The evolution and legacy of slow cinema in the 21st century cinematic landscape

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The Evolution and Legacy of Slow Cinema in the 21st Century Cinematic Landscape

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A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Film and Screen Media Birkbeck University of London

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Abstract

This research delves into the phenomenon of slow cinema, which has gained prominence since the early 21st century within international film festivals and scholarly discourse. The study began in 2012, navigating the initial stages of slow cinema's conceptualization, focusing on terminology, definition, and legitimacy. Despite a surge in critical attention and discourse, the author observes a recent decline in scholarly activity on slow cinema. The thesis aims to contribute to the existing literature by exploring themes and materials overlooked or underexplored. The primary focus is on analysing the legacy of slow cinema and offering a critical commentary on its evolving role within the changing landscape of contemporary cinema and moving image art.

Two key themes are central to the investigation: first, how slow cinema serves as a bridge between art cinema and artist film, establishing a closer connection; and second, how this fusion creates new possibilities for exhibition and distribution. The author examines the interplay between these themes, exploring how the formal qualities of slow cinema influence distribution strategies borrowed from the art world. This involves a rise in micro distributors specializing in less commercially viable cinematic styles. On the exhibition front, the research investigates the transformation of art galleries into spaces for showcasing slow cinema, alongside the evolution of traditional art house cinemas now situated within contemporary art galleries.

The study not only suggests that slow cinema has enabled a shift in exhibition and distribution approaches but also highlights its susceptibility to wider trends in the cinematic landscape. The temporal focus is between 2002 and 2014, representing the emergence and symbolic saturation of the 'slow' moment in cinema. The author views this period as distinct, emphasizing the need to recognize slow cinema not as a current or emerging moment but as

a concluded era. The exploration of this timeframe provides insights into the transformative

impact of slow cinema on the relationship between contemporary cinema and moving image

art.

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Introduction

Having emerged at the start of the century, slow cinema has become a common feature on the international film festival circuit and has been thoroughly explored within print film criticism (Romney 2010; Dargis and Scott 2011), online film blogs (Tuttle, 2014) as well as in scholarship in Film Studies (Çağlayan 2018; de Luca 2014). I will explore the emergence of the phenomenon in detail across this introduction, but I mention this here to provide a sense of the period into which my own thesis will intervene.

I began this thesis in 2012, a moment after the initial development of the idea of slow cinema, which was understandably focused on questions of terminology, definition and meaning. In other words: establishing the legitimacy and the key terms of slow cinema as an object of critical debate and academic study. It should also be mentioned that since I started the thesis, there has been a steady increase in attention given to these films, accompanied by considerable growth in the critical discourse on this topic, although one could argue that this has tailed off in recent years, in terms of the quantity of articles, books and conferences devoted to slow cinema.

The challenge I face, therefore, is to show that my study investigates themes and materials either neglected or unexplored by the existing literature. To this end I have adjusted my own focus to analyse the legacy of slow cinema over time and to provide a critical commentary and hypothesis of its role in changing, and being affected by changes to, the relationship between contemporary cinema and moving image art. I delve into two key themes: firstly, how slow cinema bridges the gap between art cinema and artist film, forging a closer connection, and secondly, how this fusion opens new avenues for both exhibition and distribution. By examining the interplay between these themes, I explore how the unique formal qualities of slow cinema have influenced distribution strategies borrowed from the art

world. This includes the rise of micro distributors focusing on these less commercially viable cinematic styles. On the exhibition front, I investigate the transformation of art galleries into spaces for showcasing these works. Additionally, I chart the evolution of traditional art house cinemas, which are now increasingly housed within contemporary art galleries and overseen by specialist film curators. This focus, analysing the routes of exhibition and distribution suggests slow cinema has both enabled a shift in these approaches as well as being affected by these wider trends. In addition, I understand this subject not as a current or emerging moment, but instead as a distinct period which can now be seen to have ended. My focus is between 2002, which saw the first reference to slow cinema, and 2014, the year I identify as the symbolic point of saturation of the 'slow' moment in cinema, a question to which I shall return later in this introduction.

Defining Slow Cinema

Initial material addressing slow cinema took the form of articles in the film press and online films blogs. Scholarship on this subject began over time to appear in academic journals, followed by PhD theses, and later by book length studies. The variety of written material exploring slow cinema reflects the ability of forms such as film journalists and bloggers to respond quickly to emerging trends, particularly those developing from within the space of the international film festival circuit. As most of the early references to the initial idea of slow cinema were in relation to works premiering at international film festivals, it was journalists and film critics who were among the first to conceptualise and group together specific films under this banner. I will explore the origins of the term itself at a later point, but refer to it now simply to underline how it had initially emerged outside of the sphere of film criticism and journalism, before finding its way into the discipline of film studies as conventionally

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reflected in book length studies such as *Slow Movies: Countering the Cinema of Action* (2014), *Tsai Ming-liang and a Cinema of Slowness* (Lim, 2014), *Poetics of Slow Cinema: Nostalgia, Absurdism, Boredom* (Çağlayan, 2018) and *Slow Cinema: Traditions in World Cinema* (Tiago de Luca, Nuno Barradas Jorge, 2015).

Throughout my thesis I refer to slow cinema as essentially a 'style' of filmmaking based on certain key formal and technical choices made by the filmmaker or artist. The decision to refer to slow cinema as a style is important to my understanding, as I want to avoid presenting slow cinema as either a traditional film movement or as a film genre. I am essentially arguing that one of the defining features of slow cinema, when looking at its emergence and development, is the way that many of the filmmakers associated with it have come from outside traditional spaces of film, for example from practices such as fine art and experimental moving image practices, and filmmakers from more traditional trajectories have moved closer into the spaces of the gallery and museum. While traditional understanding and writing on slow cinema has been in connection to art cinema movements or legacies of world cinema, I argue that there are limitations in following this mode of analysis. To do this casts slow cinema as a more typical film movement, whereas slow cinema as a body of work is a fluid, less clearly defined series of objects which problematises traditionally identifiable categories existing within film studies.

Slow cinema, almost paradoxically, both appears at times to fall under the banners and understandings of a variety of pre-existing categories which are used within film studies, film criticism and the wider distribution and exhibition, and pushes at the margins of them. Terms such as art cinema and world cinema are frequently used to describe slow cinema, and it is also at times described as being its own cinematic genre. However, I argue that to use these pre-existing terminologies is to misunderstand the clear ways that slow cinema has

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drawn from experimental film traditions and coincided with the shifting trends in gallery exhibition and distribution and thus pushes beyond these categories which are associated in relation to a more traditional conceptualisation of cinema. There is a disconnect between what art cinema and world cinema mean in fields of exhibition and distribution where they frequently exist as marketing terms, as opposed to within film studies and academia. I will explore this in a later chapter, in more detail, but mention this to underline one of the claims this thesis makes, that slow cinema marks a moment where films previously marketed and distributed through art cinema chains and repertory cinemas have instead found their home both within the gallery and through a network of screening venues outside of the art house circuit, as evidenced by large scale contemporary art museums, like MOMA, the Pompidou Centre or Tate Modern. Slow cinema represents formally the intersection of experimental, durational, and minimalist approaches, alongside elements of traditional art cinema and thus has opened up, and been reflective of, opportunities provided by the gallery and contemporary art museum. There are therefore many alternative sites being used to disseminate works of slow cinema. At this point, for clarity's sake, I will address those two terms, genre and film movement, in relation to slow cinema, explaining how in my understanding they differ from the notion of style.

Slow cinema has similarities with the traditional conception of an emerging film movement in that, like the film movement, specific directors are closely linked to slow cinema; however, slow cinema does not always function in the manner of a film movement. A good example of a well-known film movement in the classic sense would be Dogme 95. Started by the celebrated Danish filmmakers Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg, a manifesto was launched which proclaimed that 'Dogme 95 [...] is a collective of film directors founded in Copenhagen in spring 1995. Dogme 95 has the expressed goal of countering

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"certain tendencies" in the cinema today. Dogme 95 is a rescue action!' (Mackenzie 2014: 201). Dogme 95 fits the conventional pattern of a cinematic movement having been formed by a small group of people. There exists a clear set of rules, or in this case a 'vow of chastity', which creates a sense of a collective practice. Their manifesto included an acknowledgement of François Truffaut's 'A Certain Tendency of the French Cinema' article for *Cahiers du Cinéma* (1954), which had famously led to the establishment of the French New Wave, an important reference point in defining what a film movement is, especially in terms of its opposition to existing trends in mainstream French national cinema. In this spirit, Dogme 95 had sought to position itself against an existing dominant idea or style within filmmaking, notably one characterised by large budgets, high production values and special effects. With slow cinema, however, there is no manifesto and no authorial figurehead in the manner of conventional cinematic movements.

Traditionally cinematic movements are also commonly linked by nationality, as is the case with the Danish Dogme 95, and similarly with British Free Cinema and the French New Wave. To cite canonical film movements such as French Impressionism (1918-1930), German Expressionism (1919-1926), Cinema Novo (1950-1970) or Italian Neorealism (1942-1951), a national grouping allows for an increased sense of coherence to a movement, even in the absence of a clear manifesto or any dialogue between those linked under these umbrella terms. The national context can also, as with Cinema Novo and Italian Neorealism, lead to a movement forming in explicit relation to shifting political conditions within a specific nation state. No national collective exists for slow cinema, nor is there a single geographical space from which it emerges. As such slow cinema cannot be understood or referred to as a movement in a traditional sense.

The necessity of pointing this out, at this stage of the thesis, is to highlight the trajectory of film studies being predicated on waves and movements, in a manner which creates a linear sense of progression between developments and trends emerging over time. This as a side effect has led to canons and corpus formations with a Eurocentric focus centred around specific nation states and dominant cultures. This tendency has taken a great deal of work and research to counterbalance, yet it is still present in contemporary approaches and understanding of cinema both in the classroom and across dissemination, exhibition and distribution of film, particularly in relation to historical accounts of the medium due to a multitude of reasons which fall outside of the remit of this thesis.

The idea of slow cinema, as a loosely defined movement, provides a potential counterpoint to this. The absence of a grouping of films through a national trajectory provides slow cinema with a transnational characteristic, being borderless and thus positioned outside of any distinctly geographical or cultural origin, removing any national hierarchy or character. Its emergence, being linked to trends on the international festival circuit, points to a set of filmmakers working with no direct connection to one another, thus providing a succinct difference between slow cinema and the previously mentioned film movements. While the examples I referenced earlier are all historical, the practice is still used to locate and categorise developing often national trends and more recent examples of this can be seen through the Chinese so called Sixth Generation filmmakers, New French Extremity (2000-2010) or the Berlin School (2010-present).

The borderless nature of slow cinema is in one sense contradicted by attempts to paint the emergence of the style as a linear, natural development of largely European art cinema of the 1960s, and thus to impose onto a body of work whose main defining feature was its international spread and lack of any distinct figurehead or author, a clear place within the

history of art cinema. Given the lack of a manifesto or overarching programme, or the historical conditions of a national 'new wave', it appears more accurate and more productive to refer to slow cinema as a style – one that is characterised by certain key formal features such as the use of the static camera, wide angle shots and deep focus composition, temporally extended sequences, as well as soundscapes characterised by silence, especially a lack of dialogue, and a dramatic narrative that is generally pared down to the minimum. For the purposes of this study, I have found these stylistic traits to offer a better working definition of slow cinema than any reference to an explicit programme of principles or shared goals.

Just as slow cinema escapes simple categorisation as a film movement, so it departs from certain notions of art cinema. Particularly its use of durational and minimalist aesthetics, which subsequently facilitate other modes of exhibition and distribution, represents a detour from how art cinema functions in this respect. Whilst it shares several elements which correlate with common notions of the art film, slow cinema resists being understood strictly as art film largely by its use of duration which has increasingly facilitated on overlap between the gallery and the cinema. Across material on slow cinema, such as Çağlayan (2014, 2018) and de Luca (2011, 2014) slow cinema is defined as a sub-division of art cinema, which I will address and explore later.

In this context, I understand 'art cinema' as auteurist, international work shown at film festivals and linked to the longer tradition of film movements and national cinemas. Conventional approaches to understanding the art film can be reflected in the article 'The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice' by David Bordwell, who sets out a series of conditions which positions the art film in opposition to commercial cinema, attempting to identify a working definition which he suggests can be understood as 'possessing a definite historical existence, a set of formal conventions, and implicit viewing procedures' (Bordwell 1979: 151).

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Bordwell also states that 'lacking identifiable stars and familiar genres, the art cinema uses a concept of authorship to unify the text' (1979: 157). Here Bordwell draws on auteurism to help him define art cinema, which establishes a link between his working definition and the post-war modernist film movements which would become the defining texts of art cinema. Specifically, Bordwell identifies a recurring presence of a narrative approach found within art cinema. This is a position that Bordwell describes in the following way: 'art cinema motivates its narrative by two principles: realism and authorial expressiveness' (Bordwell 1979: 57). These twin elements, realism and authorial expressiveness, are present within slow cinema, and reflect one of the ways in which it relates to the art film. Yet slow cinema, even when placed under the art cinema category as in Çağlayan (2014, 2018) and de Luca (2011, 2014), maintains a connection to experimental film traditions, thus complicating its own status as a stable, fully definable genre. The reason for placing slow cinema under these categories by Çağlayan and de Luca appears to be linked to understanding it as a trajectory of post-war modernist cinema movements, whereas I argue that the myriad connections to other modes of moving image practice point to the ways in which slow cinema comes across as a distinctly contemporary unique style of filmmaking. Slow cinema exaggerates and extends elements of art cinema, resulting in a form which at times also bears similarities to elements of experimental cinema and minimalist art.

Stylistic features such as these establish slow cinema as existing under the umbrella term of art cinema, but, as I will explore later in more detail, the gestures of duration and minimalism which feature strongly in slow cinema naturally connect to other modes of moving image traditions, leading to filmmakers such as Kevin Jerome Everson, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Tsai Ming-liang and Lav Diaz all being brought under the auspices of the gallery and the museum as modes of exhibition and distribution. For example, Everson,

Weereasthakul and Ming-liang, have all had works that have been financed by museums, exhibited in galleries, and purchased and held by major international contemporary art galleries. These works, whilst different in approach and form, still retain minimalist and durational characteristics which elude the traditional post-festival modes of distribution and exhibition.

Both formal qualities of minimalism and duration link slow cinema to distinct trends of art history, not necessarily as a direct inspiration, but certainly in relation to formal characteristics. Minimalism as an art movement can be traced back to the 1960s, and its concern lies in an attempt to reduce an artwork down to its barest of forms often centred around the square or rectangle. In an article for the *Guardian*, journalist Jonathan Freedland said the following on the minimalist art movement:

> Minimalism often took to an extreme credo pioneered by previous waves of abstract art. Those artists were tired of art as an illusion, a trick by which one object represents something else. They wanted the work to be stripped of such artifice, pared down to the essentials so that the viewer looks only at the thing itself (rather than a picture or sculpture of something). (Freedland 2001)

We can therefore understand this concept as a stripped-down method, as reflected in work by artists such as Agnes Martin, Donald Judd or Dan Flavin. Minimalism emerged in the 1950s and continued into the 1970s. In the same period, Andy Warhol would also create several important works which would be defined, not necessarily by the minimalist movement, but would certainly adopt an aesthetic which was paired down and restrained, through his work with film in the 1960s including such titles as *Eat* (USA, 1963), *Sleep* (USA, 1964) and *Empire* (USA, 1965). These works would become known as his durational pieces and would be defined by their long lengths, absence of any discernible plot and a focus on incredibly simple tasks

such as the filming of Warhol associate and painter Robert Indiana eating a mushroom, sequences of members of his circle sleeping, and a series of recordings of the Empire State building.

Slow cinema draws from, rather than being defined by, film movements or art cinema, and similarly it cannot be fully defined in terms of genre, despite there being some ways in which it does function as one. In his book *Film Genre: From Iconography to Ideology*, Barry Keith Grant sets out a working definition of genre in the following terms:

> In any art form or medium, conventions are frequently used stylistic techniques or narrative devices typical of (but not necessarily unique to) particular generic traditions. Bits of dialogue, musical figures or styles and patterns of mise-en-scene are all aspects of movies that, repeated from film to film within a genre, become established as conventions. (Grant 2007:5)

Other conceptions of understanding genre offer contradictory approaches with scholars such as Robert Stam (2000), David Bordwell (1989) and Steve Neale (1980) serving as canonical examples of texts exploring genre theory in relation to cinema, and the complexities of providing a stable definition. Despite reflecting elements of this description, such as a coherent visual identity, what prevents slow cinema from being comfortably classified as a genre is that the films contain such a diverse series of approaches that I prefer to use the term style to refer to slow cinema, to suggest that slow cinema has multiple origins and aesthetic and formal forebears. Historically film genres have been tied to literary traditions with narrative also functioning as a key element in identifying and establishing genre. Slow cinema, whilst not explicitly united through a specific type of story or narrative, still features a series of narrative tropes, which touches upon some understandings of genre. Slow cinema also resists being formally conceptualised as a genre through the way in which it at times appears

to operate as a pastiche and subversion of existing genres, for example by slowing down the unfolding of the narrative or generic codes to a point where they are no longer recognisable. Tsai's *The Hole* (Taiwan, 1998) and *The Wayward Cloud* (Taiwan, 2005), for example, both approximate the musical, using realist approaches associated with art cinema to both create a homage to the musical and to bring it into dialogue with themes less common within the genre of the musical, such as, in this context, familial disconnection, sexual identity and imperialism. Similarly, Kelly Reichardt's *Meek's Cutoff* (USA, 2010) and Lisandro Alonso's *Jauja* (Denmark/ Argentina/ France, 2014), both use slow aesthetics to rework the traditional genre of the western. In approaching this genre, slowness provides extra emphasis on landscape, making the central characters subservient to the natural open spaces of the film's locations and in doing so underplaying the traditional narrative expectations of the western. In setting out to deconstruct and subvert the western these two examples share similarities with the art film, in that the method often includes a highly cine-literate formal language and both an awareness of and engagement in cinema history and its traditions. Slow cinema therefore exists across film genres as opposed to being a designated genre of its own. For the purposes of my argument, the films I am working with appear to exist in between genres, which is a key function of slow cinema, and something I will explore at greater depth throughout the thesis.

Film style, as opposed to film genre, emphasises the visual elements, appearance, and formal qualities of the film. Annette Kuhn and Guy Westwell describe film style as 'any distinctive, patterned, developed, meaningful use of techniques of the film medium, including mise-en-scene, framing, iconography, shot-size, lighting, colour and sound' (2012:178). Style, as opposed to genre, is a reference to the formal conditions of the film. Colin Burnett (2008) provides an overview of how style has been understood and approached within film studies, highlighting formalist and neo-formalist approaches found within work by David Bordwell

such as *On the History of Film Style* (1997) and Noel Burch's *Theory of Film Practice* (1981). Burnett also draws on art history, in order to highlight the historical context of how stylistic changes and trends occur and fall out of favour:

> Sources of what we now call 'film style' include such disciplines as linguistics, musicology, and semiotics. As I will argue, a further source, too often overlooked, is art history. From the study of fine arts film studies has borrowed the idea that historical styles are best explained as products of practical compositional problems to which artists develop skilled solutions. (Burnett 2008: 127)

Within the context of my thesis, my reference to slow cinema as a style is to emphasise the techniques and formal aspects of the films, and to place their use within a set historical moment, analysing the development and meaning of such a style, specifically as an engagement with societal, cultural, and political aesthetics. The naming of slow cinema as a style serves to highlight that there are key recurring aesthetic and thematic approaches which are commonly used, yet there is an absence of a singular recurring narrative, manifesto or national link, which differentiates it from definitions of film genres or film movements.

Stylistic traits of slow cinema

As stated earlier, my definition of slow cinema is constructed from the formal characteristics of the films. I will now expand on the meaning of these formal traits and set out how they appear and function across slow cinema. These features appear in any combination with varying regularity: temporally extended takes, spatially deep shots, static camera set-ups, soundscapes characterised by silence, and a dramatic pared-down narrative. The long take is one of the most recognisable and prominent elements of slow cinema. It is used repeatedly and has a long history in cinema with its meaning and effect changing as trends and tastes

shift over time. In his PhD thesis on the long take, Michael Pigott identifies two categories of

long take:

> The first category is marked by movement (the ability of the camera to obviate editing
>
> by going where it wants and needs to), and the second by stasis (the determination of
>
> the camera not to cut, to choose to keep looking). This distinction is by no means
>
> definitive… yet it does provide the key to an understanding of the very different ways
>
> in which time can be treated by a long take. (Pigott 2009: 146)

For slow cinema the second category mentioned by Michael Pigott is the one which is most

relevant. The second category is more focused on the intensity that the absence of a cut

causes and the prolonging of a scene beyond conventional duration or narrative use. One

such canonical example of this comes from *L'avventura* (Michelangelo Antonioni, Italy, 1960).

The film features several long takes where the camera maintains a focus on its subject. Figure

1 comes from one sequence in the film where Antonioni holds the shot for 17.7 seconds.

Within this scene, although it contains some narrative information – in this instance, two

central characters coming together to embrace – the image is prolonged without interruption,

which shifts the meaning and effect of the image, beyond narrative function. As Lutz Koepnick

described in his text *The Long Take: Art Cinema and the Wondrous*, upon its release

L'avventura was 'not simply challenging classical models of cinematic storytelling but it was

designed to probe the viewer's temporal endurance and precisely thus define clear

distinctions between the art of art cinema and the entertainment of commercial filmmaking'

(Koepnick 2017: 73).

Figure 1 L'avventura

Pigott 's use of the phrase 'the determination of the camera not to cut, to choose to keep looking' (2009: 146) accurately accounts for how the long take functions within slow cinema. Rather than opting for a specific numerical length which defines a take as a long take, I prefer instead to focus on what is happening within the take itself. The long take within slow cinema functions in a similar way to what Koepnick describes in Antonioni's *L'avventura*. Here the content of the scene, often containing minimal 'action' or spectacle, instead emphasises, to quote Koepnick, the 'representation of existential disorientation and psychological ambiguity, subtracting from the grammar of film the kind of elements classical editing had used to elicit viewer identification: point-of-view inserts, subjective camera perspectives, shot/reverse shot patterns' (Koepnick 2017: 56). The spectatorial result of this most directly is a more explicit sensation of the temporality of the film which can subsequently provide a greater engagement with the details of the spaces as represented on screen. This can be done by reducing movements of the characters and the camera to increase the amount of time a

viewer would spend observing a specific place or object, thus consolidating details less noticeable when presented alongside more dramatic moments and aesthetic flourishes.

Take for example *Xiao Wu* (Zhangke, China, 1997) where the repeated use of the long take underlines the characters' relationship to their environment through the focus on the rural spaces of Fenyang, becoming a metaphor for their inability to escape the limited opportunities presented by the small town. It also plays a role emphasising incremental details of the space, such as the texture of the crumbling pavements, the colour patterns of the shop fronts or the high propensity of bicycles being used by the residents. None of these details in and of themselves contribute to the narrative or develop the characters, yet they are all emphasised, through the film's commitment to extending the temporality of the scene.

An example of the use of the long take from the canon of slow cinema can be seen in Ben Rivers' *Two Years at Sea* (UK, 2011). In one scene lasting several minutes the central character is filmed as he loads up a boat, as seen in Figure 2. The length of the scene creates a more contemplative spectatorship where the viewer is encouraged to explore the scale of the image due to the combination of the temporality of the scene and its content, which again features minimal narrative progression or character development, and instead emphasises an engagement with the texture of the image. This is achieved through the director's preference for using 16mm film in this instance, but also, as with Jia Zhangke's *Xiao Wu*, through the emphasis on smaller details of the location and place, resulting in a more thorough engagement with the pictorial elements of the natural terrain of the Cairngorms, a large mountain range located in the eastern Highlands of Scotland, where much of the film is set. This shift facilitates the establishment of a move to focusing on developing a sense of place, in order to capture such details of the location as how the experience of temporality

functions, in contrast to a more urban space for example, and to channel such a seemingly abstract sensation into the spectator's encounter with the film.

Figure 2 Two Years At Sea

One of the most common features of slow cinema is the use of deep focus. This is not to be confused with the long take. Whereas the long take is centrally concerned with exploring extended time, deep focus is focused on exploring extended space. Also referred to as a wide shot, long shot or wide angle, this method takes in the human figure and its surrounding environment. The depth of the image allows for the presence of landscape and exterior space to dominate the image, and in conjunction with the long take extends many of the themes Koepnick sets out in his description of *L'avventura*, notably the inclusion of themes such as 'existential disorientation and psychological ambiguity' found within the art film. The prominence of landscape afforded by the long shot emphasises the rural setting and the vast emptiness of the landscape which in the context of Antonioni provides a visual representation of his bourgeois protagonists' experiences of existential anxiety.

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In an urban setting, deep focus is used to establish the sensations of loneliness, isolation and urban ennui within the city encountered by each film's central characters. This appears both within Antonioni's urban films such as *La notte* (Italy, 1961) and *L'eclisse* (Italy, 1962), but also, to turn to more recent examples, across Tsai's, Taipei-based films *The Hole* (Taiwan, 1998) *The Wayward Cloud* (Taiwan, 2005) and *What Time Is It Over There?* (Taiwan, 2001), where in both urban and natural landscapes the themes of alienation are emphasised. For example, Tsai's camera lingers on his characters' environments, highlighting instances where his characters are alone and undertaking everyday tasks which do little to propel a narrative.

A film like *What Time Is It Over There?* is structured around a sensation of loneliness and longing, and Tsai's use of the long take emphasises and transmits this feeling through the repeated positioning of his characters within a frame where they appear in the margins detached from any other human figure, with their environment functioning as a prison of sorts, restricting movement, and further highlighting their isolation. Figure 3 shows an example from Tsai's film, highlighting how he makes use of his frame to channel these emotions through to the spectator. In this image the exterior site of Taipei is shown and fills the frame, whilst the film's protagonist, Hsiao-kang, is crouching down, and although his presence is an important element of the frame, his presentation is one connoting marginality through his lack of movement, which is offset against the busy traffic and constant flow of people walking past the camera, and on the streets. The position of the camera emphasises the stillness of Hsiao-kang, placed in opposition to the movement of the city, as evidenced by the multiple lanes of traffic and the streets full of pedestrians.

Figure 3 What Time Is It There?

Accentuating the sensation of slowness within the long take and the deep focus is the static camera. The experience of slow cinema, from the perspective of the spectator, is informed by stillness. This is due to the lack of movement in front of the camera but also through the lack of movement behind the camera. The position of the camera is locked and limited to what the camera has fixed in its gaze. Any movement is often coming from the spectator's gaze moving across the image. To use an example from another film by Tsai Ming-liang, in *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* (Taiwan, 2005) the static camera is frequently used and repeatedly captures non-moving human figures within long takes. The result is to emphasise this stillness and establish an atmosphere of emptiness within the dilapidated cinema where the film takes place. The static camera is used to reduce the pace of the film. This recurs throughout *Goodbye, Dragon Inn*, where a lack of movement becomes an experience positioned in opposition to the dynamism of modernity. The failing cinema, screening King Hu's wuxia film *Dragon Inn* (Hong Kong, 1969) within the narrative of Tsai's later film,

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becomes another reflection of a culture being lost and subsumed within the modern urban space. The lack of movement in *Goodbye, Dragon Inn*, either of the camera or the characters, serves to portray the cinema theatre which recurs throughout the film, and the culture it represents, as a dying, moribund object, and the film's pace and rhythm accentuate this sensation. The static camera limits the exploration of space, and reduces the action to a single location, resulting in an intensification of the film's sense of place. The non-moving camera has an effect which is in a sense contradictory, yet worth unpacking here briefly. The camera will always have a finite limit, and the spaces which are captured are boxed in within the frame, yet combined with the deep focus and long shot, an extension of temporality and spatiality is created for the spectator accentuating the sense of place and the locations and environment of the film.

The static camera is also a common feature within structural cinema and other experimental traditions, emerging out of this period where the non-moving camera becomes part of an attempt to move away from the expressionistic elements of narrativized cinema. The major difference between the use of the static camera in slow cinema and more experimental modes of film is that in slow cinema the static camera is still linked, however obliquely, to traditions of narrative cinema. One such example in a British context is *River Yar* (UK, 1972) made by filmmakers Chris Welsby and William Raban, where a non-moving camera captures a single frame every minute for two separate three-week periods across autumn and spring, and the result is a study of the passing of time and the incremental shifts through the transition from night today. The film purposefully configures notions of landscape photography and painting, through an experiment with the moving image, and is predicated on creating a sense of movement, through the static camera, in order to represent pictorially the same landscape across the changing seasons.

Slow cinema also finds ways to emphasise soundscapes characterised by silence, in particular a lack of dialogue. By focusing on such a use of sound, an effect of near silence is created, and when used alongside extended takes a more intense and prolonged sensation of stillness is crafted. For example, Lisandro Alonso's *Liverpool* (Argentina, 2008) focuses on the journey of Farrel, a merchant seaman travelling home, and features almost no dialogue. This is partly linked to the narrative of the film, as the central figure is travelling largely alone and has few interactions with any individuals on his journey, reducing the likelihood of any dialogue or conversations. The absence of dialogue therefore draws emphasis to the soundscapes of his environment, which in turn portrays the isolation and loneliness of Farrel.

Within slow cinema one of the recurring themes is isolation of man from nature. One of the ways this is represented is simply the focus on the way things sound in natural landscapes or areas with few or no people. There is a recurring fascination with sound within slow cinema, particularly how sounds emanating from sparsely populated areas differ greatly from the urban environment, and more attention is focused on the quietness experienced in these locations. Across the course of my thesis, I will return to how sound is used and explored in slow cinema, but I mention it here as a starting point and a way of further establishing a common feature of this body of work.

Finally, in slow cinema there is a recurring approach to storytelling, one which downplays narrative progression, in favour of a pared-down narration. Identifying minimal narration as one of my criteria recognises that slow cinema is not strictly an anti-narrative style, as it does retain a commitment to narration in cinema. If, as my thesis does, we adopt a fluid, flexible definition of slow cinema, then on one end of the scale there are films with a slow progressive narrative and on the other end we have explicitly non-narrative works. This is reflected in the work of an experimental filmmaker such as James Benning, whose key films

are completely devoid of anything resembling a narrative, have straightforward, simple titles such as 'Ten Skies' or 'Thirteen Lakes'. One such example is Benning's *13 Lakes* (USA, 2004) Benning, which consists of thirteen shots, lasting roughly ten minutes of lakes chosen from throughout the United States. Benning largely refrains from using narrative, choosing instead to adopt a contemplative style, focusing on natural environment and exteriors.

Alongside these formal characteristics there are several recurring themes and motifs which appear across slow cinema, regardless of director and nationality. Like Bordwell's definitions of the art film, slow cinema also features certain recurring visual elements and characteristics which could be labelled as tropes, such as a propensity to film characters walking through vast spaces, as stated in Matthew Flanagan (2008) and Çağlayan (2018). The act of walking, normally one which is done alone and as a form of slow paced, glacial movement, is thus by its nature not associated with speed. Historically within Western art, and literature particularly, walking has been understood with the image of the *flâneur* as illustrated in Figure 4, Gustave Caillebotte's *Paris Street, Rainy Day* (1877). The *flâneur* is defined as a typically urban bourgeois dweller, slowly taking in the sights of the urban environment, the crowds, traffic, cafés, shops and, most famously in the case of Walter Benjamin's *flâneur*, the arcades (Frisby, 1985). Devoid of the social and cultural associations of the flaneur, the act of walking within slow cinema is used to accentuate the sensation of

temporality, being framed through the previosuly mentioned use of formal traits associated with this stylistic method.

Figure 4 Paris Street, Rainy Day

Within these films, therefore, walking as a gesture can at once relate formally to minimalist narrative, use of deep focus, static camera, the long take, and the use of natural ambient sounds. A good example of this is to be found in Carlos Reygadas's *Japon* (Mexico, 2002). The film focuses on an unnamed man who, having travelled to a remote area of Mexico to kill himself, meets a widowed octogenarian with whom he eventually finds a kind of redemption. The film is set in the vast hinterlands of Chihuahua's canyon country. The dry tropical landscape becomes the setting for repeated walks by the character only known as 'el hombre'; all we hear are the sounds of winds moving through and the sounds of his footsteps

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on the rough terrain. The same can be said of Albert Serra's *El cant dels ocells* (Spain, 2008).

The film retells the story of the Adoration of the Magi and takes these religious figures and

focuses on the minutiae of their journey to find the Christ child, presenting their interaction

and journey with a degree of simplicity and avoiding narrative embellishments. As with *Japon*

the sounds of winds and rustling footsteps dominate the soundtrack, which favours natural

sounds over dialogue and conversation.

Throughout slow cinema there is a recurring focus on inaction. This focus is reflected

in one sense through the aesthetics of the static camera, long take, and deep focus, but also

in the films themselves and the themes and narratives of the world within the film. These

include prolonged sequences of characters waiting, highlighting the preference for acts

involving little or no movement. Examples can be seen in *Uzak* by Nuri Blige Ceylan (Turkey,

2002), where the director's camera dwells on the stilted relationship between two brothers,

whose relationship has deteriorated. The film is punctuated by protracted moments of the

two sitting in domestic spaces in near silence. The gestures of both men, reclined, watching

the television, underline this inaction. In one sequence, this becomes a wry joke, as one

brother, an artist, deliberately tries to provoke boredom in his brother by changing the

channel of the television set to the film *Stalker* (Tarkovsky, 1972, USSR), to get the other

brother to leave the room. This scene as reflected in Figure 5 contains a moment of deadpan

humour, delivered through the lack of movement by each character, the near silence of the

room, and the use of the static camera, all establishing a mood of boredom, with the humour

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being conveyed through the construction of the frame, rather than any verbal interaction between the two brothers.

Figure 5 Uzak

The minimalist gesture is perhaps the most distinctive characteristic within slow cinema. Yvette Biro (2006) and Elina Reitere (2015) argue that slow cinema, rather than being seen as 'non-narrative', should instead be recognised as focusing on communicating through methods other than plot devices. This allows for minor narratives to develop as communication is generated through the accumulation of small details over the course of the film's running time. Hungarian filmmaker Béla Tarr also picks up on this in an online interview for *Kinoeye* with Phil Ballard, where Tarr discusses how through the process of focusing on what he describes as 'meta-communication' a minimalist narrative develops:

The people of this generation know information-cut, information-cut, information-cut. They can follow the logic of it, the logic of the story, but they don't follow the logic of life. Because I see the story as only just a dimension of life, because we have a lot of other things. We have time, we have landscapes, we have meta-communications, all of which are not verbal information. If you watch the news, it is just talking, cutting,

maybe some action and afterwards talking, action, talking. For us, the film is a bit different. (Ballard 2004)

It is through this 'meta-communication' that slow cinema differentiates itself from other distinctive modes of cinema departing from mainstream film language. Béla Tarr's cinema, through his use of long extended takes, is a clear example of a commitment to narrative. Tarr, like other filmmakers using the slow cinema style, reflects a commitment to a type of narrative mode, where pace is gradual, and the development of plot is interrupted through the adoption of filmmaking techniques which extend scenes beyond their conventional narrative function. This is the reason why gestures such as walking are repeatedly present in slow cinema, as the act contains little narrative information, instead emphasising the passing of time. The act of walking, and the amount of screen time the act takes up, demonstrates a key feature of slow cinema, specifically the focus on place, slow movement, and the presentation of on-screen temporality.

Early uses of slow cinema

In order to reflect on how slow cinema is understood in critical discourse and academic scholarship, it is useful to unpack the origin of the phrase. The first reference was in a review of *Gerry* (Gus Van Sant, USA, 2002). The film had premiered at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival and film critic Shawn Levy, writing for the now defunct Newhouse News Service, described it in these terms:

> Gus Van Sant's experiment in slow cinema drove people into fury and ecstasy, with almost nobody standing in the middle. Matt Damon and Casey Affleck wander lost in a desert, while Van Sant and a miniscule crew stage long, quiet, gorgeous, patience-testing shots. (Levy 2002: 3)

The way that slow cinema is described in the review by Levy as repetitively using long and 'patience-testing' shots is what subsequent early responses to slow cinema also discuss. The focus is on questions of duration and boredom. After this initial use, the phrase becomes more commonly applied as a knowing reference to the ecologically responsible Slow Food movement spawned by Carlo Petrini. A Jonathan Romney article for the *Independent on Sunday* demonstrates this usage: 'Slow Food, Slow Cities... It's surprising that no one has yet tried to market films in line with this new zeitgeist and promote slow cinema' (Romney 2004: 20).

After the initial references to slow cinema which had appeared in film reviews in the mid-2000s, there were attempts from film critics to establish something closer to a definition of the phrase, which had begun to appear more regularly at the end of decade. The 'Unspoken Cinema' blog, run by an online film critic by the name of Benoît Rouilly, has been active since 2006. Rouilly posts under the alias of Harry Tuttle, the name being recognisable as that of an anarchist freedom fighter, played by Robert De Niro, in *Brazil* (Terry Gilliam, UK, 1986). Whereas Romney was summarising a perceived film trend from the conventional viewpoint of print film criticism, and Matthew Flanagan was contributing to a more academic online film journal, the 'Unspoken Cinema' blog, having begun in October 2006, is an earlier reaction to slow cinema and uses the informality of the blog to include pictures and lists alongside pieces of film criticism. 'Unspoken Cinema' has since 2006 regularly made blog posts discussing and drawing attention to filmmakers using slow aesthetics. The blog at the time of writing is still producing content on this subject with recent posts including analysis of Chinese director Wang BIng. The blog refrains from using the phrase slow cinema, instead choosing contemplative cinema. Many of the films and directors mentioned in Unspoken Cinema

correlate with those mentioned by Flanagan and Romney, meaning that when viewed alongside one another, a clear and concise understanding of slow cinema is generated.

It is at this point that more attention from within film studies is paid to the idea of slow cinema as a body of work. Romney's 'In Search of Lost Time' (2010), published in UK film magazine *Sight and Sound*, and Flanagan's 'Towards an Aesthetic of Slow in Contemporary Cinema' (2008) for online Danish film magazine *16:9*, are two examples of slow cinema becoming a phrase which connects to an emerging, commonly agreed corpus. Romney's article, written for a revered auteurist film magazine, shows slow cinema as an idea gaining currency in film criticism, whilst Flanagan, at the time a PhD student, shows a connection to a more academic environment. Flanagan's article would eventually develop into the first academic thesis to directly explore slow cinema ('Slow Cinema: Temporality and Style in Contemporary Art and Experimental Film', 2012). The article by Romney is a work of film criticism which attempts to summarise what is understood by slow cinema and refers to the work of several filmmakers such as Bruno Dumont, Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Albert Serra. As a text written for a film magazine with a long history of cinephilia, the article adopts a journalistic tone and thus provides a definition which is largely linked to certain trends in contemporary international art cinema.

These blog posts and film journalism (as in Steven Shaviro (2010b), Dan Kois (2010) and Nick James (2010a, 2010b)) would contribute to the debate over whether 'slowness' represented an alternative to conceptions of Hollywood and mainstream cinema, or whether it was an overtly esoteric method steeped in nostalgia for post-war art cinema. The structure of the debate was initiated in print media, which adopted a journalistic, polemical tone resulting in responses falling into two groups, those praising slow cinema and those criticising it. As a response to the limitations of the responses, and to the visibility provided by such

publications as *Sight and Sound* and *The New York Times*, engagements with slow cinema began to appear in spaces outside of print media and the blogosphere.

Flanagan's article is another attempt to establish what is understood by slow cinema. Like Romney, Flanagan introduces the emergence of slow cinema as a reaction to, and departure from, more mainstream film trends and a perceived societal and cultural obsession with speed in contemporary life. Flanagan presents slow cinema as a micro-trend emerging from within art cinema. Across these two articles the notion of slow cinema is understood in the following manner: opposed to mainstream cinema; emerging at the turn of the century; adopting a series of minimalist aesthetic techniques. In these two articles, slow cinema is summarised and described in relation to international art cinema, using this term as a way of understanding and categorising the films. These initial definitions have shaped slow cinema, and this has subsequently informed my own position and understanding.

Slow cinema having been established as a body of work, there then appeared a series of articles in print and online media in publications such as *Sight and Sound*, *The New York Times*, and *The New Yorker*, which sought to debate the relevance of the phenomenon. Due to their visibility, they also raised the profile of the idea of slow cinema, suggesting that the films were symbolic of a particular moment both in film and wider culture. An extended editorial by Nick James, published across several issues of *Sight and Sound* in 2010, criticised the films associated with the label slow cinema, arguing that 'they demand great swathes of our precious time to achieve quite fleeting and slender aesthetic and political effects' (James 2010: 4). In a later article which would appear in the *The New York Times* entitled 'Eating Your Cultural Vegetables', Dan Kois also criticised slow cinema by expressing fatigue at the repeated use of slowness (Kois 2011: 52). James's editorial would subsequently prompt a response on the 'Unspoken Cinema' blog which continued to celebrate the style of slow

cinema or contemplative cinema. Actively criticising James, for example, one such post made by the blog's creator stated: 'I can't believe a serious magazine would publish such anti-intellectual banter. If you don't like these films, deal with it frontally' (Tuttle 2010).

Other articles began appearing online, such as Dan Fox's 'Slow, Fast, and Inbetween', which summarised the debate across *Sight and Sound* and 'Unspoken Cinema', underlining the absence of experimental cinema in the discussion: 'Ideas of duration, non-representation, anti-narrative, and such like, have been in circulation in film and video art and shown in galleries and museums since at least the 1960s' (Fox 2010). Another response came from Steven Shaviro, who in an article entitled 'Slow Cinema vs. Fast Films', argued that the emergence of slow cinema was an act of nostalgia which lacked the artistry of 1960s and 1970s art cinema:

> In today's contemplative cinema, in contrast, the daringness and provocation are missing. I never get the sense that Dumont, or Reygadas, for instance, are ever taking risks or pushing boundaries. There's an oppressive sense in which the long-take, long-shot, slow-camera-movement, sparse-dialogue style has become entirely routinized. (Shaviro 2010b)

In contrast to what Shaviro states here, I argue that not only are these films not nostalgic, backward-looking films, but instead they are actively taking some of the aesthetic forms he is describing into new directions. Shaviro's critical position reflects one side of the debate, one that prefer 'fast films' to 'slow cinema', celebrating the work of filmmakers embracing elements of kineticism associated with post-millennial digital cinema as discussed in Shaviro's own *Post Cinematic Affect* (2010a) or Jason Sperb's *Flickers of Film: Nostalgia in the Time of Digital Cinema* (2015). Shaviro identifies fast films in terms of their 'post-cinematic affect', and under this label he includes such titles as *Boarding Gate* (Olivier Assayas, France, 2008)

or *Southland Tales* (Richard Kelly, USA, 2006). The tone of both responses by Fox and Shaviro reflects their status as blog posts, constructed respectively for *Frieze* online and Shaviro's own personal website 'The Pinocchio Website'. The source of their contributions is relevant in demonstrating how and where articles and writing on slow cinema had begun to appear between 2010 and 2013. Other online articles following on from this include 'In Defense of the Slow and the Boring' by Anthony Oliver Scott and Manohla Dargis for the *New York Times* (2011), in which Scott states:

> I certainly don't think fun should be banished from the screen, or that popular entertainment is essentially antithetical to art. And while I derive great pleasure from some movies that might be described as slow or tedious, I also find food for thought in fast, slick, whimsical entertainments. (Dargis and Scott 2011).

Similarly, in '"Slow Cinema" Fights Back Against Bourne's Supremacy' Sukhdev Sandhu, writing for UK newspaper *The Guardian*, argues:

> In fact, slowness, far from being an enemy of cinema, is an intrinsic element of contemporary visual culture; anyone who's ever stared at a screensaver, a fish tank, a gallery installation, surveillance footage, night-cam images of sleeping Big Brother contestants or buffering online video, will be at ease with the variable velocities of the moving image". Both examples reflect an attempt through editorials to draw wider conclusions on the meaning of speed in contemporary culture and society. (Sandhu 2012).

One major exploration of slow cinema outside of these spaces was during the 2012 AV Festival. Held in Newcastle, the festival explored the theme of slowness, hosting a roundtable on slow cinema and an accompanying film programme. This was followed by an academic conference on slow cinema held at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, in April 2013, under

the name 'Fast/Slow: Intensifications of Cinematic Speed'. The conferences mission statement read:

> The Fast/Slow Symposium [calls] for a critical re-evaluation of speed and intensification in the cinema. The aim of the symposium is to move beyond reductive binaries, and to encourage a range of fine-grained critical analyses that shed new light on the role of speed in cinema. (2013)

Papers such as 'Dead Time and Intensified Continuity in Nicolas Winding Refn's Cinema' by Miklos Kiss (Groningen University) and Anna Backman Rogers (Stockholm University), 'Slowness in Contemporary Romanian Cinema' by Diana Popa (University of St Andrews), and 'Sleeping in the Cinema' by William Brown (University of Roehampton), displayed the range of the symposium's content. The underlying sense was to take the debate initiated within film magazines, and to further understand why the films and discussion had drawn such interest through a closer examination of the films, directors and issues being discussed in the media. The focus on slow cinema at the AV Festival and the Fast/Slow Symposium held in 2013 was symbolic of how slow cinema was transitioning from a discussion held in film magazines, to a subject of academic interest with researchers, students and academics continuing to develop scholarship around slow cinema.

Doctoral research on slow cinema

Between 2011 and 2014 four PhD theses were written exploring, defining, categorising, and expanding upon existing understandings of slow cinema. Having demonstrated the way slow cinema has developed from a journalistic phrase to the subject of major academic research, I will now focus on analysing the existing scholarly material on slow cinema.

Flanagan in his thesis 'Slow Cinema: Temporality and Style in Contemporary Art and Experimental Film' (2012) sets out to contextualise and ground discussions of slow cinema by mapping out earlier manifestations of the style, specifically through different modes of world cinema and art cinema. Flanagan explores the relationship between slowness and traditions of experimental cinema drawing on the work of figures such as Andy Warhol and Michael Snow as an influence on contemporary slow cinema. This connection highlights how slow cinema differs from traditional cinematic movements. Flanagan concludes that rather than being defined through their status as transnational objects, films falling under the banner of slow cinema in fact emerge from specific geographic and cultural contexts and thus are grounded in national rather than international contexts.

As the first thesis to look directly at slow cinema, there is much work done by Flanagan in making connections to other cinematic precedents and establishing a concise sense of categorisation. While acknowledging the importance of Flanagan's contribution, I am interested in exploring how slow cinema can be seen to engage with the cinema and gallery space and to looking at slowness through the work of Kevin Jerome Everson, and how it functions as a method of exploring landscape and place. In addition, particularly through Everson, I aim to include reference to those largely absent from discussions of slow cinema, and underline examples of slow cinema from other traditions of art making, in this instance sculpture and photography, through Everson's journey to cinema, through these disparate art forms. The thesis by Flanagan draws together a wide range of artists and filmmakers, whereas in my project I deliberately limit my attention to a smaller collection of case studies, thereby hoping to present a more focused study, initially analysing slow aesthetics in relation to landscape, before moving to the question of the exhibition and distribution of slow works.

Across his thesis, Flanagan alludes to the connection between experimental cinema and art house cinema, as reflected in the following passage:

> Experimental cinema thus tends to alight upon singular events (in isolation, series or superimposition) rather than narratives, and its explicit function is to interrogate both the filmic apparatus and the spectator's perception of those events. This function is what connects disparate structural or realist works such as Andy Warhol's silent films of 1963 and 1964, Michael Snow's *Wavelength* (a dual presentation of something that happens in the film and to the film), the assemblage of experience and memory in Jonas Mekas's diary films, such as *Diaries, Notes and Sketches (also known as Walden)* (1969), and the more recent experimental cinema of James Benning, Peter Hutton and Sharon Lockhart (amongst others). (Flanagan 2012: 45).

Flanagan's central argument is that slow cinema belongs to a North American and Western European tradition of experimental and post-war art cinema. My own thesis is less interested in making the connections to Western art cinema and attempts to position slow cinema in a wider context of traditions emanating from the global South and therefore to present the phenomenon in a manner departing from Eurocentric understandings of cinema. This is reflected in my own choice of corpus and how these filmmakers work in ways informed by questions of the post-colonial and by legacies of racialised inequality. My chosen filmmakers all engage in legacies of inequality, histories of racialised violence and questions of national trauma, and by building my thesis around these figures, it characterises the minimalism of slow cinema as a stylistic reflection on these themes. In many ways, this is also another connecting thread to the art cinema of the 1960s and 1970s, which was implicitly and explicitly engaged in the politics and concerns of the turbulence in the immediate build up to,

and aftermath of 1968, and the ramifications of this moment would leave a trace in many of the leading figures of art cinema of this period.

'Realism of the Senses: A Tendency in Contemporary World Cinema' (2011), a thesis by Tiago de Luca, adopts a transnational, tripartite structure to explore slow cinema, with each part focusing on a different filmmaker, namely Carlos Reygadas, Tsai Ming-liang, and Gus Van Sant. The slant used by de Luca is similar to Paul Schrader's *Transcendental Cinema* (1972), in which the author attempts to extrapolate the philosophical journey from the material to the metaphysical, as rendered within the cinema of Robert Bresson, Yasujiro Ozu and Carl Theodor Dreyer. Like Schrader, de Luca is interested in the moment where depiction of everyday reality becomes something more spiritual or sensorial, as he states here:

> These are cinemas highly representative of a tendency across the globe that purports to restore the traditional tenets of cinematic realism, such as location shooting, non-professional acting and depth of field. More remarkably, this new realist aesthetics is steeped in the hyperbolic application of the long take, which promotes a contemplative viewing experience anchored in phenomenological presence and duration. (de Luca 2011: 1)

The thesis by de Luca is specifically interested in staging an analysis of slow cinema within the films of directors using traditional realist formal language. The thesis was adapted into a book in 2014 entitled *Realism of the Senses in World Cinema. The Experience of Physical Reality*. As the title suggests, de Luca is interested in understanding slow cinema through realism and legacies of world cinema. In my own thesis, I build from this, engaging with de Luca's formulation of slow cinema. In my understanding I see slow cinema as often using narrative in a manner which reflects much of a similar methodology to that used in realist cinema. In understanding slow cinema as a late-realist cinema, de Luca establishes the legacies and

political connections between post war art cinema and these contemporary objects. My own thesis builds on these connections, and aims to expand upon this work, by exploring the ways in which slow cinema has facilitated alternative modes of exhibition and distribution, and by basing my thesis around filmmakers whose work crosses the spaces of gallery and cinema. I look specifically at slow cinema as a mode which draws both from traditions of realist cinema and from experimental traditions of durational cinema and minimalist art.

‘Screening Boredom: The History and Aesthetics of Slow Cinema’ by Emre Çağlayan (2014) identifies three elements claimed to be central to the experience of slow cinema: nostalgia, absurd humour, and boredom. The thesis also informs to a certain extent my own understanding of slow cinema, as it emerges shortly after the work by Flanagan and de Luca, and as such follows on from some of the same trajectories set out in their work, namely establishing slow cinema in relation to international art cinema, and related modes of thought and cinematic trajectories such as realist modes or networks of international film festival and distribution. My own thesis is reliant on Çağlayan's exploration of networks like the festival, but then builds upon this work to hypothesise that slow cinema has moved into the auspices and networks of the contemporary gallery and museum and is interested in exploring the ramifications of this movement. The key concepts which inform how Çağlayan interprets the filmmakers' intentions in using slow aesthetics are as follows: that slow cinema reflects the directors own inherent nostalgia for the cinema of the past; that they create works which engage with absurd humour; and that they engage with the feeling of boredom, in both the experiences of the characters within the films and as a response provoked within audiences of slow cinema. For Çağlayan, slow cinema is a celebration of boredom. Within his thesis boredom is simultaneously characterised as both an element of realist cinema and as a subversive gesture.

As in the thesis by de Luca, Çağlayan places realism as a central element in his understanding of slow cinema. Çağlayan also draws from many European filmmakers and thematic precedents in discussing this subject, as in the section focusing on Absurdism when he draws on Samuel Beckett and Jacques Tati in relation to Tsai Ming-liang. By making these comparisons, Çağlayan bases his central analysis through an art film and world cinema framework, which my own thesis attempts to depart from. For example, my thesis, through a focus on place and space, looks at the role in which a study of space facilitates an analysis of history and how these explorations inform the present. By adopting a distinct focus on local spaces in Chapter One, I explore the risk of Eurocentric perspectives that continually connect slow cinema to European artistic movements and artists, and I counter this by focusing on the geographical spaces being filmed and how meaning is generated through location. By framing much of my thesis around the figure of Kevin Jerome Everson, I bypass the figures and periods read as most directly influential to slow cinema and I show connections with traditions of fine art and popular cinema. In doing so, I seek to expand upon the established trajectory of slow cinema as a contemporary interpretation of post-war art house movements and aesthetic styles, by drawing from experimental traditions and art forms falling outside of cinema.

'The Aesthetics of Duration and Absence in the Post-Trauma Cinema of Lav Diaz' (2015) is the title of a thesis by Nadin Mai. The thesis is centred around questions of national trauma, and aesthetic and formal responses to trauma through minimalist approaches. In doing so, it attempts to move away from a formalist description of slow cinema into a closer engagement with content and the meaning of the aesthetic choices made by slow cinema directors. As such, there is a theoretical methodology which is, amongst the PhD theses that currently address this subject, closest in spirit to mine. Through a focus on the cinema of the

Filipino director Lav Diaz, this thesis is an intervention into both the study of post-trauma in cinema and the growing field of slow cinema studies.

One of the key areas Mai focuses on is the importance of the relationship between the content of the films and their socio-historical context. The thesis therefore reads the work of Lav Diaz as a response to the histories of colonialism and political instability in the islands of Mindanao in the South of the Philippines. The key concept which brings together post-trauma studies and slow cinema studies within this thesis is that the durational aesthetics used by Diaz aims to reflect the concentrationary system of state violence. Concentrationary torture can be described as 'submitting inmates to a prolonged process of psychological disintegration, reduction to bare life and, hence, to becoming a living corpse' (Pollock and Silverman 2014: 11). Mai argues that the psychological torture that the characters in Diaz's work experience is channelled through his method of filming. Mai attempts to demonstrate this first by providing an overview of the aesthetics of trauma cinema in general, where the senses of the audience are overwhelmed through use of fast paced montage, wide angles shots and close ups reflecting the direct effects of torture, and then showing how the post-trauma cinema of Diaz differs from the model I adopt. By focusing on the way that history informs the aesthetics of Lav Diaz, Mai moves beyond locating slow cinema as an extension of European or North American practices. Mai attempts to answer why Diaz uses the methods he does and what the effect of the formal characteristics on the audience is. Whilst the focus on trauma through concentrationary methods of state violence is less relevant to my own study, her emphasis on politics and space is reflected in my analysis of the work of Everson.

Mai establishes a connection between the extreme lengths of Diaz's films, which can stretch to eleven hours, and the way that this endurance can be related to the victims of concentrationary state violence experienced by the on-screen characters. One of the

elements of Mai's thesis which differentiates it from previous texts is the focus on making a link between the aesthetics of slow cinema and the conditions of trauma. This explicit connection is representative of the attempt made by Mai to move away from describing the aesthetics of slow cinema in favour of conceptualising the effect of the cinematic language being used. Despite focusing on Diaz, the emphasis on duration allows elements of Mai's research to be expanded to connect to slow cinema in general, which again is a useful method as it helps Mai to make a connection between durational approaches and national trauma and informs to an extent my own understanding of slow cinema.

Alongside her thesis, Mai has a blog which expands upon her central argument and includes references to a wider range of filmmakers and artists through her posts which are reviews of recent examples of films engaging with slowness alongside other historical examples. The site, entitled 'The Art(s) of Slow Cinema: The Only Site Dedicated to Slow Films', has been running since 2012 and functions as a space for research containing a detailed reading list and filmography. The existence of the blog further underlines the blogosphere as a space for engagement and discussion of slow cinema, alongside 'Unspoken Cinema' and Flanagan's 'Landscape Suicide'.

In the PhD theses by de Luca, Çağlayan and Mai, studies of individual directors are at the centre, and each adopts an auteurist methodology. In my own thesis I also use case studies on individual directors' work and adopt a largely director-led approach. My engagement with Everson sees me recognise him as the primary author and artistic voice in his work, in line with how the concept of the auteur functions across these other pieces of scholarship. I am interested in thinking through the relationship between art cinema, the development of modernist cinema and the spaces where slow cinema sits today, namely the gallery and the contemporary art museum. I am arguing that there has, through slow cinema,

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been an amalgamation between the language of art cinema and the language of artists' film. In doing so I am purposefully trying to present alternative routes that filmmakers such as Everson have used to arrive at durational work. The reason for doing this is to demonstrate an important part of my argument, which is that slow cinema is a style which is not solely defined by art cinema traditions, but instead is demonstrably connected to experimental traditions from outside post-war modernist cinema, and thus has facilitated, and been affected by, changes to exhibition and distribution in this fluid overlapping of categories that we call art cinema and artists' cinema. This allows for a wider, more diverse set of artistic traditions to make up and define the approach which I expand on across my thesis.

Cultures of speed

The initial slow cinema debate in blogs and film criticism was structured around the hypothesis that Hollywood films had become more kinetic and faster, and that slow cinema represented an alternative way of filmmaking. My own thesis is more focused on the intersection between art cinema and experimental cinema, a focus which, outside of Flanagan's thesis, is largely absent from the research and discussions around these films. For example, after the initial debate amongst film critics like Nick James and Dan Kois, other academic responses arose within journals, focusing on broad discussions on how speed functions across popular culture. An academic response to the question of speed and society can be found in a 2016 edition of *Cinema Journal,* devoted to the subject of speed in cinema, which presented five articles analysing, alongside examples of slow cinema, action sequences in films such as *The Bourne Identity* (Doug Liman, USA, 2002) and *Transformers* (Michael Bay, USA, 2007). The purpose of this was to establish how the temporality of action cinema had

developed, focusing specifically on how space is presented through editing and camera angles. The journal's editor Tina Kendell sets out the reasoning and aim of the journal:

> In response to this context of technological and economic speed-up, a set of 'slow' cultural practices have emerged – from slow food and tourism movements to slow media manifestos, slow art and film festivals, and slow technology and computing movements. These cultural practices figure slowness as an emblematic mode of resistance for our time, offering the kind of hope denied by Speed: namely, that it may be possible, after all, to simply pull the hand brake and get off the proverbial bus. (Kendell 2016: 147)

The issue argued that both increased speed in contemporary Hollywood films and the minimalism of slow cinema were examples of filmmakers navigating how to temporalize, through cinema, life in the twenty-first century. The relevance of these themes to my own thesis comes from thinking about how slow cinema forms a response to these larger questions, particularly through questions of technology. Here, the focus and understanding of slow cinema is placed as a mode of art cinema, with examples being drawn from canonical figures of this mode of filmmaking. This is present across articles including 'Still Speed: Cinematic Acceleration, Value, and Execution' by Timothy Corrigan, who refers to figures like Terrence Malick or Kelly Reichardt as representative of slow cinema, or elsewhere, as in 'The Tortoise, the Hare, and the Constitutive Outsiders: Reframing Fast and Slow Cinemas' by Karen Beckman, whose sole example of a film which exemplifies slowness is *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (Chantal Akerman, Belgium, 1975). Both authors articulate how the scholarly attention and critical praise granted to slow cinema neglects the aesthetics, artistry and potential for social commentary offered by Hollywood cinema. For

example, Corrigan's article reflects the interest with speed in contemporary cinema in these terms:

> While the so-called slow cinema of filmmakers like Terrence Malick or Kelly Reichardt represents one attempt to counter a cinematic speed and restore a contemplative vision and its attending values, a counter direction here is to embrace the increasing velocity of film culture in order to establish a more critical or productive relationship with it, one grounded in the efficiency of execution. (Corrigan 2016: 119).

Whilst there is a clear connection made between speed and the digital, what my thesis builds upon in relation to this question is how slow cinema uses digital cameras to create films not previously possible, for example by taking advantage of extended battery life and lower costs. The works of slow cinema which do this are also therefore using what was at the time new technology to continue legacies of art cinema and, in doing so, they establish a connection between the digital and a counter lineage separate from the types of mainstream cinema generally associated with digital filmmaking.

There are, across this dossier entitled 'Speed', examples focused on commercial films, apart that is from 'Slow, Methodical, and Mulled Over: Analog Film Practice in the Age of the Digital' by Kim Knowles, where the author discusses the meaning of celluloid in relation to the practice of artist Tacita Dean, and her large-scale installation FILM (Dean, UK, 2011) created for Tate Modern. Knowles makes the connection between analogue film practice and slowness, and contrasts this with the digital, and its relationship with speed and productivity:

> The relative ease of digital undoing and redoing, duplicating and erasing, which gives rise to spontaneity, is here pitched against the material finitude and unrepeatability of celluloid, which imposes contemplation and foresight. As problematic as this divisive dichotomy might be, it represents a recent attempt to carve out a position of

autonomy for analog practice based on an oppositional temporality. Once the emblematic modernist technology of speed and dynamism, analog film, with its cumbersome mechanical processes and stubborn physical presence, now stands as the signifier of an old order, of times past. (Knowles 2016: 147).

Knowles' contribution to the dossier is useful to my own thesis, not only due to its reference to and engagement with a filmmaker working within the galley, but also as she explores another under-explored subject relating to ideas of slowness, which is determining what the celluloid object means. In the context of the gallery, Knowles goes onto make the following reflection:

In this sense, the countercultural potential of film can be seen to operate on two interconnected levels: first, the use of old technology such as 16mm film emerges as an 'archaic choice', which outwardly rejects the forward drive of capitalist progress and its obsession with the 'relentlessly new'; second, in an era of digital filmmaking, working with celluloid requires the analog artist to enter into a temporal contract with its physical materials that is at odds with modern society's benchmark of speed, efficiency, and instantaneity. (Knowles 2016: 147).

Across my own thesis, I draw from this line of thought, and expand upon it, to see the use of celluloid in the work of figures like Ben Rivers, Albert Serra and Kevin Jerome Everson as an additional engagement with slowness and the ideas raised by slow cinema. Due to the fragility, scarcity and increasing precariousness of celluloid this aspect is less visible in the body of work of slow cinema, yet it remains very much at the heart of how some artists' work embodies and understand slowness, and thus is something which I incorporate into my own understanding of slow cinema.

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The discussion around speed and slowness as a response to the digital in contemporary society is continued in Jaffe's book *Slow Movies: Countering the Cinema of Action* (2014), which frames slow cinema in relation to trends in contemporary digital Hollywood cinema. Later, in *Slow Cinema* (Edinburgh University Press, 2015), editors de Luca and Nuno Barradas Jorge bring together a range of articles exploring areas such as live streaming, ecological filmmaking, and observational documentary, alongside writing by scholars of slow cinema such as name Hwee Lim and Karl Schoonover. The collection sets out to define slow cinema as a space for reflection and contemplation which allows the spectator to disconnect from the distractions of everyday life. Alongside pieces of writing that look directly towards works from the slow canon, the collection aims at expanding understandings of slow cinema beyond a set group of filmmakers and into disparate modes of video culture.

The specific areas the text looks towards result in a study of slowness in contemporary moving image culture as opposed to slow cinema. The distinction being that non-narrative video works such as those by Liu Jiayin, Sharon Lockhart and James Benning, which engage with traditions of structural cinema, are studied under the banner of slow cinema. This position is reflected across my thesis, where my own understanding of slow cinema is to develop a definition through its connections to non-narrative work and films with strong connections to traditions of experimental cinema. Outside of this particular focus, as reflected in articles by Julian Ross and Philippa Lovatt, slow cinema is understood as a cultural moment in relation to which the book attempts to bring together a cross-section of seemingly disconnected forms and media, in order to provide a wider overview of how slowness functions across the media.

As an edited collection, there are several articles which are of use to my thesis, such as 'Temporal Aesthetics of Drifting: Tsai Ming-liang and a Cinema of Slowness' by Song Hwee

Lim, 'Stills and Stillness in Apichatpong Weerasethakul's Cinema' by Glyn Davis, and 'Melancholia: The Long, Slow Cinema of Lav Diaz' by William Brown. Picking up on the themes explored across these texts, I am also interested in placing these discussions into how and why slow cinema emerges when it does and takes on the form it does. Whilst this is not the central focus, it is something which is embedded in my thesis through the question of different traditions of cinema and how slow cinema remains distinctly contemporary. My understanding of slow cinema is that these works are an attempt to respond to the position of cinema and filmmaking in the post-millennial moment, amidst industrial changes to production, distribution, spectatorship, and exhibition informed by the introduction of digital technology into every element of the cinema industry, and that slowness has become a way to subvert conceptions of digital technology and continue a connection to traditions of art cinema. Some of the gaps in the existing literature appear to be in the connection between aesthetic choices and the circulation of the films, and across my thesis I want to bring these two areas more directly together, as for me they determine how slow cinema has progressed over time and how it has both responded to and facilitated changes in the wider industry.

Further Engagements with Slow CInema

Outside of reading slow cinema in relation to the contemporary digital cinema and the aesthetics of post-war art cinema, studies such as Garrett (2012), Schoonover (2012) and Gorfinkel (2012) locate the politics, humanism, and concern with marginal communities, present in traditions of realist cinema (Vojković, 2019), within the work of contemporary filmmakers working with slowness. 'Mythic Time and Slow Time: The Construction of the Viewer in *El violin*' by Victoria L. Garrett takes as its focus *El violin* (Francisco Vargas, Mexico, 2005) and explores the film through the perspective of slow cinema. The intention of the

article is to show how the film presents a temporality which matches the experience of the marginal subjects depicted in the film.

Like Garrett, Karl Schoonover (2012) in his article 'Wastrels of Time: Slow Cinema's Labouring Body, the Political Spectator, and the Queer' also addresses the depiction of marginal subjects' temporality. Schoonover describes slowness as an alternative to capitalist modes of temporality and thus as 'wasted' or unproductive time and calls for this to be recognised as an act of queerness. Schoonover frames the spectatorship of slow cinema as another kind of 'wasted' time through the unproductive non-laboured body. This connection between slowness and queerness is not further explored within my thesis except to highlight that the connection between slowness and marginality is a recurring element within slow cinema. What is further explored is this connection between the aesthetics of temporality and how the audience experiences this prolonged temporal moment.

Elena Gorfinkel's article 'Weariness, Waiting: Enduration and Art Cinema's Tired Bodies' looks at what slowness says about the on-screen representation of the characters' emotional and social existence, highlighting the fatigue and weariness of the bodies depicted in slow cinema. She explores weariness in the bodies of the figures in slow cinema. Her focus is not just visual as it looks at how a temporal space which produces a sensation of 'slowness' is created within the world of the film and as a separate space within the spectatorial experience. Like Mai and Schoonover, Gorfinkel thus presents 'slowness' as an on-screen sensation, which is felt and recreated within the audience.

Garrett, Schoonover, Gorfinkel, de Luca, Flanagan, and Mai, taken as a whole, draw from a mixture of Western and non-Western filmmakers whose subjects occupy many different geographical spaces. Based on these texts, slow cinema can be seen as a body of work focusing on characters from marginal places, or experiencing feelings of marginality, and

creating a temporal experience connoting slowness through the choice of formal language. A temporality of slowness is applied to a range of subjective experiences by characters appearing within slow cinema films so that there is not one particular social group whose experience is presented as 'slow'. Rather, slow cinema presents a range of individuals representing different social groups, nationalities and genders, the result being 'slowness' as an elusive experience, not strictly associated to a particular space, culture or social group. I continue from these works and base my own understanding on a similarly internationalist approach.

To provide an example from an earlier mentioned text, Mai focuses on the landscapes of Mindanao in the Philippines and specifically looks at rural spaces, while Schoonover and Gorfinkel both look at *Wendy and Lucy* (Kelly Reichardt, USA, 2008), a film set in a small town on the outskirts of Portland, Oregon. In their respective articles, Mai, Gorfinkel and Schoonover understand these works through the perspective of slow cinema, and certain common features in Diaz's and Reichardt's specific representations of marginality can be identified. However, the geographical, historical, and emotional conditions of marginality as experienced by the characters in these works differ greatly. In the case of Diaz, marginality is the result of martial law and religious conflicts in Mindinao, whereas the marginality as explored in *Wendy and Lucy* is marked by class and gender and is set against the backdrop of the US housing crisis caused by the 2008 financial crash. Thus, slow cinema can be seen as associating marginality with a temporality of slowness, whether it is emotional, financial, or social. The centrality of space and social critique to the analysis of these films is something my own thesis continues, as my engagement with landscape is structured around its political, cultural, and historical meaning within slow cinema.

The space of the cinema theatre as central to the spectatorial experience of slow cinema has also been explored through existing scholarship. Erik Bordeleau's article, 'Soulful Sedentarity: Tsai Ming-liang at Home at the Museum' (2013) and de Luca's 'Slow Time, Visible Cinema: Duration, Experience, and Spectatorship' (2016) both address the preferred site for the spectatorship of durational and minimalist work. In his article, de Luca notes the importance of the cinema space, whereas Bordeleau looks at the gallery as a natural alternative exhibition space for slow cinema via the work of Tsai Ming-liang. Both articles reflect on the way slow cinema relates to contemporary cinephilia and the decreasing importance of the cinema space, and how through 'slowness' the cinema is mourned. The art gallery is subsequently understood as a space with which to further reflect on the waning relevance of the cinema space. Within the context of my own thesis, the gallery functions as a reference point in the exhibition of films engaging with duration. Everson as a filmmaker, for example, is someone whose work shifts between these spaces depending on the project and its form and structure. As such my thesis picks up on these under-explored elements and expands upon debates of spectatorship as it relates to the exhibition of slow cinema.

Legacies of slow cinema

Coming after an existing body of work aimed at defining slow cinema, my thesis is positioned to be able to focus on what happened to slow cinema after its emergence and conceptualisation, and is concerned with asking, 'What was the legacy of slow cinema?' I intervene in the existing body of work on slow cinema in order to underline both its uniqueness and difference in relation to previous movements and waves in cinema, and to explore how this international focus allows a less Eurocentric body of work, given the lack of a national centre. Picking up on responses to the films alongside their content and exhibition,

I reflect on how slow cinema has been disseminated into film culture, and how it has opened different intersections of understanding contemporary moving image works. In order to answer this question of slow cinema's legacy, my thesis focuses specifically on this relationship between experimental practices and art cinema, formally and in relation to questions of distribution and exhibition.

To better frame slow cinema as emerging from a specific moment in time, I have established a year to mark the occurrence of the phenomenon and have highlighted several key moments in 2014 which reflect a peak in academic attention. The year 2002 marks the first use of slow cinema as a phrase and as such it functions as a useful symbolic beginning, one which is generally accepted within writing by Flanagan (2008), Çağlayan (2014) and Mai (2014). At the other end, I have identified the year 2014 as a symbolic high point of slow cinema, marked by the institutional recognition offered by sustained academic research on the subject, alongside the cultural recognition afforded by a series of high-profile festivals giving awards to filmmakers associated with slow cinema, many of whom had been working in the spirit of slow cinema for a significant time.

There were three book-length studies published on slow cinema in 2014: *Slow Movies: Countering the Cinema of Action* (2014) by Ira Jaffe; *Slow Cinema: Traditions in World Cinema* (2014) edited by Tiago de Luca and Nuno Barradas Jorge; and *Tsai Ming-liang and a Cinema of Slowness* (2014) by Song Hwee Lim. These texts reflect the culmination of slow cinema studies within the academy. In addition, they show a significant period having passed between the original emergence of such trends and styles within the international festival circuit, and the amount of time needed to notice and develop a critical response. Such academic accounts, particularly book-length studies, will often appear a significant amount of time after the emergence of a style or movement. Their publication therefore represents

how slow cinema has entered the academy and marks this distance between the emergence of a cinematic movement and its transformation into an object of critical study and historical evaluation. My thesis, rather than tracing the emergence of said style, is instead more interested in constructing a narrative which inserts experimental traditions into the origin of slow cinema and argues that these experimental approaches, alongside the legacies of art cinema, have led to an increased interaction between art cinema and artist film, both in the aesthetic and formal sense, and also in relation to distribution and exhibition practices.

Film	Director	Festival	Prize
Winter Sleep	Nuri Bilge Ceylan	Cannes	Palme d'Or
Jauja	Lisandro Alonso	Cannes	FIPRESCI Prize
A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence	Roy Andersson	Venice	Golden Lion
From What Is Before	Lav Diaz	Locarno	Golden Leopard
Father and Sons	Wang Bing	Doclisboa	Best International Feature-Length Film

Figure 6 International Prizes awarded to Slow Cinema in 2014

The second moment I use to signal an approximate end of slow cinema is represented by the international prizes awarded at film festivals to directors closely associated with the notion of slow cinema. Figure 6 demonstrates that Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Roy Andersson, Lav Diaz, Lisandro Alonso and Wang Bing all won prizes at festivals in 2014. The awards given to these filmmakers mark a high point of the critical praise and cultural recognition received by slow cinema. Whilst there have been multiple films which have received major awards on the international festival circuit, most notably *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* (Apichatpong, Thailand, 2010), which won the 2010 Palme d'Or at Cannes, the multiple

awards being won almost a decade after the emergence of the style in a single year becomes an acknowledgement of the significance of slow cinema in the international festival circuit. I refer here to this success as marking an end point because the high-profile praise is also the culmination of a decade-long, loose body of work which, whilst having a strong presence within the international festival circuit, had not previously received such a widespread combination of awards. The visibility of a specific formal method reflects both the dominance of said style, but also, as with any trend, such praise and visibility granted by the winning of high-profile prizes can precipitate a critical backlash due to over-exposure and the desire of festival audiences and curators to identify new trends and emerging works and approaches.

Outline of chapters

In my thesis I focus on two films by the filmmaker and artist Kevin Jerome Everson, *Park Lanes* (USA, 2015) and *Tonsler Park* (USA, 2017). Alongside Everson I engage with other examples of slow cinema, in order to demonstrate trends and correlation within films and filmmakers adopting this style, such as Pedro Costa, Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Lav Diaz. My thesis understands slow cinema as a distinctly contemporary moment in cinema linked to the start of the century, one that is responding to aesthetic and material questions of film whilst also, through exhibition, both demanding and facilitating alternative methods of distribution and film curation. The corpus which forms the basis of my study has been constructed through, in the first instance, engaging with filmmakers already closely connected with slow cinema. Then, in the second instance, through Kevin Jerome Everson, I have selected an artist who exists in a different network to that of Costa, Diaz and Weerasethakul. As such, his inclusion as part of my corpus represents my own attempt to build towards a hypothesis on the legacy and impact of slow cinema.

My opening chapter sets out to introduce the importance of the role of landscape to my understanding of slow cinema. To illustrate this I use three filmmakers, Pedro Costa, Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Lav Diaz, with their work functioning as examples of how site functions within slow cinema and provide a close reading of the visual approaches of each director focusing on their use of slowness and its effects and meanings. This initial chapter functions as a bridge, drawing from existing definitions of slow cinema to articulate and provide examples of how each filmmaker uses duration and minimalism within their work. To frame this analysis, I structure my discussion around three formal elements from the films themselves: stillness, silence, and slowness.

My next chapter departs from existing notions of slow cinema to examine the work of Kevin Jerome Everson. Through this chapter, I use the durational work of Everson to answer the following question: 'How do the aesthetics of slow cinema present alternative ways of engaging with landscape?' This chapter is comprised of three case studies of feature films by Everson, *Park Lanes*, *Quality Control* and *Tonsler Park.* In addition to the focus on landscape, this section will address three distinct areas. First, I will establish both the aesthetic correlation between my case studies and further examples of slow cinema. Secondly, I will analyse how the specificities of each location are presented through the focus on minutiae in both the physical space and the ways that history and cultural legacy are infused into these locations through each film. Thirdly, this section aims to move away from definitions of slow cinema in relation to cinematic realism. In order to establish this separation, I will focus on the analysis of space in my chosen case studies.

The third chapter of my thesis is made up of three case studies looking at the distribution and exhibition of slow cinema. I draw from filmmakers Kevin Jerome Everson, Lav Diaz and Apichatpong Weerasethakul as case studies in this section. Each filmmaker I turn to

has had a distinctly different method of exhibiting their work, and by focusing on this element of slow cinema I address the question: 'How has the style of slow cinema presented alternative modes of exhibiting film?' The case studies in this section look at how slow cinema prompts an interaction with the space of the gallery. The movement between the space of the gallery and the cinema is common throughout the careers of the filmmakers who make up my case study.

The thesis concludes with an examination of slow cinema as a moment in cinema that has now disseminated into distinctly different styles. I look at how some of the filmmakers associated with slow cinema have moved into different directions. In keeping with the trajectory and narrative of slow cinema which structures this thesis, the conclusion consolidates my reading of how slow cinema as a moment and a style has led to the creation of a mode of cinema that falls outside of modernist art cinema.

By responding to slow cinema as a style attached to a particular moment in time, the conclusion reflects on the trajectory of slow cinema and the impact the films have had on contemporary cinema. Informed by the case studies in previous chapters, this section concludes by summarising the over-arching narrative of this thesis which is to map the development of slow cinema from the initial journalistic trend into a larger narrative of how the art gallery participates in exhibiting, distributing and curating non-commercial film.

Chapter One: Silence, Stillness, and Slowness

In this chapter I will closely examine the work of three directors strongly associated with slow cinema, in order to clearly define and identify the major aesthetic and formal traits of the style. The filmmakers I will be focusing on are Pedro Costa, Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Lav Diaz. Through a close textual analysis of work by these directors, I will focus on their use of silence, stillness and slowness, discussing how these elements relate to the film's narrative, having previously identified these traits as being central to my understanding of slow cinema. Whilst slow cinema is not limited to the work of these three directors, by analysing a work from each, I will establish a clear sense of the importance of each stylistic element to a collective understanding of this larger body of work. Silence, stillness and slowness are three of the dominant elements which feature within slow cinema and repeatedly appear across films associated with this style. In order to illuminate how they function, I will align each formal trait with one of the three directors, and closely analyse how each relates to the structure of their cinema.

This chapter seeks to introduce the formal, thematic and narrative styles characteristics of slow cinema, as I move from the discussion of works commonly understood under the rubric of this style, to discussion in the following chapter of Kevin Jerome Everson, an artist less closely connected with the idea of slow cinema. Using three distinct categories, this chapter will provide a clear and concise set of examples of why silence, stillness and slowness are the key characteristics of slow cinema, and the usefulness of focusing on such elements, in relation to this wider body of work.

In his book on the cinema of Tsai Ming-liang, Song Hwee Lim divides his study into four categories: Slowness, Signature, Stillness and Silence. The use of slowness, stillness and silence in my own study is somewhat of a coincidence, yet it points to the prevalence of

these formal and thematic elements when identifying slow cinema. In this chapter, I use some of the same categories but expand beyond Tsai in order to illuminate how slow cinema functions formally and thematically across the work of a variety of filmmakers. My selection points to the internationality of this style and alludes to how the films navigate questions of politics, culture and history.

The silences of Pedro Costa

In this section I will examine the role silence plays in Pedro Costa's *Colossal Youth* (Portugal, 2006) through a textual analysis of the film. In doing so, I will underline the way in which silence functions across slow cinema. My reference to silence here includes instances of the complete absence of any sound; the emphasis placed on elements typically considered to be background parts of a film's soundscape; and the absence of a score, discernible dialogue and non-diegetic music.

Pedro Costa's *Colossal Youth* is a film marked by a soundtrack which emphasises silence. The film makes use of the sounds of the location, a dilapidated housing complex on the margins of Lisbon called Fontainhas. The use of sound in the film is reflective of an attempt by the director to capture the atmosphere of life within the urban community of Fontainhas and to continue his own departure from working with large budget, high-scale productions as he had done in earlier films such as *Casa de Lava* (Portugal, 1994) and *Ossos* (Portugal, 1997). This departure is in part facilitated by what was, at the time, new digital filmmaking technology, allowing for a smaller film crew which subsequently enabled Costa to establish a closer engagement with the way of life in Fontainhas.

Costa shot the film exclusively using the Panasonic DVX100, a model of Mini-DV camera. The digital camera being used in this instance is reflective of the changes to cinema

culture occurring at the turn of century understood as the 'digital turn'. Not only has the introduction of the digital camera like the models used by Costa led to economic changes, it has also signalled an opportunity to use the scale and the pictorial capabilities of the technology to develop works which are only made possible by digital filmmaking. *Colossal Youth,* therefore, is a film marked by the technology of the moment at which it was made. Analysing the way in which Costa develops the soundscape of the film is reflective of this impact.

Though at the time the camera was regarded as an important development in filmmaking technology, it was essentially a consumer product priced to ensure that it could be sold within the home market as opposed to strictly within the film and television industry. Despite being a consumer product, it remained popular within independent filmmaking communities, being used to shoot such low budget films such as *The Puffy Chair* (Mark Dupplas, USA, 2005) and documentaries like *Murderball* (Henry Alex Rubin and Dana Adam Shapiro, USA, 2005) and *Iraq in Fragments* (James Longley, USA, 2006). The popularity of the model for such productions was not only the modest price of the camera but also the low-cost of Mini-DV tapes and the small size and portability of the object. This had the following effects for Costa and his shooting process.

Firstly, the camera's scale ensured that Costa was able to develop a method which would allow him to enter the private spaces of his subjects with minimal disruption. Across the course of filming, Costa would regularly visit the residents of Fontainhas, experiencing and then recording their routines, filming extended conversations and the interactions between the members of the community. Costa would then use the filmed material to develop sequences which were a mixture of improvisations and scripts based on what he had filmed and observed visiting Fontainhas. The model's small scale assisted this process

by offering a more intimate interaction between the filmmaking tools and the subjects, as well as allowing him to film in what were often cramped, badly lit and congested spaces.

Secondly, alongside benefiting from removing the barriers represented by a traditional film crew and production tools, Costa was able to accumulate large amounts of filmed material from his interactions with residents, captured on the Mini-DV tapes. The act of visiting and filming in Fontainhas was a long process, where Costa shot over a period of fifteen months and amassed over 320 hours of footage (Quant, 2006), an impossible figure were he using celluloid film.

The technical specifications of the digital camera assist the importance of silence to Costa's approach. To create or recreate a recurring pattern of daily life on screen, there is a clear sense – present in both the philosophy of the film and the mode of production – of the need to immerse the filmmaking crew into the intimate lifestyle of the residents of Fontainhas. Whilst a certain impossibility remains for an internationally renowned filmmaker to cross the social boundaries and submerge himself into an environment populated by the working poor, drug addicts and low waged migrants, Costa's method of documenting the quotidian with his digital camera, across a period of fifteen months in collaboration with those living in these spaces, has allowed him to better understand and translate the lived experience onto the screen. Silence becomes a recurring formal trait, which emerges out of the extended periods of time spent shooting and rehearsing.

The image of Fontainhas is introduced in the opening sequence of the film. The first sounds heard on the soundtrack are the general murmur from a dilapidated housing complex. Dripping water from an unspecified source competes with indiscernible distant conversations in the background. Dominating the soundtrack is the faint crashing of a series of wooden objects being thrown out of a second story window. This static take lasts for fifty-

two seconds and as the film's first shot it instantly establishes the dark colours which will engulf the remainder of the film and the images of debris and destruction which characterise the state of the housing complex of Fontainhas.

In this opening scene, the soundtrack complements the portrayal of the location and emphasises the sparseness of the housing complex. Seemingly falling apart and crumbling, the building in this scene is devoid of any human presence, and the sounds we hear complement this by offering unidentifiable sounds, apparently coming from off-screen. The scene is filmed with limited light and the use of the Mini-DV camera results in an image seeped in darkness, a recurring trait maintained across the film. The conditions of Fontainhas are cramped and restricted and these conditions are emphasised by the films aspect ratio of 1.33:1, which gives the frame a feeling of constraint in comparison to more commonly used ratios of 1.85:1 and 2.39:1, which provide a wider more rectangular frame connoting space and giving the subjects more freedom.

The soundtrack contributes to the visuals of sparseness and emptiness, strengthening the mood of the film. By not having a score and refraining from using both diegetic and non-diegetic music, attention is drawn to other, normally more marginal elements of the film's soundscape. The way in which audio functions in this opening scene highlights how the soundtrack is not used to advance the diegesis of the film.

Silence is used as part of a recurring approach to the construction of sequences shot in the exterior spaces of the housing complex. Again, the silence is not a complete absence of sound, but instead an absence of discernible dialogue and verbal communication. Across several scenes we witness one of the elderly residents, Ventura, traversing by foot the housing complex and visiting friends. In these scenes, Ventura is seen making his way across the dilapidated sites, and what can be heard on the soundtrack is a combination of the

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noises of the building sites, reflecting the presence of the construction workers who are actively in the process of knocking down the estate. Alongside these sounds are the continued presence of voices from children playing and arguments between adults. Whilst fragments of these conversations can be heard, they are almost inaudible, and their content is indistinguishable. The voices are faint amidst the sound of drills and work tools, yet the presence of these competing soundscapes creates a contrast between the continued demolition and the residents, offering a reminder that people continue to live on these premises despite the ongoing destruction of their homes.

Whilst the film does frequently show the exteriors of both the dilapidated housing estate and the new apartments which some residents are being moved into, a larger section of the film takes part within the interiors of buildings. Costa films Ventura's interactions with current and previous neighbours, and his engagements with his own memories and reflections on his past. Within these interior scenes silence is also a recurring element. In one scene, Ventura has gone to visit Vanda Duerte, a young woman who had previously lived in the same estate but had since been relocated into newer buildings across town.

Ventura visits her repeatedly across the course of the film, but this particular scene encapsulates how sound functions within the sequences shot in interiors. Within the newer buildings, in contrast to the ones Ventura is currently living in, there are far fewer abrasive sounds being heard. There are no construction crews, the sounds of arguing and children playing loudly are absent. In this scene, which serves to underline the contrast, the sound of a small bird can be heard tweeting. Within the scene, for a period which last for two minutes and thirty-seven seconds, Ventura is sitting with Vanda and her partner, and they sit without speaking for almost the entire scene. The first word is spoken almost two minutes into the scene, when Ventura says, 'I'm hot', and leaves the apartment. The sounds in this scene

establish a sense of Ventura's experience of temporality, through the mundanity and banality of the interactions. The sequence offers a contrast between the calmness of this space and the extreme destruction and urban decay of his existing home.

In a later scene, Ventura goes to visit Vanda and spends the sequence seemingly asleep. Again, there is no communication. The scene lasts for four minutes and forty seconds, and across this period, Ventura is silent for its entirety. Whilst he sleeps, Vanda is in the same room watching television, with the sound of the programme she is watching audible throughout. Vanda, seemingly aware that Ventura is asleep, briefly talks about her desire to stop mourning for her sister Zita and to go and visit her grave. This gesture comes across as confessional and cathartic. That Vanda says this whilst Ventura is asleep, as opposed to discussing it when he is awake, suggests that she is more comfortable communicating her intimate thoughts when Ventura is unable to listen or respond. Once he awakes, there are almost two more minutes where Vanda and Ventura are in silence, except for Vanda commenting on Ventura's non-matching socks. Silence here is not just a formal device, but it also becomes a tool for the audience to reflect on the thoughts, motivations and emotions of both Ventura and Vanda. That both are content to be in one another's company and not speak, underlines the role of silence as offering the potential for comfort and refuge. Whilst Ventura's visits to Vanda are framed in such a way, this scene also suggests that his presence has a similarly, calming effect on Vanda.

Silence in these interior sequences can be seen as establishing a sense of the everyday and quotidian, along with the fragmented dialogue, complementing this aesthetic of naturalism. This recurs across other instances of slow cinema, for example in the cinema of British director Joanna Hogg, where silence functions to gesture towards tensions

between characters. In her film *Archipelago* (Hogg, UK, 2010), Hogg use silence to punctuate dialogue, resulting in prolonged awkward pauses between family members. In his article on Hogg entitled, 'The Films of Joanna Hogg: New British Realism and Class', David Forrest describes how silence functions in the following terms:

> The conspicuous silence and the static nature of the framing draws the viewer towards a more contemplative experience of the narrative as it functions and exists within the frame, as attention moves towards gesture and interaction, or the lack thereof. (Forrest 2014: 74).

Within *Colossal Youth* there is a similar occurrence, which can be seen through the interactions between Ventura and Vanda. Where Forrest's analysis of *Archipelago* notes how silence frustrates the flow of dialogue and halts any narrative progression generated by conversation between characters, *Colossal Youth* uses silence in a similar way, drawing attention to the subject's body language and gestures within the urban interiors of Fontainhas.

In exploring the role of silence in post-war European cinema, Des O'Rawe argues that 'within the cinema of such directors, rediscovering the spectrum of silence assisted in the creation of new aesthetic modalities, new ways of configuring alienation and fragmentation, absence and the asynchronicities of Being' (2006: 403). Here O'Rawe is interested in the connection between silence and the depiction of sensations of estrangement. In his article O'Rawe cites numerous works such as *La notte* (Antonioni, Italy, 1961), *The Silence* (Ingmar Bergman, 1963, Sweden), *Gertrud* (Carl Theodor Dreyer, Denmark, 1964) and *Vivre sa vie* (Jean-Luc Godard, France, 1962). He uses these works to support his central argument that silence is linked to an aesthetic response to the politics of the period, and how these works

reflect a connection through silence to early non-sound cinema. O'Rawe claims that for directors such as Godard, Dreyer, Bergman and Antonioni, silence was a factor in establishing an artistic response to the social and political upheaval of the 1960s.

Noel Burch, in *Theory of Film Practice* (1981), continues this examination of silences, and explores how a number of European filmmakers from the 1960s such as Robert Bresson, Agnès Varda, alongside Kenji Mizoguchi (*The Crucified Lovers*, Japan, 1954), had 'succeeded in making a subtle yet basic distinction between the different "colours" of silence (a complete dead space on the sound track, studio silence, silence in the country, and so forth), thus glimpsing some of the structural roles such silences can play' (1981: 99). Focusing on the same period of modernist cinema, O'Rawe argues that the presence of silence in these works was a part of an attempt to interrupt narrative coherence and a reflection on the role sound plays in cinema (2006: 405).

With slow cinema, silence adds a sense of naturalism whilst circumventing traditional structure and film form. The relationship between slow cinema and realism can be understood in part through the role of silence. Slow cinema, in its formal language, can be seen, in one sense, to continue the traditions of realism, and yet, in a manner which reflects how both Burch and O'Rawe describe silence, it also extends and develops these same traditions and, in doing so, creates a distinctively contemporary extension of these modes. Costa, for example, develops such a distinctiveness through his use of the Mini-DV which results in an aesthetic approach which is defined by its use of modern image capturing technology. The distinctiveness can be seen in the way that Costa depicts Ventura's interactions with Vanda, and through Forrest's account of conversations in Joanna Hogg's *Archipelago*. The presence of silence within a sequence where the audience expects some dialogue between characters can result in drawing the audience's attention to the formal

device of sound within cinema. What Burch refers to as the structural role of silence underlines the tendency of slow cinema's use of silence to be read as a reflective gesture on the filmmaking process. Costa's silence can be seen as performing such a gesture by disrupting narrative development as well as the way in which his film interrupts temporalities.

For example, Costa uses silence in one sense to reflect the realities of the conditions and life experiences of migrants and non-employed people living on the margins of Lisbon in a specific temporal and historical period. It is also a conflation of different temporalities linked to the site of Fontainhas and a wider engagement with post-colonialism in Portugal, becoming a way to conceptualise not simply a realist engagement with the contemporary, but, through space, to realise a meeting between past and present. Costa purposefully seeks to depart from the current time he is filming, in order to articulate a concept, through the figure of Ventura, of how history impacts on the experiential condition of Lisbon's migrant communities, particularly those from Portugal's former colonies such as Cape Verde, Angola, São Tomé and Príncipe. Whilst the aforementioned scene invites the viewer into a soundscape of Fontainhas in the present – the sounds of multiple voices, crashes of furniture creating a pile of broken debris – Costa departs from this to complicate temporalities, and invoke the presence of the past in the present.

In this opening scene, Costa's concerns with the theme of alienation become apparent. For example, Costa focuses on a community made up of people on low-income, the unemployed, drug-addicts and migrants, and this interest in the socially, politically and financially marginalised correlates with both Gorfinkel's description of the tired bodies of realist cinema and Schoonover's description of wastrels and non-labour. Costa's approach here can again be understood wIthin a recognisable tradition of realist 70's cinema referred

to by both Gorfinkel and Schoonover within the work of filmmakers such as Tsai Ming-liang, Agnès Varda, Lynne Ramsay and Michelangelo Antonioni. However, Costa's cinema is developed through long-form collaborations within existing communities. These extended periods of Costa documenting the lives of his collaborators, then rehearsing and developing sequences which would then become scenes in his film, are examples of Costa drawing from realist production methods by embarking on a process which strips away as many features of typical film production as possible, and by taking these formal traits and pushing them towards the boundaries of a realist stylistic approach. Outside of this direct engagement with the conditions of the present day, Costa's soundtrack repeatedly merges past and present throughout the film, and I will now turn to two distinct examples which are structured around Fontainhas resident Ventura.

One scene which demonstrates this comes as Ventura is visiting an acquaintance for a meal. The sequence lasts for two minutes and seventeen seconds, in a single unbroken shot. The scene is largely silent as the two men refrain from speaking to each other. When they do speak, Ventura reminds the man of how he used to look after him as a child and reflects on his childhood. As they interact the sounds of murmuring and competing voices can be heard, though these are largely impossible to decipher. Through his reminiscing, Ventura is framed as being deeply connected and concerned with the past. His presence in the film is an example of the coming together of past and present as Ventura represents the migrant communities who had left former Portuguese colonies.

In a later scene, Ventura, as part of a journey he makes across the city, visits the Gulbenkian Museum, whose construction he had worked on as a labourer. Ventura's interaction with the museum is split across three separate interior shots which last for three minutes and ten seconds. In the sequence Ventura is attempting to navigate the museum,

but he is repeatedly ushered out by the museum attendant. In comparison with the sections shot in Fontainhas, the museum scenes take place devoid of the constant stream of conversations and voices. As Ventura looks upon the museum all that is heard is his breathing and the pacing of the museum attendant.

Figure 7 Colossal Youth

In these two short scenes Ventura's interactions with space and individuals are characterised by silences which allude to his past experiences. In both scenes Ventura is actively engaged with his past through reminiscing with his neighbour and visiting a building that he had helped construct. Ventura at times appears with a bandage on his head (Figure 7), in reference to an injury suffered on a construction site. His injury is the result of an accident which happened decades earlier, yet he wears it in the present, as an old man, creating a visual example of two temporalities being at play. Ventura's presence as a migrant from one of Portugal's former colonies, whose residence has become a dilapidated construction site, is an account of the alternative experiences of the Carnation Revolution. The image of armed forces walking through the streets with red carnations in their gun barrels has become an iconic image of a peaceful popular uprising, but the presence of

Ventura speaks to the differing experiences of poverty-stricken migrant communities and their perspectives on the night of the revolution itself, and its aftermath, in relation to their own political and social situations. Costa recounts his own realisation of the dramatic differences between his memory and that of Ventura's in an online interview:

> I realized that April 25th, which for me was an enthusiasm, had been for Ventura a nightmare. He arrives to Portugal in 1972, finds well-paid work, gets a contract. Thinks that he is going to escape. Afterwards comes the Revolution and he tells me the secret history of the Cape Verdean immigrants in Lisbon after April 25th, the history that nobody has yet told. They had a lot of fear of being expelled or of ending up in prison. They barricaded themselves. At that time, I was in the street, I was an adolescent. During shooting, we found an album of pictures of the demonstrations of May 1st with thousands of people celebrating, and it's incredible: you don't see one black person. Where were they? Ventura told me that they were all together, paralyzed by fear, hidden in the Jardim da Estrela, afraid for the future. He told me that the military police, in full euphoria, went off at night to the shantytowns to 'hunt blacks'. It seems that they tied them to the trees to amuse themselves. (McDougall 2007)

Costa's account of this conversation with Ventura does not find its way into the narrative of *Colossal Youth,* nor is Ventura's description even alluded to. The perspective provided by Ventura is instead explored via silences, which suggest the stories of people from Portugal's former colonies not being inserted into official accounts of historic events, such as the Carnation Revolution, and underline the double marginalisation of the Portugal's African migrants, marginalised in terms of their economic and social statues, and marginalised in terms of their narratives being excluded from national histories.

Silence as a mode of symbolising marginalisation both in the present and the past recurs across a number of films linked to slow cinema, forming a series of works which, when exploring the experiences of marginalised communities, draw attention to the interconnectedness of past traumas in the present. In the example of *Colossal Youth*, particularly through the figure of Ventura, Portugal's colonial history is channelled, and the film alludes to the continuation of racialised mistreatment, through conditions of urban poverty. In slow cinema, silence can be seen as an attempt to explore a sense of the everyday (as in realist works), but also to create a dialogue between conditions and experiences of inequality and how they are experienced through the past and present. The film's fluid movement between past and present, as reflected through Ventura, avoids using scenes read as a flashback and underlines how historical trauma informs present spaces, in this instance recalling the work of Mai and her engagements with Diaz and the Philippines.

Outside of Costa's work, this is a recurring point of reference in slow cinema. In the work of Lav Diaz and Apichatpong Weerasethakul, for example, there are recurring themes of the impact of state violence within the Philippines and Thailand respectively. In the work of both directors, temporality is fluid, which enables them to address historical events of violent suppressions and to explore the way in which these have led to collective traumatic memories either excluded from official national historical accounts, or underrepresented. Silence is used to explore these perspectives. For example, in works such as *Death in the Land of the Encantos* (2007, Philippines) and *Florentina Hubaldo, CTE* (2012, Philippines), Diaz explores the effects of colonial oppression in the Philippines. Across both films he prepares scenes that take place in complete silence, which has the effect of creating a sense of distance and complicates a clear reading on the part of the audience, alluding to the gaps in historical accounts of these histories of colonialism and using silence as a metaphor for

the invisibility of internal trauma. Similarly, Apichatpong has regularly taken the subject of anti-communist state violence which took place in North-Eastern Thailand in the 1970s as themes for his films. In his work he uses memories as a way to explore the effects of these instances of state violence, and again silence is used repeatedly. In two works, *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* (2010, Thailand) and *Cemetery of Splendour* (2015, Thailand), Apichatpong uses the images of sleeping soldiers and films their bodies as they lie motionless. In these scenes the soldiers are unable to communicate, and the film's soundtrack features the light humming of machines and the atmospheric sounds of the jungle. Their silences speak to their experiences of having committed violent acts on behalf of their respective governments, and their state of being asleep alludes to the propensity of dreams as a vehicle for exploring trauma and guilt not possible in consciousness. Whereas Diaz uses instances of complete silence, Apichatpong's soundtracks are, like Costa's, instead populated by quiet sounds which enhance sensations of non-action and stillness. There remains a presence of dialogue and environmental sounds whilst retaining a sensation of silence through the absence of a score or the absence of dialogue or a voiceover used to develop diegesis.

Within slow cinema, silence functions in a number of different ways. Formally silence can occur as ambience, as a way of punctuating dialogue and as a self-reflective gesture. In addition to these types of silence, it can also function as a device with which to reflect on communities whose voices have been suppressed. Across these uses of silence, there exists a wider sense of a dialogue between silence as a realist gesture and silence as being a more conceptual structural position. The way in which silence exists in these disparate elements becomes a distinctive element of slow cinema and reflects this tension between realism and something more experimental and disruptive.

Silence in Costa's cinema, as exemplified by *Colossal Youth*, is one element of a series of formal practices, such as stillness and slowness, which interrelate with one another to establish and explore subjects of marginalisation and post-colonialism in Lisbon. The use of such formal choices informs my understanding of slow cinema, as being a style which through the adoption of minimalism and duration explore the historical, cultural and political conditions of space, characterised by a complication of traditional modes of cinematic realism.

The stillness of Apichatpong Weerasethakul

A second key formal characteristic of slow cinema is stillness. Here stillness both functions as a choice of form and creates a sensation of stasis. As a formal trait, stillness occurs through the lack of movement of the camera, creating a single static image. These are not single, isolated shots but instead are used frequently, resulting in a strong sensation of the camera's prolonged stillness that has the effect of establishing a sense of inertia. Such a recurring preference for the still camera also has other non-formal consequences effecting both the narrative and contributing to the subject or theme of the film.

The stillness of the camera, as argued by Lim (2014) is traditionally seen as enhancing realism in cinema by not drawing attention to the presence of the director in the way that techniques involving movement such as pans or tracking shots would do. It can, however, also function as a breach which can undermine the realist tendency. In this section, using the work of Apichatpong Weerasethakul, I explore how in slow cinema the prolonged static camera, rather than connoting realism, becomes an element which formally and thematically breaks it.

The static camera creates a sense of stillness in a number of ways. It emphasizes the feelings of stillness one can experience as an audience member of these films. It can also enhance the feeling of contemplation, as when the camera does not move the viewer's position is locked and limited to what the camera has fixed in its gaze. The static camera can also dictate the kind of shot that is used, with the extreme long shots being preferred for their ability to capture the subject in its entirety and focus on the size of the human subject in relationship to its environment. Often there are multiple effects at play in a single given scene or sequence, resulting in a variety of spectatorial responses.

As shown in the initial debate in slow cinema by film critics such as Kois, James and Dargis, the commitment to extended duration has often been read as an implied challenge to the audience to see how much they can endure, particularly with works with running times over four hours. The discussion of slow cinema in such terms reflects a failure to position these works not just as art-house cinema, but also within experimental traditions, where duration is not used to purposefully frustrate and punish audiences, but instead to explore conditions of national trauma, history and marginality, as in for example Masao Adachi's *AKA Serial Killer* (Japan, 1975) or James Benning's early film, *Landscape Suicide* (USA, 1986) Within the films I am looking at my corpus, I have established that there are a variety of ways the static camera is used, and it is a technique some directors use more than others; however, it is one of the defining traits of slow cinema, and when it is used, there are often engagements with traditions of experimental and non-narrative cinema.

The static camera brings together foreground and background, connecting characters to their environment. One filmmaker who uses this throughout his work is the Thai director Apichatpong Weerasthakul. The interaction between the individual and the space is integral to slow cinema, and the use of the static camera tends to lead to a

topographically coherent visualisation of space. One example of this can be seen in *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives,* where the director explores the repercussions and trauma emanating from state violence occurring in the 1970s in North-Eastern Thailand, specifically an area called Issan.

In one of the film's key scenes, Uncle Boonmee, an ageing former soldier dying from a failing kidney, his sister-in-law and carer Jen, along with his nephew Tong, are all having dinner in a garden dining area when they are visited by two spirits. One is the ghost of Boonmee's wife Huay and the second is a man covered in hair who identifies himself as Boonmee's long lost son Boonsong. Across a series of shots, Apichatpong's camera remains still and has each of the characters framed in such a way that captures the rural background and elements of the interior of their house. The way in which the natural space encroaches on the image has two effects. In the first instance, the image reflects how film is concerned with space, politics and history through landscape. The natural exterior is framed centrally and encloses the interactions of the characters across each of the shots in this sequence. Secondly, the position of the rural space reflects a wider concern about how the space of the wilderness facilitates an interaction between humans and nature. One of the ghosts has emerged directly from the jungle and is a further example of the way in which Apichatpong explores the dualism between the mythology and reality. Figure 8 comes from the sequence in question, demonstrating the way in which natural space dominates the image. Despite being in the background of the frame, the jungle encroaches on the image. This is reflected by the position of the bushes which remain visible throughout the scene and are enhanced by the placement of the lamp, which is also illuminating the figures sitting at the table. The manner in which the leaves impinge upon the image in Figure 8 underlines the dominance of the rural space.

Figure 1 Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives

Apichatpong also incorporates stasis as an element of the narrative, presenting the rural life of Boonmee as one defined by a non-changing routine. In one extended sequence, Boonmee shows his sister-in-law Jen around the farm. The sequence is filmed exclusively using a still camera. The environment of the farm is one which is presented as calm and relaxed. Apichatpong's static camera emphasises the everydayness of Boonmee's life on the farm, highlighting the reality and mundanity of his life. In one sense, this contrasts with the mythical creatures we have encountered previously. By filming the normality of the farm in the same manner that he films the animal spirits, Apichatpong positions both as elements of a cultural experience related to the space of rural North-Eastern Thailand. In doing so, he establishes a connection between the real and the spiritual. Having established a realist aesthetic, through his presentation of the farm, Apichatpong uses the same modes of formal realism to present the actions occurring later in the film that are more linked to the realm of the mythological. For example, in one of the film's penultimate scenes, taking place after Uncle Boonmee has passed away, Tang, who is a Buddhist monk, is preparing to go out for

a meal with Jen. They meet in a hotel room and as Tang emerges from a shower, he encounters an image of himself and Jen sitting down watching television. The image is shot with a static camera, and the versions of both Tang and Jen are present within the frame. In addition to the non-moving camera, there is a lack of movement in front of the camera as one version of Tang and Jen sit motionlessly watching television, whilst the other version of Tang and Jen slowly exit the room. Apichatpong in this sequence has again used a setting of domesticity within which to place a spiritual encounter. In this instance, Apichatpong juxtaposes the normality of a domestic space, enhanced by the non-moving camera, with the seemingly impossible image of the doubling of two characters. The domestic setting and static camera thus result in the normalising of the encounter, suggesting that the ability for spatial temporal restrictions to be broken is part of an everyday cultural belief.

A domestic setting is also used in the scene where Boonmee encounters the Monkey spirit and the apparition of his ex-wife. In this earlier scene, the appearances occur in Boonmee's garden as the family are having dinner. The setting of the interactions between Boonmee's family, the doubles and the two apparitions, are domestic sites, which suggests that for Apichatpong the spiritual and everyday occupy the same space. Whilst not specifically engaging with a direct belief or myth, Apichatpong represents the general belief in the existence of spirits, the possibilities of reincarnation and the blending of temporalities and spatial dimensions.

Stillness is also used to suggest the impact of the past upon the present. In a scene which takes place in the last third of the film, Uncle Boonmee has ventured into a cave with Jen as he prepares for his final moments. In this scene Boonmee articulates his belief that he was born in this cave and at this point the film cuts away from him and a sequence begins where ten still photographs fill the screen. The images which are used are of a series of

soldiers and local boys. Some of the images feature soldiers posing with a man wearing a monkey suit, some feature boys in everyday clothes posing with a camera. As the images fill the screen, Boonmee recounts a dream:

> Last night, I dreamt of the future. I arrived there in a sort of time machine. An authority capable of making anybody disappear ruled the future city. When the authorities found 'past people', they shone a light on them. The light projected images from their past onto a screen until their arrival in the future. Once these images appeared, these 'past people' disappeared. I was afraid of being captured by the authorities because I had many friends in this future. I ran away. But wherever I ran, they still found me. They asked me if I knew this road or that road. I told them I didn't know. And then I disappeared.

This montage sequence, coming as it does as Boonmee lies in a cave moments before he dies, brings together several spatial and temporal layers, which interact through still photography and the landscapes in which the film is set. Boonmee himself refers to dreaming of a future city, of 'past people' and 'projected images'. These references recall the space of the cinema and highlight the temporalities at play through the projected images. For example, what he describes could be seen as a reference to the progression of the image through the projector. It exists in the past, having already been filmed and made into a film, but before it is projected onto the screen it exists as a potential image in the future. It is only when the image appears fleetingly on the screen that it becomes present. Each image yet to the hit the screen is thus a future image. However, regardless of the cinema apparatus, Apichatpong is also engaging with the rural landscape of Isarn. The space is located on the border of Thailand and Laos, with the Mekong River marking the division between the two countries.

Throughout the film there are references to the history of conflict within the region. Isarn as a result of its close proximity to the border was seen as a hotbed for communist guerrilla movements hiding in the jungle during the Cold War. The area was subsequently targeted by the Thai military, with local communities being attacked due to government suspicions of communist sympathisers. Boonmee at one point in the film expresses his anxiety at his role in the military, having killed many accused of being communists in the 1970s. In another sequence, Boonmee introduces Jen to one of his workers from Lao, who is said to have swum across the border 'when Laos fell apart'. He teaches Boonmee some French words, underlining the proximity of Laos and Thailand, and the history of French colonialism in the region.

The presence of the armed forces in the photo-montage sequence can therefore be read in relation to Boonmee's own memories and past history. In addition, the photographs display young men in uniforms in images which suggest the present day. In this instance, we experience the co-existence of the past and present, as Boonmee's history as a soldier and the anti-communist suppression of the Cold War is presented alongside a younger generation of soldiers and young men in plain clothes throwing stones. In this sequence, Boonmee speaks of 'past people' being disappeared, which suggests both the violent repressions of the 1970s and also more contemporary examples of state violence against Thailand's pro-democracy movements in 2010.

The image of the young man throwing a stone is a particularly potent reference to this period, as during the 2010 Bangkok urban street riots, as with many popular uprisings, the launching of stones has become a routine and symbolic gesture of people power versus state power. Through the still images, there exist a number of separate references, split across time and space, which point to past and present conflicts emanating from both Isarn

and Thailand in general. Apichatpong has thus merged past and present through the still image, using stillness to conflate spatial and temporal barriers. The images here are also all shot in and around Isarn, with each image appearing on screen containing an exterior landscape. These images do not feature anyone who appears in the film and are actually part of a wider project of work by Apichatpong known as *Primitive*. Also made in the area of North-East Thailand, this was a multi-media project which explored the area. In using them here, the director creates a direct link between distinct art objects made at the same time, alluding to the larger body of work, alongside which his feature film existed. In describing how he wanted to portray Isarn, Apichatpong said that the region was 'a town of men, freed from the widow ghost's empire, and featuring the male descendants of the farmer communists — teenagers that will lead a journey, fabricate memories, and build a dreamscape in the jungle' (Apichatpong, 2008).

Both Natalie Boehler (2014) and Glyn Davis (2016) read this presence of still photography in relation to Chris Marker, positioning Apichatpong's photomontage as direct reference to *La Jetée*, (France, 1962) a film constructed exclusively from photographs, and thus establishing a connection between Apichatpong and post-war European art cinema. Boehler strengthens this connection by making links between the Thai director and the Italian auteur Michelangelo Antonioni. However, stillness within Apichatpong's cinema, rather than being a cinephilic reference to Marker, connects to other examples of contemporary slow cinema whilst also underlining the contemporaneity of the gesture. The way that Apichatpong uses a wide range of film and video reflects the technology of the present moment, drawing from a range of different media, and thus highlights his own connection between his aesthetics and formal choices, and the media he is choosing to use for these specific projects.

The wider project *Primitive* positions Apichatpong as a figure who, through a series of interactions with this community, actively confronts the collective traumatic memories of, in this instance, the longer colonial history connected to the Thailand and Laos border, as well as the more recent 1970s anti-communist violence. In this instance, there is a connection between Costa's exploration of the effects of Portugal's colonial history and Apichatpong's concern with North-East Thailand's legacies of state violence. These connections recall the central claim of Nadin Mai in her study of Lav Diaz, where she amalgamates the minimalism and duration of the Filipino filmmaker's work with an aesthetic of national and individual trauma into what she calls the concentrationary mode. Later I will explore this question of the extent to which this claim can be extended to other filmmakers using duration and minimalism, but I mention it here to express how several filmmakers engage with state violence and national trauma associated with slow cinema.

Here stillness, whether as stasis before the camera or as a static non-moving camera, suggests the permanence of past violence upon the collective memory of both a space and a community. The figure of the apparition or ghost speaks to Thai beliefs in animism and Buddhism but stops short of becoming a direct articulation of these beliefs. Instead Apichatpong playfully invents his own apparitions by borrowing images from Thai pop culture such as soaps and dramas from 1970s Thai television serials, as explored by Wilailoy (2015) and Baumann (2013). Regardless of the use of pastiche and parody in his use of the monkey ghost, the figure remains an embodiment of the intrusion of the past upon the everyday.

The way in which the narrative develops also emphasises stillness through the disruption of narrative progression. The film is structured in a way whereby multi-layered diegesis is absent and Apichatpong does not advance a story in a conventional manner,

instead interrupting the flow with moments which at times seem unconnected from previous scenes. This is most apparent in the montage of still images mentioned earlier, but it also occurs midway through the film where a fable about a fish goddess is told, interrupting the focus on Boonmee, to underline the presence of mythologies and ghosts in Thai culture. Aside from inserting scenes which abruptly intervene in the film's dominant narrative, the manner in which the film relates the story of Uncle Boonmee, the central character, his illness and eventual death is also defined by stillness. The emphasis here is on inaction and a lack of movement. The scenes which feature Uncle Boonmee and present his routine, his lifestyle and his community are all characterised by immobility. We rarely see Boonmee in motion, he is repeatedly shot receiving his dialysis treatment, which requires him to be both static and seated. These sequences are shot with a static camera, emphasising the lack of movement and avoiding cutting into the image to disrupt the continuation of the shot. Boonmee is also filmed in spaces where he is seated and presented doing such tasks as drinking tea, eating dinner or communicating with his employees.

Stillness occurs as a formal, narrative and thematic element across slow cinema and is used to both emphasise location and explore local histories and national memories. Lisandro Alonso's *Liverpool* (Argentina, 2003) focuses on the character of Farrel, a boat worker and central figure of the film. Narratively speaking, this is a road movie of sorts, and as with most road movies the film focuses on a journey and is composed of a series of fleeting incidents which Farrel experiences through his travels. The film is just eighty-four minutes long, and yet an hour is dedicating to documenting his journey in Tierra del Fuego. In his article 'Reclaiming the Cinematic: Lisandro Alonso's Aesthetics of Excess in *Liverpool*', Francisco Brignole observes how the director brings to the forefront background spaces and

landscapes 'by consistently relying on takes, which invite viewers to focus their attention on ignored, largely unmotivated, subject matter' (2016: 48).

As with Apichatpong, stillness in *Liverpool* functions through the static camera, which operates alongside a lack of movement in front of the camera. Farrell is often shot when not in motion. He is shot when eating and drinking, and in instances when Farrell is travelling, whether by truck or by train, stillness is emphasised by his lack of motion. As with the framing on Uncle Boonmee, Farrell is shot in a manner which highlights immobility, despite his frequently being in transit, and Alonso positions his camera in such a way to capture his stillness, as opposed to the motion of the vehicle. Within the work of directors such as Tsai Ming-liang, Hou Hsiao Hsien and Albert Serra, stillness is used in the same way, reflecting the recurring use of these formal traits. Whilst divided in terms of their national specificities when focusing on how stillness is used, these directors share distinct formal and thematic traits. Through these commonalities, stillness becomes thus one of the defining traits of slow cinema.

Crafting slowness in Diaz

In an article summarising common formal characteristics in Asian cinema at the turn of the century, David Bordwell coined the term Asian Minimalism. For Bordwell this was used to describe the perceived correlation between the works of the Japanese filmmaker Takeshi Kitano, the Chinese Jia Zhangke and the Taiwanese Tsai Ming-liang. In his article Bordwell highlights that there is a coherent shared aesthetic style being used here:

> The style emphasizes the long take, so that a scene is executed in very few shots, perhaps only one. The long takes tend to be made with a fixed camera, so that tracking shots and even pan shots may be avoided. The camera position tends to be fairly

distant, usually no closer than medium shot, often in long shot. This spare technique

is well suited to the mundane story action and loosely structured plot. The plainness

of presentation obliges us to concentrate on details of behaviour that might reveal

what is going on below the surface of the action. (Bordwell 2007a: 23).

Bordwell is not alone in characterising the slowness trend as being closely associated with

Asian cinema, as this is also articulated in articles by Yvette Biro (2006) and James Udden

(2005). Jean Ma explores in more depth the trend for minimalism Asian cinema in her study

on temporality in Chinese cinema, *Melancholy Drift: Marking Time in Chinese Cinema*

(2010). However, slow cinema is not necessarily linked to any continent or geographical

space. In this section, I turn to Filipino director Lav Diaz, whilst referring to several non-Asian

filmmakers to explore the presence of slowness within slow cinema and underline it as an

internationally diverse and autonomous body of work.

To explore how slowness functions, I will look at two formal elements, the long take

and the use of deep focus or long shot. In addition to these, I also explore how narrative

works within slow cinema, focusing on the way in which narration unfolds, particularly in

relation to pacing. This section therefore looks at how the long take, long shot and diegesis

interact to connote slowness.

In Lav Diaz's work, these three elements are all present. In his eight-hour film

Melancholia (Philippines, 2008) both the long take and long shot are used simultaneously to

establish landscape as a central element of the film both visually and thematically. In one

extended sequence, for example (Figure 9), Diaz films a nun asking for money in a rural

street. The unbroken shot lasts for two minutes and forty-four seconds. During this time,

she is ignored by several people who walk past her, until a young woman, who has been

introduced as being a sex worker, gives her small change. The position of the camera

emphasises slowness, as several people walk past the nun crossing the screen from left to right and exiting the frame. The sequence captures the amount of time it takes to cross the path and the pacing establishes a languid temporality. The long shot and the position of the nun ensures that the full figure of the nun is visible as are several buildings and the rural landscape she occupies.

Figure 2 Melancholia

Diaz's film is set on the island of Mindoro, specifically within the jungle. The context of the location is the armed struggle and disappearances which took place in rural spaces, with battles between leftist guerrillas and state-sponsored military violence both in the aftermath of President Marcos's dictatorship and as part of a longer history of disappearances related to anti-colonial struggles. In this sequence with the nun, Diaz is introducing the location to the spectator and creating a sense of the temporality of the space, establishing the everydayness and routine of the site by focusing on small details and the minutiae of the lives of those who occupy this space, before beginning to move to more sinister elements of the place at a later point in the film.

Figure 9 is taken from this sequence and underlines the way in which the frame is designed to emphasise the domineering exterior. Shot in a wide angle with a long take, landscape remains visible across the entirety of the scene. The framing ensures that not only can the buildings and trees clearly be seen on the right-hand side of the image, but also the large hills in the background. These reflect the wilderness of the jungle and the way that even in spaces where roads have been built and people live, the presence of the jungle dominates the landscape.

Figure 3 Melancholia

Following the sequence with the nun, Diaz's camera focuses on Alberta, one of the film's main characters. The camera documents her journey after her brief interaction with the nun and begins to establish her own routine and engagement with the space. Like the nun, Alberta is captured in full within a long shot (Figure 10), with her body being enveloped by the vastness of the surrounding landscape. Space at this point of the film is characterised by a comparison between the vastness of the landscape and the trapped situations the

characters find themselves in. Alberta, within the narrative of the film, is selling her body and is portrayed as living a precarious existence. The openness of the exterior spaces engulfs the human figures, with Diaz framing them in a manner where the jungle dominates the image, suggesting the impossibility of the characters' ability to escape their situations. For example, Alberta in the opening section of the film is being pursued by a man who wants to become her pimp and she is unable to remove herself from his presence, as he repeatedly follows her and attempts to manipulate her behaviour.

One of their first encounters is on a bench on the side of a road and the shot is constructed in a manner which makes the sky, mountains and several houses all visible alongside a vast forest, full of trees and bushes (Figure 11). The jungle landscape offers no relief to the characters and contrasts with the cramped interiors of Alberta performing sexual acts with her clients and her clear dissatisfaction during these encounters. Despite the openness of the exterior spaces, the jungle sites engulf and restrict the characters, and Diaz's long takes and long shots, combined with a motionless camera, emphasise this lack of social mobility.

Figure 4 Melancholia

Alongside filming exteriors with long takes and long shots to emphasise the trapped status of the characters, the landscape is also framed as a dangerous space with guerrilla armies inhabiting the site of the jungle. When filming these sites, Diaz continues to depict landscape in a way which highlights mundanity and the everyday. However, the jungle is now framed as a space which facilitates disappearances, thus channelling the long histories of state violence in the area. Later in the film, Diaz focuses on a character called Renato who has become a communist guerrilla fighter. Renato, alongside the other communist guerrillas, has ventured deeper and deeper into the jungle in order to avoid the Filipino government military forces. Much of the time they spend there is devoid of violence, as Diaz focuses on capturing the effect that waiting and eluding capture has on the psychological well-being of the group. In order to reflect this, Diaz uses long takes, where the characters are motionless and often appear in silence. Whilst at the beginning of the film the jungle was presented in a way which emphasised mundanity, here there is a focus on the everyday nature of the act of waiting and the repetitive routines the group undertakes and experiences in attempting to evade the military.

Renato, like Alberta before him, is framed in long, wide shots where the space of the jungle fills the screen. His body appears in full, with his surroundings dominating the image. However, in these sequences, there are fewer houses and roads visible, with Diaz instead filming areas which are seemingly devoid of any non-natural objects and architecture. The effect of this is to highlight the experience of temporality within the depths of the jungle and to frame the characters as being trapped, in a clearer manner. In the framing of the jungle, the bushes and trees for example intrude upon and surround the guerrilla fighters, in a manner which increases the jungle's role as an engulfing, suffocating object. Whereas for Alberta the jungle is presented alongside open space and sky, and appears to contrast

her lack of agency, here the jungle is a prison, and the crowded, convoluted messiness of the space here reflects the increasingly instability of the mental states of Renato and his fellow soldiers. The image below (Figure 12) reflects how the soldiers are framed within the landscape. It comes from an unbroken static take which lasts for two minutes and twenty-two seconds and is preceded by a series of shots of similar lengths.

Figure 5 Melancholia

Accentuating the slowness of the long take is the one way in which the narrative of Diaz's cinema progresses. In a sequence split across several individual shots and lasting for twenty-one minutes, Renato and his fellow soldiers navigate the jungle in almost complete silence with one line of dialogue being spoken when a local villager tells the soldiers that the military has surrounded the island and are actively searching for Renato and his gang. Outside of this line of dialogue, there is nothing which actively contributes to the development of the narrative or propels the diegesis.

The focus on non-movement and silence here serves to heighten the sensation of slowness, as Diaz's long takes, long shots and absence of narrative progression interact with the aforementioned presence of silence and stillness. As a result of the way in which the narrative is not an active element of the experience of the film, at this point it becomes difficult to place the film in terms of when it occurs, as the jungle is devoid of any elements which date it, as is also true of the attire of the soldiers. That the film is shot in black and white is another element which undermines the contemporaneity of the film, and the combination of these elements detaches the sequence from its spatial and temporal relationship to any specific moment in time, becoming a reflection on both the history of state violence in the Philippines and an engagement with current examples of state-sponsored violence under more recent Filipino governments and dictatorships. For example, whilst the film is actively an engagement with attacks on communist left-wing guerrillas, the Philippines has more recently seen guerrilla warfare in the regions of Mindanao between Muslim guerrillas, government military forces and local government-backed guerrilla armies, with the jungle becoming a site of regular conflict, as troops use the wildness of the space as a location for hiding and launching attacks.

The prolonged periods the film spends with the guerrilla soldiers in the jungle develop into a more abstract reflection on the experience of using the jungle as a site of warfare, yet the film retains a close connection to actual material accounts of such experiences. The underlying theme of the film is the mental effect of trauma and emotional abuse. The film purposefully sets out to engage with the ramifications of state violence on a national level, through linking to the trauma experienced by the figures of the communist guerrillas, who are actively engaged in a real conflict which occurred in the late 1970s, but which has been underreported and ignored on a national level.

An additional element of *Melancholia*, which emphasises slowness beyond the choice of shot length and shot width and the slow narrative progression, is the movement, or lack of movement, in front of the camera. The length of the shot emphasises the duration of specific acts or gestures, such as the length of time to walk across a certain path, or the time required to ensure a particular spot in the jungle is free of military forces. The focus on these moments of non-movement leads to the narrative progression being interrupted. These moments are repeated frequently across *Melancholia* as Diaz continually focuses on sequences emphasising the passing of time and how characters experience temporality. *Melancholia*'s eight-hour length enables Diaz to prolong these moments and, in doing so, he uses the extreme length of the film to emphasise slowness, by introducing a narrative through isolated moments of diegesis and exposition, but then turning to acts which demonstrate waiting and long periods of inaction.

These repeated focuses on moments of waiting reflect how Diaz prolongs the narration, across the length of the film, thus reflecting his preference for the use of slow narration. One such example of a prolonged sequence of non-action is the previously mentioned journey made by the communist rebels through the jungle, whilst hiding from the Filipino military. As part of the commitment to such a mode of diegesis, Diaz encourages his audience to reflect on the intricate details of the jungle such as the changing weather and conditions of light. In his article 'Melancholia: The Long, Slow Cinema of Lav Diaz' (2015), William Brown picks up on observing the smaller details of the landscape as a result of the long take and wide angles:

> As I watch the jungle sequence with Renato and colleagues, my sense of time and my desire for 'action' begin to change and soon I find myself marvelling at how raindrops make quiver a branch and leaves that extend from off-screen and into the foreground

of one of the section's various images. That is, I suddenly find joy in the minutiae of the film because everything is seemingly alive. (Brown 2015: 121)

Diaz's use of slowness in one sense reflects another example of Bordwell's notion of Asian Minimalism. Underlining the perceived connection between South Asian cinema and minimalism is the work of writers such as Song Hwee Lin, Nadin Mai and Glyn Davis, all of whom explore how filmmakers such as Tsai Ming-liang, Lav Diaz and Apichatpong Weerasethakul use minimalist approaches. James Udden in his text, 'This Time He Moves! The Deeper Significance of Hou Hsiao-Hsien's Radical Break in *Good Men*, *Good Women*', explicitly refers to a pan-East Asian minimalism. Udden summarises this in the following terms:

> As it turns out, however, Hou Hsiao-hsien is not an island, but has become the center of a transnational movement that extends well beyond his own work. This can be best described as a pan-East Asian brand of minimalism, evidence of which appears at major films festivals almost every year now, almost to the point of becoming a cliché. Once again, this trend over the last decade is largely defined by a group of films which possess the same traits we find in Hou Hsiao-hsien's work up to 1993: a long-take strategy coupled with a mostly stationary camera. (Udden 2008: 193)

Outside of this geographic grouping, there are numerous examples of non-Asian filmmakers using such an approach in their work. For example, the work of Catalan director, Albert Serra, provides several key reference points of using slowness in a manner similar to that of Lav Diaz.

Serra's *El cant dels ocells* (2008, Spain) is a re-telling of the story of the Magi. The film focuses on the Three Kings journey to find the Christ child. Such is the familiarity of this story that in Serra's film the director tries to demystify the sacred manner in which the Kings are

portrayed by depicting them not as intelligent regal individuals but as confused wanderers. Like Serra's earlier film *Honor de Cavalleria* (Spain, 2006) which draws from the story of Don Quixote, this film's use of existing characters means that Serra refrains from explanatory sequences, choosing to avoid a psychological portrait in favour of focusing on the materiality of these mythological figures.

Figure 6 El cant dels ocells

In one key sequence (shown in Figure 13), the three Magi venture across a large hill as they continue in their quest to seek out the infant Jesus. In this scene they slowly cross the screen and disappear over a hill. As they leave the frame the camera remains focused on the hill, the shot now devoid of any human figures. The camera continues to capture the hill for a few seconds before the figures of the three men slowly begin to enter the frame at the top of the screen, having seemingly taken a wrong turn, and they venture across the hill re-joining the path they took at the start of the sequence. The scene is one unbroken take which lasts for eleven minutes. Serra uses deep focus in order to capture the landscape and the scale of the natural space to comparatively reduce the size of the three men. Like Diaz's characters in the jungle, Serra uses his camera to capture the duration of a particular act or

gesture, in this instance the time that it takes the characters to cross the hill and return. The frame is constructed in such a way that the three figures cross from one side of the frame to the other. By restricting the movement of the men to the space depicted in the frame and by capturing the full amount of time it takes them to cross from one side to the other, Serra's scene presents slowness in three ways. One is the length of the shot itself, lasting for eleven minutes. The other is the lack of narrative progression, the scene being devoid of any dialogue and thus slowing the pace of the film. The third is the lack of movement within the long shot. The three men's pace when shot within a long, wide-angled scene is protracted, emphasising duration and establishing a sense of the mundanity of their experiences. Like Diaz, the empty landscapes Serra's the characters navigate are presented through repeated focuses on moments of non-action.

Diaz's spaces contribute to the development of narrative, themes and meaning within his cinema, as he engages with the material history of the locations where he shoots. Serra, who in *El cant dels ocells* has to find sites to approximate Jerusalem and Bethlehem, is equally interested in material spaces. He uses the physicality of the landscape as a way of grounding the mythological and religious figures who appear in the film. While drawing from characters in culturally important texts like *Don Quixote*, and here from the Bible, Serra uses durational traits to reflect an attempt to place these figures into material, inhabited spaces. In doing so, he extracts them from their literary and religious contexts and places them into a space reflecting material reality.

Aside from Serra, there are a number of filmmakers from outside Asia who use slowness as way of creating an engagement with the films' characters and the history of the landscapes they find themselves occupying. One interesting example is the work of Kelly Reichardt, with films as *Old Joy* (USA, 2006), *Wendy and Lucy* (USA, 2008) and *Night Moves*

(USA, 2013). Across these three films, natural landscapes and spaces are used to comment on how the characters are trapped by their social and political situations, as she addresses the state of America in the wake of such defining moments as 9/11 and the sub-prime mortgage crash and attempts to study the psychological and social effects of these upon Americans. One key example of this is *Old Joy*, which focuses on two men who are friends from college but whose lives have gone in different directions. One is engaged to be married and about to start a family, and the other has maintained an alternative lifestyle cut-off from the suburban responsibilities associated with a middle income, middle-class existence. The film is structured around a weekend spent in a Cascade Mountain range, the natural Bagby Hot Springs, located east of Portland in the state of Oregon. As they venture into the rural spaces, the distance in their relationship and the different paths they have taken become apparent and the film ends as they return home, leaving the audience unclear if they will ever meet again.

The landscape in this film is framed in a way which closely resembles that of Diaz, where both characters are enveloped within the wide openness of the space. The landscape engulfs the characters, through wide angle long shots. Reichardt frames the characters in a way where the bodies of both men are visible in full, and the space of the mountain range is a crowded, convoluted space, populated by the undulating hills and trees. Figure 14 reflects how Reichardt composes her frame and demonstrates how she positions her characters in relation to the exterior spaces they occupy. They share similarities to both Serra and Diaz, particularly in the positioning of the characters to the exterior space, and the presence of the long, wide-angle shot within a long take. Like Diaz and Serra, Reichardt

films her performers when they are static or moving slowly, emphasising acts which are devoid of action and establishing a slow pace in terms of the narrative.

Figure 7 Old Joy

The pace of the narrative is further slowed through her characters being unable to communicate clearly to one another, which prevents the channelling of diegetic information to the audience. A lack of movement in front of the camera, combined with the absence of exposition through dialogue, results in a slow paced, stilted narrative, and by setting a large portion of the film in the rural space of a mountain range, Reichardt creates a sense of calm as a result of the natural environment. As with the opening scenes of Diaz's *Melancholia*, the quiet calm of the rural space contrasts with the complicated emotional states of the characters, with Reichardt using her male leads to explore contemporary white American masculinity in terms of neurosis and indecision.

Chapter Two: Slowness and Minimalism in the Cinema of Kevin Jerome Everson

In this chapter, I use the work of Kevin Jerome Everson as a case study to look at how traditions of both minimalist art and experimental film provide an alternative route into slow cinema. As such this focus underlines the importance of both approaches in understandings of what constitutes slow cinema, particularly its relationship to practices traditionally developed and displayed outside of cinema. This chapter reflects the continuation of my definition of slow cinema as a combination of art cinema tradition and experimental practices. This definition in turn reflects a key argument of my thesis namely the importance of experimental cinema to the uniqueness and specificity of slow cinema.

To examine and establish this connection to experimental cinema, I have identified key examples taken from the work of filmmakers such as Japanese director Masao Adachi, Larry Gottheim and James Benning, who have all used minimalist and durational, non-narrative techniques in their work. By drawing from these minimalist and durational experimental films, I aim to demonstrate how contemporary slow films represent a distinct formal language, and the role of experimental cinema in establishing this language. To explore this connection, I focus on two films by Kevin Jerome Everson to show how slow cinema has been used to create politically fused cinematic images which explore and examine place, through an engagement with space, cultural identity, and history. I define and set out my understanding of place, whilst drawing comparisons with how place functions in work by Costa, Apichatpong and Diaz, alongside expanding upon the work of Nadin Mai drawing on her conceptualisation of duration in Lav Diaz's work as an articulation of national trauma and a response to the legacies of long histories of state violence in the Philippines.

In addition, across this chapter, I also aim to centralise the reflexivity of slow cinema and position this as a comment on the nature of cinema. If we recall the emergence of slow cinema as coming at a point in time at the turn of the century, which due to changes prompted by digital cameras and projection represented the first point in the history of cinema where film, celluloid film, would not be involved in the construction and projection of a film, then it is logical to recognise, given this context, that a style which is defined by distilling and extending the interaction between spectator and film object is making a wider reflection on the very meaning and conceptualisation of cinema, at a moment when a fundamental definitive element of the medium was being replaced as a dominant practice across the industry. I am therefore interested in drawing from Kim Knowles' work on Tacita Dean to argue that a marginal yet important element of slow cinema is the position of analogue cinema; and through Everson's own durational technique I want to examine the role of celluloid film, and the process of working with this format, as an additional form of slowness, one which remains marginal to slow cinema, but embodies a larger point of reflection on the role and understanding of film.

Everson is an artist whose work is not commonly connected to slow cinema. This is due to understanding of this style being linked to conceptions of international art cinema. As an artist working primarily with the moving image rather than strictly a filmmaker, Everson is positioned outside of these debates, as his work exists in the intersections of the cinema and the gallery. The trajectory of what is understood as slow cinema is strongly connected to the site of the international film festival, particularly in auteur-centred art cinema. Additionally, Everson's work largely avoids what some read as the transcendental tone of slow cinema. Despite this, his work with film contains regular use of the minimalist

aesthetics associated with this method, particularly in relation to questions of temporality and duration.

Understandings of place in cinema

In the previous chapter, setting out the formal qualities of slow cinema through filmmakers strongly connected with the style, there emerges another key connecting thread across all the films I mentioned, which is the importance of place. Place becomes a key connecting thread, as the formal qualities being used in each of these filmmaker's work emphasise the location and the characteristics of place, due to the use of depth of field, silence, and long continuous takes. As a filmmaker adopting the same formal approaches, place also plays an important role in Everson's work.

My understanding of place in cinema is linked to the writing on virtual geography by Nietschmann (1993), and Relph's concept of placelessness (1976), alongside writing by Lukinbeal (2005). I will engage with these writers to explore how Everson's cinema frames place. Specifically, I am interested in how Everson creates a distinct sense of place whilst simultaneously, through adopting the stylistic characteristics of slow cinema, prohibiting a direct engagement with the places being filmed. The sites selected by Everson subsequently connote a sense of placelessness. To explore these questions of place I turn to *Park Lanes* (Everson, 2015, USA), and I present this film as an example of how slowness draws from realism and questions of representation, but also complicates these ideas through Everson's absence of narrative, lack of contextual information and the film's extreme duration.

Both Lukinbeal and Nietschmann draw from a range of largely Hollywood sources to establish a set of approaches to understanding the visual representation of space and exploring the similarities of cinematic and geographic sites. Lukinbeal establishes four ways

through which landscape functions in narrative Hollywood cinema, through 'place (as an "organized place and time"), space (as "a well-defined space"), spectacle (as a "spectacular environment") and metaphor (as a "dramatic production" and a "coherent action")' (2005: 5). In this chapter, the most relevant of these four functions is the discussions of place in film. Lukinbeal expands upon landscape as place, defining this function as establishing a factual site or location within the film:

> Landscape as place is closely associated with the geographic expression 'sense of place' and refers to the location where the narrative is supposedly set (whether real or imagined). Place provides narrative realism by grounding a film to a particular location's regional sense of place and history. (Lukinbeal 2005: 6)

Nietschmann also engages with cinematic landscapes in relation to geographical sites with a specific focus on place. For Nietschmann, landscape as place functions in four main ways: by establishing a narrative which clearly indicates the geographic scale of the location; by avoiding stereotypical images of a geographic location in order to allow a complex perception of place to come through; by framing place as a foregrounded element rather than just as background; and finally, by situating the action in specific geographic places. Drawing from Nietschmann, Lukinbeal sets out to explain exactly how a sense of place is rendered visually to the spectator stating that 'landscape as place is usually depicted in extreme long shots, long shots and deep focus shots, using a bird's-eye view or high angle camera setup (the angle is usually situated in a position where the camera's eye can see a great distance)' (Lukinbeal 2005: 8). Alongside an aesthetic consideration, Lukinbeal also analyses the relationship between national consciousness and landscape. Having focused largely on Hollywood cinema, Lukinbeal and Nietschmann provide a useful reference point with which to contrast Everson's more experimental engagement with place.

Both Lukinbeal and Nietschmann in their conceptualisation of place draw from the work of geographer Edward Relph. In his text *Place and Placelessness* (1976), Relph differentiates between authentic and inauthentic accounts of how places are experienced. Relph defines an inauthentic place by using the example of a highly commodified site such as a supermarket or a global restaurant chain and argues that spaces such as these have lost any discernible character, stating that these are examples of mass culture which reflect 'the casual eradication of distinctive places and the making of standardized landscapes that results from an insensitivity to the significance of place' (Relph 1976: Preface). An authentic place, however, for Relph comes out of use-value not limited to mass-communication and central authority; he claims that an authentic experience of place comes through 'a direct and genuine experience of the entire complex of the identity of places – not mediated and distorted through a series of quite arbitrary social and intellectual fashions about how that experience should be, nor following stereotyped conventions' (1976: 54). The cinematic techniques described by Lukinbeal as depicting place, such as long takes, long shots and depth of field, are used by Lukinbeal to render Relph's description of an authentic exploration of place cinematically.

Locating place in Everson's work

Having established how I understand place, I will now turn to how it functions both in Everson's work and across slow cinema in general. A prolific filmmaker, Everson has to date directed nine feature films and over 130 short films. Across this vast filmography there are a variety of stylistic and aesthetic approaches. The disparate methods used by Everson are all underlined by a prevailing interest in place, particularly the Midwest and the Southern American states. Everson's status as a filmmaker is signalled by his presence on the festival

circuit particularly through inclusions at major international festivals such as Rotterdam, Sundance, Berlin, and Locarno. In addition, his work has been the subject of major mid-career retrospectives at the Pompidou Centre, Tate Modern, The Whitney Museum of American Art, the Contemporary Art Museum of Seoul, Korea and the 2014 Viennale. For Everson, his productivity is directly linked to the relationship between his cinema and his background in photography and sculpture. In a recent online interview, with Anna Hogg, he explains this in the following way:

> I treat filmmaking like painting, only instead of the easel, the canvas, the brush and the paints, I have the tripod, the camera, the lens, and the film stocks. I see it as a form of composing. Both my degrees are in fine art photography, so when I do sculptures, it's like I'm making prints, like I'm making three-dimensional photographs. The content of the work is about the kind of physicality of the medium and what the medium does, but for me, they kind of blur. They're all like little paintings, which is why I make so many films. People think, I mean some people wrote, that it comes from this 'factory mentality' or something. But it's mostly because I come from a photographic background. So you have to make a body of work a year. The films are basically an illustration of the body of work I made that year, but they're more akin to fine art, like prints and stuff. Because when I design for a film installation, I'm thinking about the gallery and how it affects the viewers walking in and out, as opposed to the theatrical kind of a theater setting. So I'm always thinking of the subject matter. I mean, a lot of my films are put into installation, but if I'm making something for an installation, I want the subject-matter to affect the light of the gallery, so to speak, more so than anything else. (Hogg 2022)

In relation to Everson, the filmmaker's engagement with his location adopts elements which correspond both with Relph's understanding of an authentic place and with his definition of placelessness. Everson's films therefore maintain a paradoxical relationship with place. They are at once close, often personal interactions with community, but they also commonly adapt aesthetics which separate and detach spatial and temporal relationships of place. The reference points provided by Lukinbeal, Nietschmann and Relph allow for a sustained engagement with how Everson navigates this seemingly contradictory understanding of place, the reasons behind it and the effect of this in his films. Through this focus on Everson, I return to the overriding concerns at the centre of this thesis, specifically to place the reading of slow cinema as a blend of art cinema, realism and experimental cinema, specifically in relation to durational and minimalist approaches.

Everson's shot composition in *Park Lanes* is an initial example of how his films embody a sense of place. Avoiding establishing shots Everson repeatedly focuses on interiors. Due to the presence of interior spaces, there is subsequently a limit to the use of long shots, bird's-eye view and high angle cameras as mentioned by Lukinbeal as being crucial to establishing a visual sense of place. Instead, Everson's cinematography prominently uses depth of field when filming the factory floor, with his framing displaying several seemingly autonomous tasks occurring concurrently across the space. For Lukinbeal, place is captured by creating a sense of depth on screen, to maximise the spatial scale of the place being filmed. Whilst being restricted by the scale of the factory, Everson's depiction of space and his choice of shot emphasises the atmosphere of the factory by rendering both the foreground and background of the factory site visible. Figure 15, taken from *Park Lanes*, demonstrates how both the background and foreground of the factory are visible within the shot, with the focus being on the worker in the centre of the frame. This style shares

similarities with works by Costa, Diaz and Apichatpong discussed in the previous chapter, particularly in how the film's location is positioned with the composition of the frame, with deep focus static shots, and long continuous, unbroken takes.

Over the course of *Park Lanes*, this composition is constantly repeated to frame the labourer centrally and focus on their work, whilst demonstrating the work taking place in the background of the factory. The image used in Figure 15, despite being a paused screen grab, also reveals smaller details of where we are, through depth of field. The crowded background is full of tools, with shelves of hardware and mechanical objects telling us that

Figure 8 Park Lanes

this is a site of physical, technically precise labour. The factory space connotes a specific social group of workers, which effect subsequently leads the person in the image to be read as occupying a working-class position. Additionally, we can see that the figure here is Black and male. The image is therefore to be read as being of a young working-class African American undertaking some form of manual labour in an industrial factory setting. Little else

is revealed in this image of place, but the image, through the composition and framing, already contains several pieces of key information helping us to identify what we are seeing.

Of the location itself, again despite the cramped appearance and the position of shelves preventing the viewer from gaining an unobstructed view of the factory, a sense of the interior space can be gained. This gives some insight into the environment of the worker and the character of the place. It is clear, for example, that the factory is a working space – this is suggested by how at this workstation there are several objects which are within reachable distance from the worker, such as the small unidentified can with the red lid. The worker is positioned in such a way that we can see the attention he is paying to the object he is holding, and his attire also suggests that we are witnessing a fragment from a workday at a functioning factory. All this information is a result of the depth of field and the position of worker. Viewed from inside the film itself, where this image is part of a long take, then, the information being channelled affirms everything we can surmise from the still image whilst also offering the potential for much more. A sense of place is therefore gained from the distinct compositional elements of the framing.

Figure 16 reflects another example of this. It comes from the end of a shot which lasts for ninety seconds and captures a worker loading up several pipes onto a small forklift truck and driving off. Once the worker has left the frame, the camera remains still, observing the space the worker has just left, and retaining this position for a further fifteen seconds. In doing so Everson shifts focus from the worker, engaged in a specific task, to the image of the factory itself. This shot reflects the writing of Nietschmann on how place is channelled through cinema, specifically through foregrounding the space of the factory, which then becomes the focus of the scene. The image of the factory here, without the presence of the

worker, shows the interest that Everson has in the space of the factory itself, its visual appearance and the various tools, equipment and objects housed within.

In addition to shot composition, Everson's preference for duration offers another way in which a geographic sense of place is constructed. In *Park Lanes*, Everson explores labour in working class African American communities. The film is set in a Virginia-based factory which makes bowling-alley equipment. Everson captures the whole manufacturing process, focusing on the construction of small components and motors which are used for the building of the bowling alley, and he documents how the individual pieces of equipment come together to work with the bowling pins and balls. The processes of construction and the working patterns of the factory are depicted across the film, with Everson's camera capturing the labour of the factory workers, and the precision of their assembly.

Figure 9 Park Lanes

Temporality in Park Lanes

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As the film runs for eight hours, a unique characteristic of *Park Lanes* is the way that Everson undertakes the question of structure and the presentation of temporality. In depicting the routines of the factory and the labour of the workers, the film is in a sense continuing a tradition of the observational documentary. Documentary filmmaker Frederick Wiseman across his career has become closely associated with this observational tradition. Wiseman has documented institutions across films like *High School* (USA, 1968), *Welfare* (USA, 1974) or *Basic Training* (USA, 1979). His work is categorised by removing the presence of the filmmaker to position the spectator as a witness to the undertakings of the inner workings of the spaces that Wiseman films. To do so Wiseman uses long sequences with little camera movement to suggest realism with his camera and formal preference characterised as unobtrusive to be able to generate a sense of the processes and sub-narratives associated with the communities and institutions being filmed. Despite in one sense connecting to this observational technique, Everson's film, given its exceptional length, becomes a more durational piece, where the temporality of the workday is replicated and prolonged. In this way, not only is cinematic temporality extended, but the audience's engagement with the spatiality and the specificities of place and site becomes a dominant element of the experience of the film.

Everson creates a sense of immersion inside the factory through the opening sequence which consists of a continuous, uncut, durational sequence. A handheld digital camera is used to follow a young woman whose face is initially hidden underneath her hooded jumper, as she opens the door and makes her way into the factory. As the hooded figure enters, the sky is still dark, signalling the early hour at which the working day is about to commence. From the point where the camera begins tracking the employee, as she walks

into the factory and initiates her daily routine, to the first cut of the film, a total of eight minutes and twenty-eight seconds have passed.

Within this unbroken sequence, the unnamed individual has casually made her way into a small kitchen and begun several short conversations with colleagues as they welcome one another back to work. This eight-minute opening take has guided the spectator, by following the employee, out of the streets and into the space of the factory. The camera closely follows the route of the walking figure, maintaining a position slightly above her, but still at a position low enough to suggest that the viewpoint of the camera could belong to another human figure. In this way, there is a sense of normalcy and routine evoked by the journey the camera makes. The camera moves through the factory and into a communal kitchen space, before it becomes largely still, focusing on the interactions between the factory workers and the still unnamed female figure.

Figure 10 Park Lanes

After the long tracking shot, Everson's camera remains largely static and films the interaction of workers inside the co-worker kitchen area. In this shot which lasts for six

minutes the camera captures workers engaging with each other socially and speaking amongst themselves. Across the six minutes, the camera films this area, without moving, and there is no narrative progression and no story being established. The shot establishes that this is a kitchen of some sort and that the workers are all arriving, but outside of this being established the unbroken shot contains many details which speak to the location and the culture and social demographics of the region.

Across the six-minute shot (Figure 17), we observe a small group of Vietnamese workers speaking amongst themselves, as other African American workers begin to enter. Details which emerge as focal points are the different ways in which the workers interact. When the Vietnamese workers are in the kitchen area their voices and interactions dominate, but as they leave and more African American workers enter, the conversation shifts accordingly. That the language and accents of the workers differ gives a small insight into the ethnicity and diversity of the workforce, and as each employee enters there are subtle differences in how they interact, which suggests varying degrees of comradery and friendship between the staff being divided along racial and age lines. There are also clear differences between how the workers are dressed, which again speaks to trends associated with specific cultural styles, such as one young man wearing a hooded sweatshirt, baseball cap and baggy jeans. During the unbroken sequence the various workers who pass in and out of frame create a sense of movement and occupy the attention of the spectator who, having grown accustomed to the space of the kitchen through the static camera, naturally is drawn to the source of movement and conversation.

Whilst many of the details which I have described are fleeting and have the potential to be explored at greater depth through a narrative, they exist outside of any pre-conceived story and are instead only noticeable, if it all, by the amount of time and space given this

moment within the film. Many of these details resonate across the film as other additional moments provides further insight into the cumulative character of the workforce and the cultural signifiers that their conversations, clothing and behaviour suggest. The effect of this is to create an impression of the people who live in Richmond, and thus an impression of Richmond itself.

The eight-hour running time of the film is used to document how long each act of labour takes and to create an overview of a working day. The film brings these two approaches to the temporality of the factory together, by editing the acts of labour and of non-labour into the eight-hour film to reflect the sensation of time passing through these acts and how they function within the structure of a day's work. The film not only pays attention to the duration of individual acts of labour and non-labour, but also how these are suitably positioned across the film so that these instances occur at opportune moments. For example, roughly 150 minutes into the film, the camera focuses on a young woman, the same woman filmed at the very beginning of the film, as she moves from the factory floor to the cafeteria, seemingly signalling that this is her lunch break. She is not identified by name in the film nor clearly referred to in the credits. The sequence in the cafeteria lasts for twenty minutes and, like most of the film, is filmed in one long take. The continuous focus here on the same worker at such moments of non-labour clearly creates a sense of the structure and routine of the factory, in doing so presenting a coherent temporal account of labour in the factory.

The relevance of establishing the temporality of the factory is to underline the ways in which *Park Lanes* can be seen as creating a sense of place cinematically. Everson, despite filming largely within the interior, still reflects a few of the ways in which place is understood through film. This connection between *Park Lanes* and filming the factory and those who

work within it, demonstrates a clear engagement with place. The repeated use of long takes here creates a sense of where we are and the people who occupy this space. The duration also emphasises small fleeting details signalling ties to the space of Richmond through the depiction of the workers. Instances such as workers watching basketball matches during breaks, workers wearing such culturally specific items of clothing as doo-rags or oversized shirts, as well as moments where the radio can be heard and music seeps into the factory space. In all these instances the space is characterised as being a distinctly African American space, and through these details and gestures the film does capture a succinct sense of place.

The title of the film is a reference to a locally owned bowling alley in Mansfield, Ohio. The bowling alley being referenced here is significant as it is a place which the Ohio-born filmmaker and his family had frequently visited. The bowling alley, which is now closed, having fallen into a state of disrepair, is not seen in the film, instead what is focused on is the site where bowling alley equipment is created. The title therefore establishes the filmmaker's personal connection to a place from Everson's childhood. It suggests a connection to the very sort of place which Relph would label authentic, namely a local bowling alley in a small town which relates to the artist's experience of living in a working class African American household. Figure 18 is from the Ohio Park Lanes bowling alley before it closed down, and the image of the sign in particular creates a strong sense of the bowling alley as a symbol of Americana and a certain period of post-war youth culture, seemingly rich in meaning in relation to the surrounding environment and local communities. In an online article for the *Mansfield News Journal* reporting on the immimnent closure of the alley, the reporter reflects that 'Park Lanes has been an institution in the city since the late Brad Lewis built it into a state-of-the-art facility in the 1950s. The Lewis family sold it to

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owners who lived out of state, but financial trouble hindered the center and it soon fell into disrepair and closed' (Whitmere, 2017). The local history embedded in the building through the title thus reflects a material connection to a specific place.

Figure 11 Park Lanes, Ohio

Everson as slow cinema

Just as *Park Lanes* is a filmic engagement with a community and captures a sense of place, through the prolonged process of constructing the film, there are many examples of similar approaches from within the canon of slow cinema. One which bares most resemblance is the work of Costa, who across his films with Cape Verdan and Angolan migrants living in Lisbon developed a body of work directly out of his prolonged interactions, which reflected the rhymthns and concerns of everyday lives. In addition, Everson has spoken of his admiration for and interest in the work of Lav Diaz, praising his work in an interview with Terri Francis: 'Lav Diaz makes these nine-hour narrative films; they're so cool. Like if it takes twenty minutes for the oxen cart to come down the road, it takes twenty minutes for the oxen cart to come down the road. But there's something that's super fucking humane about

that. It's so visceral' (Francis 2013: 198). In an online interview given for an exhibition on his work in Serbia, Everson discusses *Park Lanes* in relation to Diaz, and again expresses his admiration for his durational work suggesting that Diaz's films had to some degree fuelled his own desire to construct a work of such length, to match what he described as the way that in Diaz's films 'the longer you stay with somebody, the more the humanity comes out' (SEEcult.org, 2019), and that the longer the continued scenes last, the more the spectator is able to create their own thought and ideas in relation to the film. These connections underline the commonality of the approach between these filmmakers, and shows that to an extent they are developing similar works and arriving at them through distinctly differnet paths and reference points.

As in the work of Costa, Serra and Diaz, the duration of individual scenes often far exceeds the capablities of celluloid, which is limited to the amount of film reels you can physically load into a camera. The use of a digital camera therefore enables the operator to create distinctly longer individual scenes and, in doing so, to make films which would have been impossible without digital technology. To return to Costa, his process involved filming long scenes with the residents of Fontainhas, and generating many hours of digital footage, which would eventually be edited into the final work. Similarly, Diaz has across his career frequently shot scenes which last over the eleven minutes enabled by an analogue camera, and the results are, as with Costa and Everson, a closer reflection of the experience of time passing, which enables for the creation of new types of films. One such additional consequence of these methods is the way the filmmaker is able to capture a place visually, defined by the ability to capture a prolonged, uniterrupted portrait of a place. Everson describes the ability to film with a digital camera as an opportunity to limit the influence and power of the filmmaker, with the implication being that with the long duration of a single

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sequence there is greater agency for the viewer to explore the frame, for their mind to wander, to make connections between what they are seeing. This also suggests that there is more space for the idiosyncrasies and specificities of a location to come across through the prolonged recordings.

The factory Everson is filming is located within the community of Richmond, and as a site of labour provides work and is the source of finance for residents, as well as playing a role in the leisure time for inhabitants of the surrounding areas through the creation of the bowling alley equipment. The focus on the factory therefore addresses a key element of the identity of the region, namely how people earn their money. The presence of the workers reflects what Lukinbeal refers to as a 'sense of place' by presenting a substratum of the working-class population of Richmond, Virginia. Whilst the site is not explicitly articulated in the film, the location of the factory in *Parks Lanes* and its history still managed to establish a material connection between the film and the characteristics of the region.

Figure 12 Park Lanes

Placelessness as abstraction

Having established how Everson's film represents an authentic engagement with place, I will now begin to provide an overview of how his film channels a sense of placelessness, to continue this wider discussion of how location functions through his minimalist aesthetics.

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This understanding of placelessness is borrowed from Relph, who defines it in relation to an authentic and multi-layered exploration of place.

In relation to Everson, I refer to placelessness to describe the ways in which he prevents an interaction with the geographic location which is being filmed. Everson's compositions, whilst connoting the structure and spatial dimensions of the factory occasionally, move away from this engagement with the real space towards a more abstract form. Across the film, Everson ensures that the spectator is unaware of the purpose of the factory and the specificities of each object. Without these pieces of information, the audience is unable to locate the space, which in reality may not be the most important piece of knowledge, but by refraining from suggesting what is being made, the images of manufacturing move away from realism towards something more abstract. For example, towards the end of the film two sequences (Figure 19) focus on the construction of the actual alley and bowling pins, thus making it clear what the purpose of the factory is.

Prior to the climax, preceding scenes document workers using tools and objects which resist easy recognition. The tools and actions are detached from being clearly identifiable. The images depicted in Figure 20 all come from sequences in the first half of the film and reflect at times objects which are difficult to discern. Using this lack of contextual information, Everson transforms the everyday into abstract images.

Figure 13 Park Lanes
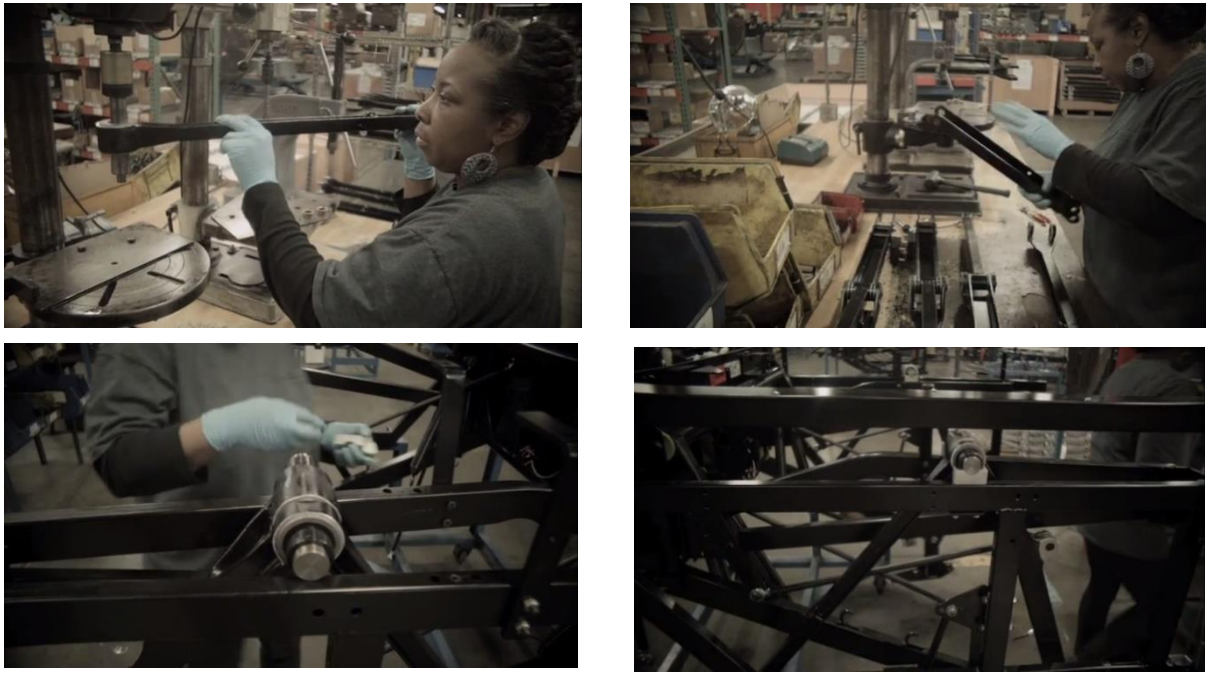
Figure 14 Park Lanes

These more abstract images speak directly to some of Everson's short films, as exemplified by *Polly One* (2018, USA), *Polly Two* (2017, USA) and *Brown and Clear* (2017, USA), where shallow focus and close-ups are combined to obfuscate the filmed objects. The use of the close-up in these short films transforms the routine and reality of the everyday situation into an image of light and shade. In sequences such as those represented by Figure 21, this technique is again in play, where Everson occasionally creates these abstract images which emerge from within the ostensibly realist styles of the continuous take, direct sound and real locations.

The non-realist images are fleeting, as much of the film resembles documentary footage. The insertion of these fleeting moments of abstract images works alongside the lack of knowledge the spectator has regarding the highly skilled labourers making objects and components that the audience are unable to recognise or identify. These come together to create images which move away from a commitment to document and inform, and because of the absence of information the scenes lack a sense of narrative. The workers

therefore become figures creating unknown small objects for an unknown larger object. Rather than witnessing the construction of a component for a car, the audience witnesses the labourers making unknowable objects, which moves the experience away from a documentation and instead again establishes this distance between spectator and subject.

Everson's use of duration emphasises the lack of contextual details provided by the film itself. The purpose is linked to how Everson positions his subjects in relation to the audience. In an online interview for *BOMB* magazine, he states how 'one strategy is that I've been trying to have the people on screen be smarter than the audience in the sense that the subjects don't need them' (Cronk 2017). The practical result of this comes in the scarcity of contextual details, found in these films. This prohibits a reading of the space and shifts spectatorial expectations by preventing a clear engagement with place and ensuring that the subjects do not function to inform the audience of their experiences. Instead, there is a distance between spectator and subject. To provide an example, in a sequence roughly an hour into the film, Everson films a female worker. She is not named or identified, nor does she acknowledge the camera as she concentrates on what she is doing. The precise nature of what it is she is doing is not clear. We encounter her when she is already focused on her work, behaving as if there is no awareness of there being an audience. Not at any stage is there any attempt to convey who these workers are, or even what exactly they are doing, as it is not clear based on the tools they are using and the objects they are working precisely what is being constructed.

The distinction between an authentic depiction of place and the establishing of a sense of placelessness relates to an attempt by Everson to complicate notions and expectations of the documentary and a spectatorial expectation of an engagement with working class African American communities.

Everson's distinct mode of realism

An absence of contextual information is important in articulating how despite adopting elements of realism and observational documentary, Everson's work is an engagement with traditions of experimental cinema. Everson provides elements of the experiences and expectations of distinct modes of cinema such as the observational documentary or traditional 'realist cinema', but by removing and preventing the narratives of 'subjects' of the film from their connection to narratives where information is passed on to the spectator, Everson also moves away from this mode of filmmaking. Further emphasising this departure, Everson's engagement with the labourers is fragmentary, fleeting and often ends without any 'relevant' information being provided. By 'relevant' information I mean information which feeds into a narrative or removes the distance established by this aesthetic approach of abstraction.

The slow cinema of Pedro Costa also foregrounds place and explicitly communicates geographic details to the audience. Costa does this by structuring his work in such a manner as to open with establishing shots of the housing estates where he is filming. Clearly signalling to his audience the sites which the remainder of the film will take place within Similarly, other filmmakers associated with slow cinema such assuch as Jia Zhangke and Kelly Reichardt prominently position exterior geographic locations and channel sensations ofto place and community. Reichardt, in work such as *Old Joy* (2006) or *Wendy and Lucy* (2008), channels topographies of place through an intricate engagement with issues related to America post-Bush and post-financial crash. Across these works, there is a continiuation of a practice which downplays diegesis and limits contextual information. Everson continues in this method, via an engagement with how African American bodies are read by audiences in cinemas across the international spaces where his films are screened, who differ from the

communities that make up the films' subjects. Considering the role of the festival as a dominant site for slow cinema, this also relates to the reception of slow cinema in general.

Everson attempts to avoid engaging with questions of representation and politics of race and class by purposefully restricting the narratives of the real geographical sites from being a part of the film. Instead, Everson emphasises his own films' materiality, and the processes involved in their construction. I will explore the question of materiality in the following chapter, but mention it here in order to emphasise that Everson considers the object of his film and the procedeures which go into its construction as much a part of the filmic subject and content as the people who appear in them. The absence of contextual, biographical and geographic information is thus adhered to in order to ensure that his work is seen in regard to its own construction and for audiences to engage with his modes of production as a key recurring theme in his body of work.

Everson adopts a seemingly contradictory position where he both films a place and community with which he has close ties and disrupts a reading of the film as a strict engagement with an African American context. In this manner Everson, like other filmmakers making slow cinema, can be seen to mix traditions of global art cinemas with other experimental modes of cinema, as the minimal, restrained tone of the films can also be read as an attempt to complicate and disrupt film language. This can be seen in Costa's movement from traditional art cinema to his digital films shot in Lisbon's dilapidated buildings; in Apichatpong's insertion of photographic stills violently disrupting the flow of his film *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*; or in Tsai Ming-liang's non-narrative *Walker* series, beginning with *Walker* (Taiwan, 2012). These practices reflect that within slow cinema, through works deemed canonical and by filmmakers strongly associated with the style, there remains a commitment to practices which disrupt expectations and at times

move beyond art cinema, towards more experimental traditions. This exact sentiment is noted by de Luca:

> As Tsai's case demonstrates, however, the long take can also be stretched towards or beyond the limits associated with cinema through silence and stillness, thereby forging intermedial links with photography and painting, and consequently interrogating medium specificity in relation to its aesthetic appreciation in traditional as well as new viewing sites. (de Luca 2017: 176)

This expresses how the extreme limit of, in this instance, the long take can demand distinct sites of exhibition, outside of the cinema theatre. Like the work of Tsai, Everson is also gesturing towards non-cinematic practices. In order to look closer at both Everson's engagements with place and placelessness in relation to other examples of slow cinema, I turn to some examples of explorations with landscape and place from experimental cinema, in doing so making the broader connection between slow cinema and experimental traditions.

Place and duration in experimental cinema

The specificities of place as a subject have been regularly visited and revisited throughout experimental cinema by North American artists from the 1960s and 1970s such as Peter Hutton, James Benning and Larry Gottheim, as well as in Japanese underground cinema of the 1960s, most notably in the work of Masao Adachi. From these seemingly detached contexts, several attempts to exploring landscape through film emerged, notably the filming and engagement with space across the use of single takes, stillness and duration. Crucially, within these works contextual details related to the spaces and their historical, social and cultural identities were not communicated to audiences, thus shifting perceptions away from these factual details, and onto the physical and material landscapes being depicted. I

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will provide examples of three filmmakers dealing with landscape and slowness: Larry Gotham, James Benning, and Masao Adachi. These examples provide a stylistic antecedent and an aesthetic framework both to Everson and more widely to slow cinema.

There are, in the history of experimental cinema, several instances of artists approaching the subject of landscape, often with a similar aesthetic. In an American context, canonical works include *All My Life* (Baille, USA, 1966), *Cassis* (Mekas, USA, 1966), *Landscape* (Shustack, USA 1970), *Faraway Places* (Kuchar, USA, 1974), *The Sky on Location* (Mangolte, USA, 1982) and *Landscape (for Manon)* (Hutton, USA, 1987). Despite differing techniques, each of these works adopts landscape as their subject and diverges from narrative in favour of long continuous takes to emphasise pictorial qualities of space and the presence of the cinematic apparatus. Shot on 16mm, Larry Gottheim's *Fog Line* (USA, 1970) is an eleven-minute film composed of one unbroken continuous shot of a valley in upstate New York, as a fog slowly clears. Filmed with a fixed camera, the film connects tangentially to the Structural Film movement. In his text on defining this movement, artist Peter Gidal states:

> The structural film insists on its shape, and what content it has is minimal and subsidiary to the outline. Four characteristics of the structural film are its fixed camera position (fixed from the viewer's perspective), the flicker effect, loop printing and re-photography of the screen. (Gidal 1976 :1)

Despite not strictly conforming to the criteria expressed by Gidal, Gottheim was a contemporary of those artists associated with the movement, and the use of the camera in a fixed position demonstrates an engagement with the language of Structural Film, alongside the commitment to making non-narrative works. Gottheim's engagement both with landscape and avoiding the visually experimental modes associated with Structural Film, such as the flicker effect or photochemical manipulations of the image, established a

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way of engaging with landscape in experimental cinema which was interested in capturing and documenting space, but also in retaining a distance and objectivity from it.

Also emerging tangentially from Structural Film, James Benning continually returned to the exploration of landscape by way of an engagement with minimalist aesthetics. Beginning with his work in the 1970s, in films such as *11x14* (USA, 1977) and *One Way Boogie Woogie* (USA, 1977), James Benning's slant consists of creating works composed of single takes of specific landscapes, shot on 16mm with a static camera. The films are shot without any discernible soundtrack or voiceover, instead capturing natural sounds accompanying the spaces being filmed. Whereas *Fog Line* is a short film, composed of a single cannister of 16mm film, Benning's work is feature-length and is made up of numerous sequences of empty landscapes.

There are clear aesthetic correlations between Gottheim's *Fog Line* and Benning's landscape films. By avoiding explanatory texts, voices or engagements with narrative, both Gottheim and Benning conceptualise landscape in a manner which departs from how, according to Lukinbeal and Nietschmann, landscape works in commercial cinema. They both produce works where the landscape cannot be easily decoded as a text, nor do their landscapes establish meaning by anything resembling a narrative. Their work therefore turns the observation of landscape into the dominant experience of the film, forcing the viewer into a prolonged interaction with space through the absence of narrative, sound, camera movement, and the lack of human figures to focus on. Figure 23 and Figure 24 both give an indication of the construction of the image in films by Gottheim and Benning, yet the main connecting feature is the commitment to filming spaces and capturing the passing of time.

Figure 15 Fog Line

A contemporary of Gottheim and Benning, though working in Japan, Masao Adachi was also engaging with landscape by the use of long takes. In addition to his aesthetic preferences, Adachi also attempted to theorise his formal style in what he would refer to as his 'Landscape theory' or, in Japanese, *fûkeiron*. Linked to his film *AKA Serial Killer* (Japan, 1969), the concept of *fûkeiron* put forward by Adachi argues that the spaces which surround us, no matter how banal, are representative of the dominant political power. To explore this idea through his film, Adachi addresses the story of Norio Nagayama, a nineteen-year-old boy who was convicted in 1969 for the murders of four people in Japan. The thesis of the film suggests that the nation of Japan is responsible for these violent attacks and explores landscapes and sites of specific relevance to the life of Nagayama. When shooting these spaces, Adachi maintains a distance from them. This effect is enhanced by an abrasive free-jazz soundtrack and a continuous voice over, detailing key incidents from Nagayama's life

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and the environment of Japan at the time, which we are led to believe have resulted in him committing these murderous acts.

Whereas Gottheim and Benning explored spaces which were rarely identified in the film, Adachi explicitly names and foregrounds where each site is, in order to implicate these spaces in the actions of Nagayama. By explicitly engaging with landscape through the use of voiceover and his soundtrack, Adachi in one sense moves away from the minimalism associated with Gottheim and Benning and later with Everson and slow cinema. Adachi, for example uses voiceover throughout *AKA Serial Killer*; however, by using the concept of *fûkeiron* and the engagement with slowness and contemplation, there remains a strong connection between Adachi's work and the other films which I am discussing in relation to landscape. Each of these filmmaker's engagements with landscape evokes strong parallels with the minimalist aspects of Everson's work.

Figure 16 One Way Boogie Woogie

Figure 17 AKA Serial Killer

Figure 24 comes from Adachi's film and reflects an interest in industry and the urban space. In terms of shot composition, it also demonstrates how Adachi often sets up his camera and frames space, selecting seemingly non-descript sites. Adachi, in these images, uses a static camera and whilst within the film these images appear as part of a montage

and are thus fleeting, the filmmaker maintains the emphasis on the relationship between place and social structures. For example, the images in Figure 22 are immediately preceded by a voiceover telling the audience about the titular serial killer Norio Nagayama's engagements with these areas. The images are from a neighbourhood in Japan called Sugamo and the narrator therefore connects their spaces to the biography of Nagayama, and the landscape thus becomes inextricably linked to the acts of the killer. Additionally, Adachi juxtaposes images of the rural with those of the urban space to suggest the social and political changes in Japan at the time, and how they are materially present in the landscape.

The politics of *AKA Serial Killer* are framed clearly and are identified from the outset of the film. In an article on Adachi, Yuriko Furuhata writes, 'the image of landscapes… clearly indicates that power is not synonymous with police, military or parliamentary power, but with transportation and infrastructure – in short, pathways of commerce and information' (2007: 361). Here Furuhata reflects on Adachi's approach to landscape, paying particular attention to the socio-political context of the film. Adachi's film is produced against the backdrop of a transitional period in Japan coming at the end of the 1960s as the country moved towards post-industrialisation. Furuhata argues that Adachi uses these images in order to locate within the landscape the 'invisible' structures of power. Central to Adachi's thinking as an avowed Marxist was that film could identify the workings of state control and provide a blueprint for mapping the traces of power inside everyday landscapes.

In relation to Everson's *Park Lanes*, therefore, *AKA Serial Killer* reflects an intensified engagement with landscape and its politics. Despite adopting an actively political aesthetic via voiceover, Adachi's film remains elusive through a focus on seemingly empty landscapes. Yuriko Furuhata summarises this point: Nothing dramatic happens or appears in *AKA Serial*

Killer; it endlessly and disjunctively strings together actuality footage of urban and rural landscapes from the tip of the northern island of Hokkaido to the southwestern cities of mainland Japan. Yet precisely because of its peculiar obsession with the eventless images of quotidian landscapes, *AKA Serial Killer* stands apart from the militant documentary filmmaking of the time, which focused upon dramatic action and the faces of student protesters and workers engaged in political resistance. (Furuhata 2007: 346)

Everson's interest in the nondescript is reflected in Adachi's work. Just as Adachi is described by Furuhata as a departure in radical documentary through his focus on the everyday, Everson's work also embodies an example of a politically engaged cinema, focused on the ordinary and the commonplace. For Everson this continued concern relates to an interaction with how Blackness is read and expectations that are made by audiences of Black film. In his book *Film Blackness* (2016), Michael B. Gillespie, himself an author of several articles on Everson (Gillespie 2016b; Gillespie 2011), reflects on audience expectations of artists across the Black diaspora and asks: 'What if Black film is art or creative interpretation and not merely the visual transcription of the Black lifeworld?' (Gillespie 2016a: 2). In saying this, Gillespie is critiquing reading such works solely in terms of representation and the perception that such works offer the spectator a path to engaging with the conditions of a singular Black experience. With the work of Everson, I am highlighting similar methods to filming place in the work of Adachi, Gottheim and Benning. Everson's work often uses similar aesthetic engagements to place to complicate a reading of the film in strictly socio-political terms. He refrains from offering a single, fixed perspective, instead his individual sequences combine to depict structures of labour.

Alongside filmmakers such as Adachi, Gottheim and Benning, there is another filmmaker whose work not only bares resemblance to Everson's, but is a stated influence on

a number of directors associated with slow cinema, and that is Andy Warhol. Warhol, like the work of the aforementioned filmmakers through the creation of films such as *Empire* and *Sleep*, developed works which were minimal in appearance, and presented experiments in filmic temporality. There are traces running through the work of Everson, and other filmmakers associated with slow cinema, which position Warhol's work as an important reference point in the development of slow cinema, and underlines the central argument of this chapter, i.e., the importance of experimental film practices to slow cinema.

Everson's interest in Warhol can be seen through the development of *8903 Empire* (USA, 2018). This film is eight hours long and is a remake of sorts of Warhol's *Empire*. Whereas the latter is composed of a series of shots of the Empire State Building, in Everson's film the focus is on a house known colloquially as a 'trap house', which essentially means it is a site of drug trafficking. Like *Empire*, the film gives the impression of an unbroken take, but this has been transposed from an iconic building to a non-descript site in Cleveland, Ohio. *Empire* has been frequently cited by Apichatpong Weerasethakul as one his favourite films, reflecting the importance of this film to his own practice. As well as Apichatpong, Pedro Costa has spoken repeatedly about the importance of Warhol's work with film to his own understandings of cinema, and the relationship between the two has been picked up by scholars such as Volker Pantenberg: 'In both Warhol's and Costa's films, realism is a temporal form of experience that needs a certain extension in time. This realism relies on duration and patient observation, on the side of the director as well as on that of the spectator' (Pantenburg 2010: 61). The durational element is noted here, as being a connecting thread between the two filmmakers in this piece by Pantenberg. The mention of duration here is a reference to the long continuous takes used by Costa and is used across slow cinema. With Warhol, Adachi, Gottheim and Benning all being associated with

experimental film, their use of deep focus and long continuous shots reflects how their work draws on the same formal approaches as slow cinema. Combined with the connections noted in the work of Pedro Costa or Tsai Ming-liang, we can see stronger connections between the experimental durational films and some key examples of slow cinema.

Figure 18 Park Lanes

Filming labour

In *Park Lanes,* although there is a degree of variation in how workers are filmed – for example, in close up, in long shots, with a static camera or with a mobile camera – there always remains a distance between subject and spectator, which is repeated throughout the course of the film. This is an attempt to respect the impossibility of the camera to cross this barrier of spectator and subject. The variety of ways in which workers are filmed is in reflected in Figure 25. Jeff Scheible reads the depiction of the workers who appear in Everson's cinema in relation to documentary ethics:

> Viewing Everson's practice as engaging in this kind of reciprocal exchange with the people he films ethically levels the set of looking relations so that – in contrast to many other works of contemporary art and nonfiction – the artist neither condescendingly regards nor uncritically celebrates the documentary subject. (Scheible 2019: 12)

In addition to the ethics of the documentary, the effect of repetition is to avoid representing individual personalised accounts of labour, in favour of directly engaging with structures of labour. Greg de Cuir Jr., in an article for the online film magazine *Cineaste*, makes a similar observation to Scheible's, noting that Everson's interest in form does not negate an ethical interaction with his subjects:

> For all this talk of inanimate materials and formal structures, we should not deny the human qualities of Everson's cinema. We should, however, resist pigeonholing his work into a schematic exploration of race and class. Take *Park Lanes*, for example. A fullness of colour is evident from the start, highlighting the dynamic multiethnicity of the American working class but not belabouring it. (de Cuir Jr. 2015)

In relation to Gillespie and de Cuir Jr. highlighting the need to avoid framing Everson's work as only engaging with questions of representation of African Americans, *Park Lanes* reflects the gestures of Adachi, Gottheim and Benning in regard to filming place. The film underlines the connection between the individual and the site of labour. This results in the film reflecting not just an African American experience, but an African American experience in relation to labour in a distinct place. This distinction is to move away from the role of his film as providing an ethnographic insight into a community and prevent the work from providing a straightforward consumable depiction of an 'African American' experience. Whilst works like *Park Lanes* do capture the minutiae of the everyday, Everson purposefully limits an explanatory register, to focus instead on temporality. This emphasis retains the

material focus on place and specificity but also allows for a more abstract engagement with underlying structures linked to the everyday experience, in this case labour.

Everson's portrayal of labour not only recognises the factory as a site of creating objects of commodification, but also creates connections both to leisure and creativity. The connection to leisure comes across via the bowling lane as a recreational destination. The bowling alley as a space of leisure is revisited in Everson's short film *A Saturday Night in Mansfield Ohio 2* (USA, 2015), which refers to an evening out in a bowling alley in the 1970s. This was a period when Saturdays at specific local bowling alleys were considered as 'Blacks' night'. The bowling alley is therefore specifically linked to leisure and play inside a working class African American context. Similarly, Everson presents the work the labourers undertake as being a creative and highly skilled role. This presentation contradicts a notion of factory-based labour as being mundane and without finesse. As a sculptor, Everson highlights the dexterity of the act of labour, seeing a parallel between the work of the artist and the factory worker creating objects with a command of their tools and an ingrained proficiency. The factory therefore functions as a site not only of labour but also alludes to the potential of the workers to be regarded as expert craftspeople creating complex objects, many of which, due to the way they are presented, elude easy recognition, and thus are removed from being seen as objects of consumption or commerce. Everson's intervention therefore is to complicate the labour of the factory by neither fetishizing the worker nor defining their labour using Marxist terminology. Labour in the factory is industrialised and an indicator of class and in this instance race, yet it is also characterised as linking to leisure and connoting a tactile craftsmanship.

Everson's decision to film African American factory workers, not only in *Park Lanes* but again in *Workers Leaving the Job Site* (Everson, USA, 2013) and *Quality Control* (Everson,

USA, 2011), demonstrates a clear engagement with labour and the structures and the role of work within working class African Americans' lives. Everson's interest in these spaces is linked to a recurring interest in quotidian routines within African American communities and the formal qualities of labour and machinery which are underpinned by structures of power. The distancing effects of minimalism allow for a critique which is not heavy handed or explicitly defined by the attempt to expose, incriminate or prompt social change, but rather through the twin interest in the actual and aesthetic experiences of the quotidian. Everson's films, like Adachi's, provide visibility to the structural forces embedded within landscapes which enhance marginalisation and disrupt and displace communities, specifically the working class African American communities which are a constant presence in Everson's work. Adachi seeks to locate the invisible structures of power and he mirrors these symbols of power through seemingly unrelated images to try and visualise and aestheticise the condition of structural inequality. In Everson's *Park Lanes,* African American labour is made visible by the camera.

Like Adachi's work, the minimalist method by Everson, Benning and Gottheim to filming landscape is in part an engagement with temporality. For each filmmaker the engagement with time becomes a reflection on the act of making images. This connection is picked up by Samuel Adelaar, who states in relation to Benning that his work 'not only manifests the inherent inadequacy of representation, but it also draws attention to the efficacy of the world in the making of its moving image' (2017: 60). Everson frequently adopts an attitude to filmmaking where his sequences last as long as the 16mm film canister. In adapting this methodology, Everson highlights the temporal limitations of the medium. In *Park Lanes*, the artist uses a small digital camera. This model limits the reflexivity of the

medium in the manner of Benning as the DV camera is not constrained by the maximum eleven-minute take of celluloid film.

By departing from a focus on the materiality of the film apparatus as enabled by 16mm, Everson does, however, focus instead on the structures and routines of labour using the capabilities of the digital camera. The minimalist focus of stillness in Benning's work is replicated in Everson's; however, in *Park Lanes*, Everson, like Adachi, is interested in the infrastructure which shapes control and dictates the rhythm and tempo of the workers' lives. The digital camera enables the prolonged duration of his film, whereas in his work on 16mm Everson's engagement with landscape is more closely linked to the materiality of the physical object of celluloid film.

The parallels with experimental engagements with landscape underline Everson's preference for preventing his work from being strictly read in socio-political terms and departing from the documentary elements adopted in his filming of the factory. Simultaneously, Everson's use of duration captures fleeting moments which retain ethnographic and anthropological importance. The seemingly paradoxical adoption of an aesthetic which both captures the real and reflects a departure from it resonates with Everson's concern with how his films present Blackness and the African American communities his camera depicts. In relation to slow cinema, this section has tried to address three concerns: the necessity for analysing slow cinema through the framework of experimental cinema; the need for expanding the definition of slow cinema beyond post-war realist traditions; and the reading of these films in relation to geographic and material places, in doing so underlining their engagement with place. In the next section, I will further develop these concerns with a focus on the question of materiality, specifically how Everson

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uses his background in sculpture and fine art to foreground his artistic process throughout his continued engagement with African American communities.

Tonsler Park, revisiting history

In this next example, I turn to Everson's feature length film, *Tonsler Park* (USA, 2017). Using this film, I will explore how Everson explores history specifically in an African American context. I will also attempt to place Everson's work inside a broad trajectory of African American art and culture through setting out an overview of important periods in recent African American cinema. In this way, Everson's engagement with history and politics is placed in relation to African American culture, art and cinema. This focus on Everson in relation to African American culture and history produces another element with which to distance the reading of Everson's minimalist aesthetics, and more broadly slow cinema, from traditions of realism and European art cinema. Everson's work is deeply engaged with, but not defined by, its exploration of African American working-class culture.

This section recognises the validity of exploring some of the African American influences and wider cultural trajectories informing Everson's work, in order to a establish a loose frame of references for some of Everson's formal methods which come from outside the narrative of realism and art cinema. Finally, this section argues that this reflects the complex way in which Everson both engages with and complicates questions of representation and subverts audience expectations and categorisation with his recurring accounts of African American history, culture, work and leisure.

Tonsler Park premiered at the 2017 Rotterdam International film festival, before screenings later that year at the Courtisane Festival, Buenos Aires Film Festival, Brazil's Olhar de Cinema/Curtiba International Film Festival and South Korea's Jeonju International Film

Festival. The relevance of mentioning the spaces where the film was initially screened is to establish the international festival as an essential space in the initial exhibition of the film and to demonstrate the separation between the communities and places filmed and the sites where the completed work is screened. The international gallery and festival spaces are reflective of the common audiences for Everson's work, something which he addresses, to an extent, through how he considers his subjects. I will come back to this throughout this section and at greater length in the following one, but I point it out here to underscore this distinction between the internationality of his audience and the localism of the subject and themes.

Everson's film takes on the appearance of a documentary, but it is instead a work which adopts fragments of an observational work, whilst being a crafted space to reflect on the legacy of African American participation in the American electoral process. Two ways in which the film functions outside of a strict documentary commitment are visible through its approaches to geography on the one hand and temporality on the other. *Tonsler Park* was filmed in Charlottesville, Virginia, at a polling station during the 2016 United States Presidential Election. Despite being filmed in 2016, the initial idea behind the film was both to highlight the role that Black public service workers had played in ensuring that US elections could take place and to channel the moment of Barack Obama's election in 2008. Although Everson had particularly wanted to channel Obama's election, the presidential election of 2016 has recontextualised the film due to the victory of Donald Trump; however, the central concept is not Trump but instead the role of African American labour in the democratic process. As in his previous films, Everson depicts the processes and infrastructure of work, this time with the focus being the polling station, focusing on the routines and gestures of the workforce.

Locating place in *Tonsler Park*

Tonsler Park is named in reference to a public park located in Charlottesville, Virginia, dedicated to an important African American citizen, Benjamin Tonsler, who had risked imprisonment in order to educate young Black children who at the time were banned from the school system once they had passed the eighth grade. Tonsler had lived in Charlottesville, Virginia, between 1895 and 1917 and is a celebrated figure in the community, and his status as such is symbolised by having the prominent park named after him. Everson had wanted to document the different generations working and voting to get a sense of the epochal moment signified by the 2008 election. The figure of Benjamin Tonsler, who lends the polling station and thus the film its name, serves as a connection to the place of Charlottesville, a symbol of the struggle for racial equality and the work previous generations had done to lay the foundations for the election of an African American president. Despite being the name of the film, Tonsler Park was one of four polling stations where the film was shot. Whilst not highlighted in the film, Everson splits filming across the Buford Middle School Media Center, the Carver Recreation Center, the Johnson Elementary School Cafeteria, as well as the Benjamin Tonsler Recreation Center. All four are precincts in Charlottesville and are located within a relatively short distance from one another. The practical purpose of shooting across four separate sites was to ensure that there would be enough African Americans working in the polling station for Everson to visualise the original intention behind the film.

As the central concept was capturing African American workers fulfilling the role of polling station registrars, Everson had to manipulate the environment slightly to develop the work as intended. He did this by requesting that African Americans swap roles with other white members of staff and negotiate delays when African American workers were going on

break. These interventions disrupt the actual everyday reality of the space, with the film becoming a more abstract manipulated space, constructed from the material Everson had accumulated from across the four separate polling stations. Shooting across the four locations, Everson's film retains the title of the only site named after a notable African American figure. This gesture thus underlines Everson's interest in the space, and the African American history of Charlottesville through the channelling of Benjamin Tonsler.

Figure 19 Tonsler Park

These are elements which add meaningful historical detail to the film and cement the film's connection to a real place, yet the figure of Tonsler and the film's location are neither explicitly identified nor discussed within the film itself. In relation to the question of African American history and *Tonsler Park*, just by unpacking the title, there is already a clear

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reference to local history, known to Charlottesville residents, but lost on much of the film's international audience. Everson's film is thus disconnected from a single space and time due to the absence of such contextual information, existing instead to audiences not actively engaged with the space of Charlottesville, as a site abstracted from reality. Paradoxically, despite not offering audiences details allowing them to make these connections, it remains informed by the place of Charlottesville and, through the lived experiences suggested by the bodies of the workers who appear on screen, it becomes an engagement with African American history in general.

As with his previous work, Everson uses long takes, shoots in real sites of labour, and works with non-actors, methods that contrast with experimental formal methods such as his interest in abstraction. Alongside continuing with this approach, Everson shoots *Tonsler Park* in black and white, thus purposefully disrupting the audience's ability to place the historical moment of the film. As well as shooting in black and white, Everson's camera refrains from clearly capturing any objects commonplace in a modern polling station such as mobile phones, laptops, computers etc. Figure 26, for example, made up of screengrabs from four separate scenes, reflects how Everson frames his image. He positions his camera so that each worker dominates the frame, focusing on their body and face with background details unclear. He films each worker from a distance with a telephoto lens, which removes the sense of distance and limits the camera's ability to clearly pick up background and peripheral details from the interior of the polling station. Shorn of modern technology and photographed in black and white, the images are detached from being linked to a clearly identifiable moment in time.

The four images in Figure 26 are reflective of the disruption of time and space occurring throughout *Tonsler Park*. The images come from distinctly separate moments

across the film and when seen together give a sense of how Everson prioritises faces and bodies at the expense of the interior spaces of the polling station. Thanks to this focusing on the bodies, not only do the subjects' various ages come across, but the combination of black and white photography with 16mm film stock ages the images and detract from the specific contemporary moment when they are shot.

As mentioned earlier, a side effect of the ambiguity of when the film is taking place has led to reception of the film being specifically connected to the 2016 election. A number of film critics have read the *Tonsler Park* as a response to the election of Donald Trump, especially since the release of the film came just three months after election day in 2016. Articles in publications such as *Sight and Sound* (De Witt 2017), *Frieze* (Bittencourt 2017) and *Film Quarterly* (Ratner 2018) underline how the proximity to the 2016 election has overshadowed the potential for other readings of the film. Everson commented on the propensity for the film to be understood in relation to Donald Trump:

> I was thinking about the Obama 2008 election more than 2016. Then as soon as we finished, I knew Hillary was going to lose. I remember not saying a word 'cause I was all freaked out. Somebody wanted to show it for the anniversary of Trump, and I said it hasn't got anything to do with these people. It's not about the election; it's about being a civil service worker. (Ratner 2018: 68)

As Everson states here, the focus of the film is the worker, with the film conforming to techniques practiced and explored by Everson in previous films. For Everson, the film corresponds to a series of earlier works where the filmmaker has shot re-enactments of historically and culturally important events and as such relates to an interest in historically and politically significant events. These are all related to questions of African American history and culture.

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With *Tonsler Park* Everson is taking the reality of the polling station and transforming it into an imagined engagement with a previous historical moment. In an online article for *E-Flux*, Erika Balsom picks up on the loose connection between the film and a particular moment, referencing a range of historical events channelled by the focus of the workers:

> To watch *Tonsler Park* is to give oneself over to a phenomenology of gesture, comportment, and detail achieved through the presentation of images shorn of any great eventfulness. Through this heightened attunement, the film opens a protracted duration in which the concrete specificity of the represented event shares mental space with farther-reaching thoughts to which it gives rise: the first presidential election after Barack Obama's two terms, of which we know the disastrous results but the onscreen figures do not; the racialized and gendered dimensions of work; widespread voter suppression through the implementation of registration laws that disproportionately affect African-Americans; the permanent disenfranchisement of convicted felons in many states, once again disproportionately affecting African-Americans; the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and its place within the Civil Rights Movement, many demands of which we must continue to levy. (Balsom 2017)

Balsom here points out both the avoidance of adopting an overriding narrative and the resulting plurality of political events recalled in her experience of *Tonsler Park*. She reads the space of the polling station and the African American workers as historical examples of institutional and politicised racism. In spite of readings of the film in relation to Donald Trump and Balsom's description of historical examples of state racialised violence, when viewed in the context of his re-enactment films, there is a specific meaning and historical moment which is being channelled and which celebrates and commemorates African American achievement, as opposed to framing them in relation to victimhood. These works

not only inform *Tonsler Park*, they also offer a potential insight into Everson's engagement with history.

By using the occasion of Obama's election to explore the routines and processes of the polling station, Everson continues the practice of exploring history through those occupying peripheral positions. The marginality of those Everson is filming comes across through their framing. Everson again adopts experimental techniques in his approach to filming. In this instance, Everson films from such a distance that people in the polling station are constantly walking in front of the camera, which thus makes the figures indecipherable and temporarily blocks the image of the worker.

Figure 20 Tonsler Park

The role of celluloid

The frequency of voters passing in front of the camera leads to black and grey shades covering the screen and thus giving the film the appearance of a flicker film. The flicker film is a structural experimental effect which involves the quick movement between black and white resembling a fast flickering of flashing lights. Everson's interest in the formal elements of experimental cinema become apparent here, as he uses the restrictions, imposed by the distance between his camera, and the individual workers resulting in sections of the film,

taking on the characteristics of the flicker film. The flicker film, made famous by *The Flicker* (Tony Conrad, USA, 1960), emphasises abstract complex images made from the interactions between light and dark colours, and the way in which bodies block the camera, creates similar abstract, indecipherable images, as reflected in Figure 27. This aesthetic decision also draws focus to the use of celluloid to shoot *Tonsler Park*.

In her article on Tacita Dean, Kim Knowles is interested in thinking about the position of analogue filmmaking practices after the larger turn to digital as default practice for the film industry. Knowles states the following:

> The recuperation and recycling of discarded machinery by increasing numbers of artist-run film labs, as well as a burgeoning culture of do-it-yourself film chemistry, has given new energy to artisanal film practices such as optical and contact printing, hand-processing, hand-tinting and -toning, the fabrication of film emulsion, and direct-on-film animation. Although these practices have long been central to the history of experimental film language, their aesthetic and political relevance is now differently inflected as the status of analogue filmmaking shifts from the dominant to the residual. (Knowles 2016:146)

With analogue practice Everson's work takes an additional mode of slowness, linked to the tactile practices associated with working with 16mm. His work is therefore connected to slow cinema not only through its shared use of silence, stillness and slowness in addition to his adoption of depth of field and long takes, but also, his work in this context, lacks the immediacy provided by digital cameras and editing equipment, instead having to wait for anything shot on his camera to be developed and processed, before being able to even view the filmed material.

Everson is not alone in working with such materials and making slow cinema. A more canonical example of slow cinema can be found in *Two Years at Sea* (Rivers, UK, 2011). This film was shot on 16mm and upon release was frequently included under this terminology, as reflected in Rose (2012), and the film's director Ben Rivers was included in a roundtable at that year's AV Festival, which focused on slow cinema alongside Lav Diaz. The 16mm camera Everson uses repeatedly in his work is an Arri-S model. Like any 16mm camera there is a limit to the length of film the canister can hold. This is often approximately a 400-foot roll of film. This amount of celluloid used in whole would typically result in ten to eleven minutes of actual footage. Everson uses the full 400-foot roll as a type of structuring device across *Tonsler Park*. The film consists of a series of single take ten-minute shots interspersed with fleeting shorter takes which last for a few minutes. The continuous shots focus on time passing, with the camera positioned from a set position. The shot lasts for ten minutes, and the two images reflect moments from the beginning and the end of the same shot. In this case, Everson has captured an instant where the image is not dominated by workers but instead a carousel of clothes which is being attended to by workers across the shot.

By structuring the film in such a way, Everson uses the materiality of the camera as an integral formal element. This draws attention to his own process and his tools as an artist. Everson repeatedly refers to the necessity for this work to reveal or at least draw attention to his 'materials, procedure and process' (*Drainmag*, 2012). When using the 400-feet roll of film, Everson shoots twenty-four frames per second, which dictates that the film is exposed in real-time. Shooting at different framerates effects the running time of the film reels, with 24fps correlating to eleven minutes of 16mm film. This essentially ensures that there is a synchronicity between the time as experienced and the temporality of the film. The 16mm film presents a restriction as it creates a temporal limit in relation to the physical amount of

celluloid and how much footage can be captured on a reel of film. This limit affects the construction of the sequence itself, as any potential scene must be strictly conceptualised and shot within this temporal parameter. There is a precedent for this tactic in experimental cinema, with examples of artists who have used the whole 400-feet of the roll including *Cargo of Lure* (Jim Hoberman, USA, 1974), *Windows in the Kitchen* (Elaine Summers, USA, 1983) and *A Trip Through the Brooks Home* (Tony Ganz and Rhody Streete, USA, 1972). Everson's film therefore continues this tradition of using the complete roll of film as part of his work. Materiality is emphasised here as Everson incorporates the physical characteristics of the 16mm film stock and camera in the form of the film, disrupting the portrayal of the site of labour along strictly realist or documentary lines, with the structure of the film emerging from the restrictions of the reel of film. The long take within slow cinema is used repeatedly and continues to be understood as a tool to emphasise a sense of reality and documenting a more everyday sense of time passing. In this context, however, Everson's long take is characterised as a self-reflexive gesture, which foregrounds the cinematic apparatus.

Everson matches several completed reels of film to a series of separate sequences and workers from across the polling station, using the duration generated to shoot procedures which can be captured in full within this period, or to depict instances where certain tasks are repeated frequently within ten minutes. This reflects the real time of the polling station, providing an insight into the length of specific tasks and the sort of routines which are constantly repeated. Alongside this, the film reel here functions as a temporal object which ultimately dictates the temporality of the film.

Slowness as an aesthetic of marginality

Marginality is both an aesthetic and a subject for Everson, and the way in which it functions across his films, connects to the wider canon of slow cinema and the way in which these films create a political language. In her thesis, Mai positions Diaz use of duration as a formal trait, to visualise the impact of trauma and displacement in the individual. This is similar to how Apichatpong's cinema recalls the ghosts of Thailand's violent military operations against supposed communists in the 1970s or how Costa summons Portugal's colonial past in his continued interactions with migrants from Cape Verda. In each of these approaches, the directors establish a visual aesthetic which focuses on suggesting the traces of these histories in the present, resulting in what de Luca and Barradas Norge describe as making 'time noticeable in the image and consequently felt by the viewer' (2015: 2). These are works which conform to the traditions of art cinema, and as such repeatedly employ a language of metaphor and allusion. Everson's *Tonsler Park* adopts a similar visual register, he is making direct reference to histories of repression and violence, through a formal allusion and a similar deftness of touch. Like these works, there is an absence of the violence that the histories recall and a reluctance to employ a literal diegesis, with which to explicitly name and address these legacies and (in Mai's terms) traumas. Across these examples of slow cinema, there is a distinct choice of withholding information which results in a sparser aesthetic, which we can identify describe as minimalist. In *Tonsler Park*, this is also at play and reflects a wider trend, present within Everson and slow cinema, of a coming together of art cinema aesthetics, with a more minimal approach, which adopts an at times paradoxical position of exploring questions of politics, through a visual aesthetic of absence. Using Everson's *Tonsler Park*, I will unpack how the formal methods of slow cinema, uses absence and marginality as a visual aesthetic, to allude to the impact of historical violences and function as a form of political commentary.

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By downplaying the centrality of narrative, other modes of diegesis emerge in slow cinema either through screen time being given, through deep focus, to marginal elements of the frame, or strategically using objects loaded in cultural and metaphorical significance. Across Everson's work, this occurs repeatedly, and it reflects an important element of constructing the frame, but also points to how, within a long take, the viewer is granted more spectatorial freedom to explore other elements within the composition of the image. These elements subsequently become more integral, through the absence of more potentially distracting modes of filmmaking like a score, or dramatic acting or elaborate camera movements. The concept of this method, resembles that of minimalist art, where less obvious parts of an object such as its colour, material, size, are prioritised due to an absence of more dramatic, conventional elements. Looking at *Tonsler Park*, a film which deliberately, adopts a minimalist style and strips back the filmmaking process, the viewer is invited to notice other elements of the film, which would have been lost, through a more conventional method.

The form Everson adopts in *Tonsler Park* is stripped back, the film lacks a score, a conventional narrative, or any actors. The space we are in is a polling station, but the film is essentially focusing on the everyday labour of African Americans workers, and their contribution to the process of ensuring people can vote in an election. The subject is inherently political, yet the subject of the individual frames, and what each frame is composed of, often is not. This tension between the political and the everyday, makes a larger point on how slow cinema engages with the political. To focus specifically on Everson, and *Tonsler Park*, the question is how to locate the political, within a frame where it seems absent. This again speaks to slow cinema as a larger body of work, as this dynamic is equally at play in works by Rivers, Costa and Diaz.

When viewed in relation to African American art and culture, Everson's relationship to politics can be understood through his attempt to represent subjects in a manner which is largely removed from any explicitly radical discourse. He chooses rather to limit direct engagements with political subjects in order to combat readings of the Black body as being defined by their socio-political meanings. For example, Everson's recurring interest in spaces such as Charlottesville, Mansfield and the University of Virginia are all directly linked to his own lived experience. These are places where he has worked, studied and lived, and are environments which he has direct access to and experience of. This is different from the locations being chosen specifically for their political content. As discussed earlier, there are paradoxes at play here, as many of his interventions have strong political meanings. However, some of these engagements emerge out of his interactions with his surroundings. These paradoxes are also offset through his engagements with experimental filmmaking techniques and by selecting subjects who exist on the periphery of wider narratives or events. In doing so, Everson aligns himself with the subjects of the film, as opposed to audiences whose encounters with his films are likely to be in art galleries, museums and international film festivals. This does not necessarily mean that his intended audience are the people that he films, but rather that the register of the film is such that Everson's subjects retain a degree of distance from his audience. In an online article for *Sight and Sound*, Elena Gorfinkel makes a similar point:

> Everson's cinema embraces the oblique and the opaque, avoiding the expository. He says that he makes his films for his subjects, rather than for an audience. His approach short-circuits a liberal white gaze that seeks a certain narrative of blackness's representability. His images prompt us to look differently, precisely because they do not require the spectator's participation to be complete. Everson's subjects bear an

occupational intelligence; they know what they are doing far better than the spectator. (Gorfinkel 2020)

Alternative modes of diegesis

Everson has spoken of several cultural influences which emerge from a specifically African American context, and which help to frame some of these ideas relating to marginality. They come from high art as well as from traditional pop culture, which reflects Everson's own working-class background, alluding to how he engages with such subjects as manual labour and the factory space. Across a number of interviews and conversations, Everson has spoken about his interest in the work of comedian Richard Pryor. In an interview for *Film Comment*, Everson discusses the comedian in these terms:

> Richard Pryor albums were considered art in my house. No matter how dirty they were, we were allowed to hear them, 'cause I guess my parents thought they were special. Richard Pryor's *Hank's Place* [1978], a monologue about his grandmother's brothel, is my second favorite art object... I also like how he goes into the story starting with a minor character. Like he's got this joke about cunnilingus where he starts off saying my uncle told me, 'Boy, whatever you do, don't eat no pussy.' Pryor pauses, then says, 'I couldn't wait to eat some pussy because my uncle's been wrong about everything in his life.' I like the uncle... I've got all these short descriptions of relatives in my sketchbooks. Like 'this guy lies a lot', you know, or 'this guy who is horrible with money'. I just like to make these things into films. Like 'this guy's a hustler' and then figure out those kinds of backstories. The one-word description tells me how they move and groove. I want the films to be demanding. 'Cause I always want the subject

matter to be smarter than the viewer. The people on-screen know what they're doing

and you – the viewer – have to kind of catch up. (Ratner 2018: 61)

Here Everson speaks about both the role Pryor's records played in his childhood and making

a connection between the minor characters built into his jokes and his own work. His

comments here correlate with how Everson positions himself with his subjects, which informs

not only how he relates to those he films but also how these factors actively dictate the

structure and aesthetics of his films. Everson does not reveal or explore the inner lives and

backgrounds of his subjects, which prevents an engagement between subject and audience,

but also leads to his audiences projecting narratives often linked to politics and racialised

inequality. For Everson, his engagements with his subjects are often more nuanced, but these

nuances are not revealed to his audience or are hidden through Everson's aesthetics. This is

similar to other examples of slow cinema and is communicated through the aforementioned

focuses on registering less tangible ideas such as traces or sensations, rather than exploring

these through traditional diegesis.

As a filmmaker who ostensibly avoids using narrative to structure his films, Everson's

stated interest in how Pryor shapes stories alludes to how, despite not being explicitly

present, narrative and particularly backstory are integral elements of his work. Everson, for

example, refers to being interested in the marginal characters within Pryor's jokes. When

considered alongside Everson's avoidance of narrative, Pryor's use of marginal figures to

supplement the main structure of his comic fables establishes a parallel to Everson's own

use of marginality as a formal device. As demonstrated through *Park Lanes* and *Quality

Control*, the director often initiates projects which contain backstories intermingled with his

own background, but purposefully avoids developing the narrational elements of his work,

focusing instead on small gestures and non-personal interactions. In relation to *Tonsler Park,*

not only is there no information about any of the workers we see on screen, but also Everson's film is out of synch, so that the voices we do hear throughout the film have no connection to any of the people who appear on the screen, preventing any engagement with the personality and backgrounds of the workforce.

These interactions with popular African American cinema demonstrate the way in which Everson reinterprets canonical texts, highlighting their formal qualities and cultural significance within an African American context. Whilst Everson's engagement with cinema in these works is complemented by his continued focus on place and location, Everson inserts himself into a larger trajectory of African American cinema, thus establishing his own aesthetic and formal interests as part of a chronology of filmmakers exploring working class African American experiences.

For example, the mise-en-scène and interior spaces in Everson's films reflect strong sensations of authentic representations of place in that they are characterised by authentic depictions of everyday life with details reflecting the lived experience of African American communities defined by interiors of living rooms, music being played, turns of phrase and ultra-localised modes of language, and how all these elements supplement the central narratives in their work. With Everson, these same attributes of authenticity appear in his work but, when extracted from the narrative contexts and expectations of a feature film, they can create an intensified study of these isolated through becoming the central focus of a particular work. For example, this is the case with the aforementioned early sculptures such as *Mansfield, Ohio End Table* (1994) a sculpture which the artists described as follows:

[D]esigned after the end tables my parents owned in the 70s, variations on watered down Dutch modernism. At the time I was interested in objects that presented 'art' in the African American working-class home. The 'Mansfield, Ohio End Tables' had

framed photographs of Black prison guards on them. My concept was to display the new economy, which was and still is, the penal institution. (Drainmag 2015)

With this sculpture, an item which would primarily be seen within the context of an interior shot in a traditional narrative picture becomes an art object in and of itself, complete with a conceptual and biographical backstory. Similarly, Everson focuses on an African American man learning the trade in a paint factory in the six-minute short film *A Week in the Hole* (USA, 2002), a piece where Everson, through the focus on a young man's first day at work, and capturing fragments of the new environment and material objects he will be using, again alludes to the conditions and experiences from a distinct socioeconomic and racial perspective.

To return to *Tonsler Park*, by exploring the workplace in the same minimalist way used in *Quality Control,* the film reflects a concerted effort to channel the history and experiences of the real figures appearing in front of the camera. The film consists of twenty shots. These shots lack the structural quality of previous films, in that they are less strictly related to the length of a film canister as Everson explored in works like *Erie* (USA, 2010) or *Quality Control*. There remains a sensation of restriction in the film as a result of only having twenty separate shots in a film with a running time of eighty minutes. This structure results in a film which establishes a distance between subject and audience, and also connects to Everson's establishing a different way of cinematically representing the environment of his subjects. Everson's camera lingers on the expressions of the workers, drawn to how they hold themselves and navigate the space of the polling station as they conduct their responsibilities. In some instances, the use of black and white photography and the shallow focus combine with the age of the individual to momentarily highlight the ability of the figure to suggest the past. This provides another instance where Everson explicitly departs

from a mode of realism, to invoke a slippery realism, which leads to a more abstract

engagement with his subjects and topic. Here, rather than documenting reality, he invokes

histories and purposefully ages the contemporariness of the setting. For example, Figure 28

reflects a moment roughly forty-five minutes into the film. The camera focuses on the

unnamed man for nine minutes as he appears to assist people entering the polling station.

He is filmed in a manner which detaches him from his environment, as little of the space is

visible in his scenes. As such, the man is temporarily detached from a specific moment in

time and place. This is repeated throughout the film, with other individuals, but with the

older workers, their bodies and faces more explicitly connote the passing of time, as their

age is symbolic of their connection to the past.

Figure 21 Tonsler Park

The film, alongside a clear interest in the gestures of work, in this instance relating

to the election, becomes a study of Blackness, specifically of Black bodies. Across African

American cinema questions of representation are articulated in how African American

culture, history, politics and identity are presented, as reflected in key texts on the subject

such as Gillespie's *Film Blackness*. There Gillespie explores and critiques both existing

representations of African American lives and the expectations demanded of cinema to

accurately represent a singular account of the reality of the Black experience. On Everson, Gillespie argues that the filmmaker contests some of the 'uneven critical burden whereby the fundamental value of a black film is exclusively measured by a consensual truth of the film's capacity to wholly account for the lived experience or social life of race' (2016: 4). Whilst Everson is clearly engaged in questions of the lived experience and sociality of these communities, he paradoxically alludes to and adopts aesthetics which distance and disrupt the 'truth' of the image. These can repeatedly be seen through the recurring presence of silence, stillness and slowness in *Tonsler Park*, which creates a work which emphasises gestures of the working day and, in doing so, returns to one of his central concerns with cinema, the presentation of temporality.
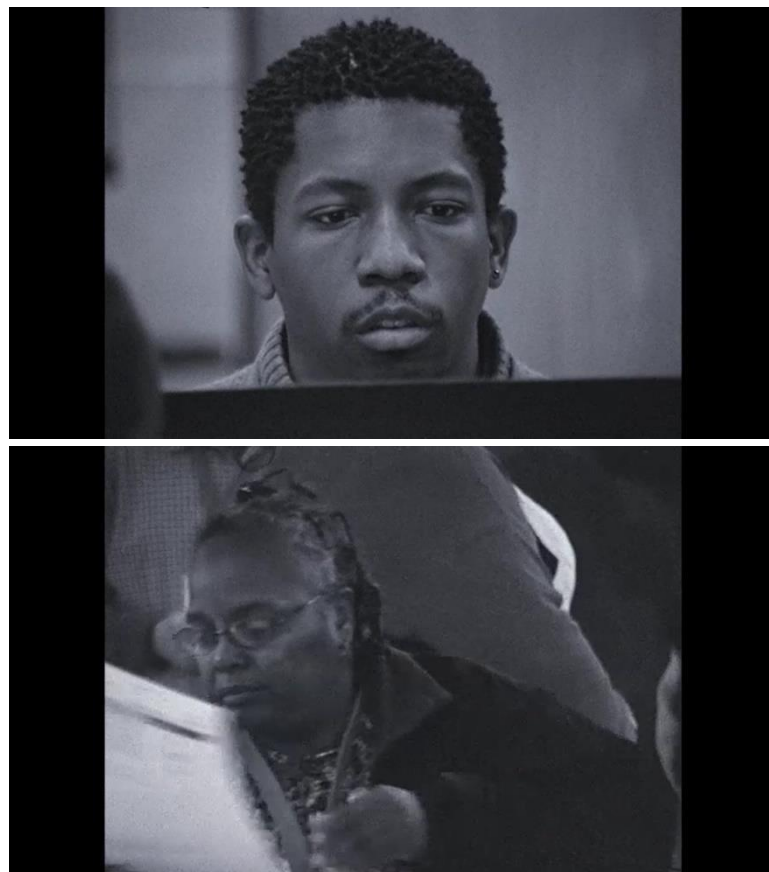

Figure 22 Tonsler Park

By filming and framing the subjects of his film in the manner that he does, Everson's films engage with Blackness by the creation of a temporal space through which his camera

captures gestures of labour. He replaces the narrative with a series of moments which display the temporality of the site of work. He focuses on the actions being performed within the workplace that are crucial to the productivity of the site as reflected in Figure 29. Here Everson's camera films workers taking names and registering voters, as well as capturing gestures of fatigue and boredom, where the workers' facial expression and posture connote detachment. The bodies who appear on screen across the film's twenty shots are framed in such a way as to embed them into their environment, without offering the audience any contextual or biographical information, which in turn leaves the audience generating their own set of narratives around each person. Everson is thus creating a depiction of African Americans which is simultaneously constructed in front of the camera, grounded in reality, and stripped of any discernible racial stereotypes or tropes. Everson creates a cinema which maintains a separation between the experiences of the workers and the audience. This absence of context resembles methods used by figures like Warhol, and gestures towards a minimalist formal style.

Tonsler Park therefore reflects Everson's exploration of history, both in terms of factual events and lived experiences, as well as an awareness of, and departure from, cinematic depictions and representations of African Americans. An awareness of African American influences and contexts establishes an artistic trajectory for Everson's work which is a notable distance from traditional art cinema. In dialogue with his interests in sculpture and experimental practices, Everson's clear interest in avoiding specific modes of representation sees him arrive organically at the minimalist style of slow cinema. His own use of the aesthetics of this style, alongside his background, reflect Everson's distinct journey towards slow cinema.

Figure 23 Everson filming *Lead, Fe26*

Everson's use of duration and his emphasis on the processes of his own work frames the filmmaker as deeply engaged in his own labour. There is, across the film, a flexibility and blurring between the reality of the space and the artist's objective account of the working environment. At times the environment of the factory or workspace includes objects crafted by Everson, and in other instances there are familial narratives connected to these spaces which go unnamed and unexplored. Everson's tracing of his own family history through the sites of labour, both points to his connection to the subject and also reflects similar experiences of countless other African American families, thus connecting to a wider history and narrative. Figure 30 consists of an image of Everson filming his short film *Lead* (USA, 2009) and a still from the short *Fe26* (USA, 2014). *Lead*, like *Quality Control*, is filmed within a factory and engages with the routines and gestures of the space. The image shows Everson hunched with a handheld camera whilst also wearing a hardhat. Beneath this simple summary of the image a deeper reflection of Everson's practice is apparent. Everson is wearing the same equipment as the workers, which, while likely to be a precaution demanded by being present in the space, corresponds with his position of being absorbed into the physical, material space of the factory, his presence becoming a part of the

atmosphere of the place, minimising the disrupting impact of his presence in the environment of the factory.

Everson's durational and minimalist methods conform with understandings of slow cinema, whilst establishing connections to trajectories of experimental landscape cinema, sculpture, and African American art and culture. His work, by making these connections, demonstrates the experimental traditions which inform slow cinema, and in his interactions with African American artistic practices establishes alternative reference points for his formal style. These sit outside of the long history of international art cinema from which slow cinema is positioned as having evolved, according to most critics and scholars, for example Mai, de Luca and Çağlayan. In placing Everson within the parameters of slow cinema, I have highlighted the limitations of understanding the style solely in relation to traditions of realism, and instead have asserted how the method clearly draws from these modes of filmmaking and incorporates more experimental formal characteristics, by focusing on the ways in which slow cinema connects to modes of experimental film in their engagements with notions of space and local culture. In my next chapter, I will demonstrate another way in which slow cinema positions itself in relation to experimental traditions, notably the way the films facilitate a movement from the cinema to the gallery space.

Chapter Three: Distributing and Exhibiting Slow Cinema

In the preceding chapters, I advocate for embracing the experimental essence of slow cinema. Expanding on this notion in this current chapter, I will delve deeper into how, in tandem with its experimental underpinnings, slow cinema has spurred the creation of alternative exhibition spaces. Focusing particularly on the art gallery and contemporary art museum, I assert their pivotal role as the natural homes for slow cinema, transcending the fleeting spotlight of international film festivals.

Looking back at slow cinema from the distance provided by the time of writing, one element which characterises these films as distinctive is the question of where they are shown. In addition to this, there is the question of how the emergence of slow cinema coincided with shifting changes in the cinema distribution network, particularly in relation to practices common across art-house and repertory cinemas alongside the presence of the cinema theatre inside the gallery and museum space. Writing in his 2012 thesis, Matthew Flanagan provides commentary on how slow cinema exists in parallel to the film festival:

> During the course of the last decade, the concepts of 'slow cinema' and the 'festival film' have often become intertwined in popular discourse, circulating as a shorthand for both a certain type of unassuming, minimalist film often entirely restricted to the festival circuit (or very limited national distribution), and a more challenging, austere mode of durational art or experimental film marginalised even in that context too. (Flanagan 2012: 8)

Building on this summary, the circuits Flanagan refers to here are essentially the paths used for dissemination of independent cinema and international art cinema. This sees the film

festival function as producer and exhibitor, with art house, independent or repertory cinema spaces and streaming services all functioning as secondary sites of exhibition and distribution. Instead of being intertwined as Flanagan suggests, we can now see how in addition to these sites, slow cinema has facilitated the creation of alternative ones.

Once a film has gone through the initial journey starting at the festival, it will likely find itself being presented in infrequent and sporadic screenings, as part of specially curated international programmes in cinema theatres, providing a less consistent means of theatrical distribution, until the cycle begins again with the creation of a new work premiering at a film festival. Paying close attention to how slow cinema is distributed and disseminated allows us to demonstrate how these films have been presented in ways which extend beyond this cycle, offering alternative ways of exhibition enabled in part by the role of the art gallery and contemporary museum.

There are two specific elements which determine and enable a different method. One is straightforward and easy to identify, namely, the duration of the works. Titles such as Kevin Jerome Everson's *Park Lanes* or Lav Diaz's *Melancholia* running at over seven hours provide self-explanatory issues of presentation. The second is slightly more speculative. The twin notions of art cinema and world cinema, in the field of distribution, have a far more restrictive and market-led definition in comparison to their usage in academic discourse. As such, this limits the types of works which are picked up by distributors and subsequently screened in art house and repertory cinemas. The loose interrelation between experimental moving image practices and more traditional elements of art cinema and world cinema, by which slow cinema is generally defined, has resulted in these works frequently being

exhibited outside of these sites. However, far from being invisible or marginalised, they have benefited from the curatorial practices existing in the large contemporary art gallery.

So far, I have explored the emergence of slow cinema, set out my working definition of the films, and gone into detail to explore how filmmakers making work in line with this style undertake the representation of an extreme locality. There is a recurring contradiction, which I have identified in previous chapters, between the intensified sense of locality and tone adopted by these filmmakers, and the transnational spaces that the films exist in, particularly in regard to where they are shown. This paradox lies in the way that these distribution networks function and speak to larger questions of access in relation to art, which fall beyond the remit of this thesis. I mention this here, as throughout this chapter I will build upon this relationship between local and transnational, by going into more detail through several case studies, to explore where it is that these works are being shown. In doing so, I will highlight the increasing presence of the art gallery as a site of exhibition and distribution, and how this space functions not only as a traditional 'white cube', but also has become a fluid site containing multiple 'black boxes'.

Through an analysis of the distribution and exhibition of slow cinema, I will explore how distinct models of curation have emerged, which reflect the difficulties the films present, in part due to their position between experimental and art cinema, alongside the formal restrictions caused by duration. By way of structure, this chapter is formed of three case studies centred around the circulation of material by Kevin Jerome Everson, Lav Diaz and Apichatpong Weerasethakul. My first case study looks at two presentations of work by Kevin Jerome Everson, a retrospective at the Pompidou Centre and an exhibition held at the Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina. My second case study is 'Lav Diaz: Journeys' held

at the London Gallery West, which is a part of the University of Westminster, and ran from 27th January to 12th March 2001. My third and final case study is 'Apichatpong Weerasethakul: Mirages', a film programme and installation held at Tate Modern in London. The film programme ran from 8th April to 10th April 2016 and the exhibition ran throughout June 2016. In selecting these filmmakers, I return to two of the three directors who form the subject of Chapter One, as well as continuing the engagement with Everson's work.

Cinema as Modern Art

Slow cinema has surfaced in tandem with a notable change in the way cinema is integrated into gallery spaces. This shift is characterised by the increasing presence of cinema within contemporary art galleries and art museums. It is important to differentiate cinema from other forms of film and moving images typically found in these spaces, like experimental film or artists' film and video. Alongside experimental short-form film, long-form feature-length cinema has found a place within the realm of contemporary galleries, through specifically focused cinemas, now being created as part of the modern gallery, like Tate Modern or MoMA. The spaces of the cinema and the gallery are brought into dialogue as sites of exhibition and slow cinema has both helped facilitate and benefited from this juxtaposition. The analysis of and focus on this shift are developed through my case studies and provide an additional way to explore one of the central concerns of this thesis, the understanding of slow cinema as existing beyond the traditions of realism, art cinema and world cinema. Subsequently, a focus on how these works are curated strengthens the connection between them and practices of experimental cinema.

Part of the cycle which art cinema and world cinema enter into is the commodification and re-circulation of cultural and national products which enter into the international sphere, adopting patterns which are supported and marketed under national 'new waves'. Despite the wide spectrum of the films understood under this term, the marketplace of the festival becomes a site for the purchasing and accumulation of cinema, based on their propensity and marketability to be distributed through cinema theatres, streaming and finally purchasable media objects. The network is thus predicated on commodification and on the purchase of films able to channel notions of national and cultural authenticity, which is itself predicated upon such things as the identifiability of the auteur director or a national film movement. The adoption of a minimalist aesthetic complicates the consumption of identifiable cultural and national elements of a particular film. We can see this through reference to Everson and how he navigates these notions of authenticity and internationality. For example, in an article for *Artforum* Ed Halter directly references this point:

> Everson rejects the role of cultural explainer in his work, opting instead to place the burden of understanding on the audience and its own labour. In this way, he has carved a place for himself outside both the typical expectations of documentary and the conventions of representational fiction, attempting to work from the materials of the worlds he encounters to create something else. (Halter 2010: 291)

A practical example of how this can function within a film can be seen through the way that slow cinema, through the long take, prolongs the connection between the individual and their environment, at the expense of explanatory information aimed at the audience.

The non-explanatory gesture contrasts with the way that cinemas are circulating art and world cinema as consumable and marketable products, as slow cinema pushes towards the boundaries of the 'pleasures' spectators expect from art house and repertory circuits. This contrast can be noticed across discussions in film criticism such as Romney (2010) and James (2010a, 2010b). As such, slow cinema subsequently requires an alternative mode of exhibition to both present and extrapolate meaning to audiences, which is both absent from the works and integral to developing an understanding of them. In addition to the issues relating to duration and contextualisation, the engagements with experimental aesthetics have combined with the continued visibility of moving image works within the gallery space, leading to art and cultural institutions becoming the de facto sites of exhibition of these works.

The architecture of the contemporary gallery and multi-art centre has become associated with including a physical cinema theatre with a specially curated programme separate from a first run-programme or traditional repertory cinema, as well as separate gallery spaces which allow for projected cinema as well as expanded cinema or installations to be presented under the auspices of these centres' operations.

This model to a certain extent can be seen to originate from the history of the Museum of Modern Art where there has been a film department since 1935. After which, upon finding a permanent home on 53rd Street Manhattan in 1939, MoMA had established a film curator, Iris Berry, whose role at the time included the purchasing of important works and paraphernalia. MoMA's preference at the time was to re-think the role of a modern art gallery and, as such, it was able to develop a new relationship between cinema and the

museum. In a UNESCO article on MoMA's relationship with cinema, this is outlined and stated in the following manner:

> This was a radical notion, indeed, and it proved possible to realize at the Museum of Modern Art because it fitted the vision of the museum's founding director, Alfred Barr. A 'modern' museum had been conceived both to bridge the gap between avant-garde artists and the public, and to promote the appreciation and understanding of the visual arts of the modern era. Alfred Barr had been influenced by his studies with art historian Charles Rufus Morey, who taught a course at Princeton University which focused on the principal medieval visual arts as a record of a period of civilization: architecture, sculpture, paintings on walls and in books, stained-glass windows. Barr applied Morey's medieval model to the twentieth century, and he in turn taught modern painting and sculpture, together with film, photography, music, theatre, architecture, and industrial design. He also visited the Bauhaus at Dessau, Germany, where theatre, cinema, and photography were taught alongside the fine arts; it is the Bauhaus that is considered his model for the organization of the museum as a multi-departmental institution, including the so-called commercial and popular arts as well as 'fine' arts. (Bandy 1994: 26)

This method was not simply a conceptual one, it also had an impact on the physical construction of the building that would be their permanent home, as the original building would be constructed with a 480-seat cinema auditorium, reflecting this position where cinema sits under the banner of a modern art museum.

Following on from this model, established with the 1939 opening of MoMA in its Manhattan location, the architecture of the contemporary gallery and multi-art centre is

now expected to facilitate a physical cinema theatre, as well as separate gallery spaces which allow for projected cinema as well as expanded cinema or installations. Using London as an example, multi-art institutions such as the Barbican Centre and the Institute of Contemporary Art both feature cinema and gallery spaces, alongside theatre and music venues, whereas both contemporary art institutions Tate Modern and Tate Britain have physical cinema spaces within the same institution. The spatial structure of the contemporary art gallery is thus designed for both expanded cinema and a traditional cinema auditorium. The inclusion of spaces for both expanded and traditional cinema reflects the tendency of contemporary experimental film to be understood as works which fluctuate between the object of a feature film to be screened communally within the space of the cinema, alongside more expanded, looped and installation type mediums designed to be displayed within the space of the art gallery.

In addition to facilitating the processes and production methods of artists working with film, the position of the physical space of the cinema within the art museum enables both an engagement with traditional film and a questioning of the space of the cinema and what is understood and meant by this space in relation to art practices. For example, using New York's Museum of Modern Art as a reference, it has since 1935 been collecting film prints deemed culturally and artistically important from major Hollywood studios and building an archive of motion pictures. The gallery's Motion Picture Department has been in existence since its opening in 1929 (although there was not yet collection of prints at this point) and as such it helped to initiate the role of the contemporary gallery as a home for cinema. The contemporary art gallery is thus both a site for traditional cinema and expanded cinema, which presents to artists working with duration the possibility of bringing both spaces into conversation. By illustrating different models of screening and distributing their

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work, this section will demonstrate the benefits of viewing slow cinema as a distinct object and will explore how the films have encouraged an intermingling between the spaces of the cinema and the gallery.

Exhibiting Everson

As an artist with a background in sculpture and photography, Everson is already framed as existing between the gallery and the cinema. His work screens regularly at major international festivals like Rotterdam and Berlin and he has been the subject of several exhibitions in art galleries and museums. Notable examples of Everson's work in major gallery spaces are the solo show 'More Than That: Films by Kevin Jerome Everson' (2011) at the Whitney Museum of American Art, which was made up of seventeen short films, digitised and screened across four screens. Later, he was part of the 57th Edition of the Carnegie International at the Carnegie Museum of Art and was selected as part of Whitney Biennial in 2008, 2012 and 2017. Everson is represented by Andrew Keeps Gallery and has exhibited across their various sites such as 'Kevin Jerome Everson Mansfield Deluxe' at 22 Cortlandt Alley from 26th February to 27th March 2021, 'Westinghouse' at 55 Walker Street from 29th February to 11th April 2020, and 'Century' at 537 W 22nd Street from 13th April to 13th May 2017. The trajectory of Everson's career specifically in relation to where his films are shown, the gallery or the cinema, was noted by Holland Cotter in an article for the *New York Times* when Everson's exhibition opened at the Whitney:

> Despite their frequent appearance in film festivals and on museum film programs, they have yet to sink fully into art world consciousness. Even when Mr. Everson's striking seven-minute *Emergency Needs* was in the 2008 Whitney Biennial, it was side-lined, as biennial films often are, by the objects in the galleries. As if to make up for this, the museum has organised a small solo show. (Cotter 2011: 21)

This review is summarising Everson's position in 2011, which has subsequently changed, through repeated inclusions at the prestigious Carnegie International, and as his profile has continued to rise and has subsequently been more prominently visible in the gallery and museum sites.

His highest profile programme in the UK took place in 2017 at Tate Modern, entitled 'Kevin Jerome Everson: So I Can Get Them Told', and centred around 'representations of labour and performativity within his practice' (Tate, 2017). Subsequently a 2019 retrospective as part of the Cinema du Réel festival was held at the Pompidou Centre. The specificity of these venues underlies the potential for Everson's work to mix the spaces of cinema and gallery and differentiates his work from how art and world cinema is exhibited. The retrospective at the Pompidou Centre (2019) and 'Kevin Jerome Everson, The Abstract Ideal' (2019) at the Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina were characterised by screening film in the cinema space and using gallery spaces to present works as installations, which allowed for the programmes to fluidly move across both spaces.

Aside from the spaces of the festival, retrospectives and individual exhibitions, a small portion of Everson's work with film is available through the Video Data Bank, which functions as his distributor, handling licenses for public screenings and purchasing DVD copies of his films. Outside of the Video Data Bank Everson largely handles distribution of his works himself. Whilst the Video Data Bank offers the opportunity for home screenings, the work is only available to purchase within pre-curated collections. This limits the availability of the films and makes the public screenings one of the only ways to see Everson's works. The Video Data Bank's collection only contains a small selection of Everson's films, so most of his works to date are only able to be seen in public screenings

and exhibitions. The distribution method is not one which adopts the model of selling limited edition copies of the film, instead most of the distribution is relatively small-scale, with DVD copies available to purchase through the Video Data Bank. There is, through the films which are available for purchase, a strong emphasis on contextualising the work, with essays written by notable academics and scholars of Everson included within the collection of DVDs. There is a clear sense of the collections being curated and this mode of distributing film reflects the level of control Everson has over how his work is presented to the public. As previously mentioned, specific titles are only available in thematic collections from the Video Data Bank. The specificities of what is available and the collections in which the films are grouped together are decided in close co-ordination with the artist.

I will now turn my focus to both the Pompidou Centre retrospective and the exhibition 'Kevin Jerome Everson, The Abstract Ideal', which took place at the Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina in Novi Sad. The purpose of focusing on these two programmes here is that they share many similarities, specifically in the way in which they use both film screenings and installations. Both are curated by Greg de Cuir Jr., who as an African American curator has worked on several programmes of Everson's work.

The relevance of these two retrospectives being held within what are essentially contemporary art galleries is linked to Everson's approach to film and his aesthetics. Both programmes are centred around the presentation of his work with film and the use of the gallery as a separate site to that of the cinema. The programmes are therefore both in line with a traditional retrospective, as well as offering alternative interventions into the presentation of a filmmaker's work. Across his career, Everson has repeatedly developed exhibition work incorporating sculptures. For example, *Westinghouse* (2019) is an exhibition incorporating two short films by Everson, *Westinghouse 1* (USA, 2019) and *Westinghouse 3*

(USA, 2019). The exhibition, as reflected in Figure 31, is structured around a digital projection of two films, installed alongside six rubber cast sculptures of irons. The two films depict a worker using one of the rubber irons made by Everson to iron white sheets, referencing another industry which had been largely marginalised and dissipated in Mansfield, Ohio. The way in which the gallery space is used here is an organic approach to displaying both film and sculpture, with the result being the mixed media installation we can see in Figure 31. In the two aforementioned programmes, the gallery space is used in a slightly different way, focusing instead on using the exhibition space as a site for screening.
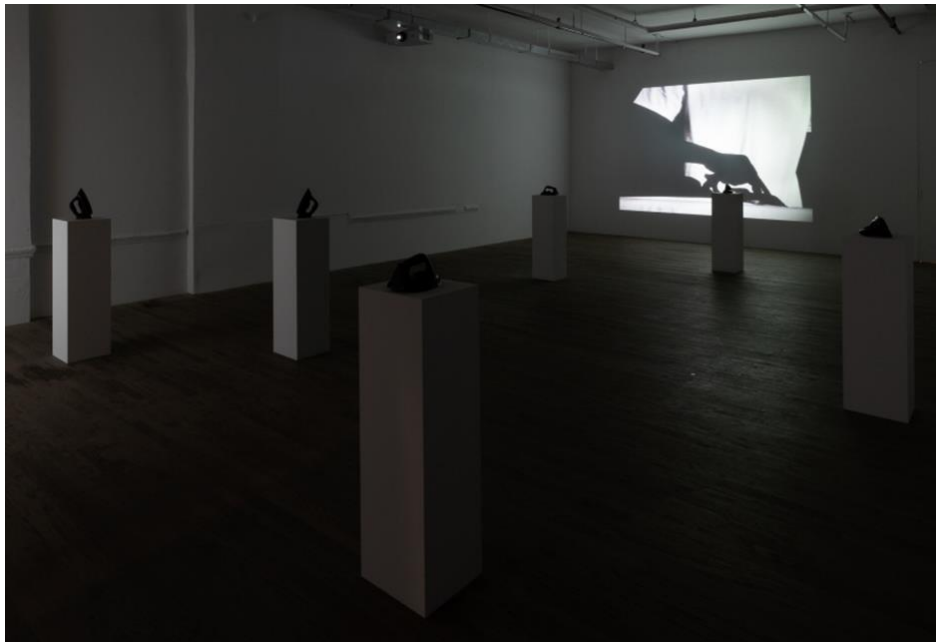
Figure 24 Westinghouse (Installation View)

Everson's Pompidou Centre retrospective ran from 15th March to 24th March 2019 and was part of Cinema du Réel, a long running festival engaging with cinema at the intersections of documentary and avant-garde practices. Later that year from 24th March to 24th June was the Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina exhibition, 'Kevin Jerome Everson: Abstract Ideal'. Unlike the retrospective in Paris, this was presented as a stand-

alone exhibition which presented Everson's work with film as installation and digital projections.

Across the two film programmes, the gallery provides a capacity to realise elements of Everson's work which were present in their original conceptualisation. One such example which was present in both the Pompidou Centre and the Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina was how *Park Lanes* was installed. Part of the reasoning behind the eight-hour running time was for the film to mirror the opening hours of a museum and run in full, across the period that the site was open. In response to both this idea and the practical issue of programming such a long film, both programmes presented the film as an installation running across a multi-day period. The Pompidou Centre retrospective was a part of Cinema du Réel, a yearly film festival, and *Park Lanes* was installed throughout the ten days of the festival. Similarly, the film was running in full across the course of the length of the exhibition. By presenting the film in such a manner, despite the practical difficulty for an audience member to take in the entire length of the film, there is at least an opportunity to experience the completed film from start to finish.

As with Everson's other durational works like *8903 Empire* (USA, 2016), *Park Lanes* has been presented in a number of different ways. For example, when presented inside the cinema space, the film has been accompanied by a break with a lunch set up for audience members in order to accentuate the time being spent through the collective spectatorship. The difference in seeing the film in a cinema space and as an installation is significant. Yet, as the film is centred around repetition and routine, the experience of perceiving fleeting, fragmented moments whilst entering into the space of an installation at a random point of the film removes the spectatorial experience from the intended beginning of the film, thus placing a greater importance on the gestures and atmosphere of the factory, as a spectator

has not experienced the structured origin. So, rather than experiencing the chronological portrait of a day in the factory from start to finish, they are instead presented with a context-less sequence of footage, dependent on the point at which their journey through the exhibition space leads them to the installation. The chance encounter is generated by the way in which the gallery facilitates the visitor's engagement with the film, with viewers not expected to experience the film in full. The film itself, structured around an eight-hour day, also enables a looser mode of spectatorship through the way that each sequence focuses on a separate moment, whether it be of leisure time or the construction of a specific part of the bowling alley, facilitating a spectatorship of the fragmented sections, with viewers experiencing the separate sections almost as mini-vignettes.

The emphasis on the processes of the factory, often shot in single takes, ensures that when a viewer walks into the installation they are presented with a specific moment from the day of the factory, which emphasises the simultaneous, parallel tasks being performed within the workplace. The viewer, therefore, even when encountering the film at random, with limited time will be engaging with a sense of both the routine which make up the factory, and some of the infinitesimal details of labour and leisure within the factory. There have been some studies into the amount of time spent by gallery visitors engaging with individual works of art, for example a study based on MOMA by J.K. Smith, L.F. Smith and P.L. Tinio (2017) suggesting that the mean amount of time spent looking at a work is 28.63 seconds. Whilst this does not specifically include moving image work, the study remains a reference point for the amount of time audience members engage with art objects within the gallery space. In relation to the Novi Sad exhibition, Figure 32 reflects how the film appears as an installation, notably how the position of the screen in the room divides the space of the exhibition and the scale of the screen.

Figure 25 Park Lanes (Installation View)

Everson's work within the Pompidou Centre retrospective and the Novi Sad exhibition is presented both within the context of experimental film and traditions of documentary. Cinema du Réel has, since its inaugural edition in 1969, focused on sociological and ethnographic film in order to promote and explore factual cinema. In recent years, the festival has steadily expanded its scope to include experimental work alongside the aforementioned historical concerns. Across the Novi Sad and Pompidou Centre programmes Everson's work with slow formal characteristics was included and their presence reiterates the contemporaneity of slowness as a formal mode of experimental cinema. The retrospective at the Pompidou Centre, aside from *Park Lanes*, is largely structured around the space of the cinema, reflecting how the programme is dominated by his work with film.

The programme, as reflected in Figure 33, consists of screenings of Everson's seven feature length films, two sessions of short films, and a masterclass, as well as the installation of *Park Lanes*. Everson's programme largely takes place within the cinema space,

emphasising the festival's identity and traditions as a festival concerned with documentary. Even Everson's eight-hour work, *8903 Empire*, is screened in full inside a cinema, placing Everson's durational work as a film to be viewed from start to finish. It is only Everson's *Park Lanes* which is screened as an installation outside of the cinema space. The retrospective, partly due to the relationship with the Cinema du Réel festival, underplays the potential for the multi-venue art gallery site to function as a space to illustrate the themes, concepts, and aesthetics of Everson's work, through the dominant role of the cinema space and the choice to not present Everson's work as a sculptor and object maker, alongside his work with film.

Figure 33 List of Works for Pompiduo Centre Programme

Title	Type of Event	Length	Venue
8903 Empire (2016)	Feature Film	480min	Centre Pompidou: Cinéma 1
Cinnamon (2006)	Feature Film	71min	Centre Pompidou: Cinéma 2
Erie (2010)	Feature Film	81min	Centre Pompidou: Petite Salle
Masterclass Kevin Jerome Everson	Talk/Conversation	150min	Centre Pompidou: Petite Salle
Park Lanes (2015)	Installation	480min	Centre Pompidou: Forum bas
Quality Control (2011)	Feature Film	71min	Centre Pompidou Cinéma 2
Spicebush (2005)	Feature Film	68min	Centre Pompidou Petite Salle
The Island of St. Matthews (2013)	Feature Film	65min	Centre Pompidou Petite Salle
Tonsler Park (2017)	Feature Film	86min	Centre Pompidou Cinéma 2
Ears, Nose and Throat (2016)	Shorts Programme 1	10min	Centre Pompidou: Petite Salle & Cinéma 2

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Eason (2016)	Shorts Programme 1	15min	Centre Pompidou: Petite Salle & Cinéma 2
Fe26 (2014)	Shorts Programme 1	7min	Centre Pompidou: Petite Salle & Cinéma 2
IFO (2017)	Shorts Programme 1	10min	Centre Pompidou: Petite Salle & Cinéma 2
R-15 (2017)	Shorts Programme 1	5min	Centre Pompidou: Petite Salle & Cinéma 2
Sound That (2014)	Shorts Programme 1	11min	Centre Pompidou: Petite Salle & Cinéma 2
Workers Leaving the Job Site (2015)	Shorts Programme 1	6min	Centre Pompidou: Petite Salle & Cinéma 2
A Good Fight (2018)	Shorts Programme 2	2min	Centre Pompidou Cinéma 2
Black Bus Stop (2019)	Shorts Programme 2	9min	Centre Pompidou Cinéma 2
Fastest Man in the State (2018)	Shorts Programme 2	10min	Centre Pompidou Cinéma 2
How Can I Ever Be Late (2017)	Shorts Programme 2	4min	Centre Pompidou Cinéma 2
Music From the Edge of the Allegheny Plateau (2017)	Shorts Programme 2	7min	Centre Pompidou Cinéma 2
Round Seven (2018)	Shorts Programme 2	19min	Centre Pompidou Cinéma 2
The Release (2013)	Shorts Programme 2	4min	Centre Pompidou Cinéma 2
Travelling Shoes (2019)	Shorts Programme 2	7min	Centre Pompidou Cinéma 2

In comparison, 'Kevin Jerome Everson: Abstract Ideal', as an exhibition, is framed exclusively within the white cube. The show is structured into three sections, with the first area framed around his short film *Welterweight* (USA, 2018) and several of his props. The

short film is a re-enactment of a fight between African American boxers Sugar Ray Leonard and Art McKnight which descended into a riot when the fight was called too early, a subject Everson has explored in the short films *Round Seven* (USA, 2018) and *A Good Fight* (USA, 2018). The fight is one for which no filmed footage exists. Exploring the way in which Everson approaches sports, Jeff Scheible comments on how 'issues of race, film form, and history are cinematically triangulated' (Scheible 2020: 33). Scheible reads Everson's concerns as a cine-literate gesture which speaks to a legacy of racism both in American society in general, but also specifically in the contexts of sports and cinema, stating:

> Consideration of Everson's films from the perspective of athletics – as theme, description of process, and link to a longer history of the cinematic treatment of antiblackness – throws into focus the abiding fascinations and anxieties related to performance, movement, and competition that sporting events animate across American culture. (Scheible 2020: 35)

As Scheible states, Everson's engagement with sport connects to concerns of racism within cinematic and sporting history in the United States, but also present is a continued interaction with local spaces. Like many of his films, within the first room of the exhibition through the *Welterweight* film and accompanying objects, there is a connection both to the space of Mansfield, Ohio, and a personal connection to Everson's own family. The fight took place in Ohio and Everson's uncle had been present in the audience. The film therefore reflects a piece of local and familial folklore, passed down between those who were there to remember the event. The film itself was shot on 16mm and was installed digitally via a projector running for three minutes, which was the length of his box of film stock. One wall contains the projected film, with the three other walls displaying props from the film. In this instance, these consist of a replica of two posters advertising the fight between Leonard and

McKnight and the eight round cards used within the film to designate each round passing. This room therefore reflects a similar method to *Westinghouse*, in that the space is expanded to demonstrate Everson's preference of manufacturing the reality of the film.

Figure 26 The Abstract Ideal

Figure 34 reflects the positioning of the round cards, created by Everson. Their positioning within the space of the exhibition reflects how Everson's non-filmic objects relate to his films. Their presence also demonstrates how the objects function as replicas for the original historical items which no longer exist. Everson thus creates stand-ins to make up for the fact that the original objects, full of historic and cultural resonance to the memory and identity of the African American communities of Mansfield, Ohio, are absent. This opening space sees Everson's artwork, both film and non-film, centralise around documenting traces of something, whether it be video footage or memorabilia, which no longer exists, yet resonates within the memory of the community. Writing on two of Everson's films which document the same event, Scheible argues that Everson's engagement with an event lacking an indexical record means that Everson's films function 'as an index of audiovisual histories that have been lost, and more specifically of racial injustices that have been swept from the record' (Scheible 2020: 17).

In the second section, there is a series of three short films projected digitally on loops. The three films are silent, and all run for under five minutes. The works all feature

personal connections to the space of Mansfield, Ohio, reflecting Everson's recurring interest in his hometown. Installed are *Westinghouse One* (2019), *Ninety-Three* (USA, 2008), which features Everson's daughters' maternal grandfather blowing out candles, and *Richland B&W* (USA, 2018) consisting of a single take portrait of a factory worker. In the same room, installed on the opposite side, is the film *Polly Two* (USA, 2018), a film capturing the eclipse and named in reference to Everson's grandmother who passed away the day after it was shot. The position of these works in relation to each other emphasises the technical experiments Everson makes with light. The three shorts positioned next to each other are filmed in black and white, but each is playing with the limitations of Everson's tools. For example, *Westinghouse One* is filmed on high contrast film stock, which results in a sharper distinction between the two colours. In the same film Everson uses a hand crank which allows the operator to manually direct the film through the camera. This can also allow the operator to speed and slow down the tempo. When displayed alongside *Ninety-Three*, a film which uses the candles as the only source of light and which was shot on a normal black and white 16mm film stock, the differences between the two stocks are made much more noticeable, due to the close proximity of each work.

The three films are all installed and projected in the gallery together in a single room. The relationship between Everson's works for the cinema and works for the gallery is not made explicit here. For example, Everson distinguishes between the two spaces, and in instances where his films are commissioned for a gallery space he conceptualises the work to respond to the site of exhibition. The difference for Everson is also one which can produce either an active or passive spectator, based on the audience members' ability to move within the respective spaces. One such work which does this is *Ninety-Three*. Whilst it was installed in the Novi Sad exhibition as a projected film, the work was shot in such a manner that the

projected image effects the conditions of the space. The piece, which has now been purchased by the Whitney for their permanent collection, when installed in the gallery is designed to be screened in complete darkness so that the candles which appear on screen are the only source of light within the room. As the candles are blown out, the light source is slowly extinguished, leaving the room in complete darkness. The film therefore affects the lighting of the space.

Figure 27 The Abstract Ideal: Richland Black and White, Westinghouse One and Ninety Three

The presence of *Ninety-Three* alongside *Westinghouse One* and *Richland B&W* in this instance, however, invites comparisons with portraiture due to the way in which they are positioned on the gallery wall. Within the context of the gallery, the capability of the films to be read as portraits is increased due in part to the expectations from the space of an art gallery, in comparison to that of a cinema. The gallery comes with a lexicon used to describe works which differs from that associated with cinema, and in this instance Everson's interest in exploring people from his community and family recalls traditions of the portrait. Alongside the exhibition space, each film is both completely silent and filmed with a still camera. These two qualities combined underscore the presence of the individual. The focus on the individual thus emphasises the characteristics of portraiture in these three films. Figure 35 displays stills of each of the three works. *Ninety-Three* focuses on the maternal grandfather of one of Everson's daughters and the figure fills the screen with his presence, alongside that of the candles, dominating the frame. The second of the three, *Westinghouse*

One, is a film, also in black and white, which focuses on a young man using one of Everson's prop-irons, to act out the gestures of labour within a dry-cleaning factory. The object being used is a cast sculpture of an iron, a reference to the irons which would have been manufactured in the factories of Mansfield, before wide-spread factory closures across the Midwest severely depleted local industry and employment. The body of the man dominates the frame, ensuring that the actions he performs with his hands are framed centrally throughout the three-minute-eighteen-second running time.

Figure 28 The Abstract Ideal: Richland Black and White, Westinghouse One and Ninety Three

Richland B&W is composed of an unbroken three-minute-two-second shot of one a young man from Mansfield, Ohio. Taken in mid-shot, the young man's face is framed centrally as he stares into the camera. The young man is from Richland, and this is thus a portrait and reference to the younger generation emanating from Everson's hometown. The three films (Figure 36) positioned as they are side by side within the exhibition, resemble a triptych of portraits of black men, all linked directly linked to the space of Mansfield, Ohio. When viewed alongside each other, as suggested through the below image, they become cinematic portraits and close engagements with Everson's experiences of Mansfield,

through his use of family members and associates, as well as his attempt to reflect on the history of labour practices and the effect of a dissipated industry on the community.

Figure 29 The Abstract Ideal Poster

One intended yet unrealised concept the exhibition's curator, Greg de Cuir Jr., had for the exhibition, was to include more of the objects Everson had crafted for his films, such as the rubber irons from *Westinghouse One*. However, due to practical complications this was not realised within the final show. One of the objects Everson had created for his film was used for the poster (Figure 37) and booklet of the exhibition, underlying the materiality and engagements with the act of making physical objects that Everson maintains across his career. Despite the idea of using the irons in the exhibition not being possible, the exhibition still positions Everson as a maker of objects in conjunction with his work with film.

In the final section of the exhibition is an installation of *Park Lanes*. The film is installed with benches at the back of the exhibition, with the projected screen creating a partition to separate the film from the other areas of the space. The position of the installation also suggests a passive spectatorship by mimicking the conditions of a traditional engagement with the screen. Each of the films which were installed were silent, meaning that the only sounds which could be heard were the faint audio from the installation at the

rear of the exhibition. As well as being installed in the gallery for 'The Abstract Ideal' and Cinema du Réel, the films was also installed at the 57th Edition of the Carnegie International. At the Carnegie International, the exhibition showcased mixed media artworks with Everson's film included amongst other works of fine art. With each instance of the film playing within the gallery the only condition is to limit the bleeding of the audio between rooms. The existence of the film as an installation (Figure 38), coming after the original 2015 theatrical and festival run of the film, provides an additional way for the film to find audiences. After an initial tour of international festivals, followed by a limited run in-cinema, the next step for a film such as *Park Lanes* would be its purchase by a home video distribution company such as Kino International, Facets Multimedia or Zeitgeist Films, who work with art house and 'quality' cinema, or else online distribution through a company with a similar identity such as MUBI. Following the purchase of the film by the Carnegie Museum of Art in March 2019, the film has now become solidified as an art object. The path of the film through the festival circuit to the collections of the gallery is reflective of Everson's flexible position between artist and filmmaker. In addition, it consolidates the museum as a site for minimalist, durational cinema.

Figure 30 Parks Lanes (Installation View)

Figure 39 The Abstract Ideal

The Novi Sad exhibition attempts to use the gallery space to highlight different elements of Everson's work through the digital projection of his films. The opening room being structured around objects that Everson has made for his film, in this instance cards indicating a change of round in a boxing match, is one example of the gallery space being used other than to screen films (Figure 39). Across the exhibition, Everson's work with sculpture, duration, film as cinema and film as installation is present. For reasons relating to scale and curating, the installation of gallery pieces *Polly Two* and *Ninety-Three* differs from how they had been installed previously. When creating films for the gallery, Everson is interested in using his art works to actively affect and change the conditions of the space they are installed in. *Polly Two,* for example, is part of a series of works about the sky. In this work Everson filmed a 2017 solar eclipse in Saluda, North Carolina. The work is filmed in black-and-white and is a twelve-minute single take filmed on Super-8, and when installed the film, like *Ninety-Three*, is installed as a single object in a whole room which both illuminates and darkens the space of the gallery as the looped film plays. Such are the conditions of the exhibition space in Novi Sad that neither work had the same effect as they did when they were installed at the Whitney (2011) or the Seed Space (2018). Yet, within

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the context of the exhibition, their close proximity highlights Everson's engagement with conditions of light and tonality, emphasising his interest in the formal elements of photochemical film and photography.

Accompanying the run of the exhibition was a tour by the artist, which added an element of presence and liveness to the show. The role of the artist in this instance also responds to the question of contextualisation. Across his work Everson repeatedly declares that his cinema is constructed for those who appear within it, as opposed to the expected audiences who frequent international festivals and gallery spaces, with the implication being that a large section of his work is typically centred around working-class labourers and communities as opposed to the sites where his work screens which would typically be more connected to the art world and international film festival. The practical impact of this differentiation between these two distinct groups is that Everson expects the people who appear in his films to understand the background details and contextual information embodied within the work and thus purposefully leaves out such details when formally constructing the films. The work avoids such contextual framing devices as intertitles, interviews and voice-overs, the absence of such elements creating the effect of sparseness. Mimicking this, the exhibition resists overt contextualisation, avoiding wall texts and explanatory material apart from a short paragraph accompanying *Park Lanes* and a paragraph-long profile of the artist on the opening wall.

With the presence of Everson, the small details of where the films are shot, who appears in them, and the details of the local spaces emerge as the artist carefully illuminates the audience on the cultural history of places like Mansfield, Ohio, which are indispensable for the understanding of the material. The lack of local details within the films are felt more dramatically in the instance of 'The Abstract Ideal' due to the location being Novi Sad, which

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led Everson to repeatedly explain and expand upon the history of both the area and larger narratives linked to African American history. The artist-led tour took place on 4th June 2019 and was documented by SEEcult.org, a non-profit organization based in Belgrade which promotes art and culture in South Eastern Europe (SEEcult.org, 2019). Everson's presence, and the explanatory commentary he provides, emphasise the lack of explicit contextual details within the work and the extent to which his work is developed out of close ties to local community which Everson has purposefully refrained from explaining, resulting in creating two audiences for his work: those who understand the signifier present within the work and react accordingly, and those that do not. For example, there were questions on how labour unions function in the USA and comments on what wages those working in factory positions would earn, which resulted in Everson's answer referencing the legacies of slavery in relation to how African American labour functions today. Whilst there is not a correct audience, the internationality of exhibition and distribution points to there being a demand for his work outside of local audiences meaning there is an inevitable distance between the intended audience, and those most likely to be engaging with it. The litany of small narratives and minutiae, which adds to the meaning of the work, regardless of how strongly they register with audiences. In an interview with critic Jordan Cronk for online publication *BOMB* magazine this question was addressed in the following way:

Jordan Cronk: By and large, then, what do you want a typical viewer, of any race, to get out of your work? A glimpse into these lives or lifestyles?

Kevin Jerome Everson: Not really, because they're not really lives. They're re-representations. The goal is to have certain formal qualities come out. But there's a social, political, and economic condition that's present. And that's part of the materiality, so people will get that. But I'm always outnumbered. It's always just me,

if the audience is six or six hundred. I don't ever know what they're going to think. But if I'm comfortable with my own relationship with the material and upfront with the subject matter— and even if I'm not — the goal is to be consistent. (Cronk 2017)

When prompted, Everson highlights the process and artifice of his work, explaining these are not real lives, but 're-representations'. This distinction is important, as it underlines Everson's interventions and formal method as an artist and image maker. It also underlines how he draws from the material conditions of those appearing in his films as they bring their connections to questions of racial inequality, labour conditions, history emanating from the plurality of African American experiences of life. The questions relating to audiences come to the forefront in situations where the artist is physically able to respond to questions relating to an international audience, as was the case with the exhibition in Novi Sad, where the audiences are directly able to respond to a work. It should also be mentioned that this model of presentation and exhibition of an artist's work, centring around the presence of the artist, is also a mode more connected to the presentations of art, as opposed to the global distribution and presentation of a feature film.

Through the space of the gallery, the exhibition underlines Everson as an artist working across sculpture, experimental cinema, and documentary. The position of the exhibition as a space for the screening of feature-length films such as *Park Lanes* alongside short works outside of the international festival, where Everson typically premieres long and short form material, removes his work from the art-house and world cinema distribution cycles. The post-festival screening cycle normally leads to a limited theatrical run in repertory and art-house cinemas, which in turn emphasises the cultural significance of said film, leading to the work entering into a canon of contemporary cinema, particularly if the film in question has won a major award at a respected international festival. Everson's long

form work has not benefitted from runs in repertory cinemas, which limits the ability of the work to enter canons of contemporary cinema. The lack of a post-festival cinematic run subsequently dilutes the likelihood of the films to be available either on steaming platforms or commercially available DVDs, further establishing them as non-commercial objects, despite the high critical regard that Everson is held in amongst film and art critics. This scarcity is further emphasised by the purchasing of works by museums, which can improve the standing of the artist through acquisition underscoring the cultural significance of the material, but this can also limit availability depending on the visibility within their collection.

In relation to slow cinema, the exhibition reflects the fluidity with which artists and filmmaker working with durational approaches as well as being a space for housing durational pieces. The use of the gallery as an installation space for Everson's *Park Lanes* across the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pompidou Centre and the Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina reflects the potential of a museum as a screening space for a work such as this, which runs for eight hours. Having been purchased by the Carnegie, the film has potentially moved from a film for theatres to an installation, as had been conceptualised during Everson's initial development of the film. One other source of inspiration of the work for Everson was the Filipino filmmaker Lav Diaz, whose films Everson had screened to his students, and who in films such as *Melancholia* has developed cinema which extends for up to eight hours. In the next case study, I will explore Lav Diaz's solo exhibition at Gallery West, London, which is structured around transforming the gallery into a screening space to house his durational works. In doing so, I aim to further highlight the limited options for these works as cinema pieces, thus prompting curators to try alternative methods of exhibition and distribution.

Distributing and exhibiting slow cinema: the example of Lav Diaz

With my second case study, I turn to the 2014 exhibition focusing on the cinema of the Filipino director Lav Diaz, entitled 'Lav Diaz: Journeys' which ran from 27th January to 12th March at the London Gallery West, part of the University of Westminster, London. The exhibition is responding in part to the unique conditions posed by the running time of Diaz's cinema. Diaz has to date made five feature films with lengths over five hours, the longest of which, *Evolution of a Filipino Family* (2004), runs for 625 minutes. A second underlying practical condition of Diaz's cinema, to which the exhibition is a direct reaction, is the unavailability of Diaz's work, with many films not currently in distribution and lacking DVD and streaming options. The conditions of his work create a paradox for the curator, namely, how do you present works created for a site which no longer has the conditions to allow them to be screened?

Diaz's cinema is seldom screened outside of the space of the festival due to the lack of exhibition within art house and repertory cinemas, as well as a lack of availability of his films across streaming platforms and amongst home DVD distribution. Through an engagement with 'Lav Diaz: Journeys', this section presents the scarcity of distribution options faced by durational cinema and discusses examples of how the work of Diaz has turned to non-cinematic sites for exhibition. Based on how his work has been presented in the UK, and to provide a greater sense of context, I will also expand upon some other ways in which his work has been exhibited, to underline how his practice provokes a need for alternative spaces of public presentations.

Writing on art cinema, in his 1981 essay 'Art Cinema as Institution', Steve Neale argued for the importance of reflecting on the conditions of funding, distribution and exhibition alongside approaching cinema's aesthetic and formal qualities. There have been

some attempts at analysing the funding models of slow cinema, specifically in relation to the space of the film festival, by de Luca (2016), Çağlayan (2014) and Mai (2015). As explored in my literature review, all three studies address concerns of the network of the international festival and how slow cinema functions within it. However, within each thesis there is a gap in relation to how the gallery or museum space is able to facilitate the presentation of film, despite several of the directors who appear within their studies functioning within these sites such as Tsai Ming-liang and Apichatpong Weerasethakul.

This section therefore follows on from their research by analysing the circulation and exhibition of slow cinema outside of the initial festival run. By doing this I hope to strengthen my argument regarding the necessity of reading slow cinema as a formal style which has enabled a specific position in relation to questions of circulation, separate from those associated with art cinema. Secondly, I argue that by reflecting on the ways in which slow cinema is curated, we can see how the multitude of spaces and sites being used allows for the works to escape from the Eurocentric networks of the pre-existing production, distribution and exhibition linked to the space of the international film festival, within which art cinema and world cinema exist. Whilst I am not arguing that the space of the gallery exists as a non-Eurocentric site, the movement of work by filmmakers like Diaz across the space of the cinema and the gallery offers an alternative mode of exhibition and thus a different network outside of the existing post-festival cycle, which favours the adoption of certain stylistic formal elements in order for a work to enter and become established as part of the contemporary canon of art cinema. One such example of a commonly adopted trait is the running time of a film, with the common length of 90-120 minutes being used by independent and mainstream cinema, in part due to the way in which the length suits the

structure of a cinema timetable. Diaz's cinema, through its length, provides an obstacle for entering the distribution cycle open to non-mainstream work.

There are also, within the UK distribution and exhibition network, some companies which disproportionately dominate the sector, which means that if a work is not associated with said company and their model, it is more difficult for it to be circulated within the UK. For example, Curzon Artificial Eye is a distributor of film which specialises in independent and international art house cinema. It owns thirteen cinema theatres across the UK, plus eight jointly owned venues, a Cinema-On-Demand streaming service, as well as Artificial Eye the arm of the company which produces films on DVD and Blu-Ray. Artificial Eye is one the biggest distributors of independent cinema in the UK, aside from distributing films they also function as an exhibitor, at the time of writing they have twelve cinema complexes, specialising in art cinema, world cinema and independent titles. In 2019 they released twelve foreign language films across cinemas, which was the third highest of any distribution company that year (BFI, 2020: 8). As a distributor specialising in international art cinema that owns several cinema theatres as well releasing films for streaming and on DVD or Blu-Ray, it is responsible for a large percentage of all art cinema released across the UK, and if a film is not picked up by Curzon Artificial Eye, it can be difficult to find national theatrical distribution.

'Lav Diaz: Journeys' should therefore be seen in this context as an attempt to create a space, outside of the network of theatrical distribution, for the presentation of experimental non-mainstream cinema. The exhibition centred around the screening of a series of Diaz's feature films. Taking place from 27th January 2017 to 12th March 2017, the exhibition was staged at a point in the career of Diaz where he had released 17 feature films and had received prestigious prizes at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival, the 2014 Locarno Film

Festival, and the 2014 Berlin Film Festival. Figure 40 is a table which shows Diaz's filmography, with running times and the sites of each film's premiere, in order to demonstrate where Diaz's work has shown and the role that length plays in his cinema.

Despite having developed a large oeuvre and received the 2014 Golden Leopard from the Locarno Film Festival and the Golden Lion from the 2016 Venice Film Festival, among other high-profile awards from international festivals, Diaz, as of 2017, had only had UK theatrical distribution for one of his films, *Norte: The End of History* (Philippines, 2013). This film had won the Prix Un Certain Regard at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival, which led to it being screened at the 2014 London Film Festival, before receiving a limited cinematic run across a single weekend the following year. This pattern is repeated across other markets, with Diaz failing to receive distribution within art-house, independent and repertory cinemas.

Film	Year	Running Time	Festival Premiere Location
The Criminal of Barrio Concepcion	1998	132mins	Toronto International Film Festival
Naked Under the Moon	1999	110mins	Berlin International Film Festival
West Side Avenue	2001	315mins	Cinemanila International Film Festival
Hesus, rebolusyunaryo	2002	112mins	n/a
Evolution of a Filipino Family	2004	625mins	Toronto International Film Festival
Heremias	2006	510mins	Cinemanila International Film Festival
Death in the Land of Encantos	2007	540mins	Venice Film Festival
Melancholia	2008	450mins	Venice Film Festival
Elegy to the Visitor from the Revolution	2011	80mins	n/a

Century of Birthing	2011	355mins	Venice Film Festival
Florentina Hubaldo, CTE	2012	366mins	International Film Festival Rotterdam
Norte, the End of History	2013	250mins	Hong Kong International Film Festival
From What Is Before	2014	338mins	Locarno Film Festival
A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery	2016	485mins	Berlin International Film Festival
The Woman Who Left	2016	226mins	Toronto International Film Festival

Figure 31 Lav Diaz Filmography

Norte: The End of History, having been the recipient of a prize from Cannes, was hampered by its running time of 251 minutes, meaning that across the traditional UK art house and repertory cinemas, the ability to screen the film multiple times across a pre-existing structure for new release films was limited. When it was screened, a short intermission took place, further disrupting the preferred programming structure for a multi-screen venue. Even repertory and art house cinemas operate a financial model, requiring them to hold multiple houses, so even cinemas such as these are reliant on having to make decisions based on the commercial viability of screening a film that will almost certainly take up multiple slots on a normal schedule, without necessarily drawing a large enough crowd to make a financial case for doing so. Having been purchased by New Wave Films, a British distribution company specialising in world cinema, independent cinema, and art house cinema, after the film's UK premiere at the London Film Festival, the only cinema in the UK which screened the film was the London based multi-arts centre the ICA, which ran the film for a single weekend. Against this context of a low presence within UK cinemas, outside of a festival window, the exhibition was playing a role in creating a UK platform for a filmmaker with a large oeuvre and a critically acclaimed reputation, but whose work is seldom screened.

The position of Diaz's feature films within the gallery space in this instance is in part a response to his work's lack of theatrical distribution as well as the practical considerations of his films' length. The art gallery therefore is creating for the films a space which they would otherwise lack, due to limited interest from cinema chains and distribution companies. It is important to note that Diaz is fundamentally a filmmaker whose work is created for the cinema space, as opposed to a figure like Everson who actively makes work for both spaces. The gallery in this instance is replacing the cinema, as opposed to being a space which the filmmaker has specifically created work for. Çağlayan summarises the funding and exhibition network within which slow cinema is connected stating that:

> Many of these films are commissioned by particular film festivals, that is, the production of such films is funded by festival mechanisms on the one hand, and later on are disseminated into their own controlled exhibition circuits and eventually sold to international distribution companies within their own distribution and sales markets. (Çağlayan 2014: 29)

Diaz, aside from the awards he had received from international film festivals, had also received significant production and development costs from organisations linked to the space of the festival. For example, Diaz has received numerous commissions such as the Hubert Bals Fund, which is administered and linked to the International Film Festival Rotterdam. Diaz therefore operates within the network described by Çağlayan, and his lack of distribution points to a failure of this structure to support work which does not conform to the preferred object and form of the feature film. The adoption of such a long duration shifts the form of the film into an object which distinguishes itself from the films consumed and circulated through the cycle described by Çağlayan.

Across the run of the exhibition, six films were installed. Each film that was selected as part of the exhibition extends beyond a traditional running time. For example, *From What Is Before* (2014) runs for 338 minutes, *Heremias (Book One: The Legend of the Lizard Princess)* (2006) for 510 minutes, *Death in the Land of Encantos* (2007) 540 minutes, *Batang West Side* (2001) 300 minutes, *A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery* (2016) 485 minutes, and *The Woman Who Left* (2016) 226 minutes. As reflected by the running times and given that the shortest film being screened runs for just under four hours, the programme features works that are far in excess of a typical length of between ninety and 120 minutes for a feature film.

Exhibitions such as these are reflective of the gallery becoming a site of exhibition in lieu of a traditional retrospective, in a way which is distinctly different from Everson or Apichatpong. In the next case study, I will examine Apichatpong Weerasethakul's 2016 exhibition and cinema programme at the Tate Modern, to further reflect the positioning of slow cinema. In addition to these two examples, filmmakers associated with slow cinema such as Tsai Ming-liang, Albert Serra and Pedro Costa have all had their work presented under the auspices of the contemporary art gallery and had material in both cinema theatre and exhibition spaces.

Alongside the screenings within the exhibition, 'Lav Diaz: Journeys' was complemented by a series of talks and discussions held within the gallery, a day-long symposium, and a film screening taking place in the Regent Street Cinema, which is part of the University of Westminster. These events ran alongside the six-week period in which the exhibition was installed. The programme reflects a careful consideration of the complexities of the films, and the series of talks function as attempts by the curators to contextualise Diaz's work and isolate specific elements of his filmmaking style.

The costs involved in distribution prohibit a wide circulation for films such as Diaz's where neither the director nor his work has the necessary high profile to allow the distribution company to re-coup their expenditure. For example, in the United Kingdom distributor New Wave Films handled *Norte: The End of History.* In order for a film to receive national distribution in UK cinemas, a distributor must apply for the film to have an official age certificate from the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC). The cost of receiving a rating for a theatrical release is a submission cost of £108.47, followed by a per minute fee of £7.56. Using *Norte: The End of History* as an example, as a result of the films 251-minute running time of, the BBFC fee would be £2,407.24. This, for a film which lacks a sufficiently large profile and may struggle to get picked up for exhibition in cinemas, is a considerable investment. Without a BBFC age rating, a film is not able to receive a theatrical release in the UK.

The cost, therefore, is a prohibitive one, for a filmmaker such as Diaz, whose works have such a long running time. The only way for a film to screen in the UK without having a BBFC certificate is if it is screened under 'Film Club' conditions. This means that if a cinema has its own private membership which the general the public can join, then a film can be screened in that cinema without having received a BBFC rating. This, for example, allows for films to screen as part of a festival, and would allow for an extremely limited exhibition in cinemas, through a series of limited one-off screenings. The gallery space potentially allows for the presentation of films in a way that circumvents these financial restraints linked to theatrical distribution.

The site of the gallery is not regulated in such a manner, meaning it operates outside of these regulations as a site of exhibition. Whilst there are additional fees related to the

displaying of moving image works, these are normally only factored into objects which are purposefully made to be displayed in both theatres and galleries. For example, for distributors such as London based experimental film company LUX Artists' Moving Image, the cost of screening films is clearly articulated and divided between theatrical and exhibition sites. As LUX distribute experimental film, there is an ingrained consideration that any of the works which they distribute could be screened in either space. This, however, is not a concern which is necessarily mirrored within distribution companies, hence there are extra levels of complications when dealing with the exhibition of films as installations. In relation to the Diaz exhibition, as each of the films being screened had been picked up by different distribution companies, fees had to be negotiated with each rights holder individually.

Figure 32 Journeys Exhibition Interior

The creation of a temporary screening theatre within the gallery for the exhibition therefore brings with it some practical benefits, linked to circumventing some of the financial costs of public screenings, as well as the issues linked to the length of the films themselves. There are, however, problems related to the question of rights holders for each work and negotiating screening fees. In relation to the structure of the exhibition, the

gallery screening room is the central element. The space itself has been conceptualised with the aim of providing an environment to allow the spectator to comfortably watch the entirety of the film being screened. Figure 41 is an image from the interior of the exhibition space. As is to be expected from an exhibition space inviting the spectator to watch a film from beginning to end, the space provides a seating area, as shown in the image, and the space, as much as possible given the dimensions and physical restraints of the room, reflects the environment of a small theatre. Central to the thinking behind the exhibition was the creation of a space to enhance the formal and material details of Diaz's work. As a filmmaker whose practice is connected to reflecting on the physical and sensorial minutiae of space, community and place, the exhibition tried to enhance the audience's ability to engage with the film's materiality, with as much attention as possible – for example, by creating a comfortable physical viewing space. The ideal spectator would be one arriving fully aware of what it is they were seeing and committed to watching one of Diaz's films in full. This involved putting simple elements in place such as the clear construction and circulation of the schedule of the exhibition programme. This gesture is another way in which the gallery takes on the conditions of a cinema space, which leads to the exhibition becoming a traditional retrospective housed within the gallery.

A consequence of using the gallery in such a way still allows for a looser spectatorship, as despite the presence of a pre-advertised and circulated schedule, the possibility for viewers to wander in at random points is retained. There is, however, within the planning of the exhibition a clear sense of a correct and incorrect mode of spectatorship, with an incorrect spectatorship involving guests entering and leaving at will, having a fragmented engagement with Diaz's work. This is due to the way in which the films remain essentially narrative works, albeit narratives stretched across several hours. One such

example which I have explored at length in an earlier chapter is *Melancholia*, but the same is true for a work such as *Death in the Land of Encantos*. Diaz has described his engagement with temporality as linked to his being half-Malaysian and adopting a 'Malay-time', which he describes as being a major factor in his adoption of duration and how he conceptualises the relationship between space and place. Diaz's films use narrative, but this is repeatedly punctuated by the amount of time his camera spends capturing action being undertaken in real time. For example, Figure 42 is taken from a scene of two characters slowly becoming visible as they walk through a field in a sequence which lasts for two minutes. As the figure reflects, the camera holds its position as the two bodies enter into view. This scene adds no narrative development, yet when placed alongside similar moments, where Diaz's camera captures actions being performed over several minutes, establishes the spaces where he films with their own temporal sensibility and mood.

Figure 33 Death in the Land of Encantos

In her article exploring and reflecting on her experiences curating the exhibition and film programme, May Adadol Ingawanij uses the concept of cinematic dispositive to describe the relationship between Diaz's approach to cinema and the circulation of his work.

Ingawanij explains her use of the term thus: 'I use the concept of cinematic dispositive to grasp the intertwining of production and circulation characterising Diaz's practice' (Ingawanij 2017: 412). Her interest in the term lies in understanding the concept of dispositive in relation to reading Diaz's cinema as an act of assemblage. May makes the following summary:

> Diaz's cinematic practice might instead be grasped as a generative ensemble of elements; film, literary and art historical traditions and influences; digital's technical tools and means of production and circulation; multiple genealogies of viewing and participatory behaviours; and affective imaginaries of collectivity. (Ingawanij 2017: 412)

In this sense, the article highlights the way in which Diaz's method is partly a result of being an independent Filipino filmmaker and the lack of facilities and funds within the Philippines for those working within this field. His work is therefore linked to the scarcity of resources available to him. The exhibition, and the temporary digital cinema space installed within the gallery, becomes an extension of this element of his practice, and continues the character of both Diaz's practice and his audience's spectatorship.

Ingawanij's reference to assemblage relates to the way in which Diaz uses the tools available to him in order develop his work. For example, across his oeuvre Diaz has drawn both from Filipino folklore and Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (1866), whilst actively critiquing contemporary Filipino politics. In relation to distribution and exhibition, Ingawanij again uses the concept of cinema as *dispositif*, whilst providing an overview of where Diaz's films have screened. Ingawanij demonstrates how a network of cine-clubs and non-profit spaces have enabled screenings of Diaz's work and how this relationship is based on issues of 'the ethics and labour of spectatorship' (Ingawanij 2017: 430). The ethics and labour

referred to here speak to questions related to the conditions in which Diaz's work is screened, which Ingawanij relates to her understanding of assemblage and *dispositif*. Ingawanij also links the ideas of ethics and labour to the space of the cinema.

To focus on unpacking the notion of *dispositif* in relation to the circulation and presentation of the exhibition initially, the central object is the digital projector. Each of the films screened within the exhibition were screened via a digital projector. The scale and quality of the projector was such that the aesthetic techniques favoured by Diaz were able to be fully realised by spectators. In addition, the room was decorated in such a way as to enhance the visual qualities of Diaz's image. One notable example is that each of the films being screened was shot in black and white. The colours of the furniture in the room were therefore selected in order to not detract from the colour palette of the films. For example, the colour of the walls and carpet avoided colour clashes and the lightning of the room ensured that the intended effect of Diaz's contrasts were directly felt.

The way in which the gallery takes on the conditions of the cinema reflects an element of Diaz's practice. Specifically, it reflects the way in which Diaz has built a career on the capabilities of the digital camera to prolong sequences and enable a filmmaker to work with duration in such a manner. The digital technology is central not only for its capacity to prolong, but also its relative affordability and cost effectiveness. Similarly, it is the affordability of the digital projector which has allowed for Diaz's work to be presented in such a capacity for 'Laz Diaz: Journeys'. Not only has the digital projector allowed for the screening of the material, but the ability of the projector to turn a gallery into a screening theatre has enabled the site to circumvent the prohibitive measures of conventional theatrical screenings.

The gallery space has also allowed for the presentation of Diaz's durational works, in full and without interruption. The clearest example of the prohibitive length of Diaz's cinema is *Death in the Land of Encantos* which runs for 540 minutes. The practical concerns of running such a film in a conventional cinema space would prevent any other material from being screened and would be difficult for a theatre to envision multiple screenings across a week in the model of a traditional first run theatrical screening. Within the context of the exhibition, however, the film ran for a week between the 10th and 16th of February starting each day at 10:00. The labour required by the spectator here is referred to by Ingawanij in terms of an ethical spectatorship which relates to the recreation of the conditions of the cinema. Ingawanij invokes a spectatorship linked to the commitment to watching the film in completion encouraged by the exhibition. This also implies a commitment to the conditions of collective viewing within the space of the cinema.

Tiago de Luca picks up on some of these conditions. Writing on the importance of the cinema space for slow cinema, he states that the films adopt:

> a mode of address that requires the film theatre for their spectatorial contract to be fully met. This, in my view, is the key to a deeper understanding of the slow style, and it provides the opportunity to reconsider the collectivity of the theatrical experience as film viewing becomes increasingly dispersed and individualised. (de Luca 2016: 26)

When discussing the gallery space, de Luca praises the potential for long-form films like those made by Diaz to be well served by these spaces, but also criticises the way in which the gallery creates a spectatorial engagement with the image which is fleeting and discourages a sustained interaction with temporal works. Similar arguments and observations are made by Song Hwee Lim (2014), Volker Pantenberg (2012), and Erika Balsom (2009), in relation to the time spent by spectators in the gallery not enabling long

form films to be seen in their entirety. I have already highlighted the steps taken by the curators to combat this, as the collective viewing conditions of the cinema are actively promoted within the Diaz exhibition.

Despite the floating spectator associated with the gallery, the black box of the gallery is an integral site of exhibition, providing as it does a platform outside of the festival which is not provided by the traditional sites for such films within art-house and repertory cinemas. The imperfect conditions of screening such works in the gallery, however, can be overcome with an approach adopting multiple ways for spectators to engage with the works. Volker Pantenburg observes that in 'the cinema, temporality is also prescribed by the duration of the film, whereas the temporal calculations of a visit to an exhibition are mostly made independently of the time required to actually see the works' (2012: 84). This is also an issue that Ingawanij discusses in her experiences of curating the Diaz exhibition (Ingawanij, 2017).

Using the example of 'Lav Diaz: Journeys', the installed screening room was one way in which to engage with the films and Diaz's work during the exhibition. Outside of the screening room, there were several other modes and spaces where audiences could see Diaz's work and engage intellectually with his filmmaking method. The situations described by Pantenburg and de Luca therefore demonstrate a response to one mode of cinema in the gallery, but there are other models which attempt to resolve and benefit from the conditions unique to the structures of the gallery, namely the ability to present different materials and encourage an expanded space for the engagement with elements linked to the film object. For example, the gallery is a part of the University of Westminster. Alongside the exhibition, other venues, also linked to the University, were used to encourage additional moments for public interactions which differ from watching the films themselves. These included a series

of four conversations held within the gallery, highlighting specific elements from within

Diaz's practice. The structure and content of the talks are replicated through Figure 43.

Speaker	Event Description (University of Westminster, 2017)	Date
Pio Abad (Filipino Artist).	The significance of Diaz's films and mode of artistic practice in the contexts of contemporary cinema and national political history.	14/2/2017
Chiara Marañón (Film Programmer). Adam Roberts (Curator)	The historical and contemporary experimentations with exhibiting durational moving image works.	5/2/2017
Tiago de Luca (Professor). Dan Kidner (Curator)	The theoretical and curatorial value of slow cinema, in relation to the work of Lav Diaz.	12/2/2017
Lucia Nagib (Professor). Ashley Thompson (Professor)	The entanglement between the aesthetically radical and the theological in relation to the legacy of Third Cinema	18/2/2017

Figure 43 List of talks and discussion as part of Journeys

Speaker	Position	Paper
Parichay Patra	Independent scholar	Jesus, Magdalene and the Filipino Judas: Lav Diaz and his 'Artless' Epics
Cristina Juan	Lecturer, SOAS	Lav and the Linambay: Catholic-Animist Aesthetics and the Films of Lav Diaz
Rebecca Shatwell	Curator, AV Festival	As slow as Possible: Lav Diaz at AV Festival
May Adadol Ingawanij	Lecturer, University of Westminster	Art, Life and Nation Once Again
Eva Bentcheva	PhD Student, SOAS	Reading Lav Diaz's Films through Philippine Visual Art History
Graiwoot Chulphongsathorn	PhD Student, QMUL	Lav Diaz: Suggestions for Future Studies from Ecological Perspective

Michael Guarneri	PhD Student, Northumbria University	Freedom is a Long Shot: Lav Diaz and the Never-Ending Struggle of the "Native Intellectual"
William Brown	Lecturer, University of Roehampton	Evolution of a Filipino Family and/as Non-Cinema

Figure 44 Schedule for the Symposium on Diaz

Alongside the programme of conversations, a symposium was held in the Regent Street Cinema, a space owned by the University of Westminster, located at a separate part of the campus. The symposium, building on the public talks, brought together a number of academics presenting papers on a full range of topics, as reflected in Figure 44. Complimenting the talks and the symposium was the artist-led tour which took place within the gallery space. Diaz's presence accompanied two film screenings at the Regent Street Cinema, 35mm prints of *Batang West Side* and *The Woman Who Left*. The accompanying events, taking place alongside the exhibition, offer extra contextual understandings of Diaz's cinema. The full programme rewards spectators making repeat visits and, as with Diaz's own extended use of temporality, invites a prolonged interaction with Diaz over an extended period of time. These interactions are split across four distinctly different types of events: the exhibition itself, the gallery talks, the symposium, and finally the films within the cinema theatre.

The gallery, in addition to housing the screening room, also had an extra space, one which housed the conversations and provided a site for objects tangentially linked to the films to be displayed, thus helping to further contextualise the work. In this instance, the gallery becomes a distinct space, different from the cinema, as it enables additional elements of Diaz's work to be reflected on. In the 'Lav Diaz: Journeys' exhibition a separate

space was used where several interviews with Diaz were displayed, alongside the novel, *El Filibusterismo* (1891), by Filipino national hero Jose Rizal, on wooden display tables. On the walls were several monitors allowing for set photographs to be displayed alongside Diaz's short film *The Day Before the End* (Philippines, 2016). Figure 45 reflects some of the display cabinets from this period which contain a CD of music used by Diaz for his soundtracks and a copy of the novel *El Filibusterismo*.

Figure 45 Cabinet for Journeys

For 'Lav Diaz: Journeys' it is also important to point out that the gallery where the exhibition was held is a small space located within the campus of the University of Westminster. This site differs from the type of gallery space implied by de Luca and Pantenberg, as structurally the exhibition covers just two rooms. The type of gallery de Luca and Pantenberg imply is the larger contemporary art space, which encompasses an expansive architectural space encouraging a mobile spectatorship. The London Gallery West is a space where, instead of the multiple exhibitions and art objects being displayed in large contemporary galleries, there are just two points of interaction, the films being screened,

and the small display of objects related to them. The gallery in this instance is structured to encourage spectators to engage with Diaz's work and thus works to prevent interaction with multiple art objects and a mobile spectatorship.

'Lav Diaz: Journeys' suggests how, using multiple sites and points of interaction, the durational elements of slow cinema can benefit from alternative approaches to exhibiting film outside of the space of the cinema theatre. The combination of the screening space, art gallery, multiple conversations, and a symposium, which all culminated in a 35mm film screening in a large cinema space over the course of six weeks, unpacks and creates a larger temporal environment in which to engage with Diaz's work. The curatorial method is one embedded in elongating and expanding the window of the traditional retrospective model, so that the spectator is given multiple opportunities to see the films and is also given a wider period with which to attend the satellite events. The model is more commonly one suited to the space of the gallery, where once installed an exhibition will open daily for a specific period over several weeks or months. The model of the traditional retrospective organises screenings around set times on set days across a smaller more intensive period where the spectator is encouraged to repeatedly return, typically within a month in order to experience the films in the cinema. The Diaz exhibition, even when adopting the structure of fixed screenings at fixed times, proposes a greater deal of flexibility by offering the spectator a wider period within which to see Diaz's films in the screening room.

In her article, Ingawanij reflects on the options open to those curating Diaz's longer work:

> The question of whether the right thing to do is to make another space for Diaz's long
>
> films or to let them take presence in everyday life, echoes the other vexed question
>
> concerning the ethics and labour of viewing them. What values are projected and

what dreams materialised in the act of gifting time to Diaz's long films? What is at

stake in staying for the whole duration? Is the stake of participating in the experience

of a Lav Diaz film a question of paying as much attention as humanly possible during

the projection of a single long film, or does that experience entail other kinds of effort

of engagement? (Ingawanij 2017: 411)

A key reason for the exhibition developing in such a way was the inability for a traditional

retrospective to be housed within an art house or repertory cinema, as a result of the time

needed for the films to be screened. Therefore, the screening of Diaz's films would prevent

any other work from being screened, due to their length.

The status of Diaz is such that his work would not attract a sufficient audience to

justify the financial commitment of a cinema space to programme a traditional

retrospective, which thus prompts an alternative method. Diaz's cinema despite having a

presence on the festival circuit is not included within the contemporary canons of art cinema

and world cinema, with Diaz's status as a filmmaker existing on the margins of these

umbrella concepts and the bodies of work they represent. The lack of marketability

ultimately speaks to the position of these national cinemas' 'soft power' and the Philippines,

despite a long history of engagement with cinema, exist outside of the dominant reference

points of world cinema, with very few Filipino films being picked up for distribution.

'Lav Diaz: Journeys', aside from being an exhibition which displays the work of a

creator of film, suggests that Diaz's work is better served outside the auspices of the cinema.

Despite the limitations of the University of Westminster's art gallery, the exhibition when

viewed alongside the satellite programme reflects the benefits provided by displaying

durational cinema within such an organisation and structure. In doing so, the exhibition also

points to an additional non-cinema space as a suitable venue for the discussion, display and

dissemination of slow cinema, and notably the role of the University. The content of 'Lav Diaz: Journeys' as a programme is a result of the physical structures of the gallery and cinema spaces operated under the auspices of the University of Westminster and the intellectual, artistic and academic work of the curators of the exhibition. The programme emerges from the research of academic May Adadol Ingawanij, curator Julian Ross, artist and curator George Clark, as well as artist and academic Michael Mazière. All these contributors hold doctorates and were employed by the University of Westminster, except for George Clark who was a PhD candidate at the time of the exhibition's completion.

Whereas the gallery as the site of Diaz's cinema underlines his work as existing outside not only mainstream cinema, but also traditional, independent, art-house and world cinema networks, the position of the University and the role that traditional research and academic work had played further emphasises the marginality of Diaz's work within theatrical distribution and exhibition sites. The position of strong contextual and analytical events, such as the programme of conversations and symposium which led directly to interventions by the filmmaker himself on his work, speaks to the difficulty in approaching Diaz's cinema and, in general, to the multiple points of entry into durational works, like those made by Diaz.

Distributing and exhibiting slow cinema: 'Apichatpong Weerasethakul: Mirages'

Through my previous case studies, I have looked at examples where slow cinema has been installed within the space of the art gallery, largely circumventing the site of the cinema. In my third and final case study, I focus on the retrospective of Apichatpong which took place at Tate Modern from 10th April to 14th April 2016, and the accompanying presentation of his multi-screen installation *Primitive* which ran from 19th May to 3rd July 2016. The purpose of using this programme as a focus is that it consisted of a series of screenings combined with

a separate gallery installation within the same site. This was enabled by the venue, the contemporary art gallery Tate Modern, being a space that houses both a self-contained cinema with its own regular film programme, as well as operating as an art gallery. In this case study, by looking at Tate Modern I focus on the role of the contemporary gallery not only in housing film as installation, and as a site for re-creating the conditions of the cinema within the gallery, but also its role as an independent self-contained cinema theatre itself. In 'Apichatpong Weerasethakul: Mirages', the venue and curation of the programme become another example of how slow cinema is a mode engaged with experimental traditions, and this highlights the position of the gallery cinema as an additional site of exhibition, outside of the festival cycle.

Galt and Schoonover position international theatrical distribution as playing a major role in the creation of canonical national cinemas. A programme such as 'Mirages' would in one sense represent an example of this, with Apichatpong's cinema arriving at Tate Modern after several major screenings at places which are similarly showcasing the work of cinema, under the auspices of the contemporary art gallery. Galt and Schoonover note the increasing frequency of filmmakers who 'mix theatrical space with gallery space in practices that are as close to the avant-garde as to commercial cinema' (2010: 6). As an example of a filmmaker whose practice is reflective of this mixture, Apichatpong's work and the spaces in which it is presented question the validity of such notions as national cinema, with his practice sharing closer similarities with the work of other international artists and filmmakers as opposed to national trends. Whilst these terms are inherently instable, there remain both key identifiable aesthetic traits and clear theatrical distribution models which help identify, canonise and commodify such work as examples of contemporary art cinema or national cinema. By fluctuating beyond both the aesthetic expectations associated with these

categories and the pre-existing distribution networks, Apichatpong's practice enters a cross-section of experimental, avant-garde cinema and thus demands that his work is re-framed, outside of traditional definitions of art house and national cinema.

As an example of a filmmaker using durational and slow formal techniques, Weerasethakul's place within the gallery is reflective of the wider trend that this thesis is articulating. Specifically, how the aesthetics and formal style of slow cinema have led to sites and modes of curation which depart from traditions and models associated with the circulation of art cinema and world cinema. This chapter has argued that slow cinema dictates alternative sites and approaches to curation and circulation, and the 'Apichatpong Weerasethakul: Mirages' programme, through the flexible engagement between cinema and installation, is reflective of this response.

The historical categorisation of first, second and third cinema refers to the demarcations between dominant Hollywood Cinema (first cinema), auteur cinema from Western Europe and North America (second cinema), and explicitly anti-colonial work from the Global South (third cinema). These terms, whilst not frequently used now, having been to a certain extent, replaced by art cinema and world cinema, were popularised following the 1968 publication of the manifesto 'Toward a Third Cinema', written by Octavio Getino Fernando Solanas. In their manifesto, emerging from a growing visibility of militant, activist cinema, Getino and Solanas conceptualised these terms in relation to global politics, arguing for the development of cinema which would address the impact of colonisation and support anti-colonial movements across the Global South in the mid-1960s. The terminology of second and third cinema introduced by Getino and Solanas has subsequently been subsumed within the categories of art cinema and world cinema respectively. For example,

understanding of second cinema has become intermingled with art cinema through the concept of auteurism.

Title Of Film	Year	Director	Country	Festival Premiere
About Endlessness	2019	Roy Andersson	Sweden	Venice
The Whistlers	2019	Corneliu Porumboiu	Romania	Cannes
Hope Gap	2019	William Nicholson	UK	Toronto
The County	2019	Grímur Hákonarson	Iceland	Toronto
Who You Think I Am	2019	Safy Nebbou	France	Berlin
Moffie	2019	Oliver Hermanus	South Africa/ UK	Venice
The Truth	2019	Kore-Eda Hirokazu	France	Venice
Parasite	2019	Bong Joon-Ho	South Korea	Cannes
Amanda	2019	Mikhaël Hers	France	Venice

Figure 34 Curzon titles for distribution in 2019

In addition, world cinema and art cinema, or an international art cinema, have largely replaced references to third cinema, albeit without the same focus on militancy and anti-colonialism. In relation to the circulation of these works, it is in repertory and art house cinemas where they are primarily screened. For example, the programme for art house cinema chain Curzon Artificial Eye is populated almost exclusively by second and third cinema. The chain also operates as a distributor making works available for streaming and for purchase on DVD and Blu-Ray. Figure 46 is a summary of the nine films purchased by Curzon for distribution in 2019. Not only do the works fit into either category; also they were

all purchased following screenings at international film festivals, underlying their identity as both art cinema and works of world cinema. Curzon Artificial Eye is one of the UK's biggest distributors of non-Hollywood cinema and the summary of acquisitions made between 2019 and 2020 reflects their preference for European art-house cinema and for films screening at high profile international festivals. Despite the internationality of the films purchased, only one of the works came from outside of Europe, *Parasite* (Bong Jo, South Korea, 2019), which was an outlier as it had won the prestigious Palme D'Or at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival and later the 2020 Academy Award for Best Picture.

Figure 35 New Wave Films list of films picked up for distribution in 2019

Film Title	Year	Director	Country	Festival Premiere
Joan of Arc	2019	Bruno Dumont	France	Cannes
Coincoin and The Extra Humans	2018	Bruno Dumont	France	Locarno
The Invisible Life of Euridice Gusmao	2019	Karim Ainouz	Brazil	Cannes
Rose Plays Julie	2019	Christine Molloy and Joe Lawlor	UK	London
Talking about Trees	2019	Suhaib Gasmelbari	Sudan	Berlin
You Will Die at Twenty	2019	Amjad Abu Alala	Sudan	Venice
Casting	2017	Nicolas Wackerbarth	Germany	Berlin
Ava	2017	Sadaf Foroughi	Iran	Toronto
Fire Will Come	2019	Oliver Laxe	Spain	Cannes
It Must Be Heaven	2019	Elia Suleiman	Palestine	Cannes

As Curzon is both a cinema chain and a distributor, it represents a useful reference point for trends of distributors specialising in art-house and foreign language cinema. To provide an example of a distributor which handles films from outside of Europe, Figure 47 is a compilation of the ten most recent films – in 2019 – released in the United Kingdom by New Wave Films. As reflected in the table, New Wave Films acquired a more internationally diverse selection than reflected in Curzon Artificial Eye. As another large UK based distributor of art cinema and world cinema, the company reflects a further example of the propensity for second and third cinema and subsequently the role of art-house and repertory cinemas for exhibiting these works. The films selected for distribution can also be either labelled as second or third cinema, due to their country of origin and aesthetic approach. Each of the films acquired for distribution by both Curzon Artificial Eye and New Wave Films falls into the broad categories of World cinema for being non-Hollywood, non-American works, as well as also being art cinema. These two tables therefore reflect how works falling under both second and third cinema labels, as well as art-house and world cinema, are circulated through art cinema chains like Curzon Artificial Eye and picked up for distribution by companies like New Wave Films, specialising in non-Hollywood, foreign language cinema.

For Apichatpong, as a filmmaker whose work has circulated through similar channels, his presence within Tate Modern, a cinema located within the art gallery, as opposed to art cinema chains like Curzon Artificial Eye, underlines both the aesthetic differences in his films to the works picked up for UK theatrical distribution, and in a wider sense his presence within a contemporary gallery suggests his work is an interaction between these pre-existing categories. Apichatpong's film programme was structured around screening all his feature

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films, interspersed with his experimental shorts. The film programme preceded the presentation of *Primitive*, an installation of multi-media artworks, the individual films which make up the installation are displayed in Figure 48. The two events ran across a two-month period, with the film programme located within the Starr Auditorium, Tate Modern's in-house cinema, and the exhibition within The Tanks, a gallery space inside the same building. By splitting the programme across the two sites, Apichatpong's work with installations and expanded cinema was highlighted, underscoring his background in fine art, and presenting the Thai filmmaker as an artist belonging in the wider field of experimental cinema.

Title	Type of Work	Length
Primitive	2 synchronized screen looped video	29 minutes 34 seconds
Nabua	Single channel looped video	9 minutes 11 seconds
Making of the Spaceship	Single channel looped video, silent	28 minutes 13 seconds
A Dedicated Machine	Single channel looped video	1 minute
An Evening Shoot	Single channel looped video	4 minutes 10 seconds
I'm Still Breathing	Music Video. Single channel looped video	11 minutes
Nabua Song	Music Video. Single channel looped video	4 minutes 12 seconds

Figure 36 Complete list of films shown as part of Primitive

The film programme consisted of four events, a screening of Apichatpong's most recent film (at the time) *Cemetery of Splendour* (Thailand, 2015)*,* a screening of his Palme d'Or winning *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* (Thailand, 2010) followed by a lecture with Apichatpong, and an all-night screening where the Tate showed all of his work

with film, lasting from 22:00 to 13:14 the following afternoon. In relation to the film programme, the structure was in line with a traditional retrospective, except for the fourteen-hour all night screening. The marathon all night event included the screenings of each of Apichatpong's feature films interspersed with short works, commercials, and trailers. The curation of such an event aimed to highlight the nocturnal elements present throughout much of his works, in particularly the themes of ghosts, dreams, stillness and sleep. These themes recur within the *Primitive* installation, establishing a connection across the spaces of the gallery and the exhibition.

The site of the art gallery in this instance has two functions. The first is to use the cinema space to exhibit cinema which falls outside of the categories of art cinema and world cinema, as well as second and third cinema. Additionally, the gallery is a space to exhibit works of expanded cinema and installations. Apichatpong's films, like much of slow cinema, emerge from both second/art cinema and third/world cinema, as reflected by the distribution companies which have acquired his films for circulation, depicted in Figure 49.

Film Title	Year	UK Distributor	Festival Premiere
Mysterious Object at Noon	2000	Second Run	Vancouver
Blissfully Yours	2002	Second Run	Cannes
Tropical Malady	2004	ICA Projects	Cannes
Syndromes and a Century	2006	BFI	Venice
Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives	2010	New Wave Films	Cannes
Cemetery of Splendour	2015	New Wave Films	Cannes

Figure 49 List of Apichatpong films with UK distribution

All the distributors listed in the table are linked to UK art-house and repertory cinemas, and companies such as Second Run and New Wave Films only distribute second/art

Cinema and third/world Cinema. Apichatpong's cinema can therefore be seen to exist within these categories in terms of distribution; however, they also complicate these terms when viewed within the context of his wider practice. Having won the 2010 Palme d'Or, Apichatpong belongs firmly within the traditions of art cinema and second cinema, given the long history and association that Cannes has with these types of films. Similarly, as a filmmaker from Thailand whose work directly addresses questions of national history, exploring national trauma and the legacies of violent uprisings, Weerasethakul's work meets understandings of world and third cinema. Despite this, across his career his work engages

Figure 50 Primitive Exhibition View

with experimental practices which are most evident in his multi-screen installations, but also present within his feature films.

   Primitive (2009) is an installation which was purchased by the Tate Gallery in 2009 and is made up of a series of seven videos split across eight screens. When viewed together, as *Primitive* was installed at the Tate, the works explore imagined myths inspired by

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racialised state violence perpetuated across the 1960s by the Thai army in and around North-Eastern Thailand, a border shared with Laos. The works in *Primitive* continue many of the ideas explored within Apichatpong's feature films, which are also located in the same provinces of North-Eastern Thailand. Figure 50 reflects the way in which *Primitive* is installed as a series of monitors of various sizes displayed across the exhibition space. When presented in such a manner, with the films split across several monitors, the multi-screens which make up the work create an immersive experience. The films which make up the installation fall within a wide variety of different categories of film, comprising music videos, documentaries, and more conventionally experimental films.

Within *Primitive* works such as *Making of the Spaceship* (Thailand, 2009) document the working method of Apichatpong and address the fabrication of the worlds within his cinema. This focus on the process of creating the mythical elements contained within the film speaks to the way in which mythology and legends adopted by Thai culture are manufactured concepts. Apichatpong purposefully introduces fictional spirits and creatures into his films, channelling Thai culture's own engagements with such beings across their national culture, to highlight the artificiality of cinema and find a parallel within Thai culture's own adoption of ghosts and spirits. As a project, the assemblage of these seven separate works, all displayed on looped monitors, encourages a spectatorship which, whilst linked directly to an engagement with screens, is more mobile. The spectator here is not guided through the space, yet they are encouraged to work their way across each of the different screens. The space has been designed in a way that extends the world of the film with a large seating area consisting of a red carpet reflecting a clear parallel to a sequence from *Primitive* of several young men sleeping in a room which is photographed through a red filter.

The space of the exhibition invites the spectator to immerse themselves within the space of Nabua, a border town, close to the Mekong River which divides Thailand and Laos. The spectatorship here is based on time, and the exhibition establishes a temporality linked to the space of Nabua, through the combination of the works on display. When entering the space, despite the cumulative duration of each of the works on display amounting to ninety minutes, which is the length of a feature film, the gallery requires a prolonged engagement with the space. This is in part due to the use of the looped work, where a viewer is not directed to enter at a specific point in time, instead entering directly into the middle of several works playing concurrently. There is a demand on the time for a spectator to navigate the exhibition, but this is not clearly defined or specified. On the temporality of *Primitive*, Una Chung refers to the space as reflecting a 'nonlinear temporal entanglement':

> We meet the isolated teens of Nabua and live with them for a moment in the gallery installation of Primitive, where they are seen sometimes in military fatigues and ambiguously dramatic tableaux vivants and at other times freely at play in casual jeans and T-shirts – running, dancing, wrestling, and building a time machine for travel to the future. To live directly the nonlinear temporal entanglement of the present moment, without concertedly tracking past or future, is in fact a potent way to engage the challenge of remembering political history, that is, by living it, as it finds us, knowing that we are embedded in it in ways more complex and nonarbitrary than our conscious knowledge of time might lead us to think. This complex relationship of Boonmee and the teens of Nabua (and of ourselves) is figured artistically through Weerasethakul's use of different media: media as bodies of time, bodies of time as relations of speed/stillness, and relations of affect (i.e., surprise of encounter) replacing fixed social relations of kinship or political antagonism. (Chung 2012: 218)

The temporal space of *Primitive* is distinctly different from that of the cinema. There is more agency on the part of the spectator, through their ability to determine the amount of the length of their interaction with the installation. The cumulative running time of the seven works on display is one metric of how much time is spent in the space. However, the non-linear nature of the works creates a more ambiguous sense of its duration. The non-linearity of the installation adds a more immersive element to the space as the works interact with each other in different ways in a manner which is non-structured. The space itself enhances this as a result of how the screens are laid out across the space of the installation.

There is no path or pre-determined route through the works and the space itself, rather than being divided by walls suggesting a clearly defined journey, is instead a wide-open space with the films simultaneously being played across the walls of the gallery. Apichatpong uses these conditions of the gallery, which differ from those of the cinema theatre, such as the presence of multiple screens, the mobility of the spectator, and the looped film, to disorientate the spectator and disrupt their sense of temporality, resulting in a more immersive interaction between the viewer and the space and communities of Nabua, which is a continuation of his work with cinema. Despite the lack of durational works, *Primitive* is an exhibition which demands an extended if indeterminate amount of time to navigate. Temporality is one of the dominant elements of the exhibition.

The shorter length of some of the works combined with their looped presentation encourages a re-watching, as through the loop their duration is extended indefinitely, the looped presentation, coupled with the mobility of the spectator provides the spectator with the opportunity to pair works in a manner not prescribed by the exhibition itself. For example, the works themselves are all directly linked, yet the path taken by the spectator could result in several different works being watched in any number of combinations. To

take three of the films in the installation as examples: the short film *Nabua* (Thailand, 2009) focuses on a film crew preparing and setting off explosions in sync with strikes of lightning; *A Dedicated Machine* (Thailand, 2009) is a one-minute loop of the spaceship Weerasethakul has created failing to take off int the air; and in *Making of the Spaceship*, the film silently documents the construction of the wooden spaceship, focusing on the villagers, landscape and the falling rain. Images of the sky and weather effecting the terrain recur across these three films.

Apichatpong in these three works captures the changing landscape as darkness encapsulates the space in *Nabua* and *A Dedicated Machine*, whilst *Making of the Spaceship* is largely shot during the day and depicts the space of Nabua illuminated by the dark sky. The changing seasons and the passing of time come across clearly when these works are viewed consecutively but depending on the order in which certain films are watched, the prevalence of specific images and themes will come across prominently. There are myriad combinations through which a viewer can experience the films, and this is increased using the loop enabling re-watching of individual works, further enhancing the ability of the spectator to draw out recurring concepts and images.

The combination of the films contained in *Primitive* expands directly on the subjects and the narratives explored in Apichatpong's feature films, specifically the landscapes and communities of North-Eastern Thailand, and this become an attempt to channel a sense of the temporality of the space. The connection between *Primitive* and his feature films is best exemplified by *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives.* The film is the result of a series of workshops and projects that he had organised as part of his work on *Primitive*.

A central element of the creation process was addressing the history of the violent repression of farmers identified as communists taking place between 1960 and 1980. The

works are all set in a small town called Nabua, in Northeast Thailand. In developing the short films which made up this series of works, Apichatpong would work closely with young men from Nabua whose grandfathers were the victims of the massacres enacted during this period. The purpose of these films and workshops was to explore the ramifications of both the actions themselves and the lack of knowledge of this history across Thailand. Apichatpong sets out the parameters of the project in an interview on the project:

> In late 2008, I spent two months there following and documenting the teens' activities. The initial idea of the artworks has since branched out and mutated into various forms. It is the manifestation of someone who has created various fictional scenarios in order to implant a memory into a place. First, we built a spaceship. I always dreamed of making a movie with a spaceship. When could there be a better time to do so than now in Thailand? And somehow Nabua is a perfect place for this vehicle to land and to introduce the idea of a journey. The spaceship's form was sketched out by one of the teens and its metal skeletons were welded together by their elders, their fathers. Soon some of the teens used the spaceship as a place to get drunk at night. They decorated the interior of the ship with little coloured lights. While it has become their second bedroom, the elders want to use it to store rice. I use it as a movie prop. (Weerasethakul 2008)

Alongside this exploration of local histories, Apichatpong is concerned with using myths and traditions of animism to punctuate his films, with spirit animals and apparitions appearing across his work. Out of these workshops came several images and material which found its way into both the *Primitive* installation and the feature film *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*. In one of the film's penultimate scenes a series of images taken during the workshops appears as part of a montage sequence incorporated directly into the

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film. Their presence reflects the interconnectedness of his practice, split across his feature films and installation work. The way in which *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* develops out of Weerasethakul's experimental film practice points to his engagements with fine art traditions and expanded cinema. For example, *Primitive* features non-linear short films which use images and footage which feature within *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*, as reflected by the appearance of a still image of a spaceship, which we also see within the short films *Making of the Spaceship, Nabua, Primitive* and *A Dedicated Machine*.

Figure 51 Primitive Installation View

One element of *Primitive* that links to the way in which it is presented and to the role of the cinema is the importance of the collective spectatorship. The working process of Apichatpong for *Primitive* was related to his own work with communities and working collectively to draw from memories and experiences of young people in and around the border town of Nabua, located in Northeast Thailand. Figure 51, images taken from the installation, reflects some of the young men who participated sleeping together in a small room alongside an image of the inside of the exhibition. In *Primitive* Apichatpong reflects on the potential for shared experiences through dreaming and sleeping near others. Through the fourteen-hour screening and the space of the gallery he invites audience members to share collective experiences and, especially through the all-night screening, attempts to create a space for collective sleep. As shown in Figure 51, the gallery space appears as an

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extension of the world created in the installation, as the figures in *Primitive* are lying down horizontally in sleep, and spectators are invited, if not to sleep, then at least to take up similar positions to those who are participating in Apichatpong's workshops.

Figure 52 Programme for Tate Film Session

Time	Title	Year	Format	Length
03.50–06.00				
	Blissfully Yours	2002	35mm	
06.10–07.30				
	Empire	2010	35mm	2 mins
	Nokia Short	2003	Nokia Phone	2 mins
	M Hotel	2011	Super 8	12 mins
	Luminous People	2007	Super 8	15 mins
	Monsoon	2011	Phone camera	3 mins
	Vampire	2008	Digital	19 mins
	Meteorites	2007	HD video	16 mins
	Ghost of Asia	2005	HD Video	9 mins
07.40–09.40				
	Tropical Malady	2004	35mm	118 mins

Presenting Apichatpong's theatrical films, alongside his shorts and his installations, brings together these disparate elements and presents them in a way that frames him as an experimental filmmaker, as opposed to the profile of the works which fall under categories of second/art cinema and third/world cinema. The conditions of the gallery, alongside the extended screenings, allow for a spectatorship emphasising duration. The presentation of

seven looped works within the gallery alongside the fourteen-hour screening, invites a durational spectatorship which encourages an engagement with Apichatpong's feature films alongside his experimental works, in doing so extrapolating the connections running through the body of work. For example, to look at one section of the fourteen-hour all-night event highlights both the variety of material Apichatpong is working with and how these inform his features. Figure 52 offers a cross-section of the programme. We can see how the curation of the session moves from *Blissfully Yours* to a selection of shorts made between 2003 and 2011, then to the screening of the feature *Tropical Malady.* It avoids a chronological presentation, instead adopting a programme which displays constellations of the directors' concerns and recurring themes. Aside from highlighting Apichatpong's use of 35mm, Super 8, mobile phones and various digital formats, the journey between his two features facilitated by the curation of the shorts consolidates how the filmmaker incorporates work done in experimental shorts into his features and extrapolates ideas from his features into the shorts. This draws attention to his wider working processes and giving equal standing to his non-theatrical work with film alongside his features.

I will now turn briefly to three of the shorts to expand upon the ways in which their presentation underlines some of the more experimental traditions of Apichatpong's practice. *Luminous People*, shot on Super 8, is filmed on a boat travelling along the Mekong River, and is a performance of a fictional commemorative event staged to pay tribute to the memories of the dead. In this work, Apichatpong recruited local villagers who participated in the process of making the film by sharing reflections and memories of their lost family members, with one villager's story of his dead father appearing to him finding its way into the finished film. Continuing the theme of ghosts and the presence of the dead, *Ghost of Asia* centres around the idea of a ghost wandering around a small island. The film is a

collaboration made with two young local children, whom he had invited to make a film by instructing an actor to perform a series of tasks. The actor stands in for the figure of the ghost, whose actions are directed by the two island children. The short film *Vampire* was filmed along the border of Thailand and Burma, the film taking the subject of a mythical creature known as Nok Phii, which is supposedly one of the only species of bird in existence that feeds on the blood of other animals. The film focuses on a film crew setting off into the

Figure 53 Tropical Malady

jungle to try and find this creature.

Across these three shorts, Apichatpong showcases his interest in developing works out of myths and fictional narratives. These are linked to cultural Thai traditions, specifically emerging from communities living on the margins of the wild landscapes of Thailand's many jungles. The three shorts mentioned here are all set in remote, sparse landscapes, and

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Apichatpong highlights the wilderness, framing it in terms of dreams and establishing an atmosphere of uncertainty and mystery. The curation of these works alongside the feature *Tropical Malady* emphasises these themes, but also underlines the experimental elements of his work, specifically in relation to the interruption and suspension of realism, using aesthetics of slow cinema to emphasise stillness. For example, in *Tropical Malady* Weerasethakul continues this practice of inserting still images in the film, thus interrupting and drawing attention to the artificiality of the cinema apparatus and drawing a comparison between the myths and fables of Thai culture and the cinema as a mythmaker and 'dream factory'. Figure 53 reflects both the presence of the cinema space within *Tropical Malady* and Apichatpong's use of stills. Though they are separated across the film, the two images articulate his practice of working across mediums and commenting on the conditions and limitations of the forms he is using. The centrality of natural landscapes to his films again prompts the perception that his feature films are a continuation of the recurring visual and spatial concerns of his experimental video and installation works, as reflected by the images in Figure 54 which come from the short films *Vampire*, *Ghosts of Asia* and *Luminous People*.

By being placed within Tate Modern, Apichatpong is framed as an artist filmmaker and producer of experimental work. His programme, by considering his shorts, installations and feature films, provides an engagement not possible within the space of the cinema. The categories which exist to describe his work, whether this be related to auteurist cinema, world cinema or traditions of second and third cinema, fail to account for experimental traditions, and the role of the art gallery as a space of exhibition reflects this by providing a connection to non-narrative histories and traditions of expanded cinema. The circulation of his works, in a way which differs from the cases of Everson and Diaz already discussed, continues to reflect how slow cinema occupies a space both inside and outside traditional

modes of circulation. Whereas Everson and Diaz use duration as part of their formal method, Apichatpong has, through the presentation of his work, used duration as a curatorial practice. One that is designed to replicate conditions of sleep and collective spectatorship. By facilitating such a technique, the gallery becomes a space which is able not only to replicate the site of the cinema, but also to transform and re-conceptualise it to expand the
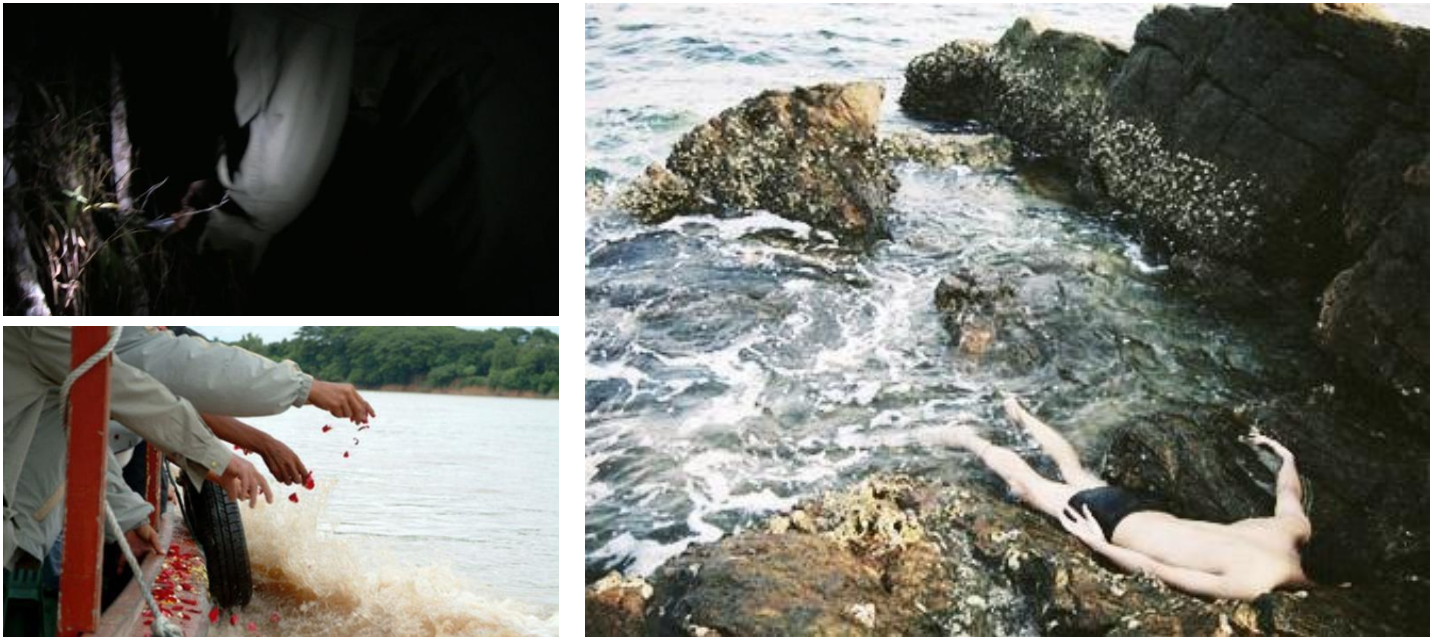

Figure 37 Vampire, Ghosts of Asia and Luminous People

world created by the film, through the site of exhibition.

Conclusion

This thesis has sought to approach the subject of slow cinema and explore the connections between the films and traditions of experimental cinema. Positioning slow cinema as emerging out of the legacies of art cinema and the formal characteristics of the durational work of figures like Warhol, Gottheim and Adachi. Through this engagement the thesis continues this connection to trace how slow cinema has facilitated a closer connection between the cinema theatre and the contemporary art gallery, primarily through the ways in which slow cinema is distributed and the spaces that it is exhibited. The thesis had originally sought to respond to what was at the time an emerging trend of slow cinema, but

due in part to the volume of responses and engagements with these films and my own forays into curation and film programming, the thesis has shifted perspective and I have tried to take advantage of the gap between my initial starting point and the present, in doing so choosing to focus instead on reflecting on slow cinema from a temporal distance and on tracing the journey that slow cinema has made, from a series of films being labelled as slow cinema by film critics and journalists, to contributing to major changes in how a certain mode of art cinema is currently being exhibited and distributed. I have tried to explore what makes slow cinema a distinctive body of work and I have focused on placing the films as both transnational and hyper-local objects engaging in questions of national trauma and legacies of inequality. Alongside these thematic qualities, I have tried to present a complex topography of the moment in cinema history into which the films have entered, and I have attempted to highlight how these works have both benefitted from some of the changes in curatorial approaches to presenting moving image work in the gallery and museum and dictated or at least influenced these conditions.

My research is thus concerned with the way in which the minimalist aesthetics of slow cinema complicates the international consumption, marketability and definitions of art cinema and world cinema. To address this my thesis has attempted (1) to provide a clear, concise, and consistent definition of slow cinema, which has aimed to build upon characterisations of art cinema and world cinema and highlight the importance of experimental cinema and (2) to look at how these films are distributed and exhibited and locate the multi-art centre as the primary site of presentation for these works. Thus, I have intervened in the field of research into slow cinema, with an approach and rationale that I hope shines some new light onto some of the under-explored areas of the films, from my position as a researcher and my activity as a film curator.

To this day, slow cinema remains a term which lacks a singular definitive meaning and subsequently has been used to describe a wide-ranging body of work. The term had widely appeared within print media, film criticism and film blogs before becoming a subject approached within the discipline of film studies as reflected in PhD theses such as Tiago de Luca (2011), Matthew Flanagan (2012), Nadin Mai (2015) and Emre Çağlayan (2014), and later publications including *Slow Cinema: Traditions in World Cinema* (de Luca & Barradas Norge, 2015), *Slow Movies* (Jaffe, 2014) and *Poetics of Slow Cinema: Nostalgia, Absurdism, Boredom* (Çağlayan, 2018). Across the multitude of texts ranging from film critics to bloggers and then academic publications, a series of overarching tendencies and definitions have been established resulting in a wide-ranging collection of filmmakers and artists who have created work falling into this category, which remains an open-ended term.

The consolidation of a common understanding of slow cinema and a degree of agreement surrounding the existence of a body of work, no matter how shifting or inclusive this is, has two clear ramifications which directly feed into my own thesis. One is that across these engagements with slow cinema the works which form a consensus all emerge from within traditional understanding of international art cinema. To take the case studies from de Luca (2011), Çağlayan (2014) and Mai (2015) as an example, all the filmmakers who are discussed emerge from across these two traditions. Gus Van Sant, Tsai Ming-liang and Carlos Reygadas are the case studies used in de Luca; Nuri Blige Ceylan, Tsai Ming-liang and Béla Tarr are the focus of Çağlayan; and Lav Diaz is the central figure in Mai.

The second key consequence of the variety of publications on slow cinema, particularly the emergence of PhD studies and full-length books, is a clear sense of an ending of the moment with which slow cinema was associated, having first emerged at the turn of century. Combined, these two ramifications point to the need to question of the impact of

slow cinema, and what can be learned from the emergence and subsequent end of slow cinema as a distinct moment in recent cinema history. I have subsequently argued that slow cinema, through an analysis of its aesthetics, but also through a sustained engagement with the distribution of the films, has facilitated a closer, more fluid interaction between the space of the cinema and the space of the gallery. This interaction also has implications for more conventional examples of art cinema and world cinema, and their theatrical distribution.

To underline and make clear this claim, I have purposefully structured a large portion of my thesis around a filmmaker, Kevin Jerome Everson, who is absent from any existing studies or publications engaging with slow cinema, and whose work overlaps with the timescale of slow cinema and straddles the spaces of the gallery and the cinema theatre. In focusing on Kevin Jerome Everson, not only have I used the distribution and exhibition of his work to consolidate slow cinema as reflecting a departure from the cinema to the exhibition space. I have also, through a close engagement with questions of place, attempted to lay out a clear sense of how slow cinema continues with aesthetics of realism associated with traditions of art cinema and world cinema, and facilitates a clear engagement with experimental cinema.

By drawing from scholarship on film and geographers conceptualisations of place, my intention was to present slow cinema as a series of works closely engaged with questions of space and place. This focus being an attempt to move away from notions of transcendentalism and situate slow cinema as being concerned with material questions linked to intricate explorations of real locations and engaged with their social contexts. The combination of minimalist aesthetics and an intense locality captures the politics and history of these specific communities occupying these locations. The second intention of drawing

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from scholarship on film and geography was to facilitate an interaction between these two fields, one which departs from mainstream narrative cinema, and presents the non-narrative cinema of Kevin Jerome Everson as offering a distinctly different way of interacting with and understanding the role of place is understood within cinema.

Place is a central concern in Everson's cinema. In his works, Everson regularly returns to Mansfield, Ohio, and surrounding areas, depicting these sites through a focus on the routines of the communities who occupy the space. One key element of this focus is labour, with Everson adopting slow aesthetics to capture the minutiae of the experience of work, emphasising the temporality of the working day. My analysis of three of Everson's labour films, *Park Lanes, Quality Control* and *Tonsler Park*, emphasises his use of durational techniques, specifically focusing on how he adopts non-realist formal traits in order to draw attention the limitations of the film camera and his interest in the formal qualities of the material film object.

By identifying the importance of the tools of cinema and the distinct characteristics of materials he is using, Everson departs from a straightforward understanding of reality, purposefully establishing a body of work which retains a self-reflexivity and complicates the audience's engagement with space by deliberately refraining from offering contextual information on the locations where he films, and thus preventing the audience from learning about the historical identity of the place and familiarising themselves with these sites and communities. By emphasising the unknowable history and narratives of his locations, Everson's engagements with commnunity become paradoxically local and non-local. The presentation of space emphasises intricate details and elements related to the cultural, historical, and political conditions of the location, yet these are only alluded to as Everson prevents these narratives from developing instead placing audiences at a disadvantage, in

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their ability to decode and analyse the spaces that the films navigate, in comparison to the knowledge and experiences that the residents of these communities would have.

The relevance of Everson's engagement with place to slow cinema in general lies in the way in which his understanding of space recurs across these other slow works. Particularly through the interaction between the local and the global. For example, a film like the nine-hour and sixteen-minute *Tie Xi Qu: West of the Tracks* (China, 2003) by Chinese director Wang Bing is an intricate engagement with the structures of labour in the Teixi District of Shenyang, one of China's largest industrial sites. His film makes use of long shots to take in the scale and processes of the factory spaces, before building portraits of those who work within these spaces. Wang avoids exposition and contextualising information, preferring instead to create an immersive engagement which emphasises observation. As Elena Pollacchi states in her examination of narrative in the cinema of Wang Bing:

> The viewing process is demanding not just for the duration of the film but also for the lack of any introduction to the many social actors. Only a few simple credits on screen indicate names, region of origin and age of some of the characters. As Wang Bing noted, the structure tends to replicate the process undergone by the filmmaker in getting to know the area and the people. Nonetheless, the work progressively takes the shape of a circular narrative in which the many social actors connect to one another in different ways, so as to compose a broader narrative of migration, relocation and ill-paid daily labour. (Pollacchi 2017: 220)

Chapter Two outlines Everson's engagements with place and space, and these recur throughout slow cinema, with filmmakers' use of durational and slow aesthetics creating an immersive observational relationship with location, whilst retaining a sense of dislocation avoiding overtly recognisable settings and refraining from contextualisation. In instances

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where more recognisable cities are used such as Mexico City in *Battle in Heaven* (Reygadas, Mexico, 2005), Taipei in *The Hole* (Tsai, Taiwan, 1998) or Buenos Aires in *Fantasma* (Alonso, Argentina, 2006), there remains a tendency to create a dichotomy between the scale of the metropolis and the position of marginal individuals within micro-spaces, filming these small, intimate sites with the same combination of durational and slow aesthetics.

Identifying an end of a particular style or period is inevitably a difficult task and this thesis reads slow cinema as being a style linked to a distinct moment, one which has essentially passed. In identifying this moment, I have, through my introduction, drawn from three specific factors which represent an end point to slow cinema. I have roughly identified 2014 as the year of this symbolic end point. After the term was first used in 2003 this would place the moment of slow cinema as lasting shortly over a decade. In 2014 there were prizes awarded to slow cinema at major international festivals, three books were released on the subject, and filmmakers associated with slow cinema such as Pedro Costa, Albert Serra and Béla Tarr all released works which signified a departure from this aesthetic.

The focus of Chapter Two, Kevin Jerome Everson, has created works which fall within this period as well as a number which were made after 2014. The position of Everson, continuing to create durational works outside of this period, alongside making work for both the cinema and the gallery, encapsulates the trajectory of slow cinema, as a style reflecting this departure from the cinema space. The repercussions of this are twofold, one is related to the understanding of art cinema and world cinema in relation to the role of experimental and expanded cinema; the other relates to the space of the cinema theatre in relation to the art gallery, and a continued increase in the contemporary art gallery positioning itself as a site for repertory and arthouse cinema.

Çağlayan (2015), de Luca (2014) and Flanagan (2012) position slow cinema as having emerged from within from a long pre-history of art cinema, placing antecedents from such a diverse array of filmmakers like Yasujirō Ozu, Chantal Akerman, Andrei Tarkovsky and Michelangelo Antonioni. As Çağlayan summarises:

> Aspects of slow cinema have appeared throughout film history, but only within the last decade or so has it evolved from a network of filmmakers into a global phenomenon. Transgressing national boundaries, slow cinema is currently the one of the most exciting, thought-provoking, daring and evocative currents within the art cinema circuit. (2014: 53)

Writing in 2014, Çağlayan, refers to slow cinema as being part of the art cinema circuit. My aim has been to ask what happened outside of this circuit. In focusing on Everson, I have tried to distance my exploration of slow cinema from the space of international art cinema to open and consolidate existing links to experimental cinema, which I strengthen across Chapter Three, through my engagement with distribution and exhibition approaches to slow cinema. This develops a narrative which traces the festival as being one part of the development of this idea with the gallery as being the destination. The increased importance of the gallery and multi-arts centre as an institution for non-mainstream cinema has allowed slow cinema to be positioned as an experimental cinema. This has subsequently further underlined the role of these spaces in fulfilling the same role as repertory and art-house cinemas, while expanding the possibilities for curation and presentation of cinema, because of the architecture of these spaces allowing for much more fluid interactions between the cinema space and gallery.

Viewing the gallery in such as way also moves away from reading the gallery as a site for the obsolescent elements of cinema, such as the material celluloid objects as described

by Erika Balsom in her article 'A Cinema in the Gallery, a Cinema in Ruins' (2009). In her article Balsom uses the work with 16mm film by Tacita Dean to reflect on the meaning of film within the gallery:

> Amidst rampant fears of obsolescence, the presence of 16 mm film within the gallery may be seen as an attempt for film to take shelter in the privileged and relatively autonomous zone of art, staking out the region as a new site of cinema after the end of its dominance as a form of mass culture. (Balsom 2009: 414)

The theme of an obsolescence of cinema has been read as one of the underlying elements of slow cinema. This can be seen in Çağlayan, who explores this in the second chapter of his thesis entitled, 'Nostalgia for Modernism: Béla Tarr and the Long Take', and with *Goodbye, Dragon Inn*, which is seen as an important reference point for the nostalgia for cinema within slow cinema, with its subject of a once grand cinema theatre screenings its last film. Shaviro (2010b) also draws on the theme of nostalgia in a blog post made via his website where he criticises slow cinema for ignoring the possibilities of digital technology and instead relying on modernist art cinema and creating films displaying 'nostalgic cliché'.

Whilst across a range of periods of cinema there have been works which experiment with form and actively push the limits of the feature film, slow cinema, through the presence of the contemporary gallery to perform as an independent cinema theatre, alongside the visibility of expanded cinema, video installations and the wideness of experimental film, has both facilitated and benefitted from the far greater flexibility to move between these spaces. In doing so characterising the present as a distinct point where the gallery has emerged as a de facto site of exhibition, for the more experimental end of art cinema. Whilst also enabling the fluid scenario of filmmakers operating within the gallery space and continuing to make feature films.

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My engagement with the gallery, through my case studies of film programmes and exhibitions featuring slow cinema, is in line with what Allison Butler refers to as the deictic turn in her article 'A Deictic Turn: Space and Location in Contemporary Gallery Film and Video Installation':

There has been a 'deictic turn' towards more complex and mutable conceptions of space and location in gallery film, and that this development is less a symptom of these cultural and technological developments than a necessary response to them. (Butler 2010: 306)

However, whereas Butler focuses on artists using the moving image to facilitate this shift, my examples have largely come from feature films and artists working with cinema, and therefore I have incorporated aesthetic examples of works which have been created for the gallery, but also, through the site of the gallery as an alternative cinema theatre, I have shown how the gallery has also become a de facto home for works, like slow cinema, which have traits of the art film, but which also pull that model apart.

This occurrence has therefore placed the gallery not just as a site for experimental, avant-garde engagements with cinema but also for more traditional feature films. This not only underlines an important specificity which distinguishes slow cinema, but also identifies a significant characteristic of how film now functions within the space of the contemporary gallery and multi-arts centre. In Chapter Three my case studies of Everson, Diaz and Weerasethakul point to the fluidity of how such material can be curated and presented within these spaces. The traditional model of the single author retrospective was used for the 2019 Everson programme at the Pompidou Centre, and 'Mirages', the 2016 Weerasethakul programme at the Tate Modern, reflecting the continuation of curatorial practices in cinematheques and repertory cinemas. Yet both were complimented by

extended screenings such as Everson's 480-minute *8903 Empire* and Weerasethakul's sixteen-hour 'A Night with Apichatpong Weerasethakul' event. In both retrospectives, each venue was a contemporary art gallery and complemented screenings with installations in non-theatre spaces, thus reflecting the new fluidity with which curation of these spaces has used slow cinema.

By specifically attempting to look at slow cinema after its emergence on the festival scene, I have tried to reflect on the new ways that the films have shaped engagements and understandings of cinema. Through an engagement with how these works have been written about and understood, I have shown the way in which, reflecting the contemporary questions regarding the position of cinema in regard to technology and shifting understandings of the role of celluloid and increasingly the cinema theatre itself, slow cinema has become closely associated with the expanding notion of experimental cinema, both formally and as a distribution object, and, in doing so, I have pointed to the centrality of the gallery as a space for shaping and facilitating new ideas and approaches to cinema culture.

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11x14, 1977. [Film] Directed by James Benning. USA.

13 Lakes, 2004. [Film] Directed by James Benning. USA.

8903 Empire, 2018. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

A Dedicated Machine, 2009. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand.

A Good Fight, 2018. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

A Letter to Uncle Boonmee, 2009. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand, UK, Germany.

A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery, 2016. [Film] Directed by Lav Diaz. Philippines.

A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence, 2014. [Film] Directed by Roy Andersson. Sweden, Norway, France, Germany, Denmark.

A Saturday Night in Mansfield Ohio 2, 2015. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

A Trip Through the Brooks Home, 1972. [Film] Directed by Tony Ganz and Rhody Streeter. USA.

A Week in the Hole, 2002. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

About Endlessness, 2009. [Film] Directed by Roy Andersson. Sweden.

AKA Serial Killer, 1969. [Film] Directed by Masao Adachi. Japan.

All My Life, 1966. [Film] Directed by Bruce Baille. USA.

Amanda, 2019. [Film] Directed by Mikhaël Hers. France.

An Evening Shoot, 2009. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand.

Archipelago, 2010. [Film] Directed by Joanna Hogg. UK.

Au hasard Balthazar, 1966. [Film] Directed by Robert Bresson. France.

Auditioning for Nathaniel, 2016. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Ava, 2017. [Film] Directed by Sadaf Foroughi. Iran.

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Babel, 2006. [Film] Directed by A. González Iñárritu. France, USA, Mexico.

Bal, 2010. [Film] Directed by Semih Kaplanoglu. Turkey, Germany, France.

Basic Training, 1979. [Film] Directed by Frederick Wiseman. USA.

Batang West Side, 2001. [Film] Directed by Lav Diaz. Philippines.

Battle in Heaven, 2005. [Film] Directed by Carlos Reygadas. Mexico, Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands.

Black Bus Stop, 2019. [Film] Directed by Claudrena Harold and Kevin Jerome Everson. USA

Blissfully Yours, 2002. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand, France.

Boarding Gate, 2008. [Film] Directed by Olivier Assayas. France.

Brazil, 1986. [Film] Directed by Terry Gilliam. UK.

Brown and Clear, 2017. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Bush Mama, 1979. [Film] Directed by Haile Gerima. USA.

Café Lumiere, 2003. [Film] Directed by Hou Hsiao Hsien. France, Japan.

Cartas a Julia, 1985. [Film] Directed by Pedro Costa. Portugal.

Cargo of Lure, 1974. [Film] Directed by James Hoberman. USA.

Casa de Lava, 1994. [Film] Directed by Pedro Costa. Portugal, France, Germany.

Cassis, 1966. [Film] Directed by Jonas Mekas. USA.

Casting, 2017. [Film] Directed by Nicolas Wackerbarth. Germany.

Cemetery of Splendour, 2015. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand.

Century of Birthing, 2011. [Film] Directed by Lav Diaz. Philippines.

Cinnamon, 2006. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson, USA.

Coincoin and The Extra Humans, 2018. [Film] Directed by Bruno Dumont. France.

Colossal Youth, 2006. [Film] Directed by Pedro Costa. Portugal.

Cotton Comes to Harlem, 1970. [Film] Directed by Ossie Davis. USA.

Death in the Land of Encantos, 2007. [Film] Directed by Lav Diaz. Philippines.

Diaries, Notes and Sketches, (also known Walden), 1969. [Film] Directed by Jonas Mekas. USA.

Dias de Santiago, 2004. [Film] Directed by Josué Méndez. Peru.

Dragon Inn, 1969. [Film] Directed by King Hu. Hong Kong.

Early Riser, 2012. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Ears, Nose and Throat, 2016. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Eat, 1963. [Film] Directed by Andy Warhol. USA

El cant dels ocells, 2008 [Film] Directed by Albert Serra. Spain.

El violin, 2015. [Film] Directed by Francisco Vargas. Mexico.

Elegy to the Visitor from the Revolution, 2011. [Film] Directed by Lav Diaz. Philippines.

Elephant, 1989 [Film] Directed by Alan Clarke. UK.

Elephant, 2003. [Film] Directed by Gus Van Sant. USA.

Empire, 1965. [Film] Directed by Andy Warhol. USA

Empire, 2010. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand.

Erie, 2010. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Evolution of a Filipino Family, 2004. [Film] Directed by Lav Diaz. Philippines.

Face, 2009. [Film] Directed by Tsai Ming-liang. France, Taiwan, Belgium, Netherlands.

Fantasma, 2006. [Film] Directed by Lisandro Alonso. Argentina, France, Netherlands.

Faraway Places, 1974. [Film] Directed by George Kuchar. USA.

Father and Sons, 2014. [Film] Directed by Wang Bing. China.

Fastest Man in the State, 2017. [Film] Directed by Claudrena Harold and Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Fe26, 2014. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

FILM, 2011. [Film] Directed by Tacita Dean. UK.

Fire Will Come, 2019. [Film] Directed by Oliver Laxe. Spain.

Florentina Hubaldo, CTE, 2012. [Film] Directed by Lav Diaz. Philippines.

Fog Line, 1970. [Film] Directed by Larry Gottheim. USA.

From What Is Before, 2014. [Film] Directed by Lav Diaz. Philippines.

Gerry, 2002. [Film] Directed by Gus Van Sant. USA.

Gertrud, 1964. {Film]. Directed by Carl Theodor Dreyer. Denmark.

Ghost of Asia, 2005. [Film]. Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand.

Goodbye, Dragon Inn, 2003. [Film] Directed by Tsai Ming-liang. Taiwan.

Hampton, 2019. [Film] Directed by Claudrena Harold and Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Harvest: 3,000 Years, 1976. [Film] Directed by Haille Gerima. USA.

Heremias (Book One: The Legend of the Lizard Princess), 2006. [Film] Directed by Lav Diaz. Philippines.

Hesus, rebolusyunaryo, 2006. [Film] Directed by Lav Diaz. Philippines.

High School, 1968. [Film] Directed by Frederick Wiseman. USA.

Honor de Cavalleria, 2006. [Film] Directed by Albert Serra. Spain.

Hope Gap, 2019. [Film] Directed by William Nicholson. UK.

How Can I Ever Be Late, 2017. [Film] Directed by Claudrena Harold and Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

I Don't Want to Sleep Alone, 2006. [Film] Directed by Tsai Ming-liang. Malaysia, China, Taiwan, France, Austria.

I'm Still Breathing, 2009. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand.

Identified Flying Object, 2017. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

IFO, 2017. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

In Vanda's Room, 2000. [Film] Directed by Pedro Costa. Portugal.

Iraq in Fragments, 2006. [Film] Directed by James Longley. USA.

It Must Be Heaven, 2019. [Film] Directed by Elia Suleiman. Palestine.

Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles, 1975. [Film] Directed by Chantal Akerman. Belgium, France.

Japon, 2002. [Film] Directed by Carlos Reygadas. Mexico, Germany, Netherlands, Spain.

Jauja, 2004. [Film] Directed by Lisandro Alonso. Denmark, Argentina, France.

Joan of Arc, 2019. [Film] Directed by Bruno Dumont. France.

Killer of Sheep, 1978. [Film] Directed by Charles Burnett. USA.

L'avventura, 1960. [Film] Directed by Michelangelo Antonioni. Italy.

L'eclisse, 1962. [Film] Directed by Michelangelo Antonioni. Italy.

La libertad, 2001. [Film] Directed by Lisandro Alonso. Argentina.

La Jetée, 1962. [Film] Directed by Chris Marker. France.

La notte, 1961. [Film] Directed by Michelangelo Antonioni. Italy.

Ladri di Biciclette, 1948. [Film] Directed by Vittorio De Sica. Italy.

Landscape (for Manon), 1987. [Film] Directed Peter Hutton. USA.

Landscape Suicide, 1986. [Film] Directed by James Benning. USA.

Las Acacias, 2011. [Film] Directed by Pablo Giorgelli. Argentina, Spain.

Last Days, 2005. [Film] Directed by Gus Van Sant. USA.

Le Tombeau d'Alexandre, 1993. [Film] Directed by Chris Marker. France, Finland.

Lead, 2009. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Les quatre cents coups, 1959. [Film] Directed by François Truffaut. France.

Live, 2014. [Film] Directed by Glenn Ligon. USA.

Liverpool, 2008. [Film] Directed by Lisandro Alonso. Argentina, France, Netherlands, Germany, Spain.

Lola rennt, 1998. [Film] Directed by Tom Tykwer. Germany.

Los muertos, 2004. [Film] Directed by Lisandro Alonso. Argentina, France, Netherlands, Switzerland.

Losing Ground, 1982. [Film] Directed by Kathleen Collins. USA.

Luminous People, 2007. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand.

M Hotel, 2011. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand.

Madame Butterfly, 2009. [Film] Directed by Tsai Ming-liang. Taiwan, Italy, France.

Making of the Spaceship, 2009. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand.

Meek's Cutoff, 2010. [Film] Directed by Kelly Reichardt. USA.

Melancholia, 2008. [Film] Directed by Lav Diaz. Philippines.

Meteorites, 2007. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand.

Moffie, 2019. [Film] Directed by Oliver Hermanus. South Africa, UK.

Monsoon, 2011. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand.

Murderball, 2005. [Film] Directed by Henry Alex Rubin and Dana Adam Shapiro. USA.

Music from the Edge of the Allegheny Plateau, 2019. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Mysterious Object at Noon, 2000. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand.

Nabua, 2009. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand.

Naked Under the Moon, 1999. [Film] Directed by Lav Diaz. Philippines.

Ne change rien, 2009 [film] Directed by Pedro Costa. Portugal, France

Night Moves, 2013. [Film] Directed by Kelly Reichardt. USA.

Ninety-Three, 2008. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Nokia Short, 2003. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand.

Norte: The End of History, 2013. [Film] Directed by Lav Diaz. Philippines.

O sangue, 1990 [film] Directed by Pedro Costa. Portugal

Old Joy, 2006. [Film] Directed by Kelly Reichardt. USA

One Way Boogie Woogie, 1977. [Film] Directed by James Benning. USA.

Ossos, 1997. [Film] Directed by Pedro Costa. Portugal, Denmark, France

Où gît votre sourire enfoui, 2001. [Film] Directed by Pedro Costa. France, Portugal.

Parasite, 2019. [Film] Directed by Bong Joon-Ho. South Korea.

Park Lanes, 2015. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Passing Through, 1977. [Film] Directed by Larry Clark. USA.

Personal Problems, 1980. [Film] Directed by Bill Gunn. USA.

Phantoms of Nabua, 2009. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand, UK, Germany.

Pizza, Birra, Faso, 1998 [Film] Directed by Adrián Caetano and Bruno Stagnaro Argentina.

Polly One, 2018. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Polly Two, 2018. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Primitive, 2009. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand.

Quality Control, 2011. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

R-15, 2017. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Railroad Crossing, 2008. [Film] Directed by Pere Vilà. Spain.

Requiem for a Dream, 2000. [Film] Directed by Darren Aronofsky. USA.

Richard Pryor: Live on the Sunset Strip, 1982. [Film] Directed by Joe Layton. USA.

Richland B&W, 2018. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Rita Larson's Boy, 2012. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

River Yar, 1972. [Film] Directed by William Raban and Chris Welsby. UK.

Rose Plays Julie, 2019. [Film} Directed by Christine Molloy and Joe Lawlor. UK.

Rosetta, 1999. [Film] Directed by Jean-Pierre Dardennes and Luc Dardennes. Denmark.

Round Seven, 2018. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Screen Tests, 1966 [Film]. Directed by Andy Warhol. USA.

Several Friends, 1969. [Film] Directed by Charles Burnett. USA.

Sleep, 1964. [Film] Directed by Andy Warhol. USA.

Slow Action, 2010. [Film] Directed by Ben Rivers. UK

Southland Tales, 2006. [Film] Directed by Richard Kelly. USA.

Sound That, 2014. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Spicebush, 2005. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Stalker, 1979. [Film] Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky. USSR.

Stellet Licht, 2007. [Film] Directed by Carlos Reygadas. Mexico, France, Netherlands, Germany.

Stray Dogs, 2013. [Film] Directed by Tsai Ming-liang. France, Taiwan.

Sugarcoated Arsenic, 2014. [Film] Directed by Claudrena Harold and Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Süt, 2008. [Film] Directed by Semih Kaplanoğlu. Turkey, Germany, France.

Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song, 1971. [Film] Directed by Melvin Van Peebles. USA.

Syndromes and a Century, 2006. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand, France, Austria.

Talking about Trees, 2019. [Film] Directed by Suhaib Gasmelbari. Sudan.

Tarrafal, 2007. [Film] Directed by Pedro Costa. Portugal.

The Bourne Identity, 2002. [Film] Directed by Doug Liman. USA.

The County, 2019. [Film] Directed by Grímur Hákonarson. Iceland.

The Criminal of Barrio Concepcion, 1998. [Film] Directed by Laz Diaz. Philippines.

The Crucified Lovers, 1964. [Film] Directed by Kenji Mizoguchi. Japan.

The Day Before the End, 2016. [Film] Directed by Laz Diaz. Philippines.

The Dust of Time, 2008. [Film] Directed by Theodore Angelopoulos. Greece, Italy, Germany, Russia.

The Flicker, 1960. [Film] Directed by Tony Conrad. USA.

The Hole, 1998. [Film] Directed by Tsai Ming-liang. France, Taiwan.

The Invisible Life of Euridice Gusmao, 2019. [Film] Directed by Karim Ainouz. Brazil

The Man from London, 2007. [Film] Directed by Béla Tarr. Hungary, France, Germany.

The Pocketbook, 1980. [Film] Directed by Billy Woodberry. USA.

The Puffy Chair, 2005. [Film] Directed by Mark Duplass. USA.

The Rabbit Hunters, 2007. [Film] Directed by Pedro Costa. South Korea, France.

The Release, 2013. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

The Silence, 1963. [Film] Directed by Ingmar Bergman. Sweden.

The Sky on Location, 1982. [Film] Directed by Babette Mangolte. USA.

The Skywalk is Gone, 2002. [Film] Directed by Tsai Ming-liang. Taiwan, France.

The Truth, 2019. [Film] Directed by Hirokazu Koreeda. France.

The Turin Horse, 2011. [Film] Directed by Béla Tarr. Hungary, France, Germany, Switzerland, USA.

The Wayward Cloud, 2005. [Film] Directed by Tsai Ming-liang. France, Taiwan.

The Whistlers, 2019. [Film] Directed by Corneliu Porumboiu. Romania.

The Woman Who Left, 2016. [Film] Directed by Lav Diaz. Philippines.

Three Quarters, 2015. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Three Times, 2005. [Film] Directed by Tsai Ming-liang. France, Taiwan.

Tie Xi Qu: West of the Tracks, 2003. [Film] Directed by Wang Bing. China.

Tonsler Park, 2017. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Transformers, 2007. [Film] Directed by Michael Bay. USA.

Travelling Shoes, 2019. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Trilogy: The Weeping Meadow, 2004. [Film] Directed by Theodore Angelopoulos. Greece, Italy, Germany, France.

Tropical Malady, 2004. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand, France, Germany, Italy.

Two Years at Sea, 2011. [Film] Directed by Ben Rivers.

Tygers, 2014. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives, 2010. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain, Netherlands.

Uzak, 2002. [Film] Directed by Nuri Bilge Ceylan. Turkey.

Vampire, 2008. [Film] Directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Thailand.

Vivre sa vie, 1962. [Film] Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. France.

Walker, 2012. [Film] Directed by Tsai Ming-liang. Hong Kong.

Wavelengths, 1964. [Film] Directed by Michael Snow. USA.

We Demand, 2016. [Film] Directed Claudrena Harold and Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Welfare, 1974. [Film] Directed by Frederick Wiseman. USA.

Welterweight, 2018. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Wendy and Lucy, 2008 [Film] Directed by Kelly Reichardt. USA.

Werckmeister Harmonies, 2000. [Film] Directed by Béla Tarr. Hungary, Italy, Germany, France.

Westinghouse One, 2019. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Westinghouse Three, 2019. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

West Side Avenue, 2001. [Film] Directed by Lav Diaz. Philippines.

What Time Is It There?, 2001. [Film] Directed by Tsai Ming-liang. Taiwan.

Who You Think I Am, 2019. [Film] Directed by Safy Nebbou. France.

Windows in the Kitchen, 1983. [Film] Directed by Elaine Summers. USA.

Winter Sleep, 2014. [Film] Directed by Nuri Bilge Ceylan. Turkey.

Workers Leaving the Job Site, 2013. [Film] Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson. USA.

Xiao Wu, 1997. [Film] Directed by Jia Zhangke. China.

You Will Die at Twenty, 2019. [Film] Directed by Amjad Abu Alala. Sudan.

Yumurta, 2007. [Film] Directed by Semih Kaplanoglu. Turkey.