



Year: 2014

Tableaux vivants und Film um 1900. Intermediale Konfigurationen des Ostentativen im Spannungsfeld von Stillstand und Bewegung

Wiegand, Daniel

Abstract: Das Frühe Kino ist nur innerhalb einer traditionsreichen und vielgestaltigen visuellen Kultur des späten 19. Jahrhunderts zu verstehen, deren Wirkungsweise zu einem großen Teil auf einer «Ästhetik des Staunens» (Gunning 1989) seitens des Publikums und einem demonstrativ zur-Schau-stellenden Gestus (Attraktion/Ostentation) auf medialer Seite gründete. Zu solchen «Schaulustdispositiven» gehörten Auführungen von Tableaux vivants. Waren diese zu Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts vor allem in höfischen und gehoben-bürgerlichen Kreisen bekannt, so avancierten sie spätestens in den 1890er Jahren zur Attraktion von Großstadtvarietés, mithin zu einer kulturellen Größe der urbanen Moderne. Durch die Ambivalenz von lebendem Körper und unbewegtem Bild scheinen die Tableaux vivants eine Art Gegenentwurf zum Film zu sein, der umgekehrt Bildern durch das In-Bewegung-Setzen nicht-lebender Körper den Anschein des Lebendigen verleiht. Filme traten ab 1896 in Varietéprogrammen neben Tableaux vivants auf, erhielten dort sogar für kurze Zeit die gleiche Bezeichnung «lebende Bilder» und verdrängten Tableaux vivants schließlich. Gleichzeitig rekurriert das frühe Kino sowohl direkt als auch indirekt auf die Tradition der Tableaux vivants, indem es z.B. in einzelnen Filmen zunächst den Stillstand von Skulpturen, Gemälden oder tatsächlichen Tableaux vivants etabliert, um ihn danach spielerisch aufzubrechen und so das eigene Bewegungspotential ostentativ zur Schau zu stellen. In dem Projekt sollen einerseits die tatsächlichen historischen Verbindungslinien zwischen Tableaux vivants und Film nachgezeichnet werden, andererseits soll dies als Grundlage dafür dienen, den filmischen Umschlag von Stillstand auf Bewegung als mediale Geste des Ostentativen für die Zeit um 1900 theoretisch zu untersuchen. Early cinema can only be understood within the broader field of visual culture at the end of the 19th century. This visual culture is to a large degree based upon an «aesthetics of astonishment» and an «exhibitionistic» or «ostensive» mode of address. At the turn of the century, tableaux vivants or living pictures were an immensely popular form of visual display. Although today largely associated with private entertainment within aristocratic or high-bourgeois circles at the beginning of the 19th century, they became increasingly wide-spread within the context of modern urban variety theater in the second part of the 19th century. Deploying living but motionless bodies to imitate paintings or sculptures, tableaux vivants appear as something like the reverse of the medium of film, which by contrast endows lifeless pictures with the appearance of life by animating them. Films were shown alongside tableaux vivants in vaudeville shows from 1896 on, and it is quite natural that films would take up the tradition of tableaux vivants just like they did with other forms of popular visual culture. Hence, motionless bodies imitating paintings or sculptures occur in many films of the period. However, in most cases these bodies are set in motion at one point or the other, thereby generating comical, magical or erotic effects, while at the same time displaying cinema's principal characteristic: motion. Bringing together turn of the century discourses about standstill and motion from a wide range of disciplines – amongst others: early film theory, aesthetics, and psychology – and linking them to a historical survey of mutual influences between tableaux vivants and Early cinema in major European cities such as Paris and Berlin, this dissertation project aims at exploring the self-reflexive use of transitions from standstill to motion as a specific strategy of displaying cinema's capacities as a new medium around 1900.

Other titles: Gebannte Bewegung. Tableaux vivants und früher Film in der Kultur der Moderne (Titel der Publikation bei Schüren, Marburg 2016)

Posted at the Zurich Open Repository and Archive, University of Zurich

ZORA URL: <https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-110028>

Dissertation

Originally published at:

Wiegand, Daniel. Tableaux vivants und Film um 1900. Intermediale Konfigurationen des Ostentativen im Spannungsfeld von Stillstand und Bewegung. 2014, University of Zurich, Faculty of Arts.

«Living Pictures»: Transitions from Standstill to Motion in Tableaux Vivants and Early Cinema

Original title / Originaltitel

«Lebende Bilder» – Das Spiel mit Stillstand und Bewegung als mediale Geste des Ostentativen in Tableaux vivants und Frühem Kino

Summary / Zusammenfassung

Early cinema can only be understood within the broader field of visual culture at the end of the 19th century. This visual culture is to a large degree based upon an «aesthetics of astonishment» and an «exhibitionistic» or «ostensive» mode of address. At the turn of the century, tableaux vivants or living pictures were an immensely popular form of visual display. Although today largely associated with private entertainment within aristocratic or high-bourgeois circles at the beginning of the 19th century, they became increasingly wide-spread within the context of modern urban variety theater in the second part of the 19th century. Deploying living but motionless bodies to imitate paintings or sculptures, tableaux vivants appear as something like the reverse of the medium of film, which by contrast endows lifeless pictures with the appearance of life by animating them. Films were shown alongside tableaux vivants in vaudeville shows from 1896 on, and it is quite natural that films would take up the tradition of tableaux vivants just like they did with other forms of popular visual culture. Hence, motionless bodies imitating paintings or sculptures occur in many films of the period. However, in most cases these bodies are set in motion at one point or the other, thereby generating comical, magical or erotic effects, while at the same time displaying cinema's principal characteristic: motion. Bringing together turn of the century discourses about standstill and motion from a wide range of disciplines – amongst others: early film theory, aesthetics, and psychology – and linking them to a historical survey of mutual influences between tableaux vivants and Early cinema in major European cities such as Paris and Berlin, this dissertation project aims at exploring the self-reflexive use of transitions from standstill to motion as a specific strategy of displaying cinema's capacities as a new medium around 1900.

Project Leadership and Contacts / Projektleitung und Kontakte

Mag. Daniel Wiegand (Project Leader) daniel.wiegand@fiwi.uzh.ch

Other Links to external Webpages / Andere Links zu externen Webseiten

<http://www.mediality.ch/>

Funding Source(s) / Unterstützt durch

Doktorand im NCCR Mediality: Ostentation, Konfigurationen und Dynamiken der kinematografischen Ostentation

Duration of Project / Projektdauer

Oct 2009 to Dec 2014