

# Miniature Pleasures: On Watching Films on an iPhone

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## Chapter 11

### Miniature Pleasures: On Watching Films on an iPhone

MARTINE BEUGNET

'Thus the minuscule, a narrow gate, opens up an entire world.'

Gaston Bachelard, *La Poétique de l'espace*

If one of the distinctive characteristics of the cinematic experience in the age of 'remediation' and 'media convergence' is the collective viewing of a film shown on a large screen, then the smartphone, as the smallest portable and personal screening device, represents its very antinomy. With its diminutive screen and set of earphones, the smartphone as screening device encourages the kind of individual and intimate viewing that appears, on the one hand, typical of spectatorial habits in the age of the digital and, on the other, more evocative of the kinetoscope's peephole apparatus than of the film theatre.

As what was initially designed as a communication implement was turned into a screen on which users could stream and watch mobile images, viewers started to engage with miniature versions of complex sequences of moving images, including film images, whose intricate compositions and variations were originally intended for the cinema screen. Hence in public spaces as well as private, domestic ones—whether in the busy carriage of a commuter train or lying in the cosy surroundings of the bedroom—smartphone owners hunched over miniature, self-contained wonderlands like modern day Alices have become a familiar sight.

In what follows, I propose to go beyond the debate about the 'proper' ways of screening films to concentrate instead on the specific characteristics of watching film images on very small screens. I will therefore look at issues of mobility, manipulability and distracted-versus-

attentive viewing only briefly, before I focus on the effect of miniaturisation on the film image. Indeed, I choose to focus on the more diminutive screens, those that can be held in one's hand, for only the very small-size moving image elicits the sense of magic and fascination that I wish to evoke here. Rather than pertaining to cinema per se, the phenomenon partakes in a diffuse sense of 'cinematicity' and, as such, it calls for its own set of terms and references. Drawing on haptic theories of visuality, as well as on the aesthetics of miniature art forms and the curio, I will explore the effects of reduction on the moving image, from the intensification of the colour fields and of movement, to the miniaturization of moving figures, and more specifically, of the human figure. I will suggest that, through the experience of miniaturized, intimate viewing that it offers even in the midst of the bustle of public spaces, as a screening device the smartphone arguably creates, to paraphrase Laura Mulvey, its own type of possessive spectator.<sup>2</sup>

### Pocket Size Cinema?

Where small screen viewing is concerned, Apple was at the leading edge.<sup>3</sup> Indeed from the start, the iPhone's distinctive qualities as a viewing device, suitable to watch even images intended for the cinema, was a key aspect of its success.<sup>4</sup> These specific qualities were duly highlighted when the device was launched in 2007.<sup>5</sup> At the Apple *grand messe* where he first presented his revolutionary touch-based device, Steve Jobs emphasized the iPhone's unique design: compared to other mobile phones, Apple's iPhone was immediately recognizable through its lack of a hard keyboard. As a result, whereas other mobile phones only afforded square, stamp-size screens, with its retractable, touch keyboard, the iPhone not only offered a comparatively expansive screen space framed by a case whose 'clean' non-intrusive design would become its trademark, but, in addition, a screen that could be held length-wise. At the

same time, the iPhone could still be held in the palm of one's hand, and easily fit in one's pocket.

In his 2007 presentation of the new device, Jobs thus pointed out that, for the first time, it would become enjoyable to not only watch mobile images on one's phone, but to watch images originally created for the cinema. Indeed, Jobs's choice of film as the prop for his demonstration is telling: the sequence of images selected to illustrate the iPhone's superior qualities as a screening device were extracted from *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* (2006, dir. Gore Verbinski)—a high production value costume drama, boasting not only a star-studded cast but elaborate sets, costumes, large numbers of extras, expansive seascapes and spectacular battle scenes. From the start, the expectation was that in spite of the small screen, viewers would not shy away from watching images that rely on a wealth of detail and that might require sustained attention – if not at the narrative level, at least where the visual composition was concerned.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, Jobs further pointed to two specifications that suggested that cinephiles, as well as occasional, distracted viewers, would use the device to watch films: the 'pinching' application, allowing the user to zoom into the image by applying tactile pressure, and a cinemascope option ensuring that the images would not be automatically 'boxed' and have their content cropped.

Pelle Snickars' and Patrick Vonderau's introduction to *Moving Data: The iPhone and the Future of Media*, begins with an account of Jobs walking the red carpet at the 2010 Oscar ceremony, a strong indicator, the authors remark, of Apple's growing interest in the cinema business.<sup>7</sup> As several of the essays contained in *Moving Data* emphasize, however, in practice access to films – in their integral, unaltered form, that is – remains an issue. The online streaming and downloading of movies is tightly regulated; storage space and battery power are a concern when downloading and watching a feature film; and it remains to be seen whether so-called cloud-based providers of moving-image based art and entertainment such as

Ultraviolet will at some point in the future allow viewers to select and access the films they want to watch anywhere, at any time, and at an acceptable cost.<sup>8</sup> The by-product of this situation is that the major modes of access to films on small portable screening devices like smartphones are television channels and video hosting websites such as YouTube. The impact on the quality of the viewing experience is unquestionable, whether in terms of the integrity of a film work (that is, the possibility of watching a film devoid of gaps, glitches and re-edits involving the removing and reordering of sequences as well as the insertion of advertisement breaks) or of the resolution of its images and soundtrack.

As far as the quality of the image is concerned, however, the compactness of the smallest screening devices, where the imperfections due to low resolution are less tangible, is a definite advantage. Moreover, the technical improvements sought and implemented since 2007, and in particular the willingness to provide the best possible image rendition, indicate a belief in the continuing, growing use of such devices for watching moving images, including films (that is, features or shorts, shot in analogue or digital format, but initially intended for theatrical release). For instance, Apple rapidly developed the so-called Retina display for the iPhone—an LCD screen that boasts a high pixel density enhanced by the small size of the screen, its high pixel resolution being squeezed into a 3.5 inch screen.<sup>9</sup> Thus even in the face of restricted access to a limited number of titles, film viewing was, from the start, one of the iPhone's selling assets (and other smartphone manufacturers soon followed suit and copied the iPhone design); with the iPhone came the promise that users would carry with them their own 'pocket size cinema' and watch films wherever and whenever they wished.

'Existential Bubbles'

To most cinephiles, such an assertion is, of course, an anathema. The arguments against the kind of media convergence epitomized in the streaming and watching of films on portable

digital platforms and the effect it has on the cinematic experience are sufficiently well known to have become topics of tongue in cheek debate amongst YouTube viewers. A spoof of an iPhone commercial, posted in 2008 and based on the clever remix of audiovisual footage from extras of a special edition of an *Inland Empire* DVD release, has in effect become a classic in relation to the debate over the cinematic apparatus.<sup>10</sup> It features a furious rant by filmmaker David Lynch warning viewers against the abomination of watching films on iPhones.<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, the hundreds of bloggers who commented were not particularly interested in determining whether or not this was a fake, and if so who the author was, nor did they discuss its achievements as an iPhone advertisement. Reviewers were primarily interested in talking about the maverick director himself (and the irony of Lynch, the master creator of warped fictional worlds, asking us to ‘get real’ was not lost on the commentators). There were also heated exchanges about the message of the fake advertisement: on the acceptability of watching actual feature films on such a tiny screen, with reduced audio span. Out of the remarks emerge familiar concerns: as viewers, as well as missing the rituals associated with communal viewing and shared experience, we lose out on the large screen projection experience with all it entails in terms of audiovisual quality. Only within the film theatre’s enfolding darkness, secluded from the outside world, can we surrender to the sense of suspended time while we sit – spellbound and immobile – among a crowd of strangers, immersing ourselves in the vast expanse of the image projected on the cinema screen. Here, and in spite of the usual observations on the alleged added ‘freedom’ (‘anywhere, anytime’) brought to the user by mobile technology, the bloggers’ ambivalent comments often mirrored those of academic observers. For many a film theorist, the possibility of experiencing a film projected in a theatre at least once is precisely what continues to define cinema; it remains cinema’s unique prerogative in an era of remediation and media convergence, where films are turned into (mere) data so as to be redistributed in a multitude of formats and shifted between a growing number

of platforms and screens of all sizes. Probably because of its long tradition of art-house cinema and cine-club-bound cinephilia, francophone film theory offers particularly polarized points of view. Serge Daney's classic advice in favour of watching films on television, and Roger Odin's advocacy for the development of a 'communication space' where the frontiers between watching and making films becomes blurred, however, remain the exception.<sup>12</sup> From Jacques Aumont to Raymond Bellour and Eric de Kuyper,<sup>13</sup> Jean-Luc Godard's classic aphorism, echoed by Chris Marker, still holds:

Cinema is larger than us; you should have to raise your eyes to the cinema screen. When you start lowering your eyes on a smaller display, cinema loses its essence [...] On television, you see the shadow of a film, the nostalgic memory of a film, its echo -- never a film.<sup>14</sup>

In the introduction to his recently published *La Querelle des dispositifs: cinéma, installations, expositions*, Raymond Bellour summarizes the argument eloquently:

To experience the projection of a film in a cinema, in the dark, as part of an audience – large or reduced – has become, and remains, the condition of a unique experience of perception and memory that will be transformed, to a lesser or greater extent, in any other viewing situation. This and only this deserves to be called 'cinema'.<sup>15</sup>

Media historians interested in the longer view however, tend to take a more relativist stance. Hence in the aptly called *In Broad Daylight*, Gabriele Pedulla echoes many 'new media' theorists when he states:

In the brief history of moving image systems, the movie theatre's absolutism was only a brief parenthesis [...] a brief encounter that today we are all the more inclined to remember nostalgically for its transience.<sup>16</sup>

In the past few decades, the emergence in the field of media studies of a media archaeology approach that looks at the evolution of cinema as part of a broader, non-linear, and on-going history of technology<sup>17</sup> has contributed to this tendency to reevaluate the importance of the actual cinemagoing experience epitomized by Pedulla's quote. Here, the question of the multiple origins and genealogies of the medium of the moving image comes into play, calling for a re-contextualization of cinema in relation to a broad range of modes of experiencing films, including the individual viewing of small-scale film images. As part of an archaeological approach to media, connections can be drawn, for instance, between today's small mobile screens and early forms of exhibition that did not involve public projection, such as peephole viewing (the kinoscope) or the zoetrope that depended on the viewing of small scale images by one or a few spectators at a time. Similarly the flip book, or kineograph, involved the kind of manipulation that could be compared to the gesture-based activity of using palm size mobile media such as iPhones.

Given the mongrel origins of the medium of the moving image and of its apparatus therefore, and acknowledging that cinema has, so far, survived the digital onslaught that was meant to annihilate the very notion of cinema as we know it, a number of film and visual studies historians see no reason to equate media convergence, and the possibility of viewing film on a variety of platforms, with its imminent death. Writing as part of the aforementioned *Moving Data* collection, Francesco Casetti and Sara Sampietro thus argue, in contrast with Bellour's quote cited earlier, that 'if it is true that media are no longer tied to an exclusive platform or technology, it is also true that they continue to possess their own identities'.<sup>18</sup> For Casetti and



Sampietro, cinema possesses a distinctive way of involving us as well as a distinctive way of reflecting on our relation to the world, which they summarize, in a Bazin-inspired fashion, as ‘the ability to simultaneously restore the world to us while creating a new one, thus reconnecting the real to the possible’. Crucially, the technology that grants us this characteristic media experience, they argue, is significant, but not decisive.<sup>19</sup> To the terms ‘remediation’ and ‘media convergence’ they therefore prefer the term ‘relocation’, because ‘media are “worlds” that can be shifted elsewhere’.<sup>20</sup>

Casetti and Sampietro emphasize, however, that there are specific conditions to the successful relocation of the film viewing experience via a technology such as the small portable screen. The first condition, they argue, is a successful pre-existing relocation (Casetti and Sampietro call this the ‘two-step condition’).<sup>21</sup> In the case of film, this was done thanks to television and, later, the computer through which we have grown used to watching movies in small frames such as Quicktime, Vimeo or YouTube.<sup>22</sup>

The second, key condition is dependent on the ability to create what Casetti and Sampietro call an effective ‘existential bubble’, that is, the capacity for a subject to isolate herself within collective environments (though as mentioned before, you may well elect to watch your iPhone in the privacy of a domestic space). Though the authors do not address this particular aspect of the creation of ‘existential bubbles’, one can expect sound to take on -- to a certain extent at least -- the function traditionally assumed by darkness in a cinemagoing experience: the sound received through earphones allows the individual sitting amongst a crowd to seclude him- or herself and engage in what Casetti and Sampietro describe as an intimate and ‘exclusive relationship with the text’.<sup>23</sup> The ‘intimate experience’ rendered possible by the creation of an ‘existential bubble’ is to be distinguished from the ‘multifocalized’ and ‘epidermal’ modes of viewing, where the viewer exercises not an attentive but dispersive gaze, switching between several objects, or privileges interaction with the

technology itself, leading to a superficial, inattentive, and highly discontinuous gaze. In these latter cases, as with web platforms such as YouTube where films appear in fragmented, manipulated forms, and abridged to ‘pill-size doses’, cinema does indeed, Casetti and Sampietro remark, ‘un-*cinematize* itself’.<sup>24</sup>

It is not the attempt at asserting cinema’s uncertain ‘relocation’ via the iPhone that is of interest here, but, rather, the way in which Casetti and Sampietro’s analysis points to the possibility of a different encounter with the moving image -- one that goes beyond what Bellour calls a ‘degraded vision’ of film<sup>25</sup> and calls forth the small screen’s own, intriguing, mode of spectatorial engagement.

It is the so-called ‘intimate experience’ that I will therefore implicitly assume as the basis of my further exploration of the specific pleasures associated with small screen film viewing. The viewer I am now picturing is an attentive one. It is probably a viewer whose cinema-going habits are not altered by the possession of a portable screen; one who is likely to prefer to watch a given film at least once on a large screen, without fragmenting it, before seeing it via miniaturized media; at the same time however, she/he will also routinely elect to watch, and re-watch, a particular moment or scene on her or his smartphone. By extension, size of screen notwithstanding, it is a viewer who is susceptible to becoming immersed in the world of the film, whether it is a narrative feature or non-narrative work. In effect, the issue of continuity (as in narrative continuity or simply in viewing a work in its entirety) versus fragmentation is not necessarily crucial here: the viewer sensitive to the attractions of the miniaturized image may well be one who appreciates miniaturization in temporal terms as well as in scale; who finds pleasure in watching brief, self-contained extracts, non-narrative and short films. However, what interests me most here is the involvement with the material, tactile aspects of the experience of watching moving images on a very small screen rather than questions of narrative formats. I want to suggest that the attraction of viewing high quality film

images on a small screen has less to do with the much advertised freedom to watch the latest mainstream feature anywhere at any time, than with the effect of image reduction itself.

Hence to consider the specific enjoyment afforded by small screen viewing is not, by any means, to suggest the possibility of one mode of viewing emulating, let alone replacing, the experience of the film projected in a cinema, but rather to explore the ways diverse or complementary modes of experiencing film might coexist and offer different pleasures. Clearly, even if it is possible to effectively create an existential ‘bubble’ allowing for an intimate relation to the film one is watching on one’s iPhone, this has little in common with the experience of cinema-going. Even if, as Casetti and Sampietro suggest, the cinema experience could be successfully ‘relocated’, iPhone viewing would still imply a highly distinctive relation to the medium of the moving image – one that is undeniably bound to the change of scale and the experience of the miniature.

### Scale and Magic

Scale has always been a key component of the magic of cinema: where analogue, nitrate or celluloid film is concerned in particular, the magic comes not only from the immersion of the viewer within the world represented on a gigantic screen, but also from the projection, that is, the capacity to transform, through the power of light, an image that is tiny -- the miniature picture contained in each of the film strip’s individual frames – so as to render it on a massive scale.

When watching on a mobile phone screen the effect is reversed, but the magic remains (and Jobs is well aware of this, using the term ‘magic’ repeatedly in his presentation). In a sense, iPhone viewing can remind us of the wonder of looking at the miniature photographic world that is enclosed and repeated within sequences of single analogue film frames.

Daniel Szöllösi plays on this association in his 2012 ‘untitled’, a short film which was awarded first prize in the Amsterdam EYE Museum ‘celluloid remix’ competition, and for which he used a series of mobile phones laid out next to each other so that they evoke photograms on a film strip.<sup>26</sup> Following the rules of the competition, Szöllösi used found footage from the museum’s early film collection from which he selected shots of camera operators of the silent period at work, as well as amateur footage of a man, woman and child awkwardly acting up and laughing in front of the camera.

Part of the footage showed at the end of the film is badly decayed – to the point where the photographic content becomes entirely obscured. Szöllösi inserted split-screens and freeze frames, and remixed and looped various sequences before playing them on three iPhones placed side by side. He then reshot this pocket-size installation work from above – the three screens contained within one frame.



At first, his hands (and the hand is, in Susan Stewart words, ‘the measure of the miniature’)<sup>27</sup> appear in the frame to switch the three devices on, and as the images start to unravel on each of the small screens in turn, the soundtrack fills with the noise of an old fashioned projector, soon mixed with the sound of a woman laughing. At one point, Szöllösi’s hand reappears, lays a fourth phone on top of one of the iPhones already on display, wherein this new device seems to pick up a sequence of images as if by contagion. Little by little, both the sound of the projector and the display of images become more erratic. Parasite noise -- static, buzzing and

whistling – invades the sound track and the images start to flick by at an irregular speed, only then to decompose and vanish, as when analogue footage jams and combusts during a projection: it is as if the small electronic devices had become inhabited with the malevolent spirit of an old, dysfunctional projector. This uncanny cohabitation of the obsolete with the new is further emphasized by the author's 'signature shot' at the end, when Szöllösi switches the central device into video mode, so that his own image appears, framed by footage of a silent film cameraman briefly displayed on either side. The repeated involvement of the filmmaker (first coming into sight as a pair of giant hands, then as a small silhouette enclosed within one of the frames) as both a *Deus ex Machina* and a kind of Alice in Wonderland emphasizes the small size as well as the touch-based, intimate interface offered by the iPhone. It also brings out the sense of enchantment that the meeting, across time and scale, of diverse moving image technologies can elicit.

Indeed the miniature, as Gaston Bachelard reminds us in *La Poétique de l'espace*, belongs first and foremost to the land of fairy tales, and is never far from the world of children and their toys.<sup>28</sup> If, to paraphrase Casetti and Sampietro, films are 'worlds' that can be shifted elsewhere, then in this case, to enter them through an iPhone screen is to engage with an experience of viewing that arguably has something in common with the fairytale and with childhood. The iPhone is, after all, a kind of toy, albeit a very expensive toy that relies on the latest technology.

In *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, Susan Stewart stresses the ambiguous relation between miniaturization and technology: while the development of new technologies has allowed for the miniaturization of data of all kinds, including audio-visual data, the miniature also harks back to traditional forms of craftsmanship

celebrated for their capacity to create images and replicate the world in as tiny a scale and as completely as possible, while maintaining proportion.<sup>29</sup>

‘Unlike the gigantic, which celebrates quantity over quality’,<sup>30</sup> the art of the miniature insists on proportional perfection and detail.<sup>31</sup> If one of the main attractions and wonder of miniature representation is borne out of the kind of association of tininess with exactness, it calls for a distinctive form of gaze. For the reduction in scale induces a commensurate concentration of details – in the case of complex film images, with compositions saturated with visual information and transformations, one might even talk, as Stewart notes, of a ‘hallucination of details’.<sup>32</sup> As such, the iPhone as a screening device arguably encourages us not only to interface in a tactile way through our fingers, but also to exercise our tactile gaze. In her seminal books *Touch* and *The Skin of Film*, Laura Marks has emphasized how, in a culture that has privileged the distanced, optical gaze over the haptic one, we need to be reminded that vision is also a form of contact. Amongst the types of haptic images that encourage us to exercise our haptic or tactile gaze, she mentions diverse ‘traditions that involve intimate, detailed images that invite a small, caressing gaze’.<sup>33</sup> It is to film and video that Marks devotes her study of tactile vision, but in so doing, she relates the medium of the moving image to other traditions such as weaving, embroidery, and to older media such as medieval illuminated manuscripts, that require us to direct our attention to the surface of the image, its textures, contrasts and colours, minutiae and details.<sup>34</sup> In the case of the iPhone, the high resolution and soft glow of the retina LCD screen and the condensation of contrasts and colours as well as figures arguably yields the same visual attraction that the miniature *enlumineurs* sought to create, with their insistence on the luminosity and vivid hues and contrasts of their tiny paintings.

As suggested earlier, however, the gaze of today’s user of tiny mobile media platforms is sustained by a distinctive relation to the soundtrack that accompanies or provides a

counterpoint to the film images. In his chapter on the miniature in *La Poétique de l'espace*, Bachelard mentions a '*miniature du son*'.<sup>35</sup> At that point Bachelard is talking about Tom Thumb climbing inside a horse's ear, and his remarks, oddly evocative of a discussion on the functions of the earbud type of audio device, may help to give a poetic spin to the often banal depiction of the role of this kind of auditory prosthetic. In effect, as my slightly off kilter rapprochement suggests, in Bachelard's literary account, as with the technology concerned here, a synaesthetic or tactile quality is associated with the kind of sound delivered in the close, intimate mode that characterizes the 'auditory miniature':

Tom Thumb is at home inside the ear, at the entrance of the natural sound cavity. He is an ear within an ear. [...] He has settled there in order to speak softly, that is, to command loudly, with a voice that no-one could hear except the one who should 'listen'.<sup>36</sup>

The wording of this passage evokes the kind of excluding perception that immersion in the microcosm presented on an iPhone's small screen can induce - a highly individualized mode of viewing and hearing that yields a specific relation to its object in terms of intimacy but also in terms of control and possessiveness. If the device effectively draws the viewer into the world that unravels on its screen and via its earbuds or head-phones, the sense of possession ultimately lies, however, with the viewer as 'user'.

Indeed, if the minuscule invites us to surrender our sense of height to penetrate its microcosms, and while the haptic gaze is, for Laura Marks, a mode of vision that encourages us to 'yield into the image', smallness and tactility also play into forms of ownership and mastery. In *Death 24x a Second*, Laura Mulvey suggests that technologies such as the VCR and the DVD with their ability to still the moving image, contribute to the creation of new kinds

of spectator, among which she posits the ‘possessive’ spectator. In using a small, individual media platform such as an iPhone to watch films, the viewer arguably develops an even greater sense of control – for here, the spectator is also the sole ‘user’ and owner of a device that he carries himself. Intimacy thus yields into possessiveness: she/he carries their screen in their pocket and holds it in the palm of their hand. He/she can select a frame ratio, rewind and fast-forward, still the image, but also ‘pinch’ or zoom into the image to try and discover its mysteries. In the case of the iPhone, it is not when the image is stilled, however, that the greater sense of mastery comes into play, but when the image moves. Suddenly, actors and actresses, stars as well as less known figures, are reduced to the size of Tom Thumb moving through miniaturized sets and landscapes. As they run around this reduced space, seemingly imprisoned in the tight confines of the diminutive frame, and their movements rendered more hysterical by their miniaturization, the distant observer might well compare the owner of the iPhone to a kind of entomologist, or a distant heir of the gigantic blue humanoids of René Laloux and Roland Topor’s *La Planète Sauvage* (1973) who entertain themselves with the spectacle of the insect-sized humans they capture or purchase.<sup>37</sup>

And thus, by extension, we are also reminded that the art of the miniature has always been an art form favoured by the collector. As Stewart reminds us, to carry a miniature picture of a loved one was always a way of keeping them close, their portrait secured in a locket and often kept against one’s skin; by extension however, miniature representations are related to specific patterns of possession and collection that would later feed into the forms of commodification of the body that the advertisement came to epitomize. <sup>38</sup>

## Conclusion

Rather than a radical loss of the cinema effect, there arguably is a strange metamorphosis as well as a doubling of it in the experience of watching moving images on the



diminutive, portable screen of a smartphone: the viewer's immersion in the world of the film is, simultaneously, an immersion in a miniature universe whose gate opens in the palm of one's hand. However, the mix of intimacy and possession that such viewing entails effortlessly yields to patterns of possession and consumption where the smallness of the image, the reduction of the human figure as well as its environment, becomes part and parcel of the device's functioning as a commodity form. To a certain extent therefore, to emphasize the connections that exist between such a mode of viewing and a diverse range of historical, literary, poetic and artistic precedents is to attempt to re-appropriate it, away from the technological fetishism and commodifying discourses that often dominate the advertising as well as critical studies of new technologies. For there is, undoubtedly, a distinctive beauty and fascination in the spectacle of extremely complex moving images rendered in such diminutive, yet perfect, fashion; the captivation exercised by the shifting glow that the small images cast against their surroundings testifies to this, as does the irrepensible need, in the bustle of public transport, to peer over the shoulder of the absorbed fellow traveller who holds the miniature screen in her hand.

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1 Gaston Bachelard, *La Poétique de l'espace* [1958] (Paris : PUF, 2011), p. 148; see also *The Poetics of Space*, translated by Maria Jolas (Boston : Beacon Press, 1994), p. 155.

2 Laura Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), p. 161.

3 Coincidentally, in his chapter on the miniature in *La Poétique de l'espace*, Bachelard quotes from Cyrano de Bergerac a passage where Cyrano describes the apple as 'un petit univers à soi même, dont le pépin plus chaud que les autres parties, répand autour de soi la chaleur conservatrice de son globe [...] ». « a little universe in itself, the seed of which, being hotter than the other parts, gives out the conservative heat of its globe [...] » Edmond Rostan, *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1897), quoted in *La Poétique de l'espace*, p. 142; see also *The Poetics of Space*, p.151.

4 Hence in spite of the fierce competition we still tend to associate touch phone technology with Apple's iPhone, it is not the communication aspect per se that has turned the iPhone into such an emblematic artefact of the digital era – an 'ideal-type commodity form' as media theorists would have it. As a telephone proper, Apple's iPhone was never rated amongst the best. It is other functions, including that of a screening device, that take precedence.

5 See Steve Jobs's introductory presentation of the iPhone, at: <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=6uW-E496FXg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6uW-E496FXg) and [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vququ7x8gnw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vququ7x8gnw)>.

6 A strange effect of shifting scales is created, however, by the fact that Jobs's presentation, taking place in a vast cinema-like auditorium, is supported by *giant* images of the iPhone displayed on a large screen.

7 Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau, eds, *Moving Data: The iPhone and the Future of Media* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. 1.

8 Alisa Perren and Karen Petruska, 'Big Hollywood, Small Screens', in Snickars and Vonderau, 104-124; Chuck Tryon, 'Pushing the (Red) Envelope: Portable Video, Platform Mobility and Pay-Per-View Culture', in Snickars

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and Vonderau, 124-140; Jennifer Holt, 'Platforms, Pipelines, and Politics: The iPhone and Regulatory Hangover', in Snickars and Vondereau, 140-155.

<sup>9</sup> The Retina display has four times the number of pixels as previous iPhones. See for instance Chris Brandrick, 'The iPhone 4's Retina Display Explained', *TechHive*, at: <[http://www.pcworld.com/article/198201/iPhone\\_4s\\_retina\\_display\\_explained.html](http://www.pcworld.com/article/198201/iPhone_4s_retina_display_explained.html)>.

<sup>10</sup> See Roger Odin, 'Spectator, Film and the Mobile Phone', in *Audiences*, edited by Ian Christie (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), p. 155.

<sup>11</sup> This fake advertisement features on a number of sites. See, for example, <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKilroiCvZ0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKilroiCvZ0)>.

<sup>12</sup> Odin, pp. 156-58. In effect, Daney's comments are but an extension of his defence of the unique experience that cinema represents (in its traditional format, both as practice and as viewing experience). Serge Daney, 'The Zappeur's Salary', in *Cinema And Television: Fifty Years Of Reflection In France*, edited by Jacques Kermabon and Kumar Shahani (Bombay: Orient Longman, 1991), 237-24.

<sup>13</sup> See Jacques Aumont, 'Que reste-t-il du cinéma?', *Trafic* 79 (September 2011), 95-107; Raymond Bellour, 'The Cinema Spectator: A Special memory', in Christie, 206-218; Bellour, 'La Querelle des Dispositifs', *Art Press* 262 (Novembre 2000), 48-52, and Bellour, *La Querelle des Dispositifs : cinéma – expositions, installations* (Paris: P.O.L, 2012), pp. 13-47. Eric De Kuyper, 'L'autre Histoire du Cinéma, ou la perte du spectacle : Qui gagne, qui perd?' in *In the very beginning, at the very end: Film Theories in Perspective*, edited by Francesco Casetti, Jane Gaines and Valentine Re (Udine: Forum, 2010), 143-151. See also Andrew Dudley, *What Cinema Is!* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), in particular pp. 66-79.

<sup>14</sup> 'Le cinéma, c'est ce qui est plus grand que nous, sur quoi il faut lever les yeux. En passant dans un objet plus petit et sur quoi on baisse les yeux, le cinéma perd son essence. (...) On peut voir à la télé l'ombre d'un film, le regret d'un film, la nostalgie, l'écho d'un film, jamais un film'. Jean-Luc Godard, quoted in Chris Marker, 'Cinéma zone', in *Immemory* (CD-ROM, Paris: Yves Gevaert Editeur / Centre Georges Pompidou, 1997), my translation.

<sup>15</sup> '*La projection vécue d'un film en salle, dans le noir, le temps prescrit d'une séance plus ou moins collective, est devenue et reste la condition d'une expérience unique de perception et de mémoire, définissant son spectateur et que toute situation autre de vision altère plus ou moins. Et cela seul vaut d'être appelé « cinéma »*'. Bellour, *La Querelle des Dispositifs*, p.14. Italics in original, my translation.

By the same token, Bellour rebuffs claims by art historians that cinema's future lies with the galleries and museums. See pp. 30-37.

<sup>16</sup> Gabriele Pedulla, *In Broad Daylight* (London: Verso, 2012), p.79.

<sup>17</sup> See Thomas Elsaesser, 'The New Film History as Media Archaeology', *Cinémas: Journal of Film Studies*, 14:2-3 (2004), 75-117.

<sup>18</sup> Whereas Bellour's argument posits a precise definition of what the term cinema designates (cinema's identity having become, in the course of time, inseparable from specific conditions of viewing which involve public projection), Casetti and Sampietro's analysis rests on the overlapping use of a set of loosely defined terms (media, cinema, film). See Francesco Casetti and Sara Sampietro, 'With Eyes, with Hands: the Relocation of Cinema into the iPhone', in Snickars and Vonderau, p. 20 [19-33]. Bellour, *La Querelle des Dispositifs*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>19</sup> Casetti and Sampietro, p. 20.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>22</sup> On this topic, see Vivian Sobchack's 'Nostalgia for a Digital Object: Regrets on the Quickening of *Quicktime*', *Millennium Film Journal* 34 (1999), 4-23. See also Lev Manovich, 'Little Movies', at: <<http://www.manovich.net/little-movies/>>.

<sup>23</sup> Casetti and Sampietro, p. 28.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27 (italics in original).

<sup>25</sup> Bellour, 'La vision dégradée du film de cinéma', *La Querelle des Dispositifs*, p.14.

<sup>26</sup> The film can be viewed on: <[celluloidremix.openbeelden.nl/media/125755/Untitled](http://celluloidremix.openbeelden.nl/media/125755/Untitled)>.

<sup>27</sup> Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 46.

<sup>28</sup> Bachelard, *La Poétique de l'espace*, p. 140; also *The Poetics of Space*, p.148.

<sup>29</sup> Stewart, p. 46. Miniaturization thus belongs to both the latest technology and to the preindustrial and early industrial worlds still connected to manual craft and to which it often nostalgically refers, as in Szöllösi's piece, with its restaging of archive footage and its insistence on the presence of the hand.

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<sup>30</sup> Stewart, p. 112

<sup>31</sup> Both Stewart and Bachelard, in their respective explorations of the miniature, offer examples drawn from literature as well as painting, including the classic description of Tom Thumb sleeping in his walnut shell, a description that celebrates the beauty of smallness associated with perfect proportions (Stewart, p. 46; Bachelard, *La Poétique de l'espace*, p. 154; *The Poetics of Space*, p. ).

<sup>32</sup> Stewart, p. 112.

<sup>33</sup> Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 169.

<sup>34</sup> Marks, p. 169.

<sup>35</sup> Bachelard, *La Poétique de l'espace*, p. 154; *The Poetics of Space*, p. 166.

<sup>36</sup> Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, pp. 165-166.

‘Le Petit Poucet est chez lui dans l’espace d’une oreille, à l’entrée de la cavité naturelle du son. Il est une oreille dans une oreille. (...) Il s’[y] est installé pour parler bas, c’est-à-dire commander fort, d’une voix que personne n’entend sauf celui qui doit « écouter »’. Bachelard, *La Poétique de l'espace*, p. 154.

<sup>37</sup> In effect, this sense of mastery may well extend to the diegetic world of the film as a whole, and, as such, function as a reprieve – a counterpoint to the sense of powerlessness experienced by one living in the era of global uncertainty. In the following quote, Bachelard, writing in 1957, is talking about philosophy as a discursive practice, and the unattainable ambitions of the metaphysician, rather than discourses of globalization. However, the passage quoted below has a contemporary resonance in the way it emphasizes the exercise of reduction as a form of mastery and as a means to fight the sense of loss one experiences when confronted with the complexity of the world at large:

‘In fact, I feel more at home in miniature worlds, which, for me, are dominated worlds. (...) To have experienced miniature sincerely detaches me from the surrounding world, and helps me to resist dissolution of the surrounding atmosphere’. *The Poetics of Space*, p.165.

‘Je suis plus à mon aise dans le monde de la miniature. Ce sont pour moi des mondes dominés. (...) La miniature sincèrement vécue me détache du monde ambiant, elle m’aide à résister à la dissolution de l’ambiance’. *La Poétique de l'espace*, pp. 149-50.

<sup>38</sup> Stewart, p. 125.