

Delia ENYEDI

Perspectives on Post-Cinema Attractions

The diachronically interpreted evolution of cinema has favored an opposition between the early films understood as non-narrative “attractions” and the coming of age of narration within the institutionalized classical cinema. But as Tom Gunning has pointed out, these attractions never disappeared, but rather went underground, integrated into avant-garde practices, as well as maintaining their confrontational nature in relation to narrative films. This issue of the *Ekphrasis* journal addresses the status of attractions in media and visual arts of post-cinematic extraction.

The theoretical framework borders on extreme perspectives on the birth of cinema, such as André Gaudreault’s replacing of the collocation “early cinema” in regard to the approximate period 1890-1910 with the term “kine-attractog-

raphy” and the “death of cinema” heralded by Paolo Cherchi Usai in the “digital dark age”. Separated by more than a century, films belonging to both periods share what Tom Gunning calls the “aesthetic of astonishment”. It defines the augmented sensorial experience of the spectators watching early films that not only explicitly acknowledge their presence, but seem to reach out and confront them. To an extent, it is mirrored in television’s “aesthetic of efficiency” defined by Max Dawson as dominated by a “decontextualized narrative or visual spectacle”.

David Bordwell has addressed the relationship between attraction and narration speaking of “intensified continuity” in Western cinema, while Steven Shaviro coined the term “post-continuity” to define the search of filmmakers for immediate effects in prejudice of classical continuity or overall narrative. While being rather opposing concepts, they galvanize the critical approach on the practices and reception of post-cinematic cultural products and events explored in the articles, interviews and reviews gathered in the following pages.

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