

***Migratory*: filmic exchanges and cinematographic weavings**

Michiko Tsuda and Caroline Bernard

By resorting to filming resources such as cell phones, webcams and GPS, the *Migrateurs (Migratory)* project proposes and experiments with new filmic forms that replay and distort relations between space and time. The title *Migratory* is a tribute to the heterotopic qualities of the network whereby images, taken in a continuous movement, become unstable nebulas and are organized into constantly reshaped migratory streams. Forms of image editing and interlacing are updated by searching through reticulated patterns, for example, through offsetting, crossing or delegating the shooting. Thus, the scenario for *Switched Eyes (2009)* involves crossing operators: one person in Europe and one in Japan are equipped with two cameras. When the filmer in Japan presses the record button on their camera, they trigger not their own camera but their opposite number's in Europe. In a similar vein, the film *Reward (2009)* crosses territories. A still camera is found in the woods with a memory card full of pictures of persons unknown. By deduction, it would seem that these people live in the city of Grenoble in France. So an investigation is conducted to try and trace them, from Japan, by exploring the Grenoble area with the Street View tool.

In this logic of crossed territories, *Six Semaines de parallèles confondues (Six Weeks of Merged Parallel Lines, 2008)* is the outcome of six weeks of taxi rides between a woman patient's home and a medical centre. The forty-five minute drive is filmed each day from start to finish, both ways, with a mobile phone mounted on the vehicle's dashboard. A GPS simultaneously records the journey; the trips are then transferred onto Google Earth satellite images like so many coloured threads on top of each other. These images accompany a story written daily and published in the form of a blog. The title is a reference to the mathematical rule whereby only one straight line, and all its merged parallels, can pass through any two points. This work on territory is an analogy to the radiotherapy treatment prescribed by the doctors. Thus the body is precisely mapped, as under no circumstances must the machine's rays move out of line. The body is marked out like a territory; and the malignant point has precise coordinates that the machine homes in on. Gradually, the trace of its passage is printed on the skin and leaves an imprint. Although it is invisible, there is a contact between the machine and the body, which is of the imprinted form as

defined by Georges Didi-Huberman: 'the imprint excludes any distance from its referent, precisely because it needs adherence in order to function. Likewise, contact presupposes the reduction, the crushing of any mediation. Lastly, the "imprinted" form is obtained blind, in the inaccessible interiority of contact between the substrate of matter and its copy in formation'.

The landscape passing-by, in a way, leaves its imprint on the sampling tools, namely the mobile camera and GPS. To be able to speak of an imprint, it should nonetheless be noted at this juncture that there probably exists a distance between the substrate of matter and its copy, and that filming cannot be considered a blind process. However, wanting to capture these trips in their entirety indicates a real desire to apply a shroud and to roll it out over the passing landscape so as to absorb it completely. These arguments seem to extrapolate Georges Didi-Huberman's thinking, but they arise from a poetic necessity - essential to the work's composition.

Every three or four seconds (depending on the vehicle's progress), the film switches sequence, meaning it changes days and journeys, while maintaining visual continuity. Each journey spills over into the next one, the six week loop is completed in about thirty seconds, and then starts all over again. Nonetheless, the vehicle proceeds on its way to the medical centre in a forward traveling shot. Below the image, the date and GPS coordinates indicate the variation of sequences. Although from one day to the next it may rain or be dark, the sequences are interwoven with no visual interruptions of the landscape: a tree, an electricity pole, a signpost, all these elements present are used - by pasting them together they carry on the wallpaper. Filming every journey in full creates an adequacy between the spatial description and progress in time. The length of the film corresponds to the scanning of the space. The films form space-time monoliths, as though they were produced by the movement of a scanner. In *Aspen MovieMap* (1978-80), a work which foreshadows the Street View tool, Michael Naimark recourse to what he calls a camera car: a vehicle fitted with a set of cameras and a gyroscopic stabilizer films all the streets and intersections in the town of Aspen. In calling his vehicle a camera car, the artist includes movement as an inherent component of the filming - just like the lenses on the cameras, or the record function. In *Six Weeks of merged parallel lines*, the concordance between the physical movement of the vehicle through space, the camera's forward traveling shot and the duration of the film produce kinds of thread films. Both plastically and temporally identical in nature, the sequences are thus associated and woven together in the form of a continuous filmic ribbon.

Capturing movements from start to finish is of course an attempt to frustrate memory and forgetfulness. The aim of this systematic capture is to be able to preserve the memory by playing for instance on the ductility of the video material and by stretching it beyond the possibilities of the engram. Video time, captured time is, to quote Piotr Kowalski's expression, 'a material to be manipulated in the same way as space'. The film *Fonction Panorama LG KU990* offers a continuous panorama of fixed images, and underneath it, a conversation reduced to a single line. The images filmed in their successions are laid out flat in the form of a ribbon scrolling past. The past exits to the left, the future comes in from the right. The scrolling produces duration, and despite the fixity of the images, time is spatialized and metered, doubtless the same way as Paul Sharits's *Frozen film frames*. The project *Hachioji: Hole in gap, la traversée des temps zébrés (The Crossing of Zebra Times, 2008)* confronts two models of descriptions of time. Shooting is done in the first place in France via a webcam placed in the urban space in the Hachioji quarter of Tokyo. Shooting is done, in the second place, simultaneously on the spot with a VD camera. An urban webcam is a camera with a shared, delayed display. The images appear in a variable stream, often considerably slowed down. The webcam is not designed for recording but for observation. Due to its slow refresh rate, the temporal description is poor compared with the thirty pictures a second that a VD camera can handle. Without this being an optical issue, the VD camera describes the course of events more accurately than the webcam; in a sense, it sees better. The two time models are alternated; each time the webcam is refreshed, which is about every two seconds, the events it has missed are described again by the VD camera - with time enriched and the detail in all the movements is at last perceptible. Thus time seems to be examined by a microscope that reveals the subdivisions. The choice of a choreographic performance inserts a third model of a description of time - through movement. The density of the choreographer's movements enables a comparison between the time operations of the two shots; for the VD camera, a leap by the dancer caught by the webcam is as a series of several steps.

There is a metaphorical relationship between the slow webcam refresh and the distance in miles. From France, Japan is no more than an echo, whose beats are laboriously transmitted. So the screen refresh is viewed as a beat, a unit for measuring time. This beat refers to the notion of interval as described by Dziga Vertov, but it also refers symbolically to the experiments of Galileo on the fractioning of time into tiny slices. The *Migratory* films tend to model filming and editing to propose models of time and space caught outside the primary issues of

cinematographic narrative. The films are accompanied by diagrams that aspire to take over from them, or even to entirely replace them. They describe the filmic scheme in the form of scores, in which they are similar to the panels in Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas*, the cinematographic aspect of which is described by Philippe-Alain Michaud, who says that 'even if nothing in *Mnemosyne* involves cinema technique, it nevertheless remains a cinematographic device, and that in Warburg's construction, the moment of projection during which phenomena of continuity, mergings and contradictions are deployed between images, has not disappeared; it has simply lost its diachronic dimension and requires an active intervention by the viewer'. The scores of the *Migratory* films describe the relations, organization and tensions between the different shots in the absence of images.

In terms of the time and space dimensions, like *Janus*, the *Migratory* films work their way out from the centre and can move out towards either past or future. They have the same features as webcams - constantly looking: they are streams, tensions, ribbons. The construction of these films is such as to take the divisions of editing to extremes and thereby fraction time indefinitely, making it impossible for it to move forward. For example, a quality in the *Voyage/Transmutation/Hybridation* project is that it has recourse to morphing. Thus, intermediate images are inserted between frames, and time becomes endlessly subdivided. Like Zeno's paradox, with the arrow always moving half the distance it still has to cover, any movement by the arrow becomes impossible. Time no longer passes, neither do the six weeks, and the vehicle never reaches its destination.

Caroline Bernard

Translation John Lee

Life cycle in digital system

Hui Zhu

Academy Arts and Design, Tsinghua University, China

H.F. Animation Lab, Academy Arts and Design, Tsinghua University, China

Sebastien Mulot

Independent Sound Artist, France

Keywords: digital media, computer animation art, biological life sciences, music visualization, video

Abstract

In exploring a perception of life growing and digital visual art, these new short animation films create a new life cycle system which combine together biological life sciences, artistic imaginative vision and music. These art works were invited for exhibit in the 11th China ART Exhibition and Tsinghua University.

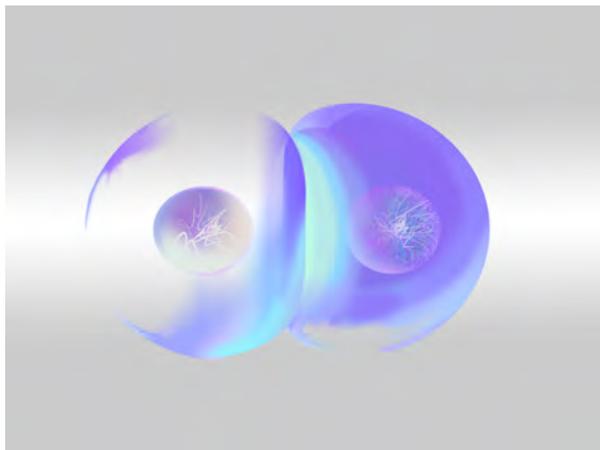
If only the clock of our life would never stop ... if only we could stay forever young ... if only our aged body could be reborn, like a new embryo in Spring, and to grow youthful again! Is this not the most dreamed dream we have been dreaming? Yet this dream could be fulfilled, when we understand the key to the cycle of life.

Do not say that it is death that gives meaning to life, because that is only the case when we have no knowledge to fight aging and no power to go against death. Of course we will all grow old in time and we will all disappear someday - each individual like a leaf on a tree - but new leaves will keep growing out from the tree of life, season after season, generation after generation. This has been the case and will continue to be case for millions of years. This great cycle makes our life beautiful and, in this sense, forever young. Yet within this cycle there is a vulnerable place we call the placenta - the place from which we all begin.

In these art works, 3D computer visualization techniques were used to create a scene that combined biological life sciences and artistic imaginative vision to create a serial of new life cycle system. We use MAYA 2008, AFTER EFFECT to create animation. And Sam created the sound for these art works.

Creative concept and visualization techniques

Many artists try to explore the notion of being behind physical surface using imagination, and some of their artworks can be helpful for contemporary science even pointing to future research. With the development of technology, artworks have been extended from paper to mobile forms, from two dimensions to three. What kind of technology might be used for a particular concept - is a common question and there always exist impossibility and possibility during the production process.



Lifecycle 001 Hui Zhu



Lifecycle Script Hui Zhu

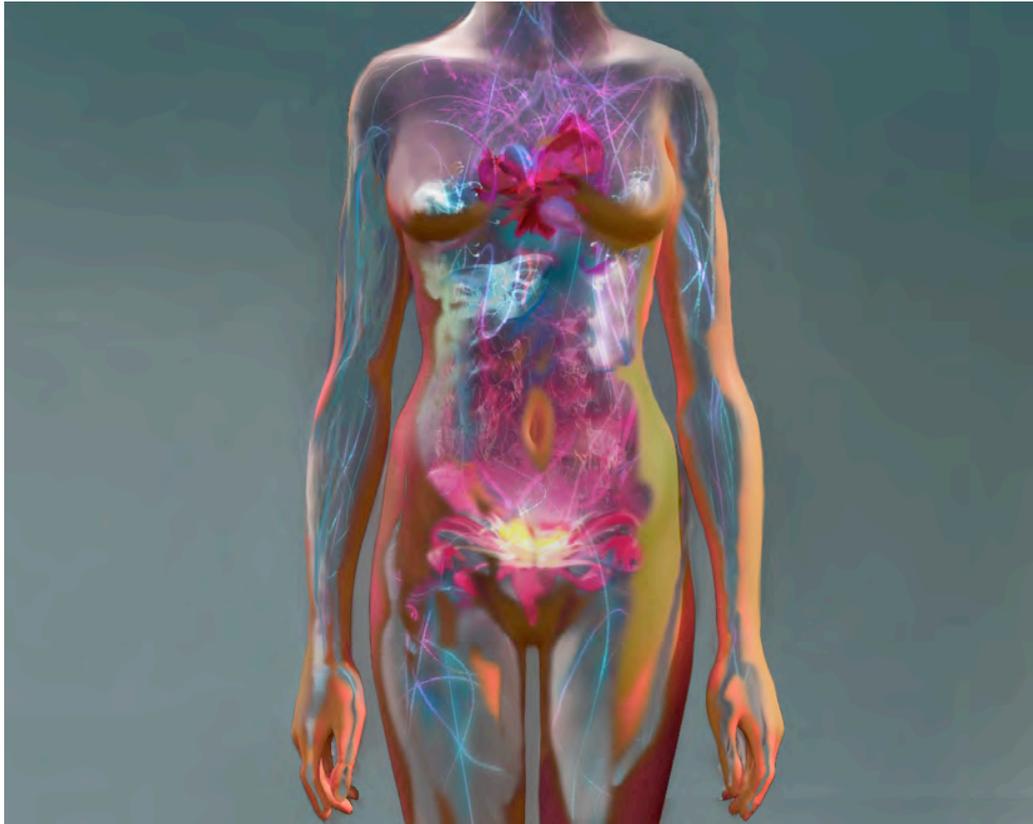
Even though China's animation has a decades-long history, it's animation industry can still be considered to be a young one. Despite the across-the-board expansion, approximately half of China's animation output is produced for other countries, and there is still a serious shortage of original content in animation and resources within the TV and film industry. The animation industry is mostly sustained by either government support or by jobs that are outsourced from other countries. And the number of firms with the ability to produce individual animation pieces that exceed thirty minutes falls drastically to the teens. Only a few Chinese animation companies that create original content animation can survive within this environment; most must rely on government support.

What might we consider a successful design? Successful design can act as a bridge connecting the art idea along with accessible technology. In this life cycle program, initially the art concept is an idea drawn from meditation. The idea is exciting but wispy. Based on our program investment, possibly 2D animation will be fit for such a phantasmagoric theme. But for the program deadline, possibly 3D animation is more controllable given the limited time. During the exploration of the theme there are some similar things found between life cycle with digital art, such as the 1 to 0 code. Based on viewers' expectation, 3D computer visualization techniques were used to create a serial of process that combined biological life sciences and artistic imaginative vision to creatively show a new life cycle code.

Everything in the world is in constant change, likewise our body, in the form of split and fusion. In exploring a perception of life growing, increasingly digital art work can create various life cycle systems combining biological life sciences and artistic imaginative vision together: from representationalism to abstract expressionism, different forms express different modes of sensory delivery. With digital technology, this programme shows different views of life cycle, from the inside to the outside, from microcosm cells to macroscopic universe, from end to a regeneration of life.

Individual and generation

One person can be considered as an individual or being the representative of his/her generation through nationality; the same can be said with this life cycle program. There is only one female character who experiences youth to old age and regeneration. She can be looked as one person or as human kind, and experience generation after generation: it depends on different viewpoints, from inside to outside, from local to international.



Lifecycle 002

Hui Zhu

We hope these digital images can contribute something to the gene project. Do not say that it is death which gives meaning to life because that is only the case when we have no knowledge to fight aging, and no power to go against death.