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The Presence of the Painting Tradition in the Visual Language of Modern Film¹

Interdisciplinary Investigations

Abstract

This study examines how modern film inherits and transforms the visual structures of the tradition of painting. The main thesis of the research is that film is not merely a representational medium, but a tool for structuring perception. Drawing on phenomenological and film-theoretical approaches, the article demonstrates how the film image becomes a reflexive, ontological and aesthetic problem.

Keywords: film theory, visual culture, perception, painting, intermediality, aesthetics

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Introduction – The cultural construction of visuality and film as a medium of perception

From the second half of the 20th century onwards, the interpretation of the visual language of modern film increasingly moved beyond purely narrative or technical approaches and began to organise itself at the intersection of perception, visual culture, and aesthetic philosophy. This study proceeds from the thesis that film is not merely a means of representing reality, but one of the most important cultural media for structuring vision. To put it another way: film does not simply show the world but contributes to how the world becomes visible and interpretable to us in the first place.

This approach is closely linked to 20th-century trends in phenomenology, Gestalt psychology and film theory, which share the recognition that perception is not a passive reception but a structured and culturally determined process. In this context, film is not a neutral mediator but an active shaping force.

Another fundamental claim of the study is that the visual organising principles of film did not emerge in isolation historically but are largely built upon structures inherited from the tradition of painting. Painting—particularly from the Renaissance onwards—developed models of image organisation which continue to function in the medium of film, expanded by a new temporal dimension. Film therefore does not simply ‘inherit’ painting, but transforms its structural logic.²

Vision as a cultural and structured practice

The visual functioning of film cannot be understood without rethinking the concept of vision. In contrast to the classical empiricist view, 20th-century philosophical and psychological trends emphasised that perception is not the passive processing of raw data, but a structured, meaning-making process.

According to the phenomenological approach—particularly in the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty—perception is always a bodily and world-embedded experience (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 74–86). Perception is not an objective mapping of the world, but a dynamic relationship between the world and the subject. In parallel, Gestalt psychology, by examining the field-of-consciousness structure

2 In my study, I will use the terms ‘modern film’ and ‘contemporary film’, the former referring to the period from 1950 to 2000, and the latter to the period from 2000 to the present day.

of film forms, highlights that perception is always organised: the relationship between the figure, the background and marginal elements determines what becomes meaningful (cf. Tan 2022, 1 and 2).

György Kepes makes similar observations, arguing that the basis of visual communication is not the mechanical recording of the image, but its structuring (Kepes 1979). Vision is thus a learned and culturally mediated process. In this context, film does not merely depict, but directs. The camera angle, the system of shots, and the rhythm of editing are all tools that determine the organisation of the viewer's attention. Thus, film not only tells us what we see, but also how we see (see also: Király 2010; Balázs 2025, 11–36).

This insight appears in the work of several key figures in film theory. André Bazin sees the ontological specificity of film in its indexical relationship to reality, putting it as follows: "...film is in fact the most advanced manifestation of that visual realism whose principles began to take shape during the Renaissance and which found its extreme expression in Baroque art. [...] film represents the fulfilment of the photograph's objectivity in relation to time" (Bazin, 1977, 20–23)—all of which is worth comparing with Mary Ann Doane's approach, according to whom medium-specificity is always a historically changing concept. In other words, what Bazin regarded as the essence of the photograph is also, in part, a cultural belief dependent on the era (cf. Doane 2012).

All this enters a fruitful relationship with the question of the survival of the tradition of painting within the visual language of modern film, because the embedded painting, photograph or other visual representation appearing in theatre and film always reflects on its own pictorial nature and medial status. When a film integrates a painting or photograph into the diegesis, it does not merely allude to the visual arts, but juxtaposes the differing levels of representation: the iconic-compositional logic of the painting, the indexical-causal logic of the photograph, and the temporal and narrative logic of the moving image.

In this sense, the 'image within an image' becomes a self-reflexive laboratory of medium-specificity, rendering visible what Bazin discusses as an ontological characteristic and Doane as a historically changing sign relationship. In the case of theatre, all this becomes even more complex, because the relationship between the presence of the living body and the stage 'tableau' rewrites the opposition between the fixed image and the present-tense representation. Thus, the relationship between the visual arts, film and theatre is not simply a question of the

history of influence, but an intermedial examination of the truth-value, presence and referentiality of images.

Gilles Deleuze, meanwhile, takes the question in a radically new direction when he describes the film image not as representation but as a form of thought, as a 'movement-image' and a 'time-image'; and according to his approach, great film directors—such as Sergei Eisenstein, Ingmar Bergman or Federico Fellini—are thinkers like philosophers, only they do not work with words and concepts, but with images, shots, rhythm, montage and sound (Deleuze 2001). According to the French philosopher and aesthete, film does not simply show the world, but recreates the conditions of perception. Classical film thinks through movement ('movement-image'), whilst modern film makes the experience of time directly visible ('time-image'). For this reason, film is one of the most important philosophical media for modern man.

These various theoretical positions point to a common ground: film is a fundamental cultural form of perception.

The tradition of painting as a structural model

When examining the role of the tradition of painting, it is important to emphasise that we are not talking about stylistic influences, but about a structural legacy. Over the centuries, painting has developed visual models that have fundamentally shaped the Western way of seeing. Renaissance perspective, for example, is not merely a technical innovation, but a new conceptualisation of space and vision. The system of central perspective presupposes a stable vantage point from which the world appears as a coherent, ordered structure. Erwin Panofsky refers to this perspective as a 'symbolic form', emphasising that it is not merely a representational technique, but a worldview (Panofsky 1984, 151–218).

Linked to this is the question of compositional hierarchy. The figure–ground relationship that emerges in painting creates not only a visual hierarchy but also a hierarchy of meaning: it designates what is important and what is marginal. Film does not simply adopt this structure but renders it temporal. The movement of the camera, changes in focus and editing all dynamically transform what is static in the painting.

Static and dynamic images: The temporality of perception

One of the most essential aspects of the difference between painting and film is the question of temporality. In the case of a painting, the timing of reception is in the viewer's hands: the gaze moves freely across the picture surface and constructs its interpretation at its own pace.

In contrast, film is a medium organised in time. The viewer cannot freely choose the pace of reception: the sequence of images, the rhythm of the editing and the camera movement determine the temporal structure of perception. This difference is not merely formal, but fundamentally perceptual in nature. Film exercises greater control over the viewer's attention and is thus able to consciously manipulate the processes of perception. In this sense, film can truly be interpreted as 'a laboratory of vision'.

Film as a reflexive and intermedial medium

One of the most defining trends in modern cinema is self-reflexivity, that is, the endeavour in which the moving image not only depicts the world but simultaneously questions its own mode of representation. This dual function also casts doubt on the ontological status of film: the medium appears simultaneously as a transparent mediator and a densely layered visual system that refers to itself. The viewer thus does not merely follow a story, but is also confronted with the conditions of seeing. A particularly fertile terrain for this self-reflexive operation is intermediality, in which film incorporates the formal language of other art forms into its own structure. Painting plays a prominent role in this, functioning not merely as a source of inspiration in its relationship with film, but also as a structuring principle.

The 'image within an image' structure is one of the most important manifestations of this; when a painting, a painting-like shot or a deliberately composed visual tableau appears in a film, it is not a simple quotation or decorative element, but a complex carrier of meaning. On the first level, such visual inserts are part of the narrative world, that is, they can fulfil a diegetic function: a painting hanging on a room's wall, a picture on display in a gallery, or a work of art viewed by a character appears as an object that can be interpreted within the story's world. At the same time, in many cases these images transcend this role and begin to operate on a meta-level.

Through painterly compositions, staged lighting, scenes frozen in static poses, or iconic visual references, the film draws attention to its own logic of image composition. At this point, the image not only depicts but also reflects, revealing that vision is always a constructed, always framed and always interpretation-mediated process. The film is therefore not a natural window of perception, but a consciously constructed visual structure that thematises its own functioning. The 'image within an image' thus takes on a meta-image function, as it not only displays another image but also highlights the conditions, limits, and illusory nature of imagery. This phenomenon can be described most accurately within the theoretical framework of intermediality. Intermediality does not merely mean the juxtaposition of media, but examines their mutual interpenetration, their interweaving, and their meaning-shaping interference. Film occupies a privileged place within this system, as it is inherently hybrid in nature, being simultaneously a visual, temporal, narrative, and performative medium. When other art forms—particularly painting—are integrated into the structure of film, they do not function as external references, but become part of the medium's self-interpretation. Thus, the reflexive and intermedial functioning of modern film is not merely a stylistic feature, but a fundamental aesthetic and ontological strategy. In this sense, the moving image does not merely convey a spectacle, but also reflects on the medium of vision, whilst constantly rearranging and rendering visible its own visual mode of existence.

Overall, this reflexivity and these intermedial relationships are not merely aesthetic games, but key dimensions of modern film's self-interpretation. By entering dialogue with other media, the moving image also reveals the conditions of its own functioning, thereby placing the viewer in a more active, critical position. This trend is particularly relevant in contemporary visual culture, where the boundaries between media are becoming increasingly blurred and images exist within networked relationships.

The tradition of painting in modern European cinema

Many filmmakers in modern European cinema consciously use the tradition of painting as a reflexive tool.

The tradition of portraiture is evident in Ingmar Bergman's films: the emphasis on the face, the reduction of the background and the dramatic use of light serve to highlight the psychological depth of the character; see pictures 1–2.



Pictures 1–2. Individual frames from Ingmar Bergman's films *The Seventh Seal* (1957) and *Persona* (1966)

This visual strategy is not merely a stylistic choice, but also a means of rendering the fragmentation of identity and internal conflicts visible. Through the intensity of the close-ups, the viewer is almost compelled to 'read' the face, which thus becomes not merely a representation, but an event. The subtle modulation of light-and-shadow relationships evokes the classical tradition of light and shadow in painting, yet within the medium of film, it becomes dynamic through its temporality: the face is not a static surface, but a changing, unfolding psychological space.

In Alain Robbe-Grillet's works, space becomes a labyrinth in which the viewer loses their fixed points of reference. Here, the composition is not a stable carrier of meaning, but a space of perceptual uncertainty.³



Picture 3. Still from Alain Robbe-Grillet's film *The Beautiful Prisoner / La Belle Captive* (1983)

³ Cf. René Magritte's paintings *La Belle Captive* (1947), *La Belle Captive* (1950) and *La Belle Captive by René Magritte* (1968).

This mode of editing radically challenges the primacy of linear narrative and brings the act of seeing to the forefront. The recurring motifs of space, shifting perspectives and redundant visual elements create a structure in which meaning is not fixed but is constantly deferred. In this way, the film does not 'tell' a story, but demonstrates the unstable nature of cognition, approaching the uncertainty of phenomenological experience.

In Andrei Tarkovsky's films, the temporality of the image comes to the forefront. The long takes and slow camera movements evoke the painterly experience of contemplation.

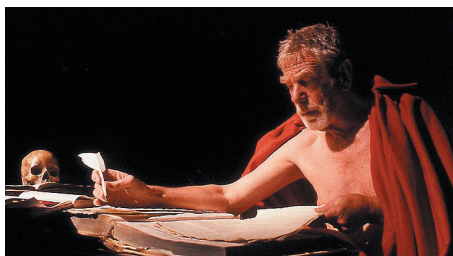


Pictures 4–5. A still from Andrei Tarkovsky's film *The Sacrifice* (1986) (left) and William Turner's painting *The Burning of the Houses of Parliament* (1835) (right)⁴

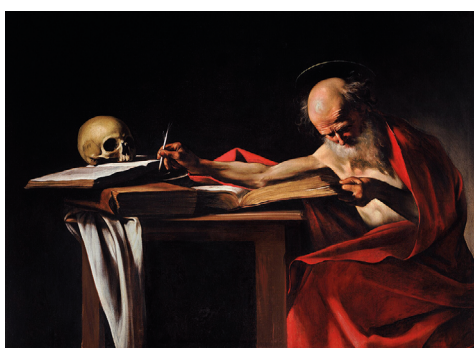
This distinctive handling of time transforms the medium of film into a space for contemplation, where the flow of time, rather than the plot, becomes the primary organising principle. The internal rhythm of the shots does not stem from the dynamism of the editing, but from the subtle evolution of changes within the frame. This deepens the viewer's attention and slows down the process of perception, bringing it closer to the experience of lingering before a painting, whilst the material quality of time—its 'imprint'—becomes perceptible.

In Derek Jarman's works, the history of painting becomes the raw material of film: the colours, compositions and iconography consciously evoke the tradition of the visual arts.

⁴ The painting is in the public domain; source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Joseph_Mallord_William_Turner,_English_-_The_Burning_of_the_Houses_of_Lords_and_Commons,_October_16,_1834_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg; Philadelphia Museum of Art (United States), dimensions: 112 × 83 cm.



Picture 6. Stills from Derek Jarman's *Caravaggio* (1986)



Pictures 7–8. Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio: *Boy with a Basket of Fruit* (1593)⁵ and Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio: *Saint Jerome Writing* (1606)⁶

5 The image is in the public domain; source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Boy_with_a_Basket_of_Fruit-Caravaggio_\(1593\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Boy_with_a_Basket_of_Fruit-Caravaggio_(1593).jpg), original title: *Fanciullo con canestro di frutta*, Galleria Borghese (Rome), dimensions: 70 × 67 cm.

6 The painting is in the public domain; source: [https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/F%C3%A1jl:Saint_Jerome_Writing-Caravaggio_\(1605-6\).jpg](https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/F%C3%A1jl:Saint_Jerome_Writing-Caravaggio_(1605-6).jpg), original title: *San Girolamo scrivente*, Galleria Borghese (Rome), dimensions: 112 × 157 cm.

This referential quality, however, is not mere remembrance, but also a critical rewriting. By placing historical styles and visual codes in a new context, Jarman makes the workings of cultural memory visible. The expressive use of colour and the stylised visual world create an intermedia space where the boundaries between film and painting dissolve. Consequently, the viewer not only recognises the references but interprets them within new contexts of meaning.

Peter Greenaway perhaps builds most consistently upon pictorial structures: his films are often organised as 'tableaux', in which the composition becomes a carrier of meaning.



Picture 9. Still from Peter Greenaway's film
The Draughtsman's Contract (1982)



Pictures 10–11. Rembrandt: *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaes Tulp*⁷ (1632) and a still from Peter Greenaway's film *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* (1989)

⁷ The painting is in the public domain; source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rembrandt_-_The_Anatomy_Lesson_of_Dr_Nicolaes_Tulp.jpg, original title: *De anatomische les van Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, Mauritshuis (The Hague), dimensions: 169.5 × 216.5 cm.

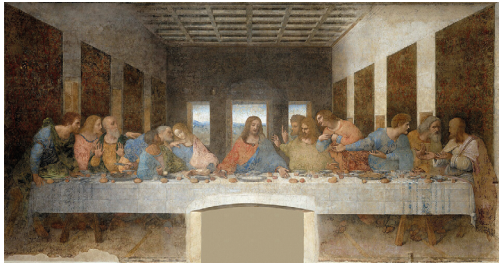
This principle of image composition renders the narrative secondary and elevates the visual order to the centre of meaning-making. Geometric arrangements, symmetry and layered visual structures evoke the compositional rules of painting, whilst at the same time gaining a new kind of dynamism through the temporal dimension of the moving image. In Greenaway's films, the visual is not an illustration but an autonomous form of thought: the image is not subordinate to the story but becomes the primary vehicle of reflection.

Intermediality and boundary-crossing: Film as a meeting point of the arts

During historical and theoretical examinations of visual culture, it is becoming increasingly clear that film does not function as an isolated medium but is in constant interaction with other art forms. Alongside the structural presence of the tradition of painting, the medial interpenetration that arises between film, theatre and the visual arts is particularly significant. This intermediality cannot be captured merely in formal borrowings or quotations, but in a deeper reorganisation of modes of representation (cf. Balázs 2021, 77–78).

The relationship between film and theatre is a particularly fertile ground for this analysis; thus, it should also be mentioned that, for example, in Gábor Bódy's work *Hamlet – A fegyveres filozófus* ('Hamlet – The Armed Philosopher'), the 'theatre of the image' appears in such a radical form that the autonomy of the visual comes to the forefront, and the film does not merely record the theatrical event but transforms it into an independent visual system. This approach points to one of the fundamental tendencies of late modern and postmodern film: theatrical stylisation is not the opposite of realism, but a critique of it.

A similar play on media can be observed in the case of the painterly references appearing in the film. Cinematic reworkings of Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*—for example, in Luis Buñuel's *Viridiana* or in later popular works—are not mere visual allusions but create new contexts for meaning-making.



Pictures 12–15. Top left: Leonardo da Vinci: *The Last Supper* (1498),⁸ top right: Luis Buñuel: *Viridiana* (1961), bottom left: Simon West: *The Expendables 2* (2012), bottom right: Paul Thomas Anderson: *Inherent Vice* (2014)

Here, the iconography of the painting undergoes a medial transposition: the static, religiously charged image is transformed into a dynamic, often ironic, or critical interpretation.

The blurring of boundaries between film and theatre can also be approached from another angle. Lars von Trier's *Dogville*, for example, radically dismantles the traditional tools of cinematic realism by reducing the sets to mere signs. The space thus created simultaneously evokes the abstraction of theatre and the visual construction of film, whilst directing the viewer's attention to the conditions of representation. Here, the difference between the media does not disappear, but rather becomes more pronounced, and thus becomes reflexive.

Intermediality, however, is not a one-way process. Not only does film integrate other art forms but painting also responds to moving-image culture. In the works of contemporary painters—such as Theo Michael—the cinematic gaze becomes a thematic focus, where framing, lighting or narrative references reflect the impact

⁸ The painting is in the public domain; source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leonardo_da_Vinci_\(1452-1519\)_-_The_Last_Supper_\(1495-1498\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leonardo_da_Vinci_(1452-1519)_-_The_Last_Supper_(1495-1498).jpg), original title: *Il Cenacolo / L'Ultima Cena*, Santa Maria delle Grazie (Milan), dimensions: 460 × 880 cm.

of the moving image.⁹ Here, the canvas seems to preserve a frozen scene that carries forward the memory of the film's temporality. This interaction suggests that the boundaries between visual media are becoming increasingly permeable, and that meaning-making takes place within a complex, networked system. Based on these examples, intermediality cannot be interpreted merely as a stylistic phenomenon, but as a fundamental mode of operation of visual thinking. Within this system, film plays a mediating role: it simultaneously preserves the structural elements of the tradition of painting, reflects on the performativity of theatre, and exerts an influence on other visual media. The visual world thus created does not convey stable meanings, but rather generates a dynamic space in which the viewer constantly reinterprets their own strategies of perception.

For further research, this media interoperability represents a particularly promising direction. On the one hand, it offers an opportunity to examine how different art forms shape each other's perceptual structures. On the other hand, it sheds new light on the visual culture of the digital age, where the boundaries between media are becoming even more blurred (Balázs 2023, 174). It is this openness that allows new horizons of perception and interpretation to constantly open for the viewer. Film is therefore not a closed genre, but a boundary-crossing artistic event in which the memory and present of different media converge. Intermediality is thus not merely a supplementary consideration, but a key concept in film theory, contributing to a deeper understanding of the cultural functioning of vision.

The ontological status of the image

One of the most important philosophical implications of modern film is that it interprets the image not as a copy of reality, but as a construction. This stance represents a radical break with the tradition that viewed the image as a 'window' onto the world. The essence of the films presented:

- Bergman: *Persona* → the disintegration of the face as an image + the face as an abstract visual field + the dissolution of identity within the image
- Robbe-Grillet: *La Belle captive* → the image is only apparent + dream logic (cf. Balázs 2017; 2024, 251–253), unconscious images

⁹ For further details, see: <https://theo-michael.pixels.com> (last accessed: 29 April 2026), and: Theo Michael: *A Glimpse Into The Past*, available online at: <https://fineartamerica.com/featured/a-glimpse-into-the-past-theo-michael.html> (last accessed: 29 April 2026).

- Tarkovsky: *The Sacrifice* → the 'image frozen in time'
- Jarman: *Caravaggio* → the painting as a living body + direct painting reconstructions
- Peter Greenaway: *The Draughtsman's Contract* → the image as construction and manipulation + 17th-century English painting (e.g. landscape perspective)

These films use the tools of painting to examine the medium of film in a self-reflexive manner, whilst questioning the ontological, aesthetic, and psychological status of the image.

Here, the image does not stand in a referential relationship with reality but is an entity with its own set of rules. This ontological shift is characteristic of modern art, but is particularly pronounced in film, as the dynamic nature of the moving image allows it to constantly reorganise its own meaning.

Ontological, aesthetic, and art-psychological dimensions

The common underlying layer of the analysed films can be grasped on three intertwined levels: the ontological, aesthetic and art-psychological dimensions. Together, these three perspectives enable an understanding of how the moving image becomes more than a mere storytelling device, and how it creates a unique experiential space for the viewer.

In an ontological sense, the film image is not a simple representation of the world. At first glance, the camera shot may appear to be an imprint of reality, yet the framing, cropping, perspective, focus, rhythm of editing and use of sound all demonstrate that what we see is a consciously created construction. The space depicted in the image is never identical to the space of everyday perception, but is the result of selection, emphasis, and editing. Film, therefore, does not simply reproduce what exists, but rearranges it according to its own laws. Consequently, the ontological status of the moving image is dual: it is simultaneously linked to recorded reality and becomes an autonomous artistic world.

In aesthetic terms, the film frame is often linked to the legacy of painting. Composition, the direction of light, the interplay of tones, the dramaturgy of colours, or the spatial arrangement of figures are factors that evoke the compositional principles of canvas paintings. A well-composed scene not only fulfil a narrative function but also possesses visual value. The interplay of light and shadow,

geometric order, the plasticity of forms, or the disruption of perspective, all carry the formal language of classical and modern fine art into the medium of film. In this sense, the moving image can also be interpreted as painting rendered in time, where the composition is not static but a constantly evolving visual structure.

From the perspective of the psychology of art, film also tests the workings of the viewer's perception. The viewer's gaze is directed, yet it often becomes uncertain: it is not always clear what to pay attention to, what is essential, or to whom the viewpoint relates. Montage, reflections, the subjective camera, shifts in time planes, or the destabilisation of the relationship between face and body disrupt stable perception. During this process, the question of identity also comes to the fore, as the characters' self-image, their relationships with one another, and the viewer's opportunities for identification can all become unstable. Film thus not only presents a story, but also activates the psychological mechanisms of perception.

Ontological dimension	Aesthetic dimension	Art-psychological dimension
the image is not a copy of reality, but a construction	the film image can also be interpreted as a painting (composition, light and shadow)	the destabilisation of the viewer's perception (perception, gaze, identity)

On this basis, the essence of the moving image cannot be grasped solely as representation. A film does not simply depict something but creates an event in the mind: a sensory, interpretative and emotional experience. Its unique power lies in the fact that it constructs a new world from elements of reality, organises it into an aesthetic form, and then sets the viewer's perception in constant motion. Consequently, film is simultaneously an ontological inquiry, a visual work of art and a psychological experience.

Summary – Film as a critical space of vision and perspectives for further research

The study has shown that the visual art-based approach is not merely fruitful on an analogical or stylistic level, but leads to the deeper, structural layers of the film's visual organisation. Historically, the visual system of the moving image is built upon compositional principles that crystallised in painting: the ways in

which space is organised, the designation of focal points, and the formation of the internal order of the visual field can all be traced back to models that have stabilised over the long historical development of visual culture. However, these procedures do not merely serve an aesthetic function; by directing attention, they create structures of meaning and are thus embedded within the order of social perception.

Consequently, the examination of visual composition always goes beyond formal analysis: uncovering what a given image emphasises and what it marginalises also entails an analysis of the cultural and power relations underlying perception. One of the most significant achievements of modern cinema lies precisely in the fact that it does not treat these structures as self-evident but makes them visible in a reflective manner. In this context, the legacy of painting is not merely a precursor, but a functioning model that cinema reinterprets, modifies, and often dismantles.

European auteur cinema of the second half of the 20th century responded particularly sensitively to this issue. Filmmakers such as Ingmar Bergman, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Andrei Tarkovsky, Derek Jarman and Peter Greenaway interpret their relationship with the visual tradition not as imitation, but as a critical dialogue. In their works, composition, the handling of space, and the use of light are not merely representational tools, but a means of destabilising and reorganising the viewer's perception. Consequently, the image loses its stable, meaning-bearing nature and becomes an event in which the viewer is confronted with their own perceptual assumptions.

The advent of digital technologies has opened up new dimensions in image-making (Antal 2025), yet it has not abolished the fundamental organising principles that determine visual meaning-making. The construction of space, the designation of focal points and the direction of the viewer's gaze continue to play a decisive role, even if these operations are now realised in a virtual environment or through algorithmic processes. Contemporary film therefore does not break with tradition, but rewrites it under new conditions, often precisely by disrupting perspective, dissolving compositional stability, or interrupting visual continuity. Several avenues are emerging for further research. On the one hand, it would be worthwhile to examine in greater detail the relationship between digital visual culture and classical models of image organisation, regarding cases where technological innovations lead to a radical transformation of perception (see, for example, the emergence of artificial intelligence in the arts). On the other hand,

the analysis of the relationship between visual structures and social representations could prove a fruitful area of research, particularly in relation to issues such as power, identity, or the politics of visibility. Finally, further examination of intermediality—in the interaction between painting, film, and other visual media—may contribute to a more precise understanding of how the conditions of visual meaning-making are transforming in contemporary culture.

This study could not undertake a comprehensive exploration of these questions; however, it has sought to demonstrate that, approached from the perspective of the tradition of painting, film can be interpreted not only as an aesthetic phenomenon but also as a cultural and critical form of vision. In this sense, the moving image is not a mirror of reality, but its interpretative framework: a medium that does not simply show the world but makes the very mode of seeing itself visible. On this basis, film cannot be regarded as a purely narrative medium. Rather, it is a complex cultural form that thematises the conditions of vision, thereby becoming one of the most important critical spaces of perception. The moving image does not simply serve to represent the world but contributes to our understanding of how the world becomes perceptible to us. The emphasis is thus not on what we see, but on the conditions under which and the structures through which we see.

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