4   Contingency, time, and event

An archaeological approach to the film festival

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The argument proposed here is that an analysis of time as it is manifested by the film festival illuminates both the particularity of the festival's structure and the continuation of its appeal. Equally, through the study of a film festival as a model or figural form we are able to comprehend our contemporary experience of time as it has mutated from a regulated clock-time of the early twentieth century to a more amorphous modality at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In summary, at cinema's inception over a century ago the populace encountered a new temporal regime that forced them to inhabit life as a series of units designated by schedules and conforming to standardized timetables. Cinema famously played it both ways, colluding with the uniformity of an increasingly mass culture in its roll-out of repetitive exhibition programs, but it also broke with the demanding nature of working life in the provision of a new spectacular culture of distraction. If factory life meant clocking in, cinema culture equaled release from duty. If we travel forward 100 years, the patterns of life and the experience of time have radically changed in a climate of deregulation and deinstitutionalization. Both work and leisure (including film viewing) in the process of relocating to the home have become mixed up and overlapping. The collective nature of film viewing is all but lost as film is dispersed across technological forms, locations, and times. In short, the dominant concept of time at the beginning of this century is one of distributed nonalignment. The film festival, however, operates a temporality that runs counter to the deregulated environment in which it exists.

To a certain extent this argument runs counter to the paradigmatic features of the film festival as they have been established in a growing body of scholarship that identifies its effectiveness and appeal through spatial terms (De Valck 2007; De Valck and Loist 2009). It is useful to enumerate the most prominent of these at the beginning. First, film festivals provide for film cultures that would otherwise remain marginalized by a dominant, high-budget cinema. These "alternative" films may be minority language, or they may focus on identitarian politics, or they may locate themselves within a minority aesthetic such as cult cinemas. Second, collectively festivals operate routes of distribution where each autonomous site also belongs to a series of nodes that

secure the circulation of films across national territories. More specifically, film festivals serve as circulators of non-English-speaking films that carry high commercial risk to exhibitors. A third function of film festivals is to secure a role for film as a public culture to be debated in a semi-structured environment involving specialists and nonspecialists. Finally, film festivals are events tied to place, part of the calendar of local rituals that perform and enact the specific nature and appeal of a location for both inhabitants and visitors. They may be understood through the discourse of tourism, reproducing a form of nationalism as culture at a local level. Within a spatial framework, the function and appeal of film festivals is inseparable from the context of globalization, understood here as the shorthand term for the domination of commerce and political relations by multinationals, most visibly manifest in transborder flows of culture and people, and the production of what Marc Augé memorably named "non-place" (Augé 1995). Within an era of globalization, the film festival operates as a bulwark against its deterritorializing effects; the model of enclosure that defines the film festival may be said to create an enclave to protect against the deracinating effects of global capitalism, retaining and marking the distinctive identity of each festival location and its cultural offering.

Yet while this broad sweep of geopolitical context illuminates the significance of film festivals as a spatial phenomenon, the temporal features of these events have something further to contribute to our understanding. Film festivals are intense temporal happenings that are on the one hand unique events, and on the other, cyclical rituals repeated annually or on occasion biannually. They inhabit the intersection where, borrowing from Claude Lévi-Strauss (1962), the synchronic (events taking place simultaneously) crosses the diachronic (events taking place chronologically). At this intersection a conversion of structure and event takes place. As annual events, film festivals are productive of a sense of cyclical calendar time sustained through rites that transform events into structures. Conversely, as structures that contain happenings that are singular and unrepeatable, such as those created by contingencies of weather, accident, or explosive commentary, film festivals are open to the transformation of structure into events. If the former tends to absorb all events into a historical continuity, lodged under the festival name as a standard bearer across time, then the latter crumbles the structure into individual fragments as events. The festival is able to move between or hold together these two opposing modalities through its power of conversion: diachrony (the festival as an historical occurrence) mutates into synchrony (the axis of events that occur at one moment in time). This movement is the focus of this chapter.

How does the conversion of structure into event take place? In simple terms, there is a movement from continuous time into the instant through the live event that in some way misfires. The instant is an experience of time generated by contingencies that may be described as accidents or controversies, but their purpose is to demonstrate an unrecorded live temporality. In so

doing, these instants resonate with an earlier moment in cinema: the time of the "actuality" film, which crafts for the instant a dimension that is separate from the past and the future. For live-time to register as such in the early genre of actualities, something has to get away, to escape control: the unforeseen obstruction of an object's path, the misfiring of an intention, and the automatism of systems that have a non-human life of their own all function to undermine the planned order of the day and demonstrate to us that time is running uncontrollable and "live." What I want to propose here is that this characteristic of early actuality film has become a century later a critical component in the model of the film festival. Festivals have captured and become efficient choreographers of the scandalous mishap that places us (and itself) in the moment of the now, managing both to facilitate and to contain directors making scandalous comments, actors who smoke in prohibited areas, and scaffolding that is prone to collapse. These contingencies never threaten to dissolve the structure of the festival; on the contrary, they serve to support its temporal particularity at the intersection of diachrony and synchrony.

In addressing the relationship between these historically distant practices, one of which is a genre and the other a type of event, the approach adopted in this chapter is an archaeological one following in the tradition of the media-focused scholarship of Siegfried Zielinski, Jussi Parikka, and Erkki Huhtamo, and the film-focused engagements of Mary Ann Doane, Thomas Elsaesser, and Tom Gunning. The definition of media archaeology proffered by Jussi Parikka is a critical process that "looks for conceptual cuts through which to open up new agendas of research and analysis,"[1] working against a chronological account of media's development by privileging relationships across time, identifying connections that are in fact "out of time" in a teleological sense (Parikka 2010: xiv). Siegfried Zielinski, writing about his archaeological intention in *Deep Time of the Media*, articulates his goal as the uncovering of dynamic moments in the history of media that "abound and revel in heterogeneity," a heterogeneity previously overlooked in the narration of media as a causal line of development (Zielinski 2002: 11). In archaeological practice, contemporary forms of media are seen to resonate most potently with objects and practices overlooked in the dominant historical account. In bringing these two moments into relation, the contemporary is relativized and "render[ed] more decisive" (ibid.: 10).[2] What I am proposing here is that the moment of cinema actualities, most prevalent in cinema between 1900 and 1907, illuminates a critical component of contemporary film culture: the making legible of time and making a particular moment matter. In both early cinema and in the contemporary film festival, the abstract intangible substance of temporality is made visible through the same process, which is the foregrounding of contingency through the structural accommodation of risk.

What, we may ask, is at stake in each of these moments in the making legible of time? The dialectic of risk and its containment first staged in early cinema actualities is identified by Mary Ann Doane as the emergence of

cinematic time in its full complexity. According to Doane, the cinema served a purpose in its manufacture of time as a release of pressure from the newly instituted clock-time of factory work, railroad timetables, and other forms of standardization, presenting in actualities the disruption of a relentless linear temporality (Doane 2002: 17). The film festival, in its manifestation of a structure punctuated by contingency, addresses the anxieties of an inverse state: the potential free fall of deregulated time. In the terms of Italian political philosopher Maurizio Lazzarato, labor practices at the end of the twentieth century are characteristically forms of immaterial labor requiring the worker to invest (time and emotional qualities) into the making of a commodity, be that an object, a service, or data. Investments of this nature deliver responsibility to the worker who is at liberty to organize her own time and labor. The rhythms of work dictate other areas of life and indeed, as Lazzarato argues, "in this kind of working existence it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish leisure time from work time," continuing "in a sense, life becomes inseparable from work" (Lazzarato 1996: 137).

The process that Lazzarato describes is dependent on deregulated time, which is manifest variously in the labor practices of contemporary film culture. (One example would be the simultaneous release of film across a range of platforms, which has not only enabled film to be viewed at any time, but has facilitated the online reviewing of films, formerly an activity of paid labor, as a leisure activity.) It is also the case that the economic model of the film festival is dependent on a degree of "affective" labor, which may typically come in the form of volunteers or interns, or interviewers of cast and crew, who receive public recognition and professional association with the festival rather than economic remuneration.[3] Yet despite these affinities with the climate of deregulation, I will argue, the structure of the film festival is productive of a form of time that opposes the broader deregulation of socio-temporal boundaries in its emphatic deployment of real-time within its structure. The festival model has built into its form a managed contingency whose function it is to produce a moment of real-time, a time that cannot be harnessed for productive labor, nor for the ethos of a deregulated time of deferral and displacement, but can only be an affective and emphatic "now." The festival, like early cinema actualities, retains the risk of a live event unfolding in real-time, in the singular instant of the here and now. It creates a moment that seems paradoxically to suspend the moment, to produce what George Kubler describes as "the instant between the ticks of a watch" (Kubler 1962: 15). In what follows, the moment of actuality in early cinema is explored through Doane's account of an emerging temporality of both modernism and cinema, the features of which are subsequently located in the practices of the contemporary film festival.

Actuality: being there (and not)

In Mary Ann Doane's account of cinema at the turn of the twentieth century, the emergence of what she names cinematic time is embedded in the dynamic

forces of modernity. Far from an abstract concept, "[t]ime was indeed *felt*—as a weight, as a source of anxiety, and as an acutely pressing problem of representation" (Doane 2002: 4). She continues, writing that "[m]odernity was perceived as a temporal demand," a demand for a consensual measure of time operating across space, necessitated by railroad timetables and telegraphy, and a demand for bodies to be regulated by a centralized timescale in industrial labor practices (the factory). The measure of time is ideologically part of a rationalization of behavior, a measure of energy expended in a given period that can be calculated as an economic outcome (wages). Pocket watches were the accessory of the late nineteenth century, the body adorned with its own regulatory device that connected the individual to the clock-time of capitalist production. Watches, for Doane, are not simply an accessory but a visualization of time as a series of units, amenable to calculation and standardization: "Time becomes uniform, homogenous, irreversible, and divisible into verifiable units" (Doane 2002: 6).

In one sense, cinema complies with the demand to fashion time into discrete units that run at predictable (albeit diverse) lengths. Film visualizes time, it measures and makes manifest the time of viewing compared to other open-ended activities such as reading or looking at a painting. It appears to mirror the measured units of work time with measured units of leisure time, all delivered by a film strip that runs forward through the projector in mimesis of Taylor's factory production belt. But in another sense cinema in its earliest and most popular manifestation performs a resistance to the rationalization of experience as knowable, linear, and recordable in its fascination with contingency. The picturesque turns dramatic in many early films as a result of contingencies in the elements, such as in Louis Lumière's *Boat Leaving the Harbor* (*Barque sortant du port*, 1895). In this film, three men row out from a harbor toward the open sea while a clutch of women and children watch from the pier (or rather parade themselves to the camera as they feign watching the boat). The boat makes good progress but is then caught by a sea swell and turned sideways, set off course and possibly endangered at the moment at which the film reel ends. Dai Vaughn writes that the distinguishing feature of the film is the response of the men to the elements: "the men must apply their efforts to controlling it; and, by responding to the challenge of the spontaneous moment, they become integrated into its spontaneity" (Vaughn 1990: 65). Clearly the film sequence is not staged in any way, and what marks early cinema is this encounter with the unpredictable and what we might think of as *untimely* events that expose the notion of rational control and total management as fallacy.

The period of early film, before its heterogeneous elements have sedimented into a particular narrative form was, according to Tom Gunning, characterized by anomalies (1990: 86). Among these anomalies was the actuality film, a one-reel movie that reveled in the witnessing of an act or event. In what was to become a genre, the recorded time of the film as a fixed sequence of actions butts up against the live-time of the event. The actuality

film is a demonstration of the unruly nature of the world and the reliable nature of film. Up until 1907 or thereabouts (the date being the subject of ongoing debate), the actuality film was the dominant cinematic form, and "for a brief time the cinema seemed to be preoccupied with the minute examination of the realm of the contingent, persistently displaying the camera's aptitude for recording" (Doane 2002: 141). Doane provides the example of Thomas Edison's *Electrocuting an Elephant* (1903), the short and desperately sad film in which an elephant, Topsy, is to be killed (her punishment for having taken the lives of three men). The film records the preparation of the event with the elephant being walked toward the site of electrocution. Several figures move from right to left in front of the camera, followed by a jump cut to the scene where the elephant's feet are being attached to the equipment. There is then a moment of stasis and the sideways collapse of this huge animal's body, smoke rising from her feet. At this point another shadowy figure moves in front of the camera into the foreground of the picture.

The paradox that is contained in this sequence is the demand for opposing assurances, a request granted by cinema. The film fulfills the requirement to record or literally document a scenario that is preplanned and cannot be repeated or experienced at a later date—"death would seem to mark the insistence and intractability of the real in representation," writes Doane (2002: 145)—and yet cinema allows the scene to be witnessed elsewhere at a later date as a recording. Simultaneously, the film attests to the liveness of the event by the way in which it elides real time in a jump cut, a cut that remains undisguised. The cut eliminates dead time in preparation for the time of death, as it were. The shadowy figures in the foreground also play out an accidental foray into the frame, and in so doing, demonstrate that the filming of a live event is open to disruption, or at least visual noise. The film frames the event literally, and yet the frame is disrupted. The singular moment of the elephant's death becomes a thing recorded and yet also eluding the record, the camera acting as witness but yet unable to attribute meaning to what it records.

In its earliest manifestation, cinema attested to the limits of the control of time and events, upending or even complementing rationalization with the specter of chance. Contingency exploded onto the cinematic screen to reveal happenings, curiosities involving accidents and hazards, thus making contingency *legible*. "Contingency, detail, visual 'noise' are part of what the camera, the photograph, whether still or moving, brings with it," writes Vicky Lebeau in her consideration of cinema's relation to *infans* (being without speech) in its earliest days. She continues,

> in fact, as far as the emergence of film as a medium for telling stories is concerned, the problem was how to turn that excess of the visual to the purposes of narrative (of knowing where to look, as it were)
>
> (Lebeau 2008: 25)

Cinema later turns that excess into a feature of comic films where the capers of slapstick gesture became the *accidental performed*. Lisa Trahair describes slapstick as "a continuum of action that spans from physical violence, to elemental decomposition, to mechanical repetition, to stylization" as the contingent became embedded within the narrative tradition of film precisely as style (Trahair 2007: 48). With this generic development of the contingent as comedy, a genre came to facilitate for the audience an infectious bodily response to the polarities of urban chaos and automated life; the toppled, beaten, falling body of Buster Keaton or of Charlie Chaplin ignited laughter in the audiences of early cinema precisely because they were seated safely outside of the spectacle, for they were looking in on the scene that was always already over.

Cinema became adept at turning the excesses and anomalies of early film to the purposes of narrative through multiple practices involving the manufacture of a visual syntax, production techniques, economic motivation, and the standardization of viewing practices. But this moment of early cinema remains a significant instance for its illumination of a paradox at the heart of modern life: the demand for routine, a working rhythm of daily life where leisure was distinguished from labor time, and conversely, the desire for singular experience, differentiation and contingency. In the actuality film and its near kin (as it mutated into documentary and newsreel films), cinema provided both, deploying the appeal and threat of contingency contained within the temporal parameters of the cinema program: film viewing as an anticipation of the unexpected and hazardous, but safe within the knowledge that the event has already happened (and is therefore contained) in a time prior to screening. In Doane's reading, cinema afforded a type of safety valve for the pressures of modern temporality, a release from the demands of an increasingly rationalized experience of time always already measured, calculated, and given value in advance, appearing to harness the unknowable aspects of the modern world. The requirement of a safety valve or a defense against the ravaging effects of rationalism and commodified time is identified not only by Doane, but by cultural critics of the early twentieth century. In Siegfried Kracauer's (1963) reading of cinema, it was of course the abstract rhythm of film images that delivered the spectator to a state of pleasurable distraction, and in Walter Benjamin's (1955) account, boredom, or the freedom to think in nonrational modes, written up in Leo Carney's (1998) account as ennui and drift.

Contingency reworked: from the accidental to the controversial

The dual times and demands of cinema characterizing the modern era migrate from the film text to the event itself in the contemporary. The model of the film festival develops over a course of a century to harness different energies and anxieties concerning time and the rhythms of everyday life. More specifically in the current era, the film festival ameliorates the effects of deregulated

time by making time matter in two seemingly opposing ways. On the one hand, the time of the film program is a structured temporality; the running time of films is stated on the program and the schedule for the whole event set out in advance, providing a temporal rhythm that deregulation has eliminated from other areas of everyday life. Yet on the other hand, the festival harnesses the time of contingency through live events that bookend screenings, introducing into the offering the singularity of an experience that cannot be reproduced at a later date or location.

The contemporary manifestation of contingency is not the incidental intrusion or accident but more often than not a seemingly casual statement that registers as a controversy. The boundary between contingency and controversy, chance and intention, is, however, not a distinct one. The live events of the festival fall somewhere upon a spectrum that on one end has chance and on the other a more consciously motivated performance and self-interested spectacle. Controversy, after all, can be a consciously wielded marketing tool for a film or a career. But what the controversy achieves, whether intentionally emitted or not, is the assurance of an uncensored event. To what extent such liveness can be controlled or managed is unclear and perhaps unknowable. It is however possible to identify the forms that it takes, the most common of which is the accidental, manifest in the accidental speech act, perhaps an excitable speech act that releases surprise into the air. In interviews, discussions, and the presentation and acceptance speeches of award ceremonies, the explosive comment appears to erupt like a buried mine accidentally stumbled upon rather than an intentional act. It is as though the comment and its effect surprise the enunciator most of all. The most notable festival in this regard is Cannes with its widely reported pranks, offensive opinions, and capers.

A recurring theme in the controversies of the Cannes film festival is sexism. In 2015, the festival organizers received criticism for having denied entry onto the red carpet to a group of women wearing flat shoes rather than the standard high heel. The happening was widely circulated on social media, with the British actress Emily Blunt—whose film *Sicario* (Denis Villeneuve, 2015) was in competition—contributing the view that "[e]veryone should wear flats, to be honest. We shouldn't wear high heels" (Furness 2015). However days later the festival's artistic director, Thierry Frémaux, addressing an audience at a Women in Motion discussion, announced that the festival was being treated unfairly for "heelgate" and for its limited selection of female directors for the main prize, attempting to deflect questions of sexism onto the Oscar awards (Webb 2015). Two years prior to this, in 2013, Roman Polanski's comments to journalists before the premiere of his film *Venus in Fur* that gender equality is "a great pity," and that "trying to level the genders is purely idiotic" caused a wave of commentary that rippled through press reports (Pulver 2013). It is difficult to assess whether this commentary has any correspondence with the controversy of the previous year in which there were no female directors selected for competition to win the Palme d'Or,

and it was noted that only one woman had been awarded the prize in 64 years. At the screening of Michael Haneke's *Amour* (2011), the red carpet ceremony was disrupted by "La Barb," a feminist activist group wearing beards and carrying signs bearing ironic messages of congratulation.

Two years earlier, and in a more pronounced fashion, Lars von Trier caused a major disturbance in his comments about Hitler during a press conference for his film *Melancholia* (2011). After being asked about his German roots, the director commented that he understood Hitler, and that despite having done some "wrong things," "I can see him sitting there in his bunker at the end [...] I sympathise with him, yes, a little bit" (Shoard 2011). Von Trier was asked by the festival organizers to provide an explanation, and in response the director offered a statement of apology. Once again, the festival director, Thierry Frémaux, felt the need to respond, banning von Trier from the remainder of the festival; all press engagements to promote *Melancholia* were canceled. The hangover of this incident continued with subsequent festivals; at the Berlin International Film Festival 2014, promoting his next film, *Nymphomaniac*, von Trier adopted his "persona non grata" T-shirt throughout. Of a different genre, and more widely reported, were Sharon Stone's comments at Cannes in 2008, dismissing the Sichuan earthquake as "karma" for the Chinese government's treatment of Tibet, seemingly less calculated than von Trier's sympathizing with Hitler. Each of these spectacles produced not only controversy, but more significantly, a sense of the event running live, a liveness guaranteed by speech acts misfiring. In a twist of J. L. Austin's speech act theory, the actors speaking out of role and in earnest, appear to be ventriloquized by the lines that they speak so that intention becomes an empty category (Austin 1975).[4] There is a further reversal if one considers the standard reportage of the red carpet "glamour" brought by actors and directors to the event set against their inability to "perform reliably" (or their reliable unreliability). The potential to read this as a distraction of sorts, generated by the apparatus of the media, is explored by Liz Czach, who asks whether "film festivals [can] emerge from under the media attention directed at celebrities and reinvigorate their reputations as film-centred experiences" (Czach 2010: 143). The film critic Jonathan Romney reads celebrity "shenanigans" as a type of attention-seeking. Reporting for the *Observer* newspaper on the Berlin International Film Festival 2014 and the actor Shia LaBeouf wearing a paper bag on his head, he notes wryly "these days, everyone's a performance artist" (Romney 2014).

If controversy is addressed here in terms of its structural function of rendering liveness as real time, there is a need to recognize the potential depoliticization of statements and acts through their perception as slapstick contingencies. The treatment of gender-related issues at Cannes is a case in point. The "prank" by Ukrainian journalist Vitalii Sediuk of crawling under the skirt of actress America Ferrera with his camera at Cannes in 2015, reported by Sky News online as "Man Dives Under Ugly Betty Star's Skirt" (Sky News 2014) received a mute response from the festival management,

implying that it was not regarded as a serious transgression. However it is also important to note that controversies arise that do retain a sobriety. An event at the Istanbul Film Festival in 2015 demonstrates the point, when the screening of the film *Bakur* (Çayan Demirel and Ertu rul Mavio lu, 2015) was canceled by the festival organizers shortly before its premiere, on the grounds of it not having an appropriate certification. The film, a documentary set in the camps of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), an organization banned by the Turkish government, was seen to be subject to state censorship in this act. This in turn prompted the withdrawal of many other films from the festival in protest and eventually the cancelation of the competition.

The singularity of the accident

"The accident always happens in the present," Sylvere Lotringer says (in conversation with fellow theorist Paul Virilio), "but is *untimely*" (Lotringer and Virilio 2005: 100), suggesting that it is a happening that appears to have no "place" in the event, that it throws continuous time out of joint. Yet, on the contrary, accidental occurrences secure the time of the festival as an unrepeatable event. What emerges from this accounting for the prevalence of the "accidental" in film festivals is the inseparability of structure from contingency, a pairing that is mutually constitutive. The accident cannot happen without an organized framework of the festival program to depart from. Conversely the festival is in need of disruption, otherwise its tightly ordered listings risk blending into the urban film programs of general city life that run continuously throughout the calendar year. The structuring agency of a festival requires, demands even, the accidental: in order for the festival of film to be a critical happening, an event in the year that matters, it needs to be a live event, and in order to demonstrate that liveness its mechanical smoothness needs moments of disruption.

Is it possible to be more precise about the nature of contingencies that disrupt? In Doane's account of the earlier period, both modernism and cinema are together characterized by "the contingent, the ephemeral, chance–that which is beyond or resistant to meaning" (Doane 2002: 10). Contingency enters the frame of early cinema to produce a moment that seems to empty a sense of meaning and continuity, that voids the doctrine of rationalism. This form of disruptive shock that suspends comprehension for an instant was described by the art historian George Kubler as an "actuality" in his famous book on *The Shape of Time* (1962). While he did not have cinema in mind when writing this, he nonetheless provides what is perhaps the finest description of the shock of actuality film when he writes that:

> [a]ctuality is when the lighthouse is dark between flashes; it is the instant between the ticks of the watch; it is the void interval slipping forever through time; the rupture between past and future; the gap at the poles of the revolving magnetic field, infinitesimally small but ultimately real
> (Kubler 1962: 15)

The disruption here and in Doane's account is closer to a suspension of linear time than a moment of coming to presence; contingency is a momentary sink or collapse into non-meaning. It is a moment when the Lacanian real (that which is unthinkable and unrecognizable) appears to flash up into consciousness for an instant, potentially rupturing the striated fabric of the symbolic order, or Badiou's event when the excluded appears to challenge reality and rethink its basis.[5]

In contrast, a contemporary disruption is an assurance of the singularity of the event, securing the join where the diachronic line of a film festival's history meets the synchronic line of this particular festival. The model of the film festival allows contingency to be situated at the center of its ordered and manicured world for reasons different from those of modernism. Contingency is not a release mechanism from the rigid grids of rationalized order, nor is it the punctum-like point of an event that is resistant to meaning. Rather, contingency testifies to the event as a shared experience, a collective experience dependent on being at one place and at one time. Pursuing this line of thought, it is possible to see how the effect of disruptive contingencies is not solely in those moments but permeates the whole festival. In gathering the spatio-temporal coordinates of the moment, the disruption makes the experience of "Cannes 2015" singular in a way that colors the screenings themselves. Despite the fact that these are recorded and therefore fixed events, the viewing of the films is a live experience in the here and now. What is historical, we might venture, is not the film itself (although film has a claim of different sorts to history), but the act of viewing. The assembly of people before a film is a commitment to the now of viewing, to this moment, but it is only in the context of the film festival that this experience is framed in terms of an event. It is an event that stands out from the deregulated environment in which it exists, defying isolation, fragmentation, and, most importantly, deferral. The contemporary film festival, in a reversal of Kracauer's formulation, suspends our allegiances to other distractions, allowing a momentary focus on the occasion of the film itself. The film festival provides for a time that is not later, not whenever, not at home nor watching on a train on a mobile, but now. The misfiring acts that appear to disrupt its smooth operation actually emphasize the time of the festival as live and pertaining to a singularity that cannot be repeated. Events may be relayed later, reported to others, and broadcast in some form, but the festival time remains anchored in a finite present.

In conclusion, the model of the film festival (rather than particular film festivals) goes against the grain of a contemporary deregulation of time that has reconfigured the practices and rituals of everyday life. The cultures of film viewing evidence the force of deregulation in the transformations of the past two decades. It is now a common place of scholarship to assume that the activity of film viewing may be broken up, distributed across a number of days, inserted between a number of other activities. The pre-given unit of film as a product bought or hired, is made pliable, available as segments to be

downloaded, tailored to service the temporal needs of the viewer. Time is no longer experienced as units of duration but a patchwork of activities many of which will be overlapping. A film festival, on the contrary, gathers together the time of the film and the time of viewing. In so doing, it re-institutionalizes the collective attention of film viewing, and re-centers the time of projection as a live event, a liveness underscored by the discussions that follow. This choreography of events compressed into the window that is the festival provides for its specific temporality. It is possible to read about it later, or the following day, or watch it on the news or catch-up channel, but to experience the actuality of the event with all of the historical resonance of that term, the festival demands that you are there within the fold of its moment.

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Notes

1 For an elaboration of method in media archaeology, see Parikka's *What is Media Archaeology?* (2012).
2 This approach is developed further by Zielinski in an ongoing project entitled "Variantology," which seeks to illuminate the secret relations between things that have been covered over by the classification of objects and practices as disciplines. See *Variantology 1* as an example of the heterogeneous nature of the project (Zielinski and Wagnermaier 2005).
3 For a further elaboration of "affective labor" within the film festival, see Chapter 11 in this book, by Liz Czach.
4 Judith Butler's *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (1997) is an illuminating application of Austin's theory to the military and the law court.
5 The French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's concept of the real derives from a tripartite system of the imaginary, symbolic, and real that collectively describe psychical subjectivity. If the imaginary is the closest description that he offers to everyday consciousness, and the symbolic is the system of culture, laws, and institutions that is mediated by a subject's entry into language, the real is that which is excluded from the symbolic and impossible to think (natural disasters or war fall into this category). The event features in the work of French philosopher Alain Badiou as a rupture in the social fabric that allows what is missing from that system to appear momentarily. These moments or events, which can arise in the realm of politics or art or love, allow what Badiou calls truth to appear fleetingly.

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