
BEYOND THE FRAMES OF FILM AND ABORIGINAL FIELDWORK

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Between 1976 and 1978, I shot several experimental films in Paris which were screened at many art festivals. The following year, while doing anthropological fieldwork in Central Australia, I filmed women's rituals using a frame by frame technique to produce superimpositions, flickering rhythms, and discontinuities, aimed at suggesting the condensation process of dream as an attempt to transpose a cosmological concept central to Warlpiri life: *Jukurrpa*, the Dreaming. It was a mistake. Anthropology and cinema should indeed call on a creative process to give an insight into the heterogeneity of cultural contexts that we analyze in writing or film, but this can only be achieved if the singularity of our subjects' perceptions are taken into account; that is, the way they express their visions, memories, and history, as well as assemblages that include other agents, and all living systems as intertwined with environment and technology.

1970s Experimental Cinema and Anthropology in France

In the 1970s many places in Paris were screening experimental films, from the birth of cinema, with Russian futurists and French Dada, or other avant garde artists such as Man Ray, Len Lye, Germaine Dulac, Bunuel, Cocteau, and Maya Deren, to the 1950s lettrists Isidore Isou, and Maurice Lemaitre, or 1960s American figures of underground, non-narrative, or "structural" cinema—Kenneth Anger, Andy Warhol, Michael Snow, Stan Brakhage, Hans Richter, Austrian Peter Kubelka, and Jonas Mekas, who with Adams Sitney founded the Film-Makers Coop in New York (1970).¹ French experimental production was blooming at the time, with oneiric atmospheres like Thierry Garrel's films or experiments from the Paris Film Coop created in 1974 by Claudine Eizykman and other film-makers who promoted an independent cinema of intermittence, searching for "energy-objects" instead of

“representing-objects,” and advocating for a “maximization of affects,” and “psychic connections (*branchements*).”²

After seeing Eizykman’s film *VW Vitesse Women* (1974), I enrolled for a cinema degree at the University Paris 8 where she was teaching. The campus, which was then located in the woods of Vincennes, offered radically innovative seminars in different disciplines, including philosophy with Deleuze and Lyotard, who had made a film with Claudine Eizykman, Guy Fihman, and Dominique Avron, *L’autre scène* (1972, 16mm, opt, 6mins), a critique of advertising comparing dream-work and film-work. Eizykman’s and Fihman’s course on “cinematographic energetics” was based on their films, her book, and Lyotard’s notion of “acinema”³—providing a theoretical and visual impulse to make non-representational perceptual experimentations of intensities. Even though I had the opportunity to make a video in 1975 and experiment with an image synthesiser, I was more interested in sticking to film materiality in order to experiment such forms of music for the eyes.⁴ I made two portraits of female friends: rewinding the same unprocessed 16 mm film strip scene by scene, sometimes only a few frames at a time, I superimposed different camera moves, or in and out zooms, to film each woman sitting, walking, or rolling in opposite directions. There was something magical in waiting for the processing to check the resulting effects: each woman seemed to diverge in reflections of herself, or merge back into one body and multiply again, as in an abyss. To add a new level of texture, I painted the black and white footage with pink and purple (*Gros Loup*, 1976) and with two shades of green (*Fédédé* as “*feminin désirante féminine*,” 1976).

I then co-authored with Martine Zevort two colored silent 16mm films. For *Miradwie* (1976) we filmed in turns, half-frame by half-frame, our own faces reflected in a crushed aluminium paper alternating expressions/looks of fear (*notre regard apeuré*) or threat (*anger au sens où notre regard était agressif*), and sadness or joy: this produced monstrous flickering masks with our eyes, superimposed directly on some frames or through intermittence of successive frames, projecting conflicting moods and emotions. The fast intermittent rhythm created an arbitrary visual perception, the viewer’s eye picking randomly this or that frame whose conscious imprint would last longer than the exposure, masking the vision of other frames left to subliminal perception. One would never see exactly the same film twice. The silent contradictory or unconscious visual stimuli provoked a psychic and physical mix of pleasure and uneasiness, and even nausea for some viewers. Whatever the obtained effect, we were enchanted/delighted with this experimental insight into perception. At the time I wrote that *Miradwie* was staging a “conflict between pulsions,” “demonstrating an antagonistic emotional process” which “requested from the viewer the perceptive availability to come to terms with the unfolding of the conflict within him/herself:” an “exteriorisation of an anthropology of (the) inside.” We also refilmed the screen projecting *Miradwie* at different speeds, using filters and a negative stock which was not printed in positive after the edit: the inversed colors transformed the texture of the aluminum paper into

an unknown soft skin which created a rather serene effect (*Noeuga*, 1976) (Figure 9.1).

My next film, *Picturlure* (1977), was based on my “pictures:” some 400 small, painted cards of little anthropomorphic figures and numerous abstract shapes



Figure 9.1 Film still, *Miradwie*, 16mm, 1976. Courtesy of Barbara Glowczewski.

made with pencils, gouache, felt pens, and varnish on cellophane or plexiglas. I had built transparent drawers to be able to slide superimposed images as I was filming, and an installation of screens to capture the moving shades of colors projected by transparent mediums hanging on a rope. Starting with grids like partitions to structure different rhythms, I used a tripod while I was painting, but over the weeks the filming became a sort of dance, with the camera turning around the painted images or their projection in the room. During the editing of the 3 mm film stock (Agfacolor, negative and positive Ektachrome), I shortened the shots to just a few frames, but respected the chronological process of the experimentations: the last sequence was the refilming of the printed film running away from the projector. I then experimented with the projection of the film on my body: the projector close enough to fit exactly the size of my chest, my skin providing texture to the projected images that seemed to become solid and which, through my breathing, moved in another direction from their movement on the film. The autonomy they had gained from the frame of the usual rectangular screen was later lost when I improvised an “expanded projection” in a public space, bringing a one by one meter board covered with a mosaic of my painted cards, which I used as a backdrop for my naked body, exposed to the projector. The screen of the cinema was so big and high that I had to stand on a stool: I realized too late that, instead of being painted or fused with my paintings, I was simply floodlighted! Nevertheless, the critical analysis of this experience and the filming process validated my degree in cinema.

I also trained in ethnology at the University Paris 7, which, in those days, brought together a group of stimulating thinkers such as Michel de Certeau who supervised my Master’s degree on “Anthropology of the 5 Senses.” Another lecturer was Jean Monod, the author of a famous survey on Parisian youngsters who explored drugs and mythical visions with Piroa Indians in Venezuela, making with them a poetic documentary (*Histoire de Wahari*, 1970), before leaving academia to dedicate himself to poetry and art.⁵ Jean Arlaud was showing his and others’ ethnographic films as well as films produced by indigenous peoples. Robert Jaulin, then famous for his denunciation of the Amazonian ethnocide, was the head of the department which regularly hosted Native Americans so they could speak about the struggle for their rights. Issues of gender were also discussed by the American feminist Judith Friedlander. To validate all these courses, I used my experimental films, the history of optics, and a critic of semiology to try to deconstruct representational interpretation in art and anthropology. Such was my training as I embarked on my doctoral field study in Central Australia.

Conveying Visions: From France to Aboriginal Australia

When I screened *Picturlure* to the Warlpiri people from Lajamanu in 1979, the response was encouraging: some men of ritual authority found it “normal” that I show paintings because they were told that my country, France, was known as a

place for painters. They also liked *Géneal* (16 mm, silent, 2 mins 30 seconds, 1976), a short montage of 900 family photographs showing my mother as a child in a trendy 1920s Poland, as a teenage Jewish refugee, dressed in school uniform, then as a Zazou, working and playing the piano in an ally camp established in Alger during World War II, and later posing with my father during the 1950s in Warsaw, where I was born, before the family moved to France in the 1960s. No photo was filmed for more than a fifth of a second; some were repeated full screen in alternated series, others as windows on a black, pink, or green background (to produce contrasted illusions of inversed colors), creating a quick rhythm, with staccato and superimpositions, especially between the faces of my mother, her mother, and myself. As my Warlpiri audience seemed comfortable with this flickering rhythm, which was new to them (this was before music clips and fast ads on TV), I showed them *Miradwie*. The scary side of the deformed faces did not seem to bother them, many women found my country “good,” because it was “full of spirits.” Seeing “spirits” beyond physical reality was in a way what we searched for when the flesh of our reflected faces disappeared in the aluminium paper, where our flickering eyes superimposed or alternated contradictory emotions, as if touching directly the organic psychic pulse (Figure 9.2).

The Warlpiri evaluation encouraged me to film the women’s rituals using a similar frame-by-frame technique. However, while the refilming of our faces in Paris had only involved my friend and I as voluntary “guinea pigs” of perception, filming Warlpiri women—who were involved in rituals of cosmological significance for the Indigenous Australian society and desert culture—confronted me with ethical issues relating to a cognitive process of survival. When watching the silent footage of their *yawulyu* rituals, the Warlpiri women felt/considered that the acceleration of their dancing movements, the superimposition of different dancers, and the upside down filming of the landscape and camp where they performed was making them look “silly.” My film effects of dream “condensation” were inappropriate. Women in their *yawulyu* rituals—like the men in theirs—paint their bodies, dance, and sing about the making of the land features and the establishment of social laws by eternal ancestors: their Dreamings. The dancers reenact the Dreamings, each bearing a different animal, plant, or using other totemic names like Rain and Fire. Each of these is called *Jukurrpa* (Dreaming, also translated as the Law). The etymology of *Jukurrpa* refers to *jukurrmanu*: dreams, which are a means to communicate with *Jukurrpa* beings who, during their creative travels, marked the landscape with their *kurruwari* (life forces) living “images,” as hills, waterholes, ochre deposits, and other imprints of their passage. The Dreaming beings are said to be present, embodied, and “in becoming” (*palkajarri*) in these sacred features of the Dreaming sites, and also, generation after generation, in the people, animals, plants, water, wind, and other things that share the same Dreaming name and living image. Through dreams, men and women can receive new Dreaming designs, songs, and dancing patterns attached to particular places to maintain the balance of the land. In this dynamic cosmological understanding, Dreamings redefine totemism as a process of becoming and a production of intensities performed by Warlpiri people.

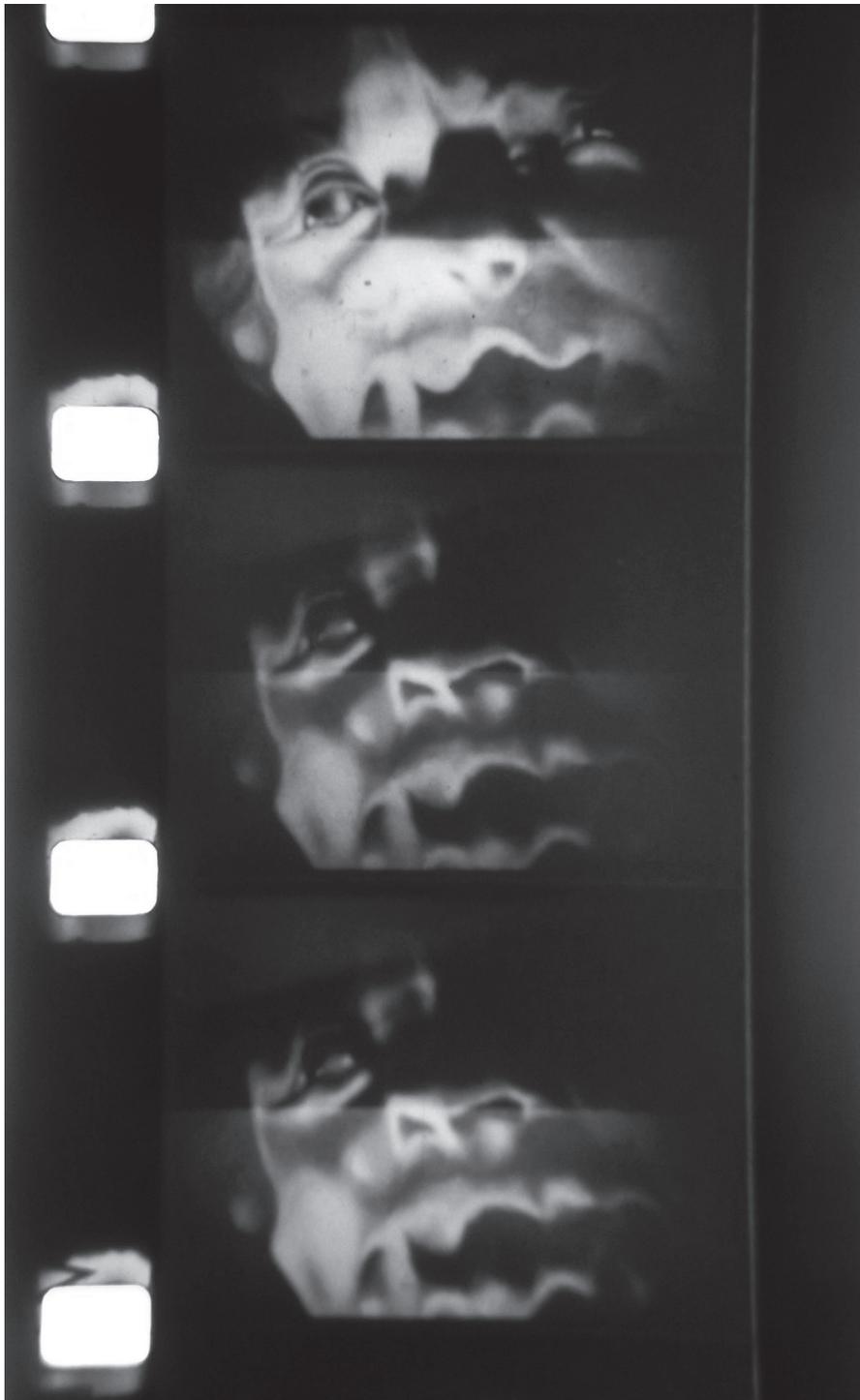


Figure 9.2 Film still, *Miradwie*, 16mm, 1976. Courtesy of Barbara Glowczewski.

For them what was important was the real speed of the performance, of the enactment, of the dance because the speed at which you enact the travelling from one place to another is itself carrying an information. (...) if it's the dry season and there's no water left, for the same distance you have to travel very fast, otherwise you will die. This means you have to dance the ritual fast. Dancing is a way of carrying the message of survival to the people who participate in the dance and who watch the dance. All these meanings are inside the performance itself and it is through rhythm that you can learn these things without it being explicit.⁶

Conception and experience of time and space in the desert are relative, almost in a non-Euclidian way. For example, a pathway linking three waterholes spread over 100 kilometres is relatively longer than another 100 kilometres pathway crossing a country with no waterholes. This relativity comes from the speed at which you need to travel at in order to survive. You need to go fast to reach the next waterhole before being too thirsty, but you can slow down or stop if there is water on the way.⁷

The *businesswomen*, a term used in Warlpiri English for women in charge of rituals dealing with spiritual as well as social “business” (exchange in all forms), asked me to film their dancing “normally:” that is, in continuous shots, long enough to respect the rhythm of their movements as being meaningful for them. So I filmed in that way, having to film very selectively over the few months of the continuous ritual activities of the Kajirri cult, as I only had 3 hours of film stock. My small Pathe Webo camera held 3 minutes-long cartridges but shots were constrained to the time allowed by the manual winding of the mechanical motor: that is 30 seconds. My shots were rarely longer than a few seconds, and I tried to frame the ending of each shot so that it could be spliced with the next one to enable the editing of the painting of bodies, sacred objects, and dancing without cutting out any image shot. Once back in France, I sent the women a copy of the Kajirri cycle spliced in a chronological order/sequence but I was told that they could not watch it because some people I had filmed had since died and their faces could no longer be seen by the mourners: I had to “erase” them like Warlpiri used to do by “blackening” photos. I asked the Institute of Aboriginal Studies in Canberra for the use of their film unit to edit out these images. But during the screening of the edited film in Lajamanu in 1983, there was an uproar of mourning cries when the women saw a group of young men (*malyarra* initiates) coming out of seclusion to be covered by the men with gifts of hair strings and cloth for their mothers. The women had recognized these initiates as being the group from which a young man had just died in a car crash. While the deceased was not on the image, the visual context of this event had become taboo, just like his camp had to be avoided, and neither his name nor the name of any other thing sounding like his name (like France for Francis) could be pronounced. This taboo, which was traditionally applied to names, songs, or visual Dreaming patterns of a deceased person, had been extended to other forms of “re-presentation,” such as photographs and films. I was happy to

respect these cultural protocols, as it gave me a challenging insight for my own exploration of how to convey anthropological observations: not to “re-present” them but to change perceptions and preconceptions. Because of the invitation to become involved in Warlpiri ritual performances and everyday life—to dance with painted breasts, witness conflicts and resolution, walk hours in the sun to hunt, camp outdoors, etc.—I was given a share of their “spirit:” when I woke with strange dreams, the women would connect them to their own dreams, personal events, or elements of their culture and cosmological system of the Dreaming space-time. I would not necessarily “hear” the voice of the spirits that they would hear in the night, but the collective atmosphere often made me “feel” a presence passing by, or crossing through us. I attempted to give an insight into this presence by translating my perception and feelings through writing, audio recordings, and photos of Warlpiri people. However I stopped filming for ten years.

Women Only and Bodies on the Screen

No matter how we try to transpose our insights, each viewer projects his or her cultural or social presuppositions in relation to the content of films and is also constrained by his or her visual habitus: the familiarity of an image can bring comfort as well as boredom, while strangeness can seduce or destabilize. I experienced this gap when I organized in Paris a screening of the silent rushes of Warlpiri rituals that the desert women had agreed for me to film, provided I would only show these images to women, even in my own country,

About a hundred came, crowding into a large apartment lent for the occasion. Some were my friends, others simply professional acquaintances, and the rest strangers flocking in as feminists for that women-only event. Personally I did not seek a discourse on liberation, I only hoped to find in the female audience that same complicity I had experienced with the women of the desert. What a mistake!

From the moment the film engaged in the projector I had that sudden feeling of indulging in a lewd act. The image the Warlpiri women presented would be incomplete and risked betraying them. When they appeared on screen, I experienced an unexpected pain as I realised how much I missed their presence. I was torn by a feeling of guilt. I did not know what I was guilty of, but the fault seemed irreparable.

The agony lasted two hours. The silent images of the body paintings and the dances unfolded to the sound of a tape of songs that someone turned systematically every half-hour. I had brought other tapes but I could not move any longer, stuck in a corner, paralysed. Gradually I discovered all the things the images did not tell, that would have had to be told for the spectators simply to see them.

I realised clearly that my encounter with the Aboriginal people had, without my knowing, deeply transformed me. That discovery sent me into such a deep feeling of loneliness I was unable to articulate the slightest commentary. The task seemed insurmountable. I wished only to cry out: “No, all you think you’re seeing is false!”

I could not bear rediscovering on that screen those corrugated metal shelters or the piles of rubbish that irrevocably reminded all of us of shanty towns. I recalled my dread and repulsion during my first days, then my feeling of detachment towards that environment that I learnt from the Warlpiri people.

Searching for new words to talk about my experience, that sensorial symbiosis with the women of the desert, all I heard in return was hysterical laughter and half-embarrassed, half-mocking exclamations. Why that uneasiness? The absence of a commentary had undoubtedly encouraged all sorts of phantasms.

There was flesh, naked, touched, marked ... too much flesh. Especially breasts, huge and floppy mammaries, hanging down to the waist and bouncing to the rhythm of dances. And all those eyes, impassive, deep, shifty, distant ... so distant, penetrating... too penetrating. And there were the sacred poles, those smooth sticks, gleaming with ochre, tapered slightly at both ends, rubbed and painted, handed from one to another, raised to the sky, pointed towards the horizon, erected in the ground, unearthed, held at arm's length, slid between legs, thrown, caught again, replanted, bound again with ropes, touched with the hollow of the palm, shaken, massaged with joined hands, in short, manipulated like objects and treated like living beings.

At the end of the projection, the inevitable question, of course, was asked: "What are those phallic objects?"

"They are the most sacred objects of the women."

Laughter and grins. This time the betrayal of the *businesswomen* was complete. Their rituals seemed to add up to no more than a phallic cult, while my experience with the Warlpiri people had consisted in living in a female world autonomous from the male one. However hard I tried to explain that female rituals are a descent into the woman's body, a transformation of the body into earth, a passage to the Dreaming, a universe of metamorphosis where sexual differentiation is no longer a reference because the process of becoming plays with the infinity of terrestrial and cosmic forms, I came up against a question that seemed stupidly reductive:

"Thus the woman is identified with Mother Earth?"

I became agitated, incapable of explaining the relationship of the Aboriginal people to the earth, which is for them, depending on the places, *mother, father, spouse, etc.*, that is, as many relatives as there are in the society of relationships differentiated by the Dreamings. In reality, Warlpiri men and women are both on the side of nature and on the side of culture. Being perceived as a succession of trails of the bodies of metamorphosed ancestors, the earth is not just a biological metaphor but also a memory support for the Law which rules society.

I explained the cartography of mythical trails linking the earth to the Dreamings, and I added that women inherited from their father the Dreaming and the vital force with which they became identified. The responses I received were psychoanalytical comments on the Oedipus Complex.

The malaise became heavier and heavier. Some spectators finally admitted they could not bear the constant presence of flesh, that they felt denigrated in their femininity, unable to identify with women so *primitive*. Others did not say anything.

It was true the body of the Aboriginal women related the power of reproduction. A body damaged by pregnancies and old age, bloated or hollowed by a sedentary life and junk food, shaped by wind, rain and sun, etched by illnesses,

ritual wounds or accidents. A body polished by time which reflected a certain image of the mother, undoubtedly universal but from which, often, we protect ourselves. It is the mother who changes into an ogress, mouth that swallows, vagina that consumes, belly that digests, womb that transforms, that mother from which we come and which is virtually there inside us as a destiny, the one we do not want to look like and who haunts us like a fatal repetition, the one from which we would like to detach ourselves but who hurts, pains and aches us.

Some spectators recounted later their emotions on seeing the transfiguration of the painted bodies. They had felt a power that seemed to come from the beginning of time which called them, seduced them, looked familiar. Behind the bodies they had seen the substance carved as a rock, resistant for eternity, full and alive. They had tasted something secret. Whether modesty or an impotence of words, they could not speak, or they did not want to. They had perceived that body which can become all of nature's kingdoms, animal, vegetable or mineral. Perhaps they had felt like me, in the heart of the substance, the earth and the stars, where there is nothing left but the force of fullness which opens onto the void, the force of the inside where all forms are suspended. The dreams of women or the dreams of men.

The essential point of female rituals and, it appears, also of male rituals, is to refer to the Dreaming as a surpassing of dualisms. The Dreaming is the actual experience of the paradoxes, the setting of the inversions, the way to overcome sexual identity and find oneself elsewhere, in the heart of the secret of life, in the heart of the power of metamorphosis.

When I said I had felt a woman with the Warlpiri, I was saying that I was on the path that leads right to the edge of human surpassing where sexual identity vanishes. Whether ecstatic or nightmarish, all those impressions and sensations seem then to melt into the collective reality of that female being on its way to dissolution. What happens then I cannot say. I stopped on the path for, not knowing where I was going, I was overwhelmed by terror. The Warlpiri women have the ancestral references of the Dreamings to find their way.⁸

The shared experience with Warlpiri women had in a way shifted my previous questioning of "femininity," especially as expressed in another experimental film I had shot in Greece with Laurence Vale. After discovering a stray hair in most frames, we had decided to mask it by using caches such as incrustations, where we inserted refilmed images different in content, rhythm, and camera movement from the images refilmed in the rest of the screen. The vibrations from the flickering of the original shots were alternated with the slow motion of the refilming which created a very grainy texture and an oneiric atmosphere. Our filmed bodies in the islands of Lindos, Rhodes, and Mytilène became landscapes. *Néroïcal* (1978), commented as "a new representation of the body," "a liberated body,"⁹ mixes an atmosphere of joyous play with a sensation of isolation of each woman enclosed in her own universe.

France had no women studies equivalent to the University of Santa Cruz summer course that I had enrolled in just after high school in 1974. Nevertheless, psychoanalytical and political questions about a feminine essence, gender relations,

sexual liberation, and desire in general were agitating some public debates, artists, and intellectuals. Such issues were at the heart of Gina Pane and Michel Journiac's teachings at the Department of Arts plastiques (University Paris 1) followed by many young artists and experimental film-makers: for instance Maria Klonaris and Katerina Thomadaki who mixed engaged performance—for example on torture—with film and art installations where they defined themselves as “*actants*” rather than “actors.”

To pass in front of, and behind, the lens—this eye, open to the world—is to destroy the classic dichotomies of subject/object, acting/transcribing, seeing/being seen.

From this flux, from this double stimulation of glances, this interlacing of two bodies and two imaginaries, there emerged the language of the intercorporeal, a language which we have not ceased to explore since.

Double Labyrinthe is also the moment in which the unconscious first makes itself tangible.¹⁰

Dominique Noguez¹¹ called their work and that of other members of the Collectif Jeune Cinéma “The school of the body” and proposed, as a “multiple posterity to the *Chant d'amour* of Genet,” to add other film-makers from the Paris Film Coop, Yann Beauvais and Unglee, who together created in 1981 a third cooperative, Light Cone.¹² Despite this investment in the body, taboos persisted. When I screened *Maladie d'Amour* (1978), a montage of short extracts from 16 mm films found at the death of a grand uncle—1930s pornographic films, 1950s Moscow military parades, and Spanish corridas—part of the audience of a Paris Festival dedicated to women film-makers and eroticism was shocked.

My position was very different from Brakhage's intent, which, according to Curtis, “to elevate the subject of pornography to an art form, an ambition almost totally contrary to that of the Australian film maker, Valie Export, who believes that any representation of sex on the screen is dangerous and an evasion of the central issue, and should be replaced by the direct confrontation with the ‘real’”¹³

I had played with *clichés* by fabricating unusual movements and juxtapositions—the Soviet soldiers parading back and forth as in a dance with the toreador's cape beating to the rhythm of their march, and intercourse between women or with men—with the intention that sexual machismo, bullfighting, and the military parades would play each other off as “pornography.” Sexual stereotypes and maybe taboos, in relation to the celebrations of the Russian revolution by the Soviet regime, probably prevented some viewers from seizing the derision of my dis-mounting (*dé-montage*) of the obscenity of such reality grounded images.¹⁴

Negotiating Percepts and Affects

In the 1970s, some alternative or “underground” media, like the French magazine *Actuel*, were promoting a postmodern collusion between indigenous tribes and high tech science fiction. Arriving in Lajamanu in 1979, I was struck with an apocalyptic vision: the entrance of the old Hooker Creek reserve, established on the edge of the Tanami desert hundreds of kilometres from the first petrol station, had piles of old cars, fridges, and other Western waste, spread in the bush as a parody of our consumption society but also like a spare parts shop for the Warlpiri people who would pick up what they needed from there to build shanty camps or repair their cars. I was attracted to this oneiric end of the world landscape, which would later resonate with the “Zone” of *Stalker* (1979) by Tarkovski. The minimalist mental and physical resistance of the “Zone” was a forbidden, “dangerous” place to cross. In a way, during the many months I spent each time in Lajamanu—as well as in other Aboriginal places—I also learned how to manoeuvre through forbidden spaces of knowledge, embodied in the landscape: zones of information and ritual camps were restricted either to men or women and to different levels/classes/groups of initiates, camping spots and pathways to be avoided because of a death, sacred sites that could not be attended or that needed a ritual protocol of introduction to the spirits. The landscape was full of spirits crossing time in a perpendicular way but leaving traces and symptoms of disease. The language was constantly fragmented with taboo words to be replaced by whispers and gestures evoking the deceased, synonyms, or simply left as holes “without name,” a punctuation of memorial vacuums, the space also for virtual reemergence through new dream revelations after the lifting of the mourning period.

The writer and ethnographer Steve Muecke¹⁵ proposes to define as experimental the documentary *Two Laws* (1980) shot in the Northern Territory Aboriginal community of Boroloola at a time of the Indigenous Australians’ struggle for land rights. He considers experimental the way the film-makers Alessandro Cavadini and Carolyn Strachan followed visual and meaningful existential priorities as expressed by Aboriginal people after they saw the first footage: for instance they wanted the whole body of Aboriginal narrators to be filmed in the landscape so they would be seen as actors in “co-presence” and not as a simple background: in other words, they wanted the Dreaming ancestors and their marked landscape to be recognized as actors. It is still a challenge to suggest through image—fixed or animated—the presence of the Dreaming involved in the performances of Aboriginal ritual, as well as the content and affects of any dream, spiritual, or mental experiences. Warlpiri and other Aboriginal desert artists have succeeded to do so in their creative way, when transposing onto rectangular canvas with acrylics their own visual tradition of painting with ochres on their bodies, sacred objects, and the ground, as well as drawing stories in the sand.

Women’s body painting consists in outlining a basic totemic design with slim lines, alternating white, red, and sometimes also yellow ochre and black charcoal,

until the whole body is saturated with lines that seem to absorb the original design. A similar technique has been adapted by men and women to paint with acrylics on canvas: first with the four traditional colors and later with any existing synthetic paint, producing kinetic effects of fusion or inversion of above and underneath, whether the lines are continuous—like in women’s body painting,¹⁶ or stippled, made with a series of different sized dots, a technique inspired by men painting their bodies and the sand with wild cotton and bird down. Born in Papunya in 1971, the Aboriginal acrylic movement spread to many desert communities, which over the next decades developed their own styles. Community art centers were established to promote these artists on the contemporary art market, with thousands of highly priced paintings acquired by contemporary art collectors and museums all over the world. Since the early 1980s, many Aboriginal people also turned to video and cinema to stage various aspects of their current life, colonial history, and spirituality. Aboriginal film-makers—like many other indigenous people—have proposed very creative ways to suggest the life of the landscape, expressing their desires and intensities as intertwined with their natural and cultural environment. Some of those films have been awarded prizes in the mainstream but they are also a recombination of deleuzo-guattarian minor-cinema, and of what Guattari called ecosophy (binding of mental, social, and environment ecologies) and its aesthetical paradigm, which includes ethics and politics.¹⁷

I am not a film-maker, but as an anthropologist I started filming again in the 1990s, with a video camera, for the purpose of a multimedia project,¹⁸ and later for the internet, especially with regard to a campaign for social justice, following the arrest of rioters after a death in custody in the Aboriginal community of Palm Island in 2004 (see Figure 9.3).¹⁹

The growing art production and the claim by people, who were traditionally studied by anthropologists, to control the way they are presented has, over the last 30 years, changed the way we work. Anthropologists have to take into account those claims and the criticism of past and present representations produced by all social sciences, the media, as well as literature. Some anthropologists, both old and young, as well as some film-makers or other artists, believe that their subjective creative approach allows them to do what they want with material collected in the field, in archives, or on the internet. Such a position can deny people’s agency and struggle for empowerment to challenge the history of their dispossession. Fieldwork contextual constraints and rules form a tool to free ourselves from our ethnocentric bias, which is often unconscious. Research implies constant negotiations, as contexts change with time, as do cultural priorities. For instance, some Warlpiri people have changed their relation to images over the years. Restricted knowledge—including some photos and films of secret rituals—is sometimes made public in order to produce art or political statements, while photos of the dead are now framed and exhibited during funerals organized by younger generations. I was allowed to include selected extracts of my 16mm footage of women-only rituals on the *Dream Trackers* CD-ROM I developed in the mid 1990s, and, since 2011,



Figure 9.3 Lex Wotton and his wife Cecilia, Palm Island, 2007: in front of a photo of the debutante ball they won when aged 16. Courtesy of Barbara Glowczewski.

at the request of the Warlpiri, I have transferred all the footage and thousands of photos and hours of ritual songs and Dreaming stories, onto a digital open source database which the Warlpiri can annotate online: the access to some files is open, others can only be accessed with a password.²⁰

Free knowledge is not knowledge freely transportable on the internet, but knowledge that people can use to free themselves. Such is, for me, the challenge of both cinema and anthropology.²¹

Filmography

L'autre scène, 1972, Jean-François Lyotard, Claudine Eizykman, Guy Fihman, and Dominique Avron, Cinedoc (Paris Film Coop), 16mm, opt, 6mins.: <http://www.cinedoc.org> (accessed December 19, 2013).

Double Labyrinthe, 1975–6, Klonaris/Thomadaki, Super 8 blown in 16mm, 55mins., color, silent (<http://www.klonaris-thomadaki.net/16dlfr.htm> [accessed December 19, 2013]).

Dyonysos, 90', 1984, Jean Rouch, 90mins, color, sound, online: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dbSKjRNqG5Q> (accessed...)



Figure 9.4 *Sand Story* by Barbara Gibson Nakamarra (Glowczewski and Vale, 1994) exhibited at *Mémoires Vives. Une histoire de l'Art aborigène*, Musée d'Aquitaine, 2013. Courtesy of Barbara Glowczewski.



Figure 9.5 Still from *Kajirri Warlpiri Ceremonies Restricted to Women*, Lajamanu, Central Australia, 1979, 16mm: yawulyu healing ritual, the ochre painting on Pampa Napangardi is feeding her body and her spirit. Courtesy of Barbara Glowczewski.

Fédéfé, 1976, Barbara Glowczewska, Cinedoc (Paris Film Coop), France, 16mm, 6 mins., painted b/w, silent.

Gros Loup, 1976, Barbara Glowczewska, Cinedoc (Paris Film Coop), France, 16mm, 8 mins. 30, painted b/w, silent.

Histoire de Wahari, 1970, Jean Monod and Vincent Blanchet, self-produced, CNRS Images, France, 16mm, 66 mins, color, sound.

- Maladie d'Amour*, 1978, Barbara Glowczewski, Cinedoc (Paris Film Coop), France, 16 mm, 10 mins, color, silent.
- Miradwie*, 1976, Barbara Glowczewska and Martine Zevort, Cinedoc (Paris Film Coop), France, silent.
- Néroïcal*, 1978, Barbara Glowczewska and Laurence Vale, grant from the GREC, special effects, Magic Studio, 16 mm, silent, 45 mins (*mention spéciale du jury* [special price] of the Jury Festival of Hyères, 1978).
- Noeuga*, 1976, Barbara Glowczewska and Martine Zevort, Cinedoc (Paris Film Coop), France, 8 mins., 30, silent.
- Picturlure*, 1977, Barbara Glowczewska, Cinedoc (Paris Film Coop), France, 15 mins, 16 mm, silent (nominated Festival de Hyères, 1977).
- Quest in Aboriginal Land*, 2000, Barbara Glowczewski and Wayne Jowandi Barker, 2002, interactive DVD, self-produced, Australia and France, 50 mins,
- Seed Dreaming*, 1994, Laurence Vale, Barbara Glowczewski, and Barbara Gibson Nakamarra, 20', Betacam video. An expanded screening with B. Glowczewski was filmed by Ghislaine Perichet at the Exhibition *Territoires*, Galerie Michel Journiac, Université Paris 4, 2011: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVaZhxgkCoQ> (accessed...)
- Spirit of Anchor*, 2002, Wayne Jowandi Barker and Barbara Glowczewski Barker, CNRS Image, France, broadcasted on Arte channel: free viewing on http://videotheque.cnrs.fr/index.php?urlaction=doc&id_doc=980 (accessed December 19, 2013)
- Stalker*, 1979, Andreï Tarkovski, Russia, 161 mins, color, sound.
- Two Laws*, 1980, Alessandro Cavadini and Carolyn Strachan, Australia and Italy, 140 mins, color, sound.
- VW Vitesse Women*, 1974, Claudine Eizykman, Cinedoc (Paris Film Coop), France, 36 mins, 16 mm, silent from <http://www.cinedoc.org> (accessed December 19, 2013).

Notes

1. Jean Mitry, *Storia del cinema sperimentale* (Milan: Italian Gabriele Mazzota, 1971; trans. in French, *Le cinéma expérimental. Histoires et perspectives*, Cinema 2000/Seghers, 1974; Gregory Battcock (ed.) *The New American Cinema. A Critical Anthology* (New York: Dutton & Co., 1967); Adams P. Sitney (ed.) *Film, Culture Reader* (New York: Praeger, 1970); David Curtis, *Experimental Cinema. A Fifty year Evolution* (New York: Delta Books, 1971).
2. Jean-Michel Bouhours, Claudine Eizykman, Guy Fihman, Prosper Hillairet, and Christian Lebrat, "parisfilmCOPTION, parisfilmCOPTION, parisfilmSCOoPTION, PARISFILMSCOOPTION" (in *La Rochelle, 4^e rencontres internationales d'art contemporain*, June 26–July 10, 1976, last page of the Festival catalog, closing the *Cinemarge3* program). Extract of this text on the website of Editions expérimentales, created by Hillairet and Lebrat in 1985: <http://www.paris-experimental.asso.fr/index2.php?option=content&task=view&id=93&pop=1&pag> (accessed December 18, 2013).

3. Caudine Eizykman, *La Jouissance-cinéma* (Paris: 10/18, 1975); Jean-François Lyotard, "Acinema," in Andrew Benjamin (ed.) *The Lyotard Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1989).
4. B. Glowczewski, "Collures. Du cinéma expérimental à l'anthropologie," *L'Unebêvue*, 30, 2012, 31–42.
5. Jean Monod, *Les Barjots* (Paris, 10/18, 1970), the word *barjots* is the *verlan* (French popular language game consisting in reversing the syllables of any word) of *jobard*, a slang expression then used by young people claiming to be non-conventional (*déjantés*, *mabouls*, etc.); Monod also played the main role in Jean Rouch's *Dyonisos* (1984): see filmography.
6. Barbara Glowczewski (interview by Erin Manning and Brian Massumi November 27, 2008), "Micropolitics in the Desert Politics and the Law in Australian Aboriginal Communities," *Inflexions. A Journal for Research-Creation*, 3, 2009 from <http://www.inflexions.org/issues.html#i3> (accessed December 24, 2013).
7. Barbara Glowczewski, "Lines and Criss-crossings: Hyperlinks in Australian Indigenous Narratives," *Media International Australia*, 116, 2005, with a DVD displaying extracts from the interactive film *Quest in Aboriginal Land*, 2002), 27–8.
8. Barbara Glowczewski, *Les Rêveurs du désert* (Paris: Plon, 1989; with new afterword, Actes Sud, 1996), 115–19. Unpublished English translation by Paul Buck; author's copyright.
9. Gérard Courant, "Festival de Nancy: Le corps morcelé," *Cinéma 78*, 234, 1978; and "Festival de Hyères," *Art Presse*, 22, 1978), both from <http://www.gerardcourant.com/index.php?i=ecrits&e=t> (accessed December 24, 2013). *Néroical* received a special mention from the jury in Hyères. A funding from the GREC French film agency, allowed to use a special effects device constructed by Polish film-maker, Julien Pappé, in his Magic Film Studio in Meudon, where Glowczewski worked to fund her 1979 fieldwork in Australia, resynchronizing the French adaptation of *Ubu roi*, a German animation long film by Lenica, a Polish graphist.
10. Klonaris and Thomadaki statement on their website, <http://www.klonaris-thomadaki.net/artsite.htm> (accessed December 19, 2013).
11. Dominique Noguez, *Trente ans de cinéma expérimental en France (1950–1980)* (Catalogue of the retrospective curated by D. Noguez and Catherine Zbinden, Centre Pompidou, Videothèque de Paris, Cinémathèque française, September 28–October 25, 1982, and other cities in France and overseas. Paris: ARCEF, 1982), 27.
12. « Rencontre avec Yann Beauvais: Le cinéma expérimental et sa diffusion sur Internet, » 2011 filmed interview, from <http://m2jc2010.wordpress.com/2011/03/01/quelle-place-pour-le-cinema-experimental-et-la-video-dart-sur-internet/> (accessed December 19, 2013).
13. Curtis, *Experimental cinema* 180.
14. Noguez, *Trente ans de cinéma expérimental en France*, 29, 36.
15. Stephen Muecke "Was Two Laws Experimental?," from <http://www.screeningthepast.com/2011/08/was-two-laws-experimental/> (accessed December 19, 2013). (About the film: <http://www.reddirfilms.com/film.html> (accessed December 19, 2013).
16. See, for instance, the art of Lorna Fencer, alias Yulyulu, and other artists from Lajamanu, from <http://www.warnayaka.com/> (accessed December 19, 2013).
17. Barbara Glowczewski, "Guattari and Anthropology: Existential Territories among Indigenous Australians," in E. Alliez E. and A. Goffey (eds) *The Guattari Effect* (London: Continuum, 2011). Felix Guattari and Suely Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007, trans. from *Micropolítica: Cartografias do desejo*, 1986). Félix Guattari, *Chaosophy: Texts and Interviews 1972–1977*, Sylvère Lotringer (ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2009); *Chaosmosis: An Ethicoaesthetic Paradigm* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995, trans. from *Chaosmose* by Julian Prefaris and Paul Bains).

18. The author developed, with 50 Warlpiri artists from the Warnayka Art Center, the CD-ROM *Dream Trackers. Yapa Art and Knowledge of the Australian Desert* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2000). This CD-ROM includes short clips, including a sand story filmed with Laurence Vale and Warlpiri story-teller Barbara Gbson (*Seed Dreaming*, 1994). Together with the Aboriginal filmmaker Wayne Jowandi Barker, Barbara Glowczewski made an interactive DVD project (*Quest in Aboriginal Land*, 2001); see comment of the interactivity in Karen O'Rourke (*Walking and Mapping. Artists and Cartographers* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013, 119–22). and the documentary *Spirit of Anchor* (2002) shot with the Yolngu people from Bawaka. About this film, see Barbara Glowczewski, *Rêves en colères* (Paris: Plon, 2004, 297–364, Book 4).
19. The photo in Figure 9.3 was taken during the filming of Barbara Glowczewski, *Lex Wotton* (video, 5 mins, edited with Dominique Masson, 2008), from http://semioweb.msh-paris.fr/AAR/FR/_video.asp?id=1635&ress=6071&video=9890&format=68 (accessed December 19, 2013); and *Palm Island Debutante Ball* (video, 10 mins, edited with Ralf Rigsby, JCU, 2005) from http://www.unebevue.org/unebeweb/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=103:barbara-glowczewski&catid=12:27&Itemid=159 (accessed December 19, 2013).
20. Barbara Glowczewski, *Kajirri Warlpiri Ceremonies Restricted to Women*, 180 mins, 16 mm, 1979, non-edited rushes deposited at the AIATSIS in Canberra, digitized extracts on *Dream Trackers: Yapa Art and Knowledge of the Australian Desert* (CD-ROM, Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2000) and in the author's audiovisual collection on <http://www.odsas.fr> (accessed December 19, 2013).
21. Special thanks to Jessica De Laryy Healy for her subtle proofreading of this text.