

## **Everything is the same as everything else, nothing came first**

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### **Lights**

Unpredictable jarring cacophony.

Tender refrains.

Mood music, coloured lights.

Tangential relationships.

### **Colours**

Photography and film are innately surreal, they can't help but be. They aren't the world, but that's not the point. The point is that they look so much like they are. That's what I call specific unlikeness. Photographic representation is not just randomly unlike the world, it's very specifically unlike it. That means that we are able to produce highly realistic visual representations of the world in which the normal physical laws do not apply. In photography we can manipulate and overlay discrete elements to make a world of wonderful suggestions and collisions that approximates the realms we see when we close our eyes. In film, where we have an added temporal dimension, we can produce even stranger coincidences, inviting space and time to button back on themselves in the most alluring ways. This surreality, which we should understand as primarily an ability to *exceed* reality, isn't something that suddenly appears with the arrival of complex CGI effects, it's there from the outset, intrinsic to film and to montage and editing.

It's a commonplace to comment that the relationship between the world and its image becomes confused in the wake of the photograph, that the way we experience the world becomes coloured by our experience of viewing images of it, and that in fact we now only experience the world as its own representation.

Whether or not the world has simply become an inferior simulacrum of itself, I'm more interested in what it is that we are only able to imagine thanks to our innately photographic perception and vision. What material objects, apparently unrelated to vision and perception, only exist because we invented photography? What shapes only occurred to us because we had experienced the foreshortened, flattened space of the photographic frame? What forms and textures only arose because we experienced time in a new way in the cinema? Is there a hat that could not have been envisioned without Henry Fox Talbot?

### **Moiré**

I wonder, did the proliferation of easily accessible, relatively clean urban public toilets at the end of the nineteenth century changed the way people ate, and perhaps brought into being certain types of foods, or particular forms of sociality?

### **Ambient music**

I find I'm not a very coherent critic, I tend to make whatever I'm looking at about whatever I last read. I fit things around ideas.

Optics produced the modern view of the universe at the most macro and micro level. We only challenged the classical view of the cosmos because someone figured out how to grind glass, and someone else worked out how to make a telescope, and then saw someone else's moon quite demonstrably not going around us.

### **Pixellation**

In a cinema watching 35mm film being projected onto a screen, each frame of the film appears on the screen for about one sixtieth of a second. Given that there only twenty-four frames of film projected in any one second, this means that we spend more than half the time – thirty-six sixtieths of it – sitting in the dark when we watch projected film. Our brains perform a complex miracle, not only in making the series of still images appear to move, but in filling in the black void in between each of them.

When we watch projected video the screen is illuminated at all times. Our eyes are bombarded with light. Video is fundamentally phenomenologically distinct from film. What is video perception? A projectionist I know claims that digital projection gives him migraines.

## Phonemes

The flat fields of colour that fill the frames of a Tintin adventure are a form of non-pharmaceutical retreat from the world beyond the page (I don't know whether to call it the real world, or the pre-photographic world, since I'm already uncertain about the claim of any perception of external reality to any kind of priority). Tintin's creator, Hergé, pioneered a style of illustration that became known as 'ligne claire', where the black outlines of the drawing had an even thickness, without any cross hatching or shading to suggest volume or shadow, and colour was added in clearly separated blocks. Even the most densely detailed frame of a Tintin book will contain no shadow.

Tintin moves – gets from place to place – in a thoroughly filmic manner. The visual grammar of his world is that of the film frame, obeying the 180° rule, and the logic of continuity between frames and cuts. The Adventures of Tintin would not be possible without the prior invention of cinema. This doesn't mean it's necessarily a good idea to turn a Tintin book into a full-motion film.

## Inverted chain

The colour magenta (4-[(4-Aminophenyl)(4-imino-2,5-cyclohexadien-1-ylidene)methyl]-2-methylbenzenamine, monohydrochloride) did not exist until 1859. It was patented as an 'aniline' dye in that year, following an accidental discovery by an 18-year-old chemistry student which led to the production of the first synthetic dyes just a few years earlier. Magenta was originally called fuchsine, after its similarity in colour to the flowers of the fuchsia plant, which was named after the 16th century German botanist Leonhart Fuchs. However, in the year of its discovery fuchsine was renamed magenta, in celebration of Napoleon III's defeat of the Austrian army at Magenta in Lombardy, then part of the Austrian Empire. An enthusiastic former art teacher of mine, in the era before Google, believed that the battle was named after the colour; that it had taken place in the middle ages; and that the nomenclature derived from the soldiers' blood, which had flowed so freely on the field of combat that it stained the very soil.

Preparation of fuchsine was shown to cause bladder cancer amongst chemical workers.

Magenta is not a colour on the visible spectrum. The purplish colour that it produces results from dilution of the chemical in water. Magenta's complementary colour is green. In their solid state, magenta crystals are green.

There is no beginning and no end.

The world I can see represented – large crowds are standing at airports in the USA – is a mediated dramatisation of itself, exceeding its own reality many times over in its consumption and reproduction. I am caught inside it, contemplating objects and refracting them through ideas.