THE DIVINE HORSEMEN
AND
PEOPLE INBETWEEN

A STUDY OF
THE
SPACES BETWEEN
MAGICAL TIME AND MECHANICAL MOTION
Divine Horsemen and People Inbetween: 
A Study of the Spaces Between
Magical Time
and
Mechanical Motion

Submitted by Jonathan Clementi-Smith to the University of Exeter
as a thesis for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Film by Practice
In April 2011

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other University.

Signature: ………………………………………………………………………
Acknowledgements

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There is no greater joy than that of feeling oneself a creator. The triumph of life is expressed by creation.

Art has no other object than to set aside the symbols of practical utility, the generalities that are conventionally and socially accepted, everything in fact which masks reality from us, in order to set us face to face with reality itself. - Henri Bergson.

The eye sees only what the mind is prepared to comprehend. - Henri Bergson.

The interaction of philosophy and art should create difference and divergence, rather than agreement and common sense. Philosophy has to do with creating concepts, while art has to do with creating new experiences. But the two can transform each other. The creation of cinema challenged philosophers to rethink the relation between time and the image; but new concepts in philosophy can provoke artists into recreating the boundaries of experience (Colebrook, 2002: 7).
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CHAPTER ONE

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FILMS

*Divine Horsemen*

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Artist’s Talk
Private view

*People Inbetween*

Poetic Documentary
Installation Highlights
Complete Installation
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Artist’s Talk
This PhD “Film by Practice” sets out to question and explore the nature of film poetry. The poetry of the cinematic image is described by the filmmaker Jean Epstein as the “unveiling of the magic inherent in the visual object beyond the capacity of words to define” (Epstein, cited in Sitney, 1978: xxiii). This is a daunting task that the study interprets through the moving image with particular reference to the magical temporal art of trance possession, which is processed within the genre of experimental ethnographic documentary and intercultural film. This thesis is an experiment in form, taking the filmmaker Maya Deren’s notion of film as comprising of “narrative horizontals” and “poetic verticals” (Deren and Sitney, 1971: 178) explored through a practical investigation of movement and time in space both beyond and within the film frame, studied through the art installations *Divine Horsemen* (2005) and *People Inbetween* (2007). It is focused through a reading of Gilles Deleuze’s Bergsonian philosophies of cinema as “movement-images” and “time-images” (Deleuze, 1989: xvi, xvii), exhibited as multi-screened video art installations that evolve within the space and hence exist in a perpetual state of “becoming”. Whether this is the sounds and images that change depending on where they are viewed, or the narrative theme of the works as “becoming other”.

The themes of “in-betweenness” and the “mix” are investigated through these two video documentary artworks; first, by a third party restaging/remixing of the experimental ethnographic footage of Haitian Voodoo trance possession shot by Maya Deren, unfinished and posthumously released as *Divine Horsemen the Voodoo Gods of Haiti* (1985); and second, diaspora and the intercultural are explored through the first person personal. Intercultural documentary and experimental ethnography filtered through me with specific reference to my own triangular ethnicity, being British, Sri Lankan, though classified as Dutch Burgher, a “lost white tribe” (Orizio, 2000: 2): a journey into racial “becoming” as an “in-between” belonging to a diasporic community.