

FINITE RANTS

Fondazione Prada presents the online project "Finite Rants", curated by Luigi Alberto Cippini and Niccolò Gravina, on its website and social platforms from 25 June 2020. Commissioned by Fondazione Prada to filmmakers, artists, intellectuals and scholars, the 8 visual essays comprised in "Finite Rants" will be published on a monthly basis. The first authors include German director and writer Alexander Kluge, Japanese photographer Satoshi Fujiwara, French director Bertrand Bonello, and Swiss economist Christian Marazzi.

As stated by avant-garde director Hans Richter in 1940, the film or video essay is a form of expression capable of creating "images for mental notions" and of portraying concepts. Starting from Richter's ideas, some later theorists identify specific traits in the video essay, such as creative freedom, complexity, reflexivity, the crossing of film genres and the transgression of linguistic conventions. "Finite Rants" aims to test the versatility of the visual essay in expressing thought images and demonstrate its relevance in contemporary visual production. According to the two curators, "this project further develops Richter's intuitions starting from the assumption that, due to the natural evolutionary condition of the cinematographic fact and its contamination with forms of information, visual material and capillary distribution of Image Capture supports, today more than ever it is necessary to search for what can be defined as 'Formatless Dogma', in support of a visual production without restrictions".

The aesthetic and theoretical roots of "Finite Rants" can be traced back to the experimental work *La Jetée* (1962) by French author Chris Marker. Defined by its creator as "photo-roman", *La Jetée* is described by its voice-over as "the story of a man obsessed with an image of his childhood". According to writer J.G. Ballard, "this strange and poetic film, a fusion of science fiction, psychological fable and photomontage, creates in its unique way a series of bizarre images of the inner landscapes of time". The authors of "Finite Rants" are therefore invited to confront themselves with a radical model of cinematic experimentation such as *La Jetée*, a fragmentary and dispersive story, consisting of a single short film sequence and a succession of static frames, which questions the very idea of cinema, understood as a set of moving images.

Following a process of creative collaboration between the authors and Fondazione Prada, the visual contributions featured in "Finite Rants" analyze social, political and cultural issues that have emerged in our present time and are normally addressed by the media with a documentary approach. Through the creation, editing and post-production of raw, heterogeneous and diverse images and visual materials, the authors are able to express personal visions and poetics that involve the viewer in an active and reflective role. "Finite Rants" is part of a historical moment of crisis of the traditional film industry and the proliferation of digital tools that record reality with an apparently neutral and mechanical method. This project questions the current dynamics of production, distribution and reception of images, trying to invent new ways of writing or rewriting reality from a subjective

and deliberately partial perspective, practicing a marginal and hybrid genre like video essay.

Following a method that its authors compare to an alchemical process, Satoshi Fujiwara and Alexander Kluge's visual essay *Werewolves Playoffs* activates an experimentation that crosses the boundaries between cinema and photography. Actions of aggression, isolation and accumulation of images create a new narrative that invests the notions of time, speed and transformation. In contrast to Marker's work, where the power of memory is fixed in the frame, in Fujiwara and Kluge's video essay the images are decontextualized, deconstructed and stratified to create a dark atmosphere far from the standards of traditional cinema. Their work is the result of a long-distance collaboration that sees the Japanese photographer tries to experiment the video format for the first time, reworking original elements and films by the German director.

In a personal reinterpretation of contemporary Europe, director Bertrand Bonello reworks the last minutes of his 2016 film *Nocturama*, which documents the logistical operations and the organization of terrorist attacks in Paris by a group of teenagers. Bonello's project is an ideal challenge to the canons of arthouse cinema, a true genre and production threshold of the French film industry. Starting with *Où en êtes-vous?*, a video commissioned by the Centre Pompidou in 2014 and conceived as a letter to his then eleven-year-old daughter, the director makes a new work. For "Finite Rants" he produces a visual essay titled *Where are you now? (Number 2)*, altering the final sequence of *Nocturama* and completely modifying the soundtrack, like a remix or a sort of sound recut, through sound archives, new music, silences and chaos, as if this video essay was a second letter written for his now seventeen-year-old daughter.

As part of an imaginary pan-European information broadcast, Christian Marazzi addresses issues related to the economic, financial and social implications of the current health emergency, such as the management of public and private debts, financial market fluctuations and social conflicts. In his visual essay the setting, visual and sound interventions emphasize the ambivalent value of economic discourse, able to predict and anticipate future scenarios or, on the contrary, to generate possible errors of evaluation. The continuous variation of these predictions triggers a reflection on the graphic representation of economic trends and the relative methods of reading the data, capable of influencing the economic debate and the political choices.

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Biographical notes

Alexander Kluge, born in Halberstadt, Germany in 1932, is a filmmaker and literary author. Originally trained as a lawyer, his body of works can be considered as a continuation in words and moving images of the “Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School”. His first feature film *Abschied von Gestern* (Yesterday Girl) won the Silver Lion at the Venice Film Festival in 1966, the first German entry since 1945 to obtain this prize. In 1968 Kluge was awarded with the Golden Lion with *Artisten in der Zirkuskuppel: ratlos* (The Artist Under the Big Top: Perplexed,) and in 1982 with the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement for his cinematographic work. His filmography includes *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin* (Part-time Work of a Domestic Slave, 1973), *In Gefahr und größter Not bringt der Mittelweg den Tod* (In Danger and Deep Distress, the Middle Way Spells Certain Death, 1974), *Deutschland im Herbst* (Germany in Autumn, 1978), *Die Patriotin* (The Patriot, 1979), *Die Macht der Gefühle* (Power of Feelings, 1983), *Der Angriff der Gegenwart auf die übrige Zeit* (The Blind Director, 1986). In 1987, Kluge founded the Development Company for Television Program (DCTP), procuring broadcast space for his own cultural magazines and programs of other independent tv-makers for the commercial channels RTL and Sat.1. In 2008 Kluge presented a work of almost nine hours: *Nachrichten aus der ideologischen Antike: Marx/Eisenstein/Das Kapital*, a reinvention of Eisenstein's unfinished project of filming *Capital* by Karl Marx. Alexander Kluge's major works of social criticism include *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*, as well as *History and Obstinacy*, both co-written with Oskar Negt. He has recently published *Russland Kontainer* and *Trotzdem* (together with Ferdinand von Schirach), both 2020, and has an upcoming book *Parsifal Kontainer* with artist Georg Baselitz. His important exhibitions include: “The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied.”, (Fondazione Prada, Venice, 2017); Pluriversum (Museum Folkwang, Essen, 2017 and Belvedere Haus 21, Vienna, 2018). In 2018 the Vincent Van Gogh Foundation in Arles showed the exhibition “James Ensor & Alexander Kluge: Dark Centuries”. He most recently exhibited “The Power of Music. Opera: The Temple of Seriousness” at Kunsthalle Weishaupt in Ulm and “The Thin Ice of Civilisation. Opera: The Temple of Seriousness” at Württembergischer Kunstverein in Stuttgart.

Satoshi Fujiwara, born in Kobe, Japan in 1984, lives and works in Berlin. He initiates a pressing and critical action on the gazer, through the focal length set from portrayed subjects and the heterogeneous definition of his photographs, diverting from the standards of photo-journalism and an exclusively documentary dimension, thus producing a new emerging lexicon. Since 2015 his works have been exhibited internationally at numerous institutions such as Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto, Canada, 2019-2020; Fondazione Prada, Italy, 2017; La Boverie (former Palais des beaux-arts de Liège), Belgium, 2018; 21_21 Design Sight, Japan, 2018; Deutsche Oper Berlin, Germany, 2016; among others. He has also participated in numerous art and photography fairs, art festivals, and biennales such as Biennale de l'Image Possible, Belgium; Art Souterrain, Canada; Photo London, UK; Paris Photo, France; Unseen Photo Fair Amsterdam, Netherland; among others. In parallel to the

projects, Fujiwara has also had several collaborations with international institutions and brands.

Bertrand Bonello was born in Nice, France in 1968. He began a career in music, participating in numerous artist's albums, then turned to cinema and directing. In 1996, he directed *Who I am – based on Pier Paolo Pasolini* (Qui je suis – d'après Pier Paolo Pasolini), a documentary short adapted from Pasolini's autobiographical prose poem. His first feature film, *Something Organic* (Quelque chose d'organique), was presented at the 1998 Berlin Film Festival. His next feature film, *The Pornographer* (Le Pornographe, 2001), with Jean-Pierre Léaud, was presented at the Cannes Festival's International Critics' Week and was awarded the FIPRESCI Prize. In 2003, *Tiresia* was selected for the Cannes Film Festival's Official Competition. Then he directed *On War* (De la guerre), shown at the Cannes Directors' Fortnight in 2008. Three years later, his feature film *House of Tolerance* (L'Apollonide – Souvenirs de la maison close) made Cannes' Official Competition; praised by the critics, it received eight nominations for the French César awards. In 2014, he directed *Saint Laurent*, which also was selected in the Official Competition at the Cannes Film Festival. The movie represented France at the Academy Awards and received ten César nominations. The same year, the Centre Pompidou in Paris dedicated a film retrospective to his work, and he released a music album: *Accidents*. In addition, he took on the leading role in Antoine Barraud's *Portrait of the Artist* (Le Dos rouge). At the same time, he went on directing musical and short films: *Cindy*, *The Doll is Mine* (2005) with Asia Argento, which made Cannes' Official Selection, *My New Picture* (2007), *Where The Boys Are* (2010), *Ingrid Caven: Music and Voice* (Ingrid Caven, Musique et voix, 2012) presented at Locarno Film Festival, and *Sarah Winchester, Ghost Opera* (Sarah Winchester, Opéra Fantôme, 2016) for the 3rd Stage, the Paris Opera's digital platform. In 2016, he released *Nocturama*, his seventh feature film. In 2019 Bertrand Bonello presented his latest film, *Zombi Child*, shot in France and Haiti.

Christian Marazzi, born in 1951 in Lugano, Switzerland, is an economist and university professor. After teaching at the University of Padua, the State University of New York and the Universities of Lausanne and Geneva, he became a professor at the University of Applied Sciences of Southern Switzerland. Among his books: *Il posto dei calzini* (Bollati Boringhieri, 1999), *E il denaro va* (Bollati Boringhieri, 1998), *Capitale e Linguaggio. From New Economy to War Economy* (Derive e Approdi, 2002), *Finanza bruciata* (Casagrande, 2009). He worked as an economist and researcher at the Department of Social Affairs of the Republic of Ticino. He was politically active as an independent leftist and was a member of the Federal Commission for Women's Issues.