

Press Release - 3 May 2016

## Painting as Film

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Not only since the invention of film have artists experimented with the depiction of movement. This is also true for many painters. There is need to make mention only of William Turner, Adolph Menzel, Edouard Manet as well as later the Impressionists Gustave Caillebotte and Claude Monet, who found a theme in the railroad as a steaming, rushing manifestation. If it seemed that photography and film had issued a challenge to painting, the artistic avant-garde of the 1910s began to shake the dogma of the fixed panel painting.

The Futurist artist Arnaldo Ginna (1890-1982) began already in 1909 to experiment with film and painting. Lacking a camera with frame device, he painted directly onto the filmstrip and created some of the first cameraless animations. French painter Léopold Survage (1879-1968) is also considered to be one of the pioneers of abstract animation in Europe. Between 1912 and 1914, Survage pursued a filmproject. Having the principle of rhythmic montage in mind, he wanted to do a frame-by-frame animation of a series of paintings. Because of the First World War, Survage could not bring his pioneering works to a conclusion. What remained was a series of colored individual sheets that the filmmaker Bruce Checefsky combined into an animated film for the first time in 2005. The result is a merging of painting and film into something that the artist Robert Bruce Rogers in 1952 named "motion painting" or "cineplastics."

Up to now, there have been only a few investigations by art history or visual culture into intermediate concepts between painting and film. In recent years, a few exhibitions and publications have focused on the relationship between film and the visual arts, but they took up a position more with respect to the reciprocal assimilation of visual strategies and to special areas such as the representation of artworks in film, the storyboard as art, the quotation of paintings or *tableaux vivants* in film or the artist's film (documentary and feature film).

At the center of the Kunsthalle Darmstadt exhibition *Painting as Film* are works that reflect the painterly process in film or even go a step further and merge both media. Camera and projector thereby bring to light something that the viewer normally does not get to see. Included in this area is the modified-base technique. These films show the transformation of the picture through addition and erasure. They are based on one or several sheets upon which work is continuously done, so that traces of change become part of the picture/film.

In addition to works of contemporary artists, the exhibition also presents a selection of classic examples of the experimental animated film, whose little-known history they recount in this manner.

Also shown in this context is a documentary film about Jackson Pollock by Hans Namuth. During the act of filming, the camera was placed behind transparent glass and thus became the canvas in a certain sense. The otherwise customary view over the artist's shoulder here becomes a view through the priming and follows the painterly process from the perspective of the work in the sense of a series of individual steps.

*Painting as Film* is curated by Dr León Krempel, Curator and Director, and Aline Willert, Assistant Curator.

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## Press Contacts & Images

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