Found Footage Experience.
Pratiques of cinematic re-use and forms of contemporary film

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In contemporary visual culture, the polysemy of cinematographic language finds its emblematic manifestation in the various paradigms of image re-use, which contextualises and relocates their functions in new interpretative formulas. The practice of found footage consists of the cinematographic, videographic and artistic practice of appropriation, re-elaboration and re-assembly of pre-existing images retrieved from heterogeneous media archives: from photography to stock footage and from home-movies to TV documentation and the web. One of the attractions of postmodern culture as a form of recycling, re-use and combination of different materials recovered from a past interpreted as a vast reservoir of imagery, found footage keeps its interest alive even in the epistemological trajectories of the so-called “new realism,” where a “society of recording” emerges (Ferraris 2011) in which everything must leave a trace and be archived. Moreover, deconstructionist thought has shown how inheritance should be understood not as a *datum* but always as a task, since archiving also responds to the need for regulation: preserving documents means imposing an order and establishing control through safeguarding and cataloguing devices.

At the same time, audiovisual consumption practices have today become complex and composite forms of reception which rewrite the spectatorial experience and the uses and habits of accessibility, availability and relationship with films and audiovisual materials. The history of cinema is configured as a “visual deposit” (Bertozzi 2012) at the origin of the development of new formal writings and metaphorical processes. By manipulating the images and intervening in the linearity and flow of the work, the user-viewer entertains new aesthetic, social and psychic relationships with the images (Mulvey 2006). Similarly, in the field of visual arts, the notion of archive resembles a catalogue-form of various arts and media in which the logic of “post-production” (Bourriaud 2004) is elevated to a representative formula of many of the works of art produced from the 1980s onwards.

In the contemporary artistic and media landscape, found footage therefore takes on the characteristics of a pervasive and interdisciplinary artistic and media experience: a significant form of an epistemic transformation with regard to the notion of the work of art, author and spectator, which seems to take on an ever-greater theoretical value, partly by virtue of its numerous applications. Contemporary practices of film reuse involve different spaces and audiences, contaminating and “re-locating” (Casetti 2012) entertainment and popular, avant-garde and mainstream culture: from museums to public art, from the web to urban spaces, from concerts to rave parties and from counter-culture to sub-cultures. Moreover, such practices simultaneously integrate innovative technologies and languages, and often employ multiple audiovisual techniques and practices: from analogue film editing, computer graphics and film-essays to video-essay, virtual reality and Vjing.

This dossier of “Imago. Studi di cinema e media” aims to investigate these expressive horizons by combining theoretical, historical and cultural approaches which restore the function of research and sensory and cognitive amplification that the creative reuse of archive cinema activates by acting on processes of the resemantization and intensification of images and evoking an often highly spectacular and performative composite audiovisual scenario. Perfectly integrated with the sensitivities and the most recent developments of the media system, the experiences of found
footage completely reformulate the notions of audiovisual creation and fruition both technologically and aesthetically, favouring an “expanded”, interdisciplinary and environmental form: eloquent testimony of an audiovisual sensibility in complete renewal.

The following is a non-exhaustive and non-binding list of possible areas for reflection:

- **Theories:** the concept of original, copy and model; the culture of “plagiarism”; the practices of re-semantization and replicability; the configurations of remix and mash-up; the concept of memory; the notion of archive in digital culture; the protection of audiovisual heritage in the practices of re-use and valorisation.
- **Histories:** the cases, histories and evolutions of found footage at national and transnational level; the relevance of particular movements and historical moments; the use of audiovisual and documentary material as a historical source; historiographic reconnaissance.
- **Contexts:** the creative environments outside official film production circuits; the link with forms of counter-culture; the roots in urban and youth sub-cultures.
- **Interdisciplinarity:** relations with other arts and disciplines; the forms of exposed cinema: museum, installation, live performance.
- **Taxonomies:** found footage in avant-garde and artists’ film; practices of amateur cinema; the critical-didactic dimension; structural experiences; historical re-writing; montage film and its legacy; the case of the elegy.
- **Metalanguages and pedagogy:** the film and the video essay; criticism and hypermedia didactics.
- **The role of technology:** analogue laboratories and work on film; electronic arts, video and digital culture; museum preservation practices for film material; rediscovery of obsolete and amateur film formats; digital systems for archiving and reproducing images.
- **Case studies:** examples of artists and filmmakers; community, social and participatory experiences of found footage films.

To submit an article, we welcome abstracts (max 2,500 characters) in Italian or English, plus 5 essential bibliographic references, 5 keywords and a bio (max 5 lines). Proposals should be sent by email to the editors (rossella.catanese@uniud.it and giacomo.ravesi@uniroma3.it) by **30 June 2021**. The results of the selection will be communicated by **5 July 2021**, and the completed essays (max 40,000 characters), written in Italian or English, must be sent no later than **24 September 2021** for double-blind peer review.
References

- Maurizio Ferraris, Anima e ipad, Guanda, Parma 2011.