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Film in Ethnographic Exhibitions

Time, Space, Velocity, and Scale

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Time, Space, Velocity, and Scale

Moving Images and Regional Evocation

Mary Bouquet

The modern practices of museology – no less than those of the museum’s auxiliary discursive practice, art history (let us call this here *museography*) – are firmly rooted in an ideology of representational adequacy, wherein exhibition is presumed to ‘represent’ more or less faithfully some sort of extra-museological affairs; some ‘real’ history which, it is imagined, pre-exists its portrayal; its *re*-presentation, in exhibitionary space.

(Preziosi 1998: 488)

Introduction ¹

- ¹ The ways that film is used in, around, and by ethnographic museums today give pause for thought about whether and how historical practices associated with the medium may trickle through into contemporary usages. The question is inspired by recent scholarship on film in art, natural history and ethnographic museums (Wasson 2015; Griffiths 2013; Bell et al 2013). The scientific potential of the new medium of film for conducting research, alongside established visual and material practices of collecting, was recognized soon after its initial use in the 1898-1899 Cambridge Torres Strait Expedition. Ethnological museum directors, notably Felix von Luschan, publicly acknowledged the need for moving images to meet the demands of modern ethnology museums as early as 1903 (Fuhrmann 2013: 43). This acknowledgement would mean funding for expedition filming by museums and also by film companies, who saw the popular potential of first contact films for cinema audiences at about the same time. Indeed, cinema was seen as the “most influential medium of expression in the world” by the League of Nations in the 1920s (Gordon 2013: 190). There was a lively, if largely unacknowledged, traffic of

influences between early anthropological and popular film from 1918 and 1939. For example, Merian C. Cooper, Ernest Schoedsack and Marguerite Harrison's film *Grass* (1925), portraying Bakhtiari pastoralists' seasonal migration – crossing the powerful Karun River and high mountains to reach pastures to the north – is a sympathetic ethnographic work while being simultaneously dramatic and spectacular cinematography.

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Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FdnLOCKRdKk>

- 3 Excerpts from films specially shot for museum use, such as those made on early twentieth-century expeditions, were displayed in museum space as early as 1930: the American Museum of Natural History installed a free-standing, viewer-activated device for viewing motion pictures in the exhibition gallery itself rather than a separate room. The Dramagraph, as this apparatus was called, was innovative for using moving images in the gallery to supplement static displays; but it was also a legacy of peep-hole viewing equipment and “a forerunner of contemporary video walls, flat panel displays, and touchscreen computer interactives” (Griffiths 2013: 90).
- 4 Film has been described as part of the interwar *zeitgeist* that helped to re-enchant the world after the horror of the First World War. Part of that re-enchantment lay in allowing people to travel vicariously by watching film footage, even if they lacked the means to undertake such journeys themselves. The colonial basis of this visual economy was built into, for example, filmed representations of indigenous material culture alongside western technology. While the relationship between film and travel changed after the Second World War, through decolonization, large-scale migration, and the advent of mass tourism, some scholars argue that film was closely connected with ways of knowing and representing the world – particularly the recurrent trope of salvage anthropology – and these would persist in the post-colonial museum not least through the use of moving images.
- 5 This essay considers the uses of moving images in and around the permanent regional galleries of the National Museum of Ethnology (NME), Leiden, which were reinstalled in 1996 and 2001, and revised in 2010.² The design brief expressed the wish for a “distinct, timeless” design, which would have a “fast lane” ribbon around the world through which cross-cultural influences between the old regional divisions inherited from the institution's 165 year history would flow (Staal and De Rijk 2003: 43). The model was Perec's *Life: A User's Guide* (2008), and curators and designers were asked to work together on the project. The design rhetoric was ‘flexible’: there was to be a “complete absence of dioramas” and no naturalistic backdrops. Instead, representations, projections, screens and texts were to be used to create the dynamics of culture and contacts. A 20 metre wall was one of the additions made by architectural bureau Opera to each of the regional galleries (former hospital wards). The wall was to function as a kind of title page to the gallery: to point to certain themes in the collection and contacts between cultures. The collection itself was to be the centre of attention in showcases positioned in front of the wall. Behind the wall, there would be small short-term exhibitions dealing with current affairs. Hence, several different velocities were explicitly written into the exhibition design of 2001.

- 6 A number of revisions to the 2001 renovation were made in 2010, notably “wallpapering” – projecting loops of images onto those large walls – prompt more general questions. One may ask what the confluence of museum and cinema effects in ethnographic museum galleries and spaces – real and virtual – amounts to? Are film and cinematic effects more generally meant to introduce a direct perception of time into the space of representation – along the lines that Groys (2011) suggested? What does the moving image do, beyond its formal discursive and aesthetic qualities, to the space of exhibition through the technology of projection? And what cultural baggage does the convergence of moving image and ethnographic museum entail, given the uneasy relationship between early twentieth-century popular uses of film (adventure and expeditionary film, in particular), and the scientific aspirations of academic anthropology (see Gordon, Brown, and Bell 2013)? And how were moving images involved in those historical moments of re-writing the script for these galleries? Do expeditionary narratives of encounter live on, whether in film or by other means, in the contemporary museum context? More generally, how do such factors of scale and velocity, discussed by Wasson (2015) with regard to art museums, impinge on the spatial, material, and visual arrangements of the regional gallery today? And what happens concretely when the museum effect and the cinema effect merge in the ethnographic gallery?
- 7 The ‘museum effect’, which can transform any object into a work of art by isolating it and turning it into an object of attention (Alpers 1991), depends upon the museum script: display techniques combined with factors such as the location, architecture, the layout, order and arrangement of objects, means of communication, and visitor guidance (Noordegraaf 2004: 15). Similarly, film theorists refer to a ‘cinema effect’ which immobilizes the spectator through a combination of architectonic, technological and discursive elements that together constitute the *dispositif* (Parente and de Carvalho 2008: 43). Whereas the script of a museum or exhibition propels the audience through the spaces of exhibition where they can view objects or artworks in real time, the *dispositif* of conventional cinema seems to do the opposite. The cinema effect is ubiquitous by now: inside and outside the room, in the spaces of TV, the internet, museums and art galleries.

Uses of Film Across the Museum Spectrum: Museum and Cinema Effects, Scripts and *Dispositifs*

- 8 Script may refer to the museum as a whole as part of broader visual culture; or to the scripting of a particular exhibition, whether permanent or temporary. The distinctive temporalities of permanent vs. temporary exhibitions, or interventions, are spatialized in different kinds of exhibition galleries. Unlike film, exhibition is experienced by walking through it – and this takes time. Yet film used in exhibition – the cinema of exhibition *dispositif*, as film theorists call it – attracts and may keep the attention and slow down the pace at which the audience moves through the display space (see Bal 2007). The speeds at which objects, images, and people move in or through the spaces of permanent and temporary exhibition constitute exhibitionary velocities. These various speeds are conditioned by scale of the building, artworks, exhibitions, but also by display technologies. The complexity of these interconnected times, spaces, speeds, and scales has a bearing on the sense of self that comes into being through engagement in public culture. The relatively large size of artworks commissioned for the Tate Modern Turbine Hall, London, in the former Unilever Series, for instance, often led to unprecedented

forms of public engagement: climbing up, sliding down, lying down, stepping across, watching analogue film, and joining in performance pieces broke new ground in the museum world (Rees Leahy 2010). In the debate about the future of ethnographic museums (Harris and O'Hanlon 2013), some argue that museums have become contact zones (Clifford 1998), others that they are marked by frictions (Karp et al. 2006), or have become conflict zones (Singh 2015). In all cases, these museums and their contents have come to matter to different people for a range of reasons. At the same time, ethnographic museums are part of a wider museumscape where difference, diversity and citizenship are being reconfigured in much broader constellations (Macdonald 2016).

- 9 In trying to understand how film might be involved in that process in ethnographic museums, it is therefore instructive to look briefly at how it is (and is not) used in museum scripts more broadly. The use of film in museums goes back almost a century: in American art museums, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, films were specially produced in the 1920s with the aim of slowing down the visit, directing the gaze, enlarging small objects, and taming the vastness of the museum's galleries, and the accompanying risk of museum fatigue, by creating museum films of different wings. "Film was imbued with the ability to spectacularize science, to dramatize nature, and to enliven art" (Wasson 2015: 608). Nowadays many museums make extensive use of film on their websites, as well as in their exhibition galleries – thereby stretching their reach still further. Several Dutch examples help to make this point. Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam was the first museum in the Netherlands to offer its own video channel – ArtTube – in 2009. Since 2012, Boijmans has been working with several other modern art museums (Stedelijk Museum and EYE Filmmuseum, Amsterdam, De Pont, Tilburg, Haags Gemeentemuseum and Belgium on a joint version of the ARTtube channel and has some 25 current partners.³ Visitors can discover and explore the videos for themselves, or opt to be inspired by one of the curators. Collectively, the intention seems to be, smaller municipal art museums can increase their impact and competitive standing by joining forces in the virtual realm. The virtual work of the ARTtube, in using video to demonstrate the interest, depth and strength of similar work by partner museums, significantly expands museum space and time 'on the ground' thereby enabling smaller institutions to increase their volume, both individually and collectively.
- 10 The Amsterdam Rijksmuseum's website emphasizes its Rijksstudio, into which you can "dive", "search", and "discover the possibilities of the masterpieces" through which to "create your own Rijksstudio" (see Internet Source 4). This playful, interactive approach to collections, provides a contemporary way of bringing the overpowering experience of the reopened Rijksmuseum (2013) to intelligible proportions. As Wasson observes, "[s]een through the instantaneous point-and-click logics of the World Wide Web, the museum is less a monumental mausoleum than a small, quaint moving postcard; a networked, digital snow-globe" (2015: 614). The documentary film, *Het Nieuwe Rijksmuseum (The New Rijksmuseum)*, about the decade-long renovation process, with setbacks and reflection included, is a narrative of epic proportions.⁴

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Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QFm8RLsQ4ss>

- 12 It expands the museum's script cinematically through its institutionally reflexive stance. This usage contrasts with the somewhat parsimonious presence of film as an object of display in the twentieth-century sections of the Rijksmuseum permanent exhibitions. No film footage accompanies the facial plaster casts of Nias Islanders made by physical anthropologist F. W. Kleiweg de Zwaan in 1910, which visualize and narrate the story of Dutch colonial expansion in the early twentieth century. The interpretation of Dutch colonialism has been assigned to the National Museum of World Cultures (as the Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, and the Africa Museum, Berg-en-Dal, have become collectively known since the 2014 merger).
- 13 Teylers Museum, Haarlem, which opened in 1784, is the oldest in the Netherlands and famous for the Oval Room at its heart. The museum has an introductory movie showing on a large flatscreen in its café, as well as a range of engaging films on its website and YouTube (see Bouquet 2012, Ch. 1), such as a time lapse recording of the restoration of the central piece of Oval Room furniture in 2010, again set to music.⁵ This restrained way of using film on site and in the virtual realities at Teylers Museum contrasts with the more elaborated introductory films and animations on the (renewed) website that go to some lengths to convey that this museum really is worth visiting and fun.
- 14 Museum scripts in the 2000s combine the rhetoric of autonomy ("Choose your own film / collection!"), with the leisure ideal ("Have Fun!"), with the metaphorical transparency ("Glimpse behind the scenes!"), in a glorious mix of Espresso Coffee Bars / exclusive dining opportunities and well-stocked gift shops – all catering to the experience economy and media ecology as the state withdraws its financial support from many areas of the cultural sector. If it still makes sense to talk about scripts under these circumstances, then these are scripts that live alongside and interweave with one another – sometimes accessed remotely from behind a stationary computer screen, sometimes on the move via a tiny mobile telephone, and as a physical site to be visited, photographed, fb'd, tweeted, instagrammed – all feeding back into the vast flows of information circulating among people: sometimes sitting next to one another, sometimes on opposite sides of the planet.

Uses of Film in Ethnographic Exhibitions and Museums

- 15 Film is often used in ethnographic exhibitions to assist public understanding of a specific concept, such as indigenous Australian understandings of 'country'; it may also be used to create an historical framework for a particular phenomenon that might otherwise risk appearing 'timeless'; and it can provide direct insight into an activity, such as basket-making, from the artist's perspective. These three usages were present in the 2015 BP Exhibition *Indigenous Australia. Enduring Civilization*, co-organized by the National Museum of Australia (NMA) and the British Museum (BM). Three digital media pieces were positioned at the start, in the middle, and at the end of the exhibition. The film about country on three screens was based on context footage shot by NMA members when interviewing community members looking at images from the BM collection. "These scenes (often just static shots with very little movement) immediately came to mind when the idea of a film of country came up" (Rachael Murphy, personal communication, 17 August 2015). In order to show the diversity of Australian landscapes, further film was sourced elsewhere including existing ethnographic film. The second digital media piece

showed urban experience of civil rights movements (the South African anti-Apartheid and American civil rights movements) according to a timeline and linking to Indigenous Australian history. Finally, the exhibition ended with a traditional basket made by the artist Abe Muriata, displayed with a filmed interview next to it.

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Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aeFt8jXzMmU>

- 17 Such current uses of film in temporary exhibitions seem far removed from what can be done with the historical genre of colonial expeditionary film. The Dutch Colonial Institute was well aware of the value of film for supporting its activities in the first half of the twentieth century (Swaving 2013). These collections were put into storage after Indonesian independence in 1949, when the task of the Tropenmuseum was redefined as furthering public understanding of development cooperation throughout the tropical world. Film, as part of the colonial collection, was barely considered to have any authentic ethnological origin or value (Van Dijk and Legêne 2011: 15). In this respect, film resembled other parts of the colonial collection, such as models, furniture, clothing, food samples, and historical photographs. The cinematic images that had played such a significant role in expanding public knowledge of the colonies at home after 1910, and had almost been trashed in the 1970s, came to be seen as valuable historical sources again in the 1990s.
- 18 Film footage of schools in Indonesia emphasizes the benefits of education for the colonized as the centerpiece of Dutch Ethical Policy around 1900. The popular genre of expeditionary film, shot in the decade 1919–1929 fed imaginings about ‘first contact’ with remote populations as well as serving scientific purposes (Bell et al. 2013). Kleiweg de Zwaan’s physical anthropology collection from Bali (1939) produced photographs as well as filmed and sketched measurements: these were later channelled into public display in the shape of wax mannequins (Van Dijk and Legêne, 2011: 105). This material is now preserved and digitalized by the EYE Film Institute in Amsterdam.
- 19 When the colonial collection was reactivated in the 1990s, film and photography were an integral part of the process. These film sources are extensively used in the Tropenmuseum’s permanent exhibition, *Eastward Bound!* (opened in 2003), to visualize different aspects of colonial history in the former Dutch East Indies. Films ranging from schooling as a manifestation of Ethical Policy, to expeditionary film, to home movies, to colonial architecture and infrastructural works, are shown on flat screens integrated into the exhibition as historical documents. As such, they help to anchor the characters dramatized in the Colonial Theatre in some kind of historical reality, although the narrative transformations going on between literature, cinema, museums and photography, may be unspecified. Film arguably contributes to “ensure that voices from the locations where the objects originated are increasingly heard in the metropole” (Pattynama 2011). However, there are no guarantees about how this complex performance of the material will be interpreted (Bouquet 2015).

Figure 1: Charles Le Roux in his role as leader of the Scientific Expedition to the Wissel Lakes in 1939, with original photographs taken in New Guinea as backdrop.

Photo by Mary Bouquet.

- 20 The approach to museum script and the place of film in it taken by the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden is rather different.

Figure 2: The expedition truck parked outside the Research Centre for Material Culture, Leiden, 2017.

Photo by Mary Bouquet.

Expedition, Wallpaper, and the Uses of Film in Leiden

Celluloid, electronic, and digital imagery are often highlighted elements of visits to contemporary museums, beginning in entryways and leading us through the galleries and learning centers, cafeterias and gift shops (Wasson 2015: 604).

- 21 A heavy duty truck is one of the first objects encountered just inside the grounds of the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden: casually parked alongside the building that houses the Research Center for Material Culture, it looks as though it might be driven away at any moment. Closer inspection reveals the words “on expedition” (op expeditie) painted on the side of the vehicle, which also features photographs of faraway people, landscapes and buildings. There are many other things to catch the eye and the imagination in the precincts of the museum – from a North American totem pole to the Maori *Wakas* (canoes), to Remy Jungerman’s ‘Yellow Home’ (a flattened toad with satellite dishes and complex wiring that disappears into the museum façade – metaphor for the pitfalls that await the migrant). Once inside the rectangular entrance foyer, though, moving images projected on wall-filling screens at each end – above the seating, and behind a piece of sculpture, are what set the scene:

Figure 3: Projected images in the entrance hall, National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden.

Photo by Mary Bouquet.

- 22 Moving images are used extensively throughout the museum, in non-exhibition spaces as well as in the exhibition halls. Downstairs in the basement, where lockers and restrooms are located, there is a short film depicting two young friends, Marius and Jasper, arriving back from an expedition to gather magical forces that have been tattooed onto their bodies and that will protect them from (unspecified) attacks. The truck in the film is none other than the vehicle encountered by the gate. Marius and Jasper invite (youthful) viewers to join the museum's World Club. The same film is featured on the museum website and accessible via YouTube (see Internet Sources 6 and 7). This is the expanded ethnographic museum in action, set out like a treasure hunt.

Figure 4: Film projection in the museum basement.

Photo by Mary Bouquet.

23 This media file cannot be displayed. Please refer to the online document <http://journals.openedition.org/anthrovision/3240>

Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVyVQ-CH5VE>

24 On the dividing wall between the restaurant and the shop, still sequences are projected, including *waka* ceremonial performed by Maori rowers and members of the Leiden University Royal Rowing Club Njord (Internet Source 8).

Figure 5: Film as part of relaxation in the museum café.

Photo by Mary Bouquet.

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Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTNFsInUJWI> (0.25 – 2.18)

- 26 The projection of moving images in the regional galleries dates from 2010 when the first major revision of the 2001 refurbishment took place. There are three permanent regional exhibition galleries – Indonesia, Asia, and Africa – on the ground floor, in addition to the temporary exhibition gallery, museum lounge, café, and shop; and five on the first floor – Oceania, China, Japan and Korea, the North Pole area and North America, and Central and South America. The 20 metre, rough-surfaced concrete walls, together with the pillars in the galleries, were a structural feature dating from the 2001 renovation of the former nineteenth-century hospital building, and they support the building. The initial uses of the wall, both structural and as a title page, were augmented in 2010 by repurposing as a screen. The use of the wall for projecting moving images since 2010 is referred to by museum staff as “wallpapering”, and was implemented in response to visitor research expressing the wish for people to be brought into the exhibition. Wallpaper is an interesting term in the context of the Leiden walls: ‘*wallpaper* (noun)’ refers to “thick, often decorative, paper used for covering the walls and sometimes the ceilings of a room”, and ‘*wallpaper* (noun) computer’ refers to “a design or image you can choose to have as a background (= behind the main information) on a screen of your computer or mobile phone.” (*Cambridge Dictionary*, Internet Source 9). While the term wallpaper seems to be talking about a simple domestic wish to decorate the house, the computer-savvy

sense of choosing to make images appear on the main screen of a computer introduces a more complex set of connotations.

- 27 While the decision to add “wallpaper” to the new gallery walls is explained as providing the atmosphere of a culture, rather than being programmatic, it clearly did require an audio-visual program. The whole sequence with a soundscape was made by a (now retired) museum employee, Herman de Boer. The same recipe was used for each gallery: very high resolution single pictures, sequences, or film footage were used. Some images were purchased, for example, from the *National Geographic*; some was shot on location in a collaboration between the photographer and the respective curator. There are six beamers per wall and a wall plinth between the beamers so that they do not cast a shadow when you stand up close to the wall. Film on this scale is intended to provide the context of different regions, adding to the exhibition: wallpaper is therefore an understatement. Loops of 5 to 10 minutes were composed with the input of small groups of museum staff to verify the representativeness of the film choices, and the pace – which should not be too fast or too slow.

Figure 6: Regional gallery “wallpaper” on the new 2001 wall, repurposed in 2010 – a portrait series in Oceania.

Photo by Mary Bouquet.

Figure 7: The Waka film shown at the end of the second floor corridor adjacent to the Oceania gallery entrance.

In the foreground, artist Roy Villevoe's Asmat T-shirts.

Photo by Mary Bouquet.

- 28 Film is also used to draw people on or further into museum spaces. The Oceania gallery is (re)located on the second floor wing (beyond the Japan and Korea, and the China galleries), at the end of a long corridor. A medium-sized screen positioned at the end of this corridor, showing a film about how the *Waka* canoes came to be in Leiden, attracts attention and brings the visitor to the adjacent gallery entrance. To the right of the screen, opposite the entrance to the gallery, there is a 9 metre wall built into the hallway, comprising a map of Oceania illuminated in a deep turquoise blue. Canoe models are positioned in Plexiglass boxes that extrude imperceptibly from the surface of map; a Micronesian stick map provides an indigenous way of navigating the ocean; and there is an introductory text. This museological cluster shows another imaginative combination that can be made with a differently scaled wall, film, map, and collection *outside* the main gallery. It is interesting to note that Oceania's hallway wall follows Opera's original design proposal for the new wall in Indonesia, realized in 2001, which consists of a large map with routes; six boat models installed across the upper and right-hand side of the map; and an introductory text panel to the lower right. Visualizations of the original design proposal for Indonesia are reproduced in Staal and De Rijk (2003: 82-83). Exactly this model for the large wall would be transformed in Indonesia, as in all the other galleries, in 2010 by means of wallpapering.

Figure 8: The wall opposite the entrance to the Oceania gallery, with boat models.

Photo by Mary Bouquet.

- 29 The effects of the wall-as-map-plus-selected-artefacts-and-introductory-text (with moving images on a small screen to one side) and the wallpapered wall are easily appreciated by stepping inside the darkened Oceania hall. Asmat, Komoro, Sepik and other carvings standing on the plinth are dramatically silhouetted and illuminated against the images projected on the long wall behind them. Five full face portraits distributed across the split screen fade after some moments into a mountainous landscape occupying the entire width of the screen. Another set of portraits shows a group of people, shot from further away so that their decorated upper torsos and regalia are visible. Caught as they appear to move across the screen together in a ceremonial way, only one person is looking into the camera lens. Most of the pictures are in colour; some are in black and white. There are coastal and seascape variations on the landscape theme: a lighthouse is plainly visible in one, sea-level views of breaking waves alternate with elevated views onto bays and islands. And there is the sound of the sea. A number of small and discretely positioned touch screens, as well as text boards, identify and offer further information on the place of specific artefacts in culture contact.

Figure 9: Regional gallery “wallpaper” on the new 2001 wall, repurposed in 2010 – a landscape panorama in Oceania.

Photo by Mary Bouquet.

- 30 The projection illuminates the wall as well as filling it with images, while spotlighting picks out the objects displayed before it. The combined effect resembles and elaborates on earlier visual technologies: the space becomes a subtle blend of panorama, diorama and cinema. When landscapes are projected, the museum effect of the shields and canoe prows comes closest to a panorama – viewed from the shadows of a veranda. The red ochre colours of many of the exhibited pieces contrast dramatically with the predominantly green and blue palette of the landscape. When people’s faces dominate the big picture, the objects miniaturize, with vertically positioned pieces apparently dividing the screen and sometimes even framing the portraits. Some of galleries (Oceania and North America) include seating that runs (part of) the length of the gallery opposite the 2001 wall, accentuating the cinematic effect. The seating affords the wandering visitor with a place to rest and so to immerse themselves in the spectacle unfolding in the room. Museum and cinema effects reinforce one another, ebbing and flowing through gallery space according to the scale of the images projected and pace of their movement. The circularity of the looping destroys the illusion of linear time, transforming it into circular time, in time-based artworks (see Groys 2011: 339).

Figure 10: Film projections on the large walls of the North America and Arctic gallery.

Photo by Mary Bouquet.

- 31 Similar projection loops are found on the 20 metre walls of all the other regional galleries: vast icy landscapes alternate with arid deserts; cliff dwellings are interlarded with groups of people; pilgrimage sites with street scenes; mountain routes with waterways; landscape and portrait, sometimes full screen, sometimes split screen; black and white with colour. And always in combination with the display cases positioned in the centre of the room (as explained for Oceania), and with the use of smaller scale screens, some interactive.
- 32 Other velocities and scales of moving picture are systematically incorporated into the regional galleries, thereby establishing a contrast with what might be termed the generic time of the large-scale, looped, projections on the walls. The medium-sized screens are used to project events in historical time captured in documentary film: the expeditionary adventure genre.

Figure 11: Replica of the aluminium cage, used in the Tellem expedition.

The film projection shows the spherical cage designed by architect Herman Haan to hoist expedition members up the cliff face to examine the Tellem burial caves; a replica of the cage is suspended in the proximity of the projection in the African Gallery.

Photo by Mary Bouquet.

- 33 This second speed of exhibition is exemplified by film clips of the 1964 *Tellem, Report of an Expedition*, projected in one corner of the Africa gallery, next to a replica of architect Herman Haan's cage constructed to explore the cliff dwellings of the original inhabitants of the Dogon cliffs, Mali. A reproduction of the cage hangs in the museum next to a medium-sized projection screen. The film clips used are fully credited in the exhibition, and include shots of the cage swinging up the cliff.

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Video link: <https://vimeo.com/58814467>

- 35 The Tellem Expedition was filmed by the Dutch broadcasting company NCRV, with live broadcasts along the way: in a VPRO broadcast, the Tellem expedition was compared to the Beagle expedition, then following in Darwin's footsteps.

36 This media file cannot be displayed. Please refer to the online document <http://journals.openedition.org/anthrovision/3240>

Video link: https://www.vpro.nl/speel~NPS_1132923~de-tellem-expeditie-schedels-meten-in-afrika~.html

- 37 The expedition left Rotterdam on 7 January 1964 on a 7000 km journey. When they got stranded on the Morocco / Algerian border, it was an adventure – breaking news. Herman Haan had reconnoitered the Dogon cliff in 1960, and there were five subsequent Dutch expeditions, making this an area of national expertise. Haan was a dashing character – an architect and amateur archaeologist. Once his cage was assembled, he was the first to be hoisted up the cliff to look into a Tellem cave. This adventure was reported in the media as looking into the secrets of the cliff. The scientific justification of the expedition was an attempt to trace the kinship between the human remains of the Tellem in the caves and contemporary Dogon. The anthropometrical measuring techniques that feature in the full-length film are not shown in the clips that form the loop shown in the African gallery.
- 38 Partly an exciting boys’ adventure, partly scientific research, the Tellem exhibit encapsulates exploration and adventure continuing as a popular genre after the Second World War – and shows them to be firmly woven into the fabric of the museum today. The historical time of events, dates, names, and places pace the documentary film fragment, linked through its juxtaposition with a specific object on display, make a story from the past materialize selectively in the gallery present tense. The Tellem expedition narrative corresponds with Arnold’s (2015: 320) perceptive remarks about an “eagerness to keep things alert and on the move” that has impacted permanent displays as part of the new museology. Notwithstanding the impact of new social media, the virtual translation of every activity, and the new paradigm of the gallery as a place to catalyse experiences, the re-creation of a story such as the Tellem expedition by combining various media reinforces the pleasure and value of encountering special things in designated physical places. The use of such looped documentary film fragments in the regional gallery may be instrumental in creating the kind of rupture with historical time (cf. Groys 2011) for which such museums and their exhibitions have been criticized.
- 39 The original Opera plan was for short-term exhibitions dealing with current affairs to take place behind the long walls in the regional galleries. With an entire ground floor wing now dedicated to temporary exhibitions, that plan has been somewhat diluted. Sometimes audio-visual recordings made for temporary exhibitions can be reused for wallpapering (as was the case with the 2015 *Geisha* exhibition.) The passage of moving images from temporary to permanent exhibition usages is just one of permutation of the multimedia museum. Their shift into the smart phone is another – beyond the scope of this article (but see Janine Prins, this volume).

Conclusion

- 40 The ubiquity of film in museums is part of a more general transformation whereby spectacle and popular culture are used to attract and retain audience attention. The link between film and ethnographic museums goes back to the early 20th century, when the popular and commercial, as well as educational, potential of the medium was established. Film is deeply embedded in a contemporary world system of cultures that many ethnographic museums now realize through their exhibition galleries. Film is also used on websites and through YouTube channels to attract attention and draw people into the physical space of the museum. The National Museum of World Cultures (NMWC) mission states that it is “about people”, emphasizing how people worldwide face the same questions about life and are linked by story-telling practices that cover a range of

common themes (see Mission in Internet Source 10). Film is often intended to bring artefacts “to life”, and bring the “people” associated with them into the space of representation, thereby rendering them visible to the spectator.

- 41 In so doing, film introduces a set of dynamics that partly contradict those of museum time and space: cinema immobilizes the ‘supine’ viewer whereas the museum propels him or her through its exhibitionary spaces ‘upright and peripatetic’ as Elsaesser (2018) puts it. The illuminated screen in contemporary museums both attracts (from a distance) and holds attention (from close up), in ways that work with the architecture of the museum – for example, by the positioning of a series of screens of various sizes through space. The wallpaper euphemism voiced by NME professionals to refer to the 2010 customization of the 2001 walls as projection surfaces for moving images deserves consideration as part of what might be termed a world system of cultures mediated across differently sized and positioned screens.
- 42 Wallpaper sounds innocent enough: it evokes domestic interior decoration of an atmospheric order. Wallpapering the regional galleries suggests little more than making the visitor feel at home: an updated version of the “ideal script” of early 20th century art museum reformers (Noordegraaf 2004). But how would generalized images of alterity make the viewer feel at home? Perhaps only in the context of travel?
- 43 The 2001 renovation, and its 2010 revision, were part of the longer-term *verzelfstanding* Dutch national museums. *Verzelfstanding* took a distinctive course in the Netherlands from 1988 to 1995 (Brinkman 2015). It meant museums being able to manage their own affairs *vis-à-vis* government: taking responsibility for the upkeep of buildings and depots, collection management, registration and conservation, for the organization itself, and being accountable for their actions. *Verzelfstanding* initially took place in a subsidy setting: indeed, the NME benefitted from 17,4 million guilders through the Delta Plan in 1990. *Verzelfstanding* did, however, entail reorganization and the ascendancy of managerial in relation to professional (curatorial) positions and functions. The shift in accountability impacted long-established hierarchies and ways of doing things.
- 44 Wallpapering and the “adventure turn” in museum narrative are both outcomes of and reactions to the new style management of museums after they took control of their own affairs. Responsibility towards, and legitimation in the name of, “the public” were vital components of *verzelfstanding*. Museums, as publicly funded institutions, had to be accessible to their audiences. This involved making them attractive to that public, and especially to children, and taking public criticism and suggestions seriously. When the NME public expressed a wish for “more people” in the new regional galleries, film and moving images were seen as a fitting response by the museum staff. Customizing existing walls for use as projection surfaces exemplifies the museum taking heed of its public’s wishes, in a smart way. Not only “more people” but also “more places” are projected in looped sequences of large-scale, generic, moving images on the 20 meter wall surface. This generic evocation of people and place in the regional galleries converges, on the one hand, with a playful pedagogy of expedition, complete with a trucks, passports, and daring characters, which forms part of the NMWC’s summer program for children. Exploring the museum of world cultures as a journey, with narratives of cultures, exchanges, vivid people and landscapes, also construes travel as a central value of the global community.

- 45 On the other hand, the significant role of film and, more specifically, moving images on different scales, at several speeds, of diverse types, and with distinctive time durations, creates exhibitionary complexity. The effect of introducing generic, large-scale, moving images, on the loop, in the space of exhibition (and outside it), may help to attract (and hence guide) visitor attention, and to hold that attention. It may allow time for associations (such as that between the truck outside and the film in the basement) to be made, or “discovered” (to use the adventure idiom). But slowing the hurrying visitor down may also create uncertainties as they move to the medium-sized and small screens (“what am I seeing?”); or hesitation (“is the truck in the basement film the same one I saw outside?”); or indecision (“shall I watch this documentary film fragment, if I have to stand, rather than sit?”); or doubt (“is this expeditionary cage the original, or a copy?”).
- 46 By repeating the same recipe in each regional gallery, complexity becomes intelligible – assisting the viewer’s passage around the world. Learning about people, common life questions and story-telling practices is simultaneously learning how to travel. Wallpaper is thus one strand of a multi-layered, differentiated use of the moving image in the museum which (it was thought) would enable the museum to compete (for visitors) with similar attractions. After the financial crisis of 2008, government funding reductions for the cultural sector, and subsequent merging into the National Museum of World Cultures in 2014, such commercial considerations weighed significantly.
- 47 What other purpose could this multi-layered and looping regional evocation have in a world where travel itself is cheap and the faraway accessible? The regional galleries are a single dimension of the other fundamental activities of the museum as a contact zone. The very obsolescence, understood in the critical sense of heroic resistance to relentless acceleration, proposed by Elsaesser (2018), may be a way of anchoring contemporary experiences of the global networked jumble into something local, intelligible, graspable, which can then be criticized and duly revised.

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NOTES

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2. OD 205 architectuur bv were responsible for the structural plan for the renovation, 1993-2001; Frans Bevers and Lies Willers of Opera were commissioned for the (interior) design in 1996. NME, moreover published an account of “the project’s progress, from beginning to end” in 2003 (Engelsman 2003: 23).

3. See Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, New website for ARTtube, Internet Source 2, and Launch of the new ARTtube, Internet Source 3.

4. Oeke Hoogendijk’s acclaimed documentary has been given special screenings, broadcast on television, and is for sale in the Rijksmuseum shop. See Filmography.

5. The time lapse recording of the restoration of the central table of the Oval Room, see Teylers Museum, Internet source 5. The Instrument Room video (described in Bouquet 2012: 14, 15, 190, Note 4), has been removed from the 2017 version of Teylers website. The constant revamping of websites underscores the problem of losses, in terms of digital heritage, at an ever faster rate.

ABSTRACTS

The uses of film across the museum spectrum date back to the early 20th century. Film was and is used in art and science museums variously to enliven, spectacularize and dramatize exhibitions. The ways film is used in ethnographic museums today raise questions about whether and how historical practices associated with the medium may percolate through into the present. This article examines a particular use of film dating from the first decade of the 21st century in the semi-permanent regional galleries of the Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden, The Netherlands. The refurbished museum reopened in 2001 with a structural addition of 20 meter walls in each regional gallery, where they functioned as title pages to the new museum script, helping to form a ribbon round the world. The walls were repurposed in 2010 by projecting loops of moving images – portraits and landscapes – in ways resembling panorama, diorama and cinema.

L'utilisation des films dans l'ensemble du spectre muséal remonte au début du XX^e siècle. Le cinéma a été et est toujours utilisé dans les musées d'art et de sciences pour animer, dramatiser et rendre spectaculaire des expositions. La façon dont le film est utilisé dans les musées ethnographiques d'aujourd'hui soulève la question de savoir si et comment les pratiques historiques associées à ce médium peuvent s'infiltrer dans le présent. Cet article examine une utilisation particulière de films datant de la première décennie du XXI^e siècle dans les galeries régionales semi-permanentes du Musée Volkenkunde de Leiden, aux Pays-Bas. Le musée rénové a rouvert ses portes en 2001 avec un ajout structurel de 20 mètres de murs dans chaque galerie régionale, où ils ont servi de pages de titre à la nouvelle écriture du musée, contribuant ainsi à former un ruban dans le monde entier. Les murs ont été réaménagés en 2010 en projetant des

boucles d'images en mouvement - portraits et paysages - d'une manière qui ressemble au panorama, au diorama et au cinéma.

Los usos de películas en el sector museístico se remontan a principios del siglo XX. Las películas se utilizaban y se utilizan en los museos de arte y ciencias de diferentes maneras para dinamizar, espectacularizar y dramatizar las exposiciones. Las maneras de utilizar las películas en los museos etnográficos hoy en día plantean preguntas sobre si las prácticas históricas asociadas al medio llegan hasta el presente y cómo lo hacen. En este artículo se analiza un uso concreto de las películas que data de la primera década del siglo XXI en las galerías regionales semipermanentes del museo Volkenkunde de Leiden, en los Países Bajos. El museo renovado volvió a abrir sus puertas en 2001 con la incorporación estructural de unos muros de 20 metros en cada galería regional que funcionaban como portadas del guion del nuevo museo y ayudaban a crear un lazo alrededor del mundo. Los muros se reconvirtieron en 2010 con la proyección en bucle de imágenes en movimiento —retratos y paisajes— de maneras parecidas al panorama, el diorama y el cine.

INDEX

Mots-clés: script, dispositif, effet muséal, effet cinématographique, expédition, papier peint, exposition

Palabras claves: guion, dispositivo, efecto museístico, efecto cinematográfico, expedición, fondo de pantalla, exposición

Keywords: script, dispositif, museum effect, cinematic effect, expedition, wallpaper, exhibition

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