Hybrid

Revue des arts et médiations humaines

4 | 2017

Malaise dans la représentation

Châteaux andalous and Shoot in the Back: The films of Lionel Soukaz as abject representation

Florian Grandena and Pascal Gagné

Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/hybrid/896>

DOI: 10.4000/hybrid.896

ISSN: 2276-3538

This article is a translation of:

Châteaux andalous et Shoot in the Back : le cinéma de Lionel Soukaz comme représentation abjecte -

URL : <https://journals.openedition.org/hybrid/888> [fr]

Publisher

Presses universitaires de Vincennes

Electronic reference

Florian Grandena and Pascal Gagné, "*Châteaux andalous and Shoot in the Back: The films of Lionel Soukaz as abject representation*", *Hybrid* [Online], 4 | 2017, Online since 04 September 2017, connection on 13 April 2022. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/hybrid/896> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/hybrid.896>

This text was automatically generated on 13 April 2022.

Revue Hybrid

Châteaux andalous and Shoot in the Back: The films of Lionel Soukaz as abject representation

Florian Grandena and Pascal Gagné

“The unique, is a radical move, the mighty blow,
the Eucharistic euphoria of inner experiences,
the poetry that irks polite society.”¹

- 1 When Lionel Soukaz is asked why he provokes, he answers: “When you get shit all day from others, you tend to give it back. [...] They forbade us from living our lives so we were prepared to do anything in order to exist. For example, in my film *Ixe* I tackle the Pope on purpose. The Pope condemned homosexuality. Then he condemned condoms, and we all saw the damage it caused in Africa and in other Catholic countries. I attack people I perceive to be politically evil.”²
- 2 His work as a director rarely leaves his audience unmoved: it grabs the viewer and demands a reaction. In “Drague et amour. Sur *www.webcam* de Lionel Soukaz,” Olivier Neveux relates an incident that happened after the film in question was screened in front of an audience of academics and conference goers in December 2009 at a seminar on transgression: certain members of the academic clique took immediate umbrage at the relatively banal images of gay internet users, some naked, some masturbating, searching for a hook-up online: “It was comical, no thought went into the complaints, it was as if rupture and transgression should always remain theoretical.”³ Evidently, cinema that comes from the margins is not always easy to watch – be it gay, pornographic or experimental.
- 3 It would be too easy to mock this “tolerant” attitude that takes offence when the vulgar is actually shown rather than conceptualised. While it is not rare to come across this type of reaction with regard to Lionel Soukaz’s work, (Olivier Neveux tells of a similar incident six years previously after a screening of another of his films, *Le Sexe des anges*), we can nevertheless question the reason or reasons for the rejection of films that, in our opinion, merely depict the banal, fun side of sexuality, providing beautiful,

imperfect, gay bodies of varying ages and sizes, with short periods of time and space to act as objects of desire through the medium of a webcam for example... But is this too much to take for liberal individuals who tend to tolerate homosexuality as John Locke (1689) tolerated the proliferation of false religions, with the exception of atheism? It means we only support diversity through the forced but generous acceptance of quirks and attitudes that are fundamentally blameworthy, on the pretext that censorship might incite something much worse: violence against social order. It is difficult to see this tolerance as anything but yet another strategy to control the docile homosexual body, it is acceptable on condition that it remains confined to the literal and symbolic place assigned to it by the majority. A gap to be filled as this identity is made up of the shame of stigma.⁴

- 4 In today's world, controlling the homosexual body, as we mentioned above, perfectly encapsulates the paranoid, even libidinous fantasies of a number of opposing or complementary fringes of society: the fantasy of the muscle-bound, hairless, naked body. The body is constantly being reframed as a surface onto which desires are projected. But it must be said, the gay physique has its uses: it is constantly exposed, flattering libidos, complying with or contravening the aesthetic norms of health and youth, or simply keeping the audience entertained by doing what is not expected of it. Its very reification keeps it under control, reduced to appearing in glossy magazines or the clearly limited stage set of a seminar or television studio. It is hard to see this new level of hypervisibility⁵ of the homosexual body as anything but yet another form of submission to a system that aims to normalize and neutralize an identity that defines itself less according to militant politics, and more according to the effects of power.
- 5 However, at times, as we see in the films of Lionel Soukaz, the individual can attempt to re-appropriate control of the self through images and self-made films. Is it not when the homosexual depicts his own body, desires, and his own manifestations on his own terms that he becomes intolerable, as, in doing so, he manages to escape the enforced docility of the dominant group and its accepted decorum, the basic cement of bourgeois thought? Isn't it true, to some extent, that Soukaz's work fights against the urge to channel and control by using transgressive tactics? He chooses to film scenes of marginal practices and forbidden acts such as taking heroin and gay sex, as he sees cinema as a release valve for social malaise, a form of catharsis inherent in escape: "Cinema is a medium, a way of connecting with others. I use it to unload my greatest secrets, by which I mean my homosexuality."⁶
- 6 As Michael Warner⁷ suggests, we must be wary of the gay move toward normalcy for a culture that, from the very beginning, took a stance that was counter-public. Today, gay culture is seen to be fulfilled *strictly speaking* in a domestic framework: inside a private home, a closed-off and discreet place, away from prying eyes.⁸ By reinforcing this traditional but unbalanced dichotomy, the decorum strategy is an attempt to direct homosexuality toward other real or virtual sites that have been rendered inoffensive. Representation is, as a result, frequently used in order to domesticate the private in public, but it becomes deeply obscene when the public area is revealed. The ideological construction of private intimacy constitutes the repressive projection of a hetero-normative idea of which we must be wary, as carnal contact is already mediated by publics. The banning of sex in the public space always betrays a privilege⁹.
- 7 By practising in certain spaces, may they be real or virtual that are allotted to them by the hetero-centrist majority, *gay users* must resort to precise tactics, that is to say to

“the calculated action that determines the absence of their own in order to emancipate themselves [...]. The only place available to the tactic is that of the other. So it must use the playing field that is imposed by the law of a foreign authority.”¹⁰ With regard to the work in question, these tactics involve constant, even compulsive or obsessive filming/self-filming of everyday life in all its unshowability, ugliness, repulsiveness, but also all its fun and touching aspects.¹¹

- 8 Thus Lionel Soukaz’s work makes both the gay body and the “own place” it frequents abject, as is suggested by our reading of the films *Châteaux andalous* and *Shoot in the Back*. In the former, the director travels across the country in a bus with his lover of the moment who masturbates in the coach; as does the cameraman. Crescendo: we move in for a close-up shot of someone’s penis. The scenes alternate between the men touching and the Spanish countryside. *Shoot in the Back* is also filmed in sequence, but this time in one long shot. It depicts an anus defecating, fixed on film, authentic, incessant. It is brutal art, untouched by editing.
- 9 The gay bodies represented here were seen to be abject in the context of the screenings described at the start of this article. They are not *de facto*, meaning they do not take into account the audience and its place in an institution such as a university or a conference screening. We must question the notions of tolerance jeopardized by abject representations – as both libidinous expressions and as a film project. The dual status of representation as abjection contaminates the gaze of this timid audience, disgusted by this experience of an almost complicit promiscuity.¹²

fig. 1

Lionel Soukaz on YouTube.

Crédits © Lionel Soukaz

- 10 The pornographic aesthetic that develops through the repetition of radical gestures is a subversive film tactic: it invites us to rethink the notion of the abject through the de-sublimation of the body, when it is represented in a graphic way. These two films, chosen from a vast corpus of “filth,” provide a contrast between two mirrored taboos, the penis and the anus. In fact, the critical reception of these films by their audience

brings up the problem of representation that tolerates difference but in no way accepts it. This reaction typifies a kind of censorship in denial, it feels comfortable with a body that is confined and marginalised to stereotypes, with control as the end product. The shift produced by the camera of Lionel Soukaz emancipates us from the clichés of the gay body – beautiful, healthy and clean, comic and ridiculous. His ironic take on the reification of homosexual identity is affirmed by the defiance of his methods and the way he records his own body in sharp detail, with a certain realism thrown in.

***Châteaux andalous*: the de-sublimation of a graphic image**

- 11 There is something utopian about *Châteaux andalous* (5'47), not just the title, an obvious nod to the French expression “châteaux en Espagne” (but also to Luis Buñuel’s surrealist film *Un chien andalou*, 1929, but in the way it perpetuates the fantasy of a homosexuality that was historically repressed but impossible to keep hidden, ignoring decorum in spaces generally used in a “normal” way. In short, a de-sublimated sexual orientation. While Freud (1905) saw sublimation as the transfer of impulses through the creation of and investment in socially valorised objects, de-sublimation inverts the relationship between sexuality and morality; it exposes that which is inadequate in sex, with the precise intention to shock.
- 12 *Châteaux andalous* is split into four sections separated by black screens that last 3 to 4 seconds that function as pauses for the audience. While the spontaneity of the film is undeniable (shaky footage, improvisation, real action), the way it is edited seems to suggest an intentional rhythm that serves the on-screen action. The four, increasingly longer sections reveal a proportional interest for the main action.
- 13 *Châteaux andalous* attempts to escape the norms that control the body within precise spaces by filming “fragments” of these bodies captured in subversive acts. In fact, many of Soukaz’s short films consist in censored fragments of his feature films. The film starts with a 4-second credit sequence of shaky footage of a school book on which we see the name of the film and the filmmaker scribbled in pen. Then, we see the first 26-second sequence that sets the scene: a coach travelling through the foggy Andalusian countryside. The director depicts himself and his companion as the protagonists in a holiday movie. Next, there is a masturbation scene in the bus, or the subversion of a non-place through a homosexual act.¹³ The wide shots of the Spanish countryside that are part of this first section are briefly interrupted at the 26th second by a close-up of an extra’s hands between Lionel Soukaz’s companion’s legs. The camera focuses on the face of one of the men looking out the window, watching the hills go by.
- 14 The second section (50 seconds long) begins with a profile shot of Soukaz’s travelling companion. As the coach comes to a stop in the middle of a small town, the camera pans around the immediate surroundings showing a square, a church facade, then sliding rapidly toward a group of young men and finally focussing on a behind in tight jeans. The third sequence also begins with furtive shots of the Andalusian countryside (1:36). As the coach takes to the road once more, we get a close-up of an erect penis, inside a black tracksuit. Holding the camera in his right hand, Lionel Soukaz uses his other hand to release and masturbate the erect penis, before his lover takes over. The last sequence (2:35) is a close-up of the masturbation with no cuts. The camera goes

from the man's face to his penis; the caresses come quickly to an explosive, jubilant climax crowned with a brief but synchronised close-up, followed by a humorous return to the Andalusian countryside.

fig. 2

Crédits © Lionel Soukaz

- 15 Two subversive forms animate the moving image with their versatility: the penis, the traditional symbol of power and domination, depicted by Lionel Soukaz with a certain puerile humour, and the hand, the manoeuvring tool, a means of both creation and relief. Both the fist and the penis as sex organs are de-sublimated in an “inappropriate” non-place, rendered abject by the filmed action.¹⁴ *Châteaux andalous* thus scrambles accepted codes of behaviour on many levels.
- 16 In the seventies, homosexuality was condemned to secrecy and in clear contrast with the gay hypervisibility of the turn of the century. This becomes even more evident when we re-examine Victorian conceptualisations of homosexuality as the pathological inversion of the feminine:
Homosexuals know that they “come” outside the system... They know and take on board very quickly that they are traitors to normal society: they have the physical characteristics through which men pretend to show their superiority (the penis), and they are disdained, like women with whom they will be assimilated to by “virile” men.¹⁵
- 17 On film, the de-sublimation of organs occurs through literal handiwork that, here, is laboriously transformed into a vector for transgression: in the same way that Lawrence R. Schehr talks of the resemblance between the writer's hand and that of the masturbating man¹⁶, we can compare the activity of the taciturn voyeur to that of his masturbating acolyte: two spontaneous and solitary activities, freely chosen and exercised, involving the mechanics of fingers and the extension of the penis or a camera lens. This “ontological” rapprochement explains the vulgarity of the representation: it makes that which is most sacred in public transport profane.

***Shoot in the Back*: to approach and film the unbearable**

- 18 While *Châteaux andalous* perverts a space and its norms with a so-called inappropriate sexual act, *Shoot in the Back* focuses on the transgressive depiction of a pretty banal act in a place considered to be acceptable. Yet again, the forbidden is committed but this

film shows, not an erect penis, but a dilated anus. By exposing with his camera a taboo, everyday, functional and objectal act, *Shoot in the Back* reaches an ultimate in vulgarity and obscenity. It is a cinema of affects that emphasises the fetish as a sign of impulse-image.¹⁷

- 19 The fetish, in fact, explains the process of reification and reduction, by substitution and the desire for an impossible relationship. The asshole man. *Shoot in the Back* is perhaps the film by Soukaz that lacks the most humanity, as the perspective has neither face nor language. The film is only a few minutes long and shows us a close-up of a dilating anus filmed by a probing, merciless lens, with no interruption or compromise possible – as the anus, and the action of the anus, filmed in one shot, take up all of the screen space and time. The focus of the shot is entirely given over to the slow, ineluctable opening of the orifice, from which we see faecal matter emerging. Like an impossible conversation.
- 20 *Shoot in the Back* is certainly not the first film to attempt to destabilise the norms of the *showable*, from the inside and the outside (of the body, in this case) and of good and bad taste through the depiction and use of organic residues. This is a dual attack of the subject and the screen to get back to a truth of the abject that is outside of the literal.¹⁸ Examples include Andy Warhol's famous *Piss Paintings* (1977-1978), Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ* (1987), Marc Quinn's frozen blood sculptures (*Self*, 1991, 1996, 2001) and Millie Brown's most recent vomiting performances. In film, we only need to mention Fellini's *Satyricon* (1979) or Pasolini's *Salò* (1975). In the former, we see a citizen of ancient Rome defecating in the street, in the latter, the elite stuff themselves with excrement; both are critiques of the bourgeoisie and fascism (in a context where repressed sexuality is at the very centre of the collective unconscious). We should also note that gay activism in the eighties and nineties regularly used bodily fluids and the obscene in an attempt at political destabilisation.¹⁹
- 21 While the scatological work has an upsetting or subversive dimension, it is not so much due to the action (relatively insignificant in this case) but the fact that it is filmed, and the way it attacks head-on the decorum inherent in certain bodily functions and associated places. There is no warning: the activity that takes place there, discreet and shameful in its everydayness, takes on an abject dimension due to the subversive tactic of film. Critics, in the end, tend to forgive the retrospective abjection of Fellini or Pasolini more easily than that of Soukaz, who is just as absurd.
- 22 The norms tackled by *Shoot in the Back* are those of the shared space in which the body excretes in the West: the toilet.²⁰ When it should be dedicated to the *discreet* and *private* relief of individuals, this non-place is destabilised by the camera's indecent gaze, the recording of something that should remain unshowable.²¹ Indeed, the body that is excreting where it should not make the reduced perimeter of the film-set transgressive, the fact that the expulsion is documented makes it subversive. The act of filming turns a place that is both intimate and public, where discretion and shame are the usual watchwords, the little perineal space, into a minimalist and dramatic stage where filth is glorified.
- 23 While the anus is, without a doubt, the main protagonist of this indiscreet, transgressive short film, it is no less disincarnated. Reduced to its primary function of the ejection of faecal waste, the organ becomes a metonymy of the gay man's body, filmed and self-filmed, as the auteur of the short film is both its subject and its object. Again, we never see the face of the man, it remains off camera, and we hear no words,

the only audible sounds are the scatological ones made by the organ. Without a face, but also without language, the protagonist remains unidentifiable, existing only through his ass and thus rendering the experience of defecation as dehumanised as it is universal. In a close-up, the fetish is an example of the crudeness that affects us and repulses us in the social collective unconscious, in addition to forcing film criticism to confront the symbolic violence of taste.²²

- 24 However, the anus and its literal and metaphorical place on the screen bring *Shoot in the Back* close to the archaic, elementary unclean:

Loathing an item of food, a piece of filth, waste, or dung. The spasms and vomiting that protect me. The repugnance, the retching that thrusts me to the side and turns me away from defilement, sewage, and muck. The shame of compromise, of being in the middle of treachery. The fascinated start that leads me toward and separates me from them.²³

- 25 Organic waste and its ejection bother and captivate us at the same time. The fact of filming them, examining them without a break and without any compromise is intolerable to us, as we see how the body of another, and our own, can be reduced to their most primitive state. A little like the presence of a corpse, filmed shit corresponds to “death infecting life” and represents “the threat that comes from outside the identity: the self threatened by the non-self, society threatened by its outside, life by death.”²⁴ As subjects, we can only be upset by this organ of abject functions,²⁵ the continuous shot of which forces us to watch what we have no desire to acknowledge:

If it be true that the abject simultaneously beseeches and pulverizes the subject, one can understand that it is experienced at the peak of its strength when that subject, weary of fruitless attempts to identify with something on the outside, finds the impossible within; when it finds that the impossible constitutes its very being, that it is none other than abject.²⁶

- 26 While society at times valorises the phallus in the extreme (the possession, re-appropriation and desire to guard it), it also tends to sublimate the anus and keep it private, the hidden, shameful secret zone of the bourgeois. As the hidden organ par excellence, the anus is sublimated as a place of shameful desire; and, in a bourgeois society, this desire is controlled through sublimation. In addition, a liberated anus would destabilise the phallographic social order, as “our asshole is neither shameful nor personal, it is public and revolutionary.”²⁷ As one of the male erogenous zones claimed as such by homosexuals, throwing off the ideological yoke could lead to the ousting of all moralistic agendas.

- 27 Soukaz’s images represent queer culture’s refusal to be restricted to tolerant, clean, depoliticised, inoffensive representations of homosexuality: at the opposite end of the spectrum to the marketing ploys of muscle-bound docility training or right-wing criticism, in Soukaz’s work, the body frees itself not by producing labels or labour, but by producing abjection and waste. The abject nature of sperm and excrement, just like the transgression of norms linked to the *partage du sensible* (common and individual experience), comes from a new aesthetic direction. The abjection is filmed in a realistic manner, close-up, one shot, the lack of mediation reinforcing the illusion of the authenticity of the image and its veracity. Fetish in representation still passes for a revolutionary critique of spectacle if it stands up to the merchandising of existence as simulation, at least according to Guy Debord.²⁸

A capricious type of cinema

- 28 *Châteaux andalous* and *Shoot in the Back* oppose and answer one another: while *Châteaux andalous* moves with fluidity through the bucolic Spanish countryside, *Shoot in the Back* is characterised by the immobility of the body (only the camera moves) within the closed space of the toilet. In both films, there is no enunciation; just the diegetic breath, blending pleasure and physical relief pushed to their utmost in a man defecating or coming. The sentence is absent, the very word is absent here, thus leaving room for images of exaltation. The homosexual body seems to throw off the yoke of the language that characterises it, and the reduction of its forms of existence hampered by the narrowness of politeness or exoticism. As David M. Halperin suggests:

If... abjection names the social situation that forces us, in order to survive, to resist the crushing burden of shame, to glory in our exclusion from the scene of social belonging, to transcend (at least in our imagination) the humiliating realities of social existence, and to find in the secret history of our pleasures a source of personal and collective triumph over the forces that would destroy us, then abjection would seem to have some life-enhancing uses.²⁹

- 29 However, can a tactic to emancipate and free the gay body be in vain? We know that the tactic, by its very spontaneous and temporary nature, operates in the in-between and the moments of rest. "It acts on an ad hoc basis. It takes advantage of situations and depends on them, with no base and without stockpiling the benefits, building capital and planning outgoings. What it earns doesn't keep."³⁰ Unable to retain that which it has conquered, this tactic would be doomed to relative failure had it not been added to posterity through the act of filming. In concrete terms, the camera allows the filmmaker to record objects and subjects in front of this lens for eternity and to watch or project these images as he pleases, as the fantasy of an inner life that, at last, can be manipulated. So we enter a dialogue with the other through an affirmation of the self. This is indeed what the "enfant terrible" intends: "My films tell the story of my life, but also show how to make your own revolution and share it with others."³¹ The body as a revolution, the upheaval of the bourgeois aesthetic in favour of an alternative, abject and slightly traumatic truth.
- 30 Representation of the abject, aimed at provoking the middle-class ethos of an audience that thinks it's tolerant, is a vain attempt to subvert the gaze. Was it then the irremediable and unstoppable nature of this attempt at emancipation that shocked the academics mentioned by Olivier Neveux (in other words, were they disgusted when they realised the tactic had actually worked)? Was it, in fact, the crude, ugly, spontaneous, shaky images that viscerally upset sensibility and good taste? "It is the lack of sentimentality that is unforgiveable in Soukaz's films, the exposure of another fantasy world/imaginaire, less untruthful, as it is on a level with all of the artifice, editing, appearances, depictions, elegant duping, faking and acting that make up erotic life."³² The tactic works, and thus upsets, showing rough images with a total lack of delicatessen: a "poor" cinema that takes its place, exceeding our limits, our tolerance. It raises the issue of the modest representation of the gay body, both marginal and de-politicised, as a revolutionary aesthetic.³³

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AUGÉ Marc, *Non-lieux, introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité*, Paris, Seuil, 1992.
- BERLANT Lauren and WARNER Michael, "Sex in Public," *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1998, p. 547-566.
- BORDOWITZ Gregg, *The AIDS Crisis is Ridiculous: And Other Writings, 1986-2003*, Cambridge, The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2004.
- Bourdieu Pierre, *La Domination masculine*, Paris, Seuil, 1998.
- CERTEAU Michel de, *L'Invention du quotidien. I. Arts de faire*, Paris, Gallimard, 1990.
- DEBORD Guy, *La Société du spectacle*, Paris, Buchet-Chastel, 1967.
- DELEUZE Gilles, *L'Image-mouvement, Cinéma 1*, Paris, Minuit, 1983.
- FOSTER Hal, "Obscene, Abject, Traumatic," *October*, vol. 78, 1996, p. 106-124.
- FREUD Sigmund, *Trois essais sur la théorie sexuelle [1905]*, Paris, Flammarion, 2011.
- GAFFEZ Fabien, "Un chant d'amour: la morale du voleur," *Positif*, vol. 645, 2004, p. 90-97.
- HALLAS Roger, "AIDS and Gay Cinephilia," *Camera Obscura*, vol. 18, no. 52.1, 2003, p. 84-127.
- HALPERIN David M., *What Do Gay Men Want? An Essay on Sex, Risk, and Subjectivity*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2007.
- HAWEE Debra, *Moving Bodies: Kenneth Burke at the Edges of Language*, Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 2009.
- HOCQUENGHEM Guy, *La Dérive homosexuelle*, Paris, Jean-Pierre Delarge, 1977.
- HOCQUENGHEM Guy, *Le Désir homosexuel*, Paris, Fayard, 2000.
- HUMPHREYS Laud, *Tearoom Trade: A Study of Homosexual Encounters in Public Places*, New Brunswick (U.S.A.)/London, Transaction Publisher, 1975.
- KRISTEVA Julia, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur*, Paris, Seuil, 1980.
- LOCKE John, *Letter Concerning Toleration [1689]*, Amherst, Prometheus Books, 1990.
- LONG Thomas L., "Plague of Pariahs: AIDS'zines and the Rhetoric of Transgression," *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, vol. 24, no. 4, 2000, p. 401-411.
- MELINARD Michaël, "Lionel Soukaz fait son souk à Pantin," *L'Humanité*, June 12th 2004. [Online] <http://www.humanite.fr/node/307211>[consulted [accessed 22 May].
- NEVEUX Olivier, "Drague et amour. Sur www.webcam de Lionel Soukaz," in Jean-Marc LACHAUD et Olivier NEVEUX (dir.), *Une esthétique de l'outrage?*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2012, p. 91-105.
- PIDDUCK Julianne, "The Visible and the Sayable: The Moment and Conditions of Hypervisibility," in Florian GRANDENA and Christine JOHNSTON (dir.), *Cinematic Queerness: Gay and Lesbian Hypervisibility in Contemporary Francophone Feature films*, Oxford, Peter Lang, 2011, p. 9-40.
- SCHEHR Lawrence R., *Parts of an Andrology: On Representations of Men's Bodies*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1997.

WARNER Michael, *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2000.

WARNER Michael, *Publics and Counterpublics*, Cambridge, Zone, 2005.

WATNEY Simon, *Practices of Freedom: Selected Writings on HIV/AIDS*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1994.

WATNEY Simon, *Policing Desire: Pornography, AIDS, and the Media*, London, Continuum International Publishing Group, 1997.

APPENDIXES

Filmography

Luis Buñuel, *Un chien andalou*, 1929.

Federico Fellini, *Satyricon*, 1969.

Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Salò* 1975.

Lionel Soukaz, *Le Sexe des anges*, 1977.

Lionel Soukaz, *Châteaux andalous*, 1995.

Lionel Soukaz, *www.webcam*, 2005.

Lionel Soukaz, *Shoot in the Back*, 2006.

NOTES

1. Fabien Gaffez, "Un chant d'amour: la morale du voleur," *Positif*, no. 645, 2014, p. 97.
2. Michaël Melinard, "Lionel Soukaz fait son souk à Pantin," *L'Humanité*, June 12th 2004. [Online] <http://www.humanite.fr/node/307211> [accessed 22 May 2017].
3. Olivier Neveux, "Drague et amour. Sur *www.webcam* de Lionel Soukaz," in Jean-Marc Lachaud et Olivier Neveux (eds.), *Une esthétique de l'outrage?*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2012, p. 91.
4. "Gay subjectivity is divided against itself, formed in stigma, in rejection by others – especially by those whom one desires – and by oneself. Our very loves and pleasures are constituted in relation to part ourselves that are causes of irredeemable shame in our social experience of them" (David M. Halperin, *What Do Gay Men Want? An Essay on Sex, Risk, and Subjectivity*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2007, p. 69)
5. Julianne Pidduck, "The Visible and the Sayable: The Moment and Conditions of Hypervisibility," in Florian Grandena and Christine Johnston (eds.), *Cinematic Queerness: Gay and Lesbian Hypervisibility in Contemporary Francophone Feature films*, Oxford, Peter Lang, 2011, p. 9-40.
6. Michaël Melinard, "Lionel Soukaz fait son souk à Pantin," *L'Humanité*, June 12th 2004. [Online] <http://www.humanite.fr/node/307211> [accessed 22 May 2017]. On the symbolic relations between abject bodily expression on the one hand, and the cathartic act of artistic creation on the other, we refer you to Debra Hawhee's excellent book on the literary output work of Kenneth Burke: Debra Hawhee, *Moving Bodies: Kenneth Burke at the Edges of Language*, Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 2009.
7. Michael Warner, *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2000; and Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, Cambridge, Zone, 2005.

8. Wanting to impose decorum, is to satisfy a normative system aimed at managing and controlling the behaviours and bodies of individuals for the workings of society or, in other terms, a strategy of the dominant group (heterosexual) that Michel de Certeau defines as follows: "The calculation (or the manipulation) of the balance of power that becomes possible from the moment a subject of will and power (a business, an army, a neighbourhood, a political institution) can be isolated. It provides a *place* that can be delimited as *owned* and be the base from which to run relations with an outside made up of targets or threats (clients or competition, enemies, the countryside around the city, research objectives and objects)" (Michel de Certeau, *L'Invention du quotidien. I. Arts de faire*, Paris, Gallimard, 1990, p. 85).
9. Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public," *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1998, p. 547-566.
10. Michel de Certeau, *L'Invention du quotidien. I. Arts de faire*, Paris, Gallimard, 1990, p. 86.
11. These two courts are representative of the "DIY" aesthetic claimed in Soukaz's work over the past few years, as well as an economy of means (made possible thanks to digital technologies) and absolute creative freedom.
12. "Ce n'est donc pas l'absence de propriété ou de santé qui rend abject, mais ce qui perturbe une identité, un système, un ordre. Ce qui ne respecte pas les limites, les places, les règles. L'entre-deux, l'ambigu, le mixte" (Julia Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur*, Paris, Seuil, 1980, p. 12).
13. Non-places are interchangeable places in which anonymous individuals hang out. They can typically be places of transit, meaning the infrastructure needed for the rapid circulation of goods and people (fast lanes, interchangers, airports) or the means of transport themselves, big shopping centres and even refugee camps (Marc Augé, *Non-lieux, introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité*, Paris, Seuil, 1992, p. 48).
14. Guy Hocquenghem (*Le Désir homosexuel*, Paris, Fayard, 2000) explains that capitalism, in order to survive, must channel relations between individuals by using the Oedipus complex that structures and controls desire. Society and individuals that make it up are thus *œdipussed* and rely on the attribution of certain functions to certain organs: fulfilling the same role as money within capitalism, the phallus becomes a social organ and imposes a system of relationships between individuals based on a hierarchy (Guy Hocquenghem, *Le Désir homosexuel*, Paris, Fayard, 2000, p. 95). Sexual desires and certain organs, thus sublimated (in this case, the hand and penis of the homosexual) are relegated to the private sphere and any attempt to bring them out can only be seen as a transgression, an attack on accepted decorum.
15. Guy Hocquenghem, *La Dérive homosexuelle*, Paris, Jean-Pierre Delarge, 1977, p. 41.
16. Lawrence R. Schehr, *Parts of an Andrology: on Representations of Men's Bodies*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1997, p. 109-147.
17. Gilles Deleuze, *L'Image-mouvement, Cinéma 1*, Paris, Minuit, 1983.
18. Hal Foster, "Obscene, Abject, Traumatic," *October*, vol. 78, 1996, p. 106-124.
19. See, for example Gregg Bordowitz, *The AIDS Crisis is Ridiculous: And Other Writings, 1986-2003*, Cambridge, The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2004; Thomas L. Long, "Plague of Pariahs: AIDS'zines and the Rhetoric of Transgression," *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, vol. 24, no. 4, 2000, 401-411; Simon Watney, *Practices of Freedom: Selected Writings on HIV/AIDS*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1994; and Simon Watney, *Policing Desire: Pornography, AIDS, and the Media*, London, Continuum International Publishing Group, 1997.
20. "Un coin d'irrationnel" (Michel de Certeau, *L'Invention du quotidien. I. Arts de faire*, Paris, Gallimard, 1990), an ambiguous, as fundamentally intimate space, shameful and public at the same time. But also an exciting and dangerous place. Also read Laud Humphrey's classic study of anonymous sexual encounters by gay men in public toilets (Laud Humphreys, *Tearoom Trade: A Study of Homosexual Encounters in Public Places*, New Brunswick (É.-U.)/London, Transaction Publisher, 1975).

21. Here, we consider public toilets to be non-places as their very *raison d'être* and their use are not identity-based (not systematically in any case, as toilets can be gender-specific), neither are they relational or historic (Marc Augé, *Non-lieux, introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité*, Paris, Seuil, 1992, p. 100).
22. Pierre Bourdieu, *La Domination masculine*, Paris, Seuil, 1998.
23. Julia Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur*, Paris, Seuil, 1980, p. 10.
24. Julia Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur*, Paris, Seuil, 1980, p. 12 et 86.
25. Anal functions are abject, in as much as they upset the norms of that which is showable and of decorum by revealing the interior to the exterior and reducing the gap between the living (the body) and the inert/ dead (the excrement).
26. Julia Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur*, Paris, Seuil, 1980, p. 12.
27. Guy Hocquenghem, *La Dérive homosexuelle*, Paris, Jean-Pierre Delarge, 1977, p. 44.
28. Guy Debord, *La Société du spectacle*, Paris, Buchet-Chastel, 1967.
29. David M. Halperin, *What Do Gay Men Want? An Essay on Sex, Risk, and Subjectivity*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2007.
30. Michel de Certeau. *L'invention du quotidien, I : Arts de faire*, Paris, Gallimard, 1990, p. 86-87.
31. Michaël Melinard, « Lionel Soukaz fait son souk à Pantin », *L'Humanité*, Saturday June 12th 2004. [online] <http://www.humanite.fr/node/307211> [consulted May 22nd 2017].
32. Olivier Neveux, « Dragage et amour. Sur www.webcam de Lionel Soukaz », in Jean-Marc Lachaud et Olivier Neveux (dir.), *Une esthétique de l'outrage ?*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2012, p. 102.
33. "The gay cinephilia [...] emerges precisely as a recovery of history, a means to articulate contemporary gay structures of feeling in the AIDS epidemic through the visual archive that has played a significant role in the constitution and maintenance of postwar gay identities and subcultures" (Roger Hallas, "AIDS and Gay Cinephilia", *Camera Obscura* 52, vol. 18, n° 1, 2003, p. 118).

ABSTRACTS

The iconoclastic work of the filmmaker Lionel Soukaz takes in all the abject expressions of the homosexual body, ejaculation and excretion included. His outrageous cinema puts today's pseudo-tolerance into perspective, especially when we realise the extent to which exposing organs to the camera remains disturbing. Playing with representations as an outlet and a performance, the artist attempts to exteriorize and reflect gay sexuality as both a life form and a revolutionary practice. His films focus on the transgression of public-private standards, as well as norms of propriety in the depiction of representation. His creative process: cinema as a way to exit oneself, to somehow connect with the other, cinema as a revolutionary gesture. At stake is the ontological status of filmmaking as the purest form of abjection.

INDEX

Keywords: abjection, cinema, homosexuality, Lionel Soukaz, queer theory

AUTHORS

FLORIAN GRANDENA

Florian Grandena is an associate professor in the Communications Department of the University of Ottawa (Canada). His current research covers representation of homosexualities in contemporary French cinema, mainly the feature films of Olivier Ducastel and Jacques Martineau, about whom he is currently writing a book, and the work of filmmaker Lionel Soukaz. He also takes an interest in vampires in international cinema and in the visual output of pop musicians such as Annie Lennox. In addition, he organises the “Hypervisibility” conference cycle that examines the representation of homosexualities in transnational visual cultures. In tandem with Cristina Johnston (University of Stirling, GB), he co-edited *New Queer Images: Representations of homosexualities in Contemporary Francophone Visual Cultures* and *Cinematic Queerness: Gay and lesbian Hypervisibility in Contemporary Francophone Feature Films* (Peter Lang, 2011) and with Charles Batson (Union College, GB), he co-edited a special issue of *Contemporary French Civilization* (vol. 37.2-3, 2012) dedicated to the work and memory of Lawrence R. Schehr. In 2014, he held the international Chair at the Labex Arts-H2H, and he is head of the ÆPI research group (aesthetics and the politics of image, <http://aepi-uottawa.weebly.com>).

PASCAL GAGNÉ

Pascal Gagné is pursuing a Ph.D. in the communications department of Ottawa University. His research concerns queer theories, collective memory and affect. He has previously worked concerts for associations promoting LGBT rights, AIDS awareness and agencies specialised in mental deficiencies. Furthermore, he has recently joined as an auxiliary member the research team on aesthetics and image politics. His academic background has been graciously supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.