

TEXT ON PRACTICE

or

(A PIECE OF) SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS/SELF-CRITICISM (ABOUT MY PRACTICE SO FAR)

or else

A MAP(-PING) OF PRESENT PRECARIOUS PROJECTS AND IN-COMING IN-PUTS (IN-TERESTS, IN-FLUENCES, IN-TUITIONS, IN-TENTIONS)

and

A SELECTION (FROM AN ONGOING COLLECTION) OF SCREENSHOT AS A (SELF- REFLEXIVE) STATEMENT (ABOUT MY PRACTICE)

//

//

**CLAUDIO TOLA**

suburban melancholic, digital nihilist, full-time flâneur // aborted architect turned visual artist // mostly makes images move, writes short texts, draws sketches // thinks and works in/by/with fragments and layers // lingers over/along edges of all kinds // endlessly edits // adopts DIY ethics and lo-fi aesthetics - both for necessity and virtue // prefers hardware stores over fine art shops // makes use of cracked software-outdated hardware / permanent markers-duct tape-blunt pencils-sharp cutters-tracing paper // loves/hates screens // born and raised in turin (it), got lost - and lost his mind - in paris (fr), was then seen in venice (it), is said to currently live and work in rotterdam (nl)

//

WORD COUNT: ~~1497~~

PZI - LENS-~~BASED~~ MEDIA  
03/2023

In the past months, my research consisted mostly in undertaking a long-term project whose starting point was my **fascination** towards North Sentinel - an island in the Indian Ocean whose inhabitants have been refusing contact with outsiders since the 18th century.

This has made them “the most isolated tribe in the world”. Almost nothing is known and **because** very few images of the island and the inhabitants exist. **taken at great distance, from above/below, from boats/planes/satellites, through telephoto lenses**

As a **visual artist** my interest was never to approach the island in an anthropological-ethnographic way, but rather its compelling status as a place/an object whose images are (almost) impossible to make. **dealer/hunter-gatherer/thinker/tinkerer, then -** **a tiny (black)hole on the world map / a dust spot on a crisp clear lens / a dead pixel on a 4K screen / a - quite literally - border-line case //**

I initially intuitively intended to retrieve ~~all the existing images of the island, to get hold of it by gathering all~~ of its existing representations, A paradoxical attempt - I am fascinated by the lack of images of this place, yet I strive I to see as much as I can of it. From the most straightforward, institutional sources of imagery - colonial maps from the 15th century onwards; aerial shots scattered on the internet; Google Earth Pro’s **cropped + blown-up where the island was (or was not) pictured** imagery; photographs/footage from scientific expeditions to the island in the late XX century.

Other types of imagery then started to emerge - more informal, less institutional. Amateur videos taken by **planes flying over** the island, screen recordings of video games in which the island is featured; articles about the “most mysterious, impossible, most dangerous” place in the world - paired with images of wrong islands, Reddit conspirations, a fictional adventure/horror ebook , a “danger tourist” guy tweeting his plans to visit it (...). **to see what it's there**

The island and the widespread attempt at making images of it became catalysts to speculate about bigger topics that the island alone can’t answer but only hint at. I clearly realized that the point of this research is image-making in its essence - human need of/attempt at knowing the unknown, making sense of the world **by making** images of it. **A matter of mankind, of image-making, of image-making mankind, of mankind making.**

I then started to follow a more open associative method, including images/objects that do not necessarily relate directly to the island, but resonate with it - a miscellany of audio-visual material metaphorically addressing and unfolding the questions that NS island arises. For instance, paintings by Rothko, Gauguin or Friedrich, a coffee drop on my studio desk...

This project has proven to be a fertile field, definitely worth digging deeper in. However, I feel that to do so effectively I have to properly organize **found imagery, texts, thoughts, inbetween connections** all the materials that it has produced so far and that will produce in the future, to make sense of their complexity. I therefore intend to spend some time building an archive with **a dedicated PZI studio iMac? a non-linear structure, in which each fragment is at the same time clearly classified on its own and multiply an online repository? meaningfully interconnected** with the others.

I feel I also need to start widening/deepening my theoretical research in regards to the topics that the project is addressing - read more, build a solid network of references.

//

The Eye Research Lab assignment was an occasion for me to tinker with some of the materials and ideas I had been investigating in this research, trying to make a self-standing piece out of them.

“1 or 2 images (some notes on)” is a 4-minute essayistic/speculative comparison between two of the more outstanding - visually and conceptually - images that I encountered in this research: a painting by Mark

Rothko and Google Earth's imagery around North Sentinel. One seemingly fully realistic, transparent, the other fully abstract and opaque; one made anonymously/automatically by Google satellites, the other made by the hands-eyes of one of the most famous painter of the XX century. Both images have a blue dominant color and feature edges as key elements in their compositions. The piece is built with and around these two images, and aims at presenting/exposing both their objective differences - in terms of media specificity - and, speculatively, their affinity.

*What if these images - and the edges they show - despite being so different, are gateways to finding answers to the same questions? What if they stem from the same, shared need of mankind to make sense of the world by making images of it?*

I set up a relatively simple set of elements - the two images, unframed; a staged version of them - that I designed/built/filmed in the studio; a text/script, that I recursively re-edited throughout the whole process; a layered soundscape made of oceanic and technical sounds; a blue frame used as a flickering intercut - and repeatedly re-arranged their order and relations. I ended up making five subsequent versions of the piece. Similar in content, yet very different in terms of form and overall structure.

keywords subjects topics fields of interest  
some, sparse

This work was an effective playground - a serious one, though - to try and find my way/voice/stance as a moving image artist and to pinpoint some of the subjects around which my practice gravitates. However, I feel I only partially achieved this intention, and I therefore intend to work more on it, pushing it forward along the lines that the later versions of the piece set up.

space / place / architecture  
structural filmmaking

conceptual art, minimal art  
language

//  
description - tautology - paradox  
self-reflection

I feel that in the past few months I came to realize clearly some staple points in my work as an artist, that come to me intuitively and that I would like to embrace and use more intentionally:

early 2000s

visual cultures

- a conceptual/minimalist approach - in reference to conceptual/minimal art movements of the XX century, which I have always been fascinated by and looked up to. I want to make this tradition and its devices mine, research about it, understand their weapons.

(feedback) loops

media theory  
errors-glitches-failures

- I make large use of image-collecting/appropriating/hording tools, power screenshots, download, rip-offs, copy/cut-and-paste-s

dispositif / device / apparatus -(e)s

printing/hording tools, power  
seeing watching staring  
visibility invisibility

- I write in a short/elliptic/fragmented/cumulative as well as scattered/spatialised/not-so-linear form.

lenses, sensors, screens

software/hardware

digital/analog

virtual/physical

- my work - be it moving images, writing, thinking - is made of/in/with fragments and layers, that I draw together and costantly re-edit

technology/the technical

- I am drawn to the exploration of edges, thresholds, interfaces, between worlds, realms, ways of being/existing, technology-ies; my gaze naturally lingers on these places of clash, of friction, of shifting, of contamination, of emergence, of creation.

edges/borders/thresholds/margins/limits/interfaces

internet

- I am interested in text as a visual element - that makes sense also - primarily, maybe? - visually - this is again connected to conceptual art tradition

appropriation, recycling, reusing, sampling, remixing,  
copying stealing

ownership-authorship

- my work shows an underlying, recurrent concern with some general topics - that I came to recognize as the thematic core of my practice. Image-making, knowledge, desire/fear, sublime, unknown, visibility-invisibility, (re)mediation, technology/the technical, production/circulation/ownership of images, space/place, architecture(s) - and their complex, mutual implications.

human condition  
existentialism, nihilism

speculative fiction

the ways and whys and weights of images

//

On the side of my main research work, I have been collecting - in the form of scattered textual/visual fragments on notebooks, hard drives, wiki pages - hints for possible projects to develop in the future. Old ideas, <sup>raw</sup> new intuitions. They hardly connect together but I feel they all tangentially address intersecting topics. I consider them as short(er)-term projects to keep myself and my practice going and counterbalance the slowness of the more research-heavy part. Serious playgrounds for languages, devices, techniques, skills - but whose ground is soft enough to allow myself to fall and fail totally. Some of them will be partially developed, some finished, some just forgotten.

if failure can ever be total

//

I have also been collecting inputs about things that I would like to try out as possibly valuable additions to my practice. These stem both from needs encountered in my self-directed research and from activities at school. Some of them are Touchdesigner, After Effects and Tomm film dark room experiments. Very different but in the end all additional tools for image-making.

Some working titles:  
Pure Theory/Mere Nature  
LOST LOST LOST LOST  
(or A tale of grain and grid)  
The absolute flicker  
Shiny stuff/Blowup  
24x1x24  
Wholegrain  
Dead pixels  
Screen saver/In case of necessity please break  
IMG 5728 aka A horse running in a loop, looped  
aka A loop, literally  
SCHERM LCD/Screens - also - lie  
(and counting)

//

I have also been reconsidering my previous work - a medium-length, Youtube-found-footage based, speculative film-essay titled *Dubai Dispositif*. The concept is strong, but the approach I had in making it is not effective. I would like to go back to it and re-edit it, starting by rewriting the script, and then going back to the images. Getting rid of the redundant parts will probably make it way shorter.

//  
(some sparse(r) side-thoughts to end with)

- I feel that I self-impose too many restrictions and high standards and I get often frustrated by not being able to keep up. I lose myself in overthinking and want to be always coherent. I should allow myself to act more freely. Which doesn't mean making things carelessly, just letting go of self-sabotaging and trusting the process more.

- I strive to be fully understood in my intellectual meanderings, but I am not yet confident enough in images alone to do so. I need and want to work more visually, to convey my intentions-thoughts-stances through images rather than through words.

- I want to think myself more as a moving-image/video/media artist rather than filmmaker. It might be just a matter of words, but I feel it allows a possibly more open, free-form, flexible approach, which is what I feel my practice should aim at.

- I don't want to stick too strictly with the plans that I started this master program with - found-footage-based, essayistic/speculative filmmaking, the NS project. I want to take it as a time-space-facilities window to explore in multiple directions.

- I find it frustrating that my work only exists on my computer, in my studio. How can I bring it outside of this small, introverted, self-feeding bubble? In the real world?

//

## REFERENCES

- not for specific project but for general practice

## READLIST

things I should read or read again

(or maybe forget about)

- Agamben, G. (2006). Che cos'è un dispositivo?
- Baldacci, C.; Bertozzi, M. (2018). Montages, Assembling as a form and Symptom in Contemporary Arts.
- Baudry, J.L. (1975). "Le dispositif". Communications. 23 (1): 56–72.
- Berger, J. (1972) Ways of seeing
- Benjamin, W. (1935). The Work of Art in The Age of Mechanical Reproduction
- Bolter, J.D., Grusin, R. (1999). Remediation: Understanding New Media
- Bourriaud, N. (2002) Postproduction
- Biemann, U. (2003). Stuff it. The video essay in the digital age.
- de Lauretis, T., Heath, Stephen (1980). The Cinematic Apparatus
- de Mul, J. (2009) 'The Work of Art in the Age of Digital Recombination' in van den Boomen, M., Lammes, S. et al (eds) Digital Material: Tracing New Media in Everyday Life and Technology
- Eisenstein, S. (1957) The Film Sense
- Gidal, P. (1976). Structural Film Anthology
- Jennings, G. (2015). Abstract Video. The Moving Image in Contemporary Art.
- LeWitt, S. (1967) Paragraphs on Conceptual Art
- LeWitt, S. (1969) Sentences on Conceptual Art
- Marin, L. (2002?) On representation
- McLuhan, M. (1967). Understanding media. The extensions of men.
- McLuhan, M. (1967). The medium is the message: an inventory of effects. w`wW
- Mulvey. L. (2006) Death 24x a Second. Stillness and the Moving Image.
- Paglen, T. (2014). "Operational Images" in Journal #59 November 2014 - e-flux.
- Sloterdijk, P. (2004). Spheres Volume III. Foams
- Steyerl, H. (2012). The Wretched of the Screen

ARTISTS some that I am currently inspired by / I am very bad at keeping track of what my influences are

Arte Povera

Carl Andre

Cory Arcangel

Tony Cokes

Tony Conrad

Harun Farocki

Morgan Fisher

Forensic Architecture

Hollis Frampton

Jean Luc Godard

Douglas Gordon

David Horvitz

Pierre Huyghe

Arthur Jafa

Joseph Kosuth

Sol Lewitt

Sara Magenheimer

Eva and Franco Mattes

Jonas Mekas

Metahaven

Bruce Nauman

Simon Payne

Morgan Quaintance

Jon Rafman

Rachel Rose

Michael Snow

Hito Steyerl

Peter Tscherkassky

Lawrence Weiner

3sat

Diese Bilder lassen sich auch anders lesen

These images can also be read in another way.



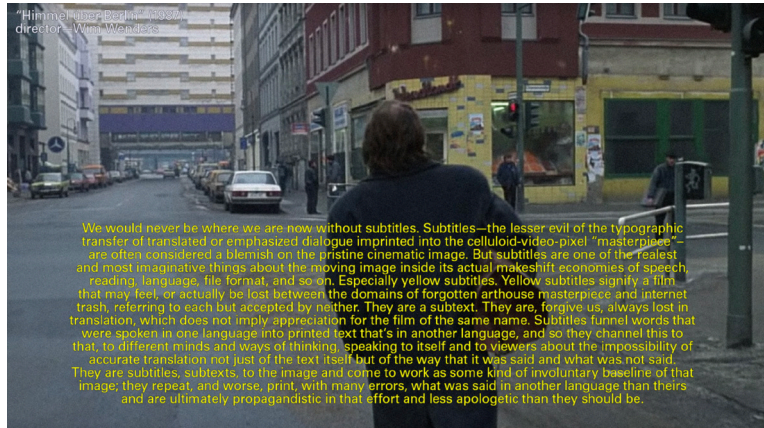
er Desert Island NOT YET RATED

More

ddled + Follow

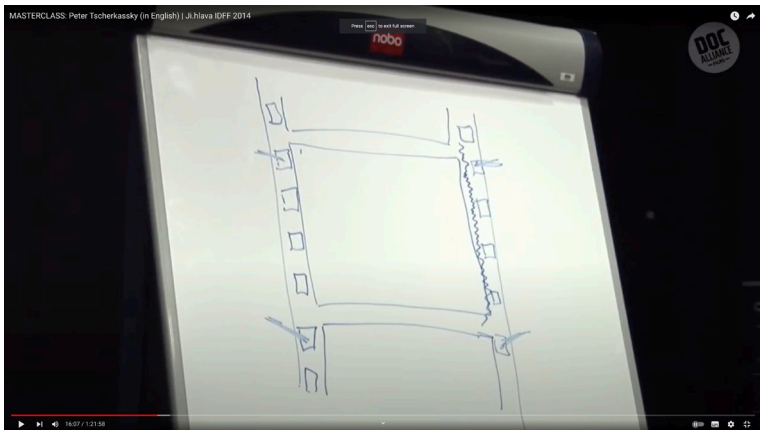
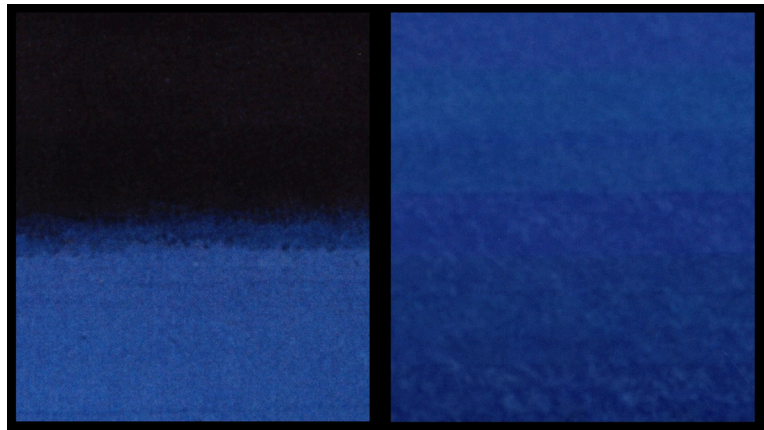
Pro

40x more upload space



"Himmel über Berlin" 1933  
director: Wislizenus

We would never be where we are now without subtitles. Subtitles—the lesser evil of the typographic transfer of translated or emphasized dialogue imprinted into the celluloid-video-pixel “masterpiece”—are often considered a blemish on the pristine cinematic image. But subtitles are one of the feeblest and most imaginative things about the moving image inside its actual makeshift economies of speech: reading, language, file format, and so on. Especially yellow subtitles. Yellow subtitles signify a film that may feel, or actually be lost between the domains of forgotten arthouse masterpiece and internet trash, referring to each but accepted by neither. They are a subtext. They are, forgive us, always lost in translation, which does not imply appreciation for the film of the same name. Subtitles funnel words that were spoken in one language into printed text that’s in another language, and so they channel this to that, to different minds and ways of thinking, speaking to itself and to viewers about the impossibility of accurate translation not just of the text itself but of the way that it was said and what was not said. They are subtitles, subtexts, to the image and come to work as some kind of involuntary baseline of that image; they repeat, and worse, print, with many errors, what was said in another language than theirs and are ultimately propagandistic in that effort and less apologetic than they should be.



MASTERCLASS: Peter Tscherrassky (in English) | JkHava IDFF 2014

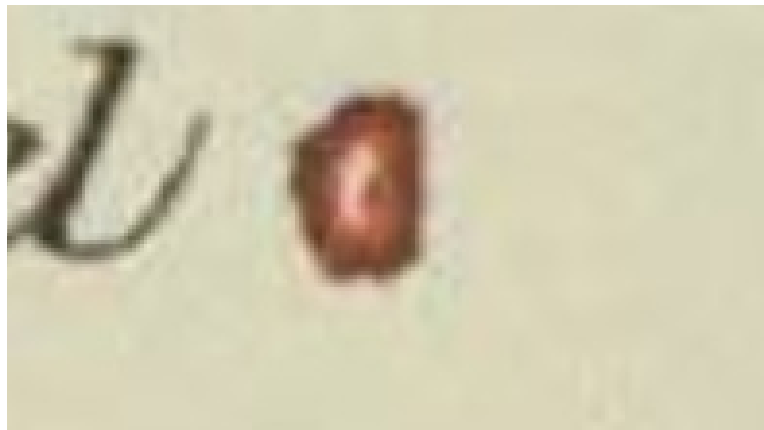
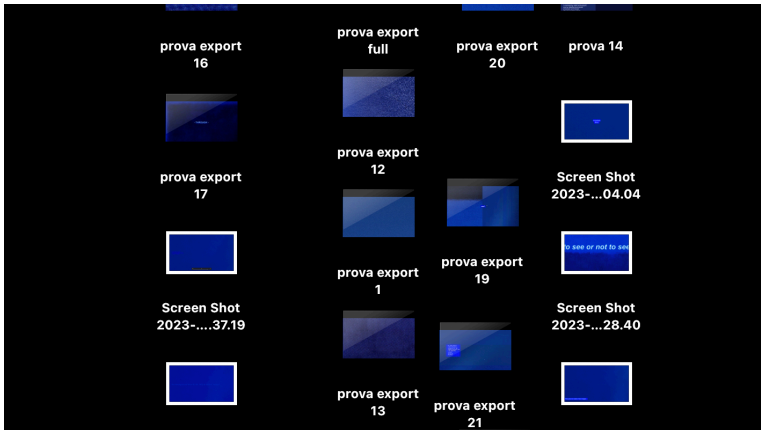
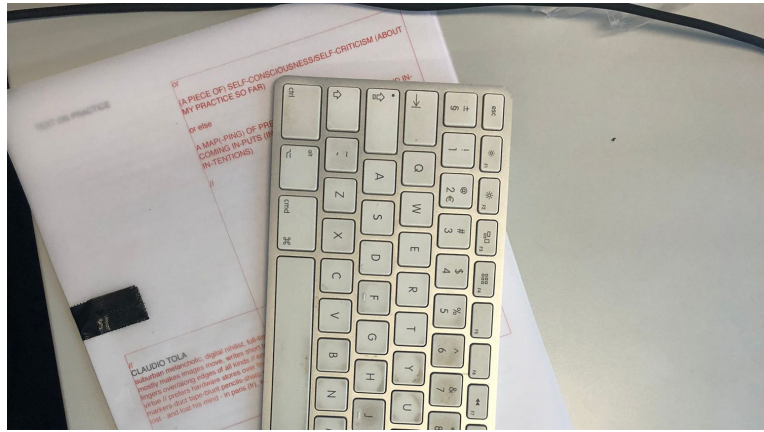
nobo



16:07 / 12:58



here are some pieces of film that I think are interesting to look at







# SCHERM LCD

