

Foreword

At the end of the 20th and in the early 21st century, art history, media history, and their reflection are characterized by four crucial trends: 1. the “Iconic Turn”¹, which conducts interdisciplinary research on the increasing significance of images, 2. the reinforced use of “multi-media strategies”² in art, 3. the triumph of the digital media and the Internet, and 4. the accompanying increasing relevance of “animation”³ or pictorial worlds generated in a hybrid manner.

- 1 The term “Iconic Turn” is modeled on the “Linguistic Turn” of the 1970s. In the context of image science, the “Iconic Turn” is further differentiated and set apart from the “Pictorial Turn”, the “Imagic Turn”, and the “Visualistic Turn” – on this, cf. the following publications: Gottfried Boehm (ed.), *Was ist ein Bild?*, Munich: Fink, 1994; Birgit Recki and Lambert Wiesing (eds.), *Bild und Reflexion: Paradigmen und Perspektiven gegenwärtiger Ästhetik*, Munich: Fink, 1997; Vilém Flusser, *Ins Universum der technischen Bilder*, Göttingen: European Photography, 1999; Hans Belting, *Bild-Anthropologie: Entwürfe für eine Bildwissenschaft*, Munich: Fink, 2001; Klaus Sachs-Hombach, *Das Bild als kommunikatives Medium: Elemente einer allgemeinen Bildwissenschaft*, Cologne: Herbert von Halem, 2003; Christa Maar and Hubert Burda (eds.), *Iconic Turn. Die neue Macht der Bilder*, Cologne: DuMont, 2004; Christoph Wulf and Jörg Zirfas (eds.), *Ikonomie des Performativen*, Munich: Fink, 2005; Christa Maar and Hubert Burda (eds.), *Iconic Worlds. Neue Bilderwelten und Wissensräume*, Cologne: DuMont, 2006; W. J. T. Mitchell, *Bildtheorie*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2008; Jörg Probst and Jost Philipp Klenner (eds.), *Ideengeschichte der Bildwissenschaft*, Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2009; Horst Bredekamp, *Theorie des Bildakts*, Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010; Christoph Asmuth, *Bilder über Bilder, Bilder ohne Bilder: Eine neue Theorie der Bildlichkeit*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2011; Sebastian Egenhofer, Inge Hinterwaldner and Christian Spies (eds.), *Was ist ein Bild? Antworten in Bildern*, Munich: Fink, 2012.
- 2 See: Ursula Frohne (ed.), *Video Cult/ures: Multimediale Installationen der 90er Jahre*, Cologne: DuMont, 1999; Gregor Stemmerich (ed.), *Kunst/Kino, Jahresring 48, Jahrbuch für moderne Kunst*, Cologne: Oktagon Verlag, 2001; Thomas Hensel, Klaus Krüger and Tanja Michalsky (eds.), *Das bewegte Bild: Film und Kunst*, Munich: Fink, 2006; Christiane Heibach, *Multimediale Aufführungskunst: Medienästhetische Studien zur Entstehung einer neuen Kunstform*, Munich: Fink, 2010; Ursula Frohne and Lilian Haberer (eds.), *Kinematographische Räume: Installationsästhetik in Film und Kunst*, Munich: Fink, 2012.
- 3 See: Suzanne Buchan (ed.), *Pervasive Animation*, London and New York: Routledge, 2013.

The paradigm shift of the digital realm in media aesthetics, which results from the interplay among art, science, and old and new technologies, is leading to a new form of hybrid culture:⁴ “The hybridization of the media has cancelled the rigid separation of media subsystems as was long sustained by research and has melted them into complex [artistic] forms. This circumstance finds expression in new research approaches.”⁵

The extraordinary cinematographic installation *Alias Yederbeck*, in which Frank Geßner, under the pseudonym or heteronym Paul Yederbeck (1965–2001), stages a fictitious artist as a virtual double, is a specific artistic research result of these aesthetic, technological, and discursive developments.

As early as the mid-1990s, Geßner began working on the as yet unpublished intermedia project *Wege zum Bild / Towards the Image*, which is composed of a total of four visual “movements”, like a symphony. He continued developing the first movement, *Teste sans fin*, consisting of 252 panel pictures and extensive multimedia archive material, into the cinematographic installation *Alias Yederbeck* from 2006–2011. He describes *Alias Yederbeck* as a “hybrid ‘auto-(author-)construction’ [*Auto(r)konstruktion*] with the goal of making conceptual and processual structures of the genesis of an artistic work sensually experientiable. According to the postmodern theory of the death of the subjective individual, there are only objective structures with mutual dependencies and/or networked systems of meaning. To transform these non-linear contexts into a cinematographic installation is the consistent conclu-

- 4 See: Néstor García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995; Irmela Schneider and Christian W. Thomsen (eds.), *Hybridkultur. Medien, Netze, Künste*, Cologne: Wienand Verlag, 1997; Angela Krewani, *Hybride Formen: New British Cinema-Television Drama-Hypermedia*, Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2001; Claudia Liebrand and Irmela Schneider (eds.), *Medien in Medien*, Cologne: DuMont Verlag, 2002; Yvonne Spielmann, *Hybrid Culture*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 2013.
- 5 Petra Missomelius, *Digitale Medienkultur: Wahrnehmung-Konfiguration-Transformation*, Bielefeld: transcript Verlag für Kommunikation, Kultur und soziale Praxis, 2006, p. 10.

sion of the project *Towards the Image*. This also makes a theme out of the site of the (post-)modern artist in the operating system of current media culture.”⁶ Frank Geßner’s polystylistic “Expanded Animation Cinema” *Alias Yederbeck* (12-channel video, 63:00 min) interlocks components of visual art with media art, as well as film, video, animation, and sound in a metafictional spatially immersive performance. The painted “auto-(author-)constructs” are the starting points for twelve nonlinear film sequences that unfold clockwise, one after the other, in a traversable, angular-round panorama (Potsdam Panorama Installation: circa ø 19.50 m × H 6.00 m, projection screen: circa W 60.00 m × H 2.80 m):

Entertainer (video, painting animation, 3D computer animation, compositing)

Flaneur (Super-8, 16mm, photography, iCam, video, compositing)

Zuschauer (video, animated drawing, compositing)

Schauspieler (photomontage, projection, video, compositing)

Auflösung (photography, video, compositing)

Projektion (Super-8, photography, projection, video, compositing)

Anima Techné (video, 3D computer animation, compositing)

Transzendente Animation (3D computer animation, compositing)

Happy End (35mm, direct film animation, compositing)

Doppelgänger (video, compositing)

Reminder (analog video, digital video, projection, compositing)

The End (video, compositing)

The artist video *Qu’est-ce que Monsieur Teste?* (1-channel video, 26:00 min) is presented as a kind of “bonus material” in an additional black box. In the

6 Frank Geßner, “Alias Yederbeck: Arbeit am Künstlermythos”, p. 81, in: *Moderne in Brandenburg: LICHT/SPIEL/HAUS. Film, Kunst und Baukultur*, ed. by Kulturland Brandenburg e.V., Potsdam, Berlin: Koehler & Amelang, 2011.

white cube, the studio is reconstructed as the production site and imaginary stage of the multiple artificial figure with a selection of archive and context materials.⁷

To realize this prototype of a large-scale cinematographic installation, Geßner founded “Atelier Berlin Production” and himself took on diverse functions as director, author, producer, actor, cameraman, animator, production designer, musician, etc. As with an elaborate auteur film / full-length production, a competent team was also necessary (see Credits). For this, Geßner was able to win friends and alumni of the majors in Animation, Cinematography, and Film Music and Sound, as well as colleagues from various departments of the University of Film and Television (HFF) “Konrad Wolf” Potsdam-Babelsberg, where he is a researching artist and Professor for Theory and Practice of Visual Arts. The project is thus able to clearly bring together several fields of research from the HFF “Konrad Wolf” Potsdam-Babelsberg, for example Pre- and Future Cinema, Hybrid Auteur Film, Expanded Animation, 3D Computer Animation / Motion Capturing and Wave Field Synthesis (3D audio-technology for virtual environments). “Sound and music”⁸ were derived from the visual structural ideas, and Geßner already brought them into the pre-production, because he regards the audio dimension as a crucial component of “Expanded Animation Cinema”. The use of wave field synthesis in combination with panorama projection in the cinematographic installation *Alias Yederbeck* enables the creation of a “total” audiovisual 360° space in which the moving and animated images and sounds unfold in a special way.

Alias Yederbeck is the largest and most complex artistic research project of the HFF “Konrad Wolf” Potsdam-Babelsberg to date and had its successful world

7 On this, cf. Brian O’Doherty, *Studio and Cube. On the relationship between where art is made and art is displayed*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008.

8 See: Benjamin Dickmann, Frank Geßner and Martin Steyer, “Sound und Musik”, <http://www.testefoundation.org/presse.html>

premiere in the framework of “Potsdam 2011 – City of Film” in the Kunst-raum and the Schinkelhalle in Potsdam from December 4, 2011 to January 15, 2012. The project received funds from the Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg and from Kulturland Brandenburg. The event production received support from the Erich Pommer Institute Potsdam-Babelsberg and the Institute for Artistic Research of the HFF “Konrad Wolf” Potsdam-Babelsberg and was sponsored by numerous partners.

The *Alias Yederbeck* DVD edition, now available, is not a replica of the original Potsdam Panorama but rather an interface for an “*Alias Yederbeck_2.0*” project that Geßner plans to place in the Internet.⁹ First the cinematographic room was built as a 3D model, into which twelve sequences of still images were fed and filmed with a virtual camera. The resulting 1-channel video of the virtual installation is the main film in the DVD. Embedding the twelve still-image sequences in the 3D model and the aid of real-time rendering, a technology otherwise used in online computer games, make it possible to interactively experience the image sequences in the DVD-ROM part. This enables the users to use the mouse to move around in the 3D installation, which is outfitted with twelve sequences. But the huge amount of data involved means that only a relatively low level of image resolution is currently possible, despite the latest technology. For this reason, the virtual panorama model of the cinematographic installation *Alias Yederbeck* is available in two variants on this DVD edition: as a real-time system with control function in the DVD-ROM part, and as a 1-channel video in greater resolution in the DVD part. The 24-channel wave field synthesis of the installation was mixed down for both variants. The 1-channel video *Qu'est-ce que Monsieur Teste?* of the installation and the *Alias Yederbeck Documentation Footage* from the Potsdam Panorama are included with the DVD.

9 Work in progress: <http://www.testefoundation.org/>

In texts written especially for the book accompanying the DVD, the animation aesthetician Suzanne Buchan, the art historian Ursula Frohne, the philosopher Christian Katti, and the media theoretician Yvonne Spielmann enter into an intense transdisciplinary dialog with this polyphonic, media “mixed product”.

This DVD edition is the result of collaboration between the HFF “Konrad Wolf” Potsdam-Babelsberg and Re:Voir Paris.

This virtual representation can make the temporary panorama installation *Alias Yederbeck* accessible to a broader public – but the latter remains an art space that cannot be adequately reproduced in other media, because taking in all its facets is possible only in the audiovisual experience on site.

It is to be hoped that the telling publisher’s name Re:Voir will lead to a renewed “physical” performance of Frank Geßner’s “Expanded Animation Cinema” *Alias Yederbeck*.

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