Inconspicuous spaces, unassuming ramblings and interpretative gazes

1: Dribble, Flooding and Schemata

It started as dribble. Short video pieces, uploaded for viewing, began appearing on the web by early 2005, led by a recent upstart video sharing service. In the blink of an eye this phenomenon attracted millions of enthusiastic users, creating a virtual visual tsunami of user-generated video content. An astounding flooding, continuously dispensed by ever-new postings, establishing an infinite pool of captured, moving viewpoints, disseminating nearly every possible imaginative topic to be visually narrated, peddled and re-viewed.

While a large amount of fine new art videos, ultra-short artistic films and conceptual video pieces are recently emerging on various web sites, and sometimes also finding their way to the main ever-growing brew at the top uploading sites, it definitely can be difficult to extract certain video samples that might convey “oblique” personal ways of seeing the conditions of the ordinary. (As most of user-generated content still are rip-offs/duplications of various movies, music videos or TV shows, pranks, gossipy babble, etc.). Acknowledging the liberating effects of easy to use, cheaply available off-the shelf, new media technology, it might seem surprising to notice the lack of simple, original visual approaches to the ordinary. Conversely, all this might seem fairly comprehensible. Given that nowadays the familiarity of visual expressions - for most people – is framed by the permeating schemata of popular movies, television shows and music videos, it might come as no surprise that even the better productive attempts still toil at emulating known visual formula(s) and, indeed, certainly their narrative structures. Basically, the fascination with the seemingly “exceptional” mostly reveals a broad range of clichés that nevertheless proves to be utterly popular.
We are thus, notoriously, already firmly embedded in McLuhan’s seminal premonitions from the mid 1960’s. The *Massage* indeed illuminated by the *Light Bulb*, without any real enlightenment yet, in the midst of furious glare(s). Lev Manovich’s precise treaty regarding the nature of new media, unravels some quite fascinating stepping-stones for further explorations and adequate *modus operandi* in this fast moving, ever-shifting territory.

Yet, it was not theoretical approaches that lead to my immersion in the expanding Vlogging community. It was a growing longing for the potential unfolding of poetic gaze(s) on the ordinary, on the seemingly inconspicuousness of daily life. A longing for the possibility of finding visual recordings similar to French writer Georges Perec’s continuous investigations at describing, “cataloguing” the everyday.

At the same time, being an architect, and teaching architecture students, I had become keenly aware of the increasing difficulties at giving out mundane exercises in visually describing parts of ordinary, inconspicuous life, without any prejudices. What might be necessary, simple task(s), where often, at first, reluctantly undertaken, as the apparent banality of the proposed activities usually was not deemed “creative” enough. I would tentatively recon that similar conditions might also prevail in sociology, ethnology and partly in anthropology studies. Might our abilities to investigate, already be that spoiled by the pervasion of schematic visual narratives formulas and overall theoretical *en vogue* creeds?

In his fine, polemic *plaidoyer* for a more haptic and inconspicuous sensuous architecture, challenging the fact that modern consciousness and sensory reality have gradually developed towards the unrivalled dominance of the sense of vision, Juhanni Pallasmaa quotes David Levin’s plea for “The urgent need for a diagnosis of the psychosocial pathology of everyday seeing -- and a critical understanding of ourselves, as visionary beings” Indeed, a huge but certainly necessary, undertaking. Meanwhile, more subtle and direct attempts to charter some of the junctions of video territory on the web, encompassing the concerns for a re-considered visual poetic of the mundanely banal, can certainly be the start of potentially, future more investigative work(s).

2: Parallaxes

The scope of the present paper is thus quite limited and humble in stance, considering the grander questions lurking round the corner of the session’s topic. To paraphrase Proust’s statement asserting that “The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new landscapes, but in having new eyes” a certain parallactic approach will be used, presenting describing and commenting a limited number of videos apparently dealing with seemingly inconspicuous matter, at the same time offering a listing of links and delineating proposals for a series of categorizations.

The investigative method used to gather video material can commonly be described as serendipitous, as surfing through the huge amounts of visual material on various video sites did not, at first, have any other choice parameters than what a seemingly intrigued approach to small pixel thumbnails did convey: Of incongruous, surprising associations, differentiating a particular one from all the others with apparent clear cliché appearance(s) and often embedded title(s). Later if was more a matter of following appropriate links, from one Vlog site to the next. The emergence of what one might call “*un certain regard*” permitted a superficial, yet selective randomness, which certainly focused on the lesser side of the spectacular.

In the following passage, a short compilation of video Vlog sites is briefly outlined, and some particular videos are extracted for future more intensive screenings.

Serendipitous views
One of the very first videos that caught my eye was a short video about cleaning a staircase of a house; a feminine hand, handling a broom, going up and down a narrow winding domestic staircase, finally opening a door, to peek out on the street: Enabling a fine afternoon sunny view of a superb beach lying some few hundred meters beneath. Turned out it was a domestic scene from Valparaiso, Chile, where Pepa Garcia lived. In her very frequent video posts, it was her view unfolding upon events from her daily endeavors, enabling a fascinating in-sight, almost being Pepa. Characteristic for her early videos is the charming refrain from (over) exposing herself (if at all) in most the videos, concentrating instead on the magic of the seen. We are thus introduced to various expeditions ranging from domestic interiors to walks in or around her Valparaiso neighborhood. Especially the interior videos are fascinating, as they do not have any pre-conceived dramaturgy but clearly focus on the intrinsic nature of the (inconspicuous) spaces, presenting an unbiased poetic reverie of the eye. A un-processed reality, yet with a keen, intuitive and perceptive approach to the seen,

”...Because it does not present the mind with an occasion to rethink the consecutive relations of things: because, rather, it offers to our sight [regard], so that it might join with them, the inward traces of vision, and because it offers to vision its inward tapestry, the imaginary texture of the real”10

This freshness of her outlook contributes to make most of her early posted videos small inconspicuous gems, using the camera as a probing instrument rather than the screen as a canvas, dwelling on surface textures rather than offering a rational, three-dimensional perspective. The eye is trained, yet still seemingly unaffected by the vlogging manners that for the moment flourish in the US, where media discussions regarding user-generated content mostly focus on the possibilities of converging into alternative TV-shows concepts. It remains to be seen, though, if her fresh out-look can be maintained.

The quiet observations of seasonal matters have the attention of Jimy Bogdanov. While most of his posted videos might be characterized as poetic video art operations, some pieces retain a clear and vivid poetic vision by their focus on small things that emphatically matter: the night-view out of the window to follow large snow-clearance vehicles, scenes of pedestrians and motorist tackling a blizzard, the space between two houses, or an insisting, blurred gaze at a passer-by with a dog on a lake shore, in spring. Scenes from Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

On the more conceptual side, Aaron Waldez’s large video showcase features “Blandlands”: a noticeable ongoing study of boring American landscapes exploring mundane actions, growing and decaying structures, unnatural nature, strip malls, strip mines, traffic islands, fields, lots, and advertising prophecies. Architectural prospects, short takes of fixed framing, wherein the “action” – or the lack of it – develops, tiny meditations with daydreaming qualities, in all their brutal clarity. Enticing again: the lack of dramaturgy. The freedom of laying out the full scope of things, to yet another gaze. The pieces are not Vlogs, though.

On the generous poetic visual side it’s Pouring down: Daniels Liss’s vlog where absolute marvel videos of timeless, attentive and compassionate scrutiny are presented. Although recently experimenting more freely, most of the works center on seemingly inconspicuous situations, mostly from New York, and elevates them into short Haiku-like narratives, often accompanied by supplementary voice-over. Street corners, views through windows, bits of interiors, situations. The most impressive pieces remain open to precise translations and charm by their fine technical, filmic poetic virtuosity. All have a very keen, precise and conscious attention to architectural and spatial matters, even when capturing footage from dandelions fields. The narrative approach is refreshingly personal: quite oblique to what one is
accustomed to from Northern American blog/vlogs. A quieter, yet much more insisting, intimate, integral coherent all round stance, supplemented by a broad minded, humanistic visual gleaning, incorporating finely tuned humoristic knowledge. Agnes Varda’s gaze\textsuperscript{13} is certainly present here, yet in a more sophisticated way.

A similar revere approach by Jennifer Proctors\textsuperscript{14} caught, early on, my attention: \textit{Meditation in a corn maze}, suddenly appeared while surfing, divinely ablaze in the midst of a cavalcade of dull video thumbnails. There was a short, enchanting video piece, transferred from 8 mm celluloid, of a walk through a cornfield in Iowa. Irresistible, charming, with a fine mix of straight-forwardness and exotic jungle-like rambling. Extremely captivating in the transformation of a mundane rural setting into a moment of exhilarating, attentive bliss. Many other fine pieces of hers are to be explored on the vlog.

Transforming apparently mundane moments into condensed cavalcades of poetic intensity has been the trademark of Duncan Klein’s \textit{29 fragiledays} productive Vlog\textsuperscript{15}. Toggling between capturing focused bits of casual human moves and movements in various urban settings and consciously framing inconspicuous urban architectural sets, a great many videos combine the two gazes into a fascinating amalgam. Two noticeable video pieces are the accumulation of random photographic “stills” taken every minute during a whole day or a longer walk in London and Seoul. The ensuing build-up forms a hypnotic, kaleidoscopic tunnel; The apparently vanished time-line in the in-betweens permits a differentiated view upon each frame - by just stopping the video- thus revealing the seemingly sublime inconspicuous banality of each setting. The stroboscopic effect of the accumulation is the catalyst in retaining a narration of complexity. Each single part, taken alone could remain mute. Re-discovered in the flux, a re-view is possible, enabling various oblique approaches to the seen: scanning detective like for clues, projecting romantically, or otherwise translating.

The visual conglomerate could also be labeled as a \textit{Gestalt, a Phi Phenomenon}\textsuperscript{16} conclusive of Wertheimer’s investigation of \textit{Apparent Movement}:

\begin{quote}
"What is happening in the whole cannot be deduced from the characteristics of the separate pieces, but conversely what happens to a part of the whole is, in clear cut cases, determined by the laws of the inner structure of it’s whole"\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

Yet, opening quite new cognitive investigations, if content, form and narrative are to be taken even further to account, re-evaluating \textit{the myth of the persistence of vision}\textsuperscript{18} and questioning the boundaries of all-pervasive visual habituation codes and conventions.

Conversions of un-remarkable footage from inconspicuous settings into sophisticated, condensed studies of visual perception probing the confines of formal visual cognizance can be found in \textit{Direct Language} and the subsequent \textit{Direct Objective} vlogs, operated by Steven Ball\textsuperscript{19}. As shorter and more disparate pieces than Ball’s more elaborate art videos, they nevertheless protrude from ordinary vlog posts. Usually using unostentatious settings as stepping-stones footage for the videos – from urban settings, interiors, and forests - the subsequently manipulated and precisely choreographed patterns mirrors the concern for formal and cognitive visual rigor. Often palindromic and/or surgically sliced into rhythmic, repetitive footage with careful concern for soundtrack implications, the short pieces reveal, at times, surprising short-circuiting attentive observations from the seemingly banal out-sets. A study in the manipulation of the inconspicuous.

Though more blog than vlog, Philip Sanderson’s \textit{Brutsmog}\textsuperscript{20} supplements his showcase of video/art works and once in a while features new video works. The overall prime concern seems to be the transformation of everyday
objects, ordinary situations and settings into abstracted moving visual pattern language, again with a keen consideration for the compatible audio side of the works. In one remarkable piece, entitled *Fleshtones* exploring the concept of correlations between sound and vision, extreme pixilated pornography footage is extracted, with auto generated piano sound accompaniment. The inconspicuous banal “motion of earthly bodies is thus transformed into something of beauty, harmony and contemplation.” A piece following on Klee, Arp Mondrian and Kelly’s grid mediations, where “order is serving as a metaphor of order”, yet re-integrating formal abstraction into a balance with life’s messy concreteness.

Contemplating beauty in a rather combined blurred state of seemingly intoxication and un-focused vision, Igemar Hultquist from Bitlabmalmö short video “An Art Exhibit at Home” presents insights into his (?) apartment and reviews the “art” found on the walls or installed on the shelf’s - including a peek into the fridge-, moving from one room to the next. The resulting, if blurred, panoptical telescoping, presents quite an ambiguous framing of the seemingly inconspicuous: part parodying, the compassionate intensity at visually gleaning is nevertheless conveyed in quite a charming, indirect way. Unfortunately, Bitlabmalmö ceased regular postings some time ago, yet many fine short videos still feature inconspicuous matters as basis of video graphic introspections, in the sites archive.

In Rosalind Krauss’s influential – yet nowadays certainly needing some revision - characterization of the video medium as essentially narcissistic, it seems that the artist’s body’s fascination with itself in the “mirror” of video space is a fascination not just with the body’s self, but also with the way others see it. In a strange blend of mostly short videos and matters from his confined room, Venezuelan Juan Navarro vlog *Envideo* presents a cavalcade of narcissistic video pieces, sometimes inter-cut by shorter views of footage of his pet tortoise, and various play-full activities with some of the paraphernalia of his room. A restless. Quite distinct collection of videos, displaying a youthful melancholic spleen in the confines of the everyday. One video stands out, though: a portrait of Luz, sitting on a bench, seemingly a university campus setting. A stunningly beautiful young girl - most probably the cause of the hero’s mute romantic chagrin - compelling him to digitally re-interpret himself, in seemingly never ending framings in his introverted journey around his room. The inconspicuous staged as claustrophobic pathos, seldom leaving the premises. An undertaking that Xavier de Maistre successfully managed to extricate himself from in his subtle masterpiece “Journeys around my Room.”

On the other side of confinement, Wu Yi-hua’s blog *Pirouette cacaouette*, featured links to her own work, with a subdued but nevertheless strikingly powerful simple piece: *aller-retours,* This is probably one of the most minimalistic piece in this subjective overview: a one minute b/w the view of a beach, with heavy clouds looming, and but little wave movements, as the sea is almost still. During the endless loop from one-minute footage, the clouds slightly shift into the horizon, to retreat back again, witnessing the feeble moves of the sea onto the shore. This insistent gaze, the framing of probably the most inconspicuous setting, leads, to a meditative image, a “reverie” not unlike Bachelard’s insistence on the literary image to be “enriched by a new oneric life, to create a different meaning and evoke a different reverie...” Present, yet constantly receding.

One would then be reminded of Italo Calino’s Mr. Palomar reading a wave. Named after a famous telescope, Mr. Palomar is a quester after knowledge, a visionary in a world sublime and ridiculous. In his observations, he focuses both on inconspicuous natural phenomena and urban paraphernalia. Whether contemplating a cheese, a woman’s breasts, or a gorilla’s behavior, he brings us a vision of a world familiar by consensus, fragmented by the burden of individual perception:
“...But how can you look at something and set your own ego aside? Whose eyes are doing the looking? As a rule, you think of the ego as one who is peering out of your own eyes as if leaning on a windowsill, looking at the world. . . . So, then: a window looks out on the world. The world is out there; and in here, what do we have? The world still - what else could there be? With a little effort of concentration, Mr. Palomar manages to shift the world from in front of him and set it on the sill, looking out. Now, beyond the window, what do we have? The world is also there, and for the occasion has been split into a looking world and a world looked at. And what about him, also known as "I," namely Mr. Palomar? Is he not a piece of the world that is looking at another piece of the world? ”

So the abovementioned, selected videos could also be seen as contemplations. Introspective, scrutinized personal reveries, on inconspicuous moments; Captured and manipulated by newly available technological means, extrovertly catapulted into public domain for further perusal, each with different agendas and out-looks.

Nothing new at that. Indeed, since time primordial, mankind’s most sophisticated activity is communication, conveyance and dissemination of personal observations in any forms. Yet, as the advent of any new technological break-through is accompanied by rather profound changes in most activities and their modus operandi, it remains yet to be seen what the actual flooding of videos on the web might depose of various residues, once the practice of up-loading and sharing videos has main-steamed itself to a common variety of everyday activities. But one condition is quite certain: in the same way as SMS messaging via cell-phone communication has already altered the use of language and its semiotics, video clips proliferation will also shift the boundaries of our use and understanding of the semiotics of moving images. And thus, of our ability to cognize perceived reality in various contextual translations.

3: Immersions into a frame

My purchase of a household digital video camera some eight years ago, lead to the usual amateur activities. The capture of documentation of various personal events, travel diaries and more specific work-related events or spaces to be investigated, condensed into edited short video bits, accumulated in labeled pixel-albums. Having no intentions of producing “films” or art videos, I nevertheless relatively quickly became aware of the ensnaring of conventional filmic codes and general narrative semiotics. As “I” was “filming” and afterwards editing the footage, the “rhetoric” of the seen and its subsequent representation gave rise to many questions. One of the most recurring was to what I was actually seeing, the next how I was seeing it. The why slowly seemed to dissolve into other, more metaphysical domains?

I was seeing, I had acquired the tools to reproduce the seen. If contextual and other narrative meanings could, for a while, be disconnected from the seeing and reproducing activities, others, to me, more important issues arose.

Having, per futile romantic pre-disposition, an affinity for observing more prosaic, inconspicuous matters, I realized while “filming” and subsequently editing, that my gaze mostly seemed to wander into other territories than the original, conscious rational our-set(s). Different reveries seemed to take place, while concentrating on capturing what seemed to be the topic or subject of the seen. The camera was seemingly a treacherous companion, leaking important visual clues, as it seemed quite attracted to a whole range of inconspicuous paraphernalia and situations than the “I”, filming, was rationally aware of. Yet, I immediately realized that it was no incident. It was a continuation of the nature of my gaze, of its inner curious predisposition.
I had thus accumulated quite a large amount of footage, seemingly unusable, yet of some unpredictable character. Further attempts to more conscious re-evaluations or contextualization just increased the storage problem.

The advent of easy video uploading on the web, in the midst of the peaking Blogging craze in early 2005, gave me the opportunity to consciously discard some of my disparate video material, while at the same time investigating the day-to-day structures of these emerging media territories.

I set up a Vlog on the web. I cloaked myself in an avatar’s monicker.

As I realized that this could turn to become a somehow absurd endeavor, I enrolled Dr. Faustrol and practiced vlogging as Pataphysician, to give the coming activities more creative leeway and to maintain a speculative investigative perspective. Simultaneously thus un-burdening myself from the real “I”, that would eventually become the seer, editor and producer of the material.

Mutating into my very own Palomar clone with pathos, I started to redefine my contemplations. As blogs were mostly diary inspired, I would concentrate my vlogging to day-to-day matters, trying to distill an essence of some of the seen into short pieces of condensed visual matter. Its sources would be the most “inconspicuous” that I would encounter during my daily peregrinations. (As it turned out, my whereabouts, my concept(s) of inconspicuousness, were far more spectacular than I had expected. What I would deem being inconspicuous would not necessarily be labeled such after a re-view)

Simultaneously, I would indulge in finding videos on the net that might have some of the same qualities that I tried to capture and convey. I could label this combined endeavor as my private “laboratory of patient visual research”, open to a public, further investigative, gaze. The propagated Web 2.0 communicative side effects soon established themselves. Exchanged comments and short mail correspondence with strangers, lead sometimes to more in-depth conversations. A close network surrounding the video category of “gazes on the inconspicuous” established itself, with regular interactivity on the net, spanning from Denmark to USA, Canada, England, Sweden, France, Venezuela, and Chile as the most active proveniences. One interesting observation could very quickly be stated: In general terms, videos from the US had quite a different approach than those from other countries. Lacking more oblique, ambiguous approaches, both in imagery and narration(s) where very closely related to TV and Film conventions. Especially when featuring the producers/protagonists on screen, the TV approach dominated with a keen emulation of soaps and commercials clichés. With a noted preference for the “spectacular” as opposed to “inconspicuous”. The chosen video samples featured in the first part of this paper are thus far more representative for positions located in the outer borderline of video vlogging territory than the prevailing popular approaches for the moment. This might probably change, though. As the activities in both producing and uploading personal videos on the net very shortly will accelerate drastically, more “genres” will in the near future appear and be labeled.

Regarding my approach to vlogging the “inconspicuous”: Although I have a keen interest and somehow broad knowledge of conventional films, film art and art videos, I was quickly determined that I would not attempt in my videos to mimic or adhere to any genre. Possibly playing consciously with some, just to get the feel of some of it. The main goal then seemed to come as close as possible to re-producing what I actually experienced seeing. Unfortunately not having the complete capabilities of a synaesthete, I was nevertheless increasingly and wholeheartedly aware that
the content of images alone, and of their conventional dramaturgy, is but a surface. Yet, I would actively refrain from
telling stories via video. The Massage is the Meaning, to paraphrase McLuhan.

The videos are also my feeble attempts to consciously re-phrase, re-view and re-construct the childlike outlook I once
had, and which is so difficult to re-capture in our present, visually saturated world. A clogged visuality, filled with
conventions, rules and formalia, which I would try to escape from. Few of my posted videos come somehow fully close
this goal. But each of them represents an earnest piece of research. A simultaneous, oblique aware gaze upon matters
of architectural or theatrical relevance would also, schizophrenically, be present in some of the videos.37

It should be noted though, that none of the videos are conscious constructs, made after some sort of pre-arranged,
scripted conceptual framework. They remain rather prosaic diary entries of what I happened to see during my daily
itinerary, at work, travelling, attending some theatre/dance performance, or while simply moving about from one
endeavour to the next. While always positively bewildered by the beauty of simple things and settings, I became
intensively more conscious about how I actually was seeing. The possibility of being able to frame, capture and later re-
edit these short, at times magic moments opened up some interesting new terrain. Particularly in being attentive to the
more precise parallaxes between what and how I actually saw and the possibilities to re-present it later in such manners
closest to my particular personal experience. Yet, simultaneously maintaining a certain amount of documentary data
enabling some crude poetics of “genre” hybridisation, through the visual transformations. The whole, growing
conglomerate, might somehow obliquely be labelled as yet another puzzling fragment of an “Atlas of Emotions”38,
mapping a personal psycho-cartography of the inconspicuous encounters of the everyday.

4: Kino-Eye, new screens and different framings.
Soviet Filmmaker Dziga Vertov’s seminal documentary/montage film “The man with a movie-camera”39 (1928),
documented a large variety of inconspicuous matter to portray a typical day in Moscow from dawn to dusk. Starting at
a slow pace, the film gradually transforms the recorded gaze via a series of stunning, radical editing techniques and
cinematic pyrotechnics. To this day the film maintains it’s stunningly fresh out-look. Vertov desired to create moving
images with their own “rhythm, one lifted from nowhere else, and we find it in the movements of things.” For Vertov, an
emphasis on the psychological interfered with the “desire for kinship with the machine.”40

Vertov’s camera work, seemingly so simple and airy, was an extraordinary feat. Heavy, clumsy and bulgy, film
equipment then was a far cry from today’s miniature digital paraphernalia. It is nevertheless surprising that the
radicalism of his conscious camera moves and subsequent editing, this particular kino-eye, recording the inconspicuous
from most unusual angles, remains so underdeveloped in mainstream video uploads today. As if the said “desire for
kinship” with the new digital devices is not yet fully developed.

This conscious gaze on how to record and re-process the viewed is probably still hindered by the permeating semiotics
of TV and Hollywood narratives. It remains, literally, to be seen how and in which directions video-blogging evolves,
if it will survive as an overall genre like blogging, or, if user content generated video mutates over into yet another
tradable commodity. The niche like position of more elaborate personal video work on the web seems to divide itself
into classically copy-righted art-videos, seeking recognition and wider public audience and a very much larger, more
disparate field. With the rising availability of even simpler uploading tools, on-line facilities and various venues for
teaching the basics of digital video, the application possibilities are seemingly unlimited.
One thing is sure though: the screen has moved. Moving images have migrated into the realm of portable devices, where not only whole films and readily available TV programs can be accessed but also the flooding of user generated video clips. The momentary, short period of transition, will in a few years have quite a different out-look, interface(s) and overall semiotic(s) with a multitude of genres, sub-genres, And, hopefully, surfacing subversive creative innovations.

In her seminal essay contextualizing her regrets for the quickening of the first generation digital (QuickTime) “movies” on the net, Vivian Sobchack concludes, “I feel nostalgia at the impending loss of a unique historical experience and a rare and miniature digital object”. Such might also be the situation at this, fleeting moment. For a short while, still, we might experience a series of small framed digital videos, behaving like “movies” still embedded in some sort of contextuality, before their lemming like race away from present, more stable screens, into a trans-portability of multi-space. The short collection of video links presented in this present paper’s context might “mobilize memory and desire through an aesthetics of absence: a privileging of the poetically and philosophically charged gap between a present artifact and the past experience of which it is only a fragment.”

What appears as a trendy, hip digital sub-category in the present moment, a sharpened focus on inconspicuous matter in videos, flaring up for a moment, might soon disappear into inconspicuous oblivion.

Yet, it might well be, that this focus broadens, wabi-sabi like, into a lager, moving mosaic. A pattern of conscious inconspicuousness.

Notes:

1 YouTube is a popular video sharing website, founded in February 2005 where users can upload, view, and share video clips. The wide variety of site content includes movie, TV clips and music videos, as well as amateur content such as videoblogging and short
original videos. The company was named TIME magazine's "Invention of the Year" for 2006. In November 2006, Google Inc. acquired the company for US$1.65 billion.

2 *Surreal Scania* at [http://www.surrealscania.se/](http://www.surrealscania.se/) features fine short videos of seemingly inconspicuous sites from southern Sweden, exploring imaginary geographies; *Being There: Another Kind of Travelogue* at [http://www.beingthere.se/](http://www.beingthere.se/) features short manipulated videos of various tourist spots round the world. Both projects by Robert Willim and Anders Weberg. While the videos are fuelled by apparently banal spatial outsets, their high conceptual artistic qualities somehow erase the inconspicuous outsets.


5 A vlog is a weblog which uses video as its primary presentation format. It is primarily a medium for distributing video content. Vlog posts are usually accompanied by text, image, and additional meta data to provide a context or overview for the video. Vlogs or videoblogs are created by vloggers or videobloggers, while the act itself is referred to as vlogging or videoblogging.

6 In his novel *Tentative d' Épuisement d'un Lieu Parisien*, published in 1975, French writer Georges Perec (1936-1982) does just what the titles implies: he attempts to describe everything he notices from his seat in a coffee shop at the Place Saint-Sulpice in Paris. In his most famous novel *Life: A User's Manual*, from 1978, a Parisian apartment block is described in detail as it could be seen if the entire facade would be removed, exposing every room. Most of Perec’s novels abound with experimental word lists, and meticulous attempts at describing and classifying banal, ordinary things and settings.


13 Steven Ball Vlog Directobjective can be accessed at through his first Vlog [http://directlanguage.blogspot.com/](http://directlanguage.blogspot.com/); click on directobjective link.


16 For an explanation of the "phi phenomenon" see


19 Steven Ball Vlog Directobjective can be accessed at through his first Vlog [http://directlanguage.blogspot.com/](http://directlanguage.blogspot.com/); click on directobjective link.


20 Philip Sanderson's Vlog/Blog can be accessed at > [http://stormbugblog.blogspot.com/](http://stormbugblog.blogspot.com/)


24. bitlabmalmø media cooperative can be accessed at > http://bitlabmalmø.net/video


26. Juan Luis Casanares Ballester’s Vlog can be accessed at > http://envideo.blogspot.com/

27. link: > http://s1.video.blp.tv/0100000434626/Juanlcb-Solamov388.mov


29. The video is viewable on-line at http://wuivar.genevart.org/aller_retours.html


31. Italo Calvino: Mr Palomar, Harvest/HBJ Book (1986), San Diego.

32. I. Calvino / Palomar p.

33. Spacetwo: patalab by Sam Renseiw; Link: http://patalab02.blogspot.com/. For those of you on a PC: you will need to install Quicktime to view the videos. (free download on the net) Firefox browser works best with this site.

34. A moniker is considered by a professional clown to be sacrosanct by the traditional code of non-infringement. The moniker is considered to be an attribute of the character of the clown and not of the performer. The Code of Non-Infringement refers to the accepted business practice and custom among certain performance artists, particularly clowns, that an artist’s unique performance attributes are proprietary and cannot be used or claimed by another. Among clowns, these attributes may include stage names, costume designs, facial designs, as well as a clown's specific jokes or “gags” and “bits”

35. Pataphysics, a term coined by the French writer Alfred Jarry, is a philosophy dedicated to studying what lies beyond the realm of metaphysics. It is a parody of the theory and methods of modern science and is often expressed in nonsensical language. It has been defined by Jarry in “Exploits and opinions of Faustroll, Pataphysician” as “The science of imaginary solutions, which symbolically attributes the properties of objects, described by their virtuality, to their lineaments” Alfred Jarry: Exploits and opinions of Faustroll, Pataphysician, Exact Change, Boston, 1996.

36. Synaesthesia is a general term covering the condition of a simultaneity of haptic perceptions whereby stimulation in one sense triggers stimulation of a different sense. A synaesthete is able to hear color, taste shapes, describe the color, shape and flavor of somebody’s voice, or music, the sound of which looks like “shards of glass”. Throughout history many notable artists have claimed to have synaesthesia, including Rimbaud, Kandinsky, Scriabin and the Russian filmmaker Eisenstein. Recent scientific research has moved the condition from the domain of mainstream neurology to mainstream neuroscience, though explanations for the conditions cause remain controversial.

For more information on this topic, see:

37. The overall conglomerate of posted video pieces might, on first glance, appear somehow disparate. I have thus chosen to include 11 illustrative videos from spacetwo: patalab, that might illustrate a gaze on “inconspicuous” matter to accompany the papers presentation. More of these videos can be accessed on-line at the following link: http://patalab02.blogspot.com/

38. Throughout her marvellous book “ Atlas of Emotions” , Giuliana Bruno insist on the inseparability of seeing and traveling. In an evocative montage of words and pictures she emphasizes that the voyeur must also be the voyageur, that “sight” and “site” are irrevocably connected . The book is a highly original endeavor to map a cultural history of spatio-visual arts. It Traverses a varied and enchanting landscape with forays into the fields of geography, art, architecture, design, cartography and film.


42. ibid, Sobchak, p. 23
A selection of spacetwo:patalab’s inconspicuous videos will be screened at the first Pixelodeon videoblogging seminar at the American Film Institute in Hollywood during two separate sessions June 9 – 11, 2007. Link: > http://pixelodeonfest.com/
A list of all videos curated by Jennifer Proctor in her session at Pixelodeon is available for the moment at http://directobjective.blogspot.com/ June 9th post.