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DAVID ROCKWELL'S HALL OF FRAGMENTS

*Looking for Film's Genius as a Medium through
Audiovisual Geographies**



*È qualche cosa che è saltato in aria, che s'è sbriciolato in mille briciole:
è una cosa nuova, rifatta con quelle briciole, che ritrova integrità, il vero.*

G. UNGARETTI¹

*Un art n'est un art que s'il est limité intrinsèquement
dans son moyen d'expression.*

M. RICHIR²

1. Raising the issue of medium specificity at the time of *expanded cinema*.

Facing a context where the premonition of an *expanded cinema*³ is the rule by now, and where the aesthetic canon is essentially the result of *remediation*, *convergence* and *relocation*⁴ processes, it is allowed to ask ourselves if the centre of the speculation about cinema stays the same, or rather if the technological and stylistic transformations which invaded the field have an influence in linguistic and – above all – in defining terms. In fact, in a context where – namely – a wide spreading of multiple pattern of filmic fruition takes place, it is easy to get lost and fall under the spell of different charming and inspired works of art, which are

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¹ UNGARETTI, G., Premessa a *Sentimento del tempo*, in ID., *Vita d'un uomo. Tutte le poesie*, (PICIONI, L. eds.), 1970. Milano: Mondadori, p. 530.

² RICHIR, M., Le cinéma: artefact et simulacre, *Protée*, 25, 1, pp. 79-89.

³ The reference is first and foremost to YOUNGBLOOD, G., 1970. *Expanded Cinema*, New York: Dutton & Co..

⁴ The main references about remediation, convergence and relocation are at least BOLTER, J.D. & GRUSIN, 1999. R., *Remediation: understanding new media*, Cambridge (MA): MIT Press; JENKINS, H., 2006. *Convergence Culture: where old and new media collide*, New York – London: New York University Press; CASETTI, F., 2007. *L'esperienza filmica e la rilocalizzazione del cinema: una traccia di lavoro*, (unpublished text) or ID., 2008. L'esperienza filmica e la ri-localizzazione del cinema, *Fata Morgana*, 4, (January-April), pp. 23-40, and ID. eds., 2009. Relocations, *Cinéma & Cie*, 11, (Spring).

undoubtedly interesting from many points of view, but which are on the border between cinema and *non-cinema*.

It becomes thus strictly important to understand what to focus our attention on, not closing ourselves in the movie theatre (considering film as the exclusive worthy object of research), nor even pretending to call *cinema* what is definitely *not* cinema. This is a ticklish question, because it pertains the deep nature of the very object of our study. There would be lots of systematic and complicated methodological approaches to the problem, but since I believe it to be a fundamental one, I prefer to restrict complexity – when possible – and choose the easiest way to disentangle the matter – or try, at least.

That's why I suggest to simply take a step backward: to keep distance from something, sometimes, allow to better outline the situation.

This step backward is set in on two levels:

1. it is an apparent estrangement that cinema carries out, almost as if it would go out from itself, in order to find itself again
2. it is the functional detachment we have to carry out, as scholars of the cinematic scenario, turning analytically our eyes towards the forms that cinema assumes nowadays

These two levels converge into one, unique, wider movement directed to build the identity of cinema as contemporary medium.

It could seem a daring methodological proposal, but luckily a renowned precedent legitimates us to carry it out. Stanley Cavell is to be mentioned, but – particularly – I'm not thinking about his notion of *automatism*⁵; I am referring instead to Rosalind Krauss, and to her suggestion to abandon “the specificity of the individual medium [...] in favour of a practice focussed on what has to be called art-in-general, the generic character of art independent of a specific, traditional support”⁶. In this perspective, the specificity of a medium doesn't eventually lie in the expression forms of *that* medium, rather it is paradoxically to be found in other hybrid structures⁷. In other words, “the filmic apparatus presents us with a medium whose specificity is to be found in its condition as self-differing”⁸. This *differential condition*⁹ means that the real essence of a medium just comes to the surface in the very moment in which the medium itself is able to vanish in its traditional form and reshape as something else.

⁵ CAVELL, S., 1979. *The World Viewed* (enlarged edition), Cambridge (MA): MIT Press.

⁶ KRAUSS, R. E., 1999a. Reinventing the Medium, *Critical Inquiry* (issue “Angelus Novus”: Perspectives on Walter Benjamin), 25, 2, Winter, (pp. 289-305), cit. p. 294.

⁷ This would pose the aesthetic question of the condition of art, in terms of unity *vs.* multiplicity. On this issue, which cannot be discussed here, please refer to “Estetica – Problematica. 15” (definition by VATTIMO, G.), 1979. *Enciclopedia Filosofica*, III, Roma: Le lettere – EDIPEM, p. 331.

⁸ KRAUSS, R. E., 1999b. *A voyage on the North Sea. Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition*, London: Thames & Hudson, p. 44.

⁹ KRAUSS, R. E., 1999b. p. 45.

The same position is shared by some recent publications¹⁰ precisely dealing with the issue of medium specificity. Unless the present atmosphere is characterized by a discontinuous horizon, where new materialities compared to classical cinema are invested with pre-eminently filmic expressiveness, a set of cinematic features seems to survive – or better: exactly the surviving cinematic features represent a symptom of innovation and preservation at the same time. My attempt is to shift the core of these considerations and apply the same logic to a concrete cinematic experience, aiming to identify its specific. This specific is what we can call *film's genius as a medium*¹¹.

2. Looking for cinematic *Fragments* through audiovisual geographies.

Having said this, we can now approach David Rockwell's *Hall of Fragments*, assuming it as study case. This work fits the perspective I just illustrated briefly, because on the one hand it shows how cinema can apparently estrange from itself, and on the other hand I believe it to be a good example to practice that paradoxical detached gaze, which permits us to take into consideration an object looking for its media specificity.

The *Hall of Fragments* is an installation by David Rockwell & Associates produced with the collaboration of Reed Kroloff and Casey Jones. It was presented at the 11th Architecture Venice Biennale in 2008, where it was selected as *ouverture* of the whole exhibition. Significantly, the exhibition was entitled *Out there – Architecture beyond Building*, a theme which recalls the idea of going out of a disciplinary precinct, as if the movement beyond its borders would represent the necessary step in order to focus on it. The work is composed by a structure shaped as an aisle made up of a projecting surface; the subject is expressly invited to pass through this space, which develops just in front of him.



¹⁰ The most recent reference on this issue is the pamphlet by CASETTI, F., 2009. *I media dopo l'ultimo Big Bang*, *Link*, (Che fare? La tv dopo la crisi), 8, pp. 197-209.

¹¹ The expression is by KRAUSS, R. E., 1999a., p. 297.

Hall of Fragments, the central aisle.

He is not only a visitor but a spectator at the same time, because while walking in between these screen-walls, he has the chance to watch moving-images taking shape on them. This is an important point of the installation concept, which is further strengthened by the areas around the central corridor. On the right and on the left there are in fact a number of screens set at the bottom of the two central walls, arranged in echelon formation and oriented towards the spectator's eyes.



Hall of Fragments, lateral view.

If the screens of the passage literally wrap the visitor up, favouring his movement through the space of the *Hall*, the lateral ones do not give him any possibility but stopping: they catch his attention, driving him to have a look. “The result is a direct engagement of the viewer with the [installation] as a viewing apparatus and, through it, with the space in which it is placed”¹².

What he can watch on the screens I just mentioned, are sequences excerpted from famous films, projected over and over again; they are very different among them, and the motion pictures from which they are taken are very different as well (scenes from *North by Northwest* are placed just next to scenes from *The Lord of the Rings*, *Metropolis* next to *Blow Up*, *Blade Runner* between *Play Time* and *The Wizard of Oz*¹³). But all of

¹² Cfr. HANHARDT, J. G., 1990. Video Art: Expanded Forms, *Leonardo*, 23, 4, p. 438.

¹³ The fragments have been excerpted from: *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang 1926), *La cité des enfants perdus* (Marc Caro, Jean-Pierre Jeunet 1995), *Moulin Rouge* (Baz Luhrmann 2001), *Waterworld* (Kevin Reynolds 1995), *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (Peter Jackson 2001), *The Truman Show* (Peter Weir 1998), *What Dreams May Come* (Vincent Ward 1998), *Alien* (Ridley Scott 1999), *Batman* (Tim Burton 1989), *Time Bandits* (Terry Gilliam 1981), *Dark City* (Alex Proyas 1998), *Team America: World Police* (Trey Parker 2004), *La belle et la bête* (Jean Cocteau 1946), *Artificial Intelligence: AI* (Steven Spielberg 2001), *Himmel ueber Berlin* (Wim Wenders 1987), *North by Northwest* (Alfred Hitchcock 1959), *Fellini Satyricon* (Federico Fellini 1969), *Barton Fink* (Joel Coen 1991), *The Matrix* (Andy & Larry Wachowski 1999), *8 ½* (Federico Fellini 1963), *The Shining* (Stanley Kubrick 1980), *Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope* (George Lucas 1977), *2001 – A Space Odyssey* (Stanley Kubrick 1968), *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles 1941), *La Notte* (Michelangelo Antonioni 1961), *Play Time* (Jacques Tati 1967), *Blow Up* (Michelangelo Antonioni 1966), *The Golden Compass* (Chris Weitz 2007), *Zabriskie Point* (Michelangelo Antonioni 1970), *Rear Window* (Alfred Hitchcock 1954), *Brazil* (Terry Gilliam 1985), *Auntie Mame* (Merton Da Costa 1958), *A Clockwork Orange* (Stanley Kubrick 1971), *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (Mel Stuart 1971), *Tron* (Steven Lisberg 1982), *The Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming 1939), *Russian Ark* (Alexander Sokurov 2002), *Professione: Reporter* (Michelangelo Antonioni 1975), *Gattaca* (Andrew Niccol 1997), *West Side Story* (Jerome Robbins & Robert Wise 1961), *Spider Man* (Sam Raimi 2002), *Lemony*

them are quoted by the curators following a common standard: all of them have been cut and inserted inside a new whole. They are displaced *fragments*, taken out from the institutional site of cinema and “collapsed into the physicality of their support”¹⁴, to be replaced in a new context; in fact, if the space of editing was traditionally the film, the sequences are now rooted out and re-edited in a three-dimensional, physical *space*, which becomes thus a cinematic *place*¹⁵. In this sense *Hall of Fragments* synthesizes and shows the movement performed by the body of cinema towards new media territories (i.e. video-installation), not actually to put a lost original text together back, since the components come from different sources, but yet to refashion themselves and the imagery they build into a new whole. The aim of creating a continuity which always characterized the editing process assumes here the forms of *collage*, perpetrating on the one hand the same goal – that is to say, create continuity –, but on the other hand showing the awareness that a fracture is occurred, slipping a space-time discontinuity into the contemporary audiovisual geography.

Consequently, these fragments are not arranged in a linear assembly of serialized sequences, on the contrary they are just placed side by side giving birth to a choreographic pattern made up of images combination and multiplication. More precisely: in the first part of the installation, heterogeneous sequences are used, while in the second one the video-projection shows the same excerpt on each screen. This resembles a split-screen, creating thus the impression of a multiplication of the image, because the very same sequence taken from Fleming's *Wizard of Oz* (1939) is endlessly reflected. Notwithstanding the autonomy, which characterizes the screens at the beginning, they converge afterwards in terms both of content and timing.

As a matter of fact, the duration of each sequence is exactly the same; furthermore, they are synchronized; this is evident when the images of Dorothy's hearing at the Wizard's place prevail on the others, which are in fact suspended in order to let the screens share a mutual ending, displayed throughout the *Hall*.

The effect of this double pattern (combination / multiplication) is an explosion of frames, which is metaphorically rendered by the image of a fire crossing the screens and spreading all over the background. These flames, which are – once again – those staged by the old man in Fleming's film, when trying to recreate the image of *Oz*, bring us right in the focus of the analysis.

Snicket's. *A Series of unfortunate Events* (Brad Silberling 2004), *Das Cabinet des dR. Caligari* (Robert Wiene 1920), *Edward Scissorhands* (Tim Burton 1990), *Minority Report* (Steven Spielberg 2002), *Dune* (David Lynch 1984), *Hauru no ugoku shiro* (Hayao Miyazaki 2004), *Cleopatra* (Joseph L. Mankiewicz 1963), *The Hudsucker proxy* (Joel Coen 1994), *Alphaville, une étrange aventure de Lemmy Caution* (Jean-Luc Godard 1965), *Dr. Strangelove or: How I learned to stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (Stanley Kubrick 1963), *The Fountainhead* (King Vidor 1949), *The Incredibles* (Brad Bird 2004).

¹⁴ KRAUSS, R. E., 1999b, p. 53

¹⁵ On the issue “space vs. place” I use the distinction made by M. Heidegger in *Bauen, wohnen, denken*, in ID., 1952. *Darmstädter Gespräch, Mensch und Raum*, Darmstadt: Bartning, Neue Darmstädter Verlagsanstalt. Moreover, the transformation of the gallery space into a cinematic place is emphasized by the darkness of the Hall, which is liven up by the moving-images, thus recalling the traditional movie theatre.

The most important points about this installation risen by now are to be identified as (1) the aesthetic of fragmentation, (2) the tie between fragments and the imagery these fragments are able to convey and (3) the spatial dimension in which the revivication of this imagery takes place.

2.1. The aesthetic of fragmentation.

As far as the first issue is concerned, I think it is clear we are presented an object, which is not a coherent, integrated whole. As the name of the work by Rockwell suggests, the main principle of composition is *fragmentation*. To put the question of fragmentation means to single a rupture out, as regards to the work of art or the classical film, and – moreover – it means to refer to a circulation of the work of art in accordance with the nature of contemporary experience¹⁶. Instead of being a logic of reconstruction, directed towards the assembly of parts¹⁷ in a new object recalling the original one, the approach to the issue of fragmentation assumed by the authors is a preserving one. Their aim is to emphasize the fragments as units worthy of artistic and cultural value in themselves. The fragment, here, is not considered as a singular piece of a totality thanks to which a whole acquires its meaning¹⁸ - indeed it is seen as the central component for a conception of art whose institutional condition has been put under discussion. It is thus the fragmentation of art – in our case, of the seventh art – which is actually represented by Rockwell's *Hall*. In a context characterized by a lack of lyricism and structured narrations, the filmic narrative is deprived of its classical development because it is dispersed, expressing thus itself through visual forms, which are pretty close to an aesthetic of dissemination. Claude Amey recently dealt with this topic, as he argued “le concept d’art, qui pose le statut et la fonction de l’œuvre, est désormais lui-même le produit de l’incapacité de celle-ci à réunir ce qui est éclaté”¹⁹. A process of *décollage* is progressively separating art from its own surfaces, inviting it to find other expression spaces. In other words, it becomes possible to find the filmic element even in something, which doesn't apparently seem to be canonically cinematic, but rather belongs to an expanded dimension – for instance, an audiovisual work, placed in a gallery space, realized for an architecture exhibition, is *anyway* able to convey a cinematic experience²⁰. *Hall of Fragments* proposes thus this broadening of the representation space, which is not to be interpreted as a sort of dissolution of the work of art and – for extension – of cinema, rather as

¹⁶ Cfr. AMEY, C., *De l'usage discontinu de l'oeuvre d'art*, in AMEY, C. & OLIVE, J.P., 2004. *Fragment, montage-démontage, collage-décollage, la défection de l'oeuvre?*, Paris: L'Harmattan, p. 25.

¹⁷ For an interesting distinction between the terms *part* and *fragment*, see GREGOTTI, V., 2000. *Diciassette lettere sull'architettura*, Roma-Bari: Laterza, p. 174.

¹⁸ This tradition is to be traced back to Aristotle (*Poetics*, chapter 7, 18), according to whom a metonymical logic of fragment was impossible, because the part couldn't be significant for the whole.

¹⁹ AMEY, C., 2004., p. 26.

²⁰ “La modalité du dé-mesuré, [...] est celle de l'étendue de l'œuvre quand, excédant son appréhension frontale immédiate, elle se prolonge en un espace non commensurable à la vision d'une seule prise [...] soit que l'œuvre englobe le spectateur... soit qu'elle l'inclue en un espace qui implique une circulation ni dehors ni dedans”. AMEY, C., 2004., p. 30.

essential opening²¹. The dissociation of the technical constraint from the specific filmic is then a sign of a widening tension²² that appears in its deep necessity and synthesizes the *differential condition* theorized by Krauss.

2.2. Rejoining the fragments, building an imagery.

This expansion of the field works in a functional way as far as the evocatory power of the fragments is concerned. As already mentioned, they are instruments of a *mise-en-forme*, because thanks to the sequences selected by Rockwell & Co. we are given the chance to recreate an imagery. It is in particular an imagery linked to architecture, just because the exhibition in which the installation was presented was an Architecture exhibition, but as we noticed, the architectural space that is built in the *Hall of Fragments*, is basically a cinematic production. In fact, the authors declared:

*among the visual pleasures that cinema is able to offer, it doesn't reach its higher effectiveness as it reproduce an architecture [...], but when it creates environments, whose perceptive dimension overwhelms the physical one.*²³

The moving image is thus introduced and exploited to create a metaphorical space²⁴, and the fragments, which are considered like valuable pieces emancipated from the order of a whole, are able to evoke a new perceptive dimension. A dimension based on an imagery, which is brought back to life thanks to the *mise-en-forme* triggered by the moving-images displayed on the screens, that are able to design the borders and fix the dwelling rules of the space. What the curators wanted thus to demonstrate, was that an

*architectural space was [...] created without the use of traditional architectural form ... So much of our architecture" – says Kroloff – "is about capturing the imagination in physical form and film does the same thing.*²⁵

Following this process of staging a variety of recognizable narratives an imagery get built, and even though it is referred first of all to architecture, it is interesting to underline that the rough materials necessary to shape it is made up of filmic frames. Once again, we are in front of a *differential use* of the moving-images, because it is thanks to the deformed forms of the fragment considered within a reflection which is not directly focused on the seventh art, that we come across a typical and traditional feature of cinema, that is to say the ability to give shape to reality, to render it visually, typify it, creating archetypes of it, producing

²¹ "Ce n'est pas ici la dissolution de l'oeuvre qui est en jeu, mais son ouverture". ROLLET, S., 2004. *Egoyan : une mémoire en pièces*, in AMEY, C. & OLIVE, J.P., 2004., p. 134. On the issue of the creation and fruition processes of the work of art as opening, an essential reference among others is HEIDEGGER, M., *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*, in ID. 1950. *Holzwege*, Frankfurt/M.: Kolstermann.

²² Cfr. "Frammentismo" (definition by BETTINI, S.), 1979. *Enciclopedia Filosofica*, III, Roma: Le lettere – EDIPEM, p. 755.

²³ ROCKWELL, D. & KROLOFF, J., *Hall of Fragments*, in A.A.V.V., 2008. *Out There – Architecture Beyond Building*, exhib. catalogue, 2, Venezia: Marsilio (translated by the author).

²⁴ Cfr. HANHARDT, J. G., 1990., p. 437.

²⁵ The quotation is excerpted from a video-interview to Reed Kroloff, which is available at the url: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwYgRVmvN8E> (last accessed 16 March 2010).

thus *exempla* of its elements and situations. In short, the architectural spaces built thanks to Rockwell's video-construction acquires meaning "as containers of representational systems that inform [the way in which] we interpret and act out our daily lives"²⁶.

2.3. Enlivening an imagery throughout space.

These considerations lead us straight towards the last point I proposed to analyze, that is to be identified as the importance which the spatial dimension undertakes within our study case. In fact, in this installation the referential gallery space remains *Beyond Building*: what actually comes to light is a *mediatectural environment*, evoking the cultural imagery through which the viewer engages fragments of visual forms and of cinematic images that inhabit and animate his own reality. Therefore, the construction of the work of art is not granted by the simple *mise-en-scène* of the devices used, nor by the exhibition space in itself: it is the relation between the object and the spatial dimension to become the central element. In this way, the limits of the work of art break, opening up towards fragmentation. This *aesthetic of fragment*, fully reveals its nature of expressive language necessary to reinvent the space as augmented form, fractioning it and informing it as expanded, in order to give birth to a new place. Since the classical film is exploded into fragments becoming a multi-faceted object, whose borders exceed their institutional site, the filmic experience invades the space. As a consequence, the connections among the different elements which compose it melt in a liquid environment, so that the presence and the structures of its limits are unavoidably called into question. For this reason, the attention is to be focused on the *place* of cinema, whose rising pre-eminence as object of study seems to let it prevail on the issue of style²⁷. In particular, it is interesting to consider the new spatial dimensions, which give shelter to the cinematic element, and where it intersects other cultural and artistic components. Here, the filmic device proceeds thanks to a constant operation of *collage*, accumulation, assembly and reshaping. In this sense, it explores the contemporary reality as questing for a meaning, for parallels-and-meridians belonging to a directing system, in which the subject becomes the author²⁸. As Sylvie Rollet puts it "Quelque chose [...] excède les images. Soumis à cet excès, [...] le spectateur va se muer en enquêteur"²⁹.

The creation of an environment made up of *video-construction* permits the visitor to establish a physical and emotional relationship with the space. But the subject is not only a visitor: he is a viewer too, then we have to do with a mutual process, since the interaction between the spectator and the moving-images designs the coordinate system of the audiovisual geography, which is conveyed by the installation. The result is a three-dimensional topology, because the filmic space is not lateral anymore; vice versa, it is something able

²⁶ HANHARDT, J. G., 1990. *Video Art: Expanded Form*, p. 439.

²⁷ L. Jullier, 1997. *L'écran-postmoderne. Un cinéma de l'allusion et du feu d'artifice*, Paris: L'Harmattan; tr. it. 2006. *Il cinema postmoderno*, Torino: Kaplan, p. 19.

²⁸ Cfr. PEREC, G., 1974. *Espèces d'Espaces*, Paris: Galilée, quoted in CARBONE, G., 2004. *Aux limites de l'œuvre: la fragmentation comme processus de disparition de l'œuvre dans l'esthétique de l'objet au XXe siècle*, in AMEY, C. & OLIVE, J.P., 2004.

²⁹ ROLLET, S., 2004., p. 27.

to embed the subject, who is then called to enter it endoscopically³⁰, walking and making his way through it. We can interpret this feature as an indubitable sign of a *post-* (media, modern?) *condition*, characterized by the figure of a subject who not only watches the frames on screen, but also manipulates³¹ the cinematic images, exploring and using them to dwell the world which surrounds him. Consequently, the meaning and the power of the work of art cease to be rooted exclusively in its ontological essence; they are to be found in the performing act which places the filmic experience in the context, in the practices triggered by the cinematic element and in the effects that its presence causes on the spaces.

If we want to take into consideration the specificity of cinema as a medium, then we necessarily have to turn our attention on an expanded scenario, in which the core is simply the filmic experience. An experience, which on the one hand can be easily found outside the canonical precincts of the seventh art as we were used to conceive it, and that on the other hand assumes the aspect of a differential artistic expression, converging with other media territories, remediating itself in other languages and relocating itself in unexpected contexts. Positioning itself outside its institutional collocation, the filmic device seems anyway to be recognizable. This is because of a *cinematic flow* surviving despite the mutations. As anticipated, we can talk about a *film's genius as a medium*.

3. The *film's genius as a medium*.

As the ancient conception of the term makes clear, the *genius* is a kind of deity able to preserve and protect what it is linked to; it reveals itself in the circumstances of experience, nevertheless it soars over the rhythm and the situations of everyday life. In other words, it is stuck in the middle between being and becoming, and so it is characterized at the same time by a conservative and a transformative attitude. That is the reason why Johann Georg Hamann considered it as *Urkraft*³²; this perspective, which associates the notion of genius to an original impulse aiming to disclose the essence of things, leads to the idea of a thin moving substance, featured by the capacity of enliven. It becomes thus very close to a kind of soul, a breath which blows and animates whatever it touches. Since the genius seems to be the principle of organic life, it has been quickly extended as source of personality and specificity; just because of this, it represents the central element to observe, in order to seize the transformations occurring to objects, contexts or concepts. Whenever something peculiar seems to run out of its driving force, its form loses its typical character, making the genius migrate and adhere to new forms to assure its own preservation. In this way, it becomes a sort of spirit-bearer.

It will be almost obvious how the same argument could easily be applied to cinema and its specificity.

³⁰ The expression is by JULIER, L., 2006., Introduction to the Italian edition, p. 9.

³¹ Once again, according to Jullier, the post-modern spectator is used to "*cut, repeat, slow, fasten, rearrange*" the filmic text, getting as result a new cinematic form, which assumes the feature of a filmic experience. Cfr. JULIER, L., 2006., p. 21 (translated by the author).

³² Cfr. HAMANN, J. G., 1938. *Scritti e Frammenti di Estetica*, (LUPI, S. eds.), Firenze, pp. 133-151, quoted by FAGGIN, G., in his definition of "Genius", 2006. *Enciclopedia Filosofica*, Milano: Bompiani, 5, p. 4610 ff.

At the time of the classical conception of cinema as traditional vision of film, the *screen + spectator + movie theatre* device was the unique source of cinematic experience; this was preserved and continuously revitalized thanks to the repeating of the same practices, which nourished and maintained them alive, fixing at the same time the expressive canon, the representation codes and the fruition rules. When this same kind of experience emerged in a number of new occurrences and contexts, its typical filmic feature would risk to get lost; it tended then to condense itself in a series of social conventions, cultural practices, attitudes, expectations, images, aesthetical and technological forms, which converged into an immaterial substance of cinema, or better – a genius typical of cinema as a medium. If in the previous ages it was not necessary for this spirit³³ to find a site, maybe just because it simply had it in the movie theatre, nowadays it needs to identify something recalling that very device. This is a way to react to the disseminatory permutations which influence those elements able to keep it alive and vivid; to achieve the same aim, the innovations which invest the seventh art trigger an *assemblage* of the fragments of filmic experience, whose consistence is to be found precisely in the cinematic genius. This finds its expression in new spaces (as the gallery space), assuming different forms, which perpetrate – to some extent – the old ones. Taken in between by two opposite forces, the cinematic genius proceeds in a double direction, that is to say: on the one hand it preserves the encyclopaedic know-how about cinema, while on the other hand it introduces this knowledge in new contexts, reshaping it and thus using it in a differential condition.

In other words, this is the story of an opening, because even though the originality of the spirit needs the definition of a form to shape a rough material in order to express itself, this same definition is something that cannot be set once for all, rather the power of the genius consists exactly in finding a new form from time to time³⁴.

This form is what we are called to take into consideration.

My suggestion is to see Rockwell's *Hall of Fragments* as a place of cinematic genius, posing the boundaries of the seventh art at stake. I hope the analysis of the installation could justify this proposal, having shown the “redemptive possibilities”, which an alternative medium as art-video highlights, focusing “within its technological support”³⁵ and aesthetic forms. In this perspective, apart from accepting the erosion of the institutional space of its specificity, the filmic device cannot do anything but recognize the chances of this widening, because the necessity of a renouncement is always associated to a regained richness in terms of experience.

³³ I use the term ‘spirit’, keeping its definition as PAGANO, M., puts it in “Spirito”, 2006. *Enciclopedia Filosofica*, Milano: Bompiani, 11, p. 10998.

³⁴ Cfr. PAGANO, M., 2006., p. 11007.

³⁵ The last two expressions are by KRAUSS, R. E., 1999a., p. 304.