

GP Thesis

**“The deposition of dust:  
Interiority and presence in Nam June  
Paik’s *Zen for Film*.”**

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This text is about the deposition of a particle of dust on film and how it comes to form the moving image in **Zen for Film**, an artwork by Nam June Paik, showing the collapsing boundaries between viewer, interior and the architecture, emerging their interiority in an instant of amplified presence of things.

I am narrating this journey of dust to argue against the interior as a separate container, against the atmosphere as an invisible, nearly non-existent factor which can be ignored and against the passivity of bodies in space. The interior is full of atmosphere and thus interconnects bodies and architecture through air and dust, activating their agency and **Zen for Film** demonstrates it transforming that dust in image.

The touchdown of dust on the film is the instant when dust and film cease being separate entities and, together, form the image. The whole artwork is a movie consisting of a very long sequence of empty frames on which particles of dust have accumulated and keep doing so throughout the screening. The movie is thus a prolonged collapse between dust and image, where each particle joins the film and becomes indistinguishable from it, blurring the material boundaries between the two. This dissolution of separations extends outward, from its origin, the projector, to the atmosphere in the screening room, the viewer and the walls, revealing that their individuality is part of an ocean of interconnected relations.

The becoming image of each particle happens as soon as the projector's light shines on it, sealing the material relation of dust and film. Together, they sublime in light and shadow, come out of the projector and land on the viewer and on the wall, in the form of an immaterial entity, the image.

The viewer and the wall's detachment are overcome through the hypnotising experience of receiving the ever-changing moving image. The viewer is drawn to the collapsing image and immersed in it, feeling his or her own interiority, and the wall merges with the image reversing its capacity to separate space in a possibility to create a connection.

Through dust, the mass of air in the screening's room, and thus the atmosphere as a whole, is in an intense process of exchange with the image and so connected to it to the extent where it is hard to tell where the image starts and the atmosphere ends and viceversa. The image, a pyramid of light made by the projector, becomes atmosphere and atmosphere becomes the image.

While it is already blending viewer and wall, the image-atmosphere merges the atmosphere with them as well, acting as a connecting tissue. The image becomes the medium which broadcasts the extending-outward of the always in-process disintegration of boundaries between viewer, interior/atmosphere and the architecture. The celluloid film is surfacing interiority, namely the operations which cause the exchange between the interior, the wall and the viewer, becoming an antenna detecting trace of their presence and movement. Each time a particle of dust becomes image, it irradiates an overwhelming presence which unveils the apparent separation of things.

I will proceed in the text narrating my own experience of *Zen for Film* at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and expand on some of the key concepts the artwork touches namely the impossibility of emptiness, the permeability of the boundaries between things and the indeterminacy of the agency of bodies. Those are the factors that are necessary for the collapse of dust and image, causing the instant(s) of amplified presence and have repercussions on the way atmosphere, architecture, interiors and bodies are conceptualised.

The matter-full-ness of the interior/atmosphere allows the acknowledgement of the non-solidity of boundaries and the revelation of the agency of even the smallest speck of dust. It is such agency which sets up the dust-image short-circuit which ultimately exposes the crash of viewer, interior and atmosphere. After this, I will narrate the embodied journey that dust undertakes from outside, in the atmosphere, to end up on the surface of the film at the moment of impact. We will stop by to deconstruct what is leading to the moments of irradiation, four times: in atmosphere, interior of the museum, screening room to finish on the surface of film. I am using the narrative sections in italics to give a sense of how what I am arguing in each chapter is perceived, at the scales of atmosphere, viewer and dust.

## Zen for film



Nam June Paik - *Zen for Film*, Stedelijk Museum, in 2020.  
Source: <https://www.syavantvlie.nl/blog/selectie/nam-june-paik>

I visited the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam on September 20th, 2020, with the purpose of going to the exhibition “The Future is Now”, a retrospective on the work of Nam June Paik, the renowned Fluxus artist, curated by Sook-Kyung Lee.

I remember there was a beautiful sunny day shining on the countless canals of the city and the air was at a warm tempera-

ture, making me forget it was a moment on the brink of autumn. I was walking on the streets directed to the museum, under the blue sky, in a cool breeze and I never would have imagined that I was already experiencing *Zen for Film* before even setting foot inside the museum. That I was already taking part to the massive exchange of dust that takes place in the atmosphere and acting on it, possibly contributing to the formation of the moving image I was about to see. I couldn't have known that the dust was already on the trajectory to deposit on a film I didn't know existed. I was just walking until at some point I arrived at the museum and entered through the revolving doors.

I got a ticket at the entrance hall and headed up to where the exhibition was situated, climbing up the stairs to the second floor of the building. Thinking back about that day, there were so many artworks that left a sign and constantly reemerge from my memory like *TV Buddha*, *Zen for head* and *Human Cello* for their intensity, their conceptual depth, but none of them gave me an estranged, mysterious feeling like *Zen for Film* did. A feeling of floating.

The video artwork was displayed in an “empty” side room, beyond an opening in a wall. I moved through the mass of air in the museum's interiors and reached the interruption of the wall, crossing the threshold and accessing the small room. It must have been a three meter by five room and the ceiling around four meters high, a cozy enclosure seemingly separated from the rest of the museum and from outside. There was an old school analog beamer placed on a white pedestal in the center of the room, projecting an image on the wall opposite to the entrance. I instinctively sat down and started watching the screening.

I noticed it was actually a silent, empty image with some strange lines and black dots appearing in it, I listened to the projector's clicking and fans. I felt unusually blank and for some reason I was enchanted by the scene. I realised I was watching scratches caused by the projector while moving the film around and specks of dust from the room which happened to stick to it. It was an empty image which couldn't possibly be empty (Asselberghs and Van Pee, 2009) showing that the empty room itself couldn't be empty, it was full of air, which carries dust. There was no emptiness because even the empty contains something. I was feeling empty but I couldn't be, I just had to look closer until I found out what I was feeling.

I was watching and I was feeling suspended, floating on a pillow of air, a portion of the gigantic mass of atmosphere out there. I was not only floating on it, but I was also submerged in it just like I am every day of my life. The obvious was not so obvious anymore, it became a discovery... I realised this air I was in was indivisibly connected to the air of the atmosphere outside and so the room did not feel so cozy and enclosed anymore, it felt like it was completely opened up and high up in the sky. I felt like the boundedness of the white box had been undone, that *Zen for Film* was showing how interconnected the small room was, beyond appearances.

I was watching, looking at images of dust flashing in front of my eyes and I imagined all the dust in the room showing itself, suddenly filling the empty interior in and swirling around everywhere. Like a very unstable liquid, dust was oscillating to any movement in the space and mixing in an unpredictable way. I was not able to tell when any of those floating particles would touch the film and become image. I felt the relationship between the mass of dust and the image as indeterminate, as if there was a gap between the two, the gap being me, the walls, atmosphere and any other presence and micro-action which, as bodies, we could do to cause dust to shift around in the room.

I was watching Zen for Film and I perceived that unknown gap, the agency of my presence, that of the walls and of the atmosphere, the hidden operations which lead to the deposition of dust and to the appearance of those black spots in the image. Each spot that became visible revealed in-depth details about the space where the viewing was happening, because of the site specificity of dust and its sensitivity to movement. It was dust which was emphasizing the matter-full-ness of the space, the permeability of boundaries between things and the agency of the bodies, through its collapse with film in an image, amplifying the presence of the whole site.

I narrated here my experience of Zen for Film trying to surface some feelings and concepts which I believe essential to the work and equally key to the argument that I am making. I(we) will continue imagining the journey of a dust particle travelling from outside, in the air of the city to the museum's interior, from the screening room to the surface of the film, in the instant of impact and formation of the image.

## Dust and atmosphere [-5 years to impact]

*It is five years prior to the impact but you can't know that. Imagine being a speck of dust floating above the streets of Amsterdam, far from the Stedelijk museum, where Zen for Film is displayed, dancing gently among streams of molecules of air. You don't see them around you but you feel supported by invisible soft bubbles, it's like skydiving in slow-motion. As a solid blob attracted by gravity you are falling towards the ground and you start to imagine depositing somewhere nice, to get some relax, but it's not up to you. Despite gravity pulls you to what is below you, the stream of air bubbles is too strong and carries you with it. You feel like you are being pushed around, unable to form your own direction.*

*So many others are like you, stuck in the air and pulled from many currents to one side or another in an unpredictable way. They are exhaust particulate coming from cars, boats and factories, small chunks of soil coming from the ground, fragments of brick facades, people's hair or dead skin and even flower and tree pollen. These and many more with you, fall in the category of dust, microscopic particles which detached from their original generating material. All together with the others, in a family of billions, you take part*

*of a gigantic moving vessel, the atmosphere, you let yourself go and become part of this invisible volume navigating between buildings, people, vehicles... you get lost in all this, you lose reference of where you are. You feel the warmth of the Sun above you and the ground attracting you from below and you travel for a long time. Chances are that you will never even find the place you wanted to go to, one of the many rooms in Stedelijk Museum, to finally encounter the film. All you need is time and patience. The atmospheric vessel keeps moving around, dividing itself, deforming and rebuilding its flows, carrying you and all your dusty companions along. Your destiny is fully in the hands of the turbulent directions of wind. Only waiting may help you find the way and ultimately enter the museum halls. You may have to wait for a long time, even years, if you got caught in an aphazard upwards current and got shot up high in the atmosphere and entered in great currents...*



A photograph of the Earth surface, capturing the diffusion of atmosphere in outer space. The contrast with outer space allows to visualise its "dusty" quality. Source: NASA

You were in the atmosphere, an immense ocean of molecules of air and particles of dust which engulfs our whole planet. With barely any exception, atmosphere floods any space on the surface of Earth which isn't already occupied by something else. If an object moves, the mass of air rushes in to fill in the resulting empty space, de facto making it impossible to devoid a space of atmosphere, unless technologically intensive equipment is used. This means that, at the level of architecture, the so-called exterior is not empty but full of matter and always interconnected with the so-called interior, by an endlessly moving and changing atmosphere.

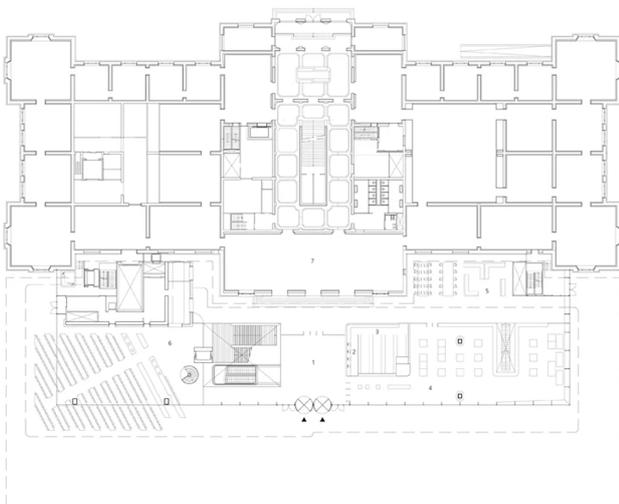
Completely dispersed in all this, dust is an umbrella material which could be any type of microscopic solid floating in the air and accumulating on any surface on Earth. It brings together a great range of different things from parts of buildings to people and it is the product of the pulverisation happening on the surface of things. If the atmosphere, full of dust, fills in the space between things, it is in fact blending their external boundaries in an extensive, overlapped area, carrying their presence far

beyond their apparent confines, as if irradiating them around. Being the most visible part of atmosphere, dust surfaces the unpredictable changes and movements of the atmosphere, reflecting the presence and movement of bodies and things. In the interior of Zen for Film these influences on the air are exercised for the most part, by the viewer and the walls, by their only presence, influencing the flows moving dust. The hidden relationality between these and their agency is surfaced in the instant of impact of dust, when the interconnected interiority of atmosphere, architecture and viewer irradiates out in the material realm.

Dust and air, the main components of atmosphere, demonstrate the matter-full-ness of space, constitute a connecting tissue between solid objects like bodies and architecture and thus fades their boundaries. In other words, atmosphere ties bodies and architecture together in an assemblage in which their relations are a result of coevolution (De Landa, 2006). Dust is a by-product of evolution in time of bodies, with dead skin, fibers of clothes and hair, but also of architecture, with the pulverisation of its walls and atmosphere pulls all this dust together. When it finally ends up on the celluloid of Zen for Film, these processes of evolution are exposed by the image, in an instant of amplification of presence.

## Dust and interior [-3 weeks to impact]

*It is three weeks prior to the impact. After years of floating up in the sky, carried by pressure differences up high in the atmosphere, you and many others in your gigantic family of particles end up swirling in Museumplein, somewhere not so distant from the entrance to the Stedelijk museum. The only factors that increase your possibility of entering is to tag along something else entering the interiors or to infiltrate in the architecture riding a current directed inside, dragging you past the revolving doors at the entrance.*



Ground level floor plan of the Stedelijk Museum. The entrance is below.  
Source: <https://www.designboom.com/architecture/bentham-crouwel-architects-stedelijk-museum/>

*Eventually, the chaotic workings of the atmosphere push you inside the museum, a geometric cavern made up of steel, glass, stone, concrete and even fiberglass, enclosing a volume of air and dust inhabited by humans. You and your particle friends from outside mix freely with other more stable inhabitants of the museum's interior like fragments of paint coming off from the walls, pieces of pulverised concrete and even flakes of dead skin detached from human visitors.*

*The lack of strong winds in the interior makes you slow down, allowing you to fly much closer to the ground. The idleness of currents inside the museum allows the dust families to be more stable and live in here longer, making the particles much more "local" and specific to the place. At the same time, your movement becomes much more dependent on specific events, like a human passing by agitating the volume of air or the fans of a projector... you notice a new sensitivity: your spiralling along with air happens as a negative to the moving of other things in the space, making your position a mirror of their presence.*

*Despite these more calm conditions, you manage to reach the second floor, jumping from a place to another, while moving closer and closer to the walls where the turbulences weaken and air gets thicker. From this close, the solid looking walls don't seem solid at all, rather they look like clouds, making it impossible to tell where air stops and the layer of paint begins. The immense surface is diffused all around, becoming slightly less solid with distance, but never reaching the point of zero density. It is like you are floating in a space which it is impossible to define as atmosphere or wall, but just a zone of exchange of dust, subverting the boundary of the wall.*

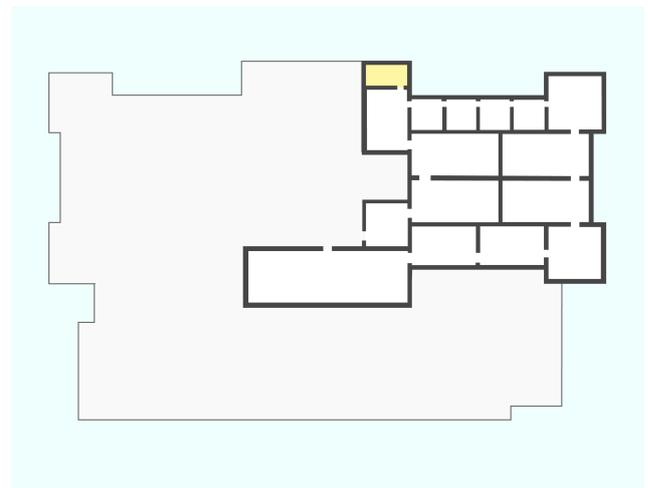


Diagram of the exhibition's interior spaces on Stedelijk museum's second level. In white: the walls. In black: the atmosphere in the interior of the exhibition. In dark grey: the small room where Zen for Film was being screened.

There is no such thing as the absolute separation between two portions of matter, like the wall and the portion of air and dust in the interior, because matter has a texture which is infinitely porous and full of caverns, without empty parts (Deleuze, 1991). Wall and atmosphere are part of the same highly porous cloth of matter, just like bodies and things in the interior, but

are differentiated by their shift in density from within the wall to outside of the wall, from outside of the wall to the inside of bodies. The in-between zone in which dust detaches from walls and bodies is also the zone where the deposition happens on the celluloid in *Zen for film*. The densification or diffusion of that zone is a consequence of any movement and presence in the interior which makes air move or influences the amount and type of dust, hence the sensitivity of the artwork and its capacity to be a spotlight on what is happening in that room.

The exchange of dust between the walls of architecture and atmosphere, the not-empty interior, renders their boundaries permeable and thus allows the interior to be filled with the presence of the walls and bodies. The co-presence of wall, atmosphere and bodies has brought them to be what they are and to the loss of their independence from each other, because their in-becoming relationship is one of interiority (De Landa, 2006). If taken apart from each other, atmosphere, bodies and walls wouldn't be the same as they are when they are together. The exchange of dust establishes a platform which interweaves their presences and their evolution in time.

The coming together through dust transforms the wall, the atmosphere and the bodies in a way that it is impossible to speak of them in separate terms. The "full" of the bodies is gradually transformed in the "empty" of the atmosphere which turns in the "full" of the wall, to the point that it is impossible to say if atmosphere is a very diffuse form of a wall and of bodies or if the wall and the bodies are a very densified version of the atmosphere. Wall, atmosphere and bodies are thus never separated by a boundary but folded together (Ingold, 2020) by the deposition of dust, which collapses their apparent boundaries and their reciprocal duality, demonstrating the interconnectedness of their interiority.

The tendency of air to be extremely sensitive to movement and the capacity of dust to gather fragments from every object present in a space, makes the matterfull interior always specific to the conditions of the site, especially to the agency of bodies. The presence of the walls and their stillness alters the direction of air flow and releases large quantities of particles, while the bodies moving around and even breathing affect the turbulences in the air. While the trajectory of a particle of dust may seem more defined by the way the space is made, they aren't completely and the bodies introduce an element of indeterminacy, of "opacity in the transmission of interactions" (Cache, 1995, p142). The unpredictability of the bodies' agency is subtly inscribed in dust's becoming and it is irradiated in the interior, by the moving image of *Zen for Film*.

The circulation of dust counters a black and white vision of wall, atmosphere and bodies, which ultimately leads to the coming apart of the concept of interior as a boxed empty space surrounded by walls. The interior is, in fact, a product of the transformations of atmosphere, walls and bodies, a surfacing of the interiority of their bond. Opposing the idea of the wall

as an absolutely solid piece of matter which separates and the interior as a completely empty non-wall, dust speaks of an interior which is product of the interrelations of wall, atmosphere and bodies. Surfacing presence and becoming of dust, the image of *Zen for film* is the exteriorisation of the exchange between bodies, walls and atmosphere, an irradiation of their bond of interiority.

## **Dust and the screening room [-1 hour to impact]**

*It is one hour prior to the impact. You are still floating near a wall in Stedelijk museum's second level, at this point closer to your destination, the film's surface. You get extremely lucky and the best possible scenario happens: a human being slams into you and many of your companions, while walking towards Nam June Paik's exhibition. The impact is shocking and the atmospheric wind vessel has to divide itself, pushed around by the solid-ish mass of the human, so you manage to land somewhere on the skin surface of the human. You land at full speed on an area that looks like a misty, desolate desert and manage to blend in with it, along with some of your dusty companions.*

*The human mountain of flesh is shaking and undulating while it is directed towards the inside of the geometric caverns made up of concrete, wood and pigments of the gallery spaces. The whole mass seems to move on a quite precise tempo, producing low booming sound, moving wind currents on the surface and thus causing the whole surface to destabilise and lift enormous quantities of dust. The surface of the human, as John Cage would say, is like an airport for particles of dust, part of a zone where dust takes off from the human into the interior and lands from the interior onto the human. The desert of skin fades outside towards the atmosphere in a zone of diffusion into the air...*

*Chances upon chances allow that once the mountain of flesh reaches *Zen for Film's* room you manage to take off from the airport of dust, along with many other companions, as the mountain of flesh approaches the projector. Parts of the city's buildings, remnants of combustion, soil but also fragments of the interior itself and the human viewer's skin. All together you detach from the human surface and join the room's atmosphere, riding the rollercoaster of currents swirling off the skin.*

*You all are in the sea of particles in the interior, floating freely in its protected atmosphere. The only alterations are caused by the enormous amount of air expelled by the projector's fans for cooling it and the viewer, moving around the space. The walls, the viewer and the projector are continuously receiving and releasing dust in the room, where it all mixes together. Their apparent external boundaries are inevitably blurred by their reciprocal exchange of material. Each of the three is taking in parts of the other, in a generous and inevitable acceptance, carrying the story of their origin and their trajectory with themselves.*

## The viewing

When you arrived in the screening room in the shoes of a particle of dust, Zen for Film was already running, while the celluloid was accumulating dust and being projected on the wall opposite to the entrance. The human who brought you here is watching the moving image, now imagine being in that body, experiencing the becoming of dust. Imagine witnessing with your eyes, in your own body, how the image amplifies the collapse of boundaries between you, wall and atmosphere, extending outward from the film touched by the particles of dust.

*Imagine that you are standing next to the projector watching Zen for Film. You see a vibrating white image on the wall, clusters of flashing black dots on it and some dark lines across the frame. Twenty minutes of blank images, punctuated by deformed shadows, appearing in different areas of the rectangle of light radiating in the exhibition space. It is like watching the parts of you that joined the fragments of the walls around you come together in the atmosphere of the room. As you watch dust, the vector of exchange, appear, your feeling of interconnection with the walls and the inside and outside atmosphere grows beyond measure.*

*You are watching and you find yourself between the projector and the white moving image, in the invisible pyramid of light created by the projector, how Paik used to do while performing. You turn around, facing the projector and stare into the light. The lamp is so bright that it is as blinding as looking straight into the Sun. Your gaze passes through all the transparent molecules in the air of the museum room and reaches the film directly, made invisible by the light. It is as if you are looking up at the Sun, through the clear atmosphere. The image irradiates you with the dematerialised conjunction of dust and celluloid, indeterminately connected to your presence in the interior and to your embeddedness in the continuous cloth of matter with atmosphere and wall.*



Nam June Paik performing in *Zen for film*, 1964. Photo by Peter Moore.

*You are not seeing the image, you are receiving it. So intensely that it warms up your skin, on the surface. The skin, a zone of shifting density interfacing the inside with the outside of your body, acts as a screen, a support for the moving image, that doesn't need to be seen, but merely felt. You look at your own body and you just*

*see the transformations of the image of dust. Your body becomes a screen which doesn't just relate the viewer to the image, but to the materiality of the screen itself (Chateau et al., 2006) which is a combination of your own body and the wall behind you.*

*The surface of the white rectangle and the surface of your body overlap, merging in something different, uniforming the roles of your surface and the white wall as screens. Seeing where your body ends and the image becomes difficult, as if you disappeared nowhere to be seen. The outer sensible surface of your body becomes a displaced extension of the room's interior surface, which in turn becomes an extension of the surface of your body. Your body merges with the wall as a screen, with the image of dust and therefore, with the atmosphere.*

The moving image of Zen for Film weaves into the interior of the museum becoming part of its texture, of a screen-sphere. It is a space-image, a configuration of experience which brings together interior, image and viewer, constitutes their phenomenological co-presence and is based on their mutual, temporary influences on each other (De Rosa, 2020). The viewing of film builds up a space within the interior of the museum, a space of interaction and contemplation. The space-image is an amplification of the matter-full interior's presence showing its in-becoming nature and it is irradiated from the point the particle of dust touches the celluloid, outward. The space-image, manifested in the instant of impact of dust, shows that the becoming of the interior is product of its embeddedness with the walls and the viewer, of the interiority of their relations.

If dust is a medium of exchange of interactions, an agent of interconnectedness, between wall, viewer and interior/atmosphere, interiority is interconnectedness itself, it is a current flowing underneath from which these form and dissolve back in (Bohm, 1980). The process of densification and diffusion which characterises the relationship between viewer, wall and interior is driven by interiority, their loss of independency from each other. At any given moment in time, dust's location and movement in the interior is a result of interiority, the deeply linked flow of interactions between, viewer, wall and air. The deposition of the particle of dust on the celluloid is thus an event consequential to all these interactions and the image, showing the particle, is externalising the processes, and hence the presences, which led it to end up on the film.

The experience of deposition of particles for the extended duration of Zen for Film, allows the viewer to perceive the in-becoming status of dust and by extension the in-becoming of atmosphere, the wall and the viewer him/herself. The perception of his or her own position in this flow of interactions, is what I would define as soul. Soul is not something that is owned by the viewer as if the body was the container of it, but it is the feeling of interiority, of being immersed in large streams of interaction and becoming. The viewing of the particles of dust evokes the soul, surfacing it into the body, in an instant of collapse between the two, presence.

Body and soul are on two different sides of the same substance, concentrated in the area of the body, which is neither corporeal nor spiritual and they complement each other in convexity and concavity (Cache, 1995). Body and soul are thus on two separate dimensions: the body is embedded in the material realm, while the soul is interconnected to the immaterial realm of becoming. Watching the particles of dust becoming the image is beholding at the material realm of dust collapse with the immaterial one of the image, which in turn triggers a collapse of the body with the soul in the viewer.

*You turn around again, look at the projected image and you suddenly get paralysed by the flow of visuals. The result of thousands of frames rushing in front of the incandescent lamp of the projector. A very long sequence of white blank images, punctuated by deformed shadows. The flow is so fast that your brain can't possibly keep up. The black dots and the long dark lines keep appearing and disappearing without a coherence at an unbelievable speed.*

*The sequence of still images seems to accelerate even more and becomes a stream, a waterfall impossible to block still and keep under control. The unknown dark objects start to morph into one another, evolving. It's like the space between one image and the other is magically filled, infused with a real dimension. Even if no movement really happened between one frame and the other, the moving image makes it happen, animating the dark blobs. You have no idea what those blobs may actually be, dust, scratches or parts of your own dead skin. You keep watching, witnessing these pseudo-beings moving about and multiplying, crowding the frame more and more. It is like watching to the collapse of the dusty materiality of the blobs in their immaterial image and feel it expand outwards towards yourself.*

*As if zooming in on time, you feel in increasing synchronicity with the operation of becoming on the film, appearing in the white image. The prospect of a future fades and you get closer to the infinite present of becoming, closer to feeling interiority and so to the overlap of your body with the soul. You find yourself in a point of hysteresis, in "a gap in the time of the world in which we perceive instantaneity", when it is possible to perceive beneath the apparent fixedness of things (Cache, 1995). The flesh of the image is materialised out of speed and engulfs you underneath it. You perceive underneath the viewing of *Zen for Film*, you feel the interiority of relations between you, the walls and the atmosphere, in an instant of presence.*

This instant is the point of inflection between body and soul: the only point in the substance in "which [there exists] a body and a soul, while at the same time being a place of rupture of the site of bodies and of souls" (Cache, 1995, p. 127). The viewer feels his or her own interiority, the embeddedness in the interior and the in-becoming of his or her surroundings. Through the collapse of the materiality of dust and its image, the viewer comes to feel his or her soul, the stream of interactions which interweave the viewer with the dust and thus with the formation of the moving image.

## **Dust and film [-0.1 seconds to impact]**

*The impact is now imminent. You leave the body of the viewer, at this point immersed in contemplation of the soul, in awe to the vastity of interconnectedness. You become, again, the particle of dust which you left just a while ago, floating in the room subject to the many currents in the interior. You are now getting close to the projector generating the image, sublimating in light countless particles of dust from the interior.*

*The turbulences caused by the mountain of flesh, combined with those by the fan and interacting with the walls, eventually cause your trajectory to end on the 16 mm undeveloped celluloid film operated by the projector of *Zen for Film*. You land on the surface, like an exploratory lander does on the Moon. Slowly and steadily. You touch the surface of the film softly and stick there, despite it being really smooth. Along with many other particles like you, you become part of one of the many film frames which composes the moving image. Up until the very last moment, when the projector's mechanisms slide you in front of the lamp and transform you into light, the film keeps exchanging large quantities of dust with the interior because while many arrive, almost as many take off before the irradiation.*

*Finally, after some moments, the 10.26 by 7.49 millimeters rectangle of celluloid you landed in is rolled in front of the incandescent lamp. The space of the frame, for the duration of 1/24th of a second, is flooded by a blinding light. The rays pass through the transparent film as if it wasn't there and then reach you and all the other particles there with you, investing you completely. Your material being is short-circuited with the film and you become an immaterial opacity in the light directed towards the outside.*

*You have become part of the stream of light and you enter a system of lenses which adjusts you trajectory to end exactly on the wall. As the light leaves the lens of the projector, passing through, it opens up in a pyramid which overlaps with a large portion of the interior, before reaching the wall. The interior atmosphere, made up of air and dust, is collapsed with the image of that same dust in an instant. For the duration of each frame in the viewing, the dust in the interior is collapsed with its own image, the interconnected relations of viewer, wall and air are collapsed with their own becoming image, bringing interiority out into the interior.*

The transformation of the particle of dust in an opacity in the stream of light is the instant when the material realm and the immaterial "flowing" realm collapse. That is a point in which the all connecting cloth of substance ruptures allowing interiority emerge out in the exteriority of the material world. There, the flow of interactions between viewer, walls and atmosphere is surfaced and comes into the material world by a splitting from its inside, along the grain of its becoming (Ingold, 2020). It is the interactions themselves which move the dust around and create the conditions for it to touch the film and become image, in fact transforming, from a hidden process merely leading the particles, into a perceivable amplification of their presence.

Being dust an agent of exchange with viewer, walls and interior, it is composed, among other things, of diffused portions of viewer and of walls, specific to that interior, making the image of dust an exteriorisation of their becoming as well. When the dust, first in the form of pyramid of light, overlaps with the interior and then in the form of a rectangle, overlaps with the viewer and the wall, it collapses their in-becoming status onto them. This overlap determines, at all effects, the irradiation from the impact of the particle to the projection on the wall and even outwards, to the rest of the atmosphere, which is in relation with the interior.

In the case of the viewer, because of his or her ability to perceive interiority, the instant of collapse is also happening at the level of perception. Not only are the body and soul of the viewer part of this conceptual and material collapse, but the viewer is able to perceive the collapse and thus enter in a state of synchronicity with it. In that instant, the viewer feels like time is being stretched and everything moves in slow motion, as if it was possible to grasp each microscopic exchange happening in the site. The sheer complexity and incompleteness of that process leaves the viewer in a state of contemplation on the hidden, soulful current which is continuously making and unmaking him/herself, the architecture and the atmosphere.

The collapse of body and soul consists essentially of an instantaneous transformation of the opacity of the body to interaction, into a transparency, for an instant. Surfacing in the body of the viewer, the soul allows to come in contact with the flow of interactions "outside" of the body connecting it to the other material presences on the other side of the interactions. Interiority allows an amplified feeling of the materialities in a chain of contact with the viewer and their always in-process state, reflected in the soul. In that instant of impact, Zen for Film bridges the body of the viewer with the materials of walls and interior, but also allows him or her to feel the soul and contextualise it in the interaction of materialities.

The collapse of dust with its own interiority encompasses the interior, the walls and the viewer through the continuity of the flow of interactions between them. Their embeddedness in each other puts them in a sensible relation in which any event travels across all of them, emanating from the origin. It is because space is matter-full, separated by permeable boundaries and inhabited by active bodies that the collapse of dust and its image is able to show the operations beneath the presence of the site. Zen for film is a very sensitive antenna to the conditions of the site exactly because space is a product of interrelations in which things are relationally constructed (Massey, 2005). These conditions are projected outwards and hence bounced back to the site itself, in an instant in which it is possible to perceive the interconnected parts which compose it and their status of continuous co-evolution.

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