

WORKS (selection)
LAURENT FIÉVET

States of Grace

States of Grace is a series of video works which associate excerpts of Rear Window and paintings representing Madonna and Child by Leonardo da Vinci. Each of them creates a dialogue of almost twenty minutes between the shots of Alfred Hitchcock's movie and one of the works of the Italian painter. Built after the same scene between Jeff and Lisa Fremont at the beginning of the film, they can be considered, as underlined by the title of the series, as a tribute to Princess Grace of Monaco. While celebrating her beauty, they contribute, in their own way, to put her life in perspective by inviting her to embody various figures of the painter.

In the continuation of the themes of these different bodies of works, the editings propose a series of reflections on the principle of Stendhalian crystallization and the consequences, for a couple, of access to maternity. They point the filters of perception which lead to desire, the problems of contradictory aspirations inside a couple, as well as the consequences of the intrusion of a third individuality which can replay the nature of the relationship and its fragile balance. This intrusion reflects clearly the intrusion of the viewer glance inside the works and its faculty to open new perspectives in the process of analyses.

This series gathers seven video editings. Each of them combine video to wine degustation.



States of Grace 1 - Annunciation

2015

HD video montage, color, sound, 35'46'', wine

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



States of Grace 2 - Madonna Litta

2015

HD video montage, color, sound, 22', wine

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



States of Grace 2 bis - Madonna Litta (portrait)

2015

HD video montage, color, sound, 16'08", wine

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



States of Grace 3 - Madonna of the Carnation

2015

HD video montage, color, sound, 24'27", wine

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



States of Grace 4 - The Virgin and Child with St Anne and St John the Baptist

2015

HD video montage, color, sound, 16'14", wine

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

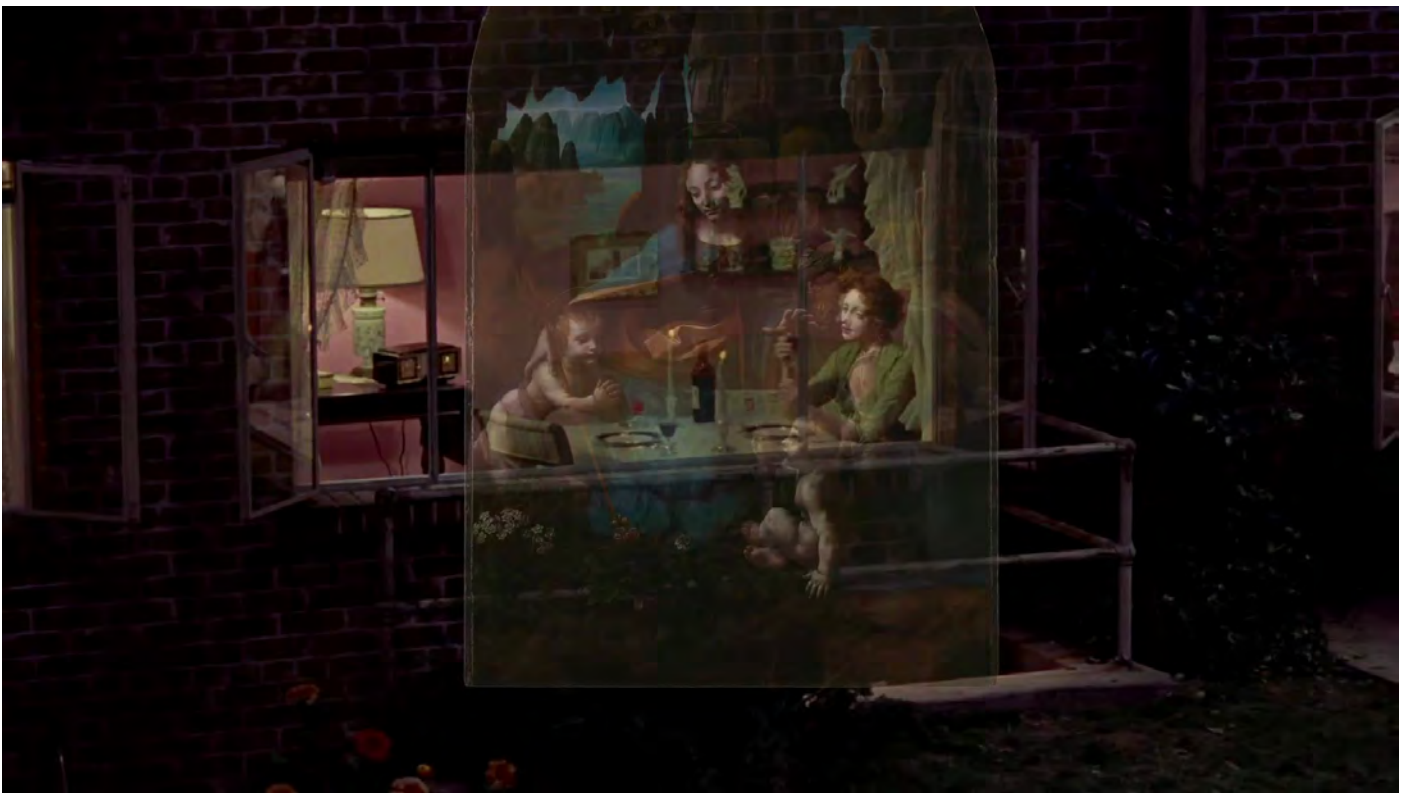


States of Grace 5 - The Virgin and Child with St. Anne

2015

HD video montage, color, sound, 21'01", wine

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



States of Grace 6 - Virgin of the Rocks

2015

HD video montage, color, sound, 27', wine

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Plaster Cocoon

2015

HD video montage, color, sound, 6'49"

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



Carlotta's Way makes use of superimposition to bring together a short extract of Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* that has been greatly slowed down and reworked to play backward and forward with a series of details of Diego Velasquez's *Las Meninas*. The piece is divided into fourteen chapters, each of which is devoted to a part of the painting that the passage from the film overlays in varying degrees of opacity, sometimes playing forward and sometimes backward. Putting the painting's motifs into motion and redefining its texture, a series of complex and continually renewed interactions takes place between the filmic and pictorial elements brought together in the piece. New readings of the works seem to propose themselves and certain elements proper to these are highlighted.

While the video's title echoes that of a film by Brian de Palma, which proposes numerous responses to Alfred Hitchcock's body of work, it most particularly introduces a reference to the character Carlotta Valdes, whose painted portrait – which is not without a certain number of correspondences to the representation of the menina Doña Isabel de Velasco, who stands to the right of the Infanta – plays a decisive role in *Vertigo*. Presiding over multiple connections between fictional and pictorial worlds to the point of generating an abundance of figurative and temporal superimpositions, it effectively invites both characters and viewers to take comparative approaches similar to those that the editing provokes through its combination of film and painting.

In line with the character's status in Hitchcock's film, this reference highlights the contaminating effects of Velasquez's work on the aesthetic of *Vertigo*, the latter's tendency to feed on the former's substance, and even the film's propensity to incarnate its different figures. In this sense, the reference summarizes the complex interactions at work in the video that point out the progression of our gaze in the principle of the analysis itself.

The 93 minute-long work can be exhibited independently or in combination with its counterpart, *Returning Carlotta's Way*.

Carlotta's way

2014

HD video montage, color, sound, 93'

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



Returning Carlotta's Way redoubles the proposition set forth by Carlotta's Way. Likewise divided into fourteen chapters, the work lingers on another series of details from Las Meninas, associated with the same extract from Vertigo, which is once more reworked to play backward and forward in very slow motion. As such, the video offers a second progression within Velasquez's composition, isolating different motifs and arranging alternative portions of the image so as to create further complex interactions between the painting and Hitchcock's film.

The retrograde succession of chapters (from 14 to 1) creates a sense of returning after Carlotta's Way, (whose chapters run from I to XIV). The combination of these two works can thus form a loop over three hours in length, structurally reinforcing both the forward and backward playback that composes the pieces and the perspective that the videos can afford one another. Combined, they create a trap that encloses the pictorial and filmic characters despite the many movements that would liberate them.

Nevertheless, the durations of the two videos differ. While they make references to types of film formats (4/3 vs. VistaVision) and to the means of their diffusion (movie screen vs. television or DVD), the videos take on a voluntary asymmetry proper to the pictorial composition and to the structure of the film's screenplay – a means of signaling the difficulty of any return in time and the consideration of its many lessons.

Returning Carlotta's way

2014

HD video montage, color, sound, 110'

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Whistle

While closely linked to the tools, objects, and images used in the series of installations entitled Tests of Time, the Whistle series—like *Swing High, Swing Low*—comprises videos that are all variations on a theme: a woman absorbed in the contemplation of one or several birds in a cage.

From self-assured to somewhat intimidated, these women manifest different degrees of assertiveness in cinematic excerpts reworked to play back and forth, sometimes reflecting a resolution to take their fate into their own hands and other times reflecting a certain passivity in regards to those around them. As the cage—an explicit object of imprisonment—proposes a metaphorical dimension, the different attitudes presented occasionally seem to hint at a kind of emancipation.

The women's whistling at the birds and the symmetry of the shots in which both women and birds figure together instigate a gradual process of identification between the two. It is as though the women are caught between hope and frustration, projection and withdrawal, and face themselves as they watch the birds move about in this series of variations on feminine desire, expressing either a kind of determination to realize one's dreams or a renunciation of seeing them take form.

From another point of view, this relationship between interior and exterior more simply initiates a reflection on the figure's relationship to the context of its representation, and even the different connections that the viewer is likely to make between himself and the cinematic image, of which each shot proposes an illustration, thanks to the gaze of the characters and the extra framing introduced by the cages they observe. That is, unless you consider that it is rather the viewer's embrace of the videos that finds itself discreetly examined in this *mise en abyme* through these attentive women whose attitudes likely correspond to those of the viewers in the exhibition space. Their whistling would, then, transform into more or less incisive commentaries in a kind of self-reflexive critique.



Whistle - Air n°1 - Tess
2014
Loop video, color, sound, 7'22"
Edition of 5 + 2 AP



The work combines in a 3 walls installation Tune #1, Tune #2 and Tune #3 to make a study on feminine desire. A larger version gathers all the editings of the series.

Whistle

2015

Video installation for 3 screens (or projectors), 3 loop vidéos, 29'30"

Les Larmes de Lora

The project Lora's Tears was born out of the desire to create a work around a face, that of Hollywood actress Gene Tierney, and her most emblematic film, *Laura*, still considered to be a true classic of film noir today. Making reference to the work's aesthetic, the highly unusual construction of its plot and the complexity of the actress' character, the idea underpinning the series consists in staging an encounter between the images from Otto Preminger's film with those of the cubist and surrealist movement, which are conjured by the treatment applied to the images appearing within the pieces.

The project finds a more specific centre point in a work painted by Pablo Picasso in 1937, the version of *Weeping woman* housed today in London's Tate Gallery. Though never explicitly shown in any of the arrangements, the work is incessantly evoked by the play of superimpositions carried out by the montages within the exhibits (whether taking the form of superimposed composition effects or the choice of motifs taken from Preminger's film), indeed the scenographic arrangements chosen, meaning the painting determines the aesthetic of the series on many levels. Other works associated with the cubist movement are also referred to in specific ways within certain pieces. Marcel Duchamp's *Nude descending a staircase* notably presides over the xy3 montage – *Nude at the window*, the piece that introduces the series. In this sense, the attention given to painting remains constant so as to instigate a dialogue between itself and the art of moving images, creating a confrontational effect similar to those created within the artist's prior creations (*Continuations of Hitchcock*, *Tests of Time* and the most recent *Olfactive portraits*).

In reference to the subject of Preminger's film, to the fate of Dora Maar, whose face formed the subject matter for Picasso's painting, and even in a different sense to the fate of Gene Tierney, the project effects a specific enquiry into what is to become of the artist's model, whose appearance and form he is working to redefine. It dwells on the idea of the metamorphosis that occurs as a subject is transformed into work of art, within a process that, while glorifying the subject and instilling its surface with beauty and radiance, simultaneously freezes the person in time and cloaks them in darkness by effacing certain aspects of their personality and a large portion of their freedom. It is a kind of sacrifice (of a particularly sensitive nature in Dora Maar's case), or even a form of vampirism that drains the life out of the subject so as to retain nothing more than a diaphanous husk. It is also the idea of metamorphosing an individual into an object, indeed into an economic and cultural asset, in a movement that flies in the face of any suffering or frustration it may entail.

With regard to the black and white aesthetic adopted by Preminger's film, the series employs specific types of materials, such as glass, crystal and mirror. These function within each scenographic arrangement to create effects of transparency and reflection, and play on distortion effects to muddy the clarity of the image. Playing on the changing rhythms that the montages create in relation to each other, they effect interruptions, but also create playful mirroring effects that, even if only in reference to Picasso's painting, invite the pieces to communicate with each other.

Expanded to encompass five films interpreted by Gene Tierney (Preminger's *Laura*, *Where the Sidewalks ends* and *Whirlpool*, and *Dragonwyck*, *The Ghost* and *Mrs Muir* by Mankiewicz), the series is currently made up of twelve pieces.



The two parts of Split, composed of excerpts from Laura, are projected onto two walls which are slightly offset from one another so as to create a passageway within the exhibition space.

Like Rain/Pain and Mak's dream, Split presents a series of variations on Pablo Picasso's Weeping Woman. A cracked clock constitutes the central motif around which the ensemble of the piece is figuratively structured, putting forth Time as a major theme of the work.

The passage between the two walls creates a breach at the center of the image. It materializes a sort of temporal fault into which Otto Preminger's work is submerged, provoking a series of imbalances manifested both through the use of double exposure in the video installation (where different sequences from Laura are stacked atop one another – sequences that don't seem to have any particular relationship to one another as regards the film's internal structure) and the rhythmic variations that affect the video's flow, which are occasionally further altered by changing the playback speed of certain passages. The visitor can repair the rift in the image created by the installation's scenography by watching the video from particular angles. Conversely, the visitor can also situate himself in such a way as to expand the gap at the center of the image and to heighten the deconstructive effects which the installation uses in reference to the Picasso painting.

The rift created by the installation's layout renders the figures' appearances disjointed – split, lacerated, or even flayed, the bodies and faces represented seem subjected to an advanced decomposition. But it is not the representation of the undead that is privileged here, as might be the case in Ann's Dream, for example; in this version, the springs and cogs are exposed, showing the characters to resemble rather automatons whose gestures and movements are calculated with precision. This evocation contributes to highlight the cinema's mechanical aspects as well as its capacity to circumvent the passage of time, showing after showing.

As with the video, the characters too are subjected to effects that give rise to the confusion of identities and identity splitting that allow Split to come back into contact with the themes approached in the other installations from this series that have to do with Gene Tierney's psychological problems.

Furthermore, like Dragon's Kiss, Split affirms references to religious painting. The work creates a procession of haloed figures through its use of double exposures, celebrating both the status conferred upon the stars of the silver screen by the public and the endurance of their images.

Split
2009

Video installation for two projection supports or simple retroprojection. 1 or 2 loop videos, black and white, mute, 16'
Edition of 5 + 2 AP

galerie dohyanglee



www.galeriedohyanglee.com

Lucy's dream combines and evidences the similarities that develop between two related sequences from Joseph L. Mankiewicz's *The Ghost and Mrs Muir*. Elaborating common situations and motifs, they have the particular quality of echoing each other within the film's structure so as to mark out an important rupture in the progression of the narrative.

The double exposure effects which super-impose the sequences over each other compromise the narrative imagined by the American producer and screenwriter. While the repetition effect in the film serves to signal the retreat of the Captain's Ghost (Rex Harrison) from Lucy Muir's (Gene Tierney) life in the plot, the super-impositions applied to this video piece, instead, highlight the persistence of his intrusions and their propensity to take possession of, and redefine, the very substance of the tale.

The super-imposition of the sequences shown, resulting from an almost stroboscopic series of alternations performed by this piece, creates an effect serving to conjure a number of ghostly apparitions. After inviting the figures to enter into a dialogue, this process quickly introduces a troubling sense of splitting and interweaving of those figures, which, through rendering them indistinguishable, transforms the visitor's perception of positioning in space and time.

In this troubled realm, subject to a host of alterations, the movement initiated within the scenes brought together creates pronounced stretching effects. By redistributing all of its figurative elements within the space, they work to weaken the image's texture, creating a breach that instantly releases a threatening torrent. In a thematic flooding comparable to that presiding over the montage in *Little Foxes*, water pours into the frame. Wave after wave it rolls in, swallowing all in its path.

Should we refer to the reading grid offered by the series' title, we may see this liquid element as a material representation of the emotions of Lucy Muir, the character shown sleeping at that very point in the montage. Once reached by the water and literally submerged by it, the young woman nonetheless succeeds in stemming its flow by rising from her armchair and sealing the gaping breach behind her (by closing the doors of a French window that appeared to be the source of the influx) – confirming through this very act the degree of control she is capable of exerting on the process at hand through her characteristic ability to master her own emotions. Following her intervention, calm is once again restored in the room where she was sleeping and the horizon clears in a visual effect that appears to open up the boundaries of the space.

The biographical components that infiltrate a number of the series' installations here invite us to consider the fates of Gene Tierney and Dora Maar. How could we not see, reflected in this liquid unleashing, this filling of the screen by Lora's Tears, the dramatic events and setbacks endured by both women in their respective lives and their attempts to cope with their now well-known frailties, before eventually regaining control of their fates? If we call them to witness, could it be said that Lucy's dream invites spectators to share the consuming agonies of their torments, but also to feel the spiritual strength that leads them out of their darkest moments?

Lucy's dream

2009

Video montage, black and white, sound, 6'42"

Edition de 5 + 2 EA



A montage is projected onto a white wall, showing a very short extract of Otto Preminger's *Laura* (1944). A glass stack of shelves has been assembled on the wall, displaying bottles and carafes. The shelves obscure the lower third of the projection.

The work's title, *xy3*, suggests an invasion into the realms of physics and genetics. It reduces the entire piece to an application of mathematics, an exercise in style, indeed a disembodied scientific formula set in opposition to the subtitle, *Nude at the window*, which instead emphasises the piece's reliance on tangible data and its figurative dimension. The use of the word *nu* (nude), which creates a clear allusion to Marcel Duchamp's *Nude descending a staircase* (1912) – one of the work's principal points of reference – nonetheless detracts from the central concerns of this representation.

As is attested by the scene from *Laura* used in the montage, there is no question of any bodily nudity here, since the figure that appears is fully dressed, wearing a hat. Instead, the piece dwells on a more intimate process of undressing, one that exposes the subject's very identity. This reality being unveiled by the representation constitutes a key focus of the piece, casting the work as an enigma that the visitor is invited to decipher.

As well as the obscure piece title, the principle of deciphering is felt equally strongly through the narrative data proffered by the montage, with its highly assertive plot structure. A character is seen (Lieutenant Mark McPherson played by Dana Andrews in Preminger's production) pausing in front of a crystal object whose purpose appears difficult to determine. He picks it up from the window display, moves it around, examines it and drifts off into contemplation, before returning it to the place it was originally displayed. We may begin to wonder whether the nudity evoked in the piece's subtitle refers more directly to that of the object engrossing the character than that of his own body. Should we re-imagine the object of his desire as a substituted representation of another body that Lieutenant McPherson dreams of possessing, in line with the story related by Preminger's film?

It is precisely the nature (it is almost tempting to say gender) of this object that lays the character bare, as in the case of Duchamp's *mariée par ses célibataires* (bride stripped bare by her bachelors). The setting creates a game of diffraction around the character's body, which is further displaced by the reflective 'ready made' bottles and carafes positioned near the surface of the projection so as to obscure spectators' perception of the body from certain angles. This diffraction suggests the materialisation of an act of undressing, in which the individual, in line with the treatment given to *Laura* in Preminger's film, gradually reveals the multiplicity of points of view from which they can be seen.

xy3 - Nu à la vitrine

2007

Video installation for a videoprojector with shelf and crystal objects, video montage, black and white, mute, 3'08"

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



On the tip of the tongue - Water Bucket

2015

HD video loop, color, sound, 3'18''

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



On the tip of the tongue - Hey!

2015

HD video loop, color, sound, 3'56''

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



On the tip of the tongue - Under the bridge

2015

HD video loop, color, sound, 2'14''

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



On the tip of the tongue - Blink

2015

HD video loop, color, sound, 2'34''

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



On the tip of the tongue - Bloom & Grow

2015

HD video loop, color, sound, 2'41''

Edition of 5 + 1 AP



On the tip of the tongue - Coda

2015

HD video loop, color, sound, 2'54''

Edition of 5 + 1 AP