The Emergence and Definition of Screen Dance

Lee, Eun Yi

MPhil Creative Practice, Dance / Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance

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Introduction

The statement that, in our postmodern societies, almost all aspects of visual culture are now synonymous with the cultural phenomenon of digitization, may or may not be an exaggeration. It is obvious that most live events and works, including live performances and visual events such as plays, concerts, dances, exhibitions, films, and even television programmes, have all been subjected to the process of digitization and as such can be experienced via websites (such as www.youtube.com). Due to digitization, we experience most events in an audiovisual form. As a result, most live events and visual works are deeply related to
screen. Therefore, we live in a predominantly ‘visual’ culture, a culture in which visual media has produced new ways of signifying. In this sense, I consider that this visual culture is related to cinematic innovations. Artist, programmer and media theorist Lev Manovich (2001) states:

A hundred years after cinema’s birth, cinematic ways of seeing the world, of structuring time, of narrating a story, of linking one experience to the next, have become the basic means by which computer users access and interact with all cultural data. In this respect, the computer fulfills the promise of cinema as a visual Esperanto. (pp. 78–9)

D.N. Rodowick (2010) also makes a diagnosis of twentieth century culture in relation to cinema:

Cinema is the philosophy of our everyday life; it brings philosophy into contact with life, and for these and other reasons, cinema has defined the audiovisual culture of the twentieth century. (p. xvi)

Manovich theorises about what represents a significant change in our culture, although his statement has been criticized as retrospective by media theorists such as Mark Hansen (2006) because Manovich tries to connect the digital to cinema, the analogue media of the past. However, whether it is digital or analogue, no one can deny the fact that our current culture is dominated by audiovisual forms.

Among live events, dance performance has been produced or reproduced in audiovisual formats such as video, DVD and CD-ROM for circulation or archiving. In recent days, moreover, choreographers and dancers have produced dance work as an audiovisual form only for the purpose of screening. Now we go to cinemas or galleries to watch dance, and can easily access dance performances at home or on the