

Live Montage in Mediated Urban-Experience: Between Media and Architecture

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Abstract The purpose of this chapter is to reconstruct the idea of montage from the context of cinema studies and apply it to architecture, so as to reframe it as a live montage. Live montage is understood here as the new interconnection of spatial concepts such as everyday experience, the practice of the Urban Flanerie, and the semantic or mental juxtaposition of images (time montage) within the body's medium. The nature of montage will be redefined through finding relations in neighbouring concepts, in particular, Heidegger's idea of neighbourliness and neighbourhood to re-evaluate the nature of things concerning other concepts (Walley in *The material of film and the idea of cinema: Contrasting practices in sixties and seventies avant-garde film*. The M.I.T Press, Cambridge, pp. 15–31, 2003). Moreover, the chapter will delineate the boundaries and borders of montage as a concept that redefines itself through its relation to other concepts particularly through its reflections in the interface in everyday life between media and architecture.

Keywords Live montage • Urban Flanerie • Place/time montage • Image recollection • Medium

Introduction

Montage is a process in which fluidity happens after semiotic fragmentation. It is a process in which the real and imaginary are pursuing one another, as if each was being reflected in the other, around the point of indiscernibility (Deleuze 2005). Here the aim is to focus on fluidity as a quality of montage. Fluidity in montage occurs not through juxtapositions of images or events but rather through a process that encompasses gaps and intervals (voids) between images of events to achieve temporal fluidity. Here the reference is being made to the fluidity of time in 'time images' or fluidity in understanding spaces in place montage. Through the idea of

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montage, it is proposed that we can approach virtual/real circular continuity and reflection of one in the other through the path that starts from fragmentation towards becoming (fluidity). This starts from the abstraction of time or space towards fluidity and continuity. In this chapter through moving between the borders of montage as understood in cinema and architectural discourse 'live montage' will be proposed as a result of overlapping ideas of montage in both disciplines. Redefining montage in the new context of our everyday life in which access to pervasive media technologies suggests live montage as a concept through which we can understand the situation and relations of body, place, time and image. The idea of 'live montage' focuses on the process of combined real and virtual recollections of fragmented images and its relations (smells, feelings, sounds, and so forth) that occur through the daily experience of places, by adding the pervasive media layer to our everyday life. In the new context of architecture, not cinema, spectators are active and sometimes mobile. Screens could also be mobile so that the perception of time and space becomes more fragmented and temporal. This chapter seeks to reveal the essence of montage in our everyday life explorations 'in between things' to challenge the conventional idea that montage is a technical apparatus embedded in the medium of cinema. Montage in cinema is a mechanical technique for perceiving coherency. It is more like a black box that spectators observe through, outside the black box. Here montage places the observer as mobile spectators inside the black box of 'live montage' and the coherency of time and place happens in a more complex way as it passes through the medium of the observer/participant's body.

Deleuze's Time Montage: Freed from the Movement Image

French philosopher, Gilles Deleuze points out the potential of the screen to operate like a brain and how cinema operates based not solely on the linkage of rational cuts but rather by the re-linkage of irrational cuts. He sees the role of montage in cinema to represent the time liberated from movement through piecing irrational cuts together. Russian filmmaker, Sergei Eisenstein is one of the pioneers that detached the time being subordinated to movement using techniques of slowing down and reversing sequences, the non-distancing of the moving body, the false continuities of movement, the constant change in scale and proportion, the false continuity of images, the disproportion of scale, the dissipation of centres, etc. Both Deleuze and Eisenstein draw attention to the consequence of the abbreviation of movement specific to a cinematographic image that sets time free from real time. Montage in cinematographic image carries out a direct representation of time (regarding liberation from movement) by reversing the relationship of subordination that time maintains with normal movement.

Thus, time is co-opted not through the flow of movement but rather through times signs or what Eisenstein refers to as 'signaletic material'. The only medium for perceiving time without movement and duration has been a cinematic montage.

Cinema makes visible the relationships of temporal time that can only appear in the creation of images. Montage is an art of the creation of time through chronosigns (Deleuze 2005: 52). Deleuze's ideas of time montage helped to construct the process of understanding time (as coherent change) in cinema through adopting concepts of chronosign, opsign, and so forth. In explanation of montage as a medium that liberates time from the movement, he describes the processes in which we understand the sense of passing time and change via signs that images carry. Similarly, what we experience in our everyday life, especially in the day-to-day exposure to ubiquitous media, is the sense of the passage of time through the signs embedded in that media, even though its time duration is different from clock hours. The same experience of time happens when we follow putting comments on each other's Weblogs such as Facebook or other types of social networking media. The time that we experience is fluid and continually different from the sense of duration that we experience in reality. We feel that the event is still going on, and the conversation is alive although the second person might not be responding at that time.

In cinema, during film projection our sensory motor cannot deal with outside stimuli. We are in a position of standstill, and our experience of the world is through the opsigns and sosigns that media carries. The idea, which Deleuze mentions, is that whenever our body's ability does not respond to the stimuli of the external world, the link between the virtual world and reality commences. In other words, when we cannot explore and collect information from the environment through movement, when our sensory motors, which respond through movement, stop responding we become detached from reality immersed in virtual. It is this time of ambiguity of the sensory motor that perceiving the chronosigns of montage becomes possible through opsigns and sosigns of the cinema apparatus. This connection of reality with the virtual and perceiving the passage of time in a different way is now departing from cinema and enters in our daily life experiences. Whenever we are in a position that we are informed through opsign and sosigns of cinematic apparatus (for example when we are exposed to pervasive media, mobile devices screens, and so forth) the cyclical process from reality to virtual occurs. This type of circulation detaches us from reality. What we perceive in our life is a temporal structure of time that clearly goes beyond the conventional perception of time known as the past, present and future. It is, for example, a co-existence of distinct durations, or of levels of duration. A single event can belong to several levels: the sheets of past coexist in non-chronological order (Deleuze 2005). Coexistence of many different times, such as social times and media times, gives us a circular, repetitive temporal sense of time.

Place/Time Montage: Traversing Fragmented Places

The idea of 'live montage' allows for the pursuit of the theorisation of montage as a form of continuity and fluidity of "place fragmentation" in motion. Place montage is a mental installation that transforms fragments of places explored through walking

into one unity. Mental Installation is a memory based recollection of images of reality and virtual reality in a form of virtual installation that is formed mainly based on the relations of fragments and is a result of a recollection event process. Place montage is done by monitoring spectators (Flanerie) in motion, studying street-walking as an installation that merges fragments of perception of places or events, and reinventing and transforming spaces that we experience based on connecting the points of place and time through a walking process by our vision apparatus. Place montage mainly focuses on walking freely while capturing the sense of place in just short fragments and through the path between the first place towards the following event finding a mental coherency.

We capture fragments of places, fragmented recollection of images accompanied or attached by smells, feelings, sounds of the places or events as a form of memory which Deleuze mentions as the virtual version of any real event (ibid). The process of meaningful coherency of these fragmentary perceived images of places happens through moving from one place to the other and through intervals of mental coherency. After adding the layer of media to our life, we recollect images that are not directly found in the places that we experience. We are exposed to images and narratives that might not be attached directly to daily places, and they are captured and recollected with pictures of our everyday life. They are processed as part of our quotidian events while they have a different quality of being immaterial and inside a second medium. Previous to new media and smartphones we captured images of events and places (with attached relations of sounds, smells, feelings, and so forth) and through the process of mental installation or mental montage we made coherency of the recollected events (Pallasmaa in Treib 2009). Nowadays the condition is that we are exposed to media, or fragments of it, based on where we go and what kind of activity we do on daily basis. The concern is that we are more and more exposed to media images and its temporal time, and as a result, the circulation to the virtual/unreal world happens more often. Moreover, our awareness of places that we experience is combined with information that we receive from the media like unfolded layers of screens projected on city facades. This leads to questions of the how the mind receives, recollects virtual images and how it distinguishes the images captured from reality from the images captured from a virtual medium of the same place.? Does recollection of reality exist in the same layer as a recollection of virtual images? Does an intermediary chain link images of reality with images of virtual? If so what chain is it?

Inside the medium of 'live montage' exists a combination of images of reality and virtual images which we recollect at once as a type of an event-based process of experiencing a link from point A to point B. If we imagine memory is a box of recollected images of reality or, in other words, recollected images of the events that we experience, we collect images of pervasive media at the same time while they are not raised from the context of physical places or at least are images inside another medium and do not directly respond to our sensory motor exploration. When we recall the images of a memory whether it is a recall of a place or an event, images of virtual (images inside a medium) relate to images of reality (images of places) through intermediary chains.

Deleuze explains that virtual images are images that we perceive not through our physical movement and exploration but rather through the situation of standing still. When we stand still, the optical situation and the aural quality that Deleuze categorises them within (i.e. chronosign, opsion, sosion) replace the sensory motors that help us to obtain information through body movement. When the body loses its ability to explore through physical movement (for example exploring the screen just through opsion and sosion), the virtual realm starts emerging in response to the lack of information or exploration possibilities of moving within the space. It is through this quality of moving images, especially montage, which the repetitive switch between realities and virtual happens (Deleuze 2005).

The idea of 'live montage' as a black box in which the processing of recollected images of reality plus virtual images of our modern technological life is happening in the context of daily places and not in cinema, means that the spectator (observer) is inside the system of montage (inside the Black Box). The mental process of this type of montage is mainly process-based montage of places or events that occur in the medium of the body. Both time-image montage and place time-montage rely on the medium of the body to find coherency and continuity. Without passing through this medium and taking advantage of the intervals in moving between places as points of transition no mental montage would be possible. As Eisenstein (1969) has mentioned semantic montage happens in the gaps between images when they melt into one another.

Travelling through and along sites with vision or a perceptual machine allows the construction and reconstruction of new geographies of places based on images captured and recollected within the medium of observer's body as the final medium. Consuming space and time, reinventing places and transiting from one place time to another all happens under the idea of 'live montage'. Architecture and media studies theorist, Bruno (1993) reflects on the Surrealists who loved going to the arcades and movie theatres. They established an activity of film reception based on urban transitory pleasure. Constantly wandering from theatre to theatre, continually entering and existing in the film medium itself, they constructed a place montage of filmic experiences. Explaining the idea of trans-subjectivity and the consistent shift from subject to object and moving in-between things and spaces, Canadian social theorist and philosopher, Brian Massumi explains that the concept of quasi-corporeality is an abstract map of transformation between body, its image and object of experience. "The quasi-corporeality can be thought as the superposition of the total of the relative perspectives in which the body has been implicated, as object or subject plus the passage between them" (Massumi 2002: 47–53). Here the body expands through fragments of experiences and exposures to virtual media—similar to the practice that Surrealists were establishing as a mental installation of image/place montage. Within this type of mental installation images captured from new media play a major role in the place/image montage of activities.

Experiencing through the eyes of a mobile female spectator-voyageur, not through the male gaze, a move from gaze to Flanerie also called the "modern gaze", is happening in both architecture and filmmaking (Bruno 1993). Like a voyageur, in this form of perception of the space, urban geographies are perceived as temporal

unintentional passages that ‘expand with close up and extended through slow motion’ (Vidler 2002: 114). Spectators reinvent their relations to the film or the site through various trajectories and follow the narrative of architecture or filmic frames. They also transform the narrative through their movement and engagement visually and tactily with the site. Inhabited sites are temporally narrativised by motion (Bruno 1993). A narrativised space, which is intersubjective, is a complex of socio-sexual motilities. Travelling physically in the space followed by the travels of the mind brings alive the idea of montage as a juxtaposition of fragments of spatial representation. This emerges as a dislocated mixed reality with virtual points of time/event that has passed through the subjective medium.

Vidler’s (2002) social, architectural exploration of our every day is more similar to associated fragments of places whereas Bruno’s Flanerie is more like a reinvention of reality through the exploration of physical spaces. It is an apparatus, a mechanism of production and reproduction of narratives and space (Bruno 1993) that happens through our everyday life exploration of urban spaces. We capture images, fragments and frames while we move in architectural spaces. The spectator moves between a series of carefully disposed of phenomena that s/he observes sequentially with their visual sense. Alternatively, s/he mentally moves through a path designed for the mind of an immobile spectator in cinema theatres through the art of montage. The path could also be a two-folded idea that the mobile spectator participates in a process of ‘live montage’ with the help of technology and ubiquity of screens in our daily life, accompanied by the human camera apparatus.

Montage as a Process of Becoming that Happens in Voids/Intervals/Transitions

Montage is not only an assemblage of space-time or image collections. It is a process of becoming that happens through the gaps in between its fragmented elements. Through these gaps or intervals that connect point A to point B, our imagination has space to manoeuvre, so as to fill the spaces in-between and inject semantic coherency for reconfiguration. It is in the space between subjective spectator and space-time fragmentation that a new type of reality emerges, for this reconstructed, dislocated time place reality. It is a dynamic, holistic system that encompasses all mediums—cinema, architecture and the body.

American philosopher and psychologist James (1907) argue that experiencing the world does happen based on a process, and the transition from one architectural experience to the other is continuous in a sort of conjunctive relation. Similar to the idea of fluidity and continuity in place Montage, James (1907: 36) argues for “Unity by continuity; experience in whole is a process in time; knowledge of sensible realities thus comes to life inside the tissue of experience. It is made and created by relations that unroll themselves in time”.

From known point A to known point B, our experience of knowing is in transit and before getting to point B, we are already a virtual expert of point B (James 1907: 23–31) even though we have not reached it. Likewise through deconstructing our everyday events and based on the idea of ‘live montage’, experiencing the world does happen due to a process of transition from one point of the event to the other no matter even if it is partly virtual (i.e. a media event point). Through this transition of points of events, we know the departure before our arrival at that point. The process of ‘live montage’ covers the virtual and real, material and immaterial quality, leaving gaps for imagination in-between points of events to obtain coherency. Live montage is no longer concerned with cinema. It is expanded and exists out of the context that it was born from. It still carries the concepts of intervals and the role of intervals in the process of coherency. However, the relations of continued transitions through intervals are what make our experiences cognitive. Knowledge consists in intermediate experience (possible if not actual) of a continuously developing process (James 1907: 29). In cinema, Eisenstein mentions the role of intervals, which James calls transitions, as a component of the kinetic production of illusion. They increase the intensity of meaning through applying meaningful rhythm. Through walking, each event has a location so the space-time between events is considered as intervals that result in meaningful coherency.

For Eisenstein (1969) architecture could embody the principles of montage. In his observation using the architectural historian, Auguste Choisy’s “picturesque” view of the Acropolis, Eisenstein compares architectural composition with cinematic montage believing that architecture unfolds its layers of composition through the journey that a spectator takes. Being aware of the pace of spectator’s movement and measuring the distance between spectator and building as well as keeping the rhythm of space allows architects to produce architecture as ‘live montage’ (Vidler 2002). Exploration of new urban context is not entirely subjective and is based on being exposed to different narratives. Screen projection on façades of building unfolds a new story of the envelope of that building. It alters the perceptual condition of the site, at least temporarily. It crystallises a vague sense of unaccustomed possibilities putting on standby the general function of the building. The façade that we pass by every day is temporarily not there, and instead a feeling of unfamiliarity, vagueness, and strangeness replaces our mental installation of our everyday places. This relationship highlights the need to evaluate the intersection and interface of media and architecture as a consequence of new technological conditions.

American film theoretician Walley (2003) explains how Eisenstein’s montage concept is not limited to the medium of cinema. Rather Walley argues it be a basic cultural principle that could be found outside the medium of film; the film is just the most recent artistic embodiment of the principle of montage. Eisenstein in “the cinematographic principle and the ideogram” has depicted an analogy between montage and Japanese pictographic writing identifying the blurred boundaries of montage as a concept. In his article “Film Form”, Eisenstein (1969) claims that principles of this idea existed before the invention of cinema in Japanese visual culture. In “Associational Montage” he argues that two or more adjacent symbols produce in Japanese writing, through their collision, meaning not inherent in either

one of these symbols. Thus, the symbol for eye next to the symbol for water will produce a different meaning of weep, in which two adjacent images or shots transfer a new abstract meaning because of the nature of their juxtaposition, not inherent meaning in any of them (ibid: 28–56).

Conclusion

Due to the emergence of new media technologies in our daily life we are becoming exposed to experience time montage and space montage of film and architecture simultaneously. Architecture mainly becomes the site of interface between reality and the virtual realm. ‘Live Montage’ occurs and brings cinema and architectural together. Layers of virtuality unfold in an architectural media through mobile devices, screen projections, moving images, public urban game shows, and so forth, where new layers of temporality are thus added to the experience of an urban event. Argued here is that through this new interdisciplinary spatial construct, observer-participants operate inside the system of montage and the previous relations between spectator cinema and place have transformed. As mobile spectators inside the black box of ‘live montage,’ we can recollect fragments of everyday events and images found in both media and architecture. ‘Live montage’ starts from focusing on the effects of “moving images” injected in urban spaces and consequently changes the perception of spectators as mobile, voyageur reconfiguring the spaces through their physical movement through space. That movement allows us to look back to examples of architectural spaces as a ‘live montage’ of viewpoints and filmic perspective received through the eyes of the spectator of the urban explorer and perceived through their mind and eye. This concept is supported by Brian Massumi’s and James William’s writings on “knowledge in transit” and the qualitative and consistent transformation that happens by passing and experiencing space from one point to another point through transitional gaps. ‘Live montage’ is not only an inter-relational spatial concept between architecture and cinema. Moreover, it is a real engagement of the two mediums in our daily life. The new type of juxtaposition of mediums (media and urban places) creates and transfers new meanings and experiences that are in fact embedded in neither of them individually.

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