

# What is a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait?

## *Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno's Zidane a 21st Century Portrait and the Formatting of Television*

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Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno's *Zidane a 21st Century Portrait* and the Formatting of Television

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# Abstract

*Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* is a 2006 film directed by Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno which follows Zinedine Zidane, arguably one of the most famous football players in the world, through a match between Real Madrid and Villarreal which took place on April 23, 2005. Rather than focusing on the game itself, the frame is fixed on Zidane for almost the entire duration of the game.

My line of inquiry has focused on untangling what is meant by the assertion of the film as a “21<sup>st</sup> century portrait”, with particular focus on the film’s self-reflexive foregrounding of the television apparatus. I argue that *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* builds on a strategy which I term “formatting”, involving the creation of a new format that explicitly foregrounds the relationship between televised football and post-industrial life. Rather than a typical model of portraiture, where the portrait is conceived of as a negotiation between the artists and Zidane, I argue that the mode of portraiture engendered by the film rests on a normative schema of Zidane, produced through the affective engagement of viewers and originating in the media events that Zidane inhabits.

Accordingly, the 21<sup>st</sup> century portrait asserted in the title can be understood as embodying the machine which produces this schema of Zidane by self-reflexively foregrounding the television apparatus, rather than a schema assigned from the outside. This approach is interdisciplinary, intersecting art history with concepts originating in media studies, philosophy, and film studies.



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# 1 Introduction

On April 23, 2005 Real Madrid defeated Villarreal 2-1 at the Santiago Bernabéu. The game itself wasn't especially remarkable, yet across the world millions of people gathered attentively in front of television screens in private homes and in restaurants or pubs, hoping to catch a glimpse of excitement and magic. For some, the game was undoubtedly the highlight of the week, while others ended up watching more or less by chance, flicking through television channels while relaxing after a long day at work. For the many hopeful Real Madrid supporters, the game did not quite deliver the magic that they had hoped for, despite the victory. For much of the game their team had struggled to work cohesively, leaving Villarreal in the lead until late in the second half. Perhaps even more worryingly for many, Real Madrid's star central midfielder, Zinedine Zidane was sent off in the 90<sup>th</sup> minute following a scuffle with an opposing player.

Philippe Parreno and Douglas Gordon's 2006 film *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* follows Zinedine Zidane, at the time arguably the most famous football player in the world, through the entirety of the match between Real Madrid and Villarreal with the help of 17 cameras and a production crew of roughly 150 people. Zidane is tracked relentlessly for almost the entire film, save for a short montage sequence consisting of snippets of news footage just before half time, and the occasional cut to footage from the television broadcast of the game. Consequently Zidane is singularly foregrounded for the vast majority of the film's 92 minutes, even when other Real Madrid stars such as Ronaldo or David Beckham are more directly involved in the ebb and flow of the game. In addition to the images captured by Parreno, Gordon and their team, the film makes use of footage from the television broadcast of the game and snippets of Zidane's answers to a series of questions formulated by Parreno (shown as text along the bottom of the screen in parts of the film). Furthermore, a distorted guitar based soundtrack by Scottish post-rock band Mogwai, serves to supplement the mood of the game and the sound of the crowd. This hybridization is by no means new, confined to the sphere of artistic production, or even particularly surprising.<sup>1</sup> It does, however, allow *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* to traverse a complex field of media, producing a highly reflexive approach to the current state of television, the site where Zidane has appeared against the green backdrop of the pitch week after week.

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<sup>1</sup> Edmond Couchot, *Media Art: Hybridization and Autonomy* (paper presented at presented at the REFRESH! conference, First International Conference on the Media Arts, Sciences and Technologies, Alberta, Canada, September 29 to October 4 2005). Accessed April 18, 2015, <http://hdl.handle.net/10002/339>.

*Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* premiered out of competition at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival. The film was afforded a general cinema release in several European countries, coinciding with Zidane's retirement from professional football following the 2006 World Cup. Unusually for a film by two artists, *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* was subsequently commercially distributed on DVD and later also on Blu-ray. In addition to the commercially available version, several multichannel configurations of the film exist, the most extensive version shown across 17 screens – one screen for each camera in the production. For the sake of simplicity, this text will refer to the commercially available single channel version of the film, although many of the arguments contained within undoubtedly pertain to both versions.

### **A Question of Portraiture**

My initial interest in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* was sparked by the sections of the film where Gordon and Parreno make use of footage from the television broadcast of the game, such as in the opening moments of the film. *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* begins with the moment immediately before kick-off, but something seems a little different – the image is fuzzy, bleeding colour while scan lines roll down across the surface of the image. Immediately following the opening whistle, the camera begins to slowly inch towards a single Real Madrid player, identifiable as Zinedine Zidane. The resulting movement gradually resolves into a large grid of red, green and blue dots with each constellation of three (one of each) making up a single pixel in the surface of an LCD screen. This gradual shift towards the materiality of the image, which is redrawn around 60 times every second by pixels refreshing row by row, shifting their intensity and colour, is accompanied by the film's opening credits, before suddenly returning to the game. This time however, the imagery flowing across the screen is crystal clear: much more intimate and tightly framed than anything found in the typical broadcast of a football match. Of the shots that follow, one in particular stands out. It shows the closed circuit monitor that functions as a viewfinder for the camera operator, the small black and white screen revealing that the operator in question has been tasked with tracking the ball. In a broad sense, these opening moments (we return to the matrix of the LCD with the end credits) serve to illustrate the hybrid status of these images: digital, but containing the remnants of a host of different formats and sources, illustrating a point in time where television is becoming increasingly harder to delineate as a

singular medium.<sup>2</sup> This is not only illustrated by the reflexive focus on the televisual image, but by the fact that *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* is shot on a combination of 16 and 35mm film and HDCAM, a cassette based, high definition video format commonly used in television production, but also by the montage sequence that takes place at half-time, where a variety of images appropriated from television and other sources from the same day as the game appear in the film.<sup>3</sup>

The contrast briefly described above gives form to a number of questions that are raised by *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*. Gordon and Parreno assert the work as a 21<sup>st</sup> century portrait in their choice of title, but what exactly is meant by the term “21<sup>st</sup> century portrait”? And how does the notion of a 21<sup>st</sup> century portrait relate to the reflexive foregrounding of the technical underpinnings of television that takes place throughout the film? Rather than focusing on the highlights of Zidane’s career or an iconic moment, Gordon and Parreno have chosen to focus on a single game that does not hold any particular significance. The film does not mention any of Zidane’s major accomplishments, or anything at all about his background. Instead, emphasis is placed on the minutiae of Zidane’s movements, his absorption in the game, eyes constantly scanning the movements of the ball, opposing players and teammates. These shots are interrupted when Gordon and Parreno occasionally return to the television footage of the game.

In the dictionary, the word *portrait* is taken to mean a likeness of someone realized in an artistic medium such as drawing, painting, sculpture or photography.<sup>4</sup> However, for art historical purposes this definition seems a little too indeterminate, as it does not adequately delineate

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<sup>2</sup> Ina Blom writes that video: “[...]starts around the time when television producers could for the first time choose to record their transmissions on videotape and ends when analog video is made obsolete by the digital platforms that reduce the difference between film and video to a question of rhetorical (as opposed to technical) formatting.” See Ina Blom, “The Autobiography of Video: Outline for a Revisionist Account of Early Video Art”, *Critical Inquiry* 39, no. 2 (2013): 280, accessed September 20, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/668526>.

<sup>3</sup> Edmond Cochot has pointed out that hybridization involves the ability to fold separate supports into the same format. In *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, this hybrid feature of formatting is perhaps best exemplified in the montage of various footage from news broadcasts of events that took place on the same day as the game and where the technical specific origins of the footage can only be guessed out due the large variety: “While technically new, this type of hybridization continues, without rupture, traditional techniques and their aesthetics of collage, inclusion and compositing, while making them simpler and more precise. For example, cinema widely and successfully relies upon composited digital and cinematographic images. But diamorphosis brings something new. For example, it allows for the realisation of all the states between a photo and a painting, or between a digital and a cinematic image.” Edmond Cochot in “Digital Hybridisation: A Technique, an Aesthetic”, *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 8, no. 4 (2002): 22, accessed April 15, 2015, doi: 10.1177/135485650200800403.

<sup>4</sup> *Cambridge Dictionaries Online*, s.v. “portrait” accessed October 11 2014, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/portrait>

portraiture from other modes of representation. Shearer West is a little more specific, when she defines a portrait as a representation of someone, brought about in a wide range of media, perhaps wider than any other genre. Portraits can be found as coins, busts, photographs and stamps as well as a vast multitude of other media, but is traditionally associated with paintings.<sup>5</sup>

Gordon and Parreno have chosen to realize their portrait of Zidane as a film, which despite the ubiquity of moving images is a relatively unconventional choice. My argument, building off of the model of portraiture described by Richard Brilliant, is that the mode of portraiture enacted by Gordon and Parreno does not encompass a traditional model of portraiture as a negotiation between artists and sitter, but a model that encompasses the ever unfolding imagery of Zidane, as he exists as a figure in various forms of media, such as television. According to Zidane, he accepted Parreno and Gordon's proposal for the film because he wouldn't have to "act" to participate in the project. His part in the film would be doing what he does every week: "I recognize myself – it's me and what happens every Sunday".<sup>6</sup>

### **Theoretical Considerations**

Gordon and Parreno make use of footage from the television broadcast of the game, combined with images captured by their own crew of cameras and camera operators. The result breaks with the typical formatting of televised football in some regards, while conforming in others. This strategy, which I have termed formatting, is not simply the appropriation of existing material, but involves the creation of a new format that explicitly foregrounds the relationships that are part of the game and the relationship between televised football and post-industrial life. In this section, I will outline some of the theoretical considerations that underpin how this strategy is enacted in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*.

*Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* may be a film, but it primarily engages with the conventions of televised football. This is not incidental, and can be related to an understanding of football matches as media events; a term which Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz describe as encompassing:

[...] thrilling events, reaching the largest audiences in the history of the world. They are shared experiences, uniting viewers with one another within their societies. *A norm of viewing*

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<sup>5</sup> See Shearer West, *Portraiture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 43-44.

<sup>6</sup> "Interview with Zinedine Zidane" in *Zidane a 21st Century Portrait*, DVD, directed by Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno (London: Artificial Eye, 2006).

accompanies the airing of these events. As the day approaches people tell one another that viewing is obligatory, that no other activity is acceptable during the broadcast. Viewers actively *celebrate*, preferring to view in the company of others and to make special preparations – unusual food, for example – in order to partake more fully in the event.<sup>7</sup>

Both the model of portraiture engendered by Gordon and Parreno and the media event itself, build on the affects that occur with the extensions of the sensory apparatus allowed by mass media.<sup>8</sup> In her analysis of the technical beginnings of video technology and the early history of video art Yvonne Spielmann points out that television is directly underpinned by video, the two technologies sharing fundamental characteristics.<sup>9</sup> In an essay by Maurizio Lazzarato titled *Machines to Crystalize Time: Bergson*, Lazzarato makes use of the phenomenology of perception developed by Henri Bergson in the 1896 book *Matter and Memory*, arguing that video functions on similar terms to what Bergson calls pure perception, allowing the re-actualization of memory in current perception.<sup>10</sup> According to Lazzarato, technologies such as video and television closely resemble the workings of Bergsonian perception because they work on similar schema, drawing upon memory in synthesis with real-time playback: “On the one hand, television and digital networks *constitute a memory* (the present is conserved in the past), while on the other, through *their functioning in ‘real time’*, they *work on the splitting of time*, intervening in a time which is in the making.”<sup>11</sup> It follows that video and television technology work on time, binding past and future into one, in a manner that mirrors the function of memory as described by Bergson. According to Lazzarato, capitalism exploits this production of time for

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<sup>7</sup> Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz, *Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994), 13.

<sup>8</sup> For Marshall McLuhan all media are extensions of various parts of the human sensory apparatus. See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1994), p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> Yvonne Spielmann writes: “video shares with television the basic characteristic that fluid forms of imagery arise through its signal-transmission technology. [...] In comparing media, it becomes obvious that video is not only related structurally to the parallel medium of television but also shares the automatic registering of rays onto a surface with the historically precedent, analog recording medium, film.” Yvonne Spielmann in *Video: The Reflexive Medium*, trans. Anja Welle and Stan Jones (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2010), 3.

<sup>10</sup> Bergson stresses that although pure perception can be theorized, it can’t be directly accessed due to the intervention of memory-images in all perception. For Bergson, pure perception is primarily a thought exercise, as it would imply a perception free from memory where each image is experienced as if there were no preceding images: “[...] a pure perception, I mean a perception which exists only in theory rather than in fact and would be possessed by a being placed where I am living as I live, but absorbed in the present and capable, by giving up every form of memory, of obtaining vision of matter both immediate and instantaneous.” Henri Bergson in *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 2004), 26.

<sup>11</sup> Maurizio Lazzarato in “Machines to Crystallize Time: Bergson”, *Theory, Culture & Society* 24, no. 6 (2007): 105, accessed February 15, 2015, <http://tcs.sagepub.com/content/24/6/93.refs>.

value, Lazzarato suggesting that:

[...]the machines to crystallize time are the first technologies to remove the hand of man from the production of images, making this automatic. We have also affirmed that the industrial reproduction of time represents the precondition of this break in human history, given that images, from every point of view, are time. The development of photography, cinema, video and the digital is, from this point of view, the development of a *motor* which, instead of producing and accumulating kinetic and potential energy, accumulates and produces duration and time and hence a 'new kind of energy': affective energy. We know how important the invention of motors was for the first industrial revolution. We can imagine the potential importance of the realization of this wholly particular motor which, by becoming independent of will and affective force, either 'liberates' or 'annuls' them.<sup>12</sup>

The framework sketched by Lazzarato is of particular importance to *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* because it gives grounds for understanding the relationship between the reflexive foregrounding of video that takes place throughout the film in relation to the affective potentialities surrounding Zidane, making him (and also football) exciting and engaging to watch, showing how the two are linked through television's crystallization of time.<sup>13</sup>

Crystallization of time not only ties in with the success of televised football in post-industrial society through the use of video and subsequent formatting, but also serves to underline Zidane's frequent reflections on memories of past games and childhood, as well as his experience of the game being televisual in some sense, emphasized by moments in the film where the text based on Zidane's answers to questions posited by Parreno states things like "the game, the event, is not necessarily experienced or remembered in 'real time' along the bottom of the screen. By rendering their portrait in time, and by reformatting the typical conventions of football, Gordon and Parreno are able to foreground the affects present in the media event. Affects that resonate from Zidane and towards other actors and viewers, but also affects that resonate in the opposite direction, towards Zidane. Bergson describes affect as "[...] that part or aspect of the inside of our body which we mix with external bodies; it is what we must first of all

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<sup>12</sup> Lazzarato in "Machines to Crystallize Time: Bergson", 112-113.

<sup>13</sup> Lazzarato's approach draws upon Deleuze's notion of *the crystal*, developed in *Cinema II*. Roughly explained, crystals are images that encompass two poles of time drawn into simultaneous present: dream and reality, subjective and objective or flashback (re-actualized memory). Deleuze remarks that "The crystal reveals a direct time-image, and no longer an indirect image of time derived from movement. It does not abstract time; it does better: it reverses its subordination in relation to movement. [...] What the crystal reveals or makes visible is the hidden ground of time, that is, its differentiation into two flows, that of presents which pass and that of past which are preserved. Time simultaneously makes the present past and preserves the past in itself." Gilles Deleuze in *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 103.

subtract from perception to get the image in its purity”.<sup>14</sup> In Massumi’s interpretation of Deleuze and Guattari, affect is not emotion, but pre-linguistic bodily “intensities” that cannot be realized in language. In the translators notes for the English edition of Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus* Massumi gives the definition of affect/affection as:

Neither word denotes a personal feeling (*sentiment* in Deleuze and Guattari). L'affect (Spinoza's affectus) is an ability to affect and be affected. It is a pre personal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act. L'affection (Spinoza's affectio) is each such state considered as an encounter between the affected body and a second, affecting, body (with body taken in its broadest possible sense to include "mental" or ideal bodies)<sup>15</sup>

Affect is not emotion, but the capacity to act, the ever-shifting agency of bodies. It is a challenging term to adequately describe because of its pre-signifying, pre-personal nature. For viewers of a televised football match, it could be said to be the atmosphere, tension: the bodily intensities that occur with the shifting flow of the game, crowd and players. Affects, unlike emotions, do not occur because of internalized processes, but are pre-personal and resonate between and through bodies. Unlike Fredric Jameson, who characterizes a lack of affect in postmodern art, Massumi perceives affect as “[...]central to understanding our information- and image-based late capitalist culture[...]”.<sup>16</sup> Media, according to Massumi, gives affect expanded, ideological potentialities. Massumi gives Ronald Reagan as an example, drawing on the fact that Reagan’s messages were linguistically muddled and often incoherently articulated alongside Reagan’s visibly faltering health. For Massumi, Reagan’s voice was “[...] the embodiment of an asignifying intensity doubling his every actual move and phrase [...]” the timbre of his voice more reassuring than the actual content of his political messages. In *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* the text along the bottom of the screen, based on interviews with Zidane conducted by Parreno, at one point remarks that:

As a child I had a running commentary in my head when I was playing. It wasn’t really my own voice. It was the voice of Pierre Cangioni, a television anchor from the 1970’s. [...] It wasn’t that his words were so important but the tone, the accent, the atmosphere, was everything.

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<sup>14</sup> Bergson in *Matter and Memory*, 60.

<sup>15</sup> Brian Massumi in the introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), xvi.

<sup>16</sup> Brian Massumi in *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 27-28.



Zidane's description of his childhood experience touches on the affective, pre-linguistic potentialities of media and televised football, Zidane himself enrolled in various affects as an actor in the assemblage of the media event. In the context of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, affect can be understood as the intensities that radiate from Zidane to viewers, but also the intensities involved in the relationship between Zidane and the media event itself. According to Eric Shouse, "[...] affect is what makes feelings feel. It is what determines the intensity (quantity) of a feeling (quality), as well as the background intensity of our everyday lives [...]"<sup>17</sup> Jeremy Gilbert has described how affect can be related to football matches:

The most intense and significant form of verbal activity engaged in by fans at a football match is not even the chant, but the wordless or semi-articulate cheer: an activity at once expressive and affective, but without *meaning* as such. The relations between football fans must surely be understood as occurring not *only* via the medium of their shared identification with their team, but with an identification *with each other* that is not reducible to any other identification, and which, not being grounded in fantasy but in the actuality of a shared physical experience, of proximity and tactility and the transversal transmission of affective force (the 'Mexican wave' would be a perfect illustration of this), is not amenable to a linguistic psycho-analysis. Nonetheless, such an experience will be organised, describable, and differentiated. As such, it demands vocabularies other than those that rely on language as their master-metaphor to describe it.<sup>18</sup>

What I wish to propose, is an expanded notion of the affective relations at play in the game that encompasses not only crowd, but all of the actors in the media event: viewers at home, players and spectators in the stadium, bound together by television's crystallization of time and extension of the sensory apparatus. Extensions that allow affective intensities be experience from a private home or pub, video understood in Lazzarato's terminology, as a producer of "affective energy" in turn exploited for value. Through interviews with football supporters Cornel Sandvoss has discovered that a considerable number find watching television from home preferable to watching football in the stadium. This is not because the two modes of experience are considered qualitatively equal, but because of the convenience of watching from home and because the rational mode of vision engendered in televised football (always focused on the ball, the immediate action), is preferable to many fans.<sup>19</sup> By focusing on a single player, *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* breaks with this format. However, this does not mean that the film breaks with

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<sup>17</sup> Eric Shouse in "Feeling, Emotion, Affect", *M/C Journal* 8, no. 6 (2005), accessed 17.05.2015, <http://journal.media-culture.org.au/0512/03-shouse.php>.

<sup>18</sup> Jeremy Gilbert, "Signifying Nothing: 'Culture,' 'Discourse' and the Sociality of Affect", *Culture Machine* 6, (2004), accessed April 18, 2015, <http://www.culturemachine.net/index.php/cm/article/view/8/7>.

<sup>19</sup> Cornel Sandvoss, *A Game of Two Halves: Football, Television and Globalization* (London: Routledge, 2003), 138-165.

the production of affective energy described by Lazzarato. Rather, it means a shift towards a format where the affective intensity is centered on one person and his role in the event as a whole.

Jane Bennet uses the electrical grid as example when explaining the term assemblage which like affect originates with Deleuze and Guattari. For Bennet, the electrical grid is understood to encompass a variety of natural forces, resources, ideas and systems: human and non-human, material and non-material that act in tandem and upon each other setting into motion the daily delivery of electricity, but potentially also blackouts with far reaching consequences. Crucially, there is no central governing power and no single actor has the competence to determine the chain of consequences of the activities of the assemblage of as a whole. However, this does not mean that power is equally distributed across the network of relations.<sup>20</sup> Zidane is a single actor in the media event assemblage of the game in question, but he is an important one, with the potential to change the outcome of the game. However, his figure also extends far beyond the game in question, and is constantly unfolding in a variety of different media, on a global stage.

Returning once again to the central problem of defining the nature of what Gordon and Parreno have termed a “21<sup>st</sup> century portrait”, I base my argument on a model of portraiture developed by Richard Brilliant. According to Brilliant, the relationship between a portrait and the person depicted is not a straightforward case of an image resembling a person as they appear in the world, but rather a reflection of a complex field of social interactions between human beings. Both the artist and the person portrayed are subject to the established social and artistic conventions of their given place in history, meaning that categories such as age, gender, race, social status and class are all markers in the network of relations between human beings that have their own historically contingent schema for representation.<sup>21</sup> Brilliant draws upon ancient sculpture in one of his many and varied examples of how his model would play out; he argues that the Greek and Roman public knew what a thinker should look like because they were surrounded by depictions of them. The many prestigious and famous portraits of philosophers, poets and playwrights set the standard for looking the part – meaning that if you wished to be taken as a philosopher by others viewing your portrait, it would have to conform to the schema,

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<sup>20</sup> Jane Bennet, “The Agency of Assemblages and the North American Blackout”, *Public Culture* 17 no. 3 (2005): 445-465, accessed April 18, 2015, doi: 10.1215/08992363-17-3-445.

<sup>21</sup> Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture* (London: Reaktion Books, 1991), 7-15.

at least in part. In other words: portraiture is normatively conditioned to a certain degree, dependent of course on who is being portrayed by whom, and at what point in history.<sup>22</sup>

Brilliant's model is interesting because it allows for quite radical departures in medium as well as in how subjects are depicted in different periods of art history, while keeping the genre as a whole intact within a relatively simple framework. Some may find it problematic that the quality of the representation is considered a factor in defining portraiture, as this could seem somewhat arbitrary, even a subjective quality. For Brilliant however, this definition of quality is dependent on historically contingent social conventions held by the viewer, as well as her existing knowledge and impression of the subject, balancing on the artist's ability to depict the signs that elicit the appropriate response from the socially conditioned viewer, rather than an idea of quality as something that arises from the relationship between the artist and subject alone. In such a configuration, "the social conventions of the day" mirrors the development of different systems of knowledge (episteme) that prefigure and shape the production of knowledge in general conceived of by Michel Foucault in *The Order of Things* – different social configurations and conditions of knowledge in different times.<sup>23</sup> This is particularly relevant as portraiture is often envisaged as a configuration that consists of either a battle or symbiosis between the personality of the subject and the skill and insight of the artist regardless of period. This isn't a view that has been held by the general public alone, but also by scholars and critics, such as Harold Rosenberg and Michael Fried.<sup>24</sup> As such, Gordon and Parreno's foregrounding of the technical underpinnings of television and the affects produced by the media event should be understood as an essential part of their portrait, showing Zidane, as most of us know him – a figure that we engage with affectively through television. Thus, the film is equally rendered as a portrait of television at a point in time where the medium is becoming increasingly difficult to delineate. By extending the Dayan and Katz concept of the media event, together with

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 121-122.

<sup>23</sup> For example, Foucault argues that Velasquez famous portrait *Las Meninas* foregrounds the artificial nature of its own representation in the opening chapter of *The Order of Things*. A shift towards symbolic representation of exchange value is one of developments within science that is seen by Foucault to parallel this break with classical representation. The emergence of the analysis of wealth in 17<sup>th</sup> century is one of Foucault's main arguments for how this shift in representation takes place in knowledge at large, 17<sup>th</sup> century economists arguing that the value of money derived directly from the amount of precious metals contained within each coin on the one hand and as a sign of symbolic exchange value on the other. Foucault does emphasize that such histories of knowledge do not constitute an unbroken, linear development, but that it also encompasses blind spots, ruptures and periods of transitions. See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 180-226.

<sup>24</sup> Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 90.

Lazzarato's Bergsonian approach to video as a medium which engages in the production of time and affect, the socially contingent schema posited by Brilliant could be understood to be tied to the real-time unfolding of media events where Zidane takes part. With the automatic production of images that occurs with video, Brilliant's notion of quality is rendered as an issue of the overall format, rather than the images themselves.

This synthesis of ideas can be extended even further by Lazzarato's understanding of television as a machine that produces subjectivity. Lazzarato conceives of television as one of several security apparatuses "[...] which act on and through speech by 'shutting up' the public and making it speak according to the rules of the common space of communication."<sup>25</sup>

Interestingly in relation to *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, television is fixed as an example of a non-discursive machine, meaning that a person who is interviewed on television has their speech taken over by the machine, functioning on the basis of a small number of possible codified statements. Appearing on television, as Zinedine Zidane does, involves conforming to a set of non-verbal semiotics that can cover everything from choice of clothing to rhythm, gestures, framing and colour patterns in the general design of the image as well as the arrangement of space. Television is so heavily codified, that the unexpected does not occur, and if it does, it passes unnoticed.<sup>26</sup>

Tiziana Terranova shares a similar approach to Lazzarato in outlining what she calls an "information culture". One of the examples given by Terranova is of a televised political debate. Terranova argues that instead of swaying public opinion with by persuading the audiences of the truthfulness of a given argument, the task of the politician is to carve out a channel to the audience through a noise-heavy media landscape. The same could be said to apply to advertising as well. According to Terranova what matters about Nike's Swoosh is its capacity to survive as information, not any essential quality in what it conveys.<sup>27</sup> It is not the message itself that is of importance, but its ability to affect – a "carving out" is also what takes place with Gordon and Parreno's displacement of the highly codified conventions of televised football. By moving focus away from the game, the event and onto a single player, elements that would otherwise be lost in

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<sup>25</sup> Maurizio Lazzarato in *Signs and Machines: Capitalism and the Production of Subjectivity*, trans. Joshua David Jordan (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2014), 161-162.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 162-164.

<sup>27</sup> Tiziana Terranova, *Network Culture: Politics for the Information Age* (New York: Pluto Press, 2004), 10-20.

the noise can be foregrounded; in this case the affective relationships engendered by the media event and television that give rise to the potential for the portrait itself.

### **Existing Accounts of Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait**

There have been many accounts of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* in newspapers and magazines since the film's release in 2006. In addition, *Zidane* is mentioned quite frequently in scholarly work, but often briefly, and only a few of these accounts afford the work in-depth analysis or pay particularly attention to the core issue of portraiture. The account given of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* by Hugh Dauncey and Douglas Morrey is one such example. The film is central to their analysis of Zidane's position as a highly popular celebrity figure in France from a cultural studies perspective, but the question of the 21<sup>st</sup> century portrait asserted in the title of the film is absent from their line of inquiry.<sup>28</sup> Elsewhere, Lutz Koepnick has read *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* into what he terms a logic of contemporary slowness, claiming that the work is " [...] an intriguing phenomenology of what it means to participate in the spatiotemporal dynamic of team sports such as soccer to begin with"<sup>29</sup> and that "soccer, at its best – like video art – emphatically pursues the art of interlacing different flows without ever seeking to achieve harmony and closure".<sup>30</sup>

Elizabeth Ezra and Martine Beugnet afford *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* their exclusive attention in a 2009 article in the journal *Screen*, which looks at *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* from a film studies perspective. Ezra and Beugnet frame the work as an explicit critique of mass media, rather than a deep engagement with media events, commodified culture and the status of portraiture in relation to time-based media:

The great achievement of the film is the captivating work of reappropriation that its treatment of audiovisual material represents: its refusal, precisely, to let media images be confined solely to the realm of the commodified culture and formatted entertainment that vampirizes not only political and artistic fields but also our experience of the world and others.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Hugh Dauncey and Douglas Morrey, "Quiet Contradictions of Celebrity: Zinedine Zidane, Image, Sound, Silence and Fury", *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 11 no. 3 (2008): 308-318, accessed September 20, 2014, doi: 10.1177/1367877908092587.

<sup>29</sup> Lutz Koepnick, *On Slowness: Towards an Aesthetic of the Contemporary* (New York: Columbia University Press), 210-211.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>31</sup> Martine Beugnet and Elizabeth Ezra in "A Portrait of the Twenty-First Century", *Screen* 50 no. 1, (2009): 85, accessed April 29, 2015, doi: 10.1093/screen/hjn072.

On the other hand, Michael Fried offers a more observant account in his book *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before*, beginning with an excellent and evocative description of the film. More importantly however, Fried undertakes a serious consideration of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*'s relation to the genre of portraiture from an art historical perspective – an approach absent from the other accounts of the work mentioned.

Fried approaches *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* from a concept of portraiture that builds on his own work in one of his previous books, *Absorption and Theatricality*:

More nakedly and as it were categorically than the conventions of any other genre, those of the portrait call for exhibiting a subject, the sitter, to the public gaze; put another way, the basic action depicted in a portrait is the sitter's presentation of himself or herself to be beheld.<sup>32</sup>

Here, Fried reveals a reliance on a model of portraiture that conceptualizes portraiture as a negotiation between subject and portraitist, avoiding considerations of the beholder in the process of creation, as such an approach could invoke Fried's old arch-nemesis theatricality: in this case understood as a mode of affected (and in a certain sense guarded) posturing by the sitter on behalf of an audience (this audience includes anyone that could potentially view the image in the future).<sup>33</sup> According to Fried portraits by contemporary photographers such as Thomas Struth and Rineke Dijkstra rely on strategies where the sitters are made comfortable in the presence of the photographer, allowing the subject to remain absorbed in his or her self and avoiding the trap of an affected (theatrical in Fried's terminology) presentation. In regard to Struth's family portraits, Fried argues that such strategies are able to reveal much about the relationship between the individual sitters despite a very frontal and direct framing.

In accordance with Fried's analysis of photographic portraits it is Zidane's laser-like focus that makes *Zidane a 21st Century Portrait* remarkable. The relationship between Zidane's absorption in the game and the fact that he is aware of being watched by millions of television viewers as well as the 80,000 individuals in the stadium is given particular importance. Zidane's ability to seem unaffected by being observed in minute detail by so many people in certain portions of the game and seeming acutely aware in others raises the question of "[...] how exactly to understand Zidane's double consciousness, if that is what it is: on the one hand,

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<sup>32</sup> Michael Fried citing himself in *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2008), 192-193.

<sup>33</sup> Fried began developing his twin concepts of theatricality and anti-theatricality in his infamous essay *Art and Objecthood*. See Michael Fried "Art and Objecthood" in *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 148-171.

immersed in the game he does not really hear the crowd; on the other, *at the same time*, he can ‘almost choose’ what he wants to hear [...]”<sup>34</sup>. Interestingly, Fried remarks briefly that “Furthermore, not only does *Zidane* lay bare that new relationship, it goes on to explore it, in the first place, by the repeated foregrounding of the filmic and TV apparatus [...]”<sup>35</sup> Fried is correct in saying that the film repeatedly foregrounds the television apparatus, however in the case of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, television is more than just a formal strategy. Television is not only essential to the formatting and structuring of the work, but mass media also informs how the portrait itself is negotiated. In this sense, the portrait is equally of the television apparatus itself. In addition, Fried neglects to explore the premise on which Parreno and Gordon’s exploration of the relationship between Zidane and the affective power of the media event by choosing to extend his concept of theatricality into the work.

Fried’s analysis illustrates the need for a more detailed and technically grounded approach to the work, taking into consideration the reflexive foregrounding of television that takes place and its consequences for portraiture. Gordon and Parreno’s approach to the medium of television and the conventions of televised football can be framed as the configuration of a new format, with the express purpose of negotiating what they have termed a 21<sup>st</sup> century portrait. This strategy is not uniquely new, and evidence of it can be seen in much of Gordon and Parreno’s individual work, which is where we will begin.

After a look at Gordon and Parreno’s individual bodies of work, formatting is explored in the context of television and *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* specifically. I then move on to Brilliant’s model of portraiture, followed by a look at various other strategies that approach portraiture through the engagement with media and celebrity. Finally I explore Maurizio Lazzarato’s model of assigned subjectivity in relation to television and its consequences for the 21<sup>st</sup> century portrait.

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<sup>34</sup> Fried in *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before*, 231.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

## 2 Douglas Gordon, Philippe Parreno and Formatting

Although *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* stands as Philippe Parreno and Douglas Gordon's only mutually exclusive collaboration, both artists have extensive experience working with moving images and have had long and varied careers as artists.<sup>36</sup> That said, neither Parreno or Gordon's practice can be reduced to the moving image alone, both artists having worked in a variety of media, encompassing an eclectic mix of installations, videos, drawings, prints, photographs and text among others. Illustrating this, Parreno has been described by both himself and others as more of an exhibition maker than an object maker: "From the beginning, it was more a refusal to be an object-producer; I always felt that an exhibition is not just an arrangement of objects but also an act of creation."<sup>37</sup> Parreno also holds the view that video is just another tool in the toolbox: "I was talking to Matthew Barney when we did the opera *Il Tempo del Postino* (2007) about the fact that we're a generation who uses video as just another tool. We don't use it necessarily in order to make a film but to measure an object of art in time."<sup>38</sup> Gordon on the other hand, has explained that his interest in the moving image grew from his personal experiences of watching movies, often on television and often at home:

I try not to be too nostalgic about it but, to be quite honest, most of the movies that I've watched, I've watched in bed rather than in the cinema. For me there was no difference between seeing a Truffaut film late at night when I was sixteen in bed watching television, and watching a John Ford movie or a Huston movie in bed with my parents when I was maybe three, four or five years old.<sup>39</sup>

It would seem that for Gordon, television and cinema intersect, representing a convenience that can be easily be allocated leisure time in post-industrial life, with a medial distinction between film and video of little consequence for the end user. In this chapter, I argue that the engagement with media in respective artistic practices of Gordon and Parreno can be linked to a strategy of

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<sup>36</sup> A short video work titled *Vicinato 2*, first shown as part of Parreno's show *One Thousand Pictures Falling from One Thousand Walls* in 2000-2001 at the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain in Genève, was a collaboration between Parreno, Liam Gillick, Douglas Gordon, Carsten Holler, Pierre Huyghe and Rirkrit Tiravanija.

<sup>37</sup> Philippe Parreno quoted in "My Influences: Philippe Parreno" by Jennifer Higgie in *Frieze Magazine* 158, October (2013). Accessed September 23, 2014. <http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/my-influences-philippe-parreno/>

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> David Sylvester, "Interview With Douglas Gordon", in *Douglas Gordon*, ed. Russell Ferguson (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2011), 153.



*formatting*, understood as a strategy which involves the displacement and re-encoding of existing formats into new structures. Formatting is not simply the manipulation of existing material, but involves organizing work on the continuums of post-industrial life, conditioned by technical media, mirroring the affective engagement and relations that these media structure.

### **Philippe Parreno**

Philippe Parreno (b. 1964 Oran, Algeria) has spoken at length about his formative years in Grenoble and of how his experiences in Grenoble's art centres, rather than museums, have influenced his practice: Parreno sees art centres are places where things can be allowed to happen, whereas museums are more or less stagnant sites.<sup>40</sup>

Parreno's engagement with formatting is evident in his many and varied collaborations, such as the much-discussed *No Ghost Just a Shell* (1999–2000) conceived of with Pierre Huyghe. In the project, the two artists purchased the rights to the manga character "Annlee" from a Japanese animation company for the relatively modest sum of approximately \$400. Huyghe and Parreno invited a number of other artists to collaborate on work revolving around Annlee, including Liam Gillick, Rirkrit Tiravanija and Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, who all produced films featuring the character.<sup>41</sup> Considering this approach, it could be tempting to reduce Parreno's practice to the archetype of artist-as-curator, but this would be a mistake. Consider for example Parreno's self-titled exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery in 2010, where the four films included in the show were given a scheduled starting time, such that visitors could view each film in its entirety, one after the other, moving between rooms dedicated to each work. After moving through the entire cycle of rooms, the show culminated with a snow machine giving the illusion of snow falling in Hyde Park just as the final film, *Invisibleboy* (2010), ended. This choreographically inclined approach to formatting the exhibition certainly encompasses elements of curatorial strategy, but it is also an approach centered on carefully ordering the work on a given duration, reminiscent of the formatting of free-time into discrete blocks in post-industrial life, especially in relation to media apparatuses such as television and cinema.

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<sup>40</sup> Hans Ulrich Obrist, *The Conversations Series 14. Philippe Parreno* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2008), 36-37.

<sup>41</sup> Tom McDonough argues that the typical view of *No Ghost Just a Shell* as the emancipation of Annlee from capitalistic exploitation by Huyghe and Parreno should be taken as a naïve oversimplification, Huyghe and Parreno's use of the character in fact being emblematic of the exact opposite. See Tom McDonough, "No Ghost" in *October* 110 (2004): 107-130, accessed April 29, 2015, doi:10.1162/0162287042379829.

Like the exhibition at the Serpentine in 2010, Parreno's 2013 retrospective at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, *Anywhere, Anywhere Out of the World* also followed a strategy that closely correlates with the strategy of formatting. In the exhibition, Parreno included a large room containing a self-playing piano performing a section of Stravinsky's *Petrushka* that Parreno had cut down with sound designer and frequent collaborator Nicolas Becker. Another work in the show, the installation *Danny The Street* (2013), is named after a Marvel Comics character and consists of several lamp or marquee-like light boxes programmed to follow the movement called "the dance of the nannies" from *Petrushka*. Parreno remarking that "The idea was to encrypt the entire exhibition using *Petrushka* as a code".<sup>42</sup> Again, a new format is developed around an existing type of media, extending beyond the typical framework of the art institution into the formatting of media and consumer culture. Parreno's formatting of his exhibitions linking technical apparatuses, such as the self-playing piano and lamp-configurations included in *Nowhere, Out of this World* at the Palais de Tokyo, to the configuration of the exhibition itself format.

This approach is equally evident in work by Parreno going back to the mid 1990s, as evidenced by the text accompanying Parreno's 1995 show *Snow Dancing* at Le Consortium in Dijon. In this early example, the possibility of formatting the exhibition space is expressed in the following way:

Perhaps we should compare the nature of this building to the nature of the event proposed in this book. There is a sense in which the party/promotion/event here is a new sort of assembly line. Not a machine aesthetic, but a sense of interaction on a grand scale. A quite particular space but one that reveals enough of its past to allow something special to happen. Because of its vast emptiness, it has many possibilities. The building has somehow become a place where art or people can be exhibited, although it was never intended to be an exhibition space.<sup>43</sup>

Here Parreno links the formatting of the exhibition to the idea of "new sort of assembly line", an idea that resembles Maurizio Lazzarato notion of immaterial labor:

The concept of immaterial labor refers to *two different aspects* of labor. On the one hand, as regards the "informational content" of the commodity, it refers directly to the changes taking place in workers' labor processes in big companies in the industrial and tertiary sectors, where the skills involved in direct labor are increasingly skills involving cybernetics and computer control

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<sup>42</sup> Philippe Parreno quoted in Carlos Basualdo and Philippe Parreno, "Anywhere, Anywhere Out of the World: A Conversation", (interview with Philippe Parreno) in Philippe Parreno, *Anywhere, Anywhere Out of the World* (London: Koenig Books, 2014), 38.

<sup>43</sup> Philippe Parreno, *Anywhere, Anywhere Out of the World* (London: Koenig Books, 2014), 51.

(and horizontal and vertical communication). On the other hand, as regards the activity that produces the "cultural content" of the commodity, immaterial labor involves a series of activities that are not normally recognized as "work" — in other words, the kinds of activities involved in defining and fixing cultural and artistic standards, fashions, tastes, consumer norms, and, more strategically, public opinion.<sup>44</sup>

For our purposes, it is the second category that is of particular importance. Labour and leisure as increasingly difficult to differentiate, “a sense of interaction on a grand scale” as affect at play in the event itself.

An early work by Parreno, *No More Reality II* (1991) has appeared as part of several of Parreno’s shows, including the *Anywhere, Anywhere Out of This World* and his self-titled show at the Serpentine. The video consist of a fixed position, single take betacam recording of school children repeatedly chanting “no more reality!” while they marched enthusiastically around the playground with placards bearing the same slogan. *No More Reality II* is part of a series of works that Parreno initially mailed to various television stations, allowing them to be integrated into the flow of television programming in whatever way the stations themselves saw fit. In *Anywhere, Anywhere Out of This World*, *No More Reality II* is presented on a huge LED-panel titled *TV Channel (2013)* along with five other videos by Parreno. At the Serpentine, it was presented as the first of four films to be watched in a chronologically formatted sequence across several separate rooms. In both cases, the same work enters into new formatting, just as it did when Parreno mailed the video to television stations. The strategy of reformatting that takes place in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* occurs on a similar premise, discreet blocks of imagery (from the television broadcast of the game and elsewhere) rearranged into new structures according to a set of codes. In fact, *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* has been subject to similar reformatting on several occasions: both Gordon’s retrospective at the Museum Für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt in 2011 and Parreno’s at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris in 2013 included versions of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* in different multi-channel iterations: shown on 20 floor mounted monitors in Gordon’s show and across 17 floating canvases in Parreno’s. This not only reflecting the fact that *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* is seen as a key work in both of their individual practices, but that re-arranging media on new continuums can be understood as a significant point of contact between Gordon and Parreno.

## **Douglas Gordon**

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<sup>44</sup> Maurizio Lazzarato in “Immaterial Labour” trans. Paul Colilli and Ed Emery, in *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, ed. Michael Hardt and Paolo Virno (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 132.

Douglas Gordon (b. 1966 Glasgow) grew up in Dumbarton, Scotland and attended the Glasgow School of Art. He won the Turner Prize in 1996, going on to represent Britain at the 1997 Venice Biennale. Various texts have appeared in the catalogues accompanying Gordon's shows that include texts written by either Gordon's "friend" or his "brother David" that are in fact authored by Gordon himself. These texts, which mirror the doubling that often takes place elsewhere in Gordon's practice, highlighting the uncertainty of identity and the difficulties involved in deploying biographical interpretations. While it certainly could be true that Gordon grew up in Scotland with a mother that decided to become a Jehovah's Witness when Gordon was six, Gordon's playful approach to authoring his own biography highlights the dual problem of verifying such accounts with sources other than the individual in question, as well as the problems inherent in the use of biographical information for the purpose of interpreting work.<sup>45</sup>

Although Gordon's work encompasses a wide variety of different media, Katrina M. Brown has argued that "it is perhaps an astute understanding of film that has shaped the physical make-up of much of his work to date."<sup>46</sup> Brown's assertion is unsurprising, considering that much of Gordon's best known work consists of interventions into Hollywood films, as in the case of *24 Hour Psycho* (1993) where Gordon slowed down the framerate of Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) so that a single viewing would take 24 hours, or *5 Year Drive-By* (1995), where John Ford's classic Western *The Searchers* (1956) was given the same treatment, but with a duration of five years realized over several exhibitions - five years being the narrative timeline of the film.

However, cinema does not cover the entire story; and reducing Gordon's practice to the moving image alone would be doing him a disservice. A large portion of Gordon's practice has centred on text, often engaging with the subjective qualities of memory. Katarina M. Brown has pointed out that while many of these works bear a certain resemblance to work by conceptual artists such as On Kawara and Lawrence Wiener, works by Gordon, such as the ever-on-going *List of Names 1990-*, where Gordon attempts to continually update a list of everyone he has ever met, encompasses a fundamentally different approach than the strict instruction set down in On Kawara's *I Met 1968-79*. Unlike On Kawara's methodically and daily recording of his encounters, Gordon has left the recording of his encounters up to memory, exercised anew each time the work is shown; invariably leaving the list with many shortcomings and oversights. It is a

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<sup>45</sup> See Philip Monk, *Double-Cross The Hollywood Films of Douglas Gordon* (Toronto: The Power Plant and Art Gallery of York University, 2003), 45-57.

<sup>46</sup> Katarina M. Brown in *Douglas Gordon* (London: Tate Publishing, 2004), 8.

work that potentially evokes a certain edge of anxiety for visitors that have previously encountered Gordon, as they are forced to consider that they could be among the people forgotten for whatever incidental reason.<sup>47</sup> Like *List of Names*, other text based work by Gordon, such as *instruction, number 3b* which states “From the moment you hear these words, until you kiss someone with blue eyes” engage with the how and when of the memory-image, the memory of the phrase either re-actualized at some unknown moment in the future, or more likely simply forgotten. Mark B.N. Hansen has suggested that “[...] Gordon engages with issues of cinematic time, the time-image, and specifically the interstice or ‘between two images’”.<sup>48</sup> By expanding the temporal duration of each film the interval is foregrounded rather than movement. However, something very similar is also at play in the text works that engage with memory. Bergson’s phenomenology of perception after all suggests that that any memory of the past may be set alongside current perception:

It would be sufficient to neglect in this perception and in this memory just enough detail for similarity alone to appear. Moreover, the moment that the recollection is linked with the perception, a multitude of events contiguous to the memory are thereby fastened to the perception – an indefinite multitude, which is only limited at the point which we choose to stop it.<sup>49</sup>

For Bergson, memory is always and constantly actualized alongside current perception, meaning that Gordon forces us to consider why exactly, the memory of this sentence at this very moment? Bergson, on his part, offers an explanation based on association: “a word from a foreign language, uttered in my hearing, may make me think of that language in general or of a voice which once pronounced it in a certain way”<sup>50</sup>. Bergson concedes that classifying the different mental dispositions leading to associations would be a difficult task, best left to psychology; in effect leaving the question of how associative bonds occur in the mind relatively open.<sup>51</sup>

Gordon’s temporal extensions of cinema, such as a *24 Hour Psycho* and *5 Year Drive-By* also deal with the intersection of time and memory. In the case of *5 Year Drive-By*, the extension of the duration of the film to coincide with the timeframe of the narrative foregrounds the ability of moving image technologies to expand and contract time – effectively reformatting the film to function on a temporal interval that at least in duration resembles the human interval, rather than

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 10-15.

<sup>48</sup> Mark B. N. Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), 242.

<sup>49</sup> Bergson in *Matter and Memory*, 218-219.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 220-221.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 218-222.

the one produced by cinema. This formatting defaces the narrative structure and the continuity of film, but more importantly, as Erika Balsom points out, the “videotape is not only the inspiration for *24 Hour Psycho*, but also the key to the work’s material and aesthetic dimensions”.<sup>52</sup> Balsom points out that Gordon produced the work using a VHS tape and an industrial VCR, doing nothing to alter the tape, only manipulating the playback. Again, as elsewhere, formats are made interchangeable, film becomes video, and imagery is allowed increased agency in terms of reproducibility and manipulation. As elsewhere in Gordon’s work memory plays a crucial role: we recall viewing *Psycho*, but not with the affordance of the hyperawareness of details allowed by the temporal extension of video, mirrored in the ability of home video to rewind, pause and fast-forward – cinema subsumed into the technical formatting of home technology.<sup>53</sup>

Of Gordon’s work it is perhaps *Feature Film* (1998) that bears the closest resemblance to *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, although it could certainly be placed on a continuum that also includes *Play Dead Real Time* (2003).<sup>54</sup> In *Feature Film*, Gordon follows James Conlon as he conducts the score to Alfred Hitchcock’s *Vertigo*, focusing on Conlon’s hands, and face for the entire duration of the score; often in extreme close-up. Here Gordon makes use of the formatting of a classical concert, but rather than the traditional view of conductor and orchestra, we are presented with a laser-like focus on Conlon’s hands and head: his tools of the trade that enable him to affect the collective performance of the orchestra. Like in *Zidane*, there is a focus on mastery of movement, only achievable with the moving image, tracked with a precision beyond what would be feasible unassisted by technological extensions of the sensory apparatus.

Like Parreno, Gordon has also engaged in the practice of formatting his own, existing work. The installation *Pretty Much Every Film and Video Work From About 1992 until now* is updated every time it is exhibited, and consists of a variety of different sized monitors displaying almost every single video by Gordon simultaneously. This work illustrates the double sensibility that can be involved in formatting, as both the reconfiguration of material display and the codes of media formats.

### **Critical Engagement with Gordon and Parreno: Discourse on the art of the 1990’s and Beyond**

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<sup>52</sup> Erika Balsom in *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013), 141.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 137-147.

<sup>54</sup> *Play Dead Real Time* is a work featuring an Indian elephant closely tracked by the camera while moving around the cavernous interior of the Gagosian Gallery on New York’s West 24th street.

As both Gordon and Parreno have shown work at major international institutions from the early 1990s and beyond, each of their respective bodies of work have featured prominently in much of the discourse and theory surrounding contemporary art from the 90s and onwards. Hal Foster mentions work by both Gordon and Parreno as examples of artworks that are emblematic for a tendency that he terms “an archival impulse” in his essay of the same name. In Parreno’s case it is *No Ghost Just a Shell*, which is subject to discussion, while in Gordon’s case it is his various temporal extensions of Hollywood movies that are subject to Foster’s interest. Foster considers work by Gordon as emblematic for an artistic strategy where historical information is made physically present, often realized in the form of an idiosyncratically juxtaposed installation. *No Ghost Just a Shell* on the other hand is considered as something along the lines of a digital readymade by Foster, considering that Parreno and Hugye bought the rights and files containing the “Annlee” character from a company that provides disposable characters for use as background furnishings in comics and cartoons. Foster argues that while it may be tempting to liken the structuring of the body of work that resulted from the “Annlee” licence and files to the internet, the resulting archive of work is material and idiosyncratic, not suitable for processing in a database. Foster is also keen to separate the collections of data and objects that result from the from practice that he terms the “archival impulse” from notions of artist-as-curator and practices that encompass a critical engagement with collections and the collecting practices of museums.<sup>55</sup> It is also important to note that for Foster “to connect what cannot be connected” implies a sort of paranoia, while it at the same time opening an avenue for questioning archives in general. Even so, Foster recognizes the same sort of connections being bridged in his own text, in the way he groups the various artists mentioned allowing for overlap in their practices.<sup>56</sup>

It would seem that for Foster, collections of objects, data and documents such as those produced by Parreno and Hugye’s *No Ghost Just a Shell* project constitute archives by force of association. According to Foster, these archives:

[...] are recalcitrantly material, fragmentary rather than fungible, and as such they call out for human interpretation, not machinic reprocessing. Although the contents of this art are hardly indiscriminant, they remain indeterminate like the contents of any archive, and often they are

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<sup>55</sup> Hal Foster, “An Archival Impulse”, *October* 110, (2004): 4-5, accessed September 20, 2015, doi:10.1162/0162287042379847.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

presented in this fashion –as so many promissory notes for further elaboration or enigmatic prompts for future scenarios.<sup>57</sup>

However, this use of the term *archive* is imprecise, both in terms of digital and pre-digital archives, reducing the term archive to an idiosyncratically selected set of objects. In contrast to Foster's concept of the archive, Wolfgang Ernst has written that:

An archive is not an arbitrary quantity, not just any collection of things. The archival regime of memory is not an idiosyncratic choice but a rule-governed administratively programmed operation of inclusions and exclusions that can be reformulated cybernetically or even digitally.<sup>58</sup>

For Ernst digital archives involve a significant displacement of the archive, extending the archive from text to audio-visual data, thereby dissolving the existing archival regime, yet this does not mean that they are no longer rule-bound entities:

In digital space, when not only every film, but every still in every film or, even more – every pixel in every film frame – can be discreetly addressed, titles no longer subject images to words, but alphanumeric numbers refer to alphanumeric numbers. Thus the archive transforms into a mathematically defined space; instead of being a passive container for memorisable data, the technoarchive (as dispositive) actively defines the memory of images.<sup>59</sup>

In a slightly earlier essay, titled *Archives of Modern Art*, Foster preemptively addresses some of the issues that occur between his notion of the archive and more orthodox understandings such as that of Wolfgang Ernst. In the very first sentence, Foster writes that “The ‘archives’ of my title are not the dusty rooms filled with dry documents of academic lore. I mean the term as Foucault used it, to stand for ‘the system that governs the appearance of statements’ [...]”.<sup>60</sup> Here Foster is referencing the way in which Foucault argues in *The Order of Things* and *An Archeology of Knowledge* that different periods of history should be understood to be underpinned by widely differing systems of knowledge (episteme), shaping discourse. In *Archives of Modern Art*, Foster terms a particular canon of western art understood as a form of collective memory, influencing a wide range of artists practice within painting in a period roughly delineated as 1850-1950. In this system, it follows that modern art practice, art museum and art history can be understood as

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>58</sup> Wolfgang Ernst, “Discontinuities: Does the Archive Become Metaphorical in Multimedia Space?” in Wolfgang Ernst, *Digital Memory and the Archive*, ed. Jussi Parikka (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 139.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>60</sup> Hal Foster in “Archives of Modern Art” in *October* 99 (2002): 81, accessed September 20, 2015, doi:10.1162/016228702317274648.



archives which are challenged through engagement with dialectical processes.<sup>61</sup> Although Foster specifies that his archives are not dusty collections of documents, the displacement he performs in favour of ephemeral collections of ideas and cultural memory have only, at best, a passing resemblance to actual archives, which are relatively stable entities organized around specific cataloguing systems. Foster's use of the word forgoes this specificity, which as Ernst shows still has relevance, as archives across the world are being updated to be searchable with digital tools.

Since both Parreno and Gordon are mentioned by Foster as artists that engage with archives, it could raise the question of whether it is appropriate to consider *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* as a work that engages with either of the above-described notions of archives? It is certainly true that *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* engages with various idiosyncratic assemblages of information and images – snippets of interviews, TV-footage and news broadcasts. However, this still raises the question of what, if anything, is gained by conceiving of these sorts of collections of material as archives after Foster's notion. Since the montage of footage from various news broadcasts from the same day as the game that appears roughly around half-time in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* seems to be selected without any apparent systematic organisation, and because the footage does not encompass the totality of news footage of that single day or some sort of thematic organization, or even the totality of images from any one source, this section isn't an archive in the traditional sense. What is of interest here is not the juxtaposition itself, but its relationship to various media that are converging in new ways.

In what Foster calls his closing speculations in *An Archival Impulse*, he suggests that his definition of archival art:

[...] cannot be separated from "the memory industry" that pervades contemporary culture (state funerals, memorials, monuments...), it suggests that 2. Archival art also might be bound up, ambiguously, even deconstructively, with an "archive reason" at large, that is, with a "society of control" in which our actions are archived (medical records, border crossings, political involvement...) so that our present activities can be surveilled and our future behaviors predicted. This networked world does appear both disconnected and connected – a paradoxical appearance that archival art sometimes seems to mimic [...]<sup>62</sup>

In regard to Zidane it is definitely the case that his performances on the football pitch are archived by "the memory industry" in that his best and his worst performances are part of the collective memory of fans, but also the archives of broadcasters. These instances are also

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 81-94.

<sup>62</sup> See footnote 60 in Foster, "An Archival Impulse", 22.

networked as each game (event) doesn't exist in a vacuum but rather in a network of performances that cover individual seasons, years and tournaments all integrated into the flow of television synthesizing a normative, collectively held image of Zidane. Foster's definition of *archival art*, his conception of collective memory (*the memory industry*) as a structure approaching actual archives such as border records or medical records is problematic and falls short in explaining how such images are negotiated. The use of the term archive is not only imprecise, but for collective memory to be made archive in the true sense it would have to be an entity, rather than process.

Considering the engagement with various assemblages in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, and the frequent use of strategies centered on formatting in much of Parreno and Gordon's practice, it seems no coincidence that they are both mentioned (although Gordon only very briefly) in Nicolas Bourriaud's book *Postproduction*. In the book, Bourriaud states that "The artistic question is no longer: 'what can we make that is new?' but 'how can we make do with what we have?'"<sup>63</sup>, Bourriaud argues that the artists he describes (Mike Kelly, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Vanessa Beecroft and Pierre Huyghe among others) deal with pre-existing forms and formats, not unlike a DJ, mixing and adjusting pre-existing music into a new juxtaposition – culture as toolbox for artists.<sup>64</sup> In addition, Bourriaud restates the perception of Parreno as someone whose work is concerned with appropriating and developing formats before objects, drawing on his many collaborations as examples.<sup>65</sup> Although *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* isn't mentioned, as it appeared after Bourriaud's book, *Postproduction* is certainly relevant in regard to *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, as Parreno and Gordon have built a new format while effectively integrating the formatting and production techniques of sports broadcasting for their feature length portrait of Zidane. However, in Bourriaud's brief analysis of works such as Douglas Gordon's *24 Hour Psycho* alongside work by Vanessa Beecroft, Pierre Huyghe and Rirkrit Tiravanija among others, Bourriaud claims that these practices "[...]have in common the recourse to *already produced forms*".<sup>66</sup> In the case of *24 Hour Psycho*, it certainly holds true that Gordon is engaging in the formatting of pre-existing material (Alfred Hitchcock's 1960 film *Psycho*). However, the practice of formatting is not exclusively the case of manipulating existing material, thereby

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<sup>63</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud in *Postproduction* (New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2005), 18.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 40-44.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 75-77.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

giving it renewed agency; the practice of formatting can also involve the displacement and re-encoding of existing formats into new structures, as well as the creation of entirely new material, both factors at play in *Zidane*. The main problematic of Bourriaud's approach is that it reduces the work to its formal structure, as a reformatting of pre-existing material, exempting considerations of how the various works that engage with these formats give rise to new affects. As such *Postproduction* leaves something to be desired when employed as a framework for analyzing Parreno and Gordon's individual bodies of work; Bourriaud's description of the practice of postproduction does not explain the subtleties and variations in how Parreno and Gordon's practice engages with assemblages beyond the work itself, or how the codifying effects of media enrolls free time into the system of capital. In regard to Bourriaud's emancipatory claims, Erika Balsom has argued:

Rather than erasing the difference between production and consumption, Post-Fordist production, as Maurizio Lazzarato has elaborated, is characterized by a shift to immaterial labour whereby the act of consumption becomes an integral part of production. Therefore, participation cannot be seen as inherently oppositional, but is in fact precisely what is required for the generation of value.<sup>67</sup>

Parreno and Gordon both feature prominently in Bourriaud's divisive and much discussed book *Relational Aesthetics*, which prompted Claire Bishop's critical response in *October* as well as her subsequent book *Artificial Hells*.<sup>68</sup> *Relational Aesthetics* is Bourriaud's term for works of art that intervene socially, creating an arena for exchange between viewer and artist, but also between viewers, in this case probably more aptly referred to as participants. This form of practice is conceived of by Bourriaud as the heir to the utopian ideals and political agency of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century avant-garde. Bourriaud wisely avoids this paternalistic line of reasoning in *Postproduction*, it being one of the more controversial aspects of *Relational Aesthetics*.<sup>69</sup> In *Relational Aesthetics* several works by both Gordon and Parreno are mentioned

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<sup>67</sup> Balsom in *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art*, 126.

<sup>68</sup> See Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics" in *October* 110 (2004): 51-79, accessed April 23, 2014, doi:10.1162/0162287042379810 and Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London and New York: Verso Books, 2012).

<sup>69</sup> In *Sculpture in the Expanded Field* Rosalind Krauss uses the perceived paternal relationship between constructivist- and minimalist sculpture commonly invoked by critics and art historians as an example of the artificial nature of many such couplings. According to Krauss, these couplings are invoked because of a tendency to historicize, creating neat, relatable narratives: "Never mind that Gabo's celluloid was the sign of lucidity and intellection, while Judd's plastic-tinged-with-dayglo spoke the hip patois of California. It did not matter that constructivist forms were intended as visual proof of the immutable logic and coherence of universal geometries, while their seeming counterparts in minimalism were demonstrably contingent – denoting a universe held together

briefly, but none of the work presented is discussed or analyzed at length, instead allowing both artist to be quickly co-opted into Bourriaud's system as "relational artist" without too much resistance.<sup>70</sup>

Finally, work by Parreno plays an important role in Ina Blom's 2007 book *On The Style Site*. The book reflects on a tendency within contemporary art practice from the 1990s and onwards where the lifestyle worlds of late capitalism are explored through machines that produce subjectivity, first and foremost thought of as technologies such as television.<sup>71</sup> The artists mentioned in the book largely overlap with those mentioned by Foster and Bourriaud. According to Blom, Philippe Parreno, Olafur Eliasson, Liam Gillick and Rirkrit Tiravanija are among the artists that increasingly focused on "the manner in which everyday life is formed, designed and stylized."<sup>72</sup> However, unlike Bourriaud's focus on the activation of social interactions in *Relational Aesthetics*, Blom urges us to look beyond the situations themselves and to how these artists articulate "[...] the connections between style and lifestyle, media and information networks and contemporary production".<sup>73</sup> Blom draws on Philippe Parreno and Jorge Pardo's collaborative floor-wired lamp installations are drawn upon as one example of how works by these artists engage with various assemblages:

A closer look at the artistic situations in which lamps take center stage shows, over and over again, the same phenomenon: an explicitly articulated continuity between lamps and TV screens – a continuity that is between ordinary lamplight and the luminous real-time emanations of electronic and informational media. Placed in such a context the lamp works evoke both the networked continuity of electronic wiring and the continuous activity of projection that subtends our current way of living, thinking, producing.<sup>74</sup>

Pardo and Parreno's lamps are of particular interest to Blom, because the wiring of the lamps draw attention to how the lamps are constantly and continuously connected to electronic and

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not by Mind but by guy wires, or glue, or the accidents of gravity. The rage to historicize simply swept these differences aside." Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field" in *October*, Vol. 8 (1979): 32, Accessed April 23, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/778224>.

<sup>70</sup> The examples mentioned include Gordon's text based instructions, along with a brief mention of *Snow Dancing* an exhibition organized by Parreno at Le Consortium in Dijon in 1995. For Bourriaud, Parreno's practice of orchestrating the exhibition space is somewhat like the work engaged in by a film director, Bourriaud titling one of the sections that mentions Parreno and his work "the exhibition-set". See Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods (Paris: les presses du reel, 2002), 33-35.

<sup>71</sup> Ina Blom, *On the Style Site: Art, Sociality, and Media Culture* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2007), 11-33.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

informational networks, similarly to Parreno's installation *Danny The Street* discussed previously in this chapter.<sup>75</sup>

Parreno's 2003 film *The Boy From Mars*, made in collaboration with architect François Roche, is drawn upon as another example. In *The Boy from Mars*, the relationship between lamps and social space takes form of a large building, gradually lit up at night, while *The Story of Feeling* uses descriptions of lamps to designate the function of various rooms. Both cases form the basis for "futuristic thinking" a mode of thinking about the future driven by "[...]media machines that capitalize on the mere ability to hope, dream and imagine [...]",<sup>76</sup> mirroring the way in which contemporary capitalism extracts labour from leisure time by way of information networks.

Lamps do not play a particularly central role in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* (although the stadium lights are certainly a prominent feature in several shots), but framing the lamps themselves as Blom's exclusive concern would be missing the point. Rather, lamps stand as an apparatus that is subject to the vast assemblages that drive post-industrial life, such as the electrical grid, intervening in function of social spaces and life. The montage sequence in the middle of the *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* serves as a reminder of the networked continuity of electronic media that Blom explores through her analysis of various lamp-configurations. In *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, the continuity of electronic media is continually underlined by the reliance on television for formatting, as well as the affective relationship between Zidane and the media event and viewers. Furthermore, Blom's book offers a model for thinking of television as a site of social life with the potential to intersect artistic production.

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 72-73

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 95.

# 3 From the First Kick of the Ball: Formatting Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait

Let us compare the screen on which a film unfolds with the canvas of a painting. The painting invites the spectator to contemplation; before it the spectator can abandon himself to his associations. Before the movie frame he cannot do so. No sooner has his eye grasped a scene than it is already changed.<sup>77</sup> – Walter Benjamin in *The Work of Art in the Mechanical age of Reproduction*

Today, there are no longer images that are beautiful, there are chains of images.<sup>78</sup> – Philippe Parreno

In the previous chapter I argued that the strategy of formatting – understood as the configuration of new formats that engage with existing media – can be traced in much of Gordon and Parreno’s respective bodies of work. In this chapter, I look at how this strategy can be traced in the structuring of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*. In this case the highly codified format of televised football is of particular importance, invoked at a point where television is becoming increasingly hard to delineate. Gordon and Parreno return to the television footage of the game throughout the film, but often break with its fundamental conventions in their own footage, illustrating that formatting can be understood as both the creation of new material placed into relation to existing media, often alongside the reconfiguration of existing material. This is a process that goes beyond the “remixing” proposed by Bourriaud, because it necessarily involves the development of a new format, and not just displacements within pre-existing confines, offering entirely new experiences.

With media such as television extending the sense apparatus, affects can be experienced from home and spectators can be brought closer to the action than what they could hope to achieve in the stadium. The tension, atmosphere and excitement of football made accessible in the company of friends or family from the comfort of a private home or a local pub, neatly

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<sup>77</sup> Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Mechanical Age of Reproduction” in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt and trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 238.

<sup>78</sup> Obrist quotes Philippe Parreno in Obrist, *The Conversations Series 14. Philippe Parreno*, 13.

integrated into the daily routines of post-industrial life. Shared experience is central to Dayan and Katz notion of the media event. Media events providing “[...] shared reference points, the sense of common past, bridges between personal and collective history.”<sup>79</sup> For example, many Norwegians are able to recall Norway beating Brazil 2-1 in the 1998 World Cup – the surprise victory marked as an important event in the collective history of the Norwegians whom watched it unfold, despite the vast majority having watched the game from home.

### **The formatting of Televised Football**

The foregrounding of Zidane that takes place in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, prioritizes tracking Zidane over displaying the game itself, contrary to the strictly codified formatting of televised football, where the visual unfolding of the game is largely contingent on tracking the ball, cutting occasionally to close-ups of individual players when the action slows down, or to replay-sequences if there is a goal, foul, near miss or other important on-pitch event. Cornel Sandvoss has argued that the mode of vision employed by televised football represents a rationalization and maximization of action in comparison to attending a game, as the camera tends to primarily follow the ball, employing close-ups and a predictable set of angles and frequent cuts. This standardization and rationalization is further emphasized by the real time standardization of vision on television in general – television viewers all see the same image at the same time, encompassing multiple angles, while those attending a game in person only see the game relative to their location in the stadium. According to Sandvoss, the viewing of televised football fulfils a set of audience desires that are very similar to other forms of televisual entertainment. The length of games, two to three hours of viewing time, as well as the possibility of watching from home, are factors that fit conveniently with daily, post-industrial life and go a long way towards explaining why a significant portion of fans prefer viewing from home rather than attending games. Additionally, football offers an on-going, strictly codified narrative, not unlike a soap opera.<sup>80</sup> Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, writing in 1978 on the world cup of the same year, identified a set of formal conventions regarding televised football. These include preserving the 180-degree rule from cinema by placing the majority of cameras along the sidelines, and the use of an all-seeing commentator to preserve neutrality. Television doesn’t focus primarily on the overall tactical shape of the teams, but on close shots of confrontations between players –

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<sup>79</sup> Dayan and Katz, *Media Events*, 212.

<sup>80</sup> Sandvoss, *A Game of Two Halves*, 138-165.

individuals or groups of individuals in action - often intercut with images of tense managers on the side-lines and shots that emphasize the emotional and physical reactions of the players. For Nowell-Smith, it follows that televised football and television in general is always a representation of events rather than a reconstruction, as the depiction of any event on television will always differ from the experience obtainable in the immediate presence of the event, owing to the technical apparatuses employed.<sup>81</sup>

In attempting to describe *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* it could be tempting to summarize the main events of the game, such as the goals and Zidane's late game sending off, yet the important moments of the game and the important moments of the film do not always overlap (although sometimes they do). The film even emphasizes certain moments in the game when Zidane isn't performing particularly well. Perhaps this resistance to description stems from the formatting of the film itself, which isn't strictly the format followed by televised football, although the two share some similarities. Writing about *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, Simon Critchley has remarked that in Parreno's films "things are not created. Rather, a frame is established which allows something to happen."<sup>82</sup> Gordon's work too, has often resisted the typical narrative structure of cinema. His slowing down of Hitchcock's *Psycho* in *24 Hour Psycho* (1993), so that a single viewing lasts for 24 hours undercuts narrative expectations while it "ratchets up the idea of suspense to a level approaching absurdity"<sup>83</sup> according to Russell Ferguson. Writing on the characteristics of video, Yvonne Spielmann observantly notes that the features of formats aren't contingent on the technological characteristics of the underlying medium alone, but also on "culturally semiotic forms of expression that not only communicates the particular, specifically technological characteristics but also generates those features, which a particular medium has in common with other media."<sup>84</sup> In other words: the question of how to understand the formatting of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* is not just a question of purely technical understanding, but also in part a question of understanding the relationship between the culture of televised football and the underlying technical assemblages that give it form.

### **Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait and the End of Television**

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<sup>81</sup> Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, "Television – Football – The World" in *Screen* 19, no 4, (1978): 45-60, accessed September 18, 2015, doi:10.1093/screen/19.4.45.

<sup>82</sup> Simon Critchley, "A Puppet or a God? On Philippe Parreno's Films" in *Philippe Parreno*, ed. Christine Macel (Zürich: JRP Ringier, 2009), 192.

<sup>83</sup> Russell Ferguson, "Trust Me" in *Douglas Gordon*, ed. Russell Ferguson (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2011), 15.

<sup>84</sup> Spielmann in *Video: The Reflexive Medium*, 11.



*Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* doesn't tell the story of Zidane's career, his beginnings in Marseille or even the entire story of the documented game in particular. It isn't only an attempt to portray Zidane, but is also an attempt to portray Zidane with the help of a format that links Zidane to a moment in the history of television where television itself is becoming increasingly hard to delineate as a singular medium. The mode of vision engendered by *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* is unlike the experience of watching football on television, and also unlike watching football from the stands. However, like television, *Zidane* relies on a mode of vision conditioned by technology, suggesting that the film is not just an attempt to portray Zidane, shown as he was almost every single week on the football pitches that inhabit our TV-screens, but also an attempt to portray the medium of television itself, at a point in time where television, the dominant medium in the western world from the end of the Second World War and until at least the 1990's, was beginning to slip. Television no longer easily delineable with the influx of digital infrastructure and new forms of media; existing forms of media integrated into one through the universality of binary code, bits and bytes, in what Friedrich A. Kittler termed digital convergence.<sup>85</sup>

By the time of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portraits* release (in 2006), the set of technologies known as television was in the midst of several fundamental technological changes.<sup>86</sup> In this regard, *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* finds itself at a very interesting intersection in the history of television; 2006 is the same year that Alexander B. Magoun describes as the point where television stops existing as a clearly delineable medium in his comprehensive study on the history of the medium:

By the end of 2006, the technology of television had changed beyond recognition – if not over night, then over the previous five years. [...] around the world, via cellphones and digital cameras; the internet and local WiFi wireless nodes; and fiber-optic telephone networks,

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<sup>85</sup> Friedrich A. Kittler famously began his book *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* with the words "Optical fiber networks. People will be hooked to an information channel that can be used for any medium – for the first time in history, or for its end. Once movies and music, phone calls and texts reach households via optical fibre cables, the formerly distinct media of television, radio, telephone and mail converge, standardized by transmission frequencies and bit format." Friedrich A. Kittler in *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999)p. 1.

<sup>86</sup> Yvonne Spielmann argues for a *genealogy of media* encompassing multiple stages which includes the development of a new technology, a break with existing, related technologies and the articulation of a media-specific vocabulary of expression. In contrast to this path towards a fully formed medium, I would suggest that the technology, along with the vocabulary of expression should be understood as changing and often re-configured assemblages rather than parts of a developmental cycle that moves towards a fully formed totality. See Spielmann, *Video: The Reflexive Medium*, 19-23.

corporations and individuals operated their own television systems and created their own, often transient, networks, content and audiences. People spent more time online than in front of a TV and the younger they were, the more that was the case.<sup>87</sup>

Despite this relatively bold assertion and the suggestion of a specific time frame, the same indeterminacy that characterized the emergence of television also holds true in Manoun's account of the end of television.<sup>88</sup> When television disappeared, it did so quietly, in that it ceased being delineable as a singular medium, but it didn't disappear from living rooms as a physical device, and its disappearance wasn't the result of a singular innovation or event. Rather than a neat narrative, there was a complex set of innovations encompassing their own distinct technological narratives involved: among them increases in the availability of bandwidth, improvements in the manufacturing of Liquid Crystal Displays, satellite- and cable broadcasting, leaps in compression technology as well as storage capacity, the standardization of HDTV and last but not least the development of the Internet, in the beginning an entirely separate technology with its own history and components. Thus, the history of how television disappeared is perhaps even more complex than the history of its emergence. Likewise, many of the same innovations have also affected cinema, Erika Balsom has noted that with convergence, elements of the cinematic apparatus:

[..] break out of the previously fixed network of relations of which they were once a part to now appear far from their usual configurations in new constellations that inhabit a murky interstitial space between cinema and its various others – television, the Internet, video games, mobile phones, and of course, media art.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Alexander B. Magoun, *Television: The Life Story of a Technology* (Westport: Greenwood Press 2007), p. 155.

<sup>88</sup> Like most modern technology, television didn't emerge at a precise point in time, pre-packaged and standardized from the get-go, but was the result of a long series of innovations by individuals and corporations working separately and in different parts of the world. Sometimes in competition, sometimes collaboratively and at other times without any knowledge of each other at all. For example, Paul Nipkow's invention of the The Nipkow disc in 1884 was an important contribution towards the electronic broadcasting of images, but one that Nipkow was unable to fully realize as more than a concept, as a complete system of signal transmission wasn't feasible with the materials available at the time. His discs weren't realize until the 1920's, when independent of each other, John Logie Baird and Charles Jenkins demonstrated the electronic transmission of images, both using Nipkow's discs as part of their respective systems. Even so, many different suggestions and models for the electronic transmission of images were conceived in the years between Nipkow's discs and Baird and Jenkins realization of the electronic transmission of images. It would still take several more incremental and often diverging innovations before commercial television finally could be realized in the years following The Second World War, as television required significant investment in infrastructure. The cost of equipment for home consumers was of course also a significant factor, as well as the founding of broadcasting corporations and regulatory bodies. See Magoun, *Television: The Life Story of a Technology*, 15-39.

<sup>89</sup> Balsom in *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art*, 14.

*Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* would seem to encompass a similarly ambivalent disposition in the case of the television – the use of television footage in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* often reflects a search for intimacy, a need to get closer than the sensory apparatus allows. This is especially evident in the opening moments of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, where the camera first searches across the centre of the pitch, then fixes on a particular player, identifiable as a Real Madrid player because of the whiteness of his kit, before gradually inching closer to the image, resolving into the matrix of red, green and blue pixels that constitute the surface of an LCD screen.

*Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* not only shifts suddenly to the format of televised football, but integrates it into its own format, suggesting that television, at least in the form it existed for most of the second half of the twentieth century, can only reach so far when it comes to getting “as close as you can for as long as it lasts, for as long as it takes”. For Marshall McLuhan, all media are extensions of the human sensory apparatus; Gordon and Parreno, for their part, would seem to question if the extension typically allowed by television are enough to create a convincing portrait for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>90</sup> Perhaps such intersections between old and new are the reason why Mark B.N. Hansen emphasizes that the discourse on new media has taken a binary form, with discourse split into “two (in my opinion) equally problematic positions: those who feel that new media have changed everything and those who remain sceptical that there is anything at all about new media art that is, in the end, truly new”.<sup>91</sup> *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* would seem to encompass both some of the new and some of the old, illustrating that the televisual technologies have changed in fundamental ways, while also remaining essentially the same in others – still an ubiquitous feature of living rooms across the globe.

McLuhan famously labelled television a cold medium – meaning that it required participation on the part of the viewer, unlike film or radio. McLuhan’s use of the word participation is intended to mean something more along the lines of immersion; participation should not be taken to mean that people interact directly with television, but rather that they are immersively and affectively engaged in viewing. McLuhan attributes part of the difference between film and television to the amount of data contained in each image:

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<sup>90</sup> McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 21.

<sup>91</sup> Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media*, 23.

The mode of the TV image has nothing in common with film or photo, except that it offers also a nonverbal *gestalt* or posture of forms. [...] The TV image is visually low in data. The TV image is not a *still* shot. It is not a photo in any sense, but a ceaselessly forming contour of things limned by the scanning-finger. The resulting plastic contour appears by light *through*, not light *on*, and the image so formed has the quality of sculpture and icon, rather than of picture. The TV image offers some 3 million dots per second to the receiver. From these he accepts only a few dozen each instant, from which to make an image.<sup>92</sup>

The difference in image modalities pointed out by McLuhan, certainly held true in 1963 when *Understanding Media* was first published. However, television is no longer the same. As discussed by Magoun, HDTV, other forms of transmission such as cable, digital and satellite television, as well as advances in screen size and the move from CRT to LCD and plasma have all contributed to larger and clearer images, containing significantly more information. In *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, the use of two Panavision 300x cameras for extreme zooms and very wide shots enables Parreno and Gordon to get much closer to Zidane than what would be possible unassisted or with older technological supports, thus making it possible for Parreno and Gordon to integrate the affective engagement that takes place when viewing football, while simultaneously foregrounding Zidane's engagement in the game.<sup>93</sup> Beyond increases in the amount of detail that can be recorded and transmitted, the hybridization between different technical supports like film and video is indicative of the difficulty of preserving the divisions between cinema and television proposed by McLuhan – there is little discernable impact from the fact that some of the footage in *Zidane* is shot on HDCAM and some on film.<sup>94</sup> McLuhan's framing of television as a medium requiring participation understood as affective engagement and television as a producer of what Lazzarato calls "affective energy" in turn allowing the monetization of leisure-time.<sup>95</sup>

### **Formatting and Affect**

Although *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* conforms to the format of televised football in some regards, such as duration, it departs from it in others. Most obviously *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* focuses on a single player rather than successive close-ups of action or the ball that are relevant for the overall flow of the game. In *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, the camera lingers

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<sup>92</sup> McLuhan in *Understanding Media*, 313.

<sup>93</sup> These cameras, originally developed for military surveillance, had not previously been used in a film production. The impact of these cameras is discussed in the "Making of documentary" in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, DVD, directed by Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno (London: Artificial Eye, 2006).

<sup>94</sup> Cochot, "Digital Hybridisation: A Technique, an Aesthetic", 19-28.

<sup>95</sup> Lazzarato, "Machines to Crystallize Time: Bergson", 112-113.

for longer and significantly closer than it would in a live broadcast and Zidane is almost always in centre of the frame, except when he is occasionally allowed to wander out into off-screen space. In the second half of the game, shots of Zidane's feet and hands are prominent and there are several extreme close-ups of Zidane's boots, studs digging into the green of the pitch. In a shot that is found throughout the film, Zidane is silhouetted against the black of the Madrid sky or against the backdrop of the crowd, the angle of the shot roughly perpendicular to the pitch unlike in television footage, where the majority of footage is shot from a higher angle, looking down on the pitch from the stands. In other moments, extreme close-ups of Zidane's face show him sweating, wiping his face, or spitting, in general deeply concentrated. The shots of Zidane's hands, feet and face emphasize that Zidane's body is the tool of his trade. The movement of his hands, feet as well as his constantly searching gaze are essential components of his often extremely impressive on-pitch performances that form the basis for the image of Zidane held in the minds of fans. While it may seem that what these shots have in common is a focus on the minute details of Zidane's movement and mastery of his body, the sum of these images also confer much insight into the affects that arise from the flow of the game on Zidane. Although his state is generally stoic, unflinching and quiet, Zidane is at times frustrated, sometimes deeply concentrated and in moments bursting with energy when in direct possession of the ball. These images do not only illustrate the dynamism of football, but also that the body can't be conceived of in binary terms as either moving or static. Zidane is moving, even in the moments where he stands still – a portrait in time, because bodies are never static.<sup>96</sup> The minutiae of Zidane's movement illustrating the affect of the game going badly, and later better; and also the impact of sound, the cries and movement of the crowd, opposing players and teammates and the position of the ball.

As the camera keeps tracking Zidane even when he is nowhere near the ball or action, watching the game is both a familiar and unfamiliar experience. There are bursts of action and bouts of inactivity that blend into each other in an almost trance-like manner. The efficiency that Sandvoss suggests as central to the formatting of televised football is for the most part absent, but re-emerges with added precision when Zidane is in the thick of action. Other unusual shots from the perspective of televised football include pans up towards the stadium lights and the

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<sup>96</sup> Brian Massumi has described Bergsonian movement as processual, where the distinction between stasis and motion is "not a logical binarism", but understood as "dynamic unities" under continual qualitative transformation. Massumi in *Parables for the Virtual*, 7-8.

night sky, as well as a few carefully selected extreme-wide shots captured by the two Panavision 300x cameras used in the production. Additionally, there is an impressive precision and elegance evident in many of the cuts that populate the more motion heavy sequences in the film, such as when a medium close-up transitions seamlessly to a close-up of Zidane's feet while Zidane is in mid-motion. Towards the very end of the film, there is a particularly remarkable series of shots that transition mid-movement from Zidane dribbling, stopping the ball on the spot, turning with his foot still firmly in place on top of the ball while edging it slightly back and forth, to an ultra close-up of the ball and his foot in action. It's a sequence that is incredibly brief, but impressive both in terms of the skill required to accomplish the trick on Zidane's part and in the skill required to capture and edit the imagery with such precision and minute detail. Considering that the film's production setup is very similar to a conventional football production, with the two directors situated in front of rows of monitors in a production bus communicating instructions to the teams of camera operators, shots such as the one described above are impressive, although it has to be taken into account that unlike the producer of a live football match, Parreno and Gordon have the considerable luxury of post-match editing. The fact that the game isn't live is a factor easily forgotten, perhaps because of the live nature of television signals, and because of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait's* partial reliance on the conventions of televised football, which after all is typically viewed live.

The use of sound and music in the edit has also been carefully considered. There are extended sections where diegetic sound is completely absent, Mogwai's lo-fi and distorted guitar-based soundtrack the only thing audible. After such sections, pitch and crowd sounds are often abruptly and jarringly reintroduced, adding to the tension and pressure. At times, both diegetic and non-diegetic sound are present simultaneously, the music often reflecting the pace of the game from Zidane's perspective, as well as the general rhythm of cuts. In the second half, Mogwai's soundtrack is used to effectually underscore Zidane's growing frustration with his own team's performance, as Real Madrid still trail Villareal after Juan Riquelme scored from a penalty just before the end of the first half. Zidane's disposition can be said to be deeply concentrated for much of the game, yet the flow of the game, its pauses, bursts of action and the sound of the crowd all seems to impact him; while at the same time, Zidane also affects the excitement and atmosphere of the game when in direct control of the ball. Intensities flow in both directions – from Zidane to crowd and television spectators, and from the flow of the game,

television and spectators to Zidane. As such, watching the game is engrossing, even if the majority of the action occurs outside of our field of view.

When there is a major event in the match, such as a goal, Parreno and Gordon tend to cut to footage from the live broadcast of the game, which includes the Spanish commentary. However, this is not a rule without exceptions. When Real Madrid's Walter Samuel is sent off in the second half, it is almost impossible to discern who the involved players are, as the incident occurs in the periphery of the frame, with Zidane occupying the centre, as tends to be the rule. The shot that follows is an ultra close-up of the resulting red card, Zidane's face in the background looking concerned but concentrated. However, we do not see Walter Samuel's reaction, or any footage of him leaving the pitch. The viewer is left with no way of knowing who got sent off, unless they already have knowledge of the events of the game from elsewhere; the focus remains on the affective relationship between Zidane and the flow of the game, entirely ignoring Samuel, even though the impact of the sending off is made both visible and audible.

In other cases the events of the game are handled a little differently, allowing for a larger degree of context in regard to the events giving rise to our affective engagement with the game and Zidane. For example, there is a sudden cut to television footage late in the second half, showing Ronaldo receiving a cross from David Beckham and running past the outside of a Villareal player in the penalty area. Ronaldo loses possession to another Villareal player, but this player makes a mistake while clearing the ball, allowing Ronaldo to get up again and regain possession. Ronaldo punches the ball across the box, allowing Michél Salgado to slide in, cleanly depositing the ball past the keeper and into the bottom right hand corner. In the footage that follows there is a little more enthusiasm to trace in Zidane's face, as Real Madrid have now taken control of the match, although Zidane is still mostly cold, in stark contrast to some of the other Madrid stars such as David Beckham. Zidane is shown waiting for the game to kick off again, hands on hips, spitting. He slaps David Beckham on the back as he walks by. In the above-mentioned case Zidane clearly isn't directly involved in the action, yet the footage that follows show that the goal has had an impact on Zidane, despite his characteristically opaque presence. In this case, *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* does follow the events of the game, unlike in the previous example. Here, however, the inclusion is meant to emphasize the reason for Zidane's sudden shift in posture and mood, further illustrating that formatting of the film is focused on allowing us to affectively engage with Zidane. Although there isn't any explicit

narrative, Gordon and Parreno are careful to trace emotional changes in Zidane, using a repertoire of images, text and sound, often in carefully considered tandem – a use which underscores the affective power of moving images, even when the emotive qualities of the central character is quite muted.

In a slightly earlier scene, the second goal of the game, which brings the Real Madrid level with Villarreal (1-1), Zidane is more directly involved. Zidane receives the ball and gathers pace, elegantly dribbling past 3 Villarreal players while the camera struggles to keep up. Zidane keeps moving, running almost all the way up to the stationary camera positioned at the goal line, before crossing the ball to the far post, an action that is evident because of a quick cut to a shot showing Zidane barely visible behind the Villarreal goalkeeper. The view then cuts to a wide-angle shot of the pitch, as the crowd, visible in the background roars. From the reaction of the Real Madrid players and the crowd someone has clearly scored a goal off of Zidane's run and subsequent cross. Zidane is shown hugging and locking arms with David Beckham and Ronaldo. Ronaldo scored the goal assisted by Zidane's cross, but *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* doesn't provide any immediately way of knowing this from the footage in the film alone. Zidane is shown running back towards the Real Madrid side of the pitch, but he doesn't react much at all to the goal, even compared to the other Real Madrid players intermittently visible in this sequence. The TV footage shows the goal again, this time from the typical birdseye view of the box, the Spanish commentator enthusiastically shouting "gooooooooooooall" as is typical of the commentators in Spanish speaking countries. We are shown the close up slow motion replay of the cross and goal, before cutting once again to an ultra close-up of Zidane's face, game already underway. Again, the TV footage is used to provide context, as part of Gordon and Parreno's overall format, although this footage follows very different rules than Gordon and Parreno's footage and gives the viewer a minimum of insight into the overall game as a way of contextualizing Zidane's movement, actions and emotions, encoding and structuring the relationship between Zidane and the overall events of the game, as they appear in the film.

Text makes frequent appearances throughout *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*. When text appears on the screen it is usually across the bottom of the frame, almost like a subtitles track, but it also appears in the center of the frame, such as in the opening minutes of the film. The main bulk of text is based on interviews that Parreno conducted with Zidane, although this isn't stated directly in the film, meaning that statements such as "When you step on the field, you can



hear and feel, the presence of the crowd. There is sound. The sound of noise” appears to somehow reflect Zidane’s inner thoughts as the game goes on. This is further emphasized by the lack of diegetic sound in most of the cases where words such as these pass by, Mogwai’s soundtrack taking precedence.

In the first half of the game, Around the 29th minute mark, there is a tracking shot of Zidane running a significant portion of the pitch while in possession of the ball, before handing it off and receiving a misplaced cross in return, easily intercepted by a Villarreal player. Here the accompanying text tries to give us insight into the inner workings of Zidane’s mind and his subjective experience of football games in general, telling us that:

Maybe if things are going badly, you become conscious of people’s reaction. When it’s not going well... You feel less involved and more likely to hear the insults, the whistles. You start to have negative thoughts... Sometimes you want to forget. The game, the event, is not necessarily experienced or remembered in ‘real time’. My memories of games and events are fragmented. Sometimes when you arrive at the stadium, you feel that everything has already been decided.

The music cuts away, and we can hear the crowd voicing its discontent – for the first time in almost 20 minutes the television broadcast of the game returns, showing Real Madrid defender Pavon fouling Villarreal striker Diego Forlan within the penalty area, Zidane and his teammates animatedly voicing their displeasure with the referee’s decision to award the penalty, although the actual words are inaudible over the displeased crowd. Zidane watches the penalty attentively, ready to pounce once the ball is in play, yet it is immediately evident from Zidane’s reaction that there has been a goal, the sound of the stadium cutting away momentarily as the Villarreal players celebrate, disappointment clouding Zidane’s face. This section not only serves as foreshadowing of the Villarreal goal, but also serves to illustrate Zidane’s subjective experience of appearing on television – attempting to allow viewers to imagine what it may be like to inhabit the centre of the media event.

That Zidane’s own experience of the game is televisual in some sense is repeatedly emphasized in the snippets of text. At one point a point-of-view shot of the stadium lights is intercut with Zidane lifting his head in frustration, presumably looking up towards the night sky. When this shot first appears it is timed exactly with the re-introduction of Mogwai’s soundtrack, which at this point has been absent in favour of the sound of the game and crowd for quite some time, also coinciding with the reintroduction of the white text across the bottom of the screen. In addition to emphasizing that Zidane’s subjective experience of the game is televisual in a sense,

the text restates repeatedly, as in the intro, that closeness is an important and recurring theme in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*:

As a child, I had a running commentary in my head when I was playing. It wasn't really my own voice, it was the voice of Pierre Cangioni, a television anchor from the 1970's. Every time I heard his voice, I would run towards the TV. As close as I could get. For as long as I could.

This section not only serves as a sort of inner monologue, but also constitutes a radical change of perspective for the viewer, suggesting, in tandem with the sudden point-of-view shot a few moments earlier, that we are entering Zidane's train of thought, or at the very least approaching Zidane's subjectivity in a manner that circumvents the paradoxical distance and intimacy established through these images. The words "As close as I could get. For as long as I could." are more than reminiscent of the words that immediately follow kick-off: "as close as you can for as long as it lasts, for as long as it takes" the similarity suggesting a certain inescapable universality in the televisual experience, but also a self-awareness on Zidane's part of the role he plays on the screen for the people that watch him, Zidane having grown up with the same experience. "It wasn't that his words were so important," continues in the text, "but the tone, the accent, the atmosphere was everything..." – tone, accent, atmosphere, pre-linguistic affects of the media event, re-actualized and extended by the moving image.

Formatting is a strategy which involves exploiting the hybrid nature of moving images, so that footage from television, footage that resembles television and elements of text and sound generated through other technical practices can be combined and encoded into a format that is recognizable as football, but that deviates from its schema, first and foremost by systematically tracking a single subject rather than the ball. The television footage serves as a set of codes that give context to the overall game, while the affective relationship between Zidane, the game, crowd and television apparatus is explored in Gordon and Parreno's footage.

Crucially, the aim of this format is a displacement away from the economical, action-oriented mode of vision engendered by television towards a focus on the affective relationship between a single player (Zidane), the totality of the event and viewers, including the various apparatuses that underpin it and give it shape. It would seem that for Parreno and Gordon, the task of portraying Zidane involves getting as close as possible within a format based loosely on television, as this is after all where Zidane appears to us, week after week. However, despite this closeness, the question of what we actually learn about Zidane, if anything at all, is left relatively

open. Gordon and Parreno do emphasize that every game is a huge event, but they are also quick to emphasize that the game wasn't the only event that day, and that in the end, Zidane has played in hundreds of games, many of them televised. Football is conceived of as an event that generates constant movement and affects. Zidane is an actor in the media event, affecting viewers, but also affected by other actors and the totality of relations. As demonstrated above, the deviations from the typical formatting of football are by no means systematically consistent in precisely how or why they occur. On the other hand, the use of 17 cameras and a production bus for centralized control is consistent with televised football in general, although post-match editing clearly represents a major deviation. But regardless of post-match editing, the production setup is framework for an event where something can occur, the strategy of reformatting involving a shift of focus within the technical possibilities of image production inherent to the specified space of televised football.

### **Half-Time Montage**

The only sequence of the film where Zidane is absent from the frame for an extended period of time occurs just before the point where the 15-minute half-time break would normally occur, breaking with the real time conventions of televised football. In this section of the film, which resembles a montage, a wide variety of footage and text from a diverse set of sources is organized in a sequence of approximately 3 minutes in length. The various snippets of blocky, low resolution footage is all sourced from the same day as the game, namely the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2005. First we are transported to a puppet show at Ipanema Beach where the main attraction is a puppet that is supposed to represent Bob Marley. The next images are of people standing behind a lectern, accompanied by the text ““A 48 Hour Marathon reading of ‘Don Quixote’ is performed to celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Cervantes’ book””. Extremely blocky, badly compressed images of a nebula obscure a portion of text that seems to mention an auction of Star Wars memorabilia. Next, night vision footage of a swamp: “Hundreds of toads swell to 3 times their normal size and explode in a fresh water pond in Germany.” An armoured fighting vehicle on a road in a dessert landscape filmed from the perspective of a moving vehicle: “Car bomb in Najaf, Iraq, kills 9 in wave of escalating attacks.”, soldiers searching the rubble, while children watch curiously.

The stream of footage continues on, images often blocky and badly compressed, seemingly from a variety of sources. A mining disaster in Turkey, the death of Sir John Mills, a

business summit in the Philippines. The half-time sequence, although extremely dense with words and images, only lasts approximately 3 minutes. It is also worth bearing in mind that it doesn't actually take place during half time, as it begins roughly at the 39 minute mark of the film, in other words a few minutes short of the 45 minutes that normally make up one half of a football match. So although it may seem that *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* follows the real-time conventions of broadcasting, this isn't strictly the case, and the fifteen minutes that make up the half-time break, normally filled with studio banter and commercials, are also absent from the film's total running time. The sequence is also notable because it is the only sequence of the film where Zidane is out of the frame for an extended period of time. The experience of watching this section of the film isn't dissimilar to the experience of flicking through television channels, evoking Raymond William's notion of flow, broken here by the sudden inclusion of personal references in closing moments of the montage, adding another layer of subjective experience to the many separate and seemingly idiosyncratically selected events that took place on April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2005.<sup>97</sup> Although it is worth noting that a significant amount of the footage would seem to be from the Internet, based on the lossy compression and references in the snippets of text. What this section exemplifies more than anything, is the mass of information and imagery available at any given moment, extended even further by satellite television, the internet, increases in available bandwidth and improvements in compression techniques. Media events such as the game that took place between Real Madrid and Villareal on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2005, are accompanied by an almost endless flow of other images, no longer necessarily privileging one event over another. The use of these sections of footage parallel the reuse of material on new continuums discussed in the previous chapter, such as the appearance of *No More Reality II* in various formatting across Parreno's exhibitions, or Gordon's reuse of most of his production in *Pretty Much Every Film and Video Work From About 1992 Until Now*. Again, this is not simply appropriation of existing material stitched together along the lines of Bourriaud's notion of postproduction, but a reworking of this material into completely new formats.

### **A Format that Crystalizes Time**

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<sup>97</sup> Williams describes flow as the sequence of programming on any given TV-channel arguing that the continuity of television and its endless stream of images is to be understood as a flow, rather than as discreet sections, discreet sections being characteristic of the modes in which we experience older forms of media, books for example standing as individual, self contained entities, in contrast to the mode of television, one program always following another on the screen. See Raymond Williams, *Television* (London: Routledge Classics, 2003), 101-120.

The montage section of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* invokes the Bergsonian ontology of images put forth by Gilles Deleuze in the first of his two volumes on cinema, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*. Here Deleuze operates with an expanded notion of images, positing them as the building blocks of experience:

An atom is an image which extends to the point to which its actions and reactions extend. My body is an image, hence a set of actions and reaction. My eye, my brain, are images, part of my body. How could my brain contain images since it is one image among others? External images act on me, transmit movement to me, and I return movement: how could images be in my consciousness since I am myself an image, that is, movement? And can I even, at this level, speak of 'ego', of eye, of brain and of body? Only for simple convenience; for nothing can yet be identified this way. It is a rather gaseous state. Me, my body, are rather a set of molecules and atoms which are constantly renewed.<sup>98</sup>

Cinema, thought of with the concepts Deleuze develops in *Cinema 1*, is constructed in a form analogous to the construction of experience itself.<sup>99</sup> In *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* the montage sequence presented during half-time is where Deleuze's approach is at its most obviously relevant. By pulling back from Zidane and into the expanded events of the day, all realized as images in time, we are reminded that Bergson's constitution of the world and subjectivity (followed by Deleuze) does not privilege any single body, brain or object as the centre of experience over others, although the body is held as the centre of any single given subjectivity and therefore privileged over other images:

Here are external images, then my body, and, lastly, the changes brought about by my body in the surrounding images. I see plainly how external images influence the image that I call my body: they transmit movement to it. And I also see how this body influences external images: it gives back movement to them. My body is, then, in the aggregate of the material world, an image which acts like other images, receiving and giving back movement, with, perhaps, this difference only, that my body appears to choose, within certain limits, the manner in which it shall restore what it receives.<sup>100</sup>

Bergson's system begins from the external universe, moving in towards the body, rather than the other way around. Perception is effectively a virtual compound of past and present images, constantly renewed by movement: "But whereas our visual perception was of a continuous

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<sup>98</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Continuum 2009), 60-61.

<sup>99</sup> Video, like Bergsonian experience, is never a stable image, but constantly refreshed through movement from left to right, either pixel by pixel or line by line depending on display type. Yvonne Spielmann gives an account of this process and the different standards (NTSC/PAL), including how the unstable video-image differs from the individually stable frames of film without reliance on Bergson in *Video: The Reflexive Medium*, 47-49.

<sup>100</sup> Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 4-5.

whole, the movement by which we endeavour to reconstruct the image is compound and made up of a multitude of muscular contractions and tensions; [...]”<sup>101</sup> Memory-images, are “[...] inseparable in practice from perception, imports the past into the present, contracts into a single intuition many moments of duration [...]”<sup>102</sup> images of the past held in memory, intervene in present perceptions, because time, pushed by movement, is always passing:

Whereas my body, taken as a single moment, is but a conductor interposed between the objects which influence it and those upon which it acts, it is, on the other hand, when placed in the flux of time, always situated at the very point where my past expires in deed. And consequently, those particular images which I call cerebral mechanisms terminate at each successive moment the series of my past representations, being the extreme prolongation of those representations into the present [...]”<sup>103</sup>

By contrast, pure perception is held to be a form of perception where memory does not intervene. Bergson stresses that although pure perception can be theorized, it can’t be directly accessed due to the intervention of memory-images in all perception. For Bergson, pure perception is primarily a thought exercise, as it would imply a perception free from memory where each image is experienced as if there were no preceding images:

[...] a pure perception, I mean a perception which exists only in theory rather than in fact and would be possessed by a being placed where I am living as I live, but absorbed in the present and capable, by giving up every form of memory, of obtaining vision of matter both immediate and instantaneous.<sup>104</sup>

Building off of Bergson, Maurizio Lazzarato has argued that one of the aspects of video, as well as a host of other media technologies, is that they allow access to pure perception, in effect creating their own intervals in the same manner that Bergsonian perception does. In Lazzarato’s thinking the video camera can be thought of as “a machine that crystalizes time”. Lazzarato emphasizes that in Bergson’s ontology, the brain does not produce perception, but rather that brain:

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 26.

[...] does nothing else but *continue* or *transform* the streaming of flows of light. It is contained within universal variation, it does not create images, it does not add perception to things. Quite the contrary, its function is to *draw* and *retain* from image-matter what serves its own needs, what is necessary to its action. Our images, therefore, are not something *we add to the object*, but rather a *selection (a withdrawal) from matter*.<sup>105</sup>

Furthermore, Lazzarato places particular importance on the relation between memory and perception in Bergson's framework, describing this aspect as a circuit, not unlike how Bergson uses a telephone exchange as a metaphor for the Bergsonian brain.<sup>106</sup> Lazzarato explains pure perception in the following way:

The image, in pure perception, is nothing other than a centre of action that receives and transmits movements, in which action and reaction are merged. All the images act on and react to each other. And this action/reaction is accomplished not by a part specialized in this function (the eye, for example), but by all the elementary parts of the image at once. *The image is defined as tremor, pure vibration, shiver*. We are obviously dealing with a metaphor, since for us pure perception exists only *de jure* [...].<sup>107</sup>

In Lazzarato's interpretation of pure perception he emphasizes pure perception as the totality of images, which no single eye can perceive – images acting upon each other in an endless chain of movement. This interpretation is not only in line with Bergson, but is also something very similar to how Deleuze describes cinema.

Montage, here meaning the cutting together of images separated by duration and movement, is for Lazzarato, following on the frameworks developed by Bergson and Deleuze, a technology and technique for moving within an artificial memory. Technologies such as video and television, closely resemble the workings of perception because they work on similar schema, drawing upon memory in synthesis with real-time playback.<sup>108</sup> Video and television technology create time, binding both past and future into one in a way that mirrors the function of memory in Bergson's system of perception (as the image is constantly redrawn, line by line – never stable). According to Lazzarato, capitalism exploits this power over time for the purpose of producing subjectivity.<sup>109</sup> As we have already touched on briefly in the introduction, Lazzarato

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<sup>105</sup> Lazzarato, "Machines to Crystallize Time: Bergson", 99.

<sup>106</sup> Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 19.

<sup>107</sup> Maurizio Lazzarato, "Machines to Crystallize Time: Bergson", 98.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 111-112.

introduces the idea that moving image technology can be considered a motor that produces affective energy.<sup>110</sup> Affect, produced by video, is what makes football and consequently Zidane engaging to watch. This relationship not only serves to illustrate how viewers are engaged, but also serves to underline Zidane's frequent reflections on memories of past games and childhood – his experience of the game being televisual in some sense. Through the crystallization of time, television allows such past moments to appear as part of actualized memory/perception synthesis, unfolding in real-time. In Gordon and Parreno's format the particular game is of minor significance – what is made present in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* is a recollection of a game that could be any other game, and the engagement and excitement that televised football engenders. This is a format that breaks with televised football, while simultaneously integrating televised football into the encoding of its own structure, a structure that privileges a subjectivity condition by the camera's ability to create "its own interval, registering and crystallizing the perpetually varying flows of pure perception".<sup>111</sup> The game, the event, isn't necessarily experienced in Zidane's "real time"; it is experienced in the real time of the moving image. Recorded time and "real time" synthesized into a continually unfolding image. If electronic and digital technologies are "an 'automation' of perception, memory and imagination", then *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait's* focus on the televisually conditioned production of affect is not only highly self-consciously formatted by Gordon and Parreno, but also a reflection on how this automation effortlessly connects a web of images that draws together the memory of the world outside of the game, on the same temporal duration. Thus, in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* moving image technology allows us access to Zidane, while also touching on a much larger framework outside of Zidane and the media event (game) itself. In addition to video, this is achieved through the hybridization/convergence of material from a large variety of sources: text, images, sound. Zidane is presented as an actor in the media event, moving in time, as part of the affective material that produces subjectivity.<sup>112</sup>

For Bergson, the continually unfolding moment means that the present always has "[...] one foot in my past and another in my future"<sup>113</sup>, *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* exists at a moment where the technology of television mirrors this divide, which for Bergson is central to

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 112-113.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>112</sup> Lazzarato writes: "Perception, time and affect are not products of subjectivity: quite the contrary: it is subjectivity which is internal to perception, time and affect" in *Machines to Crystallize Time: Bergson*", 110.

<sup>113</sup> Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 177.



the continual process of perception and movement – one foot planted in the television as it existed for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and one foot planted in an uncertain future. The present as both “ [...]a perception of the immediate past and a determination of the immediate future”.<sup>114</sup>

However, all of this still leaves something central unaccounted for: as evidenced in the title, Parreno and Gordon conceive of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* as a specific formatting of the genre known as portraiture. But what exactly is this notion of the portrait, and how exactly, does it tie in with the production of subjectivity, as mentioned briefly by Lazzarato in *Machines to Crystallize Time*?

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

## 4 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait

In many of the interviews and articles published around the time of the general cinema release of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* in 2006 Philippe Parreno and Douglas Gordon describe taking the film's camera operators to the Museo del Prado in Madrid on the day before the game, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 2005.<sup>115</sup> The stated purpose of this outing, according to Gordon and Parreno, was to allow the crew to get a feel for the tradition and conventions of portraiture, particular attention being paid to works by Goya and Velázquez. Both examples are frequently mentioned by Parreno and Gordon as sources of inspiration for *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, often cited alongside Andy Warhol's video portraits.<sup>116</sup> Parreno and Gordon's labelling of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* as a portrait of Zidane is asserted in their choice of title, but this is not a wholly unproblematic or indisputable assertion, and a feature length film is certainly not a conventional choice of format or medium for portraiture. What should we make of the relationship between Gordon and Parreno's images of Zidane and portraiture? And what, exactly, is a 21<sup>st</sup> century portrait? Considering that *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* relies so heavily on the technology of film and television production, as well as actual footage from the televised broadcast of the game, this second question could in fact be rearticulated as "How does *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* integrate the effects of mass media upon society and the subject within the genre of portraiture?"

### Approaching Portraiture

Most attempts at studying portraiture approach the subject from the context of a specified period in art history. Many of the most famous texts such as John Pope-Hennessy's *The Portrait in the Renaissance* concern themselves with a given periodization, although they certainly contain elements that potentially could be extrapolated into a more general framework for portraiture. Additionally, many of the widely read and cited texts on portraiture are short essays on specific works, such as Erwin Panofsky's influential analysis of *The Arnolfini Portrait* or the chapter in Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things* on Velázquez's *Las Meninas*. However, there are two

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<sup>115</sup> Douglas Gordon talks about visiting the Museo Del Prado at length in a video interview with Vice magazine. Available: <http://www.vice.com/art-talk/douglas-gordon>, accessed September 6, 2014.

The trip is also discussed in the making of documentary on the DVD release of the film.

<sup>116</sup> Examples of articles mentioning the influence of Warhol include Jason Solomons and Andrew Hussey, "Chronicle of a Disgrace Fortold" in *The Gaurdian*, (16th of July 2006), accessed August 16, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2006/jul/16/worldcup2006.festivals>. As well as accounts in more art-centric media, such as Michael Fried, "Absorbed in the Action" in *Artforum* (September 2006): 333-336.

books, one by Shearer West and one by Richard Brilliant, both titled *Portraiture*, that stand as exceptions in attempting to explore portraiture as concept, and less as a historically bound phenomenon. Of these, Brilliant's approach is the most interesting, because he attempts to locate portrait characteristics relevant to the genre as a whole across its practice throughout the history of western Europe, while West tends to focus on delineating specific issues at play in certain portraits, but not necessarily the genre as a whole, such as gender, power relations, age or group portraiture, in effect going for a more taxonomic approach.

Richard Brilliant has argued that a portrait should be considered a depiction of a named person, as we tend to think of portraits as being the person in question. This effect, he argues, is what makes us consider some portraits as good likenesses, and others as bad likenesses, without the distinction necessarily reflecting the degree of resemblance, as a portrait may be idealized or even abstracted and still be considered a good likeness.<sup>117</sup> According to Brilliant, the relationship between a portrait and the person depicted is not a straightforward case of an image resembling a person as they appear in the world, but rather a reflection of a complex field of social interactions between human beings. Both the artist and the person portrayed are subject to the established social and artistic conventions of their point in history, meaning that categories such as age, gender, race, social status and class are all markers in the network of relations between human beings that have their own historically contingent schema for representation. However, this does not mean that portraits are exclusively social constructs; Brilliant notes that the personality of the person depicted, understood as peculiarities in manner and appearance that can't be directly tied to the social fabric, are dependent on the artist's observations and insights. Thus, Brilliant has formulated three basic questions that portraits attempt to answer: *what do I (you, he, she, we or they) look like? What am I (you, she, he, etc.) like? And finally, who am I (you, etc.)?* The first question addresses appearance as what makes us recognizable to others. However, portraits can also be both abstract and non-descriptive, meaning that the resemblance to an individual that exists in the world does not necessarily denote a portrait as insightful. The second question addresses the individual's perceived character, social markers such being part of a particular profession or class, as well as markers of personal behaviour, such as an expression of wisdom or courage. The third question can be answered in two ways; as a depiction of position in the social construct: as a celebrity, statesman, general or married couple for example, or in a manner more

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<sup>117</sup> See Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 23-44.

demanding to the viewer, by depicting some perceived essential quality, such as humanism or artistry.<sup>118</sup>

Brilliant's model is interesting because it allows for quite radical departures in medium as well as in how subjects are depicted in different periods of art history, while keeping the genre as a whole intact within a relatively simple framework. Some may find it problematic that the quality of the representation is considered a factor in defining portraiture, as this could seem somewhat arbitrary, even subjective quality. For Brilliant however, this definition of quality is dependent on historically contingent social conventions held by the viewer as well her existing knowledge and impression of the subject, balancing on the artist's ability to depict the signs that elicit the appropriate response from the socially conditioned viewer, rather than an idea of quality as something that arises from the relationship between the artist and subject alone. In such a configuration, "the social conventions of the day" mirrors the development of different systems of knowledge (episteme) that prefigure and shape the production of knowledge in general as conceived of by Michel Foucault in *The Order of Things* – different social configurations in different times.<sup>119</sup> This is particularly relevant as portraiture is often envisaged as a configuration that consists of either a battle or symbiosis between the personality of the subject and the skill and insight of the artist regardless of period. This isn't a view that has been held by the general public alone, but also by some scholars and critics, such as Harold Rosenberg or as previously mentioned, Michael Fried.<sup>120</sup> Some, like art historian Joanna Woodall, argue that portraiture went through a re-invention coinciding with the emergence of renaissance humanism and the onset of bourgeois individuality, meaning that the socially contingent notion of portraiture originated at some point during the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>121</sup> In an approach shared with Brilliant, Shearer West argues that while it is certainly true that portraiture is most prevalent in

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 7-15.

<sup>119</sup> For example, Foucault argues that Velasquez famous portrait Las Meninas foregrounds the artificial nature of it's own representation in the opening chapter of *The Order of Things*. A shift towards symbolic representation of exchange value is one of developments within science that is seen by Foucault to parallel this break with classical representation. The emergence of the analysis of wealth in 17<sup>th</sup> century is one of Foucault's main arguments for how this shift in representation takes place in knowledge at large, 17<sup>th</sup> century economists arguing that the value of money derived directly from the amount of precious metals contained within each coin on the one hand and as a sign of symbolic exchange value on the other. Foucault does emphasize that such histories of knowledge do not constitute an unbroken, linear development, but that it also encompasses blind spots, ruptures and periods of transitions. See Michel Foucault, "Exchanging" in *The Order of Things*, 180-226.

<sup>120</sup> Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 90.

<sup>121</sup> Joanna Woodall, Introduction to *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, ed. Joanna Woodall (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 1-2.

western European culture, the re-invention of portraiture in the renaissance is an artificial division. West adding that the earliest evidence of portraiture dates from the Neolithic period, and that portraiture existed in ancient art as well as the art of the middle ages, although she concedes that portraits of individual sitters were rare until the renaissance.<sup>122</sup> In describing why portraiture is so often linked to the renaissance and the emergence of a distinct bourgeoisie identity, Ernst Van Alphen touches on how the notion of portraiture as an effect of the emergence of Bourgeois culture underscores the commonly held view that a successfully executed portrait is a mesh between the subjectivity of artist and viewer:

The pictorial genre of the portrait doubly cherishes the cornerstone of bourgeois western culture. The uniqueness of the individual and his or her accomplishments is central in that culture. And in the portrait, originality comes in twice. The portrait is highly esteemed as a genre because, according to this standard view, in a successful portrait the viewer is not only confronted with the 'original', 'unique' subjectivity of the portrayer, but also that of a portrayed.<sup>123</sup>

Considering Gordon and Parreno's positioning of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* in relation to the genre of portraiture, Brilliant's approach seems especially relevant, not because the work necessarily falls entirely outside concepts of a bourgeoisie identity distinct from the working class and the aristocracy, but because of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*'s reliance on mass media for its form and for the model of Zidane it perpetuates, a model that is a negotiation between Zidane, Gordon and Parreno and the image of Zidane already established in the mind of the public through images distributed through the media. The hundreds of football games played by Zidane on television screens conditioning expectations of how he should appear and act in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* or how Zidane should appear at all, in any medium. As such, it would be a mistake to view the depiction of Zidane in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* as a negotiation between Zidane and Gordon and Parreno. In the case of a 21<sup>st</sup> century portrait, perhaps more than any other period in history owing to the huge number of images distributed through mass media, the task of the portrayer is to create an image that fits into the framework of depictions of the subject that are already in circulation. The schema for likeness derived from a continuity of images distributed in various media networks – a schema in effect formed by our collective engagement with media, rather than a negotiation performed by a few individuals. As

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<sup>122</sup> West, *Portraiture*, 14-15.

<sup>123</sup> Ernst Van Alphen, "The Portrait's Dispersal: Concepts of Representation and Subjectivity in Contemporary Portraiture" in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, 239.

noted earlier, Simon Critchley has remarked that in Parreno's films "things are not created. Rather, a frame is established which allows something to happen."<sup>124</sup> Critchley's remark in fact sums up the strategy that Parreno and Gordon make use of to enact portraiture: rather than attempting to *represent* Zidane, Parreno and Gordon make use of a delicate reformatting of televised football, the site where the majority of depictions of Zidane in mediated culture already occur. Again, reconfiguring an existing format has to be considered central – likeness is achieved through integration of the codified formatting of televised football into Gordon and Parreno's own format and letting the game unfold. Portraiture occurring through what Lazzarato describes as "a crystallization of time-matter, made possible by conventional technological mechanisms of codification", in other words in time.<sup>125</sup> Stated a little more simply: portraiture in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* does not take place because of a specific strategy of representation, but rather as a consequence of a codified format built around the ability of television and the camera to crystallize time, rendering a portrait that emerges from the workings of the media event. This format, which Parreno and Gordon have christened a "21<sup>st</sup> century portrait", lingers on a single player, thereby allowing the film to draw upon the vast network of affective relations that Zidane is enveloped in; going far in terms of reflexively illustrating the appeal of collectively experienced media events such as televised football. It is a portrait of the process that creates the schema of Zidane, through a reflexive approach to television.

### **The Prototype: Helmuth Costard's Football as Never Before**

The general premise of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* – tracking a single player rather than the game itself – is not a uniquely new idea. A similar film titled *Football as Never Before (Fußball wie noch nie)* by the experimental filmmaker Helmuth Costard premiered in 1971. The basic pattern of *Football as Never Before* will be a familiar experience for anyone that has seen *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, Costard's film following Manchester United player George Best for the entirety of a match against Coventry City. Similarly to Zinedine Zidane at the time of the release of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, Best was arguably one of the world's most famous, if not the most famous footballer in the world at the time of *Football as Never Before*'s release. The film is frequently mentioned in relation to *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, such as in Tim Griffin's comparative analysis in the September 2006 issue of *Artforum*, where a shot from *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup>*

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<sup>124</sup> Critchley, "A Puppet or a God? On Philippe Parreno's Films", 192.

<sup>125</sup> Lazzarato, "Machines to Crystallize Time: Bergson", 111.

*Century Portrait* appeared on the cover.<sup>126</sup> On the other hand, the artists themselves have taken a more reserved stance in regard to Costard's film, Parreno dismissing it as "bad art".<sup>127</sup>

As in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* we are witness to the entire match, Best tracked for the entirety of it, certain sections even accompanied by music (most of it absolutely terrible in the case of *Football as Never Before!*). There are bursts of action and athleticism, even though it is quite evident that the football of the 1970's doesn't hold quite the same pace. Much of the imagery will also be familiar to viewers of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*. Best is shown multiple times silhouetted against a crowd of fans, or in tightly cropped shots of his legs methodically moving across the pitch, sudden bursts of pace and dribbling, his head constantly moving, looking, tracking.

Looking at *Football as Never Before* with Brilliant's three questions gives some insight into the differences between the two films, which at least on the surface have a remarkably similar form. Attempting to answer the first question, *what does he look like?* immediately highlights the large gap between the technological supports used in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* and *Football as Never Before*. The cameras in *Football as Never Before* struggle to track Best consistently, and there are no shots that match the lingering shots of Zidane's hands, feet and face in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*. As Tim Griffin mentions in his analysis in *Artforum*, the experience of watching Zidane in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* allows an intimacy that seems "as real as it gets",<sup>128</sup> in other words an experience that is qualitatively different from watching a television broadcast or attending the game in the stadium. This is not the case with *Football as Never Before*. While there is familiar imagery, such as Best silhouetted against the backdrop of the crowd, the available technology and the scope of Costard's production ultimately limit the detail and flow of his imagery of Best. The images do not get close enough to clearly make out the minutiae of Best's facial expressions, body language or emotions. The cutting is on the whole much more imprecise, failing to achieve the continuity present in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*; images never quite as tightly cropped, the focus on a single player never quite as singular.

The second question, *What is he like?* is left largely unanswered in *Football as Never Before* and unlike *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, there is no attempt at giving us insight into the

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<sup>126</sup> See Tim Griffin, "The Job Changes You" in *Artforum* (Vol. 45, No. 1, September 2006), 336-337.

<sup>127</sup> Philippe Parreno in "The making of documentary", *Zidane a 21st Century Portrait*, DVD.

<sup>128</sup> Tim Griffin, "The Job Changes You", 336.

affective relationship between Best and the crowd, nor his subjective experience of the game. Text for example, employed to great effect in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, is completely absent as are the contextualizing cuts to the television footage of the game. Best would eventually develop a reputation for alcoholism, infidelity and for squandering large sums of money, but this image wasn't entirely cemented in the early 1970s, when Best became one of the first football players to achieve a celebrity status. Some, like Alan Bairner, hold the not entirely unproblematic view that Best's problems could be attributed to his upbringing in an impoverished community in Northern Ireland:

George Best must have experienced a similar feeling of exposure to the unfamiliar when he left Northern Ireland as a boy to join Manchester United. Not only was he leaving home and the working-class Protestant culture that had shaped him, he was about to pursue a highly successful career which would bring him considerable fortune with a club that has consistently been identified with Irish Catholic culture. Without wishing to engage in pop psychology, perhaps in the end the strains of the triple dislocation of class, geography and culture simply became unbearable.<sup>129</sup>

While Bairner does attempt to qualify his statement about Best's background slightly, by comparing Best with another famous Irish-Protestant, the rock musician Van Morrison, he engages in deeply problematic speculation on Best's subjective experience – drawing up a symptomatic relationship between his alcoholism, infidelity and spousal violence and his background by arguing that Best's problems could be linked to what he terms “dislocation”: Best not being able to come to terms with the contrast between life as a famous football player and his working class background. Zidane, for his part is from a similarly working class background, but he has by and large avoided off the pitch scandals, and seldom, if at all, comments on his family and personal life.<sup>130</sup> In the case of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, Parreno's interviews do attempt to give some insight into what it's like to be Zidane on the pitch. Best on the other hand was just as famous for his exploits off the pitch as on it, yet little if anything about the on-pitch Best is revealed in *Football as Never Before*. As the audience, we are left to speculate on Best's experience of the game and his experience of being in the centre of the media event.

The third question, *Who is he?* is perhaps the question where the answer has the closest resemblance to the same question posited in relation to *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*. Best is

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<sup>129</sup> Alan Bairner, “In Balance With This Life This Death: Mourning George Best” in *International Review of Modern Sociology* 32, no. 2 (2006): 298. Accessed April 23 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41421247>.

<sup>130</sup> Dauncey and Morrey, “Quiet Contradictions of Celebrity”, 304.



wearing the iconic red kit of Manchester United, his characteristically thick and long dark hair hiding much of his face, as it does in many of the iconic photographs of him. It is Best in his prime, at age 25, long before his personal problems and lifestyle choices caught up with him – presumably how he'd want to be remembered, and at least as he is remembered by the public – even by people too young to have ever seen Best play in real life or through a live television broadcast. Yet, as mentioned, these images are seldom clear enough, and it is difficult to make out Best's facial expression or any of his communication with his teammates. Consequently we don't get that much closer to Best than we would watching him on television and due to the placement of the cameras, we arguably don't get significantly closer than if we attended the game in the stadium. Unlike the strategy of formatting employed by Gordon and Parreno, which both displaces and integrates the highly codified format of televised football, *Football as Never Before* leaves a larger portion of the formatting of televised football intact. Furthermore, when a limited number of departures are attempted, such as tracking Best singularly in close-up during attacking play, these invariably fail and these short sections are often frustrating, rather than engaging.

It is important to emphasize that Costard's film was never meant to be a portrait of George Best, but rather an experiment in how football could be captured and shown on film. However, answering Brilliant's questions gives some insight into precisely what Parreno is referring to when he dismisses *Football as Never Before* as "bad art". Despite the superficial similarities in form, *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*'s status as a portrait positions it as a significant departure from *Football as Never Before*. The technology available to Costard in 1971, coupled with his lack of resources, does not allow for an experience that differs enough from watching the game on TV, in that we never quite get close enough. The film never quite allows for a significant displacement of the conventions of televised football. In contrast, the formatting of televised football that takes place in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* not only allows Parreno and Gordon to approach Zidane, but also the affective relationship constituted by the media event which as a whole gives rise to the schema of Zidane held in the mind of the public. In comparison the issue with Best and *Football as Never Before* is twofold: on the one hand, the insight into Best's subjective experience of the game is absent; on the other hand, the technology itself is not foregrounded, leaving the relationship between Best and the media event unexplored. As mentioned repeatedly: *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* is just as much a portrait of the

technology that underpins the event. If part of Costard's ambition was to explore how football could be presented on film, his displacement of television formatting seems far less successful. As *Football as Never Before* illustrates, Gordon and Parreno's assertion of their film as portrait is grounded in a notion of Zidane as a figure that cannot be separated from the media event and television as the sites where we engage with him. While Zidane does appear as he does on television in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, the film itself does not follow the typical formatting of televised football – this shift in focus underpinned by a strategy of formatting, is ultimately the key to understanding what is meant by the term 21<sup>st</sup> century portrait. If portraits have to have a likeness to their subject, then Zidane must necessarily be shown enveloped in the media event where we encounter him. This is not to claim that Best is not encountered in the middle of a media event in *Football as Never Before*, but that this encounter ultimately leaves us much more distant from the event; the technical means not allowing for the same degree of affective intensity.

## 5 Celebrity and Portraiture

Celebrities are commodities in their own right, and exist in a symbiotic relationship with media and cultural commodities. P. David Marshall has suggested that the power of celebrities lies in laying the ground for an “affective investment by the audience”. This does not only occur in the field where the celebrity primarily resides, sport, cinema, music and so on, but is also supported by feature articles in magazines, online gossip, social media and talk shows.<sup>131</sup>

By refusing to comment on politics or his personal life, Zidane has come to embody often contradictory values for various groups of people. Zidane is held as a symbol of France as a successfully multi-ethnic society, and as “one of us” by disenfranchised immigrant youth. He has received the Légion d'honneur and has been voted the most popular person in France multiple times since 1998, yet he has also been subjected to attacks from the right-wing nationalist party Front National whom have criticized the French national team for including players with minority backgrounds.<sup>132</sup> Some even see Zidane as a protector of family values, apparently threatened in the Fifth Republic: “Zidane incarnated values that seem threatened nowadays, but to which ordinary people remain attached: loyalty to family, diligence, and cooperation. Here is a man who was not only a world champion, but also a model son and father”.<sup>133</sup>

W.J.T. Mitchell has written that: “a sports and advertising icon like Andre Agassi can say that ‘image is everything,’ and be understood as not only speaking about images, but for images, as someone who is himself seen as ‘nothing but an image’”.<sup>134</sup> What then of portraits? How can we understand portraits of individuals that are themselves images? In attempting to answer these questions, I have chosen to focus primarily on portraits of individuals that are entangled with media and celebrity, analyzing the means by which such portraits achieve likeness to their subjects.

### The Iconic Moment

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<sup>131</sup> P. David Marshall, “New Media - New Self: The Changing Power of Celebrity”, in *The Celebrity Culture Reader*, ed. P. David Marshall (London: Routledge, 2006), 634-644.

<sup>132</sup> Dauncey and Morrey, “Quiet Contradictions of Celebrity”, 301-320.

<sup>133</sup> Pascal Boniface, “The Tragedy of Zidane”, *Project Syndicate*, July 11, 2006, accessed October 9, 2014, <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/the-tragedy-of-zidane#PGD7bSyvVbDQ86b4.99>

<sup>134</sup> W.J.T Mitchell in “What Do Pictures ‘Really’ Want?” in *October* 77 (2006): 73, accessed May 1 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/778960>.

Interestingly, one of the examples given a closer look by Brilliant in *Portraiture* is a portrait of a sportsman, a sculpture of the tennis player Fred Perry by David Wynne located outside Center Court, Wimbledon. Brilliant pays particular attention to a newspaper interview with Perry, where Perry expresses his admiration for the sculpture (“Oh my God, it’s me”), explaining that Wynne looked at around 700 photographs of Perry before selecting the one that served as model for the sculpture. The image, taken in the 1930s, was for obvious reasons a picture of a very different man than the Perry of the 1980s, when Wynne sculpted the monument. As Brilliant points out, the 700 images of Perry that Wynne examined likely only preserve a small portion of Perry in the 1930s, the photograph ultimately selected as the essential model of Perry preserving him as we choose to remember him at the height of his achievement; chosen by an artists that likely never saw him play in his prime. This process of selecting the one photograph that most embodies Perry is in actuality a process of finding an image that resembles the collective memory of Perry in the mind of the public, an image that naturally enough would have had to be taken at the height of his achievement and popularity.<sup>135</sup>

A sculpture depicting Zidane in a similarly iconic moment by the French artist Adel Abdessemed was unveiled outside the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 2012. This sculpture, which towers at approximately 5 meters tall, shows Zidane together with Marco Materazzi, depicted in the very moment when Zidane headbutts Materazzi in the 2006 World Cup final. Although the gulf in time isn’t as large between the creation of the sculpture and the event it depicts as in the case of David Wynne’s sculpture of Fred Perry, it shows Zidane in a prime moment on the pitch, perhaps at his most famous, a moment that certainly is emblematic in forming how Zidane is seen and remembered by the public. The real Zidane will age and become frail, but the Zidane of the sculpture and the Zidane of collective memory will live on and in all likelihood there will come a point where the sculpture will be more reminiscent of Zidane than Zidane himself can ever hope to be. However, the strategies employed in the two examples above differ significantly from how portraiture is enacted in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*. In both cases the artist intervenes to determine a moment that most closely resembles the subject in relation to a collective determined schema given through media, searching for an iconic moment. In *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, owing to the live nature of the game, the event, the framework that determines likeness isn’t approached through a selection, but rather established through a

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<sup>135</sup> Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 130-32.

retooling of the format of televised football. Rather than searching for the singular iconic moment, Gordon and Parreno have constructed a portrait in time, relying on the totality of the media event, in effect offering a portrait that is as much a reflexive portrait of the television apparatus that structures the appearance of Zidane, as it is a portrait of Zidane.

### **Serialization**

Gordon and Parreno have mentioned Andy Warhol as a significant influence on *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* on multiple occasions, and unlike the portraits by Wynne and Abdessemed many of Warhol's portraits offer a model for portraiture that moved beyond a single, iconic moment as multiple images of a single subject within one canvas are realized either by serialization or repetition. For example, Brilliant pays close attention to Warhol's portrait of Jackie Kennedy, *Sixteen Jackies* (1964), organized around a photographic grid, comprised of four different repeated photographs of Jackie, before, during and after the assassination of her husband, John F. Kennedy. Brilliant arguing that:

Although the history recounted by the *Sixteen Jackies* is brief, the total effect is reminiscent of the biographical tradition on portraits that always tries to place the subject in time. Because Warhol has adopted his types of 'Jackie' from earlier representations in the popular media, their collective appearance in the work has a special private resonance in the minds of viewers who remember the Kennedy era. Looking at Warhol's composite as a model, the viewer can enjoy the private, reflective experience, available to anyone who remembers a longtime friend or looks at an extensive series of portraits of the same individual over a period of years and from this collection of images, fashions his or her composite of the subject. Warhol seems to have understood the implications of this process and the importance of its contribution to the fabrication of identity, when he filled up this reservoir of visual memories available to the public in *Sixteen Jackies*.<sup>136</sup>

The typology of Jackies presented by Warhol in *Sixteen Jackies* is immediately relatable because they depict iconic events that constitute a public understanding of Jackie Kennedy's likeness through mass media and the media event. However, unlike the strategies used in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, the media event in *Sixteen Jackies* isn't unfolding directly in time, even though separate moments are contracted together. As discussed in previous chapters, moving-image technologies such as video and television not only expand and contract time, but also allow us to move within an artificial memory, re-actualized in time, intervening in time that is always in the making. These aspects of video and television technology differentiate *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

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<sup>136</sup> Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 137.

*Portrait's* contraction of time from the strategy of serialization present in Warhol's silk screen, because it makes it possible for *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* to invoke the entire media event – every idiosyncrasy – rather than a selection of essential moments.

By also including the moments that unfold in-between the action, moments that are not essential to the narrative of the event, or even the narrative of Zidane, Parreno and Gordon are able to underscore an intimacy that would not be possible without the intervention of technological extensions of the sense apparatus; mirroring and extending the affective engagement achieved with the broadcasting of football. Hence, artistic strategies such as serialization do invoke the media event, they do so by contracting either a single or several events to a set of iconic moments; contracting time, but never expanding it – in effect grounding such artworks in the realm of print media. As such, the genealogy of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* cannot strictly be reduced to further development of Warhol's engagement with the serialization of iconic moments.

### **The Films of Andy Warhol and the Affection-Image**

If not Warhol's silkscreens, then what of his various films? A sustained focus on a single individual is central to many of Andy Warhol's films from the early 1960s such as *Sleep* (1963), which featured the poet John Giorno sleeping for the six-hour duration of the film. Like his silkscreens, these works make use of serialization, likely owing to the fact that Warhol maintained that people mainly go to the cinema to "eat up" the one star that holds their interest.

<sup>137</sup> The singular focus on Zidane in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* certainly mirrors this aspect of Warhol's films, in that Gordon and Parreno allow the camera to linger where it wouldn't be able to in the normal formatting of television, letting the collective fascination with Zidane play out in a way that does not occur in the regular broadcasting of football. *Sleep* is composed of various shots that are repeated throughout the film rather than a fixed shot, as is the case with Warhol's *Empire* (1964). Brandon W. Joseph has argued that this form of repetition, also evident in many of Warhol's silkscreens, and in other Warhol films such as *Blow Job* (1964), involves a certain eroticism mediated through death and commodification. Joseph has argued that in the case of *Sleep*, Warhol's repetitions draw us away from the film's subject (Giorno), and while they may allow the audience to "eat up the subject" for as long as they want, this takes place within a

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<sup>137</sup> Brandon W. Joseph quoting an interview with Andy Warhol conducted by Gretchen Berg in "The Play of Repetition: Andy Warhol's Sleep" in *The Grey Room* 19 (2005): 27, accessed September 20, 2014, doi: 10.2307/20442678.

format that is structured similarly to consumption in commercial culture.<sup>138</sup> In comparison the formatting of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* ultimately seems less concerned with “the eating up of the subject”, than with laying the groundwork for approaching the network of affective relations that engage us in football. However, Joseph’s interpretation of Warhol’s *Sleep* also gives us an important indicator as to how Warhol’s films prefigure *Zidane* in elements of their formatting: in both cases the formats are built around modes of consumption driven by machinic apparatuses, extracting labour value from leisure time. In this regard, Parreno and Gordon’s innovation on Warhol is the use of the media event as a backdrop, rather than a format that extends a certain kind of shot (the close-up) from Hollywood cinema. The numerous *Screen Tests* that Warhol made of his various “superstars” and celebrity visitors to the Factory are particularly relevant in this regard, as they tend to focus exclusively on the face, in stationary, tightly cropped and frontal close-ups. So for example, in one of several screen tests featuring “Baby Jane” Holzer, she stands almost unblinkingly brushing her teeth, staring directly into the camera for the entire take. These short works are not so much movies, but extensions of a certain component of the language of cinema: the close-up. This holds equally in the case of *Sleep* despite its feature length format – Hollywood narrative structure giving way for repeated and often lingering close-ups. For Deleuze the close-up (and not just of the face, although the face is his primary concern) belongs to the realm of the affection-image, Deleuze’s Bergson-derived term for images that give rise to affect, regardless of the narrative space of the shot. For Deleuze the close-up retains “[...]the same power to tear the image away from the spatio-temporal co-ordinates in order to call forth the pure affect as expressed”, meaning that “Even the place, which is still present in the background loses its co-ordinates and becomes ‘any space whatever’[...]”.<sup>139</sup> Warhol would seem to have recognized the way in which the close-up can set affect into motion, tearing the image from the context of a specific space. In contrast, the close-ups in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* don’t dislocate from the stadium, although Zidane at times is less directly involved in the game. The stadium is not only the constant backdrop of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, it is also the backdrop of most of the media events that constitute images of Zidane. Despite the fact that Zidane remains restrained in his expressiveness, even in comparison with his Real Madrid teammates, affective potential is realized by changes in body

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 46-47.

<sup>139</sup> Deleuze in *Cinema I*, 99.

language and minutia of movement, reflecting both the intensity of the atmosphere of the stadium and the effect of the flow of the game on Zidane and in turn on viewers. Watching him is exciting; the intensity of his movement always suggesting concentration and readiness to pounce at any attacking opportunity. Often the film suggests that the affects of the media event structure Zidane's subjective experience. In other, words, The Zidane of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* is not only constituted by the relationship between subject and viewer, but by a broad spectrum of assemblages involved in the media event that are explicitly foregrounded. The close-up (affection-image in Deleuze's terminology) as enacted by Warhol, mainly concerns itself with the affective relationship between viewer and the image of the person on screen, rather than the unfolding of the totality of an event, such as in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*. With his screen tests, Warhol created a new format that broke with the existing formatting of Hollywood cinema, while simultaneously keeping elements intact.

Taking the limits of dislocation when immersed in the media event into consideration, it would seem that *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* approaches the close-up a little differently. In *Cinema II* Deleuze's main focuses has shifted towards time (movement was the main concern of *Cinema I*), here Deleuze proposes the pure optical-sound image, where situations are reported rather than explained, where "[...]we no longer know what is imaginary or real, physical or mental, in the situation, not because they are confused, but because we do not have to know and there is no longer even place from which to ask."<sup>140</sup> Deleuze is primarily thinking of post-war cinema, specifically Italian Neo-Realism and the French New Wave, yet this confusion between real, physical and mental would seem to be at the core of how subjectivity is evoked in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*: we are aware that the text running along the bottom of the screen cannot be Zidane's inner monologue at that very moment, yet the quality of the imagery certainly suggests a correlation between Zidane's body language the words printed on the screen. Additionally, the game is for the most part left unexplained – some sequences of events almost impossible to register in detail without knowledge of the game derived from elsewhere. Of course this non-explanatory mode is broken periodically, whenever the formatting demands cuts to the televised footage of the game.

### **Sam Taylor-Johnson's *David***

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<sup>140</sup> Deleuze in *Cinema II*, 7.



Sam Taylor-Johnson's (previously Taylor-Wood) *David* (2004) is a portrait of Zidane's former Real Madrid teammate David Beckham commissioned by the United Kingdom's National Portrait Gallery. Following a strategy highly reminiscent of Warhol's *Sleep*, the film shows David Beckham sleeping after a training session with Real Madrid. In the video, which unlike *Sleep* consists of a single fixed shot where Beckham can be observed sleeping, face framed in a tightly cropped close-up, lit by a single light source. Beckham is presented away from the media event similarly to John Giorno in *Sleep*, however, unlike Giorno, Beckham is a global icon, instantly recognizable to a vast majority of people with access to the internet, television or print media. Video here offers an extension of the senses, giving the impression of lying next to Beckham. Sleeping is clearly private, and far removed from the media events that Beckham regularly inhabits and *David* certainly leaves us ample time to "eat up the subject" like in Warhol's screen tests. Since Beckham isn't directly present owing to his unconscious state, affect is constituted entirely in the viewer and image, forgoing the relationship between camera and subject. As such, the work is without the complexity of affects present in the media event, central to the reflexive portrayal of Zidane in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*.

In the end *David* offers little, if anything, in the way of conceptual or formal innovation beyond what was offered by Warhol in the 1960s. There is little to contextualize Beckham beyond a reliance on voyeurism – his skill on the pitch, his emotions and personality are absent – there is likeness, but not likeness that directly exploits the technical possibilities of the moving image. The work is less a reflection on how the star power of Beckham navigates our world, than an exploitation of his celebrity status. Of course, *David* does have one important thing in common with *Zidane*; both works avoid any mention of the many achievements of their protagonists, taking it for granted that such information is common knowledge having penetrated the noise-ridden channels of media and lodged itself in collective memory. In the beginning of the chapter we noted that an important aspect of what makes celebrities enticing emerges from our ability to affectively engage with them through media – this is not only mirrored in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, but also expanded beyond what is possible in relation to a single individual in the conventional broadcasting of televised football.

## 6 Capital, Portrait and the Production of Subjectivity

So far, I have argued that *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* is a formatting of televised football that expands our ability to affectively engage with a single actor in the media event assemblage, which in turn is based on a normative schema of Zidane. This is what Brilliant calls “the social conventions of the day” in his definition of portraiture as social contingent.<sup>141</sup> Our engagement with celebrities is often conceived of as part of a process of self-fashioning, perhaps an unsurprising assertion considering that Zidane has appeared in adverts for everything from Adidas football shoes to Dior’s fragrance Eau Sauvage. Beyond the consumption of material goods however, celebrities participate in the production of immaterial value. In regard to sports like football, this is perhaps best exemplified by the huge sums paid for broadcasting rights, with clubs increasingly converging with media conglomerates.<sup>142</sup> In the previous chapter, I argued that we engage affectively with celebrities, something that also occurs in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*. In this chapter, I will explore Maurizio Lazzarato’s framework for the production of subjectivity and how this relates to media such as television and the model of portraiture engendered by *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*.

### The Production of Subjectivity

In his recent book *Signs and Machines* Maurizio Lazzarato has claimed that “in modern-day capitalism subjectivity is the product of a world wide mass industry: “[...]subjectivity is a “key commodity” whose ‘nature’ is conceived, developed and manufactured in the same way as an automobile, electricity, or a washing machine.”<sup>143</sup> Lazzarato understands subjectivity as a property assigned to the individual by capital through social subjection and machinic enslavement. He writes: “By assigning us an individual subjectivity, an identity, sex, profession, nationality, and so forth, social subjection produces and distributes places and roles within and for the social division of labour.”<sup>144</sup> This assigned subjectivity, is product of “machinic

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<sup>141</sup> Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 37.

<sup>142</sup> Tom Evens and Katrien Lefever, “Watching the Football Game: Broadcasting Rights for the European Digital Television Market”, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 35, no. 1 (2011): 38, accessed May 1 2015, doi: 10.1177/0193723510396665.

<sup>143</sup> Lazzarato in *Signs and Machines*, 56.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

enslavement”, a term Lazzarato borrows from Deleuze and Guattari, described by Lazzarato in the following way:

[...]the individual is no longer instituted as an “individuated subject,” “economic subject” (human capital, entrepreneur of the self), or “citizen”. He is instead considered a gear, a cog, a component part in the “business” and financial system assemblage, and the “welfare state” assemblage and its collective institutions (schools, hospitals, theaters, television, Internet, etc.).<sup>145</sup>

Conceived of as part of a heterogeneous process, machinic enslavement and its assignment of subjectivity, understood as a place in the machine (a machine which can include, people, objects animals) drastically constrains individual agency, as well as the possible identities available to any one individual, political and otherwise:

The linguistic signifying machine operates and imposes “exclusive disjunctions” (you are a man, you are a woman etc.) which prevents becomings, heterogeneous processes of subjectivation; it recognizes only identities defined by these significations (man, child, animal, etc.) and by specialized functions (worker, boss, student, etc.). The structure of the modern signification machine opposes inclusive-disjunctive syntheses, concentrating all subjectivity and expressivity in man by reducing the other (nature, things, cosmos) to an object.<sup>146</sup>

These two consequences of capitalism (machinic enslavement and social subjection) are understood by Lazzarato as centrally underpinned by semiotics in a multiplicity of forms, collapsing distinctions between human and non-human agency: “The strength of capitalism lies in the exploitation of machines and semiotic systems that conjoin functions of expression and functions of content of every kind, human and non-human, microphysical and cosmic, material and incorporeal.”<sup>147</sup> The most central of these systems is language, although Lazzarato argues that language is just one of several such semiotic systems. Sign-machines such as money, economics, science, technology and art are given as examples of systems that can function in parallel or independent of language, allowing Lazzarato to form a criticism of much of the philosophy and critical theory from structuralism and onwards, which according to Lazzarato privileges language as the domain of the human the case of Judith Butler, or language literally as politics in Jacques Rancière.<sup>148</sup> According to Lazzarato, again quoting Guattari:

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 57-60.

[...] enunciation does not primarily refer to speakers and listeners – the communicational version of individualism – but to “complex assemblages of individuals, bodies, material and social machines, semiotic, mathematical and scientific machines etc., which are the true sources of enunciation.”<sup>149</sup>

It follows that there is no “I” of a unified, individual subject:

Intelligence, affects, sensations cognition, memory and physical force are now components whose synthesis no longer lies in the person but in the assemblage or process (corporations, media, public services, education, etc.)<sup>150</sup>

Furthermore, Lazzarato invokes Guttari’s categories of “natural” a-semiotic encoding, signifying semiologies, and asignifying semiotics to further delineate forms of enunciation.<sup>151</sup> This is because capitalism requires a stabilized overcoding of semiotic signification, requiring symbolic semiotics (Lazzarato places gestures, music and ritual production among others within this category) to be subordinated language. Choice of language is in itself an articulation of power, as we speak different languages to different people, one to our workplace or to our boss for example, and another at home or with friends, capitalism:

[...] must realize the homogenization, uniformization and centralization of different human and non-human expressive economies: language, icons, gestures [...]. The semiotic assembly line not only produces knowledge and information, but also attitudes, stereotypes of behaviour, and submission to hierarchies.<sup>152</sup>

Lazzarato borrows Guttari’s example of driving a car for the purpose of explaining how subjectivity functions in a machinic assemblage. If a person knows how to drive they act without thinking, guided reflexively by the car’s machinic assemblage, automating our subjective components (memory, perception, etc.) in tandem with the electronics and hydraulics of the car. In fact, we operate such assemblages all the time, when turning a light switch and activating the power grid, or listening to voices transmitted through the radio, browsing the Internet, or when buying groceries in the supermarket.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Maurizio Lazzarato quoting Felix Guttari in *Signs and Machines*, 60.

<sup>150</sup> Maurizio Lazzarato quoting Felix Guttari in *Signs and Machines*, 27.

<sup>151</sup> With “natural meaning” Lazzarato gives DNA as an example. The category signifying semiologies includes symbolic and pre-signifying (for example music, gestures and rituals). this category also encompasses human behaviors. The last category, asignifying (or post-signifying) can be understood as pertaining to money, mathematics and computer code – semiotic systems that exists before reality, as producers of reality. See Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines*, 66-69.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 90-94.

## Media and Subjection

Mass media plays an important role in the process of subjection and the assigning of roles and Lazzarato's main example in this regard is the cinema. According to Lazzarato the cinema is "[...] powerfully aiding in the construction of roles and functions, and, especially in the fabrication of the individuated subject and his unconscious."<sup>154</sup> However, like in Walter Benjamin's *The Work of Art in The Mechanical Age of Reproduction*, the cinema also offers a significant possibility for resistance. In Lazzarato's analysis this emerges because cinema allows the rediscovery of pre-signifying semiotics, thereby allowing the possibility of avoiding a fixed and stable binary relationship of signifier/signified. The movements, intensities, intervals and durations enacted by film images are understood as possible disruptions of fixed meanings. Even so, this remains for the most part a possibility, Lazzarato pointing to the relative homogeneity of the American culture industry and Hollywood in particular.<sup>155</sup> Television, on the other hand, would not seem to offer Lazzarato any such escape from the process of machinic enslavement and subjection, as it is conceived of as one of several security apparatuses "[...] which act on and through speech by 'shutting up' the public and making it speak according to the rules of the common space of communication."<sup>156</sup> Interestingly in relation to *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, television is fixed as an example of a non-discursive machine, meaning that a person that is interviewed on television has their speech taken over by the machine, functioning on the basis of a small number of possible codified statements. Appearing on television, as Zinedine Zidane does, involves conforming to a set of non-verbal semiotics that can cover everything from choice of clothing to rhythm, gestures, framing and colour patterns in the general design of the image as well as the arrangement of space. Television is so heavily codified, that the unexpected does not occur, and if it does, it passes unnoticed.<sup>157</sup> This understanding can be taken even further by Lazzarato's argument that enunciations in media culture are not a product of an individuated subject, but complex assemblages that encompass individuals, bodies, semiotic, scientific and mathematical machines, working alongside sign machines such as art, economics, technology and so on.<sup>158</sup> In this framework, the Zidane of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* is the Zidane of televised football, because the technical machine (television) that produces his enunciations is

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 108-113.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 161-162.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 162-164.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 60.

relied on for formatting and reflexively foregrounded throughout the film. Looking again towards the problem the 21<sup>st</sup> century portrait, it is precisely this schema of Zidane as an actor in the media event, which is the subject of the portrait.

A 21<sup>st</sup> century portrait is necessarily a portrait on the terms of capital, working with the machine, rather than through the emancipatory mode claimed for the film by Ezra and Beugnet.<sup>159</sup> Zidane is singled out as the focal point of attention; but his capacity to affect and be affected, his movement, his relationship to the other actors are all part of the event rather than individually constituted. This model of subjectivity also gives us a toolset capable of analysing the focus on the materiality of the image in the opening and closing moments of the film, as the camera inches closer to a sea of pixels that constitutes Zidane. It is the technical apparatus (television) that Zidane's subject is part of through the media event, explicitly foregrounded as constitutive of the excitement, joy, disappointment and tensions experienced in front of screens in homes and pubs across the world, week after week, presumably also experienced by Zidane. In the previous chapter, I mentioned that Zidane holds a plurality conflicting meanings for different social groups. This is largely enabled by the non-discursive nature of television. By conforming to certain semiotics, Zidane can be a symbol of successful integration, icon of immigrant youth and French-Algerians and a protector of family values; popular with just about everyone except the extreme right. The portrait avoids fixed meaning by forgoing any sort of overt discussion of Zidane's background or symbolic power, and is instead modelled on signifiers that avoid explicitly political meaning. Reflexively foregrounding the underlying apparatus of television is a way of foregrounding the automatic production of affect that takes place with the moving image, subsequently producing subjectivities on the behalf of capital.

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<sup>159</sup> Beugnet and Ezra, "A Portrait of the Twenty-First Century", 77-85.

## 7 Summary and Conclusion

“That’s all I’m interested in now. A human face.”

– Sir John Mills in the montage sequence of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*.

In the introduction, I outline the key problem of defining a 21<sup>st</sup> century portrait and explore some of the key theoretical considerations revisited throughout the text, such as affect, assemblage and video’s crystallization of time before taking a brief look at the reception of *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*.

In the first chapter, I explore formatting, defined as a strategy involving the development of new formats based on existing media and how these media integrate into post-industrial life. This strategy is not only found in much of Gordon and Parreno’s individual work, but the contours of this practice is also found in much of the theoretical discourse on influential art of the mid to late 90s and early 2000s. Unlike Bourriaud’s notion of postproduction however, formatting is not simply the reconfiguration of existing material, but involves the production of new material and the displacement of existing technical supports.

In the second chapter, I explore how formatting takes place in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, shifting focus away from the immediate action and onto a single player through both breaks and continuations of the conventions of televised football. Additionally, I argue that affect plays a central role; the shift of focus towards Zidane, allowing our affective engagement to be centered on one actor in the media event, rather than the event as a whole. Furthermore, this shift in perspective makes it clear that the atmosphere, tension, sound and flow of the game are not only affect that engage viewers, but also Zidane. Crucially, this could only be achieved by a portrait in time, mirroring the televised football’s reliance on video, taking advantage of what Lazzarato calls ‘affective energy’ to keep viewers engaged.

Returning to the central problem of portraiture, I outline Richard Brilliant’s model of portraiture, which argues that portraiture can be considered to build on socially negotiated, normative schemas for achieving likeness – in other words, collectively negotiated semiotics. I argue that the model of Zidane presented in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* is negotiated by a format that encapsulates the media event, Zidane as the figure that appears on our screens week after week. I then compare and contrast Helmuth Costard’s 1971 film *Football as Never Before* with *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, using Brilliant’s criteria for portraiture, as the two films are

based on a similar premise. Contrasting the two films makes it evident that the reflexive foregrounding of television that takes place in *Zidane* can be considered an integral part of the portrait, as television is integral to the negotiated image of Zidane.

Subsequently, I explore several different models for realizing portraits of celebrities, either through a search for an iconic moment or serialization, as a set of moments contracted together. An alternative is however found in the various films of Andy Warhol. Although Warhol's portraits are realized in time, they do not engage with the totality of affective relations present in the media event. Instead they focus on achieving affective engagement through extending the close-up, or what Deleuze called the affection-image. These works are an important precursor, as they engage in the development of a new format modelled on cinema.

Next, I look at the relationship between subjectivity and capital through the lense of Maurizio Lazzarato's system of subjection and machinic enslavement, as outlined in his recent book *Signs And Machines*. Here Lazzarato argues that media, and especially television are machines that assign subjectivity. I argue that this process is central to forming Zidane, as we know him, as appearing on television necessitates conforming to both verbal and non-verbal codes. As such are affective engagement with Zidane is directly linked to our own status as consumers through television's exploitation of leisure-time. Zidane as a product of the machines, which structure his subjectivity as well as ours.

## **Conclusion**

Where does this leave us in relation to the initial question of how exactly to understand what Gordon and Parreno mean by the term "21<sup>st</sup> century portrait"? The 21<sup>st</sup> century portrait invoked by the film encompasses the media event, which gives shape to Zidane, as he appears on our television screens.

As such, the portrait not only engages with how our affective engagement with technical media such as television produces conventional signification and subjectivity, but it is also a model of portraiture intimately linked to modes of consumption in post-industrial life, bound to a moment in time where television and other media are becoming increasingly difficult to differentiate from one another.

In regard to portraits in general, this foregrounding of how the images themselves are negotiated is highly unusual. An essay by Maria H. Loh on Renaissance portraiture illustrates this quite well: a host of different art historical texts make the claim that one of the figures in



Raphael's *The School of Athens* can be interpreted as a depiction of Michelangelo. However, on further investigation Loh discovers that 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century texts, such as Vasari's biography of Michelangelo, make no mention of the portrait in question, despite mentions of several other portraits. Instead, it turns out that the claim originates from an essay published in 1941 that bases its argument on 16<sup>th</sup> century written description of Michelangelo's face, which the author of the 1941 essay considers to correlate to the figure in *The School of Athens*.<sup>160</sup> Loh's point is that we tend to think of portraits as the person in question, yet faces work as signs, and are assigned meaning and resemblance rather than constituting the individual as such.<sup>161</sup> In *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait*, the process of signification is present inside the work itself while simultaneously foregrounded, rather than the work being subject to external machines. Unlike Loh's Renaissance portraits which are assigned meaning from the outside, the machine that produces signification and subjectivities is part of the portrait engendered in *Zidane a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Portrait* itself. As viewers we are necessarily cogs in this machine as well, as it is through our affective engagement that our own subjectivity is shaped.

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<sup>160</sup> Maria H. Loh, "Renaissance Faciality" in *Oxford Art Journal* 32, no. 3 (2009): 341-363, accessed April 23, 2015, doi: 10.1093/oxartj/kcp032.

<sup>161</sup> Loh makes use of Deleuze and Guattari's term faciality as a point of departure. Faciality is described through a morphological metaphor of black holes on a white backdrop, the so-called white wall / black hole system. The black holes of the system are not the cavities of the face, mouth eyes, nostrils and so on; in fact, the face is not understood as the literal features of the head, but rather as an expressive system mapped onto the body. Signification takes place on the surface (the white wall), black holes permeate the white wall, the black holes understood as the emergence of subjectification (identity and its constituents such as gender, class, profession and so on). Various combinations of black holes come together in the white screen to form faces that conform to dominant signification. Rather than excluding certain faces, the system defines faces in order of their deviance from the standard face of the white European man. See Deleuze and Guattari *A Thousand Plateaus*, 167-191.

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