

This introductory statement by Noah Cowan is followed by responses from Andréa Picard, Cameron Bailey and Wayne Baerwaldt, Toronto International Film Festival curators and programmers. Please visit the Future Projections page at [tiff07.ca](http://tiff07.ca) to view further commentary we have canvassed from leaders in film and visual-arts curation. We also invite comments and feedback online from anyone interested in joining our discussion.

# Something exciting and perhaps a bit dangerous has been taking place in the blurry territory between film and the visual arts.

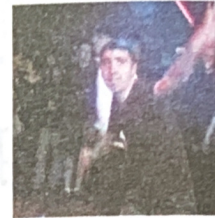
Projected video and celluloid have become core tools for many of the world's most celebrated artists. Even artists working primarily in traditional media like painting have been utilizing film and video to frame or elaborate on their work. Much of this work comments on the nature of cinema and cinema-going itself. At the same time, an increasing number of well-known film directors have embraced gallery-based installations as a play space to work out their ideas. The gallery business also represents a potential source of revenue for original and innovative film and art productions, removed from onerously expensive feature filmmaking.

This confluence is a positive development; it extends the creative possibilities of several art forms and engenders a frisson of friendly competition among otherwise unrelated art makers. It also provides audiences with new possibilities for exploring narrative and the experiential within moving-image and sound environments. Experiments in immersive spaces, interactivity and re-imagined uses of obsolete or abandoned technology are all thriving in non-

cinema settings. These works of art inspire both new flights of imagination and a serious questioning of the apparatus behind conventional cinema's narrative and visual forms.

As this interdisciplinary dance continues to grow in importance, it presents a challenge to curatorially specific organizations like our own. After three years of pilot projects, international research and critical negotiation, this year's Festival marks our first broad programme of work that occupies the borderlands between film and the visual arts. The inaugural year of our Future Projections programme features several projected works appearing at venues throughout the city, each exploring various ways in which artists are interrogating and repurposing cinema's toolbox. The Festival's involvement runs from producing shows based on a staff curator's vision, to acting in the role of supporter of congruent work developed by colleagues at other institutions.

At the same time, our longstanding Wavelengths programme continues to present some of the world's best artist-made films, whether by filmmakers or visual artists



working in film or video. As “experimental” and “avant-garde” increasingly become problematic as labels, Wavelengths puts forth film and video as works of art, worthy of contemplation, discourse and engagement; works that may or may not belong to the established tradition of “expanded” cinema.

In addition to the presentation of art work, we have also asked a few interested parties to comment on the issues that both complicate and inspire the relationship of a film festival to work from the visual arts community. Debates have been raging for some time and these suggest honest differences among us. Whether concerns reflect frustration with presentation standards, differing critical language, different modes of economic production, the role of experimental cinema or even the idea or importance of duration itself, we ask that these concerns and opportunities come to light.

Noah Cowan

**STANDARDIZATION IS THE PRICE OF GLOBALIZATION** in the commercial imagistic world. With Hollywood's tendency to optimize and replicate successful formulae, the commercial imagistic world both contains and limits the process of expressive experiments. The cinema and the home entertainment system become the prescribed settings for viewing moving images within this structure. Digital media, on the other hand, provide a platform for the evolution of independent, experimental and personal approaches to moving images and sound. Crafty artists have been able to rival – and in many cases surpass

– mainstream Hollywood's narrative and experiential achievements. The Future Projections art installations offer evidence that the technological and ideological apparatus of a huge entertainment industry can be transformed, critiqued and bettered by savvy artists steeped in the knowledge of cultural history.

The aim of Future Projections may be to deconstruct, if necessary, the total apparatus of cinema, to transform the cinematic apparatus, and create new technologies and investigative approaches that allow for different psychic mechanisms – the kind of experiential works that subjugate subjects in diversified forms of “art spaces.” Immersive projects insist on different relations between spectator and screen surface, different representations/constructions of reality and subjects, and a critical relationship to representation. The cinematic imaginary beyond what we can describe as traditional film formats (in the extreme: multiplex, projector, audience) is the imaginary signifier in the digital field.

Thus, Hollywood's hegemony of movie-making modalities is challenged by the potentialities of the digital-media technologies. This challenge is evidenced by the rapid rise of video gaming, location-based entertainment industries and new multi-media practices in galleries and museums. The new digital modalities for the production and presentation of cinematic content are setting up platforms for the further evolution of the traditions of independent, experimental and expanded approaches to cinematic experience. Digital interactivity offers an immediate dimension of user control and involvement in the creative proceedings. As the growing spectrum of technologies and techniques are

*Late Fragments – An Interactive Film (l-r), Wildflowers of Manitoba, Tyranny, Best Minds Part One*