

Hard Cinema 硬電影

電影往往被視為虛擬的體驗：它難以捉摸、輕若鴻毛又似有還無。在泛光的暗室內，電影把觀眾帶到鬼魅的世界，讓人踏上奇異的幻像旅程。電影把人們的身體從繁瑣的物質世界中釋放出來，打開不受物理定律阻礙的夢幻世界，讓想像力在無形、自由和原始的領域飛翔。

可是這充滿誘惑的沒有形體性，卻不應被視為電影媒介的本質。相反，它是一種經過電影工業精心設計的特殊效果，並藉各種技術和文化象徵制度化才得以存在之物。

傳統的电影院通常都是設計成黑盒子，並與主建築的其他部分分隔開。觀眾面向銀幕，放映機置於觀眾後方的獨立隔音房內，主揚聲器即隱藏在銀幕之後。在放映過程中，觀眾安坐於位，全程保持沉默。這個精心設計的安排，令觀眾暫時忘卻自身所在的真實空間，悄悄隱藏了電影放映的各種實體配置（如放映機、揚聲器等）。這獨特的空間安排，再加上觀影的種種規章文化，旨在虛化放映時種種的物質性。簡單而言，現代電影的操作正正是要抹殺電影的物質性和空間性。

現代電影傾向掩蓋其物質性和空間性這一特點，與早期電影的歷史和實踐形成強烈對比。初期的電影（我們也不妨把電影的前身如幻燈和光學玩具等包括其中）往往凸顯和強調本身的物質性和生產條件。而我們現今所熟悉的電影則與這持相反的軌跡發展。

雖然我們很容易會把電影視作為非物質的媒體，但同時要重新發掘出電影的物質性亦並非難事，尤其是如果我們以使用菲林膠片的模擬電影作為一個切入點。畢竟電影菲林只是不久之前的技術。膠片電影在過去超過一個世紀曾經是電影的基石。此物料出名繁瑣、脆弱和凌亂。電影放映時灼熱和嘈吵的放映機，洗印膠片的有毒化學品與及膠片的花痕和灰塵等等全部都是易於辨識的電影物質特性。

數碼時代也許令電影實質性的問題更隱閉。近代的數碼放映呈現出光潔無瑕的影像和聲音，進一步把電影的實體模糊和複雜化。曾經被認為電影特有的污漬和花痕，與及模擬聲帶的雜音，現在都被完美高清和無噪音的聲音和影像所取代。

然而，儘管數碼電影較模擬制式欠實體性，這並不代表電影不是實質存在。就像許多與數碼媒體相關的討論，往往把它錯誤當成無形的東西。數碼資料被視為自由流動但非物質性的虛擬形體。數碼媒體雖然彷彿難以捉摸，但事實上仍需依靠存儲和傳輸的媒介。從這個層面來說，數碼電影與其模擬性的前身並沒有顯著的分別。

電影實體性的抑制是一個有趣並值得我們再三反思的現象。在這個展覽中，我們志在探索電影經常被忽略的「其他」維度：當中包括對其物理性、物質性和空間性的探討。通過探究這些經常被故意忽視和邊緣化的另類面貌，我們企圖打開和擴展電影的創作可能，試驗電影作為一種有形的、帶雕塑性、動態性和空間性的創作媒體。

「硬電影」這一概念在某程度上而言是一個對 Lev Manovich 的「軟電影」的俏皮回應。由藝術家 / 理論家 Lev Manovich 十年前提出的「軟電影」，既是理論概念亦同樣是一個多方位的創意項目。「軟電影」一方面探索使用算式和電腦軟件在電影創作過程，亦同樣實驗和提倡電影媒介的多樣性和混雜性。「硬電影」的策展概念，以後者作為出發點，而異於 Manovich 集中於屏幕和軟件的方向，把電影從「軟件」的討論轉為對其「硬件」的重點探索。

「硬電影」旨在探索電影的物質性和混雜性，同時重新審視在目前的科技和文化條件下電影的創作潛力。它試圖把電影作為屏幕和時間性媒體的慣常身分延伸成為一個具雕塑性、動態性和空間性的媒體。從歷史脈絡來看，「硬電影」與擴展電影 (expanded cinema) 和唯物主義電影 (materialist film) 的傳統一脈相承，有著同樣的關注和精神，也和唯物主義電影理論家 Peter Gidal 視電影為「物件和程序」的想法互相呼應。

重新探究電影的實體性、物質性和空間性並非一趟懷舊之旅（無論是藝術上或知性上），也並非要徹底否定電影製作的傳統手法。相反，這是一種能夠實現、發掘和拓展電影體驗其他可能性的方法。從另一角度來看，這是一個關於何謂電影及如何建構電影經驗的課題。

Cinema has often been considered as a form of virtual experience: elusive, weightless and immaterial. Inside the chamber of glowing darkness, cinema embarked on a virtual journey, transposing its audience to the realm of ghostly shadows. Cinema frees the physical body from its cumbersome material and earthly being, opening a fantastic world of ethereal doubles unhindered by the laws of physics. Imaginations thrive without the need of a body, free and pristine.

This ephemeral incorporeality, while wonderful and magical in all its lure and might, should not however be taken as an inherent quality of the cinematic medium. Quite on the contrary, it is a specific *effect* and *construct* carefully engineered by meticulous design, supported and institutionalised by a set of technical and symbolic arrangements.

A conventional cinema is usually designed as a black box that is marked off from the rest of the main architecture, with audience facing a frontal screen, main speakers hidden behind. Audiences are expected to be seated and remain silent in the dimmed room during the film presentation. The film projector is located out-of-sight in the back, often high above, in a separate sound-insulated booth. The main function of this elaborate setup is to temporarily suspend the (real) space inhabited by the audience and to conceal the various materiality of the filmic presentation (e.g. projection, speakers, etc.) from the audience. This unique arrangement of the cinema space, together with its associated codes of spectatorship, seeks to render the material conditions of cinematic presentation, immaterial. In short the effacement of materiality and spatiality is what underlies the operation of modern cinema.

Modern cinema's tendency to conceal its very own materiality and spatiality stands in sharp contrast to its earlier history and practices. Compared with the early days of cinema (and by extension the history of its predecessors such as magic lantern shows and optical toys), which often foregrounded and highlighted its own material and production conditions, cinema as we know and experience today took on a rather opposite trajectory.

While it is easy to mistakenly reduce film to an immaterial medium, it is at the same time not difficult to rediscover cinema's corporeal self as well, especially if we consider celluloid-based analog cinema, a technology that belongs to a time that is after all not so long ago. Celluloid cinema, which is the foundation of

cinema for over a century, is notoriously cumbersome, fragile and messy. The unwinding rolls of film, the heavy heat and noise of the mechanical projector, the toxic processing chemical as well as scratches and dirt left on the film prints, all constitute a much more recognisable material and corporeal identity of the filmic medium.

The digital age perhaps rendered the question of cinema's materiality more problematic and hidden. Pristine images and sounds brought forth by recent digital cinema system further obscure and complicate the status of cinema's material being. What used to be the signature marks of cinema's material being, e.g. dirt and scratches on film; noise floor inherent in analog soundtrack, are now effectively superseded by crystal-clean noise-free digital pictures and sounds.

However, while it is true that digital cinema operates in a much less physical way as opposed to its previous analogue form, it does not then follow that cinema has no material being and bearing at all. Like many discussions related with digital media, people often wrongfully equate digital media with immateriality. Under this view, people see digital data as a crystal form of immaterial permanence that can flow freely without the need of any material base. However, digital cinema, as intangible as it seems, still requires some forms of medium for storage and transmission. In this sense, digital cinema is not significantly different from its analogue predecessor.

The suppression of materiality in cinema is an interesting phenomenon that is worthwhile for us to take a serious second look. Hence in this exhibition, we are interested to explore the physicality, materiality and spatiality of cinema: the "other" dimensions of cinema that are often being overlooked. We intend to explore these alternative sides of cinema, sides that have been systemically neglected and marginalised under standard film practices and spectatorship. Through this probing, we attempt to unleash cinema's creative potentials, extending and experimenting cinema as a tangible, sculptural, kinetic and spatial medium.

Hard Cinema, a term that is selected and adopted as a playful and satirical response to Lev Manovich's widely celebrated project "Soft Cinema", is the key curatorial concept of the current exhibition that aims to raise questions about cinema's material being in the post-digital age.

Put forward by artist / theorist Lev Manovich a decade ago, Soft cinema is a concept as well as a multi-faceted creative project that explores the use of algorithms and software in the filmic creative process. It also highlights the multiplicity and hybridity of the cinematic medium. The curatorial concept of "Hard Cinema" takes on the latter idea as a starting point but departs from Manovich's primary focus on screens and software. It relocates the locus of investigation from the soft(ware) to the hard(ware) of cinema.

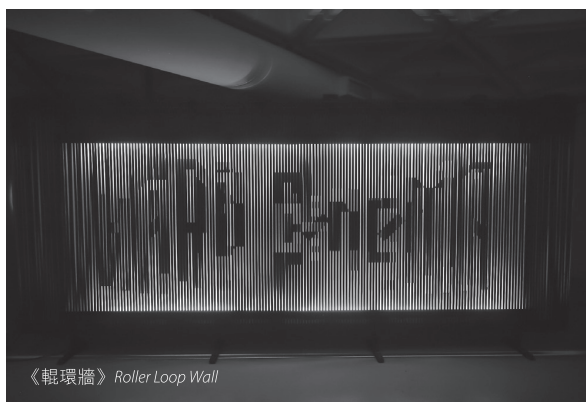
"Hard Cinema" aims to explore cinema's material and hybrid being while re-examining its physical potentials under the current technological and cultural conditions. It attempts to extend cinema's customary identity as a screen-based and time-based medium to one that also encompasses sculptural, kinetic and

spatial dimensions. To put it back to a historical context, the idea of "Hard Cinema" shares similar roots, concerns, and spirits with the traditions of *expanded cinema* and *materialist films*, which critically and creatively explore the apparatus and physical materials of films. The concept echoes the materialist film theorist Peter Gidal's idea that regards films as both "object and procedure."

To revisit the physicality, materiality and spatiality of cinema is not meant to be nostalgic (artistic or intellectual-wise), nor meant to outright deny traditional practices of filmmaking; rather it is a way to realise, unearth and continuously expand the full potentials and experience of the cinematic. To put it in a different perspective, it is essentially a question about the cinematic, and the conditions that constitute the cinematic experience.



《光鏡盾》Optical Lens Shield



《靚環牆》Roller Loop Wall



《光學儀》Optical Instrument

場地空間設計由 XCEED 主理，以攝影機械物理貫穿整個空間概念，配合展覽主題。
CINEMA 2.0 spatial concept by XCEED a motif of film mechanics and cinematic process to echo with the theme of Hard Cinema.

