

Second Letter to Balthazar

Montreal, July 12, 2016

Balthazar,



At the beginning of my last letter, I said I would tell you about your presence in one of my films – but then completely neglected to do so, my letter having taken an unforeseen turn. Please forgive me.

Yes, something wonderful happened to me one day because of a distraction, and in that lucky moment you returned to my life. A mistake was made during the shoot for my installation *Out of Mies*: when I arrived on set, I realized that the sound operator was not there, and that I was going to be without an audio recording, with mute images. During the editing, I felt like I wasn't seeing anything. Then I suddenly thought of you, and suggested on a whim to the editor that she use the sounds from your film, *Au hasard Balthazar*. So the sounds from your film were placed over the images of my film: your steps became Karina Iraola's steps, the wind from *Au hasard* became the wind in my film, the little bell around your neck became the passing of time, and so on. This created a discrepancy between the sound and the image, and between the images themselves – an out-of-synch quality that was light and very subtle, barely perceptible, but tremendously powerful: I ended up bringing attention to the image, and creating something that allowed me to see. I admit to having had to do almost nothing; I randomly placed the sound on the footage, and instantly life burst out from the film. By keeping the slight discrepancy between sound and images during the edit, two distant spaces came together – you in your film, and Karina, the dancer, in hers. You reached each other and this out-of-synch quality between sound and the image created life. In my research, I call this out-of-synch quality an asynchrony. This asynchrony consists in a misalignment between two spaces, or between space and time – there are a number of ways to bring it about. For *Out of Mies*, there is an asynchrony between sound and image. This subtle out-of-synch quality, as slight as it may be, acts upon our perception. In fact, the sounds of another space – but not only

the sounds, its language and its dramaturgy as well: in short, elements that are completely foreign to my film, arising from a whole other space-time – are integrated into the space of my film *Out of Mies*. This slight discrepancy is crucial. It is a desynchronization between one space and another that allows us to differentiate and detach objects, images, and sounds; to appreciate them; and in a sense do the editing ourselves, and to visualize them.

I had produced this asynchrony by accident. In this way, I had applied a choreographic process to cinema, one that I have used in dance – a concept-metaphor I've developed called *fake space*. This concept works through the withdrawal of movements (holes) in a movement sequence, but also through bifurcation and insertion of movements. One of the first times I experimented with this method was during the making of *Encyclopædia-DOCUMENT 3* in 2002. The dancers and I borrowed jumps from classical dance (*pas de chat*, *grand jeté*, *chassé*, *pas de bourré*, *cabriole*, etc.) which we blasted apart by removing most of the movements, leaving only an odd jump. With the film for *Out of Mies*, I turned to you when I had this absence of sound problem in my work, thinking the resolution would be provisional – but in the end it became both a solution and a work method.

I think of you often, Balthazar, with your little sounds and the tinkling of your bell. You occupy multiple spaces in my life. All I have to do is think of your name, and immediately your face comes to my mind, your eye, and a fly buzzing around you, pestering you in that scene in *Au Hasard...* I've taken a few photographs from the movie, and when I miss you too much, I watch you on DVD.

Thank you Balthazar,

Lynda

