

Preface to the Second Edition

Twelve years have elapsed since the first appearance of this book. Much as we hoped to elicit a dialogue on the theme of curatorship in relation to the cinematic event, the favorable response from readers of different backgrounds – students, teachers, archivists, as well as committed film spectators – went beyond our most optimistic expectations. The many constructive and often inspired comments received over the past decade are, in our opinion, the best proof that a candid discussion on the theme was not only desirable but also urgent, in light of the cultural and technological changes affecting our society. We therefore take great pleasure in accepting the publisher's invitation to give our volume a second life with a new edition.

The book was conceived and assembled when the tidal wave of the so-called digital revolution was about to reach its peak; from this standpoint, it is very much a child of its turbulent times, and we felt it appropriate to leave it as it originally appeared in 2008. By and large, notwithstanding the various suggestions we could subscribe to, we stand by the approach we took when first tackling the question of what film curatorship is, both within and outside the multifaceted contexts of festivals, museums, and the commercial sphere. The “revolution” is now over, in the sense that the hegemony of non-photochemical moving images is now firmly established; its aftermath, however, still resonates in the filmmakers' works and especially in their public consumption.

The terms “public” and “consumption” are employed here in relation to three separate and mutually dependent phenomena: first, the commodification of film festivals, increasingly treated either as ancillary outlets of the corporate world, or remnants of an allegedly outdated mode of collective (theatrical) experience of the moving image; second, the questionable and yet pervasive use of an ideologically loaded adjective, “archival” (in lieu of “museum”), in reference to the dissemination of all cinema from the past; third, the seemingly fatalistic presumption that any digital facsimile of a photochemical film qualifies as “restoration” insofar as its producer – be it an entrepreneur, a copyright owner, or a collecting institution – presents it as such.

Taken together, the three tendencies reflect a further shift in the appreciation of cinema as art. The neo-liberalist misuse of “new” technologies, as denounced by Shoshana Zuboff in her landmark study *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* (2019), is endangering our freedom of sight and its innermost values. In this perspective, the basic prerogative of choosing how you wish to see (and show) a film is potentially a political issue, because it implicitly advocates your right to reject any imposition on how you should or shouldn't experience moving images. Civil disobedience can take more important forms than this. Nevertheless, we would like to think of this book as its humble but useful launchpad in the realm of cinema.