

*Analysis of L'inter-code, written by Francesco Cazzin and Francesca Rusalen, for the blog "Emergere del possibile".*

*For the original in Italian, please visit:*

<http://emergeredelpossibile.blogspot.fr/2018/04/linter-code.html>

*L'inter-code* (France, 2017, 10') stems from a deep problem, from an aphasia that lies at the center of today's experimental cinema, in the fracture that breaks it down from the film and that characterizes it as irremediably furrowed, pierced by a smoothing, a white and irreducible space. We choose not to define this problem immediately, believing that the analysis of the short film by Pablo-Martín Córdoba will make it emerge as clearly as possible, bringing out its relevance, its stringency, its urgency, that its beauty. After all, it does not happen so often to find works that are so clear today and that, more importantly, are able to reveal, during the creation process, the problematic joints, thus putting themselves at its height. It's not often the case, but it's what makes a job great. And in this sense *L'inter-code* is a great film. Córdoba's operation, in fact, starts from an inconsistent image, from a virtual image that is also, at the same time, a virtuality of the image: the image does not exist or, better, it is a trace of a virtuality that surpasses the image from all sides. The image contains virtuality by referring to it but the image surpasses virtuality when defined as a difference from the virtual one, which also innervates it: it is the constitution of the image through a stochastic system that empties it, makes it lack, defines its statute as something markedly random, not only ineffable. This stochastic system, which starts from the generation of an algorithm in C++ able to animate the image, refers, more or less immediately, to the idea that Kubelka had of cinema, to which the work is dedicated: a film is composed only of frames, and their succession, therefore the movement, takes place only at a later time and in any case is not constitutive of the cinematographic essence. A very simple idea, but one that Córdoba radicalizes. What does Córdoba do? An act of sampling, of extraction, divided into three moments. First, he enters a museum, precisely the Musée des Arts et Métiers in Paris, and takes images of what is on display there and animates the 3D models. Second, he extracts fragments from the filming that German ethnologist Theodor Koch-Grünberg made at the beginning of the twentieth century in the Brazilian Guayana (found footage). Third, he selects excerpts from the text by philosopher Vilém Flusser, *Towards a philosophy of photography*. All these acts clearly refer to a common root, which is precisely that of extraction or extraction. This root assumes, by definition, something like a set of layers, which explains why the director has not stopped at one of the three soils; in fact, it is not so much a matter of returning what is taken from a layer but the stratification itself: the image is worth as it is stratified. The cinematographic image is not outside the order of knowledge. It's not about knowing Flusser's philosophy, nor about making it interact with Koch-Grünberg's found-footage. Of course, Córdoba does not limit himself to a chatter, we do not mean this, and in his work there is certainly a respect that preserves the specificity of the objects treated, so much so that an analysis of his work could very well be done otherwise, and that is taking into account the lines of conjunction between the film and the philosophy of Flusser, for example, which is not of interest here, since we care to emphasize another aspect of *L'inter-code*. What is this about? The problem of stratification on the one hand and virtuality on the other is the composition of the image. What is the status of the image, the liquid image, rarefied by glitch, the digital and random image, which is born from an algorithm and whose consistency tends, ultimately, to nothing? In fact, this is the problem of glitch art. Glitch art, far from being the purity of the digital image, dissolves the image while trying of preserving it, not realizing that the shape, the pixel, is, yes, constitutive of the image, but that it still refers in the strangest and most unorthodox ways to a quid that is to dissolve and that, therefore, is already in the image, or to which in any case the image must refer. Glitch art is boring and repetitive for this very reason, for its claim to obtain a purity of image not

realizing the fracture that unhorns it from the inside. Conversely, all of Córdoba's operation is an attempt to account for this image puncture. The image is perforated, there is a void in it: and this void is not of the digital order, of the algorithm, but it essentially inerts the image as such. The intercode is the capture, the appropriation of a stratification, we have seen: but this stratification does not stratify the image without, with this, making voids appear, lines between one plane and another. Digital technology, then, is what makes this void liquid, and not in order to annihilate it, but to preserve it, to manifest it in all its devastating power.

The removal of layers makes the image an image with different atmospheres, a multifaceted image that presents different latitudes and different longitudes: vectors do not cease to cross it, and what we call image are nothing but the trails left on a smooth surface, the trajectories traveled. In other words, stratification does not apply to layers that are stratified; on the contrary, these layers - the Musée des Arts et Métiers in Paris, the footage of Theodor Koch-Grünberg, the text by Vilém Flusser - are found as referring to a stratification that inerts them as such, that is, as layers. But where does this stratification come from, which comes before the layers, at the limit that both the one element and the other, could only exist as layers? It comes from the image: it is not the shape of the image, but its strength. A force that never ceases to decentralize it, to make incessantly proliferate trajectories through which the image finds itself having to relate with an outside that is no longer an out-of-hours but yet another power. The image will therefore be potentially this out, and its power will in a certain sense only relate to this out without however ever appropriating it, because, when it appropriates it, here is that the image would vanish - instead of what? This is where Córdoba excels, the greatness and the urgency, as well as the extreme contemporaneity of this work: if he appropriated the outside, the image would disappear not because he would be sucked in from this outside but because he would give up his place, would leave space - what would he do? To the regime of representation, which would once again be established. The image in asymptotic relation to an outside is, vice versa, the purely cinematographic image: that with digital technology finds, perhaps, its most complete form or, in any case, that which is most proper to it. The virtuality of the image is, then, a regime in which the image finds itself, a step away from the outside, in continuous relationship with an outside world that, on the one hand, excludes any updating of the image and, on the other, allows it to resist as such. In the image it is evident that something is happening, the Musée des Arts et Métiers in Paris, but this never happens without the philosophy of Flusser. Why? Because the image itself is a stratification, it can only place layers, or rather the interstices, the limits that are also of the cracks. If the museum were not brought up to date, then there would be no image; but if only the museum were brought up to date, then the image would no longer be such, but would be a re-presentation of the museum. On the contrary, by updating both the museum and the early 20th century shots, the image takes on consistency, but in this taking on consistency preserves an inter-, an inter- "between" that must remain unmentionable and that does not acquire value for what takes place but is what takes place that acquires value and can take place because this "between" is prior to everything. This interity, moreover, is not to be confused with an interiority: the image does not have an inside, a *noumen* from which an irreducible phenomenon would then manifest itself: the image is pure surface, white eyelid on which are inscribed the powers of an outside that trace it, fomenting its lack, the between that is between a layer and the other. Virtuality as a region of the image is then, above all, a space of the image - and the image is only a virtual space, a place of virtuality. *L'inter-code* that gives the title to the work is therefore the definition of the cinematographic image: not a code that codes, translating it into a language, but a code, an inter-code that refers to the aphasia of space between one layer and another, to that place of lack that is, precisely, the generative space of the image, its indefinable virtuality.