Micro Movies
On the Smartphone Film as Media Miniature

Films are in motion. As moving images, they are subjected to movement and themselves create movement: this has been the case since the beginning of cinematography. But in the age of digitalization, films are far more mobile than they could have ever been in the industrial age: this applies both to their production and reception as well as to their distribution. This can be seen the most clearly in the smartphone film. Not only has the camera that we always carry with us in our smartphone become more mobile. What it records is also subject to mobilization, since it can be edited and viewed, shared and uploaded without any time delay or spatial separation.

In the smartphone film, medial mobility and mobile mediality merge. This raises questions: In what sense does the mobility of smartphone practices lend a specific dynamic to the compressed filmic forms it generates and drives? Which aesthetic innovations could emerge from it? And ultimately: How can one approach the medial mobility inherent in these processes both theoretically and methodologically? The following three sections will pursue these questions. The first section concerns medial transformation to which, on the one hand, mobile filmmaking in the digital age is subjected and which it, on the other hand, itself generates; the second section investigates the new filmic aesthetics constituted in and through the smartphone film, and the third section discusses the question of how the methods of examining mobile mediality themselves can be set in motion. In doing so, I assume that a new conception of the image arises with the operations and dynamics of mobile media practices—whereby the smartphone film does not proclaim this conception as fixed but constantly generates it through processes of mobility.

1.   Mobile Practices

Films get something up and running—and can themselves run. They have long since left their traditional places and have emigrated from the film studio, the editing room, and the movie theater. If not in their place, then at least alongside them, new places and localizations are emerging. These include the everywhere and anytime, i.e. the possibility of shooting and watching films via mobile media at any location. The primary characteristic of mobile practices is thus the increased availability of the means of image production. Digitization facilitates not only the consumption but also and above all the production of images. Although the development of amateur cameras had already begun around 1900 and has expanded continuously ever since—from the easy-to-use cameras of the home movie era to the camcorders of the video age. Nevertheless, only the integration of digital cameras into portable devices with mobile broadband has led to a use-specific dissemination that has made filmmaking attainable for more and more parties. Mobilization is then accompanied by an increase in efficiency and speed. In the process, the computing capacity of image-generating machines plays a crucial role. It organizes not only the length but also the quantity of possible recordings: whereas the film reel or videotape come to an end, the digital recording apparatus allows for the potentially infinite.

These innovations are connected to the second characteristic of mobile practices: advanced editing. Images are now more mobile not only in relation to their production but also in relation to their editing. Here, the basic increase in digitalization involves direct access to the image material. Every edited version can be displayed on the screen immediately and can also be revised at the same time. This is where digital editing differs from analog editing in a critical way, namely, the removal of the picture lock. "The plus of the digital image," Lorenz Engell points out, "always lies in its de- and re-composability, i.e. in the fact that the image is precisely not the final state, not the valid version [...] and, not least for this reason, cannot be a document—except for that of the state of processing itself."[1] Its specificity, following Engell, "its unique characteristic, differentiating it from all other images, therefore, is

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1   Lorenz Engell, "Die Liquidation des Intervalls. Zur Entstehung des digitalen Bildes aus Zwischenraum und Zwischenzeit," in *Ausfahrt nach Babylon. Essais und Vorträge zur Kritik der Medienkultur*, ed. Lorenz Engell (Weimar: VDG, 2000), 198.

developed by digital images more as processes than as images."[2] This process-like quality applies not only to the individual image but also, primarily, to how it can be linked and connected. In this sense, digital editing of a sequence of images is also always already characterized by its status as something provisional. Accessing the images, selecting and recombining them, takes place by means of nonlinear control—via a process that, again, emphasizes the process-like quality of image manipulation.

This is accompanied by the third characteristic of mobile media practices: increased distribution. Smartphone films can not only be immediately edited but also readily shared: they can be sent to individual recipients, made available on video platforms, or posted on social media sites. This is where we find the connection between mobility and connectivity as a characteristic that clearly distinguishes smartphone film from any other form of mobile film practice. Because the smartphone film can be shared immediately, it is also available to others and can thus be expanded. Thereby, it moves into the realm of the collective and the collaborative. This has less to do with the fact that a smartphone film can be seen by as many users as possible in as many locations as possible; rather, the important aspect is the fact that it can be further manipulated with additional operations. Pierre Lévy points out:

> For communities to share meaning, it is not enough that each of their members receives the same message. The role of groupware, rather, entails collectively creating not only texts but also networks of associations, annotations, and commentaries into which anyone can enter them. As a result, the constitution of a common meaning becomes visible and practically materialized.[3]

Not only can smartphone movies be easily distributed, they can also provide clues to their meaning-making via the comment sections and discussion forums associated with them. As a mobile media practice, the smartphone film is also characterized by its ability to diffuse into other media systems, in other words, it can be placed into new contexts beyond established boundaries. These contexts and settings are now, in turn, highly mobile—not only because old comments can be deleted and new ones added, or because new comments can reconfigure the old ones, but also because the connections between images, films, and texts in the digital dispositif are never complete but

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2   Ibid., 197–198.

3   Pierre Lévy, "L'hypertexte, instrument et métaphore de la communication," *Réseaux* 9, no. 46–47 (1991) : 64.

can always be updated. Social media sites, video platforms, or discussion forums on the Internet broaden the framework of image and text structures. They expand it and thereby allow for the transition from the stable, inalterable organization of meaning to the processual form of meaning generation.

Mobile media practices of smartphone films are characterized by the fact that they no longer rely on stable or exclusive locations—places of production, editing, and distribution. Rather, their unique quality consists of a specific type of mobility—a mobility of devices, users, processes, and transmissions. This profound change has consequences not only practically but also aesthetically. One basic assumption of media theory is the fact that textual artifacts cannot be considered independently from the practices and procedures of their production. If it is true that the new possibilities of mobile media practices are connected with a new filmic understanding, then this understanding would have to be extended to the question of the formation of new modes of representation and staging. These, in turn, would have to turn away from old practices and disrupt them in order to become observable as new. It is precisely these moments of disruption that will be of interest in what follows.

2.   Mobile Aesthetics

Let us begin with the first mobile example. On the one hand, it exhibits the new camera mobility, its liberation and potential boundlessness, and, on the other hand, its disruption, in the sense that it involves the breakdown of a regulated process. The example, "Seagull Steals a Camera," can be found on YouTube.[4] In only one minute and 39 seconds, the action unfolds in a rapid and surprising way.

An evening in Cannes. A camera is rolling. The unchanged frame suggests that it is statically aligned; presumably, it is lying on a table where someone is eating dinner. But, unexpectedly, an inversion occurs. A seagull suddenly appears, walks up to the device, grabs it with its beak, and flies away. While the bird was initially placed before the lens and visible as a recorded object, it now abruptly transfers the recording situation into a new condition with its intervention. Carried in its beak, the portable camera glides over buildings

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4   RealJap, "Seagull Steals a Camera," YouTube Video, 1:39, June 25, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcEIMJl6cPQ.

and streets, opening up a veritable bird's-eye view. One can see different fields of view, dynamic pans, shifts between light and dark, fragments of wings and façades—and ultimately, after the seagull has landed on a roof and cast the camera to the side, a sight of the protagonist by means of a direct gaze into the camera. The bird squawks, pecks on the display a few times, and disappears as quickly as it had appeared.

As a small and inconspicuous recording apparatus, the mobile camera can be quickly purloined, removed from its actual purpose, and applied to new uses. The mobile camera is capable of not only expanding the scope of possibilities for recording but, simultaneously, of also calling into question the smooth flow of recording due to interferences. It is these deviations and irritations that bring to light what lies beyond the grand form of knowledge organization.[5] While meaning-making via a filmic recording had long been organized by a technological, instrument-based arrangement, such as the adaptation to the requirements of light and sound recording, now, the compactness of the dispositif provides for a more unevenly permeable recording situation. In a situation where no spotlights are set up, no sound recording equipment is employed, where a scene does not have to be specifically staged on a closed set, something unintended and unforeseen can always enter the picture. The moment of the incident is also a moment of the uncertain: it throws the medium back down to its foundations and thereby expands the boundaries of its horizon of expectations.

Following Béla Balázs, these foundations have always included "the mobility and constant movement of the camera"[6]—for Balázs, it is even one of the most important "basic elements of the optical language"[7] that film formulates and articulates. For the camera shows

> not merely a constant flow of new things, but also changing distances […]. And this pinpoints what historically is absolutely innovative about film art. There can be no doubt that film has *un*covered a new world that had been previously covered *up*. It has uncovered the visible world surrounding man and his relation to it. Space and landscape, the face of things, the rhythm of

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5   On the productivity of "goofs" in media history and for media historiography, see *Goofy History. Fehler machen Geschichte*, ed. Butis Butis (Cologne: Böhlau, 2009).

6   Béla Balázs, "The Productive Camera," in *Béla Balázs: Early Film Theory. Visible Man and The Spirit of Film*, trans. Rodney Livingstone, ed. Erica Carter (New York: Berghahn, 2010), 98.

7   Ibid.

the masses, as well as the secret language of mute existence. But film has not just brought new material into view in the course of its development. It has achieved something else that is absolutely crucial. It has eliminated the spectator's position of fixed distance: a distance that hitherto has been an essential feature of the visual arts.[8]

Balázs's remarks about the medium specificity of the filmic language, in other words, of its capability to capture movements not only in the image but also and primarily as movements of the image, can now be extended to include the fact that the suspension of distance in the age of smartphone films is transferred from the filmic image to its devices. The mobility of the seagull-camera is an example of this. As the snapshot of a movement, it shows the fluid alternation of positions beyond a meaningful, structured arrangement and thus relocates to "the purely visual nature of film [that] enables us to see that *indeterminate something*."[9] This creates an "image of knowledge that more significantly emphasizes the coincidences, contingencies, and arbitrariness over the planned and expected."[10] The incident is also an accident. It enables "the rejection of overarching orientations"[11] and shifts the viewer's gaze toward those blanks and gaps from which something new can emerge.

The second example also takes place within the context of unexpected new orientations. It is taken from the web series *Glove and Boots*, a puppet comedy show with its own YouTube channel. In the episode "Vertical Video Syndrome,"[12] the protagonists Mario and Fafa deal with a mobile media phenomenon that confounds familiar viewing arrangements. Here, too, an inversion takes place, or more precisely: the shift from landscape format to portrait format. The episode revolves around the observation that the mobility of a smartphone, that is, the movability of the camera's positioning, leads to

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8   Ibid., 99.

9   Béla Balázs, "Visual Linkage," in *Béla Balázs: Early Film Theory. Visible Man and The Spirit of Film*, trans. Rodney Livingstone, ed. Erica Carter (New York: Berghahn, 2010), 67.

10   Bernhard J. Dotzler and Henning Schmidgen, "Einleitung: Zu einer Epistemologie der Zwischenräume," in *Parasiten und Sirenen. Zwischenräume als Orte der materiellen Wissensproduktion*, ed. Bernhard J. Dotzler and Henning Schmidgen (Bielefeld: transcript, 2008), 7.

11   Ibid.

12   Gloves and Boots, "Vertical Video Syndrome," YouTube Video, 2:59, June 25, 2012, http s://www. youtube.com/watch?v=Bt9zSfinwFA.

the dramatic expansion of videos that are recorded with phones held vertically. "Vertical Videos happen when you hold your camera the wrong way," Mario states, "Your video will end up looking like crap." Surrounded by numerous vertically recorded cellphone videos, Fafa then explains the real threat posed by these increasingly emerging new forms. They are not only faulty and ugly to look at but also do not fit into established image and viewing conventions: "Vertical Video Syndrome is dangerous. Motion pictures have always been horizontal. Televisions are horizontal. Computer screens are horizontal. People's eyes are horizontal. We aren't built to watch vertical videos."

This observation shows Mario and Fafa to be media-historically trained viewers: They have a clear eye for historically varying recording technologies and presentation systems, that is, for those ensembles that specifically produce and organize viewing positions and viewing conditions. Their particular attention to the horizontal picture format as the metric for what is aesthetically acceptable is shown to be a guiding value in a double sense. It establishes the horizontal orientation of images and screens as an unquestioned basic condition according to which the medium is arranged and aligned, and it makes whatever contradicts this definition an undesired deviation from the norm.

Therefore, vertical videos are in fact dangerous. Their increased occurrence suggests that we are not dealing with an isolated incident but numerous instances of the same blunder. After all, Mario and Fafa do not speak of a symptom but of a syndrome, in other words, not of individual signs of interference but, rather, of the simultaneous appearance of various defects. The actual expansion lies in this accumulation of blunders since disruptions not only have an irritating effect, but also a catalyzing one. They are innovative, in the sense that they request new procedures when dealing with moments of interference. Such procedures could, on the one hand, exclude everything that does not fit established formats or, more interestingly, make it productive. For this would show that new forms do not merely imitate old ones but lead beyond them. They would then seek new perspectives and develop their own dynamics, in other words, they would reflect on their medial specificity, on what they are, what they are capable of, and what distinguishes them from other previously established forms.

The third and last example of the mobile aesthetic represents the transition from the experimental phase, with all of its interferences and irritations, to the establishment of its own visual style. The example is the smartphone app Vine, released in January 2013, which developed into its own social net-

work. Its principle was both simple and compact: users of the app could record six-second videos, which the software would transfer into an endless loop. The recording runs exactly as long as the user's finger is touching the screen; the editing (if one can still call it this) would thus be integrated into the recording apparatus and the recording duration limited. The finished films would then be published on the Vine platform, where they could be accessed and shared.[13]

Vine also featured the aforementioned shift from horizontal to vertical filming; in Vine, however, it did not appear as a sudden irritation but as a phenomenon that has become self-evident. This is shown, for example, in a stop-motion clip that presents an animated puppet vertically aligning an iPhone on a flexible mini tripod.[14] The puppet approaches the tripod, fixes the device, adjusts it a bit until the right position is found, and then runs in front of the camera to pose as the subject. Here, an aesthetic reflection on the newly autonomous smartphone film, which no longer needs to borrow from other media, manifests itself. Moreover, the way the puppet moves the iPhone to the flexible tripod refers to the production process itself: the stop-motion trick is accomplished by an illusion of movement, where the mobile device is kept still in order to capture individual frames of motionless objects and then set them in motion again.

In contrast to stop-motion processes, which split up film into its smallest recording segments, uncut recordings were also possible on the platform. They would often feature short, everyday scenes that were nevertheless prolonged by the loop. What escapes our attention at first can perhaps only be caught through the repetitive continuous loop. In a clip with the title "Simple Pleasures Café,"[15] for example, the fleeting and ephemeral nature of the smallest movements (the light dancing of a curtain, the combination of static and kinetic shadows, the arrangement of images and objects, the interweaving of interior and exterior) marks a transition from the everyday to the aesthetic.

Furthermore, complex narratives can also emerge—such as in the Vine video "...then I woke up in Calgary" from the Hollywood actor Adam Gold-

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13   On this topic, see for example Elke Rentemeister, "Snap!" in *Kurz & Knapp. Zur Mediengeschichte kleiner Formen vom 17. Jahrhunderts bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Michael Gamper and Ruth Mayer, 367–389 (Bielefeld: transcript, 2017).

14   Ian Padgham, "Untitled," Vine Video, May 30, 2013, https://vine.co/v/bYwPIluIipH.

15   Lisbetho, "Simple Pleasures Café," Vine Video, February 8, 2013, https://vine.co/v/bnFw EFVL zxF.

berg.[16] The video shows the distorted perspective of a dreamlike scene. It presents a situation that oscillates between tracking and panning shots and combines alternating spatial and landscape impressions: a complex superimposition of segments of reality and fragments of perception. It is unclear where the dream begins and ends, where consciousness and unconsciousness meet. In a maelstrom of visual impressions, the loop spins into an endless imbalance.

Ultimately, images from smartphone films can also make reference to images from other films. This is shown, for example, by the animated nightmare of an Oreo cookie[17]—a vision of horror inspired by *The Shining* (Stanley Kubrick, 1980). The recurrent subliminal image of blood pouring out of an elevator in the Overlook Hotel in Stanley Kubrick's film is now, in the Vine video "The Spilling," a giant wave of milking flowing toward the Oreo.

What this short selection shows is that the mobile aesthetics of the smartphone film is beginning to develop its own media quality. In the process, smallness and shortness, movement and mobility, play a central role. Smartphone films are related not to the cinematic dispositif but to the conditions of mobile screens and viewers: their images are learning how to walk by being carried around. Beyond long-form storytelling, such as the narrative feature film or the serial narrative of a television show, they operate with a short attention span and limited means of production. Their characteristic feature is the temporary and malleable, their hallmark their volatile visuality.

Smartphone films can only be described as micro movies in distinction to the tradition of long films, to which they relate in a special way. In the early days of cinematography, the brevity of films was a basic technical condition. The capacities of early film technology regulated the duration of the recording, so that a comparison to longer forms was impossible. Brevity was not a deliberately chosen form of condensation but the aesthetic norm.[18] With the development and solidification of the long form into a narrative convention, a change occurred in subsequent decades that marginalized the short form

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16   Adam Goldberg, "... then I woke up in Calgary," Vine Video, December 7, 2013, https://vine.co/v/hxYxbTKDXQA.

17   Oreo Cookie, "The Spilling," Vine Video, October 28, 2013, https://vine.co/v/hDq2L9PeVTX.

18   For more, see also . Ruth Mayer, "Clipästhetik in der Industriemoderne. Das frühe Kino und der Zwang zur Kürze," in *Kurz & Knapp. Zur Mediengeschichte kleiner Formen vom 17. Jahrhunderts bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Michael Gamper and Ruth Mayer, 251–267 (Bielefeld: transcript, 2017).

and almost completely pushed it out. Its return has come about with media modalities that have only become technically possible and aesthetically compatible in the age of digitalization. It then becomes clear that the forms of micro movies transcend those categories that film theory traditionally employs for the interpretation of film texts: namely work, author, and narration. How could this be approached methodologically? This is what we will address in the following section.

3.   Mobile Methods

The unique mobility of the smartphone film, its mobile mediality, leads us to then ask about the mobility of theoretical approaches. If we make no progress with the established categories of film analysis—what approach could we then use?

The first possibility would be, in recourse to the first section, to more closely examine the new practices of mobile filmmaking. Micro narratives that develop in and through the smartphone film are connected to a transformative mobility that is based on the smallness of such devices. With the smartphone, we always have both the camera and the screen at our fingertips: we hold the entire apparatus in our hand, making it work and keeping it in motion. This is not an insignificant detail but, most likely, the beginning of a new era of how we *grasp* film. While the activities of the filmic hand had once been in a certain sense "outsourced" and were limited to the specializations of the cinematographer, the editor, or the projectionist as the collective control center of filmic operations, we now all have the capacity to actively become manual producer-users. Furthermore, our hands move closer and closer to the images themselves. Unlike the separation between viewer and screen required by the classic projection screen, one that requires distance between the two, the touch screen invites users to touch the screen and thus to move their hands.

Miniaturization and mobilization are therefore of interest because they shift the focus to the haptic and thereby to what makes the smartphone so "handy." Here, the hand has received a new set of actions; it is thus worthwhile to more closely examine its practices and procedures in the age of digitalization. Michel Serres has proposed one way to accomplish this. In his book *Thumbelina: The Culture and Technology of Millennials*, he describes the members of the networked generation as Thumbelinas—because of their ability to ac-

cess the world via the touchscreens on their smartphones. The Thumbelinas, writes Serres, "inhabit the virtual. [...] With their cell phone, they have access to all people; with GPS, to all places; with the Internet, to all knowledge. They inhabit a topological space of neighborhoods, whereas we lived in a metric space, coordinated by distances."[19] Interestingly, Serres also connects this system of neighborhoods and proximate relationships to the practices of reading and writing. He recognizes in them a shift from pages to swiping, from the formatted, definable paper page to the scrolling text, from distanced consideration to involved grasping.

This addresses an important field of reference—and, with it, the hand conditioned by touch screens and multisensory media. In the digital age, grasping and comprehending the world is substantially organized by tactile techniques: by finger skills and manual practices that no longer assume distance and delimitation but proximity and tangibility. This is precisely where a media theory of the mobilized digital image could begin. It would have to investigate the status of tangible images, their malleability and variability, for example, when we not only retrieve images with our smartphones but drag them larger or smaller with our fingers, when we can bring every image we see into contact with another image. It would thus have to ask what occurs when images are no longer determined by the form and format of the classical film dispositif but are generated and made accessible through tactile processes—and furthermore, what occurs when the sensory modalities of visuality and tactility no longer are no longer regarded as separated spheres but are mediated to each other through touch.[20]

For film theory, which has long concentrated on the primacy of the visual, this necessarily presents a challenge. An ideology of the gaze, which asserts seeing as the preferred access point to knowledge or as the guarantor of transparency, is opposed by the apparatus-conditioned upswing of tactility: here, something emerges that escapes the eye. In the experienceable space of tangibility, perceptible things are newly arranged on a level separate from the viewer and the human eye. In the process, that which can be made sense of

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19   Michel Serres, *Thumbelina: The Culture and Technology of Millennials*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 6.

20   On the mediality of the relationship between visuality and tactility, see Lisa Gotto, "Kontaktieren. Zur medialen Begegnungszone von Visualität und Taktilität," in *Die Medien und das Neue*, ed. Daniela Wentz and André Wendler, 17–28 (Marburg: Schüren, 2009).

by touching requires a particular form of participation. The recipient is no longer a passive onlooker but an active participant: he is mobilized.

Whoever is touching something remains in motion. The mode of perception of the tactile itself is constituted through processuality and variability. Unlike with an overview or overall prospect, what is to be touched is to be captured successively. Already in 1935, Erwin Strauss writes:

> The momentary belongs to any tactile impression, 'moment' understood both in a temporal sense and in the sense of movement. […] In the world of tactility, there is no coherent, fulfilled horizon; there are only moments, but also, because of this, the urge to go on from moment to moment. The tactile movement, therefore, becomes the expression of a restless and endless, never quite fulfilled approximation.[21]

Touching involves a process-driven exploration and investigation, an interminable movement within mobile constellations. The tactile does not imply the closed whole but something to be gradually explored, that is, something that is only emerging in the process of becoming. The fragmentary, the advancing from moment to moment, is made possible not least by a variable positioning. Through movement, the person touching is involved in a particular, specifically dynamic way and constantly on the move. Every stopping point is a potential starting point—not a conclusion, but a connection.

Here is where a mobile methodology would have to start. It would have to consider mobile media as agile arrangements that necessitate processual approaches. It would have to emphasize reflections on mobility, ubiquity, and connectivity and thereby repeatedly problematize these reflections. It would have to view birds as authors and understand flights as incomplete texts. It would have to be interested in non-linear narrations, in recursive rotations and loops. It would have to consider the mobility of potential archives complete with their deletable and expandable operations: tags, comments, and image links with or without words. It would have to mobilize its questions and focus its epistemological interests on the specifics of short and small forms.

As a media miniature, the smartphone film is characterized by a particular relationship to smallness. The compactness of the devices allows for a new type of availability: viewers become users, passive consumers become active producers. Furthermore, and this is crucial, small mobile devices not only

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21   Erwin Strauss, *Vom Sinn der Sinne. Ein Beitrag zur Grundlegung der Psychologie* (Berlin: Springer, 1978 [1935]), 361.

allow us to see things differently but also to absorb them in a completely different way. In this way, the fragments of everyday reality can be medially processed and made aesthetically productive. Through the ever-present smartphone camera, every moment, no matter how small, can be instantly captured and fixed, and even the incidental or temporary can be readily recorded and edited. This availability enables a type of bearing witness whose access point into the exploration of the world lies in the ordinary small. Siegfried Kracauer describes film's affinity for everyday life in the 1960s as follows:

> The small random moments which concern things common to you and me and the rest of mankind can indeed be said to constitute the dimension of everyday life, this matrix of all other modes of reality. It is a very substantial dimension. [...] Products of habit and microscopic interaction, they form a resilient texture [...]. Films tend to explore this texture of everyday life [...]. So they help us not only to appreciate our given material environment but to extend it in all directions. They virtually make the world our home.[22]

What Kracauer accentuates here as a capability of film, namely the medium-specific ability to attach itself to small, everyday things and thus make them visible and accessible, appears to be enormously increased in the digital age. Because the smartphone is always handy, it makes things easier to handle in a unique way. As a result, a mobile understanding of the small arises, a movable type of filmmaking that finds its raw materials beyond the studio and in everyday routines. In this sense, micro movies, even more intense than their cinematic predecessors, are uniquely suited to "virtually make the world our home."[23]

Every small form is part of a history of forms that it adapts, interpolates, and transforms. What is essential for micro movies is that they do not simply rediscover the ephemeral but, rather, that they reformat it. Their aesthetic forms are embedded in the accelerative processes of the digital age, in the dynamization and condensation of fragments of information and narration. It is precisely this media disposition that gives rise to their special potential to epistemologically charge the short:

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22   Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1965), 304.

23   Ibid.

> What is formally due to the ephemerality of the moment and expresses an accelerated experience of time in a corresponding format simultaneously proves itself to be a small archive of a polychronic experience of time: the unavoidable difference between the presence, the presentness of the moment, and its simultaneous ephemerality and unavailability have perhaps never been more clearly experienced than in the age of an enormous circulation and density of information, as well as in the seemingly limitless potential technological access points to it.[24]

Micro movies are not only the results of a new practice of exploring everyday life but also an expression of moving pictures being disseminated beyond previously limited domains of production and reception. With the possibility of Internet-based networking, they form a new, kaleidoscope-like structure of visibility. In this sense, their smallness can be understood not as a fragment but as a segment, as a referential element that invites us to connect our own dots. Herein lies the particular potential of micro movies: with the snapshot-like incompleteness of the moment and the expansive capability of the web, the unfolding of our perceptive capabilities is driven process by process, and our vision is not only sharpened but also renewed and enhanced.

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24   Sabiene Autsch and Claudia Öhlschläger, "Das Kleine denken, schreiben, zeigen. Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven," in *Kulturen des Kleinen. Mikroformate in Literatur, Kunst und Medien*, ed. Sabiene Autsch, Claudia Öhlschläger, and Leonie Süwolto (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2014), 10–11.