



Joseph Kosuth, *Titled (Art as Idea as Idea) (Meaning)*¹

"It is about life... which is what film is about."

Dan Graham²

"One of the things that critique is, after all, is a test of love."

Andrea Fraser³

1 Joseph Kosuth, *Titled (Art as Idea as Idea) (Meaning)*. 1967. The Menil Collection, Houston. ? 2002 Joseph Kosuth/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

2 Dan Graham describing *Sunset to Sunrise* (1969) in an interview by Eric de Bruyn: Alexander Alberro (ed.), *Two-way Mirror Power: Selected Writings by Dan Graham on His Art* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1999) 98.

3 A quote attributed to Andrea Fraser found at *A Radical Cut In the Texture of Reality* blog, published November 8, 2014 by Jacob Wren, accessed December 8, 2015. Although I wasn't able to trace it to any official source, I decided to include it nevertheless for its truly Fraser-like nature.

Stepping into the semi-dark room in the rear gallery of the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts in San Francisco was like being caught in a dream. The spectacular of four opposite, wall-high projections entrapped the viewer in the middle of layered storylines. The author, Cologne-based artist Frances Scholz built the complicated narrative of *Amboy/Fragments of a Screenplay* (September 10 – November 21, 2015) from scattered, fragmented elements that one might find not easily untangled. Co-created by sci-fi writer Mark von Schlegell and curated by Jamie Stevens, the new multi-media installation unfolded predominantly in videos featuring many artists, writers, and musicians from the Los Angeles and New York art scene.⁴

One of the actors was a well-known artist, recognized especially for her institutional critique, Andrea Fraser.⁵ Her appearance wasn't by chance since her work has many contact points with Schultz's practice as well as with the topics touched on in *Amboy*. In the Wattis Institute the inner proximity of the two artists mirrored larger curatorial concept. The

4 Full list of the collaborators can be found in the exhibition brochure: *Amboy/Fragments of a Screenplay* (San Francisco: The CCA Wattis Institute, 2015) 14.

5 Jamie Stevens, "Introduction," The Wattis Institute program statement, accessed December 8, 2015, www.wattis.org/view?id=4,240.

exhibition *Amboy* was part of a year-long program to “have Andrea Fraser on our mind”, as the director and chief curator Anthony Huberman puts it.⁶ This metaphorical, constellational approach rendered an unusual mind-map with many new vantage points.⁷

In my review I will build on this associative curatorial method suggested by Huberman. While researching into this year's theme, Andrea Fraser, I came across her video installation from 2001 titled *Soldadera* (*Scenes from Un Banquete en Tetlapayac, a film by Olivier Debroise*). The resemblances, formal and inner, of *Amboy* and *Soldadera* were evident and immediate. Therefore, I decided to put the two pieces on my own, notional, adjacent screens and examine them in relation to each other. To create a broader mental image and also for the entertainment of the reader, I

6 The Wattis Institute has a dualistic program. In the words of the mission statement: “As an exhibition space, we commission and show new work by artists from around the world. As a research institute, we dedicate six months to reflecting on the work of a single artist, which informs a regular series of public events, texts, and research by other relevant artists and thinkers.” (Andrea Fraser program is year long. For details see previous note.)

However loose might the connection of the programs seem, in reality the research projects into the exhibitions in more or less intimate ties. “Read about us,” accessed December 8, 2015, www.wattis.org/about.

7 **“The mind is a metaphor of the world of objects which is itself but an endless circle of mutually reflecting metaphors.”**
Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, (Cambridge, Mas.: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 91.

accompanied the text with quotes by Pierre Bourdieu.⁸

In the critical analysis of *Amboy* and *Soldadera* I will proceed followingly: First, I will provide the reader with description of both artworks with a short overview of their context. Subsequently I will discuss their points of contact. Specifically common employed narratives, Fraser's and Schultz's use of fragmentation and their formal sources. Finally, I will address the transformation that the shared message undergoes between *Soldadera* and *Amboy*, and the differences between the works, especially related to viewer's experience.

8 French philosopher known best for his critique of sociological systems, cultural institutions and for his intellectual influence on Paris student demonstrations in May 1968. Helene Lipstadt, “Sociology: Bourdieu's Bequest,” *JSAH* 64 (2005): 433.
Besides the apparent relevance, Bourdieu is an important source for Fraser. She speaks about the essential influence of Bourdieu on her work many times. Moreover, their contact wasn't only indirectly, through the sociologist's writing, but, until Bourdieu's death in 2002, they were in direct contact and correspondence. Fraser actually admits that he “was the only person I ever sent work to unsolicited”. Andrea Fraser, “To Quote, ' Say the Kabyles, 'Is to Bring Back to Life,” memorial essay about Pierre Bourdieu, *October* 101 (2002): 7.
Furthermore, only is he connected to Fraser personally, but his *engagé* work has been long associated with feminist thinking, an influence on both discussed artworks. Toril Moi, “Appropriating Bourdieu: Feminist Theory and Pierre Bourdieu's Sociology of Culture,” *New Literary History* 22 (1991): 1017-1049.

Amboy/Fragments of a Screenplay.

In the Wattis Institute version, *Amboy* had the ambition to be a *Gesamtkunstwerk*.⁹ Four projections on opposite walls built its slightly spectacular, holistic, yet fragmented form. One of them was oddly cut in half by the entrance corridor's wall, another disrupted by a suspended photograph of Juan Pollo food truck. In one corner, a black semicircle platform, resembling an intimate amphitheater, invited viewers to listen to the videos through headphones. They proved useful to screen out the subtly shrouding noise, mixed from the soundtrack of the installation with sounds of one of the projections playing aloud at the moment. By putting them on, one could focus closer on an individual projection and sink deeper in the stories of what became a somber desert vaudeville.

One word was ever-present in the installation: "Amboy." The name spun around, shared by multiple things. From what the videos revealed, one would learn, that Amboy was a man. He appeared at times to be lounging. At others, there was someone, a woman, holding a lecture on his art. Another

9 Term first used by Richard Wagner for a synthesis of arts in an artwork. Richard Wagner, *The Art-Work of the Future and Other Works*, trans. W. Ashton Ellis (London, 1993), 35.
For further reading: C. Ruhl (ed.), *The Death and Life of the Total Work of Art*, (Berlin: Jovis, 2014).

woman, was making a documentary about him. And the deaths of female artists appeared to be connected to him. But Amboy was also a place. A small town in the Mojave desert, in the middle of nowhere. Something might have happened there. There was a mysterious black crater nearby. Maybe it was natural, maybe it was Amboy's artwork. Not even the eccentric female detective was able to find out where Amboy was before she died.

It was hard, yet not impossible, to discern narrative arcs in such complicated metaphorical confusion. The task was made even more difficult by the fragmentary structure mirrored in the changing visual language. The featured pieces seemed to range from alternative artistic typology to documentary to B film aesthetics. However, these cracks in the surface of the work could also provide the viewer with entry points for navigating through the stories. In the process of mapping the various components of the videos, the visitor started to recognize certain topics, locations, and characters.¹⁰ If one were to spend a substantial amount of time with the

10 Some might identify Paul Giamatti playing the "main" character Amboy, a rock'n'roll-ish artist. Besides him there were several mentioned female characters – real-life widow of a famous science fiction writer A. E. van Vogt; a documentarist coming to L.A. to shoot a movie about van Vogt, later changing the subject to Amboy; an artsy lecturer doing later a performance in the Mojave desert; an art detective, and many more.

installation, it was possible to track the story of *Amboy* in its entire complexity, with all its blind alleys and detours.

Part of the overwhelming feeling one might get from *Amboy* was evoked by the enclosing installation causing a flood of ever changing juxtapositions. But the cinematic spectacular wasn't always part of the artwork. In its first version, presented in the Tif Sigfrids gallery in Los Angeles in 2014, *Amboy* consisted of one large projection, screened on the corner of the gallery room and thereby angled, together with five framed, middle-sized photographs of Amboy, the town. One of which was, by the way, our familiar yellow Juan Pollo truck. The general appearance of the installation was much more moderate, evoking museum education room. Also, the featured videos – only two, each five minutes long – focused more on documenting Amboy's fictional artistic practice, showing him in his studio etc. In the press release, Schulz described the short films as thrillers, thereby indirectly promising a following movie.¹¹

11 Sarah Lehrer-Grainer: "Amboy," press release (Los Angeles: Tif Sigfrids, 2014).

Soldadera (Scenes from Un Banquete en Tetlapayac, a film by Olivier Debroise).

The second artwork in the sightline of this essay, Andrea Fraser's *Soldadera (Scenes from Un Banquete en Tetlapayac, a film by Olivier Debroise)*, resembled very much the original *Amboy* installation. When on display within the *Performing Histories: Live Artworks Examining the Past* exhibition in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 2013 it was installed in similar semi-dark room room. Its two-channel screen had quite impressive proportions, each about 100 per 150 inches. Together, they formed a corner in otherwise empty room, except of a five page facsimile letter from Frances Flynn Paine to Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, and a seat for viewers facing the projection corner.¹²

Two parallel stories were looping on the screens. On the right hand a female revolutionary peasant was riding on horseback, weaving a red banner. Later, she was in a trench, readying for attack agrarian tools with her two fellow comrades. But before one could see any action, before the story progressed past gestures and preparations, the video looped and she

12 Object number 2.2011 in the Media and Performance Art Department.

was riding towards bright tomorrows again. Simultaneously, on the left screen, the same actress played wealthy-looking lady, presumably Frances Flynn Paine,¹³ whose close-up took turns with a shot of a theater audience seemingly waiting on some kind of public speech. The main female characters were played by the author of the videos, Andrea Fraser, herself.

To understand the background of the work, one had to go quite deep into history.¹⁴ *Soldadera* was based on a movie from 1930 called *Que Viva Mexico!* written and directed by Sergej Eisenstein, the inventor of movie montage.¹⁵ The epic project, celebrating local revolution through Mexican history and culture, was never finished, but became one of the legends of cinematography. Its fourth, culminating part was supposed to depict the story of Mexican revolution as seen through the eyes of woman soldiers.¹⁶

Therefore the name of the chapter – *Soldadera*. But Fraser's *Soldadera*'s

13 Frances Flynn Paine was a wealthy socialite, promoter of Mexican art, president of the Paine Mexican Arts Corporation funded by the Rockefeller family, and also the curator of Diego Rivera's 1931 retrospective at The Museum of Modern Art in New York. In Fraser's work her story points quite clearly to the apparatus of the art world, its trends, and its connection to the politics of the rich.

14 Most of the historic background of Fraser's *Soldadera* in this article comes from: James Meyer, "The Strong and the Weak: Andrea Fraser and the Conceptual Legacy," *Grey Room* 17 (2004): 82-107.

15 For more about montage see: Maud Lavin and Matthew Teitelbaum, *Montage and Modern Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992).

16 David Bordwell, *The Cinema of Eisenstein*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993) 203.

lineage has a second, additional source. As the subtitle indicates, it is also inspired by Olivier Debroise's 2000 movie *Un Banquete en Tetlapayac*.¹⁷ This documentary homage to Eisenstein's work in Mexico is actually a disguised cinematic bacchanalia celebrating artistic life. It reconstructs events surrounding the making of *Que Viva Mexico!*, focusing on the happenings during the filming of the second part of the epos, when Eisenstein and his crew stayed at the Tetlapayac hacienda. At that time, filming was halted for few weeks when the leading actor ended up in jail because he had accidentally shot dead his sister. In the meantime, the crew members killed time watching film fragments, having discussions, and above all extensively partying. For his film, Debroise brought together a group of film-makers, artists and intellectuals to visit the hacienda and relive the mood of the past.

However, contrarily to the subtitle, Fraser didn't include any original scenes from Debroise's movie in her work. Nor did she use direct citations from Eisenstein's material. Rather, by using the history of the films, she references to the narratives of the afterlife of artworks. In never letting

17 "Un banquete en Tetlapayac: Olivier Debroise," *International Film Festival Rotterdam Archive*, accessed December 8, 2015, iiffr.com/en/2000/films/un-banquete-en-tetlapayac.

anything “real” happen, she exposes the inner emptiness of the legend of an artist, especially when it comes to such avant-garde gestures as were Eisenstein's and Debroyse's. More generally it speaks about the fate of radical utopias. They too stay often on gestures, preparations, and talk only.

Amboy and Soldadera.

I hope by this point many similarities between *Amboy* and *Soldadera* are already evident to the reader. Of course, on the formal side, the *Amboy* installation extends Fraser's initial two screens to four projections covering all walls, swallowing the viewer into the belly of the narrative. Also, there are much more film fragments to follow in *Amboy*. Shortly, Schulz replaces Fraser's dichotomy with a kaleidoscopic view, splitting the narratives and forms into diamond texture. But the layers of meaning, or rather interpretation perspectives, of the works are surprisingly alike, I would even argue more developed within *Soldadera's* modest means.

In both works, the main theme seems to be the apparatus of the art world:¹⁸ The making of and the status of artist legend.¹⁹ Especially the unequal position of male and female artists. In both videos the proclaimed focus point is a famous male artist. However, in both, most the characters are females. In Fraser's work not Eisenstein nor Debroyse appear. Nobody

18 Arthur C. Danto “The Artworld” *The Journal of Philosophy* 61 (1964): 571-584.

19 **“It is society which, by producing the affairs or positions that are said to be 'important', produces the acts and agents that are judged to be 'important'.”**
Pierre Bourdieu, “A Lecture on Lecture”, cited from: Andrea Fraser, “To Quote, 'Says the Kybeles, 'Is to Bring Back to Life',” *October* 101 (2002): 8.

shows up to held the lecture the theater audience is waiting for. The viewer can see Scholze's Amboy here and there but he is hiding, once behind his eccentric hats or slipping wig, other times behind his own defocused name. It makes one think about the legend of the artist. How he is also unrecognizable under the layers of myth surrounding him, generated by the art world.²⁰

Women, on the other hand, are very much concrete and active both in *Soldadera* and in *Amboy*. They seem to direct the eye of the camera with their action. Finally, one thinks, they were able to step out of the role of “woman as (passive) raw material for the (active) gaze of man”, as Laura Mulvey defined it. However, their efforts only make more apparent the fact that, although they won the battle for equality on the surface, they are still put in the positions of objects not subjects. The revolutionary in Fraser's movie never gets around to actually implement her ideas. Same as none of

20 Fascinating reading on the apparatus of artistic legend: Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic In the Legend of the Artist: A Historical Experiment*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

It is also worth mentioning that “...for Bourdieu, the ultimate author is not an individual creator, but the field itself. Not only does it create the creator, it creates our belief, or illuio, our faith in the creator's power to transubstantiate material objects into art and ours and the public's belief in that object as one of art.” (Lipstadt, “Sociology: Bourdieu's Bequest,”434.) From which perspective the artist is even more defocused, multi-faced, than in the traditional concept of the Artist. The last, art history, remark, I'd like to make is to Shigeo Kubota's videos on one of the biggest art legends and also myths in modern art, Marcel Duchamp.

the many female artists in Schulz's videos finishes her project.²¹

I will argue that it is the deconstruction of language that creates the tension and sense of being trapped embedded in the narratives. All the female characters have the want to criticize. Their situation is loaded with history, references, problems, and pressing questions. But their Derridian identity, which is constructed by the cultural system, makes them externally determined and fractures them internally.²² Fraser's *Soldadera* doesn't get the chance to proclaim her radical belief before the camera cuts. Nor does Frances Paine comment on her role in the artworld, she is captured thinking silently. Both characters evidently want to make statements, but the medium of film itself trapped them by selecting moments lacking utterance,²³ thereby determining their role, denying them complexity of

21 **“Male domination is so rooted in our collective unconscious that we no longer even see it.”** Pierre Bourdieu, “On Male Domination,” *Le Monde Diplomatique* 10 (1998) 12.

22 Kathrin Woodward, “Concept of Identity and Difference,” in *Identity and Difference*, (ed.) K. Woodward, (London, New Delhi, Sage Publication, 1977) 38.

The use of Derrida's philosophy isn't used by chance. His ideas on construction of meaning influenced by different discourses and linguistic systems had a very significant and acknowledged influence on early video art and media theory. Kate Horsfield, “Busting the Tube: A Brief History of Video Art,” in *Feedback*, (eds.) K. Horsfield and L. Hildebrand, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006) 12-13.

Finally, the oppression through linguistic limits is one of the core topics in feminist philosophy. See for instance: María Lugones, “Playfulness, 'World'-Travelling, and Loving Perception;” Persimmon Blackbridge, Lizard Jones, and Susan Stewart, “Kiss and Tell: Questioning Censorship”; or Marilyn Frye, “Oppression,” in *The Feminist Philosophy Reader*, (eds.) A. Bailey and C. Cuomo, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008).

23 Of course, not making a statement is a statement as well. However, what I want to point out is

individuality. Similarly, in Schulz's *Amboy* the female characters are prevented to make a stance. Firstly due to fragmentation and cuts manipulating them. Secondly, because Amboy's multiple faces, the confusion of tongues surrounding him, prevent others to locate him, face him. Or it.²⁴ The situation resembles the state of contemporary art criticism. In critique, interdisciplinarity – the dispersion of fields and roles (of artist, critic, theorist, businessman) – “became an opportunity for increasingly esoteric language and for the abandonment of stakes.”²⁵ This interpretation is especially visible in one of *Amboy*'s fragments in which Chris Kraus is giving a lecture.²⁶ An act supposed to enlighten the audience is in her rendition an opaque performance. Originally, the lecture was written about late Jason Rhodes,²⁷ the model for Amboy. When it was first held for the clueless CalArts students, Kraus replaced Rhode's name with Amboy's. And even without the confusion of identities the lecture wasn't intended to be communicative or easily

understandable. In its course, Kraus invited the audience to engage with her in an esoteric salutation between bits of text that were more evocative than informative.²⁸ Mostly, it resembled the vagueness of “International Art English”.²⁹

The deconstructed language of the artworks builds a bridge to the next common element under discussion, the pervasive fragmentation.³⁰ It connects the works to postmodernism by several links – through the method of deconstruction,³¹ in the technique of collage³² and montage³³, and in the context of disruption of big systems, focused but not limited to

28 Lehrer-Grainer: “Amboy,” press release.

29 Alix Ruler and David Levine, “International Art English,” Triple Canopy research, accessed December 8, 2015, www.canopycanopycanopy.com/contents/international_art_english.

30 **Question 20: With the following subjects, is a photographer more likely to produce a beautiful, interesting, meaningless or ugly photo?**
a landscape - a car crash - a little girl playing with a car - a pregnant woman - a still life - a woman breastfeeding - a metal structure - tramps quarrelling - cabbages - a sunset over the sea - a weaver at his loom - a folk dance - a rope - a butcher's stall - the bark of a tree - a famous monument - a scrapyard - a first communion - a wounded man - a snake - an 'old master'

Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. R. Nice (Cambridge, UK: Harvard University Press, 1984) 517.

31 After all the term “deconstruction” was first used by Derrida in his work *Of Grammatology*, French version, (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1967): 25. (On this page Derrida states that the occidental history of signs is essentially theological with reference to Logocentrism. He wants to demonstrate that there is no linguistic sign without writing.)

32 For more about collage see: B. Craig (ed.), *Collage: Assembling Contemporary Art* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2008) or Braindon Taylor, *Collage: The Making of Modern Art* (London: Themes and Hudson, 2004)

33 For further reading: Thomas B. Brockelman, *The Frame and the Mirror: On Collage And the Postmodern*, (Evanston: Northern University Press, 2001).

the absence of linguistic utterance.

24 **“The forbidden question: Who creates the creator?”**

Pierre Bourdieu, “But Who Created the Creator?,” in *Sociology in Question*, trans. R. Nice (London: Sage, 1993), 139-48.

25 George Baker in “Round Table: The Present Condition of Art Criticism, G. Baker, R. Kraus, B. Buchloh, A. Fraser, D. Joselit, J. Meyer, R. Storr, H. Foster, J. Miller and H. Molesworth,” *October* 100 (2002): 201.

26 Eileen Miles, Foreword, in: Chris Kraus, *I Love Dick* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007), 13.

27 Eva Meyer-Hermann, *Jason Rhoades*, Friedrich Christian Flick Collection Artists` Monographs, (Cologne: DuMont, 2009).

linear temporality and language.³⁴ Feminism adopted all these aspects from postmodernism. Especially the collage technique resonates deeply with feminist thinkers and artists. It allows women to deconstruct the totalitarian white male system, point out its violating apparatus and absurdity, and build anew fresh perspectives.³⁵ Both *Amboy* and *Soldadera* use collage this way. Furthermore, their used medium, film, has fragmentation and assemblage inherent in itself too.³⁶ Montage, collage of moving images, is “part of the cinematic language”³⁷ from its very origin. It can be traced back to Russian

34 **“By structuralism, I mean that there exist, within the social world itself and not only within symbolic systems (language, myths, etc.), objective structures independent of the consciousness and will of agents.”**

Pierre Bourdieu, “Social Space and Symbolic Power,” *Sociological Theory* 7 (1989): 14.

35 Some examples of readings on feminist use of collage and montage: *Feminist Collage: Educating Women In the Visual Arts*, (ed.) J. Loeb. (New York: Teachers College Press, 1979).

Gwen Raaberg, “Beyond Fragmentation: Collage as Feminist Strategy in the Arts,” *Mosaik* 31.3 (1998) 153-171.

Documentation from *Feminage: The Logic of Feminist Collage*, conference held by The Cross Art Project, Aug 2 – Sept 15, 2012, crossart.com.au/home/index.php/archive/169-feminage-the-logic-of-feminist-collage.

36 “Film makes the still image run, thus causing the 'illusion' of movement... It captures the pure oscillations of light.” Maurizio Lazzarato, “Video, Flows And Real Time,” in *Art And the Moving Image: A Critical Reader*, (ed.) Tanya Leighton, (London: Tate Publishing, 2008) 284. “For the first time in the history of the arts and culture, man has found the means to fix time and simultaneously reproduce it, to repeat it and return to it as often as possible. Man has a matrix or real time.” Andrei Tarkowski, *Le Temps Scellé*, (Paris: Cahiers du Cinéma, 1989) 59, cited from Lazzarato, “Video, Flows And Real Time,” 280. In this new construction of time, cinematic art has a parallel in the theory of memory: “... memory condenses an enormous variety of oscillations that all appear at the same time although they actually follow each other.” Gilles Deleuze, *Le Pli* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1988), 104, cited from Lazzarato, “Video, Flows And Real Time, 287.

37 Montage/cut are part of the cinematic language. It means bringing... together.” Nam June Paik, *Du cheval à Christo et autres écrits*, (Paris: Lebeer Hossman, 1993) 125, cited Lazzarato, “Video, Flows And Real Time, 285.

avant-garde cinema,³⁸ Eisenstein's dialectics of montage,³⁹ to the first relativization of film's “truthfulness” by Lev Kuleschov,⁴⁰ all the way to Internet visuality.⁴¹ Fraser and Schulz use cinematic fragmentation as a tool to, again, deconstruct the reign of authoritative narratives. Fraser does so more subtly. She uses the two screens to divide viewer's focus and to compare, to relativize. Her abrupt cuts between pieces urge the viewer think about what is “beyond”, what is not said or shown. Unlike Schulz, Fraser is very much in control of the montage. *Amboy*, on the other hand, is characteristic with certain randomness in the putting together of fragments. Mainly because of the ever-changing sequencing of the four projected loops that resembles the contemporary post-Internet aesthetics.⁴²

38 David Bordwell, “The Idea of Montage in Soviet Art and Film,” *Cinema Journal* 11 (1972): 9-17.

39 Sergei Eisenstein, “The Dramaturgy of Film Form,” in *Writings, 1922-1934*, (ed.) R. Taylor, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988) 161.

40 Michael Russell, “The Kuleshov Effect and the Death of the Auteur,” *FORUM* 01 (2005): 1-17. Lev Kuleshov, *Kuleschov on Film: Writings by Lev Kuleshov*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.).

41 Lev Manovich and Andreas Kratky, *SOFT CINEMA: Navigating the Database*, DVD-video with 40 page color booklet, (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2005).

Brigid Maher, “V7N1: Smart Montage: The New Mobile Dialectic” *iDMAa Journal* 7 (2013), published online March 4, 2013, accessed December 8, 2015, idmaa.org/?journalarticle=v7n1-smart-montage-the-new-mobile-dialectic.

42 With post-internet interpreted as “not a time 'after' the internet, but rather to an internet state of mind — to think in the fashion of the network. In the context of artistic practice, the category of the post-internet describes an art object created with a consciousness of the networks within which it exists, from conception and production to dissemination and reception.” *Art Post-Internet*, (eds.) K. Archey and R. Peckman, Copy no. 9793, downloaded Nov 22, 2015, 8.

Hopefully, by now I covered, or at least hinted on, most of what is addressed in *Amboy* and *Soldadera*. To sum up, generally, it is the apparatus of the artworld, with the supremacy of the myth of the artist, specifically the male one. This is formally explored through fragmentation, using cinematic language. I believe the critical motivation behind the works arose from Schultz's and Fraser's shared conviction that "artists have a responsibility to represent themselves".⁴³

Naturally, the shared concept transforms on its way from *Soldadera* to *Amboy*. In my opinion, *Soldadera* offers more layers when it comes to content. First, it puts the problem of the women oppressing *habitus*⁴⁴ in parallel not only with the mechanism of the artworld, as *Amboy* does, but also with avant-garde revolutionarism. Thereby, Fraser's work marks more connections, and enables the viewer to see the universal processes behind criticized problems. Secondly, by avoiding as straight forward and even violent metaphors as Schultz, Fraser points to the many, often subtle ways the

43 Andrea Fraser in *Roundtable*, 213.

44 Bourdieu's term describing how culture of a certain group is internalized in individuals. It is "society written into the body". Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1990), 63.

apparatus works.⁴⁵ Thus, she is able to engage the viewer in deeper discourse about all possible shapes of oppression.

Indeed, the viewer is in the center of both discussed works.⁴⁶ Especially Schultz makes this fact visible by entrapping the visitor in the middle of her projections. In both cases, the audience is seduced⁴⁷ into wanting to look "behind the text",⁴⁸ into curating their own story from the fragmented narratives. However, the viewer is not in control. The artists choose carefully what they reveal.⁴⁹ There is no face-to-face encounter, only illusion of the flat screen, only electric impulses. The audience was told by postmodernism that their experience is the ultimate key to interpretation. Bakhtin's "fatal theoreticism"⁵⁰ replaced traditional western rationalism.

45 I believe the directness of *Amboy* could have been its merit. The use of slightly ironic, hyperbolic language points out actual problems quite directly. However the fragmented form worked against straightforwardness.

46 **"Objects, even industrial products, are not objective in the ordinary sense of the word, i. e., independent of the interest and tastes of who perceive them..."**
Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 100.

47 Not only by the spectacularity of film, and of the installation, but also by the fragmentation making the viewer want to decrypt it.
"Distinctive signs, full signs, never seduce us." Jean Baudrillard, *The Ecstasy of Communication*, trans. B. and C. Schutze (New York: Semiotext(e), 1987), 59.

48 Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. R. Miller (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1975), 11-12.

49 "The celebrated birth of the Viewer never really happened. Those people fell away, they fell into a default position that is usually antisrtistic, anticritical, antiintellectual." Andrea Fraser Baker et al., "Round Table: The Present Conditions of Art Criticism," 215.

50 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, ted. V. Liupanov and M. Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 27.

The viewer became curator.⁵¹ But both Fraser and Schultz play with him/her a cat-and-mouse game.

That said, the viewer's experience of *Amboy* and *Soldadera* is very different. Fraser is a real critic. She has a message, an agenda, and uses her artwork to express it.⁵² On the other hand, *Amboy's* opaqueness, though created on purpose, seems to entrap not only the viewer but also the artist. It prevents the message to come across clear enough. Schultz seems to make it more about the game than about the target. To tell the truth, none of the above observations would be possible by only visiting the installation in the Wattis Institute. The questions – to which some answers can be drawn from *Soldadera* – remain: How to address concrete issues without simplifying them too much? How to be artistic and yet not lose the specific, concrete message?⁵³ How to evoke without becoming too impressionistic?

51 As defined by Hans Ulrich Obrist, the viewer is the creator of the “junction between object, quasi-objects, and non-objects”. In other words, the creator of meaning.

Ed. Clotilde Floirat, “Interviewing the Interviewer; A Conversation with Hans Ulrich Obrist,” *Frieze blog*, published December 6, 2011, accessed December 8, 2015, <http://blog.frieze.com/interviewing-the-interviewer-a-conversation-with-hans-ulrich-obrist/>.

52 “A good critic produces as well as reports.” Rosalind Krause Baker et al., “Round Table: The Present Conditions of Art Criticism,” 215.

53 **“To bring to light contradictions is not to resolve them but, as skeptical as one might be about the efficacy of the sociological message, we cannot dismiss the effect it can have by allowing sufferers to discover the possible cause of their suffering and, thus, to be relieved of blame.”**
Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1993), 944.