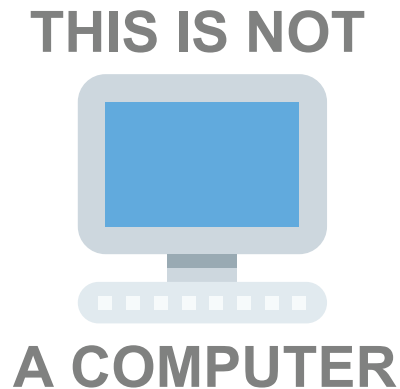


F (ANALOGITAL)



‘New’ media usually don’t just replace the elder, but media of different generations rather merge to influence and augment each other, as Marshall McLuhan already pointed out in the 1960s. This is not only true for their technical, but first and foremost for their cultural use—two uses which are hard to separate, but certainly are not the same. What does this mean for film, or better: for what we still call ‘film’—even, if the imaging technology completely or partly does without support or storage material? In what sense and how do the parameters survive that have determined the medium film and film culture before the rise of digital technology? What kind of transfers and transformations can be observed? Or, if we ask with McLuhan: what about the “furious release of energy and change” bred by these “hybrid unions”¹? Which kinds of bastards are set free?²

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- 0 For more information on the illustrations, captions, credits and licenses pls. see p. 16.
- 1 McLuhan 1964/2001. The above quote refers to chapter 5, “Hybrid Energy: *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*,” pp. 53–61, p. 54).
- 2 Terms like “bastard” or “bastardization” are not to be found in McLuhan’s original text, but in its German translation (*Die magischen Kanäle*, Düsseldorf/Wien: Econ, 1968). However, McLuhan’s own term “hybrid” means exactly the same, including the biologist implications deeply rooted in its etymology. He himself writes that the “hybrid unions *breed* furious releases of energy and change.” McLuhan 1964/2001, p. 54; emphasis V.K.).

Kuni, Verena (2015): „F (ANALOGITAL).“ Kulle, Daniel/Lund, Cornelia/Schmidt, Oliver/Ziegenhagen, David (eds.): *Post-digital Culture*, <http://www.post-digital-culture.org/kuni>.

THIS IS NOT A FLOPPY DISC

To answer these questions, it will be fruitful to enlarge the perspective and to analyze the actual situation of analog and digital media technologies and cultures. With respect to the limits set by the framework of an anthology dedicated to reflections on the so called ‘post-digital,’ however, the following essay will focus on some very basic considerations about what we propose to coin as analogital to mark a broader scope of possible relationships between “hybrid unions” of analog and digital.³ Each chapter will discuss selected aspects and functions of the analogital in dialogue with observations made in everyday culture, with cultural artifacts and/or artistic projects we may consider as both being inspired by and at the same time reflecting the transformations within contemporary media technologies and cultures.⁴

THIS IS NOT AN ENVELOPE

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- 3 For further references see, together with earlier publications quoted below, my forthcoming book on the *Analogital* (more info on the related research project's website, www.underconstruction.cc/a2d2a).
- 4 Accordingly, the “f” in the title is for “function” (in a methodological perspective, borrowing from the mathematical f) rather than for “film” (as a single medium or a complex of media)—on which we will focus in the very last chapter. In contrast to this essay the lecture held in the framework of the conference contained a chapter on analog, digital and analogital zoetropes skipped here, as well as the related part of the original title (“Nach dem Film ist vor dem Film,” “After film is before film” or “after/avant film”).

In the end we will probably understand that the big question is not so much about the “bastards” themselves and their multiple appearances and formations, but about the motives for their generation. If, again with McLuhan, “the medium is the message,” what is the message of bastardization? What is the message of the analogital?

FROM ANALOG TO DIGITAL

What to do with paperclip in a world without paper? You could look for alternative uses—bend it to become a tool to poke into a fitting hole in your hardware, i.e. to reboot your laptop or to open the sled containing the chip of your mobile, or to spontaneously create a micro-sculpture just for fun. Or, in case you prefer rather radical solutions, simply dump it into the office bin. Of course we all know that, at least up till now, the digitalization of office work has not led to a general good-bye to paper, and thus on many desks paper clips made of metal or plastic continue to do their job. However, as many of us will remember, in the mid-late 1990s certain widely used software packages with office functions (and released under a related name) used to come with a paperclip—or, more precisely: with an animated avatar paperclip: *Clippy* aka the *Office Assistant*.⁵

THIS IS NOT



A CLIPBOARD

Almost immediately after its first release within the *Microsoft Office 97* suite in winter 1996 *Clippy* became infamous for its annoying appearance, distracting the user’s attention by popping up with rather useless information, and thus was followed by pun and parody, including a whole range of re-appearances in the material world from cartoons to costumes.⁶

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5 *Clippy*, designed by Kevan J. Attenberry, used to be part of the *Microsoft Office for Windows* releases from 97 to 2003 and *Microsoft Office for Mac* 98 to 2004. In 2001, *Microsoft* decided to drop *Clippy*, so the Office package *Windows XP* was the first release with *Clippy* turned off by default. In later versions it was completely removed.

6 For a small selection of cartoons and video clips see <http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/clippy> – accessed: June 17, 2015. Note that also many of the cartoon and video parodies indeed imagine *Clippy* materializing off screen.

Obviously, *Clippy* failed for several reasons—above all, as we may assume, for the ill-fated transformation of a familiar, useful and flexible office tool from the material world into a rather useless screen assistant.⁷

Yet, it may remain debatable in how far the lack of logic within design transfer as such counted in. Indeed a closer look on digital interface design will easily reveal a fair number of similar examples right at our fingertips. Many desktop and program shortcut icons are buying into visual metaphors based on analog objects and tools to transfer core functions of the latter to digital processes and applications.



Some of these icons, like the scissor for “cut” or the eraser for “delete,” seem almost “timeless” and work similar to standard pictograms: when it comes to details, the comparison may turn out to be rather weak or even problematic due to larger differences in terms of technological processes and concepts as well as the potentials and limits of use. At the same time, knowing about the latter or not is not relevant for a general understanding of the functions symbolized. Others, however, like the notorious floppy disk for “save to disc,” are already outdated—not to mention the mere fact that meanwhile there are already younger generations of users who grew up after floppy disks were taken from the market.⁸

Nevertheless, at least for the time being, the majority of users prove to be rather tolerant toward discrepancies of this kind. Even more so, this is also the case with a considerably broad range of more or less telling transfers to be found on a more general layer in concepts as well as in according designs of software applications, including prominent candidates like i.e. *Adobe Photoshop* or *Microsoft Office PowerPoint*, along with many of nowadays applications for mobile phones and computers aka “apps”. It seems as if people loved to look at digital timekeepers that show circular clock-faces and even look like grandfather clocks, or to shuffle MP3s by touching an

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7 The company itself, however, tried to take advantages even from saying good-bye to *Clippy* by starting a thoughtfully designed campaign in 2001, advertising the forthcoming release of *Windows XP* and *Office XP* together with the announcement that *Clippy* would loose its job because of the new software being so comfortable and user-friendly. See Luening 2001. The campaign had its own website: www.officeclippy.com — access: defunct/resold.

8 For one of the earlier discussions of the subject see a. o. Hanselman 2012.

icon designed as a DJ record player—regardless of the technology behind. Some even crave for what in the analog world would have been considered as an artifact like the familiar lens mirror effect for rendering images with a finishing touch often to be found in game design.⁹

THIS IS NOT



A PAPERCLIP

Thus it seems like *Clippy's* rejection is a special case, and rather due to its weak performance and its failed communication with the user. Moreover, we should perhaps count the parodies, especially those performed as materializations in comedian sketches, among the more positive responses: in the end, emotions refer to relationship. As we will see, when it comes to transfers from digital back to analog, it is indeed relations and emotions that count.

THIS IS NOT



AN ALARM CLOCK

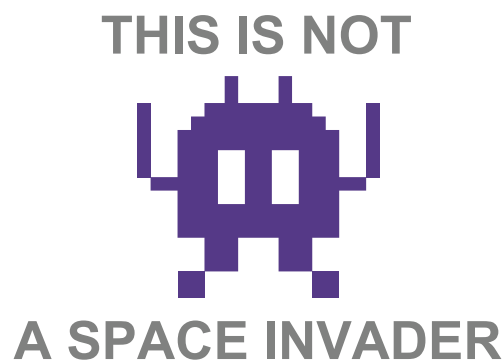
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⁹ This complex with its multiple intersections of technological as well as cultural implications of user interface design sincerely deserves a more detailed discussion in its own rights.

FROM DIGITAL TO ANALOG

A crocheted ball, all yellow, except for two black dots marking the eyes, and a neatly stitched black line for the mouth—accompanied by four likewise crocheted creatures, short cylinders-cum-hemispheres, in orange, red, pink, and pale blue.¹⁰ Cut. In the streets. Urban space, divided into an imaginary and at the same time real grid. People in costumes, the silhouettes of the latter neatly cut to cylinder-cum-hemisphere, again: orange, red, pink, and pale blue. And another one, a single yellow circle—on the run, just like the others, but obviously trying to escape from their sight.¹¹

Strange encounters? Not really—at least not for the generation of digerati. Thanks to the ubiquitous effects of retro-fashions, encompassing 8bit-aesthetics and early video game cultures for some years now,¹² you do not necessarily need to have grown up in the mid-1980s, with an arcade hall round the corner or an *Atari* at home, to be able to identify the characters' origins in *Pac-Man*, the Japanese arcade video game released in 1980 to become one of the most popular of its kind.



While arcade machines as well as *Atari* computers have become museum items, *Pac-Man* is still there—or, more precisely: there are revenants on several levels. Together with digital emulations—editions for game consoles, browser games and apps—we can find a broad spectrum of materializations, ranging from consumer items of all kind to hand made personal objects like the mentioned crochet toys and transformations into street game characters.

For sure each of these connects the original game design with different cultural functions, requirements and needs, the urban game perhaps figuring as the most consequent transfer of a digital one player screen game into a social game settled

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10 For more examples and references see Kuni 2013, pp. 32ff.

11 The most prominent example is *PacManhattan* (2004), an urban game using the street grid of New York City for its recreation of the video game, see: <http://www.pacmanhattan.com> — accessed: February 28, 2014—expired.

12 For general (re-)considerations on retro, see Reynolds 2011; for examples specifically from 8bit game culture, see Gibson 2006.

in an everyday life environment—hereby hinting us to possible structural parallels or, if one may dare to say: a design thinking applied to digital games, but originally rooted in more general layers of our culture and thus also embedded in the grids of urban planning that consequently contribute to making the transfer possible. Other materializations, i.e. t-shirt prints, key chains or plastic toys come as a rather conventional offspring of consumer media culture—the usual merchandize accompanying commercial media productions, be them movies, TV series or games.¹³ The hand made crocheted toys may still make a difference, however only gradually, in so far as they show even more so the need, if not desire, to literally get hold of and keep a part of the personal and cultural universe that otherwise would have gone lost.

In the end, however, the crocheted *Pac-Man and Ghosts*, just as the urban game, are not only situated in the sphere of matter and embodiment and thus ‘analog’. First of all, more generally, what some of us may still prefer to call the ‘analog world’ is thoroughly informed by the digital—and indeed both, the crocheted game characters and their counterparts performed by humans, are telling examples for this very kind of in-formation rather than simply the outcome of a vague desire to transfer digital culture into ‘the real world’. As a matter of fact, digital media are part of ‘the real world’.¹⁴

THIS IS NOT



A CONSOLE

This being said, there are good reasons to assume that the motifs and motivations for transfers from digital to analog are neither limited to items of popular consumer culture that have been part of once youth or adolescence nor to individual habits. Not everyone who is having now fun with items related to retro-game cultures has

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13 Of course cross-media merchandizing is not at all limited to movies, games and the like, and it can take any direction and any kind of materialization or medialization, analog to analog, analog to digital, digital to analog and so forth. Probably all kinds of pop cultures are known for cross-media marketing strategies—book characters becoming toys and kitsch collectibles as well as movie stars for sure not being the earliest examples in history.

14 This is no news per se and should be stressed for earlier periods as well. In popular debates about media cultures, however, we can still find the assertion of neatly separated and separable spheres (“online” vs. “offline,” “virtual reality” vs. “reality”).

necessarily been an avid gamer her/himself. Moreover, taking the case of *Clippy* and its physical appearances in account may raise additional doubts: doubts about the desire to get hold and keep something otherwise lost due to digital decay being the only motivation behind.

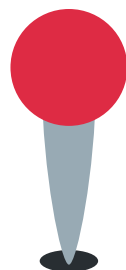
There is something, we can be sure of: in contrast to technological standard processes of signal processing from analog to digital and back again, it is also not only about mere technical reasons for the transformation: of course, to play urban *Pac-Man* you need to map the screen on the streets and to sew appropriate costumes, to be able to hug *Pac-Man* in your bedroom you need a cuddly 3D object—but obviously that's not all.

Rather, as we will see later, it is again an issue of relations: of our relationship with media and to media generations—the latter term referring both to technological developments, and to us as human users and developers of technologies.¹⁵

ANALOGITAL CULTURE AND/AS ART

At this point, we would like to come back to the general characteristics of what can be considered as analogital: obviously, in nowadays culture we find manifold transfers and transformations from analog to digital, from digital to analog—and the “objects” resulting from these transfers and transformations are neither to be considered as “pure digital” or “pure analog,” but rather hybrids. Indeed they seem to fit perfectly into a culture where analog and digital co-exist next to each other and mingle in many ways. Are they—or at least some of them—thus to be considered as the very bastards Marshall McLuhan was talking about with respect to the relations between “old” and “new” media? If so, what about the “furious energies” set free by the “hybrid unions,” the processes of bastardization? Are hybrid objects like those recalled in the previous chapters the fall-out of these processes prompting us to think about the latter and to better understand the driving forces behind? Are some of them even themselves capable to release further boosts of energy?

THIS IS NOT



A PIN

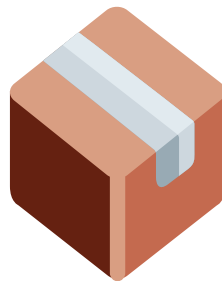
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¹⁵ For some of the arguments brought up here see also Kuni 2010, pp. 185–193.

While Marshall McLuhan himself clearly set out to stress a more general perspective in his writings about current and future developments in media technology and culture, it is probably not by chance that when looking for a related practice he pointed to the arts. This comes as no surprise. First of all, expecting artists to be the avant-garde matches perfectly with the familiar stereotype of the artist-as-creative-inventor—and in the 1960s, McLuhan is not the only critical thinker with obvious sympathy for this tradition. However, he—and his contemporaries—had good reasons for doing so: as a matter of fact the 1960ies were a period seeing many artists participating actively in the creative development of and in experiments with new media and technologies.

For similar reasons, it seems useful to draw special attention to the arts and to artistic projects in our case as well. In the mid-1990ies artists and other cultural professionals were among the early birds engaging in the digital network media—and were among the first to reflect the circumstances and effects of digital decay.¹⁶ However, probably more important is that, together with a more creative bunch of designers, artists and other cultural professionals are likely to be trained in a reflexive use of their tools. Both the practical experience and theoretical background combined with related interests in the field should be good premises indeed for developing projects that go beyond a mere reproduction of the state of art.

THIS IS NOT



A BOX

One of the artists active in this field is Aram Bartholl.¹⁷ Over the past decade, he has developed a considerably rich body of work dealing with transfers and transformations between digital and analog culture. Some of these come as analog reconstructions of basic elements of digital media, like his *Random Screen* (2005) made of tea-light candles enclosed in rotating semi-cut beer cans placed in a matrix of open cubes behind an old projection screen.¹⁸ Others expand this principle to export

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 16 For a more detailed discussion see Kuni 2009, pp. 181-197; with further reference to the analogi-
 tal, Kuni 2011, pp. 119-138.

17 See <http://www.datenform.de> – accessed: June 17, 2015.

18 See <http://www.datenform.de/rscreen.html> – accessed: June 17, 2015.

characteristic elements and/or functions of more complex online media environments, platforms and networks—i. e., *Second Life* or games like *World of Warcraft* or so called “social media” applications like *Facebook*¹⁹—to unplugged everyday life performance. Meeting a man armed with an online adventure game gear,²⁰ or people carrying projectors to chit-chat with each other at a party,²¹ or choosing buttons to pin on their sleeves for showing off their personal and professional *Twitter* network at a conference²² is first of all hilarious. A closer look, however, can invite us to rethink the borders between the analog and the digital world.

In some parts, the gates remain closed: you can't easily transfer the merits earned in a game or your creative investments into *Second Life* to the analog sphere—and in many cases this is due to those owning the media and the data, the space and the tools; those who define the rules and probably want you to stay within their dominion, and to pay. In other parts, the gates are rather open, or could be, depending on our own capabilities and dispositions. Yet the possibility of transfers is one thing, the effects and consequences are another. In each single case we'll have to consider the latter carefully, and/or decide about how far we want to go—always supposing that we have a proper basis for decision-making, and the related space of action in hand. But no matter what the specific conditions are, in any case we should be conscious about the fact that we are living in an analogital culture, where the analog and the digital coexist and mingle in many different ways, and to likely different ends.

Moreover, this also includes aspects of loss, of giving up and of leaving apart elements of culture. As the history of culture has proven more than once, the merging of different media generations—instead of ‘new’ media simply replacing the elder—is not to be confused with the conservation of the latter. This is obviously the case when it comes to the technologies and cultures of apparatus-based media like photography and film. Both share not only a whole range of functions, features and qualities closely bound to the technical apparatus as well as the related processes of image production, but also provide us with a considerably long cultural tradition of thinking about these very processes, including a whole range of concepts dealing with the relationship between perception and representation, objects and images, reality and fiction.

Thus let us now reconsider and refine our questions to focus on film, respectively, to ask what we could learn about its analogital condition.

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19 Despite the general habit to call i. e. company-run networking services “social media” it should be worth to consider in how far this application of the term is misleading.

20 See Aram Bartholl: *1 H* (2008), <http://www.datenform.de/1h.html> – accessed: June 17, 2015.

21 See Aram Bartholl: *Chat* (2007-2009), <http://www.datenform.de/chat.html> – accessed: June 17, 2015.

22 See Aram Bartholl: *Follow me!* (2008), <http://www.datenform.de/followme.html> – accessed: June 17, 2015.

FILM, ANALOGITAL

Above all, we have been prepared. We have seen movies leaving the cinema and the cinematic space to be “screened” on TV. We have seen movies being taped on video. We have seen film formats come and go. We have seen video formats come and go. We have seen changes in production technologies and formats, in projection technologies and formats, in distribution systems, in systems and spaces of screening, viewing and perception. We have seen changes in cultural attitudes towards the moving image. Of all of this, we have seen a lot. Digital technology as well as digitalization have been part of these developments relatively early, to different amounts and to different ends. Over the last decades, a lot of research has been done on a whole variety of related aspects, on technologies and concepts of conservation, restoration, and archiving; on the history of apparatuses and formats, on the materiality of media, on their aesthetics, and more. Media archaeology has grown into a serious and widespread field of research—film being only one of many subjects herein.²³ Yet it can’t be said that we have been able so far to seriously take up the challenge to fully understand the cultural consequences of this ongoing transformation—if only to find ways to keep the cultural memory of what is going to be or is already lost.



This in mind, let us now look at cultural phenomena related to the transfers and transformations from analog to digital, from digital to analog, and back again before then proceeding to our main concern, the quest for projects encouraging us to rethink the functions of analogital culture rather than merely being symptoms of the latter.

Already by rather incidentally browsing through nowadays popular culture—obviously also more generally influenced by a strong taste for retro-fashion²⁴—we can find a considerably rich choice of examples for both the first and the second

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23 For a more recent overview see Huhtamo/Parikka 2011; Parikka 2012; with focus on the projected image Huhtamo 2013.

24 See Reynolds 2011 for more general considerations.

category: ranging from all kinds of digital designs sporting punched strips of analog film material, including icons for digital moving image processing software, over the characteristic widescreen format, sometimes available even with the notorious black frames that used to result from necessary format adaptations, to a variety of hand-made look-alikes of cameras, including vinyl and plush toys, crocheted and knitted cozies similar to the *Pac-Man* introduced before, *Lego* constructions and even bakery.²⁵

Now what about projects taking up the challenge on a level similar to that we can find in works of artists like Aram Bartholl, Cory Arcangel, Stephanie Syjuco, Cornelia Sollfrank and others who are mainly focussing the problems and potentials of digital network culture, and whose analog(ital) projects invite us to re-think the impact of related politics and aesthetics?²⁶

It is probably no surprise that in this case promising candidates are to be found among those actively interested in media archaeology, and also some of whom have been actively involved in analog film culture as well.



HIGH NOON WITH MOBILESKINO

A scenario all too familiar not only to addicts of western movies: two cowboys in full gear, straddle-legged, face to face, hands on the colts waiting in the hip-holsters, ready to shoot. *High Noon*—the famous shot from the Hollywood classic?²⁷ Yes and

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25 As already pointed out above, a more detailed analysis and discussion of the manifold transfers and transformations within the analogital sphere should allow to make out fundamental as well as rather subtle differences between formats, functions, classes of objects—including different generations of media (and media generations), technological utopias and realities as well as the related cultural contexts and traditions.

26 For further discussion see a. o. Kuni 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2013 (as well as, in preparation and hopefully forthcoming soon, the *Analogital* book).

27 USA 1952 (D.: Fred Zinnemann). The title refers to the key scene, (high) noon being the time for the hero to make a fateful decision (leave the town with his wife before a probably deadly duel with the enemy) as well as for the decisive duel (a fight which he will finally win, but only with the help of his wife who made her decision in favor to her husband, although he previously decided for standing in the clearing fight). While being neither the first nor the last of its kind in

no. For to see these two guys get into action, you have to call them. Literally. By using your own mobile, neatly to be placed in a fake gun and connected to one of the old dial phone sets waiting on the table nearby. In case you find a partner doing the same, the duel can start right away. In case you are quick enough, you can be sure your movie hero on the projection screen will stand in for you.

THIS IS NOT A FILM CAMERA

Yes, it's a game—or more precisely, an art installation providing us with a best practice example of what we are looking for: analogital film. *HIGH NOON* (2007)²⁸ is a piece by MOBILESKINO, “a collaboration of artists, animation-filmmakers, film-technicians and sound-designers. The projects of the art-collective MOBILESKINO are located in the space between digital[-] and analog[ue] media, professional and trash [...], institutionalized and independent art. In our research in the fields of interactive environments, we combine mechanic and electronic technologies, building machines and installations.”²⁹

The German version of their *MANIFESTO!* quoted here is even more telling in our terms, for it contains the following additional paragraph almost perfectly describing the motivation of the group to head out for new ways to merge analog and digital technologies and cultures:

Die röchelnde Filmtechnologie ist trotz visueller Überlegenheit im Aussterben begriffen und wird links und rechts von Video und Computer überholt. MOBILESKINO stellt sich wie Don Quixotte im Super8-Format in den Wind dieser Entwicklung und bläst zurück. Unsere kurzen Filme, Loops, Screenings und Aktionen sind Hom[m]agen an alle Kratzer und Brandlöcher und an die Vergänglichkeit; ohne ‘Copy/Paste’ arbeiten wir ausschliesslich mit Originalmaterial, sind als Techniker stets mit unseren Maschinen vor Ort.³⁰

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 the history of the genre, the shot featuring the duel became iconic for good reasons (the aesthetic of the camera shots, the extraordinary suspense generated by the extended timeframe etc).

28 See <http://www.mobileskino.ch/highnoon.html> – accessed: June 17, 2015.

29 See <http://www.mobileskino.ch/manifest.html> – accessed: June 17, 2015.

30 Ibid. “The death-rattling film technology is, despite its visual superiority, going the way of the dodo bird. It’s overtaken and superseded by digital technologies, video on the left and computer

How serious a sentence like the last one should be taken nowadays is something many of us will have painfully learned over the last decade—and we can expect more lessons to learn in the near future. While visitors of art institutions and exhibitions have always been used to face a sign reading “currently out of work” whenever media technologies are involved, the situation in cinemas, and especially program cinemas used to be considerably different. Of course, sometimes there were accidents with the analog technology—like the infamous film tear or simply a horribly worn down copy. However, projectionists were technicians, and usually would know what to do. But times are changing. Together with the old analog film technology and its projectors the knowledge about how to handle the latter is slowly (if not rapidly) dying out as well. No problem for those who do not care about aesthetic difference—not to mention the fact that you have to know about the qualities of material film to see and feel the difference. But there is a problem, too, with work made specifically on analog material and for the analog projection in a cinema or a museum space.

THIS IS NOT



A CLAPPERBOARD

Already at this moment in time it has become rather difficult to find places, spaces, and people not only willing, but able to properly take care for and show this kind of work. Indeed it makes pretty much sense that artist-technicians travel with their pieces to make sure that they are presented the way they should be.

Yet for MOBILESKINO that's not all. Rather than giving in or sullenly standing against the development, the group takes up the challenge to create work dealing with the multiple transformations. To those confronted with the digital decay and the loss of digital data they offer an alternative solution by saving their data down on Double8 (*SAVE YOUR DIGITAL DATA! / DATASHREDDER*, 2002).³¹ Those missing the good old

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on the right side. Like Don Quixote, MOBILESKINO is standing against the blowing wind of this development with Super8—and is blowing back. Our short films, loops, screenings, and actions are paying tribute to all the scratches and burn holes, and to the transiency. Without ‘copy/paste’ we are working with original material only—and, together with our machines, we are on site.”
Translation V.K.

31 See <http://www.mobileskino.ch/SYDD.html> – accessed: June 17, 2015.

Arcade video games are invited to play in an analogital upgrade sporting slides and substandard film instead of computer screens (*GAME ARCADE*, 2005).³² And, to come back to *HIGH NOON*, nowadays mobile phone addicts—some of whom being the threat of old style cinema lovers who for good reasons are not so happy about the pattern of glowing mini-screens one usually is confronted with in cinema spaces—are cordially invited to use their favorite gadget to sneak into an action game built upon the ruins of a traditional widescreen cinema genre, taking them back to the times where suspense was created by two people waiting for each other to start the duel rather than by using an ever-growing bunch of digital special effects.

None of these analogital pieces will survive for very long—mixing obsolete technologies with instable media obviously rather increases risk than reducing it. However, as they show and tell and make us experience the very aesthetics of a hybrid whole that is more than its parts, for the time being they are best practice examples for how to make art in an analogital world.

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32 See <http://www.mobileskino.ch/arcade.html> — accessed: June 17, 2015.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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All illustrations are based on svg files originally coming from the *Twitter Emoji Project* (<https://github.com/twitter/twemoji>) and downloaded from the *Wikimedia Commons* collection “Category: Twitter Emoji” (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Twitter_Emoji), to which they have been ported by *Wikimedia Commons* user Ebrahim (<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Ebrahim>) in December 2014, published under the Creative Commons License cc-by 4.0 international (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.en>). This license is also appropriate for the illustrations (Verena Kuni 2015 – cc-by 4.0 international); for the illustrated essay combo I'd prefer Verena Kuni 2015 – cc-by-nc-nd; but feel free to contact me in case you are interested in alternative licensing options (<mailto:verena@kuni.org>).

Whereas the essay is based on my talk presented in the framework of the conference “Postdigitalität und Film” in July 2013 and has been finished in autumn 2014, the illustrations were created in summer 2015 as a special supplement. On the one hand side related to the topics addressed and the arguments discussed in the essay, they are on the other hand part of another project in progress. This project spread from the same roots (reflections on the relations, transfers and transformations between analog and digital media, with special tributes to the status of undead media within our analogital cuture), but is taking another direction than the essay insofar as it is focussing on the relations between icon(icity) and index(icality) in analog and digital media of visual communication (a. o. pictograms, icons, emoticons and emoji).

The embedded text lines of the illustrations obviously refer to René Magritte's painting *La trahison des images* (1929) and thus almost inevitably to the debates about the difference between object and image, depiction and picture the painting has aroused over the past decades (see a. o. Michel Foucault's famous essay from 1973). Digital images have – again: obviously and inevitably – added another layer to this complex. With regard to the painting's title, however, it should be mentioned that many arguments pointing to the delusional powers of digital images (be them referred to as “simulacra” or as mere impostures, as “images that lie”) are missing the point by overacting and thus at the same time concealing the most important fact we have to consider: digital images are, in the first instance, files: data generated and interpreted by a machine – and only in the second instance interpreted by humans as images.

Now, why the choice of files from the *Twitter Emoji Project*? Please allow me some additional remarks to explain. On April 2, 2014 Twitter released a set of several hundred (872) emoji (“Twe-emoji”) to allow the users of their web based service to embed emoji in their tweets; in November 2014 the whole set went into an open source library on Github for further development. Emoji are originally from Japan; the term “emoji” can be roughly translated to “pictograph” (“e” means “picture” and “moji” is for “character”). Thus they should not be confused with emoticons, the “emotion icons” originally based on plain text characters (their Japanese counterpart is called “kaomoji”), and considerably popular in digital media culture since the late 1980ies. Both emoji and emoticons grew up in ASCII code, and separately found their way to Unicode. With the advance of mobile communication devices capable to put image files on display, however, not only began the vocabulary of emoji and emoticons to merge. It became also more obvious that both families of pictographs share the quality (and function) to add signs of emotion to a very condensed format of human to machine to machine to human communication. The infamous “smileys” (be them smiling, crying, or red-faced and puffing of anger) may provide the best example, together with (at least in Western cultures) even more traditional icon classics like hearts (complete, paired, broken etc.).

But what about those pictographs that do not hint us this immediately to what Aby Warburg would have called “Pathosformeln,” gesture-images capable to transport emotions? In the first instance, we would assume they are chosen for other reasons: due to their resemblance to a physical object they are reminding us to the practical uses and cultural meanings of this object, and thus they should be perfect vehicles within systems of abbreviated and condensed communication – just like pictograms or icons on computer screens. However, apart from the mere fact that both pictograms and computer icons are as such culturally informed in many ways (and thus bear their own complexities), we should also take a second look at the pictographs chosen, and the way objects are translated into images to become pictographs (to which, not only in the case of Twemojis, the “kawaii” style may be taken as a first hint). Just to mention one example: why would you include a paperclip into your Tweet? To ask a colleague to bring some paperclips to your office booth because you ran out of these little helpers? To point to an attachment – which is not possible to include in a Tweet?

While I would not generally exclude the answer to these questions still could be a “yes,” I should nevertheless like to point to another aspect, another quality I’d suggest these images (or many of them at least) do share: similar to smileys and hearts these objects are indeed charged with emotion – more precisely: with cultural rather than personal emotion. This is – in different ways and for different reasons – true for flags and symbols for nation holidays; for the sun, moon, stars and starry nights; for food (especially sweets like fruit, cake, and ice cream). And it is also true for objects, tools and devices most of which are rem(a)inders from analog media communication (paper, pen, scissor, ruler etc.) and/or members of the ever growing family of (un)dead media apparatuses (i.e. rotary dial phone, fax machine, cassette, floppy disc, mini-disc, cd/dvd). Thus I would invite to consider the Twemojis of both the latter groups as “imagines agentes” of our analogital (or, if you prefer the term: post-digital) culture – the data-display format brothers and sisters of the material objects discussed in the essay above (be them knitted or crocheted cameras, pixel screens made up from tea lights in beer cans, or arcade games run on slides and Super8 movies).

THIS IS NOT



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