

»Moving Spaces«

Special exhibition of the Filmmuseum Berlin from February 10 to June 19, 2005
accompanying the Retrospective of the 55th Berlin International Film Festival



Place:
Filmmuseum Berlin at Potsdamer Platz, 1st Floor
Potsdamer Str. 2, 10785 Berlin - Tiergarten

Opening hours:
The exhibition will be open every day during the Berlinale 2005 10 – 18 hrs, Thurs 10 – 20 hrs

Admission:
3 Euro, reduced 2 Euro, combined ticket: 7 Euro
Events, Informations: www.filmmuseum-berlin.de, www.moving-spaces.de

Supported by Hauptstadtkulturfonds

In cooperation with the Deutsches Filmmuseum, Frankfurt am Main

SPACES OF POWER

Filmic spaces of power enable unrestricted control and portray power relations. This is realised through situation, set design, and decor. Centres of power draw their potency from contradictions and hyperbole: they are both sealed off from the outside world and situated in exposed positions like the office of Joh Fredersen, the master of *METROPOLIS* (1925/26), which occupies the top floor of a skyscraper. Open plan offices as mass workplaces are strikingly similar in *THE APARTMENT* (1959/60) and *THE TRIAL*. The strict alignment of the allotted workplaces provides a commanding view but the sheer endlessness of the disposition soon sets a limit to control.

As in *DAS EXPERIMENT* (2000), *MINORITY REPORT* (2001/02) or *DR. STRANGEGLOVE* (1963/64), centres of power are often concealed like a heart or brain deep inside control structures. Links with the outside world are provided by highly specialised technology; monitors, luminous displays, world maps, buttons, and keyboards enable monitoring and intervention. The materials used in furnishing and equipping power spaces are typically smooth and cool; heavy furniture of dark wood, leather suites, smooth, hard surfaces of metal or concrete keep visitors and subordinates at an appropriate distance. Light enters through gigantic, usually barred panorama windows or is provided by artificial sources that give only sporadic illumination; so that it is not quite clear who is observing and who is being observed.

PRIVATE SPACES

Private spaces tell something about their occupants and, like costumes or acting, have a dramaturgical function. In creating the personal environment of a character, the production designer can convey things to the audience about the people who live in these rooms in an infinite number of ways. A first consideration is the historical context: a film like *DAS WUNDER VON BERN* (2002/03) recreates exemplary private spaces of the 1950s. Clichés and polarisation are often used to give sharp contours to characters and greater tension to the dramaturgy. For instance, Ang Lee's *THE ICE STORM* (1996/97) plays with the accentuation and emotional charge of the settings in the two families' houses.

In *SOLO SUNNY* (1978-80), the apartment of the protagonist is her stage as well as the mirror of her character, an extension into filmic space inspired by reality. The modernistic Villa Arpel, for Jacques Tati's film *MON ONCLE* (1956), has two portholes with moving pupils that constantly follow the visitor. Within the Villa Arpel – a Bauhaus cube with fully styled, cool interior – nothing takes account of the human element. The exterior and furnishings of the building are for representational purposes only, hostile to visitors and guests. The production design for *FANNY OCH ALEXANDER* (1981/82) recreates the turn of the 20th century, and is inspired by the characters of the protagonists. The tension generated by the contrasts between interiors allows not only the protagonists but also their private spaces to communicate.

LABYRINTHS

Labyrinths are perplexing and enigmatic. In the classical labyrinth the route is linear, there are no junctions. Mazes, in contrast, branch repeatedly and have many dead-ends. Colloquially, mazes and labyrinths are both referred to as labyrinths, and this is how the term is used here. Film labyrinths appear primarily to be psychological spaces. The perspective of the actor is particularly important, whether he strolls like a sleepwalker through spacious halls and corridors – as in Alain Resnais' *L'ANNÉE DERNIÈRE À MARIENBAD* (1960/61) – or flees panic-stricken through the narrow passages of a space ship – as in Ridley Scott's *ALIEN* (1978/79). Ornaments and reliefs lend movement to the eye; tracking shots and cutting create bewildering space sequences

The labyrinth is both a metaphor and an architectural articulation. The library in *THE NAME OF THE ROSE* (1985/86) is designed as a multi-storey labyrinth based on etchings by Giovanni Battista Piranesi and the prints of M.C. Escher. The motif of the labyrinth occurs in a number of variations in *THE SHINING* (1978-80). The hotel in the mountains with its innumerable corridors is perplexingly labyrinthine, interior settings and carpeting play with Indian patterns, in the garden there is a large hedged maze that finally becomes a trap. Labyrinthine sequences of spaces are often presented as prisons with no way out. The distorted perspective of the psychiatric ward corridors in *DER KRIEGER UND DIE KAISERIN* (1999/2000) and the police

building in HEAVEN (2000-02) seem to offer no escape. Decorative mirrors or halls of mirrors reveal a different reality: the world of dreams, memories, and the unconscious.

TRANSIT SPACES

We encounter transit spaces primarily in the course of one of modern man's fundamental experiences: movement. Moving from one place to another can mean a short journey or a world tour, in film even a SPACE ODYSSEE (Stanley Kubrick, 1965–68). Transitional outdoor and indoor spaces are streets, arcades, businesses, department stores, hotels, terminals, lobbies, public transport, trains, cars, and aircraft. In constructing these spaces – spatial constellations or means of transport – robust, durable materials are used: asphalt, stone slabs, metals and metal alloys, plastics, and glass. The architecture of transit spaces is functional, and this is supported by the mostly symmetrical arrangement of artificial lighting.

Transit spaces as filmic settings are difficult to photograph in real locations because shooting attracts the attention of passers-by or interferes with the normal functioning of the location. The decision to construct transitory exterior and interior spaces for filming has sometimes resulted in gigantic, self-contained outdoor and indoor sets: the 230-metre-long Berlin street for Joe May's silent film ASPHALT (1928/29), the modern office city "Tativille" for Jacques Tati's PLAYTIME (1964-679), or the fully functional airport building with escalators, elevators, and stores for Steven Spielberg's THE TERMINAL (2003/04). Ultimately, it depends on the style of a director whether shooting takes place in original locations or in the studio. One example for the use of transitory original locations is the film GESPENSTER (2004/05) by Christian Petzold, partly filmed at Potsdamer Platz.

STAGE

Film is closely associated with the stage situation primarily owing to its roots in the theatre. Even if the cinema began to overcome stage-like presentation as long ago as the 1920s through mobile cameras, close-ups, cutting, and three-dimensional scenery, there has been a close, now mutual interaction between the two art forms. In its simplest form, the stage is itself the main setting of a film; as in DER BLAUE ENGEL (1929/30), THE RED SHOES (1947/48) or CABARET (1971/72). A look behind the scenes into wardrobes and wings is just as typical as views of the audience. The dramaturgical intensity of the original stage situation is enhanced by the frontality and unity of action and place in films like QUERELLE (1982) or THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE AND HER LOVER (1988/89).

One genre that cannot do without the stage, without the stylisation and artificiality of stage scenery, is the revue film. Among the theatrical means used in films like DIE FRAU MEINER TRÄUME (1943/44) or SENSATION IN SAN REMO (1951) are hyperbole and the illusion of exotic places. In SMOKING/NO SMOKING (1993), Alain Resnais takes the opposite approach by having a real setting like a golf course on the English coast constructed in the studio in the form of a realistic stage set showing traces of exposure to wind and weather. In DOGSVILLE (2003) Lars von Trier reduces the filmic space to its origins by presenting streets, houses, and rooms as labelled ground plan drawings. Common to all filmic stage spaces of whatever type is the accentuation of stage acting and language.