

# ARTHEMIS

Is pleased to present a lecture by  
**Trevor Mowchun and John Hunting**

## Film, Photography and their World Dependence

**Nov 22, 16h00**

**EV 5,615** (1515 Ste. Catherine W.)

Trevor Mowchun explores the “world dependence” of film by proposing that the space-time presence of the world onscreen outweighs the implications of its material absence, but that in turn such presence is equally outweighed by its insignificance or poverty as a cinematic subject in its own right. Balancing Martin Heidegger’s ambivalent critique of technology as the concealment of Being with Stanley Cavell’s conception of the mechanical automatism of film as “world projection,” he puts forth the possibility that the camera is a special type of technology whose primary function is to reveal without purpose and to no end. A poetics of presence in film emerges when the camera is projected back into the image, marking it as a site or clearing for what Heidegger calls “the happening of the world.”

John Hunting queries the relevance of Levinas’ notion of the face for photography and film. Levinas’ descriptions of radical passivity in mind, Hunting proposes that to experience the photographic as a trace is to experience the world as undergone. In this regard the photographic can attest to otherness in novel ways. But if photography betrays the world it depends upon by producing still images and film registers worldly encounters in their potentially disrupting endurance, film also lends itself to overarching continuities that photography disrupts, the latter short-circuiting the very renewal that all temporal unities imply. Hence Hunting explains how a Levinasian aesthetics of photography and film might offer how both potentially sponsor and foreclose attestations to what Levinas meant by ethics.

Trevor Mowchun is a Ph.D student in the Humanities interdisciplinary program at Concordia University. He completed his Masters in Film Studies, also at Concordia, where we wrote his thesis on cinematic contingency. He is also in the finishing stages of his first feature film entitled *World to Come*. John Hunting teaches Humanities at Dawson College. The title of his doctoral dissertation was *Affect, melodrama and cinema: an essay on embodied passivity* (McGill, 2006).



photography by Hiroshi Sugimoto