

# *Afterword: An Art Historical Return to Bergson*

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That an effort of this kind is not impossible, is proved by the existence . . . of an aesthetic faculty along with normal perception.<sup>1</sup>

What we're after certainly isn't any return to Freud or return to Marx. Nor any theory of reading. What we look for in a book is the way it transmits something that resists coding: flows, revolutionary active lines of flight, lines of absolute decoding rather than any intellectual culture.<sup>2</sup>

'A Return to Bergson' is the title of Gilles Deleuze's famous afterword for the English translation of *Bergsonism* (1966). Written more than twenty years after the book's initial publication, the afterword is itself another opening, another invitation to return to Bergson that extends his project today. As Deleuze writes, this renewal or extension is undertaken 'in relation to the transformations of life and society, in parallel with the transformation of science'.<sup>3</sup> These well-known lines express Deleuze's methodology of 'return', his history of philosophy as repetition and masquerade. Hence his singular 'Bergsonism' is a method that prioritises concepts inherent in Bergson's own texts such as multiplicity, the virtual, becoming and immanence; yet they are transformed in Deleuze's appropriation of them.<sup>4</sup> What Deleuze demonstrated was that a return neither recollects some putative origin nor shores up an author-function. Instead, it always involves a radical untimeliness, an event. Any return worth its salt 'dissipates the temporal identity where we like to look at ourselves to avoid the ruptures of history'.<sup>5</sup> Deleuze's 'return' to Bergson allowed him to render new lines of thought that traversed the history of philosophy, offering alternatives to structuralism, phenomenology and psychoanalysis.

So what kind of challenge is the call for an art historical return to Bergson? First and foremost, it is a challenge to accept that there has yet to be an art historical methodology that is truly Bergsonian. Undoubtedly the first steps of such a visual, cultural, theoretical

and historiographic 'return' to Bergson are to be found within this anthology.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, it remains evident that to date art historians have disregarded the creative and transformative 'Copernican turn' Bergson's work presents for any study of the relation between images and time. Second, perhaps there are reasons for the blind-eye we have turned to Bergson, who too often appears only in discussions of simultaneity in Italian Futurism or histories of perception. Perhaps it is because critical art historical practice, indelibly coloured by Frankfurt School theory and poststructuralism, has been caught in a double-bind of sorts: it is enthralled with psychoanalytic and Hegelian frameworks, even as it simultaneously tries to extricate itself from these very frameworks.<sup>7</sup> Conversations about mnemonic traces, archival practices, social history, the digital apotheosis, artistic survival, and melancholy as a congenital discursive condition all involve psychoanalytic and Hegelian modes. Simply put, they are renewed attempts to deal with the presupposition that 'art is a thing of the past'. This discursive condition is only worsened by the persistent desire for *Kunstwissenschaft*, the desire for art history to be a social science: objective, historicist, transcendent, global.

These current debates over aesthetics and historiography evince that we have become inattentive to the inseparable epistemic and aesthetic effects of the image itself. As art historians work through their disillusionment with the anti-aesthetics of postmodernism and a related anxiety about a rearticulated formalism, Bergson awaits his untimely return. This return can only transform our critical practices if we reaffirm 'the enormous influence Bergson has had on French art and culture' and do not shy away from the complications of Bergsonian aesthetics: we must 'read Bergson anew as a contemporary' rather than as a 'historical curiosity'.<sup>8</sup> It is Bergson who haunts art history. So perhaps now, as we consider affect theory, the reappearance of Aby Warburg's notion of *Nachleben* (survival), and neuro-aesthetics, art history – one of the professional *arts of memory*, 'one of a network of interrelated institutions and professions whose overall function has been to fabricate a historical past that could be placed under systematic observation for use in the present' – can become Bergsonian.<sup>9</sup>

So it is to the event of Bergson that we must turn. The event that makes art historical language stutter by adding all of this foreign language and inelegant phrasing to our discursive glossary: time as duration? materiality begetting oblivion? passage as absolutely real phenomenon? memory as an ontological 'magnetiser' (a shaping force)? The Janus-face of Bergson: on the one side, the challenge 'to learn what a non-thinking body [an image, any nonlinguistic element]

is capable of, its capacities, its positions'; on the other, the compelling, vertiginous reality that images have an existence, a survival, independent of us.<sup>10</sup> But even this Janus-face is only a pause before an explosion that traces a multiplicity of lines. Beyond that split-image, a 'depth of duration' (*épaisseur de durée*, Bergson's great phrase) emboldens us to go beyond existing well-worn narratives and methodologies in order to *experiment* with higher levels of risk and tension between history and becoming, to *encounter* images and signs, to *become* attentive to life.<sup>11</sup>

To do so we must return to the Bergson who argues that 'continuity of change, preservation of the past in the present, real duration' suggest that 'life, like conscious activity, is invention . . . unceasing creation'.<sup>12</sup> What must be emphasised here, as we return to Bergson, is that every return is a revision, a seeing-again (perception) and a transformation (memory as duration). Hence each and every return is a re-creation of Bergson, who will have been our 'future contemporary'.<sup>13</sup> So forego any illusory synthesis between Bergson and Deleuze, Bergson and Benjamin, Bergson and whomever. Just as there is no synthesis of history and life, matter and memory. Instead, 'there is radical contingency in progress, incommensurability between what goes before and what follows – in short, duration'.<sup>14</sup> This incommensurability is in Bergson's terms a 'tension', a 'rhythm' or 'double movement' wherein unforeseen, aleatory, new creations are produced. 'Duration means invention', Bergson remarks, 'the creation of forms, the continual elaboration of the absolutely new'.<sup>15</sup> In what follows then, we 'survey' Bergson through a number of contemporary readings, before focusing on Deleuze's own monstrous, but still faithful, rendering.

#### MEMORIES OF BECOMING-BERGSONIAN

An image is a true problem for Bergson. As such it is inseparable from memory and from the past as such. The past as such (a virtual pure past) is never anything like empty, homogeneous time, but is only duration, that is, intensive time as difference. In his great work *Matter and Memory* (1896) Bergson argues for the ontological status of the past, which necessitates a shift from memory-traces and associative representation towards something more dynamic and fluid: a philosophy with real movement and coexistence between past and present, virtual and actual, infinite and finite.

For Bergson, present and past are different in kind rather than degree. This means that the past does not simply follow the present in any discrete linear order; rather, the entirety of the past coexists – *differently* – with each moment of the present. Hence the 'past can

never be recomposed with a series of presents since this would be to negate its specific mode of being'.<sup>16</sup> Memory and perception are thus simultaneous rather than sequential. We can state with Bergson that the past *is* rather than *was*.<sup>17</sup> As Deleuze intimates: 'We are touching on one of the most profound, but perhaps one of the least understood, aspects of Bergsonism: the theory of memory . . . What Bergson calls "pure recollection" has no psychological existence. That is why it is called *virtual*, inactive, and unconscious.'<sup>18</sup>

Besides an image of thought that veers away from Freud, Walter Benjamin and others, Bergson's theory of memory forces a '*leap into ontology*' that reorients art historical practice. As Deleuze writes:

We only grasp the past at the place where it is in itself, and not in ourselves, in our present. There is therefore a 'past in general' that is not the particular past of a particular present but that is like an ontological element, a past that is . . . the condition of the 'passage' of every particular present . . . According to Bergson, we first put ourselves back into the past in general . . . We really leap into being, into being-in-itself, into the being in itself of the past. It is a case of leaving psychology altogether . . . In any case, the Bergsonian revolution is clear: We do not move from the present to the past, from perception to recollection, but from the past to the present, from recollection to perception.<sup>19</sup>

The past as such is an 'unattainable limit'.<sup>20</sup> There is no call in Bergson for any idealism or mysticism about this pure past. Nor is there any reason to desire to represent it 'as it truly was'. For Bergson, the pure past is what allows for the actualisation of each and every particular past (as a former particular present). The pure past is contracted, actualised into a present. Simultaneous with its actualisation, this real movement of contraction-dilation reorganises the coexistent pure past: time as an open whole, as virtual becoming.

Time as virtual becoming is the real, immanent mode of what is because it has no other mode than its own actualisation (its continued differing from itself). Thus there is no preceding place that the past is. One does not look or go back in time as if retracing one's steps. Nor does any ready-made narration in the present assure your encounter with the past as such. On the contrary, the entirety of the past is always enfolded within each and every actualisation (every measurable, extensive, useful succession of time imagined as a one-directional movement from past to future). On time as virtual becoming Ansell Pearson writes:

We can posit it realizing itself and becoming what it is – pure otherness and pure difference – without any need to appeal to either a logic of contradiction and negation [Hegelian dialectics] or to an abstract universality or generality . . . Conceived in itself it is the mode of the 'non-active' since

it only acts and comes to be what it is (otherness) in differentiating itself, *both* ceasing to be itself and retaining something of itself, and it is in this very respect that it can be considered to be 'the mode of *what is*.' Bergson's challenge to thinking consists in the claim that this is not to move thought in the direction of an abstract metaphysics. Indeed, he insists that the contrary is the case. The virtual is not, then, a general idea, something abstract and empty, but the concept of difference (and of life since it is vital) rendered adequate. The concept of the virtual gives us the *time* of life.<sup>21</sup>

This 'time of life' is a complex splitting of time: a memory-perception circuit. It helps account for Bergson's interest in hallucinations, *déjà vu*, dreams, delirium. These anomalies are intriguing to him because they disclose the splitting of time: the operation of memory as more than a recollection-image, a re-presentation of a former present. The pure past is therefore an 'unattainable limit' that is nonetheless operative in every act of recollection-perception, body-image. In addition to these anomalous states, which Bergson refers to as 'de-tensifying', meaning a lessening of one's practical self-interest, we could add our relation to artworks.<sup>22</sup>

Our attentiveness to images requires a 'de-tensifying' mode that allows us to sense the virtual, time as such. An image embodies an opening in time. Becoming attentive to images demands that we experiment with recollection-perception, dilation-contraction, rhythm beyond measure. Attentiveness does not, paradoxically perhaps, mean an intensified focus on an image, but is rather a mode of encounter. A 'de-tensifying' of consciousness allows one to become-other, to move beyond habitual being and to open oneself to other durations, worlds other than one's own. Attentiveness is a mode of becoming that does not 'cut up the past into separate memories corresponding to present needs and interests'.<sup>23</sup> Rather, it allows one to touch and sense an image as a material-force, as the 'finest thread' opening us to an outside, to radical alterity, to *a* life beyond the subject.<sup>24</sup>

With Bergson we become attentive to images and time: to an ethics of an event. An event is the untimeliness of the image: how and why it embodies an 'attention to life'.<sup>25</sup> An art historical return to Bergson, an art historical ethics of this event, requires that 'we must no longer speak of *life in general* as an abstraction' but rather as 'a visible current . . . traversing the bodies it has organized one after another', individuating itself into a myriad of forms 'without losing anything of its force'.<sup>26</sup> For Bergson, life is certainly not the 'spirit' of an age, an individual, or a culture. Nor does it avail itself of a symptomology or any indexical, anthropological reading of presence. Nor is it an autotelic life of forms.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps it goes without saying, perhaps not:

art never simply represents any life, whether of an individual, society, or a culture, unless that 'life' is understood narrowly in a strictly realist manner. For too long the discipline of art history has maintained an abstract quasi-scientific, quasi-religious system wherein art supposedly reflects, expresses and/or exposes sociocultural, economic, or formal issues. Or else, inversely, it posits artworks as autonomous from social and cultural history. Bergson's work, however, consistently sets itself against this understanding. Hence 'there is no solid, first-order brute reality upon which a hierarchy of abstraction can elevate itself'.<sup>28</sup> As John Mullarkey explains: 'Reality, says Bergson, is neither finite nor infinite but "indefinite": "action on the move", we recall, "creates its own route . . . and thus baffles all calculation".'<sup>29</sup> Contrary to the false interpretative movements of art historical discourse, which is spatial and abstract in structure, Bergson encourages us to form any and all 'questions relating to subject and object, to their distinction and their union' in terms of 'time rather than space'.<sup>30</sup> Begging the question: what is the value of our historicist yet *atemporal* art history?

Bergson emphasises the 'unstable tension' between life as duration and any abstract, scientific system such as art history or museology.<sup>31</sup> In *Creative Evolution* he addresses 'concrete time' (duration) and 'abstract time'. Abstract, scientific systems are 'never in that real, concrete duration in which the past remains bound up with the present'. He adds that in abstract time 'what will flow on in the interval – that is to say, real time – does not count, and cannot enter into the calculation'.<sup>32</sup> Bergson challenges us to experiment with immanence: idealism *and* realism, monism *and* pluralism, thought *and* instability, form *and* content, discourse *and* archive, in order to regain 'real time', that is, 'attention to life'.<sup>33</sup> In part this means conceiving and performing an art historical methodology capable of encountering the concrete time of duration: life as such *and* an image.

It is important to stress this point: *history and life, matter and memory, are immanent but not ahistorical or atemporal*. It is only within duration – 'a hyphen, a connecting link' – that art historical research becomes-creative, becomes-immanent.<sup>34</sup> What we are after is the irreducibility of history and life. Bergson termed this irreducibility a 'law of dichotomy', neither the transcendence of one over the other nor the disappearance of either within an artificial, abstract system. Many of Bergson's terms evince precisely such an insistence on embodiment and immanence: life within and inseparable from a certain particular embodiment, 'interpenetrating, so that each has to abandon some of its original purity'.<sup>35</sup> Far from a call for metaphysical escape or historical evasion, Bergson always calls for immanence, for becoming-creative

with how we think and imagine the tensions and involutions between materiality and duration. Becoming-creative forces us to rethink our practice because 'the final effort' of art historical research is 'a true work of integration'.<sup>36</sup> A passage from Bergson is an opening to an art history to come:

To give up certain habits of thinking, and even of perceiving, is far from easy: yet this is but the negative part of the work to be done; and when it is done, when we have placed ourselves at what we have called the *turn* of experience, when we have profited by the faint light which, illuminating the passage from the immediate to the useful, marks the dawn of our human experience, there still remains to be reconstituted, with the infinitely small elements which we thus perceive of the real curve, the curve itself stretching out into the darkness behind them.<sup>37</sup>

#### FROM BERGSON TO DELEUZE: BECOMING-BERGSONIAN

It is this Bergsonian mode of encounter and becoming that art historians have obscured. Our disciplinary desire to officiate and parse the relation between art and life leads to neither one. Curating art objects and articulating historicist determinism has led to only more 'abuses of history for life'.<sup>38</sup> Ready-made narratives and self-satisfied commentary on discourse evince only that nothing is risked, nothing wagered, and therefore nothing gained in relation to our sensitivity or experience of duration. Time and again, we substitute the demands of ontology for the concerns of historiography. We should take Deleuze here as a contemporary Delphic inscription for art historical practice:

Each image has two halves: it *designates* an object, it *signifies* something different. The objective side is the side of pleasure, of immediate delight, and of [historiographic] practice. Taken this way, we have already sacrificed the 'truth' side. We recognize things, but we never come to know them. What the sign signifies we identify with the person or object it designates. We miss our finest encounters, we avoid the imperatives that emanate from them: to the exploration of encounters we have preferred the facility of recognition.<sup>39</sup>

As art historians our 'finest encounters' must be with Bergsonian time itself – 'a single, universal and impersonal Time', as Deleuze characterises it.<sup>40</sup> And yet far too often we relish in the 'immediate delight' of recognition. Encountering images and the 'imperatives that emanate from them' – an ethics of becoming within art historical practice – has nothing to do with either the eternal, the primal, or the utopian. Instead, it is an untimely encounter with a material-force, with a *deframing* power, that 'acts counter to the past, and therefore on the present, for the benefit, let us hope, of a future – but the future is not

a historical future, not even an utopian future, it is . . . untimely, not an instant but a becoming'.<sup>41</sup> In other words, Deleuze and Guattari describe the untimeliness of an image as an event.

To rethink art history, yet again, requires a return to Bergson through Deleuze because his work forces us to think how and why an artwork is what it *transmits*, that is, a 'nonsignifying passage', a *deframing* power that renders an opening within history. Within this opening, art historians confront a difficult lesson: 'Life is not your history.'<sup>42</sup> Art is and opens us to a 'vertigo of immanence', a life that exceeds lived experience without abandoning art as an end-in-itself because 'thought and art are real, and disturb the reality, morality, and economy of the world'.<sup>43</sup>

An image of thought, art history is a little two-step that goes awry when it stops counting, when it goes beyond cadence or measure, when it becomes experimentation with events rather than the interpretation of states of things. Experimentation means here something like working with and alongside images, in order to grasp how and why an image 'maintains a relationship with language in its entirety, but rises up or stretches out in its holes, its gaps, or its silences'.<sup>44</sup> It remains to be seen if we can seriously think the coexistence of the past with the present, one of the essential theses of Deleuze's Bergson. But we mustn't forget that there are also other Bergsons, and so other theses that we can engage with as both philosophers and art historians. This is surely what this collection of essays has demonstrated so well: the becomings immanent within Bergsonism are multiple and unforeseeable.

#### NOTES

1. Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: Dover, 1998), pp. 176–7.
2. Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations: 1974–1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 22.
3. Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1988), p. 115. In addition to *Bergsonism*, see 'Bergson, 1859–1941', which was written at the request of Maurice Merleau-Ponty for his *Les Philosophes célèbres* in 1956, and 'Bergson's Conception of Difference' (1956), in Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Michael Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004). Of course, the entirety of Deleuze's two volumes on cinema as well as his work with Félix Guattari are written under the sign of Bergson; in particular see '1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible . . .' in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*,



trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987). This chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus* has a section entitled 'Memories of a Bergsonian' that I allude to below.

4. These concepts are found throughout Bergson's texts; see especially Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1991); and Bergson, *Creative Evolution*.
5. Michel Foucault cited in Gilles Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975-1995*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2007), p. 351. See also Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).
6. In addition to the essays in this anthology, there have been other recent uses of Bergson's work in relation to images. See Mark Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004); Eric Alliez, 'Undoing the Image (Signposts of a Research Programme)', in Armen Avanesian and Luke Skrebowski, eds, *Aesthetics and Contemporary Art* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2011), pp. 66-85; and John Rajchman, 'Deleuze's Time, or How the Cinematic Changes Our Idea of Art', in D. N. Rodowick, ed., *Afterimages of Gilles Deleuze's Film Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), pp. 283-306.
7. Much has been made of Walter Benjamin's criticisms of Bergson in his essay on Charles Baudelaire and in relation to his thoughts on Marcel Proust. These criticisms were shared by Max Horkheimer as evidenced by Benjamin's correspondence and the context around the writing on the essay on Baudelaire: see Walter Benjamin, *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin 1910-1940*, ed. Gershom Scholem and Theodor W. Adorno, trans. Manfred R. Jacobson and Evelyn M. Jacobson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). However, Benjamin's admiration for *Matter and Memory* as well as his treatment of Bergson in his *The Arcades Project*, particularly in 'Convolute H: The Collector', is altogether different. In fact, Benjamin characterises his entire unfinished project in undeniably Bergsonian language as an attempt to grasp 'the crystal of the total event': see Walter Benjamin, 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire', *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), pp. 155-200; and Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), especially 'Convolute H and N'. For a nuanced and insightful discussion of Bergson in Benjamin's work see Beatrice Hanssen, *Walter Benjamin's Other History: Of Stones, Animals, Human Beings, and Angels* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000); for Benjamin on collecting and temporality see Jae Emerling, 'An Art History of Means: Arendt-Benjamin', *Journal of Art Historiography*, Vol. 1 (2009).

8. John Mullarkey, 'Introduction', in Mullarkey, ed., *The New Bergson* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 13, 12.
9. Donald Preziosi, 'Art History: Making the Visible Legible', in Donald Preziosi, ed., *The Art of Art History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 7.
10. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), p. 189; Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness*, p. 201.
11. I would like to note that Bergson's phrase '*épaisseur de durée*' is used by Deleuze and Guattari in a discussion of modern painting that refers to Hubert Damish as well as Clement Greenberg's predilection for flatness in painting. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 193–9. The word translated as 'thickness' is the French word *épaisseur*, which is a reference to Bergsonian duration rather than a mere spatial, formalist term. See the original French edition: Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* (Paris: Minuit, 1991), p. 195.
12. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 23.
13. The phrase 'a future contemporary' is from Alain Badiou, in a remarkable memorial piece he wrote for Deleuze: Alain Badiou, *Pocket Pantheon: Figures of Postwar Philosophy* (London and New York: Verso, 2009), p. 113.
14. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 29. Bergson's comment here comes in a footnote wherein he contrasts his understanding of art and life with that found in Gabriel Séailles's *Essai sur le génie dans l'art* (1897).
15. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 11. Mullarkey explains that Bergson acknowledged how metaphysics (philosophy) must 'be perpetually "remodelling" itself on the processes of reality'. In a passage that reinforces our discussion here, he adds: 'Remember that Bergson advises that his own concepts such as *durée* and qualitative multiplicity must eventually be superseded . . . it is essential, he says, that we continually create new concepts instead of simply new names for old concepts.' See John Mullarkey, *Bergson and Philosophy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2000), p. 185.
16. Keith Ansell Pearson, 'Bergson on Memory', in Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz, eds, *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 71.
17. This is, of course, Deleuze's famous summation (Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p. 55).
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 56–7, 63.
20. James Burton, 'Bergson's Non-Archival Theory of Memory', *Memory Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (2008), p. 329.

21. Keith Ansell Pearson, *Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 7.
22. Burton, 'Bergson's Non-Archival Theory of Memory', p. 329.
23. Ibid.
24. The phrase 'the finest thread' is used by Bergson and later by Deleuze; see Ansell Pearson, *Philosophy and The Adventure of the Virtual*, p. 41. This is the guiding principle of my own work; see Jae Emerling, *Photography: History and Theory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012) and Jae Emerling, 'A Becoming Image: Candida Höfer's Architecture of Absence', in Isabelle Wallace and Nora Wendl, eds, *Contemporary Art About Architecture: A Strange Utility?* (London: Ashgate, 2013).
25. Mullarkey offers the following: "Attention to life" is one name Bergson gives to this effort, but it is really "a-tension" which is in question, a holding together of opposites. This is not a voluntary attention, which would be momentary and individual, but a range of mental plasticity that is species-specific, imposed by nature . . . Though this attention is very fatiguing, it is one which, simply by being "more complex" and "delicate" in the precision of its adjustment to reality, is thereby "more positive" . . . a continual active adjustment, always on the brink of losing its balance, always on a knife-edge' (*Bergson and Philosophy*, pp. 54–5).
26. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 26.
27. We must reassess Henri Focillon's interpretation and use of Bergson's concepts throughout his work, notably in *Vie des Formes* (1934). See Henri Focillon, *The Life of Forms in Art*, trans. Charles Beecher Hogan and George Kubler (New York: Zone Books, 1992).
28. Mullarkey, *Bergson and Philosophy*, p. 183.
29. Ibid., p. 185.
30. Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 71.
31. The phrase 'unstable tension' is used by Mullarkey (*Bergson and Philosophy*, p. 181).
32. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 22.
33. 'Thought and instability' refers to the original French title of Bergson's *Creative Mind*, which was *La Pensée et le mouvant*. Mullarkey elaborates on the importance of this phrase, stating that it 'might have been a better choice of translation, for [it] clearly states the aim of Bergsonism to be a philosophy which "would follow the undulations of the real"' and would oppose 'all "artificial unities" in philosophy that attempt to embrace [any] totality' (*Bergson and Philosophy*, p. 179).
34. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 22.
35. Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 155.
36. For effect I have altered a line from Bergson that reads: 'The final effort of philosophical research is a true work of integration' (*Matter and Memory*, p. 185). Also, on Bergson's 'law of dichotomy' in relation to 'integration', Mullarkey explains that we must come to understand how and why Bergson's 'law of dichotomy' or 'integration' has nothing to do

with Hegelian sublation; rather, it posits that 'every unity is provisional and practical, being destined to fragment for the simple reason that life . . . is understood as a reciprocal interpenetration of opposed forces held together in an unstable tension . . . constant dichotomisation (without subsequent Hegelian mediation, we must add) is the driving force of reality' (*Bergson and Philosophy*, p. 181).

37. Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 185.
38. This phrase alludes to Nietzsche's famous 1874 text on historiography 'On the Uses and Abuses of History for Life' (*Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben*). See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, ed. Daniel Breazeale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 57–125. In addition, see Emerling, 'An Art History of Means: Arendt-Benjamin'.
39. Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs: The Complete Text*, trans. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p. 27. Deleuze's conception of semiology upholds this statement: 'Language has no self-sufficiency . . . it has no significance of its own. It is composed of signs, but signs are inseparable from a whole other element, a non-linguistic element, which could be called . . . "images." As Bergson has convincingly shown us, images have an existence independently of us' (Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness*, p. 201).
40. Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p. 80. It should be noted that Deleuze's interpretation of Bergsonian time has been criticised for being more metaphysical in nature than it is for Bergson himself; see Ansell Pearson, *Philosophy and The Adventure of the Virtual*, and John Mullarkey, 'Deleuze and Materialism: One or Several Matters?', in Ian Buchanan, ed., *A Deleuzian Century?* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 59–83.
41. Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 112. Some attempts to theorise this art encounter have already been undertaken. See Georges Didi-Huberman, *Confronting Images: Questioning The Ends of A Certain History of Art*, trans. John Goodman (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), and Simon O'Sullivan, *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2006).
42. Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 15.
43. Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 48; Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. M. Lester with C. Stivale, ed. Constantine Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 60.
44. Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 162.

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