

examples of artistic pilgrimage, we are presented with documentation of a site rendered important or sacred by virtue of its previous representation. It is a site made famous for no other reason than being captured in paint or, as the focus shall soon be for the remainder of this chapter, on celluloid.

At first glance, investing in travel to photograph a site previously represented may seem a hollow act of appropriation. However, what Albert Halaban gained through this process was insight into Hopper's work, specifically his earlier canvasses and their relation to his more iconic images. For instance, she discovered Hopper's tendency to select the less flattering view of the structures he painted and to eliminate the picturesque elements of the surrounding environment, to capture instead "the more hard-edged, working-class end of [Gloucester, Massachusetts]."⁵ In other words, she became privy to how Hopper transformed a space to confront a history of it often ignored, in this case one supplanted by a touristic image. She also came to see how Hopper experimented with narrative by conflating various times of the day by blending different qualities and directions of light, thus turning on its head claims that the early Hopper was a realist. This strategy, one prevalent in some of his later, more famous paintings, directly contributed to their alienating effects. It also prompted Albert Halaban to deploy similar tactics in her own works as a means to inventing new narratives for these spaces.⁶

Albert Halaban's practice of pilgrimage and representation unearthed important facets of Hopper's work, shedding light on his approach to painting. Much the same can be said of artists who engage in (or with) the act of cinephilic pilgrimage and the type of insights gleaned about the films and filmmakers that motivated their ventures. To see what, in particular, we might learn about Hitchcock and the cinema more generally from this type of practice, I want to examine Cindy Bernard's photographs *Ask the Dust: Vertigo 1958/1990* (1990) and *Ask the Dust: North by Northwest 1959/1990* (1990); David Reed's installations/ensembles *Judy's Bedroom* (1992) and *Scottie's Bedroom* (1994); and Douglas Gordon's public artwork, *Empire* (1998). I selected these examples for the ways in which they stand as the product of (or prompt for in the case of Gordon) cinephilic pilgrimage, the ways they bring the pleasures and limitations of cinephilia into stark relief, and for the probing questions they pose about the cinema in terms of its relationship to place, time, and history.⁷ From the photographic documentation of filmic sites in

Bernard's case, to the material reification of filmic sites in Reed's, to the reconfiguration of urban sites for pilgrimage in Gordon's, these three case studies represent three distinct approaches to the cinephilic pilgrimage, revealing each, in their own way, what cinephilia's objects might accomplish.

Like Albert Halaban's *Hopper Redux*, Cindy Bernard's *Ask the Dust* begins with a physical journey to document sites rendered familiar through their previous representation. Completed between 1989 and 1992, *Ask the Dust* comprises 21 photographs of landscapes and locations from well-known Hollywood films released between 1954 and 1974, a time that roughly coincides with Bernard's own childhood and youth. She chose her time frame based on significant historical events, namely, the desegregation of American schools and the resignation of Richard Nixon. These events bookend, for Bernard, a particular period of history defined by its significant social transformations and a growing cynicism in American life.⁸ It is also a period subject to intense national mythmaking, efforts that resulted in constructions like the "Fifties" and the "Sixties" and thus concepts that have become deeply entrenched—thanks in large part to Hollywood—in the American psych. Films like *Them* (1954), *The Searchers* (1956), *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), *Easy Rider* (1969), and *The Godfather* (1972) are represented in this project, one for which she spent countless hours at the Margaret Herrick Library and on the phone with location managers attempting to pinpoint the exact location of specific scenes. After discovering precisely where Roger Thornhill attempted to evade the crop duster in *North by Northwest* (1959), for instance, Bernard traveled to the site in order to photograph it. Like other works in this series, it is devoid of any human presence and framed to approximate the aspect ratio and shot distance of the original filmic image as closely as possible. And, like the rest, its title is that of the film followed by the year of its release and the year Bernard took her picture.

Like others in the series, *Ask the Dust: Vertigo 1958/1990* and *Ask the Dust: North by Northwest 1959/1990* prompt us to confront a number of things (see figures 1.1 and 1.2). They remind us of the constructed, mediated nature of landscape and the ways in which representational practices, and, in this instance Hitchcock's cinematographic practices, necessarily inflect what and how we see, what and how we remember, and indeed how we experience the spaces we inhabit. Whether we are acutely or only vaguely familiar with the sites captured in Bernard's photographs, we know, from their titles, that they refer to films.⁹ And

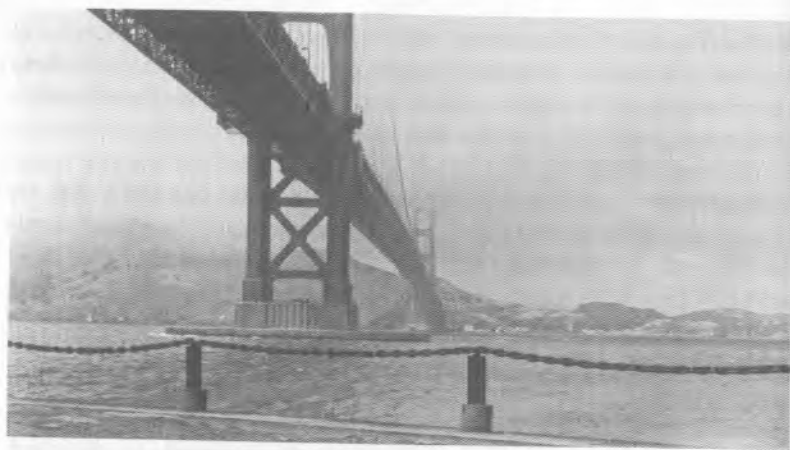


Figure 1.1 Cindy Bernard, *Ask the Dust: Vertigo 1958/1990*, 1990, photograph (courtesy of the artist).



Figure 1.2 Cindy Bernard, *Ask the Dust: North by Northwest 1959/1990*, 1990, photograph (courtesy of the artist).

yet, because landmarks and markers of the passage of time are present in most of the images from her series, we also know (or at least suspect) that we are looking at “real” places. Bernard appeals to the indexicality of the photograph in order to bring into collision fact and fiction, the real and the cinematic, past and present. These images, however much aligned with a particular film, now also belong to Bernard. Her authorship of photographs of locations otherwise already embedded

in cultural memory through earlier filmic representations complicates the practice of appropriation pursued by many of her contemporaries. By eschewing the use of found footage or creation of visual pastiche, Bernard intervenes in the legacy of iconic cinematic places and asks, in this instance, what can actually be appropriated and what, in fact, is there to appropriate?

For Bernard, these questions are political. Her aim was to appropriate (and confront) a legacy of landscape representation shaped by male artists and thus a legacy steeped in patriarchy. Bernard explains that she “set out on a semi-feminist project—to recapture the idea of landscape from a long list of male photographers.” She continues, “I’m going to go into these spaces to make these photographs with my 4 × 5 camera all by myself, and there’s this act of recapturing a space away from this male-dominated perspective.”¹⁰ It is a perspective wrapped up in the history of Manifest Destiny, mythologies of the West and expansionism, and the tenets of Romanticism. As such, she appropriates landscapes defined by not only films, but also sites already inscribed by earlier, politically charged mythologies and image-making practices. Ultimately, she wanted to see how these spaces have been “coded by culture,” specifically from a male perspective.¹¹ And yet, as Martha Langford astutely points out in her deeply personal and sharply analytical essay, Romanticism informs Bernard’s approach as well through her appeals to “loss and yearning, passion, historicism and exoticism.”¹² For Langford, Bernard positions herself as Caspar David Friedrich’s *Rückenfigure*, the “main protagonist of Romantic landscape painting . . . the figure who turns his back to the viewer, the possessor and director of the original gaze.” In *Ask the Dust*, it is Bernard who is this “surrogate and solitary traveler.”¹³

Ask the Dust: Vertigo 1958/1990 and *Ask the Dust: North by Northwest 1959/1990* exist as documents of mythic, coded, and mediated sites layered with history. They are also, quite crucially, documentation of Bernard’s cinephilic pilgrimages, records of her “solitary travels.” In his essay on the cinephilic pilgrimage, Douglas Cunningham explores this phenomenon, arguing that such journeys are the cinephile’s “attempt to reify (that is, ground within the real) an inherently ephemeral experience of the past, while simultaneously utilizing real spaces as portals through which to once again access, personally experience, and even occupy the past.”¹⁴ Cunningham’s acknowledgment that such visits tend to come up short for the cinephile and his identification of certain artistic practices (including those

enacted by Chris Marker, Victor Burgin, and Cindy Bernard) as key to the process of rendering explicit these inadequacies is particularly compelling. While visiting a site allows for some physical, material connection to a film, it does not necessarily allow viewers to feel they are inhabiting the world of the film. Missing, among other things, is the cinematic frame that contains and thereby shapes this world. As Cunningham puts it, "the human eye... can only fail in its attempt to re-replicate the two-dimensional framed vistas and/or details the camera sought initially to replicate. Such a re-replication requires the intervention, once again, of an 'optical crutch,' as it were, a camera, a telescope, or some such."¹⁵

By closely approximating the cinematic image, Bernard's photographs both provide and draw attention to this "optical crutch." As such, these images are as much the product of her own cinephilic desires as they are about cinephilia itself, the ways in which a deep love for the cinema is acted upon, and the inability of these acts to bring back these objects of desire. And yet, despite these shortcomings, there is pleasure in the process, in the research and the search, in the journey and discovery of filmic sites—both real and imagined. There are also pleasures to be had for the viewer, ones that stem from Bernard's invocation of places that resonate with our own cinephilia as well as the potential for analytical pleasures from her invocation of the theoretical problematics of film and photography, indexicality and the real, and space and memory.

Whereas Bernard's work is ostensibly about the cinephilic pilgrimage and the representational matters that its documentation brings to light, David Reed's concern rests more with the reification of ephemeral cinematic and cinephilic moments. During an excursion to paint the landscapes of Monument Valley in the late 1960s, Reed experienced what he has since come to call his "media baptism." Looking for reprieve from the hot desert sun, he discovered a cave with a small spring. Once inside, a sensation of overwhelming familiarity struck, compelling him to catch the flowing water with cupped hands and drink it. What seemed at the time like a primal bodily memory, a gesture reborn from a collective unconscious, resonated for years as a cherished spiritual experience. That is, until he rewatched John Ford's *The Searchers* and witnessed Ethan (John Wayne) perform that very same gesture in precisely that location.¹⁶ This moment of recognition shattered an illusion of mystical significance and initiated Reed's long-standing interest in how the cinema inflects our experiences and structures our memories in ways that are often embodied and deeply embedded.

Since Reed's media baptism, film has played an important and highly varied role in a practice otherwise conceptually invested in the histories and possibilities of painting. Indeed, it is through painting that he attends not just to the legacies of abstract expressionism and, at times, minimalism, but also to the effects of filmic color, light, surface, and language, the nature and orientation of film's material base, and the myriad dimensions of cinematic time, space, memory, and experience. This engagement with the ontological and phenomenological principles of cinema might best be characterized as a paracinematic impulse. As noted in the introduction, this is an impulse to grapple with the "cinematic" as a phenomenon independent of the material properties of film, to locate answers to the question "What is cinema?" in the conceptual rather than the material realm or in creative practices that eschew the technological conventions of the traditional cinematic apparatus.¹⁷ In Reed's case, paint, installation, and photography are mobilized in explorations of cinematic aesthetics and effects.

In #72 and #90, both large-scale painted canvasses from 1975, Reed lays bare the horizontal orientation of the celluloid strip and its structural logic grounded in both continuous and discrete coding.¹⁸ These compositions are ones devoid of color and in which time is writ large through gestural strokes that unveil themselves sequentially, almost narratively.¹⁹ At certain regular intervals pauses appear that arrest what reads as movement and, in the process, approximate film's aspect ratio through which a visual reference to its photographic base emerges. This film strip orientation remains in Reed's later works, including #293 (1990–91) and #316 (1992), which replicate a cinematic light and surface gloss as well as the distinctive Technicolor palette of early two-strip technologies. The preternatural reds and vibrant shades of turquoise juxtaposed to dramatic effect in *Phantom of the Opera* (1927), for instance, are resurrected in Reed's paintings in ways that testify to the affective force of now outmoded practices of representation and their capacity to entrench themselves as cinematic—if not cultural—history and memory.²⁰

The surfaces of Reed's paintings chronicle multiple ways of engaging with film. But when these paintings become themselves contained in one of Reed's "ensembles," *Judy's Bedroom* or *Scottie's Bedroom*, both based on sets from *Vertigo* (1956), the terms of engagement are radically transformed (see figures 1.3 and 1.4).²¹ They are terms that now involve philosophical complexities brought on by confrontations between profilmic and museal space as well as collisions between multiple registers of cinematic and real time. By reifying and intervening