**Histoire(s) du cinéma (1988-98)**

*Histoire(s) du cinéma* is a multi-media work by French film director and video artist Jean-Luc Godard. Consisting of four parts (or rather eight half parts), this 264-minutes film is a reflection on cinema, cinephilia, the relation between film and the other arts, the twentieth century and particularly the Second World War and its cinematic visualizations. A highly idiosyncratic and cryptic survey evoking a (post)modern condition characterized by a proliferation of images, Godard’s monumental video essay particularly deals with the complex relations between cinema and history. It juxtaposes the “history of film” on the one hand, to film as a medium that registers world history on the other – both “histories” intertwine because, according to Godard, the twentieth century and modernity are inconceivable without the film image. The *Histoire(s)* also endorses Godard’s opinion that cinema itself is a thing of the past. Whereas he had seen montage during the 1960s and 1970s as a dialectical tool in the service of class struggle, it had now, to him, become a convenient instrument for an idiosyncratic reshuffling and re-examination of both political and film history. For Godard, history itself is dissolving into disparate images that can at best be tied together in a montage of multiple histories.

Further Reading:

- Godard, J.L. (1998) “A propos de cinéma et de l’histoire,” in Alain Bergala (ed.), *Jean-Luc Godard par Jean-Luc Godard*, Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, II, 401-405.

- Hardouin, F. (2007) *Le Cinématographe selon Godard: Introduction aux* Histoire(s) du cinéma *ou réflexion sur les temps des art*, Paris: L’Harmattan.

- Scemana, C. (2006) *Histoire(s) du cinéma de Jean-Luc Godard: La Force faible d’un art*, Paris: L’Harmattan.

- Temple, M., J.S. Williams & M. Witt (eds.) (2004), *Forever Godard*, London: Black Dog Publishing.

Paratextual material

- 10 digital stills

- cover of eponymous book (Paris: Gallimard, 1998)

Steven Jacobs

Ghent University, Belgium