

## Book Review: Deleuze Reframed

by Blog Admin

December 18, 2012

*Aimed at students and researchers in the fields of Cultural Studies and Visual Arts, **Deleuze Reframed** considers the influential work of Gilles Deleuze and the application of his key theories to art and creative spheres. **Simone Belli** finds that examples from contemporary history and popular culture are a welcome and interesting inclusion.*



*“They have seen something in life that is too much for anyone, too much for themselves”  
(Deleuze and Guattari, 1994:172)*

This quote from Deleuze and Guattari’s final collaboration, *What is Philosophy?* holds the key to the relationship between philosophy and art. Artists are almost considered within the same breath as philosophers, in the sense that they have glimpsed something of the immanence that holds the universe together in its tremendous forces and flows. This quote is also perfect to introduce *Deleuze Reframed*, a book not only about Deleuze and his ideas, but also a guide about working and creating with Deleuze’s thought.

Written by [Damian Sutton](#) and [David Martin-Jones](#), it is aimed at students and researchers in the fields of Cultural Studies and Visual Arts, and considers the impact of Deleuze’s philosophy in numerous artworks, in new visual communications and philosophies, including the works of Michel Foucault and Slavoj Žižek. The authors provide useful tools for working with Deleuze’s thinking, and deal with a wide-range of topics from video games to the internet, from cinema to photography, and from architecture to television.



The book answers three key questions that new readers and those seeking to apply Deleuzian thought to their artistic work would need to consider: What is a rhizome? What is becoming? What is duration? These three questions provide a narrative structure for the book (part of the [I.B. Tauris Reframed series](#)), which the authors explore with original examples from contemporary visual culture. Each of these three sections starts with a theoretical reference to Deleuze’s original text, which is necessary in order to get down to the practical examples.

Deleuze and Guattari’s 1980 work *A Thousand Plateaus* is written in an entangling and non-linear fashion, contrasting with their previous work, *Anti-Oedipus*, and allows immediate connections between any of its points, encouraging a rethink of the dominant Western binary model of knowledge. In *Deleuze Reframed*, our reframers introduce the idea of the rhizome as an ever-expanding labyrinth without a centre, capable of either opening up new horizons or closing down possibilities. Bringing this concept to modern popular culture, Martin-Jones examines a possible rhizomatic gamer identity, with *Grand Theft Auto* as an example of the way gaming can be viewed as either a de-territorialising or re-territorialising of identity. Players can lose themselves (deterritorialise) for a while in a new and alternative identity; it is a space for experimentation, an arena that is potentially deterritorialising the gamer’s identity. Interestingly, Jones discusses *Pac-Man*’s mapping space through his movements in his labyrinth, comparing them to the Vietcong movements in the tunnels of the Vietnam War. These movements are rhizomatic, because they deterritorialise and transform the space through which they move. The rhizome as burrow, then, is a way of describing an underground political movement, literally and/or figuratively. This first part of the book offers

the most examples and suggestions to the reader. It has an elaborate and seductive line of approach to the idea of the rhizome that can be understood from current events.

Considering their second key question, Sutton discusses the relationship between Deleuze's work and becoming. For Deleuze, identity is always in motion, it is always a coming-into-being, a never-ending project of becoming. It is both a guiding principle for the analysis of culture, and an ethical call for a different way of being. Sutton explains how the artist makes decisions, dealing with the forces and materials, while the intersection with affects may never happen. Artworks are born from the conjunction of percept and effect, when the material 'passes into sensation', and until then they are just clichés or ruminations of the material. But Deleuze suggests that there may be an art that reveals the plane of immanence, the movement of materials. This is when the artist comes closest to the project of the philosopher.

The becoming topic, although highly interesting and relevant for many artists, deserves more detail: It would be desirable to gain a deeper understanding of gender issues (becoming-woman) and postcolonial processes (becoming-minor) in the visual arts in future research.

The third section expands on influential French philosopher Henri Bergson's notion of duration, which influenced Deleuze's analysis of the representation of time in film and the cinematic treatment of memory, thought and speech in [Cinema 1](#) and [Cinema 2](#). Deleuze felt that certain films are able to visually render the passing of time; these he calls 'time-images'. The time-image is a glimpse of time, in and for itself, of duration. The 'movement-image', on the other hand, helps explain how time is spatialised by consciousness as we attempt to make sense of our daily lives. In the last two chapters, the difference between movement-image and time image is illustrated by the disparity between Hollywood and European movies (for example, *Die Hard* and *Umberto D*). Particularly interesting is the use of the hybrid-image, used in films such as *Pulp Fiction* or *Run Lola Run* that contain basic elements of the movement-image, and that also incorporate aspects of the time-image, summarizing and updating [Cinema 1](#) and [Cinema 2](#).

The strengths of the book are the writing, storytelling, structure and the use of current examples. The authors have presented their work from a critical perspective, not mainstream, and they favour new epistemological paradigms, suggesting the readers think about their research or creations in a Deleuzian key.

According to the authors, we often use the visual arts to tell stories, but it is easy to forget that they are also employed to conceive, elaborate and discuss paramount aspects of living: our relationship to society and meaning, to growth and subjectivity, to time and the immensity of duration. Deleuze's is a productive philosophy, one that should engender creative thought, the authors suggest.

[Read more from the IB Tauris Reframed Series.](#)

---

**Simone Belli** is Postdoctoral Researcher at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. He received his PhD Doctor Europeus in Social Psychology from Autònoma University of Barcelona with the thesis 'Emotions and language'. Sponsored by the Spanish Department of Education and Science, he worked as predoctoral fellow at Georgetown University at Washington, DC, University of Manchester, and Manchester Metropolitan University supervised by Rom Harré, Ivan Leudar, and Ian Parker, respectively. You can also see his [webpage](#), [Academia.edu](#) page, and [blog](#). [Read more reviews by Simone.](#)

Related posts:

1. [Book Review: Guattari Reframed \(15.6\)](#)
2. [Book Review: Baudrillard Reframed \(14.5\)](#)
3. [Book Review: Derrida Reframed \(13.2\)](#)
4. [Book Review: Kristeva Reframed \(13\)](#)
5. [Book Review: Heidegger Reframed \(12.9\)](#)

