In Search of UIQ unfolds the story of UIQ both as a missing film and as a missed chance for cinema. Moving between documentary, fiction and essay, through the deployment of video and sound archives, letters and other documents that are enmeshed in a series of fabulations and spectral re-enactments, In Search of UIQ explores what Guattari’s cinema of the Infra-quark might have been (and may still become) in relation to his thought and clinical practice, and considers its implications in terms of the

Following the publication of Mille Plateaux (1980), a work that for many marked the high-point of his creative partnership with Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari began working on a screenplay for a science-fiction film which was never made, Un amour d’UIQ. Initially developed in collaboration with American independent filmmaker Robert Kramer, through various drafts and revisions the script was to occupy Guattari for seven years, from 1980 to 1987.

The film imagines a hyper-intelligent infra-cellular life substance dubbed UIQ (Univers Infra-quark) capable of taking control of global communications networks and of plugging into the precarious ‘desiring machines’ of a community of social and psychological outsiders living in a squat in Germany. Influenced by his work at the La Borde clinic and his engagement with radical politics, UIQ offers a blueprint for a subversive ‘popular’ cinema (Guattari’s original ambition was to make the film in Hollywood, with Spielberg’s former producer Michael Phillips) of scrambled semiotic codes, impersonal and transpersonal affects that in terms of the actual possibility of its being produced would be pure science fiction. Yet in desiring to make the film in the commercial arena as a sci-fi blockbuster, Guattari was perhaps effectively raising the stakes of his own political engagement, attempting to smuggle his innovative ideas on cinema as a ‘producer of subjectivities’ into the dream-factory, in order to reconfigure existing patterns of collective unconscious desire.

After bringing to light the script for this ‘lost’ film in a book publication, Graeme Thomson & Silvia Maglioni initiated a multiform project combining elements of performance, installation, sound and radio art, and culminating in their film In Search of UIQ, which takes on Guattari’s central quandary: how to give shape to a bodiless entity, seemingly without spatial or temporal limits.
wider social and political transformations both of its own time and of the present moment. Building a dynamic counterpoint between the unfilmed UIQ script and hypotheses of its possible manifestations, *In Search of UIQ* creates a phantom topography of this missing big-screen encounter involving science-fiction, schizoanalysis and molecular politics – virtually projecting UIQ towards horizons of present and future struggles as a tactical weapon of sabotage in the war of images.

The three movements of *In Search of UIQ* roughly correspond to three historical moments in the UIQ script’s life that, like its hapless hero, lacks temporal as well as spatial limits.

1. **CINEbACTERIA**

The first movement, “Cinebacteria”, traverses a prehistory of political cinema projects that Guattari developed but never realized during the 1970s, alongside the concomitant explosion of technologically sophisticated, big budget science-fiction movies as a new, purely imaginary horizon of the possible, re-projecting stifled or inchoate yearnings for alternative forms of life towards improbable encounters with alien intelligences. Archival visions of a short film on the free radio movement conceived at the time of the Italian uprisings of 1977 and Radio Alice (*Projet de film au sujet des radios libres*), followed by a project for a film in collaboration with Robert Kramer, about two Italian women fugitives seeking asylum in France (*Latitante*), enable us to witness a mutation in the cells of an already sci-fi politics. These unmade film projects will lead to the invention of the Infra-quark Universe, an ambiguous entity from a parallel dimension with no spatial or temporal limits and no clear sense of its own identity. A mysterious female figure with links to the Autonomia movement guides us on a journey across a Mediterranean island haunted by these archival spectres and accompanied by an old tape recording where we hear Guattari discussing his early ideas for UIQ with Kramer - a recording that resurfaces in fragments throughout the film.

How far do we have to go back to get to the beginning of this adventure? This disappeared history? Perhaps to where the future could still be imagined.
The second movement of the film, “Distant Encounters”, is a part-documentary part-fabulatory reenactment of Guattari’s attempts to produce Un amour d’UIQ in Hollywood, as well as a cartography of its non-making that maps out a number of parallel, unrealized universes, beginning with a phantom radio trailer announcing a film that is not to come.

Employing the directors as avatars and emissaries of the Infra-quark, Félix becomes an unlikely alien visitor set adrift in Los Angeles, envisioning the application of his revolutionary theories on cinema and the unconscious to the steely logic of mainstream movie production, making a delirious telephone pitch to the producer of Spielberg’s Close Encounters (to whom he had sent the script in 1982), and trying to divine, with the help of a tarot reader, if UIQ still has a future.

Meanwhile the words of Guattari’s preamble, setting out his project for a processual cinema and a schizoanalysis of film production, resonate along the shores of Venice Beach, in the fogbound Hollywood hills and the broken luminosity of the night freeway.

“The drama evoked here runs parallel to the one our societies are currently undergoing, where the rise of computerized forms of thought, sensibility, imagination and decision-making, the digitalization of a growing number of material and mental operations, is not always easy to reconcile always be reconciled with the existential territories that mark our finitude and desire to exist.”

“Cinema is an extraordinary instrument for producing subjectivity. It is political, whatever its subject. Each time it represents a man, a woman, a child or animal it takes part in a micro-class struggle that concerns the reproduction of models of desire. In every film that is produced, in every sequence, every shot there is a choice to be made between a conservative economy of desire and a revolutionary opening.”

Characters without a film,
without a future.
Living in a trailer
on the shores of existence.
The third movement, “Porteurs d’ombres” (Shadow Bearers), journeys from the ‘winter years’ of the 1980s to the directors’ labyrinthine archive research - which throws up an interesting surprise in the form of a shadowy filmmaker of Finnish origin, Markus Tuleviin.

Tuleviin, who seems to have anticipated them in discovering the existence of the UIQ screen play, has now mysteriously disappeared, leaving an enigmatic trail of notes towards his own version of Guattari’s unmade film, whose script he finds strangely prophetic of the mesh of digitally integrated codes and circuits that mark the current epoch of global technocapitalism.

Lending his voice to the disappeared cineaste is Lou Castel, an actor known for his cult roles in the films of Bellocchio, Fassbinder, Chabrol, Garrel and others whose own historical traversal of cinema and militant politics seems to shadow the trajectory of UIQ.

I dream of ‘UIQ in Love’ as an action movie in which the spectacle will lie in the way action breaks down, is disabled or thrown off course. Nothing works, but there is poetry in this disaster, and humour too, a new way of seeing.

IN SEARCH OF UIQ (72 mins, HDV, 2013)

Written, directed and edited by Graeme Thomson & Silvia Maglioni
Original music and sound textures Graeme Thomson
Radio trailer mix Arnaud Forest (ARTE Radio)
With Benjamin Abitan, Julien Bancilhon, Novella Bonelli-Bassano, Cécile Duval, Julia Gouin, Daphné Heretakis, Erik Herson-Macarel, Silvia Maglioni, Francesca Martínez, Nina Negri, Graeme Thomson AND Félix Guattari
Narrators Lou Castel, Graeme Thomson, Silvia Maglioni
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