

The Conceptual Epigraph

Feminist Citational Practice Exercises

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“But, for me, even the most dazzling technical skills disappoint if the project is conceived in the manner of a recorded lecture, as a written text supplemented by images and sounds... The trajectory of some videographic critics has thus been to angle increasingly away from language, recognizing the power of words (both written and spoken) to overdetermine meanings and close down the expressive energy of images and sounds.”

—Jennifer M. Bean (2023)

[Feeling Videographic Criticism](#)

Part of an exploratory series, this exercise is designed to encourage feminist citational practices in which the process is envisioned as a means of public thinking through a media object without the pressure of polish or publishing. In other words, we encourage you to embrace the mess of discovering through doing to see where it can take you on the timeline.

Prompt: This exercise is inspired by “[The Videographic Epigraph](#)” of the Middlebury Scholarship in Sound and Image workshop designed by Christian Keathley, Jason Mittell and Catherine Grant. If you do not have experience with this exercise, we heartily recommend that you do it first. Unlike the exercise designed by Keathley, Mittell and Grant, where the purpose is to engage with text as a key tool for videographic criticism, this exercise asks the maker to respond to a text without explicitly citing the text it is responding to.

For this exercise, you will work with at least one other person. Together, you will choose a quote from a published piece on videographic criticism. This could be from a traditional essay or scholarship closely associated with a videographic work (e.g. a “Creator’s Statement”). Your video essays will use the same quote as inspiration to shape your piece, but you may not include this quote as text-on-screen, spoken audio, etc. in the actual video. Throughout the making, you should share your work with your collaborator(s) to see if the concept is legible in what you are creating. Finally, you should cite the source of the quote as well as the works of your collaborator(s) in your credits sequence.

The intent of our exercise is to think about how we can express an idea videographically without relying on explicit, explanatory text-on-screen. Simultaneously, it is an opportunity to engage with established videographic criticism to build a familiarity with existing scholarship and some of the critical modes that already accompany videographic essays (e.g. the “Creator’s Statement”). The exercise is designed for collaborations to encourage a community of practice, ways of working through materials together while in process, and to foster dialogues that challenge us to think carefully about what exactly is a citation, as well as how, when, and what we should cite.

Examples of places to look for/read about videographic criticism:

[*The Cine-Files*](#) (Issue 7: “The Video Essay: Parameters, Practice, Pedagogy”)

[*The Cine-Files*](#) (Fall 2020 Special Issue: “The Scholarly Video Essay”)

[*The Audiovisual Essay: Practice and Theory of Videographic Film and Moving Image Studies*](#).

[*Film Scalpel*](#)

[*Screen*](#) (Volume 60, Issue 3, Autumn 2019)

Consider:

How can we challenge ourselves to think more videographically to express ideas and convey arguments? How can we make these ideas legible without explicit explanatory techniques?

How do we build on and engage with existing scholarship on videographic scholarship?

How might engagement with collaborators shape your practice?

How does working through ideas with others throughout the process of making help inform your understanding of your source material?

What are some ways we can cite indirectly? How do you decide who or what to cite?

Guidelines

- Team up with at least one other person; you will each make your own video
- Chose the same quote to serve as your conceptual epigraph
 - The shared quote must come from “print” scholarship on videographic criticism
- The quote may NOT appear on screen, not even in the credits, not even as spoken audio
- You must cite the text source in the credits, as well as the people you teamed up with, including the names of their pieces
- 60 seconds - 3 mins long

*This exercise was devised by Lucy Fife Donaldson, Colleen Laird, Dayna McLeod, and Alison Peirse as part of [*Ways of Doing*](#) (2025).*