

glorious measure and your venerable cross'.

15. In codices, the Latin prayer does occasionally occur without the image of the cross. See, for example, London, British Library, Additional MS 37787, fol. 92r.

16. The printed broadsheet *STC* 14077c.64, held at Harvard's Houghton Library, associates Quiricus and Julitta with a wide range of protections including safety in childbirth, but not with the measured cross. See Gwara and Morse, 'Birth Girdle', pp. 61–62 and fig. 4. London, British Library, Sloane MS 783 B, fol. 215r, invokes the saints for protection against various dangers, with no mention of childbirth. An English prayer to the saints with no mention of childbirth appears on fol. 2v of Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 48. See Morse, 'St Margaret', p. 195.

17. London, British Library, Egerton MS 2781. Kathryn A. Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England: Three Women and Their Books of Hours* (London, Toronto and Buffalo: The British Library and University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 32, 36, and 315.

18. Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion*, p. 316. The rubric reads: 'Ceste oressoun apres ceste ruberike uous que estes gros denfaunt a matyn. quant uus le uotre leyt [culez].'

19. New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Beinecke MS 410; New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS Glazier 39; London, British Library, Additional MS 88929; London, British Library, Harley Ch. 43.A.14; and the printed sheet preserved as items 143 and 144 in the British Library's Harley 5919.

20. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley MS 177, fol. 61v, edited in C. T. Onions, 'A Devotion to the Cross Written in the South-West of England', *The Modern Language Review* 13:2 (1918): p. 229.

21. The charm as it appears in Harley Roll T.11 is edited in W. Sparrow-Simpson, 'On a Magical Roll Preserved in the British Library', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 48 (1892): p. 51. For more on the peperit charm, see Marianne Elsackers, "'In Pain Shall You Bear Children'" (Gen. 3:16): Medieval Prayers for a Safe Delivery', in Anne-Marie Korte (ed.) *Women and Miracle Stories: A Multidisciplinary Exploration* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 179–207. The earliest surviving examples of the Sator-Arepe formula in an English manuscript is written in the margin of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 41, p. 329.

22. The image of the side wound has often been described as a childbirth image: see, for example, Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York, NY: Zone Books, 2011), p. 202. However, I believe that this description limits the perceived function of the image, much as the description of rolls as 'birth girdles' limits their interpretation. As well as promising safety in childbirth, the side wound in Harley T.11 protects its owner against death by sword, spear, and shot; being overcome in battle; and from both fire and water.

23. For more on the side wound image and on measurement in medieval devotion see, for example, David S. Areford, 'Printing the Side Wound of Christ', Ch. 5 in *The Viewer and the Printed Image in Late Medieval Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 228–267.

24. Ann Eljenholm Nichols, 'O Vernicle: A Critical Edition', in Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown (eds.), *The Arma Christi in Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture: With a Critical Edition of 'O Vernicle'* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014).

25. These six manuscripts are Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS TYP 193; London, British Library, Royal MS 17 A xxvii; London, British Library, Additional MS 32006; Aberdeen, Sir Duncan Rice Library, Scottish Catholic Archives CB/57/9 (formerly in Edinburgh); San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, MS HM 142; and Marquess of Bath, Longleat MS 30. See Linne R. Mooney et al., *The Digital Index of Middle English Verse*, no. 5196.

26. Philadelphia, Redemptorist Archives of the Baltimore Province.

27. In the Latin prayer to Quiricus and Julitta on the dorse of the roll, the text reads '[mi]chi famule tue .N.: 'to me, your [female] servant, [name]'

28. London, British Library, Harley Ch. 43.A.14: 'tribue michi Willelmo famulo tuo': 'grant me, William, your servant'.

29. New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Beinecke MS 410: 'tribue mihi . Thome famulo tuo': 'grant me, Thomas, your servant'. This may be Thomas Barnak of Lincolnshire: see Barbara Shailor, *Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University*, vol. 2 (Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1987), pp. 308–311.

30. London, British Library, Additional MS 88929. The inscription, probably in Henry's own hand, reads 'Wylliam thomas I pray yow pray for me your lovyng master Prynce Henry'. The original owner or donor of the roll may have been the unidentified bishop depicted kneeling before the Trinity.

Scott McKendrick, John Lowden, and Kathleen Doyle, *Royal Manuscripts: The Genius of Illumination* (London: The British Library, 2011), p. 186.

31. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS Glazier 39. In a colophon at the end of the roll the scribe writes: 'Chanoun in Couerham with owten le | In /[th]e\ ordere of Premonstre | [Th]at time [th]is schrowyll I dyd wryte [...] In Rudby towne of my moder fre | I was borne wyth owtyne le | Schawyn I was to [th]e order clene | the vigill of all haloes evyn | My name it was percevall | Ihesu to [th]e blys he bryng vs all.' See John Block Friedman, *Northern English Books, Owners, and Makers in the Late Middle Ages* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995), p. 169.

32. Don C. Skemer, *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages, Magic in History* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 2006), p. 263.

33. Morse, 'St Margaret', p. 202.

34. London, British Library, Harley Roll T.11 also uses these masculine forms in prayers including the one to Quiricus and Julitta.

35. Gwara and Morse, 'Birth Girdle', p. 37.

36. Mary Morse, 'Two Unpublished Elevation Prayers in Takamiya MS56', *Journal of the Early Book Society* 16,(2013): p. 269.

37. Mary Agnes Edsall, 'Arma Christi Rolls or Textual Amulets: The Narrow Roll Format Manuscripts of "O Vernicle"', *Magic, Ritual & Witchcraft* 9 (2014): pp. 206–209. London, British Library, Harley Ch. 43.A.14, is 7 cm wide but just 46 cm long: too short to realistically serve as a girdle. British Library, Harley Roll T.11 measures 8.5 x 121 cm, while British Library, Additional MS 88929 measures 9.7 x 134.6 cm.

38. Daniel James Waller, 'Echo and the Histori-riola: Theorizing Narrative Incantation', *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 16:1 (2015): pp. 263–280.

39. Edina Bozóky, 'Mythic Mediation in Healing Incantations', in Bert Hall, Sheila Campbell, and David Klausner (eds), *Health, Disease and Healing in Medieval Culture* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1991), pp. 86–87.

40. One example of this charm, from British Library, Additional MS 33996, fol. 149r, is edited in Tony Hunt, *Popular Medicine in Thirteenth-Century England: Introduction and Texts* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1990), p. 29.

41. Matthew 9:20–2; Mark 5:25–34; Luke 8:43–8.

42. I am very grateful to Ian Green for the digital processing of manuscript images that made this text, and others in this roll, legible.

43. A prayer beginning 'Tibi laus tibi gloria' also appears in MS Glazier 39 but does not otherwise match the texts in these two rolls.

44. See, for example, MS Glazier 39 and British Library Additional MS 88929.

45. London, British Library, Additional MS 88929; New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS Glazier 39

46. For example, New York, Columbia University, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Plimpton Add. MS 4 contains the 'Fifteen O's' in English verse.

Making the Impossible, Possible: Ivor Beddoes and Superman's Flying Ballet

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Production design for British film has become firmly established as a field of academic study in recent years, with monographs including Laurie N. Ede's *British Film Design: A History*, delving into the 'built worlds, real worlds, fake worlds and other kinds of worlds that have been created by the British film industry over its one hundred and more years of existence'.¹ Such studies have made great inroads into the art of the production designer, looking in depth at the on-screen semiotics of design and its function within the *mise-en-scène*. Spatial studies of film design, including *Film Architecture and the Transnational Imagination*, have provided connections with the field of architecture, and have delved into the wider socio-political frameworks shaping the industry.² Fionnuala Halligan's recent *Movie Storyboards: the Art of Visualizing Screenplays* has done much to uncover the drawn storyboards originating from the art department, and has helped to shed light on lesser-known names working under the great production designers of the past century, while Chris Pallant's *Storyboarding – A Critical History* has taken an in-depth look at the storyboard within the context of production and practical filmmaking and has done much to reevaluate its position within the history of film. Yet within this, comparatively little is known about the specific role of the sketch artist and the vast swathes of paper artwork that they collectively produced, particularly those beyond the narrative-based storyboard.³ The sensory, material presence of paper often remains conspicuous by its absence. This is perhaps in no small part due to the fact that in relation to the working papers generated for a single production, relatively few survive within an archival context. But those objects that do are able to dialogue with an engaged viewer in the here and now, opening up new pathways into the design matrix surrounding film and the way in which paper is central to the visual fiber of a production.

Within the British Film Institute (BFI) National Archive is object SPD-611288: a twenty-metre-long scroll of paper, assembled from thirteen individual sheets of artist's paper, card and lining paper. Titled *Flying Ballet*, it was created by sketch artist Ivor Beddoes (1909–81) for the film *Superman* (1978) (fig. 10.1).

Beddoes was a British sketch and storyboard artist, matte painter, costume and set designer, painter, dancer, composer, and poet. He is best known for his film work, spanning more than thirty years (fig. 10.2). A versatile creative, Beddoes won a scholarship to art school at the age of fourteen before deciding to train as an actor and dancer. He spent six years at The Windmill Theatre in Piccadilly as a principal dancer and choreographer, and later as a designer and director, before he was conscripted for war duties in 1940 (fig. 10.3). Serving with the Royal Signal Corps in Egypt, Beddoes worked as a draughtsman for the armed forces while also gleaning a knowledge of Islamic costume and culture that would influence his later work. Some of his drawings from this period were published alongside those of Edward Ardizzone in *Life* (December, 1941).⁴ Returning to Britain in 1945, he had his first foray into film design under the tutelage of leading Art Director Alfred Junge, working on Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's masterful *Black Narcissus* (1947). The art department's atmospheric renderings of the Himalayas, all achieved via built sets on the stages of Pinewood, won the Academy Award that year for Best Art Direction.⁵

Beddoes would remain with the company to work on *The Red Shoes* (1948) the following year, under Artistic Director Hein Heckroth. Like Junge, Heckroth was a political emigre with a background in avant-garde cinema and German Expressionism, with an understanding of the power and prowess of the built set. But where Junge brought order and a creative rigor to the British art department, Heckroth's surrealist and painterly approach took Powell and Pressburger's productions, and Beddoes, in a somewhat different direction. Fully integrating costume and production design into a singular process, Beddoes would work closely with Heckroth on *The Red Shoes*, honing his already considerable skills as a draughtsman but also exploring the more expressive possibilities of design for film. He remained with Powell and Pressburger's production company, The Archers, for six years, within a studio system that was unusually intimate and familial. Creatives were drawn from the world of dance, music, and performance to make it the filmic rival to some of the great artistic and repertory companies of the early twentieth century.

Following his stint with The Archers, Beddoes went on to have a prolific and varied career, first taking up a contract with Technicolor before going on to work on a series of major box office successes, including *Star Wars* (1977) and *Superman* (1978). Rather than rising to the rank of Art Director, he chose to remain in the role of sketch artist. When interviewed about this choice, he stated:

'A few sketch artists become art directors, but this is a question of temperament. Once you become an Art Director you are involved in meetings, sets, politics, budgets, time, location hunting, which some enjoy. Others of us ask nothing better than to read a script, see it in our mind's eye and bring it to life with our imagination'.⁶

This may be a somewhat romanticised representation of his role. We know from his working papers that Beddoes' opinion was much-respected by those that he worked with, meaning that he inevitably became involved in meetings, politics, and location hunting, while a look at practising Art Directors and Production Designers reveals the level to which many in this role remain very hands-on, creative visionaries. Nevertheless, his comments point out where Beddoes' motivations lay; his primary interest remained the interpretive moment in which word became image.

Like many sketch artists, Beddoes took his skills and with a chameleon-like ability adapted them to each production that he worked on, absorbing the design aesthetic required.⁷ This trait of the sketch artist is typical of film design more broadly, and Donatella Barbieri's comments on the practice of design for live performance ring true in this context. The readings of pre-production performances that follow are indebted to her phenomenological study of archival costumes, where she trials new pathways into object-based design research.⁸ Read primarily as a pragmatic sign, design is intended to assimilate into the overall performance. However, in order to perform correctly it is often reducible, reproducible, and can ultimately be taken for granted and become unnoticed.⁹ Within its success lies its downfall. Design must be woven seamlessly

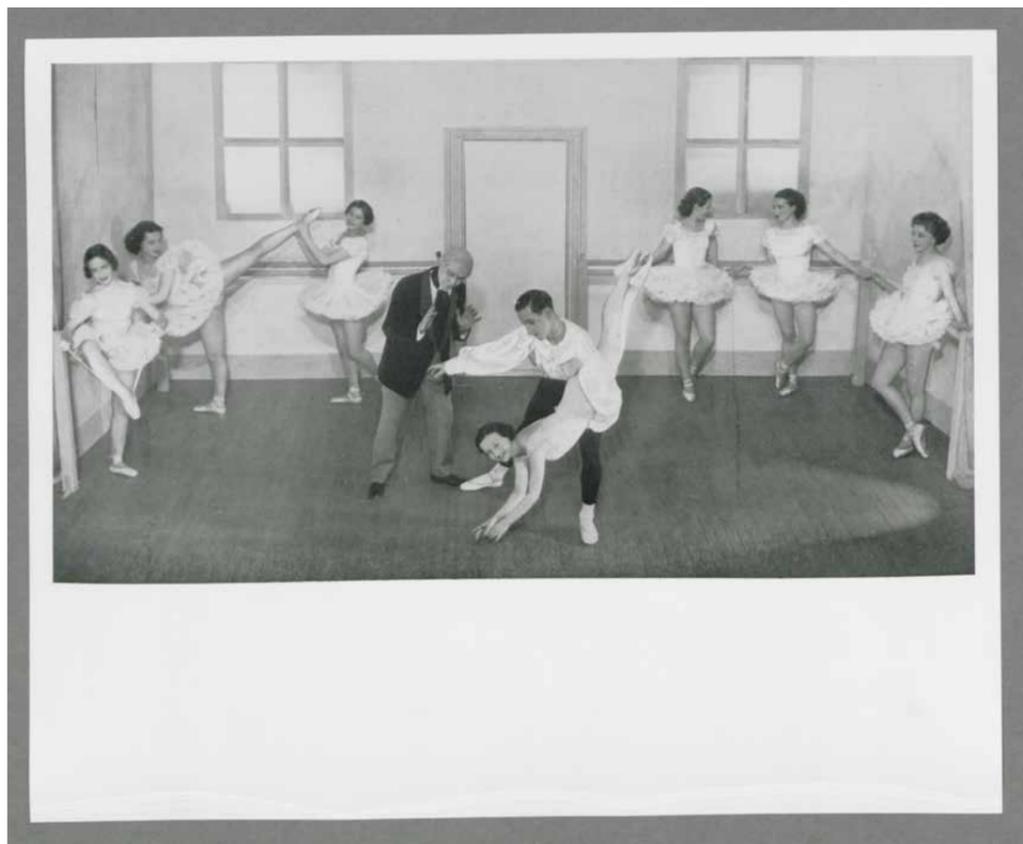
Fig. 10.1 (detail)
Ivor Beddoes,
Flying Ballet
(1977). Gouache
and poster paint on
paper, 380 x 2017
mm. London, BFI
National Archive,
SPD-611288.
Photo: © BFI
National Archive,
London.



Fig. 10.2
Photographic
portrait of Ivor
Beddoes (c.1969).
Silver gelatin print,
200 x 250 mm. BFI
National Archive,
London. Photo:
© BFI National
Archive, London.



Fig. 10.3
Ivor Beddoes
on stage at the
Windmill Theatre
(c.1933). Silver
gelatin print, 200
x 250 mm. BFI
National Archive,
London. Photo:
© BFI National
Archive, London.



into the identity of the production to achieve its aims, but in doing so, the narrative of its creation disappears, too. Yet embedded in each archival object is the ability to recover this complex history of creation and performance, and to interrogate the palimpsestic layers of these generative forces within the final production.

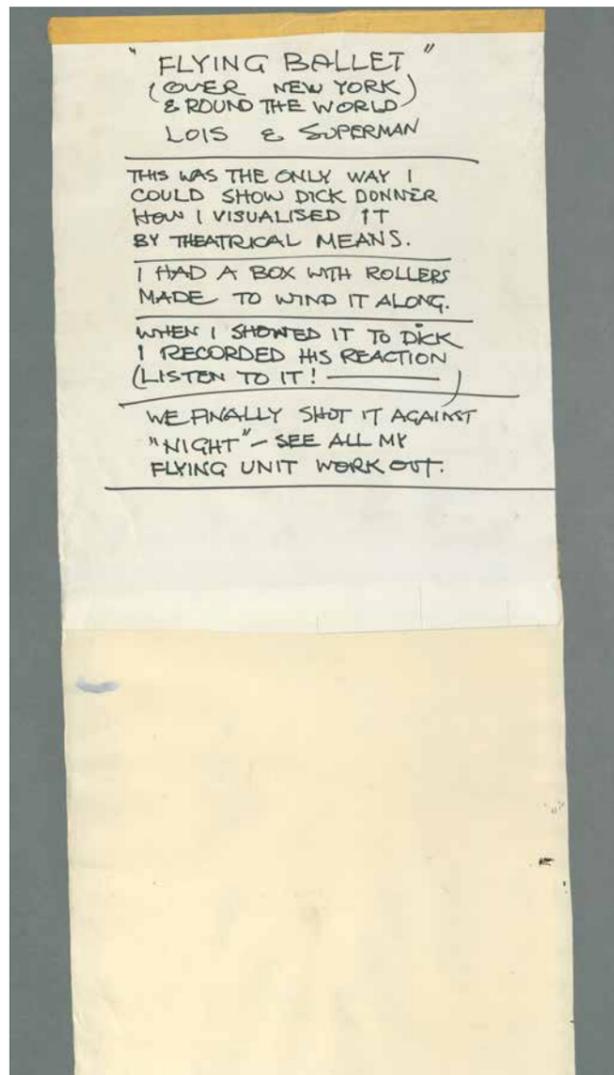
The Ivor Beddoes Collection, now cared for by the BFI National Archive, reveals a little of the nuanced design process for film involving many minds, hands, and eyes, each one often producing objects that are highly creative but necessarily subsumed into a wider idea to produce a coherent outcome. An examination of the diverse body of work produced by the sketch artist offers an opportunity to explore many of these ideas before they are filtered down into the final vision: the first glimmer of a generative visual vocabulary for a narrative that has hitherto only existed as words.

These paratexts unravel our understanding of the film as singular entity, and instead stress the multi-layered, multifaceted semiotics of the filmic process. The film is neither singular nor linear in origin, and once a dialogue is opened up with the pre-production text(s), the assembled reel can instead be seen as a constituent within a much wider landscape of elliptical performances. The Beddoes Collection is unique within the context of the BFI, offering a broad, detailed, and often autobiographical rendering of this process. Bequeathed to the BFI in 1981, the collection comprises over 2000 drawings and spans sixty productions. A holistic view of the collections reveals that the aesthetic of Beddoes' output ebbed and flowed, but it also uncovers the passions and obsessions to which his work as an individual artist remained true. And so, it is perhaps no coincidence that as late as 1977, for a film centred around a caped super hero, Beddoes titled one of his sketches *Flying Ballet*.

The moment in which Richard Donner's *Superman* (1978) emerged is significant. During the 1980s, Tom Gunning's seminal concept of the 'cinema of attractions' entered the academic world to redefine early cinema, examining the earliest years of film exhibition as a period in which cinema delighted in its powerful ability to magnetise the audience with acts of direct visceral appeal.¹⁰ These spectacular interruptions, encounters, and staged moments often delighted in film's ability to celebrate the agitating qualities of its own apparatus, and were rooted in a history shared with music halls, variety theatre, fairgrounds, carnivals, and circus thrills. Gunning's essay notes the recurrence of cinematic attractions in later years, and a prominent return to its key principles during the years in which he was writing, stating: 'recent spectacle cinema has reaffirmed its roots in stimulus and carnival rides, in what might be called the Spielberg–Lucas–Coppola cinema of effects'.¹¹ Gunning's speculative comments on special effects have since been re-examined in more detail, with Dick Tomasovic furthering that the triumphing of consumption culture in the 1970s and 1980s sparked a visual aggressiveness amongst a new generation of filmmakers, which he designates as 'heirs of a long lineage of American directors extending back to Cecil B. de Mille'.¹² These filmmakers rediscovered the taste for the spectacular, with Tomasovic suggesting that *Jaws* (1975) and *Star Wars* (1977) aspire to visual shocks that unmistakably produce 'grandiloquent images in a story full of new developments and repetitions'.¹³ There are obvious differences in *Superman's* cinematic writing and sensibility to the work of the directors pinpointed by Gunning (although Tomasovic does reference *Superman* in passing), but what is clear from Donner's instructions to Beddoes is that the spectacle of the cinematographic machine—and specifically its ability to render the human form in flight—would provide one of the most powerful attraction values within *Superman*, using special effects to celebrate film's ability to produce a narrative-subsuming spectacle.

Of particular importance to Donner was the scene in which Superman (Christopher Reeve) takes Daily Planet reporter Lois Lane (Margot Kidder) on a moonlit flight over the mythical all-city, Metropolis. The concept behind it, states Donner in interview with the Director's Guild of America, was: 'Just a couple of teenagers going for a ride for the first time. Sweet, honest, and real.'¹⁴ He elaborates:

Fig. 10.4
Ivor Beddoes,
Inscription for
Flying Ballet
(1977). Marker
pen applied to the
verso. London, BFI
National Archive,
SPD-611288.
Photo: © BFI
National Archive,
London.



With the idea 'wouldn't it be nice if you could fly', we wanted something subjective for the audience. It forced subjective shots through their emotions, like [Lois Lane's] fear of looking down. It's the reality for her of feeling 'I'm flying, I don't believe this.' It's what we would all go through.¹⁵

Technical innovations and subjective point-of-view shots would be used to impart a visceral and emotional disbelief akin to some of cinema's earliest experimentations with the tools at its disposal: propelling the audience into the sensory experience of flight.

A dedicated 'Flying Unit' helped to map out and then shoot the sequence over several months. Drawing on a wealth of special effects expertise, the sequence introduced an innovative front projection system to achieve the finished shot. Actors were photographed while suspended in front of a background image, dimly projected from the front onto a purpose-built screen, which reflected light back at many times the original intensity into a combined camera-projector. The result was a clear and intense photographic reproduction of both the actors and the background plate. The illusion of movement was created by zooming in on Reeve while making the front projected image appear to recede. Everything was shot on a built set at Pinewood studios.

The Art Director was John Barry, fresh from his Academy Award-winning work on *Star Wars* (1977). Barry was a highly accomplished designer who worked with a team of those skilled in paper and practice-led design. Having already worked with Barry on previous productions,

Beddoes was responsible for drawn processes both within the pre-production and production stages, contributing a large number of sketches for concept design, storyboarding, continuity, and also painting glass plates and mattes for the film, two of which he kept within his collection.¹⁶ He worked alongside a number of other sketch artists for the scene, including Roy Carnon.

Within the shooting script, the Superman and Lois flight sequence is titled 'Flying Montage', described as: 'A series of aerial POVS INTERCUT with flying reaction shots of SUPERMAN and LOIS as they circle the world, passing through different time zones.' The sequence was intended to take in key international landmarks including the Place D'Etoile, St Peter's Square, the Great Pyramids, the Taj Mahal, and the Great Wall of China, before returning to Metropolis (New York). Following meetings with Donner and Barry, Beddoes was tasked with sketching out some of these details. But whereas the script describes a 'montage' of intercut point-of-view shots, the *Flying Ballet* chooses not to stage a series of individual sketches, but instead presents an extended musing on the subjective spectacle of flight. It contains a retrospectively applied inscription (fig. 10.4):

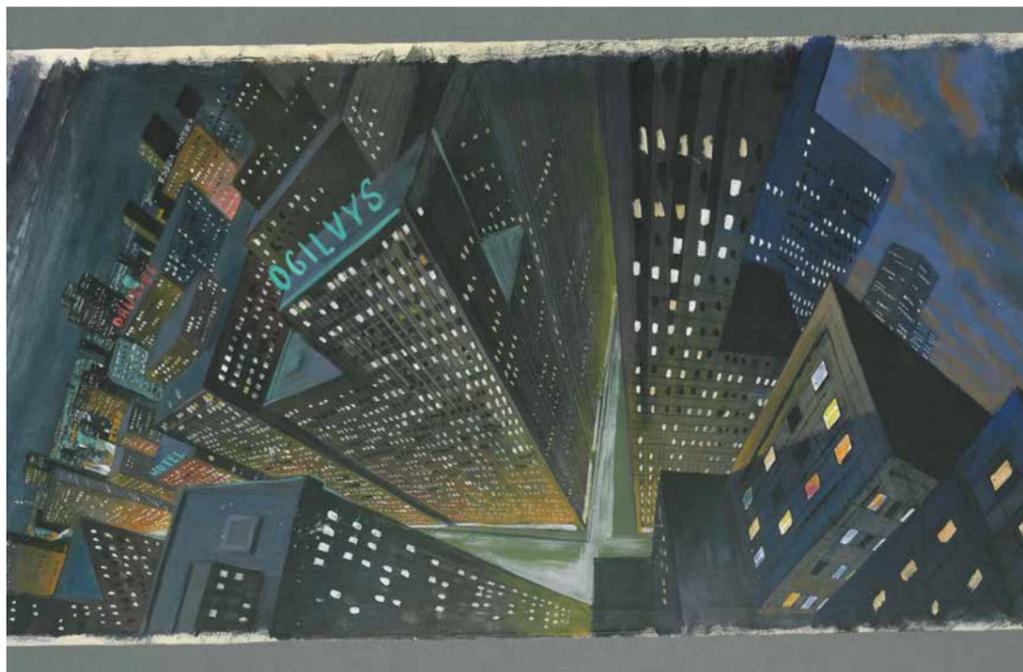
FLYING BALLET
(OVER NEW YORK
& ROUND THE WORLD)
LOIS & SUPERMAN
THIS WAS THE ONLY WAY
I COULD SHOW DICK DONNER
HOW I VISUALISED IT BY THEATRICAL MEANS
WHEN I SHOWED IT TO DICK
I RECORDED HIS REACTION
LISTEN TO IT! —
WE FINALLY SHOT IT AGAINST
"NIGHT" — SEE ALL MY
FLYING UNIT WORK.

Unfortunately, the recording referenced by Beddoes was not archived alongside the *Flying Ballet*. But it is nonetheless still possible to sense in the extant document an urgent sense of necessity, conveying a pivotal idea within a wider set of complex processes.¹⁷ In its collected and conserved state within the Archive, alongside the presence of the inscription and artist's title, it is possible to read Beddoes' scroll as a theatrical, artistic, and cultural construct in its own right.

As the embodiment of just one problem-solving exercise within the complex and multifaceted design process, the *Flying Ballet* helps to articulate the performativity of paper within film, and the crucial relationship it has to the finished design work that we see on-screen. The format and scale of an object such as this grants it a certain amount of agency, as does the way in which its creator has knowingly curated and inscribed it within his collection. When this inscription is sited within the Archive, it draws attention to the complex work done on paper to produce a visual effect. It identifies itself as source and becomes the visual and material embodiment of an idea. It also illustrates details or even whole concepts cut or discarded at an early stage, conveying that which is left out or left behind. While the scroll presents a flight around the world, through seasons and across continents, we know from the inscription and the finished film that the Director ultimately chose to shoot against the nocturnal skyline of Metropolis.

In this sense, it renders on paper a unique here-and-now as experienced by the pre-production audience, in this instance the Director. It shifts our notion of audience and reception, underlining the fact that a filmic production contains within it many more performances and iterations of an idea than those seen within the finished shot. Much more than generative sketches, we know from Beddoes' inscription that the designer anticipates a layered reception, in which the object

Fig. 10.5
Ivor Beddoes, detail
from *Flying Ballet*
(1977). Gouache
and poster paint
on paper. London,
© BFI National
Archive, SPD-
611288. Photo: BFI
National Archive,
London.



is placed on rollers and scrolled before the director in pre-emptive, theatrical performance.¹⁸ The inscription identifies this moment as a live performance, with the scroll sited firmly at the centre of it. As an object, it was always designed to have agency and to enter into dialogue with its audience. The written inscription ensures the continuation of this dialogue within the Archive. *Flying Ballet* points towards a much wider, near-Deleuzian territory of indeterminacy and excess; a constellation of forces in which scroll, performance(s), reel and screening(s) enact a ballet of influences that we might collectively term, the 'film'.

The layering of live and recorded performances emulates Beddoes' earlier work on *The Red Shoes*, but in such a way as to align the *Flying Ballet* with a sensory and visceral thrill. Designed to enrapture its audience, the *Flying Ballet* presents a scrolling, shifting, organic rendering that provides a direct line of evolution from paper to celluloid, elliptically taking us from the illusion of a continuous page to that of the continuous reel. Beddoes' intense focus on audience, reception, theatre, and spectacle aligns the pre-production performance with the final effect: a cinematic attraction. But in doing so, it underlines that what we perceive as staged departures from diegetic unity into exhibitionism or spectacle, are more often than not built on skilled and seamless acts that harmoniously unite disparate ideas, shots, and frames into a projectable whole. The scroll, manually turned on rollers and unabashedly paper-based in its performance, draws attention to the mechanics of its creation and use. And as a relatively rare example of a film design scroll of this size within an archival context—the only one currently archived at the BFI, for example—it presents its own visceral thrills to viewers and researchers today.

The scroll sits amongst a wider network of drawings by Beddoes that intertextually map out the mise-en-scène. Of particular importance is the city, *Metropolis*, which Donner selected for production as a direct result of the scrolling performance. Upon completion of *Superman*, Beddoes drafted a letter to Donner, which reflects on why and how he was selected to map out the urban geography:

I want to go back to when we all crowded on to *Superman* with a world ahead of us – away back in Shepperton, early in 1977. After I had worked out the [Marlon] Brando sequences, you gave me the end of part 2 to storyboard because it involved building Broadway with its 6 lane traffic,

its Winston and Coca Cola signs up on the lot. John Barry had set it down, Reg Bream had built a model. Ernie Archer came on the film to take charge and build the Cecil B. de Mille monster that would allow for 'The Destruction of New York' (as we've always called the end of part 2). [...] I drew a sample of a hundred or so sketches for you, and Tom Mankiewicz saw, vetted, partly rearranged and made some cuts – and finally agreed to the basis for the whole sequence. The set for the lot was estimated at around a million pounds. Owing to money difficulties Ernie's project was whittled down to the top 4 storeys [sic.] of the Planet Building – and a scheme was evolved to spend the 'million pounds' not on a mammoth exterior set but only in part + to build a big, big [author's emphasis] model on the 007 stage where we could float cameras over it for down shots and put cameras down at street level for up shots + f.p. [front projection].¹⁹

Collectively developing a fictionalised space that had already gone through multiple iterations within the comic book genre, many of the art department's resultant references for *Metropolis*—and those of the original graphic illustrations—evoke New York City. The script and inscription go so far as to title it 'New York'. As Jason Bainbridge points out, the city plays a crucial role within the comic book genre, working as a generic space adaptable to the demands of the narrative, toying with the familiarity of New York's iconic and towering urbanity, but also as the repository for phantasms of the modern self (figs 10.5–10.6).²⁰ Beddoes' renderings identify with these past graphic manifestations, but they are also distinctly filmic. The forced perspective and geometric identity recalls Fritz Lang's allegory to modernity, *Metropolis* (1927), and all its implied socio-cultural yearnings, anxieties and limitations.²¹ When scrolled, it gives the impression of a city coming into view at night before transitioning into day and disappearing into the distance; a city of change; a city in flux.

In the city's cinematic manifestation, the blockbuster attractions identified by Tomasovic again comes into play. Although Tomasovic analyses the recent *Spiderman* franchise for its spectacular urban exploits, his comments can also be retrospectively applied to *Superman*; particularly



Fig. 10.6
Ivor Beddoes,
sketch of
Metropolis for
Superman (1977).
Gouache on paper.
BFI National
Archive, London.
Photo: © BFI
National Archive,
London.

when mapped against paper items that outline both what was but also what might have been. Beddoes' drawings for *Metropolis* concern the gaze ('vertiginous effects, shocks of colours, speed of camera movements and editing, grandiloquence of special effects') and the body in exhibition (the spectacle and prowess of Superman's body in flight repeats throughout the drawings).²² The detailed renderings of *Metropolis*'s upper layers in all its glimmering and hectic glory is a city composed of New York fragments, both real and imaginary. And the entire scene is predicated on Superman's already considerable 'acrobatic exploits against vertiginous buildings and gigantic billboards, apocalyptic battles scenes in the sky' (on which Beddoes was particularly keen), all rooted in 'the modern experience of urban life, its unpredictable irruption of aggressiveness, and which attractions have to compete with'.²³

Within this energetic spatial realm, the performer's body is central to the designer's thoughts but often necessarily divorced from its context. *The Flying Ballet* was designed without the body, but in its various manifestations has a performativity intricately related to and mindful of the human form. Throughout the scroll, there are noticeable expanses where the body is conspicuous by its absence: it gestures towards movement even where there is none. It evokes an on-set world, created both by space and form, suggestive of the final scene in which the background performs and is animated through projection, while static actors must give the illusion of embodied movement as they are suspended on wires.

As Beddoes' titling suggests, the relationship is somewhat balletic; an intimate and complex dynamic between stillness and movement that draws attention to the human form through a series of deliberate and formalised gestures; a feat requiring presence and strength in the actors performing it, and where the scenography must work as hard as the body. Alongside the *Flying Ballet*, Beddoes was asked to draft a number of continuity sketches for the scene, carefully outlining the camera set-ups and angles required to achieve each shot (fig. 10.7). Within these, the representation and form taken by the body presents certain dance-like qualities. Rooted in the baroque figurative arts, ballet's elegant lines and strength of form appealed to the performer, costumier, and draughtsman in Beddoes. Indeed, the term 'Flying Ballet' is not unique to Beddoes, and is one that may well have been borrowed from his time in theatre. The term often appears in relation to hybrid dance-

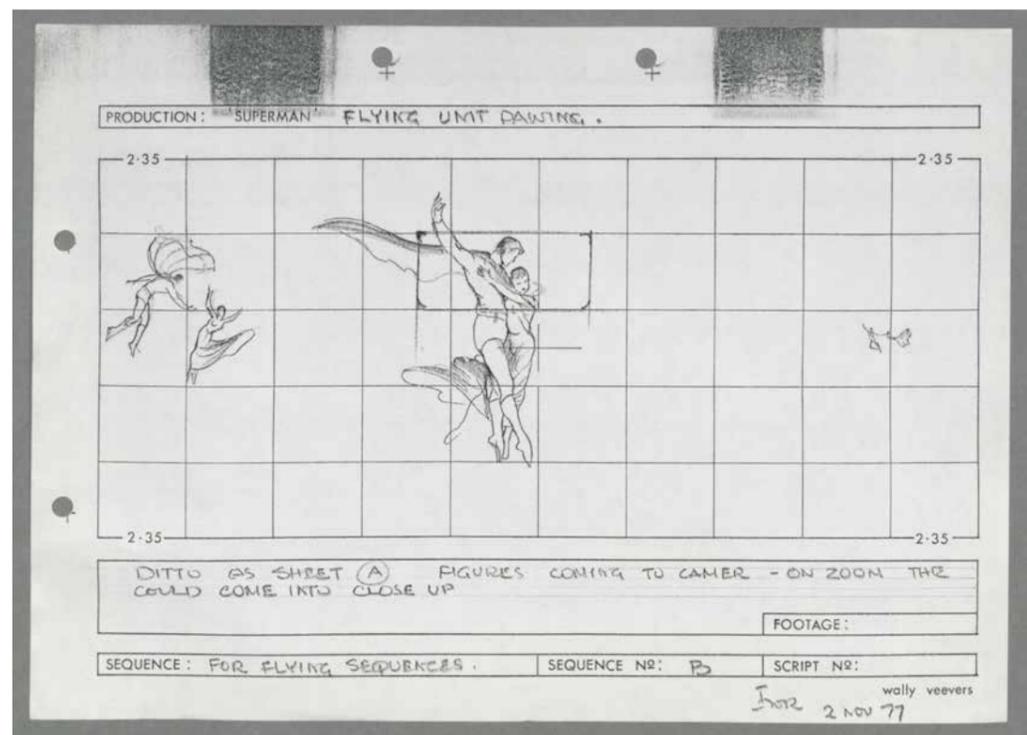


Fig. 10.7
Ivor Beddoes,
continuity
sketches for
Superman (1977).
Reprographic copies
of pencil drawings
on paper. BFI
National Archive,
London. Photo:
© BFI National
Archive, London.

acrobatic performances at the turn of the century, which exploited new developments in lighting, photography, and stagecraft to create ever more beautiful and spectacular performances of the human form in flight. As just one example, in 1896 George Conquest, working for the Britannia Theatre, introduced a 'flying ballet' in which the fairies seemed to float through the air: a special effect with wires, animated scenography and lighting that exploited the same basic, illusory principles later expanded on by *Superman*.²⁴ These theatrical performances, much like cinema's attractions, reached out to viewers in their seats in order to create audience participation, which could be emotional, sensorial, or intellectual, sometimes even going so far as to employ circus and fairground techniques to suspend performers above the audience, or to introduce pyrotechnical reverberations below the seats of the audience.²⁵

As Laurent Guido has furthered, the emergence of cinema more broadly can be related to a context marked by the vast expansion of interest in bodily movement, at the crossroads of aesthetic and scientific preoccupations.²⁶ Within early film, numerous shots were effectively focused on athletic and acrobatic prowess, as well as traditional or exotic dances. Furthermore, *féeries* in colour, such as those by Georges Méliès or Segundo de Chomón, gave great importance to the procession of young women in tights inspired by ballet or music hall reviews.²⁷ This, alongside an increased scientific understanding and photography of human mobility, 'created an element that contained not only an aesthetic, but also even a spectacular dimension. Dance, just as sports and gymnastics, imposed itself at the beginning of the twentieth century as a harmonious way of organising body movement. It was considered that the muscular mimicry put into motion by physical performance would position spectators under an irresistible rhythmic spell'.²⁸

The result was a powerful and attractive medium for both dance and cinematographic experimentalists in the years in which Beddoes was working as a choreographer, and a set of body-oriented principles to which cinema would return in the 1970s and 1980s.²⁹ He also trained during a period in which the inspired handling of the dance vocabulary by companies such as the Ballet Russes paved the way for more inventive interpretations of the classical form, understanding the relevance that such a deeply traditional discipline could have in new contexts and settings.³⁰

His later renderings of Superman and Lois in the *Flying Ballet* imply both natural and choreographed movement, and the constant transitions between the two that dancers must make. Fixing a formal repertory of poses in ink, his drawings present flight as an act of dance, to be choreographed against the scenic, scrolling backdrop of the night's sky. This is not to suggest that Beddoes was the only influence within this scene. A myriad of other individuals guided and shaped the finished sequence, not least those of the Director and Production Designer, some of whom may also have recognised the relationship between dance and flight and instructed Beddoes accordingly. But isolated from their context and presented in sequence within an individual's collection, the drawings collectively underline the prevailing ideas that drove Beddoes, which may well have impacted the finished shot in both direct and indirect ways. Tracing dance iterations through the collection reveal Beddoes repeating and refining the same composition, much like a dancer practising a time-honoured motion.

Within the finished sequence, the actors were similarly expected to practice and repeat a series of formalised movements to achieve the illusion of easy weightlessness. Required to hold their bodies in agreed, static poses—embodying movement while creating none—they overcame the hurdles presented by wires and harnesses to present a vision of ease and grace (fig. 10.8). In their successful presentation of these qualities, the scene initiates a theatrical dialogue with an imagined spectator, subjectively asked by the camera to occupy the position of Lois Lane, whose fantasy of what it is to remain static in the comfort of both Superman's and the cinema seat's embrace, and yet to witness the thrill of the world moving past at speed comes into play. The act of watching the flying ballet on-screen is an on-going physical adjustment and response to a shifting spatial universe.

The 'work' of the scroll within the pre-production process is therefore vital in the creation

Fig. 10.8
Film still for
Superman,
Superman
(Christopher
Reeves) and Lois
Lane (Margot
Kidder) in flight
(1978). Silver
gelatin print, 200
x 250 mm. BFI
National Archive,
London. Photo:
© BFI National
Archive, London.



and reception of the final performance. While removing the human form from the frame, but nevertheless retaining the sensibilities of performance and dance; once animated on rollers, the scroll elicits a somewhat primitive but embodied and experiential response from its micro-audience to the act of flight, alongside a reading and decoding of visual signs that anticipates the finished shot. The exploitation of shared, embodied and cultural fantasies of flight play a central role. Unrestricted by time or space, the scroll takes us the full circumference of the globe. The site and locations are not about geographical or architectural accuracy, but about embodying the fantasy of moving across continents and time zones, projecting surface, colour, form, and materials as if remembered hazily, spontaneously springing up from memory, rather than copied accurately from life or research resources (specific visual references are not made to all of the landmarks identified in the script, for example).

The painterly renderings are sensory and impressionistic. Given the practical implications of a painting twenty metres in length, the material composition of the scroll, and Beddoes' understanding of theatrical scenography, it is likely that Beddoes created some of the shorter lengths individually—the scene for *Metropolis*, for example, is on a noticeably shorter length of artist's paper—and moved through other scenes continuously; ebbing and flowing, he concealed the material joins of the paper with a swift and harmonious application of paint. The paint striations move from left to right, while the tonal range of the painting ebbs between darkness and light. Starting and ending in darkness, Beddoes' visual awareness is typically attentive to the elliptical nature of the performance, and the need to present a complete visual sequence to his intended audience, the Director, who necessarily has a co-authoring, responsive presence within the object. To draw again on Barbieri's summary of design for live performance: in crafting it, the creator was required to role-play the Director, anticipating both his and the wider audience's reception at every stage of the process.³¹ The form such an object takes is determined by the 'desire to project into the moment of performance' (in this instance, a dialogue with the director), as much as from 'the balancing act of artistic synthesis and practical concerns'.³² It is inscribed with

the notion of its performance from its inception. Beddoes' work is multi-layered and profoundly visual. The addition of the inscription anticipates an audience beyond that of cinematic reception, instigating a further performance in the Archive before a viewer who he places in a subjective position: 'listen to it!', he writes.

In the majority of cases, these pre-production items are generated for multiple but often invisible performances in frequently private moments that exist as a prelude to shooting. Separated from this context they can often become confusing and their meanings obscured. Beddoes' interpretive strategies mark the object as part of a creative process that mediates between design, performance, and the gaze of both a known and unknown audience. The scroll contains within it clues to several different performances. This object is now consultable in further 'staged' encounters within the Archive, in which curators, archivists, researchers, and other interested parties seek to explore the hidden performances of the pre-production process.

The complex object that is a pre-production sketch—constituted through craft and recontextualised in its archived state—can offer new ways to articulate its performative values. Through its material clues it demonstrates how an image can perform as both part of and also apart from the film reel. The scroll is an object on which multiple filmic performances are predicated: but archived as an object in its own right, it is possible to look outwards to future perspectives that place paper-based performances very much at the centre of the enquiry.

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- Laurie N. Ede, *British Film Design: A History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), p. 1.
- Tim Bergfelder, Sue Harris, and Sarah Street (eds), *Film Architecture and the Transnational Imagination: Set Design in European 1930s Cinema* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007).
- Fionnuala Halligan, *Movie Storyboards: The Art of Visualizing Screenplays* (San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 2013). As Halligan points out, much of the art department's work, while vital, is intended to be quick and disposable. It is only recently that some of the art-forms within it, including storyboarding, are gaining in reputation and recognition.
- Examples of Beddoes' drawings from this period are now held by the Imperial War Museum, London. See <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1973>; <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1975>; <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1974>. Further information on Beddoes' work with the Ministry of Information can be found in the war artists archives, Imperial War Museum, catalogue no. ART/WA2/01/065.
- For an overview of Powell and Pressburger's approach to design see Ede, *British Film*, pp. 50–58.
- Transcript of Ivor Beddoes in conversation, BFI National Archive, London.
- His sketches under Ken Adam, for example, look remarkably like those of the great designer, particularly Adam's famed designs for the James Bond franchise. For examples of Adam's work see Christopher Frayling, *Ken Adam and the Art of Production Design* (London: Faber & Faber, 2005).
- Donatella Barbieri, 'Encounters in the Archive: Reflections on Costume', *V&A Online Journal 4* (Summer 2012), accessed 31 May 2016, <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/journals/research-journal/issue-no.-4-summer-2012/encounters-in-the-archive-reflections-on-costume/>.
- Barbieri, 'Encounters in the Archive'.
- Tom Gunning, 'The Cinema of Attraction: Early Film, its Spectator and the Avant-Garde', *Wide Angle 8*: 3/4 (1986): pp. 63–70.
- Gunning, 'The Cinema of Attraction'.
- Dick Tomasovic, 'The Hollywood Cobweb: New Laws of Attraction (The Spectacular Mechanics of Blockbusters)', in Wanda Strauven (ed.), *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), p. 311. Chris Pallant also gives an account of the Cinema of Effects as it relates to the 'visual texts' of the pre-production process, specifically the storyboard. Although focusing on Gunning's triumvirate of Spielberg-Lucas-Coppola, he does reference Beddoes and discuss another of the productions that he worked on, *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back* (1980). See Chris Pallant, *Storyboarding – A Critical History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p.130.
- Tomasovic, 'The Hollywood Cobweb', p. 311.
- Richard Donner in interview with Robert Abele, 'Fly Me to the Moon', Directors' Guild of America website, accessed 31 May 2016, <https://www.dga.org/Craft/DGAQ/All-Articles/1302-Spring-2013/Shot-to-Remember-Superman.aspx>.
- Donner and Abele, 'Fly Me to the Moon'.
- BFI National Archive, BED-146 to BED-149; BED-160.
- A project to capture, identify, and archive relevant oral history recordings was started by the BFI in collaboration with Beddoes in 1981, but unfortunately was not completed before the time of his death.
- This technique has a history in scenography and has also been used to a lesser extent in film design, including a year earlier for the famed title sequences of *Star Wars* (a production on which Beddoes also worked). Examples of Beddoes' continuity sketches for *Star Wars* are held by the BFI National Archive, object number PD-18649. Three sketches are also illustrated in Chris Pallant, *Storyboarding: A Critical History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) pp.17–18.
- Ivor Beddoes, draft correspondence to Richard Donner (8 January 1979). BFI National Archive, London.
- Jason Bainbridge, "I am New York": Spider-Man, New York City, and the Marvel Universe', in Jörn Ahrens and Arno Meteling (eds), *Comics and the City: Urban Space in*

Print, Picture and Sequence (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), p. 164.

21. See Tom Gunning, *Fritz Lang: Allegories of Vision and Modernity* (London: BFI, 2000)

22. Tomasovic, 'The Hollywood Cobweb', p. 311.

23. Tomasovic, 'The Hollywood Cobweb', p. 311.

24. Janice Norwood, 'Visual Culture and the Repertoire of a Popular East-End Theatre', in A. Heinrich, K. Newey, and J Richards (eds), *Ruskin, the Theatre and Victorian Visual Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 135.

25. Norwood, 'A Popular East-End Theatre', p. 135.

26. Laurent Guido, 'Rhythmic Bodies/Movies: Dance as Attraction in Early Film Culture', in Strauven, *Cinema of Attractions*, p. 139.

27. Guido, 'Rhythmic Bodies/Movies', p.143. With roots in the magical colours, mechanical trickery and dance-like movements of the *feerie* plays of the nineteenth century, these films often display their theatrical provenance through the lively choreography of sets, costumes and the human form. See for example *The Frog* (1908), *The Spring Fairy* (1902), *The Kingdom of the Fairies* (1903), *Modern Sculptors* (1908).

28. Guido, 'Rhythmic Bodies/Movies', p.143.

29. Although not possible to discuss in detail within the parameters of this chapter, blockbusters exploiting dance as spectacle enjoyed significant box office success in this decade, from *Fame* (1980) to *Footloose* (1984), *Flashdance* (1983) to *Dirty Dancing* (1987), arguably signaling a return to exhibitionist practices around the choreography of the human form.

30. For an overview of the transformational role of the Ballet Russes see Jane Pritchard, *Diaghilev and the Golden Age of the Ballets Russes 1909–29* (London: V&A, 2011).

31. Barbieri, 'Encounters', n.p.

32. Barbieri, 'Encounters', n.p.

Piero Manzoni's Line: From the Roll to the Infinite Painting

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