

Beyond George Stringwood

collected writings



Joris Lindhout [Red.]

Beyond George Stringwood

Collected writings

Joris Lindhout [*Red.*]

© 2005 Joris Lindhout

Written by George Stringwood
Edited with an introduction by Joris Lindhout.
Cover design by Joris Lindhout.

Introduction to this writing

Narrative is one of the ways in which knowledge is organised, and storytelling is the way knowledge organised like this is passed on.

Knowledge organised in narrative is like a gift: the content is wrapped up in a nice wrapper, and the act of unwrapping is just as important as its content (in order to resemble a gift it is required that the wrapper is attractive and that it has nice content).

Because of the relation between the wrapper and the content, it is also a difficult and “unsafe” way to organise knowledge. Look for instance at one of the oldest collection of narratives known to man, The Bible. A lot of discussion takes place around interpretational issues. Times have changed dramatically, and people cannot make a clear division between wrapper and content anymore. This is also the reason why the world of science discarded the wrapper and made an effort to develop a language capable of organising knowledge in its purest form.

On the other hand, a whole industry developed itself around the wrapper: the entertainment industry. This industry has grown tremendously, maybe because there was a necessity for just wrappers, since in our profession we already deal with just knowledge in its purest form. Both these formats (the wrapper and the gift – diversion and content) in which knowledge can be organised are specialisations derived from the original format narrative. What would happen when we bring those specialisations together again, so the content and the wrapper can again form a gift?

This essay consists of a few documents written by a contemporary storyteller named George Stringwood. His re-search concerns the question posed above, and illustrates it with one of his works and a short (unfinished) movie. My choice for these documents as content for this essay is best expressed by a quote from Deleuze’s “Cinema 1, the movement image”:

“Bergson’s second thesis – although it stops halfway – makes possible another way of looking at the cinema, a way in which it would no longer be just the perfected apparatus of the oldest illusion, but, on the contrary, the organ for perfecting the new reality.”

George was concerned with the border between the real (the content) and the virtual (the wrapper), and cinema (the medium of George’s interest) being both a manner and a method to mediate knowledge organised as narrative. George is the person most likely to re-unite the wrapper and the content and to give us the gift that he creates with those.

The texts included are the first piece of George’s autobiography, supported by a web of footnotes he uses to explain his theoretical basis (his convictions), a list of films, books, exhibitions that probably inspired him in his search, and the script for the short film he last worked on.

As a teenager I was addicted to a certain computer game which, even though it wasn’t played with a VR-helmet and VR-gloves, felt to me like a virtual-reality game. This was in the days when there still existed arcades in the Netherlands (big spaces crammed with computer games). I think I must have

washed every car on the block at least once a week in order to make enough money to go and play the game at the arcade. Years later I saw a strange film, a western, during a public screening of short movies. It intrigued me because of the symbiosis between the image and the soundtrack, between America and the Netherlands, and between history and present time. It felt unfinished, but provoked enough questions in order to constantly keep me trying to reconstruct and finish it in my head.

By chance, I found out that the creator of the game and the director of the short movie was one and the same: a guy named "George Stringwood". Curious if this Stringwood did some more cool stuff, I Googled him. It was very hard to find any information about him. His scarce fans seemed to be dwelling deep in the underground. I eventually managed to find out that George had aspirations to become a famous Hollywood character, and was well on his way to achieve this ambition. He was working on a short movie together with a New York based independent producer, and had just finished the first shoot for it in the Netherlands. He made an appointment with the producer to meet in an editing suite in NYC and to make a first rough edit with a professional editor. However, he never arrived in NYC.

If we are to believe the airline he was supposed to fly with, he did board the plane, but the American customs have no record of someone named George Stringwood entering the USA on that date. Basically, nobody knows where he is. The police stopped searching over a year ago which in all likelihood means that they assume he is dead.

On the usenet (<http://www.deja.com>) different theories circulate; the most interesting one being that George Stringwood was a fictional character in the first place. The guy who "played" George is supposed to be obsessed with the theories lying at the base of the works made by George and has totally lost track of reality, is living his life as an actor. In other words, he is acting out his life.

All texts written by George Stringwood on the following pages were being sent to me by different people who met George shortly before his disappearance. For this I would like to thank the following people:

Mika Goldberg, First Assistant Director on "Scene 1", for sending me the script of "Scene 1" used by George during the shoot.

Simon Starbuck, Producer of "Scene 1", for sending me the first part of the autobiography George was working on ("an important ingredient when one wants to conquer Hollywood", he said), including footnotes, and the footnote-diagram.

Ward Lindhout, Conceptual Artist for "Scene 1", for making the compositional drawing of George.

Hayden Charckal, Chief Editor for "Scene 1", for sending me the first - and only - rough edit of "Scene 1".

In the texts I have made comments and noted down in *italics* my own thoughts concerning certain issues.

Joris Lindhout.

Everything I like

There are these points in one's life, where one looks back. The end of a period, time¹ for self² reflection³, time to look back and ask "What have I been doing?". Now this is one of those moments in my life. I spent the last years searching for appropriate means of expression, and I know that what I found is the right thing. I am finishing off the period of searching, and through this writing I want to re-search the process⁴ I went through.

Usually people take the time to stand still and look back at the path they took only later in their lives. Artists have retrospectives mostly after their fifties. George takes the time to look back already at an early stage in his life. Could this mean that he knew he was going to die soon, that this moment wasn't that early in his life?

Primary school is where the search probably began. I was approached by a producer of independent television, and he asked me if I was interested in playing a small part in a series for kids. On that moment, I heard Hollywood calling me... I knew what I had to do. I said yes. After the shoot it was clear to me: to reach Hollywood, I needed skill of some sort. Since acting appeared to be the road I took, the skill I was going to go for would be acting. Anyway, actors seemed the rock stars in Hollywood (River Phoenix, Brad Pitt, Johnny Depp, Marilyn Monroe). Au contraire directors seemed more like nerds (Steven Spielberg, George

¹ Time: A scale according to which movement in space is measured

A bit of a shaky definition, although on the right track. Movement in space can also be measured in distance, and distance can be measured in time. Maybe a better definition would be something like "The dimension that makes movement through the third dimension possible". A funny thing is that George's definition seems to spring from his affiliation with film, in a film movement is measured in time: 24 frames a second provides the illusion of movement.

² Self: Presentation of your existence

How one defines "self" is heavily dependant on your existentialistic beliefs. The definition George gives here tells us more about him than it tells something about the "self": I'd say we can conclude from this that George doesn't make any distinction between the mind and the body, he seems to live his life more from an atheistic than a religious point of view.

³ Reflection: Becoming aware

A nice image pops up in my head: A cave man looks down in a puddle, and sees a reflection of him self. The reflection makes him aware of how he looks (that he existed is something that he must have already known, or is seeing yourself reflected making you aware of your existence?).

⁴ Process: Sequential communication

Funny how communication itself can also be seen as a process, I mean communication is interaction between people, and interaction is an exchange of ideas. An exchange can be seen as sequential communication.

Lucas, Ridley Scott) to me and besides acting or directing I still don't have a clue as to what to do in Hollywood anyway.

An interesting thing is that Hollywood directors indeed seem more like the silent types. All the major gossips from Hollywood are about actors (the "who-dates-who stuff"), while the most we hear from the directors is which movie they are going to do next. In Europe, it seems almost the other way around. Here the directors are the extravagant types who make it into the gossip news (like Godard, Fassbinder, Ritchi, van Gogh).

So I took acting classes, primarily aimed at acting for theatre (a choice⁵ with two sides to it: Acting for theatre is very different from acting for the movies⁶, so it's questionable what good this certain type of acting skill would do me in Hollywood. But on the other hand, acting for theatre in the Netherlands is of a much higher quality than acting for film and television), and spent ten years searching for ways to make acting real⁷. A search that put me in some schizophrenic situations: sometimes I was like an undercover cop from "Miami Vice" that forgot his reality as cop, and became the criminal he acted out. It was not until I had to play "Don" in Cervante's "Don Quichotte" that I realized the importance of one reality as basis, even if that reality didn't conform to any other norm. To reach something (to achieve...) you need either luck or faith, and I don't think you can have faith without truth, which finds its basis in reality.

Realising this, acting didn't seem the right way into Hollywood for me anymore. It wasn't my nature⁸ to pretend, not my talent, and talent is a fertile basis for skill. That basis is something I couldn't find through acting.

"Talent is a fertile basis for skill": when the hypothesis about George's religious background I posed in footnote 2 is correct, I wonder what he thinks about "talent". Probably not as something that is divine.

⁵ Choice: Being aware of all possibilities you did and didn't take.

This one I don't understand. Being aware of that maybe provides one with the possibility of making a good choice, but doesn't choice have more to do with possibilities in the future?

⁶ Movie: A narrative choreography of sequential images and sounds.

A beautiful definition, although it excludes the old-school silent movies. One could also define comic books like this.

⁷ Real: Non-mediated experience.

What frustrates me (and I guess it also frustrates George) are people who classify movies, computer games, comic books, television, etc. as "not real". The medium is the message, and that means that it is the medium that is the reality. Nobody will deny the existence of the medium "film".

⁸ Nature: All that/those what/whom is/are not aware of its/their own existence.

So everybody/everything (including animals) that cannot reflect one his/hers/its self is nature. Do they then need to invent the mirror to become something else from nature (and humans are not nature then?)?

I decided to go the direction of visual arts. Acting is a way to show a story: You as actor invent a way to tell/show the story, you act it out. In visual art that's also the case, but with some influence from the directional corner: As visual artist you have the possibility to invent the story that you want to tell or act out.

At first I ended up at the faculty for new media and design, where I continued my search influenced by computers, internet, and interactivity.

Sitting behind my computer, experimenting with some documentation of a theatre play, I suddenly realized the possibilities of post-production. You could reflect on all the material, and re-act to it through sequential changes in composition, image⁹ and sound¹⁰. An important gestation, since I found my direct link to the Hollywood film industry again. "Living Dead" was the title of my first reasonable successful project within the realm of visual arts. It concerned a clay-mation (frame based animation with characters made out of clay) about how the human¹¹ body would transform when we'd go and live on like we do now. I sent it to a couple of film festivals (I understood that the time was right for a subject like that) and won the "people's choice award".

Won at the "Hiroshima International Animation Festival" in Japan, a place in perfect fitting for a movie with such a subject.

They praised the used materials (clay for the decaying, neglected human body), and the usage of a more documentary style for a fictional film (suggesting truth like this was still a little revolutionary back then).

This delivered me some money to spend on the next project, which would make interactivity part of my search. I was going to build a computer game, in order¹² to seek for the interactive possibilities of the cinematic.

Since what I was seeking seemed to lie primarily in effects¹³, I invented a very short and basic story about a Blitzkrieg

⁹ Images: A two-dimensional (re)presentation.

I wonder why "re" is between "()", I would say that an image is always a representation.

¹⁰ Sounds: A vibration sensed with the ears (sensation).

I once heard about a mental deviation that makes you see sound and hear colour. Since they are both mediated through vibrations it's probably not that difficult to build a machine that gives everybody a similar experience.

¹¹ Human being: Nature but not nature.

Aha, so there is still some nature left in us!

¹² Order: Arranged according to a given structure.

¹³ Effect: A manner to emphasize a certain meaning.

Which makes effects not as cheap as they are often thought to be (especially concerning contemporary movies). Effects are an essential part of communication. We can even see this in nature, for example, in the use of colours in nature. The yellow-black stripes of wasps is

performed by birds, which are genetically mutated through exposure on nuclear waste (Hitchcock's "The Birds" meets Romero's "Night of the Living Dead"). In the game you are Butch the Butcher, one of the sole survivors and your mission is -off course- to make sure the other survivors can put their lives back on the line, without being disturbed by these monstrosities.

In order to approach the experience as close to watching a film as possible¹⁴, I invented -together with the open source community- a method¹⁵ to play a video game in three dimensions (this was way before VR and all 3d possibilities of contemporary gaming of course). You as player became the main character in order to really experience the story, instead of just watching it. The concept¹⁶ for this type of story telling was inspired by a discussion that was just starting up in the field of contemporary art. The discussion was started by the artist Marina Abramovic, who started to re-enact¹⁷ her performances which she originally acted out in the period of Fluxus (in the Sixties). This act of re-enacting inspired a discussion about the "real" experiences of the moment, about art as life and life as art, and about art as documentation. Inspired by this discussion I thought about how a movie was an improvement on painting considering experiencing¹⁸ a work, but how far it still was removed from the reality. I mean, painting is much more an abstraction of reality than film, since painting has no real movement¹⁹ and sound (which doesn't mean a painting isn't just as able as film to give you a real experience, it means it's a harder medium through which the audience can identify with a work), but film still is a passive medium, e.g. it doesn't require the audience to do anything but watching and listening. Life is of course active, so the thought I had was: "How do I make film an active medium?". Then one day I was making *Mario kick mushroom ass*, and lightning struck me. I had to put the active element of

emphasising their aggressiveness, and therefore copied by other species (so they also seem aggressive).

¹⁴ Possibilities: Different ways of experience.

A definition beautifully illustrated by such films as "Lola rent" and "Hero".

¹⁵ Method: Modus logicus.

This definition seems to be copied directly out of "Critique of judgement" by Immanuel Kant.

¹⁶ Concepts: A developed idea.

¹⁷ Re-enactment: Act out a certain event in order to try to make the mediation of that event an experience as real as experiencing that certain event.

This also makes it impossible to experience something of the original event, since every time the event is re-enacted, it becomes a different event. I would say that watching documentation of the original event will give you the chance to re-construct the experience people must have had during that event and give you an experience much more close to the ones they had.

¹⁸ Experiencing: Living.

Although true, I get the feeling this is written with a certain sarcasm.

¹⁹ Movement: The usage of space and time.

games into a cinematic environment, to turn the spectator/listener into a participant²⁰ of the story. All this resulted in the game described²¹ above, presented in 3d, with some "real" sound effects (not the computer beeps which were standard in those days), and best played in the dark on a big widescreen, from a soft velour chair, with a big cold Coke within reach.

The results were satisfying, but only for a short while. It seemed we came up with a new way of playing/experiencing games, instead with something that I could call "active cinema". The possibilities for interaction²² were too limited for that. Moments of user-intervention seemed more like practice than experience to me. They consisted of small repetitive actions²³ and the increasing difficulty was mainly determined by accuracy issues. Not the type of intervention one could call interaction, and not the type of intervention that makes the user an active participant in the narrative.

Although the game became rather a success (it provided the starting point for a whole range of games based on this principle: "Doom", "Hexen", "Quake"), I wanted to take the search yet another step further.

"Rather a success" is an understatement. The game is still a massive underground hit. Emulators of the game are being made for all kinds of different systems, even for Sony's new "psp" (PlayStation Portable) the game was one of the first to be emulated on it. The soundtrack is a grateful source of samples for all kinds of digital music makers, and on code-con's homemade t-shirts with pictures of the game paste on them are no exceptions.

This time I tried to transform the audience in participators through deconstruction of the linear²⁴ structure²⁵ of the

²⁰ Participants/participating: Taking part.

²¹ Described: A re-enactment of an event through language.

What is the difference between re-enactment and re-presentation? A re-enactment is a re-presentation that also wants to be presentation (the moment, the present). I guess they are the same thing, but re-enactment is a failed attempt to replace re-presentation with presentation.

²² Interaction: An exchange of ideas.

Or better: An exchange of actions (sounds like fighting).

²³ Action: Defined movement.

Which makes inter-action choreography then?

²⁴ Linear: Following a straight line.

In the Dutch language a ruler is called a "liniaal".

²⁵ Structure: A set of rules/laws/agreements.

Buildings are often referred to as "structures", and although they are of course built according to certain "rules" which obey certain "laws" of nature, they mainly consist of matter. So, to add something like "Matter organised according to a..." would greatly improve this definition.

narrative²⁶. The medium I used for that was the internet, and to be more specific: "Hypertext".

"Let me introduce the word hypertext to mean a body of written or pictorial material interconnected in such a complex way that it could not conveniently be presented or represented on paper"--Ted Nelson.

Allowing me to set up a structure for a story based on rhizomatic principles (and also forcing me to write in a non-linear way, not working to an end) - I mean a story without a beginning, end, or defined²⁷ sequence²⁸, but still a story - hypertext offered me the possibilities to take the audience even a step further: They weren't just participants in the story, they were co-creators. It is similar to the peak of the Fluxus period when people were asked to build their own artworks or to make their own music when attending a concert. A very promising move, but as you probably have read in the beginning of this text, I wanted to go to Hollywood. I could only imagine myself there as either an actor, or a director. And certainly not as a writer (for some dark reason²⁹ Sweden seems to have more fertile soil for writing to me).

When you read footnote 29, a "dark reason" seems like a discrepancy. But when George is referring to environmental issues here I can understand. Sweden has a landscape often found (as description) in old stories, such as fairytales.

Computers, the ones who made this whole way of working possible in the first place, also became the reason to stop working this way. Technically, it wasn't yet possible to use the quality of cinematic material I wanted to use. To use material of less quality was just not an option, because this

²⁶ Narrative: Sequence of described events.

I was thinking about why the art world doesn't seem that concerned anymore with the act of storytelling (humans probably started to express themselves with their voices. So singing and storytelling are at the basis of human expression). I propose that artists are specialising, just as scientists. They are specialising (which may be a temporary specialisation) in one element of a process, like Job Koelewijn for instance, was specialising in his relationship with New York City during a residency there. He was specialising on his impotence to work there, and this specialisation was concluded with an image. A photograph of him balancing a skyscraper-like structure made of glasses on one hand in a street in NYC is an image not really telling a story. It seems more to make an ambiguous point, to mediate a pure feeling, without too much nonsense (a story) around it. In the language used by scientists everything not absolutely necessary to get the data across is skipped, all the noise is taken away, and that's why it is so hard to understand for outsiders. With art it is similar, all the noise has been taken away, and therefore the mediated data is hard to understand for outsiders.

²⁷ Defined: Pointed out and described.

²⁸ Sequential/sequence: Composed linear order.

²⁹ Reason: Conscious choice.

A choice that one is aware of making.

would add a layer of abstraction to the material which would make the material too much part of reality.

In expectation of the development of the internet, I found a story that dealt with the intermingling of realities: American history and especially the role of the cowboy within it. On one hand we have the real cowboy: a figure in American history that functioned on the frontier, the barrier between the America that was mapped, and the America that was yet to be explored. This frontier was moving from the east coast towards the west coast, and when the west coast was reached this frontier continued its existence³⁰ in a small town called "Hollywood". Although the technique was only available more than a century later, the whole story of the frontier and the character of the cowboy soon became a big source of inspiration for the explorers of the frontier called "cinema". The cowboy was taken in as the one that explores the frontier, the one that pushes boundaries, but since the real cowboy seemed rather a boring guy (his main job was to check if the fences that contained the cattle were still doing their job), they transformed him. We have on the other hand the Hollywood cowboy: a mysterious hero with a strict dress code (cowboy hat, spores, revolver, etc), living in the desert, and whether a good guy or a bad guy, he always remained a little ambiguous. This Hollywood version of a figure that actually played a part in American history became the first hero in American history (similar to the figure we have in the Netherlands of Willem van Oranje). It is here that we have the intermingling of realities: we have the actual historic figure, which through a certain type of mediation (film) became a hero, and a key figure in American history. This intermingling of realities became a main source of inspiration for contemporary American pop culture: All super heroes live their lives like the cowboy: during the day a normal boring guy with a normal boring job, and at night (or whenever necessary) a mysterious alter ego with super powers who saves the day (only Superman is an exception to this rule: Superman is a mysterious hero born with super powers, and being normal (Clark Kent) is his alter ego).

I decided to make a short film using this manner³¹ to play with realities. I arranged³² a small crew, and armed with a camera we headed for the Dutch frontier (the Dutch frontier is the border between old land, and new land that once belonged to

³⁰ Existence: Being there; to be.

A beautiful book by Jerzy Kosinski: "Being there", made into a great movie by Hal Ashby. Actually that book is probably one of the best works on existentialism.

³¹ Manner: Modus aestheticus.

Also copied straight from "Critique of judgement" by Immanuel Kant.

³² Arranged: Coherently obeying to a certain set of rules/laws/agreements.

the sea, the areas which are built here (called "vinex" locations) spread out in a way comparable to the original frontier in America). We used the visual and audible laws³³ that define the western genre in cinema (prescriptions³⁴ about colour, camera angles, pace, instruments in the soundtrack, mis-en-scene), and captured a story about cowboys with original jobs/tasks in a contemporary frontier. A particular amusing detail is that one of the actors was an American who played a cowboy character based more from Dutch history (his task was derived from early printmaking), and the other actor, a Dutch man, played the American cowboy whose task was to check fences.

Partly due to the usage of a Vinex location, the film (called "Golden Age") received extensive attention from the press (Vinex was a hot item of focus in the realm of visual arts at that time), and via-via it drew attention from an independent NYC based producer.

The only article I could find in the archives was in a newspaper called "Utrechts Nieuwsblad", dated Wednesday 23rd of February 2005, written by Anka van Voorthuijsen, titled "Op de grens van wonen en niet-wonen" (article in Dutch).

The good man invited me to come over to NYC and discuss Golden Age, future plans, and his possible role in them. We met in the Starbucks on Union Square, and while enjoying our Frappucino's we had a very fruitful conversation. Apparently he was involved in conceptual phase of Dennis Hopper's "The last movie", and he saw some important resemblances between "The last movie" and "Golden Age" (something with a "cultural-reality twist" he called it). We decided to do a short together based on our conversation, and during my stay in NYC we worked on a script with the working title "Scene 1". A script describing a situation: A crew tries to shoot a scene for a western movie. We attempted to avoid a beginning and an end, but still respect the narrative structure of the medium, treating the medium as we defined it: a narrative choreography³⁵ of sequential images and sounds.

³³ Rules/laws/agreements: More or less agreed on consensuses between/within groups of people.

³⁴ Prescription: A vision of an event.

³⁵ Choreography: Designed movement.

When a good friend and colleague of mine and me were writing something about one of our projects, we came up with the term "Choreograffity". It sounds good, looks good, and I have the strong feeling its meaning is beautiful.

Appendix A

This is the script for a short movie with the working title “Scene 1”. It is the last work George made, or to be more precise, what he was still working on before he disappeared. These are the actual papers he used on the shoot of “Scene 1”.

George Stringwood

Working title: **Scene 1**

Crew 1-1 (wearing black):

Director:	Joris Lindhout
Cameraman 2-1:	Jan Pieter Fokkens
Cameraman 2-2:	Haydar Çakal
Light technician 2-1:	Ella Marthe . ? .

Crew 1-2:

George Stringwood:	Ward Lindhout
Simon Starbuck:	Paul de Waal
Johnny Franco:	Giovanni van Heusden
Simon's horse:	Leonie
Johnny's horse:	Floris Heijnsbroek
Cameraman 1-1:	Gerwin Luyten
Cameraman 1-2:	Tamara Karsdorp
Light technician 1-1:	Martijn Dijkma
Light technician 1-2:	Chantal Erhardt
Sound technician 1-1:	Sebastiaan Verhees
Gaffer:	Juha Laatikanen

Postproduction (Crew 2):

Edit: t sound	Haydar Çakal, Joris Lindhout
Music:	Zatoichi . ? . C steel (slap guitar)

We see that George already starts to play with reality in the division of the parts. He made a clear distinction between “Crew 1” and “Crew 2”: “Crew 1” is the crew that is concerned with the production, and “Crew 2” is concerned with the post-production. But within “Crew 1” George also made a division between 1-1 and 1-2. The most remarkable difference between this 1-1 and 1-2 is that 1-1 doesn't seem to have any actors, and 1-2 doesn't seem to have a director.

One of the parts is that of “George Stringwood”. This is a little joke by George, a reaction to directors such as Jean-luc Godard and Quentin Tarantino who actually play parts in their own movies.

Light: Here is a 'stage' like area and a 'set' like area

Setting: In an indoor "neutral" (walls with plain light colours, clean floor, and not any diversification from the enclosed space) space, where we see three groups of people:

→ lighten seemingly according to a plan

The first group we notice consists of two young men, dressed as cowboys. They don't really seem to feel too comfortable on their places as they reluctantly role a smoke, and have a chat during which their body language is obviously influenced by nerves.

→ lighten by the light meant for the 'stage' like area

The second group is a bunch of people who kind of run around the two cowboy's. They carry around cameras, lights, mikes, cables, etc. They install cameras and try to find the good shot, others try to install the lights according to the light plan, the sound is being equalized, and cables are taped to the floor. This second group looks like they are working on a film set: They wear overalls, old jeans and tees with prints like "light" or "sound", some also wear tool belts or carry special tools. One thing is rather strange: All the technical equipment they are installing is made out of cardboard, and painted as cameras, lights, and mikes. Even the cables are made out of garden hose, the tape used to tape the cables to the floor with is painters tape, and the chair-that-looks-like-a-directors-chair is just a plastic chair with the name "George Stringwood" hand-painted on it. In this chair sits a guy holding a "klap", (also made out of cardboard) and a bunch of papers, observing all the activities going on around him, sometimes going through the papers and making some adjustments with a pen.

Big hall
"Big hall echo"

mumbling

occasional sound of working people.
"zo is het goed!"
and iets
meer naar links"

cardboard sounds?

all most no light - "shady"

The third group we see consists of four people all wearing black: black shoes, black trousers, black long sleeves, black gloves, and a black bonnet. Two of them are filming (this we see because we switch between the two cameras, and we see the other person filming) and deciding what would be the best position to film from, one of them is concerned with the lights (the lights that are actually lighting up the place), and the last one is making sure everything goes as is written on the paper he is holding.

} silent "pantomime"

The chosen space has some strong resemblances with the space used in George Lucas' THX-1138. A super-neutral space, a "white cube": the space is just a space, necessary because for movement you need space. The visibility of the space is brought back to the level of functionality: this movie isn't aiming at representing the world as we already know it.

The division George makes between this three groups (which seems like the same division made in the division of the parts) becomes a little confusing here.

The first group are actors who play cowboys in the movie. They are obviously waiting until the preparations for the shoot are done to be able to start performing.

The second group is preparing the shoot for these two cowboys, but all material they have is made out of cardboard: e.g. fake.

Then we have the third group who control the actual situation in the space: they arrange the real lights, they operate the real camera's, but in a way that looks like acting (pantomime), while in the division of the parts there seemed to be no actors in "Crew 1-1".

Act 1:

Fade in, Total from bird perspective, low-tech crappy black and white (a real-feel)

After some time the activities of the second and the third group seem to come to an end. And the two positions from where there is filmed become fixed.

The guy who holds the paper takes a "klap", and we see in **close up**: "Scene 1, scene 1, take 1" written on the "klap". *no clapsfx!!*

*} silent
maybe
sand fx
"Film roll!"*

Total from bird perspective, focused more on the 2nd group, retouched colour, no widescreen

After the "klap" from the third group, we see the second group (who were not moving at all during the above described activities from the third group) also finishing their activities, and gathering around George Stringwood (the guy in the chair-that-looks-like-a-directors-chair).

*} rumble...
rumble...*

*mumbling
with
pointing*

George gives the people some instructions and here too the cameramen take in their positions behind their cardboard cameras, the light technicians take in their places behind their cardboard lights, and the sound technician takes his mike. George walks towards the two cowboys, and also gives them a few final instructions pointing towards the cameras and lights, showing them how the mis-en-scene works for this scene. George walks back to his chair, takes the cardboard "klap", and we see in **close up**: "The Dutch frontier, scene 1, take 1" written on the "klap".

*Sfx: step...
step...step...*

-CLAP-

The third group – the group that is making the movie we see – is presented to us in the same way that reality is often presented to us through the media: sloppy and poorly executed (reality is often presented to us through amateur recordings or recordings made by surveillance cameras). The second group is much more cinematic: retouched colour. In movies colour and pace are adjusted to the way the director wants us to experience his representation of the world. It is too bad George doesn't say anything about the way the colours are retouched in "Scene 1".

Act 2:

light:

hand shade

light cone

From above

"Sun" like

also music Fade in; music = steel/slp guitar "once upon a time..." Like

Fade in, medium shot, black and white, high contrast (dust&scratches - widescreen)

Simon Starbuck is shot from aside, walking. He walks from the left to the right on the screen.

His pace is a bit indifferent, just as the look in his eyes.

Medium shot, black and white, high contrast (dust&scratches - widescreen)

walking SFX = with spores!

Johnny Franco is shot from aside, also walking. Johnny walks from the right to the left on the screen.

Medium shot, black and white, high contrast (dust&scratches - widescreen)

Simon walking, this time shot from behind. The camera follows him. Simon walks out of the image.

Close, black and white, high contrast (dust&scratches - widescreen)

Johnny walking shot from behind.

Total, black and white, high contrast (dust&scratches - widescreen)

Simon and Johnny walk into the image, both from the opposite direction. It is clear they will meet in the centre of the image. It's unclear if they see each other; they don't really seem to care about that anyway. The meet has an indifferent feel to it.

George Stringwood:

Cut! ... Cut!

/music stops

As George (walks) into the image described above, the image changes into a colour image (retouched colour), the wide screen bars disappear, the image shakes, as if the camera is being taken off the tripod, and hand held.

↳ SFX?

Followed by a light?

George walks towards the two cowboys, and is being followed by the camera (which shakes a bit), in a medium shot.

George Stringwood:

Wat zijn we aan het doen jongens?

Simon Starbuck:

Cowboytje aan het spelen toch?

↳ dark

In the back we see the guy holding the papers from the third group. He watches the conversation between George and Simon as if he is the director of the conversation. He turns his head towards one of the cameramen.

Director:

Dit was opzich toch wel oke? Ook qua spanningsboog? George komt er mooi invallen...

} whispered

Cameraman 1:

Ja, ja..., het staat erop!

Since the medium is video, but seems to want to be film, the first part of "Act 2" seems like the main "character" of "Scene 1". It's a piece of motion picture that meets all the requirements for the cinema: the black box, the space designed to experience movies to the full extent. A soft chair, darkness (space disappears), silence, and for the inner man popcorn and sodas are available all over the place.

Act 3:

Total from bird perspective, low-tech crappy black and white (a real-feel)

Director: Oke, scene twee!

We see the people from the third moving around, taking in their positions, putting their cameras back on the tripods.

The guy who holds the paper takes a "klap", and we see in **close up**: "Scene 1, scene 2, take 1" written on the "klap". *no clap sfx*

Total from bird perspective, focused more on the 2nd group, retouched colour, no widescreen

After the "klap" from the third group, we go to the second group (who were not moving at all during the above described activities from the third group). George is still standing by the two cowboys.

George Stringwood: Dus nu met koffer, en graag wat serieuzer deze keer!

George draait zich om, en loopt terug richting zijn stoel. *normal walking sfx*
turns and walks back to his chair

George Stringwood: Iedereen klaar? We doen het nog een keer!

The people from the second group take in their places. Johnny grabs a suitcase from the set, George reaches his chair, takes the cardboard "klap", and we see in **close up**: "The Dutch frontier, scene 1, take 2" written on the "klap".



The difference between "Scene 1" and "The Dutch frontier" becomes clearer now. "Scene 1" isn't just documentation of the shoot of "The Dutch frontier", but a movie on itself. This makes the people in the third group (the ones dressed in black) also actors, even though they are the ones actually recording what we see and hear.

Act 4:

light:
again

music Fade in: same steel /slap guitar music
Fade in, medium shot, black and white, high contrast (dust&scratches - widescreen)

Simon Starbuck is shot from aside, walking. He walks from the left to the right on the screen. His pace is steady and sure: he has an aim.

Medium shot, black and white, high contrast (dust&scratches - widescreen)

hard shaded from "sun" perspective,

again walking SFX with spots

Johnny Franco is shot from aside, also walking. Johnny walks from the right to the left on the screen. He carries a small suitcase, with a pace as sure and steady as Simon's.

Medium shot, black and white, high contrast (dust&scratches - widescreen)

Simon walking, this time shot from behind. The camera follows him. Simon walks out of the image.

Close, black and white, high contrast (dust&scratches - widescreen)

Johnny walking, shot from behind, camera follows suitcase. *walking SFX = louder (near to feet)*

Total, black and white, high contrast (dust&scratches - widescreen)

Simon and Johnny walk into the image, both from the opposite direction. It is clear they will meet in the centre of the image. They see each other, and give evince of that. It is not really clear whether they are friendly or hostile.

Close, black and white, high contrast (dust&scratches - widescreen)

Simon's face covering half the screen on the left side; he clearly looks Johnny in the eyes, and is trying to judge the situation.

more tension in the music.

Close, black and white, high contrast (dust&scratches - widescreen)

Johnny's face covering half the screen on the right side; looks back at Simon, also trying to judge the situation.

George Stringwood:

It's a wrap! De eerste scene staat erop jongens! Genoeg voor vandaag.

It will be interesting to compare the two shoots – the two pieces who actually look like film – when "Scene 1" is finished. Together they form a minor research into tension.

Act 5: *light on the set goes out, new lights go on, and the second group is light according to a plan, they are on stage now.*

The music plays soft in BG

A zoom-out from the first group (the two cowboys) to a total including the second group, retouched colour, no widescreen
 We see the two cowboys having an "after-work" chat, and arranging their things to go home (Johnny puts his suitcase back on the set for instance). When the zoom-out starts they walk along with the border of the expanding image. When the zoom-out is almost finished the cowboys have reached their horses, and start saddling and petting them. Meanwhile we see the second group filming them. George Stringwood gives/asks suggestions to the camera and light men, and scribbles some notes on his script. One time he even intervenes with the horse saddling, showing one of the cowboys how it is done, and re-shooting the saddling process. When the horses are saddled the cowboys start walking with the supports in the hand. **The camera follows this movement in a total.** The whole second group follows the cowboys, filming and lighting them. When this strange caravan reaches the door of the building, the two cowboys ascend their horses, shake hands, and take off. The second group off course films this whole ascending, and after the cowboys have left, they also shake hands and leave through the door.

*mumbling and rumbling with SFX + spurs
 rumble with pointing horse SFX
 walking horses SFX*

The door is a hole made of light like heaven.

Act 5.5: *with following spots (directional).*

light: Dark, "snuff" like amateur reel. "Flickering"

A medium frog shot, low-tech crappy black and white (a real-feel)
 We see the director, the light technician, and one cameraman from the first group walking around on the set. The image rumbles a little, and the head of the other cameraman appears looking into the lens, obviously checking the camera.

Film roll SFX

Cameraman 2: *Ja hij loopt nog hoor... Wacht even. Ja, hij staat goed zo!*

The second cameraman walks from the just installed camera to the other people from the first group. They are cleaning the set a little bit: One is sweeping, one is collecting left behind scripts, another is removing the cables and tape from the floor, and the last one went and got a pile of clothes. When finished cleaning the group gathers around the pile of clothes, and starts to change clothes. The clothes are just normal everyday clothes from 2005. The black clothes and bonnets are being put on coat hangers, and one of the people takes all the coat hangers (with the black clothes on them), and takes them somewhere off screen, returning empty handed. When the whole group is on screen again, they look at each other, shake hands, say goodbye, and leave one by one. The last one to leave is the Director: When everybody left, he kind of looks around to see if nothing was forgotten, takes the suitcase (which was onscreen all the time, but not too obvious) which was used by Johnny, and leaves too.

silent pantomime

Act 6:

We see an actual strip of film rolling on the screen. The material is finished and the film ends.

The end
 The end
 The end

*Film roll SFX
 Flapping sound when it ends
 Flap-Flap-Flap*

An interesting ending: the group that appeared as "actors" at first are "real", and the group that appeared as "real" at first (and the ones that recorded the material we just saw) are in fact "actors".

Appendix B

I included the whole list of definitions and a map that shows how they connect. For me this provided more insight in George's way of thinking, and it gives a good outline of the terms that form the basis for his search&research.

Movie: A narrative choreography of sequential images and sounds

Narrative: Sequence of described events

Choreography: Designed movement

Sequential/sequence: Composed linear order

Images: A two-dimensional (re)presentation

Sounds: A vibration sensed with the ears (sensation)

Described: A re-enactment of an event through language

Prescription: A vision of an event

Events/event: A defined action

Language: Sets of rules/laws/agreements used to make communication within/between groups as efficient as possible

Defined: Pointed out and described

Action: Defined movement

Designed: Shaped by a human being

Movement: The usage of space and time

Shaped: Through which objects present themselves to us (form versus content)

Composed: An assemblage created by or pointed out by a human being

Assemblage: An establishment of relationships between elements/objects previously unrelated

Linear: Following a straight line

Order: Arranged according to a given structure

Sensed: Experienced through one of the senses

Communication: Interaction between people

Efficient: To use all available energy in the process of reaching the aim

Re-enactment: Act out a certain event in order to try to make the mediation of that event an experience as real as experiencing that certain event

Arranged: Coherently obeying to a certain set of rules/laws/agreements

Structure: A set of rules/laws/agreements

Real: Non-mediated experience

Experiencing: Living

Interaction: An exchange of ideas

Rules/laws/agreements: More or less agreed on consensuses between/within groups of people

Human being: Nature but not nature

Establishment: A coming and staying together (could be temporarily)

Relationships: Denominator for the knowledge that people have when they know that they have a common denominator

Mediated: Passed on through

(re)Presentation: Conscious (re)appearance

Space: A defined piece of the universe

Time: A scale according to which movement in space is measured

Ideas: A mental prescription

Consensuses: In symbioses

Nature: All that/those what/whom is/are not aware of its/their own existence

Denominator: The word for words that define concepts

Scale: A set of rules/laws/agreements meant for accurate measuring

Measuring: Collecting data in order to be able to compare

Accurate: Efficient and precise

Concepts: A developed idea

Symbioses: All participants gain from participating

Conscious: Being aware

Aware: Taking responsibility for

Existence: Being there; to be

Responsibility: Accepting consequences

Developed: After reflection

Compare: Valuing based on norm

Participants/participating: Taking part

Consequences: Re-actions

Knowledge: Mental map based on reflected experience

Reflection: Becoming aware

Re-actions: Action which is part of an interactive process, extending the process from a previous action from another participant

Norm: Point of reference

Process: Sequential communication

Reference: Mediated reflection

Senses: Ears, Eyes, Nose, Mouth (tongue), Skin

Sensation: Experiencing Hearing, Sight, Smell, Taste, or Touch

Vision: Mentally seeing

Mentally/mental: Sensation without use of the senses

Performative: Evoking mental interaction (within the self)

Digital: The simplest structure of language: Language based in binary opposition

Binary: Consisting of the choice between two elements

Opposition: Binary measurement

Self: Presentation of your existence

Valuing: Developing an understanding for

Understanding: When knowledge complies with other knowledge or an action

Becoming: The process of growing towards

Growing: A side effect of movement (for some it's the main goal although)

Effect: A manner to emphasize a certain meaning

Manner: Modus aestheticus

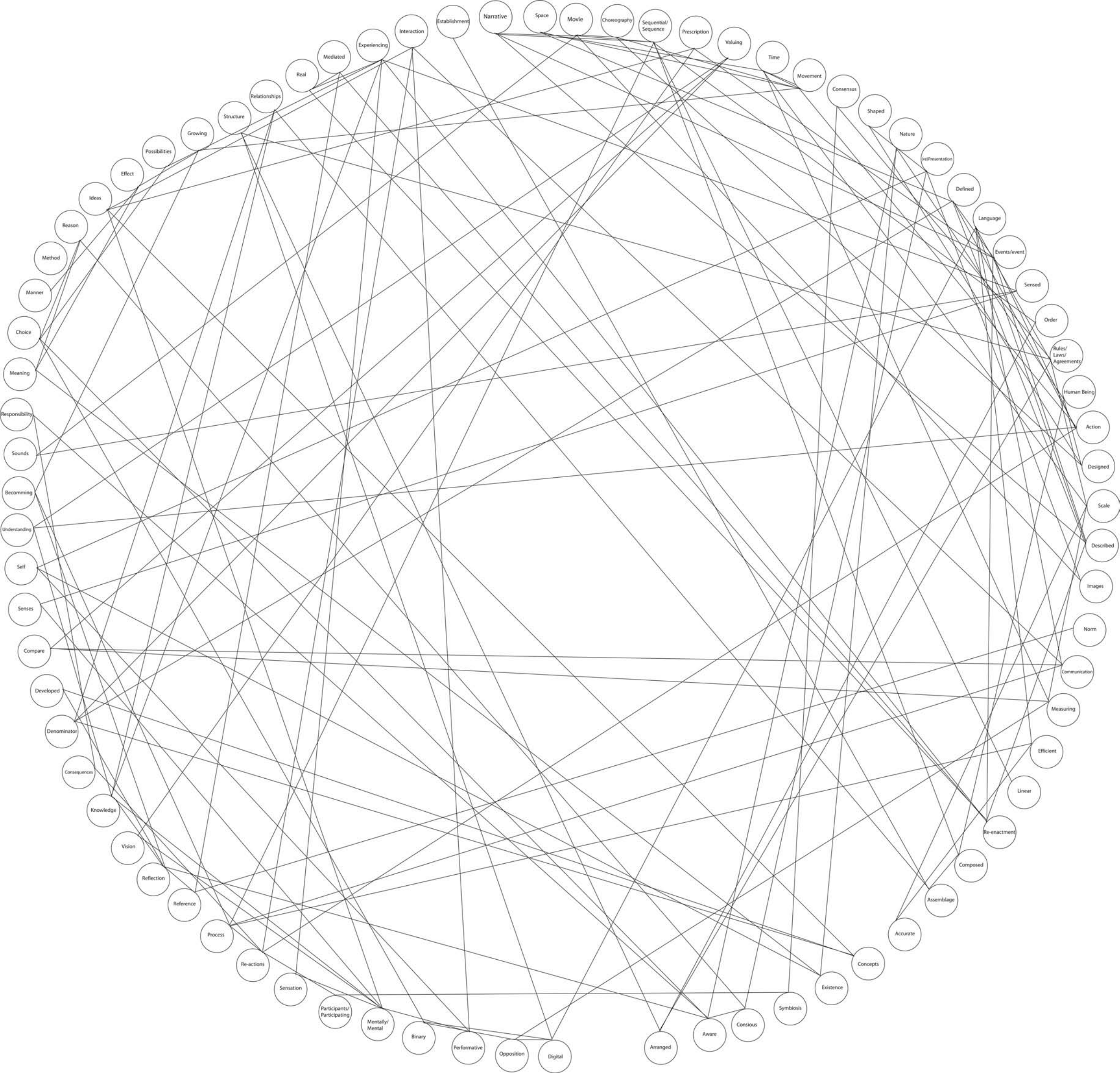
Method: Modus logicus

Meaning: Reason for existence

Reason: Conscious choice

Choice: Being aware of all possibilities you did and didn't took

Possibilities: Different ways of experience



Appendix C

Between George's papers I found a list of films, artists, and literature. Since the list was titled "bibliography" I presume that it contains the names of things that inspired George in his life. Since the autobiographical text "Everything I like" is the only text I could find from George's hand, this bibliography was probably meant as part of that text. That means that this is the bibliography of George's life, and that it can be used as a tool to develop a better understanding of George.

Bibliography

Barney, Matthew	Cremaster Cycle, 1995, 1999, 2002, 1994, 1997
Capcom	Megaman, 1987
Coppola, Francis Ford	Apocalypse now, 1997
Disney, Walt	Bambi, 1942
Gibson, William	Neuromancer, 1984
Godard, Jean-luc	À bout de souffle, 1960
	2 ou 3 choses que je sais d'elle, 1967
Han-ru, Hou	Zone of urgency, 2003
Jackson, Peter	Bad Taste, 1987
Kurosawa, Akira	Seven Samurai, 1954
Leeflang, Thomas	Het goede, kwade, en slechte in het wilde westen, 1978
Lucas, George	Star Wars saga, 1999, 2002, 2005, 1977, 1980, 1983
Lynch, David	Eraserhead, 1977
	Lost highway, 1997
	The cowboy and the Frenchman, 1988
Nintendo	Mario, 1985
	Zelda, 1986
Otomo, Katsuhiro	Akira, 1985, 1985, 1986, 1986, 1990, 1993
Scott, Ridley	Bladerunner, 1982
Svankmajer, Jan	Alice, 1988
	Conspirators of pleasure, 1996
	Faust, 1994
	Otesanek, 2000
Tsukamoto, Shinya	A snake of June, 2002
	Tetsuo: the iron man, 1988
	Tetsuo: body hammer, 1992
Verhoeven, Paul	Robocop, 1987
	Starship Troopers, 1997

Appendix D

I asked a professional concept-artist to make a drawing of George Stringwood based on the information I could provide him (including his writings). These are the results.



George Stringwood

List of used literature

Auster, Paul	The book of illusions, 2002 New York
Bal, Mieke	De theorie van vertellen en verhalen, Inleiding in de narratologie, 1978 Muiderberg
Barthes, Roland	Mythologies, 1993 London The pleasure of the text, 1975 New York
Bordwell & Thompson	Film art, an introduction, 2004 New York
Deleuze, Gilles	Cinema 1, the movement image, 1992 New York Introduction & chapter 7 of "Mille plateaux"
Cage, John	Silence, lectures and writings, 2004 London
Danielewski, Mark Z.	House of leaves, 2002 Toronto
Duve, Thierry de	Kant after Duchamp, 1997 Massachusetts
Kant, Immanuel	The critique of judgement, 1790 Internet
Lier en Boog	Exploding aesthetics, 2001 Amsterdam
McCloud, Scott	Understanding Comics, 1993 New York Reinventing Comics, 2000 New York
Mulder, Arjen	Over mediatheorie, 2004 Rotterdam
Negroponte, Nicholas	Digitaal leven, 1999 Amsterdam

Lectures:

Disorientation: New ways of storytelling, 2005 Amsterdam:
Danielewski, Mark Z. lecture on "The Matrix"
Oosterling, Henk lecture on philosophy and storytelling

Acknowledgements

Tanks to the following people:

Ward Lindhout for inspiration, the compositional drawing, and acting in Scene 1. Haydar Çakal for being my master in filming and editing. Maaïke Gouwenberg for reading and commenting on all the crap I came up with. Paul de Waal, Giovanni van Heusden, Jan-Pieter Fokkens, Tamara Karsdorp, Ellamarthe, Floris Heijnsbergen, Chantal Erhardt, Leonie Nijman, Martijn Dijkstra and Sebastiaan Verhees for acting in Scene 1 (I hope we all make it to Hollywood, yo!). Theo Marks for inspiration and aspiration. All the people of the MA Fine Art Utrecht 2004-2005 for the great year. Maria Pask for checking my English. Maria Hlavajova for the patience with that same MA people. Job Koelewijn for making me stop and look back. Michiel Kluiters for making me go and look forward. Henk Slager and Klaas Hoek for the opportunity to be part of this first MA year, and for teaching me how to read. Dimitri Merkoulov for the chance to be on a real set. Koos Boekhout for...well...just for everything. Bruce Mclean for telling me my name in English. Christina Della Guistina and Andrew March for keeping up with my progress.

Thanks and all the best!

Groet van Joris.

-Fin-