One aspect of globalization is the development of a worldwide network of technological standards and production, distribution and presentation norms aimed at conquering new markets, minimizing costs and maximizing profits on a global scale. The image industry is not exempt from this economic pressure whose many side effects include enormous increased production costs for movies, which can be distributed on a mass global market. Although these production costs also encouraged investment in new digital technologies, in general the price of globalization is standardization. With its tendency to optimize existing formulas for success, the image industry at the same time freezes the process of technological and expressive experiments. Digital media, on the other hand, are providing an appropriate platform for the evolution of independent, experimental and paracinematic cinema in the digital field. A new class of artists, those individuals formerly called artists, have developed technical competence enabling them to challenge a cinematic homogeneity supported by millions or billions and to move above the industry's expressive, narrative and expressive achievements. This book offers evidence of a surprising fact: Even the technological and ideological apparatus of huge industries can be transformed by individuals.

The transformation of classical cinema on the basis of apparatus took place in three phases. The Expanded Cinema movement in the 1950s extended the cinematic code with the cinematic element itself, with analogous means. The video revolution in the 1970s with its electromagnetic laws allowed intensive manipulation and artificial construction of the image in a post-production stage. The digital apparatus of the 1980s and 1990s created an explosion of the aesthetic image with completely new features like observer dependency, interactivity, virtuality, programmability, and so forth. This book focuses on the cinematic code's expansion into the digital field and concentrates on the apparatus-oriented approach. This emphasis on technical innovation does not imply the exclusion of artistic or ideological content. On the contrary, we insist on the technical aspect because artistic and ideological functions of film are, according to the apparatus theory of the 1970s, invested in the cinematographic apparatus.

The apparatus (or, to use Foucault's term, “dispositif”) is our platform. Each change of the technical apparatus also allows new artistic and ideological options. In 1969, Marshall McLuhan questioned the ideology produced by the apparatus that determines the cinema. In the 1970s, Jean-Louis Aubry, Christian Metz and others used the work of Louis Althusser and Jacques Lacan in order to create an apparatus-oriented theory of cinema that combined psychoanalysis, Marxism and cinema. The theoretical apparatus of the cinema is the theoretical instrument. There is no neutral self-awareness: “The machine is always there before it is technical.” Lacan developed an apparatus theory of the subject and demonstrated that the subject is inside what he calls “I” (a self) and constructs instead an imaginary self (sil) that is offered from external to subject. This imaginary self is the reflection of an imaginary other. This process describes the external construction of the subject through an imaginary lack. Althusser uses the term “internalisation” by which a subject is addressed and positioned. This diegetic method to address and position subject is ideology. Therefore, the function of ideology is not so much to reproduce social structures or classes as to reproduce subjects who maintain themselves and are therefore willing to reproduce the values and social order necessary for the survival of capitalism. The apparatus theory of film shows that the cinema is an apparatus of diegetic, material, formal elements that construct not only a reality but also a subject. We do not demonstrate a "reading of technique." This book is therefore not inspired by "total cinema" in André Bazin's sense of a total representation and mechanical reproduction of reality. The aim is to deconstruct the totality of the cinema, to transform the cinematic apparatus, and create new technologies that allow different psychic mechanisms, that subjugate subject in the cinema, that allow different relations between spectator and screen, different representations and constructions of reality and subject and a critical relation to representation. The cinematic imaginary beyond film is the imaginary signifier in the digital field.

The genes of this exhibition is closely related to the activities of the ZKM | Institute for Visual Media under Jeffrey Shear's direction. For more than a decade this institute has been at the forefront of artistic, social and technological research into new forms of interactive digital media with an emphasis on the expansion of cinematic codes and technologies. Many of the world's leading digital practitioners have been artists in residence at the institute, and a majority of the installations in the "Future Cinema" exhibition present the groundbreaking work they produced in collaboration with the institute's team of experts. The exhibition also draws on the institute's achievements as an innovator in the field of interactive narrative through a serial series of CD-ROM and DVD-ROM publications and the ZKM digital art edition.

An exhibition of this scope and complexity rests on the skills of the curatorial and engineering teams at ZKM. Led respectively by Stehle Himmetzch and Martin Heeke, these teams are specialized in organizing, installing and maintaining the public operation of highly complex works of electronic art in both the permanent ZKM | Media Museum collection as well as in international art exhibition programs. The editors have chosen a book design that graphically distinguishes the documented installation environments from the backgrounds, which are slightly angled in order to show them as part of a time-based continuum. Furthermore, the artists' pages are illustrated in color, the essays in black and white.

The comic book format of the 2007 ZKM exhibition catalog is influenced by the aesthetic of the 1970s, and is informed by the works of the ZKM's "future cinema" team, led by Jeffrey Shear and Dörte Zbikowski. We are also especially grateful to Roger Conover at MIT Press, and to Tim Druckrey, the director of Electronic Culture series for their enthusiastic commitment and contribution to this project since its inception in 2005. Thanks are also due to Mark Steddon and Holger Jost, the graphic designers who provided us with an innovative and coherent design that allows the book to be read as a whole, and to the many people who contributed to the exhibition's realization.

The comic book catalog joins the series of influential publications produced by ZKM over the years and is due to the unfaltering patience and dedication of the ZKM editorial team, led by Ulrike Harenmeier and Dörte Zbikowski. We are also especially grateful to Roger Conover at MIT Press, and to Tim Druckrey, the director of Electronic Culture series for their enthusiastic commitment and contribution to this project since its inception in 2005. Thanks are also due to Mark Steddon and Holger Jost, the graphic designers who responded so creatively to the editors' call for a new way of narrating the transitions, interrelated and heterogeneous nature of the images and writings that constitute the account of the past, present and future of the cinematic imaginary beyond the frame.