

# La máquina de futuro

Bruno Varela

2024



Mexico 13'34", 16 mm and Super 8, colour, & BW 2024

March 8th, 2024 – 6 pm

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## The Machine of the Future (La máquina de futuro)

A film and an expanded cinema assemblage

“Man on the Moon: A Film Record of the Apollo 11 Moon Conquest”: Regular 8 footage found in Los Sapo

“Inauguración Verástegui”: 16mm footage of launch of Verástegui automated tortilla machine (*tortilladora*) found

Speculative technology, prototypes for time machines. Repetition. Change, transformation of forms and possibili

Other lines of a possible future. Utopia, rituality, circularity.

A machine that involves the four elements and the core.

Anáhuac against the robots.

One tortilla is never the same as another, and yet they are always the same.

A machine operating against the system.

A machine of contradictions.

That always offers difference in repetition.

A rural dimension of technology, one that dreams of the original *comal*.

“If we are indeed doomed to the comically convergent task of dismantling the universe, and fabricating from its ε it is reasonable to suppose that such an artifact will resemble the vaults of an endless film archive built to house, film.”

*Hollis Frampton, “For a Metahistory of Film: Commonplace Notes and Hypotheses”*

The Lemur people are older than Homo Sap, much older. They date back one hundred sixty million years, to the from the mainland of Africa. They might be called psychic amphibians—that is, visible only for short periods when breathe, but some of them can remain in the invisible state for years at a time. Their way of thinking and feeling is oriented toward time and sequence and causality. They find these concepts repugnant and difficult to understand

*William S. Burroughs, “The Ghost Lemurs of Madagascar”*

On Monday December 13, 1993, the following message was published in the Mexican newspaper *La Jornada*, sig

EUM

8 Ttekpatl-1968= 1981 /1 Akad-1987=2000

8 Tochtli-1994=2(XM)/13 Akad-t999=2012

Tiempo Cósmico

Mundial

C E.R. P.C. P. D.I. E.U. M.

Gómez Palacio, Dgo. Dic 13 de 1993.

Mechanizing Mexicanidad: Fundamental to approaching Bruno Varela’s film work is to understand that there is so corn tortilla (centuries-old staple of the Mesoamerican diet). Indeed that mysterious element of commodity prod epiphanic powers of found footage. As stated in the titles of *Mano de metate* (2018, in collaboration with Bruno’s tortilla is a representation of time, a comestible archive, without words. It has no definite shape; each tortilla is di resemblances with previous ones and those to come.” Every tortilla, like every piece of found footage, is a protot

In Varela’s early video *Barrenador* (2004), tortilla production occupies a central place in the geographically fragn begins with the request for rain from Oaxaca’s Señor del Rayo (God of Lightning), and which is shown to be corri

Fox by “green colonization” and genetically modified corn. And in Varela’s *Tortillería Chinantla* (2005), the mecha tortilla-making machine) caught on Super 8 in Brooklyn, New York, become a “waltz” standing for both the obfus production and a vision of a future (or current) reverse colonization of the North. The references to the tortilla in since that film builds on the grindstone metate’s status as original Mesoamerican tortilla-making instrument, as v Chris Marker’s *La Jetée* (1962), to allow the tortilla’s contours to figure as symbols of time travel (a Mexicanization Jardin des Plantes): “This is where I come from.” / “That is where it all begins.”

Varela’s new project, *La máquina de futuro*, premiered as an expanded cinema performance at the Muestra Mínic Autonomous University in Texcoco, State of Mexico, in October 2023. <sup>1</sup> With the distance of two decades, we can Varela meant Barrenador’s seemingly ludic juxtaposition of corn and a plastic astronaut figurine. In both the perf called *La máquina de futuro* (2024), we are faced with two pieces of found footage, derived from two 1960s laun foremost competitor of Veracruz’s Fausto Celorio, inventor of the modern tortilladora—presented under astral sig and the spectacular, universally significant colonial project of the Apollo 11 moon landing. <sup>2</sup> (A landing that ambig medals of fallen Soviet cosmonauts.) Twinned audio tracks of Apollo 11 and a YouTube video describing the Verá superimpositions. The “resemblances” mentioned in *Mano de metate* now encompass the lunar surface, with eac Tranquility.

In this work, the continuously spinning wheels of the Verástegui tortilladora (patented in 1959) rhyme with the ro the lunar atmosphere, lending these pieces of found footage a sublime role—in their form and content—in Hollis I infinite film contains an infinity of endless passages wherein no frame resembles any other in the slightest degre wherein successive frames are as nearly identical as intelligence can make them.” A fine description of the máqu like Frampton’s fantasy of reassembling the universe in the shape of a film archive—cannot release us from the q might be lying behind it. Is it an instance of what philosopher Günther Anders called “Promethean shame”: an er not our own product, and correlatively the false consolation that the Earth we are destroying is, because simulat

In 1969, several months before Apollo 11, the person later responsible for publishing Frampton’s “For a Metahisto critic Annette Michelson—wrote in the same journal as a response to Kubrick’s *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968): “In confronts the loss of those coordinates through which it normally functions.” The “reinvention of those coordinat movement. It is also the young who are “more openly disposed to that kind of formal transcription of the fundam negates, in and through its form, the notion of equilibrium as a state of definition, of rest in finality.” The standing equivalently, to wrest the body from its familiar temporal coordinates. That loss of equilibrium, that dance involv knowing where to place it in time, exemplifies the temporal flexibility and and athleticism that Michelson labeled

The very same way of thinking about time is exercised in Varela’s main influences from science fiction and specu 1981 novel *Valis*, the principle inspiration behind Varela’s feature *El Prototipo* (2022), a science fiction film genera signals of Christian Gnostics changes with each screening. And in another influence on Varela, Dick’s earlier 196- “anomalous children” on Mars are “out of phase in time”: “precisely as we would be if we faced a speeded-up tele possible the child Manfred’s “precognitive” visions (or prophecies).

William S. Burroughs’s cut-up and fold-in writing methods—conceived as a form of time-travel—have long constit footage experimental filmmaking, and Varela’s in particular: “When the reader reads page ten he is flashing forw and back in time to page one,” the author says in “The Future of the Novel.” <sup>4</sup> Burroughs’s speculative prehistory ( the lost continent Lemuria) foregrounds their temporal flexibility. Such prehistories, like those surrounding the ai

and emanating from a television program, form the backdrop of Varela's film *Parque Colosio* (2013). An entire his of our received concepts.

"Anáhuac against the robots" (*Anáhuac contra los robots*): this phrase in Varela's writing provides the title of the futuro and another tortilla-related short film, *La ranura en el tiempo* (2024), in collaboration with dancer Rosario 16mm in the ancient Zapotec city of Dainzú, Oaxaca, and sampled in the Chapingo performance. Thus, that ancie the moon act as stages for a future confrontation between the Valley of Mexico (understood by its Nahuatl name And in consequence, nothing less than a vision of Neo-Mexicanist Millenarianism and its ambiguities (Is it a mecl against that?) emerges from Varela's counterintuitively balletic transformation of Jean-Marie Straub's last film, *F* released to the world at the start of a pandemic and adapted from the French author Georges Bernanos. ("Regin are now directly united by technology," says Christophe Clavert in Straub's *France Against Robots*, following Ber

These millenarian visions (beliefs in a radical transformation to come) were increasingly common in the late twer often took on a neo-Mexicanist character. Thus, the diptych *Anáhuac contra los robots* would seem bound up wi such omens as "the alignment of the planets that occurred in March 1982 up until the passing of Halley's Comet i asteroid Icarus in 1988 or the lunar eclipse of 1993," building up to that milestone year of Mexican history, 1994. <sup>5</sup> uprising in Chiapas, of the assassination of PRI presidential candidate Colosio in Tijuana, and of Bruno Varela's r Zapatismo to southern Mexico).

"[Max] Weber had already pointed out that subversive side of prophets and brujos, who move outside the priesth tortilladora, understood now as a machine for generating prophecies, by removing the subjectivity of the human of photography and cinema) is thus the radical negation of priestly institutions. And the idea of a machine for ge máquina de futuro, Varela's quotation of) the series of mysterious mechanical-seeming prophetic messages pub newspaper *La Jornada* in 1993 and 1994, and later interpreted in Octavio Gordillo Guillén's book *Mensajes cifrad* (1997). Every approach to politics is ultimately a search for patterns, rendered in this case as a search for codes.

The ambition of a prophetic vision is to leave no significant event untouched. It is as though neither a liberating p politics could escape the presence of Ometéotl, Aztec god of creation. He is omnipresent, like a vision announce that covers everything. He is self-generating, like the wheeling mechanisms of the tortilladora (feeding our contil phases of the moon. Ometéotl's creative powers cannot be traced to a past event but are rather immanent in all t

Every tortilla is a potential film.

Text by Bruno Varela and Byron Davies

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<sup>1</sup> In the performance, Varela was accompanied by Marcela Cuevas Ríos. The edition of *Muestra Mínima* at Chapi and Ricardo Benítez Garrido, and focused on agricultural themes, reflecting Chapingo's character and historical :

<sup>2</sup> By eliminating the definite article and exclamation mark in the sign visible in the Verástegui footage (*La máquir cracks open and cools the original's marketing-enforced confidence.*

<sup>3</sup> See Daniel Morgan, "Modernism Is Not for Children: Annette Michelson, Film Theory, and the Avant-Garde," *Cr* (2023). A slightly different kind of temporal athleticism characterizes the main precedent for using footage of *Ap*

filmmaking: Alfredo Gurrola's *La segunda primera matriz* (1972), where the moon landing figures as a technologi:

<sup>4</sup> William S. Burroughs, "The Future of the Novel," in *Word Virus*, ed. James Grauerholz and Ira Silverberg (New

<sup>5</sup> Francisco de la Peña, "Profecías de la mexicanidad: entre el milenarismo nacionalista y la new age," *Cuicuilco* 1

<sup>6</sup> Astrid Maribel Pinto Durán and Martín de la Cruz López Moya, "Extraterrestres en el imaginario del New Age: r desde San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas," *LiminaR* 9, no. 2 (2011), 63-82.

<sup>7</sup> See Miguel León-Portilla, *La filosofía náhuatl estudiada en sus fuentes*, 11th ed. (Mexico City: UNAM Instituto d 218.