

## Panel E4

Sala Emiciclo

### Animation: Beyond Movement

Kirsten Moana Thompson

#### Light, Color and Motion: Animated Materiality in *Moana*



Giuliana Bruno has spoken of film, architecture and clothing as linked aesthetic surfaces in that all three have the ability to "house the motion of emotion" or make mood (18). For Bruno, the motion of an emotion can be "drafted onto the surface, in the shape of a line or in the haptic thickness of pigment" (5). This paper attends to the relationship of material surface, e(motion) and color in Disney's feature film *Moana* (John Musker and Ron Clements, 2016), which has received some popular attention as the 'first' Disney film to feature a Polynesian princess. Firstly it situates *Moana* within a longer, yet largely unexamined aesthetic history of midcentury modernism and 'tiki kitsch', in which the Pacific (Te Moana in Hawaiian and Maori) has played an influential role in Disney architecture, theme park design and animated cartoons, from the Enchanted Tiki Room to Polynesian Villages at Disneyland. Secondly, it then turns to the film's treatment of two specific animated surfaces: Maui's bioluminescent fish hook, and the scintillating hard gold surface of Jermaine Clement's glam crab Tamatoa ("Shiny"). Through these textual examples I will explore the ways in which illuminated, scintillating light is a key component of animated motion and one that has its roots in the analogue era. For Jean Epstein, whose notion of photogénie suggested an architectural understanding of light, "the design of the world is materialized in light in palpable ways as light saturates a space, the universe of things becomes animated" (cited in Bruno, 134). Following Jean Epstein's ideas of photogénie, I want to explore the ways in which animated light in motion is part of a transformation of the contemporary screen into a new generative site across multiple art forms.

### Bibliography

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## Biography

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Kirsten Moana Thompson is Professor of Film Studies and Director of the Film Programme at Seattle University, and former Director of Film at Victoria University and Wayne State University. She is the author of *Apocalyptic Dread: American Cinema at the Turn of the Millennium* (SUNY Press, 2007); *Crime Films: Investigating the Scene* (Wallflower: 2007), and co-editor with Terri Ginsberg of *Perspectives on German Cinema* (GK Hall: NY, 1996). She has written a number of articles on the history of Disney cel animation and the color production process and is currently working on a new book, *Color, Visual Culture and American Cel Animation*.