

**Mitch Goodwin, PhD**

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# The Falling Man

The Virtualization of the Violent Body

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@oldmateo #ViolentBody





*Homage To Bleriot* (Robert Delaunay, 1914)



*Sun, Tower, Airplane* (Robert Delaunay, 1913)



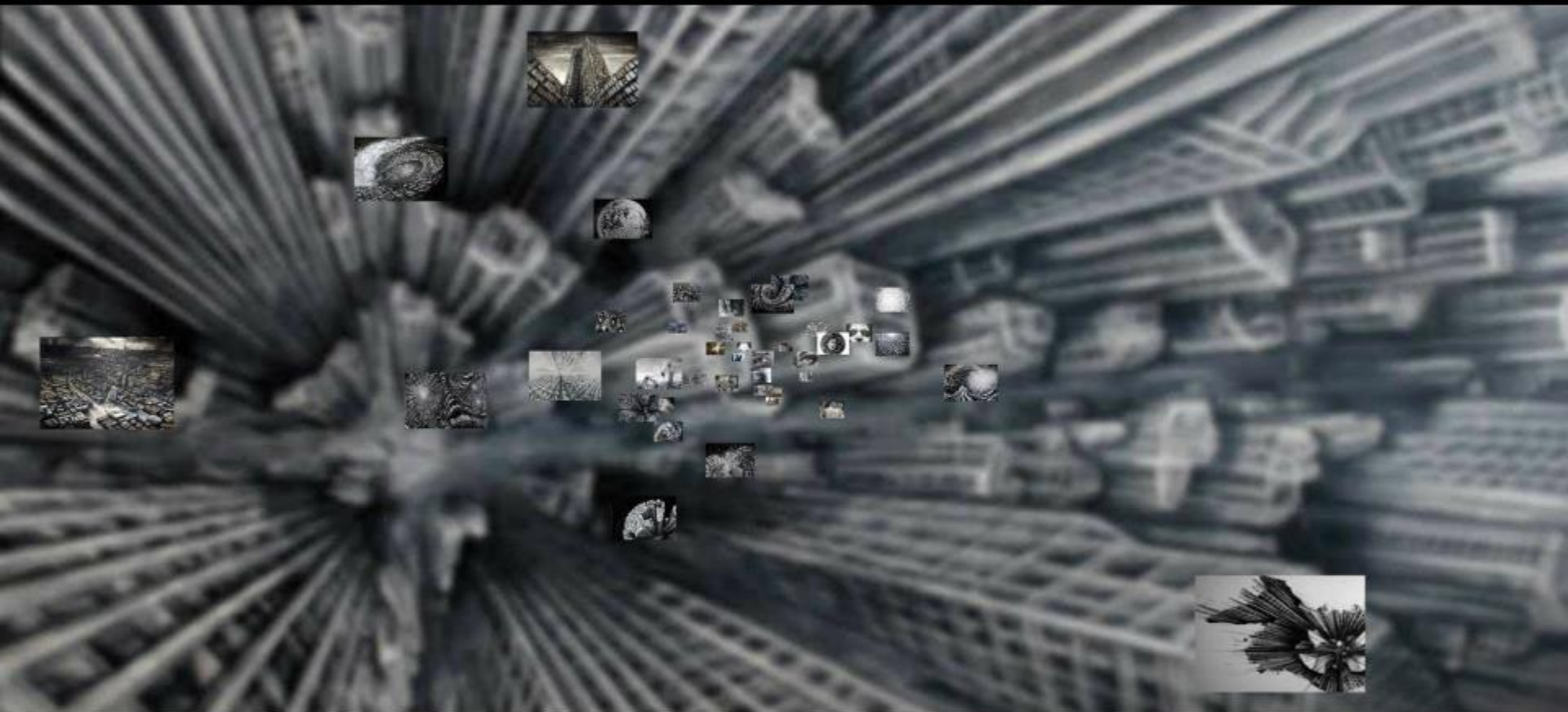
(New York Magazine / Corbis, 2001)

A black and white photograph of an astronaut in a full space suit floating upside down in the void of space. The astronaut is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the frame. Below them, the dark, cratered surface of the moon is visible, with a range of jagged mountains in the distance. The scene is dramatically lit from the side, highlighting the textures of the suit and the lunar terrain against the pitch-black background of space.

**PART I :: Dark Euphoria**



Stanley Kubricks' *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Warner Bros, 1968)



Interface of *Fabio Giampietro's* online gallery ([fabiogiampietro.com](http://fabiogiampietro.com), 2013)

... things are just falling apart, you can't believe the possibilities, it's like anything is possible, but you never realized you're going to have to dread it so much. It's like a leap into the unknown. You're falling toward earth at nine hundred kilometres an hour and then you realize there's no earth there. That's a dark euphoria feeling. It's the cultural temperament of the coming decade.

- Bruce Sterling, speaking at Reboot 11, Copenhagen, 2009





Promotional collateral for series six of *Mad Men* (Weiner, 2013) and Richard Drew's photograph, *The Falling Man* (Drew & Associated Press, 2001).





Still from *Gravity - Falling Montage* (Plot Point Productions, 2013)



Ang Lee's *Ice Storm* (Fox Searchlight, 1997) and Sam Mendes' *American Beauty* (Dreamworks, 1999)

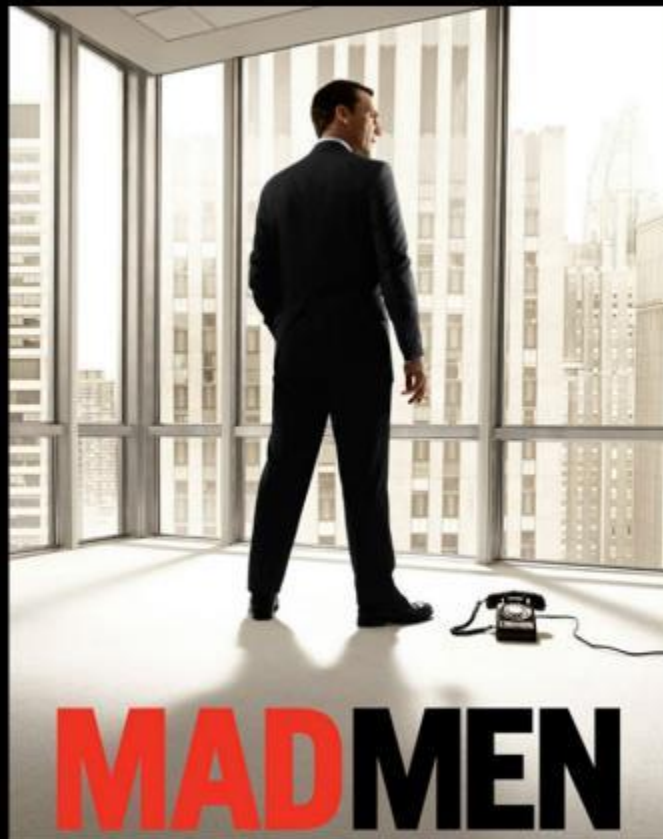


Richard Kelly's *Donnie Darko* (Pandora Cinema, 2001) and Sofia Coppola's *Virgin Suicides* (Paramount Classics, 1999)





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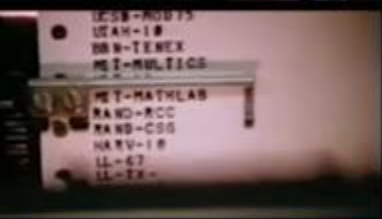












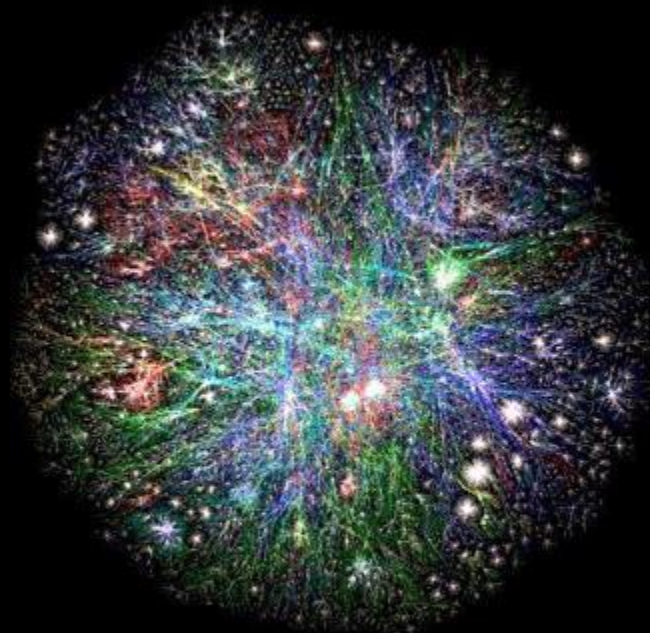
A silhouette of a person in a space suit is shown floating in a dark space. The person is illuminated from behind by a bright, circular light source, creating a halo effect. The person's arms are outstretched, and they appear to be in a state of freefall or floating. In the foreground, there is a dark, rocky lunar landscape with several peaks and ridges. The overall scene is dramatic and evocative, suggesting a theme of exploration or a significant event in space.

**PART II :: The Fall**





Alfonso Cuarón's *Gravity* (Cuarón, 2013)



*Google Earth* interface (Google Inc., 2008) and *The Opte Project* which maps internet usage across the globe (Barrett Lyon, 2003)



The technology of the digital POV image began with a pistol and a shotgun, *Doom* (ID Software, 1993) and *Quake* (ID Software, 1996)



Marc Webb's reboot, *The Amazing Spiderman* (Marvel, 2012)





James Kingston performs in *Cambridge Parkour POV* (Ambisound, 2013)



*The Mirror's Edge* (Electronic Arts, 2008)



Still from *Dream* (Vaya Studios, 2013)



Alfonso Cuarón's *Gravity* (Cuarón, 2013)



*Ground Zero* by Doug Kanter (Reuters, 2001) and promotional footage for *Crysis 3* (Electronic Arts, 2013).



Dutch architectural firm MVRDV's design for the the *Yongsan Business district*, Seoul (MVRDV, 2011) and Twin Towers image (Associated Press, 2001)



*The Man of Steel* (Warner Brothers, 2012) and the WTC dust cloud on September 11, 2001 (Associated Press, 2001).



Christopher Nolan's *Dark Knight* (Warner Brothers, 2012) and the impact site on WTC1 September 11, 2001 (AFP & Getty Images, 2001).





*Flesh* (Edouard Salier, 2005)



*Flesh* (Edouard Salier, 2005)

... All of a sudden...BOOM! There was a huge explosion. I never saw anything so red in my life. It was red like blood, like anger. It felt like it was coming through me, it was so powerful. I had just been sitting where it hit.

- Lykeria Manis, *My 9/11 Escape from the World Trade Center*, New York, 2009





*Flesh* (Edouard Salier, 2005)



## PART III :: The Simulation

What happens at the end of this process of visualization, however, is that we begin to experience 'real reality' itself as a virtual entity. For the great majority of the public, the WTC explosions were events on the TV screen, and when we watched the oft-repeated shot of the frightened people running towards the camera ahead of the giant cloud of dust from the collapsing tower, was not the framing of the shot itself reminiscent of spectacular shots in catastrophe movies, a special effect which outdid all others, since – as Jeremy Bentham knew – reality is the best appearance of itself?

- Slavoj Žižek, in his essay *Desert of the Real*, September 15 2001







*The Falling Man* by photographer Richard Drew, September 11, 2001





*Spider-Man* (Sony Pictures. / Raimi, 2002)



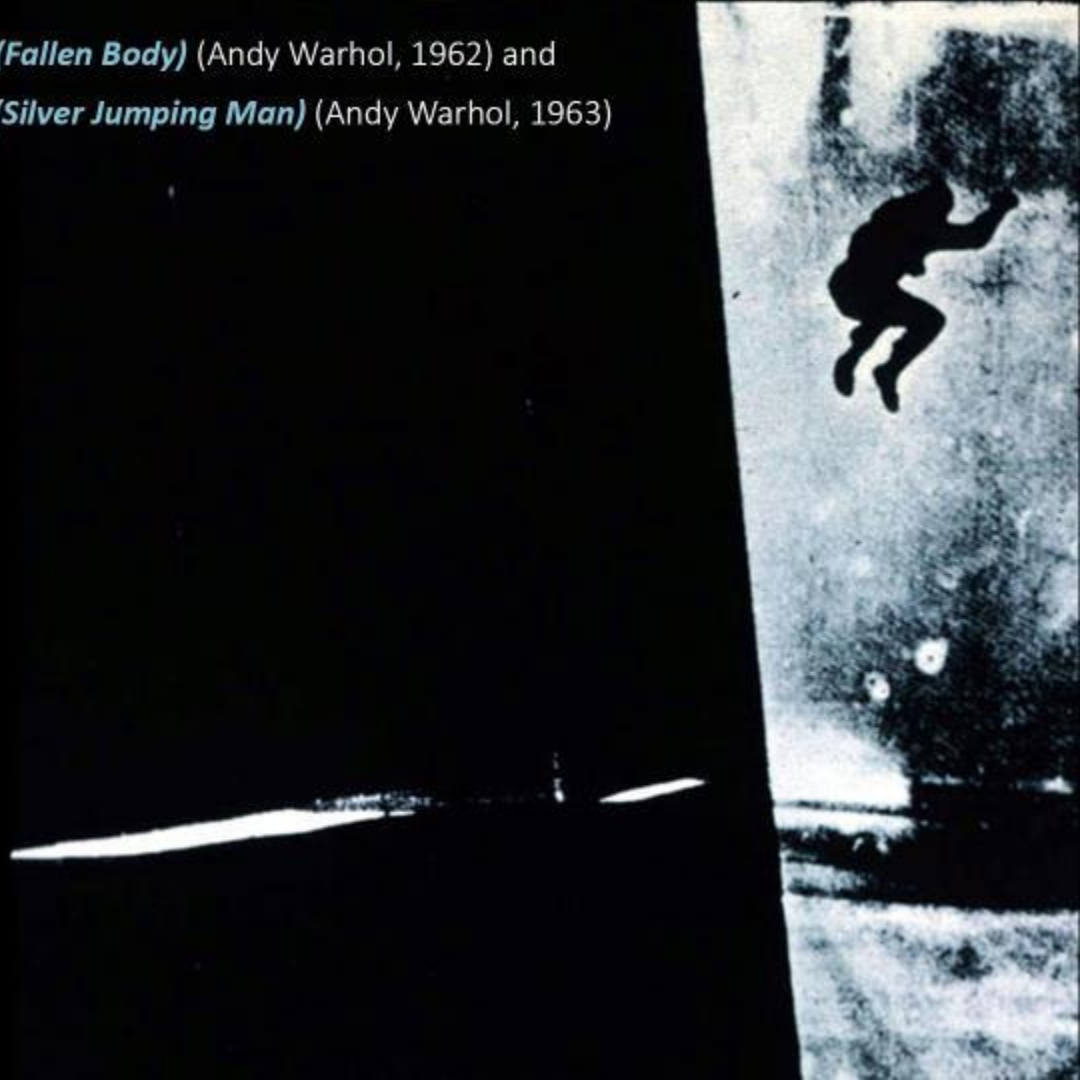
*A.I. Artificial Intelligence* (Warner Bros. / Spielberg, 2001)

Overexposure is the live broadcast; it is real-time replacing the past, present and future. A society that heedlessly privileges the present necessarily privileges the accident... So somewhere the end of the future and the end of the past, in our societies of immediacy, of ubiquity, of instantaneity, are necessarily the advent of the accident.

- Paul Virilio, *The Accident of Art* (Virilio & Lotringer, 2005, p. 109)



*Suicide (Fallen Body)* (Andy Warhol, 1962) and  
*Suicide (Silver Jumping Man)* (Andy Warhol, 1963)



We have lost history and have also, as a result, lost the end of history. We are labouring under the illusion of the end, under the posthumous illusion of the end. And this is serious, for the end signifies that something has really taken place. Whereas we, at the height of reality – and with information at its peak – no longer know whether anything has taken place or not.

- Jean Baudrillard, *The end of the millennium or the countdown* in *Economy & Society*, 1997

