



### **A Short Reflection on V1 (*Tourbillons*)**

by Angela Joosse

The opening of Christian Lebrat's video, *V1 (Tourbillons)*, fades in with a torrent of staccato sounds while the screen fills with a play of light reflections and raindrops on a watery surface. This scene is sustained, holding my attention on the details of this maelstrom long enough for me to grasp the patterning of rain as the central focus of the video. It is from here that I am able to enter the piece. The indexical quality of the image recedes, and I begin to perceive drawings of light on the surface of the water and surface of the screen. These are transient, delicate, ephemeral light drawings, which burst forth only to quickly decay. I note that this play of light is akin to the flutter of moths around a flame; the moth wings briefly catch the light in fan shapes and then disappear into the black of night.

The play of light on water and the sound of raindrops on the umbrella overhead are mesmerizing. The raindrops puncture and ripple the sheen of light on the surface of water, and also chatter away on the unseen surface of the umbrella. These stochastic sound-image patterns work together to produce a hypnotic effect. As Christian Lebrat describes, "this is a kind of hypnotic image that keeps you on the screen." The patterned sounds and images of *V1 (Tourbillons)* are perceptually enticing, offering a magical play for my eyes that "keeps me on the screen." I remain highly attentive to the subtle variations in light and sound. But with this attentiveness comes an oscillation between attention to the surface of

the water, and to the surface of the video image on screen. I experience a perceptual flux between representation and pure light. It is in the moments when my attention to the representation of rain recedes and perception to the light-on-surface comes forward that the vibrant, eclectic qualities of these video images begin to emerge.

Though not immediately apparent, this video can also be considered in continuity with Lebrat's exploration into the nature of colour, which forms an integral part of his film work. Here the study of colour is caught up in images that double as hypnotic figures as well as abstract formations of electric light. When I attend to *V1 (Tourbillons)* as images of water, the more inclined I am to edit out the colour content of the image; electric magenta, yellow and blue do not belong to what I know of the properties of raindrops and water. But in the moments when the image appears as a play of light on the fluid surface of the screen, the colours jump out and vibrate with the fluxing white light. Shimmering rainbow colours appear, like the sheen of oil on water. Or blue halos leap out, electric and vibrant, from the rims of ripples. These colours are as transient and ephemeral as the traces of white light on the dark fluid surface. These bursts of colour do not belong exclusively to the reflections of light off the water, to the conversion of light into digital signal, to my perception and focus of attention, nor to the projection of light on screen. These colours are only able appear at the momentary eddy of all these phenomena.

Powerful sounds often disrupt my hypnotic focus on the frenzy of light reflections and crackling of raindrops hitting the umbrella. I hear men's voices calling to each other, thunder, a child's cries, the slosh of footsteps through water, and the approach of a boat on the canal. These sounds place me somewhere: huddled under an umbrella in a city space. These transient sounds belong to things and people I cannot see, provoking my imagination to visualize what might be seen, but also provoking a sense of vulnerability and fragility in me since I am not able to see beyond the close-ups of rain on dark water. I remain surrounded by darkness. This darkness has a thickness to it, appearing as a deep black on the screen. I note the fragility of the light reflections that fill my view, and their necessary dependence on surfaces upon which to draw out their appearance. These light drawings only have a moment to survive before conceding to the tourbillons of thick, productive, blackness.