

About *Bounces*

I was watching a French soccer match between Paris and Monaco. At one point, a player from Paris threw the ball at the other side of the field. The ball crossed the width of the field but, because of a lack of precision of the pass, it bounced halfway between two players. Both of them moved toward the ball but, just after having started, they stopped, raised their heads, and looked each other. This eye contact, supposed to determine which of the two had to catch the ball, created a floating pause for all the players on the field. This “interruption” lasted a very short instant, so short that soccer audience barely saw it. Far from being a timeout, these one or two seconds were a concentrate of energy. Obviously, the ball did not stop, but slowed down, as if it had escaped the domination of the players. The contrast between the intensity of the players and the slackening of the ball was striking.

I wrote down and analyze these instants where a tension emerges between mobility and immobility, intention and indecision. I focus on a misunderstanding or an unexpected event on the field, that created an interval, which impacted the player’s movements. By superimposing twice the same action in both directions, I intend to show several views of the same motion. Then the viewer is prompted to imagine a correct path, as originally “presumably” happened on the field. Here reality is blurred, hard to see. What remains are fictitious trajectories.

From the largest motions to the smallest and almost indiscernible gestures, I imagine that the viewer could “feel” the ball in order to deduce its motion. The ball acts as a magnet for both the players and those who see them on the screen. The “blurring” is partially emphasized by the scale. In TV close up motions are easier to analyze: bodies are shown with accuracy, contacts with the ball are easy to determine. By contrast, in most of these *Bounces*, players are small, and smaller still is the ball. How can we perceive motions that are sometimes impossible to see in detail?

As the two images overlap, players and ball of the one blend with those of the other. How to perceive the movements in their original when the two images stack on the flatness of the screen? The result is misleading.