

**C A N Y O N C I**

**N E M A Z I N E**

I S S U E N O 3

2 0 1 4 2 0 1 5

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on sound

Cover: hand-painted slide by Taryn Jones, 2013  
Inside Cover: collage by Linda Scobie, 2014

## MASTHEAD

Canyon Cinemazine  
An assemblage of experimental film and video writing, art, and ephemera.

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## ABOUT THE FLEXI-DISC INSERT

A flexi-disc is a phonograph record made of thin, flexible vinyl. The flexi included in this issue plays on a standard record player at 33rpm. Designed for magazine promotions, this sound object is particularly delicate and degrades after about 50 plays. Like the printed page and worn film reel, this object is made to disappear, and a fitting addition to a publication devoted to transcient images (and sounds).

## FLEXI-DISC TRACKS & CONTRIBUTORS

John Davis, "Wild Air Moon"  
GX Jupitter Larsen, "A Noisy Delivery"  
Jodie Mack, "Let Your Light Shine (B-Side)"  
*See last page for more information.*



*Relativity (#1)*, Paul Glabicki, 2014

Ongoing drawing series generated by Einstein's  
writings about time and space

**REFRAIN: WARREN SONBERT & MUSIC**  
**// MAX GOLDBERG**

*Right: Sonbert's record  
collection inventory from  
Harvard Film Archive*

Beginning with *Carriage Trade* (1972), his first and most sustained attempt at a “polyvalent” form of montage, Warren Sonbert jettisoned the jukebox soundtracks of his early films. The imagery of his mature work could hardly be called austere, but Sonbert felt that silence was needed to avoid crushing the flower: “I really feel that images are so much more clarified and ambivalent and really powerful if they can just be *seen* in and of *themselves*,” he told critic David Ehrenstein in a 1983 interview. During this same period Sonbert wrote hundreds of articles for *The Advocate* rating opera performances and rounding up the latest classical recordings. As if to signal the intertwined nature of his passions for music and cinema, the columns were signed under the pen name Scottie Ferguson (Jimmy Stewart’s character in *Vertigo*, perhaps Sonbert’s ultimate movie muse). Sonbert arranged his frequent travels to accommodate both of his preferred arts: screening his latest films at cinematheques and film festivals, attending operas and concerts for review, and all the while collecting footage for the upcoming work.

This touring circuit inevitably colored Sonbert’s aesthetic ideas and aspirations for his films. “[My] films *are* musical,” he told Ehrenstein about his decision to forego soundtracks. “I

always compare my shots to notes or chords. It does come from music, but because of that I can’t *use* music.” As a typed inventory of his record collection makes clear, Mozart was a major source of inspiration. “I indeed regard the [films] in a Mozartian key scheme,” he offered in his “Film Syntax” lecture. “*Carriage Trade* being in E-flat Major, broad, epic, leisurely, maestoso; *Rude Awakening* in D minor, brooding, cynical, fatalistic, dancing on the precipice; *Divided Loyalties* in C Major, agile, dynamic, spry, with a hint of turbulence.” Sirk struck Sonbert as a second Mozart, another model of tonal subtlety: “Like Mozart, whose music is always ‘beautiful’ and utilizes the accepted forms and structures of his age and yet - for those with ears to hear it - has the bitter resignation and fatality that was to be smeared to abuse in later times,” he wrote in a Pacific Film Archive program, “Sirk never hammers home points, forces rigid attitudes or forms condescending judgments about his characters and their situations.”

If the comparison between Sirk’s characterizations and Mozart’s compositions seems a bit fanciful and even snobbish (“for those with ears to hear it”), it also suggests the extent to which the musical analogy reinvigorated Sonbert’s faith in his formative cinematic influences. Introducing



Mozart - 450	D. Scarlatti - 9	Esterhazy - 3	Wilbye - 1
Bach - 132+	Pergolesi - 9	Auber - 3	White - 1
Beethoven - 140	Josquin - 9	Gretry - 3	Landini - 1
Verdi - 191	Busoni - 9+	Erkel - 3	Wolkenstein - 1
Strauss - 140	Cherubini - 9	Kodaly - 3	Marais - 1
Wagner - 142	Pfitzner - 8	Schoeck - 4	Theile - 1
Handel - 151	Milhaud - 8	Holst - 3	Cavroy - 1
Brahms - 88+	Britten - 8	Weinberger - 3	Sarti - 1
Haydn - 81	Massenet - 8	Herrmann - 3	Rossi - 1
Schubert - 75	Wolf - 8+	D'Albert - 3	Caldara - 1
Mahler - 67+	Szymanowski - 7+	Rochberg - 3	Tinctoris - 1
Rossini - 74+	Copland - 7+	Canteloube - 4	Nenna - 1
Stravinsky - 59+	Penderecki - 9+	Buxtehude - 2+	Stradella - 1
Schumann - 57	G. Gabrieli - 7	Biber - 2+	Clerambault - 1
Berlioz - 56	Respighi - 8	Arne - 3+	Giuliani - 1
Chopin - 58+	Lassus - 6+	Berwald - 2+	Frederick - 1
Tchaikovsky - 51+	Satie - 6+	Granados - 2+	Demantius - 1
Schoenberg - 48+	Bloch - 6+	Turina - 2+	Paissello - 4
Rachmaninov - 39+	Field - 6	Martin - 2+	Marcello - 1
Janacek - 38+	Barber - 6	Gregorian - 3	Cui - 1
Bruckner - 35	Gershwin - 6	Alfonso X - 2	Glauzonov - 1
Dvorak - 39	Poetry - 6	Willaert - 2	Rheinberger - 1
Debussy - 34	Machaut - 5	Isaac - 2	Mompou - 1
Rameau - 33+	Dufay - 5	Gibbons - 3	Balakirev - 1
Monteverdi - 34+	Victoria - 5	Bull - 2	Foster - 1
Ives - 32+	Corelli - 5	Devienne - 2	Alkan - 1
Prokofiev - 31+	A. Scarlatti - 5+	Cavaliere - 2	Bruch - 1
Liszt - 32+	Meyerbeer - 5	Carissimi - 2+	Enesco - 1
Vivaldi - 29+	Bellini - 6+	Hummel - 2	Widor - 1
Purcell - 26+	Webern - 4+	L. Mozart - 2	Vierne - 1
Gluck - 25	Falla - 4+	Dittersdorf - 2	Ibert - 1
Mendelssohn - 24+	Roussel - 4+	Pepusch - 2	Foss - 1
Ravel - 23+	Tippett - 4+	Geminiani - 2	Skokolay - 1
Bartok - 24+	Boulez - 4+	Boccherini - 2	Perle - 1
Schuetz - 24	Dowland - 4	MacDowell - 2	Reich - 1
Puccini - 23	Gesualdo - 4	Villa-Lobos - 2+	Baksa - 1
Bizet - 21	Albinoni - 4+	Bridge - 2	Dresher - 1
Mussorgsky - 20+	Cimarosa - 4	Gerhard - 2	Erickson - 1
Sibelius - 20	Nicholai - 4	Honegger - 2	Bolcom - 1
Nielsen - 19+	Thomas - 4	Ligeti - 2	Nazareth - 1
Hindemith - 20+	J. Strauss - 4	Wolpe - 2	Koechlin - 1
Telemann - 19+	Chabrier - 4	Pinkham - 2	Antheil - 1
Charpentier - 16+	Goldmark - 5	Nono - 2	Panufnik - 1
Weber - 21	Chausson - 4	Menotti - 2	Infante - 1
Franck - 15+	Dukas - 4	Orff - 2	Goehr - 1
Smetana - 15+	Varese - 4	Walton - 2+	Ruggles - 1
Berg - 14+	Cage - 4	Sheppard - 1+	Khachaturian - 1
V. Williams - 14	Okeghem - 3+	Taverner - 1+	Nancarrow - 1
Saint-Saens - 16+	Byrd - 4	Tartini - 2+	Yardumian - 1
Gounod - 13+	JC Bach - 3+	Mercadante - 1+	Stockhausen - 1
Scriabin - 13	Albeniz - 3+	D'Indy - 1+	Ulm Kulthum - 1
Boito - 12+	Rimsky-K - 4	Borodin - 1+	Domingo - 1
Carter - 11+	Zemlinsky - 3+	Duparc - 1+	Kiki - 2
Grieg - 12	Thomson - 3+	Dallapiccola - 1+	Norman - 1
Poulenc - 11	Reorem - 3+	Reger - 1+	Etting - 1
Shostakovich - 11	Bernstein - 3+	Piston - 1+	Balinese - 1
CPE Bach - 10+	Xenakis - 3+	Cowell - 1+	Schubalakshma - 1
Donizetti - 10+	Senfl - 3+	Messiaen - 1+	Weelkes - +
Elgar - 11	Tallis - 3	Crumb - 1+	Molter - +
Palestrina - 10	Morley - 3	Abelard - 1	Hurlebusch - +
Weill - 10	Praetorius - 3	Bertrand - 1	de la Rue - +
Couperin - 9+	Lully - 3	Busnois - 1	de Quatris - +
Cavalli - 10	Zelenka - 3	Ciconia - 1	Jannequin - +
Faure - 10+	Frescobaldi - 3	Colonna - 1	Morales - +
Delius - 10+	Cesti - 3	Susato - 1	Ribera - +
			Runstable - +

the serial publication of his script for a complex film adaptation of Richard Strauss's final opera, *Capriccio*, in the Collective for Living Cinema's *Motion Picture* journal, Sonbert cited Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* as a reference point: "As Berg had woven into his theatrical narrative the traditional musical forms of rondo, sonata, theme and variations, passacaglia and so on, so I wanted to employ certain cinematic equivalents of musical set pieces: parallel editing, a long, complicated track with no cuts, a lengthy stationary camera take with foreground, mid-ground, background tensions, established narrative codes utilizing 'point of view' as the framework, and so on." Within the conceptual framework on loan from opera one finds the same auteurist idiom that preoccupied Sonbert from his earliest films. A private note in his *Capriccio* materials reads in full: "HITCHCOCK/SIRK/KEATON/OPHULS/RENOIR/GRIFFITH."

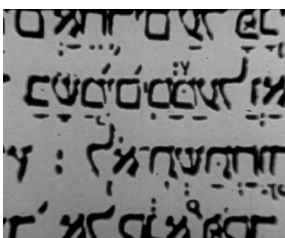
"After years of being pigeonholed as a filmmaker of the avant-garde...it was a provocative enough gesture to thrust out 53 major characters in a scenario setting," Sonbert wrote, a little tartly, in his introduction to the *Capriccio* screenplay. Friends and colleagues often remarked on his consummate ease mixing with the arts world *beau monde*, but Sonbert obviously desired a different order of recognition for his own films - one unavailable to him in the circumscribed world of experimental cinema. Sonbert's *Capriccio* was to remain on paper, but a few years after publishing the script installments he began reconciling music and montage in his short films. *Friendly Witness* (1989) cues some of the same pop platters that scored his 1960s films before taking wing on Gluck's overture to *Iphigénie en Aulide*. His last completed film, *Short Fuse* (1992), returns to the siren song of Strauss's *Capriccio* - but only by way of Herrmann's *Vertigo*.

Right: Collage of filmmaker's  
accumulated opera/concert  
tickets

Images courtesy of the  
Warren Sonbert Collection,  
1966-1997. Harvard Film  
Archive, Fine Arts Library,  
Harvard University.









**BARE ROOM | JOEY IZZO**

U.S. | 2011 | 31M 33S

COLOR/B&W | SOUND

16MM, SUPER8 & REGULAR8

B-movies, industrial films, home movies, TV commercials, animation, & softcore porn have been collected and re-assembled into a fractured, noir, murder mystery in Joey Izzo's *Bare Room*, part of John Zorn's "Film In Fifteen Scenes" collection. Through film reassemblage practice, akin to the works of Bruce Conner and Joseph Cornell, *Bare Room* orients the viewer within the (dis)associative realm of thematic collage and self-reflexive imagery. Plot and characters freely dissolve and reform at will, requiring the viewer to concentrate less on narrative coherence and plot solvability. *Bare Room* champions the mysterious and balks rational story at nearly every turn (also accompanied by a rhythmic, film sample-based new score by Ikue Mori).

**PRODUCTION NOTES**

Here's how it went...

Zorn wrote a script in 1981...

It was 254 shots, divided into 15 scenes...

A type of visual music... it's medium/meaning remaining cryptic...

In 2005 I got in contact with John and approached him with my interpretation...

A found footage murder mystery...

Joseph Cornell came up for both of us...

He never told me if my approach was "correct" just that it sounded great...

And with that I was off and running...

I collected footage from a randomized variety of sources... rusted 16mm cans piled high in Craig Baldwin's basement...

2 years later, the images were collected and assembled...

4 years later Ikue Mori adds her own interpretation... adding a film sample-based soundtrack

The film was now complete... an intertextual visual score...

The three of us adding layers of our own sonic/visual meaning.

- J . Izzo

## **BIG MACK ATTACK: INTERVIEW WITH JODIE IN NOVEMBER 2013 // WALTER FORSBERG**

*Jodie Mack is an animator and professor at Dartmouth College. I have always wanted to officially ask her about her work. Her current academic sabbatical, and the 2013 release of Dusty Stacks of Mom: The Poster Project - an animated tour de force about her mother's poster company, set to a re-imagined soundtrack of Dark Side of the Moon (1973), provided such an opportunity.*

**Walter Forsberg:** NYC's Duet 35 during the 2010 Orphan Film Symposium: I feel like karaoke is the bedrock of our friendship - not movies. What was your first karaoke experience? How does karaoke influence your live score performances?

**Jodie Mack:** My first karaoke experience was on a cruise ship somewhere in the Caribbean Sea. I was six or seven, maybe, and I sang "Eternal Flame" by the Bangles. I suppose karaoke does influence these performance combo things I've been doing lately - namely, because karaoke feels aligned with amateurism and immediacy. I enjoy setting the stage for chance encounters or accidents as a reason to have a live element in the first place.

**WF :** Congratulations on *Dusty Stacks of Mom* (DSOM), BTW. I truly think it's your best work to-date, and it really blew me away. The sheer wealth of animation sequences stands as one of its great strengths, IMHO. I'm curious as to your animation process: How do you go about inventorying and creating so many sequences?

**JM :** Well, both times I went to my mom's poster warehouse to shoot, I definitely had ideas for 10-20 scenes I wanted to do. From there, I improvised. I grouped types of shots: warehouse, material, heads, light show, etc. At a certain point, it became my goal to chew through/digest the material, which is how I ended up working on it in tiny form (folds, shreds, etc.). After the warehouse closed, I worked solely from my animation stand on a micro level. At that point, I tried to strategically envision shooting scenes, in order, from most-to-least intact.

**WF :** The list of musicians you collaborated with on the film is lengthy. How complicated was coordinating those people to complete the Pink Floyd-inspired soundtrack? More specifically: How did you come to know drummer Will Glass? He was my roommate in Montréal in the early 2000s.

**JM :** A different person or group performed for each song. I assigned songs, gave everyone instructions, and gave everyone a deadline. I sent each person the track from the original album and asked them to keep the same timing, key, etc. For the most part, this worked out very well. Someone dropped out due to illness at the last minute on one of the songs, so I scrambled to prepare a franken-version featuring two peoples' stylings + my own. This birthed the kazoo sequence. After that, there was necessary work at the transition points to stitch things together, but it worked out pretty well. I actually don't personally know Will Glass; he's a friend of my pal Mark Gallay, who worked on track 1. Thanks, Will!

**WF :** Is a focus pull truly the metaphoric visual equivalent of a guitar string bend? That was one major takeaway from watching *DSOM*.





**JM :** Obvs. My Bolex focus pulls were pretty herky-jerky, so I thought they made a nice pairing with the bends!

**WF :** The experimental film world can be very serious. What do you think about being serious? For all of the ebullience and explosive positivity that I know and love about you, and the playfulness of your animation, the core thematics of *Yard Work Is Hard Work* (2008) and *DSOM* are pretty freaking heavy: the housing crisis of 2008, and the lingering economic hardship of the financial collapse on Mom-run businesses. Confess!

**JM :** I am totally serious about seriousness, though many factors work against such a claim. Properties of my films like color, speed, humor, wordplay, and/or songs can deceive viewers and mask the works' underlying themes involving economic and emotional complexity. The many stigmas associated with "animation" in general also complicate perceptions of the work. But, the films are serious. All of them - from my films that simply study materials in motion to my films that interweave other elements like declaration, narrative, music, or other elements. I'm serious about expanding the form of experimental

animation and pushing its range, to work against the medium's associated stigmas. And, I'm serious about using animation as a way to examine the role of spectacle, technology, and material in daily life. But, I agree that the tone of the films, or my own metabolism, mask the malaise or melancholy that is present throughout most of my work.

**WF :** I often think of your story about what Mark Toscano said: "If you love film, you need to work in the archival universe. Because, that's the very last place you'll get to work with it." How has your commitment to 16mm helped and/or impaired you (w/r/t festival programmers, your bank balance, print scratching, etc.)? While you make a lot of digital work, I still associate you with a commitment to those little pictures with holes on the side.

**JM :** Yes, the story goes something like that. Or, maybe, "learn archiving skills because these are the skills we need passed on: film craft knowledge." I'll remain committed to celluloid as long as I can be. It's a beautiful medium, and I can't believe the world doesn't get that. I mean, we still teach lithography and fresco painting, but film is dead? Of course, this stems from the fact that cinema wouldn't exist without industrial practices; it was an industry before it was an art. Its mechanical principles are born from economic production. Still, I really think the world's attitude to film seems extremely hasty. Putting all your eggs in the unstable, constantly changing world of digital cinema makes no sense to me. To me it's much more a universe of both than a universe of one taking over the other. Coexist!!! That said, yes, it's harder and harder to find a good projectionist and/or well-maintained equipment. I am thinking

about starting to use a loan agreement form for my films to try and ensure that venues take as much care as possible. But, that doesn't really ensure anything. The best luck I've had is projecting films, myself, with equipment I bring around. But, that's not always possible.

**WF :** To my mind, experimental animators have a really tough role. Animation is often where the most experimentation takes place in filmmaking, yet it's also a realm that's frequently given the least props by the experimental film community. Can you speak to your experiences/struggles/triumphs as an animator, working towards some kind of position of respectability in that universe?

**JM :** Sure, and I think this relates to your question about seriousness. In Q+As, I often cite the problem of the experimental animator as being "too weird for the animation world, yet too cute for the experimental film world." Because commercial advertising and technology usurped the medium of abstract animation for its own purposes, it sits in a funny place. Lots of experimental film people



seem to undermine it, but they're missing the point. Without the early abstractions of the Italian Futurists, Eggeling, Richter, etc., there might not be experimental film as we know it. Deren, Brakhage, etc. - these folks all cite such early work as a major entry point into experimental filmmaking! But, yes, indeed strange biases, aforementioned stigmas, and associations with children's cinema do provide obstacles for the contemporary animator.

**WF :** Tell us about moving beyond the four walls of the 'black box.' Earlier this year, you had a gallery show of new work including a series of screen savers. Is that another fascination with obsolete media?

**JM :** The screensavers are actually part of my ongoing installation project: *No Kill Shelter*. *NKS* features an array of objects born from interests in materials, waste, and old technology: screensavers, and animated loops inspired by mesmerizing computer graphics, that play on discarded monitors and computers hand-decoupled with wrapping paper. Highlighting rapid technological obsolescence and the role of abstract animation in everyday life, the screensavers question the preciousness and fetishization of "antiquated" technology and the relationship between fine art, design and craft. Or, at least that's what I say in the vinyl on the wall. Mounting that show earlier this year was a valuable experience. I hope to install it again and continue to grow the shelter, but I've been slow to reach out to places insofar as it's a whole different world. Because of *Dusty Stacks* and my four other new films, I've been pre-occupied with the film world. The art world is a totally different thing that I don't even completely understand yet.

**WF :** You travel incessantly to film festivals and screenings. What work are you recently impressed by?

**JM :** Good question. I was recently asked something similar and so will now attempt to answer the question completely differently. I'm a lifetime devotee of Scott Stark, whose films and videos have made a great impression on me. I also love Tomonari Nishikawa's gorgeous cine-compositions. Both expand the notion of stroboscopic cinema to illustrate spatial and special truths about the natural and constructed world, which is something I really appreciate. I like work that takes risks in both form and content. And, I like work that doesn't bore or alienate the audience. Work that can speak to avant-garde die hards and regular people. Memorable work. It's amazing how many genres exist within "experimental" film; I want to see work that breaks those genres apart. That said, as an educator, I try to see something, to learn something in everything I watch. People work long and hard on these pieces, so I've been trying to do my best lately to notice the fruits of labor in an effort to be a good citizen.

**WF :** Oh, before I go, I almost forgot: What happens if you smoke weed and watch *DSOM*?

**JM :** I wouldn't know, but I think your mind resurrects the spirit of Judy Garland, singing "Somewhere over the Rainbow" really slowly, to match the length of the album. It's supposed to work perfectly.



*Siren*, A.G. Nigrin, 2013

From the acme years of Al Jolson and Mickey Mouse, to the day before yesterday, moviegoers have been hearing reel sounds.

Analog noises, quietly rumbling like a soft quilt of static blanketing us while we huddle to watch and hear the mellifluous voices of Monica Vitti or Frank Moran.

We've dismissed and forgotten them as quickly as we noticed them. If we even did in the first place. Often they almost disappear underneath Ennio or Lalo. Ravi or Toru. Bennie or Jerry or Quincy.

But then, sometimes, when reel X ends and reel Y begins, there's a shocking 'POP!' coming through the speaker like nothing other than a phonograph needle hitting a nicked groove.

The earliest film sound systems were record players. Edison's cylinders, Gaumont's Chromophones, the Warners' Vitaphones. But even when sound-on-film broke through, a charge led by the quacks of Gus Visser and other curious outriders, these optical cryptographs retained exclusively physical forms for decades.

Digital sound-on-disc arrived with the dinosaurs (Spielberg's of course) 20 years ago. Not for much longer would multiplexonauts hear any evidence of schmutz on a soundtrack. Crisp, clear ones and zeroes.

If we don't (even almost subliminally) hear the little snaps and crackles that tell us that we're in a film world, do we start to confuse the screen with real life? Or do we think it's more like a video game? Are these three worlds merging into one as fewer and fewer cinemas run reels with with soundtracks you could hold up to a light source and see?

Maybe this is all just like the nostalgia I have for my childhood Krispies although I know barley and flax makes a healthier, silenter breakfast.

But I've long felt more nourished after a visit to the rep. house than to a room advertising DTS or DCP. The tiny cellulose termites of time, microbes scratching their initials into records of human existence and endeavor. For me, it's part of the art.

What can I do about my Dolby Atmos fear?

**BRIAN DARR**

[www.HELLonFRISCObay.blogspot.com](http://www.HELLonFRISCObay.blogspot.com)

This is a selection of fifteen of the eighty-two slides I painted for the Hermit Thrushes tour earlier this month. For each show we projected two static slides and had one carousel of eighty slides that our viola player, Andrew Keller, advanced using a remote that he pressed with his foot throughout the set. The setup was different in each space (we played a varied mix of art galleries, bars, colleges, coffee shops), but this was the general idea: two static images and one that changed at irregular, improvised intervals.

**HERMIT THRUSHES  
PERFORMANCE SLIDES  
// TARYN JONES**

Hermit Thrushes

Yianni Kourmadas: Guitar, vocals

Andrew Keller: Viola

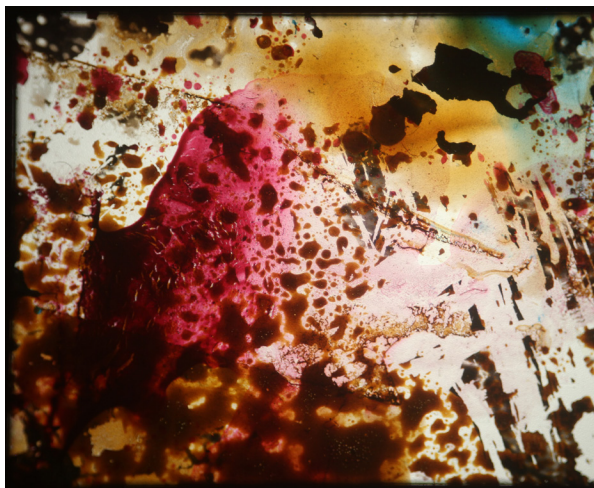
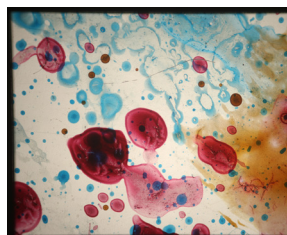
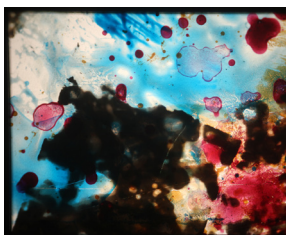
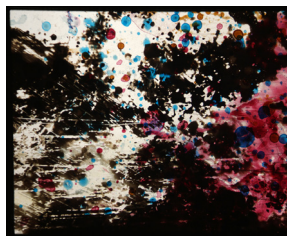
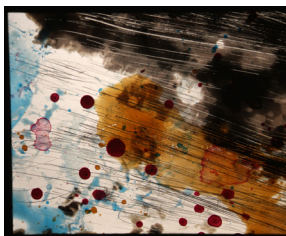
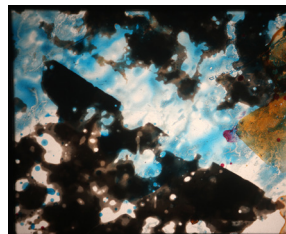
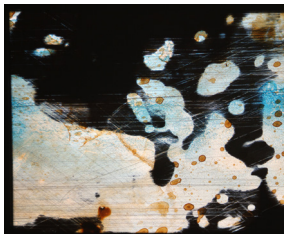
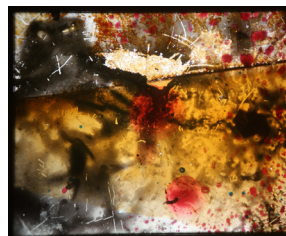
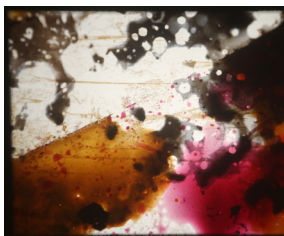
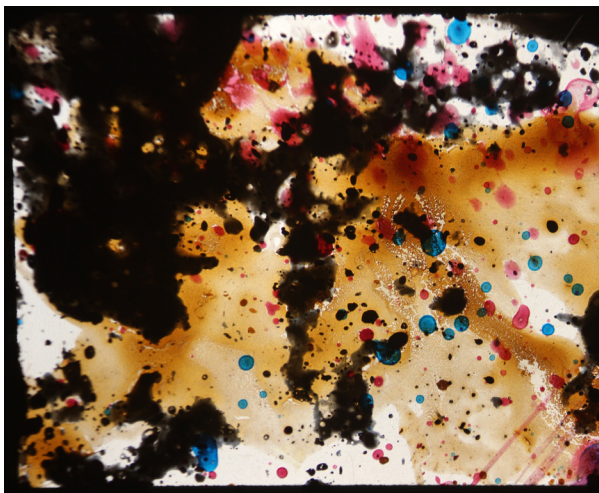
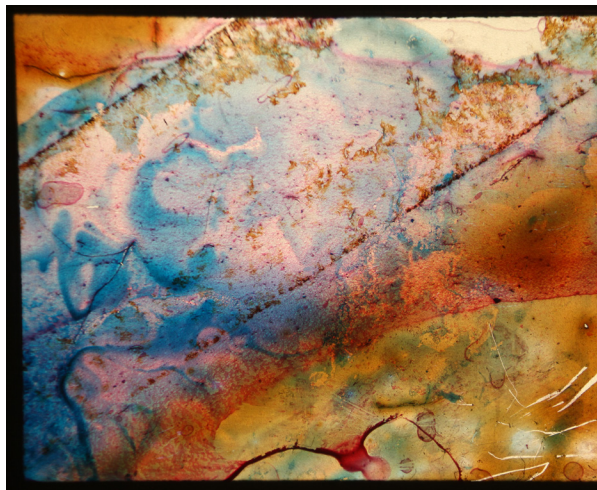
Spencer Carrow: Keyboard, percussion

Taryn Jones: Drums, and a homemade hurdy gurdy style instrument informally dubbed "the crank"

*Photo: Performance at Turner Gallery at Alfred University in Alfred, NY. Courtesy of the artist.*









## RHYTHMIC SYNCHRONIZATION (visual/music technique variations)

EDITING cutting both on and against the rhythm [montage]

MOTION movements that correspond to the tonal  
"movement" up/down scale =  
up/down screen

APPEARANCE variation on EDITING. 'objects' appear  
and disappear individually based  
on what sound they sync with,  
independently of anything else on  
screen [linked to musical phrase, note or instrument]

sync sound and image to create a "visual/music" effect  
resulting from their correspondence on screen

as elsewhere

Kinds of motion:	(axis)	(movement)
spatial { planar {	y	up-down
	x	left-right
	z	larger-smaller

these kinds of motion work in compounds  
between x, y and z motion, even when connected to a plane

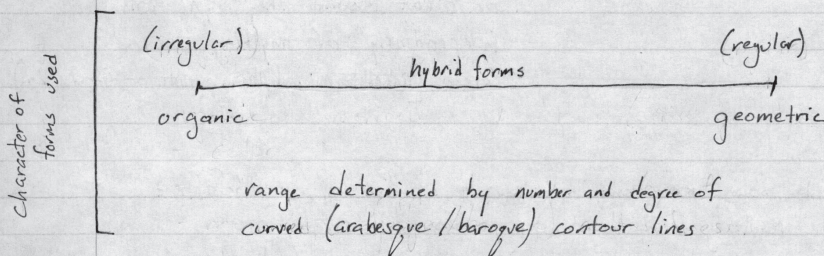
THE ISSUE IS SYNC, NOT ABSOLUTE TONE TO IMAGE  
CORRESPONDENCE, independent of its particular relationship within  
a specific (singular) movie

## KINDS OF FORM

regular } both  
irregular }

organic — geometric forms exist in a continuum, describing the extreme ends of a spectrum concerned with the outline (linear) qualities of forms displayed on screen: there are intermediary stages that are neither and both

shapes are used in combination to create specific effects and "emotional" correspondences to the music/sound employed



- questions of symmetry are independent of the regularity or irregularity of the forms in use
- relation of light/dark to "brightness" of instrument/sound or note sequence



One day, in the late 1970s, James Broughton was visiting southwestern Ohio where I was teaching Film and Photography at Antioch College. Out on a shopping errand, we happened upon a photo-booth in a shopping mall and took this series of snapshots.

- Janis Crystal Lipzin





Sept 26, 10 PM.

Just viewed the later version of "Of Human Bondage",\* TCM - with Lawrence Harvey and \_\_\_\_\_ (sorry, dysfunctional memory), from Somerset Maugham's novel. I thought it excellent, though the program moderator noted the film was not somehow well received. A very good film in every way, better perhaps than the earlier film version.

\*The theme, we are as human beings inevitably bound together - responsible for/to one another.

Greetings to all, Bruce Baillie, Camano Island, WA



## **ON *DYKETACTICS*** **// BARBARA HAMMER**

*Dyketactics*. I made the electronic score just playing around with the Moog Synthesizer at Mills College Electronic Music department in Oakland, California. They just let me in and showed me how to twirl dials and record what I liked, so I did! Great fun. I made the new electronic 4 minute soundtrack because Alex Dobkin wouldn't give me permission to use her songs from *Lavender Jane* (*Women Loving Women and Any Woman Can Be A Lesbian*) if I couldn't promise that men would NOT see the film. This was the early 1970s and lesbian separatism was a political choice

some women were making. I was naive about obtaining permission for music scores. I made the film before I asked Alix. How embarrassing, but we all start somewhere.

Alix has changed her position on separatism for some years now and has told me I could rerelease the film with her music. I put the two films with the same image track but different soundtracks to not only make transparent the history of the film's process, but also because the film with 110 images in 4 minutes (*Dyketactics* has been called





a 'lesbian commercial') bears seeing twice. Then, and most significantly, there is a different audience experience for the same film with varied sound.

Most recently Gina Carducci and I made *Generations*, 2009 ( 16 mm and Digibeta, color/ sound, 30 minutes). *Generations* is a spin-off of Shirley Clarke's *Bridges Go Round* and Hammer's *Dyketacics X 2* : the same film twice with two different soundtracks. Instead, Hammer and Carducci shot together on Bolex cameras (during the last days of Astroland at Coney Island, in

Hammer's studio, and in the film lab where Carducci works. The 16 mm film is hand-processed and then with the same sound and picture footage to choose from, each edited her own version (Hammer on the computer in Final Cut, Carducci on the Steenbeck with the old tape splicer). They didn't see each other's edits until they were completed and spliced together. A true generational, experimental experiment. There's really nothing like it.

Barbara Hammer  
New York, NY



**A SERIES OF QUESTIONS FOR  
EXPERIMENTAL FILM AND VIDEO  
PROGRAMMERS // CLINT ENNS**

*The following questions are asked in good faith as an experimental film and video enthusiast. These questions are being asked by someone who regularly attends experimental film and video screenings/festivals. They are written by an educated and devoted audience member who would be considered an active and engaged member of the scene. These questions are intended to be provocative and I feel it would be near impossible for any programmer to arrive at a consistent group of answers. These questions are asked in the interest of creating dialogue among members of the experimental film and video community at large.*

Are you taking enough chances? If you had to choose which would you rather be: rigorous or risky? Would you characterize your taste as specific or diverse? Do you pride yourself on challenging your audience? How do you challenge your own boundaries and limitations? How much obligation do you have to the audience? Do you have an obligation to foster an audience? Have you provided your audience with proper program notes? Are you guilty of ArtSpeak? Do you view yourself as an authority figure? Why or why not? Are you more worried about your own career than you are about opening the door for emerging artists who show potential? Do you have "good" taste? What does this mean? What is your obligation to canonized experimental film and video artists? What is your obligation to your local experimental film and video community? Do you consider yourself a member of your local experimental film and video community? Do they consider you a member? Do you feel you have any obligation to fostering a local scene? Do you consider yourself a conservative programmer? Does this promote conservative experimental film and videos? Is this an oxymoron? Has the avant-garde become conservative? Is fun only reserved for after the screening has finished? Do you reject "outstanding" work when it doesn't fit your curatorial concept? Do you attempt to find a place for this work? Are you being paid? Are the artists being paid?

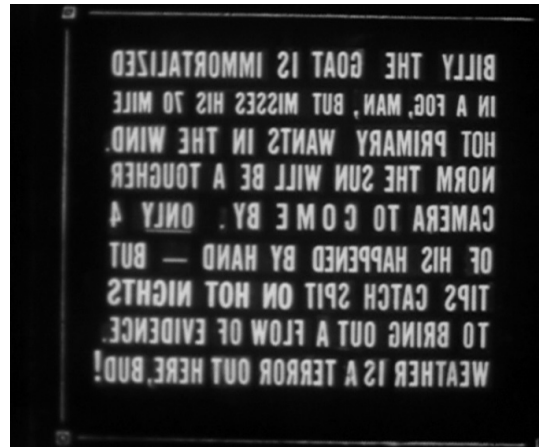
**CIRCUS SAVAGE:  
A WALKING INTO THE BECOMING  
// JOHN DAVIS**

*"The Screen flashes into light and with the picture consciousness passes across the world. The lie of the stationary photography is corrected, time is denied, partially at least, and space is unable to boast and swagger as it loves to do. The cinema frees and extends the consciousness, restores the past, and sets distance close beneath the eyes. Only the watching self remains, pregnant symbol in the darkness."*

- Algernon Blackwood

*Circus Savage* is filmmaker Lawrence Jordan's confluence of moving image and sound. It is a twelve-hour assemblage of personal vision, and a privileged window into a life uncompromisingly dedicated to poetic investigation. The film itself is comprised of Jordan's own outtakes, unfinished works, appropriations and various odds and ends. As a collagist masterwork in its own right, the soundtrack was culled from hundreds of hours of film sound, 1/4" magnetic tape and vinyl LP's that Jordan collected over the years. While he is neither a sound artist nor a musician in a formal sense, watching *Circus Savage* reveals that five decades of creating time-based art has nurtured in him a lyrical adaptation to sound as well as film. From the start, discordant pairings of picture and sound prove unsteady groundwork that quickly detours our expectations, leaving us to fend for ourselves with regard to any understanding of

what the film is all about. Some of the sounds are recognizable, some are not, but like their image counterparts, they question each other in a constant back and forth that leaves us little room for intellectual musing. However hard we seek to analyze the work, this is a sensory film, and viewers are best served by allowing it to envelop rather than inform.



As might be expected, there are less compelling points in the film where the rhythm falters, where extended shots of travel excursions, garden sequences and archival footage seem to meander aimlessly. In fact, the very first ten minutes of the work, extracted from Jean Cocteau's *La Belle et la Bête*, is taken out of order, disarranged, and appears nonsensical. Though aligned with sounds that charge the clips with a fervent power (in this case canned sound effects), longer passages like these can appear less vital. When taken as a whole, however, these spans serve an important function, and provide the attentive viewer an opportunity to meditate on the breadth and scope of the work, to let the experience percolate in the subconscious, much the way the passing of time, memory and nostalgia might. That said, the film should be experienced rather

than endured, and Jordan has stated that he expects people to come and go during screenings, to take the work in parts rather than as a whole. In fact, Jordan himself has never viewed the film from beginning to end.

I met Lawrence Jordan in 1998 while taking one of his film classes when I was a graduate student at the San Francisco Art Institute. It was the first experimental film class I had ever taken, and although I had shot film over the years, his class revealed to me a deeper world of avant-garde cinema, and fundamentally changed the way I thought about film as an art form. Then, in 2007, while I was working as a film projectionist at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, I had the good fortune to catch up with Jordan while projecting a newly struck 35mm print of his film *Our Lady of the Sphere*, which was being shown in conjunction with the Joseph Cornell exhibit *Navigating the Imagination*. Around that time I had a cassette of my own music released, and gave him a copy as an example of what I had been up to. I didn't think much about it until I got a phone call from him some months later saying he was working on a new film called *Cosmic Alchemy* that he was trying to find the right soundtrack for. He went on to say that he'd listened to the tape I'd given him while doing some editing for the film, and was struck with how well the music and images worked together. He asked if I wouldn't mind letting him use some of it for the film (I pretended to think about it for a minute), which of course I agreed to.

That opportunity wound up deepening our friendship and began an ongoing collaboration that now includes soundtracks to four films, a live music/film performance, as well as an

upcoming film and soundtrack due out in July 2014. The exchange also provided me a window into Jordan's creative process. He explained that the unsolicited act of me sharing my music was a preferred mode for him to choose a soundtrack. He went on to say that in an unconscious sense, things revealed themselves to him when they were ready, as opposed to him having to make premature choices about things when they weren't. He said that this *positioning* himself to chance encouraged providence in his work, and that it was his desire to let the subconscious drive his artistic process. He further explained that my music had found the film at the right moment, and his choice, as it were, was an involuntary one that allowed the music to become a part of the film. As esoteric as that may sound, it is in fact a functional belief system that informs all of Jordan's work, if not most expressly in *Circus Savage*.





From left to right, John Davis, Lawrence Jordan and Brecht Andersch

I had the good fortune to project *Circus Savage* at the now defunct Gallery Extraña in Berkeley in 2009. Jordan, Brecht Andersch and myself ran the film in shifts for the full twelve hours, giving everyone there an opportunity to experience the work the first and only time it has ever been shown in its original 16mm format (as of this writing). The film consists of thirty-two twenty-minute film reels, as well as thirty-two twenty-minute sides of cassette tape (one twenty-minute side per film reel). Jordan's only instructions were to take our time, to be sure and hit play on the tape machine approximately at the beginning of each reel, and to keep the cassettes and film reels in order. That was basically it. In addition to the film reels and cassette tapes (organized in a small case with drawers), Jordan brought his own 16mm projector, cassette player, McIntosh amplifier and two large speakers from his home studio in Petaluma.

When I first heard about *Circus Savage* I was skeptical that a twelve-hour experimental film of outtakes and unfinished works would hold up. However, I was quickly lured by its array of images and sounds, and I was struck by the fact that here was a well established filmmaker in his late career going back over a fifty year stockpile of accumulated footage to uncover it's relevance as a new work of art. That alone is interesting, if not unprecedented, but what I found even more engaging, and what I continue to marvel at, is the tension between what appears as a seemingly random collection of forms, but is in fact Jordan acting as a divining rod for his own subconscious truth. As the film unfolds, we become untethered, drifting well beyond the reassuring harbor of any narrative anchor. This experience is disconcerting, even uncomfortable at times, but it is also liberating and charged with the excitement that

comes with the unexpected. Despite all these disjointed excursions and disparate forms, it is reassuring to know that Jordan has spent most of his life embracing the subconscious as a guide through the artistic process. Jordan's work is as much a doorway to his subconscious as it is to our own, and *Circus Savage* is perhaps his most well crafted roadmap for encouraging that journey. Jordan further explained his process to me as *a walking into the becoming*, which he said was taken from a Taoist concept that he applies to both his life and his art, and is rooted in "simply letting things happen, not forcing or analyzing, just allowing."



Through its collection of flawed experiments, playful artistic gestures, outtakes, archival footage, and various intimate flights of fancy, *Circus Savage* invites us to engage fragments of a personal history. However, in an inversion of what we might anticipate, the material is decontextualized and stripped of sentiment, used less as a diaristic exposé, and more as objective fodder for Jordan's creative explorations. This is primarily the result of the ways the sound impacts the images and vice versa, each serving as a dialectical counterpart to the other. What

remains conspicuous is the familiar mirror with which to reflect our own experiences, but what also emerges is the deep humanness that comes with freely sharing one's creative process, especially one so deeply rooted in subconscious experimentation. Additionally, Jordan's using these expositions of film and sound as source material (some of which I suspect revealed long dormant emotional states) shows a reconciliation of, and coming to terms with the past, reinforcing a highly evolved spiritual and artistic equilibrium.



I experience the film as one largely about love. Not just the love Jordan freely demonstrates for his partner the poet Joanna McClure (who features prominently throughout the film from the 1950's through the 1990's), but also a love for the senses, the mind and creative expression. Simultaneously, I see the film as being about chance, both in terms of the way Jordan assembled the work, but also as an analogue to the unexpected reversals and changing currents that impact our lives, sometimes rewarding, other times disastrous. If you let it, the work is an excursion for the senses, promoting unique discoveries that can sometimes feel custom tailored to our own personal fancies.



In the end, Jordan is the experimenter experimenting with the experiment, trusting the viewer to fill in gaps, loosen expectations, and ride alongside the mystical portals of celluloid magic and its companion sound. Instead of recapitulating this trove of past sounds and images, Jordan reexperiments with them in order to create something new. Rather than use the past as a private memory, he shakes off its emotional weight, and allows himself (and us) to explore it in the same way he would any other source material. Diving into this personal archive and letting it choose its own final form is much the way Jordan has approached his life, and it serves as a good example of what it means to let go and be free of the suffering that comes with control, to become liberated agents on a path that has no beginning, no end, or any outcome we could possibly predict.



## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOUND AND IMAGE // MICHAEL DAYE**

In his *The Myth of Total Cinema*, André Bazin suggests that cinema should be an attempt to “reproduce the human subject in its movements and to imitate its functions of perception and memory,” and typifies the issues of cinema as being related to the connection between image and sound. The independent development of recording mechanisms for sound and image has essentially resulted in a separation or ‘doubling’ of the senses, an issue which has been raised repeatedly throughout the history of cinema. Attempts to unite the two experiences into one singular form have ranged from Disney’s animated *Fantasia* (1940) to Godfrey Reggio’s *Koyaanisqatsi* (1982), which edits images of technological achievement in time with a Philip Glass score.

Before the development of cinematic sound technologies, films made use of live musical scores, which avoided redundant repetition of information by acting as a counterpoint to the image. In some performances, the disconnection between sound and image was so pronounced that the musicians were given freedom to improvise. As the technology developed, film presentations became capable of directly recreating the sounds and dialogues made by the entities on screen, allowing the experience to seem more ‘real’, and any break from this practice in contemporary cinema is usually reserved for dream sequences or a recreation of any otherwise ‘unreal’ experience.

In his description of the ‘audio-visual contract’, a term referring to the symbolic

relationship between sound and image in the cinema, sound theorist Michel Chion identifies the phenomenal influence music has on the moving image with the idea of 'forced marriages' - that is to say, the application of different pieces of music to a single sequence (one example would be Derek Jarman's *A Journey to Aveybury* (1971), which supposedly took on conflicting meanings according to the different pieces of music he edited it to). In recounting these experiments, Chion notes the potential for "amazing points of synchronization" and "moving or comical juxtapositions", claiming that it is specifically the incompatibility of sound and image which brings forth these unexpected combinations.

Though not specifically operating within the realm of music, Maya Deren's cinematic practice, termed "choreocinema" by some due to its relationship to dance, frequently made use of the potential for synchronicity between sounds, movements and sequences of images, particularly in her choreographic films, to uncanny effect. Deren herself recognised that this experience could only exist on film by dint of the combination of sonic and visual experiences. An explanation of this phenomenon might take into account the idea that while sight and sound possess distinct traits and parameters, such as colour and pitch, there are similarities between the two senses in the way the brain processes them. Cinema's simultaneous presentation of sounds and images takes advantage of this transsensoriality, producing an effect which is not specific to either the eye or the ear, but is rather a cumulative experience.

The music video is a popular example of an art form which makes use of this transsensorial phenomenon, synchronising a set of images to music without the supposed impediment of 'dramatic time'. In these short films, visual motifs

and images are edited into patterns in time with the music, and thus the two experiences give the illusion of simultaneity. However, because of the closeness of their form, neither the sound nor image is truly separable from the other, nor are they one and the same experience. While sound can carry multiple layers at the same time, only a single image can be read at a time, resulting in the need for images to be edited rapidly together in order to mimic sound.

Canadian animator Norman McLaren's work often covered similar ground to music videos, albeit with a less commercial goal. He experimented with new ways of visualising music, often beginning by animating a single line on a frame before introducing further elements into the mix. In several of McLaren's films, such as the Oscar winning short *Neighbours* (1952), the soundtrack was literally produced by his marks upon the optical soundtrack - the documentary *Pen Point Percussion* (1951) explains the method, comparing it to conventional musical notation. *La Poulette Grise* (1947) features images of a chicken and an egg superseding and replacing each other in various ways, a visual pun on the riddle 'what came first; the chicken or the egg?'. Because of McLaren's cross-sensory discipline, the riddle could equally be about whether the sound or image in his films came first.

Stan Brakhage's *I... Dreaming* (1988) makes similar use of this illusion of synchronicity, although the effect is far less frivolous. The film, one of few Brakhage films to feature a score, is dedicated to the filmmaker's home life with his family, but also his deteriorating health. The music, edited by Joel Haertling, cuts between various Stephen Foster songs in a manner which suggests an ailing record player. Simultaneously, the images of Brakhage's film jump and skip, as if

they too were struggling to play out, creating the illusion that the entire film is a single deteriorating entity. This is perhaps an autobiographical reference, given that film dominated Brakhage's life, and thus his loss of life is the deterioration of his films, a simulacrum for his human experience. On several occasions during the runtime of *I... Dreaming*, Brakhage forcibly transcends the supposed boundaries of sound and image by scratching some of Foster's lyrics directly into the celluloid, creating a dialogue between the two experiences which also incorporates the poetry of words. Malcolm Cook suggests that the restless nature of the film's editing, which forces the loud and the quiet, the light and the dark into juxtaposition, is reminiscent of the action of memory, partially fulfilling André Bazin's aforementioned expectations of cinema. By editing closely to Joel Haertling's score, Brakhage conflates music and image in terms of their fragility, suggesting that if sound deteriorates, so too must vision.

Such a close relationship between music and image is also evident in many feature films, a famous example being Bernard Herman's score for the shower scene in *Psycho* (1960), which emulates the violent stabs of the knife. In the case of some directors, the music is so vital to the film experience that the authorship may be considered a collaborative effort between director and composer. Sergei Eisenstein's audiovisual work with composer Sergei Prokofiev often involved a heavily collaborative process wherein image and music would be negotiated simultaneously - in some cases, Eisenstein would use Prokofiev's score as a reference before shooting a film. Eisenstein justifies this method of working by noting similarities in the structure of music and film:

"Listen again and again to the recorded music, until the moment arises when you can imagine a series of images which could correspond with the music [...] These correspondences can be of various types: a texture of an object or a landscape which can be matched with a timbre in the music; the possibility of synchronising a series of close-ups with a certain rhythmic pattern in the music; the matching of the music with a corresponding section of visual representation, producing an internal harmony, inexpressible in rational terms."

This collaboration of the senses not only gives the illusion of synchronicity through pairing aesthetic attributes in music and film, but also generates a new emotional experience that would not have existed in either independent text - imagine the dark humour of an Ingmar Bergman film re-edited to Yakety Sax from *The Benny Hill Show*.

While most of these filmmakers concern themselves with the simultaneous movement of music and image, whether parallel or perpendicular, others take advantage of the significance of each individual text, such as in Michel Chion's aforementioned 'forced marriage' experiment. Kenneth Anger is a renowned proponent of this idea, as seen in his thirty-minute mood piece *Scorpio Rising* (1964). The film meditates on biker culture and elements of the occult through a montage of references, both sonic and visual. Anger makes use of thirteen songs by contemporary popular artists such as Elvis Presley, Bobby Vinton and Ray Charles, organising them alongside images of biker gangs,

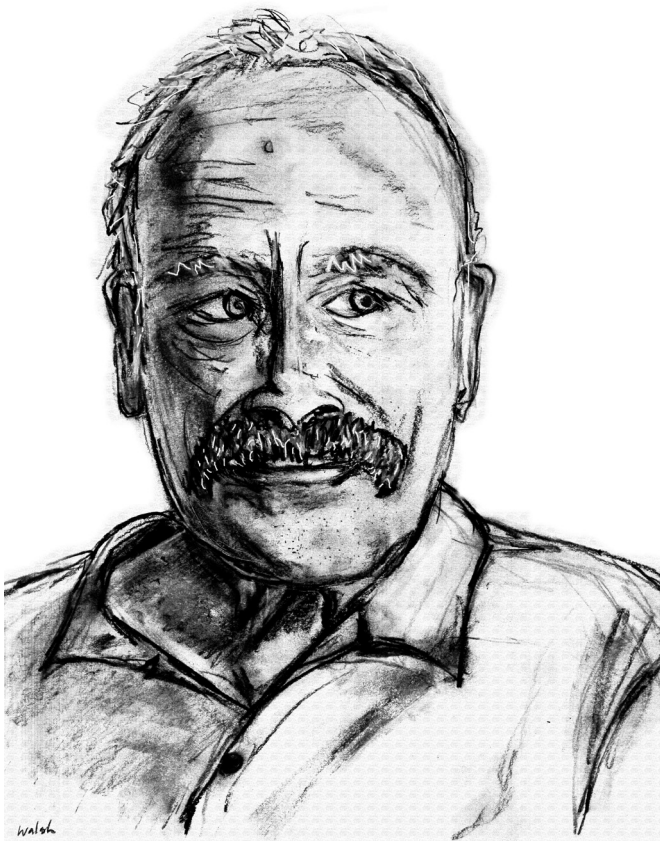
comic books and Hollywood icons. Though Anger is said to have used popular music as a means of articulating a "contemporary sensibility", the deliberate absence of dialogue implies that the viewer is meant to derive their interpretation specifically from the combinations of cultural references. Through these juxtapositions, Anger encourages his audience to reinterpret the lyrics of these songs in a new context and apply new significance to them. Similarly, icons of the occult and counterculture appear renewed by their association with elements of pop culture. Through channelling diverse references, Anger demonstrates the transformative influence music and image can have on one another when placed in counterpoint, altering their individual social and artistic contexts.

A significantly different approach to this practice is evident in the work of Nina Danino, whose work frequently concerns issues of death and ritual. In *Temenos* (1998), the filmmaker visits a series of sites where apparitions of the Virgin Mary are said to have been experienced. Many of the images of the film are presented without introduction or narration, and few people are visible in frame, but the images find context in the form of improvised vocal accompaniments. These soundtracks themselves do not exhibit much of their provenance and are frequently wordless or devoid of specific language. However, as Louise Gray observes, they share a theme in common:

"[Danino] employs improvisational singers, often from the most experimental reaches of contemporary music, to access a realm of women's song, which occupies, through social structures, ritual or power, a space apart from that of men and formal control."

Danino does not allow for much specificity in the nature of these voices - at times they are human, others they are animalistic. The lack of human presence in the images encourages the interpretation of these sounds as otherworldly - the film essentially occupies a synaesthetic middle space between the two senses. Unlike the films of Deren or McLaren however, which concern themselves with structure and rhythm, Danino's films exhibit the similarities in timbre of music and films, giving representation to the 'unseen' and 'unheard'.

This collaborative effort of music and image appears to best fulfill Bazin's expectations of a 'total' cinema, collectively recreating the senses in order to preserve the experience of the human sensorium. Filmmakers such as Danino and Anger acknowledge that music and film cannot identically recreate each other, instead capitalising on the potential crossovers by editing the music in counterpoint to the film, or vice versa. Other directors, such as Eisenstein and McLaren, take advantage of the formal similarities shared between music and film, editing the two into one cross-sensory experience. Given that music and image (or for that matter, sound and vision) do not present the same information, nor are they completely independent experiences, it follows that the combination of the two would present a new third piece of information, one which for directors such as Anger, Eisenstein and Danino represents the heart of their cinematic goal.



**DRAWINGS BY  
MICHAEL WALSH**

"A drawing I did of George Kuchar. He was another close friend. We all miss him so. What a human. Also a drawing I did of Robert Breer. I did these drawings right after they both died a few years back. What shitty year that was, losing all them greats, Jordon, George, Bob, Robert... man oh man. I haven't quite recovered."



## FILM STILLS FROM PRELINGER ARCHIVE // EMMA HURST

"These are stills that I collected while working for Rick Prelinger as a research assistant. Of the millions of frames of mostly anonymous home movie footage that I watched I began to curate this collection of stills, split seconds in time of a much longer narrative, that I found particularly enchanting, amusing, or striking in some way. It's the accidental nature of these shots - from films that haven't been seen in so many years and perhaps were never meant to be seen again that I find so provocative. I think the ambiguous

and enigmatic essence of these narratives is so fantastic because although we will never have any clue as to what these are or what the real story is (especially because I viewed them without sound) I think we can all see a little bit of ourselves and our own memories and experiences within them. And that I think just gives me the warmest feelings about humanity. I also like that for as far back as the camera can remember we have been playing pranks on our pets. (2013 - Ongoing)."

More: <http://homemoviearchive.tumblr.com>













# VISUAL MUSIC NOTES

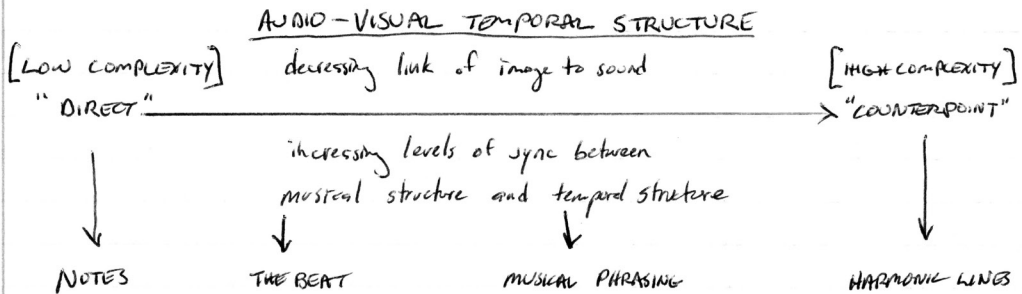
- 3 LEVELS for sync between sound — image  
(direct, obvious link of sound — image construction)

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| (1) NOTES                     | } different levels of<br>musical organization<br>in time |
| (2) THE BEAT                  |  |
| (3) PHRASING / HARMONIC LINES |  |

- SYNC IS EITHER "DIRECT" OR "COUNTERPOINT" IN NATURE.

"DIRECT" (NOTES / BEAT / PHRASING) = auditory events

"COUNTERPOINT" (MUSICAL STRUCTURES) = inaudible



typically, what is called "visual music" is only sync at the lowest level of audio-visual structuring ("DIRECT" sync) — the sync between individual notes and visual elements within the image (motion, color, form) — either singly or in combination

Counterpoint arises from the larger-scale organization of the image against the audible relationship imposed by playing the musical score at the same time as the picture

## **WILL THERE EVER BE SILENCE? A FUGUE BY GERRY FIALKA**

Great question, eh? Should we ruin it with an answer?

The derivation of the word "silence" comes from "the absence of sound." The word "sound" derives from "to be audible." "Audible" derives from "to hear, to perceive." "Perceive" comes from "to understand." And the word "understanding" comes from "mutual agreement."

Could the relationship between the tree falling and ears hearing it be a mutual agreement? Wait! Did I just hear an audio hallucination from yon transcendental timberland? Nietzsche mused, "People have the acoustic illusion that where nothing is heard, there is nothing."

Listen, author Orlando Battista claims, "There are times when silence is the best way to yell at the top of your voice." This essay is silence yelled at the top of my voice.

To steal a phrase from Jonathan Lethem's review of Thomas Pynchon's *Bleeding Edge*, I use teasing, "much as Pollock uses a color on a panoramic canvas or Coltrane a note in a solo: incessantly, arrestingly, yet seemingly without cumulative purpose." I yearn for noise about noise and silence about silence, but wind up with much ado about But "let us leave theories there and return to here's hear," wrote James Joyce in *Finnegans Wake*. He hoped that people would read his book aloud, turning the eye into an ear. Was Joyce invoking the spirit of cinema by evoking the staccato stutter of the film projector with the

stutter of speech? The Wake makes speech visible. Why do humans have eye lids, but no ear lids?

John Cage probed noise as music. In preparing for his famous composition 4'33", he spent time in silence. As writers on Wikipedia have noted: "An anechoic chamber is a room designed in such a way that the walls, ceiling and floor absorb all sounds made in the room, rather than reflecting them as echoes. Such a chamber is also externally sound-proofed. Cage entered the chamber expecting to hear silence, but he wrote later, 'I heard two sounds, one high and one low. When I described them to the engineer in charge, he informed me that the high one was my nervous system in operation, the low one my blood in circulation.' Cage had gone to a place where he expected total silence, and yet heard sound. 'Until I die there will be sounds. And they will continue following my death. One need not fear about the future of music.'"

It was this revelation - the impossibility of silence - which led to the composing of 4'33". Though it is usually referred to as the "silent" piece, Cage scholar Richard Kostelanetz says that it should be called the "noise" piece. Pacific Film Archive curator Steve Seid prefers to call it the "noise-cancelling composition."

Musician David Simons agrees, saying its about "the sounds inside our heads while the concert is progressing. What sounds did we want to hear, and how did we fill the silence?"

Understanding the relationships of sounds can indeed make an impact. In 2010, Cage's composition charted at number 21 on the UK

Singles charts. People continue to love to hate it. I propose an experimental film documenting the performance of 4'33" in an anechoic chamber.

The relationship between noise and silence in avant-garde film and music is fascinating. Having researched psychosomatic cinema for years, I recall that an audience member at a Bruce McClure screening told me that the barrage of loud noise and flickering image caused her period to start. She ran out of the theater feeling as barraged as people who live near airports. The noise becomes unbearable.

Pre-eminent artist Harry Smith hung a microphone out his window in New York City and accumulated environmental recordings for his films. Tony Schwartz, sound archivist supreme, doubled the voice-over narrative which significantly contributed to the the success of the iconic short *Frank Film*.

Craig "Sonic Outlaws" Baldwin's mentor Bruce Conner explored the ebb and flow of silence and noise in disrupting societal norms. They both inspired another Bay area experimenter Will Erokan, who employs binaural tones to instigate questions like: "What is silence? Why does it have such a grip on the imagination? And why do we automatically connect it to important parts of the world such as melancholy, memory, solitude, contemplation, and mourning?" These questions are from Helfenstein & Rinder's forward to the book *Silence* by Kamps & Seid.

In his 2008 book *Canyon Cinema: The Life and Times of An Independent Film Distributor*, Scott MacDonald quotes filmmaker Abigail Child: "When I was filming the high school scenes in Mutiny,

I was struck by how noisy everything was. The toilet paper roll in the bathroom even sang a little song when you pulled it! It was a sort of revenge that I could make a music out of this noise."

So let us silence this essay for now. Read it in its entirety at [www.cinemazine.net/silence](http://www.cinemazine.net/silence)

"Shut up, he said" - McLuhan.

*Gerry Fialka lectures world-wide on experimental music, film, avant garde art, and subversive media. [Laughtears.com](http://Laughtears.com)*



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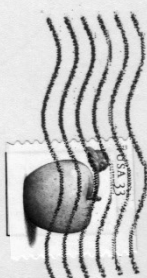
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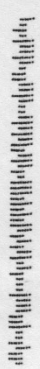
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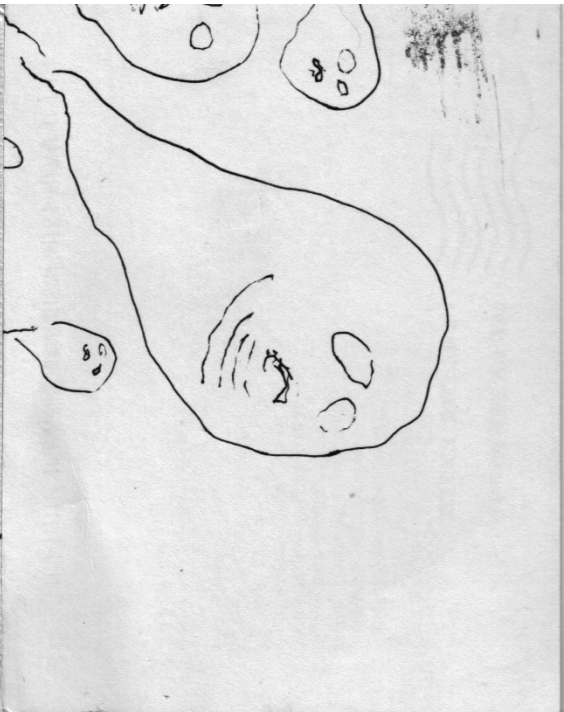
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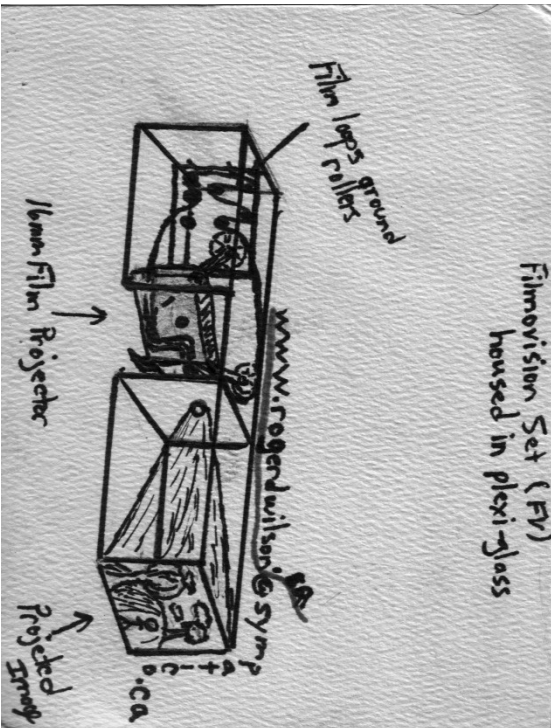


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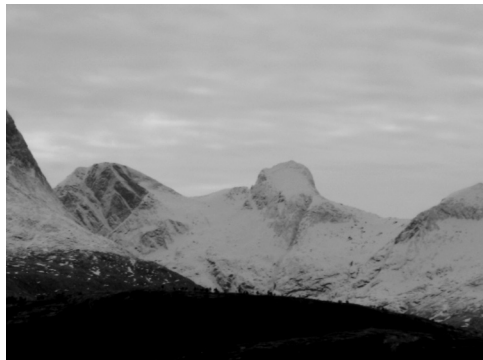
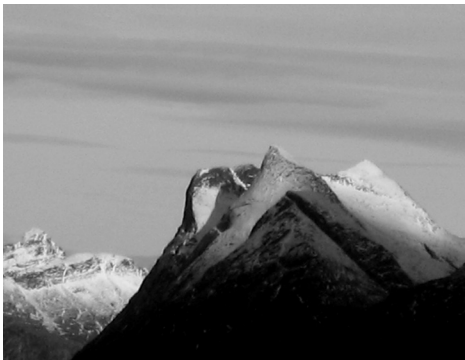




Filmvision Set (FV)  
housed in plexi-glass



9/29/13



*Stills from A Noisy Delivery*

## **FLEXI-DISC TRACKS & ARTISTS**

John Davis, "Wild Air Moon"

A sound collage with excerpts sampled from Lawrence Jordan's twelve-hour film comprised of unused film footage - *Circus Savage* (2009).

Jodie Mack, "Let Your Light Shine (B-Side)"

Handmade optical percussion for *Let Your Light Shine* (2013). Borders made in Photoshop, captured on the soundtrack portion of super 16mm sound recording film. Editing assistant:

Carlos Dominguez.

GX Jupiter Larsen, "A Noisy Delivery"

*A Noisy Delivery* (2014), by GX Jupiter-Larsen, questions the format of meaning rather than the meaning of format. In this experimental feature, a couple were going to get together after the girlfriend had dropped off her package, but the boyfriend will have to keep waiting. Everyone, it seems, was at the post office for philosophy instead of postage. The soundtrack, also by GX Jupiter-larsen, is a composition of broken toy pianos and amplified erosion. As the ideas in the movie get more difficult, the soundtrack gets denser.

[www.noisyvideo.com](http://www.noisyvideo.com)