

### INTRODUCTION

The London Film-Makers' Co-operative was founded in 1966 and based upon the artist-led distribution centre created by Jonas Mekas and the New American Cinema Group. Both had a policy of open

The Co-op asserted the significance of the British films in line with international developments, whilst surviving hand-to-mouth in a series of run down buildings. The physical hardship of the organisa-



membership, accepting all submissions without judgement, but the LFMC was unique in incorporating the three key aspects of artist filmmaking: production, distribution and exhibition within a single facility.

Early pioneers like Len Lye, Antony Balch, Margaret Tait and John Latham had already made remarkable personal films in England, but by the mid-60s interest in "underground" film was growing. On his arrival from New York, Stephen Dwoskin demonstrated and encouraged the possibilities of experimental filmmaking and the Coop soon became a dynamic centre for the discussion, production and presentation of avant-garde film. Several key figures such as Peter Gidal, Malcolm Le Grice, John Smith and Chris Welsby went onto become internationally celebrated. Many others, like Annabel Nicolson and the fiercely autonomous and prolific Jeff Keen, worked across the boundaries between film and performance and remain relatively unknown, or at least unseen.

tion's struggle contributed to the rigorous, formal nature of films produced during this period. While the Structural approach dominated, informing both the interior and landscape tendencies, the British filmmakers also made significant innovations with multi-screen films and expanded cinema events, producing works whose essence was defined by their ephemerality. Many of the works fell into the netherworld between film and fine art, never really seeming at home in either cinema or gallery spaces.

Shoot Shoot Shoot, a major retrospective programme and research project, will bring these extraordinary works back to life.

Curated by Mark Webber with assistance from Gregory Kureciewicz and Ben Cook.

Shoot Shoot Shoot is a LUX project. Funded by the Arts Council of England National Touring Programme, the British Council, bfi and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

### PROGRAMME NOTES

#### A GUIDE TO THE FILMS IN THE EXHIBITION

"What follows is a set of instructions, necessarily incomplete, for the construction, necessarily impossible, of a mosaic. Each instruction must lead to the screen, the tomb and temple in which the mosaic grows. The instructions are fractured but not frivolous. They are no more than clues to the films which lust for freedom and re-illumination with, by and of the cinema. What follows is not truth, only evidence. The explanation is in the projection and the perception."  
Simon Hartog, 1968

"It is often difficult for a venue organiser/programmer to determine from written description what an individual or group of film-makers work is 'about', from where it comes, to what or whom it is addressing itself. Equally, it is difficult for a film-maker to provide such information from within the pages of a catalogue when for many, including myself, the entire project or the area into which one's work energy is concentrated, is intent on clarifying these kind of questions. The films outside of such a situation become more or less dead objects, the residue (though hopefully a determined residue) of such an all-embracing pursuit."  
Mike Leggett, 1980

"The most important thing still is to let oneself get into the film one is watching, to stop fighting it, to stop feeling the need to object during the process of experience, or rather, to object, fight it, but overcome each moment again, to keep letting oneself overcome one's difficulties, to then slide into it (one can always demolish the experience afterwards anyway, so what's the hurry?)"  
Peter Gidal, c.1970-71

### EXPANDED CINEMA

British filmmakers led a drive beyond the screen and the theatre, and their innovations in expanded cinema inevitably took the work into galleries. After questioning the role of the spectator, they began to examine the light beam, its volume and presence in the room.

In a step towards later complex projection pieces, for *Castle One*, Malcolm Le Grice hung a light bulb in front of the screen. Its intermittent flashing bleaches out the image, illuminates the audience and lays bare the conditions of the traditional screening arrangement.

*Take Measure*, by William Raban, visually measures a dimension of the space as the filmstrip is physically stretched between projector and screen. To make *Diagonal*, he directly filmed into the projector gate and presents the same flickering footage in dialogue across three

screens in an oblique formation.

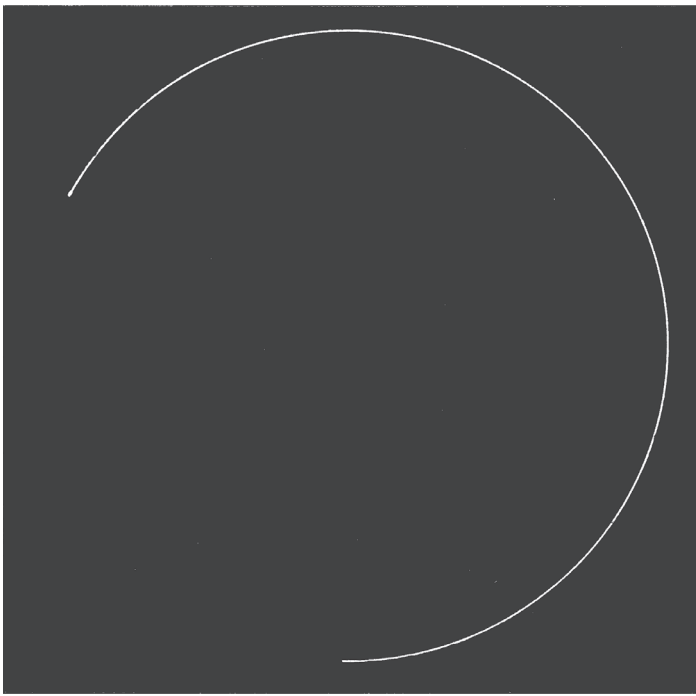
Gill Eatherley literally painted in light over extremely long exposures to shoot *Hand Grenade*, which runs three different edits of the material side-by-side.

*Light Music* developed into a series of enquiries into the nature of optical sound-tracks and their direct relation to the abstract image. The film can be shown in different configurations, with projectors side-by-side or facing into each other.

Anthony McCall succinctly demonstrates the sculptural potential of film as a single ray of light, incidentally tracing a circle on the screen, is perceived as a conical line emanating from the projector. The beam is given physical volume in the room by use of theatrical smoke, or any other agent (such as dust) that would thicken the air to make it more apparent. More than just a film, *Line Describing a Cone* affirms cinema as a collective social experience.

Malcolm Le Grice, *Castle One*, 1966, b/w, sound, 20m  
William Raban, *Take Measure*, 1973, colour, silent, (X)m  
William Raban, *Diagonal*, 1973, colour, sound, 6m  
Gill Eatherley, *Hand Grenade*, 1971, colour, sound, 8m  
Lis Rhodes, *Light Music*, 1975-77, b/w, sound, 20m  
Anthony McCall, *Line Describing a Cone*, 1973, b/w, silent, 30m

(Total running time approximately 93m)



Anthony McCall, *Line Describing a Cone*

#### CASTLE ONE

"The light bulb was a Brechtian device to make the spectator aware of himself. I don't like to think of an audience in the mass, but of the individual observer and his behaviour. What he goes through while he watches is what the film is about. I'm interested in the way the individual constructs variety from his perceptual intake."

Malcolm Le Grice, *Films and Filming*, February 1971

"... totally Kafkaesque, but also filmically completely different from anyone else because of the *rawness*. The Americans are always talking about 'rawness', but it's never raw. When the English talk about 'raw', they don't just talk about it, it really is raw – it's grey, it's rainy, it's grainy, you can hardly see what's there. The material really is there at the same time as the image. With the Germans, it's a high-class image of material, optically reproduced and glossy. The Americans are half-way there, but the English stuff looked like it really was home-made, artisanal, and yet amazingly structured. And I certainly thought *Castle One* was the most powerful film I'd seen, ever..."

Peter Gidal, interview with Mark Webber, 2001

"Malcolm said to me "Ideally in this film there should be a real light bulb hanging next to the screen, but that's not possible." And I said "It's not possible to hang a light bulb?" He said "Well, I don't see how we could possibly do this." I said "Well the only question is how do we turn it on and off at the right moments? ... Are you able to do that as a live performance?" He looked at me like the world was going to end! And I said "The switch will be there..."

Jack Moore, interview with Mark Webber, 2001

#### TAKE MEASURE

"The thing that strikes me going into a cinema, because it is such a strange space and it's organized to allow you to get enveloped by the whole illusion of film, when you try and think of it in terms of real dimensions it becomes very difficult. The idea of a sixty foot throw or a hundred foot throw from the projector to the screen just doesn't enter into the equation. So I thought the idea of making a piece that made that distance between the projector and the screen more tangible was quite an interesting thing to do."

William Raban, interview with Mark Webber, 2001

"*Take Measure* is usually the shortest of my films, measuring in feet that intangible space separating screen from projector box (which is counted on the screen by the image of a film synchronizer). Instead of being fed into the projector from a reel, the film is strung between projector and screen. When the film starts, the film snakes backwards through the audience as it is consumed by the projector."

William Raban, *Perspectives on British Avant-Garde Film* catalogue, 1977

#### DIAGONAL

"*Diagonal* is a film for three projectors, though the diagonally arranged projector beams need not be contained within a

single flat screen area. This film works well in a conventional film theatre when the top left screen spills over the ceiling and the bottom right projects down over the audience. It is the same image on all three projectors, a double-exposed flickering rectangle of the projector gate sliding diagonally into and out of frame. Focus is on the projector shutter, hence the flicker. This film is 'about' the projector gate, the plane where the film frame is caught by the projected light beam."

William Raban, *Perspectives on British Avant-Garde Film* catalogue, 1977

"The first great excitement is finding the idea, making its acquaintance, and courting it through the elaborate ritual of film production. The second excitement is the moment of projection when the film becomes real and can be shared with the audience. The former enjoyment is unique and privileged; the second is not, and so long as the film exists, it is infinitely repeatable."

William Raban, *Arts Council Film-Makers on Tour* catalogue, 1980

#### HAND GRENADE

"Although the word 'expanded' cinema has also been used for the open/gallery size/multi screen presentation of film, this 'expansion' (could still but) has not yet proved satisfactory – for my own work anyway. Whether you are dealing with a single postcard size screen or six

machinery itself which imposes this relationship. The image throughout is composed of straight lines. It need not have been."

Lis Rhodes, *A Perspective on English Avant-Garde Film* catalogue, 1978

#### LINE DESCRIBING A CONE

"Once I started really working with film and feeling I was making films, making works of media, it seemed to me a completely natural thing to come back and back and back, to come more away from a pro-filmic event and into the process of filmmaking itself. And at the time it all boiled down to some very simple questions. In my case, and perhaps in others, the question being something like "What would a film be if it was only a film?" Carolee Schneemann and I sailed on the SS Canberra from Southampton to New York in January 1973, and when we embarked, all I had was that question. When I disembarked I already had the plan for *Line Describing a Cone* fully-fledged in my notebook. You could say it was a mid-Atlantic film! It's been the story of my life ever since, of course, where I'm located, where my interests are, that business of "Am I English or am I American?" So that was when I conceived *Line Describing a Cone* and then I made it in the months that followed."

Anthony McCall, interview with Mark Webber, 2001

"One important strategy of expanded cinema radically alters the spatial discreteness of the audience vis-à-vis the screen and the projector by manipulating the projection facilities in a manner which elevates their role to that of the performance itself, subordinating or eliminating the role of the artist as performer. The films of Anthony McCall are the best illustration of this tendency. In *Line Describing a Cone*, the conventional primacy of the screen is completely abandoned in favour of the primacy of the projection event. According to McCall, a screen is not even mandatory: The audience is expected to move up and down, in and out of the beam – this film cannot be fully experienced by a stationary spectator. This means that the film demands a multi-perspectival viewing situation, as opposed to the single-image/single-perspective format of conventional films or the multi-image/single-perspective format of much expanded cinema. The shift of image as a function of shift of perspective is the operative principle of the film. External content is eliminated, and the entire film consists of the controlled line of light emanating from the projector; the act of appreciating the film – i.e., 'the process of its realisation' – is the content."

Deke Dusinberre, "On Expanding Cinema", Studio International, November/December 1975

#### DOUBLE SCREEN FILMS

Widening the visual field increased the opportunity for both spectacle and contemplation. With two 16mm projectors side-by-side, time could be frozen or fractured in a more complex way by playing one image against another and creating a magical space between them. Each screening became a unique event, accentuating the temporality of the cinematic experience.

*River Yar* is a monumental study of landscape, nature, light and the passage of time. It employs real time and time-lapse photography to document and contrast the view of a tidal estuary over two three-week periods, in spring and autumn. The film stimulates cosmic awareness as each day is seen to have its elemental events. Sunrise brings in the light and sunset provides the ultimate fade-out.

The use of different film stocks, and the depiction of twins seen in a twin-screen format, emphasises the fractured and slightly disorientating view from Sally Potter's window in *Play*.

David Parsons' re-filming of a stunt car demonstration pulses between frames, analytically transforming the motion into a visceral mid-air dance.

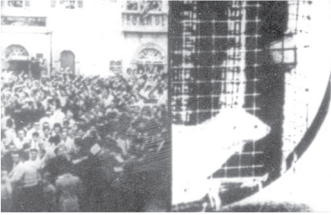
*Wind Vane* was shot simultaneously by two cameras whose view was directed by the wind. The gentle panning makes us subtly aware of the physical space (disrupted between the adjacent frames).

With a rock music soundtrack, *Choke*, suggests pop art in its treatment of Piccadilly Circus at night. Multiply exposed and treated images mirror each other or travel across the two screens.

*Castle Two* immediately throws the viewer into a state of discomfort as one tries to assess the situation, and then proceeds a long, obscure and perplexing indoctrination. "Is that coming through out there?"

William Raban & Chris Welsby, *River Yar*, 1971-72, colour, sound, 35m  
Sally Potter, *Play*, 1971, b/w & colour, silent, 7m  
David Parsons, *Mechanical Ballet*, 1975, b/w, silent, 8m  
Chris Welsby, *Wind Vane*, 1972, colour, sound, 8m  
David Crosswaite, *Choke*, 1971, b/w & colour, sound, 5m  
Malcolm Le Grice, *Castle Two*, 1968, b/w, sound, 32m

(Total running time approximately 97m)



Malcolm Le Grice, *Castle Two*

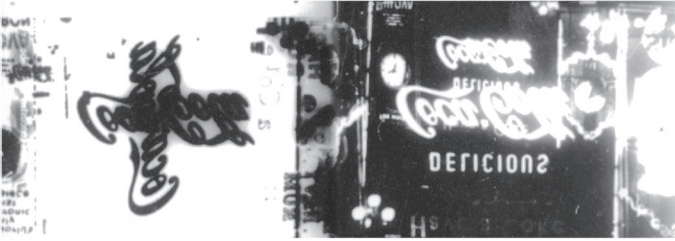
#### RIVER YAR

"The camera points south. The landscape is an isolated frame of space – a wide-angle view of a tidal estuary, recorded during Autumn and Spring. The camera holds a fixed viewpoint and marks time at the rate of one frame every minute (day and night) for three weeks. The two sequences Autumn and Spring, are presented symmetrically on adjacent screens. The first Spring sunrise is recorded in real time (24 fps) for 14 minutes, establishing a comparative scale of speed for the Autumn screen, where complete days are passing in one minute. Then both screens run together in stop-action until the Autumn screen breaks into a 14 minute period of real time for the final sunset into darkness. Recordings were made of landscape sound at specific intervals each day. Each screen has its own soundtrack which mixes with the other in the space of the cinema."

William Raban & Chris Welsby, *NFT English Independent Cinema* programme notes, 1972

"Chris found the location, which was an ex-water mill in Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight, owned by the sons of the historian A.J.P. Taylor. We managed to get it for an astonishing rent of £5 a week. One of its upstairs windows happened to look over this river estuary, it was the kind of view we were looking for, so it was ideal in many ways. We'd worked out the conceptual model for the film, how we wanted it to look as a two-screen piece, more or less entirely in advance. We also knew what camera we wanted. There was really only the Bolex camera that would be suitable for filming it on. I made an electric motor for firing the time-lapse shots that was capable of giving time exposures as well as instantaneous exposures. Unknown to us of course, the first period of shooting coincided with the big coal miners' strike, in the Ted Heath government, so the motor was redundant for most of the time; we had to shoot the film by hand. And it was quite interesting because we weren't just making *River Yar*, we were down there for six weeks in the autumn and three weeks again the following spring, so we were also making other work. I was doing a series of tree prints in a wood nearby. And we invited people down to share the experience with us, so Malcolm, Annabel and Gill all came to stay."

William Raban, interview with Mark Webber, 2001



David Crosswaite, *Choke*

#### PLAY

"In *Play*, Potter filmed six children – actually, three pairs of twins – as they play on a sidewalk, using two cameras mounted so that they recorded two contiguous spaces of the sidewalk. When *Play* is screened, two projectors present the two images side by side, recreating the original sidewalk space, but, of course, with the interruption of the right frame line of the left image and the left frame line of the right image – that is, so that the sidewalk space is divided into two filmic spaces. The cinematic division of the original space is emphasized by the fact that the left image was filmed in color, the right image in black and white. Indeed, the division is so obvious that

when the children suddenly move from one space to the other, 'through' the frame lines, their originally continuous movement is transformed into cinematic magic."

Scott MacDonald, *A Critical Cinema* 3, 1998

"To be frank, I always felt like a loner, an outsider. I never felt part of a community of filmmakers. I was often the only female, or one of few, which didn't help. I didn't have a buddy thing going, which most of the men did. They also had rather different concerns, more hard-edged structural concerns ... I was probably more eclectic in my taste than many of the English structural filmmakers, who took an absolute prescriptive position on film. Most of them had gone to Oxford or Cambridge or some other university and were terribly theoretical. I left school at fifteen. I was more the hand-on artist and less the academic. The overriding memory of those early years is of making things on the kitchen table by myself..."

Sally Potter interviewed by Scott MacDonald, *A Critical Cinema* 3, 1998

#### MECHANICAL BALLET

"... I began to forge ideas that explored the making of the work and the procedure of events and ideas unfolding in space and time. Inevitably, this led to the consideration of the filmmaking apparatus as an integral element within the construction of the film. Taken literally of course, this applies to the making of any film, but I am referring to processes that do not attempt to hide the means of production and make the technique transparent, rather the very opposite. There are many parallels in other creative fields: the improvisational aspects of modern jazz, and Exercises in Style by the wonderful French writer Raymond Queneau. These examples spring to mind as background influences upon what I see now as an essentially modernist project, in that I was attempting to assert the material aspects of making, over what was depicted. So, to turn to the camera to attempt exhaust all the possibilities of its lenses, the film transportation mechanism, the shift of the turret, hand holding or tripods mounting, as conditioning factors within the films became the challenge. The project broadened out with seemingly endless possibilities offered by the film printer, the projector, and the screen."

David Parsons, "Picture Planes", *Filmwaves* No. 2, November 1997

"Several areas of interest intersect in the making of *Mechanical Ballet*: an interest in 'found' footage (relating to collage, assemblage), the manipulation of the film strip and the film frame, time and duration, projection and the screen, and the film printing process, to highlight some of the main concerns. In the early '70s I began a series of experiments with ways of re-filming and improvising new constructions with different combinations of frames. Thus new forms emerged from the found material that I had selected to use as my base material. In one work I extended the closing moments of the tail footage of a film, consisting of less than a second of flared out frames, stretching it into two minutes forty five seconds, 100 foot of film. In another I used some early documentation of time and motion studies of factory workers performing repetitive tasks on machinery. A speedometer mounted in the corner of the frame monitored the progress of their actions in relation to the time it took to perform their tasks. I found the content both disturbing and absurd and sought to exemplify this by exaggerating the action and 'stalling' the monitoring process by racking the film back and forth through the gate. The original material that formed the basis for *Mechanical Ballet* was an anonymous short reel of film of what appeared to be car crash tests. In the original these tests are carried out in a deadpan and

somewhat cumbersome manner. Reworked into a two-screen film and divorced from their original context they take on both a sinister and humorous quality. Using similar techniques to the aforementioned films, the repetitive re-filming of the original footage in short sections emphasised the process of film projection. Somewhat like a child's game of two steps forward and one back, the viewer is made aware of the staggered progress of the film through the gate. In sharp contrast to the almost stroboscopic flicker of the rapid movement of the frames that alternate in small increments of light and dark exposures, the image takes on new meanings; the distorted reality of two heavy objects (the cars, one on each of the screens) 'dancing' lightly in space."

David Parsons, 2002

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EDITORIAL

SHOOT SHOOT SHOOT

In recent years, my activities as an independent curator or programmer of ‘avant-garde’ film and video have put me into contact with many individuals and organisations around the world. Many people would ask me about the London Co-op and British filmmakers and I was embarrassed to have to admit that I didn’t know much about the cinematic heritage of this country. The constant enquiries about British work made it clear that there was a sustained interest in, and demand for, the films made in and around the London Film-Makers’ Co-op.

Gregory Kurcewicz should be credited with instigating the present project in 1999. Since then it just grew and grew. During the early stages of research, the screenings organised by Felicity Sparrow as part of the Whitechapel’s exhibition “Live In Your Head” provided a valuable opportunity to survey the field. At one of those screenings I met Peter Mudie, who had been working on an as-yet-unpublished history of the Co-op. Peter generously gave me an early draft of his manuscript, giving me access to his years of research and interpretation. David Curtis gave me hours of his time and loaned me his archive of documentation from the period (which is now available at the AHRB Study Centre). Meanwhile, I was watching every British film the Lux held that was made during this period and going direct to filmmakers to discover and see the obscurities and lost gems.

This project was conceived not only as another historical film programme. The elements of preservation and documentation were very important from the beginning. Many new prints, sound masters and internegatives have been made, a publication is planned and a website is being constructed as an online research resource. In parallel to the exhibition, a documentary on the Co-op is being made by John Wwyer and Illuminations.

AGAINST INTERPRETATION

It is not my intention to argue the historical importance of these works, nor do I wish to set up a ‘canon’ of films by which this period should be measured. I see my role more that of an excavator, looking around, finding something interesting and getting it out there so people can see it and make their own minds up. I have tried to appear transparent, but inevitably the choice of films in such an exhibition must be informed to some extent by personal taste. I regret that many works have been left out despite attempts to be objective and inclusive. I was born in 1970 on the day the First International Underground Film Festival began at the NFT. I hope that I have brought a different perspective on a period that has not recently been reviewed.

FILM AS FILM

It’s refreshing, in this time of new media feeding frenzy, to be reminded of the wondrous virtues of film, a medium that is often now seen as an archaic, old-fashioned and outdated. Here are works made on film, by artists, because no other medium suits their purpose. Beneath the surface of each is an underlying ‘human-ness’, an inherent tacitility and transience. You can *feel* these films, that each one has been crafted and fashioned into form by hand. The unique characteristics and possibilities of film are brought forward during the realisation of the work, where the artistic process begins at the inception of an idea and goes right through to its projection.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

That *Shoot Shoot Shoot* should finally become visible in London at this time seems incredible timely, so much so that the project was almost halted just as it began to move into the final planning stages. The closure of the Lux Centre, which managed the exhibition, in November 2001 would have ended *Shoot Shoot Shoot* if it were not for the foolhardy persistence of Ben Cook and myself. The events that led up to the Lux crisis are indicative of the lack of appropriate planning, support and resources allocated to artists’ film and video in London (or the UK as a whole) in recent years. Despite early commitment of substantial funding from the Arts Council of England’s National Touring Programme and the British Council, for which I am truly grateful, this project (and others like it) has been hindered by the lack of institutional or organisational support. Perhaps the current review led by the London funding agencies will improve matters, and in the meantime the gap is being filled by independent screenings. Maybe the interest shown in experimental film by a new generation will impel the major arts bodies to invest in the venues, the prints and the production facilities that make up this unique ‘essential’ cinema.

THE ABSENT CATALOGUE

Much of the work done over the past two years has been towards assembling materials for a publication and the launch of the film programme was the logical opportunity to publish this research. A vast quantity of archival documentation has been gathered, and many new interviews have been conducted. Essays have been commissioned from David Curtis, Barry Miles, Michael O’Pray and Al Rees. Lack of funds have forced us to sacrifice the book in favour of film print costs. The proposed catalogue will now be compiled as a separate book, to be completed when funds become available. It will hopefully benefit from the new insight and understanding of the works which should come with the revival and re-viewing of the films and the discussions they will provoke. In the meantime, I hope this special broadsheet will provide some background information for the screenings. I am still collecting photos, stills, documentation and information, so please get in touch if you might be able to help.

Mark Webber  
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WIND VANE

“At that time, the automatic gyros on sailboats were run from a wind vane that was attached through a series of mechanical devices to the rudder. The wind vane actually set itself to the wind and you adjusted all the gear and that then steered the boat in the particular orientation to the wind. On various sailing trips, I’d been looking at this thing thinking, “Hmm, that’s really interesting ... I wonder if I could set a camera on something like that?” Because, for me the idea of a sailboat travelling from A to B was an interesting sort of metaphor for the way that people interacted with nature. In sailing, as you may know if you’ve done it, you can’t just go from A to B, you have to adjust everything to which way the tide is going, which way the wind’s going and so on and so forth. Hopefully, eventually, you would get to B but, really, in between time there would have been all sorts of other events that would affect that: speed of tides, speed of wind, no wind, etc. So that seemed to me to be an interesting metaphor, so then I started building wind vanes and attaching cameras to them...”

Chris Welsby, interview with Mark Webber, 2001

“The spatial exigencies of twin-screen projection become of primary importance in this film because the adjacency of the screen images is related to the adjacency of the filming technique: two cameras were placed about 50 feet apart on tripods which included wind vane attachments, so that the wind direction and speed determined the direction and speed of the pans of the two freely panning cameras. The landscape images are more or less coincident, and the attempt by the spectator to visually conjoin the two spaces (already conjoined on the screen) sets up the primary tension of this film. As the cameras pan, one expects an overlap *between* the screens (from one to another) but gets only overlap *in* the screens (when they point to the same object). The adjacency of the two spaces is constantly shifting from (almost) complete similarity of field to complete dissimilarity. And within the dissimilarity of space can be more or less contiguous. The shrewd choice of a representational image which exploits the twin-screen format is Welsby’s strength.”

Deke Dusinberre, “On Expanding Cinema”, Studio International, November/December 1975

CHOKE

“*Choke* was made from 8mm footage that I had blown up to 16mm. It was colour film I took of the Coca-Cola sign in Piccadilly Circus, which is now vastly different. I think that it was the fact that this expanded film thing was happening, and Malcolm would’ve said, “Well, aren’t you going to make any double screen films, then?” and I said “Can do, yeah!” I just had this idea of using this image that I had, and again started painstakingly sello-taping little cuttings onto film so it tracked across the screen in certain parts. I must have been an absolute glutton for punishment at the time.”

David Crosswaite, interview with Mark Webber, 2001

“... But nevertheless you get characters like Crosswaite, whose films I find absolutely magical, I think they’re the most seminal works of the whole Co-op period. He certainly didn’t engage in the arguments that were going on, he stood aloof from it. In fact he would the erode attempts of that hierarchical thing, his presence eroded it. He never really engaged in the theoretical arguments, the polemics, at all, but nevertheless he produced the most seminal, the most beautiful work probably of the period. He certainly wasn’t excluded, and he was always there to deflate this idea of exclusivity. He refuses to engage. He would just say, “Here’s my film” ... and yet they are beautifully polemical, they’re just extraordinary pieces of work.”

Roger Hammond, interview with Mark Webber, 2001

CASTLE TWO

“This film continues the theme of the military/industrial complex and its psychological impact upon the individual that I began with *Castle One*. Like *Castle One*, much use is made of newsreel montage, although with entirely different material. The film is more evidently thematic, but still relies on formal devices – building up to a fast barrage of images (the two screens further split – to give 4 separate images at once for one sequence). The images repeat themselves in different sequential relationships and certain key images emerge both in the soundtrack and the visual. The alienation of the viewer’s involvement does not occur as often in this film as in *Castle One*, but the concern with the viewer’s experience of his present location still determines the structure of certain passages in the film.”

Malcolm Le Grice, London Film-Makers’ Co-operative catalogue, 1968

“Le Grice’s work induces the observer to participate by making him reflect critically not only on the formal properties of film but also on the complex ways in which he perceives that film within the limitations of the environment of its projection and the limitations created by his own past experience. A useful formulation of how this sort of feedback occurs is contained in the notion of ‘perceptual thresholds’. Briefly, a perceptual threshold is demarcation point between what is consciously and what is pre-consciously perceived. The threshold at which one is able to become conscious of external stimuli is a variable that depends on the speed with which the information is being projected, the emotional charge it contains and the general context within which that information is presented. This explains Le Grice’s continuing use of devices such as subliminal flicker and the looped repetition of sequences in a staggered series of changing relationships.”

John Du Cane, Time Out, 1977

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LONDON UNDERGROUND

As equipment became available for little cost, avant-garde film flourished in mid-60s counter-culture. Early screenings at Better Books and the Arts Lab provided a vital focus for a new movement that

infused Swinging London with a fresh subversive edge.

Made independently on 35mm, in collaboration with William Burroughs, *Towers Open Fire* is rarely considered in histories of avant-garde film, despite its experiments in form and representation. It combines strobe cutting, flicker, degraded imagery and hand-painted film to create a visual equivalent to the author’s narration.

*Gloucester Road Groove*, featuring Simon Hartog and David Larcher, is a spirited celebration of youthful exuberance, the excitement of shooting with a movie camera.

Jeff Keen’s vision is a uniquely British post-war accumulation of art history, comic books, old Hollywood and new collage. Positioned between happenings and music hall, he performs dada actions in the “theatre of the brain”. *Marvo Movie* is just one of countless works that mix live action with animation, but is notable for its concrete sound by Co-op co-founder Bob Cobbing.

*Speak*, with hypnotic flashing discs and relentless noise track, anticipated many of the anti-illusionist arguments that the Co-op later embodied. The film was made in 1962, but its advanced radical nature made it largely unknown until later screenings at Better Books brought Latham into contact with like-minded contemporaries.

In *Dirty*, Dwoskin accentuates the dirt and scratches on the film’s surface while interrogating the erotic imagery through reframing.

The systematic cutting of Stuart Pound’s film, and its cyclical soundtrack, derives from a mathematical process that condenses a feature length work (*Clocktime I-IV*) into a short ‘trailer’.

*Soul in a White Room* is a subtle piece of social commentary by Simon Hartog, an early Co-op activist with a strong political conscience.

Peter Gidal questions illusory depth and representation through focal length, editing and (seeming) repetition in *Hall*.

*Reign of the Vampire*, from Le Grice’s paranoiac *How to Screw the C.I.A.*, or *How to Screw the C.I.A.?* series, takes the hard line in subversion. Familiar “threatening” signifiers, pornography and footage from his other films is overlaid with travelling mattes, united with a loop soundtrack, to form a relentless assault.

Antony Balch, *Towers Open Fire*, 1963, b/w, sound, 16m

Jonathan Langran, *Gloucester Road Groove*, 1968, b/w, silent, 2m

Jeff Keen, *Marvo Movie*, 1967, colour, sound, 5m

John Latham, *Speak*, 1962, colour, sound, 11m

Stephen Dwoskin, *Dirty*, 1965-67, b/w, sound, 10m

Stuart Pound, *Clocktime Trailer*, 1972, colour, sound, 7m

Simon Hartog, *Soul In A White Room*, 1968, colour, sound, 3.5m

Peter Gidal, *Lath*, 1968-69, b/v, sound, 10m

Malcolm Le Grice, *Reign Of The Vampire*, 1970, b/w, sound, 11m

(Total running time approximately 75m)



Simon Hartog, *Soul in a White Room*

TOWERS OPEN FIRE

“*Towers Open Fire* is a straight-forward attempt to find a cinematic equivalent for William Burroughs’ writing: a collage of all the key themes and situations in the books, accompanied by a Burroughs soundtrack narration. Society crumbles as the Stock Exchange crashes, members of the Board are raygun-zapped in their own boardroom, and a commando in the orgasm attack leaps through a window and decimates a family photo collection... Meanwhile, the liberated individual acts: Balch himself masturbates (“silver arrow through the night...”), Burroughs as the junkie (his long-standing metaphor for the capitalist supply-and-demand situation) breaks on through to the hallucinatory world of Brion Gysin Dream Machines. Balch lets us stare into the Dream Machines, finding faces to match our own. “Anything that can be done chemically can be done by other means.” So the film is implicitly a challenge to its audience. But we’re playing with indefinables that we don’t really understand yet, and so Mikey Portman’s music-hall finale is interrupted by science-fiction attack from the skies, as lost boardroom reports drift through the countryside...”

Tony Rayns, “Interview with Antony Balch”, Cinema Rising No.1, April 1972

“Installations shattered – Personnel decimated – Board Books destroyed – Electronic waves of resistance sweeping through mind screens of the earth – The message of Total Resistance on short wave of the world – *This is war to extermination – Shift linguals – Cut word lines – Vibrate tourists – Free doorways – Photo falling – Word falling – Break through in grey room – Calling Partisans of all nations – Towers, open fire*”

William Burroughs, Nova Express, 1964

GLOUCESTER ROAD GROOVE

“A film for children and savages, easily understood, non didactic fantasies. Urban landscapes...Strolling single frames.”

Jonathan Langran, London Film-Makers’ Co-operative distribution catalogue, 1977

SHOOT SHOOT SHOOT

“I felt really high with all these people around. I was kind of a provincial film student and the youngest of everyone and there were fashion photographers, David Larcher who was very glamorous, there was Simon Hartog who was kind of intel-

llectual ... all sorts of people, wonderful women that would come around, friends, and I was always in awe of them and what to go out to restaurants and that was all a very big thing for me. So one evening we went to Dino’s in Gloucester Road and I took the camera. I think I’d been using it all day. I just liked cameras and I filmed us going to eat, and we came back again, and I still kept filming! Gloucester Road was kind of cosmopolitan, late at night... it was exotic, very exotic, it wasn’t your dour kind of thing shot at 5 o’clock or 6 o’clock, Gloucester Road was buzzing.”

Jonathan Langran, interview with Mark Webber, 2002



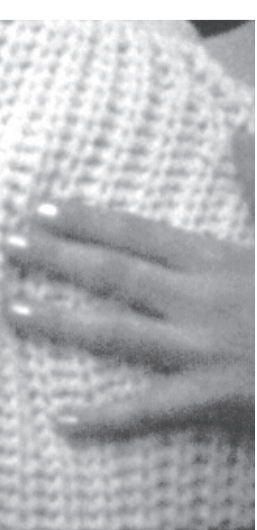
Anthony Balch, *Towers Open Fire*

lectual ... all sorts of people, wonderful women that would come around, friends, and I was always in awe of them and what to go out to restaurants and that was all a very big thing for me. So one evening we went to Dino’s in Gloucester Road and I took the camera. I think I’d been using it all day. I just liked cameras and I filmed us going to eat, and we came back again, and I still kept filming! Gloucester Road was kind of cosmopolitan, late at night... it was exotic, very exotic, it wasn’t your dour kind of thing shot at 5 o’clock or 6 o’clock, Gloucester Road was buzzing.”

Jonathan Langran, interview with Mark Webber, 2002

MARVO MOVIE

“Movie wizard initiates shatterbrain experiment – Eecow! – the fastest movie film alive – at 24 or 16fps even the mind trembles – splice up sequence 2 – flix unlimited, and inside yr very head the images explode – last years models new houses & such terrific death scenes while the time and space operator attacks the brain via the optic nerve – will the operation succeed – will the white saint reach in time the staircase now alive with blood – only time will tell says the movie master – meanwhile deep inside the space museum...”



Ray Durnat, London Film-Makers’ Co-operative distribution catalogue, 1968

“I was never part of the early 70s scene among the independent filmmakers – very much anti-American, anti-Hollywood. ‘Industrial Cinema’ they used to call it, which is true, but I never felt that antipathy towards commercial cinema. It was awful being a fucking misfit, I can tell you. I’d done my footsoldiering for the communist party and everything in those days – factory gates and all that shit, “ban the bomb”... So by the time of 1970, I’d got out of that. As for sexual liberation, I’d been happily married! And the drug scene didn’t mean anything to me because I’m puritanical. I’m a misfit.”

Jeff Keen, interview with Mark Webber, 2001

SPEAK

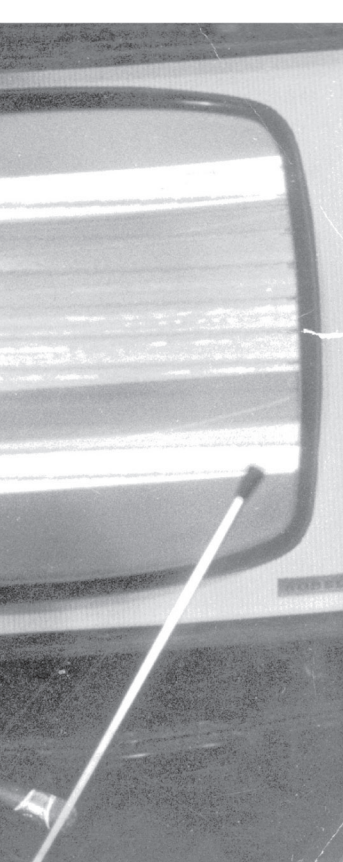
“Latham’s second attack on the cinema. Not since Len Lye’s films in the thirties has England produced such a brilliant example of animated abstraction. *Speak* is animated in time rather than space. It is an exploration in the possibilities of a circle which speaks in colour with blinding volume. *Speak* burns its way directly into the brain. It is one of the few films about which it can truly be said, “it will live in your mind.””

Ray Durnat, London Film-Makers’ Co-operative distribution catalogue, 1968

“In 1966 Pink Floyd were playing their free-form, experimental rock at the Talbot Road Tabernacle (a church hall), Powis Square, Notting Hill Gate. On several occasions, Latham projected his film *Speak* as the group played. Since the film had a powerful flicker effect, the result was equivalent to strobe lighting. Film and music ran in parallel – there was no planned synchronization. Thinking to combine movie and music more systematically, Latham asked Pink Floyd to supply a soundtrack. The band agreed and a recording session took place. The artist explained that he wanted music that would take account of the strong, rhythmic pulse of the film. This the acid rock group proved unable or unwilling to provide; consequently, the association was terminated. A soundtrack was eventually added to one print of *Speak*: Latham

CLOCKTIME TRAILER

“A time truncation film trailer for the rather long film called *Clocktime*. Film made as a totally systematic stream of hitherto unrelated events welded together



into a colour interchange frame i.e. image (1), image (2), image (3)... repeat time cycle, 6 frames, 1/4 second, then images move further along their original time base; a very linear film.”

London Film-Makers’ Co-operative distribution catalogue, 1977

“I wasn’t particularly interested in making films about poetry but films that had got quite a strong sexual charge. For instance, in *Clocktime Trailer* there’s a woman in it who used to work for the Other Cinema years ago – Julia Meadows. I was absolutely fascinated with her, it was almost like having sex through the lens of the camera. I have now seen Michael Powell’s *Peeping Tom*, but I’d not seen that at the time. It came out about 1960, here was such a hoo-hah about it and I was only about 16. Subsequently when I saw it I was: “Oh my god”. I could see how I was a real menace!”

Stuart Pound, interview with Mark Webber, 2001

SOUL IN A WHITE ROOM

“Films are not bombs. No cultural object, as such, can have such a direct and measurable effect on the physical universe. Film works in the more ambiguous sphere of art and ideas. It cannot change the world, but it can change those who can change it. Film makes use of values that exist within a culture, and a society’s culture is more pervasive than its politics. The alteration, or even the questioning of existing value is the alteration of society. The established cultural hierarchy maintains itself by protecting and enforcing the ideas that keep it in power. Anything that attacks, questions, or provides new values is a threat. The culture allows only that which will not challenge its assumptions; everything else must be forced underground. Film, as a cultural and social activity, contains within itself a potential for change. Besides the great reporting and recording qualities of film, which provide it with a direct reference to the culture, it also provides the sense of

magic. It possesses this sense in its ability to capture life; to capture movement and to fracture time and space. The main characteristics of magic are its indirect reference to the culture, and to the past and its derivation from very specific emotional experiences. Magic’s base is those emotional experiences where the truth of the experience is not revealed by reasoning, but by the interplay of these emotions on the individual human...”

Simon Hartog & Stephen Dwoskin, “New Cinema”, Counter Culture: The Creation of an Alternative Society, 1969

“*Soul in a White Room* was filmed by Simon Hartog around autumn 1968. Music on the soundtrack is “Cousin Jane” by The Troggs. The man is Omar Diop-Blondin, the woman I don’t recall her name. Omar was a student active in 1968 during “les evenement de Mai et de Juin” at the Faculte de Nanterre, Universite de Paris. Around this time, Godard was in London shooting *Sympathy for the Devil / One Plus One* with the Stones and Omar was here for that too, appearing with Frankie Y (Frankie Dymon) and the other Black Panthers in London ... maybe Michael X too. After returning to Senegal, Omar was imprisoned and killed in custody in ‘71 or ‘72. I believe his fate is well known to the Senegalese people.”

Jonathan Langran, interview with Mark Webber, 2002

HALL

“*Hall* manages, in its ten minutes, to put our perception to a rather strenuous test. Gidal will hold a static shot for quite a long time, and then make very quick cuts to objects seen at closer range. There is just a hallway and a room partially visible beyond, pictures (one of Godard) on a wall, fruit on a table, and so forth. The commonplace is rendered almost monotonous as we become increasingly familiar with it from a fixed and sustained viewpoint, and then we are disoriented by the closer cuts and also by the sudden prolonged ringing of an alarm. But even at the point of abrupt disorientation we remain conscious of the manipulation applied.”

Gordon Gow, “Focus on 16mm”, Films and Filming, August 1971

“Demystified reaction by the viewer to a demystified situation; a cut in space and an interruption of duration through (obvious) jumpcut editing within a strictly defined space. Manipulation of response and awareness thereof; through repetition and duration of image. Film situation as structured, as recorrective mechanism. (Notes from 1969) Still utilizing at that time potent (signifying, overloaded) representations. (1972)”

Peter Gidal, London Film-makers’ Co-operative distribution catalogue, 1974

“In *Hall*, extremely stable, normally reproduced objects are given clear from the beginning, the editing, moreover, reducing the distance from which they are seen, cutting in to show and to detail them, repetition then undercutting their simple identification; the second time around, a bowl of fruit cannot be seen as a bowl of fruit, but must be seen as an image in a film process, detached from any unproblematic illusion of presence, as a production in the film, a mark of the presence of that.”

Stephen Heath, “Repetition Time”, Wide Angle, 1978

REIGN OF THE VAMPIRE

“It was about trying to get a mental position which defied the way in which the then-C.I.A. was kind of intervening in the world. But it was more, not a joke, but an icon title. I suppose it said to me and to other people, “Make your barb against the C.I.A.” A lot of my early work, all that aggressive work, has a political paranoia about it: the idea that there are hidden forces of the military-industrial establishment, which are manipulating us

\*\*\* TAKE A FRIEND TO THE MOVIES \*\*\*

London Filmmakers'

CO-OP

WEEK-END

AT THE

NEW ARTS LAB

1 ROBERT ST. LONDON, NW1

FRIDAY 19 DEC

8pm P GIDAL

10pm S. DWOSKIN  
F. DRUMMOND  
S. HARTOG

SATURDAY 20 DEC

8pm M LEGRICE

10pm P. GIDAL  
S. DWOSKIN  
M. DUNFORD  
M. LEGRICE

SUNDAY 21 DEC

8pm S DWOSKIN

10pm S. HARTOG  
F. DRUMMOND  
M. DUNFORD  
M. LEGRICE

\*\*\*\*\*



SHOOT SHOOT SHOOT

from within that power. Obviously, they were – people were having their telephones tapped though I don't suppose for one minute that my telephone was interesting enough to tap. *Reign of the Vampire* is that kind of paranoid film. It's a hovercraft that comes in, but it could easily be a tank with the army getting out of it ... The idea of a military force that can sneak in somewhere, and the computer images. *Threshold* is in similar territory, about the borders and so on but very abstract. It's about that hidden sense of force."

Malcolm Le Grice, interview with Mark Webber, 2001

"The film is made from six loops in pairs (simple superimposition, but made by printing through both loops together rather than in two runs following each other, the effect of this is largely to eliminate the transparent aspect of superimposition). In content, the film comes near to being a synthesis of the *How to Screw the C.I.A.* or *How to Screw the C.I.A.?* series; it draws on pieces of film from the other films, and combines these with the most 'disturbing' of the images which I have collected. It also relates to the 'dream'/fluid association sequence in *Castle Two*; it is a kind of on-going under-consciousness which repeats and does not resolve into any semantic consequence. One of the factors of the use of the loop, which interests me particularly, is the way in which the viewer's awareness undergoes a gradual transformation from the semantic/associative to the abstract/formal, even though the 'information' undergoes only limited change. The sound has a similar kind of loop/repetition structure."

Malcolm Le Grice, *How to Screw the C.I.A. or How to Screw the C.I.A.?* programme notes, 1970

\* \* \*

STRUCTURAL / MATERIALIST

The enquiry into the material of film as film itself was an essential characteristic of the Co-op's output. These non- and anti- narrative concerns were fundamentally argued by the group's principal practising theorists Malcolm Le Grice and Peter Gidal.

In explaining their (quite different) ideas in some erudite but necessarily dense texts Le Grice and Gidal have in some ways contributed to misunderstandings of this significant tendency in the British avant-garde. (For example. It is not the case, as is often proposed, that films were made to justify their theories.)

Le Grice was instrumental in acquiring, installing and operating the equipment at the Co-op workshop that afforded filmmakers the hands-on opportunity to investigate the film medium. His own work developed through direct processing, printing and projection, providing an understanding of the material with which he could examine filmic time through duration, while touching on spectacle and narrative.

By contrast, Gidal's cool, oppositional stance was refined to refute narrative and representation, denying illusion and manipulation though visual codes. His uncompromising position resists all expectations of cinema, even modernist formalism and abstraction. The artistic and theoretical relationship of these two poles of the British avant-garde, who were united in opposing 'dominant cinema', is a complex set of divergences and intersections.

Originally intended as a test strip, the first film produced at the Dairy on the Co-op step-printer was *Shepherd's Bush*, in which an obscure loop of abstract footage relentlessly advances from dark to light. The two short films by Roger Hammond and Mike Dunford concisely encapsulate

an idea; while *Window Box* exploits the viewer's anticipation of camera movement and shrewdly transforms a seemingly conventional viewpoint, the permanence of the cinematic frame is the focus of *Tautology's* brief enquiry. By translating footage across different gauges, Crosswaite and Le Grice explore variations in film formats: *Film No. 1* uses permutations and combinations of unsplit 8mm, while *Little Dog for Roger* directly prints 9.5mm home movies onto 16mm stock. In *Key*, Gidal plays on the ambiguity of an image to challenge and refute the observer's interpretation of it, while intensifying disorientation through his manipulation of the soundtrack. Du Cane's *Zoom Lapse* comprises dense multiple overlays of imagery, vibrating the moment, while Eatherley's *Deck* re-photographs a reel of 8mm film, which undergoes a mysterious transformation through refilming, colour changing and printing.

Roger Hammond, *Window Box*, 1971, b/w, silent, 3m (18fps)  
Mike Leggett, *Shepherd's Bush*, 1971, b/w, sound, 15m  
David Crosswaite, *Film No. 1*, 1971, colour, sound, 10m  
Mike Dunford, *Tautology*, 1973, b/w, silent, 5m  
Peter Gidal, *Key*, 1968, colour, sound, 10m  
John Du Cane, *Zoom Lapse*, 1975, colour, silent, 15m  
Malcolm Le Grice, *Little Dog For Roger*, 1967, b/w, sound, 13m  
Gill Eatherley, *Deck*, 1971, colour, sound, 13m

(Total running time approximately 81m)

WINDOW BOX

"In the small masterpiece *Window Box*, Hammond sets up a situation which is mystified in its presentation, and yet at the same time demands of (and allows) the viewer to demystify the given visual impulses. The situation presented includes thus within its own premises the objective factors which determine the possibility and probability of successful analysis. The criteria one uses to evaluate, interpret, are secondary to this conceptually-determined process of working out what is. We are taken into a post-logical empiricism which realizes the sensual strength of illusion which at the same time using precisely that to refer to precision of information. The opposite of Cartesian in its in-built negation of any aspect outside of the given system. Hammond is non-atomistic, non-referential within a specific, set-up, and defined closed system. Thus, a pure attitude. Hammond is purifying the conceptual and non-psychological aspect of his work to the point where it increasingly represents his calculable mental system: the nonreferential structural obligation. He does not create a whole system, however; rather, he deciphers one."

Peter Gidal, "Directory of UK Independent Film-Makers", *Cinema Rising* No. 1, April 1972

"Roger Hammond's movies are short studies of apparently simple subjects...they induce a tight awareness of how these relations can be radically transformed by subtle shifts in film process; shifts of light value, angle, movement, framing, etc.... The illusions of cinema as they bend our consciousness, become the focus of our attention. In *Window Box*, a simple subject takes on multiple dimensions in a ghostly world created by the process of rephotographing projected negative footage. There is a gentle reminder in this process in the framing of the eventual image, which incorporates in its composition a horizontal bar of light from the wall from which the film is being rephotographed."

John Du Cane, *Time Out*, 1971

SHEPHERD'S BUSH

"*Shepherd's Bush* was a revelation. It was both true film notion and demonstrated an ingenious association with the film-process. It is the procedure and conclusion of a piece of film logic using a brilliantly simple device: the manipulation of the light source in the Film Co-op printer such that a series of transformations are effected on a loop of film material. From the start Mike Leggett adopts a relational perspective according to which it is neither the elements or the emergent whole but the relations between the elements (transformations) that become primary through the use of logical procedure. All of Mike Leggett's films call for special effort from the audience, and a passive audience expecting to be manipulated will indeed find them difficult for they seek a unique correspondence; one that calls for real attention, interaction, and anticipation/correction, a change for the audience from being a voyeur to being that of a participant."

Roger Hammond, *London Film-Makers Co-operative distribution catalogue* supplement, 1972

"The process of film-making should emphasise the imaginative, and the contact between film-maker and spectator should become more direct. *Shepherd's Bush* was made through a process contrary to the generally accepted method of making a film. It was without a script, without a camera, without the complicated route through task delegation. The entity of the film was conceived through the reappraisal of a Debric Matipo step-contact printer. Designed such that with precise control of the light reaching the print stock after having passed through filters, aperture band and the negative, it was possible to demonstrate the gradual way in which the projection screen could turn from black to white. First, a suitable image on an existing piece of positive



Mike Leggett, *Shepherd's Bush*

stock was found with which to produce a master negative. The shot was only ten seconds in length but contained a range of tones from one end of the grey scale to the other. It was loaded into the printer as a loop, and subsequently a print which repeated the action was made from the negative. Only part of the viewer's attention should be taken with the perception of the figurative image on the screen. It should however, be dynamic enough to warrant careful inspection should the viewer's attention turn to it. A thirty-minute version was made first, but on viewing was judged too long, so for the next version half this length was judged correct. A soundtrack was made matching in audio terms the perceptible changes in visual quality not usually encountered within the environment of the cinema. This film realized *total* control over the making of a film, from selection of the original camera stock, through exposure, processing, printing, processing, projection, cataloguing, and distribution."

Mike Leggett, excerpts from unpublished notes, 1972

FILM NO. 1

"*Film No. 1* is a ten minute loop film. The systems of superimposed loops are mathematically interrelated in a complex manner. The starting and cut-off points for each loop are not clearly exposed, but through repetitions of sequences in different colours, in different *material* realities (i.e. negative, positive, bas-relief, neg/pos overlay) yet in a constant rhythm (both visually and on the soundtrack hum), one is manipulated to attempt to work out the system-structure. One relates to the repetitions in such a way that one concentrates on working out the serial formula while visually experiencing (and enjoying) the film at the same time. One of the superimposed loops is made of alternating mattes, so that the screen is broken up into four more or less equal rectangles of which, at any one moment, two or three are blocked out (matted). The matte-positioning is rhythmically structured, thus allowing each of the two represented *images* to flickeringly appear in only one frame-corner at a time. This rhythm powerfully strengthens the film's existence as selective reality manipulated by the filmmaker and exposed as such. The mattes are slightly 'off'; there is no perfect mechanical fit, so that the process of the physical matte-construction by the filmmaker is constantly noticeable, as one matte (at times of different hue or different colour) blends over the edge of the matte next to it (horizontally or vertically). The film deals with permutations of material, in a prescribed manner, but one by no means *necessary* or logical (except within the film's own constructed system/serial). The process of looping a given image is already using film for its structural and abstract power rather than for a conventional narrative or 'content'. But it is the superimposition of the black mattes which gives the film its extremely rich texture, and which separates it from so

certain relations between segments, between what the camera is aimed at and the way that 'image' is presented. The dialectic of the film is established in that space of tension between materialist flatness, grain, light, movement, and the supposed reality that is represented. Consequently, a continual attempt to destroy the illusion is necessary. In Structural/Materialist film, the in/film (not in/frame) and film/viewer material relations, and the relations of the film's structure, are primary to any representational content. The structuring aspects and the attempt to decipher the structure and anticipate/recorrect it, to clarify and analyze the production-process of the specific image at any specific moment, are the root concern of Structural/Materialist film. The specific construct of each specific film is not the relevant point; one must beware not to let the construct, the shape, take the place of the 'story' in narrative film. Then one would merely be substituting one hierarchy for another within the same system, a formalism for what is traditionally called content. This is an absolutely crucial point."

Peter Gidal, "Theory and Definition of Structural/Materialist Film", *Structural Film Anthology*, 1976

ZOOM LAPSE

"If I had to compare my work with another activity, I would first point to two related musics: Reggae and certain West African music. If I had to label my work, I would choose a term radically opposed to 'Structural'. I would say that I made 'Ecstatic Cinema' ... I would like to think that the ecstatic is our birthright and to remember that ecstasy has many dimensions: we know that, from the Greek, we are talking about 'a standing outside' of oneself. This is meditation. And in the process of meditation, both rapture and a deep peace can co-exist. If my films work as intended, they will help you into ecstasy, and they will do this by satisfying in a polymorphic manner. The films are very physical, they are polyrhythmic and they are patterned in a manner designed to create a very definite way of seeing, of experiencing. I intend my films to jump out at you from their dark spaces, their gaps, their elisions, to vibrate in your whole being in the very manner and rhythm of felt experience. The magic of film for me is the possibility to portray these complex interlacings unfolding through time. You can watch one of my films, and see two films simultaneously; one of my mind and one of yours. I say film of 'my mind', but what I want to emphasise, because the films emphasise it, is that is a film of my *being*. The last thing I want my films to be is a purely mental event. This would be to deny a large part of the spectrum of the film."

John Du Cane, "Statement on Watching My Films: A Letter from John Du Cane", *Undercut* 13, 1984-85

"I was interested in film as a sculptural medium, and as a way to have the viewer be more aware of his viewing process, of his consciousness. My films were meditative at a time when that phrase wasn't a popular term to use, but most of the films were designed to reflect the viewer back on himself. I also usually wanted my films to be very physical experiences. I wanted to make the experience work on really all of the main levels of energy; the physical, the intellectual and the aspects of awareness that we associate with consciousness. In *Zoom Lapse* I was also interested in working with the way we perceive time and space as it can be manipulated through the camera. Of course part of the content of this film had to do with the camera's ability to squeeze our perspective through the process of zooming in and zooming out on a particular area. In the making of the film I actually lapsed the zoom process, so that I would shoot a single frame that had a zoom within it, and sequences in the film that were more extended zooms, so I took a very simple shot. I was living on a canal in Hamburg in a kind of romantic, old warehouse district, about all that was left after the bombing of the city. There was an old set of warehouse windows across the way and so I was interested in exploring the ways that you could squeeze space and watch the relationships between your time perception and your perception of space and how the two interact. There's a process in the film, that happens in many of my other films, where I want the viewer to be pretty conscious that what they're seeing is not something that exists on the celluloid, that there's a way they're manufacturing



John Du Cane, *Zoom Lapse*

in the viewing process. The film should very obviously be something that if you come back and watch it a second, third, fourth, fifth time you're not really going to see the same thing because the eye is creating sets of images that don't actually exist."

John Du Cane, interview with Mark Webber, 2002

LITTLE DOG FOR ROGER

"The film is made from some fragments of 9.5mm home movie that my father shot of my mother, myself, and a dog we had. This vaguely nostalgic material has provided an opportunity for me to play with the medium as celluloid and various kinds of printing and processing devices. The qualities of film, the sprockets, the individual frames, the deterioration of records like memories, all play an important part in the meaning of this film."

Malcolm Le Grice, *Progressive Art Productions distribution catalogue*, 1969



Gill Eatherley, *Deck*

"The strategy of minimizing content to intensify the perception of film as a plastic strip of frames is explicitly demonstrated in Le Grice's seminal *Little Dog For Roger*. Here the 9.5mm 'found-footage' of a boy and his dog is repeatedly pulled through the 16mm printer; the varying speed and swaying motion of the original filmstrip ironically allude to the constant speed and rigid registration of the 16mm film we are watching, and develop a tension between our knowledge of the static frames which comprise the filmstrip and the illusion of continuous motion with which it is imbued. The use of 'found-footage' and of repetition – which threatens endlessness, though this is a relatively short film – owe something to the 'pop' aesthetic then dominant, but the spectator is never permitted to complacently enjoy these found-images; the graininess and under-illumination, the negative sequences and upside-down passages are designed not so much to add variation as to continuously render those simple images difficult to decipher, thus stressing that very act of decoding. The relentless asceticising of the image became a major preoccupation in subsequent British avant-garde filmmaking."

Deke Dusinberre, *Perspectives on British Avant-Garde catalogue*, 1977

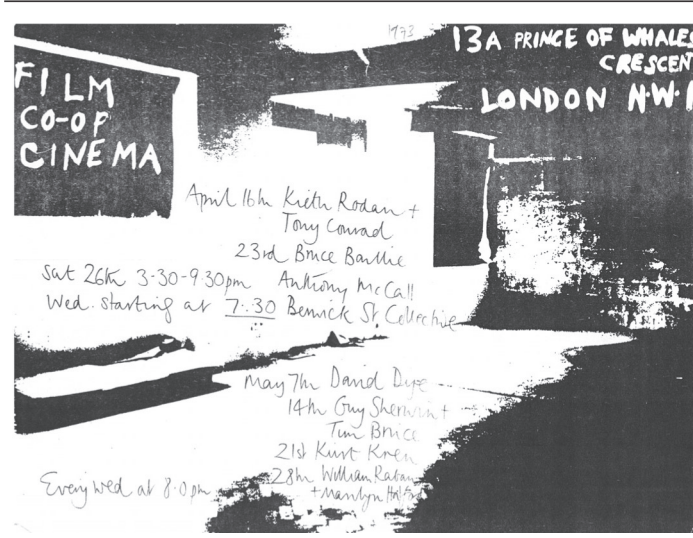
DECK

"During a voyage by boat to Finland, the camera records three minutes of black and white 8mm of a woman sitting on a bridge. The preoccupation of the film is with the base and with the transformation of this material, which was first refilmed on a screen where it was projected by multiple projectors at different speeds and then secondly amplified with colour filters, using positive and negative elements and superimposition on the London Co-op's optical printer."

Gill Eatherley, *Light Cone distribution catalogue*, 1997

"*Deck* was shot on Standard 8, black and white, on a boat going from Sweden to Finland on a trip to Russia. And then I just filmed it off the screen at St Martin's, put some colour on it, and turned it upside-down ... Just turned it upside-down and put some sound on. The sound came off a radio – just fiddling around with a radio and a microphone, just in-between stations. It was one of the longest films I've ever made and that kind of frightened me a little bit. I thought it would be too long, you know, 13 minutes was quite a long time. Most of my films are only three minutes, six minutes, eight minutes ... but it could have gone on longer maybe..."

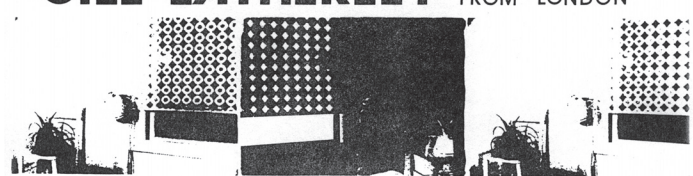
Gill Eatherley, interview with Mark Webber, 2001



ENGLISH AVANT GARDE

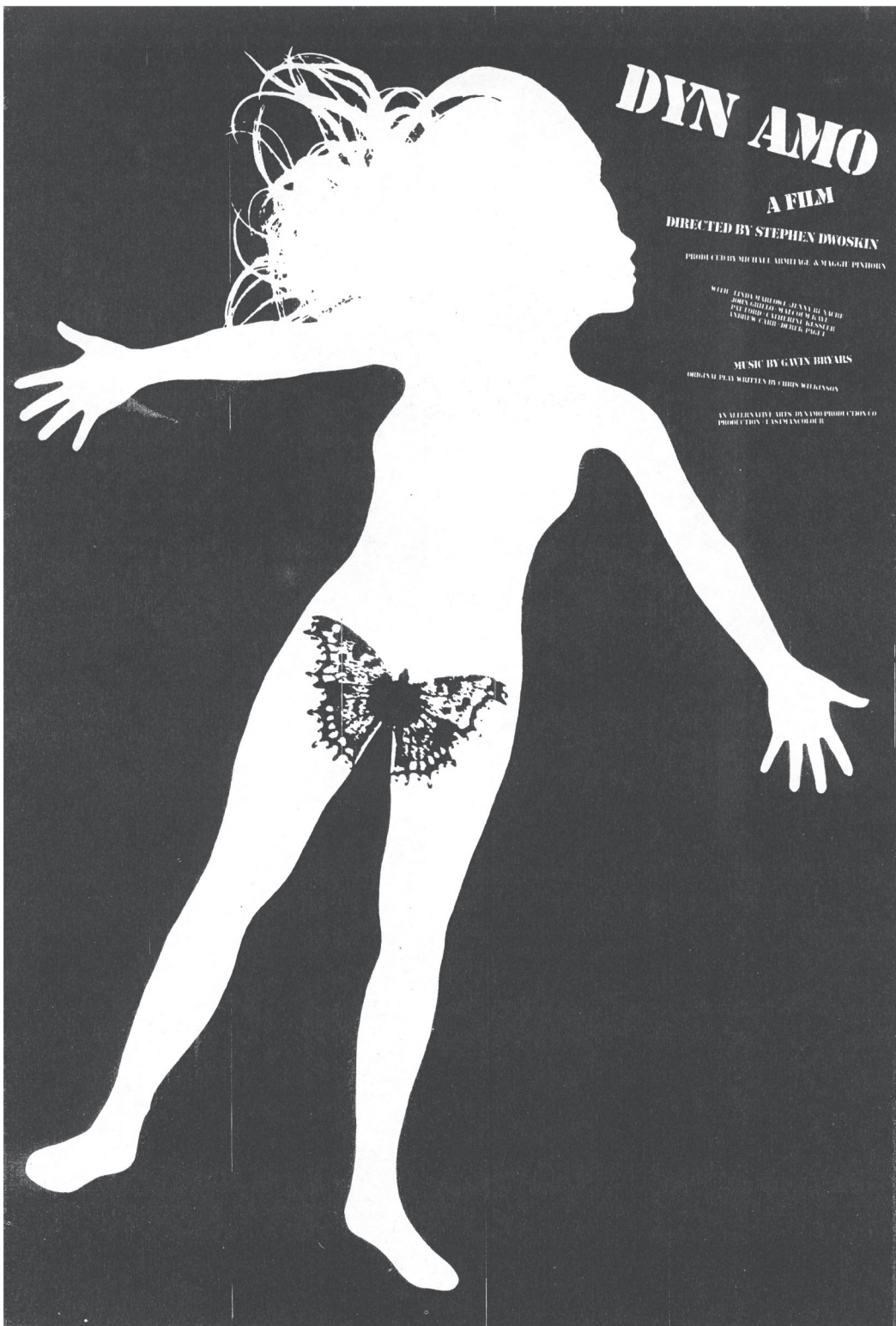
EXPERIMENTAL FILMS

DOUBLE AND TRIPLE SCREEN BY GILL EATHERLEY FROM LONDON



A SERIES OF SHORT SINGLE, DOUBLE, AND THREE SCREEN WORK - TREATING FILM AS FILM - EXPLORING SPACE AND TIME. THE FILMS FALL INTO THREE CATEGORIES - THOSE THAT ARE PURELY EXPERIMENTAL IN TECHNIQUE, COLOURS, WITH SOUND AND RE-FILMING, THEN THOSE THAT ARE MORE STRUCTURED AND OBSERVATIONAL-PLAYING WITH LIGHT - SINGLE FRAME SHOOTING AND CAMERA MOVEMENTS - AND THIRDLY THE "LIGHT OCCUPATIONS" SERIES, WHICH ARE SIMPLE, SILENT STATEMENTS, COMMENTS ON FILM PROCESS, PROJECTION, LENSES AND A GREY CONVERSATION BETWEEN TWO CAMERAS!!

PREVIOUS SCREENINGS THROUGHOUT EUROPE AND U.K. AT FESTIVALS, COLLEGES, NATIONAL FILM THEATRE, ART MUSEUMS- STEDELIJK, TATE, KUNSTHALLE COLOGNE ETC. the filmmaker will be present and participate in all the screenings





## LOCATION: DURATION

Film is a unique tool for the investigation of time and space. The subjective time of the photographed image may be measured against the objective time of projection through the use of time-lapse, editing and duration.

First tracing sunlight moving around a room, then a static study of illumination around a night-time window. The formal *Leading Light* might surprise those familiar with the more humorous works of John Smith.

Peter Gidal uncharacteristically used the mechanics of an automated camera to construct the loop-like rhythm of *Focus*, which zooms through the "static reality" of a mysterious apartment. With an electronic score by Anthony Moore.

*Sheet* develops from a conceptual basis and could be viewed as documentation of an event. The eponymous object is seen in different locations, making this one of the few experimental films that offer us incidental glimpses of London during this period.

Le Grice's film *Whitchurch Down* (*Duration*) takes three views of a landscape and combines them with pure colours and intermittent sound in progressive loop sequences and freeze-frames, positing duration as a concrete dimension.

Shot to a pre-planned structure, Welsby's dynamic *Fforest Bay II* uses speed as the instrument with which he demonstrates the disparity between the cinematic view and the film surface.

Via time-lapse, manual exposure and refilming, *Broadwalk* by William Raban ranges from serenity to rigour. The perceptible traces of human movement appear as ghosts in the tranquil walkway. David Hall, a pioneer of video art, displays a command of the cinematic medium in the layers of superimposition that make up *Phased Time<sup>2</sup>*, building up aural and visual 'chords' while mapping out a room on the flat screen.

John Smith, *Leading Light*, 1975, colour, sound, 11m

Peter Gidal, *Focus*, 1971, b/w, sound, 7m

Ian Breakwell & Mike Leggett, *Sheet*, 1970, b/w, sound, 21m

Malcolm Le Grice, *Whitchurch Down* (*Duration*), 1972, colour, sound, 8m

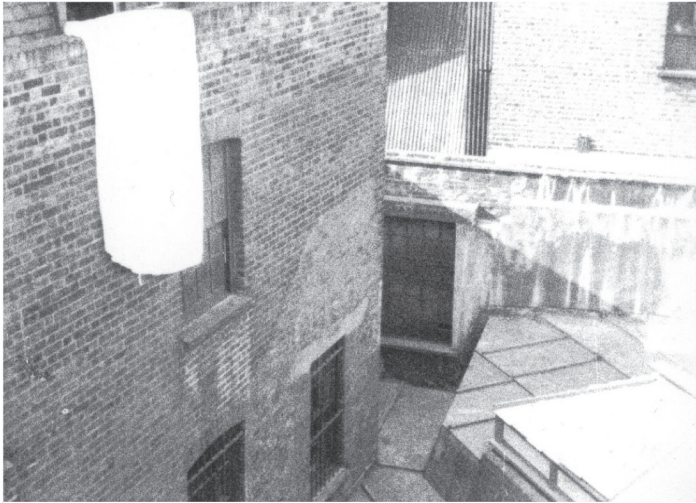
Chris Welsby, *Fforest Bay II*, 1973, colour, silent, 5m

William Raban, *Broadwalk*, 1972, colour, sound, 12m

David Hall, *Phased Time<sup>2</sup>*, 1974, colour, sound, 15m

(Total running time approximately 82m)

This programme adapts its title from Malcolm Le Grice's "Location? Duration?" exhibition of films and paintings at the Drury Lane Arts Lab in 1968.



Ian Breakwell & Mike Leggett, *Sheet*

## LEADING LIGHT

"*Leading Light* evolves a sense of screen depth and surface through the simple agency of light. The film is shot in a room over the period of a day and records the changes in light through the single window. The image is controlled through manipulation of aperture, of shutter release, of lens, but the effect is more casual than determined and the spectator is aware primarily of the determining strategy of following sunlight. Smith has commented that, "...the film is not intended as an academic exercise – I wanted to make a film of light cast by the sun largely because I found it *beautiful*. At the same time, I did not want to make an illusionistic narrative film about the sun moving around a room, but instead to employ these events within an essentially filmic construction. Because the images are so seductive, there is a conflict in the film between the events which occurred and the way in which they were recorded. This is quite intentional – for this reason I chose a very romantic piece of music for the soundtrack, which is mechanistically manipulated. The sound (which only occurs when an image of a record player appears on the screen) alters in level in relation to two variables – the apparent distance from the camera to the apparent source of the sound, and the exposure of the individual shots (bright–loud, dark–quiet). The manipulations according to distance are merely an extension of an accepted illusionistic code (source of sound seems further away, therefore the sound is quieter, etc.), whereas the manipulations according to brightness are materialist – a new code, but just as valid as the one in the film's terms."

Deke Dusinberre, *Perspectives on British Avant-Garde Film* catalogue, 1977

"*Leading Light* uses the camera-eye to reveal the irregular beauty of a familiar space. When we inhabit a room we are only unevenly aware of the space held in it and the possible forms of vision which reside there. The camera-eye documents and returns our apprehension. Vertov imagined a 'single room' made up of a montage of many different rooms. Smith reverses this aspect of 'creative geography' by showing how many rooms the camera can create from just one."

A.L. Rees, *Unpacking 7 Films* programme notes, 1980

## FOCUS

"Taking the relocating enumerative placement of 'static' reality in *Bedroom* to its ultimate conclusion: a film whose 'repetitions' are as close to mechanistic processes (loops) as the human camera-

operator can get, with the help of a Bolex-16 pro. With an overwhelming, complex, deep, beautiful soundtrack by Anthony."

Peter Gidal, *London Film-Makers' Co-operative* distribution catalogue, 1971

"Gidal's ultimate goal is the viewer's head: he's interested in the way that the viewer comes to terms with what he sees, the analytic process of working out the true nature of the experience. Like other 'structuralists', his distrust of content in films verges on an all-but-paranoid fear of human emotion... and since his films define their own rhythms (rather than matching life-rhythms, as in Eisensteinian montage) they presuppose the viewer's willing surrender to the task of watching them. At their best, as in *Bedroom* or *Focus* (the latter a series of backward-and-forward zooms through an open indoor space, the elements within the shot at once seemingly arbitrary and precisely defined), they are sufficiently strong conceptually to capture the viewer into participating in the experience, consciously or not. One of the few genuine 'originals' at work in Britain."

Tony Rayns, "Directory of UK Independent Film-Makers", *Cinema Rising* No. 1, April 1972

"Film cannot adequately represent consciousness any more than it adequately represents meaning; all film is invisibly encumbered by mystificatory systems and interventions which are distortions, repressions, selections, etc. That a film is not a window to life, to a set of meanings, to a pure state of image/meaning, ought to be self-evident. Thus, the documenting of an act of film-making is as illusionist a practice as the documenting of a narrative action (fiction). And consciousness is as encumbered by the illusionist devices of cinema, if one is attempting to document 'it', as anything else. Filmic reflexivity is the presentation of consciousness to the self, consciousness of the way one deals with the material operations; film reflexivity is forced through cinema's materialist operations of filmic practice."

Peter Gidal, "Theory and Definition of Structural/Materialist Film", *Structural Film Anthology*, 1976

## SHEET

"*Sheet* is concerned with redefining boundaries, affirming that old Gestalten thing that elements in a field are always subordinated to the whole, the composition of it – an aggregate of episodes – is such that what finally emerged was a somewhat soft mesmeric movie, the repetitions and symmetries setting up moods in which one became immersed."

Roger Hammond, *London Film-Makers' Co-operative* catalogue supplement, 1972

"Shrouding or hiding belong both to

in a sense, if you have the eyes to see, everything is revealed, and technique is no longer a means of alienation between observer and actor, or between the actor and his activity. From this point of view, Malcolm Le Grice exhibits an unusual honesty and integrity of intention. If Le Grice's heart is in technique, then his concurrent concern with the context within which an observer assimilates and directly experiences his structured time/space events, is a way of wearing his heart on his sleeve."

John Du Cane, *Time Out*, 1977

## FFOREST BAY II

"Each of my films is a separate attempt to re-define the interface between 'mind' and 'nature'. Although specified or at least implied in any one piece of work, this delineation is constantly changed and adapted both as a definition, at a material level, and as a working model, at a conceptual level, to each unique situation or location. Without this essentially cybernetic view of the relationship between 'mind' and 'nature', a view in which the relation between the two operates as a homeostatic loop, 'nature' becomes nothing more than potential raw material at the disposal of 'mind' acting upon it. This raw material is most visibly manifest in that subdivision of 'nature' termed 'landscape'. The wilder and more remote this landscape is, the further it is removed from, and the less it exhibits those signs which mark the activities of 'mind'. Technology is both a subdivision of 'nature' and an extension of 'mind'. Viewed within these terms of reference, the camera, as a product of technology, can be seen as a potential interface between 'mind' and 'nature'."

Chris Welsby, *Arts Council Film-Makers on Tour* catalogue, 1980

"The idea that I was thinking of with *Fforest Bay* was sort of the way that if you changed the 'sampling rates', you were able to capture different types of events. One sampling rate would do certain things with the waves, and other sampling rates would start to register the activity of people in the scene. With another sampling rate, you'd be able to see the clouds moving. The idea was to start with a really rapid sampling rate and then slow it down, and then reverse the process. So the fastest sampling rate was one frame per position. I divided the rotation circle of sixty degrees into eight segments: rotated the camera, took a frame, rotated it again, took a frame, etc. Second time round, I took two frames, and so on up to about thirty frames, I think. At the fastest sampling rate, you can't really see much because it's going too fast; you're more aware of the circular motion of the camera itself. Then as it starts to slow down, you can see individual waves break on the shore. As it slows down some more you can see people and, eventually, clouds and changes of light. Then, the whole process returns. Also, the image flattens when it's going very fast, so you may become aware of the film surface itself rather than the surface through the screen."

Chris Welsby, interview with Mark Webber, 2001

## BROADWALK

"This film reiterates some of the concerns of Raban's earlier work: the manipulation of time and the role of light/colour in landscape representation. The opening and closing sequences of the film, shot at regular camera speed (24 frames per second) establish a tension with the predominant time-lapse/time-exposure sequence (each frame exposed for a full twenty seconds). The original hundred feet or so which were exposed during a period of 24 hours in Regent's Park were then refilmed (off a projection screen) resulting in a film over 400 feet long. This technique of rephotography further abstracts the process of landscape representation and offers greater possibilities for variation and control over certain aesthetic effects. Raban's established motif of the light/colour variations of landscape imagery is here radicalized into white/black sequences, which operate in similar ways despite their polarity. White-outs constantly flatten the deep space of the original image. Black 'bars' – parts of irregularly exposed (rephotographed) frames – are seen rolling across the screen emphasizing its surface nature. And the black 'night' sequence serves to assert a strong identity between film and landscape, in so far as blackness is first felt as absence of landscape, and only then as absence of light – inverting causal order. The fundamental aspect of this film is the interpretation of actual time and actual landscape into filmic time

By treating film as a medium in the same way that a sculptor might use different materials, the Co-op filmmakers brought a new understanding of the physical substance and the way it could be crafted. Annabel Nicolson pulled prepared sections of film (which might be sewn, collaged, perforated) through the printer to make *Slides*.

Fred Drummond's *Shower Proof*, an early Co-op process film, exploits the degeneration of the image as a result of successive reprinting, intuitively cutting footage of two people in a bathroom. Guy Sherwin uses layers of positive and negative lead to build a powerful bas-relief in *At The Academy*, while Jenny Okun explores the properties of colour negative in *Still Life*.

Considered and brilliantly executed, *The Man with the Movie Camera* dazzles with technique as focus, aperture and composition are adjusted to exploit a mirror positioned in front of the lens.

For *Silver Surfer*, Mike Dunford refilms



William Raban, *Broadwalk*

and filmic landscape. But the process of reinterpreting a rigorous time-lapse system of recording into an intuited one of re-recording might suggest that Raban has some reservations about the hegemony of any system and feels the need to insert a measure of spontaneous experience."

Deke Dusinberre, *British Avant-Garde Landscape Films* programme notes, 1975

"Initially, the scale of screen speed was determined by the intermittency of frames. Within this broad framework, which reduces the whole daylight period to minutes, the film studies a more specific minor scale of speed changes occurring inside the twenty-second frame interval. In order to make this more apparent, I refilmed the original from the screen at a speed which was high enough

to slow down the speed changes and show the build up of individual frames. The intermittent light sections of the film were made by filming directly into the projector gate, sometimes 'freezing' individual frames and repeating sections of the darker film. By using freeze frames, bleached images, under-exposure and inclusion of the frame line, the film asserts both its physical and illusionistic realities."

William Raban, programme notes, 1972

PHASED TIME<sup>2</sup>

"Constructed on a pre-determined progressively self-defining 'phased' score and Jens-matting procedure, *Phased Time<sup>2</sup>* consists of six sections, each out of a 100 ft. roll. All work was done in camera except for linking with black spacer between sections. Apart from the first, each section is subdivided according to logical cyclic procedures. Each division (take) is a fixed position shot. At every consecutive take the camera is 'pre-panned' half a frame's width to the right. Effectively, the camera is revolving in a 'static pan' around a room throughout the film. Also, each consecutive take is partially superimposed over its predecessor (by rewinding after each take) and consequently phases the half-frame moves. The first section is a single continuous take, with the whole frame exposed. The second commences the phased divisions; in each, the whole frame is exposed. In the third, alternative takes are matted half a frame's width, progressively left and right of the frame. In the fourth, takes are progressively matted by quarter frame widths and cycle twice; once through whole frame exposure; quarter matte (right); half; three quarters; half; quarter, and back to whole. Then, quarter matte (left); half; three quarters, etc. In the fifth, the same procedure is taken using multiples of a one-eighth matte, but this time proceeding through only one complete cycle. The sixth, and last, proceeds through one-sixteenth mattes from whole frame to black (left). The second section (the first to comprise a multiple of takes) has its number of divisions determined by the number of half-frame moves necessary to complete a 180 degree linear 'pan' (eight using a 10mm lens). Subsequent sections progressively increase their numbers (according to matte cycles) until the last which completes a 360 degree pan, with all takes simultaneously superimposed in the center of the section in sixteen takes (concurrent with the one-sixteenth progressive mattes). The comparative 'panning' pace is apparently accelerated or decelerated according to the relative matting procedure and number of frame divisions, working from left to right and back from right to left and back, since the camera is at all times moved to the right. The sound phases and eventually superimposes synchronously with the picture, and was produced on a synthesizer and electric organ."

David Hall, *First Festival of Independent British Cinema* catalogue, 1975

\* \* \*  
INTERVENTION & PROCESSING

The workshop was an integral part of the LFMC and provided almost unlimited access to hands-on printing and processing. Within this supportive environment, artists were free to experiment with technique and engage directly with the film-strip in an artisan manner.

By treating film as a medium in the same way that a sculptor might use different materials, the Co-op filmmakers brought a new understanding of the physical substance and the way it could be crafted. Annabel Nicolson pulled prepared sections of film (which might be sewn, collaged, perforated) through the printer to make *Slides*.

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For *Silver Surfer*, Mike Dunford refilms

Guy Sherwin, *At The Academy*, 1974, b/w, sound, 5m

David Crosswaite, *The Man With The Movie Camera*, 1973, b/w, silent, 8m

Mike Dunford, *Silver Surfer*, 1972, b/w, sound, 15m

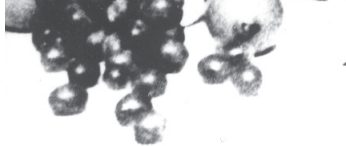
Jenny Okun, *Still Life*, 1976, colour, silent, 6m

Lis Rhodes, *Dresden Dynamo*, 1971, colour, sound, 5m

Chris Garratt, *Versailles I & II*, 1976, b/w, sound, 11m

Roger Hewins, *Windowframe*, 1975, colour, sound, 6m

(Total running time approximately 78m)



Jenny Okun, *Still Life*

## SLIDES

"*Slides* was made while I was still a student at St.Martins. Like the sewing machine piece, it was one that just happened. By that time I was immersed in film and I always seemed to have bits of film around in my room, on the table, everywhere, always little fragments. I had slides of my paintings and I cut up the slides and made them into a strip. I spoked a 16mm strip of celluloid with sprocket holes: Instead of that what I had was a strip – just slightly narrower – without the sprocket holes and the slides were just cut into bits, just little fragments and stuck in with other film as well, and also sewing (this was before *Reel Time*). There are bits sewn with thread and some bits with holes punched in it. It was a very natural way of me to work, coming from painting, just working with something I could hold in my hand was somehow less threatening than working with equipment. I think I was much more confident working with something that I could grab hold of, so I made this strip and then the film was really created in the contact printer at the Co-op. Normally you would have your raw negative and your emulsion and its literally in contact, the light shines through it and you make a copy, but I had this very thin strip, which I held in the contact printer and I just manoeuvred it. I could see what I was doing because there's a little peephole you can look into so that you can see each image. It amazes me now that I could have ever done anything like that. I couldn't possibly go within a hundred yards of doing it now. But I did it then and *Slides* was what came out of it."

Annabel Nicolson, interview with Mark Webber, 2002

"*Slides* develops a simple and elegant tension between stasis and apparent motion, between surface and depth, and between abstract colours / shapes and representational imagery. Ironically, the material pulled through the printer this time is not found-footage posing as original material which is utilized in the way found-footage had been used by others. The film thus engages the entire concept of – in David Curtis' phrase – 'the English rubbish tip aesthetic' which embraces, in part, the theory that anything that can travel through a printer and/or projector is film material for a film and for cinematic projection. The valueless becomes valued. Nicolson asserts the preciousness not only of her original material but also that material in its transformations, and by extension the potential preciousness of all perception. In this respect the film moves away from the rigorous ascetic strategy and is more indulgent of the pleasure of vision..."

Deke Dusinberre, *Perspectives on British Avant-Garde Film* catalogue, 1977

## SHOWER PROOF

"SONF SOUND TRACK SYNC? SPASH BTHA BATH GURGLE WATER – how real – pure film – or a report – situation examined by camera – but false – contrived realism is not a true record of spontaneous actuality – this could never



Fred Drummond, *Shower Proof*

be? enough to contrive (the camera makes every situation an arrangement), then edit out as much obvious contrivance. It is only a FILM."

Fred Drummond, original production notes for *Shower Proof*, 1968

"Fred Drummond has made a series of short single and double-screen films that explore visual rhythms and the potentials of the printing process. They are non-narrative, careful orchestrations of repeated loop footage. *Shower Proof* is printed on increasingly high-contrast negative. The image grows from the abstract, yet plainly anthropomorphic, steadily through to the personal, yet non-specific – we see neither the man's nor the woman's face in detail – and back. The film explores the relation between form and movement. The visual rhythm is so strong that despite the film being silent the viewer has a strong aural impression."

Verina Glaessner, "Directory of UK Independent Film-Makers", *Cinema Rising* No.1, April 1972

## AT THE ACADEMY

"In making films, I am not trying to say something, but to find out about something. But what one tries to find out, and how one tries to find it out, reveals what one is saying."

Guy Sherwin, *Arts Council Film-Makers on Tour* catalogue, 1980

"*At The Academy* was made during a period of raiding laboratory skips for junk film. It uses a very simple and highly unprofessional homemade printer. The found-footage was hand printed by winding it on a sprocketed wheel through a light beam. Because the light spills over the sound track area, the optical sound undergoes identical transformations to the image. I programmed the printing so that the image gradually builds up in layers superimposed, slightly out of phase, moving from one up to twelve layers.



This has the effect of stretching or decelerating individual frames from 1/24 sec to 1/2 sec, causing them to fuse with adjacent frames. A separate concern in the film is the game it plays with the audience's expectations."

Guy Sherwin, *A Perspective on English Avant-Garde Film* catalogue, 1978

## THE MAN WITH THE MOVIE CAMERA

"Crosswaite's *Man with the Movie Camera* is a particularly elegant film. By mounting a circular mirror a little before the camera, so that it only occupies the central area of the screen, and another mirror to the side, the camera and the cameraman may be seen as the central image, with the other features of the room visible around the circumference. The film is complex in spite of the simplicity of the set-up, which is only slowly grasped. Particularly succinct is the way in which the effect of manipulating the camera, like changing focus, is seen in the image simultaneously with a view of how it is brought about. There is no other 'content' than the functioning of the camera itself, seen to be sufficient and even poetic."

Malcolm Le Grice, *Abstract Film and Beyond*, 1977

## SILVER SURFER

"A surfer, filmed and shown on tv, refilmed on 8mm, and refilmed again on 16mm. Simple loop structure preceded by four minutes of a still frame of the surfer. An image on the borders of apprehension, becoming more and more abstract. The surfer surfs, never surfs anywhere, an image suspended in the light of the projector lamp. A very quiet and undramatic film, not particularly didactic. Sound: the first four minutes consists of a fog-horn, used as the basic tone for a chord played on the organ, the rest of the film uses the sound of breakers with a two second pulse and occasional bursts of musical-like sounds."

London Film-Makers Co-operative distribution catalogue supplement, 1972

"Scientific or objective reality is based on repetition or frequency of observed data. It has been postulated that any unusual event which occurs only once cannot be observed. Organisation of space is determined by a continuous reference to the relationships between the observer and the observed data. 'Objectivity' is a function of frequency, continued frequency implies permanence and therefore objectivity. Frequency is determined by the organism. The perceptual threshold of a human being is approximately 1/30th of a second. Perception is a product of frequency which is a product of perception."

Mike Dunford, "Conjectures and Assertions", *Filmaktion* programme notes, 1973

## STILL LIFE

"*Still Life* moves towards later stages of transformation than the earlier films and substitutes positive for negative camera stock in the conventional negative-positive process of filming and printing: the filmmaker then attempts to reinstate some sort of representation of reality by painting the fruit in front of the camera its negative colours; but the burnt-out shadows and black highlights consistently prevent any illusionistic interpretation of the space within the frame while also asserting the processes involved."

Jeremy Spencer, "Films of Jenny Okun", *Readings* No. 2, 1977

"My films, photographic constructions, and paintings all stem from similar concerns. They are attempts to integrate the structural aspects of an event/landscape with the structural aspects of the medium involved. This integration of structures is aimed at creating a balance with no one element overstated, no one part dominant. My own participation is emphasised in this process – just as scientists now acknowledge that their own existence cannot be ignored in the calculation of experimental data. The subjects that I choose are not those that most easily suggest a filmic structure but are subjects which cannot be verbalized. For me, film is a language with which we can study our own visual thought processes. Each new film can create its own language for this visual discussion and can be explored and contained within its own terms."

Jenny Okun, *Arts Council Film-Makers on Tour* catalogue, 1980

## DRESDEN DYNAMO

"The enduring importance of Lis Rhodes as artist and film-maker is attributable to her quiet and powerful radicalism. Rhodes' work juxtaposes an artistically and theoretically rigorous practice with passionate commitment. She has developed a mode of film-making inspired but not enslaved by feminism, which has sustained and grown regardless of fashionable trends in art and representation."

Gill Henderson, *A Directory of*

British Film and Video Artists, 1996

"Sounds are affective. Images are instructive. In reversing, turning over, the notation, or perhaps the connotation of images and words, it becomes alarmingly apparent that words (and not only in their relationship with sentences) are to be believed, or not, and are therefore emotional. This is why lots can be said and nothing happens, or nothing is said and a lot happens. One person's word against another's. The answer and the question occupy the same space. They are already familiar if not known to each other. Emotionally they live within the same political order, that is, of manipulation and persuasion. Images do not 'say'. They are instructive. They are said to 'speak for themselves'. And I think they do. Seeing sense is a rare occurrence, in itself. There is little space for reflexive meaning in reflection. The one is the other, if not in geometry, certainly in time. The values of a social system are continuously displayed and reproduced. Repetitive distribution re-enforces acceptance, protectionism masquerades as 'free' choice. But the explicit nature of images always remains implicit. You can look at them. They are made to look at you. Even chance cannot avoid recognition. Abstract or configured instruction is within the image. Even nothing much is something. Meanwhile the needle goes round and round the record irrespective of the recording. Tape wraps round the head and the disc spins. "Read my lips", he said. Hopefully, we didn't bother. Seeing is never believing, or lip sync a confirmation of authenticity. But the combination of instruction and affectivity is very effective. Anything can be sold in between, anything that necessitates the political construction of emotion. In a series of films and live works I have investigated the material connections between the film image and the optical sound track. In *Dresden Dynamo*, the one was the other. That is – what is heard is seen and what is seen is heard. One symbolic order creates the other. The film is the score is the sound."

Lis Rhodes, "Flashback from a Partisan Filmmaker", *Filmwaves* No. 6, 1998

## VERSAILLES I &amp; II

"For this film I made a contact printing box, with a printing area 16mm x 185mm which enabled the printing of 24 frames of picture plus optical sound area at one time. The first part is a composition using 7 x one-second shots of the statues of Versailles. Palace of 1000 Beauties, with accompanying soundtrack, woven according to a pre-determined sequence. Because sound and picture were printed simultaneously, the minute inconsistencies in exposure times resulted in rhythmic fluctuations of picture density and levels of sound. Two of these shots comprise the second part of the film which is framed by abstract imagery printed across the entire width of the film surface: the visible image is also the sound image."

Chris Garratt, *London Film-Makers' Co-operative* distribution catalogue, 1977

"I was motivated originally by the prospect of being able to compose sound and visual images in units of fractions of seconds and by the tremendous ratio of magnification between the making and projection of sound and picture images. The content is not really the figurative subject matter as in some superimposed concept, but the here and now of the raw material, in making and in projection, and in the relationship between these two events in which nothing is hidden, propped up, decorated, representative or representable. (The choice of the material used was largely a matter of chance, but it is significant that (1) the original footage deals with 'art' and 'culture' in a very clichéd way, (2) we instantly relate to this whole genre of documentary rather than to the particular subject, (3) it contains virtually no subject or camera movement at all, and (4) there is an optical soundtrack, identifiable during editing only in the abstract, i.e. visually.)"

Chris Garratt, "Directory of Independent British Cinema", *Independent Cinema* No. 1, 1978

## WINDOWFRAME

"*Windowframe* is an investigation of the way in which we may perceive a specific image – that of two people, seen through a window, involved in some activity. This is the image seen at the opening of the film. Subsequent sections of the film present to the viewer differing juxtapositions of the four segments of this image which are created by the cross-bars of the window. Tensions are created between what we expect to see, and what we do see. We see the original image as a single whole. Do we perceive the manipulated sections in the same way, or are we drawn to investigate each pane separately? Can we make ourselves see the manipulated sections in the same way we see the original sequence? In the section in which the image is split simply horizontally or vertically are we able to re-establish/re-construct the original image in our minds so that the image we see differs from that on the screen? Perhaps this film answers some of these questions; perhaps it merely raises them."

Roger Hewins, *Derby Independent Film Awards* catalogue, 1976

"For the best part of ten years *Windowframe* was exhibited as a silent film. I had, however, always 'seen' it as a film with sound. Indeed a magnetic stripe to facilitate this had been added to the original print of the film at the lab. However, I was unable to decide exactly what the soundtrack should be. A simple music track seemed inappropriate, too much like background music for its own sake with little relationship to the structure of the visuals, whilst attempts at a more constructed rhythmic track introduced extraneous 'off-screen' information taking the viewer outside of the experience of simply watching the film itself. I was looking for a soundtrack that provided an equivalence for the visuals themselves. The soundtrack on the existing print is the 'Missa Pange Lingua' by Josquin des Pres. It was combined with the visuals in 1982. This music was in fact recorded for a later film. During the editing of this film I became interested in the 'out-takes', where singers had made mistakes injecting sudden interruptions in the four-part medieval harmonies. Not only did the religious music resonate the stained glass quality of the images, but also the four-part structure and its interruptions provided the auditory equivalence for the overall structure of the film."

Roger Hewins, 2002



## DIVERSIFICATIONS

From personal montage through to exploration of the cinematic process, the work was sensuous and playful. As a creative group, the Co-op covered vital aesthetic ground and resisted categorisation. This programme does not pursue a single theme or concept, rather it demonstrates the

tension rises, later to explode in spectacularly bending, twisting single-frame bursts.

The brief, rapid-fire collage *White Lite* by Jeff Keen is made up of baffling layers of live action, stop-motion, obliteration and assemblage. Anne Rees-Mogg's *Muybridge Film*, in homage to the pioneer of motion photography, constructs a playful film by breaking down a sequence



Annabel Nicholson, Shapes

broad range of work that was produced during this time.

The exposition section of Annabel Nicolson's *Shapes* reveals its tactile evolution, as visible dirt is made evident by the step-printing technique. Moving into real time, the multiple layers of superimposition present strange spatial dimensions as the filmmaker toys with light, moving among the paper structures in her room.

*Footsteps* engages the camera (viewer) in a playful game of "statues". The film was often presented as a live performance in which Marilyn Halford crept up on her own projected likeness.

Le Grice's *Talla* adopts an almost mythical pose. Images slowly encroach on the frame as the visual

into its constituent frames.

*Moment* is an unmediated look, erotic but not explicit, as saturated as its celluloid. It's a key work of Dvoskin's early sensual portraits of solitary girls, in which the returning stare challenges our objective / subjective gaze.

Chris Welsby's *Windmill II* is one of a series in which propeller blades rotate in front of the camera, acting as a second shutter, controlled by an unpredictable and natural force. In this instance, the blades are backed with a reflective material that offers a glance back at the recording device intermittently with the zoetropic view of the park.

In *The Girl Chewing Gum*, by John Smith, the narration appears to direct everyday life before breaking down, causing the viewer to question the

accepted relationship between sound and image, the suggestive power of language.

Chinese images and slogans are transformed by split-screen, ingrained dirt and hand-held photography to create a visual pun in Ian Kerr's film, from "Persisting in our struggle" to *Persisting* in our vision.

Annabel Nicolson, *Shapes*, 1970, colour, silent, 7m (18fps)  
Marilyn Halford, *Footsteps*, 1974, b/w, sound, 6m  
Malcolm Le Grice, *Talla*, 1968, b/w, silent, 20m  
Jeff Keen, *White Lite*, 1968, b/w, silent, 2.5m  
Anne Rees-Mogg, *Muybridge Film*, 1975, b/w, silent, 5m  
Stephen Dvoskin, *Moment*, 1968, colour, sound, 12m  
Chris Welsby, *Windmill II*, 1973, colour, sound, 10m  
John Smith, *The Girl Chewing Gum*, 1976, b/w, sound, 12m  
Ian Kerr, *Persisting*, 1975, colour, sound, 10m

(Total running time approximately 85m)

## SHAPES

"I tried to make a kind of environment in the room where I lived in Kentish Town and to make a film within it. There were pieces of paper and screwed up, transparent gels hanging from the ceiling; it was quite dense in some parts. I wandered through it with a camera and then other parts were filmed on the rooftop at St Martins. I think I was just very much trying to find my way in a whole new area of work. I remember it involved a lot of re-filming, which was the part I liked. The process was very fluid, similar to painting. I got quite interested in the specks of dust and dirt on the film and the re-filming gave me a chance to look at that more closely. Probably the thing that attracted me to film was the light ... the kind of floating quality you can get, images suspended in light. Looking at it now, the kind of paintings I was doing before were floating shapes. It seems to me that the kind of things I was looking for I should be able to do with film. When I make a film, I'm not sure what I'm ever trying to achieve ... it kind of gets clearer to me as I'm doing it."

Annabel Nicolson, interview with Mark Webber, 2002

"Compassion; care; love; appreciation; attention. Quietude; silence; slowness; gentleness; subtlety; lyricism; beauty. It is terms like these that Annabel Nicolson's films can be discussed in (*exploratory* would be another), if they are to be discussed at all; and perhaps they are best left to themselves, and to the receptive eye, mind, and soul of the viewer. They are humble, unpretentious, searching, and thoughtful films: they are reverent, after a style, and should be seen with a similar sort of reverence. The ephemeral thing, by this compassionate attention, is given the aspect of timelessness which transcends mere nostalgia: the thing is seen 'under the aspect of eternity'."

David Miller, Paragraphs On Some Films by Annabel Nicolson Seen in March 1973

## FOOTSTEPS

"*Footsteps* is in the manner of a game reinacted, the game in making was between the camera and actor, the actor and cameraman, and one hundred feet of film. The film became expanded into positive and negative to change balances within it; black for perspective, then black to shadow the screen and make paradoxes with the idea of acting, and the *act* of seeing the screen. The music sets a mood then turns a space, remembers the positive then silences the flatness of the negative. I am interested in the relationship of theatrical devices in film working at tangents with its abstract visual qualities. The use of a game works the memory, anticipation is set, positive film stands to resemble a three-dimensional sense of time in past/future. Then negative holds out film itself as the image is one stage further abstracted and a disquiet is set up in the point that the sound track ends, whilst the picture track continues."

Marilyn Halford, Perspectives on British Avant-Garde Film exhibition catalogue, 1977

"We'd just got one of these Russian film developing tanks, that you can load 100 feet of black and white film into and develop it yourself, which is very appealing because it means you haven't got all the palaver of going to labs. *Footsteps* is based, obviously, on a game. Now whose early work would I have seen that prompted that? I think the image itself came from René Clair. That slightly rough black and white image I like very much – the idea of it not mattering if it's got speckly and dusty. It had a certain degree of antiquity built into it which, to me, was quite liberating because it's hard to keep it all dust free and so forth. Anyway, that's how I wanted it, I wanted it to look old even before it started, like old footage. Consequently it's got the Scott Joplin soundtrack, "The Entertainer", just because it's amusing and also to add that aged thing to it. The first time it goes through it's in negative so you wouldn't necessarily see what was going on, so you would have a lot of questions and curiosity as to what was happening. And then when all is revealed the right way round, it is just so simple, it's just such a simple game. I suppose the performance part of it just grew out of that, to extend it really, it was another way of presenting it – to take part and to play the game with the film image itself."

Marilyn Halford, interview with Mark Webber, 2001

## TALLA

"*Talla* is the most narrative/subjective film I have yet made. Because all the material was shot by me in a week or so it has location continuity, which becomes very important in the film. The pace of the cutting is still fast and images still work from perception to conception or perhaps in this film – to 'feeling'. However, there is no consistent building up of pace and the fast-cut pieces are held within pauses so that there are often 'clusters' of images diving out of a mainly calm field."

Malcolm Le Grice, Interfunktionen 4, March 1970

"I think *Talla* is a hard film for most people. It's a very psychological and mysterious film. It starts out, in one primitive way, from the interplay of the black and the white. I was interested in this white screen on which things appear black. It's highly orchestrated, in terms of the black and white qualities of the image. There's something that's coming out of this work, in the mythological kind of subject – *Chronos Fragmented* and the *Cyclops* and all of that stuff – that *Talla* is playing on. The shot material is actually on a very obscure bit of Dartmoor, and Dartmoor Prison and the warders there. So there's that element of the threatening, mysterious bit of society which is something that you can't get into, the dark side of the social. It's also very mythical, in that the gods and ghosts of that landscape are floating around there in the mist. It was completely edited directly on 16mm using a magnifying glass, I didn't edit it at all through a viewer. I thought of it symphonically, in terms of the lengths and orchestration. There's an element of propheticness in there..."

Malcolm Le Grice, interview with Mark Webber, 2001

## WHITE LITE

"Watch the ghost of Bela Lugosi decay before your very eyes. A sequel to *Plan 9 From Outer Space*."

Jeff Keen/Deke Dussinberre, "Interim Jeff Keen Filmography with Arbitrary Annotations", Afterimage No. 6, 1976

"Keen is indebted to the Surrealist tradition for many of his central concerns: his passion for instability, his sense of *le merveilleux*, his fondness for analogies and puns, his preference for 'lowbrow' art over aestheticism of any kind, his dedication to collage and *le hazard objectif*. But this 'continental' facet of his work – virtually unique in this country – co-exists with various typically English characteristics, which betray other roots. The tacky glamour/True Beauty of his Family Star productions is at least as close to the end of Brighton pier as it is to Hollywood B-movies... The heroic absurdity and adult infantilism that are the mainsprings of his comedy draw on a long tradition of post-Victorian humour: not the 'innocent' vulgarity of music hall, but the anarchicness of The Goons and the self-lacerating ironies of the 30s clowns, complete with their undertow of melancholia."

Tony Rayns, "Born to Kill: Mr. Soft Eliminator", Afterimage No. 6, 1976

## MUYBRIDGE FILM

"I started making films in 1966, and teaching filmmaking in 1967. Before that I had been painting and drawing and exhibiting at the Beaux Arts Gallery and other places. My first film was a painterly study of interference colours and structures of soap bubbles (*Nothing is Something*). At the same time I made a 16mm home movie of my nephews which was called *Relations*. I realized two things, one that film is not about movement, and that the figurative and narrative possibilities of the second film were what I wanted to explore. Eight years later I made the film I should have made then, a small film called *Muybridge Film* in which I explored all the filmic possibilities of someone turning a cartwheel."

Anne Rees-Mogg, Arts Council Film-Makers on Tour catalogue, 1980



John Smith, The Girl Chewing Gum

## MOMENT

"*Moment* presents a continuous, fixed gaze by the camera at a girl's face. The fixity, although paralleling the spectator's position, nevertheless marks itself off as 'different' from our view because it refuses the complex system of movements, cuts, 'invisible' transitions, etc. which classic cinema developed to capture our 'subjectivity' and absorb it into the filmic text. In this way, the distinction between the looks of the camera at the profilemic event and of the viewer at the image is emphasized. Moreover, the sadistic components inherent in the pleasurable exercise of the 'controlling' gaze (a basic fact without which no cinema could exist) are returned to the viewer, as it is he/she who must construct the 'scenario' by combining a reading of the image (slight movements of the woman, colour changes in her face, facial expressions, etc.) with an imagined (but suggested) series of happenings off-screen. The result is a narrative: the progressive excitement of a woman who masturbates."

Paul Willemen, Perspectives on British Avant-Garde Film catalogue, 1977

"In one long take, a girl whose face we see in close-up throughout, smokes and excites herself, her eyes resting at moments on the camera as if in a supplication which is also an utterly resigned accusation of film-maker and spectator alike. Not for their curiosity, which may after all be far from devoid or reverence for the human mystery, but for a willful self-withholding which is the standard human relationship. Here are three solitudes, and the film's climax occurs after the girl's, in her uneasy safety, a convulsion returning her, and us, to an accentuation of the nothing from which she fled."

Ray Durnat, Sexual Alienation in the Cinema, 1972

## WINDMILL II

"A reflexiveness using the camera shutter as a technical referent can be seen in Welsby's *Windmill II*. The camera is

placed in a park. The basic system involves a windmill directly in front of the camera, so that as the blades pass by the lens they act as a second shutter, as a paradigm for the first shutter. The blades are covered in melanex, a mirrored fabric. The varying speeds of the blades present the spectator with varying perceptual data which require different approaches to the image. When moving slowly, they act as a *repoussoir*, heightening the sense of deep space. At a moderate speed, they act as an extra shutter which fragments 'normal' motion, emphasizing movement within the deeper plane and critiquing the notion of 'normality' in cinematic motion. When moving quite fast, the blades act as abstract images superimposed on the landscape image and flattening the two planes into one. And when the blades are stopped (or almost so) a completely new space is created – not only does the new (reflected) deep space contain objects in foreground and background to affirm its depth, but these objects are seen in anamorphosis (due to the irregular surface of the melanex) which effectively re-flattens them; the variations in the mirror surface create distortions which violate (or at least call attention to) the normal function of the lens of the camera."

Deke Dussinberre, "St. George in the Forest: The English Avant-Garde", Afterimage No. 6, 1976

"Formalism has grown up in parallel with the development of an advanced technology. The medium of landscape film brings to organic life the language of formalism. It is a language shared by both film-makers and painters. In painting, particularly American painting of the 1950s, formalistic thinking became manifest in the dictum 'truth to materials', placing the emphasis on paint and canvas as the subject of the work. In film, particularly the independent work done in England, it manifests itself by emphasizing the filmic process as the subject of the work. The synthesis between these formalistic concerns of independent film and the organic quality of landscape imagery is inevitably the central issue of contemporary landscape film. It is this attempt to integrate the forms of technology with the forms found in nature which gives the art of landscape its relevance in the twentieth century."

Chris Welsby, Perspectives on British Avant-Garde Film exhibition catalogue, 1977

## THE GIRL CHEWING GUM

"I am writing this with a black 'Tempo' fiber-tip pen. A few months ago, I bought fifteen of these pens for sixty pence. Unfortunately, because they are so common, other people pick them up thinking they are theirs, so I don't have many left now. I bought the pens from a market in Kingsland Road in Hackney, about a hundred yards from where the film was shot. The film draws attention to the cinematic codes and illusions it incorporates by denying their existence, treating representation as absolute reality."

John Smith, "Directory of Independent British Cinema", Independent Cinema No. 1, 1978

"In relinquishing the more subtle use of voice-over in television documentary, the film draws attention to the control and directional function of that practice:

way, river, or some other obstacle. 2. Something that resembles this in shape or function: *his letters provided a bridge across the centuries*. **sub**title *n.* 1, an additional subordinate title given to a literary or other work. 2. (*often pl.*) Also called: **caption**. Films. **a.** a written translation superimposed on a film that has foreign dialogue. **b.** explanatory text on a silent film. vb. 3. (*tr.; usually passive*) to provide a subtitle for. **sub**titular *adj.* **sound**track *n.* 1. the recorded sound accompaniment to a film. Compare **commentary** (sense 2). 2. A narrow strip along the side of a spool of film, which carries the sound accompaniment ... Wave Upon Wave of Wheatfield." Ian Kerr, 2002

## THE EPIC FLIGHT

An extended personal odyssey which, through an accumulation of visual information, builds into a treatise on the experience of seeing. Its loose, indefinable structure explores new possibilities for perception and narrative.

Reinforcing the idea of the mythopoeic discourse and the historically romantic view of the artist-filmmaker, *Mare's Tail* is a legend, consisting of layers of sounds and images that reveal each other over an extended period. It's a personal vision, an aggregation of experience, memories and moments overlaid with indecipherable intonations and altered musics. The collected footage is extensively manipulated, through refilming, superimposition or direct chemical treatment. The observer may slip in and out of the film as it runs its course; it does not demand constant attention, though persistence is rewarded by experience after the full projection has been endured.



David Larcher, Mare's Tail

While studying at the Royal College of Art, David Larcher made a first film *KO* (1964-65, with soundtrack composed by Philip Glass), which was subsequently disassembled and small sections incorporated in *Mare's Tail* (a recurrent practise that continues through his later works). Encouraged by contact with true independent filmmakers like Peter Whitehead and Conrad Rooks, Larcher set out on to document his own life in a quasi-autobiographical manner.

Though financed by wealthy patron Alan Power, *Mare's Tail* was, in its technical fabrication, a self-sufficient project made before the Co-op had any significant workshop equipment. At times, Larcher was living in a truck, and stories of films processed in public lavatories in the Scottish Highlands do not seem far from the truth. His relationship to the Co-op has always been slightly distanced, though his lifestyle impressed and influenced many of the younger, more marginal figures. His next film, *Monkey's Birthday* (1975, six hours long), was shot over several years' travels across the world with his entourage, and this time made full use of the Co-op processor to achieve its psychédelic effect.

David Larcher, Mare's Tail, 1969, colour, sound, 143m

"From one flick of the mare's tail came an unending stream of images out of which was crystallised the milky way. Primitive, picaresque cinema." (David Larcher)

## MARE'S TAIL

"Now you see it, now you don't. Waiting room cinema from the mountain top to the car park, an alternative to television. The good, the bad and the indifferent. Some consider it self-indulgent but me has a duty to itself. Bring what you expect to find. Not structural but starting in the beginning from the beginning...organic...prima materia...impressionable massa confusa...out of which some original naming and ordering processes spring...they are not named, but rather nailed into the celuloid. "Please don't expect me to answer the question I'm having a hard time not falling out of this chair" syndrome." David Larcher, Arts Council Film-Makers on Tour catalogue, 1980

"*Mare's Tail* is an epic flight into inner space. It is a 2 and 3/4 hour visual accumulation in colour, the film-maker's personal odyssey, which becomes the odyssey of each of us. It is a man's life transposed into a visual realm, a realm of spirits and demons, which unravel as mystical totalities until reality fragments. Every movement begins a journey. There are spots before your eyes, as when you look at the sun that flames and burns. We look at distant moving forms and flash through them. We drift through suns; a piece of earth phases over the moon. A face, your face, his face, a face that looks and splits into shapes that form new shapes that we rediscover as tiny monolithic monuments. A profile as a full face. The moon again, the flesh, the child, the room and the waves become part of a hieroglyphic language... *Mare's Tail* is an important film because it expresses life. It follows Paul Klee's idea that a visually expressive piece adds "more spirit to the seen" and also "makes secret visions visible". Like other serious films and works of art, it keeps on seeking and seeing, as the film-maker does, as the artist does. It follows the transience of life and nature, studying things closely, moving into vast space, coming in close. The course it follows is profoundly real and profoundly personal: Larcher's trip becomes our trip to experience. It cannot be watched impatiently, with expectation; it is no good looking for generalization, condensation, compli-

cation or implication."

Stephen Dvoskin, Film Is: The International Free Cinema, 1975

"A film that is almost a life style. Long enough and big enough in scope to be able to safely include boredom, blank-screens, bad footage. The kind of film that is analogous in a symbolic way to something like the 'stream of life' – no one would ever criticize looking out of the window as being boring sometimes. It's not a film – more like an event composed of the collective ideas and attempts in film of several years. Like a personal diary: humorous, wry, sad, ecstatic. Concerned with texture, with seeing and not seeing, light and darkness, even life and death. Monumental not in size alone, but in its breadth of concept. Relaxed enough to be able to let one idea run for twenty minutes before switching to another. The exact opposite of most film-making which attempts to keep the audience 'interested' by rapidly changing from one form or idea to another, to exclude boredom and participation. A 'super-Le Grice' in that it has inherent sensitivity and humanity, as well as superlative and highly inventive technique. It opens up film-making by including such self-conscious ethics as those propounded by Warhol etc. as a natural part of the film ethic as a whole."

Mike Dunford, Cinematics No. 1, January 1970

"*Mare's Tail* is one of the finest achievements in cinema. It is a masterpiece that everyone in the country should get to see. To write about it is about as difficult as conveying the essence of magic, the meaning of existence, the quality of love or the shadows of a receding dream. For the film is pure myth, a living organism in its own right, a creation whose infinite complexity makes criticism of it a shallow irrelevancy (or at best a crude mythology). The achievement is that the film never looks like a mere catalogue of special effects – the vision is integrated, relaxed, spontaneous and too fluid for there to be any sense of contrivance in this staggering display of inventive curiosity. The immense diversity of technique runs hand-in-hand with a sustained



simplicity of treatment. You're aware of a mind that is open and loving toward everything; and this loving openness of response transfigures every image in the film, as it eventually transfigures the viewer too..."

John Du Cane, Time Out, 1972

"A film that is undoubtedly one of the most important produced in this country and that stands comparison with the best from the United States. It's as if it were the first film in the world. When *Mare's Tail* first appeared it was compared to Brakhage's *Art of Vision*, as an examination of ways of seeing. The comparison can be taken further: as Brakhage is to the New American Cinema, it seems to me, so Larcher should be considered to the New English Cinema. ... *Mare's Tail* is not only about vision but proposes an epistemology of film, particularly in its first reel: revealing basic elements of film in an almost didactic fashion: grain, frame, strip, projector, light. We see a film in perpetual process, being put together, being formed out of these attitudes. The first reel is a 'lexicon' to the whole film – to film in general – holding together what is essentially an open-ended structure to which pieces could be continually added and offering us a way to read that film. It is at once a kind of autobiography and a film about making that autobiography." Simon Field, "The Light of the Eyes", Art and Artists, December 1972

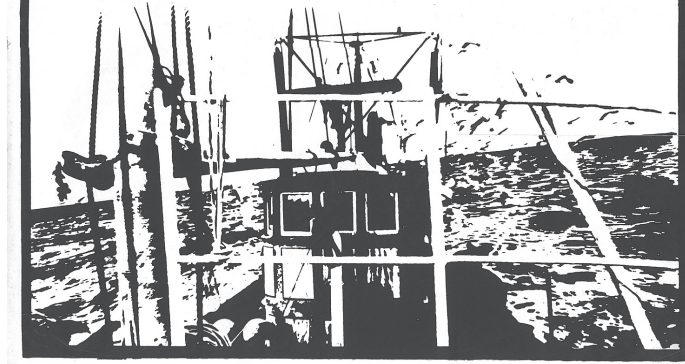
"Pierre Boulez came to a screening of *Mare's Tail* at Robert Street once. Simon Hartog said: "Oh, I sent my father to see *Mare's Tail*", his father was an impresario for people like Joan Sutherland and Pierre Boulez, and it turned out that Boulez came and was sat behind us. I'd been living in trucks and I'd just come up and it happened to be the same day. I went along and found this old tramp called Eric – this famous character who was around in those days, early 70s – and took him along. We were sitting there and then I suddenly realised Boulez was behind. After half an hour he said, "C'est le perfection", and walked out with Simon's father!"

David Larcher, interview with Mark Webber, 2001

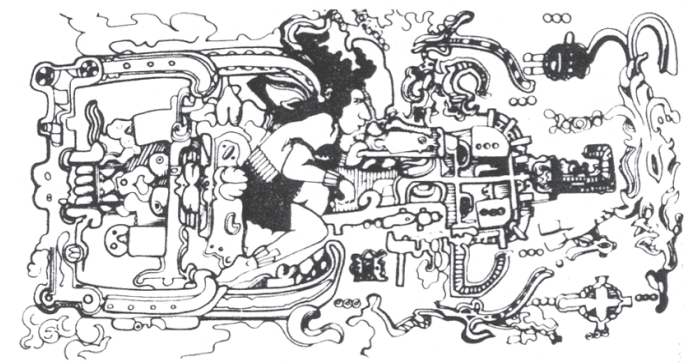
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Introductory programme notes by Mark Webber, with thanks to Al Rees. Excerpted paragraphs on each film were assembled by Travis Miles and Mark Webber. Copyright remains with their original authors.

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**BY RON HASELDEN, 7PM TO 9PM**  
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## LONDON FILM-MAKERS CO-OP

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### PRESS CONFERENCE

date: thursday 20th october 1966  
time: 11 a m  
place: better books new compton street shop (adjoining 94 charing x rd)

announcing:  
the foundation of the london film-makers co-operative new member of the international association of film co-operatives

the movement:

avant-garde low budget non-commercial films are today being made here in london in greater numbers than most people realise similar groups of young film-makers are active in both the united states and countries throughout europe seeking to free and therefore widen this art-form from the ties of industry and high finance which have bound it so far now with the formation of the london film-makers co-op an important link in the world-wide chain of non-commercial 'underground' film-making is established at the press conference plans will be outlined for a major london festival of 'underground' films from around the world london film-makers co-operative magazine CINIM no 1 will appear in a fortnight

born on october 13th london film-makers co-operative has already held one highly successful all-night viewing of 'underground' films to capacity audience

harvey matusow: chairman  
paul francis bob cobbing: joint secretaries

## LONDON FILMMAKERS COOPERATIVE

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### PRESS RELEASE

The London Filmmakers Cooperative will inaugurate its cinema which was built by Coop film-makers on 10 of September at 4.00p.m. with a press showing of new films from the Film Coop library at its new premises: 13a Prince of Wales Crescent. Many of the films to be shown will be having their first public screening in England. A number of the films have been processed and printed by the filmmakers on Coop Workshop equipment.

The Filmmakers' Coop is a non-profit organization formed to help independent filmmakers in production and distribution of their films. It is organized and run cooperatively by the filmmakers themselves. The Coop has the largest non-commercial library of English, American and European experimental, avant garde' or underground films in Europe and England. The Coop Workshop is a place where independent filmmakers can experiment freely while avoiding exorbitant production costs. The workshop has facilities for processing, printing and editing 16mm and 8mm film.

Many of the films screened at the 'press show' will be shown at the Coop Cinema during the course of the year. The films will also be screened in London (and other parts of England) at such places as the New Cinema Club, and at art schools, clubs and film societies.

Underground or independently made films rarely get much press coverage in England, even by the 'underground' press, so that all too often really fine, important, interesting, original or outrageous films get a tiny audience that hardly pays for the cost of the screening. This is partly due to the fact that people have never heard of the film or filmmaker before. We hope this showing will generate some coverage of these films. It would be especially good if something could be written about the films prior to their public showings. We will distribute a 1971-72 Coop Cinema program and upon request can let you know where and when Coop films will be shown elsewhere.

The new Coop Catalogue is also available upon request.

## FILM CO-OP WORKSHOP NEW ARTS LAB ETC.

DEAR ALL,  
PLEASE EXCUSE THE LAST WET COMMUNICATION FROM HERE AND DIG OUT ALL THE ENTHUSIASM YOU ONCE HAD, HOPING IT HASN'T BEEN TOTALLY DISSIPITATED BY RECENT NON-HAPPENINGS)

WE NEED YOU YOURMEMBERSHIP (YES AND THE BREAD YOU HAVN'T PAID YET) YOUR ACTIVITY YOUR DISCUSSIONS DECISIONS THOUGHTS QUESTIONS

YOUR LEARNING AND YOUR TEACHING YOUR PRESENCE

I HAVE YOUR NAME BECAUSE YOU WERE ONCE INTERESTED IN THE FILM CO-OP. IF YOUR NO LONGER INTERESTED SILENCE (BYE-BYE) IF YOU ARE STILL INTERESTED GET IN TOUCH WITH ME, (GARETH COOK) HELP ME MAKE THE WORKSHOP YOUR WORKSHOP THAT'S WHY IM HERE

ACTUALITY'S TESTS ARE BEING RUN ON BOTH THE PRINTER AND THE PROCESSOR TO DETERMINE THE BEST EXPOSURE/DEV.SPEED FOR PRINT MATERIAL

WE NEED ACURATELY EXPOSED NON VITAL CAMERA STOCK TO RUN SIMILAR TESTS ON TO DETERMINE BEST DEV.SPEED FOR ORIGINAL CAMERA WORK I ANTICIPATE THIS WILL BE COMPLETED FIRST IT WOULD DEPEND WHO WANTED WHAT FIRST AND WHO CAME AND DID IT

SO FAR YOU ARE JUST NAMES ON A LIST TO ME ( BAR40RS) I AM "IN RESIDENCE" -

TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY 12.30-6.00&&  
ALSO EITHER SATURDAY OR SUNDAY 12.30-6.00 GIVE ME A RING AND SAY WHEN

YOU'LL BE HERE AND ILL ARRANGE TO BE HERE OUTSIDE THOSE TIMES

IF YOU HAVE CAMERA STOCK TO DEVELOP BRING IT IN  
IF YOU HAVE DEVELOPED STOCK TO PRINT BRING IT IN

BUT BRING YOURSELF IDEAS EFFORTS

LOVE GARETH  
(HOME) 731-0931RAT RECETP.387-2605  
IF THEY CANT/WONT FIND ME LEAVE A MESSAGE AND PHONE NO.

## CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS 1966-76

### A DETAILED GUIDE TO THE PERIOD

Excerpted from a work-in-progress, with particular bias toward the early formative years

#### 1966

Bob Cobbing (a concrete poet who had previously organised film societies and other arts clubs in Hendon and Finchley) left teaching in 1965 to work in paperback department of Better Books shop on New Compton Street (around the corner from 94 Charing Cross Road) – organises Cinema 65 film club there showing foreign, experimental, non-commercial and unknown films – Ray Durnat, Philip Crick, John Collins in frequent attendance at regular Friday night screenings – in '65 the screenings are meant to provoke and encourage; by '66, it becomes apparent that more coherent organisation is needed as more people become interested in making and distributing films – films usually projected in the shop (surrounded by books), and only occasionally in the basement (which was used for poetry, exhibitions and theatre / happenings, such as Jeff Nuttall's People Show)

#### MARCH 1966

Jonas Mekas posts an open letter to New York Film-Makers' Co-operative members stating that, through the persistence of Barbara Rubin, a London Co-op is forming and will be run by Barry Miles, and based at Indica (a bookstore and gallery on Southampton Row) – planned film fundraiser at Albert Hall (following on from the 'Wholly Communion' poetry reading, which featured Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, and Trocchi the previous year) – talk of establishing London Co-op as base for European distribution

#### MAY 1966

Mekas says in second letter that the LFMC will start in July – plans to spend £2,000 on prints for 3 programmes for Albert Hall show in June (the show never happened) – Co-op committee at this time: Bob Cobbing, Phillip Crick, John Collins, Paul Francis, Simon Hartog, Ray Durnat, Michael O'Casey, Les Philby, Stewart Kington – general ethos is an enthusiasm for filmmaking (in addition to viewing) despite a lack of knowledge or experience

Harvey Matusow arrives from New York, where he had been involved in fringes of underground scene – had previously spent time in jail for perjury during McCarthy trials – an incorrigible hustler, he got things done but aroused much suspicion

#### JUNE 1966

Approximately 20-25 people attend 2 Co-op planning meetings – draft code of practice drawn up by Miles, Cobbing, Jim Haynes, Paul Francis, M. Ellis, Peter Whitehead and Matusow (who is named as secretary) using Better Books address as base

#### 1 JULY 1966

Letter from Paul Francis to Mekas announces Co-op is being set up independent of Better Books and Indica – by reply receives Western Union cable on 11th with message "GOOD START AND GOOD SPEED WE ARE WITH YOU!" signed Brakhage, Breer, Brooks, Emshwiller, Jacobs, Markopoulos, Mekas, Vanderbeek, Brigante, Clarke, Rogosin

#### 12 JULY 1966

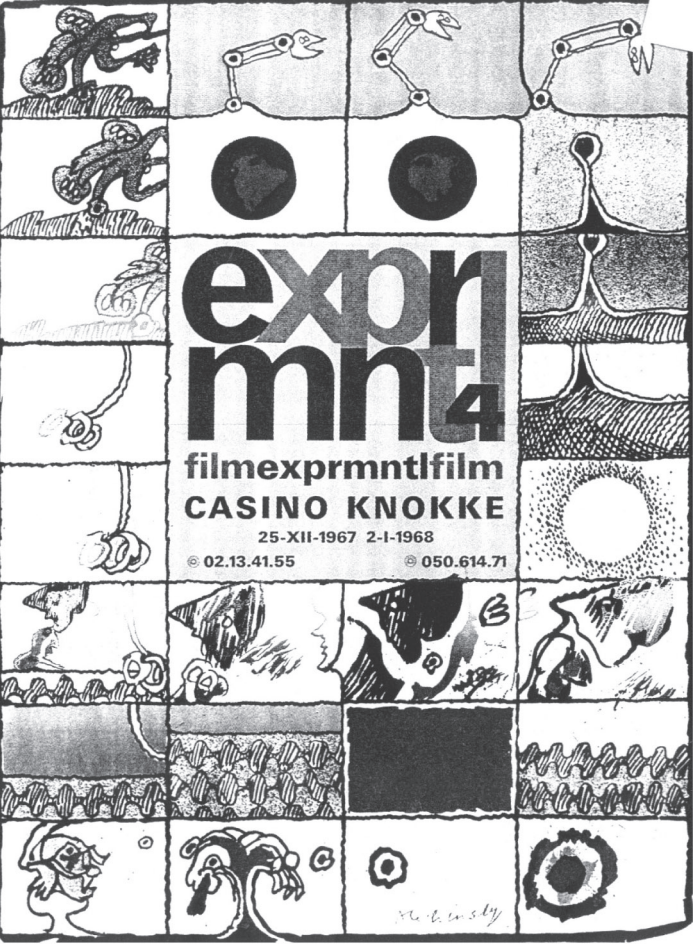
Co-op Committee meeting at which a 5 page draft constitution is written including plans for screenings, distribution, newsletter and quarterly magazine (then called Reel) – Durnat, Francis, Hartog, Matusow, Leonard Foreman, R. Hudson, and Jeff Keen write Mekas again explaining preference to develop independent base despite friendly competition of the 2 bookstores – Open Screenings start to outnumber pre-selected programmes at Better Books

#### SUMMER 1966

David Curtis graduates from the Slade summer '66 and travels to New York to see films – on his return he frequents Better Books and helps with film shows – a week of Open Screenings at the London Free School is presented as part of the Notting Hill Fayre – Steve Dwoskin, on a Fulbright Scholarship to London College of Printing, brings his early films with him from New York – meeting with John Latham leads to screening at the Fayre, seen by Cobbing – Co-op is by now established as a group though not officially formed

#### SEPTEMBER 1966

Destruction In Art Symposium (DIAS) at venues throughout London includes

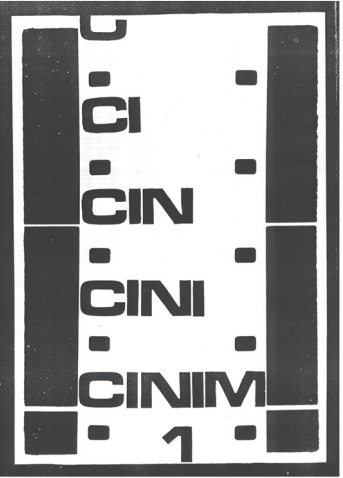


events at Better Books, organised by Bob Cobbing & Gustav Metzger – screenings include Kurt Kren's Actionist films and John Latham's *Speak* – nature of event leads to significant media and public attention

Plans to use Jeanetta Cochrane Theatre (set up by Jim Haynes) for late night independent screenings – new Co-op draft constitution includes renamed magazine (Cinim) and outlines structure of the organisation

#### 13 OCTOBER 1966

London Film-Makers' Co-operative (LFMC) officially formed at meeting at Better Books: Matusow as chairman, Cobbing and Francis secretaries – Co-op draft telegram to Mekas, declaring intention to "shoot shoot shoot" – unlikely that the telegram was ever sent, it may just have been mocked-up by Hartog for reproduction in Cinim and elsewhere



#### 15 OCTOBER 1966

First official Co-op screening forms part of the Roundhouse Rave – launch party of IT (International Times) newspaper held at the Roundhouse – includes Pink Floyd, Soft Machine and 6-hour film programme featuring Balch, Dwoskin, and Latham – IT, the press organ for the British cultural underground was published by Jim Haynes, John Hopkins (Hoppy), Barry Miles and Jack Moore, and edited by Tim McGrath

#### 20 OCTOBER 1966

Matusow's presence secures good attendance to the press conference which announces the Co-op at their Better Books HQ – subsequent article in Town magazine proclaims Steve Dwoskin, Andrew Meyer, Simon Hartog, Bob Cobbing, and Matusow "some of London's most active underground filmmakers"

31 OCTOBER – 5 NOVEMBER 1966 "Spontaneous Festival of Underground Films" at Jeannetta Cochrane Theatre – 6 day long schedule includes films by Dwoskin, Keen, Balch, Matusow, Meyer and London School of Film Technique students as well as significant international work by Anger, Brakhage, Mekas etc – just about every piece of experimental film that was available in London (from Co-op, BFI, Connoisseur, Contemporary Films distribution) is shown – followed by 6 nights of Open Screenings at Better Books – first issue of IT includes 4 page supplement on the event

#### NOVEMBER 1966

First issue of Cinim is published; edited by Phillip Crick, designed by Lawrie Moore, and published by the Co-op – Co-op has about 50 members and distributes films by Dwoskin and Meyer – First LFMC bulletin distributed to members

#### 26 NOVEMBER 1966

Matusow complains to Mekas by letter that US visitors gravitate to Indica "although Miles has never been to a Co-op meeting" – a later letter from Barbara Rubin to IT staff indicates that NY filmmakers reluctant to send films to London because of Matusow's involvement

NOVEMBER 1966-JANUARY 1967 Co-op holds 11 Open Screenings and many other programmes at Better Books

#### CHRISTMAS 1966

Hoppy opens UFO club on Tottenham Court Road and David Curtis begins film screenings, which first augment light shows on Friday nights, in between live performances by psychedelic rock groups

#### JANUARY 1967

LFMC Bulletin Number 2 notes that film supply for exhibition is 'drying up' – Co-op screenings become repetitive due to the lack of available films

#### FEBRUARY 1967

Matusow complains to Mekas that the

## SHOOT SHOOT SHOOT

Robert Fraser Gallery has prints of experimental film and will not loan them for screenings – desperate to get promised New American Cinema films – Co-op use Spontaneous Festival profits to buy 6 films from Robert Pike's Creative Film Society including works by Ian Hugo, Kurt, Al Sens, Paul Bartel, Scott Bartlett, Robert Pike – by this time Co-op have approximately 8 hours of films, and British film-makers slowly begin to start making work

Matusow thrown out of Co-op due to suspicion of motives based on alleged pilfering from Spontaneous Festival receipts – replaced by new executive committee of Cobbing, Dwoskin, Hartog, Trevor Peters, John Collins

#### 29 APRIL 1967

"14-Hour Technicolor Dream", hippy London's gathering of the tribes, at Alexandra Palace – intended as fund raiser for IT but too many tickets were given away for free – live bands inc. Pink Floyd, Crazy World of Arthur Brown, Alexis Korner, The Pretty Things, The Move, plus happenings (Yoko Ono), films and light shows – BBC TV make the documentary "Man Alive: What Is A Happening?" at the event

#### JULY 1967

Second issue of Cinim (edited by Philip Crick, designed and produced by Steve Dwoskin, published by the Co-op)

#### SUMMER 1967

UFO club closes (later to be revitalised at the Roundhouse) – Jim Haynes and Jack Henry Moore lease 182 Drury Lane for the Arts Lab

#### AUGUST 1967

Co-op Bulletin No. 5 announces plans for lecture series on various aspects of filmmaking to encourage production – John Collins made executive officer of Co-op, but is later asked to leave for allegedly embezzling profits from Cinim

#### 18 AUGUST 1967

Negotiated by Curtis, Cobbing and Co-op hold first screening at Drury Lane Arts Lab (before its official opening)

#### SEPTEMBER 1967

Tony Godwin sells Better Books to Collins Publishers who halt all cultural activities – Cobbing given one month's notice to leave – Film collection moves temporarily to Dwoskin's flat in Notting Hill – office to Cobbing's flat, then Hartog's, then Curtis & Biddy Peppin's

#### 25 SEPTEMBER 1967

Arts Lab opens and includes theatre, cinema, coffee shop, gallery – Haynes asks Curtis to run cinema in basement – opens with disastrous week long run of *Echoes of Silence* by Peter Emanuel Goldman – Open Screenings held there every Tuesday

#### 26 SEPTEMBER 1967

Malcolm Le Grice present to see Ray Durnat introduce films by Kurt Kren at ICA – Curtis initiates plans for film workshop at Arts Lab – 2 Co-op programmes at Arts Lab in October, plus Peter Kubelka in person at ICA (arranged by Dwoskin and Cobbing) before screenings cease following closure of Better Books on 2 October – Co-op screenings at ICA demonstrate its independence from the Arts Lab and reluctance to move organisation there – beginning of split between ex-Better Books and Arts Lab group's different views on how the Co-op should develop – 41 films in Co-op distribution library at this point

#### AUTUMN 1967

Co-op films shown at Liverpool Bluecoat Arts Forum festival, who also award money for the completion of films by Steve Dwoskin, Simon Hartog, Jeff Keen, David Larcher, John Latham and Roland Lewis – Co-op encourages a shift to filmmaking rather than film watching – Anthony 'Scotty' Scott begins to assemble *The Longest Most Meaningless Movie in the World*, an endless film entirely constructed by the progressive inclusion of footage found around Soho production houses

#### OCTOBER 1967

Opposition to Jonas Mekas who proposes that he, Stan Brakhage, Ken Kelman, P. Adams Sitney (a group that would later form Anthology Film Archives' controversial "Essential Cinema" committee) will select New American Cinema films for European distribution – Jonas plans to arrive with films in September '67 (he didn't) – Ray Durnat briefly Co-op chairman, Ron Gessin replaces Paul Francis as joint secretary with Bob Cobbing

Derek Hill starts New Cinema Club and shows films initially at Mermaid Theatre and ICA – Vaughan-Rogosin Films start to buy American experimental work for UK distribution, including Anger, Brakhage, Kuchar and Warhol

#### NOVEMBER 1967

Bob Cobbing and John Collins announce plans for new bookshop and arts centre called "Boooooooks" at 80 Long Acre – to include a cinema plus sound facilities and editing equipment (they call it an "Eventure Room") – and write to American Cinema filmmakers asking for prints

#### 22 NOVEMBER 1967

List of films in distribution includes 60 titles, few of which are home-grown

#### DECEMBER 1967

Knokke-Le Zoute "Expmntl 4" festival and competition in Belgium proves a watershed, whose influence leads to the LFMC establishing itself on an international level – 20 British films submitted, though only 5 shown in competition – Steve Dwoskin wins the Solvay Prize, and his films *Chinese Checkers* and *Soliloquy* are chosen by P. Adams Sitney for his New American Cinema tour – *WaveLength* (Michael Snow) wins first prize as Sitney begins to consider his pivotal definition of 'Structural Film' – David Curtis regards the festival as a significant moment for London film-makers, though Dwoskin and Cobbing play it down, crystallising differences between Dwoskin's subjective view and Curtis' (and other's) increasing attention to process

#### 1968

Following Knokke, Curtis starts to screen

more 'serious' work at Arts Lab – during 1968 Stan Vanderbeek, Gregory Markopoulos (*Gammellon*), Warren Sorkobert and Marguerite Paris (representing Millennium Film Workshop and showing Charles Levine) all present shows, though none deposit films for Co-op distribution.

#### JANUARY 1968

John Collins presents screening at psychedelic club Middle Earth which was raided by police – Collins impulsively moves event to basement of planned "Boooooooks" store which was also raided after complaints from residents – leads to the loss of lease for the new shop and Collins again parts company with Cobbing and the Co-op

30 JANUARY – 27 FEBRUARY 1968 Malcolm Le Grice, a painter who had graduated from the Slade in 1963, takes Curtis to the "Young Contemporaries 1968" show at the Royal Institute Galleries which includes *Photo Film (Based on Muybridge)* by Fred Drummond, *Horizon* by Lutz Becher and work by other St. Martins students of Le Grice

#### LATE FEBRUARY 1968

Le Grice shows *Castle One* (The Light Bulb Film) at Arts Lab under pseudonym "Minima Maas" and becomes directly involved with Co-op activities – Curtis and Le Grice (with Drew Elliot) draw up plans for processing/printing equipment to be housed at Arts Lab

#### 17 MARCH 1968

"Battle of Grosvenor Square" anti-Vietnam War demonstration is documented by a group of Co-op filmmakers including Dwoskin, Hartog and Michael Nymman – some footage sold to BBC TV news

#### APRIL 1968

Curtis and Hartog arrange 12 city university tour for P. Adams Sitney's massive "Travelling Avant-Garde Film Exposition" that premieres at the NFT 22-28 April – tour has an huge effect on burgeoning critics and film-makers around the country and is first major opportunity to see this work in England – Curtis again tries to secure NAC tour prints for Coop – to coincide with Essex University screenings, Simon Field and Peter Sainsbury publish only issue of Platinum

#### 17-18 MAY 1968

"Parallel Cinema" meeting at ICA to discuss the possibility of an independent distribution collective – over 100 people present including Marc Karlin (Cinema Action, later Berwick St Collective), Peter Block (24 Frames Distribution), Derek Hill (New Cinema Club), Ron Orders and Tony Wickert (Angry Arts, later Liberation Films), John McWilliam (Electric Cinema) and Tattoosties International (Dick Fontaine et al) – meeting leads to a Parallel Cinema information office being established at ICA – committee (led by Philip Drummond) forms with intention to establish a circuit of 50 'electric' cinemas, distribute packages of short films, and provide a central booking agency for independent 16mm films – Godard's *Le Gai Savoir* is chosen as a test film toward establishing the circuit – as a direct development, Peter Sainsbury and Nick Hart-Williams establish The Other Cinema in 1970, which becomes the most active and successful of the independent distributors, representing Godard, Herzog, Straub plus Dwoskin and many political and third world filmmakers

#### SPRING 1968

Le Grice and Hartog complete new draft constitution for Co-op which includes provisions for liberal division of labour, and shared equipment and facilities – agree to appoint a paid secretary for more efficient management to generate revenue for film production

#### JULY 1968

Peter Gidal (having arrived from New York the previous month) attends screening at Arts Lab and brings along two of his own films – *Room (Double Take)* scheduled to be shown in 2 week's time, when Curtis, Hartog, Le Grice, Dwoskin, Fred Drummond see and are impressed with Gidal's work – 8mm films by Goldsmith's sculpture student Mike Dunford are also well received – many new film-makers begin to emerge without any substantial knowledge of previous avant-gardes – aesthetic and conceptual trends that later become specific to the LFMC start to surface

#### SUMMER 1968

After his tour ends, Sitney returns to NY with all films from the NAC Exposition tour – David Curtis meets Carla Liss, American artist and friend of Mekas who will become central to Co-op organisational structure – First LFMC distribution catalogue published (loose metal binding, assembled by Liss and Curtis, cover by Dwoskin) – list approximately 100 films plus addendum of experimental films distributed by Vaughan-Rogosin – no doubt because of present state of flux, no Co-op address or personnel names are printed – Sitney had advocated integration of the 2 active groups and there are soon proposals towards uniting Arts Lab and Co-op factions: Arts Lab group: Curtis, Le Grice, Bennett Yahya, Cordley Coit / Co-op group: Dwoskin, Hartog, Cobbing, Collins

#### AUGUST 1968

Scotty's *Longest Most Meaningless Movie in the World* is over 5hrs of 35mm material by the time it is premiered at Arts Lab ... 10 hours long by 1970 ... could still be growing for all we know

#### SEPTEMBER 1968

Curtis writes the report "Subsidies to Independent Filmmakers: The present situation and how it might be improved", which calls for new funding structures – Curtis & Le Grice are in favour of working with the BFI to secure funding, while Dwoskin and Hartog strongly resist the idea

#### 11 SEPTEMBER 1968

First LFMC screening of 1968 at the Arts Lab – Mike Dunford and Fred Drummond show new work

#### 19 SEPTEMBER 1968

Michael Snow and Joyce Wieland at the ICA, a visit that helps to perpetuate a general shift on part of LFMC practitioners toward formalist work, although

many of these film-makers had been clearly moving in this direction before similar North American work had arrived in London

#### 12-17 NOVEMBER 1968

Curtis and Dwoskin travel to the six-day "Europ" (European Co-op) meeting at the Independent Film Centre in Munich – film-makers Birgit and Wilhelm Hein invite over 40 colleagues to the meeting, which is inconclusive, only leading to the publication of *Supervisuell* magazine (edited by Klaus Schoener) – plans for a European co-op had evolved from discussions initiated by P. Adams Sitney and Shirley Clarke at Knokke – Curtis sees *Rohfilm* (W+B Kren) and recognises aesthetic similarities with Le Grice, whose *Talla* is also screened – at this time Germany has 3 regional co-ops, as well as P.A.P. (Progressive Art Productions distribution and print sales) – Austrian, Dutch and Italian co-ops also present at meeting

#### NOVEMBER 1968

Carla Liss returns to New York and negotiates with Mekas – agreement to send the NAC prints from the previous European tour to London on condition that Liss will manage them – Bob Cobbing demands an "Extraordinary General Meeting" (some resentment at the hiring of an American)

Malcolm Le Grice mounts his exhibition "Location? Duration?" in the Arts Lab gallery – large paintings, constructions, drawings and films – his screenings on 1 & 2 November include recent works completed on new printing / processing equipment which hint at Co-op's materialist direction for next few years

#### 18 NOVEMBER 1968

David Curtis and 10 others resign from Arts Lab following disagreements with Jack Moore over the future direction of the organisation – Sandy Daley takes over management of cinema – Arts Lab is forced to close by bad debts six months later

#### 26 NOVEMBER 1968

At the Co-op meeting, Bob Cobbing, Philip Crick and John Latham resign – Cobbing replaced as treasurer by Le Grice – by late '69 Dwoskin and Hartog have also left, severing ties with early Better Books community

Following the Arts Lab walk-out, Co-op again has no permanent base – film collection is housed at Covent Garden flat of David Curtis and Biddy Peppin, printing / processing equipment in Malcolm Le Grice's garage in Harrow, mail goes via address of Carla Liss and Nicholas Albery

#### DECEMBER 1968

Co-op holds several fundraising screenings in late '68 – early '69 including those at All Saints Hall in Ladbroke Grove and Living Arts Workshop, Surrey

#### EARLY 1969

Carolee Schneemann arrives in London (stays until 1973, at one point living in a tent outside Co-op) – prints *Plumb Line* at Co-op – Schneemann is one of several Americans who wind up in London to avoid Vietnam War, and who graduate toward the Co-op inc. Barbara Schwartz and Lynne Tilman

David Curtis fails to persuade the Slade to host Co-op screenings, and is refused an application to the Arts Council to assist with screenings and lectures in England and Europe – negotiations with Camden Council for their support of the New Arts Lab – most Co-op screenings during this time are at the Electric Cinema on Portobello Road, organised by Liss

#### 25-26 JANUARY 1969

Conference of Arts Labs organised by Philippa Jeffrey and the Cambridge Arts Lab – attended by representatives from Drury Lane Arts Lab, LFMC, Oxford Film-Makers' Co-op, Artists' Information Register, Time Out, Release, Cybernetic Theatre, Portable Theatre, Edinburgh Combination and the Arts Council – organisations share information and discuss collaboration – Tony Rayns and Roger Hammond meet with Co-op for first time

#### MAY 1969

Last issue of Cinim (edited by Simon Hartog, produced by Steve Dwoskin, published by the Coop)

Camden Council offers building at 1 Robert Street for temporary use, rent-free – IRAT (Institute for Research in Art & Technology) is formed as an umbrella organisation to administrate different groups that will occupy the space – Joe Tilson and J.G. Ballard on advisory board – LFMC members spend the summer renovating the space, which include many different artistic groups and encourage cross-disciplinary work – cinema (David Curtis), LFMC (Carla Liss & Malcolm Le Grice), video (TVX / John Hopkins & Til Roemer), theatre (Roland Miller, later Victoria Miller & Martin Russell) mime (Will Spoor), music (Hugh Davies), photography (Ian Robertson), gallery (Biddy Peppin & Pamela Zoline, later Judith Clute), printing (John Collins) electronics (David Jeffrey) metal and plastics (Martin Shann, later Bernard Rhodes) and cybernetics (John & Dianne Lifton) – renovations to the building are completed by September

Dwoskin and Hartog leave the Co-op organisation – Dwoskin will later remove his LFMC-distributed films to The Other Cinema



**1970**

Le Grice starts to make colour-field films on Coop workshop equipment, beginning with Love Story – his first expanded performance with this material is *Horror Film 1* (1971)

Rodney Wilson becomes Film Officer at Arts Council and implements funding for artists' films



Malcolm Le Grice

**JANUARY 1970**

At IRAT, 5 days of open live-action and multi-screen events are held, mostly led by Annabel Nicolson, and include Le Grice, Mike Dunford and Sally Potter – this inaugurates a period of intense development of expanded work by the core LFMC group, quite unique from other international examples

Issue one of Cinemantics (published by John Mathews)

**JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1970**

Larry Kardish (from New York Museum of Modern Art) tours Britain for 2 weeks with 3 1/2 hours of films from US and Canada

**APRIL 1970**

J.G. Ballard exhibits crashed cars in the IRAT gallery

**MAY 1970**

3 week season of late night underground films at Roundhouse includes premiere of John Chamberlain's 7-screen film *Wide Point*, produced by Alan Power (who also funded films by Dwoskin and Larcher)

**JUNE 1970**

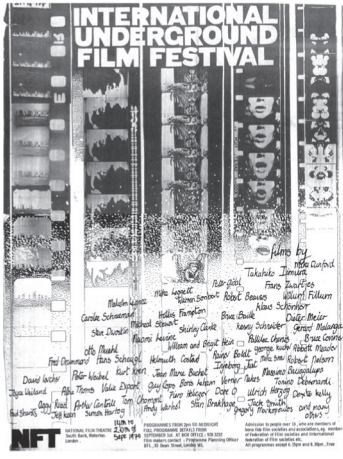
Mike Leggett and Ian Breakwell present expanded shows at IRAT inc. *Sheet* and *Unword*

**SUMMER 1970**

BFI tries to negotiate a take-over of Co-op distribution

**SEPTEMBER 1970**

Curtis, Field and Albie Thoms organise "1st International Underground Film Festival", a week of screenings at National Film Theatre which attracts a large number of international filmmakers inc. Kurt Kren, Peter Kubelka, Paul Sharits, Jonas Mekas, Wener Nekes, Tonino de Bernardi – programmes run from 10:30am to past midnight, exhausting and liberal survey of the international scene, approx 330 films in 100 hours – *Oh Sensibility* performance by Otto Muehl was banned following public outcry because of plans to slaughter a chicken on the NFT stage – expanded



events by Weibel & Export, Schneemann and Jeff Keen (whose show was invaded by 'Crazy Otto' because it wasn't provocative enough) – Afterimage No. 2 published by Simon Field and Peter Sainsbury to coincide with festival, devoted to articles on avant-garde film

**DECEMBER 1970**

Co-op decides to move out of Robert Street and find its own location, in anticipation of the impending IRAT closure

**JANUARY 1971**

Camden Council offers the abandoned Dairy at 13a Prince of Wales Crescent (building is partly occupied by Space subsidised artists' studios) – Co-op is given the entire first floor for a cinema, workshop and distribution facilities, its first dedicated base in its 4-year history – many new members becoming involved with Co-op at this time are Le Grice's former St. Martin's students – Paul Botham, David Crosswaite, John Du Cane, Gill Eatherley, Roger Hammond, Stuart Pound and William Raban join over the next year – considerable renovations needed at the Dairy take 9 months, shared labour adds to developing collective ideology

"American Underground Film Festival" at NFT organised by Ken Wlashin and James Lithgow – 7 programmes of mostly narrative experimental film

**26 MARCH 1971**

IRAT closed as the building is finally reclaimed by Camden Council – Curtis withdraws from Co-op organisation

**APRIL-AUGUST 1971**

Curtis and Field present 3 seasons titled "Developments of the New Cinema" at NFT – 22 screenings of mostly international work includes Dwoskin / Gidal programme and special evening of 2 shows devoted to "Double Projection Films from English Filmmakers", which were printed and processed at the Co-op

**MAY 1971**

"British Cinema 4: Independent Movie Makers" at NFT includes a programme of films by Gidal and *Mare's Tail* by Larcher

**JUNE 1971**

BFI offer Curtis £75 for 3 weeks work to

document underground cinema activity in Britain and later withdraw offer before he is able to decline – BFI appoints Mamoun Hassan as Production Department Supervisor (following Bruce Beresford's resignation), which marks a shift to funding longer (feature) film production

**AUGUST 1971**

Second LFMC distribution catalogue (A5, black with pink lettering) features around 400 films, by over 160 filmmakers – distribution is still being managed by Carla Liss and Barbara Schwartz during the transition period

**SEPTEMBER 1971**

Official opening of the Co-op at the Dairy – Peter Gidal (completing his postgraduate degree at the Royal College of Art) becomes responsible Dairy cinema programmes with support of Roger Hammond – David Crosswaite is main projectionist – discussion becomes an increasingly important part of screenings (which may have led to a greater emphasis on literary discourse) – under Gidal, the cinema holds weekly screenings and almost half of the slots are devoted to English-made films – through 1971-72, there is an increasing emphasis on new LFMC work – Co-op survives this period without any funding, all work is done by volunteers and cinema / distribution income covers overheads – no heating and no seating, audience sits on old mattresses on cinema floor

Carla Liss leaves, thereby severing the last tie to the initial Co-op group and to Jonas Mekas and New York – Gidal immediately insists that 50% of all future group bookings from the LFMC must be English films, a policy that leads to a greater international presence for Co-op works – prior to this, majority of European and domestic bookings had consisted of New American Cinema films – Lynne Tiltman manages distribution for a short time

New Co-op committee consists of Malcolm Le Grice (chairman, workshop organiser), Peter Gidal (treasurer, cinema organiser), Mike Dunford (secretary)

**OCTOBER 1971**

Opening of Co-op workshop at the Dairy, which is run by Le Grice and his former students – first film produced there is Mike Leggett's *Shepherd's Bush* – during this period widespread use of cheap German Orwo stock (much of it stolen from the BBC) accounts for mid-grey cast on many of the films

**1972**

John Du Cane and Peter Gidal write regularly for Time Out over next 3 years – their promotion of Co-op and related screenings at the NFT increase attendance and awareness of activities

**21 JANUARY 1972**

Time Out publishes a long article on the Co-op written by Irving Washington, comprising a history of the organisation and description of the current situation

**MAY-JUNE 1972**

Hamburg Filmschau includes 2 programmes of LFMC work

**2 JUNE 1972 & 7 JULY 1972**

"English Independent Cinema" at NFT, 4 programmes organised by Gidal includes work by 17 filmmakers, inc. Crosswaite, Dwoskin, Hammond, Schwartz and Schneemann, with two screen films by Botham, Drummond, Raban & Welsby

**15 JULY 1972**

*River Yar* (Raban and Welsby) shown at Co-op – a group of new and younger film-makers begin to work with and through the LFMC including David Parsons, Chris Welsby (Chelsea School of Art students) and Tim Bruce, Steve Farrer, Ian Kerr, Lis Rhodes, John Smith (North East London Polytechnic students of Guy Sherwin)

**27 AUGUST 1972**

Anthony McCall presents *Death Watch Beetle*, a fire event at North Weald Airfield

**LATE 1972**

Supplement to LFMC distribution catalogue No. 2 is published (A5, black cover, silver lettering) – lists approx 170 additional films that have been acquired over past year, majority having been produced by British filmmakers

**2-15 OCTOBER 1972**

"Survey of the Avant-Garde in Britain" curated by Rosetta Brooks at Gallery House, 50 Princes Gate – third part of the exhibition features film, video, installation and performance – work by many Co-op filmmakers inc. Du Cane, Dwoskin, Gidal, Leggett, McCall, Raban and others but not Crosswaite, Hammond and Le Grice – Gallery House is a temporary alternative exhibition space managed by Rosetta Brooks and Sigi Krauss between Spring 1972 and Summer 1973

**NOVEMBER 1972**

Annabel Nicolson travels to New York, Buffalo, Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal with several recent works by Co-op members – her memoir of the trip appears as "Canadian Fragments" in Art & Artists, April 1973

**DECEMBER 1972**

Special "Artists' Films" issue of Art & Artists demonstrates increasing attention to film from the fine arts sector – cover is *Horror Film 2* by Le Grice – contains articles by or about, David Dye, Simon Field, Peter Gidal, Malcolm Le Grice and Annabel Nicolson

**6 DECEMBER 1972**

Inspired by Art & Artists feature, William Raban sends an open letter to British institutions and arts centres to attract bookings, which leads to two more events at Gallery House and a Filmaktion week at Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool (June '73) – thus begins a period which sees the Co-op reaching out beyond their own facility

**21-30 DECEMBER 1972**

"A Small Festival of Events and Films" at Gallery House including expanded work from Le Grice, McCall and Schneemann

**DECEMBER 1972**

Le Grice begins to regularly contribute film column "Vision" to Studio International (which continues until 1977)

**1973**

Peter Gidal commences teaching at the Royal College of Arts – Anne Rees-Mogg establishes a film course at Chelsea School of Art

Camden '73 Festival includes "Festival of British Films – London Film-Makers Co-op Mixed Show" at The Place

**EARLY 1973**

Le Grice invited to join the BFI Production Board (FIPB) to advise on funding – Le Grice and Colin Young prepare a report on state of independent filmmaking in Britain – Screen invite Le Grice to commission and edit articles on experimental film for a future issue, but all are later rejected as they abandoned the planned special issue

**FEBRUARY 1973**

David Curtis joins the Arts Council Film & Video sub-committee (later appointed Assistant Film Officer in 1977)

**16-18 MARCH 1973**

3 days of Filmaktion events at Gallery House (core group plus David Crosswaite) inc. first performances of *Matrix & Gross Fog* (Le Grice), *Chair Installation* (Eatherley) and *2'45"* & *Diagonal* (Raban) – Filmaktion formed as loose collective primarily consisting of Eatherley, Le Grice, Nicolson and Raban who develop expanded work for group shows

**11 MAY 1973**

2 programmes of Co-op films shown at NFT, includes Botham, Crosswaite, Drummond, Du Cane, Hammond, Nicolson, Potter and Raban

**5-7 JUNE 1973**

3 programmes at the Tate Gallery under the title "Film as Structure" organised by Mick Hartney – 1st screening inc. Frampton, Kubelka, Sharits, Snow, other 2 nights are one-man shows presented by Gidal and Le Grice

**20-27 JUNE 1973**

Walker Art Gallery "Filmaktion" shows organised by William Raban and Anthea Hinds include Botham, Crosswaite, Dunford, Eatherley, Hammond, Le Grice, Nicolson, Pound and Raban – a week of screenings, expanded cinema and children's workshops – Raban shoots a time-lapse film of the event

**JULY 1973**

The Arts Council's "Committee of Enquiry into Films" (aka The Attenborough Report), begun in 1971, is finally published – leads to establishing the Art Film Division at the Arts Council and causes disruption at BFI – Mamoun Hassan resigns, replaced by Peter Sainsbury, who initiates a shift to funding of experimental film – Arts Council Artists' Film and Video Sub-Committee provides the main source of funding for Co-op filmmakers' who seek production grants during the mid 1970s

**3-16 SEPTEMBER 1973**

"Second Festival of Independent Avant-Garde Film" organised by Simon Field and David Curtis at NFT (films and ICA (expanded cinema) – Kurt Kren, Michael Snow, Joyce Wieland, Jonas Mekas, Ken Jacobs, Barry Gerson, Taka Iimura, Peter Kubelka, Valie Export, Peter Weibel and others travel from abroad – 105 filmmakers represented in programmes that run from morning to early morning – Filmaktion group present their last 4 shows as part of the ICA programme – Piero Heliczer runs a week long fringe festival in the Co-op cinema – Australian TV station ORF make a documentary of the festival

**OCTOBER 1973**

Tony Rayns' long review of the 2nd Avant-Garde Festival in Sight & Sound prompts Le Grice to write a letter under then pseudonym Mary Lou Grace, ironically praising the magazine for finally getting around to acknowledging 'real' film

John Du Cane publishes only issue of Light One, dedicated to the work of Michael Snow

**DECEMBER 1973**

Le Grice presents LFMC films in Stockholm and other Swedish cities

**LATE 1973**

Deke Dusinberre arrives in London – a former student of P. Adams Sitney and Annette Michelson, he intends to write his Master of Philosophy thesis on Structural Film at the University of London but changes his focus to the LFMC and English avant-garde – after completing his thesis at the Slade, Dusinberre becomes very involved in Co-op organisation in 1976

Police raids on Co-op building and William Raban's home under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, apparently looking for evidence of political activism and links to the I.R.A.

New LFMC distribution catalogue (A5, blue cover, white lettering) lists over 500 films and for the first time includes separate listings for expanded cinema performances

**JANUARY-APRIL 1974**

Barbara Meter and Peter Gidal collaborate to establish a Dutch touring circuit for Co-op filmmakers – Mike Dunford & Sally Potter, David Dye, Gill Eatherley, Tony Hill, Le Grice, Annabel Nicolson and William Raban each present shows in Amsterdam, Groningen and Utrecht

**MAY 1974**

Malcolm Le Grice takes Co-op films to screen at Millennium Film Workshop in New York and Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh



Intermission at McCall/Schneemann Co-op screening, 12 June 1974  
Photo by Alan Power

**JUNE 1974**

Anthony McCall presents *Fire Piece* at Oxford MoMA

Peter Gidal stops programming Co-op cinema – Annabel Nicolson takes over (assisted by Tony Hill) and temporarily closes the space to widen it in order to better accommodate the expanded works she intends to present – Gidal also stops writing for Time Out and is replaced by Tony Rayns – Marjory Botham moves into Nicolson's former position managing distribution

**AUGUST 1974**

7 programme retrospective of Steve Dwoskin at NFT

**AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1974**

24 Frames presents "The New Avant-Garde" series of 18 programmes at the NFT – showcases films they distribute and consists almost exclusively of American work (John Du Cane is one of few English filmmakers they represent) – at the present time they carry approx. 350 film and 50 videotapes – 24 Frames is a commercial distributor directed particularly towards TV sales

**9 NOVEMBER 1974**

First meeting of the Independent Filmmakers' Association at the RCA, whose intent is to lobby to promote independent film and video makers and encourage exchanges between theorists and practitioners – organising committee includes Dwoskin, Gidal, Hartog, Nick Hart-Williams, Marc Karlin, Le Grice, Laura Mulvey and James Scott – initiated in response to a BBC TV programme by Melvyn Bragg which misrepresents contemporary independent filmmaking practice in the UK

**25 DECEMBER 1974-4 JANUARY 1975**

"Expmrntl 5" festival at Knokke-Heist – performance and multi-projection work is excluded from competition so Malcolm Le Grice and several others refuse participation – video is included for the first time – *Still Life With Pear* (Mike Dunford), *Line Describing a Cone* (Anthony McCall) win awards, William Raban and Marilyn Halford also in competition – *Sign* (John Du Cane) is not selected though P. Adams Sitney protests for its inclusion

**11-18 FEBRUARY 1975**

"First Festival of Independent British Cinema" at the Arncliffe Gallery in Bristol is organised by ICW (Independent Cinema West), led by David Hopkins – many Co-op, political and independents filmmakers and students travel from all over the UK to attend – week of events include screenings, workshops, discussions and expanded work

**3-21 MARCH 1975**

"Avant-Garde British Landscape Films" organised by Deke Dusinberre at Tate Gallery, consists of 3 repeating daily programmes plus special evening events presented by William Raban, Chris Welsby, and Renny Croft – films by Jane Clark, Mike Duckworth and David Pearce also shown

**MARCH 1975**

Camden Council give 6 months notice to Co-op – announcing intention to reclaim the Dairy building for a housing project

**APRIL 1975**

Co-op apply for a grants from BFI Group Support Fund and Gulbenkian Foundation for workshop funding – BFI application is turned down but Peter Sainsbury offers to help them re-apply

**MAY 1975**

Le Grice presents programme of LFMC films at the Oberhausen International Short Film Festival

Arts Council "Video Art" show at Serpentine Gallery includes Ian Breakwell, Mike Dunford, David Hall, Mike Leggett, Will Milne, Lis Rhodes and Tony Sinden – at this time, many visual artists were turning to video

**JUNE 1975**

Peter Sainsbury meets with Co-op executive committee to discuss application – suggests restructuring Co-op by employing paid workers – amount of original request doubled and re-submitted

**8 JULY 1975**

Meeting at Camden Town Hall organised by Malcolm Le Grice includes representatives from LFMC, Camden Council, Greater London Arts Association, Gulbenkian Foundation, Space Studios and BFI – Camden Council suggest temporary 12 month relocation to former Piano Factory at 44a Fitzroy Road and Co-op accept the offer later that month – building again needs considerable renovation before it can be occupied

**AUGUST 1975**

BFI award Co-op first significant grant towards running costs

**SEPTEMBER 1975**

Le Grice and Gidal begin to withdraw from organisational activities (though they stay on the Co-op committee), after mutually deciding to step aside to allow new leaders to direct Co-op initiatives

**NOVEMBER 1975**

LFMC opens at the Piano Factory – Space Studios again occupy part of the building – Co-op uses BFI grant pay first salaries since Carla Liss left in '71 – projectors that had been used since IRAT in '69 are replaced – second hand optical

First conference of the Independent Filmmakers' Association (IFA), organised by Simon Hartog, Claire Johnston and Paul Willemen

**MAY-JUNE 1976**

Peter Gidal presents "Structural Films" season at NFT – 18 screenings of international work, with almost half devoted to Co-op members – Structural Film Anthology (edited by Peter Gidal) is published by BFI and includes revised version of Gidal's "Theory and Definition of Structural/Materialist Film", excerpt of Le Grice's forthcoming book *Abstract Film and Beyond*, and new or reprinted articles by and about filmmakers in the programme

**JUNE-JULY 1976**

Berlin Film Festival includes new work by Dwoskin, Le Grice and Raban

**AUGUST 1976**

Co-op runs out of distribution catalogues, so Deke Dusinberre asks BFI for grant to print new edition, but 2 applications are rejected (next catalogue is not published until early 1978)

Co-op executive committee at this time consists of Paul Botham, Mike Dunford, Peter Gidal, Malcolm Le Grice, Anne Rees-Mogg, Chris Welsby

Afterimage No. 6 special issue "Perspectives on English Independent Cinema" published by Simon Field – includes articles by or about Cinema Action, Noel Burch, Mike Dunford, Deke Dusinberre, Steve Dwoskin (by Paul Willemen), Jeff Keen (by Tony Rayns), on Gidal's Theory (Anne Cottringer), Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen

**6-9 AUGUST 1976**

Deke Dusinberre organises the "Derby Independent Film Awards" at Derby Playhouse – an attempt to stimulate film-making outside London – Fujit supplies film stock which is awarded to everyone included in programmes – work shown displays a wide range of artists, independent and political filmmaking

**30 AUGUST-3 SEPTEMBER 1976**

Edinburgh Film Festival presents "International Forum on the Avant-Garde" organised by Simon Field and Peter Wollen – a week of screenings, expanded cinema and discussions – Regina Cornwell, Hollis Frampton, Annette Michelson, Yvonne Rainer, Paul Sharits, Michael Snow and Joyce Wieland from USA, Chantal Akerman, Raymond Belloir and Birgit Hein from Europe and Ian Christie, Peter Gidal,

**1976**

Jonathan Harvey, director of Acme (an organisation which provides artists with access to abandoned houses on short-term leases), opens the Acme Gallery in Covent Garden – Marilyn Halford works there part time and helps organise film events including shows by Lis Rhodes & Ian Kerr, William Raban and Chris Welsby

**4-11 JANUARY 1976**

"Festival of Expanded Cinema" at ICA organised by Deke Dusinberre and Simon Field features 43 artists, both established and new filmmakers – includes works by Steve Farrer, Chris Garratt, Tony Hill, Derek Jarman, Anthony McCall, Annabel Nicolson, William Raban, Lis Rhodes & Ian Kerr, Guy Sherwin, Tony Sinden and many others – new filmmakers starting to come through include Robert Fearn, Rob Gawthrop and Roger Hewins

**14 JANUARY 1976**

Premiere of David Larcher's *Monkey's Birthday* at the Co-op – shot over several years around the world, the film makes extensive use of LFMC workshop equipment

**10-11 FEBRUARY 1976**

Weekend seminar in response to Wollen's "Two Avant-Gardes" article is organised at the Co-op by Deke Dusinberre – Le Grice delivers a paper on relationship between theory and practice in his films, while Gidal and Wollen expand on their Studio International articles – Tony Rayns chairs the discussion

**FEBRUARY-MARCH 1976**

"Arte Inglese Oggi" survey of British artists organised by British Council at Palazzo Reale, Milan – Richard Cork invites David Curtis to advise on film programme which includes Dunford, Dye, Gidal, Haselden, Keen, McCall, Nicolson, Raban, Rhodes, Sherwin and Welsby – several of these go to Italy to present expanded events

**MARCH 1976**

Co-op makes new application to the restructured BFI for running costs but by receives no subsidy at all for a 4 month period – BFI eventually makes interim payment to cover period until lease on Fitzroy Road expires – lease is subsequently extended to December '76 (Co-op eventually moves to Gloucester Avenue in Autumn 1977)

**MARCH-APRIL 1976**

Le Grice tours USA and Canada as first filmmaker to use British Council's "Touring Abroad" scheme which pays international travel for artists – Gidal, Leggett, Raban and Welsby also travel to USA in '76 – Peter Gidal begins his presentation at Museum of Modern Art in New York with the statement "I hate everything about America, and everything that America stands for."

**SPRING 1976**

David Hall proposes the formation of London Video Arts (later to become London Electronic Arts) as an organisation run by and for video artists and the distribution and exhibition of their work – other founder members include David Critchley, Tamara Krikorian, Stuart Marshall, Steve Partridge.

**MAY 1976**

Le Grice lectures on "Materiality in avant-garde film" at State University of New York, Buffalo, at invitation of Hollis Frampton and Paul Sharits

Marc Karlin from UK, among many others, take part in debates – Le Grice and McCall also present expanded cinema work at the Scottish Arts Council Gallery

**SEPTEMBER 1976**

Guy Sherwin writes another application to BFI for catalogue and relocation costs – William Raban resigns from Co-op workshop to teach at St. Martin's School of Art – Steve Farrer takes over the vacant position – Annabel Nicolson has a second period of running the Co-op cinema

**SEPTEMBER 1976**

LFMC begins to negotiate lease on space above a laundry at 42 Gloucester Avenue, which is owned by British Rail

**OCTOBER 1975**

Co-op again runs out of money – BFI agrees to pay basic running costs to end of year

**10 OCTOBER-11 NOVEMBER 1976**  
"LFMC First 10 Years" screening series and party are organised by Deke Dusinberre, with assistance from David Curtis – 4 mixed programmes of work illustrate the diversity of work made in and around the Co-op during its first decade

**NOVEMBER 1976**

Deke Dusinberre takes over cinema programming, Sherwin continues to run workshop (with Steve Farrer) and becomes acting Executive Representative – Co-op receives funds towards imminent relocation from Greater London Council and Gulbenkian Foundation

After a prolonged period of fundraising and renovation, the Other Cinema finally open their own theatre on Tottenham Street (it closed after a year, later reopening as the Scala)

**DECEMBER 1976**

Mary Pat Lee



## LOCATING THE LFMC

## THE FIRST DECADE IN CONTEXT

A.L. REES

Before the London Filmmaker's Co-operative was founded, only a few inspired individuals such as Margaret Tait, John Latham and Jeff Keen made experimental 16mm films in the UK during the early 1960s. Filmmaking was costly and time-consuming, and had little status as a serious art form. With limited technical means, these artists created their own kinds of lyric cinema, hand-painting the film as well as shooting live action. Their films were sadly little known at the time, when even Anthony Balch's films made in collaboration with William Burroughs had few outlets beyond the London art-house cinemas run by Balch himself. By the mid 1960s, however, interest in underground film grew across the counter culture. News of the US and European avant-gardes filtered through the underground press and the colour supplements, and film clubs began to show some of the films themselves.

The LFMC was begun by a small group of such enthusiasts who screened films at an avant-garde book shop in Charing Cross Road in 1965-66. Shortly afterwards, augmented by David Curtis' programmes of experimental film at the Drury Lane Arts Lab, it attracted more filmmakers and began to live up to its name. Stephen Dwoskin and Peter Gidal brought from New York an authentic whiff of Andy Warhol's Factory. Others, like Malcolm Le Grice, used found footage and raw projection as an extension of painting and sculpture. In 1968-69 the filmmakers were in control of the LFMC and more films were being made. When it moved north to Robert Street, on the fringe of Camden Town, in 1969, the LFMC was just one among a cluster of radical arts groups housed by the New Arts Lab, but it was already developing its own ethos as well as the facilities to shoot, process and edit films.

With the closure of the Arts Labs, the LFMC split off on its own. It moved successively through a series of former industrial spaces: 'the Dairy', 'the Piano Factory' and finally 'the Laundry', its home in Gloucester Avenue for twenty years. In the crucial years of 1971-75, it occupied austere studios in Prince of Wales Crescent. Each location stamped its shape on the films that were made there, from the meltdown of media in the 'expanded cinema' of the two Arts Labs, to a more purist climate at Fitzroy Road. En route, the LFMC effectively invented a new avant-garde genre, the British Structural/Materialist film. Its tough and demanding screening programme often featured the latest work, straight from the workshop.

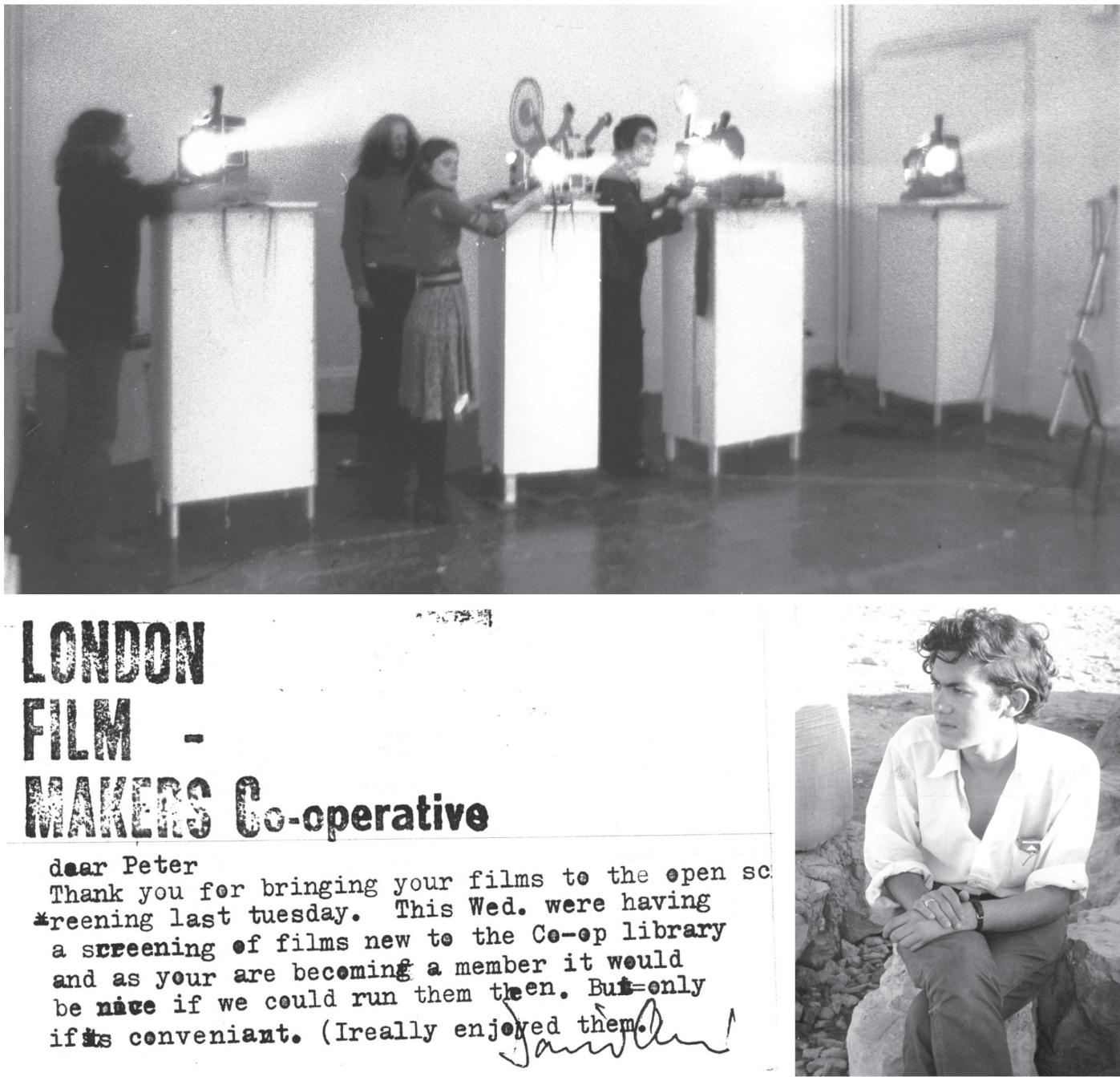
## DISTINGUISHED

LFMC films looked strikingly hand-made. Many films of the early seventies carry distinct traces of their own printing and processing, as in the sparkly film surface that mirrors the watery image of Mike Dunford's *Silver Surfer*. Annabel Nicolson pulled the film through the printer to make the colour tapestry of *Slides*, while successive reprinting of the film leader numerals in Guy Sherwin's *At The Academy* creates the illusion of bas-relief depth on the flat film surface. Le Grice emerged as a master-printer whose rich overlays of colour primaries for *Threshold* and *Berlin Horse* were similar to the loops used in his live-action three-projector performance in *Horror Film*. The notion of the direct print survived in later professional lab-printed work by Le Grice and others, and in the images of some who never or rarely used the LFMC workshop, including such different artists as David Larcher, Stephen Dwoskin and Chris Welsby. Larcher's dissolute, ripe and wandering colour, Dwoskin's photographically crisp tones and Welsby's insistently unmanipulated print, struck direct from the negative, all attest in distinct ways to the primacy of process in the LFMC.

These features distinguished the British avant-garde film from its American progenitors, whose films were rarely seen until the American critic P. Adams Sitney toured England with his New American Cinema Exposition in Spring 1968. Six months later, those same films returned to England when Carla Liss took up her post as the LFMC's first paid employee. With the American work now available in Britain, Liss was able to establish LFMC distribution as a more sustainable operation. Temperamentally, however, the LFMC felt closer to the similarly material-based experimentation in Germany, Austria and Poland. By contrast, the American underground, from Kenneth Anger through Maya Deren and Stan Brakhage, had favoured the personal film of inner consciousness, or 'psychodrama'. Warhol turned the genre on its head, revealing the subjective dream with the 'fixed stare' of the camera-eye. Subsequent films by Paul Sharits, Michael Snow, Hollis Frampton, Ken Jacobs and George Landow created a new 'structural' avant-garde that had an enduring influence on international filmmakers.

The New American Cinema had powerful advocates, including Sidney and Annette Michelson. In their persuasive and informed essays, the medium of experimental film was also a model of mind. For Michelson, the avant-garde captured new forms of appearance and awareness in a radically phenomenological cinema, as exemplified in the self-referential films of Michael Snow. The title of Sitney's magisterial book "Visionary Film" also stresses the American avant-garde's subjective moment and its capacity to evoke ideas. By contrast, the British avant-garde was empirical rather than metaphysical. Here, a film was not so much an illusion in the mind of the spectator, as a construction and projection thrown as an image on a screen.

This conviction emerged directly from the art school background of most of the LFMC filmmakers. Few of them were interested in feature films and they had no ambitions to enter the film or television industries. Film for them was primarily an art medium. Filmmaking had a series of acts or stages, each of which implied a new range of strategies, from shooting to printing and projecting. These could be



Top: Filmaktion group at Gallery House, 1973. Bottom left: Postcard from David Curtis to Peter Gidal, 1968. Bottom right: Peter Gidal, 1967.

combined to make a film or separated to make an event.

There was no real equivalent to the psychodrama at the LFMC. Psychodrama was a literary model and by contrast the LFMC sprang directly from the visual arts. The few exceptions are more playful than traumatic, and include Bruce Lacey's 'family' films and the childlike humour of the films and performances of Jeff Keen. After the short, intense lyricism of *Alone* and *Moment*, Stephen Dwoskin turned to extended portraits with a documentary touch. David Larcher's films are documentary-diaries or personal travelogues, loosely structured and of long duration. Such tactics disrupted, even as they elicit, the spectator's identification with the lure of the screen image. Peter Gidal, more extremely, rejected psychodrama along with all cinema which denies its own illusionism.

## PLASTIC

The next generation (which included William Raban, Chris Welsby and Annabel Nicolson) came straight to film making from the art school studio. The art schools were in a state of flux as waves of new art hit them throughout the 1960's, from abstract expressionism to Pop. At the same time they kept up a studio tradition which went back to William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement of the nineteenth century. This regime encouraged 'hands-on' direct experience and a respect for materials. As older art forms lost their appeal, under the impact of the mass media, some younger artists turned to film, video, sound and photography, which were largely free of high art associations, and modernist in their impersonal technology. Each was treated like any studio material, in the artisanal manner. Film, for example, could be hand-printed, stained, used as sculpture, or looped. It was literally a 'plastic medium', in the jargon of the Bauhaus, as well as a recording device. For this generation, led by Le Grice, the physical and as yet unexplored aspects of film were as important as its ability to make a representational image.

The aim was not just formal. By challenging the ways in which film representation appears, the viewer is made aware of the process by which the image is coded. The visual illusion is transformed into an experience of time. New structures explore and question the passive role of the cinema spectator, and look to a participatory rather than semi-hypnotic state of viewing. Each of these goals brought the film avant-garde close to the growing conceptual art movement in the late sixties and early seventies, characterised by 'lists, grids, catalogues, counting games and random procedures' (Peter Wollen). These ideas, at the margin of the arts, were an alternative to official culture, cinema language and its power to manipulate the audience. In an early film, *Castle One*, Le Grice used found footage of industrial labour and of politicians to show that film is a social object or construct. No image is neutral, in this view. A flashing light bulb in front of the screen also means that "the awareness of the audience is returned to the actual situation (watching a film) by reference to the bulb and the perceptual problem which its flashing creates" (Malcolm Le Grice).

Some of these and other deconstructive ideas entered the LFMC orbit from concept art. This diverse movement included many artists who made films, notably Ian Breakwell, David Dye and Tony Sinden. Most were born in the early 1940's, and were part of a generation that also included Le Grice, David Curtis, Derek Jarman and David Hall (the founder of British video art who was at this time a filmmaker and sculptor). For Dwoskin, Gidal and Larcher, film was their major medium, while others crossed media barriers into live performance and installation art. On the south coast, Jeff Keen, Jim Duke and Tony Sinden founded the Acme Generating Co. for expanded cinema and performances in 1967. In 1969-70, Le Grice and his students made 'pre-production' films, or what David Curtis called

"making films with projectors". This was in the spirit of the Arts Labs, which hosted the LFMC until 1971, and where all the art forms mingled promiscuously. When film went off on its own it lost much of that interaction, even as it developed a new independent ethos and produced, for the first time, a distinct group of LFMC filmmakers.

This new direction appeared in 1973 as 'Filmaktion', but was seeded three years earlier by tutor Malcolm Le Grice at St Martins School of Art, where his students included William Raban, Gill Eatherley, Annabel Nicolson and Marilyn Halford. Around these circulated others from the London art schools, such as John Du Cane, Chris Welsby, Jenny Okun and Anne Rees-Mogg. The purist, if not puritan, elements in the structural avant-garde were not their only feature, as time now shows. Seen today, their strict forms also have more playful ingredients. The 'room films' of the time are revealing and moving documents of typically spartan domestic space. They include John Du Cane's *Zoom Lapse*, in which a window and kitchen table are densely superimposed until they white-out; the deep colour of John Smith's *Leading Light*; and the glimpses of dailiness in David Hall's metrical *Phased Time*<sup>2</sup>. Peter Gidal's *Hall* is a canny example, drawing the viewer by selective framing to iconic photo pin-ups (Godard, the Rolling Stones) and to simulacra for the film itself as a projected sound-image event (a desk lamp, an intermittent door bell).

Marilyn Halford, in such films as *Footsteps* (a cat and mouse game with the camera as pursuer) and Gill Eatherley's light-play in *Hand Grenade*, also shared some of Annabel Nicolson's unique insights into transience. Their insistence on the fragility of the image was differently developed by the 3 and 4 screen films of Le Grice, Raban and others, in which the projectors are moved and overlapped in the screening, or in which the filmmaker interacts with the movie. Nicolson read by flickering match-light (*Precarious Vision*). Le Grice created colour-layers by moving his arms and body in front of three projector beams (*Horror Film*). Raban measured screen space by pacing out the film as it was projected (*Tape Measure*). Welsby constructed large scale installations of projectors in horizontal format (i.e. on their sides), to show panoramic shots of the sea (*Shore Line*).

## EXTREME

At one extreme, Welsby edited wholly 'in camera', using time-lapse and predetermined structure to reveal landscape as form and light. Le Grice similarly reviews landscape in such films as *Whitchurch Down* (*Duration*), but in a more intuitive and colourist way. Raban and Halford were turning to the urban scene in such films as *Time Stepping*, which alternates different axial views of an East London street, while East London itself was to become prime subject matter for another filmmaker, John Smith. From David Crosswaite's *Choke*, a two-screen film of Piccadilly Circus with rock soundtrack, to Paul Botham's *Eiffel Trifle*, the urban scene was part of the LFMC's image bank, although the constant appeal of landscape was also a hallmark. Here, the LFMC filmmakers linked back to the story of British art and to its fusion of the empirical gaze with the new scientific meteorology in the nineteenth century. Just as in that earlier meeting of Constable's eye with scientific topography, so in the 1970's a painterly understanding of light and form met up with the mechanical apparatus of camera and printer. The romantic vein in this tradition continues with Larcher's epic scale films, which celebrate the same interaction of the eye and the machine to expand sight.

In 1975, the critic Deke Dusinberre posited a distinct 'landscape tendency' in the British avant-garde, and he curated a series of screenings at the Tate to prove his point. He connected landscape film to the art of John Hilliard, Richard Long and Hamish Fulton, who had indeed emerged

from the same art college and concept art background as the LFMC. After almost a decade of process-led films, the image was back. In some ways this extended the field of what Le Grice and Gidal had called 'structural-materialism' in the early 1970s. Gidal coined this distinctive term for the direction taken by British filmmakers towards a politics of vision, or of film as a critique of optical sensation. But these two leading and gifted filmmakers were in some ways also pulling in different directions. Le Grice eventually embraced Frampton's 'spectre of narrative', and his vision has always been of the expansive sort. Gidal's modernism was of the other kind: paring down and minimizing the image, so that each frame resists the lure of unity and possession. His films are a running critique of their own viewing conditions, and internalise their pictorial codes, just as his mentor Samuel Beckett made loops of words and speeches to sideline the power of language to refer.

In the art school tradition of the LFMC filmmakers, language as such was treated warily. Dialogue and voice-over were associated with mainstream drama and documentary. They rarely appeared until late in the 1970s, notably in Lis Rhodes' invocation of a 'woman's voice' in *Light Reading*, (1979). Sound was disrupted and looped by Le Grice in *Castle One* and *Reign of the Vampire*, but much of the work made at the LFMC was characteristically visual and often silent. Anthony McCall and Annabel Nicolson explored primary projection, Marilyn Halford and Guy Sherwin combined projection with performance, Ian Kerr and Lis Rhodes made films in live projection by drawing and scraping on them as they passed through the lens. Most elaborate were Welsby's gallery installations for multi-screen seascape films with text, charts and documents of the location. Ron Haselden also created large-scale gallery works with looped projection and contrasts between still and moving images. The Festival of Expanded Cinema at the ICA in 1976 revealed a whole new generation that included Steve Farrer, Bob Fearnis, Chris Garratt, Rob Gawthrop, Nicky Hamlyn and many more.

## IMPULSE

A similar impulse to direct making lay behind the 'expanded' use of media in the early LFMC. The Bolex camera, which had been developed as a relatively lightweight news gathering instrument, was a versatile vision machine. Its engineering produced a new kind of cinema as filmmakers adapted its technology to their own devices. Springwound action, turret lenses and variable focus, rewind, overlaps, timed dissolves, autoaction, removing the lens, swinging the camera in the air and single framing appeared in many films. Such options for film vision, set free from the human-centred eye, were taken up by LFMC filmmakers in films like *Lensless*, *Zoom Lapse*, *Knee High*, *Clockwise* (*Accept No Substitute*), *Shepherd's Bush*, *River Yar*, *Colour Separation*, *Focus* and *Room Film*. The literalness of these titles is striking. They name the process by which the film was made, or the location where it was shot. The content of the film can be deduced from its self-descriptive title, an idea also found in modernist painting and music.

The films made at the LFMC were not the whole story. It took part in international festivals in London (1970 and 1973) and abroad, while Peter Gidal and John Du Cane publicised the LFMC and related National Film Theatre screenings from 1972-75 with regular reviews in Time Out. From the middle to late seventies the LFMC attracted the cautious interest of Screen, then the leading UK journal of film theory. Gidal and Le Grice were persuasive and sophisticated voices in intellectual debate and in raising funds from the Arts Council and the British Film Institute. Through the Independent Filmmakers' Association, founded in 1974 as a forum for filmmakers and theorists, the LFMC was part of a chain of campaigning workshops like the Berwick Street Collective (founded 1970), Cinema Action (founded 1968), Four Corners

(founded 1973) and the Film Work Group (founded 1974). These and other factions also met and tangled at the RCA Film School, where Gidal and Dwoskin both taught from 1973, along with theorists Noel Burch and Jorge Dana. Different versions of film semiotics, experimentation and politics were hammered out. Gidal's citation of Brecht 'against representation' was countered by the Brechtian 'alienation effect' in the drama films of Straub-Huillet. Both were critical of 'visual pleasure' in the conventional sense, but where Gidal turned to fragmentation and enigma, the political groups adopted the long-take and spoken text to disengage the viewer from the film spectacle.

## VISUAL

The more visual and celebratory side of the LFMC, including Le Grice's lyrical colour films, eventually had an effect on the commercial world, which most of its members would have rejected had they known of it. This was its impact, both direct and oblique, on TV advertising and rock videos, whose language of rapid cut-up is largely imitated from the avant-garde, up to the present day. David Sylvester was one of the rare art critics who saw (and approved) this way of speaking the modernist message. For television, plagiarism is necessary. Similarly, LFMC expanded cinema long precedes the current enthusiasm for installation and projection art, but is rarely acknowledged. In part, this is due to a split between filmmakers and other artists which still persists. The LFMC itself had only the loosest alliance with video makers and other media artists. Consequently, London Video Arts (later London Electronic Arts) was founded in 1976 as a separate group. Video had been profiled at the Serpentine Gallery in 1975, and then at the Tate in 1976. It was already developing distinct concerns of its own, from real-time viewing to television 'interventions' and gallery space.

Twenty years later, the LFMC and LEA finally merged in the Lux Centre. The Lux closed after five years in 2001, but the film collection and key workshop facilities remain open as a holding operation. In this sense, with several hundred members as well as an extensive distribution archive of classic and new work, the LFMC has not yet vanished. Its history was made up of such crises. Commenting on the period of the structural film in the early 1970's, David Curtis wrote, "for me its rigour is inextricable from the physical deprivation of the Prince of Wales Crescent building". At an all time financial low, he adds, the LFMC was only held together by Gidal's and Le Grice's "will to survive". It was under these conditions that genuinely new ideas emerged.

From LFMC experimentation sprang a kind of filmmaking which was related to but finally distinct from the contemporary films of Gilbert and George, Gordon Matta-Clark and Marcel Broodthaers, to take a random sample of artists. In their cases, film extended or documented their practice in other media, as it still does for artists from Bruce Nauman to Tacita Dean. The LFMC - in the spirit of Deren and Brakhage as it happens - was committed to film as an independent art form. The conditions of making and projecting the film were taken to be internal aspects of the art form, to be investigated as its major content. Here it led film way beyond its key aspects as a document or a record, let alone a narrative. The LFMC had little interest in the mainstream cinema, except perhaps to oppose it. Most of its rigour is in a straight line from Lumière and Méliès, bypassing the narrative cinema. It opened the gates for all kinds of experimental filmmaking that explode the classic rules of cinema. This was far from the intention at the time, but from the mid-1960's the LFMC was laying out the basic map we all still use in time-based media. New roles were explored for maker, for viewer and for the space - the viewing space, be it cinema or installation, live performance or film projection - which stands between them.

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## LONDON FILM-MAKERS' CO-OPERATIVE

## CONSTITUTION, 1976

## I. Principles

A. The London Film-Makers' Co-operative (hereafter referred to as the Co-op) is a voluntary organisation of film-makers dedicated to the production, distribution, and screening of independent, non-commercial films. The Co-op encourages the growth of a dynamic independent film culture in Great Britain. The Co-op is a non-profit organisation; any surplus income shall be reinvested in Co-op activities and shall not be distributed among its members.

## II. Membership

A. Membership in the Co-op is open to any interested individual upon receipt of a film for the library. Anyone becomes a member of the Co-op and is entitled to use the Co-op's production/workshop facilities subject to approval by the Committee or its delegate (section III), upon payment of £5 per annum.

B. Cinema screenings are open to Co-op members and the public, upon payment of a fee of £1 per annum.

C. General Meetings of the membership shall be held at least twice per year; UK members shall be given at least 14 days notice of General Meetings by the Secretary. Extraordinary Meetings may be called by the Committee on the basis of a request by 3 members to the Committee. 25 members, or 30 of the London-based membership, constitutes a quorum for a General or Extraordinary Meeting.

D. The membership is responsible for Co-op policy and may amend articles in sections II, III, IV by a 2/3 majority; with the exception of membership fees, which may be altered by a simple majority.

E. The Co-op shall be dissolved only by a 9/10 majority at an Extraordinary Meeting called for that purpose. Any assets at the time of dissolution shall be devoted to projects with goals similar to those of the Co-op (section I). At such meetings, only foreign members can have a postal vote.

## III. Administration

A. Co-op policy and programmes shall be administered by a Committee accountable to the membership at General and Extraordinary meetings.

B. The Committee shall be elected annually from the membership; it shall consist of at least five members, including a Chairperson, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. General membership only can appoint and dismiss staff.

C. The Committee shall oversee the daily operation of the production/workshop facilities, the distribution library, and the screening programme.

D. The Treasurer shall present an audited statement of all Co-op accounts to a General meeting not less than once per year.

E. Minutes of all Committee meetings shall be available from the Co-op offices to any member upon request.

## IV. Regulations

A. All members complying with section II A shall have access to the production/workshop facilities as administered by the Committee, or its delegate(s).

B. Films in the Co-op library shall be made available for rental at rates determined by the film-maker; all prints shall be provided by the film-maker, who retains complete ownership of the print. Films may be withdrawn from the library at any time, subject to prior booking arrangements made through the Co-op.

C. Film-makers shall receive 70% of all rental fees on each of their films; the Co-op shall retain 30% of rental fees to cover distribution costs. Payments will be made to film-makers on a semi-annual basis, unless otherwise requested.

D. The Committee shall endeavour to keep distribution lists up to date through supplements or re-issue of the distribution catalogue.

## LETTERS

Dear Sir

I am a basket stacker at the Basingstoke Co-operative Supermarket. Four times a year, one of my duties is to collect the un-opened copies of SIGHT AND SOUND from all the other sales girls. We send these to under-developed countries for use as toilet tissue (although the paper is not really absorbent enough, it does help to ease our consciences a little).

This quarter there was not a single copy left in the box on delivery day. I only understood why when Polly Griddle (on check-out) ran up to me excitedly with her little virgin pages bared for the first time in many years: "They have something about real films this time," she said.

Of course I did not believe her at first, but there it was, an article (four full pages) on the Independent Avant-Garde Festival by Tony Rainbow. Yes! even written by someone who knows about it. You can imagine the ecstasy that filled our shop for at least an hour or two. However we mellowed a little when we realised what depravation would be caused in South America if SIGHT AND SOUND were to make a habit of paying attention to this kind of cinema.

Yours faithfully,

MARY LOU GRACE

## TEN YEARS OF BRITISH AVANT-GARDE FILM

## A DOCUMENTARY

Taking its cue from the 2002 retrospective programme of British avant-garde film 1966-1976, SHOOT SHOOT SHOOT relates the story of the first decade of the London Film-makers' Co-op. Key participants in the closely intertwined stories of the Co-op and British experimental film in these years reflect on the successes (and failures) of a radical project to imagine a new kind of cinema: new ways of distributing work, new forms of exhibition and, crucially, new kinds of images and sounds. Participants include Stephen Dwoskin, David Dye, Gill Eatherley, Peter Gidal, Malcolm Le Grice, Annabel Nicolson, William Raban and Guy Sherwin; the film's consultant is David Curtis. Clips of many of the key films, performances and installations are also featured.

SHOOT SHOOT SHOOT is available for retail or institutional sale or hire from Louise Machin at Illuminations. Contact louise@illumination.co.uk or +44 20 7288 8409; more details at www.illumination.co.uk.

## BRITISH ARTISTS' FILM &amp; VIDEO STUDY COLLECTION AT CENTRAL SAINT MARTINS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

This new resource for scholars and curators is funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Board, and is part of the Centre for British Film and Television Studies, directed by Professor Laura Mulvey of Birkbeck. The collection has two forms; a physical collection of tapes, still images and paper documentation, and an on-line database giving details of over 4,000 works by British artists 1920-2000.

The collection at Central St Martins holds over 600 VHS tapes - containing over 1,500 individual works. These include the Arts Council of England's reference collection of work it funded, exhibition compilations from the Film & Video Umbrella, the former LEA and other organisations, off-air recordings and tapes donated by individual artists. The paper documentation includes over 500 artist files (writings by and about the artist) and collections of fliers and programme notes, film stills and posters. The research team is: Professor Malcolm Le Grice / David Curtis / Michael Mazière / Steven Ball.

The database of artists and works will be online at www.pads.ahds.ac.uk from June 2002. To book study time contact d.curtis@csm.linst.ac.uk Further information from the CSM site www.research.linst.ac.uk/filmcentre/

British Artists' Film & Video Study Collection, Room 203, Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, Southampton Row, London WC1B 4AP  
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## LUX

LUX is a new organisation formed to continue the work of its predecessors: The London Filmmakers Co-op, London Electronic Arts/London Video Access and The Lux Centre.

Based around a unique collection of artists' film and video work LUX seeks to promote and support contemporary and historical artists' moving image work as well as the artists that make it through distribution, exhibition, publishing and research.

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## SHOOT SHOOT SHOOT

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Shoot Shoot Shoot website and online research facility at www.lfmc.org

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