

other on motion picture film. When 35mm film is projected, it may be seated in the projector's gate in such a way as to reveal, rather than hide, the frame line. This results in an image made of parts of two frames. This artifact is utilized in some shots as an editing device, with the image moving up screen or down screen while continuing to observe temporal continuity. / It is also an anxious farewell to the motion picture technology of the twentieth century: celluloid, sprocket holes, silver, dyes, frame lines, dust, and abrasions. It is a hand-made film, at every step in its gathering, ordering, and composition.

Descriptions Courtesy of Pat O'Neill / Funded by the English Department and Film and Media Studies Program at Amherst College / Special Thanks to Kate McCabe

X (Unknown Quantity) Presents / Troubling the Image / Four Films by Pat O'Neill / Wednesday October 7th / 7:30pm / Amherst Cinema / 28 Amity St. / Amherst, MA 01002 / Curated by Josh Guilford / TRT ca. 72 min

***Coreopsis* (1998) 35mm, color, silent, 7.5 min**

Coreopsis was made by scratching with a scribe on black leader. The leader, which was salvaged from 35mm color print rolls, produces the characteristic yellow and green coloration when the emulsion is disturbed. I keep a roll of this leader around for times when I can't seem to get anything else done. I pull out the leader and scribe and begin drawing. There are no frame lines, but every fourth sprocket hole equals one frame, and soon the interval becomes instinctive. Or you forget about it and the image floats up or down depending on the interval you have chosen. The project is simple enough to be done under odd circumstances, such as in an airplane, on the phone, or in a pup tent. / Having made a length of drawing, I go to the optical printer and copy it on color camera stock. A score is written which tells the printer to copy frames following a pattern of repetition and deletion. The pattern changes from section to section, but all have in common a changing repetition: For instance, five frames are copied, then the projector is rewound for four frames, then five frames copied, resulting in a partial repetition which gradually progresses through the material. Thus a relatively short length of original material produces a much longer projection time, and emphasizes particular changes between frames by repeating them. / The film was not so much intended as it was allowed to happen. One tends to make the same kind of mark over and over again, like handwriting. A recognizable repertory of gestures emerges, within the special limits imposed by the material, the tool, the body's position and the brain chemistry of the day. Some days produce hundreds of short jabs, others long loopy lines. Eventually certain marks are curated out. Usually they are the ones that strive too hard to "be" something. / There is a gap, perceptually, between film that has taken an image through a lens, photographically, and one that is affected by some other kind of force, mechanical, chemical, or manual. It is nearly impossible to mistake one for the other, but when an image on the screen does somehow make that bridge, does seem to be made by an unknown agent, that this project gets interesting. / The notion of a handmade film is, in a sense, impossible: the material we begin with is factory made, and whatever we do to it must abide by the mechanical rules of the projector. And then we transfer the result to an electronic medium which alters it once again to its own needs. We are shoppers in the second-hand store of technology, adapting illusion machines to remind one another of the simplicity of experience itself. / The *Coreopsis* is a flower- a little bush, an annual, with prolific yellow daisy-like blossoms. Which attract, as if from nowhere, a following of small white butterflies. Among the small leftovers from her eighty-nine years, my mother had tucked away a brown paper envelope with the

words "Helen's Coreopsis, 1935." She had visited her sister in Nebraska that year. I planted the seeds and quite a few came up. That same year, by chance I made this small yellow film.

***Trouble in the Image* (1996) 35mm, color, sound, 38 min**

Trouble in the Image is collection of visual and auditory ideas, many of which seem to radiate a sense of internal conflict, irony and rage. The film has no continuing characters, but is made up of dozens of performances dislodged from other contexts. These are often relocated into contemporary industrial landscapes, or interrupted by the chopping, shredding, or flattening of special-effects technology turned against itself. All is not lost, however. The reward is to be found in immersion within a space of complex and intricate formal relationships, where subject matter is almost irrelevant. The film was accumulated over a seventeen-year period by a filmmaker who continues to insist that film can be an art form independent of storytelling.

***Squirtgun/Stepprint* (1998) 35mm, b&w, silent, 3.5 min**

Squirtgun/Stepprint was about using extremely limited means to make a motion picture with a single subject, developer splattering randomly on the surface of 35mm monochromatic print stock. / Strips of Eastman 5302 were suspended from a branch, outdoors, on a sunny day. A squirt-gun was loaded with Dektol developer (usually used for processing paper prints in a darkroom) The gun operator aims at the strips and pulls off a single blast, intending to make marks, which turn dark immediately. The developer responds to gravity, running lengthwise down the strip. / Strips are taken into the darkroom and placed in a fixer bath until all unaffected emulsion is cleared from the film, which is then washed and dried. We now have black marks on clear film. The next step is done using an optical printer to duplicate the strips onto raw stock (Eastman 5244) with the intent of re-arranging the sequencer of the frames. This rearrangement usually, but not always, takes the form of a progressive loop. That is, we duplicate frames (for example) 1,2,3,4,5,6, and then return to frame 2,3,4,5,6,7, and then frames 3,4,5,6,7,8 and so forth, so that the "action" shows both repetition and change. All the parameters of the rephotography may be altered, and improvisation sometimes occurs. This might be represented as a graph, but I did not do so. A number of sequences were made this way and edited together. / There are millions of hand-drawn, hand dryad filmic objects out there. Initial stages of production are easy and immediately satisfactory, to a point. I believe it is the next stage of production, that is, recombination and alteration, that hold the most interest. / This four minute film and one other (Coreopsis, also 1998) are the only two hand-made silent works I have finished to date. Others, particularly "Trouble in the Image" use marking on exposed raw stock to interrupt another, unrelated image. This combining also took place in an optical printer.

***Horizontal Boundaries* (2008) 35mm, color, sound, 23 min**

Although *Horizontal Boundaries* could be described as a landscape film, it is actually "about" visual experience- a particular kind of experience in which the subject is dislocated, interrupted, and juxtaposed in a way which is, by turns, ordered and random. Thus it is a series of experiments in temporal, spatial, and auditory composition. / The film was shot in and around Los Angeles with the intent to produce "synthetic" depictions of locations made up of multiple and disparate parts. One need not (in fact may not) believe that these sites are real, but instead may accumulate an impression of a place which exists only in a set of disparate details. By so doing, the filmmaker sets out the conditions of instability, pointing to a confluence of forces of nature and society which drive a region into convulsive and irrational change. / The title *Horizontal Boundaries* refers to the divisions between individual frames arranged one above the