SCRIPTED

A curated selection of film and video artworks to officially launchthe Electronic Media Component of the Griffith University Art Collection.

Curated by Beth Jackson, Griffith Artworks.

A Fringe Festival Event: 4th June, 1997

These works, spanning some thirty-five years provide a brief overview of Australian experimental film and video practice. Through the time-based medium these works collectively explore the role of narrative or scripting, and the consequent formation of the viewing subject, as we are interpolated within and without these visual texts. All works have been acquired with the assistance of the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council.

PROGRAM

ARF ARF   *Thread of Voice* **1993**
                                                                                         16mm film 18' 00"

Thread of Voice is a union of sound poetry, performance, and film. The name of the group "Arf Arf" cleverly plays on the word "art", making it into a nonsense word, similar to "Dada", and highlights the humorous and subversive elements of their work. The group mention Kurt Schwitters and Raoul Hausmann (both German dadaists) as influences for their work. Frank Lovec remarks, "We're interested in everything that can be fun or can be played with - the elements of flip books and animation - although we also take it very seriously." The group's interest is in pure sound, though they often try to introduce a literary element to their work, telling stories which are broken up by using different voices, body postures, gesticulations, and dance. *Thread of Voice* combines all these elements, using documentary footage from their live performances, improvised action, and handwritten film.

Niamh LINES   *Talk Show* **1994**
                                                                                         video 3'00"

Niamh Lines is a graduate from Media Production at Griffith University. *Talk Show* was produced during her honours year and received two awards as well as several major screenings. It is a quirky and humorous work which adeptly combines a straightforward, documentary style of video making (almost home video), with computer technology effects. This stylistic juxtaposition is also mirrored in the subject of the work which combines an everyday conversation (two young people discussing a movie) with their attempts to grapple with "theory", and theoretical methods of interpreting the film they've seen. The "swirly" pattern created by the computer technology has a seventies feel to it, as does the black and white "throw-away" style of filmmaking. In this way contemporary technologies are not merely pursued as a subject in themselves, nor for creating a nineties aesthetic.   Rather, here they are used, in a quirky and humorous way, as tools for interpreting the past: past aesthetics, film clichés, character and gender stereotypes, and so on.

Janet MEREWETHER
A Slice of Life or the Crumbs of Existence 1993-4
16mm film 15'00"

A Slice of Life or the Crumbs of Existence is a diaristic and intimate work featuring the "hand-made" qualities of animation and the artist's own personal voice over. The work explores the equation between art and life in simplicity and without pretension. The rich and subtle tones of black and white at once reference both artistic and documentary concerns, filtering the footage through the artist's personal viewpoint and feelings. The artist takes us through her diary of daily journeys, asking us to filmmake with her and share the world through her eyes.

Frank OSVATH
Homage to John Cage 1993
SVHS video 6'30"

Frank Osvath's *Homage to John Cage* initially resembles the electrical impulses of a medical monitor. Set against a blank screen of darkness, Osvath's horizontal flat lines initiate a process of eventual screen chaos and disparity. The process under which this manipulation occurs is both hypnotic and subliminal, suggesting some strong affiliations with the surrealist and early postmodernist explorations into automatic writing and chance encounters. Having exhausted their parallel consistency, these dual light impulses eventually disperse and take on a chaotic and unpredictable screen presence. The whole process soon accelerates, generating an atonal hybrid of voice/sound distortion. Initially this audible encounter is unintelligible, but eventually reveals the poem "I have nothing to say... and I am saying it". This metamorphosis from apparent chaos to order is focal to the work, and relates closely to the structures and processes of language and meaning. The work's title refers explicitly to the inclusion of artist John Cage's poem, and to Cage's early conceptual work which deals with the relationships between sounds, language, and meaning. The way in which Osvath utilises technological sources can also be seen as an expansion of Cage's preoccupation with automated and random occurrences.

Martina PALOMBI
Projection 1993
shot on video 8, completed on VHS 5'00"

Martina Palombi's *Projection* features a very straight forward (or "straight") use of video (that is, real-time documentation with no camera effects or editing), to record a "queer" performance. A young man in a red satin dress and make-up sings a Valentine song to a sound track played on record. The "hiss" of the record needle and turn-table and the grainy quality of sound are audible "low-tech" sounds which partner the low-tech video imagery. The drag-queen style performance is thereby robbed of any theatricality or artificiality (as well as its parodic humour) and is instead given a heightened realism, naturalism, and intimacy. Because of this the performance becomes incredibly poignant. The title, *Projection*, resonates with multiple meanings: the video projection of an image, voice projection in performance, and also the psychological projection of an imagined self.

Michelle MAHRER; choreographed
and performed by **GRAVITY FEED**
(Denis BEAUBOIS, Ari EHRLICH,
ALAN SCHACHER); sound by **Rik RUE**

D-VOID 1995
SP Betacam video 3'00"

Michelle Mahrer's *D-VOID* features a performance work by Gravity Feed and a sound track by one of Australia's leading experimental composers Rik Rue. The work is heavily influenced by the absurdist works of the European Dadaists and Surrealists. The "void" in which the performance takes place seems to be the virtual space of the television or computer monitor, clinically clean and empty. In this anti-environment, men in business suits bounce around operating without reason or logic or even the "natural" forces of gravity. The work mocks the technological achievements of this century, made in the name of so-called "progress" and "civilisation".

INTERVAL

Stephen DUKE   *Soul Road Poem* 1993
                                                                      video 7'00"

Soul Road Poem is a diaristic work which follows a journey made by the artist between Sydney and Darwin in 1992. The work is structured using twelve main images which appear as small "chips". These "chips" were originally actual artworks, small collages of found materials, made at various points on the journey. Photographs of these works were digitally scanned and incorporated into the video. The artist states: "The first stage of this work began as a study of the process of 'categorisation', of naming the world. I constructed a visual/elemental computer consisting of an environment mother-board, with five chips that could be interchanged in its centre. Each chip is a visual algorithm that runs a different program when installed in the mother-board. They are each a map representing a different level or focus for perceiving the world."

Jennifer LEGGETT   *E* 1994
                                                  shot on super 8, completed on video 9'00"

Jennifer Leggett's *E* combines hand-drawn animations with electronic sound composition of Robert Zocchi, and abstract sequences of text with simple, realist images of a room's interior. The play on non-sensical text with the repetitive images of the room interior (the glowing bulb, the rotating fan), creates a trance-like effect. The work shows the influences of Surrealism and Dada. *E* is a visual poem which, through the medium of video, performs over time, exploring the permutations of linguistic and visual symbols. The text is not readable, as the sound is not tuneful, and the images situate the work in a no-time and no-place. The viewer, entranced, is asked to empty their head of everything and allow *E* to enter the mind through the liminal doors to the unconscious.

RANDELLI (Robert RANDALL   *Love me, Buy me, Envy me.* from *Video as Art* 1980
and Frank BENDINELLI)   VHS video 5'00"

From the series *Video as art*, Randelli's *Love me, buy me, envy me* is a seductive pastiche of graphics, images, and dialogue. In this video montage a stamped dialogue dominates the screen diagonally. It reads: "PUBLICITY CREATES THE DREAMS OF OUR CULTURE". Surrounding this "epicentre" is a cropped and overtly personal encounter with a mouth, which is seen sensuously devouring a sandwich, then a chocolate frog. Below this less-than-subtle metaphor for "consumption", are three individual mouths which speak separately "Buy Me", "Love Me", and "Envy Me". Complementing the abundance of mouths is a pair of eyes which stare blankly into space as if mesmerised by a television or some other transcendent fantasy. Although the piece comments rather explicitly on the powers of advertising on culture, the work is predominantly interactive unto itself, evoking its status as "Art".

Warwick THORNTON   *Payback* 1996
                                                                          film 10'00"

Warwick Thornton's *Payback* is a surreal and haunting film of an Aboriginal man's release from prison custody. The architecture of the prison creates a stark, psychological space of oppression, while the traditional singing from an Aboriginal past resounds through this space, saturating it with a song line. The weight of institutional apparatus and social and cultural heritage falls heavily, invisibly, and violently upon the silent figure of the man. His burden of shame becomes food for the cameras which surround and consume him. An elder and an ambulance drive him away, awaiting the dealing out of an unknown fate. The work explores complex issues in strong symbolic terms without recourse to sentimentality or romanticisation.

Geoff WEARY   *Objects for the blind* 1994
                                                                       VHS video 6'00"

Objects for the blind, like many of Weary's works, deals with the construction of the individual written into history and the physicality of knowledge through bodily experience. The use of slow-motion, lush colouration, nakedness, crushed velvet, and the feeling finger-tips, creates an overwhelming sensuality and physicality. However the work remains 'trapped' in the video medium, and the audience is able only to watch. There is no sound track for the work so that where the blind are trapped in a world of physicality and aural sensations, here the audience, in reverse, are trapped within a visual experience, unable to feel or hear. The repeated super-imposition of the two naked bodies creates an intense intimacy while also suggesting an incommensurability (between male and female, or self and other). The blank pages of the book upon which the two lovers trace the single horizon line over and over, suggests a ceaseless effort to communicate.

Robyn WEBSTER

Korper 1995
shot on Super 8 and SVHS 6'00"

Robyn Webster's *Korper* is a seductive work which traces surfaces of skin and other intimate textures relating to the body. The sound-track is also resonant with bodily qualities such as breathing. The building up and paring away of layers creates a body-poetry, as painful and pleasurable as memory itself. *Korper* explores the fashioning of identity, the physical embodiment of social and emotional practices, the navigation of desire. Webster takes us beyond the removed voyeurism of cinematic realism into the sensate realm of the corporeal.

Albie THOMS

David Perry 1968
16mm film 4'00"

This four minute film was made as tribute to the filmmaker David Perry who collaborated with Albie Thoms on ten films from 1965-69, as part of Ubu Films. The film, which includes a voice-over by David Perry is handmade, and was created by combining incised and handcoloured opaque film stock with film fragments found on the cutting-room floor, to create a layered effect. The vibrating lines and colours are in strange disjunction with the apparently unrelated images which appear; a woman's eyes heavy with mascara, a couple embracing, a ballroom scene reminiscent of an old Hollywood film, all of which start to function as excerpts from the films Perry is speaking about in the voice-over, although they are quite removed from his own practice. This absurd pairing is part of Thoms' experimental strategy. The soundtrack comes from the actual noises made in the production of the film, overlaid with the voice of David Perry speaking about his work. In the final frames of the film the coloured distortion dissolves to reveal Perry behind the camera in the role of filmmaker. *David Perry* celebrates the absurd and the experimental in an aesthetics of anarchy.
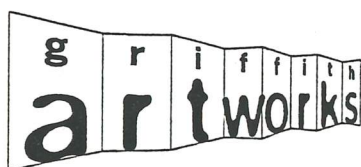
Leigh HOBBA

Why be an artist 1994
video 9'00"

This work features long-standing artist and arts administrator Noel Sheridan giving a "sermon" on why one should or should not be an artist. His humorous and often scathing remarks leave few stones unturned - bureaucrats, romantics, political activists, the gifted and talented, and many other positions which use the term "Art" for their own ends and justifications. As one of the "father figures" of contemporary art practice, Noel Sheridan's cynicism both attests and belies his years of supporting emerging practitioners and experimental artforms. Leigh Hobba's documentation of Sheridan establishes the work as a performance piece in its own right.

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
QUEENSLAND COLLEGE OF ART

Arts for Australians
Australia Council

PRO-CAM
Broadcast Video Facilities