VIDEO GUIDE

ART ON FILM
FILM ON ART

THE PROGRAM
FOR ART ON FILM

A JOINT VENTURE OF
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
& THE J. PAUL GETTY TRUST

The Program for Art on Film was a joint venture of The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the J. Paul Getty Trust. It was established in 1984 to foster new ways of thinking about the relationship between art and moving-image media. The Program for Art on Film sought to enhance and broaden public understanding and enjoyment of the visual arts through the media of film, television, and video. In addition to the Production Laboratory, which generated the productions described in this guide, the Program compiled the Art on Screen Database, and developed publications based on its research. The Program remained active through 1996.

The Art on Screen Database is a critical inventory of bibliographic information about international film and video productions on the visual arts, including more than 26,000 entries from seventy-one countries. Over one third of the entries include some critical data: citations of published reviews, festival awards and honors, or evaluations by panels of experts in art history, art education, film, and television.

The Program for Art on Film archives are now housed at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles. The Art on Screen Database can be searched on the Getty website: http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/institutional_archives/art_on_screen/index.html

For more information on the archives and database, please contact:

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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION LABORATORY
What the Program Sought To Do

Between 1987 and 1990, the Program for Art on Film commissioned fifteen short films and videos through its Production Laboratory, with Joan Shigekawa as program executive. The Lab was conceived as an arena for inquiry and experimentation – a means of exploring and expanding the cinematic vocabulary of films on art. Each production was designed as an extended collaboration between a filmmaker and an art expert and was intended to explore the issues of collaboration in content-driven filmmaking, seeking new approaches that might influence future films on art. Because research for the Art on Film Database indicated that the vast majority of films on art feature twentieth-century Western works, the Production Lab focused on art made before 1900.

ART ON FILM/FILM ON ART presents the results of the Production Laboratory in their original context: as experiments. Film subjects range from the Japanese concept of space and time to Egypto-Roman funerary portraits, and they illustrate a broad variety of approaches and interpretations. The series was made with two audiences in mind: those individuals and organizations interested in embarking on the adventure of making a film about art; and those individuals and organizations – programmers, teachers, broadcasters – who use film to reach a wider audience.

The most successful of these works have achieved a harmony between art-historical information and the film's own aesthetic imperatives. All of the collaborators have struggled with the need for a certain overlap of responsibility, sharing power and creative/editorial control.

ART ON FILM/FILM ON ART is an experiment. The series does not intend to define a formula for making a successful film on art. It seeks to stimulate discussion and debate among filmmakers and art experts, not only of the films themselves, but of the broader issues involved in interpreting works of art on film and video: the tensions between the art expert and the filmmaker, between the film as an art object and the art being depicted, between the meaning and intent of the film and the meaning and intent of the original artist. And, while these films ask to be judged as works of art in their own right, they also should be understood as parts of an ongoing dialogue about the cinema's role in communicating art history.

Photo courtesy of Sarah Stacey

1867 ***used a complex, fourteen-minute single shot to represent the evolution of Manet's*** **The Execution of Maximilian.**

ART ON FILM/FILM ON ART represents a first step, inviting new and increasingly varied experiments that test the boundaries of this still under-explored genre.

No single and unchanging definition of a successful film on art exists.

Not all films are for all purposes.

STRUCTURE

USING THE VIDEOS
A programmatic overview

Each of the five programs in the anthology ART ON FILM/FILM ON ART has a characteristic structure:

Opening
The opening is the same in each program and serves as a provocative introduction to the many issues about film and art that are raised by the series.

Conversation
Each program begins with excerpts from conversations between filmmakers and art experts that explore ideas about collaboration as well as ideas about art on film. While each conversation addresses specific issues about filmmaking and has a theme, the themes are universal and could apply to any of the programs. The major issues are highlighted by a series of on-screen questions.

The Films
Three films produced by the Production Lab are on each disk, grouped to stimulate discussion of themes introduced in the conversation. Like the themes, however, the groupings are flexible, and other works in the series could as easily be used to stimulate discussion of each of the themes. Similarly, other themes could be illustrated by the films on any particular disk.

Programmers are encouraged to develop their own film groupings. Brief on-screen or voice-over comments from filmmakers and art experts who made the individual films introduce each work.

Closing Comments
Each program ends with a review of the conversation. This is meant both to symbolize the many challenges involved in collaboration and to suggest that discussion follow the screening of these works.

ORIENTATION

THE CONTRASTS BETWEEN FILM AND ART

Some thoughts to guide viewing

Film and television are fixtures on the landscape of modern life. By now, most of us are so used to viewing the world through the lens of the camera that we have ceased to see that this is but a window. We feel that we move as the camera moves, that we are figuratively present in the undisclosed space inhabited by the camera. This ability to identify with the camera is not naïve; it is the product of tremendous sophistication. Thus we are seldom confused when the camera cuts fluidly from one location to another. We recognize and appreciate the camera's privileged view and its ability to capture details and move through space more efficiently than we can. We do not mistake music or other artistic effects for elements actually present within a scene. But in interpreting a work of art on film, these features introduce some profound dilemmas.

Most of art is still; film demands motion. When we see a work of art in a film, we sit and the object unfolds before us.

Most art is silent; film stimulates the ears as well as the eyes.

Art seeks slow and steady contemplation; film demands rapid change.

When viewing art, we are free to explore at leisure and as we choose; with film, the view is tightly controlled and the time for viewing limited by how long the image appears on the screen.

Viewing a work of art firsthand, we experience the object in its entirety – even when studying the details; in a film, we focus on the details, often at the expense of the whole.

And while the technological quality of reproduction continues to improve, film and video always will entail a degree of visual distortion – flattening colors, reducing contrast, misrepresenting three-dimensional relationships and scale, obscuring textures.

In short, watching a film about art is not the same as being in its presence.

PROGRAM 1

BALANCE: FILM/ART

TOTAL RUNNING TIME 59 MIN.

THE CONVERSATION

the collaborative relationship between filmmakers and art experts
the expression of one medium through another

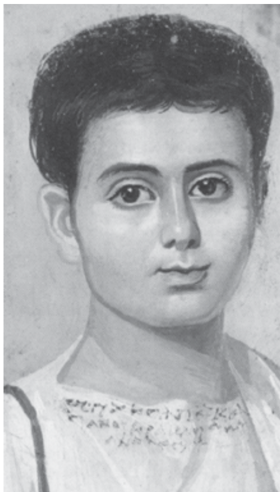
Keith Christiansen
Jane Wrightsman Curator of European Paintings, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Jerrilynn Dodds
Associate Professor, School of Architecture, City University of New York

Linda Downs
Head of Education, National Gallery of Art

Brian O'Doherty
Director, Media Arts Program, National Endowment for the Arts

Andrea Simon
Independent Filmmaker



Reproduction courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Gift of Edward S. Harkness, 1918 [18.9.2]

The Fayum Portraits *provides historical context to haunting faces from Roman Egypt*

Photo courtesy of Masaru Ohashi

Ma: Space/Time in the Garden of Ryoan-ji *considers the Japanese concept of* ma *as exemplified in a Zen garden.*

Photo courtesy of Simon Sully

1867 *adopted the techniques of fiction film to dramatize Edouard Manet's creative process in painting four versions of* The Execution of Maximilian.

THE FILMS

THE FAYUM PORTRAITS: FUNERARY PAINTING OF ROMAN EGYPT
15 min . Color . 16mm . 1988 . USA . English

Producer/Director: Bob Rosen and Andrea Simon
Art Expert: Richard Brilliant
Music: Meredith Monk

1867
14 min . Color . 35mm . 1990 . UK/USA . French/German (English subtitles)

Director: Ken McMullen
Producers: Clive Syddall and Olivia Stewart
Art Expert: Michael Wilson

MA: SPACE/TIME IN THE GARDEN OF RYOAN-JI
16 min . Color . 16mm . 1989 . USA . No narration (English text on screen)

Producer/Director: Taka Iimura
Art expert: Arata Isozaki

BALANCE: FILM/ART

If a filmmaker and an art expert collaborate, can the result be both good filmmaking and good art history?

If a filmmaker also is an artist, what is the role of the art historian?

Does the film's meaning coincide with the meaning of the work of art?

Does the film evoke both subjective and objective responses?

You have to assume that the art historian is going to enter into the realm of being the eye behind the camera and make part of the visual interpretation. And you're going to have to assume that the filmmaker is going to enter into the interpretation of the object. Everybody has to let go a little bit of their role and take on a little bit of the role of the other.
(Jerrilynn Dodds, art expert, *A Mosque in Time*)

Film is the most collaborative art form ever invented.
(Andrea Simon, filmmaker, *The Fayum Portraits*)

It's a problem of communication for the art historian to be able to impart what he feels is unique to that object or the motivating idea behind that object so that it gets transmitted in the images themselves.
(Keith Christiansen, panelist)

The question of responsibility is central to the issue of collaboration. Michael Wilson, art historian on the film 1867, which depicts Edouard Manet's struggle to balance historical inspiration with artistic impulse, asks:

Is the historian only there to check that some kind of accuracy is retained? Or, does one's responsibility in a collaboration extend to ensuring that all the cinematic means that are used are, in your view, interpreting the material in the right light?

Ken McMullen, the filmmaker of *1867*, in contrast, states:

Number one, I think, there has to be absolute respect for what film and cinema are. And the second thing is that these films should not be illustrations of academic points of view. They should be works of art in their own right.

These potentially conflicting goals point up the complexities of collaboration. While some degree of tension is inevitable and, indeed, constructive in a cooperative process, it is vital that each individual learn a little of the other's unique expertise in her or his specialized role.

Clearly, however, fundamental role differences remain. Engaged in filmmaking as a means of communication and an art form, the filmmaker concentrates on giving the audience a complete experience – one that touches the sense and emotions as well as the intellect. The art historian must, to some extent, stand at a distance from this experience in order to understand it critically. Yet the art historian's passion for the subject needs to find cinematic expression in a film. Scholarship may well hold the key to many of the truths the filmmaker hopes to present.

What makes collaboration difficult is that each side speaks a different language and is accustomed to communicating through different tools:

My concern in terms of films on works of art is to not destroy the image of the object itself.
(Linda Downs, panelist)

What we have to do is to use cinema as something that beguiles and enters your subjective being.
(Jerrilynn Dodds)

Films about art as works of art of their own, when they are successful, provide insights into the nature of art itself, to the whole activity of creation and of the enjoyment of the creations of others.
(Richard Brilliant, art expert, *The Fayum Portraits*)

A film that adopts a tone of uncritical veneration for the work of art may be intellectually weak. On the other hand, one that asserts itself over and above its subject runs the risk of undermining its own credibility. As in any other genre, a film on art, if it is to be considered truly successful, must both explore the subject in an honest and invigorating manner and sustain itself as a self-sufficient entity, unified and vibrant in its own right.

The use of words often is at the root of this dilemma. Film offers unique expressive properties, but for an art historian, the written word is a primary tool. This can be a serious stumbling block when dealing with filmic language.

Words are a useful tool in film, but only one tool among many. When words dominate the image, films tend to lapse into static sequences and visual clichés. The challenge for the filmmaker is not to mimic the role of the lecturing art historian, but to find a new voice for presenting art-historical information, taking full advantage of the medium's specific strengths.

The filmmaker needs to

create a cinematic work that conveys ideas about the subject being filmed

and at the same time

respect the intellectual tradition of art scholarship, incorporating critical perspectives into the film's framework.

The art expert needs to

supply wisdom to illuminate and enliven the film while conforming to rigorous standards of art-historical scholarship

and at the same time

bridge scholarship and film by adopting a sympathetic attitude toward the practical and aesthetic imperatives of filmmaking.

PROGRAM 1

THE FAYUM PORTRAITS:
FUNERARY PAINTING OF ROMAN EGYPT
15 MIN. / COLOR / 16 MM / 1988

Bob Rosen and Andrea Simon / Filmmakers
Richard Brilliant / Art Expert

The film presents more than fifty mummy portraits painted in the Fayum region of Egypt between about A.D. 100 and 300. It is visually simple, presenting only the works of art themselves against dark backgrounds. At the same time, it is aurally complex, with multiple soundtracks that place these unfamiliar portraits in their historical setting. The soundtracks include ancient texts, interpretations by Richard Brilliant, a "tour guide" and original music.

MAKING THE FILM
I think one of the things we wanted to convey is a different definition of the self, a different experience of being in the world that begins to take shape around the second or third century A.D. Our idea was to remove the mediator between the audience and the work so the notion of allowing the work to speak was at the bottom of the structure of the film. (Simon)

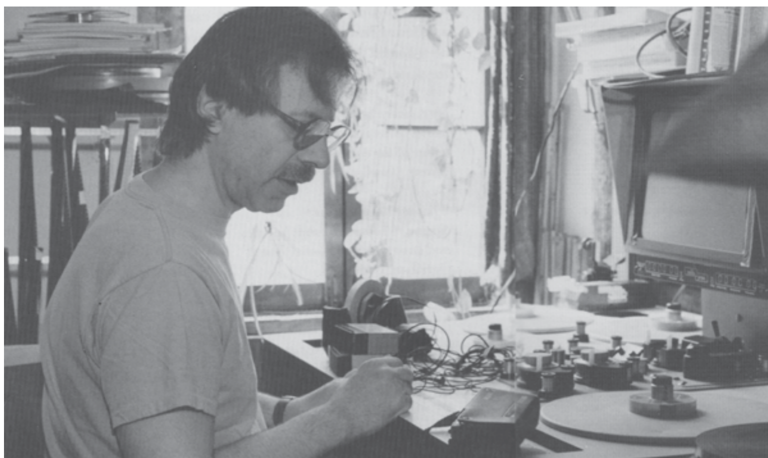


Photo courtesy of Michael Camerini

***Filmmaker Rosen considers an editing decision during post-production of* The Fayum Portraits.**

The film itself is not a vehicle for the presentation of my expertise. Rather my knowledge becomes, together with the works of art and the skill of the filmmakers, a platform upon which a construct is created. (Brilliant)

We're trying to create an imaginary place in the mind of each viewer in which the fact of this ancient person that you're contemplating on the screen generates a kind of immense panorama of possible interpretive approaches. So there is a kind of imaginary space, in which the whole spectacle of the decline of a vast, extremely stable social system is made present just by this collage of individual voices telling you things. (Simon)

By virtue of the juxtaposition of these bright images against a dark ground, essentially a negative ground, the concentration upon these images themselves was complete, because the eye had nowhere else to look. I think film did that in a way that perhaps one could not do in any other medium. (Brilliant)

One of the most difficult aspects of the collaboration was trying to resolve my views as an historian, and my insistence that we maintain the accuracy of the historical situation insofar as we could, that we simply did not match up things because they looked good or sounded good, but that they had an intrinsic conceptual and historical relationship. (Brilliant)

ABOUT THE WORKS OF ART

Fayum portraits are among the few examples of portrait painting that survive from classical antiquity. More than 750 of them are known, and new ones are occasionally unearthed. Most were painted between A.D. 100 and 300, at a time when Egypt was under the rule of the Roman empire.

Fayum portraits are generally about life-size, and most seem to have been painted from life, often years before the sitter's death and mummification.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

The filmmakers intended the multivoiced soundtrack to draw the viewer into the spiritual climate of the Roman empire. Do these texts help one to understand the aesthetic and historical context of the portraits in question? Would another technique have done as well or better?

What is achieved through the use of multiple voices as opposed to a single host?

Does the film balance respect for the filmmaker's vision with respect for the integrity of the works of art being depicted?

Reproduced by courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1909 [09.181.6]

Portrait of a woman from Fayum.

During the sitter's lifetime, the portrait was probably displayed in his or her house. After death, the portrait was cut down at the corners, placed over the subject's face, and fitted into the wrappings of the mummy.

Fayum portraits combine two contradictory traditions: the careful rendering of specific details juxtaposed with a strikingly abstract rendering of the eyes, which are huge, dark and unfocused. The special treatment of the eyes and the placement of the head against a deliberately flat and featureless background separate these people from their earthly context.

The creators of the Fayum portraits, usually local artisans, painted with beeswax, which was heated and saturated with brilliant colors and then applied to thin panels of wood, usually cedar or cypress. This encaustic technique protected the pigments from being absorbed by the wood. Because the wax hardened as it cooled, the artist had to work very quickly, which may account for the extraordinary freshness of the portraits and for their remarkably intense color.

The people in these portraits are predominantly non-native Egyptians. They were colonials and provincials who formed part of the pluralistic culture that flourished in lower Egypt and around the city of Alexandria in late antiquity. Some were quite wealthy, but most were of modest means, living uneventful lives on the margin of a great empire as shopkeepers, artisans, teachers and housewives. Once strangers in Egypt, they had gradually adopted many Egyptian social and religious attitudes. The fact that these men and women chose to be mummified in the Egyptian manner, rather than buried or cremated, is an indication of the degree to which they had become assimilated to Egyptian traditions.

SELECTED TEXTS FROM THE FILM

The soundtrack includes excerpts from various late Hellenistic and Roman texts, sepulchral inscriptions and personal documents from Fayum dwellers.

Death, they say, is sweeter than sleep, and mightier than the young men of Argos.
(T. Flavius Glaucus, third century A.D.)

All that is of the body is as a rushing stream. All that is of the soul, dreams and vapors. Life is a warfare, a brief sojourn in an alien land, and after: Oblivion.
(Marcus Aurelius, Roman emperor and philosopher, A.D. 121-180)

Paint me my beloved, paint her with dark plaits; and, if the wax can express it, paint too the scent of myrtle that surrounds her.
(Anacreon, Greek poet, c. 560-490 B.C.)

O Queen of the Gods, Deathless Lady Isis, by Your power the channels of the Nile are filled at harvest-time. . . . Turbulent water floods the land, making it fruitful. Because of you, heaven and earth have their being; And the gusts of wind and the sun with its sweet light. (Isodorus, “Hymn to Isis”)

The offering is barley and wheat; The offering is myrrh and linen; The offering is life.
(Book of the Dead, 173)

I go in as a falcon, I go out as a phoenix. Morning star, make way that I may enter in peace into the goodly West.
(Book of the Dead, Ms. R)

I have taken the road to the sacred portals. I journey, I journey. . . .
(Book of the Dead)

Who are we, and what have we become? Where are we headed, and from what place are we being redeemed?
(Gnostic text)

Noble Caesarius! . . . You knew the Stars, and Geometry, and Medicine, and yet you die.
(St. Gregory, c. A.D. 590-604)

Know that the soul is a stranger in this world.
(Talmud)

O, Wretched [wo]man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?
(Old Testament)

I long for the Lord of the Winds, the Lord of Fire, Creator of the world, He who gives light to the sun. I seek for God Himself, not for the works of God.
(Clement of Alexandria, Christian theologian, A.D. 150-214)

My thoughts are torn this way and that in the havoc of change.
(St. Augustine, A.D. 354-430)

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1867

14 MIN. / COLOR / 35 MM / 1990

Ken McMullen / Director
Clive Syddall and Olivia Stewart / Producers
Michael Wilson / Art Expert

The French painter Edouard Manet (1832-1883) painted four canvases depicting the execution of Emperor Maximilian of Mexico in 1867. In this short dramatic film, director Ken McMullen evokes the artist's studio and the events of Maximilian's death, using a single, uninterrupted shot to present the artistic thought process through the eyes of the painter. A narration was written by the film's director in the form of an imagined interior monologue. It is presented in voice-over style in French and German (with English subtitles) and alludes to the narrative, historical and visual texts that Manet drew upon to form his four versions of the painting.

MAKING THE FILM

1867 is different from all the other films in this anthology series in that it uses the technique and style of fictional narrative cinema (including actors in historical costume) to explore a complex episode in the history of art: Manet's reaction to an actual event and his interpretation of that event in four separate paintings. Manet's interpretations are influenced by previous works of art, especially those in the tradition of history painting.

Images of paintings by David, Géricault and Goya are visible in the film, which raises subtle issues about the difference between truth and fiction, actual events and their representation by artists or filmmakers. The final painting of Manet's series was filmed from an Ektachrome transparency, while the other versions were filmed from painted reproductions of Manet's works.

The problem with making a film about a single painting is the further you go away from the event, the greater the critical possibility, and possibly the further away from the truth it actually is. And so I wanted to restrict the didactic aspect of the film very much. I wanted to reveal in this single shot a parallel to Manet's process. His paintings were developmental.
(McMullen)

The function of a documentary is to present the facts and give a view at the end, whereas if you dramatize something, whether it's based on a true story or fiction, it is the writer/director who is dramatizing the story, which means they've got to make a good drama. So therefore they will veer from the truth if necessary to make it dramatic. There is a license really for the director and writer to say what they think is important and what is the truth of a particular story.
(Syddall)

I thought that we'd absolutely agreed that the thing that I felt was most essential, and least subject to compromise, was the fact that the final film shot of the actors would be the same as the final painting. And then it wasn't.
(Wilson)

In my view a script is a launching, a beginning. I could have two thousand people riding across the screen doing this, but the actual concrete reality of the place I'm going to shoot in and the abilities of the characters I work with, and everything else, means that I have to transform [my plan] at the time of shooting into something else.
(McMullen)

I think that where the problem arose was really a question of territory and that it was very difficult actually taking the art historian's territory away from him. . . . [The shift between pre-production and production] is a critical moment. The art historian thinks that at all stages it is a 50/50 collaboration. And there is no moment at which it is said the shift takes place when you can say to the art historian, look, this is now the director's province. You've put everything you can into it. Now you must allow it to be in the hands of the expert.
(Sarah Stacey, co-producer)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

The "fiction" of the voice-over would probably not be acceptable in an art-historical publication on Manet. Is it a legitimate tool in an art-historical film? In this case, what are the costs of such a "veering away from the truth"?

It could be said that **1867** ***is not about the paintings but about the inner process of creation. Can such films ever be made without conflicting with art history's methods of understanding and establishing fact?***

The entire film seems to be a single, seamless shot, yet it depicts work that Manet created over a year and a half. What is the effect of this device?

Photo courtesy of Simon Sully

1867 ***posed models in a simulated artist's studio to depict an early version of Manet's painting.***

ABOUT THE WORKS OF ART

The French Academy, founded in 1648, taught that monumental paintings of historical subjects were more important than other forms of painting. Even after its influence waned in the 1860s, many artists felt obliged to attempt history paintings. In Maximilian's execution, Manet recognized a contemporary subject worthy of being treated in the monumental manner of this style.

The primary artistic source for Manet's *Execution of Maximilian* series was Francisco Goya's painting *The Third of May, 1808,* which shows the execution of a group of Madrid residents during Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Spain. In Goya's painting, the dramatic night lightning and the anguished expressions of the victims draw the viewer's attention to their suffering.

The changes in Manet's four paintings show the process by which he developed and refined his artistic ideas. The first version of the painting probably was begun in July 1867, as the first accounts of the execution were arriving in Paris. Sketchy and freely painted, its directness and warm colors are close to Goya's style. Manet apparently abandoned this painting in late September, after he learned more about the details of the scene from later newspaper accounts. In the second version, Manet painted the firing squad in French uniforms to underscore the French responsibility for the execution. The third sketch and the final painting, finished in late 1868, are painted in cool colors. The figures are clearly silhouetted against the plain background of a cemetery wall, which Manet learned about in newspaper accounts. The soldier to the rear of the firing squad is calmly loading his rifle to deliver the final death-shot to the emperor.

These four paintings, completed over a year and a half, chart Manet's progress from the emotional immediacy of the first version to the cool, understated self-control of the final painting. They give us a unique view of the painter at work, and they illuminate the complex character of Manet's artistic personality.

THE HISTORICAL EVENT

In 1864, the Austrian Archduke Maximilian was placed on the throne of Mexico by Emperor Napoleon III of France, a nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte. The French hoped to establish an overseas empire with the help of this puppet emperor. In 1867, however, American protests and unrest in Europe led Napoleon III to betray the terms of his agreement with Maximilian and to withdraw all French troops from Mexico. Left with only his own small army to fight the nationalist guerrilla troops of Benito Juarez, Maximilian was captured and tried with two of his faithful generals. All three were executed by a firing squad on June 19, 1867.

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THE EXECUTION OF MAXIMILIAN (TOP DOWN)
First Version; Second Version, which survives in reassembled fragments; Third Version; Fourth and final version.

IMAGE CREDITS (TOP DOWN): 1) *Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Gair Macomber. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; 2) Reproduced by courtesy of National Gallery, London; 3) Reproduced by courtesy of Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen; 4) Reproduced by courtesy of Stadtische Kunsthalle, Mannheim, Germany*

PROGRAM 1

MA: SPACE/TIME IN THE GARDEN OF RYOAN-JI

16 MIN. / COLOR / 16 MM / 1989

Taka Iimura / Director
Arata Isozaki / Art Expert

The viewer is invited to experience the early sixteenth-century stone garden of the Zen Buddhist monastery of Ryoan-ji in Kyoto, Japan. The garden is an embodiment of *ma*, a Japanese concept that conveys both time and space. Slow-moving images of the garden are intercut with poetic reflections by Japanese architect Arata Isozaki, accompanied by music composed for the film by Takehisa Kosugi.

Photo courtesy of Taka Iimura

***Composer Takehisa Kosugi creates music with two stones for* Ma: Space/Time in the Garden of Ryoan-ji.**

Photo courtesy of Masaru Ohashi

Director Taka Iimura seeks to represent the Japanese concept of space and time in* Ma *through the movement of his camera.

MAKING THE FILM

I consider ma *as a unity of space and time, as inseparable. In very slow movement you can't separate space from time, or vice versa, so that you can perceive* ma.
(Iimura)

An idiot is a guy who loses a sense of ma.
(Isozaki)

We placed the text between the visual [elements] as in the old silent films. In this way you read the text separately from the visual yet both are integrated in your head. The text sounds like a contradiction for your ear. It is through this contradiction that ma *may be achieved.*
(Iimura)

I made five versions using the same material. Although I was using the same footage, every version gave me a different perception of the garden.
(Iimura)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

How are our perceptions of space and time affected by camera movements and techniques?

How does the use of written text alter the impact of the words being presented?

How does the film's soundtrack relate to the concept of* ma*?

The filmmakers use images of the garden to communicate an idea. In doing so, do they remain faithful to the garden's essential vision? Does this approach distort or enhance our experience of the garden?

Compare the perception of Ryoan-ji as a "scroll" garden with the presentation of Chinese scrolls in* A Day on the Grand Canal *(Program 5).

ABOUT THE WORK OF ART

The early sixteenth-century Japanese garden of the Zen Buddhist monastery of Ryoan-ji is the most famous of all Japanese gardens and is considered a masterpiece of the *karesansui*, or dry landscape, style. The garden is composed of fifteen rocks arranged in five groups set in a rectangular space that is filled with fine white gravel. The garden is surrounded by a wall on two sides and can be viewed from the long veranda of the abbot's quarters, a place for both walking and contemplation.

One riddle posed by the garden is that no single point exists from which all fifteen stones can be simultaneously observed. A rock may be visible from one position, yet hidden by another stone if viewed from a different spot. Thus, it is necessary to view the garden from different points in order to experience it fully.

When viewed from inside the abbot's quarters, the garden is compressed from both sides and framed by its surroundings. Bounded by the veranda in front and the wall and forest behind, the individual stones are difficult to distinguish, and the observer's attention is drawn to the manner in which they are grouped. In contrast, the views along the veranda are closer to the garden and reveal more of its open space. Here, one can observe individual rocks more easily, and the space between the groups of stones appears to expand. The shifting sense of the garden's space is analogous to the experience of looking at a Japanese scroll painting, in which a limited section of landscape appears as the scroll is unrolled at the left side and rolled up at the right. Like a camera taking a tracking shot, the viewer of a scroll painting gradually moves his or her focus of vision horizontally along the length of the image. The shifting viewpoint of a stroller along the veranda offers a parallel experience.

The scholar David A. Slawson notes, "Gardens that are viewed primarily in this way, like a painting seen from several vantage points centering around a principle one, may perhaps be called 'scroll' gardens to distinguish them from the stroll gardens and tea gardens of later times."

Ryoan-ji has the most abstract treatment of *ma* found in any Japanese garden. The architecture critic Teiji Itō links its ideal quality to Zen thought: "Ryoan-ji's garden . . . is the living blueprint of the perfect garden. . . . In Zen Buddhism, one does not seek to analyze the truth. Rather, one grasps the truth as a whole. 'Not logically, but intuitively,' goes the phrase, 'does one seek the truth.'" Many experts regard it as a masterpiece of exceptional tranquility and beauty.

THE CONCEPT OF *Ma*

The concept of *ma* is fundamental to the arts of Japan. From ancient times, the Japanese language contained no word for either time or space. The word *ma* was used to define the distance between two points or two sounds. Generally, as the term came into common use, more importance became attached to the space between two things – to the emptiness or silence – rather than to the things or the sounds themselves. This emptiness or silence was conceived of as an essential element in various Japanese art forms.

Among the many arts of Japan, the idea of *ma* appears most tangibly in the design of gardens, the forms of which offer a symbolic key to the Japanese understanding of the universe. The prototype of the Japanese garden originated with *himorogi*, an altar where a spirit would descend. It also evolved from early gardens made in the form of a mountainous island encircled by a pond, which represented a small island in the ocean and was symbolic of paradise. Often, the water of the pond was replaced by white sand, creating a *karesansui*, or dry garden. Karesansui gardens mainly were created in temples of the Zen sect of Buddhism. The *karesansui's* simplified, abstracted image of islands in water served as a focus for contemplation and meditation, in much the same manner as did the koans, or teaching texts, of Zen.

Ma

The garden is a medium
for meditation
Perceive the blankness
Listen to the voice of
the
silence
Imagine the void filled

Perceive not the objects
But the distance
between them
not the sounds
but the p a u s e s
they leave unfilled

Are the rocks placed
on the ground
the islands of paradise
Is the white sand the
vast ocean
that distances them
from this world

B r e a t h e
Swallow this garden
Let it swallow you
Become one with it.

Arata Isozaki

SUGGESTED READINGS

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Ito, Teiji. *The Japanese Garden: An Approach to Nature.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972.

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Slawson, David A. *Secret Teaching in the Art of Japanese Gardens.* Tokyo and New York: Kodansha International, 1987.

Photo courtesy of Masaru Ohashi

The camera crew prepares a shot of the garden of the Zen Buddhist monastery of Ryoan-ji.

PROGRAM 2

FILM SENSE/ART SENSE

TOTAL RUNNING TIME 59 MIN.

THE CONVERSATION

experiencing art through film
interpreting art through film

Barry Bergdoll
Associate Professor, Art History and Archaeology, Columbia University

Leila Kinney
Assistant Professor of Art History, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Richard P. Rogers
Independent Filmmaker

Susan Vogel
Executive Director, The Center for African Art, New York

Photo courtesy of Foto Vasari Roma

***Both its builders and visitors have invested numerous meanings in the Trevi Fountain, many of which are explored in* Trevi.**

Photo courtesy of François Poivret

A Window to Heaven ***director Maben plans a shot as he sits in the cave of Saint Neophytos in the saint's medieval Byzantine monastery.***

THE FILMS

GIORGIONE'S TEMPEST: THE FIRST ROMANTIC PICTURE
11 min . Color . 16mm . 1988 . Great Britain/USA . English

Director: William Cran
Producer: Stephanie Tepper
Art Expert: Cecil Gould

TREVI
17 min. Color. 16mm. 1988. USA . English

Producer: Richard P. Rogers
Director: Corey Shaff
Art Expert: John A. Pinto

A WINDOW TO HEAVEN
20 min. Color . 35mm . 1990. Great Britain/France/USA . English

Producer/Director: Adrian Maben
Art Expert: Robin Cormack

FILM SENSE/ART SENSE

How does one define one's goals in making a film about art?

Does the film encourage viewers to be open to the multiple meanings of the art?

Does the film engage the viewer in a process of questioning and discovery?

Does the film encourage further exploration?

The human mind wants to have everything neatly into pigeon holes. But you can't always do it.
(Cecil Gould, Art Expert, *Giorgione's Tempest*)

The sense or meaning of a work of art is both a private, individual question and a central concern of a scholarly discipline, art history. This program tries to demystify the issue of interpretation by looking critically at three films that tackle this concept head on. The films highlight a common feature of films about art: the complex three-way relationship among the film team, the art being depicted and the body of interpretation that surrounds and sometimes obscures the art.

In each film, the art historian and the filmmaker have attempted to elicit an emotional response from the viewer, while at the same time presenting relevant art-historical information. How these elements are combined lies at the heart of the film.

Discussions concerning the film's meaning tend to assume that every film is a complete and static object. The working style of Bill Cran and other filmmakers belies this definition. For Cran, film is as much about process as it is about the final product, so that the effectiveness of any film depends largely on the success with which the patterns of thought and discovery are conveyed through the unfolding of visual text.

As the collaborating art historian on *Giorgione's Tempest*, Cecil Gould had his own reasons for wanting the film to leave open riddles about the interpretation of the art. Believing that "overinterpretation is the besetting sin of contemporary academic art teaching and that a cold dose of realism and common sense is the best antidote," he took an attitude of scholarly caution while presenting a number of "unsupported and mutually contradictory theories." For Gould, as for Cran, the film emphasizes the mysteries contained within the work, impervious to simple interpretations.

In positioning a film in any kind of relationship to the meaning of a work of art, the filmmaker and

art historian face a complex set of circumstances. Each work of art exists as a response by the individual artist to a network of aesthetic, historical, economic and technological forces. Moreover, interpretations of art often change over time, subject to new research and topicality. Audience expectations also contribute to the way a work of art will be viewed and experienced.

It is an act of discovery. I think that films are not so different from any other cultural object. They are a set of solutions to specific problems. And there may be techniques, and there may be procedures. And the filmmakers are aware of them. But in a way, you have to discover each time what those proper procedures are.
(Richard P. Rogers, filmmaker, *Trevi*)

Many of these films opt for a complex, multitextured style that emphasizes different ways of viewing. Robin Cormack, art historian on *A Window to Heaven*, describes the effort in this manner:

When I entered art history, the aim of art history was to help people appreciate art. Now, if that's the answer, then film just directs your eyes – and directs your eyes professionally by showing you what parts within a painting are significant. Unfortunately, I don't quite follow that view of art history anymore. I think it's quite valid for art to work one way in the twelfth century and the same art to work in a different way in the twentieth century. And that would not mean that either viewing activity was wrong.

Among the final fruits of the experiments was a conviction that took hold within many of the film teams – that conveying hard information is not incompatible with an open-ended discussion, and intellectual rigor is still possible in an approach that encourages the viewer of a film to question and explore further. Film must give us more than a message; it must assert itself as experience, taking us on a voyage of exploration and discovery.

The filmmaker needs to

engage the viewer in a process of discovery, while maintaining strict standards of scholarship

and at the same time

fashion a film that triggers emotional and intellectual responses to a work of art.

The art expert needs to

honestly place his/her own interpretation within a framework of other interpretations

and at the same time

reveal possible meanings encoded within a work of art, using the language of film.

GIORGIONE'S TEMPEST:
THE FIRST ROMANTIC PICTURE
11 MIN. / COLOR / 16 MM / 1988

William Cran / Director
Cecil Gould / Art Expert

The work explores various interpretations of the meaning of *The Tempest*, the early sixteenth-century masterpiece of the Italian painter Giorgione (d. 1510) that hangs in the Galleria dell'Accademia in Venice. The intent of the project was to explore a work of art whose exact meaning is not known. The film attempts to evoke the mood and atmosphere of the painting, and to make the many conflicting interpretations of it accessible.

MAKING THE FILM

What drew me to this picture is [that] it is about nothing except atmosphere. It's not telling a story or if it is, it's a story that nobody knows. What gets me going personally, what gets my juices going, is trying to get that atmosphere, a sense of place, a sense of time, or just a mood.
(Cran)

In this particular case, what I was chiefly determined to do was to show that most of what is written about Giorgione and about this picture is all nonsense.
(Gould)

I find with almost any film I do that I sort of flounder around, thinking about it. You may just be attracted to a subject, with no particular idea of how you're going to do it or what style you're going to adopt, or anything. And you think about it, not necessarily very, very consciously, but it's kind of that clock ticking away in the back of your head. And then you sort of suddenly say, "Oh! We could start like this." And then once you say, "Well, we'll start like this," you've actually set in motion a whole train of logic.
(Cran)

Well, I think you could say that I took the lead and the producer then tried to translate what I said in the way of facts into something that was viable from the film point of view.
(Gould)

Using sound effects and music and cutting and so on, you're aiming for an experience that's much more theatrical than an unadorned painting. But then, it seemed to me that you say, "What's the point of making a film about a painting at all, unless you explore two things simultaneously: you're exploring what can film do, and what can film do about this

Director Cran and his cameraman set up a shot in Venice during the production of **Giorgione's Tempest.**

painting." I support what the film is saying to you, and hopefully not in a too obvious way, that this is a painting which is a mystery. We don't really know what it's about, but it has this compellingly brooding, mysterious atmosphere, and I tried to make a film that was brooding and mysterious.
(Cran)

By the use of different voices and rather spooky music, it was possible to get across this atmosphere of mystery, and of nothing very definite. I think the idea of having different voices made it very vivid. Also, the fact that the writer didn't try to talk all the time is very important. Because if somebody is talking the whole time the camera is travelling across the picture, you may just listen to him and not use your eyes.
(Gould)

If you are writing a learned article, you can bore the pants off people and it doesn't matter. But if you're writing it for a film, in addition to instruction, you've got to provide entertainment.
(Gould)

I want the audience to live more intensely for the duration of that film than they did for the ten minutes before and the ten minutes after.
(Cran)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

What is the responsibility of film to art when art experts do not agree with each other about interpretation or attribution?

The filmmakers tried to convey the experience of exploring an actual landscape. Does the camera adequately convey this experience?

The stronger the technique, the greater the danger becomes of a film calling attention to itself rather than to the art. How can one judge whether a film's style overwhelms its content?

ABOUT THE WORK OF ART

The Tempest is one of the smallest of the world's great pictures, and one of the most mysterious. It was painted in Venice in the early sixteenth century by Giorgio of Castelfranco, known as Giorgione, or "Big George." In a landscape threatened by an approaching storm, a nearly naked young woman sits on a river bank nursing a baby. A young man stands nearby. Experts have offered many interpretations of the painting's subject, but no one has yet agreed on the picture's exact meaning.

A recent theory holds that the painting represents Adam, Eve and Cain after the expulsion from paradise, but that the subject has been treated in a subtle and secularized manner to suit the taste of an educated and worldly patron. Or, the painting may be a poetic image of melancholy lovers in an Arcadian setting. Some identify the soldier as a self-portrait of Giorgione. Others have seen a likeness between the features of the woman and those of Giorgione's portrait of an old woman holding a slip of paper inscribed *col tempo*, or "in the course of time." It has been suggested that this portrait thus represents a woman who rejected Giorgione's advances, and that he painted her as she would look ravaged by time in order to persuade her to enjoy her beauty while it lasted.

Whether *The Tempest* is religious, allegorical or personal, the beautifully painted landscape and the picture's mysterious and poetic quality have fascinated generations of artists and scholars.

Facts about Giorgione's life are few. He is said to have been born about 1477 or 1478, in Castelfranco, a town about 28 miles northwest of Venice. His master may have been Giovanni Bellini, who also taught Titian. Giorgione painted at the Doge's Palace in Venice and executed the frescoes on the exterior of the German Merchants' Building there. The work for the Doge's Palace has been lost, and only a fragment remains of the frescos. Although Giorgione painted large commissions for churches, his fame rests on the small, informal, freely painted pictures made for private patrons. These paintings, called *poesie*, or poetic pictures, are frequently of mysterious or unrecognizable subjects, but they convey a lyrical and evocative mood. At the time they were created, they presented a revolutionary new idea of what a painting might be. Although Giorgione was only about thirty when he died in 1510, his work exerted a profound influence on younger painters such as Titian, and it shaped the course of Venetian painting for the next century.

ITS REVOLUTIONARY QUALITIES

The Tempest's qualities would have seemed new and revolutionary when it was painted. Many of the paintings produced in Venice at the start of the sixteenth century were large religious pictures, meticulously painted on wooden panels with elaborate layers of underpainting. The figures often were arranged symmetrically, and usually took up far more space than the landscape background. In contrast, *The Tempest* is small and painted on canvas in a free technique. It was probably painted directly, without underpainting. It is not obviously a religious painting, and its subject may be personal or allegorical. The figures

are placed asymmetrically on the canvas and are small in relation to the landscape around them. *The Tempest* was painted not for a church, but for the private enjoyment of a sophisticated patron.

An x-ray of *The Tempest* reveals that where the young man now stands, Giorgione had originally painted the figure of a nude woman bathing in the river. The substitution of a soldier for a nude bather indicates a surprising degree of improvisation in Giorgione's work. This freedom of invention suggests a personal or poetic subject for the picture and sets *The Tempest* apart from the carefully plotted pictures of Giorgione's predecessors.

SUGGESTED READINGS

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Settis, Salvatore. *Giorgione's Tempest: Interpreting the Hidden Subject.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Steer, John. *A Concise History of Venetian Painting.* New York: Thames and Hudson, 1986.

Wilde, Johannes. *Venetian Art from Bellini to Titian.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974.

During a break in production, filmmaker Cran poses with a reproduction of* The Tempest *created especially for the film.

TREVI

17 MIN. / COLOR / 16 MM / 1988

Richard P. Rogers and Corey Shaff / Filmmakers
John A. Pinto / Art Expert

The film team set out to question the relationship between the intended meaning of a work of art and the meanings that are ascribed to it over time. They also sought to create a film about how the interpretation of a public monument changes depending on the context of the viewer. As they track the changing interpretations of the Trevi Fountain, the filmmakers adopt different cinematic and editing styles to reflect shifting attitudes toward the work of art. The soundtrack includes excerpts from a memorandum written by Nicola Salvi, architect of the fountain, a passage from Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun* (1860) and views of contemporary tourists.

MAKING THE FILM

I didn't want to make a film about a single precious object outside of life. I felt that would be very hard for film. If we could find something that wasn't in a museum yet nevertheless was important, that would be a good challenge for a short film.
(Rogers)

I think it's hard for many art historians to surrender what they take to be or see as their prerogative. It is as if they own or wish to control access to the work of art and, therefore, surrendering a part of that to someone is difficult.
(Pinto)

We wanted to make a film that would explore the notion that meaning is contextual, that the meaning of the work of art changes over time.
(Rogers)

We live in a culture that just loves beautiful surfaces. What we tried to do by mixing beautiful sections with rougher section, is to break through the slick and the official, the perfectly presented thing.
(Rogers)

The way this film came about is that [we] had a number of long talks with John Pinto, we read his book, and we came to understand something about the fountain from an art historical point of view. Then we went to Rome and just hung out for a week around the fountain and just looked at it and looked at it. And we shot everything we could think of in a very informal way.
(Rogers)

We came away, I think, with a very simple perception of the fountain, which was that it was a confident, generous, playful public sculpture open to interpretation and highly adaptable to mood. And the idea for the film was a simple one. We hoped that by documenting some examples of those moods and interpretations, the film might hint at those reasons for the fountain's continued success as a work of art.
(Shaff)

I think having written a scholarly book freed my hand, made me feel more free in what we could do in the film. But [there must be] a fundamental recognition that a book is not a film and a film is not a book, and neither should try to be the other.
(Pinto)

I had been rather wary of making a significant use of people on the site. As an art historian trained to look at still, unmoving, inarticulate monuments, I always tended to edit out the people in my slides. I came to see that one can [include people] and do it well.
(Pinto)

There are no rules. One cannot take art-making and make it into a manufacturing process.
(Rogers)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Several different film styles are used to convey different interpretations of the fountain. How do these express different meanings and affect our relationship to the film and the information it presents?

How does the technique of multiple interpretations affect the manner in which the work of art is understood?

What is the role of water in animating the fountain and in structuring the film?

Photo courtesy of Corey Shaff

A maintenance man cleans the Trevi Fountain.

ABOUT THE WORK OF ART

In 13 B.C., a country girl is said to have led a detachment of Roman soldiers to a hidden spring ten miles outside of Rome. Their commander, Marcus Agrippa, had this water brought to Rome by means of an aqueduct, through which it continues to flow today. The aqueduct terminated in a fountain called the Trevi, after the three streets, or *tre vie*, that converged at the site.

During this period, water from the Trevi was sold and transported all over Rome, forming the life blood of the city. As the urban terminus of a long aqueduct, the Trevi constituted the main water source of Rome, transported at great expense. Not surprisingly, it came to be used by popes to celebrate their pastoral care for the city and to provide an enduring memorial of their reigns.

Three successive fountains were constructed on the site between 1453 and 1732, each with a distinctive design and architectural setting. As it appears today, the fountain is largely the work of Nicola Salvi, whose late-baroque design was executed over a thirty-year period between 1732 and 1762. Salvi transformed an existing building facade and a modest piazza into one of the most monumental fountains in Rome, covering the front of the Palazzo Poli with an elegant architectural veneer and extending the basin out into most of the available space. Against a backdrop that resembles a triumphal arch, the commanding figure of Oceanus, lord of the water, stands on a shell-shaped chariot drawn by sea horses and accompanied by tritons, mythological creatures with the upper bodies of men and the tails of fish.

On the fountain's facade are other allegorical figures symbolizing the beneficial aspects of water and two bas-reliefs showing the discovery of the spring and the building of the aqueduct. Surrounding Oceanus and his chariot, an extraordinary landscape of eroded rocks and plants, all carved from travertine, extends into the basin of the fountain.

Salvi's theme for the Fontana di Trevi was the role of water as the primary life force in nature. The scientific principle of the recirculation of the earth's water through evaporation and precipitation had first been formally proposed in 1717, but the phenomenon had been considered much earlier by Aristotle, Plato and other classical authors. Salvi combined mythological symbolism and contemporary scientific inquiry to create a visual metaphor of the presence of water on the land and in the sea and air.

SELECTED TEXTS FROM THE FILM

In whatever way we chose to visualize Oceanus, it will always be true that the image must embody an impression of power that has no limit and is not restricted in the material world by any bounds. It is completely free and always at work even in the smallest part of the created universe. Here it is brought and distributed itself to make useful those parts of

earth which give nutrition and birth to new forms. At the same time it quenches the excessive heat which would destroy this life. Thus water can be called the only everlasting source of continuous being.
(Nicola Salvi, architect of the Trevi Fountain)

They and the rest of the party descended some steps to the water's brim, and after a sip or two stood gazing at the absurd design of the fountain, where some sculptor of Bernini's school had gone absolutely mad in marble. It was a great palace front, with niches and many bas-reliefs out of which looked Agrippa's legendary virgin, and several of the allegoric sisterhood; while at the base appeared Neptune, with his floundering steeds and tritons blowing their horns about him, and twenty other artificial fantasies, which the calm moonlight soothed into better taste than was native to them. And, after all, it was as magnificent a piece of work as ever human skill contrived.
(Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun*, 1860)

Photo courtesy of Foto Vasari Roma

The great god Oceanus oversees the Trevi Fountain.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Blunt, Anthony. *Guide to Baroque Rome*. New York: Harper and Row, 1982.

Clark, Eleanor. *Rome and a Villa*. New York: Atheneum, 1982.

Morton, Henry Canova Vollam. *The Fountains of Rome*. New York: Maemillan, 1966.

Pinto, John A. *The Trevi Fountain*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.

PROGRAM 2

A WINDOW TO HEAVEN

20 MIN. / COLOR / 35 MM / 1990

Adrian Maben / Filmmaker
Robin Cormack / Art Expert
Gabriel Yared / Music

Saint Neophytos (1134–1214) was a Byzantine monk who spent 55 years of his life in a set of caves near Paphos in a remote corner of the island of Cyprus. He established a community of followers and commissioned artists to paint the cave walls with scenes depicting the lives of the saints and of Christ. The film team sought to create a project about the interplay between twelfth-century words and images, and to draw a parallel between media messages of today and the hidden messages of the hermit Neophytos on the walls of his cave dwelling.

MAKING THE FILM

This kind of approach to art history is what in England we call new art history. It's more anthropological, and it says that meanings lie more in the viewers than the intentions of people. . . . I would hope that this film could help in the process of showing the value of new art history to some people who otherwise might have said it was a kind of scholarship which is all jargonized.
(Cormack)

I disagree with the idea that one must be a scholar before starting on things. On the contrary, it's essential to learn during the process of making a film. The advantage of the Program for Art on Film's Lab was that you had the art historian on hand to supply the information and facts whenever you needed them.
(Maben)

In the first treatment, I hadn't really understood that I couldn't have as many words as I wanted. And that they couldn't be exactly in the form I wanted. Some people would say that words can explain everything you need to look at in art. I would disagree with them partly from what I've learned from making this film. If the film is correct in arguing that images speak in a different way from words and say different things from words, then of course the film is doing this itself all the time. It has its own subtext. In other words, film offers the art historian a way of saying very precisely what he or she can only hint at in a rather ambivalent way in writing. It is a more precise medium in this case.
(Cormack)

Adrian was convinced that the film would not take shape until we shot it. Therefore he was reluctant to formulate anything in great detail before shooting. I think in retrospect Adrian was correct that it was the shooting and the editing process which determined the nature of the film.
(Cormack)

Photo courtesy of François Poivret

***Director Maben checks the lighting of the paintings during production of* A Window to Heaven.**

In spite of the fact that we spent a lot of time preparing the film, many changes were made during the shooting period. This is an essential part of filmmaking. You must keep an open mind, improvise whenever necessary and learn to use the surprises (both good and bad) that crop up during daily routine.
(Maben)

The relationship between the author and the director – where the power lies – depends on what stage you are in making the film. . . . When you start off the film, Robin knows everything. He's the king. It's his film, so to speak. When we shoot it, probably there is a mixture of the balance between both of us. He'll say what we need and I would say, this is what I can do. And in the last stage, probably the balance swings back to me, because it's a technical thing there.
(Maben)

I think that the most important thing for me in the collaboration was being there at all times, being there on location, particularly being there during the editing process. My advice to another art

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

How does this film convey the ways in which art can express what cannot be directly spoken or written?

The film presents one way of understanding a particular work of art. Does it allow its audience to reflect on other ways of looking at that art? Does its dramatic structure close off thought?

***Compare the sacred space of Neophytos' cave with those of Beauvais* (Architecture of Transcendence, *Program 4) and Cordoba* (A Mosque in Time, *Program 3). How do the different film treatments affect your perception of those spaces and their decoration*?**

historian [would be] that it must be total commitment to this and a willingness to rethink and to change all the time. . . . The thing that surprised me most was the power of the edit, the ability to change so much just by moving a few frames around. . . . One thing I've learned is that the more you have to do with films, the more you want to be a director.
(Cormack)

ABOUT THE WORKS OF ART

The painted caves of Neophytos are among the major twentieth-century discoveries of Byzantine art. They survive almost completely, and they vividly evoke the world of medieval Christianity. Neophytos himself made striking choices of pictures that show how the image of a living saint was conveyed to other members of his community and to pilgrims visiting the site. These paintings, along with the writings of Neophytos, were to serve as exemplars of spiritual living.

The walls of the monastery, painted in 1183 and again in 1196, provide an extraordinary opportunity to examine the persuasive function of religious art. According to art historian Robin Cormack, Neophytos made claims about his virtues and his afterlife in paradise by using art to imply messages that he could not risk stating directly. In the painted images, he goes almost so far as to identify himself directly with Christ.

A painting of Neophytos in his hermit's cell, for example, contains the written text, "Christ, through the prayers of your Mother and your Baptist, Who stand reverently by your holy throne, Be merciful now and for evermore To him who lies as a suppliant at your feet." While the written prayer is a model of saintly humility, the painted image shows the hands of Christ blessing Neophytos, conveying the unspoken message that the hermit's prayers have been answered.

Over the altar of the monastery church, a painting of Neophytos incorporates a text that can be read in two ways. One meaning reads, "I pray to these two angels that this image should come true." The other states, "I pray to join the community of these two angels because of my religious cloak." Although the words are ambivalent, the visual message is clear. Neophytos is ascending to heaven just as the figure of Christ does on the wall beside him.

In a painting of Christ resurrecting the dead from Hell, Saint John is portrayed with the text, "See the one of whom I have said, He comes to free you from the bonds of Hell." Christ is shown freeing Adam, but Adam strongly resembles Neophytos. A twelfth-century monk looking up at the ceiling of the monastery church would have seen a painting representing the ascension. Neophytos, portrayed as an icon, looks downward, having joined the company of the other saints.

Neophytos died about 1214, not long after making his will at the age of eighty. He was buried in the wall of his hermit's cell. Although he never explicitly claimed to be a saint, he was recognized as a saint of the Orthodox Church, fulfilling the destiny that he prophesied in the images he commissioned for the walls of his monastery.

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE AND ITS ART

The beginning of the Byzantine, or East Roman, empire is usually dated to the founding of Constantinople (now Istanbul) in A.D. 330 by Constantine the Great.

By the sixth century, the western part of the Roman empire had been seriously weakened by invading tribes, while the eastern, or Byzantine, part of the empire remained relatively stable and gained power. As the Byzantine empire grew, differences in Christian doctrine led to a break between the western, or Roman Catholic Church, and the eastern, or Orthodox Church.

Byzantine churches often were filled with rich and brilliant mosaics or wall paintings depicting religious and imperial figures. The most famous surviving monument of Byzantine art is the church of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul.

The twelfth century was a period of intense artistic creativity in Byzantium, but more paintings have survived in the churches of the empire outside Constantinople than in the capital itself. The Enkleistra of Neophytos in Cyprus has one of the best preserved decorations of the period; some paintings were commissioned in 1183 from the artist Theodore Apseudes; other artists added more paintings around 1190.

The work of 1183 is in a new and expressive style of Byzantine art, making much use of swirling draperies and exaggerated postures for the figures. The second phase is much more static and mesmeric in style, with heavy figures and staring eyes.

Both periods include portrait images of the hermit Neophytos. These representations of an individual during his lifetime make the whole ensemble unique in Byzantine art; nowhere else are the aspirations and values of this society communicated so directly in art.

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PROGRAM 3

FILM FORM/ART FORM

TOTAL RUNNING TIME 52 MIN.

THE CONVERSATION

the relationship of a film's structure to the work of art
the role of experimental film technique

Keith Christiansen
Jane Wrightsman Curator of European Paintings, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Jerrilynn Dodds
Associate Professor, School of Architecture, City University of New York

Linda Downs
Head of Education, National Gallery of Art

Brian O'Doherty
Director, Media Arts Program, National Endowment for the Arts

Andrea Simon
Independent Filmmaker

Courtesy of Windsor Castle, Royal Library / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Leonardo's Deluge *animates Leonardo da Vinci's sketches in an unusual approach to depicting art on film.*

Photo courtesy of Alain Morillon

The film team of The Pantheon of Domes *prepares for a shot from the revolutionary dome structure.*

THE FILMS

LEONARDO'S DELUGE
14 min . Color . Video . 1989 . USA . English

Producer / Director: Mark Whitney
Art Expert: Carlo Pedretti
Music: Ian underwood

A MOSQUE IN TIME
8 min. Color. Video. 1990 . USA . English

Director: Edin Velez
Art Expert: Jerrilynn Dodds

SAINTE-GENVIEVE, THE PANTHEON OF DOMES
16 min. Color. Video . 1989 . USA . English

Director: Nadine Descendre
Art Expert: Barry Bergdoll

FILM FORM/ART FORM

Should films and videos about art be experimental in their use of form and visual language?

Does the film move beyond the facts toward an experience of the art which would not be possible in other media?

Do the form and visual language of the film parallel the form and meaning of the art?

Do the form and visual language of the film contribute to a deeper understanding of the art?

There are some times when changing the viewers' experience – taking them out of the very controlling experience of viewing something in their normal way – tells them something new about the thing that they're looking at.
(Jerrilynn Dodds, Art Expert, *A Mosque in Time*)

The [films] which seem to work are the ones which try to make their own filmic structure homologous with the structure of the art work on some level.
(Andrea Simon, Filmmaker, *The Fayum Portraits*, Program 1)

Too often films about art, with their predictable pacing and monotonous narrators, fail to exploit the full range of aesthetic possibilities available to the medium. They wind up being boring and flat, supplying almost no sense of what made the work of art so interesting in the first place. Clearly, one may challenge outmoded presentations by experimenting with content and visual style. But what does experimentation really mean? What underlying issues guide the structuring of a film about art? And how does form contribute to the meaning of the film itself?

I think film can do pretty much anything that the object will submit to. And if it can't do it, you have to ask yourself if you should be trying to do that to it. (Jerrilynn Dodds)

We were trying to animate a sequential process. I think that's important to establish, because I actually am quite conservative about this. I think that bringing the technology to most art, most high art – and to animate it – is a total bastardization of the work. And it may or may not be in [Leonardo's Deluge] as well, but I think there was a rationale behind it.
(Mark Whitney, filmmaker, *Leonardo's Deluge*)

Filmmakers and art historians who play with non-traditional film forms risk being misunderstood. They may find their intentions lost in the clutter of technique. On the other hand, a film that does not engage the viewer in the filmmaking process fails in one of its primary missions: to use the medium in its own unique fashion.

One of the defects, at least for me, in many of the films produced is the discordance between the idea and the images. I feel again and again that the filmmaker is caught up in his own world of cuts, technique, how this film is fitting into filmmaking [and] the statement it's making about filmmaking, instead of a film about this project.
(Keith Christiansen, panelist)

What can be learned from a "failed" experiment? Playing with film form can lead to distortions of the subject matter. The pressure to be avant-garde, especially among independent filmmakers, can reduce even simple ideas to gibberish. Yet, issues of structure and technique are important, even when one is working within more traditional formats. To ignore these issues is a disservice to both the medium and the viewer.

Rather than imposing a strict structure upon art-historical information, many of the films in this series try to provide a loose, flexible framework encouraging a variety of responses from the viewer. Ultimately, the richest film form may be the one that most directly involves the viewer in a continuous reshaping of experience.

The filmmaker needs to

find an approach that does justice to both the language of film and the language of art

and at the same time

find film styles and techniques that communicate the experience of a work of art.

The art expert needs to

be receptive to the language of film as a tool for exploring specific characteristics of the art

and at the same time

recognize film form as a process of communication and not a mute vehicle for traditional scholarship.

Photo courtesy of Ethel Velez

Art historian Dodds and director Velez pause during the shooting of **A Mosque in Time** ***to view a take.***

PROGRAM 3

LEONARDO'S DELUGE

14 MIN. / COLOR / VIDEO / 1989

Mark Whitney / Filmmaker
Carlo Pedretti / Art Expert

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), the Italian artist and scientist, was fascinated by the movement of water. Late in his life, he composed eleven small drawings of a deluge, drawings that probably reflect theories developed over a lifetime of observation. This video uses state-of-the-art computer animation techniques and scenes of natural landscapes around the Arno River to underscore the symbolic significance of these drawings. Selections from Leonardo's notebooks comprise the narration, which is spoken by Anjelica Huston.

MAKING THE FILM

We wanted to show that Leonardo is still very much part of our life today, and that's why we have this animation, to show that, literally, Leonardo moves. I'm not the art historian who approaches Leonardo as a mummy or something like that. I'm the art historian who takes him back into our time, because that's where he belongs.
(Pedretti)

Courtesy of Windsor Castle, Royal Library. © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Leonardo da Vinci was fascinated by the physical and symbolic properties of water.

As a filmmaker looking at this series of drawings about an event taking place over time, intrinsic in that is the fact that it has to do with a developmental sequence. It blends, in a way. These are stills that lend themselves to being put into a sequential order and animated. So, embedded in this series that Leonardo drew is the concept of time and space and movement and, hence, filmmaking. So they intrinsically lent themselves to the process of being animated. (Whitney)

The whole charting of the course and the decisions that were made regarding the production of the film really came out of a questioning and a trying to come to terms with what may have been going on in Leonardo's mind when he made the drawings. (Whitney)

Here we are dealing with essence. So we are dealing with Leonardo's thought process, and I think it would be disturbing to have a Gregory Peck voice on top of that. I think Anjelica Huston is a perfect choice because soon enough you don't think of Anjelica Huston anymore, you have this haunting type of musing aloud. By the end, of course, you've completely forgotten that there is a name attached to that voice. It's Leonardo. (Pedretti)

Most of the live-action footage has been processed, both in the production and in the post-production of it. I found that if I changed the speed of the camera when I was recording it, and then went back into post-production and changed the speed of the recorder, I could get something that was much closer to what in fact my mind's eye saw subjectively. (Whitney)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

By using animation, this film changes the work of a great artist. Is this desecration, or have the filmmakers served Leonardo's larger goals in some way?

Do we experience Leonardo's drawings differently in a lasting way after having seen this film?

How does the choice of a female voice to read Leonardo's words affect our comprehension or appreciation of the film?

ABOUT THE WORKS OF ART

Painter, sculptor, architect, inventor and engineer, Leonardo da Vinci is an outstanding example of a Renaissance genius. Throughout his career, Leonardo seemed to be fascinated by the destructive force of water. Four years before his death, he completed the eleven drawings depicting a deluge that appear in this film.

As scholars have noted, Leonardo's drawings of water go beyond scientific notation to express a symbolic vision of a cataclysm. They suggest a last judgment or the end of the world. Leonardo saw water as the source of all life and as a symbol of the blood flowing through living beings. He perceived streams, rivers and oceans as the earth's corollary to the life-sustaining circulatory systems in the human body. Filmmaker Mark Whitney observed that Leonardo's deluge drawings "represent a synthesis of observation and imagination. They reflect his proclivity to go beyond nature into the realm of the symbolic. For Leonardo, the high point of humans is reached when their observations are informed by imagination."

COMPUTER ANIMATION TECHNIQUES

Although animating the deluge drawings is a radical approach to putting art on film, the film team feels Leonardo would have enjoyed this experiment. In fact, the team believes that if Leonardo were alive today his curiosity and work in scientific observation would lead him to use computers in creating his art.

Photo courtesy of Isaiah Wyner

***Director Whitney (standing) and art historian Pedretti view an animated segment of* Leonardo's Deluge.**

Animating the drawings required a complex series of technical steps. At the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, scanned images of the drawings were enhanced using computer technology created to strengthen pictures from outer space. Art historian Carlo Pedretti arranged the drawings in a sequence, creating a series of images resembling a storyboard, and a computer was used to develop intermediary images between the drawings. For some images, however, too much information was missing for the computer to fill in the gaps between drawings. The team then turned to research in fluid dynamics for help in depicting Leonardo's flowing water. Further experiments at the National Center for Supercomputer Applications at the University of Illinois failed to solve the problem.

The team then took the project to Optomystic, a studio with extensive experience in combining art with science to created animated images. Using a sophisticated supercomputer known as the Connection Machine, one of an emerging group of computers known as parallel processors, computer animator Karl Sims outlined individual areas of each drawing so that they could be choreographed to move individually. Because of the computer's tremendous power, each pixel, or picture element, could be manipulated individually. Sims wrote the software in a week, and the animation of the drawings was completed a few weeks later.

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PROGRAM 3

A MOSQUE IN TIME

8 MIN. / COLOR / VIDEO / 1990

Edin Velez / Filmmaker
Jerrilynn Dodds / Art Expert

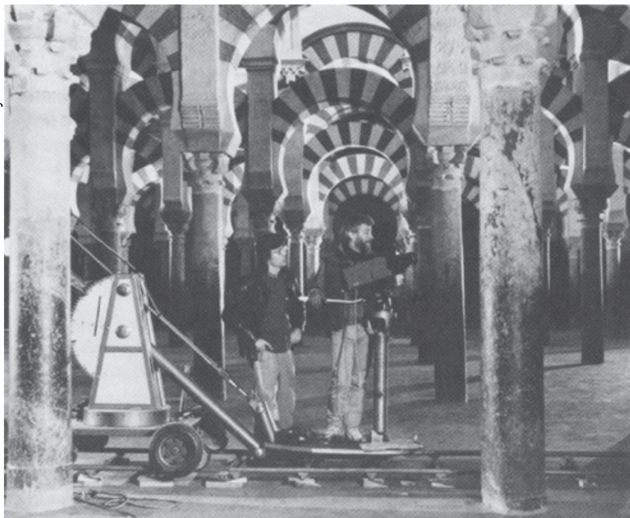
Originally built by Abd al-Rahman I in the eighth century, the Great Mosque of Cordoba was consecrated as a Christian church in 1236. The video uses a complex layering of images and split screens to deconstruct the architectural space and the forms of Islamic and Christian ornament that intertwine two cultures that are alienated in time but bound together in this extraordinary space.

MAKING THE FILM

One of the biggest challenges I had in dealing with representing architecture on screen is how to convey a proper sense of scale without the inclusion of a person within the frame. (Velez)

Edin's work is all about breaking up the screen in order to create a more intellectually honest reaction between the surface of the screen and the audience, that is, not to draw the audience in, not to trick the audience into the ultimate subjective identification. And I

Courtesy of Ethel Velez



Director Velez and his camera operator discuss a tracking shot through the arched interior of the Great Mosque at Cordoba.

very much respected that. And politically, I believed in that when I started out. But what happened is that I saw how incredibly that dispersing of the image on the screen alienates the audience, not so much from the film, because it's beautiful video, but alienates the audience from the object.
(Dodds)

The video, visually, structurally, has two main components, which are the long travelling shots with a single image that reveal large amounts of the space in uninterrupted moves, and then the layered images, which reveal the dissonances and constancies of the architectural detail.
(Velez)

In the course of shooting and seeing the mosque from the camera's eye and noticing with what difficulty the mosque yielded to the notion of being clarified, I understood that it wasn't supposed to be clarified, that every person who had added to the mosque, including the Christians, had wanted to appropriate everything else. Because the mosque itself had so much power and meaning, nobody wanted their little part of it to stand alone. They wanted their part of it to be part of the whole. And I learned that through the camera's eye. I learned that through trying to make the camera do something to the mosque that the mosque didn't want done to it.
(Dodds)

I really think that our film had to fail. It's a very big issue to understand that the intellectualization of film does not produce a good film on art.
(Dodds)

ABOUT THE WORKS OF ART

The Great Mosque at Cordoba was begun in 786 by the Caliph Abd al-Rahman I on the former site of a church. The mosque was originally designed as an open rectangle, with interior aisles of columns to mark the side nearest Mecca. Fifty years later, the building was enlarged by lengthening the aisles. Between 961 and 965,

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

The film team hoped to create a visual language that embodied a way of both thinking and seeing. Why is this a useful goal in a film about art? Could the filmmakers have found other approaches?

To what degree is the visual approach a natural outgrowth of the environment explored, and to what degree is it an intrusive application of extraneous technique?

This video explores a monument whose meaning and form evolved over time. Compare its approach to interpretation with the films in Program 2.

the Caliph al-Hakam II extended the aisles for the second time and embellished the interior with rich ornamentation. At the end of the tenth century, during the last years of the caliphate, al-Mansur extended the prayer hall to the east.

The visitor entering the Mosque of Cordoba sees an endless forest of columns supporting a double tier of striped stone arches, which creates a light and airy effect. A vaulted chamber near the mosque's prayer niche carries the stacking of arches even further. Here, three tiers of lobed arches intertwine to form a lacy, ornamental screen. This delight in architectural tracery that obscures walls and lends mystery and fascination to architectural interiors is typical of the Islamic architecture of Spain and North Africa.

In 1236 King Ferdinand defeated the Muslims of Cordoba, placing the city in the hands of the Christians. The mosque was then reconsecrated as the Cathedral of St. Mary. King Henry II decorated the cathedral as a royal pantheon for Christian kings in 1371. In 1523, the construction of a choir was begun within the precincts of the old temple, and an enormous nave and crossing was built at the mosque's center.

Today, the mosque is a secular monument attracting tourists from all over the world. The most important mosque built in Europe, Cordoba survives as a great architectural achievement at the crossroads of Islam and Christianity.

RELIGION AND CONQUEST IN ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

The architecture and decoration of mosques reflect several characteristics of the Islamic religion. The Prophet Muhammad had barred idolatry from Islam; thus mosques contained none of the sculpture or pictorial art that ornaments Christian churches. Instead, Islamic mosques are embellished with a rich and varied repertoire of abstract design, including intricate tracery and geometric patterns.

In *A Mosque in Time*, it is possible to distinguish the highly abstract geometric designs of the Islamic ornament from the graphic figural sculptures in the Christian church. A parallel to this contrast is also in the texts in the film: the Islamic texts are more abstract, referring to absolute qualities, while the Christian texts emphasize the human suffering of Christ.

The notion that every Muslim has equal access to Allah and the lack of a religious hierarchy that is characteristic of Islam led to the creation of buildings that did not need the formally structured aisles and altars common in Christian churches. Early mosques were often improvised in appropriated churches, halls or even in enclosed fields. The only necessary element was the marking of the direction of Mecca, toward which Muslims turn in prayer.

Early in the eighth century, when the Islamic empire stretched from Spain in the west to India in the east, Muslims symbolized their conquests by constructing mosques on a grand scale. These were often large rectangular buildings with aisles of columns running toward the wall that faced Mecca, which was generally marked by a niche called the Mihrab.

Photo courtesy of Ethel Velez

A Mosque in Time director Velez uses a moving camera to depict the space of the mosque.

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PROGRAM 3

SAINTE-GENEVIEVE,
THE PANTHEON OF DOMES
16 MIN. / COLOR / VIDEO / 1989

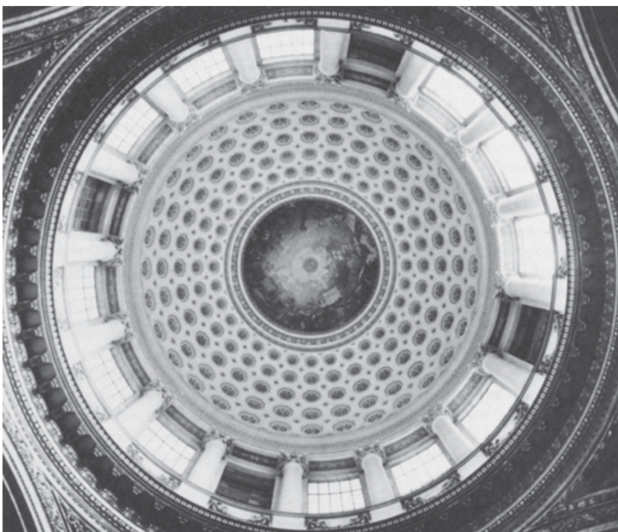
Nadine Descendre / Filmmaker
Barry Bergdoll / Art Expert

This video explores the complex and controversial Parisian church of Sainte-Geneviève, designed by Jacques Soufflot in the 1750s and known today as the Pantheon. It follows two experts in eighteenth-century architecture, Barry Bergdoll of Columbia University and Jean-Pierre Mouilleseaux of the Caisse Nationale des Monuments Historiques et des Sites, as they explore the building. Their conversation considers the place of the Pantheon in architectural history.

MAKING THE FILM

Cinema is, above all, a problem of dramatic construction. We are in a space/time system that has nothing to do with an architecture or painting. So we must find a specific process

Courtesy of Alain Morillon



Soufflot's plan for the great dome of Sainte-Geneviève provoked controversy among his architectural peers.

for film which would correspond to the meaning of this architecture.
(Descendre)

I wanted to communicate the importance of Soufflot through this film. I wanted to find a way of provoking the viewers of this film so that it would change their way of seeing it. For me, it was more an intellectual challenge than a cinematographic one.
(Bergdoll)

Working with Barry gave me a different appreciation of the building. If I had made the film alone, maybe it would have been the same from a cinematographic point of view, but concerning the message about the architecture itself, I would have ruined the building. I would have tried to find a cinematographic trick to deconstruct this place because it seemed eclectic – and I think it is – but at the same time very unstable in its coherence.
(Descendre)

I am not afraid to say that it didn't really work out the way we planned. The original idea was that the two voices would totally correspond to the structure of the film, and in fact they didn't quite correspond at the end. The idea was to have two points of view: visual and historical, the views of two specialists who didn't completely disagree but who didn't quite agree either. The real presence of two distinct voices was a little lost.
(Bergdoll)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

The video presents the Pantheon in a variety of ways: through cameras and kaleidoscopes, and in paintings, stamps and bank notes. How does this additional layer of interpretation affect our understanding?

Art historians are used in a particular way in this film. How does this technique affect our experience of the Pantheon? How does it differ from other styles of narration?

ABOUT THE WORKS OF ART

The great neoclassical church dedicated to Sainte-Geneviève was built by Jacques-Germain Soufflot (1713-1780) to house the tomb of the popular patron saint of Paris. Its fame and its place at the center of French politics was assured during the French Revolution, when the unfinished basilica was renamed the Pantheon and converted to a secular temple of civic virtue dedicated to the great men of France. The Pantheon has remained at the center of political controversy as successive governments reinterpret the building as a symbol of their new ideals.

Soufflot's architectural daring is most clearly expressed in the Pantheon's soaring dome, which incorporates three distinct masonry drums, placed one within the other. Unlike all previous domed churches built on cross-shaped plans, the dome of the Pantheon was not to be supported by massive masonry piers. Rather, Soufflot's audacious and inventive design placed its weight primarily on free-standing Corinthian columns, creating a light-filled and spacious interior. In contrast to other domes with multiple shells, which contain a great deal of wooden carpentry to distribute their weight. Soufflot insisted that his three nested drums were to be built entirely from stone.

A bitter architectural controversy arose over Soufflot's design. Many architects doubted that the daringly thin columns could support the weight of the dome and accused Soufflot of contradicting traditional structural knowledge. He responded with the testimony of a distinguished engineer and evidence of machines especially designed to test the limits of the materials he had employed. However, even before the dome was begun, fissures had appeared in the thin crossing piers. Soufflot refused to change his design, and he died in 1780, without seeing the completion of his building.

NEOCLASSICISM

Soufflot's design for the Pantheon represents an ambitious attempt to combine the majestic simplicity of Greek architecture with the lightness and structural daring of Gothic architecture. Rejecting the delight in ornament for its own sake that typified rococo architecture, Soufflot's design heralded the birth of the more austere architectural forms of neoclassicism.

Typical of Enlightenment thinkers, Soufflot believed that the past offered the key to progress. He was one of the first architects to make a pilgrimage to the Greek temples in southern Italy to search for the origins of Greek architecture. He also analyzed Christian architecture from the earliest adaptations of the Roman basilica to the great churches of the seventeenth century. He hoped to incorporate their multiple lessons in a building that would surpass them all.

By proposing that antique buildings could be perfected by incorporating the structural lessons in Gothic architecture, neoclassicism revealed itself to be more than nostalgia for a lost golden age. The search for architectural origins led to a progressive investigation of the

Photo courtesy of Alain Morillon

The Pantheon of Domes ***presents a tour of the great neoclassical structure in Paris.***

possibility of a new architecture, one that would rival the great monuments of the past. Reflecting these aims, Soufflot's building is more than a mere example of technical innovation. It embodies the Enlightenment faith in the perfectibility of man and his creations.

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PROGRAM 4

FILM VOICE/ART VOICE

TOTAL RUNNING TIME 51 MIN.

THE CONVERSATION

defining the voice of a film
the number of voices in a film about art

Barry Bergdoll
Associate Professor, Art History and Archaeology, Columbia University

Leila Kinney
Assistant Professor of Art History, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Richard P. Rogers
Independent Filmmaker

Susan Vogel
Executive Director, The Center for African Art, New York

Courtesy of Anita Thacher

Painted Earth ***examines thousand-year-old painted pottery, the artistic remains of a Native American people who lived in what is now the southwestern United States.***

Architecture of Transcendence ***celebrates the cathedral at Beauvais, France, the tallest Gothic cathedral.***

Photo courtesy of Anita Thacher

Painted Earth ***adopted the techniques of television commercials to present works of art on film.***

THE FILMS

DE ARTIFICIALI PERSPECTIVA OR ANAMORPHOSIS
15 min . Color . 35mm . 1991 . USA/Great Britain . English

Directors: The Brothers Quay
Producer: Keith Griffiths
Art Expert: Roger Cardinal
Advisor: Sir Ernst Gombrich
Music: Leszek Jankowski

ARCHITECTURE OF TRANSCENDENCE
9 min. Color . 16mm . 1988 . USA . No Narration (English text on screen)

Director: Richard Greenberg
Producers: Brian Williams and Lisa Fisher
Art Expert: Stephen Murray
Music: Philip Glass

PAINTED EARTH: THE ART OF THE MIMBRES INDIANS
15 min. Color . 16mm . 1989 . USA . English

Producer/Director: Anita Thacher
Art Expert: J. J. Brody
Music: Vito Ricci

PROGRAM 4

FILM VOICE/ART VOICE

Who is the voice of authority in a film about art?

Does the balance between words and images strengthen the film's voice?

Does the use of multiple voices enrich the film?

What voice does the film have besides its verbal text?

The whole issue about voice is really very hot in museums these days. Nobody ever sees art, I think, without some kind of framing. It's always presented; you're always seeing somebody's idea of how you ought to see it. And a museum is not a neutral context, it's not a transparent lens.
(Susan Vogel, panelist)

The concept of voice in film is difficult to define, but we experience something approximating a dominant authorial voice in most films. Voice is sound – narration and music. Voice is the guiding presence or perspective shaping the film. And finally, voice is the totality of a film's many elements – image, text, music, sound – that combine to deliver meaning.

Each film in ART ON FILM/FILM ON ART constructs voice in its own way. Some use historic texts and music to enhance our experience of the art. Some use an innovative visual style. Others create voice-over narrations. Still others juxtapose a variety of alternative perspectives, seeking to subvert the idea of a single authoritative viewpoint. Yet, the decision to subvert authority is in itself the expression of a guiding sensibility. By this token, voice transcends issues relating to the work of art, revealing a philosophical disposition toward all knowledge and human experience.

It seems to me that the real problem with the voice in films about art is that the people who commission the work are often comfortable with words. They want to see a text, and they believe that what a film says is what the voice says, because that's what "saying" means. And there's a great fear that the meaning of the film will get loose somehow, that it will mean something that no one can agree upon because they can't hear it.
(Richard P. Rogers, filmmaker, *Trevi*)

Voice can be described as a symphony of senses and ideas, sometimes jarring, sometimes contradictory, but always suggesting an underlying plan. Perhaps the most elusive concept addressed by ART ON FILM/FILM ON ART, it is also the one that provides cohesion to even the most fragmented of films. To the extent that we can hear a voice in a film, we begin to experience the sounds and images as more than just a random collection of data. Voice allows us to penetrate below the surface of the senses,

toward an awareness fueled by intelligence and meaning.

The great early twentieth-century Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein claimed that film is a synthesis of sights and sounds that, in collision, produce abstract concepts and complex ideas. In his view, the process of filmmaking is crucial to understanding the film and to experiencing the author's perceptions. Many of the films in this series emphasize film language – with startling edits, experimental special effects and provocative juxtapositions of image, word and music. But at some level, an abiding voice does filter through. It is not merely to be found in the narration or music, or even in the sequence of images, but in the complex interaction of all of these diverse elements.

When we identify the voice in these films about art, we cannot simply attribute it to a single author. The collaboration of the filmmaker and art historian prevents us from understanding authorship in such simple terms. Moreover, the intentions of these individuals constitute just one component in a film's constant cycle of conflict and synthesis. The true voice of a film can only be found in the body of the film itself.

The filmmaker needs to

construct a system of sounds and images that engender a new conception of a work of art

and at the same time

shape a perspective that not only says something about the art but about how that knowledge is expressed.

The art expert needs to

be sensitive to alternative contexts in which a work of art may by experienced and redefined

and at the same time

contribute more than facts, remaining sensitive to the limits of human objectivity.

The reflexive image of a theater in this frame from Anamorphosis highlights the manipulation of images in creating and understanding anamorphic art.

DE ARTIFICIALI PERSPECTIVA OR ANAMORPHOSIS

15 MIN. / COLOR / 35MM / 1991

The Brothers Quay / Directors
Keith Griffiths / Producer
Roger Cardinal / Art Expert
Sir Ernst Gombrich / Advisor

In this film, animation techniques elucidate anamorphosis, a method of depiction that uses the rules of perspective to systematically distort an image. When looked at from a different angle or in a curved mirror, the distorted image appears normal. Using animation of three-dimensional objects, the filmmakers demonstrate the basic effects of anamorphosis and reveal the hidden meanings that lurk within selected works of art.

MAKING THE FILM

We are probably saying that this particular medium, the film about art, is a medium that guides people to seeing in a certain way. I don't think it can be anything less than pedagogic, but in the best sense: it's an invitation to see more clearly and, if you like, more lucidly. But simply to show without explaining what you're showing doesn't, I think, get people to see any other way than they normally would.
(Cardinal)

We actually have access to giving the viewer that perfect viewpoint. I suppose that's probably what attracted us to this project. Although you had to meet at an exact point to see it, it didn't matter how you approached that point. You just knew you had to get to it at the end. And that was, I think, the whole basis of this film, the different ways of arriving at that point.
(T. Quay)

You can see a little curly broken string on the canvas. I suspect that is part and parcel of that theme of disharmony underlying the harmony. We did at one point have an instruction to the man that made the music to produce the effect, as it were, of a broken string. We would be implying, in effect, a secondary level of argument whereby harmony and disharmony, through musical terms, were being invoked as analogues for anamorphosis and correct vision. And I guess this is a level of simply working with implication, that you're never quite sure afterwards whether you meant it or not or were aware of what you were doing.
(Cardinal)

Photo courtesy of The Brothers Quay

The Brothers Quay, directors of* Anamorphosis*, used animation to reveal hidden images contained in anamorphic art.

I think that it's quite clear that in the films that the twins make, which are very, very subjective, personal films, they treat the image as dance. In essence, there can only be one choreographer of that, and that's the filmmaker. When you're balancing between a documentary form and fiction form, that balance of letting the image speak on its own and clarity [of explanation in the narration] gets extremely complicated.
(Griffiths)

One might say that there's too much of this negotiation of what you're looking at, and it might be that at a certain point there's an overload of demonstration going on. To have [the puppet] standing in for you, being bewildered and then understanding, and then in addition for the voice to say, "Lo and behold, this is happening. Can't you see it?" – it may be that certain viewers would feel this is redundant.
(Cardinal)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

What does the style and approach of this film say about possible ways of dealing with larger and more complex subjects in art?

Do the film's visual strategies contribute to our understanding of anamorphosis in ways that simply viewing the art would not?

How does the film's reflexive reference to a theater alter the way we interpret what we see?

How does the use of the puppet relate to the film's voice?

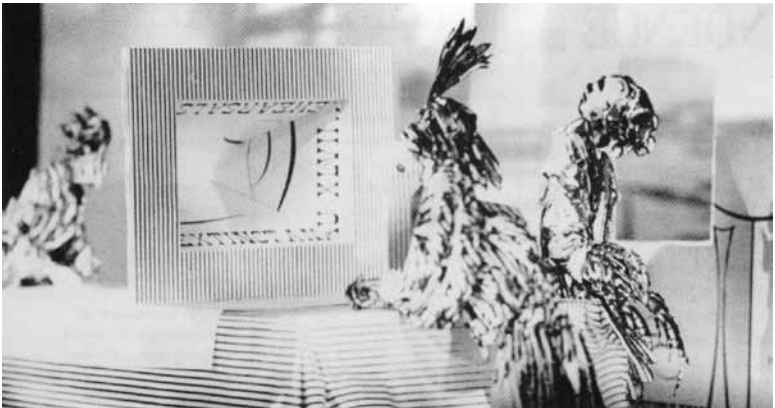
ABOUT THE WORKS OF ART

Anamorphosis is a special mode of illusionistic art that creates a visual distortion by means of exaggerated perspective. The scene depicted is presented to the viewer in a confused or misshapen form but can be made available in a corrected form. This correction – the restoration of a normal view of things – is achieved either by inviting the viewer to view the image from a different angle, or by introducing into the visual field some reflective device, such as a curved mirror.

The practice of creating anamorphic images enjoyed its golden age in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and was an offshoot of the more central artistic concern with perspective techniques for rendering space.

Seemingly flippant, the anamorphic distortion of perspective can be seen as part of an overall artistic concern with exploring the nature of illusion and perceptual experience. Anamorphosis shares with illusionistic painting the same desire to master appearances and to impress the viewer with effects of technical brilliance.

Some practitioners of anamorphosis painted large-scale frescoes in buildings in which the viewer saw the image from a series of changing positions while walking through the interior. Other artists produced woodcuts, oil paintings or wooden boxes. These smaller works often have a more playful spirit than the larger images, which were frequently intended to convey some religious or philosophical message. Smaller works could be tilted or moved about by the viewer to produce the image hidden by the anamorphic illusion.



In this frame from* Anamorphosis*, animated figures explicate anamorphic techniques.

The essence of the viewer's experience of anamorphosis is the pleasurable transition from the disorientation and puzzlement produced by the illegible and unresolved image to the understanding and relief that occur when the correct viewing position has been found. The "question and answer" effect of anamorphosis made it ideal for communicating playful and revealing humor. At the same time, anamorphosis has been used to enhance the mystery of sacred and wondrous events and to uncover deeper truths hidden behind our everyday experience of the world. Used in this manner, anamorphosis leads us to the point where, if we dare, we can contemplate truths that are normally hidden. Even the playful illusions of anamorphosis can teach us serious lessons.

THE WORKS OF ART DEPICTED

wooden chair
Jean François Nicéron
(c. 1638)

two puzzle pictures
Erhard Schön
(c. 1535)

painting of saints
anonymous
(c. 1550)

Saint Francis of Paola
fresco in cloister of S S Trinita dei Monti, Rome
Emmanuel Maignan
(1642)

The Ambassadors
Hans Holbein the Younger
(1533)

SUGGESTED READINGS

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Leeman, Fred, Joost Elffers and Mike Schuyt. *Hidden Images: Games of Perception, Anamorphic Art, Illusion.* Ellyn Childs Allison and Margaret L. Kaplan, trans. New York: Abrams, 1976.

PROGRAM 4

ARCHITECTURE OF TRANSCENDENCE

9 MIN. / COLOR / 16MM / 1988

Richard Greenberg / Director
Stephen Murray / Art Expert
Philip Glass / Music

This film celebrates the Gothic cathedral in Beauvais, France, without spoken narration. The camera is constantly in motion, shaping perception through movement as it explores the interior and the exterior and the imagery of the stained glass windows. The visual images are presented in a sequence that parallels that of the cathedral's construction. Aerial cinematography reveals the structural details of Beauvais' flying buttresses and situates it in the landscape.

MAKING THE FILM

I don't think anybody has ever explored a great building simply by moving through it and watching it change. Intellectually, it has an interesting dimension simply in the way that we use words. Every description of Gothic architecture will resort to certain clichés. We talk about a cathedral "soaring." We talk about the bays "expanding." In a literal sense, I think we have to insist that space does not "soar." Space does not "expand." Space is inert. It is enclosed within a framework of stone and glass. And so the movement of the camera is an attempt to energize the building. And by moving through the building, indeed it soars. It turns. It moves. It does all those things. But we're making it do that.
(Murray)

We started to use the tools that are available to a filmmaker. We moved the camera, boomed and dollied, panned, and from a middle point in the film, it starts moving and it never stops. The camera becomes like an observer who is continually moving through the space, who experiences in a perfect way what really wouldn't be possible for a human being to experience. So it takes on a kind of celestial feeling. The viewer is like an angel flying through that space.
(Greenberg)

Certainly in the back of my mind making this movie was [the feeling that I wanted] to get into the movie the most wonderful raw material, which the beholder, then, can understand in a whole range of different ways, rather than telling the audience what it is they see and what it is they must understand.
(Murray)

In Architecture of Transcendence*, the camera constantly moves, effectively communicating the soaring vertical space of Beauvais within the horizontal format of the screen.*

I found that a voice broke the hypnotic spell that I wanted to create with this film. Anything that we added to it was somehow intrusive. And it became what I really didn't want to make, which was kind of an illustrated lecture. So, by putting [on-screen text] up as just an element of the texture of the film, you then looked at the picture. I also have this feeling about film that you either look or you listen. I wanted the audience to look. (Greenberg)

In a sense, the storytelling and the visual exploration were in conflict. We did, in fact, experiment with a voice-over where we attempted to put a narrative onto it in which we talked about the sequence in which the building was put up. In a very horrifying way, the words bumped into the images.
(Murray)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

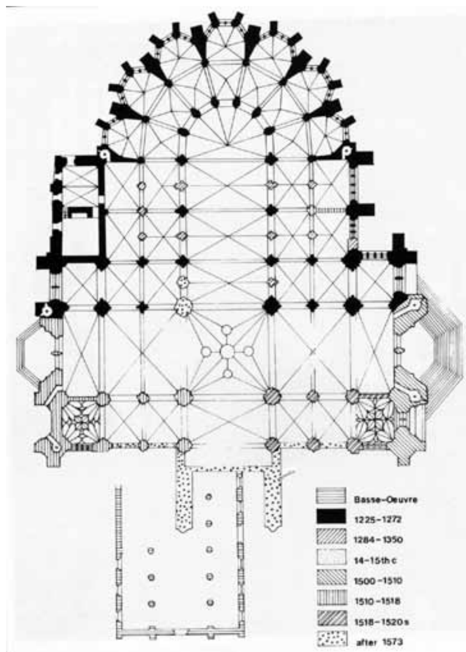
What does the film achieve through the absence of spoken narration? What does it sacrifice?

The film limited its text in order to communicate ideas about "becoming" and transcendence. Does it succeed, and if so, what are the implications for other kinds of films about art?

How does the music contribute to our experience of the film? What are the pros and cons of modern versus period music?

ABOUT THE WORK OF ART

Saint-Pierre de Beauvais was intended by its builders to be the greatest of the high Gothic cathedrals. Its choir, constructed between 1225 and 1272, was the tallest structure that had ever been built in northern Europe.



Drawing by Stephen Murray. © Princeton University Press.

This plan of Beauvais cathedral shows the chronology of its construction.

The first of several major disasters to befall the cathedral happened in 1284, when the upper choir collapsed. Repair work on the choir seems to have begun shortly thereafter and to have been carried out in stages. The final repairs began in 1341, and after they were completed, construction on the cathedral ceased for a century and a half.

Between 1500 and 1550, a transept was built onto the cathedral. The massive and lavishly decorated transept arms were designed by Martin Chambiges, the great architect of the French late Gothic style. In 1563, work began on a colossal tower atop the crossing of the transept and the nave. The tower was finished by 1569 and allowed visitors to see Paris from its upper levels.

Structural problems caused by the weight of the tower were apparent even before it was completed. In spite of several attempts to alleviate the problems, the tower collapsed on April 30, 1573, just after a great procession had left the cathedral. Repairs were completed six years later, but construction halted by 1600. The nave was never built, and on its site, dwarfed by the mass of the Gothic choir and transept, stands the nave of an earlier cathedral, built around 1000 and known as the Basse Oeuvre.

TEXTS FROM THE FILM

We must, in my opinion, begin with distinguishing between that which is and never becomes; and that which is always becoming and never is.
(Plato, *Timaeus*)

The cathedral reveals itself through constant transformation. Constructed in multiple campaigns, victim of multiple structural disasters, it remains unfinished even today. Saint Peter's of Beauvais was begun in 1225 by a proud bishop who claimed to serve only the Apostle. A violent confrontation with the townsfolk and the king of France unseated the bishop and imposed a temporary halt on construction. Finished by 1272, the choir was increased in height, transcending all previous cathedrals. Its proportions, dimensions and extraordinary luminosity match the description of the Celestial city in the Book of Revelation: "and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal."
(Stephen Murray)

Then it seems to me that I see myself dwelling, as it were, in some strange region of the universe which neither exists entirely in the slime of the earth nor entirely in the purity of Heaven; and that, by the grace of God, I can be transported from this inferior world to that higher order.
(Abbot Suger, A.D. 1144)

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Construction of Saint-Pierre de Beauvais was begun in 1225 but, after numerous structural problems, was never completed.

PROGRAM 4

PAINTED EARTH:
THE ART OF THE MIMBRES INDIANS
15 MIN. / COLOR / 16MM / 1989

Anita Thacher / Filmmaker
J. J. Brody / Art Expert

The film concentrates on an examination of the aesthetic aspects of the painted pottery bowls of the Mimbres, a Native American people who lived in the isolated mountain valleys and deserts of southwestern New Mexico a thousand years ago. The filmmakers enlisted camera crews trained in the production of food commercials, who used special camera riggings, motorized prop tables and other tools of commercial "table-top" photography to film the pottery. A portion of the narration is provided by cultural historian Rina Swentzell, a member of the Santa Clara Pueblo tribe.

MAKING THE FILM

We wanted to show this art in such a way that someone would be as close as they could to the actual handling of the work and to give a view of it that people walking in a museum would never have. If you had these pots behind glass, you'd never see the detail that you're able to see in the film. Nor would you get a sense of them in motion which you would if you held them in your hands.
(Thacher)

The first time I saw the film, I was terribly disappointed in it, because of what it didn't say. The second time I saw it, I began to see what it did say, and my disappointment abated. The third time I saw it, I think I really did see what the film was saying, and my disappointment was virtually gone. But the didactic, historical, sociological messages that I wanted to discuss, or at least suggest, were virtually absent.
(Brody)

All my work is about perception. Brody's work isn't about perception, but he was extremely open to that point of view. I mean, I don't think he questioned that for a minute in terms of the way the pots should be shot and so forth. A lot of that was worked out with the cameraman and myself.
(Thacher)

I think that Anita's handling of the medium couldn't have been better. There's one sequence where she begins by focusing in on what appears to be a small child waving its arm, and then she zooms the camera up and twists the pot around, and suddenly you realize, "Son of a gun! This is a child emerging from the womb!" When you look at the pot that idea

of discovery is absent, because it's all there. You don't see it a bit at a time the way the camera does. On the one hand, she used the camera in ways that simulated the actual experience of holding the pot, and on the other hand she used the camera in a very creative way that actually used the pots to do something else that the artist who painted the pots never had in mind.
(Brody)

The Native American voice in the film [narrator Rina Swentzell] conveys a richness of comprehension of the work that a Western observer wouldn't have as part of their life, as part of their history, as part of something that's been passed down to them through their culture. It's something that we're dimly aware of, and we're just beginning to learn how to respect and appreciate.
(Thacher)

Photo courtesy of Isaiah Wyner

Art historian Brody and director Thacher confer during an editing session.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

The filmmakers used sophisticated camera equipment and effects to explore the concave surfaces and imagery of the painted bowls. What other special effects would convey visually some of the techniques and effects created by Mimbres painters?

Has the cinematography provided the viewer with a way of seeing that would not be possible in a museum?

One of the narrators of the film is a Native American. Would knowing this in advance have altered your appreciation of the film in any way? Why?

Does the interplay of voices in fact succeed at suggesting different ways of looking at the art? Does this technique in some way enhance the viewer's understanding?

ABOUT THE WORK OF ART

The Mimbres were a small group of agricultural people who lived in southwestern New Mexico from about 200 B.C. to the twelfth century A.D. The Mimbres had no written language, and thus they are known to us only through their art and physical remains.

To study the art of Mimbres pottery is to be in touch with a culture that operated under vastly different social and economic conditions from our own. Their pottery painting dates from the 700s to 1150. During this time, they moved gradually from hilltop communities of a few households each to large villages in the nearby valley of the Mimbres River and

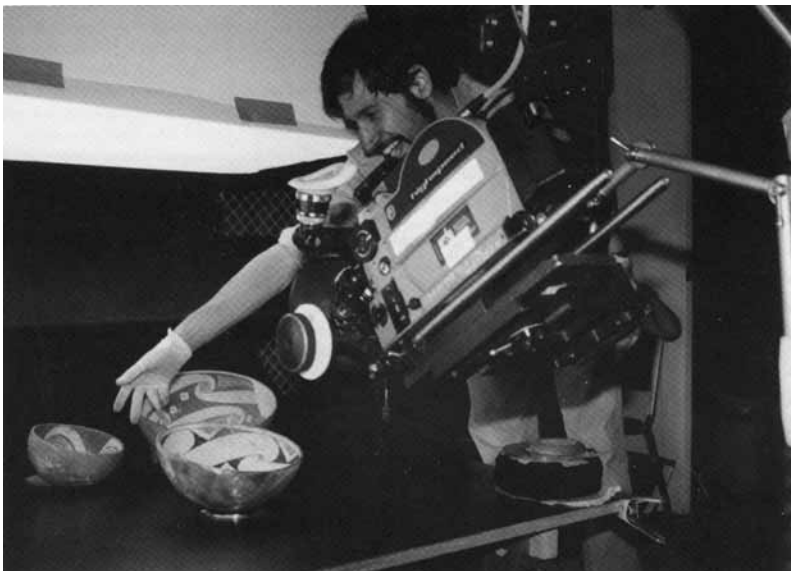

Photo courtesy of Anita Thacher

Painted Earth uses a moving camera and close-up photography to give a three-dimensional view of ancient pottery.

its tributaries. There were never more than about 3,000 Mimbres people living in about a hundred villages. Their paintings became most expressive in the period from 1000–1150, just before they abandoned their homeland, and with it, their art.

Mimbres art, according to art historian J.J. Brody, was made by women who were part-time artists and is part of a much greater regional art tradition that continues to this day among certain Pueblo Indian potters. Unlike the art of our own time, most Mimbres pottery was actually used and then sacrificed before being buried with the honored dead. Mimbres pottery paintings contain varying geometric designs, narratives and images of animals and fantastic creatures, some of which combine aspects of two or more species. The oppositions,

tensions and dualities of Mimbres art can be read as metaphors of a world view harmonizing cosmic oppositions: life-death, male-female, real-supernatural. While we can only speculate about the meaning of the work, we can nonetheless understand and appreciate the success of the Mimbres artists as they resolved complex and fascinating pictorial challenges. The concave, hemispherical picture surface of the interior of a pot is radically different from the flat, rectangular plane surfaces of most painting traditions. This form imposed technical constraints on the Mimbres artists while it provided them with surprising creative opportunities.

From certain perspectives, many of the lines in Mimbres painting give the illusion of being straight, even though they are of necessity painted on a concave surface. Since the paintings were often seen from varying angles as the pots were handled, the Mimbres artists considered the work from multiple viewpoints.

The formal and pictorial elements of Mimbres pottery coexist with a technical means of expression that is simple. Mimbres potters could not easily erase their errors. These pictures required the confidence of an artist whose hand, eye, brush and brain were perfectly coordinated.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Brody, J.J. *Mimbres Painted Pottery.* Albuquerque: School of American Research and University of New Mexico Press, 1991.

Brody, J.J., Katherine J. Scott and Steven A. LeBlanc. *Mimbres Pottery: Ancient Art of the American Southwest.* New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1983.

Carr, Patricia. *Mimbres Mythology.* Southwestern Studies Monograph, no. 56. University of Texas El Paso, 1979.

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PROGRAM 5

FILM/ART: SUBJECT AND EXPERT

TOTAL RUNNING TIME 100 MIN.

THE CONVERSATION

the on-screen expert: potential and limitations
the voice of authority vs. the quest to understand

Barry Bergdoll
Associate Professor, Art History and Archaeology, Columbia University

Leila Kinney
Assistant Professor of Art History, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

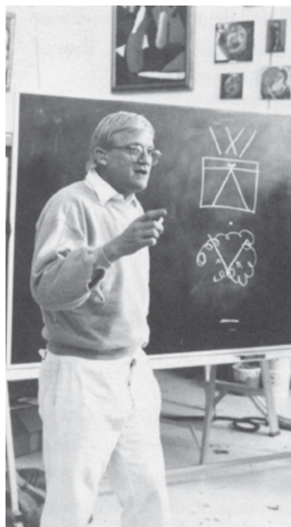
Richard P. Rogers
Independent Filmmaker

Susan Vogel
Executive Director, The Center for African Art, New York

Courtesy of Bo Lutoslawski

In** Gombrich Themes, **Sir Ernst Gombrich, the noted art historian, discusses properties of light in art and nature.

Photo courtesy of Jerry Sohn



Artist Hockney considers perspective in Western Renaissance art and seventeenth and eighteenth-century Chinese scroll painting in Grand Canal.

THE FILMS

GOMBRICH THEMES:
PART 1, ILLUMINATION IN ART AND NATURE
PART 2, REFLECTION IN ART AND NATURE
(1) 26 min . Color . 16mm . 1989 . USA/Great Britain . English
(2) 20 min . Color . 16mm . 1989 . USA/Great Britain . English

Producer/Director: Judy Marle
Art Expert: Sir Ernst Gombrich

A DAY ON THE GRAND CANAL WITH THE EMPEROR OF CHINA
OR SURFACE IS ILLUSION BUT SO IS DEPTH
46 min . Color . 16mm . 1988 . USA . English

Producer/Director: Philip Haas
Art Expert: David Hockney
Music: Marc Wilkinson

PROGRAM 5

FILM/ART: SUBJECT AND EXPERT

The traditional film on art has an authority figure leading the viewer through a gallery. What is wrong with that?

Does an on-camera expert add a quality that an off-screen narrator would not provide?

Does an on-camera expert provide ideas that invite or limit the imagination and further thought?

If somebody had said to me, what's the worst thing you can do, it would be get a famous man and have him talk about some specific piece of art information. But I found these films [to be] wonderful, a life of caring about art recorded.
(Richard P. Rogers, Filmmaker, *Trevi*)

One of the greatest clichés in films about art is the on-screen expert, the scholarly type who points out what we should be looking at in a work of art. This time-honored practice has fallen into disfavor, however. Filmmakers dismiss it as an old-fashioned format saddled with the limitations of the lecture. And many art historians would rather have the art be the "star" of the film.

But is the use of an on-screen expert really so bad? Most of the films in ART ON FILM/FILM ON ART do not use an on-screen expert, but some adopt variations of the format that seek to revise or critique the on-screen expert approach. Can the device succeed on its own terms? The films in this program add fresh insight to the discussion.

A Day on the Grand Canal with the Emperor of China was a collaboration between a filmmaker and an artist rather than an art historian. Artist David Hockney brought a different sensibility to the project, closer in many ways to a filmmaker's. So it is ironic that his film with Philip Haas uses the "art historian's approach" – that of the on-screen expert presenting a work of art.

Hockney's on-screen presence tells us something about the art expert himself. The viewer hears not only various facts and theories about the work of art, but also the passion of the individual expressing them. Hockney becomes part of the subject matter – the protagonist in a larger narrative that explores on artist's fascination and interaction with a work of art. By introducing the expert as a real human being, the film imparts something that voice-over narration seldom does: an awareness of the continuous human effort to understand.

I *think going to art with somebody who really cares about it is wonderful. I think the idea that*

a film can provide an interpretation which invites the imagination by extension is wonderful.
(Richard P. Rogers)

The on-screen expert is by no means a panacea for making films about art. But with the right combination of concept, subject matter and creativity, this traditional form can produce very untraditional results. At its best, the form can make us aware of the human values implicit within all art and art scholarship. Most importantly, it can suggest that the answers offered are not necessarily definitive or even correct, that further directions have yet to be pursued. Ironically, by inscribing clear limits, a film can remind us of how much we still do not know.

Courtesy of Jerry Sohn

David Hockney (left) discusses a Chinese scroll with filmmaker Philip Haas in preparation for* Grand Canal *in which Hockney is both the art expert and (in some ways) the subject.

The filmmaker needs to

create a context in which the on-screen expert provides more than art history

and at the same time

incorporate the expert into the film's dramatic texture, sensitive to nuances of character.

The art expert needs to

determine whether his/her on-screen presence contributes to the drama of exploring a work of art on film

and at the same time

view himself/herself at a critical distance, maintaining the spontaneity and subjectivity of the impassioned "expert."

PROGRAM 5

GOMBRICH THEMES:
PART 1, ILLUMINATION IN ART AND NATURE
PART 2, REFLECTION IN ART AND NATURE
(1) 26 MIN. / COLOR / 16MM / 1989
(2) 20 MIN. / COLOR / 16MM / 1989

Judy Marle / Filmmaker
Sir Ernst Gombrich / Art Expert

In this two-part film, British art historian Sir Ernst Gombrich discusses the natural phenomenon of light and its representation in Western art. In Part 1, he discusses the rendering of shadows and how the direction of the source of light creates different effects. In Part 2, he distinguishes between the objective character of illumination and the subjective character of reflection.

MAKING THE FILM

I really distrust that particular format where you listen to what someone's saying because she is someone who's been hyped up as being the person who ought to be telling you this, unless it's genuine, unless you're listening to someone who's thinking aloud.
(Marle)

In looking at a picture, we are always selective; we can't take in all details. The film, like a lecture or like a guide, can certainly make people look at one detail, or feature, or character, which they never noticed. But it is in a way, again, a danger that you might then think that "this is everything," that "this is the essence." A great work of art has many essences, not just one, you know. The main point is the richness of the great work of art. So any comment can make you, as people say, "see." I don't like the cliché of "making people see." Our eyes are wonderful instruments and, except if we are handicapped, we always see, and we see very well indeed. We are aware of many things, only we don't know how we are aware.
(Gombrich)

I think that first meeting, without my knowing it, gave me very strongly the sense of what a film with Sir Ernst would have to be like. It's that genius and particular vision that's actually so honed that it feeds all the time off [the] things around, the way things are, and then makes those connections with the way painters want to make things appear.
(Marle)

We did have a few sessions where we both scoured the upstairs, he and I, and carried down books he knew he wanted to have just in case, or objects that he wanted to have. So there was a great big sort of stew set up on the table in front of him. But we were determined to keep the whole feel of the film as sort of shooting from the hip and as off-the-cuff and as homey as we could. (Marle)

What I would like to see in all these films is the feeling that this is an endless quest, that it is an open quest. That people shouldn't think that now they know. Stimulating interest, particularly in the young, is a very worthwhile thing, and the film or other methods can do it. But it should not rest there. It should be "now you go and find out more."
(Gombrich)

ILLUMINATION AND NATURE

Painters have been fascinated with light throughout Western art history. This interest is understandable, since we cannot see without light, nor can we create a convincing representation of objects without understanding how light illuminates them.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Do you think the filmic approach used here could be used successfully with other art historian? Why?

What other art-historical topics might lend themselves to film treatment?

Did the film achieve Gombrich's goal for films as stated in his last quotation (at left)?

Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472) observed: "I would consider of little or no virtue the painter who did not properly understand the effects every kind of light and shade has on all surfaces." How have the films helped you to appreciate Alberti's remark? How does his remark also apply to the art of filmmaking?

Photo courtesy of Bo Lutoslawski

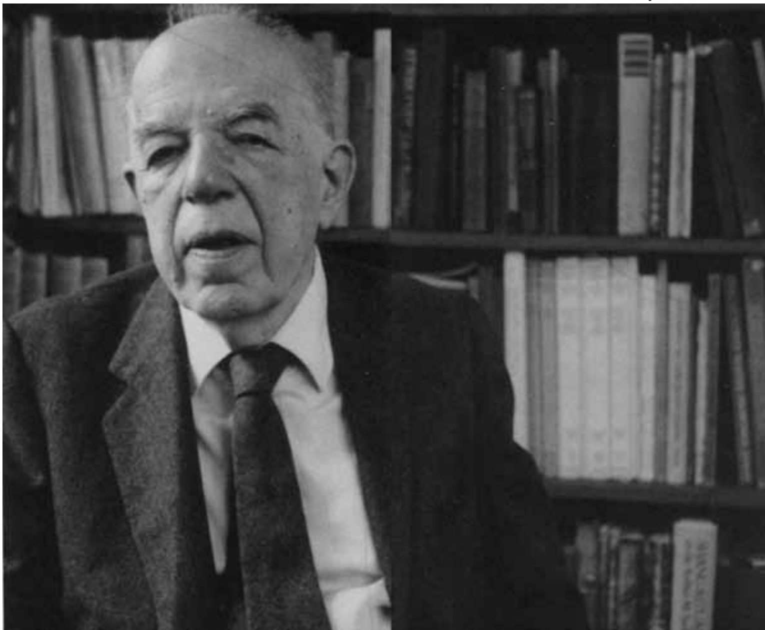
During a filming session in his home, Gombrich uses a face mask to describe an effect of illumination, as filmmaker Marle looks on.

Sir Ernst Gombrich begins with the premise that the artist cannot reproduce what he or she sees but is able to create effects that suggest a three-dimensional presence on a picture surface.

Artists cannot copy the light of nature. They must search for the closest equivalents within their medium to the relationship of light and shade. The white of a piece of paper cannot be as bright as the light of a fire, yet by darkening the rest of the paper to recreate the relationship between fire and the surrounding darkness, the artist can convey a sense of its radiance.

Shadows also reveal form. As light falls on the object, areas of light and shadow define its shape. We speak of modeling in light and shade, which is achieved by indicating where shadows fall on the object.

Photo courtesy of Bo Lutoslawski



Gombrich Themes ***revitalizes the traditional lecture-type film on art by focusing not only on the art and its interpretation but also on the art expert, Sir Ernst Gombrich.***

The light in our world is never stable. Artificial light can be controlled to a degree, because its direction remains unchanged. Sunlight, however, changes direction as the sun moves across the sky, and its intensity varies with atmospheric conditions. Thus, the

light and shadows in a landscape represent a momentary effect that the painter has captured and transcribed.

Every painting is a feat of invention or memory, for the painter has had to construct or reconstruct how the light might fall at any given moment in time, and then build the painting accordingly. The painter of light must be a keen observer and creator in manipulating and transcribing the relationships between light and shadow.

REFLECTION AND NATURE

Reflection is the effect of light as it is thrown back from a surface, and it can vary greatly according to the quality of the surface. A reflective surface such as a mirror will throw back most of the light that hits it. A shiny surface may reflect many gleams and highlights, while a rough, textured surface may absorb most of the light, reflecting only occasional highlights.

Highlights or reflections on an object can be distinguished from the point of greatest light in a painting. The distinction between illumination and reflection, therefore, is that illumination, or actual light, is objectively measurable, while reflection varies according to the texture of objects and the position of the viewer.

It is important to distinguish between effects of illumination and reflection as we see them on film or video and the way they appear in the original paintings. A form of transparency, film's images are lit from behind. The quality of the image varies with the intensity of the projector light. This produces a very different effect from the visual appearance of paintings. It is only when we look at the original paintings that we can really understand what an achievement it was for painters, through a long process of tradition, trial and error, to match these effects of light in media that are totally distinct from the visual reality that they represent.

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PROGRAM 5

A DAY ON THE GRAND CANAL

WITH THE EMPEROR OF CHINA OR SURFACE IS ILLUSION BUT SO IS DEPTH

46 MIN. / COLOR / 16MM / 1988

Philip Haas / Filmmaker
David Hockney / Art Expert

Artist David Hockney guides viewers along a late seventeenth-century Chinese scroll painting, *The Kangxi Emperor's Southern Inspection Tour*, scroll seven, which was made before the introduction of Western perspective into Chinese art. He contrasts its multiple viewpoints and anecdotal spatial depictions with another scroll painted about seventy-five years later, *The Qianlong Emperor's Southern Inspection Tour*, scroll four, which shows the influence of Western perspective. Reference also is made to the use of perspective in Italian painting.

MAKING THE FILM

Like a lot of artists, David is a very instinctive person. So there wasn't a lot of planning. What was really exciting about doing the film particularly was that it was really made in the making. There was a certain amount of theorizing before, but I think the film really came about from David's response to the material and my response to David's response to the material and my response to the material as well.
(Haas)

The scroll is, in itself, a kind of film. And so we were able, by shooting it, and then doing a montage – a series of edited sequences – to give a rendition of a work of art which was a rendition of something which actually happened.
(Haas)

What one became aware of was, of course, that film itself is a scroll, and as I watched the rushes, I realized that's what was happening. In a sense, you are making a moving picture of a moving picture. And in no [other] Western art [form] could you do this. I realized it was quite unique what was happening on the screen. It was very beautiful in itself.
(Hockney)

I think, fundamentally, at least for me as a filmmaker, I'm interested in making the most compelling film possible. I suppose I'm also a little bit of a minimalist in terms of the information that I want conveyed from the point of view of the historical side. In a sense, less is better there. I wanted people to know something about the scroll, but without giving them an incredible amount of information. Because, in effect, the more information, the less, in my view, they were going to retain.
(Haas)

You begin to realize that perspective is an abstraction that has great political overtones to it, that one had not really thought about. I realized that, for instance, there are two great surfaces we have thrust at us daily. One of them is the television screen, and the other is paper from the media. And both of them immediately ask you to deny their own surface. The television is a piece of glass you look through, not upon. Here you are looking through the paper. Somehow it's denying the first reality in front of you. This need not be the case. And you begin to realize what depictions do, in the sense that "do we accept them as reality?"
(Hockney)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

David Hockney compares the single viewpoint created by Western perspective to photography, and the shifting viewpoint of Chinese scrolls to film. How do the two painting traditions affect the artist's way of telling a story? How do they affect one's perception of the time represented in the painting?

David Hockney is in some sense the subject of this film. What does his presence add to our understanding of the work of art? What kind of film could this have been without him?

The filmmakers sought to treat the scroll as a "film on paper," emphasizing the illusion of real space and time. What are the tradeoffs of this essentially narrative approach?

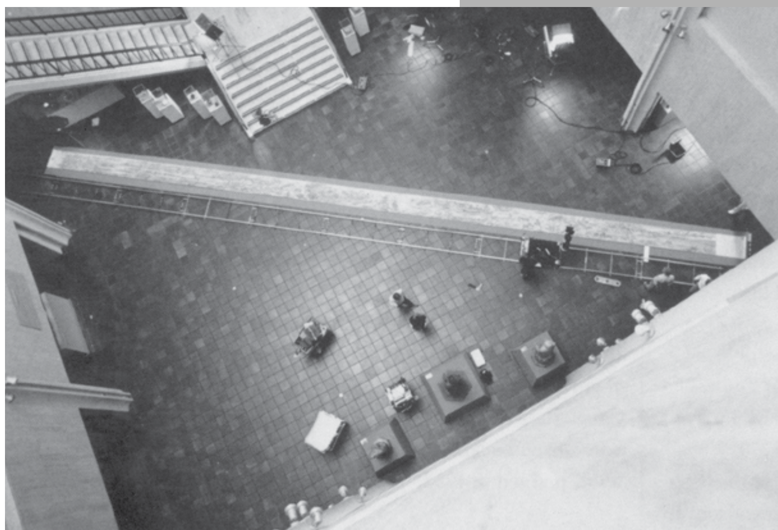

Photo courtesy of Jerry Sohn

Seventy-two feet long, **The Kangxi Emperor's Southern Inspection Tour** ***is stretched out on a gallery floor during filming of*** **Grand Canal.**

ABOUT THE WORKS OF ART

The Kangxi Emperor's Southern Inspection Tour, scroll seven, which is 72 feet long and 2 1/4 feet high, depicts one segment of the emperor's tour of southern China in 1689. The work, one of twelve handscrolls executed by the artist Wang Hui between 1691 and 1695 to document this tour, illustrates a 30-mile section of the emperor's route along the Grand Canal.

Wang Hui worked in a style that predates Western influence on Chinese painting. He represented spatial reality without the Renaissance invention of fixed-point perspective. The multiple viewpoints that the artist adopted allowed him to develop the narrative possibilities of the scene to a far greater extent than would have been possible with the single viewpoint of Western fixed-point perspective.

The scroll serves as a pictorial catalogue of Kangxi's realm, as well as a visual document of the principal events of one part of the tour. The scene is represented in great detail, including theatrical events, banquets and elaborate decorations lining the tour route. The scroll also illustrates diverse scenes of local life, including wood gatherers, fishermen and farmers in the countryside and bustling street life in the cities and towns.

The Qianlong Emperor's Southern Inspection Tour, scroll four, painted by Xu Yang between 1764 and 1770, represents the tour of the Kangxi emperor's grandson. In contrast to the earlier scroll, which presents the emperor's journey as a lengthy and nearly continuous travel narrative, the later scroll represents a single scene of the emperor inspecting the place where two rivers meet. This great difference can be explained by the fact that Xu Yang, the second artist, has adopted Western-style perspective. By using the fixed viewpoint, he has organized his scene as a single panorama rather than creating an extended series of linked but individual vignettes to describe the journey, as Wang Hui had done.

In *Grand Canal*, David Hockney also refers to the use of perspective in Italian painter Canaletto's *Capriccio: Plaza San Marco Looking South and West*, painted in 1763.

PERSPECTIVE IN CHINESE AND WESTERN ART

Following the Renaissance invention of single-point perspective, European artists treated painting as a window onto a clearly defined space. Within the boundaries of the picture's frame, the space recedes toward a horizon. Solid shapes diminish in size as they are seen farther away from the viewer and closer to the horizon. Straight lines in the painting are aligned in such a way that if the lines were extended, they would all converge at a single point on the horizon, called a vanishing point. Western perspective assumes that the viewer is standing outside the represented scene looking at it from a single, fixed viewpoint in space and at a single moment in time.

In contrast, Chinese scrolls adopt a shifting series of viewpoints, allowing the artist to

present the scene from varying angles, thereby giving the viewer a sense of participating in the scene and travelling through the space in the painting. Instead of presenting a window onto a single space, a Chinese scroll is meant to be unrolled a little at a time and enjoyed sequentially. Thus, the image at any given moment has no clearly defined boundaries at either side, but changes as the scroll is unrolled.

There is no single, fixed horizon line in a scroll, nor do the straight lines converge toward a single point. Often, lines that describe buildings or roads diverge away from one another as they move away from the viewer into space. This effect is called "reverse perspective," a technique that gives the viewer a sense of seeing a scene from several different angles, possibly at different moments in time.

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Photo courtesy of Jerry Sohn

In **Grand Canal,** ***Hockney assesses the role of perspective in the representation of reality and speculates on its political and philosophical ramifications.***

WRAPPING UP

Over a four-year period from 1987 through 1990, fourteen creative teams, representing a wide range of cultural, artistic and scholarly perspectives, each consisting of a filmmaker and an art expert, created films about art. The art works they chose to interpret on film were created over nearly a two-thousand year period and ranged in media from stone to oil to earth. The teams were charged to make content-driven films – films whose very form and structure were determined by the needs of their art content. Among the team members were those who had grappled with films on art before, either individually or as part of a team, and those who had not.

The results are incredibly diverse. Some teams were happier with their creation than others and at times differences in levels of satisfaction emerged within teams. To some extent, the teams grappled with problems that are inherent in the collaborative process. As individuals, some team members tended to lead, some to follow. Some found order in detail and in planning; for others, order emerged as part of the process. Some were better able to understand one another's specialized language than others. But these differences are true of all collaborations, particularly when they are formed as the result of an external opportunity.

Some films more obviously than others take their structure from properties inherent in the art. Some filmic solutions are so perfectly suited to their content that it is difficult to imagine them working with different art. All the films began with the art, seeking to find their cinematic voice, approach and techniques in the art they strove to elucidate.

This anthology seeks to reveal what was learned about the collaborative process that is particular to the process of making content-driven films about works of art. It groups the fourteen films around five broad themes to stimulate discussion and debate:

- Balance: Film/Art
- Film Sense/Art Sense
- Film Form/Art Form
- Film Voice/Art Voice
- Film/Art: Subject and Expert

But from the beginning, the Program understood that any grouping was artificial, that the questions addressed in any one program could as easily be applied to all the films. And in fact should be. The Program came to understand that the

lessons learned from any one film similarly could – and should – be applied to all. The following issues, therefore, presented earlier in this Guide on a program by program basis, are repeated here both to underscore their universality and to set forth a process of discovery that can guide future teams in the creation of films or videos about works of art.

BALANCE: FILM/ART

The filmmaker needs to create a cinematic work that conveys ideas about the subject being filmed, and at the same time, respect the intellectual tradition of art scholarship, incorporating critical perspectives into the film's framework.

The art expert needs to supply wisdom to illuminate and enliven the film while conforming to rigorous standards of art-historical scholarship, and at the same time, bridge scholarship by adopting a sympathetic attitude toward the practical and aesthetic imperatives of filmmaking.

FILM SENSE/ART SENSE

The filmmaker needs to engage the viewer in a process of discovery, while maintaining strict standards of scholarship, and at the same time, fashion a film that triggers emotional and intellectual responses to a work of art.

The art expert needs to honestly place his/her own intepretation within a framework of other interpretations, and at the same time, reveal possible meanings encoded within a work of art, using the language of film.

FILM VOICE/AT VOICE

The filmmaker needs to construct a system of sounds and images that engender a new conception of a work of art, and at the same time, shape a perspective that not only says something about the art but about how that knowledge is expressed.

The art expert needs to be sensitive to alternative contexts in which a work of art may be experienced and redefined, and at the same time, contribute more than facts, remaining sensitive to the limits of human objectivity.

FILM/ART: SUBJECT AND EXPERT

The filmmaker needs to create a context in which the on-screen expert provides more than art history, and at the same time, incorporate the expert into the film's dramatic texture, sensitive to nuances of character.

The art expert needs to determine whether his/her on-screen presence contributes to the drama of exploring a work of art on film, and at the same time, view himself/herself at a critical distance, maintaining the spontaneity and subjectivity of the impassioned "expert."

ABOUT THE FILM TEAMS [as of 1992]

Barry Bergdoll

(*Programs 2, 4 and 5, Panelist; Program 3, Art Expert,* ***The Pantheon of Domes***) is associate professor of art history and archaeology at Columbia University. A specialist in modern architecture, European architectural theory and nineteenth-century urbanism, Mr. Bergdoll currently is collaborating with Nadine Descendre, director of *The Pantheon of Domes*, on a film about the history of bank architecture. He received his Ph.D. from Columbia University and an M.A. from Cambridge University.

Richard Brilliant

(*Program 1, Art Expert,* ***The Fayum Portraits***) is Anna S. Garbedian Professor in the Humanities, Department of Art History and Archaeology, Columbia University. His publications include *Arts of the Ancient Greeks, Roman Art from the Republic to Constantine, Visual Narratives* and *Portraiture*. He holds B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Yale University and an L.L.B. from Harvard University.

J.J. Brody

(*Program 4, Art Expert,* ***Painted Earth***) is professor emeritus of art and art history at the University of New Mexico, a research curator at the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology, University of New Mexico, and a research associate at the School of American Research in Santa Fe. He received a Ph.D. in art history from the University of New Mexico and has published many books and articles on Mimbres and other Southwestern Indian art traditions.

Roger Cardinal

(*Program 4, Art Expert,* ***Anamorphosis***) was born in England and studied languages at Cambridge University, where he wrote his doctoral dissertation on surrealism. He has written books on modern European poetry, surrealism, expressionism and the German romantics and is an international authority on Art Brut and psychotic art. He currently is professor of literary and visual studies at the University of Kent at Canterbury, England.

Robin Cormack
(*Program 2, Art Expert,* ***A Window to Heaven***) is a professor of the history of art at the Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London. He received a B.A. and an M.A. from Oxford University and a Ph.D. from the University of London. He has published numerous books and articles on Byzantine art.

William Cran
(*Program 2, Filmmaker,* ***Giorgione's Tempest: The First Romantic Picture***) was born in Tasmania, Australia, educated in England and is now based in New York and London. He has worked for BBC Television, CBC Canada and WGBH/Boston and is now an independent producer. One of his notable television series is *The Story of English*. He and his wife, Stephanie Tepper, run their own company, Network Features, Inc.

Nadine Descendre
(*Program 3, Filmmaker,* ***The Pantheon of Domes***) is a journalist, art critic and filmmaker who has directed a number of documentaries for French television and written articles for many arts and news magazines. She is editor-in-chief of *Public*, a contemporary art review, and is curator of the exhibition "Génériques: Le Visuel et L'Ecrit" at the Hôtel des Arts. Currently, she has in production a film on bank architecture and the history of money.

Jerrilynn Dodds
(*Program 1 and 3, Panelist; Program 3, Art Expert,* ***A Mosque in Time***), associate professor, School of Architecture, City University of New York, is the author of *Architecture and Ideology in Early Medieval Spain* and is special consultant to The Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition "Al Andalus: The Islamic Arts of Spain." She received her Ph.D. from Harvard University and a B.A. from Columbia University.

Sir Ernst Gombrich
(*Program 4, Advisor, Anamorphosis; Program 5, Art Expert,* ***Gombrich Themes***) was born in Vienna in 1909 and joined the staff of the Warburg Institute in 1936. He served as its director and professor of the history of the classical tradition from 1959 until his retirement. He has held many guest professorships and has received numerous awards. His books include *The Story of Art, Art and Illusion* and *The Sense of Order*. Published collections of his essays include *Meditations on a Hobby Horse, Norm and Form, The Heritage of Apelles* and *New Light on Old Masters.*

Cecil Gould
(*Program 2, Art Expert,* ***Giorgione's Tempest: The First Romantic Picture***) is a

former keeper and deputy director of the National Gallery in London. He has published several books and numerous articles on sixteenth-century Italian painting.

Richard Greenberg
(*Program 4, Filmmaker,* ***Architecture of Transcendence***) came to filmmaking with interests in architecture and industrial and graphic design. With his brother, Robert, he founded R/Greenberg Associates, a film production company specializing in visual effects and graphic animation.

Philp Haas
(*Program 5, Filmmaker,* ***A Day on the Grand Canal...***) has made ten films with contemporary artists, ranging from British artists Richard Long and Gilbert & George to Australian aboriginal ground painters and Malagasy funerary sculptors, Retrospectives of his films have been held at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, the Tate Gallery in London, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and the Film Society of Lincoln Center in New York. In 1991, he was awarded a fellowship by the Guggenheim Foundation. He received a B.A. from Harvard University.

David Hockney
(*Program 5, Art Expert, A* ***Day on the Grand Canal...***) has works that are in many public collections in Europe and America, and he has exhibited extensively in museums and galleries throughout the world. He has produced stage designs for the Royal Opera House and the Glyndebourne Opera in England, the Metropolitan Opera House in New York and the Los Angeles Music Center Opera. He has appeared in several films about his work and collaborated on many publications about his work and life. He has held teaching posts at the University of Iowa, the University of Colorado and the University of California, Los Angeles. He currently lives in Los Angeles.

Taka Iimura
(*Program 1, Filmmaker,* ***Ma: Space/Time in the Garden of Ryoan-ji***) is an internationally recognized film and video artist whose works have been shown in major museums in New York, Paris and Tokyo. He began his filmmaking career after graduating from Keio University in Tokyo in 1959, and he has received numerous fellowships and awards, including an artist's fellowship from Harvard University and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. As a critic, he has published several books on film and art.

Arata Isozaki
(*Program 1, Art Expert,* ***Ma: Space/Time in the Garden of Ryoan-ji***) is widely

recognized as one of the world's leading architects. His projects have included the design for Expo '70 in Osaka, the Sports Hall of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, the Palladium in New York, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles and many public and cultural buildings in Japan. He has served on juries for numerous international architectural awards and has been a visiting professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, the University of Hawaii, the Rhode Island School of Design, Columbia University, Harvard University and Yale University.

Adrian Maben
(*Program 2, Filmmaker,* ***A Window to Heaven***) has directed many films on artists and musicians including feature films with Pink Floyd (1975) and Helmut Newton (1990). His work has appeared frequently on European television, and he is currently engaged as a news and sports director for French television. He received his B.A. and M.A. in biochemistry from Christ Church, Oxford University.

Judy Marle
(*Program 5, Filmmaker,* ***Gombrich Themes***) is a director of Landseer Film & Television Productions, which specializes in the production of arts documentaries. She has directed and produced numerous documentaries on contemporary artists that have been broadcast by the BBC and Channel Four Television in England. She studied fine art at the Chelsea School of Art and art history at the Norwich School of Art.

Ken McMullen
(*Program 1, Filmmaker,* ***1867***) studied painting at the Liverpool College of Art and the Slade School of Fine Art in London. He began making films as an extension of his work in painting. A number of his experimental films have been exhibited in Europe and North America, and three feature films have been released in cinemas and shown on Channel Four Television in England.

Stephen Murray
(*Program 4, Art Expert,* ***Architecture of Transcendence***) is a professor of art history at Columbia University. He has published books on Beauvais Cathedral and Troyes Cathedral and has written numerous articles and lectured extensively on Gothic architecture.

Carlo Pedretti
(*Program 3, Art Expert,* ***Leonardo's Deluge***) has taught Italian Renaissance art and architecture at the University of California, Los Angeles, since 1959, where he is director of the Armand Hammer Center for Leonardo Studies and holds the Armand Hammer Chair in Leonardo Studies. He is the author of some thirty books and over three hundred articles and essays. Since 1976, he has been working on

a monumental facsimile edition of Leonardo's drawings and manuscript pages in the collection of The Royal Library at Windsor Castle.

John A. Pinto
(*Program 2, Art Expert,* ***Trevi***) is professor of art history at Princeton University. He has published a book on the Trevi Fountain and has written numerous articles on baroque Rome.

The twins *Timothy* and *Stephen Quay*
(*Program 4, Filmmakers,* ***Anamorphosis***) were born in America but live in London, where their work has received support from Channel Four Television and the British Film Institute. They have created more than a dozen animated short films and have also made several television commercials. Their work has received awards in Europe and America, and they have also been invited to design sets for Opera North and the Old Vic. They studied at the Philadelphia College of Art and the Royal College of Art, London.

Richard P. Rogers
(*Programs 2, 4 and 5, Panelist; Program 2, Filmmaker,* ***Trevi***) is chairman of the film department and professor of theatre arts and film at the State University of New York at Purchase and a visiting professor in visual and environmental studies at Harvard University. A filmmaker and cinematographer, Mr. Rogers' credits range from documentary filmmaking (*Smithsonian World* and documentaries on the poets Wallace Stevens and William Carlos Williams which were part of the PBS series *Voices and Visions*) to prime-time directing (*Life Goes On*, ABC). He produced and filmed *Siena: Chronicles of a Medieval Commune* for The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Bob Rosen
(*Program 1, Filmmaker,* ***The Fayum Portraits***) has been responsible for more than fifty film and video productions since 1965 and has won ten CINE Golden Eagles and many other awards. He started his own production company in 1979. His recent projects have included the films *Ellis Island*; *Sun, Moon, Feather*; *Vienna 1900*; and *Seeds of a Century*.

Corey Shaff
(*Program 2, Filmmaker,* ***Trevi***) is a New York–based director/editor. His interest in the experimental documentary form has been developed through his work with such filmmakers as Shirley Clarke and Robert Frank. He is currently exploring the conventions of and exceptions to film grammar through producing a documentary on American avant-garde film and editing the pilot program for the PBS *American Cinema* series.

Andrea Simon
(*Program 1, Filmmaker,* ***The Fayum Portraits****; Programs 1 and 3, Panelist*) is a writer/director of documentary films. Her work, which has won many international prizes, includes *The Happiness of Still Life*; *Art of Indonesia, Tales from the Shadow World*; *Destination Mozart: A Night at the Opera with Peter Sellers*; and *Vienna 1900*. She is currently creating three video pieces for the Jewish Museum. She holds degrees in comparative literature from Sarah Lawrence College, Cambridge University and Yale University.

Anita Thacher
(*Program 4, Filmmaker,* ***Painted Earth***) is a New York–based artist who is known for film, video, photography and installation work exploring issues of perception. Her work has been shown extensively in festivals, museums and on television and is included in numerous film and museum collections such as the Museum of Modern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the French and Berlin Film Archives. Her short films have premiered at five New York Film Festivals. Her work has been recognized by the French Ministry of Culture Award, the American Film Festival Red Ribbon, the CINE Golden Eagle and the Martin E. Segal Award of Lincoln Center, among others.

Edin Velez
(*Program 3, Filmmaker,* ***A Mosque in Time***) is a video artist whose work has been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (permanent collection); the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris; the Whitney Museum of American Art (Biennial Exhibition); and Dokumenta 8, Kassel, among others. His videos have been broadcast on PBS as well as on French, German, Japanese and Spanish television. He has received a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship as well as grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the American Film Institute and the New York State Council for the Arts.

Mark Whitney
(*Program 3, Filmmaker,* ***Leonardo's Deluge***) has directed a number of documentary films about artists and was the director of the feature film *Matter of Heart*, about C.G. Jung. He has done independent production work for several organizations, including WGBH/Boston and the United States Information Agency. He directed an artist-in-residence program at Digital Productions that enabled artists to make use of the Gray supercomputers. Currently he is working on a film about Dostoyevski with Central Television Moscow.

Michael Wilson
(*Program 1, Art Expert,* ***1867***) received his B.A. from Oxford University and

his M.A. from the Courtauld Institute of Art. He is now head of exhibitions and display at the National Gallery in London, where he has organized a number of exhibitions, including "Manet at Work." He has published numerous books and articles on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century French painting.

ABOUT THE PANELISTS

Barry Bergdoll, see p. 86.

Keith Christiansen

(*Programs 1 and 3, Panelist*) is Jayne Wrightsman Curator of European Paintings, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Among the exhibitions he has curated are "A Caravaggio Rediscovered: The Lute Player" and "Painting in Renaissance Siena: 1420–1500." He served as art historian for the film *Siena: Chronicles of a Medieval Commune*, which was produced by Richard P. Rogers in conjunction with the exhibition.

Jerrilynn Dodds, see p. 87.

Linda Downs

(*Programs 1 and 3, Panelist*) is head of education at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. A curator, writer and educator, Ms. Downs has served as producer of films, videotapes and slide/tapes about art, including the award-winning films *The Frescoes of Diego Rivera* and *Only Then Regale My Eyes*.

Leila Kinney

(*Programs 2, 4 and 5, Panelist*), assistant professor of art history at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has written extensively on French painting with a particular focus on gender and fashion. She is co-editor of *Tableaux de Paris: Essays on French Art, 1750–1950*, which includes her essay "Fashion and Figuration in Modern Life Painting."

Brian O'Doherty

(*Programs 1 and 3, Panelist*) is the director of the Media Arts Program, National Endowment for the Arts. His far-flung career in art and media includes six years as arts reporter on the *Today* show and the writing and production of two television series, *Invitation to Art* (WGBH/Boston) and *Dialogue* (WNBC/New York). His paintings, presented under the name Patrick Ireland, have appeared in numerous solo and group shows, including the Venice Biennale. He is the writer, producer and director of *Hopper's Silence*, an award-winning film on the artist Edward Hopper.

Richard P. Rogers, see p. 90.

Andrea Simon, see p. 91.

Susan Vogel
(*Programs 2, 4 and 5, Panelist*) is executive director of the Center for African Art in New York. Among the exhibitions she has curated are "Art/Artifact, Africa and the Renaissance" and "Wild Spirits, Strong Medicine: African Art and the Wilderness." She also has written and lectured extensively on African Art.

ART ON FILM/FILM ON ART

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Producer/Director: Michael Camerini
Program Executives: Wendy Stein and Karl Katz
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