

Unframing.

Several technical characteristics in film and video are either overlooked or taken for granted. Perhaps most important of these is the frame, especially in the cinema context where it functions as an image container, a subsistent, invisible barrier or cut-off between the screen space and its surrounding darkness. Several filmmakers have tested the givenness of the framing edges -it's called the frame but it's really a mask- either by incorporating them into the work or by making them disappear. The strategy of incorporation, in the form of frames within frames, can generate a partial *mise en abyme* (Droste Effect), or gesture towards it. This imperfect effect is crucially distinct from the fractal-like, exact *mise en abyme* characterised by its vertiginous character, its endless dead-endedness, which precludes any possibilities of deviation and hence uncertainty, on which films depend for their interest. (Indeed, one way of distinguishing between moving image graphics and film art is in the frequent deployment of exactly repeating patterns in the former and its avoidance in the latter).

. There are exceptions to this effect. In Steve Partridge's canonical video feedback work, *Monitor* (1975), the camera records the monitor on which its signal is presented, generating a familiar feedback-loop image of monitor-within-monitor ad infinitum. This absolutely simple process is complicated, however, by the presence of the artist, whose hands rotate the monitor according to a set of planned moves. The disruption is compounded by the time lag between each layer and by the degradation of the image as it recedes. However, in terms of framing, this is a work for small video monitor, where the framing/masking function common to all CRT TV sets is different from current film and video projections. *Monitor* is shown in a normally illuminated room, whose off-screen space will almost certainly be discontinuous with the screen image, unlike images projected in darkened spaces.



Steve Partridge: *Monitor*, 1975.

The frame is crucial to the stability that images require and the proliferation of mobile and other platforms in the internet age has done nothing to disperse it, on the contrary, so it is perhaps surprising that only a small number of artist filmmakers have sought to question and dissolve it. The dissolution of the frame threatens the dissolution of the image: in the works considered here forms of cinematic framing and hence of off-screen space are challenged on their own terms. The frame ceases to be a window, with the illusionistic implications of that, but instead its dissolution leads to film becoming a material medium more akin to painting, where the frame is determined by the artist in response to the formal requirement of the picture. For although digital video technology allows aspect ratios to be freely created, the edges still function in the same way as an analogue film frame. Furthermore, all video works with non-standard aspect ratios are still ultimately presented as cropped frames within a standard 16 x 9 projection format. Such framing edges are different from the frames or edges of many, if not most, modern paintings that either respond to the painting in some way or form a material continuity with it, for example in the work of Howard Hodgkin, where a physically distinct frame may be painted on, thereby incorporating it into the image.

Films and videos that continue aspects of the anti-illusionist project of structural-materialist film are as necessary as ever in an increasingly mediated, media saturated reality: criticality is reasserted in the face of so much recent artists' film and video, mostly in the gallery world which, in concerning itself with subject matter outside its proper sphere of activity, leans on reactionary forms of narrative construction and illusionism, or engages with spectacular forms of presentation, such as multi-image or floor to ceiling projection where the conceptual relationship between the formal operations of the image and its mode of presentation is often tenuous. The conventional format of mainstream cinema permits the relentless sequential

picturing process that framing automatically perpetuates, breaking the world into spectacular, causally connected fragments, unreal because they reduce the complexity of the visual field to stable views in the service of an imposed structure, the narrative arc. In a different way, this also includes complex photos like those by Andreas Gursky and others, which depend on boundedness for their legibility, and to which end are invariably enclosed within a uniform, plain, mid-toned brown or grey frame with a white border of roughly the same width between edge of the photo and the inner edge of frame. Films like Michael Snow's *Back and Forth* (1969) and *Central Region* (1971), among others, in which continuous, real-time, overlapping reframing focuses attention on the frame's selective, visual-kinetic functions and effects also make an important, if implicit, contribution to the challenging of the frame's function, however, here I am concentrating on works that explicitly address the framing edge in their construction.

"For normally, the movie screen is perceived as a kind of window, more or less arbitrarily circumscribed, and behind which an illusion of space appears; in *Rhythm 21* by contrast, it is a planar surface activated by forms upon it. Thus, its forms, like those of an abstract painting, seem to have no physical extension except on the screen, nor do we sense their lateral extension beyond the limits of the screen"².

In his film *Rhythmus 21*, Hans Richter addresses the framing edges as integral to the work. Although it's clear that the rectangles-within-rectangles structure references the framing edges, the first three shots are wipes: from the left and right-hand edges into the centre from an initially black screen, then the reverse of this, repeated once, from white to black. This establishes in the most dramatic way possible the framing edges but is then followed by a square within the frame that diminishes/recedes. A contrast between Lawder's surface activation is established and "the complex spatial illusionism that derives from the dynamic interplay of contrasting areas of black and white"³. Following the receding square, the contrast is reinforced by the same pattern of wipes as the opening three, but now from top and bottom. The final shot reconciles these tensions -the wipes and the receding square- with a movement that begins as a wipe identical to the first, but which becomes a receding square halfway through. At certain points, squares expand outward towards the framing edges but are arrested just before they go beyond them. In one sense this addresses the framing edge but in another sense surrenders to it. It's notable that these shapes are square, not rectangular, so that at no point are their edges congruent with all four sides of the frame, however, it is true, as Lawder says, that: "nor do we sense their lateral extension beyond the limits of the screen."⁴ In other words: although the wipes hit the framing edges, thereby defining them, they don't generate a sense of off-screen space, because they're not fixed forms that move out of frame or exceed it. Rather, they are fluid movements that lack the dimensions by which one could infer their extension beyond the framing edges. Nevertheless, the film accepts to a large extent the limitations of the frame, even as it draws critical attention to them.



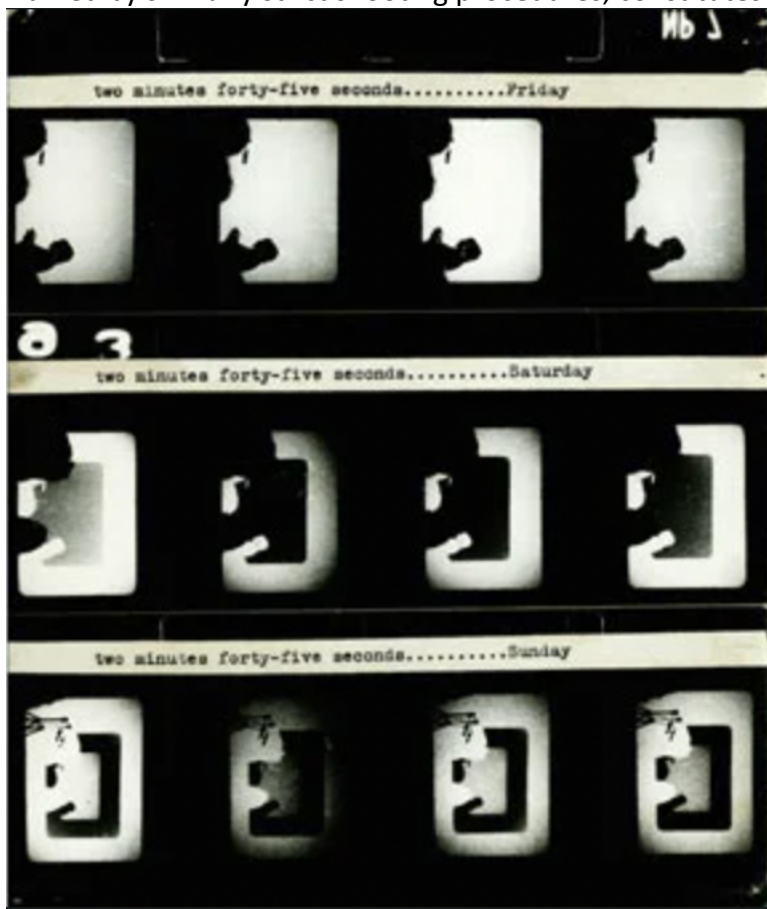
Hans Richter: *Rhythm 21*, 1921

In William Raban's much cited performance work, *2' 45"* (3', 16mm, B&W, 1973), a frames-within-frames structure is generated layer by layer. The piece is only occasionally performed since it requires its audience to return at least once to the space where it was and is shot and projected, for a second round of projection and filming. It works typically, therefore, as a festival event that can develop over three or four days or more. A 16mm Auricon sync- sound camera records a white screen with a microphone on a stand in front of it, lit by the light of an empty projector. Raban stands just within the frame and reads a statement into the microphone that describes the work and how it will progress. The projector is positioned so that its beam catches the heads of the audience members, whose silhouettes appear on screen. The next day the negative film from day one is projected onto the same screen and the process repeated, then again on day three. On day three, the projected negative of a negative of day two renders as positive, while day three's film will appear negative (a negative of day two's positive) on day four and so on. This structure generates a recessional form, a kind of tunnel-effect, but which is counteracted by the negative-positive-negative shifts from one layer to the next, which tend to interrupt this synthetic spatial recession. To see the work is to experience a strange sense of an accumulation and flattening of time, but what is also notable is the way the frame becomes a temporal border: it's no longer simply a spatial mask in the sense noted above, but a rectangular line at which two time periods abut. The spatiality of the framing edges is in balance with this temporal effect.

The reinforcing effect of tightly packed, contiguously aligned frames generates a claustrophobic sense of diminishment: the smallest frame seems cramped, remote yet equally present, yet this is always true, since for most films, off-screen space, which is almost always much bigger than on-screen, is not visible but is, rather, virtual: it's an effect of filmmaking, not something that pre-exists its instantiation. It's a paradoxical, virtual effect, in that it impinges on our

understanding of on-screen space, reinforcing the position of the framed image in a putative visual field. It is a kind of non-existing object in the philosophical sense, something that can be posited but which doesn't really exist, despite its having effects.

Raban's film engages this paradox, in that the space outside any of the inner frames is where off-screen space would be or would have been, yet there is more than nothing in these spaces, there is something, an image. One could then say, conversely, that the work becomes a set of off-screen spaces, actualised and nested inside -or outside?- each other, or alternatively and perhaps uniquely, on and off-screen space are instantiated and co-present: yesterday's off-screen becomes today's on-screen space. Although Raban describes the work in terms of *mise en abyme*, it doesn't have the exact form of the Droste effect, since each layer is different. It is these differences that are part of the work's fascination, the precise re-staging of specific parameters of place, camera and projector positioning frames the inevitable variations in the image that result from the many imponderable factors; audience size and composition, the seats they choose, their movements and noises etc. The work functions like a graph on which these spatio-temporal differences are plotted, and the spontaneous and uncontrolled behaviour of the audience forms a continuity with other of Raban's films in which the weather, framed by similarly strict shooting procedures, constitutes the imponderable.



William Raban: *Two Minutes Forty Five Seconds*, 1972.

In contrast to *2' 45"*, is Cathy Rogers' *All Around You (II)* (2012), which dispenses entirely with the frame. "A length of super 8 film is exposed in a black sphere punctured with small holes.

Made by light, presented with light in relation to the method in which it was made. The resulting image is of the empty space that surrounded it at the time of exposure”⁹. Because the film was not exposed in a camera there are no frame lines, although even if there were the image would be of an ‘empty space’. This raises a tangential question about what the difference would be between a framed film image of an empty space made with a camera and the frameless one made with a pinhole camera, aside for the absence of frame-lines, which are anyway not visible when a film is projected.

The developed film was placed loosely inside a clear glass ball, suspended in the beam of light emitted by an empty super 8 projector, whose frame has been thrown out of focus so that the rectangular edges dissolve. The glass ball further diffracts the light, dispersing any vestiges of frame-light rectangle. If anything, the framing here, rather, addresses the institutional frame of cinema: “This work disrupts the traditional method of projecting film, suggesting that the filmstrip can be used to represent space and time outside the apparatus of cinema (the film camera and projector)”¹⁰



Cathy Rogers, All Around You II, 2012.

By pushing the question of framing beyond the medium’s technical parameters into film’s institutional frame, Rogers positions the work as antagonistic to the instrumental norms of

cinema. Context -also a form of frame- is thus implicitly present and may inform the viewer's approach to the work in this regard, but in a mediumistic sense the comprehensive dissimilarities between it and a conventional film projection invite the viewer to appreciate it on its own terms, as much more than simply a critique of conventional filmmaking procedures. Rather, it is a material and phenomenological investigation of the frame, framing, what it is, means and does. All the stages of a film, normally sequential, are co-present; filmstrip, exposure to light, development (which, since it must be performed in a light-proof environment, is necessarily invisible) and projection.

All Around You (II) is a sophisticated and replete work of 'para-cinema'¹¹. Para-cinema is typified by an engagement with some of the conventional materials of filmmaking to produce something that only refers to or has a tangential relationship to cinema. In some cases, the work is but remotely related, such as Anthony McCall's canonical *Long Film for Ambient Light* (1975), in which the title and light are the only shared features. The 'film' employs no film technology, while the light, as the title states, is simply ambient: the daylight that entered the room in the day, artificial light at night¹². Rogers' work, by contrast, presents all the elements of a putative film projection transparently, but those elements are rearranged into something radically other. The projector light's flicker, all but concealed when a film is running through it, is here clearly visible at 18 frames per second. The filmstrip is present and observable all at once so time is condensed into a continuous instant, reflecting the way it was made, as a single brief exposure of the entire roll of film. Filmic temporality is suppressed, in a different way, however, to 2' 45", where discrete 2' 45" periods of real-time are presented simultaneously. Rogers' work has no fixed duration or temporality, so is in this sense, too, antithetical to convention, however, the image of the ball and its contents are projected, over time, onto the wall so that not only is there a projection, but the means by which it occurs are exposed and highlighted, the stages separated spatially, emphasising that film images are created by shining light through an image-bearing medium. As well as casting shadows on the wall, the knot of film in the glass ball also casts shadows and 'filtows', to borrow Roy Sorensen's portmanteau word (filters + shadows), on itself. Filtows are the shapes cast by semi-transparent media, of which film images are the most common example¹³.

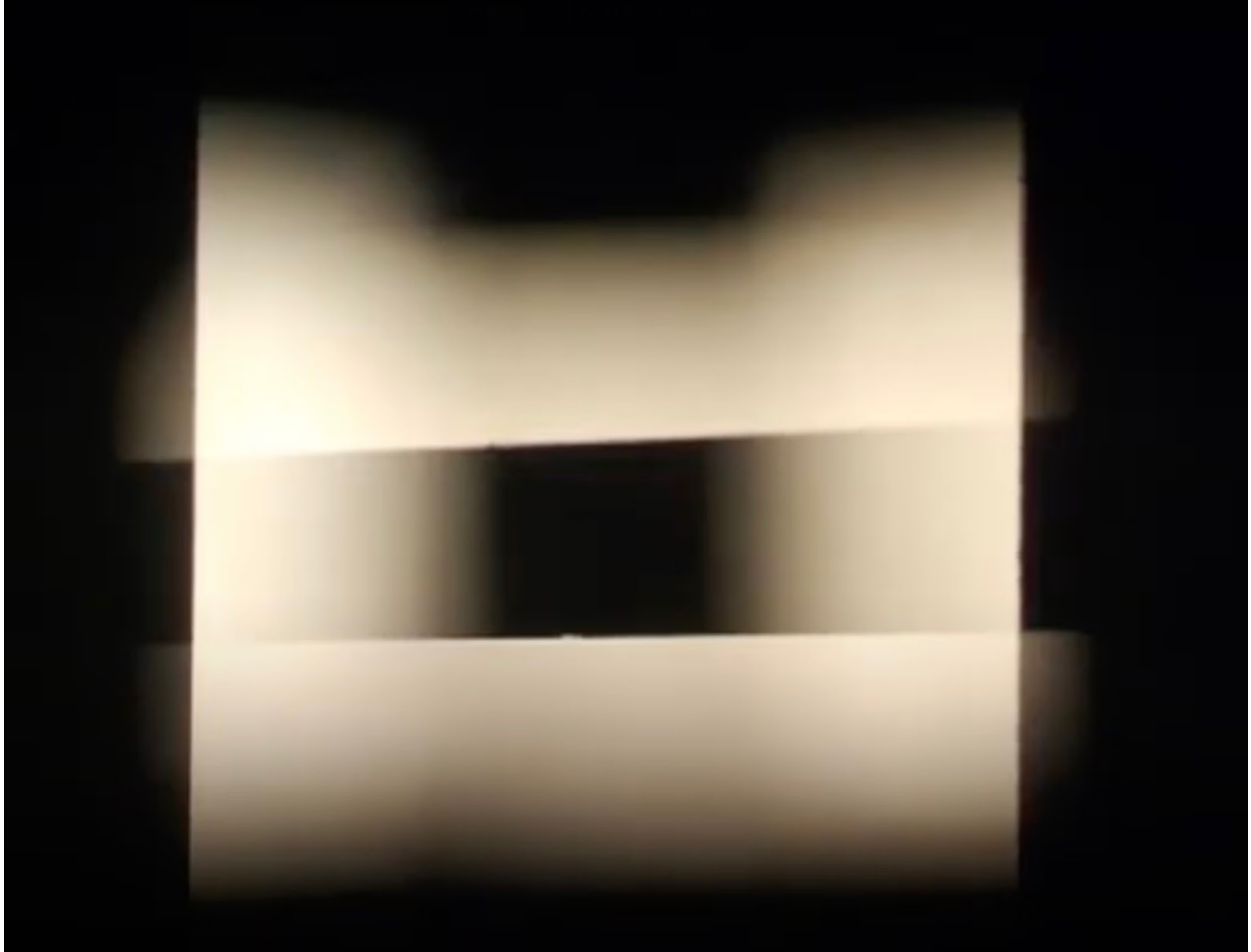
These phenomena in *All Around You (II)* too are unframed and, as a micro-projection within a larger projected work, form a kind of mise en abîme -shadows within shadows. The kinetic potential of these complex shadow plays perhaps invites us to imagine how they might look when projected, at what the en-framing activity of the projector would do to a continuous image in the process of cutting it into small rectangles and presenting them individually. What would be the character of the putative film that the spectator makes in their head? It's hard to imagine it would be framed, since that would require us to imagine a framed film projection, an image within an image of a frame. On the other hand, the work already constitutes a kind of shadow play, which needs no further animating in order to be realised as a virtual film, a 'film by other means', to use the term coined by Pavle Levi in his book *Cinema by Other Means*. The possibility of kinesis is raised, but these self-casting shadows can anyway be experienced rhythmically, in the same way as paintings can be.

The frame is approached in a different way by Bruce McClure. For over thirty years McClure has been performing his film loop works with one to six projectors in a range of formats, from 8mm

to 35mm, though predominantly 16mm. Optical sound is generated by the loops, which are composed of patterns of black and clear frames, which he refers to as 'base' and 'emulsion'. The sound is fed through a matrix of guitar effects pedals and other devices and the projectors have been modified so that the lamp brightness can be varied. Over the last few years, the sound has become prominent in numerous works: very loud, rhythmic and percussive, while the images, or more accurately the rectangles of projected light, have receded, becoming smaller and dimmer.

Exeunt Chiodo Venga Presepe (2020) was originally a transitional phase between two other pieces: *Chiodo*, 2003 and *Presepe*, 2003, before becoming a work in its own right. It's a silent demonstration of the deconstruction of a frame ('corruption') assembled using four projectors focused on the projector's aspect ratio (the projector's frame – *Chiodo*, 2003) to focus on the 'stacks' i.e., the metal masks inserted into the film shoe assembly, and the reconstruction of a different frame where each edge of the metal insert is used to construct different orientations of the 3:4 aspect on the screen'¹⁴

The plates are positioned in the projector's shoe assembly and moved incrementally so that the gate's edges and the frame area's division by the plate become the centre of attention. The plates are in a slightly different plane to the edges of the film aperture, so that when their edges are focused those of the aperture are soft, and vice versa. Focus is pulled between planes, which occasionally generates recessive feedback akin to *mise en abîme*: when the inner plates are defocused a dark, pulsating void appears. A *mise en abîme* is also suggested, though not strictly enacted, by the frames-within-frames structure. The aperture is upstaged and bisected by the plates, even as they themselves are a kind of aperture in material terms, being made of steel and having a framing function in subdividing the full frame into smaller areas within it. Thus, the framing function is displaced inwards creating an effect of recession, but which is mitigated by the focus pulls. The sense of inward movement generates a turning inside out of the frame with its internal area, a torus that turns on itself: the framing edges fall into the abyss and become a shapeless, dark void. In the final performed version, loops of clear film that have been sprayed with ink to create what McClure calls 'ink sneezes' run in all four projectors.



Bruce McClure: *Exeunt Chiodo Venga Presepe* (2020).

In *Tower of the Winds* (2022), performed in two parts in Paris at the artists' space Les Voûtes, the projector's presence was only implied. The projector's optical exciter lamp was used to generate sound, which was pre-recorded and played back as an audio file. McClure sat at a small mixing desk, at the opposite end to the screen, making incremental adjustments as the piece progressed. Only if one were familiar with previous work or had read the programme notes, might one assume that this was still a kind of film performance that raises questions about its own status and meaning. Since the projector's presence can only be inferred as a source, it might as well not be a film-work and strictly speaking it isn't, because the connections made by the projector to its primary cinematic-reference function have been cut and least radically reprioritised. The projector's framing functions have been removed, even if its originary contribution in a physical and conceptual sense is essential to generate the experience and to raise questions about the work's ontology: in what sense is it a film work and does it matter? What changes if the sound has been generated from a pre-recorded soundtrack rather than the projector that generated that recording? One answer is to re-think what a film projector is, despite its intended function. McClure's prioritising of the smaller of the two lamps in the projector, the optical sound exciter lamp, inverts the standard hierarchy and supersedes - or in this case destroys - it, because the picture lamp is switched off. In some ways this brings

the work closer to Daphne Oram's 'Oramics' (1962-69), for which she used black and white 35mm cine film to record sound, however, crucially, her work was never positioned as film, rather, 35mm celluloid was simply a convenient carrier medium (which is, furthermore, a much more stable and long-lasting one than either magnetic tape or digital files).¹⁵

In *Tower of the Winds* something invisible, the putative projector in the box, impinges on the visible, creating a version of the way offscreen space structures our understanding of on-screen space in conventional cinema. A notional off-screen space, triggered by the work's context, is filled with sound, as is standardly the case with surround sound cinema, but without the usual anchoring visual reference. Something audible implies the absent visible, the on-screen image. The reference to the absent image is reinforced by the houselights being off but the screen illuminated by lamps. This posits two distinct temporal moments in the conventional cinema experience simultaneously: the moment after the houselights have gone down but the screen is still illuminated prior to the projector being switched on, with the film having already commenced. McClure further took advantage of the seating arrangement in the barrel-vaulted space to utilise the institutional frame. Plush seats line the side walls, such that the audience can choose to watch either the screen or the artist, who was placed where the projector would have usually been. This arrangement replicates that of the early Japanese cinema, where audiences were able to watch the image and the equally fascinating projection device¹⁶. Thus, a further institutional, albeit historical, reference is made.

A work that bears comparison with *Exeunt Chiodo Venga Presepe* is Simon Payne's *New Ratio* (2007), a digital video generated in a computer without the use of a camera: 'The colour fields that comprise *New Ratio* involve a tense relationship with the edge of the screen. The piece explores the move from 4:3 screen ratio to 16:9, which is now effectively the standard for broadcast television and video. In the construction of *New Ratio* each colour was assigned a particular tone: white was attributed a standard 1KHz test tone; the pitch of the tone attributed to blue was half that of the test tone; and each of the colours in between (in descending order of luminance) were attributed tones at intervals between these values. The video comprises two simple repeating sequences, which are fundamentally the same. One sequence includes an additional frame of black, which throws them out of synch, causing a phasing that effects different mixtures of colour, a range of tone combinations, and various pulsations in the soundtrack and within the frame'¹⁷

The work is synthetic, in that it is generated from forms that are themselves generated by aspect ratios. These aspect ratios are conventional indeed, as Payne points out, everything in the work is off the peg, derived from existing parameters, which are combined with the systematic operations of the allocation of sound pitches. This combination yields something distinctive and not at all 'found' in its effects, which are complex and vigorous. The aspect ratios in themselves are, again like off-screen space, non-existent objects, empty parameters according to which video imagery must conform in order to be made viewable. Payne rescues and transforms them into an intense bombardment of buzzing rhythmic colour clashes.

In two recent works, *Waves* and *Ladders*, part of a series entitled *Edges* (2018-continuing) Payne addresses precisely the edge of the video frame through a single solid black rectangular shape that all but fills the frame, leaving a shifting white sliver between edge of shape and edge of frame. When viewed on a computer screen the shape has the same density as the off-screen space of the viewing device, so that the horizontal framing edges disappear as they are

encroached upon by the black shape. Here, in contrast to the usual relationship between image and frame, the image disperses the framing edge, literally destroys, or equally, one could say, incorporates it, even as our gestalt-forming tendencies aim to reinstate it psychologically. In its address to the frame the *Edges* series harks back to Richter's *Rhythm 21*, also one of a series of three works in which, along with ongoing concerns with the frame, there is an evolution of forms, between rectilinear and curved.



Simon Payne: *Edges: Waves*, 2018.

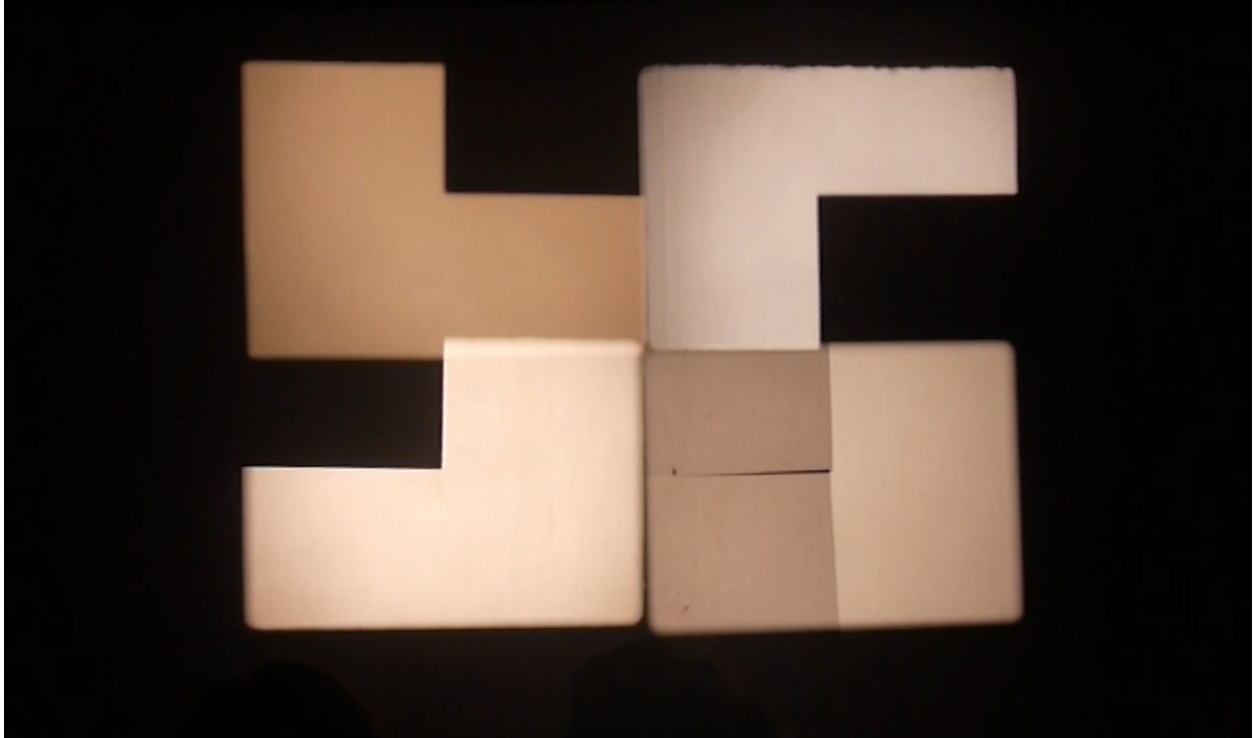
There is also a broader, historically conscious, investigation-analysis going on here around the extent to which effective and surprising artworks can be generated from the most overlooked, because fundamental, components. In so far as Payne's work foregrounds the technologically banal, overlooked or invisible features of film and video, *New Ratio* has its precursors in his own *Colour Bars* (2004), 'generated from the colour bars (that) ordinarily form a constant test signal image that is used to calibrate video equipment'¹⁸. Earlier examples from the pre-digital era include George Landow's *Film in which there appear Edge Letters, Sprocket Holes, Dirt Particles etc* (16mm, 4 minutes, 1966), a looped re-presentation of a strip of film containing the famous photo of the white woman used by laboratories to balance a film's (Eastmancolor negative) colour. In Guy Sherwin's *At the Academy* (16mm, 5 minutes, 1974), Academy countdown leader was looped and multiply printed onto itself in increasingly dense superimpositions. In all these works a kind of institutional critique is mounted. *New Ratio*'s unusually synthetic composition is at the same time strongly analytic, so that it supersedes the synthetic-analytic dichotomy, which, it can be argued, invariably exists as a conceptual distinction, not one that can be cleanly applied to artworks.

In my own four projector loop performance works *4 X LOOPS* (1974), *Rings* (2012) and *Quadrants* (2018) I have worked emphatically with the edges of the frame by incorporating them actively into the composition. All three works utilise short, abstract looping patterns. Identical loops run on all four projectors and the projectors are moved during the performance to create configurations by varying degrees of overlap and separation. The configurations in *Rings* and *Quadrants* generate patterns and effects, some of which are intrinsic to the loops, but are mostly the product of overlapping combinations that generate larger forms and/or rhythmic phasing effects.

In each loop, movement is created by an on-off pattern of appearance and disappearance. This was inspired by the way an illusion of movement is generated in a string of Christmas tree lights, when each is briefly switched on and off in sequence (though not in *4 X LOOPS*, where the on-off rhythm is much slower and so doesn't generate an illusion of movement). This on-off process is akin to the way film works as a medium, as a succession of rapidly appearing and disappearing images, in this case a ring shape or a rectangle. In *4 X LOOPS* the projector frame edges group together to constitute a composite 'image' both with and without the X motif each frame carries. The motif traverses the framing edges such that the two form a compound image in which the framing edges become self-sufficient formal elements. In *Quadrants*, the framing edges form two sides of each one of the four possible rectangles within it, in other words, two of the four framing edges of the image are formed by the frame itself, so that the two framing edges and the two internal edges form an apparently continuous border, though they are not materially so: besides the fact that the two inner edges are formed of images of surfaces (black rectangles), when these two edges are sharp, the two outer framing sides are soft and vice versa, similar to the plates in *Exeunt Chiodo Venga Presepe*. During the performance of the work, focus is pulled from one to the other. When the framing edges are sharp the interaction between the inner edges and the general focus of the piece shifts: the resulting blur produces a qualitatively different effect to when they are sharp. In both works the configuration of rings or rectangles references the aspect ratio of the frame (4 x 3) and in the case of *Quadrants* the aspect ratio of the four rectangles is of course the same as that of the frame itself. The strong white of the high contrast image can cause an effect whereby the black parts of the frame edge blend into the surrounding darkness, in a similar manner to Payne's *Edges*, so that the integrity of the composite rectangle is broken and becomes an intermittent effect of the work.

In *Rings*, twelve white rings are arranged in a 4 x 3 grid, which conforms to 16mm's aspect ratio, on a black ground. Each ring flashes briefly in a sequence that traces top to bottom, left-right-left. For much of the time the rings are confined within the frame in a conventional manner but after a while they are de-focussed and the frames incrementally overlapped to form a nebulous, irregular configuration without distinct borders, within which multiple movements are discernible. We no longer see shapes on a plane confined by a rectangle but cascading blobs of light in an irregularly shaped field of indeterminate depth. The image, whose formation is premised on its stabilised isolation from its surroundings, gives way to pure light play: the sense of it being a film dissolves along with the rings. The pulsating that arises from the interplay of the phasing effects of the projectors, which all run at slightly different speeds, overpowers the rhythmic flicker effect of the individual projectors. An ambiguous sense of depth in the light

play can be compared to the tensions within a classic *mise en abyme*, where the depth illusion is counteracted by the flattening effect of the patterning. Bringing the image back into focus reconnects it to its filmic resources, thus the technical-contextual frame waxes and wanes during the projection.



Nicky Hamlyn: *Quadrants*, 2018.

Hollis Frampton's (*special effects*) (16mm, B&W, sound, 10 minutes, 1972), is the seventh and last part of the suite of films called *Hapax Legomena*, of which the first, (*nostalgia*), is the most well-known¹⁹. "*(special effects)*, the final film, is without information, almost without illusion. A broken white line runs around the edge of the frame, emphasising its proportion. In projection the white frame is continuously in motion, vibrating, the sound reflects the visuals: a juddering, rough regular machine sound. It is a film reduced to its parameters: frame, print, colour, sound, time"²⁰.

The bold white line displaces the frame -it is very much a something, an agitated noisy border, the antithesis of the frame (invisible, silent, still), yet at the same time is constrained by it and looks like one. It's ambiguous, since it is an image, but in the form of a border, so in the second sense not an image in the usual way. On the other hand, since it frames nothing, it becomes an image, in the absence of anything else within its borders. Here, the cognitive activities of the spectator seem to take on special powers, in the way that something visible -material- can both be and not be an image, is determined by thought: thought seems not simply to interpret but almost to determine matter, the ontology of a phenomenon.

The line is broken, discontinuous, but it's perceived as a unity, which is reinforced by the uniformity of its shaking. The violence of the shaking overshadows the film frame lying outside it, both conceptually and perceptually, because the brightness of the white line bleaches out the darkness of the black frame and the dark off-screen space. The frame seems promissory: surely something will eventually appear within its boundaries to justify its presence and reward the viewer's patience? But after ten minutes nothing has appeared. Insofar as the sound seems to emanate from the line, it insinuates itself as a sonic frame, though this is impossible because sound diffuses throughout the projection space, nevertheless, conceptually one can hold this contradictory state of affairs in mind. The whole piece embodies this contradiction and points to the inherently paradoxical character of the frame, its impossibility.

The foregoing works, in which the frame is dissolved or dispersed, as in the work of Bruce McClure and Cathy Rogers, or critically reinforced so as to emphasise its oppressive contingency, as in the work of Raban, Payne, myself and others, highlight the intrinsically obdurate nature of the image and its dependence on a fixed frame to stabilise those internal relations that are necessary for the fixity of meaning. As well as engaging critically with the cinematic apparatus, the works discussed here constitute visual experiences that are neither simply image-based, nor dependent on the perpetuation of banal abstract patterns or decorative motifs, because the critical engagement of the works positions them between these two possibilities.

Endnotes.

1. See the Rewind site for extensive documentation and links: <https://rewind.ac.uk/>
2. Standish Lawder, *The Cubist Cinema*, (New York: New York University Press, 1975), 49-51.
3. Lawder, *ibid.*
4. Lawder, *ibid.*
5. A 35mm colour version, 4' 22", was created in 2008.
6. In his detailed account of the work, Jonathan Walley discusses the 'nowness' of the performance, which he sees as an essential characteristic of Expanded Cinema, in relation to the pastness of the recording, as well as subsequent realisations by Raban and others, in Walley, J *Cinema Expanded: Avant-Garde film in the Age of Intermedia*, pp 100-107. Raban also discusses the work in these terms and relates it to theories of film's 'nowness' more generally in Rees et al, 2011, pp 102-103.
7. For a discussion of nonexistent objects see Maria Reicher "Nonexistent Objects", Stanford: *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed July 1st, 2022, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nonexistent-objects/#ConNonObj>.
8. Raban, 2011, quoted in Walley, 2020, p 102.
9. Rogers, Cathy 2012, *All Around You (II)*, accessed July 1st, 2022. <http://www.cathyrogers.co.uk/All-Around-You-II>
10. Rogers, *op cit.*
11. For an extensive account of Paracinema, see Walley, Jonathan (2020), *Cinema Expanded: Avant-Garde Film in the Age of Intermedia*, Oxford: OUP.

12. LUX online, accessed July 1st, 2022, https://www.luxonline.org.uk/artists/anthony_mccall/long_film_for_ambient_light.html
 13. (G E Moore also discusses the ontology of film images in similar terms in his *Commonplace Book*)
 14. McClure, email to the author, 2022.
 15. An account of the Oramics machine can be found here: <https://www.daphneoram.org/oramicsmachine/>
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- Similar historical precedents include Walter Ruttmann's sound collage *Weekend* (1930) and Arseny Aramov's graphic sound experiments of the 1930s.
16. For several years, gallery artists, including Philippe Parreno (*June 8th, 1968*, 70mm, 2009), Rosa Barba (*Bending to Earth*, 35mm, 2015) and Marine Hugonnier (*Antonio Negri*, 35mm, 2019) have presented films as installations in which elaborate looping machines, enabling them to run continuously, feature prominently. In most cases the links between film form and projector presence and function are tenuous, so that the projector's presence seems gratuitous and fetishized.
 17. Simon Payne's website, accessed July 1st, 2022, <http://www.simonpayne.co.uk/pages/videos/new-ratio.php>.
 18. Payne, op cit.
 19. *Nostalgia* has appeared on at least two DVD compilations and has been written about by, among others Rachel Moore in her monogram, published by Afterall in their *One Work* series. By contrast very little has been written about *Special Effects* and it is only available to view in its original 16mm format.
 20. Simon Field, 'Interview with Hollis Frampton', in *Afterimage 4*, London: Afterimage Publishing, 1972, page 47.

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