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# AVANT-GARDE FILM IN AUSTRIA: CURRENT ACTIVITIES (1975)

Peter Weibel

S. 214-218

## SHORT (HI)STORY

Since 1945 Austria has produced two generations of artists concerned with experimental cinema. The first generation (1951-63) consists of Herbert Vesely, Curt Stenvert, Ferry Radax, Peter Kubelka, Kurt Kren and Marc Adrian<sup>1</sup>. These film-makers did not form a group, but worked isolated from each other, although Radax and Kubelka worked together on *Mosaik im Vertrauen* (1955). The only avant-garde film-makers in the strict sense were Radax, Kubelka, Kren and Adrian, the others after their experimental beginnings in a post-surrealist, symbolic or existential vein soon drifting to commercial TV or film productions. The works of Kubelka and Kren alone had an influence on the next generation of film-makers (1964-71)<sup>2</sup> who have co-operated in a spirit more politically in keeping with the times. In 1968 Ernst Schmidt jr., Hans Scheugl, Peter Weibel, Kurt Kren, Valie Export and Gottfried Schlemmer founded the Austrian film-makers' co-operative, which joined Otto Muehl, Guenter Brus and Otto Bauer. Gottfried Bechthold and Hermann Hendrich also belonged to this second generation of experimental film-makers. Kren linked these two-generations. The first culminates at the end of the fifties, the second at the end of the sixties. The co-op became the Kuratorium neuer österreichischer Film on a broader basis, but after some trials on grounds of obscenity; the emigration of several film-makers; the general decline of the revolutionary culture movement; and the dissolution of the Kuratorium in 1971, the film scene became very calm at the beginning of the seventies. Since there was no financial or other support, and no opportunity to show films, a retreat into theory took place.

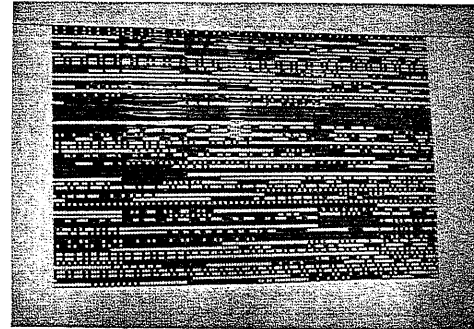
Weibel, assisted by Export, published a picture manual on Viennese actionism and avant-garde film (*Wien, 1970*, Kohlkunst Verlag, Frankfurt), which landed him in court. And in 1973 Schlemmer published an international anthology of theoretical works on avant-garde film: *Avantgardistischer Film 1951-1971: Theorie*, Munich, Hanser Verlag. Scheugl published two works: the 1974 *Show Freaks & Monster* (together with Felix Adanos), Dumont Verlag, Cologne, and *Sexualität und Neurose im Film*, 1974, Hanser Verlag, Munich. Schmidt jr. and Scheugl published the first international history of avant-garde film in the form of a 1,300 page dictionary: *Subgeschichte des Films*, 2 volumes, 1974, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt. Weibel's introduction explains the title and argues that the sub-history of film is the true history of film. The authors worked on this huge book from 1969.

Today this period of depression, theoretical labour and historical orientation seems over and prospects are more favourable. In 1972 Peter Kubelka got 600,000 Austrian schillings (around £15,000) from the Ministry of Education and Art for his work in progress, *Monument for the Old World*. Since then the Ministry, under the socialist minister Sinowatz, has formed a film jury which declared its support for 'projects which show film as an autonomous medium'. This jury did not give all its money to dull cultural or commercial products as was the custom in the past, but generously supported those who have worked for the development of film as an art medium. Out of 19 million Austrian schillings, 2.5 millions went to the avant-garde. This seems to be a unique step in Europe and worthy of imitation. It is to be hoped that this attitude towards film will continue. Arnulf Rainer, about whom Kubelka has already done one

film (*Rainer*, 1960), has got 250,000 Austrian schillings for his project *Body Language* which Kubelka is likewise filming. Ernst Schmidt got 500,000 schillings for his project *Vienna*, Weibel 500,000 (around £12,000) for *Kernkodifikate*, and Export 600,000 for the project *Invisible Adversaries*.

## STATE OF ART

The most important contribution of the first generation to the practice and theory of avant-garde cinema was the development of a cinema of structure—as it was called later—by Peter Kubelka and Kurt Kren. Since Malcolm Le Grice is writing on Kren in this issue of *Studio International* and since Kubelka was the first, I will concentrate on Kubelka. Both men adopted serial methods to edit very minimal units of frames, Kubelka especially lavishing his attention on single frames.<sup>3</sup> Rejecting the illusion of motion in the cinema, he sees film as the projection of still frames. 'My economy is one single frame. And the same with sound'. He treats the frame in the same way as dodecaphone musicians do the tone. It is worth noting how much his methods owe to Anton Weibern. Just as Weibern reduced music to the interval and the single tone, emancipating the pause as a musical element, so Kubelka reduced film to the single frame and the interval between two frames, the sync event emancipating the black frame as an element of composition. As Weibern composed with his serial methods (permutation, negative repetition, combinatory, 'krebs' etc) structures that were not continuous in the traditional sense of music, so Kubelka composed structures in film with serial methods ('architecture in time between light and darkness' in *Rainer*, 1960) that were not fixed on continuous motion, but syncopated. Growing up in a musical family, and familiar with the methods of music, he developed a strict combination<sup>4</sup> of algebra and music in his films *Adebar*, 1957, and *Schwechater*, 1958. The



Peter Kubelka *Arnulf Rainer* 1960

emancipation of the darkness (black frame) and clear serial techniques led to *Rainer*, 1960: almost a 'handmade' computer film, because he made by hand all the calculations and combinations of white and black frames, tone and pause, which a computer would usually make. In preliminary exercises he investigated the possible combination of these four elements for different frame units, eg the eight possible

appearances of a time structure articulated by light, darkness, sound and silence (structure articulated by light, negative of light, structure articulated by sound, negative of sound, structure, light meets sound, light structure meets negative of sound structure, etc.).

*Adebar* already had a graphic notation (*vide the analysis by Export*)<sup>5</sup> that could be mistaken for a musical score. *Rainer* has a score like a musical one, defining the film completely so that it can be remade by anyone without possible error: the true machine film. Kubelka called *Adebar*, *Schwechater* and *Arnulf Rainer* 'metrical films' because by focusing on the frame and serial methods his films became countable. This conception of filmic time is also related to a conception of musical time which derives from Hegel, who defined tones as 'time points' and musical time as countable, and which triumphed in Weibern and post-Weibern music. His methods of editing derived from all sorts of musical techniques like counterpoint, permutation, variable velocity, retrograde development of motifs and intervals. Repetition prepared the ground for his theory of filmic articulation: a reciprocation of the relations between image and sound, the interval between two frames and the split-second sync sound-image event. Kubelka preferred mathematical and musical structures because they have no reference to outside events, so he could make absolute films with no relation to the world, neglecting the referential aspect of the image. But the moment he had images with a strong representative quality, as in *Imagere Afrikareise*, 1966, he could no longer avoid meaning and had to build up a grammar. The interval between two frames in his metric films became the sync event between two images or image and sound (before or after or synchronous with the image). Like Eisenstein and Vertov he found in the collision of images and sound the meaning of expression, but with him it is more precise and computable. The sync event is the unit of his filmic grammar, and it seems to me that his theory of articulation built on frame-sound relations is the first notable theory of filmic syntax—something music achieved a long time ago. The possible limits and problems of picture processing raised by such a theory will be discussed later.

In his spring 1973 exhibition at the gallery grünangergasse 12, Vienna, Kubelka displayed the scores and the filmstrips of his metrical films. The strips were arranged in the form of pictures, so that the combinative and serial character of his compositional method stood out especially. At the moment he is working on two films: *Monument for the Old World*, approximately 30 minutes long, which will be finished probably by 1976 and seems to be concerned with the representational aspect of pictures and the application of his theory of articulation. The other film has the preliminary title *Body Language*, and is on the body work of Arnulf Rainer. A book of the shooting material has been published.<sup>6</sup>

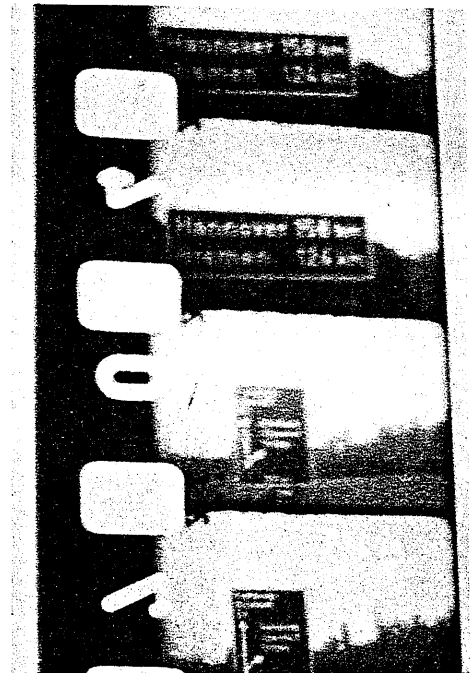
The younger generation has extended the cinema of structure to a cinema of material, or the cinema itself to expanded cinema. Not a cinema of condensation, but a cinema of elongation. Not so much music as a model but painting and sculpture. As a result of the disregard for condensation, all sorts of limits and frontiers have been broken down. A classical system has strict limits and rules, eg for deciding when an art work is finished or not. But as one word leads to another, so any finished film can be regarded as footage for the next. Even the difference between a good image and a bad one, where the lighting was wrong or faulty—such frontiers were abolished. The emancipation of many other parts of the cinema machine went on to include the spectator as well. Literary footage was used by Schmidt in many of his films, eg in the film with the proper title *Film Footage*, 1967 (16mm, bw, sound, 10 min), a contrapuntal montage of sound and image in groups of ten different shots. Scheugl made another film but with a reduced view. The materiality of film was exploited in many ways, especially the filmstrip and the projection situation. Weibel put his fingerprints on a blank filmstrip, making an original from a print. Schmidt punched holes in the blank strip, *White*, 1968 (16mm, bw, 2 min), where through failures in the projector the strip becomes more

and more scratched and these scratches seem, as an after-sensation, to fall into the holes.

Some films were even a counter-reaction to the serial films. Instead of condensed countable metric time, we preferred an elongated time defined by the filmed object, the material or the concept: action time, duration time, real time. Schlemmer's anti-metaphysical positivist film *8 h 07 - 8 h 17* (16mm, 10 min, 1968) showed a digital clock for ten minutes. Scheugl's *Wien 17, Schuhmannngasse* (16mm, bw, 2 1/2 min, 1967), solved an equation successfully: the length of a film reel in the camera should be the equivalent of the length of a street. In one shot he filmed the beginning and the end of the street so that the filmstrip started and ended equally with it. Weibel's *Glanz und Schicht des Zelluloid* was a short filmstrip, half of which changed the shine of the celluloid with only one side perforated, so that at the projection when the perforation changed sides the film was torn. Weibel projected this piece during a tour of Germany in 1968. After each projection he again cut the pieces, which thus became progressively smaller and smaller. The film ended when the filmstrip disappeared. Filmic parameters defined the attitude to reality, but reality defined the angle of the shot and the attitude to the material. New techniques of montage were employed by Schmidt and Scheugl, who took two cameras and filmed the same events simultaneously from different perspectives—*Hernals*, 1967 (11 min).

An important feature of second generation cinema was the transformation and substitution of the constituents of the cinema machine. *Abstract film Nr. 1*, 1968 by Export, was organized concretely: a mirror, water and a spot made abstract shadows on the screen. There were new projection situations and systems, for instance *Action lecture*, 1968, by Weibel, where the noise of the audience directed the projector; and Adrian's *Weisse und Schwarze Schatten*, 1969, where the projected shadow of a loop mingled with the real shadows of spectators through a transparent screen.

A lot of expanded movies and cinema performances investigated all parts of the film machine: the strip, the projector, the screen, the light beam, the curtain etc. Scheugl put a twine through the projector instead of the



Weibel & Export *A Journey is Worth a Journey* 1968

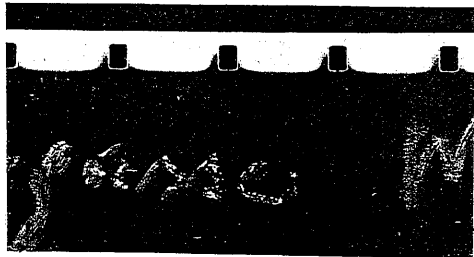
strip. Weibel made a film with no camera and no strip, only the noise of a camera and Weibel himself as the image before the screen (*Nivea*, 1967). Export operated with different screens: paper screen to skin.

By using new technology and creating new sensory experiences through the extension of formal film into material film, the second generation found a lot of methods of avoiding narration and at the same time retaining representation. Non-narrative structures were discovered, environmental pieces, film sculptures, film installations and all sorts of expanded movies were created. The material film included structural films, conceptual films and project films. In 1968 Weibel/Export made one of the first itinerary films, *Eine Reise ist eine Reise wert* (8 mm, 8 min), where during a journey from Kiel to Vienna all signs on the street as a spatial parameter were filmed. Weibel and Export wanted to emphasize the shift from the theatre situation to the gallery to emphasize the explicit art character of these films.

#### STATE OF AFFAIRS

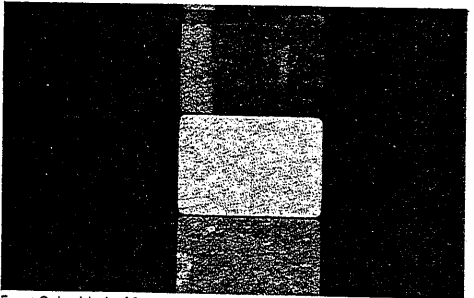
From the second generation only Export, Schmidt and Weibel are still working in the field of experimental cinema. Scheugl has been in India since the publication of his books. Muehl and Bauer are shooting documentaries on life in their commune. These films evidently lie in areas other than the avant-garde cinema.

**Ernst Schmidt jr.** is a devotee of the very difficult art of not doing classical art. He is now accumulating his experiences in a very long project that will be a multiple projection, one part a long film on Vienna and the second part 23 short films on the 23 districts of Vienna. His old method, the slow shift from documentary to abstraction, will again be used. But different formal methods will be employed. As the traditional zoom goes from total view to close up, Schmidt will proceed from documentary techniques to minimal structures. Archive material involving historical reminiscences will be



Ernst Schmidt Jr. *Wien in Namen* 1975

intercut with sections of commercial movies, interviews with living persons and old newsreel. The short films especially will be formal exercises. Some examples: since the social-democratic party is dominant in Vienna the city is called 'Red Vienna'. Therefore all symbols of Vienna like opera, burghtheater, etc. are filmed with a red filter. The incongruence of language and image has interested Schmidt from the start, eg *Colour film*, 1967

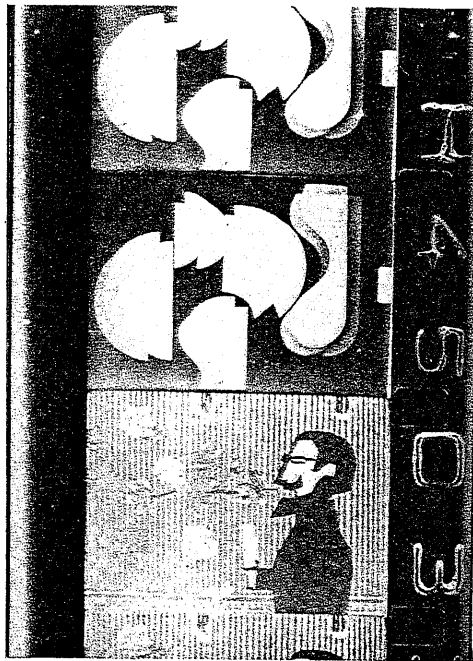


Ernst Schmidt Jr. *Master over 230 Cars* 1975

(30 sec) where the named colours were so changed by shooting and reproduction that they lost their original character. Together with Export and Weibel, he is contributing to the exhibition 'Art from Language', held in the Museum of 20th Century Art, Vienna, from November to December this year. His work in progress includes some language films:

*Wien in Namen*: on a blank filmstrip all the street names of Vienna are written. The act of production is more important than the act of projection, because the names change their mode of being: in projecting they become abstract signs.

*I-Film*: from some signs on public buildings he



Ernst Schmidt Jr. *Eine Subgeschichte des Films* 1974

filmed the writing in such a way that some letters were covered and finally the name of the film-maker appeared on the frames.

*Master over 230 cars*: a car park was filmed in very short shots. The camera view shows only the numbers of the places. The minimal content (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) corresponds to the film structure (addition of the shots), but the ciphers are variable in colour, size, shape, in shadow, in sun, partially covered by cars, etc. Reality offers such a great formal richness. The endless variations which the subject of this film affords, makes for a practically infinite film. Therefore the result can only be a selection. To show this, the film shows his own grammar.

In 1974 Schmidt made *Eine Subgeschichte des Films* (1,5 min). The film consists of 127 x 16 frames of the book of the same title. Each photograph of this book was filmed 4 times as follows: first 7 frames, then 5, then 3, then 1 - 16 frames. The book has 127 images. The following is the score of the film (the left cipher is the number of the photograph, the right cipher the number of frames)

1/7  
2/7 1/5  
3/7 2/5 1/3  
4/7 2/5 1/3  
4/7 3/5 2/3 1/1  
5/7 4/5 3/3 2/1

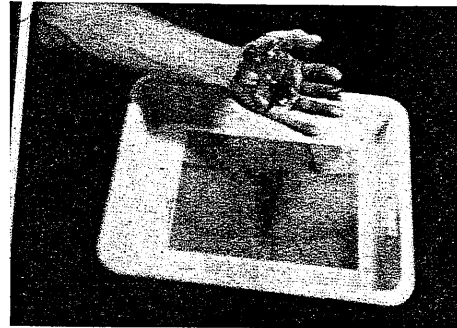
127/7 126/5 125/3 124/1  
127/5 126/3 125/1  
127/3

Along with *Vienna*, Schmidt is writing the script for a commercial production called *The Total Family*, after Heimito von Doderer's novel *Die Merowinger oder Die totale Familie*.

**Valie Export**: Semi-narrative and local subjects are also among the features of Valie Export's work in progress called *Invisible Adversaries* (approximately 1 hour long). The film will be a collection of narrative fiction and documentary, as well as conceptual and formal parts along the lines of her last films.

*Remote... Remote...* 1973 (16mm, 12 min) is concerned with paratime - the memory that is the key to present behaviour. Human behaviour (not alone) is influenced by events of the past. No matter how remote these experiences are, they form a psychological paratime running parallel to objective time.

*Man & Woman & Animal* 1973 (16mm, colour,



Valie Export *Man & Woman & Animal* 1973

10 min) is an investigation of body communication seen from the vantage-point of feminist art: 'what joins man and woman is natural history.'



Valie Export *Adjoined Dislocations* 1973

*Adjoined Dislocations*, 1973 (16mm, bw, and 8mm, bw, 10 min) employs two 8mm cameras bound to her body. With them she made different body positions and movements in different places. The 16mm camera



Peter Weibel *World Cinema* 1968-75

recorded how she did it. The projection system was: the two 8mm films each above the other, the 16mm film beside - so you see her bending in the 16mm film, and on the 8mm films the ground and sky. Through the contrary position of the cameras the film makes the total spatial environment possible and visible. The film shows the method and the result, the operator and the operations simultaneously: the exploration of the environment, the exploration of the body and the exploration of the environmental body.

Export organised a big European exhibition with paintings, films, video, photographs and a symposium on 'Feminism: Art and Creativity', in the gallery nächst St. Stefan, Vienna, in the Spring of 1975. An excellent catalogue was published on that occasion. Much feminist art seems also to be in the projected movie on how a woman's character changes, unremarked by the forces of the political system: in the film the individual loses his autonomy. With Weibel she is at present shooting a script of 1968 *World Cinema* (this is not an error, it's a wordplay with 'word' and 'world'), a language film where verbal communication arises from eating words and other plastic implementations of verbal phrases.

**Peter Weibel's** work in progress is *Kernodifikate* (kernel calculi). Since 1967 he has defined cinema as a conjunction of calculi, and his efforts have been directed towards the extension of these calculi. *Kernodifikate* will be an investigation of the calculus of cinematography. He uses the word cinematography in a broader sense than film. It encompasses video, laser, slide projector, photography, polaroid etc. all devices of pre-cinema, para-cinema, post-cinema. Film for him is cinematography reduced to filmstrip, the production of an object. Narrative cinema and commercial cinema offer messages that can also be presented in other media and are therefore seldom autonomous, but frequently filmic adaptations. Narrative cinema works with codes which already exist outside the cinema and have developed over the last thousand years. These are codes with fixed meanings like body language, clothes, music, etc. 90% of cinema operates with these codes and only 10% with pure filmic codes. Hence it is possible to condense so much into a frame, retaining a picture still coded after non-filmic codes. Because the problem of pattern recognition and picture semantics is not referred to, it is possible to articulate this great amount in two hours or less. He wants to reverse the ratio: 90% filmic codes and 10% other codes. Naturally these films

will not be understood easily. What are the specific filmic codes? That is the question of *Kernkodikate*. Obviously you must not bring these with you into the cinema, but learn from the film itself. Like chess, where the moves seem nonsensical if you do not know the rules. So the prime signs and axioms of film (the basis of operation) are filmstrip, camera, projector, signs, patterns, etc. from which the language of film (deduction and transformation rules) is devised. *Kernkodikate*, probably lasting about three hours, will be an investigation of the codes of cinema in three parts: eg 'Möbius strip', after the Möbius paradox, a projector installation piece; 'geometric films', about 10 copies of 1 strip laid together as an area on which patterns are drawn and transformed in time sequences; and 'w-games', visual communication after structures of modal logic. Each person as a possible world and communication as the transfer between possible worlds: this is the possible combination of images. Shot from several perspectives with several cameras simultaneously, he tackles the frame as the frozen concept of image because such a concept seems to him to hide the problem of meaning between the frames.

#### AFFAIRS OF ART

What is the danger of films which are too close to music? That they encounter the problems of the dodecaphonists and of *musique concrète* or music generally. Cage was dissatisfied because music was becoming too instructive through the incongruity between the score and the performance. He dissolved this incongruity by chance composition — an easy way, but the problems remain. Music is a language of tones without denotation, but — as Baudelaire remarked — it has similar effects in different minds. Concrete music uses sounds with denotation (the whistle of a locomotive, the noise of a broken glass). The paradox of concrete music is just this: not to use tones but sounds. These sounds should not, however, refer to their source: they are treated as tones, they should be tones, they are used as tones in a musical composition (not as sounds in a narration). The same applies to film: images are used that refer to outside objects, but the reference should not be apparent, they will be treated as abstract elements in the filmic composition. Kubelka, for example, used representative images in *Adebar* and *Schwechater*, but by repetition, negative images, frozen stills and other musical techniques he almost eliminated these references and used the images as abstract elements in an absolute film. In *Rainer* he had no representative image at all, and this film therefore has a complete score and is his most musical (structured). But film images do have references, and they are unavoidable. You have total freedom only in the interval between two frames: you can choose the frame collision and impose the meaning you want. The paradox of concrete music is the limit — it seems to me — for film as musical score, because film language exists (unlike music) in a double embodiment, in phone and logos, in sound/image and sense. But as phonetic poetry has shown, the limits are very far away, where you lose the sense. E. Benveniste illuminated the paradoxical character of the signs by saying 'that the morphemes, elements of meaning, are constructed of phonemes, elements of articulation without meaning'.<sup>6</sup> In this contradictory shift from meaningfulness to meaning, is the frame interval an escapist exit?

The dodecaphonic composers were intrigued by the reproach that the ear could not grasp the structure: the score, the form on the paper, did not correspond to the performance, the received opus. The solution is not to learn by heart. It's more problematic than that. If you learn a poem by heart you do not learn its structure. Even worse, it seems that Baudelaire did not even know the structures which Lévi-Strauss and Roman Jakobson discovered in his poem 'Les chats'. 'Saussure' also discovered that the old (Latin, Greek, German) poems and poetics made abundant use of anagrams, but that the poets themselves did not talk of them, nor could he prove that the poets had been conscious of these anagrams. If there are structures that even the creator is

unconscious of, how is the receiver expected to understand? As dodecaphonist and serial music used a method of coding intelligible structures, which nobody had foreseen as to systems, the relationship between musician and hearer, score and performance collapsed — especially in electronic music where the structures on paper are often very different from the structures perceived by the ear. The anagrammatic faculty of language (a problem which the founder of modern linguistics could not solve) is to discover words within words, sense within sense, is just as much of a limitation for theories of filmic articulation built on musical scores, frame films etc., because it can happen that the relationship of meaning to image breaks down, that the score of meaning is not at all congruent with the 'performed' meaning — which means that, unlike music, the effect of a film is different in different minds, and sometimes produces no response at all.

<sup>1</sup> 1951-54. Curt Stenvert and Wolfgang Kudrnofsky made *The Raven* (1951) after E. A. Poe. Vesely made *Und die Kinder spielen so gerne Soldaten* after *In der Strafkolonie* by Franz Kafka. In 1963 Adrian finished his first film *Black Movie*. The other film by Stenvert is *Flucht ins Schiff* (1953). Vesely's other experimental films are: *An diesen Abenden* (16mm) after the poem *Die Magd* by Georg Trakl: a very expressionistic story of the seduction of a maid, with time dilations and segmentations which he exploited later in his *Nicht mehr fliehen* (35mm) 1955, and his long film *Brot der frühen Jahre*, 1962 — a technique similar to *Mosaik im Vertrauen*, 1955, and Resnais' *Marienbad*.

Marc Adrian's films are mostly abstract op art/concrete poetry films, sometimes computer made:

**Film:** (all 35mm, sound)  
 1957-63 **black movie**, colour, 198 Sec.  
 1963 **random**, bw, 285 Sec.  
 1962-64 **orange**, bw, 198 Sec.  
 1964 **go**, bw, 143 Sec.  
**text 1**, bw, 154 Sec.  
**text 2**, bw, 220 Sec.  
**mund**, bw, 320 Sec.  
**ich**, bw, 100 Sec.

1958-68 **total**, bw, 924 Sec.  
 1969-70 **blue movie**, colour, ca. 650 Sec.  
 1971 **theoria**, 16mm, colour, sound, 35 min.  
 For Kren's Filmography vide the article by Le Grice.  
 Kubelka's Filmography:

1954-55 **Mosaik im Vertrauen** (Mosaic in Confidence), bw+ colour, sound, 16½ minutes.  
 1957 **Adebar**, bw, sound, 1½ minutes.  
 1958 **Schwechater**, black, white & red, two sounds, 1 minute.  
 1958-60 **Arnulf Rainer**, black and white frames, black and white sound, 6½ minutes.  
 1961-66 **Unsere Afrikareise** (our Trip to Africa), colour, sound, 12½ minutes.

<sup>2</sup> Schmidt finished his first film, *Steine*, in 1965 (16mm, bw, sound, 30 min) but started his first film, *P.R.A.T.E.R.*, in 1963, finished 1966 (16mm, bw, colour, 21 min). Scheugl's last film was made in 1968.

Weibel started film-making in 1965 with 8mm, and showed his last film in 1971. Kren left Austria in 1971. The Kuratorium collapsed in 1971.  
<sup>3</sup> Vide the books of Josef Schillinger (1895-1943) and *The Schillinger System of Musical Composition* (New York, 1946). These books had a considerable influence on the musical avant-garde of the early fifties. Some chapter titles reveal a similarity of approach in some structural films:

'Engineering v. Spontaneous Creation'  
 'Definition of an Art Product by the Method of Series'  
 'Time as a General Parameter'  
 'Series of Values'  
 'Permutation'  
 'Mechanical Scheme for the Permutation of Tone Elements'  
 'Composition of Density'  
 etc.

He also recommended summations in series after Fibonacci:

1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, ... or 1, 3, 4, 7, 11, 18 ...  
<sup>4</sup> *Vien. Bildkompendium wiener aktionismus und film*, p. 301.  
<sup>5</sup> 'Peter Kubelka filmt Arnulf Rainer', *Die Schastrommel* 11, Berlin, December 1973, editor Guenter Brus.  
<sup>6</sup> E. Benveniste, 'Communication animale et langage humain', *Diogenes* 1, Paris 1952.

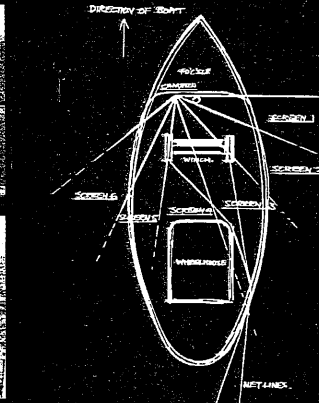
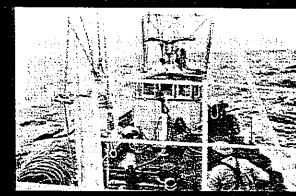
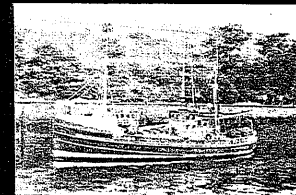
<sup>7</sup> Jean Starobinski, 'Les mots sous les mots: Les anagrammes de F. de Saussure', Gallimard, Paris 1971.

<sup>8</sup> Maybe I have stressed the relationship between Kubelka and Webern too much. Partly because it has never been hinted at anywhere else, partly to emphasize the problems of articulation in film. Despite my arguments it must be to Kubelka's credit that these problems have been raised at all.

# 'MFV "MAUREEN" FISHING OUT OF EYEMOUTH'

By Ron Haselden

The First Stage of a 6 Screen Film Structure



MFV "Maureen"

Installation shots at the New 57 Gallery, Edinburgh

The initial film material for this structure was shot in August 1975 on a motor fishing vessel while she was 'seine' netting out of Eyemouth.

The boat was a platform for myself and the camera.

A series of film loops were shot, in order to be projected from a bank of 6 16mm projectors at the New 57 Gallery, Edinburgh.

The gallery becomes my work space for a week, and with a basic set-up of equipment, I continue to reshoot film, process it, print and project it, starting with the original material from the boat. The whole of this activity is contained within the gallery.

This is the start of the project, and an end is not necessarily envisaged. As in some of my former work, this structure is expected to continue and develop at other venues. Every transition or new generation of the structure will embody a formed idea. One idea will precipitate the next. The daily performances of the work will be open for visitors to come and go freely, as well as offering them the opportunity to enter into discussions about the work. The original material shot on the boat has been kept very brief. Each loop will recycle itself during projection in about 40 seconds, but as there are 6 loops running asynchronously, and each 40 seconds of film is composed

of 960 photographs, there is a vast amount of material to deal with.

The presence of still photography as a component of film 'action' will be suggested by building a day-by-day construction of still frame blowups on the walls. These will indicate the history of the structures that have already been projected.

The structure attempts to describe 2 states, a constant and its extensions.

In the construction that occurs as a scan across all the screens, the form of the boat is continually being defined and interrupted. The boat sometimes occurs as a composite whole, but this is disrupted by screen images briefly and independently tracking away and then returning. During the period of tracking off, other aspects that appear across the field of vision are restated. The main composite form of the boat always predominates, and the independent excursions out of it are brief. The actions of the rolling horizon and the fishermen operate independently behind the composite form of the boat. Throughout refilming programmes, the boat structure remains a constantly recurring image. It is in the tracking off or breakaway periods that ideas will be extended.