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Image: Representation and Object
The Photographic Image in Canadian Experimental Film (Michael Snow and Jack Chambers)

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Writing with a confidence arising from the authoritative position he held in 1962, the American art critic Clement Greenberg asserted:

> By now it has been established, it would seem, that the irreducible essence of pictorial art consists in but two constitutive conventions or norms: flatness and delimitation of flatness; and that the observance of merely these two norms is enough to create an object which can be experienced as a picture.[1]

At the very time Greenberg was writing, events were occuring that would cast doubt on the adequacy of his critical theories. In New York, Andy Warhol had already begun to exhibit his serigraphs based on popular photographic imagery. In Toronto, Canada, Michael Snow (b. 1929) had abandoned purely abstract painting and was producing works that incorporated representational elements. And, in the small southwestern Ontario city of London, Jack Chambers (1931-78) was making paintings that revelled in the glory of the fully detailed rendering made possible by copying photographs.

Clement Greenberg was the foremost exponent of the artistic theory known as modernism. Modernists claimed that the progress of art lay in the elimination from artistic media of everything that was accidental, so that only that which was essential would remain as the material with which an artist would work. Consequently, much of the experimentation that took place under the banner of modernism can be described succinctly: artists tried to make works that remained within the boundaries of the media in which they were realized (that is, to write novels or pieces of music that remained novels or pieces of music), even though they lacked certain traits (e.g. narrative line or tonic centre) that are commonly believed to characterize these media.

Nearly two decades have elapsed since our best artists employed their energies in the effort to realize these ideals. One can easily identify, in retrospect, certain exemplary products of this effort. There are, for instance, Malevich's white-on-white paintings. Among more recent works, one could cite the novels of Alain Robbe-Grillet, which narrate the stories of their stories being narrated. And, at the source of the traditon, there are the works of Gustave Flaubert,[2] particularly the project he announced in 1878 that he intended to undertake after finishing Bouvard et Pécuchet -- a novel that would be about nothing. Flaubert, unfortunately, was captured by Nothingness before he could succeed in catching nothing in the net of his fiction. Had he lived to carry out his idea, the art of the past century would likely have been quite different. As it is, his proposal has taken on the status of a legend, for it defined the telos of the artistic currents of the century after his death. In the last two decades many have come to realize, as Flaubert had indicated a hundred years before, that the process of reducing artwork to its essential elements was destined to culminate in a work that was about nothing at all.

Modernism's attraction was widespread: indeed, among the arts, only photography seemed, by and large, reluctant to submit to its appeal. That photography should resist reformulation according to the modernist ideal is hardly surprising. Just try to imagine what a photograph would look like if it reached Flaubert's ideal of being a work about nothing. While one has no difficulty in

imagining a painting that represents nothing, to conceive of a similar photograph seems impossible. It would be nothing more than an empty piece of paper or an empty screen.

Film, on the other hand, has not proven so resistant to modernist reformulation; indeed, some of the finest examples of modernist art are to be found in the cinema. While no one has yet found a way of making an interesting film that would consist of nothing but projected white light, several American avant-garde filmmakers (e.g. Paul Sharits, Tony Conrad and Taka Iimura) have come pretty close, for they have created rich and interesting works out of nothing except bursts of white or coloured light projected at regulated intervals for various periods of time.

There exists no similar body of work in photography. The reason that filmmakers have been able to come so much closer to Flaubert's "zero-point" of artistic construction than have photographers is that film possesses one property still photographs lack, namely, the attribute of unfolding at a measured and regulated rate. The works I have just cited demonstrate that the essential capacity of the film medium is its ability to articulate forms that provide temporal structures for changes in light. If the film medium is not embarrassed by the elimination of referential forms, it is not because a reserve of features that withstand the elimination of reference is inherent in its photographic basis, but, rather, because film possesses properties in addition to those that derive from its photographic basis.

The modernist movement in Canada produced no experimental cinema[3] whatsoever. The closest approximation one could find would be the works of Vincent Grenier, and even these were produced only after the filmmaker had lived in the United States for several years. Grenier's films typically employ forms that present the illusion of possessing processive areas and recessive areas; this illusory depth generally appears quite shallow and extremely fragile. Moreover, his visual forms appear, for the most part, to be non-representational, although, in most of his films, a few brief passages disturb this appearance by revealing that these apparently abstract images are in fact direct recordings of real objects.

Grenier's main concern is to illustrate how slight changes in the tonal relations in a form affect our impression of the relations between the volumes in that form. However, I find more intriguing his treatment of the theoretical issues involved in the concept of representation. These issues are treated with particular clarity in Grenier's World in Focus (1977). The development of Grenier's thoughts on representation reflected in this film parallels the course of late modernist thought during the early-to-mid '60s. A prevalent notion in modernist circles during the 1940s and '50s was that the incorporation of representational images in a work of art degraded its ontological condition by downgrading it from an object to an image. Accordingly, early modernists eschewed representation entirely.

In the early 1960s, however, artists found a way to make representational works the ontological status of which was not, in relation to the original, a debased one. Jasper Johns, in his Targets series (1955-61) and American Map series (1960-63, 1965-66), pioneered the use of images that "represented" other representational images. Such images avoid the problem of opening up the ontological gulf between image and original that plagues most representational practices, since an image of an image has much the same status and can serve many of the same functions as the original image itself. The images of maps in Grenier's World in Focus are a case in point. The image of a map can serve the same functions as the original map does, and is, in fact, a map. Thus, in this film Grenier found a way of using representational images in a fashion completely consistent with the modernist programme.

One of Michael Snow's favourite tactics accomplishes exactly the opposite of what Grenier achieved in World in Focus. He demonstrates how an image is transformed when it is made the subject of another medium. In One Second in Montreal (1969), for example, a series of still photographs is reproduced in a motion picture. A viewer reacts to these lengthy, motionless film images differently than he or she would to the equally protracted display of slides or still photographs. When watching these unchanging film images, one is conscious of the length of time during which they are presented in a way one would not be when looking at the stills. The difference points up the fact that temporality is inscribed in a film image. Duration is thus shown to be one of the filmmaker's fundamental materials, even more fundamental (pace such theorists as Siegfried Kracauer and Slavko Vorkapich) than motion, a trait of the film it makes possible. In a similar vein, Side Seat Painting Slide Sound Film (1970) shows that a photograph of a slide produces different effects than does the slide itself, and that a slide of a painting produces different effects than does the painting itself.

The simple strategies that Snow employs in these films raise an enormous theoretical challenge to the very basis of the modernist enterprise. Modernists had insisted upon the idea that every art faces the imperative of not losing its identity when it assimilates impulses, form or norms from the neighbouring arts. It had taken the purification of each medium as an urgent task and had attempted to find for each medium a form that would have a set of attributes entirely different from those of forms constructed for other media. Snow proposes a more relaxed attitude, suggesting that the task of preserving mediumistic purity is not quite as imposing as modernists took it to be, for, even when two arts use the same means, they produce different effects. Thus, in One Second in Montreal he shows that when aspects of still photographs are incorporated in film -- indeed, when still photographs are incorporated "holus-bolus" in a film -- they acquire the durative properties of a filmic image.

Snow's One Second in Montreal provides a clue to why Canadian avant-garde film is anti-modernist in conviction. Much Canadian cinema, both experimental and non-experimental, seems to rest on the assumption that film is a photographically-based medium. For this reason, Canadian cinema in all its forms has been preoccupied with that endeavour we find reflected in One Second in Montreal: the analysis of the nature of photography, and, in particular, the attempt to comprehend the paradoxes inherent in that medium. It is the very intractibility of the photographic image to conform to modernist reformulation that explains the dearth of modernist works in the corpus of Canadian avant-garde cinema. Conversely, the affinity of photography for post-modern practices explains the predominance within that corpus of post-modernist works. The reason for photography's affinity for post-modernism involves complex issues, but one point of contact between photography and post-modernism can easily be described: by and large, both are concerned with issues that arise from the use of representation, and, especially, with the values, both aesthetic and cognitive, of a representational image. Even the paradoxes to which post-modern works return with such regularity are paradoxes inherent in the concept of representation.

The nature of these paradoxes can be clarified by considering two examples: Jack Chambers' 1968/69 oil, 401 Towards London No. 7 and an individual image from a photographic series by Snow entitled Plus Tard (1977). The former is a painting from what is evidently a snapshot, i.e., a casually produced photograph of an everyday event; the latter is what seems to be a casually produced photograph of Tom Thomson's The Jack Pine (1916/17),[4] a painting well known to Canadians as a pioneering example of "documentary landscape painting," a type of painting many critics believe to be quintessentially Canadian.

The responses these works evoke run an interesting course. When looking at either of them, we imagine the image that the work represents: the photograph from which Chambers painted, and the painting Snow photographed. Such representations, then, induce a desire to see the original. We can imagine, though, that if the original were to be presented, we would then want to see the scene that it represented. Yet we know, in spite of that desire, that if we were to be shown the scene which the original represents, the curiosity and fascination aroused by the work of art would not be satisfied.

If the presentation of its original model cannot sate the curiosity aroused by a work of art, it would seem that this curiosity must be directed not toward that which is represented, but rather toward something intrinsic in the representational image itself. This was the conclusion drawn by modernist theorists. Consequently, they expended much effort on identifying the properties intrinsic in the work itself that might sustain such interest and curiosity. Some argued that it was because artworks possessed "significant form" that they fascinate us; others claimed that it was because the artwork bore evidence that a human personality had shaped it.

More recent artistic practices have tended to refute these claims. Neither Snow's "casual" photograph of a finished artwork, nor Chambers' careful painting derived from a casual photograph, possesses what would canonically be considered as a "significant form;" in fact, if either were to be contemplated in exclusively formal terms, each would be found lacking. Moreover, the meticulous objectivity of Chambers' reproduction of his source photograph is calculated precisely to exclude the formative -- or, as he considers it, the deforming -- role of the human personality.[5]

What underlies the effects we have described, according to post-modernists, is not something intrinsic in the work of art itself; it relates, rather, to something intrinsic in the phenomenon of representation.[6] Quite simply, post-modernists contend that the special interest evoked by a representational image results from the fact that it presents the appearance of an object other than itself. Although this claim sounds almost tautologically trivial, it asserts an absolutely fundamental proposition. I choose the word "appearance" with great care, for it embodies an

ambiguity essential to the phenomenon of representation. The word "appearance" can refer either to someone or something actually present (as when we talk of a celebrity's "appearance" at some gathering), or to an illusory presence (as when we speak of a pool of water in a desert as being only an "appearance").

The concept of representation is similarly double-edged. A representation is at once an actual object and an illusion, an image that seems to present an object not actually present.[7] A representational image, then, is a fascinating matrix of presence and absence. In fact, only when the absence of the represented object is actually acknowledged does representation occur. It is the double-sided nature of the concept of representation — the fact that the presence of the original is suggested by an artistic representation even while its absence is demanded — that explains the peculiar course of desire a representation evokes. This desire projects itself towards the "Other" the image represents. It is this that makes the desire one that is impossible to sate. The "Other" cannot retain its "Otherness" when it is actually present.[8] Inherent in the very concept of "Otherness" is the idea of absence.

As the relationship of pictorial space to the picture plane was, for modernism, a fundamental relationship in an artwork, the relationship between presence and absence has been taken as the controlling feature of an artwork in post-modernism. This explains the particular interest post-modernists have taken in photography. The relationship between presence and absence in a photograph is a particularly intense one, since a photograph offers an unusually forceful illusion of the "Other" it represents. Indeed, it offers that illusion with such a force that the Other's absence becomes something of a Presence. This paradox of photography has been remarked upon by Roland Barthes, who speaks of "the real unreality" of the photograph and states that, in a photograph, one discovers "a new category of space-time that involves an illogical conjuction of the here-now and the there-then."[9]

The advocates of modernism had forsworn any truck with an artwork's Other. They insisted that an artwork must have a solid being, that it must be wholly itself, with no part constituted by something separate from itself. This coincidence of a work with its own being was to be gauged in two distinct though interrelated ways. One gauge was the degree of referentiality of the work. Illusionistic features were alleged to throw a work out of alignment with its being, since they forced the work to surrender aspects of its internal structure to that which it represented. Another gauge was the degree of its conformity to the medium in which it was realized: to be fully aligned with its being, a painting must be wholly a painting and must not possess features from some other medium.

Modernism, in sum, was a centripetal doctrine: it turned the artwork in upon itself. Post-modernism, on the other hand, is a centrifugal doctrine: its techniques are techniques of "decentring," of dispersal. The proponents of post-modernism have proposed, for example, the dissolution of notions of mediumistic purity and instead have advocated the construction of forms that employ attributes of one medium in works realized in a different medium.

The temporal structures of Michael Snow's films are a case in point. Most of them have very simple shapes which extend over protracted durations. Snow pioneered the use of such forms; indeed, when he first developed them, they provoked something of an uproar because they were so very unusual. During the early and mid-'60s, avant-garde cinema was dominated by forms developed by the American filmmaker Stan Brakhage. Brakhage's films typically employ intense, expressionistic camera movements, frequent use of extremely close camera positions, rapid cutting between shots with contrasting attributes, and complex rhythmic structures created by the conjoint effects of cutting and camera movement. The style forged from these devices tends to rivet the spectator's attention to the screen. Brakhage's works are so rapidly paced and have such intensity that one is required to give one's entire attention to the task of grasping what occurs in the very instant of its happening. Hence, one's mental energy is devoted wholly to the perception of what is immediately present; there is none left over for the apperceptual acts of recollection or anticipation. The spectator of a Brakhage film is a fascinated spectator, absorbed completely in the given moment; he occupies a realm without any temporal extension, for in it everything exists in a timeless present.

The temporal forms of Brakhage's films were designed to consolidate the viewer's experience, for they act to assure that only what is present in time is present to consciousness; they assure that what is given is totally present, i.e. totally revealed. Snow's temporal structures, on the other hand, involve a strategy of dispersal. By using a form that unfolds over an extended period in a nearly predictable manner, Snow encourages his viewer to recall the course the film followed to

reach a certain point, and to speculate on its future course. These structures, then, lead one out of the confines of the present into the past and the future, away from what is actually given towards that which is furnished only by reflexive acts of consciousness: away, in short, from presence toward absence. In this respect, they resemble representations.

The temporal forms of Snow's films also relate to features specific to photographic representation. A photographic representation,[10] unlike representations in many other forms (e.g. paintings, drawings, poetry, fiction), cannot depict objects or events that have never actually existed. The distinction between forms of representation that are constrained to depict or record actual existents and those that are not so constrained is an important one in mimetic theory. It was first introduced by Aristotle, who noted, amongst other features, that the former sort of imitation stands to the latter as history stands to poetry.

Aristotle's comment is startlingly apposite to a characterization of the contrasting temporal structures of the films of Brakhage and Snow: Brakhage's works are poetic constructs and Snow's, historical constructs. The temporality of Brakhage's cinema figures in his endeavour to make of his films a form of poetry. The fascinated absorption in the timeless present which he seeks to evoke suggests his poetic commitment to the supreme ecstasy of imaginative creation. Snow, on the other hand, uses a continuous period of time in order to scrutinize the way in which an experience evolves. The study of how events evolve in time is a study that can properly be termed historical.

If the extended durations of Snow's films make the viewer aware of the passage of time, another aspect of their structure acts to counterbalance this. Many of Snow's films have diagrammatic shapes, the conical shape of Wavelength (1967), based on the gradual narrowing of the zoom, being the prime example. Such shapes allow one to grasp the films' lines of development as wholes and to conceive of them in what are, in essence, atemporal, spatial terms.

There is a similar tension between the temporal features that characterize a photograph. A photograph, too, seems to depict the unfolding of an event in time even while it lifts those events outside time. So strongly do these conflicting qualities assert themselves that each has provided the basis of a separate tradition of photography. One approach, as exemplified by the works of Robert Frank, exploits the photograph's ability to depict the speed of unfolding events; the other, represented by Edward Weston, exploits the photograph's capacity to freeze a form and render it timeless. Snow's brilliant insight was to see how these two competing qualities of a photographic temporality could be reconciled by giving a photographically-based work a temporally-extended form with a diagrammatic shape.

Snow's works involve still another type of dispersal, in that he allows them to cross the boundaries separating different media. As we have seen, he sometimes does this by re-using imagery created in one medium in a work realized in a different medium — as, for example, he incorporated still photographs in his One Second in Montreal. He also does this by incorporating features of one medium in forms constructed in another — introducing, for instance, characteristics of sculpture in a film. A fine instance of this is ←--------→ (1968/69), which was produced by stationing a camera in front of a classroom wall, and, first, panning it back and forth, then tilting it up and down. Because the camera is positioned non-equidistantly from the two ends of the wall, the pan contains a slight asymmetry; the wall seems to swing one distance toward the camera, then a different distance away. The effect is that the space in front of the wall seems to expand and contract while the wall itself undulates aperiodically toward and away from the image's picture plane. As the panning decelerates and accelerates, these spatial variations are reinforced; rapid panning streaks and blurs the image, flattening it further, while a more leisurely pace restores the illusion of deep space. Thus, ironically, a back-and-forth movement almost parallel to the picture plane results in an apparent movement toward and from the picture surface.

As the title suggests, the film balances opposites: an optical (two-dimensional) space is balanced by a haptic (illusory, three-dimensional) space; self-referential constructs are balanced by illusionistic constructs; abstract passages are balanced by narrative episodes. The film literally oscillates between poles of cinematic construction. It uses a monomorphic shape that is based on a single operation, panning, to demonstrate that these poles are joined in a continuum of possibilities for film construction. Since all the possibilities can be realized by varying a single facet of this operation — its rate — there must be something common to them all. Even the poles, the extreme ends of the continuum, must share in this common nature. Thus, Snow demonstrates, these two poles of cinematic construction cannot be the simple opposites modernists took them to be. The monomorphic forms of Snow's films act to reconcile diversity by demonstrating that seemingly opposite forms of construction have something in common.

Along with other artists formulating that art which is now commonly referred to as post-modern, Snow's work involves a repudiation of the modernist ideals of "purity" and "essentiality." In essence, his strategies and forms are based on the principle of non-exclusion. He has insisted on using both representation and abstraction and on employing both illusionistic devices and devices which emphasize the "objecthood" of a work of art. Snow, it might be recalled, entitled another of his pieces Two Sides to Every Story (1974). The catholicity implied by the title is a key feature of his vision. While modernist art was based on principles whose effect was to exclude certain characteristics from painting or sculpture, Snow has laboured to reinstate those features into each of the several media with which he has worked, using them to balance those features which modernist art admits.

Like Michael Snow, Jack Chambers is well known as a painter. Many of his paintings depict features of his immediate situation: his family, friends, places in the city where he lived, and the landscape of southwestern Ontario. He was evidently deeply in love with his local environment and strongly committed to the ideal of depicting it.

This was not always so. In the late '50s he had left Canada, somewhat disgusted at what he perceived as its anti-artistic attitudes. He studied painting in Spain -- significantly, because he felt that there he could receive the best training in traditional techniques -- and worked in the country briefly after graduation. Before long, however, he felt the urge to return to London. As he explained to an interviewer:

> The Castilian landscape was always something impenetrable for me. It was something I desired to become by entering but never could or did... There was an organism within an organism that appeared as landscape. But I knew I was not inside.[11]

The beauty of the experience of the unity of self with nature recurs throughout Chambers' writing and painting, and underlies his use of the photograph. Chambers is a Romantic artist and his commitment to making realistic paintings depicting scenes from his immediate surroundings relates to his Romantic ideals. These images have an ambiguous existence. Since their contents are rendered with such meticulous objectivity, they seem to depict things in the material world; since their subjects are rendered with such intimacy, they seem to represent Chambers' inner world. Their contents thus appear to be both subjective and objective. In fact, they seem to exist at that point where self and world meet.

Chambers values photography highly because a photograph is a paradigm of this sort of amalgam of subjectivity and objectivity. A photograph is a product of a machine, since, in an important sense, the presence of a consciousness is only accidental to the making of a photograph, and since its nature is mechanically and scientifically determined.

Paradoxically, though, a photograph conveys, perhaps more forcefully than any other medium, the presence of a consciousness. A photograph always suggests a viewing subject; that is why "the look" of a photograph and "the eye" of the photographer have, of late, become so celebrated. This paradox -- that the more objective a description becomes, the more subjective it seems to be -- underlies much of Chambers' work. Subtending his philosophy is the Romantic conception that a perception and a work of art are both products of the same creative force in nature. His commitment to objective painting ("perceptual realism," he labelled his style) was founded on his dedication to the task of giving himself over to this creative urge. In his films Chambers relies, as would be expected, on the natural, scientifically-based likeness between a photograph and the object or scene it depicts in order to convey the idea that his films represent objective reality. On the other hand, to convey the idea that they represent the contents of his inner world, Chambers resorted to several somewhat unusual devices. For example, in Hart of London (1970), Chambers used a special printing technique known as bas relief to eliminate details from large areas of the image, leaving only the outlines of predominant shapes visible. This makes the imagery resemble the contents of memory. As well, in such films as Hart of London and Mosaic (1966), Chambers employed high levels of exposure and negative-for-positive reversal, which make the imagery appear to be suffused with an intense light. This brilliance acts partly to reduce the image to its predominant elements and partly to suggest an analogy to thought. In Hart of London he also made use of multiple images which seem detached from any real space, as if in order to represent simultaneously-occurring thoughts.

Chambers believed that the properties of the photographic image made the photograph a useful tool in conducting phenomenological investigation. This belief he shared with Stan Brakhage. It is hardly surprising, then, that Brakhage should be drawn to Chambers' work. Brakhage, in fact, has done great service in the cause of bringing Chambers' films out of obscurity.

In his campaign to get them exhibited, Brakhage has brought them to the attention of curators and film programmers, has spoken to audiences about them, and has written notes on them. In the programme notes he prepared for the 1978 San Francisco Cinemathèque, Brakhage wrote:

> The fact is that the four films[12] of Jack Chambers have changed the whole history of film, despite their neglect, in a way that isn't even possible within the field of painting. There are no "masters" of film in any significant sense whatsoever. There are only "makers" in the original, or at least medieval, sense of the word. Jack Chambers is a true maker of film.[13]

Jack Chambers' films, like Michael Snow's, deal with issues arising from the nature of photographic representation. There are, of course, clear differences between the films of these two artists. While Chambers continues to use the metaphoric figurations that were so important in Brakhage's "film-poems," Snow in large measure rejects such tropes: indeed, one of Snow's favourite strategies is to develop a structure that literalizes a commonplace metaphor. Furthermore, Snow's deep interest in framing has led him to give metonymic devices preference to metaphoric ones. But in spite of these differences, the two artists share a concern with photographic imagery which was quite uncommon in avant-garde cinema at the time they began to make films. Probably this reflects a deep-rooted interest among Canadian artists in the activity of documentation. Whatever the source of this interest may be, it helped them to reshape experimental filmmaking by stimulating the advance from modern to post-modern forms, and gave them an important place in the history of avant-garde cinema.

The area of exploration Snow and Chambers opened up has been mined by a number of younger filmmakers. Their means of doing so has often exploited the resources of the optical printer. The optical printer is a device that permits the filmmaker to rephotograph previously recorded material, and to introduce into the rephotographed material changes in the speed of the represented movements (i.e., movements can be prolonged or condensed); in the direction of those movements (a movement to the left can be transformed into one to the right or can be made to run backwards); in the image's photographic characteristics (the grain of the image can be enlarged, the image can be made more contrasty, or its brillance can be increased or decreased); or in its colours (one colour can be substituted for another, a black-and-white image can be turned into a colour image, or a colour image can be turned into black-and-white one).

When one is working with an optical printer, the photograph or cinematographic image literally becomes the subject of the film. Perhaps this is why the optical printer has become an instrument that has won more favour among Canadian experimental filmmakers than it has found among experimental filmmakers working in other countries. And while experimental filmmakers in other countries have certainly made interesting use of the device, Canadians generally have made use of it in a specific and unique fashion. American filmmakers who employ the device have tended to use it to create an art of powerful sensations, whereas Canadians use it to explore the temporal paradoxes inherent in the photograph. (When a photograph is looked at, a moment from the past seems to have been transported into the present.) The contrast between the works of the American-born Canadian Al Razutis and his Vancouver colleague David Rimmer points up this contrast. Thus, while Razutis produces works of tremendous vitality, which produce strong sensations in the viewer, Rimmer conducts subtle and delicately nuanced investigations of time and place.

Notes

1 Clement Greenberg, "After Abstract Expressionism," Art International, 6 (October 1962):30.

2 It was the great American avant-garde filmmaker Hollis Frampton who, citing how central Flaubert's project was to the modernist ambition, first indicated the incompatibility between it and the nature of photography. See Hollis Frampton, "Impromptus on Edward Weston," October, 5 (Summer 1978):53.

3 That is, live-action cinema. In animated film (which I consider a completely different medium, since its photographic properties are quite accidental to it, in the sense that any method of duplicating images for subsequent rapid projection would be suitable) we have the splendid work of Norman McLaren. I consider it a confirmation of my thesis that the major modernist "film" works produced by a Canadian artist were made in a non-photographically-based medium.

4 This appearance of being casually produced is created by its slightly soft focus and by the inclusion in the frame of the sort of reflections of people and the surroundings which, typically, appear inadvertently when one makes a rapid snapshot of a work of art hanging in a gallery. The appearance is deceptive; Snow uses these apparently accidental features to reveal the environment in which the painting he photographed was hanging.

5 See Jack Chambers, "Perceptual Realism," artscanada, 26, No. 5 (October 1969):8.

6 Or, more technically: the special effects of representation depend upon relational rather than absolute properties. The error the modernists made was to assume that the special properties of representation must be absolute properties. It was this assumption that underlay their notions about the autonomy of the work of art.

7 The magical thinking characteristic of pre-artistic representation equated both forms of presence, i.e., the illusion represented was taken as having the same reality as the representing token. Artistic representation depends upon separating these two forms of presence. To express the point more technically, I argue that artistic representation occurs only when a consciousness of the nature of symbolism replaces the effects of magical thinking in one's psychology.

8 Or, taken as being so, as in magical thinking.

9 Roland Barthes, "The Rhetoric of the Image," in Image-Music-Text. Essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1977), p. 44.

10 Or, in the case of photo-montages or photo-composites, the individual components of the image.

11 Ross C. Woodman, Chambers (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1967), p. 8.

12 Brakhage is mistaken in believing that Chambers made only four films; in fact, he finished six and left two nearly completed but unprinted at his death. Of his films, however, only Mosaic, Hybrid, Circle and Hart of London are known by more than a very few.

13 Stan Brakhage to San Francisco Art Institute Cinemathèque, cited in Cinemathèque's Brochure for June/July 1978.

Filmographies

Michael Snow (1929-):

A-Z (7 min.) 1956
New York Eye and Ear Control (34 min.) 1964
Wavelength (45 min.) 1967
Standard Time (8 min.) 1967
One Second in Montreal (26 min.) 1969
_____ (50 min.) 1969
Side Seat Paintings Slide Sound Film (20 min.) 1970
La Région Centrale (3 hrs.) 1971
Rameau's Nephew by Diderot (Thanx to Dennis Young) By Wilma Shoen (4 hrs. 3 min.) 1974
Breakfast (15 mi.) 1972-76
'Presents' (94 min.) 1981

Jack Chambers (1931-78):

Mosaic (approx. 20 min.) 1966
Little Red Riding Hood (approx. 15 min.) 1966

Hybrid (approx. 10 min.) 1967
R34 (approx. 20 min.) 1967
Circle (35 min.) 1968
Hart of London (80 min.) 1970
Life Still (approx. 30 min.) in progress 1970/71 (unfinished)
C.C.C.I. (approx. 30 min.) in progress 1969-1971 (unfinished)

(Note: Except for Circle and Hart of London, Chambers' films are unavailable through distribution channels. Running times are not known.)

Bruce Elder (1947-):

Breath/Light/Birth (8 min.) 1975
She is Away (13 1/2 min.) 1975
Barbara is a Vision of Loveliness (6 min.) 1976
Permutations and Combinations (8 min.) 1976
Unremitting Tenderness (8 min.) 1977
Look: We have come through (13 min.) 1978
The Art of Worldly Wisdom (55 min.) 1979
Sweet Love Remembered (14 min. 20 sec.) 1980
1857 (Fool's Gold) (22 min.) 1981
Illuminated Texts (2 1/2 hrs.) 1982

Illustrations
(Page numbers refer to the German edition of this catalogue.)

Page 339, upper
Jack Chambers
401 Towards London No. 1, 1968/69
Oil on mahogany (18.3 x 24.4 cm)
Collection: Northern and Central Gas Corporation Ltd., Toronto
(Photo: courtesy, Art Gallery of Ontario)

Page 339, lower
Michael Snow
Image from Plus Tard, 1977
Colour photographic print, plexiglas, painted wood
(The painting is Tom Thomson's The Jack Pine, 1916, in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada.)

Page 342, upper left and right
Michael Snow
Wavelength, 1967
(Photo: National Gallery of Canada)

Page 342, lower
Michael Snow
Rameau's Nephew by Diderot (Thanx to Dennis Young) by Wilma Schoen, 1974
(Photo: courtesy, Michael Snow)

Page 343, upper
Michael Snow
Sequence from La Région Centrale, 1970
(Photo: courtesy, Michael Snow)

Page 343, centre
Michael Snow
La Région Centrale, 1970 (production still)
(Photo: courtesy, Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre, Toronto)

Page 343, lower left and right
Michael Snow
"Presents," 1981
(Photo: courtesy, Michael Snow)

Page 344, upper, centre, and lower left
Jack Chambers
Hart of London, 1970
(Photos: by permission, Olga Chambers)

Page 344, right
Jack Chambers
Circle, 1968
(Photo: by permission, Olga Chambers)

Page 345, upper
David Rimmer
Canadian Pacific I, 1974
(Photo: courtesy, David Rimmer)

Page 345, centre
Bruce Elder
Breath/Light/Birth, 1975

Page 345, lower
Bruce Elder
Sweet Love Remembered, 1980

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(An asterisk (*) indicates an exhibition catalogue.)

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Periodicals

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Film Programmes

Experimental Artists' Films
Presented at the Arsenal, West Berlin, January 1983
Selection: Bruce Elder

Programme 1: Modernism: Its Legacy and the Challenges To It

Vincent Grenier -- While Revolved, 1976, 12 min.; World in Focus, 1976, 20 min.
Michael Snow -- One Second in Montreal, 1969, 26 min.; Side Seat Painting Slide Sound Film, 1970, 20 min.
Joyce Wieland -- Sailboat, 1967, 3 min.; 1933, 1967, 4 min.

Programme 2: The Structures of Postmodernism

Michael Snow -- Wavelength, 1967, 45 min.; -------, 1969, 50 min.

Programme 3: Around and About the Frame

Michael Snow -- Standard Time, 1967, 8 min.
Michael Snow/Joyce Wieland -- Dripping Water, 1969, 12 min.
Chris Gallagher -- Atmosphere, 1978, 10 min.; Seeing in the Rain, 1982, 10 min.
Ellie Epp -- Trapline, 1978, 15 min.
Jack Chambers -- Circle, 1969, 35 min.

Programme 4: "Innocence Ensnared"

Jack Chambers -- Hart of London, 1970, 80 min.

Programme 5: "Retaking"

David Rimmer -- Seashore, 1971, 12 min.; Blue Movie, 1970, 6 min.; Surfacing on the Thames, 1970, 8 min.
Al Razutis -- Lumière's Train, 1979, 10 min.; Wild West Show, 1981, 15 min.
Bruce Elder -- 1857: (Fool's Gold), 1981, 35 min.

Programme 6: (re)Presenting

Mary Bellis -- T.V., 1981, 15 min.
Sandra Meigs -- Purgatorio, A Drinkingbout, 12 min.
Patrick Jenkins -- Shadowplay, 1981, 13 min.; Sign Language, 1982, 10 min.
Bruce Elder -- Permutations and Combinations, 1976, 8 min.
Andrew Lugg -- Black Forest Trading Post, 1973, 4.5 min.; Plow, Skid, Drag, 1973, 7 min.; Postcards, 1974, 6.5 min.
Joyce Wieland -- Solidarity, 1973, 11 min.
Patricia Gruben -- The Central Character, 1977, 16 min.

Feature, Documentary and Animated Film Programme
Presented at the Arsenal, West Berlin, as part of the OKanada exhibition, Akademie der Künste, 3 to 28 January 1983 (official "opening": 7 January 1983)
Co-ordinator: Jean Lefebvre, Film Festivals Bureau, Department of Communications

A total of 62 programmes of Canadian films were shown in the following categories: National Film Board of Canada/Office National du Film, Classics; Cinéma-vérité (NFB/ONF); Cinema and minorities (private and NFB/ONF); Jacques Leduc Retrospective; Jean-Pierre Lefebvre Retrospective; Independent Canadian Feature Films; Independent Canadian Documentaries; Films for Children; NFB/ONF, Animation.