

FILM SECTION
MUSEUM OF ART
CARNEGIE INSTITUTE

COLLECTION SCREENINGS
THURS. NOV. 15, 1979
MUSEUM OF ART THEATRE 8:00

CORRIDOR (1970) 22 min. by Standish Lawder
SERENE VELOCITY (1970) 23 min. by Ernie Gehr
BARII RUSHES (1971) 34 min. by Larry Gottheim

CORRIDOR:

Using a home-made optical printer to rephotograph the images many times, this film begins with the three-dimensional nature of the corridor and transforms it, and the woman, into shifting, elusive entities. The simple rectangular corridor seems to evolve into an expanded underwater cathedral, finally becoming dancing abstract images as if a Franz Kline painting had come to life. The Terry Riley music (Rainbow in Curved Air) is crucial to the state of mind evoked by the film.

"The most visually demanding film I have made, CORRIDOR is in no sense an 'entertainment' film. It is best described as an occasion for meditative speculation, for it creates in the spectator an elevated mental state normally attainable through meditation, drugs, or direct electrical stimulation of the brain. Particularly towards the end of the film, the stroboscopic fluctuations of light bring about a change in brain wave activity of the viewer through the interface stimulation of alpha-wave frequencies. In addition to the meditative trance-like state this induces, there are also illusions of color sensations from the high-intensity vibration of light on the retina. The extensive transformations of the image, resulting from a two-year period of work and experimentation, were created entirely by home-made film printing equipment.

--Standish Lawder

SERENE VELOCITY:

"Ernie Gehr used a minimum number of structural components to make SERENE VELOCITY:

- 1) fixed camera position
- 2) frame by frame registration
- 3) zoom positions altering every four frames
- 4) uniform progression of zoom positions...
- 5) promotion of the pairs of zoom positions every sixty feet

The rigorous maintenance of these few structural roles and the absence of characters and dramatic events tend to emphasize the autonomous, depersonalized stature of the work. The description of the mechanics of the film, however, does not account for the viewer's response. Rather than experiencing the work as a succession of discrete units operating within a simple metrical system, the viewer becomes aware of an increasing complexity of various formal attributes.

"Superimpositions and rhythmic patterns, nowhere apparent on the filmstrip itself, become a powerful factor in the viewing experience. The static quality of each image is undercut as the length between zoom positions increases. Walls appear to move laterally, the exit sign pushes towards and away from the upper edge of the screen, doors and objects along the wall seem to advance and retreat. The simultaneous play of these and other perceived movements affirms the four frame metric system while it establishes a more elaborate rhythm. Depending on the direction of one's glance or the dominance of a particular configuration or object (through scale, color, or vivid graphic composition), patterns of strong and weak beats are felt. ...

"In an interview with Jonas Mekas in 1972, Gehr made repeated reference to the relationship between film and mental processes. His intentions in making SERENE VELOCITY were:

a desire less to express myself and more of making something out of the film material itself relevant to film for spiritual purposes.... What I mean by 'spiritual' is sensitizing the mind to its own consciousness by allowing the mind simply to observe and digest the material, the film phenomena presented, rather than manipulating it to evoke moods and sentiments.

--Ellen Feldman, from A History of the American Avant-Garde Cinema/Program 7

BARN RUSHES:

"A series of eight intermittent glides past an upstate New York barn. The barn, gently bobbing on the screen, reveals its changing silhouette, itself a screen. Each subsection, separated from the others by light-struck film ends into which the illusion descends (and from which it emerges), records a different day/time/light situation. A radiant serenity resolves the oppositions explored in the film. The eye is pleased, the mind keeps on transcending."

--Larry Gottheim

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This is made possible in part by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts;

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