CARNEGIE MUSEUM OF **ART**

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Independent Filmmaker, Robert Breer, Lecture

Date of Recording: May 06, 1970
Location: Carnegie Museum of Art
Running Time: 68:31 minutes
Format: ¼-inch audiotape

Date of Transcript: November 2015

Department of Film and Video archive
Lectures and interviews with artists
ID: fv001/002/002/A

Sally Dixon: ...in our Independent Filmmaker Series. We have Bob Breer with us tonight. He was born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1926, graduated from Stanford University, and went to live in Paris for 10 years; came back to the United States, and works in New York, lives in New York now. He has been in numerous film festivals, won prizes. His films are owned by the Museum of Modern Art, and ran an Exchange Program with the Tokyo Museum of Modern Art. He has just returned from Osaka, working as one of the E.A.T. artists in the design collaboration for the Pepsi-Cola Pavilion.

He's brought his films, I think the latest '69, and will show them to us, and talk with you about them. Robert Breer.

Robert Breer: Thank you. Thank you, Sally. Well I make all these notes but I don't usually have anything to begin with, except the list of films, I guess. I have about-you have a program here with maybe six films on it. I brought some more than are on the program. Can you hear me all right? Okay.

I have to explain always that any of my film showings amount to a retrospective of some kind, because I've been making films for a lot of years, but I only make very short films, and I only make one or two a year, so to make up a program of any decent size, I have to always show old films. That's what you are going to get tonight; you are going to get a survey, roughly, a chronological series of films.

A general statement about me, and about the films, would be that; let's see, the first film shown tonight was made in 1954, and I left school a few years before that as a painter, and it was as a painter that I got into making movies, and what I painted in those days was-and this was in Paris, as Sally mentioned I just-that I moved to Paris 1949, and I got tied up with the Gallerie Denise René, and what I would call a "School of Vasarely", but in those days, I think most of you know Vasarely's painting now, in those days it was-he was one of a lot of "neoplastic artists", so called. He worked himself, in larger-well, in paintings that had large, abstract forms in them, and as many other people, this is an outgrowth, a rebirth of Mondrian, and that neoplasticism.

I painted the same way, large, semi-geometric shapes, and it was a kind of- a very rigorous abstraction, it was a very, very pure movement. A group of painters who felt very strongly about the importance of absolute composition, absolute pure abstraction, of color-of red being red, and this is a rebirth of this, a recycling of this tendency, and I guess we are going out one right now. It was recently called "minimalism", a possible misnomer, but anyhow they -Of course, minimal-minimalist art, it has a different aspect and probably a different intention than what I was doing in the '50s, but there are a lot of similarities.

One of the others-Well, I got into film because this bothered me somewhat, the rigidity of the notion about getting to a-arriving out of an absolute formal composition. What bothered me was, that I would arrive at that one day after working on a painting for a while, and then I would start another painting and arrive at it again, and I couldn't-Somehow it was harder to accept having so many absolutes. One of them had-there had to be an ascendency of some kind. One of them had to be the final statement, and this seemed impossible, and I began to shift interest to the process itself, the development of an absolute, and I got into film for this reason, because I saw that maybe it was in developing one of these formal compositions that-in the development itself, that was where the thing was.

The first film I made was, kind of, an animated painting where shapes shifted around and found their place finally. It was a very awkward thing as a film, but what I'm showing you tonight, the first of these films tonight is a later version of these early films, where the paintings were-became animated. I was, kind of, dissatisfied with this-with these things as films, but certain things happened in the process that turned me onto cinema very much. There are some glimmerings in this first film, it's called *Form Phases Number IV*, the first things that-I very seldom show this, it's a very dim print, and it's silent, and it runs at silent speed, but I wanted to give more of a curve to this evening than I usually do, so I'm going to start with this thing. [00:05:50]

The last film that I'm going to show tonight is also a geometric film, and it was done a-year-and-a-half ago, and this has been 1954, well, that number of years between them, and between them you'll see the films I did between them, and they go off in very funny directions. I have come back to this very formal kind of filmmaking, and I can't explain it, but there in order to is. Let me see, well, all right, so this first film, a couple of things that I would point out, as you are looking at it, is that I began-In animated films you work with single frames very, very closely, isolate frames.

You might work on one single image, which is 24th of a second, a long time, then make another one which follows it; and I think in that process you become very aware of single frames. The time you spend on one frame, and then on the next, it might-it might have something to do with the way I ended up, and that was making very strong relationships between each 24th of a second. In other words, while I was making the film I forgot about the infinitesimal fragment that each one of these pictures amounted to, when it would appear on the screen.

I thought only that I'd spend a day on this thing, and it took on an individual character. As usual, in animation, the sophistication in animation you'll get away from this, because the usual intention is to make a flow between them, but what happened, I'm very perverse so I decided to rupture this flow instead of making a smooth transition for each 24th of a second, I thought I would try

to break it up. It was just to go in the direction that I was tending to go anyhow. It was, in some ways, an easy way out.

The film, after this *Form Phase* is when I-this first rather formal, academic, animated film, if you like, I began to play with fractured images, and the next film is-has sequences in it, in which each frame is completely different from the preceding one. Tonight there's an awful range of kinds of films, and I don't know how-I've never been able to-I've always had the feeling that people looking at them get terribly confused. I don't know if it's true or not, and I don't know what to do to help you except to have you know that I sympathize.

I considered stopping between films and saying something so you get adjusted to the next thing, but that's too complicated, and that also tends to split up the experience more, so I'm going to throw at you a very mixed bag of kinds of films, and ask your indulgence, and I want you to realize that these films, the first reel for instance, consists of one, two, three, four, five films, and they range in time from 1954 to 1961, and I made probably 10 or more films during that time, and these are just picked out of that batch of films, so it makes for a rapid change from one to the next.

The last one on this first reel, I won't have a chance to introduce it, so until-I mean only now, it's called *Blazes*. I've spoken about the first one, which is rather slow from my-by my standards, and *Blazes* is a film made up where I've gone the whole hog on a single frame of changes, and it's three minutes long. I tell you that now because some people think it's much longer, and others think it's much shorter. For those that think it's much longer, it's just for comfort reasons, I'll tell you it isn't really any more than three minutes. It consists-it was made-I've put together 100 images, and there are 4,000-roughly 4,000 frames in this film. [00:10:10]

Those 100 images are changed around, they are made, they are small gnashes made on 4 by 6 cards, and each card -the way I made the film-if I can grab it out of my pocket, can I? One of my cards; I have some cards here. This size card, I made 100 of these, little paintings, and I made them, I scattered them around the floor as I made them, so I was surrounded by them, and the idea was that I wanted them to relate to each other, not only in sequence, but as a family because when I made the film, I shuffled them like a deck of cards, and they would have to relate to each other in every possible way.

This was a way of- A kind of a metaphor for the film, as a way of foreseeing the collision of all these different images. Okay. Let's see. I think that's about all I'll say. There's a-You'll have to-Maybe after I show this first reel, we can talk, if there are any burning questions I can talk about that first reel before we go into the next one. Let me see. I'll list the films that we are going to show right now, in case it doesn't coincide with your program. *Form Phases IV*, is the first one; *Jamestown Baloos* is a collage film that I made three years after the first

one. I think in between those is a 32nd film called, *Un Miracle*, if you see French words in these, it's because I was making them in France, it's not some kind of snobbism, French titles and so forth. *Un Miracle*, when it went through the laboratory here it came out, *U-N Miracle* that was the way-the titles that the lab put on it.

That has-Let's say, it used to be considered very sacrilegious, and now as things go, it's a fairly timid questioning of the whole idea of the Pope, and so forth. Then the next one is; *A Man and His Dog Out for Air*; which is much-squiggly lines; and then *Blazes*, this one that I just described, that's done on these cards. I think we'll just show them, hope for the best and then I'll talk about the next reel afterwards. Okay? [end of lecture 00:12:48]

[Screening 00:14:00-00:22:04]

The things I wanted to say about those, I had [movement of the microphone 00:22:10]-Oh, well, it's something -No, this -You can hear me, can you now, without this? Louder? Okay. I think this will come on, here we go. Okay. Well, nothing much more, the idea of process, I mentioned about that earlier-earliest painting, and the-I didn't say much about collage in *Jamestown Baloos*, but for me that was a big breakthrough at that time, the idea that I could put together some of the formalistic notions I had about space, about form, with ideas, configured of ideas maybe, maybe literary ideas that film could do this.

That I could mix everything up in the same bag, because of time, I could do one thing one minute and do something else the next. I could use-well, the image I use all the time is, I could use red as an abstract sensation, and I could use red as blood, and I could follow one with the other, and they would be isolated enough so that one could-I thought this was a parallel with the way the brain works, and with the way one thinks, the way one feels. You have a lower-lower reactions-of lower order than you have more articulated ones, more literary kind of ideas, and they are mixed up, and they skip around.

That was, for me, what *Jamestown Baloos* meant, that's-that was that-that was a breakthrough. From now on I can do anything-I can do everything, not anything. Then I tried to discipline that in various ways, and I isolated parts of it. Like, *Blazes*, I concentrated on just a pure optical shift. Okay. Oh, I have some general notions about big, high-powered philosophical notions about art that I scribbled down this afternoon. Something about breaking through the confines of the convention to define it better. Something like, student strikes. Well, that was this afternoon, but the idea that I feel connections here and there that one loses sights-sight of the limits that confine you, and I've written here, limits are goals, but one has to run through the goal post and not just up to them. Football analogies are from the '30s when I used to play football. Yeah.

There's that feeling anyway, I've always felt that way about an art form that I had to go all the way through it and come out the other side, and look back at it to know what it was, and by that time it doesn't matter of course, but it's that kind of activity, that it has to do with the way I make films, and that why I push very far on a-at least on an optical level. I don't know if it's deeper than that; and so further than that, I guess it's an ordinary thought that art is a permanent state of revolution, a philosophical stance. [00:25:16]

Well, I went to the museum today, and I saw the Cezanne self-portrait there, and you don't see Cezanne every day anymore. Anyhow, I was kind of-I was impressed. I don't know if you've seen it, you should go back maybe and look at it. It's a self-portrait showing his-his legs are in the foreground, or one leg, and he has his hand on it; and his leg is completely out of whack, and after you look at it a while you see his head has been pasted on sideways too, and the whole figure is grotesquely out of line with itself. The only that occurred to me looking at that, and seeing all the other impressionists' paintings, and how well, they've dropped into place in our visual experience, but this one doesn't.

Still, a leg out of whack is a leg out of whack, and it excited me, because it meant to me that this funny aberration, or what it did was refer to the plane of the painting, as anybody who has studied art knows Cezanne's intention about the picture plane, and this is the kind of thing that turns me on, and it's-Again, refers to breaking through the convention, so you become aware of it. It's like falling off the stage, so you know there is a stage when you are looking at theatre. Anyhow, so I applied that to my filmmaking.

There are some ramifications lately in this project, which I'm going to show some slides of after this next reel of films, and that has to do with experiment on a large scale. Gee, how did I get there? I don't know. I'll have to make that bridge later, or maybe we'll all forget about it. Anyhow, I'd better talk-tell you about the next reel of films, and there are four more films, or three-and-a-half.

The first one is called *Pat's Birthday*, and it's a 15-mintue film I made with Claes Oldenburg, 1962, and it was the spring of a year that he had spent his first big deluge of theatre events in his little store downtown, and he wanted to make a movie, and he did get a friend to shoot some footage of those experiences, and he kept after me to photograph them, but I didn't feel I had any business doing a documentary film of anything, much less somebody else's art. I begged off, but when spring came around and the outdoors opened up, and leaves came out and all that, and I lived out in the country, I thought maybe if we got him out of his theatre, and go got nearer my house, then I could make a film and somehow keep myself in it, and not just become a camera operator. The result was *Pat's Birthday*, the way you look at it.

Let's see. After that it was *Fist Fight*, which was made a couple years later. That's another collage film, and kind of a super-duper version of *Jamestown*

Baloos. I made that, and that's quite a few years after, in '64 that is, *Fist Fight*. I modified it to fit a theatre event that was produced by Karlheinz Stockhausen, a thing called *Originale*, and it's the only-I don't-I think it might be the only happening that he ever devised. It was based on his composition *Kontakte,* and done to the clock. It was first produced in Cologne in '63, I think, where he was in charge of the experimental radio station there, he might still be.

It's peopled with-or it was, that production had-has actors in it, all of his friends, and the roles they played were the roles they normally played in life, so he had his friend, a poet, play the poet , and whatever roles, I've forgotten what they were, but there was a filmmaker in a German version, and when he came to New York he just recast the whole thing. I ended up the filmmaker in the New York version, and I happened to have this film *Fist Fight* almost done, and the score called for a film to be shown during the performance, and it also called for some stills of the actors in the performance, so I added it on. [00:30:09]

In the beginning of this film you'll see rapid snapshots of the people involved. Allan Kaprow was the Director of the thing, Allen Ginsberg was the Poet. I don't have the roster in front of me, but maybe you'll recognize some of the faces at beginning of that film, and that it goes into the film that I had already done. Let's, see. Then there's a very short film. Are you lost? You're probably lost by now, but maybe remember this as you look at them.

Anyhow, there's a short film after *Fist Fight*, *Pat's Birthday*; the Oldenburg *Fist Fight*, is the Stockhausen thing. Then there was a film that I made for television, a political cartoon that was to be-it was one of a series, and that series was to go on and on, and it didn't. It lasted through three little films. They were then just stuck into the public broadcast laboratory program last year. This one was aired-it was the Fall of '68, as a matter of fact, and it's probably self-explanatory, except to tell you that that's what it is. It has no title or any other explanation.

It starts out as a line that wiggles, and then it develops into what it is. It's kind of a throwback for me in terms of how to make imagery. It goes way back to *A Man and His Dog*, but it gave me an opportunity to say something specific about contemporary things. I really look forward to doing the others. We had one going on the Pentagon, a public broadcast. I remember them sitting around-working up the Pentagon one, and everybody looking at their shoes. They had gotten word that they had to first send it to the Pentagon before they could show it, and gradually that part of -that segment of the-of *PBL* got wiped out totally, so it was never continued.

Anyhow, let's see, and the last film is-the last film of the program is '*69*, and that was named after the year, it was made in 1968, and that goes back to,

as I mentioned before, it's a very formal film, and it's one of -I'm working another one along these lines, and there's one, preceded it, and that's pure abstraction. Then after that, I'd like to show you about four slides of the pavilion in Osaka that I've been working on for the last year-and-a-half, so we'll show these next three-and-a-half films. I say a half because that *PBL* film is one minute, exactly. Then slides, and then we'll talk if you want to, some more. Okay. [end of lecture 00:33:00]

[Screening 00:33:21-34:35]

It's hard to sit up so close. Okay. Well, maybe we-almost, quick, but I have these slides to show you, and it is what I've been doing for the last year-and-a-half, and there's some connection, and disappear briefly out there, and I'll come back in a second, and then we'll-I'll talk about these things. [pause 00:35:00]

A graphic demonstration here; these are-[pause 00:35:47-00:36:02] I don't know from that distance what you can see, four little white things. I'm going to show you a slide or two of this pavilion that a group of us have designed for Pepsi-Cola Company; and you'll see these same white blobs on the slide, and big scale, and these are scaled down; well they are actually souvenirs now being sold, as souvenirs of the bigger sculptures. I guess to continue my history very briefly, after I got into films from painting, and went back into the art gallery with sculpture, kinetic sculpture, and moving objects that I call "floats", and this, I've been making these things for a few years now, and showing them in galleries, and various places, museums, and it culminated in this pavilion in Japan.

I could go n talking about that, but why don't I show you-let's-Look, oh, well, before we turn the slides on, I have, I think, four or five, and I'll just describe briefly what you are looking at. I guess I'll have sound with the slides, so why don't we look at them, and then I can describe while we are looking at them. Well, you're slightly out of focus. Here we go.

That white shape in the foreground-Let's see. You see, you are still out of focus I think. It's still pretty fuzzy. It moves too, that's-No. We had trouble setting that up earlier. I think that's pretty good, or maybe it's in the photo, but-Well, I guess we'll-Okay, there's a white blob there in the foreground, and that is the-that is, besides being out of focus, that is the Pepsi-Cola Pavilion. Well, we got a glimpse of it there. This is a movie I made of the- there we go. Okay. That's pretty good. That is the Pepsi-Cola Pavilion there, that white shape, and the top of it is-on the top of it you can see some white fog, and that's generated by the pavilion. That's one of the features that we designed into it.

I think we ought to go to the next slide. Oh by the-Wait, quickly. This general layout, in the background you'll see, that's Expoland. Now this photo was taken about a week before the opening, and it was cold as Hell in Osaka then, and among other things, and it looked grim. I don't want to make bad publicity for the fair, so let's say that this is not typical of the very joyous spectacle it really is; but this does show, it's a long shot of the thing. Now let's move on, and see if-Yeah, there it is, another shot in the daytime, I guess.

Now, it's still a little fuzzy, I mean, besides the building part of it. Can you get better? That's better. It went bad again there. Okay. Whoop, there, that's-Oh, beautiful, right there. Okay. Now those shapes on the right, with are really on the left, those things being on backwards which is my fault. Anyhow, it doesn't matter, right or left. Those shapes on the right are the things I call "floats", and they are about 6 feet high, and there are seven of them out in front of the pavilion, and the background is the pavilion itself, and the fog, which is very beautiful stuff, it changes all the time. Part of that is under control, and part of it isn't, part of it depends on the weather. [00:40:00]

Anyhow, that's the general aspect of that pavilion, and you can see on left there, that tube is-you can see people going into it, that the entrance. Now you go down that tunnel and come out in a room inside, underneath, which is, we call a "Clam Room", it's a black chamber, saucer-shaped, and it serves as a foyer before you go up into the-inside the dome. Inside the dome there is a kind of tour de force in technology. It's a 90-foot spherical mirror. It's not a hemisphere, it's more than a hemisphere, it's as though you sliced off the bottom-third of a sphere, and you come up into this spherical shape, and it's all-optically, quite correct so that it's in virtual lens, I'm told.

What this means is that you get real images, suspended in space. You get aerial images in there, of anything in there, specifically yourself, if you go up and stand in the middle of the room that has a floor that slopes up towards the middle. It's very spectacular. If you walk around you get the same-real images walking around upside down, over your head, and it's pretty indescribable. I have the slide. I haven't seen it myself, enlarged, but we'll move on to it, and you'll see what I'm talking about.

Oh, before we do that, I haven't said much about these things. Maybe while we are on it, there will be some more close-ups of them. They move around - these big shapes are fiberglass shells, and underneath them are motor-motorized tractors, and they move around the test at the rate of about one mile a day. That means it's about 30 to 40 inches a minute. In other words, very slowly, and you are not really aware of them moving until you are quite close to them. They also admit sounds, they are programmed, each one has a continuous tape in it, and the sounds are quite various, they range from four or five people discussing a beautiful view to kind of a jungle environment to the sounds of whales underwater, and heartbeats.

There's a Mack Truck driving and it's-and it makes a sound composition out there, because they move around, and cluster sometimes, and these tapes are staggered so that-I don't know why this is funny. I think of it as being quite beautiful, but it is surprising, if you are there and you look at these dumb shapes, and then you realize all this is going on.

Let's move to the next slide. I forget what there is. Well, there's one up, close up, it looks the same, only bigger; again, the fog in the background. A little background of the whole pavilion, it was designed-Pepsi-Cola Company had the opportunity to have a pavilion at the World's Fair, and they didn't know what to do with it really. It had several ideas. One of-in their searching they encountered me, and I sort of steered them towards a collaborative effort with E.A.T., Experiments in Art and Technology, that has in the past, worked towards the collaboration of engineers and artists in big art shows, usually.

There was some hesitation on the part of E.A.T. to get involved with a commercial company, but with the pretext that we were going to do something very pure, and something that would be in the context of a large public. There are 12,000 people a day that go through this pavilion. They decided that it would-it would coincide with their ideals, with their general purposes, so we went ahead. Two years later, and $2.5 million later, this is the result.

Let's turn to the next one. I don't know what the next slide is. Oh, yeah, this is a couple of kids out here playing, and it's just another shot of the thing. There were a group originally of four artists that designed this thing, and I could list them; there is Robert Whitman, Forest Myers, known as Frosty Myers, David Tudor and myself. Then we went to other artists to elaborate the design. To add features to it, and it was really a first time-We all had the feeling, we all have the feeling it was a very exciting breakthrough on a couple of levels; one, the obvious ones, sponsorship by a big company doing something without ever, ever any interference on the part of the company. [00:45:30]

I have to admit that it was partly a fear on their part, a misunderstanding, confusion, a few other things, some goodwill I think too. In some ways a fluke that we went ahead with what we did. I don't want to short-change them; they had a lot of courage, I think, in a way.

Anyhow, that's one level of breakthrough; another one that-four and eventually six and eventually eight artists could all work together in beautiful, beautiful harmony; everybody-the artists-That, for me, was one of the bigger things that happened. The idea of collaboration, it doesn't seem to work out with the kind of paranoia and egocentricity of artists, and I've always felt that collaboration was, kind of, a cop out; but in this case, no. I felt that somehow we had the right alchemy, and everybody worked together beautifully.

The other thing that worked successfully was the engineer-artist thing, they call it ”interface” at E.A.T., or they called “interface” in the industry, I guess, in general. Between the engineers and the artist, how to convince and engineer that this essentially, useless thing was worthwhile doing; and I felt this maybe is what the artist's contribution to the engineering group was to allow them to feel that they could do something useless. That doing something useless was really, maybe a beautiful idea and-

Well, what's the next one? I think maybe it's the inside. Yeah. I don’t know. These photographs on the inside of the mirror are very difficult to take, and even when they are taken it's somehow hard to really impart the -what goes on there. I think a movie is, maybe, a better means, but now here you see, well, I'm in a bad position, I can't tell you what you see. The things you see above the figures in the foreground there on the floor, and everything above them, it's on the ceiling reflected upside down.

I guess what's missing in a slide like this, is the 3-dimensionalness of it. The figures you see in the upper light up above really have-are out in palpable space, they are not up against the ceiling, as you might expect, as you usually get in a virtual image when you look at a mirror. In this case the-if you get near the focal point you'll see these real images that are, for all intents and purposes, tangible. It's just a very splendid space.

Combined with that is a very sophisticated sound system that David Tudor designed along with engineers, of course. Gordon Mumma, and there are lot of people involved here, the names I should mention. We worked with Japanese artists too. There's this-Anyhow the sound system that is-the sound behaves the same way as optics do on a shape like this, so you get just as many special effects, you get the virtual images as well as real images. You get infinity kind of things, you get standing waves, and the whole dome was backed up.

The dome is made out of the thing you are looking at. The mirror was made out of mylar, very thin mylar. It's an air structure, but unlike most air structures, this one was supported by a vacuum on the outside rather than pressure on the inside. We had not airlocks, you just walk right in from outside, the atmospheric pressure is the same inside as outside. It had an outer shell behind it, about 10 feet larger in diameter, and that in radius, let's say, and that shell, that we pumped air out of that shell that changed the atmospheric pressure, just enough to support this thing. This is a big advantage over, for instance, the U.S. Pavilion in Osaka is another air structure, but there's an elaborate system of airlocks and things that get in there to keep the pressure difference.

Anyhow, this is one of the byproducts of this thing. There are a lot of technological discoveries and things that will be used later on. One is an astral

telescope as a result of perfecting this system, making a mirror this big, that's optically correct. Anyhow, the technology side of the thing isn't what it's about, it's really about the experiences-the essential experiences sort of separated from each other. The floor that was very special, it was divided into different sections, and different materials. [00:50:42]

As you walk over the floor you heard different sounds through handsets that were given to you when you came into the pavilion. I should put this in the present tense, because it's going on now, and will for the-till the end of the fair, hopefully. This "Floor and Sound Loop System", that it's called, worked-all of these things are programmable, and there's a big console at one end of the-in this area, and we've invited artists to appear there, and program. Play the whole pavilion like a giant instrument.

I don't know I think that must be-Are there any more slides? That's it. Okay. I can go on and on and on, and I don't want to overdo it, but anyhow, what that has to do with movies I don't know. It's just another involvement of mine. I'm still making movies. I would suggest, I think it's gone on too long now, so it's a whole lot of things you've seen. I will be glad to answer any questions right away and-Okay. What?

Audience: What is the experience of projecting a image on a mirror?

Robert Breer: Well, to project a movie on a mirror and you get the image of the light coming out the lens. One of the experiences, is the news photographers that went in there and shut off their flash bulbs and when they did they got 10 million flash bulbs in their picture, and that was it; we-That answers that. I don't know.

Audience: I was thinking of reproducing a three dimensional image in a three dimensional way-

Robert Breer: Well, the mirror does that itself. He said that he was thinking of reproducing a 3-dimensional experience by means of movie projection, but the mirror does that. Any object placed in there becomes a 3-dimensional suspended aerial image, and that's pretty vivid, because you have-you can see the thing, and then you can see its real image floating there. Yeah. Any questions? Yes?

Audience: Were they all photograph-was any of the image on the film itself?

Robert Breer: Oh, yeah. No. I have done work on-I have worked on film but I find it too inhibiting, too small an area to work on. It generalized everything so-but I do work on-I do work on these cards, you know, a pretty small area. The advantage of the cards is that I can do a whole stack of them. On a light table, for one thing, I can see through them, so I can make a progression of up to five or six images, to give me continuity when I want it, which is not too often, as you've seen. That's a big advantage over doing it right on film.

The other thing is, I can flip the cards to get a preview of what is going to show on film, and this helps pre-editing. That's the thing why I didn't work on films, it's just too small an area, and then-Yeah. Anything else? Yes?

Audience: What is the fog?

Robert Breer: How is it, the fog generated? It's water vapor, and it was perfected by an engineer in Los Angeles, and it's done by forcing water, high pressure, through special nozzles. It's very critical business to get the droplets small enough so that they'll remain suspended, and he has this nozzle he has developed, and I can explain. I think it's patented, so it's no secret that the nozzle is like any sprinkler nozzle with a round orifice, and has a small hook of wire that comes off one edge, and that comes down right in front of the opening of where the water comes out. That all these small droplets are then further split by this pointed wire that aims right at the nozzle, and that makes a very fine spray.

The adjustments are very, very critical on those things, and there are 2,300 nozzles lined up around the surface of that dome. It was really a big operation there. Very expensive and very elaborate, and a lot of power and a lot of water as well, and it works beautifully. Yes? [00:55:25]

Audience: When you show[Inaudible 00:55:33] you seem to show for about ten seconds [inaudible 00:55:38] why do you do that?

Robert Breer: Well, I don't know if what you're describing is exactly true, but there are breaks in this non-continuity I guess. There is composition to each of my films even though it's pretty well devastated, there's a kind of syncopation, and so those breaks are related to one another. What that-Isn't that what you are asking? What?

Audience: Well it seems that you gives us a chance to catch up with the images [Inaudible 00:56:14]

Robert Breer: Oh, maybe.

Audience: [Inaudible 00:56:15]

Robert Breer: Yeah.

Audience: Would you get them all?

Robert Breer: Yeah. Yeah. Yes. Well, you can-That's an interesting point, to me anyhow, that I discovered that you can-it's relative to the surrounding imagery, so you'll see it, 24th of a second very well. If it's 1/24th of a second on a black screen, you are sitting there and all of a sudden it's flash, you'll see it, and there's no question about what the lighting as your eye. You will also register it if it's

something familiar, that you can immediately label. If it's a shape like a hand I used in the illustration.

The first time I did this, I made a loop film, which I ran for about-I'd run it 15, 20 minutes at a time, and the film was only six feet long. Each frame was different, and as I ran it continuously, I began to discover new images in it, so that when that repeated itself. This meant that there was an ascendancy, and order of recognition from mere ones, and then it depended on the context very much. If you follow a red with the green you don't get grey, but you get yellow, and projected light is what happens.

If you follow a hand with a foot then you'll get a fanned, or something. You get an amalgam of the two, but if you follow a hand with some other totally dissimilar image, then the two will be distinct enough from each other to stick in your mind. It's with that kind of threshold situation that I've composed these films. I know very well. Finally, I mean, I've done it for a long time, so that I can predict what's going to stick out, and what isn't. That's why I sort of quit doing it because predictable thing aren't very interesting. I have-in another way, I mean, that's incorporated in my making of films. At first it was pure experiment, it's a psychological retention as well as, you know. Yes?

Audience: [Inaudible 00:58:11]

Robert Breer: Pardon me?

Audience: [Inaudible 00:58:15]

Robert Breer: Oh, yeah. These things, yes; there's one over there, and well-Yeah, these particular ones they-as well as the big ones, when they encounter something they back away again. These, when they encounter something they pause before they back away, so if two of them come together, they'll sit there a little while, and then they'll back away. That's just the difference in the mechanisms. Yes?

Audience: I don't quite understand is it all the same?

Robert Breer: Yes. They all have the same-They all did have the same tape. We've run into some disagreements with Pepsi-Cola on the whole pavilion, so the software belong to us, and we removed it all. Now, I don't know what they put in there, German band, or whatever, but at the time, and originally, and for the first month, the tapes were all identical, but of course they-In fact, there's a funny anecdote about that, because we were showing the pavilion off to Kendall, he was the President of Pepsi-Cola, and he was making his grand tour, and he came up on the terrace there, and they turned the fog on, and it was kind of wet there, and cold, and stood there with his underlings, and myself, all shivering there, between these things which, to him, weren't moving.

I guess nobody bothered to tell him they were, and at the same time, I had those I-those original tapes had pauses in them, silence for 15 seconds at a time, and while he was standing there, there was four of them, surrounded by four of them, there was absolute silence. As soon as he walked away they all started up the sound, and so that the pauses happened to coincide, and it was pure chance; and they never did for the rest of the time, of course. [01:00:06]

Audience: Do they have access to the-

Robert Breer: Yeah. Yeah, they do, but of course the tendency there is that the people go by, they walk by those things, because one man confessed to me, and it's an American journalist, I've forgotten who he was, or for what paper, but he happened to be up there, and he was all very excited jumping around. I went up to him, and I'd just come from a talk with the Pepsi-Cola officials, they were upset because my things weren't doing anything, and they weren't grabbing people. This guy was very enthralled. I asked him, "How come you are looking at these things this way? How did you discover?" Or something, I just wanted to talk to somebody I guess; to a person.

He said, we'll, he'd read about them. It had a certain amount of publicity, so he came to see them, and when he first got there, he looked at those shapes and he thought they were-those were the covers for something, a sculpture underneath. Then he discovered they were moving, and then he said, it was the greatest thing he's ever seen, and so he was very enthusiastic, finally, but I mean they don't come on very strongly.

Audience: What language do they appear?

Robert Breer: In English or Japanese, somebody is asking me do they come on. Oh, there's some talking in there in English. How do you say it? It's *Pepsi-Coro*. I think, something like that. It sounds better in Japanese. To me, anyhow. Yes?

Audience: [Inaudible 01:01:37]

Robert Breer: Intuition or haphazardly. Well, that film started to be a kind of autobiography and then-so I chose the material that I had around me, and inevitably it was some kind of-Oldenburg would say, "Hot stuff," like old family photos and things. I deliberately used mementos, and this was before it became the Stockhausen-part of the Stockhausen happening, so there's a lot of home photo stuff in there. I pick stuff that was just, since I needed a lot of material, I decided I would pick stuff regardless of whether it had any emotional content for me, not, and cope with it. The way those films are made is by just shooting those-X-amount of footage and then looking at it, and saying I like this or that.

It's built slowly, going-shooting more and developing that, and so forth, and editing, and it's a lot of chance to begin with, and it's all real-it's all-no chance at all when it's over. I actually shuffle images, as you shuffle cards, in some of these films. If I didn't like something I'd take it out, you see; so it's, okay; well, I don't know what you call that. It's not aleatoric, I guess. Okay. One more.

Audience: In the film, *'69 ,* [Inaudible 01:03:11]

Robert Breer: Yeah. Yes. Then of course, that's not done with the film, it's just done with the pictures, and I used the kind of commercial, cellophane, it sticks to paper, and it changed colors. They cut out colors that are sort of -so I had three versions of each figure, if the thing swung in the field this way, and out again, that took 24 frames, I had 24 frames of that, just an outline 24 in different colors; 24 in-who else did I have? Anyhow, I could alternate those three versions. In other words, show first the outline, and then the color one, then the next outline, and the next color one, et cetera.

It's a matter of staggering them. There were no double exposures or anything, I never used double exposure; for, I don't know, five or six. I also alternate dark field, light field. In other words, the background would be a color and the foreground would not be white for instance. Then on the next frame the thing would be-because you can build up vibrations, and that I-The reason it's full circle is because I did that in that very first film you saw some kind of vibrating colors in there. It was a question of alternating four different colors, frame by frame by frame, overlays. Mixing colors that way is kind of impressionism-cinematic impressionism, I guess. Yes?

Audience: I can't remember which film it was, but one them had a large blue field and it was very difficult to look at, my eyes could not keep up. Do you have a-

Robert Breer: Large, blue field. I don't know.

Audience: [Inaudible 01:04:53]

Robert Breer: Oh, yes. I guess, yeah. Well, you are probably just crying. That was the part I leftover from earlier images, because that's soothing that blue stuff. Maybe you just had the first opportunity to have your eyes well up. Honestly, I'm not being funny, but I don't know what to tell you. It's something that is pretty hard. Yeah? [01:05:17]

Audience: [Inaudible 01:05:18]

Robert Breer: Oh. Oh, I see. Well *Pat's Birthday* is nothing but a kind of continuous nothing. Well, that's wrong. I don't mean to put it down. It was in the spirit of happening theatre, and that is a continuous and simultaneous actions, that aren't related to each other except physically, and of course somewhere

underneath they are related. There's a very specific non sequitur, and I agonized in that film for instance, in cutting two-I agonized a lot in making that film. There's very specific editing there, of what follows what, and on the basis of a feel about them, and I made a conscious effort not to make a kind of literary continuity.

I can't-all I can do to answer your question is to say that it's deliberately non-sequential, and it doesn't make sense in that way. I wanted to stand sill and invoke a kind of feeling, maybe a day in the country, I don't care, or something; but atmosphere, because I'm not prepared to talk more about that, I guess, at this moment. Yes?

Audience: Was any of it shot with a still camera?

Robert Breer: Oh. On the program, you are talking about there are stills. No. That's because those on the program, the pictures were taken with the copying camera of the original drawings. It's a fake sequence-

Audience: [Inaudible 01:07:05]

Robert Breer: Yes. Yeah. All of these were shot, I think, on 16. I have shot some on 35, with delicious results, but I didn't show one of those tonight. Some of these have been blown up, 35. Okay, well, I'd say, great audience. I've never had so many questions almost. Thank you. I'll answer some more, I'll stay around if anybody would like to- [applause 01:07:38]

Sally Dixon: [Inaudible 01:07:44]

Robert Breer: Oh. Okay.

Sally Dixon: Come on up and see the white things, if you'd like. [end of discussion 01:07:57]

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