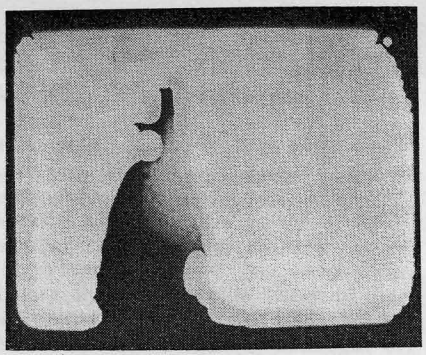
ORBIT
FILM

'Actor'

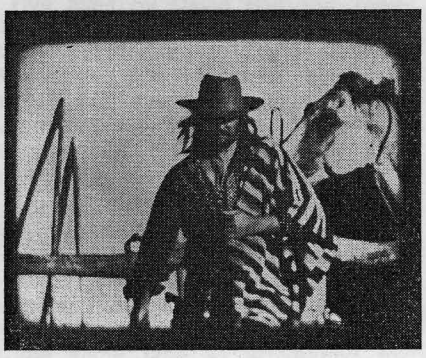
'Edge'

EXPERIMENTAL FILMS

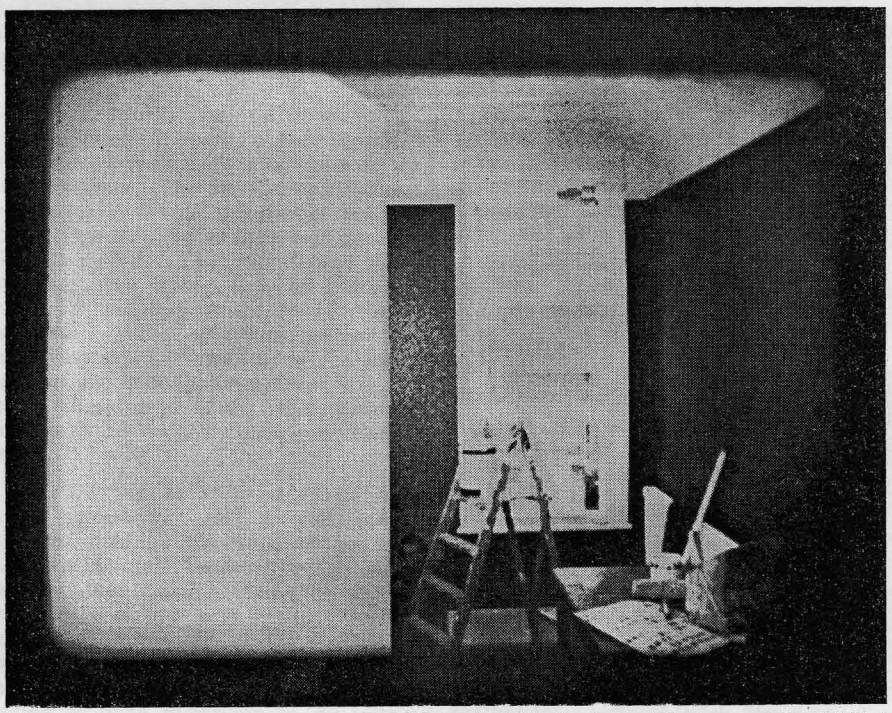
Tony Sinden, film maker, talks about his work



'Between'



'Edge'



'View'

Films & Stills by Tony Sinden and David Hall

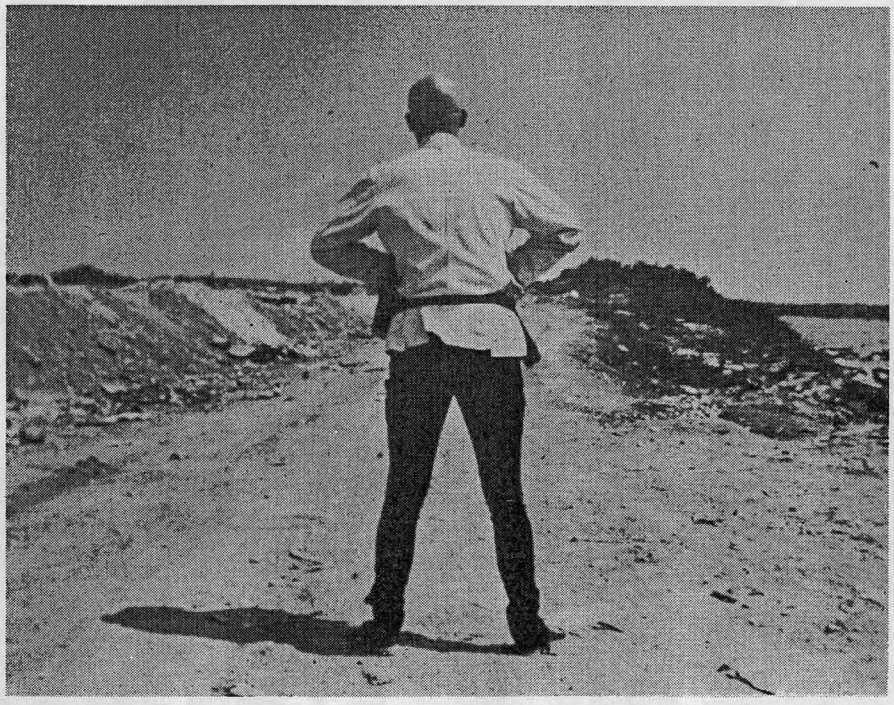
I STARTED independently to make short experimental films in 1967. My films and events have been shown at several International Film and Art Festivals and I am currently working on a new film and video installation which is to be exhibited in May 1975 at The Serpentine Gallery, London in The Video Show. In 1972 I set up an Experimental Workshop together with David Hall at Maidstone College of Art where I lecture on the possibilities of creative experiment with the media of Film, Video and Sound.

Although I personally dislike labels my earlier films and events are best described as 'Expanded Cinema' in that the ideas and visual imagery were influenced by conventional narrative cinema together with alternative aesthetic concerns related to painting (collage, Dada and Pop Iconology) music and contemporary poetry (The Who, Burroughs, Beafheart and Stan Brakhage). My creative objectives, to 'overload' the medium at the same time as expand its conventions with visual events in which unrelated imagery and concerns became fused as one. These films and events often utilised several film projectors as well as live performance and sound accompaniment.

During the period between 1967-70 I formed together with Jeff Keen (film maker) and Jim Duke (Poet) 'Acme Generating Co.' an Expanded Cinema Group that utilised film, performance and poetry.

In 1970-71 my attitude towards film and cinema took on a different direction and I began to think in terms of developing ideas that would explore and perhaps consider as their 'subject' the actual events and structures of the film medium. In late 1971 I teamed up with David Hall during the Edinburgh Festival in producing a number of short experimental films for Scottish Television. During this period we developed a mutual working relationship and discovered that our film making concerns were somewhat similar in their objectives. Consequently in the Spring of 1972 we decided to work together on a series of jointly created films which were eventually financed with an award from The Arts Council of Great Britain.

David Hall was born in 1937 and studied at Leicester Art College 1956-60 and Royal College of Art, London (Sculpture). He has exhibited in several major international exhibitions.



An image from an earlier film 'Arcade', 1968

He started to make films in 1968 which have also been shown at several International film and art festivals; currently working on some new films and video installation which is to be exhibited in The Video Show at The Serpentine Gallery in May. He is Head of Experimental Film, Video and sound Workshop at Maidstone College of Art, Kent.

Five films by David Hall and Tony Sinden 1972-73: 'View' (10mins.) 'Actor' (11mins.) 'This Surface' (11mins.) 'Edge' (10mins.) 'Between' (17mins.) 16mm colour/optical sound. Distributed by The Arts Council of Great Britain (Film Dept.) and The British Film Institute.

From the outset of the project we were thinking in terms of developing ideas that would explore some of the structural aspects of film and cinema (camera, projector, process, colour, image, time and spatial continuity etc.) at the same time as attempting to utilise some of the basic perceptual values and expectancies of an audience in relationship to the conventional narrative cinema, for developing ideas that involve them in a more conscious appraisal situation, referential to both the events on the screen and the 'real' event in which they were participating (the cinema). By working within this framework we attempted to implicate alternative values and discover new directions within a cinema context at the same time as expand our own consciousness of the medium.

'VIEW': A fixed camera, a single take film, which explores a shift in perception from the cinema screen surface area, to the illusion of three dimensions and colour in a filmed image. A white painted door, in close-up and barely distinguishable from the screen surface, gradually swings open to a partial view of a room, a deep space, continuing out through a window to a street beyond. The film starts in black and white with the occasional sound of the door banging as it swings gently back and forth. The sound gradually increases, conveying activity outside the view and the atmosphere within the room. Hints of colour are introduced eventually transforming the flatness of the monochrome view into a more illusionary three dimensional representation of the space recorded/seen.

'ACTOR': An actor in conversation with 'somebody' on a telephone attempts to draw the audience across the time barrier, between when the film was shot and when it is seen, gradually revealing that his conversation with a 'somebody' is the audience themselves. We also applied unconventional juxtapositions in the editing to pose questions to do with the usual sense of temporal and spatial continuity.

Actor: (silence) "Look, let's get this straight . . . where did you come in? You're there now . . . aren't you? (silence) Obviously, I'm here". (silence) . . .

'EDGE': A western in which we directed a classic heroic situation of an impending gunfight towards revealing observations immediately related to the camera view and the conventional action frameline. An idea in which we developed a situation of 'the less you see of what you expect the more is revealed, more or less'.

'THIS SURFACE': This film purposefully utilises a seductive image at the outset, a man dancing up and down in a pub with a pint of beer on his head, which is followed by a series of long travelling shots along Brighton seafront and a still shot of a waxworks tableau. The imagery and illusion of spatial depth are subsequently challenged and redefined in alternative terms that refer to the filmed image being a projected image on the surface of a cinema screen. A situation that attempts to pose questions regarding concepts of film perception.

'BETWEEN': This film initially identifies the filming and viewing situation as one. The action is simple, a hand held camera is moved towards an illuminated projection screen inside a small viewing theatre. The camera is walked down a central line following the beam of light thrown by the film projector. As the cameraman nears the screen the shadow he casts becomes a distinctive pulsating shape. On reaching the screen the camera is turned back towards the projector and the camerman walks up the central line into the projected beam of light. This in a sense identifies a cinema location with a filming situation within an actual viewing situation. The sequence we filmed was processed and then re-processed several times, using an alternating printing method: a print of a print of a print, etc., etc., until the image and space recorded disintegrated into an abstracted form, revealing the 'real' image to be a projected image.

On completion of those films in 1973 we both continued, independently, to make other films.

Tony Sinden — 'Kino-Sketches' 1973-74. 'Override' 1974. Also started to work in Video (in progress).

David Hall — Film 'Phased Time'. Also started to work in video. "This is a Video Monitor". Other work in progress.

SURFACE TENSION: Sculpture, Painting, Music, Theatre, etc., etc., have all established wider scopes of usage and representation. Consequently, in my current work, I am attempting to deviate from my previous film-making concerns towards using film on an aesthetically simpler level, film as film without necessarily any conscious reference to 'Cinema'.

GALLERY 27

Original Paintings,
Lithographs, Sculpture,
Woodwork, Framing.

John Bratby
Paintings

3rd May - 31st May

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