

Interview of Malcolm Le Grice by David Curtis & Duncan White

London, March 2008

MLG: My feelings on narrative: first of all you need to separate the story from the way in which the story is told, the way in which you access the story is a sort of underlying thing which is 'the narrative' in narrative film. In literature, the order of the sequence of narration is not always the same sequence as the sequence being narrated. So there is a real set of questions about the relationship between the content of the narrative and the sequence of presentation

DC: But that's true too of literature; it's not a film specific thing.

MLG: The continuity between literature and cinema in terms of narrative is very strong. I don't think there is a massive difference in the issues that arise from that except the one of facsimile. The distinction is that in cinema you have facsimile. And then the really big set of issues is not narrativity or narrative itself – but dramaturgy - the way in which sequences unfold; also the way that the spectator is inscribed in the work. And that's really crucial – how is the spectator inscribed in the work. And I try to deal with this in the Spectator Placement in Film piece ["Problematizing the Spectator Placement in Film" Undercut no 1, March 1981, Pages 13-18 and in Cinema and Language, American Film Institute Monograph Series Vol 1, 1983, Pages 50-62 (conference papers 'Cinema and Language' of March 1979 Milwaukee) ISBN 0-89093-583-1. Reprinted in 'The Undercut Reader' ed N. Danino and M. Maziere, also reprinted in Experimental Cinema in the Digital Age", BFI Publications, London 2001 ISBN 0-85170-873-0]. The issue there of what is it that's happening when we identify with something, what do we mean by that? What is the transfer of our psychic energy that's going on when we engage with something? How we engage with it, as if we are concerned about what happens. There's a very curious thing that happens there, and I'm interested in what's going on in the artefact (cinema, or the narrative or literature or theatre), and how that relates to what goes on in our behaviour in normal life outside of art. What is it that makes us not entirely selfish about our relationship with the goals and objectives of other people? How do we transfer our desire? – It happens in a football match; you're actually wanting that person who's not you to achieve something or not achieve something – and there's a whole structure of things that are to do with identification. And then in cinema – I think in narrative in general – identification into the action via one of the represented characters, the ability to switch from identification with one character to another character. And then how that might relate to a cinema practice which says that it breaks narrative; where the processes that are going on in the narrative cinema and in narrative in general where those have a bearing on what happens in a kind of cinema that breaks with a strict linearity of narrative – and what I've called the Kismet factor, where in any narrative the narrator is privileged in the sense of knowing the end. So you encounter the narrative - in a sense there's a preordained event, something that's controlled by a model of fate. The implication is that all of the pre-events are the cause of the final elements – so there's a moral element to it. Without a concept of morality it's very difficult to see what the underlying energy of a narrative is – if there isn't an element of consequence related to action that

postulates some sort of norm that is a moral or ethical norm – it's very difficult to see what holds a narrative together.

Then the other question is to what extent narrative is the model creating a linearity in a string of consequences – to what extent does that model represent an adequate model for our understanding of existence and experience? And in a crude sense I have made a comparison between the linearity model in narrative and the construction of perspective in the picture. Perspective is a system for placing the representation of objects into an apparently coherent order but it foregrounds space above other things and it doesn't correspond – as the Cubists and post-Cubists have shown – to our actual experience of the world. I don't experience you as smaller just because you're a little further away and I don't even consider that when I'm sitting here. I'm not creating a spatial model. I only create a spatial model when I sit here and attempt to represent it. For me there's this parallel between the breakdown in perspective space – which happened with the Cubists, post-Cezanne – and the breakdown of the linearity and coherence of narrative. And both in a funny way were driven by the attention not to the object out there but by attention to the spectator of the object. It's true in literature as well - with existentialism you get implicitly the first person novel, so that the identification isn't directly through the pages to the characters that are represented – the first identification comes with the narrator – and the narrator then is inevitably in a position where the elements of the coherence of the linearity is at least challenged. So there is a lot I would like to see sorted in terms of an understanding of the term narrative before looking at expanded cinema.

DW: There is the problem of a singular narrator – you are then identifying with a uni-vocal character who will speak on your behalf – whereas in expanded cinema - because it uses multiple screens - breaks down to some extent the idea of identifying with a singular narrator. Also isn't there the problem that even if it's a narrative film in the traditional sense, filmmakers often use non-linear narrative to achieve the same effects.

MLG: Where are the examples of a narrative but non-linear film?

DW: Something like *Pulp Fiction*?

MLG: I mean, narration is always linear. The thing *narrated* is not necessarily linear.

DW: Sure. Then is it a question of tense? Because it's not until the end that you see the linearity of the narrative because it's been given to you at the time in a non-linear way – so instead of being given ABCD you're given DBCA and it's not until the end that as a spectator you're piecing together a narrative almost in hindsight.

MLG: And in some literature like *Finnigan's Wake* in a sense you never have an end.

DW: Or a beginning.

MLG: I have never read *Finnigan's Wake* from beginning to end – I've dipped in and out – and that for me is the proper way for reading it. So there is never in *Finnigan's Wake* something that constitutes 'the completion' of the book.

DW: You're supposed to die reading it.

MLG: I'm interested in what you say about what happens when you have something on three screens or two screens. Obviously I've been involved in doing that pretty much all the way from the beginning of my work with cinema. I've started to ask myself what's going on there? Particularly – I argued a long time for this Brechtian thing, that you're drawing the spectator's attention to their own presence in the cinema – alienation devices like the light bulb [in *Castle 1* 1967] and so on. And then for transformational things in the image - as in the sense of making the image not an image which you easily go through to its content, to its visual representational content, – like in the *Cyclops* series [Started in 1996] But then for me anyway, the notion that film as a medium is now replaced by a digital form which to my mind has no medium – I don't think digital *is* a medium – I think it's a process but it's not a medium and it's not a medium in two quite important respects. Physically it's not a medium. You can't identify the forms that come from it with the material that produces it. There's no material element. The second thing is: it's so diverse in the way in which the digital can become something which we perceive, so diverse in the possible output elements of the digital, that there's no stability to it as a medium with a history, if you see what I mean. Unlike painting or sculpture where you knew what the expected boundaries were, not just of the canvas and the surface, but what the expected boundaries of the institution of painting were, and what the content element of painting would be, because it was a continuous and contained history. Which when you broke that, the breaking of it became a very important component – like if you started to make something come off the canvas... because it was referencing back to a medium, something that was a history of usage. So in two ways the digital isn't a medium.

The kinds of devices I and other people had used for a very long time within the framework of cinema as a way of referencing the spectator to the work (the materiality) pretty much became not possible [in the digital]. You could emulate it (e.g. in the *Cyclops* series – layering of image and transformation of image) you could emulate it but it wasn't the same thing as the physicality that came with the use of the medium.

So then the question is: is there something about the condition of the multi-projection that does something equivalent to that? The first thought I have is that it puts the spectator in a position where they have to choose. The spectator has to choose what they pay attention to – you don't follow one line straight through the middle. And particularly if the screens relate to each other, that's an active process. If they don't relate to each other – if it's just a random relationship, they don't do much – but if they relate to each other, then the spectator has to be active.

The other thing is the way in which it's a very different state of affairs when the images that are being presented are coming from independent sources (screens), rather than when you map the whole lot onto one screen. Why is that the case? I think it's because it creates a dramatic event. The spectator, even to a marginal degree, is aware that the configuration that they're responding to is specific to that moment of presentation. Which again refers people back to the film as a dramatic condition within life, rather than a dramatic condition representing life. I don't necessarily believe a statement like, that but it's a pointer to something – I don't think it's the correct theorisation of it. But something is happening there.

I resisted very much that when they did the *Nuit Blanche* thing [Paris 2006 street performances of multi-screen film] that they could put the whole of the three screens onto a single track. I resisted that. I wanted it to be projected as three individual things. And I have to ask why? One thing is I was nervous about the loss of resolution. But the main thing is that one of the conditions of Expanded Cinema is the separation of sources that creates a theatrical environment. And I think the cinema isn't a theatrical environment. It simulates a theatrical environment but it isn't a theatrical environment. It's an entirely illusory environment. That is, every component of it is already fixed before the spectator encounters it.

DW: There's no risk.

MLG: There's no risk. There's a sort of mental risk always in Expanded Cinema. Means you can get away with murder. [laughs]

DC: But if we were to just pursue the literally for a second. If you're saying that there has to be this element of risk, there has to be that element of live composition, doesn't that rule out all those video installations, multi-screen installations where the relationship is absolutely fixed and determined? They are a performance that is simply repeated.

MLG: I'm trying to tease out these differences. I, like a lot of people, am prepared to do installations. There may be some slippage as the thing is projected – I hope not and that's a problem for me. An installation can have that element but you have to construct it in there.

DC: Rather like Stan Douglas programming the computer to do a random presentation of the shots.

MLG: That's right. Which I'm also exploring at the moment. Recent work a reworking of *Treatus* [first version shown as 5 screen performance with live music by John Tilbury and Eddie Prevost, Dundee, KYTN 2004] in which the images are selected at random and in real time. And that's an interesting possibility.

DW: Do you think, relating that idea of random or arbitrary programming of images – which is about authorial control – and expanded cinema is often (especially the Filmaktion work) reliant on the presence of the author or the presence of the filmmaker. I mean is there a relation between these two things? This programming of randomness, and then on the other hand this playing up or this acting out of the author's presence; of authorial control?

MLG: I have to say that there is no single solution to that question. What you do in any of those productions is you excavate the issues. I used the term 'problematization' for a long time. That my work was about problematising things, which meant you don't give a coherent answer to something or a coherent structure, but you did focus the work into certain problematic areas. And you excavated them and you made that available as content – the spectator dealt with problematics – things that you were opening up. The work is propositional – it's hypothetical – it creates a situation and that situation isn't a resolved one. It's dealing with territories that remain actively problematic for spectatorship, for the relationship of the spectator to the work, the spectator to the world, the artist to the spectator. All those things are unresolved but actively available.

Gidal is right in those things: it's the 'actively available' as a component of constructing content. Content isn't pre-constructed, content is continuously being constructed in the act of encounter with the work.

DW: The encounter becomes the moment of production. It's not something produced elsewhere in order to be received somewhere else.

MLG: If there's one key element of expanded cinema – it's about the moment of encounter – then the future that's of interest is the future that the spectator has after having encountered the work. It may be an indeterminate one, a partially effected one – but that is the future element. And expanded cinema work says 'this is the point of encounter' but it's equally concerned with what it was that gave rise to the encounter – the images on the screen, the actions taken in putting it together; the authorship remains a major component (and what is implied in that) – but it isn't the only component. Because within that the artist is acting in a way that says something like 'I don't know what the meaning of this is' - by putting something up in this way, by opening up the risk of the moment of presentation in this way. This is true of [Valie Export, [William] Raban, [Annabel] Nicolson. The artist is saying this isn't a coherent work, this isn't a singular work with a singular meaning. The spectator has to approach works as *not* having a singular meaning. One of the big problems with conventional cinema – curiously less so in literature – is that it apparently gives to the spectator a coherence that is satisfactory. The spectator doesn't have to be puzzled. The spectator doesn't have to sense themselves as being in an environment where the answers are uncertain. Even when a film doesn't finish with a clear denouement – there's still a sort of certainty inevitably because of the linearity and the fixedness of the work. It doesn't happen in theatre in the same way because there's always the element of risk. It doesn't happen as much in literature because the timescale in which you read is much greater and so it integrates as you read it with other aspects of your life continuously. In the cinema there is no kind of integration (you're there for an hour and a half) between other aspects of your life and the work.

DW: Perhaps this is a defence of installation as a more satisfactory way of integrating life and film?

MLG: I don't think you need a total definition of expanded cinema before you start. I think that what we talk of as expanded cinema is already quite multiform. The issue is to find out what works there are and how they work – what they do, how they function and what the differences are. I don't mean to find out what the artist's intention was. I'm very mistrustful of trying to analyse intentions. What's this work doing, how does it function, why has *Berlin Horse* [1970] got two screens – why does one stay black and white and why does the other go into colour – and is there a narrative there? The answer is yes – there's a sort of narrative – certainly there's a dramaturgy – dramaturgy means that it's quite different if you see the end before the beginning. There's clearly in *Berlin Horse* a dramaturgy – it's a sequential work – the sequence of unfolding is a component of the work the work would be different without it – even true in *Little Dog for Roger* [1967] there's a sequential element despite the anti-narrative intention I think all my work has a sequentiality which is a problem working in the installation environment.

DC: Presumably there's a question there: how does the dramaturgy of the installation version of *Little Dog* on two screens differ from that of the two screen *live* version?

MLG: That's something that needs to be analysed. Is the artist happy that this change has taken place? To some extent on my behalf it's opportunism. To some extent I'm trying to rationalise it by saying that it doesn't break the intention of the work – but of course it does to some extent it does. Certain works work better than others in that environment. *After Leonardo* the installation works rather well – curiously because it's long. It isn't a short work – it's 30 odd minutes if you see the whole cycle, and if you come in on any component of that cycle you can get some sense [of the whole]. Holographic [metaphor for installation abstraction]. Do you know the difference between holography and photography? Holography is a diffusion pattern that is recorded photographically – it's not done with a lens – and in that diffusion pattern, any one component of the hologram has the information for the whole image but at a lower resolution. If you've got an installation, maybe the structural thinking is one of holography. At any one encounter – even though you don't have the whole thing in clarity, you do have something that in a sense has a sufficient sequence within each component to give you a degree of sequential experience.

DC: I think that one certainly needs testing!

MLG: I'm talking about my work. But the same questions need to be asked around people like Stan Vanderbeek for example. What is it that when Stan Vanderbeek is bombarding us with images from all sorts of sources; what is it that his work is doing – what's the relationship to spectacle? What do we mean when we say something is a spectacle? A spectacle means in some sense that the spectator is taking pleasure from encountering something which they want to look at but which is not completely determined.

DC: The term overload comes in there. Is overload actually a productive state?

DW: You can have a spectacle that is critical of the relationship with spectacle. But with something like overload you can't help feeling it's reproducing televisual experience or MTV. I can be bombarded but the relation between the things I'm being bombarded with is somehow secondary to the effect of that bombardment and it's the effect of the bombardment that we somehow enjoy and can quite easily cope with.

DC: I think that's what Vanderbeek's *Movie Drome* was all about.

MLG: But I wouldn't reject that – firstly it's clearly part of the history of what we mean by Expanded Cinema. Secondly it's another form of centring the work around the spectator. I've always been very jealous of the relationship that musicians create between themselves and the spectator (listener). Music entirely functions as a sensory experience. It's not representational. It can lead you to representation – there are points in Classical music and other music where sounds are in a sense already representational (you know the sounds of hunting horn and the sounds of galloping – there are elements of representation) but the fundamental component of music is highly physical. The physicality of the body's rhythm and the body's music and physicality of the effect of the sound. The visual field is always in many ways contained, it's either in the reality we're negotiating our way through, in a utilitarian sense (we use sound in this way too). Or it's contained – if it's an art work - in the visual field. My jealousy of music is how to construct something that primarily functions

just from the physical experience. So I'm sympathetic sometimes to the pop-promo type thing although they keep filling it up with unnecessary content. But the bombardment thing isn't such an unreasonable approach to shifting the cinematic away from the representational - where the spectator assumes that the reality existed behind the screen and before the event. The in traditional cinema, reality is always implicitly before the event of the encounter. It might be that this is one of the characteristics of Expanded Cinema - that it breaks you from the assumption that the reality which you're encountering has already happened in another place in a previous time. Which is still the case even with representations of the future (like *Alien*). Something that exists in another place at a previous time.

DW: Or that you missed and have no access to except through the medium.

MLG: Yes, you have no access to. Of course you can make the argument that in fact the spectator is always in a position where they can make choices. But that isn't the condition traditional cinema tries to create. Traditional cinema attempts to construct a situation in which the spectator is limited in their capacity to choose. I've made an argument that at the basic motor level nothing has to be done very much - you don't have to refocus your eye because it's all on one plain; you don't have to look left or right (unless you sit close to a widescreen presentation); you don't move your neck, you don't move your body, you don't walk around in the space. So all of your motor activities are incredibly limited. And motor and motive come together for me. We express our motive through our motoricity - in order to get something, we have to put in effort. There's a relation between perception and effort. Even to look at you and then look at David, I'm psychologically putting in effort. My motive, my desire, leads to a physical response and my physical response changes my perception. But in the cinema that's already done for you. So there are so many of the things that are to do with the present condition of the spectator that are inhibited by the traditional cinema environment. So Expanded Cinema has a number of strategies for breaking out of that condition for the spectator.

DW: There's a sense that you move from the managed space of cinema - to an unmanaged space of Expanded Cinema with some restraints on how that management is played out. To go back to your jealousy of music, do you think Expanded Cinema brings something of a different kind of language than other cinematic practices? Poets are often jealous of music because it's non-language or at least it can say something without saying it - so your jealousy might be linguistic to a certain extent do you think? Does Expanded Cinema bring a different type of perspective to that problem?

MLG: I think it's a cultural and redundancy question really. I think we have a lot of spare capacity in the auditory field. Would you find it more difficult to be blind or deaf? Our visual sense - we're using it in a utilitarian sense - we rely on it for almost everything we do. We're not nearly as reliant on the auditory in the utilitarian sense. I'm getting increasingly deaf. But I can exist pretty well without detailed hearing - but if I couldn't see I couldn't engage in a tenth of what I do as a sighted person. We have to create much more specialised situations to take the visual from the utilitarian to the experiential or aesthetic. It's a lot easier with music. Music has a much longer tradition of being about experience rather than about representation. But cinema is not about experiencing it's about representing - expressing something through the representation - so I think there is something intrinsic and cultural that effects what is available to

music and what is easily available to film. It's not unavailable to film. I don't think abstract cinema and expanded cinema are the same thing. I'm not really sure what now one would mean by abstract in the cinema. I use two different terms of abstract – one is the traditional art way of saying non-representational; the other is the more classical conception of abstraction as the separating out of components and qualities from the whole – abstraction as a form of analysis is parallel to analysis in a scientific sense. For me the classic beginning of this is Cezanne. The separating out of colour factors from their position in relation to spaces and the putting them back together again. So you get process, analysis, synthesis. So it's not just about non-representational.

But in terms of the question of aesthetic experience the issue of representation is very important – it becomes the framework of a certain kind of experience. That is the passage of yourself through the work into an identification that somebody else has constructed which is very different from an abstract, concrete, non-representational experience, such as you get in music. And that you can find it in abstract films shows that it's possible for the visual field to function in an equivalent way to an experience which doesn't require a pre-definition of a representation of a prior event. It separates itself from photography as representational, separates itself from pictorial art – becomes genuinely non-representational. One of the factors of that is again - to create an encounter or situation – you can only have an encounter with it. You can't use it as a way of passing through 'into' somewhere else. – though maybe it's an imaginary space that takes you out of the utilitarian. [Think of the Flicker films of [Paul] Sharits, [Tony] Conrad or other artists who have explored perceptuality; they have also been interested in changing the spatial relationship in cinema.

DW: Expanded Cinema is concerned primarily with that spatial relationship.

MLG: I don't know whether it's about spatial relationships. Sculptural spatiality is one component but it's not the exclusive component of the definition. It makes an awareness of the spatial relationship but that's a component of making the spectator aware of their condition of presence. It could be that there are instances of Expanded Cinema that are not foregrounding spatiality. An example would be multi-screen projection. Raban's *Diagonal* [1973] for instance – it's on a screen but it has nothing to do with the spatiality. [Raban's] *Take Measure* [1973] is about the spatial relation. A number of my multi-projection pieces aren't about the spatial relation. *Horror Film* is. [Anthony McCall's] *Line Describing a Cone* [1973] is. There's a quasi-sculptural element. It says to the spectator you are here now – the presence of the work belongs to you. The work tells you that your presence belongs to you. You're there because you're motivated to be there because you have chosen to be there. And part of the symbol of that choice is in *Line Describing a Cone* – you can walk around and interact with the piece you can modify it to some extent.

All you have to do is look at the range of strategies [perhaps Expanded Cinema is a range of strategies]. What is the role of abstraction in Expanded Cinema? What's the role of perceptual experience in Expanded Cinema? – the link with music?
Treatise with the residue of AMM in Dundee – a hybrid. [LeGrice performed this work with members of the AMM group at Kill Your Timid Notion in Dundee in 2004]

Improvisation and Expanded Cinema?

MLG: For me this is another factor that's hidden in the issues around Expanded Cinema. Improvisation is a strategy of presence. One of the things that has attracted me to jazz is improvisation. The spectator is aware that the particular configuration of notes and harmonies that are coming to them at that moment are ones that belong to that improvised situation they are unique to that moment. Not entirely. They're always based on some structures and knowledge from previously. That is very attractive to me and is part of the issue of Expanded Cinema. A lot of the works that I've done involve a degree of improvisation. Even the basic set up – I have to respond to the environment I'm in – I still have to adapt and adjust it to that situation. Pieces where I've moved the projectors and changed the focus – like *Threshold* and *Matrix* – at those film performance pieces people have said they're like VJ-ing. Now one of the problems about the piece I did with AMM – I wasn't improvising. I had five screens that I'd pre-recorded with a view to the sort of flow of music that AMM is engaged with. It included some re-worked video where I already had a sound track, I worked to a soundtrack by AMM – but it wasn't improvised during the performance. This is why the piece came apart a bit – for me. The work I'm doing at the moment does involve the technology for possible improvisation with that material – but the technology is still not very convenient.

One of the reasons I've held back on this is that I want something where the image flow can be modified in real time at high resolution. I can control the sequence of images using a midi-keyboard.

DW: So you're playing the film?

MLG: Yes I am. What I was also trying to do was see if it would work with three or four images on the same screen – but if I was going to do it I would need three or four computers.

DW: So it could be set up so any one could do it. How would you feel about that?

MLG: Oh I don't mind.

DC: That takes you back to multi-screen things in the 70s where William and you and others were operating different projectors.

MLG: Yes and also making choices. You build in a lot of the potential choice into the system itself. Grahame Weinbren's interactive narrative work is interesting in this? Is that Expanded Cinema?

DW: I would say so.

MLG: He had four of the early video discs. And the interaction was just for a single user - but they would make choices that pass through from one of the visions of the narrative onto another – but it was completely linear you couldn't go back. It wasn't terribly satisfactory as an art work – it was very interesting work as a proposition. But for me the kinds of choices you could make were too determinate. But this was early. The spectator's condition as a participant is foregrounded. What it negates them doing is as

important as it what it allows them to do. So it shifts the condition of the spectator even if that shift is not perfectly realised. Just the shifting of the condition of the spectator is already an important act. It has consequences for the way in which you think you have had your experience of an artwork.

DW: The fact that the spectator would want an alternative to what is available changes the expectations of spectatorship in considerable way. While your both here I thought it would be interesting to talk about the early days – Drury Lane and the Arts Lab Cinema – the first screenings you were doing and the fact that there were two projectors.

MLG: Well that's very important because I don't know if I would have made double projection works except that there were two projectors and a wide screen.

DC: Which was for the most pragmatic reasons – that we showed feature films and films came on several reels and the only way to do a seamless cross-over was to have two projectors.

DW: So it was standard practice.

MLG: ... and I think I looked at that set-up and said why don't we use both screens

DC: ... and both projectors.

MLG: ... and both projectors. It was very much a response to that situation. You never get an opportunity like that. I had no idea where I was going as a film artist at the time. I had no idea.

DW: Were you still a student here?

MLG: No I was teaching. I'd started to set up a film dept here at St Martins as best I could. I was nicking cameras and working with Roger Ackling, in fact all the material for the first one *Castle 1* – I made that film before the Arts Lab – all the material came from the bins around here [in Soho, base of UK film industry]. I had shelves of reels of film. And I'd just go through it without a projector and see an image – and I did some random things – we had evenings when I was teaching at Goldsmiths College [Le Grice did some shows at Goldsmiths where he included some random edited found footage only shown once then discarded]. But the double projection thing came as a result of the cinema. I don't think I did *Horror Film* there, did I?

DW: Was *Castle 2* made for there?

MLG: Yes and *Little Dog for Roger*. And *Berlin Horse*. *Yes No Maybe Maybe Not*. Certainly all the black and white things I made on my own printing equipment. And they were invariably shown two screen. I think that the wider aspect of multi-projection started with the Gallery House Filmaktion show. I think that was one of the first times we projected stuff in a gallery type space.

DC: Wait a minute – you're missing out – Gallery House was 72/73? All the Robert St period was before that.

MLG: Did we do multiple projections at Robert St?

DC: You certainly did.

MLG: But the gallery situation – for instance Gallery House – I did pieces that were highly improvised. I've never done them since - of colour fields that were projected into the corners. We did all sorts of stuff.

DW: Where the ceiling meets the wall?

MLG: It was a square exhibition room – and I did a series of pieces where I would make a column of colour changes or the *Gross Fog* [loops] stuff. I'd configure them differently every half an hour and we'd do things with live feedback sound truly improvised – it was like a multi-projection workshop. But again it was partly because the environment matched what you wanted to do. The environment would allow it – it was a contextual thing. The Arts Lab was not only a contextual thing as part of the physical space – but in terms of the atmosphere there. Jack Moore [theatre director] did multi-screen things there. Whether he did them before me, I don't know.

DC: It would be interesting to know if Jeff Keen did multi-screen projections – he was working with his own super 8 projectors. He did screenings in Better Books – which was before any of us. I think he possibly did. [Jeffrey Shaw certainly did, in that context]

MLG: So it's really important that the process isn't seen as being theory led. It was led by this inventiveness. Improvisation – inventing as you go was very important to me.

Theorisation of FLUXUS. FLUXUS shifted from taking a medium and saying are you working in sculpture, film whatever, to taking the components of any artwork which would cut across media. Is it flat? Is it on a wall? Is it time-based? Then the question of which medium you've got is to do with what is the particular combination of component characteristics. And that comes from FLUXUS. Is it Macunias? Look it up. Not just FLUXUS as neo-Dada – it was a solution to the restrictions of media – it was a way out of Modernism – because the container of any medium was already being broken down – because it emphasised the reconfiguration of components across media.

We [in the UK] were a little behind this (*Film Culture* 66) We were a couple of years adrift of this. It was also the time of the *Nine Evenings of Theatre and Engineering*. Diversification.

One of the things about Expanded Cinema is that it is cinematic – it is a picture – it's about the presence of an image – it's there and it's not there – the context of stressing that it *is* there (which is from materiality) is still at odds with the fact that what's up there is *not* there. The only thing that's there is the reflected light or non-reflected. That gives you a framework for Expanded Cinema, it involves a projection of something that isn't there – it gives you a framework in that sense. The Happenings movement contributed to Expanded Cinema but is not Expanded Cinema. The context isn't cinematic.

The other thing that's tricky: is Expanded Cinema a dialogue with cinema in the historic sense of cinema? Is Melies Expanded Cinema? Yes perhaps it is. That's part of the history of Expanded Cinema.

MLG: New work: What interests me is moving to a point where I can really get control over an improvisatory system which includes recorded image – so it sequences memory.

DC: Memory and dealing with personal autobiographical information. You're somehow trying to dramatise or complicate your relationship with this material of memory.

MLG: And also to deal with the fact that I don't think it has a single or correct relation. And in the cinematic context that relation belongs to the spectator as much as to me. Or it could even be that of a user. There's no reason why you can't build this up into something where you use sensors in the environment where the spectator's movement or any other thing you can feedback would control the development of the sequence.

DW: What about the idea of other people bringing their own source material to the programme?

MLG: Also that, yes. I think it says that in the piece I wrote about the *Chronos* project. ["The Chronos Project" published in *Media Scape* 3 Zagreb June 1995, and *Vertigo* no5 1996 ISSN 0968-7904, and *Experimental Cinema in the Digital Age*, BFI Publications, London 2001 ISBN 0-85170-873-0]

DC: Do you think you discuss anywhere empathy, and how the viewer relates to the work?

MLG: I don't think so. There is a new piece *Self Portrait After Raban's Take Measure*. I wanted to see how I could do an equivalent to [William's] *Take Measure* in video – so it's based on the length of time it takes a ray of light to come from the sun to the earth which is 8 minutes and 20 secs on average. So the piece is 8'20. It's for three screens. This one is the sequence of the shadow movement for 8'20. The other one is me walking out into the garden in the same space and the third screen is a text describing the basis for the film – the 8'20 – that during the period of viewing the film depending on your latitude you would have travelled, because of the rotation of the earth, 600 miles in an easterly direction and the earth would have traversed a space around the sun of 3,500 miles in that time. And there's a bit I'm tempted to use – although invisible in the image one component of the illumination comes from the star Aldeberan and Aldeberan is a star in the constellation of Taurus the light from which takes 67 years to reach the earth – so part of the light component used in the film would have originated in the constellation of Taurus in the year I was born.



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