

30 minutes 16mm.

'CINEMA'

Colour

David Hall and Tony Sinden

It is proposed that a composite of short films are produced in colour of about 30 minutes duration.

Since a great deal of the decision making (in terms of actual content) will occur during the film making activity, it has been decided not to attempt to present a specific predetermined treatment or script. However, it is possible to draw up a synopsis of the general attitudes which will be applied.

The proposal is a fundamental development arising out of the situation encountered when I (DH) was asked to participate in the Scottish Arts Council's 'Locations Edinburgh' exhibition during the 1971 Festival. I decided to make, as my contribution, a series of short films specially for Television transmission. I asked Tony Sinden, a young experimental film-maker, to assist me. During the short intensive three week period working together in Scotland, a close collaboration and mutual awareness of particular aesthetic attitudes developed.

A number of the shorts made at that time have since been put together in a finished film titled 7 TV PIECES. It would be most useful if the Committee were to view this as an introduction to our proposal since the concepts and structuring involved towards television indicate a principle which we wish to develop, and this time specifically to film in cinema.

Notes on '7 TV PIECES'

Originally these pieces were transmitted as 'interruptions' to scheduled programmes on the Scottish Television Ltd network.

In considering the television medium certain criteria become apparent, particularly that a), response to TV is usually on the grounds that it is an information source - the 'box' is a device to this end, and b), the conventional treatment of most programmes has a fairly consistent level of expectancy technique-wise.

The idea was not only simply to broadcast a series of 'artworks' but that the very structure and content of them might create an alternative relationship to the medium, even to the box itself as a potentially powerful piece of furniture.

Some redirect attention back to the box as an object, others to the attitudes assumed when watching it, others to the way the time scale can be manipulated on film as well as TV, etc., etc.

(Not only were the pieces purposefully influenced by the circumstances in which they were to exist, but they were intentionally injected unannounced amongst normal scheduled programmes so as no special categorization was put to them. Had they appeared, for instance, on an arts feature the reaction would have been somewhat predetermined.)

David Hall

There are fairly obviously parallels when considering cinema in similar ways. The proposal is that we explore and attempt to expand them.

This, through the properties and ingredients that are involved in film making, to the final projection. The properties of celluloid, camera work, editing and time structuring, to the effect on the physical context of the cinema as a 'plane' (the relationship of an audience to the physical projection, and the physical consciousness of the screen as a large surface area as well as the screen as an information source). Coupled with this will be consideration for the relationship to narrative cinema, utilising 'understood' techniques into ideas of an alternative aesthetic: A cross fertilisation of the expected and unexpected. (Time, position and relationship inside and outside of levels of expectancy).

A number of films have attempted to concern themselves with such notions, but usually within the confines of a single 'unit' film. The proposal here is that a number of shorts put together would juxtapose often very different ideas in a 'non-linear' manner, but that they nevertheless would have an overall relationship.

Fundamentally, it would be a collection of ideas motivated within this framework. The actual content of each would be determined by a particular concern (in the TV pieces for instance; the water tap piece identified the receiver as a specific object; the tree shadow piece disorientates assumed actual time at an unexpected moment; the burning receiver - an interruption within an interruption; etc).

In proposing these as 'self defining artworks' rather than narrative/theatrical ideas which are then put onto film (capable of some pre-definition), or documentaries on other artforms, the only reference that can be made to content at this juncture are past attempts in similar areas (not only the TV pieces, but my (DH) previous 'Vertical' and the recent BFIPB film 'Timecheck'). We feel this is the only criterion which is assessable, much in the same way as a proposal for a painting or sculpture. The analogy here would be with past personal experience in sculpture, where any precise definition of a proposed piece would limit potential change and development in executing it. It is necessary that a similar premise is put to this project (and might even be considered the most relevant way for an artist to approach it).

However, there is a consistent factor which should be apparent, certainly in the earlier films (and indeed the sculpture). This is that 'areas of perception' are being questioned and, more important, utilised to stimulate (not merely didactically) awareness of the physical context in which we exist. That in this case an observer would be effectively participating, by his reappraisal of assumed perceptual values, rather than being 'entertained passively'. The art might be considered as the individual's conceptual activity rather than a comparatively comfortable reassertion of values within an accepted framework.

It may be useful to note at this point that the objectives would not include an emphasis on 'technique effects' for their own sake. It is felt that films totally constructed out of these may well be of artistic merit but often exist too much as isolated phenomena. We are interested in redirecting attention to one's value judgement of conventional treatments. New techniques would only be used as a 'foil' within the acceptable framework. There is an

David Bell and Tony Sinden

area between total 'abstraction' and narrative type cinema which as yet seems to have had only minimal exploration.

In the project the pieces' content would be appreciably more involved than the TV pieces since there would not be the same limiting production pressures, i.e. extremely limited budget; tight deadlines; working in inadequate conditions. The use of colour would present further possible exploration.

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A number of the shorts made at that time have since been put together in a finished film titled '7 TV PIECES'. It would be most useful if the Committee were to view this as an introduction to our proposal since the concepts and ideas being involved towards television indicate a principle which we wish to develop, and this film specifically to film or video.

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The idea was not only simply to broadcast a series of 'art-works' but that the very structure and content of these might create an alternative relationship to the medium, even to the box itself as a potentially powerful piece of furniture.

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