

Starting from scratch

Peter Boyd-Maclean is part of the director/editor team known as the Duvet Bros, which has caught the industry's imagination with its pioneering "scratch video" work.

Boyd-Maclean and his partner Rick Lander live in council flats in Brixton and it was at the Brixton nightclub, The Fridge, that they started their famed multiscreen shows.

Boyd-Maclean admits to disliking most of the ads on TV — the Holsten Pils campaign is one notable exception. He wants to direct commercials so that he can provide a new input.

"Advertising provides a good outlet for experimental film and video makers because it is open to new ideas. This isn't as true of the British Film Industry, with few exceptions like Derek Jarman," he says.

Boyd-Maclean started out running a film workshop in a Colchester art gallery, called The Minorities, making Super 8 films about the human condition which his tutor described as "cathartic." It was here he met Lander.

They started their multiscreen shows in 1983. For these they used three video machines to mix different images and sounds, live, across a series of screens — "rough state of the art stuff," as Boyd-Maclean describes it. They have gone on to do shows in Rome, Berlin and Amsterdam.

Boyd-Maclean has recently completed a project which he describes as the first art promo — an interpretation of paintings of zoo animals through video. "To introduce interest and motion into something which is essentially static, I had people running around with paintings and then intercut shots of kids at the zoo to interpret the feeling of the animals' captivity in the paintings."

Boyd-Maclean uses film and



Duvet Bros: scratch video kings.

video to express different things. He says: "For me film is more personal than video but video equipment is more accessible." He does all his work with Lander on video. He says: "We bounce ideas off each other and experiment with basic video equipment to try and achieve a fresh and entertaining feel."

Their video 'Blue Monday' was Lander's concept and is regarded as a milestone in "scratch video." It used footage from before the miners' strike, which was re-edited and put to a love song, to introduce a new meaning.

"Scratch video" techniques, for example repeat edits, are already being used in advertising albeit not very imaginatively. But Boyd-Maclean believes "scratch video" needs to develop in new directions.

Duvet Bros is negotiating with the Callender Company to work on a half-hour "scratch" documentary on apartheid.

It also plans to work on documentaries with the newly-formed Scratch Corporation, which includes the other "scratch video" makers George Barber and Guerilla Tapes.