

# EMPAC

WED / SEP 02, 7:00 PM

FILM / VIDEO

## ON SCREEN/SOUND NO. 01

### *Tron*

Steven Lisberger

### *Mosaic*

Evelyn Lambart and Norman McLaren

### *Synchromy*

Norman McLaren

### *Video Tape Study No. 3*

Nam June Paik and Jud Yalkut

### *Technology Transformation: Wonder Woman*

Dara Birnbaum



Rensselaer

## ON SCREEN/SOUND

This year-long film series takes a close look at—and listen to—the way filmmakers have employed the sonic dimension of their form to complement, challenge, and re-consider our experience of the moving image.

Presenting cinematic performance, artists' moving image, and Hollywood feature films, each *On Screen/Sound* program delves into the relationship between movie sound and image tracks, highlighting some radical examples of the aesthetic power and technical potential of sound in cinema. From musical theater to the music video, experimental shorts to industrially produced features, the series explores the affective and technical relationship between sound and image through the art of Foley, experimental music, found footage, soundtrack imaging, synched, multi-channel, and non-diegetic sound.

**ON SCREEN/SOUND** IS CO-CURATED BY EMPAC'S VICTORIA BROOKS, CURATOR OF TIME BASED VISUAL ART, AND ARGEO ASCANI, CURATOR OF MUSIC.

## ON SCREEN/SOUND: NO. 01

SEP 02, 7:00 PM

### **Mosaic** (1965)

Evelyn Lambart and Norman McLaren / Sound mix: Ron Alexander

### **Synchromy** (1971)

Norman McLaren

### **Video Tape Study No. 3** (1967–69)

Nam June Paik and Jud Yalkut / Sound: David Behrman and Ken Werner

### **Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman** (1978–79)

Dara Birnbaum

## INTERVAL

### **Tron** (1982)

Steven Lisberger / Music: Wendy Carlos



## ON SCREEN/SOUND: NO. 01

The first screening of the new series *On Screen/Sound* focuses on analog and synthetic experiments by US based artists who pioneered new approaches to the correlation of a film's sound and image tracks.

Presenting films and videos from a 15 year period of intense experimentation with electronic synthesis, animation, and editing techniques across all media, this program begins with **Norman McLaren** and **Evelyn Lambart's** *Mosaic*, in which the artists composed the soundtrack by engraving it directly onto the filmstrip. McLaren followed this in 1971 with *Synchromy*, taking this approach further by photographing sound card patterns on the soundtrack and reproducing them on the celluloid's image track in order to directly visualize the sound. Built from the manipulation, distortion, and looping of found footage and televisual images, both **Nam June Paik** and **Jud Yalkut's** *Video Tape Study No. 3* and **Dara Birnbaum's** iconic *Technology Transformation: Wonder Woman* are videos structured by the original sound as well as its image.

These experimental shorts, which combine animated and live action techniques and materials, are followed on an industrial scale by **Steven Lisberger's** acclaimed 1982 feature film *Tron*, with a soundtrack scored to combine both synthesizer and orchestra by electronic music pioneer **Wendy Carlos**.

## FILM NOTES:

### Mosaic

Evelyn Lambart & Norman McLaren / Sound mix: Ron Alexander

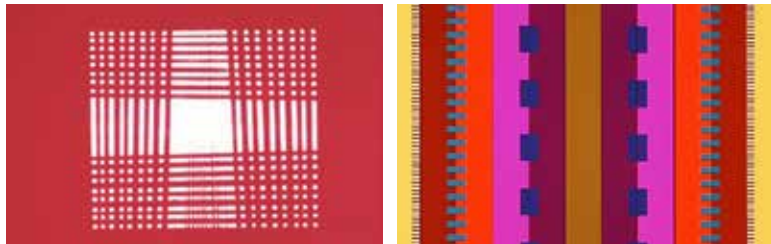
1965, 5:41 min, color 16mm transferred to digital video

*Courtesy of National Film Board of Canada*

The third film in the *Lines* series, *Mosaic* was produced by etching several film strips with horizontal and vertical lines and optically coloring the intersecting dots. The sound is created from Lambart and McLaren's marks in the soundtrack strip of the film. Sound mixer Ron Alexander then manipulated this sound with reverberation in the re-recording.

Evelyn Lambart (1914–1999) became the first woman animator to join the National Film Board of Canada as a technical director in 1942, and was Oscar-nominated for *A Chairy Tale*, her 1957 collaboration with Norman McLaren. A regular partner of McLaren's for the first part of her career, in the 1960s she began to make films on her own and developed her animation technique using paper cutouts that were transferred to lithographic plates to be painted and animated. Later in her life she credited her early hearing impairment for strengthening her ability to communicate through visual images.

Norman McLaren (1914–1987) was a Scottish-Canadian animator and film director. Continually experimenting with new filmmaking techniques, his films ranged from live-action and optical printing effects, to hand-drawn animation, abstract film, pixilation, and graphical sound. McLaren is best known for his work with National Film Board of Canada, where he was employed from 1941.



### Synchromy

Norman McLaren

1971, 7:27 min, color, 16mm transferred to digital video

*Courtesy of National Film Board of Canada*

Continuing his investigations into graphical sound following his *Lines* series, McLaren produced *Synchromy's* sound by photographing sound card patterns directly onto the soundtrack. The same patterns were multiplied and colored for the image track area of the 16mm film to create the effect of “seeing” the sound.

### Video Tape Study No. 3

Nam June Paik and Jud Yalkut / Sound: David Behrman and Ken Werner

1967–69, 4:01 min, black & white, sound, 16mm film on video

*Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix, eai.org*



Combining news conference footage of President Lyndon Johnson and New York Mayor John Lindsay, Paik and Yalkut used reverberation and delay to manipulate the protagonists' voices. One of a series of collaborations between the two artists in the late 1960s and early 1970s that explored the differing approaches

of celluloid and video, the series deliberately combined the two forms of media within moving-image works.

Korean-born artist Nam June Paik's (1932–2006) video sculptures, installations, performances and single-channel videos encompassed one of the most influential bodies of work in electronic media art. Merging global communications theories with an irreverent Fluxus sensibility, his work in music, performance, and video explored the juncture of art, technology, and popular culture.

Jud Yalkut (1938–2013) was a pioneering intermedia artist and filmmaker. His work ranged from early performance renderings and poetic filmic experiments to a series of groundbreaking hybrid video-film collaborations with Nam June Paik. Transcending and transforming media as he explored and merged film, video, expanded cinema, electronic manipulations, performance and installation, he created and collaborated on seminal intermedia projects with numerous artists, filmmakers, musicians, and performers.

### **Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman**

Dara Birnbaum

1978—79, 5:50 min, color, sound, video

Courtesy of *Electronic Arts Intermix, eai.org*

Manipulating pirated television images, New York artist Dara Birnbaum (b.1946) isolates and loops the moment of Wonder Woman's transformation and a howling siren to reveal the gendered language of television and its relationship to the transformative powers of new media technologies and networks of distribution.

One of the first artists to appropriate and deconstruct television footage to critique embedded ideologies, Birnbaum has stated that she wanted to "define the language of video art in relation to the institution of television." In her radical media critiques of the late 1970s, including the seminal *Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman*, she used rigorous tactics of deconstruction and appropriation to dismantle television's codes of representation.



### **Tron**

Steven Lisberger / Music: Wendy Carlos

1982, 95 min, color, 35mm transferred to Blu-ray

Courtesy of *Swank Motion Pictures*

Inspired by the early video game *Pong*, the 1982 cult classic *Tron* was originally conceived as an animated film. Through the support of Walt Disney Studios (who were, at the time, looking to produce "unconventional films") the idea was eventually realized as an unprecedented combination of traditional live action film, computer-generated visuals, and hybrid live action with "backlit animation." The filming of the backlit animation scenes were shot on a specially made high-contrast black-and-white film on an all-black set. The film was then colored with rotoscoping techniques in post-production to give the images their unique technological appearance.

*Tron* was the first film in 12 years (since 1970's *Ryan's Daughter*) to be shot on 65mm Super Panavision (celluloid film nearly twice the physical size and resolution of 35mm film and still at a greater resolution than today's "4K"), which caused numerous logistical and technical lighting challenges. However, one of the benefits to using Super Panavision was its ability to reproduce six channels of audio—something composer Wendy Carlos and sound designer Frank Serafine used to its fullest.

Carlos, known for her soundtracks to *The Shining* and *A Clockwork Orange*, created two separate sound worlds to represent the locations in *Tron*. For the "real world," the music is played mainly by acoustic instruments (musicians from the London Symphony Orchestra). In the "computer world" the sounds are generated by analog synthesis (including a Minimoog, the Prophet-5, and the Fairlight, among others). The sound effects for the fantastical computer world included field-recordings of refrigerators, buzzing machinery, and even the Goodyear blimp.

Not all of Carlos' forward-thinking sounds were appreciated in the capitalist world of major motion picture production. Some sections (including the iconic "lightcycle" scene) had its music completely cut. In an effort to sell more albums of the film's soundtrack, the rock band Journey was brought on to provide additional music, interrupting the climatic moment of Carlos' ending credits.

After tonight's screening, we will be showing clips of the "lightcycle" scene and the ending credits with their original musical scores intact.

**ON SCREEN/SOUND #2 WED / SEP 09, 7:00 PM**

The second program of *On Screen/Sound* presents a series of shorts from the past five decades that use human movement to embody the connection between image and sound.

*My Name is Oona* / Gunvor Nelson

*Passage a l'acte* / Martin Arnold

*Ditch Plains* / Loretta Fahrenholz / Sound design: Steffen Martin

*Jewel* / Hassan Khan

*Jump* / Charles Atlas and Philippe Decoufle / Music: Joseph Biscuit

*Twenty Eight Nights: Endnote* / Akram Zattari



My Name is Oona  
Passage a l'acte  
Ditch Plains

Jewel  
Jump  
Twenty Eight Nights:  
Endnote

**ON SCREEN/SOUND #3 WED / SEP 23, 7:00 PM**

The third screening in the series *On Screen/Sound* is introduced by Brooklyn-based filmmaker and archivist Andrew Lampert.

*Beach Boys/Geto Boys* / Cory Arcangel

*All Magic Sands (Chappaqua)* / Andrew Lampert



Beach Boys/Geto Boys  
All Magic Sands  
(Chappaqua)

**ON SCREEN/SOUND #4 WED / SEP 30, 7:00 PM**

The fourth screening in *On Screen/Sound* brings together painting, architecture, fashion, dance, and music for an evening of modernist and surreal cinema.

*Plastic Haircut* / Robert Nelson

*L'inhumaine* / Marcel L'Herbier / Music (lost): Darius Milhaud



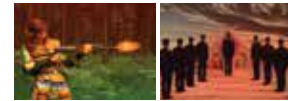
Plastic Haircut  
L'inhumaine

**ON SCREEN/SOUND #5 WED / OCT 28, 7:00 PM**

The fifth screening in *On Screen/Sound* grapples with ideas of the real, acted, and reenacted as intertwined in both image and music.

*Hilvarenbeek* / Jimmy Joe Roche and Dan Deacon

*Mishima: A Life in Four Parts* / Paul Schrader / Music: Philip Glass



Hilvarenbeek  
Mishima: A Life in Four  
Chapters

**ON SCREEN/SOUND #6 WED / NOV 04, 7:00 PM**

The sixth screening in the series *On Screen/Sound* features two works composed exclusively using light: Lis Rhodes' *Light Music* and Henning Lohner and John Cage's *One<sup>st</sup>* and *103*.

*Light Music* / Lis Rhodes

*One<sup>st</sup>* and *103* / Henning Lohner and John Cage



Light Music  
One<sup>st</sup> and 103

**ON SCREEN/SOUND #7 WED / NOV 18, 7:00 PM**

The seventh screening in the *On Screen/Sound* series examines the influence of Foley and sound effects on moving image.

*Hacked Circuit* / Deborah Stratman

*Yozakura Quartet: Hana no Uta No.7* / Kou Matsuo

*Blow Out* / Brian de Palma



Yozakura Quartet: Hana  
No Uta No. 7  
Hacked Circuit  
Blow Out

**ON SCREEN/SOUND #8 WED / DEC 02, 7:00 PM**

Introduced by London-based artist Cally Spooner, the final fall event for the *On Screen/Sound* series presents an evening exploring the specificities of transforming the musical from theater to screen.

*And You Were Wonderful, On Stage* / Cally Spooner

*Gold Diggers of 1933* / Mervyn Le Roy



And You Were Wonderful,  
On Stage  
Gold Diggers of 1933

# STAFF

Geoff Abbas / Director for Stage Technologies  
Eric Ameres / Senior Research Engineer  
Argeo Ascani / Curator, Music  
David Bebb / Senior Systems Administrator  
Peter Bellamy / Senior Systems Programmer  
Michael Bello / Video Engineer  
Victoria Brooks / Curator, Time-Based Visual Arts  
Eric Brucker / Lead Video Engineer  
Michele Cassaro / Guest Services Coordinator  
John Cook / Box Office Manager  
Roxanne De Hamel / Web Developer  
David DeLaRosa / Production Technician  
Zhenelle Falk / Artist Services Administrator  
William Fritz / Master Carpenter  
Kimberly Gardner / Manager, Administrative Operations  
Johannes Goebel / Director  
Ian Hamelin / Project Manager  
Katie Hammon / Administrative Specialist  
Ryan Jenkins / Senior Event Technician  
Shannon Johnson / Design Director  
Eileen Krywinski / Graphic Designer  
Carl Lewandowski / Production Technician  
Eric Chi-Yeh Lin / Lead Stage Technician  
Stephen McLaughlin / Senior Event Technician  
Josh Potter / Marketing and Communications Manager  
Alena Samoray / Event Technician  
Candice Sherman / Business Coordinator  
Avery Stempel / Front of House Manager  
Kim Strosahl / Acting Production Administrative Coordinator  
Jeffrey Svatek / Audio Engineer  
Dan Swalec / Master Electrician  
Todd Vos / Lead Audio Engineer  
Michael Wells / Production Technician



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