



**BROAD  
UNDERGROUND  
FILM SERIES**

**Expanded Cinema | Medium, Technology, Apparatus**

***Recreation***

**(Robert Breer, 1.5 min, 1956)**

The Detroit-born artist Robert Breer came to filmmaking in the early 1950s as a painter working in Paris around the circle of Victor Vasarely. "I went from making paintings to animating paintings," Breer claimed; "for me, that was the whole point of making a film." *Recreation* is Breer's re-creation of his ten-second loop film *Image by Images* (1955), and explores the relationship between stasis and movement, pure cinema and impure assemblage, the plastic and the temporal arts. The soundtrack is nonsense poetry in French, by Noel Burch.

***Glimpses of the U.S.A.***

**(Charles and Ray Eames, 4 min excerpt, 1959)**

Like Breer's *Recreation*, *Glimpses* experiments with imagistic superabundance, temporal compression, and speed, but on a very different scale. Commissioned by the United States Information Agency for the U.S. National Exhibition in Moscow in 1959, *Glimpses* is a masterpiece of Cold War propaganda. The presentation aimed to tell the story of a typical "day in the life of the United States," on seven 20x30 foot screens, and under a geodesic dome designed by Buckminster Fuller.

***Panels for the Walls of the World***

**(Stan VanDerBeek, 8 min, 1966-7)**

"An experiment in video tape control, an electric collage that mixes the images by way of electronic mattes, superimpositions, and other electronic means of integrating as many as eight separate images onto one screen. A film commissioned by CBS for television, it is the first attempt to examine the almost unlimited graphic and visual possibilities of video tape inter-mix."  
--Stan VanDerBeek

***Snows***

**(Carolee Schneemann, 20 min, 1967)**

This is a newly restored version of documentation of the 1967 group performance *Snows*, which was built out of Schneemann's outrage and sorrows over the atrocities of the Vietnam War. An ethereal stage environment combining colored light panels, film projection, torn collage, hanging sacks of colored water, "snow," crusted branches, rope, foil and foam was the set and setting in which an audience-activated electronic switching system controlled elements of the performance/installation. Images from film,

slide and live action propel silent, ghostly performers to become aggressor and victim, torturer and tortured, lover and beloved, as well as simply themselves in this breakthrough mixed-media film performance. (The film *Viet-Flakes* is a central element).

—Electronic Arts Intermix

***Poemfield No. 2***

**(Stan VanDerBeek, 8 min, 1966)**

One in a series of eight computer-animated projects VanDerBeek made in collaboration with Kenneth Knowlton at Bell Laboratories in the 60s. The results of their collaboration were a number of cathode-ray mosaics, typically brief, non-narrative and abstract. All of these films explore fragments of text, computer graphics, and in some cases combine live action with animation collage.

—Tate Intermedia

***Permutations***

**(John Whitney, 4 min, 1968)**

An experimental animator, John Whitney studied music composition in Paris before collaborating with his brother James on their celebrated abstract experiment in visual music, *Five Film Exercises* (1943-45). By repurposing the technology from a disused WWII M5 anti-aircraft gun, he built an analog computer to produce animations; a version of this device was used to create the Lissajous spirals for Saul Bass's title sequence in Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958). *Permutations* was made on an IBM mainframe computer, and represents Whitney's aspiration to "restore a kinship between science and art."

***TV as a Creative Medium***

**(Ira Schneider, 12 min, 1969-1984)**

In 1969, the Howard Wise Gallery in New York presented *TV as a Creative Medium*, the first exhibition in the United States devoted to video as an emergent art form. Schneider recorded this landmark exhibition, and here revisits the original documentation with commentary. The document features works such as Nam June Paik's *Participation TV*, Paul Ryan's *Everyman's Mobius Strip*, Thomas Tadlock's *Archetron*, Eric Siegel's *Psychedelelevision in Color*, Charlotte Moorman's first performance of Paik's *TV Bra For Living Sculpture*, and Schneider's own collaboration with Frank Gillette on the installation *Wipe Cycle*.

—Electronic Arts Intermix

***Media Burn***

**(Ant Farm, 23 min, 1975-2003)**

A key work of the experimental architecture collective Ant Farm, *Media Burn* exemplifies the group's expanded field of art practice in the 1970s, which included video alongside pneumatic structures, public sculpture, performance art, and social critique. For the nomadologists of Ant Farm, video fueled alternative architectural and environmental practices of the kind exemplified in *Media Burn*'s explosive collision of two American obsessions: the automobile and the television.