

**From:** Mike Leggett <legart@ozemail.com.au>  
**To:** George Clark <gogbad@hotmail.com>  
**Cc:** Fiona Villella <fiona@sensesofcinema.com>  
**Date:** Tuesday, 27 August 2002 12:07 PM  
**Subject:** Shoot Shoot Shoot @ Senses of Cinema

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Dear George,

Fiona Villella has let me have your email so that I can make a few comments to you about your article.

I'm delighted that you were able to attend so many of the screenings at Tate Modern - I hear it was quite an occasion with most of the film-makers present after 20 or more years apart. It seems I was one of the few selected for inclusion in the season who couldn't actually get there, but then I live further away than anyone else.....

I was able to introduce a couple of the screenings however, when the program reached Brisbane and shared the enthusiasm you displayed in the article, upon seeing the work again after so long.

However, there are a few howlers in your text which I feel bound to correct - maybe others have done so already?

- The LFMC wasn't based on the New York version but encouraged by its work.
- 'Unique' is not a word I would use as many times as you did! (Thanks Ed.!)
- Though Screen was a champion of the emerging methodology of film, later media, studies, it definitely didn't favour 'structural theories' - this was hotly disputed ground!
- Though the Workshop possessed an 'artisans' optical printer rather than an industrial type this wasn't until much later in the piece - late 70s was when I think a film or two emerged from it. The machines that made the difference to the Workshop was the B&W processor and the contact step-printer. The 'printer' was therefore not an optical printer. (In an optical printer the original material and the duplicating stock move independently of one another through an optical path - in effect, the frame of the original is re-photographed.

The printer was an ex-industrial type, extremely robust and capable of withstanding the treatment that non-technicians would meter out to it. It was capable of accommodating bi- or tri-pack + original material, the uppermost layer being in contact with the unexposed print stock. The light intensity and colour composition could be filtered on its way to the print stock, before passing through the original material in the gate. Thus many 'variations' of image would result, depending on the way the film-makers worked with this machine (in ways that probably could be described as unique!) But the machine was capable of producing very accurately controllable prints (or internegs).

The printer also had a sound head so could also print from an optical track negative onto the edge of the print stock simultaneously - many people 'worked' with this feature too.

I worked with this machine - and loved it like I would a horse - from when it was first installed in Robert St Arts lab in 1969 and the last film I made in 1981 at the premises in Gloucester Avenue.

- An Academy Leader has nothing to do with the Academy Cinema in Oxford Street but was put together by the AMPAS (who do the Oscars) before it was superseded by the SMPTE leader in the 60s. I haven't seen the film for ages but have a feeling that in fact Guy used an SMPTE leader!

- When you have access to the program catalogue, as I assume you did, you shouldn't make as many spelling errors as you did..... not only do you spell my name wrong but also the name of the film - Shepherd's Bush!

I guess it's your prerogative to attempt to interpret these films with wholly subjective terms like anxiety, nostalgia, loss of innocence etc etc. but I would have thought that as you are conveying to a readership some sense of what the work sets out to achieve, then somewhere in the piece you should have bit the bullet and

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grappled with the substance of the polemics that much of the work was based on..... the structural/ materialist discourse... To do otherwise risks representing the work to an audience who haven't seen it, who might wish to see it, that it is nothing more than the vagueries of another troupe of egos intent on 'self-expression'.

Have a go at Malcolm Le Grices recent book - Experimental Film in the Digital Age. If you like, I can send you a 2000 word review I have written about it!

Thanks for your attention and good luck with the studies.

Bests  
Mike

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**From:** George Clark <gogbad@hotmail.com>  
**To:** <legart@ozemail.com.au>  
**Date:** Wednesday, 28 August 2002 7:28 AM  
**Subject:** Re: Shoot Shoot Shoot @ Senses of Cinema

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Dear Mike,

I am very glad you took the time to write to me and give me such constructive comments. I am sorry for the oversights you mentioned but I am sure I will be able to correct these and re-issue the article for the archive on Senses of Cinema.

I am glad you recommended that book to me (and I would be happy to read your article on it as well) but I wonder if you could give me some recommendations of theoretical material specific to this period and group of filmmakers. I am glad I got this exposure and I plan to pursue this period in my future research.

I also have a specific question for you concerning your film *Shepherd,s Bush.*, In the introduction Mark Webber apologised for not including your collaborator on this film in the notes. I didn,t manage to write his name down then. I would be grateful if you could give me his name as well as describing how you worked together (I am under the impression that the other party was responsible for the sound track.)

I am glad you took this article seriously and found time to write to me with your comments. This season appeared in something of a void for me and I appreciate all the comments and suggestions I can get. As a student of St Martin,s I am staggered by the lack of enthusiasm for this season from the tutors. I am very glad to be learning about these past movements and see it as essential material (my ancestry). But I am somewhat alone in this and lack the critical environment I crave.

Best wishes

George

>From: Mike Leggett  
>To: George Clark  
>CC: Fiona Villella  
>Subject: Shoot Shoot Shoot @ Senses of Cinema  
>Date: Tue, 27 Aug 2002 13:08:43 +1000

**From:** Mike Leggett <legart@ozemail.com.au>  
**To:** George Clark <gogbad@hotmail.com>  
**Date:** Thursday, 29 August 2002 8:49 PM  
**Subject:** Re: Shoot Shoot Shoot @ Senses of Cinema

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on 28/8/02 7:28 AM, George Clark at gogbad@hotmail.com wrote:

I am glad you recommended that book to me (and I would be happy to read your article on it as well) but I wonder if you could give me some recommendations of theoretical material specific to this period and group of filmmakers.

Hi George

Malcolm Le Grice's book is the book to read - I've attached the long draft of my review of the book which also mentions Peter Gidal's book, which you'll probably find heavier going.....

I also have a specific question for you concerning your film *ÆShepherd,s Bush.* In the introduction Mark Webber apologised for not including your collaborator on this film in the notes. I didn't manage to write his name down then. I would be grateful if you could give me his name as well as describing how you worked together

It's in the credits at the beginning of the film - it was John Lifton who set up the VCS3 sound synthesiser to my requirement. (No organs in sight George!) The VCS3 was the first of the 'non-industrial', post-Moog synthesisers that appeared in about 1967/8 and one of them arrived in the Institute for Research in Art & Technology (IRAT) at the Robert Street Arts Lab in 68/69 where John was one of the main movers, specialising in sound production. (The building, just off the Euston Road, was on three floors and divided between various arts (and science) uses). I made the film in 1971 shortly after the Film Co-op moved into The Dairy in Chalk Farm - in fact I think it was the first film off the printer and processor at that location (there were many). Quoting from notes:

The raw footage I shot during a site-specific sculpture day at the Somerset College of Art in Taunton. I was a regular part-time teacher there with Ian Breakwell, John Hilliard and Rose Finn-Kelsey. The film was shot on a Bolex being operated frame by frame, something I used the Bolex a lot for (in Unword as well) and which I'm continuing to use to this day, though now it is with a stills digital camera and Premiere.

The selected positive loop was used to make a negative, and comopt prints were then struck from this and the optical soundtrack neg. This was done on the printer and processor that we had just installed at The Dairy and, because of its nature, was quite a useful test that all the gear was working satisfactorily. The gradual appearance of the image and its disappearance into the white of the screen was controlled in the printer with a prepared aperture band during the process of making the negative. I made two negative versions: the first was about 30 minutes long, the second, the distributed version, is about 15 minutes.

The description I gave to John Lifton for the kind of soundtrack I wanted went along the lines of: 'black sound, white sound, with fleeting tones between..... starting higher and going lower towards the end.... a slow beat to reduce to intervals.....'

He set-up the little patch board on the synth, set the dials etc, then gave me control of the beat through the joystick. I had by this time set-up my quarter inch mono tape recorder which I had lugged on the Tube to his flat in Covent Garden (artists' rents in those days!) and recorded the output from the VCS3 for 15 minutes. The tape was taken to the commercial labs for them to make an optical track negative as the Co-op didn't have the (delicate and technically critical) equipment for such a purpose.

Comopt prints could be made quite simply on a single light setting. (One of the commercial labs were asked to make a print at one stage for some reason - they went through and graded the neg, and then said it was unprintable!)

As a student of St Martin,s I am staggered by the lack of enthusiasm for this season from the tutors. I am very glad to be learning about these past movements and see it as essential material (my ancestry). But I am somewhat alone in this and lack the critical environment I crave.

Well the irony is George as you probably are aware, is that St Martin's was very much the core of a lot of the energy around at the time - in fact it's where Malcolm was teaching at the time and from where many of the film-makers at the Co-op came from.... Malcolm is research professor there now and he's working with David Curtis on a study centre for this and other independent British film..... I should contact him: Malcolm Le Grice <m.legrice@csm.linst.ac.uk>

Good luck and best wishes,  
Mike

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