Rückbau

Toby Cornish & Owen Lloyd

Rückbau is a generative film with accompanying generative soundtrack, programmed in Max/Msp/Jitter and shown as projected video from a computer. An initial, test, version was shown at the Royal College of Art in their exhibition *Moving Frame*, part of the 2006 London Design Festival.

Rückbau consists of 16mm and Super 8 images of the dismantling of the Palast der Republik in Berlin, which housed the East German parliament and a cultural centre. Its architectural structure forms the basis of the film. This hangover from the former communist regime has been removed to make way for a reconstruction of the Stadtschloss, the building from the Prussian regime that was demolished to make way for the Palast. It seems a strange way of dealing with history but it has made for some lovely footage. The piece was first shown in its incomplete form because the dismantling of the building took three years longer than expected and was only completed in February 2009.

The initial aim of this project was to make visual a numerical progression, centred on the number of verticals and horizontals within images of the building frame. This was realised with rapid fire sequences of shots running through number sequences of vertical and horizontal elements. As the piece has progressed the aims have expanded to address the qualities of the film footage. The focus has shifted to a more poetic approach, incorporating longer form shots of the surrounding area, giving the bursts of vertical and horizontal grid context. It has become a hypnotic space, interrupted by grid bursts and the occasional builder.

There is also a conceptual/technical concern, which is to address the problem of showing film work in a gallery. We both feel that linear film can suffer in the gallery context. A linear narrative can be disrupted by the way in which the audience arrives or leaves in the middle of the work, potentially destroying any narrative arc by experiencing the beginning, middle and end in the wrong order. Our solution is to make the work generative in nature, not algorithmically, as the visuals and most of the sounds exist as discrete files, but in terms of the editing systems for both image and sound.

Conceived during a research project on the moving frame in film and digital media, the film has a structure which is determined by parameters within software created using Max/Msp/Jitter. These parameters shape the film, using a variety of shots in a number of different categories, they determine how long each type of shot lasts and in which sequence. The result is a dynamic editing system, endlessly composing both image and sound.

A ten minute extract of the test version is available to view at http://www.repeat-to-fade.net/project/ruckbau. The final version will have the same kind of feel but with a fifteen minute loop of probability tendencies so that over the loop duration the images and sounds will gradually become more empty.
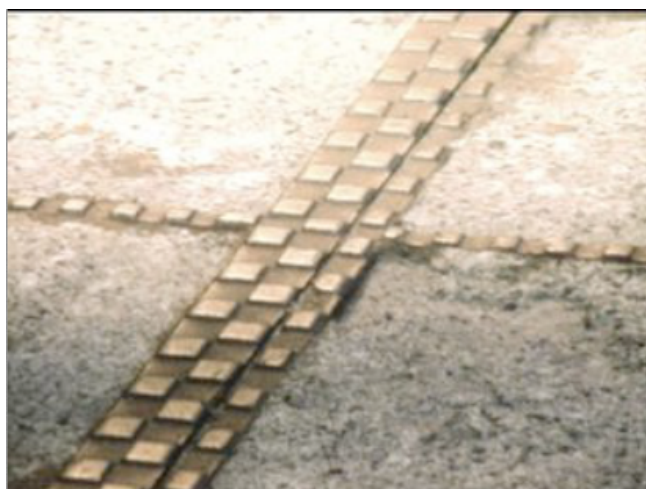
Biographies

During a Graphic Design BA at Camberwell College of Arts and then MA at the Royal College of Art, London, **Toby Cornish** started making film projections and installations, using the available low-tech equipment to an aesthetic and conceptual advantage, creating images and manipulating them without the use of computer special effects.

Now based in Berlin, he continues to use super 8, 16mm film and slide projectors to make both personal short films and installations for clients and music events as part of the film and design group Jutojo.

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Owen Lloyd is a composer and sound artist who's practice and professional work focus on sound and interaction. He conceptualises and builds systems for creating compositions from a variety of tracked and random inputs, hoping to reveal the shapes and time intervals of events in musical forms.

His work has been presented at concerts, conferences, experimental film festivals and exhibitions, in the cinema and on television, beside swimming pools in Miami, and in many other situations.

He is also actively engaged in research and is studying for a PhD in Sonic Art at Bath Spa University.

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Technical requirements:
Fast Apple Mac desktop computer running Max/Msp/Jitter software or Max runtime ** Digital projector ** Audio system including amplifier, 2 monitors and a sub bass module ** Boxed space with the possibility of painting the projection surface onto a wall ** The piece has some low bass frequencies so some kind of audio isolation is preferable.