AN EXAMINATION OF A SPECIFIC NETWORK OF POETICS
FROM THE REALM OF
LANGUAGE - IMAGE - SOUND RELATIONS

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ABSTRACT

It is my intention in this paper to examine the network of poetic relations which I explore in my art work.

This document is divided into two main sections: part one deals with a number of art historical foci in regard to language, image, and sound relations. Part two focuses on selected video works of mine which synthesize aspects of this art historical data. In both sections a set of ideas intrinsic to the work will be defined.

Language, image and sound elements in my work are not dealt with in a hierarchical manner. Since these elements appear simultaneously in the video work, the following writing will approach them in a way which examines how they function individually as well as in relation to each other.

It is the artist's intention to create a resonant poetic network through the dynamic interaction of language, image and sound elements.

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Part I

Historical Foci In Regard To
Language - Image - Sound Relations
Marcel Duchamp - Qualifying Image Through The Use Of Text

One of the more illusive fields of investigation that Marcel Duchamp explored was the set of relationships that exist between an image or object, and language that is presented to accompany that image or object. His art works and the processes involved in generating those art works take on the function of encapsulating ideas. In Duchamp's work language serves various functions, i.e. titles for given works, inscriptions and notes which pertain to the work.

Duchamp's use of language often sets up a field of meanings through punning and word play which give clues to the pluralistic reading of his work. At times nonsense is employed to mislead intentionally. The conceptual distance between object and external ideas related to language give the viewer the chance or responsibility to complete the work through their own associative powers.

The ambiguities embodied in a work of art draw the viewer into a continuing process of deciphering the suggested meaning a work carries. The greatest works of art are ever expanding in terms of their suggestive qualities.

One such work is Marcel Duchamp's La Mariée Mise À
Nu Par Ses Celibatares, Même or The Bride Stripped Bare
By Her Bachelors, Even also known as The Large Glass,
1915 - 1923. The work is a large construction 2.7 meters
high on two glass panels. The background is transparent
glass upon which lead foil, lead wire and oil paint
create a complex composition of numerous symbolic
elements. A fascinating set of poetic correspondences
are generated by Duchamp. The accompanying set of notes
for The Large Glass is called the The Green Box. The
combined viewing of The Large Glass and The Green Box
form a cryptic, paradoxical whole.

Duchamp has said of it, 'The Glass is not to be
looked at for itself but only as a function of
a catalogue I never made.' In fact in 1934 he
published his 'Green Box', a compilation of
documents, plans, sketches and notes made in
connection with 'The Large Glass' between 1912
and 1915.¹

The Green Box sheds light upon a set of abstract
symbols which comprise The Large Glass. The notes in
"The Green Box" are not intended as a one to one
explanation or interpretation of the symbols in "The
Large Glass" but as poetic qualifiers. The notes become
an external language perspective system, containing
poetic definitions of the symbols used in The Large
Glass, information about processes involved in the
manifestation of these symbols, descriptions of the
interrelated functioning of the symbols and ideas for
some projects which were never completed.
John Golding writes about a printed edition of the notes.

Each of the slips of paper in 'The Green Box' was reproduced in exact facsimile and these were then assembled in a deliberately random order, so that their arrangement varied from box to box. Although they fail, and indeed were not intended to explain 'The large Glass' rationally, the written notes compliment their visual counterpart and they help illuminate a work which Duchamp has aptly described as 'A wedding of mental and visual concepts.2

One takes an active role in assimilating the expanded poetic realm that Duchamp created. Part of the process of unraveling the enigmatic nature of the work involves deciphering how the visual language of symbols functions with the writing. Eventually the written counterpart defines its own perplexing poetic syntax. The exploration of the relationship between the actual art work and the notes is intriguing because every viewing lends new meaning due to the work's ambiguous poetic nature. The passage through the work's vast labyrinth of ideas is enlightening.
Footnotes


2. Ibid.

Bibliography


Networks of Multiple Meaning

The poetic application of a word or image is not limited to the use of a single meaning, nor to all of their various possible definitions. Instead, any particular word or image is the center or essence of a network of meanings.

These meanings are derived from many sources. Definitions; connotations; associations - verbal, visual and autobiographical; image puns; literalisms; the sound quality of a word based on phonetic intonation; colloquialisms; idioms and figures of speech are all relevant to the network. This network is established both logically and intuitively.

The multiple meanings that the chosen word or image carries are then established within a constructed context. This context is created through the process of bringing together a number of these networks or fields of meaning. Often more than one connection is created between any two fields.

Through the viewing of a work, contexts are constantly created and altered. The viewer carries the memory of contexts that have been explored while entering new contexts. Thus as more networks are connected into the structure, a layered interwoven fabric of poetic relations is established. The act of choosing specific
fields of meaning and establishing connections between these fields is central to my working process and way of seeing. This set of relations presents a world with many interpretations. Its plurality is achieved through the construction of a work comprised partially of informed nonsense.

Take for example a line from "Telling Motions", a work which explores many of the ideas presented above, 'The shadow of a word from the glass wings of a housing...'. The word 'wing' is used as a pun, where the idea of both the 'wing of a house' and the 'wing of something that flies' are brought together. Consequently the poetic ambiguity functions as a specific nonsense connection between fields of meaning.
An informed sense of nonsense can convey many ideas. Nonsense often humorously communicates about a situation while simultaneously presenting other trains of thought. A nonsense statement can present a particular logic while concurrently disrupting it, thus implying a set of ideas that do not depend on an internal logic for understanding.

Nonsense subverts a linear logic by grafting more than one logical system together. The artist presents an informed nonsense situation for the viewer. The viewer then interpolates the relationship between the various underlying concepts by applying his/her own powers of association and personal connection. Thus the viewer experiences fields of meaning instead of a single meaning. The viewer goes through an instantaneous sifting process attempting to trace the component logics back to their source. Then the viewer draws a conclusion based on the relationships suggested by the juxtapositions. The distance between lines of thought force the viewer into an active role of attempting to bridge this conceptual gap. If the lines of thought have no apparent relation, the viewer will either find nonsense a source of frustration or will take a creative role in the act of interpretation.
When a nonsense statement is extremely perplexing, it asks of the viewer a high level of participation. Certain Zen Masters would use nonsense statements called Koans to help bring their pupils to an enlightened state. By learning to deal with complex structures of this nature we also learn to understand better the seemingly infinite complexities of our daily lives.¹

Art works may contain collisions of lines of logic and/or aesthetic systems, presented as informed nonsense. Through the manipulation of these structures the artist can communicate a set of intuitive relationships that stimulate an active role in the decoding of the work.
Footnotes

The Image Pun

The image pun is a means of generating a pluralistic language/image environment. The multiple meanings of a chosen word are connected with an associated image or set of images. Each image can correspond to one of the meanings of the word.

Making a literal translation of one meaning of a chosen word is one method of deriving an image pun. Take for example the work of the artist Michael Snow, *Multiplication Table*. In this work Snow utilizes a photograph of a small drawing of an actual table (one that could be used for the process of eating). His work plays off of the multiple meanings of the words 'multiplication' and 'table'. The 'table' is a small drawing whose scale has been 'multiplied' by blowing up the photograph to a large scale. The meanings generated in this self referential work are also 'multiplied' through a resonant literal and metaphorical cross referencing. Snow also triggers through language an image in the mind of the viewer of a literal 'multiplication table'. Thus, besides being self referential, the work also refers to an external reality.

An early example of this kind of image pun is Marcel Duchamp's *Trébuchet*, mentioned in the chapter of this paper on "Readymades". The word trebuchet (trap) is a
pun on the chess word trébucher, the french word meaning 'to stumble over'. The art object is a coat rack which is fastened to the floor. The viewer both literally and conceptually 'stumbles' over this art work. Its precarious place in art history also likens it to a chess move.

I use the image pun as one kind of linking mechanism in poetic language-image-sound networks.
Bibliography


An Examination Of The "Readymades" of Marcel Duchamp

The concept of the "Readymade" was invented by Marcel Duchamp. As an enlightened Dadaist gesture Duchamp chose a series of objects, indifferent to their aesthetic appeal, and displayed them in the art context.

Probably the most 'difficult' of Duchamp's concepts and creations are the 'Readymades'. They are outrageous yet logical demonstrations of his suspension of the laws of artistic causality, for he has substituted for the traditional 'hand-made' work of art such ordinary, mass produced, machine made articles as a snow shovel, a comb, a bottle rack or a bicycle wheel (set upside down on a kitchen stool) ... The substitution of an anonymous article of everyday use for the conventional painting or sculpture can be understood only as an intellectual or philosophical decision.¹

Over time the concept of the "Readymade" has been misunderstood. Some writers have suggested that the objects were chosen for their beauty which Duchamp denied. They were chosen to manifest conceptual concerns. The expanded notion of the "Readymade" now includes both aesthetic and conceptual underpinnings, a coupling of understanding and misunderstanding in relation to Duchamp's original concerns.

The "Readymades" revealed new ways of thinking about the creation of an art work. It is through this set of works that the notion of appropriation was revealed. As a result an artist can manipulate pre-established objects, music, images, writings and situations to an
artistic end. The manipulation includes the following strategies: a part of an object or situation may be used to stand for the whole; the formal properties of chosen pre-established material may be utilized; associative properties of an object or situation may be drawn upon. Emphasis is placed on how the appropriated material functions within a constructed context.

The notion of displacement is central in the establishment of "Readymades".

Here again, the process may be concerned with the physical, or more abstractly with the logical context of the object... Displacement from physical context is achieved by changing the visual angle from which an object is ordinarily perceived and by isolating it from its ordinary surroundings. This is the principal at work in the 1913 Bicycle Wheel (the fork is upside down screwed to a kitchen stool), the 1914 Bottle Dryer (to be viewed hanging from the ceiling like the 1917 Hat Rack), and the 1917 Trap (a coat rack designed for the wall but nailed to the floor)

Displacement from ordinary logical context is achieved by re-naming the object, the new title having no obvious relationship to the object as ordinarily understood. This process is exemplified in the 1914 Pharmacy a commercial print of a winter landscape); In Advance Of The Broken Arm (1915, an ordinary snow shovel); in the 1915, Pulled At Four Pins (an unpainted chimney ventilator); and in Fountain(1917, a urinal).

...The 'Readymade is sometimes a pun in three dimensional projection. Trap (Trebuchet) is then an example not only of physical displacement, but of logical displacement as well since the word itself is a pun on the phonetically identical chess term trebucher, the French word meaning 'to stumble over'. The pun is also used in the titles of Apolinere
Enamel (1916-1917); The 1919 bearded and mustached Mona Lisa, L.H.O.O.Q. (when read in French becomes 'she has a hot bottom'); and Fresh Widow (1920) a pun on French window.2

Implicit in the "Readymades" of Duchamp is the act of seeing common everyday objects in an enlightened manner.

This action of using "Readymades" as art is often said to blur the distinction between art and life. The important distinction here is not that art and life are interchangable. Life is made up of a series of processes of which the making of art is one. However, by observing life through the literal and metaphorical perspectives which Duchamp posed, we can come to understand the world at large in a new light. We can begin to see inside objects and actions the beauty of their functioning and through displacement a beauty in their malfunctioning.

Lao Tzu suggests "The wise man... studies what others neglect and restores to the world what multitudes have passed by."3
Footnotes


3. Ibid., p. 34.

Bibliography


Film And Video's Relation To The "Readymade"

The process of film and video creation can be analogous to the use of the "Readymades". An ordinary location is filmed or videotaped. Thus what is before the lens has a "Readymade" potential for use in an artwork. This film or tape is the first level displacement for the subject of the image. The manipulation of this image, its placement in relation to other images, its relation to a given soundtrack or language structure and the manipulation of the formal qualities of the image, form a constructed context through which the image takes on meaning. Consequently the image functions like a "Readymade"; the original meaning is shifted; new meanings are generated in the constructed context.
Sound Poetry And The Expressive Power Of Intonation

A number of artists have been interested in the exploration of phonetics in writing poems. One literary artist to explore this area was Lewis Carroll, aka Charles Dodgson. His nonsense poem Jabberwocky written in 1862 is an interesting early example of what came to be known as phonetic poetry. The following is an excerpt from Jabberwocky.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And mome raths outgrabe.¹

Paul Sheerbar's Kikakou ! Ehrolaps of 1897 has often been cited as the earliest phonetic poem. Der Grosse Lalula by Christian Morgenstern was composed five years later.

The Dadaists produced a series of fine phonetic works. Raoul Hausmann and Hugo Ball were the forerunners followed by Kurt Schwitters.

In his diary Hugo Ball said:

With this kind of phonetic poetry we altogether renounce language that has through journalism become corrupt and impossible. We withdraw into the innermost alchemy of the word, even surrender the word itself, and thus preserve for poetry its last, holiest domain.²
It is interesting that Ball mentions alchemy in his reflections about poetry. Many of the basic ideas presented in this paper suggest a transcendent means of viewing the world. By attempting to embue mundane artifacts with a greater value through contextual manipulation, a situation is created which is analogous to alchemical processes.

Another phonetic poet interested in using mundane materials in a transcendent manner was Kurt Schwitters. His numerous Merz works are constructed of scraps of paper, advertising snippets and other materials. Through contextual manipulation, he created art works of great beauty out of materials which were essentially valueless.

Schwitters phonetic works are incredibly rich in their suggestive use of sounds produced solely by the voice. The following is an excerpt of Schwitters' poem -

The Ursonate.

Tuii tuii tuii tuii
Tuii tuii tuii tuii
Tee tee tee tee
Tee tee tee tee
Tatta tatta tuiiEe teiiEe
Tatta tatta tuiiEe teiiEe

It was Raoul Hausmann that triggered Schwitters interest in phonetic poetry. Schwitters famous Ursonate of 1932 was:
Deliberately constructed like a piece of music. It was developed melodically and rhythmically as a work intermediate between spoken poetry and sung music, bold in its consistent use of purely phonetic means, conventional in its articulation as a sonata.

When we examine spoken language we find a vast grey area of non-codified (in the dictionary sense) phonetic communication. This vocal communication takes the form of hissing, guttural utterances, sighs, yells, laughter, etc., as well as abstractions thereof. The ability to understand this form of communication rests in the collective subconscious. Our daily communication depends on these utterances which augment the meaning of codified spoken language.

The Phonetic poets were in a sense mining the collective subconscious. Their works transform the grey areas of communication into vehicles of poetic expression.

These poets were not the only group to explore phonetic expression. The Scat singing of performers like Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald, the early rock and roll nonsense syllables of Little Richard - "A Wop Bop Alu Bop A Wop Bam Boom", and numerous other popular entertainers have all used phonetics in their work.

These performers and artists show that the pure sound of words has an expressive power. By manipulating the sound qualities of words, an artist can establish a signifying layer which augments the meaning of a given
art work.

It is interesting to observe the learning process of language. Many cultures transmit information through ritual language to their young. Often the phonetic qualities of communication are memorized and it is not until much later that the actual meaning of an utterance is learned. Take for example the Latin spoken in the Catholic Church or the Hebrew spoken in a Synagogue. It is often the intonation and phonetic qualities of religious services which move the listener.

In terms of language, image, and sound relationships, one can see the resonant power of communication in places of worship. Whether one believes in God or not, it is hard to deny the expressive beauty exhibited in religious architecture, art, music and ritual language.

It was this concept of linking the expressive qualities of the sound of words with the possible meanings a word carries that influenced much of my video works. Often on the first listening to a song or poem, the intonation of its delivery generates one aspect of the meaning. This relates directly to the sound qualities the phonetic poets and others were fascinated by. As the viewer returns to the work, and the meaning of individual words come into play, the viewer will experience an expanded notion of the meaning of the work. If words are presented with the intonation of a television commercial,
one kind of meaning is generated. If they are presented with the qualities of a religious service, another set of associations will be triggered. As the viewer comes to understand what the words mean in relation to the tone in which they are being delivered, a complex field of meanings is generated.

When signifying codes which are not normally presented together are used in art works, a situation which is similar to that of the nonsense statement (described in another chapter of this paper) is generated. A situation is made manifest where a high level of viewer participation in decoding the work is again created.
Footnotes


3. Ibid., p. 213.

4. Ibid., p. 214.


Bibliography


Digital Delay Voice Treatment

Another example of the expressive use of voice in my music is in the creation of a background of tonal layers. Creating these layers involves the making of digital loops using a digital delay. The digital delay is a sound sampling and treatment unit.

One function of the device allows the user to sample a voice tone. The voice tone is then repeated over and over, decreasing in volume with each repetition. Additional tones can be entered and mixed with the first, creating a harmony.

One function of the machine allows for the creation of an infinitely repeating loop. At a chosen time while singing into the digital delay, the infinite loop function can be engaged creating a vocal drone loop. Any kind of sound which can be generated with the voice can be entered into the machine: vocal beats, tones, words and word fragments can all be entered. A simple set of voice sounds can become an underlying beat structure through the use of this device.

A new vocal fragment can be input into the structure when desired. The speed of repetition can be altered with a direct correlation to the pitches of the given samples. If the speed of repetition is increased the pitch will go up and conversely if the speed is slowed
down the pitch will be lowered.
The Use Of The Digital Delay For Instrumentation

The digital delay is not limited to altering vocal sounds, it can treat any sound entered into it. Fragments from pre-recorded music, tapes, and/or records can all be used as source material. Again the digital delay that I employed forms a one second loop out of the sampled material. Fragments of sound shorter than one second can be interjected into these loops, creating a seamless polyrhythmic sound module.

Many of these loops can be layered, forming a complex linear architectural rhythmic structure.

Since the sound sources which enter into this structure are often pre-established (taken from the realm of pre-recorded music or sound), these structures can be considered a collection of micro-musical "Readymades". Much of the underlying structure of the score to my work called The Water Catalogue was made in this manner.
Looking at time is difficult. One cannot be removed from it to study it from the outside. We know that in our perception, time takes different forms. Experience tells us that time expands and contracts, though we measure it objectively by a shared standard. We say that time 'flies' when we experience it from a pleasurable perspective and that it 'drags' when we are waiting or experiencing some form of difficulty. It is interesting that both of these figures of speech are movement based. The latter deals with friction or gravity while the former suggests the inversion of this concept—weightlessness.

Just as our perception of time passing is related to our psychological state, the notion of an objective time measurement exists relative to motion.

What was still more astonishing was the discovery that lapse of time depends on motion; that is to say two perfectly accurate clocks, one of which is moving very fast relatively to the other, will not continue to show the same time if they come together after the journey.¹

Our indeterminate life-spans make time an entity with physical ramifications. We are aware that we are constantly aging as time is passing. We cannot grasp time and make it stop before us. Thus the ephemeral nature of time passing has been a focus for the
inquisitive throughout the ages.

Since the advent of photography, film and video we have the ability to look at processes in time as never before. Through slow motion and high speed photography we can observe behaviors that are lost to the naked eye and begin to see inside the time of events. The simplest of mundane gestures takes on the aura of a dance as it begins to reveal the inner workings of its motion. There is an inherent beauty to how mechanisms function that is often ignored in our daily life.

One of the important investigators of motion was Edweard Muybridge. In 1872, Muybridge went about studying the movement of horses' legs, using innovative photographic gear which he adapted and/or developed. This particular motion study was the catalyst which led him through an exhaustive study of the movements of animals, including an interesting set of photographic studies of people performing various tasks. Using a number of cameras and triggering devices, Muybridge was able to break down movements into sequential images. His title for this vast photographic series is Animal Locomotion.

His numerous studies of motion are fascinating. Though they were done under the guise of scientific experiment, Muybridge developed a specific aesthetic
which in its peculiarity, displays a curious beauty.

Muybridge is often cited as being the father of the motion picture.

The Scientific American in its issue of 19 October 1878 had made a suggestion which anticipated the motion picture. On its first page it published six drawings of Abe Edgington walking and twelve of him trotting, all made from Muybridge's photographs. If the readers cut out the drawings and mounted them in a zoetrope, said the article, the horse would apparently walk and gallop when the drum was revolved. (The Zoetrope, invented in 1833, was a popular scientific toy. Looking rather like a lamp shade with vertical sides, it consisted of a revolving drum with a strip of sequence pictures mounted on the inside. Each picture faced a slot cut in the opposite side of the drum and when it revolved the pictures were seen briefly one after the other, giving the illusion of movement). 2

This line of inquiry into motion over time has been explored by a number of scientists. Dr. Harold E. Edgerton's studies of stroboscopic photography, from the 1930's to the present, reveal incredible qualities which never before were available to the naked eye. His photographs and films have an undeniably arresting aesthetic quality which, like Muybridge's, blurs the distinction between scientist and artist.

One thought to be addressed in the poetic study of motion over time is the nature of function. In speaking with Dr. Edgerton, I asked him if he had aesthetic criteria that made his photographic works successful. He replied that generally if the photograph was successful
in capturing the information necessary to complete the experiment, it also held a fascination in the aesthetic realm.³
Footnotes


Bibliography


Repetition In Relation To Time

There is no normal time in everyday life. Our perception of time keeps us in a state of flux. Travel, media, and psychological effects create a shifting perspective system through which we observe time's passing.

Though we never leave 'real time', we can experience it differently by focusing on illusions or events which intentionally manipulate our awareness of its passing. Works in film, video, theater and dance manipulate time in that they present condensed (edited) information in a particular sequence. Sometimes information is presented which is greatly extended in time.

The use of repetition has a particular effect on our sense of time passing. In music, film, video and dance works, repetition forms an almost static object in time which after a certain number of cycles, dissolves our ability to estimate duration. By focusing on repetitious 'time objects', one becomes one with the relatively static motion. Time is thus experienced in a new way.

Some viewers, being somewhat unaccustomed to this kind of repetition, experience various psychological states. A viewer may experience boredom for a time and then transcend that boredom by focusing on the given in a more extended manner. Relationships are observed which
would not be apparent on a single viewing. At some point during the repetitions, the viewer's thoughts may become focused on him/herself. The repetition may throw the viewer out of the film due to a first level saturation effect, or the viewer may be accustomed to the viewing of repetitious work, and go into a trance-like state. The repetitious sound and/or image combination functions as a trigger for associations and reflections on the part of the viewer. Thus the viewer is provided with a mental space which shifts between a set of aesthetic intentions presented in the images by the artist, and the personal associations which the work provokes.

Certain tribal rituals involving repetitious rhythmic structures may stimulate a similar state of consciousness.
A drone is a continuous tone which is held for an extended duration. The drone is an important musical component that manipulates time. Like repetitious time structures, a drone may exhibit only small internal changes. We depend on clues in our environment for a sense of time. By removing these clues, we become submerged in the drone's own environmental qualities.

The drone has a long musical tradition both in Eastern music and in the organ point of Western music. I became interested in the drone as a reflection of our contemporary acoustic environment. As a child I rode in a dinghy with a small motor. As I traveled across the water I sang harmony to the tone of the motor. I also sang with the tones generated by a lawn mower. Drones permeate our daily acoustic environment; the sixty cycle hum of a fluorescent light, the sound of a car, plane or train as it moves at a constant rate, and the whir of machines at work all produce drones.
The Manipulation of Qualities of Light to Reflect Emotional States

Various qualities of light stimulate different emotional states in the viewer. Specific memories and associations are triggered by specific light conditions. Artists can record images in particular light environments to reflect psychological states. By presenting chosen music or sound with these images a psychological state can be reinforced. Music can also function as an ironic or disruptive device which plays against the mood generated through lighting.

Throughout history artists have explored qualities of light. The chiaroscuro lighting in a painting by Vermeer creates one such atmosphere. Claud Monet explored light conditions with an almost obsessive drive to capture subtle shifts in mood in relation to light and color. The film maker Andrei Tarkovski uses qualities of light with a mystical precision.

Qualities of light are inextricably connected to our understanding of time. By presenting the light qualities of certain times of day or night the artist lends further emotive power to a given image.

In section II of this paper I will describe a selected set of my video works. I will also examine how I applied the principles presented in Part I, to these works.
Section II

SELECTED VIDEO WORKS
S.he

Over a number of months, a series of poetic observations were recorded in notebooks for the video work S.He. In the video, the language component takes the form of a number of short descriptions. Almost all begin with "S.he is...". These descriptions are sometimes contradictory, sometimes self referential in a mocking way. At other times the words refer to an elaborate set of external ideas and images.

The lines are spoken in a quiet voice almost liturgical in nature. They are delivered within a musical framework which moves through a set of permutations of tonal variations, comprised of voice loops (fragments collaged and treated), a drone, a tonal series which relates to the pitches in the voice loops, and a repetitive drum machine rhythm. The tonal variations run through their permutations based on the varying lengths of the loops and the sequence of the tonal series. One such loop takes longer to go through its cycle than another, consequently each cycle brings to light a slightly different combination of sounds when presented together.

The images that comprise S.he were shot in Super-8 film and transferred to 3/4" video. The images were later transferred to 1" video.
The majority of the images used in S.he were shot from a train window on a trip from Boston to New York City. These images move from left to right across the screen focusing on architecture and landscape. Because of the combined motion of the train with the differing motion of the camera, the elements which make up the frame appear to move at different rates and through different trajectories. When a landscape is viewed at a 90 degree angle from the direction in which one is traveling, objects (visual phenomena) at different distances appear to be moving at different velocities. That which is closer to the viewer appears to be moving faster than situations at a distance. Focusing on this set of relations draws attention to the relative nature of observation in terms of the viewers vantage point.

The slow motion manipulation of both the Super-8 image during the transfer process and the 1" video image after transfer, further highlights this perceptual phenomenon.

The language in S.he presents a set of thoughts which take form through a constellation of poetic relations. Often the image to language relationships are created at a distance in time. An image will be presented and the language which qualifies that image will be presented at another time in the tape. Thus only after viewing the entire work do certain relationships become apparent.
There is a metaphorically pivoting quality to these relations, where a word addresses one field of thoughts in one image context and is further qualified through subsequent abstractions and juxtapositions in other contexts.

The text from S.he follows.
S.He

S.he is the energy that remains constant
S.he is made of he and she
S.he is a perfect window
S.he is a seaman singing songs about the sea
S.he is a resemblance
S.he is a moving housing for a train of thought
S.he is the train as a moving housing
S.he is the train as a thought
S.he is the train as light
S.he arrives at the proper wording
S.he is a shifting perspective
S.he is this action of escaping - this outlet / passageway
S.he is a release giving vent to emotion
S.he is the means or opportunity to do this
S.he is this small hole or opening
S.he is a triangular window in an automobile for ventilation
S.he is going through the motions
S.he is redundant
S.he is plumbing
S.he is a container that is aware of itself
S.he is a barrier
S.he is a protective device
S.he is used as a means of confinement
S.he is fencing
S.he is the perfect foil
S.he is cyclical
S.he is the water cycle
S.he is a film of water
S.he is a river of light
S.he is a bridge in thought
S.he is a sanctuary
S.he is still motion
S.he is vapor
S.he is luminous
S.he is a reflection of emotion
S.he is rust
S.he is a translation
S.he is the language of light
S.he is erosion on the face of a house
S.he is not herself today
S.he is a receptacle
S.he is a catalogue of connections
S.he is a crystalline pulse
S.he is a building in thought
S.he is a step toward fear
S.he is in the drink
S.he is that which slips away before it can be grasped
S.he is a shifting construction
S.he is the embodiment of surveillance
S.he is the evidence
S.he is the key witness and the prime suspect
S.he is the house and the inhabitant
S.he has time in hand
S.he is collapsed time
S.he folds
S.he is empty and full
S.he is knowingly confused
S.he is a lover with incredible endurance
S.he is a perfect moving beauty
S.he is indefinite
S.he is floating
S.he climaxes and falls asleep
S.he is under constant repair
S.he rests in a resonant nest
S.he pivots at the angle of pain articulation
S.he is this house in a word
S.he finds release in song
S.he becomes this blank building
S.he is an accumulation
S.he believes in doubt
S.he finds a home in paradox
S.he is a film of water in relation to evaporation
S.he makes a better door than window
S.he is a radiator
She is a moving destination
She is traveling
She is one that can be held
She is a philosophy that changes constantly and need not be notated
She is the architecture of thought
She is a liquid passageway / an electric current
She is a stream of electrons
She is indivisible
She is on / off
She is a circle
She spills a drink occasionally
She is afraid of pain
She is a watch
She never climaxes
She is a borderline sense of humor
She frustrates expectation
She is intuition
She is a labyrinth
She is a game
She is a liar
She is just listening
She makes you think about where you might be instead
She reads about a location where she is not
She is a vehicle
She is clarity in oscillation
She is watching the falling
She is an interior resonance
She is the sound of flight
She is the fallen light
She is the logic in doubt
She is the logic in doubt
She is the moment of perfect light
She is the perfection of decay
She is a transmission
She is a driver
She is a filter
She is the pressure of time
She is in a state of disrepair
She is sounding out situations
She is flight of stairs toward darkness
She is an architectural melodrama
She is unsure
She watches the aging process
She is revolving both open and closed
She is the sex of a building
She is a fascination with slippage
She is thought in circles
She is up in the air
She is a drink on the house
She is a song with the pitch of the roof
She is warmth
She is vernacular
She is a womb / a pivoting system
She is a double take / a second glance
She is time out
She bet with the house behind her
She is a roomer
She dwells in the house of innuendo
She is a rumor
She is built
She is a wry smile
She dwells in self supporting architecture
She is a tautology
She is a navigation system
She calls the shots
She knows the shots are empty
She watches the blue through a window
She knows there is nothing to hold onto
She is drifting
She is alone
She is one
She is the energy that remains constant
The Water Catalogue

The Water Catalogue is a video work of mine which uses images of water in various contexts to explore a series of different metaphors. The Water Catalogue combines original songs, texts, a musical soundtrack and Super-8 images transferred to 3/4" video then to 1", defining a poetic network which passes through a set of emotional states.

The work uses the catalogue form, skipping from one modular section to another in a somewhat random fashion. This form of nonsequitur editing is carried by the music which utilizes sound elements to function as segueways from one image section to another. This kind of editing forces the viewer to reestablish continuously his/her relation to the given information. The images function as associational triggers, giving the viewer the opportunity to explore their own reflections. The viewer is forced to come to an understanding about how each modular segment functions in relation to the entire work as it unfolds. The accumulated memory of these desperate elements form a poetic network of pluralistic meaning.

Though the structure of The Water Catalogue is essentially non-narrative it relies on the use of tension and release to bring the viewer through its twenty-seven minutes, culminating in a climactic final section.
comprised of a very rapid schedule of edits.

Much of the music I composed for the work relies on the use of layers of digital one second loops. A continuous low drone underlies most of the work which when removed allows silence to be felt in a physical way. Each of the sections plays off of the drone which functions as a tonal center. The work is comprised of repetitious rhythmic structures which are layered and overlap. Sections of music in The Water Catalogue function as abstractions of popular dance and 'rap' music.

The final section of The Water Catalogue is among other things a parody of the popular "MTV" (Music-Television) format.

A "Prophet" synthesizer which allows for individual programming of 'voice' parameters was used throughout the work. Thus specific sound characteristics were generated exploring aspects of attack, decay, envelope shape, pitch, and timbre. Sound was further "treated" in a 16 track recording studio where elements of psychoacoustic space were manipulated.

The final stereo mix-down was digitally recorded and bumped directly to 1" video. The digital recording allowed for perfect sound reproduction without the loss of a generation due to re-recording.
on tape.

Much of the video in The Water Catalogue is played back at a slow speed and re-recorded. This manipulation of video develops an incremental movement through the given material. One premise the work explores is the following; by altering the speed of an architecturally repetitive image structure, the images can be placed in sync with a repetitious synthetic rhythmic audio structure. A series of trial and error speed alterations of the 1" video image were made in relation to the pre-recorded sound. Time code windows were placed on the image, giving the image a specific place in time in relation to other images on the same tape.

A special software package was developed by Russ Sassnett, a graduate student and research associate at the MIT Film/Video department. He created a system which could duplicate the trial and error image to sound relations previously generated. This was facilitated by feeding the computer the coordinates of the "in" and "out" points of both the real time placement of where the images were to be in the finished tape, as well as the the time code coordinates of the slowed down material. The computer then determined the appropriate tape speed for the 1" video machine to travel in order to replicate the
trial and error material.

This program helped to facilitate the choreographing of image to sound, creating dancelike motions in common objects and architectures, as well as translating the mundane gestures of people into dance oriented movements.

The following are transcripts of the language used in the work.
The Wake

The wake is a time line
Moving out to the edges where sand is made.
The water clock is timeless but not silent.
Erosion whispers on the depth of time.
The swimmer goes diving in memory.
Though certain details have been washed away
Other thoughts rest in curious enclosures
Temporarily suspended above the current.
The pool of thought is clear on the surface.
At its greatest depths light barely passes.
A water wheel is turning,
Turning for a lifetime.

Make Light Of Water

Make light of water.
Make light of water.
A confused wave made its way to the TV.
It was thinking back on the old days,
Reflecting on its past.
It left a residue of salt on the circuits.
Corroded the wires,
Disrupted the current.
The TV was solid state,
Simulated blue - black and white
On the top of the set was a blue box
Above the blue box light
On the circular box in tiny letters it said
When it rains it pours

The Glass Bottom Boat Crew

A crystal glass filled to the brim
Was flung from a glass bottom boat
I was drifting nearby on a red air mattress
Keeping myself afloat
The crystal skipped like a stone
And on the water table left little rings
And the tone that it made when it tapped the surface
Made the crew of the glass bottom sing
I dove down under the water
And listened to the crystal clear sound
Somber taps were leaking through
When the waves began to pound
I held my breath and fathomed this
From Deep down below
Beneath the surface of the sound
Being tossed to and fro
The waves kept perfect time
As they broke on the shore
The glass bottom boat crew moved to the beat
As they watched me through the floor
Yet the crew of the glass bottom boat
Couldn't sing to save their life
So they chanted these words with determination
To relieve their life long strife
Can you float me a loan
Loan me a float
Fly like a loon
Loan me a boat
Can you sing like a loon
A blue blue tune
Sing with the motor

The Fireman

A fireman went on vacation to let off some steam
The fireman was once a water boy
To be a fireman was his dream
The fireman feels the force of the water
When he holds the hose and sprays
He spends his time praying for fires
Waiting for days and days
The fireman is now water skiing
Skiing at his leisure
The fireman takes a tumbling spill
As part of his pleasure
The higher the knots the harder you fall
It's a rug of knots, not soft at all
The skier leans into the liquid
Making temporary walls of white
Water frozen in this position
Create temporary halls of light
The angel of the hydrofoil
Hovers over the lake
The fireman watches with a drink on the rocks
And wonders if she is a fake
Then the fireman with fire in his eyes
Slowly began to speak
Knowing full well of the fires down below
Made his knees go somewhat weak
He said, I saw a man walking on the water
I saw a man moving on the ice
I was thinking of a walk on the water
I have thought of this once or twice
There's been a lot of talk about the water walk
And water wings as well
When the well runs dry of things to say
They're be another story to tell
The first man was a carpenter, moving on the water
The second man was a fisherman moving on the ice
His ice fishing house is a holy hovel
Inside, its a snug warm place
A fisherman can find heaven in winter
Far from the human race
The Thesis Video - "Telling Motions"

Telling motions is comprised of three main sections. The first section of the tape presents a poetic text, a set of video images (transferred directly from super-8 film to 1" video) and an original score. The images that are included relate directly to word play in the text. The second section of the tape presents an image/sound alphabet translation system. First a letter is presented and then a short image and sound fragment 1/3 second in duration is displayed as the coded substitution for this letter. All of the letters in the alphabet are presented, establishing an image/sound alphabetical key. Punctuation marks are also presented and given image-sound substitutions. The code is presented in the format of a song. This section of the tape is called 'Key-Code'.

The images that form this code as well as the music fragments of which it is comprised are culled from the first part of the tape. These fragments function as associational triggers, carrying meanings established in the first section of the tape in abbreviated form.

The third section of the tape presents specific lines from the text as presented in part one of the tape, along with a translation of this text utilizing the image/sound code as presented in the 'Key-Code' section.
of the tape (part 2). Thus a nested network is established.

The notion of the creation of a personal poetic pictographic language system is at the heart of this project. A study of alphabets and related systems of communication was undertaken before a decision about the inclusion of particular images was made. I was interested in the exploration of the collision of a "Readymade" system, highly objective in nature (the alphabet), with a subjective poetic network of observations in the realm of language, image and sound relations.

A special edit list compiler was created by Russ Sasnett to help facilitate the editing of the modular 'Key-Code' section of the tape and the third 'Translation' section. An IBM personal computer was used as a controller for the 1" video decks. Particular video and sound segments were chosen and entered into the computer. In this case, each of these segments was interfaced with the computer keyboard. As designated keys were struck, an edit list was created and subsequently the edits were performed by the computer. In terms of Telling Motions, this system was a perfect creative - poetic tool.

The original conception of Telling Motions dealt with the placing of the code presented in the 'Key-Code'
section of the tape on a video-disc. By interfacing the video-disc with a personal computer, very quick edits could be performed. A viewer could enter any typed information that he/she wanted to and then see the sound/image translation of this information. It seemed more interesting to develop a linear video tape which would create a particular context, generating meanings that the code would carry outside of its alphabetical function.

The *Telling Motions* tape synthesizes the various relations of language, image and sound that have been previously addressed in this paper.

The music moves through continuous slow changing tonal swells along with a repetitious vocal drone loop. The environmental qualities of the music present a floating atmosphere where the experience of time is addressed.

The work presents a poetic structure of language play, alliteration and phonetic investigation which relates directly to the images in the tape, developing a network of poetic correspondences. The intonation of the voice lends a particular feeling to the mood of the music.

The images were preconceived. Specific natural light conditions were sought to reflect particular moods. *Telling Motions* utilizes modular editing strategies
and nonsequitur juxtapositions which 'make sense' in terms of the overall work. The modular qualities of the alphabet functioned as a model both in the choice of images and in the method of shooting those images.

The following is a transcript of the language used in part one of *Telling Motions*. 
Telling Motions

Revolving drums
Revolving drones
Carriers,
Evaporation memories
Mapping the light trappings of a loss of resolution
I resolve to revolve in the realm of telling motions
For instance the incidents of coincidence at a distance
With lilly light lies letting levels slide
A floating vessel side slipping against the tide
Back and forth
Teeter totters
Seesaws
Back and forth
Drifting and shifting on a rotating schedule of skids
The gist is mist or moist with the tumbling twist
Of telling motions
The puzzle of puzzles is presented
Through sets of swollen notions
That swivel off the light machine
Calculating error as an entrance
The shadow of a word
From the glass wings of a housing
Is cast in darkness
Setting in motion a sonic vision
Through systems both nervous and circulatory
With a balance beam
The diver
Bit by bit
Bit by bit
Bit by bit
Room reconstruction
A turn of events with circular breathing
Adds an air of tumbling willy nilly
From signs to sighs
Things go the way of pressure
The path of least resistance
Mistaken identities and mixed metaphores
Are mumbo-jumbo at the core of a boring book
With splintered words and enterings of dust
A scatter brained scheme to simply dodge and weave
While boxed boxing terms
Tell telling motions to collide and generate sparks
Floaters and bobbers were born building histories
Of fabrication on the fly
In the light of sound substitutions
The grafting of the glancing shivers and shunts
Casting reflections which are gathered and gone over
A true wheel within a wheel pivots, switches back
Turns in on itself
A spine of light binds and blinds
As telling motions turn
Summary

It is my intent as an artist to present works which are resonant in nature. Through the synthesis of historical data and the exploration of intuitive processes, the artist can create a personal world. The poetic network of meanings that this world presents provides the viewer with an alternate perspective through which to observe the world at large. The artist gives the viewer the opportunity to re-see aspects of reality that are often lost in the velocity of daily life.