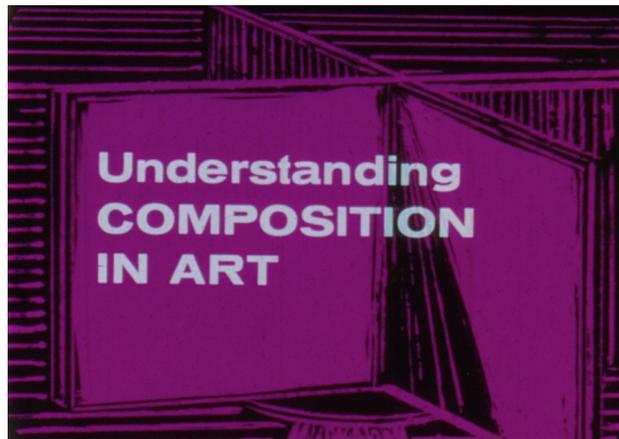


# CLASS PICTURES



PRESENTED BY  
DUSTIN GAVIN, LEANA  
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ALEX SCHULTZ, AND  
ANDREW VIELKIND

FILM & MEDIA STUDIES 604:  
"THE FILM ARCHIVE"  
SPRING 2016



N<sup>o</sup> 13  
SEASON 2

*An Evening of  
16mm Films  
Presented by  
Student Archivists*

PRESENTED WITH SUPPORT  
FROM PAUL L. JOSKOW  
'70 M. PHIL., '72 PH.D.





## UNDERSTANDING COMPOSITION IN ART

(Dir. Sean O'Brien, 1971, 16mm, 16 min.)

UNDERSTANDING COMPOSITION IN ART was produced by Academy Films, an independent Los Angeles-based company that created educational films for high school classrooms. This short documentary explains the importance of formalist elements such as positive/negative space, texture, color balance, and rhythm in painting and sculpture. The film characterizes these various compositional strategies as being universal, but foremost stresses their manifestation in twentieth century art.



Artist June Harwood (1933-2015) served as the primary creative consultant for the film. She earned notoriety for being one of the principle members of the “Hard-edge” movement, a term used to describe a tendency toward geometric abstraction shared among artists on the West Coast beginning in the 1950s. Artists such as Lorser Feitelson, John McLaughlin, and Karl Benjamin, dispensed with the gestural abstraction of luminaries like Jackson Pollock and instead devoted their efforts to crafting dynamic tensions between adjacent zones of color. They applied paint uniformly in order to render crisp, clean edges. While the documentary draws visual aids from a wider historical corpus, it ultimately stresses that the efficacy of these techniques is applicable to a wider spectrum of artworks.



The preoccupations of the “Hard-edge” movement help shape the film’s pedagogical aims. Harwood dedicated much of her life to education—first as a high school teacher in Los Angeles from 1958 until 1970 and then later as a professor in the Art department at Los Angeles Valley College. Much of her teaching philosophy was rooted in the belief that art, like the natural world, is fundamentally constituted of geometrical forms and patterns.

*Notes by Andrew Vielkind, PhD candidate in Film and Media Studies and History of Art '18*

## BEHIND THE GUNS

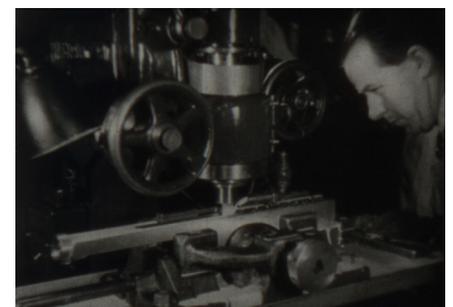
(Dir. Cecil Musk and Montgomery Tully, 1940, digital, 20 min.)

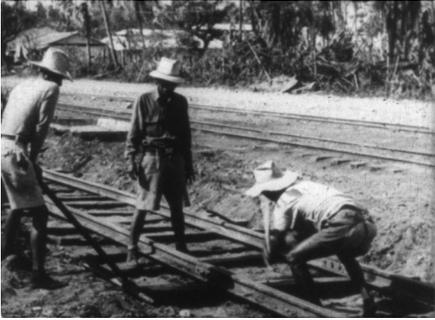
A government sponsored short documentary, BEHIND THE GUNS (1941) is a classic example of WWII British propaganda film commissioned by the Ministry of Information (MOI). The film celebrates the workers of the home front involved in the production of weaponry and at the same time showcases British military capacity including war planes and giant warships. The documentary follows typical stylistic pattern for MOI documentaries and newsreels: it is comprised of black and white chronicles of the war zone and the home front layered on top with a “voice of God” narration and non-diegetic orchestra music producing dramatic effect.

The development of sound in film and new more sophisticated movie cameras in the interwar period opened new opportunities for those seeking to influence people’s hearts and minds thus governments of major participating countries made heavy use of cinema during WWII. From the first days of war Britain recognized film medium as an effective propaganda tool and prioritized it. British Ministry of Information (MOI), a government body formed on September 4, 1939, just one day after Britain’s declaration of war, with the general task of controlling news and information flow in the war years, gave propaganda films and newsreels first priority in the allocation of film stock. The production was outsourced to a number of studios (but then always censored by MOI itself). Merton Park Studios in South Wimbledon, London, was one of them. It opened in 1930 and, unlike many other studios, remained open during WWII producing films for MOI including the one we are watching tonight.

*Note: Due to the fact that the print of this film is extremely shrunken, a digital transfer of the film will be screened tonight.*

*Notes by Anastasia Kostina, PhD candidate in Film and Media Studies and Slavic Languages and Literatures '20*





# MANILA LIVES AGAIN!

(S.W.P.A. Newsreel, 1945, 16mm, 9 min.)

MANILA LIVES AGAIN! is an American propaganda film produced by the South West Pacific Area (S.W.P.A) Newsreel, an internal military newsreel that both chronicled and uplifted the United States military efforts in the Southwest Pacific.

According to the July-December 1944 issue of *Broadcasting Magazine*, an S.W.P.A. newsreel was shown twice a month in all GI theatres. These films were coupled with radio broadcasts and correspondence courses. MANILA LIVES AGAIN! stands as a snapshot of the sort of films the U.S. military used to propagate internal support and understanding of the mission and work of American GI forces in the South West Pacific Area.

The film, created between April and August of 1945, is a 16mm black and white print. Because of its audience, it features disturbing clips of death and destruction, but these clips are also nestled within messaging that highlights the many beauties of Manila. Its theme is centered around American engineering achievements and the restoration and liberation of the capital city of the Philippines.

Notable figures including General Douglas MacArthur and President Franklin D. Roosevelt are featured in the film. MANILA LIVES AGAIN! stands as a cultural artifact and allows a modern audience a peek into the media disseminated to military audiences during World War II.

*Notes by Dustin Gavin, M.A. Religion & Visual Arts Candidate, Institute of Sacred Music and Yale Divinity School '17*

# WORKERS ON THE LAND

(Dir. Ernest Reid, 1946, 16mm, 18 min.)

Formed during peacetime as a government-funded film production agency, the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) was forced to turn its creative endeavors to the production of nationalistic propaganda with the outbreak of war in September 1939. Guided under legendary documentary filmmaker John Grierson, the first to coin the term “documentary,” the NFB gained a reputation during WWII for screening films throughout the nation that combined Allied support with artistic experimentation. However, the postwar years proved to be a crucial juncture for the NFB as it began to contemplate how it could retain funding and remain an important aspect of Canadian nationalism during peacetime.

It is out of this period that WORKERS ON THE LAND was created. The film follows a small, rural Canadian family as they problem solve how to keep a hardworking, recently married farmhand employed on their land during the winter months. The film gives pragmatic information that would have been highly valuable to the rural farmers who would have seen this film in its original context on the NFB's rural film circuit. But even more so, the film reveals the emergent artistic endeavors of the NFB during this time of great change. WORKERS ON THE LAND exemplifies the NFB's creative achievements in stop-motion animation done by Jean-Paul Ladouceur as well as its pioneering use of 16mm Kodachrome film, which was both economical and allowed for more travel throughout the nation due to its light weight.

Lastly, the film reveals the ways in which documentary filmmaking provided a means of promoting both an individualistic work ethic in the face of the “Red Scare” and a new sense of Canadian identity as it emerged as an important global power in the aftermath of WWII.

*Notes by Alex Schultz, American Studies major, Yale College '17*





## SOLE MANI (Dir. Horst Schier, 1989, 16mm, 4 min.)

Catalogs of Mario Mariotti's career abound with multiple media and superlative epithets. The beloved Italian conceptual artist (1938-1997) was by all accounts a brilliant wit, incorrigible charmer, prophet, painter, performer, sculptor, photographer, graphic designer, and organizer of collective artistic events in Florence, where he spent most of his life. Throughout the 1970s, his playful illustrations graced the covers of *Il Castoro Cinema*, a journal devoted to auteur filmmakers from Fellini to Disney; commissioned in 1980 to decorate the blank façade of Santo Spirito, Mariotti invited local artists to create a slideshow of images alongside him to project onto the dilapidated Florentine church. The projection lit up the square and ran for several weeks; it is for this transformative work of public art that Mariotti is best remembered in his native country.



Throughout the rest of the world, Mario Mariotti is known for his hands. Painted, contorted, and staged to look like a menagerie of fantastical creatures, they have “reproduced like rabbits” and crept into public libraries and classrooms from Paris, France to Fairfield, Connecticut. As Mariotti writes in *Hanimations*, the second in a long series of punnily titled children's books, “they have traveled halfway around the world. Some, the most vain among them, have sneaked their way onto television. Others, the boldest among them, have run off my hand to advertise Japanese watches and other products.”



Boldest of the lot are the hanimations in SOLE MANI, dressed to impress with instruments in hand (so to speak), gracefully adapted to the medium of 16mm film. Their musical performance, opening with bombast and ending in tragedy, offers a glimpse into the strange workings of an ambidextrous artistic mind.

*Notes by Leana Hirschfeld-Kroen, PhD candidate in Film and Media Studies and Comparative Literature '20*

## WHERE WERE YOU? (Dir. Victor D. Solow, 1960, 16mm, 27 min.)

Released just months before the 1960 presidential election, the Ford Motor Company-sponsored short WHERE WERE YOU? explains the electoral process and implores viewers to become involved in politics. Watching WHERE WERE YOU? allows us to glimpse not only a unique moment in the country's political past, but also a pivotal moment in the history of American media.

It may seem strange that Ford would finance an educational film about elections. At the time this film was made, though, it was common for corporations to underwrite “public service” movies, which were distributed in 16mm for use in community spaces like schools, factories, churches, and social clubs.

In this way, companies like Ford were able both to position themselves as civic-minded institutions and to promote their products in places outside the reach of traditional advertising. Ford adopted this technique quite early, producing their first films in 1913. WHERE WERE YOU? was part of a campaign organized by Ford's “Civic and Government Affairs Office,” which organized a number of election-related programs in 1960, including the circulation of letters from both candidates to Ford employees and publication of a “Voter's Guide” in the company newspaper.

Released at a moment of technological transition, WHERE WERE YOU? was shown both on 16mm film in traditional community settings, and on television, leading production company MPO Television Films to boast that 11 million Americans saw the film between August and November in 1960, a huge audience for an industrial picture.

While we often think of the inexorable relationship between corporations, media, and politics as a contemporary phenomenon, WHERE WERE YOU? forces us to consider the interplay of these entities in an era before the internet, 24-hour news cycles, and Citizens United. Documenting an important past moment, WHERE WERE YOU? gives us a unique look at the history of corporate mass media and politics in the United States.

*Notes by Carolyn Jacobs, PhD candidate in Film and Media Studies and American Studies '21*

