

Tony Sinden: early works

Preview: 02 July 2010, 6-8pm

Exhibition: 03 July – 07 August 2010

"Tony Sinden was perhaps the individual artist who did most in the UK to establish the moving image as an expected feature in the gallery during 80s (the era before the YBA's 'discovered' video)" David Curtis¹.

Tony Sinden is increasingly considered a prominent figure within the development of British moving image – producing a body of innovative work throughout his career until his premature death in 2009. Sinden's practice spanned four decades of substantial production, experiment and exhibition. He worked across a range of mediums: single screen 16mm, expanded 16mm, video, installation, slide and site related practices. His works reflect a sculptural use of video and questions of media, materials, time and space.

Picture This presents the exhibition **Tony Sinden: early works** as a starting point from which to appraise the practice of an artist who was key to developments in both artists' film, expanded cinema² and – critically – site specific and large scale multimedia installations. The exhibition focuses on works from the 1970s which use moving image as a found object rather than a narrative device.

The artist was based in the South West. Picture This has a very special relationship with Tony Sinden, commissioning him to produce new works (*Ancestral Voices* 1993 and *Dichotomy* 2000) and working with him on his projects for almost fifteen years.

Tony Sinden: early works includes single screen works produced by Tony Sinden in the 1970s as well as two reconstructions of key installation and performative works.

Behold, Vertical Devices 1974 (re-constructed, 2002)

This seminal video installation consists of a line of nine small black and white video monitors placed side by side on a sloping 9' builders' plank. The monitors are turned on their sides, changing the normal framing/viewing position. A single video tape feeds the installation with a continuous panning shot of a lone figure running in a landscape. The vertical hold of each monitor is preset to allow the video image to drift, and create its own 'unsynchronised' movement.

Video Vacuum 1974-1975 (with David Cunningham and Rob Gawthrop)

"My memory of Video Vacuum is rather vague. It consisted of reel-reel video recorders, camera and microphone, chair and stools. There was a 'script' but it was all essentially improvised. There were a number of impromptu pieces within Video Vacuum one of which concerned balancing a stool by one leg on the palm of a hand, hand-held video recording (diagonal) then played back with (corner of) monitor balanced on palm of hand trying to keep the image of the stool vertical..."
Rob Gawthrop

¹ British Artists Film and Video Study Collection, Central St Martins, London. Author of *A History of Artists' Film and Video in Britain 1897-2003*, BFI Publishing, October 2005

² Coined in the mid-1960s by Stan VanDerBeek, but with its origins in the experiments of early twentieth century avant-garde filmmaking, media-technologies and performance art, the term Expanded Cinema identifies a film and video practice which activates the live context of watching, offering an experience that is performative and non-determined. Expanded Cinema works often open up questions surrounding the spectator's construction of time/space relations. In doing so it offers an alternative and challenging perspective on filmmaking, visual arts practices and the narratives of social space, everyday life and cultural communication.

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Press Release Tony Sinden: early works

Notes to editors

Press Contact Information

For further press information, interviews or images please contact Picture This on 0117 925 7010
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Exhibitions are open

Thursday – Saturday 12 - 5.30pm
Admission free

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About Tony Sinden

Tony Sinden is an artist who began independently to make short experimental films in 1966. Subsequently he went on to produce several films funded by The British Film Institute and Arts Council of England. His practice in the 1970s embraced a conceptual approach to film and video and wide-ranging debates of contemporary art. He was one of the first artists in the UK to exhibit film, video and installation in the gallery context. Including the ICA, Serpentine and Hayward Gallery; Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol and Third Eye Centre, Glasgow. Sinden was a founder member of Housewatch with artists Ian Bourn, Alison Winckle, George Saxon, Lulu Quinn, and Stan Steele making site related installations with performance, film and video."

His work has exhibited widely including installations at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Berkeley Museum and Pacific Film Archive; South Bank Centre, London; Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh, sites in Kyoto, Kobe and Art Tower Mito, Japan; Durham Cathedral; Canary Wharf Tower, London; Forest of Dean Sculpture Park; Lux Gallery; Whitechapel Art Gallery; and The Bloomberg Space, London.

About Picture This

Picture This develop artists' film and video through commissions and exhibitions. Our resources are used by artists and arts organisations, and our events, exhibitions and publications contextualise projects within current developments in contemporary art.

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