

Diagrammatic Gestures: Paul Sharits' film notes

An essay accompanying a film installation in response to materials in the Pacific Film Archive library's collection

space age trip

Merry Melody

start: flicking star flicker: hold 5 secs (+) — dark 5 secs — flash, 4 secs — flash — 3 secs etc to overlap then introduce red color wheel blank & come forward in overlapping pulse waves then:

is seen f19 yed

www	www	www	www	www
www	www	www	www	www

frame count diminish as image advances


skin color wheel flicker

4-color

many disappear

recycle

then ☆ starts turning — then credits —



one continuous motion, master Bow

then diff marked sections start pulsating in +/- & other subject matter (ie a tree is a tree-egg frying)

from continuous motion up until mid — then series of freezes each 5 secs long until cv of screwing

*articulated freezes

a mundane action too sterile for words becomes a frightening mysterious cartoon

— mind over matter —

— mind is matter —

— matter is mind —

— MATMINDER —

later: full drama of short articulated gestures collapse into next

The Pacific Film Archive library has in its holdings a collection of handwritten notes left behind by experimental filmmaker and expanded cinema pioneer Paul Sharits. A majority of these notes refer to a project titled "Lobotomy," which--not identifiable as a work in his official filmography--was perhaps abandoned, never realized, or somehow subsumed into other completed works in Sharits' oeuvre.

Without a formal research methodology to approach the materials, I chose to engage them on their own terms--as self-referential but expansive sketches, diagrams and descriptions of thematic elements and structural formulas, gesturing towards the translation of these elements to 16mm film. While this collection of notes does not fit neatly into the category of "visual score" (which Sharits utilized with works such as "Declarative Mode"), the visual organization of these notes offer a similar guide to conveying the film's structure. The notes in the collection detail complex patterns that transform images by way of color flicker, negative and positive image reversals, and the interstice of intervening shots: "a film of all (interrupted) images." Sharits' typically confrontational, intense, and often troubling imagery is reduced to factors on a graph-- "1" or "B2," and so on--leaving the imagination to piece together these elements through short descriptions such as "French kiss" and "Bite sandwich." Within these frame-by-frame graphs and charts, the film strip and its constitutive images and colors become physicalized elements in the mind's eye. We slowly piece together the progression of one image to the next via intercutting as a mental process of interruption. Similarly, duration and progressive shifts in image and color become an abstracted notion to be constituted in the mind of the reader-viewer.

At the Pacific Film Archive in 1977, while presenting new works on film, Sharits stated, "spoken language is a series of sounds that are distinguishable phonemes strung together in a linear matter, and I kind of see the phonemes related to film frames, discrete units serially arranged to create meaning." In a similar sense, this collection of notes operates through devising a map of its own language to convey ideas.

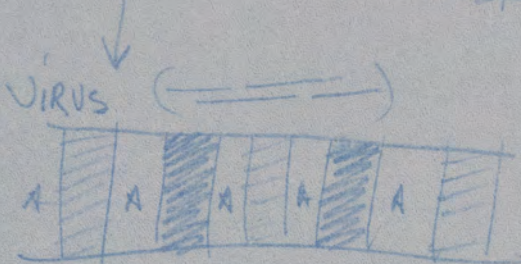
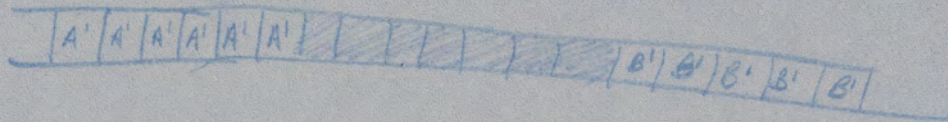
In response to the collection, I created a series of 16mm film loops: infinitely finite strips of film material that continuously run through the projector. I aim to convey the idea of note-taking and fragmented structural elements, combining in loose choreography towards an open-ended amalgamation of filmic ideas.

A FILM OF ALL (INTERUPTED) IMAGES (section of Lobotomy)

A¹ B¹ A² B² C¹ B³ C² D¹ B⁴ D² C³ D¹ A² D² A¹ E¹ F¹

E² G¹ H³ G² E³ G³ H² G⁴ H¹ I¹ H¹ I² H² J I³ H² I³ H²

SOLIDS
↓
FADES



↓

Image Intercutting/united by continuous color



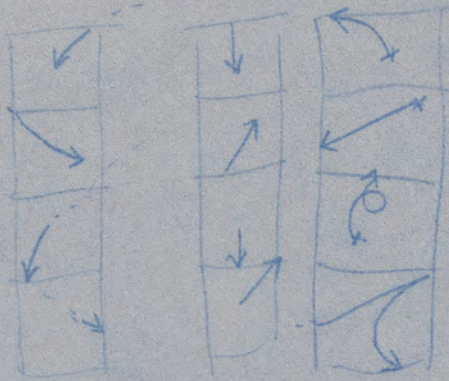
A¹-A³
B¹-B³

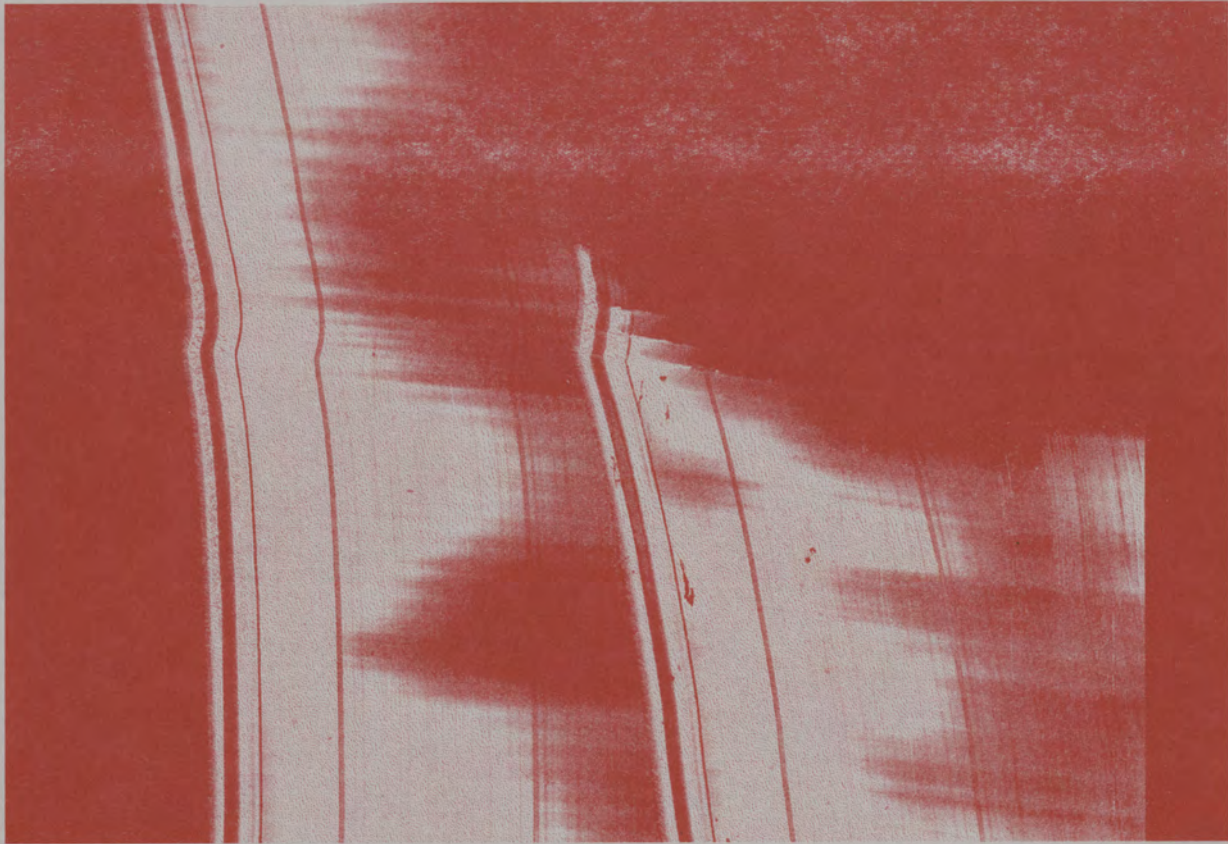
Nonahold
Sexual
Industrial

gestures
diagramatic

French kiss
Iron across collar
unzip pants
bite sandwich
open cupboard
cut butter
grab tit
open car hood
twist lemon
pour milk
eat soup
hammer nail
turn car key
flush toilet

lits
andle
drink
coffee
Zip coat
fellatio





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