

VIDEO
CACHE

VIDEO CACHE is a screening comprised of ten works from the original SAW Video Mediatheque, which were accessible online from 2003 until 2009. Curated by SAW Video Director, Penny McCann, the works are presented here in a renewed context—in full quality—to a small audience in Montréal, approximately one year after the Mediatheque's server crash.

VIDEO CACHE is also an online showcase, available at wayward.ca/videocache from November 24th 2010, until December 24th, 2010. Online, the videos are framed by numerous contextualizing documents in the form of academic articles and videos created during the development and launch of the Mediatheque, at SAW Video. wayward.ca is a project by Mél Hogan and Nikki Forrest, discussed in dialogue format at the end of this catalogue. wayward.ca is Mél Hogan's doctoral research creation play space and Nikki Forrest's experimental playground for situating art in relation to the web.

VIDEO CACHE is initiated by Mél Hogan (with the help of Nikki Forrest), curated by Penny McCann, and facilitated and sponsored by GIV.



WAYWARD

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-----Original Message-----

From: Michael Lechasseur [mailto:mlecha@artengine.ca]
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2009 12:30 PM
To: ross
Cc: ross; Penny McCann
Subject: Re: sawvideo.com down?

Hi Ross,

I should be able to cobble together most of the main site.

I don't have the videos for the mediatheque, but I'll co-ordinate with SAW Video to see what they have archived.

Is the PostgreSQL database gone, do you have backups of the databases you host, or is that on a different machine?

Thanks,

Michael

ross wrote:
> Michael Lechasseur wrote:
>> Hi Ross,
>> I'm having difficulties reaching sawvideo.com by HTTP and SSH this
>> morning.
>
> The server crashed and it looks like the hdd is unrecoverable.
> I am working on setting up a replacement machine.
>
> Do you have a recent backup of your website?
>
> -ross

⏪ Reply ⏩ Forward

Penny McCann

Pour le visionnement **VIDEO CACHE**, ma tâche à titre de Commissaire fut de sélectionner dix oeuvres parmi les 486 vidéos de la collection Médiathèque de SAW Video. Les dix oeuvres sélectionnées pour **VIDEO CACHE** représentent autant l'esprit que la diversité de la Médiathèque : des vidéos indépendantes et des vidéos canadiennes dont la plupart proviennent de la région d'Ottawa-Gatineau.

Un bref historique de la Médiathèque

Financée par le ministère du Patrimoine canadien et le Conseil des Arts du Canada, la Médiathèque fut créée par SAW Video en 2003. Le but recherché de ce projet était de promouvoir gratuitement l'échange entre artistes sur le web, et faciliter le visionnement en ligne d'oeuvres complètes en format vidéo. Pour obtenir les oeuvres, SAW Video lança un appel aux artistes de la région d'Ottawa-Gatineau ainsi qu'aux centres d'arts médiatiques canadiens. Un cachet de 200 \$ par vidéo fut versé aux artistes pour une diffusion d'une durée de trois ans sur le site de la Médiathèque. En tant qu'artiste participante à cette demande de la Médiathèque, je me souviens de la course—vu le court délai prescrit—pour soumettre des vidéos dans le cadre de ce projet afin d'être rémunéré. Les artistes pouvaient ainsi soumettre jusqu'à douze oeuvres, tandis que la limite pour les centres d'artistes était de dix oeuvres.

Quelques artistes non affiliés à SAW Video ont aussi soumis des oeuvres. Par ailleurs, les onze centres d'artistes suivants ont répondu à l'appel lancé par la Médiathèque : Independent Filmmakers' Cooperative d'Ottawa, Daimon (Gatineau), Vidéographe (Montréal), Vidéo Femmes (Québec), Spirafilm (Québec), Charles Street Video (Toronto), Quickdraw Animation Society (Calgary), Cineworks (Vancouver), Video Out (Vancouver), Ed Video (Guelph) et Groupe Intervention Video (Montréal). L'ensemble de cette contribution a permis d'atteindre l'objectif de SAW Video et de constituer, en fin de compte, une impressionnante collection de 486 films dans la base de données de SAW Video.^[1]

Le choix des dix oeuvres

La Médiathèque offre une grande sélection de vidéos d'art indépendantes—si grande qu'il ne fut pas facile de restreindre le choix à dix vidéos représentatives. On se rappellera que plusieurs des vidéos furent créées dans les années précédant le lancement de la Médiathèque en 2003. Ces années furent une période intense de création médiatique due à la disponibilité des systèmes de montage non-linéaire à SAW Video dès 1997.

Dans le cadre de ce projet, les oeuvres suivantes ont été sélectionnées, en premier lieu : **Damn Near Killed Him** (1997) par Tony Asimakopoulos, et **Beacon** (1999) par Eric Walker, parce que ces artistes étaient les plus reconnus à l'époque.

Par la suite, **Hyperemotional** (2000) par Riley Rempel, et **Mr. Roger's Vacation** (1998) par Jacob Hanna et Ryan Stec ont été produits lors d'un programme de formation pour les jeunes à SAW Video qui a connu un grand succès entre 1998 et 2006.

Pour illustrer cette période particulièrement prolifique à SAW Video, j'ai retenu la vidéo **Emballage** (1999) par Tim Dallett, Phil Rose et Thomas McIntosh. Créée en 1999, la vidéo **Emballage** capte bien l'esprit multidisciplinaire de la Galerie SAW Video.^[2] Enfin, j'ai retenu la vidéo **X (trace)** (2002) de Phil Rose afin de rappeler cette période importante de développement de SAW Video.

J'ai aussi choisi d'inclure dans le palmarès, **Teleculture, the Teleculture** (1982) de Chris Mullington. Bien que la Médiathèque ne soit pas directement liée aux archives de SAW Video, quelques-unes des oeuvres sur le site nous ramènent aux premiers jours de la production vidéo à Ottawa. Le travail de Mullington est l'une des rares oeuvres produite dans les années 1980 à SAW Video.

Finalement pour atteindre notre objectif de dix vidéos, j'ai aussi retenu trois oeuvres provenant des centres d'artistes : **Fire and Ice** par Dan Sokolowski (1998) de l'Independent Filmmakers' Cooperative d'Ottawa ; **ASK-ME** (1993) de Carol Beecher, de Quickdraw Animation Society à Calgary ; et **Hello Ingmar** de Gunilla Josephson, oeuvre provenant de Charles Street Video.

Les hauts, les bas et le futur de la Médiathèque

La Médiathèque a continué son travail de sélection d'art jusqu'en mai 2009, soit jusqu'à la perte inexplicable de données sur le site web de la Médiathèque. Suite à cet événement désastreux, la direction de SAW Video a choisi de ne pas réinvestir des argent dans la recréation de la base de données mais plutôt de concevoir à l'aide de la technologie un nouveau site web pour la Médiathèque. Le nouveau site web est presque complété et la nouvelle version devrait être lancée au début de l'année 2011, ce qui devrait permettre à SAW Video de reprendre sa place dans le monde artistique.

[1] Le nombre d'oeuvres disponibles sur le site a été réduit en 2006 suite à l'expiration du contrat de trois ans. En 2006, les artistes furent contactés à nouveau et la majorité d'entre eux ont consenti à ce que leurs oeuvres demeurent sur le site—soit 300 sur 486. Des oeuvres additionnelles, provenant de membres SAW Video, furent aussi ajoutées en 2004, ce qui augmenta le nombre d'oeuvres disponibles sur le site à 325.

[2] SAW Video est devenue une corporation distincte en 2001. Les deux SAW opèrent présentement comme deux organisations indépendantes: la Galerie SAW et l'association SAW Video.

Penny McCann,
Directrice de SAW Video

Penny McCann

For this **VIDEO CACHE** programme, my task as curator was to select ten works from the 486 works included in SAW Video's Mediatheque media art web streaming project. Collectively the works selected represent the composition and spirit of the Mediatheque—-independent, Canadian, with the large majority of the work—75%—from the Ottawa-Gatineau region.

A quick history of the Mediatheque

Funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canada Council for the Arts, SAW Video's Independents Online media art streaming project (later, the Mediatheque) was created in 2003 with the aim of fostering an on-line community of media artists through streaming full-length films and videos. To solicit work, SAW Video put out an open call to artists in the Ottawa-Gatineau region as well as to media art centres from across the country. An artist fee of \$200 per work was paid for rights to stream works for three years, with individuals and centres limited to twelve and ten works respectively. In all, eleven media art centres from across Canada contributed work: the Independent Filmmakers' Cooperative of Ottawa, Daimon (Gatineau), Vidéographe (Montréal), Vidéo Femmes (Québec), Spirafilm (Québec), Charles Street Video (Toronto), Quickdraw Animation Society (Calgary), Cineworks (Vancouver), Video Out (Vancouver), Ed Video (Guelph,) and Groupe Intervention Video (Montreal). A handful of individual artists outside the region, and not affiliated with media art centres, also submitted work. As an artist with work on the site, I recall the headlong rush by Ottawa media artists to get their work on the site ... and be paid for it! SAW Video's goal was to acquire 500 works and—by the time of launch—an impressive 486 films and videos were included in the database. [1]

The Chosen Ten

With so many works to choose from, for this programme I selected works that could also stand in for other works on the site. Many of the works date from the seven years immediately preceding the Mediatheque's creation, in 2003. Interestingly, these years coincide with artists' initial access to non-linear editing systems, such as those acquired by SAW Video in 1997, an advent that triggered an increase in artistic production at the centre. Several of the selected works were made during this highly productive time at SAW Video: **Damn Near Killed Him** (1997) by Tony Asimakopoulos, and **Beacon** (1999) by Eric Walker, represent work produced by more established artists working at SAW Video at the time.

Hyperemotional (2000) by Riley Rempel, and **Mr. Roger's Vacation** (1998) by Jacob Hanna and Ryan Stec, were products of SAW Video's youth programme, a highly successful video training programme that ran from 1998–2006.

Emballage (1999) by Tim Dallett, Phil Rose and Thomas McIntosh, also dates from this particularly prolific time at SAW Video. This performance-video captures the spirit of the multi-disciplinary centre, Galerie SAW Video, that existed from 1988–2001. [2] Phil Rose's **X (trace)** (2002) is the most recent piece included in this selection.

Although SAW Video's Mediatheque does not have a direct relationship to SAW Video's tape archive—a collection that is now entering its 30th year—some of the works on the site, such as Chris Mullington's **Teleculture, the Tele-culture** (1982), hearken back to the early days of video production in Ottawa. Mullington's video is one of the few works from the 1980's in the Mediatheque.

The contribution of works by other centres is represented by **Fire and Ice** (1998) by Dan Sokolowski, from the Independent Filmmakers' Cooperative of Ottawa; **ASK-ME** (1993) by Carol Beecher, from Quickdraw Animation Society in Calgary; and Gunilla Josephson's **Hello Ingmar** (2000), which was one of several works contributed to the site by Charles Street Video.

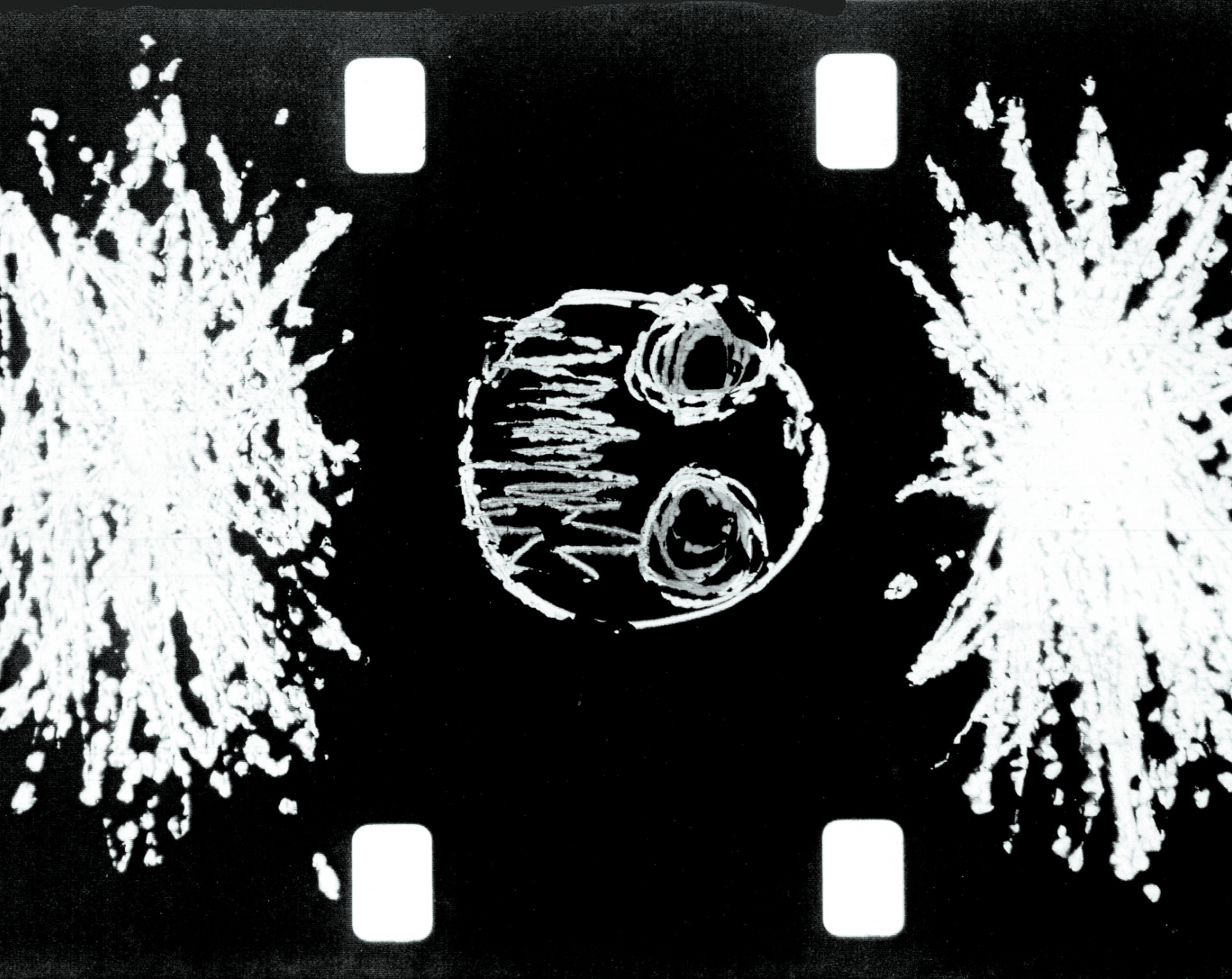
The Fall and Rise of the Mediatheque

SAW Video's Mediatheque continued streaming media art until May 2009, when the site suffered a disastrous failure of its backend database. At that point, rather than incur the expenses necessary to resurrect the site, SAW Video elected to revamp the now technologically outdated Mediatheque into a newly redesigned website for the centre, with updated web streaming technology and a new aesthetic. The website redesign is currently nearing completion and the new Mediatheque will be launched in early 2011; an event that will begin a new chapter in SAW Video's media art streaming initiative.

[1] *The number of works on the site was reduced in 2006 due to expiration of artists' three-year streaming contracts. In 2006, a contract renewal request was sent to all artists with work on the site. The majority of artists consented, resulting in almost 300 works of the original 486 remaining on the site. Additional works from SAW Video members were also added since 2004, bringing the current number of works on the site to 325.*

[2] *SAW Video became a separately incorporated organization in 2001. The two SAWs now operate as two separate organizations, Galerie SAW Gallery and SAW Video Association.*

Penny McCann,
SAW Video, Director



ASK-ME

Carol Beecher
(2:10)
1993

ASK-ME is an experimental cameraless animation piece etched directly on 16mm black leader, with the addition of colour using permanent markers.



*Not sure if she was going to be a theatre technician or an animator, **Beecher** figured either way she'd have to be an artist first, so she went to the Alberta College of Art + Design, graduating in 1987. Her first film, an experimental cameraless film (etched on 16mm film stock), **ASK-ME**, was nominated for Best Experimental Film at the Yorkton Short Film and Video Festival in 1996 and received a Director's Citation at the 1997 Black Maria Film-Video Festival in New Jersey. She honed her administration and communication skills as Operations Coordinator of the Quickdraw Animation Society, and oversaw the development of the organization from an animation fan club into an internationally recognized independent production, resource, and education centre for all forms of animation. With her partner Kevin D.A. Kurytnik they produced *Mr. Reaper's Really Bad Morning* in 2004, a 17 minute film about the uneasy co-existence between life and Mr. Death. Released on 35mm it has toured the world at festivals, winning the Bronze Award at the Kalamazoo International Animation Festival. They have just completed a commissioned film, *Business as Usual*, for Animasivo Animation Forum of the Festival de Mexico and **Beecher** is currently wrangling a bunch of creatures from the planet Zig 5 with her pencil for the Intergalactic Who's Who science fiction interstitial series.*

Mr. Rogers' Vacation

Jake Hanna/Ryan Stec

(3:20)

1998

Using the plainness of Mr. Roger's to juxtapose the fantastical journey into a dream world of colour and rhythm, this piece takes the viewer away from tension and angst, and leads them through a pleasant emotional vacation built on the light and flowing colours of the piece. Something to think about.



*Jake **Hanna** is an Ottawa-based video artist who has been heavily involved in the technological configurations of SAW Video for over 10 years. His work spans the gamut of spectacle from commercial productions to art house experimentation. Currently Jake has been focused on using video as a tool of social communication with a variety of non profit and non government organizations.*

*Ryan **Stec** is a media artist and producer whose work experience and community involvement spans a wide variety of disciplines and interests. He has been heavily involved in cutting edge cultural production in Ottawa since 1998. He is currently the Artistic Director of Artengine.*



Hyperemotional

Riley Rempel

(2:26)

2000

Hyperemotional is what happens when SAW Video gives a musician a microphone, a camera, and some free editing time. **Rempel** went in with no plan other than to make a music video for a song that didn't exist yet – which, in retrospect, wasn't much of a plan. The footage was shot in the Avid editing suite over the course of two overnight shifts and the video built on itself as the song took shape. It was a weird experiment that turned out pretty well.



*Riley **Rempel** was born in Oak Park Illinois on January 17, 1922. **Rempel** was the first woman ever to receive an Emmy for game show hosting. She is passionate about cheesecake, her real-life hero is Charles Darwin, and she thinks Facebook is a huge waste of time. You can visit her website at rileyrempe.com.*



Fire and Ice

Dan Sokolowski

(2:43)

1998

A documentary on the 1998 ice storm.



Dan **Sokolowski** is a graduate in Fine Arts from the University of Ottawa. He currently lives in Dawson City, Yukon, where he is the producer of the www.dawsonfilmfest.com. Dawson City International Short Film Festival. He has taught courses in 16mm filmmaking, video production, animation and studio arts. He was a board member of the Independent Filmmakers Cooperative of Ottawa (5 years) and the Canadian Film Institute. He is currently a member of the Dawson City Arts Society and the Yukon Film Society.

Sokolowski's films have been shown at many film festivals and film events locally, nationally and internationally and has received grants from the Canada Council, Ontario Arts Council, CBC, IFCO and the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture and the Yukon Film and Sound Commission.



Teleculture, the Teleculture

Chris Mullington

(6:43)

1982

Willoughby Sharp visited SAW Gallery in 1983. This flamboyant New Yorker was a denizen of Andy Warhol's Factory scene before becoming a prophet of telecommunications and satellite technology. He was interviewed by David Peat for CBC Television. Producer Joan Woodward provided the footage to **Mullington**. This is an early example of an experiment with repetition, rescanning and looping of video. The intent was to produce a video structure that worked like music. Interesting to fans of analogue effects.



*One of the founding members of SAW Video, **Mullington** is an internationally recognized video director, editor and producer whose work is exhibited worldwide, in galleries, festivals and on television and included in the collections of The National Gallery of Canada, The Canada Council Art Bank, and The Museum of Modern Art in New York. His groundbreaking (and now classic) broadcast design work for This Hour Has 22 Minutes set new benchmarks for comedy in a country famous for great comic television. He has won numerous Canadian and international awards for his work in various capacities including a Gemini for his comedic work for CBC TV's The Health Show. Now creative director of the Ottawa production company, TV Factory, **Mullington's** video art aesthetic has strongly influenced his television work which has been widely featured on such shows as CBC's This Hour has 22 Minutes, The Health Show, and CBC Sunday.*



Emballage

Tim Dallett / Phil Rose / Thomas McIntosh

(3:27)

1999

This video-performance recording draws out and magnifies the phenomena produced by physical gestures. **Emballage** captures the spirit of “live architecture” by intensively documenting the work of two performers building a structure out of stacking chairs and industrial packaging. Image and sound are recorded live in camera without overdubs, creating a syncopated audio-visual flux that carries the viewer through the arc of the performance. A version of the work was presented as a live performance as part of the Detonator performance art festival at SAW Gallery, in 2000. **Emballage** was included in the screening SAW Video: A Quarter Century, curated in 2006 by Caroline Langill.



Tim Dallett has worked in media arts and artist-run centres across Canada for the past two decades as an artist, curator, administrator, technician, writer and educator. His work focusses on the relationship between real-time media and installation environments. He received an MFA from the Nova Scotia in 2001. A co-founder of the Artifact Institute, Tim currently lives and works in Montreal.

Thomas McIntosh studied Architecture at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada and at Berlin Technical University, Germany. He holds a Bachelor of Architecture with high distinction from Carleton University. Through the study of architecture he developed an interest in the aspects of our physical environment which affect our perception - in the point of cross-over between experience and architecture. It is the exploration of this relationship, which he believes to be key to the question of architecture, which led him to form [The User] in collaboration with Emmanuel Madan.

Phil Rose spends his time between visual art - lightboxes which make use of old 16mm film - and ongoing film and video projects, as well as trying to find the answer to such weighty questions as why Ray Parlour can't find the back of goal a bit more often. He currently works at Centre de Production Daimon in Gatineau.



Beacon

Eric Walker

(4:47)

1999

With hypnotic image loops and squelching radio noise, **BEACON** is a fast meditation on microwave relay towers and urban landscape.



Painter and video artist Eric **Walker** was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1957. He studied at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and began exhibiting in 1982 with a graduation show at the Anna Leonowen's Gallery (NSCAD), Halifax. He has continued to work and exhibit primarily in the university /regional art gallery/artist run scene for over two decades. Walker has received numerous awards and grants for his artwork, including "A" grants from the Canada Council for the Arts as well as awards from the Ontario Arts Council, the Conseil des arts et des lettres de Quebec, and the City of Ottawa. **Walker's** works are widely held in public collections including the Canada Council Art Bank, The Ottawa Art Gallery, the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, The Art Gallery of Newfoundland and Labrador, The Owens Art Gallery (Mount Allison University), Dalhousie University Art Gallery (Halifax), and the City of Ottawa. Walker has exhibited his work widely in Canada, with international representation in group shows in Poland (1987), Mexico (2001), and New York (2008) as well as solo exhibitions at the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo (2002), the Ottawa Art Gallery (2005), the Southern Alberta Art Gallery (2005), and the Confederation Centre for the Arts (2006). Walker lives in Ottawa.

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Damn Near Killed Him

Tony Asimakopoulos

(8:08)

1997

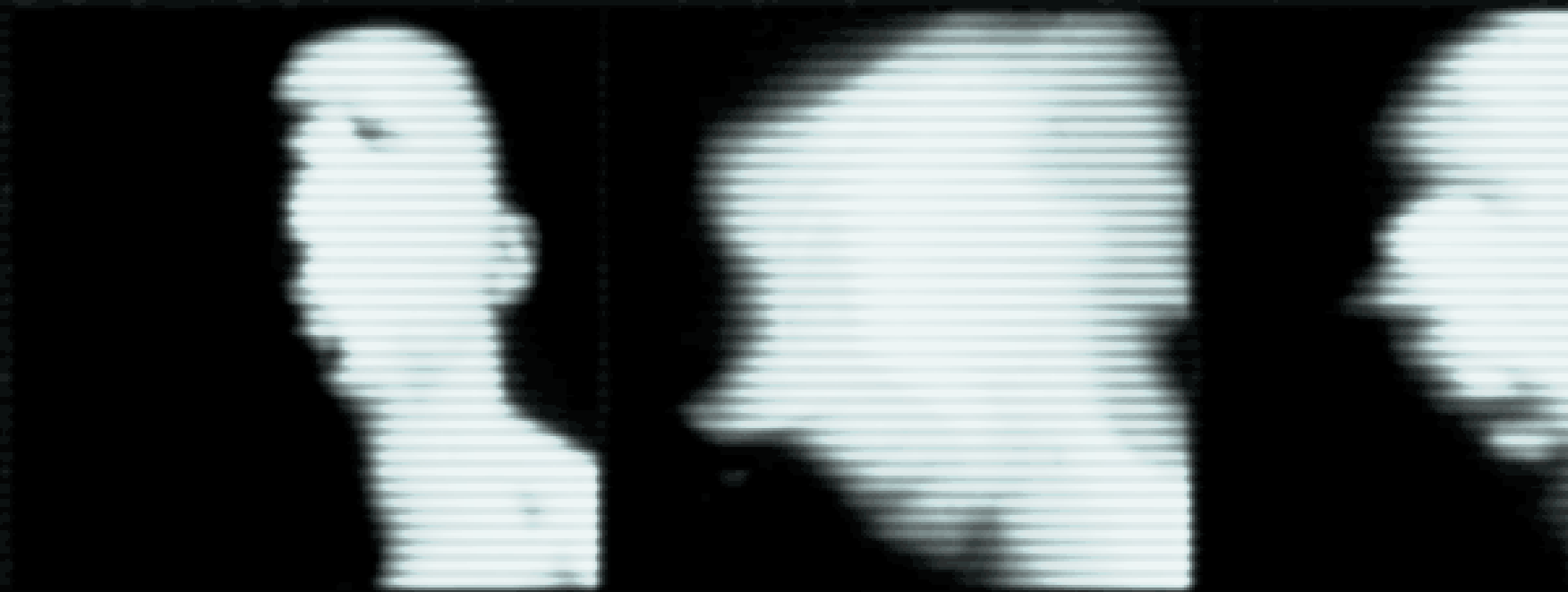
A poetic montage of images from films **Asimakopoulos** made years ago, revisiting violence and transgression in the form of a confession and prayer. A hit-and-run outburst of dreamy melodrama within a rant within a mystery all wrapped up inside a longing for God.



*Tony Asimakopoulos. 1969-1985: kid; 1986-2010: filmmaker. Noteworthy shorts: Jimmy Fingers, 1991. Mama's Boy, 1992. **Damn Near Killed Him**, 1998, Night of the Celibate, 2000. Wrote and directed the feature Horsie's Retreat at the Canadian Film Centre in 2004. Currently lives in Montreal, where he is completing Fortunate Son (working title), an autobiographical feature documentary, produced by EyeSteelFilm.*

VIDEO CACHE

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(X) Trace
Phil Rose
(10:49)
2002

The title is meant to be read as “times trace”—as a kind of pseudo-mathematical formula—“X” being the multiplication sign and “trace” that which is multiplied. A play on words is also intended—“time’s trace”—suggestion, obliquely, a multiplication of small instances, an accumulation of traces, residue even, of the subject, resulting in multiplicity—not just a single instance, not a summing up of the subject; but rather an evolving and fluid subject, through fleeting glimpses and extended moments of different shades of the subject as time, and the manipulations of the image’s surface, act upon. Although **Rose**’s intention was for this process to result in a certain degree of abstraction and ambiguity, **Rose** felt that this treatment would illuminate aspects of the subject, and convey the entire experience in a direct and visceral manner.



*Phil **Rose** spends his time between visual art—lightboxes which make use of old 16mm film—and ongoing film and video projects, as well as trying to find the answer to such weighty questions as why Ray Parlour can’t find the back of goal a bit more often. He currently works at Centre de Production Daimon in Gatineau.*



Hello Ingmar

Gunilla Josephson

(7:36)

2000

For three decades he stood at the dizzying heights of world kino, his name synonymous with the term art movie. But who would ever imagine finding a home in Ingmar Bergman's psycho-nightmares? Gunilla, that's who. Cast as a bit player in his unknown 1963 effort *Virgin Belief and Double Moral*, Gunilla travels the imagescape of Bergman's flicks, stopping its troubled interlocuters to ask whether they'd seen her pass this way or not. In the original she actually has a speaking part, which consisted of this one line: "Hello Ingmar, all my tanks were knocked out and the roads were impassible."

All of **Josephson's** work deals with possible pasts and fictional histories from an entirely subjective point of view with a complete disregard for historical facts with the intent of re-imagining and re-assessing the narratives of the past. Her true interest lies in voicing ideas about the interstices between art and reality, between truth and fiction.



*Gunilla **Josephson** is a Swedish-born artist, based in Toronto. She holds a BA in Social Sciences from Stockholm University and a MFA from the College of Art and Design (Konstfackskolan), Stockholm. Her videos have been exhibited extensively throughout Canada and internationally, most notably at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, the Southern Alberta Art Gallery, the Winnipeg Art Gallery, SAW Video (Ottawa), Cinematheque Ontario (Toronto), Pleasure Dome (Toronto), Bio Rio (Stockholm), the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris, the Swedish Culture Centre in Paris, Kassel Dokumentarfilm & Videofest, and LUX (London, UK). The Images Festival has presented her work on numerous occasions (in each festival from 2000 to 2004). **Josephson** was awarded the Canada Council Paris Studio residency in 2003 and has been an artist in residence at Circolo Scandinavio (Rome), the Gushul Studio (Blairmore, Alberta), the Nordic Arts Centre (Bergen, Norway), and Charles Street Video (Toronto). Gunilla **Josephson's** work is distributed by Vtape (Toronto) and Filmform (Stockholm).*

Mél Hogan

Ce qui est étonnant n'est pas que les médias numériques s'atténuent, mais qu'ils demeurent—et que nous demeurons—rivés à nos écrans alors que cet éphéméralité persiste.

Wendy Hui Kyong Chun / The Digital Ephemeral (2008)

VIDEO CACHE est un projet de recherche-création.^[1] D'une part, ce projet sert à mieux supporter la Médiathèque en rappelant le contexte ayant permis la discussion sur la nécessité de conserver des archives en ligne. D'autre part, étant donné l'importance de ce projet, **VIDEO CACHE** est devenue une occasion pour moi de collaborer avec SAW Video et en particulier avec Madame Penny McCann. Au cours de ce projet, j'ai eu la chance et le grand plaisir de discuter avec elle de la Médiathèque et nous avons pu échanger sur toutes les questions touchant la Médiathèque notamment la distribution, l'accès et la préservation de vidéo en ligne. Son expérience et sa perspicacité m'ont été précieuses dans l'élaboration du projet **VIDEO CACHE**.

Je suis reconnaissante à plusieurs personnes impliquées dans la conceptualisation et le développement de la Médiathèque à la SAW Video. Un gros merci à Kevin Morris pour sa disponibilité et ses échanges sincères (ancien coordonnateur du projet Mediatheque et administrateur de la SAW Video), à Anatoly Ignatiev (ancien archiviste numérique de la Médiathèque), et à Douglas Smalley (ancien technicien de la Médiathèque, agent de préservation vidéo aux Archives et Bibliothèque Canada). Remerciements à Michael Lechasseur pour ses commentaires sur mes textes. (Michael Lechasseur a quitté SAW Video un mois seulement avant le lancement de la Médiathèque, et il est maintenant le technicien web à SAW Video). Le résultat des efforts de toutes ces personnes jumelé avec le travail de plusieurs artistes, assistants techniques et bénévoles, a permis d'imaginer, de créer et de lancer un projet d'archivage de vidéos en ligne d'une ampleur sans précédent au Canada. Suite à ces échanges, le projet de **VIDEO CACHE** est né. J'ai proposé, à la Directrice de SAW Video, Madame Penny McCann, en titre de Commissaire, de programmer une soirée projection basée sur les vidéos de la Médiathèque. Le but était de choisir les œuvres qui représentaient l'historique du projet de développement du portail Médiathèque. Nous avons obtenu des fonds pour payer les artistes afin de présenter les œuvres retenues dans le projet **VIDEO CACHE**, de GIV (Groupe Intervention Vidéo).

La projection est accompagnée d'une exposition en ligne à wayward.ca/videocache, pour laquelle les artistes/distributeurs eurent l'option d'y participer dans un contexte actuel. La plate-forme en ligne de wayward.ca/videocache sert à documenter l'événement, à fournir des matériaux complémentaires (Anatoly Ignatiev avec *SAW Dust* et Firuz Daud avec une vidéo conçue pour le lancement de la Médiathèque en 2003) et à poursuivre la discussion de vidéo sur le web. Dans le cadre de cette discussion, une entrevue avec Nikki Forrest a aussi été ajoutée au catalogue afin de résumer l'influence du web sur la distribution, et sur sa pratique en tant qu'artiste.

MISE EN CONTEXTE

VIDEO CACHE

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Toutefois, il demeure difficile de suivre le trajet du développement de la Médiathèque depuis la conception du projet vers la fin des années 1990, de son lancement en 2003 jusqu'à la perte de sa banque de données en 2009 lors du « crash de son serveur ». L'absence de documentation a créé un vide dans l'histoire de la Médiathèque. Cette situation illustre bien la problématique de l'archivage en ligne : qui permet d'accéder simultanément au passé, au présent, et à un espace temporel prédictif.[2] Bien que la mémoire numérique soit largement conçue comme une mémoire enregistrée « cache » et qui donc, laisse des traces numériques indélébiles sur le web, c'est le « crash » qui met en évidence la valeur et la nécessité du maintien de la collection. Reconstruire l'histoire de la Médiathèque à partir de cette mémoire « cache », ainsi que des entrevues et des nombreux fragments numériques, sert à documenter le projet dans ce qu'il était, ce qu'il est devenu et du potentiel qu'il représente pour le futur. Une approche qui tient compte de l'importance du « crash » comme symbole—parfois paradoxal—de l'archivage en ligne est utile pour une compréhension plus entière d'un tel projet. Finalement, pour comprendre l'importance du « crash » on doit aussi tenir compte de l'impact de la disparition de ces documents sur les personnes responsables de l'archivage en ligne.

Le « cache » symbolise la mémoire de la Médiathèque, qui sert de base et d'inspiration pour le titre : **VIDEO CACHE**, où le double sens de « cache » en français est destiné à laisser entendre que les travaux ne sont pas visibles, mais qu'ils ne sont pas perdus pour autant.

En juin 2009, Tiffany Tse, la stagiaire d'été de la SAW Video a expédié une lettre aux artistes expliquant les problèmes techniques de la SAW Video et de la Médiathèque. Le message destiné aux visiteurs du site internet présentait l'avis suivant : « En raison de circonstances hors de notre contrôle, la Médiathèque sera fermée jusqu'à nouvel avis. Nous nous excusons pour tout inconvenient. » Ainsi, près d'une décennie après le lancement du site, je crois que la Médiathèque ne peut renaître comme elle était auparavant et sa ré-création, à l'ère des médias sociaux, demanderait que l'on porte attention à des concepts entièrement nouveaux.

Parce qu'il existe peu de documentation sur ce projet ou de projets similaires, il devient difficile d'articuler ou de soutenir les approches proposées par la Médiathèque pour la préservation et distribution de vidéo en ligne. Avec le développement des médias sociaux, il est logique de penser que les utilisateurs du web se sont fait à l'idée que les données numériques ne sont accessibles que pour une période limitée.

En conclusion, je crois que ce projet de documentation permet une plus grande compréhension de la nature complexe et souvent paradoxale des archives en ligne et cela va bien au-delà de l'apparente contradiction entre les collections dites matérielles ou immatérielles. Cet exemple du « crash » de la Médiathèque nous aide à comprendre le concept de l'éphémère durable.[3] Une meilleure compréhension de ce concept est un des apports principal de cette étude de cas.

Notes:

[1] Voir: Chapman, Owen, and Kim Sawchuk. *Research-Creation: intervention, analysis and "family resemblances"*. *Science Studies* (Forthcoming).

[2] Voir: Rick Prelinger (2008) *14 point Manifesto* online: <http://subjectobject.net/2008/11/09/on-the-virtues-of-preexisting-material-a-manifesto-by-rick-prelinger/>; et Felix Stalder (2008) *Copyright dungeons and grey zones* From: *nettime-l Digest*, Vol 7, Issue 10, sent: Tue, 15 Apr., 2008

[3] Voir: Wendy Hui Kyong Chun (2008) *The Enduring Ephemeral, or the Future Is a Memory In: Critical Inquiry* 35 (Autumn) *The University of Chicago*: 148–171.

Mél Hogan

What is surprising is not that digital media fades but rather that it stays at all and that we stay transfixed by our screens as its ephemerality endures.

Wendy Hui Kyong Chun / The Digital Ephemeral (2008)

VIDEO CACHE is a two-fold experiment in research creation;[1] on the one hand it serves to further document the Mediatheque project by updating the context from which emerges a conversation about what it means to activate the online archive. On the other hand, it is an entity onto itself. **VIDEO CACHE** has become an opportunity for me to collaborate with SAW Video, and in particular Penny McCann, with whom I have had great pleasure in discussing the Mediatheque and all ensuing issues pertaining to online video distribution, access, and preservation. Her experience, initiative and insight have been invaluable to shaping **VIDEO CACHE**.

I am also grateful for having had the opportunity to exchange with several people implicated in conceptualizing and developing the Mediatheque at SAW Video. Many thanks for the heartfelt and insightful exchanges with Kevin Morris (former Project Coordinator and Administrator of SAW Video), Anatoly Ignatiev (Mediatheque Digital Archivist, and filmmaker), Douglas Smalley (Mediatheque technician, currently LAC/video preservation). And for the feedback, thank-you to Michael Lechasseur (who had left SAW Video only months prior to the Mediatheque launch, and is currently SAW Video's web technician). Together—and with the assistance of other artists, technical assistants and volunteers—this group envisioned, created and launched Canada's first large-scale online video archive and portal.

Inspired by these conversations, **VIDEO CACHE** was born. I proposed to Penny McCann that she curate a screening based on works from the Mediatheque—the works she felt, as the current director of SAW Video, best represented the project and SAW Video in the years of the portal's development. Through GIV (Groupe Intervention Video) we were able to secure screening fees for the artists and a venue to showcase the works. The screening is accompanied by an online showcase at wayward.ca/video/cache, for which artists or distributors were to opt in/out of the project as a month-long continuation of the Mediatheque's original context to showcase works online.

The online platform of wayward.ca, shared with video artist Nikki Forrest, serves to document the event, showcase additional materials, and broaden the discussion of the online realm for video artists. Two videos constitute additional contextualizing material to the project: Anatoly Ignatiev's *SAW Dust* and a video created by Firuz Daud for the launch of the Mediatheque in 2003. An in-depth two-way interview with Nikki Forrest is also included in the catalogue as part of this ongoing discussion about the web's hurdles and affordances for video art.

Tracking the Mediatheque project from early discussions in the late 1990s, to its (soft) launch in March 2003, and then to its database crash in May 2009, the digital (paper) trail links stories, ideals, tensions, troubles, and absences into the history of the Mediatheque.

The case of the Mediatheque is rare and is important for understanding the manifold locus of the online archive: it is past, present, and increasingly predictive potential.^[2] While it is the ‘cache’ that makes the Mediatheque’s traces visible and re-visit-able, it is the ‘crash’ that signals its ongoing (archival) value.

Reconstructing the Mediatheque’s story from cached memory and interviews, many scattered digital fragments serve to document the project—what it was, what it has become, and what future potential it holds. An approach that accounts for the importance of the ‘crash’ as symbolic of and essential to understanding the paradoxical nature of the online repository as archive—the ‘cache’—is key conceptually in this exploration and documentation project. I consider the ‘crash’ to represent simultaneously the database of video and the affective let-down of the project. Similarly, the ‘cache’ symbolizes the memory of the Mediatheque, as distinct from storage, which serves as the basis and inspiration for the title: **VIDEO CACHE**, where the double meaning of ‘cache’ in French is intended to imply that the works are not visible, but not completely lost either.

In June 2009, SAW Video’s summer intern, Tiffany Tse, sent out a letter to video artists regarding the Mediatheque project and more specifically to communicate the ‘going down’ of the site—including both the SAW Video site and the Mediatheque. However, since this outreach effort, a notice has been posted that diverts users from the SAW Video website: “Due to circumstances beyond our control, the Mediatheque will be down until further notice. We apologize for any inconvenience.” Perhaps, almost a decade after the launch, into the age of social media, the Mediatheque cannot exist as it did, and/or its re/creation would pose a different series of tribulations.

Because so little documentation exists about these projects, not much can be done to support new approaches to video preservation and distribution online: the ‘crashes’ and broken links have come to make a bold statement about the seemingly inevitable end point of online distribution and display. However, this documentation project serves as a springboard into a larger conversation about the intricate and often paradoxical nature of online archives—beyond the mere tension between material and immaterial collections. Finally, the Mediatheque also invariably thwarts utopian visions of the web, while complicating resistance to its growing potential as an archive and the enduring ephemeral generated brought into evidence through this case study.^[3]

Notes:

[1] See: Chapman, Owen, and Kim Sawchuk. *Research-Creation: intervention, analysis and “family resemblances”*. *Science Studies* (Forthcoming).

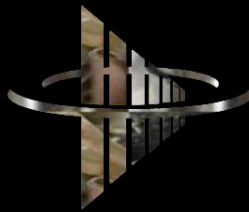
[2] See: Rick Prelinger (2008) *14 point Manifesto* online: <http://subjectobject.net/2008/11/09/on-the-virtues-of-preexisting-material-a-manifesto-by-rick-prelinger/>; and Felix Stalder (2008) *Copyright dungeons and grey zones* *From: nettime-I Digest, Vol 7, Issue 10*, sent: Tue, 15 Apr., 2008

[3] See: Wendy Hui Kyong Chun (2008) *The Enduring Ephemeral, or the Future Is a Memory In: Critical Inquiry* 35 (Autumn) *The University of Chicago*: 148–171.

Médiathèque

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SAW Video's Mediatheque entry portal as archived in the Internet Archive Wayback Machine, circa 2003.

INTERNET ARCHIVE

WaybackMachine

Enter Web Address:

All Take Me Back [Add Search](#) [Compare Archived Pages](#)

Searched for: <http://sawvideo.com> 177 Results

Note some duplicates are not shown. [See all](#).

* denotes when site was updated.

Material typically becomes available here 6 months or more after collection, with some exceptions [See FAQ](#).

Archived Results from Jan 01, 1996 - latest

1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
0 pages	0 pages	0 pages	0 pages	0 pages	9 pages	8 pages	25 pages	22 pages	35 pages	32 pages	33 pages	4 pages	0 pages	0 pages
					Jan 24, 2001 * Feb 12, 2001 * Mar 08, 2001 * Mar 31, 2001 Apr 05, 2001 Apr 18, 2001 May 17, 2001 Sep 30, 2001 Dec 01, 2001	Jan 23, 2002 Apr 02, 2002 * May 24, 2002 May 28, 2002 Aug 04, 2002 * Sep 28, 2002 * Sep 30, 2002 Nov 22, 2002 *	Jan 27, 2003 * Jan 30, 2003 * Feb 18, 2003 Feb 17, 2003 Mar 28, 2003 Mar 30, 2003 Apr 09, 2003 Apr 23, 2003 Apr 24, 2003 May 31, 2003 Jun 05, 2003 Jun 11, 2003 Jun 18, 2003 Jul 26, 2003 Jul 31, 2003 Aug 08, 2003 Oct 19, 2003 * Oct 22, 2003 Oct 27, 2003 Oct 29, 2003 Nov 18, 2003 Nov 28, 2003 Dec 01, 2003 Dec 13, 2003 Dec 27, 2003	Mar 24, 2004 Apr 12, 2004 May 22, 2004 May 24, 2004 Jun 04, 2004 Jun 12, 2004 Jun 27, 2004 Jul 29, 2004 * Aug 08, 2004 Aug 19, 2004 Aug 29, 2004 Aug 28, 2004 Sep 01, 2004 Sep 04, 2004 Sep 18, 2004 * Sep 25, 2004 Sep 28, 2004 * Oct 15, 2004 * Nov 23, 2004 * Nov 24, 2004 Nov 30, 2004 * Dec 12, 2004 *	Jan 11, 2005 * Feb 01, 2005 Feb 03, 2005 * Feb 05, 2005 Feb 06, 2005 Feb 07, 2005 Feb 09, 2005 Feb 18, 2005 * Mar 04, 2005 Apr 02, 2005 * Apr 23, 2005 * May 15, 2005 May 19, 2005 * May 22, 2005 Jun 28, 2005 * Jul 30, 2005 Jul 06, 2005 * Jul 14, 2005 * Aug 14, 2005 * Aug 22, 2005 Aug 27, 2005 Aug 28, 2005 Aug 30, 2005 Oct 03, 2005 * Oct 29, 2005 * Nov 02, 2005 Nov 05, 2005 Nov 26, 2005 * Nov 28, 2005 Nov 29, 2005 Dec 03, 2005 Dec 08, 2005 Dec 14, 2005 Dec 23, 2005 Dec 29, 2005 Dec 30, 2005	Jan 01, 2006 Jan 10, 2006 * Apr 23, 2006 * Apr 05, 2006 * Apr 07, 2006 * Apr 10, 2006 Apr 11, 2006 * Apr 12, 2006 Apr 18, 2006 * Apr 23, 2006 * May 15, 2006 * May 19, 2006 * Jun 12, 2006 * Jun 13, 2006 Jul 04, 2006 * Jul 05, 2006 Jul 08, 2006 * Jul 19, 2006 * Aug 13, 2006 * Aug 20, 2006 Aug 22, 2006 Sep 01, 2006 * Oct 21, 2006 * Oct 25, 2006 * Nov 08, 2006 * Nov 16, 2006 * Nov 24, 2006 * Dec 06, 2006 Dec 11, 2006 Dec 18, 2006 Dec 21, 2006 Dec 30, 2006	Jan 03, 2007 Jan 08, 2007 * Jan 13, 2007 Jan 18, 2007 Jan 23, 2007 Jan 28, 2007 Feb 03, 2007 Feb 06, 2007 * Feb 10, 2007 Feb 26, 2007 * Mar 15, 2007 Mar 14, 2007 Mar 15, 2007 Mar 21, 2007 * Apr 17, 2007 * May 08, 2007 May 18, 2007 * Jun 17, 2007 * Jul 02, 2007 * Jul 08, 2007 * Jul 18, 2007 * Aug 13, 2007 * Aug 18, 2007 Aug 21, 2007 * Sep 18, 2007 Sep 20, 2007 * Sep 21, 2007 * Sep 23, 2007 * Sep 29, 2007 * Oct 01, 2007 * Oct 05, 2007 * Oct 11, 2007 * Oct 12, 2007 *	Jan 03, 2008 * Feb 08, 2008 * Mar 05, 2008 * Apr 09, 2008 *		

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Archive of the SAW Video Mediatheque through the Internet Archive Wayback Machine.
http://web.archive.org/web/*/http://sawvideo.com

Nikki Forrest & Mél Hogan

*Presented below are fragments of a conversation between Nikki Forrest and Mél Hogan that took place over the course of the last six months by email. This conversation is reassembled to take on the form of a two-way interview, reflecting on and emerging from their collaboration on various projects at wayward.ca. wayward.ca is a collaborative experimental online space, for which **VIDEO CACHE** is the second project, made possible by SAW Video and GIV. The first project, **SPLINTER**, began summer 2010 and is on-going at wayward.ca/splinter. **SPLINTER** is a video-art chain letter in circulation by mail and displayed online. Future projects are in the brainstorming phase... Here, they discuss the platform, projects and philosophical implications of video art in the age of the web. Comments can be sent to info@wayward.ca.*

Mél Hogan: How would you define *wayward* and what we are trying to do?

Nikki Forrest: For me, *wayward* is an experiment, something that evolves over time starting from shared interests. The collaborative aspect is especially interesting to me. Curating and programming are specific activities based on particular sensibilities: knowledge and experience I don't have. But as an artist, questions around collaboration, dissemination, exchange and research in relation to technology and communication interest me a lot. In this case we are looking specifically at possibilities for archiving, presentation and exchange online. In terms of history, it's very interesting that artists' collectives and artist-run centres led the way in Canada by establishing exhibition and screening fees for artists, but also with the first online distribution and showcase projects. I'm interested in looking at this in relation to where we are now. For the artists who work with video, there are ongoing questions about how/where/when/if to show work in particular situations—for free in some cases.

WAYWARD CONVERSATION

VIDEO CACHE

SAW Video | GIV | wayward.ca

MH: Can you tell me in which instances you feel it is interesting to show your work for “free”? Or, let’s say, if a work is older and has already been paid for through other curated venues, like in the case of **VIDEO CACHE** for example, or if a work isn’t picked up by curators... or if a work is too old for the festival circuit but not old enough to have historical value... are these things you as an artist account for? And I’m wondering—though this might be a generalization—if these issues about the various contexts that define value were teased out—if there would be less ‘fear’ when it comes to online screening. The default position seems to be that online distribution and display are necessarily detrimental for artists working within the traditional distribution model, without much accounting for the different types of contexts possible online. It’s still—more than 10 years into it—the conversation nobody wants to have. Do you have thoughts on this, as someone who works off and online?

NF: I’m still showing mostly off-line. For me it’s more a question of context than the value of an individual work. I don’t think about videos as objects with intrinsic value, like the way paintings or sculptures have traditionally been valued—in terms of scarcity or the uniqueness of art objects. I don’t think about the value of a specific video—or about one video being more valuable than another, but I think the work artists do overall as a practice has value. There are certain contexts where I would show for free, rather than certain works I would show for free. For example: certain educational contexts or small festival screenings that are not funded. But this is tricky. When it comes to screening and exhibition fees the question remains—is there value to the work that artists do? Is it an economic value? If not, what kind of value is it and how does this fit into existing structures? I’m not sure about the answers. Clearly most artists do not make a living from screening fees and do other types of work to generate income. Like other types of research and production (academic, technical, etc.), artists need time and resources. So the question of context is really important to *wayward.ca*... is this how you would also frame it?

MH: I think of *wayward* as an experiment, too. But if I had to say which kind of experiment, I would say that for me—as a person really interested in technical elements of the web and their link to uses/possibilities—it’s an experiment about conventions. Even if the web is ‘young,’ it has been around long enough to instate itself into certain principles and discourses. For example, playing with ‘dynamic’ and ‘static’ is interesting, as is the ‘material’ and ‘immaterial’ contrast—which is almost cliché in its most simplistic comparison.

For *wayward* we have decided to launch a limited one-month online showcase in conjunction with a live public discussion, with curator present. **VIDEO CACHE** is paralleled online but I don’t think we would say that it is meant to duplicate or mirror the event. How would you describe it?

NF: As a parallel activity it’s more of an extension than a duplication. Plus it’s an exhibition rather than a single screening. Hopefully it will also reach a wider audience, in addition to the people who were able to attend the GIV screening. It also provides the possibility for people to review the work. In this case it also

reiterates the initial intended location for Mediatheque: the selected work was originally accumulated and formatted for online viewing, so the videos were already thought of as working well in the online context.

MH: Making **VIDEO CACHE** into a one-month showcase is actually breaking the convention of the web, which is for the most part, more of an ongoing and continual space, continually updated and archived. Rare are the projects that showcase—intentionally—for short periods of time on the web. I find that kind of thing, those conventions, interesting. And like you say, this becomes an experiment for ways of showing and also preserving video, though ‘preserving’ in a different sense...

In terms of video history and archives, I think **VIDEO CACHE** definitely plays with ideas and ideals around scarcity and value, which are pertinent to both. I think showing works from the now-defunct Mediatheque (even if it’s due back up in 2011) serves the purpose of reviving the project and creating a document that highlights the fact that it was the first large-scale video art repository of its kind. But it is also the very nature of the defunct archive that gives us an angle for this show—if the Mediatheque remained online, this wouldn’t happen. I think looking at interruptions, breaks, and even failures is essential for understanding the link between video art history and the era of online distribution and display.

It allows for many of the works—some of which are not distributed elsewhere—to be shown. Artists represented by distributors often default to them to determine the conditions and contexts in which their work should be shown, but these questions of online value remain largely unresolved even for distributors, it seems. Is it ‘safer’ to opt to not show work online because of lack of control over circulation and downloading? Maybe... when the online realm is framed as a threat to the value of the work, which it often is, despite little evidence to this effect.

One of the main questions I want to get at with **VIDEO CACHE** is how the entire notion of preservation is thwarted in the digital online realm. But my thought is that preservation is really a central issue of this project. If you look up the etymology of “preservation”, it leads you to “self-preservation” (seventeenth-century) and “conservation” and “protection” (eighteenth-century). I find that it says a lot about preservation as a paradox—that you have to protect and keep intact—to access later. To me... online, we have to reconsider this notion. I would go out on a limb and say that access itself could be preservation. Could be. I’m not saying it is, but I think it needs to be a bigger part of the discussion than it has been so far. I don’t think storage and memory are the same thing, but I think access might be a memory trigger...

What pervades, either way, is that the online realm is forcing us to reconsider the foundational concept of preservation within and beyond the archive. I think preservation is also really pertinent to the work featured in **VIDEO CACHE**, especially if we consider how many works draw upon other works—found footage, mainstream media clips, collage and commentary on pop culture and so on. A lot of that work was

pre-internet, so it's interesting to think about this in relation to video as an art practice that has a political impetus. That the online realm makes file-sharing more easy and accessible is interesting to think about within video art's art historical trajectory, too... where does *wayward* fit into this?

NF: The idea that access in itself is a kind of preservation in terms of a collective conversation and memory is very interesting. It makes me think about how you could try to work with collective memory as a site. But also the whole question of memory has been altered by the amount, scale and speed of information that's available and that we all, to some extent, deal with. Our collective attention span tends to (or has necessarily) become smaller. This is obvious in a way. You could argue that this just means we are able to deal with and/or process more information faster. I have some doubts about this. I also wonder where experimental video art fits into this enormous data stream. I like the idea that everyone is or could be an artist and that participation becomes more open. I'm still attached to different kinds of conversations, exchange and experience, including online, but also in person, in groups, in a variety of venues.

Does more access mean preservation? Or does everything just become disposable? I also wonder who really has (or even wants) access to what. Is doing everything online becoming a convention?

MH: I hear what you are saying about how time and speed pertain to framing preservation online...

NF: Yes, this is interesting... there is no doubt that we have been changed by technology, including our perception of time... and probably space, for that matter. I see that artists and art institutions have responded to this in some way. But the type of response could be to offer radically different possibilities for experience and interaction: for example stillness, silence or some kind of very slow and meditative experience. This may seem a bit romantic, naïve even, and certainly not the only response, but I would say, still valid! If you think about an hour-long video loop projected in a gallery, for example, many people will not have the time or patience for this kind of interaction with a work. But is that a reason not to produce or show something like this?

I wonder if art and art institutions should be moving closer to the speed of everyday lived experience or deliberately offering alternative experiences? I realize the idea that art is counter-culture is somehow over, but it just seems so impoverishing to move everything in one direction: more/bigger/faster. We could debate this, but I would even question if this is the best way to engage an audience in a museum context. We can talk about open and free access in terms of exchange and conversation. Clearly online resources are great tools. There is also an aspect that's about consuming and discarding information at high speed. This makes me wonder who is really going to look at and think about video art? I'm not sure about this, but maybe the sheer amount of video available online in one way or another discourages viewers from spending much time with anything in particular, especially anything 'difficult.'

At the same time, this doesn't detract from the incredible resources available online, particularly for research and education. In terms of presentation and creating a certain type of experience for viewers, I think online platforms have limitations. For me, marginal is okay and I don't have any illusions about being able to speak to everyone. I'm interested in small audiences.

The whole question of memory is endlessly fascinating. Artists (I think) want to make things that people remember and they also want to be part of the cultural conversation. Is something that you see once in a particular place and time (an event or screening) with all of its associated sensory, embodied information, going to be remembered differently than something you look at repeatedly online, possibly in a distracted way? I don't know the answer to this. I see that value based on scarcity or exclusivity is problematic, but what's the other side of this coin? Everything available all the time everywhere?

MH: I would counter this point and say it's not about everything being available for free all the time as much as it is about acknowledging the 'many lives' and contexts of video. What I mean is that in Canada, distributors and festivals tend to consider works new if they were produced in the last two years. Distributors also hold high the value early works—from the 70s and 80s—often in deteriorating formats. So I think what the online might offer is a place for works that fall in between. That's one thing. The other thing is that sites like UBU Web make available works that are rare and out of circulation, works that would never be accessed otherwise or are so obscure that most people would not even know to search them out.

So in this way, I would argue that the online realm extends the notion of audience and has the potential to include more people, to inspire more people. This doesn't mean that marginal is not okay; in fact the web's kind of like a giant amalgam of marginal interests...

NF: I see what you mean. In the ways you describe here, I have to agree... in terms of research, archiving, preservation and extending the audience.

There is no question that online screening increases access. Maybe for me the question is whether this is always the best way of seeing work. If an artist spends months constructing a sound track—you want people to be able to hear it on a real sound system. Or if you're working with image processing in very particular ways, you want the audience to be able to see the image correctly. But these can also be problems in live screening contexts. One solution is having different versions of the same work for different screening situations.

MH: To me it seems like the more people have access to something, the better preserved it is, as it remains part of a collective conversation: to be reassessed, remixed, deconstructed, intellectualized, critiqued, and so on. But for sure 'access' is a problematic concept, too.

NF: This makes sense. Access keeps things alive in a way. For me file-sharing, collaboration and exchange are where online video becomes really interesting. Thinking about *wayward* in this realm, our SPLINTER project has really worked in terms of production, exchange, collaboration and even developing an extended sense of community. As a kind of video chain letter, it really relied upon file-sharing. We started with one short video that you made. I responded to it. We put both online and drafted a series of instructions to send out.

Interestingly, we also sent out data DVD copies with invitations by mail to specific artists whom we wanted to participate. They were asked to make a video in response to my video, which drew from your video, and to invite another artist to continue this chain. We encouraged people to respond in any way they liked, using the video they received by mail as a starting point. The response has been really interesting and inspiring. All the videos can be seen online, and there is also a plan to organize a live screening of those works at some point, or to make a compilation video. For me SPLINTER is an example of how online exchange can work in terms of collaboration, inspiration and extending your individual practice in new directions.

It's interesting to think about projects like this and to think about how one idea/approach/image (in the form of a video) is transformed through a series of other processes and points of view... what one person takes from another and so on. I like the idea of setting something loose and observing what happens... putting material out there not knowing exactly how it will be used or where it will end up. There are now 11 works on the site for SPLINTER and they really demonstrate how ideas circulate—what it means to be inspired and to draw from other people's work.

So video art online is just one venue...

MH: I agree that online video art should just be seen as a venue—an alternative or option—and not a progression or replacement of offline screenings, for example.

My interest is also in how the online realm is almost always contrasted to the offline: the quality, experiential elements, viewing experience and so on. But I think we tend to forget that the white room/black box experience that we now deem ideal in a lot of ways, wasn't the original screening context either, if such a thing exists. And especially not for video art... Into the 1930s, cinema-going involved a collective and attentive spectatorship, but prior to this, the viewing experience was more like unruly Vaudeville and popular entertainment forms. And early films were also often screened consecutively without effort to demarcate beginning or end. The emergence of video art in the 1960s created new practices of spectatorship and exhibition protocols in galleries. For a period of time, video art appeared in marginal spaces within galleries—unsure of how to conceive of video as art—tucked away in foyers and corridors, under the stairs, etc. But it was only in the 1990s that a new default format was born—the white cube became a black

box, with large ‘frameless’ projections onto dark enclosed gallery walls. The current viewing etiquette, that largely carries over from cinema to the gallery space, demands respect for the works of art (generally) through attention and silence.

NF: I’m interested in a variety of viewing experiences. Even with single channel video, a physical experience of viewing a projected image has always been important to me as an artist. Online is definitely interesting as one of several modes of presentation, but not as a replacement. Again I can see that it’s especially useful (invaluable, even) as a research and educational tool and maybe also as an introduction to someone’s work. As I think more about this, I’m remembering that for certain videos I picture one person as the audience. Usually I think of a gallery situation with a small screen and headphones for this type of work, but viewing online with headphones would be another possibility for addressing one person at a time.

I’m interested especially in the physical/phenomenological possibilities of different modes of presentation. I haven’t thought enough yet about how this works online but it could be interesting.

I’m not sure if etiquette is really the question: or even respect for the work. Isn’t it more a question of what kind of experience you want to have as a viewer? And what constitutes “experience” and “interaction”?

I also really like more unruly, Vaudeville-type situations as one possibility and I can think of some examples that have stayed with me. These experiences were interesting partly because the viewing etiquette was a lot less formal, also because the venues were outside of usual gallery, museum or official cinema contexts, and most importantly because the audiences were mostly non-art world and they engaged in different ways with the artists and with the work. The questions and the conversations were different. One was a screening tour in Scotland. Another was *Rendez-vous with Madness*, a screening organized by Deirdre Logue at the Queen Street Mental Health centre in Toronto. The other one that comes to mind was in a squat in Bielefeld, Germany. Very memorable experiences... which brings me back to the whole question of memory and preservation, as well as experience and interaction.

I guess when anything becomes a convention it’s interesting to experiment with other possibilities.

I know that these questions are central to your doctoral research, as well as in your work as a video-maker. As an academic but also as someone who makes things, how are you thinking about research and creation and how does it relate to the **VIDEO CACHE** project?

MH: Thinking of what I do as research-creation is an approach that works for me now. There was a period where I struggled with the term because I wasn’t sure what it meant, how it was applied, how it could be assessed, and ultimately, I worried that it created a distinction between research and creative work,

rather than incorporating them to challenge certain foundational ideas about what constitutes legitimate and “rigorous” research, and conversely, what doesn’t count. I see it differently now (in large part thanks to Kim Sawchuk, Owen Chapman and Matt Soar at Concordia University), and it not only appeals to my research politics and ethics, but it very much situates me as a particular kind of researcher. Together, as an approach and philosophy, my work invariably challenges the foundations of what constitutes knowledge and ‘knowledge production,’ as we like to call it in Communication Studies. I think it was Einstein who said something to the effect that research is not about the answer but about the way the question is asked. I like this idea of research requiring not only one’s positioning as a researcher within a specific process, and mode of documentation and analysis, but also that this very process becomes the crux of research. Thought of in that way, research is not about proving a hypothesis—it is far more experimental, complex and invested in ideas about knowledge creation and the ‘iterativeness’ of it all.

Another Einstein quote I like: “In theory, theory and practice are the same. In practice, they are not.” I like to think that there is an integral part of research that is practice-based by definition in research creation. In the case of **VIDEO CACHE**, research creation has come to mean two things. One: collaboration enriches research, and from a feminist purview, fits with the idea that a very substantial exchange with the community with whom you work is necessary as an acknowledgment of the shared contribution to that field of knowledge. Collaboration is a word that gets thrown around a lot, but in this case it is the key to producing rich, detailed, and thorough research—nothing about this project is accessible without a personal investment and that means being personally accountable, responsible and involved at each stage of the project. Often I think that this project chose me, or that we chose each other. **VIDEO CACHE** is a way to highlight the extraordinary initiative from SAW Video in building the Mediatheque long before video was on the web, and including their patient and engaged assessment of how such a project figures in the current technolandscape. These are difficult questions. The research creation component of research then, includes curating **VIDEO CACHE**, showcasing some of the videos of the Mediatheque, organizing a public event around it, inviting artists and contributors and technicians for the project to attend and discuss, creating documentation through a catalogue such as this one and an online showcase for one month, and contextualising it all with both published academic articles and documentary video footage. Secondly, research creation is about an approach—if not a politic—for research. It means engaging in research while being highly reflexive on process and, in turn, always reflecting on how knowledge is being produced... what gets highlighted and—more importantly from a cultural Studies standpoint—what gets left out and what power relations are revealed as a result. So to merge two answers into one, research creation allows me to position this project as necessarily collaborative, self-reflexive, process-driven and producing documentation that falls outside of the strictly written realm of academia. Finally, research creation is also focused on process rather than identity; this appeals to me very much as someone who identifies neither as academic nor artist.



VIDEO CACHE Curated by Penny McCann, SAW Video

VIDEO CACHE Sponsored and hosted by GIV

VIDEO CACHE Catalogue by Mél Hogan

VIDEO CACHE Online Exhibit by Mél Hogan

Wayward.ca by Mél Hogan & Nikki Forrest

SAW Dust video by Anatoly Ignatiev (online)

Mediatheque launch video by Firuz Daud for SAW Video (online)

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