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The Red and The Green

BRUCE JENKINS

Critical assessments of the cinema of Hollis Frampton usually revert to his work of the early '70s, to such films as *Zorns Lemma*, *nostalgia*, and *Critical Mass*, all justly celebrated since they rehearse the terms of a dialectic central to his enterprise. The analysis, in isolation, of these privileged texts does not, however, fully illuminate that dialectic, grounded as it is in three decades of consideration of the cinematic apparatus and the conditions of an ontology of film.¹ It is, rather, by studying the works located at the edges of his enterprise that we may chart the singular movement that propelled Frampton from his early engagements with the mechanics of film to later elaborations on the possibilities of what he termed the "infinite cinema."²

To enhance the visibility of this trajectory, I have elected to color code its terminal points. I shall label the initial stage red (the first of the primary colors, emblem of corporeality, symbolic hue of revolution, the tint of the first of his films to be released, *Process Red*) and the final stage green (the glow of the video display terminal, the tint of *Gloria!*, the last completed film of the project known as *Magellan*). The Red and The Green is a tale of spectral shift that begins with a young man of letters seeking, in the mechanism of the moving image, another mode of writing. It ends with the mature artist's inversion of those terms in the service of a complex project, at once personal and historical, expressive and analytic. This is the tale already twice told in the allegories of artistic practice that emerge from the tripartite structure of *Zorns Lemma* and the comic thumb-nail metahistory of film sketched in the sections of *Hapax Legomena*. It is a tale, nevertheless, that bears retelling.

1. For Frampton's commentary on the critical reception of his work, see Scott MacDonald, "Interview with Hollis Frampton: *Hapax Legomena*," *Film Culture*, nos. 67-68-69 (1979), pp. 174-176.

2. See Hollis Frampton, "For a Metahistory of Film: Commonplace Notes and Hypotheses," *Artforum*, vol. 10, no. 1 (September 1971), pp. 32-35, reprinted in *Circles of Confusion: Film, Photography, Video: Texts 1968-1980*, foreword by Annette Michelson, Rochester, Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1983, pp. 107-116.

The Red

We do not receive wisdom, we must discover it for ourselves, after a journey through the wilderness which no one else can make for us, which no one can spare us, for our wisdom is the point of view from which we come at last to regard the world.

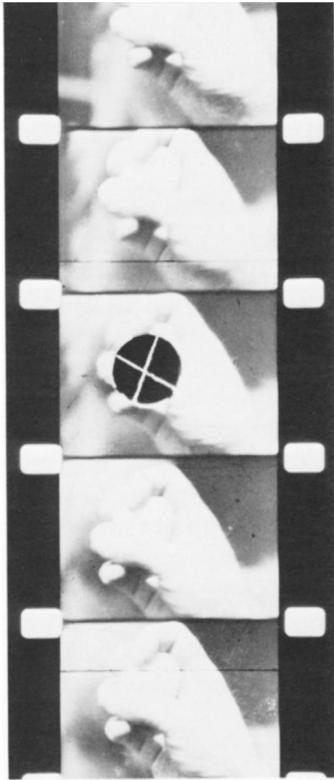
— Marcel Proust, *Within a Budding Grove*

The earliest films suggest that his training in “living and dead languages” and his literary ambitions had predisposed Frampton to seek out and develop the linguistic dimensions of his newly adopted medium. In what appears to be his first film, *Clouds Like White Sheep*, language was introduced directly within the image by way of poetic subtitles affixed to evocative shots of clouds and sky (tinted “Mallarmé azure”), while in *Obelisk Ampersand Encounter*, a linguistic device was appropriated to resolve a problem of cinematic construction (a male voice utters the word *and* at the juncture of two rather disparate shots: one depicting Cleopatra’s Needle and the other an ambulatory collision at lunch hour on Third Avenue). In yet another early work, Frampton simply labeled a set of shots taken from a moving elevated train a *Ten Mile Poem*.³

These juxtapositions of film image with text were followed by a series of investigations through which Frampton sought rather to establish cinema-specific principles of construction based on the material nature of the medium. His breakthrough in this regard came with the completion of *Process Red*, one of a trio of “first films” released in 1966, which revealed a Frampton deeply immersed in mapping out an ontology of filmmaking and formulating the practice that I have termed The Red. He chose in the film to focus upon a perspicuous emblem of artistic intervention — hands. They form not only the principal content of the film, but also inform directly the manner of its production. A rapid succession of manual activities — hands holding cigarettes, raising glasses, lowering coffee cups, peeling hard-boiled eggs, screwing in bolts, wiping down tables, at rest on knees or in pants pockets — is presented through shots which are hand-held, on stock that appears hand-tinted, and in an order so complicated that even the filmmaker described it as “manhandled.”

Process Red’s hand-crafted aesthetic is based principally on the radical use of montage which produces an almost physical assault on the filmstrip. Its Eisensteinian character derives from the deployment of paradigms of spatial

3. For these descriptions of Frampton’s lost “earlier-than-early” films, I am indebted to the work of Scott MacDonald in his “Interview with Hollis Frampton: The Early Years,” *October*, no. 12 (Spring 1980), pp. 103–126.



Hollis Frampton. Process Red. 1966.

conflict such as oppositions between “close shots and long shots,” “pieces of graphically varied directions,” and “pieces of darkness and pieces of lightness.”⁴ The context in which these experiments with montage are conducted, however, remains quite distinct from the Eisensteinian program: the film’s silences, its steadfast refusal to speak of its actors, to elaborate upon their activities, to depict them within a continuous space of action (that is, outside of the continuity born of their copresence on the filmstrip), all serve to announce the emergence of a practice at once nonnarrative and temporally determined, representational and replete with graphic events erupting on the celluloid surface.

Adopting the emblematic color of revolution, *Process Red* radically challenges the dominance of the diegetic (the power of the image to depict and project the environment of manual activity) through an explicit acknowledgment of the nature of the film material. The Red emerges most palpably in these physical attempts to generate expressive force from a film-specific lexicon composed of the visible signs of editing (tape splices, framelines, punchmarks) and such direct graphic means as scratching, gouging, and tinting the filmstrip. This is a labor-intensive, hand-crafted practice in which the corporeal presence of the maker is inscribed within the work’s constitutive movement and montage.

4. Sergei Eisenstein, “The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram,” in *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, ed. and trans. Jay Leyda, New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1949, p. 39. These were not Frampton’s first borrowings from Eisenstein; he had attempted in *A Running Man* (1963) a remake of the “Odessa Steps” sequence from *Potemkin*.

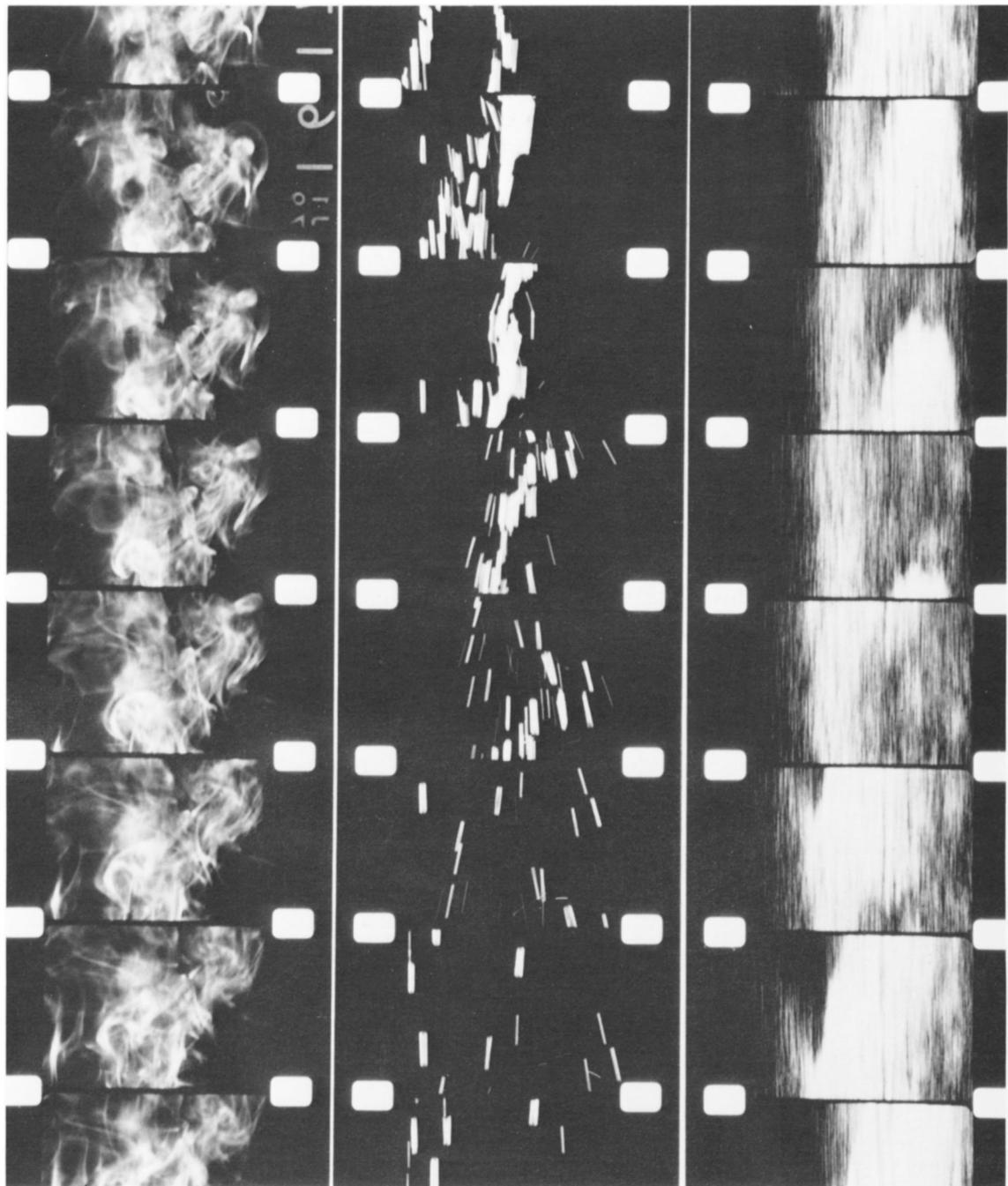
Much of Frampton's early film work turns upon this material practice and the interventional, physical strategies of *The Red*. *Manual of Arms*, for example, in its presentation of fourteen kinetic, highly edited portraits of Frampton's friends, employs many of the same shooting and editing techniques used in *Process Red*. Here, however, Frampton's handling of the camera and his elaborate montage experiments assume a signifying function, as well. His humorous censure of Carl Andre's consumption of caffeine and nicotine is accomplished through a montagist sight gag that collapses the two activities of drinking and smoking into a single, apparently continuous movement. Similarly, Lucinda Childs, seated, is virtually animated across his loft through a series of canted angles and rapid cuts; the random movements of Twyla Tharp are converted by loop-printing and a circular shooting pattern into a kinetic pirouette; and Michael Snow, sipping coffee, is transformed into a prestidigitator by a series of trick effects that cause an ordinary coffee cup to disappear and reappear under his casual gaze. These and other techniques inflect the simple document, transforming each object while referring to the presence of the subject behind the camera.

In these two early examples, *The Red* operates principally on a formal level (though also maintaining a semantic dimension in *Manual of Arms*). In others it operates on the level of content, metaphorically informing the imagery of the films. Thus in *States* Frampton offers an elegant equation between the constitutive elements of all matter (the three "states": solid, liquid, and gas) and those of film (the frame, the cut). His serial displays of images of cascading liquid, rising vapor, and falling grains function as cinematic analogues for that other basic substance which Michael Snow described as "the sliceable, arrangeable film material itself."⁵ In *Maxwell's Demon*, his first systematic experiment with color and sound, Frampton derives the color spectrum from the six additive and subtractive primaries and cuts the sound of sprocket holes to coincide with the synthesis of color. The considerable effort expended in generating these filmic elements analytically is projected onto the film itself in the figure (taken from a "found" instructional film) of Frampton's *Demon*—a man performing a series of Canadian Air Force exercises.⁶

The Red continues to dominate Frampton's film practice, assuming its most rarefied form in *Artificial Light*. The exhaustive range of shooting and editing strategies employed and the kind of imagery used are strongly reminiscent

5. *Film-Makers' Cooperative Catalogue*, no. 5, New York, The New American Cinema Group, 1971, p. 108.

6. An equally felicitous metaphor of film practice emerges in another "found" film of the period, *Works and Days* (1969): appropriating the imagery intact from an instructional film about planting a Victory Garden and taking the title from a classical treatise on agriculture, Frampton draws a humorous analogy between gardening and filmmaking as physical activities involving the segmentation of long, narrow strips which must be sutured via serial strategies—"nurtured and cultivated, hoed and so forth."



Hollis Frampton. States. 1967, revised 1970.

of *Process Red* and *Manual of Arms*. It has again, as its cast, a group of Frampton's friends performing simple gestures: Carl Andre sipping wine, Twyla Tharp munching food, Rosemarie Castoro smoking, Lee Lozano mugging for the camera, Bob Huot conversing animatedly. *Artificial Light*, however, is subjected to a second level of articulation by the repetition of the principal imagery in twenty variations based on physical interventions and/or optical processing—"a cookbook," as Frampton envisioned it, "of things to do to a piece of film."⁷

At the first level of articulation is the film that resembles *Process Red* and *Manual of Arms*, a 1¼-minute work systematically organized around the mechanics of film construction and six basic connective devices: the cut, superimposition, fade, dissolve, long take, and camera movement. In the film's first ten seconds, Frampton joins more than fifty shots with straight cuts. Carefully matching the sightlines of each artist's closeup, he constructs (or rather reconstructs) the spatial continuity of the roundtable arrangement of the performers. This continuity is then challenged through a rapid series of mismatched angles, only to reemerge through the use of superimposition; fades of brief, portraitlike shots of each artist; and finally a series of distended lap dissolves. The film phrase concludes with two other continuity devices: the long take, which Frampton uses in a single protracted long shot of the five artists and, in a remarkable interpolation, a single continuous zoom into a rather artificial-looking image of the moon. This apparently anomalous final image actually serves to complete the array of continuity-producing devices by demonstrating the mechanism of camera (focal) movement as a simple linear means of linking spaces.

It is this same basic sequence of shots—a work in its own right as materially complex as any of Frampton's finished films—that is repeated twenty times in the course of *Artificial Light*. While the first level of filmic articulation organized the footage according to film-specific conventions of editing and shot transition, the second level of articulation subjects the footage to a series of external modifications derived from the basic materials and processes of filmmaking. Frampton presents visible sprocket holes (overprinted in the second repetition) and black leader, and uses optical processes such as superimposition (of the footage onto itself with a slight temporal lag), reversed images, negative printing, and colorization. Applied serially to the original imagery, these devices inflict a violence on the material, effecting a continual shift in the balance between the hegemony of the diegetic content and the intrusive visibility of the presentational, intervening forms.

This confrontation between the materials of the medium and the representational imagery in each section of the film effectively summarizes the thematic and formal concerns of Frampton's earlier filmmaking—so that *Artificial Light*, insofar as it is his most materially inflected work, becomes a most "typi-

7. MacDonald, "Interview: The Early Years," p. 124.

cal” film. At the same time, however, it functions as a limit text for the practice I have called The Red. For beyond presenting a virtual anthology of shooting and editing strategies, graphic devices, and interventional techniques, the formal system of double articulation established creates the possibility of an endless cycle of material intervention. With *Artificial Light*, Frampton seemed to have reached the logical boundaries of a practice predicated on the material conditions of the medium and a mechanical comprehension of the *act* of filmmaking.

A Monochromatic Interlude

That *Artificial Light* brought Frampton to a sort of cinematic cul-de-sac is suggested by the extent to which the next two films took as their subject matter (on one level) a reexamination of the formal development of his own filmmaking—retracing terrains already covered before mapping out new areas of investigation. Thus, for example, *Zorns Lemma*, in addressing the aesthetic impasse, recapitulates Frampton’s passage from an artificer of language to a maker of images. In a similar act of retrospection, *Hapax Legomena*, in its seven serial parts, systematically recounts the discrete moments of his emergence as a filmmaker and, ultimately, proposes a new direction for filmic practice.

It was in *Remote Control*, the sixth section of *Hapax Legomena*, that this new direction was first suggested. An intentionally unwieldy work, it is divided into five parts, each of which recycles a 2¾-minute (100-foot) loop of commercial television imagery. The apparent enigma at the center of the film involves the displacement of Frampton’s typical repertoire of material interventions onto the textual presence of a set of numerals (0 to 40, numerical notations for the “five ways of making” and/or the “five ways of knowing”).⁸ Not unlike the old joke about penitentiary humor (in which the tedium of the telling of a limited repertoire of jokes is resolved by a notational system requiring only the calling out of a number to elicit laughter), Frampton reduced the set of all possible physical assaults upon the filmstrip, camera movements, editing strategies, and so forth, to a series of numbers. While this comic encoding of artistic means recapitulated Frampton’s then-current practice (in such works “made by the numbers” as *States*, *Artificial Light*, *Zorns Lemma*), *Remote Control*’s mode of production—“right off the tube”—indirectly suggested new formal and conceptual terrains that went beyond the mechanics of the moving image toward the electronic pathways of mental activity. It was *as if* the interfacing of cinema and

8. For a meticulous description of the textual display of this numerical series and a section-by-section account, see MacDonald, “Hollis Frampton’s ‘Hapax Legomena,’” *Afterimage*, no. 5 (January 1978), p. 12. It should be noted that, my section title notwithstanding, the first movement of *Remote Control* concludes with a color version of the television roll, a “surprise,” according to Frampton, “out of Haydn (or S.M. Eisenstein’s IVAN, II).”

video had invigorated the older medium, providing it not so much with a new content (the detritus of commercial television) as a new practice of imaging.

Special Effects, the final section of *Hapax Legomena*, confirms *Remote Control*'s function as a clearinghouse for the older materialist forms and mechanical options. Here Frampton loosens his formalist constraints, signaling a new practice as he wipes the slate clean, leaving visible just the bare outline of the film frame. *Special Effects* consists solely of moving shots of the white, dotted outline of a rectangular frame and a piece of synthesized, quasi-musical accompaniment. The frame appears to float within the shallow space of projection, assuming the guise of an animated character, replete with its own machinelike voice. The virtual absence of content or action ("one expects something to happen") serves to announce (as the ultimate proposition of *Hapax Legomena*'s serial account of the metahistory of film) the emergence of a new form, as well as a new protagonist—the spectator. The Framptonian photographer-protagonist of the earlier sections vanishes, and a new character is addressed by the filmmaker, who asks him or her to "people this given space, if you will, with images of your own devising."⁹ In so doing, he effectively reverses the direction of cinematic articulation, for it is the spectator who now projects content *onto* the screen, which is thereby transformed into a locus for conceptual discourse.

The Green

*If the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.*

— Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Brahma*

That Frampton had chosen to embark on a new, uncharted direction in his filmmaking is evident in the figure of the eponymous protagonist of virtually the entire post-*Hapax Legomena* output—Magellan, who during his five-year voyage "trespasses (alive and dead) upon every psycholinguistic 'time zone,' circumambulating the whole of human experience as a kind of somnambulist."¹⁰ The explorer serves as the central metaphor of a vast film series which attempts a complete tour of the imaginative world. As in earlier artistic travels, however, the focus is as much on Frampton himself as on the aesthetic ground he covers. *Magellan* diverges from previous work in its move toward a metahistorical

9. *Film-Makers' Cooperative Catalogue*, no. 6, New York, The New American Cinema Group, 1975, p. 91.

10. Hollis Frampton, "Statement of Plans," n.d., Files of Anthology Film Archives, New York (photocopy).

model that focuses on the diverse range of materials (still and moving, real and imagined) produced by that “polymorphous camera [which] has always turned, and will turn forever, its lens focussed upon all the appearances of the world.”¹¹ In *Magellan*, Frampton was to become the metahistorian of this “infinite film,” charting its flow and accessing it in all of its dimensions.

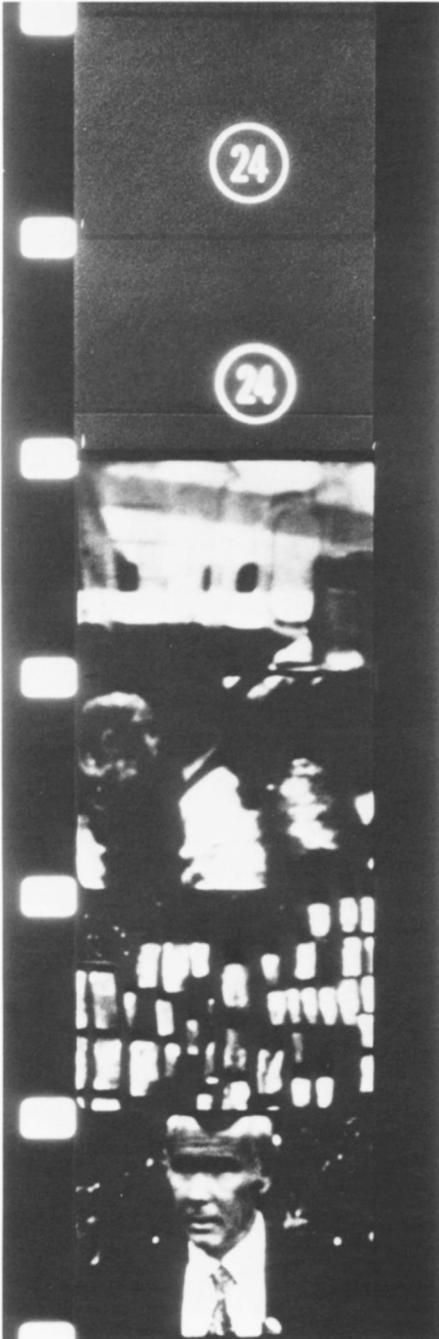
The practice I have called The Green emerges in the films of *Magellan* as the direct result of Frampton’s postmechanical, metahistorical model of film-making. This shift is accompanied by a new technological orientation already evident in the videographic imagery of *Remote Control* and the synthesized score for *Special Effects*. Moving beyond the film-specific repertoire of forms and techniques that had characterized The Red, *Magellan* is aglow with the phosphorescent possibilities of an electronic mode of image and sound production. In an outline of his work on *Magellan*, Frampton described this new set of resources as:

rhetorical options available to film art through such image-forming and -manipulating tools as optical and video synthesizers, electronic means for synthesizing and modifying sounds, and the digital computer. I am particularly interested in these devices in proportion as they make available to film, within a framework that has some discoverable relation to “real time,” generative or metamorphic options that once lay outside the possibilities of film art simply because they could not handily be entertained during a single lifetime. I am not in the least interested in wandering among the ‘infinite possibilities’ of such devices; I want to press them into the service of cinema as directly as others have done with the mechanical camera.¹²

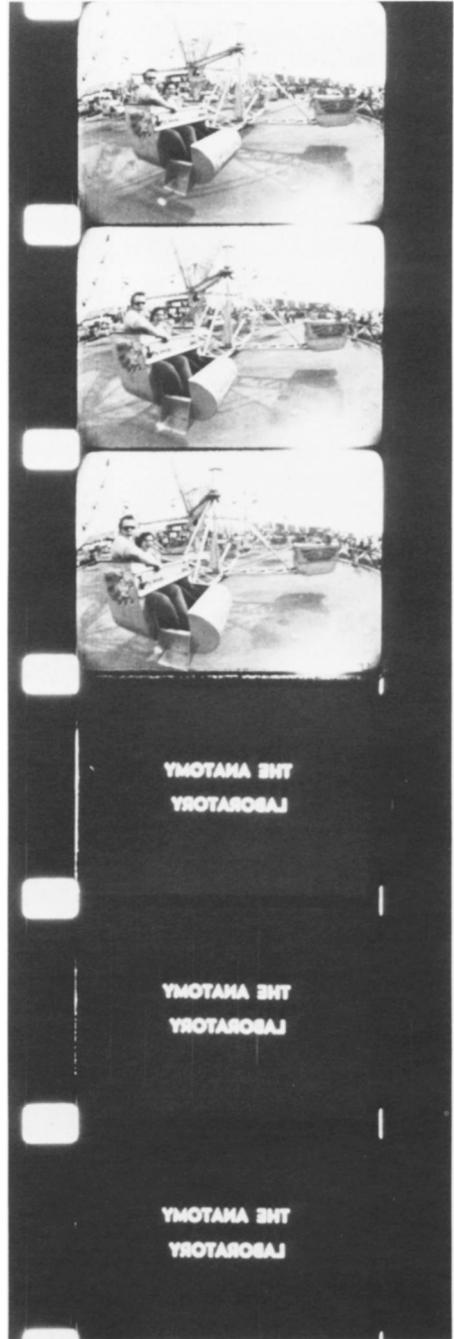
The extent to which Frampton actually availed himself of these electronic options in the construction of *Magellan* remains a matter for further research. Yet, given the speculative nature of the “infinite film” model, the metaphorical force exerted by these new technologies is evident even in work clearly constructed by more conventional means. Such is the case in early portions of *Magellan*, which consist of films that derive from the materials and methods of early cinema. The short *Cadenza I*, the first segment of *Magellan*’s year-long screening cycle, interpolates through parallel montage two sets of images that stem from opposite ends of film history: an informal color portrait of an outdoor wedding, accompanied by the sound of canned applause, and footage from a very early silent comedy. In combining these two disparate sets of images, Frampton dispenses with the conventional connective repertoire of straight cut, dissolve, or fade, developing instead a new form of shot transition: “That will consist in deriving from any given photographic ‘shot’ a purely *graphic* composition, which will then mediate with a subsequent ‘shot’ through means more

11. Frampton, “For a Metahistory of Film,” in *Circles of Confusion*, p. 111.

12. Frampton, “Statement of Plans.”



Hollis Frampton. Remote Control. 1972.



Hollis Frampton. More than Meets the Eye. 1979.

akin to those of animation than of classic *montage*.¹³ *Cadenza I* employs a set of moving graphic forms that, while marking the point of cinematic articulation, create the sense of continuous transition, miming perhaps the continuous turning of that “polymorphous camera.” These primary-colored opticals function much like an electronic cursor. For at the core of Frampton’s facility in retrieving these fragments from the “infinite film” is that originating aesthetic desire to write in images, to exercise what Astruc had termed the “camera-stylo.” As in much of Frampton’s early photography and mixed media work, the constructive force behind the film is language-based—namely, here, a cinematic pun that pays humorous homage to that touchstone of artistic modernity, Duchamp’s *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even*.¹⁴

Frampton makes frequent use of such filmic quotations and aesthetic homages throughout *Magellan*—simulating a sort of high-tech retrieval system able to key up disparate fragments of visual discourse stored on the reels of the “infinite film.” In *Public Domain*, for example, he recapitulates cinema’s infancy in a series of direct quotations from such notable primitive works as *Record of a Sneeze (Fred Ott’s Sneeze)* and *Sandow Flexing His Muscles*, two 1894 Edison kinesiographic shorts, as well as literal pieces of cinematic juvenilia (child wading at the beach, another throwing a tantrum at home, three women merrily blowing bubble pipes, and the finale, a melodramatic weighing of a newborn attended by anxious father, doctor, and nurse)—all readily retrievable/quotable fragments from our finite federal version of the “infinite film,” the paper print collection at the Library of Congress. Similar sorts of early footage bracket later works in the cycle, as in *Otherwise Unexplained Fires*, where red-tinted images from an antiquated scientific demonstration are inserted as an emblem of Frampton’s meditation on the relationship between the mechanics of film (a nineteenth-century invention) and its pyrotechnic possibilities (as a twentieth-century art form).

Citations are on occasion more figuratively drawn, as in *INGENIVM NOBIS IPSA PVELLA FECIT*, in which Frampton re-creates a Muybridge-like portfolio of human motion studies that features a nude woman engaged in various forms of ambulation and serial encounters with jump ropes and rubber balls. Similarly, *Magellan*’s massive central section, *Straits of Magellan*, which was to encompass hundreds of small, one-minute films, was conceived as “an homage to film’s very beginnings, the protocinema of the brothers Lumière.”¹⁵ The sampling of forty-nine such pieces that now constitute *Straits of Magellan: Drafts and Fragments* includes a number of direct invocations of the early Lumière

13. Hollis Frampton, Notes on *Magellan*, n.d., Files of Anthology Film Archives, New York (photocopy).

14. The pun derives from the juxtaposition of the wedding footage and the primitive comedy, in which two men play a practical joke upon an unsuspecting matron; while one engages her in conversation, the other picks a thread from her skirt and unravels it until she is stripped bare.

15. Frampton, “Statement of Plans.”

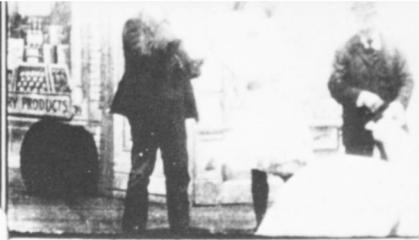
actualities (the most striking a reworking of *Démolition d'un mur* [1896], with a farm silo hauled down in place of the Lumières' wall). It includes, as well, direct references to Frampton's own films, as in the quotations of one of *Zorns Lemma's* replacement images, the solid state from *States*, and a pixilated passage from *Ordinary Matter*. Some of Frampton's films even return in their entirety, most appropriately, as *Dreams of Magellan*, a section of the larger work that includes his *Palindrome* and a complex reweaving of the three seasonal sections of *SO-LARIUMAGELANI* into *Dream I: Matrix*.

The "infinite film" which provides material for the practice of *The Green* is not only quotable for Frampton, but analyzable. Thus the recycling of filmic texts in *Magellan* is accompanied by the reappearance in his work of linguistic content and an exploration of the semantic dimensions of sound and image. In *Mindfall* Frampton inaugurates this work on a preverbal level, experimenting in the film's two released sections with a full range of contrapuntal, nonsynchronous sound/image configurations. Mindful of the seminal 1929 Soviet "Statement" on sound,¹⁶ he freely juxtaposes a set of sound effects—"specimens" from typically urban, technological, and man-made aural environments (car crashes, jackhammers, sirens, pinball machines)—with lush footage of tropical flora and fauna, of coastline, and of Spanish architecture recorded in and around the town in Puerto Rico where Columbus landed on his second voyage to the New World. What results is a discursive comedy which demonstrates not only the comic potential of the soundtrack itself (through sound effects set into humorous dialogue), but the complex range of comic effects generated by vertical pairings of sound and image. In dissecting "the oscillating *width* of that disjunction [of sound and image],"¹⁷ Frampton foregrounds the independent semantic status of the soundtrack prior to the merging of sound into either language or music.

A similar sort of semantic speculation is focused on the image in *More Than Meets the Eye*, in which Frampton travels to the purported birthplace of the Eisensteinian model of cinema, the fairground, with its "montage of attractions." *Magellan's* tour of the "infinite film" becomes momentarily peripatetic in the ambulating, wide-angled portrait of the fair, its throng of participants, its array of attractions (Belgian Waffles, Walk Away Sundaes, Flying Bobs, the Toboggan, a Hall of Health). Interpolated within this walking tour are nine optically reversed passages of text which are briefly flashed on the screen and framed by a repeated image of a ride known appropriately as "The Scrambler." Not unlike the spiraling texts of Duchamp's *Anemic Cinema* (1926), these flickering, reversed texts, by virtue of their graphic presence, challenge the compelling illusions of depth and movement generated by the camera's incessant circling of

16. Sergei Eisenstein, V. I. Pudovkin, and G. V. Alexandrov, "A Statement," in *Film Form*, pp. 257–259.

17. Hollis Frampton, personal correspondence, October 1978.



the fairgrounds. And as with Duchamp's punning texts, Frampton's intertitles bear little relationship to the images to which they are appended.¹⁸ Both texts and titles give a didactic edge to the work — suggesting a system of visual interpretation — and yet, ironically, the conventional loci of information, the explanatory titles, require more deciphering than do the images they purportedly describe. What is “more than meets the eye” must reside in the tension between the film's graphic and plastic elements and their modes of reading. For it is within that dialectic — spatial and conceptual — that Frampton locates what he termed “the onset of cinematic thought.”¹⁹

Perhaps no single work in *Magellan* more elegantly exemplifies the writerly weave of aural and visual citation leading to the “onset of cinematic thought” than *Gloria!*, one of a trio of films set for the final day of the entire screening cycle. The film recasts the multiple metahistories of *Magellan* in the relationship of two figures: Frampton's maternal grandmother, to whom the entire film cycle is dedicated, and her grandson, the filmmaker himself. Their identities are inscribed within the materials of the work in the form of citations from early cinema (like the grandmother, products of the nineteenth century) and a videographic display of textual materials (like the grandson, a twentieth-century product). The film begins with the former, a fragment from a primitive comedy that recounts misadventures at an Irish wake. Against this comic backdrop Frampton presents a series of sixteen “propositions” that include a rather extraordinarily varied inventory of personal recollections of the grandmother, ranging from the matter-of-fact (THAT SHE WAS OBESE; THAT SHE WAS MARRIED ON CHRISTMAS DAY, 1909, A FEW WEEKS AFTER HER 13TH BIRTHDAY; THAT SHE WAS A NATIVE OF TYLER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA, WHO NEVER KNEW THE EXACT YEAR OF HER OWN BIRTH TILL SHE WAS PAST SIXTY) to the charmingly incredible (THAT SHE KEPT PIGS IN THE HOUSE, BUT NEVER MORE THAN ONE AT A TIME. EACH SUCH PIG WORE A GREEN BAIZE TINKER'S CAP; THAT HER CONNOISSEURSHIP OF THE EROTIC IN THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM WAS UNERRING; THAT HER FINAL REQUEST WAS FOR A BUSHEL BASKET FULL OF EMPTY QUART MEASURES).

Frampton's inventory includes one of his grandmother's own recollections in the penultimate proposition:

THAT SHE REMEMBERED, TO THE LAST, A TUNE
PLAYED AT HER WEDDING PARTY BY TWO YOUNG

18. Some of the titles seem to describe another tour in their cataloguing of scenes and activities (ADVANCED STUDENTS AT WORK IN A BALANCE ROOM, A TEA AT THE HOUSE, INTERIOR DECORATION). Others seem vaguely interpretive of the imagery at hand (HERE, UNDER GREAT TENSION, STEEL BARS ARE PULLED APART; REHEARSING FOR A PLAY; THE ANATOMY LABORATORY).

19. Frampton, “Statement of Plans.”

IRISH COALMINERS WHO HAD BROUGHT GUITAR AND PIPES. SHE SAID IT SOUNDED LIKE QUACKING DUCKS; SHE THOUGHT IT WAS CALLED "LADY BONAPARTE."

It is this doubled recollection that determines a final element in the film, a transition from the silent text (consisting of computer type on a green videographic field) to an aural citation of the recollected wedding tune played in its entirety against the blank, green screen. A second early Irish-wake comedy follows, ending with the deceased arisen and dancing a wicked jig, while the text of Frampton's dedication concludes the film.

The aural and visual citations of which *Gloria!* is composed—indeed the film exists solely as citation—set the terms for a more global meditation on death, on memory, and on the power of the photographic image and recorded sound to resurrect the past. In so doing, the film seems to acknowledge what Frampton himself once characterized as the "resurrection of bodies in space from their dismembered trajectories."²⁰ The figurative resurrection implicit in the film's textual weave, however, exacts a certain price in the death of another figure—the author.

The Green is predicated upon this postauthorial understanding of cinema, of its generative capacity, its constant reinvention of itself from the materials and knowledge of an ever-advancing past. Seeking a future for filmmaking, Frampton returns the film author, in one sense, to that original role as recorder *and* presenter inherent in the conceptual and mechanical basis of cinema's own first device, the cinematograph, which functioned both as camera and projector. The filmmaker, so visibly present in the practice of *The Red*, all but vanishes in *The Green*, serving primarily as a conduit for the projection of the "infinite film" ("or of all knowledge, which amounts to the same thing")²¹ onto every available surface.

Epilogue: The Red and The Green

The movement from *The Red* to *The Green* in Frampton's conceptual understanding of the cinematic enterprise was inconvertible, yet in practice these were not mutually exclusive forms. Midway through the making of *Magellan*, *The Red* and *The Green* converge, resulting in a work that was able to reinstate Frampton's labor-intensive, material methods while pushing at the limits of the "infinite film." *Magellan: At the Gates of Death* consists of two complementary parts, *The Red Gate* and *The Green Gate*, representing "twenty-four encounters with death" that were to have been dispersed in small segments throughout the screening cycle. In their present state, seen together and roughly the length of

20. Frampton, "For a Metahistory of Film," in *Circles of Confusion*, p. 112.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

an average feature film, they constitute one of the most extraordinarily powerful and complex works in the Frampton oeuvre, a film “as ponderous, endless, uniform as its subject.”²²

The anatomy laboratory serves as the visual threshold onto Frampton’s subject, ever present in the figures of a half-dozen cadavers, a bisected skull, and an empty cranium (“Death’s Head”). Through the mechanical intervention of the movie camera and the postmechanical random accessing of images, Frampton sets about resurrecting these fallen bodies and simultaneously casting them into complex trajectories through a physical space. The body of the film consists of images of these remains of the human form, seen still or moving, singly or in superimposition, in black and white or tinted red or green, all bound together in virtually isomorphic sections. Within the single-layer material, Frampton presents inventories of the senses through initially amorphous images that shift, as he pans or tilts the camera, zooms or racks the focus of the lens, to reveal recognizable features (eyes, ears, noses, fingers)—a shooting strategy effectively linking physical change with a representation of mental activity.

It is out of the endless weaving and reweaving of the cadaver footage into concrete forms and abstract circulatory patterns that *The Red* is placed in the service of *The Green*—death emerging as the grounds for a discourse, both material and textual. Such a synthesis of the two practices (effected elsewhere, though perhaps less dramatically, in the seasonal films of *SOLARIUMAGE-LANI*) represents the ultimate, though largely unacknowledged and regrettably unfinished, accomplishment of Frampton’s filmmaking—to initiate a complex cinematic practice where previously only boundaries had existed.

22. Hollis Frampton, remarks at a screening of his work at NAME Gallery, Chicago, Illinois, April 7, 1977.