

Ottica TV

An unfinished history

I started Ottica TV in 2008 and it is now in mothballs. Over this period it underwent several changes which reflected the early history of digital movie making in relation to art practice. It also exemplified some of the decisions and revisions that often become necessary in the pursuit of creative projects.

In 2005 I had completed 25 years working as a milkman. In appreciation, the company that I worked for awarded me a service prize to spend as I wished. I had never done any movie making before but thought it might be fun and so opted for a Sony mini-DV camera. The very first movie I made, 'The Synaptic Sun' was accepted for the Egilsstadir Film Festival in North East Iceland. I was immediately hooked.

Jeremy Allaire was a US tech entrepreneur who started up the Macromedia Corporation. Its intention was to evolve the internet from a document browsing facility into a content rich interactive software platform. He sold Macromedia to Adobe and with the proceeds started up Brightcove, an online video platform, in 2004. In the following years the corporation was looking to expand its user base and I was the lucky recipient of one of their spamms. By 2006 I had made several movie shorts and was looking for a streaming platform on which to host them. Brightcove looked ideal; and more than that it was free. I became knowledgeable at codec and format conversion and the help desk at Brightcove became an invaluable source of information.

Artist movies were still the preserve of festivals and screenings so I thought there may be an opportunity for a dedicated channel for some of the interesting work I was seeing around me. Apart from paper catalogues, with stills from the movies, there was little by way of distributed documentation of this stream of creativity. In addition, installation art was increasingly using projection in a gallery setting and suffering the same paucity of documentation.

This was especially so as artists then did not usually have their own YouTube or Vimeo account. Vimeo was originally called 'College Humour' which, as the name suggests was for students to exchange funny videos. Only in 2009 and after being bought by IAC (Interactive Corporation) did it start to become a professional platform. Youtube was launched in 2005 and bought by Google in 2006. It was not as popular as it is today and still less a platform for art content. There was really very little in the way of channels for art movie making and the quality of both the platforms and streaming was very low. The take up of broadband by everyday users was also not so common.

At this time I was only posting up my own videos but I thought it would be interesting to see what the response would be among artists for a dedicated channel. In 2008 I set up the website (first; ottica-tv.com then ottica.co.uk) and linked it to my Brightcove platform. I did a 'call' on Artist Newsletter and received a very encouraging response with a wide variety of content. At that time not many artists had broadband and so I invited respondents to submit their movies on DVD. These arrived in a strange mixture of formats and codecs and it was a considerable learning curve to convert them all into a format that would be acceptable to the platform. At that time this was Flash format (*.flv) which has since been deprecated.

Given that I had so many movies now, I thought it would be a good idea if Ottica had its first screening. This took place in March 2009, followed by a second in October, at the Better Bankside Community Space, just behind the Tate Modern. It had a very good overhead projector and refreshment facilities - also, as I was their milkman, I got a great discount! These events had a very good attendance and I decided to make screening an annual event. The next screening at Bankside took place in November 2011 but in 2010 the Channel was invited to screen in Berlin for the EU funded 'Erased Walls' project. Also in 2010, Ottica took part in 'Croydon Skyline' and submitted 'High 5', a large scale sequential projection onto the side of an office block on Wellesley Street.

At this time there were several streaming facilities available on the internet and broadband speeds were becoming sufficient to enable good quality movie streaming. One benefit of this kind of screening was that it did not require a blacked out space and a defined time and location. Ottica teamed up with The Streaming Festival and did 2 themed screenings with them - 'Anastrophic Mondays' in 2009 at Amsterdam and 'Plat du Jour' in 2011 at The Hague.

It was just about this time that Brightcove decided to charge for their hosting service - £3000 p.a. in fact. First of all I tried streaming from my existing web hosting service. Only then did I discover that 'unlimited streaming' did not actually mean that and I got de-platformed for 'warehousing'. Youtube was established then so I hosted everything there and linked from the Ottica website. Currently I am de-platforming from Youtube and will be with Vimeo and Odysee in future.

By 2013 many artists were hosting their movies on their own facility and institutions like the Tate Modern were making documentaries of their artists and installations. The need for a curated platform was receding and I decided to return to the idea of recording installations that included the moving image in its wider context. In that year I applied for and received a Press Pass to the Venice Biennale. I was able to take my movie camera round on Press days and record the many artworks that used this kind of format. As can be imagined, recording moving image, in an often dark environment, was quite a challenge!

On return I tried out various editing and presentation formats but the standard overlay of commentary, such as you would find on the BBC, did not work very well as it interfered with the audio aspects of the works. Therefore in subsequent Biennales I just recorded a 'walk-through' and titled the sections with the pavilion and artist names. These are split into Pavilions and cover the years 2013 to 2017. I was not able to do 2019 and 2021 has been moved to November 2022. I thought it would be good to invite considered written commentary on these movies by the art public (in pdf format) so this is a project for the future.

In 2015 the Channel curated an online project for UNESCO International Year of Light called 'First Light' about artists' first visual experience. I was now starting to publish these on my Cipango.co.uk project site.

In 2016 Ottica hosted a peripatetic screening of the Addis Abbada Film Festival at the APT Gallery. The Festival was due to go ahead that year in the Ethiopian capital but was canceled due to a military coup. I proposed to the curators we run it here in London instead, an idea they were pleased to accept.

The Venice movies were migrated to a separate 'Reportage' section of the site with the intention of adding further to the range of documentation. However events were of conspire against this aspiration. Ottca TV is currently in mothballs awaiting both a return from the global 'Grand Peur' and my acquisition of a block of time to reconfigure the project.

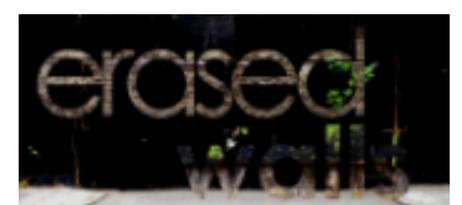
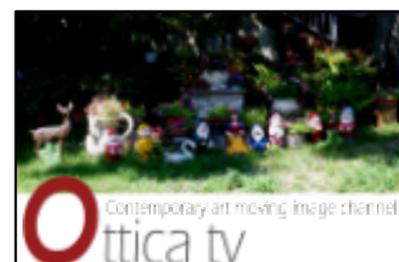
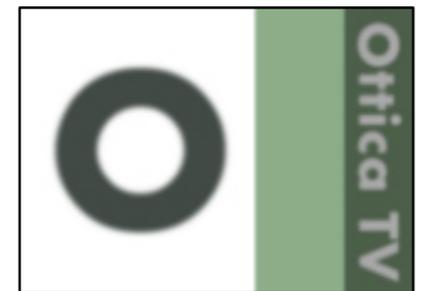
Ottica is the Italian word for optical - it is also the word for optician. As a humorous coda to the project I have had the email for the website ripped and distributed among the mailing lists of the Italian optician community. I regularly get invites to their shows and conventions. Maybe one day...

Thanks to all those who contributed content to the Channel:

Alexander Bates - Alexandra Dementieva - Alma Tischlerwood - Alyssa Ueno - Andrew Payne - Benjamin Ochse - Catherine A. Kennedy - Chia En Jao - Chia Hua Wu - Daisy Richardson - Daniel Rodrigo - Debra Fear - Eugenia Gortchakova - Fabiola Faidiga - Fran Cottell - Gianluca Ferrari - Giorgio Tentolini - Jade Heritage - Jason Marsh - Jonathan Gildersleeves - Jonathan Moss - Kianoosh Motallebi - Leopoldine Roux - Liz Harrison - Marianna and Daniel O'Reilly - Marlena Novak and Alan Jay Yim - Massimo Premuda - Max Valentin - Nicola Rae - Olga Koroleva - Seraphina Samet - Steven Scott - Susanna Carlisle - Tom Sands - Tom Walker - Tom Webber - William Joys - Ziggy Grudzinskas - Zoha Zokaei

Paul Malone 2021

Ottica TV Logos



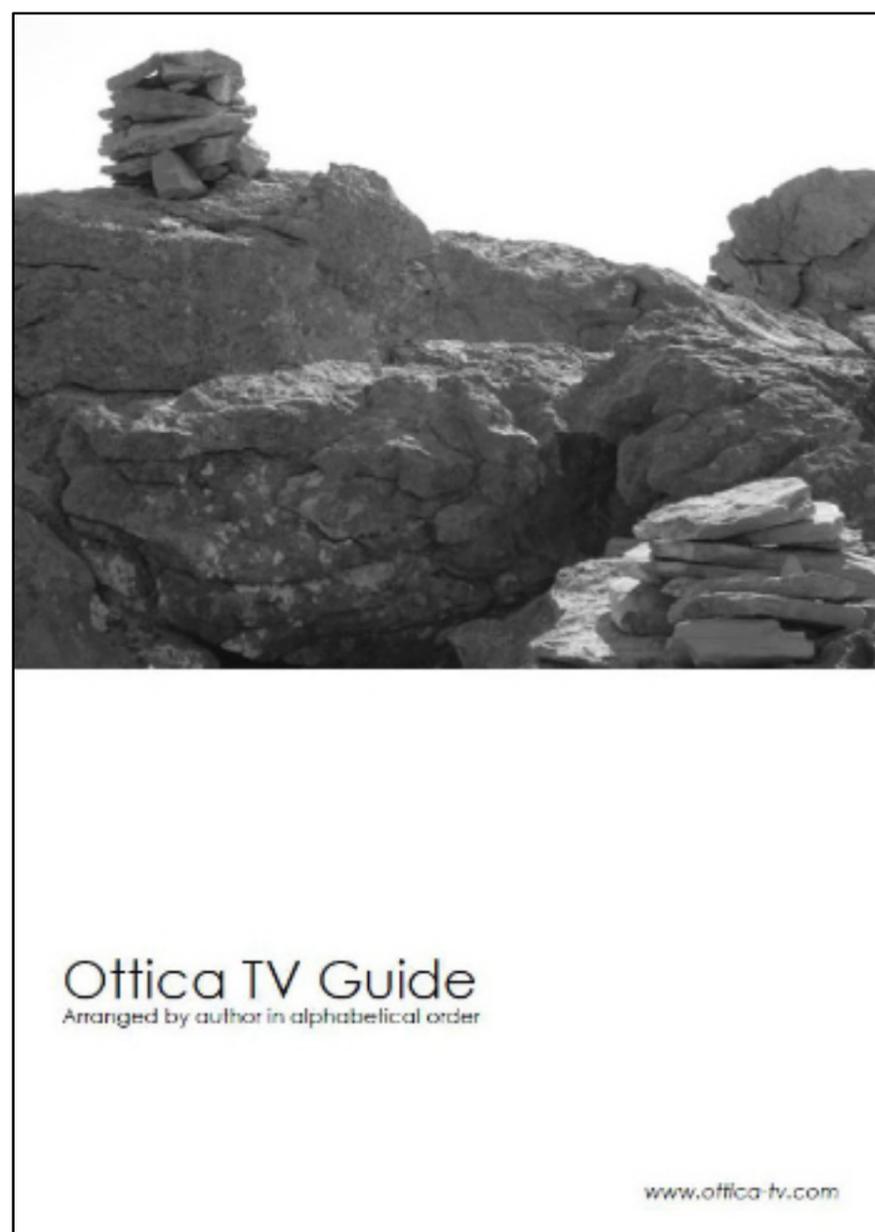
Ottica TV Screenings and Projects



An early Ottica TV webpage showing the Brightcove system

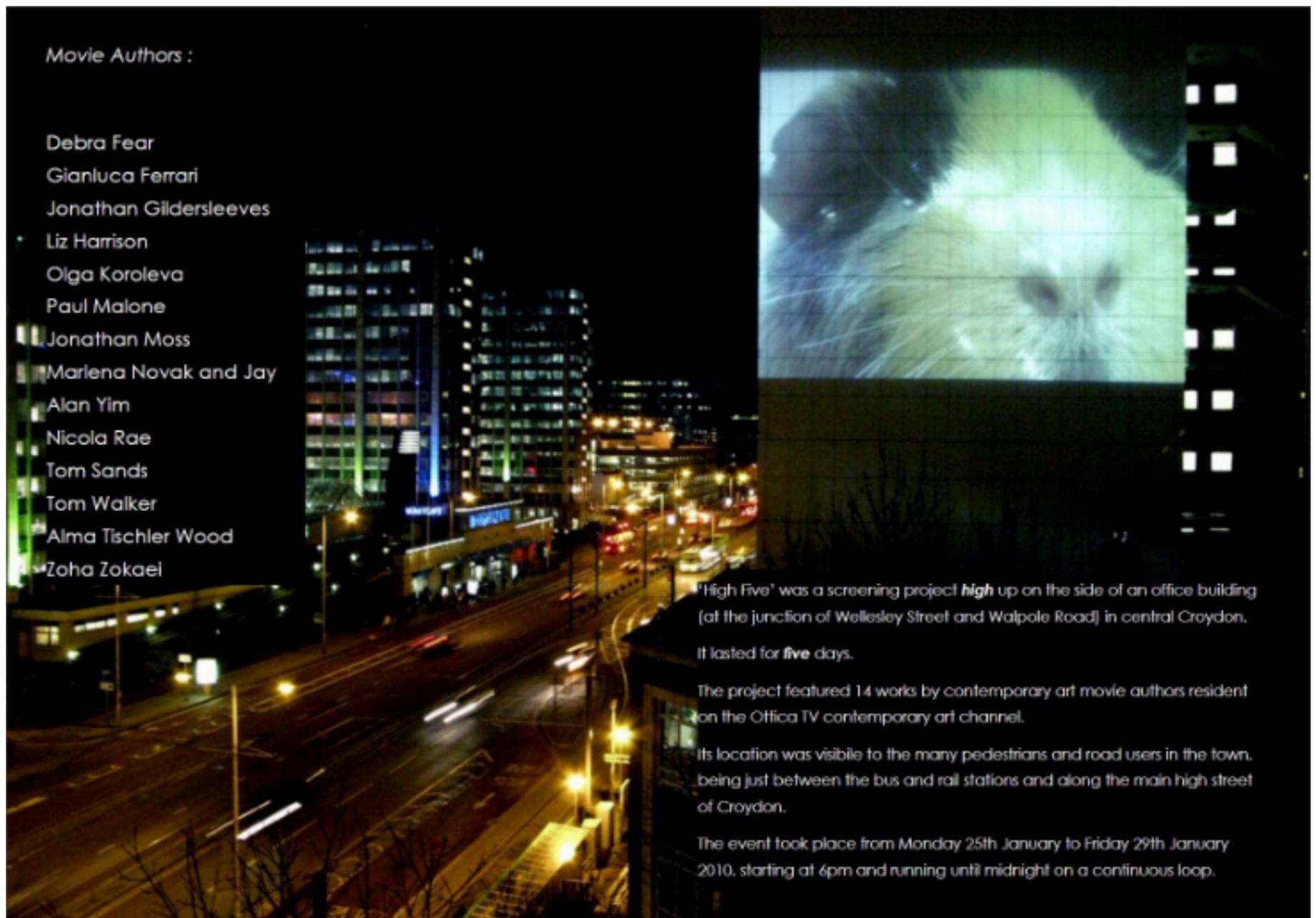


Ottica TV screening magazine March 2009

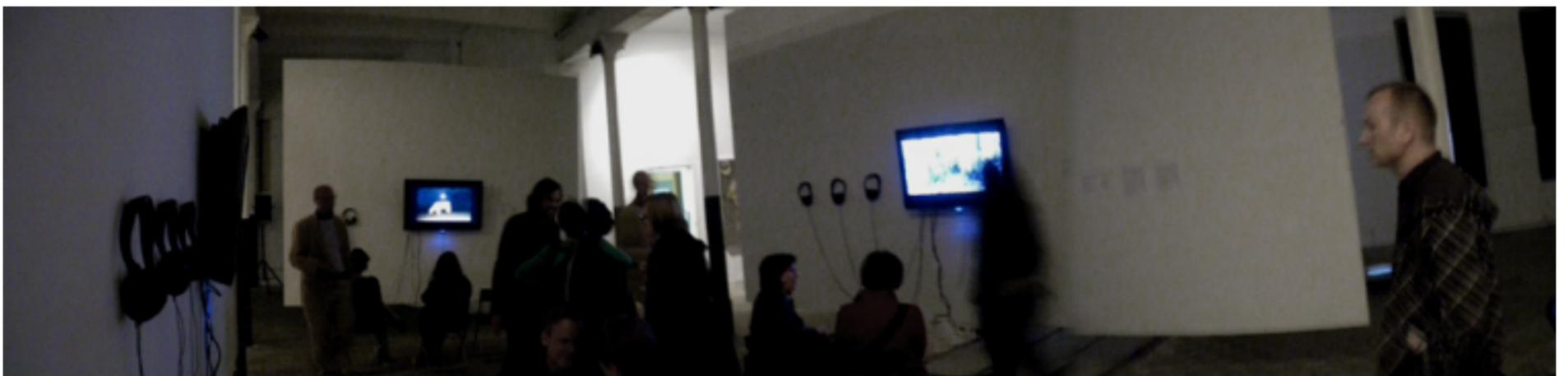


Screening magazine October 2009

'High 5' Croydon Skyline 2010

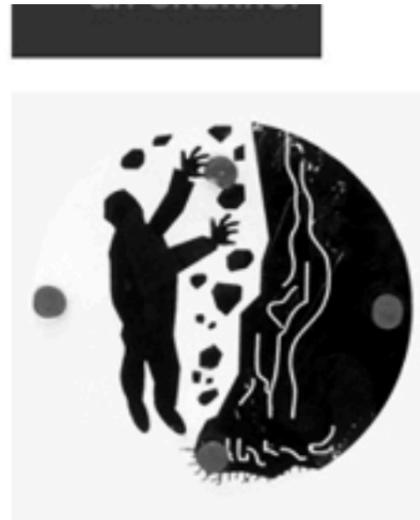


'Erased Walls' Berlin 2010



	Zoha Zokaei : And Yet Another Wall Walls are made to give us shelter. Walls are made to divide us. Walls are built to imprison us. Walls are not made out of Goldfinger. And Yet Another Wall...	04:20
	Steven Scott : Electric City - A Modulated Image A real time video of a decaying neon sign depicting the word 'Electricity' is projected onto a wall of a disused electricity substation	02:02
	Fabiola Faidiga : Circus Memo NATURE IS TRANSFORMATION / MEMORY IS OBLIVION. The project is a multimedia work made up of photos - three videos - a sculptural work and a live performance.	05:48
	Marlena Novak and Jay Alan Yim : Edge Detection Our interviewees shared their views on boundaries they perceive as affecting their daily lives and the environment they inhabit	10:00
	Nicola Rae : Night Frequencies In Night Frequencies - Deptford Creek 20-26-10 sonic frequencies were filmed responding live to situated sounds on a Friday night in Deptford SE London	07:00
	Eugenia Gortchakova : Free like a Leaf The video is based on the intensive correspondence between two philosophers - Karl Jaspers and Hannah Arendt. The Theme is Time	14:59
	Marianna and Daniel O'Reilly : Blackmail Starting with Delivery - Blackmail is the second part of a collaborative project which documents an ongoing quest for attaining personal/existential freedom by exploring the idea of inexchangeable in wardness through the example of the architectural	15:36
	Alyssa Ueno : Iron Glass and Navigation This short film piece Iron, Glass and Navigation observes this curious phenomenon through the reflective windows as well as depicting trains as crucial visual protagonists in the city of Tokyo	05:03
	Olga Koroleva : Unbelievable Unbelievable is a series of video and photo works that originate from a recent trip to Israel. The video is based on true stories of a life-long resident of Jerusalem bearing documentary value	07:31
	Paul Malone : Terminus The movie introduces a sequence of encounters between walls destruction and the miniature scale model railway environment	04:39
	Giorgio Tentolini : Muro dei Muri I did this video for a reading in which the Italian writer Carmine Abbato showed one of his novel Il Muro dei Muri - The wall of the walls. A novel about the racism among youth people in Germany after the fall of the wall...	04:04
	Debra Fear : Here is There Filmed at the Electrician's Shop, Trinity Buoy Wharf, London, UK, the rhythmic elements of this work vibrate in gentle poetic collisions of stillness against the motor of a passing shot	00:52
	Liz Harrison : Fret A wall constantly in motion, shrouding, creeping, ominous in its fretful, secretive presence. The wall encroaches and hides, threatens and is unpredictable	07:53
	Gianluca Ferrari : There is Light - Her Light Light and dark are used as instruments to create a structural metamorphosis of both form and gestures to create a new subject able to interact with the viewers on several levels of understanding	13:27

'Anastrophic Mondays' The Streaming Festival 2009



Amsterdam 2009

'Anastrophic Monday'

- [Ottica TV Home](#)
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Alexander Bates
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 Jonathan Moss
 Kianoosh Motallebi
 Marlena Novak and Jay Alan Yim
 Nicola Rae
 Marianna and Daniel O'Reilly
 Léopoldine Roux
 Seraphina Samet
 Tom Sands
 Tom Walker
 Alma Tischler Wood

Ottica TV was set up in 2008 as a platform for contemporary art based movie content. It is an offshoot of A2 Arts, a South East London independant artist group that has been engaged in international artist exchanges on the internet since 1996

www.ottica-tv.com

Ever had one of those days when everything goes right?

No matter how hard you try, events conspire to deposit you in the lap on the Gods. All your efforts to elicit sympathy from friends and relatives fall on stony ground and those tears just will not flow.

Well this is the day and this day is a Monday. You do not need to go to work as money will fall from a golden sky. Far more productive to ship the oars and float downstream on your newly found cushion of good fortune. Enjoy.

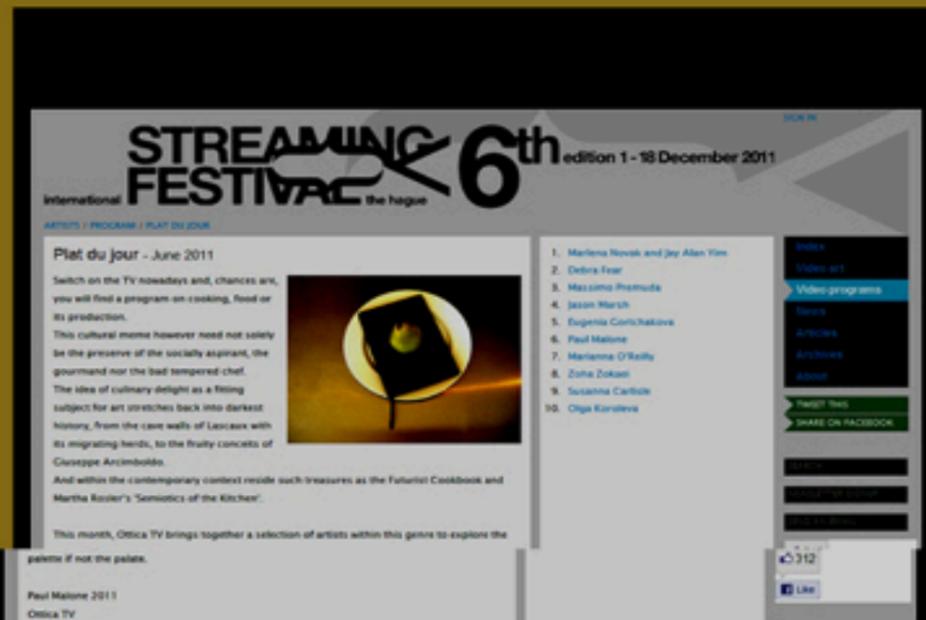
On every side we are beleaguered with portents of catastrophe and worse...it is all our fault! Not any more. By your action in viewing these movies everything will come right and be truely anastrophic.

Augury, extispicy, spontaneous divination, omens, sortilege, expensive consultant fees,...and the like, are consigned to the dustbin of history as, quite simply, things just cannot go wrong.

'Plat du Jour' The Streaming Festival 2011



Ottica TV : The Streaming Festival at The Hague. June 2011



Click here to view the movies...

Switch on the TV nowadays and, chances are, you will find a program on cooking, food or its production.

This cultural meme however need not solely be the preserve of the socially aspirant, the gourmand nor the bad tempered chef.

The idea of culinary delight as a fitting subject for art stretches back into darkest history, from the cave walls of Lascaux with its migrating herds, to the fruity conceits of Giuseppe Arcimboldo...

...and within the contemporary context reside such treasures as the Futurist Cookbook and Martha Rosler's 'Semiotics of the Kitchen'.

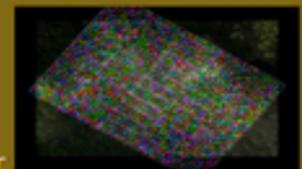
This month, Ottica TV brings together a selection of contemporary artists within this genre to explore the Palette if not the Palate.



Contact : Paul Malone, Ottica TV



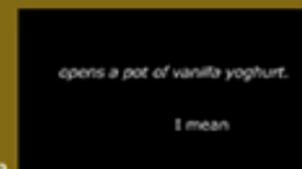
Susanna Carlisle



Debra Fear



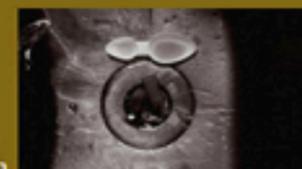
Eugenia Gortchakova



Olga Koroleva



Paul Malone



Jason Marsh



Marlena Novak and Jay Alan Yim



Marianna and Daniel O'Reilly



Massimo Permuda



Zoha Zokaie



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Authors



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- Eugenia Gortchakova
- Ziggy Grudzinskas
- Liz Harrison
- Jade Heritage
- Chia-En Jao
- Catherine Kennedy
- Olga Koroleva
- Paul Malone
- Jason Marsh
- Jonathan Moss
- Kianoosh Motallebi
- Marlena Novak + Jay Alan Yim
- Massimo Premuda
- Marianna + Daniel O'Reilly
- Benjamin Ochse
- Andrew Payne
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- Alyssa Ueno
- Max Valentin + Tony Hultqvist
- Tom Walker
- Tom Webber
- Alma Tischler Wood
- Zoha Zokaei

Notes

Note: All copyright for the movies, photographs and textual material contained in this site are retained by the authors, unless otherwise stated. Contact links to the authors can be found on their individual pages.

Ottica TV is based at the Greenwich Millennium Village and Art in Perpetuity Studios, Deptford, London UK

Website design by Paul Malone

Ottica Streams

Ottica Reportage

New section: Arriving here soon with reports from the world of moving image based contemporary art.

Next: Reports from the Venice Biennale 2013

Installation and the Performative



Art Projects 03

Art Projects 02

Art Projects 01

Experiential and Existential



Observations 02

Observations 01

Threads and Dialogue



Narratives 02

Narratives 01

News and Events

August 2013: Relaunch using html5 coding and mp4 videos in a series of static arrays

Archive, Microsites, PDFs

Annual Screening 11th March 2011

Susanna Carlisle
Fabiola Faidiga
Debra Fear
Susanna Carlisle
Olga Koroleva
Paul Malone

Ottica LAS 11-03-2011 (PDF)

Annual Screening 19th February 2010

Susanna Carlisle
Debra Fear
Alexander Gortchakova
Debra Fear
Paul Malone

Ottica LAS 19-02-2010 (PDF)

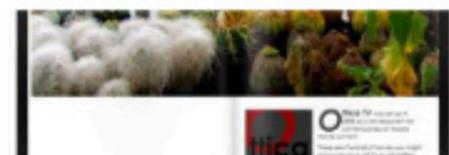
Magazines



Croydon 'High Five' 01-2010



Ottica LAS 03-2009



First Line-up 01-2009

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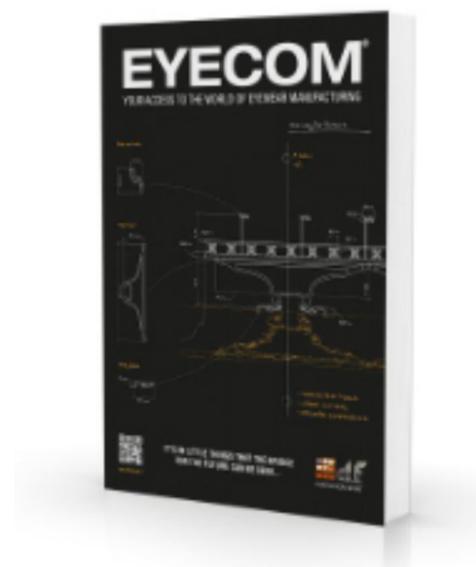
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Giovedì 28 Maggio 2020

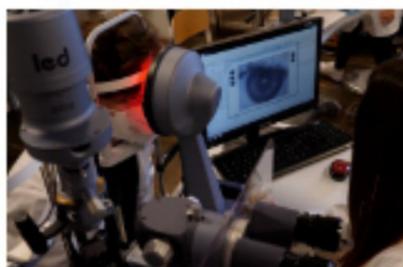
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