

ALTERNATIVE PROJECTIONS

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INTERVIEW SUBJECTS: Craig Rice and Keith Ullrich

Keith Ullrich Biography:

Keith Ullrich was born in Pasadena in 1958. He met frequent collaborator Craig Rice when they were both students at Pasadena Community College. Ullrich went on to study literature and design at UC Berkeley, and art and sculpture at Chouinard School of Art. Ullrich and Rice participated in Pasadena's burgeoning art scene and became regulars at Pasadena Filmforum (now Los Angeles Filmforum) screenings in the 1970s and 80s, as well as filmmakers themselves, with Ullrich contributing sound to Rice's images. Ullrich founded O Tela Group, a loose association of collaborative artists, in the early 1980s. His collages, artist books, assemblages, and music/sound works for film are in the archives of the Getty, The Museum of Modern Art, British Film Institute, Franklin Furnace, and in private collections. Although he has lived and worked in Northern California and the East Coast he prefers the San Gabriel Valley, where he now resides and continues to work on collage, assemblage, and alternate guitar tunings. He is a member of Collage Artists of America and South Pasadena Artist Studios (SOPA).

Craig Rice Biography:

Craig Rice was born in Cincinnati Ohio in 1957, and grew up in Southern California. He began experimenting with photography as a child, and made his first super-8 film in 1970. The purchase of a Kodak Cine-special 16mm camera in 1978 was followed by the construction of an animation stand in the garage, and shortly thereafter the production of short animated films. Most notable are ZULU AS KONOE, and I KISS THE DEAR FINGERS SO TOILWORN FOR ME. The Los Angeles Times says he "...makes eccentric, elliptical films reminiscent of the primitivism demonstrated in early film makers and photographers like Eadweard Muybridge." He also made a series of Super-8 diaries in the 1980s that focused on the odd and unusual. The Times called FLINTSTONELAND "a kitsch but telling comment on our culture."

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Interview date: January 16, 2010

Interviewer: Terry Cannon

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Transcript Reviewer: Craig Rice, Keith Ullrich, Elizabeth Hesik

TAPE 1: CRAIG RICE/KEITH ULLRICH

00:00:41

ADAM HYMAN

Saturday, January 16, 2010. Take one, oral history and can you each please say and spell your names for the transcriber?

00:00:54

CRAIG RICE

My name is Craig Rice. That's C-R-A-I-G last name Rice, R-I-C-E as in Rice-A-Roni.

00:01:02

KEITH ULLRICH

He's going to transcribe that. I'm Keith Ullrich. K-E-I-T-H last name U-L-L-R-I-C-H.

00:01:14

TERRY CANNON

Okay. Well, we'll start from the beginning. And Craig and Keith, why don't you each give us a little background on yourself with pertinent information such as where you were born, where you grew up and maybe any kinds of childhood activities or interest that later resonated in terms of your art and filmmaking activities.

00:01:44

CRAIG RICE

Well, let's see. I was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1957, [but I] didn't stay long. My parents split up and my mom brought my sister and I out here to Pasadena in, like, 1961. And [in] childhood, I think, as I recall, I was one of those kids that was constantly ruining things by taking them apart and not being able to put them together again, like ruining clocks. I think I ruined my dad's binoculars. I guess that's why my parents got divorced because I ruined his binoculars. I just thought of that. But anyway, I think it was just being really interested in mechanical things. And then that led into, I think, the interest in photography because truthfully, I think I was almost more interested in the technology than in what it could do.

00:02:35

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

But I guess I just was one of these kids. You know, I ended up, I made my own cameras when I was a kid. I experimented with that, making panel cameras, had friends that had a home dark room so we'd do our own developing and really get, start getting into the process of film. However, from a very early age, I mean, I really loved film. I mean, literally, I love when you opened a new package of film, I just, I like[d] the smell of it. So it was really a kind of a real visceral thing. Yeah, I still remember to this day, you know, cracking open a nice new thing of Kodak Tri-X 16 millimeter and just that smell that would come up out of there as you were putting it in the camera.

00:03:17

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

But anyway, getting, backing up a little bit, [I] basically started making Super 8 movies when I was 13. I finally nagged my poor mom to death. It probably took me a year or two of nagging but she finally broke down and took me to Fedco and we got a very inexpensive little Super 8 camera and a projector when I was 13. And so, of course, I started doing the, you know, making little short movies with my buddies and all that, and did that for a few years, made a lot of films. I think I sort of started developing the technique that would serve me well later of just so shooting little short snippets of things and learning to be very spare with the images you were shooting because, like, a set of film was maybe like a little over three minutes.

00:04:11

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

So it wasn't like [now] where you've just had video tape, where you could just shoot for hours and hours and hours. And the thing was too, when you were a kid that little Super 8 film [cartridge] the spool you had, you didn't know when you're going to get another one. So you might, you know, there might be a year where you maybe got one roll of film and that was it. So you had to be really careful what you shot film of. And so, anyway, that devolved into a little bit later getting it evolved into 16 millimeter when I was about 20, [I] got a 16 millimeter camera. And that was like a big leap forward. I mean, that felt like the big time going from Super 8 to 16. [technical]

00:05:06

TERRY CANNON

How about a little background information on you then?

00:05:10

KEITH ULLRICH

Before, I want to say, like, I thought you, weren't you in Kentucky for awhile, too?

00:05:15

CRAIG RICE

No, my dad was from Kentucky but we, I never actually lived in Kentucky.

00:05:17 **KEITH ULLRICH**
[overlapping] I see, I didn't know that.

00:05:21 **CRAIG RICE**
[overlapping] Never actually lived there, but...

00:05:24 **KEITH ULLRICH**
Well, I'm from here, actually. So I was born here, actually in Southern California, [and] actually in Pasadena. Same, almost the same time, '58, about the beginning of '58. And all I really remember, see, because I wasn't really so much making, doing films, you know. As a kid I remember experimenting stuff with sound, which is weird. Because as soon as you mentioned the film thing, I suddenly remembered at one point [when], I had like this, I was really young too, I had this record player. I was playing all these different records and I was slowing them down or speeding them up or trying to figure out ways of playing them, like, how you're not supposed to. Putting things, like, in a way so that they would, like, skip and jump.

00:06:07 **KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)**
And, see, that brought back all of that stuff in my head just now, like that. For me, actually, a lot of the stuff that happened was [with] reading. I mean, I did just like [an] intense amount of reading when I was very, very young. I remember doing a summer reading program [one year] where I determined, like, all I was going to do was read Jules Verne novels. And that was my whole summer reading list, to get through these huge tomes. But actually, they read pretty fast. Another thing that I remember was, and this is much later really, is I'm about the same age, I think, as Tim Burton, filmmaker Tim Burton. [KU: Tim Burton grew up in Burbank, and I was in Pasadena, about 10 or 15 miles to the east.]

00:07:02 **KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)**
Because I remember reading an interview of his where he was talking about how he loved watching Saturday [or] Sunday afternoon B-science fiction films that would always play on TV. And I'm thinking, I'm sitting in front of the TV at exactly the same time that he was watching those crazy films. And now all that stuff, I mean, you can get on DVD, but at that time you had to wait for it to be broadcast. "Invaders From Mars."

00:07:33 **CRAIG RICE**
Oh, all that. That was a big deal when you'd be channel flipping and something really good was on, want to be like, oh, my God, it's on...

00:07:38 **KEITH ULLRICH**
[overlapping] "Creature Features."

00:07:38

CRAIG RICE

...and you'd have to stop everything and, you know, sit down [to watch].

00:07:41

KEITH ULLRICH

[overlapping] Yeah. And all of that stuff. So that was another, that was really sort of my, I think, my real interest in film started coming in from that crazy stuff, from watching all those things on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. And then, if I think about high school, when you're making your Super 8 stuff at 13 and for me a little bit later, I think I got actually my first tape recorder. I had a reel-to-reel tape recorder in high school. And that was even better, because now I was, like, really sort of really being able to mess around with my own recordings. And it wasn't just like a record player, trying to mess around with stuff that was already prerecorded. So those were the kind of things that I remember really.

00:08:29

TERRY CANNON

Now, when did the two of you first meet?

00:08:35

KEITH ULLRICH

Yeah, that's a good story.

00:08:35

TERRY CANNON

What year and how did you meet and start your collaborative work? Can you take us back to the year and time of that?

00:08:48

CRAIG RICE

Well, appropriately enough, we actually met right across the street from Filmforum at Kieran Sala's apartment up there [on] Raymond [Avenue, Pasadena], didn't we? Isn't that where we...

00:08:59

KEITH ULLRICH

You know, the thing is, I first, I think the thing is, it was at, we were at PCC [Pasadena City College]. We were in a classroom...

00:09:03

CRAIG RICE

[overlapping] We were in a class together [at Pasadena City College]

00:09:04

KEITH ULLRICH

[overlapping] We were in a couple of classes.

00:09:06

CRAIG RICE

It was a creative writing class, but we never spoke. We were just in the same class. And I don't know about you, but for me being at PCC at that time, it was like the 13th grade. It was just a completely flat period. And I couldn't write a damn thing for that class. Everything I wrote the teacher hated [laugh] because it was really horrible.

00:09:28

KEITH ULLRICH

[overlapping] I remember that. But it was a thing where, you're right, we were in the same classes. We were [in a] couple of classes...

00:09:35

CRAIG RICE

We were in a couple of classes together.

00:09:35

KEITH ULLRICH

And I remember, what I remember was going up to Kieran's. I met Kieran at Pasadena City College.

00:09:43

CRAIG RICE

This is our friend Kieran Sala, a mutual friend that, Kieran and I actually went to high school together and you guys actually met at PCC.

00:09:50

KEITH ULLRICH

I met him in Pasadena City College, right. So I remember being invited to come over to his studio for some reason, something was going on. And the first thing I see is, I see you there and I was literally just like, oh, it's you. [laugh]

00:10:02

CRAIG RICE

Oh, it's you. [laugh] Now that was one of those funny moments because I remember Kieran saying, you know, oh, yeah you should meet my friend Keith, I think you guys have a lot of common interests, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And then it was the same thing for me, I was like walking in and seeing Keith, I'm like, oh, you're this Keith. Oh, wait a minute, I know you, like, sort of, [laugh] that was funny.

00:10:25

KEITH ULLRICH

That's how that had gone.

00:10:26

CRAIG RICE

But that, wasn't that though, when the night I met, well, the night that we were actually formally introduced, you and Charles Anderson were together, I think. And then I think we did...[I] think you were with Charles Anderson.

00:10:37

KEITH ULLRICH

[overlapping] A dear friend of mine.

00:10:37

CRAIG RICE

...we go then from Kieran's, didn't we then go across the street to Filmforum because I think that's why we were [meeting there].

00:10:43

KEITH ULLRICH

I don't remember.

00:10:44

CRAIG RICE

...I'm thinking that we met, because Karen had a place on Raymond Avenue that was right across from where Filmforum was. And I think we all went to Filmforum, if I recall.

00:10:55

TERRY CANNON

So, what year are we talking about now?

00:10:58

KEITH ULLRICH

'77, '76, '77...

00:11:02

CRAIG RICE

I'm thinking like '76.

00:11:04

KEITH ULLRICH

[overlapping] End of '76. Yeah, fall of '76.

00:11:07

CRAIG RICE

Yeah, yeah, '76.

00:11:09

TERRY CANNON

Now to backtrack just a little bit, what year were you at PCC?

00:11:16

CRAIG RICE

Well when I started, I graduated from high school in '75. So I, like I say, PCC for me like [was] the 13th grade. I mean I'm one of those people that I simply went to PCC because I didn't have anything else to do. [laugh] And I really wasn't [CR: ready for real college].

00:11:31

KEITH ULLRICH

But you know...

00:11:31

CRAIG RICE

...I was not ready to go to college yet, not real college.

00:11:35

KEITH ULLRICH

We were in, is it at Doug Aiken's film class? Is that his name? [KU: This is not the artist Doug Aitken.]

00:11:40

CRAIG RICE

That was a little bit later. That film class? .Were you in that film class?

00:11:42

KEITH ULLRICH

I took a film history class and a film making class. It was Doug Aiken....

00:11:49

CRAIG RICE

Right. Doug Aiken.

00:11:50

KEITH ULLRICH

... teaching that class. And I remember, and that was one of the things that I wanted to bring up was, that was another little area that was pretty amazing, the events that took place there. Because that film history class, you know, this is, again, prior to having easy access to these kinds of films, like Eisenstein's POTEMKIN. We saw that.

00:12:18

CRAIG RICE

Uh huh, saw CITIZEN KANE.

00:12:19

KEITH ULLRICH

CITIZEN KANE, Griffith's THE BIRTH OF A NATION.

00:12:24

CRAIG RICE

And these were 16 millimeter prints. that they were out on.

00:12:26

KEITH ULLRICH

[overlapping] Yeah, 16 millimeter prints. And these were things that of course, I mean, are absolutely impossible really at that time, like, [to] really see [anywhere else]. This stuff wasn't being screened - only in film history classes. You couldn't just go to the library and pick up a copy that you can watch. So that was a big part of it. I remember then in filmmaking class, what I ended up discovering, I wasn't really very good at making films. [laugh] But I could add sound to films. And we can get to that part a little later. But you were in that class, though, and Steve Escandon, a mutual friend of ours that was part of that class too, I remember.

00:13:06

KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)

But that was a very, very important thing, because what was happening was, there was that class, there was Filmforum that was going on. And we just really started to meet and be introduced to a number of people who were working with a lot of different kinds of media.

00:13:28

TERRY CANNON

Before my next question, I wanted to just backtrack, what year did you come to Southern California then to start?

00:13:35

CRAIG RICE

Well, my mom brought my sister and to Southern California in about 1961. I think I turned five very shortly after we got here.

00:13:46

TERRY CANNON

Okay. Now, so, you met really, kind of, at PCC. Around that time, you're in your early 20s and you kind of met through the film class. I remember, I think I took that class as well, all of that class, primarily showing older foreign films. So was Filmforum your first real exposure to what we would call experimental avant-garde films? And also, once you answer that, do you remember what your first program you went to, both of you, I'll ask both of you.

00:14:29

KEITH ULLRICH

Yeah. I do remember the first program, as a matter of fact. Yeah, actually, I think Filmforum was [a] true introduction to that area of film. Before that, as I said, everything was, sort of, hitting at once. I mean, all the [KU: regular] stuff, of course, that's been broadcast on television at that time. [technical]

00:15:03

KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)

Filmforum was actually the first place that I was introduced to that, that type of film, experimental, make-it-as-you-go type filmmaking as opposed to stuff that was done specifically with scripts and whatever. [technical].

00:15:34

KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)

The program that I remember seeing at Filmforum first though was actually a set of films that was chosen by the filmmaker Bill Scaff. That was my first real memory of Filmforum. And I remember one of the films that he chose, which I later actually asked Adam [Hyman, Filmforum's director] to screen at an open screening, I think it was like, you choose the films that we're going to play for tonight. [KU: a couple of years ago, Filmforum did an open screening of films selected from the Canyon Cinema catalog.] And one of Bill's choices for his film program at Filmforum was a Victor Faccinto film.

00:16:18

CRAIG RICE

Oh, I think I know the film you're talking about.

00:16:20

KEITH ULLRICH

What is it? I've lost my track.

00:16:23

TERRY CANNON

Well, it was an animation film.

00:16:25

KEITH ULLRICH

Yes, it was.

00:16:25

CRAIG RICE

Was that the one done in the optical printer?

00:16:27

KEITH ULLRICH

Book of Dead. [KU: Canyon Cinema's notes on the film: Book of Dead, Victor Faccinto, 1978, 15 minutes, COLOR, SILENT, 16mm film, 24 fps: "In BOOK OF DEAD, no human image can hide from the secrets the animator chooses to reveal. Figures walking on a beach grow satanic horns and tails; tiny pitchforks and snakes pierce the bodies of others. Murder, disfigurement and enactment of the basest lust are the actions most frequently depicted. Through drawings on the frame, the human beings in the initially innocent photographic images have been made to do the bidding of their own creator and suffer his many torments." - Barbara Scharres, TRICK-FILM/CHICAGO, 1980 Catalogue (<http://canyoncinema.com/catalog/film/?i=846>)]

00:16:28

TERRY CANNON

Book of the Dead.

00:16:29

KEITH ULLRICH

BOOK OF DEAD. And all it was, was a lot of found, it's found footage. I believe found footage that he had gone ahead and drew on the frames various kinds of [images to be] animated, like arrows and swords and...

00:16:42

CRAIG RICE

[overlapping] Yes, yes. I remember that specifically. It was like people walking on the beach and it was done frame by frame. And it would be like a woman walking along in a swimsuit and a big giant pitchfork going and passing through her body and then coming out the other side. And you had to see it. I mean, it was just so, it was so random. It was just really hilarious. And I remember the audience just almost, like, fell out of their chairs. It was pretty [CR: extreme]-- and drawing little devil horns on people that would come out of their heads and vibrate and, you know?

00:17:13

KEITH ULLRICH

That film made such an impression on me. [laugh]

00:17:15

CRAIG RICE

But, see, that's the thing, though, it's stuff like that that does.

00:17:19

KEITH ULLRICH

Yeah.

00:17:19

CRAIG RICE

Its stuff like that that does it. You see that and then you go, oh, my God. I want to do this, like not that exact thing but...

00:17:28

KEITH ULLRICH

No. I think the thing about seeing that film was not that I would go ahead and do exactly the same thing. Didn't know how, didn't really, you know? The thing was I looked at that film thinking like, okay, here is the realm of possibilities of the kinds of things you can do. And that's what I really remember most, I think, about that particular screening. And I was, like I said, that was the first real event that I made at Filmforum with Bill and all those films. I don't remember the other ones, though. How about you?

00:18:03

TERRY CANNON

Craig, do you remember your first program at Filmforum?

00:18:07

CRAIG RICE

You know, I don't. I don't. I have no idea what my first program was. I went, I attended Filmforum for several years pretty religiously. And you know, there's several films, shows that I do remember for just being outstanding shows. But you know, I don't, I don't have a recollection of, my memory is not that fine tuned. I just, there's just a few things that that really pop out. I mean, it's the, for me it's the, my memory, it's more the overarching idea that what the experience [of] going to Filmforum was. It was almost more like a salon that you'd go to. You knew most of the people there or you'd get to know the people there. It was a relatively small audience. You'd see the films screened. Most of the time, the filmmaker was in attendance.

00:18:59

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

He'd get up and speak briefly. And then maybe after the film, and then, then the thing was, then it was like after the screening, you could get together with the filmmaker. And a lot of times, Terry Cannon who was running Filmforum, he, we'd go with him and the filmmaker and we'd go down to like a coffee place or something. And we [would] just]just sit and hang out, And talk for maybe an hour or something. So in that sense, it really was like a film screening /slash film salon. And you really got to meet and talk with a lot of really interesting filmmakers from all different parts of the country. And it was just, you know, for me, being this young, you know, 22-year-old guy with no money and wanting to make movies, it was just really heartening to hear other people just talk about yeah, you know, we're just scraping along.

00:19:46

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

And, you know, just get a roll of film whenever you can. And I mean, I remember a roll of 16 millimeter film was pretty hard to come by. Again, it was that whole thing, it was almost like the same as when I was a kid with Super 8. When you had the money to buy a roll of film, you used it very wisely because you didn't know where your next roll was going to come from, you know? So you really, I often think, I often wonder what kind of stuff I would have been able to do if I had had any quote, unquote, "Real money" to work with.

00:20:19

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

On the other hand, if somebody had thrown a lot of money at me, it might have been a total disaster, you know? Just the fact that you had to really squeeze every little bit from every frame of film, I think that really, that really made you think. But you know, I think I'm kind of digressing a little bit here but, well the, you know...

00:20:40

TERRY CANNON

Well, okay. So you guys had started going to college. You started to go to Filmforum. Now, how did this begin to shape your own work? How did you, you know, in film and in sound and in graphic arts, how did these experiences now start to come together both individually and in terms of your collaborate work? I mean, what kinds of films were you doing at this time? This would have been around '76 to '77. So you know, what kinds of works were you doing in these particular fields now?

00:21:19

KEITH ULLRICH

You know, I remember purposely avoiding art classes in high school. I mean, I really, really stayed away from them because I saw the stuff that was being produced and I thought, [laugh] like, no way. This isn't, you know, this isn't going to work. And I remember trying other stuff. I mean, I was taking lots of writing classes. A good friend of mine, Gerry Braun, in high school, we were doing things that I guess today would be sort of considered performance art. And we were doing things during open periods in high school where we were playing golf on the campus and trying to play golf through classrooms while they were actually in session and [then] having our golf clubs taken from us until the end of class that day.

00:22:14

KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)

But purposely avoiding art classes until after high school, that was the thing. And getting into Filmforum, meeting a lot of people who were working with a bunch of different kinds of media. I never knew anybody [else] who was working in film, really. Kieran, I think, was dabbling in stuff here and there. But it was really that I think I took that film class at Pasadena City College just because it was like, okay, this was just kind of something I wanted to learn...

00:22:54

CRAIG RICE

Well, it counted as an elective too. So it did, it counted for something I mean, it was, you know?

00:22:59

KEITH ULLRICH

So all of that kind of stuff was sort of shaping things then. And that's when I started thinking about things a little bit different and realized, like, I didn't have to make or think about art the same way that people were thinking about it in what's high school, you know, high school art.

00:23:19

CRAIG RICE

The art thing is interesting because you get to that point, I think, we both were, I think we both kind of started arriving at that point in the late '70s, where basically, the kind of art, the only way you were going to see the kind of art you really wanted to see was to make it yourself. In other words, all of those weird strange collages and, you know what I mean? Just all of that, that look, there was a lot of people, Keith was involved with a group that was actually doing, like a Xerox art magazines and things. And you know, there was a whole movement, well, talk about that, that was it was really interesting.

00:23:54

KEITH ULLRICH

[overlapping] Yeah, there was actually, what was coming, and this was again late '70s so, '78, '77, '78. I think what was happening was there was, there was sort of, I don't really even think it was like a movement or any sort of thing. But there were a lot of people that were doing something that has become, something that has been labeled mail art. The idea of making some sort of work of art, a postcard or whatever, dropping it in the post office box and sending it out. I got involved in a lot of that kind of stuff while I was making one-of-a-kind pieces of art and [mailing] to various artists and getting stuff, you know, back as well from them.

00:24:46

KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)

And I think I met a lot of people in Los Angeles that way that were doing some of the same kinds of things. I'm trying to remember, Richard Meade, who Terry and I later worked [with] on a project, we can mention it later on, for Filmforum [KU: this is the "Show For The Eyes" mail-in film project covered later in the interview]. I didn't know where else to sort of go with that right at the moment. So...

00:25:12

CRAIG RICE

The graphics thing, the art, you know, I'm thinking of art that we, the kind of art that we were interested in, it wasn't like, you know, painting a tree art. It wasn't that kind of art. A lot of it was taking existing images and maybe altering them or, you know, experimenting with, I almost think of like, you know, move, like, art things that we both admired. Like, I think we really liked sort of the Russian supremacist stuff that was very primitive with just shapes moving around. And I ended up later incorporating some of that stuff.

00:25:48

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

Like when I got into 16-millimeter at about, in about '78, '79, some of the first things I started playing with was not really so much shooting just live action, but the camera I had actually had a, it was a really, it was a camera that was set up for being able to do animation. So what I did was I built myself a really primitive animation stand in my garage. And it was just basically, I think it was, I think the base of it was an old nightstand and a it was a two by four. And I had something off of a, I forget what it was, it was part of an old easel. It was the mechanism on the easel that lets you move the canvas up and down. And I was able to attach the camera to that and make myself a very primitive animation stand where I could move the camera up and down. And I had some lights.

00:26:40

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

And just basically took what I was, took sort of what I've been playing with graphically with different little collages and things, and started translating that into film. And so really using the film medium, just using it as a way to just take these graphical montages and things, and sort of bringing them to life and start them moving around, as opposed to them being, you know, not that I had anything against stuff being static, but it was just that the fact that you could shoot the stuff one frame at a time and then do this very deliberate manipulation. And I mean, and another aspect of animation that many other animators have touched on is that when you're doing animation, you don't need actors, you know what I mean?

00:27:28

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

It's just a real, and it's hard to explain when you're cooped up with your animation stuff in a little room. It's, it almost becomes like this weird sort of meditation and then you get into this whole thing where I can't remember if I clicked off the frame or if I didn't move it. And then you'd make little mistakes where you'd maybe clicked two frames, then you'd have to move it again. And, but anybody that's ever done animation knows that it's very, it's fun and it's really tedious at the same time. And I remember spending so much time shooting animation that the backs of my hands got burnt from the lights.

00:28:08

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

Because every time you had to put your hand in, I had these very bright little lights that were on either side of the animation stand, and I spent so much time with my hand in there manipulating things that I remember I finally had to stop [laugh] because the back of my hands hurt from the lights. Just things like, I'm sorry I haven't thought of that in a long time. But, yes. So for me, the film thing was really, it kind of branched out into two directions. and it started becoming sort of shooting the black and, oh, and I also, for Super 8 around that time, I ended up switching to just shooting black and white because I thought it had more, but it kind of detached you more from things. It gave things more of a timeless look. Like I, I remember trying to shoot things in Super 8...

00:28:54

KEITH ULLRICH

[overlapping] What were you shooting, that was, animation?

00:28:55

CRAIG RICE

[overlapping] Shooting just sort of, not animation with Super 8, but shooting sort of like those diary films, like the stuff I shot at R Reinway Court, [CR: where we were living] and doing like the film that FLINTSTONELAND and the Las Vegas thing. But the black and white Super 8...

00:29:10

KEITH ULLRICH

Let's talk about the Las Vegas thing.

00:29:12

CRAIG RICE

I was actually, what I was doing was, to intensify the black and white look, I was actually using the stuff called chromium intensifier, where you'd basically shoot the black and white film, get it developed. You'd basically use a bleach and you'd bleach the film out so that there was really no image on the film. It was just this white image. And then you'd redevelop the film again, like Dektalin dektal [developer] or something. And then what it would do is every time you did it, it made the film get grainier and more contrasted. So if you did this process to Super 8 film two or three times, you'd ended up with this really wonderful looking grain, this very grainy looking film that almost started looking like something that had been, like, filmed in the 1930s or something.

00:29:57

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

But, so I remember concurrently doing that, really starting to develop doing graphical stuff in 16-millimeter, but then just still doing sort of live action stuff in Super 8 and sort of kept, and sort of have those two things sort of running in tandem.

00:30:15

TERRY CANNON

While we're on that, can you just talk about maybe a few of your first three fully accomplished films in Super 8 and 16? I won't go back all the way to your 13 years of age when you started. What were the first films that you really completed and maybe were screened?

00:30:36

CRAIG RICE

First, the, I'm thinking about films that sort of felt like completed films that were done in Super 8. Like I mentioned earlier, I'd sort of developed a style of shooting just little snippets of things. And really, it was all editing in the camera. Because editing, even though I did have a set up to edit Super 8, it was very tedious and the edits were really ugly because the edit would actually be a piece of tape. And when the edit went through the projector, you could not only see it, you could actually hear it.

00:31:08

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

You could hear that little [makes noise] going to the projector. And so the goal was really to try to get films with as few edits as possible, and shooting...

00:31:18

KEITH ULLRICH

Your edits on the camera actually are really good. You were doing that early on. I remember seeing some of the finished films that were not spliced, everything was edited and... in the camera.

00:31:28

CRAIG RICE

It was just...

00:31:29

KEITH ULLRICH

[overlapping] Your choices of, whatever you chose to snap at the time, you always used to get, you got pretty good.

00:31:34

CRAIG RICE

And like I say, that style of shooting, that was developed out of pure necessity because you had to really think, do I really want to shoot this? And in retrospect, there's a lot of really interesting things when I was a kid that I didn't make films of because I simply thought at the time that they weren't worthy of the film that they would use up. But anyway, that's another story. film thing... [technical]

00:32:05

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

The first Super 8 films that really looked, kind of felt like real documentary films as opposed to just being sort of like a home movie probably is the black and white stuff I was doing in the late '70s, a film I went, I went to a place in Arizona called Bedrock City, which is a, kind of a Flintstone Village with little fake Flintstone houses made of concrete and everything, shot some footage there, did that. Shot some footage in Las Vegas.

00:32:35

KEITH ULLRICH

I don't want to actually comment on that FLINTSTONELAND film because there was another time that you went to go do that film. And we were roommates at Reinway Court in Pasadena [at the time], a bungalow, a set of bungalow apartments. And, we can go more into that...

00:32:53

CRAIG RICE

[overlapping] It was sort of a little artist's haven kind of a place.

00:32:55

KEITH ULLRICH

[overlapping] I remember one morning, getting up and you had gotten up in the bedroom, [we're] making coffee in our room and you said, well, I'm going to go to the Grand Canyon today.

00:33:08

CRAIG RICE

On my motorcycle.

00:33:09

KEITH ULLRICH

On his motorcycle. Grabbed his camera and puts everything [on], gets his helmet on and he, [laugh] he's going to come back. He's just going to up there to, like, film something, and then come back later, and that's what you did in one day.

00:33:21

CRAIG RICE

No, that was not one day.

00:33:23 **KEITH ULLRICH**
[overlapping] You didn't stay out there.

00:33:24 **CRAIG RICE**
No, I was out there for a couple of days, I think.

00:33:27 **KEITH ULLRICH**
No, there was one day that you went all the way out there [laugh] and came back. [laugh]

00:33:32 **CRAIG RICE**
I don't think I went to the Grand Canyon and back in one day.

00:33:34 **KEITH ULLRICH**
Maybe not the Grand Canyon. You went to Flintstoneland. [KU: Actually, it's called Bedrock City, Grand Canyon, Arizona.]

00:33:37 **CRAIG RICE**
No, but that is the Grand Canyon. That's...

00:33:39 **KEITH ULLRICH**
[overlapping] You know, I swear to God, you actually [rode out there].

00:33:44 **CRAIG RICE**
That's funny.

00:33:46 **ADAM HYMAN**
Tell us more about the Flintstone film

00:33:48 **CRAIG RICE**
Oh, sure. That, yeah, the "Flintstone" film was really just, you know, the place was just there. All you had to do was walk around and shoot it. And they had, I think they had some people that dressed up in "Flintstone" outfits that, you know, these poor souls that were getting paid, who knows what to walk around and, you know, greet the guests. Like, "Hi, I'm Fred Flintstone." It was just one guy with this big enormous paper mache plaster of paris Flintstone head and the eye holes had like little screens in them. And I remember looking down inside the eye hole and just seeing this little scrawny man[laugh] there's a little scrawny man inside there. And his, [laugh] and he had dirt, his legs were dirty. He had dirt on his legs.

00:34:31

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

Oh, that was kind of sad. But anyway, it was, you know, [laugh] it was just, it was one these things where you're just, you know, I remember it's funny, documenting stuff is very strange. There was this one image I shot in Las Vegas of this old guy with a piece of cardboard, holding up the piece of cardboard, and the piece of cardboard said, "Do you thank God you can see?" And then I pan up to the man's face. And the man is obviously blind. You know, his eyes are just all white. And I think at, somebody seeing that film one time said, well, do you think it's right to exploit that person and film them?

00:35:05

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

It's really a conundrum because it's sort of like, it was just there, you know? I didn't make the man. I didn't make him blind. I didn't put him there. He was just there. And the fact that I just photographed him, because to me, he that was just part of the landscape, you know? You get a shot of a fountain and a shot of fake Roman God at Caesar's Palace, and then some shot of some horrible store with a bunch of money in the window spinning around.

00:35:33

KEITH ULLRICH

[overlapping] Oh, you're shooting stuff that nobody really wants to see.

00:35:36

CRAIG RICE

But it was, and when I say shooting in Las Vegas, it was not the at-night glamorous. I purposely shot only during the daytime, because the idea of the film is to make Las Vegas look as terrible as possible, because you were filming what was really there, not what people saw when they went at night, and it was all glossy and lights and, you know? So...

00:35:59

KEITH ULLRICH

Yeah, actually, [along with Craig's] film footage, I did still photography during that trip. He shot all the film part of it. And I, actually, I remember [one] of the reasons for going and shooting that stuff, too, was to sort of capture a moment of what that place was at the time because it changed very, very rapidly after that.

00:36:24

CRAIG RICE

[overlapping] Well, and, you know, it's funny, we knew, and we pretty much knew instinctively that they were going to ruin it. And they did. [laugh]

00:36:32

KEITH ULLRICH

It became something really different.

00:36:34

TERRY CANNON

Did you go to these locations, Las Vegas, FlintstoneLand, with the idea that you were going to make a film, or were you just shooting footage and, or were you actually consciously thinking while you were there? This is something that...

00:36:49

KEITH ULLRICH

[overlapping] Foothill Boulevard. [KU: Not discussed, but around the same time, Craig and I spent a couple of days filming the length of Foothill Boulevard in the San Gabriel Valley, which, at that time still had a lot of miniature golf courses, small odd diners, unusual gas stations and architecture, mom/pop stores and seedy Route 66 motels. Now it's pretty much all the regular boring strip malls and fast food.]

00:36:51

CRAIG RICE

I'm thinking, when you're, if you're asking, if it comes up, to go to Las Vegas and FlintstoneLand, if it was, the idea was to make a film, I'd say in those instances, the answer would be yes. I think there was the idea that you brought maybe, I'm thinking I had maybe four rolls of film, which would probably be about maybe 12 minutes worth of film, edited down, probably end up being, like, basically a 10-minute film. I just want to make a point that when I talk about some of these films, we're not talking about like a feature-length film here. We're talking about what I consider, for me, to be a pretty long fully developed film is maybe a film that runs 10 minutes at the most.

00:37:34

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

So it's a very, and it's a very encapsulated look at something. It's not, and there, and these are silent films too. There's no sound. And the films were really made, those films really were pretty much made with the idea of watching them silent, you know? You could always change your mind later and play music or something with the film if you wanted to, but they were really made with the idea that you're just looking at the imagery. And that any kind of, trying to enhance it or anything, create an artificial mood or anything with music, that just wasn't part of the idea at all. It was really just a, the idea of it just being very...more like watching a series of still photos.

00:38:15

KEITH ULLRICH

[overlapping] That was my art, the sound...

00:38:16

CRAIG RICE

...very raw.

00:38:17

KEITH ULLRICH

...so it was, like, Craig, this film needs sound, and let me do that for you.

00:38:21

CRAIG RICE

Oh, and they were good. [laugh] They're, no, and like I say, they're very good with some sort of sound on them.

00:38:26

KEITH ULLRICH

[overlapping] Yeah. Some of them.

00:38:27

CRAIG RICE

But initially, the idea though was...

00:38:30

CRAIG RICE

...that it was just, it's almost like, again, that the film thing, I was really still doing still photography. And the idea with the film thing was it just made it easier, you know, you could do two things. You could either, I mean, looking at a film in a sense, if you imagine yourself looking, being in a gallery and walking along a wall and seeing a row of still photographs and looking at each photograph and then looking at the next one, the fact that you're making a film, you're almost creating that experience with just a lot of really sort of static shots.

00:39:06

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

You know, it's not like this thing where you're thinking of Hollywood film where it's all, you know, car chases and things blowing up. It's almost exactly the, it's the opposite of that. It's where you're...

00:39:16

KEITH ULLRICH

[overlapping] You were just...

00:39:17

CRAIG RICE

...lingering. You sort of linger just for a few moments on something and then you shift and you show another thing and you linger on that. And it was really like, you know, now when I think about it, it is, a lot of it, it's like looking at a series of still photographs, except you're aware, you're always aware that it is really film footage because there's, you know, there's always a little bit of...

00:39:37

KEITH ULLRICH

Well, it was documenting the moment.

00:39:38

CRAIG RICE

...movement.

00:39:39

KEITH ULLRICH

You're acting as an editor in that you're choosing, you were choosing what it was you decided on, looking a particular direction and not looking the other way or...

00:39:47 **CRAIG RICE**

Right. And that's really important....

00:39:51 **CRAIG RICE**

...the editorial control because that's...

00:39:52 **KEITH ULLRICH**

[overlapping] Yeah, you've been very, very specific of the choices that you'll make.

00:39:55 **CRAIG RICE**

You're taking, it's almost like you've got control of the viewers' head. And you're, okay, you're going to see this and then you're going to look at this. And you don't know what's behind you, but all I want you to see is this.

00:40:10 **KEITH ULLRICH**

Right.

00:40:11 **CRAIG RICE**

But see, that's the beauty of...

00:40:12 **KEITH ULLRICH**

You are very conscious of your choices.

00:40:13 **CRAIG RICE**

That's the beauty of the editorial process, though, is that you, it's not objective at all. It's very subjective. I mean, you're seeing what I want you to see, you know?

00:40:24 **TERRY CANNON**

What were the titles of those two films? And you've mentioned late '70s.

00:40:29 **CRAIG RICE**

I think the one film is just called FLINTSTONELAND. And I think that's just the title of the film. And I think the other film is just called LAS VEGAS 1980. And again, I'm just, the films themselves don't even have, there are no titles or anything on the actual film. You just, the imagery just starts and ends. There's no credits on the film. I'm actually, in my mind, seeing what's written on the outside of the film can, you know?

00:40:57 **TERRY CANNON**

Now, those were more done in the style of documentaries. Were you simultaneously, when you were making those films, you were doing some of your at home experiments with Super 8?

00:41:08

CRAIG RICE

Right. Yeah. In tandem with doing the Super 8 documentaries, I was also working in 16. And again, that was almost like a completely different medium. It was really a medium for doing experimentation and exploring things graphically. And I was experimenting with, you know, I never had an optical printer device, which was a device that film people used to, you know, superimpose images on each other and do things like that. But I, sort of, made, just off the top of my head, I just, sort of, figured out ways to get special effects and things on film, you know, over, double-exposing things, printing frames out.

00:41:53

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

Again, this is, it just gets to be very tedious sometimes, you know, recreating a bunch of frames and still images, altering the still images and then re-photographing them again to get an effect. So doing a lot of things like that in 16 millimeter, I just thought 16 millimeter lent itself to that type of work better than Super 8, because the image was so much sharper. I think that 16 millimeter, I think it's about a four-time, I think the image is four times larger than a 16 -than a Super 8 frame.

00:42:26

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

So the 16 millimeter, for me, and then the film I had, the camera I had, it was actually a camera that was called a Kodak CineSpecial II. It'd been the camera from the 1940s. And it's a very, very good camera. It gave you a very precise image quality. So I was able to photograph a flat imagery using that camera. But, yeah, it was the, the experimental stuff, it was very experimental. And I never really started out thinking to make a film. I think I just, sort of, let the stuff, let the material just, sort of, guide me and work with things and then eventually I'd end up with a finished film. I didn't really make very many 16 millimeter films, one of the reasons is because it was so expensive.

00:43:13

KEITH ULLRICH

You made, but you didn't work, do the 16 until we were at Reinway, right?

00:43:18

CRAIG RICE

Yeah. That was, well, the first 16 millimeter I did was that, the film I did, that's the flying ducks animated around. That was kind of a silly film.

00:43:26

KEITH ULLRICH

That was at Reinway.

00:43:27

CRAIG RICE

That, no, actually, I shot that in my garage when I still lived at home.

00:43:31

CRAIG RICE

That was in...

00:43:32 **TERRY CANNON**
What year?

00:43:32 **CRAIG RICE**
Seventy, early '79, I think.

00:43:36 **KEITH ULLRICH**
Okay. So then that was just before...

00:43:38 **CRAIG RICE**
That was just before we...

00:43:39 **KEITH ULLRICH**
...just before Reinway.

00:43:41 **CRAIG RICE**
Probably late '78 early '79 is when I shot that.

00:43:48 **KEITH ULLRICH**
I was on the East Coast at that time.

00:43:50 **CRAIG RICE**
Oh, that's right. That's right.

00:43:52 **KEITH ULLRICH**
To put this into perspective, I had decided to, like, leave Los Angeles and I went to the East Coast for a short period of time and got a phone call. Well, [KU: by then] I decided things were wearing down [KU: even] out there, but I got a phone call from Steve Escandon who said, there's a place that's opened up at Reinway Court, are you interested? And I thought, yes, I am. Yes I am. But I knew I couldn't afford [it] alone, [by] myself, and so I gave him a call, and he was, like, yeah. And so that's what that happened, and that was '79 then.

00:44:24 **CRAIG RICE**
Yeah, that was...

00:44:25 **KEITH ULLRICH**
Summer of '79...

00:44:26 **CRAIG RICE**
August of '79. And we were both, well, I was, see, that's funny. I remember that we were still both, I think you'd come home already. And we were both...

00:44:35 **KEITH ULLRICH**
And I called you once I was here.

00:44:36 **CRAIG RICE**
...we were both still living at home and just had complete, had-to-get-out-of-the-house-itis. Like, it was just being at home with our parents...

00:44:46

KEITH ULLRICH

Yeah.

00:44:46

CRAIG RICE

...was just [laugh] it was just...

00:44:49

KEITH ULLRICH

I already had all my boxes packed.

00:44:51

CRAIG RICE

Oh, my God. It was just driving us. I think we were both just on this collision course with, like, I've got to get out of here. Not that there was anything in, you know, your folks are really nice people...

00:45:00

CRAIG RICE

...and I was living with my mom and we got along great. I mean, it would have been fine. I could have lived at home forever with my mom. That would have been just fine with her, but [laugh] you get to the point where you just got [laugh] you just got to go.

00:45:12

KEITH ULLRICH

No, I already had, I...

00:45:13

CRAIG RICE

Yeah. Oh, my God.

00:45:14

KEITH ULLRICH

...I was, I mean, 19 years old or whatever, but the whole thing was, I went to the East Coast with the idea that I was going to actually be living out there. I went to Boston and Connecticut and stayed for quite some time. And the problem was, it started getting cold, and for me, I mean, I grew up here., [so] I was like, no way. [laugh]

00:45:38

CRAIG RICE

Cold.

00:45:38

KEITH ULLRICH

I was visiting a friend, a woman that I had met, actually through that whole mail art program, Jan Stenson, who had a great apartment in Boston. And she was an art retoucher. She actually worked in restoration, art restoration. She told me a story, and this is what freaked me. She told me the story, [and] she said, well, last winter we were here, her and her roommate she said, [and] we built this structure in our living room so that we could get, so we could sleep as close to the ceiling as possible, because it was warmer up there.

00:46:15 **KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)**

And I thought, yeah, well, I don't want to be a part of any of this. [laugh] And then that's when Steve Escandon had called and said, like, hey, Southern California, we have, you know, there's a place that's opened up here at Reinway Court. I said, I'm there.

00:46:30 **CRAIG RICE**

That's another whole, that's another story, the adventures at Reinway Court. Boy, I mean...

00:46:34 **KEITH ULLRICH**

And then we had to do [it], [so] there we go.

00:46:36 **CRAIG RICE**

It was like moving into a little artists' colony, almost.

00:46:48 **TERRY CANNON**

So who was there? I mean, who, I mean, you know, who lived there? How was it, how did you interact with one another? I mean, it was an art gathering, there was all different kinds of artists.

00:47:02 **CRAIG RICE**

Yeah, lot of kooky kooky people lived there during that period.

00:47:06 **KEITH ULLRICH**

So Steve Escandon...

00:47:07 **CRAIG RICE**

Steve Escandon was there.

00:47:08 **KEITH ULLRICH**

...he is a painter, and primarily...

00:47:11 **CRAIG RICE**

Elaine Carhart...

00:47:13 **KEITH ULLRICH**

...Elaine Carhardt, who works in ceramics. And I saw her maybe a few years ago. Actually, I saw her at the Rauschenberg Combines exhibit at MOCA. And we started talking about Reinway Court. And one of the things that she brought up, was she said, you know, she says, I would get up and I would get ready to go to the studio in the morning. And her studio was at Reinway, it was in a basement of the main building. And, she said, the parking lot would be absolutely filled with cars. It was like 10:30, 11:00 in the morning, and she said, I knew nobody had a job. [laugh] I said, well, that's right, everyone, it was at the time, like, everyone was there working on whatever it was they had, nobody had any money really.

00:48:02

CRAIG RICE

No, there was no...

00:48:04

KEITH ULLRICH

We were working part time, everyone was working part-time jobs.

00:48:06

CRAIG RICE

Or just even working, if we were working full-time, it was just minimum-wage jobs, so you didn't have any money any way.

00:48:12

KEITH ULLRICH

But the rents were really cheap and it was a great place.

00:48:14

CRAIG RICE

Speaking of Elaine Carhardt, this...

00:48:15

KEITH ULLRICH

Elaine, who else was there? That's still...

00:48:17

CRAIG RICE

Well, then there were people that weren't strictly artists. There was this guy named Craig Palmer [sp?] that lived next to us.

00:48:23

KEITH ULLRICH

He was nice.

00:48:23

CRAIG RICE

[laugh] Who, he was a nice guy, but he was convinced that his house was filled with seed spores, [laugh] and that they were somehow hurting him. And that earned him the nickname spore man. He was an interesting character. And then I met my friend Jay Pooler [sp?] there who was...

00:48:39

KEITH ULLRICH

Jay Pooler was an artist.

00:48:40

CRAIG RICE

Jay Pooler was, I don't know that he was an artist but, boy, he sure was unemployed. [laugh] And, I mean, that's just unemployed with a capital U. He was like, I think he was getting electricity for his apartment by running an extension cord into the apartment next door and siphoning off some of theirs. I mean, I don't know that he ever paid rent the whole time he was there. He finally got booted out, but...

00:49:05

KEITH ULLRICH

I met Jackson Scott Riker, J. Riker, there, who's a musician [KU: J. Riker, or Scott, is both a musician and a fine arts painter]. And I really didn't start working with him until after...

00:49:17
After I was...

CRAIG RICE

00:49:17
...you left.

KEITH ULLRICH

00:49:19
I went back to college in 1981, so I left.

CRAIG RICE

00:49:23
And that's about the time I started working and doing some stuff with Scott Riker. And I can go into a little bit of that work, that stuff too. Because one thing that happened was the apartment ended up becoming pretty much a part of that take-it-down type recording studio with tape decks all over the place, and instruments all over the place. And he would come over for practically, like, weekends at a time. And we would just do a lot a recording and...

KEITH ULLRICH

00:49:54
This is Scott Riker would come over...

CRAIG RICE

00:49:55
Scott Riker, yeah.

KEITH ULLRICH

00:49:56
Yeah.

CRAIG RICE

00:49:58
And he was, he actually is, I'm still in contact with him, a wonderful painter. He's teaching up in San Francisco now, still doing music work. But I know I have a lot of that work that we did together and stuff on tape and so...

KEITH ULLRICH

00:50:12
Where exactly was Rein Court ... Reinway?

ADAM HYMAN

00:50:15
Reinway Court is in the northeast, northwest part of Pasadena. It was a little rough area at the time. [KU: Reinway Court is in the northwest part of Pasadena.]

KEITH ULLRICH

00:50:26
It's right off of Los Robles Street just right above the freeway a little bit.

CRAIG RICE

00:50:33
Reinway was built in 1906, 1903, again, it's a series of about almost 30 different apartments, all bungalow-style apartments.

KEITH ULLRICH

00:50:48

CRAIG RICE

It was a tuberculosis clinic originally, I think. And the main, the main building, the larger of the buildings was the actual clinic itself. And then the bungalows were where the patients would stay...

00:51:00

KEITH ULLRICH

They had, the bedroom had one of those old-style Murphy board beds that was no longer [working]...

00:51:11

CRAIG RICE

The mechanism was there...

00:51:12

KEITH ULLRICH

...the mechanism was still there.

00:51:13

CRAIG RICE

...but the bed wasn't there.

00:51:14

KEITH ULLRICH

So that what you would do is, there was a screened porch area, there was the bedroom, and you could see where the bed would have turned around to be opened up into the screened porch area, so that the person, the people that were staying there could get the night air or day air or whichever it was...

00:51:30

CRAIG RICE

Oh, it was really...

00:51:31

KEITH ULLRICH

...supposed to be for the best.

00:51:31

CRAIG RICE

[overlapping] it was really ingenious, because that the wall, the bed would pivot down out of the wall like that to be a flat bed. When the bed is was folded up, you could actually, there's almost, like, in some detective movie you could actually completely pivot that wall around so that the bed was then facing on the other side of the wall. So when it was hot, you could sleep on this side of the wall, which was a screened porch. And when it was cold, you could sleep on the other side of the wall. It was really ingenious, you know what I mean, and stuff like that, I love that.

00:52:03

KEITH ULLRICH

I took over the, I took over the living space. That ended up being my bedroom. You're in the bedroom, and then the screened-porch area, you ended up putting up your animation studio.

00:52:11

CRAIG RICE

I had my animation stand out there, yeah.

00:52:12

KEITH ULLRICH

And you see, you used to work [out in that] screened-porch area.

00:52:15

CRAIG RICE

Which was good because, again, those lights would get, those lights would get really hot, and you needed the, you needed the ventilation for those lights.

00:52:23

KEITH ULLRICH

So most of the stuff that was being done there was work where we were drinking way too much coffee. [laugh]

00:52:32

CRAIG RICE

That goes without saying, I mean...

00:52:34

KEITH ULLRICH

We were listening to "KGRB AM" radio, which was broadcasting big band music...

00:52:41

CRAIG RICE

Big band music.

00:52:42

KEITH ULLRICH

...out of West Covina.

00:52:45

CRAIG RICE

We were basically living there trying to pretend that it was still like 1940 or something. I mean, including the clothes just clothes included I think. We had our thrift store duds.

00:52:57

KEITH ULLRICH

That's right.

00:52:58

TERRY CANNON

Now you guys were together working in film, doing sound work, graphics work, what was your first, kind of, collaborative project and if it was not a film, what was your first collaborative film? And was thinking maybe ZULU AS KONOE. Can you talk about that film, give us the date, and the, you know, kind of, a description of the film and the nature of your collaboration on that film?

00:53:29

CRAIG RICE

Well, collaboration [laugh] I think, I pretty much got Keith to be my guinea pig. I needed a, there were a few sequences where I needed someone to, kind of, dance around or something.

00:53:39

KEITH ULLRICH

Oh, I forgot about that.

00:53:41

CRAIG RICE

That was a good conversation, convincing Keith to, I needed it, I needed it to be backlit. So, just imagine if a, I mean, basically, you can almost film it here. If somebody stood up there, and I needed someone to, sort of, dance around, and, sort of, like a...

00:53:56

KEITH ULLRICH

That was the live action.

00:53:57

CRAIG RICE

...like a go-go dancer.

00:53:58

KEITH ULLRICH

Right.

00:53:58

CRAIG RICE

And I filmed it...

00:53:59

KEITH ULLRICH

You're shooting up and down the couch.

00:54:01

CRAIG RICE

...filmed it and, you'd have to see the film. But it was basically, sort of, backlit.

00:54:05

KEITH ULLRICH

But the film was not, the film itself though was not the [finished] film. Wasn't it like Xerox reproductions of a...

00:54:14

CRAIG RICE

A lot of it, some of it's...

00:54:16

CRAIG RICE

...re-photographed to 16 millimeter frame by frame. But then, again, a lot of it is the Xerox technique.

00:54:22

KEITH ULLRICH

You should really talk about that...[technical]

00:54:24

CRAIG RICE

Yeah, the Xerox technique is where you'd shoot, as a matter fact, I think some of the original stuff I would actually shoot in Super 8. I think I would shoot some stuff in Super 8, develop it as a negative, not as reversal film, develop it as a negative. Make a print of each individual frame which would then be a positive. And then, I made some sort of a jig in my animation stand to an alignment for each frame to keep them all straight. And then basically re-photograph the paper frame. So I was converting film to paper, maybe then re-Xeroxing it several times.

00:55:06

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

The Xerox process back then was really primitive to compare to what we have now. The Xerox process, you got to really, you could get really interesting effects depending on the way the machine was, you know, sometimes you could get images to ghost a little bit or it was just a way of taking an image and adding, kind of, another layer onto to it to process it. So that it didn't look like just, like just a regular black and white photograph. It looked like it had been enhanced somehow. And then taking those paper, sheets of paper, and basically doing, and technically it's called a cell flop.

00:55:42

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

Where you take an animation cell, photograph it, flip to the next one, photograph that. So I was basically doing cell flops, but I wasn't really using animation cells in the strictest sense. I was just using, you know, paper, probably like eight and a half by eleven paper, but using those as animation cells, and so. And then, once you had these sequences of images, you could then repeat them as many times as you wanted. You can alter them, you know?

00:56:12

KEITH ULLRICH

And the filming of that becoming very, very rhythmical, reminding me a lot of some of those, gosh, I'm thinking now, like, Hans Richter. I'm thinking of some of like, some of the other films that had a sort of look to it where they were really, kind of, rough all around the edges and...

00:56:34

CRAIG RICE

Then when you say, Hans Richter, you're referring to some of his experimental films that were made, like, in the 1930s and things. Probably, '30s and early '40s.

00:56:42

KEITH ULLRICH

Earlier I think, but I'm trying to remember some of the...[technical]

00:56:49

CRAIG RICE

I think the film, the film that we've been talking about here with rephotographed images and everything is, the film's name is called ZULU AS KONO. [KU: Konoe, with an 'e', for Craig's film title, not for the TV series credits.] And the origin of the name has a, it's, kind of, a silly story. The TV show "Hawaii Five-O" was always a favorite of mine when I was kid. And if you watched the credits for the show, there was an actor named Zulu. And his, the credit type on the screen when they showed him, it would say "Zulu as Kono." And I always wondered, well, why don't just leave his name Zulu? Why does he have to be Kono? And then I think, there was actually another guy, and I see this could be the sequel. There was another title that was Kam Fong as...

00:57:37 KEITH ULLRICH
Yeah.

00:57:37 CRAIG RICE
...Chin Ho.

00:57:38 KEITH ULLRICH
Right.

00:57:39 CRAIG RICE
Again, it was, like, well, why don't they just...

00:57:42 CRAIG RICE
Why do they have to change the guy's name, so then we have Zulu As Konoe. [laugh] And this is almost, for me, it was almost of, like, a da-da thing, where it just sounded so nonsensical, you know, ZULU AS KONOE. It just, such a stupid thing that...

00:57:57 KEITH ULLRICH
And what year was the film?

00:57:58 CRAIG RICE
That was 1980.

00:58:01 CRAIG RICE
So, when the film was completed, I decided just to call the film ZULU AS KONOE.

00:58:05 KEITH ULLRICH
It was very rhythmical. And that's what I remember about it. So when it came time about adding sound to that what I remember distinctly really about that was really, very, very simple, there was...

00:58:25 CRAIG RICE
You had a tape loop.

00:58:26 KEITH ULLRICH
I had a tape loop going.

00:58:28 CRAIG RICE
You had a tape loop.

00:58:29 KEITH ULLRICH
And it had some sort of a strange audible click somewhere in it, and there was this hiss that would build up. And I remember this strange audible click, and you had this wonderful old graphic equalizer we played around with, and...

00:58:45

CRAIG RICE

Uh huh, yeah.

00:58:47

KEITH ULLRICH

... a little bit [with the tape] speed, but I remember primarily, that graphic equalizer was really the main tool that created the soundtrack.

00:58:54

CRAIG RICE

Well it was, a 24-channels, you could really tweak the...

00:58:57

KEITH ULLRICH

Drop, yeah.

00:58:58

CRAIG RICE

I got...

00:58:58

KEITH ULLRICH

We just let this thing go, this loop running through the graphic equalizer. And we recorded it to tape to put with the film. And all we did was just change the equalization. That was all it was. And it got sometimes to sounding like a small bomb was dropping off somewhere. Sometimes it sounded like someone dropping a pin on the floor. Years later, you screened that film at Cal State University, in Long Beach.

00:59:28

CRAIG RICE

That was a very, I would give my eye teeth to have a tape recording of that screening. You remember a, well, let me just put it his way, there was a...

end of tape 1

TAPE 2: CRAIG RICE/KEITH ULLRICH

01:01:13

TERRY CANNON

The initial screening, public screening of ZULU AS KONOE.

01:01:32

CRAIG RICE

All right. The initial? I'm trying to recall, as I recall, the initial public screening of the film I made, ZULU AS KONOE which I believe I made in 1980, that I believe was at the Bank Playhouse when Filmforum had just moved [there] . There was a show that Keith and I were involved in, I believe.

01:01:58

KEITH ULLRICH

Was that really? That was really the initial screening? Wow.

01:02:01

CRAIG RICE

I believe that that was the first time that movie had been shown in public because that was early 1981 I believe.

01:02:08

KEITH ULLRICH

Okay.

01:02:10

CRAIG RICE

Like what was that? I think it was January of '81.

01:02:13

KEITH ULLRICH

It was. It was the first program of the new year, I think. I think, yeah. I don't want to write off if that was '80 or '81.

01:02:24

TERRY CANNON

Can you talk a little bit about that screening and how it was conceived and what films were on that and what additional films? I think there was an improvised job?

01:02:36

KEITH ULLRICH

That screening that was done at the inaugural show at the Bank Playhouse in Pasadena, for Pasadena Filmforum, was a program, I think the program ends up being called "Crimes Against Vision."

01:03:03 **KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)**

Yes. I think that's what the poster says, "Crimes Against Vision." Really good title. And I was working at a printer's at that time and I had flyers all made up for that. It was under the guises actually of the O Tela Group at that point, which was, [KU: the O Tela Group was a very loose arts collective for collaboration] well, we'll go back into that a little bit later. But I had you primarily show a number of your films there. And ZULU AS KONOE was there...

01:03:28 **CRAIG RICE**

Showed that. Showed FLINTSTONELAND I think I showed LAS VEGAS there.

01:03:32 **KEITH ULLRICH**

LAS VEGAS. Another artist friend of ours, Art DeLeon, I'm pretty sure [we] screened at least one or two of those liquid light films.

01:03:38 **CRAIG RICE**

Yeah. He showed a film.

01:03:43 **KEITH ULLRICH**

Which were animated films that he did using light panels. Little, little, I don't even know exactly how he did that, but it was a light panel that he animated and he was working out of a studio in Pomona at that time.

01:03:58 **CRAIG RICE**

Well, the flyer actually says films by Craig Rice, Art DeLeon and Hans Richter, which is funny because on the face of it, you would think that Hans Richter was a contemporary of ours but he was much earlier.

01:04:13 **KEITH ULLRICH**

In his own mind he was a contemporary.

01:04:15 **CRAIG RICE**

Well, I mean it's kind of, it's cool to have your name lumped in there with Hans Richter.

01:04:19 **KEITH ULLRICH**

I didn't remember that part. That's right. What did we show? GHOSTS BEFORE BREAKFAST probably?

01:04:24 **CRAIG RICE**

I think it's probably something like that. That was Richter's approach, what a 1930's film or maybe even earlier? Very Dada-esque type of film. People that we identified with.

01:04:38

KEITH ULLRICH

So there was, there was that, and one of the things that I wanted to bring up was that I think [one of] my best memories of that event, of that program of films and live music was the screening of FLINTSTONELAND. And my girlfriend at the time, Becky [Jackman], did a really wonderful improvised piano score to the screening of FLINTSTONELAND and since Flintstoneland was such a strangely dark, sort of depressing [place]... [laugh] I remember she had this wonderful piece that she was playing that was little snippets here and there of the Flintstone theme song and in minor key.

01:05:30

KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)

And then she would kind of move into something else and always come back to this “Flintstones, meet the Flintstones” and then just sort of, you know...

01:05:42

CRAIG RICE

I'd hear you seeing this grainy black and white footage of these horrible little Flintstone houses.

01:05:47

KEITH ULLRICH

Badly done. Badly constructed. And out in the middle of the desert.

01:05:55

ADAM HYMAN

Can you please describe the Bank Playhouse space?

01:05:59

CRAIG RICE

It was a nice space.

01:06:00

ADAM HYMAN

So tell me what you're talking about.

01:06:02

CRAIG RICE

Oh, I'm sorry. The, the Bank Playhouse was actually the space where this thing took place. “Crimes Against Vision.” And it was right, as I recall, it was really just a stone's throw from the original Filmforum space. It was a larger space and I think if I recall correctly, I think there were sort of bleachers that have been set up where you sat.

01:06:25

KEITH ULLRICH

Stadium style.

01:06:28

CRAIG RICE

The original Filmforum, Yeah, it was stadium seating. The original Filmforum had really just been like chairs and sofas on a flat floor looking up at the screen. This was quite a big advance from the original space.

01:06:40

KEITH ULLRICH

And it was actually in what used to be an old bank.

01:06:43 **CRAIG RICE**

Hence the name Bank Playhouse.

01:06:48 **ADAM HYMAN**

Did it have a piano in it?

01:06:48 **CRAIG RICE**

The piano. The piano that Becky played. How did that, where did that piano come from? Was that in there or did somebody bring that over? Do you recall?

01:07:00 **KEITH ULLRICH**

I don't remember [KU: But the space was used for stage performances when Filmforum was dark, so it's likely the piano was already there].

01:07:03 **ADAM HYMAN**

And what was the projection situation like in that space?

01:07:07 **CRAIG RICE**

As far as the projection situation in that space. I'm thinking that it was, I don't know that it was all that different from the original Filmforum space. I'm thinking the throw, actually the throw may have been longer so the image was probably larger.

01:07:22 **ADAM HYMAN**

Rather than talking about the comparison to the previous play house, could you just sort of describe the space as it was?

01:07:30 **CRAIG RICE**

I just recall a fairly spare space, although come to think of it though I'm thinking though that you still had some remnants of the teller cages and things that were in there?

01:07:41 **KEITH ULLRICH**

Yeah.

01:07:42 **CRAIG RICE**

I think you still had teller cages over on one side over kind of off to the left of where these bleachers were where you sat and, you know, my memory, I just don't, I just don't have a real, real clear memory of the space itself other than just as a screening [room], sort of a big screening room with big bleachers. That's really the main thing that I remember about it.

01:08:09 **TERRY CANNON**

Keith, now was that your first, I believe you were like the curator of that show. Was that kind of your first public curatorial effort of that sort and...

01:08:32

KEITH ULLRICH

I don't, I don't remember if that was actually, I don't remember if that was the first of that.

01:08:40

TERRY CANNON

But with Filmforum, would that have been your first?

01:08:42

KEITH ULLRICH

But with Filmforum. Yeah, with Filmforum, I think that that was it.

01:08:54

TERRY CANNON

Your first curatorial, curator of the show.

01:08:59

KEITH ULLRICH

I believe that the "Crimes Against Vision" program was the first curatorial opportunity that I had at Filmforum.

01:09:16

TERRY CANNON

What did you think about how it all, I remember that it was a packed house. What did you think about the program as a whole and...

01:09:29

KEITH ULLRICH

You see, it's funny because most people have better memories of that one than I do. I mean I remember as I said some of the films and such that were good but I don't remember...

01:09:39

CRAIG RICE

I remember the review in the LA TIMES. I think the review...

01:09:44

KEITH ULLRICH

I don't even have a copy of that.

01:09:44

CRAIG RICE

Actually I need to get a better copy. I have a photo stat of it. And I think the title of the review, the title of the review was "Bizarre Visions of Worlds Unhinged." Which was...

01:09:58

KEITH ULLRICH

Was it true?

01:10:00

CRAIG RICE

Absolutely. Worlds unhinged. I thought that was, and I remember that I think there was some phrase such as "Craig Rice makes intricate elliptical films, evocative of the work of Eadweard Muybridge which..."

01:10:19

KEITH ULLRICH

Wow, I do kind of remember that.

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

Reading that[in print] to me, I mean that was like a huge thing for me, you know, being compared to Eadweard Muybridge. I mean he's sort of one of my heroes. You know, just that type of imagery and everything. That repeating imagery. Come to think of it, you know what? Not to digress but actually there was another film that I haven't mentioned that we showed at, we showed at that show "Crimes Against Vision" it was found footage that I had found of school children hitting each other in a classroom. I think it was, it had been filmed for some sort of an experiment and I think I, I called the film, it was sort of a play on words of the film by Truffaut L'enfant Sauvage.

01:11:03

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

Which is "the Savage Child." I called mine L'ENFANT S-A-L-V-A-G-E which was salvaged children footage, that's sort of the play on words and I remember , it was funny because the review in the L.A. Times, I think it actually said that L'ENFANT SALVAGE is an amazing film and I thought oh great, the film that I just basically found and had nothing to do with [making] other than just saying here, this is a found film. That's the film I think is an amazing film. I mean, it is an amazing film, but it's found footage, pure and simple. I had nothing to do with it.

01:11:43

KEITH ULLRICH

Craig, this is pre-MTV.

01:11:46

CRAIG RICE

Oh man, don't get me started on the MTV thing. That was a pre-MTV.

01:11:51

KEITH ULLRICH

It was.

01:11:51

TERRY CANNON

What about your mentioning a later screening in Long Beach. Can you talk about that?

01:11:57

CRAIG RICE

There was a gentleman named Al Bates who has since passed on, Al Bates was curating a film series at Cal State Long Beach and he was a friend from Filmforum and he asked me if I wanted to do a show at Cal State Long Beach and this was actually in the early summer of 1982 I believe because I was at UCLA at the time and we put together a program [of films] and it was a lot of the same films I'd shown at the "Crimes Against Vision" show. There was ZULU AS KONOIE and some other black and white super eight films and probably some other films that I'm forgetting but the reaction of the audience at this screening was really interesting because one gentleman at the screening said that my films were the scariest things he'd ever seen and he said that they reminded him of old creepy comic books in the 1950s before they had the comic book code to keep you from putting out stuff that was too scary for kids or something.

01:13:00

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

And I thought that was a really strange analogy. I mean I kind of knew what he was saying but again, this visceral response [from] this audience in Long Beach. It was almost like people that weren't used to seeing independent films where you were seeing sort of non-linear type of imagery and everything, just showing them these films, I just think that this particular audience, I don't think they knew what to make of it.

01:13:30

KEITH ULLRICH

There was a woman who commented to you, and this one I remember took you quite by surprise. It was a woman who said "your films hurt my body."

01:13:45

CRAIG RICE

[laugh] You know, one of the biggest mistakes I've ever made, a girlfriend of mine at the time that went with me to screening, she and I were together at UCLA. She had actually offered to bring a tape recorder and to tape record the comments of the audience after the screening and I just completely waved it off like oh no, [why bother]. nobody's going to. You know and boy, what a mistake that was. I would give anything to, I don't know what it was but that his particular audience at [that] show had the most visceral reaction to my films.

01:14:15

KEITH ULLRICH

The person who was asking the question on the soundtrack for ZULU AS KONOIE, again, you know, [it had] this very rhythmical altered click that was, that kept appearing on this loop and they wanted to know if it was a shotgun blast that had been recorded.

01:14:31

CRAIG RICEE

Which it could have been. I mean, it could have been just about anything. But see that was the beauty of it, though. Was the fact that not only the sound but the images, I mean there were people that saw that film that asked me, well, in that one sequence, is that a child being beaten? And I'm like "well, no." You know? And it was, and,

01:14:52

KEITH ULLRICH

But you have to, you have to admit, in that film, there is a disturbing level of what appears to be some sort of random violence that's being captured. It has this in it, but it's, but it's not. It's just, but it's not. It's not. [laugh]

01:15:14

TERRY CANNON

With those images that you're referring to...

01:15:16

CRAIG RICE

Well, one of the...

01:15:17

KEITH ULLRICH

Were they actually?

01:15:18

CRAIG RICE

One of the images I think was actually image that I shot in the Pasadena Doo-Dah Parade and it was actually somebody I knew, I think they were hitting a mannequin with a club or a bat or something but it was just this little brief film snippet that was probably that long[a few frames] and what I did was again, I did the rephotographing of it and xeroxing of it and making it look real grainy and real scary. There may even have been a negative image, it may not even have been a positive. But anyway, what you saw was what appeared to be a body being hit but you were seeing this thing be repeated over and over and over again interspersed with the other images and I guess the overall effect that people saw this film combined with this looping soundtrack that just sounded like this kind of dull thud.

01:16:15

KEITH ULLRICH

It was a thud and a squeaking sound. Yeah.

01:16:15

CRAIG RICE

And a squeak and kind of another thud. I guess people just, I mean you know, I mean that's the beauty of film. You create a completely artificial thing that people basically assemble inside their heads, you know, which is why it's so, it's so subjective. People put their own stuff into it, you know? People that are watching it, they just put stuff into it that isn't really there.

01:16:42

TERRY CANNON

And you had different audiences. I know the audience in Long Beach and this that audience was a lot of people who had very little exposure to this experimental work. It was a much older one which brings me to a question which is almost just a little out place but since you're talking about audiences. What, how did you perceive the audiences, obviously you had a much different reaction to Filmforum to your work. What kind of some audiences did you see at Filmforum at those times and in terms of the kinds of people that were going, uh, you know you were obviously audience members but now all of a sudden in the late 80s and, or the late 70s and early 80s, you've become now curators and so how did you see the audience there and how did you see that audience develop over the years? Any thoughts on that?

01:17:40

CRAIG RICE

Well, the audiences, if we're talking about the kinds of audiences you would have at Filmforum when I started going, it was, you had a lot of young people but you had a good mix. You had a good mix of people, it didn't really feel like any particular type of person. Um, you know, you sense that a lot of people in the audience were sort of artist types. When I say artist types, I don't mean like, you know, beatniks with cigarette holders and berets, I mean, you know, we're talking circa 1980 artsy types. Just, the audiences for the most part that came in to see the films there, I think were pretty much, I think they were pretty sympathetic audiences.

01:18:24

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

And by sympathetic, I mean I think they were people that were there to see something off the beaten track. Not the type of audience that, you know, would stand in line at the Laemmle to see, I don't know, whatever movie was playing in 1980s.

01:18:39

KEITH ULLRICH

If I remember correctly as well it's that as the years kind of went on -- and it was primarily happening though at the screenings, Filmforum screenings at the Bank Playhouse -- is that there were more people coming from outside of, really sort of what was our sort of immediate area in the valley.

01:19:01

CRAIG RICE

That's a good point. Like more sort of west side people.

01:19:01

KEITH ULLRICH

There was some things where yeah, people were really sort of coming in from outside going, like, what is this place? They knew that they were, that they needed to come there to see something, whatever specific thing they came to see, whatever screenings. That was happening a lot more, but it was after, after Filmforum got into the Bank Playhouse. There were more, the audience was taking on a little bit different...

01:19:31

CRAIG RICE

Well, the Bank Playhouse definitely accommodated more people so you had more people in there.

01:19:40

KEITH ULLRICH

I don't know. I mean, it was that, but I think also there was something else kind of going on as well. Either whatever was being, whatever was being screened, the advertising, getting the word out. A lot of stuff was changing at that time too. It was a little easier to get the word out on what was, what was happening.

01:20:00

TERRY CANNON

Now that you are actually launching into exhibiting your work, and obviously you're experimenting with sound, you're doing experimenting with sound and footage and imagery.

01:20:13

KEITH ULLRICH

Found sound.

01:20:15

TERRY CANNON

Found sound. Was there work at the time both in and out of film that was something you were aware of that was an influence? I mean obviously we've probably shown some Bruce Conner, what kind of influences were you, you know, impacting you at that time in the creation of that work that you were doing in '78, '79, and '80?

01:20:41

CRAIG RICE

Well, as far as, as far as film influences for me personally, I mean I can go all the way back to stuff I saw when I was a kid. I mean I can go back to the first time I saw the film Jason and the Argonauts which had the stop motion by the famous animatore Ray Harryhausen who had that one sequence of the fighting skeletons that was done. I mean you're watching it when you were a kid and, you know, later on you find out how they did the stop motion and they photographed it frame by frame, but just seeing stuff and seeing imagery and things and being really intrigued by it and really thinking to yourself boy, you know, I wish, I want to do that when I grow up, you know? And later on just seeing, you know, for me it wasn't always even just films, it was a lot of it was just still photography and just seeing images and even just I remember being a kid flipping through a LIFE magazine and seeing some sort of imagery or some sort of photography and just being really struck by it.

01:21:42

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

Just compositionally, just the way the images [were], the image was composed and thinking boy, I would love to be able to do something like that or, you know, recreate that and not copy it but recreate it in my own way and I think for, you know, when I started doing the 16-millimeter stuff, I think what I was doing, in a lot of ways, I think I was playing catch up. I think I had a lot of stuff inside there that just needed to come out onto the film. Just a lot of imagery and a lot of things that, and it's, I'm sure there's a lot of stuff that's almost just subconscious and it's, maybe even look at those films today and say oh, I just, I didn't realize I was thinking about that or whatever but, uh, I mean, you know, I don't know how Freudian you want to get with all of this.

01:22:30

KEITH ULLRICH

I'm not going to go there.

01:22:32

CRAIG RICE

Where all this stuff comes from. I mean it comes from someplace.

01:22:38

KEITH ULLRICH

Well, it's influences. Influences. I think [that] for me, one of the things that was of influencing, that's influenced me was not so much in film, but in sound, [and] [the] person [who] has influenced [me and an] incredible amount of other musicians and sound people is Brian Eno [and his] work. And I actually came across his work very, very early on. I mean I was in high school. And uh, so I'm talking about '74? '73? '74 I came across the initial sort of work he was doing and wondering who this person was and the person [that's] dealing with, working with sound in a very sort of different way and his working methods of playing around with the sound.

01:23:35

KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)

I remember thinking like, well gosh, you know, I would like, watch things on television and think what if, you know, I try to break up time and experiment with recording portions of the audio tracks off of television? And as much as you were doing with imagery, with film, I was trying to experiment a lot of that kind of stuff with tape and so forth, where like you select little sorts of times where you take your hand off of the pause button and let something record for a while and then press pause and release it again. And whatever is going on, you're capturing all of this sound, and you're doing a similar sort of thing with imagery.

01:24:21

KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)

I remember one time as well going and making some recordings downtown Los Angeles. I was just walking around with a tape recorder taping whatever was going on, ambient sounds on the street and various places, and I used a lot of those, those recordings, later on as backing for other things, or where I would take even that signal and I would send it through [devices] and reprocess the sound in various kinds of ways. And people would end up hearing these things and think were you in a riot somewhere or were you, you know, like, like was there murders or something? I mean they would hear all kinds of things in these recordings and they were just slightly manipulated sounds. It's just audiences or people just walking on the street and muttering to themselves or...

01:25:14

CRAIG RICE

You know, I, just not to over state the obvious but just I'm thinking about all of these things that we were doing,. I mean another reason to do all of this stuff is it was just fun. It was...

01:25:27

KEITH ULLRICH

It was experimentation.

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

It was experimentation. That was, there was nobody [making you] you were doing it for yourself. There was nobody hanging over your [shoulder] I want you to make this like this or do this. There was no, like you didn't have an art director. You were just, you were the art director. You were doing it because you felt like it and it was really[fun}, you know?

01:25:50

KEITH ULLRICH

And at the same time, the influences, you know? At that time I was reading, and still do, I mean, some of the stuff that was going on with William Burroughs and Brion Gysin doing cut-ups, and all of that stuff influenced me as well.

01:26:04

CRAIG RICE

Well then you had those like, I remember one time at Filmforum they showed a documentary on the Photomontagist John Heartfield who was active in Nazi Germany, and who did a lot of really amazing photo montages that were very critical of the Nazis. Some of them are very famous but just looking at that type of work and then looking at, you know, a lot of the Dada work from the '20s and, you know, I mean it's, we just, I guess we really just looked up to those kinds of artists that were just really out there that, you know, made a statement and made it really well and really unambiguously. I'm just trying to think of what, you know...

01:26:54

KEITH ULLRICH

And how to then make things with materials that you had on hand. A lot of it was making stuff with whatever materials you had on hand.

01:27:02

CRAIG RICE

That was a lot of it, yeah. Just doing the best you could with what you had available to you at the time. And not worrying, that sort of makes me think of the hand made film I made. I was at a point where I didn't have any, uh, I think I had one roll of 16-millimeter film that I made a sort of a primitive optical printer and I, I had some old footage from I think it was an Army Air Corps. Sing along film that were all these army men in the barracks singing.

01:27:27

KEITH ULLRICH

If you're going to give me this one, then I've got my take on this too.

01:27:34

CRAIG RICE

Oh, you've got your take. Well, let me just describe what the film is. The film is it's a, it's a cameraless film where all I'm doing is I'm literally the, the name of the film is I KISS THE DEAR FINGERS SO TOIL-WORN FOR ME which is a line from the song "Mother Machree", which is one of the songs that they sing in this Air Force sing-along film and since it was a sing-along film, they had the line of dialogue, they had the lines of the song run horizontal along the bottom of the film frame and one of the film frames that I used that I re-photographed had I KISS THE DEAR FINGERS SO TOIL-WORN FOR Me along the bottom.

01:28:22

KEITH ULLRICH

It's like 1981?

01:28:22

CRAIG RICE

1981 I think. No money, I think I had a roll of 16-millimeter film unexposed and I had some Dektol developer and what I did was I used a little flashlight and I would take a strip, I would go into the bathroom in the dark and I would line up a strip of this movie with the unexposed 16-millimeter, take the pen light, pull the pen light, shoot the light through the strip of film to expose the image on to this other strip of film. [Then] develop that which of course would end up coming out as a negative because the film if you developed it yourself in Dektol developer, the film won't reverse. It comes out as a negative so you had [to] in turn take that strip of film and then dry that and then redo the same process again to get it to come out positive. I kept doing this thing and I would get real sloppy and I would let it slip a little bit, not align the frames quite right.

01:29:29

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

I think I actually had all the strips of film out back drying on a clothesline or something like that.

01:29:35

KEITH ULLRICH

And in the bathroom. All the strips of film were, I don't remember, I remember [you] putting [up] long strips of film because you weren't doing little pieces, you had long strips of film.

01:29:44

CRAIG RICE

But at the end of the day when you put this thing in the projector and ran it, you ended up with this really peculiar film that had these film images that would come in and out almost like ghosts and the sprocket holes would come in and out. And I have to admit, for just doing what I did, it actually had kind of a nice, it was kind of a nice effect. It was very peculiar.

01:30:12

KEITH ULLRICH

Yeah my, my memory of that was, that was the last film that you did at Reinway Court before you opted out and went and did the UCLA gig.

01:30:25

CRAIG RICE

Yeah. That was...

01:30:28

KEITH ULLRICH

And you really were literally leaving like very, very soon. You had that last role of film, no money, made that film in the bathroom. I remember I was working out in the living room [in] the studio, [the] little studio area that I had and stuff. When that film was done, when you had put it all together, it was literally like a couple of days. It was like well, let's see the film.

01:30:55

CRAIG RICE

Just put it on the projector. [laugh]

01:30:55

KEITH ULLRICH

Just put it on the thing and, and really, like the first time I looked at that film, I was thinking. I saw the rhythm of the film, [and] I kept thinking oh, oh, this will be really great with sound, but you know what? That film looked so well silent, it's got its own, it's got its own singing. It's got its own built-in sing-along lyrics and everything. You know? You make up your own rhythm to it, but it's a gorgeous film. And I just remember, as I said, like thinking, like here it was [with you saying], I've just got to make a film.

01:31:27

CRAIG RICE

And to me, that's an example of a film that just, that just came out of nothing.

01:31:30

KEITH ULLRICH

It came out of nothing.

01:31:32

CRAIG RICE

That film, it just came out of nothing.

01:31:28

KEITH ULLRICH

It's a beautiful film. It's got a nice sort of like, it's got some sort of, like a golden brown kind of color to it. Really beautiful. And it does things like, come in and out of focus, there's some things that are overlapping and it looks as if someone is just kind of like, almost on some sort of a strange Ferris wheel of imagery.

01:31:58

CRAIG RICE

Yeah. You show that film to the wrong group of people and all they're going to say is "boy, that was a tremendous mistake." [laugh] This is such a...

01:32:08

TERRY CANNON

It was a very weak...I recall, I think we...Filmforum bought a print of that we have... [unintelligible]

01:32:16

CRAIG RICE

Do you guys really have a print of that? Wow.

01:32:20

TERRY CANNON

Yeah. And I remember showing it at Filmforum and I believe we later put it on a traveling program and it was really, it was always well received and it's a very, I mean it's a stunning film but it's very, but it's also a little, you get a little dizzy watching it. I mean, it was all like you're saying, everything kind of, you know, did you have that kind of reaction?

01:32:38

CRAIG RICE

And then it accelerates towards the end where you start getting the woman with the broom knocking the stool out from under the man and he falls down, the man with the pipe. It's just such, the thing is, the film, [laugh] just the film I started with, the army sing along film in its own way was just so completely warped that just then taking that and, I don't know. Sort of doing the equivalent of giving the viewer a large dose of LSD and then showing it to him again, you know, it's just this bizarre thing.

01:33:15

KEITH ULLRICH

Really beautiful film.

01:33:18

CRAIG RICE

Well, thank you.

01:33:21

TERRY CANNON

So that was something had you thought of maybe originally? Well, you didn't get [unintelligible].

01:33:25

KEITH ULLRICH

I thought when I was first watching the film, I thought, oh, this would be, this would really do well with some sort of sound. And then I think, on like the second screening of the film, it was just kind of like, you know, man, it just needs to kind of just stay as it is. It worked so well as a silent film. It really, really does. Just like, adding sound to it would just like completely ruin it in some way.

01:33:50

TERRY CANNON

What's the running time on that?

01:33:51

KEITH ULLRICH

It's real short.

01:33:53

CRAIG RICE

It's very short. Probably what? Six? Maybe five minutes? Even if that.

01:33:59

TERRY CANNON

Do you remember anything. I think it was on one or two touring programs. Do you remember anything about how that came about?

01:34:07

CRAIG RICE

I think the way it...

01:34:11

KEITH ULLRICH

Did that go to Chicago?

01:34:13

CRAIG RICE

Well, I'm thinking that Terry Cannon who was running Filmforum, I'm sure that was his doing getting it on the, getting it on the traveling program. If I recall, I think there were a couple of my films that at one time or another showed at the Whitney or something in some sort of a film series that they had. Again, I'm little bit muddy on some of these memories of some of these other things.

01:34:40

TERRY CANNON

Do you, you were talking earlier and you had alluded to the O Tela Group which I believe was the umbrella...

01:34:54

KEITH ULLRICH

The umbrella, yeah.

01:34:55

TERRY CANNON

For your first public screening and I know that dates back until the...

01:35:00

KEITH ULLRICH

'79? '80s? '79.

01:35:05

TERRY CANNON

Talk a little about who the O Tela Group was.

01:35:07

MALE SPEAKER

Start bring saying the name and the spelling of it.

01:35:10

KEITH ULLRICH

Yeah. O Tela Group, it's three words and it's just the letter O, and then Tela, T-E-L-A Group. At the time actually, initially it was called O Tela Conversion, and later it had become O Tela Group. I changed that. And I will tell you why as well. But O Tela Conversion originally was a way of sort of my becoming anonymous. I was trying to produce some works that were a little, that were actually anonymous. And I was making collages and small books that I was leaving in various locations as if it was being done by a some sort of a large conglomerate or some sort of a corporation or something.

01:35:58

KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)

What ended up happening a little later than that though is I began to see O Tela as being a possibility for collaboration and I was inviting a number of people to, to act under this sort of anonymous umbrella as a group. And I think [that the] screening then of this show at Filmforum at the Bank Playhouse inaugural, there was sort of one of the larger attempts at that. Let's get together and pull all the resources together and just do it under this one, this one heading. But by all means at that point, it was no longer really anonymous, it was giving credit to all of the artists that were performing and their work.

01:36:49

KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)

What else about that? The change in name occurred because I was sending stuff out either by mail or because I was soliciting responses from other artists and trying to get an idea of what other kinds of things, work that people were doing at that time. And I had someone who was coming through Southern California and he was interested in talking with me, and I do not remember this artist's name unfortunately. And he told me a really great story though. He said, you know, I was really concerned about contacting you because I thought O Tela Conversion, I thought I might be getting into some sort of religious cult. And I said well, it is a religious cult. No, no, no. But I said to him, oh, well I didn't mean that sort of impression. So I changed the name to the O Tela Group so that it sounded a little bit more [vague]...

01:37:35

CRAIG RICE

Well, and, and as I recall, there was kind of a, I think there were several other artist groups that were, that had a name and I think there was, wasn't there almost sort of a little bit of a friendly rivalry between [them]? I remember there was this one group, what was it? World Imitation that they were sort of out in the valley?

01:37:51

KEITH ULLRICH

World Imitation and Science Holiday. They actually, they, there was a group of people that were... this is such a strange little story. I didn't know this at the time, but there were a number of people who were out in, that were going to Cal State Northridge that were doing some very similar work where they were doing these little handmade booklets and collages, and I discovered all of this stuff and thought, what is this group that's doing something really similar [and what are they doing] out in Northridge? And that was the Science Holiday and World Imitation productions group and man, they really ramped things up. I mean they ended up having a band, doing music and doing some recordings.

01:38:48

CRAIG RICE

That's right. I remember that.

01:38:48

KEITH ULLRICH

Really wonderful work but a little bit, a little bit different and in a way, it was sort of a friendly rivalry. I remember trying to get in contact with them and again, it was touch and go, little things here and there, but I met some of the people from that group but it never really sort of gelled as far as being able to do anything with them.

01:39:07

CRAIG RICE

people, looking at Pasadena versus the larger, the larger L.A. art scene, Pasadena, I think we were a little bit provincial. I think there was almost a little bit [of] provincialism. Maybe I'm not using that word correctly. But there was kind of a, I don't know. I just always felt like the Pasadena people, it just felt more sort of home grown or something. Maybe that's just my perception of it because it was so, the whole film thing to me personally always felt really sort of grassroots like it was just really coming from the bottom up.

01:39:54

KEITH ULLRICH

Well, I think this gets back into the thing of you saying you made the decisions about what it was that you were going to do and no one was telling you what it was you were going to do.

01:40:03

CRAIG RICE

And that's one of the reasons it was so much fun because you didn't have, you weren't trying to satisfy someone else's expectations, you were really only trying to satisfy yourself.

01:40:14

KEITH ULLRICH

Pasadena artist and musician Tom Recchion told me [something similar] about that time as well. Like in the late '70s or early '80s, he said Pasadena, and this is like a rough quote, but he said "I love working and living in Pasadena because it's the only place I can really get things done without being, you know, without being interfered [with]. I'm not interfered with, [and] people aren't telling me, you know, what kinds of music and what kind of art that I can make here." He basically said you're left on your own to do what it is you want to do. And that, I always remember that being really sort of important. An important thing.

01:41:02

TERRY CANNON

Do you think that aesthetic applied to your experiences at Filmforum? I mean, in other words, you know, what, that you were seeing screened there and the environment that was being created, kind of like what you were saying a grassroots, home grown, you know, because we were showing a lot of changes where it wasn't always just experimental work but what I'm trying to say is was there some kind of an almost aesthetic quality there as opposed to some of the venues and other parts of Los Angeles, the whole sphere, by now you were probably going out and seeing films and other venues. So was there something different about Filmforum versus some of the other places you had been to?

01:42:03

KEITH ULLRICH

Yeah. I remember what was very different about Filmforum was, compared to the stuff that was, that we were seeing from film history classes, Craig and I being at Reinway Court and going, like, at least a good couple of times a week to the local art revival theater place in South Pasadena, the Rialto. They were showing a rotating screening of, you know, you'd go there and see Jacques Tati films or Jean-Luc Goddard films the next day and such.

01:42:42

KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)

Filmforum was sort of giving, was filling in all of that other stuff, the stuff that wasn't being supplied by [all the other places.] Filmforum was bringing you everything else to sort of give you the whole full plate, as it were. I mean, there was stuff that just, you couldn't see anywhere else really.

01:42:55

CRAIG RICE

And when you say couldn't see, couldn't see anywhere else, yeah, I mean that to me is a key thing about when I think about the experience of Filmforum and just the whole idea that you were going to see stuff that you, that wasn't really commercial work in the larger sense of it being, you know, Hollywood produced or stuff you'd see on television, it was really stuff that was really unique and the one aspect of the films that I really enjoyed is the fact that a lot of the films were really highly personal. They were a personal vision of the filmmaker. This were very personal, often very revealing and a lot of it, you know, was film that was very non linear, you know, films, a lot of films I'd have to say that the average movie goer wouldn't make any sense [of].., you know, quote, unquote "sense."

01:43:57

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

But I mean there we go, I mean, and this is before, you know this is before the advent of MTV and all these other media outlets that we have now.

01:44:09

KEITH ULLRICH

Impossible to have a personal copy of a lot of this stuff [so] that you can see it on your own.

01:44:13

CRAIG RICE

But what I guess the point I'm trying to make is people now, I mean here we are in 2010. I think the average person now is really used to seeing a lot of very disconnected seemingly ambiguous imagery. I think that's just become part of our culture. I don't think it was 30 years ago. I think that type of imagery was really pretty much limited to the art house. You know, there are some exceptions and obviously, you know, mainstream films that dabbled in but I think a film like, you know, Kubrick's 2001 which has some really astonishing sequences in it. But by and large, if you wanted to see, you know, imagery that didn't just follow, you know, an ABC, you know, type of progression of plot or whatever. You really needed to see independent films.

01:45:05

KEITH ULLRICH

I think going back to that, that point you just made about seeing the films at Filmforum and seeing films that were, a number of those films, so many of them were highly personal films. That's an important point to bring up because again, we're going to go back to that whole thing [that] many times, after screenings of these extremely personal films, you had an opportunity then to talk with the person that actually made the film, and that's impossible to get. That was impossible to get anywhere else.

01:45:34

CRAIG RICE

Right, right. You couldn't get that.

01:45:29

KEITH ULLRICH

I mean, [imagine] after a screening at the Rialto saying, I want to talk to Jacques Tati about something. I have some questions I'd like to ask him. Oh, he's been dead for how many years? Oh no.

01:45:42

CRAIG RICE

But he's, he's busy tonight. He's busy tonight.

01:45:47

KEITH ULLRICH

That's right or he's not around.

01:45:49

TERRY CANNON

What were some of the places you would go after screenings or filmmakers? Can you describe those? Would you go to a few bars and some other establishments?

01:46:03

KEITH ULLRICH

Yeah. After screenings, at Filmforum, you'd...

01:46:09

CRAIG RICE

you'd go down to the Espresso Bar, right? Right down the street?

01:46:07

KEITH ULLRICH

Smiling Joe's.

01:46:16

CRAIG RICE

No, well,

01:46:09

KEITH ULLRICH

No, what was it? It was Smiling Joe's? Smiling Joe's. Which was one of the first bars that had been opened in Pasadena after prohibition ended. It's no longer there. But 75-cent gin and tonics. [laugh] And they made them strong. And then you could get the filmmakers to talk pretty darn easy about anything after some of those. What else, what other places were there?

01:46:51

CRAIG RICE

Well, I was thinking that the Espresso Bar that was down the street and then just going to someplace to get pie.

01:46:59

KEITH ULLRICH

Just like a local restaurant. Little like a little 24-hour restaurant place, Shaker's, or whatever. That was good. You had to feed them. Yeah. Something to eat.

01:47:09

TERRY CANNON

Can you just tell it factually, like what streets are we talking about here?

01:47:14

CRAIG RICE

Somewhere in Pasadena, when we're talking about places where we'd go after Filmforum, we're talking about maybe the Espresso Bar which was in an alley located just south of Raymond and Colorado in Pasadena. It was a back alley. The entrance was through an alley, you'd go around through the alley, make a right and then go in that doorway. That was a neat little place. What was the bar you were talking about?

01:47:39

KEITH ULLRICH

Am I getting the name of that bar right? Smiling Joe's? Smiling Joe's was on California [KU: actually, on Colorado] Boulevard, really, actually close to where Pasadena City College is. It's like Allen, near Allen and Colorado?

01:47:57

CRAIG RICE

Yeah. Pretty close.

01:47:59

KEITH ULLRICH

And then Shaker's was on your way to South Pasadena. It was on Arroyo Parkway around California and Del Mar.

01:48:06

CRAIG RICE

Sounds about right.

01:48:08

TERRY CANNON

On our screenings on Monday nights, we kept a lot of places and the economic boost we gave for places like Smiling Joe's which was basically empty on a Monday night. Sometimes there was a group of 12 to 15 people.

01:48:19

KEITH ULLRICH

They had no idea what they had. [laugh]

01:48:27

TERRY CANNON

I think at one point they wanted to do a wall of fame of all the filmmakers that came in there. I want today ask you, going back a little bit to O Tela Conversion and some of the graphics that you were doing at that time. I wanted to see, could you talk a little bit about, because I know the Filmforum of graphics at that time, the flyers and the posters incorporated some found type imagery and there was a lot of interest in that at the time. Do you recall doing any type of graphics work with Filmforum in terms of flyers?

01:49:04

KEITH ULLRICH

I remember, I do remember doing one calendar schedule. One full calendar schedule that was primarily for the Dada and Surrealist screenings that were done as a part of [the] "Show For The Eyes" program that Terry Cannon, Richard Meade and I put together, which was a mail art program, as it were, for film instead of collages and paper objects. It was actually a mail-in film program. We can talk about it later or do you want to talk about it now?

01:49:42

TERRY CANNON

We can talk about it now I guess.

01:49:43

KEITH ULLRICH

Well, getting back to the program part of that, though. That was, that [the] program I remember making, and it was a need for, well, what kind of imagery are we going to use for this? And I snapped a photograph of Terry Cannon at his house putting some sort of a, part of a, part of a furnace grate in front of, in front of his face to capture sort of a mask. And that image ended up being on the poster. It was again sort of a random, well, what can we use here? Well, okay, "Show For The Eyes," let's just get an image of your eyes, [makes noise]

01:50:27

KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)

And this was the image that appeared on the program schedule. I also remember that time too of thinking, "well, a program note [for a Dada and Surrealist show] shouldn't be straight on this." So I skewed everything off to the side [at an angle] and I remember the printer deciding that it was very, very important to go ahead and straighten everything all out before running it through the press, and it was like "Lord, we know!" We wanted to do that.

01:50:56

CRAIG RICE

We wouldn't want to make anything that looks like a mistake, you know? Yeah.

01:51:01

KEITH ULLRICH

I remember that specifically. And there were, [later] there was a program guide that was then made for screenings of films that went to Chicago -- that was part of your films. I don't remember all the films that were there, [but] Bill Scaff had a film in there, and I don't know, one of your other films was there. But there was a small little program booklet that I made up and it was supposed to be, if I remember this right, it's films from Los Angeles, and my first thought was well, if you were from Los Angeles and you were going to be screening elsewhere, what kind of imagery should be used? Los Angeles car culture?

01:51:44

KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)

And [so,] I had an image on the cover of some man who was supposed to be looking in his rear-view mirror at something behind him but what was in the rear-view mirror was some sort of a, like a skull image or something.

01:51:55

CRAIG RICE

It was a skeleton image of something in the rear-view mirror. Now I remember that.

01:51:59

KEITH ULLRICH

Had nothing to do with any of the films, but the whole idea was that coming up with something like, with car culture and like, well, you know, you live in your car if you're in Los Angeles.

01:52:06

CRAIG RICE

You live in your car and you probably end up dying in it as well. Yeah.

01:52:10

KEITH ULLRICH

Or at least in the backseat [if] you left somebody back there a little too long. So those are, those are two things that I remember doing some graphic, uh, graphics booklets for Filmforum. Other than that, gosh, [of] a lot of the other artists who were working on Filmforum flyers at that time was filmmaker Bill Scaff. He did quite a number of programs, really beautiful stuff. And, gosh, who else did some stuff, do you remember? I don't know, did Steven Escandon ever do a work?

01:52:46

CRAIG RICE

You know, I'm not sure.

01:52:54

TERRY CANNON

Now to finish up on "Show For The Eyes," can you talk any more about that operation specifically about the title? Because I think you were responsible for coming up with that?

01:53:10

KEITH ULLRICH

Oh, all right. I don't know, I don't remember that. I don't remember.

01:53:14

TERRY CANNON

Wasn't there a theme that was written? By one of the Dada poets?

01:53:19

KEITH ULLRICH

Probably. Gosh, you should have asked me that before. I could have actually like had that. Because you're right. I think it did come from that and I know now what the, I can even visualize the book on my bookshelf. Of what that, of what that book is that that comes from and I don't remember who the poet was. Darn. [KU: The poet is Pierre Reverdy, and the title of the Filmforum series comes from his poem "Spectacle des yeux," Show For The Eyes. I found Reverdy's poem in a book edited by Michael Benedikt, likely long out of print, *The Poetry of Surrealism: An Anthology*, in 1975. Part of Benedikt's translation of the poem, so perfect for the series, goes like this: "...The child with eyes burnt by wonder / The blond boy the fearful angel / Shaken by the sight of all these people from altogether another world / Who don't look like everybody else / But whom you wish you could travel off with / Marvelous strangers who appear and disappear without ever dying..."]

01:53:37 **TERRY CANNON**

I think it's in the little catalog.

01:53:39 **KEITH ULLRICH**

Okay.

01:53:42 **TERRY CANNON**

The little program.

01:53:43 **KEITH ULLRICH**

So "Show For The Eyes."

01:53:45 **TERRY CANNON**

Now didn't both of you have film work or submissions into "Show For The Eyes"?

01:53:51 **KEITH ULLRICH**

Yes.

01:53:51 **TERRY CANNON**

Can you, can you talk a little bit about that? Because I know you both,

01:53:55 **KEITH ULLRICH**

So, I should say first that, again, so "Show For The Eyes" was again because of this whole thing that was really sort of happening at that time with what was termed mail art. The idea of like [physically] mailing [art]work [through the post] whereas, you know, now of course people just send this stuff all by e-mail or other ways. Terry Cannon, artist Richard Meade and myself had this program idea where we would invite a number of artists, filmmakers, to send in submissions of pieces of film. And I don't remember now if there was a, if there were any constraints on the length of the amount of film that was to be sent in. But some things came in small strips and others in longer forms, and it was 16 and Super 8, so there were going to be two separate films produced, one was a 16-millimeter film and one was going to be a Super 8.

01:55:09 **KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)**

And the films were constructed, [assembled] as the submissions were received. That was an important part of the construction of the films. So whatever mail came in that day, that...

01:55:25 **CRAIG RICE**

It just got added, added it on to the reel essentially. Just add it on.

KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)

That got tacked on, tacked on, tacked on. Where else was I supposed to go with that? [Addressed to Craig] Do you have a submission to that film? That's what it was.

01:55:36

CRAIG RICE

Boy, if I did, I sure as hell don't remember. [laugh]

01:55:41

KEITH ULLRICH

I remember what I submitted. It was my take on trying to do my own version of, [or homage to] Victor Faccinto's **BOOK OF DEAD**. It was a small strip of film with some man with a top hat, and I don't remember if he was doing a dance but I do remember him taking his top hat off. And I remember scratching various kinds of things into the film and trying to, to follow this top hat [around] as he was [removing it, as he was doing like this. It was no more, probably on screen very, very short. Probably, if I had to count, about probably no more than five seconds of film, so very, very short.

01:56:17

CRAIG RICE

You know, if I did submit something, I'm just guessing it would have been some little snippet of some found footage I had lying around. That's just my best guess, I mean I, I really don't remember what I submitted.

01:56:35

TERRY CANNON

Now, I thought one of the most interesting collaborations in that time period, which actually pre-dates **SHOW FOR THE EYES** was in a kind of a, I don't want to [say] pioneering but it was at that time, it was very unusual, was the Filmforum's sponsor outdoor screening of **THE CABINET OF DR. CALAGARI** with a largely improvised score and can you talk about that Keith, I think you were very intimately involved with that. I think you may have actually even curated that? I can't remember.

01:57:13

KEITH ULLRICH

You know, I can't remember the origins, I do not remember the origins of, of how that...

01:57:24

KEITH ULLRICH

...there was a screening of **THE CABINET OF DR. CALAGARI** at the Pasadena Espresso Bar, and I'm trying to remember what year we must be looking at here as well.

01:57:36

CRAIG RICE

Well, and it was, you might add that it was actually in the alley behind the Espresso Bar. It was an outdoor screening.

01:57:42

KEITH ULLRICH

That's right. Which was an important [thing]. That actually was the entrance at the time to the Espresso Bar. You had to actually enter the Espresso Bar through the alleyway and there was a courtyard area. Anyway, so this was a screening of the film and there were a number of people who were invited to do a, do an improvised soundtrack. And I say improvised because there was [only] a short little rehearsal the day before I think of what, what kinds of things we were going to do and when are we going to place the sound and what kinds of sounds are we going to make.

01:58:16

KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)

I may say that this [idea of a live score to the] film may have come about with the idea that, there was actually another artist who had done some sound work that I listened to, the [English] artist [and musician] Bill Nelson had done sound for [a stage performance of] *Beauty and the Beast*. I think he did a soundtrack to that and so the idea of doing something like [that for] *Dr. Caligari* [came up]. In fact, actually, I think later on he did a version of *Caligari* as well. But I think it was for a stage play [too]. There was a stage play for that. Anyway, getting back to the film part of that, there were a number of Pasadena artists that were musicians that were asked to, to take part in this. [KU: these notes from *Trouser Press* magazine, regarding Bill Nelson's work: Bill Nelson (musician), *Das Kabinett* (The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari), (UK Cocteau) 1981: *Das Kabinett* (The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari) was written and recorded as the score for a stage presentation by the Yorkshire Actors Company. Released on Nelson's own label, the record consists of eighteen instrumental pieces, each designed to accompany a particular scene in the story. Although musically stunning, it's a hard concept for rock fans used to song structure (and words) to grasp. (http://www.trouserpress.com/entry.php?a=bill_nelson)]

01:59:13

KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)

Some members of the Los Angeles Free Music Society, Tom Recchion, Rick Potts I remember. There was the artist John Duncan who participated. And there was an outside artist who was visiting, visiting [with] Tom Recchion and Rick Potts and some of the [other] LAFMS people. This German artist who had come in to town and wanted to participate in this and so we let him come in because he really, really, really expressed a great interest in doing this. His name was Holger Hiller and he ended up participating as well. [KU: It was nice to have someone from German soil on this one.] Do you remember anybody else who was in that? I'm trying to remember who else was at that screening?

02:00:02

CRAIG RICE

No, I can't. I remember specifically I think that the fellow you mentioned John, John Duncan, I think, wasn't he playing big giant empty Sparkletts bottles that had something inside them? Wasn't he hitting those? I don't know, for some reason that's, that's what I remember.

02:00:26

KEITH ULLRICH

I don't remember what John was playing. But I remember that Tom Recchion had a number of [his] homemade instruments, which he was really, really big on at the time, making his own instruments, and he had a little table all set up with this, this stuff that just looked basically like someone's kitchen where things had kind of come all apart and everything, and he was making the most tremendous sounds with all of this homemade material, and I mean, [it] just looked like a bunch of junk on a table top but it was really, really gorgeous stuff that he was doing.

02:01:06

CRAIG RICE

Now they weren't, were they up by screening where the people could sort of see them over to the side or were they, where were they in relationship to the audience is what I can't...

02:01:17

KEITH ULLRICH

I remember where I was, but I don't remember where a lot [of the others were.] I think the screening was actually at the far end of the courtyard, and I remember I was over to the right [facing the] screen near the entrance to the Espresso Bar and that Tom Recchion was on the far left, so he was against another wall. So, most of the musicians were not near each other. Some of us were cramped up in certain areas and others were crunched up in other areas. There was no PA, so the sounds, wherever you were sitting watching that film, you were picking up whatever sounds were coming at you from what was being bounced off around the walls of this courtyard.

End of Tape 2

TAPE 3: CRAIG RICE/KEITH ULLRICH

02:02:17

TERRY CANNON

Perhaps you can talk about how that all came out, what was the end result... if you can and talk about the fire.

02:02:28

KEITH ULLRICH

That's right. The film ended. All went well except [laugh] you remember it more than I do.

02:02:35

CRAIG RICE

Well, as I recall, at some point...

02:02:39

KEITH ULLRICH

Was the film over with?

02:02:42

CRAIG RICE

You know, I don't think the film was over with. I think the film was running. So you have alley full of people watching this film and then all at once I think I slowly started to become aware that there were a bunch of firemen standing behind us back down the alley and they were all looking at each other and apparently what had happened was [that] the building at the end of the alley that [the] screen was[in front of] actually was on fire. Not that we could see it, but apparently it was on fire and the firemen had come[running] down through the alley assuming that they were going to come around, put a ladder up on the back of the building and get up on the roof and put the fire out from, from the roof side.

02:03:23

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

And so you had all these, you know, the firemen had just come around this corner and we're not confronted with an empty alley, they were confronted with a bunch of people watching a movie.

02:03:35

KEITH ULLRICH

They were confronted by a German expressionist film.

02:03:38

CRAIG RICE

And the firemen were just all looking at each other like “well, what's this?” I mean it was just sort of like, it was funny. I mean they just, and I guess at some point, the firemen, I don't remember if the film was actually stopped or if the firemen looked at each other and then just decided well, this obviously isn't going to work and then just went back around the other way or what. But that's the thing that I remembered about the screening.

02:04:00

KEITH ULLRICH

And they're telling me that John Duncan was up on a fire escape? And he was playing up on a fire escape.

02:04:11

CRAIG RICE

That seems to be Terry Cannon's recollection that he was maybe up on a fire escape or something. [laugh]

02:04:17

KEITH ULLRICH

We were all over the place.

02:04:21

CRAIG RICE

You know...

02:04:24

TERRY CANNON

Is there any existing record of that sound track?

02:04:27

KEITH ULLRICH

Yeah. There is, [and] I believe I have the cassette of that. It, it's an open air, yeah, it's an open air recording of at least a good portion of that film. I don't know if the entire event was captured. But at one point I know I had lost the cassette and it turned out that it was in Rick Pott's possession. He kept saying he was going to do something with that and he didn't. I think I have the cassette back so I'm going to have to look for that. Because if I haven't got it, then he has it. But again as I said, it's an open air, open air recording because there was no PA or soundboard or anything like that.

02:05:09

TERRY CANNON

That seemed to open, like you were saying, the flood gates on all of that. I mean up to that point, I didn't remember any silent films with [these] avant-garde scores but it seems like shortly after that, it became kind of popularized.

02:05:33

KEITH ULLRICH

I had written to, I had written an e-mail actually to Terry Cannon a little earlier about this saying I wanted to bring up the CALIGARI screening because it felt like at the time that was being done, there wasn't anything else that I could remember with the exception of the scored soundtrack that Bill Nelson had done. I couldn't remember any live performances that were being done at that time where someone was doing an improvised score to any sort of silent films. I mean they might have done something, I really don't recall. But after that screening, it just seemed over the next few years, [and] even [later] when I was living up in San Francisco, gosh, I was running across that all the time where people were doing live improvised scores to this, live improvised scores to that and, wow. [KU: An interesting, amusing, and sad note... in June of 2003, I went with Bill Scaff to the John A. Ford Amphitheatre to see an IFP/LA Film Festival screening of Caligari with a live music accompaniment by the band Sparklehorse (Mark Linkous). Very moody, typically scratchy, and characteristically Optigon-driven. Sadly, Linkous committed suicide in March 2010.]

02:06:24

KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)

There was one group in San Francisco that I saw an announcement for that they were going to be doing a score, it was [to be] an improvised score for CALIGARI. And so, I sent them a copy of the flyer and a nice little letter saying you may be interested to know I'd taken part in a screening of CALIGARI in Southern California, gave them my name, my number, my contact and I heard nothing from them. And I thought, well, that was rather odd. So I think it was because it was Southern California. As soon as they saw somebody from Southern California or something, it was like...

02:07:07

CRAIG RICE

They saw that Pasadena postmark. That was the kiss of death right there.

02:07:11

TERRY CANNON

Now what about, what, what was your role in the musical company at that time? What were you doing?

02:07:23

KEITH ULLRICH

[For CALIGARI,] I think I had, at that point, I think I had my trusty Mini Moog synthesizer and I was making some various beeps, plops, hissing noises and such using that synthesizer and that was pretty much it. Because I realized most of the other guys were going to be doing percussion work, and Tom Recchion as I said, doing, uh, doing his work on his homemade instruments, and so I, I felt like I needed a little electronics. A big part, there was a musician at that time that I really, really admired, and I still do actually. There was a synthesizer player for a band out of Ohio, the band was Pere Ubu,

02:08:11 **KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)**

and the musician was Allen Ravenstine, and he played a keyboardless synthesizer, an EML synthesizer. [Even] today [I] really love hearing the nice textures that he would add to these very traditional, you know, very traditional, but they were, you know, they were songs. Actually, true songs, and he would add these very wonderful watery and hissing sounds, so I always wanted to sort of kind of capture that as well, and it seemed as good a time as any, and that's the work that I did for CALIGARI. Less melodic.

02:08:50 **TERRY CANNON**

Yeah. I want to talk about some of the individual shows that you, both of you made and you recall that stood out in your mind. Before that, I want to talk a little bit about Bill Scaff. Because he was I guess in that period of time around 1975 around the early '80s, he was probably the closest we had to kind of a renaissance man in Pasadena in terms of his involvement in all of the arts and his graphic involvement and close to the Filmforum and used to do annual shows of that. So both of you guys knew him well and worked with him on the greatest projects and can you talk a little about his involvement in Pasadena and with Filmforum work in particular?

02:09:36 **KEITH ULLRICH**

To back up again a little bit and retrace part of that, [to] go back again and say that my first introduction, really, that I remember, to Filmforum was a screening of films that were selected by Bill Scaff. It was, again, a curated show where he selected the films to be screened, and that was my first encounter with him. Um, and I realized at that point in time, this is probably somebody I better get to know. [laugh]And did. Yeah, the graphic work. When I realized that he did a lot of stuff other than just film work, I mean he was working, was he really working in Super 8? I think so. So Bill was, Bill was doing Super 8.

02:10:19 **CRAIG RICE**

Yeah, he was, he was doing, he was definitely Super 8.

02:10:24 **KEITH ULLRICH**

And later, his modus operandi was selecting [and using sound] works by the Los Angeles Free Music Society [as backgrounds for his films, performances.] But I remember doing one or two film soundtracks with him for some things where, I'm trying to remember, one of the films was called "Black Mamba." Did some sound work on that with him.

02:11:13 **KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)**

I'll have to get the names, I'm trying to remember who else worked on that as well. [KU: His wife, Carol Lewis. And local musician, Don Kirby.] But that was one, that was one with a longer piece that was done. What else?

02:11:23

CRAIG RICE

Well, you know what's funny, that's going back to the mail art thing for a second. There was this wonderful piece of art that you got in the mail from Bill Scaff. It's the best piece of mail art I've ever seen and it's one of those things where you look at it and you can't believe it went through the mail system. It's basically a piece of styrofoam. It's some sort of styrofoam.

02:11:44

KEITH ULLRICH

Yellowed, breaking apart [now].

02:11:44

CRAIG RICE

It's that styrofoam building material that I think it's got a shiny surface on each side but the inside is Styrofoam and it's about maybe six inches by six inches and glued on to this piece of Styrofoam is a black and white photograph of Art Linkletter and written on the front is "fine art." And it it has a stamp on it and I remember we were actually living at Reinway when that came in the mail and I looked at this thing and thought I cannot believe.[this went though the mail]. That was when I first, the concept suddenly sunk into my head that you could just put a stamp on some thing and an address and theoretically it would go through the mail system. But I remember that, it said "fine art." That was pretty good. [laugh]

02:12:34

KEITH ULLRICH

I still have that work. It's a beautiful piece and the Styrofoam is completely coming apart.

02:12:38

CRAIG RICE

And it went through the mail system. Now it probably wouldn't today.

02:12:42

KEITH ULLRICH

Well, those are the kind of things Bill was [doing, and] no, you wouldn't [get that through] today.

02:12:45

CRAIG RICE

Today they would think it was a piece of explosive or something.

02:12:47

KEITH ULLRICH

But Bill would still mail it today.

02:12:48

CRAIG RICE

Oh yeah. He would. But I bet you it wouldn't go through. But anyway, that's what I remember it was one of my earliest memories of Bill was that he sent you that thing. But I remember actually, the thing that was very interesting on kind of a sad note about Bill, his wife passed away in 1985 and the night of her passing, he had a private little gathering at his apartment and he showed a very strange film of his wife who had just passed away where she was on the other side of some sort of a window or something and it was raining and it was almost like she was trying to get through but she was already on the other side. of this thing. And it was a very, it was really very moving because this was the night that she passed on. I'd gotten a phone call from Bill saying Carol has died it was October of 1985.

02:13:44

KEITH ULLRICH

I had just moved to San Francisco...

02:13:46

CRAIG RICE

I got a phone call from Bill that said Carol passed on and I should come over and he showed these films and it was really eerie. It was like she was saying goodbye. I'd never seen that film. It was like she was saying goodbye from the other side in this film. I'll never forget it. It was actually very brave of him. I mean I don't know if I lost a loved one, if I'd be able to show a film of them that same night. I don't know that I'd be able to do it.

02:14:14

KEITH ULLRICH

Carol Lewis.

02:14:14

CRAIG RICE

Yeah, Carol Lewis, his wife. Very, died very young. Died probably what? She was probably in her early 30s maybe?

02:14:22

KEITH ULLRICH

That film, yes. In that film, for the life of me I cannot remember the name of that film, but that film, as well as the "Black Mamba" film, she actually added some sound to that as well. So that film is important in the fact that she's not only visually in the film but actually in the soundtrack as well. I'd have to look that up later and find out what that film was, I can't remember the title. [KU: At the time of the soundtrack recording, 1982, the film was untitled. Not sure if Bill Scaff ever titled this second film, but the soundtrack is approx. 16 minutes long, and I believe this is the film that was shown after Carol's death in 1985.]

02:14:52

TERRY CANNON

Can you talk briefly about some of Bill's performance work, because whenever he was doing shows it seemed like he was always incorporated performance and any recollections about that?

02:15:08

KEITH ULLRICH

I remember a performance that did not, well, it did not take place in Pasadena. It was a performance that he did as part of a series of small performance works organized by [Art DeLeon and] Art's Building, [a studio and arts space] [at the old] Pomona [outdoor mall]. And Art put on this event, and he had of string of performances, and this was in Los Angeles though. And I'm trying to remember exactly where this was. This was in L.A.

02:15:51

CRAIG RICE

It was someplace that Art DeLeon had gotten the use of for this one evening to have this performance.

02:15:56

KEITH ULLRICH

Yeah. And Bill's part of that performance was a thing that he called "B & B Brand Oysters." [That] was the name of the performance. Again, he chose a sound work that was pre-recorded, on vinyl, and I don't remember what the sound work was, [but] I remember it was a lot of drums. Good God, it could have been Stan Kenton, or who knows. It could have been, [but it was] just lots of drums, [and] that [was] the main thing with this piece. Fog on the stage, lights and such, Bill comes out wearing a jumpsuit that was supposed to be sort of like the American flag, and a huge plaster of Paris type head that was painted all different colors and such, and with [all] this music going on and on and on and on and on. The main part of the performance was he had this hammer that he kept breaking [the] plaster of Paris [away] with, breaking it until it all completely came apart and once it came apart, Bill Scaff was under all of that in blackface.

02:17:17

CRAIG RICE

It was like in a cartoon where a cigar blows up in your face and your face is black and your hair is just all [standing up] like that. That was the pay off was when that thing broke, and now I have an interesting story about that. I actually videotaped that and most of the performances of that program and I videotaped Bill's performance too. The sad part is I got the whole warm up to where he comes out and he's dancing around and the music is playing and whatever is happening. And I didn't know there was going to be a payoff and so I'm here videotaping and just before the payoff, when he broke the thing, and you saw his thing and I heard the camera, the video, it was actually, it was 8-millimeter video, that was a camera that I had bought in Hong Kong. It was 8-millimeter video, the videotape ran out and stopped just shy of the payoff. So I got, and that was the best thing of the whole evening so I got this whole hour's worth of stuff and then the best thing was the payoff at the very end and of course I didn't get it because the video ran out.

02:18:25

KEITH ULLRICH

It was Bill Scaff. You knew there was going to be a payoff.

02:18:25

CRAIG RICE

I didn't, you know, the video just, it, it, and I, I felt, I felt really bummed that I missed the payoff.

02:18:33

KEITH ULLRICH

Well, I believe, I would have to check with Art DeLeon on this, but I believe that there is a recording of the entire event, of the entire, of all performances, of all of the performance pieces that were done that night. It was an event that was called, was that "No Time for Art"? I believe it was called "No Time for Art." 1986 maybe? I don't remember.

02:19:02

CRAIG RICE

You know, I know exactly when that thing was because the woman that I was dating at the time, she and I broke up on the phone right before I was supposed to go pick her up to go down to that thing. This was really, talk about an awkward moment. This was the woman that I was dating in 1987 I believe. And we had this big fight on the phone. I basically told her to, where to go...

02:19:31

CRAIG RICE

And she actually showed up. This is the darnedest thing. I went to the performance because I already, I think she'd already, she knew about it. And I went to the performance and doggone it if she wasn't there at this thing with another guy. And this was like four hours later after we had broken up on the phone and doggone it if they weren't sitting like right behind me. So I was sitting at this thing and this very awkward position with this woman I had just had this huge fight with sitting right behind me glaring at me.

02:20:05

KEITH ULLRICH

I don't know if I knew that.

02:20:05

CRAIG RICE

[laugh] That's what I remember about that thing. That, and the fact that I missed, I didn't get to videotape Bill's thing. Those are the two things that I remember about that thing. [laugh]

02:20:18

KEITH ULLRICH

It's all...

02:20:18

CRAIG RICE

As a matter of fact, when I was talking to her on the phone when we were having our big blow up on the phone, the smoke alarm in my house went off because I had peas cooking on the stove that boiled dry because I was on the phone with her for so long screaming. We were screaming at each other over the phone and the peas burnt and the smoke alarm went off and I finally said to her I have to get off now, the smoke alarm in my house is going off and she basically told me I was a liar and hung up on me.

02:20:50

KEITH ULLRICH

Good God. I didn't know any of that. That's like a whole performance piece right there, going on in your own [home.]

02:20:58

CRAIG RICE

And then to add insult to injury, I go to I show up at this show that evening and she's there.

02:21:05

KEITH ULLRICH

That, that was one major performance I remember of Bill's. And that's a good sort of one to mention because all the other ones would have sort of the same flavor to them, in a sense, with [all] the dynamics [that] are there in his performances. Any specific films? I remember one, there was a film that he showed at Filmforum at the Bank Playhouse, and he must have shown this film before. There's a film that he showed using, remember that small Super 8 projector? Was it a Bauer?

02:21:54

CRAIG RICE

I think it was a Bauer .

02:21:55

KEITH ULLRICH

Was it a Bauer? That you could slow, you could slow the speed down and then the [on-screen] image, of course, the light was [dimmed]. And there was a specific film that he had that he loved to show using that projector. There [were] people, like, in a swimming pool. And I remember there was this beautiful blue of the pool. I don't remember what the film was [exactly]. It was a very short film, but I remember it just being absolutely gorgeous because once you slowed down the film, the blues and everything got even darker and richer, and there were these ghost images of people swimming in this pool. It was really, really gorgeous but it was specific for that projector though because you had to have it slowed down and the light brought down as well. I don't remember if that was silent or if there was [a] sound[track] to it.

02:22:48

CRAIG RICE

Interesting. Interesting.

02:22:50

TERRY CANNON

Well, how about maybe you could talk a little bit about maybe your most memorable screenings that you attended at the Filmforum and things that left a lasting impression on you and shocked you, it's hard to imagine that something could have shocked you, but maybe there is something.

02:23:12

CRAIG RICE

Well, a really memorable screening for me was a film called THE DEMON LOVER DIARY and the back story of this film, these were two filmmakers, I believe it was, I believe the guy's name was Jeff Grines and it was his, him and his girlfriend, they were actually from MIT which was surprising because I remember at the time thinking I didn't realize MIT even had a film program and what this film was, the back story on this film was really interesting because these two Detroit auto workers decided that they wanted to make a horror movie and they decided that they were going to make this horror movie and they were going to get rich.

02:23:51

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

And what the guy did was to raise money for the movie, he staged an industrial accident, there was a chart that the union had that for each, for a specific body part that you lost in an accident, they pay you so much money. Well, they pay you \$10,000 if you lost your little pinky and he figured he could lose his little pinky so he faked an accident and stuck his little pinky in something and [got] it chopped it off, this was at an auto factory and he was given the \$10,000 because he lost his little finger in the accident.

02:24:24

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

With that money, he and this other guy were going to make this horror movie called THE DEMON LOVER. So since they knew nothing about making movies, they hired this guy Joel DeMott [sp?] or no, I'm sorry, excuse me, Jeff Grines. Joel DeMott I think was his girlfriend. And they hired him to come and be the camera man on their movie and to shoot it for him. Well, the part of the bargain they didn't like was when he showed up at their doorstep to start working on their film, [with] his girlfriend tagging along to make a documentary about him making their film. And so the film that you were seeing at Filmforum was the documentary that this woman was shooting of her boyfriend interacting with these auto workers and I remember just from the get go, when he knocks on their door and opens up the door and they meet for the first time, the guy is looking at the woman going "well, who is she and why is she filming us?" and then it was like a bad omen and then he just explained to them well, this is my girlfriend, don't worry about her, just ignore her, she's just going to be over in the background making a documentary.

02:25:36

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

And the guy just didn't want to have anything of it. They had a big argument right off the bat.

02:25:39

KEITH ULLRICH

Great film.

02:25:39

CRAIG RICE

They finally struck some sort of deal and so you go through the process of seeing these knuckle heads trying to make this horrible horror film called **THE DEMON LOVER** and things just go from bad to worse. And I remember one of the last scenes in the film is this guy and his girlfriend driving away and I think they were being shot at by people and you could hear her, I think she's crying and the camera at this point, I think she, I think the camera is just laying on its side in the backseat of the car and you hear the car engine and they're driving away into the night trying to escape these horrible people and so that's why her, the film was called **THE DEMON LOVER DIARY**, but I just remember it was a really well done sort of a *cinéma vérité* type of film. That stands out to me and I'm trying to think of some other films, yeah, go ahead. What stands out?

02:26:42

KEITH ULLRICH

There was more than, more than one screening of this, but I remember making the first screening of Anthony McCall's **LINE DESCRIBING A CONE**, and that was in the old [Filmforum] space, with all the sofas and all the chairs and everything all cleared out. I have no idea where Terry stored any of that stuff, but it was all, all away. And, well, "Line Describing A Cone," the film was actually taking place within the space between the projector and the screen and that's the important part. Do you remember this? Do you remember that film?

02:27:21

CRAIG RICE

Well, keep going, I'm not remembering it yet, but...

02:27:25

KEITH ULLRICH

Well, the idea here is that the space [between] is going to go ahead and get filled up with [smoke], whatever, [to make the film]. I think everyone of course, like, there were no smoking ordinances at the time so I think most people were like, smoking cigarettes, and so the entire theater space is now filled with cigarette smoke and as the projection starts, there truly is a line that's starting, that you're seeing on-screen [and in the space between]. Part of it anyway, that's going to be making a complete circle by the time the film ends. There might be a little bit more to it, it's been a long time since I've seen that film.

02:28:04 **KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)**

But the end result of the film is that the, there is a cone in the space that is the theater space. And that's actually the projection. That was impressive to me because there wasn't anything, there wasn't anything else like that. And I thought great, the whole idea of turning the space itself into [a] screen. Another, [laugh] another thing that was actually pretty amazing was Terry Cannon's "Films Found In A Box." Remember those? Which was a screening of films that were found at a garage or yard sale?

02:28:40 **CRAIG RICE**

I remember the scene towards the beginning of the man and the woman just standing in the field looking back and forth.

02:28:46 **KEITH ULLRICH**

It was a test. It was a film test. It looks like a color test or something. Where there was a man and a woman in profile, in profile and it looked like they were standing in front of some sort of a, a field?

02:28:57 **CRAIG RICE**

A field or something, weren't they? And wouldn't they just both slowly they would look to the side and then they would look back and I think there was, but there was something about it that, and I remember people in the audience just started laughing.

02:29:10 **KEITH ULLRICH**

Well, it was funny.

02:29:11 **CRAIG RICE**

It was funny but I mean, it was just, I don't know why it was funny. It just was.

02:29:16 **KEITH ULLRICH**

His whole program was basically found [film] so, what else was good there?

02:29:22 **CRAIG RICE**

Well, so many things. I mean God, I'm trying to think of specific things.

02:29:26 **TERRY CANNON**

Let's stop there.

[Tape is stopped, break in recording.]

02:29:28

CRAIG RICE

You up everything to look reverse. Like you took people and you made them put-- this is horrible-- our poor friend Charles Anderson made him put black stuff on his face so that when I showed the movie as a negative, he'd look normal and everything else would be reversed and it just, you know, shot him out in the dark with a light so he'd be lit up so that when you reversed it, it would look like it was daytime and it was just, this ridiculous...

02:30:10

CRAIG RICE

And talk about a film that's about absolutely nothing. I think the best part of the film is some cat wandered by while we were filming so he picked up the cat and he threw the cat and I slowed the film down so that it's like he's throwing this cat in slow motion and then he's also doing things like taking an enormous glass full of milk and flinging it. But I mean it was just like, it was just an excuse [to film something]. It was just, well, it was an experiment. That's all it was. We ended up calling the thing, I thought it was too pretentious, to call it Carbon Poem. You know, carbon being a reference to something being black instead of white. So I just took off the M and called it CARBON POE. But I remember the, actually the photographs that Keith took of us making the film are more interesting than the film. And I'm not, I'm serious. You made a little, you made a little xerox book and some of it, one of [the photos] is the photograph of Charles Anderson in the bathroom putting on his make up in the mirror and kind of making this face.

02:31:06

KEITH ULLRICH

Very exaggerated features.

02:31:08

CRAIG RICE

No, it's a terrible. I mean it's not, it's like a fragment. It's not really a real-- but it's funny, I forgot about that. See? It was if you, it was fun to do it. It was fun to do it. [laugh]

02:31:22

TERRY CANNON

Are there any other memorable things guys that you, maybe call your attention to David Wilson's installation I believe in about 1978. [Note: "Tying Dog's Legs"]

02:31:31

CRAIG RICE

Yeah, a really outstanding exhibition, I remember at Filmforum. Yeah, a show called "Tying Dog's Legs" which was [done by] this fellow David Wilson who has since become the curator of the, well, it's his museum, the Museum of Jurassic Technology is his museum, it's a private museum. But I believe he had a background in special effects from movies and he ended up doing this thing where he built these little environments that were like three dimensional models and he projected stereoscopic images into the environment and I think one that I remember was a little miniature angel standing in a little miniature alley. And the image of the angel was projected into the alley and you had to look through a little stereo viewer to see it. And these were, this was an installation.

02:32:26

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

So you had, as I recall you had one projector on each side of you, the little view thing you looked in and then the actual little environment. It was really fascinating. Very well done.

02:32:39

KEITH ULLRICH

Filmforum was on summer hiatus, so this was an installation that was on display for that, during that period of time, during the summer off-season, as it were.

02:32:49

CRAIG RICE

It was really well done, I'm trying to remember. I don't remember how many separate little installations there were, I think there were maybe what? Like five or something? But they were pretty elaborate. It was pretty elaborate, you know?

02:33:03

KEITH ULLRICH

That was on my, that was on my notes to bring up too as something really important.

02:33:09

TERRY CANNON

How about, do you guys have any memories of the Kurt Kren, Otto Muehl, programs? Some of the most highly attended programs.

02:33:24

CRAIG RICE

[laugh] My memory was taking some girl I was going out with at the time to one of those screenings and her looking at me after the movie like "I don't know why I even have anything to do with you." [laugh] Yeah. That was a hard one to live down. I remember coming out of the movie with her looking at me like I was some kind of sicko. What were they called? They were called "material aktion" film? Action being spelled like A-K-T-I-O-N or some bizarro German "material aktion" very German-sounding. [KU: Muehl and Kren were part of what was known as Viennese Aktionism.]

02:34:09

TERRY CANNON

So what about what's become now called FILMFORUM FILM, kind of a little bit of a artifact from that late late '70s, early '80s, can you talk a little about since you were the film maker, can you talk about the origin of that?

02:34:25

CRAIG RICE

Yeah. The origin of FILMFORUM FILM, Terry Cannon approached me and said that they needed documentation for the California Arts Council to get their grant for the following year. And he suggested making like a little documentary [film] and I said okay, great. So I think the budget was a couple hundred bucks so Terry gave me the 200 bucks and, we did it in 16-millimeter just to make it seem more professional. And went ahead and did the full thing with it, you know, shot stuff at Filmforum, shot at some of screenings, I got a good shot of Terry in the booth running the projectors. Got a shot of Wilbur George in the ticket booth selling the tickets and I think it says "tickets \$2" or something like that. There's Wilbur, bless his heart, you know, there in the little booth.

02:35:14

KEITH ULLRICH

That was at the, at the old space too.

02:35:16

CRAIG RICE

Yes, that was the original. It's got a really nice shot of the arch. The original arch that had the words "Filmforum" painted on the bricks above the arch. I think that arch is actually still there. Anyway, shot it and edited it. Had to rent editing equipment. I remember I actually ganged up and I think I had two or three films that were in the can that needed to be edited all at once so I think I waited until I got the Filmforum footage shot and then I went ahead and edited that and the other two films that I had. Because you had to rent the equipment. I didn't have the equipment so I had to go to an editing house in Hollywood and rent an editing set up and it was, you know, with the big film rewinds and the whole deal, the synchronizer and all of that.

02:36:04

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

Got a girl that used to hang out at Filmforum, I think her name was Brendy got her to do the voice over. You know, she had a very good voice so she did a very professional sounding voice over which we just recorded wild. Just recorded it on a cassette deck. So the film, it's not synchronous sound, it's wild sound, but what you're basically seeing is footage of people, the environs around Filmforum people going in, people sitting in the show, the projection room and it just gives you a little encapsulated version of the Filmforum experience and you hear this voice over talking about "Filmforum was founded in blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." And then you had little snippets of people just talking about what they liked about Filmforum. And it was, it was very loose, I mean it's a nice little film.

02:36:53

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

I think it's one of those things that got more interesting as it aged. I think when things like that are brand new, they're a little too fresh. I think seeing it now 30 years out, it definitely seems more interesting because you're just so much, you're just so disconnected from it now. You know?

02:37:09

KEITH ULLRICH

Well, and so much younger then.

02:37:12

CRAIG RICE

Yes. [laugh] but, you know, the film turned out. That was a nice little, nice little film that turned out to be.

02:37:18

KEITH ULLRICH

How long is that? Do you know?

02:37:20

CRAIG RICE

Only like seven minutes or something. It's very short. Maybe even six minutes. I, it's pretty short. It's pretty short. It's pretty short.

02:37:30

TERRY CANNON

Keith, you were introduced to the work of Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi in probably '79 and I think there were one or two screenings and can you talk a little about that? They're scented films and your introduction to them and collaboratively with them?

02:37:55

KEITH ULLRICH

Yeah. I first saw the works of Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi at Filmforum. Probably, I guess the first screening was '79. That's my first encounter with them, when they did a series of scented films, where they showed short films that they had made and [they] released various perfumes, they were actually oils, that they were heating up and releasing these scents into the air [that] were to relate to the images that were up on screen. I don't remember talking with them after that, but I think it was during the second set of screenings when they came back again, it may have been the following year. But it was pretty early that I got a chance to meet and talk with them and [I] brought them some things to share with them. Some [sound work] that I had done on a cassette. Definitely I remember giving them a handful of some collage work that I'd done, reproductions of some collages and such, and from that, it went many, many years later. I don't remember really keeping much in contact with them. In fact, I remember it's like, little things here and there. I think little communications coming [every once in awhile].

02:39:16

KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)

And they are living in Milan. And shortly after I had moved to San Francisco in late 1985, I had been contacted by Terry Cannon with, and I don't remember if this maybe happened just before I moved or when I had got there. Terry called me and [told] me that Yervant and Angela were very interested in perhaps having me work with them, doing some sound work for a film that they had actually already finished, and the film is "From the Pole to the Equator." It's a feature length film and the thing about it, of course, [was that] there was [very little] time to construct the soundtrack. It had to be done in a very, very short period of time [as they] had scheduled some screenings and some [other] things in advance. This was all, you know, can you please do some sound work for this, and it was a feature length film. [KU: Working with Charles Anderson, I believe we had three months.]

02:40:17

KEITH ULLRICH (CONTINUED)

One of the ways that this film soundtrack got completed was that I didn't go to work every day [to my regular full-time job] that I was supposed to go to. So in order to actually do the film [score], I would go into work and then leave work and go home and actually work on the soundtrack, and at the end of the day, I would go back to work. And everyone thought that I was working. That's how the film soundtrack actually got [finished]. [laugh] There was no other way to do it.

02:41:08

TERRY CANNON

Where were you working that you could do that?

02:41:10

KEITH ULLRICH

I was a salesman. I was a really bad salesman. [laugh] So I went out every day and [I was] supposed to have done cold calls and seeing my clients and I didn't do cold calls and my clients never saw me.

02:41:31

TERRY CANNON

Well, any other thoughts? Any things that you want to add that we haven't covered? Anything important from that time period?

02:41:45

ADAM HYMAN

Oh, what are the other venues?

02:41:46

TERRY CANNON

Oh yes.

02:41:47

ADAM HYMAN

Did either of you ever frequent other experimental film venues? And if you didn't, why not?

02:41:58

CRAIG RICE

I know I didn't frequent any other venues. If I did go to another venue to see experimental films, it would have just been a lark. That was 30 years ago so I just, if I went, I mean I'm sure during that time, I must have gone to see something someplace else but for the life of me I can't remember. Filmforum was just so handy I mean the physical proximity of it was just so, it was so close, I mean we were talking, Terry and I were talking earlier about the film show where nobody showed up. It was just me and the filmmaker and I think I made a deal with the filmmaker. I think I said I'll tell you what, I'll watch a couple of your films. I'm going to go home real quick and get a couple of my films and so we'll just share films.

02:42:53

KEITH ULLRICH

Who was that? Do you remember?

02:42:55

CRAIG RICE

I don't remember but I think that's what I did. I think I ran home, got a couple of films and brought them back and that was the deal.

02:43:02

TERRY CANNON

I think it was Rodger Jacoby [sp?] [KU: I believe this is Roger Jacoby, died 11/19/85. See more information at Canyon Cinema.]

02:43:03

CRAIG RICE

Is that who it was? But that's, [laugh] I think that's what I did is went home and got a couple films and brought them back. So we shared. I saw a couple of his and he saw a couple of mine.

02:43:15

KEITH ULLRICH

I don't really, I didn't really have an opportunity to travel much outside the area. My transportation was always very, very unreliable and so a lot of the other venues were just difficult for me to get [to]. I guess this is like, you know, the excuse why a lot of people outside of Pasadena had difficulty coming to [us], it just seemed like so far away. But as I said too, earlier, that did change as the years went by. What else?

02:44:04

CRAIG RICE

Well, let's see, Filmforum at that period had sort of a community of people, it was Keith and myself obviously. Bill Scaff, a fellow filmmaker. Richard Meade? He came in quite often, didn't he? I think it's Steve Escandon probably came. He's a Pasadena artist.

02:44:31

KEITH ULLRICH

I guess some of the people from Reinway, and that was it.

02:44:33

CRAIG RICE

I'm trying to think who really came on a regular basis, there's so many people that I know by sight that would come regularly.

02:44:46

TERRY CANNON

How do you spell Steve Escandon's last name?

02:44:49

CRAIG RICE

E-s-c-a-n-d-o-n. Escandon.

02:44:57

TERRY CANNON

Was there ever a time where Terry was not present?

02:44:59

CRAIG RICE

If there was, I don't know about it. It would have been a dark screen because Terry was the projectionist. It would have been a pretty dull show. [laugh]

02:45:12

TERRY CANNON

Do you guys at all remember the guy attended quite a few screens, always sat in the back, rested back, pasty white complexion, Michael Tolkin.

02:45:25

CRAIG RICE

No.

02:45:28

TERRY CANNON

Because he wrote a piece in THE NEW YORKER about how he used to attend Filmforum...

02:45:34

KEITH ULLRICH

No, no.

02:45:35

CRAIG RICE

Really?

02:45:37

TERRY CANNON

When he came to Pasadena, he would eat at the Ai restaurant. So he came almost religiously for two or three years.

02:45:49

KEITH ULLRICH

And that's A-I, Ai, the Japanese restaurant. It is. Right next to the Rialto.

02:45:59

TERRY CANNON

There was a killing behind the Rialto in THE PLAYER and he was working on that at the time he had written I think it was a short story and he was taking a screenwriting workshop and translating that short story into a film. You don't remember him?

02:46:15

KEITH ULLRICH

I don't remember him.

[02:46:16](#)

[CRAIG RICE](#)

Neither do I.

[02:46:18](#)

[TERRY CANNON](#)

Nobody remembers him.

[02:46:19](#)

[CRAIG RICE](#)

It sounds to me like he was probably really good at making himself really innocuous. You know?

[02:46:24](#)

[KEITH ULLRICH](#)

Invisible.

[02:46:22](#)

[TERRY CANNON](#)

Once in a while, I would try to engage him in conversation, sometimes he'd say a few words. But never very much.

[02:46:31](#)

[ADAM HYMAN](#)

But he was screen writer for THE PLAYER.

[02:46:34](#)

[TERRY CANNON](#)

Yes, yes. Yeah, he wrote script. And he did several films, he made that film with, what was that film he made about the religious fanatic [Ed note: THE RAPTURE].

[02:46:50](#)

[KEITH ULLRICH](#)

I do remember at the "Crimes Against Vision" screening someone told me afterwards they said, well, you know Tom Waits was in the audience.

[02:47:03](#)

[CRAIG RICE](#)

Yes, he was there, I saw him. I saw him, no he was there, Tom Waits was there. That was the celebrity sighting at that show, Tom Waits.

[02:47:12](#)

[KEITH ULLRICH](#)

I don't recall that but I was told that afterwards.

[02:47:15](#)

[ADAM HYMAN](#)

Could you tell me about the penny and the train track ritual?

[02:47:20](#)

[KEITH ULLRICH](#)

Oh, wow. I never had that one note written down.

[02:47:24](#)

[CRAIG RICE](#)

Was it a quarter or a nickel? It was a quarter. That the train track used to run alongside of the building that [all talking at once] at the Arnun Gallery. The original Filmforum, the train track ran alongside and this is before the Metro train, this is the actual Santa Fe freight train or no, maybe it was the passenger train.

02:47:44 **KEITH ULLRICH**

It was the passenger train probably.

02:47:46 **CRAIG RICE**

Probably leaving, leaving, leaving Pasadena station would come up through there and I believe that Terry would put a quarter on the track and let the train smash it and after the show, come out and find the smashed quarter and present that to the filmmaker for the evening if I recall, that's what the, that's what the tradition was.

02:48:07 **KEITH ULLRICH**

Did that carry over to the Bank Playhouse?

02:48:09 **CRAIG RICE**

Well, I didn't get a smashed quarter. So I'm still, I'm still hurt that I didn't one-- get a smashed quarter.

02:48:16 **KEITH ULLRICH**

You got smashed at Smiling Joe's though. So... [laugh]

02:48:20 **CRAIG RICE**

That's another story for another day.

02:48:24 **ADAM HYMAN**

Why don't you describe just the physical setting of the Arnun Gallery. When you walk into the space, how was it laid out?

02:48:34 **KEITH ULLRICH**

Yeah. That's a little easier to describe than the Bank Playhouse one because the Arnun Gallery space was, I remember, a long hallway entrance to where Wilbur [George] took the cash and [then it] went into the main space, which was really just a lot of old beat up, uncomfortable and comfortable couches.

02:48:57 **CRAIG RICE**

Beat up sofas and was it all sofas or were there a few chairs scattered around?

02:49:02 **KEITH ULLRICH**

I remember the sofas primarily. Nice space.

02:49:07 **ADAM HYMAN**

Tell me more. Was there projection booth? How was the sound?

02:49:12

CRAIG RICE

There was a little stairway at the back of the space that you go up the stairs and there would be this little projection booth. And you had to, I think Terry had two projectors up there and that was so that you could run one film off and run the other film and while that one was running, rewind the first one and then put the next one on. You know, it wasn't quite as slick as at a movie theater where they seamlessly change reels, but it was pretty efficient as I recall, it worked pretty well.

02:49:43

ADAM HYMAN

Tell me about Wilbur [George].

02:49:45

CRAIG RICE

Wilbur was a really nice guy. He was sort of the Filmforum mascot as I recall. If I can use that word, maybe Wilbur probably would hate that but as a matter of fact, I recall, speaking of Wilbur, I remember a film, seeing a film that Wilbur had made in his younger days back in the early 1950s and I think it was a color film and I think it was a young guy wearing bikini underwear up in a fake tree or something. And you know...

02:50:14

KEITH ULLRICH

Lots of, lots of imagery of young boys in trees.

02:50:18

CRAIG RICE

[laugh] And it's, I keep thinking that somewhere in that film there's Wilbur wearing a night gown or something. I can't quite, but We got kind of a kick out of that. Some of his early Wilbur films.

02:50:32

ADAM HYMAN

Was he always there?

02:50:36

CRAIG RICE

He was there most of the time as I remember very faithful. Wilbur George, very faithful ticket taker. Yeah. As a matter of fact I think towards the end, I think his partner was there quite a bit too. Yeah. He was there quite a bit too.

02:50:52

TERRY CANNON

He's got a submission in "Show For The Eyes" too.

02:50:58

KEITH ULLRICH

I didn't really know that.

02:50:59

TERRY CANNON

Isn't there a guy sitting on the toilet seat.

02:51:03

KEITH ULLRICH

I don't remember. [laugh]

[02:51:08](#)

[ADAM HYMAN](#)

Does anyone have anything else for the moment, memories?

[02:51:09](#)

[KEITH ULLRICH](#)

Wow.

[02:51:13](#)

[CRAIG RICE](#)

Wow, yeah. It's kind of hard 30 years later, it's kind of hard to come up with a lot of this.

[02:51:20](#)

[ADAM HYMAN](#)

Think about how much harder it would be in 10 more years. Okay, good. That will be all unless you have anything else. Wilbur, venues, Pasadena mainly. Anything else? Do you have anything else?

[02:51:41](#)

[CRAIG RICE](#)

The only, the only thing I can think of. Is I don't know if this has to do, if this has to do with film just to, I actually had the experience about a year and a half ago I transferred a number of my old mainly Super 8 films ms transferred them to video and the experience of actually watching and I mean when I say Super 8 films, I mean all the Super 8 films I made from the time I was 13 up through any films from the 1980s, I transferred almost all of them over a period of a week and a half, transferred all of them to video which meant basically projecting them and just filming them and it transferred pretty well but, the visceral effect I had not anticipated a hot of stuff came back just a lot of memories, you see people that you completely, see people in situations that you had completely forgotten about and it was, it kind of freaked me out a little bit. It was a little, you know, having all that stuff coming at you 40 years later, or whatever, that was, some of this old material, it's a little bit strange when you see some of it that so much time has passed.

[02:52:56](#)

[TERRY CANNON](#)

And think about all of those people who starred in Bill's film THE BATHERS.

[02:53:03](#)

[CRAIG RICE](#)

[laugh] THE BATHERS.

[02:53:06](#)

[KEITH ULLRICH](#)

So now you understand that woman at the screening at Cal State University? [That] woman that said "your films hurt my body."?

[02:53:13](#)

[CRAIG RICE](#)

Oh, man. Those films hurt my body seeing those things.

[02:53:18](#)

[ADAM HYMAN](#)

Could you tell me, each of you, what you do know?

02:53:25

KEITH ULLRICH

[To Craig] You still make films.

02:53:28

CRAIG RICE

I'm a graphic artist.

02:53:50

KEITH ULLRICH

And I'm doing graphics as well. Graphics production work for actually an institutional investment firm, so I do a lot of their graphic work. But I'm still doing other stuff too. I'm still doing images production and sounds work, [KU: collages, and working with sound]. That's what I'm doing tonight, as a matter of fact. So all that's still going on.

02:54:11

CRAIG RICE

I'm still, I'm still doing, well, it's funny, I just started a couple of years ago shooting high def. video which is kind of a new adventure so I'm just, I figure that's sort of about my fourth phase of, let's see, Super 8, 16, then about ten years of 8 millimeter video, none of which has been transferred High 8. I haven't even seen any of that in years. And actually it's not even High 8, I think it's pre-High 8. I think it's primitive 8-millimeter video but I've got about 50 tapes that I haven't seen in years because I have no way to watch them and then of course just started on the high def. video which I really like. and I've been actually helping, I'm still working with Terry Cannon on some things.

02:55:04

CRAIG RICE (CONTINUED)

Documenting some shows at Alhambra High School where Terry and Mary are in the library there [Ed note: they are librarians] and putting on some shows there and so I'm still, I'm not really doing graphical film work any more but I'm still doing sort of the documentary stuff. And I even shot some stuff here today, so I can't help myself.

02:55:27

ADAM HYMAN

Okay, great. Thank you very much.

End of tape 3