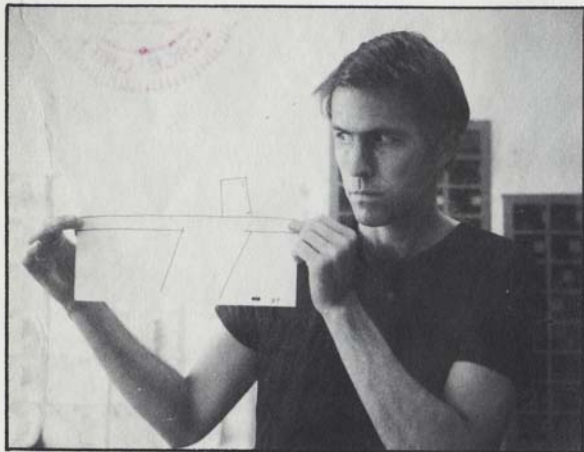


LINEAGE traces a circuitous thread through synthetic times and spaces to recover a lost age of innocence, when photography and magic tricks merged into "movies." The agent in this investigation is a square man who appears as a line drawing on an artist's table, as a paper-thin puppet in a vaguely Deco set, and as a "real" man in the street, though not, as logic would seem to dictate, in that particular order. In fact, logic is constructed in LINEAGE only to be parodied.

As an antidote to the accepted avant-garde practice of artistic patricide the film searches for and ultimately confirms its own heritage. The traditions established by Méliès, Cohl, Fleischer, Richter, and Fischinger are invoked through a series of visual and verbal essays, self-mocking introspections, and fictional oral histories.



LINEAGE (29 MINUTES, COLOR, SOUND, 16MM)
IS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AND RENTAL FROM:
SERIOUS BUSINESS CO.
1145 MANDANA BLVD
OAKLAND, CA
94610

LINEAGE

I drew this line directly on film. Now it's moving through a projector that cleverly creates the illusion of stationary film and moving line. I too am stationary, having lived and worked in New York City for the past 12 years.

I would like these lines to suggest, among other things, the hand-crafted nature of animation, a vestige of manual dexterity, independent from the photographic concerns of cinema.

Also, as a line, it represents a connecting thread to other artists — people who make marks and who are in turn marked by what they make. One of whom is my father, a cartoonist and architect who, as a child, saw Winsor McCay present his films and drawings at a music hall in Atlanta. This film is dedicated to him.

NOTES FOR A FILM
BY GEORGE GRIFFIN

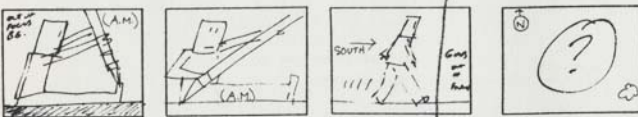
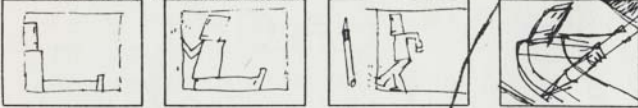
© 1979



HOW ARE YOU ← HOLD FOR 10 MINUTES TO INCREASE AUDIENCE ANTICIPATION



ARCHITECTURE AS A LEGAL SYSTEM



gutter

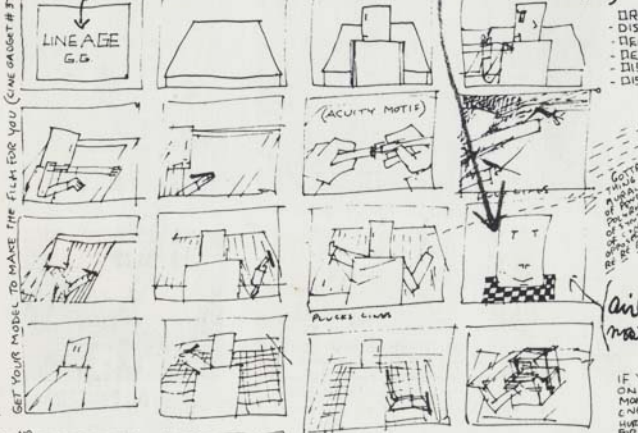
we think we're referring to the comic strip

THE COMIC TENDENCY IS A POPULAR FORM OF VISUAL ART EXISTS TODAY ANYWHERE SURELY IT IS IN THE STORY BOARD

1) First thing I do is chop up the old pencil! A MERE HEURISTIC DEVICE INTENDED TO AID PREPLANNING OF THE COMPLEX, LABOR-INTENSIVE PROCESS OF HAND-DRAWN ANIMATION. 2) Then I spread out the panels and make sure they're real clean because if they're not gressy the ink won't stick, but that's actually after I make the pencil sketches. And arguing that's the "inker's" job.

ON FIRST GLANCE, RANDOM SCRATCHES WHAT MIGHT AT FIRST APPEAR TO BE SKETCHES ARRANGED AT RANDOM BECOMES, ON CLOSER EXAMINATION, A SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM OF HYPOTHETICAL NARRATIVE POSSI-

(START WITH A GOOD TITLE & THE FILM WILL MAKE ITSELF)

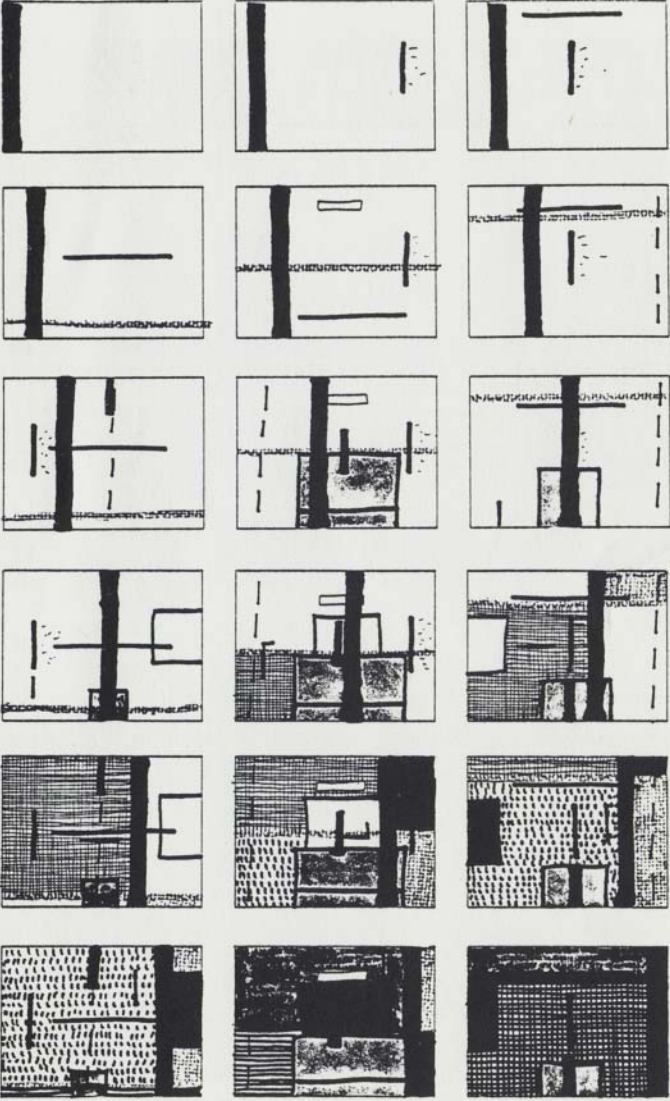


- DRAWING AS DISCIPLINE
- RECOGNITION
- DEFINITION
- DISPERSE
- DISCOURSE

Gotta understand why a pencil is used... a pencil is used because it's a good way to get a rough idea of what you want to do... it's not perfect but it's a good way to get a rough idea of what you want to do...

(airbrush materials)

IF YOU INSIST ON ALL THIS METHODOLOGY (i.e. CENSURE) YOU WILL NEVER REACH THE POINT OF CREATION (i.e. ART CREATION) DISTRIBUTION



"A DRY, SYSTEMATIC EXERCISE IN DESIGN"

DURATION OF A LINE

The Eskimo have a handy narrative device, called a *story knife*. It's a long, carved bone embellished with scenes from the narrator's repertory of stories. While telling or singing his story the poet brandishes his *story knife* for emphasis.

It can become a spear to illustrate the precise angle at which he aimed to kill a particular polar bear, or it can act as a baton to indicate the rhythm of running after the bear when the spear first misses, or it can be used as a stylus to sketch a map in the snow showing his exact position with respect to the bear, including those topographical details relevant to the hunt.

Whatever its particular function the *story knife* becomes, in the hands of a skillful narrator, a magical wand cutting a hard-edged swathe through the amorphous granularity of the sterile, arctic reaches, forging a path to follow where a blizzard of confusing detail could easily lead one astray. A well-honed *story knife* can also surgically remove excessive narrative ornament, those baroque details of description which often impede the plot's efficient development.

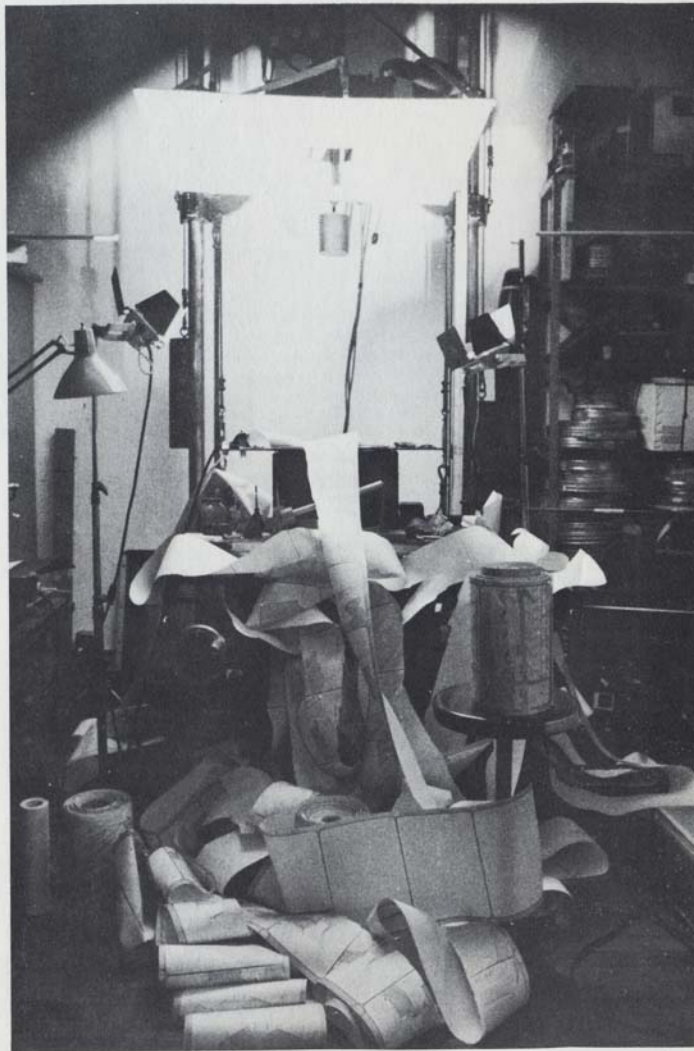
But there are pitfalls in this course. The very performance of delineation, that virtuosity of thrust and parry we call technique, may overshadow the original material, be it myth or fact. The artist, disregarding content which he thinks irrelevant, instead, dazzles his audience of thrill-seekers with the relentlessness of his obsessions, which is often mistaken for a form of sincerity.

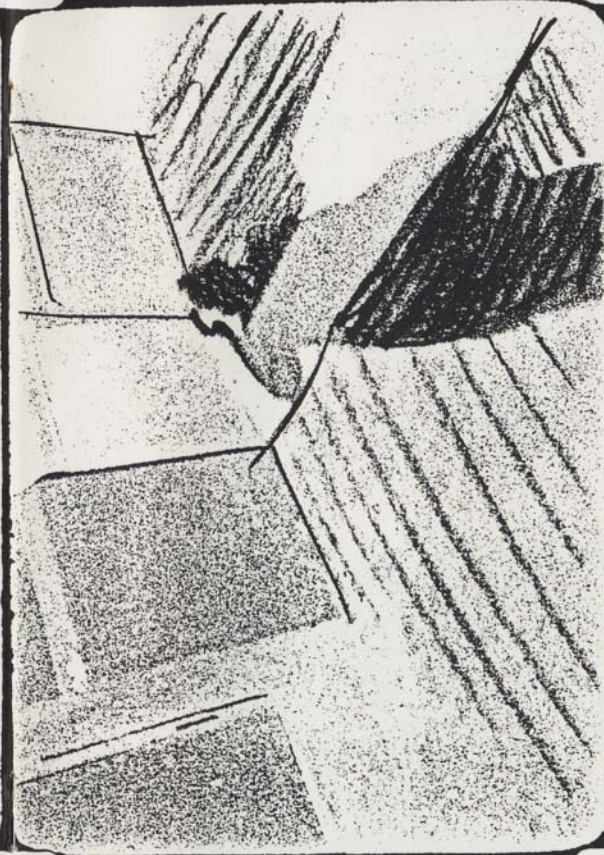
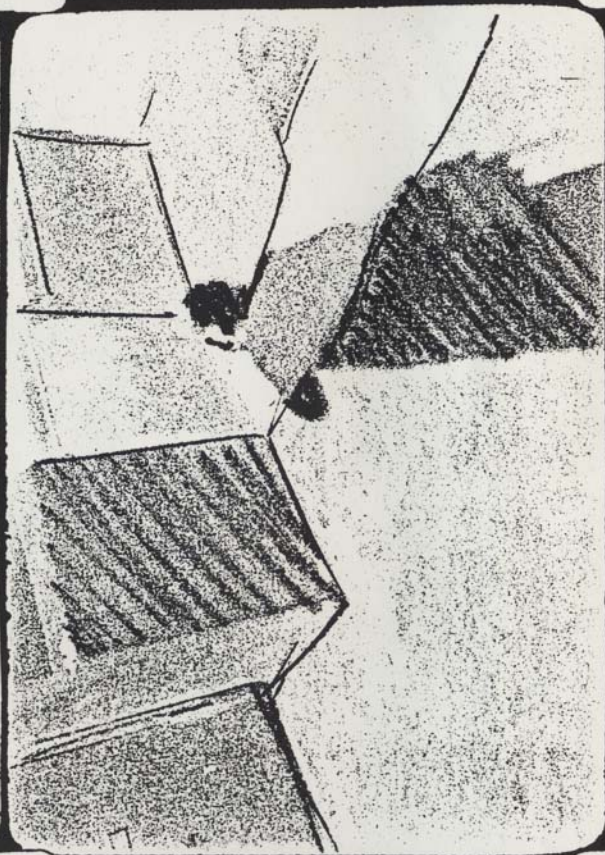
He may encounter the criticism that certain flourishes are performed for too long, boring his audience — this is called self-indulgence. On the other hand, if his strategies and conceits appear to be fleeting, whimsical gestures, he may be thought to be frivolous. This temporal quandary may be conveniently circumvented by relying on the durational properties of the medium or process itself. The artist might completely cover a canvas with graphite, or draw a line until the pencil is totally used up. These procedures are most appropriate to painting and sculpture, but photography present a new problem.

Being machine-made art it doesn't allow as much room for those eccentricities of technique which in painting we call style. Indeed it thrives upon the objective representation *real* time, *real* space, *real* people. Of course the medium provides its own tricks. But these gimmicks seem quite insubstantial compared to photography's inherent value as actuality, as evidence, admissible as such in a court of law. As a document for authenticating, and even appropriating reality, a photograph possesses great power, whether it is a high resolution Edward Weston print or a blurred, anonymous snapshot.

In 1884 Fox-Talbot described photography as the "pencil of nature" because it replaced the elective intervention of hand drawing with the photo-mechanical trace of chemistry.

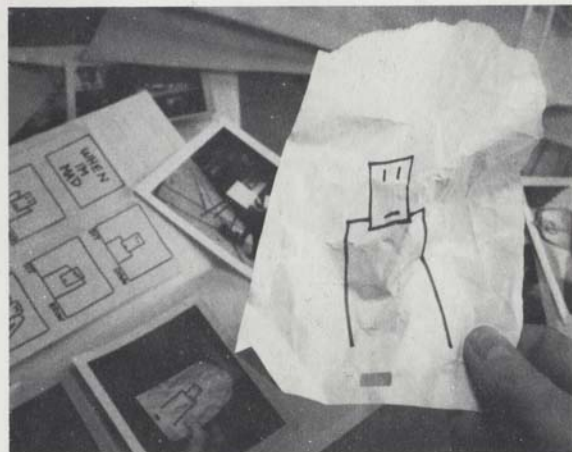
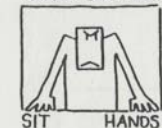
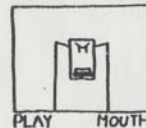
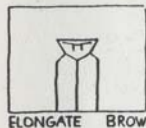
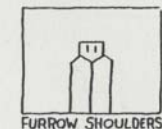
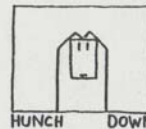
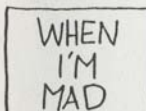
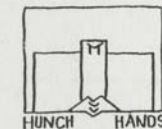
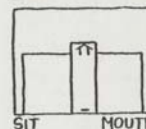
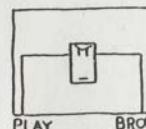
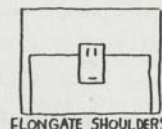
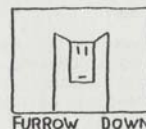
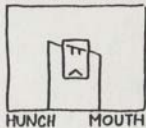
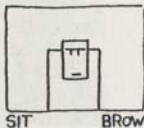
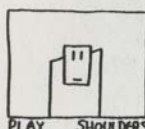
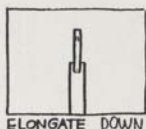
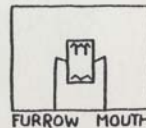
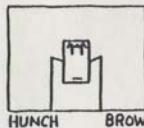
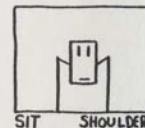
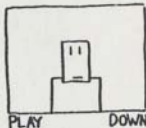
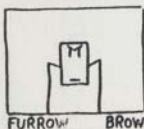
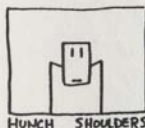
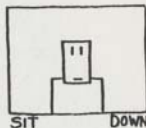
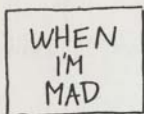
Today this "pencil" is assumed to be just another *story knife*.





I am ambivalent toward formalism:

attracted to its objectivity and logic, repulsed by its values, or perhaps its lack of values. While I may approach its processes with a subjective urgency I don't regard them as appropriate vehicles for emotional expression. Consider, for example, When I'm mad. When I'm mad, I sit down and hunch my shoulders, furrow my brow, elongate my mouth, play with my hands. That's what I do when I'm mad.



The following anonymous fragment was discovered, quite by accident in 1979, by Miss Mary Ellen Barnes, head of the audio-visual department at the Ho-Ho-Kus (N.J.) Public Library, as she was cleaning out a filing cabinet. The date in its title 1893, supported by carbon-14 analysis, places the production prior to those of Edison, Lumiere, et al. thus making it the oldest extant motion picture film

The so-called Phantasmoscope process apparently utilized a steady claw film movement, though the hand-cranked shutter produced irregular exposures, causing the characteristic flickering of early films

Considering its primitive origins it is surprising to discover a sophisticated grasp of narrative film grammar (continuity editing, close-ups, inter-titles) and also numerous "trick" effects, achieved by stopping and starting the camera in the middle of a shot.

Of special interest are the images which appear on the artist's easel. These were apparently drawn frame by frame with color dyes directly on the photographed image. It is most interesting that though the film is obviously meant to be a popular entertainment, these amusing doodles seem to reflect, and even predate, certain vanguard fine art concerns. At various, fleeting moments they resemble kinetic abbreviations of Kandinsky, Klee, and Mondrian.

Speculation that the film was actually shown in Europe, and even influenced painters there, must remain the subject of future research.

—MUSEUM FILM DEPARTMENT



QUICK SKETCH

My first big break in show business came with a crazy vaudeville act. I was really green then, you know. I'd do just about anything. And this was a really peculiar act. Right after the big chorus number this guy would come out with this easel, you see, and do quick sketches of people in the audience—what they used to call caricatures. By Jesus he was good—and real fast. He'd take one look and call for the house lights to be turned off and in pitch dark he'd do a 10-second portrait of anybody in the audience, so perfect you'd think he used a camera. Well sir, this fellow was looking to expand his act—that's where I came into the picture.

It seems he'd designed and built this weird box, really it was a set, that looked like a giant easel. It was so big you could walk around inside it but from the orchestra it just looked like a big piece of white paper. Don't ask me how he did it—some kind of fancy lighting and mirrors or something—he kept it a big secret.

Well sir, in this new act he'd do a few quick sketch routines to warm up. Then there'd be a loud fanfare and he'd announce that he was going to make his drawings move—that'd really bring the house down. Those old boys down in Atlanta had never heard tell that sort of thing so they were pretty keyed up.

Well sir, he'd pull the curtain on his new fangled easel and then it was time for yours truly to go on. First time I was pretty nervous of course. He'd be out there waving around that pencil and I was supposed to wiggle, walk around, scratch my head, then fall on my behind, and look around, then run around in his actions, like I was tied I wore this silly white co-som on my head with slots cut. Of course I never said spoiled the whole illusion. he'd pull away his pencil and then he'd pull the cur-go wild. I never understood by these tricks.

THIS
ASTOUNDING
SPECTACLE
WAS CREATED BY THE
PHANTASMASCOPE
A DEVICE
FOR THE ANIMATION OF MYRIAD
PHOTOGRAPHS, PRECISELY ORDERED
UPON A STRIP OF
CELLULOIDE!

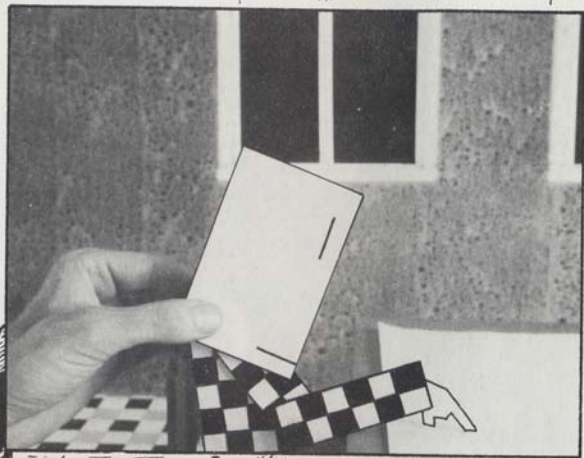
Well sir, after we'd been together a year and toured all over the country I was getting a little frustrated. I couldn't talk, sing, or really act. All I had was this dummy routine. I wasn't getting any real experience. I went to the maestro to talk it over with him. He told me about his new plans to take his act out of the theatre and do it in the street, on the sidewalk, where any passerby might stop and see it. He said he was tired of the artificial, synthetic setting of the theater—he thought it was generally bad for your spiritual and physical well-being: poor lighting, stale air.

But when I said I wanted a larger, more dramatic role he got pretty huffy and told me never to forget *he* was boss, *he* called the shots, *he* drew the pictures, and *he* drew the big fees, and *he* wasn't going to be upstaged by a rank amateur.

Well sir, that was pretty upsetting at the time. I stormed out and never went back. After that I had a long dry spell. Then the movies came in and started hiring actors to do westerns over in Jersey. Then I went out to California and of course the rest is history.

Well sir, one day I was back in the city, and was out for a walk, near the Bowery, when I turned a corner going north and, lo and behold, there he was—that old quick sketch artist, still grinding out his tricks on that fake easel of his. But now it was a really pathetic sight because nobody noticed him. They just walked on by. Oh maybe somebody would toss a nickle in his cup, and he'd murmur "thanks" but not like he really meant it. It was a sad sight. He had been really big in the theater but out in the sunlight all his routines and gags were so obvious and old fashioned.

I guess he was just out of step with the times.



I trace my line to find out who I am. At times the journey leads to magicians and conjurers, *artistes* of the popular theater who entertain for our approval and applause—a joyous and healing enterprise.

Then, the thread leads to the discipline and alienation of art which studies chiefly itself. The self-consciousness is bracing, cleansing even, yet I wouldn't want to live there.

At times these contradictory strands converge into knots, mazes, and spirals, before unravelling as gently receding horizons. Then, they burst into a multitude of impressions as evocative as scrapbooks, as honest as signatures.

Both I and my cartoon surrogate fail to find truly satisfying conclusions, for the object of our search is often less challenging than the experience of walking backwards blindfolded, and decoding the text is of less interest than discovering the shapes of newly imagined alphabets.

