



# Video 82 Supplement



The first six months of the Arnolfini Video Library has seen considerable interest in the independently made videotapes and films on tape available in this innovative resource. The library is being expanded by the addition of a new section of films on art that have been transferred to tape.

The diversity and range of these films, independently made but funded by the Arts Council, spring from the inevitably eclectic methods of grant aid. This can be seen as a positive asset—exposing the healthy differences and frictions between a set of films which embody very different attitudes to art and approaches to film-making itself . . .

The subject matter of the new section goes beyond painting and sculpture to include films on architecture and the environment, popular music and culture—*Dread Beat n' Blood* on Linton Kwesi Johnson and *Steel n' Skin* on Caribbean culture. Theatre is touched on by *No Problem*, a film about the notorious Ken Campbell, and *Ubu* Geoff Dunbar's strange and strident animated version of Jarry's play; there is even a film about film itself—Noël Burch's brilliant *Correction Please*, an inventive and instructive guide to the early years of the cinema.

Many of the films have been made in close collaboration with the artist who sometimes provides a voice-over guide to the work and its origins. While artists' explanations are always extremely interesting, talking about art merely as an expression of its originator's intentions is ultimately insufficient and tends to close off other valid ways of approaching the work.

In the case of films such as *Woodman* (David Nash) and *Tom Phillips* the privileging of the artists' rationale leaves many interesting questions about the work and its provenance unasked. The rather more distanced and analytical attitudes indicated in *Bridget Riley* and *Richard Hamilton* (which opens with Hamilton's statement "I don't like art films,") seems to connect with the type of art that they practise. Likewise the juxtaposition of a series of lively interviews in James Scott's *Chance, History, Art . . .* leads to a focus on issues, rather than the artist as star personality.

Gilbert and George have made their own audio-visual exposé of their calculatedly tasteless parody version and inversion of British traditions and values; in *The World of Gilbert and George* oxymoronic texts accompany ambiguous imagery of nationalism, perversion and eccentric self-exhibition.

Another potentially productive friction within the group of films is the variety and contradiction evident in their attitudes to art. Several of them espouse a fairly traditional starting point implicitly suggesting that 'art' (itself seen as an unquestionable category) is the expression of isolated and intentional individuals motivated and inspired by Genius, Creativity, Myth etc . . .

The naivety and conservatism of this view of artists and art is questioned by the films which attempt to link the production of art to ideas, society and history, and make connections with other art forms. *Art in Revolution* indicates interesting connections across and between the arts and tries to locate the individuals who produced it in the historical context in which they worked. *Return Journey*, in sketching in the development and usage of documentary photography elaborates a fascinating series of relations between three disparate photographers working in different times and places.

Parallel to the differences in attitudes to art the films also exhibit different styles and approaches to film, representing the diversity of forms apparent in independent film-making in this country. There is a certain irony in the way that films discussing avant garde developments in the visual arts seem willing to unquestioningly adopt the familiar forms of the stock television art documentary.

However the innovations of construction and approach of films such as *Hogarth* and *Correction Please* pose an implicit challenge to the respectable entity of 'non-fiction' film in general and the art documentary in particular<sup>1</sup>. There is an interesting contrast between a popular film like *The Art We Deserve?*, which attempts to explain Britain's damaging cultural divisions in an immediately accessible way and the more ambitious approach of *Four Questions About Art*, which raises some of the same issues, but in a more complex and open way with clearly structured sections leaving gaps between the historical questions and their twentieth century counterparts. In refusing to provide any final diagnosis or 'simple answers' *Four Questions* demands that the spectator participate in the work of criticism and analysis<sup>2</sup>. Which of the two films would be the most useful educationally—provocative of thought and discussion?

Whatever our attitude towards the various styles, positions and understandings offered by these films the new section of the video library offers a range of indispensable material, available for reference in a radically new type of resource, to anyone interested in issues of contemporary art and its impact in society.

Rod Stoneman

<sup>1</sup> This question is discussed in relation to *Hogarth* and *England Home and Beauty* by Noël Burch in 'Two Recent British Films and the Documentary Ideology', *Screen* v19 n2.

<sup>2</sup> An attitude to cinema explored in *Independent Cinema?*, Sylvia Harvey.

## Ideas and Issues



### FOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT ART

Ed Bennett 1979 50 mins

It is sometime toward the end of the 1850's. In an industrial town in the north of England the critic John Ruskin lectures to a middle-class audience. He tells his listeners that they have a duty not simply to collect pictures or build churches, but to direct cultural activity throughout society as a whole.

He asks them to consider four questions—how to discover an artist, how to employ him, how to collect his work and how to distribute it to the best national advantage. Over a hundred years later, how much of this self-confident programme survives in our own attitudes and institutions? Can art, as the Victorians believed, be of benefit to everyone—or does it still retain its crucial link with privilege?



### CORRECTION PLEASE

Noel Burch 1979 52 mins

What we call the Language of Cinema is not a 'natural' language, it did not grow spontaneously out of the technology of animated photography. It had to be fashioned by local and cultural forces. It has a history.

By taking certain films from the primitive cinema (1896—1906) which prophetically—and often humorously act out the major gestures of the future Cinema Institution, and by inter-cutting them with stylized evocations of the successive periods of development of the Institutional Mode of Representation, this film suggests possible answers to such key questions as where do those film-school rules come from? and what do we learn when we learn to 'read' narrative cinema?



### CHANCE, HISTORY, ART . . .

James Scott 1980 50 mins

*Chance, History, Art . . .* is a totally new approach to the art documentary. Beginning as a film about the contemporary significance and influence of surrealist ideas, *Chance, History, Art . . .* developed as an investigation into the social and political contexts of the work of six artists: performance artists Ann Bean and John McKeon, and Stuart Brisley, painter Rita Donagh, Sex Pistols graphic artist Jamie Reid, and sculptor Jimmy Boyle, currently serving a life sentence for murder. "Scott's film relates their work to the ideas of the Surrealists, takes pot shots at most prominent art institutions, and deals a casual death-blow to the solemn intonations of the traditional voice-over documentary." (Performance Magazine).



### THE ART WE DESERVE?

Richard Cork 1979 46 mins

An apparently unbridgeable gulf separates the popular pictures most people buy in shops, from the often unpopular objects which galleries display as certified examples of modern art. But this gap is not created by a natural, unchangeable law. It springs from the structure of a divided society. Extremes of privilege and under-privilege in Britain co-exist with an art for the further educated elite and another—often not referred to as 'art' at all—for the rest of the public.

## British Art

### HOGARTH

Ed Bennett 1978 25 mins

Hogarth is not just a film about an artist, it is an examination of the different status our society grants to the original and to the reproduced image.

### STANLEY SPENCER

David Rowan 1979 54 mins

What this film sets out to do is to take Spencer at his word and to tell the story of his life through his work. By marrying his words to his pictures, by showing his work from the smallest sketch to the Burghclere Chapel, by filming Cookham and other places which inspired him, it brings us a little nearer to understanding the creative process of a highly original artist.



### BLAST

Murray Grigor 1975 23 mins

The indian summer of pre-World War One England was rudely interrupted by the appearance of BLAST, the manifesto of the Vorticist movement, determined to disrupt the complacent Edwardian art establishment. They were convinced of the need for a new abstract art, worthy of the new century and derived from the rhythms of the new machine age.



### RICHARD HAMILTON

James Scott 1969 25 mins

Hamilton's commentary illuminates aspects of the Pop Art Movement and provides background material to many of his own major paintings in the last 15 years. The film includes American TV commercials from the fifties, clips from Hollywood B movies and newsreel footage of the 'Swinging London' of the mid-sixties.

# Video library



### FATHERS OF POP

Julian Cooper 1979 47 mins

Legend has it that the activities of the 'Independent Group' in the mid-fifties lay behind many of the revelations and fermentations of London Pop art as it emerged in the Sixties. Eduardo Paolozzi, Richard Hamilton, Lawrence Alloway and Toni del Renzio are among the names associated with the group.

The greying heads of former art-radicals return to the scenes of their old battlefields—which include a collage of some extraordinary period pieces.

### BRIDGET RILEY

David Thompson 1979 28 mins

Perceptual art has primarily to do with the effects and processes of what, in this film, Bridget Riley calls the great privilege of sight. 'Looking', as she puts it, 'is a pleasure—a continual pleasure.' From the black and white paintings of the early 60s which first established her international reputation, to her increasing concern with the self-generating luminosity of pure colour, the film traces her 'exploration of the truth of what one can see'.

### PHILLIP KING

Peter Day & Anthony Parker 1974 20 mins

Resisting the usual biographical approach the film-makers have concentrated on the sculptor and his developing relationship with one piece—'Open Bound'. King takes us through the creative processes from the initial model to the finished, full-scale work, made of wood and steel.



### THE WORLD OF GILBERT AND GEORGE

Gilbert & George 1980 69 mins

Gilbert & George have worked together as sculptors since 1968 making living sculptures, photo-pieces, drawings, paintings, video-sculptures, books and works in other forms. In *The World of Gilbert & George*, their first film, they frankly reveal their hopes, despairs, feelings, thoughts, views and passions.

Gilbert & George have used the form of film in a distinctive and artistic way to give a damning and hopeful picture of our world.



### TOM PHILLIPS

David Rowan 1977 50 mins

A central aspect of Tom Phillips' approach is a concern for process, reflected not only in the structure of individual paintings but in his method of documentation of the development of each work. The film is true to the spirit of this concern with overall shape and the way paintings are seen in a few works, 'A Humument', 'Benches', 'Wall', are shown in detail.

## European Art



### EUROPE AFTER THE RAIN

Mick Gold 1978 88 mins

A feature documentary which explores the Dada and Surrealist movements as modernist and post-modernist plastic arts, as well as a history of the avant-garde—exploring their desire to unify political and psychological values with artistic creativity. Utilising primary newsreels, dramatisation and accounts of paintings (featuring the work of Duchamp, Tzara, Ernst, Breton, Miro, Dalí, and Ray) the film attempts to locate artists within their historical context and explain their interactions.



### ART IN REVOLUTION

Lutz Becker 1972 50 mins

In the years between the 1917 Revolution and Lenin's death, the Russian avant-garde undertook an experiment unique in the history of art. Positions of responsibility, artists worked as painters, sculptors, architects, musicians, dramatists, poets, and designers in all the arts passionately pursued the aim of integrating art and politics to further the creation of a new society. Using contemporary film and photographic techniques, *Art in Revolution* gives a vivid impression of the movement and shows the lasting influence of Malevich and Rodchenko on the course of 20th-century art.

A selection on art produced by the Arts Council, that have been transferred to tape and are available for viewing in the video library.



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Rowan 1977 50 mins

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**KATHE KOLLWITZ**  
Ron Orders & Norbert Bunge  
1981 44 mins

Kathe Kollwitz spent most of her working life in  
Berlin during the politically turbulent years before  
and after the First World War.

It was always of great importance to Kollwitz that  
her art should communicate directly with an  
audience, and by working with graphic  
media—lithography, etching and woodcuts—she  
hoped to give her images a wide circulation, as cam-  
paign posters and in left-wing books and periodicals.



**MALEVITCH SUPREMATISM**  
Lutz Becker 1970 9 mins

This film is based on the ideas that Malevitch  
developed as Suprematism between 1913 and  
1928. In 1924 he scripted an abstract animation  
film, which is realised by Becker in a free and per-  
sonal interpretation.

## Fringe Theatre and Performance

**NO PROBLEM**  
The Theatre of Ken Campbell  
Ian Johnson 1981 30 mins

Ken Campbell has a reputation for attempting the  
impossible. He succeeds by generating enormous  
enthusiasm from his actors and by a relentless,  
often mesmeric, ability to 'make things happen'. His  
productions have explored the fantastic worlds of  
Science-Fiction and the 'alternative society' but are  
consistent only in their mocking, subversive wit.

## Animation

**UBU**  
Geoff Dunbar 1978 20 mins

The result of three years work, *Ubu* takes the bare  
bones of Alfred Jarry's anarchic play *Ubu Roi* and  
provides it with an appropriately brutal visual style  
and expletive (if non-verbal) sound-track. One of the  
most popular of the Arts Council productions, this  
film may nevertheless prove offensive to some  
audiences.

## Architecture

**BUILDING THE  
INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION**  
Mick Gold 1975 40 mins

This film is about the elements that created the fac-  
tory system, the buildings that housed it, and the  
social changes that it generated—a story told by the  
industrial architecture of the East Midlands.



**IMPERIAL CITY**  
David Rowan 1980 45 mins

In 1911, in the high noon of their Empire, the British  
decided to build a new capital for India. The building  
of New Delhi is a story of the conflict between art  
and politics; about architecture as an instrument of  
the Raj, in its attempts to reconcile imperial rule with  
Indian nationalism. It is also about the dilemmas of  
the two architects, Edwin Lutyens and Herbert  
Baker, divided between their artistic ideals, their  
patriotism, the *realpolitik* of the Viceroy, and their  
dream of building a renaissance city in the heart of  
tropical India.

## Photography



**RETURN JOURNEY**  
Ian Potts 1981 45 mins

*Return Journey* traces the development and useage  
of the documentary photograph through the work of  
three photographers, Humphrey Spender, Derek  
Smith and Jimmy Forsyth.

## Craft and Design



**NEWS FROM NOWHERE—  
WILLIAM MORRIS**  
Alister Hallum 1978 53 mins

The original *News from Nowhere* was a visionary  
romance: Morris used it to describe the rural,  
socialist utopia that would revitalise his beloved  
crafts. The film follows Morris and his envisioned  
self along the river, and encapsulates through con-  
versation with his companions some of his major  
pronouncements on Art, Architecture and Society at  
large. The film hints at the personal sadness Morris  
masked beneath his immense creative energy.

## Community Arts



**DREAD BEAT 'N' BLOOD**  
Franco Rosso 1978 45 mins

Linton Kwesi Johnson challenges our image of  
poetry and poets, drawing on an older tradition in  
which art, society, politics and music are inex-  
tricably bound together.

The film is therefore not only about Linton Johnson,  
poet, writer, musician, individual, but about the com-  
munity from which his material is drawn and to  
which he addresses himself, the black working class  
community in London.

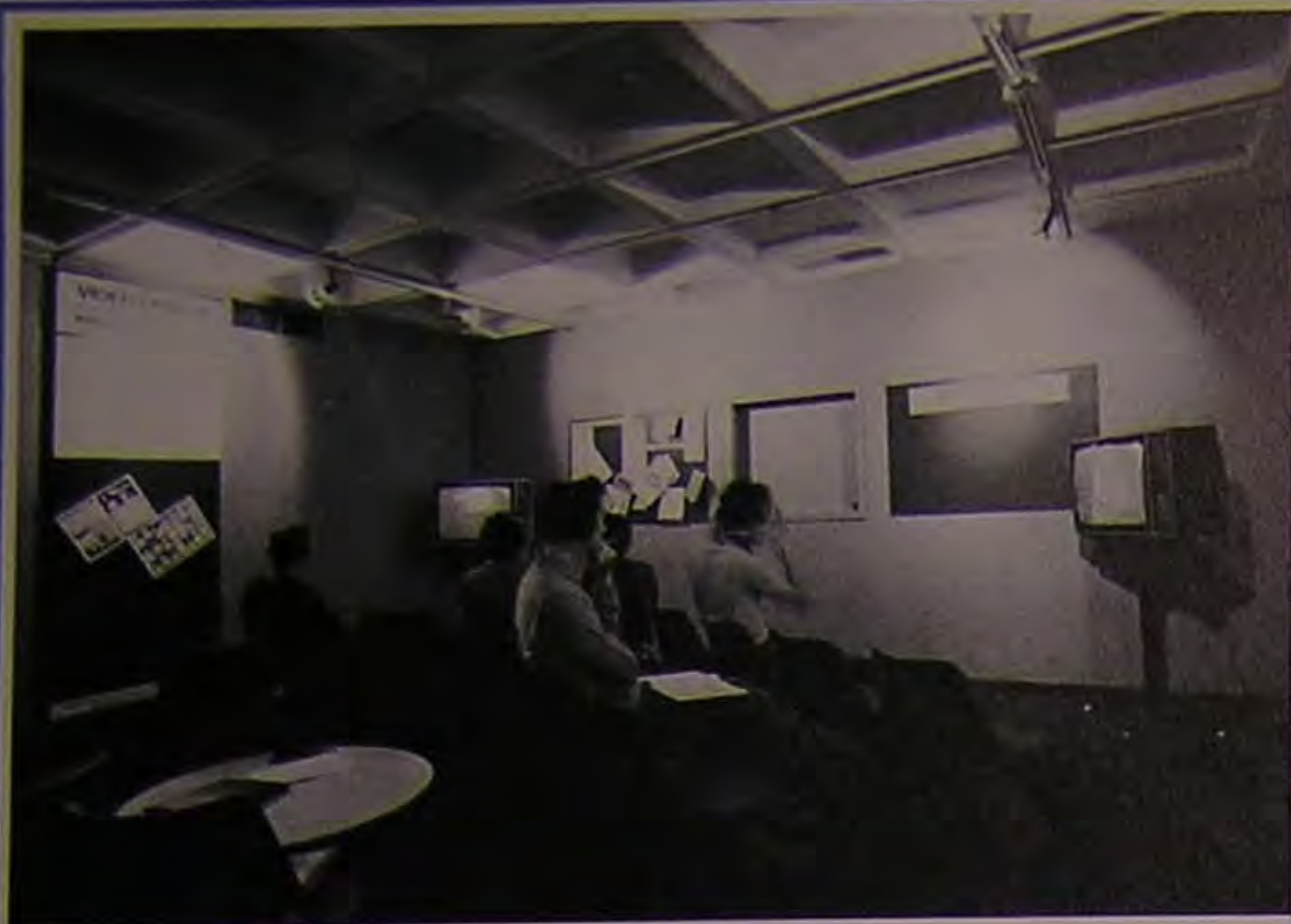
"I don't believe that poetry changes anything . . .  
You could write a thousand songs depicting the  
most terrifying conditions of human existence, that  
won't bring about the revolution. It's people's actual  
material struggle to change these conditions that  
bring about political change." Linton Kwesi Johnson

**STEEL 'N' SKIN**  
Steve Shaw 1979 36 mins

*Steel 'n' Skin* are an exciting and highly entertaining  
dance and music group, representing a unique  
fusion of the living arts and cultures of Africa and the  
Caribbean. Their performances, which take place in  
a wide variety of venues, include the complex  
rhythms and chants of West Africa, reggae, dances  
and dance drama, stories and traditional folk-lore.  
The film captures the vitality of the group and illus-  
trates through observation of their working rela-  
tionships, the way in which *Steel 'n' Skin* convey their  
cultural heritage in a multi-racial society.

SUBSIDISED BY THE  
**Arts Council**  
OF GREAT BRITAIN

The Arnolfini would like to thank the Arts  
Council Film Section for the loan of these  
video tapes.



# Video library information

The video reference library is open from tuesday to saturday 4-8 pm and at other times by prior arrangement. A nominal fee of 25p is charged for tapes under 30 minutes and 50p for longer tapes. In the video area (adjacent to gallery two) one monitor is permanently available for viewing library tapes and a second monitor is used for screening contextual programmes relating to gallery, film, music, dance, or other current Arnolfini events.

Headphones are used to isolate the viewer from distractions. The video library provides a quiet and comfortable place with the additional facilities of a selection of current film, performance and art magazines, a reference section of books on film and video and also an extensive collection of artists' bookworks.

## FILMS ON ART: ARTS COUNCIL LOAN

- Chance History Art  
James Scott 1980 50 mins
- Art in Revolution  
Lutz Becker 1970 50 mins
- The Art We Deserve  
Richard Cork 1979 46 mins
- Correction Please (Early Film)  
Noël Burch 1979 52 mins
- Four Questions About Art  
Ed Bennett 1979 50 mins
- Building the Industrial Revolution  
Mick Gold 1975 40 mins
- Stanley Spencer  
David Rowan 1979 54 mins
- Steel n' Skin (Afro-Caribbean Culture)  
Steve Shaw 1979 36 mins
- Hogarth  
Ed Bennett 1978 25 mins
- Woodman (David Nash)  
Peter Francis Browne 1979 35 mins
- The World of Gilbert and George  
Gilbert and George 1980 69 mins
- News from Nowhere (William Morris)  
Alister Hallum 1978 88 mins
- Kathe Kollwitz  
Ron Orders and Norbert Bunge 1981 44 mins
- Europe After the Rain (Surrealism)  
Mick Gold 1978 88 mins
- Dread, Beat n' Blood  
(Linton Kwesi Johnson)  
Franco Rosso 1978 45 mins
- Return Journey  
(Spender, Smith, Forsyth)  
Ian Potts 1981 45 mins

- No Problem (Ken Campbell)  
Ian Johnson 1981 30 mins
- Ubu  
Geoff Dunbar 1978 20 mins
- Reflection (Keith Critchlow)  
Lawrence Moore 1977 57 mins
- Imperial City (Lutyens in India)  
David Rowan 1980 45 mins
- Playing the Environment Game  
Mick Gold 1973 30 mins
- Bridget Riley  
David Thompson 1979 28 mins
- Fathers of Pop  
Julian Cooper 1979 47 mins
- Tom Phillips  
David Rowan 1977 50 mins
- Grove Carnival  
Henry Martin and Steve Shaw 1981 18 mins
- Hockney Interview  
David Rowan 1981 46 mins
- I Build My Time (Kurt Schwitters)  
Tristram Powell 1976 30 mins
- England Home and Beauty  
Christopher Mason 1975 38 mins
- Richard Hamilton  
James Scott 1969 25 mins
- Phillip King  
Peter Day and Anthony Parker 1974 20 mins
- Blast  
Murray Grigor 1975 23 mins
- Malevich Suprematism  
Lutz Becker 1979 9 mins
- Jack Yates  
Thaddeus O'Sullivan 1981 35 mins

## VIDEO LIBRARY SELECTION

### ORIGINAL INDEPENDENT VIDEO TAPE

- Mirror  
Stephen Littman 1979 5 mins
- You Make Me Shout  
Stephen Littman 1980 4 mins
- This Is A Television Receiver  
David Hall 1979 10 mins
- TV Fighter (Cam Era Plane)  
David Hall 1977 12 mins
- The Love Show Parts 1, 2 & 3  
Stuart Marshall 1980 50 mins
- The News  
Ian Breakwell 10 mins
- Vanitas  
Tamara Krikorian 1977 9 mins
- Interplay  
Stephen Partridge 1980 9 mins
- La Belle et La Bête  
Marceline Mori 1977 9 mins
- Orange Free State  
Mick Hartney 1978 24 mins
- Floor  
Richard Layzell 1980 18 mins
- Pieces I Never Did  
David Critchley 1979 35 mins
- The Fashion Show  
Vida 1979 20 mins

### INDEPENDENT FILM ON VIDEO TAPE

- Berlin Horse  
Malcolm Le Grice 1970 9 mins
- After Lumiere  
Malcolm Le Grice 1974 16 mins
- Moment  
Steve Dwoskin 1970 10 mins
- Romantic Italy  
Chris Garratt 1975 8 mins
- Versailles Part 1  
Chris Garratt 1976 8 mins
- Filmusic Part 1  
Chris Garratt 1977 15 mins
- Commercial Break  
Chris Garratt 1980
- Seven Days  
Chris Welsby 1974 20 mins
- Sigmund Freud's Dora:  
A Case of Mistaken Identity  
Claire Pajaczowska, Jane  
Weinstock, Anthony McCall,  
Andrew Tyndall 1979 38 mins
- News and Comment  
Frank Abbott 1978 35 mins
- Silent Partner  
Peter Gidal 1977 35 mins
- Amy!  
Peter Wollen and Laura Mulvey  
1980 30 mins
- Filmlane  
Mike Leggett 1973-4 18 mins
- Sheepwoman  
Mike Leggett 1976 20 mins
- Blue + Green + Red  
Mike Leggett 1976 15 mins
- Short Film Series  
Guy Sherwin 1977 12 mins
- Thriller  
Sally Potter 1979 33 mins
- Associations  
John Smith 1975 7 mins
- Girl Chewing Gum  
John Smith 1976 12 mins

Arnolfini Video Library  
Narrow Quay  
Bristol BS1 4QA  
Open Tuesday to Saturday, 4-8pm  
Telephone (0272) 298191

The Arnolfini gratefully acknowledges assistance for the video library from HTV South West Arts and the Arts Council of Great Britain.

## OPEN ACCESS

In developing the video library we have included an Open Access section where tapes may be deposited; they remain the property of the producer and a proportion of the viewing fee is repaid each time the tape is screened. They should be in Sony Umatic format (either NTSC or PAL/SECAM). The Arnolfini retains the right to exclude material on legal grounds (obscenity or libel). For further information about this section contact Tony Broad, Arnolfini Video Assistant.

- We Have Created Atypical Systems  
Cioni Carpi
- Work By Tony Cragg 1970-80  
Tony Cragg/Arnolfini 1980 13 mins
- Jennifer Durrant  
Jennifer Durrant/Arnolfini 42 mins
- Mackerel and Mandolins  
Bruce McLean/Arnolfini 1980 7 mins
- Sense of Place  
Arnolfini/University of Bristol 1981 15 mins
- Gunilla Treen (A Profile)  
Arnolfini/Bristol Polytechnic 1980 13 mins
- Warhol At The Arts Council Bookshop  
Steven Coulson 1981 80 mins
- Video On Video  
Colin Thomas 1981 35 mins
- Le Via Lounge  
Bill Butt 1981 16 mins
- Shine So Hard  
John Smith 1981 31 mins
- Road Dreams  
Elliott Bristow 1970-80 10 mins
- The Bristol Bands Newsreel 1980  
Mike Gifford and Mike Leggett 1980 30 mins
- Future Tense  
Moonshine Community Arts Workshop 1981 40 mins
- A Description Of The World  
Mick Eaton 1981 33 mins
- Phantom Jet  
Pat Toplis, Stuart Gorman,  
Bristol Film Makers Co-op 1980 30 mins

Future Tense  
Joram Ten Brink & Liz Allan 1981 40 mins

Nuclear time is running out; the doomsday clock stands now at 2 minutes to midnight. We are advised by those whose job it is to protect us and help us to survive, to make our shelters under tables... In other words we are to defend ourselves against the enemy. Every child, woman, man, for themselves? After seeing this film, we should ask: "Who or what is the enemy?"

Video on Video  
Colin Thomas 1981 35 mins

Much of the huge quantity of portable video equipment sold in Britain sits locked up in cupboards in schools and colleges used, if at all, only for job interview training. Video on Video suggests a whole range of other uses—games, developing social skills, role playing, building an information library, looking at recent history, making a documentary.

Shine So Hard  
John Smith 1981 35 mins

Echo and the Bunnymen have recently rocketed to fame with their own distinctive brand of 80s Rock and Roll. With thoughtful arrangements and an emphasis on the beat, they play loud and fast. Shine So Hard was made in and around the Pavilion Gardens, Buxton, earlier this year. But the film is anything but wall-to-wall concert footage. By using the location imaginatively, and by shooting individual members of the group in their hotel rooms, in restaurants or just hanging around waiting for the night to begin.

The Bristol Bands Newsreel 1980  
Mike Gifford & Mike Leggett 1980 30 mins

Initially shot on Super 8mm, the film-makers (both members of Bristol Film-makers' Co-op) examine the various ways in which musicians can be represented visually in relation to the music that they make, whether at a gig, in rehearsal, on a record or on the soundtrack of a film. Included is music by TVI, Talisman, Blur, Art Objects, Glaxo Babies, Shoes for Industry and Slow Twitch Fibres.