PANELS   FOR THE

WALLS OF   THE WORLD

MEANING

LIFE LIKE
THIS
LIVING
BUT
BE
ALWAYS
SUSPECT
IT

THE END
POEMFIELD#
A STUDY
IN COMPUTER
GRAPHICS
BY STAN VANDERBEEK
AND KEN KNOWLTON

NO
GO
NO
GO
NO
GO
NO
GO
NO

WHILE WAITING
OR
WHILE FALLING
FREE
FREE FALL

YES

June 2,74

The human face is a monument

the human face is a monument
existing
on the balance of geography between
inner and doubt

slowly,
it stands in its own shadow
enjoying it's own composition
waiting for the sun rise, the

man's face glances off man's grace
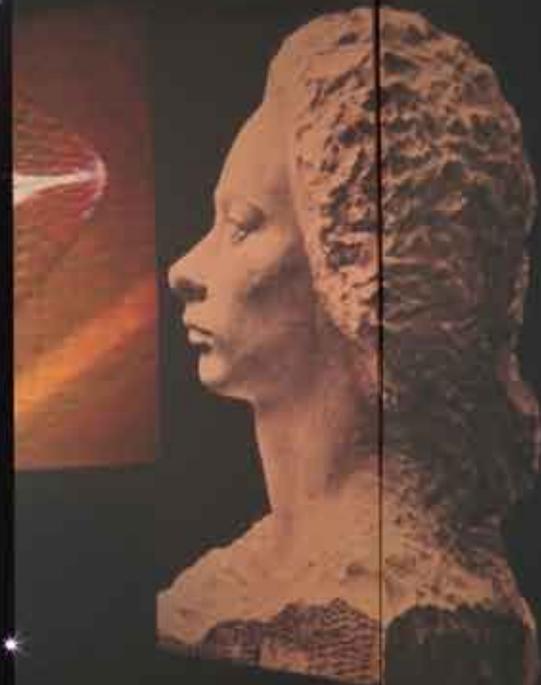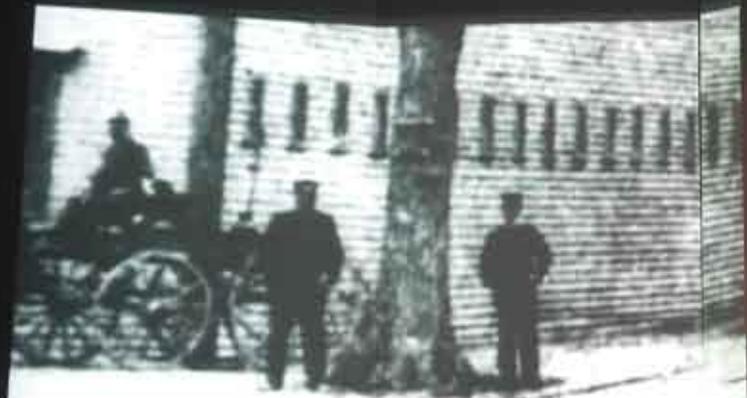while man's bones arrange
in the slip
of age of man
and each man

man's face is a monument
dreaming in the mirrored squares of the

listening to the dream of life singing in the dark
listening to the mirroring dream, speak out
between now and fast

the human face is a monument, it is
the sun's movement in dark star flames
and as bones of sight are
meeting price in the falling wall of the world.....

IMAGINATION IS THE
FOUNDATION OF REALITY

IF WAR
COMES

80 82
85

ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE
AND DEVICES

FILM
FROM
STAN VANDERBEEK
GATE HILL RD.
STONY POINT, N.Y.
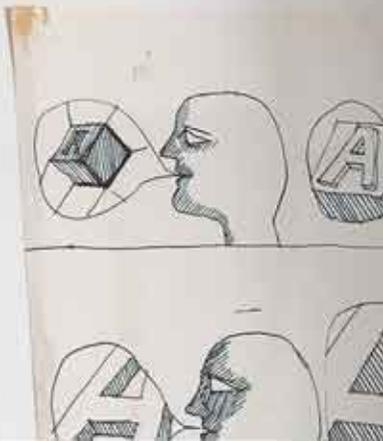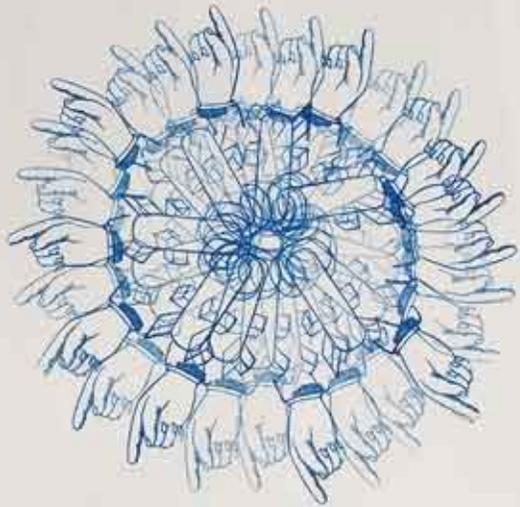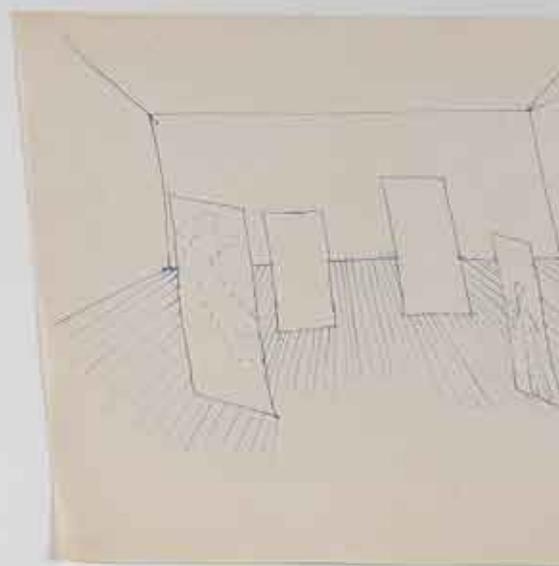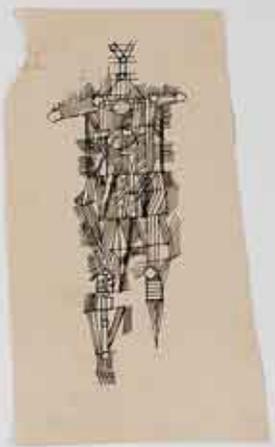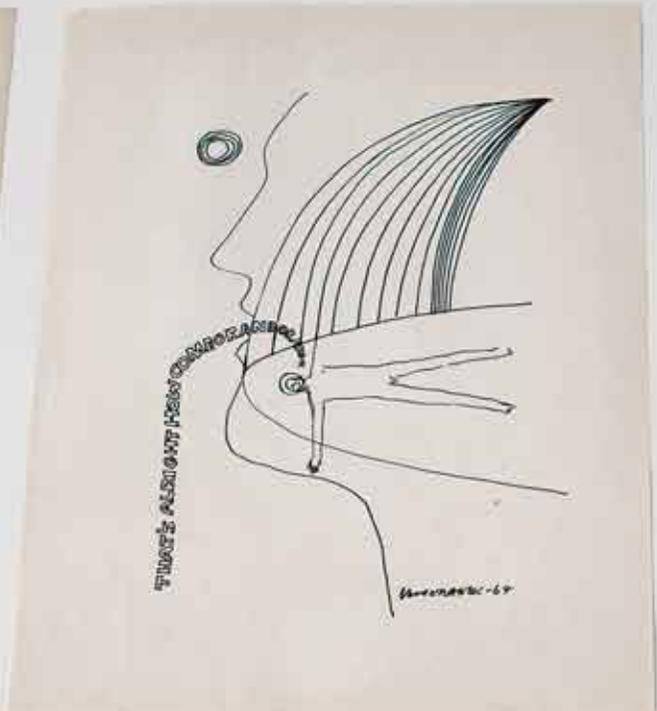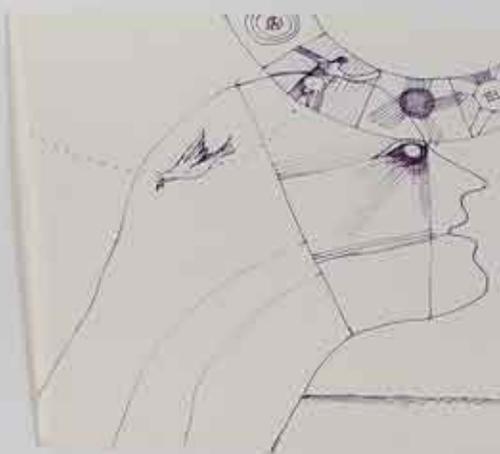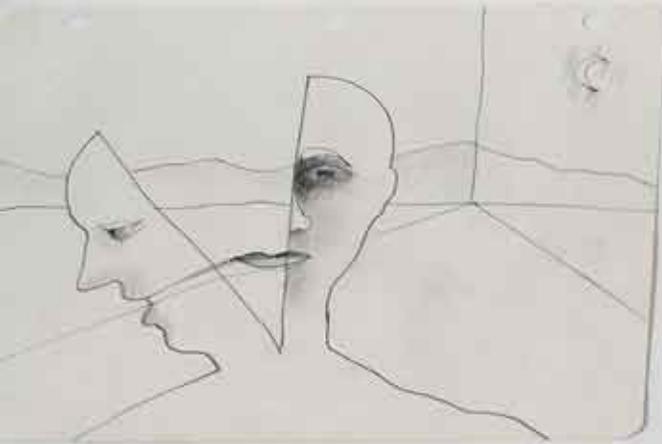
LEAP BEFOR YOU LOOK

Tomorrow shall come

with a burning harp
a feathered hand drawing designs
in the air
voices,one thousandth of a whisper-thin
weaving in the ear,a gossimer wick
hands opening hands
o lord

Tomorrow will come

with the shock of death upon the stair,
in the center of summer's spare dreams
befor the mercurial mating of naked eyes
o lord sooner than it seems

Tomorrow has come

dawns apumical motion
smoking steps moving befor long ancut shadows
silence mooted about the house of man
o lord o lord

the serious food of existence

s.vanderbeek '5G n.y.c.

Tomorrow shall come
        with a burning harp
        a feathered hand drawing designs
in the air
voices,one thousandth of a whisper-thick
weaving in the ear,a gossamer wisk
hands opening hands
o lord

Tomorrow will come

        with the shock of death upon the stair,
        in the center of summer's spare dreams
        before the mercurial meting of naked eyes
        o lord sooner than it seems

Tomorrow has come

        drums .... motion
        smoking steps moving before long uncut shadows
        silence masted about the house of man
        o lord o lord

        the serious food of existence

                    s.vanderbeek '66 n.y.c.

Tomorrow shall come
        with a burning harp
        a feathered hand drawing designs
in the air
voices,one thousandth of a whisper-thick
weaving in the ear,a gossimer wink
hands opening hands
o lord

Tomorrow will come
        with the shock of death upon the stair,
        in the center of summer's spare dreams
        befor the securial meeting of naked eyes
        o lord sooner than it seems

Tomorrow has come
        dreams mechanial motion
        smoking stops moving befor long uncut shadows
        silence mantles about the house of man
        o lord o lord

        the serious food of existence

s.vanderbeek '60 n.y.c.

FILM
FROM
STAN VANDERBEEK
GATE HILL RD.
STONY POINT, N. Y.

POEMFIELD #2

POEMFIELD

GESTURES
DO NOT
MISTAKE
PLACE
THY.........
FINGER POINTING
TAKES A WORD TO COMPLETE
SOME NOW
WORDS
FILL
THE SPACE BETWEEN
BETTER
MEANING
MOVES
POSITION
LOVES
FINGER
DIRECTS
SPEECH
THAT
SILENCE
FALLING
TOUCHES
THE END
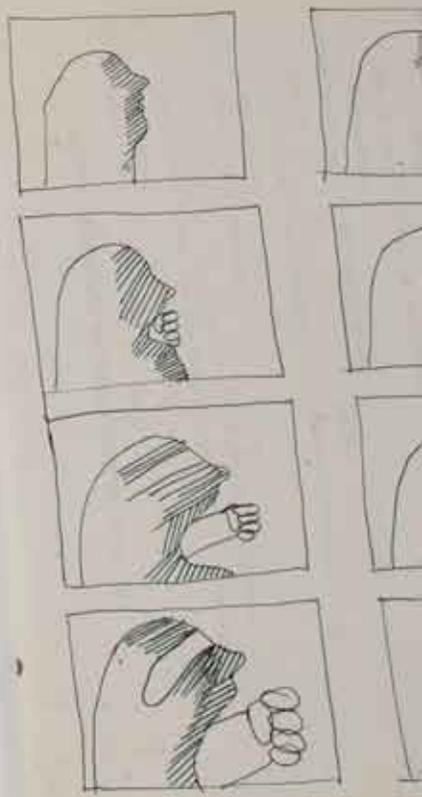
Art in Review

Stan VanDerBeek

Guild & Greyshkul
328 Wooster Street, SoHo
Through Oct. 18

Stan VanDerBeek (1927-84) was an experimental filmmaker, animator, computer graphics pioneer, painter, photographer, collagist and poet who was ahead of his time and died far too young. He was globalist in his thinking way before the present interna-
He was globalist in his thinking way before the present internationalist moment. He believed that aesthetics and science could fruitfully merge, an idea being borne out by the Internet. He nurtured an avid faith — one lost at present — in the potential of art to change, for the better, the way people everywhere felt, acted and thought.

VanDerBeek was as much a systems programmer of the utopian imagination as he was a maker of stand-alone objects. But objects are what we have left of him; and there are many, many of them. We are fortunate that two of his children, Johannes and Sara VanDerBeek, artists and two of the founders of the Guild & Greyshkul gallery in SoHo, have begun the task of retrieving and conserving those objects and reconstructing his vision.

The show they have assembled cuts a wide swath through more than 30 years of work. The material ranges from beautiful little paintings done in the 1950s, when VanDerBeek was studying at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, to his zany Dadaist film animations of the 1960s, which look at once futuristic and antique and were produced while he was collaborating on projects with Allan Kaprow, Merce Cun-
was collaborating on projects with Allan Kaprow, Merce Cunningham and Yvonne Rainer in New York.

Later, at M.I.T., he used developing computer and communications technologies to create multipart interactive pieces that partly existed in virtual time and space. His ultimate goal was to create immersive, consciousness-altering art environments around the world. The Movie-Drome he built at his home in Stony Point, N.Y., for the all-over projection of films was a prototype for these.

He would probably have enjoyed the sampler format of the current show, which has projections, collages and paintings wherever you look. More tightly edited exhibitions focusing on single aspects of his art surely lie in the future, as, one assumes, does close attention by museums. Meanwhile, we can savor this generous and seriously considered tribute, a rough-cut of a notable career.
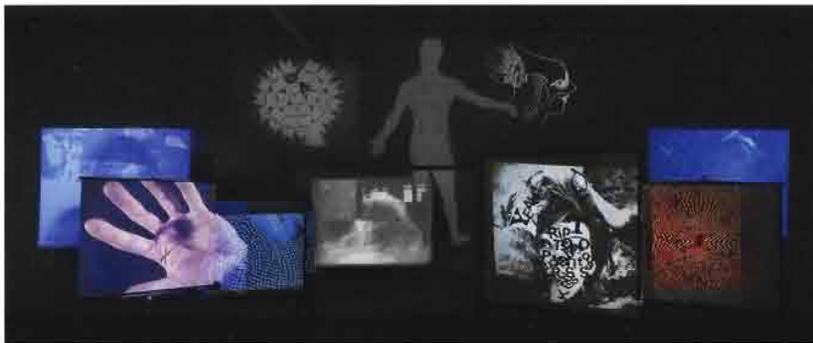
Stan VanDerBeek
GUILD & GREYSHKUL

When Stan VanDerBeek (1927–1984) wrote in a 1961 manifesto ("The Cinema Delimina—Films from the Underground") that artists were increasingly "abandoning the logics of aesthetics, springing full-blown into a juxtaposed and simultaneous world that ignores the one-point-perspective mind, the one-point-perspective lens," he could well have been describing the vertiginous presentation of this retrospective of his own work. In the main space, three film loops, six 35-mm slide projections (three looped and three still), and an image of a collage were projected on screens clustered in front of one wall, their sound tracks cacophonous. Forty-seven framed collages lining the opposite wall, photocopies of a mural by VanDerBeek, and a two-channel video completed the display.

Abolishing any pretense of sustained, individual viewing, the show's seventeen short films, spanning 1957 to 1972, were projected alongside *Found Forms*, 2008, a "multi-projection film performance" presented in 1969 and reconfigured here. The montagelike installation could have been fractious and heavy-handed, but instead served as an intimate demonstration of VanDerBeek's layered compositional strategies and seemed to argue, as he did, that people can take in, associate, and categorize an excess of simultaneous imagery—here both moving and still, amusing and harrowing. Sara and Johannes VanDerBeek, cofounders of the gallery and established artists in their own right, organized the show, and their initially distracting yet ultimately analytical and resolute layout captured the innovative spirit of their father's multifaceted work.

For *Found Forms* (the most complicated and structurally ambitious of the pieces), an "electronic assemblage" of newsreels and miscellaneous footage was projected on a central screen flanked by slide projections of figurative sculptures and journalistic photos documenting contemporary conflicts; completing the multiscreen composition were computer-generated mandala-like drawings that slowly rotated to the left and right. As the nonsynchronous groupings of images repeated their circuit, a haunting photograph of battered civil rights activists

View of "Stan VanDerBeek," 2008.

might have found a recombinant reading with, say, a Grecian torso and sumo wrestlers. Sports and entertainment snippets intercut with war footage further conveyed VanDerBeek's mordant vision of an increasingly volatile and interconnected world in which images of armed conflict, political protest, and ritual celebration readily mingle with vehicles racing at top speed, absurd feats of human strength, fashion shows, hurricanes, and the occasional dancing bear. Although a forerunner to multichannel installations and searchable image databases, *Found Forms* is perhaps most reminiscent of Aby Warburg's anachronistic *Mnemosyne Atlas*, 1924–29, in its penchant for delirious cataloguing and cross-referencing of gestural expression and figurative similitude.

Alongside the installation were VanDerBeek's short films (a mix of stop-motion animation, live-action scenarios, and found footage), which made him a central figure in the avant-garde cinema scene of New York in the 1960s. The comic style of VanDerBeek's films recalls not only the knockabout farce of Dadaist filmmakers like René Clair and Hans Richter—and, in turn, Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin, and Georges Méliès—but also Max Ernst's episodic collage narratives, Harry Smith's esoteric animations, and Joseph Cornell's found-footage reveries. *Breathdeath*, 1963, is a particularly potent example: A riff from the song "I Put a Spell on You" propels a *danse macabre* of collage sequences in which a human foot slips out of Nixon's mouth, a newspaper announces US SKY BOMB A SUCCESS, Marilyn Monroe's face is blackened into a death mask, an elegant couple dining are superimposed over footage of a firebombed building, and Chaplin's head splits in two to reveal a billowing atomic mushroom cloud. A seeming influence on such divergent collage projects as Terry Gilliam's animations for Monty Python's *Flying Circus* and Martha Rosler's "Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful," 1967–72, VanDerBeek's work shows him to be a fascinating figure in need of more extended presentations and critical reconsideration.

—*Fionn Meade*

Sara VanDerBeek

Left: An untitled collage from See Saw Seems, 1965, black-and-white film in 16 mm, 8 min. Right: Stan VanDerBeek in his Movie-Drome, 1963–65. Photo: R. Raderman.

Artist Sara VanDerBeek, who, with her brother, Johannes VanDerBeek, and Anya Kielar, owns Guild & Greyshkul gallery, is the daughter of experimental filmmaker and animator Stan VanDerBeek, who died in 1984. Guild & Greyshkul presents an exhibition of Stan VanDerBeek's work from September 13 to October 18.

THE PROCESS OF ORGANIZING our father's estate and putting together this exhibition has been intensely emotional and very exciting for both Johannes and me. When he passed away in 1984, only a few months after an initial diagnosis of cancer, there were no instructions regarding how his artworks should be cared for or organized. Everything was piled up in his office, and it was eventually split up among various family members. Only recently, as the administrative aspects of handling the estate have become too difficult for our mother, and as our father's first wife asked us to handle the artworks in her possession, have we realized the scope of what he kept. It turns out that much of what went into making the films and multimedia installations remains extant, but not much has been done to organize it. We spread everything out in the empty gallery this summer and began to piece it together, a process made difficult by the fact that sometimes only photographic documentation remains to guide us in reconstructing moving-image and three-dimensional artworks. To that end, I describe some of these works as "approximations."

Johannes and I initially decided to present an overview of our father's career, but now that we've installed the exhibition, we realize that it focuses on his involvement with language—in particular his desire to create a means of universal communication using images. There are many early works, from the 1950s and early '60s, some of which an audience familiar with his work might not know. The show includes a twelve-part series of paintings from around 1956 that combines small images with words and seems to us to mark the beginning of his experimentation with animation. With certain works like the fax mural and Violence Sonata [1969], the show touches on his experiments with then-new technologies, which occurred with increasing frequency from the late '60s until his death, but which we realized could constitute another show in itself.

One challenge is presenting this work in a gallery context. While he was collegial with a wide range of people—from scientists and computer programmers at places like MIT and Bell Labs to artists like Claes Oldenberg and Jim Dine, who is the main performer in a film we're exhibiting—he remained most closely involved with the experimental-film, -media, and -animation communities. He never worked with a commercial art gallery during his lifetime, and the majority of the items he chose for his CV were performances, screenings, multimedia events, and residencies. This is, like everything else, a problem compounded by the facts that we're his children and that we have very different ideas about how to present the work than he might have had. Finding that balance has been both a challenge and a pleasure.

Some decisions were easier than others. For example, we're presenting a whole wall of collages, most of which our father signed and dated, which indicates to us that despite the fact that he used them in animations, they are themselves finished artworks. Making his animations was such a time- and work-intensive process that I can't imagine many such collages survived, and he would want to present the ones that did, whether as artworks or as concrete documentation of that process. Something I really enjoy about seeing these works together with the films is the shift in scale: They are all quite small, especially in comparison with how large the images become when projected onto a wall.

All this, of course, bears on my own art. Earlier this summer, I went away from New York and came up with an idea for a large multipart photographic work. When I returned and was laying out one of my father's fax murals, I realized that the gathering of different framed images that I had imagined must have been directly influenced by him. The re-presentation of images from his archive that I had done in earlier photographs of mine also crops up in his work: He not only used found imagery but reappropriated images from his earlier work in later pieces. Symbols and themes—hammers that hit people on the head in comical ways, forks flying through the air and poking people in the eye, using images of eyes to direct viewers' attention—recur through his films.

We hope that the way we've organized the exhibition will allow artists working today to connect with our father's practice. He was also an incredible writer, and we're presenting some of that material, along with drawings, on tables in the gallery. His utopian desires—the Movie-Drome [1963–65], the fact that he lived for some time on a piece of land owned by an artists' cooperative—and his wry take on contemporary politics seem particularly relevant today.

— As told to Brian Sholis for http://artforum.com/words/

Stan VanDerBeek: *Found Forms*, 1969/2008, 16mm film, 35mm slides and transparency projections; at Guild & Greyshkul.

STAN VANDERBEEK
GUILD & GREYSHKUL

Stan VanDerBeek (1927-1984) is usually remembered as an experimental filmmaker, but this summary label is ultimately too confining for his wide-ranging creativity. An expanded understanding of VanDerBeek's achievement was recently proffered by two of his children, Sara and Johannes, who discovered a long-neglected trove of his writings, paintings, collages and projected images last year. They mounted a fragmentary survey of their father's work at Guild & Greyshkul, a gallery they cofounded along with Anya Kielar.

Before he acquired basic filmmaking and animation skills while working on the set of a children's television program, VanDerBeek studied painting at Black Mountain College in the 1950s. The rear room of the gallery contained dozens of his early oils, all rather thinly painted on small wooden panels and displayed in neat rows on long shelves. Centralized orbs are recurring motifs, and often appear

to hover like suns above distant horizons. But some of the paintings combine circular forms with purely abstract marks and resemble Adolph Gottlieb canvases in miniature.

Most of the show occupied a larger, darker and noisier room, where assemblages—VanDerBeek's fundamental format—dated between 1957 and 1968 and 47 framed collages were hung salon-style on a large wall. Piecing together fragments of human bodies, facial features, domestic interiors and car parts from magazine clippings and other found photographs, VanDerBeek concocted wacky, scale-defying mechanomorphs clearly indebted to Dada. These collages were ultimately used as stop-motion frames for the numerous black-and-white animated movies that VanDerBeek created during the same period. Seventeen of those 16mm films (transferred to DVD) were projected on the opposite wall.

The centerpiece of this show was an approximate restaging of a "multi-projection performance" that VanDerBeek produced for the Intermedia Festival in Tokyo in 1969. Eight visible projectors (one for 16mm film, another for overhead transparencies and six for 35mm slides) cast a variety of still and moving images onto a bank of slightly overlapping movie screens and the blank wall behind them. A large, central silhouette of a standing man anchored the

clustered projections, while numerous satellite images appeared at varying speeds and intervals, never fully conforming to the boundaries of their target screens. Though wildly diverse, many of the flickering images (which included pictures of civil rights protestors, Vietnam War footage and psychedelic abstractions) bore the stamp of the 1960s. Yet the larger significance of this immersive environment seemed to be VanDerBeek's prescient concern with media saturation and technological interconnectivity. Indeed, among a selection of his writings displayed on tables in the rear room, one typewritten poem read: "technology/may be/only a symptom/of the/impossibility/of people/to deal with/one to one/relationships."

—*Matthew Guy Nichols*

Before he acquired basic filmmaking and animation skills while working

These collages were ultimately used as stop-motion frames for the numer-

ogy/may be/only a symptom/of the/impossibility/of people/to deal

October 1, 2008

The charming absurd: From Stan VanDerBeek's Breathdeath, 1965

Best in Show—Art

Stan VanDerBeek at Guild & Greyshkul
By R.C. Baker

In 1966, Stan VanDerBeek (1927–1984) presciently wrote: "It is imperative that we quickly find some way for the entire level of world human understanding to rise to a new human scale. This scale is the world." Four years later, from his studio at MIT, he faxed a wall mural of ghostly handprints and advertising snippets to venues all over the world—a brash precursor of the PDFs zipping around today's Internet. This computer-graphics pioneer could paint with the verve of Max Ernst—check out the surreal '50s landscapes topped by black suns in the rear gallery—and draw with the passionate clarity of Ben Shahn, as in a bold ink sketch of three gesturing hands. Allying a gift for collage with insightful absurdity, VanDerBeek's animated films, some of which are projected simultaneously in the gallery, are by turns charming and startling: The silverware in *Dance of the Looney Spoons* (1965) gambols to a percussion soundtrack, fork tines twisted like Hell's own bad-hair day; similar abstract squiggles explode from Nikita Khrushchev's mouth in 1960's *Achooo Mr. Kerrooschev*. Such mordant burlesques prefigured Monty Python's spasmodic cartoons by years. In manifestos, films, and kinetic computer animation, VanDerBeek sought a universal means of communication, but he didn't live to marvel at the Web's promise of worldwide connectivity (or be disappointed by its blaring tribalism). His work's invigorating clash of sounds and images reaches back to the bittersweet provocations of Dada and the Beats while keenly foreshadowing our own cacophonous age.

Daylight magazine

Exhibition Review – Stan VanDerBeek (On view at Guild & Greyshkul thru Oct. 18)

Written by Chris Wiley

Stan VanDerBeek was once a major figure of the New York avant-guard. He associated with luminaries like Claes Oldenburg, Jim Dine, Robert Morris, Allan Kaprow, and Yvonne Rainer, showed at major museums, participated in international art events, and worked as an artist-in-residence at NASA and M.I.T. In 1977, he was the subject of a retrospective at the Anthology Film Archives. But, since his death in 1984 at the age of 57, he has been largely forgotten.

Recently, though, it has begun to seem that VanDerBeek's work may not be fated to molder in obscurity forever. Signs have been appearing that indicate a burgeoning revival: Paul McCarthy, who has a history of championing undeservedly obscure artists, organized a film program at the Whitney devoted entirely to VanDerBeek's work; one of his photo collages appeared on the cover of the most recent installment of Charley, the publication put out every-so-often by Wrong Gallery collaborators Maurizio Cattelan, Ali Subotnick, and Massimiliano Gioni; and, his work has been cropping up in an increasing number of group shows around the country. But the current show at Guild & Greyshkul, which could be billed as a mini-retrospective, is the greatest effort that has been made to bring VanDerBeek's work back from the depths to date. This is not without good reason: the gallery was founded, in part, by two of VanDerBeek's children, Sara and Johannes, and much of the work in the show—slides, films, videos, paintings, drawings, computer-generated prints, a vast wall of photomontages and film stills—was rescued by the younger VanDerBeeks from the basement of their mother's house in Baltimore.

The show is a labor of love, and the work it contains is no different: it fairly crackles with frenetic creativity, the static discharge of a peripatetic life. One gets the impression, in fact, that VanDerBeek was working under some infernal deadline, which barely allowed time for his hands to keep up with the constant churnings of his mind. While this may sound like an over-Romanticization of the Modernist variety, it is certainly an apt case: the work is passionate and hurried, messy in the best sense of the word—without the mediation of the studied wink.

VanDerBeek began studying art at The Cooper Union in New York, and later attended the storied Black Mountain College, where he associated with the likes of Merce Cunningham, John Cage, and Buckminster Fuller. The show includes an ample selection of VanDerBeek's paintings and drawings from this period, many of which betray an

affinity for the visual works of William Blake. These works certainly have merit, but it is clear that VanDerBeek's work didn't truly flower until after he had finished his formal schooling, when he underwent a seemingly Damascene conversion that compelled him to begin working with film.

From the late 1950s onward, VanDerBeek produced reel upon reel of film, largely using painstaking stop-motion technique to animate collages of found photographs, which he often painted or drew on and intercut with found footage. Immediately, and with a certain shock of recognition, the films bring to mind the whimsical animations produced by Terry Gilliam for Monty Python's Flying Circus, though VanDerBeek's early films pre-date Gilliam's by at least a decade. (This is not a coincidence: Gilliam has cited VanDerBeek as an early influence.) Despite their obvious initial consonances, however, VanDerBeek's films move in realms beyond Gilliam's reach: they are more pointedly satirical and wildly surreal, whipping together Khrushchev and DuBuffet, Ernst and Eisenhower, tribalism and technoromanticism to create a turbulent, oneiric vision of sex, death, and politics in the machine age.

The show has a great number of these films on view, and they are accompanied by a large and notable selection of his photomontages, many of which were used in the films' production. Despite their technical designation as "film stills," these are far from mere ephemera: even rent from their original context they are fascinating and inspired, and, in fact, often benefit from reintroduction of the color and tactility that was necessarily wicked from them in the filming process. (VanDerBeek's films, with some notable exceptions, such as Science Friction (1959), were largely shot in black and white.)

VanDerBeek's initial interest in film paved the way for his much broader interest in technology, which he viewed as a force that could be used to both expand traditional artistic practice and, if used wisely, allow artists to participate in—and possibly guide—a shift in global consciousness. This latter, quasi-Utopian formulation fueled much of his late creative output, which saw him experimenting with various vanguard technologies like computers, fax machines, and video cameras, creating increasingly ambitious and encompassing art environments, and authoring urgent-sounding manifestos to codify his aesthetic and theoretical positions.

Though he is not mentioned by name, it is clear that many of VanDerBeek's ideas concerning technology were inspired by the then-fashionable and still-influential Canadian philosopher and communications theorist Marshall McLuhan—a few of VanDerBeek's manifestos are even reminiscent, both visually and textually, of McLuhan's landmark The Medium Is The Massage. This is, of course, not to say that VanDerBeek has engaged in any kind of intellectual plagiarism. Rather, it is remarkable how VanDerBeek takes McLuhan's ideas about sensory expansion, visual learning, and then-incipient global information networks and transforms them into tangible projects that attempt to push McLuhan's theory into practice.

This tendency pushed VanDerBeek to produce a number of remarkable works that are also on view in the show—a large mural that VanDerBeek created in his New York

studio and then faxed piece-by-piece to the Walker Art Center in Minnesota for exhibition, quilt-like computer printouts, a pair of videos that were screened simultaneously on two separate New York public access channels—but by far the most ambitious project that came out of this period was something VanDerBeek called a "Movie-Drome." Essentially, the idea was this: Large dome structures would be erected in sites around the world, which would serve as hubs for the distribution of knowledge via the universal language of the information age—images. Programs at the various Movie-Dromes would be tailored to the needs and desires of local populations, and would draw on a limitless image library, parts of which would be stored electronically in each Movie-Drome, which would, in turn, be connected up to its fellows through a network of satellites, televisions, and telephones.

Obviously, this was a project that was never fully realized, or VanDerBeek might be credited with creating an imaginative precursor to the Internet. But, from 1963 to 1965 he did build a full-scale prototype of a Movie-Drome out of an abandoned grain silo up in Stony Point, New York. Inside, he held multi-media events that employed dozens of film and slide projectors to produce what he called "a super collage or movie mosaic."

It would be nearly impossible to contain this kind of spectacle in a gallery space, but Guild & Greyskhul has pared down the Movie-Drome's aesthetic by presenting a recreation of one of VanDerBeek's "Electric Assemblages," a collage of slides and film projected on an overlapping thicket of free-standing screens. It is, with good reason, the centerpiece of the show. The work looks stunningly fresh, a testament to VanDerBeek's aesthetic prescience as much as it is an indicator of the accuracy of his technological prognostications.

Though the Electric Assemblage is an apt summation of VanDerBeek's singular artistic achievement, there is another, more modest work in the show that helps illuminate the ambitions that he had for art making as a whole. Tucked away in the little back room is a watercolor on which these words are painted: "Art Moves Through The Infinity Of Perhaps." It is an aphorism, or perhaps a Koan, that furnishes us with the most succinct summation of VanDerBeek's practice that anyone could hope to provide. For his art did indeed move through the infinity of perhaps, to such an extent that climbing inside his Movie-Drome now would feel like getting a view of the inside of our own skulls. One can only imagine, with not a small feeling of loss, what his work might look like now, if he had lived.

REVIEWS

STAN VANDERBEEK
GUILD & GREYSHKUL - NEW YORK

STAN VANDERBEEK, Found Forms, 2008. 16mm film, 35mm slide, transparency projections. Installation view at Guild & Greyshkul. New York. Courtesy the Estate of Stan VanDerBeek; Guild & Greyshkul, New York.

Stan VanDerBeek, artist of the moving image extraordinaire, created a vibrant body of work throughout the '60s and '70s before suddenly dying in 1984, leaving behind a wide variety of films and handmade slides, as well as a sprinkling of works on paper for good measure. Master of cut-out animation and ephemeral cinema, he also created numerous films with drawing and paint, accumulated vast amounts of archival film stock and imagery and pioneered his way into computer animation. His films, which bring to mind both the work of Georges Méliès because of their sheer ingenuity, and John Hertzfeld for their quirky irreverence and biting criticism, are uniquely American in spirit, a delightful blend of Dada and Beat, the freshness of which hasn't aged a wink. From *Achooo Mr. Kerrooschev* (1960) to *Breathdeath* (1963) or *Violence Sonata* (1969), his is a riotous world in which the Marx Brothers cavort on battlefields, General de Gaulle and superheroes share the limelight with Marilyn Monroe and the Mona Lisa, and television sets spill out confetti and streamers. The exhibition also includes a recreation of *Panels for the Walls of the World,* a vast faxed mural first exhibited in 1970, as well as a recreation of one of his numerous multi-projection film performances.

A devout believer in the power of visual communication and the utopian ideal it represents, VanDerBeek devoted much of his time to the study of the interaction between art and technology. He also collaborated with such illustrious figures as Claes Oldenburg and Yvonne Rainer. One can only hope that he will soon reclaim his spot on the forefront of the experimental film world.

Isabelle Dupuis

A La Mode, 1958. Animation frame, collage, paint and ink, 16 x 20 cm. Courtesy the Estate of Stan VanDerBeek; Guild & Greyshkul, New York.

"Stan VanDerBeek, Works from 1950–1980"

Art

Panels for the Walls of the World

★★★★ ☆ ☆

Guild & Greyshkul, through May 3
(see Soho)

In the 1960s and '70s, experimental filmmaker Stan VanDerBeek (1927–1984) collaborated with scientists at research hotbeds like MIT and Bell Labs to produce some of the most innovative cinema of the time. Curated by daughter Sara, an artist in her own right, this tight survey highlights VanDerBeek's achievements—from stop-motion animation made in the '50s to computer-generated movies and works transmitted over an early version of the fax machine in later decades.

VanDerBeek's artistic development reflects his quick mastery of new media, and judging by his frequent references to classical Greek sculpture and Renaissance painting (evidence of past aesthetic revolutions), he clearly understood that technology would transform the making and consumption of images. *Symmetricks* (1972), a computer-generated ballet of lines set to sitar music, seems to celebrate this potential. But other films featuring the presence of mushroom clouds or whirring machinery suggest a downside to the mechanization of daily life, whereby information was becoming just another throwaway product.

Ultimately, VanDerBeek hoped that an increase in the speed and ease of communication would foster shared cultural experiences. In *The Human Face Is a Monument* (1965), he presents the cycle of life as a series of faces ranging from the newborn to the age-ravaged, revealing the universality of human emotions.

Technology has indeed abetted globalization, but as the group show of younger, female artists organized by Ms. VanDerBeek to accompany her father's work indicates, it was his method of mining the media— and his cynicism about it—that has endured.—*Joshua Mack*

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Art Keeps On Slipping Into the Future
By Marisa Olson on Thursday, October 2nd, 2008 at 3:21 pm.

Stan VanDerBeek (1927-1984) shares with artists like Josef Albers, Aldous Huxley, John Cage, Robert Rauschenberg, and Buckminster Fuller the legacy of having developed their practice at Black Mountain College, the creative mecca where these and other thinkers pushed the edges of visual art, music, literature, technology, and consciousness. His experimental films of the 1950s blurred dada collage and science fiction, and he was an early adopter of both analog processes and computer animation, establishing for him a godfather-like position in the origin-narratives surrounding new media. His often rough aesthetic anticipated glitch-fetishism by several decades and drove the surrealist aesthetic into new territory; yet this is not to say that his works didn't go down smoothly. (The internet is full of video evidence of his colorfully dreamy proliferations.) The artist is currently the subject of an exhibition at New York's Guild & Greyshkul gallery, where one can see VanDerBeek's contribution to the proto-history of digital copy-and-paste stylistics in the form of real copy-and-paste collages and his own reworkings of his early films. Much of the work in the show, including a "faux mural" he transmitted electronically to international venues, in 1970, was made in his days at MIT, where his immersion among scientists and engineers had a clear impact on his art. VanDerBeek had a futurist and almost cosmological approach to his work and was one of those artists known for spouting beautiful witticisms about finding universal modes of expression that transcended media and the confinement of traditional forms. At the end of the day, he also reminded us that "Art is the artifact of reality (not taken for granted)."
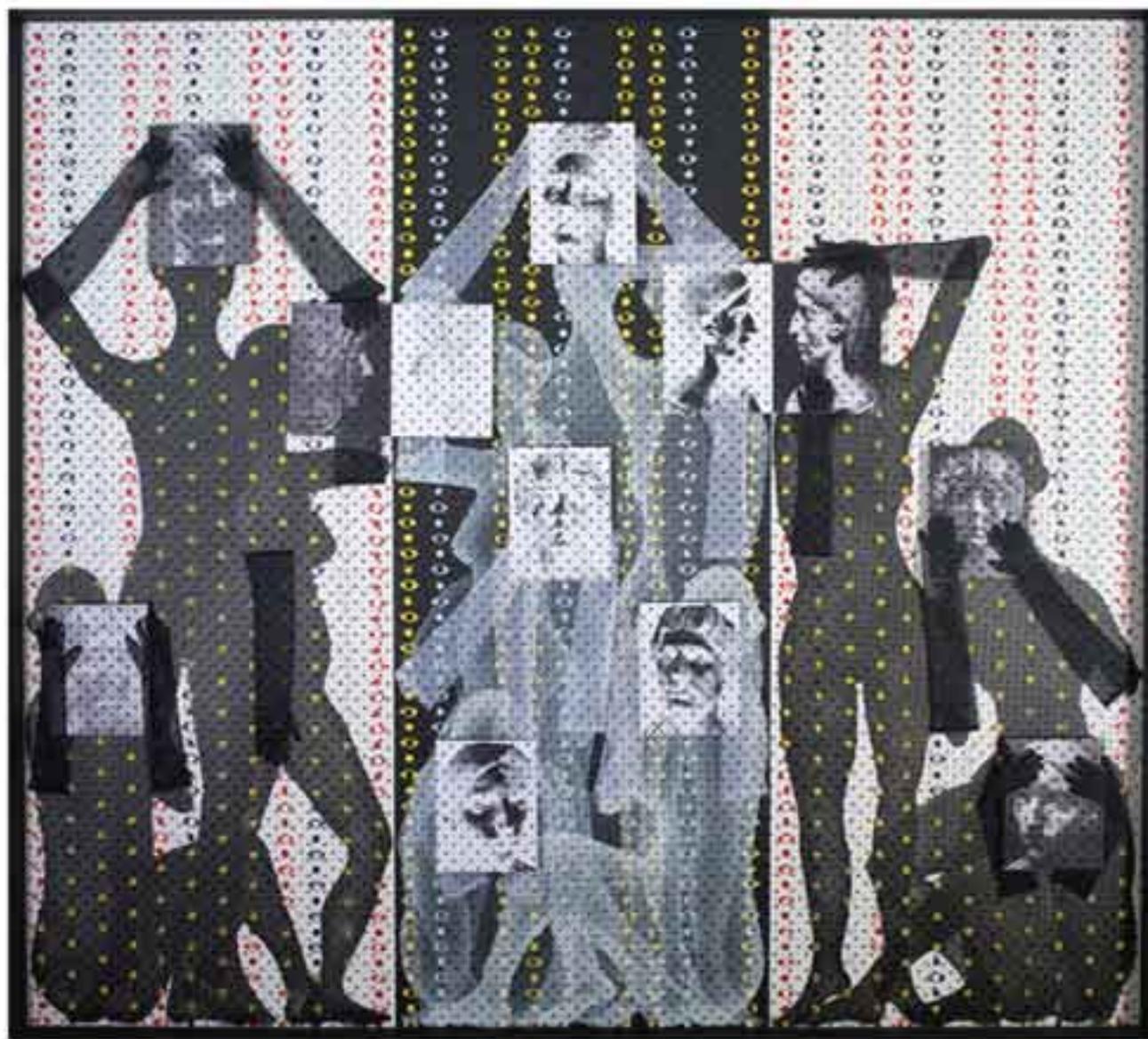
- Marisa Olson
www.rhizome.org

Art

'THE HUMAN FACE IS A MONUMENT' Titled after a 1965 movie by the underground filmmaker Stan VanDerBeek (1927-1984), "The Human Face Is a Monument" is a lively group show at Guild & Greyshkul that could be subtitled "And Glossy Magazines Are a Feminist Gold Mine."

May Wilson (1905-1986) is represented by several little-known collages from the late 1960s, whose latticelike layering of images create a kaleidoscopic mix of voyeurism, patterning and interior. In Sarah Charlesworth's "Figure Drawings," a work initiated 20 years ago, 40 small, individually framed figurative silhouettes — mostly sculptures — catalog poses, gestures and meanings.

Dana Hoey's latest, possibly transitional, work contrasts different female roles and the passage of time in loose-limbed quilts of images. Sara Greenberger Rafferty uses pictures of fried eggs to accent the absurdity of some of the roles women play. In a 1982 video Martha Rosler dismembers an issue of Vogue magazine, verbally and unaided by scissors. And, finally, "The Geeks 2008," right, a large new work by Anya Kielar, uses fabric, paint and inkjet prints to create pale female silhouettes that invoke both a Greek chorus and the alert, sharp-elbowed women of Picasso's "Demoiselles D'Avignon."

In a separate area, collages and films made between 1950 and 1980 by Mr. VanDerBeek — father of two of the three art-ists in charge of this gallery — reverberate with nearly everything on view, reintroducing a neglected artist and confirming that neither feminism nor collage is exclusively female terrain. (Through May 3, Guild & Greyshkul, 28 Wooster Street, at Grand Street, SoHo, 212-625-9224, guildgreyshkul.com.) *ROBERTA SMITH*

COURTESY OF ANYA KIELAR AND GUILD & GREYSHKUL, NEW YORK

GOINGS ON

May 01, 2008
All in the Family

Five hundred galleries in New York is a lot of galleries. So it's inevitable—if maddening—that excellent shows can open and close before there's a chance to review them. One case in point is "The Human Face Is a Monument," at SoHo's Guild & Greyshkul, which closes on Saturday, May 3. The exhibition was organized by Sara VanDerBeek, who runs the space with her brother, Johannes, and her fellow Cooper-Union alumna Anya Kielar. (All three of the gallerists are also artists, represented by young dealers in Chelsea.)

As a photographer, Ms. VanDerBeek, whose work has generated much interest over the past year, has an indexical eye and a taste for collage. The same is true of the seven artists in her curatorial debut. They range from the established (Sarah Charlesworth, with a wall of framed silhouettes that suggest a vogueing update of Steichen's famous "Family of Man") to the up-and-coming (Sara Greenberg Rafferty, ubiquitous on the group-show circuit, with witty works on paper) and the all but forgotten (May Wilson,the Maryland housewife and grandmother who became an artist in the New York underground at the age of sixty-one.) But the heart of the exhibition is the gallery's back room: a program of films by the curator's father, the experimental filmmaker Stan VanDerBeek, who died in 1984. (The show takes its title from one of these shorts.) Terry Gilliam has credited the elder VanDerBeek—notably, his 1964 collage-animation of Richard Nixon trying to talk with his foot in his mouth—for inspiring his own signature style, and one can also see the influence of father on daughter. It's a moving coda to an exceptionally engaged and engaging show.

—Andrea K. Scott

Review: Stan VanDerBeek at the Box

12:30 AM, April 3, 2009

Since opening its doors in 2007, the Box has supplemented its thoughtful contemporary program with periodic exhibitions devoted to underexposed pockets of recent art history, particularly from the 1960s and '70s. Barbara T. Smith, Wally Hedrick and John Altoon have all been featured, as well as collaborative video artists David Lamelas and Hildegard Duane.

The current show presents the work of experimental filmmaker Stan VanDerBeek (1927-1984). Combining film, video, collage, drawing and several re-created multimedia installations, it is an ambitious undertaking — apparently the first of its kind to appear in Los Angeles — and a rousing tribute to the artist's radically multifarious output.

Born at the dawn of mass culture and media, VanDerBeek had a ravenous appetite for images and a prescient fascination with the interlocking layers of technology that define and circumscribe contemporary cultural experience. He filmed images, drew them, painted them, cut them out, spliced them together, animated them, photocopied them, even faxed them in one case, all with a giddy rigor that makes the work feel as fresh as anything you'll find in a gallery today.

The collages, which date from the mid-'50s through the early '80s, are especially enchanting. Here one sees the artist literally churning through the mess of visual stimulus that modern culture had become, drawing connections, illuminating idiosyncrasies, crafting strains of visual poetry through an astute process of juxtaposition and layering. In turns playful, elegant, jarring and crass, they provide an intimate glimpse into joyously frenetic sensibility.

-- Holly Myers

The Box, 977 Chung King Road, L.A., (213) 625-1747, through April 18. Closed Sundays through Tuesdays.