

SUR: the movement of people
working

Description of the environment:
2 continuous loop films, 25
and 25 minutes long
2 45 minute taped musical
compositions

Equipment:
2 continuous loop film
projectors
1 auto-reverse tape deck
1 sound amplifier
4 loudspeaker units
2 8' by 10' screens

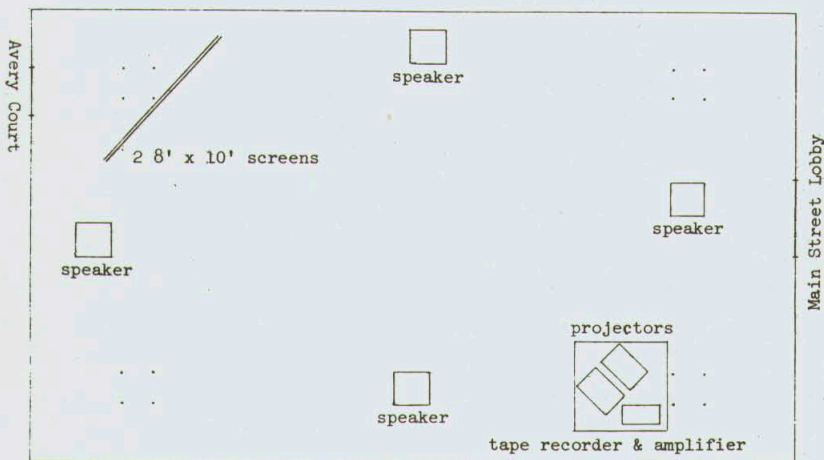


Diagram of installation in
Austin Gallery, Wadsworth
Atheneum.

Phill Niblock is an artist of several disciplines, all of which he brings to the film and music environment, "SUR: the movement of people working." He was born in Anderson, Indiana in 1933 and attended the University of Indiana, receiving a degree in economics. He worked in a variety of jobs for a while, which he says, "really aren't worth recalling." An interest in photography developed in the early 'sixties and led to gaining expertise in filmmaking by the mid 'sixties. He began composing music in 1968.

Today, he is equally well-known as an experimental filmmaker and composer and has been combining his work in these media during the last five years. He is currently Associate Professor in the Department of Creative and Performing Arts of the City University of New York. Phill Niblock is part of the Experimental Intermedia Foundation in New York and his work is supported in part by the New York Council on the Arts.

The film used in this piece was shot in Mexico and Peru over the last year and contains images of people making various things and doing routine chores. These daily tasks approach abstraction through the use of careful shooting and editing and with bright colors and bold designs of the images he has chosen. The music is two 45 minute tapes of flute and tabor, which are mixed and manipulated electronically to provide a continuous, fascinating block of sound. The music was composed independently of making the film, but in experiencing the environment one has the distinct feeling that they belong together, enhance each other, and, indeed, together

become much more than they might be separately.

Other environments by Phill Niblock will be installed this year at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Texas and The Kitchen, New York City.

AHC

Excerpts from a January, 1975
interview with Phill Niblock:

- Q: How would you describe this environment and what kind of visual and aural experiences do you expect it to provide the viewer?
- PN: It's non-verbal theatre.... I try to make non-verbal theatre, which I describe as little as possible in order to throw the responsibility on the experiencer.
- Q: Do you consider this theatre as formal theatre--with structure, plot, movement...?
- PN: It's theatre in the broad sense of theatre. We're living in a time of non-narrative theatre....There is no particular time sense.
- Q: Were the film and music made to complement each other?
- PN: The relationship between the film and music is that I did them both only. For the most part, the music was all done before.
- Q: Do you feel that the music enhances the film or, vice versa, the film enhances the music?
- PN: I would prefer not to deal with the term "enhance."

Film Performance Data

- Environment Series-Non-verbal Theatre with Slides, Film, Dance and Music. Performed with The Environments Company.
- 1972 Ten Hundred Inch Radii/Environments IV, with Barbara Lloyd and Ann Danoff. Premiered at the Everson Museum, Syracuse, N.Y.
- 1971 100 Mile Radius/Environments III, with Barbara Lloyd and Ann Danoff. Premiere produced by the Kirkland Art Center, Clinton, N.Y. (also performed at the Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC).
- 1970 Cross Country/Environments II, with Barbara Lloyd, Ann Danoff, and Vernita Nemeč. Premiered at Judson Dance Theater, NYC.
- 1968 Environments, with Max Neuhaus and Ann Danoff. Judson Memorial Church, NYC.

Museum-Gallery Exhibits.

- 1972 Ten Hundred Inch Radii, Exhibit Project, a continuous film and music exhibit, daily in the museum gallery, Everson Museum, Syracuse, N.Y.

16 MM Films

- 1973 Sur I, music by Phill Niblock, color, 25 minutes.
- 1972 Thir, Film and Music One, music by Phill Niblock, color, 43 minutes.
- Animals, music by Phill Niblock, color, 16 minutes.
- 1970 Morning, members of the Open Theater as cast, black and white, 17 minutes.
- Annie, dancer Ann Danoff, color, 8 minutes.

- Raoul Middleman, a painter in process, color, 20 minutes.
- 1969 The Magic Sun, a film of Sun Ra and his Arkestra, music by Sun Ra, black and white, 17 minutes.
- 1967 Dog Track, color, 8 minutes.
- 1967 Max, a film of Max Neuhaus, composer-performer, edited by David Gearey, music by Max Neuhaus, black and white, 7 1/2 minutes.

Selected bibliography:

- Nelson, Abigail. Sight Lines Magazine, Winter, 1974.
- Rockwell, John. High Fidelity Magazine/Musical America, May 1974.

Television-short special pieces with film, music and live dance.

Concerts of music (Available on tape). Appearances at The Kitchen, Mercer Arts Center, NYC and at 224 Center Street, NYC.