In Fall 1974, Muhammad Ali knocked out George Foreman in 8 rounds in *The Rumble in the Jungle*, Roman Polanski’s *Chinatown* was playing in theaters, and a brand new Walker film/video department opened their first gallery exhibition. This year’s Artists’ Cinema series, *Artists’ Cinema 2011: Projected Images* is named in honor of the seminal 1974 exhibition, an exhibition which is still influential as one of the first attempts to blend the “Black Box” of the cinema space with the “White Cube” of the gallery.

1973 was an exciting year for film and video at the Walker. In one fell swoop, the Walker Film/Video department was created—led by its first full-time coordinator, John G. Hanhardt—and the Edmond R. Ruben Film and Video Study Collection was established. In the early 1970’s a new moving image art form was becoming increasingly affordable for young artists. That format was, of course, video, an almost entirely D.I.Y. medium where anyone who could afford a *portapak* (about $1000) could shoot their own artists’ video. At the same time there was a resurgence of 8mm and 16mm experimental and art film, as Hollis Frampton put it, “In the late 50’s, as I was 19 or 20 years old, I imagined, as did a lot of young people at that time, I imagined myself to be a poet, it was a good thing to be. A few years later it was a good thing to imagine oneself to be a painter, and now I think everyone wants to be a filmmaker.” Since the Ruben Collection started at this essential “filmmaker” moment, the Walker was able to get in on the ground floor, collecting video work by Joan Jonas, Dennis Oppenheim, Peter Campus, Andy Mann, Ina Schneider, Nam June Paik, Joan Downey and William Wegman and film work from Hollis Frampton, Kenneth Anger, Marcel Broodthaers, Stan Brakhage, George Landow, Paul Sharits, Derek Jarman, Bruce Conner, and Yvonne Rainer.

Leading off with the work of this cavalcade of film/video stars, chief curator Dean Swanson and Walker director Martin Friedman organized the first *Projected Images* exhibition at the Walker. In this groundbreaking exhibition, filmmakers who had traditionally worked in a cinema screening space took a step into the white cube, adapting their work and their style to a more painterly experience. This exhibit not only reformed and reimagined the separation between art and cinema, but it set the groundwork for the artist filmmakers who are active today. From the catalog of the original exhibition:
The term, “projected images,” describes a group of environmental works that depend upon specific light sources for their existence. The perception of these transitory images in darkened spaces is affected by the character and scale of such spaces. Many artists who work with projections have come to this hybrid form through dissatisfaction with traditional painting and sculpture techniques. While filmmaking and video production attract an increasing number of artists, most of these converts observe the technical conventions of the new media; their films are intended for viewing under standard projection conditions and their videotapes are made to be seen on television monitors. By contrast, the artists represented in this exhibition conceive of film and video images essentially in environmental terms—as dominant elements of interior spaces—and they are as much concerned with the changing spatial and psychological relationships between observer and image as with the character of the image itself.

A Michael Snow piece commissioned for the ‘74 exhibition called Two Sides of Every Story, installed on two sides of a metal screen hung in the center of the gallery. Two films are projected in continuous loops from opposite ends of the room. Both films show a woman making a series of movements as she walks between two cameramen positioned opposite each other. The films projected on opposite sides of the screen re-present the two differing perspectives of the cameramen. The metal screen represents an explorable space (the double sided screen world) in an explorable space (the gallery), and throws the viewer/participant into dialogue between two opposite points of view constructing the same idea.

Like the exhibition itself, Snow’s piece absorbed Eisenstein’s concept of dialectical montage, combining two conflicting points of view into a more complicated synthesis. The collision of opposite viewpoints, in Two Sides of Every Story, is what creates the space between the cameras.

The different viewpoints that 1974’s Projected Images collides are slightly more complicated. In 2003, avant garde filmmaker Anthony McCall described the differing viewpoints as “The dichotomy between avant-garde film- (and video-) makers, and artists ‘working in film/video,’ still seems to be with us. The two worlds sometimes seem like Crick and Watson’s double helix, spiraling closely around one another without ever quite meeting.” But when Projected Images exhibition brought those two worlds into proximity, the collision was positively nuclear. The gallery’s white cube and the artists therein smashed into the filmmakers from the theater’s black box, and the resulting synthesis gave way to the next generation of film and video art and the ubiquitous nature of moving images in galleries today.
This year’s *Artists’ Cinema: Projected Images* is a restaging of that collision, but on different home turf. Here artists and filmmakers are stepping into the black box to do their dirty work. Installation artists, conceptual artists, visual artists and filmmakers will meet in the theater in a series highlighting the interconnections and dialogues inherent in their work. *Artist’s Cinema* will be another step toward the dialectical combination of art and cinema.

**Works in the original *Projected Images* exhibition:**

(descriptions taken from *Projected Images* catalog text) — Peter Campus

Peter Campus’s singular achievement was his early recognition of the historical process. Recognizing that painting and sculpture were now actualizing their viability as species through the introduction of temporality, Campus reversed priorities. He imposed a static vision of painting and sculpture, one might say a Formalist vision, upon issues of technology and temporality by which video art had previously identified itself.

*Shadow Projection*, Peter Campus, closed circuit video projection.

Diagram of Peter Campus’ Shadow Projection Rockne Krebs

Projected images is what the exhibition is all about. It is not, per se, what Rockne Krebs is all about, although a major element of *The Lock (Home on the Range, Part III)* is a projected image: a camera obscura. Krebs is a sculptor who is primarily concerned with space, light, and natural phenomena. If a projected two-dimensional image happens to provide an expressive vehicle for these concerns, there is no reason, he feels, to shun a medium
because it happens to be more akin to painting. Initially, therefore, it is worth exploring how his use of the camera obscura (in conjunction with beams of laser light) relates to the evolution of a major aspect of the artist's development since 1967.


Rockne Krebs’ *The Lock*

Cinema is a Greek word that means “movie.” The illusion of movement is certainly an accustomed adjunct of the film image, but that illusion rests upon the assumption that the rate of change between successive frames may vary only within rather narrow limits. There is nothing in the structural logic of the filmstrip that can justify such an assumption. Therefore we reject it. From now on we will call our art simply: *film*.

—Hollis Frampton, *For A Metahistory of Film*

*Synchronoussoundtracks* is not wholly a film, nor even a projected work, but rather an environmental complex structured about three 7 by 9 foot images produced by 3 projectors. From three speakers arranged on the back wall, one hears the sound of sprockets passing over a projector sound head, with a frequency whose oscillation stands in direct relation to the sprocket hole images seen upon the screen. The dominant impression then, is of a synchronicity whose terms are articulated with a definition that derives from a complex phasing, itself a product of a generative technique of recording and re-recording.

*Synchronoussoundtracks*, Paul Sharits, super 8 mm synch sound film, projected on wall.
Paul Sharits’ Synchronous Soundtracks

Specimen, Paul Sharits, 16mm filmstrips mounted in plexiglass.

Two Sides to Every Story conjures up in the saying a psychological truism as well as a conventional device of narrative—playing one side off another. Snow’s installation actually does play one side off another, literally spatializing and spatially literalizing that
conventional narrative device, so that each side is seen through the camera eye of the other.

*Two Sides to Every Story*, Michael Snow, 16 mm double projection.
Nature has always been of primary importance to Ted Victoria. In graduate school at Rutgers, it was a source of imagery in his paintings and prints and then a source of energy for the work which followed. By the time he received his MFA in 1968, Victoria was making solar-audio pieces in which solar batteries receiving the sun’s rays activated transistor radios. In *Light Bulb Projections*, we see the process of projection and the mechanics of artificial light itself. The six bulbs rotate at slightly different speeds, so slowly that movement is barely perceptible. The illusion exists in real time and space.

*Light Bulb Projections*, Ted Victoria, six light bulbs, six projectors designed by the artist.
“Pioneer,” like virtually every term connoting innovation in the contemporary critical vocabulary, has been so over-worked as to become meaningless. Yet I can think of no other description that more accurately identifies Robert Whitman’s relationship to those current media, performance and environmental works which constitute the only authentically committed avant-garde operative today. For his piece, *Untitled*, A continuous filmed projection of a burning match is projected on a surface of wooden planks with water flowing over it.

*Untitled*, Robert Whitman, super 8mm film, wood planks, water.
Robert Whitman's Untitled

*Room 1, Robert Whitman, super 8mm film, circular room.*
Robert Whitman’s Room 1

Artists' Cinema: Projected Images