

What should I make up?: An inquiry into autobiography

Interviews with Sarah Jane Lapp, Michele Fleming, and Amie Siegel

By Jenny Perlin

“What should I make up?”

In 1997 I interviewed my grandmother, Belle Ginsburg, about her mother Sadie (Zelda) Ginsburg. I was making a film entitled *The Whole History of That*, examining the failures and desires which accompanied my search for roots in Central Europe. At the end of our interview, having told me what little she knew about her mother, my grandmother said “I’d love to give you more information--but--unless I make something up. What should I make up?” And with this, the film found its logical conclusion. It refused to allow my autobiographical desires any solid place on which to rest.

“What should I make up?” is the title of this autobiographically-inspired essay. I’ve chosen to interview three filmmakers whose work engages with issues surrounding autobiography and representation in striking and innovative ways. I have spoken with Michele Fleming, Sarah Jane Lapp, and Amie Siegel about their recent films, *Life/Expectancy*, *Mimo*, and *The Sleepers*.

To begin, then.

I think it is only appropriate to introduce myself and outline the reasons for this exploration. I work with the moving image. I am a woman who makes films and installations in a style or genre which has many names. Non-fiction, essay, experimental documentary, etc. The projects grow out of reading, research, and from my personal life. My choice of subject matter in each project is intrinsically linked with autobiography, although it may not manifest itself directly in the projects.

Since 1991, my projects have taken me to tiny border towns between the Czech and Slovak Republics; to interview Lisa Fittko, the German Jewish partisan who accompanied Walter Benjamin on his flight across the Pyrenees; to the Chicago site of a Civil War prison; to trash heaps in San Francisco; to the town where Sigmund Freud was born. In each of these places, questions arise: what is this thing we call history? Is it located in this creek, which now divides a village into two countries? Is it under the ground with the bones of these Confederate soldiers? Is it in the stories my grandmother tells? Is its dust scattered on the cobblestones in rural Moravia? Or in the ink of this text? Or is this thing we call history something we've invented, and now believe as fact?

My pieces are translations among numerous histories. A personal history, a history of a particular site and space, national, cultural histories. These narratives cross, contradict, and reinforce one another. Each of my projects investigates these intersections.

A confession

The impetus for this article comes from autobiography. I am currently at work on a new film, entitled *Perseverance and How to Develop It*. In the process of making the film, a piece inspired by the discovery of a self-help book from 1915, I find myself at a crossroads. How much, if any, autobiographical information to include directly in the work? And what form should this information take? As an artist with no commissions, and no one to answer to, the choice of subject matter is inherently a personal one. However, what voice should it take? A first-person voice-over? The word “I” or the word “she” or “he?” My voice or someone else’s? Or no voice, letting the images “speak” for themselves? The combinations and inflections of the personal are potentially infinite.

I was stumped, and turned to investigate some recent films by women I much admire. Each one of the works sketched below engages with and against the presence of autobiography in intriguing and complex ways. I believe these films form a new trend in the world of experimental film precisely because of their complex use of the personal.

Neither confessional nor strictly formalist, the films, *Mimo*, by Sarah Jane Lapp, *The Sleepers*, by Amie Siegel, and *Life/Expectancy*, by Michele Fleming all bring cinema into to a new space replete with complex questions and thoughtful responses.

In the spirit of the personal I will also add that I consider these women friends; we did our graduate work together at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Michelle Fleming was and continues to be a much-admired faculty member at the same institution.

I find it striking that such an interesting generation of experimental filmmakers has emerged from this school, and especially in these times of blatant commercialism rampant in institutional settings. In addition, the continued commitment to 16mm film is also worth noting. Why are we still working with film? And how are we engaging with the personal?

The personal and “women’s film.”

Is an autobiographical impulse inherent in films by women? I don’t believe so. However, I do sense there is a difference in audience expectation of films by men or by women. I believe that audiences assume autobiographical content more readily when watching films, especially experimental films, by women. As makers, we are working with and against these expectations, that there is a communicative, confessional drive in our work as non-narrative filmmakers. These filmmakers work directly with this play of expectations, carefully weighing their choices: whether to engage the autobiographical, or to refuse it, and how. These choices may not be directly outlined at the beginning of the filmmaking process, but make themselves manifest throughout. The first choice engenders more possible choices; the makers choose their paths. Films shift and tell different stories while they are being made. These choices--of direct voice, confessional voice, the modality or refusal to introduce that which can be recognized as personal--challenge each of us.

Why these three films?

I see these films as part of a new spectrum of non-fiction film, with *Mimo*, and its beautifully filmed recreation of a personal memory, on one side, and *The Sleepers* on the other, hovering in the tension between voyeurism and the desire for narrative. Between them: *Life/Expectancy*, which uses archival materials and texts to create a deeply thoughtful, personal (yet neither didactic nor confessional), and moving film.

The first two films, *Mimo*, and *Life/Expectancy* stand in contrast to other works in which the “I” or “she” seems intimately connected to the experience on the screen, works such as Su Friedrich’s *Sink or Swim*, Greta Snider’s *Futility*, or other works of avant-garde cinema by women. Lapp and Fleming’s films look outward. They gather words of others from archives or interviews, and present them in concert with the personal voice. The first person voice-over does not play a substantial role in these films. Instead, they weave, embrace, and confront the autobiographical, and the audience’s expectations of it. Amie Siegel’s film, *The Sleepers*, brings up questions surrounding of the autobiographical by directly refusing its presence in the film. The film engages instead with voyeurism and narrative, confronting the viewer’s desire for narrative and autobiographical identification which traditionally accompanies the cinematic experience.

I feel privileged to write about these filmmakers and their recent work, and thank them in advance for their willingness to be interviewed, their good spirits, and of course for their works.

Mimo (Beyond)

Czech Republic, 1996, 16mm, 15 minutes, color and black & white, English & Czech, English, Hebrew with English subtitles.

Part documentary, part memory exchange of two sojourners in a strange land: Behind the locked vestiges of a cemetery in Zizkov, Prague, childhood marbles descend onto tombstone marble, inducing song and strangely intersecting spiritualities. *MIMO* which

is perhaps simply a celluloid gift for my elderly neighbor who stars in it, will either be seen as very obtuse or very--I don't know what.

--- Sarah Jane Lapp

Sarah Jane Lapp was a Fulbright fellow in Prague, leaving her home for a land far away. The exchanges she had with her neighbor, Gusta Sibova, about spirituality, Torah, and song, interweave with a scene from memory, reconstructed. The memory is of a departure from the place far away, and of the last hours in which a father tries to give a camera to his daughter, spilling a box of marbles in his clumsy search for camera. Marbles play the role in interweaving the stories, which continue into an investigation of Prague's television tower and its displacement of a neighborhood Jewish cemetery. Gusta carries marbles to the cemetery, lays them on tombstones. Marbles spill from great heights in memory, making a mess, impelling closeness and marking a departure. I spoke with Sarah Jane about her experiences with the film.

JP: Please describe a bit living in Zizkov, and if and why this neighborhood affected you.

SJL: Zizkov, like Prague, like the Czech Republic, represented a system of overlapping palimpsests. Such historically challenging topography offered at least one lesson: that one should never take anything at face value. Of course metatext is everywhere if you look for it, but in Zizkov, even the schnitzel seemed to have a subtext.

I lived near an old Jewish cemetery upon which a television tower had been built, displacing and/or liquidating many graves, buried Torahs etc. Around the perimeter of this cemetery one found many pubs. These pubs often kept blackboards outside their doors announcing the daily specials or proprietary requests like "Whites only." The banned population, the Romany (Czech Gypsies) resided on the terraced hills. Tourist books told you to watch your possessions, to beware, especially in Zizkov. Beware indeed. Czech Romany, disenfranchised like most European Gypsies, appeared in the public imagination as thieving exotica. PhDs at my school insisted that their children not go to school with "those children." Which children? Or did they mean the children of one of the 10,000 Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian refugees moving through the Czech Republic in the 1990s? And so, the chain of displacements continued and what a link was Zizkov.

I lived across the street from Telecom. Every week, Telecom's employees flooded into the street to avoid another bomb (scare?). I lived above [Czech artist] Frantisek Skala's beautiful bar, Akropolis, but my own apartment offered no bastion of sanity either. One day we had a sink, the next day it had inexplicably vanished. And the day after, our landlord and his dog appeared naked on our floor. Both alive, maybe sleeping. And the day after that-a squat woman calling herself a psychotronic, knocked on our door, insisting she had been ordered to "clean" our apartment. Her tools: a saucer, a teacup of water, and a very tall, silent adolescent male holding a burning candle near his ear.

This bizarre political and social alchemy clearly contributed to my film endeavors-as did my naiveté at age twenty-one, an age where everyone wants to squeeze the most magic from life. *Mimo* was my first film and I worked by intuition. My script, on one hand, was a piece of prose poetry I had written about my departure from the States. On the other hand, under the auspices of a Fulbright fellowship, I had set out to investigate and possibly document how women in the Jewish community had constructed or reconstructed their spirituality after the Velvet revolution. The interviews I conducted evolved into two films: *Mimo*, and its sister film, *Raj*...How nice it would be to screen these films in the old neighborhood...

JP: The film describes both a present and a memory of the past, and makes connections with others who may be living a similar, dual experience. Can you talk a bit about why you chose to restage the scene of the memory?

SJL: I can't imagine I'll ever shoot "The Civil war, the sequel." But somehow I find value in the re-enactment of the personal. Cinema-therapy? I was just obsessed with this

memory of my father, with the precipice of departure, and I wanted to turn it over and over in my hand, like a marble, I suppose....

JP: The film is very complex in relating the marbles to the stones placed on graves to commemorate the dead, to the story of the bulldozed Jewish Cemetery. Similarly, Gusta has numerous roles in the film, in my view. She is the rememberer, the daughter, and also the witness. Could you talk about what you think Gusta represents in the film? Or what many things she does for and in the film?

SJL: I cast as a way of eulogizing. I prefer to work with people whom I believe should have their personae committed to celluloid--film is an archival material and anyone who makes it through the chemical pathways will survive a hundred years or more. Or so I like to hope.

And so any performer I choose, I cast as She Herself and as She the Persona I Project onto Her. That interface, that "Gusta not Gusta" is what results in *Mimo*. So Gusta Sibova on one hand was my neighbor. The eighty-plus year old woman who called me and my boyfriend Ville to bring her buckets of water when the neighborhood waterworks periodically didn't; who gave me schnitzel on a napkin...Gusta was also the voice I heard in synagogue, every song she produced sounding like the epiphany I always wished I could have.

In the film I don't render her as a fully psychologized character, but neither do I contextualize her as a former Romanian citizen, who served as a translator for forty years, who teaches Hebrew and Torah to local students, etc. I keep her as the ephemeral half-life she always seemed to be to me. Maybe if I were Bergman or Chantal Akerman I might have sublimated the idea of Gusta into a fictional figure who shimmered just as much as my memory of her. Alas.

JP: This brings me to the less oblique question, I hope. I'd like to hear what you have to say about the relationship between invention, interview, and autobiography. I think *Mimo* does an amazing job of weaving those things together. So it is somehow an invented story, or series of stories, especially the highly dramatic b/w section, but also a story inspired or influenced by the interview with Gusta, and of course since I know you, it is to me completely autobiographical. Where and how did you choose to locate the autobiographical within the film, and why did you make the choices you made, to represent these things?

SJL: I think filmmaking offers a singular opportunity to access interiority. Whether one decides to contextualize or present the catalyst for such a journey is up to the maker. Personally, I like to present as many layers of reality as enter the process. No, not true. I spend two years cutting a short film so that I don't present every single slice of reality--like the thunderstorms, the flat tires, the suddenly dead production coordinators, and so forth. You know, when you scan the word "interiority" with Spell check, the computer offers "inferiority." A humbling thought for the editing room.

Mimo presented an opportunity for pan-Slavic collaboration and I feel the dialogues I held with consulting editor Krasimira Velickova, with sound recordist Jiri Klenka, and especially with cinematographer Ramunas Grecius articulate for me the meta-language that film offers. As with other forms of language acquisition, one does not just speak a purified native tongue, but an abrogated language that bears the imprint of time, humans, obstacles, joys. Such is the language of filmmaking (or any art making). When I realized that the four of us has traversed a singular emotional trajectory, well, what a miracle. What a gifted experience.

Life/Expectancy

Michele Fleming, USA
16mm, 30 minutes, 1999

Part meditation on a woman's midlife search for meaning, part essay on and experiment in cinematic form, Michele Fleming's *Life/Expectancy* creates a rich visual and conceptual tapestry of autobiography. Provocative and seductive, this film gives us, in Fleming's words, a "glimpse of stories that refuse to be told."
--San Francisco Cinematheque Brochure

Life/Expectancy. It is exquisitely shot in black and white; it uses archival materials to comment on and contrast with the voice over; it makes me want to attach autobiographical tendencies to the work, and yet there is much more in the film. It is a meditative piece, full of windows and shadows, observations of the kind where one sits by the window and stares, not searching, just watching quietly. A meditation, it is said, on the passage through mid-life. Yet just beneath the surface of the quiet, questions and voices, abound. The beautiful roses have menacing thorns, the placid fish are piranhas, and time passes; *life* passes, indiscriminately, over each of us.

JP: I would like to ask you about your unique working methods. You once told me how you work, shooting reversal film and then A/B rolling the original**, but I'd like to hear more about this process in detail, and also if you could talk a little about why you have chosen to use this process, which involves such a different experience of the editing process.

MF: The means by which I created my last film were traditional-what most would call old-fashioned. I shot the material on film, and edited the film itself by hand. I used black and white reversal camera stock and because of this I could edit the original footage with no need to generate a workprint. I A/B/C rolled my original footage, prescribing overlapping super-impositions and dissolves to be realized by lab printing as the final step. This is a creative process and a classic, material-film centered methodology that finds its origins in the work of figures such as Will Hindle and Bruce Baillie. I was fortunate enough to explore this method...as a personal, singular culmination in the exercise of my own imagination. My mind...builds and forges links from textual fragment to fragment, from image to image, image-fragment to text-fragment to sound-fragment. Associations ensue. Fragments...blend with one another, resulting in renewed force...My crucial intent is that my film will evoke a certain receptiveness in the spectator to an imaginative state that parallels...the imaginative processes that I used in the making of the work.

JP: Your use of archival materials, especially archival sound, is quite striking in the film. Could you talk about your choices there? The audio seems very personal. Do you see relationships between your choices of archival sound and autobiography? By this, I think I mean, when I see the film, I attribute an autobiographical impulse to the choices of archival audio. Is this the direction the audio is meant to take us? I think it is very interesting that instead of a confessional-type voice-over, you have a man's voice and these conversations from other films.

MF: I was teaching a Film I class and I was showing Su Friedrich's "Gently down the Stream" which as you know is silent, with text scratched in the emulsion. I always ask my classes after they see the work if they hear a voice reading the text in their head while they are watching it...usually I get a wide spread of responses from: 'I hear my own voice' to "I hear an anonymous woman's voice" But this time I got nothing. Nobody heard a thing. Finally a student spoke up and said "Don't you think it's kind of sick to hear voices [in your head]?" I responded with something like "I hope not, because I hear them all the time..."

Lines from songs, quotes, comments from friends (and foes), lines from movies, quips from commercials and sitcoms...they all literally pop up in my head all the time. Along with more intuitive guides that often seem to speak. Anyway, I became interested in collecting some of these voices...the more famous the better. Interesting issues of identification came up (can you identify with a voice...not an image?) I collected lines from some of my favorite movies and discovered I was dealing mostly with characters that were misfits...those people who, for one reason or another, were forced to the margins. I decided I would literally begin a conversation with these voices and started cutting them into my own text [in the film]. So these voices either lead the

conversation or respond to it. They add a whole level of “complication” to the film...issues and comments that go on in my head all the time...

I have to say that my process is always a matter of collection. I find something and I pick it up. I write about it, or in response to it, or find an image that seems appropriate to it...I find ways to weave this collection.

The voices, the text, the images, the footnotes...all are intended to open up poetic lines of communication. I still think this is an important more of communication that has nothing to do with solid facts or points of view, but has everything to do with potential and discovery. Growing, getting past what you always held as true without question.

JP: The roses, and the time-lapse scene out the window, and the nondescript views out the window, and the exquisite curtain blowing. These windows, shadows, and non-views are very compelling in your film. Why so many windows? For me, the feeling of being inside and looking out comes through very strongly. But there is more there, in the arranging and rearranging of the roses, like life stories. Could you talk about these images specifically and what they mean and meant to you?

MF: I had time off...I spent a year reading, thinking, and making this film. Nearly the whole piece...was shot out my window. It's what I looked at as I thought and worked. From the surface of the glass at night when it gets cold and there is condensation, to filming some summertime event/celebration that my neighbors threw, to the big snowstorm ...I responded to whatever was there and weaved it into the film...

I was interested in the rose because I wanted to look at “the underneath” of things. We get so swept away by the beauty and the wondrous, intoxicating fragrance of these flowers that we don't look at the equally amazing defense system nature has given the rose. Many people never learn about this nastier underside...but I feel that it is critical if we are going to really explore human nature to explore darkness.

The film is partially about the contemplation of a liminal passage into mid-life and what this particular persona was thinking about at that time. And so literally takes place in my most familiar surrounding (with thanks to Bachelard). When I was younger I thought I would be a lot smarter by now. There is the shock of realizing that the struggle and search gets more intense and urgent with age...unless you ossify into a single philosophy that denies the existence of all else.

JP: And the relationship to autobiography?

MF: Well, I'll quote footnote [an element from the film] #7: 'Autobiography: "When someone asks you later if your work is autobiographical, you answer,' No, not exactly,' and smile enigmatically."--Diane Schoemperlen, *Forms of Devotion*.

The Sleepers

45 minutes, 16mm, color, sound, 1999

Shot entirely at night, *The Sleepers* uses "the urban [Chicago] architecture of distant windows to explore the private, the performative and vernacular." The evening rituals of unsuspecting apartment dwellers become objects of voyeuristic pleasure and subjects of unfulfilled narrative desires.

— Amie Siegel

The Sleepers is a fascinating work, hovering tensely between voyeurism and, as Amie puts it so well above “unfulfilled narrative desires.” The film views the windows of apartments in the evenings, capturing fragments of the quotidian, the banal, and the potentially mysterious. However, no narrative is permitted; the film engrosses because we are finally able as viewers to watch and watch, yet we realize soon enough that nothing is really going on. At each turn, narrative desire is thwarted. The soundtrack is a fascinating mixture of exterior and interior, which draws us into spaces, then takes us back out of them. Even in the singular scene in which the camera goes *inside*, nothing is revealed. An empty center of desire is what we

encounter, as we are propelled back outside to our voyeuristic perch in the dark Chicago night.

JP: Amie, What I find fascinating about *The Sleepers* is the way it refuses any imposition of the autobiographical. The viewer is simply not permitted to make any assumptions about the maker, and also not able to create a fantasy-narrative from the worlds we are observing through the windows.

AS: Before jumping into [your question], I should mention that a refusal to make “autobiographical work,” that is, work that is somehow directly evocative of my own experience, is not so much that I find it in any way lacking, but that in the Nineties I think we experienced (and are still experiencing) a limitation imposed on our identities as a result of society’s need to categorize them...

There are many filmmakers who seem content to let the themes and programming of their work be dictated by the terms by which society (in its most unimaginative, parochial form) defines them. Terms that push people into a herd as dictated by their race, gender, or sexual orientation. It’s not that I see anything wrong or inherently negative in that phenomenon, it’s just that personally I do not want to be limited to an autobiographical discourse... I am interested in the quality and individual premise of the artwork, not just its presence in the face of an absence.

The reason I made *The Sleepers*, became interested in shooting into people’s windows at night, is a bit autobiographical in that I had grown up in Chicago, going to friends’ and relatives’ apartments where just outside the window, fifty stories about the street, a small movie would be unfolding in someone else’s apartment across the way. The odd juxtaposition of that view, being able to see both the vast landscape of the city and evidence of someone’s private, interior life in the same pictorial moment always struck me as fascinating, uncanny even.

JP: Can you talk about the desire of the viewer’s part to make an autobiographical or narrative connection with the film?

AS: First of all I think it’s very interesting that “narrative” and “autobiography” for you are linked. I think that those two terms are linked only in that autobiography is part of the system of identification that rules conventional narrative. And here I don’t mean the filmmaker’s own experience but the viewer’s. Projection of the self onto the screen is part and parcel of the narrative cinematic experience, thus all narrative is autobiographical *for the viewer*. In *The Sleepers*, you have a sort of “doubling” experience as a viewer in that you are watching onscreen the reframing of another experience of watching, voyeurism. Here it is the absence of narrative (Who is watching? Are they alone? Do they know the people across the street?) which provides a kind of currency that is autobiographical in its concern. And at the same time, those exact questions are being asked of the people being filmed along with another set of questions (Do they know they are being filmed? Is the action set up?)

JP: In fact, I do see *The Sleepers* as a refusal, or repudiation even of narrative and autobiographical desires.

AS: The film for me is not about narrative, but about viewership. It is narrative expectation that the situation of voyeurism elicits, a kind of half-written story where you have all the props, the set, and the characters (the furniture and knick-knacks, the glowing [interior] space of the apartment, the figures that move around inside that apartment) but you don’t know exactly what is going on or what relationships connect those people. And that is where the viewer’s own work comes in to finish writing the story, so to speak.

There are scenes in the film that are almost void of any alteration, they unfold as I shot them. And there are others that provide a certain wealth of added information--musical accompaniment (emotional register), dialogue (enactment of conflict or banality), sound effects (specificity to their actions), etc.--in other words, scenes which

provide a slightly more detailed set of narrative clues. While that first kind of scene allows the viewer space in which to create narrative, the latter is more replete with the tropes of narrative (music, dialogue, sound effects, parallel editing). Each allow and refuse the advance of narrative. And this kind of phrasing of narrative expectation is what I was after with *The Sleepers*.

In every other film I'd seen about voyeurism, the line that separated the watched and the watcher was always crossed, so the narrative expectation became wrapped up in that almost always erotic tension (*Rear Window*, *Naked*, *Peeping Tom*), not the pure tension of looking. But I was more interested in how the situation of looking itself is inherently erotic, that is, both creates and defers expectation in the visual information simultaneously given and withheld from the viewer. This kind of build-up and deferral is symptomatic of both the erotic and the cinematic, and I was interested in creating a space where that dynamic could unfold without giving in to the unusual trope of a character through whom we experience that tension. That is why we--we the camera, we the audience--eventually go inside an apartment. We are there without distance, without the character, the voyeur who acts as our cinematic foil. I think here is where you experience a refusal of the autobiographical most strongly. There is no voice-over revealing the thoughts of a central voyeur. There is no "climax" or "explanation."

I see that kind of absence of a character on whom to push off the film's conflicts as a Marker-like refusal of the autobiographical. In *Sans Soleil*, Marker doesn't visually depict someone traveling through Japanese landscape in order to have us identify with that figure onscreen, he makes us experience the products of that person, their images of a culture, and thus engages issues of representation. At the same time, though, Marker creates epistolary personae through the voice-over that guides the film. And that is certainly a kind of "bow" to the autobiographical, if not narrative. I didn't even want that to occur in *The Sleepers*. I felt it would specify an experience, voyeurism, one of whose main characteristics is anonymity. I think it is one of the things people find the most difficulty about *The Sleepers*. But there are others who find that it's most rewarding aspect.

JP: Do you think your gaze in the film is distant, or more empathic?

I think that phrase presumes a level of personal involvement (autobiography) that isn't part of the formal constraints of the work. Since I didn't include a voice-over and any allusion to my experience, I don't think my gaze is foregrounded in *The Sleepers*. It is certainly present, choosing which moments to film, framing them and re-contextualizing them with sound effects and music and elements of performativity...but I don't think it is a formal device, per se. In the ways it is present, I would hope that it is not wholly either distant or empathic but has moments of distance and moments of, well, engagement, moving around and tugging at the different tensions and conflicts within the situations of looking, constructing and deconstructing voyeurism. I have a hard time with the word Empathy since that is the title of my new film and it is questionable to me whether Empathy really exists...

And in conclusion

I believe these three films represent a new spectrum in the world of non-fiction cinema. From the re-presentation of memory, to the intentional refusal of narrative desire, these three films come to questions of the personal and autobiographical in striking new ways. The intentionality of address, deliberate choices and shifts by each filmmaker are extraordinary evidence of a film practice which is reshaping the traditions handed down over the past thirty years in avant-garde cinema. These kinds of thoughtful, provocative works are, I hope, evidence of a new trend in non-fiction filmmaking. A trend in which traditions are challenged in a direct and intense way; a trend in which and where new kinds of dialogue and inquiry emerge. I am delighted to have the opportunity to discuss these works with the filmmakers and thank them again for their inspiration.

****“A/B ROLLING:**

The consecutive shots of negative are cut up and assembled alternately in two separate rolls, with black leader between the shots on each roll. Since the first shot on Roll A corresponds with black leader on the second, the next shot on B corresponds with black leader on A, and so on, a checkerboard pattern is achieved between the two rolls. The shots from both rolls are printed consecutively and in order on a single film, thus preventing any splices from appearing in the printing of 16mm film. Sometimes a C or even D roll might be incorporated for additional effects.”