**From Catalogue`In Search of Expo’, Musee D’Art Contemporain de Montreal:**

*By the Time We Got to Expo* is a kinetic journey through Expo 67, revisiting Canada’s centennial through the symbols, choreographies, and built environments of the world’s fair and its construction of (inter)nationalism. By reworking archival footage, the film creates vibrant collisions of textures and forms in order to explore the surfaces, ideologies, and implications of the ‘meeting place’ that was Expo 67.

The film is a contemporary examination of past performances and rituals of nationalism. The official slogan of Expo 67 was 'Man and His World', an appropriately dominant and forceful message. The smooth tracking motion of the minirail gives us views of, and from, the train. The viewer is lead on a “Tour through a World Wonderland,” reminding us of how the train and the camera have worked together throughout film history to extend the tourist’s gaze.

Expo 67 is the celebration of Canada’s confederation, when the individual British colonies (now provinces) united as one country. The Canadian pavilion at Expo was named ‘Katimavik’, the Inuit word for ‘gathering place’. Architect Rod Robbie drew inspiration for its inverted pyramid design from a glass ashtray he found in his office. The Katimavik pavilion contained plaster murals crafted by Inuit artists from Cape Dorset and other artistic contributions from indigenous Canadians.

During the same decade as Expo 67 a number of atrocities against indigenous people were being committed, including the Sixties Scoop, where first nations children were removed from their families and put up for adoption or placed in foster care, with thousands forced into residential schools.

Through photochemical and digital manipulation of the images from two films (‘Expo 67’ by Castle Films and ‘Impressions of Expo’ produced by the National Film Board of Canada), and Josh Bonnetta’s otherworldly analog soundtrack, crafted from optical elements of the original archival films, we attempt to make ‘the familiar strange’ while bringing these 50 year old images into the present for the viewer.  Using techniques of repetition and remediation, the film uncovers what has been hidden amidst the fray of pomp and ceremony.

The two vintage films that were used as source material for *By the Time We Got to Exp*o contain an overarching sense of optimism and tone of excitement for Expo 67. Shot in bright colours, ‘Impressions of Expo’ takes us on a journey through Expo on the minirail, exploring the different pavilions, each one a carefully crafted geometric structure. At Expo 67, we see the entire world distilled into a miniature playground that ignores all political implications, conflicts and tensions.

We were excited to rework the existing footage of Expo 67. The images were transformed through rephotography onto black and white hand processed film. By inverting the colours and rendering the image in negative, people become ghostly figures, forms and masses. Black and white images are washed with solid colours. Sections of footage were tinted red, blue and yellow. Hand colouring the footage allows us to transform its original meaning and context while creating dimensions and textures.

In the final section of the film, footage of the pavilions is degraded using the mordancage process. Treated with photochemical bleach, the emulsion peels away and bubbles up. The now familiar images of Expo 67 become fluid and unstable. As the emulsion pulls away, folds in upon itself, and comes untethered from the filmstrip, we are reminded of the artifice of world’s fairs’ pageantry and how these ideas can be viewed from a contemporary lens.

-(Eva Kolcze & Phil Hoffman)

**Staging Canada at Expo 67 Panel, London, U.K. - 2017 (P. Hoffman)**

The late 1960’s carried two significant film related memories for me, which perhaps unconsciously fuelled my passage into the realm of experimental film. In 1967 at the age of eleven, I attended Expo 67 with my family, and in 1968 at the age of twelve I went to a screening of 2001 A Space Odyssey, with my father in the tiny town of Mount Forest, a place that twenty-five years later (in December 1992)would become my home, and where the Film Farm was birthed a year and a half later.

There lays a multitude of images created at Expo 67, home movies and promotional films along with official Pavilion films, all stored in the collective unconscious of the internet. The film Eva Kolcze and I made (accompanied by Josh Bonnetta’s sound track) in 2015, attempts to recycle these images, to revisit them and make them new again, through a remediation practice.

Analogue image (16mm & Super-8 celluloid) were copied to digital, as well digital images from the internet were reshot onto celluloid, to reveal the seams of the media. This work was then hand processed, tinted and split-toned, solarized and run through the mordengage technique (a bleach etching process which Kolcze learned from Kevin Price at a LIFT workshop in 2013 in Toronto), in an attempt to make Expo 67 live again – a kind of return to the excitement that was this grand performance in Montreal at “Expo”. The ephemeral nature of the audio-visual experiments of Expo 67, is re-performed in “By The Time We Got To Expo”.

How BTTWGTE surfaced, fits with the spirit of Expo 67 – a spontaneous burst, birth, re-birth. Janine Marchessault and Monika kin Gagnon were launching their book “Reimagining Cinema at Expo 67”, and asked if I might make a film for the launch, with only a month before the event. I called up Eva Kolcze, who had just completed her Masters thesis film at York University – a wonderwork “All That Is Solid”, which used various decay techniques to melt, both physically and figuratively, local examples of Brutalist archetectures from the 1960’s which she shot and manipulated. This methodology of bleach-etching or mordancage forces silver layers in the celluloid emulsion to lift off, fold, slip and veil the representational subjects captured in the celluloid. This technique seemed appropriate for the Expo iconography, since so many of the Expo films, themselves have decayed and no longer exist. Eva agreed to join me in this race against the clock project.

I had a lingering super-8 promotional film in my archive that I picked up at a flea market many years ago (Castle Films: “Expo 67”) which we had transferred to digital at Frame Discreet in Toronto. When the film was returned as a negative digital image, we were attracted to the reversed colour palette of the negative image, which poignantly rendered the familiar, strange, blending with and the black scratches that nicely represent the scars of time passed (and mix well with the hand processed images).

We found scenes from other Expo films from the internet including(`Impressions of Expo’ (NFB) ). Sections from this film were re-shot several times, from a digital screen with a Bolex camera, onto 3378. By slowing down the digital images by 50% , and shooting them at a slow frame rate (12 fps on the Bolex), the “hidden” material nature of the analogue and digital processes manifested through celluloid scratches and digital glytches and strobing. We put these repeated scenes through different and various image remediation techniques (hand processed, tinted and split-toned, solarized, bleach-etching/mordancage techniques).

We needed a soundtrack so we called up sound artist and filmmaker Josh Bonnetta

and he worked with fragments of sound from Expo films found on the internet. Also I played the raw 16mm hand-processed films on my 16mm Bell & Howell projector and outputted the sound taken off the optical head of the projector, which picked up the sounds rendered by the scratches, slashes of light that recalls McLaren’s more controlled manipulation of the optical track section, on the celluloid. I sent these sounds to Josh on a wave file, by way of the internet and he returned a soundtrack made with analogue and digital sound gear, often manually slowing the sound, by dragging the ¼ inch audio over the sound head of the Nagra IVL. The track followed the flow of images to a dark rising crescendo, a sound wall, that peaks and falls sharply.

The film culminates in an explosion of images, with veiled ghostly of Expo architecture, slipping and sliding out of its realist frame, to its inevitable resting plce, as decay. The film might suggest a bittersweet homage to all the films, lost and decayed, a celebration of the ephemeral experience that the Expo experiment stimulated.