

Expanded Cinema

2012-09-26 at 8:00 PM CDT, Dallas, Texas

Expanded Cinema is an exhibition of new video art works created especially for the exterior walls of the Omni Dallas Hotel, Texas, with audio simulcast by 91.7 KXT public radio, presented as part of the 25th Dallas VideoFest. Each of the works will cover all four of the building's curved walls. (Image right, courtesy of the Omni Dallas Hotel.)



The exterior of the Omni Dallas Hotel is continuously wrapped with LED bars that function like a low-res computer monitor. Only a handful of buildings in the world offer similar displays, and since this particular system was specifically created to fit the hotel's architecture, it is unique.

The artists included have a local connection and experience in making video; but none had ever worked with anything like the Omni Dallas system.

The display constitutes a potentially looping screen approximately 193 feet high and 999 feet in width or circumference. But while it's the biggest screen in town, it's unusual in shape and very low-res, effectively just 20 display "pixels" tall and 333 wide.

The simulcast of the audio gave rise to additional requirements and opportunities. The audio would need to be appropriate for KXT's listeners, and there could be no lengthy silences; but the pieces also had to work without the audio, since many viewers might not hear the simulcast. On the other hand, KXT's license allowed the artists to use recordings without the payment of fees.

Because of the unique requirements and opportunities, most of the artists had to completely re-think their aesthetic practices for this new platform.



Still from *You'll Forget Everything, Soon* (2012), by Mona Kasra.

The resulting videos are widely varied, yet many show overlapping concerns. What kinds of expression are and are not possible through this giant display? It can be seen by much of the city's populace simultaneously; but how do its low-res nature and usual silence, combined with the fact that many viewers just glimpse it while driving by, limit what it can convey? Can the spectacular nature of the display be exploited for aesthetic purposes, as well as for the kinds of

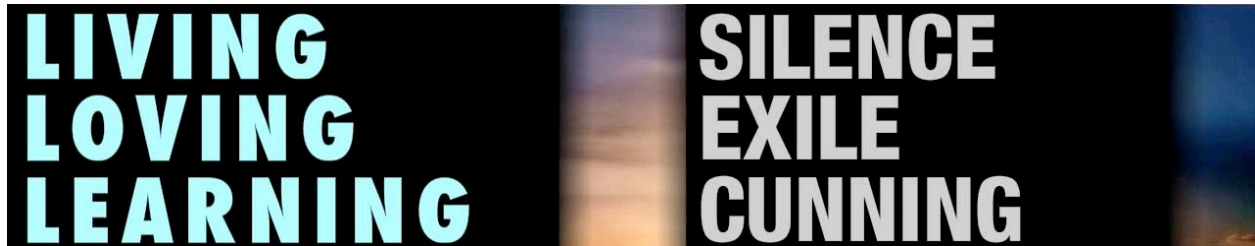
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commercial purposes for which such systems are more often used? Can it comment on its own glam, and go on to raise questions about value? What kinds of histories can be evoked? Can the personal retain any sense of intimacy, or does it more readily suggest the universal, when writ so large? What if any kinds of genuine connection can be made through such a monumental medium?

The program was curated by Carolyn Sortor, Bart Weiss, and Michael A. Morris and includes works by Kari Altmann, Frank Campagna, Tim Capper with Ryan Hartsell and Wes Martin, Rebecca Carter with Mark Collop, Jeff Gibbons, Andrea Goldman, Mona Kasra, Kyle Kondas, Phil Lamb, Shane Mecklenburger, Michael A. Morris, Edward Setina, Carolyn Sortor, and Jenny Vogel. Sortor also led the effort to create a template to help the artists make their works and served as the project coordinator.

It is the hope of the organizers that, if only for a short time, *Expanded Cinema* will enrich the cultural and communal life of Dallas, opening the city to new ways of viewing and thinking about art and architecture, and that in this "expanded" exhibition, viewers throughout the city will find something to enjoy, think about, and share.



Still from *Stop. Collaborate. Listen.* (2012), by Andrea Goldman.

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Artists, Titles, Etc.

All works are site-specific video especially designed for the 193 x 999' LED display wrapping the exterior of the Omni Dallas Hotel, with audio simulcast by 91.7 KXT, and were made in 2012. Curated by Carolyn Sortor, Bart Weiss, and Michael A. Morris. (TRT 52:11 min.)

Works in the program are shown in the order listed below.

Tim Capper with Ryan Hartsell and Wes Martin, *Pong Master*, 1:49 min.
visionwise.com



"Playing games with each other is the intention of the living. Being nice to each other is the invention of the living. Exploiting each other is the convention of the sinning." Online flaming. Game Over. Concept by Tim Capper, with script, music, and audio effects by Wes Martin and animation by Ryan Hartsell.

Michael Alexander Morris, *Monument for Juanita: Candy is the Sun*, 2:45 min.
michaelalexandermorris.com

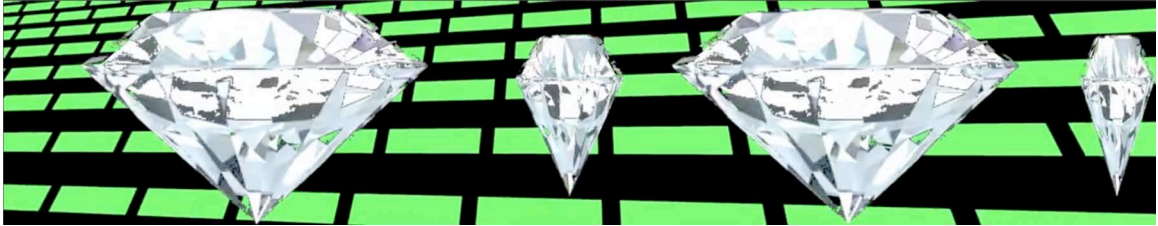


Monument for Juanita: Candy is the Sun is an ephemeral moving light monument to Juanita Slusher (aka Candy Barr), the infamous exotic dancer and Dallas folk hero who performed at Abe Weinstein's Colony Club, which was originally located just steps away from the current location of the Omni Hotel in Downtown Dallas. Over the years, the skyline of Dallas has morphed from the brick and concrete architecture that characterized many cities at mid-century to a sleek, postmodern cityscape of glass, argon, and LED screens. In her own words, "[d]ancing was my greatest pleasure. It was my world. I danced a picture. I just lived it up there, and whatever I was painting came across – charcoals, oils, or pen-and-inks." *Monument* seeks to commemorate Juanita in her moments of creative ecstasy, giving her the face of the city as her canvas.

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Shane Mecklenburger, *OMNEY*, 4 min.
shmeck.com



I'm fascinated with perceived value – what we value, and how we value it. I'm also interested in – and often astonished by – the spectacle accompanying symbols of value. This spectacle is a creative activity, like the daily invention of value itself. Nothing has any value until we impart it, so every economy is an act of imagination. My projects participate in these activities to highlight our creative control and the malleability of value.

For the Dallas Videofest I chose the format of the dance party, a basic human spectacle accompanying nearly every important cultural transaction. I thought it would be fun to try and make the building dance. The spectacular scale and cost of the Omni's display made it seem like the perfect medium to express the ritual dance of value and exchange.

Mona Kasra, *You'll Forget Everything, Soon*, 1:28 min.
monakasra.com



Mona Kasra is a new media artist and a PhD candidate at University of Texas at Dallas with a focus in Arts & Technology. Mona's video artworks tend to be poetic autobiographies, revealing her curiosities, memories, fears, and insecurities, and are mainly centered on a process of personal discovery through an open narrative structure.

You'll Forget Everything, Soon is about physical and emotional distance. It alludes to the obscurity of human communication, and the curious relation between presence and absence. It explores the state of being and simultaneously not-being, and is occupied with the thoughts of two people who are close, yet far away from one another.

Andrea Goldman, *Stop. Collaborate. Listen.*, 3:07 min.
andreagoldman.org



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Andrea Goldman creates videos, drawings, and songs that explore overlapping rhetorics of ideology, common sense, and personal freedom. Her video *Stop. Collaborate. Listen.* uses the concept of hendiatis, a rhetorical device that conveys a broad concept – or motto – through three terms or phrases, such as "eat, drink, and be merry" or "live, love, and learn."

Jenny Vogel, *Save Our Souls*, 7:30 min.
jennyvogel.net



My work explores subjective themes as they are experienced in the age of information. I examine the anxiety of alienation, the desires of communication and a sense of be-longing in a virtual world. These traits, attributed to Romanticism, are dealt with in my work through the lenses of contemporary communication technology, the media and historical preconceptions. I am particularly interested in the depiction of the individual and individuality through media technology, with its resulting misrepresentations and miscommunications. Through this juxtaposition of technology and Romanticism I attempt to challenge the image of the Internet as the "global village," objectivism in the news and the ideology of science.

High-resolution photographs of low-resolution encounters, offer a surprisingly intimate reading of a contemporary loneliness. Live streaming video projections of the one-shot-per-second progression of web cameras result in a fireworks-display of light signals as if trying to communicate in some unknown code, some unknown message. Voyeurism and self-induced surveillance through constant online exposure are the desperate desires of participation in the online world, which fails in the colloquial boredom of chat-rooms. Together these practices present a postmodern tableau of the Romantic ideal of solitude, the failing utopia of the global village and the dark beauty of a mediated planet. However, I don't merely see my subjects as victims whose individuality is crushed by the homogenizing effects of globalization and mass media. They are also heroes in a way, defying categorization, re-instating a sense of humanity, poetry and myth. These themes are expressed through a wide range of practices, including photography, live-streaming web movies, video, drawing and printmaking. In many of my works the medium is used in its original form, providing references to its real world scenarios, while at the same time adding self-reflexive content.

Frank Campagna, *Orange you glad I didn't say knock knock*, 3:22 min.
franksart.net



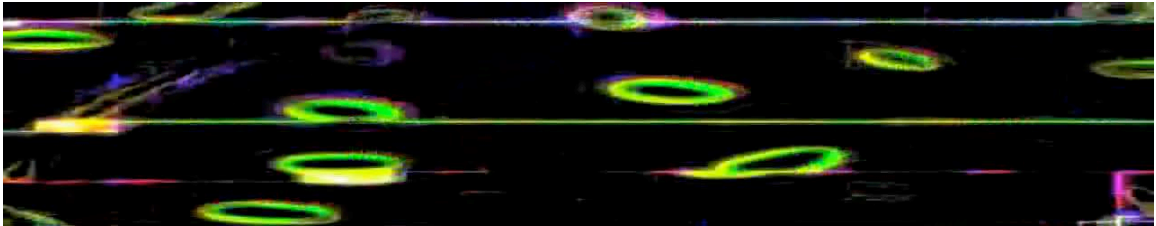
Frank Campagna is a fixture in Dallas whose murals are as recognizable as his scratchy voice. But he also has made an artistic mark with Deep Ellum's Kettle Art gallery, which offers a quiet escape amid the entertainment district's music venues. (USA Today 7/ 27/ 2012.) In his video

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entitled, *Orange you glad I didn't say knock knock*, Campagna utilizes his experience of working on a large scale, along with his recent fascination of playing with both video and audio editing.

Kyle Kondas, *DOTS*, 2:30 min.
vimeo.com/kyle1point0

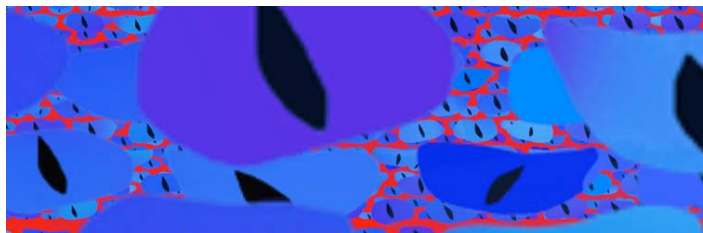


My video paintings have always been a study of how to break down and disrupt the normal image of the video. The original material that I work with has always had to come from various areas of interest that I've been passionate about. First it started with video games, which I still work with, but recently I've started working with media referencing pop-culture.

Originally, my pieces were glitched through the use of programs, but now I have started working with the video's code through the study of circuit bending. For the *Omni*, I decided to go back to one of my very first pieces ever and try applying both forms of glitching together. *DOTS* has been a new experiment and possible first piece into a new area of work.

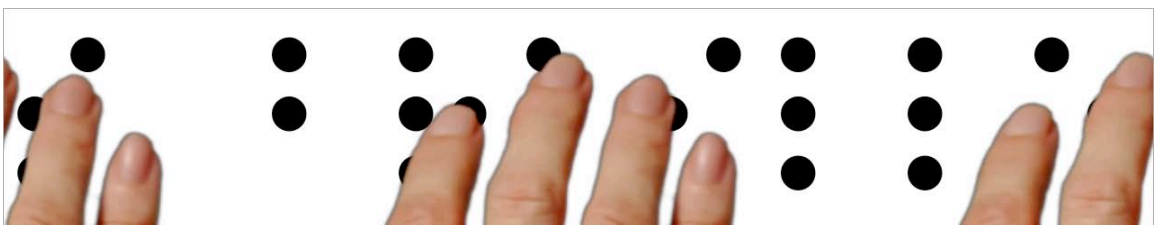
Rebecca Carter with Mark Collop, *The Eyeballs From Outer Space/Strangers in the Night*, 3:14 min.
rebeccacarter.org

My works utilize language, thread matrixes, photography, and video to explore shifting states of intimacy and alienation. *The Eyeballs from Outer Space* have become a kind of super hero. They are the cosmic gaze of a benevolent Other swarming in layers larger and smaller. Semi-embodied as flickers of light momentarily on the *Omni* hotel they peer over the city of Dallas. They fix the city for a moment in a shifting gaze. "I love you Dallas." They can't speak it, but the impulse of intention sits there on the edge of seeing and being seen.



With audio by Frank Sinatra with Mark Collop.

Carolyn Sortor, *Braille*, 3:08 min.
c-cyte.com

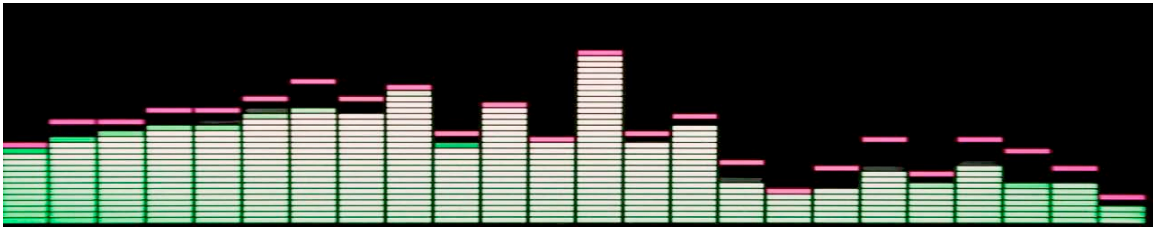


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In *Braille*, two hands on opposite sides of the building seamlessly circle it twice, but never meet, "reading" a code that sets out the name of the alphabet's inventor twice. The text though huge is probably legible only to those who can't see it, and can be seen only by those who can't read it. The alphabet's inventor, Louis Braille, used an awl to create his texts, the same instrument with which he'd accidentally blinded himself as a child. Braille's invention revolutionized communications for the blind, but the school in which he taught forbade its use. Use of the alphabet spread after he died, but it's now being superseded by automated reading technologies. The sextet from *Lucia di Lammermoor* used in *Braille* reflects both the paralysis and gorgeous order that can result from conflicting emotions among individuals in an interconnected social group. Within an individual, such conflict can result in abulia; it can also create consciousness. In the moment of conscious indecision, time seems suspended; but it's not. Conflict implies difference. In the language of dreams, Freud wrote, doubled objects can refer to repetition in time.

Edward Setina, *Specter City*, 3:38 min.
edwardsetina.com



Ted Setina's piece casts the Omni as a giant audio levels display that literally translates music into visual form, with display bars of a size suggesting rising and falling skyscrapers.

Jeff Gibbons, *Owboy*, 2:58 min.
jeffgibbons.net



I often find myself with a lack of position, more concerned with the interactions or connections between infinity and a seemingly finite life. I am here in an existence, all of which manifests itself in the perception of a fragile mind, a vehicle of flesh, which resides in a "cause-and-effect world." This instills a need for attachment, understanding, and meaning (purpose). So I place meaning in the work I do (how I function in society), purpose in my attachments and love, and try to make the best of living, while existing in the knowledge of my own mortality. I see purpose as a coping mechanism that I cannot live without. It is the meaning I

place on my own existence and everyone/everything else's that makes now, before, and after have value. There is a balance between purpose and doubt, existing within life and death, where meaning and futility work as a seemingly polarized constant.

[Continued on next page.]

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[@hdx dvd](#) (Kari Altmann), *Omnia XII Ethnique Epic Vista Demo 1280p with Tribal*, 2:47 min.
[karialtmann.com](#)

A string of mutated, translated, and appropriated terms from the back end and black markets of cultural and biological production. Through proximity, they exoticize and re-brand each other into mythical new territories, textures, and tribes. Displayed and titled similarly to HDTV demo clips full of "ethnic," seductive, and often feminine footage.



Kari Altmann is a wifi-based artist currently stationed in Baltimore and New York, with recent residencies and on-site projects in Bucharest, Seoul, Tokyo, Rotterdam, Panama, Bilbao, Berlin, and beyond, as well as several tours inside the U.S. Since earning a BFA from MICA in 2008, she has exhibited in a range of platforms, from "print to real life" showrooms and live stages to filesharing cloud communes, 3d simulated spaces like Chrystal Gallery for Gentili Apri, and editorial arenas like *Dis Magazine* and Rhizome at the New Museum.

Philip Lamb, *Metamorphosis*, 2:30 min.
[philiplamb.com](#)



As with most all cities, Dallas has a history of replacing old buildings with new ones . . . sometimes for good, sometimes for the worse. In the case of the Omni hotel, Dallas is lucky to have gained a beautifully appointed convention hotel where other buildings have stood. The metamorphosis of our built environment is an ongoing slow process. With intended irony, Philip

Lamb's video symbolizes this evolution by showing the implosion of older buildings on the surface of the new building. After the collapse, the architectural regeneration is represented by patterns of color.

The music accompanying the video is "Bat Chain Puller" by Captain Beefheart. It is nonsensical and surreal, and serves to emphasize the organized chaos from which cities evolve.

Expanded Cinema was coordinated and compiled by Carolyn Sortor, and the template to facilitate the making of the video works was created by Carolyn Sortor and Ben Britt. Special thanks to Mark Abuzzahab of KXT 91.7 FM public radio; Pat Anderson of Matthews Southwest, Lighting Producer; the Omni Dallas Hotel, the Dallas Convention Center hotel; the City of Dallas; Ben Britt Photography for documentary videography; Bart Weiss for pushing the idea; and Jeff West for saying yes.