

THE KITCHEN

VIDEO
MUSIC
PERFORMANCE
DANCE

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ARTS/ENTERTAINMENT

Films with a new shape

Hollywood movies usually want to look — and perform — like best-selling novels come to life. By contrast, many independent filmmakers take poetry, painting, or music for their models. These films often do without the conventional plots and characters we expect from popular features. Instead, they offer new perspectives on what film can do when stretched into new and often unexpected shapes.

The Kitchen, an adventurous showplace in lower Manhattan, has launched a new series that will explore this undervalued branch of cinema. The series is called "Film/Music," and it opened the other day with a quartet of classics, each of which probes the relationship between image and sound on the motion-picture screen.

The oldest item on the program was "Rose Hobart," a late-'30s "collage film" by the respected artist Joseph Cornell, who is best known for his lovely and mysterious boxes decorated with "found" materials. Always unconventional, Cornell took all the footage of "Rose Hobart" from a 1932 "B" movie called "East of Borneo," and specified a particular phonograph record — "Cordoba," a disc of Latin dance tunes — to be played along with it.

Thus, the sound track and the film have only a loose connection that will be different each time the movie is shown, since the projector and record player will never be in perfect sync. Of course, this chance element vanishes when the "Cordoba" tunes are physically added to the film like a standard sound track; but the Kitchen commendably

**'All the kids in the cast
were reading these books
by someone named
Hinton,' says director Tim
Hunter.**

showed a silent print, with the merry Latin music tagging along at its own jaunty pace.

Somewhat similar is the 1964 "New York Eye and Ear Control," by Michael Snow, a Canadian artist and musician. The images are based on a cardboard cutout of a woman's figure, which is seen in various situations with various moods and meanings. The sound track is a freewheeling jam session, featuring six jazzmen, whose unfettered noodlings are punctuated with long moments of silence. As in the Cornell film, the pictures and sounds each have their own lives, which intermingle on the filmmaker's terms.

The program was rounded off with "All My Life," an audio haiku by Bruce Baillie that exhilaratingly matches a single-camera movement with an Ella Fitzgerald song, and "Blonde Cobra," by Ken Jacobs and Bob Fleischner, in which deliberately anarchic images are counterpointed with a seemingly chaotic but actually controlled mélange of ranting speech, whimsical song, and miscellaneous noise.

The "Film/Music" series, curated by critic and teacher Amy Taubin, will continue Nov. 28 with a splendid program featuring Bruce Conner's exquisite "5:10 to Dreamland," Peter Kubelka's dense "Unsere Afrikanese," and worthwhile pictures by Baillie and Kenneth Anger, along with several other items including an anthropological film and a cartoon. It's all part of the Kitchen's new effort to emphasize forward-looking film along with its usual menu of video, music, and dance — an effort to be praised and encouraged.

A Thursday column