The first six months of the Arnolfini Video Library have seen considerable interest in the independently made videotapes and films on tape available in this innovative resource. The library is being expanded by the addition of a new section of films on art that have been transferred to tape.

The diversity and range of these films, independently made but funded by the Arts Council, spring from the inevitably eclectic methods of grant aid. This can be seen as a positive asset—exposing the different attitudes to art and film-making itself...

The subject matter of the new section goes beyond painting and sculpture to include films on architecture and the environment, popular music and culture—Dread Beat n’ Blood on Linton Kwesi Johnson and Steel n’ Skin on Caribbean culture. Theatre is touched on by No Problem, a film about the notorious Ken Campbell, and Ubu Geoff Dunbar’s strange and strident animated version of Jarry’s play; there is even a film about film itself—Noel Burch’s brilliant Correction Please, an inventive and instructive guide to the early years of the cinema.

Many of the films have been made in close collaboration with the artist who sometimes provides a voice-over guide to the work and its origins. While artists’ explanations are always extremely interesting, talking about art merely as an expression of its originator’s intentions is ultimately insufficient and tends to close off other valid ways of approaching the work.

In the case of films such as Woodman (David Nash) and Tom Phillips the privileging of the artists’ rationale leaves many interesting questions about the work and its provenance unasked. The rather more distant and analytical attitudes indicated in Bridget Riley and Richard Hamilton (which opens with Hamilton’s statement “I don’t like art films,”) seems to connect with the type of art that they practise. Likewise the juxtaposition of a series of lively interviews in James Scott’s Chance, History, Art...leads to a focus on issues, rather than the artist as star personality.

Gilbert and George have made their own audio-visual expose of their calculated tasteless parody version and inversion of British traditions and values; in The World of Gilbert and George oxymoronic texts accompany ambiguous imagery of nationalism, perversion and eccentric self-exhibition.

Another potentially productive friction within the group of films is the variety and contradiction evident in their attitudes to art. Several of them espouse a fairly traditional starting point implicitly suggesting that art (itself seen as an unquestionable category) is the expression of isolated and intentional individuality, motivated and inspired by Genius, Creativity, Myth etc....

The naivety and conservatism of this view of art and artists is questioned by the films which attempt to link the production of art to ideas, society and history...and make connections with other art forms. Art in Revolution indicates interesting connections across and between the arts and tries to locate the individuals who produced it in the historical context in which they worked. Return Journey, in sketching in the development and usage of documentary photography elaborates a fascinating series of relations between three disparate photographers working in different times and places.

Parallel to the differences in attitudes to art, the films also exhibit different styles and approaches to film, representing the diversity of forms apparent in independent film-making in this country. There is a certain irony in the way that films discussing avant garde art and individual arts seem willing to unquestioningly adopt the familiar forms of the stock television art documentary.

However the innovations of construction and approach of films such as Hogarth and Correction Please pose an implicit challenge to the respectable entity of non-fiction film in general and the art documentary in particular. There is an interesting contrast between a popular film like The Art We Deserve!, which attempts to explain Britain’s damaging cultural divisions in an immediately accessible way and the more ambitious approach of Four Questions About Art, which raises some of the same issues, but in a more complex and open way with clearly structured sections leaving gaps between the historical questions and their twentieth century counterparts. In refusing to provide any final diagnosis or ‘simple answers’ Four Questions demands that the spectator participate in the work of criticism and analysis. Which of the two films would be the most useful educationally—provocative of thought and discussion?

Whatever our attitude towards various styles, positions and understandings offered by these films the new section of the video library offers a range of indispensable material, available for reference in a radically new type of resource, to anyone interested in issues of contemporary art and its impact in society.

Rod Stoneman

1 This question was discussed in relation to Hogarth and England Home and Beauty by Neil Burch in Two Recent British Films and the Documentary Tradition, Sight and Sound 1975.
2 An attitude to cinema explored in Independent Cinema’s Sylva Harvey.
Four Questions about Art

Ed Bennett 1979 50 mins

It is sometime toward the end of the 1950s. In an
unused church in the north of England the critic John
Hillwood lectures to a middle-class audience. He tells
his listeners that they have a duty to support contem-
porary art, and that they should look for art that is
innovative and challenging. The audience is divided,
but Hillwood argues that art is not just a reflection of
society, but also a force for change.

The Art We Deserve?

Richard Cork 1979 46 mins

An apparently unimportant art movement in the
1960s, Pop Art, is now considered to be one of the
most important movements in modern art. The
philosophy behind Pop Art is that art should be
accessible to everyone, not just the privileged few.

Hogarth

Ed Bennett 1978 25 mins

Hogarth is not just a film about an artist. It is an
examination of the different status of society
and art, and how this affects our attitudes towards
art today.

Bridget Riley

David Thompson 1979 28 mins

Perceptive art has primarily to do with the effects
and processes of what is in the film. Riley's art is
perceptive and analytical, and this film is a
concise, critical analysis of her work.

Correction Please

Noel Burch 1979 52 mins

What we call the Language of Cinema is not a
"natural" language, it is not spontaneous. It is a
language that is constructed by the director and
the actors and the camera.

Blast

Murray Goring 1975 23 mins

The Indian summer of pre-World War One England
was suddenly interrupted by the appearance of BLAST,
the manifesto of the "vorticist" movement, designed
to disrupt the complacent Edwardian art
establishment. They were not just a bunch of
artists; they were a group of young men who
rejected the old ideas and wanted to create a new
art that was closer to the reality of the time.

Chance, History, Art...

James Scott 1980 50 mins

Chance, History, Art... is a totally new approach to
the art documentary. Beginning with a look at the
contemporary scene of the world of natural history,
the film aims to show the relationship between
art and the natural world. It is a film that is
accessible to all ages and is suitable for schools
and galleries.

Richard Hamilton

James Scott 1969 25 mins

Hamilton's commentary illuminates aspects of the
Pop Art Movement and provides background
to the work of many of his own major paintings in
the last 15 years. The film includes American TV
commercials from the fifties, clips from Hollywood
movies and newspaper coverage of the "Swinging
London" of the mid-sixties.

The World of Gilbert and George

Gilbert & George 1983 69 mins

Gilbert & George have worked together as sculptors
since 1968 making sculptures, photo pieces, drawings,
prints, paintings, video, sculptures, books and works in
other forms. In the World of Gilbert & George, their
first film, they slowly reveal the mystical, destructive,
feeling, thought, view and pain.

Art in Revolution

Luz Becker 1975 50 mins

In the wake of the 1971 Revolution in Latin America,
the Latin American avant-garde began to emerge.
A new wave of artists, many of whom had been
living in exile, returned to their countries to
participate in the struggle for social change.

Europe After the Rain

Mick Golder 1974 20 mins

A feature film which explores the career of a
plastic artist who is struggling to establish his
art in a world that is not sympathetic to his work.

Fathers of Pop

Julian Cooper 1979 47 mins

Legend has it that the activities of the "Independent
Group" in the mid-fifties lay behind many of the
revolutions and ferment of London Pop art as it
emerged in the sixties. Edward Steichen, Richard
Hamilton, Lawrence Alloway and Tony del 
Pozo are among the names associated with the
group.

Bridgford Art

David Thompson 1979 28 mins

Perceptive art has primarily to do with the effects
and processes of what is in the film. Bridgford Art
is a perceptive and analytical film that examines
the relationship between art and society.

Phillip King

Peter Day & Anthony Parker 1974 20 mins

Resisting the usual biographical approach, the
filmmakers have concentrated on the sculptor and his
work. King takes us through the creative processes
from the initial idea to the finished, full-scale work.

European Art

Noel Burch 1979 52 mins

What we call the Language of Cinema is not a
"natural" language, it is not spontaneous. It is a
language that is constructed by the director and
the actors and the camera.
A selection on art produced by the Arts Council, that have been transferred to tape and are available for viewing in the video library.

**Phillips**
Rowan 1977 50 mins

An aspect of Tom Phillips' approach to painting is the concern for process, reflected not only in the way of individual paintings but in his meticulous recreation of the development of each work. It is true to the spirit of this concern in shape and the way paintings are shown. A trip down an English country lane - Magpie - is drawn in detail.

**Kathe Kollwitz**
Ron Ormsby & Norbert Bunge 1981 44 mins

Kathe Kollwitz spent most of her working life in Berlin during the politically turbulent years before and after the First World War.

It was always of great importance to Kollwitz that her art should communicate directly with an audience and by working with graphic media - lithography, etching and woodcut - she hoped to give her images a wide circulation, as campaign posters and rally wingbooks and periodsical.

**Imperial City**
David Rowan 1980 45 mins

In 1911, in the high noon of their Empire, the British decided to build a new capital for India. The building of New Delhi is a story of the conflict between art and politics, about architecture as an instrument of the Raj, its attempts to reconcile imperial rule with Indian nationalism. It is also about the dissension of the two architects, Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker. Divided by their artistic ideals, their patriotism, the ideal of the Viceregal and their dream of building a Renaissance city in the heart of tropical India.

**Ubu**
Geoff Dunbar 1978 20 mins

The result of three years work, Ubu takes the bare bones of Alfred Jarry's anarchic play Ubu Roi and provides it with an appropriately brutal visual style and an explicit (non-verbal) sound-track. One of the most popular Arts Council productions, this film may nevertheless prove offensive to some audiences.

**Craft and Design**

NEWS FROM NOWHERE - WILLIAM MORRIS
Alistair Hallum, 1976 53 mins

The original News from Nowhere was a visionary romance. Morris used it to describe the rural socialist utopia that would revolutionise his beloved crafts. The film follows Morris and his companions some of whose major pronouncements on Art, Architecture and Society at large. The film ends with the personal sadness Morris masked with his immense creative energy.

**Mallevitch Suprematism**
Lutz Becker 1970 9 mins

This film is based on the ideas that Malevich developed as Suprematism between 1913 and 1928. In 1924 he scripted an abstract animation film, which is realised by Becker in a free and personal interpretation.

**Dread Beat 'N' Blood**
Franco Rosso 1978 45 mins

Horton Kevins Johnson challenges our image of poetry and poets, drawing on an older tradition of which art, society, politics and music are inexorably bound together.

**Photography**

The film is therefore not only about Horton Johnson poet, writer, musician, individual, but about the community from which his material is drawn and to whom he addresses himself the back working class community in London.

I don't believe that poetry changes anything. You must write a thousand songs, expressing the most fleeting conditions of human existence, that won't bring about the revolution. It's people's actual material struggle to change these conditions that bring about political change... Horton Kevins Johnson.

**Fringe Theatre and Performance**

NO PROBLEM
The Theatre of Ken Campbell
Ian Johnson 1981 30 mins

Ken Campbell has a reputation for attempting the impossible. He succeeds by generating enormous enthusiasm from his actors and by a relentless, often impossible ability to make things happen. His productions have explored the fantastic worlds of science fiction and the 'alternative society' but are consistent only in their mocking, subversive wit.

**Return Journey**
Ian Potts 1981 45 mins

Return Journey traces the development and usage of the documentary photograph through the work of three photographers, Humphrey Spencer, Derek Smith and Jimmy Forsyth.

**Community Arts**

STEEL 'N' SKIN
Steve Shaw 1970 36 mins

Steel 'n' Skin are an exciting and highly entertaining dance and music group representing a unique fusion of the living arts and culture of Africa and the Caribbean. Their performances, which take place in a wide variety of venues, include the complex rhythms and chants of West Africa, reggae dances and world music. The film captures the vitality of the group and illustrates through observation of their working relationship, the way in which Steel 'n' Skin convey their cultural heritage in a multiracial society.
**Video Library Information**

The video reference library is open from Tuesday to Saturday 9 – 5 and at other times by prior arrangement. A nominal fee of 25p is charged for tapes under 30 minutes and 50p for longer tapes. In the video area (adjacent to gallery two) one monitor is permanently available for viewing library tapes and a second monitor is used for screening contemporary programmes relating to gallery, film, music, dance, or other current Amolfini events.

Headphones are used to isolate the viewer from distractions. The video library provides a quiet and comfortable place with the additional facilities of a selection of current film, performance and art magazines, a reference section of books on film and video and also an extensive collection of artists’ works.

**Films on Art: Arts Council Loan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Problem (Ken Campbell)</td>
<td>30 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ugo</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection (Keith Critchlow)</td>
<td>77 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing the Environment Game (Michael Gold)</td>
<td>30 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridget Riley (David Thompson)</td>
<td>26 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers of Pop (Paul Cooper)</td>
<td>47 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Phillips</td>
<td>50 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grove Carnival (Harry Martin and Steve Shaw)</td>
<td>18 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hockney Interview (David Hockney)</td>
<td>46 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Build My Time (Kurt Schwitter)</td>
<td>30 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England Home and Beauty (Christopher Mason)</td>
<td>38 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Hamilton</td>
<td>25 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillip King (Peter Day and Anthony Parker)</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blast</td>
<td>23 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Yates</td>
<td>9 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Amolfini Video Library**

**Narrow Quay**

**Bristol BS1 60A**

On Saturdays, 6 – 8.30 p.m.

**Telephone:** (0782) 219 8333

The Amolfini video library provides a selection of video material for the use of people in the Top Floor Area and the Arts Council of Great Britain.

**Open Access**

In developing the video library we have included an **Open Access** section where tapes may be deposited; they remain the property of the producer and a proportion of the viewing fee is repaid each time the tape is screened. They should be in Sony U-matic format (either NTSC or PALSECAM). The Amolfini retains the right to exclude material for grounds (obscenity or libel). For further information about a selection contact **Tony Broad, Amolfini Video Assistant**.

- We have created **Atypical Systems**
  - Cioni Carpi
  - Work by Tony Cragg 1970-80
  - Tony Cragg/Amolfini
  - 1969 13 mins
  - Jennifer Durrant
  - Jennifer Durrant/Amolfini 42 mins
  - Mockorel and Mandolins
  - Bruce McLean/Amolfini
  - 1980 7 mins

- **Sense of Place**
  - Amolfini/University of Bristol
  - 1980

- **Gunilla Teen (A Profile)**
  - Amolfini/Bristol Polytechnic
  - 1980 13 mins

- **Wahrol At The Arts Council Books**
  - Steven Coast 1980 80 mins

- **Video**
  - **Colin Thomas** 1981 35 mins
  - **Le Vrai Loup**
  - **Bill Birtwistle** 1981 16 mins

- **Shine So Hard**
  - John Smith 1981 31 mins

- **Road Dreams**
  - Elliott Bristow 1970-80 40 mins

- **The Bristol Bands News**
  - Mike Gifford and Mike Leggett 1980 40 mins

- **Future Tense**
  - Moonshine Community Arts Workshop 1981

- **A Description Of The World**
  - Mick Eaton 1981 33 mins

- **Phantom Jet**
  - Pat Tilley, Stuart Goaman, Bristol Film Makers Co-op

- **Future Tense**
  - Joram Birn & Liz Allan 1981 40 mins

- **Nuclear Age**
  - Mike Gifford and Mike Leggett 1980 30 mins

- **Video**
  - **Collin Thomas** 1981 35 mins

- **Much of this is in**
  - video equipment sold in British arts libraries

- **Echo and the Bunnymen**
  - **Nuclear Age**

- **Shine So Hard**
  - **John Smith** 1981 35 mins

- **The Bristol Bands News**
  - Mike Gifford and Mike Leggett 1980 80 mins

- **Initially shot on Super 8mm**
  - video film-makers (members of Bristol Film Makers Co-op) examine the various ways in which music and music videos can be represented visually in relation to the music that they make, whether at a live concert or as a record or on a soundtrack of a film

- **The Amolfini Video Library**
  - **Narrow Quay**
  - Bristol BS1 60A
  - On Saturdays, 6 – 8.30 p.m.
  - **Telephone:** (0782) 219 8333

- **The Amolfini Video Library**
  - **Narrow Quay**
  - Bristol BS1 60A
  - On Saturdays, 6 – 8.30 p.m.
  - **Telephone:** (0782) 219 8333

- **The Amolfini Video Library**
  - **Narrow Quay**
  - Bristol BS1 60A
  - On Saturdays, 6 – 8.30 p.m.
  - **Telephone:** (0782) 219 8333

- **The Amolfini Video Library**
  - **Narrow Quay**
  - Bristol BS1 60A
  - On Saturdays, 6 – 8.30 p.m.
  - **Telephone:** (0782) 219 8333

- **The Amolfini Video Library**
  - **Narrow Quay**
  - Bristol BS1 60A
  - On Saturdays, 6 – 8.30 p.m.
  - **Telephone:** (0782) 219 8333

- **The Amolfini Video Library**
  - **Narrow Quay**
  - Bristol BS1 60A
  - On Saturdays, 6 – 8.30 p.m.
  - **Telephone:** (0782) 219 8333