

Media Art Lab Video Exquisite Corpse

“Among Surrealist techniques exploiting the mystique of accident was a kind of collective collage of words or images called the cadavre exquis (exquisite corpse). Based on an old parlor game, it was played by several people, each of whom would write a phrase on a sheet of paper, fold the paper to conceal part of it, and pass it on to the next player for his contribution.”

–William S. Rubin

In my work, I have been most strongly aware of the camera as representation of point of view...But I have been interested in how we can move this point of consciousness over and through our bodies and out over the things of the world...I want to make my camera become the air itself. To become the substance of time and the mind.

– Bill Viola

Each pair will have a week to create a *video* exquisite corpse, using the camera to record images grounded in a specific point of view and individual, subjective position. Use the camera’s manual functions in an intentional and controlled way, developing fluency with exposure and focus controls such that technical “imperfections” are clearly intentional, expressive effects.

What this means is that you and your partner will share one Canon XA-10 camera. One student will begin shooting with it tonight. Collect no more than three minutes total of footage, with your last shot being 15-30 seconds. On Monday, the camera will change hands. The second student may watch the last clip on the camera but no more. Responding to that shot visually, spend the next four days collecting material for your half of the exquisite corpse.

Hints:

- Atmospheric, personal, evocative imagery tends to work best for this project. Try to avoid a “home video” or “broadcast video” look.
- Plan your shots in record standby mode before hitting record. Check for exposure, focus, and timing.
- Consider the sequence of shots before you begin. You may edit by deleting mistakes, but you cannot reorder the sequence of shots.
- Keep in mind that shots that seem short while being collected may feel excessively long to the eventual viewer.
- Camera movement can be distracting and/or nauseating to the viewer.
- Have someone on hand to help you with camera operation or to manipulate items, but try to avoid letting the person immediately before or after you in your group see what you are shooting.
- Disable the audio on your camera.