

Layers and Lattices: the Super 8 films of Helga Fanderl*.

Helga Fanderl is one of a very small number of filmmakers making serious formal innovations with Super 8(1). She came to filmmaking after studying European literature, having wanted to be a poet, but found writing a difficult and uncongenial medium. She was introduced to film in the mid 1980s through a Super 8 workshop in Frankfurt, organised by Urs Breitenstein, a former pupil of Peter Kubelka. She went on to study with Kubelka, informally at first, then formally at the Frankfurt Städelschule. She subsequently studied at Cooper Union in New York with Robert Breer. Since the mid 1980s she has completed over six hundred short films. Most of them consist of a single roll of Super 8, lasting around three minutes, but many are shorter, and some but a single shot of a few seconds duration.

In Fanderl's work a number of contrasting elements; formal, spatial, colouristic, graphic and performative, co-exist in productive tension with each other, often pulling one's attention in opposing directions. Equally, Fanderl will change the conceptual register within a single film by a shift of strategy. This is achieved by, for example, foregrounding graphic connections over representational stability, or reducing information to allow the kinetic to override illusory space. The films thereby create a self-consciously active spectator, for what, at first glance, appear to be straightforwardly observational films. In an important sense they are, of course, observational, since each one strongly conveys the *genius loci* in which it is made, but the demands the films make are untypical of those made (or not made) by conventional documentaries. Humans and animals are very important for the way in which they inform the formal strategies and eventual structures of these scenarios.

The films may be grouped according to some recurring themes and approaches; those that explore reflections, usually in water; black and white films; and a third grouping that have grids, or lattices, in common. The films in this last group often involve a strong performative element, such that the familiar characterisations of grids as predetermining, rectilinear, fixed forms are reconceived. The earliest films were constructed in a more conventionally edited manner, but Fanderl soon found this way of working difficult and constraining. The difficulties were partly technical-practical, in that the tiny size of Super 8 makes editing shots, especially the short shots she wanted to work with, cumbersome. The cuts are also highly visible which makes it difficult to control the effects of montage. In a positive sense, in-camera construction allowed Fanderl to: "concentrate and dip into the flow of time, filming so to say time and events that happen in time, searching for the "gesture" that could integrate the complexity of everything that happens in the "here and now" when I film and for the expression of the reciprocity between what is happening in me and outside of me".

* I am grateful to A.L.Rees and Simon Payne for commenting on earlier drafts of this essay.

Hence, almost all her films are edited in-camera, so there is no post-production: mistakes are accepted, although in this context they are no longer mistakes, since everything that is made, as it is made, becomes part of the work: When mistakes are judged to be fatal, the entire film is jettisoned. The momentary temporal pauses between shots become motifs, both in the articulation of rhythm and in the play and disturbance of light and movement, continuity and discontinuity. All the films are silent.

The films are characterised by their brevity and a dance-like motility and lightness of touch, combined with an improvisatory, yet exploratory purpose. Indeed, in the former respect many of them may be compared to small-group, free musical improvisation, in which a successful interplay of instrumental voices depends on the musicians' ability both to play and listen at the same time, so that they may modify their playing in response to their fellow group members. As Fanderl herself puts it in relation to her filmic procedures "learning to pay attention to the pace, to the correspondence between the subject matter, my interest and feeling and the timing". She has honed her ability to look and structure simultaneously –to anticipate- resulting in a structuring process, rather than structure in the sense of predetermined forms, although there are degrees of this in some of the films, for example *Zelte am Kanal* (*Tents on a Canal*: 3', 2006), where a static subject allows for a more pre-meditated approach. At the opposite extreme, in a film like *Große Voliere* (*Big Aviary*, 2000), the camera moves rapidly and repeatedly to catch the frenetic to-ing and fro-ing of birds, filmed against the curving grid of glazing bars in an Art Nouveau aviary. It should be born in mind that the real core of Fanderl's work, its effects, its energies, are what remains after any analysis has taken place.



Große Voliere

See (*Lake*, 1986) establishes a modus operandi for the way in which many of the subsequent films are shot, and a template for the instantiation of some key recurring formal features of the films. In a wide

shot of a lake, the land from which the reflections are cast lies along the upper edge of the frame. A red tractor and trailer move backwards and forwards at the top of the picture, below which a plume of smoke drifts slowly through the ripples on the water, mingling inextricably with them to produce ambiguous micro-movements. The inverted state of the image makes it appear flatter by making it harder to read mimetically, reinforcing the abstract interaction of smoke and water, and bypassing the perceptual habits that want to come into play to distinguish sky, smoke and water as such.



See



Blätter im Fluß

The approach established in *See* is consolidated in a similar film: *Blätter im Fluß* (*Leaves in a River*: 3', 2000), where the strategy of isolating naturally arising, but competing, layers of imagery is more precisely defined. In the earlier film the interactions of spatially distinct features occupy a small area of the frame. In *Leaves*, by contrast, the focus is explicitly and wholly around medium close-up reflections of trees in water, on the surface of which actual leaves float by. One is concomitantly aware of the camera's role in producing this effect by its isolating small areas of water such that they occupy the whole frame. Fanderl presents a situation in which one's attention can be deliberately shifted from a focus on the reflected leaves to the actual leaves. Thus the division of attention is between features that in the real world are distant from each other but which, as images both virtual (reflected sky) and actual (leaves) combine on the same plane, where one's attention oscillates between the two. The film plane itself both fixes this conjunction but also complicates it by imparting its own surface texture. This is a recurring phenomenon in Fanderl's work. However, its persistence does not imply a formulaic approach because every film respects the integrity and peculiarity of its subject. This can be demonstrated by looking at *Spiegelung* (*Reflections*: 3', 2006), which moves in yet closer on its subject, this time an area of ornamental lake below a steeply curved, artificial hillock in a park. Below the hillock, there is a second path along which pedestrians pass horizontally.

At the start of *Reflections* a duck passes across the surface of the water, the only object we will see directly, that is not either reflected in, or seen beneath, the surface of the water. The film is characterised by a bold colour scheme of bands of deep pink, black, white and blue-green, but these will shift as the film shifts into close-up, and break up further with the movement of ripples and the onset of rain. The film is animated by the passers-by who pause on the crown of the hillock. Are they staring at the camera or simply looking over the lake? It's impossible to tell. Here, though, they function as vertical, colour co-ordinated notes, passing through the horizontal key-colours of the scene.



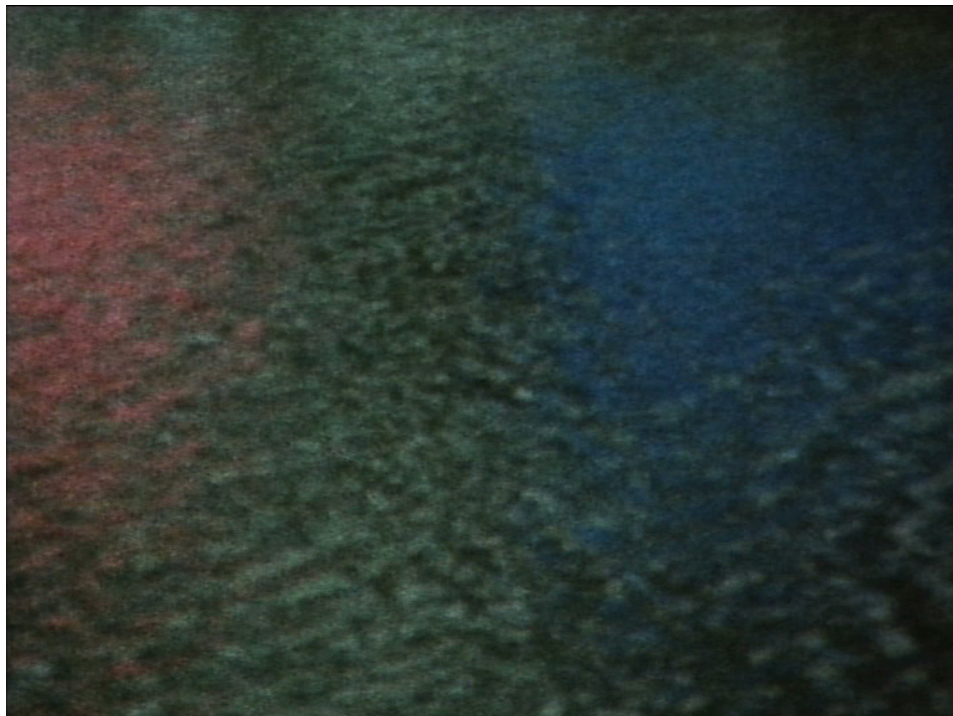
Spiegelung

As rain starts to fall, deep space is established as the drops assert the orientation of the surface of the water as angled away from the viewer into the middle distance. Then a little later, Fanderl shifts focus from the water's surface onto its reflections, but because we are now on a wide shot the picture plane doesn't return to the same extent that it did at the beginning, where the withholding of deep space, achieved by tight framing, flattened the water on the picture plane. Around the same time that rain starts to fall, we move into close-up, and individual colours start both to dominate and mutate. A pink becomes a deep red and sprays of white flowers fill the screen. At the same time orange carp, just below the surface, blend with the pink-reds seen in reflection. When the camera angle lowers, the carp carves a silvery path through the reflection, breaking it up.

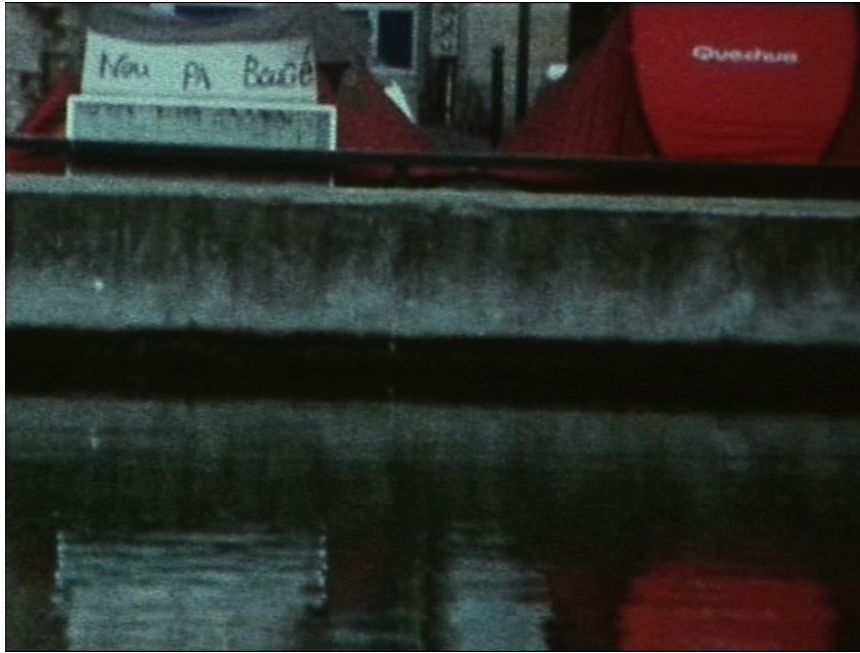


Spiegelung

This mingling of colours reflected from physically distant objects is a major feature of *Tents on a Canal*, made at the Canal St. Martin in the 10th Arrondissement of Paris. In the opening sequence the frame is divided into soft vertical bands of colour reflected on water. The graphic force of these bands is emphasised through their being permutated in a succession of short shots; blue-red, red-blue-white, blue-white-blue etc. The focus gradually shifts so that the bands are visible as apparently up-turned boats, but it soon becomes apparent that these are similarly-shaped tents pitched along the edge of the canal. In the meantime, Fanderl permutates right way up and upside down by alternating reflected tent with actual tent, a process complicated by the fact that some of the tents look like upside down boats, while familiar dome-shaped tents look like right way up boats in reflection. (As in *Reflections*, a duck also passes through the frame). The banding of the reflections is duplicated in the framing of the actual tents in pairs and threes; red-black, red-red-red, red-white-red etc. A notable aspect of this repetition is how the hard-edged objects make for a more emphatic and disruptive form of montage than when the same procedure is applied to soft-edged reflections. The film thus demonstrates how the rhythmic and spatial effects of rapid jump cutting are modified by the morphological character of the subject-matter. In a more epistemological sense, *Tents on a Canal* shows us how the coloured patches in reflection may be seen (initially) as coloured water, even though we seek, at the same time, to identify and connect the object with the reflection to which it gives rise. Once the tents are established, this stage gives way to the perception of objects as reflected in water, which in turn opens up more phenomenal distinctions between water as pictorial ground and reflection as object, though that object is not phenomenally distinct from the (previously coloured) water.



Tents on a Canal



Tents on a Canal

Fanderl often makes more than one film in the same location. In strong contrast to *Tents on a Canal* is an earlier film, *Winter am Kanal* (*Winter on a Canal: 3'*, 2002) also made at the Canal St. Martin. The canal is established in black and white, in a high-angle wide shot, followed by a series of increasingly tight framings that emphasise, through the foreshortening effect of longer lens settings, the ladder-like array of near-identical footbridges crossing the canal. Wide shots of children playing snowballs are inter-cut with close-ups of horizontal bands formed by the planks of snow-covered benches. These are contrasted with isolated bollards, railings, and other bits of street furniture. Low-angle tight shots of the bridges' steps echo the earlier high-angle establishing shots. Fanderl uses the black and white to emphasise and contrast graphic shapes, and exploits the lack of information in black and white to play on ambiguities between, for example, the texture of snow and that of tree bark. This is a feature of a number of her black and white films that also recurs in three films that, though not purely black and white, achieve similar ends through a restricted colour palette of black, white, red and blue.



Winter

In *Warrior's Mark* (2', 2007) a snowy landscape in brilliant sunshine is seen between the peeling planks of a fence, such that there is an interplay between the paint textures of the fence and that of the snow, upon which, additionally, we see the shadows of bare branches. In *Gletscher (Glaciers: 3', 2006)* a similar strategy is deployed in respect to a sky of broken cloud (blue/white) above mountain peaks (dark brown/white). In the third film, *Louïe* (1', 2007) the graphical power of a near-complementary colour contrast in the image of a dappled red dog (rusty orange) frolicking in sunlit snow (bluey-white) is fore-grounded through the simple device of isolating the dog in mid-shot against the snow.



Warrior's Mark



Louïe

In two further black and white films, the elucidation of ambiguities arising from the lack of information in black and white imagery is employed to other ends. Whereas the films discussed above work with the homogenisation of texture both to produce ambiguities and to highlight analogies and correspondences between clouds, peeling paint and snow, in other words localized effects within the visual field, in *Ausgestopfte Tiere (Stuffed Animals, 3' 2003)* and *Nacht und Wind (Night and Wind: 3', 2003)* the overall image space is redefined. Both films were shot on Tri X reversal, a high-speed film that, in its Super 8 version, is very grainy. This results in a pronounced surface texture, which serves to reduce the distinction between foreground and background, since the level of detail at different depth levels becomes uniform, ultimately limited, or overridden, by the grain pattern. The grain draws attention to the surface, so that what is depicted always seems divided between its place in space and its existence as modulations in the field of grain: objects are located both on the picture plane and somewhere in the space of the image. The objects come to seem not like objects, but transitory agglomerations of matter, denser than the air around them, but with which they form a continuum. In this sense they are analogues for the way modern science has moved away from a metaphysics of objects in space, to thinking of the world as consisting of a field of varying densities of interacting particles.

The flattening effects of Tri X grain are put to good effect in *Stuffed Animals* where, additionally, a kind of intellectual montage has been deployed. For example, a goose in the foreground of a shot is juxtaposed with an ostrich in the background. We know that the birds are not the same size, yet they each occupy the same amount of screen area. Their curving forms articulate the confined space of the

taxidermy shop in which the film was made. Three-dimensional space is flattened into Baroque pictorial space, in that the curving shapes of the birds' necks form a continuous two-dimensional serpentine that crosses the illusory depth of the room, connecting foreground to background. There is also a gentle humour in the juxtaposition, generated by the contrast between the birds' formal similarities and their contrasting flying abilities. Mostly, though, a poignant mood predominates, effected, for example, by the lion gazing intently into the distance, one of an idealised menagerie of wild friends, who appear to be almost alive, a sense engendered by the way the film, as recording, exists at one remove from the actual lifelessness of its subjects. Their inanimacy is tempered, while at the same time the room as a whole is brought to life, re-animated by the scintillating interactions of grain with reflected light. Indeed a notable feature of the film is the way in which its static subject matter emphasises the animacy of its grain movement. For the most part the film's poignancy overpowers its obvious potential to conjure up a sense of the uncanny, although there are such moments, for example, in a brief shot of what appears to be a wolf -a near-dog- lying on the floor, just as a domestic pet might have, had it been really alive in the room. This overall effect is enhanced by the fact that the museum is housed in what appears to be a domestic space (it is actually a shop), rather than a conventional museum.



Ausgestopfte Tiere

Like the previous black and white films, *Night and Wind* also exploits the limitations of black and white film. The combination of a street scene, filmed on Tri X on a black and blustery night, and lit entirely by a combination of artificial illuminations; street lights, shop signs and car headlamps, and animated by the wind, creates a high contrast dance of points and smears of white in a black field. The chaotic movements of tree branches buffeted by wind overlap stable areas where light spills from shops, and the space is further defined by the passing of car headlamps through small areas of the

scene. However, the stability of the visual field established by these fixed and predictable points is largely undone by the unpredictable movements of light reflected off leaves, cars and wet tarmac. The effect of a light-play is reinforced by the camera's high angle, whence the scene is viewed in something similar to an architectural isometric projection, a three-dimensional perspectival image that shows a space as seen from above at an approximately 30° angle.

Night and Wind is one of the few films not obviously organised around some form of grid, unless one broadens the notion of grid to encompass a field of vision within which unpredictable phenomena, interacting with more or less predictable movements, form a kind of plottable unity. The resulting or implied grid, or network, might not be rectilinear, so arguably not a grid in the strict sense. However, Fanderl's strategy, in which a set of movements seen in quasi-plan, and therefore less subject to a 3D spatialising gestalt activity, builds up a kind of recurring, and therefore predictable, patterning of phenomena. This larger gestalt-forming activity is symptomatic of our propensity for recognising and forming patterns over time, for using gained information predictively. Such activity seems to imply the assumption of a kind of grid, or matrix-like scheme which must underly such predictions, and which allows us to spot anomalies and behaviours or movements that deviate from the pattern. *Night and Wind* evokes this notion, but also challenges it in the chaotic movement of branches and reflections that interfere with a clear reading of the other elements in the scene.



Night and Wind

The idea of an underlying grid that is subject to deformation and fragmentation is explicitly taken up in *Große Voliere* (*Big Aviary*: 3', 2000), but whereas in *Night and Wind*, where a time-based matrix is implied, in *Big Aviary* an actual curved grid structure, the glazing bars of a large aviary, are ever-present. However, it too is subject to de- and re-compositions through the frenetic, interrupted

movements of Fanderl's camera as it follows the rapid and unpredictable back and forth movements of birds. The framing shifts from medium shot to close-up and finally to wide, as the camera follows the back and forth and round and round trajectories of a couple of herons as they take off and land from the trees and fly around in what is a cramped arena relative to their size. At different degrees of closeness, different effects come into play. In the initial mid-shots we experience the arrangement of the bars as discontinuous and chaotic, constantly shifting between sharply defined and thereby architectonic, and blurred, so that an interplay between bars and birds is effected. In close up the bars flicker through the frame, modulating the light-play and providing a contrast to the rhythmic flapping of the birds' wings. We also see a fine mesh, not previously visible, against the thickness of the bars. The widest shots reveal the aviary to be oval shaped though this is also exaggerated to some extent by the wideness of the lens being used. As the camera pans, the quasi fish-eye view creates a rotational effect that reinforces the curvature of the arena and its confining rôle. The upshot of all this is that at different degrees of closeness a qualitatively different experience is generated. This is a feature of a number of Fanderl's films. Rarely, if ever, do we see a simple magnification of something when she moves from wide to mid shot to close up. Rather, different phenomena -kinetic, spatial, rhythmic- are produced at different degrees of magnification. Actually, the nature of these phenomena calls into question the whole notion of magnification, insofar as it is understood as revealing the same thing but in more detail. The way magnification functions, the way it reveals and what it reveals (assuming "reveal" is even appropriate to describe what is happening here) appears then to be determined by the nature of the technology used and the productive procedures to which it is put. It becomes clear that what magnification means in this context is actually a progressive move through a succession of points of view within an infinite visual field. However, to the extent that this is achieved from a single viewpoint the characterisation of these succeeding points of view as magnifications is not unjustified.



Große Voliere

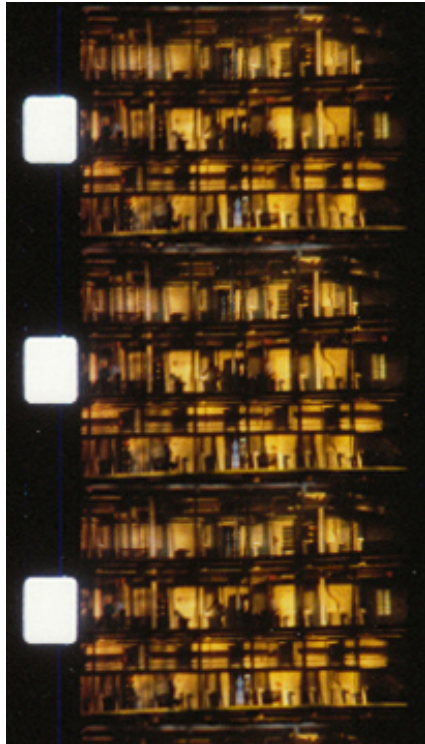
This is well demonstrated in *Gitter (Grid: 2'*, 2003), one of a number of black and white works. But whereas in *Big Aviary* qualitatively distinct phenomena are produced at different magnifications, here, previously invisible objects and movements are revealed at different magnifications within the same fixed field of view. Positioned inside the entrance of an apartment building, the camera looks square onto a street through a large, elaborate wrought-iron entrance gate.



Gitter

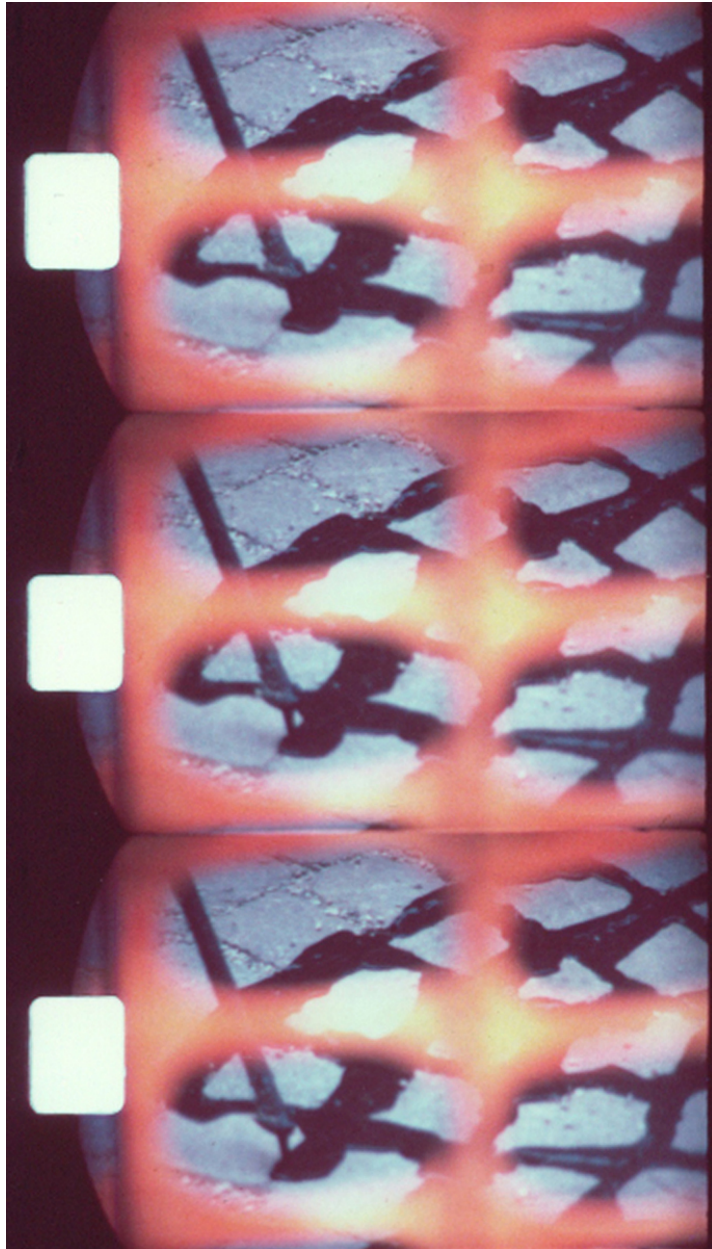
Beyond the gate lies the pavement/sidewalk, then traffic lanes, between which sits a barrier separating the left and right moving lanes, shops and unidentifiable layers beyond, possibly reflections. The film begins in wide shot before moving through two closer positions. At each change of position certain things are revealed, but equally, new features emerge, or rather our attention is drawn towards them, since, as time-based phenomena things that appeared fleeting or went unnoticed in wide shot now become central, in this case the shoes and legs of passers by as they move through the frame. As the framing shifts from one position to the next, closer one, the foreground / background relationship changes, or rather, our tendency to read the space pictorially, in terms of foreground and background, is confounded. This is because the film is composed of multiple layered planes that become the focus of attention depending on the degree to which the lens penetrates the scene. Any one plane can be seen to interact with another, depending on choice of lens and degree of depth of field. Foreground / background is thus shown to be a conventional effect, dependent on the nature of the subject matter. Fanderl often films through the thickness of things, merging planes into complex kinetic fields, so that space becomes a dense morass of interacting elements, while human activity is redefined as similarly spatio-kinetic.

This can be seen in *Golf House* (21/2', 2006), where the camera points towards a multi-storey golf driving range through several layers of fence. Here, the kinetic activity generated by the interacting planes forms turbulent veils, where the interplay of grain, movement and texture –simply detail that is unresolvable beyond a certain level- brings into question the distinction between texture as surface and movement as spatial. Here again scale plays a determining role in the way we distinguish these various phenomena, as figure/ground juxtapositions, as objects, in motion, as disturbances in a field of layers or as mobile textures.



Golfhaus.

In *Pflasterzeichnen* (*Drawing Cobblestones: 3'*, 2006), by contrast, the layers are reduced back to two clearly placed, maximally contrasted grid-events. The closer one, a soft-focused rectangular mesh of orange plastic safety barrier, is animated by the camera as it follows the movements of a long metal pipe, held by a labourer who is just out of frame, from which he directs copiously flowing tar into the joins between the cobblestones of an area of pavé in Bologna. Our attention is fixed by the progress of the pipe, as it meanders erratically from row to row, stone to stone, the tar overflowing the channels between the stones to half-cover many of them. The two grids are both, in different ways, performed and in process. The camera movements across the orange safety mesh animate it and cause it to interact with the activity of the worker, as well as both tracking and impeding a clear view of his progress. The worker draws attention to the grid-like arrangement of cobblestones by delineating them, outlining them in the moment of applying the tar, yet at the same time diminishing their form by partially obliterating the lines separating one from another.



Pflasterzeichnen

In the context of Fanderl's other films that record human activity, the pipe-movements are a kind of inadvertant performance, captured unobtrusively, since the subject is often unaware of being filmed. In their un-selfconscious concentration on the tasks in hand, the protagonists in these films are captured as in "life unawares" to use Vertov's phrase. But whereas Vertov acknowledged and incorporated into his films, as "life unawares", the self-conscious acknowledgement of the camera by his subjects, Fanderl's seem to be captured, if not strictly unaware, then sufficiently engrossed in the demands of their activity that their behaviour is indistinguishable from truly unaware behaviour. (The distinction hinges, perhaps, on the difference between un-self conscious and unaware, and whether it is possible for a person who is aware of the presence of a camera to behave as if it were not there). On the other hand, the viewer is very aware of the camera, since its movements are tracked against the close-up, out of focus grid of orange mesh that separates the filmmaker from her subject. The grid is drawn out, or in this case reinforced, by the actions of the film's subject. The strategy by which camera movements are

guided by the formal disposition of elements within the profilmic scene has two layers in this film; the camera's movements are broadly determined by the progress of the pipe whose own movements are determined more strictly by the pattern of the cobblestones.

In *Mädchen* (*Girls*: 2', 1995) some of the issues outlined above reappear in an even more complex and multi-layered form. A group of girls in summer dresses play a game of catch in the Place des Vosges in Paris. The game takes place on a sunny day, under a canopy of trees whose slender, geometrically arranged trunks create a grid of 'bases' three or four metres apart from each other. The game involves running from tree to tree without being touched by whoever the catcher is. When a girl is touching a tree/base she cannot be caught. The girls' movements are broadly circumscribed by the arrangement of the trees, except for the catcher who moves freely within the grid in her attempt to touch a girl as she runs from one base to another. Decisions about the camera movements must be taken rapidly, as fast as the game is played. Fanderl decides which girl to track and for how long, avoiding lingering on girls who are standing at a base, so that the camera is in constant motion. The filmmaker's aim of keeping her camera in play mirrors the ethos of the game, whose players similarly aim to be constantly moving, since the bases offer only momentary respite before the player launches herself towards another tree.



Mädchen

To some extent the camera movements are also directed by the grid, though indirectly, via a girl who is running. But Fanderl is also free to stop following one girl in order to pick up another. Thus the camera movements are in a complex and frequently changing relationship to those of the girls, whose own movements are underpinned, but not absolutely determined, by the arrangement of bases: an occupied base cannot be claimed by another girl, but must be vacant, so that a trajectory towards one

base may abruptly alter if that base suddenly becomes occupied. Thus the girls' movements trace further, grid-like connections between the trees, and a record of these connections would include changes of direction that embody deviations from the implicit set of connecting lines determined by the pattern of the trees. In effect these deviations, or changes of direction, are what define the game as such, in the same way that the ludic essence of musical chairs, for example, is defined by there being always one more player than there are chairs to sit on.



A four-layered topography thereby emerges: firstly, the underlying, fixed grid of trees, secondly elaborated and overlaid by the girls' movements. These latter can be sub-divided into thirdly, intended trajectories, and the abrupt changes of direction forced by a tree becoming occupied. On top of this, fourthly, are Fanderl's camera movements which trace a sequence of incomplete movements from tree to tree. The film consists of fragmentary traces of partial, interrupted movements, stitched together from parts of the various movements of all the players involved in the game. The film's traces lie on top of the palimpsest of grids and movements; underlying (fixed but not explicit), uninterrupted and interrupted.



Fanderl's strategy is emphatically spelled out at the end of the film where the game ends with the injury of a girl, who sits down on a bench and is then attended upon by her playmates. In keeping with this unplanned turn of events, the camera, too, follows the action, recording the girls gathered on and around a bench. The film ends when one of them waves to the camera (the same girl is also seen waving earlier in the film). This wave is also part of the work. In one banal and familiar sense it is indistinguishable from the waves that people regularly make when a camera is turned on them in a public place. Here however, it is as if the girl who waves is acknowledging Fanderl as a participant in the game, while the reciprocal gaze of her camera acknowledges the girls' activities as the film's *sine qua non*. This is true not just in the obvious sense, but also in the sense that their movements give Fanderl the film: its images and structure, its pace and energy. Thus the girl's wave and the camera's recording of it democratise a situation –the activity of observational filmmaking– that is invariably hierarchical, and more or less coercive, and/or non-participatory, especially (though not here, obviously) when behind the camera there is a crew of professional filmmakers.

Fanderl's willingness to surrender to the particular dynamics of the situation in which she finds herself, opens up her practice to otherwise unavailable possibilities. In some ways her stance exemplifies what most artists discover in the process of making, which is to allow the work's own momentum to pull them with it, so that there is always a margin of doubt, of things to be discovered and surprised by, before the conscious awareness of the contents of this margin of doubt permits retrospective theoretical and strategic consolidation to take place. This is common among painters, whose activity is typified by a minute, hyper-sensitive feedback process in which decisions can be acted upon impulsively and immediately, then just as quickly adjusted, as necessary. But it is much more rare among filmmakers, for whom the kind of improvisatory activity undertaken by painters and musicians is risky, because expensive or permanent: every mark made by light on celluloid is ineradicable. This is why post-production is of key importance for most filmmakers. Indeed, on this view, the division between 'production' and 'post-production' is questionable, insofar as the shaping that takes place in post-production can entirely negate the outcome envisaged at the production stage.

Because there is no editing in Fanderl's films they are an exact record of the production process. One might be tempted to compare them to Stan Brakhage's films, in the sense that the latter were conceived of as a kind of record of a performance for and with hand-held camera. But Brakhage's films invariably have a teleological, premeditated quality to them, a sense that he is either looking for something he knows is already there, waiting to be embodied, or that he is making things happen, seeking things as ends in a controlled manner that are then fortified in post production. Fanderl's films, by contrast, are more open to incident, to the fortuitous and unexpected, as exemplified in the ending of *Mädchen*. What is fascinating about many of her films is precisely a sense of the undirected that they embody. In examples such as *Zelte am Kanal*, where the subject permits a degree of planning, Fanderl can be more calculating, but in that case the work's playfulness, which there takes the form of the permutation of colour combinations of tents embodies, no less strongly, a refusal to impose an a priori order or teleology. Fanderl's films thus reveal an ethical position in which a commitment to exploration encounters the unavoidable facts of filmmaking: the transformative, interventional agency of the cinematic apparatus, which she tempers and subjects to examination precisely through a commitment to undirectedness. There is a distinction to be made here between this work and documentary, which frequently suppresses its covert a priori strategies beneath a narrative of apparent discovery or revelation.

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1. Other examples are the Canadian film maker John Porter, who has made over three hundred films since 1968, makes extensive use of variable rates of time-lapse combined with time-exposures of individual frames and improvised camera-mounts, and the German Margaret Raspé, who, in the 1970s, made a series of *Camera Helmet* films with a camera attached to a plastic helmet, are two such examples. The Bostonian Saul Levine has a large body of diaristic work made over a fifty year period. More recently Melina Gierke has made a number of films that are improvised or structured in-camera.

