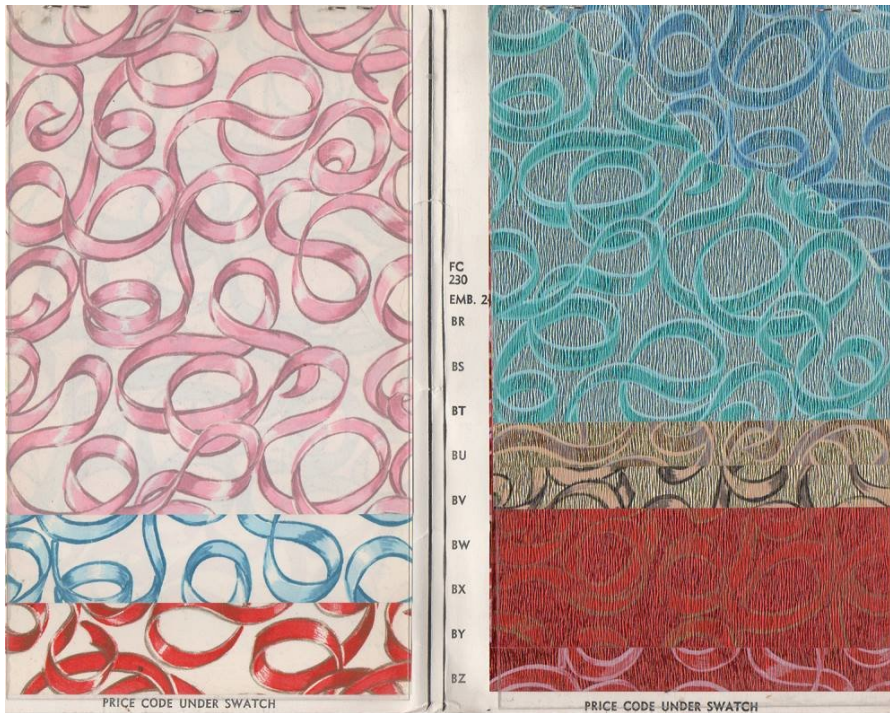


Notebook Interview

Anti-Animator: A Conversation with Jodie Mack

The great young American filmmaker discusses her series of films modeled on a rock concert, including a rock opera and laser light show.

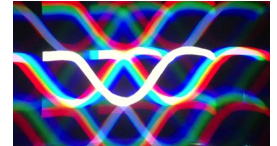
Daniel Kasman • 02 MAY 2014



Above: *New Fancy Foils*

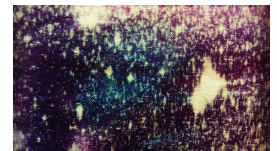
My new favorite filmmaker is the American animator Jodie Mack. In 2012 I was in the audience at the Views from the Avant-Garde sidebar of the New York Film Festival and had

Related Films



LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

Jodie Mack



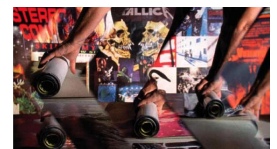
UNDERTONE OVERTURE

Jodie Mack



NEW FANCY FOILS

Jodie Mack



DUSTY STACKS OF MOM: THE POSTER PROJECT

Jodie Mack



WASTELAND NO. 1: ARDENT, VERDANT

Jodie Mack

the unexpected experience of dropping my jaw and having it remain fully in that position throughout the surface loveliness and aggregating intensity—both analytic and sensual—of Mack's lace flicker film *Point de Gaze*. Its young filmmaker has been making films since 2003—several of which are viewable on her [website](#)—with a flurrying productivity which belays the painstaking efforts taken to bring her animated films to life. The screening was the revelation of incredible talent, a moving effort of hands and mind, and it promised a great deal for the future.

That promise had already paid off in spades at the 2014 International Film Festival Rotterdam in January, which presented a program of Mack's recent short films not as a profile, a retrospective, or a portrait, but rather, as Mack describes it, a rock concert. Made up from five works from 2013, the show was organized around the short feature *Dusty Stacks of Mom: The Poster Project*, an intimately expansive animated musical documentary about the use and meaning of posters and postcards within the context of the decline of "analog"/print mom and pop shops (here, Mack's mother's mail-order shop in Florida) in the face of a digital marketplace and culture. (Watch the trailer [here](#).) This story is told visually through a history of animated film using the inventory of the Florida shop, and aurally through a rock opera soundtrack—taking the form of a quasi-remake of *Dark Side of the Moon*—which includes live singing in the theater by the filmmaker.

This miniature epic was preceded by what the filmmaker describes as two "opening acts," *New Fancy Foils*, a silent compendium of turn of the century wall paper samples, and *Undertone Overture*, a chill, morphing palette of 90s tie-dye patterns. After *Dusty Stacks*' "headliner," the show

was concluded with two "encores": a hushed holographic shimmer (*Glistening Thrills*) and a stroboscopic rainbow onslaught (*Let Your Light Shine*). If I avoid going into details about each film, it is to pay homage to writer Phil Coldiron, whose cover story in issue 57 of *Cinema Scope*, "[Flicker Flicker Flicker Blam Pow Pow: Five Films by Jodie Mack](#)," is the best possible summation, characterization, and analysis of these films, and is thankfully available online. The program itself, so full of vibrant energy and playful, smart invention, was the major highlight and most rewarding experience of the Rotterdam festival, and I highly recommend reading Coldiron's article in order to understand it better.

I had a chance to sit down with Jodie Mack in Rotterdam to talk about her filmmaking and these films.

NOTEBOOK: I came to your films first with *Point de Gaze*, so I'm unfamiliar with your work before that. Could you talk a bit about how you got into making movies?

JODIE MACK: Sure! Well, actually I started out in school as a film studies major, I was sort of on track to get a PhD. I thought that I might become a writer about film, and then just ended up in a production class and started making camera-less films. The first four or six of my films were all made without a camera.

NOTEBOOK: Because of the requirements of the class you were taking?

MACK: It was just one assignment. It certainly wasn't something I invented, honestly there's a long tradition of work in that vein. I then decided to go to graduate school

for film at School of the Art Institute of Chicago. There it's a two year program, you learn the basics of filmmaking. And I finished a non-camera-less animated musical which is about 30 minutes long...

NOTEBOOK: "Non-camera-less"?

MACK: Yeah, so it's stop-motion animation with magazine cutouts. I made a few other pieces and started making things in the vein of *Point de Gaze*, which I would call "anti-animation" or "non-sequential animation." And something that occurred to me recently is that the ferocious speed of those pieces is just trying to get back to what you get when you make a camera-less film, which is something that is really fast and out of control because there's no way to register the images. And because what you're working with is so small and then is projected so large that the little changes from frame to frame create a kind of effervescence on screen. So I feel like I'm just constantly trying to achieve that with non-camera-less methods in some of those shorter films.

NOTEBOOK: Do you feel like it was a natural progression for you from working with camera-less films to wanting to record actual images?

MACK: Hmm, yeah. Yeah, I think you can see in a lot of my work that I'm jumping from technique to technique often as a way to just try and learn new things and get a larger toolkit. And just working with camera-less films got boring after a certain point, so I just wanted to try new things.

NOTEBOOK: You just said "anti-animation" films, which you described as "non-sequential animation." By "sequential" do you mean the chronological animation of an action, for

example your mom waving her arms in *Dusty Stacks*?

MACK: Yeah it's supposed to create a fluid, natural movement. Movement has a chronology, there's a science to creating "a walk," a science to creating something that moves in sequence. And then there's a different science for creating the illusion of movement through non-sequential things. Something that was sort of taken up by people like Robert Breer in some of his films like *Recreation* or *Eyewash*, where he shoots completely different things under the camera and forms animation out of it. He also works a lot in alternating animated sequences, which is something I'm really interested in lately because persistence of vision should govern that you see movement at faster than 10 frames per second and a slide-show at slower than 10 FPS. He figured out that you could go back and forth between animation sequences and do, like, 2 frames from one sequence, 2 from another, 2, 2, 2, and see two things moving at the same time through a strobe.

NOTEBOOK: Have you tried that yet?

MACK: Yes, actually that's present in *Let Your Light Shine*. I went up to five sequences at a time. Because five at a time at 2 frames per image is still moving faster than 10 FPS. And so I did all sorts of experiments where I did 2 and 2, I did two sequences, three, four, five, six. If you were shooting on 1s, I'm pretty sure you could do 10 sequences.

NOTEBOOK: I guess it may be semantic, but when you say non-sequential...it's hard for me to tell how systematic your editing is in a film like *New Fancy Foils*, if you're following a mathematical structure—one page from this book, two from this, one from the original—or this color, that color, and back...

MACK: Actually, I feel like that one is kind of...out there. Because it's very much taking inventory of all these pieces, so you're just going through all these books. You see the cover and go through each book and at the end you go through all of them. But yeah, there's a different structure for each film, and I say non-sequential animation but you can also build sequences out of these things, moving smaller to larger, changing colors, and things like that. But they're still not supposed to go together because they're not the same image. Like, if you're turning an arm, it's the same arm in different positions, but these would be...all different arms [*laughs*].

NOTEBOOK: So it's sort of sequential but abstract. You're creating the sequence, the sequence doesn't exist inherently in what you're filming.

MACK: Well, no, I'd argue for the most part it is non-sequential. Just a million different fabrics in a row, there's no animation in that...or there shouldn't be, which is what makes it interesting when you force an animation upon it. The animation is an illusion; it's not on purpose, you know? Generally, in animation I think a smooth, fluid movement is what's desired by the maker, not something made out of these staccato, non-similar objects.

NOTEBOOK: Do you see a film like *New Fancy Foils* as archival work?

MACK: It would kind of sort of be a poor man's archive, maybe, because even in that film for example I'm just working with something that somebody sent me in a box. They sent me this group of books, but there's a moment where I take them numerically, because the catalog put out "catalog number 1, 2, 3," so I have, like, "364," "367," "373"—

so definitely like an incomplete archive. The concept of “inventory” is becoming prevalent in a lot of my films, *New Fancy Foils* being one of them, *Dusty Stacks* being another; *Posthaste Perennial Pattern* [2010] and *Rad Plaid* [2010] sort of take inventories of my own belongings. I think the films do sort of serve as stroboscopic inventories or stroboscopic archives, but putting out at the forefront that archives can often be incomplete or calling to attention what could be missing from the archive, potentially. Especially when you view it like *br-br-br-br-br-br*, or trying to express a simultaneity of what's present within the archive over time. A snapshot of it, or something.

NOTEBOOK: And also maybe to grant it intrinsic qualities it has but without being animated. You were talking at your screening about psychedelic elements found in daily non-psychedelic culture.

MACK: What I was getting at with the paper scraps and things of domestic nature was that they were abstract, separate from the psychedelic argument. That there are many motifs that have come into our culture through abstract painting, for example, that are also present within our every day experiences, our everyday aesthetiscapes. So, obviously if you just see a striped shirt, you don't really think about how my grandmother doesn't like Sol LeWitt paintings, or whatever, but if you move them into sequence, hopefully, or collect them all, you can create a visual argument for the tension between these stripes. “Are stripes fine art, or not?” Well, obviously they are. I'm interested in how a striped canvas doesn't strike a regular person's fancy, yet a striped shirt does.

NOTEBOOK: And also how they both tied—and I suppose

this connects *New Fancy Foils* to *Dusty Stacks*—how these different experiences connect to markets and monetary industries. You pay for art and you also pay to wallpaper your room with “art.”

MACK: Exactly, wallpapering with the same thing that you don't like as actual art.



Above: *Undertone Overture*

NOTEBOOK: The tie-dyed elements in *Undertone Overture*, what are those? Shirts, sheets?

MACK: That's a good question, as *Undertone Overture* marks a funny moment, where generally in those types of films I collect all the material. But I was dying to make some tie-dye. So I collected some, but I made some as well. And then, because I was shooting under the camera for a period of several weeks, I was able to alter the tie-dyes. So I got a spray bottle...you know you move through that piece and you see certain motifs of tie-dye like the sun-burst or the spiral and stuff and it becomes more cosmic or splotchy or underwater—and that's where I got out the spray bottle and

I sprayed the fabrics with different colors and then sprayed them with bleach to try to wash them back out to white. That was fun because I got to really chew through the material and digest it until it is gone.

NOTEBOOK: Where is that material now?

MACK: The bleached stuff is unusable, it would rip if you touched it. Some of it I kept and framed and sent to friends and stuff.

NOTEBOOK: It becomes a very different piece if it's something you made rather than something you found.

MACK: Kind of...well, it's both. There are tie-dyed shirts in it as well. But it's actually the exactly the right film when trying to talk about how motifs of tie-dye could show up in something like a Sam Francis painting or a Pollock painting. I'm very interested in geometric versus amorphous abstraction, because I introduce abstraction to many people as an educator. Because geometry is rooted in design, people are less likely to adhere their own narratives to these artworks. Whereas in amorphous abstraction, in something like Pollock, people are always reading into it, they're connecting it to like psyche or the cosmos or something—because there's not something as simple as a shape to grasp on to in that way.

NOTEBOOK: Did that free yourself as a viewer-creator, or did that make editing the film more difficult?

MACK: Well, none of those films are edited, they're all shot in camera.

NOTEBOOK: Right, sorry, I mean constructing the film. With *Undertone Overture*, were you challenged by this material

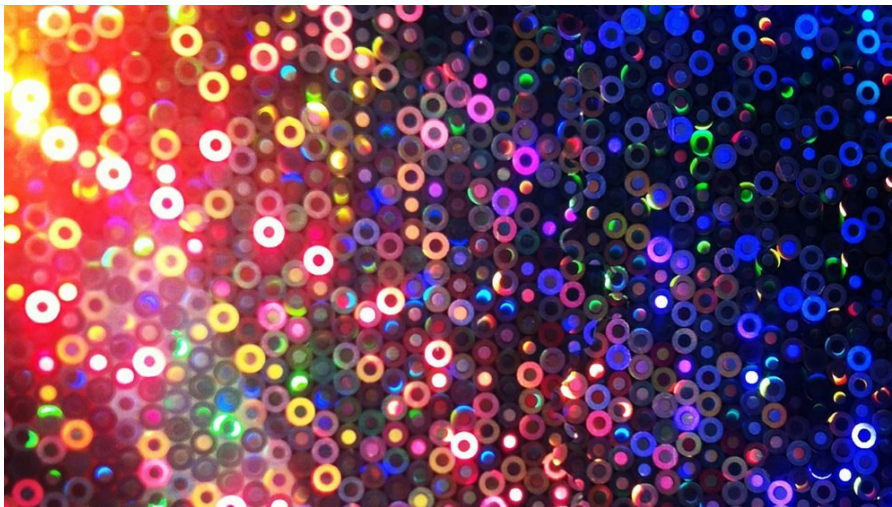
whose forms were more amorphous and not geometric, and how the experience of putting together those images was different than doing that for something more strictly geometric?

MACK: The geometry in a lot of the patterned textiles doesn't even play that much of a role in the sequence. If it's all lace or something like that, for example, that's more of a relationship between the foreground and background colors of the paper. No, it wasn't necessarily harder to put together, it presented a different set of constraints. Every batch of material presents new possibilities, right? If you're working with stripes, you can turn them into plaid, and then you can throw in a diagonal, you know, or you've got the lace with the colors behind it; in *New Fancy Foils* I introduced text for the first time into the films—stuff like that. For each one, I try to analyze the elements that are present within the material and let that guide the animation, which will then guide the structure.

NOTEBOOK: For these materials, how are you finding them? Are you seeing them out or stumbling upon them?

MACK: That's a good question. These things started out, as I said, of taking inventory of things that I owned. Then, when I started teaching at Dartmouth, I started having a relationship with the costume shop there, and they've been very helpful. They've donated me all my lace, they donated me a bunch of paisley. They basically just give me license to go in there and get what I want and give it back when I'm done. The *Unsubscribe* series [2010] is a similar vein of films, all working with junk mail that came to my house. I'm now to the point where I work with these collections enough that people think of me when they have

something...someone mailed me all the stuff in *New Fancy Foils* in a box! So it goes back and forth. I said "I definitely want to make a tie-dye movie," so I started collecting those; I'm kind of thinking about doing a camouflage movie so I want to start collecting those, or hounds-tooth. I'm now trying to carve out something in stroboscopic-ethnography where I go places and work with those textiles. So I just traveled to Mexico, where I shot animation and was just collecting what I could. I went to a rug village and knew someone whose family made rugs and I got a bunch of rugs that way, and also went to a market and just bought a bunch of stuff. So it varies, ya know, sometimes I find things and build upon it. The costume shop has been a great resource, but sometimes I can find things, too, that spawn ideas. Like, I had a gift bag, and I said "Oh wow, these holographic gift bags are so cool, I'm going to make *Glistening Thrills*."



Above: *Glistening Thrills*

NOTEBOOK: *New Fancy Foils* is silent and the rest of the films in the program have soundtracks. Can you talk a bit about your work with sound?

MACK: I definitely see my work coming out of the tradition

of visual music that was an early answer to or relationship for abstract animation, this analogy between hearing and seeing. A lot of my animated forefathers like Oskar Fischinger, Len Lye, Norman McLaren, people like that, they're obviously working in that vein. So the relationship between sound and image has always been very important to me. Now, at this point, I'm trying to move beyond what visual music has been in the past, mainly because I think what's possible with technology has almost killed the dream in many ways. And what your iTunes' music visualizer can do is far less interesting than what you can come up with, yet how can you fight against that, you know? I am interested in this relationship between image and sound in time; I consider myself as a "time choreographer" in many ways, as a way to think about that. I'm not trying to think of animation as music, but as an animator I have a microscopic relationship to time, so rhythm is always important, I'm very interested in experimental percussion music, and things like that. So that's always present.

The goal right now is to sort of experiment with what those relationships with time can be, so in *New Fancy Foils* I'm really trying to have the audience focus on these minute variations that are happening over this temporal spectrum. In *Undertone Overture*, I'm seeing what happens when you just let it rip. One of the big points about *Dusty Stacks* or any of these films has to do with "synchresis," Michel Chion's notion of synchresis—the irresistible weld between sound and image—where an audience will associate any sound they hear with an image they see, even though most sounds are recorded in post and there is no connection between them. What that proves is that you could put any sound with any image and it would work. Which is one of the reasons why I chose *Dark Side of the Moon*, because of

its underground reputation for clicking with *The Wizard of Oz*; they really have nothing to do with each other but it's this notion of synchresis that's so important to visual music. In *Undertone Overture* those are just three recordings from the ocean playing against this stuff, there's no tweaking whatsoever. In *Dusty Stacks* obviously the relationship between image and sound is pretty close and there was a lot of meticulous syncing there. Similar in *Glistening Thrills*, and very present in *Let Your Light Shine* where all the sound is made with images, too. I'm always interested in trying to explore those avenues and see what those possibilities are between hearing and seeing.

NOTEBOOK: Was creating the soundtrack for *Dusty Stacks* incredibly challenging?

MACK: Yes! In many ways it was much harder than the animation.

NOTEBOOK: You were saying in your Q&A for this program that a non-animator could not possibly understand how difficult and how much work is put into creating such animations—and yet the soundtrack was more difficult?

MACK: Definitely. One of the things about shooting on film is I use what I get. I can only edit it. If I'm going to make a print, I can't re-use anything, I can't slow it down, I can't speed it up. It just needs to be cut together. And so the animating happens and then it's over. The sound, working digitally, it's always there. And you just tweak it, and tweak it, and tweak it; and make this version, and this version, and this version. And it's never done! One of the reasons the sound was harder was that I feel more comfortable animating, and I took all the sound on myself. When you start to work on a big project like this, you realize "Oh, that's

why there are all these really specific rules in cinema! This is why you have this person and this person and this person." You mixing person shouldn't be your mastering person, and that person shouldn't be the one who makes the optical track on your film. I really started to understand all that. I also gained a lot of confidence in trusting my own ear. In my other longer piece, the musical *Yard Work Is Hard Work* [2008], I did a lot sound work with that, in addition to composing the music. But the tricky thing with *Dusty Stacks* was remaking freaking *Dark Side of the Moon*! Some things had to be done a few times because they just sounded like Pink Floyd and I wanted them to have a new life. With "Money," for example, we did it three times, and then finally said "Let's make it into a gangsta rap," and finally the song is good!

NOTEBOOK: Do you have any background in musical composition? Because not only was the recorded music great, but your live performance was a blast.

MACK: I didn't do all the music in *Dusty Stacks*, which was outsourced to many different bands. But yeah I did a lot of theatre growing up and went to a magnet high school of performing arts, musical theatre, but really I was just a bad kid, leaving and smoking cigarettes. I regret it a lot, but I at least didn't end up on Broadway, thank god—instead I ended up in Rotterdam! I have a little bit but not really. But that's what's exciting about it, the amateurism.



Above: *Dusty Stacks of Mom: The Poster Project*

NOTEBOOK: To get to the shooting of *Dusty Stacks*, what was your experience setting up a camera and shooting things in a room rather than flat on an animation stand?

MACK: Well, there's a lot of that in *Yard Work Is Hard Work* as well, but it was the first time I'd ever traveled somewhere to make a film, traveled down to Florida with all my gear, rather than my animation stand in New Hampshire. It was new and presented an exciting set of challenges. I usually shoot in an 8x10 zone, and here I was shooting in a giant warehouse, making these huge scenes.

NOTEBOOK: And you had one or two people helping at all times, like a micro-crew?

MACK: Not always. My first shoot I brought someone down with me, for a week, and the second time I had someone for a week out of two or three weeks, and also family friends would come in and help cut things out so I could shoot. What I learned is that it is handy to have someone just

clicking the frames, so that you could move around in these huge spaces without having to run back to the camera.

NOTEBOOK: That seems a whole different world, rather than being by yourself in your room with your stand, being in this big space with other people helping, having traveled there. An opening up, perhaps.

MACK: Yeah, definitely. And I really felt that when I went to Mexico as well. And I enjoy both practices. There's a lot more at stake when you travel somewhere and have people helping you. It forces you to be more organized and focused, because you only have a finite amount of time to shoot. And they're spending their time with you. In Mexico, for example, I could only shoot during daylight hours, so I had to keep that in mind, that the light would be changing; so it does present new challenges.

NOTEBOOK: And I assume the inverse experience is risky, too, in it's own way: it's just you and your stand, and what you've been doing. Rather than "we did this"—a group effort.

MACK: That was one of the reasons I wanted to go bigger, because I had just been sitting at my animation stand all the time, and missed...people. I live a very rural, isolated life, so it was a good way to work with people in the shooting of the animation but also to work with people on the sound, and to collaborate. Coming from Chicago where there is so much collaboration all the time to just working alone all the time was a big change.

NOTEBOOK: The sort of fun you have towards the end of *Dusty Stacks* with animating Google Images and computer images, is that something you've done before? Animated

digital images?

MACK: I've done a couple of digital pieces. I've also make a piece called *Glitch Envy* [2010], which is all made with paper but it's imitating pixelation of compressed image quality. Chicago has a very prominent new media community, so at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago when I was a student there that was very much on our minds. Specifically, new forms of technology and spectatorship, and how it's hard to get past the "Ah ha!" moment when watching something, "Oh wow, this is doing that!" There's this moment when Golan Levin came to talk to us and asked us how this was any different than a zoetrope and how do you move past that and how can new media be critical in any sort of way. At best, a lot of times it's like "*Ahhh, media overload!*" I have a student making this piece every time, where if they're not waking up and checking their alarm than they're looking at their T.V. and it's *hisssssss*—all fuzz. So there is a sort of visual argument that takes place during that sequence of *Dusty Stacks* where you see the paper catalog turn into the Google Image source and then it gets datamoshed. Datamoshing is a technique in new media—you would recognize it if you saw it—it's pixel bleed, you do it by removing the iframes out of videos, so then the one video takes the movement of the next video in this sort of square of puke, vid-puke [*laughs*]. I worked with that a little bit. I wasn't totally happy to take this part out, but it didn't really look right: we had a part in *Dusty Stacks* where we had taken the images and put magnets on a T.V. and shot that to get that sort of early video art, because I wanted to have this visual timeline of how abstract animation has traveled. How it started in this pure way and how it formed this early video art, but the histories became quite separate. And now there are a lot of

people working in media who don't...know about a lot of media [*laughs*].

NOTEBOOK: I take it that for such a large and elaborate project, you must have written a script.

MACK: Er, no. [*laughs*]

NOTEBOOK: But it's composed in such a way that it appears to me that it must have required a meticulous structure, to animate this section, and needing these objects to animate that....

MACK: There was some of that, but I shot ten minutes of the piece before even knowing it was going to take this *Dark Side of the Moon* twist. The second time I shot I didn't even know what the words would be, but I knew kind of where certain things would go—actually I didn't know that. The second time I went down to Florida I probably had like forty shots I wanted to get and left aside six other days to just play. I would always play: If there ever was room at the end of a roll after a shot I wouldn't just start a new shot, so I would experiment in those ways. But I still didn't have enough footage. And after a pretty grim screening at the University of Chicago—well, it wasn't grim, but I was like, "I'm done!" and they were like, "Are you done? This could be so good if you are not done." Then all the stuff that went under the animation camera added a lot, and the datamoshing stuff.

NOTEBOOK: Did you do an edit or assembly and then time all the sound and music and lyrics to that?

MACK: Some of the things I timed out in advance, some of them I knew what would go where when I was shooting. So,

like, the guitar solo, I knew where that would be. I meticulously timed out the matte shot of my mom playing all the different instruments; I would just time out the music and shoot certain sequences in time. The ballerina posters and the vibraphone music, and things like that. Because synchresis is real! You can just fake it.

NOTEBOOK: The film seemed to me like a summation or like a guide to what is going on in all the other works of yours I've seen. To contain and vocalize—literally, in some cases, with the lyrics to some of the songs—things that were subtexts of the other films. Was it so comprehensive and explicit because of the nature of the project, because you could sing and have lyrics, because it's "more representational," because of its length, because it was personal?

MACK: Well, it's important to note that *Dusty* came first, it came before the other films, which were made to supplement it. If they relate, it's definitely on purpose.

NOTEBOOK: So all these films in the program were created to be shown as part of this full program?

MACK: What happened was I made *Dusty* and showed it a few of times, and when I had the opportunity yesterday at the screening to introduce it by itself I was really excited, because part of the reason I made the other films was because I made *Dusty*. I had said to my friend, "People really aren't understanding this the way I understand it. They're getting this personal element from it." Obviously it's semi-personal to me, but it's really not that personal to me, and I'm adopting a form and a set of ideologies for this piece that would come from that of making a documentary about your mom. Like I said yesterday, that's being faked.

It's really trying to be an exposé on these other truths about abstract animation.

NOTEBOOK: It's funny you wanted to say that, because I don't know if I had come in thinking it was going to be one thing or the other, but once you said it wasn't a strictly personal documentary I anticipated it being even more about your mom, even more about the store. And of course it clearly is, but not as much as I had then assumed it would be based on your introduction.

MACK: But that's all it would be, you know what I mean? And I said to my friend that people weren't getting that. And he said, "Well, Jodie, you are an expert in abstract animation. Your audience isn't going to have expertise in experimental animation. Even people that are into experimental film." I'm interested in a niche of a niche of a niche of a niche. So I couldn't have that conversation with other people, and I wanted to highlight the conversation I wanted to have. It became a great opportunity to me, because someone would look at *Point de Gaze* and at *Dusty* and say, "These are so different, wow did the same person make these?" I tried to make this string of films that would be obvious that this one person was having a trajectory.

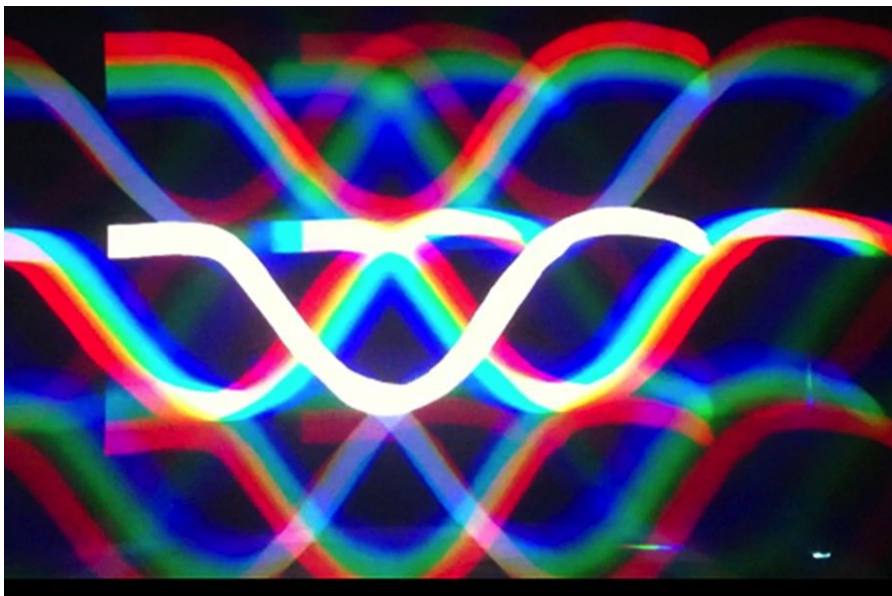
NOTEBOOK: The way you organized the show, these pieces created in such a way as to literally be a supplement to this short feature?

MACK: Yeah, at one point I re-arranged the first two films, *Undertone Overture* was supposed to go first, because...it's the overture [*laughs*]. But it made more sense that *New Fancy Foils* would go first, because seeing it in the show you can see it would be hard to go from a sound film to a

silent film, and parts of *New Fancy Foils* move a lot slower. So there's this nice progression that starts out silent and you move to *Undertone* with its water sounds—and the first part of *Dusty* is the water. Another thing that no one would get is that my mom's business is in Florida, so there's a coastal abstraction nature that's important. I see *Glistening Thrills* as where the laser light sequences in *Dusty Stacks* leave off, sort of the funeral of the music. Because I'm interested in these boxes, prosceniums or the movie screens or the computers or the churches. Len Lye used to talk about his own films as stained glass daydreams, and I feel like *Glistening Thrills* is like going to church.

NOTEBOOK: There was a point in its soundtrack when three notes in a row made me think of a Christmas-time carol, and of being in a cathedral.

MACK: Cathedral! That's totally what I'm thinking. And with the rock concert structure we talked about—with the two opening acts, the headliner, and two encores—then *Let Your Light Shine* would be the ultimate partner in image and sound, because it's this handmade sound stuff. It's echoing the *Dark Side of the Moon* prism, and it's like the spectacle of the last encore. Phish doing a *three day encore...in three minutes!*



Above: *Let Your Light Shine*

NOTEBOOK: Can you talk about how you made *Let Your Light Shine*?

MACK: Sure! Maybe I can pull out my computer so you can understand [*pulls out her laptop*]. You know about film though, 4:3 and stuff? Here's a 16mm template; this should be the image part, and this the soundtrack part. I shot the animation for *Let Your Light Shine* from drawings that were black on white, because you can't draw white on black by hand. Step 1. Then I brought the images into the computer and flipped it, so it would be white on black, because that's how the animation works. And then I started working with the sound. What I did was I shot the animation in 4:3...

NOTEBOOK: Wait, so first you had this now-inversed image on your screen, and then you photographed your computer screen frame by frame?

MACK: Yes, but first I shot the whole animation. And then I had all these different sound...pictures. All of these are the different images that I used to make the sound. These images are what were shot into the soundtrack of the film.

So I made a separate video of that, and that's just the sounds. Then I made an After Effects project, so I put the animation in there, and the sound there, offset them 26 frames because image and sound are not in sync on a computer, and just shot it 1:1 off the computer screen.

NOTEBOOK: And how did you create these drawings or paintings—sound pictures—were they based on the way you knew they'd make a sound, or are they independent drawings?

MACK: I just worked with a set of images and tested what sound they would make. A lot come from Op art patterns, but I had also taken some scans from borders and things. I'm stemming from Oskar Fischinger's *Ornament Sounds*, where he would work with decorative borders and stuff, so I'm working with scrap book border cuts to make the sound. This is what you'd shoot, where'd you'd shoot if you'd used a regular camera. I used a Super16 camera and divided the frame in my computer and sized it out right so I could get the sound to work.

NOTEBOOK: Is that an unusual amount of digital manipulation for you?

MACK: Yeah, I don't usually work with a computer in that way, but it just seemed...it was the only way to get it one take. Because of the negative. Because if you shoot on high contrast film, which is what I could have done to get the black to white, to reverse the image, that film is double-perf, so you can't shoot the soundtrack on there, so I would have had to shoot to another one. It was not simple.

NOTEBOOK: This is the simple way.

MACK: Yes, this is the simple way!

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