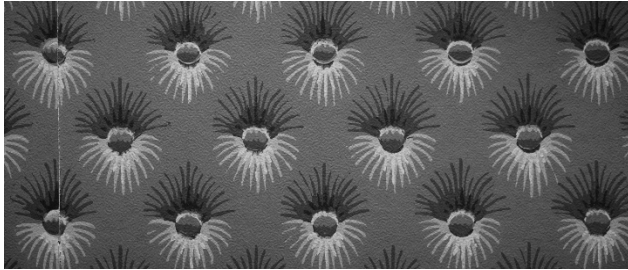

THE BOX

August 1–31, 2017

Matt Meindl

Corridory (2017)



Corridory, image courtesy of the artist.

Corridory

Jennifer Lange, curator of the Film/Video Studio program, spoke with artist Matt Meindl to talk about his video *Corridory*, an optical extravaganza using the colors, textures, and patterns of vintage wallpaper.

Jennifer Lange: *Corridory* is based on fragments or samples of vintage wallpaper, a pretty simple starting point but one that ends up so evocative, rich, and mesmerizing through editing and animation/camerawork. I had it running on repeat on my computer when you first sent it to me and I kept thinking of the Star Gate sequence from 2001: *A Space Odyssey*. Where did the idea for this film come from and how did it come together?

Matt Meindl: It was originally inspired by Louis Zamperini's bathroom. I got to photograph Louis at his home in 2014 for a magazine article because the film *Unbroken* (which chronicles his life as an Olympic athlete and WWII prisoner) was due to come out later that year. At the time he was 97 and living in a Hollywood Hills bungalow that had originally been built for Theda Bara in the 1920's. One of the bathrooms was covered in this amazing, shiny silver-and-green striped wallpaper. It looked like it may have been original to the house! There was something about seeing that old design up close, in person—I had an emotional reaction to it, just standing there in this guy's bathroom. Not wanting to leave the bathroom.

I started thinking about making a film where the camera just wanders through dim rooms and halls with strange wallpaper, and the spaces would have this illogical layout—like the way houses are in dreams. It doesn't make any sense architecturally yet it still feels like home. And I liked the idea of putting a strong focus on material that is essentially designed to be background. I tend to use filmmaking to examine things that were not really designed to be paid that much attention to. I eventually started buying up partial rolls of wallpaper from the 1940s and 50s. I loved the colors and busy patterns and just wanted to get lost in it. I used collage-style animation techniques to try and bring those patterns to life. I sort of think of *Corridory* as "patternsploitation."

JL: Can you talk about how you approached the material? I'm thinking about Lewis Klahr here and how the material in his films (collages of vintage comic books and images) came alive in a completely new way when he switched from shooting on film to HD video. Did you know right away that you'd be shooting in HD or did you experiment with other formats?

MM: Oh yeah, I remember going to see some of Klahr's Super 8 films at the Wex years ago! His newer HD work definitely feels startling in comparison, in a good way. I feel like when you move from film to video, you're kind of trading mystery for immediacy. My initial urge was to shoot *Corridory* on Super 8 but I worried there would be too much loss of detail in the designs...Almost every shot is a macro close-up and when I began shooting I noticed that some of the wallpaper was even more heavily textured or embossed than I had first realized. So even though it's video, there's a sort of added physicality there that reminds me a bit of grainy film.

JL: I know you live in Los Angeles now (we miss you!) but I still think of you as a Columbus filmmaker...maybe it's me being nostalgic or maybe Columbus is, in fact, a part of you. You partnered with musician Dan Eshleman on this film, who also happens to be from Columbus. Was that a serendipitous meeting of talented and creative Columbus expats or did you know each other here?

MM: I still think of myself as a Midwestie though I definitely drive like an Angeleno. Dan and I actually met in a high school art class in Columbus and started recording weird songs together. Back then he would self-release these drum 'n' bass cassette tapes, making his own sleeve art and everything. The songs were sonically intense but also had this dreamy undercurrent that I liked. And it was clear that Dan had gotten pretty good at recording and arranging, even then as a teenager. He had a 4-track and a heap of electronic gear so I'd bring over my guitar and we'd spend all day making...I guess let's call them "songs." We lost touch at some point but reconnected after we both had moved to LA, and I was glad to see that he was still putting out music.

JL: Music is an important part of your films and your practice (you've made music for all your films, right?). So how did this collaboration work?

MM: I usually like to record music for my films alone but with *Corridory* I wanted the score to be heavy-duty moody, and thought that Dan's sensibility might be a good fit. He's also way more knowledgeable than me when it comes to sampling and sound manipulation. So we worked together to build up a pile of sounds and melody fragments and then I spent a month or so mixing everything.

Matt Meindl

Corridory, 2017

3:23 mins., HD video

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