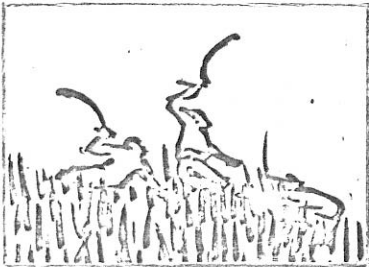


THE FILM LOOPS

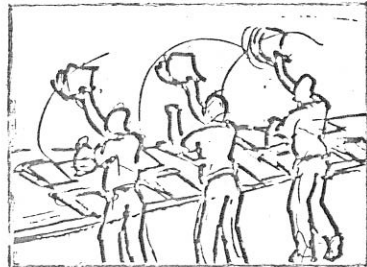
The three loops are designed to be shown in Super 8 mm film cassettes on three 'Technicolor' cassette projectors (available from MERC). The tableaux depicted in the loops, as shown below, are to be projected on a single wall, side by side. Each scene will be shot frontally, with shallow space, and with a grey background.



1.



2.



3.

The loops are described as follows:

1) FIELD WORK

Two machette weilding reapers and one gatherer will (roughly) maintain the field positions shown in the drawing above, while performing a sequence of slashing, gathering, bundling, etc., which will repeat, with continuity, every 90 seconds. The workers will be positioned at the top of a small hill and filmed from below. Overcast sky at the crest of the hill will serve as the grey background.

2) CINDERBLOCK PRODUCTION

Two workers will operate a rudimentary wooden scissor/sled type cinderblock mould. Cement is first poured into the forms and is then, in a single action, compressed and forced onto the ground as blocks. The blocks remain in long rows until dry. The workers will pour and form two sets of blocks every 90 seconds. As the action will move (between block sets) from left to right, the camera will move likewise on a track to maintain a constant frontal frame, allowing the 90 second sequence to repeat

with continuity. The camera will be shot at eye-level. In the background will be scattered stacks of dried blocks against a non-descript grey (building) wall.

3) COLLATING

From ten stacks of paper placed in two rows, a group of workers will collate, ie., put sequential order to the sheets of paper. The workers will collate in unison, returning (off-camera) to the first stacks after having collated each leaflet only to begin again - the effect being a continuous flow of the same group of collaters. This flow will repeat with continuity every 90 seconds. The tableau will be shot from an altitude of approx. 12 feet. In the background will be a non-descript grey (building) wall.

PROSPECTIVE READING

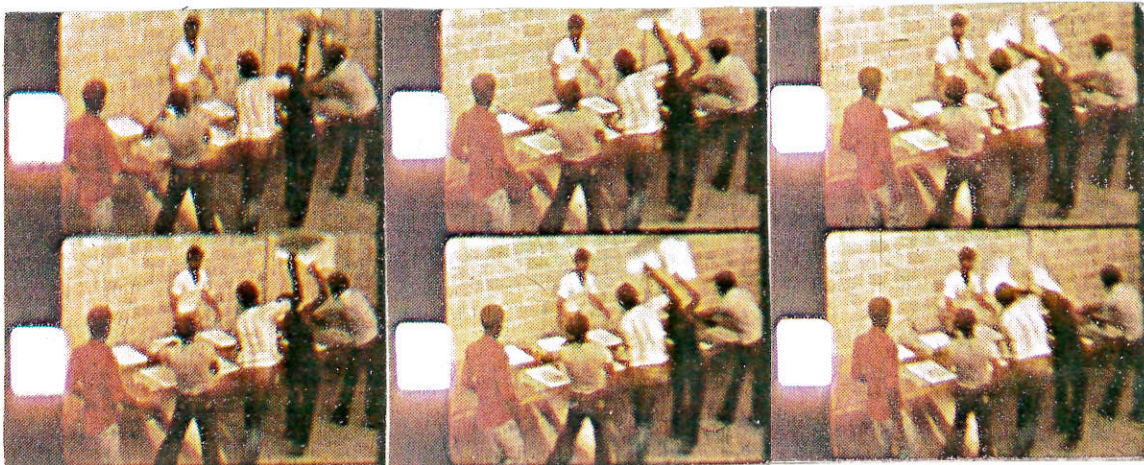
Dominica is an extremely underdeveloped country. For both the series of loops and short-feature, a group of Dominican men and boys will be hired at regular hours for a month's time as actors. The schema is to superimpose stock, familiar, Americanized, or otherwise generalized images of underdevelopment on an already underdeveloped country, and to have citizens of that country enact those images.

None of the depicted images of underdevelopment exist in Dominica: the island is lush, verdant, and mountainous, the agricultural staple being bananas - not wheat in a semi-arid chaparral landscape; cinderblocks are, in fact, produced on the island in a small factory - not with scissor/sled type rigs on expanses of levelground; and as collating must surely exist in some form, it does so (as everywhere else) on either a completely informal or a completely mechanized basis - not as an ingrown, self-developed form of day to day production.

While the discrepancy between the authentic and the depicted forms of underdevelopment will not be clear, nor apparent, nor intended for a structural reading, there will exist, in viewing the loops, a striking disjunction: if the images purport to represent an authentic state of underdevelopment they will do so self-consciously insofar as the worker will clearly be performing unfamiliar tasks under outside direction.

So, to look at the workers one believes that if any people were suited to such tasks, it would be the Dominicans, while it remains clear that the tasks are foreign to the Dominicans.

By this recognition, issues of patronage, gratuitous, colonialism, etc., are subverted from consideration as 'motive' to consideration as 'subject' (ie., 'motive' being the ideology or persuasion which propells the making of, say, an agit-prop work, as opposed to 'subject', being the framed and formalized consideration of 'the fact' of such a persuasion.) This was the common reading of the already completed COLLATING loop, certain frames of which are shown below.



Jeff Balsmeyer's personal motives in this work are:

- 1) An anti-symbolist attempt to construct something which is unnameable or indeterminate to the degree that many surrealist tableaux are unnameable or indeterminate, but to do so without the use of absurd or ridiculous arrangements. This could be accomplished by producing an 'effect of purpose' - whereby, there is a belief or 'absent reason' for the arrangement of objects and action. An academic example of this could be a picture of an unfamiliar machine. To see the machine is to trust that it was built to serve a certain purpose, even though one may have no idea as to what that purpose may be.

Aside from the 1) portrayal of purposeful work in the loops and 2) the maintenance of that purposefulness as an 'effect' (by subverting the reading of underdevelopment), an example of this principle would be 3) the way in which the obvious reading of a 'historical progression' - from agrarian to rudimentary to mass production - is rendered indeterminate by the portrayal of underdevelopment, where primitive and modern practices occur contemporaneously.

- 2) To press a minimalist treatment of 'work' or 'labor practice' beyond mere aestheticization by making subject of such a process (as previously discussed on page 4).

THE SHORT-FEATURE FILM

(description to follow in September).