

Creating Art in Super 8

Stills taken from a film titled *Three Things, Three Images: Doing Battle, Indecision, Feeling Trapped*, by James Casebere. (Three loops of super 8 color and sound film, continuous, 1978.)

The artist describes the work:

Three animated film loops are projected on to separate screens hanging from the ceiling, which allow the images to be visible from both sides. Behind each screen and facing it is a stand upon which rest the corresponding objects seen in animation. The image generally represents a major portion of what is there behind the screen. Since the dimensions of the screen approximate two-dimensionally the dimensions of the space in which the objects move, the objects represented are only slightly larger than the objects themselves.

From left to right, as named in the title, the images are as follows: Two boats. One is shrinking, the other collides. Shrinking is synonymous with sinking. The larger of the two runs aground on the rocks nearby.

In the center image, boxcars go back and forth continually. The whole train wavers. It precariously rides the edge of the cliff and its wheels are at times seen in midair.

The third image consists of a dark, empty room and a bird in flight, which enters from

the side and disappears into a back corner. After a brief refrain, a light is turned on in the adjoining room, illuminating an open door on the right and a portion of the foreground. The bird is then heard beating its wings in the corner—followed by silence.

With the boats, the objects correspond to the final state of the moving image, the image itself represents an event prior to the objects as they currently exist. The image represents the past—it signifies memory.

In the case of the train, the object remains notably stationary: The image implores it to move.

The presence of the bird is experienced in the last image, but not in its accompanying object. The image draws attention to itself as metaphor—the act of making visible the invisible—be it in manifesting the sense of fear in this case, anxiety in the boxcars, or interpersonal conflict in that of the boats.

Casebere, a native of Detroit, is a second-year graduate student in the CalArts School of Art and Design. *Three Things, Three Images: Doing Battle, Indecision, Feeling Trapped* has been shown at CalArts and is scheduled to be shown later this month with other work at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design.

