



## KINETICA, Spirituality, Pshychedelia and Contemporary Abstraction

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*Published in:*  
Cinemateket

*Publication date:*  
2004

*Document Version*  
Også kaldet Forlagets PDF

[Link to publication from Aalborg University](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*  
Graca, M. (2004). KINETICA, Spirituality, Pshychedelia and Contemporary Abstraction. *Cinemateket*, 35.

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## KINETICA 4

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In 1946, the first Art in Cinema Festival opened in San Francisco. It featured ten programmes on the best of European and American avant-garde cinema. To a whole generation of young West Coast filmmakers, the Festival represented the occasion to be confronted and inspired in a wide open technical and poetical dimension. This led to a sudden flowering of cinematic experiments reflecting a remarkable diversity in style and content, all sharing a vision of filmmaking as a form of personal expression, free from the demands and constraints of commercial conventions.

That movement culminate at the late '50, when artists, filmmakers and musicians invented a new form of live event: the *Vortex Concerts* at the San Francisco's Morrison Planetarium. Music, light, film, art and counter-culture combined in truly multimedia happenings reflecting the energy and intent of a new radical generation. Artists like Jordan Belson, John and James Whitney and other, pondered the possibilities of a truly synthetic experience, a unified form of art that fused elements of music and image into a single creative process. They started experimentation with abstract images and, as some of them were musicians, began composing visuals and motion as music, in quest of visual and acoustic sensation correspondences. Theories and conventions were being questioned and there were efforts to establish a dialog between the French 'musique concrete' and the synthesizer.

Believing that they were on the threshold of a totally new art form, they seek out whatever techniques, tools and combination of resources suited to their expressive needs and to the quality of experience they wished to create. Thus, they embraced both new technologies (audio and video tape-recorders & synthesizers and pioneer computer systems), and clever unusual use of old ones. The appropriation of images was the topic, those taken from nature, through the camera, versus those constructed inside the workings of different equipment. There was a clear interest in machine-made forms as far away from nature as possible. The synthetic principle was the talk of the day. They were also looking for ways to seize dream, trance and hallucinogenic images as their cinematic efforts appear to be able to relate external experience to internal experience. Experiments with drugs and meditation or other ways to attend altered states of consciousness and creative visualization took place. Their visual music films start to have a spiritual or mystical dimension.

The body of work and experiences produced by these experimental filmmakers, during a period that clearly starts at the late 50's and seems to end at the early 70's, have provided the essential groundwork for all contemporary synthetic forms of abstract motion media, as well as the basic principles for fusing both music with visuals and art with technology. KINETICA 4 presents us some of these rarely screened early and contemporary experiments.

KINETICA 4 was curated by Dr. William Moritz (deceased last 12 Mars 2004) and produced by Cindy Keefer (IOTA Center, USA).

(Marina Estela Graça, Aalborg University, Mars, 2004)