

TONY CONRAD: LATER WORKS IN VIDEO

**Selections guest curated for the
Albright-Knox and descriptions written by
Anna Scime and Laura McGough**

The only compilation Conrad made of his video work was completed in 1991. Entitled *Authorized to Surrender*, it constitutes a sustained look at the breadth of Conrad's work in video from 1977 to 1990. *Authorized to Surrender* is presented on two different monitors in this gallery: on one monitor, the six-hour program plays through in the order Conrad intended and as he screened it in his lifetime, and on the other, the individual videos in *Authorized to Surrender* are made available using an "on demand" menu.

However, because Conrad continued making video for more than thirty years after completing *Authorized to Surrender*, the exhibition curators invited two scholars and Conrad's close collaborators, Anna Scime and Laura McGough, to make a selection from the artist's later videos. This new compilation helps illustrate the diversity of his work in video art, which ranges from playful to earnest. As art historian Paige Sarlin has noted in her contribution to the exhibition catalogue, "The range of Conrad's video work confounds easy categorization in great part because he made it out of a variety of impulses. His interventions ranged from media critique to parodies to experiments in performance, collaboration, and/or conversation."

**To access the "on demand" menu, choose the number
corresponding to the video you wish to view.**

Some videos in this compilation contain explicit content.

1. The Space of Writing Is the Surface of the Skin (Video from Super 8 film, 1989/2011, 2 minutes, 23 seconds)

The Space of Writing Is the Surface of the Skin plays with perspective and space, while using landscape and skin as materials for writing a postcolonial allegory. Filmed on location in Tikal, Guatemala.

2. The Directors (1991/2011, 9 minutes, 38 seconds)

One person, who is using a Super 8 camera to take pictures of shoes, is being directed by another person, who in turn is being directed by a second director, who in turn is being directed by Conrad. With 8mm News Collective members Wago Kreider, Cathy Steffan, and Julie Zando-Dennis. Originally recorded for the 8mm News Collective's public access television program.

3. Tony's Ocular Pets (2001, 7 minutes, 17 seconds)

Conrad demonstrates how to care for the pets that live inside his mouth.

4. Claiming Los Angeles (2002, 2 minutes, 28 seconds)

"I want to claim this land for Buffalo!" yells Conrad, the antagonist of this work of flash docufiction. "All this land and its contents and its inhabitants should be owned by everyone—by the suburban territory of Buffalo!"

5. Scanty Claus (2002, 6 minutes, 49 seconds)

"I wore a wig and presented myself as Mrs. Claus, who had to stay at home while Santa went out and played havoc all over the world with everybody's wives. That was basically the theme—she's sitting home, knitting, and jealous and furious that he's out all over the place while she has to stay home. And it's really funny. I sent it to a few friends at the time, but I mean, what is this? Is this deep? No, this isn't deep, it's fun."

—Tony Conrad

6. Grading Tips for Teachers (2003, running time: 13 minutes, 50 seconds)

Conrad performs grading tips for teachers in a series of tutorials.

7. Landscape Is a Wish for Motion (2003, 4 minutes, 5 seconds)

Conrad speaks of choreography and movement as a film of his son Ted is projected on his mouth.

8. Putin's Gas Station (2003/2010, 4 minutes, 57 seconds)

Conrad visits a Lukoil gas station at 24th Street and 10th Avenue in New York City owned by Russian President Vladimir Putin on the day after it opens.

9. Fear (2003/2010, 5 minutes, 37 seconds)

"*Fear* interweaves the collective fears after September 11, 2001, with the (anxious) external observation of the body (using glasses, magnifying glass, and camera) to indicate the (growing) observation of society. The collective concern breaks down in the privacy and fear of losing one's body or one's belongings."

—Tony Conrad

10. I've Never Been . . . (2003/2011, 3 minutes, 20 seconds)

. . . *in love like this before* . . . with an original, experimental rendition of a folk song. Vocals accompanied by guitar, as a circling camera records.

11. Indirect Measurement (2004/2011, 7 minutes, 45 seconds)

Hypnosis via minimal music with a wire, a bow, and a vibrating mirror.

12. In Santa Fe with Tony Conrad and Steina Vasulka (2004/2011, 4 minutes, 8 seconds)

An experimental work that features a bowed string performance by Conrad and Steina Vasulka that was processed in real-time.

13. Good Day, Bad Day (2006, 1 minute, 55 seconds)

In this single-shot short, Conrad's camera points out the window of an unknown Karlsruhe locale. Setting up dichotomies and playing with perspective, he pans up and back down again repeatedly to reveal a scene with a sky above that looks inviting and bright, and a world below that's rainy and dark.

14. A Handful of Earth and a Box (2008, 7 minutes, 50 seconds)

Conrad takes a walk around Vienna Central Cemetery with Angharad Davies and Tim Parkinson, visiting the graves of Ludwig van Beethoven, Arnold Schönberg, Franz Schubert, and more. (Sometimes even—or especially—death needs an audience.)

15. Walking to the Sun (2009, 3 minutes, 45 seconds)

Conrad ruminates on life and death as he walks out of his apartment on Leonard Street through the neighborhood and toward the sun.