

"Alex MacKenzie's Parallax is a stereoscopic improvisation of found and self-shot black and white film footage, hand-processed or re-purposed, set to a phantom electronic score. Combining technical dexterity with turntable precision and timing, MacKenzie coaxes twin analytic projectors through a wide-ranging repertoire of optical whimsy, including coloured gels, hand-masking, variable speeds, superimposition, flicker and single framing. Foregrounding the projectionist (played by himself) as a visible actor, the film-event has a uniquely performative gesture, tempting and sustaining antique machines on the edge of failure. The outcome: An ephemeral highwire track through the cinematic unconscious and an elegy to 16mm's passing future. Amid the increasingly commodified, rhythmically challenged, digital age of projected images, MacKenzie exhibits genuine commitment to film's outmoded apparatus, material fragility and musical cadence. Parallax is cinema to be played (with); it requires a different kind of engagement, in which the viewer becomes actively aware of celluloid's fleeting magic.

**(Brett Kashmere in Synoptique, March 2005)**



"Parallax, the recent double-projector performance film by Alex MacKenzie, was presented at the 21st Olympia Film Festival, in the intimate confines of The Mark, a speakeasy-style club generously offered as an art venue. Mackenzie used two aged, 16mm analyst projectors to create an overlapping map of visions that seemed to come at us from the screen and then take our sight through it to some deeper surface beneath. There are 3D films, which are viewed through glasses to create agonizingly perfect stereo-vision effects, and then there are "faux stereo" films, which use two projectors to create wildly new effects and stimulate similar sensations to those of actual 3D. The best of these works form lucid images in the mind, new thoughts, which is more than can be said for most cinema, which leads you through a story by the nose. Parallax is just such a lucid work, a kind of film-essay without words, and was accompanied by a beautiful abstract audio track which tied the two strings together.

Starting with a wide-screen, two-projection width, we were introduced to a series of lost and found images, loosely matched on left and right screens like out-of-synch binoculars. Slowly, MacKenzie slid the projections together and added rich gel colors to his black-and-white archive material. We witnessed housing developments being born and amphibians escaping sunlight under dense rainforest foliage. The projectors themselves behaved like unwilling beasts of burden, rattling and showing signs of failure, but somehow kept running by their operator as they chugged slow-motion forwards through one micro-history of nature-conquest after another. The film regularly threatened to fall apart in the machine. This kind of film is performed very few times and each performance is one-of-a-kind: the analyst projectors become harder to find and this original footage fades and falls apart. A philosophy of film lies behind such practice: that it is alive now, presented uniquely each time for its short life-run, and then disappears, lost."

**(Owen O'Toole, Olympia Film Festival Review)**