

50 years ago in the Journal

J. A. Maurer, "The Photographic Treatment of Variable Area Sound Films," June 1930

One of the most important of the problems which arise in the photographic recording of sound is that of defining for the film laboratory workman the procedure by which he will obtain the most satisfactory results. This problem as it presents itself in the case of the variable density record has been the subject of several papers which have been read before the Society . . .

[The variable area] record is much less critical in its requirements than the variable density type because there is no need to consider linearity in the photographic tone scale. Since the purpose of the film is merely to reproduce the profile, or outline, of the sound waves, the record is inherently free from non-linear distortion.

Discussion

Mr. E. D. Cook: I was very interested to hear this excellent paper by Mr. Maurer . . . In applying a name we ought to accept

the name from the ideal. In so far as the varying area is present, it only contributes distortion and it would seem desirable to stick to the older term "variable amplitude."

Mr. Taylor: I was going to endorse what Mr. Cook said until he called it "variable amplitude." Amplitude is measured in a great many ways. "Variable width" appears to be a better term.

Society Notes, June 1930

An interesting address was given by Will H. Hays, President of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc., in which he announced that he was authorized by President Hoover to state that arrangements are being made to preserve motion picture film records and the collaboration of the Society would be appreciated in making recommendations for the best method of preserving the film. President Crabtree replied that a committee would be appointed immediately in order to collaborate in this work.

Louis Malter, "Loudspeakers and Theater Sound Reproduction," June 1930

The ultimate goal in theater reproduction of sound motion pictures is the complete simulation in each part of the theater of the sound originally impinging upon the pickup microphone. This goal is at present far from having been achieved, one of the weakest links in the chain between sound striking the microphone and the sound impinging upon the ear of the auditor being the loudspeaker.

25 years ago

Donald G. Fink, "Color Television vs. Color Motion Pictures," June 1955

Color television and color photography today occupy an anomalous relationship. As industries they are sharp competitors, but as techniques they are partners. The competition stems from the struggle of television broadcasting and the motion-picture industry to acquire public following at each other's expense. Since neither side has any prospect of a permanent monopoly of good actors, directors or writers, the leaders of the two industries are paying a great deal of attention to technical methods, in the hope that by exploiting their re-



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spective media to the utmost they may acquire a competitive advantage. The wide screen, the increasing use of color, and the substantial effort to improve color film and processing are evidence that Hollywood is taking its techniques almost as seriously as its talent. In fact, in many of the late lamented experiments in 3-D production, the factor of talent was almost ignored.

William A. Price and Ernest H. Ehling, "Motion-Picture Photography in Guided-Missile Research," June 1955

The performance of experimental guided missiles can be most effectively evaluated through the use of the motion-picture type of instrumentation. At the Air Force Missile Test Center (AFMTC), Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, numerous types of cameras are utilized for this purpose, including several specially modified high-speed and normal-speed motion-picture cameras.

AFMTC fires missiles from the coast of Florida on a range extending through the British West Indies and terminating at Puerto Rico. The range provides missile contractors with a long-range, instrumented proving ground on which new missile models and modification to existing models may be tested. Photograph instrumentation is located at the launching site, along the missile flight path and the target area.

Book Reviews

Handbook of Animation Techniques

By Eli L. Levitan. Published (1979) by Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 135 W. 50 St., New York, NY 10020. 318 pp. Illus. 8½ × 11½. Price \$24.95.

It can be a great source of bewilderment to study the techniques of animation. Guides on the subject all seem to share one annoying attribute: after revealing the basics, they somehow fail to indicate how, exactly, the material is refined. All of us have at some time seen an advertisement which reads "Drawing Made Easy." Step one consists of two circles and one triangle. In step two can be seen a variety of circles, ovals, triangles, obelisks, and penciled shading (in which a vague figure can be discerned). Then *presto!* appears Renoir's *Le Moulin de la Galette!* Gone are the obelisks! Gone are the triangles, the circles, the ovals! The penciled shading has faded into obscurity, and we are left with the impression that it's really very easy except for that one minor operation in the end.

Though he shares this problem to some ex-

tent, Eli Levitan has, in fact, produced an informative, easy-to-read manual that is sure to be of use to the animator. Its strength lies in the emphasis on tools, procedures, special effects, and some aesthetic principles.

The author, besides being a member of the SMPTE, is a recognized consultant on animation and is associated with several leading production houses. He has received numerous industry awards including the coveted Clio. A man of his impressive credentials may stimulate greater interest in future editions by touching upon state-of-the-art computer graphics and video animation techniques. Another cause for dismay is that the poor quality of the illustrations may deter the otherwise interested reader from purchasing this book.

Yet it is important to note that the author, with 40 years of experience, has much to say that will apply to ancillary aspects of the trade. The book will arouse the interest of non-animation filmmakers who may be astounded at how much of the technical advice and attention to detail can be translated to other areas of motion picture production.

— Gary Rosenberger

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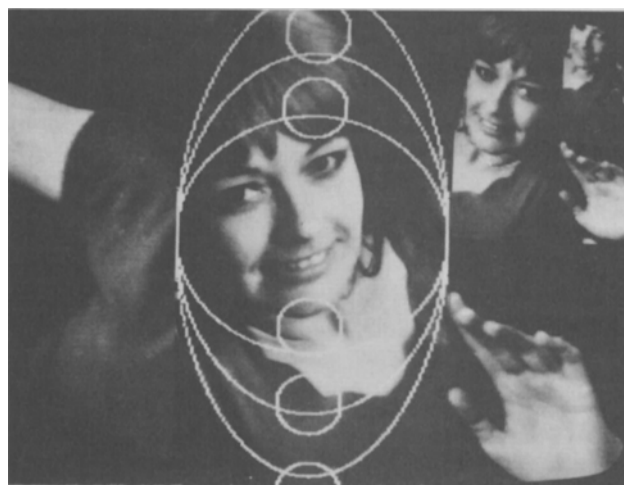
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