

(Re)performing the Archive: Barbara Lattanzi & Hollis Frampton in Dialogue

Chris Hill

Genealogies of performance...resist such erasures by taking into account the give and take of transmissions, posted in the past, arriving in the present, delivered by living messengers, speaking in tongues not entirely their own. Orature is an art of listening as well as speaking; improvisation is an art of collective memory as well as invention; repetition is an art of recreation as well as restoration. (Joseph Roach, 1995) [1]

1. Viewer as Editor, Archivist, Performer

I find I have email from Barbara Lattanzi with the URL of her project at www.wildernesspuppets.net. Her website presents her "idiomorphic software," a series of tools for improvising with digital video. I select *HF Critical Mass*, a real time performative instrument that specifically references the structuring principle of Hollis Frampton's 1971 film *Critical Mass*, one of the 7-part film series *Hapax Legomena* (1971-72) that announced his transition from photographer to filmmaker and investigated fundamental materials and strategies of the time-based medium he would continue to engage. I can now choose to download the *HF Critical Mass* software, examine its copyleft open source code, and/or read Lattanzi's remarks about how this software relates to Frampton's work.

Upon launching the *HF Critical Mass* software I am confronted by a black screen; rolling the mouse reveals a gadget that asks me to "select video," opening a dialog window, and enabling me to select a QuickTime movie clip from my local archive of digital media files. There are now three gadgets on the screen. One allows me to find a starting point within the QuickTime clip. The second engages me in performing the editing algorithm employed by Frampton in *Critical Mass* that, according to Lattanzi's introduction to the code:

...applies a playback pattern algorithm to the video sprite.--The pattern involves alternately moving the video forward a certain length - temporally playing point 'a'

to point 'c' - then-- jumping back (an instant "rewinding") to a point 'b' somewhere after point 'a' and proceeding then toward point 'd', then jumping back toward point 'c', proceeding toward point 'e', and so on. [2]

The third gadget toggles the visibility of the other gadgets on and off the screen. I have selected from my hard drive a media file containing unedited footage. In Frampton's *Critical Mass* this editing strategy was applied to a stationary camera's documentation of a couple's explosive argument, breaking up the progress of the narrative and creating a drifting disjunction between the sound and image. I explore Lattanzi's software instrument—changing the length of the sampling interval, reversing the direction of Frampton's sampled structuring gesture, adjusting the starting point in the QuickTime footage.

I am both user and viewer. My attention oscillates between learning what the instrument allows me to do and considering the media playing on the screen before me in response to my real time handling of the gadgets provided. I become involved with the ways in which this particular footage, interacting with the new structures delivered by the idiomorphic software, builds meaning. As I step back from the interface and consider the project as a maker (and curator) I am very interested in the required gesture of selecting clips from a digitized video archive or, as described by Lattanzi, "sampling from the raging flows of media detritus." [3] What intersection of chance and considered reflection determines the footage I choose to subject to Lattanzi's detoured instrument, which will in turn affect how I might play with that instrument? While it is not surprising to encounter appropriated media within a project, this project does not provide footage at all but rather a tool to retrieve footage. Within the contemporary digital environment, volumes of moving image files are only a few mouse clicks away, and Lattanzi's *HF Critical Mass* project insinuates that those seemingly infinite archives are just one more instrument on the computer's workbench.

The extensive domain of readily available media files, however, are not the only archives referenced. Lattanzi's idiomorphic software, by appropriating Frampton's editing strategy and coding its algorithm as an editing tool, also references the potential domain of retired and active media instruments and structuring strategies that might be accessed and re-configured within a digital environment. Through her direct references to Frampton's work, Lattanzi tactically dialogues with the media art discourse of the late 1960s/early 1970s. Her idiomorphic software tool shares with structural filmmaking (and many early video projects) of that era the desire to critique the industrial model of tool and content

development, to explore the construction of moving image media in generative ways other than narrative construction [4], and to engage the viewer directly in the project of constructing meaning in the work. A text on Lattanzi's website states,

With its particular video improvisation interface, *HF Critical Mass* software mediates the narrative reading of moving images, an approach modeled by Hollis Frampton's film. It demos how this inter-active reading can shape, twist, morph and stress the particular temporal passage belonging to the viewer—that variously named "here-and-now" or "real time" during which the software is deployed. [5]

A few days after first working with the *HF Critical Mass* software I find in the mailbox a bubble wrap-padded envelope containing a VHS tape. Recorded is documentation of Lattanzi performing an earlier version of the *HF Critical Mass* software, this time bundled with other coded instruments and applied to selected clips from F.W. Murnau's 1922 film *Nosferatu* (with soundtrack by Hans Erdmann) as the archived media. That bundled project, called *Muscle and Blood Piano* (2000) is included with the other idiomorphic software on her website. [6] Her use of the instrument to perform repeated gestures of moving forward and backward through the shots and sounds (e.g. scenes of a woman waking up, *Nosferatu* watching from afar, *Nosferatu*'s demise at sunrise) builds enormous tension and creates provocative phrasing. Her real time instrument allows for an intimate and intense relationship with the fractured, staggering narrative footage as images are glimpsed twice, three times, more, scrubbed back and forth. Gestures and edit points in the original footage are acknowledged, broken up and rephrased. Addressing the documentation of Lattanzi's performance on the monitor, I am aware that she is skillful with the digital tool she has coded (the one that I experimented with days earlier). She is also familiar with the nuances of the *Nosferatu* excerpts she has selected, both as modifiable footage and as available metaphors for film that invoke the power of projected shadows, phantoms, darkness and light.

As the documentation tape concludes, another image emerges: her performance clearly repositions the user of the *HF Critical Mass* as film editor. The user's experience with the software can easily be transposed into that of the filmmaker, sitting with rewinds, pulling the film strip back and forth over the lamp, developing an intimate relationship with the details of sounds and images, evaluating sequenced frames, and scrutinizing the pacing of a passage. Undoubtedly this attention to the gestures of the film editor is a bridge anchored to Lattanzi's own work in the 1970s and early 80s in film and filmic installation [7]. However in a recent on-line discussion Lattanzi articulated her active agenda for a

performative editor working in a contemporary digital environment replete with industrial editors and conventional montage:

...(W)hy is there not yet a viable discourse of "live" editing? The potential is there. Software can be written. Commercial software editing packages can be used "wrong". Musicians are (badly) doing it. Vjays are testing it, but subordinating it to music. Where is the clumsy, awkward video amateur who understands the new potential of the Act of editing as an interactive Mode of Projection by and with the audience? [8]

Lattanzi's gesture in *HF Critical Mass* of privileging the user as performative (film) editor is also in dialogue with the working practice of Frampton. In writing and interviews he repeatedly states the importance of watching film both projected and at the editor's bench on rewinds, so that the viewer might apprehend the work, hunt for its structures, and confirm its materiality. In fact, in the opening anecdote in *Ox, House, Camel, Rivermouth*, Frampton's preface to his collected essays *Circles of Confusion* (1983), he recalls that experience:

Taking the film from the projector, mounting it on rewinds, removed it from serial, spectatorial time and returned it to a randomly accessible space, a skeletal emulation of the conditions under which it had been made, wherein, I expected, the postulates of its montage were sure of retrieval by a method that begins in imitation of a feral hunter, in search of traces of its prey, lacing a terrain with its own invisible pathways,...and culminates, it is imagined, in the exemplary historical certitudes of autopsy. [9]

In Lattanzi's digital reconfiguration of Frampton's editing tool she has paradoxically conjured up a way to re-experience and celebrate, if not the materiality of the filmstrip specifically, at least the viewer's awareness of handling media in ways that are particular to working with film at an editing bench. And further, she has coupled that re-education with editing as live performance within a contemporary digital environment.

In connection with her project *Surface Tension: Applied Memory Mutation Software* (another bundled version of idiomorphic software, also referencing a Frampton film and available at her website) Lattanzi writes:

Interactivity as a form of presentation and projection takes montage "out of the

closet" and makes the interpretive act of editing coincide with the moment of viewer reception. Software construction offers a form of aesthetic-cultural practice which involves the staging of intensified forms of perception. [10]

2. 1971-2002, Speaking Across the Distance of Time

In Frampton's essay *For a Metahistory of Film: Commonplace Notes and Hypotheses*, written in 1971, the same year that he made the film *Critical Mass*, he addresses the filmstrip as part of an ongoing "metahistorical" film project:

There is no evidence in the structural logic of the filmstrip that distinguishes "footage" from a "finished" work. Thus, any piece of film may be regarded as "footage," for use in any imaginable way to construct or reconstruct a new work. Therefore, it may be possible for the metahistorian to take old work as "footage," and construct from it identical new work necessary to a tradition... [11]

While Frampton describes and seems to welcome the now familiar cultural gesture of appropriating images and sound from the fabric of the mediated world as productive art historical statements, Lattanzi's radical gesture in *HF Critical Mass* is not to sample Frampton's footage but rather his 1971 editing algorithm and turn it into an elegant digital instrument. Her insight continues in dialogue with Frampton, and particularly with his 1971 writings and work. With its inclusive references to the histories of instruments, structuring strategies and archives of footage, Lattanzi's project can be understood as reconfiguring Frampton's visionary film "machine" with its many "parts," proposed in *For a Metahistory of Film*. In that essay in the service of addressing the history of film, Frampton traces a series of events from the history of science, mathematics and literary culture that made possible the invention of photography. Then in articulating the domain of his metahistorical film project, he first imagines the mathematically approached concept of an "infinite" film:

The infinite film contains an infinity of endless passages wherein no frame resembles any other in the slightest degree, and a further infinity of passages wherein successive frames are as nearly identical as intelligence can make them. [12]

Enlarging on this assumption he theorizes an expanded film "machine," the domain of his

stated metahistorical project of identifying fundamental principles and attaching value to the better part of a century of filmmaking. He continues:

We are used to thinking of the camera and projector as machines, but they are not. They are "parts." The flexible film strip is as much a "part" of the film machine as the projectile is part of a firearm. The extant rolls of film out-bulk the other parts of the machine by many orders of magnitude, since all the "parts" fit together, the sum of all film, all projectors, and all the cameras in the world, constitutes one machine... which is by far the largest and most ambitious single artifact yet conceived...If we are indeed doomed to the comically convergent task of dismantling the universe, and fabricating from its stuff an artifact called *The Universe*, it is reasonable to suppose that such an artifact will resemble the vaults of an endless film archive built to house, in eternal cold storage, the infinite film. [13]

Frampton's mathematically inspired art historical poetics grounds moving image making in the materiality of ubiquitous filmstrips and footage, and it might be assumed that his investigation into moving image media would also eventually embrace videotape, and even digital media files. Together with all footage he includes all the cameras, projectors, and now digital tools that might continue to be produced and circulated. His "film machine" is a living archive of footage, apparatus, and the history of the practice of producing moving image culture. In the early 1970s, as Frampton moved from photography to film, both his writing and work in film resonate in attempts to address the history of filmmaking which he clearly felt to be a critical, all-consuming cultural project. *Hapax Legomena* (1971-72), the series in which *Critical Mass* (1971) is one of the early works, includes *nostalgia* (1971) and five other films. Each of the films in the series addresses a specific condition of cinematic representation and construction of meaning in time-based work; the Greek term hapax legomenon refers to words that are only used once in a work.

In her dialogue with Frampton Lattanzi has extended the metahistorical film project into the digital realm, and in so doing resituated Frampton's concept of the expanded film "machine" with its infinite "parts" in the digital moment. In an earlier gesture, Frampton's meta film project anticipated the necessary appropriations that would make such a future dialogue possible and productive. Like Frampton, Lattanzi's contemporary repositioned film apparatus both insinuates the extensive archive of instruments and structuring strategies and requires that users address existing archives of moving image and sound. The tenet of 1960s-70s structural filmmaking that "understanding a modernist work is the

equivalent of seeing how it was made" [14], reflected in Frampton's insistence on looking at the filmstrip as well as the projected film, is echoed in Lattanzi's contemporary open source coding and invocation of the viewer as editor. Both artists specifically encourage their viewers to be in dialogue with the tools, codes and the footage they have created or accessed; both privilege the viewer's discovery of meaning and education through an active engagement with the work. Lattanzi, by re-articulating Frampton's metahistorical film machine—a project that aspired to address the history of mediamaking,—interacts with him meaningfully across a generation of practice with its technological and aesthetic shifts.

3. (Re)collected and (Re)performed Archives [15]

Lattanzi's artist statement *We Are All Projectionists* was posted on her website as supporting text for a performance of idiomorphic software at Hallwalls in Buffalo (2002). The occasion was the 10th anniversary of the successful defense of women's abortion and reproductive health clinics in that city, and Lattanzi used archived demonstration footage shot by Buffalo pro-choice media activists in her performance there. *We Are All Projectionists* references Frampton's memorable lecture/performance of the elemental vocabulary of film projection, reproduced in *Circles of Confusion* (1983) as *A Lecture*. Lattanzi's statement addressed her project's relationship to voluminous media archives in an "ongoing process of deferred completion," media archives such as the Buffalo activists' video witnessing material.

The Cultural Producer who samples from the raging flows of media detritus - endless satellite feeds, cable and broadcast transmissions, and the sedimentary layers of these through the past 25-50 years - becomes the heroic Luther, wresting deconstructive (re)form(ation)s out of the desolately formless industrial wasteland...These ubiquitous archives - home movies, surveillance, porn, editing out-takes, activist interventions, agit-prop, and video witnessing - are not forms that deconstruct themselves, but forms molding forms in an ongoing process of deferred completion, passed on from one Projectionist to the next, generation after generation. (16)

As footage or work in a state of "deferred completion" Lattanzi references the archived media's availability for access by some future users, and also shares a sensibility with Frampton about a larger film "machine" or media historical field with which these living

archives are poised for potential dialogue. However appropriated or engaged by new instruments or users, Lattanzi understands this footage to be inherently incomplete, awaiting new performative gestures, and apparently future "projectionists" who might recollect these partial traces of former cultural economies, the frayed fabric of other media cultural scenes anxious to be reintegrated to cultural discourse.

The performance of Lattanzi's live editing tools opens up an array of potential gestures—not only deconstructive commentary derived from the references to past cultural practices, but also generative gestures in the contemporary digital environment. Insisting on her instrument's performance with an essentially unlimited archive of footage, Lattanzi opens her practice to Cage-like aleatory gestures, welcoming, like Frampton, the "improvisations, sheer accidents, indeterminacies" [17] always available, but also specifically situated in a digital environment where anonymity, the collapsing of great distances, and the elementary ease of making an exact copy create new forms of digital dispersal. In a recent interview about media education, she asserts:

I would rather make my own software (what I term "idiomorphic software") because the commercial software comes at a price. The price has less to do with money and more to do with a different process of abstraction: the active framing of my work within consideration dictated by irrelevant practices of Design. I make clear with students that I'm not interested in their Design "clarity" and "precision" but in their discovering productive ambiguities. This is much harder...the students are learning to make space for ambiguities, mistakes, clumsiness, lucky accidents and so do-it-yourself aesthetics...Only then is a technology (as a cultural production) truly matured. [18]

As a live editor, the contemporary user addresses access to not only the moving image media archives situated in vaults or personal hard drives, but also the possibility of intercepting the moving, flowing bundles of images—collections that are in constant motion on the net, modulated into broadcastable waves, and bounced off of satellites. Archives of images may register in various collective or personal attentional modalities, and through those same modalities be filtered, censored, forgotten. Most readers involved with media are familiar with the collections of established film archives and media distributors. Additionally there are many remarkable collections poorly marked and almost forgotten on dusty shelves. There are aging collections in the process of being indexed, whose future viability depends on public and private funding being applied to conservation efforts that will be critically applied by curators and gatekeepers, displaced

from the making of the work by perhaps a generation or more. The cultural politics of new media coding, also in states of deferred completion, are actively being shaped in the contemporary scene that ranges from celebrations of open source to draconian copyright legislation such as the (U.S.) Digital Millennium Copyright Act [19].

Negotiations with images, sounds, and codes shift perceptibly as artists and audiences adjust personal and collective sense of their authorship, exchange value, and cultural relevance, as they ponder the images' aura or lack of it, the appropriative habits of artmaking over time, and the implications of cultural re-performance. In 1983 Robert Horwitz, then a citizens' radio activist and arts editor of *Co-evolution Quarterly*, spoke on a panel with other film/video makers and art magazine editors narrowcast on public access cable TV in New York. He observed that at some undetermined distance from the making of the work, gatekeepers such as curators, editors, distributors, and server administrators, not artists, emerge as managers of collections, archives that now exist as potentially or already digitizable commodities.

I'd much rather that people stopped thinking "what is the most useful or exciting or creative way that I can relate to this technology," regardless of whether the results are art-like or not, or whether the art world acknowledges it or not. If people did that I think they might find that the most exciting, useful, empowering ways [to relate] might not be anything like producing specific concrete, program-like events... [I]t is the gatekeepers to the distribution channels—the curators, the dealers, critics, and editors—who wield the power...When I look closely at the things that I enjoy most about access to new communications technology, what is most empowering and unique is having access to a huge array of inputs and outputs and being free to choose among them. Access means the right to send and to receive, to produce and to consume, with equal emphasis on each mode...I don't think it is any accident that the three of us up here have gravitated to the role of editor as the most creative and empowering position in an information rich environment. [20]

There are other artists who, like Lattanzi, could be described as being involved in projects that perform archives and/or who create or modify instruments that perform variously accessed footage. [21] Steina Vasulka, a contemporary of Frampton whose early 1970s work with partner Woody Vasulka structurally investigated the video signal, uses in her recent performances a MIDI violin to "play" video footage, usually from personal archives, accessed and modified by her active bowing. Lattanzi's live editing instrument also shares a media performance context with the recent wave of consumer-oriented v-

jaying (video d-jaying) software, applied to video footage in a music concert or club context. Lattanzi, however, asserts resistance to the effects of commercial development where the coding and a history of the tool remain for the most part remote, denied or ignored. Lattanzi comments on writing code:

Software-making, in this sense, resists the generic development approach of digital video editing "tools" which subordinate the expansive potential of Interactive Modes of Projection to the Industrial Mode of Montage.[22]

The tactical "dialogue" that has been used to reference the intergenerational exchange between Lattanzi and Frampton in this essay is a specific reference to Woody and Steina Vasulka's articulation of their work with the video signal and custom built or personalized video instruments in the early 1970s as "dialogues with tools." [23] Commonly the Vasulkas' tapes took the form of documentation of their demonstrations or performances of the video signal in combination with instruments developed or modified through collaboration with independent engineers. Like Frampton, who envisioned film apparatus and footage as part of an ongoing film machine and projection project, the Vasulkas articulated their work as entering into an active relationship with tools that generated, modified, routed and displayed the video signal. It was routine for the Vasulkas to credit the tool developers and independent engineers within their early work. In 1992 the Vasulkas curated an exhibition for Ars Electronica where many important early video instruments were rehabilitated and reconsidered from the distance of almost three decades [24]. In a recent interview Woody Vasulka comments on their early projects:

Our work are forms of demos, artifacts. They were never intended to be compositions...We're both from socialist countries. The transmission of knowledge is important. [25]

Lattanzi's project, along with Frampton's vision, and the Vasulkas' work share an interest in the transmission of knowledge, and to the generative potential of (re)collected archives of recorded footage, machines, and structuring codes in various states of completion.

Through idiomorphic software, Lattanzi toggles back and forth in dialogue with Frampton through film, analog and digital video, and HTML and net-based practice, throwing open and peering through the gates of footage, instrument, and code archives. In an observation offered in the mid-1970s, Frampton again contributes to this dialogue, speculating on how memory processes images and codes in an increasingly image-

saturated world, and on our evolving human capacity to negotiate them:

Well, there are reasons that language has been the dominant code in the culture for so long. One of them is its enormous parsimony. One reads only to recall the set of symbols, or the code, and the code itself indexes the culture. The image does not have that kind of parsimony. Images have been around for a long time, but for only a few hundred years in anything remotely like the plethora that we now have them. For hundreds of thousands of years there was no adaptive value for human beings at all in developing the power to recall unparsimonious codes. Now, on the other hand, there is a strong adaptive value, a survivor value, in the ability to recall images in their entirety; but we haven't had very much time to select ourselves for that ability. Presumably, if the hard image persists, we will do that in time, though I have a sneaking suspicion that we may not, because electronic imagery, which is for all practical purposes in this culture nothing more than television, has fallen into such a rigid spatial typology that the images are not memorable at all. They are the most evanescent kind of consumer product. [26]

4. Critical_Mass_Idiomorphic_Software_Digitally_Dispersed

In a classroom, with a few students and friends invited to watch Frampton's film *Critical Mass* projected, I am quickly absorbed by multiple tasks: anticipating and apprehending its staggering rhythms that persistently disrupt the narrative, an argument between a woman and a man, as well as the variable syncing of sound and image that shifts over the film's four sections. While the film's structure demands careful attention, the explosive argument, formally fractured, remains deeply affecting. The film offers a compelling music of fragmented and rephrased emotional exclamations through a concatenation of elemental domestic accusations, while at the same time teasing the critical viewer who might wrestle ecstatically with the catholic project of the narrative. Scott MacDonald points out, "Ironically, Frampton's heavy manipulation of both sound track and image creates one of the most believable arguments I've ever seen enacted in film." [27]

Frampton's own description of the process of shooting the film makes it clear that the performances were both appreciated and staged:

I asked around the film department [SUNY Binghamton], which was well populated

by volatile personalities, for the names of the two people, the man and the woman, that by consensus were judged most likely to fly off the handle...I asked them if they would be willing to do it and gave them a set of conditions—namely, that they had been living together for about six months, that he had disappeared for a weekend and refused to offer any explanation...It was one take. It was also the first time, and the only instance in a film released so far, that I used lip sync...Barbara is a volcano of energy, a young woman with astounding powers of projection. When she finally saw the film, she was, to my regret, deeply troubled by it. I don't know why. If I had delivered myself of an interlude of that magnitude, under conditions of such sanity and control, I would consider it one of the grand achievements of my life. It's a Mediterranean rage... [28]

Critical Mass is both intensely rigorous in exercising an editing strategy that breaks up an apparent narrative, and sublime in delivering to the viewer an intimate awareness of her or his own strategies for integrating the editing algorithm with the effects of its structuring. The varieties of experience available upon viewing *Critical Mass* are rich and affecting, but require active work on the part of the viewer.

One of the things that goes on in *Critical Mass* (this is also true of much of the rest of my work and of work by others that I admire) is a process of training the spectator to watch the film. The work teaches the spectator how to read the work. [29]

Frampton further asserts his expectations of viewers as self-educators in his response to a question about his intentions at a screening with a restless audience:

...My idea of communication is very different. It involves my trying to say something I think is important and into which I have put all my thought and substantial labor. Necessarily, what I have to say will be difficult to apprehend, if it is original enough to be worth saying at all. That is my half of the communicative process. Yours must be to sensitize and educate yourself fully enough to be able to understand. It is only when two people—filmmaker and viewer in this case—can meet as equals that true communication can take place. [30]

Variations of this sentiment pervade Frampton's writing and interviews. While speaking about the time-based conundrum presented in an earlier film *Heterodyne* (1967), Frampton could be referring to the filmmaker working with film on rewinds:

Once again, the real protagonist, the 'first struggler', is the spectator, who is always trying to retrieve why the last event looked the way it did and to anticipate when the next one will come and what it will look like. [31]

Both of the films he made in 1971, *nostalgia* and *Critical Mass*, deal with the apprehension of time as anticipation and review. Both films deny the apparent narrative its authority, and exercise the viewer's agency in experiencing variations on the theme of re-collecting, looking back and moving forward, or in the case of *nostalgia*, moving forward and looking back. While *Critical Mass* studies a particular progression algorithm as a time-based project applied to a compelling but faked story, *nostalgia* uses a related staggered structure to examine Frampton's own recent past as a photographer, as the artist's photographs are placed on the coil of a hot plate and slowly burned. Bruce Jenkins' describes the indexical structure of *nostalgia* :

With the exception of the first photograph, the images in *nostalgia* are destroyed in precisely the same order in which they had been created....In a now celebrated "structural" maneuver, Frampton staggers the reading of the voice-over narration so that the burning of this first darkroom image is accompanied on the soundtrack not by a commentary on what we see, but rather by a text which describes the next image in the film...This dislocation of image and sound throughout the film achieves (by means of an anticipatory structure) an elegant linkage of the disparate array of images, whose ordering might otherwise lack motivation. More significant, though, is the way in which the staggering device allows the viewer to experience the film in a mnemonic manner so that, for example, when the image of Andre appears on the screen/burner, we necessarily identify it as an index of the past (albeit for us the immediate past experience of hearing the descriptive commentary) and therefore make of the appearance an occasion for recollection. [32]

In "training" to watch Frampton's films the viewer engages in an ongoing process of construction and reevaluation. The film strip is pulled directionally through the projector but making sense of his films often involves, like working with a film strip, reshuffling observations, venturing hypotheses, testing those hypotheses, and refining insights. The two films completed in 1971, *nostalgia* and *Critical Mass*, provide the viewer as protagonist with rehearsals for the performance (and re-performance) of Frampton's metahistorical film project.

In *A Lecture* (the lecture/performance referenced in Lattanzi's statement *We Are All Projectionists*) Frampton, refers to himself in the third person (as "he" who performs the roles of both filmmaker and projectionist). In order to demonstrate that his work as an artist is less about self expression and more about "recovering the fundamental conditions and limits of his art" he explains that he has removed his own voice from the demonstration. He concludes with a gesture that assures his participation in the dialogue Lattanzi has instigated:

For the sake of precision and repeatability, he has substituted a tape recorder for his personal presence—mechanical performer as infallible as the projector behind us...And to exemplify his conviction that nothing in art is as expendable as the artist himself, he has arranged to have his text recorded by a different film-maker, whose voice we are hearing now. [33]

The student/viewer of Frampton's 1971 projects—*Critical Mass, nostalgia* and *For A Metahistory of Film* and the user/performer of Lattanzi's idiomorphic software has experienced an algorithm that facilitates his or her grappling with a fractured historical discourse—moving forward only to be abruptly repositioned in the past, moving forward again through the "just past" to be confronted with familiar images, words, sounds, codes, gestures that will be recontextualized by the next lurch into the future where again the viewer/protagonist, accompanied by future artists, will attempt to construct meaning, reflect on learning, and experience new affective states. In that disorienting scrubbing or scratching back and forth across time, with which the viewer has now become familiar, it appears that Lattanzi's software, by sampling Frampton's editing code, has translated Frampton's film and reflected his meta film "machine" project in the digital present.

But the code for Lattanzi's idiomorphic software, however present, functions as part of an apparatus that is standardized only for the moment. Her *HF Critical Mass* code, dependent on now widely available operating systems, will eventually fall victim to code rot, an incompatibility with the next better machine. Lattanzi's gesture, in fact, is more cogent as part of an ongoing dialogue with Frampton. Frampton's film, that heavy, material ribbon wound up in a metal can that takes up space on the shelves of the Filmmakers' Coop, may paradoxically become the index for Lattanzi's elegantly coded software in the future. Whatever the projects' respective archival conditions in the near or distant future, Lattanzi's re-collecting of *HF Critical Mass* remains a component of the anticipated performance over time of Frampton's meta film "machine," a project he authorized for himself in 1971. And Lattanzi's idiomorphic editing instruments, by

insisting on re-productive and generative real time performance, affirm her openness to chance encounters, digital dispersion, even erasures, and the value of an engaged dialogue about media art that is grounded in media making and its public performance. The dialogue continues.

Footnotes

1. Joseph Roach, "Culture and Performance in the Circum-Atlantic World,," in *Performativity and Performance*, Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, editors. New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 61.
2. Barbara Lattanzi, <http://www.wildernesspuppets.net>, 2004.
3. Barbara Lattanzi, <http://www.wildernesspuppets.net/yarns/writing/projectionists.html>, 2004.
4. For a discussion of Hollis Frampton's observations about narrativity and film see his essay "A Pentagonam for Conjuring the Narrative," in *Circles of Confusion* (1983).
5. Barbara Lattanzi, www.wildernesspuppets.net/yarns/hfcriticalmass, 2004.
6. See also on Lattanzi's website in the "interactive demos & applets" menu *The Letter and the Fly* and *Startled*, both with provocative commentary and editors, using footage from F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu*.
7. See listing of her new media projects, videotapes, multimedia installations, and films in "Vita" on Lattanzi's website <http://www.wildernesspuppets.net> . Filmic/multimedia installations include *Double-Cross* (1983), *Life of the Party* (1983), *ENTHUSIASM* (1987), and *Unarmed Target* (1988-90).
8. See Lattanzi's contribution to the threaded discussion hosted by *Lossless Video* on the subject "Time, Video, and Osnabrueck's Media Art," archived at <http://bbs.thing.net>, 2002.
9. Hollis Frampton, "Ox, House, Camel, Rivermouth," *Circles of Confusion*. Rochester,

NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1983, p. 7.

10. Barbara Lattanzi, www.wildernesspuppets.net/yarns/surfacetension, 2004.

11. Hollis Frampton, "For A Metahistory of Film: Commonplace Notes and Hypotheses," *Circles of Confusion*. Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1983, p. 113.

12. Ibid, p. 114.

13. Ibid, p. 115.

14. P. Adams Sitney, "Circles of Confusion," *Millennium Film Journal*, No. 14/15 (Fall/Winter 1984-85), p. 13.

15. This third section has been re-edited since the first publication of this essay in *Millennium Film Journal*, Winter, 2003.

16. Barbara Lattanzi, <http://www.wildernesspuppets.net/yarns/writing/projectionists.html>, 2004.

17. Scott MacDonald, *A Critical Cinema: Interviews with Independent Filmmakers*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988, p. 31.

18. Keiko Sei, "Productive Unclarity: Interview with Media Artist Barbara Lattanzi," *Springer/in*, December, 2001 (see <http://springer.in.sil.at>).

19. See more discussion about the Digital Millennium Copyright Act at nettime archive at: <http://amsterdam.nettime.org>

20. Robert Horwitz, unpublished transcript from *Arts and Communication* (public access cable TV program, New York), 1983.

21. In October, 2001, the author curated the *Living Archives* symposium, part of the larger *Ready To...* conference (organized by Milos Vojtechovsky and Georg Dietzler), at the Center for Contemporary Art, Prague, which specifically featured artists involved with performing archives, as well as projects engaged in creating and sustaining media art scenes and archives (especially in east central Europe). See also author's presentation at

Demo or Die! conference, "Demonstrating the Archives" (organized by Barbara Lattanzi, Julia Dzwonkoski and Ghen Dennis at Squeaky Wheel, Buffalo, 2000).

22. Barbara Lattanzi, www.wildernesspuppets.net/yarns/hfcriticalmass, 2004.

23. Johanna Branson Gill, "Video: State of the Art," (published originally as a report for the Rockefeller Foundation, 1976), in *Eigenwelt der Apparate-Welt/Pioneers of Electronic Art*, Woody and Steina Vasulka, curators. Linz: Ars Electronica, 1992, p. 84. See this catalog and other archived material at: <http://www.artscilab.org>.

24. Woody and Steina Vasulka, curators; David Dunn, editor. *Eigenwelt der Apparate-Welt/Pioneers of Electronic Art*, Linz: Ars Electronica, 1992. This exhibition rehabilitated and presented many of the earlier video instruments, comments by instrument designers, and tape documents of video practitioners' early "dialogues" with those tools.

25. Chris Hill, curator's notes (referring to 1992 interview with Woody Vasulka) to "Program 5: Performance of Video Imaging Tools" in *Rewind: Video Art and Alternative Media in the U.S., 1968-1980*, Chris Hill, editor. Chicago: Video Data Bank, 1996. See also "Attention! Production! Audience!: Performing Video in its First Decade, 1968-1980," by the author in the internet journal *Massage*, v 1.01 (Winter, 1998) at: <http://nomadnet.org/massage.htm>.

26. MacDonald, op.cit., p. 65.

27. Ibid, p. 24.

28. Ibid, p. 66.

29. Ibid, p. 65.

30. James Peterson. *Dreams of Chaos, Visions of Order*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994, p. 2.

31. MacDonald, op.cit., p. 34.

32. Bruce Jenkins, "The 'Other Work' of Hollis Frampton: A Tour," in *Hollis Frampton Recollections, Recreations*, Bruce Jenkins and Susan Krane, editors. Buffalo, NY:

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, 1984, p. 15.

33. Hollis Frampton, "A Lecture," *Circles of Confusion*. Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, pp. 198-99.