

Where the Movement Comes From: A Study in Choreography

The Great Pumpkin Race, Emil Cohl / 1910, BW, silent, 5

In this film, very large flat-shaped pumpkins roll off a cart and around the streets. The rolling pumpkins are chased by a group of men and women (men in drag?), including a man pulling the donkey from the cart, through an inconceivable obstacle course throughout the city.

Bridges Go 'Round, Shirley Clarke / 1958, color, sound, 8

The stark elegance of the New York City bridge system, paired with an evocative period jazz soundtrack, creates a set of intricate sound-image relationships.

Annabelle Dances, The Edison Company / 1897, BW with hand-tinting, silent, 5

Female dancers dressed with butterfly wings; a dancer with voluminous skirts.

Awake, But Dreaming, Kerry Laitala / 2000, color, sound, 10

An empty arcing hallway shot from different angles, with repetitions from the optical printer that seem to serve as a metaphor for tunnels of the mind.

A Study in Choreography for the Camera, Maya Deren / 1945, BW, silent, 3

A dance film so related to the camera that it can exist only in this film. Of this title Deren wrote, "The movement of the dancer creates a geography that never was. With a turn of the foot, Beatty makes neighbors of distant places."

The Awful Backlash, Robert Nelson and William Allan / 1967, BW, sound, 14

"Probably the 'purest' movie ever made. A pair of hands patiently disentangles a knotted fishing reel. Little triumphs, little setbacks, a drama of human endurance. Some remarks on the track." -Anon

Latina Contortionist, American Mutoscope & Biograph Co. / 1905, BW, silent, 1

A woman in tights attempts to maneuver her body through a hoop that seems too small. She is able to do it because her body is double-jointed.

Rainbow Dance, Len Lye / 1936, color, sound, 6

Experimentation with BW footage colored by manipulating the three matrices of the Gasparclor 3-color separation system. Dancer Rupert Doone appears as a silhouette performing various actions against stylized backgrounds. Music by Rico's Creole Band.