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All of my dreams are short films. Last night I had this dream that I'm living in a world where there's just two kinds of people, bodies and minds. Somewhere a bell rings and the whole world stops for recess so we all run out of school heading for the wall on the other side of the vard. I can feel my leas growing as I run and with one giant step I'm there, I'm at the wall watching everyone race towards me. That's when I realize, omigod, I'm a body.

fee shop in the wrong end of Paris when they first started showing films in public. And the film they showed that night, the one that came before all the rest, seemed to contain all of the short films that would come after, because every medium, like the people who go to live there for a time, carries its inventory in a mark or sign, like a fingerprint that traces DNA lines about the contours of the thumb. And it was the same with this short film, the first film ever shown, it seemed to us when we finally saw it, like an act of writing, as if we were reading the writing on the wall of all that was to come. That every desire awakened in us by the cinema is already here in miniature, inscribed in the movements of a seeming chance encounter between the gestures of work and the gestures of love, between the trains of funerals, marriages, and

transport and a text which had come to be written in the body itself. Already in this first writing of light there is a concern with the autograph, the signature and the destiny of the name. Lumière in France means light, and it's as if they could only complete the sentence that began with their own naming by beginning a medium which does little more than vary the play of light against a wall, a wall which they call in French, le mur, the wall, l'amour, the wall of love. And all of the filmmakers that would succeed them. who would try to make a name themselves in this light reading would marry their Christian names with those of the Lumière brothers, the twins of light, whose pictures always double their subject and whose image or imagination would soon make doubles of us all.

When I hear the words short film, I wonder short of what? There's a kind of despondency to the term. a defeated air that hangs around it that smells distinctly, well it smells Canadian somehow, It's a kind of confirmation of inadequacy, not so much a statement as a shrug. Movies are short only in relation to other movies which aren't. The "short film" implies something else, something much longer, something that isn't just "short." And you want to know, we all want to know, where the rest of it is, because that is just a short form, an abbreviation, an acronym. We know that when we watch it, the short film, we are watching something missing, we are watching a part of something, and we can't help wondering where the rest is.

one-short and simple. It showed a train arriving at a station, while folks who worked in the factory of the Lumières poured out of the factory gate, waiting for a ride home. When we look at this first film of the Lumières we feel that something is missing. something has been left out. Where are the gestures of work, of the factory? We look into the image of evidence of its passing, and realize that the brothers of light have left nothing out after all. that in order to show us the terrible effects of their machines we need only to witness the workers themselves. They bear the writing of the machine not simply in its hours of operation, but in their moments of leisure, in their unthinking stroll between factory and home. The Lumière's turn an unerring attention to the habits of the body, and find that everything is written there, every remark made in anger, every slight of childhood, every happiness and criminal intent. If only we knew how to read them. As the heads of the proletariat turn to the revolution of turbines and dynamos we understand that their walk is nothing less than a march of progress, inscribed for the benefit of future generations. They are the hieroglyph of industrial culture, written now not in the stones of pyramids but in flesh and bone. Here is the first great legacy of the brothers: to begin a public study of the human body, by projecting its parts as large as possible in dark houses of learning across the world, repeating the same gestures time and time again, until we could unravel the fathomless mystery of our own flesh.

The first film ever made, ever shown, was a short

from an address to the First Annual Toronto Worldwide Short Film Festival

by Mike Hoolboom

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Some days when I go out I fall in love with everyone I meet-do you get that? The way the streetcar driver calls out the name of your stop or the way someone's hair gets caught in the revolving door, there's just some days you wake up and everyone is impossibly beautiful so you know that while you've been dozing off they've been up all night on the stair master, the tummy tucker, the waist watcher, and you walk down the street with these gods all around you and think that you don't have to die to go to heaven after all, sometimes just a membership at the "Y" will do. All day long you feel that you've undertaken a perilous descent because you're falling, falling in love, so it's a big relief when you can finally get home and shut the door behind you and as you're taking off the day's uniform you happen to catch a glimpse of yourself in the mirror and there you are all at once, you're one body, one person again. Your skin is like a force field, it's the place your personality returns to when it's tired of wanting to be a guitar hero or a fireman or the sex slave of the Minnesota Vikings, tired of finding yourself in all the movies you watch. When you say I like that movie, you really mean that's me there and then one day you discover short movies and you gorge on them, you watch one after another, somehow there is a perverse delight in being able to watch 20 or 30 movies in the course of a single afternoon. But after a time you grow confused, you have lived too many lives and the place between you and your image is growing dangerously narrow.

In the beginning there were only short movies, the camera wouldn't fit anymore, and the length of a film relied on the projectionist's patience-in the old days movies were worked by hand, and if the projectionist was bored, or drunk or had seen the print too many times, even a very long film could be turned quickly through the projector. In the early days of the movies, length was in the hands of the beholder.

Introducing yourself as a maker of short films-isn't this the same as admitting that you didn't make it, didn't go all the way, the odds were too great so you fell short, came up short? Was it because we were short-sighted, or short of the vision that would have made of our masterpiece a real movie, the kind of movie that wouldn't have to be prefaced with a shrug, it's short, it's a bit like saying I'm sorry, it's a bit like one of those things you apologize for to strangers, well after all you made the short list, or we'll get to you shortly, and if this keeps up you wonder whether you'll always end up on the short end.

Many books have been written about how to make movies, but few have been written about how to watch them. Fifty years ago a couple of surrealists devised a radical new movie-going method, so radical that it's taken nearly 50 years to catch on. Their means were simplewalk into a movie theatre ensuring that the film is somewhere in the middle, stay until the plot begins to make sense, then rush into the next available theatre and begin all over again. Today this celebration of fragments has become a way of life. Today we call it channel surfing.

short film, I wonder short for who? For all those people I keep reading about who have short attention spans-who can't be responding to these reports because they're post-literary. For those whose who are channel zappers all the world's a short film, which of course is never short enough-20 years ago you couldn't get enough of a good thing, but now you can't get little enough. The short film already implies too much commitment, it's still too much like getting married. What channel zapping has made possible is a glorious series of one night stands where the present is the only form of life, and the bodies never stop changing. Is this what Oppenheimer feared when he split the atom-that we would grow increasingly microscopic; that we would learn to live in smaller and smaller niches of time; that our nuclear arsenals signalled our inability to mourn because they implied that there would be no one left, no one left to turn the reels of the movie that would show everyone as they once were, bending in blue dresses to touch something, watching over the small movies of our lives, the small people we've become, huddled together in our private moments. Our movies mark the passage of time, they are time machines, machines built for mourning, and in some moments they are much of what stands between us and our need to obliterate everything, our need to begin again, to wipe the slate clean. There are two kinds of terror here, the terror of annihilation and the terror of remembering. Which will we find more painful? Or more seduc-

When I hear the words

ther. This addressee, quite simply the reading subj y oriented enti signifier in his relation to the text ject of narration and himse elation bety n a dvad (A hose two terms, communic m. The subject of narration , con tute code, to a nonperson, to as herefc re on ediated by a third per r, subje cter, the e. The writer is thus the ig included himself with 1 transfe ness nor anybody, but th m; he is om story to discourse and fr utation fr ymity, an absence, a blank spa . He bec s such At the very origin of Mike Hoolboom's *Red Shift* (2 min.): one of 38 short films Hoolboom has made since 1980

The first film ever made, ever shown, was a short one-short and s i m b i e