

Exhibition curated by Panel with Annette Lux and Steven Cairns

Exhibition design by Steff Norwood with Bernie Reid

Exhibition Graphic design by HIT

All films sourced from the BFI National Archive and the BUFVC

HILDA HELLSTRÖM

TRAVIS JEPPESEN

ROB KENNEDY

DANIEL PADDEN

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# HOUSE STYLE

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25 October 2013 – 19 January 2014 Tramway 5

STEVEN CAIRNS

# A VERY BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE CINEMAGAZINE

Cinemagazines or screen magazines, as they are also known, first appeared in British cinemas during the early half of the 20th century, proliferating after the Second World War and latterly becoming regular features on television, with many series broadcast into the late 1960s and early 1970s. These news-like programmes ranged in duration from a few minutes to half an hour and consisted of short segments that often focused on news items or lighthearted entertainment topics relating to everyday life in Britain. While titles such as Pathe Pictorial and Ace Cinemazine profiled news items and popular topics from Britain and abroad for British audiences, others such as Roundabout, London Line and Living Tomorrow were distributed to 'territories' further afield. These internationally distributed films projected an image of Britain to the rest of the world, and were predominantly produced by the Central Office of Information (COI), a government body founded after the Second World War in 1946 (officially ceasing activity in 2012 with its catalogue of over 20,000 films being passed to the British Film Institute (BFI)). The COI's films, commissioned by a variety of government agencies, aimed to promote Britain as a national brand, emphasising its pioneering industries, trade and cultural activities to overseas audiences including those of the Commonwealth, the Middle East and the USA among others.

These films are a product of Britain's efforts to construct a progressive image of itself as an innovative and industrious nation and they illustrate how perceived notions of industry and culture could be conveyed on film to promote understanding and trade between geographically diverse regions in the wake of the Second World War and the dismantling of the British Empire. The Technicolor series Roundabout (1962–74), produced by the COI is an example of such 'soft-

propoganda’, and forms the focus and source material for designer Hilda Hellström, writer Travis Jeppesen, artist Rob Kennedy and musician and composer Daniel Padden. The Roundabout series was distributed monthly and ran for over a decade. Unlike many of its sister cinemagazines, which were produced for a growing television audience, Roundabout was shot on 35mm film and distributed to cinemas in South and East Asia, to audiences in areas where television was still uncommon. The BFI’s recent restoration of the series’ 35mm elements sees over 600 segments of the long running cinemagazine freely available for the first time, catalogued online in partnership with the British Universities Film and Video Council. This resource provides a veritable treasure trove of high-quality material for new audiences as well as a rose-tinted glimpse at the Britain of the 60s and 70s.

### S o f t - p r o p a g a n d a   a n d   a n   i m a g e   o f   B r i t a i n

After over six decades we look at this ‘soft-propaganda’ with a degree of objectivity and can go some way to understating how an image of Britain was constructed and portrayed to the outside world in the 20th century. In exercising this hindsight we can question the material’s historical relevance and the political and social motivations incumbent in the series’ choices of subject matter and location of delivery. The glossy image of Britain that Roundabout paints is a far cry from the actuality of the country during the 60s and early 70s: Labour winning the General Election in March 1966, the Race Relations act of 1968, the Conservative’s electoral win in June 1970 and the Miners Strikes of 1972, all marking moments of significant change in Britain that are absent from the series’ content. Yet, the vision it does construct is a comforting and creative rendering of Britain’s potentials, as well as being a unique and visually stunning document of the countries industries, alongside those from further afield, also captured on film as propositions of cultural integration.

### H o u s e   S t y l e

For ‘House Style’ this archive material has been sifted and from it a refined number of clips selected for their subject matter, as well as their visual and contextual appeal, to be reinvented and responded to within the context of the exhibition. From the series’ first edition in 1962 to

its final installment in 1974, examples of how cultural identity can be understood and constructed through the promotion of industry and making are drawn upon by Hilda Hellström, Travis Jeppesen, Rob Kennedy and Daniel Padden, who take their lead from segments including 'Dress Show' and 'Make-Up' issue No.5 (1962), 'Plastics' issue No.12 (1963) and 'Fashion Model School' issue No.40 (1965). Adopting the medium of film they each, in different ways, recontextualise their subject matter. By manipulating sound and narrative structures, as well as their visual content, they make new connections and juxtapositions that question the role material objects and ideals play as signifiers of style and identity. Each approaching their chosen material from their respective practices as designer, writer, artist and musician they present a unique and varied experimental reading of the archival source footage.

From today's globalised and globally networked perspective, endeavours in national branding such as those represented by series' like Roundabout seem unsophisticated and transparent, artefacts of the pre-digital age; however, one feels a certain sense of nostalgia towards their cinematic means of distribution and the idealised representations of identity, industry and culture they portray. Looking back at such material opens up the possibility of its reimagining through generations of detachment: its lush colours and utopian or futuristic subject matter, optimistic by nature, are malleable to creative tinkering through the objectivity with which they are approached. With such exemplary material, parallels can be drawn between current systems and constructions of cultural identity that represent the dramatic extent of social and industrial change since the 60s. In examining these ideals Hellström, Jeppesen, Kennedy and Padden highlight changing attitudes while creating an alternative framework to present the viewer with a series of reinterpretations that draw together decades of technological, social and political divergence.

# HOUSE STYLE FILM PROGRAMME

Full Programme Running Time 20:00 minutes  
*The film programme runs on a continuous loop*

## AN ENGLISH MODEL

Daniel Padden

*Features 'Dress Show', Roundabout issue No.5, Central Office of Information UK, 1962.*

Anne-Marie Copestake (co-editor)

Ross McCrae (trombone)

Richard Merchant (trumpet)

Daniel Padden's new work undermines and usurps the original narrative structure of 'Dress Show', layering it within a new audio composition. Combining and collaging the original audio with traditional Burmese/Myanmar music (as well as some specially created new material), the new piece attempts to break the slick-yet-awkward set-pieces of the original, instead creating something more absurd, playful and chaotic.



Film credits:

'Dress Show', Roundabout issue No.5, Central Office  
of Information UK, 1962.

Courtesy BFI National Archive



'Dress Show', Roundabout issue No.5, Central Office  
of Information UK, 1962.  
Courtesy BFI National Archive

## EXPERIMENTS WITH PLASTICS

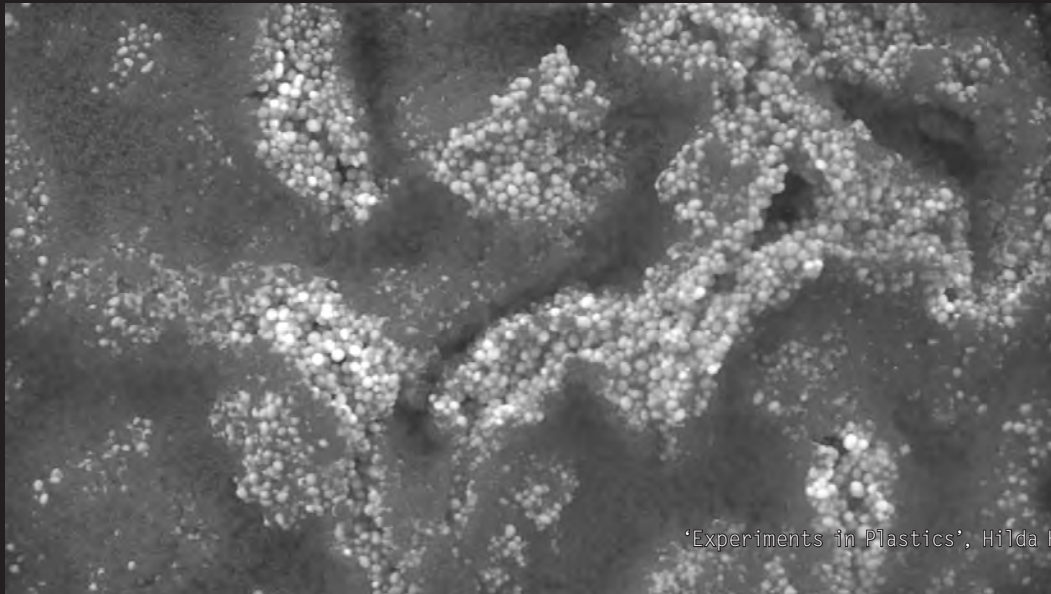
Hilda Hellström

*A response to 'Plastics' Roundabout issue No.12, Central Office of Information UK, 1963.*

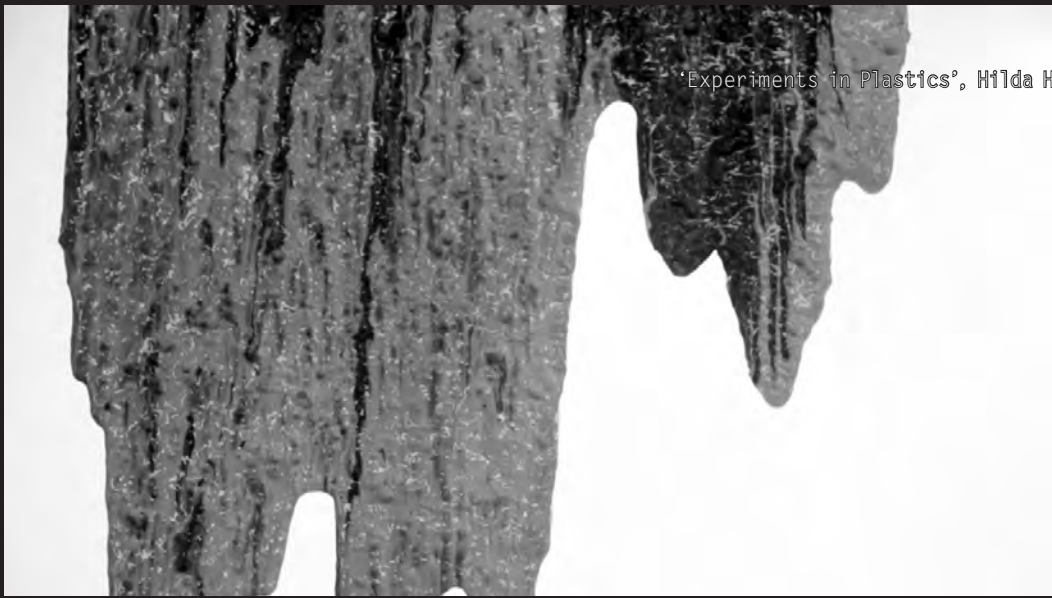
Eric Severin (editor)

Jakob Hvistendahl (sound)

Hilda Hellström considers the use of the moving image to shock, sway and seduce. In response to 'Plastics', she presents her own updated version of contemporary propaganda, focusing on her role as 'craftswoman' whilst drawing attention to the materiality and properties of plastic.



'Experiments in Plastics', Hilda Hellström, 2013.



'Experiments in Plastics', Hilda Hellström, 2013.



## I, AN OBJECT

Travis Jeppesen

*Features Roundabout issue No.40, Central Office of Information UK, 1965.*

Mario Dzurila (montage)

Snax (sound)

'Object-oriented writing' is Travis Jeppesen's term for his medium of a writing that is meant to inhabit – and thus potentially alter – pre-existing works of art, culture, and media. Housed somewhere among the fields of poetry, art criticism, and narrative – yet belonging to none of these domains – object-oriented writing is essentially a spectral practice of *über-authorship* or *over-writing* that enables new structures of meaning and entirely new works to emerge.

*I, an Object* entirely replaces the soundtrack of Jeppesen's 'Roundabout' selection with his own voice and narrative, thus producing a new film that is both detached from and serves as a subtle commentary on the propagandistic images comprising the episode.



'Fashion Model School' Roundabout issue No.40,  
Central Office of Information UK, 1965.  
Courtesy BFI National Archive



'Fashion Model School' Roundabout issue No.40,  
Central Office of Information UK, 1965.  
Courtesy BFI National Archive

## WHAT ARE YOU DRIVING AT?

Rob Kennedy

*Features 'Dress Show' and 'Make-up', Roundabout issue No.5, Central Office of Information UK, 1962 and 'Plastics' Roundabout issue No.12, Central Office of Information UK, 1963.*

Pete Dowling (software development)

Rob Kennedy explores aspects of power within the promotional feature, including expressions of technical innovation, cultural composition and image construction in contemporary media. With these relationships in mind, sound and image sampled from current television and internet sources interplay with footage from the 'Roundabout' series.



*'Plastics' Roundabout issue No.12, Central Office of Information UK, 1963.  
Courtesy BFI National Archive*



'Make-up', Roundabout issue No.5, Central Office  
of Information UK, 1962.  
Courtesy BFI National Archive



# INFORMATION

House Style is presented in partnership with Tramway.

T R A M W A Y

is an international art-space which commissions, produces and presents contemporary arts projects. It is Scotland's internationally acclaimed venue for contemporary visual and performing art. Tramway's reputation is founded upon a commitment to the presentation of the most innovative work by Scottish and international artists and the very distinctive architecture, character and history of the venue itself have ensured that Tramway is a unique place to produce and experience the best in contemporary art. [www.tramway.org](http://www.tramway.org)

All 'Roundabout' films sourced from the BFI National Archive and the British Universities Film & Video Council (BUFVC).

T H E B F I N A T I O N A L A R C H I V E

holds a magnificent collection of film and television, from the birth of cinema to today, as well as posters, images, publicity material, original scripts, letters and other artefacts. Concentrating on British titles, the archive carefully selects material for its collections, preserving, restoring and interpreting it to ensure our film heritage is widely accessible to public audiences.

Roundabout – 1963: A Year in Colour is available to buy on DVD from the British Film Institute.

H I L D A H E L L S T R Ö M

is a Swedish designer with a background in fine art. A recent graduate of the Royal College of Art's Design Products MA, she originally studied in Barcelona and Copenhagen before gaining a BA in Product Design from Beckmans College of Design, Stockholm.

Hellström's methodological approach as a designer is of a highly independent nature, often

craft-based, with a focus on process and a phenomenological examination of the themes behind the work. Preoccupied with things that shock and surprise, and in situations that elevate the soul, she likes to explore the notion of myth and investigate the narrative essential in objects. With this comes an interest in what constitutes our reality; subjective experiences, universal truths and what we classify as 'fake' in opposition to 'real'.

The daughter of a psychoanalyst and a carpenter, she describes herself as an 'analytic craftswoman'.

T R A V I S J E P P E S E N

is the author of five books, including *Wolf at the Door* and *Disorientations: Art on the Margins of the 'Contemporary'*. His play, *Daddy*, premiered at the HAU Theater in Berlin in 2009. His writing on art and film appears in *Artforum*, *Flash Art*, and *Art in America*, among other publications, and he regularly collaborates with visual artists. Jeppesen's new novel, *The Suiciders*, is published by Semiotext(e) in October 2013.

R O B K E N N E D Y

is an artist who lives and works in Glasgow. Kennedy's work shifts between sculpture, video and live video manipulation. His art uses film to physically manipulate material, language and time rather than acting as a framing device to view the world. He often collaborates with composers and musicians using techniques of improvisation both live and in the studio, to play with the generic conventions of television production.

D A N I E L P A D D E N

is a musician and composer based in Glasgow. His work covers a wide range of styles and forms and draws on an enormous variety of sound sources and instruments. He creates scores for theatre and live performance as well as for screen, often taking 'traditional' musical forms and creating music that is both reverential and sacrilegious. He is a member of the avant-experimental band Volcano The Bear, as well as founder of The One Ensemble.

A N N E T T E L U X

together with Lina Grumm are HIT, a graphic design studio driven by a strong interest in print media,

based in Berlin/London. Since 2008 they have worked for a broad range of clients, mainly on publications from the cultural field. With an intuitive sensitivity to their collaborators and subjects, HIT's practice focuses on the development of non-formalistic, conceptually inventive designs as much as on the quality of their work relations.

S T E V E N C A I R N S

is Associate Curator of Artists' Film and Moving Image at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. He recently coordinated the LUX/ICA Biennial of Moving Images 2012, curated Alma Mater (2011/12) a LUX annual touring programme of recent Moving Image from the UK and has contributed to numerous screening programmes and panel discussions. He is also a regular contributor to Artforum and Frieze among other publications.

S T E F F N O R W O O D

is a Glasgow-based artist who works between the disciplines of design and sculpture. A graduate in Sculpture from Edinburgh College of Art and MLitt Fine Art Practice from Glasgow School of Art, his work as a furniture maker is hybrid by nature, incorporating a singular aesthetic approach to furniture commissions, exhibition design and interiors.

Selected recent projects include: The Shop, Six Cities Design Festival, Aberdeen (2007); The Local, SWG3, Glasgow International (2008); Social Landscape, Glasgow International (2010) and The Common Light of Day, Intermedia (2011).

B E R N I E R E I D

incorporates highly skilled printing and stenciling processes in the production of his unique artworks and designs, which are inspired by sub-cultural fashion trends and their influence on an ever-evolving cultural and sartorial narrative in Scotland. Reid formed art-based interiors company Atelier E.B. in 2007 with designer Beca Lipscombe and artist Lucy McKenzie, with the intention of bringing fine art criticality into the realm of commercial design. Since graduating in 2011 with a degree in Fine Art Painting from Edinburgh College of Art, he has had a number of group and solo shows including an exhibition with Panel as part of the Merchant City Festival 2012 and most recently, Rugs al fresco, Lunatica for the Fiorucci Arts Trust, Stromboli, 2013.

**House Style** presents a series of new commissions by Hilda Hellström, Travis Jeppesen, Rob Kennedy and Daniel Padden that reconsider and reposition stories from the Roundabout cinemagazine series (1962–74), investigating the ways in which cultural identity, status and style can be understood through design, industry and image making. Their experimental narratives, presented in an exhibition design scheme by Steff Norwood and featuring a hand-stencilled trompe l'oeil rug by Bernie Reid, provoke a new reading of the promotional feature, juxtaposing ideas of national identity with tradition and modernity, documentary and fiction.

**House Style** is generously supported by Creative Scotland and is presented in partnership with Tramway.

**PANEL**  
is an independent curatorial practice led by Catriona Duffy and Lucy McEachan. Our programme of exhibitions, commissions and events focuses on design in relation to particular histories, archives, collections and events and is delivered across a range of locations, venues and environments.  
[www.wearepanel.co.uk](http://www.wearepanel.co.uk)

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*Panel*

TRAMWAY

