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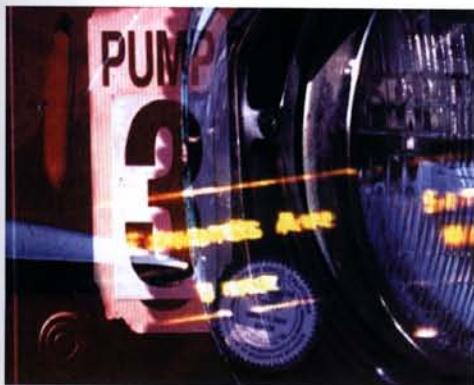
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ARTICLE ABOUT CREATIVES FROM OTHER
MEDIA MOVING INTO FILMMAKING

beyond the frame



The Light Surgeons
live (top) and on film
(left). stills from
Thumbnail Express

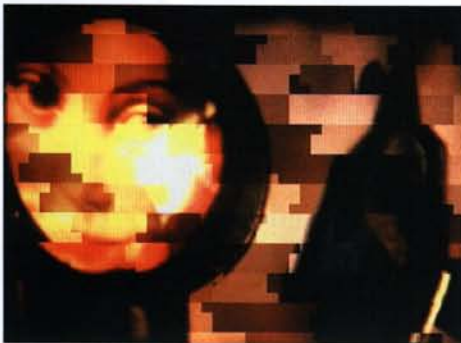
Creatives from other media are leaping into filmmaking on the back of digital technology – and they're helping to open up new ground, reports Jordan McGarry

We're all already familiar with the model-turned-actress, but another hybrid looks set to become just as ubiquitous – the designer-turned-director. Industry watchers will have noticed how many creatives from other media – illustration, graphic design and architecture, to name a few – have been making their presence felt on the turf of the traditional filmmaker.

Shane Walter and his partner Matt Hanson have long been showcasing the growing scene through their international festival, onedotzero, now in its fifth year, and TV series, onedottv (Channel 4, UK only). Walter says: "It was a leap of faith for many designers and other creators to move into motion but it was a logical next step in some ways. A lot had always had the desire to make 'films' but due to the cost and accessibility it was very difficult. Then when desktop digital filmmaking became a reality, the only thing standing in their way was themselves." Andy Martin, an accomplished illustrator for many years, is a perfect example. "The moving image is like a portal," he says. "It opens up the possibilities of time and audio. When you've been working on static illustrations, suddenly having 24 frames a second at your disposal is like opening a door and seeing a huge expanse of possibilities stretching out in front of you."

Another director exploring the potential of the new toys is Richard Fenwick. Signed to Godman, London for commercial promo work, Fenwick used to be a graphic designer and still keeps a hand in his old trade with a long-term personal project, RND# (Random Number), a growing collection of short films inspired by the modern fascination for technology. Never heard of it? Well, that's Fenwick deliberately keeping it from you. "At this point my two careers are mutually exclusive," he says. "My commercial work is me just trying to become a competent

filmmaker, and the experimental work is me experimenting in a field that's kind of new, not understood. I don't make a habit of sending [my personal work] out. It's a conscious decision to let commissioners believe that I am a filmmaker, first and foremost, because that's the kind of work I want to do. The commercial work will eventually get me into features, but the graphic design stuff feels like it's just as art-based and stimulating because it's a field that hasn't been explored and I'm trying to answer some questions."



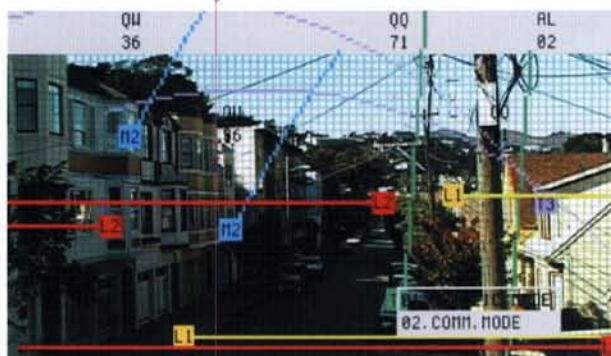
Andy Martin's *Beyonder* (above) and *Rag and Bone* (left), commissioned by onedotzero

The technology allowing people from non-traditional backgrounds to make films is rapidly becoming more accessible to the masses. Now you don't have to study film to make one. "If you use the punk analogy, all of a sudden everyone was able to have a little record label and make their own music, but it doesn't mean that all of it was good," warns Martin. There are benefits though, as Walter explains: "When Kodak brought out the Box Brownie there weren't suddenly thousands of Cartier Bressons running around, but there was a much wider understanding of photography, which was great, and maybe some new stars did arise." This unabashed experimentalism often means playing more with aesthetics and feelings than traditional narrative, which sometimes makes the work tricky to get to grips with for the uninitiated. But evolution in art is essential, says Walter: "Visual art, such as painting, continually re-invents itself. It didn't stop at realism or impressionism but pushed on with cubism, surrealism and so on. Cinema needs re-invention and the new filmmakers emerging can bring something fresh to the arena." onedotzero has provided a fertile bed for experimentation in digital and graphic filmmaking. Each year it commissions pioneering directors to break new ground in their work for the yearly festival, a rare chance for them to

experiment freely. It has also provided an opportunity for another non-traditional filmmaker to rise.

The Light Surgeons, a group of film fans with their roots in the music scene, met at college and started mixing film, graphics, music and photography to spark off a new genre of hyper-creative club visuals. There have been a few changes in the line-up, but The Light Surgeons team is still developing with each show, often held as part of onedotzero events around the world. Founding member Chris Allen and his group have also been working on documentary-style films for the last couple of years as a natural progression to their live work. Without waiting for offers of work, The Light Surgeons decided to get film projects going independently, and has made several shorts and a couple of music videos so far. With music so close to the group's heart, promos seem like an obvious extension of its live work. "We've done a few on DV and would love to do more, but it depends on how you present yourself. It's difficult because that's not what we're known for. The live thing is a forum to experiment and try things out and slowly develop something bigger, and our films are part of that. They are the finished pieces, if you like, of a bigger puzzle," Allen says. A sample of work from these alternative filmmakers can be seen on this issue's reel, and also on onedotv until December 13. The work

Still from *Underworld. RND#6*, from Richard Fenwick's personal *Random* project



happening now is shaping trends for the future and who knows, you might just like it. As Walter says: "It's all part of a maturing landscape, one that is still very surprising and incredibly exciting because of its youth." ☺