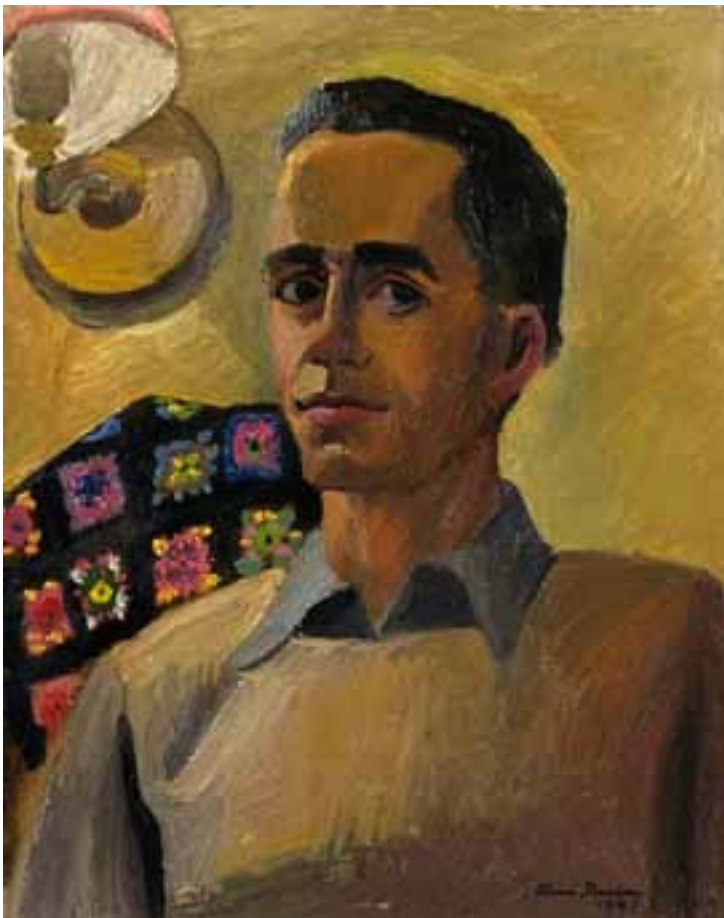


Milestone Film & Video and the National Film Board of Canada present

# Cut-Up

## The Films of Grant Munro



Alma Duncan. *Grant Munro*, 1947. Oil on Masonite. The Ottawa Art Gallery, Firestone Art Collection, donated by the Ontario Heritage Foundation to the City of Ottawa, Canada

*“A long-overdue tribute to one of animation’s unsung heroes”*

— Leonard Maltin

*“CUT-UP: THE FILMS OF GRANT MUNRO is a joyful rediscovery of one of the original shining lights of the Animation Department of the National Film Board of Canada: the brilliant and versatile Grant Munro. He collaborated with Norman McLaren on several projects, such as the Academy Award-winning NEIGHBOURS in 1952; but this Milestone collection also showcases Munro’s own eclectic film work as a graphic artist and performer, and in so doing reveals an animator, actor, mime, dancer, and film director of enormous charm, wit and creativity.”*

— John Canemaker, animator and film historian

*“Witty and wicked, kind and modest — Grant is a treasured friend. He is also a rare talent!”*

— Wendy Tilby & Amanda Forbis, Academy Award®-nominated animators of *When the Day Breaks*

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## Grant Munro

Although not as well known as other animators because most of his work were collaborations, the work of Grant Munro — whether as animator, documentarian, actor, dancer, editor, cinematographer, and general provocateur — can now be seen by the public as a whole and judged on its own merit. And what viewers will discover is a filmmaker of unequalled talent. For Grant Munro's talent, humor, charm, art, and all-out goofiness has graced the world of cinema for over forty years. He is a combination of Joan Miró, Buster Keaton, Chuck Jones, Gene Kelly and Felix the Cat. And for those lucky enough to actually meet him, sit with him, and hear his stories, they will go away with remarkable memories. There is no one else like Grant Munro.

Grant Munro was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba on April 25, 1923. There he attended Gordon Bell High School. He then attended the Musgrove School of Art and then studied sculpture at the Winnipeg School of Art and the Ontario College of Art.

Grant Munro joined the Animation Department of the National Film Board of Canada on March 25, 1944. He started out as an animator of titles on the animation series *Chants Populaires* and *Let's All Sing*, musical shorts intended as light entertainment for moviegoers during World War II. He explained in an interview with Cecille Starr:

It was in 1944, during the war. I had always been film crazy. I had the idea that I might like to try acting, but my father was a doctor and he certainly wasn't in favor of that. Then the Winnipeg Ballet began; I adored dance, but that was certainly a definite no-no. I took a year of pre-med, but didn't get through the year. Then my father agreed that I could study art. I wanted to go to the Art Center school in Los Angeles, because many of the teachers were connected with the film studios. But I was getting to be of military age, and I couldn't leave the country for training that I could get in Canada. So I went to the Ontario College of Art. And in my last year, this modest, terribly shy man came to interview me.

I knew nothing about the Film Board. I'd seen "Canada Carries On," the monthly series which Grierson had launched in movie theaters across the country to bolster the war effort and morale. The night before my interview, I'd seen a program at the Art Gallery of Ontario — films by George Dunning, Lawrence Hyde and Jean-Paul Ladouceur. I thought, if George Dunning, a graduate of the Ontario College of Art, is working at the National Film Board, it must truly be a remarkable place.

The next morning I had an appointment with the shy Norman McLaren, who was desperate to find someone to work in his newly formed Animation Department at the Film Board. He had visited several art schools across Canada. He didn't want to meet students until he had seen their work and after that he would decide if he wanted an interview. I've no idea what he saw in my student work. I had studied sculpture and fine art, but I was in commercial art. Oh, yes! I almost forgot. I'd made flipbooks since I was a child. Years later, when Norman was reminiscing, he said that when he walked into my art school that day, he told my renowned professor, Franklin Carmichael, what he was looking for and Carmichael said, "I've got just the person." Norman replied, "I don't want to know who it is" and went on to do the interviews. Lucky me!

But when he interviewed me, Norman said that the work would be for titling. Since there was no hot press or type, it all had to be done by hand. I was so arrogant and rude that I told him he'd come to the wrong person — even though jobs were scarce then, terribly scarce. Instead of walking out, Norman sat there and said, "But you don't have to letter in white ink or white paint on black cards; sometimes you can letter in plasticine or pipe cleaners or sugar." And I added, "Or salt?" "Yeah," he said, "or salt." So I took the job. I started working there on 25 March 1944. My first title was carved

in rock salt, cow salt, for a documentary called *Salt from the Earth*, by Gudrun Parker. I carved the Roman letters and Norman helped me animate them on a turntable. After I had done titles for about six months, Norman said that I clearly had a sense of movement: “I think you’re an animator, so let’s put some projects your way.

His first films on his own included sing-alongs such as *Men on the Flying Trapeze* and *My Darling Clementine*, both made in 1945. For the next few years he worked with colored paper cutout characters and puppets as in *Andrea’s Giant Tour*, *Sur le pont d’Avignon* and *Funny Mic Mac*. He explained in the same interview:

[The NFB] was in an old two-story lumber mill, a real tinder box. They had a few serious fires there because of the nitrate film. We also had a still department outside of that building and a distribution department downtown. Only six or seven of us were in animation then. Some left along the way to do other things. Four or five of us shared an office, all doing different things. If you needed assistance, someone would help you. It was a sharing kind of experience. Certainly, Norman, who was very involved in his own films, was always available. We were so very lucky. There was an atmosphere of passion and excitement. We didn’t consider overtime or weekend work or shooting all night a chore. We talked film all the time; actually, too much film. We were very proud not only to be working at the Board, but at the Board that employed Norman McLaren. Needless to say, we worshipped him, as did the entire National Film Board.

One terrifying thing I remember was the first time I saw an animation dope sheet. I thought, that’s it, I’ll have to leave. I’m not a true animator, because I’m very limited. I could never do cel animator or full character stuff. But those of us privileged to be part of the McLaren stable were weaned in the best possible way. I could work in plasticine or cut-outs. My first work as an animator, *My Darling Clementine*, was done with jointed cut-outs, which we really hadn’t done until then. When it came out, a lot of encouraging people said it was very amusing — but one report from a disgruntled projectionist on the rural circuit called it very vulgar and called me a “lavatory laureate.” He suggested that I be kept off the payroll. I honestly thought I’d be kicked out of the Film Board.

In 1947 he went to Mexico to paint and study silverwork. From 1948 to 1950 he worked at Crawley Films, Ottawa, as a filmstrip artist, returning to the Board in 1951 to script, animate and direct a series of instructional films for the Canadian Air Force. In the late 1950s he left the Board for three years to work at TV Cartoons in London as animation director.

When we moved to Montreal in 1956... I realized I hadn’t seen much of the world, so I left. I went to Spain by way of London, in 1957, and then did commercial animation with George Dunning in London for several years. I went back to the Film Board in 1961 and stayed until I retired.

As actor and editor, he teamed up with fellow animator Norman McLaren on the productions *On the Farm* (unreleased), *Two Bagatelles* and the internationally acclaimed *Neighbours*, which since its release in 1952 has won innumerable awards, including the Oscar®, the second ever for a Canadian film (the first was for the short *Churchill’s Island* in 1942). This was followed by *One Little Indian* (1954), a puppet animation film with a traffic safety message. It took top honors at festivals in Europe, South America, the USA and Canada. Other prize-winners include *Canon* (1964, co-directed by Norman McLaren); *The Animal Movie* (1966); *Toys* (1966); *Ashes of Doom* (1969); *Christmas Cracker* (1963); and the documentaries *Tour en l’air* (1973), *Boo Hoo* (1975) and *See You in the Funny Papers* (1983, a profile of cartoonist Lynn Johnston). In 1977, he co-directed and co-produced *Animated Motion*, a series of five short films explaining various aspects of McLaren’s techniques. He was also the artistic consultant on McLaren’s last production, *Narcissus*, in 1983.

During his long film career, Grant Munro has enjoyed sharing his knowledge and talents throughout the world. In 1960, Munro served as a jury member at the very first International Animation Festival in Annecy. In 1968, He worked with doctors at the Montreal Children’s Hospital, creating loops of super 8mm films for young children with learning disabilities. In 1970, the Canadian government sent him to Cuba to re-organize

the animation department of ICAIC, the Cuban film agency. He has been a popular guest lecturer at film animation workshops, has sat on many international film festival juries, was a co-programmer of the 1977 Robert Flaherty Film Seminar, and was a frequent contributor and editorial advisor to *Wide Angle*, a film quarterly published by Ohio University. Grant Munro retired from the National Film Board in 1988.

A filmmaker, artist and occasional actor; a keen observer with a wry sense of humor, Grant Munro lives in Montreal.

## The Films

*The Three Blind Mice*. 1945. 16mm. Black and White. Produced by the National Film Board for the Industrial Circuits. Director: George Dunning. Animation: Grant Munro, Robert Verrall and George Dunning. Music: Louis Applebaum.

Munro: *Norman was working very closely with us. We'd come up with ideas, but we didn't know how to make films. Instead of discouraging us, Norman would say, "Well, let's try it, let's investigate it." He'd sit in with us. So we were developing what we thought were new techniques. It was so exciting that you could hardly leave the filmmaking area, you just wanted to stay there. And when we hadn't a job of our own we'd work along with someone else. Let's say, George Dunning needed two people on Three Blind Mice, so Bob Verrall and I sat in with him. There was always a sharing and enthusiasm. It was a great, great time. — "A Dictionary of Movement: An Interview with Norman McLaren and Grant Munro" by Melanie Magisos, *Wide Angle*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1980.*

The first films from the NFB animation unit were cut-outs, because of the equipment limitations they faced — all they had was a 35mm title stand with a vertically mounted camera. Since the camera was made out of wood it was called the MOY "box." The first cut-outs were jointed or unjointed, and made out of cardboard and soft metal sheets. It was George Dunning who simplified the process and the method of making the joints. He used black thread between the shoulders and the bodies to provide greater flexibility.

Bob Verrall: *My first job as an assistant was to cut the cut-outs and glue on the thread for George. I also did a bit of animation on The Three Blind Mice.*

Grant Munro: *You did one of the mice, I did one and George did one. We sort of followed his moves. — from NFB's "Anecdotal Material recorded March 1981," compiled by Guy Glover.*

*On the Farm*. Unreleased. 6 minutes. 58 seconds. B&W.

Munro: *Originally before the pixillation tests [for Neighbours], Norman had decided on a film on highway safety. So we worked on the farm. We have some remarkably good tests which we were going to use in the final film: a farm boy living on one side of the highway, a farm girl on the other side, they fall in love and the film ends with them both being killed on the highway. We just got into it when the film commissioner came to Norman and said that for the first time we had a small international budget, and would Norman think of some kind of international theme.*

*Two Bagatelles*. 1952. 3 minutes. 16mm & 35mm. Color. Produced by the National Film Board. Running time: 3 minutes. Shot on 16mm Kodachrome, blown up to 35mm. Produced by Norman McLaren. Directed by Norman McLaren and Grant Munro. Dancing by Grant Munro. Animated music by Norman McLaren.

McLaren: *Two very short dances in lighthearted vein, using the new technique of puppet animation with a live dancer. The first dance is called On the Lawn, the second In the Backyard. The sound track consists predominantly of animated or synthetic music. —NFB memorandum, July 30, 1952.*

Munro: On the Lawn, one part of Two Bagatelles, was an out-take from Neighbours. Norman thought it was a good example of pixillation, so he did a synthetic sound track for it. The second part, In the Backyard, was a lot of fun. We went to work at 8 o'clock in the morning and hadn't discussed the film before. Norman told me to go off to the music department and pick some music, and he went out and got some old clothes. We shot the whole thing in one day. I marked the calliope track, and it ended up just as the sun was setting. It was shown often on television to fill in on live-action programs that ran too short.

*Neighbours*. 1952. 8 mins. Canada. Produced, directed, and animated by Norman McLaren for the National Film Board. Cinematography by Wolf Koenig. Music by McLaren. With Koenig, Grant Munro, Jean Paul Ladouceur, Clarke Daprato. Shot on 16mm Kodachrome blown up to 35mm.

McLaren: I thought originally of making some sort of animated country dance with live people ["On The Farm"], but exaggerating and caricaturing the movements because we were animating the action. But when we looked at the rushes of all those tests, it suddenly struck me — there were some shots where Grant and another animator were fighting each other by punching. Of course, they were doing it very slowly (about four frames a second).

On July 13, 1951, a scripting and research request went to the NFB Production Secretary asking for \$1500. The rough outline of the production read, "three minute short using pixillation technique on the theme of good neighbourliness. The result of his short sample film may indicate to what extent single frame animation of human beings may be useful as a technique for other subjects of a similar nature." The money was raised through the nontheatrical department and approved five days later by the Film Commissioner. Munro and McLaren talk about the process in a 1980 interview:

McLaren: I was inspired to make *Neighbours* by a stay of almost a year in the People's Republic of China. Although I only saw the beginnings of Mao's revolution, my faith in human nature was reinvigorated by it. Then I came back to Quebec and the Korean War began. My sympathies were divided at that time. I felt myself to be as close to the Chinese people as I felt proud of my status as a Canadian. I decided to make a really strong film about anti-militarism and against war.

When *Neighbours* was released in 1952, McLaren was pressured to excise the scenes of women and children being beaten to death; but years later, in a gesture of protest against the war in Vietnam, McLaren re-inserted the footage and restored the film to its original state.

Munro: Norman asked me to edit *Neighbours* and that was a terrific challenge. I had never edited in my life. You never worked for Norman, you always worked with him. He always encouraged us to come up with ideas. When we were doing *Neighbours*, he knew what he wanted at the beginning of the film and what the final scene would be. But every morning we discussed everyone's ideas. It was Ladouceur who suggested the newspaper headlines. And the war paint scene was my idea.

McLaren: This film is a simple parable, which describes the gradual deterioration (due to an overactive possessive instinct), in the relationship of two people who start out by living amicably side by side. The visual technique used to tell the story is the animation of live human beings; in other words, the principles normally used to put drawings and puppets into motion were used with live human beings.

*The Ballot-o-Maniac*. 1953, 15 min. Director: Stanley Jackson. Producer: Guy Glover.  
Cast: Bernard McManus (The Opponent); Grant Munro (The Willing Worker); Charles Ogilvie (The Drunk); Andrée Cunningham (The Wife); Kenneth Greene (The Candidate); Bob Kasten (The Assistant). Script and Text: Stanley Jackson. Cinematography: Grant McLean and Osmond H. Borradaile. Editor: Fergus McDonell. Sound Clifford Griffin

Illustrates some of the things the voting public should know about the election act through the story of a man whose over-zealous election activities nearly disqualify his candidate.

*Six and Seven Eighths.* (1959) Unreleased, 9 mins. 35mm fine grain and magnetic sound at NFB Archive.

McLaren: *It is a group of old men who were musicians in the 1910's and so on when they were doing cakewalks and they're playing and they make wonderful music. It's very lovely and we were exhausted; and we took one piece of it one Sunday night. I got a camera down at Theatre Three where we used the stage and Grant danced to it. And the first take, it was a straight run through. It was quite a short piece, about three minutes [it is actually 1 minute, 42 seconds – ed.]. We had a bottle of gin with us. Grant had a good swig of gin and after taking time to get into his system, we made another take. He wasn't doing the same thing; he was improvising just how he felt to the music. We did the same thing seven times [five actually – ed.] until Grant was full of that bottle of gin. I had just a fixed camera position, a long shot. We wanted to see the effect of a bottle of alcohol on a performance. We thought it was getting better. I was taking a little gin too, so I couldn't judge it objectively either. I must try to find it because the first performance as an overall thing was the best definitely, the other performances overall no so good but much more brilliant moments in them. So the last performance was sort of maudlin, but had brilliant things in it. Straight shooting at 16 frames a second to give it a period piece. — from an interview with Donald McWilliams.*

*Christmas Cracker.* 1963, 9 min. Director: Norman McLaren, Grant Munro, Gerald Potterton and Jeff Hale. Producer: Tom Daly. Cast: Grant Munro. Music: Maurice Blackburn and Eldon Rathburn. Nominated for Academy Award, Best Cartoon.

A seasonal pleasantry consisting of three animation segments, employing tricks in movie magic by NFB artists and animators, and with specially arranged music. Three scenarios are presented: a rendition of “Jingle Bells” in which paper cut-out figures dance; a dime-store rodeo of tin toys; and a story of decorating the perfect Christmas tree. Film without words.

*Canon.* 1964, 9 mins. Directors: Grant Munro and Norman McLaren. Images: J. Gillissie and Robert Humble. Music: Eldon Rathburn. Sound: Ron Alexander. Five awards including Toronto; Necochea.

Munro: *Norman said Canon was the most difficult thing he ever attempted. His health was very delicate and halfway through the filming he said he would have to give up. It was too complicated, and we didn't have sophisticated equipment. We were having to discard some of the takes for technical reasons, even though they were funny. Just at that point, Norman got a call from the front door saying a visitor from the airport wanted to see him. A young man came in and asked what we were working on. Norman showed him some footage and said he was ready to give it up. The young man said that the problems were heartbreaking but urged him to continue — and Norman did. After he went back to the airport, I said, “That must be Roman Polanski's son.” Norman told me it was Polanski himself. In a way, we owe the completion of Canon to him.*

*The great pity was that Norman had wanted to do other music forms, but Canon nearly defeated him, so he just couldn't deal with another such film. Also, the film didn't cause any real excitement when it was first released. I think audiences saw the sight gags and things, but didn't take in the musical ideas. Gradually, it has found wide international audiences and remained a favorite of Norman's.*

*[As for the “woman” in the film] when people ask me, I say it was the secretary on the third floor who sat near the window. And they say, “Oh, yeah, I know the one you mean — was her name Dorothy? The one with the overbite.” When we shot it, the cameraman was giggling and Norman was rolling on the floor. When I showed it in Hollywood, at a tribute to Norman McLaren, I was criticized by some people who knew the film because I didn't tell the audience that it was I who played all the roles. Stupid! Sometime we must discuss the cat sequence. Shooting that was one long nightmare.*

*Toys.* 1966. 8 min. Director: Grant Munro. Producer: Grant Munro. Script and Text: Margaret Wescott. Images: Jean Roy and Paul Leach. Editor: Roy Ayton. Sound: Ron Alexander and Karl Duplessis. Invited to the Cannes International Film Festival, 1967.

It begins with the faces of children outside a toy store window at Christmas--but then the war toys appear and we realize that some games are played for keeps. This film has no commentary, but it is easy to see what it aims to show: war toys do not necessarily make warriors, but it is possible that they give a false glamour to the deadly pursuit. With toys that keep up with the times, this film creates a battle that is all too real and frightening.

*The Animal Movie.* 1966. 10 mins. Directors: Grant Munro and Ron Tunis. Producer: Sidney Goldsmith. Images: Jacques Jarry. Animation: Grant Munro and Ron Tunis. Music: Kathleen Shannon, Pierre F. Brault, and Malca Gillson. Sound: Kathleen Shannon, Ron Alexander, Pierre F. Brault, Roger Lamoureux, and Malca Gillson. Winner: 1966 Venice Film Festival, Plaque of the Lion of St Marc.

Norman McLaren: *When I was in China teaching visual aids, the students wanted me to teach them replacement animation [total replacement of one image by another as in cel technique and direct-drawing-on-film] but since there was no cel material and no camera either I could only show them the principle of it. We took sheets of typewriter paper and chopped them into four equal rectangular pieces. Using an L-shaped corner as a rough registering guide the students did sequences of drawings as exercises. When I came back here [to the NFB] we did several things working on this small scale (small, that is, compared to conventional cel sheets). It makes quite a big difference to the amount of time spent on the art work.*

Grant Munro: *And you don't have to go through a pencil-test stage. We just flipped the stacks of sheets as we went along to see how the movement was developing. [This was in The Animal Movie.] For some sequences we had to use larger sheets but about 75 per cent of the film was done on the small size paper sheets. — from NFB's "Anecdotal Material recorded March 1981," compiled by Guy Glover.*

*Ashes of Doom.* 1970. 2 mins. Directors: Grant Munro and Don Arioli. Producers: Robert Verrall and Wolf Koenig. Cast: Grant Munro and Nadia Salnick. Script and Text: Don Arioli. Images: Jacques Fogel. Editor: Grant Munro. Music: Eldon Rathburn and Karl Duplessis. Sound: Ron Alexander and George Croll, Victor Merrill, Roger Lamoureux and Malca Gillson.

A "thriller" of the evils of cigarette smoking, set in a Gothic boudoir. A young woman lights up one cigarette after another. The clock strikes twelve, wind from the balcony door blows out the candles and a vampire stands in the doorway. As he approaches her, she still finds time to light up another cigarette. The vampire bends over the woman to find nourishment and, as he backs away, he gasps his last breath amidst a puff of smoke. A clever statement on an important problem.

*Boo Hoo.* 1975. 18 mins. Shot in 16mm. Director: Grant Munro. Producers: Ian McLaren and Rex Tasker. Cinematographer: Barry Perles. Camera Assistants: Douglas Bradley and Monique Crouillère. Editors: Grant Munro and Tim Reid. Sound Recording: Bev Davidson and André Hourlier. Sound Editor: John Knight.

Sometimes sad, sometimes witty, often bizarre, the prolific anecdotes of a retired cemetery superintendent provide insight into an intriguing, off-beat character. Here, as he wanders nostalgically through the cemetery grounds in Saint John, New Brunswick, his uninhibited thoughts touch upon everything from mourners to monuments.

*McLaren on McLaren.* 1983. 8 mins. Director: Grant Munro. Producer: Douglas MacDonald and Sidney Goldsmith.

An opening address, a tribute and highlights of a long and productive career--*McLaren on McLaren* is Norman McLaren on camera. The occasion is the opening of a prestigious festival in Arnhem, the Netherlands, in November, 1983, marking the tenth anniversary of Holland Animation. The

renowned animator pays homage to those who merged their arts with his, and to the National Film Board, which gave him forty-two years of artistic freedom.

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**“Pixillation” *Canadian Film News*, October 1953**  
**Some Notes on Stop-Motion Live-Actor Technique**  
**As used in the visuals of *Neighbours* and *Two Bagatelles***  
By Norman McLaren, Written: August 12, 1952

This technique (sometimes referred to as “pixillation”) consists of applying the principles normally used in the photographing of animated and cartoon movies to the shooting of actors; that is, instead of placing drawings, cartoons or puppets in front of the animation camera, we placed real human beings.

The technique is not new, its origins go back to the early French movies of the Méliès epoch, when the camera was stopped in the middle of shots to produce trick effects, and the same principle has since been used occasionally in films by experimentalists like Hans Richter, Len Lye, Richard Hassingham and many others. But on the whole, the technique has never had the exploration it deserves, nor has it had this in the film *Neighbours* or *Two Bagatelles*, where only a few of the possibilities have been applied, and rather crudely at that. None the less, as a result of working with this approach I have jotted down the following observations.

In essence, any technique of animation consists of stopping the camera between the taking of each frame of film, instead of letting it run on relentlessly at normal speed (that is, 24 frames a second). Once it is assumed that the actor being photographed by a movie camera can stop between any or every 24<sup>th</sup> of a second, a new range of human behaviour becomes possible. The laws of appearance and disappearance can be circumvented as can the laws of momentum, inertia, centrifugal force and gravity; but what is perhaps even more important, the tempo of acting can be infinitely modulated from the slowest speed to the fastest. Apart from the apparently spectacular feats of virtuosity that this makes the actor capable of, it is possible to use the technique in a concealed way behind what appears to be normal acting. Or if used in a less concealed way it can permit the actor a caricature type of movement. In much the same way as a pictorial caricature can make comment on character and situation by distorting the static form of a drawing, so live-action-animation can create a caricature by tampering with the tempo of human action, by creating hyper-natural exaggerations and distortions of any given human movement. This type of caricature is, of course, often found in animated cartoons, but cannot be found in live-action films until an animation technique is applied to them.

It is also possible to devise many new ways for a human being to locomote. Apart from new types of walking and running, a person may get from one place to another by sliding (while sitting, standing, balancing on one foot, or any other way) by appearing and disappearing, and a host of other ways.

At the outset of shooting *Neighbours* our conception was to get all action by taking a single frame at a time throughout each shot (having the actors move in small amounts, between frames); but after some experimenting it became apparent that the single frame approach was best only for certain types of shot.

To meet all our requirements, we decided to use a whole gamut of shooting speeds, from one frame every five minutes to one frame every 1/16<sup>th</sup> of a second, depending on the nature of the shot, so we would select the most desirable shooting speed. Within one shot we might often vary the shooting speed if different parts of the action demanded it.

The tempo of the actor’s movement was also considered a variable factor, ranging from very slight changes of static positions, through very slow movement, up to normal speed.

The tempo of the actor’s behaviour and the tempo of the camera’s shooting were therefore adjusted to any desired ratio, depending on the final desired effect, and the speed at which it would be easiest for the actor to achieve his point. For instance, if the actors moved half as slow as normal and the camera shot half as slow as normal (twelve frames per second), the final screen speed would appear normal, but, in the process of shooting, a tempo-control factor of two had entered in and the actor, by performing at speeds between half-

normal and normal had available a range of final screen speeds ranging from normal to twice normal. The concept of a tempo-control factor proved to be a useful one.

Many of the shots in *Neighbours* that appear in fairly normal tempo were shot with camera and actors both moving slowly, sometimes as much as four, six, eight, ten and twelve times slower than normal. In the shots with speeded-up human action the camera often took pictures at eight times slower than normal, while the actors moved about four or three or two times slower than normal.

Another advantage of achieving a formal normal speed effect by using a tempo-control factor while shooting was this: to tie in with steady musical beats and phrases of the as yet unmade sound track; we often wished the actions to be of precise metrical lengths, so while shooting at slow speed we would count out the number of each frame as it went by in the camera, thus the actors could arrange to be at such and such a spot on the 60<sup>th</sup> frame, to have their arms raised on the 80<sup>th</sup> frame, and their hands touch on the 90<sup>th</sup> frame, to start rotating on the 100<sup>th</sup> frame, and to decelerate to a stand-still over a period of sixty frames, etc. For purposes of integrating human action with music (in a rather ballet-like way) this method of considerable value, especially so if the music has already been recorded, and the lengths of beats and phases permanently fixed.

Since both camera tempo and acting tempo are considered as flexible, in order to obtain, for instance, the effect of a man walking, starting at one mile an hour and gradually and almost imperceptively speeding up until he reaches twenty miles an hour, either the camera may be run at a constant slow speed and the man allowed to accelerate from extremely slow to normal speed, or alternatively the man may walk at a constant speed, and the camera be allowed to decelerate. In either case the overall effect of tempo will be the same, but in the bodily or muscular behaviour and centre of balance of the figure there will be a difference.

We did not use or explore this field of subtle differences, but we did compare the convenience of either varying the actor's or the camera's speed. In many but not all cases, it was found better to keep the camera speed constant and let the actor do all the modulating of the movement itself; at times both methods were used, especially if during a take the actors were tending to move either too slowly or too fast, we would compensate by pushing the single frame button slightly more or slightly less frequently.

Obviously a normal effect (a 1:1 ratio of camera and acting speeds) can be achieved at any overall tempo, such for instance as the camera running at half normal speed and the actors performing at half normal speed; alternatively, the camera running ten times slower than normal and the actors performing ten times slower as well, etc.

However, apparently normal effects achieved by such means do not appear normal when certain effects of gravity, inertia, centrifugal and centripetal force are involved; for instance if a girl who wears a long full skirt twirls around rapidly, and this is photographed normally, the skirt will fly out in all directions (the more rapidly she rotates the more the skirt will fly out); but if the camera is made to shoot twelve times slower than normal and the girl to rotate twelve times slower than normal, on the final screening the girl will still twirl at the original fast speed but her skirt will not fly out. The audience will interpret this either as a lack of centrifugal force or more likely as the skirt's being made of lead or some excessively heavy substance. The degree to which the skirt will fly out (or its apparent specific gravity) can thus be controlled by the changes in the overall tempo of the 1:1 ratio between shooting speed and acting speed. Many gradual or sudden modifications in the behaviour caused by momentum, gravity and other physical forces are possible by this technique.

The creative potentialities of this stop-motion live-action technique are quite considerable — not so much for a straight action movie involving speed and lip synchronization but for a new genre of filmic ballet and mime.

## Filmography

<i>Year</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Position</i>
1944	Canada Carries On (series)	Titles
1944	World in Action (series)	Titles
1945	Let's All Sing Together (series)	Titles
1945	More We Are Together (series)	Titles
1945	My Darling Clementine	Animator
1945	Oh, No, John	Animator
1945	All Through the Night	Animator
1945	Barn Dance	Animator
1946	Stanley Takes a Trip	Story, Animator
1948-1950	Animated sequences and film strips	Film Strip Artist (Crawley Films, Ottawa)
1951	One Little Indian	Story, Animator
1952	Neighbours	Story, Actor, Editor
1953	Two Bagatelles	Actor, Editor
1955-1956	Huff and Puff (Royal Canadian Air Force)	Story, Animator, Director
1955-1956	Various technical films	Story, Animator, Director
1955-1956	Radio Range 1 & 2	Story, Animator, Director
1957-1960	Commercials for theaters and TV	Animator, Director (TV Cartoons, London)
1962	My Financial Career	Storyboard, Co-animator
1963	Christmas Crackers	Co-animator, Actor
1964	Canon	Story, Animation, Actor, Co-Director
1966	The Animal Movie	Story, Director, Co-animator
1968	8mm loops for special education program	Story, Director
1969	Carmen, Party, Ashes of Doom, Cough Dance, Vampire, Coffee House	Story, Director, Actor (anti-smoking commercials)
1973	Tour en l'air	Producer, Director
1974	Boo Hoo	Producer, Director
1976	Animated Motion	Co-animator, Co-director
1980	Hoo Doo McFiggin's Christmas (filmstrip)	Illustrator
1980	See You in the Funny Papers	Producer, Director
1980-1981	Narcissus	Advisor

## The Conspirators

### Louis Applebaum

The favorite composer for the NFB filmmakers, Applebaum composed scores for some 250 films between 1942 and 1960. He worked on the films of Norman McLaren, Colin Low, John Spotton and Morten Parker. After he left the NFB, he produced hundreds of outstanding scores for radio, film, television and theater. Beloved by all who worked with him, Applebaum died in 2000 at the age of 82.

## Maurice Blackburn

Born in 1914, Maurice Blackburn was one of the three staff composers at the NFB. Brought to the organization by Louis Applebaum, his talents became immediately apparent. Blackburn worked on such classics as *Blinkety Blank*, *Christmas Cracker* and *Pas de deux*. He died in 1988.

## George Dunning

Gentle, graceful and articulate, George Dunning was, according to both Chuck Jones and Norman McLaren, “a true poet” of the animated film. A native Canadian, Dunning joined the NFB in 1942. Besides a series of brilliant short films such as *Damon the Mower* and *Cadet Rouselle*, he is most known for his legendary feature he did with the Beatles, *Yellow Submarine*. Dunning died in 1979.

## Guy Glover

Born in London, Guy Glover came to Canada at a very young age. In 1942, Glover joined the NFB and collaborated on many short films — both animated and live action. Included were *L’Homme aux Oiseaux*, *The Romance of Transportation* (nominated for an Academy Award®), *Lewis Mumford on the City* and *Bethune*. Retired in 1974, Glover died on May 17, 1988.

## Norman McLaren

An intensely shy and private man, Norman McLaren’s career has been characterized by creative and technical brilliance, and by humor and sympathy for the human condition. His sense of movement brought life to everything from a straight-back chair to scratches on raw filmstock. McLaren was born in Stirling, Scotland, in 1914. After graduating from the Glasgow School of Art, he started making films in 1934, which drew the attention of the great John Grierson. Grierson offered him a job at the General Post Office Film Unit, then the greatest creators of documentary films in the world. In 1941, McLaren joined Grierson once again, this time to start an animation department and the National Film Board of Canada. And like the British GPO for documentarians, the Film Board became *the* place for animators. He inspired his animators to experiment, to explore the seemingly endless possibilities of the medium. His own animation became famous throughout the world — perhaps the most widely seen experimental films of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the time of his death in 1987, McLaren was recognized as one of the true geniuses of cinema.

“He taught us timing and economy. And he left a legacy of beauty and wit.” — Grant Munro on McLaren, *Maclean’s*, February 9, 1987.

## National Film Board of Canada

Created in 1939, the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) is a public agency that produces and distributes films and other audiovisual works which reflect Canada to Canadians and the rest of the world. It is an exceptional fountain of creativity, which since its very beginnings has played a crucial role in Canadian and international filmmaking. Its founder and the first Government Film Commissioner, John Grierson, wanted to make the NFB the “eyes of Canada” and to ensure that it would “through a national use of cinema, see Canada and see it whole: its people and its purpose.”

The establishment of the NFB on May 2, 1939 came just four months before Canada entered World War II. Since Film Commissioner John Grierson was a specialist in the psychology of propaganda, the NFB concentrated on the production of patriotic films in the early years. This gave rise to a number of documentary films series focusing on current events, notably *Canada Carries On* and *Actualités canadiennes* (which became *Les Reportages* in March 1943), all serving the war effort in one way or another. However, when Norman McLaren joined the NFB in 1941, he broadened the production slate through the introduction of animated films. The founding of the Filmstrips Department in 1944, and the addition of four separate studios in 1948, diversified postwar production.

## Milestone Film & Video

*“Since its birth the Milestone Film & Video Co. has steadily become the industry’s foremost boutique distributor of classic and art films — and probably the only distributor in America whose name is actually a guarantee of some quality.”*

— William Arnold, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

Milestone is a boutique distribution company with more than 13 years experience in art-house film distribution. The company has earned an unparalleled reputation for releasing classic cinema masterpieces, new foreign films, groundbreaking documentaries and American independent features. Thanks to Milestone’s rediscovery, restoration and release of such important discoveries as Mikhail Kalatozov’s award-winning *I am Cuba*, Jane Campion’s *Two Friends*, and Alfred Hitchcock’s *Bon Voyage* and *Aventure Malgache*, the company now occupies an honored position as one of the most influential independent distributors in the American film industry. In 1999, the *L.A. Weekly* chose Milestone as “Indie Distributor of the Year.”

Amy Heller and Dennis Doros started Milestone in 1990 to bring out the best films of yesterday *and* today. The company has released such remarkable new films as Manoel de Oliveira’s *I’m Going Home*, Bae Yong-kyun’s *Why Has Bodhi-Dharma Left for the East?*, Hirokazu Kore-eda’s *Maborosi*, and Takeshi Kitano’s *Fireworks (Hana-Bi)*.

Milestone’s re-releases have included restored versions of Luchino Visconti’s *Rocco and His Brothers*, F.W. Murnau’s *Tabu*, Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack’s *Grass and Chang*, Henri-Georges Clouzot’s *The Mystery of Picasso*, and Marcel Ophuls’ *The Sorrow and the Pity* (a Woody Allen presentation). Milestone is also working with the Mary Pickford Foundation on a long-term project to preserve, re-score and release the best films of the legendary silent screen star. In recent years, Milestone has re-released beautifully restored versions of Frank Hurley’s *South: Ernest Shackleton and the Endurance Expedition*, Kevin Brownlow’s *It Happened Here* and *Winstanley*, Lotte Reiniger’s animation masterpiece, *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*, Michael Powell’s *The Edge of the World* (a Martin Scorsese presentation), Gillo Pontecorvo’s *The Wide Blue Road* (a Jonathan Demme and Dustin Hoffman presentation), Conrad Rooks’ *Siddhartha* and Rolando Klein’s Mexican classic, *Chac*.

Since its beginning, Milestone has had a fruitful collaboration with some of the world’s major archives including the British Film Institute, UCLA Film & Television Archive, George Eastman House, Museum of Modern Art, Library of Congress, Nederlands Filmmuseum and the Norsk Filmintitutt. In August 2000 the Film Society of Lincoln Center in New York premiered Milestone’s 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Retrospective. During the New York run and the nationwide tour that followed, all revenues from retrospective screenings were donated to four major archives in the United States and England to help restore films that might otherwise be lost.

In 2003–2004, Milestone will be releasing an important series of great silent films restored by the world’s foremost film historians and preservationists, Photoplay Productions. These stunning versions, never before available in the United States, include the horror classic *The Phantom of the Opera*; André Antoine’s early neorealist adaptation of Emile Zola’s *La Terre*; and an astonishing historical epic of Polish independence by Raymond Bernard, *The Chess Player*. Video highlights for this year also include a special DVD series of incredible animation including *Cut-Up: The Films of Grant Munro*, *Norman McLaren: The Collector’s Edition*; and *Winsor McCay: The Master Edition*.

In theaters, Milestone will be releasing Tareque Masud’s remarkable *The Clay Bird* from Bangladesh and *The Big Animal*, directed by and starring Jerzy Stuhr, from a script by Krzysztof Kieslowski.

Milestone received a Special Archival Award in 1995 from the National Society of Film Critics for its restoration and release of *I am Cuba*. Eight of the company’s films — Charles Burnett’s *Killer of Sheep*, F.W. Murnau’s *Tabu*, Edward S. Curtis’ *In the Land of the War Canoes*, Mary Pickford’s *Poor Little Rich Girl*, Lon

Chaney's *The Phantom of the Opera*, Clara Bow's *It*, Winsor McCay's *Gertie the Dinosaur*, and Merian C. Cooper, Ernest B. Schoedsack and Marguerite Harrison's *Grass* — are listed on the Library of Congress' National Film Registry.

Cindi Rowell, director of acquisitions, has been with Milestone since 1999. In 2003 Nadja Tennstedt joined the company as director of international sales.

*"Milestone Film & Video is an art-film distributor that has released some of the most distinguished new movies (along with seldom-seen vintage movie classics) of the past decade"*  
— Stephen Holden, *New York Times*

Press Kit written by Dennis Doros. © 2002 Milestone Film & Video

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See Milestone's website for other animated classics available on video including *Norman McLaren: The Collector's Edition*, *John Canemaker: Marching to a Different Toon*, Lotte Reiniger's *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*, *The Cameraman's Revenge and Other Fantastic Tales: The Films of Ladislaw Starewicz*, and *Winsor McCay: The Master Edition*.