

**Pierre Hébert**, recipient in 2004 of the Albert-Tessier Quebec government award for cinema, was born in 1944 in Montreal. Self taught, strongly influenced by animation film makers Norman McLaren and Len Lye, he directed his first films independently while he was still studying Anthropology at the University of Montreal. He worked at The National Film Board of Canada from 1965 until the end of 1999. Since then he pursue his career as an independent artist and filmmaker. Right from his first film in 1962, Pierre Hébert has been experimenting with the animation technique of engraving images directly on 16mm or 35mm processed black film. In the eighties, he has developed a new type of performance involving "live" animation scratched directly on a film loop while it is rolling in a projector, usually associated with improvised music and occasionally with dance.

**Robert "Bob" Ostertag** is an experimental audio artist based in San Francisco. Raised in Colorado, Ostertag studied at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. In 1976, he formed the improvisation ensemble Fall Mountain with Ned Rothenberg on reeds and Jim Katzin on violin, himself on electronic keyboard. The ensemble released Early Fall in 1979. In 1999, after 10 years working with the same Ensoniq ASR-10 sampler, Ostertag switched to a laptop computer and began writing his own audio performance software through Max/MSP. This allows him use various controllers, including joysticks, game pads, and drawing tablets in his performances. Bob Ostertag is currently Professor in the faculty of Technocultural Studies at UC Davis.

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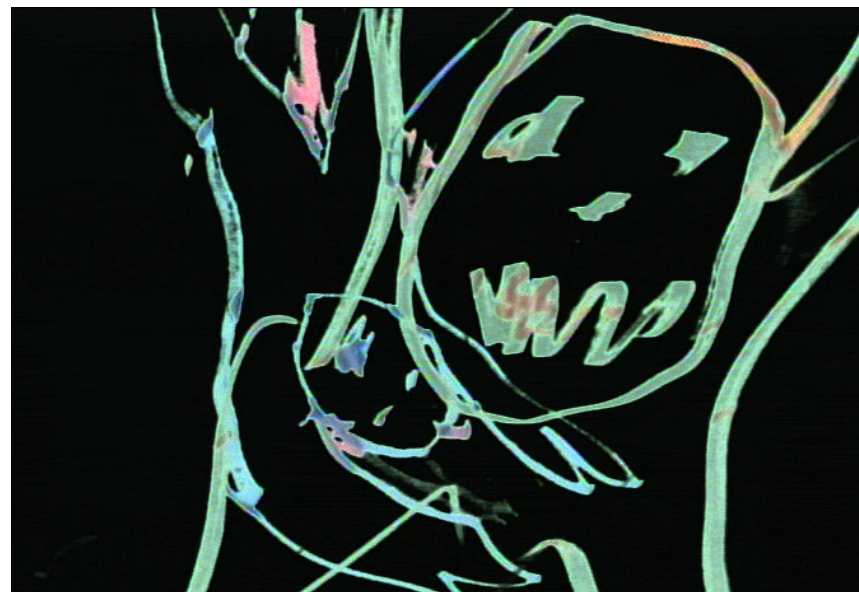
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# Special Forces ←

A live animation performance by  
Living Cinema



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7pm Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2009

North Street Church, 5657 North St,  
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# Living Cinema

Pierre Hébert and Bob Ostertag

Living Cinema consists of live animation, music and computer-processed performances by Pierre Hébert and Bob Ostertag. They started to work together in 1989 at a time when Hébert was still doing live scratched animation performances and Ostertag was still using a commercial sampler. In the following years, Ostertag moved to a computer-based sampler programmed with Max/MSP and, in 2000, began writing a computer video-processing program for Hébert using the first, yet-unpublished elements of what would become Jitter, now a leading video processing resource.

The work that Living Cinema produces comments on the world political situation, but it also involves a specific statement about technology. Although Hébert and Ostertag use state of the art computers and paraphernalia, their objective is not to celebrate the marvel of technology. Rather, the performances are conceived as a confrontation between the bodily actions needed to do their work and the machines they are using. For the audience, they try to make the process as transparent as possible.

*Between Science and Garbage* was premiered in the days following 9/11, and was followed by *Endangered Species*, which responded to the beginning of the Iraq war and the reelection of George W. Bush. The bombing of Lebanon in the summer of 2006 inspired the third phase of Living Cinema's *Special Forces* project. In April 2007, after a few presentations as work-in-progress, *Special Forces* premiered in Beirut as part of the Irtijal Festival of experimental music. It was then presented at The San Francisco International Film Festival, at Roulette in New York, The Buenos Aires International Festival of Independent Cinema, the Fort Worth Museum of Modern Art, the Rotterdam International Film Festival, the Sons d'hiver Music Festival in Paris and at le Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels. Bob Ostertag also presented two solo performances, with a recorded image tape, in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

The *Special Forces* project was decided on very quickly during a short phone call between the two of us sometime during August 2006 while the bombing of Lebanon was raging. One of the beauties of the Living Cinema project is that it allows us to react very quickly to current events. Living Cinema reoriented existing work that incorporated game images and sounds to comment on the war in Lebanon.

Days after this decision, we received an e-mail from the Irtijal Festival in Beirut asking us to perform *something* there in April 2007. This invitation gave a strong focus to the piece. We were committed to premiering the work in Beirut during the winter... assuming that it would be possible to fly to Lebanon by then. *Special Forces* came from a very visceral reaction to what was happening in Lebanon, especially the fact that many victims of the war there were children. By presenting the work in Beirut it became quickly apparent that it was ridden with hard ethical concerns about what it meant to go in front of a Lebanese audience and show images relating to the war they had been suffering through. But at that point we had no choice but to do it. It is part of Living Cinema's concept to do things on the razor edge.

Since 2001, there have been up to 60 Living Cinema performances in a range of countries, including the United States, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Portugal, Spain, Italy, France, the U.K., Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Poland, Slovenia, Lebanon and Japan. The fact that these performances are totally improvised makes it possible to constantly adapt them to recent situations within world events. Hébert and Ostertag are currently in discussions about going to the Palestinian city of Hebron, in the West Bank occupied territories, to develop a new phase of Living Cinema.

The DVD version of *Between Science and Garbage* is available on the Tzadik label (TZ3002).