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Mash Media

Klip Collective, *What's He Projecting in There?*, 2014.

"**NEW FRONTIER**," the mini-art-fair component of the Sundance Film Festival, was headquartered this year in and around the building where casual or well-heeled festival-goers buy movie tickets. (Industry professionals register for passes and "packages" in advance.) Between the ticket buyers and the not inconsiderable numbers of viewers who are excited by the promise of expanded and interactive media, "New Frontier" drew crowds every day to its primary location—between Park City's Main Street and its free bus depot.

With the exception of jury members and the rich and famous who have their own cars and drivers, almost everyone at the festival gets from theater to theater via Sundance shuttles or Park City buses, mingling on the latter with skiers. "New Frontier's" location, therefore, also worked in favor of the installations that at night spilled onto the streets near the stairs to the depot. From there, one could be lured toward James Nares's *Street* (2011), projected on a large, freestanding screen surrounded by benches and heat lamps, its extreme slow-motion images of New York in summer rendered surreal by the subfreezing temperatures and patches of ice and snow. A half-block in the opposite direction from the depot put you in front of David Adjaye's circular, two-thousand-square-foot pavilion designed to house Doug Aitken's *The Source (evolving)*, an open-ended series of video conversations between Aitken and "pioneers" of various creative disciplines (among them Paolo Soleri, Tilda Swinton, and James Turrell) about art in the contemporary world. As bland and vaguely nauseating as Pablum (a throwback to the early years of Sundance where "granola" was the favored descriptive adjective for far too many of the film selections), the videos were omnipresent at the festival, projected outside and inside the dedicated pavilion and shown as short clips before feature films screened in the theaters. (You can find many of them here and on the *New York Times* website.)

Much livelier, the Klip Collective celebrated the festival's thirtieth anniversary with high-speed multiple projections of images from Sundance hits (and some misses). These covered the façade of the Egyptian Theater, the Main Street movie mini-palace that used to be the festival's most important venue and which is now used largely for foreign-language film premieres and repeat screenings. It remains my favorite venue—not too big, as are the Eccles and the Marc theaters, not too small like the screens in the Holiday Village four-plex. The work, awkwardly titled *What's He Projecting in There?*, was also used as a teaser for the film screenings, a better choice than excerpts from the lugubrious Aitken interviews.

Inside the "New Frontier" exhibition space, crowded with new media work, viewers queued for a chance to don virtual reality headsets designed by Oculus Rift. The headsets are basically a gaming device that will hit consumer stores this year, but here they were used to best advantage by Chris Milk to put you "virtually" onstage with Beck in concert, as the musician covers David Bowie's 1977 single "Sound and Vision." The Oculus fans, hanging out on disco-like settees, were face to face with the most subtle and haunting piece in the exhibition, Marina Zurkow's *Mesocosm (Wink, TX)* (2012), a hand-drawn animation of a sinkhole around which insufficiently wary birds, coyotes, butterflies, and occasionally humans circle. The animation, which captures the fragility of the threatened ecosystem, develops and changes over time in response to software-driven data inputs, recombining in condensed, seemingly slowed motion (twenty minutes equal one day; 144 hours, one year). The piece is part of Zurkow's "Mesocosm" series, which can be seen in full on her website. I doubt that the VR enthusiasts paid the piece much attention, but its canny placement in the room (a decision by "New Frontier" curator Shari Frilot) perhaps allowed it to be absorbed into their collective unconscious.

— *Amy Taubin*