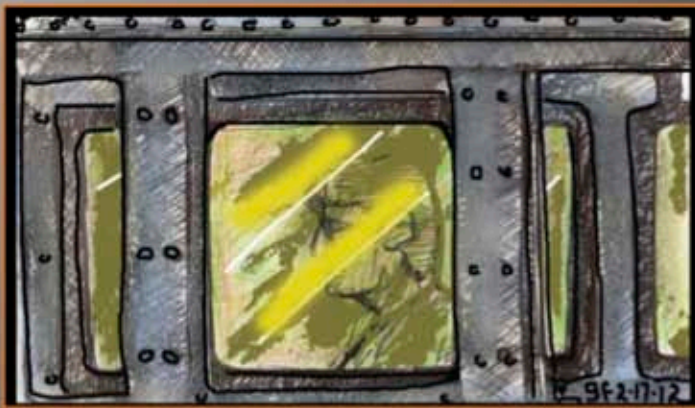


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N.Y.C.
SUBWAY
RIDE



"New York Subway Ride"
A Short Motion Picture Profile
of the Art of George Fasanbinder
Produced by
Mr. Francis Zuccarello

ANCIENT
ASTRONAUTS
motion pictures

My challenge was to make a motion picture worthy of the subject.

For three decades I've been a television commercial editor and twenty-some years ago, George Fasbinder was my client. George was a much lauded advertising agency art director from the mid-1960s until the mid-1990s, and then briefly again a few years ago.



Although George never wanted to be an artist but always wanted to be a cowboy--and did indeed ride rough stock in rodeos--he has sketched and painted since childhood. I've been a fan of George's non-commercial work since his first gallery show in 1995. I even own an original George Fasbinder.



We crossed paths most unexpectedly and renewed our friendship after a long lapse.

George of course showed me his current work, which began as sketches in charcoal or pencil or ink in the pages of his spiral bound notebook--sketches that he made on the subway to pass the time during his commute. George later scanned the sketches and brought them into Adobe Photoshop where they were neither enhanced nor repaired but re-envisioned or re-imagined using the tools of the digital workshop.



In a body, "New York Subway Ride" was spectacular. Each piece was stunning and evocative of the characters, or the constrictions, or the kinesics everyone encounters on the train.

This was the flavour of real New York depicted by a real New Yorker.

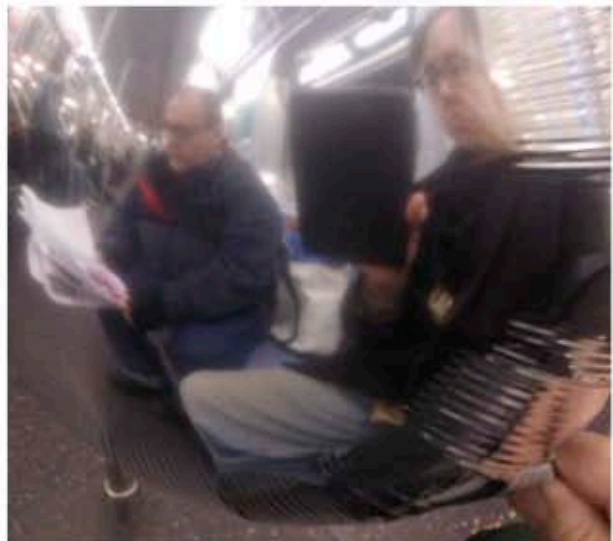
I wanted to capture that flavour in a short motion picture profile.

Most of George's work is oriented vertically whilst motion pictures today are oriented horizontally and wide screen. Therefore, I needed to present

George's work, a medium of one shape, in the format of another. I didn't want to compromise the work by cropping it--you'll notice the binding spirals are still visible in my movie--or staying too tight or too far away from the images, so I decided on traditional animation stand style pans and zooms. Yet this left me with as much as two thirds of the screen to fill in. I decided to go down into the subway and shoot video over which I would superimpose George's work.



Beforehand, however, I created a pre-visualization using my own still photography and free footage provided through the website of Russia Today (RT) <http://freevideo.rt.com/>. This process was similar to my experience of editing prototype commercials we call Rip-O-Matics for advertising clients, and confirmed my instincts. The vitality of George's work stole the gaze of the viewer away from any background. Moreover, George's art, although expressionist, fit organically into the footage. Since there is a resemblance between the interiors and exteriors of the trains of Moscow Metro and the New York Subway, some of the RT footage remains.



Then with a storyboard, my production assistant pal, Richard Kite, a Mylar balloon and, oh yeah, my consumer HD camcorder, I rode the Lexington and Sixth Avenue lines, gathering images and sounds.



For one segment, where subway stops are called out, I created a fake network map in Adobe Photoshop that I animated with Adobe After Effects.

The sound design had to be truly vivid. I put together the authentic noises of the subway: the whooshes and click-clack of rolling stock; the bells; the staircase footsteps; and the nasty screeching brakes. But I was careful to omit the automated conductor announcements, which might be proprietary.

Rather than interview George about his work, he wrote a poem inspired by train rides and riders. No one but George, with his Brooklyn rasp so familiar to me, could narrate the piece.

The sound design is driven by a wonderful piece of music, "All Jazzed Up," composed by John Hyde and licensed through My Music Source. The layered instrumentation and the breaking arrangements evoke the hustle and wait that two dollars and seventy-five cents buy you. The piano and woodwinds add whimsy and adventure, and are counterpoints to the snare and heavy brass.

George, ever the art director, designed the end titles.

One critical element is something I left out. I was very careful not to make this overwrought editorially. The piece was to be about George's skill, not my cutting ability. Nevertheless, the viewer must admit, this is one "New York Subway Ride" that's uniquely fast and fun.

As always, my editorial platform of choice is Avid Media Composer.

This is the painting by George that I own, and which has hung in my apartment for a dozen years.



Thanks for your time and consideration.

Francis Zuccarello