

at its eyes as if she thinks something might be inside, she could find it and pull it out, this hidden, perhaps invisible thing. The footage cuts off just as it appears she might stick her head right in, be swallowed whole by the face that is and is not a face but, either way, seems to hunger.

The real clown appears (or his face does, at least, that of Lou Jacobs, the first clown ever to grace a US postal stamp, here simplified on a basement linoleum square) sometime after a jester's tomb (that of Dicky Pearce, the earl of Suffolk's 'fool,' who fell to his death from a minstrel gallery) in the churchyard of St. Mary in the English village of Berkeley flashes before us. Images flash quickly in succession, linked intuitively by Hill, who assembled the film's sequences from a mass of footage old and new. Archival 8mm footage shows black-and-white images of a great aunt and her nephew sometime in the early 1980s tramping through the dunes and detritus of the future Battery Park City, the Twin Towers towering in the near distance. A cousin and her son in their home in Staten Island, he plays VR, waving his arms at invisible challenges, floats in the pool looking at the sky, seeing what in the clouds, we cannot know.

'Attempting to grasp the invisible,' a voiceover narrates as the same words appear on the screen, white against black, describing something about the e-minor key, whose melancholy tones we hear whistled, rough and airy, at various junctures, a haphazard refrain. 'Just because you can't see something, doesn't mean it's not there,' it continues, and who wouldn't agree, in this age of slick obscurity and fetish finish capitalism. Near the end of *E-Minor*, a hulking container ship moves slowly down a river, ferrying its thousands of brightly coloured boxes, their interiors invisible, to who knows where. 'Excuse me, I'm collec—' the now familiar female voice appears again, 'Excuse me—' and this is Hill, asking the Times Square pilgrims what 'E' comes to mind, but she might also be describing her film and its many boxes, frames of vision, not all so brightly coloured, but stacked carefully for us to witness as we will and imagine how much lies just beneath the surface.

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CALLUM HILL

E-MINOR

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Outline of a Theory of Form

Emily LaBarge

Places and faces and people and spaces, what you see is what the artist sees but also what you see, and what you feel is what the artist feels but also what you feel — a kind of mood, an atmosphere, a sensibility, perhaps what they call in music a timbre, 'the character or quality of a musical sound or voice as distinct from its pitch and intensity,' but which can also be called tonal quality or tone colour, and if I had to choose one for Callum Hill's 12-minute film I'd say, aside from *E-Minor*, its title, it might be kind of blue (like the Miles Davis album) or almost blue (like the Chet Baker album), and with the same dusky feeling of preferring to offer truth in impressions and illusions over realities.

Wakefield and Windrush Square and Gravesend and Bybrook Cemetery, UK, and Lodine, Sardinia, and Staten Island and Times Square, New York City, New York, USA, but everyone knows where that is, the famous bright lights big city, a site of pilgrimage for so many international travellers looking for — what? Whatever pilgrims seek. To the unseen filmmaker they say, smiling, stopped in their tracks, words beginning with 'E': Extraordinary, Empty, Eternal, Emergency, Enchantment, Elephant, Everybody, Elaborate, you could choose whichever you wanted (I read that there are 7916 options), just one simple rule, a place to begin.

The same is true of the series of inkblots carefully removed from an archival box and laid on a study table at the C.G. Jung Institute where it sits on Manhattan's East 39th Street — one point on a straight diagonal between the Empire State Building and the Chrysler Building, the city's famously competing (bigger, better, higher) Art Deco peaks. Officially called Rorschach tests, the cards with their shadowy, ambiguous forms were developed by Hermann Rorschach in 1921 as a projective psychological test designed to probe the unconscious mind of a patient. Rorschach was a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, but he had a background in art education, tutored by his father, Ulrich, a highly skilled artist, who also wrote a 100-page treatise on varied aspects of perception, entitled *Outline of a Theory of Form*. 'Who among us has not often and with pleasure,' he writes, 'turned our eyes and imagination to the ever-changing shapes and movements of the clouds and the mist?'

In a 1955 letter to the German psychologist Bruno Klopfer, Jung describes Rorschach's enigmatic cards as 'the most obvious development of the basic idea' of his own Word Association Test developed in 1910 — 'the first feeble attempt to examine complex mental attitudes by an experimental method,' in which a patient was to respond rapid-fire to a list of 100 words (*to swim, voyage, blue, lamp, to swim, pity, yellow, mountain, to die*, etc.). No doubt he saw similarities, too, with his concept of the 'collective unconscious,' which he described in 1916 as 'a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals.' Unlike our immediate consciousness, the collective unconscious is not personal or idiosyncratically developed but inherited: 'It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents.'

Rorschach died suddenly from peritonitis, aged 37, so who knows what else he might have done, what images so slightly solicited from the collective unconscious (what do we ever have but feeble attempts, in any case), but in *E-Minor* we begin with his delicate, fluttering stains and the world, vast and tangled, criss-crossing oceans and continents, days, months, years, flies out from there so as a question without answer: what do we see, or remember, in any passing detail, and why?

They say that the human mind wants to recognise, in random and meaningless patterns or forms, the human face most of all, a touching desire. The man in the moon, a face on mars, religious images on toast, crisps, tree trunks, wherever, really. This is called *pareidolia*, and some studies say that those in negative moods, as well as women, are more likely to apprehend these 'faces' peering out from inanimate material. I'd call this a skill, not an aberration or a maladaptive fantasy — to make meaning from nothing, the business of art.

And so, in one inkblot we see a face, or I do, with a clownish smile, orange eyes that flame outwards like broken stars, a matching mouth in a curved canny shape, sfumato wing-shaped smudges like make-up, a mask, the funny accoutrements of the jester's vestments designed to make him comical, unserious, so he can speak the truth. Later, another face, in a giant rock in Sardinia, in the province of Nuoro. The rock looms and lumbers, huge and craggy, its 'face' two large holes for eye sockets and one for a mouth, like the visage of a beast, some growling, prowling thing. We see a woman from behind who crouches next to the rock on a precarious slope, her hands claw