Hussein Chalayan
Frank Zappa
Boudicca
Jeremy Deller
Punch and the Apostles
Gillian Wearing
Stephen Jones
ARTISTS and film directors often get involved in each other's work. Italian Futurism influenced Russian Futurist cinema, Pasolini and Visconti used painting inspired stills and Warhol and Bacon experimented with both. Some artists are now our most exciting film-makers – Pipilotti Rist, Gillian Wearing and 'Nowhere Boy' director Sam Taylor Wood.

Curators Andrew Bracey and Dave Griffiths are two figures also crossing over. To celebrate the 25th birthday of Manchester’s Cornerhouse, 'Unspooling' contextualises their years of research about different aspects of cinema practice. Film stars, cult heroes and established auteurs dissect ideas, memories, histories and theories of cinema as the exhibition searches behind the screen. 'We like the fact that 'Unspooling' is a slang projectionist’s term for screening a film,” they say. “So there is a hint at another version of how we would normally view a film.”

The work that best demonstrates this is Stefan Zeyen’s 'Farewell' – a striking exploration into the mystery and beauty of the medium. In an original film on 35mm, a woman in the passenger seat of a convertible departs into the distance. A high definition camera films her in counter movement so she always stays the same size within the final projected image. The result is a corroding image, revealing white noise and microscopic film grain.

The grainy, lo-fi quality behind the gloss of Hollywood production is another feature of the show. The exhibition is curated for an arthouse cinema – so the old and the analogue past of directors the artists admire (Visconti, Lynch, Kubrick) is assimilated and challenged in digital possibilities for the present and future. Sheena Macrae’s 'Odyssey' (2006) remixes by abstracting the sci-fi speculations of Stanley Kubrick’s '2001: A Space Odyssey' into slit scans. Grander pieces, including the world premiere of Ben Gwilliam and Matt Wand’s new live cinema and Foley piece, 'I Married a Foley Footstep!' (2010), interact with the current explosion in event cinema. "There is 'guerilla' type activity here but we also have all painting and drawings, performance, film and video. In terms of approach there is a tendency towards the anarchic side of cinema, but that reflects the cinema we find interesting – Godard, Bresson, Pasolini, Dogma 95. This is certainly not the domain of rom-com or singing chipmunks!" - Sian Rowe

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