

# IMAGINATIONS

REVUE D'ÉTUDES INTERCULTURELLES DE L'IMAGE ▪ JOURNAL OF CROSS-CULTURAL IMAGE STUDIES



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## "Dialoguing on Miniature Cinema as New Art: Sheena Wilson with Midi Onodera"

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# imaginations

## Dialoguing on Miniature Cinema as New Art: Sheena Wilson with Midi Onodera

### Sheena Wilson

*Animal Crossing Underground*



[play](#)

*Blame Warhol*



[play](#)

*If Wishes Came True*



[play](#)

### Background information on Midi Onodera

MIDI ONODERA IS A WELL-RECOGNIZED Canadian filmmaker with more than thirty years of filmmaking experience. She has had screenings internationally at such prestigious venues as the Andy Warhol Museum, the International Festival of Documentary and Short Films, Bilbao, Spain, the Rotterdam International Film Festival, the Berlin International Film Festival, the National Gallery of Canada, and the Toronto International Film Festival. Her first film, a seven-minute short film entitled *Reality-Illusion* that she shot on Super Eight, appeared in 1979, while she was still in high school. She now has twenty-four films, two television writing credits, two commissioned artist profiles, two feature length works, two interactive DVDs, 434 short videos, and a total of 467 films and videos to her name.

Starting in November 2006 and continuing for one year, Onodera worked on the A Movie a Day project, and an article on this project was featured in *CineAction* in 2008.<sup>1 2</sup> As part of that project, she created one 30-45 second video per day for

365 days. These films explore a variety of issues and social situations from a variety of perspectives that are occasionally specific to Onodera's own life and viewpoint but also include the perspective of fictional characters. In the article mentioned above, published as "Mini-Camera: A Digital Diary for iPod," Catherine Russell has argued the following:

The 365 videos rigorously interrogate the nature of the "image" as an object. The techniques Onodera uses include a play with framing in which the image size and shape is consistently varied, a dynamic use of saturated colours, and special effects that alter space and time. An extensive palette of designer colours are used to frame the videos, making interesting contrasts with the many striking images of nature. The rich colours contribute to the object-like nature of the image. (3-4)

As an acknowledgement of Onodera's long and productive career as a Canadian artist and filmmaker who has consistently demonstrated critical engagement with her subjects and her chosen media, we have invited Onodera to be the guest artist-filmmaker for the inaugural issue of *Imaginations: Journal of Cross-Cultural Image Studies*.

### In Dialogue

*Sheena Wilson:* Hello, Midi. I would like to thank you for accepting the invitation to be the guest artist-filmmaker for the inaugural issue of *Imaginations*, and for agreeing to participate in this dialogue.<sup>3</sup> As you know, the vision that the editorial board has for this journal is to use it as a vehicle to transcend some of the traditional boundary lines between academia and the critics, and artists and filmmakers working with images. One of our goals is to create an ongoing conversation between various communities that intersect because of a shared interest in the role of the image in the current image-dominated cultural-mediascape; our conversation is the beginning of that process. You were invited as the guest artist for many reasons, including the fact that your work deals with cross-cultural aesthetics and images, as well as the fact that you are working in the cutting edge area of miniature cinema.

I am drawing attention to 365 because the video-shorts that you have created specifically for this inaugural journal issue are in the same vein as those created for that project. Also, your use of images, or image as object, as Catherine Russell refers to it, aligns well with the focus of this inaugural issue, devoted to defining theoretical frameworks for image studies through variegated approaches to manifestations of the image as it is informed by different cultures, national histories and linguistic traditions. I hope that we can address most of these issues during the course of our dialogue.

Perhaps the best way to do this is to begin our discussions of these issues by addressing the three feature videos that you created specifically for *Imaginations*. I must say that I appreciate how you have created three dramatically different videos: [Animal Crossing Underground](#), [Blame Warhol](#), and [If Wishes Came True](#). Do you think you could comment on how each of these videos was inspired by the Call For Papers and the focus of *Imaginations* and how each of these miniature films is, as you see it, a commentary on the relationship of the image to our contemporary lives?

*Midi Onodera*: First of all, Sheena, thank you very much for the honour of being involved with the inaugural issue of *Imaginations*. I welcome a forum that encourages dialogue between academia and artists and a journal that utilizes the tools of digital publication. In some way, the three shorts that I've made are ideally suited for your intended audience and form of dissemination.

As you've mentioned, these shorts have their roots in the A Movie a Day project, as well as the Movie of the Week project. For four years now I have been making short videos for personal viewing: either online or for portable viewing devices such as the iPod, etc. I see these movies as a form of miniature cinema: intimate, temporal, and spontaneous. These tiny movies or, as I call them, "Vidoodles," have a very different relationship with the viewer than larger screen movies. Unlike conventional cinema that draws on techniques and a visual/auditory vocabulary of over one hundred years, tiny cinema's history is only five years old, marked by Apple's introduction of their fifth generation iPod with video playback capability. There are vast unexplored and unexploited opportunities for visual and audio manipulation in this new format, and even after making over four hundred titles, I know that I am only superficially scratching the surface. Therefore I am very interested in participating in this dialogue to both further my understanding of this unique viewing format and to begin forming a critical framework in which to examine these wireless, portable artist-produced works.

I call these shorts "Vidoodles" because like a doodle these videos are meant to be an almost unconscious form of expression. I wanted to challenge myself to create an everyday amusement, a thought or quote for the day but in the form of moving images. Obsessively-crafted within a limited timeframe, I sometimes think these Vidoodles have a stronger relationship to folk art than cinema. My Vidoodles are similar to many personal YouTube postings: these videos reflect the passionate interests of the maker, whether it be an amateur glee club or a makeup demonstration. These movies are designed to attract an audience of like-minded individuals, a social network. This is an audience that makes public comments, creates mash-ups and reworks posted videos to create their own personal statements. This is the context for online videos, it is dominated by the personal and the DIY culture. In some ways, it is the contemporary version of the soapbox in the park.

But I am not naïve or idealistic enough to believe that there are vast numbers of like-minded souls devouring videos in the privacy of their homes. In reality I think that unless a video has gone “viral,” then the chances are quite high that one’s audience is made up of friends, family, and a few strangers who happen to stumble upon your posting. This is the flip side of online viewing: what if no one is watching? For me, the practice of online video-making is a constant rebalancing of the desire for anonymity and pull for increased audience numbers, although I think that I am more weighted to the anonymous side.

The shorts that I made for *Imaginations* are very much tied to different forms of digital communication. My world has always included a screen. Although I am old enough to remember black and white television, I have become a game addict with a number of gaming consoles, a collector of digital toy cameras, and an incessant computer and iPhone user. I tweet, text, and automatically refresh my email every minute. (But oddly my presence on Facebook is more of a lurking ghostly inhabitant than active participant). This is the context in which I make these Vidoodles.

Specifically these forms of insta-communication have provided me with more toys to play with in the digital sandbox. For instance, both *Animal Crossing Underground* and *Blame Warhol* use manipulated Nintendo DS scores. These tinny sounding MIDI soundtracks are ideal for the earbud generation. The metallic taste of these tracks is both soothingly familiar and abrasive. The soundtrack for *Blame Warhol* is from *SonicRush Adventure*, a SEGA produced title, featuring Sonic the Hedgehog. This endlessly climaxing, relentless soundtrack evokes a hypertensive feeling, a sense that one is on the brink of fame, within reach of conquering the villain or winning the game. In contrast, *Animal Crossing Underground* utilizes the ambient tones of the passive almost non-game Nintendo title, *Animal Crossing Wild World*. This movie also employs an unconventional frame format or screen size, something which at this point can only be achieved using software programs such as QuickTime. Further, this short is an animation, made up of one hundred-plus stills taken with my iPhone using the QuadCamera App.

I have always been interested in how we see the world through visual technologies. Having cut my teeth on the Structuralist films of the 1970s, I challenged myself to examine the fundamental qualities inherent in film: grain, composition, superimposition/dissolves. Now, several decades later, I find myself playing with similar formal concerns, except now the palette is not limited to film stock, the camera, film processing, and editing but it encompasses a diverse range of different image and sound creating equipment. But just as our storage shed of image-making tools has expanded, our narrative sense of storytelling has also shifted. More and more ideas, concepts, and conversations can be distilled into 140 characters, slogans, branding devices, and catch phrases.

In the end, however, there is still the relationship between the viewer or user (in the case of participatory works) and the moving image. Do you see these miniature movies differently than you do theatrical or gallery-situated works? In

what ways do we experience contemporary moving images that are similar/dissimilar to the past? As an academic, how do you frame discussions in “cross-cultural image studies” within the ever-evolving state of both political globalization and technological advancement?

*Sheena Wilson:* I’ll answer your last question first and then go back to your other questions about delivery format and reception: big screen versus miniature screens. Your question regarding how I frame discussions in cross-cultural image studies within the ever-evolving state of both political globalization and technological advancement, speaks to the focus of *Imaginations*. The short answer to this question is that I frame the discussion of any image in relationship to the context out of which it originates and the reverberations it has in the culture or cultures of its reception at one or more historical moments. Some images can communicate a consistent message across time and culture and others cannot. Some images are recuperated over time, transforming the original message. This, in fact, is the theme of the next issue of the journal: “Stealing the Image.”

However, the use of the term “cross-cultural image studies” as it appears in the journal title refers more specifically to our desire to address images from a diversity of cultural contexts, and not specifically to discuss images that do, or do not, transcend cultural borders, however porous they are rendered by technological advancements in global communication.

Now, to answer your question about whether I see miniature movies differently than theatrical or gallery-situated works, the answer is yes. I do agree with you that the big screen and the miniature screen function very differently. You made specific reference to the different technical tools and applications used in the production of these different film formats. I’d add to that the fact that gallery-situated film is typically constructed according to more classical notions of narration and storytelling, even experimental film is in dialogue with those expectations. The subjects of gallery films, regardless of the specific genre, are generally developed over a long period of time, require significant funding—which comes with its own implications—and the message often makes social or political commentary, either implicitly or explicitly. Stories, after all, are how we understand ourselves, our world, and our place in it. Viewers take time to watch and to consider the message of such a film, often in a communal setting. When viewed in a movie theatre, the venue requires a certain amount of social interaction and it is received as a shared experience. Beyond that, gallery films usually receive at least some attention from film critics.

Transformations are now taking place in the world of moving images – movies and videos – that can be compared to what happened decades ago in the music industry; historically music was performed live and it was a communal experience. Then, the advent of vinyl LPs allowed music to be recorded and played on a gramophone or stereo; later technological developments resulted in the 8-track, the cassette, the CD player, and then the Minidisc (to lesser commercial success),

and we now play music stored on computer files. The similarities that I see between earlier developments in sound technology and more recent transformations in movie-image delivery devices are largely in people's reactions to the notion of individual or private experiences as replacing the communal viewing experience. People once balked at the notion of recording music and listening to it in a private space. In fact, the Walkman was originally designed to have two headsets because the belief was that no one would want to listen to music alone. Ultimately, market trials proved that this was not to be the case. Moreover, we know that sound recordings did not, as some feared, separate the individual from the larger cultural experience. Neither will this occur with the increased popularity of individual viewing experiences. The concept of watching a movie alone or in a private space using a VCR or DVD attached to the home television has long been accepted. However, as you know, since the release of the iPod, film/video/moving image technology has become as portable as sound (music) technology, and this is having ramifications not only on how we receive visual messages but on the form those moving image messages are taking. Now, we are not simply watching feature length movies on the go or catching the latest episode of our favourite TV drama while riding the bus; the iPod has inspired a new genre of miniature-cinema that is responding to this new medium.

These miniature movies are for consumption on a dynamic individual basis, and as such, they are filmed with technology that corresponds to the small screen. Unlike some shows where visual clues might be provided in the background as you watch, the miniature screen does not allow for this kind of visual detail. Also, it is very significant that miniature films are not only smaller but shorter. These visual messages are conveyed as an "image-bite" (sound-byte) and received more like the way in which one would view a commercial. The amount of time that certain viewers or communities of viewers spend watching the film may be proportionate to the time he/she spends reflecting on the issue; given, there are engaged viewers who fall outside these categories. Paul Virilio saw speed as an innately transformative agent of contemporary civilization. Therefore, I'm very interested to discuss further with you your perspective on the short delivery format of miniaturecinema given that you are a pioneer in the exploration of miniature-cinema.

However, you had asked, "In what ways do we experience contemporary moving images that are similar/dissimilar to the past?" and my answer to you would be that the general viewer, both past and present, to varying degrees, is looking for the message being communicated via the images, with an eye to the way they are combined and juxtaposed in order to create meaning. People are always seeking meaning, and certain communities of critical viewers even more so. Earlier, you drew a parallel between your "Vidoodles" and the soapbox in the park. The metaphor of the soapbox, of course, makes recourse to political speech and action. Therefore, my next question to you would be whether you see

“Vidoodles” as having a political message? What is the transformative power of miniature-cinema as an art form?

*Midi Onodera:* You’ve touched upon many different aspects of image making and the varied relationships between the viewer and the image: communal and individual. How one sees the work plays a very big role in how one interprets the content of the movie. Stepping back further to the conceptual stage, it’s important to discuss why one would choose to create movies within the framework of the small screen in the first place. Over the years filmmaking has morphed into video-making. Today, there is very little distinction between the two. Film festivals now show videos or digital copies rather than celluloid film prints. Production costs have diminished, allowing more people to make movies. People without formal filmmaking educations can now create their feature length masterpieces and post the work online for the public to view. But is the possibility for widespread distribution the only reason one would choose to produce work for the small, portable screen?

For myself, distribution is one factor, but it was more an afterthought than the main reason I became interested in this format. After making *Skin Deep* (1995) I became disillusioned with the politics of traditional filmmaking. I spent so many years trying to raise the funds to produce that theatrical feature that I lost sight of what was important to me. I found myself making compromise after compromise, and gradually the content of the film became less important than getting it made. For five years following *Skin Deep*, I struggled with the idea of ever making another film again. Instead I worked in watercolours and carved large wood “paintings” and kept it all locked away in my studio. But around that time, electronic toy manufacturers began to produce toy cameras for children.

Back in 1987 when the Fisher Price PixelVision camera (PXL-2000) came out, I was a starving artist unable to buy the precious device that recorded fuzzy black and white images onto cassette tape. I vowed I would never let another toy camera slip through my fingers and eagerly purchased the latest gadgets for children. At first I had no idea how to work with this new format. The fixed lens and camera bodies were made from cheap plastic, and the recording capacity limited to a few minutes. The resolution of these recordings was so low that it would make it extremely difficult to show in a theatrical setting, never mind ever conforming to broadcast standards. But since I had turned my back on large budget productions, these limitations were exactly why this form appealed to me. Working with toy cameras made creating moving images fun again.

As I mentioned before, the birth of portable cinema really began with the first iPod capable of video playback. With this innovation, my toy camera-produced works finally had a distribution platform. Although iTunes began to sell feature length movies reformatted for the iPod, this reduced version of a theatrical experience did not appeal to me. Beautifully composed wide shots that were breathtaking on the large screen were reduced to tiny landscapes for ant-sized

characters. The loss of so much visual detail and the isolated viewing experience created a clear distinction between the large screen and the tiny screen.

I began to experiment with what kinds of images “worked,” the use of audio heard not through speakers but headphones, the use of text—the font size, placement, and style. I discovered the subtle visual differences between the digital VCamNow and the Mattel Vidster versus analogue toys such as the Barbie Camera and TrendMaster video camera. I worked with aspect ratios and video compressions and allowed myself the freedom to manipulate the footage in post-production.

I never saw these miniature movies as “calling cards” for a traditional career in filmmaking. These are not movies that can be easily translated to the large screen; they are specifically made to hold in the palm of your hand. But because of the portability of this format, the viewing context in which one can watch miniature movies is incredibly varied. We are no longer restricted to special locations such as movie theatres or galleries, living rooms, etc. in order to view moving images. The video screen now dominates public spaces from monitors showcasing the baggage claim network in airports, to elevators, washroom stalls, and of course electronic billboards.

Obviously these public screens are different from the personal screens we carry in our pocket, but they are linked through an urban context. I imagine that the typical urban iPod video audience is on the go, traveling to and from work on public transportation. In order to make the trip more bearable the portable viewer distances him/herself from the reality in front of his/her eyes. In a way, the iPod screen becomes dominant, and reality falls into the peripheral.

The Vidoodles that I made for *Imaginations* and most of my other small format shorts are shot spontaneously. While going about my daily life, I happen upon moments or locations that I find compelling. It could be an unusual interaction, an odd juxtaposition, or simply a moment in time. Most of these shots eventually evolve into tiny narratives. Because these Vidoodles are produced very quickly I’ve learned how to carefully narrow my production parameters and therefore my shooting ratio is very small. I carve these narratives out of material found littered in the street, from a direct experience of the reality in front of me. This relationship that I have with the images is almost in direct opposition to the escapist desires of the urban iPod audience. I am trying to call attention to the moments we may have overlooked or want to avoid.

For instance, *Blame Warhol* can be viewed in the location where it was filmed—Time Square, NYC. Watching the Vidoodle in situ amplifies the viewer’s relationship to the visible bombardment of commercialism dominating this physical location. But is it simply a reinforcement of this physical reality or does it make the viewer conscious of our growing obsession with celebrity and consumption? I would hope that *Blame Warhol* reawakens how we perceive the reality in front of us, reclaims the peripheral experience and forces it into focus.

*Animal Crossing Underground* could work similarly, challenging the audience to re-examine a mundane subway ride.

*If wishes came true* works on another level: it is a reflection of urban reality, but the narrative also evokes childhood memory, desire, and imagination. The split screen device works to separate and contrast these two worlds. Yet the overall connection with present-day reality is still visible through the imagery of the Egyptian god Anubis set against a downtown cityscape.

Looking back at what I've written, I realize that I have only provided partial answers to some of your questions and perhaps I have just complicated our discussion even further. I'm not sure if I could answer the question, "[W]hat is the transformative power of miniature-cinema as an art form?" That seems to be a never-ending discussion in itself. I feel the same way about the question of whether my Vidoodles have a political message. To answer this I think we would need to define what a moving-image "political message" is in the landscape of media consumerism and consumption. How does one differentiate between a political message and a "Just Do It" Nike advertisement, or is this distinction even important?

*Sheena Wilson*: It is true that current communicative technologies and the associated communicative environments have created a specific fluidity regarding the political spectrum, a fluidity that allows for a plurality of simultaneous messages, contradictory, paradoxical, and/or evanescent, to instantly diffuse via the networks of communication. However, in the *age of instancy* or *immediacy gratification*, this *post-political* climate risks merely creating a noncommittal/ethical political action—*post-political participaction*—that reinforces the dominant discourses, however masked they might be by the communicative environments.<sup>4 5</sup> And, in order to define what a political message entails in the context of current communicative environments is to first acknowledge that in the present situation the image is instantly diffused in such ways that the contexts of production, the contexts of diffusion, and the contexts of critical engagement are no longer knowable, in many/most cases: neither to the artist, nor to different communities of viewers respectively. Current communicative technologies thus result in an erasure of contexts, both of production and of reception. The image might still have, when necessary to strict ideological enterprises, some possible political message, but it depends on how it is created, used, consumed, distributed, filtered, recontextualized, re-invented, re-circulated, etc.

In any case, your responses have given your viewers (and our readers) some insight into your changing relationship to the moving image by indicating how toy cameras and miniature cinema have, in fact, inspired you anew to use video—the moving image—as your medium of expression. However, I'd like to ask more specifically how you see yourself in relationship to the camera. Are you a filmmaker, an artist, a collector of images, a narrator of contemporary life, all of the above, or none of the above?

On a related note, regarding how you identify as an artist, I cannot end this conversation without touching on the ethno-cultural influences in your filmmaking. I am most familiar with your film *The Displaced View*—a film that I have called your ethnic coming out film, since your films prior to that did not directly address your Japanese Canadian heritage—and a film that makes use of Japanese literary motifs, visual symbols, and images. Related to that, I've always been intrigued by your use of fairytale and poetry in your film/videomaking. Poetry and elements of classic stories and storytelling techniques are present in many of your earlier experimental films, including *The Displaced View*, and your Vidoodles. These narrative techniques also seem linked to the use of the split screen that you just referred to as a way to represent multiple realities at once. Could you comment on the role of poetry, fairytales, classic storytelling techniques, and the more technical elements of visual communication such as colour, split screens, graphics, collage, etc., in constructing your films and Vidoodles? Simply stated, how do you self identify and how does this impact your artistic vision and your artistic production?

*Midi Onodera:* It's funny that you ask if I consider myself to be a collector and a filmmaker. The latter is a term that I have been wondering if I can continue to use to describe what I do. From the beginning of my career I have made a clear distinction between film and video. Back in the 1980s the terms filmmaker or artist filmmaker connoted a specific practice in the context of art production: experimental, non-industry, and non-traditional. Similarly, video artists had their own history based more on alternative narrative structures and the aesthetics of analogue video. Today, however, I see myself more as a moving image artist: someone who is working in different areas of media production, discovering the inherent qualities of each medium and exploring these through an alternative story-telling framework. I would say I see film, video, and moving images as a continuum rather than separate disciplines such as experimental film, artist videos, and new media. Over the years I have become a collector of images, and through the collection process I adapt, shift, and question those images and how we process them.

An example of this would be my video *I have no memory of my direction* (2005). This piece was an informal follow-up to *The Displaced View* (1988). *I have no memory of my direction* was shot in Japan over five months between the early spring and late fall of 2003. Rather than approach the video as I had previously done with my other scripted work, I decided to shift my approach and tackle the work in a more freeform way. Having never been to Japan, I was unsure of what I might discover there. The only elements I had to work with before I arrived were vague family histories and pop culture references flavoured with fairy tales and contemporary myths. The one constant framework was Chris Marker's film *Sans Soleil* (1983). This essay film masterwork deeply influenced my approach to image making, and I wanted to pay homage to Marker while constructing counterpoints from the

perspective of a woman of Japanese descent. Arriving in Japan, a few days after the 2003 invasion of Iraq, I armed myself with various cameras (toy, traditional video, and still cameras) and dove into the culture. My agenda consisted of visiting different locations that were in *Sans Soleil* and locating my relationship with those spaces.

Each day I would leave my apartment before the overwhelming Tokyo rush hour and head off to a few places I tracked down from the film. I would observe the area and try to imagine what Marker might have seen twenty years earlier. What had changed? How did I view the scene differently? What did this place mean to me? I would unpack my gear and film images that captured my attention. From these original *Sans Soleil* locations, I discovered links to other places and connections with family back in Canada and a family I had never met in Japan. Every night I would return to home, log my shots, and jot down my impressions of the day.

My first trip lasted about three months. Returning home, I mulled over the footage and watched my father struggle with Alzheimer's. I became obsessed with memory: familial, personal, and cultural. I chose the framework of a dream because I didn't want to be limited to a documentary perspective; I wanted to create a fantasy that flowed in and out of the crevices of reality, a form that might resemble a shifting memory or a dream. I returned to Japan in the fall and picked up the missing shots that I needed to shape the dreamscape. The Japanese title of the video is *Yume Oi*, which roughly translates to "chasing the dream."

Making this video in this non-scripted manner was particularly challenging, and through the process I honed my skills of quiet observation that later became essential in creating my Vidoodles. Living on an overpopulated island with people who physically looked like me was an experience I had never had. Although I had always self-identified as a Japanese Canadian, I realized that I had to a certain extent been mythologizing my Japaneseness. On many levels this created ethnic mythology has shaped my work. However, I do not see this in isolation to the other aspects of my identity. I cannot separate my ethnicity from my sexuality from my gender identity. They are all intrinsically linked and sometimes in conflict with each other.

The visual manifestation of this shaded identity could be subconsciously tied to my multi-screen devices that seem to permeate the Vidoodles. Obviously the use of multiple screens has invaded our visual landscape through advertising and the omnipresence of public and private screens. How we now digest these multiple moving image screens is vastly different today from just a few decades ago. I remember, as a five year-old child, attending Expo 1967 in Montreal and visiting the Ontario Pavilion. Christopher Chapman created *A Place To Stand*, a fifteen-screen portrait of the province with six-channel surround sound. Engulfed by the orchestral soundtrack, I felt transported to another world, not one that actually existed but one that was locked away in my mind's eye. The sheer diversity

of the multiple images was inspirationally irresistible, and I think I must have childishly come to the decision that making images was what I wanted to do, but it wasn't until I picked up my first Super 8 camera in high school that I had the opportunity to pursue my dream.

Being involved with this dialogue for *Imaginations* has forced me to consider the trajectory of my practice and has demanded that I examine, evaluate, and articulate what that means. It's not an easy process to go through. To a certain extent, I want to hide behind the traditional artist's mask and tell you that it is up to your interpretation, as a viewer, an academic, someone who is forging a path or paths between the audience and the maker. But that would be the easy way out, less challenging and less threatening. By agreeing to this process I have exposed fragments of myself that I have kept private. These fragments, to some degree, are the shards that I use to piece together a facsimile of a screen identity, characters that become woven into imaginary landscapes that confront or avoid the complexities of that space.

In 1990, I was invited to create an artist profile on David Cronenberg for the Toronto Arts Awards. During the interview he spoke a bit about the "surgical impulses" of an artist: the desire to "cut open the surface skin, and then once beyond that, to make sense of what lies beneath it." He spoke about how art can be dangerous to the artist: the drive to push oneself over the edge, into the abyss of the unknown. I would add that there is nothing more exhilarating and melancholic than completing a work. The dizzying intoxication one feels when absorbed in creating something is highly addictive.

But there's nothing like that first time, and one is always searching to recapture that extraordinary experience again and again. For some, however, the process of analyzing the artistic cocktail endangers the magic and destroys the high. I like to think of myself as a cultural mixologist: just as I need to keep increasing the potency of my own work, I also want to understand the ingredients better in order to reach that next level (of scrumptiousness).

*If you are interested in further information about these Vidoodles, please read the interview-dialogue between the artist in this same volume of Imaginations. For further details on Midi Onodera and her body of work, consult her [website](http://www.midionodera.com) (<http://www.midionodera.com>), her [filmography](#), or contact her [here](#). A DVD collection of her work from 1981 -2008 is also available for purchase through [Art Metropole](#). Her films and videos can be rented from the [CFMDC](#) or [V tape](#).*

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> This project is referred to as both "A Movie a Day" or "365."

<sup>2</sup> Russell, Catherine. "Mini-Camera: A Digital Diary for iPod." *CineAction*. Toronto. Issue 73/74 2008.

<sup>3</sup> This dialogue took place in written format, via e-mail correspondence.

<sup>4</sup> These terms come from an article co-authored with Dr. William Anselmi entitled "Technologies of Memory, Identity and Oblivion in *Persepolis* (2007) and *Waltz with Bashir* (2009)," forthcoming in 2011 with Athabasca University Press. In that article we explain the following: "These two terms refer to the current sociocultural condition created by technology. On the one hand, we can be in multiple spaces simultaneously and, on the other, the grand narrative of postmodernism has transformed History into a plethora of diluted/deluded narcissistic performances/stories for commercial use."

<sup>5</sup> The term "post-political" comes from previous and ongoing collaborative work with William Anselmi where we refer to the post-political as a current reality where the historically understood political spectrum has been mutated, such that it has merely become a rhetorical reference in a post-political reality where all positions on the spectrum can simultaneously be attributed to one individual or action in a media frenzy where there is no responsibility to history and its references. Likewise, all perspectives on the political spectrum can simultaneously exist and find viewership without having to acknowledge or be acknowledged through critical debate, thus eliminating dialectical processes