

Video Score for the Coast of Cape Ann

*a coast
is not the same
as land
a coast
is not the main
a coast means
travel by horse
along beaches from
Saco south
via Ipswich to,
crossing Annisquam,
Gloucester
or by shallop
(long boat) across
Ipswich Bay
as such the Thatchers,
minister preparing to teach
Marblehead fishermen
got wrecked going
from the settlement at Ipswich
didn't make it around
north promontory of
Cape Ann. A shore
life.*

—Charles Olson, *Maximus Poems*

Place

Cape Ann is on the Rocky Coast of the Atlantic in between Boston and Seabrook. The Coastline of Cape Ann runs approximately fifteen miles from the mouth of the Annisquam River to the Blynman Canal.

Time

This score was composed during the spring and summer of 1980, the year of the coast. Actual production would require a full summer with a month and a half of pre-production and a month and a half of post-production.

Product

This score will yield a color videoscape of the Cape Ann Coastline six hours in length. The internal orchestration of the tapes will allow multiple viewing possibilities from single channel broadcast of ten-minute segments to six channel showings of the entire work.

Method

The method for this score is generated from a single figure original to the artist. Combined with the phenomenology and semiotics of the American Philosopher, C.S. Peirce, this figure makes possible two resonant modes of videotaping: continuous scanning, and semiotic selection.

Range of the Method

For the artist to produce this videoscape is to produce a scouting report for our species now endangered by its own environmental destruction. While such scouting is valuable, more is possible with this method. The same figure that regulates this score for the individual artist could regulate a relational practice for a group. A group of such practitioners, trained in scanning and selecting, could embed a shared perception of the coastline on videotape.

A shared perception of the coast could make a significant difference in current efforts to reorganize human activity in accord with coastal ecology. Without foregoing the aesthetic, the educational and juridical systems could be impacted. A concrete local curriculum could be built up on videotape for and with students raised on television. A jury of observers could embed critical coastal processes on videotape and introduce this tape as evidence in court to help preclude transgressive coastal practices.

Continuous Scanning

Continuous scanning will be used to produce tapes at eighteen different sites. Taken together these eighteen ten-minute tapes will provide an overlapping line-of-sight, covering the entire Cape Ann Coastline.

The selected sites are a combination of twelve single sites and six composite sites that move sequentially from the mouth of the Annisquam River to the Blynman Canal. The odd numbered sites in the sequence will be taped at low tide, the even numbered at high tide. At each of the single sites, a ten-minute unedited tape will be made. For the composite sites the number of edits will correspond to the number of sub-sites in the composite. For example, four sub-

sites from Pigeon Cove in to Rockport might result in a ten-minute tape with four two-and-a-half-minute segments.

The Sites

1. Babson Jutty
2. Davis Neck
3. Plum Cove/Flat Rocks
4. Folly Cove
5. Halibut Point
6. Andrews Point
7. Pigeon Cove (tide in)
8. Rockport (tide out)
9. Straitsmouth Island
10. Whales Cove/Lands End
11. Brier Neck
12. Bass Rocks #1
13. Bass Rocks #2
14. Bass Rocks #3
15. Brace Rock
16. Lighthouse
17. Gloucester Harbor #1
18. Gloucester Harbor #2

Composite Sites

Tapes produced by continuous scanning will exhibit an integration of movement from T'ai Chi and camera experience over ten years. Attention will be paid to a sense of place, the specifics of each site and coastal ecology. The sound track

will be a two channel combination of waves and the heartbeat of the cameraman.

Semiotic Selection

Eighteen ten-minute tapes will be produced by semiotic selection. Twelve of these will be semiotic arrays of ten commonplaces of coastal life. The other six will be more exploratory, dealing with tidal zones and tide pools.

The exploratory tapes will use a close-up lens to provide an understanding of tide zones and tide pools in terms of the methodology, at times combining scanning with the semiotics. Three ten-minute tidal zone tapes and three ten-minute tide pool tapes will be produced.

The ten commonplaces that will be arrayed semiotically are: rock, water, alaria, light, sand, boat, wind, lobster, fish, and oil. Rock and water will be arrayed twice in keeping with the rocky shore line.

Peirce presents his semiotics, or doctrine of signs, in technical language that can be bypassed here. His three trichotomies of signs results in a tenfold classification and the possibility of a sixty-six fold classification. One possible consideration of rock in terms of the ten classes would be as follows:

- I. Rock considered in itself
- II. Camera moving with grain of rock
- III. Surf indicating rock
- IV. Buoy marking a submerged rock
- V. Drawing of Rock
- VI. Rockweed

- VII. Rocks tumbled down, positioned by gravity
- VIII. Printed word "stone"
- IX. Printout of Wallace Stevens's line "The boat was made of stones that had lost their weight"
- X. Printout of Coastal laws for quarrying stone

This list does not exhaust the multiple aspects of rock nor Peirce's classification system which, theoretically could handle all aspects. Yet it does indicate the sort of selecting possible and the various affinities between classes that make coherent editing possible.

Six Monitor Showing

Each monitor would show an hour tape composed of six ten-minute segments.

Tide Zones #1	Whales Cove/Lands End
Babson Jutty	Sand
Davis Neck	Water
Rock	Brier Neck
Water	Bass Rocks #1
Plum/Flat Rocks	Tide Pool #2
Folly Point	Tide Zone #3
Halibut Point	Bass Rocks #2
Alaria	Bass Rocks #3
Light	Lobster
Andrews Point	Rock
Tide Pool #1	Brace Rock

Tide Zone #2	Lighthouse
Pigeon Cove (in)	Fish
Rockport (out)	Oil
Boat	Gloucester Harbor #1
Wind	Gloucester Harbor #2
Straitsmouth Island	Tide Pool #3

Sequential Showing

The proper order for sequential showing is given below.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Tidal Zone #1 | 19. Whales Cove/Lands End |
| 2. Babson Jutty | 20. Sand |
| 3. Davis Neck | 21. Water |
| 4. Rock | 22. Brier Neck |
| 5. Water | 23. Bass Rocks #1 |
| 6. Plum Cove/Flat Rocks | 24. Tide Pool #2 |
| 7. Folly Point | 25. Tide Zone #3 |
| 8. Alaria | 26. Bass Rocks #2 |
| 9. Light | 27. Bass Rocks #3 |
| 10. Halibut Point | 28. Lobster |
| 11. Andrews Point | 29. Rock |
| 12. Tide Pool #1 | 30. Brace Rock |
| 13. Tide Zone #2 | 31. Lighthouse |
| 14. Pigeon Cove (tide in) | 32. Fish |
| 15. Rockport (tide out) | 33. Oil |
| 16. Boat | 34. Gloucester Harbor #1 |
| 17. Wind | 35. Gloucester Harbor #2 |
| 18. Straitsmouth Island | 36. Tide Pool #3 |