

Staff, "Mini-Retrospective of Work by Bruce Conner to be Presented by Creative Time", 2010, ART DAILY, 25 January 2010.

## Mini-Retrospective of Work by Bruce Conner to be Presented by Creative Time



Still from 'Easter Morning', 2008.

**NEW YORK, NY.-** At 44 1/2, Creative Time's presentation of video art on MTV's outdoor, gilded screen located in the heart of New York City's Times Square, will showcase the work of legendary artist Bruce Conner (1933-2008) in a mini-retrospective from February 1-28, 2010.

Bruce Conner has influenced generations of artists, and his oeuvre spans more than 50 years. Creative Time will present three of his film works At 44 1/2 from the early years of his output to the year of his death: *TEN SECOND FILM* (1965), *CROSSROADS* (1976), and *EASTER MORNING* (2008).

"For years we have dreamt of showing the films of Bruce Conner," said Anne Pasternak, president and artistic director of Creative Time, "an artist who has been enormously influential to so many other artists and whose videos have done so much to shape video art, independent film, and music videos as we know it. And what could be a more interesting place to show a short survey of his emotionally charged and visually stunning works than in the heart of popular culture, Times Square?"

### **TEN SECOND FILM**

**1965, 16mm, b&w/silent, 10 seconds**

Bruce Conner's *TEN SECOND FILM* was commissioned by the 1965 New York Film Festival, and Conner intended for it to act as a television commercial and a prelude for the film programs in the theater. It is comprised of just ten film strips, each 24 frames long, of "countdown leader"—the universal cinematic signifier that announces the imminent start of a film, causing a hush to fall across the audience as it ticks off the final, suspenseful seconds. With his agile re-editing, Conner manages to heighten the energy and

exhilaration of this now-obsolete convention. This fervency was lost on the festival, however, which rejected the film for being “too fast.” It seems only fitting that TEN SECOND FILM ushers in this series of Conner’s work, shown on a screen of cinematic proportions amongst the breakneck speed of Times Square.

### **CROSSROADS**

**1976, 35mm, b&w/sound, 36 minutes**

**Original music by Patrick Gleeson and Terry Riley**

On July 25, 1946, “Operation Crossroads” detonated Baker, the first underwater atomic bomb test, 90 feet under Bikini Atoll. The bomb forever altered the course of human events and it yielded a horrific vision of the apocalypse documented by 500 cameras on ships, on land, and in the air. Conner’s editing and composition of 27 individual shots from declassified U.S. Government footage of this event from the National Archives transforms nuclear holocaust into hypnotic abstraction, rendering a real-world tragedy amidst the corporate pitch of Times Square.

### **EASTER MORNING**

**2008, 8mm/Digital, color/sound, 10 minutes**

**Music: “In C” by Terry Riley**

Departing from an inimitable film repertoire of tour-de-force editing technique, visual comedy, and apocalyptic themes, avant-garde master Bruce Conner envisioned EASTER MORNING (2008)—a metaphysical quest for renewal beyond the natural and ephemeral worlds—to be his last finished masterpiece. Keeping with his ritualistic reworking and re-imagining of his films, the image source originates from the 8mm Kodachrome footage of EASTER MORNING RAGA (1966), expanded in duration, gauge, and frame rate to devise an effect of visual transcendence. EASTER MORNING celebrates Conner’s reverence for experiential cinema, aleatoric sound, and discoveries within the realm of the spirit. EASTER MORNING will be screened At 44 1/2 concurrently in a solo show of Conner’s work at Susan Inglett Gallery, NY, opening January 28.

Creative Time kicked off At 44 1/2 with the overwhelmingly successful presentation of *Shallow* by Malcolm McLaren in June 2008, and was followed by selections from Mark Tribe’s Port Huron Project; early work by the legendary Gilbert & George; a series curated by artist Marilyn Minter; the work of acclaimed artist Steve McQueen; and two series by young artists.

The larger than life, high definition 44 1/2 screen is located on Broadway between 44th and 45th Streets, directly across the street from MTV’s offices and studio. At 44 1/2 is part of Creative Time’s long history of presenting public art in Times Square.

Bruce Conner (1933-2008) was born in Kansas but spent most of his active career in San Francisco, California. Conner worked in multiple mediums and often combined collage, prints, tapestries, and film in a single piece. He was one of the first to fuse popular music and video and collaborated in his later career with several musicians including Terry Riley and David Byrne. He often incorporated found footage into his films as a way of dealing with media and its effects on culture and society as a subject.