

Review: Stan VanDerBeek at the Box  
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Since opening its doors in 2007, the Box has supplemented its thoughtful contemporary program with periodic exhibitions devoted to underexposed pockets of recent art history, particularly from the 1960s and '70s. Barbara T. Smith, Wally Hedrick and John Altoon have all been featured, as well as collaborative video artists David Lamelas and Hildegard Duane.

The current show presents the work of experimental filmmaker Stan VanDerBeek (1927-1984). Combining film, video, collage, drawing and several re-created multimedia installations, it is an ambitious undertaking — apparently the first of its kind to appear in Los Angeles — and a rousing tribute to the artist's radically multifarious output.

Born at the dawn of mass culture and media, VanDerBeek had a ravenous appetite for images and a prescient fascination with the interlocking layers of technology that define and circumscribe contemporary cultural experience. He filmed images, drew them, painted them, cut them out, spliced them together, animated them, photocopied them, even faxed them in one case, all with a giddy rigor that makes the work feel as fresh as anything you'll find in a gallery today.



The collages, which date from the mid-'50s through the early '80s, are especially enchanting. Here one sees the artist literally churning through the mess of visual stimulus that modern culture had become, drawing connections, illuminating idiosyncrasies, crafting strains of visual poetry through an astute process of juxtaposition and layering. In turns playful, elegant, jarring and crass, they provide an intimate glimpse into joyously frenetic sensibility.

The Box, 977 Chung King Road, L.A., (213) 625-1747, through April 18. Closed Sundays through Tuesdays.

Above: An animation frame from Stan VanDerBeek's "A La Mode" (1959). Credit: Estate of Stan VanDerBeek/The Box

