

JORDAN BELSON

From 3 March - 31 May 2020
Video gallery

Allures (1961) *Samadhi* (1967)

"Jordan Belson (1926, Chicago - 2011, San Francisco) studied painting before seeing Oskar Fischinger and the Whitney brothers' films at the Art in Cinema festival, beginning in 1946, at the San Francisco Museum, whereupon he increasingly devoted himself to the moving abstract image. His early films animated real objects (pavements in *Bop-Scotch* [1952]) and scroll paintings prepared like film strips with successive images (*Mandala* [1953]).

Between 1957 and 1959, Belson collaborated with composer Henry Jacobs on the historic *Vortex Concerts*, which combined the latest electronic music with moving visual abstractions projected on the dome of Morrison Planetarium in San Francisco. The *Vortex* experience inspired Belson to abandon traditional painting and animation in favor of creating visual phenomena in something like real time, by live manipulation of pure light-- which has been the technological basis for his approximately 20 films from *Allures* (1961) until 2005.

The second major well-spring of Belson's mature films arose from his increasing involvement with mystical and contemplative philosophies. The mature films frequently express aspects of Indian mysticism and yoga, reflected in the titles of his masterpieces *Samadhi* (1967) and *Chakra* (1972), which render the actual visual and auditory phenomena that Belson experienced in heightened states of meditative concentration."* Dr. William Moritz.

The films selected for this presentation reflect these two periods in his oeuvre.

Checklist:

Allures, 1961

16 mm transferred to HD video, color, sound,
7 minutes 45 seconds

Sound by Jordan Belson and Henry Jacobs

Courtesy of Center for Visual Music, Los Angeles

"I think of *Allures* as a combination of molecular structures and astronomical events mixed with subconscious and subjective phenomena - all happening simultaneously. the beginning is almost purely sensual, the end perhaps totally nonmaterial. It seems to move from matter to spirit in some way". Jordan Belson

Samadhi, 1967

16 mm transferred to HD video, color sound,
5 minutes

Sound by Jordan Belson

Courtesy of Center for Visual Music, Los Angeles

"It is primarily an abstract cinematic work of art inspired by Yoga and Buddhism. Not a description or explanation of *Samadhi*". Jordan Belson

*Quotes are from essay by dr. William Moritz. From *L'art du Mouvement 1919-1996*, ed. Jean-Michel Bouhours, Cinema du Musee national d'art moderne (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 1996).

