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| Fischinger, Oskar (1900-1967) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Oskar Fischinger, (b. 22 June 1900, Gelnhausen, Germany; d. 31 January, 1967, Los Angeles, USA), was one of the most influential German abstract experimental animators and creators of visual music. As a youth he studied draughtsmanship and engineering. In 1922, he invented a machine that photographed sequential slices of wax blocks, producing an abstract film in a relatively short time. In Munich, he continued his experiments in creating visual equivalents to orchestral music while making animated cartoons and multi-projector light shows. In Berlin, he did special effects for Fritz Lang’s *Frau im Mond* [*Woman in the Moo*n] (1929), helped develop the three colour Gasparcolor process, and made stop-motion commercials. In 1936, Fischinger immigrated to the United States. In 1937 he composed the abstract short *An Optical Poem* to Liszt’s ‘Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2’ for MGM. He worked nine months on the ‘Toccata and Fugue’ segment of Disney’s *Fantasia* (1940), but none of his original art appears in the film. He continued making abstract expressionist visual music films until 1947, culminating in his masterwork *Motion Painting No. 1*. Lack of funding subsequently restricted him to painting; around this time he invented a machine to generate artificial sounds. In 1955 he patented the ‘lumigraph’, which enabled its operator to create silent moving colour compositions. Fischinger influenced a host of avant-garde animators including Norman McLaren, Jordan Belson, and Len Lye, as well as composer John Cage. |
| Oskar Fischinger, (b. 22 June 1900, Gelnhausen, Germany; d. 31 January, 1967, Los Angeles, USA), was one of the most influential German abstract experimental animators and creators of visual music. As a youth he studied draughtsmanship and engineering. In 1922, he invented a machine that photographed sequential slices of wax blocks, producing an abstract film in a relatively short time. In Munich, he continued his experiments in creating visual equivalents to orchestral music while making animated cartoons and multi-projector light shows. In Berlin, he did special effects for Fritz Lang’s *Frau im Mond* [*Woman in the Moo*n] (1929), helped develop the three colour Gasparcolor process, and made stop-motion commercials. In 1936, Fischinger immigrated to the United States. In 1937 he composed the abstract short *An Optical Poem* to Liszt’s ‘Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2’ for MGM. He worked nine months on the ‘Toccata and Fugue’ segment of Disney’s *Fantasia* (1940), but none of his original art appears in the film. He continued making abstract expressionist visual music films until 1947, culminating in his masterwork *Motion Painting No. 1*. Lack of funding subsequently restricted him to painting; around this time he invented a machine to generate artificial sounds. In 1955 he patented the ‘lumigraph’, which enabled its operator to create silent moving colour compositions. Fischinger influenced a host of avant-garde animators including Norman McLaren, Jordan Belson, and Len Lye, as well as composer John Cage. Paratextual material *An Optical Poem*, YouTube courtesy of Turner Entertainment Company:  <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=they7m6YePo&list=TLfAm5Da5pNxtb3n8zPmvqjufWHJD_cjaW>  Still images at <http://www.oskarfischinger.org/> Filmography: *Wax Experiments* (1921-26)  *Spirals* (1926)  *Studie Nr. 6*, (1930)  *Studie Nr. 7*, (1931)  *Kreise* [*Circles*] (1934)  *Ein Spiel in Farben* [*A Play in Colours*] (1934, colour, sound; aka *Studie No. 11a*) *Quadrate* [*Squares*] (1934, Gasparcolor, silent) *Muratti Greift Ein* [*Muratti Gets in the Act*] (1934, object animation cigarette commercial, colour)  *Muratti Privat* (c.1935, object animation cigarette commercial, black and white)  *Komposition in Blau* [*Composition in Blue*] (1935)  *An Optical Poem* (1937, MGM; music: Franz Liszt, *Second Hungarian Rhapsody*)  *An American March* (1941)  *RadioDynamics* (1942)  *Allegretto* (1943) ‘Late’ version  *Motion Painting No. 1* (1947, oil on plexiglass; music: Johan Sebastian Bach, *Brandenburg concerto No.3*)  Several of the above can be found on the DVD *Oskar Fischinger: Ten Films* released by the Center for New Music. |
| Further reading:  (Bendazzi)  (Canemaker)  (Keefer, C. and Guildemond, J.)  (Moritz)  (Moritz, The Films of Oskar Fischinger)  (Russett and Starr) |