

## Document Citation

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Author(s)	Maya Deren
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ANAEMIC CINEMA (French 1925). Designed and executed by Marcel Duchamp with the assistance of Man Ray and Marc Allegret. (From the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.) For many years Duchamp experimented with a method of mobile design he called *roto-reliefs*. These were ordinary phonograph records upon which were painted various plane geometric shapes which, when rotated, produced astounding optical effects, and an illusion of third dimension. Duchamp's aim to eliminate the traditional tools of the artist and substitute for them mechanical tools which would give rise to a mechanical estheticism devoid of human personality resulted in a number of amazing contraptions. One of them consisted of a group of multi-sized glass blades fixed to a motor-driven axle, a device which nearly killed Man Ray when a blade flew off at high speed. *Anaemic Cinema* is another variation on his theme of the rotating spiral and circle. (See Gabriel Buffet's articles in *View*, series V, No. 1.)

Maya Deren observes that *Anaemic Cinema* creates an "optical pun": "Like the rest of his work the film of Marcel Duchamp occupies a unique position. Although it uses geometric forms it is not an abstract film, but perhaps the only 'optical pun' in existence. The time which he causes one of his spirals to revolve on the screen effects an optical metamorphosis: the cone appears first concave, then convex, and, in the more complicated spirals, both concave and convex and then inversed. It is *time*, therefore, which creates these optical puns which are the visual equivalents . . . of the inserted phrases which also revolve and in so doing, discloses the verbal pun. (Maya Deren, in her *An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form, and Film*. The Alicat Bookshop Press, Yonkers, 1946.

ANAEMIC CINEMA (Duchamp): Music for this was played very softly, and the captions were translated into English over the public address system. Music used was the first two sides of the Howard Ferguson *Sonata in F Minor*, HMV C7580, C7581.

