

A Screening In Memory of Run Wrake, 1963 – 2012

Presented by Royal College of Art and onedotzero

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Royal College of Art, Kensington Gore, London, SW7 2EU

Famously inspired by Art of Noise's Close to the Edit promo, Run Wrake has been consumed by animation linked to musical structures ever since. He has an explosive imagination and he has used this in a deliberate non-linear and anti-narrative way for years, preferring to produce his ideas as visual samples with cut and paste loops. His method of production has been very instinctual and freeform, challenging the need for conventional storytelling by replacing it with visual experimentation influenced by Dada and Pop Art.

Despite this, Run's distinctive style has been very much in demand – whether it is delivering visuals for landmark live concerts for U2, or commercial projects, or his long running relationship with Howie B, as only he could. When he finally came to making Rabbit, a more traditional story-driven short, he unleashed a masterful quirky award-winner that was a liberation, and which brought a whole new world of possibilities for his work.

Here we show a selection of his work, by no means a full retrospective, interspersed with speakers who knew and worked with him during various parts of his career.



Anyway / 04:00 / 1990

Run Wrake's graduation film Anyway won awards in Chicago, Bombay, London, and from BBC2's 'First Bite' competition. It came to the attention of the Art of Noise's manager, who asked Run to make his first music video, for the Gang of Four's Cadillac. MTV Europe had launched in 1987, and moved its base from Amsterdam to London in 1989; Anyway was shown as part of MTV's animation showcase Liquid Television. Screening from 16mm print tonight.

Jonathan Ross Presents: For One Week Only / Channel X Television / 00:39 / 1990

Vintage looptastic title sequence for Jonathan Ross TV show.

Jukebox / 04:45 / 1994

In this up-tempo party piece, Xerox, paint and found-sound montage with Curtis Mayfield, moving on up into fragmented experience. The first appearance of Run's Meathead character who appears in much of his work throughout his career. Run said "Jukebox was a two-year slog and a real learning curve, but achieved what I had intended at the outset, and it led to so much." An Animate! commission under the legendary Dick Arnall.

We Have Explosive / The Future Sound of London / 03:35 / 1996

Unsurprisingly, him having worked for the NME for so long, Wrake also lent his talents to a number of music videos. Run used his animation, Jukebox, to construct 'We Have Explosive' for The Future Sound of London and shows just how well Run's trademark style combined with similarly inventive sounds conjured by the FSOL noise wizards. He said their music "set off a little explosion in my head."

Music for Babies / Howie B / 06:09 / 1996

A copy of Jukebox came Howie B's way via his brother-in-law starting an audiovisual marriage between Run and the Glaswegian producer. The relationship developed through years of collaborations that also spilled into sleeve designs and Howie doing the soundtrack to Rabbit. This short film was made to accompany the release of Howie B's 1996 album of the same name.

Take Your Partner By The Hand / Howie B + Robbie Robertson / 04:09 / 1997

A grainy and rasping Robbie Robertson features in this collaboration with Howie B adding an extra ingredient to Run's syncopated, animated brew. Run also art directed the sleeve work for the release.

What Is That / 03:32 / 2001

Created during the snatches of time between jobs, with the music as starting point to Run's surreal universe. His trademark meathead character enters a multi-layered Dadaist universe.

Try Again Today / The Charlatans / 03:43 / 2004

Run was given a week to pitch the idea for this promo for British alternative rock band The Charlatans. He filled pages of scribbles and submitted those as the basis for a treatment. He remarked "A scribble is kind of trying again".

M Also stands for / MTV / 00:31 / 1995

MTV ident where all the elements begin with the letter M, see how many you can spot...

M2 Intro / 01:11 / 1998

Created as part of the hour long Run Wrake director's cut that launched M2 in Europe in 1998. Music by Howie B, A2 paintings by Run.

Easter Chicks / Coca Cola / 00:30 / 2000

Commercial made with Publicis London

The Showbiz Set / Channel 4 / 00:31 / 2002

Title sequence, 'The Showbiz Set' was a documentary on the big names from the golden period of TV light entertainment. Chopping together a plethora of famous faces from the varying eras covered in the show, Run's title sequence set the scene for it well.

Musicman / MTV / 01:05 / 2005

Pimping, Burn and Ed Phone are three out of a series of twelve idents for MTV USA, starring the legendary Musicman, an unlikely aristocratic protagonist, in raucous or rock n roll-type scenarios.

Water / Playhouse Disney / 01:27 / 2008

Animated educational short explaining to children the implications of using too much water and what we can do to stop the earth's natural resources from drying up.

Just a Minute – Sudoku / BBC / 01:05 / 2009

A playful, visual interpretation of Paul Merton's minute long delivery on the subject of Sudoku, for BBC Radio 4's website. Taking on the dual aims of being strange and inventive, but without being off putting to the Radio 4 audience it was aimed at, Run put together a piece that flows as expertly as Merton's yapping mouth does at its best.

Rabbit / Animate! / 08:41 / 2005

A modern mystery film of lost innocence, greed and nature. A dreamlike but dark story about the random justice of nature, told with curious images from a distant childhood. A selection of 1950s educational stickers, discovered in a provincial junkshop 20 years ago, provide the ingredients for this adult fairytale. Once they were new, delivering a simple message to those also young. Like us, however, they have grown older and now present a more complex meaning. Rabbit tells a tale of lost innocence, greed and the random justice of nature. When a boy and girl find an idol in the stomach of a rabbit, its magical abilities lead to riches. But for how long?

An Animate! scheme commission, BAFTA nominee, and multi-award winner including Tiger Award for Short Film Rotterdam and Best Short Film, Best Film at the Cutting Edge, British Animation Awards.

The Control Master / Veer / 06:45 / 2008

Reminiscent of a comic strip annual from the 1950s, this short once again relays Run's stylish charm in this humorous 2D escapade. Created completely from image library stock this work is filled with colour, charm and exuberant action. The Control Master will have you running for cover!



Down with the Dawn / 08:01 / 2012

Run explains the starting point for this highly personal film; "For three weeks in November 2011 I underwent a series of tests that resulted in a diagnosis of cancer. That period inspired this film." Music by Howie B.

A Message from U2 / 2013 / 02:24

A message from Bono and the members of the band U2 filmed from Electric Lady Studios in New York for this memorial screening.

A Message from Aung San Suu Kyi / U2 / 01:18 / 2011

The groundbreaking U2 360° world tour stretched over three years and included video content from over twenty video artists. The concert featured a message from Aung San Suu Kyi filmed in Rangoon with background animation from Run.

Sunday Bloody Sunday / U2 / 01:19 / 2011

An edit to accompany Sunday Bloody Sunday on the leg of U2's 360° tour in South Africa, with images of the 2011 protests in Egypt replacing those from the summer's uprising in Iran.

Interval / U2 / 02:21 / 2009

For the interval of the 360° World Tour, Run created a joyous animated segment in his signature style. Two meathead characters fly through space whistling U2 melodies.

Roy Lichtenstein / U2 / 01:24 / 1997

The band U2 was so inspired by the art of Roy Lichtenstein that they commissioned Run to animate one of Lichtenstein's famous explosion paintings for the stage show of their 1997 Popmart tour.

Keith Haring / U2 / 00:35 / 1997

A perfect complement as Run takes on the iconic work of the 1980s New York based graffiti and visual artist Haring – and makes it move.

Live in Mexico / U2 / 00:34 / 1997

A surreal loop of everyday objects feature in this title sequence for the 1997 Popmart tour.

Meat Street / 02:35 / 2012

Due to Run's untimely death, Meat Street presents the last outing for one of his most memorable characters, Meathead, who first appeared in the short 'Jukebox' in 1994.

Public Meat / 03:00 / 2011

It is 18 years since a featureless Meathead first appeared, shivering on a pavement in "Jukebox". To mark this coming of age, here are some of Meathead's best bits.

Speakers:

Dr Paul Thompson – Rector of the Royal College of Art

Shane RJ Walter – Co-founder, Creative Director onedotzero

Joan Ashworth – Professor and Head of Programme, Animation, School of Communication, Royal College of Art

Lesley Adams – Royal College of Art Alumni; Animation Course Leader for the Creative Arts at Farnham; Surrey; University of Wales College, Newport. Met Run on their first day at RCA and became good friends.

Maria Manton – Producer of animation, shorts, commercials, TV, films and visuals. Worked with Run at Bermuda Shorts early in his career.

Gary Thomas – Programme Manager, Film British Council; Co-founder and Associate Director Animate Projects.

Willie Williams – video director, stage and lighting designer for concerts, theatre, and multimedia projects worked with Run on a number of notable U2 Tour visuals.

Joe Phillips – Run's agent at Curtis Brown agency.

Further Reading / Watching:

onedotzero Motion Blur2, Book 2008, Run Wrake Chapter:
<http://onedotzero.com/download/news/6>

Engine speaks to Run Wrake – a video interview by Animate Projects in 2009:
<http://vimeo.com/6607580>

Obituaries:

Shane Walter / onedotzero
<http://onedotzero.com/news/Run-Wrake-RIP>

Gary Thomas for BFI
<http://www.bfi.org.uk/news/obituary-run-wrake>

Tributes:

http://www.televisual.com/news-detail/RIP-Run-Wrake_nid-2135.html
<http://blog.bcdb.com/award-winning-rabbit-director-run-wrake-dies-47-4979/>
<http://boingboing.net/2012/10/25/run-wrake-animator-of-dark-an.html>
<http://white-screen.jp/?p=20668>

Websites:

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