

# Sound in Silver: A 16mm film screening and zine

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## Abstract

This research brings together reflections and experiments from a community of optical sound filmmakers, bridging the worlds of NIME and experimental expanded film. Encouraged by this year's theme, as well as the arrival of alt-NIME, we present a physical submission in the form of a spliced collage of film experiments, a 16mm screening and a risographed zine. The main contribution will be screened and distributed at NIME'26, but a digital film and pdf of the zine can be found here: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19919449>

## 1 Project Description

The work presented within this submission draws from a rich history of experimental audio synthesis through the use of optical sound film, [2–6, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16–18].

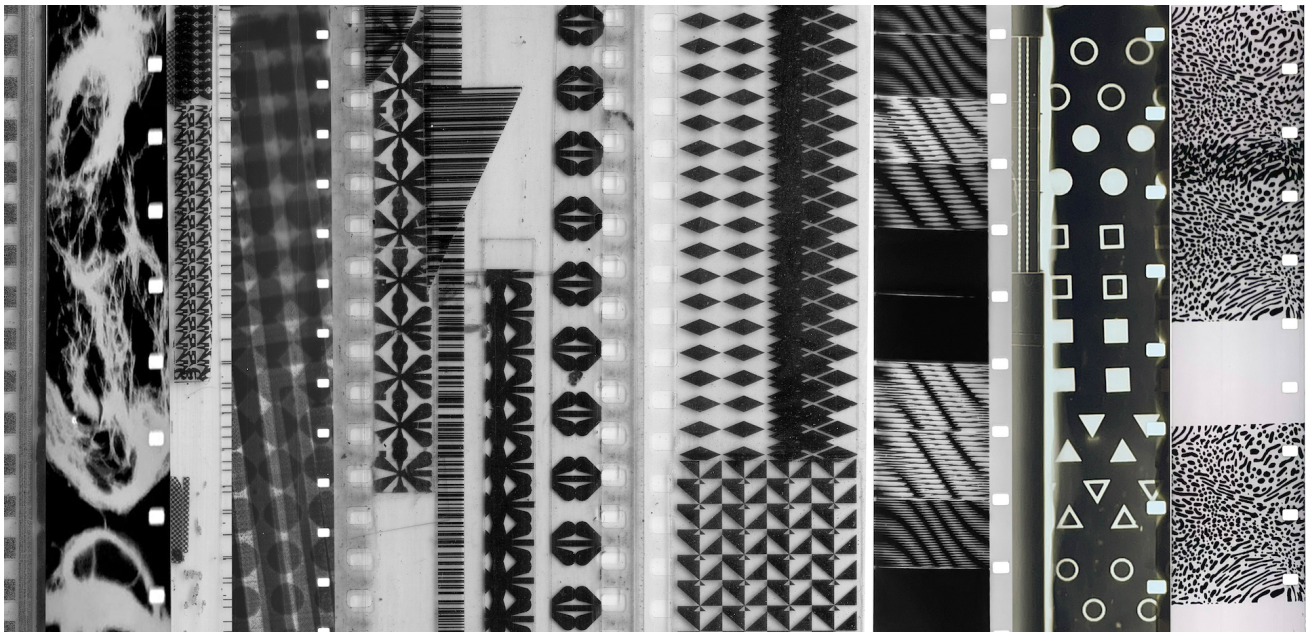


Fig. 1. A collage of filmstrips from co-authors optical sound works

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Through their custodianship of de-industrialised film equipment, film labs, collectives, and individual artists continue to explore optical sound technology, producing works that foreground photochemical audio synthesis within a media archaeological framework [15], and situating these practices in relation to expanded cinema [20] and structural/materialist filmmaking [1] practices.

We have been encouraged in this communal endeavour by recent NIME research that questions the requirement of 'newness' at NIME [7, 8, 10, 19], as well as last year's 'Mis-User's Guide', [13] which calls for 'contributions from beyond the self-perpetuating expertise of academic communities' that can 'find value in inefficient machines'.

This alt.NIME submission collates 16mm film strips and details of tools and processes from a collection of optical sound filmmakers. Sharing a small corner of a much wider world of contemporary practice, we present photochemical optical sound not as a heritage medium, but as a continually shifting material sound system shaped through slow process, touch and material inscription.

## 1.1 Physical Research Outputs

*1.1.1 16mm Film screening.* A spliced compilation of optical sound works in the form of a 100ft roll of film. This film comprises short film strip contributions from 8 co-authors. If accepted, the film will be screened as a continuous loop for one hour or longer during NIME 2026. Subject to spatial possibilities, we aim to extend the film loop into the exhibition space, emphasising the materiality of the chemically inscribed signals. We will use reels or a film looper if this is not possible. Three co-authors plan to attend. *A further participatory element is possible, and subject to acceptance and discussion. Attendees will be invited to contribute to the creation of an additional optical filmstrip through direct mark-making. This will be spliced onto the main loop and screened.*

*1.1.2 Risograph zine.* An A6 sized, 24 page, dual colour risograph zine will compile photographic and written contributions from co-authors. This booklet contains details of optical sound processes and the blueprints for DIY tools, as well as information about the contributed 16mm optical sound strips. (PDF zine in supplementary materials has not yet been risograph printed)

### Note:

*Additional 16mm film prints will be made and distributed to participating film labs and collectives with zines, with the aim of helping to cultivate and strengthen networks.*

## 2 Technical Notes

### Space Requirements:

A dark, or semi-dark space, with (ideally) at least 5 meters of throw space. A white or light wall (failing this, the co-authors can provide a screen).

The screening could take place during the daytime session or as a freestanding evening installation at Rich Mix.

### Co-authors will provide:

A 16mm film roll; A 16mm film projector; a projector stand; a mixer; 150+ risographed zines; (possibly materials for participatory element if accepted); speakers (if necessary); screen (if necessary).

### Co-authors request:

Speakers (if possible)

## 3 Media Links

- zine pdf and film can both be found here: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19919449>

## 4 Ethical Standards

This work was ethically approved by our university's Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

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