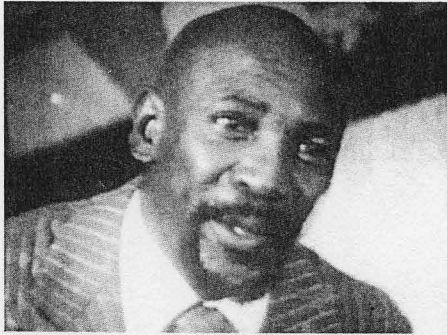


GEORGE BARBER

YES FRANK NO SMOKE

George Barber was the artistic core of the British 'scratch' video movement. He edited the influential *Scratch Video's Greatest Hits Volume 1* compilation tape, and produced some of the best work it contained. His early tapes like *Tilt* and *Scratch Free State* using found-images from film and television, chosen for their framing, shape and rhythm, rather than their subject matter. Originally some of these tapes were used as part of a large multi-screen installation work.



Yes Frank No Smoke
1985 5mins U-matic

In *Yes Frank No Smoke* however, Barber's interest in surface and pictorial qualities gives way to an investigation of narrative construction, particularly the creation of spatio-temporal unity through editing. Barber de-constructs two feature films *Blue Lagoon* and *The Deep*, pillaging 'moments' which when re-edited constitute a new totality. A comparison suggests itself with the witty film collages of the American artist Bruce Conner. Barber's astute use of eye-line matches, repeated phrases of dialogue, moments of high anxiety and off-screen looks creates a subtext which lay buried in the original

films – one of paranoia and female anxiety. The threatening face of a male star looms into frame, a body is discovered on a beach, a girl hides herself from our gaze and characters indulge in highly-charged but incomprehensible exchanges. Images of water abound (as in other Barber tapes) as a rhythmic and cultural counterpoint to the hard-nosed aggression of the rest of the tape. *MOP*

Born 1958. Studied sculpture at St Martin's School of Art 1977-80, film and video at Slade School of Art 1982-84, founder member of ZG magazine 1980. Work shown widely on television by BBC, Channel 4 and stations abroad. Commissioned to make 'scratch' works by Channel 4's 'The Media Show' and by the Arts Council. Active as a freelance director.

The Elusive Sign · 1988

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