

## PROMO MAGAZINE INTERVIEW

1. How did you come to work with the band and what inspired the look (i.e., how did you decide on this concept - I would think that finding a new way to do a performance piece - as opposed to narrative - is quite challeng)?

There were a few reasons we did a performance video. The main point that the band wanted to communicate was the process of making the song..i.e. what instruments created what noises and sounds when..it has very odd instrumentation so the idea of creating a a visual recording of the piece being performed was a motivation we thought would be strong. Secondly the band are very much performance oriented, the tracks are worked out live and they have a viscerally intense stage presence, as if it might fall apart at any second, which creates this organized chaos... unlike many bands in this day, where entire tracks are created in a safe studio with no real connection between the band members. They are quite purist about their processes of creation, which I very much respected and wanted to capture. So we wanted to work to the strengths of the artist, that dictated the overall decision to make the piece performance based. An added benefit of that was that, since this was going to be one of their first large scale videos, we had hoped it would bring in many new fans, so we wanted to make sure it was a good "introduction" video, without too many convoluted concepts and characters to follow that a narrative video might create. The look was inspired by the concept of a visual feedback system, the band uses and echoplex in the track, a device which creates loops and feedback..the idea to use mirrors was stemmed from that.

2. Please offer some insight about the set: did you literally build a cube of mirrors and glass and have the band perform inside of it? What went into creating it, how did the feel about the environment, and did you map out all the camera angles?

It was all done with greenscreen. Just kidding. In keeping with with purist band motivations we did build the set, or rather the band themselves built the set. I created a miniature version a few months before shooting which I used to work out the technical issues. Then the model was scaled up to fit the band. There was a lot of work to figure out the correct size..if it was too big the the refecation effect wouldn't work very well..too small and the band could not fit into it. We weren't really sure what it would look like until it was completely built and full of their gear. And yes the Band themselves worked as the carpentry crew on it. As far as camera angles go, since we couldn't tell what the reflections would do it was very difficult to work anything out in advance. We did tests to figure out a few basic ideas with the mini set and then worked out the rest live.

3. Please describe some of the technical aspects: did the camera dolly around the closed space, did the closed space rotate, and was it shot on a black set?

It was shot on a black set, which took nearly all of the blackout material available in New York City to accomplish. Controlling the lighting was a nightmare, any reflection at all would show up in the cube, the set was closed off to everyone except the DP, Ivan Able, who also operated the camera, and myself. Interesting the set had a hidden bonus, the band themselves could not see outside, they could only see reflections of themselves ad infinitum. This made their performance much more natural I think as none of them were every sure if the camera was on them or not. It also cut down on the amount of downtime between shots and chatter between the band and crew. The only problem was getting the playback heard, we had to imbed the speaker into the floor of the set and use 2-way radios to call action and cut, etc.

#### 4. How much of the look was accomplished using special effects and green screen, and what was involved in getting the sort of "sliced glass" effect?

We used no green screen for this project, I personally don't use it very often, if anything we would use a rear screen projector, but we didn't need to for this.

We also had minimal post effects, almost all the effects were created on set with very simple techniques. Then in post Ryan McKenna used unique editing techniques to re-purpose abstract shots from the shoot day into transitions and such, and to highlight parts of the track. He also created rough versions of the few moments of 3dvfx that were used. But even the 3dvfx were made from parts of the actual shoot rather than being created solely in the computer. Seth Pommerantz did an excellent job of keeping that end of it very tasteful and subtle.

I'm not sure what moments are the "Sliced Glass" effect..if you tell me I can explain it to you.

#### 5. What challenges did you face (and possibly overcome...or not)?

Building the set was a huge challenge, it was very sensitive material that could crack easily. It was also sensitive to light and heat so the lighting was always an issue. 12 spacelights get very hot. We didn't have an enormous budget for the project, so our time in the studio was very limited. But that is always an issue with any video it seems. The set, even though we had a very long time to prepare for it, was the biggest challenge, especially for the band. It was a hot airless box full of blinding light and very loud drums being played by powerful musician. 16 hours of that would test anyones patience.

In post, keep the effects true to the piece, natural and organic, tasteful and not too distracting, but still have them add to the track and work for what we needed (Especially the transitions) was another major issue. It took a very very long time to minimize the look of everything. Since the language of the video was quiet simple, some parts information overload, someparts minimal objects in space, we had to keep the post minimal too.

6. What is it like to transition from photography (still) to film, and have you worked done other videos?

I've done motion pieces more and more recently. In 2006 I directed a video for the artist Peaches on XL recordings, that would be my first real music video. The transition from still is interesting. The process for a video takes much much longer, 3 months full time on a piece doesn't seem uncommon..still photographers are not used to that, though I'm growing to love it. In still photography there is a big element of immediate gratification, you can take a photo and quickly see something that is very close to the end result. There is much less of that element in motion it seems, much more of enjoyment comes from seeing many different elements coming together over long periods of time, there's a much bigger leap of faith you take I'd say. However you can be more creative in motion I believe, In still you have to communicate everything you need to in one frame, usually, it can be very frustrating if you want to create something abstract at times. In motion the dimension of movement and audio/visual synchronicity is very potent and I believe makes it, in some ways, the ultimate art form.