

## Oskar Fischinger Biography

Oskar Fischinger was an abstract animation filmmaker born in Germany in 1900. He began making his films, which some people dub as "visual music" in the 1920's. He was trained as an engineer and a draftsman and by 1922 he was producing experimental films with the use of animation. He began with his black and white Studies, which were shown as shorts at film festivals all over Europe and around the world. Fischinger had a love for music and for art and it was a goal of his to combine the two mediums. He also worked with many other filmmakers including designing the special effects for the filmmaker Fritz Lang's *Woman on the Moon*.

Fischinger experimented with different processes to create his animated works. He would use cardboard cutouts, photographs of multiple forms, swirling liquids and prepared blocks of wax that would have an image built into it. He designed an animation machine that would use the wax blocks. The machine would cut away a thin layer of wax and at each layer the camera would take one frame of the block.

In the 1930's Nazi Germany began its rise in Europe and many of the artists at the time were not supporters of Nazi rule. In 1936 the Nazis labeled Oskar Fischinger's work as "degenerate". In his film *Muratti Grieft Ein* (*Muratti Gets In The Act*) he expresses his dislike for the Nazi ideology by mocking them with goose-stepping cigarettes. The film was actually an advertisement for a cigarette company but was clearly intended to get back at the Nazis for their censorship of his work.

In 1936 Fischinger left Nazi Germany and relocated to Los Angeles where he worked with Disney and at other Hollywood studios. He worked for a year on the Disney film *Fantasia* and at this time his filmmaking slowed considerably. He did however produce many works in geometric abstract painting and drawing. Fischinger was a major influence in the process of animation at Disney. However because he was a refugee from Germany he was the focus of ridicule by his co-workers. Fischinger had enough when on September 1, 1939, the day the Nazis invaded Poland, some of his co-workers pinned a swastika on his door. After two months of trying to end his contract he was released from Disney.

After Oskar Fischinger was rid of Hollywood he became a strong influence and subject of inspiration for American avant-garde filmmakers and went on to produce many abstract animation films until his death in 1967.

--Jennifer McHale, 2001

[http://people.wcsu.edu/mccarneyh/fva/F/OFischinger\\_bio.html](http://people.wcsu.edu/mccarneyh/fva/F/OFischinger_bio.html)