

IN THE VIDEO GALLERY

Luca BuvoLi

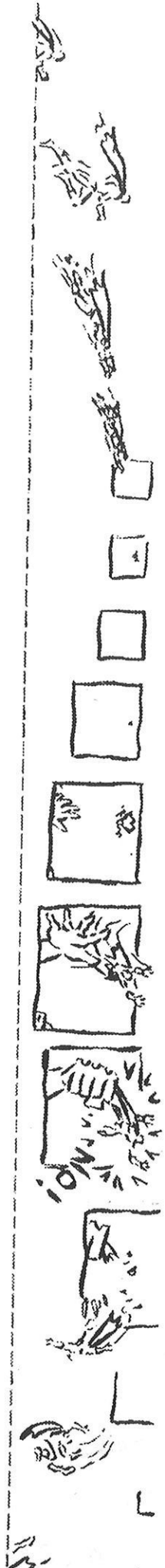
**Inside and Outside Time:
Finally Revealed!, 1995–97**

April 18–June 3, 2001

An animated film that is always beginning again and continuously “to be continued,” *Inside and Outside Time: Finally Revealed!* chronicles the entropic travails of Not-a-Superhero, a comic book character created in 1992 by New York artist Luca BuvoLi (born Italy, 1963). Designed to raise questions about the desire for cultural icons invested with superhuman power, authority, and virtuosity, Not-a-Superhero has been the protagonist of five films, thirteen comic books, five flip books, and a miniseries of radio episodes by the artist.

Mixing comic book antics with philosophical conundrums, *Inside and Outside Time: Finally Revealed!* moves in fits and starts toward its paradoxical premise: a conflict between its animated characters and the elusive medium of their production and existence—time. The mixed-media, sculptural marquee suspended outside the Video Gallery is inspired by the form of a Möbius strip and announces another of the film’s chief themes—the idea of infinitely deferred closure. Assembling the border of this page will create such a strip—a continuous surface in which distinctions between inside and outside disappear.

Constructed from drawing and collage elements including pipe cleaners, tin foil, bubble wrap, and plastic straws, Not-a-Superhero is ever in motion and ever changing, an assemblage that refuses to cohere as a recognizable whole. He unfolds in time through successive, animated images of running and flying, evocative of the visual codes of Italian futurism and the trajectory of cinematic history: hand-drawn flip books, the circular motion of zoetropes, the time-motion studies of Eadweard Muybridge and Arturo Bragaglia, and contemporary animation techniques. This montage of materials and editing effects overwrites the singular presence of Not-a-Superhero, a character defined by his fragility and lack of identity rather than his unique power to galvanize a heroic narrative.



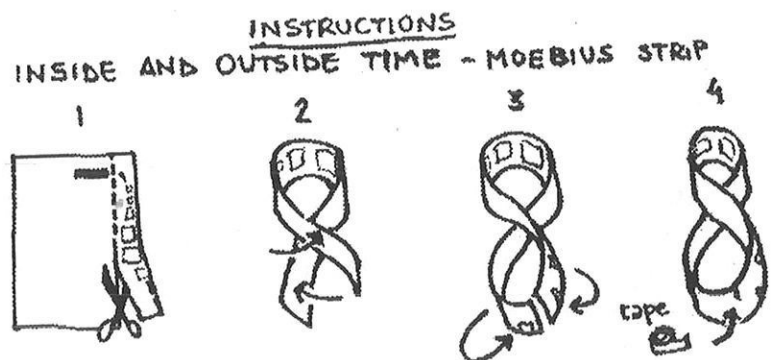
Against the metronomic rhythms of an original score by Jeffrey Lependorf (American, born 1962), Not-a-Superhero's challenge is presented in an on-screen synopsis that writes itself before the viewer's eyes: "In his struggle between Being and Becoming Not-a-Superhero goes to the Clocktower." A real-life studio and exhibition space in New York where this film was partly conceived and shot, the Clocktower Gallery is shown in time-elapsed footage. Its imposing exterior clock face and laboriously functioning internal gears are the setting for a confrontation between Not-a-Superhero and his adversary, Temporibus, the Guardian of Pseudocyclical Time.

Personified by a pair of 3-D glasses, large groping hands, and wheels that ensnare Not-a-Superhero, Temporibus appears within the repeating structure of the film as the vehicle of the protagonist's entrapment. The synopsis raises the question, "Is Not-a-Superhero condemned to an infinite accumulation of equivalent intervals? Will he ultimately escape the destructive course of his foe?"

The answer of course is ... to be continued, but the pleasure is in viewing this delicate, handmade film, which focuses on its materials and construction to the point of extending them into three-dimensional space. Buvoli's juxtaposition of varied spatial and visual systems portrays the elusive Not-a-Superhero as inseparable from his environment, drawing the viewer and the space not framed by the film into the unending loop of the protagonist's flight, fall, decomposition, and reconstitution. The film's discrete intervals—metaphors for the artificially determined units by which time is measured—are the antagonists of Not-a-Superhero, whose vain struggle incarnates the desire to escape into an untethered and borderless realm of perpetual metamorphosis.

Susan Rosenberg, Assistant Curator, Modern and Contemporary Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art

Film and sculpture courtesy of the artist.



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