

# 25 Storm, Stress, and Structure: The Collaborative Cinema of Roberta Friedman and Grahame Weinbren

Juan Carlos Kase\*

An idea comes to me clear and sharp. However it appears as a single unit, like a mass of hair, straw and scraps of fabric, stuck together with mud, gum and all kinds of gunk. The characteristics of this ball of matter are its density and its indivisibility [. ] Often one bit emerges still entangled with others, and what looks like an individual idea or a unitary stream is really itself a complex of thoughts and ideas that themselves cannot be individuated.  
– Grahame Weinbren, 2005<sup>1</sup>

Though they have not been effectively integrated into the dominant narratives of the American avant-garde, the collaborative projects of Roberta Friedman and Grahame Weinbren represent pioneering experiments with form, authorship, and ideology within the independent cinema of the 1970s and early '80s. Over roughly ten years, the pair produced an extensive filmography of conceptually rich, exploratory works.

They began their creative work together around 1969, when, while students at the University of Buffalo (Friedman, an undergraduate student in English and intermedia; Weinbren, a graduate student in philosophy), they made *Three*

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