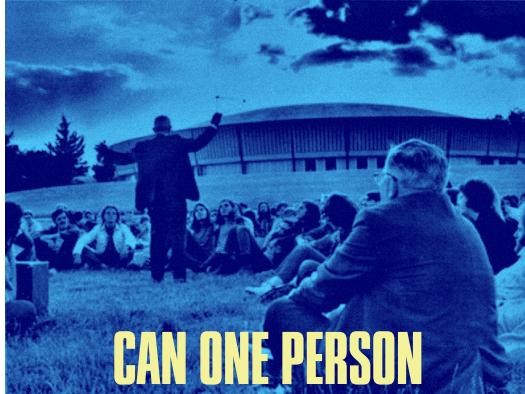


THE LOVE SONG OF R. BUCK- MINSTER FULLER

A “live documentary” collaboration
by Sam Green & Yo La Tengo



CAN ONE PERSON CHANGE THE WORLD? END POVERTY? END WAR?

Buckminster Fuller, twentieth-century futurist, architect, engineer, and inventor—he called himself a “comprehensive anticipatory design scientist”—experimented tirelessly for fifty years to find out just what a single person can do on behalf of humanity.

THE LOVE SONG OF R. BUCKMINSTER FULLER

The Love Song of R. Buckminster Fuller is a new hour-long “live documentary” from Academy Award-nominated filmmaker **Sam Green** exploring Fuller’s utopian vision of radical social change through a design revolution. Originally commissioned by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art’s Design and Architecture Department, the project is a collaboration between Green and the legendary indie band **Yo La Tengo**. At each screening, Green narrates the film in person and cues images while Yo La Tengo performs their original score. The film’s unique form draws inspiration equally from old travelogues, the Benshi tradition, and TEDtalks.

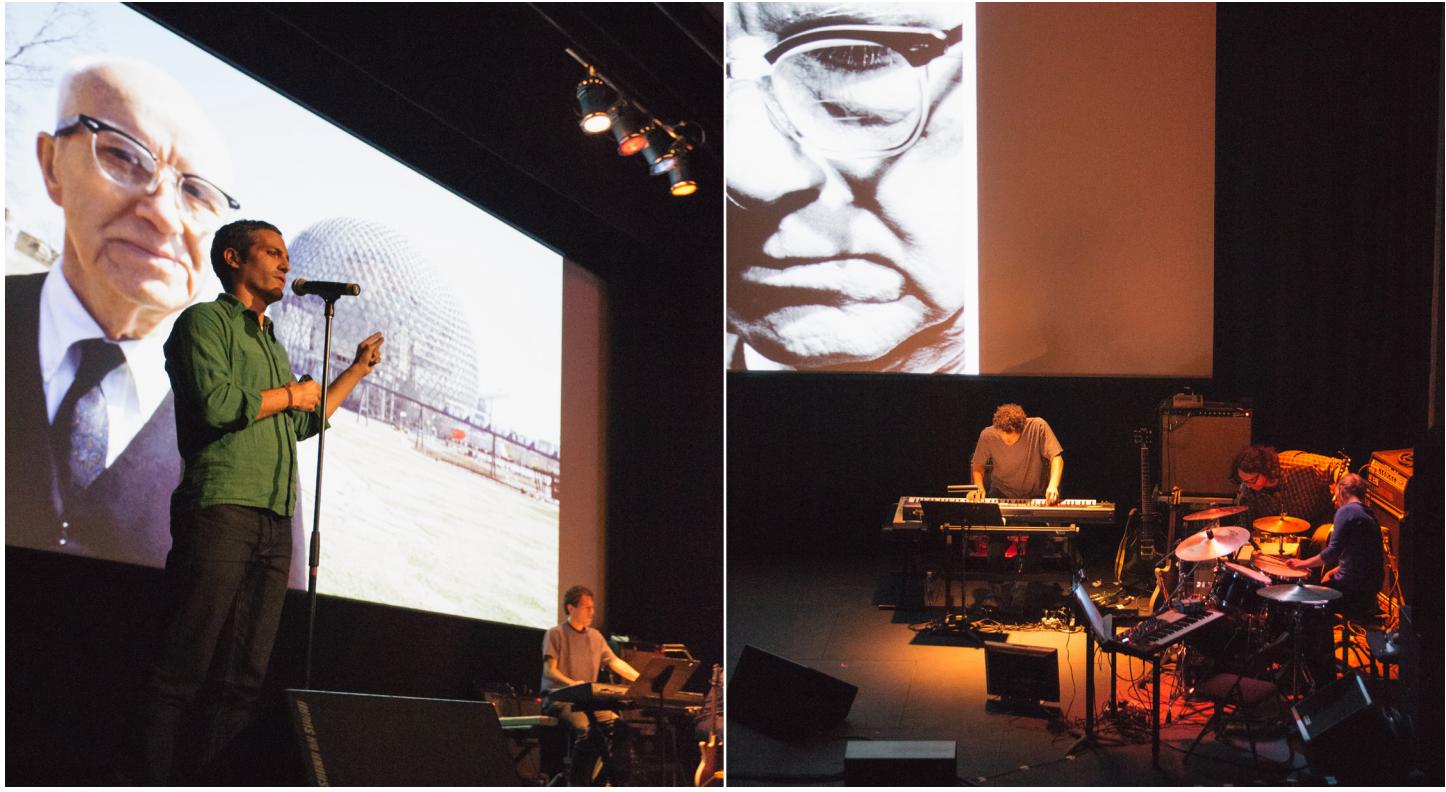




Buckminster Fuller was a grandiose and generous thinker, teeming with ideas. He once put together a lecture series called “Everything I Know”—it was forty-two hours long. No notes. He was an early proponent of conservation and environmental stewardship as social justice; Fuller was interested in “doing more with less,” so that everybody could have enough. He redesigned human structures from cars and bathrooms all the way up to entire cities, inspiring figures as diverse as the industrialist Henry Kaiser, John Cage, and Stewart Brand. *The Love Song of R. Buckminster Fuller* explores this vision by looking at many of his concepts and projects, ranging from his signature invention, the Geodesic dome, to some of his more conceptual plans, including a proposal to build a huge dome over Midtown Manhattan to cut down on snow removal costs. Fuller’s projects were a collision between rational thinking and utopian idealism, made rich and complicated by the background noise of his cultural connections and tireless optimism.

The Love Song of R. Buckminster Fuller premiered May 1, 2012, at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art as part of the 2012 San Francisco International Film Festival. The piece is now screening widely, including at venues such as the Time-Based Art Festival in Portland, OR, the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, OH, and the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, MA.





BIOS

Sam Green is a San Francisco-based documentary filmmaker. His film *The Weather Underground* was nominated for an Academy Award in 2004, broadcast nationally on PBS, and included in the Whitney Biennial. Green's recent "live documentary" *Utopia in Four Movements* premiered at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival and screened widely in the U.S. and abroad. Green was commissioned by Terry Riley and David van der Leer to create a portrait of Las Vegas for the exhibit "And Then it Became a City" at the Shenzhen Biennial of Architecture and Design. His other films include *Utopia Part 3: the World's Largest Shopping Mall, lot 63, grave c*, *The Rainbow Man/John 3:16, N-Judah 5:30*, and *Pie Fight '69*. Green received his master's degree in journalism from the University of California, Berkeley, where he studied documentary with acclaimed filmmaker Marlon Riggs. He has received grants from the Creative Capital, Rockefeller, and Guggenheim Foundations, as well as the National Endowment for the Arts.

www.samgreen.to

Yo La Tengo is a seminal indie band formed in 1984 by husband-and-wife duo Ira Kaplan and Georgia Hubley (incidentally, Hubley's parents were the Oscar-winning independent animators Faith and John Hubley and her sister is the animator Emily Hubley). The band has released more than a dozen full-length albums and composed soundtracks for a number of films, including *Old Joy* and *Shortbus*, as well as their own *The Sounds of Science*, a live soundtrack to a program of films by Jean Painlevé.

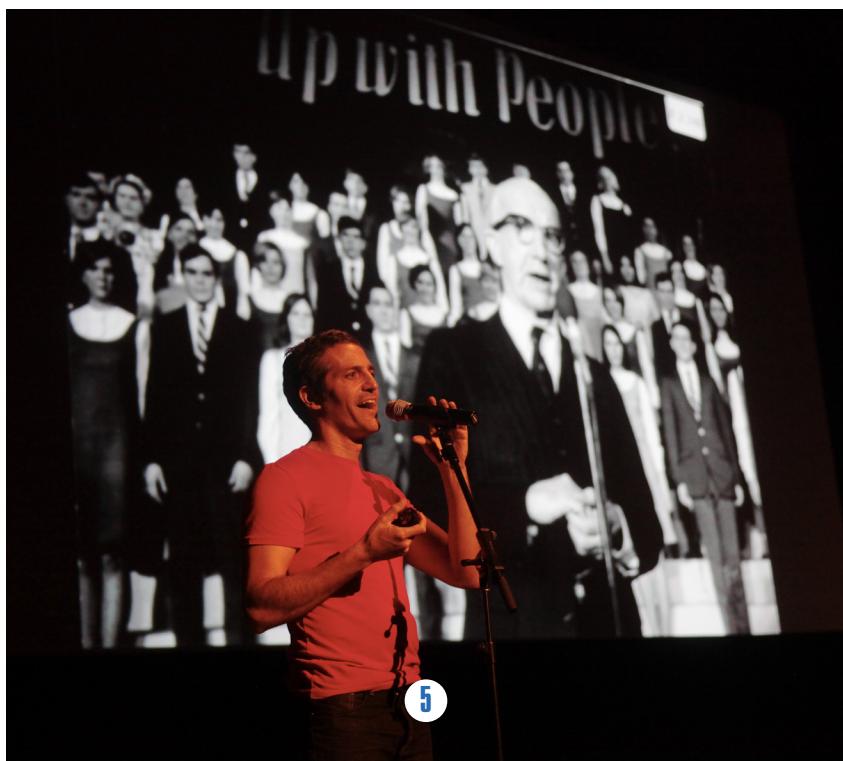
www.yolatengo.com

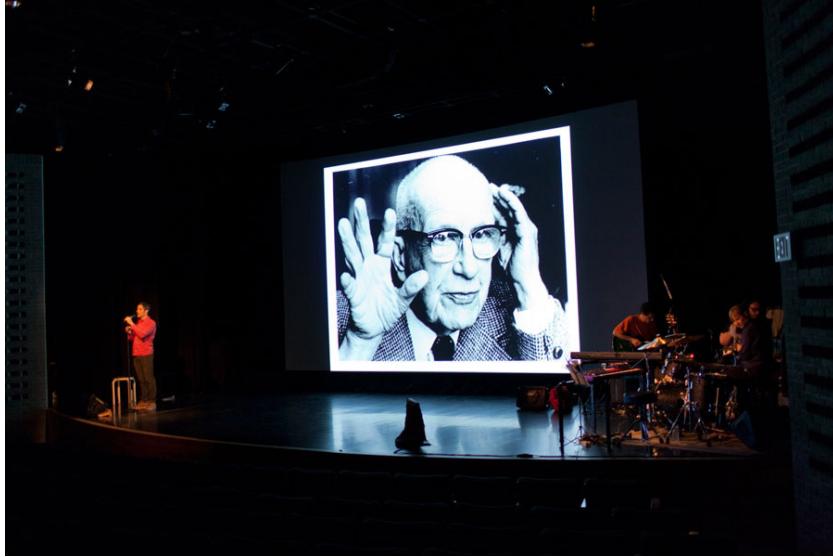


LOVE SONG TOUR SCHEDULE

Past and currently scheduled performances include:

May 1, 2012	San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (as part of the 2012 San Francisco International Film Festival)
September 11, 2012	The Moore Theater, Seattle, WA
September 12, 2012	The Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (as part of the 2012 Time-Based Art Festival), Portland, OR
September 29, 2012	Cornell Cinema, Ithaca, NY
October 18, 2012	Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH
October 20, 2012	Institute for Contemporary Art, Boston, MA





LOVE SONG TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The Love Song of R. Buckminster Fuller is a movie performed live by **Sam Green** (narrator) and **Yo La Tengo**, a 3-piece band (drums, bass, guitar, and keyboards).

Lighting is required on both the narrator and the band. Band lighting should be minimal, but they need to see their instruments during the performance.

A **MacBook Pro** laptop is connected to a **projector** at the venue, and Keynote is used to display images and movies on the **venue screen**. Sam stands to one side of the screen, speaking into a microphone. He advances the Keynote slides using a **wireless remote control**. Sam can see the slideshow via a separate monitor.

Yo La Tengo accompanies the performance with music, performing on the opposite side of the screen from Sam.

Video Equipment

Provided by performers
 1 Keynote laptop
 1 DVI/VGA adaptor
 1 Remote control

Provided by venue

1 video projector (DVI or VGA)
 2 video monitors (1 for Sam, 1 for band)
Either... camera pointed at stage to feed video monitors
 Or... high-quality DVI or VGA splitter to feed video monitors

Audio Equipment

Amplifiers
 2 Fender Super Reverb
 1 Fender Deluxe Reverb

Bass Rig

Either... 1 Ampeg SVT-VR with Ampeg SVT
 4x10 cabinet
 Or... 1 Fender Bassman with 2x15 cabinet

Keyboards

1 Kurzweil PC-2X with foot pedal for sustain
 1 NORD Wave

Miscellaneous

2 Table top keyboard stands (i.e. for playing seated with no obstruction by the stand itself—an x-style stand is not acceptable)
 3 Hercules guitar stands
 4 drum thrones, round—no bicycle seat style (band is playing seated and there are 5 instrument positions on stage)
 1 music stand with light
 20 1/4" cables

Drums

Ludwig drum kit (if not available please advise)
 1 20" bass drum with mount for rack toms (fully adjustable mount)
 1 12" x 8" rack tom
 1 13" x 9" rack tom
 1 14" x 14" floor tom w/ legs attached to drum (no stands)
 1 14" x 5 1/2" snare drum

Drum hardware: Yamaha or Tama

1 snare stand
 1 hi-hat stand
 4 boom stands for cymbals
 1 DW single spring, chain driven bass drum pedal
 1 drum rug

Cymbals: Zildjian

1 - 20" or 22" ride
 2 - 18" crashes
 1 - 20" crash ride
 1 - 14" New Beat hi-hats

CREDITS

Director	Sam Green
Music	Georgia Hubley Ira Kaplan James McNew
Producers	Sam Green Mark Decena Teri Heyman
Commissioned by	The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art: Dominic Wilsdon, Curator of Education and Public Programs Jennifer Dunlop Fletcher, Assistant Curator of Architecture and Design
Cinematography	Andy Black
Editors	Sam Green Dave Cerf Matt Notaro
Research	Hannah Airriess Sarah Cowan Dana Kash
Additional cinematography	Theo Rigby
Location sound	Nao Nakazawa
Sound mix	Paul Bercovitch
Color correction	Ayumi Ashley
Production assistance	Bill Pope
Design	Familiar
Footage clearance	Anne Bast
Special Thanks	Dave Cerf Peter Chermayeff Allegra Fuller-Snyder Kat Galasso Kirk Simon Jaime Snyder Roberto Trujillo Sean Uyehara
Funding	The Drumsticks Foundation Kontent Films San Francisco Museum of Modern Art The Whitman Institute



PRESS & CRITICAL PRAISE

“Understatement of the millennium: Buckminster Fuller was a complex fellow. Summing up his life is near impossible... and the best we might do in 60 minutes is what a few lucky ticket holders saw and heard... in a multimedia program entitled *The Love Song of R. Buckminster Fuller*.”

—*The San Francisco Chronicle*

“Let me cut to the chase: The experience is an audiovisual marvel.”

—*Willamette Week*

“One of the most exciting and avant-garde events at this year’s San Francisco International Film Festival.”

—*The Stanford Daily*

“Just gonna put it out there: I pretty much want to live in *The Love Song of R. Buckminster Fuller*... I was reminded that strong entertainment value and contemporary art aren’t mutually exclusive forces.”

—*The Portland Mercury*

“A balanced and fascinating hour-long exploration of Fuller’s life and work... Anyone familiar or unfamiliar with Fuller will be lucky to experience his life’s work through the enthralling interpretation by Green and Yo La Tengo.”

—*Filmmaker Magazine*

“It’s a thoroughly modern mash-up, mixing visuals controlled by the narrator from a laptop (think PowerPoint, but not boring), with a score provided by a live band, like the in-house orchestra that would have accompanied a silent picture in the pre-talkie days.”

—*Portland Monthly*

“There are more ways than ever to watch a movie without sitting down in a theater. But viewers won’t be able to put *The Love Song of R. Buckminster Fuller* in their pockets.”

—*Boston Globe*

“Green has accidentally developed a format that demands live experience, one whose essence is impossible to transfer to DVD.”

—*Columbus Alive*

“A great live documentary... I was very inspired by this positive view.”

—Larry Page, co-founder of Google

The Boston Globe

Movies

R. Buckminster Fuller, backed by Yo La Tengo

By Andrew Doerfler | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT OCTOBER 13, 2012

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES AND THE R. BUCKMINSTER FULLER ESTATE

A film about R. Buckminster Fuller (above) will be enhanced at the ICA by a live score and references to his local impact.

There are more ways than ever to watch a movie without sitting down in a theater. But viewers won't be able to put "The Love Song of R. Buckminster Fuller" in their pockets.

"You either have to accept that people will be watching on their iPad on a subway train," says director Sam Green, "or you make something that can't be watched in that way."

Green's latest live movie experience will have its Boston premiere on Saturday , with two performances at the Institute of Contemporary Art. The documentary chronicles the life and influence of Richard Buckminster Fuller, the architect and thinker most famous for his work developing the geodesic dome. As Green narrates onstage and cues images and video, longstanding indie rock trio Yo La Tengo performs its own original score.

Green, who codirected the 2002 Oscar-nominated documentary "The Weather Underground," says in a phone interview that he stumbled into the genre of what he calls "live documentary." With "Utopia in Four Movements," which ran at the ICA in February 2011, he had tried to make a movie in the vein of Errol Morris's "Fast, Cheap & Out of Control," where disparate stories are linked by unstated themes. But viewers weren't seeing the connections. Fuller decided some explanation might be necessary, and what was originally a presentation about the film became its essential form.

When the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art asked Green to make a live film about Fuller, he decided to make the experience even more specific to its

environment. He adds tidbits about Fuller's influence on each city that the movie visits.

"It takes . . . the challenge and interest in doing something live even further," he says in a phone interview. "It goes back to old, old film, in the early 1900s. Some photographers would travel around to towns and shoot a bunch of portraits, and show them that night. It was a big deal because people would see themselves up on the screen."

Adapting it for a Boston audience, he says, will be easy: Fuller was born in Milton, kicked out of Harvard twice ("officially for cutting my classes, but in fact for general irresponsibility," Fuller once wrote), and buried in Mount Auburn Cemetery. But in other places it's more of a challenge.

"It's a little bit like a high wire act — can I do it everywhere?" Green says. "So far it's worked." Since premiering in San Francisco, the film has toured to Portland, Ore., Seattle, and Ithaca, N.Y.

The live score is a big part of the attraction. Yo La Tengo has experience with scoring film — the band's credits include "Adventureland," "Junebug," and "Old Joy." After seeing the band perform its soundtrack to the avant-garde films of Jean Painlevé, Green was inspired to tap them for the project.

"That was one of the greatest cinematic experiences I've ever had," says Green. "I was enraptured."

Because Yo La Tengo was also busy working on a new album (set to be released in January), Green visited the trio and gave them feedback in person as they rehearsed the score. Though it saved time, the band had to adjust to having another person in the practice space.

"It's a lot tenser," Yo La Tengo cofounder Ira Kaplan says with a laugh over the phone. "The three of us are used to working with just the other two. . . . Because we've been playing so long, we have our own language. To bring someone else into it — anybody, whether it's Sam or another filmmaker — it changes the dynamic deeply."

Because of the film's format, Green felt a responsibility to ensure that the band felt good about the soundtrack. Normally, he said, the musicians are removed from the process once they finish recording.

"It was really important to me that they feel comfortable and like the musical parts, because they'll be playing it in front of people," Green says. "There's no way I could say, 'Listen man, it's got to be this way.'"

For Kaplan, the collaborative process pushed creativity.

"I love the challenge," he says. "When you change the working method, it's always intriguing. It makes the hard parts worth it."

The collaboration has continued beyond the rehearsal space and adds to the film's spontaneity. Before a recent performance, Green says the band suggested shifting some of his narration to cue a break in a song with the film's final image. After some maneuvering, Green decided the move would fit — or so it seemed.

"It's funny because the last show we did, somehow it didn't quite work," Green says. "It's fun to try and make things work in the moment. . . . Hopefully in Boston we'll nail that end."

"The Love Song of R. Buckminster Fuller," with live accompaniment by Yo La Tengo, screens at the ICA, 100 Northern Ave., Boston, Oct. 20 at 7 and 9 p.m. Tickets: \$20-\$25. For more information call 617-478-3103 or visit www.icaboston.org.

Andrew Doerfler can be reached at andrew.doerfler@globe.com.

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SAM GREEN'S LOVE SONG AT SFIFF

By [Mike Plante](#) in [Festival Coverage](#), [News](#)

on Monday, May 7th, 2012

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One of the highlights of the 2012 San Francisco International Film Festival, which boasted a great lineup of films and filmmakers, was the new "live documentary" by **Sam Green**, *The Love Song of R. Buckminster Fuller*, featuring Green and **Yo La Tengo** live on stage. The notion of the live documentary is exciting as a new film movement, a far more powerful one than the overrated reemergence of 3-D.

As part of their **Buckminster Fuller** exhibit, SFMOMA commissioned Green to create a live documentary on Fuller in the spirit of the filmmaker's previous work *Utopia in Four Movements*. Fuller is most well known as the designer of the geodesic dome for use as an

event space or home for individuals. However, Green uses this project to delve into Fuller's life; he was a unique man who believed that wars over natural resources were unnecessary, and he promoted the idea that all human beings could be provided for with very simple means.

To create the visual and spoken narrative of the piece, Green utilized the Fuller archive at Stanford — *The Dymaxion Chronofile* — a stunning collection of notes, schedules, letters he wrote and received, blueprints, stills, film, and TV footage that Fuller (1895-1983) collected throughout his life "as an architect, lecturer, mathematician, writer, inventor, and social critic," to borrow a description from Stanford's introduction. You can imagine Green as that guy walking in the warehouse at the end of *Citizen Kane*. You may not find Rosebud, but you love looking for it.

The result is a balanced and fascinating hour-long exploration of Fuller's life and work. I couldn't stop thinking about the intersection between Fuller's intelligent and straightforward nature, and his role as an "exchanger of ideas." Anyone familiar or unfamiliar with Fuller will be lucky to experience his life's work through the enthralling interpretation by Green and Yo La Tengo.

Green is the front man, narrating the entire night live with a microphone and no notes. He doesn't just lecture, but interacts with the still photography, injecting his own personality into the unfolding tale. You feel like you are talking with Sam, rather than being lectured to. During one scene, Green said, "Holy shit," right at a point when that was what I was thinking. In another part of the performance, onscreen was a photo of the famous car Fuller invented — a slightly fuzzy, wide shot of people looking at it. Green said: "This car was so popular and important to culture — look at this crowd. That's **Diego Rivera** there in the front." Next shot was the photo zoomed in. "It is him — look at the tie."

Green also worked hard to flesh out Fuller's connections to San Francisco, something he plans to do in each city they perform the piece. (There are talks for a modest U.S. tour of the show.) Fuller never lived in San Francisco, but designed plans for a giant pyramid-shaped apartment building (over Alcatraz!) and had amaaaazing discussions with hippies caught in a beautiful old TV doc.

All parties involved in this performance have a certain pedigree (Green was nominated for an Academy Award for *The Weather Underground*; Fuller invented a way to live, both physically and philosophically; Yo La Tengo is a bigtime band with great records and cult-like fans), but here it was a true collaboration. Yo La Tengo worked with Green to compose original music for the show that enhanced the performance. Although on stage, it was far from a one-sided concert. Everything worked together so you forgot about the individual parts. Their luscious soundtrack added to the film clips. The opening, featuring old news footage of Fuller, a dome and a helicopter, became magical. Footage of test drives of the car Fuller invented became energetic and playful with the music, sounding like the spirit of **Raymond Scott** entered the band.

After the show, the crowd kicked around lots of talk about the connections to their love of elementary school teachers. The show was a poem of sorts, about an important man, presented with the showmanship and style worthy of a legendary story, shiny things, and finger painting. I left feeling the same enthusiasm for learning that you have as a child.

SFIFF page on the event [here](#).

For more information on Fuller, please visit: <http://bfi.org/>

Photo by Pamela Gentile

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'The Love Song of R. Buckminster Fuller' with Yo La Tengo at SIFF

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Understatement of the millennium: Buckminster Fuller was a [complex fellow](#). Summing up his life is near impossible (but the man himself gave it a good try with his [Dymaxion Chronofile](#)) and the best we might do in 30 minutes is what a few lucky ticket holders saw and heard Tuesday at San Francisco Museum Of Modern Art in a multimedia program entitled [The Love Song of R. Buckminster Fuller](#).

The architect, designer, thinker and visionary received special treatment that combined live music from rock band [Yo La Tengo](#) along with projected film and images and live narration from Academy Award nominated (*The Weather Underground*) director [Sam Green](#) to explore Fuller's influence and experiences with the Bay Area. The presentation was one of the more unique events in this year's [San Francisco International Film Festival](#).



Architect, inventor and designer Buckminster Fuller, subject of Sam Green's THE LOVE SONG OF R. BUCKMINSTER FULLER. Photo by John Loengard/Time Life Pictures, courtesy of San Francisco Film Society

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Indie music superstars Yo La Tengo performed their score for Sam Green's THE LOVE SONG OF R. BUCKMINSTER FULLER at SFMOMA on May 1, 2012. Courtesy of San Francisco Film Society

perhaps) musical interludes were the highlights for most in attendance. YLT's poignant dream pop washed over without overpowering the images, a symbiosis that was sometimes lacking in another film-and-live-music program from earlier in the festival, tUnE-yArDs and the Buster Keaton Shorts.

Bucky Visits Hippie Hill

Credited with many designs and ideas, Fuller's most enduring physically-engineered artifact is the **geodesic dome** design he standardized and popularized, and which is (and forever will be, we can assume) found everywhere from [Antarctica](#) to [The Playa](#) to backyards in-between. The ecological and divergent thinking movements of the 1960s, and in the Bay Area in particular, found a hero in Fuller, who had been preaching about peace through proper resource management for what seemed like eons before people started paying attention to the heavily-spectacled man who always seemed to be wearing a dark suit. He looked very Establishment, but he was more counterculture than most "radicals" will ever hope to be.

Love Song features a segment on **Stewart Brand**, who started up the **Whole Earth Catalog** in Menlo Park after encountering Fuller's ideas and message. But it wasn't just those hippies who wanted to listen: Fuller's appearance on "Over Easy", a KQED-produced show targeted to senior citizens, demonstrated his pull with the older set. (Of course, maybe the KQED audience was just happy to sit down and rest their dogs.) The show, hosted by **Hugh Downs**, had production values that seemed especially quaint to the *Love Song* audience in the midst of comprehending Fuller's immense ideas.

One hilarious (and touching) sequence on film shows Fuller, now in his 70s, at **Golden Gate Park's Hippie Hill** holding forth and surrounded by a mix of humanity. (Section 17, Tapes 43a & 43b from the **Fuller Papers**, for those interested). One guy, who had no shortage of energy, launches into a wide ranging rap that jumps around from "Bam! the Star of David!" to a concise (and perhaps predictable) summary: "The while thing is one big acid trip!" (Wow, those guys really *did* exist!) Fuller takes this guy's hippie heaviosity in stride, but he's probably thinking "yep, been there, done that."

Cars, Domes

The film of the **Dymaxion Car** zipping around in the early 1930's was one of the most exciting – and bittersweet – moments that evening. One wonders where this world would be had that car been mass produced. It seemed headed for success, exciting the public (footage shows Diego Rivera at one demo), but a test-drive crash that killed one person made investors shy away.

My favorite sequence was the beautiful footage of the **Biosphere** complex built for the 1967 Expo in Montreal. YLT started into a song as we approach the dome in a moving camera POV: It's a tracking shot provided by the Expo's monorail that goes directly into the sphere. (Try THAT with a jet-pack, futurists!) We see many shots of showing the interior and exterior of the dome in bright Quebec sunlight. We're riding up and down escalators, patrons are ogling each other and the pop art hanging on free floating Miesian walls. It's just fantastic. I've seen this dome myself, but in 2008, long after its glory days. The basic hard structures are still there, but the dome covering burned away in the late 70s.

Green mined Stanford University's **R. Buckminster Fuller Archive** for this project, pulling out highlights of the man's life and ideas. The film portion is also part of SFMOMA's related exhibit, **The Utopian Impulse: Buckminster Fuller and the Bay Area** which runs through July 29.

Standing stage right with the YLT trio bunched on the other side, Green spoke into the live mic to describe Fuller in broad ideas and precise details to a focused audience, periodically stepping back to let the projected film footage take over.

Sometimes this footage had synch sound (from Fuller himself or contemporary experts like [Hsiao-Yun Chu](#)) and sometimes the footage was accompanied by the live music – I'll venture these extended (2-3 mins

perhaps) musical interludes were the highlights for most in attendance. YLT's poignant dream pop washed over without overpowering the images, a symbiosis that was sometimes lacking in another film-and-live-music program from earlier in the festival, **tUnE-yArDs and the Buster Keaton Shorts**.



Sam Green, director of THE LOVE SONG OF R. BUCKMINSTER FULLER.

Photo by Joanna Eldredge Morrissey, courtesy of San Francisco Film Society

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Group Blobs



Buckminster Fuller with a Dymaxion Car and a dome variation. Courtesy of San Francisco Film Society

Green spoke without notes from what I could tell, a pretty ambitious endeavor. Not always 100% smooth, but a basic rule in public speaking is you can best connect to your audience by being yourself, and Green accomplished that at times: Descriptive narratives that recounted historical details were interspersed with Green's own emotional reactions and asides. Very personal – and sometimes very informal: I think he used the "S" word once. One of his most articulate moments as a Fuller "spokesman" came in response to an audience question: his extemporaneously answer showed passion and excitement about the man he started researching over a year ago. "Buckminster Fuller didn't speak in sound bites," Green said of the daunting task of distilling Fuller's complexity into media moments.

Though most programs at SFIFF had tickets available when the fest got under way, these two presentations scheduled for last Tuesday in SFMOMA's 278-seat Wattis Theater sold out in February, long before most SFIFF fans were even thinking of the Festival.

Everyone felt pretty lucky to see these one-off events. Someone asked Green, possibly feeling the spread-the-resources spirit of Fuller, if he plans to release on DVD what we all just experienced live. Even if Green were to do that – and he said there are no plans to – the product won't do the event justice. A DVD could never encompass the show's entirety, but it can approximate the original and spark curiosity, just like *Love Song* itself did for R. Buckminster Fuller.

The 55th San Francisco International Film Festival ends tonight. *Journey* will be there!

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