Alphaville (1965)
“Sometimes reality is too complex for oral communication. But legend embodies it in a form which enables it to spread all over the world.”
SUB-DOGMA 13
A PROTOCOL FOR CINEMATIC TRAILERS.
TRAILERS THAT EXPLORE THE SPACES, ARCHITECTURES AND OBJECTS THAT AID AND CONTEXTUALISE THE ACTION OF A FILM.

GREETINGS, MY FRIENDS.

PROTOCOL

RULE 1. ‘COLLAPSING’

RULE 2. LENGTH BETWEEN

RULE 3. NO PERSON(S) OF INTEREST TO APPEAR ON SCREEN, TEXT OR AUDIO

RULE 4. ALL CONTENT MUST BE SOURCED FROM THE FILM, OFFICIAL TRAILER OR ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK

RULE 5. THE FULL TITLE OF THE MOVIE MUST APPEAR AT THE BEGINNING, BUT NOWHERE ELSE ON SCREEN, TEXT OR AUDIO

RULE 6. THE DIRECTOR MUST NOT BE CREDITED

THANKS TO

JIMMY LOIZEAU FOR THE TERM ‘SUB-DOGMA’
The idea of a collapscape is probably nowhere more visible than in cinema production. We have all wondered and realised how, in many of our favourite movies, there are inconsistencies in terms of space and time.

Juanico is a friend of us from Almeria. This region of Spain is famous for its desertic landscape, its blazing sun and, these days, for its vast poly-tunnel fields which blur the landscape in the intense summer heat (another collapscape on its own right). In the 60’s and 70’s was also known because it provided the backdrop for all those Sergio Leonne spaghetti westerns. A location which was, close enough in feeling, but few thousand kilometres closer to the Italian director than those in California, Arizona or New Mexico. The illusion was completed by flying over a Lee van Cleef or a Clint Eastwood to lead the story through these frontier locations, to the sound of Morricone’s scores. Here, the shorter and dark haired Spanish and Italian secondary actors and extras would not seem out of place. For Juanico, watching this westerns was not fun. Not because he did not enjoyed the stories or because he did not like westerns or Lee van Cleef but because, for him, the illusion of the film was destroyed by the fact he was too familiar with all those locations. The fantasy of being a ‘western’ was destroyed by being able to continuously recognise the backdrop to that story. That collapscape did not work for him, but it did for millions of other cinema goers.

Cinema, like its predecessor theatre, plays to a still audience. The context, the mise en scène, it is always exterior to the action. As a viewer, you are transcended by the acting and the dialogue, the scenography just sets the context for the action. In films the mise en scène is an integral part of the narrative, it is part of the physicality of the film, it is the reality it describes. Film, like photography, creates the illusion of reality. The film reproduces all that the lens sees and captures, there is a sense of reality that comes attached to anything you see on these mediums. The commercial need for films to tell a story in 90 minutes brings with it the need to collapse time and space, so the narrative can be delivered on a screen where subservient actions are cut and paste (or edited) into filmic linearity. In doing so, films create all types of fictitious geographies, and deliberately alter timescale without any regard for accuracy as far as it follows its narrative imperatives. It was interesting to think about these parallel worlds, created with attention to detail to survive its unavoidable scrutiny against reality, their believability. But if we were to remove all the main action and all the main actors from a movie, we would be left with a very different narrative, a narrative constructed by the all that is created around a scene in order to make it believable. All those bits put together generate an abstract trailer of the film that exposes its construct, texture and colour rather than its plot. (Sub-Dogma 13)

The collapsing of time and space in cinema is not then a requirement of the medium, but a consequence of its industrialisation and of the standardisation of its consumption. The film studio was born out of this industrialisation.
When we first began considering the relative merits of trailers (the highs: "I cry during trailers" the lows: SPOILERS) we went about watching a whole bunch of 'em. In amongst the general dire straits that is the 'trailer industry' circa 2013, we managed to dig out a few gems. Here are two we would definitely recommend:

Eraserhead (1977) & Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (1964)

These two trailers were where we sourced our time frames for RULE 2. Both are relatively short by contemporary trailer standards, and both do something a little more interesting than a simple micro rendition of an entire feature's best bits.

Eraserhead is all action atmosphere, not a spoiler in sight. It's also a great trailer to watch if maybe like us you'd seen that film a few or more years ago and half remembered what went on in that monochrome mindfuck. Because what it does is waft towards, dangle punctuated by black, no speech and no diegetic sound. So it doesn't really meddle with or override your vague memory/understanding of that motion picture's seminality. This lead to the notion and subsequent desire for more "TRAILERS FOR MOVIES YOU'VE ALREADY SEEN."

Dr. Strangelove does something very different in the way it introduces its themes, locations and objects and is a long way from what we are likely to see at our local Multiplex these days. Coca-cola machine, war room, bombers, fluids, etc... It lifts all these elements from the narrative, and sets them up in semi-isolation, asking you 'Why are these seemingly disparate things related? To find out, head on down to your local projection complex!' This trailer is a piece of stand-alone entertainment, a film in its own right! AN ABSOLUTE MUST SEE! Our Dr. Strangelove could be summed up as 'Meanwhile, somewhere over the USSR a solitary Boeing B-52 Stratofortress & Vera Lynn?'

Also would RECOMMEND:

Maximum Overdrive (1986) - MAXIMUM TERROR, "I'M GONNA SCARE THE HELL OUT OF YOU."

Who Killed Captain Alex? (2010) - "WAAAAAAGH, ACTION!"

2016 (2011) - "TWO THOUSAND SIXTEEN!"

Pretty much anything by the guy who directed Psycho (1960) -

Undefeatable (1993) - "DRIVEN BY INSANITY!"

The Room (2003) - "A PERFECT WORLD, A PERFECT LIFE."

Also one or two things by the guy who played Kane in Citizen Kane (1941) -

LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD (1961) 01:17
An object... a gesture... a decor... an attitude -- the most insignificant detail.

DOWNFALL (2004) 00:45
Berlin is beautiful in the spring, 1945.

WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE? (1962) 00:49
Don't look at me, I didn't do it!

OLDBOY (2003) 01:16
WHY SPIKE LEE WHY?

FAHRENHEIT 451 (1966) 01:22
Got home.

PANTONE 185 (red).

MAXIMUM OVERDRIVE (1986) 01:18
Cut grass, beer bottle, cooler, headphones. Ice-Cream Truck. Dixie Boy Truck Stop.

THE LIMITS OF CONTROL (2009) 01:13
A dream cut of the iconic film!

FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS (1998) 01:20
What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas.

INCEPTION (2010) 1:36
White Ford E-350.

DAWN OF THE DEAD (1978) 00:46
Nothing but pure, motorized instinct.

THEY LIVE (1988) 00:47
O B E Y !

TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY (1991) 00:55
All action pigeon cameo.

A CLOCKWORK ORANGE (1971) 01:06
Real horror slide-show.

ALPHAVILLE (1965) 00:55
Sometimes reality is too complex for oral communication.

STAR WARS: EPISODE IV -- A NEW HOPE (1977) 00:44
Just when you hoped it was all over...
SEMI-CONTRADICTORY INTERPRETATION/DEFINITION NO. 2 SUB-DOGMA13

The general hazards of watching film trailers include:

- Seeing the biggest explosions
- Hearing the best lines
- Laughing at the funniest jokes
- Judging the familiar faces
- Knowing the entire story

Sub-dogma13 is, in reality, unlikely to be the solution to the general state of the entire trailer industry, but it offers a genuine alternative to the current landscape of compressed renditions of feature length entertainment. The sub-dogma13 rules attempt to eradicate the majority of the master narrative cues and generate a depiction of a film’s architecture(s). The goal is to re-construct a shell around a film’s kernel, a ‘battle suit’, a casing or curtain comprised of peripherals, cutaways, transitions, ambiances and so on. It is then onto this flickering envelope that the viewers may project themselves.

The trailers are designed to work both pre and post your viewing of a film. The trailers might well jog your memory, or they might well... not. No spoon-feeding. No intravenous narrative drip. You are freer to project. Projection is key to s-d13 trailers. A ‘Medium of the mind.’

SEMI-CONTRADICTORY INTERPRETATION/DEFINITION NO. 3 SUB-DOGMA13

In the peripherals of a character’s vision, either side of catchphrases, split seconds after the famous, moments before the infamous, beyond the memes, excluded from the clip-shows, omitted from the best bits... this is the collapscape.

1. What is meant by architecture(s) here is not simply buildings, although they do inevitably feature heavily in s-d13 trailers. Another word for these might be: set-scenes or super-stages.

2. The City Is A Battlesuit For Surviving The Future.

In the same way that Ford systemised his assembly line, the production of movies had to be efficiently systemised and providing these ‘real’ backdrops or contexts on a specific space was the answer. The architecture of the film studio provided the ultimate collapscape where was possible to travel from Mount Rushmore to the African jungle and from there to a romantic sunset in the Texan planes by stumbling across a few doors (or fake walls). Always loved that...
Points Of Interest in SD13 No.2

1. 'The Schleissheim Palace'
2. 'Führerbunker'
3. 'Westward Beach'
4. 'Seoul'
5. 'Future Dystopia'
6. 'Dixie Boy Truck Stop'
7. 'Flamingo hotel'
8. 'El Fureidis'
9. '39 Pottery Lane'
10. 'San Francisco'
11. 'Torres Blancas'
12. 'Castilla y León'
13. 'Stalag Luft III'
14. 'Henry Ford Bridge'
15. 'Montevelle Mal'
16. 'Downtown'
17. 'Elysian Park'
18. 'Roof Top Cafe'
19. 'Flat Black Marina'
20. 'Paris'
21. 'Death Star'