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**San Francisco Cinematheque
1993 Program Notes**

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San Francisco Cinematheque, Sept. 1993—Aug. 1994:

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silt: EROSIONS AND ACCRETIONS
Artists Christian Farrell & Jeff Warrin in person

February 4, 1993

Silt: a word which when you utter it, letting the air slip thinly between your teeth, invokes a slow, sly insinuating agency. Silt: which shapes and undermines continents; which demolishes as it builds, which is simultaneous accretion and erosion; neither progress nor decay.

—Graham Swift

silt is a three-member San Francisco-based collaborative film group (Keith Evans, Christian Farrell, and Jeff Warrin) which has been working in Super-8mm since 1990.

All films Super-8mm, color/b&w, silent w/sound-on-cassette

Grapefruitfilm (1990, 2.5 minutes) Our first experiment! We crammed found footage inside a grapefruit and left it to rot for a month before rephotographing it.

The Emerald Palace (1990, 2.5 minutes) A tribute to an old, majestic building in downtown Seattle demolished a few days after the film was shot. The conjuring of a ghost and the fading of a memory.

ATION PROGR (1992, 2.5 minutes) Three stanza, haiku-structured film about Old Glory.

Nearby, A Female is Shedding (1992, 6 minutes) Native documentary footage rephotographed off television, hand-processed, and left in the muddy bottom of an evaporating marsh, where it soaked and baked for many weeks.

"...wandering in the dark." * (1992, 4.5 minutes) Shot during a 10-minute break in a three-day thunderstorm—left out in the rain, treated with a corrosive and dyed with coffee, chlorophyll, burgundy wine, and blackberries.

* see A. Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time*, p.99

KUCH NAI (color, 45 minutes)

A document of correspondence in writings and Super-8 film between Christian, traveling in Northern India, and Jeff and Keith in S.F. A three-way journal examining the nature of experience and re-experience through multiple layers and generations of images, sounds, and words.

The San Francisco Cinematheque and Film Arts Foundation present

**UNMOORED MEDIA: AN EVENING WITH
DRIFT DISTRIBUTION**
Drift Executive Director Brian Goldberg in person

February 7, 1993

*Dérive [drift]: a mode of experimental behavior linked to the conditions of urban society; a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances.**

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Since its founding in the late 1980s, New York's Drift Distribution has championed some of the most daring and socially-charged contemporary independent media. Drift's expanding media collection emphasizes contemporary experimental narratives and documentary film and video. Drift's mission is to bring challenging, new works to a wide and diverse audience, and to contribute to the future health of alternative media through flexible and responsive attention to the contours of the field.

This evening, Brian Goldberg, co-founder and current Executive Director of Drift, will present a program of recent Drift acquisitions, and will discuss strategies that Drift uses in reaching new audiences. Part I of the program is comprised of short works, including the World Premiere of local artist Greta Snider's new film, *Our Gay Brothers*; Part II features the Bay Area premiere of Harun Farocki's *Images of the World and the Inscription of War*. Goldberg will speak before the program and will answer questions from the audience during the break.

Skullfuck (1992), Joe Kelly and Danny Fass; 3/4" video, color, sound, 1 minute

DHPG Mon Amour (1989), Carl George; 16mm from Super-8 original, color, sound, 13 mins.

Put Your Lips Around Yes (1991), John Lindell; 3/4" video, b&w, sound, 4 mins.

Through the Door (1992), Lana C. Lin; 16mm, color, sound, 2 mins.

Candy Tangerine Man (1991), Jonathan Horowitz; 3/4" video, color, sound, 6 mins.

finally destroy us (1991), Tom Kalin; 3/4" video, color, sound, 4 mins.

The Truth About Abraham Lincoln (1992), Matthew Buckingham; 16mm, b&w, sound, 20 mins.

Our Gay Brothers (1993), Greta Snider; 16mm, World Premiere

* * *

Images of the World and the Inscription of War (1988/89), Harun Farocki; 16mm, color, sound, 75 mins.

Farocki's film "deals" with war, the production of images and photography as a medium of "enlightenment." There is a double meaning in this term which Farocki uses dramaturgically. "Enlightenment" [*Aufklärung*, in German] is a term from intellectual history, as well as a term from military and police language ("reconnaissance").

One can "enlighten" through photography in order to preserve things. But one can also use enlightenment ("reconnaissance") for destruction, like the bombers in the Second World War. Enlightenment and destruction come together in the medium of photography.

In the center of Farocki's essay film is a "reconnaissance photograph"... On April 4, 1944, from points in Italy, American bombers began flying over targets in Silesia. Cameras, which were mistakenly operated too early, photographed Auschwitz while flying over the construction site of the IG Farben factories. But the photo analysts in England only saw that which they already recognized: they saw from a 7000 meter altitude a power plant and a carbide factory. They didn't recognize the lines of people in front of the gas chambers, because it wasn't their job to look for a camp. Auschwitz was never bombed.

Farocki connects the perspective from above, the aerial shots, with the perspective from below, with images drawn by the prisoner Alfred Kantor. That which was only partly visible from above becomes painfully clear. Kantor wanted to visualize and preserve the horror of the camp in his sketches, to attest to this incredible reality with a visual testimony. The Nazis, the SS, also photographed in Auschwitz. They photographed the people on the selection ramp.

Farocki understands and interprets these images as inscriptions of war from the perspective of the victims as well as of the perpetrators. He ties the images together in a visual essay, in a text which speaks from and about the images. Farocki's questioning of images—with a dramaturgic sense of repetition, pauses, intensification—brings seemingly disparate elements together in a classic syllogism and “enlightens,” not in the military sense, but in the sense of a “critique of knowledge.” One doesn't necessarily see only that which one knows—at least not when one looks carefully enough.

—Klaus Gronenborn
Zelluloid, 28/29, May 1989

*from “Definitions” in Ken Knabb, editor and translator, *Situationist International Anthology* [Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981], page 45.

THREE DOMESTIC INTERIORS by Lynn Kirby
 Filmmaker Lynn Kirby in person

February 11, 1993

My interest in movement, sound and light led me from sculpture, and performance to film in the late 70s, yet I continue to explore ideas in sound pieces and installations which are for me a more immediate way of working. —Lynn Kirby

Sharon and the Birds on the Way to the Wedding (1987); 16mm, color, sound, 35 minutes

This is a film about the language and perception of love and romance. The film blurs the line between fact and fiction, personal and cultural experience. “She found that the truth didn't sound real. She did research. She went through the magazines. She found that there existed a magazine kind of love that had a vocabulary of about twelve words. She found that if she rearranged these twelve words around different names and places that could make a story.” (Canyon Cinema Catalogue #7)

“In *Sharon and the Birds on the Way to the Wedding* I have been interested in how stories are told and in how the telling of stories is effected by who is narrating the story. How do the narratives of our cultural myths get told and how is our personal perception of our own narratives changed as we tell our stories. Does the story change with a different voice? Is the story different if we perceive it to be a factual (documentary) story or a fictitious (dramatic) story?

Sharon and the Birds on the Way to the Wedding is a film about conflicting perceptions of love, romance and marriage: the romantic and the pragmatic, the subjective experience and the cultural description, the fictional and the real. The character, Sharon, is narrator and the character of her own dramas.” (Lynn Kirby)

Three Domestic Interiors (1993); 16mm, color, sound, 45 minutes, World Premiere

Three Domestic Interiors stars Paula Alexander, Lewis Gannet and Marie Senkfor. The film is a domestic triptych: the lives of three people as seen through each character's living room environment. The characters talk casually over the telephone of their lives and experiences, directed perhaps to each other, perhaps to some outside audience. “The power of these characters resides in the force of memory that allows each to create and then tell her or his own story, just as each has organized the very elements of her or his home by choosing and then arranging pieces of furniture.”

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Using the surface textual qualities of video and the deep spatial qualities of film to deconstruct the spatial attributes of each medium, *Three Domestic Interiors*, fractures the plane of the screen. This play of space, mirrors a play in time in the construction of each characters' narrative. The stories are developed in parallel as deconstructed, faceted narratives, built up out of patterns of conversation, fragments of furniture in the characters environments and memories. The telephone is the common link to the outside world. Parallels aspects of their lives emerge as they tell their stories. An off-screen space is constructed for each character on the sound track. This sound is a psychological sound portrait of each character as well as a sound narrative of each character's daily life.

Three Domestic Interiors works on the border line between the traditions of narrative and documentary and between the traditions of film and video. Just as there are overlaps in these forms, there are moments when the character's parallel histories intersect the circular time of memory as "today's Sunday is not so different from last week's." The viewer is invited to reflect on family ties as "the interaction of three voices, three bodies and three rooms creates a milieu for the flourishing of one's own contemplation."

(Lynn Kirby; quotations from Lynne Sachs)

Filmography:

It Gets Bumpy (1976)
C.C. Beam Goes for a Walk (1978)
Sincerely (1980)
Across the Street (1982)
Deciduous (1982)
Love, Lynn (1982)
Prelude (1982)
Three Voices (1983)
Sharon and the Birds on the Way to the Wedding (1987)
Fish and Liposuction (1990)
Three Domestic Interiors (1993)

DOUGLAS SIRK - HIGH & LOW

February 14, 1993

There is a very short distance between high art and trash, and trash that contains the element of craziness is by this very quality nearer to art.

—Douglas Sirk

Though not a creative film maker, he is a completely honest adaptor whose films are usually as good as their literary origins or the scripts based on them.

—George Sadoul, *Dictionary of Film Makers*, 1972

Tonight's show includes rare features from the German and Hollywood phases of Sirk's career: *La Habanera* (1937) and *Sign of the Pagan* (1954).

Douglas Sirk (born Hans Detlef Sierck in 1900) worked for some fifteen years as a theater director in the vital and incandescent atmosphere of Weimar Germany. In 1934 he moved into the cinema and made several successful melodramas, including *Zu neuen Ufern* and *La Habanera*. In 1937 he left Germany and made his way, via France and Holland, to America. In Hollywood he was under contract first to Columbia and then to Universal. With these studios he was rarely able to film his own projects, but he was nearly always able to

“bend” the stories and transcend the material, particularly in the melodrama. All his films show the vision, style, and daring to deal with the toughest situations in two disintegrating societies. In 1960 Sirk retired to Germany and Switzerland, where he died in 1987.

La Habanera (1937); 16mm, b&w, sound, 98 minutes, in German with English subtitles

Production Company: Ufa; Producer: Bruno Duday; Script: Gerhard Menzel; Director of Photography: Franz Wehmayr; Music: Lothar Brühne; Cast: Zarah Leander (Astrée Sternhjelm), Julia Serda (Ana Sternhjelm), Ferdinand Marian (Don Pedro de Avila), Edwin Jürgensen (Shumann), Michael Schulz-Dornburg (Little Juan), a.o.

Auf einer Kreuzfahrt nach Puerto Rico, die sie gemeinsam mit ihrer Tante Ana unternimmt, verliebt sich Astrée von Sternhjelm Hals über Kopf in den reichen Großgrundbesitzer Don Pedro de Avila. Sie verläßt das Schiff und heiratet ihn. Zehn Jahre später ist die Ehe am Ende. Astrée ist einsam und unglücklich, sie haßt die Sonne und die Hitze, nur ihr Sohn verschafft ihr Tröstung. Die Insel wird von einer Seuche heimgesucht, doch Don Pedro vertuscht die Angelegenheit, um seine Exporte nicht zu gefährden. Er behindert die Nachforschungen Dr. Sven Nagels, eines jungen schwedischen Arztes, der auf die Insel gekommen ist, um die mysteriöse Krankheit zu untersuchen. Als Don Pedro selbst daran stirbt, verläßt Astrée die Insel in Begleitung des Doktors.

(On a cruise to Puerto Rico with Ana her aunt, Astrée Sternhjelm falls in love at first sight with a big local landlord, Don Pedro de Avila. She jumps ship and marries him. Ten years later the marriage is on the rocks. Astrée is alone and wretched, hating the sun and the heat, with only her young son for solace. A young Swedish doctor, Dr. Sven Nagel, arrives to investigate a mysterious disease on the island. Don Pedro is attempting to cover it up, to protect his fruit trade. At a lavish party, he collapses by his own pool, and Astrée leaves for Sweden with the doctor.)

Sign of the Pagan (1954); 16mm, color, sound, 92 minutes

Production company: Universal; Producer: Albert J. Cohen; Script: Oscar Brodney, Barre Lyndon; Director of Photography: Russel Metty; Editors: Milton Carruth, Al Clark; Art Directors: Alexander Golitzen, Emrich Nicholson; Music: Frank Skinner, Hans J. Salter, Joseph Gershenson; Cast: Jeff Chandler (Marcianus), Jack Palance (Attila), Ludmilla Tcherina (Princess Pulcheria), Rita Gam (Kubra), Jeff Morrow (Paulinus), George Dolenz (Theodosius), Eduard Franz (Astrologer), a.o.

Q: Well, there's *Sign of the Pagan*, which (...) needs discussing, because this seems a slightly bizarre component in your work (...)?

A: I'll tell you about this picture. I was handed the script rather late by the studio. At that time we did have one star around, Jeff Chandler. He had read the script, but had refused to play the Attila part. (...) I was stuck with the *Sign of the Pagan* script and a star who did not want to play the lead. Now, apart from Chandler the studio had one other person they were trying to promote, Ludmilla Tcherina. All she could do was dance—though I got on well with her. She had a good body, but she could do nothing with her face. Any emotions she may have had must have gone straight down to her feet.

I needed someone to play the all-important Attila part, and the picture was in a hurry. Chandler's definite attitude was that he had to be the good guy, a screen lover, and that it would be bad for his career to play what he called the heavy. I think he liked the idea of himself striding around in a toga and all that. Whereas my position was that the only interesting thing in the story was the fury of Attila. (...) I honestly told Chandler this: that in my shooting of the picture the center of attention would be Attila. He still wouldn't hear of it. “Let them love me,” he said. And I wasn't unhappy. Chandler wouldn't have been able to bring out the twilight aspect of the character.

Now, there was a lesser-known actor around, Jack Palance. He was famous, but not a leading man. The exhibitors didn't like him. I screened one of his pictures and I reckoned he might be all right in the part, if he had the strength to carry the picture. I pretty soon found out he did have sufficient presence on the screen. (...) I said to Chandler: “Look out, because the part of the Hun is going to dominate the movie.” But he just said: “I've never been upstaged by a heavy.” And, as you know, it came out Palance's film.

—Sirk on Sirk, *Interviews with Jon Halliday*, The Viking Press, New York, 1972

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Filmography:

1935: *April, April; Das Mädchen vom Moorhof; Stützen der Gesellschaft*
1936: *Schlußakkord; Das Hofkonzert*
1937: *Zu neuen Ufern; La Habanera*
1942: *Hitler's Madman*
1944: *Summer Storm*
1945: *A Scandal in Paris*
1946: *Lured/Personal Column*
1947: *Sleep, My Love*
1948: *Slightly French; Shockproof*
1950: *The First Legion; Mystery Submarine*
1951: *Thunder on the Hill; The Lady Pays Off; Weekend with Father; Has Anybody Seen My Gal?*
1952: *No Room for the Groom; Meet Me at the Fair; Take Me to the Town*
1953: *All I Desire; Taza, Son of Cochise; Magnificent Obsession*
1954: *Sign of the Pagan; Captain Lightfoot*
1955: *All That Heaven Allows; There's Always Tomorrow*
1956: *Written on the Wind; Battle Hymn; Interlude*
1957: *The Tarnished Angels, A Time to Love and a Time to Die*
1958: *Imitation of Life*

The San Francisco Cinematheque and Frameline present

***RULES OF THE ROAD* by Su Friedrich**
Filmmaker Su Friedrich in person

February 18, 1993

"The critique of conventional cinema that is articulated in Su Friedrich's films has roots in two different cultural projects: the development of North American avant-garde cinema and the recent feminist reassessment of modern society (and of the popular and independent cinema). Each of her films represents a different combination of these sources, and she has demonstrated her loyalty to both in her extra-film activities ... Her particular gift has been to find ways of combining cinematically experimental means and a powerful feminist commitment in films that, increasingly, are accessible to a broad range of viewers, even to viewers unaccustomed to enjoying either experimental or feminist filmmaking. This accessibility is, to a large degree, a function of Friedrich's willingness to use her filmmaking to explore the particulars of her personal experience. And her success in reaching audiences represents a powerful attack on the assumption that viewers will only respond to conventional film rhetoric."

—Scott MacDonald, *A Critical Cinema 2* (University of California, 1992)

Sink or Swim (1990); 16mm, b&w, sound. 48 minutes

Through a series of twenty-six short stories, a young girl recounts the events that shaped her childhood and formed her adult perceptions of fatherhood, family, work and play. The stories are told in a simple, direct manner, but are full of ambiguity, confused loyalties, and an apprehension of danger and loss.

Most of the stories focus on the girl's relationship to her father, a man she both adores and fears. He is the one who introduces her to the larger world and teaches her to navigate through it. Like most children, the girl has no distance from her experiences; she cannot contextualize his behavior or recognize its source in his own past. Her task and desire is to meet his challenges and withstand his punishments, but finally she is expected

to understand what is beyond any child's comprehension: that her father would leave his family, leave her, to start a new life elsewhere.

Throughout *Sink or Swim*, the usual distinctions between childhood and the adult world are blurred, as the stories, clearly written by a woman, are spoken by a young girl. By combining the unmediated experiences of the child with the critical, reflective stance of the adult, the fertile tension between the two worlds is exposed. We see what a child can know, and what an adult can know when her memories are shorn of the usual nostalgia and romance. Towards the end of the film, we are brought into the present, when the woman is forced to relive her childhood during an encounter with her father's young daughter from another marriage. The profound connection between past and present, between memory and daily life, is then revealed in all its harsh symmetry.

The images used in conjunction with the stories reinforce this tension, and further complicate the relationship between the two perspectives. The child's world is a shifting, mutable place, as much a product of fantasy as it is a hard material fact. Although quite spectacular, it is also full of the constraints imposed by adults, who have either abandoned or lost touch with their imaginary world. In response, the images attempt to recapture some of that blend of sensuality, longing and awareness of loss that existed in the young girl, and that exists in all children.

Rules of the Road (1993); 16mm, color, sound, 30 minutes, West Coast premiere
 "It's about a station wagon. It's also about leaving a lover, about sharing and then losing objects." (Su Friedrich)

As in her earlier widely celebrated films, Friedrich confronts haunting memories of intimate (in this case, romantic) relationships through verbal anecdotes and suggestive imagery. This time, however, the voice is Friedrich's own, exploring the intersections between desire, memory and unavoidable reminders of lost love.

Filmography:

Hot Water (1978), Super-8mm, b&w, silent, 12 minutes
Cool Hands, Warm Heart (1979), 16mm, b&w, silent, 17 minutes
Scar Tissue (1979) 16mm, b&w, silent, 7 minutes/18fps
I Suggest Mine (1980), 16mm, b&w/color, silent, 6 minutes
Gently Down the Stream (1981), 16mm, b&w, silent, 14 minutes/18fps
But No One (1982), 16mm, b&w, silent, 9 minutes
The Ties That Bind (1984), 16mm, b&w, sound, 55 minutes
Damned If You Don't (1987), 16mm, b&w, sound, 41 minutes
Sink or Swim (1990), 16mm, b&w, sound, 48 minutes
First Comes Love (1991), 16mm, b&w, sound, 22 minutes
Rules of the Road (1993), 16mm, color, sound, 30 minutes

NEW FROM CANYON CINEMA

February 21, 1993

Geography of the Body (1943), by Willard Maas; 16mm, b&w, sound, 7 minutes

An analogical pilgrimage evokes the terrors and splendors of the human body as the undiscovered, mysterious continent. Extreme magnification increases the ambiguity of the visuals, tongue-in-cheek commentary counteracts or reinforces their sexual implications. The method is that used by the imagist-symbolist poet.

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Films by Stan Brakhage: *An Avant-Garde Home Movie* (1962), by Stan Brakhage; 16mm, b&w, silent, 3.75 minutes

"I had a camera with which I could make multiple superimpositions spontaneously. It had been lent to me for a week. I was also given a couple of rolls of color film which had been through an intensive fire. The chance that the film would not record any image at all left me free to experiment and to try to create the sense of the daily world in which we live, and what it meant to me.. I wanted to record our home, and yet deal with it as being that area from which the films by Stan Brakhage arise, and to try to make one arise at the same time..." (Stan Brakhage)

***Spitting Image* (1992)**, by Paula Froehle; 16mm, 3 minutes

Spitting Image ... involves a personal narrative about the struggle to free oneself of the haunting memories of one's past. Its title is intended to convey both the literal and connotative meanings of the words—*Spitting Image*, connotatively, meaning to be of one's likeness; literally, a "spitting" image would be one that mocks or repulses the viewer. The imagery is a quickly edited montage of references to the past optically printed in an attempt to reconstruct them in a more suitable form.

Two early films: *Quick Constant and Solid Instant, Wedding* (1969), by Winston Wheeler Dixon; 16mm, color/b&w, sound, 10 minutes

Quick Constant and Solid Instant features John Wallington, a British painter, Rod Townley, and Gerard Malanga on the soundtrack, doing a poetry reading at Rutgers University. Also in the film, the Fluxus Group stages a Fluxmass at Vorhees Chapel at Douglass College, a rather controversial event at the time, and now part of performance art history.

Wedding is [a] heartbreaker ... I photographed the wedding of two dear friends in the spring of 1969, gathering together in film some of the strongest relationships of my adolescence. Soundtrack: "Sanctus" from Gabriel Faure's *Requiem Mass*.

***Fest* (1991)**, by Kurt Kren; 16mm, color, sound-on-tape, 3.25 minutes, U.S. Premiere

In 1991 Wolfgang Ainberger, program director of "Kunstucke" at OrfII (Austrian television) asked me to make a coverage of the festival "10 Jahre Kunstucke" at the Museum fur Angewandte Kunst for OrfII. *Fest* was the result.

***Fetal Pig Anatomy* (1989)**, by Heather McAdams; 16mm, sound, 5 minutes

I got tired of making funny films and came up with a rather upsetting montage film that I later combined with an equally upsetting soundtrack that a friend made. The film has something to do with that whole idea that there's a button somewhere that some asshole can press that will blow up the whole world.

***Spring* (1991)**, by Thomas Korschil; 16mm, color, silent, 3 minutes

To move the world (and thus the mind!) with one's eyes, to put (part of) it into a box (like we do) and shake it, gently, as to bring its (the world's, the mind's) particles to life (again), for the first time, to seek some sense out of it—"all."

A souvenir, capturing (in vain!) time (lost), passing us by like the shadow of a fast-moving cloud. (Inertia!) Still, "a sweet film."

***Satrapy* (1988)**, by Scott Stark; 16mm, color, sound, 13 minutes

This film was made by contact-printing rolls of 35mm slide film onto 16mm movie film. The result is a collage of fragments of larger still images. Since the images overlap onto the optical soundtrack area of the 16mm film, the images actually generate their own sounds. Crude musical rhythms and tonalities are created based on visual rather than aural cues.

***SideTRACKED* (1992)**, by Leslie Alperin; 16mm, color, sound, 22 minutes

"*SideTRACKED*—my rendition of a feminist quest film—sets the story of a woman's personal journey through Western Europe against the larger experience of travel. The mythology of travel is juxtaposed with the mythology of romance, and the woman's journey becomes a catalyst for reflection on the relationship between personal expectations and cultural myths." (Leslie Alperin)

ERNIE GEHR: A RETROSPECTIVE
Artist Ernie Gehr in person at all shows

Program I

February 25, 1993

Ernie Gehr: A Retrospective includes four different programs featuring fifteen films made between the years 1968 and 1993. The highlight of the retrospective is the World Premiere of *Daniel Willi, March April May 1992* on Program IV, Sunday, March 7. Program II will be presented on Sunday, February 28 and Program III on Thursday, March 4.

The Cinematheque has published a limited edition, signed monograph—*The Films of Ernie Gehr*—in conjunction with the retrospective. The monograph includes new writing on Gehr's films by Tom Gunning, Susan Thackrey, Daniel Eisenberg, and Robert Becklen; a complete filmography; a bibliography; and original photographs by Ernie Gehr. The monograph will be on sale at all screenings during the retrospective.

Morning (1968); 16mm, color, silent, 4.5 minutes

Wait (1968); 16mm, color, silent, 7 minutes

Reverberation (1969); 16mm, b&w, sound, 25 minutes

Transparency (1969); 16mm, color, silent, 11 minutes

History (1970); 16mm, b&w, silent, 10 minutes (excerpted from 40 minute original)

Field (1970); 16mm, b&w, silent, 9.5 minutes

Watching an Ernie Gehr film is an experience unlike any other. With an almost ascetic severity, he excludes the expression of affect from his work. Yet the films are no mere formal experiments or academic exercises: a full viewing of one of them leaves the viewer more aware, more vitally alive.

Gehr's films can seem deceptively simple upon first viewing. They generally concentrate on a single subject (subjects can range from a brick wall seen through falling snow to the city of Berlin) depicted through one or more rather visible techniques. In *Reverberation*, grainy black and white images of street scenes are rephotographed at varying speeds; in *Table*, views of a table are seen through different colored filters, intercut with dazzling rapidity. Yet when one watches these films, something odd happens. One does not see past or through the visible technique, images, or subject matter to some other subject; instead, one's attention is absorbed by the perceptual experience offered by the work. Awareness is focused on the actual act of seeing the films.

A conventional narrative film bypasses such awareness in order to stimulate the affective emotions through photography and editing that, through a kind of seamlessness, leads one into the dream-world of the drama. In much of avant-garde cinema, by contrast, the use of surprising and innovative technique ensures against such a reaction. But in many of the finest avant-garde films, visual devices, however unusual, also work to transport the viewer into an imaginary realm, some revelation of the artist's inner life, in which affect and even implied dramatic narrative may not be absent.

Gehr's ends are different. His vigorous avoidance of seductiveness of technique focuses the viewer's attention on the cuts, compositions, shot lengths. And on this level, the better one knows a Gehr film, the more times one has seen it, the more one is amazed. Editing that appeared to be rather regular becomes oddly jarring. The overall rhythm which can either appear violently accelerated (*Field, Table*) or strangely distended (*History, Still, Signal—Germany on the Air*) becomes an important part of each film's statement. When one views the fastest of the films, the frame-by-frame rhythm seems to directly address and activate the entire perceptual system, as long-forgotten nerve endings seem to spring to life. The slower films confound our expectations for cinema time—these shots go on and on, Why is nothing “happening”?—until it becomes apparent that we

are being asked to adopt a different, more meditative stance, to view imagery, and the world, without preconceived expectations about structure or beauty.

Gehr's films are full of little miracles. An indistinct wall of snow somehow becomes a wall of red brick. A long corridor seems to constantly shift in depth. Cars move before the eyes in multiple directions, creating a labyrinthine maze. But there is no sleight of hand here; one can always tell how such sights are created, and the filmmaker's achievement goes beyond the creation of such joys. The point of his cinema is that by redefining the relationship of viewer to film, he has made his discoveries ours as well. These works cannot be viewed with the passivity that conventional narrative films can encourage, nor are we encouraged to travel with the artist to some place defined by its separateness. Instead, each film encourages us to a deeper awareness of our own eyes, nervous system, brains. A new and more equal balance between viewer and filmmaker is achieved, as we realize that everything we see we apprehend not because the filmmaker gives it to us but because we actively create it out of our own perceptions and the true subject of the work is not any "object" but those perceptions themselves. The site of cinematic creation is thus relocated from the filmmaker's editing table, or imagination, to the viewer, who is given at last a position of unprecedented equality with the filmmaker. These are films that are no more about the inner life of that filmmaker than they are about the possibilities inherent in each of us.

—Fred Camper, 1990 *Maya Deren Award Brochure*,
American Film Institute

* * * * *

Program II

February 28, 1993

Serene Velocity (1970); 16mm, color, silent, 23 minutes

Mirage (1981, revised 1991); 16mm, color, silent, 12 minutes

Eureka (1974); 16mm, b&w, silent, 30 minutes

Table (1976); 16mm, color, silent, 16 minutes

preliminary sketch for *Shift* (1972); 16mm, color

Serene Velocity is one of the few really unique films I have seen during the last few years. It is so emphatically single-minded and complete in its exploration of the various ironies and multiple levels of its imagery that it leaves one stunned. Just when you have settled into a one-groove visual interpretation of the given space you are viewing, Gehr transforms this space in such a way that your awareness of it becomes something entirely different. Surprises and transformations within the image are constantly setting one off balance. The image is a corridor, with a set of double doors at one end. The camera is in a fixed position, placed squarely at the end of the hall facing these doors. The sequence of shots consists of two images placed closely together, following one another at a rapid pace. The first slowly recedes from the doors; the second approaches them. The shots alternate one with the other so that the viewer is pulled away and pushed forward almost at the same time. After a period the accumulation of these images makes what seems to be the logical perspective of the hallway invert upon itself—so that instead of it being a long hallway receding into the distance, it also becomes a pyramidal shape thrusting forward. The lines of the corridor (floor, walls, ceilings) create expanding and contracting squares within squares. Three-dimensionality in either direction, forward or backward, is all but destroyed only to reappear again unexpectedly. As the distant doors draw nearer, both they and the hallway engulf in blackness the other gradually receding doors. A heartbeat blinking on and off. The long shot of the reflection of the ceiling lights bouncing off the floor becomes repeatedly pierced by a black line which is actually the dividing line between the doors. The variations and complexities which occur within the basic concept seem endless. Even the floor which normally appears in natural perspective does not remain that way—in fact one sees an upright pyramid shooting out from the screen and then passing back into it, a characteristic strangeness of many of the transformations. One can only follow the progress of the doors by keeping the two bottom shiny brackets in view as they expand and contract. The receding doors become

postage stamp size. The advancing doors fill the screen by half. This pushing back and forth flattens the image and gives rise to a complete geometric design. It is rare that a film, which on the surface seems to be only a technical tour-de-force, can lift one to such emotional heights as it develops from surprise to surprise. *Serene Velocity* is not another dry and deadly structural film, it is an organic living experience.

—Bob Cowan, "Letter from New York" in *Take One*, Vol. 4, #1 (1974)

Serene Velocity is a literal "Shock Corridor" wherein Gehr creates a stunning head-on motion by systematically shifting focal lengths on a static zoom lens as it stares down the center of an empty, modernistic hallway—also plays off the contradictions generated by the frame's heightened flatness and severe Renaissance perspective. Without ever having to move the camera, Gehr turns the fluorescent geometry of his institutional corridor into a sort of piston-powered mandala. If Giotto had made action films, they would have been these.

—J. Hoberman, *The Village Voice*

* * *

Eureka

Ernie Gehr's revitalization of a film originally shot around 1903 is only a small portion of his concerns in *Eureka*, and yet it is his straightforward manner of reviving this work which shouldn't be overlooked. By refilming the material as he has done (optically repeating each frame 8 times) he allows it to remain the representational documentary it was and still is of a vanished era while at the same time bringing his own interests to the foreground. As the never seen trolley car with camera makes its way down San Francisco's Market Street, it reveals a turn of the century world: a co-mingling of an industrial/urban and rural/agrarian setting with its admixture of people, automobiles and horse-driven vehicles; all sharing/competing for space on a bumpy cobblestone street, alluding to the fading out of a late 19th-century environment and the fading in of 20th century mechanization.

Imagine moving down such a street—uninterrupted, not for 30 seconds, or one minute (or five minutes as in the original), but for half-hour. A time which is psychologically and metaphorically even much greater and so implied by Gehr in his temporal elongation of the film. Yet what he offers us is not an illusion of what it was like at the turn of the century, but a cinematic indication of what it might have been like given the characteristics of the original film/material.

Gehr's method of re-filming heightens the bumpy movement of the original film, echoing the texture of the uneven cobblestone street, giving us the impression of what it might have been like to be transported through that street in some sort of vehicle at around the turn of the century. The film's staggered movement induces an exaggerated sense of moving through space, opening up a feeling of deep space while at the same time its slow and seemingly discontinuous advancement tends to flatten space out. By bringing out contrast and starker definition of light and shadow, Gehr intensifies the grainy irregular texture of the original film, causing the black and white spectres which populate his work to oscillate in a pulsating rhythm between their tactile existence as representational forms and pure film grains varying in tonality, density and shape. Sometimes areas of the screen are full of brooding dark particles on the verge of some kind of battle or explosion, and then, all of a sudden light pours through and representational forms begin to come into focus; only to be again swept away by the oncoming waves of dark or light eruptions as the grains both devour the image as well as emanate from it.... Also attempting to define a deep space are those ever-present streetcar tracks, moving out in renaissance perspective toward an imaginary horizon while other elements, such as the scratches or splice of the original film are working against them, re-inforcing the screen plane. But Gehr's work is never a simple play of light and shadow, and/or of the tension between two-dimensional and three-dimensional space.

What a remarkable observation of history is made available as we move ever so gradually down this teeming street. Not only are we being guided through space but time as well. It is practically the entire 20th-century which comes between us and the activities depicted on the screen. A century which has probably gone through changes at a faster pace than any previous generation, both physically/visually as well as psychologically. In *Eureka* we see people from another era going to and from work. Men and women out for a day's shopping, businessmen, newsboys, messengers, workers, people waiting for a streetcar or just milling around. Similarly, there are a variety of moving vehicles and means of transportation. Bicycles, horses, horse-driven wagons, horse-driven streetcars, electrically-driven streetcars, trolleys, horse-driven carriages, automobiles, all interweaving and crossing each other's paths, and like the inhabitants, moving through this

labyrinth in totally unrestricted patterns. Countless dramas unfold as motor-driven vehicles now vie for space once dominated by humans, animals and horse-driven vehicles. Automobiles carelessly navigate through the traffic, aggressively asserting their presence, cutting directly in front of the more precarious horse-driven vehicles and even challenging the steady moving streetcars. Those automobiles careening close to the camera create at times a strong sense of three-dimensional space, yet leave only a blur in their path as they traverse the frame hurrying to their unknown destination. Pedestrians pour through the streets, obliged to mingle with the traffic. They maneuver between cyclists, automobiles, horses, wagons and trolley cars, often creating wonderful cinematic incidents like the bustling woman making her way across the street to catch the approaching streetcar. As we watch her ascend on the passing streetcar she seems to be "stepping out of the frame."

Periodically a young boy runs in front of the trolley, looking into the camera, jesting, waving, making his presence felt. One notices him and then because there is so much other phenomena to follow, loses him running ahead through the crowd or beyond the limits of the frame. Upon first viewing it may not be possible to recall whether it is one boy or a number of different boys who persistently return. In either case, his appearance at different intervals creates a recurring tension, like a constantly reappearing familiar figure within an otherwise changing landscape. Appearing more frequently towards the latter part of the film the boy seems to be leading the trolley to the end of the street as the front facade of a splendid 19th-century building, previously looming calmly on the horizon, begins to engulf more and more of the frame. With the camera's journey coming to its final destination and the facade filling the entire screen, the boy throws himself against the building wanting to be in the film up to the very end. But contrary to one's expectations the camera advances a bit further, pushing on past him to reveal the last image in the film. Through the shifting grains of film on the right side of the frame a plaque on the building comes into view and the words "Erected 1896" can barely be made out. Next to the plaque on the left side of the frame stands an old man, his long white beard blows slowly in the wind, moving in rhythm to the shifting film grains. The camera comes to a complete stop at this point in Gehr's film* pausing on its last image. The image is held beyond the time needed to identify it, remaining in our field of vision as in a state of suspended animation and acting as a terminal point for Gehr's film. The old man is poised there like a vision from the 19th-century, a full generation separating him from many of the younger people passing through the streets. He stands at the end of Market Street gazing back down the space we have just traversed and perhaps sees this street, not as an image from the past but as a vision from the future....

At the end of *Eureka* what impressions remain are more than just the physical allusions to time and space depicted by the fleeting shadow world represented on the screen. As we have moved down this street, floating, hovering in space slightly above the crowds and traffic, we have seen the passing of a world and a way of life long gone, vanished, and we are perhaps reminded of the irretrievability of our own past.

—Myrel Glick, June 1980, *Film Culture* No. 70-71 (1983)

*In the original film the trolley is turned around revealing to us a reversed view of the street we have just passed through. Whereas in Gehr's film, the plaque is the final destination of the trolley/camera's journey. What a coincidence that the plaque should read "Erected 1896," a date so close to the first public projection of films by the Lumiere brothers in 1895.

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Program III

March 4, 1993

Shift (1972-74); 16mm, color, sound, 9 minutes

Signal—Germany on the Air (1982-85); 16mm, color, sound, 37 minutes

This Side of Paradise (1991); 16mm, color, sound, 14 minutes

Shift

. . . For [Ernie] Gehr, *Shift* broke new ground—hence, perhaps, a pun in its title. The film is his first to employ extensive montage: virtually all of his earlier works were created through the application of

predetermined shooting systems and thus edited in the camera. *Table* is pure visceral sensation; *Shift* is more dramatic. The actors, however, are all mechanical—a series of cars and trucks filmed from a height of several stories as they perform on a three-lane city street. Gehr isolates one or two vehicles at a time, inverting some shots, so that a car hangs from the asphalt like a bat from a rafter, using angles so severe the traffic often seems to be sliding off the earth, and employing a reverse motion so abrupt that the players frequently exit the scene as though yanked from a stage by the proverbial hook.

A sparse score of traffic noises . . . accompanies the spastic ballet *mécanique*. Not only the action but Gehr's deliberate camera movements are synced to the music of honking horns, screeching brakes, and grinding gears. The eight-minute [sic] film is structured as a series of obliquely comic blackout sketches: Trucks run over their shadows; cars unexpectedly reverse direction or start up and go nowhere.

—J. Hoberman, *American Film*, June 1982

Signal—Germany on the Air

Over the past few years there have been several films by established artists that have not only extended the inherent concerns of their makers but cast a fresh critical template through which to reconsider and reexperience previously secure work . . . Ernie Gehr's *Signal—Germany on the Air* causes us to think as much about the significance of earlier achievements as it does about the complex issues of historical vision it adumbrates. In particular it elicits an understanding of Gehr as sort of radical urban ethnologist working in the tradition of Steiner and Strand, Cavalcanti, Ruttman, and especially Vertov; creators of the “city symphony” in which spatial dynamics and social activity are seen as mutually informing. Except that *Signal* . . . is a city dirge, a tensely ominous diary of a visit to Berlin, one of the grimmest loci of twentieth-century consciousness.

. . . . The film's central location is a busy intersection thick with detail, movement, and “actors,” with all manner of signs and signals—the common semiosis of urban life. It is treated as a field to be broken down into motifs such as pedestrian versus auto traffic, articulated through slight shifts in camera angle and position, through sets of surveillance-like pans, and through sound. But instead of a constant locus of theme and variation it undergoes a sinuous and cumulative transformation in the film's global structure. At first there is just a series of contiguous views underscored by fitting street sounds. Changes in position shift relations of depth and shape; some details are thrust forward, others recede. Objects are re-formed by spatial coincidence into new, compound shapes. A clock subtended by a sign with a giant eye measures both time and space. The emphasis is on how in the visual welter of this scene slight adjustments foster apertures and blockages to vision.

Gradually, as in the opening of *The Man With the Movie Camera*, new elements are added which animate and extend through contrast the initial descriptions. The intersection gives way to a less regulated, less socially-imprinted array of an empty lot with waving grass and a deteriorating building labeled in several languages as the former site of a Gestapo torture chamber. When we return to the intersection radio sounds accompany the continuing dissection of space and movement: a fragment of a symphony, a cabaret song, a woman's voice speaking in German. The recording seems to have been taken directly as it includes static interference between signals. With its variety of musical, and later dramatic, forms and spoken languages, the radio constitutes an aural analogue to the intersection—just as the sliding of the dial parallels lateral pan shots. The radio is more than background or formal foil. An announcer states that a Glen Miller selection was made in 1942. What we are hearing is a counterpoint of past and present and this insight begins to inflect our apprehension of what is at stake in the visual organization.

History and memory are subtly invoked, the other scene of the wartime holocaust. The intersection is played off shots of a railroad siding with aging boxcars. Later, the dialogue of a bilingual radio program focuses on accusation and guilt: “You got us into this mess;” “Don't blame me;” “You people are all the same;” “You don't know anything about the real world.” The radio is both immediate and absent. Like the sound of a moving train it is heard but not seen. With each recurrence of the intersection it looks and feels different—and more sinister. Where do the clutches of cars and people who fill and vacate the frame come from? Where is

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the elsewhere into which they disappear? Patterns of movement grow more complex, revealing an insistent underlying grid of restraint, coagulation, and tentative release.

City streets are an ideal realm in which to map the interpenetration of order and random occurrence. Observation and arrangement can tear through the facade of the quotidian, revealing suppressed tensions and disavowed orders of regulation. Lines painted on the street control the flow of traffic but there are less visible rules governing how people pass one another, how they line up and wait at the curb. A silent and barely intelligible language of the body in space operates within and against the language of editing and composition. Yet in direct proportion to what is made visible, the absent and unretrievable, which is perhaps beyond representation, continues to assert itself.

At the core of this absence is human consciousness, not just the eye but the mind that predicates it. *Signal* moves towards a visual and dramatic climax in a series of nearly a dozen pan shots across the active square. They are of slightly different speeds and describe slightly different arcs. And they are once mechanical—like the controlled patterns of human movement and their mirroring in the surrogate bodies of automobiles—and idiosyncratic, expressive of a psychological presence. This sequence retroactively confirms the intimation that there was more to the shifts in position around the intersection than mere formal rearrangement. That a sentient, anxious and remembering agent lurked behind the distanced observation. At one point in the film we begin to feel that the present is defined by constant motion and the past is irrevocably still. By the end this can no longer be the case. Memory and observation are not separate functions; the visible and invisible coexist. Analytic procedures cannot be severed from history or from the individual or collective consciousness which constructs it.

Gehr's visit to Berlin was not a casual tourist excursion. But for an "accident" of history it would have been his childhood home. Thus the ways in which *Signal* implicates and expands (some of) his earlier films is related to a displaced attempt to seize and understand a pattern of events deeply inscribed in and by his chosen location, events which could exist for him only in consciousness. His simplicity of technical means could not be other; any denaturing of the image by superimposition or printing would only blunt the dynamic of threat and resistance. Berlin is not in this film just another urban setting, another visual field of fascination and display. Rather, it is the field out of which those others were conceived, albeit in profound but not impossible absence. . . . Gehr piles his images into the breach of a complex existential predicament. We can only hope there will be more such battles forthcoming.

—Paul Arthur, *Motion Picture*, Vol II, No. 1 (Fall 1987)

This Side of Paradise

In 1989 I was in Berlin to record sounds for *Rear Window*. A couple of days before leaving, I came across a huge flea market where a large number of East Europeans, mainly Poles, were selling whatever goods they had managed to bring across the border to what was then still West Berlin. The over-all character of the place was grim, pathetic and ominous. At the same time it had an eerie, almost festive mood to it. Though not quite. Perhaps it was the result of the East Europeans' encounter with Western realities; perhaps it was because of the dire situation at home to which they had to return; perhaps it was the multitude of curiosity seekers, shoppers, bargain hunters and tourists like myself.

As I began to walk through the market, I was seized with a desire to film impressions of what I was witnessing, and so I started to record images without any idea of what I would do with the material later on. In order to by-pass some Poles' uneasiness with cameras aimed at them (and there were many people with cameras when I was there), at some point I began to focus on the possibilities offered by the numerous small and large muddy puddles of rain water which were all over the place and out of which their wares and misery as well as the remnants of western goods seemed to ooze, and into which, ironically, the Poles seemed to have landed. Half an hour later I had used up my five rolls of film. I then recorded some sounds on a malfunctioning cassette tape recorder. A few days later I left Berlin. On my way to the airport I heard that on that day the Berlin wall was coming down.

—Ernie Gehr, 1993

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Program IV

March 7, 1993

Untitled (1977); 16mm, color, silent, 5 minutes

Side/Walk/Shuttle (1991); 16mm, color, sound, 40 minutes

Daniel Willi, March April May 1992 (1993); 16mm, color, sound, 25 minutes, Work in Progress

Untitled

. . . . For me, Gehr's cinema has explored the process of perception as crisis—and, in this sense, his films deal with the relation of eye, mind, and image from a *critical* perspective. I have always experienced the title of *Serene Velocity* ironically. In its exploration of the fissures in the persistence of image and the mind's ability to create space from a filmic image, *Serene Velocity* leads me toward a crisis in seeing and understanding that leaves me astonished, rather than serene.

. . . *Untitled* . . . operates with a similar crisis in recognition . . . The form of the film follows certain strategies of minimalist filmmaking of the sixties and seventies: a single camera roll exposed from a static camera position. Gehr does not use these limitations to produce a simple contemplative image, however. The exploration of human perception in relation to the cinematic apparatus in this film produces an image in flux, in fact, and image of flux in dialectical relation to precise limitations.

Like *Serene Velocity* and *Eureka*, *Untitled* . . . explores the camera's relation to space through a meditation on penetration. As in the two previous films this penetration is rendered problematic. It is produced as an issue, as opposed to the simple phallic appropriation of the third dimension found, for instance, in Busby Berkeley's camera tracking through the gothic-arched legs of a line of chorus girls. In *Untitled* . . . the means of passing through space is exclusively optical. Gehr changes the focal planes of his camera so that the eye moves from foreground to background as successive layers come into sharpness. There is no zoom or camera movement here, but the eye dwells progressively deeper into the image as new planes of distance come into focus.

. . . . In many ways it seems to me that Gehr's films comment in a witty, ironic, and precise way on the ambitions of the avant-garde filmmakers of the twenties, particularly the Soviets. . . In *Untitled* . . . (as in many of his other films), Gehr seems to relate to Vertov's paradigmatic opposition of human eye to camera eye—much of what a man can't see a camera can. However, if Vertov's project was a part of revolutionary optimism that saw the camera as the completion and improvement of human perception, Gehr's attitude seems more modest and more critical. It is the limitation of perception that Gehr explores through the possibilities of the camera, an art of vision founded on a crisis in seeing . . .

—Tom Gunning, "The Critique of Seeing with One's Own Eyes: Ernie Gehr's *Untitled* (1976)" [sic] *Millennium Film Journal*, #12

Side/Walk/Shuttle

Part of the initial inspiration for the film was an outdoor glass elevator and some of the visual, spatial and gravitational possibilities it presented me with. The work was also informed by an interest in panoramas and the urban landscape. In this latter respect Eadwaerd Muybridge's photographic panoramas of San Francisco from the 1870s as well as the over-all topography of the city itself were sources of inspiration. The final shape and character of the work was tempered by reflections upon a lifetime of displacement, moving from place to place, and haunted by recurring memories of other places, other possible yet unlike "homes" I once passed through.

—Ernie Gehr, January 1993

Daniel Willi, March April May 1992

Work in Progress

Our son, Daniel Willi, was born on March 3, 1992. The images in this work were recorded between the 4th of March and the end of May.

—E.G.

GENERATIONAL GAPS

February 26, 1993

The Body Beautiful (1991), by Ngozi Onwurah.
Migration of the Blubberoids (1989), by George Kuchar.
Splash (1991), by Thomas Allen Harris.
Martina's Playhouse (1989), by Peggy Ahwesh.
Remains to be Seen (1989), by Phil Solomon.
Time Being (1991), by Gunvor Nelson.

The Cinematheque hits the airwaves as part of KQED Channel 9's "Living Room Festival" with a powerful program (is this really T.V.?) exploring the familiar and often disturbing dynamics that make up parent-child relationships. Although each piece has a personal and distinctive voice, the stories told — unresolved tensions, ambiguities in roles, parallels and differences — capture the universal experience of family.

Ngozi Onwurah's *The Body Beautiful* is a riveting autobiographical film of the development of the relationship between the artist and her mother, Madge. Playing herself, Onwurah's mother dramatizes her feelings as she comes to terms with a growing breast cancer during her third pregnancy and is forced to have a radical mastectomy immediately after the child's birth. With loving respect but a piercing eye, the filmmaker goes on to detail the other hardships and losses of her mother's life — the death of her husband in the Nigerian War of Independence, the struggle to raise her mixed-race children in racist London, and her on-going battle with the pain of rheumatoid arthritis. This compelling journey beyond the one dimensional perception of a mother by her child into the recognition of her mother as a complex tapestry of emotions and needs is as haunting as it is liberating.

Veteran filmmaker George Kuchar gives us a peek into his relationship with his mom in *Migration of the Blubberoids*. Beginning with glimpses at haunts frequented by the filmmaker as a youth and including that well-known institution, turkey dinner at Mom's house, this 8mm video diary entry takes a nostalgic, yet unromantic, look homeward. Edited in the camera, this humorous short features his sweet and loving mother — who, the filmmaker says, "graciously blubberizes any mammal she comes into contact with."

In *Splash*, African American video artist Thomas Allen Harris explores the interplay between identity, fantasy and homosexual desire in the pre-adolescent experience. Using the metaphor of swimming across a body of water, this fable-like tale explores the artist's psycho-social and sexual development within the narrow confines of a society that encourages the consumption of whiteness and heterosexuality.

Everything is up for grabs in *Martina's Playhouse*, Peggy Ahwesh's tale of a little girl as she moves from the role of the child to that of the mother. Martina learns the parts of the many characters she is expected to play and moves easily between them. Playhouse encounters with friends reinforce the lesson of adaptability through scenes in which the movement from object to object is not merely a transfer of attention, but a shift between layers of meaning.

Dedicated to his mother, Philip Solomon's *Remains to be Seen* examines the fragile line between life and death. Using images of the operating room intercut with old home movies, Solomon creates what *Village Voice* film critic Manohla Dargis has called "images that seem stolen from a family album of collective memory."

In her black and white silent film, *Time Being*, Gunvor Nelson offers a gentle portrait of her mother. Opening with a group of youthful photos and moving into a real time observation of her mother asleep in an old age home, Nelson poetically captures the moment. The filmmaker describes this portrait of her mother in the last stages of life as "a quiet film with my old mother."

THE LOOKING GLASS CRACKED

March 11, 1993

The Looking Glass Trilogy (1988-92), by Pelle Lowe; S-8mm, b&w/color, sound, 41 minutes
 includes: *Introduction*, 1 minute
, nor (1988); 6.5 minutes
Chintz (1990); 8.5 minutes
Earthly Possessions (1992), 25 minutes

A Page of Madness (1926), by Teinosuke Kinugasa; 16mm, b&w, sound, 60 minutes
 Music by the Modern Bamboo Flute Ensemble (supervised by Kinugasa)

* * *

On Pelle Lowe's *Earthly Possessions*

For my brother on his 8th birthday.

Mi Querido Alberto Javier:

Two years ago you sent me a letter written in a single sentence that said: "This is a trick." You were speaking, of course, not of mistakes or attachments or boundaries, but of the demon of possibility that we hold hands with. I love your tricks, and now I must tell you about something that you will see in the future but that you already understand.

This is a film inspired by two books: a novel called "Wuthering Heights" and the memoirs of a 19th century hermaphrodite. A hermaphrodite is a person who has both sexes, male and female, and who probably has illuminating thoughts about the question of fate.

One part of the story is made of recurring images of things we see and touch and listen to when we play: decaying flowers, flames, sighs, snakes, swans, toy houses, a corpse on a table, lightning, running water, birds, trees, hands, poems, the moon, waves breaking in the shore, music-box music. These things don't lose their value in spite of their repetition; they act like markings of experiences lived before.

Another part of the story is told by lovers who have tantrums or stay very still, waiting to understand how does one person travel outside of his or her body. They confuse their beloved's face with their own and dress each other and hold each other, wandering through rooms like the chambers of the heart, trying to recover something or inventing new things to believe in.

There is also one woman who transforms herself into the man she loves and who is absent. She refuses to forget and wants to be faithful to moments of extreme feeling. Like when you lose at a game and there is no mercy. I am telling you this because one is never too young to know rage and sorrow, to know that play is sometimes left unfinished. She carries her nakedness with a solemnity that is very similar to both your courtesies and your need to jump.

The film celebrates love and the need to tell stories, and the translation of this necessity into language. We are confined to the impulse to live beyond ourselves, and this piece speaks this impulse in gestures that are ordinary but that tend to be done carefully: lighting a candle and carrying it across a dark room, stopping work at a desk to turn to face someone you love, undressing someone you love.

Lovesickness is understood instinctively as a persistence of identity, as a time for reflection beyond meaning. All the stories in this film awaken us to humbleness, to its consolation and visionary powers; they are promises, like your letters, but you already know this, and I just succumb to the weight of words that must be said.

—Maria-Eugenia Mann, *Cinematograph* Volume 5 / *Sentience* (1993)

A Page of Madness

Teinosuke Kinugasa first achieved prominence as an *oyama*, or female impersonator, in Kabuki theater and later on the screen in a similar role in film's like Tanaka's *Living Corpse* (1917). Until the re-discovery of *A Page of Madness* in 1971 (found in an old rice shed in Kinugasa's house), his most famous silent film had been *Crossways* (1928), a work which showed great dramatic power and was apparently

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influenced by German Expressionism (*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, in particular) and the Soviet concept of montage, but was made—as was *A Page of Madness*—before any of these films reached Japan. In the 1930s, Kinugasa studied with Eisenstein and eventually traveled to Germany where he was able to view, at last, many of the seminal works of early German cinema. He achieved international recognition in 1953 with *The Gate of Hell*, a film remarkable for its color sense, that helped bring Japanese cinema to the attention of European audiences and critics.

Although under contract with Shochiku Studios at the time he made *A Page of Madness*, Kinugasa produced the film independently with the assistance of a group of writers and poets who were among the founders of the influential literary magazine, *The Age of Letters*. The novelist Yasunari Kawabata, a member of this group, has been credited with writing the film's original screenplay.

Generally recognized as the first experimental film made in Japan, *A Page of Madness* is a remarkable cinematic achievement. It is even more astounding that Kinugasa conceived of so many innovative uses of expressive sets and lighting, and so original a conception of montage without ever having seen *Caligari* or any early Soviet films. The set was painted with silver to increase the amount of available light, which accounts for the unearthly luminosity found in some of the images. The emphasis on the visual quality of the film and the reliance on the power of associative editing allowed Kinugasa total freedom from intertitles and gave the work a uniquely disorienting character.

The soundtrack was added by Kinugasa upon the film's re-release, and recreates the type of live wind music often used to accompany Japanese silent films during the 1920s.

DROIDS, POIDS & VOIDOIDS

March 14, 1993

Sins of the Fleshapoids (1965), by Mike Kuchar; 16mm, color, sound, 40 minutes

Cast: Bob Cowan, Mister Robot; Donna Kerness, Voluptuous Princess; George Kuchar, Evil Prince; Julius Mittleman, Voluptuous Tarzan; Marin Thomas, Lady Robot.

Narration by Bob Cowan.

Love, a million years in the future, in a world that abandons all mechanical knowledge, and plunges itself into the abyss of erotic pleasure and stomach churning hate! Delightfully and shamelessly overacted and filmed in blazing color, *Sins of the Fleshapoids* reaches a new peak in the cinema of the ridiculous! . . . My specific aim was to bombard and engulf the screen with vivid and voluptuous colors, because *Sins* is a fantasy of science-fiction . . . so I tried to boost the colors according to its category . . . “fantastic” or “unreal.” . . . In *Sins* intensive rehearsing was not necessary. In fact, sometimes what I did was to yell out directions of what the actors should do while the camera was on and the film was rolling. I have two types of actors that I work with: half of them overact, the other half can't act at all. When given very brief or on the spot directions, they become hilarious to look at. I believe this technique contributes greatly to making a comical movie. The costumes were from the racks of various thrift shops. They aren't actually costumes; they are a combination of dresses, jockstraps, and beads. The set material, draperies and pottery were bought at Alexander's and Woolworth's toy department and were constructed in my bedroom when I lived at 250 East 207th Street in the Bronx. However, some of the “fill-in” shots were done in the toilet, when it contained a very exotic wall paper.

—Mike Kuchar, *Film-Makers' Cooperative Catalogue* No. 5

[*Sins of the Fleshapoids* is] my most movie movie. It is a monument assembled to glorify Hollywood and the star image . . . to me. Donna Kerness has reached the peak of her “Movie Goddess” image, an image that, in this film, makes her a caricature, a Debra Paget or Dorothy Lamour, that borders on the grotesque, but yet still retains romantic atmosphere. I have given Donna a “leading man” that can only be described as a “gift from the gods.” His looks and physique endow the sets like mustard on a hotdog. The script deals with science fiction while the sets display a sort of mythologic or Arabian Nights flavor. To sum up, *Sins of the*

Fleshapoids is my most dearest dedication to commercial American movies, or, to put it another way, it is a joke that cost me a thousand dollars.

—Mike Kuchar, from notes for the premiere of the film at the
New York Film-Makers' Cinematheque, 1965



Creation of the Humanoids (1962), directed by Wesley E. Barry; 16mm, color, sound, 84 minutes
Producers: Wesley E. Barry and Edward J. Kay. Screenwriter: Jay Simms.

Surprisingly little information exists on this nifty post-apocalyptic allegory, which is o.k. because anonymity really becomes this early '60s gem. Films like *Creation of the Humanoids* seem to have been made expressly for the TV twilight zone of 2 to 6 AM, Saturday and Sunday mornings, to be viewed only while under the influence of sleep-depriving narcotics or alcohol—or, better yet, a creative mixture of both.

I've yet to meet anyone who actually saw movies like *This Island Earth* or *Mothra* or *The Monolith Monsters* or *The Crawling Eye* during their original theatrical release. Of course, I don't mean to suggest that no one ever saw these films in theaters, only that I haven't met anyone yet who had. Like millions of other kids growing up in the late sixties/early seventies, I saw all of this stuff on TV first. In a variety of altered states. This, then, is a tribute to misspent youth...(AK)

The following entry is from Michael Weldon's *The Psychotronic Encyclopedia of Film*:

An incredible little film about the sterile future after WWII. The small group of remaining humans use superintelligent, obedient, purplish-green hairless robots to do all the work. Don Megowan (the creature in *The Creature Walks Among Us*) is Craigus, a security officer who distrusts the mechanical men. A scientist has been injecting blood into the emotionless androids, making them more human, and Craigus' girlfriend [sic] falls in love with one. The furious Craigus gets even more shocking news. Filmed on minimal sets as if it were a play, this short hit has been called "Andy Warhol's favorite movie." With Dudley Manlove from *Plan 9 From Outer Space*.



No Such Thing as Gravity (1989), by Alyce Wittenstein; 16mm, b&w/color, sound, 45 minutes
Director, Producer: Alyce Wittenstein. Cast: Nick Zedd, Adam Malkonian; Holly Adams, Kay Zorn; Taylor Mead, The Judge; Emmanuelle Chaulet, Claire Foreman; Fred Wittenstein, Andreas Lafont; Michael J. Anderson, the Botanist.

No Such Thing as Gravity is a black comedy about a world of the near future where the entire planet. Earth is governed by the interests of its largest corporation, a producer of elaborate consumer goods. The fun begins when the World's most ambitious project, an artificial planet (Nova Terra) which is being used as a refugee camp, begins to slide out of its orbit, threatening the Earth with extinction. Passions flare as a cocky lawyer (scenery-chewer Nick Zedd, at his sneeringest), a couple of ambitious scientists, a wacked-out judge (underground legend Taylor Mead), a seductive ambassador (Emmanuelle Chaulet from Eric Rohmer's *Boyfriends and Girlfriends* and Jon Jost's *All the Vermeers in New York*), and a corporate tyrant (the filmmaker's father, Fred Wittenstein) battle to preserve their interests. Expressionist black and white photography shot at the sight of the 1964 World's Fair, *No Such Thing as Gravity* warns of capitalist fascism that, in a climate of out-of-control "mergermania," could be right around the bend.

LINDA GIBSON/VALERIE SOE
Both Artists In Person

March 18, 1993

Linda Gibson moved to San Francisco from New York just over a year ago. Many of her videotapes blend choreographic, symbolic, text and documentary elements. She has been a key national advocate of independent media for several years, and currently works at California Newsreel, a non-profit distributor of independent film and video on social issues, as Director of the African-American Perspectives Media Project.

On the Beach (1977); video, b&w, sound, 4.5 minutes

Directed and performed by Linda Gibson and Noelle Braynard

This duet for hand-held camera and dancer explores the changing spatial relationships between the two performers.

Crossings (excerpts, 1980); video, b&w, sound, 11 minutes

Responding to life in suburbia, the artist uses video editing to manipulate the time/space of movement improvisations recorded in the reflections of a store window.

Empty Sky (1982); video, color, sound, 6 minutes

Choreographed and performed by Kathy Kroll

Adapted and directed by Linda Gibson

Poetry by Lao Tsu

Adapted from a stage performance, the videotape combines video feedback and visual inserts to create a visual analogy to the dance and poetry.

Flag (1989); video, color, sound, 24 minutes

Diaries, snapshots, dance, and icons of popular and unofficial culture are used in this insightful video to represent the artist's relationship patriotism and the American flag. Growing up Black and female in the '50s, she finds herself between two cultures. Kennedy, Marilyn Monroe and Angela Davis are used as symbols of wider questions of racism and American history; montage and superimposition foreground the contradictions and tensions among these symbols. (Women Make Movies)

* * *

San Francisco resident Valerie Soe's videotapes integrate social and political activities into the fabric of her art. She is a teacher, writer, curator and media activist.

New Year I and II (1987); two-channel video, 5 minutes

An autobiographical memory of growing up in a family that struggled to hold onto its Chinese culture in the suburbs of Pinole, California. The irony of these childhood memories and the struggle to maintain a sense of cultural identity becomes unapologetically poignant when juxtaposed with racist and stereotypical images that existed and continue to exist in the American media.

Diversity (excerpt); video

Black Sheep; video

Mixed Blood (1993); video, color, sound, 20 minutes

This work takes a personal view of interracial relationships in the Asian American community, examining some of the motivations behind cross-cultural intimacy, and the attitudes and reactions from Asians and non-Asians involved. Combining interviews with over thirty individuals, text, and clips from scientific films and

classic miscegenation dramas, Soe's tape explores the complexities of intimate emotional and sexual choices and whether such choices have public and political implications.

FROM BREER TO ETERNITY: A TRIBUTE TO ROBERT BREER

Filmmaker Robert Breer in Person

Program I

March 21, 1993

"I haven't felt as good in a long time as when I stood in the Bonino Gallery looking at Breer's constructions and movies. The amazing thing is that all this goodness and happiness is caught so simply and so effortlessly... We look at Breer's work and we begin to smile—lightly, inside, a happy sort of smile, a happy feeling like when you see anything beautiful and perfect. It's through an amazing control and economy of his materials that he achieves this; through the elimination of all the usual emotional, personal, sick material; by not giving in to temptations."

—Jonas Mekas, *Movie Journal*

"Breer's unpredictable lines flow forth naturally with an assurance and a serenity which are the signs of an astonishing felicity of expression."

—A. Labarthe, *Cahiers du Cinema*

"Breerworld is homey but tumultuous, filled with sudden shifts in scale or color, flash frame jolts, and a steady back beat of good-natured apocalypse...he towers over a field where gimmicks are common currency and cuteness is as virulent as malaria in the tropics..."

—J. Hoberman, *Village Voice*

"Robert Breer's style is akin to musical composition. His films begin by presenting various elements...upon which he will later expand...becoming ever more complex."

—Janet Maslin, *New York Times*

All films 16mm:

A Miracle (1954); b&w, silent, .5 minutes

Recreation (1956); color, sound, 1.5 minutes

Jamestown Balloos (1957); color, sound, 6 minutes

A Man and His Dog Out for Air (1957); b&w, sound, 2 minutes

Homage to Jean Tinguely's Homage to New York (1960); b&w, sound, 9.5 minutes

66 (1966); color, sound, 5.5 minutes

69 (1969); color, sound, 5 minutes

Fuji (1973); color, sound, 8.5 minutes

Swiss Army Knife with Rats and Pigeons (1981); color, sound, 6.5 minutes

A Frog on a Swing (1989); color, sound, 5 minutes

Sparkill Ave (1993, world premiere); color, sound, 7 minutes

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Program II

March 25, 1993

PBL #2 (1968); 16mm, color, sound, 1 minute

A concise one-minute cartoon history of the black American commissioned by Public Broadcast Laboratory and shown on NET network.

Blazes (1961); 16mm, color, sound, 3 minutes

100 basic images switching positions for four thousand frames. A continuous explosion.

Pat's Birthday (1962); 16mm, b&w, sound, 13 minutes

A day in the country with Claes Oldenburg and the Ray Gun Theatre Players...includes such classic items as the haunted house, a gas station, ice cream stand, miniature golf, airplane noises, balloons. Things happen after each other in this film only because there isn't room for everything at once. After all, time's not supposed to move in one direction any more than it does in another.

Fist Fight (1964); 16mm, color, sound, 11 minutes

Frame by frame collage of everything imaginable. First shown in New York production of K.H. Stockhausen's *Originale*. Track is from these performances.

70 (1970); 16mm, color, b&w, 5 minutes

Made with spray paint and hand-cut stencils, this film was an attempt at maximum plastic intensity. "...places Breer for the first time among the major colorists of the avant-garde."

—P. Adams Sitney, *Visionary Film*.

Gulls and Buoys (1972); 16mm, color, sound, 7.5 minutes

"The film might appear to be an unassuming, whimsical exercise in animation or, to the more serious-minded, it could be viewed as a high point in formal graphic film tradition stretching back to the work of Viking Eggeling and Hans Richter. It could be viewed either way because in fact, it is both...a magical feat that merits him consideration as one of our most important film artists."

—Scott Hammen, *Afterimage*

77 (1977); 16mm, color, sound, 7 minutes

"Breer is a consummate master of cinematic space. Like Hans Richter, he constantly provokes a sense of depth through changing the scale of his shapes. We see the space as constantly shrinking and expanding...the metamorphosis of things and space is located in the spectator who actively participates in creating the meaning of the image. Breer celebrates the freedom endemic in animation by giving the spectator a creative role in the process of metamorphosis."

News

—Noel Carrol, *Soho Weekly*

T.Z. (1979); 16mm, color, sound, 8.5 minutes

"An elegant home movie, its subject is Breer's new apartment which faces the Tappan Zee (T.Z.) bridge. It is permeated, as are all his films, with subtle humor, eroticism and a sense of imminent chaos and catastrophe."

—Amy Taubin, *Artforum*

Sparkill Ave (1993); 16mm, color, sound, 7 minutes

Descriptions are by Robert Breer unless otherwise noted.

Presented in collaboration with the **San Francisco Art Institute** and **ASIFA - San Francisco**.

**WORLDS IN FOCUS:
New Films by Henry Hills, Peter Hutton, and Warren Sonbert
Warren Sonbert in Person**

March 28, 1993

Bali Mecanique (1992), by Henry Hills; 16mm, color, sound, 17 minutes

Bali Mecanique is a two-part, self-reflective study of the dance and rhythms of life in Bali, combining experimental film techniques with documentary-style footage. The first section presents a complete Legong dance intercut with footage of the Odalans (temple celebrations) and sacred architecture, building into an increasingly frenetic collage as the dance reaches its crescendo. In contrast, the second section weaves together footage of lush rice terraces and the "erotic bumblebee" of the Oleg Tambulilingan dance to give a humorous literalization of the "other" vision of Bali: the Westerner's paradise on Earth, set to the original record of "Bali Hai" from *South Pacific*, which the filmmaker grew up on and recently found in a stack of discs on the floor of a closet in his parents' house. The film ends with the famous Kris dance of Batubulan as it is performed today. Starring the dancers from the Tirta Sari, Gunung Sari and Samara Jati gamelan orchestras of the Peliatan. (HH)

Lodz Symphony (1991-1993), by Peter Hutton; 16mm, b&w, silent, 20 minutes

A portrait of Lodz, Poland that exists in a time warp of sad memory. Hutton creates an empty world evoking the 19th century industrial atmosphere that is populated with the ghosts of Poland's tragic past.

Short Fuse (1991), by Warren Sonbert; 16mm, color, sound, 37 minutes

"Assembled from two decades of Sonbert outtakes, and shot all with his 16mm Bolex camera, *Fuse* is a crazy-quilt of disparate images. Boogie boarders, trapeze artists, lava beds, snoozing cats and an all-male clogging group share screen time, arranged in a cinematic mosaic that's occasionally soothing, but more often discordant.

"Unlike most rock videos—which cut to the beat and favor flowing, sensual camera moves—Sonbert's montage is jagged and arrhythmic. His images frequently cut off just as we begin to feel drawn in, and often are followed by shots that seem to negate or chide them. By disrupting our conditioned viewing patterns, Sonbert creates an emotional urgency that makes us question the relationship of image and perception, sight and cognition."

—Edward Guthmann, *San Francisco Chronicle*

**THE ELECTRONIC MUSE: New Videos by Lynn Hershman
Lynn Hershman in Person
Program 1**

March 30, 1993

Internationally acclaimed video artist Lynn Hershman has challenged the viewer's assumptions and passive spectatorship from her earliest pieces. In her recent narratives she investigates the disturbing ambiguities between truth and fiction. Over the next two evenings the Cinematheque and Roxie Cinema present three new videotapes that showcase the breadth and originality of Lynn Hershman's work.

Seeing is Believing (1991, San Francisco premiere); 3/4" video, color, sound, 58 minutes

Featuring Estrella Esparza, Janet Orovac, Guillermo Gomez-Peña, Rachel Rosenthal, Kathy Acker.

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Shooting Script / A Transatlantic Love Story (1992): 3/4" video, color, sound, 52 minutes. In collaboration with Knud Vesterskov and Ulrik Al Brask. Music by The Residents.

This work is a unique collaboration between three artists from two different countries. It is not only about cultural difference between America and Denmark but also about the loss of identity due to the omnipresent surveillance and data systems in the modern world. It is these systems which erode and assassinate the right to privacy.

With *Shooting Script / A Transatlantic Love Story* [the videomakers] have produced an intensely uncomfortable work. On one hand, one could easily introduce it as an example of a theme which has been explored at great length by narrative filmmaking: The story of a woman (a number of variations on the *femme fatale* figure) who is playing with the affections of a would-be lover, and which ultimately resolves itself tragically.

But the tape goes much further by deconstructing the structure of this fiction, through a collision of aesthetic strategies ... The initial confrontation lies in the encounter between sexuality as representation and sexuality as a construction.

At the core of [this video] ... we find the video letter: A woman from America and a man from Denmark meet in a club, the woman invites the man to her hotel room in order to play against his expectations. They meet again and decide that they will send each other a series of letters.

... Lynn Hershman makes exceptional use here of her own intricate narrative strategies, assigning to the female character several identities against whom the male character is pitted. Furthermore, a key element in this aesthetic resides in Hershman's *interruptions*, in which she comments at once on the nature of the collaboration as well as on the relationship between the two characters, as if they truly existed. But it doesn't stop there; she integrates herself in the story as a friend of the woman. It's in such moments that the tape takes on a particularly *perverse* attitude ...

—Stephen Surraizin, Copenhagen Film + Video Festival 92

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Program II

March 31, 1993

Cut Piece: An Homage to Yoko Ono (1993, World Premiere) 15 minutes, portrays one of the major New York artists of the 1960's.

Changing World: A History Of Feminist Art (1993, World Premiere) 70 minutes, is a chronicle of Women's Performance Art as depicted in the work and words of Judy Chicago, Judy Baca, Yvonne Rainer, Rachel Rosenthal, Suzanne Lacey and others.

Panel: *Women— Impact Art*: Featuring Kathy Acker, Conrad Atkinson, Judy Baca, Suzanne Lacey, and Lynn Hershman as moderator.

**A COUPLE OF SWEETHEARTS:
Gunslinging Cowgirls**

April 8, 1993

Johnny Guitar (1954), directed by Nicholas Ray; 16mm, color, sound, 110 minutes with Joan Crawford (Vienna—"Gun Queen of Roaring Arizona"), Mercedes McCambridge, Sterling Hayden, Ernest Borgnine, and John Carradine.

The Furies (1950), directed by Anthony Mann: 16mm, b+w, sound, 109 minutes with Barbara Stanwyck, Walter Huston, Judith Anderson, and Wendell Corey.

... the Western continues to be the least understood of genres. For the producer and distributor, the Western cannot be anything more than an infantile and popular film, destined to end up on television, or an ambitious superproduction with major stars. Only the box-office appeal of the actors or of the director then justifies the effort of publicity and distribution. Betwixt and between is a haphazard question of chance, and no one—the critic no more than the distributor, it must be said—draws any appreciable distinctions between the films produced under the Western label. . . .

The fundamental problem with the contemporary Western undoubtedly consists in the dilemma between intelligence and naiveté. Today the Western cannot in most cases continue to be simple and traditional except by being vulgar and idiotic. A whole cut-price production system persists on such a basis. The fact is that, since Thomas Ince and William Hart, the cinema has evolved. A conventional and simplistic genre in terms of its primitive characteristics, the Western must, however, become adult and intelligent if it wishes to be ranked alongside films worthy of critical attention. Hence the appearance of psychological Westerns, with their social or more or less philosophical theses: the Westerns of consequence.

—André Bazin, "An Exemplary Western," *Cahiers du Cinéma* 74, 1957

Johnny : How many men have you forgotten?

Vienna : As many women as you've remembered.

Johnny : Don't go away.

Vienna : I haven't moved.

Johnny : Tell me something nice.

Vienna : Sure, what do you want to hear?

Johnny : Lie to me. Tell me all these years you've waited. Tell me.

Vienna : All these years I've waited.

Johnny : Tell me you'd have died if I hadn't come back.

Vienna : I would have died if you hadn't come back.

Johnny : Tell me you still love me like I love you.

Vienna : I still love you like you love me.

Johnny : Thanks. Thanks a lot.

A young American filmmaker . . . Nicholas Raymond Kienzle is somewhat, in fact very much, the passionate discovery of the "young critics" [of the *Cahiers du Cinéma* stable: Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rivette, Rohmer]. Nick Ray is an *auteur* in our sense of the word. All his films tell the same story, the story of a violent man who wants to stop being violent, and his relationship with a woman who has more moral strength than himself. For Ray's hero is invariably a man lashing out, weak, a child-man when he is not simply a child. There is always moral solitude, there are always hunters, sometimes lynchers.

... *Johnny Guitar* is by no means its *auteur's* best film. Generally, Ray's films bore the public, irritated as they are by the films' slowness, their seriousness, indeed their realism, which shocks them by its extravagance. *Johnny Guitar* is not really a Western, nor is it an "intellectual Western." It is a Western that is dream-like, magical, unreal to a degree, delirious. It was but a step from the dream to Freudianism, a step our Anglo-Saxon colleagues have taken by talking about the "psychoanalytical Western." But the qualities of this film, Ray's qualities, are not those; they cannot possibly be seen by anyone who has never ventured a look through a camera eyepiece. . . . The hallmark of Ray's very great talent resides in his absolute sincerity, his acute sensitivity. He is not of great stature as a technician. All his films are very disjointed, but it is obvious that Ray is aiming less for the traditional and all-around success of a film than at giving each shot a certain emotional quality. *Johnny Guitar* is "composed," rather hurriedly, of very long takes divided into four. The editing is deplorable. But the interest lies elsewhere: for instance in the very beautiful positioning of figures

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within the frame. [Well, that certainly is *one* area of interest, but definitely not the only one in this mind-boggling gender-bender]. (The posse at Vienna's is formed and moved in a V-shape, like migratory birds.)

—Robert Lachenay, aka François Truffaut, "A Wonderful Certainty," *Cahiers du Cinéma* 46, 1955



*If a man
can spread his hands and show that they are clean,
no wrath of ours shall lurk for him.
Unscathed he walks through his life time.
But one like this man before us, with stained
hidden hands, and the guilt upon him,
shall find us beside him, as witnesses
of the truth, and we show clear in the end
to avenge the blood of the murdered.*

—Aeschylus, *The Eumenides*

The Furies marked the first western from director Anthony Mann, who would go on to make A-budget psychological Jimmy Stewart westerns (*The Naked Spur*, *Bend of the River*) that emphasized strong characters in conflict set against great American landscapes. In *The Furies*, Barbara Stanwyck stars as the power hungry daughter of a New Mexico land baron (Walter Huston, in his last film) who carries out her love affairs and acts of vengeance with all the passion of a character in a Greek tragedy.

[That's because she *is*, sort of. Stanwyck embodies many of the qualities associated with the three Furies, or Eumenides, of Greek mythology. Born from the blood of Uranus, the function of the Furies was to punish wrongs committed against kindred blood regardless of the motive. They were usually represented as three ugly crones with bat's wings, dog's heads and snakes for hair. Their names were Megaera (envious), Tisiphone (blood avenger) and Alecto (unceasing, i.e., in pursuit). When called upon to act, they hounded their victim until he died in torment. In the myth of Orestes, they appear as Clytemnestra's agents of revenge. After Athena absolves Orestes of guilt in the murder of his mother, the Furies accept her decision and become known as the Eumenides (kindly ones)].

. . . . *The Furies* is also the name of a vast territory controlled by land baron T. C. Jeffords (Huston), over which many dramas are fought. . . . While most women-oriented films of the period were sympathetic toward their leading characters, *The Furies* doesn't hesitate to show a less-than-lovable, power-driven Stanwyck. At one point she flings a pair of scissors into the eye of her stepmother and later shows not a hint of remorse. Even her desert riding shots are framed so that her face is in darkness and the cactuses and surrounding desert looks foreboding. Stanwyck's cold and dangerous characterization is chief in making *The Furies* one of the darkest westerns ever made.

—John Stanley, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4 April 1993

The San Francisco Cinematheque, San Francisco Arts Commission,
and The 509 Cultural Center Present

THE SPACE BETWEEN: LIVING SPACES — HOME AND AWAY **An Outdoor Projection/Installation at 6th and Market Streets**

April 16, 1993

Conceived and curated by Lissa Gibbs, "Living Spaces — Home and Away" is part of The Space Between, a three-part outdoor projection/installation series sponsored by the San Francisco Art Commission's Market Street Art in Transit Program and the San Francisco Cinematheque. It is a series of collaborative public art events focusing on the role of Market Street as a site of communications and public forum. Through the projection of film images created by the city's own inhabitants onto the surfaces of Market Street buildings,

the series seeks to create new and different possibilities for public gathering and community expression along this historic promenade. The home movies screened tonight were gathered through an open public solicitation through newspaper announcements, fliers, and word of mouth. Special thanks to all of those who submitted their films, the Luggage Store, and the residents and businesses of the Market and 6th Street area.

Reel #2, from Beasley; 16 mm, color, 15 minutes

Reel #1/Oakland, circa 1935; from Beasley, 16 mm, b & w, 15 minutes

Kiya/Hawaii, from Lana Girvin; Super-8 mm, b & w, 3 minutes

Jake, June 1989, from Lana Girvin; Super-8 mm, b & w, 3 minutes

Lucy's Dogs Playing/Thanksgiving 1991, from Liza Xydis; Super-8 mm, color, 3 minutes

Lesbian/Gay Pride, San Francisco 1991, from Chana Pollock; Super-8 mm, color, 3 minutes

Napa Valley Balloon Trip, 3/85, from Andy Moore; Super-8 mm, color, 6 minutes

Family Gathering, 1972?, from David Blankenship; Super-8 mm, color, 3 minutes

Burbank Parade, May 1974, from David Blankenship; Super-8 mm, color, 3 minutes

Go Slow Movie, from Andy Lawless; Super-8 mm, color, 3 minutes

Thanksgiving Weekend 1991: San Francisco - Top of the Emporium Carnival Rides, from Jerome Carolfi; Super-8 mm, b & w, 3 minutes

Roll 2-S, from Carey Liu; Super-8 mm, color, 3 minutes

Fort Point, from Nancy Whalen; Super-8 mm, color, 3 minutes

Protesting the Oscars, April 1992, from Chana Pollock; Super-8 mm, color, 3 minutes

**EYE-FULL FILMS REVISITED: Films by David Michalak
David Michalak in Person**

**Live Music by PLANET X
(Bruce Ackley/J.A. Deane/Joseph Sabella)**

April 22, 1993

Tales You Lose (1992); 16mm, sound

Tales of good intentions, and tails from left over films, make a movie. Phone call from Sean Brancato. Originally made for the No Nothing's annual HELP KEEP FILM DEAD show.

Once a Face (1984); 16 mm, sound

From disheveled misfit to strangled yuppie — "Fame and fortune may have its' grace, but who wants to be known as Once A Face?"

Not Quite Right (1987); 16 mm, sound

A dark, haunting psychological portrait of a man struggling with his demons and his desire for change. "The faces of Michalak's characters are often confused and troubled, as if their psyche were forever mirroring the fragmented environment they find themselves in."

Portraits, Part I (1986); 16mm, sound

Three special friends rendered visually. Shot on one roll of film, these "moving paintings" contain over 200 in-camera double exposures.

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Who Stole the Keeshka? (Calling W-A-2-E-J-V) (1993); 16 mm, sound

A filmic seance. A tribute to my brother Jimmy and a quest for contact. Movies as an afterlife. "...never let it fade away."

Life is a Serious Business (1983); 16 mm, sound

Using the wisdom from a How To Overcome Discouragement record, an instructor coaches his former self out of depression.

Love and Faith (1992); 16 mm, sound

Campaigning reduced to handshakes and pointing fingers. Made from footage found at the flea market.

Popcorn Obstacles (1984); 16 mm, sound

This film will be shown, technology permitting. Please pardon the delay! The crowd will be treated to some horror (*Thanksgiving II*), porno (*Volley for Serve*), and other accidental movies while the projectionist searches for loose ends. The trouble with expectations...

THIRD EYE BUTTERFLIES: A Tribute to Storm De Hirsch

April 25, 1993

Divinations (1964); 16mm, b&w/color, sound, 5.5 minutes

Third Eye Butterfly (1968); 16mm (twin-screen projection), color, sound, 10 minutes

excerpt from *The Tattooed Man* (1969); 16mm, color, sound, approximately 10 minutes

Cine-Sonnets:

The Recurring Dream (1974?); Super-8mm, color, silent, 4 minutes

September Express (1973); Super-8mm, color, silent, 6 minutes

Malevich at the Guggenheim (1974?); Super-8mm, color, silent, 5.5 minutes

Deep in the Mirror Embedded (1975); Super-8mm, color, silent, 14 minutes

Lace of Summer (1973); Super-8mm, color, silent, 3.5 minutes

Spring/Fall Cinesongs: For Storm De Hirsch (1990), by Gary Adlestein; Super-8mm, color, sound, 11 minutes

*

Filmmaker, painter and poet Storm De Hirsch (1912–) was born and raised in New Jersey (née Lillian Malkin) and moved to New York at an early age. Her published poems appeared in journals, anthologies, and such volumes as *Alleh Lulleh Cockatoo* (1955) and *Twilight Massacre* (1964). Her paintings, drawings and collages were exhibited in various group and one-person shows in New York and Rome.

The 25 or more films she made between 1963 and 1975 are marked by their diversity in subject, style and format. Her early short, painterly and poetic 16mm films brought her prompt acclaim in avant-garde film circles. These included hand-made abstractions in black-and-white and in color, some with designs etched into the film itself, some mixed with live photography. The very titles – *Divinations*, *Shaman: A Tapestry for Sorcerers*, *Sing Lotus* – indicate her leanings toward magic, myth and ritual. *The Tattooed Man*, made with an \$8,000 grant from the American Film Institute's first round of independent filmmaking awards, is a 16mm mini-feature, at once mythic, dramatic and avant-garde.

In 1973 she began her Hudson River Diary series, using a hand-held camera to create cinematic landscapes and waterscapes in *Cayuga Run* and *Wintergarden*. In the same year, partly because of the high cost of

16mm sound films. De Hirsch started her series of silent Super-8mm "Cine-Sonnets" (*Lace of Summer*, *September Express* and others). "De Hirsch's technical methods of expression," wrote Casey Charness, "result in the creation of expression itself. A zoom is not a zoom: it is a trope." Lucy Fischer called the Cine-Sonnets "deceivably modest," and reminded viewers to note the subtlety with which De Hirsch positioned her camera to combine interior and exterior space.

Storm De Hirsch spoke extensively with her films and for a while taught filmmaking at New York's School for the Visual Arts. Her films were honored at U.S. and foreign festivals and avant-garde venues, including retrospectives at the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum.

In later years she married Louis Brigante, a filmmaker and film producer who was among the founding editors of the pioneering journal *Film Culture*. Following Brigante's death in 1975, Storm De Hirsch became increasingly incapacitated from Alzheimer's disease. She now resides in a Manhattan nursing home.

(Information excerpted from a profile of Storm De Hirsch circulated by the Women's Independent Film Exchange, based on research by Tina Wasserman, Cecile Starr, and Jessica Wolff.)

*

GOODBYE IN THE MIRROR

The last time I saw Storm I didn't say hello. Considering the circumstances under which I saw her, I've never been able to forgive myself.

I had taken the bus from Reading to New York for the weekend to see some films. I don't remember now which films I had planned to see, nor do I recall exactly when this trip took place, but I do remember sitting on the bus listening to some slick dick from Soho trying to talk his way into the pants of a Kutztown State coed by laying on some shit about how he was the bass player for the Plasmatics—ever heard of 'em?—and where was she staying in the city so he could call her?, so I guess it must have been about 1980 or '81. It was a gorgeous spring day. Lots of welcome sunshine caressing insanely green Pennsylvania hills and high blue skies dotted with ack-ack puffs of white cloud—a one-in-a-million spring day pregnant with possibilities: the kind of day where, if you paid close enough attention, you could hear the sound of earthworms fucking.

Unfortunately, I couldn't. I was on this bus trying to block out the slick dick's jabbering and the stench of the disinfectant from the toilet—I still smoked in those days, so I was sitting in the back of the bus, puffing noxiously and exuding such a pungent *eau d'anomie* that no one dared sit next to me—by burying my face in a *Village Voice* that I had picked up that morning. After breezing through the weekly rave-up of the latest hippest new film ever, I turned the page and scanned the film ads. Well, whattya know? The Donnell Library was presenting a free screening of films by Storm De Hirsch that very afternoon. I decided to go. When the bus docked at Port Authority shortly after noon, I walked uptown to the library for the show.

Not many people know who Storm De Hirsch is. This isn't surprising. In many ways her life as a filmmaker is a testimony to the old saw, "History is lies agreed upon by the victors." If one based their knowledge of experimental cinema as it developed in the United States solely upon the information contained in the venerated texts of the field (Sitney's *Visionary Film*, Mekas' *Movie Journal*, Curtis' *Experimental Cinema*), they would know next to nothing about her work—other than the fact that she was a woman (along with all the other "footnotes" to film history like Sara Arledge, Mary Ellen Bute, Barbara Rubin, Gunvor Nelson, Chick Strand, and others). Given, women have played a more substantial role in independent cinema than in the film industry, but their contributions are easily marginalized—when considered at all—by most male film historians. Even recent writing by *women* film historians has neglected the work of all but the most obvious artists—Maya Deren, Yvonne Rainer, Shirley Clarke, Chantal Ackerman.

Storm De Hirsch began making films in 1963 (at the age of 51) during the salad days of the New York underground film movement. She was there when all the great man-child film poets were exposing their flickering Orphic epiphanies to growing audiences in Manhattan's mouldy subterranean grottoes. Storm was a poet too. I mean, a real poet, a *poet* poet. She had published two books of poems before she made her first film, *Journey Around A Zero* (revealingly dubbed "a phallic invocation" by Storm). Her next film *Goodbye in the Mirror* was a 35mm feature photographed in Rome. She followed this with a flurry of films that addressed spiritual, mystical and transcendental themes: *Divinations*, *Peyote Queen*, *The Tattooed Man*,

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and the dual-screen *Third Eye Butterfly*. (Storm was connected to other planes of being in ways that were very scary. My friend Gary, who knew Storm much better than I, swore she was authentically psychic). But the films that I liked and admired the most were Super-8mm films that Storm made in the 1970s. These delicate and modest "cine-sonnets" struck me as some of the loveliest lyrical works I had seen up to that time. In a very quiet way, these films revealed the power and spontaneous potential of cinema as an intensely personal medium. While the films of Brakhage, Warhol, Rice, Deren, Jacobs, Snow and Conner schooled and instructed me; the Super-8 films of Storm De Hirsch hooked and *infected* me.

The Donnell Library "Meet the Filmmaker" programs were (and still are, I think) free. A great idea, I thought. Saturday afternoon, free movies, New York City, what could be better? Of course, the consequences of "free" events in New York City could be nasty, even lethal, but what could possibly happen in a setting as respectable as a library? I opened the front doors and entered a combination lobby/lounge teeming with lolling septuagenarians who were waiting to enter the theater. Well, it certainly is nice to see so many people of Storm's generation turning out for her program. I walked into the large and rapidly filling theater and took a seat (in the middle, as always). Scanning the crowd, I easily picked out Storm—her still-blond hair bobbing conspicuously in a sea of gray—already seated near the front. I should say hello, I thought, but now that I'm already seated I'll save my greetings for after the show. The room grew dark and the projector surged to life.

Now, I had endured many unusual and awkward moments during film screenings, but nothing in my experience had prepared me for the carnage I was about to witness. Moments into the first film—a single-screen version of *Third Eye Butterfly*—the crowd began to fidget, the typical "well-this-isn't-quite-what-I-was-expecting-but-o.k.-I'll-try-it-for-a-while" type of rustling fairly common among audiences who haven't seen very many experimental films. In a moment or two the audience will relax, enter willingly into the space of the film and all will be well. Except it wasn't, something was very wrong. The rustling continued, growing louder, gruffer, uglier. Then, a smattering of negative comments. "This is...what is it?" "I'm glad I didn't pay money to see this." "What kind of movie is this? Nothing's *happening*!" "When does the picture start?" And then the deluge, a barrage of insults and epithets that would have made the Surrealists' legendary outbursts at the premiere of *The Seashell and the Clergyman* sound like the mere whining of hungry Cub Scouts. "This is garbage!" "This isn't art, it's complete trash." Catcalls, jeering, whistling apoplectic outrage. I was *in* the movie theater scene from *Gremlins*. All this before ten minutes of the film had elapsed!

And then a voice—shrill, petulant, huge: "HOW DARE YOU CALL YOURSELF AN ARTIST! YOU'RE A FRAUD. A FAKE. THIS IS THE WORST MOVIE I EVER SAW. YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF YOURSELF." A gnarled old woman had walked down the aisle and was unleashing a tempest of abuse and invective inches away from Storm's face. "YOU ARE A SHAM!" she concluded triumphantly. The theater exploded in agreement. I was numb with horror. The room was a hissing mass of surly snakes. I panicked. There was only one thing to do. I stood up, gathered my things, and fled.

I lurched out onto 53rd Street, my chest heaving with despair and shame over the scene I had just witnessed. Why had I done nothing to defend the film and Storm? I had taken on some pretty mean customers in the past and successfully tongue-lashed them into submission, but the thought of rebuking a rabid crowd of senior citizens made me shrink in fear. What could I have done to save the day? Nothing, I know now. It was out of my hands. What had happened in the library was preordained. . . Storm was a sacrificial lamb and she was still in the theater, being broasted, while I stumbled down the street looking for a bar. I was sick and miserable. I wanted to be someone else, a surfer, a dental technician, a proctologist. I wanted to die. . .

Storm once gave me a dollar for good luck. I had driven her to the bus station and when we approached the window to purchase her ticket to New York, she just reached into her change purse and pulled out a wrinkled dollar bill and gave it to me for no reason at all, completely without provocation. When I tried to refuse, she insisted. I took the dollar. Probably bought a pack of cigarettes with it.

My luck since then hasn't been all that good, but I'm still here, one good lung left. And I've been thinking a lot about Storm lately, who's still alive out there somewhere, and who *knew* that I would remember the Donnell Library debacle and the dollar she gave me and would write it all down one day for you to read.

—Albert Kilchesty, 1993

A selection of poetry by Storm De Hirsch is featured in the upcoming edition of Cinematograph, available June 1, 1993.

**THE PRAGUE CONNECTION: Videos by Helena Kolda & Radek Pilar
Artist Helena Kolda in Person**

May 2, 1993

Helena Kolda and Radek Pilar were both born and raised in Czechoslovakia during the same period. However, political events separated them in 1948 when Ms. Kolda left Prague soon after the Communist takeover, never to return to her native country until forty-two years later, for a visit. She has lived in New York, Connecticut, and San Francisco, working as a photographer, graphic designer, photo-collagist, and videomaker.

Radek Pilar became a well-known artist in Prague, working in several media: printmaking, photography, animation, experimental film, video, television, and multi-media presentation. Generations of Czech children grew up watching his imaginative television programs.

Tonight's program consists of eighteen short subjects, tracing each artist's chronological development and including experimental, contemplative, and exuberant works, with an emphasis on personal style and perspective.

The combination of work by these two artists on the same program inevitably raises questions of similarity and difference in and between their works: they share the common ground of their Czech heritage, but were influenced by the extremely diverse cultural environments of the booming post-war America and the isolated, totalitarian Czechoslovakia of 1948–1989.

All work projected as 3/4" video, color, sound, approximately 72 minutes total

Radek Pilar:

Artist's logo/intro montage; 53 seconds

Painting in the Air (1965); 1 minute

Colors (1965); 2 minutes

Earth, Light, Air (1982); 2 minutes

Wood and Stone (1989); 5 minutes

Time of Mourning; 8 minutes

Time of Mirth (1990); 3 minutes

Mirror of Time (excerpt); 3 minutes

Flare Up (1991); 4 minutes

Memory of Time (fragment), 45 seconds

Helena Kolda:

My Eccentric Cupboard (1986); 4 minutes

Noon Song (1987); 4 minutes

The Saints (1987); 4 minutes

Chemo (1989); 6 minutes

Sorry Our Time is Up (1989); 6 minutes

Bacchanalia (1989); 1 minute

Jungle Breath (1990); 3 minutes

In the Piggery (1990); 2 minutes

Time Petrified (1992); 12 minutes

LAST GENERATION FILMMAKERS
Curated and Introduced by Gregg Biermann

May 6, 1993

Whether it is to be in five years or in thirty-five years we must count on the fact that film itself will come to an end. Perhaps it is the loss of stocks, formats, and equipment, or the encroaching technologies of digital electronic media that lead to the perception that film is losing its options as a technology, and therefore as an art form. And perhaps also, we will value the essential and exquisite qualities of the projected film image and the works which take the fullest advantage of those qualities more at the moment of their technological obsolescence.

Commercially motivated film production has already proven that its forms can be transferred to electronic media because the quality of the image is not important.

I would like to suggest that this group of filmmakers is involved in filmmaking because they in their own unique ways are quietly and passionately in love with this medium. Through their dedication they have all achieved dimension in their work that extends beyond the often facile materialist (structural) films that preceded them. This last generation of film artists whose work has been centered in 16mm films at the end of the twentieth century have accomplished unlikely and original styles which are among the most refined in the film medium.

—Gregg Biermann

Circus, Small, by Stephanie Barber; 16mm, b&w, sound, 8 minutes

Stephanie's film, *Circus, Small*, is an intimately expressive work of light, sound, and word. Without any introductory trappings the film suddenly begins, and without any formal development (in the strict sense) the film moves, and suddenly ends (without ending). The simple "rightness" of Stephanie's word choices, her active involvement in looking with the camera at the outside world, and her intuitive sense of editing all lead to utterly approachable, sincere, and unpretentious experience. *Circus, Small* is a film of modest means that achieves an extraordinary sense of fullness, as layers of looking, hearing, re-looking, and recognizing play off of one another. (GB)

Tree Farm Energy, by Francis Schmidt; 16mm, color, sound, 7 minutes

Was the name of my father's company and farm. Five peoples' point of view, four people desperate to get to the same home but not time. How long ago was WWII? Vietnam? Who died there and who died elsewhere? What you want to happen happens or does not matter. There was no need to look through the camera because it can not see. Look through the screen. (FS)

Love Letter to Galileo (1992), by Ariana Gerstein; 16mm, b&w/hand-painted color, silent, 7 minutes

An inquiry into ambiguities of distance. Those things closest to us seem farthest away while that which appears distant sometimes feels very near.

Cinema is art and science. The differentiation between the former and the latter is often unclear. Light is focused and filtered. A silver halide crystal is transformed by light and chemistry into metallic silver. Film is measured and timed. The film receives a pattern from light. During projection, film distills light into its pattern. But the final timing and form of the film takes place in the viewer's mind – and this is beyond both the physical realities of the filmic structure and the control of the filmmaker. (AG)

The Garden of Eden (1988), by Robert Flowers; 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes

Robert calls his films "dark satires ... that aren't funny." His four major works, *The Garden of Eden*, *Whatever Happened to Eve*, *Are There Fairies Dancing on the Lawn*, and *Warheads* form a unique and uncanny body of work. These films invariably use a wide variety of techniques, mixing live action, animation, optical printing,

video, and digital sampling. Robert's films are part diary, part biblical narrative, and yet his passion for the medium rivals that of Ernie Gehr, who has remarked on Robert's mastery over technique. (GB)

A chaotic, but methodical journey through the (un)realities of the mind of an individual desperately reaching for an escape from the industrialized society in which he is engulfed. (RF)

I Raise My Arm (1993), by Elise Hurwitz; 16mm, b&w, silent, 10 minutes

I Raise My Arm looks at the surface of the body as a border between interior and exterior spaces. Nothing is really inscribed upon it. The surface of the film assumes the function that the surface of the body renounces: description/site of meaning. Different ways of working activate the surface including attaching Super-8 frames to 16mm film and bleaching parts of images. Layers shift to reveal something behind, and image comes forward with its origins unknown.. (EH)

Dream Cantata (1992), by Kevin Deal; 16mm, color, sound, 13 minutes

Dream Cantata is a journey through the landscape of my dreaming life. The film explores the collective unconscious as a societal and environmental form of checks and balances. By including imagery from dreams that deal with environmental misuse and apocalyptic situations, *Dream Cantata* is a direct expression of the collective unconscious as an environmental "whistle blower." As well, the film contains historical places which are often visited in my dreams as my unconscious tries to give validity to my life by placing it in time and space. (KD)

Dream of Love, by Matt Chernov; 16mm, sound, 20 minutes

Dream of Love is a dark, obsessive, and ultimately romantic film. Three "figures," adrift in a hostile environment, struggle with themselves for survival. A return to the Atomic Age, and a love story to boot. Peter Lorre dreams a soundtrack. (MC)

You Never Worry (1992), by Gregg Biermann; 16mm, b&w, sound, 20 minutes

You Never Worry is a film which contains fragmented and unrelated subject matter that is issued forth without irony. The content of the film is given equal emphasis with the aesthetic qualities. This strategy sometimes creates situations in which form and content seem to be at odds with one another. I discovered this odd form vs. content anomaly in *Giants of the Sea*, particularly during the race relations section. I sought to push the idea further and in a more concentrated form with *You Never Worry*. My feeling about subject matter is that the subject never lends importance to a work. It is the way in which the subjects are revealed that is the key to the profundity or banality of the content. This is related to Kant's term 'disinterest' – a condition devoid of purposive interests (i.e., ones with use). For example, if my artistic judgment is clouded by personal need then I cannot be sure my works will be of value to someone with differing concerns.

This argument becomes difficult to swallow when a work seems to speak to an urgent, real need. It was just these incongruities that I began to be interested in when I made *You Never Worry*. (GB)

DO IT FOR MOM! Videos & Films by Elizabeth Sher
Artist Elizabeth Sher in person

May 9, 1993

The Training (1979); 16mm, color, sound, 9 minutes

Juggling (1981); 16mm, color, sound, 14 minutes

Too Young to Date (1980); 16mm, color, sound, 4 minutes

Check Up (1985); 3/4" video, color, sound, 6 minutes

Approaching the 14th Moon (1993, premiere); 3/4" video, color, sound, 52 minutes

A woman is considered to have reached her menopause when she has missed her monthly period for one full year (13 moons). *Approaching the 14th Moon* looks at the taboos, health issues, emotional, physical and psychological implications inherent in the process [of menopause]. Using an extensive series of interviews with women from across the cultural landscape, medical doctors and practitioners of non-traditional medicine, the tape explores the sources and diversity of the images and myths surrounding menopause both as a life passage and a health dilemma. Featured on the tape is Dr. Sadja Greenwood, author of *Menopause Naturally*. Issues of menopausal symptoms are broadened to discuss what it means to be a woman in the "second half of life" (Dr. Greenwood), in a society (and medical environment) which has given this sector of the population little or no specific consideration.

I am very lucky. I am part of the population age-group which moves through life like the elephant in Saint Exupery's *Le Petit Prince* moved through the boa constrictor, defining the "important issues of the day" as we go. When it was time for me to mate, the sexual revolution allowed for honest interaction, experimentation and choice. When I was pregnant with my two children, parents were offered an expanded range of natural and humane options for the course of pregnancy and delivery. Now that I am perimenopausal (meaning I have symptoms of menopause, but still have my monthly period) I find, as I begin my research, that my peers also want to discuss, demystify, share, study, expose and profit from this important life passage.

Recently a deluge of media attention has been focused on this issue. Almost as quickly it has disappeared. The decisions are not simple. There is no one answer. The videotape looks at ways to process the many different points of view, responses to symptoms and treatments, and attitude changes, so that each woman can make informed choices for herself. The faces and voices of the women will expose the breadth and depth of the experience which is indeed profound.

The tape was edited on the D-2 (digital 2) format which provided the opportunity to present the information in a more intimate and sharing visual context. This electronic technology offers effects which give the tape a feeling of a conversation between the more than 40 women I have interviewed.

My art has always interfaced with my personal process. For example, my first film, *The Training*, was made in response to a book which advocated using the behavior modification approach to toilet training. Luckily for my son, I decided to forget about his training and make a film satirizing the process instead. I have made films about the perils of prepubescent sexuality, *Too Young to Date*; the difficulties of trying to balance work and parenting, *Juggling*; and an examination of the fear of aging, *Check Up*. Each of these films processed a part of my own life experience. Works in the documentary area include videotaped and edited interviews with more than two dozen artists from a wide range of ages, cultures and media. These works also expose my own process as I choose artists whose work and words exploit my own creative philosophy as well as their own.

—Elizabeth Sher

Berkeley-based artist Elizabeth Sher moved from painting and printmaking to film and video in 1979. Her films and videos range in subject and tone from "pure" documentary to humorous fantasy to satire to abstract works. They have won numerous awards at film and video festivals in the U.S. and in Europe. She conceived and produced the popular *I.V. Magazine* series – packages of short video pieces assembled in the "TV magazine" format – beginning in 1983. She currently teaches at the California College of Arts and Crafts.

PERSISTENCE OF VISIONS: Animation from Northern California
Curated and Introduced by E.S. Theise

May 13, 1993

Northern California is home to world class commercial animation studios, computer graphics labs, and special effects houses. Their commercials, music videos, and blockbuster film sequences are known throughout the world. It's harder to see, but there is also a thriving independent animation scene here. Some makers work for studios and pursue their own visions in their "spare" time. Some support themselves by teaching or other means, and produce animations as their personal labor of love. Others are students or recent graduates, still learning their craft, and unclear about the place of animation in their future. This program of films from the past eight years includes a sampling of work in many techniques and formats, from computer generated to cameraless, pencil and paper to post-Bros. Quay miniatures.

Flashpoint (1986) by Seth Olitzky; 16mm, color, sound, 5 minutes

Eights (1992) by Seth Olitzky; 16mm, color, sound, 6 minutes

Seth Olitzky, a graduate of the UCLA Animation Workshop, has been making computer generated, abstract films for nearly a decade. His work keeps pace with high-end computer technology for the home (an early film was made on a PCjr), and his uses of bright colors, symmetric movement, and his brother's soundscapes are trademarks. His work has been distributed nationally on cable networks, and he's ruminating over the possibility of including hand drawn images in his next film.

The Subtle Flight of Birds (1991) by Steven Dye; 16mm, b&w, silent, 4 minutes

"Through the eye of a bird/then through a world of landscapes/populated with junk puppets, conflict,/then the 'subtle flight' of the soul from the body/of a bird, resolution." (SD)

RTC Vocabulary Reel (1993) by E. S. Theise; 16mm, color, silent, 18fps, 4 minutes

RTC is a dancepiece-in-progress by choreographer Julie McDonald. Multiple film projections play the role of active, antagonistic backdrops; thus the sputtering and unpredictable nature of this footage. Punctuated by live action footage of road reflectors, this reel explores the possibilities of cameraless filmmaking and has accompanied *RTC* at New Performance Gallery and other dance spaces. *RTC* is tentatively scheduled to be performed next in late June/early July as part of a residency and workshop series at Sight and Insight in Mill Valley.

Sometimes (1987) by Kim Tempest; 16mm, color, sound, 4 minutes

Lover and producer of both cartoons and high art, educator at De Anza College and the California College of Arts and Crafts, multimedia animatrix, and self-described maker of girl films, Kim Tempest ... is in Florida today. *Sometimes* gently, fluidly acts out a poem of love and vulnerability, with simple — and occasionally symphonic — flourishes.

Calculated Movements (1985) by Larry Cuba; 16mm, b&w, sound, 6 minutes

Larry Cuba's earlier films — *3/78* and *Two Space*, set to shakuhachi and gamelan — were spare, minimal, black and white films featuring dots moving in highly orchestrated, mirrored patterns. I'd never seen *Calculated Movements* before today, although I've seen stills for years. Stills are unjust to this film, for it comes into being entirely through its speed and breathtaking asymmetry. Even though its vocabulary is limited — white solids seen from high perspective, drop shadows, and black or staffed backgrounds — its visual impact goes far beyond the hyper-realistic, ray-traced, megacolor computer graphics so predominant today.

It's Time To ... (1988, Bay Area premiere) by Drew Klausner; 16mm, color, sound, 6 min.

I'm normally not a fan of rotoscoping (a technique that allows for tracing and manipulating live action footage), but Drew Klausner's tribute to his son uses imaginative color and line work, and his wiping clock hand is an interesting formal device for marking the passage of time.

San Francisco Cinematheque

Wirework 1991-1992 (1992) by Michael Rudnick; 16mm, color, silent, 5 minutes

Okay, so *Wirework* is not an animated film, but it deals with the fundamental concerns of animation so clearly and directly that it had to include it as part of this program. Don't miss a chance to see Rudnick's rotating wire sculptures in person if you can!

The Collector (1993, premiere) by Lana Bernberg; 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes

"It's about someone who spends his life collecting things, filling that space with accumulation when what he truly seeks cannot be collected: a vision." (LB)

Preludes in Magical Time (1987) by Sara Petty; 16mm, color, sound, 5 minutes

It begins like many constructivist-influenced films. But when the curtains blow across the frame, cutting those unbelievably beautiful, hard-edged curves, it's clear that this is a Sara Petty film (originally titled *Picture Window*). Set to a selection from Bach's Suites for Unaccompanied Cello, the interaction between two and three dimensional spaces, the playful treatment of the history of abstraction (isn't that a Malevich constructing and deconstructing outside the window?), and the intricate color, shading, and texture work, make *Preludes* a masterwork, unfortunately neglected.

Steve Reich for Two Projectors (1990) by Jim Flannery; 16mm, color, silent, indeterminate duration

"The duration of the piece is neither a punishment nor a dare for the audience; because it is dependent upon the projector's independent behavior, it is 'away from [my] intention.' My involvement ends with the design of the process; ultimately, however, the viewer experiences the process, not my design. I am both in control of the process and helpless before it: 'By running this material through this process I completely control all that results, but also I accept all that results without changes.' (Steve Reich, *Music as a Gradual Process*)" (JF)

Long time devotee of difficult films and musics, S.F. State alumnus Jim Flannery will be leaving the Bay Area in the fall to pursue graduate film studies in the midwest.

Notes and program by E.S. Theise

SPRING OPEN SCREEN

May 14, 1993

El Sabor Rojo by Anne-Marie Schleiner; 1/2" video, 6 minutes

The Allure of the Threshold by Bret Lama, 16mm, 11 minutes

Happy Loving Couples by Doug Wolens, 3/4" video, 4:30 minutes

Love is Something if You Give it Away by Alison Earl, 16mm, 4 minutes

TV Fan/Sierra by Tim Wilkins, Super 8, 5 minutes

A Little Ditty by N. Cousin, 1/2" video, 2:40 minutes

Untitled by Ken Paul Rosenthal, Super 8, 2:40 minutes

January '91 by Helga Weiss, 1/2" video, 20 minutes

Untitled by Johnny Rock, 1/2" video, 15 minutes

Boy Frankenstein by Susana Donovan, 1/2" video, 15 minutes

Potentia by Alex and Martha Nikoloff, 1/2" video, 8:30 minutes

**A LIFE IS NOT FILM: The ALMOST Complete Works of Dean Snider
Dean Snider in Person**

May 15, 1993

July 4, 1992 marked the tenth anniversary of San Francisco's Unique No Nothing Cinema, which started in a former Lamborghini garage on Berry Street and became the community's most uninhibited and accessible place to screen personal films. At the center of this remarkable grass-roots activity remains Dean Snider, a steam-engine of activity and determination whose devotion to filmmaking has inspired young and old in the Bay Area and throughout the United States. Dean plans to leave the Bay Area due to Parkinson's Disease, and the Cinematheque with Film Arts Foundation invites friends to celebrate Dean's 25 - year contribution to the City's culture by sharing in an evening of his films. Included will be 45 minutes of unseen 35mm work.

"THE SPACE BETWEEN: Market Spaces, Market Places"

May 20, 1993

San Francisco's Art Gallery and Shopping District will be taken over for one night with this *al fresco* program of independent films. From mass transit and bike messengers to urban neighbors and earthquakes, many different portraits are drawn of this place we call home.

Postmodern Daydream, by Larry Kless

Echo Anthem, by Mark Street

Across the Street, by Lynn Kirby

Street Scenes, by Richard Schatzman

Acceleration, by Scott Stark

Celebrities, by Al Hernandez

A Bad Day Cycling Is Better Than a Good Day at Work, by Bill Daniel

City City Day Nite, by Alfonso Alvarez

If You Lived Here You'd Be Home By Now, by Marina MacDougall

Panorama, by Michael Rudnick

**ZERO DEGREES LATITUDE by Steve Fagin
Videomaker Steve Fagin in person**

May 23, 1993

Zero Degrees Latitude (1993); 3/4" video, color, sound, 60 minutes

San Diego-based video artist Steve Fagin's latest work, *Zero Degrees Latitude*, is a timely, challenging, and characteristically unorthodox look at the so-called "new conquest" of Latin America by U.S. interests of various orders. The piece focuses specifically on religious evangelization of the indigenous peoples of Ecuador in both the Andes highlands and the Amazon basin, and argues that "modernization" of this kind (involving a specific North American belief system) abets the disintegration of the tribal systems that had bonded the indigenous peoples into communities. A surreal grid of remarkable *verité* footage and stylized studio shots are linked by the voiceover of an aging gringo missionary to produce a surreal grid that creates seemingly implausible liaisons that, unfortunately, are all too real.

San Francisco Cinematheque

A professor in the Visual Arts department at the University of California, San Diego, Steve Fagin has exhibited his videos worldwide. His previous works, *The Machine that Killed Bad People* (1990), *The Amazing Voyage of Gustave Flaubert and Raymond Roussel* (1986) and *Virtual Play: the doubledirectmonkeywrenchinBlack'smachinery* (1984), have all been exhibited by the Cinematheque. His work has been reviewed consistently in *Afterimage*, *October*, and the *Village Voice*.

COLUMBUS ON TRIAL by Lourdes Portillo Artist Lourdes Portillo in person

May 27, 1993

Columbus on Trial (1993); 3/4" video, color, sound, 18 minutes

Columbus on Trial presents a fanciful version of a courtroom trial as it might transpire in contemporary times, were Christopher Columbus to return from his grave to take the stand. The setting is an imaginary courtroom that serves as a repository of memories and images recounting the deromanticized exploits of the famous explorer on the island of Hispaniola.

As the videotape begins, Christopher Columbus is surrounded by curious journalists eager to ask questions that have been stored up for hundreds of years. His defense attorney, Bob Oso, fends off the media throngs to deliver his client to the judge, Justicia Diaz. Both Oso and Diaz are chicanos, proud of their Hispanic heritage. The prosecutor, Storm Cloud, is a very different kind of chicano, identified with his people's Indian roots. The courtroom, then, becomes an arena of expression for the polemics on both sides of the great Columbus debates of 1992, the year *The New Yorker* has sardonically christened "a circus of near-global celebration."

As the trial comes to an end, all the evidence points to the guilt of Columbus. X, a slave prophet, foretells a conspiracy that will set Columbus free once again. Sure enough, the Hispanic judge finds that there is insufficient evidence to convict the great man. Once again, defendant Columbus is acquitted on account of popular belief in his discovery of something called America. The story does not end there, just as our modern myths have not ended in courts of law or history books. Victoriously exiting the courtroom, Columbus is gunned down in cold blood, Jack Ruby-style, by a chicana teenager. In the ambulance speeding away, the ghosts of 500 years envelop him in the truths and consequences of his actions.

Sobriety has no place in *Columbus on Trial*. In its courtroom, satire and parody rule. Christopher Columbus dances the mambo, Storm Cloud cries crocodile tears, and Bob Oso compares his client to Gerard Depardieu. The lyrics and tunes of popular songs waft in and out of the proceedings. Invented costumes and stylized sets give the comedy an indeterminate period setting, while the use of modern video techniques place the characters in a constantly shifting environment of layered images (postcards, archival footage, and postage stamps) that obliquely comment on the proceedings.

Columbus on Trial is an unusually dynamic piece, employing a complex visual construction to match its verbal humor and physical comedy. Images are edited, collage-like, interrupting each other, as a constant run of puns and gags interrupts all pontificating. At last, people's desire to laugh at the carnivalesque horrors of history has been granted full rein.

—from notes supplied by the artist

Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo (1986), co-made with Susana Muñoz; 16mm, color, sound, 64 minutes
In April 1977, fourteen mothers gathered spontaneously in Buenos Aires' Plaza de Mayo (in front of the Presidential Palace) to protest the disappearance of their children at the hands of Argentina's military junta. Unarmed and unprotected, facing the vicious military police in a country where all civil liberties had been suspended, the women felt they had nothing left to lose. Throughout the late 1970s their numbers grew to thousands, their organization solidified until *Las Madres*, as they came to be called, became a political force that would eventually help overthrow the military dictatorship.

Interviews with the mothers (and some fathers) are interspersed with powerful scenes from recent Argentinean history. There are interviews with representatives of the junta themselves, who testify and even glory in the kidnappings of 30,000 people by claiming that these young men and women were "part of an international marxist conspiracy." According to their parents, most of these people were not revolutionaries, simply young idealists who opposed the poverty and injustice plaguing Argentinean society....

When the mothers first decided "to go out into the streets" they did not know what would happen; they simply felt they could no longer grieve alone. In finding other women who had lost children, they not only found comfort, they also found a way of making the cruelty of the junta visible....

An early organizer of *Las Madres* was in fact kidnapped, along with a nun who was helping the cause. The two were never seen again. Although branded by the junta as "madwomen," harassed and attacked, rejected by the Catholic Church hierarchy who advised them to pretend their children had died of natural causes, the mothers persisted. Eventually, they came to the attention of worldwide religious and amnesty groups who have raised money and support for their cause. Due to mass discontent, and the military debacle in the Falklands, the dictatorship was finally overthrown, and the practice of kidnapping stopped. Yet according to the film, most of those responsible for the atrocities have not been brought to justice.

The new government also advised the mothers to "forget." They, however, continue to press for justice and the return of their children, although gruesome footage suggests that very few may still be alive. In one interview, a defector from the military police describes the method of making kidnap victims "disappear." Some were clubbed over the head and thrown alive from helicopters; others were chopped in small pieces and shoved into an oven in a remote farmhouse. The decaying corpses of others are shown actually being gathered in plastic bags. There are scenes in this film that can be matched only by films of the Nazi concentration camps. In fact, the atrocities committed by the junta suggest that lessons in cruelty may have been learned from the Nazis who fled to Argentina after World War II.

Still, the mothers don't give up hope....

Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo is dedicated to "struggling mothers everywhere." Stills at the film's conclusion show mothers of "disappeared" children in Chile, Guatemala, Lebanon, and Peru. They too hold photographs against their hearts in mute protest against the dictatorships of the world. Through the eloquent testimony of these loving mothers, Portillo and Muñoz have created an unforgettable image of social injustice.

—Susan Jhirad, *Cineaste*, Vol.15, No. 1, 1986

San Francisco resident Lourdes Portillo was born in Mexico, in the state of Chihuahua, and emigrated with her family to Los Angeles when she was thirteen years old. In 1976 she joined a NABET apprenticeship program and worked with the Bay Area film group, *Cinemanifest*, on the production of their feature *Over, Under, Sideways, Down*. She studied film at the San Francisco Art Institute with James Broughton, George Kuchar, and Gunvor Nelson. Since then her films have been exhibited at festivals worldwide and have received multiple awards and honors. *Las Madres ...* received an Academy Award nomination in 1986 for Best Documentary. *Columbus on Trial* was included in the Whitney Museum of American Art's 1993 Biennial exhibition, and has also been presented at the Sundance Film Festival, and the London Film Festival.

Lourdes Portillo Film/Videography

Columbus on Trial (1992); 18 minutes

Mirrors of the Heart (1992); 60 minutes

The Aztec Myth of Creation (1991); in production

Vida (1990)

La Ofrenda: The Days of the Dead (1990); 58 minutes, made with Susana Muñoz

Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo (1986); 64 minutes, made with Susana Muñoz

Chola (1982); screenplay commissioned by American Playhouse

Despues del Terremoto (1979); 30 minutes

TREASURES OF SHADOW AND LIGHT:
Narrative Avant-Garde in the '20s

May 30, 1993

Avant-garde cinema blossomed in Europe during the ten years between 1920 and 1930, showing to a skeptical world that film was indeed a serious art form. This growing movement attracted painters and poets who used the materials of film to expand upon the language of conventional cinema, focusing more on the purely visual elements unique to the cinema. While many film artists abandoned plot, narration, and dramatic action altogether, others chose to play with these elements freely, each employing disparate approaches to the ordering of time and space. The unfolding of events in space – how an element of time can be diffused, lengthened, compressed, or obliterated – is a phenomenon that these films investigate, each in their own different manner.

Ghosts Before Breakfast (1928), by Hans Richter; with Paul Hindemith and Darius Milhaud; 16mm, b&w, silent, 9 minutes

Nothing is as it seems in this fast paced Dada comedy, where heads spin, people disappear behind lamp posts, men stalk the camera, and everyday objects revolt against their usual roles. With a complete absence of logical, causal relationships, the viewer is free to enjoy these humorous and uncompromisingly uninhibited frolickings without interference from a conventional narrative setting.

Ménilmontant (1925), by Dimitri Kirsanov; 16mm, b&w, silent, 36 minutes

An unforgettable depiction of one woman's trials and tribulations. A young woman, who early in the film witnesses the brutal axe murder of her parents, finds her way into the city where she is ultimately seduced by a man who ends up leaving her. Kirsanov's sensitive handling of her loneliness and rejection is a triumph of the lyric imagination.

The brilliant display of atmosphere, the loneliness of narrow streets, churning currents under city bridges—all poignantly render her emotional turmoil. The rain and cold felt through these images evoke a powerful sense of isolation within the confines of the setting, where dreamlike episodes often seem more crisp and intense than reality.

Blending conventional narration with elements deriving from Soviet montage, Kirsanov creates a truly visionary film with a picturesque setting and moving dramatic performances.

The Seashell and the Clergyman (1928), by Germaine Dulac, scenario by Antonin Artaud; 16mm, b&w, silent, 39 minutes

The Seashell and the Clergyman is considered one of the first surrealist films. A visualization of Antonin Artaud's scenario, Dulac's film plumbs the depths of the subconscious and repressed sexuality in a sophisticated narrative combining elements of tradition with brilliantly inventive camerawork. Her vision brings inanimate objects to the forefront – a seashell, a glass ball – that are transformed by Dulac into trans-symbolic representative of emotional and psychological states.

Surviving a nasty outburst by Artaud and his surrealists friends, the film caused a riot in the theater at its premiere in 1928. It has been suggested that Artaud actually had wished for more involvement in the film's making, which caused him to be so bitter towards Dulac's realization of his scenario.

Although she is still linked with the surrealists, Germaine Dulac never viewed herself as a member of that group. She, in fact, was more interested in promoting film as a "pure" art form, with its own distinct and unique language, rather than having it exist as a handmaiden to other interests and agendas.

The Fall of the House of Usher (1928), directed by Jean Epstein, assistant director: Luis Buñuel; 16mm, b&w, silent, 51 minutes

In an interview Jean Epstein was asked, "Are realist films the essence of cinema for you?" In an account of his replies, Epstein stated, "I didn't answer him at all, for I confess not to know what realism is in matters of art. It seems to me that if an art is not symbolic, it is not an art...."

Jean Epstein's last film before he broke with the avant-garde movement is based on the tales of Edgar Allan Poe. The mysterious house of Usher is visited by a friend who finds Roderick following the family tradition of painting his wife's portrait with such passion that he draws the life from her to put it into his picture. Refusing to accept her death, he declines to have her coffin nailed shut. Everything in this film is subordinated to the creation of atmosphere. Misty, fog-shrouded scenes, slow motion filming, low angles, lighting, and camera tricks lend themselves to eerie supernatural effects. Epstein was a cinema theoretician and the maker of the important Impressionist film *Couer Fidèle* (1923). After this film he launched a series of lyric documentaries among the fishermen of Brittany, and found a new use for slow-motion in drawing emotional performances from nonactors. (MOMA, Circulating Film Library Catalogue)

Epstein lyrically handles the motion of time in this film. Narration is gracefully intermingled with slow moving figures, surroundings fading in and out of light sources, and the interplay of stills and titles that, for Epstein, provide, "a rest for the eye, punctuation for the mind."

Notes by Elizabeth Dee

STAN BRAKHAGE: 3 NEW WORKS

June 3, 1993

This evening's program is the third presented this season by the Cinematheque to feature recent films by Stan Brakhage. Earlier programs included the complete *Visions in Meditation* and a number of his exquisite hand-painted films, including *Delicacies of Molten Horror Synapse*.

Blossom—Gift/Favor (1993); 16mm, color, silent, 30 seconds

This short hand-painted film will be shown twice. First at 18fps and then, following *Boulder Blues and Pearls and ...*, at 24 fps.

Boulder Blues and Pearls and... (1992); 16mm, color, sound, 22 minutes, music by Rick Corrigan.

Peripheral envisionment of daily life as the mind has it—i.e., a terrifying ecstasy of (hand-painted) synapting nerve ends back-firing from thought's grip of life. (S.B.)

A Child's Garden and the Serious Sea (1991); 16mm, color, silent, 80 minutes

In poet Ronald Johnson's great epic *Ark*, in the first book *Foundations*, the poem "Beam 29" has this passage: "The seed is disseminated at the gated mosaic a hundred feet/ below, above/ long windrows of motion/ connecting dilated arches undergoing transamplification:/ 'seen in water so clear as christiall'/ (prairie tremblante)" which breaks into musical notation that, "presto," becomes a design of spatial tilts: This is where the film began; and I carried a xerox of the still unpublished ARC 50 through 66 all that trip with Marilyn and Anton around Vancouver Island. As I wrote him, "the pun 'out on a limn' kept ringing through my mind as I caught the hairs of side-light off ephemera of objects tangent to Marilyn's childhood: She grew up in Victoria: and there I was in her childhood backyard...": and then there was *The Sea*—not as counter-balance but as hidden generator of it all, of *The World* to be discovered by the/any child ... as poet Charles Olson has it: "Vast earth rejoices,/ deep-swirling Okeanos steers all things through all things,/ everything issues from the one, the soul is led from drunkenness/ to dryness, the sleeper lights up from the dead,/ the man awake lights up from the sleeping." (*Maximus*, from "Dogtown—I")

—Stan Brakhage, verbatim from Canyon Cinema Catalog #7

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Stan Brakhage's subject has frequently been himself but *A Child's Garden and the Serious Sea...* is biography once removed. The film was shot on Vancouver Island, where Brakhage's second wife, Marilyn, grew up....

At 80 minutes, *A Child's Garden* is Brakhage's longest film since *Tortured Dust*, his last portrait of his first family, and he uses a lifetime of polished techniques—prisms, diffusion lenses, sudden camera movements, percussive shifts in exposure, oversaturated colors, tricks of scale—to suggest Marilyn's world as an enchanted island in the midst of some pellucid sea. Despite the typically jagged rhythms and the occasional shock-cut (from reflected full moon to shimmering clear water), the pace is leisurely and the structure fluid: a sun-dappled lawn, with a crawling baby glimpsed at the top of the frame, dissolves into a correspondingly dappled ocean.

Whales and starfish frisk around this green haven. The imagery in the first half of *A Child's Garden* is almost completely natural; the movie's title invites elemental metaphors. Behold the rainbow forest, the bower of night, the sky of fiery turquoise, the mountains of mist, the crystal sea. (Is that a ruby or a bicycle reflector?) Gradually, some sort of amusement park begins to insinuate itself into the montage of El Greco skies and Turner seas. Flashes of murals, fountains, people playing miniature golf suggest a fairy-tale village or Oz-like dream....

—J. Hoberman, *The Village Voice*, Feb. 9, 1993

We are, all of us, obsessed with what we once had but no longer possess. For some, the irretrievable dwells in material forms or physical embodiments—the simple loss of a favorite photograph or book, or the graver loss of one's health or the departure of a loved one. For others, the objects of obsession are more abstract, their loss perhaps more harrowing because they ravage and corrode the intellect—the loss of reason, the loss of innocence, the loss of childhood's wonder and abandon.

Stan Brakhage has spent a substantial portion of his artistic career in relentless pursuit of the latter. More than any other American filmmaker, Brakhage has—for four decades—passionately plumbed the depths of his own psyche in an attempt to re-discover the primal innocence of vision, to film the world the way a child's unschooled eye sees it. In his many writings and films—from the often-quoted and frequently parodied “How many colors are there in a field of grass to the crawling baby unaware of the word 'green'?” in *Metaphors On Vision*, to films like *Scenes from Under Childhood*, *Agnes Dei Kinder Synapse*, *Sexual Meditation: Open Field*, and many others—Brakhage has pursued with grail-quest intensity an elevated state of perpetual wonderment and amazement akin to that which a child's mind/eye would see.

While his attempts to do so have sometimes fallen short, his recent long film *A Child's Garden and the Serious Sea* certainly does not. The film exudes beauty, freshness and joy. Images wash over the viewer in sensuous waves—limpid, inviting, ultimately intoxicating. This co-mingling of earth and sea, the twin lost worlds of Eden and Atlantis, “limns” the edges of consciousness with organic ecstasy. Periodic flashes of sun and sky snap the mind to attention like the tang of the salt sea in one's nostrils only to disappear again immediately beneath the swelling tide.

A Child's Garden slowly leads the viewer through the childhood world of Brakhage's second wife, Marilyn. While viewing the film I almost thought I could hear the filmmaker saying, “My God! What an exquisite and enchanted place to have been a child. What must it have been like for her to grow up within arm's reach of the sea and its nacreous treasures: to splash through tide pools inhabited by quivering starfish, to swim with the whales, to absorb the sea's tranquillity and its wrath, to drink aquamarine with one's eyes?” As Hoberman notes above, this film is unique among Brakhage's work in its attempt to visualize the germinating consciousness of an Other, and not that of the maker himself. In previous films where Brakhage has turned his camera onto another's world, he succeeds more often in merely imposing his will on that world than in capturing the unique essence of it. For example, in *The Loom* (1986)—a meditation on the backyard menagerie kept by his first wife, Jane—Brakhage's will to possess almost turns the film into an (unintentional) portrait of the wild soul's entrapment by the penitentiary of marriage. (That's an admittedly biased reading based retrospectively on the knowledge that Stan and Jane's marriage of many years was about to dissolve.) In contrast, *The Child's Garden* succeeds quite beautifully in its empathetic embrace of Marilyn's

backyard wonderland. Brakhage's immersion in Marilyn's world is whole, complete, utter. The film's great beauty is exactly this—it is rooted in the maker's sublime and profound love for another human being. It's almost as though Brakhage is insisting that the act of seeing with one's own eyes is no longer enough; to approach the world with compassion and love, we must first start seeing through the eyes of others as well.

—Albert Kilchesty

**LANDSCAPE OF THE MIND: The Films of Chris Welsby
Chris Welsby in Person**

June 6, 1993

The question “Is it relevant to be producing landscape art in the latter half of the twentieth century?” is a question which, when engaged in making or exhibiting my work is always uppermost in my thoughts.

The work is, not surprisingly, classified under the general art historical term “Landscape Art” and undeniably exhibits certain links with the history of that genre. However, there is a fundamental difference in attitude which underlies my approach to the subject matter and sets my work apart from most of its historical counterparts. This attitude is inscribed both in the form and content of every film. Inevitably, the content is so heavily charged with both art historical references and popular connotations that the intended meaning may well be overlooked. Certain preconceived notions about landscape must be laid aside.

My primary concern is with the area of epistemology which deals with the definition of, and relationship between 'mind' and 'nature'. Briefly, 'mind' can be defined as ideas/concepts/paradigms and 'nature' as constituting all things and attributes which do not fall within this description of 'mind'. Neither of these categories is mutually exclusive but must be regarded as two relational sets, whose permutation at a particular moment in time may constitute a holistic model of the world. To think otherwise would come close to the error inherent in Cartesian dualism. It is the constantly shifting interface between these dual concepts which lies at the core of my attitude towards landscape in art.

Each of my films is a separate attempt to re-define the interface between 'mind' and 'nature.' Although specified or at least implied in any one piece of work, this delineation is constantly changed and adapted both as a definition, at a material, and as a working model at a conceptual level, to each unique situation or location. Without this essentially cybernetic view of the relationship between 'mind' and 'nature', a view in which the relation between the two operates as a homeostatic loop, 'nature' becomes nothing more than potential raw material at the disposal of 'mind' acting upon it. This raw material is most visibly manifest in that subdivision of 'nature' termed 'landscape.' The wilder and more remote this landscape is, the further it is removed from, and the less it exhibits those signs which mark the activities of 'mind.' Technology is both a subdivision of 'nature' and an extension of 'mind.' Viewed within these terms of reference the camera, as a product of technology, is not a window into the world but a potential interface between 'mind' and 'nature': 'nature' masquerading as 'mind', and 'mind' manifest in 'nature.'

Advanced technology is simultaneously the most useful and the most dangerous facet of our exogenous evolution. Without a full understanding of its significance and unless we develop a coherent epistemology which includes technology in our relation to the world, our chances of survival, together with the possibility of a tolerable life are non-existent.

Left to run its own course, evolution will remain a primarily pragmatic operation and we will be left with no option but to read the instruction manual having first played with the technological toy. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the product is not guaranteed against accidental (or intentional) damages inflicted upon the user or any third party, irrespective of the circumstances under which this damage may occur.

—Chris Welsby, *Landscape Art in the Twentieth Century?*, 1980

Windmill II (1973); 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes

The camera films a park landscape through the mirrored blades of a small windmill. The film was shot in three continuous 100 ft. takes. The camera angle remained the same throughout. Variations in wind speed

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cause a constantly shifting relationship between the blades of the windmill and the reflection of the camera with the landscape behind it.

Stream Line (1976); 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes

This film was made on Mount Kinderscout in Derbyshire. It was a continuous real time tracking shot of a stream bed. The length of the track was ten yards. The camera was suspended in a motorized carriage running on steel cables three feet above water surface. The sound of the water was recorded synchronously from the moving carriage.

Sky Light (1988); 16mm, color, sound, 26 minutes

This film is a "short" creation myth which challenges the notion of its own form, and ends in beautiful and violent abstraction in which only nature and technology remain. The film is in three sections, each leading further towards the final abstraction and each resembling a search for meaning and order amidst a plethora of electronic, chemical and mechanistic information. Space in this film is both highly compressed and volatile....

The idea for the film goes back to a summer day 48 hours after the Chernobyl disaster. I took our one-year-old daughter to Kew Gardens. It was overcast, and a light rain was falling. The clouds were punctuated by 747's on course for Heathrow. Exotic shrubs and plants drank up the moisture falling from the sky...

Sea Pictures (1992); 16mm, color, sound, 36 minutes

Sea Pictures is a film about hope and despair. Hope that the planet will not be engulfed in a tide of indifference, greed and violence. Hope, like that of any parent, that my child will have the chance to live her life with some expectation of good health and the opportunity for happiness. Despair that I should have to tell my eight-year-old that she can't go to the beach today because the ocean is poisonous and the sunlight will give her cancer.

In the film a small child is building a sandcastle on a deserted beach. In the background the glass and steel towers of a city dominate the horizon. A succession of landscape and cityscape images weave dream-like patterns on the screen. The reverie is broken by the staccato bombardment of T.V. images. The child builds on, absorbed by the process of creativity. The dream-like images return, light and water combine in tiny waves ... the tide advances, alternately obscuring and revealing a childhood tide pool.

Sea Pictures is firstly about my experience as a newcomer to the Pacific Northwest. It is also about the way in which the political and economical forces (though not the hardships) at work in the region can stand in for the environmental situation on a global scale.

The film puts it more simply:

- 1) The rainforest of the second section of the film is a major natural resource.
- 2) The modern highrise city of the third section is paid for by the trees or the mines or whatever else is required to oil the wheels of economic growth.
- 3) Fire as represented in part five is used by the logging industry, is used to make the glass and steel in part three and is used in conflict, riots and warfare.
- 4) The tide pools of parts one and seven are included to represent a beautiful but very fragile ecosystem which is under constant threat from unsound logging practices, oil spills and toxic waste from factories and cities. (The future is being decided here. They live—perhaps we live).
- 5) The television in part six is intended to represent both a driving force for and a commentary on the process of economical development and consumption in which greed, violence and environmental destruction are major players.
- 6) The little girl on the beach is my daughter, Sarah. She represents my parental hopes and fears for the future. She is building a sandcastle and wondering at and about her surroundings (and the film in which she is a participant). Her creativity is crucial, her childhood is vital, her realization as the tide threatens her efforts ... is her own. I am making a film and she is making a sandcastle ...

(All notes by the filmmaker)

**AS SHE LIKES IT:
Short Films by Austrian Women**

June 10, 1993

The Cinematheque is pleased to present Part I of a two-part survey of recent experimental films made by Austrian women. The selection of films in this touring program were made by Viennese curator Claudia Preschl. The program is distributed by Sixpack Film, Vienna, and received its premiere in July 1992 at the London Filmmakers Coop. Program II will be screened at the Pacific Film Archive, 2625 Durant Avenue, Berkeley at 7:30 PM on Thursday, June 17.

Livingroom (1991), by Sabine Hiebler & Gerhard Ertl; 16mm, sound, 5 minutes

Livingroom is a film defining reality, concepts of reality and levels of reality and how they are networked with one another. The subjective perception and interpretation of each individual level of reality produces a dense individual reality network—everyone lives in their own world. **The polarity of male and female reality perception, for example**

—Different cinematic language and camera work

—Gender specific portrayal on screen

The finish of various materials we use (solarization, negative film, grain, and various types of color processing) in terms of film correspond to the various facets=realities/distortions of reality. We assemble this material using short cuts, like a mosaic, into a new reality. —Fusion of Reality

Semiotic Ghosts (1991), by Lisl Ponger; 16mm, color, sound, 18 minutes

Lisl Ponger has made ten films in the last ten years. Each one is a game with time, symbols and their significance, and the change of light and darkness. *Semiotic Ghosts* is her first sound film, a succession of associative, mostly static pictures showing motives such as a passing pleasure boat hung with strings of lights, an artiste throwing knives, fish circling in spirals and, repeatedly, people at work. The link between the pictures develops from geometric forms such as a square, a circle or a triangle. The accompanying music is provided by an Egyptian string orchestra composed entirely of blind girls. However, it is not music as it is understood in the usual sense; only the tuning of the instruments is heard and only towards the end do a few bars of Mozart become recognizable. —Bernhard Praschl

Kugelkopf (1985), by Mara Mattuschka; 16mm, sound, 6 minutes

Parasympathica (1986), by Mara Mattuschka; 16mm, 5 minutes

Les Miserables (1987), by Mara Mattuschka; 16mm, 2 minutes

Es hat mich sehr gefreut (I have been very pleased) (1987), by Mara Mattuschka; 16mm, 2 minutes

Anyone who has seen the films of Mara Mattuschka—alias Mimi Minus—knows that she likes to sound out binary opposition, to go to the limits and explore the breaks which they create. Her interest in the world is still determined by ambivalence, just as if ambivalence were a relationship with the unmastered—and one relates ambivalently to something one never actually mastered and from which, I feel, one is not able to withdraw from in such a hurry. Of course, Mara Mattuschka connects her efforts with the sensual qualities of experience, with an exacting look at and listen to herself and the world. Entwined with the grasping and mirroring of herself, admiring herself in the mirror as someone else. She is narcissistic to the same extent and is enchanted by looking at her own body.

In *Parasympathica* she opens her eyes at the beginning and from then on enjoys the probing of the female and male viewers. She knows how to stress her materiality emotionally. She smiles from under her now brittle black/white mask, flirts with and ogles at the audience, pulls faces and seems threatening—especially when she gets too close to her audience with her nostrils flaring, the corners of her mouth forced way apart and her eyes wide open. —Claudia Preschl, 1990

Savannah Bay (1989), by Astrid Ofner; 16mm, 14 minutes

The film tries to retain the memory, the compulsion and the nostalgia of a text by Marguerite Duras. *Savannah Bay* is an imaginary landscape whose pictures find their home exclusively in language. In Astrid Ofner's [film], bare surfaces therefore dominate. Space remains abstract. Stage, studio, screen—with this

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minimalist approach a sensuality develops which concentrates entirely on the voices, gestures, looks and movements of the performers, without these elements being reduced to one single meaning. They are fluid. *Savannah Bay* remains a white dot on the map. —Christian Frosch, 1991

Inoten (1991), by PRINZGAU/podgorschek; 16mm, 14 minutes

An experimental, personal and ironic feature consisting of conversations about art in Vienna, France and Switzerland, *Inoten* is a series of sequences which change rapidly. Images and soundtrack are edited on top of each other, contradictory pictures appear superimposed, move in different directions and are sometimes projected on moving elements. The projection of a film image on a horse is a fine example of the latter. Within the film, different media are used such as Super 8, 16mm and video.

The makers call this film an "Artern," a combination of art film and western—a playful and consciously puzzling poetic treatment on the idiots and *exoten* in the arts world. The "Artern" is obviously not a film about art, but a work of art in itself. An artwork made with the raving nonsense often vented by connoisseurs. The makers juxtapose art analysis with verbal and visual poetry. —Gertjan Zuilhof

Syntagma (1983), by Valie Export; 16mm, color, sound, 18 minutes

The body and specifically the "woman's body" is often used as a focus for questions of origin, subject-object relations, political resistance and sexuality. It may appear that this is also the central issue of *Syntagma*, yet Valie Export's notion of "body language" poses an ironic relation to these questions that actually acknowledges "the end of the body" or at least the final break with the way in which we understand it to be a biological, existential, or metaphysical entity. Export has broken away from any notions of unity—either of body, space or time—into a fragmented world of doubling and difference that is caught in representation. Through a vision that is tactile without contact she depicts the non-coincidence of the present with itself—the schizophrenic breakdown of identity. The "body" and its metaphors—mattresses, textbooks, printed photographic paper, t.v. monitors, etc.—are all shown in the film as "speaking": however, "body speech" does not issue from a place of cohesion, but as a selected movement, like circuitry within a system...

—Valerie Manenti

OUT OF THE LOOP: NAIVE FILMMAKERS AND THEIR WORK Oddities from the Prelinger Archives presented by Rick Prelinger

June 13, 1993

This program celebrates the achievements of lone, unschooled nontheatrical filmmakers—the thousands of mom-and-pop shops that found their own niches in the industry and survived against competition as best they could. Unlike larger studios that cranked out film after film designed to instruct or sell, these producers often refused to master the rules of good filmmaking, perhaps because they had never learned them. The few examples that have survived from their huge output constitute one of film's last frontiers—celebrating their makers' naiveté, inventing their own technique while following unpredictable paths, unafraid to be surreal.

Preventing the Spread of Disease (1940), National Motion Picture Company; 16mm, sound, 10 minutes
As films age, their messages often recede into the background. In fact, if *Preventing the Spread* teaches us anything today, it's the risks of cinematic innovation. Every device employed by its makers (who also produced the creepy *Told By A Tooth* in 1939) calls attention to itself while distracting the viewer from the main point.

St. Paul Police Detectives and Their Work (c.1941), producer unknown; 16mm, Kodachrome, sound, 9 minutes.

A "Color Cartoon." Low budgets can sometimes turn ordinary ideas into great films. Mixing clichéd images, poetic metaphors and gritty police statistics, this cheapie stands alone in the annals of "reality" filmmaking. Physical evidence on the film suggests that the print you will see tonight is the only one made.

Door to Heaven (c. 1940), A C.O. Baptista Production for Scriptures Visualized Institute; 16mm, sound, 10 minutes

Religious films struggle with the dilemma of finding new but inoffensive ways of telling oft-told stories. This dilemma led to the founding of the Scriptures Visualized Institute, and this film shows how they moved beyond the Word to the Image.

Ant City (1949), Paul F. Moss for Almanac Films; 16mm, sound, 10 minutes

A "John Kieran Kaleidoscope." *Ant City* blends picture from a German educational film (obtained after World War II at bargain-basement prices from the U.S. Alien Property Custodian) with commentary by the eminent radio personality John Kieran, host of *Information, Please*. Kieran's gift: to have a great time while he's narrating, and make it seem as if he's doing it for the first time. This hybrid film was made as a low-budget insect teaching picture for schools and television.

Bill Garman, 12-Year-Old Businessman (1946), Frith Films; 16mm, Kodachrome, sound, 11 minutes

Emily Benton Frith produced over 80 films, many of which share the charm of this one, which is actually about her own nephew who lived in the then-rural San Fernando Valley. During the Korean War, the U.S. Office of Education designated this film as one of "102 Motion Pictures on Democracy."

What Made Sammy Speed? (1957), Sid Davis; 16mm, Kodachrome, sound, 10 minutes

No screening like this would be complete without work from Sid Davis, who has made over 100 films blending sensationalism with simplicity of expression.

More Dangerous Than Dynamite (1941), Panorama Pictures; 16mm, sound, 8 minutes

More sensational than a creepshow trailer, this film exposes the little-known dangers of a little-known problem: using gasoline as a cleaning fluid.

Perversion for Profit (1964), Citizens for Decent Literature; 16mm, color, sound, 28 minutes

Produced by Charles Keating (yes, the same one) as part of his anti-pornography crusade of the early Sixties. *P for P* reaches new heights of prurience precisely as it seeks to increase decency, and sexualizes familiar conspiracy theories.

Richard Prelinger, founder and head of Prelinger Archives in New York, is one of the world's foremost collectors of ephemeral (educational, industrial, advertising, amateur) films. He has put some of the most memorable films in his collection on a number of videotapes which are available for sale by the Voyager Company in Los Angeles and for rent at any well-stocked video store in the Bay Area.

Film descriptions provided by Rick Prelinger.

NOT ANYWHERE: penumbra #2
Curated and Presented by Mark McElhatten

June 17, 1993

the elements:

early assembly, in progress from *The Five Bad Elements* —Mark Lapore (shown in penumbra - Stray Dogs and the Arousal of Silhouettes in different form, then called *Burma Rolls*). 16mm, b&w workprint

audio: banya breath circle and schnittke

Totem —retrieved by Scott Stark, family home movie Agfa 16mm b&w original

Prince and Broadway circa 1976 — Ernie Gehr 16mm Kodachrome work print

audio: for douji wolfli

Whirling —Leslie Thornton, 3/4" video premiere of the latest installment from *Peggy and Fred in Hell*

audio: in ire (semiconscious and semiquaver)

Untitled — unreleased video work by Ken Kobland commissioned and unaired by French television—
excerpt Photography Nancy Campbell. Audio mix Ken Kobland

audio: 1900s splinterneedled opera aria and 1400s Ciconia canon *la ray au soleyl*

excerpt from *The Great Invisible* —sample assembly from the upcoming feature by Leslie Thornton

audio: Scheherazade - Patti Smith monologue radio broadcast nyc

Unwrapping

audio: 1920s cantor

Pharaoh's Belt (cake excerpt) by Lewis Klahr finished 3/4" in video. satellite work from some of the materials from the upcoming film *Pharaoh's Belt* (camera rolls were viewed at the last penumbra screening)

audio: Jack Smith nyc

Dracula - 1931 Universal dir Tod Browning cinematographer Karl Freund—excerpt

Dracula - 1931 Universal dir George Melford cinematographer George Robinson—excerpt

audio: Jimi Hendrix - heartbreak, laughter, blue seude haze

second excerpt from *The Great Invisible* —Leslie Thornton

partial assembly from work in progress *100 Views of New York* —Mark Lapore

second excerpt from *Untitled*—Ken Kobland

Autour la Region Centrale—Michael Snow 16mm, color, sound print originally conceived as the first part of *La Region Centrale* 1969/1970, never screened in public.

Special thanks to Mike Snow and Andrew Thompson at the Canadian Consulate for their generous assistance.

within reach:

City Film, by Lewis Klahr Super-8 camera original

Larry Gottheim 8mm camera original

Adynata, by Leslie Thornton, first version 22 min., very different from the completed 30 min film

The San Francisco Cinematheque and The Seventeenth San Francisco
Lesbian and Gay Film Festival present:

EXPERIMENTAL SAMPLER
Curated by Michelle Sophia Sabol

June 20, 1993

Mark Called (1993), by Billy Lux; 16mm, b&w, sound, 4 minutes

In this gay S&M phone sex comedy, the backdrop is the open road. There, American masculinity is monolithic but primed for inversion. Go East young man.

Mondays (1992), by Judith M. Redding; 3/4" video, b&w, sound, 3 minutes

Mondays is a video interpretation of Victoria A. Brownworth's poem "Mondays: 1890," about the daily work of a turn-of-the century laundress. *Mondays* was shot with a Fisher-Price Pixelvision camera and edited on 1/2" videotape. It features Brownworth reading her work and percussion by musician Patti Little.

Drag on a Fag (Canada, 1992), by Nickolaos Stagias and Arlene Sandler; 16mm, color, sound, 5 minutes

Are they fags smoking cigarettes? Or are they cross-dressers smoking fags? In any event there are lots of 70's, smoking queens, Barbies, and groovy lipstick lesbians.

Mother's Hands (1992), by Vejan Lee Smith; 3/4" video, color, sound, 10 minutes

This experimental narrative explores the memories of an adult haunted by childhood sexual and physical abuse. Using music and chants we experience a darker connection between mother and daughter. — Third World Newsreel

Black Body (1992), by Thomas Allen Harris; 3/4" video, color, sound, 5 minutes

Drawing on representations on the body on Macunde carvings of Tanzania, East Africa, this video explores the psychic and physical interaction within the legacy of oppression characterizing the experiences of the black male. — Third World Newsreel

The Heart of Seduction (1991), by Rebecca A. Blumen; 16mm, b&w, sound, 5:45 minutes

The Heart of Seduction is a portrait of a surreal dream sequence with an ambient soundtrack. The sound is layered and there is a recursiveness between image and sound. This isomorphic correlation of sound and imagery reflects the maker's intent to profile the process of the unconscious becoming conscious through dream and fantasy imagery. This film represents a connection between body and mind and shows the process of unconscious images and sounds becoming conscious through its pace, rhythm and complex editing.

Pubic Beard (1991), by Anie Stanley; 1/2" video, b&w, silent, 4 minutes

A brief film about displacement.

San Francisco Cinematheque

Sewing On A Breast (1991), by Anie Stanley; 1/2" video, b&w, silent, 1.5 minutes

This is an exploration of post-modernist, feminist science fiction. First, a woman has her breast sewn on, then a man. The film originally was in an installation on a continuous loop about oversized Catholic families.

A Dance With A Body (1992), by Anie Stanley; Super 8mm, b&w, silent 2.15 minutes

Formerly called *The Ferris Of Them All*, first featured at the Spew Festival at the Kitchen in New York City. The diptych montage serves as an expression of female desire. In the film, there is a mix between metaphors and directness, where the erotic and voyeuristic are changed in the familiar/personal.

Put Your Lips Around Yes (1992), by John Lindell; 3/4" video, b&w, sound, 4 minutes

Put Your Lips Around Yes is a sleek and straightforward barrage of words cut on a house groove. *Put Your Lips Around Yes* extends visual artist John Lindell's work into television. This alphabetical list of chap-book titles (pulp narratives used for jerking off) is both what it appears and something more: a list of fantasies, a lexicon of identities, a comment on the absurd yet enticing reductions of pornography. — Matias Viegner, *Decontrolled Boundaries, The Body as Artifact*

The Death of Dottie Love (1991), by Todd Verow; 16mm, b&w, sound, 7 minutes

Todd Verow's *The Death of Dottie Love* explores sexual violence; against men by men, against women by woman, against women by men, and finally the violence against men perpetrated by a woman, Dottie Love. Verow captures the sexual politics of the small Maine town (Bangor) where he grew up and witnessed members of his high school class murder Charles Howard because of his sexual orientation. This film is a reaction to that murder. *Death of Dottie Love* is a stranger, surrealer-than-fiction short, which has been deemed politically incorrect by certain censors.

My New Lover (excerpted from *The Dreaded Experimental Comedies By John Topping*) (1992), by John Topping; 1/2" video, color, sound, 10 minutes

John describes his film and video pieces in his own words: "My work, in a nutshell, is unique and outrageous comedy that is often openly gay. Within this outrageousness, I always try to reveal something on a deeper level: either some truth about myself, or some observation of humanity, or perhaps simply a way of looking at things from an unusual perspective. I also have no problem with things that are funny for the sake of being funny, but there's almost always something more profound involved if you look."

Hard to Swallow (1991), by Tony Coray and Jim Hankle; 3/4" video, b&w, sound, 6 minutes

Hard to Swallow is a montage of evocative images and choreography that, set to music, form an enigmatic yet haunting short film. *Hard to Swallow* was originally developed for the opening section of a much larger performance work. Choreographed by Tony Coray, this dance-theater piece (by the same title) explores issues of power, gender, and loss within a metaphorical family.

Its inclusion in the 1993 San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival marks the first public screening of *Hard to Swallow* independent from its performance component.

Fontvella's Box(Germany, 1992), by Stefan Hayn; 16mm, color, sound, 17 minutes

Fontvella is facing hard times. Not only did her last performance fail completely, moreover her wardrobe is ruined by a biker. Nothing works for her. Transformed by magic into a cow, she follows the man of her dreams and tumbles down while walking in her sleep. . .

Beneath the Surface (1993), by Jennifer Johns; 16mm, color, sound, 26 minutes

Through memory and emotion, movement and stillness, fluid poetic image and stark reality, *Beneath the Surface* provides an intricate and uncommon vision of the emotions and losses of breast cancer.

"[This film] is my search to find out what it feels like to have breast cancer, to fill the gap left by the silence that surrounded my mother's experience." — J.J.

All descriptions by the artists unless otherwise noted.

The San Francisco Cinematheque and The Seventeenth San Francisco
Lesbian and Gay Film Festival present:

FOUR BY HIROYUKI OKI

June 23, 1993

Colour Wind (Iro Kaze) (1991); Super-8mm, color, silent, 10 minutes

Landscape Catching (Koukei Dori) (1992); 16mm, color, silent, 5 minutes

Melody For Buddy Matsumae (Matsumae-Kun No Senritsu) (1992); 16mm, color, silent, 50 minutes

Colour Eyes (Irome) (1992); 16mm, color, silent, 8 minutes

While a new wave of queer cinema was coming together in Europe and North America over the past few years, one remarkable independent filmmaker has been busy reinventing the concept for himself in Japan. This program features five of the most recent films by Japan's premier gay experimental filmmaker, Hiroyuki Oki.

Most of his recent works build on the subjectivity and homoeroticism that are so strong in his groundbreaking feature *Swimming Prohibited* (1989). In both *Colour Wind* and *Landscape Catching*, Oki continues to develop his technical sophistication and his openness to new forms and themes, culminating in a sensuality that is apparent in his latest two films. The last film in Oki's Matsumae Trilogy—*Melody For Buddy Matsumae*—chronicles ten days spent in a seaside town: five of them with a visiting boyfriend, and five more after his departure.

Colour Eyes is a swooning collage of lovers and love objects. It is Oki's most recent work, and probably his most erotic. Although these films are silent, their moods represent a panorama of gay feelings and sentiments, which make for a thrilling and wonderful viewing experience. All the films in this program have been provided courtesy of Image Forum, Tokyo.

—Paul Lee, Guest Curator

“THE SPACE BETWEEN: Displays and Displacement”
A Collaborative Installation with The 6th Street Photography Workshop
location: Market Street Facade of 1 Bush Street (Market @ Sutter/Sansome)

June 24, 1993

The 6th Street Photography Workshop involves tenants of residential hotels in the Tenderloin and other individuals living below the poverty line in creative photography projects. Robert Farrell, Andrall Taylor, Bud Gundelach, Raymond Blance, Willmon Poole, Frank Morz, Robert Session, Tom Ferentz, Barbara Szegedi and Lissa Gibbs collaborate to create tonight's slide and audio installation piece — bringing one section of the Market Street spectrum to another for one night.

CINEMATOGRAPH PUBLICATION PARTY
Curated by Albert Kilchesty

September 30, 1993

All films/tapes sound unless otherwise indicated.

Surprised (1973), by Charles Wright; 16mm, color, 4.5 minutes

An abstract, hand-drawn cartoon set to original music. No shape, line, edge surface or background can be taken for granted for very long before turning out to be something else. (C.W., Canyon Cinema Catalogue No. 7)

As You Lift Your Eyelids, Tracing Lightly (1990), by Peter Herwitz; Super-8mm, color, silent, 6 minutes

Part IV from the series *In the Shape of Waking: Meditations*, which "represent a kind of luminous waking from a dark dream world of the past." (P.H.) Peter Herwitz is the founding editor of *Sentience* and the editor of *Cinematograph* Volume 5.

Christ Mass Sex Dance (1991), by Stan Brakhage; 16mm, color, sound, 5.5 minutes

Sound: "Blue Suede" by James Tenney.

The *eminence gris* puts on his dancin' shoes.

Dervish Machine (1992), by Bradley Eros and Jeanne Liotta; 16mm blow-up, b&w/color, 10 minutes

Hand-developed meditations on being and movement, as inspired by Brion Gysin's Dreamachine, Sufi mysticism, and early cinema. A knowledge of the fragility of existence mirrors the tenuousness of the material. The film itself becomes the site to experience impermanence, and to revel in the unfixed image. (Eros/Liotta)

Love Craft (1993), by Timoleon Wilkins; 16mm, color, silent, 3.25 minutes

"I'll switch to video when they pry the Bolex from my cold, dead fingers." (from unpublished draft of "A Simple Message of Undying Devotion")

Mutiny (1982-83), by Abigail Child; 16mm, color, 11 minutes

"I want my work ... to upset the torque of culture. *I don't want to give you what you want.* Out of a sense that I need you awake, thinking, not disconnected, but alive to potential, the optimism that this is possible." (from "Sound Talk")

Tenent (They Hold) (1977), by Daniel Barnett; 16mm, color, silent, 6.5 minutes

"... I have been using the development of *thought-with-motion-pictures* to try to begin to untangle the habits of organization that we acquired as we learned to speak with others; trying by virtue of this other kind of experiential parallax: thought in image only, parallel to thought marshaled by words. Toward this end I felt incredibly lucky to have been born so soon after cinema, since with it humans have acquired the first significantly new language making tool since we learned to make letters, numbers, ideograms, etc., and it seemed to me to be of fundamental importance to begin the process of exploring and investigating this *tabula rasa* before it was impossibly polluted by habits dragged thoughtlessly over from our other addictions." (from "Film and the Social Font")

Two Landscapes: Coyote Cow and Modernist-Not (1993), by Paula Levine; 3/4" video, color, 4 minutes.

Two brief meditations on western landscape.

September Express (1972), by Storm De Hirsch; 16mm blow-up, color, silent, 6 minutes

"Cine-Sonnet. A study of time in motion. An accelerated montage of reflections and landscapes framed in the window of an express train running from Rome to Venice. Dedicated to the writings of J.W. Dunne, the

collage of Kurt Schwitters and the cubistic paintings of Braque." (S.D.H.—Filmmakers' Cooperative Catalogue)

Little Stabs at Happiness (1959-63), by Ken Jacobs; 16mm, color, 15 minutes

"At one point on the voiceover track, after a bit of chat and play, Ken says that he will now turn the tape recorder off to check out what he has just done; a moment of silence ensues, then he *returns* and confides in us: 'I like it. It's kind of vague.' It is in that *gap of the moment, that crack in time*, that the uncanny sense of an excitable, temporal displacement ... begins to tremor and reverberate Later, having watched (in retroSPECT) this footage of his friends (that we are *currently* watching), Ken laments to us that he 'doesn't see them much anymore' ... then he mentions that Jerry (Sims) will be coming over *next* Saturday to pick up his paintbrushes Of course, next Saturday didn't exist at that moment, as it doesn't exist now ..." (from "XCXHXEXRXXIXEXSX" by Phil Solomon)

Text (1992), by Jordan Biren; 3/4" video, color, 6.5 minutes

"Get out of here. Get out of here. Get the fuck out of here." (J.B.)

Pennant Fever (1981), by Albert Kilchesty; Super-8mm, color, silent, 2.5 minutes

A fall classic.

Exit Music

"Just what was it I felt so compelled to belong to?" (from "Virginia, 1968" by Lissa Gibbs)

Notes credited to Abigail Child, Daniel Barnett, Phil Solomon, Timoleon Wilkins, and Lissa Gibbs are excerpted from articles in *Cinematograph* Volume 5/*Sentience*. Thanks to all the artists who made their work available at no cost for this free screening.

BAY AREA LIGHTS: NEW FILMS & VIDEOS

October 3, 1993

Acceleration (1993), by Scott Stark; Super-8mm, color, sound, 10 minutes

Diluted figures undulate in this visual poem of urban apparitions.

Receiving Sally (1993), Erin Sax; 16mm, b&w, sound, 6.5 minutes

"And the children are afraid of the dark, and run away from it, and if some time they have to stay in it, they press their eyes shut and put their fingers in their ears. But for them also the time will come when they love the dark." (Rilke from *The Stories of God*)

Aspiratia (1993), by silt; Super-8mm, color, sound, 10-12 minutes

Excerpt from a work - in - progress. "A sketch and preface to a larger work, this film comes out of experiences working in an AIDS hospice." (Christian Farrell)

Definition: Aspiration—1. act of breathing; breath. 2. aspiring; strong desire. 3. the removal by suction of fluid as from a body cavity. 4. in phonetics, a pronouncing with an aspirate.

Built for Endurance (1993), by Todd Verow; 16mm, color, sound, 6.5 minutes

"Against the 'macho' facade of motorcycles, bars, cars, and barbecues Lisa Guay narrates the goings on of a bar drifter caught up in the turmoil surrounding a mysterious, identity-switching lush and her charge, a violent man who can't control himself or his sexuality." (T.V.)

Dial-A-Kvetch (1993), by George Kuchar; 3/4 inch video, color/b&w, sound, 15 minutes

"What's your favorite Ed Wood film?" (G.K.)

San Francisco Cinematheque

City of Fear (1993), by Emily Cronbach; 16mm, b&w, sound, 12 minutes

Plots and subplots are entangled within film noir fantasy as an FBI agent is ordered to infiltrate a biological weapons conspiracy. The invasion of a celluloid villain adds to the circuitous narrative in Cronbach's meditation on the suspense genre.

No Zone (1993), by Greta Snider; 16mm, color, sound, 19 minutes

No Zone uses geographic unspecificity in its study of contemporary environments both man-made and natural. Divided into five parts (Toxin, Run Away, Sickness, Reprieve, and End of History) each visually distinct, bathed in either monochromatic haziness or vibrant colors. And each appearing simultaneously familiar yet alien. Snider is ushered through this *No Zone* by a variety of survivalist-tour-guides; veritable pedagogues of the modern landscape. Because of the tenuous nature of many of their lives, Snider is careful not to betray their confidences. This discretion inspires neither empathy nor judgment, creating an atmosphere of pure objectivity.

Drive-by Shoot! (1993), by Portia Cobb; video, color, sound, 12 minutes

This the third in a three part trilogy. Part one being *Destiny is Eyleash Close*, and part two, *Videography*.

"Abstract images are layered and blended to comment on the issues of survival and displacement and global kinship. A compelling experimental journey through black urban communities in America and West Africa is underscored by written and spoken text and music." (P.C.)

Cobb prowls the landscape armed only with her camera. Hunting targets both human and material. Guerrilla-like she imperceptibly attacks, capturing only the visual image. She then stealthily departs, moving back into the anonymous cityscape or rural terrain. Proving that her camera, like a gun, can change the course of history—not by the taking of a life mortally, but rather pictorially.

Notes prepared by Ariel O'Donnell.

CUT OFF AT THE SOURCE: New Film and Video from Los Angeles Presented by Eric Saks

October 7, 1993

Cut Off at the Source frames Southern California by its urban infrastructure problems. Los Angeles waiting for the quake or a riot. In the summer of '93 arts money is frozen and more injustice inevitable. Making films in Hollywood and watering lawns with resources from the North. *Cut Off at the Source* is a few careful considerations of "So-Cal" landscape, mediascape and worn-out social values. —Eric Saks

Seven Lucky Charms (1992), by Lisa Mann; 16mm, color, sound, 16 minutes

Seven Lucky Charms is unique and imaginative in its use of disjointed animated imagery and cold statistical facts to provide an environment for understanding the emotional reality of battered women, especially those who kill their batterers in self-defense. This experimental documentary guides the viewer, step by painful step, through a scenario of violence and retaliation, inadequate police response, and the gender inequities of the legal system and prison sentencing. (L.M.)

Mead Lake (1992), by Gary Kibbins; 16mm, color, sound, 28 minutes

Lake Mead, the Hoover Dam, fancy literary terms, and "foreigners" are all cross-referenced as two academics slowly make their way out of town toward their favorite swimming hole. On the way, they discuss the rhetorical virtues of a questionable newspaper editorial applauding the work of the World Bank and its policies toward developing countries.

A series of intermittent voice-overs (all with "foreign" accents) take their own trajectory, examining the Hoover Dam, swimming, the mythical unconscious, public sculptures, the Gulf War, and bdelgyas.

The academics see the world through the screen of their education and their training. Correspondingly, their observations vary widely, ranging from insightful to silly. The foreigners behind the voice-overs never become visible, making ironic commentary which is often detached, while at other times seeming to be that of the academics' own unconscious. (G.K.)

There It Is, Take It by Martha Atwell; 16mm, color, sound, 28 minutes

KNBR (1993), by Eric Saks; video, sound, 14 minutes

KNBR utilizes home movies from the Los Angeles area and positions them in a fictional biography. A historical view of a neighborhood comes to light through the juxtaposition of one person's comments about his career as a municipal bus driver and as a home movie enthusiast. Red-lining and interracial tensions are investigated in the notions of neighborhood space as documented in the original films themselves as well as the recontextualization in the narrative. (E.S.)

Chapbook of the Non-eminent (1992), by Elizabeth Wiatr; 16mm, color, sound, 20 minutes

Nostalgia, alienation, neurology, truth, leisure, the history of ideas, and quotidian stories are woven among the facades and surfaces of downtown Los Angeles. The rarely seen narrator—a flâneuse with one foot in the working class and the other in recondite theory—is really (although she won't admit it) searching for meaning and authenticity in this easily romanticized dystopia. (E.W.)

Los Angeles-based film/video/multi-media artist Eric Saks is best known for his infamous Pixelvision tape, *Don from Lakewood*, and his fictional documentary *Forevermore, the Diary of a Leach Lord*. He currently works for the Voyager Company in Santa Monica where he oversees the production of laserdiscs of short, experimental works for the home video market.

The San Francisco Cinematheque and Frameline present

JOE-JOE

Video Artists Leslie Singer and Cecilia Dougherty in Person

October 9, 1993

Joe-Joe (1993); Pixelvision on 3/4" tape; b&w, sound, 52 minutes

Cecilia Dougherty and Leslie Singer split the character of English playwright Joe Orton into two Mission District lesbians, partners in playwriting and love. Joe and Joe prosper from their work publicly, but the effects of celebrity hardly reach them.

Do not expect to witness the sharp dialogue of the real-life Orton's plays or the manic cruising that possessed him. *Joe-Joe* provide(s) laconic comments on the vague cultural idioms so familiar to us, with a manner more self-effacing than flamboyant. They attract attention without desiring it, looking typically uncomfortable in Santa Cruz with leather caps as necessary accessories. Posing in wryly humorous scenes with just enough ability to exploit the attention of the camera, they exhibit their outlandishness quietly and self-consciously. Daily events occur which they find intriguing or expressive, but not satisfying. Ultimately, no aspect of Joe-Joe's existence enlivens them but their own shared excitement. Sexual acts display the intense correspondence between the two women that is hidden in other episodes. Though sought after, Joe-Joe is (are) publicly inscrutable, but this revealed private life emphasizes the individuality that exists beyond stage and screen assumptions.

The screening will be introduced by Cecilia Dougherty and Leslie Singer, and will be followed by readings of passages from the diaries of Joe Orton and his play *Loot* by Roberto Friedman, Cliff Hengst, and Monique Nobo.

Program notes by Chris Bishop

VIOLENCE AND DISLOCATION
Program I: Unsettled Territories

October 10, 1993

In October, the Cinematheque presents three programs that reveal and examine the ongoing tragedy of human beings torn or alienated from their roots. As bloodshed continues in Bosnia, the Middle East, and virtually every part of the globe, the histories of world film and video offer concrete reminders of the painful consequences of intolerance towards other peoples and cultures

In this evening's program, "Unsettled Territories," we present three stylistically diverse meditations on political conflict and the dispossession of populations.

People, Years, Life (1990), Yervant Giankian & Angela Ricci Lucchi: 16mm, color, sound, 70 minutes
"Milan-based artists Yervant Giankian and Angela Ricci Lucchi have been characterized as film archaeologists, seeking out cinema's origins and bringing them 'to the light' in their own exquisite assemblages. Their newest project was originally intended to be a documentary on Armenian history using footage which they planned to shoot. But upon realizing the power of the existing images, they once again turned to scavenging film collections and archives. Beginning in 1987, they traveled to the Soviet republic of Armenia seeking traces of a history that has been characterized by deliberate, brutal erasures. They uncovered footage, some found in the archives of the Czar, of the massacre of Armenians in 1915, the advance of the Czarist army against the Turks in 1916, and the mass exodus from Armenia following that country's inclusion in the Soviet Union in 1918." (Kathy Geritz, Pacific Film Archive)

"You understand that their gorgeous, fragile images are grace notes in a relentless *danse macabre*." —J. Hoberman on Giankian and Lucchi's earlier film *From the Pole to the Equator*

The distortion of archival footage through rephotography, optical printing and hand-tinting reflects the discontinuity of Armenian history. Images depicting the bloody battles fought over territories by the Turks and Russians, and the desolation of the Armenian people moves between nightmare and languid dream as the saga unfolds on the screen, awash with intense saturations of color. The film is entirely without narration; instead the voices of Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* add to the melancholy atmosphere. At times the images seem to drift away, allowing the eye to wander over unguided territory. The *nowhereness* that permeates the film becomes a tragic metaphor for the plight of the Armenian people.

Children of War (1946), U.N.R.R.A.; 16mm, b&w, sound, 20 minutes
Produced by the U.N.R.R.A. (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Association) as part of its drive to collect donations for war-ravaged Europe from Americans who "look upon shortage as simply an inconvenience." The footage is surprisingly graphic and exploitative in its depiction of children—emphasizing the urgency with which aid was required in post WWII Europe. Appealing notions of brotherhood and peace are accentuated by a melodramatic voiceover, proclaiming these impoverished children "the pillars of the brave new world." In the end the benevolent viewer is asked, "Can there be rebirth in the ruins?"

Up to the South (Talaen a Junuub) (1993) by Jayce Salloum & Walid Ra'ad; video, color, sound, 60 minutes

"Lebanon has been used as a metaphor, as a 'site' serving the real and imaginary for various 'visitors' throughout its history. It has been a ground for a history of claims, discursive texts and acts of 're-construction.' It has become an adjective for the nostalgia of our past and the fears of the future. We have come to understand so very little in spite of the massive amounts of 'information' we have received regarding Lebanon, the war, and especially the situation in the south of the country that for one to even mention the name all sorts of images come to our minds. What basis in which realities do these images have, where in Lebanon are these realities situated? Who are we really talking about, us or them, or some other construction in-between.

"*Talaeen a Junuub* focuses specifically on South Lebanon, the current conditions, the people living there, the histories, politics & economics of the region and the Israeli occupation & the social, ideological, and popular resistance to this relationship to the situation on the ground and their currency in the West; terrorism, occupation, colonization, the post-colonial, resistance, collaborator, truth and fiction, going into the myths and martyrs/sacrificial acts and actors, while engaging in a parallel critique of the 'documentary' genre and the West's construction of knowledge about the area.

"In Lebanon we worked in collaboration with 6 local media producers, researchers, historians and journalists to research and gather material on the south of Lebanon ... Over 150 hours of footage was shot on location, between January and December 1992, and approximately 30 hours of archival video and film material collected.

"This tape is being produced as the final part of the four part *Counterterror* series organized by Annie Goldson and Chris Bratton in the U.S. dealing with the representation of communities+ groups labeled as 'terrorists.' This series takes as its departure point how the term 'terrorism' has been used to obscure the historical roots of political conflict.

— Jayce Salloum & Walid Ra'ad

—Notes Prepared by Ariel O'Donnell

In conjunction with the Yerba Buena Gardens' Center for the Arts
Inaugural Exhibition, *In Out of the Cold*, the San Francisco Cinematheque presents

VIOLENCE AND DISLOCATION
Program II: Displaced Identities
Curated by David Gerstein

October 12-17, 1993

The Cinematheque's current three-program series, *Violence and Dislocation*, focuses on the ongoing tragedy of human beings torn or alienated from their roots by physical and psychological violence. The five artists featured on this program, "Displaced Identities," each confront their alienation from and struggles with their unique cultural identities.

Measures of Distance (1988), by Mona Hatoum: video, color, sound, 15.5 minutes

Mona Hatoum is a Palestinian woman born in Lebanon who has been living and working primarily in Britain since 1975. Her performance and video work has generally been concerned with the divisions between the privileged West and the Third World. In *Measures of Distance* she constructs a visual montage that evokes feelings of separation and isolation from her Palestinian family. Reading aloud from letters sent from her mother in Beirut, and using the Arabic text from those letters superimposed over still photographs as the primary visual material, Hatoum creates a narrative that explores identity and sexuality against a backdrop of traumatic social rupture, exile and displacement.

Chronicles of a Lying Spirit by *Kelly Gabron* (1992), by Cauleen Smith; 16mm film on video, color, sound, 5.5 minutes

For San Francisco artist Cauleen Smith, bonds with community are primary. Through her work, she attempts to make the invisible visible by challenging form, structure, and stereotype. In *Chronicles of a Lying Spirit* by *Kelly Gabron*, she artfully turns her rage into a celebration of African pride and beauty, exploring truth, fiction, and collective memory in a spirited autobiographical fantasy-as-history of Black slavery in America.

San Francisco Cinematheque

The Drama of the Gifted Child (1992), by Cecilia Dougherty; video, b&w/color, sound, 6 minutes
Cecilia Dougherty is a San Francisco artist whose videos address the intersection of issues regarding lesbian representation, video narrative, and popular culture. *The Drama of the Gifted Child* is about the dysfunctional relationship between the videomaker and her subject, and an illustration of our need to belong, our desire to please, and the urge to rebel.

Expulsion (1989), by Julie Murray; S-8mm film on video, color, sound, 10 minutes
Julie Murray is an Irish-born artist who has been working in San Francisco for the past eight years. "A compilation of found and live footage assembled in such a way as to present a different, more ambiguous view of Ireland and its predominant religion, Catholicism, in a fragmented and frantic way, liberally peppered with visual and aural references to a main aspect of the religion—patriarchy. This is coupled with a brief hint at an ancient Irish space program as a way to rationalize the presence of so many round towers that exist there. The stereotypical image of the peasant is cut alongside images of recognizably American characters emphasizing the blurring of distinctions and confused identity that occurs when cultures are melded together as the cannonball of global internationalism picks up speed." —Julie Murray

The Ties That Bind (1984), by Su Friedrich; 16mm film on video, b&w, sound, 55 minutes
New York-based filmmaker Su Friedrich's *The Ties That Bind* is "an experimental documentary about my mother's life in Nazi Germany and her eventual marriage to an American soldier. In the voiceover, she recounts her experiences, while the images portray her current life in Chicago, the assembly of a modern German house, contemporary peace marches, archival footage of Germany, sensationalist newspaper headlines, her first years in America, and much more, woven together to create a dialogue between past and present, mother and daughter.

"Let me state very simply that, in making *The Ties That Bind*, I had no intention of creating a general portrait of all Germans, or of all German women, nor did I intend to explain the origins of the war or of Nazism. The film began as a personal investigation of my own mother's life before and during the war, primarily from age 10 to 28. I was often tempted to extend the film beyond the parameters of her own stories, but I decided against that; I wanted to stay close to her text and work within the confines of a single life. Since the war has engendered such a wide range of material, which often takes such a broad, 'objective,' view of the events, I was interested in taking a more subjective and 'limited' approach. Moreover, it would be ludicrous to presume objectivity when working with material about my mother (although I tried hard to maintain my skepticism throughout the project.)" —Su Friedrich

SUPER-8 FILMS AND PERFORMANCE BY JOHN PORTER

October 14, 1993

PORTER'S CONDENSED RITUALS

<i>Santa Claus Parade</i>	1976	4 minutes	Silent
<i>Landscape</i>	1977	1	
<i>Mother and Child</i>	1977	2	
<i>Exams</i>	1982	3	
<i>Amusement Park</i>	1978/79	6	

CAMERA DANCES

<i>Firefly</i>	1980	3	
<i>Angel Baby</i>	1979	2	
<i>Down on Me</i>	1980/81	4	
<i>Martha's Balloon Ride</i>	1981/82	4	
<i>Cinefuge</i>	1974-81	4	Sound
<i>Pleading Art</i>	1992	3	
<i>Window Water</i>			
<i>Bobby Moving</i>	1984	3	
<i>The Secret of the Lost Tunnel</i>	1992	3	
<i>Hamilton Homes</i>	1985	9	
<i>Shootout with Rebecca</i>	1983	2	w/ performance
<i>Revolving Restaurant</i>	1981	2	
<i>Animal in Motion</i>	1981	2	
<i>Scanning #5</i>	1983	3	Silent

John Porter is a prolific filmmaker and performer from Toronto who now works almost exclusively in Super 8. The lightweight Super 8 camera he uses has an automatic intervalometer and a shutter which can be left constantly open. It is the perfect instrument for experimenting with what he calls "two of my oldest ideas: animation/pixilation ... and the wiping of images with time exposures." Porter has produced two major series of films: *Porter's Condensed Rituals* which exploit the animating capacities of his camera, and *Camera Dances* which take advantage of the lightness and mobility of Super 8. Porter's films are innovative and fun, a pleasure for young children and seasoned avant-garde film fans.

For many years, Porter was a contributing member of the (now defunct) Funnel, the only center combining film production, exhibition, and distribution in Canada. In addition to producing over 200 films, he is well known throughout North America as a tireless film activist, running film screenings and providing encouragement to filmmakers young and old. He is currently one of the guiding forces behind The Pleasure Dome, a group devoted to the presentation of experimental films in Toronto. He has previously worked as a letter carrier for the Canada Post Corporation, and a bicycle courier.

The Cinematheque is indebted to the Canadian Consulate General for making this appearance by John Porter possible.

The San Francisco Cinematheque and the Goethe-Institut San Francisco present

VIOLENCE AND DISLOCATION
Program III: The Transfigured Homeland

October 17, 1993

Germany, Year Zero (1947), Roberto Rossellini; 16mm, b&w, sound, 75 minutes

In March of 1947 Roberto Rossellini traveled to Berlin in hopes of finding material to complete "the third panel of (his) war triptych." In *Cahiers du Cinema* he spoke of his curiosity surrounding the state of post WWII Germany: "The Germans were human beings like the rest; what could have brought them to disaster? The false morality which is the very essence of Nazism, the abandonment of humility in favor of the cult of heroism, the exaltation of force rather than weakness, pride against simplicity." This inquiry became the inspiration for his film *Germany, Year Zero*.

The story revolves around a thirteen-year-old boy by the name of Edmund. His age is itself a potent statement, for at thirteen he is clearly old enough to have been influenced by Nazi propaganda while at the same time being too young to fight for the cause. Edmund is a symbol both of the aspirations of Hitler's Germany as well as the grim reality of reconstruction in post liberation Europe. He now lives in a country set adrift, a place where corruption and exploitation are the order of the day. Due to extreme economic hardship Edmund is forced to fend not only for himself but also for the survival of his decrepit family—his father, an invalid; his sister, unemployed and compelled to entertain servicemen in exchange for cigarettes which she then sells for food; and his older brother, a once heroic soldier now reduced to shameful cowering in the family's squalid apartment. Rossellini explained, "Although the story of Edmund and his family was invented by me it is nevertheless the common story of all German families."

Filed almost entirely in the rubble-strewn streets of Berlin, *Germany, Year Zero* took only twenty days to shoot, working at a rate of one scene per day. As the weather worsened, Rossellini moved the production to Rome, and finished filming the interior scenes in a studio. Unfortunately, the final product was seen as highly subjective and was therefore received poorly by the critics, the public, and especially Germans, who felt that Rossellini had created an inaccurate and alienating rather than compassionate study of the German experience.

As discouraging as the reception of the film may have been, it appears from the following discussion by Rossellini that he was in fact very successful in accomplishing what he had set out to create. "Usually in the traditional film a scene is composed as follows: A long shot, we see the milieu, the character, we approach it; then a medium shot, a three quarter view, a close-up; then the story of the character is told. I proceed in the opposite way, a person moves, and his movements make us discover his surroundings. I begin always with a close-up; then the movements of the camera as it follows the actor reveals a milieu. The actor must never be left alone; he must move in a complex and comprehensive way."

Surprisingly *Germany, Year Zero* was one of only three early post-war films to deal with Germany (the other two were German made: *In Jenen Tag* by Helmut Käutner, and *Die Mörder Sind Unter Uns* by Wolfgang Staudte). And it is perhaps no accident that this film was made one year after the death of Rossellini's first born son Marco Romano (to whom the film is dedicated). This loss must have greatly affected Rossellini's outlook upon his life and his filmmaking as well as upon the future of Europe and its children.

O Logischer Garten (1988), Ingo Kratisch & Jutta Sartory; 16mm, color, sound, 85 minutes

"What many see as the German penchant for order, most often and casually noted in the activity of the Third Reich, is not order at all; it is totalitarianism, fascism, fear, and a disregard for others. But order is an ideal based on logic, rational behavior, judgment, and generosity. It should not be surrendered to these other things. Our own sense of what is true is demeaned when there is no resistance to these linguistic appropriations.

"When in *O Logischer Garten* we see the polishing of the silver and images of carefully piled plates, the cleaning of doorways and stoops, the removal of leaves from graves, we are reminded that all these things are part of the effort to create order from small daily tasks, order not as a restrictive regulation system, but as a source of calmness and reflection, and attempt to 'somehow' set things right. The ordering of household objects, their care and maintenance, suggests a modest model for the re-ordering of larger confusions, perhaps even of historical tragedies.

"And it is the invisible connection between the dining table and the workbench that echoes the unspoken but finely drawn connections in the films; between the individual, one's daily life, the city, and history." (Dan Eisenberg)

Notes prepared by Ariel O'Donnell

JACK SMITH'S *NORMAL LOVE*
Presented by Jerry Tartaglia

October 24, 1993

Normal Love (c.1963); 16mm, color, sound, approx. 65 minutes
 preceded by *Vavooma and the Moon Goddess*, 35mm slides and audiotape

Spend a night in Lucky Landlord Paradise with Jack Smith, Scarlet Filmmaker!

After the triumph of *Flaming Creatures*, Jack Smith brought his creatures outdoors to romp in an idyllic adventure photographed in glorious color. *Normal Love* mixes pastoral and horror with dream-like logic, encompassing contradictions and illusion. A woman's skin glows an ill orange in sunlight while exuding a speckled blue in the shade, the tone moving in and out of life. There is joy in the costumery, veils, sparklers, verdant scenery and the werewolf slipping in the mud. The monsters featured are hostile but not taken too seriously, a joke that the characters are in on. Sexuality is flagrantly on display while never being clearly defined or pornographic. Its expressiveness is pleasurably open, more innocent than exhibitionistic. Furthermore, the film features ridiculous underminings of its own conceits, like a few frames of a calf bucking and running as the calibrator mob is about to enter the scene.

The playfulness of the filmmaking is evident in the technique, which indulges in the most elementary manifestations of film illusion. Flash frames litter the credits, and a potion changes color as it touches the drinkers' lips.

Smith toys with the illusions of Hollywood cinema (particularly horror pictures), providing the stock mummy as a dense patsy who interrupts the sensualists' picnic. The monsters have a vital role in destroying the veneer of glamour adorning the would-be stars. The pinhead-like Mongolian Child who guns down the cake follies appears like one of Tod Browning's freaks, triumphant over the vapid fritterings of the "beautiful." To light, though, when his foot falls through the cake, he is immediately helped by one of the revelers he just shot with his water gun. He continues his declaration of victory with our gracious leave.

The film works as glib satire, but also evinces strong threads of Smith's sensibility. Through the fluid maneuvering of his actors, he constructs sardonic groupings of culture conditioning. *Normal Love* ventures violence, ritual and rape as threats in which the victims play a consenting part but emerge unaffected. The masquerades of monster and prey, idol and enchantress, acknowledge this frightening structure with the purpose, though, of lessening the control this power seeks to exert with mockery, and transforming its intents into make-believe and pleasure. The film is a permeable strip, its value shifting between a conscious and impulsive sensuality, and the dreamer's serious attempts to accommodate what is foreign and hostile.

San Francisco Cinematheque

In a *Film Culture* interview, Smith offhandedly claimed he had finished *Normal Love*. It seems an arbitrary statement considering the awkward continuity of the film today. Sections shot early on like the woman on the swing and the watermelon capers are linked to the concluding cake scene by an incantation superimposed over a landscape. The earlier scenes are more intimate and richer in color. In these, Smith created a better rapport with the actors than in the chaotically swinging finale. The expectation to finish the film with a defined structure conflicted with his natural form of continuous expression. In film he could retain improvisation, but the ability to keep the timeframe undefined was not as accessible to him as in live performance. Jack's genius as a performer can be seen in films by Andy Warhol (*The Life of Juanita Castro*), Ron Rice (*Chumlum*), and four films by Ken Jacobs: *Little Stabs at Happiness*, *Star Spangled to Death*, *Blonde Cobra*, and the Nervous System performance, *Two Wrenching Departures*, in which Ken found the means to linger over each amazing inflection of Jack's features.

Though he does not appear himself in a role, one is aware of Jack's sensibility throughout the film. *Normal Love* is an exultation of beings unconstrained in action and enlightened in outlook. The impetus for these elements is Smith's presence lurking just outside the shot, goading his creation to evoke the meaning he desires.

Normal Love was never "completed." Throughout the '60s and early '70s, Smith showed the film in a variety of differently edited versions, selecting and playing various exotic, vintage phonograph records as sound accompaniment. Jerry Tartaglia's restoration is an assemblage of already edited sequences, with a chronology based on notes made by Jack Smith and Tony Conrad in 1963-64 and a sound track that mirrors the spirit of Smith's impromptu performances. Proceeds from screenings of *Normal Love* will benefit the preservation of Smith's other unfinished films.

Jack Smith Filmography:

Scotch Tape (1962)

Flaming Creatures (1962-63)

Normal Love, aka *Normal Fantasy* (1963-64)

No President? (1969)

Jerry Tartaglia is the co-founder of Berks Filmmakers, Inc., in Reading, PA, and the author of the seminal essay, "The Gay Sensibility in Avant-Garde Cinema," published in *Millennium Film Journal*, Nos. 4/5 1979. His films and videos (*Ecce Homo*, *Vocation*, 1969, among many others) have been screened internationally to wide acclaim. He is currently working to preserve and disseminate Jack Smith's films.

Notes written by Chris Bishop.

MARJORIE KELLER: RECENT WORK

Marjorie Keller in Person

October 28, 1993

Marjorie Keller has been one of America's most influential independent filmmakers and film activists for nearly two decades, bridging multiple worlds in her work as artist, teacher and critic/historian. This evening marks her first appearance in the Bay area since 1985.

Foreign Parts (1979); 16mm, color, silent, 2.5 minutes

The second in a series of camera edited films. *Foreign Parts* portrays the poetics of family life in an unfamiliar context. (M.K.)

The Answering Furrow (1985); 16mm, color, sound, 27 minutes

Owing to Virgil's *Georgics*. With assistance from Hollis Melton and Helene Kaplan. Music: Charles Ives, *Sonata for Violin and Piano #4* ("Children's Day at the Camp Meeting") and *Ambrosian Chant* (Cappella Musicale del Duomo di Milano). Filmed in Yorktown Heights, New York; St. Remy en Provence, France; Mantua, Rome and Brindisi, Italy; and in Arcadia and the island of Kea in Greece.

Georgic I

In which the filmmaker depicts the annual produce first seen in spring — The furrowed earth ready for planting — The distribution, support and protection of young plants — The implements of the garden.

Georgic II

In which the life of Virgil is recapitulated in summer, with a digression on the sacred — The sheep of Arcadia — The handling of bees — The pagan Lion of Kea.

Georgic III

In which the filmmaker presents the skill and industry of the old man in autumn — Ancient custom and modern method — The use of implements of the garden.

Georgic IV

In which the compost is prepared at season's end — The filmmaker completes *The Answering Furrow* with the inclusion of her own image.

(M.K.)

Herein (1991); 16mm, color, sound, 50 minutes

"Dense and complicated, Marjorie Keller's *Herein* is optical archaeology, a meditation on memory, space, nostalgia, and the Rivington Street [sic] tenement building where, once upon a time, she was approached by an FBI agent to become an informer. (She declined.) The title, lifted from the cover of her FBI file, "all documentation herein is unclassified," is also a play on Keller's own investigation, where official untruths meet unofficial truths, and the counterhistory speaks up. In this fusion ... words trickle by on electronic screens, overlapping with images of different interiors, music, and voices, male and female, talking about life and reading excerpts from Emma Goldman's diaries.

"In spite of the nod to this anarchist demigod, Keller's film is radically, admirably unsentimental. As anyone who's lived the down-and-out knows, nostalgia is always tricky. In one section, a man recalls fondly a tenant who'd return to the building in the middle of the night screaming ('If you motherfuckers don't like it, too bad, this ain't Fifth Avenue'), only to be refuted by an insistent female voiceover. On and off, Keller peeks into apartments, shuffling images of tidy, well-appointed flats with those of bleak domestic confusion. Her camera moves in, panning intimately across split plaster walls, paint-encrusted pipes, a filthy stove and a gas line left over from the last century, as if the building's very nooks and crannies held clues. When history demands its due, look to the fissures."

—Manohla Dargis, *Village Voice*, October 26, 1993

See also "*Herein* — excerpts from a letter by the filmmaker to Saul Levine" by Marjorie Keller in *Cinematograph* Volume 5 / *Sentience* for more information on the making of *Herein*.

Part Four: Green Hill (1993); 16mm, color, silent, 4 minutes.

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Marjorie Keller Filmography:

Turtle (1969)
Backsection (1970)
Untitled (1971)
She/Va (1971)
History of Art 3939 (1972)
The Outer Circle (1973)
Objection (1974)
By 2's and 3's: Women (1976)
Superimposition (1) (1975)
Film Notebook: Part 1 (1975)
Film Notebook: 1969-76;
Part 2, Some of us in the Mechanical Age (1977)
Misconception (1977)
The Web (1977)
On the Verge of an Image of Christmas (1978)
Ancient Parts /Foreign Parts (1979)
Six Windows (1979)
Daughters of Chaos (1980)
The Fallen World (1983)
Lyrics (1983)
The Answering Furrow (1985)
Private Parts (1988)
Herein (1991)
Part Four: Green Hill (1993)

Program Notes Prepared by Ariel O'Donnell

BRAIN SALAD BUFFET An Unthinkable Triple Feature

October 31, 1993

The Brain Eaters (1958), directed by Bruno Ve Sota; b&w, 60 minutes

The Brainiac (El Baron del Terror) (1961), directed by Chano Urveta; b&w, 70 minutes

The Brain from Planet Arous (1958), directed by Nathan Hertz (Nathan Juran); b&w, 71 minutes

A few brief comments about the films:

Bruno Ve Sota, the director of *The Brain Eaters*, is described by Jim Morton in *Re/Search #10: Incredibly Strange Films*, as a "pug-ugly, fat character actor who usually plays heavies because of his menacing, bad looks. His list of credits include some of the best horror movies ever made—a Bruno Ve Sota film festival would be highly entertaining. His films include *Daughter of Horror*, *The Alligator People*, *The Undead*, *Attack of the Giant Leeches*, *Wasp Woman*, *Night Tide*, *Attack of the Mayan Mummy*, *Creature of the Walking Dead* and *Wild World of Batwoman*."

The Brain Eaters is a very loose adaptation of the Robert Heinlein story "The Puppet Masters," featuring invaders from inner space who snack on the brains of human hosts. Like the other films presented this evening, *The Brain Eaters* benefits enormously from moments of inspired, unintentional surrealism, triumphing over an insipid script and a lack of production money with lots of creative ideas.

I remember seeing *The Brainiac* as a kid on the Dr. Shock TV show, a late-night creature feature program that introduced a lot of kids in Philadelphia to the wonderful world of cheap monster movies. Dr. Shock's handlers had apparently cornered the market on Abel Salazar-produced Mexican horror films (dubbed for north-of-the-border consumption by the inestimable K. Gordon Murray)—for the good part of a year those were the only films shown on the program. I lost interest in them after a while because, to my kid's mind, they just weren't scary enough and there was too much unbelievably dopey dialogue. Many years later I saw *The Brainiac* again and couldn't believe that I had once dismissed it so casually. (Although I still can't figure out how his tongue marks appear on the *back* of his victims' necks when he attacks all of them frontally.)

For years *The Brainiac* was one of the greatest 16mm film rental bargains: Budget Films in L.A. rented it for \$25, then later, \$35. A week after booking the film for this show, Budget called back, informing me that they had officially “retired” the film—it was too badly damaged and couldn't, in good conscience, be rented any longer. Quality control was never a big factor at Budget in the first place, but to actually “retire” a print was a first for them as far as I know. Crestfallen, I looked for other prints but couldn't find any, so *The Brainiac* is projected as video tonight.

Everybody is pretty familiar with the John Agar story by now: the second most-decorated WWII soldier (Audie Murphy was the top man) who landed a part in John Ford's classic *She Wore A Yellow Ribbon*, hung out in Hollywood, met and married (and divorced) Shirley Temple, had a nasty drinking problem, and starred in an incredible string of horror and science fiction films during the fifties (*Tarantula*, *The Mole People*, *Attack of the Puppet People*, *Invisible Invaders*, and *Hand of Death*, etc.). His greatest role by far is that of nuclear physicist/good-guy in *The Brain from Planet Arous*. By 1970 Agar had abandoned acting and became an insurance salesman.

I hope this program nestles squarely in your “fissure of Orlando.”

Program Notes by Albert Kilchesty

IN MEMORIAM: PAUL SHARITS, 1943-1993
The Poetics of the Intellect

November 7, 1993

Paul Sharits died at his home in Buffalo on July 8th. He was a man of extremes and contradictions, but he was consistent in his belief that the artist's role is to illuminate the conditions of the human spirit. Through the medium of film he found an ideal means of expression for both his creative vision and philosophic insights. Influenced by Peter Kubelka's and Tony Conrad's experiments with the *flicker film*, Sharits went on to further break down traditional filmmaking structures: “I wish to abandon imitation and illusion to enter directly into the high drama of celluloid (itself).” His goal was to challenge “the viewers retina screen, optic nerve and individual psycho-physical subjectivities of consciousness.” Though peripherally involved in Fluxus, Sharits enthusiastically worked within that movement, producing *Word Movie* (Fluxfilm no. 29, 1966) and collaborating with founder George Maciunas and other Fluxus artists on a number of film and non-film related works. From 1973 to 1992 Sharits held a teaching position at SUNY in Buffalo. Tonight's tribute includes four works spanning his career, ranging from color/flicker to video self-portrait, from overt to covert political message, and including both single and multiple screen projection.

“Certain incidents in a creative person's life may not be an observable part of the concepts and/or forms that that person gives over to the world but those incidents may nevertheless be cardinal substructurally; those incidents may even be interesting, at least to those who care as much for the spirit as they do for its manifestations.”— Paul Sharits, excerpt from “Postscript as Preface,” *Film Culture* No. 65-66

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Piece Mandala/End War (1966); 16mm, color, sound, 5 minutes

"Sometimes, in the brilliant light cast by some trivial circumstance and swept away by the reverberations the incident has provoked, I suddenly see myself caught in the trap, immobilized in an impossible situation (site): there are only two ways out (either...or) and they are both barred: nothing to be said in either direction. Then the idea of suicide saves me, for *I can speak it* (and do not fail to do so) : I am reborn and dye this idea with the colors of life, either directing it aggressively against the loved object (a familiar blackmail) or in fantasy uniting myself with the loved object in death ('I shall lie down in the grave, pressed close against you')."

—Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse, Fragments*

S:TREAM:SECTION:S:ECTION:S:S:ECTIONED (1968-71); 16mm, color, sound, 42 minutes

"it is 3 a.m. and i am drinking sherry and 'editing' 'unnecessary' splice bars/dams 'in' my river, into a current of film of currents of almost hypnotically smooth/undulating lap dissolves of 'water' currents and silver-tones layers of ghost sirens' word-streams come swirling into the room, cycling around the corners of my studio, sound volumes intersecting themselves incomprehensibly; there are so many words that, while they each seem clearly and adamantly enunciated no one of them is distinct to me. overlapping : insistent : seductive : diaphanous : female : bell : chants..." —Paul Sharits, excerpt from *-UR(i)N(ul)LS:TREAM :S:S:ECTION:S:SECTION:S:S:ECTIONED(A)(lysis) JO: "1968-70", Film Culture 65-66*

Declarative Mode (1977); 16mm, color, silent, 40minutes, (dual projection)

"This is a non-structural film, even while it contains much *flicker*. One cannot predict the scene by scene fabric; nor is there any overall unifying principle. The film attempts to be like itself, full of unexpected twists and turns. It is an homage to Jefferson's anti-slavery section of his Declaration of Independence (which was voted down by the first congress) and it is my declaration of independence from the tyranny of preconception, of working form and overall structural logic."—Paul Sharits

Rapture (1987); video, color, sound, 20 minutes

Sharits' *Rapture* recalls the imagery of his earlier work in *Epileptic Seizure Comparison* (1976), as he convulsively moves from postures of degradation to ones of exaltation. Dressed only in a white hospital gown he resembles a figure from Greek tragedy caught in the grips of *divine madness*. Sharits' movements, in time to the frenetic musical score, are like a Bacchic mimetic dance performed in an archaic pagan ritual. As a counterbalance to this rhythmic construct the screen is intermittently filled with solid colors underscored by a monotonic and unnerving Haiku. Sharits, in *Rapture*, again explores the value of the abnormal state through which higher levels of consciousness can be reached.

Partial Filmography:

Ray Gun Virus (1966)

Word Movie/Flux film 29 (1966)

Piece Mandala/End War (1966)

Razor Blades (1965-68) two screen projection

N:O:T:H:I:N:G (1968)

T.O.U.C.H,I,N,G (1969)

S:TREAM:SECTION:S:ECTION:S:S:ECTIONED (1968-71)

Inferential Current (1971)

Sound Strip/Film Strip (1971) locational film piece

Axiomatic Granularity (1973)

Analytical Studies III: Color Frame Passages (1973-74)

Synchronoussoundtracks (1973-74) locational film piece

Damaged Film Loop (1973-74) locational film piece

Color Sound Frames (1974)

Vertical Contiguity (1974) locational film piece

Apparent Motion (1975)

Shutter Interface (1975) locational film piece

Dream Displacement (1975-76) locational film piece

Episodic Generation (1976) single screen version

of 4-screen installation piece
Epileptic Seizure Comparison (1976) single screen version of
 2-screen installation piece
Tails (1976)
Episodic Generation (1977-78) 4-screen projection
Brancusi's Sculpture Ensemble at Tirgu Jiu (1977-84)
3rd Degree (1982) 3-screen projection
Bad Burns (1982)
Rapture (1987) video

Program notes by Ariel O'Donnell

BROUGHTON AT 80: A CELEBRATION
James Broughton in person

November 11, 1993

Adventures of Jimmy (1950); 16mm, b&w, sound, 11 minutes

A lonely innocent from the backwoods goes to the Big City searching for an ideal mate. He is stalked by ladies of the town, lodges in the slums, exhausts himself in a dance hall, tries prayer and poetry and psychoanalysis. Thanks to his naive persistence, his quest proves alarmingly successful.

This parody of a stereotypical fable I made as a spoof of my own idealism. I enacted the title role to mock my awkward pursuit of love objects.

Testament (1974); 16mm, color, sound, 20 minutes

In 1972 I was invited to present a speech at the opening of the new county library in the town of Modesto, California. The librarian wanted an inaugural address by an author who had been born in the town. I was the only candidate they could unearth. When I explained to my class in Film Directing at San Francisco State University that I would be unable to meet them on the day of the event, they proposed staging a "homecoming" parade for me through the streets of the town. From the footage of that colorful occasion, I spun what I thought would be my final film: a self-portrait bouncing me from my babyhood to my imagined death. To summarize the quest for erotic transcendence that animated all my cinema I mixed film clips, still photos and staged scenes. I was assisted at the camera by an ingratiating redhead named H. Edgar Jenkins, who had filmed the Modesto parade in slow motion. At the film's beginning I am seen rocking in a chair by the Pacific Ocean, questioning my life:

I asked the Sea how deep things are.

O, said She, that depends upon
 how far you want to go.

Scattered Remains (1988, with Joel Singer); 16mm, color, sound, 14 minutes

In 1988 when the San Francisco International Film Festival planned to honor me with a tribute to my forty years of filmmaking, I thought it apropos to prepare a new work for the occasion. Joel proposed making yet another portrait of me, this time his "Portrait of the Poet as James Broughton." He devised a dozen techniques to enliven my reading of a dozen poems. The last of these is, "I hear the happy sound of one hand clapping / all the way to Buddha land." In the final image clowns first seen on a beach at the beginning reappear transformed into Pan and Hermes dancing away toward the sea.

Film notes by James Broughton from *Making Light of It* (City Lights, 1992).

Daystar Express

I am an old youngster who gets up with Venus
I am an old childhood of the dawn
 I worship the morning star
 I ride the morning star
I arise early to run after my downfall

I am an old boy glowing as the light fades
I have a new childhood ready for the dusk
 I dropkick the sunrise
 I polevault to sundown
I perish nightly on my nonstop dayshift

There is no doubt about it
 a cloud is in the sky
What happens is what happens
 and I happen to be I

There is no doubt about it
 the rain is on the sea
What's happening is happening
 and it's happening to me

What comes in will
eventually go out
and what goes out
comes in again

My in goes out
my out goes in
Both in and out
 are me
My in's as big as
all outdoors
and all's as small
 as me

—James Broughton

THE SURVIVAL OF IMAGES
A Slide Installation by Gavin Flint

November 14, 1993

Images from films can become our memories, often more powerful than memories of actual events. *The Survival of Images* is a recreation of cinema as a metaphor for the mind. In this installation, well-known narrative films are described by texts that are presented visually on slides in the hope that the viewer may recollect images from those films. The viewer is thereby invited to question her relationship to the image-making process and to become an active participant in the cinematic event.—Gavin Flint.

“Whenever we are trying to recover a recollection, to call up some period of our history, we become conscious of an act *sui generis* by which we detach ourselves from the present in order to replace ourselves, first, in the past in general, then, in a certain region of the past—a work of adjustment, something like a focusing camera...”

—Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*

“Those who are so absorbed in the world of the movie by its images, gestures, and world, that they are unable to supply what really makes it a world, do not have to dwell on particular points of its mechanics during a screening.” —Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception”, in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*

“In his Gran Teatro delle Scienze, Giulio Camillo (ca. 1475-1544) hoped to construct a model theater that reversed the relationship of spectator to audience. Originally, Camillo had thought to use the metaphor of the human body as a microcosm of the universe in order to illustrate his memory system, but later he chose instead the ancient metaphor of the world as a great theater.” —Judith Barry, “Casual Imagination” in *Blasted Allegories*

“Mistakes in Regard to Content of the Story:

- Lack of recognizable content.
- No relation to the audience's interests at a certain time.
- Cost in no proportion to appeal.”

—Eugene Vale, *The Technique of Screen and Television Writing*

“*Matter and Memory* was the diagnosis of a crisis in psychology. Movement, as physical reality in the external world, and the image, as psychic reality in consciousness, could no longer be opposed. The Bergsonian discovery of a movement-image, and more profoundly, of a time-image, still retains such a richness today that it is not certain that all its consequences have been drawn.” —Gilles Deleuze on *Matter and Memory*

“Pure perception, in fact, however rapid we suppose it to be, occupies a certain depth of duration, so that our successive perceptions are never the real moments of things, as we have hitherto supposed, but are moments of our consciousness.” “The true effect of repetition is to decompose and then recompose, and thus appeal to the intelligence of the body.”

—Henri Bergson, “Of the Selection of Images”, in *Matter and Memory*

“A good concept for a screenplay can be described in three words.”

—Kotaro Shimogori describing a Hollywood producer

“It is not a matter of boring the public to death with transcendent cosmic preoccupations. That there may be profound keys to thought and action with which to interpret the whole spectacle, does not in general concern the spectator, who is simply not interested.”

—Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*

“In contemporary society and culture...the question of the legitimation of knowledge is formulated in different terms. The grand narrative has lost its credibility, regardless of what mode of unification it uses, regardless of whether it is speculative narrative or a narrative of emancipation.”

—Jean-Francoise Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*

“Jacques must have said a hundred times that it was written up above that he would not finish the story and I can see, Reader, that Jacques was right. I can see that this annoys you. Well then, carry on his story where he left off and finish it however you like.”

—Denis Diderot, *Jacques the Fatalist*

“For thirty-five cents each we went into the beat-up old movie-house and sat in the balcony till morning, when we were shooed downstairs. The people who were in that all-night movie-house were the end...”

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Number two feature film was George Raft, Sidney Greenstreet, and Peter Lorre in a picture about Istanbul. We saw both of these things six times each during the night. We saw them waking, we heard them sleeping, we sensed them dreaming, we were permeated completely with...this weird dark Myth of the East when morning came. All my actions since have been dictated automatically to my subconscious by this horrible osmotic experience." —Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*

San Francisco resident Gavin Flint is a multimedia artist who makes videos, installations, and books. A continuing theme in his work is language and the way it influences the systems that control our lives. Flint has most recently exhibited videotapes and installations at Artists Space in New York and the Randolph Street Gallery in Chicago, and will open *The Doris Day Story* at the San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery in January. His book, *Vincent's Coloring Book*, is being distributed by Printed Matter Bookstore in New York.

AL HERNANDEZ / CLAIRE BAIN Filmmakers in person

November 18, 1993

Films by Al Hernandez

"My films are a tool in the process of self-discovery and growth. A process where imagination and experimentation are gold." — Al Hernandez

Jump Fence (in-progress); S-8mm on videotape, sound, 24 minutes

"Child abuse, hip hop, virtual reality and organic spirituality are some of the themes that come together in this surreal film of a suburban youth's journey to rebirth." (A.H.)

Untitled work in-progress; 16mm, color, sound, 4 minutes

Films by Claire Bain

Petroglyph Park (1993); Super-8mm, b&w/color, sound, 12 minutes

Petroglyph Park is about a visit home to Albuquerque, New Mexico, last Christmas. We are led through the landscape by my nephew, Marcus, and my sister, Anna. The film shows relationships of camera, subject, family, history, and culture. Marcus narrates about pre-Spanish invasion picture writings in the rock, and shows us modern Christianity at its glitzy extreme in the form of Christmas decorations on my neighborhood houses. (C.B.)

Vel and the Bus (1993); Super-8mm, color, sound, 20 minutes

Starring Vel Richards, Yolanda Bain, Al Hernandez, David Garden, Tomas Santi, Ken Rosenthal, and others.

Vel and the Bus is the heart-rending tale of Vel Richards' brave recovery from a harrowing accident. We join Vel on her subsequent journey along the path of recovery and self-discovery which leads into the full bloom of mid-life. This film is the fourth in a series of *Vel* movies. (C.B.)

Originally from Santa Fe, New Mexico, Claire Bain began making films in 1985 and received a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1989.

Vel Richards was born in Hobbs, New Mexico in 1949. She recently quit her job as a typist and is planning to open a laundry. She met Claire Bain at the lunch counter at the original Woolworths at Powell and Market Streets in 1989. Their fruitful collaboration has yielded four films thus far.

IMAGINING INDIANS BY VICTOR MASAYESVA, JR
Presented by Michelle Valladares

November 21, 1993

Hopi videomaker Victor Masayesva, Jr. is one of the first Native American media artists to emerge with his own authentic voice while steadfastly addressing his traditional culture. His works have won awards including a Gold Hugo at the 1984 Chicago International Film Festival, and have been broadcast in the U.S. and on German and Spanish Television. Tonight Masayesva's associate, Michelle Valladares, will present his most personal work, *Itam Hakim, Hopiit*, a visually vibrant, lyrical portrait of Hopi life and sensibility; and *Imagining Indians*, produced by ITVS for national broadcast, which critiques Hollywood's continuing absorption of American Indian culture as grist for its glamour mill.

***Itam Hakim, Hopiit* (1985); video, color, sound, 58 minutes**

Itam Hakim, Hopiit translates directly as 'we, someone, the Hopi People.' As used by the narrator, Ross Macaya, the phrase indirectly reflects our ancient heritage here on the North American Continent: we came here as unknown bands to fulfill our destiny of a united Hopi Nation. It is the process of becoming, this journey to the heart of the North American Continent that is Macaya's story.

Ross Macaya was born in the last decade of the 1800's, and is the oldest member of a storytelling clan: the Tobacco. Fluent in English, Spanish, Navajo, Santo Domingo, Zuni, and Tewa, Macaya's tale is told in archaic Hopi. Having widely traveled during the course of his years as a freighter and trader, he immediately appreciated the television medium and its potential for communicating and for storytelling. Fully conscious of the technology after a few sessions, he later provided us with invaluable insights into the editing process and the art of storytelling.

Clan stories are jealously protected, often crucial to the performance of closed ceremonies. In this instance, Macaya was telling the clan story of his fathers, practically extinct because of taboos and restrictions placed against the Bow Clan, often by their own members. Refusing alliances and binding ties with other clans, the Bow Clan numbers two male members today.

—Victor Masayesva Jr.

In renting or purchasing *Itam Hakim, Hopiit*, Hopi producer Victor Masayesva, Jr.'s poetic visualization of Hopi philosophy and prophecy, programmers are given a choice between a subtitled version (with the words of Macaya, aged storyteller, translated into English) and one that eschews translation. Reflection upon the relative merits of each format and one's own preferences (and indeed the tape deserves more than one single viewing) is likely to tell more about oneself than the video work in question, and in so doing rightly shifts the focus of attention from an 'exotic' text to its impact on a non-Hopi audience.

The tape offers a cultural bridge of a very different kind, evoking a culture and an environment through the look and sound of it and the fluidly majestic pace of its unfolding. The untitled version is more likely to impart the drama of distant rainstorms across desert landscapes or cause one to gasp in astonishment at the rainbow that enters the frame during a revelatory pan. For indeed the lyricism of Masayesva's imagery and the tone of reverence for the earth, whose caretaker's the Hopi consider themselves to be, has the power to transport the viewer, substituting our Western predilection to map cosmology and culture onto constructed paradigms—that is, to interpret—for knowledge of another, less aggressive kind arrived at through revelation. It is the achievement of Masayesva's work that even the most committed to interpretation among us stand to be converted, if only for a moment, and taught the quiet virtues of observation.

—Michael Renov, Anthropol '87 - Meyerhoff Film Festival

***Imagining Indians* (1992); 16mm, color, sound, 80 minutes**

For years, Native American objects, images and rituals have been claimed for purposes having little or nothing to do with their original context. From comic book panels and wooden Indians to sports mascots and Kachina dolls, the appropriation of Native America is now spurring some Native Americans to say 'no' to the buying and selling of their cultural heritage. Says Hopi filmmaker Victor Masayesva, Jr., 'Native

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Americans are asked to sell the sacred aspects of their existence as art, politics or a spiritual agenda, and tribal communities are questioning what is being compromised, destroyed, lost and sold.'

Imagining Indians looks at the problems that ensue when Native myths and rituals become a commodity. The video addresses these issues through an examination of such commercially successful films as *Dances With Wolves*, *A Man Called Horse*, *Thunderheart*, and *Darkwind*. Says Masayesva, "Coming from a Hopi village which became embroiled in the filming of *Darkwind*, I felt a keen responsibility as a community member, not only as an individual, to address these impositions on our tribal lives."

He adds, "I have come to believe that the sacred aspects of our existence that encourage the continuity and vitality of Native peoples are being manipulated by an aesthetic in which money is the most important qualification. This contradicts values intrinsic to what is sacred and may destroy our substance. I am concerned about a tribal and community future which is reflected in my film and I hope this challenges the viewer to overcome glamorized Hollywood views of the Native American, which obscure the difficult demands of walking the spiritual road of our ancestors."

—Independent Television Service

EXULTATIONS: IN LIGHT OF THE GREAT GIVING **Bruce Elder in Person**

December 2, 1993

Exultations: In Light of the Great Giving (1992); 16mm, color, sound, 100 minutes

Co-maker: Alexa-Frances Shaw

The Apostle Paul tells us that there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female. And so this film moves towards the vision of time when Heaven descends to earth and makes all earth one with Heaven; when the two become as one; when the outside becomes as the inside, and the inside as the outside; the above as below and the below as the above; when the male and the female become one and the same, neither the male as a male, nor the female as a female; when form and energy, love and beauty, desire and response, become identical; when the end returns to the beginning and the beginning finds its completion in the end; when the new creation joins with the revelation.

Inspired by meditation on two of John Donne's greatest poems, "The Extasie":

Where, like a pillow on a bed,
 A Pregnant banke swel'd up, to rest
The violets reclining head,
 at we two, one anothers best.
Our hands were firmly cimented
 With a fast balme, and thence did spring,
Our eye-beames twisted, and did thred
 Our eyes, upon one double string:
So to'entergraft our hands, as yet
Was all the meanes to make us one,
And pictures in our eyes to get
 Was all our propagation.
As twixt two equal Armies, Fate
 Suspends uncertain victorie,
Our soules, (which to advance their state,
 Were gone out,) hung twixt her, and mee.

and "The Canonization"

Call us what you will, wee are made such by love;
 Call here one, mee another Ilye,
 We're Tapers too, and at our owne cost die,
 And wee in us fine the'Eagle and Dove.
 The Phoenix ridle hath more wit
 By us, we two being one are it.
 So to one neutral thing both sexes fit,
 Wee dye and rise the same, and prove
 Mysterious by this love.

Finally, the phrase "The great giving" is taken from Rainer Maria Rilke, and used partly according to the sense he gave it. For, at the end of *Consolations: Love is an Art of Time* I, too, seemed to have lost the power to continue. Then there was a great giving, a moment when the films that conclude **The Book of All the Dead** [Elder's epic multi-film cycle that he has been working on since the late seventies] were given to me all at once. After that, there was only four years of shooting, editing, and most time consuming of all, computer programming till they were done. The great giving is also the Creation and the Revelation, and the Sacrifice.

—Bruce Elder

The Book of All the Dead (approximately 40 hours) is comprised of three sections: *The System of Dante's Hell*, *Consolations (Love is an Art of Time)*, and *Exultations (In Light of the Great Giving)*. The cycle concerns recovering what has been lost in the modern era, a sense of subjectivity and personal as well as cultural values, an awe before God and Nature. As Elder has stated, "The cycle begins with the emergence of Nature out of nothing and ends with the New Beginning. Moreover, the interweaving of themes in **The Book of All the Dead** constitutes a gigantic metaphor for the development and conflicts within an individual whose development in turn stands for the historical process itself. On a more psychological level, its main theme is love and the irreconcilability of love with domination. Along with this there is a social or political level of import which deals with the attempt to rescue a corrupt world presided over by degenerate idols...The protagonist of the cycle is Time.

"Two more sections of **The Book of All the Dead** will be released in 1993—*Burying the Dead (Into the Light)* and *Et Resurrectus Est*. In December 1992, I decided, with sections of running time left to create, not to finish the project. This seems a fitting tribute to the broken dreams that the epic imagination of the twentieth-century left as its legacy."

The third part of the cycle, *Exultations (In Light of the Great Giving)*, includes the films "Flesh Angels" (1990), "Newton and Me" (1990), "Azure Serene: Mountains, Rivers, Sea and Sky" (1992), and "Exultations: In Light of the Great Giving" (1992).

Bruce Elder lives in Toronto, Canada. His works have been shown widely in North America and Europe, and he has had retrospectives at the Cinematheque Quebecoise, the Art Gallery of Ontario, and Anthology Film Archives. He has also written two books and many articles on film, music and poetry.

HOLDING GROUND:

Films by Diane Kitchen, Lynne Merrick, and Gunvor Nelson

December 5, 1993

In this evening's program both geographical placement and spiritual motivations are examined as three filmmaker create portraits of cultures familiar and remote. The artistic differences and the range of subject matter inspire unusual insights into the state of the modern world.

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Roots, Thorns (1993), by Diane Kitchen; 16mm, color, sound, 23 minutes

"She thought of her children and she sang. He tried to translate but couldn't. He said, 'A man doesn't understand her meaning.'"

The discontinuity in both dialogue and imagery in *Roots, Thorns* reflects the fragmentation of the Peruvian Ashaninka Indians as they precariously move into the next millennium. The Ashaninka are people that "exist between the sun and earth" or, more precisely, between nature and civilization. In *Roots, Thorns* Diane Kitchen provides the viewer with a glimpse into this tribe's daily activities. Ackbar Abbas, writing on Kitchen's earlier film on the Ashaninka, *Before We Knew Nothing*, said: "A filmmaker like Ms. Kitchen uses the camera to present and introduce images; moreover, images which have their own order of understanding and which she does not presume to have completely understood. In her film the presence of the camera is neither hidden nor flaunted; rather the camera is placed in such a way that its field of vision does not become hegemonic."

The Ashaninka wear westernized clothing and listen to recorded music while simultaneously carrying on the traditions of the ancient past. Their lush jungle location offers isolation but not freedom from the intrusion of the "white man" whose existence seems elusive yet omnipresent. Of these outsiders the Ashaninka say, "They do impressive things but are dangerous."

How much longer the Indians can remain is uncertain, but as the story goes: "They say there was a strong vine and it fastened around him and said— Live here! Live here!"

"So it was."

A Stack of Black Cats (1989), by Lynne Merrick; 16mm, color, sound, 40 minutes

Under a limitless winter sky, its clarity suggesting a bitter coldness, Lima goes about her chores as she has for a lifetime. She is the feminine embodiment of the western spirit, a woman who steadfastly held her family together, battling poverty, the elements, and death—the provider of food and the giver of life. Lima's refusal to abandon her family home high in the rugged Montana wilderness is indicative of her unwillingness to acquiesce to old age and death. Her existence, however comparatively insignificant, convinces one that the forces of nature would be left ever so slightly out of balance without her.

Old Digs (1992), by Gunvor Nelson; 16mm, color, sound, 20 minutes

Sound by Patrick Gleeson.

"Do we ever understand what we think? We only understand that thinking which is a mere equation, and from which nothing comes out but what we have put in. That is the working of the intellect. But beyond that there is a thinking in primordial images—in symbols which are older than historical man; which have been ingrained in him from earliest times, and, eternally living, outlasting all generations, still make up the groundwork of the human psyche. It is only possible to live the fullest life when we are in harmony with these symbols; wisdom is a return to them."

— C.G. Jung from *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*

In *Old Digs* Nelson creates a surrealism of memory, combining the anticipations of her return to Sweden colored with a subtle lament. Reflections in a river remark upon the passage of time, images lost and found. Her symbols are both universal and personal: a bicycle, a dead bird, a worn fence. The chatter of voices in Nelson's native language underscores her attempt at making sense of her recollections, and how these recollections alter her understanding of the present.

Program notes by Ariel O'Donnell

TIMOLEON WILKINS & JEROME CAROLFI
 Filmmakers in Person

December 9, 1993

Films by Timoleon Wilkins

Colorado native Timoleon Wilkins presents several recent films that explore the "natural" world, "this first person terrain that comes into being out of instinct...certain things have to be filmed, edited, etc. for reasons I am often not aware of until later." (TW) Wilkins now resides in San Francisco. (Film descriptions by the filmmaker)

Night Rose (1991-91); 16mm, color, silent, 4 minutes

This is my first 16mm film, shot a few blocks from where I lived in Denver. The "Greek" temple you see here is the "infamous" Chessman park—by day, a benign everyday city park; by night, Denver's most popular spot for gay cruising. On any warm night there was literally the glow of a cigarette behind every tree, yet the surrounding streets were so desolate and calm—the neighborhood seemed to lie in waiting—ripe for nightly explorations with the camera and a first poetic cinematic inspiration. I did not try to film what was happening among those pillars and roses—it was too dark—too obvious...instead the film became a record of the mood of that time and place.

T.V. Fan/Sierra (1991-92); 16mm, b&w, silent, 5 minutes

Two films that came together in many ways. The first: wasting away a warm summer day in front of television watching "repeats" (read repetition). The second: a passage through Reno (the city is like one big T.V. show itself)—in solitude, but not alone. Black space, gambling, desert environs—on to California.

Below Angel World (1993); 16mm, color, sound, 11 minutes

Exploring the archetypes of the city in glorious, dark, and subtle Kodachrome. A torch song to a love that hasn't happened and a longing for open space. The rivers and torrents of neon, water, and automobiles make psychosexual fire that is abruptly contained by the ever-present fire engines of loneliness.

Grandma, Subrosa (1993); Super-8mm, color, sound, 8 minutes

A portrait of my grandmother, Dorothy Kopulos, in Golden Gate Park. She appears in this film as if undercover—her image is fleeting within the constructed nature of the park—yet she is able to emerge strong, just when you need her most. Like in life. This film is dedicated to her.

Father Trip (1993); Super-8mm, color, silent, 3 minutes

This is a roll of very outdated film I took in April of this year when I finally got to meet my biological father for the first time since I was born. He took me up to the Russian River one day, and that trip is the main body of the film. There were other trips happening at that time, too; all in my head—all indescribable.

Films by Jerome Carolfi

Jerome Carolfi has been making films since 1979. He received a BA in Communication Arts from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1982 and an MFA in Filmmaking from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1987. His films have been screened at the Ann Arbor Film Festival, Film in the Cities, the Film Arts Foundation Festival, and the Cinematheque. In addition, his work has been screened internationally in Germany, Norway and Spain.

Lunacy (1988); 16mm, b&w/color, sound, 12.5 minutes

Influenced by American experimental films of the '40s and '50s, *Lunacy* is a surreal portrait of a full moon night (lunacy=mooncrazy). Within the film's structure, viewers are taken through a waxing and waning vortex of temporary insanity like a dusk-to-dawn drive-in dream. The moon's energy finds a personal context within

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the film's constant transformations, suggesting altered perceptual states, fleeting illusions and irrationality in various forms. What emerges is a kind of expressionist portrait of Fall making its transition to Winter with the autumnal full moon marking a turning point in the changing seasons.

Town of Day (1989); 16mm, b&w/color, sound, 13.5 minutes

The process of making this film, which began as an exploration of personal identity, family history and birthplace, ultimately led me to question the manner in which historical narratives are too often regarded as authoritative sources of truth. Ostensibly the film commemorates my father's death, but in so doing it also acknowledges connections between his life and the lives of others who had lived in the same Wisconsin community. By looking back to the rural country of my father's and grandfather's generations, I was reminded that this place had been home for both Native Americans and Whites and that both cultures had left traces of their existences behind them. I think that it was only through the enormity of my father's death that I was truly able to understand how life and death events draw people together in much more profound ways than written histories. Ultimately, our lives and loves emerge from, revolve around and retreat into the same land. When I think about those White European settlers in the "new" world, I wonder how the new "owners" of the land could have known that they would also come to own the sorrow of the dispossessed?

Inflorescence (1991); Super-8mm, b&w/color, silent, 11 minutes

As the cold and snowy winter of the upper Midwest begins to give way to spring, the transition is usually preceded by the gradual reemergence of light as the longer days provide a subtle clue of what is to follow. When this happens, a feeling of something incipient is in the air, but not much appears to happen. Suddenly, though, the transformation makes itself visible and spring arrives, bursting upon the scene like the inflorescing of the pink cherry blossoms.

Loci Lacunae (1993); 16mm, b&w/color, sound, 7.5 minutes

Taken from Latin, *Loci Lacunae* means "sites of the blank spaces in the texts," and it is the nature of filmic gaps which this work explores. Created by combining marginal photo-realist imagery with abstract hand-processed footage, *Loci Lacunae* provokes a consideration of the level on which its texts function, challenging the viewer to regard the gaps not as denoting something that is missing, but something else that is present.

(Film descriptions by the filmmaker)

"When It Comes Right Down to Doing It"
(from *Town of Day*)

I am just almost sure that
he had it / nothing, I said.

He wouldn't, he wouldn't look at it, I said.

And I said this time he's gotta help me, I said.

And she said, I didn't understand it was that way at home,
she said.

But she said he's making no effort to learn, she said,
and / I ...

And she said, you go home this morning,
she said. You don't stay.

She said, you go home.

And I went home.

(two voices together)

– But you just try ...

– But he just thought that I had to go

Ma got back just as,

Ma was just gonna go out and take a walk,

It was like Ma had a premonition.

Well, actually, I mean you could say he was
he was, I mean he was truly, truly dying.

That was it.

That was it – I mean, Dad was a, a liver.
 I mean he lived, he lived life to the utmost.
 ... for a man that was almost dying ...
 or ... You don't, you know,
 face it yourself. You think,
 You think well, yeah, he's gonna be here yet
 tomorrow. I'll come back again tomorrow ...

That's the way, I always felt that way.
 He's gonna be here yet tomorrow.
 I just ... every day I thought that.
 When I went to bed or something,
 he's gonna be here yet tomorrow, I used to say
 to myself. He's gonna be here yet tomorrow.
 And I ... deep down I knew that
 one day would be the last but still
 I always looked forward to the next day
 he was going to be there yet.

I don't know if I ever told you this.
 She said to him,
 George, well this morning I'm gonna be invisible.
 You're not so sure you want to do that
 when it comes right down to doing it.

We're all in the same boat.
 That's the way it is Jerry,
 there are people up there that are gonna die,
 and there's no hope for.
 a couple of them ...
 (unitelligible, voice like auctioneer)
 ... and they'd say,
 well, everybody is in the *same boat*.
 Yeah.
 All the people up there have people dying.
 ... because you all knew,
 you were all in exactly the same boat.

—Jerome Carolfi

WINTER DREAM SONGS:

Films by Peter Herwitz, Joseph Cornell and Sergei Eisenstein

December 12, 1993

Films by Peter Herwitz:

In the Shape of Waking, Part 2 (In the Rhythm of Falling) (1989-90); 16mm, color, silent, 8 minutes

"This film quartet represents a kind of luminous waking from the darker dream worlds of the past portrayed in my earlier films. Part 2 is a lyrical journey through the city whose shapes and colors rhyme with but are veiled by paint and other media on the surface of the film."

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Autumn Chanson (Song of Autumn) (1991); 16mm, color, silent, 5 minutes

"A song which uses the rich colors of autumn to interweave with one another in patterns that sing of the beauty and fragility of this time of year. More than in any of my other films, the superimpositions and layering seem to create a voice and accompaniment reminiscent of songs, melodies, or lieder."

Films from *Melodies aux pays des rêves (Songs from the Country of Dreams)* (1992-93);
16mm, color, silent

"A song cycle which takes as its themes the subtle and delicate areas between dreams and waking, imagination and reveries, and the potential beauty and intensity of seeing the worked thought moments of epiphany—as with memory and dreams."

The Color of Rain 2 minutes

Rainy days—dreamlike colors and transformations.

The Dream Gardens 5 minutes

A garden, a niche, a place where dreams and shadows, clouds and flowers, angels and people can meet.

The Enchanted Places 3 minutes

A child's place for dreaming, outdoors, by the water, in the forest, on a swing. The film takes its title from Christopher Robin Milnes's memoirs and is my version of A. A. Milne's Thousand Acre Woods.

Reflections 2 minutes

The most abstract film in the series, this work ponders the elusive nature of reflections—both as mirror and as thoughts.

Of Twilight and Leaves 3 minutes

After some dark and delicate dreams an explosive one with deep rich colors, leaves turning color and bathed in light, and an ecstatic movement towards twilight.

Winter Dream Lieder (1993); 16mm, color, silent, 12 minutes

"A series of simple melodies that are nevertheless meant to capture the dream-like quality of winter scenes and interior moments. The film juxtaposes images of flowers and snow in such a way as is meant to evoke some complicated textures of dream and a simple dichotomy of blossoming and darkness." (P.H.)

Reverie For Peter Herwitz

within the space of a blink is a journey
 through light and sky
 seeing the world from the slits
 that let light through a feather
 distilling time to make a second out of a day
 making colors out of muddy water

on top of rosy shapes of skin
 the complexions of clouds
 or windows on faces
 shift in and out of the eyes
 their movements as inevitable
 as those of the sun

choreographing the minutes into mosaics
 we grasp time in our mouths
 and blow it out as bubbles
 echoing the leaves rustling
 by showing a hand caressing a head

if you speed up your blinking
 you see the world as it passes though itself
 as reflections of reflections
 frame by frame

if you open your eyes wider
 to suck in all the light
 the wrinkles make patterns
 that show us the world
 as the movement of dreams

—Sharon Shively

A Legend for Fountains (1957-70), by Joseph Cornell; 16mm, b&w, silent, 16 1/2 minutes

Known until 1965 also as "A Fable for Fountains." With Susan Miller as the *protagonist*. With reference to Garcia Lorca's poem "Tu Infancia en Menton." The first part of the film entitled *fragments*. The second, "...your solitude, in shy hotels" (a line from a Lorca poem).

Your Childhood in Menton

"Yes, your childhood now a legend of fountains."

—Jorge Guillén

Yes, your childhood now a legend of fountains.
 The train, and the woman who fills the sky.
 Your evasive solitude in hotels
 and your pure mask of another sign.
 It is the sea's childhood and the silence
 when wisdom's glasses all are shattered.
 It is your inert ignorance of where
 my torso lay, bound by fire.
 Man of Apollo, I gave you love's pattern,
 the frenzied nightingale's lament.
 But, pasture of ruins, you kept lean
 for brief and indecisive drams.
 Thought of what was confronted, yesterday's light,
 tokens and traces of chance.

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Your restless waist of sand
favors only tracks that don't ascend.
But must I search all corners
for your tepid soul without you which doesn't understand
you
with my thwarted Apollonian sorrow
that broke through the mask you wear.
There, lion, there, heavenly fury.
I'll let you graze on my cheeks;
there, blue horse of my madness,
pulse of nebula and minute hand.
I'll search the stones for scorpions
and your childlike mother's clothes,
midnight lament and ragged cloth
that tore the moon out of the dead man's brow.
Yes, your childhood now a legend of fountains.
Soul a stranger to my veins' emptiness,
I'll search for you rootless and small.
Eternal love, love, love that never was!
Oh, yes! I love. Love, love! Leave me.
Don't let them gag me, they who seek
the wheat of Saturn through the snow,
who castrate creatures in the sky,
clinic and wilderness of anatomy.
Love, love, love. Childhood of the sea.
Your tepid soul without you which doesn't understand you.
Love, love, a flight of deer
through the endless heart of whiteness.
And your childhood, love, your childhood.
The train, and the woman who fills the sky.
Not you or I, not the wind or the leaves.
yes, your childhood now a legend of fountains.

—*Federico Garcia Lorca*, translated by Edwin Honig

Romance Sentimentale (1930), by Sergei M. Eisenstein, G.V. Alexandrov, Edouard Tisse; 16mm, b&w, sound, 20 minutes

This short film was commissioned by Leonard Rosenthal, the "Pearl King" of Paris, as a showcase for his Russian mistress, singer Mira Giry. *Romance Sentimentale* is credited as Eisenstein's first sound film. In actuality, he had contributed very little to the production because he was unable to cope with Giry's overbearing personality and closed-mindedness for the experimental. When Eisenstein left for Mexico to begin production on *Que Viva Mexico*, Alexandrov stayed behind in Paris to complete *Romance Sentimentale*.

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