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PROGRAM NOTES 1994

SAN FRANCISCO
CINEMATHEQUE

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San Francisco, California
2007

**San Francisco Cinematheque
1994 Program Notes**

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SPECTRAL CINEMA

FILMS INSPIRED BY FOUND AND RECEIVED IMAGES

Thursday, January 27, 1994 Center for the Arts

Whether as personal souvenirs of lost moments or as mass-consumed imitations of life, images govern our existence. This evening's show features many different examples of how filmmakers use extant images (postcards, family snapshots, footage from other films) to create powerful, new reconstruction's of reality, critique the image-world, and breathe life into old shadows.

A Fainting Woman's Lost Monkey (1993), by Eve Heller;
16mm, b&w, sound-on-tape, 15 minutes

An exotic Coney Island fantasy. "Zentropic."

—Jennifer Montgomery

By Night with Torch and Spear (date unknown, released in 1978),
by Joseph Cornell; 16mm, tinted color, silent, 9 minutes

One of the most beautiful of Joseph Cornell's found footage films, *By Night with Torch and Spear* is a re-edited documentary on steel manufacturing that concentrates primarily on the smelting process. Tinted blue, gold, and pink these shots are printed upside down and backwards and are interspersed with other shots (images of the Sahara in negative, Indians dancing around a campfire, the title—"By night with torch and spear"—used to name the film), creating, in the words of J. Hoberman, "as stunning an example of alchemical transformation as the industrial process it intermittently depicts."

strain, restrain (1993 Premiere), by Elise Hurwitz; 16mm, b&w, silent, 3 minutes

An old family snapshot sparks a penumbral meditation on the body's connection to its past.

I'll Walk with God (1994 Premiere), by Scott Stark;
16mm, color, sound-on-tape, 10 minutes

Using airline emergency instructional illustrations, *I'll Walk with God* pictorially charts the stations of the cross in a flight attendant's passage into sainthood.

passage à l'acte (1993), by Martin Arnold; 16mm, b&w, sound, 12 minutes

Austrian filmmaker Martin Arnold's *passage à l'acte* "dismantles a simple sequence consisting of five takes: a breakfast table with a family of four, almost idyllic in the original (the sequence comes from *To Kill a Mockingbird* with Gregory Peck, who incidentally remarked on Arnold's film with the words 'Nice sound, but didn't get it!'). Using a small gesture by the father, *passage à l'acte* uncovers the authoritarian center of the middle-class family. It shows how the authority of the father is directed at the son, accepted and emulated by him, and then directed at the sister, who in turn—in relation to the father—takes up the same position as the mother. *passage à l'acte* also deals with the theme of corporeality by cutting up the 'body' of classic, narrative Hollywood cinema in order to reveal something of the codes which were passed on to us by Hollywood and integrated into our own corporeal history."

—Peter Tscherkassky, *Austrian Avant-Garde Cinema* (1994)

Trepanations (1983), by Janis Crystal Lipzin; Super-8, color, sound, 20 minutes

A film made up of various kinds of correspondences—pictorial, written, and audio tape "letters" sent to the filmmaker by Nancy Rexroth, Carmen Vigil, Joe Gibbons, David

Robinson, Jane Dobson and others. The soundtrack is the dominant element and was constructed from excerpts from the tape correspondence of a contemporary woman photographer living in a small midwestern town. She describes the madness of her daily life in moods vacillating between delight and despair. Her experiences, while uniquely her own, function as a magnifier through which we all can see our own situations and strongly identify with hers. The title describes a delicate cranial operation performed in prehistoric cultures. (JCL)

Dervish Machine (1992), by Bradley Eros & Jeanne Liotta;
16mm, 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 tenuous nature of the material. The film itself becomes the site to experience impermanence, and to revel in the unfixed image. (BE/JL)

Island Zoetrope (1986), by Al Hernandez; 16mm, b&w, sound, 10 minutes

A man struggles with his sanity in a surreal world where trains become ocean and walls become cliffs. The zoetrope spins, flickering animated images of dinosaurs and robotic life. Visual rhymes that express the primal energies rise from the industrial soot. (AH)

Mirage (1983), by Chris Gallagher; 16mm, color, sound, 5 minutes

The ultimate union between a filmmaker and his material.

TOWER OF THE ASTRO CYCLOPS AND OTHER NEW VIDEOS BY GEORGE KUCHAR

GEORGE KUCHAR IN PERSON

*Sunday, January 30, 1994 SF Art Institute
Special Free Admission*

A torrid collection of George Kuchar's newest videotapes, including several of George's travelogues from spots all over the U.S.

"For 30 years, working several economic rungs below low budget, Mr. Kuchar has reached for the glamour of Hollywood and pulled it right down to street level, where ordinary mortals with weight problems and bad skin wage unequal battle with their tawdry surroundings.

"Mr. Kuchar, the subject of a month long retrospective (in August 1993) at the American Museum of the Moving Image in Astoria, Queens, is right down there with them, a tortured romantic struggling with the cheap materials that life so stingily provides."

—William Grimes, *NY Times* (Aug. 10, 1993)

Film synopsis/descriptions by George Kuchar.

Sunbelt Serenades (Parts 1 & 3) (1994 Premiere); video, color, sound

Sunbelt Serenades is a video series on the southwest featuring rocks and empty places plus people wandering around, buying and eating.

Andy's House of Gary (1994 Premiere); video, color, sound

Andy's House of Gary features two Art Institute alumni verbally tackling the enigmas of California living.

Tower of the Astro Cyclops (1994 Premiere); video, color, sound

A tour of a redwood retreat built by a scientist/author who plumbs the inner and outer reaches of verboten visions.

Bayou of the Blue Behemoth (1994 Premiere); video, color, sound

Large and small creatures swim, sway and chomp their way into rejuvenated extinction.

Glacier Park (1994 Premiere); video, color, sound

Ice and mountains and gobs of goodness abound in Montana.

LIVING THE GERMAN DREAM

FILM ESSAYS BY PETER THOMPSON & HARUN FAROCKI

Sunday, February 3, 1994 Center for the Arts

Universal Hotel (1986), by Peter Thompson; 16mm, b&w, sound, 24 minutes

"As the director of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial I have had the opportunity to view a considerable number of documentaries recalling the fate of those resisting or suffering the Nazi regime. Often filmmakers were striving to reconstruct history on a large scale by compiling as many interviews and documentary materials as possible, and, sometimes quite successfully, they were able to impress by this means the immense tragedy of the holocaust upon the viewer.

"Peter Thompson's film uses a completely different approach. Indeed he offers the spectator a new habit of vision. Using only a few photographs and drawings which he collected from different people and in different countries, he concentrates on one person only. At the beginning this person is not much more than a name. With minimal sources, however, underlined by Peter Thompson's account of his search for information, the film becomes an extraordinarily moving experience. He introduces one victim of one of the most gruesome aspects of the Nazi concentration camps: the medical experiments performed by SS doctors on helpless inmates.

"This victim becomes through this film a universal example, a metaphor for the oppression of the individual, which, as we know, did not end with the defeat of Nazi Germany.

"Visitors from more than 100 different countries visit the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial each year. There are many discussions and seminars where some of these youngsters coming from different cultural backgrounds try to find the meaning of the lesson that can be learned in Dachau today. Peter Thompson's film *Universal Hotel* has proven to stimulate successfully intercultural discussions. Young spectators are moved by this small forgotten piece of history presented in an unconventional way and this might help them to understand and maybe learn from the past."

—Barbara Distel, Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial

How to Live in the Federal Republic of Germany (Leben-BRD) (1989/90),
by Harun Farocki; 16mm, color, sound, 83 minutes
Camera: Ingo Kratisch

"Harun Farocki's 1990 film *Leben-BRD* is a montage assembled of short scenes taken from 32 instructional training classes, and therapy and test sessions from across the Federal Republic. The individual film segments are all 'acted scenes,' recorded during practice sessions in which some real life situation is being introduced, taught, practiced, imitated, invoked, or mastered. *Leben-BRD* is a film composed entirely of these scenes—'a documentary film with performers.' The various types of performance in the film all have specific rules, sometimes revealing a depressing banality and sometimes an enticing, all too obvious perfection. The effort demanded by these performances represents a particular form of labor—indirect and contrived. True human action is ruled out, what is important here is the significance of preparatory and follow-up work, which appear as exercises in wasted human knowledge, or as a drill in modern marketing methods. These 'didactic plays on mastering life' are intended to be instructional in the carrying-out of certain administrative and service activities, that is, in the rehearsal of certain functions. In addition, they—much like a 'false bottom'—are meant to discover and cure, per therapy, the effects of actual events and actions on the human spirit. *Leben-BRD*, in its brief shots of the tests that various consumer goods are put to, has created its own cinematic method of editing, its own form of punctuation. It is precisely these images, absent of people, that reinforce the human situation. 'Matter is more magical than life' (Roland Barthes)—this magic appears to imbue the film's scenes, somewhat similar to a concept of 'endurance,' whether of human beings or of objects. Just as material and product testing reveal something about our utilization of things—in the face of endless, rhythmic endurance/application/torture testing of consumer goods, the essence of ordinary activity emerges—so the various trials and errors and re-enactment and role-playing reveal something of the control that the forces of big business, the insurance conglomerates, and the military impose on human life through their representation of the world—a standardization that human beings do not completely assimilate. To practice for a life of the rules of which are visibly lacking in coherence means two different things at once in terms of life and work processes. One is that a biased attitude (or in today's language: a philosophy) is imparted and secured in people, through schooling, practice and rehearsal. The other is that something in these people is forced open, something that is supposedly hidden in each of us individually, and is then brought to light (economics and therapy...)

"...The particles of reality of which *Leben-BRD* is composed offer a simulated life. The sections are connected as in a feature film. Johannes Beringer has noted the stylistic affinity of this film to Walter Benjamin's plan to write a book consisting entirely of quotes from foreign languages. The 'image of the present' that *Leben-BRD* assembles offers a rediscovery of the concept of 'factography' (according to Sergei Tretjakow), with an altered meaning: not as a rolling text in which relationships are ordered in the context of their function, but as a form of synchronous compression, a visual as well as conceptual density surrounding a phenomenon that is rewritten visually in order that it might be seen."

—Jorg Becker, "Images and Thoughts," *Harun Farocki: A Retrospective* (1991)

VIDEOGRAMS OF A REVOLUTION

BY HARUN FAROCKI & ANDREI UJICA

Sunday, February 6, 1994 SF Art Institute

Videograms of a Revolution (Videogrammes einer Revolution) (1992),
by Harun Farocki & Andrei Ujica; 16mm, color, sound, 107 minutes

Videograms of a Revolution is a unique, close-up recreation of the atmosphere surrounding the fall of Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaucescu. The film focuses on the five days between the dictator's last speech on December 21st and his execution on December 26th, using amateur videos as well as never-broadcast Romanian television footage to piece together an account of the 1989 revolution from contradictory versions.

"A sobering, critical, and exciting analysis of the revolution in Rumania... The shots may have lost their news value, but careful investigation, putting together a jigsaw puzzle of contradictory data, provides surprising insights [concerning] the operation of the modern media in general... Dozens of people were present with their video cameras, so there are multiple records of what the official media didn't want to see."

—Rotterdam Film Festival

HARUN FAROCKI FILMOGRAPHY:

The Words of the Chairman (Die Worte Des Vorsitzenden) (1967); *Ihre Zeitungen* (1968); *Inextinguishable Fire (Nicht Loschbares Feuer)* (1969); *The Division of All Days (Die Teilung Aller Tage)* (1970); *Eine Sache, Die Sicht Versteht* (1971); *Der Arger Mit Den Bildern* (1973); *Between Two Wars (Zwischen Zwei Kriegen)* (1978); *The Taste of Life (Der Geschmack Des Lebens)* (1979); *Zur Ansicht Peter Weiss* (1979); *Before Your Eyes—Vietnam (Etwas Wird Sichtbar)* (1982); *An Image (Ein Bild)* (1983); *Jean-Marie Straub and Danielle Huillet at Work on Franz Kafkas "Amerika" (Jean-Marie Straub und Danielle Huillet Drehen Einen Film Nach Franz Kafkas "Amerika")* (1983); *Peter Lorre: Das Doppelte Gesicht* (1984); *Betrayed (Betrogen)* (1985); *As You See (Wie Man Seht)* (1986); *Images of the World and the Inscription of War (Bilder Der Welt Und Inschrift Des Krieges)* (1988); *How to Live in the Federal Republic of Germany (Leben-BRD)* (1989); *Videograms of a Revolution (Videogrammes einer Revolution)* (1992)

FRACTURED REALITIES

THE CINEMATHEQUE ON TV!

Friday, February 11, 1994, 11:00PM
KQED Channel 9 "The Living Room Festival"

Film and television have dominated the 20th century as the primary means of shaping history and our most intimate attitudes. Yet how much of the "reality" that we see in the media consists of just the facts and how much is shaped by choices of inclusion, omission and opinion? These questions are probed in *Fractured Realities*, a ninety-minute film and video program curated by the Cinematheque for the second season of KQED-TV's "Living Room Festival." The ways that media can relate, shape, manipulate and falsify this ineffable thing we call "reality" are examined in *Perfect Film* (1986) by Ken Jacobs, *American Eyes: mom's home movies 1954-61* by Ruth Hasegawa, *Japanese Relocation*

(1943) by the U.S. Information Agency, *Mother's Hands* (1992) by Vejan Smith, *S'Aline's Solution* (1989) by Aline Mare, *Home Avenue* (1990) by Jennifer Montgomery, *El Espectro Rojo* (1903) by Ferdinand Zecca, and an excerpt from Joseph Cornell's *Rose Hobart* (1939).

**ROMANTIC NOTIONS:
FILMS & VIDEOTAPES ON LOVE**

SELECTED BY LINDA GIBSON

Sunday, February 13, 1994 Center for the Arts

Romantic Notions celebrates a universal human experience: love. The works in the program explore many aspects of the cycle of love—falling in love, being in love, and losing love.

The eve of St. Valentine's Day is an appropriate time to reflect on the power of love in our lives. The works of Cauleen Smith, Pilar Rodriguez, Tom Kalin, and Philip Mallory Jones remind us of the complexities of love even as they celebrate loves that were, that are or that may yet be. These films and tapes remind us that, in love, we are all vulnerable.

Although love can be viewed through many lenses (political, religious, social), the works presented focus on the personal experience. Whether it is the passerby who steps into Wendy Clarke's recording "booth" or artists such as John Sanborn, Barbara Hammer, or Kit Fitzgerald who carefully construct their thoughts with digital technologies, they invite us to share the intimate moments and emotions of their lives, and to find resonance with our own. (LG)

Love Tapes (1980), by Wendy Clarke; video, excerpt

In 1980, video artist Wendy Clarke set up her camera in public and private spaces to record people's thoughts about love. Each person who participated selected a piece of background music and, alone with the camera, spoke for three minutes. *Love Tapes* the compilation of these recordings, is alternately humorous, touching, and bittersweet, but always intensely personal and real.

Recorded at Staten Island High School.

Romance (1986), by Kit Fitzgerald; video, color, sound, 6 minutes

Romance joyously recreates the euphoric feeling of falling in love with computer animation and an original score.

The Message #1 (1993), by Cauleen Smith; video, color, sound, 5 minutes

The complexities of love, desire and their social context are captured in this study of male sensuality from a woman's perspective, with sensuous visuals and densely layered audio.

Love Tapes, excerpt

Recorded in an apartment in New York City.

No-No Nooky TV (1987), by Barbara Hammer;
16mm, color, sound, 12 minutes

Filled with puns and allusions in her inimitable style, *No-No Nooky TV* is a playful tribute to two major influences in Hammer's life, her *amiga* and her Amiga.

The Idea We Live In (La Idea Que Habitamos) (1990), by Pilar Rodriguez;
video, color, sound, 19 minutes

This experimental meditation on love as the foundation of the meaning of home is simultaneously spare and rich, with painterly visuals and a bilingual text from writers and poets.

House Poem, by John Sanborn & Sarah Cahill;
video, color, sound, 45 minutes

When does a house become a home? In this most unusual "open house," Sanborn and Cahill seem to find the answer—when every nook and cranny resonates with their love.

Love Tapes, excerpt
Recorded at the World Trade Center.

Finally Destroy Us (1991), by Tom Kalin; video, color, sound, 4 minutes
A taut evocation of the pleasures and pains of finding a man to love.

What Goes Around/Comes Around (1987), by Philip Mallory Jones;
video, color, sound, 3 minutes

In this unique, hand-drawn video animation, Philip Mallory Jones mourns love's loss, while celebrating the love.

Love Tapes, excerpt
Recorded at the Wadsworth Athenaeum.

program notes by Linda Gibson

STREET BEATS

CHUCK HUDINA IN PERSON

Thursday, February 17, 1994 Center for the Arts

"Our children are mirrors of our society. The reflection they are giving back isn't too glorious...they are shouting at us with anger and frustration in their voices to the tune of gun shots and screeching tires...one must consider why these children act as animals running wild in the streets...possibly it's the kennel they're caged in."

—Curtis Phillips

Street Beats offers three videos by three makers in different parts of the country (Kansas City, MO; San Francisco, and Los Angeles, respectively) that investigate the brutal realities of life on America's mean streets.

Streets (1992), by Curtis Phillips; video, color, sound, 15 minutes

Tenderloin Blues (1987), by Chuck Hudina; video, color, sound, 57 minutes

L.A. Familia (1993), by Harry Gamboa, Jr.; color, sound, 37 minutes

**THE CIRCUMSPECT HEDONIST:
FILMS BY KURT KREN**

KURT KREN IN PERSON

Sunday, February 20, 1994 SF Art Institute

2/60: 48 Heads from the Szondi-Test (48 Kopfe aus dem Szondi-Test)
(1960); 16mm, b&w, silent, 5 minutes

3/60: Trees in Autumn (Baum im Herbst) (1960); 16mm, b&w, sound, 5 minutes

7/64: Leda and the Swan: An Otto Muehl Happening (Leda und der Schwan: Materialktion: Otto Muehl) (1964); 16mm, color, silent, 3 minutes

8/64: Ana: A Gunter Brus Action (Ana Aktion: Gunter Brus)
(1964); 16mm, b&w, silent, 3 minutes

10a/65: Silveraction Brus (Silberaktion Brus) (1965); 16mm, b&w, silent, 2 minutes

13/67: Sinus Beta (1967); 16mm, b&w, silent, 6 minutes

15/67: TV (1967); 16mm, b&w, silent, 4 minutes

16/67: September 20th – Gunter Brus (1967); 16mm, b&w, silent, 7 minutes

23/69: Underground Explosion (1969); 16mm, color, sound, 6 minutes

26/71: Cartoon: Balzac and the Eye of God (Zeichenfilm: Balzac und das Auge Gottes) (1971); 16mm, b&w, silent, 1 minute

31/75: Asyl (1975); 16mm, color, silent, 9 minutes

36/78: Rischart (1978); 16mm, color, silent, 3 minutes

37/78: Tree Again (1978); 16mm, color, silent, 4 minutes

44/85: Foot'-age Shoot'-out (1985); 16mm, color, sound, 4 minutes

0 No.: Falter 2 (1990); 35mm transferred to video), b&w, sound, 1 minute

In an interview with Hans Scheugl about the ideas and techniques behind some of his films, filmmaker Kurt Kren told the following anecdote, which sheds an interesting light on his work. For his film *Tree Again* (1978), Kren used a highly sensitive infra red color film, a type which usually has to be developed within a very short period of time. However, Kren, who has always worked on a very small budget, had used film which was already five years past the expiration date and, as Kren says, "there was little likelihood of anything being on the film." But he still decided to take shots of a large and splendid tree

surrounded by bushes and a stretch of pasture-land over a period of several weeks, from summer to autumn—a series of individual pictures taken from the same camera position. As he says, “I didn’t have much hope—(I knew) it was a crazy thing to do.” But Kren’s illogical hopes were rewarded. *Tree Again* became one of Kren’s most beautiful works—although it is difficult to single out any individual work from a corpus of extraordinary density and variety which spans over thirty years and includes over 40 films.

Much has been written about the abstract, serial, musical, structural or mathematical nature of Kurt Kren’s films, their affinity to painting, poetry or twelve-tone music; but too much concentration on their structure and rhythm has eclipsed the films’ objectification, their almost documentary quality. The compact and artistic interweaving of the fragments of reality being expressed—which may be glimpses out of a window, paths, trees, walls, the changing of the seasons, faces, or the human body in motion—as well as the way they are filmed, processed and arranged can often go unrecognized even if each film is seen several times. The methods used by Kren [include] extreme multiple exposure, individual shots, time lapse, the use of filters and masks, alternating between positive and negative film, blurred images, imposing scratches and drawings on soundtracks and complicated cutting rhythms based on specifically pre-formulated diagrams [and] a variety of technical experiments and inventions which he has evolved over the years. And yet, appreciating Kurt Kren’s films is not a question of dissecting his technique, recognizing their richness of innovation or analyzing their rhythm. To understand these films it is not necessary to see through them but to feel and perceive them as real.

...Someone once said, “The greatness of film-making lies in being modest enough to realize that one is confined to taking photographs.” Kurt Kren’s films are neither paintings, nor poems nor music; they are not even typically film, as the term is used in the degenerate rhetoric of most modern film artists. It is this self-awareness which constitutes their greatness.

—Hans Hurch

Kurt Kren was born in Vienna, Austria in 1929. In the midst of prevalent anti-semitism, the Kren family sent their young Jewish child to Holland. Kren returned to Austria in 1947. Back in Vienna, Kren became involved in the contemporary art movement. To support himself, he worked as a cashier in the Austrian National Bank until 1968.

In 1957 Kren made his first 16mm film, *1/57 Versuch mit Synthetischem Ton (Experiment with Synthetic Sound)* (all his films’ titles are preceded by two numbers; the first refers to the film’s chronological order within his oeuvre, the second to the year it was made). Since this time Kurt has steadily been making films. While he had made most of his films alone, eight films were made during the 1960s in collaboration with other artists. These eight films are Kren’s documentation of the performances and works of the Direct Art, Material Action movement, spearheaded by such artists as Otto Muehl, Gunter Brus, and Helga Philip.

In 1966 Kren co-founded the Vienna Institute for Direct Art. Two years later he made his first visit to the USA. Since then, Kren’s films have been shown throughout the world. In the ‘70s Kren divided his time between living in the USA and Europe. After working as a security guard at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, Kren returned to Vienna permanently in 1990.

**"UNPLUG YOUR ORGASM FROM THE MACHINE"
FILMS & TALK WITH MANUEL DE LANDA**

MANUEL DE LANDA IN PERSON

Thursday, February 24, 1994 Center for the Arts

This evening, author, 3-D computer graphics pioneer, radical theoretician, and anarchic filmmaker Manuel De Landa presents a special program of his rarely see films followed by a talk discussing new theories of self-organizing behavior and their consequences for post-capitalist society. Manuel De Landa is the author of *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* (Zone, 1992), and an article "Non-Organic Life" that appears in the recently-published anthology *Incorporations* (Zone, 1993).

Raw Nerves: A Lacanian Thriller (1980); 16mm, color, sound, 30 minutes

Raw Nerves is the *noir* version of the Oedipus complex. The private eye personifies the Ego who narrates the story of how he learned language. Only in the film, instead of the traditional image of the castrated mother which is supposed to mediate the encounter with the Signifier (the Law), we have a secret message written on a *public* bathroom wall. Our hero is there, just taking a shit, when he suddenly sees it—he doesn't know what it means but he knows he knows too much. So instead of having a private encounter with language in the coziness of the family, here it is the secret message which inserts the subject *directly* into a social project which preexists him and swallows him up without mercy. (MLD)

*Unconscious/desire/expresses/itself/through/gaps/in/language,/slips/of/the/tongue...**

Ismism (1979); 16mm, color, silent, 8 minutes

"A silent film that documents his own street graffiti in New York. Made originally for a course in language and film taught in 1976 by P. Adams Sitney, De Landa conceived of *Ismism* having 'the form of a manifesto against the orthopedic power of language.'"

—Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Film: The Front Line* (1983)

Harmful or Fatal if Swallowed (1982);

Super-8 transferred to 16mm, color, sound, 7 minutes

*...use/illegal/surfaces/for/your/art...**

Judgment Day (also known as *Massive Annihilation of Fetuses*) (1982);

Super-8 transferred to 16mm, color, sound, 7 minutes

This film is my tribute to the real master race that will soon inherit the planet. Cockroaches have not only invaded the flip side of my house (i.e., the back of my kitchen, the other side of my walls, etc.) but they have also taken over some areas of my unconscious. Since I started the film the structure of my nightmares has changed, almost as if I had violated their laws and they were getting ready for revenge. (MLD)

*...let/the/slang/of/your/desires/drive/language/crazy.**

* excerpts from *Ismism*.

MANUEL DE LANDA FILMOGRAPHY:

Shit (1975); *Song of a Bitch* (1976); *The Itch Scratch Cycle* (1977); *Incontinence: A Diarrhetic Flow of Mismatches* (1978); *Ismism* (1979); *Raw Nerves: A Lacanian Thriller* (1980); *Magic Mushroom Mountain Movie* (1981); *Judgment Day* (also known as *Massive Annihilation of Fetuses*) (1982).

THE MALADY OF DEATH

JEFFREY SKOLLER IN PERSON

Tuesday, February 27, 1994 SF Art Institute

***Topography/Surface Writing* (1983); 16mm, color, sound, 37 minutes**

**THIS IS A FILM WITHOUT A CENTER,
THERE ARE ONLY BITS AND PIECES...**

As in everyday life, *Topography/Surface Writing* is a series of events, impressions, voices, ideas, sounds, images, texts. In their constant flow they become a surface, upon which we always move. It is this surface that is the place where we exist. It is who we are, and what we are. Like the Mystic Writing Pad that Freud wrote of, on which inscriptions are made and then apparently erased, (via a translucent sheet of paper being pressed into a wax base by a pointed implement, which can then be erased by lifting the paper, leaving a trace of the inscription remaining in the wax base), experiences move into our lives and then move out leaving their memory or trace indelibly etched into our unconscious. These traces are different from the experiences themselves, but it is these traces that finally become real for us.

Film (as material) can be a perfect metaphor for this. The very strip of film is a surface in which meaning is etched into the emulsion. If one were to look very closely at the emulsion of a piece of film, one would not find a smooth surface, but rather a surface with mountains, valleys and ridges where the light and chemical process has removed certain areas of emulsion and left others. Also, because film is a time based medium, it can create and distill a view of the world very similarly to the way our minds do. In this film, images and sounds appear and disappear, start and stop with little apparent connection or resolution (except for the ones that the viewer might make).

The main theme running through *Topography/Surface Writing* is violence. Physical, psychological, and environmental. However, it does not give a portrait of violence in the conventional sense of representing it as spectacle or sensation and therefore somehow separate from our normal activity, nor does it attempt to analyze or aestheticize the problem. Rather the film attempts to show how integrated violence is in our lives and how inherent it is to our whole social system.

So as the title suggests, *Topography/Surface Writing* is not an essay, but a mapping of new possibilities for seeing and thinking through the use of cinema that is neither authoritarian or passive, but rather a challenge and provocation...

***The Malady of Death* (1994 Premiere); 16mm, color, sound, 40 minutes**

Text performed by JD Trow

The Malady of Death is an adaptation of Marguerite Duras' story of the same name—her text comprises the voice-over—which is a particular reading of the story in which work and image, in a complex interplay, explore male sexuality. The processes of reading are revealed to be complicated, poetic and political, as an unspecified narrator names and describes "the malady" and tells of a man and woman's sexual encounters. The male "you" is multiplied, depicted by many men, each photographed nude, variously fragmented and abstracted, studied and distanced. The "her," the "difference," is literally absent from the image but present metaphorically, "possessed" but not known. While societal connections between possessing sexually, economically, and by force are explored in relation to male sexuality, the implications of the act of looking permeate all these discourses. The erotic

depiction of the male body for both the camera and the viewer, the displaced and disembodied representation of the woman, and the structured alternation of image and black — at times like an eye opening and closing, but also suggestive of what culturally can and cannot be imagined—create a viewer who cannot easily possess the story, but who must rather read and reread.

JEFFREY SKOLLER FILMOGRAPHY:

The Malady of Death (1994); *Still, It Runs Warm* (1989); *Nicaragua: Hear-Say/See-Here* (1985-86); *Topography/Surface Writing* (1983); *Moving In* (1982); *Historical Film Study: Bringing the Blues to Jazz* (1981); *Image-Sound Film Part #3* (1979); *Historical Film Study: Centering* (1979); *Events Happen* (1978); *Seven Rolls/End to End* (1978); *Emulsion Surface: 1905, Me, My Brother, Leon & The Lumieres, A Hand Process(ed)* (1977); *Image-Sound Film Part #1* (1977); *Image-Sound Film Part #2* (1977); *Variations on a Pan: a Rhythm* (1977).

FILM AND PHYSICAL REALITY

ERIN SAX & ARIANA GERSTEIN IN PERSON

Thursday, March 3, 1994 Center for the Arts

The films of Erin Sax and Ariana Gerstein employ the material and spirit of film to investigate both personal and social relationships to reflection, thought, science and vision. While the avenues that each maker employs differ in approach it is where the works do intersect that one discovers the evocative parallels of this medium's form with its content. This evening Erin Sax will be presenting a trilogy of works that examine the progression of time and ritual of loss. Walking a line between personal exploration and a more documentary vision, these works focus on the physical body as a vehicle to transmit the frustration and fear of communication and memory. Included in the program are two previous works as well as the premiere of her most recent film *Seven of Worlds*. Ariana Gerstein's work insists upon the visceral, tactile capacities of the filmic medium. The techniques employed activate the film's surface and create a moving, breathing universe where filmed images, rephotographed images, emulsion, color, grain, and material attached to the surface interact and influence each other. This evening she will be premiering a collaged four part work, a trilogy plus a prelude, entitled *Recovering the Silence of Falling*.

ARIANA GERSTEIN

Recovering the Silence of Falling (in 4 parts) (1994 Premiere);

16mm, color/b&w, sound/silent, 30 minutes

Scraps and chunks of rhymed thought, almost remembered, almost understood. Carried by light and filtered through film that is solarized, scratched, cut, painted—some frames embedded with insects (ants and roaches). (AG)

ERIN SAX

Receiving Sally (1993); 16mm, b&w, sound, 6 minutes

A response to an imminent death, this film is a projection of closure both forward and back, of becoming and dispersing. A message sent across time from one generation back to another; a warning to be careful, to measure the days. (ES)

Each Evening (1993); 16mm, b&w, silent, 2 minutes

As a bridge from one work to another this film is the beginning of a memory. It is a moment that communicates the inability to move at will. Here the body is situated at the point of transition. (ES)

Seven of Worlds (1994 Premiere); 16mm, color and b&w, sound, 18 minutes

A reaction to the loss of the physical body and an exploration of the fear which surrounds death and the dying. The work is an observation of rituals that exist to facilitate memory and promote an acceptance of death. (ES)

program notes by Erin Sax & Elise Hurwitz

SAM FULLER'S WILD, WILD WEST

I SHOT JESSE JAMES & RUN OF THE ARROW

Sunday, March 6, 1994 SF Art Institute

"Every film must have a message. Maybe I'm too didactic. If so, too bad. That's just the way I write. Even if people don't agree with me, I like to make them think a bit. I like them to learn something. I'm not what you would strictly call an educator, but all the same, I think the cinema must be used in this way..."

"I put action in my films, so that the action can carry the message and so that the public doesn't get the idea that I'm trying to deliver a sermon or a lecture. For me, the greatest art-form in the world is education. I believe that, one day, cinema (through the medium of film or television) will give the world first class education." —Samuel Fuller

I Shot Jesse James (1949); 16mm, b&w, sound, 81 minutes

Directed and written by Fuller, with Preston Foster, Barbara Britten, John Ireland

"The 'props' in the story line are just that: props. The huge close-ups of faces in the film are not indications that the film is best read as a psychological examination of Bob Ford, but the stylistic equivalents of the tensions involved. The close-ups erupt out of the narrative flow in the same way as the internal pressures placed on Bob, first by his decision to kill Jesse and then by his life in the limbo without Jesse or Cynthy, explode into his external situation."

—Phil Hardy, *Samuel Fuller* (1970)

Run of the Arrow (1957); 16mm, color, sound, 85 minutes

Directed, produced and written by Fuller, with Rod Steiger, Ralph Meeker, Sarita Montiel (voice dubbed by Angie Dickinson, and Brian Keith)

"Even on the level of plot, *Run of the Arrow* is explicitly about America and an individual's need for allegiance to a nation. At the close of the Civil War, a white Southerner, O'Meara (Rod Steiger), refuses to accept the South's defeat. Equally, he rejects the South's re-integration into the Union and journeys westward to the lands outside the Union's domain where he joins the Sioux. However, he arrives at a time when the Sioux are making peace with the United States and is detailed, as one familiar with the white man's ways, to ensure that the peace is kept by making certain that the fort the American's are building—Fort

Abraham Lincoln—is built outside the Sioux's hunting grounds...The paradox that *Run of the Arrow* underlines is that construction can come only out of destruction."

—Phil Hardy, *Samuel Fuller* (1970)

SAMUEL FULLER FILMOGRAPHY:

As screenwriter: *Hats Off* (1936); *It Happened in Hollywood* (1937); *Gangs of New York* (1938); *Adventure in Sahara* (1938); *Federal Man-Hunt* (1938); *Bowery Boy* (1940); *Confirm or Deny* (1941); *Power of the Press* (1943); *Shockproof* (1948).

As director and screenwriter: *I Shot Jesse James* (1948); *The Baron of Arizona* (1950); *Fixed Bayonets* (1951); *Pickup on South Street* (1953); *Hell and High Water* (1954); *House of Bamboo* (1955); *Merrill's Marauders* (1961); *Shark (Caine)* (1967); *Dead Pigeon on Beethoven Street* (1974); *The Big Red One* (1980); *White Dog* (1981); *Street of No Return* (1989).

As producer, director & screenwriter: *The Steel Helmet* (1950); *Park Row* (1952); *Run of the Arrow* (1957); *China Gate* (1957); *40 Guns* (1957); *Verboten* (1958); *The Crimson Kimono* (1959); *Underworld USA* (1960); *Shock Corridor* (1963); *Naked Kiss* (1963).

CLASS AND SEXUALITY: FILM & VIDEO BY JACK WALSH

JACK WALSH IN PERSON

Thursday, March 10, 1994 Center for the Arts

Working Class Chronicle (1985); 16mm, color/b&w, sound, 43 minutes

Working Class Chronicle developed from my desire to mix major film forms (narrative, documentary, experimental) with autobiography. In doing this, I wanted to show how our individual histories are not only constructed by our insular familial experiences, but also by political and social moments. The period of time examined here, 1954 through 1969, spans the time from my birth into my teen years. Two other elements were key in the creation of this film. One was my belief that stories of the working class are rarely told by people from that background. Instead, we find them created by a more privileged class who often use the working class for didactic illustration—be it Hollywood's romanticism or documentary's heroism. A second, parallel element was my desire to explore gay sexuality in ways that are not necessarily the histories of the nice, middle-class civil rights movement. This is not to say that being gay in this society is without common elements across class lines—harassment and discrimination being but two such examples of issues that unify all gay men and lesbians. However, gay sexuality does have its class distinctions. In the case of teens, sexual expression is not going to be within the confines of boarding school, but more likely on the street. At a time when teen sexuality is constantly attacked and denied by the Religious Right, and when the suicide rate among gay youth is highest among all teens, it becomes all the more important to tell stories about teen sexuality, no matter how transgressive they may appear to the larger society.

Working Class Chronicle reconstructs the past through the organizing concept of selective memory, a past constructed with the aid of found footage, appropriated home movies, manipulated documentary footage, pop culture movie and rock 'n' roll stars, and reprocessed popular music from the period. In using a group of voices, including my own, I am attempting to speak for a generation. *Working Class Chronicle* mimics the seductiveness of dominant narrative and documentary cinema and, alternately, becomes

distancing and self-conscious, principally through the use of rupture. Personal history collides with period history to examine the ideological assumptions of this transitional era in American history. (JW)

Present Tense (1987); 16mm, color/b&w, sound, 27 minutes

Moving from the tourist image to the found image, pastoral landscape to industrial landscape, the idealized object of desire to the "real," *Present Tense* explores obsession, desire, and consumption in the contemporary world. Centered on the personal experience, the film uses the modern state to examine the issues of gender, class, genocide, torture, and surveillance. (JW)

"*Present Tense* weaves together visual and aural contrasts of first-person narration, painting portraiture, travel diaries, and found footage, in a riveting appropriation of the filmmaker's gay identity. In the film, Walsh defines this self through the interplay of power relationships drawn from historical, personal, and cultural contexts by examining specific critical issues including physical attraction and death, annihilation, family relationships, and political community."

—Jon Gartenberg, Museum of Modern Art

Dear Rock (1993); video, color/b&w, sound, 20 minutes

Dear Rock is a posthumous fan letter to Rock Hudson that uses Hudson as a springboard for an examination of AIDS and homophobia. As the bachelor, movie-star idol, Hudson was emblematic of Hollywood's construction of the all-American male. Yet, as is the case with many cultural myths, this public, straight facade masked the private, gay man Hudson was, forcing him to lead a double life.

Using the contrived form of the fan letter, *Dear Rock* uses digression as its structure, beginning with elements of Hudson's life that open onto larger contemporary issues about gay male identity. *Dear Rock* builds on the dichotomy facing gay men: it moves between the private and the public, the myth and the reality using Hudson's life as a metaphor for gay male issues. The often contradictory relationship between gay male desire and popular culture is explored using images from men's swim meets and underwear advertisements. Tension is constructed between the homophobic and the homoerotic, the forbidden and the desired. *Dear Rock* is a reflection on a victim of Hollywood's enforced homophobia, but ultimately the tape attempts to map the landscape of AIDS since Hudson's death in 1985. (JW)

program notes by Erin Sax

L A M B E N T L I G H T : F I L M S B Y B R A K H A G E , D O R S K Y & B A R N E T T

Sunday, March 13, 1994 SF Art Institute

Alaya (1976-87), by Nathaniel Dorsky; 16mm, color, silent, 28 minutes

Sand, wind, and light intermingle with the emulsions. The viewer is the star.

"*Alaya* manages a perfection of 'musical' light across a space of time greater in length than would seem possible (consider how brief most such *perfected* works are, such as Peter

Kubelka, say)...and with minimal means of line and tone...After about three minutes I began to be aware of the subtlety of rhythm, within each shot and shot-to-shot, which carried each cut, causing each new image to sit in-the-light of those several previous...a little short of a miracle. Bravo!"

—Stan Brakage, *Canyon Cinema Catalog 7* (1992)

Chartres Series (1994 Premiere), by Stan Brakhage; 16mm, color, silent, 9 minutes

"A year and a half ago the film-maker Nick Dorsky, hearing I was going to France, insisted I must see Chartres Cathedral. I, who had studied picture books of its great stained-glass windows, sculpture and architecture for years, having also read Henry Adams' great book three times, willingly complied and had an experience of several hours (in the discreet company of French film-maker Jean-Michele Bouhours) which surely transformed my aesthetics more than any other single experience.

"Then Marilyn's sister died; and I, who could not attend the funeral, sat down alone and began painting on film one day, this death in mind...Chartres in mind. Eight months later the painting was completed on four little films which comprise a suite in homage to Chartres and dedicated to Wendy Jull.

"(My thanks to Sam Bush, of Western Cine, who collaborated with me, on this, much as if I were a composer who handed him a painted score, so to speak, and a few instructions—a mediaeval manuscript, one might say—and he were the musician who played it.)" (SB)

Endless (1987-90), by Daniel Barnett; 16mm, b&w, silent, 45 minutes

"Although constructed from thousands of still images of Chicago, *Endless* maintains a complex relationship to the photographic image. Time and space seem to compress or implode into a contradictory experience—one which is fluid yet of the past. The images are layered both horizontally and vertically, creating 'endless' variations of time and space which are unable to be contained within the fixed boundaries of the film frame."

—Kathy Geritz, Pacific Film Archive, in *Canyon Cinema Catalog 7* (1992)

program notes by Maya Allison

THE GREAT DIVIDE

DEBORAH FORT & ANN SKINNER-JONES IN PERSON

Thursday, March 17, 1994 Center for the Arts

This evening Deborah Fort and Ann Skinner-Jones present their most recent video documentary, *The Great Divide*. Focusing on the moral conflict that continues to rage between the Religious Right and the "secular humanists," it examines questions of civil and moral rights for gays and lesbians. Tonight's program also includes Deborah Fort's incisive video, *Dykeotomy*, that dives into the question of how one begins to position the history of gay sexuality in the present. In these works, as integration of personal anecdote and political fervor builds, and the voices and definitions of what is right and what is wrong begins to unravel, these makers poetically create the space to consider such basic issues as the rights to love and to human respect.

Dykeotomy (1992), by Deborah Fort; video, color, sound, 20 minutes

Integrating found footage and found ideas with personal stories of life as a lesbian-identified individual, *Dykeotomy* meditates on the fragmentation of identity in the public forum. Without questioning the filmmakers own desires, the work is a sensual pulling together and pushing apart of the stories that directly influence our experience of the world.

The Great Divide (1993), by Deborah Fort & Ann Skinner-Jones;
video, color, sound, 59 1/2 minutes

Collected interviews with individuals of varying ages and backgrounds are compiled in this timely documentary investigating the moral and political camps on both sides of the Colorado and Oregon anti-gay legislation rulings. Probing the justice of discrimination and hate, the work raises critical questions and provides often brutally honest glimpses into the rhetoric that surrounds the vernacular of morality and divine right. Their vision asks the viewers themselves to examine the creation and expression of fundamental beliefs.

Presented in cooperation with Artists Television Access.

program notes by Erin Sax

DIS-INTEGRATED CIRCUITS OF THE MIND FILMS BY NINA FONOROFF

NINA FONOROFF IN PERSON

Sunday, March 20, 1994 SF Art Institute

Empathy (1980); Super-8, color, sound, 10 minutes

A Thanksgiving family visit in Vermont, a warehouse fire in Boston, two girls in tutus, a New Mexico landscape, and passages from Prokofieff's *Lieutenant Kije Suite* are sites of empathic connection among disparate images and sounds. Originally titled *Empathy, The Cheapest of Emotions*.

A Knowledge They Cannot Lose (1989); Super-8, sound, 17 minutes

This film represents my attempt to come to terms with my father's death from cancer in early 1987. "Bernie" emerges as an erudite, generous, and sometimes egotistical character through juxtaposition with other Jewish men of his generation (Danny Kaye, Zero Mostel). From his incompetent performance of Bach on the piano and his singing of the *HMS Pinafore*, through scenes of myself reading his journals at the beach in Santa Cruz where he lived his last years, and through traces of Jewish self-deprecation, humor, and other cultural traditions, I reveal my affectionate gratitude toward Bernie while necessarily resisting the temptation to complete his portrait. The film is finally less about Bernie than about my inability to mourn. (NF)

The Accursed Mazurka (1994); 16mm, sound, 40 minutes

Music, clinical reports, obsessive journal entries, and a series of watercolors depicting a pierced and bleeding brain, these are among the elements that make up a collage around the occasion of mental breakdown. A variety of instruments of electrical transmission become metaphors for the diseased brain, an event reconstructed by a woman who has lost her reason, her body, and any foothold in personal identity. This unseen protagonist at first

attributes her illness to repeated hearings of a mazurka on the radio. Radio static, a telephone switchboard gone awry, a woman imagistically redoubled playing the accordion, become points of departure for a rant situated in the remembrance of a mental state so extreme as to make impossible any attempt at representation. A train derails and jumps track, capsizes, is internally hijacked, a trap door opens, and the entire mechanism by which a person knows herself jumps ship, in a mimicry of the workings of the mind at the moment of imminent breakdown. On the road to recovery, the woman searches for possible causes for her recent lapse of sanity. Her provisional understanding makes reference to a 1963 home movie of her family dancing on the lawn of their house: "It is not for me to ransack scenes of the past for clues or explanations. So, let these people dance in peace...they have done nothing wrong...there is no culpability to be found amount these shadows."

**ARTIFICIAL PARADISES:
STRANGE WEATHER & THE CONNECTION**

Thursday, March 24, 1994 Center for the Arts

Strange Weather (1993), by Peggy Ahwesh & Margie Strosser;
video, b&w, sound, 50 minutes

In *Strange Weather* the viewer/voyeur is allowed into the intimate moments of a circle of young, mostly white crack-addicts. We join in the group of crack smokers as they get high, gossip about one another, and engage in the ritual of smoking crack. But these addicts are "being realistic" in a clutter of well-worn, even campy means of creating plot tension: from glistening sweat and languor we see the humidity of Florida—introduced on a map—before the big hurricane, and increasingly hear the television warning of the coming disaster. We escape into the sense that we have privileged access into a dangerous fringe culture through a member's eyes, and wonder at their oblivion to the impending catastrophe of the hurricane.

At one point, when the whole crack clique gathers in the bathroom, we find ourselves looking at them from our spot (the camera) on the floor or perhaps the bathtub-edge. The room is covered entirely in tile, dark squares in grids of white grouting. We are crowded in this space, with some members perched so high up they seem to stoop below the ceiling, and some with faces near the floor. This group of crack addicts and the pixelvision camera are in an abstract space, floating in the grid of this bathroom. The junkies take on the air of lab specimens in a simulated environment. Around this time the camera becomes progressively more conspicuous. The position of the camera moves around the characters' home like a protagonist, allowing the viewer a powerful feeling of "subject-hood." But this results in a nagging uncertainty about how to read the video and its motives, whether this is documentary or fiction, or even serious. Exactly what manner of document is *Strange Weather*?

The low-budget look of pixelvision, the detail shown in the ritual of smoking crack, and the fascination for this form of self-destruction gives the sense of an "insider perspective." A former (or still addicted) crack user might be behind this camera. But the apparent issues of crack addiction become less gritty with each interview, until we wonder whether this is a video about addiction at all. The video becomes a mystery about the story-teller, tempting the audience to peer behind the camera, to discover clues toward the "real" story. The need for a narrative template to explain the camera's role with the junkies increases. After the

tape is over, the mystery of "how real is this" becomes the focus of *Strange Weather* as a document, rather than any new insights into drug addiction itself. The non-ending refuses to relieve the pain of our structural addictions.

—Maya Allison (1994)

The Connection (1961), by Shirley Clarke; 16mm, b&w, sound, 103 minutes

"Nothing happens in *The Connection*. They talk, they goof, they play jazz. No ideas arise, no dramatic climaxes occur—or if they occur, they are of little importance, they don't change anything. That is where the meaning...of *The Connection* is: In that nothingness, in that unimportance. It shows something of the essence of our life today only because it is about nothing. It doesn't point at truth—it sets truth in motion, it suggests it.

"Beneath the supposed meaninglessness of *The Connection*, beneath all walking, talking, and jazzing, a sort of spiritual autopsy of contemporary man is performed, his wounds opened. The truths which would have slipped through the hermetic forms of the classical drama were caught by the supposed formlessness of *The Connection*. Fake external dramatic clashes would have led us away from the true drama; big pronounced ideas would have hidden our true uncertainty; even the metaphors would have become lies."

—Jonas Mekas, *Movie Journal* (1962)

"*The Connection*'s visual qualities, setting, characters, action, and temporal developments all adhere to cinéma vérité conventions...Camera angles and movements reveal a completely enclosed, naturally lighted room rather than a two or three-sided, evenly lighted set on a sound stage. The action or, rather, the lack of conventional dramatic progression suggests a real-life situation rather than a scripted one.

"But the film invokes more significant issues than how easily one can simulate or manipulate cinema so that it appears to be transparent reality. The conceit upon which the film hinges is that everything the spectator sees is from the subjective point of view of the white bourgeois director-character through his camera viewfinder or from that of his African-American, middle-class assistant. The second camera frequently enters the field of vision, repetitively inscribing the camera on-screen as a representation for the apparatus that mediates the production of meaning...The inscription of the camera is a way to foreground the film's dominant subject position. While *The Connection*'s fictional director Dunn whines the cinéma vérité slogan, 'I'm just trying to make an honest human document,' he pans his camera, mobilizing the frame to bring some action to the sedentary situation... Only when the director within *The Connection* realizes that his predisposed way of seeing infiltrates and determines whatever he sees does he acknowledge his simple substitution of 'objectivity' for his subjectivity...he recognizes the existence of social 'realities' impenetrable by his experience and his camera."

—Lauren Rabinovitz, *Points of Resistance* (1991)

program notes by Maya Allison

OPEN SCREENING

GUEST PRESENTER REBECCA BARTEN IN PERSON

Friday, March 25, 1994 SF Art Institute

The Cinematheque hosts an open screening where the public is invited to present recently completed films and videos under 15 minutes in length. Guest presenter this evening will be film and videomaker Rebecca Barten, who will kick off the event with a sampling of her recent work. Barten writes, "As a carnivore of reality, a phenomena maniac, in my work I am paradoxically looking for a point without an elsewhere, a free zone where you may wonder if it is you who has ejected penetrating waves of a strong smelling musk secretion into the pleasant atmosphere."

DELIVERED VACANT

BY NORA JACOBSON

Sunday, March 27, 1994 SF Art Institute

Delivered Vacant, by longtime social inquisitor Nora Jacobson, chronicles eight years in the life of Hoboken, New Jersey, a blue collar community across the river from midtown Manhattan. Combining collected interviews and subsequent testimonies from new and old residents, politicians, and dissidents of this "Naples on the Hudson," this documentary becomes a valuable testament to the "cultural transfiguration of a community and the economic history of America in the 1980s."

—Erin Sax

Delivered Vacant (1992); video, color, sound, 118 minutes

"In the early eighties, the ethnic, blue collar community of Hoboken, New Jersey began to receive an influx of artists and other residents who crossed the river from Manhattan in search of cheap rents. As the decade's atmosphere of financial speculation heated up, real estate developers descended on the city to build condominiums for the new generation of New York Yuppies, in the process displacing thousands of Hoboken's longtime residents, many of whom became homeless. Others organized to protect their homes and for years waged a heated and protracted battle from city hall to the New Jersey State Legislature. Ironically, by the time the new legislation was enacted to protect Hoboken's apartment dweller's, the real estate boom had collapsed amidst a national recession, new condominiums remained empty, and many developers faced financial ruin. Filmmaker and Hoboken resident Nora Jacobson spent eight years documenting the city's struggle against gentrification, showing us the homes and lives of old time residents and newly arrived Yuppies, tenant organizers, real estate developers, politicians, street people, immigrants, and the wackiest mayor in America. The result is a richly detailed chronicle of urban change that characterized many American cities during the 'boom and bust' economy of the Reagan era."

—Cinema Guild Catalogue (1994)

program notes by Erin Sax

**ELUSIVE MOMENTS:
FILM & VIDEO BY VINCENT GRENIER**

VINCENT GRENIER IN PERSON

Thursday, March 31, 1994 Center for the Arts

Born and raised in Quebec, Vincent Grenier began making films while in school at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Grenier arrived in San Francisco in the early seventies and made lasting contributions to the Bay Area film community. After receiving an MFA in film from the San Francisco Art Institute, Grenier worked as the program director for the Cinematheque, introducing new works from across the United States to local audiences. The Cinematheque welcomes Vincent Grenier back this evening for the Bay Area premiere of his new video *Feet*, shown with two recent film works and an earlier film from 1979.

Mend (1979); 16mm, b&w, silent, 5 minutes

Is it happening in the screening room or on the screen; in a snowstorm or inside; what isn't surrounding and what is? From filming Ann sewing, on a grey winter day. (VG)

You (1990); 16mm; color, sound, 16 minutes

I had been looking for someone's unnerving encounter, that conversation that one just couldn't get out of their head, the kind of event that leaves one still debating out loud while walking in the streets or doing one's tidies in the bathroom. After interviewing a few people, I found Lisa Black who obliged with one of her own and became the film's main character. A situation with many angles; the telling, the filming, the final projection event... *You* is an imaginary fictionalized you in a whimsical space. It is the still live residue of the broken relationship Lisa is here confronting. A parallel actor, the film is in the business of reinterpreting. As a result the film is closer to a psychic space, an ironic place where distance is also intimate and a measure of insight. Lisa Black is a member of theater OObleck in Chicago. (VG)

Out in the Garden (1991); 16mm; color, sound, 15 minutes

A film about the dynamic of assumptions as seen through the struggle of a gay man who has recently been told that he is HIV positive and who, in his own way, tries to come to terms with the news. The film eschews the usual talking head and focuses on the peculiar occasion for examining anew as brought on by disconnectedness. In the process, questions of identity, one's sense of reality, the day to day and social tyrannies end up implicating the viewer intimately as well. (VG)

Feet (1994 Premiere); video, b&w, sound, 28 minutes

A video portrait of my friend Susan Weissner and of her rapport with 13-year-old son Billy and 17-year-old daughter Amanda. The video uses as a premise the reconstruction of her daily rituals with first her son and then her daughter. Enactments, accounts, confidences and spirited arguments freely criss-cross each other within the dynamic that my presence and the camera create. Great opportunities ensued for live tensions in the framing of sounds and visuals; a sort of enchanted construction from the fanciful revelations of the everyday. (VG)

Co-sponsored by the Canadian Consulate General.

program notes by Elise Hurwitz

**FACING VIETNAM:
FILMS BY LYNNE SACHS & TRAN VAN THUY**

LYNNE SACHS IN PERSON

Sunday, April 17, 1994 SF Art Institute

Which Way is East (1994 Premiere), by Lynne and Dana Sachs;
16mm, color, sound, 33 minutes

Filmmaker Lynne Sachs travels north from Ho Chi Minh City to Hanoi with her sister Dana, a journalist living in Vietnam. The camera travels between the cities and across the countryside of Vietnam searching for evidence of war's impact on geography, landscape, and a country's inhabitants. What the camera finds however, are images whose meaning is not immediately apparent, and images whose history we can only begin to understand through knowledge being shared. *Which Way is East* delicately imparts this process to us. How can we know the significance of images, sounds, places, and traditions? The desire to know, and the limitations on what we can learn, surface and stay with us. The film superimposes images of Vietnam over other images of Vietnam, daily life over a sense of place. A sense of time and rhythms of life are reconstructed in the film. *Which Way is East* addresses the difficulties in interpreting images across cultures, and the possibility of the coexistence of multiple meanings. Is thunder in the sky just a heavy rain or the sound of American B-52's from years ago? A photograph of a Vietnamese woman is at once a face that has survived war and just an ordinary person.

How to Behave (Chuyen Tu Te) (1987), by Tran van Thuy;
35mm transferred to video, color, sound, 43 minutes

How to Behave is an incisive inquiry into the beliefs of "The People" and underlying national ideologies. The film raises questions on what constructs Vietnamese national identity, and what are the vast influences that shape post-war life. The film crew, who have a strong presence in the film, approach people on the street to ask deceptively simple questions, the answers to which accrue over the length of the film to provide a disturbing account of personal and national values. The film encapsulates people's experiences in a search for "tu-te," human relations, fraternity, or simply, kindness. in modern Vietnamese culture. Originally banned in Vietnam, *How to Behave* was released only after the intervention of Communist Party leader Nguyen van Linh. After its release the film was seen by over three million Vietnamese, and was an important step in increasing access to media produced independently of those who control the means of production.

program notes by Elise Hurwitz

**BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH
— THE WAKING EFFECT**

CURATOR, MARK MCELHATTEN IN PERSON

Thursday, April 21, 1994 Center for the Arts

"The black trees, the white trees / are younger than nature, / in order to recover the freak of birth one must / Age."

—Paul Eluard

"What I have been trying to tell you all the time is that behind each production there has lain a practical tangible reality. It has never been invented or made up."

—Ingmar Bergman in conversation

16mm camera rolls (1993), by Lewis Klahr; 16 mm, color, silent, 5 minutes

(1) In 1993 a building, formerly a cinema, situated at 66th Street and Broadway in Manhattan was demolished. This destruction left behind a vacant lot and revealed a wall of advertising bricks that has been unseen for most of the century.

(2) Later that day several blocks away on Central Park West, one of several days of mock parades took place, staged for the benefit of cameras filming an upcoming Hollywood feature.

Uncut camera rolls (1994), by Mark LaPore: 16mm, color, silent, 10 minutes

Shot in Sri Lanka, processed in New York, as yet unseen by the filmmaker. Mark LaPore is currently residing in Sri Lanka under the auspices of a Fullbright fellowship. LaPore currently has three outstanding projects: *The Five Bad Elements* (partially shot in Burma), *100 Views of New York*, and a film originally intended as a response to Basil Wright's classic documentary *Song of Ceylon*. These camera rolls may be edited into this latter evolving project. Through conscientiously minimal impositions, and aesthetic delimitation based on an acuity for direct observation, Mark LaPore creates a cinema of heightened transparency. A cinema that is analogous to the "real" in the kind of fidelity and equipoise with the "seen" that is achieved in his filming. Within his selective frame we see how reality composes itself and how cinema orchestrates this composition into perception.

Untitled (1991), by Karl Kels; 16mm, b&w, silent, 8 minutes

excerpt from **3 Comrades** (1938), by Frank Borzage;

16mm, b&w, sound, circa. 5 minutes

Starring Margaret Sullivan & Robert Taylor

"I couldn't bear all this if it were real." "Maybe you're just in love with a fragment."

Melodie aux Pays des Reves: Part II (1992/93), by Peter Herwitz;

16mm color, silent, 9 minutes

1. *S. Among the leaves*
2. *C. to the Skies*
3. *The Air Sings*
4. *You See the Fire of Evening*
5. *Mirrors*

"Her dreams in broad daylight make the suns / evaporate, make me laugh, cry and speak when I have nothing to say."

"If I know no longer all that I have / lived it is because your eyes have not always seen me."

"On the sparkling forms/ On the bells of color / On the truth of bodies / I write your name."
—From three poems by Paul Eluard

Study in Color and Black and White (1993 Premiere), by Stan Brakhage;

16mm, color/b&w, 2 1/2 minutes

Ice Cream by John Brattin; video, color, sound, 2 minutes

Brattin is a miniaturist in relation to time duration, a "compressionist" in terms of content. He works primarily as a painter and in video installation work. Of his other single channel pieces *Fat Heart* has been seen previously in San Francisco in the program *God doesn't care what movies I watch*.

Aladdin (laboratory trial fragment) by Bradley Eros & Jeanne Liotta;
video, color, silent, 3 minutes

Bottles (1936), by Harman & Ising, produced by MGM;
16mm, color, sound, 3 minutes

The Color of Love (1994), by Peggy Ahwesh; 16mm, color, music on cassette
Chemically imbalanced found film. Eroded "Swedish Erotica" Super 8 material blown up to 16mm, printed with the sequences in reversed continuity. Music on audio cassette by Astor Piazzolla.

The film in progress was shown in a performance version in Toronto with texts by Napoleon, and then later in Astoria, Queens under the title *His Most Precious Blood*, a title that I gave to that afternoon's version of the film without realizing that only two blocks away from the screening there was a Catholic church with the same name, a fact which apparently scandalized the archdiocese. (PA)

"Ruin is that which happens to the image from the moment of the first gaze."
— Jacques Derrida

"Pornography on the other hand can be pure documentation and art simultaneously. Take its basic structure—the introduction of characters, interaction, seduction. In larger doses this format's so boring that voyeurs must learn to perceive it cleverly. So slight discrepancies in lighting say or oblivious camera angles, bad overdubbing, the shadows of crew and director—all are paramount. Collectively they imbue what seems simplistic with extra—added dimensions. Serious students of porn apply the same rigorous mind set to their favorite medium as conventional aesthetes apply to an exhibition of paintings, enjoying the pleasures of the flesh as latter do the properties of paint."
— Dennis Cooper

friendless/faceless, excerpt from found film courtesy of Scott Stark;
16mm, color, sound, 15 minutes

"Sometimes pornography is a roaring fireplace I've pulled my chair next to."
— Dennis Cooper

A cross between Delmar Davies' *Dark Passage* crossed with Andy Warhol's *Blow Job*, but of course really neither. We marvel at the manufactured prophetic (only by seconds) dissolve that allows the barbershop's shaving towel to stand as a synecdoche for facial bandages and reconstruction, and the unnatural contortions necessary to allow our main protagonist to conceal both his "past" and "present" face. Filmed in San Francisco in the 1970s.

"...this face looked at in the face of memory itself, what remains or returns as specter from the moment one first looks at oneself and a figuration is eclipsed. The figure the face then sees is visibility being eaten away, it loses its integrity without disintegrating."
— Jacques Derrida

"Just as contemporary art eschews the traditional subject relying instead on display of purely aesthetic components, pornography's not about what it appears to observe—sex. Porn's simply intimate with human beings, its components, though not necessarily the stars of the movie one's watching. They're just the wardrobe sex happens to wear on particular outings...When you're nude you're real. Sounds idiotic but it's true. That's why porn will outlive art because it's beautiful in the purest sense. Beauty is timeless. It's the deity panning for gold in these wasted stars used up bodies. It creates dreams out of people that a cat wouldn't drag in."

—Dennis Cooper

Downs Are Feminine (1993), by Lewis Klahr, 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes
Music by Mercury Rev.

"The sear of metamorphoses / The unbroken chain of dawns in the brain"

—Paul Eluard

"Whoever comes into this pool as a man / May he emerge a half-man at these water's touch. May he / be weakened, softened."

—Ovid, *Metamorphoses*

"[Pornography] creates dreams out of people the cat wouldn't drag in, aiming our cocks, averting our minds from the 'ditch' of what each one means."

—Dennis Cooper

Lewis Klahr's *Downs Are Feminine* unveils a kind of rainy day, indoor, peaceable kingdom of desultory and idyllic debauchery, masturbatory reveries and hermaphroditic transformations. Klahr's onerous collages graft 70s porn of pallid stubbly flesh, flagrantly spumes onto *Good Housekeeping* - *Architectural Digest* decor, (varicolored crab-orchard stone foyers, modacrylic sunbursts, jalousie windows and orientalist metal scrollwork interior states where characters despoil themselves in quaalude interludes of dreamy couplings.

The 1970s may have been the least photogenic decade since the invention of photography. Easy to wince at the stylistic impositions of that era, (unless you are of course newly smitten, through the repo-revivalism of its shotgun second coming, that brings deposits of devolved kitsch to life - a cruel dancing chicken show - a hotfoot command performance at best) harder to cultivate the genuine gift of second sight that allows you to pry off the barnacles of association and get past the gamy scent of officially assigned clichés that *Time* - *Life* encapsulates each age in, and find what was lost in its own time, *in media res*. The photochemical pedestal and base of color from the 1970s has proved to be more unstable and adulterated than any other, with its own special short cut formulas of built in obsolescence and degradation. The financial premium placed on silver and petroleum products substantially deprived the physical make up of sound and image recording materials botching the promise of durable time travel. "Vinyl" record albums warped and curled in a flash of sunlight. PhotoMat's democratically distributed trademark fuzziness sideswiped our family snapshots and left crude effigies adrift in the memory banks. Kodak discontinued film stock after film stock sentencing some of the most beautiful and responsive stocks into an early grave. Most of the Hollywood blockbusters from the '70s have visually slid into an anemic monochrome of vinegerated steak tartare. Klahr's rich colors counter this with their own restorations while still emotionally expressing the inevitable slope of that age. Blaise Cendrars says that photogenic "is a flowery asshole kind of a word, but a mystery." "To be photogenic..." (he proclaims from the vanished vantage point of cubist jazz age expansiveness,) "one must have a real mug, personality; keep secret; and live in close communion with the truth of your soul." The world evoked in *Downs Are Feminine* seems to be one where the body is both actively dispirited yet

mercurial. A defoliated decade (in terms of popular perception much of mid '70s popular culture was in a kind of "horse latitudes" where many things from the previous ten years were treated as ballast, were thrown overboard or became waterlogged) the '70s arrived at the doorstep as a posthumous footnote to the brigadoon '60s and didn't find it's bearings until the last lap, circa '76-'77. The cut out characters of *Downs Are Feminine* reflect that spun around aftermath aimlessness, they have a wanton and blissful disconcert. In this out of touch realm, touching is intelligence gathering for a carnal knowledge that can never attain a platonic ideal.

Klahr was affected by his remembrance of high school classmate, a figure of speculation within those corridors outside of the artists immediate circle but a compelling presence. This teenage boy overdosed on barbiturates and died of hypothermia (purported to be one of the most dreamily beautiful exits possible i.e. Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Match Girl*) under the 59th street bridge. The world Klahr creates is sheerly one of conjecture and rumor as he tries to recreate his adolescent projection into the unimaginable. He reconstructs a legendary secret world of this fallen boy, a bloodshot never-never land of fogged out perception and transgressive frolic. Where melancholy doldrums can't retard the brilliant metamorphoses of time worn satyrs and sylphs. The red spheres, the "downs" that float in midair ("And if there's one thing I can't stand it's up, up. up. up. up...") and emerge pearl like from the oyster labia of a transsexual, are also a candy cure, the kind of pills you would find in a children's toy doctor kit, the gobbly good placebo. Astral pellets that fell to earth. The imbibing characters seem supremely distanced from the Byzantine testicular globes, and the Genet like anal horticulture of backyard roses blooming from backdoor orifices merits not a nod or a blink from the seed beds they spring from. Unreadable text is excreted. The deadpan attitudes may be the result of the impossibility of distinguishing the actual from the imagined. The whole atmosphere is pervaded with euphoria, a hopelessness without despair, a contentment beyond longing.

Detachment may be the password of these hybrid polysexual creatures. A detachability that applies to the portable appliances of their free floating sexual organs, the phallic thumbs and the deep throated microphones which in *Downs* no longer are mikes as surrogate dicks but vice versa. Klahr's penchant for free association is full in play as the grill work of a vintage automobile dissolves into the revolving barbecue grill of sirloin steaks, and acts of auto fellatio give way to philatelic souvenirs like a pre-princess Grace Kelly stamp. If the *mise en scene* presents a fleeting Eden of garden furniture and garden implements, the fetish tools of steel fingered rakes, shovel and wheelbarrows, the music of *Mercury Rev* suffuses these scenes with a felling that is definitely *apres le deluge*.

Ornamental hookahs, Kon tiki figures and the cool mint juleps can't smooth away the fact that this film is in part about demise and descent. No matter how pleasingly mythological and closeted the garden party daisy chain appears, no matter how blithe, the prevailing tinge from the music is part the far side of bittersweet, a breathy macerating lullaby ("Tonight I'll build tunnels to your nightmare room") whose burrowing temperament bewitches the space of the film, making it at once more porous and more abstract. The music is an adjutant that brings the film closer to being a narcoleptic memorialization of the ninth circle - a Dantean reference (this was the infernal circle reserved for teachers, poets and homosexuals) that was freely celebrated in the gay community in that all too brief period that was the post-Stonewall pre-AIDS epidemic, seventies.

If Klahr's previous *Yesterday's Glue* presented an after hours clubworld of pining narcissists where the mandatory sex, drugs and rock and roll was glacial if not sinister, *Downs Are Feminine* presents a world that edges past despondency to become an amoral libertine glade that is at its core abeyant but benevolent.

program notes by Mark McElhatten

**SMALL GAUGE TREASURES:
SONGS I-XIV BY STAN BRAKHAGE**

PRESENTED IN THEIR ORIGINAL 8MM FORMAT

Sunday, April 24, 1994: SF Art Institute

SONGS

Go, little naked and impudent songs,
Go with a light foot!
(Or with two light feet, if it please you!)
Go and dance shamelessly!
Go with an impertinent frolic!
Greet the grave and the stodgy,
Salute them with your thumbs at your noses.

— Ezra Pound, "Salutation the Second"

*Film synopsis/descriptions by Stan Brakhage.
All films are silent.*

Song I (1964); color, 4 minutes

A portrait of a beautiful woman.

Songs II & III (1964); color, 7 minutes

An envisionment of fire and a mind's movement in remembering.

Song IV (1964); color, 4 minutes

A round-about three girls playing with a ball... hand-painted over photo image.

Song V (1964); color, 7 minutes

A child-birth song... I think my best birth film yet.

Songs VI & VII (1964); color, 7 minutes

VI: A song of the painted veil — arrived at via moth-death.

VII: A San Francisco song-portrait of the City of Brakhage dreams.

Song VIII (1964); color, 4 minutes

A sea creatures song — a seeing of ocean as creature.

Songs IX & X (1965); color, 10 minutes

IX: a wedding song — of source and substance of marriage.

X: a sitting around song.

Song XI (1965); color, 6 minutes

A black velvet film of fires, windows, insect life, and a lyre of rain scratches.

Song XII was not available for tonight's screening. **Song XXIII** was presented instead. See Brakhage Program 2, March 19, 1995 for screening of **Song XII**.

Song XIII (1965); color, 6 minutes

A travel song of scenes and horizontals.

Song XIV (1965); color, 3 minutes

A "closed-eye" vision song composed of molds, paints, and crystals.

"The conception of *Songs* was a dramatic event in Brakhage's life. He had come to New York where he showed the completed *Parts Two* and *Three* of *Dog Star Man* with a vague idea of joining the New American Cinema Exposition then traveling in Europe. While in the city his 16mm equipment was stolen from his car. He collected enough money to get himself and his family back to Colorado, but he did not have funds for new equipment. With the twenty-five dollars paid by the limited insurance on the stolen equipment, he discovered he could buy an 8mm camera and editing materials. He did so. At least three factors were involved in the switch to 8mm, beyond what Brakhage would call the 'magical' coincidence of finding the inexpensive equipment when he went looking to replace what he had lost.

"In the first place, he wanted to get away from the giant form of *The Art of Vision* which had occupied him for seven years. Then, there was a definite economic advantage in making 8mm films: materials and laboratory prices were much lower than for 16mm work, and one could not be tempted into costly printing work (mixing layers of film, fades, etc.) simply because no laboratory undertook to do that in 8mm. All superimpositions, dissolving, and fading had to be done in the camera. Finally, Brakhage saw a polemical advantage in the switch. Not only would his example dignify and encourage younger filmmakers who could afford to work only in 8mm, but he would be able to realize, on a limited scale, a dream he had for years of selling copies of his films, rather than just renting them, to people for home viewing. Since the early 1960s he had been prophesying a breakthrough for the avant-garde filmmaker when films would be available for purchase like books, records, and painting reproductions and could therefore be owned and screened many times and at pleasure.

"In the beginning Brakhage had no idea that would become a single, serial work. Even after making the first eight sections he resisted the idea. But by the spring of 1965, with ten *Songs* finished in a little more than a year, he began to speak of the totality of the work in progress: 'I think there will be more *Songs*. I do definitely see that they relate to each other. That is, practically every *Song* has images in it that occur in some other *Song*, if not in two or three others. The more remarkable thing is that each *Song* is distinct from each other; that holds them together in a very crucial kind of *tension*.' Within another year he was punning on the relation of a *Song*'s number in the series to its subject (*XV Song Traits, 23rd Psalm Branch*); soon after that he was wondering when they would end. They did conclude, with a dedication to the filmmaker Jerome Hill, after thirty *Songs*, or punning again, *American Thirties Song*, in 1969."

—P. Adams Sitney, *Visionary Film* (1974)

REACHING THROUGH THE SCREEN: A TRIBUTE TO LYNN HERSHMAN

CURATOR, STEVE SEID

April 28 - May 22, 1994 AMC Kabuki
Consult S.F.I.F.F. brochure for more information

The San Francisco International Film Festival (in association with SF Cinematheque) will present the first major American retrospective of Bay Area artist Lynn Hershman. Although viewers have had the chance to glimpse each Hershman work as it has been completed, these four programs (plus her installation *Room of One's Own* on view at the Kabuki and

the Koch Gallery) offer the first in-depth opportunity to reevaluate her achievement. Program 1: Tribute Program; Program 2: Virtual Diaries; Program 3: Phantom Limbs; Program 4: Virtual Voices.

**IN GENTLE MEMORY:
TRIBUTE TO MARJORIE KELLER**

Sunday, May 1, 1994 SF Art Institute

Marjorie Keller's unexpected death on February 17 was a shock to everyone she has touched over the years as a filmmaker, educator, writer, and friend. She was recently at the Cinematheque this past fall to screen her last work, *Herein*. Tonight's program consists of a selection of her early work, all Standard 8mm, silent, with the exception of *Lyrics*, shot in Super 8 with sound. These films are infused with energy, from the way they are shot to the forms they acquire through editing. Formal elements are important in these works but exist only as part of a dynamic with the chosen subject matter. The instants which occur when the film can no longer lock on to an image, for example when there is not enough light to distinguish an image from what lies behind it, or when the camera is too close to an image to focus, become moments of pure emotion. Color, light, texture and movement no longer simply constitute an image, but mediate our experience of it. Color occupies the screen and an image slowly emerges from it, through it. Color is added to an image, painted on the surface, refracted through a filter. Color and light exist as visual material, attached to an image or resisting attachment to anything but the frame. Movement, texture, shape, color frequently exist beyond the confines of an image, almost as if the image can not contain its own skeleton, spilling its contents and bringing us up against filmic representation. Keller repeatedly returns to familiar imagery: children, water, nature, friends, immediate surroundings. To Keller's eye, there is no imagery more lush, none more significant. The camera moves across and delves into this imagery as if to prove its unending richness. From time to time Keller succeeds in losing the us in an image, taking us deeply into a form. We are then brought slowly to something more familiar, a body perhaps, and steadied.

*Film synopsis/descriptions by Marjorie Keller.
All films Standard 8 mm except where indicated.*

Turtle (1969); color, silent, 2 1/2 minutes

A life-light guilt trip, tragicomic psychodrama in film time. Made in the darkness of my year at a women's dormitory. 1969, Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts.

Untitled (1971); b&w, silent, 7 1/2 minutes

A portrait of Saul Levine, filmmaker and one-time Italian Ice vendor / of the film surface & depth so by the choice of image / of the inside & outside light in the summer and the shower. 1971, Cambridge, Mass.

She/Va (1973); color, silent, 2 3/4 minutes

Dreams of childhood come true - blue tu tu / black soft-shoe/ Scotch plaid jig /pink hip toe too!

A kick in the ass on the head and a hip hip hip. Pink parasol stroll. Cut down by the push mower. Black. Black. The inexorable success of the littlest, with a string of flamboyance projected into her future—remade in her image. For Ginny. Camera: Fred Moore. Starring: Corinne, Peter, and Ginny Moore.

By 2's and 3's: Women (1974); color, silent, 9 1/2 minutes

American landscape with women. A tense portrait of one friend and one not. This film puts together a perspective on the unhappy experience of traveling in cars—an activity aimless and unmemorable. The splicer makes a new trip of the footage, limited not to the represented geography but to the after-effect on the mind and heart of the first trip.

Film Notebook: Part 1 (1975); color/b&w, silent, 12 minutes

The Web (1977); color, silent, 9 3/4 minutes

In *The Web* I delved for the first and only time into film as mischief-making; wicked, like a child. An homage to the powers of little girls.

Lyrics (1983); Super 8mm, color, sound, 5 minutes

Three songs between heaven and earth. With Carmen, Susan, Joseph and Marcus Vigil.

"Devoted beyond reason to what was then called the New American Cinema, Marjorie Keller began making short personal films while still in her teens; over the next 20-odd years she distinguished herself not only as an artist but as a teacher, an organizer, an activist, an all-around inspiration—as well as the first editor of *Motion Picture* and the author of *The Untutored Eye*, a study of childhood in the films of Jean Cocteau, Joseph Cornell, and Stan Brakhage.

"Keller's aesthetic forebear was likely Brakhage (his emphasis on subjective vision and the domestic environment), but she was not one to accept tradition unquestioned. Her revision of Brakhage was clear-eyed and anti-idealist, informed by both her gender and a post-'68 sense of sexual politics. *Misconception* (1977), in particular, was a purposely raw and unromantic view of childbirth.

"Keller was firmly rooted in the world and her sense of family was complex. She grew up surrounded by a half dozen siblings; married to film scholar and critic P. Adams Sitney, she helped raise two stepchildren and was also, heartbreaking to write, the mother of three-year-old twin girls.

"Marjorie Keller titled one of her strongest films *Daughters of Chaos* and the shock of her death—inexplicable, which is to say "natural"—on February 17 illuminates the chaos we try to ward off with our daily routines. As articulate, as cheerful, as bright, as determined, as loving and unfailingly supportive as Margie was, she was exactly the person you would want to comfort your family and speak at your funeral. I never imagined that I'd be attending hers."

—J. Hoberman, *The Village Voice* (Feb. 22, 1994)

program notes by Elise Hurwitz

WASTELAND AND OASIS

CURATED BY ELISE HURWITZ & ARIEL O'DONNELL

Thursday, May 5, 1994 & Sunday, May 8, 1994
Broadcast over City College of San Francisco Cable Channel 52

A collection of works by Bay Area makers exploring environmental fragility and methods of survival, these films and videos pose questions regarding the body and its relationship to both urban and natural surroundings. The images used by these artists are sometimes abstractly lyrical or pedagogically literal. Physical terrain and emotional landscapes emphasize the tenuous realities of modern existence: How does the human body simultaneously retain individuality and fight against destruction? Where do we go from here?

REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS FAST BY JOHN MAYBURY

&

PROJECTIONS BY DEREK JARMAN

Thursday, May 5, 1994 Center for the Arts

The Cinematheque, in association with the *San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival*, is pleased to present a sneak preview of two of the hottest titles in this year's festival—*Remembrance of Things Fast* by award-winning music video maker John Maybury and *Projections* by the late Derek Jarman.

Projections (1989), by Derek Jarman;

16/35mm film transferred to video, color, sound, 46 minutes

"*Projections* was created by Jarman to serve as background to the Pet Shop Boys' 1989 tour. It's Jarman at his most carefree and whimsical. By eschewing standard music video conventions, Jarman allows himself to riff off the Boys' songs with greater creative reign. The sequence for 'Paninaro' segues to an imaginary picture-postcard Italy filled with pouting young hustlers and knife-wielding girl-on-girl action. 'It's a Sin' imagines a well-oiled Bacchanalian orgy/Greek mystery cult meets homo kitsch. *Projections* also features *Studio Bankside*, Jarman's first ever film, and *A Garden in Luxor*, both used at a benefit concert with the Pet Shop Boys in Manchester, 1992."

—Ed Halter

Remembrance of Things Fast (1993 US Premiere), by John Maybury;

16mm transferred to video, color, sound, 60 minutes

"A disjointed psychedelic joyride with a homo-cyberpunk sensibility, *Remembrance of Things Fast* investigates some of the seedier rest-stops along the information superhighway. Award-winning British music video director and artist John Maybury places Tilda Swinton, Rupert Everett and porn star Aiden Brady in a hyper-real videoscape amid menacing dominatrices and transgender aristocrats.

Disturbing, challenging, and at times painfully beautiful, *Remembrance* represents both the culmination of Maybury's work and the cutting edge of video production today; many of the state-of-the-art editing techniques used were invented as the work was shot.

"This is certainly not a film for people who want simple story-telling pleasures. Swinton and Everett appear as you've never seen them before—less actors than objects, their images distorted, pulsating, and visually deconstructed to expose the 'true stories and visual lies' of queer existence in the postmodern age. Testing the limits of global television and the clichés of the three-minute attention span, *Remembrance of Things Fast* provides an exhilarating and subversive commentary on our technophilic culture of images."

—Ed Halter

**A PALIMPSEST OF DREAMS:
PHIL SOLOMON & STAN BRAKHAGE**

FILMMAKER PHIL SOLOMON IN PERSON

Sunday, May 8, 1994 SF Art Institute

Phil Solomon often likes to describe his filmmaking as a reverse form of archaeology, attempting to find buried artifacts not by removing soil, but by dumping more on. In Solomon's case the "soil" is the layers of surface texture and imagery he acquires through optically printing (re-photographing) or chemically treating pre-existing film footage, either his own or found. Solomon's project, though employing a process contrary to that of the archaeologist, shares with the latter the same inquisitive impulse to search for what is hidden below the surface: both are engaged in a quest for remains.

Visually, Solomon's films border on the abstract, hiding behind scrims of densely-packed images and shifting textures. But it is precisely this refractive nature of the films that works against the abstraction of a particular reality. The more we try to define exactly where our place is in the amorphous nature of the actual film material, the deeper we enter into what is behind its surface. In the end, the role of archaeologist is placed onto the viewer. We search, we dream, we long—both with Solomon and through Solomon. The territory we begin to traverse is sometimes murky, at other times ghostly, but always one destined to yield buried treasures. These riches are not handed to the viewer on a silver platter, however. There is no mapped-out yellow brick road; only the darkness of a starry night where the constellations formed are our own.

Despite their technical virtuosity, the films remain handmade. The heavily textured surfaces give the films a fragility, as if at any moment the film material itself could break. More importantly, though, it is their placing of the viewer in the uncomfortable realm of the past that makes one feel like one is walking on eggshells. The effort to grasp that which is slipping past, and the attendant sense of loss, pervades the work of Solomon, and as such, his films require ginger steps. But they also require a wide-eyed innocence, for through the fog Solomon is discovering remains to be seen, and so should we.

—Kurt Easterwood (1990)

Clepsydra (1992), by Phil Solomon; 16mm, b&w, silent, 14 minutes

Clepsydra is an ancient Greek waterclock (literally, "to steal water"). This film envisions the strip of celluloid going vertically through a projector as a sprocketed (random events measured in discrete units of time) waterfall, through which the silent dreams of a young girl can barely be heard under the din of an irresistible torrent, an irreversible torment. (PS)

Elementary Phrases (1994), by Stan Brakhage & Phil Solomon;
16mm, color, silent, 38 minutes

This is a hand-painted and elaborately step-printed collaboration between the filmmakers Stan Brakhage and Phil Solomon. After many months of working together step-printing the painted strips of film by Brakhage, Solomon re-discovered the following passage which helped clarify their process and inspired the editing which then began:

"The profound nature of this concept will be better understood, and the positive study of it more successful, if we think of such an organization, in its temporal aspect and scope, as corresponding exactly to what is called in music the phrasing; distinguished both from the melody (which is based on the differences of pitch) and from the rhythm (based on the rhythm of an arsis-thesis system). Like rhythm it is based on facts of intensity (nuances) even while its form is extended over a dimension analogous to that of melody.

"Whoever distinctly grasps these ideas will feel the importance of what we must call the phrasing of a picture; and for example, the stylistic importance of the differences observable between the slow, full, majestic phrasing of a Veronese (that of Tintoretto is more suave with equal plenitude), the rugged phrasing of Caravaggio, powerful in its boldness, brutal, even a bit melodramatic; the essentially polyphonic and architectonic phrasing of N. Poussin; or again the pathetic and tormented phrasing of Delacroix. It is entirely reasonable to note a likeness with these characteristics in the music of Palestrina, Monteverdi, Bach, or Berlioz."

—Etienne Souriau, "Time in the Plastic Arts," *Reflections on Art*

Remains to be Seen (1989, revised 1993 Premiere), by Phil Solomon;

Super 8 transferred to 16mm, color, sound, 17 minutes

Using chemical and optical treatments to coat the film with a limpid membrane of swimming crystals, coagulating into silver recall, the dissolving somewhere between the Operating Theater, The Waterfall, and the Great Plains...my wish for a "moving painting" finally realized. Dedicated in loving memory to my mother, Ruth Solomon. (PS)

POST-COLONIAL CONUNDRUMS

CURATOR, CRAIG BALDWIN IN PERSON

Thursday, May 12, 1994 Center for the Arts

The Couple in a Cage: a Guatinaui Odyssey (1993), by Coco Fusco
& Paula Heredia; video, color, sound (English/Spanish), 30 minutes

Esta Provocativa Pieza, combina imágenes de archivo tomadas a indígenas, y la presentación en 1992 de Fusco y Guillermo Gómez-Peña. En este video, ellos parodian la

exhibición antropológica de indígenas, mostrándose prisioneros en una jaula dorada, como primitivos antes de ser colonizados.

"The Couple in the Cage (is) a sly, sophisticated look at a traveling exhibit in which a couple from the jungles of South America are caged and put on display... Some viewers interviewed while they watch the exhibit think it's a performance piece; some think it's a disgusting, imperialist throwback. All is revealed at the end, but from the start it is apparent that the directors Coco Fusco and Paula Heredia have created a deliciously witty satire about cultural stereotyping."

—Caryn James, *The New York Times* (Oct. 08, 1993)

"As artists of color in the United States', writes Fusco, 'whatever our aesthetic or political inclinations, Guillermo Gómez-Peña and I carry our bodies as markers of difference and reminders of the endlessly recycled colonial fantasies on which Western Culture thrived.'

"Non-Western human beings have been exhibited in theaters, museums, zoos, circuses, and world's fairs for the past 500 years. In most cases the people who were exhibited did not choose to be on display, but, according to Fusco, 'served as proof of the natural superiority of European civilization, of its ability to exert control over and extract knowledge from the primitive world, and ultimately of the genetic inferiority of the non-European races.' This is how Caucasians discovered the 'other,' by exhibiting them as fetish objects offered for inspection, or as trophies of imperial conquest. The first impresario of this sort, Fusco points out, was Christopher Columbus, who brought several Arawaks to the Spanish Court in 1493, where he left one of them on display for two years. In 1906 a Pygmy was brought to the United States and put on display in the primate cage at the Bronx Zoo. (Fusco and Gómez-Peña's) performance, 'Two Undiscovered Aborigines,' is like a public exorcism of departed ghosts."

—Suzi Gablik, *The New Art Examiner* (Oct. 1993)

Un Chien Delicieux (1991) by Ken Feingold; video, color, sound, 19 minutes

We see an old Thai man talking about his memories of anthropologists, we see a photo of André Breton and associates in some Paris drawing room, and we see a dog killed and prepared for eating. With precision Feingold dismantles the house of ethnographic truth and displays the ruins for our delectation.

—Cameron Bailly

Un Chien Delicieux....makes playful use of the documentary, giving us an account of western academia and the art world through an outsider's eyes.

—Rosemary Heather

"This deceptively small, yet highly important work raises fundamental questions concerning codes of documentary cinema, Western ethnocentrism, and taboos. The entire first half of the work—the 'interview'—is a fraud. The voice-over consists of a text written by the filmmaker and does not translate what the man says, thus breaking the 'insoluble,' taken-for-granted link between image and voice-over. The entire story of the trip to Paris and the surrealists is an invention. We do not know whether Lo Me Akha is the man's name, whether he is Burmese, whether he speaks Burmese, whether Burmese indeed do eat dogs, or, finally, whether this is even Burma.

"Filmgoers beware! The borders between documentary, fiction, and propaganda are tenuous—unless the dog is killed and cooked on camera.

"In a certain sense, the brutal truth of the film's second part further misleads viewers unaware of the director's machinations into retroactively and even more strongly 'reconfirming' the veracity of its first part. For why should we even for a moment question the veracity of one part of a work when the other one is so manifestly 'true?'"

"In this connection, the cleverness of Feingold's text for the interview becomes, in retrospect, even more impressive. The 'Native Other' is almost 'one of ours'...Our customary racist condescension toward the native is 'softened' as we patronizingly consent to acknowledge his 'wisdom' (limited, of course) and secretly congratulate him on his ability to get to Paris and meet (another joke here) the surrealists, of all people. Thus swaddled in the cozy cocoon of our prejudices, we more easily fall prey to a filmmaker who had staged it all—from fraudulent interview to an actual killing."

—Amos Vogel, *Cineaste*

Corporation With a Movie Camera (1992), by Joel Katz;
video, color, sound, 33 minutes

Corporation with a Movie Camera is a videotape about how corporate representations have operated in shaping the American public's ideas about the "Third World." Weaving together clips of corporate-produced archival film with poetry, performance, and other metaphorically interpretive text, the tape raises questions about how public relations media operate in the constitution of power, how and by whom history is written, and how audience and consumer desire are constructed.

Excerpting sponsored film produced by U.S. corporations about their Asian, African, and Latin American business ventures as primary historical "texts" for examination, *Corporation with a Movie Camera* includes rarely seen footage from industrials such as *Sumatra, Island of Yesterday* (Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co., 1926) and *Assignment Venezuela* (Creole Petroleum Corporation, 1953). Part propaganda, part narrative, part pedantic exposition, these films are rich sites of information about corporate enterprise, often containing anthropological and cultural observations more revealing about the observer than the observed. (JK)

Emotional Tourist by Marshall Weber; video

This densely edited video evokes the cross-cultural delirium of an occidental in modern-day Egypt.

program notes by Maya Allison

OPEN SCREENING

GUEST PRESENTER CAULEEN SMITH

Friday, May 13, 1994 SF Art Institute

The Cinematheque hosts our season's final Open Screening of recently completed short films and videos. Tonight's guest presenter, Cauleen Smith, begins the evening with a selection of her own work.

WITHER CYBERSPACE?

ERIC THEISE IN PERSON

Sunday, May 15, 1994 SF Art Institute

"Going online" has special meaning to videomakers, but to most people it means using computers and modems to connect to bulletin boards, conference systems, global computer networks, and <dramatic pause> cyberspace. Does this digital territory hold anything of interest to the film, or video, maker? You bet! Tonight's event will cover the basics of global network infrastructure and tools like electronic mail, gopher, WAIS, and Mosaic. We'll take a look at media-specific resources on the Internet and USENET, as well as Arts Wire, Film/Tape World's Media Planet BBS, The WELL, and other systems, some still under development. (ET)

Eric Theise, co-founder of Bay Area Internet Literacy, workshop coordinator for the Exploratorium's Multimedia Playground, and editor of the forthcoming *Millennium Whole EarthCatalog's* Internet pages will lead this spirited romp.

Co-sponsored by X-Factor.

THE SMELL OF BURNING ANTS BY JAY ROSENBLATT

JAY ROSENBLATT IN PERSON

Sunday, May 19, 1994 Center for the Arts

The Smell of Burning Ants (1994 Premiere); 16mm, color/b&w, sound, 21 minutes
The film is about a man: he's angry, he is not entirely sure why.

—From *The Smell of Burning Ants*

Using beautiful footage and elegant transitions Jay Rosenblatt uncovers the dark side of the Huck Finn or Tom Sawyer archetype. Without giving answers he asks us to look at the ways in which boys are deprived of wholeness. In a departure from the Iron John notion of men's need to get back to their primal selves, Rosenblatt offers a narrative of how men become so emotionally disconnected. The sacred dismissal "boys will be boys" evolves into a chilling realization that these boys are becoming angry, destructive, emotionally disabled men. It begins with "the boy" carried along by the crowd, detached but feigning interest to fit in. What begins as the desire for acceptance during boys' play becomes self-preservation in light of the violence inflicted on those who are different. Finally the boy has "killed" any natural ability to empathize and develops an independent will to violence.

As the narrator follows the boy's initiations into manhood in academic, generalizing tones, we may see the boy in descriptive action, or as an element in a more symbolic sequence. The boy is shown behind a camera panning across the viewer's line of vision to gaze into each formative sequence of his life. Ants appear throughout the film, signaling the torture inflicted by the boy, and perhaps the boy's own fear of being tortured.

The film begins with a description of how a scorpion kills itself when surrounded by fire, even when the fire wouldn't have caused its death. "A clear case of self-destruction" according to the narrator. It's not immediately apparent how the boy's torture of ants, small animals, other children and women is a "clear case of self-destruction." Early in the film the narrator describes one of the first self-denials in which a boy must engage: "boys become boys by *not* being girls. Later he will be with women and feel what he's been robbed of." Strangely, the one shot of an adult man with a woman depicts rape. Rather than the recognition of a buried part of himself in a woman, we see a denial of her voice in the most literal sense possible. Perhaps he was robbed by his socialization, but at this point in the process he robs himself in raping her. He has completed the socialization by continuing the behavior beyond his childhood. In light of the rape, the scorpion's suicide might outline the way in which he now kills his true self. His peer group is no longer in the room (as the circle of fire would not have killed the scorpion), only he is responsible for this. Perhaps his scorpion-like suicide appears in the death of his ability to empathize; and to act independently from his initiations into manhood.

—Maya Allison

***The Quiet One* (1948)**, by Sidney Meyers, Janet Loeb, Helen Levitt, & James Agee;
16mm, b&w, sound, 67 minutes

"*The Quiet One* is a documentary-drama which won awards at the Venice and the Edinburgh Film Festivals, and was acclaimed as one of the most penetrating studies of juvenile delinquency. It tells the story of a black youth who grows up in Harlem without the love of his parents. Feeling rejected, withdrawn into a state of shame and loneliness, he drifts into delinquency. He is sent to the Wiltwyck School for Boys for rehabilitation. His emotional damage has been so great that he becomes a 'quiet one,' who builds a wall of silence around himself to hide his fear and bitterness. Under the guidance of a psychiatrist and counselor, he is slowly brought back into the world. Sidney Meyers, apparently influenced by the Italian neo-realist film-makers, uses nonprofessional actors, and emphasizes the details of everyday life. James Agee's stirring commentary is spoken in the film by Gary Merrill."

—Audio Brandon Films: *Collection of International Cinema* (1976-77)

"The use of significant detail, the building up of atmosphere, the essentially visual way in which we understand the working of the boy's mind, the really brilliant way in which the people...are handled or observed unconsciously—these reveal cinematic skill of the highest order. There are no elaborate technicalities, no tricks or devices, but every shot is subtly planned without your being conscious of it. Composition and use of camera deserve to rank with the best of cinema...The overall result is extraordinary: a most moving, important and memorable film."

—Paul Rotha, *Rotha on Film*

HAIRCUT (NO. 1) & POOR LITTLE RICH GIRL BY ANDY WARHOL

ANDY WARHOL PROGRAM 1

Sunday, May 22, 1994 SF Art Institute

***Haircut (No. 1.)* (1963)**; b&w, silent, 27 minutes @ 16 fps
With John Daley, Freddy Herko, Billy Name, James Waring

"The idea for the *Haircut* films originated with Billy Name, a close friend of Warhol's who, in 1963, was a lighting designer for the Judson Dance Theater in New York. Name had learned how to cut hair from his grandfather, a barber in Poughkeepsie, New York, and often held what he called 'haircutting salons' at his apartment on the Lower East Side, which he had painted entirely silver. These haircutting parties were attended by Billy's friends, often impoverished dancers, performers, and choreographers from the New York avant-garde dance world. Although *Haircut (No. 1)* was not shot in Name's apartment, its cast—which includes the dancer Freddy Herko and the choreographer James Waring—is representative of Name's circle at that time. At the end of 1963, Warhol moved his art and film production into a new studio, called the 'Factory,' on East 47th Street, and asked Billy if he would paint it silver like his apartment. Name eventually moved into the Factory, where he became one of the key figures in the Warhol scene, acting as Factory 'foreman' as well as the lighting and set designer and official photographer for Warhol's film productions.

"*Haircut (No. 1)* is an interesting example of Warhol's early cinema, made during an experimental period when he was in the process of developing the pared-down style of his purely minimalist works. Unlike the later, longer, and very simplified films *Eat*, *Blow Job*, *Empire*, and *Henry Geldzahler* (all from 1964), each of which was composed of a single frontal shot continued through multiple rolls to record a single action, the six 100-foot rolls in *Haircut (No. 1)* are shot from six different camera angles. Each shot is carefully composed and framed, almost in the style of European art cinema, with dramatically different lighting painstakingly designed by Billy Name for each take. The layered compositions of overlapping figures and faces stress the depth of the film images, while the grainy, high-contrast quality of the Tri-X film heightens the expressionist use of light and shadow. The final 100-foot roll contains three brief, hand-held close-up shots of Name, Herko, and Daley, which appear in the middle of a longer, tripod-mounted shot.

"The intensely homoerotic atmosphere of *Haircut (No. 1)* places this film squarely within the continuum of Warhol's gay cinema: the provocative performance of the bare-chested Freddy Herko and the sensuality of the haircut itself relate directly to Warhol's later, more explicitly sexual works like *Blow Job* and *Couch* (1964), as well as to the various male grooming scenes in *My Hustler* (1965), *Bike Boy*, and *Lonesome Cowboys* (both 1967-68). But the *Haircut* films are also strikingly successful portraits of Billy Name himself: the delicate, intensely focused attention of his haircuts suggests the benevolent, care-giving presence which, as sole resident of the Factory, he brought to the Warhol scene in the sixties. In 1965, Billy would repeat his haircutting performance with Edie Sedgwick in one of Warhol's early videotapes as well as in *Lupe*.

"Three films labeled *Haircut* have been found in the Andy Warhol Film Collection; these do not seem to be different versions of one work, but three distinct films, each shot at a different location and with a different cast. For purposes of clarity, numbers are being added to the titles as the works are preserved. All three *Haircut* films seem to have been shot around the end of 1963: *Haircut (No. 3)*, for example, was shot on film stock manufactured in 1963, but notations found on the original film materials indicate it was processed in January 1964."

—Callie Angell, *The Films of Andy Warhol: Part II* (1994)

Poor Little Rich Girl (1965); b&w, sound, 66 minutes

With Edie Sedgwick and the off-screen voice of Chuck Wein

"Edie was incredible on camera—just the way she moved... She was all energy—she didn't know what to do with it when it came to living her life, but it was wonderful to film. The

great stars are the ones who are doing something you can watch every second, even if it's just a movement inside their eye."

—Andy Warhol (1980)

"In March 1965, just a few months after he bought his first sound camera, Warhol began making a series of films of Edie Sedgwick, a beautiful young heiress whom he had recently met. The *Poor Little Rich Girl Saga*, as this extended series was initially called, included this film as well as *Restaurant*, *Face*, and *Afternoon*. The title *Poor Little Rich Girl* is a reference to the 1936 Shirley Temple movie of the same name, in which an eight-year old girl runs away from her wealthy family to perform with a vaudeville troupe—a situation not unlike that of Edie herself, who had fled her tragic, wealthy family in California to join Warhol's underground art world. Shirley Temple was a childhood idol of Warhol's, he had once written away for an autographed photograph of her, which became his most prized possession.

"Unlike the more elaborate, scripted narratives such as *Vinyl* and *The Life of Juanita Castro*, on which Warhol was collaborating with the playwright Ronald Tavel during this same period, the Edie Sedgwick films are basically extended portraits; in fact, they can be regarded almost as documentaries—straightforward, unscripted filmings of Edie simply being 'herself.' in scenes taken from her real life. Warhol's original idea had been to make a 24-hour film of a whole day in Edie's life, although this long film was never realized, these shorter Sedgwick films can be viewed as installments in this larger project. In Warhol's opinion, Edie was self-possessed and fascinating enough to carry a feature-length movie just by playing herself: 'To play the poor little rich girl in the movie, Edie didn't need a script—if she'd needed a script, she wouldn't have been right for the part.'

"Despite its rather straightforward filming, *Poor Little Rich Girl* is one of Warhol's more challenging films, since the first 33-minute reel is completely out of focus. The first time Warhol shot this film, both reels were out of focus because of a technical problem with the lens; he subsequently reshot the film and then selected one reel from each version as the finished work. The first, out-of-focus reel shows Edie waking up in her apartment and going about her morning preparations alone: ordering coffee and orange juice, smoking cigarettes, doing her exercises, taking pills, putting on makeup—all performed in silence, except for the poignant accompaniment of an Everly Brothers album, and recorded in blurred images that are sometimes nearly illegible, sometimes vaguely suggestive of the impressionist shapes of a Renoir *toilette* painting. After 33 minutes of watching a film about Edie in which we are unable to either hear or see her, the second, in-focus reel arrives as a sort of revelation, in which a suddenly visible Edie smokes pot, tries on clothes, and talks casually with an off-screen Chuck Wein. The contrast between the romantic elusiveness of the first reel and the realistic immediacy of the second creates a minimal narrative of visual suspense and resolution, in which Edie's extraordinarily mercurial, vulnerable presence is literally brought into focus in a subtle drama of loss and recovery."

—Callie Angell, *The Films of Andy Warhol: Part II* (1994)

Others have insisted that Warhol's use of an out-of-focus image was entirely intentional. See Chuck Stephens, "Silver Is the Color of Speed."

—S.F. *Bay Guardian* (May 18, 1994)

THE SAN FRANCISCO CINEMATHEQUE,
PACIFIC FILM ARCHIVE & NEW LANGTON ARTS PRESENT

EMPIRE BY ANDY WARHOL

ANDY WARHOL PROGRAM 2

Sunday, May 29, 1994 New Langton Arts 1:00PM

Empire (1964);

16mm, b&w, silent, 8 hrs 5 minutes @ 16 fps (7 hrs 19 minutes @ 18 fps)

Based on an idea by John Palmer. Arranged by Henry Romney. Camera by Jonas Mekas. Filmed on the night of July 25-26, 1964, from the offices of the Rockefeller Foundation on the 41st floor of the Time-Life Building.

"The best, most temporal way of making a building that I ever heard of is by making it with light. The Fascists did a lot of this "light architecture." If you build buildings with lights outside, you can make them indefinite, and then when you're through using them you shut the lights off and they disappear."

— Andy Warhol (1975)

"*Empire* is the only film Warhol made which does not have a human being as its subject. If Warhol's films can be regarded as a series of investigations into the portrayal of personality on film, then *Empire* might be seen as the control in that series of experiments. This rigorously executed, minimalist work—a portrait of a building—can be seen as a deliberate test in which Warhol attempted to isolate the 'secret' of screen magnetism by separating it from the human subject, to discover which, if any, elements of screen glamour might be inherent in the medium itself, and thus transferable to a neutral subject like a building."

— Callie Angell, *Something Secret: Portraiture in Warhol's Films* (1994)

"This image, shot from a tripod-mounted camera, never moves; projected at the slow motion speed of 16 fps and immobilized within the stationary frame of the movies screen, the film becomes equivalent in the physical presence to a painting on the wall. *Empire* is thus, on one level at least, an early example of film installation, in which the projected film achieves an object-like existence comparable to that of more conventional art works.

"Despite the monolithic immobility of its subject, however, *Empire* is, paradoxically, very much concerned with elements of temporality and the more ephemeral phenomena of light and darkness."

— Callie Angell, *The Films of Andy Warhol: Part II* (1994)

"The intellectual content of *Empire* clearly overshadows the visual, and the exaggerated time element is in opposition to the 'telescoping' of incidents typical of the commercial cinema.

"*Empire* is now a classic of the avant-garde. In a short period it has received extraordinary acceptance, which suggests it appeared at the right moment. Whatever influence it may have had, film will not be quite the same again. Neither, perhaps, will the Empire State Building."

— Gregory Battcock, *The New American Cinema: A Critical Anthology* (1967)

The following are excerpts from a conversation with the Warhol (*Empire*) crew—Henry X., John Palmer, Marie Desert, and the poet Gerard Malanga:

John: Why is nothing happening? I don't understand.

Henry: What would you like to happen?

John: I don't know.

Henry: I have a feeling that all we're filming now is the red light.

Andy: Oh, Henry!!!

Henry: Andy?! NOW IS THE TIME TO PAN.

John: Definitely not!

Henry: The film is a whole new bag when the lights go off.

John: Look at all that action going on. Those flashes. Tourists taking photos.

Andy: Henry what is the meaning of action?

Henry: Action is the absence of inaction.

Andy: Let's say things intelligent.

Gerard: Listen! We don't want to deceive the public, dear.

John: We're hitting a new milestone.

Andy: Henry, say Nietzsche.

Henry: Another aphorism?

John: B movies are better than A movies.

Andy: Jack Smith in every garage.

Marie: Someday we're all going to live underground and this movies will be a smash.

John: The lack of action in the last three 1200-foot rolls is alarming!

Henry: You have to mark these rolls very carefully so as not to get them mixed up.

Jonas: Did you know that the Empire State building sways?

Marie: I read somewhere that art is created in fun.

Jonas: What?

Gerard: During the projection, we should set up window panes for the audience to look through.

Andy: The Empire State Building is a star!

John: Has anything happened at all?!

Marie: No.

John: Good!

Henry: The script calls for a pan right at this point. I don't see why my artistic advice is being constantly rejected.

Henry to Andy: The bad children are smoking pot again.

John: I don't think anything has happened in the last hundred feet.

Gerard: We have to maintain our cool at all times.

John: We have to have this film licensed.

Andy: It looks vary phallic.

Jonas: I don't think it will pass.

John: Nothing has happened in the last half-hour.

- John:** The audience viewing "Empire" will be convinced after seeing the film that they have viewed it from the 41st floor of the Time-Life Building, and that's a whole bag in itself. Isn't that fantastic?
- Jonas:** I don't think the last reel was a waste.
- Henry to John:** I think it's too playful.

—Jonas Mekas, *Movie Journal* (1972)

program notes by Maya Allison

KOREAN VISIONS: THE NEW CINEMA

CURATOR, HYUN-OCK IM IN PERSON

Thursday, June 2, 1994 Center for the Arts

While difficult to contain tonight's filmmakers and video artists under a single rubric, they do represent the growing spirit of Korean alternative cinema. Unlike avant-garde cinema or other alternative practices in the West, these Korean works have emerged only recently, both in the context of a firmly entrenched commercial film industry, and from a tradition of alternative practices in the other arts. Their critique of the conventions of the mass-market commercial cinema has a different resonance, as well as an additional resistance to the domination of a U.S. based-worldwide image culture within Korea.

The development of the short, alternative, and experimental film or video has to do with general trends in the larger world of cinema. What has emerged in South Korea since the late 1980s is a new Korean cinema enabled by a climate of significant political change. With the relaxation of censorship, challenging themes and new expressions have energized mainstream filmmaking in South Korea. For the first time in 30 to 40 years, an alternative cinema— independent feature films made outside the *Ch'ungmuro* (studio) system, experimental films and video—has emerged, diversifying the Korean cinematic idiom.

Cockup (1992 Premiere), by Park Chang-kyong; 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes

The "colonization" of culture by coca-cola is addressed through associative and cross-cultural linguistic exploration. The abbreviated version of "coca-cola"—"coke"—sounds like "cock" when pronounced in Korean. Therein an inventive exploration of the multiple nuances and meanings of this universal product of consumption begins.

Daily Poem (1993 Premiere), by Kang Kyoung-Ah; 16mm, color, sound, 3 minutes

The visual analogy between the film's boundaries (the frame), and psychological boundaries experienced by the filmmaker are the nodal points in this piece. The music, a popular Korean song played backward, signifies the ironic relationship the filmmaker has to her bicultural identity now that she lives in the United States.

Sorry, I Am An Actress (1992), by Park Ji Hong; 16mm, color, sound, 8 1/2 minutes

This film draws an analogy between the camera and women's bodies, of the U.S. and South Korea. With the premise that the audience is dominantly positioned, thereby taking

on the “male” gendered eye, the film becomes a peep show where desire is controlled by camera movements, and where the female body, prostitution, roses, and meat are conflated.

Translation of (Korean language) dialogue in *Sorry, I Am An Actress*:

| | |
|--------------|--|
| (mannequin) | Sorry, I’m not an actor. |
| (actress) | I’m an actress. Please come in and play with me. |
| (prostitute) | There is a room for you. Please come in and play with me. |
| (song) | No, No, I shouldn’t. Because I’m a woman. Instead of saying “I love you,” I show a smile. But you pretend not to know. I hate you. I really hate you. Should I say “I hate you?” Should I say “I don’t like you?” No, No, I shouldn’t. Because I am a woman. |

Passing (1991), by Park Ji Hong; 16mm, b&w, sound, 5 1/2 minutes

The sights and sounds of a walk in the woods are conveyed in this lushly textured optically printed film.

The Lying Buddha (1991), by Lee Yong-Bae;

35mm transferred to video, color, sound, 4 1/2 minutes

According to local folklore, at Oon Joo Temple reclining Buddhas wait to one day rise and fulfill the people’s dream of an egalitarian society. The members of this animation collective formed to provide a native Korean animation in counterpart to the proliferation of American and Japanese animation and culture in Korea, while addressing issues of the grassroots pro-democratic *minjung* movement.

Homo videocus (1991), by Lee Je Yong & Byun-Hyuk;

16mm, color, sound, 20 minutes

“Homo videocus” is a constructed term, inspired by the category of *homo sapien*, which refers to the thinking species of human. “Homo videocus” thus refers to the category of human who “sees.” Through the eyes of a young man caught in the fantasy world of media images the filmmakers critique the ubiquitous television culture in Korea, and convey how that process has intensified over time (color television was introduced to South Korea in the early 80s).

Wet Dream (1992), by Kim Yun-Tae; 16mm, color, sound, 15 minutes

Wet Dream is a sensual and mysterious vision of bodies, death, water and light. Divided in three parts, according to traditional Korean funerary observances, the film is a rumination on contradictory emotions: the fear of death, the impulse of sex, self-love, and self-hate. Keeping true to the sense of “experimental,” Kim Yun-Tae made this film without pre-planning, allowing instead to let his internal images manifest in the resulting work.

Comfort Me (1993), by Soo Jin Kim; video, color, sound, 8 1/2 minutes

This 2nd generation Korean-American video artist recounts the use of Korean women by the Japanese army during WWII as “comfort women.” Scores of Korean women were forcibly taken to Japanese-controlled areas to sexually service the Japanese soldiers. The reading of real accounts adds to the provocative portrayal of this difficult period of history.

Org (1994 Premiere), by Im Chang-Jae; 16mm, b&w, sound, 13 minutes

One man surrounded by a materialist space is the situation presented in this film that looks at the possibility of suicide within an overwhelming image culture. Along with Kim Yun-Tae, Im Chang-Jae is a member of the recently formed experimental film collective,

The New Image Group, the first group of its kind in Korea. This group formed in response to the dizzying influx of a worldwide image culture by positioning itself as an essential Korean voice in dialectic to the dominant media culture.

Special thanks to the Motion Picture Promotion Corporation of Korea and the San Francisco Consulate General of the Republic of Korea for their assistance with this program.

program notes by Hyun-Ock Im

**BUFFERIN
&
THE VELVET UNDERGROUND AND NICO**

ANDY WARHOL PROGRAM 3

Sunday, June 5, 1994 SF Art Institute

Bufferin (1966); 16mm, color, sound, 33 minutes

"In this film, (Gerard) Malanga gives a performance for Warhol's camera, reading from his diaries and poems and, in acknowledgment of Warhol's presence behind the camera, censoring his own writings by substituting the word 'bufferin' for most of the proper names in his text: '*Bufferin* was banned from the Dom for stealing '*Bufferin*'s' paintings,' and so on. The word 'bufferin' refers not only to the brand of aspirin, but to the 'buffering'—or censoring—of information which Malanga apparently felt was necessary in Warhol's presence. The film is thus not only a portrait of Malanga himself, but a kind of playful confrontation between Malanga and the filmmaker in which the complexities of their relationship become apparent...*Bufferin* is significant as the first film in which Warhol broadly experimented with the 'strobe cut,' his trademark style of in-camera editing in which the camera (and tape recorder) were rapidly turned off and then on again, leaving a clear frame, a double-exposed frame, and an electronic 'bloop' on the soundtrack. This technique was directly related to Warhol's refusal to edit his films; 'since everyone says I never stop the camera, I stop it now, start and stop, and that makes it look cut.' After fifteen minutes of straight forward footage of Malanga's readings, Warhol suddenly starts a series of creative camera movements, strobe cuts, and experimental framings of Malanga's image, thus actively interceding in the action of the film by editing out portions of Malanga's text and 'buffering,' in return, the poet's rather self-absorbed performance."

— Callie Angell, *The Films of Andy Warhol: Part II* (1994)

"Gerard Malanga was introduced to Andy Warhol the first week in June 1963 at a party given by Willard Maas and Marie Menken. He recalls the artist's silver hair, white skin, dark shades, and outright nervousness. Gerard had just curtailed his formal education at Wagner College and was 'desperately in need of a job.' Andy was in need of an assistant to help with the production of his silkscreen paintings."

— Ronald Tavel, *Film Culture* 40 (Spring 1966)

"At dead center (of the Factory 'Scene') was the pale sun Warhol himself, immediately flanked by the two men who make the Factory work. The most conspicuous of the two was Warhol's 'assistant' Gerard Malanga, the hyped, endlessly talkative golden boy of the

art world, with his superb arching Italian face, combination superstar and errand boy, the omnipresent voice and body of the master, transporting just a touch of Warhol into every night, the depthlessly narcissistic center of every scene. For six years, Malanga must have attended five parties a night, either in company with the art world's super star, or as his magical representative.

"For years, Warhol and Malanga went everywhere in sado-masochistic drag; black leather jackets and high boots were central to the image. Later in the 1960s, all Malanga's narcissism was at last able to twist itself out in a tour with the Warhol rock band, the Velvet Underground (its very name lifted from s-m patois), writhing through his famous whip dance, dressed from top to toe in black leather, a huge bullwhip in his hand as the light show flared in the darkness."

— Stephen Koch, *Stargazer* (1973)

The Velvet Underground and Nico (1966); 16mm, b&w, sound, 67 minutes

With Ari Boulogne, John Cale, Sterling Morrison, Nico, Lou Reed, Maureen Tucker, appearances by Gerard Malanga, Billy Name, Stephen Shore, Andy Warhol, the New York City police, and others. Music by the Velvet Underground.

"The Plastic Inevitables (Velvet Underground: Warhol and Company) performances at the Dom during the month of April provided the most violent, loudest, most dynamic exploration platform for the intermedia art. The strength of Plastic Inevitables, and where they differ from all the other intermedia shows and groups, is that they are dominated by the Ego. Warhol, this equivocal, passive magnet, has attracted to himself the most egocentric personalities and artists. The auditorium, every aspect of it—singers, light throwers, strobe operators, dancers—at all times are screaming with an almost screeching, piercing personality pain. I say pain; it could also be called desperation. In any case, it is the last stand of the Ego, before it either breaks down or goes to the other side. Plastic Inevitables: theirs remains the most dramatic expression of the contemporary generation—the place where its needs and desperations are most dramatically split open. At the Plastic Inevitables it is all Here and Now and the Future."

— Jonas Mekas, *Village Voice* (May 26, 1966)

"Warhol began his involvement with the Velvet Underground at the end of 1965, when Gerard Malanga found the group performing in a New York nightclub and took Warhol to meet them. This quickly led to a professional association, as Warhol became the band's producer and started organizing multimedia events in which the Velvet Underground's proto-punk rock-and-roll performances became the center of a larger theatrical environment of multiscreen movie projections, strobe lights, and confrontational dancing by Warhol's superstars. The first performances of Warhol's productions of the Velvet Underground were at the Annual Dinner of the New York Society for Clinical Psychiatry at Delmonico's Hotel on January 13, 1966, and at the Film-Makers' Cinematheque during the second week of February, under the title *Andy Warhol—Uptight*.

"In Spring 1966, Warhol rented the Dom, a Ukrainian community center on St. Mark's Place in the east Village, and opened an extended run of these multimedia performances under the title Exploding Plastic Inevitable (or EPI). The EPI later toured to other cities and to California, where Warhol's stagings became an early influence on the light shows of the late sixties and early seventies. The EPI provided Warhol with an opportunity to reappropriate his by now voluminous collection of films as material for his multimedia environments, and also to experiment with movies intended for double-screen projection, a format he would put to good use later in the year in *The Chelsea Girls*.

"The Velvet Underground and Nico is a portrait of the band, recorded during a practice session at the Factory; apparently shot in January 1966, it shows the group rehearsing for what was probably their opening at the Film-Makers' Cinematheque in February. The music is an instrumental number; Nico, the German singer and actress whom Warhol introduced into the band, sits on a stool and bangs a tambourine, while her son Ari plays on the floor at her feet. The two reels contain a great deal of wild camerawork and psychedelic zooming, which indicates that this form was intended for exhibition, probably in double-screen, behind the Velvet Underground on stage.

"As if to authenticate the film's countercultural status, the second reel documents the arrival of the New York City police during the filming, apparently in response to a telephoned complaint about the noise level at the Factory. After a disarmingly self-conscious cop appears on screen to adjust the amplifier, the rehearsal is stopped, and the camera pulls back to show the deep space of the studio—one of the few documentary views of the Factory in Warhol's films—where Warhol is seen talking with the police while the Velvets, Gerard Malanga and other Factory regulars mill around.

"A number of other two-reel films of the Velvet Underground, also presumably shot for projection during their performances, have been found in the collection, but are not yet preserved; these include *The Velvet Underground* (in which Maureen Tucker is tied up with ropes), *The Velvet Underground Tarot Cards*, and *The Velvet Underground in Boston*."

— Callie Angell, *The Films of Andy Warhol: Part II* (1994)

program notes by Maya Allison & Carrie Gray

**PROJECTED LIGHT:
ON THE BEGINNING AND END OF CINEMA**

CORINNE & ARTHUR CANTRILL IN PERSON

Saturday, June 11, 1994 SF Art Institute, Studio 8

Projected Light: A Film-Performance; For Two 16mm Projectors, One Slide Projector, Audio Tape, Posters, Artifacts And Two Performers

At this time of transition when filmmaking technologies as we know them seem about to disappear, we look back, 30 years after we began collaborating as filmmakers, to consider our cinematic influences, from childhood on (Chaplin, Emile Cohl, Winsor McCay) and some of our own investigations into the nature of film.

We screen the original of a film we have been shooting with one of the oldest and finest 16mm stocks still remaining: Kodachrome, the product of 50 years research and perfection by its manufacturers, a stock which was the mainstay of the international independent film movement. We take it as an example of the ideal, almost mythical film material on the brink of disappearance.

Faced with the end of the photo-chemical film era, we become more aware than ever before of the qualities of projected light as against those of transmitted light, and continue to work with renewed energy as one of the small band of "the last filmmakers."

The filming of our house, Prestonia, began in February 1988 after a visit to North America where conversations with filmmakers confirmed our pessimism about the threatened future of film.

There was a desire now to work with that most powerful and intense film stock, 16mm Kodachrome. The intention was to make a film from which no print would be struck: to project a "pure," original image, with sound on a separate tape. One of several reasons for this decision was the burden of 30 years filmmaking that we are still responsible for—the *millions* of feet of film pressing in on us, the tons of cans of film materials. Not only does one *not* wish to continue working in this way, but as there is now hardly any possibility of selling film prints, to continue playing at film production/replication becomes a form of self-inflicted pain.

In contrast we have the freedom of filming on Kodachrome, making no prints and no optical soundtracks, and showing/seeing a brilliant sharp (rivaling 35mm) and saturated image, while saving time and expense. When the film is scratched and damaged, it must make way for new films.

The slow speed imposed limitations on the work, as the house is not awash with light—there are few windows, and trees surround the house. Rather than using wide views, the identity of the house is constructed from details illuminated by transitory and changing patches of intense sunlight. The camera follows these "illuminations" through the house during days and months...We weren't interested in "lighting" the subject. We filmed at night, in the rain, on windy days, at sunset.

The work is a meditation, through an intense film medium—original Kodachrome—on daily life, on daily light—the beauty in things around us which we no longer see, at a moment when it is all about to be lost by events we have set in motion and are now unable to stop. (CC/AC)

"To call oneself the 'last' of anything is more than a little romantic, but then the Cantrills have never been averse to romanticism. It's a little hard to believe that the cinema is really going to die out that rapidly—and even if it does, there's probably a way of valuing its material ephemerality while knowing that the spirit or soul of image and sound combination will simply just reappear in another form (like video). But perhaps the Cantrills' (and others') urgent talk of death is a way—beyond the world weary endgames of post-modernism—of reinventing the language of cinema at new extremes of violence, lyricism, play. Is that what some of us are anticipating—a renewed idealism in experimental cinema, and more convulsive forms of artistic beauty?"

— Adrian Martin, *FilmNews* (Nov. 1988)

"Although it takes the form of recollection in tranquillity, its message is pessimistic: Kinema—the art and craft of motion pictures, as distinct from Cinema, trader in an outmoded commodity—is dying. With easy mastery *Projected Light* moves from sensation, encompassing the history of early motion pictures and the impending demise of Kodachrome... The senses thrill and the mind races, the senses race and the mind yields to reverie, borne upon the flow of light and motion, chemistry and physics, reason and imagination."

— John Flaus/Paul Harris, *The Age* (Aug. 11, 1989)

"There is a political message bubbling away beneath the surface of *Projected Light*—it is 'Make films before the entire medium disappears!' A kind of techno-conservation where the underground film environment is declared a national park. The film performance parallels the history of cinema itself with that of the Cantrills' house, Prestonia, and by

implications the history of the Cantrills, their work, and its relationship to the experimental film movement generally. For any study of this movement is a study of a political imperative extending as far back as living memory..."

— David Cox, *FilmNews* (Feb. 1989)

program notes by Maya Allison

BIKE BOY

ANDY WARHOL PROGRAM 4

Sunday, June 12, 1994 SF Art Institute

Bike Boy (1967); 16mm, color, sound, 96 minutes

"Motorcyclist Joe Spencer is the protagonist and object of desire in this roguish sex comedy. Yet another portrait, *Bike Boy* depicts a young, working-class 'bikie' who is decidedly out of his element in the sophisticated world of Warhol and his super-star friends (Viva, Ingrid Superstar, Brigid Polk and Ed Weiner). 'One of the most liberating experiences of my life was seeing *Bike Boy*... Viva was in a bathtub with a man, telling him if he wanted to make plastic sculptures he should just do it and shut up about it. As I watched this film I thought: 'That's for me.'"

— Gary Indiana

Co-sponsored with the 18th International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival.

ARTICULATED SILENCES

CURATOR, LYNN KIRBY IN PERSON

Thursday, June 16, 1994 Center for the Arts

How is silence articulated in an era when plot and action define narrative and time, as content is considered invisible? Out of the corner of the eye, this group of artists question and explore personal experiences of time. This exhibition opens a conversation about other ways of telling stories and describing experience that is related to listening, silence and a state of being in-between. The artists included work with time and silence, light and words, on the screen or in space. (LK)

Wind Grass Song (1989), by Jana Birchum & Tori Breitling;
16mm, color, sound, 20 minutes

"Based on interviews with Oklahoma women aged 85 to 101 years, *Wind Grass Song* presents a unique vision of U.S. regional culture through an invaluable oral history. In this impressionistic documentary, venerable faces and voices of these elderwomen—Black, Native American and white—are interwoven with highly evocative shots of the landscape. Summer locusts, prairie grass and tornadoes of red earth are swept into the rhythms of

rural life on the Great Plains, conveying how the land shaped the lives of these courageous women.”

— *Women Make Movies Catalogue* (1994)

One year of mourning (1994 Premiere), by Paula Levine;
video, color, silent, 12 minutes

Grief and mourning turn objects, people, places inside out, revealing a hidden dimension of undomesticated time where everything lives at once, and by association. Mourning and grieving forge spaces of coherence which defy logic and strategies by which the everyday is governed, ruled and ordered. *One year of mourning* is like notations in a journal or notches on a tree—both are gestures not of what has passed, but where one has been. (PL)

Poems; read and by Opal Palmer Adisa:

Speak and Speak Again

Articulated Silences

Madness Disguises Sanity

Children Must Be Seen

Opal Palmer Adisa is a Jamaican born literary critic, writer, storyteller and educator whose published works appear in numerous journals in the USA, London, Canada and Jamaica. In 1992, she won the PEN Oakland/Josephine Miles Award for *Tamarind and Mango Women*. She is presently Associate Professor and Chair of Ethnic Studies at California College of Arts and Crafts.

Bywandering Fields (1993), by Suzanne Cockrell; 16mm, 12 minutes

Bywandering Fields investigates the expansion of a moment and the sense of being deeply connected inside to the dips and rises of feelings, sensations and thoughts that punctuate and move us. (SC)

“This [film] isn’t wacko; it makes real sense the way our own thoughts do to us and no one else.”

—Kurt Wolff, *San Francisco Bay Guardian* (Nov. 3, 1993)

Paris and Athens, June 1993 (1994 Premiere), by Lynn M. Kirby;
16mm, color, sound, 15 minutes

A hotel room in Paris and a friend’s apartment in Athens provide locations for my interest in intimacy, movement and light. (LK)

Following the screening, the audience is invited to a reception of installation works by Sara Bird, Suzanne Cockrell, Lynn Kirby, Paula Levine, Mona Nagai and Mary Tsiongas at The Victoria Room, 180 Sixth Street at Howard. The installations will be open to the public through June 21, 1994.

program notes by Lynn Kirby

**HOW HIGH THE MOON:
AN EVENING OF LUNAR MYSTERY, MAGIC & MAYHEM**

CURATOR, ALBERT KILCHESTY IN PERSON

Sunday, June 19, 1994 SF Art Institute

Apollo America: intercepted radio transmission c. 1985

Prowl (1987), by Larry Talbot;
unedited Super-8 camera roll, silent, 3.5 minutes

Rabbit's Moon (1972, 1979), by Kenneth Anger;
16mm, color, sound, 7 minutes

Blue Moon (1988), by Jeanne Liotta; Super-8, color, sound, 3 1/2 minutes

Moonlight Sonata (1979), by Larry Jordan; 16mm, color, sound, 5 minutes

A Trip to the Moon (1902), by George Méliès; 16mm, b&w, silent, 10 minutes

Moona Luna (1990), by Emily Breer; 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes

For All Moonkind; video; text from J. K. Huysmans' *En Rade*, 9 minutes

Bottle Can (B.C.) (1994 Premiere), by Luther Price; Super-8, color, sound, 20 minutes

A LARGE MOON GATHERING

By Hans Arp

A large moon meeting has been called.
Moons, and everything connected with the moon,
will turn up.
Moon founts, feathered moons,
moonbells,
white moons with diamond belly buttons,
moons with handles of ivory,
tiny moon lackeys who love most of all to
pour boiling water over upholstered furniture,
megalomaniac roses,
who think they are the moon.
White moons which weep black tears,
moon anagrams which consist of almost nothing else
but Anna
and to which only a few grams
of moon have been added.
A moon conglomerate of silver twigs
which continue to branch silverly,
and from which moon-fruit ripen.
A naked moon, naked like all moons,
but with a hat, on which a fig leaf
is attached. Time honored moon eggs,
and among them a horrible lot of moldy ones
in sfumato sedans.
Unfortunately, not all that is silver is moon.
A few dizzy monstrosities are among
the greedy-gutting pinchbeck moons,
which devour, devour, devour

one shadow mat after another shadow mat,
giant tears of tar and,
with the same lust,
their own spawn.
Double headed moons,
moons with enormous brisance
and all that rhymes with it, like
ants, pants, vagrants, bezants, Hans.
Yes, moon travelers and moon dreamers,
just like me,
will also turn up at the moon meeting.

Translated by Malcolm Green

program notes by Albert Kilchesty

**PERSONAL DOCUMENTS /
PERSONAL DOCUMENTARIES**

PROGRAM 1

CURATOR, LISSA GIBBS IN PERSON

Thursday, July 14, 1994 Center for the Arts

Who Stole the Keeshka? by David Michalak; 16mm, color, sound, 16 minutes

Tribute (1986), by William Farley; 16mm, b&w, sound, 7 minutes

A Visit to Indiana (1970), by Curt McDowell; 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes

The World's Fastest Hippie (1976), by John Knoop; 16mm, color, sound

Wild Night in El Reno (1977), by George Kuchar; 16mm, color, sound, 6 minutes

Riverbody (1970), by Anne Severson (a.k.a. Alice Anne Parker);
16mm, b&w, sound, 7 minutes

The Chill Ascends (1993), by Jim Seibert; 16mm, b&w, sound, 15 minutes

Penumbra (1994 Premiere), by Hilary Morgan; color, sound, 12 minutes

Hajj, drinking from the stream (1992), by Claire Dannenbaum;
16mm, b&w, sound, 20 minutes

*Presented by the Film Arts Foundation in association with
SF Cinematheque & Center For The Arts.*

**PERSONAL DOCUMENTS /
PERSONAL DOCUMENTARIES**

PROGRAM 2

CURATOR, LISSA GIBBS IN PERSON

Thursday, July 21, 1994 Center for the Arts

White Passage (1986), by Ruby Yang; 16mm, color, sound

A Constant State of Departure (1986), by Lidia Szjako;
16mm, b&w, sound, 8 minutes

Castro Street (1966), by Bruce Baillie; 16mm, color/b&w, sound, 10 minutes

Victims of the Victim (1992), by Erica Marcus; video, color, sound, 6 minutes

Disposition (1992), by Baruch Rafic; video, color, sound, 16 minutes

red white blue and yellow (1993), by Angela Chou; 16mm, color, sound, 12 minutes

Sincerely (1980), by Lynn Kirby; color/b&w, sound, 14 minutes

Both (1993), by Vic De La Rosa; 16mm, b&w, sound, 8 minutes

Decodings (1988), by Michael Wallin; 16mm, b&w, sound, 15 minutes

*Presented by the Film Arts Foundation in association with
SF Cinematheque & Center For The Arts.*

FRAGMENTING SOLUTIONS

NEW BAY AREA WORKS

Thursday, September 29, 1994 Center for the Arts

Three works by **silt** (Keith Evans, Christian Farrell, Jeff Warrin)

VANNAV (1993 Premiere); Super-8, color, sound, 3 minutes

...ATION PROGR... (1992 Premiere); Super-8, color, sound, 3 minutes

kemia (in 7 parts) (1994 Premiere); Super-8, color, silent, 17 minutes

*It turns out that an eerie type of chaos can lurk just behind a facade of order—and yet,
deep inside the chaos lurks an even eerier type of order.*

—Douglas Hofstadter

These three short films occurred spontaneously in the midst of, or on the way toward, larger works. They are unplanned births conceived in a darkness where the night of the eye's heart and black river bottom soil meet. (silt)

travelogue (1994), by Irina Leimbacher; 16mm, color, sound, 5 minutes

Grew out of an old piece of film wanting exorcism—somewhat trite perhaps, this rendering of my anticipation of an impossible nostalgia. (IL)

view/camera (1994), by David Landau; 16mm, color, sound, 4 minutes

The house as Camera Obscura –vitreous humor and ground glass. (DL)

Chagrana (1994), by Miguel Alvear; 16mm, b&w, sound, 9 minutes

To put different things together and to present them as one. (MA)

Tree (1994 performance version), by Timoleon Wilkins;

16mm, color, sound, 3 1/2 minutes

A quick cut to the root of cinema talk. (TW)

Selenology (1994 Premiere), by Mary Slaughter; 16mm, color, sound, 5 1/2 minutes

Selenology is a meditation on the strange terrain of the body, on the mystery of the erotic and the grief of corporeality. Hypnosis is the point of entry, both as attempt at reassurance and as evidence of the inability to contain the excesses of sexual desire and spiritual longing. (MS)

Split Description (1994), by Andy Moore; 16mm, color/b&w, sound, 8 minutes

A film of gestures rather than statements, *Split Description* presents a kaleidoscopic moving montage of three diverse locales (in California, Massachusetts and New York). A collision of different worlds of color and form, the film is a magic viewing box designed to cut the viewer free from narrative expectation and instead to serve as a tool for reflection on space/time/ sound. (AM)

Crazy Love 2 (1987/1993), by Rebecca Barten; video, color, sound, 7 minutes

“There is a god at the outset, if not at the end, of every joy.”

—E. M. Cioran, *The Trouble with Being Born*

Due to technical difficulties during screening, *Crazy Love 2* was not shown in its entirety.

A FEW PARTING SHOTS WITH DAVID GERSTEIN

DAVID GERSTEIN IN PERSON

Sunday, October 2, 1994 SF Art Institute

PART I: FILMS OF DAVID GERSTEIN

Tourist Movie (1981); 16mm, color, silent, 4 minutes @ 18fps

The first few moments of this film may feel like trying to find your way through a foreign city in a jet lag-induced fog. The streets and cars, buildings and people all overlap and reappear in various angles. After a moment of sorting through the layers, my eye uncovers a familiar San Francisco North Beach Church as its anchor in a gentle flow of superimposed footage. Slowly this stability allows me to forget the church like a placid backdrop and follow the rush of images: sightseeing attractions, congested intersections,

urban decay. This second world seems to be filmed from a moving car, and is edited to change scenery quite rapidly. From time to time, the church decides to shift its position, showing me its best angles. The two worlds vie for the "foreground" position, and interact in the process: a woman lying on the lawn seems to cause a car to hesitate before driving right across her image. The camera comes to an intersection and pans around, and I begin to wonder: is it looking for the church? Gerstein layers a film world which plays with notions of "fore" and "back"-ground, traveling and stationary, including the values we ascribe to each position.

—Maya Allison

Burnt Offering (1976); 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes

"*Burnt Offering* is an exploration of the physical qualities of film emulsion. Made without the benefit of a camera, the images stream past, giving the illusion of imagistic content when there is actually a purely abstract field of color."

As the Sun Goes Down, a Hole Appears in the Sky (1976);

16mm, color, sound, 11 minutes

"A cyclical transformation from blackness, through increasingly brighter images, back to darkness. The film combines a fusion of photographed, non-photographed and hand-inked images. Each cycle's imagery mirrors, but does not duplicate, that of the preceding cycles. The soundtrack of projector noises comments on the unavoidable sound of most silent film projectors."

AmbiValence (1982); 16mm, color, sound, 5 minutes

"I am aiming for a way of apprehending film in which perception and interpretation operates on multiple levels. A shot can be seen as an individual fragment and at the same time as a component in several different progressions unfolding over varying lengths of time. Image usage runs from simple matching of shapes and motions to the use of internal themes that develop as much on an intuitive as an intellectual level. The use of sound reinforces this thematic development. It can be understood for its internal content of words and sounds, for its relationships to individual picture images, for its function as a marking and defining device for different categories of picture. In this way the tyranny of a singular pre-planned experience is broken. The film is not anarchy—I do have reasons for the selection and placement of each shot. But the viewer is allowed to make his/her own way through the work, moving from internal response to external representation/illusion/reflection at will."

Alternations of Perspection (1977); 16mm, color, sound, 22 minutes

"The film came about conceptually as the reverse of a standard technique. Rather than shooting 8mm film and projecting it at 16mm, I shot the film as 16mm, slit it to 8mm and then blew it up again to 16mm frame by frame. The basic premise is the way in which the eye creates superimpositions out of rapidly alternating images. There are also some supplementary visual ideas—horizontal vs. vertical space, expanding or contracting the time through which a particular motion takes place, confusion of field/ground relationships. The soundtrack was physically altered to set up a series of impedances corresponding to the picture manipulation, ordered in a manner of repetition similar to the picture. As with the pictures, the sounds have some consistent similarities (i.e. a rhythmic quality) but are mainly interesting noises recorded over a two-year period."

— notes by David Gerstein as reprinted in the *Canyon Cinema Catalogue*, except as noted

PART II: PERSONAL FAVORITES

Film in Which There Appear Sprocket Holes, Edge Lettering, Dirt

Particles, Etc. (1965-66), by Owen Land; 16mm, silent, 4 1/2 minutes

"The overt content of this film, that is the visual image, was reduced to a cipher, a necessary adjunct to the real area of concern, which was the physical materiality of the film

celluloid. With typical (Land) wit, the image picked to represent this zero level of content was loaded: a bizarre, full-color winking lady—the ‘star’ of Kodak’s leader... This purportedly empty image became a symbol for (Land’s) evolving concerns: the transfer of attention away from the image on film and towards the workings of the projections situation, which transfer allowed the audience to see previously hermetic materials—the dirt that had always been wiped away from them, the sprocket holes hidden away in the projection gate, the edge lettering crucial only to the film editor.”

—B. Ruby Rich, *New Art Examiner*

Western History (1971), by Stan Brakhage; 16mm, color, silent, 8 minutes

This is a comedy, tho’ few will know the subject well enough to laugh; it meticulously represents the whole personal story of Westward Ho and Hoeing Man as He might attempt to remember it while watching a Pittsburgh basketball game. (SB)

Otherwise Unexplained Fires (1976), by Hollis Frampton;
silent, 18 minutes @ 24fps

“The fog and wind in the cypresses at Land’s end, a mechanical horse, Jane Brakhage’s chickens, various fires, all combined in what is perhaps Frampton’s most perfect and moving film to date. There is a strong mystery, something elusive and intriguing—for the fires seem to burn in some other world, the created world of the film for sure—like the fires of the gods with great intensity—heatless but not cold.”

—Carmen Vigil

Solidarity (1973), by Joyce Weiland; 16mm, color, sound, 11 minutes

“Joyce Weiland describes this film as one ‘about a strike in which women are involved, but told in a very different way...’ Although the political message exists on the soundtrack and a few readable placards, the film captures the essence of human anxiety and toil by revealing one portion only of the demonstrators’ bodies: their feet... Women’s feet in high-heeled shoes, walking together in unison, not in goose-step but as individuals will, clearly belonging to the same class, yet each bearing its individual stamp, carry layers and layers of meaning. The film maker’s power of observation, isolating one single aspect of the whole, magnifies the enormous strength of the subject, and of the film.”

—Excerpt from *Art & Cinema* Vol. 4, No. 3 (1974)

program notes by Maya Allison

THE “I” IN QUESTION: RECENT FILMS

SECA PRESENTATION

*Hosted by Agnes Bourne & Dr. James Luebbers,
Wednesday, October 5, 1994 Stone House, 2622 Jackson Street*

kemia (Part 3, 4 & 5) (1994), by silt (Keith Evans, Christian Farrell, Jeff Warrin);
Super-8, color, silent, 7 minutes

These three extracts occurred spontaneously in the midst of, or on the way toward, larger works. They are unplanned births conceived in a darkness where the night of the eye’s heart and black river bottom soil meet. (silt)

Futility (1989), by Greta Snider; 16mm, b&w, sound, 9 minutes

Futility's narrative is told in two disarmingly honest voice-overs, with images reprinted from found and archival footage. The first section is a woman's story about a pregnancy and subsequent difficulties in scheduling an abortion. The second is a moribund love letter read by the same narrator. The images are never an illustration of the voice-over, nor do they constitute a narrative of their own, but blow in and out randomly, constituting a kind of peripheral vision. The film's severe economy of means provides a startling contrast to the unity and characterological nature of the soundtrack. (GS)

Chronicles Of a Lying Spirit By Kelly Gabron (1992), by Cauleen Smith;
16mm, color, sound, 5 1/2 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."

—Post Modern Sisters

Time Being (1991), by Gunvor Nelson; 16mm, b&w, silent, 8 minutes

"This extraordinary film manages to craft a delicate portrait of her mother through time and refracted light."

—Crosby McCloy

Nocturne (1980/1989), by Phil Solomon; 16mm, b&w, silent, 10 minutes

Finding similarities in the pulses and shapes between my own experiments in night photography, lightning storms, and night bombing in World War II, I constructed the war at home. (PS)

Mizu Shobai (Water Business) (1993), by Lana Lin; 16mm, color, sound, 12 minutes

"*Mizu Shobai* explores cultural dislocation and shifting identity through the fragmented retelling of a geisha's imaginary voyage. Carried by the act of perception, the geisha drifts beyond the prescribed bounds of 'her place' in the world. The phrase, *Mizu Shobai*—literally 'water business,' the Japanese term for the entertainment world—encompasses multiple layers of meaning."

—Ming Yuen S. Ma

passage à l'acte (1993), by Martin Arnold; 16mm, b&w, sound, 12 minutes

"Austrian filmmaker Martin Arnold's *passage à l'acte* dismantles a simple sequence consisting of five takes: a breakfast table with a family of four, almost idyllic in the original (the sequence comes from *To Kill a Mockingbird* with Gregory Peck, who incidentally remarked on Arnold's film with the words 'Nice sound, but didn't get it!')

—Peter Tscherkassky

THE AFRICAN SPIRIT IN CONTEMPORARY FILM & VIDEO

Odún dé Odún dé — I:

BLACK WOMEN'S SPIRIT

October 6 through November 26, 1994 Bomani Gallery

Odún dé Odún dé (ah-DOON-deh, from the Yoruba new year's festival, translating as "the time of celebration has arrived") celebrates the African and African-diaspora spirit in art and features numerous events all over the city. Currently on view are major shows at Yerba Buena Gardens (*Malcolm X & Hair Style Boards* and *Fantasy Coffins* from Africa), the University Art Museum (*Face of the Gods*), Bomani Gallery (*Women's Spirit*), The Oakland Museum (*25 Years of Collecting California*) and nearly two dozen other galleries and schools throughout the Bay Area during October and November.

The San Francisco Cinematheque is contributing four programs of films and videos co-curated by video artist Linda Gibson and Cinematheque Director Steve Anker: October 14; "African Diaspora & Re-Integration," October 16; "Imaging Identity: Fantasy & Memory," October 20; "Africa: Political Myth & Personal History." "Black Women's Spirit," co-presented by the San Francisco Cinematheque and the Bomani Gallery, this program of short pieces by women of African descent will repeat regularly during gallery hours.

Voices of the Morning (1992), by Meena Nanji; video, color, sound, 15 minutes

Kenyan-born Meena Nanji searches for a balance between self-determination and tradition in this evocative exploration of the freedoms and constraints faced by Islamic women.

Cycles (1989), by Zeinabu Davis; 16mm, b&w, sound, 17 minutes

Waiting for your period—an experience familiar to every woman. This sense of anticipation is brilliantly captured in an exuberant performance piece with a multi-layered soundtrack of women's voices and music from Africa and the African diaspora.

Edges (1993), Ayanna Udongo; video, color, sound, 5 minutes

Good girl or bitch. In this taut video, the artist chooses between the options she sees for an African American woman in a man's world.

The Body Beautiful (1991), by Ngozi Onwurah; 16mm, color, sound, 23 minutes

Race and female sexuality are intertwined in this painfully honest reminiscence of mother-daughter relationships from Britain. Bi-racial filmmaker Onwurah considers the impact of her mother's double mastectomy on her mother, herself and the bond of devotion that they share.

Odún dé Odún dé films and videos supported in part by a grant from Bank of America.

The Cinematheque would also like to thank the Walter / McBean Gallery of the San Francisco Art Institute, California Newsreel and New Langton Arts

program notes by Linda Gibson

REVISIONING THE TIME CLOSET:
EMERGING FILMMAKERS OF THE 1970S

CURATED BY DAVID GERSTEIN

Sunday, October 9, 1994 SF Art Institute

The 1970s, especially the latter half of the decade spilling over into the first years of the '80s, was a period of supposed malaise in the world of avant-garde film. If the only people you listened to were the better-known critics or you only followed the programs of the larger institutions, you would have thought that the only films worth seeing were being made by the artists who had already become established by the end of the '60s. The reality is that nothing could have been further from the truth. It is true that vehicles like *Film Culture* and *Artforum* weren't giving the same amounts of attention to younger filmmakers that they had proffered to artists like Hollis Frampton and Michael Snow. It's also true that museums like Albright Knox in Buffalo and the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh discovered that film exhibition would never become more than a small adjunct to their more popular activities. What these institutions didn't realize was that a whole new generation of filmmakers had emerged and were producing compelling new work. Contrary to the received wisdom of the time, the 1970s were an extraordinarily fertile time for filmmaking. Many of the artists who emerged during this period never received the attention they merited, and too much of their work has drifted into the limbo of unfashionability and unavailability.

As I began to prepare for my departure from the Bay Area, I found myself reminiscing about all the films I'd seen and all the filmmakers I'd come to know during the past 20 years. I realized that many of the films I remember from ten and fifteen years ago haven't been publicly visible since their original screenings. I also realized that few people in San Francisco shared my memory of the films and that much of the work was in danger of permanently disappearing from film's nascent history.

Tonight's is the first of two programs that I hope will begin to cure our collective amnesia. (The second takes place on November 20th and features films by Peter Gidal, Linda Klosky, Gail Vachon, Michael Mideke and Richard Levine.) It took me a few weeks to get used to the idea that films from the 1970s could even qualify as being historical, but the contemporary world changes so quickly that they really didn't make sense to me in any other context. These shows only begin to scratch the surface of what I wanted to show. I hope there will be enough interest in rediscovering this and earlier eras of filmmaking to merit a regular historical component in the Cinematheque's exhibition schedule—there's no question that a body of work exists that deserves to be seen. (DG)

Frames and Cages and Speeches (1976), by Martha Haslanger;
16mm, color, sound, 13 minutes

Linguistic theory, semiotics, and structuralism were major influences on filmmakers during the 1970s. Martha Haslanger was one of the first to try to explore the parallels between the building blocks of language and the mechanisms of film. *Frames and Cages and Speeches*, as its title suggests, is made up of "sentences" of images whose meanings are in a continual state of construction and deconstruction.

"...—About frames and framing, cages and caging, speeches and speaking—an experimental film (a seven-act 'play') dealing with a medium's narration of us and our narration of it. FRAMES are developed according to the stories one believes in, CAGES

re-form experience into expression, and SPEECHES translate what we know into a narration." (MH)

***Cheap Imitations—Part II: Madwomen; Part III: Point, Point* (1979-81),**

by Roberta Friedman & Grahame Weinbren; 16mm, b&w, sound (Part II); 16mm, color, silent (Part III), 16 minutes total

All of cinema is artifice, whether it's that of actors and sets pretending to be real life or the more direct manipulations that experimental filmmakers use to shape their art. Friedman and Weinbren try to get behind the scenes, especially in *Cheap Imitations*, to expose the hidden mechanisms that shape our viewing experience. Ranging from the way in which an image is shot to the physical limitations imposed by photography's chemical base, the film reminds us that all art is a process of selection, omission and disguise.

One concern of these pieces is an attempt to *reduce* cinema—to bring it to the same level as other (art) forms, and to work against its tendency to contain and subdue whatever it makes use of. Each section of *Cheap Imitations* is based on a particular source, ranging from Hawks' *Red River* to a book by the 19th century psychologist and amateur photographer Hugh Diamond. The questions raised are about art-making, madness, genius, obsession, femininity... (RF & GW)

***Bellevue Film* (1977-78), by Gail Camhi; 16mm, b&w, silent, 20 1/4 minutes**

"How do we see the world in which we live? How do we take our perception of what's going on around us and transform it into creative experience? These fundamental questions form the background of *Bellevue Film*. On the surface it's a straightforward document of a physical therapy ward. Or is it a diary of time shared with fellow patients? Where is the personal and private, and where does public expression take over? These questions are deceptively simple, and Gail Camhi's film offers us deceptively straightforward answers.

"(*Bellevue Film*) is just what its title says it is: 'A look at physical therapy, having profited from it.'

"Russian Formalism associates art with 'making strange.' Gail Camhi seems to be doing just the reverse—showing how ordinary, say, amputees and their stumps and artificial limbs are, making them familiar and banal presences rather than fearfully charged objects. Yet by removing (to some extent) myth and other forms of fantasy from a hospital ward, she may actually be inviting the aesthetic imagination to relocate itself elsewhere in the film..."

—Jonathan Rosenbaum, "Declaration of Independents," *Village Voice*

***diary of an autistic child/part two/ragged edges of the hollow* (1983),**

by Edwin Cariati; 16mm, color, silent, 6 minutes

Autobiography is a common subject for filmmakers, as are films about family members (parents, grandparents, children, etc.). What's less common is attempts to see the world through someone else's sight. The visual dislocations, flashes of perception and continually shifting field of focus might seem like familiar territory but in Edwin Cariati's hands these devices take on a poignant immediacy that goes far beyond style and mannerism.

Master and slave lose sight of roles and embrace in copulative ecstasy. the edges of the hollow yearn to become the matter from which they have been released. Feeble memory prohibits recollection of nothingness dooming anti-image to envy the apparent stability of the photoworld. Photorealms, possessing the power of gravity, bend reality to the son while eschewing the holy ghost. The anti-image struggles to achieve escape velocity but

fails. Unresolved tensions triumph and lead to a netherworld search for the irretrievable where will o' the wisp veils delude the focused seeker. The autistic child views multiple realities, as interchange is manifested in the hollow where light and darkness unfold. (EC)

Horse Science Series (1977-79), by Rob Danielson; 16mm, color, silent, 45 minutes

"Rob Danielson is an explorer, a man trying to understand the mysterious and strange realm where physics and phenomena intersect in a unified theory of thought and feeling. Today he conducts this search in the more immediate arena of public-access television. *Horse Science Series* comes from a time when it was still possible to pursue private goals that were justified by their own visual and intellectual accomplishments.

"We are presented in the *Horse Science Series* with an integrated view or perhaps with thoughtful and lovingly compiled evidence of the filmmaker's perceptions of the essence of our world. He exhibits number in its simplicity, the celestial mechanics of the earth and the heavens, the changes in season, the wonders of coincidence, and the harmony of things. To us it seems that the filmmaker's ecstasies of sight and comprehension are not hermetic but are available to any perceptive viewer. They are intense, yes. Who of us finds this intensity in our daily lives? Yet these intensities have been crafted over a period of years to be presented to us in what afterwards seems like a lightning instant.

"And while the films are personal, the elements with which this articulated world is made manifest never moves from a simple, everwo/man existence: a night sky, a frozen lake, a city street, a country field, an open window—all are within our experience. Like the scientist, the filmmaker's vision ranges from the very small world we tend to overlook in our daily lives to the very large world which because of its scale we also tend to ignore. His camera records the subtle motions of dust on a floor, leaves in a deserted street, and the subtle motions of clouds, stars, and seasons."

—Thomas Gaudynski & Diana David

program notes by David Gerstein

THE AFRICAN SPIRIT IN CONTEMPORARY FILM & VIDEO

Odún dé Odún dé — II:

AFRICAN DIASPORA & RE-INTEGRATION

CO-CURATOR, LINDA GIBSON IN PERSON

Thursday, October 14, 1994 Center for the Arts

Tonight's, "African Diaspora & Re-Integration" conveys through six films and videotapes senses of "otherness" by the artists and their subjects to the dominant American culture: standing apart while affirming their right to belong on their own terms, acknowledging the strengths of their now-distant African cultural heritage.

Hairpiece: A Film for Nappyheaded People (1985), by Ayoka Chenzira;
16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes

This lively animation examines issues of self-identity faced by black women living in a land where beauty is based, in part, on hair that "blows in the wind" and "lets you be free." The

pulsing score and witty narration survey the history of "beauty" rituals (and the occasionally embarrassing consequences) devised by Black women to attain this unattainable goal.

Chronicles of a Lying Spirit by Kelly Gabron (1992), by Cauleen Smith;
16mm, color, sound, 5 1/2 minutes

The contrast between who one is, and who one is assumed to be, is at the core of this delicate montage of images and layered voices. Working at the outer edge of perception, the film draws the viewer into a world where self-identity can only be maintained through the constant confrontation of social stereotypes.

Cycles (1989), by Zeinabu Davis; 16mm transfered to video, b&w, sound, 17 minutes

Waiting for your period—an experience familiar to every woman. This sense of anticipation is brilliantly captured in an exuberant performance piece with a multi-layered soundtrack of women's voices and music from Africa and the African diaspora.

Home Away from Home (1994), by Maureen Blackwood;
35mm transferred to video, color, sound, 8 minutes

Immigrant and societal interpretations of cultural integration collide in this sensitive drama about an African immigrant in England. The stresses she expiates through a traditional African art form, and the tensions that arise from that form of expression, are explored on the personal, family and community levels.

X: The Baby Cinema (1993), by Robert Banks; 16mm, color, sound, 4 1/2 minutes

The transformation of Malcolm X from a leader and thinker into a marketable icon is the focus of this pointed indictment of our consumer culture. An animation tour-de-force, the film confronts the substitution of images for substance, slogans for understanding.

Planet Brooklyn (1992), by Regi Allen; video, color, sound, 30 minutes

This impressionistic journey through a New York City borough explores the African diasporan cultures that co-exist in a microcosm of the world. Mixing experimental techniques with the neighborhoods and individuals, Allen affectionately captures the moods and rhythms of this unique community.

program notes by Linda Gibson

THE AFRICAN SPIRIT IN CONTEMPORARY FILM & VIDEO *Odún dé Odún dé — III*

IMAGING IDENTITY: FANTASY & MEMORY

Sunday, October 16, 1994 SF Art Istitute

Part III, "Imaging Identity: Fantasy & Memory," explores the grey areas between fantasies of self and fantasies of collective memory.

Picking Tribes (1988), by Sandra Sharp; 16mm, color, sound, 7 minutes

Using vintage photographs and watercolor animation, *Picking Tribes* takes a look at a daughter of the '40s as she struggles to find an identity between her African American and Native American heritages.

Voices Of The Morning (1993), by Meena Nanji; video, color, sound, 14 minutes

Voices Of The Morning explores the psychological ramifications of a woman growing up under orthodox Islamic law. Resisting traditional definitions of a woman's role in society as only a dutiful servant, Nanji's autobiographical piece depicts her struggle to find a space amidst the web of necessities imposed upon her by restrictive societal conventions.

Water Ritual #1: An Urban Rite Of Purification(1990), by Barbara McCullough;
16mm film transferred to video, b&w, sound, 4 minutes

An original and visionary work, this film links the present with the ancestral past. A graceful young African American woman emerges from the ruins of a crumbling building. She disrobes and slowly approaches a sacred offering place. Fully unclothed, she sits on the ground and positions objects representing her deteriorating environment and female fertility. In a final act of purification, she dispels the ills and frustrations rampant in her body and soul.

Black Body (1992), by Thomas Harris; video, color, sound, 5 minutes

Black Body is a harsh meditation on the contradictory values projected on to black bodies in American culture; they exist as both desired and feared, abject and powerful. The "black body" is a body whose surface reflects fears and repressed desires. Harris presents it as a site of ideological struggle, a surface which is simultaneously eroticized and denigrated.

Coffee Colored Children (1988), by Ngozi Onwurah;
16mm, color/b&w, sound, 15 minutes

This lyrical, unsettling film conveys the experience of children of mixed racial heritage. Suffering from the aggression of racist harassment, a young girl and her brother attempt to wash their skin white with scouring powder. Told through a complex weave of images and sounds, *Coffee Colored Children* is a testimony to the profound effects of racism and the struggle for self-definition.

Asiam (1982), by Toney Merritt; 16mm, b&w, silent, 6 minutes

Bay Area filmmaker Toney Merritt has been making films and curating independent film since the 1970s. His 2-part series, "Black Experiments In Film" was presented at the S.F. Cinematheque in June, 1983. Of *Asiam*: "A look at how I perceive people sometimes see me, and I them." (TM)

Dreaming Rivers (1988), by Martina Atille & Sankofa Film and Video Collective;
16mm, color, sound, 35 minutes

Evoking the post-colonial experience of Caribbean immigrants in Britain, *Dreaming Rivers* presents an impressionistic rendering of a middle-aged Black woman who reflects on the past, present and future from her death bed. Attending her are three young people who discuss the loss of the matriarch as a metaphor for their Caribbean identity that is fragmented with the passing of each generation.

program notes by Linda Gibson

THE AFRICAN SPIRIT IN CONTEMPORARY FILM & VIDEO

Odún dé Odún dé — IV:

**AFRICA: POLITICAL MYTH
& PERSONAL HISTORY**

CO-CURATOR, LINDA GIBSON IN PERSON

Thursday, October 20, 1994 Center for the Arts

This final program, "Africa: Political Myth & Personal History," is subtly layered personal essay films reflecting on colonialism's legacy, each maker's search for his father (biological and spiritual), and the search for truths behind received cultural myths.

Lumumba: Death of a Prophet (1992), by Raoul Peck;
16mm, color, sound, 69 minutes

A combination of private autobiography and public biography, *Lumumba* is a powerful portrait of a visionary leader. Taking the form of a meditation on a series of images, photographs, interviews, home movies and newsreels, Peck deconstructs the straightforward narrative of most film biographies and presents instead a nonchronological weave of both past and present. Beyond a mere documentation of Lumumba's bloody rise and fall, this is a study of how his legacy has been distorted, even erased, by politicians, the media and time itself.

"A film essay in the tradition of *Night and Fog*, *Sans Soleil* and *The Sorrow and the Pity*, this work explores how any image represses the multiple stories surrounding it, how the present captured in photographs is always in a sense the hostage of history's winner."
— *California Newsreel*

"*Lumumba* triumphs on two levels: as a pungent exploration of a nightmarish epoch in modern Africa and a cogent comment on the very activity of sifting through the past."
— Jan Stuart, *New York Newsday*

Allah Tantou (1991), by David Achkar; 16mm, color, sound, 62 minutes

This film is a personal exploration of the filmmaker's father and the brutal torture he suffered under the post-colonial Sekou Touré regime. Like Peck, Achkar is deeply distrustful of the power of images and refuses to construct a single, authoritative narrative in space or time. Rather, he combines fragments of contrasting, sometimes contradictory, texts into a resonant collage of home movies, newsreels, journals and his own dramatized imaginings of his father's prison experiences.

Every time you look at a picture you have a past that comes back to you. Under some circumstances, you have to imagine your own nostalgia. Sometimes you create an image of your past that doesn't exist. You always have a compulsion to recreate things, but at the same time, the memory is still based on some real image. (DA)

program notes by Todd Wagner

OPEN SCREENING

HOSTED BY IRINA LEIMBACHER

Sunday, October 21, 1994 SF Art Institute

Tonight we resume our regular Open Screenings, a tradition dating back more than twenty years. Bring recently completed films and videos to share and discuss.

Fallen by Russell Nelson; Super 8, 2 minutes

Anti-Ship Control (the short version), by John Nape; VHS, 1 1/2 minutes

Conversation Killers, by Andrew Ching; Super-8, 1 minute

Psychological, by Kade & Kuhn; VHS, 3 minutes

Tom R, by Thomas Richardson; 16mm, 9 minutes

The Lip Side, by Georgina Corzine; VHS, 4 minutes

Mother Tongue, by Irina Leimbacher; 16mm, 4 minutes

Ex Machina, by Thomas Richardson; 16mm, 30 minutes

NEW POSITIONS FOR WOMEN IN PORN

PENDRA IN PERSON

Sunday, October 23, 1994 SF Art Institute

"Where is woman's sexuality in our culture? Is sexuality in our culture an inscription from a cultural source, a replication of the political forces with a strategic interest to suppress women? Woman's sexuality has been either misrepresented or not represented at all. There is an ideological dictatorship of the politics of woman's pleasure, not only in cultural norms and the national arts funding institutions, but in such unlikely cousins as the porn industry, the fundamentalist establishment, and the sexual-conservative feminist community. Developing a Woman's Erotic Language in Porn would start a radical raw look at pornography both as a repressive force and a liberating tool to be used by feminist women. A night of porn with different visual representations of women, from normal porn examples to meta porn and finally introducing the audience to the new emerging women-produced porn.

"Pendra produces the successful Bad Girls Feminist Sex Magic: Multi Media Women Artists Developing a Woman's Erotic Language, in Toronto, Seattle and now in Vancouver. Pendra has been on radio in San Francisco's K101 with her show Metaphysical Fridays, and now in Vancouver on radio LG73 and CKNW as Pendra the SEX ASTROLOGER. She is a seasoned performer/playwright on stage in Toronto, Vancouver, San Francisco and Seattle. Pendra is maker of porn; she also belongs to Feminists for Free Expression."

—Pendra, *New Sexual Positions for Women in Porn*

LUTHER PRICE: FROM THE HEART AND GUT

LUTHER PRICE IN PERSON

Thursday, October 27, 1994 Center for the Arts

"The currently Mr. Luther Price has been writing poetry and making films under different names and guises since 1987."

I Want You; video, color, sound, 3 minutes

Music video inspired by *I Want You* by Olivia Newton John. Play it LOUD.

"I knew I was making a film not a video. A prelude to everything...the music is very sexual. I love Love and Sex. I love to be embarrassed. It's about lost boundaries. This work was my first sexual encounter with film medium—pop!"

—Luther Price in conversation

Jellyfish Sandwich (1991-94); 8mm, color, sound, 20 minutes

Sodom (1989-94); 8mm, color, sound, 15 minutes

Viewing *Sodom* is a visceral experience of...passion and intensity...Some of *Sodom's* more virulent critics have leveled charges of homophobia against the film...That is, gay sexuality as an institution that promotes relationships of power and use, whose acts result in disease and death... given the tragedy of AIDS and the specter of a re-emerging an unspoken mandate that the portrayal of gay male secularity in film reflect a positive, aware self-image. *Sodom* violates this mandate and thus confuses the issue. Relationships of power pervade. The sex portrayed is unsafe. AIDS may be alluded to or not, and if it is, it is in an ambiguous and unsettling fashion...The "facts" of what we see are for the most part clear: we are viewing pornography made for public consumption pre-AIDS. The "fiction" that emerges from the manipulation of the material is another matter...How this "found" imagery is bent by the will of the artist profoundly affects this shift from fact to fiction. Luther Price is very much the alchemist, transmitting dross into cinematic gold.

— Michael Wallin, *In Defense of Sodom: A Gut Response*

In B/WH (1991-94); 8mm, color, sound, 20 minutes

the sky is grey, burgundy and white.

the cities burning...

hot with flames

in pinkish twilight

walk not run

splash sidewalks concrete.

the bridges will fall i said...

we all knew

we could see

we heard from before

walk quickly, not run...

—Luther Price, excerpt from a poem by the same name

Bottle Can (B.C.) (1991-93); 8mm, color, sound, 20 minutes

Watching the Films of Luther Price can be like cauterizing a wound. Obstacle courses of feigned innocence, purposeful misinformation and true faith, they provide us with revelations that tax our patience and fuel our imaginations. *Bottle Can* is the second part of a trilogy whose other companion parts are not yet project-able like so much of Price's vast unseen oeuvre. The trilogy is ostensibly about "changeless-ness" in light of successively changing icons. And the end of the world as it would have occurred (contrary to Nicodemus) in the 1940s. The first part of the trilogy is entitled *In Black and White*. The final part of the trilogy, *Jellyfish Sandwich*, is about getting the story fifth-hand. As Price

describes it, *Jellyfish Sandwich* blames the bombing of Pearl Harbor on the Chinese and depicts the ensuing battle as a football game. A film about ignorance. Sandwiched between these two films is the rocket ship drama, *Bottle Can* alternately referred to as *B.C.*, indicating a time before the Christian Messiah but presumably in some time dimension that allows simultaneous residency in the 1940s. *Bottle Can* is concerned with evacuation in every sense of the word. "All your elimination will be regular" intones the hypnotic suggestion/command of the soundtrack as we rattle through space in some tin can jalopy spacecraft in search of the innermost petals of the Empyrean circles. The film is about "Leaving the spectacle, leaving the planet... clowns in space. In order to leave behind your history you must strip away layers and layers of yourself to achieve weightlessness. Stay thin." (quoted from presskit)

Run (1994); Super-8, 13 minutes

a run day... THE EDGE ELECTRIC AGAINST INFINITY REVELAED EVERYTHING.
IT WAS THE MOMENT BEFORE I WAS BORN THE MOMENT BEFORE I DIED.
(LP)

Eruption/Erection (1990); 8mm, color, sound, 10 minutes

| | | |
|---------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| icons | sister mother | cum towel |
| hardons | girlfriends brother | a lipsinker lisper |
| fancy time | a bend over boy | a beam of light |
| fancy day | a strong holy rock | a reserretion |
| joyous moment | a rock on | a big errection |
| bowl movement | a plunger | a sissy spanking |
| snot | a butter fly | heaven above |
| santa | a noisy napper | belly button fuzz |

—Luther Price, from a poem by the same name

Me Gut No Dog DOG (1994 work in progress); 8mm, color, sound, circa 30 minutes

program notes by Maya Allison

MAGNIFIED MYSTERIES: THE MUSIC OF CARL STONE

CARL STONE IN PERSON

Saturday, October, 29 1994 SF Art Institute

... he became so enamored of the beauty of the sample that he just had to take it apart, to discover what it was that made it so great, all the while creating something else equally lovely.

—Jac Zinder, *LA Weekly*

-Tonight's Program -

MAE YAO (Part 1) is, as the name implies, the opening section of a longer (in fact evening-length work) *Mae Yao*, which was commissioned by the Art of Spectacle Festival in Los Angeles in 1984. This section uses the multiplicative technique of layering, wherein simple sound sources (in this case various bells) are cloned and summed, the results in turn

cloned and summed, until the final sounds represent masses of over 32,000 elements. (CS)

Easyout (1971), by Pat O'Neill; 16mm, color, sound, 9 minutes

Has to do with a consideration of one possible conceptual model for human existence; that of a primitive form of yardchair, upon which sits The Creator, impassively observing the inexorable flow of His mountains. The name "Easyout" is derived from a commercially available bolt and stud-extracting tool, whose function seemed strangely parallel to that of the film. (PO)

Prefaces (1981), by Abigail Child; 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes

The rapid-fire cross cutting of the images is extended to the construction of the sound track, which is also a dense panoply of fragments. What results is an impressive musique concrete composition, a collage of "female" sounds interwoven with others: snippets from vocal music, conversations, poetry reading, etc. Child plays with memory, not only her own and the world's, but also cinema's: its conventions, polarizations (man/woman), and hierarchization of images.

—Robert Hilferty, *New York Native*

DONG IL JANG was composed in 1982 and is adapted this evening for Macintosh computer. (CS)

- Intermission -

passage à l'acte (1993), by Martin Arnold; 16mm, black and white, sound, 12 minutes

... dismantles a simple sequence consisting of five takes: a breakfast table with a family of four, almost idyllic in the original (the sequence comes from *To Kill a Mockingbird* with Gregory Peck, who incidentally remarked on Arnold's film with the words "Nice sound, but didn't get it!"). Using a small gesture by the father, *passage à l'acte* uncovers the authoritarian center of the middle-class family. It shows how the authority of the father is directed at the son, accepted and emulated by him, and then directed at the sister, who in turn—in relation to the father—takes up the same position as the mother.

—Peter Tscherkassky

KAMIYA BAR (excerpt), is once again, part of a work that, in full form, takes one evening to perform. All the sounds are from the urban soundscape of Tokyo, collected while I was living there with the aid of a grant from the Asian Cultural Council. This section uses radio and television textures, and a performance of a group of street musicians called 'chindonya.' (CS)

The musical paths of **CARL STONE** project the listener into the microcosm of Japanese sound. From the chaos emerge vital arcane phrases which become fixed, modified and processed by the electronics and computers. They are compacted melodies in an extremely vital, violent, energetic stream to follow at high volume. The major challenge to Stone is to succeed in rendering extraordinary that which, initially, is not.

—Domenico De Gaetano, liner notes to *CENTURY XXI*

Film-Wipe-Film (1983), by Paul Glabicki; 16mm, black and white, sound, 28 minutes

The film is a journal (drawn by hand over a period of four years), opera, and journey through 100 animated sequences which are joined and transformed by 100 film wipes in continuous succession. The film is a synthesis of both abstract and figurative imagery, analysis and commentary, writing and multiple languages, multi-layered sounds and music, lyrical and contrapuntal relationships, and elaborate animated compositions. The film plays with thresholds of change between intuition and analytical thinking, as well as between

what is read or heard as “figurative” or “abstract”. The various animation sequences range from pure geometric abstractions to symbols, metaphors and icons (boxing ring, car, chair, airplanes, steps).

The film is not computer generated or assisted in any way. (PG)

An up-to-date Carl Stone catalog with playlists from his Imaginary Landscape radio show is available online: WELLgopher (gopher.well.com), in the Communications, KPFA section.

If you're Web-enabled, the URL is
gopher://gopher.well.com/11s/Communications/KPFA/cstone

curated by Eric Theise
<verve@cyberwerks.com> <http://cyberwerks.com>

SUBVERTING THE LIBIDINOUS: NEW WORKS BY WOMEN

CO-CURATOR, MICHELLE HANDELMAN IN PERSON

Sunday, October 30, 1994 SF Art Institute

Loredana (1994), by Salome Milstead; 16mm, b&w, sound, 7 minutes

Djune Idexa (1994), by Salome Milstead; 16mm, b&w, sound, 9 minutes

Djune Idexa is a love poem that falls somewhere between desire and biology. There is clarification of purpose when one gets down to animal instincts, so the narrator states, and the animal reference here becomes the oldest living creature: the beetle. Images of a woman covering her body with pictures of gears, insects and kissing creatures are optically printed with the effects of split screen, slow motion, and image degeneration to create a break in time perception, frame reference and the objectifying of the object of her desire once more.

Whether it be the cockroach or the June bug, Salome explores the nature of the beast and the properties of love, desire and sex with an eternal and lyrical reverence.

The Color Of Love (1994), by Peggy Ahwesh; 16mm, color, sound, 12 minutes

Inspired by the nudie films of '60s filmmaker Doris Wishman, Peggy Ahwesh has taken an old porn film and instilled it with new life through manual film manipulation and optical printing. At times both erotic and grotesque, the humor lies in her choice of film featuring two women, one man and 1 very sharp knife engaged in an obviously very fake gore scene. In the porn film we see the women rubbing blood over the chest of the dead man and as Ahwesh “rubs” decomposing colors of film over the women the final piece becomes both a burial and crowning of beautiful flowers over a lost moment in porn history. Psychedelic and lustful, it reminds one of a Gustav Klimt painting where the lovers disappear and reappear in the colorful mix.

A Lot of Fun For The Evil One (1994), by M.M. Serra & Maria Beatty;
video, color, sound, 14 minutes

In the words of Craig Baldwin, “It’s *Super Hot!* A proud film that celebrates sexual desire — where the energy never drops and the camera never stops . . . Absolutely

uncompromised." M.M. Serra and Maria Beatty have taken the time, and their cumulative years of expertise, to light, shoot and edit this sweet gem of sexual domination. The John Zorn soundtrack adds to the intensity with a dense and aggressive sound mix that drives this piece straight into your groin. A stylistically sophisticated piece of true erotica. Power tripping never felt so good.

Taking Back The Dolls (1993), by Leslie Singer; video, b&w, sound, 45 minutes

Leslie Singer's taken pixel vision and used it in its best form: a faux cinema vérité in a comedic send up of Russ Meyer's classic exploitation film, *Valley of the Dolls*. A story of sex, drugs and media manipulation in the high fashion world, we meet an unlikely group of depraved wannabes who tellingly get what they deserve. Warhol, Edie, Roger Vadim and all the vacuous pop icons and image makers of the 60s come to mind; however, the Nirvana soundtrack brings it right into the 90s confirming that some things never change. No, fame isn't what it's cracked up to be, and even sex and drugs and delirium can't save you from yourself.

Co-Curated by Steve Anker & Michelle Handelman.

program notes by Michelle Handelman

ARTICULATE FLESH

Thursday, November 3, 1994 Roxie Cinema, 3117 16th Street.

Giving voice to one's body has long been the territory of experimental film and video work. The range of exploration is evidenced in these recent works by Northern Californian makers. From basic issues of self-representation to painful re-examination of family and self, the body is explored here as catalyst, reminder, albatross, power agent, transformer, and nurturer.

Virus (1994), by Stuart Gaffney

Naked to the World (1994), by Jon Shenk

Aqueduct (1994), by Rebecca Ormond

Tom's Flesh (1994), by Jane Wagner & Tom di Maria

skin-es-the-si-a (1994), by Vicky Funari

Mother Load (1994), by Betsy Weiss

Isabella Holding a Pot of Basil (1994), by Jennifer Gentile

The Flesh is Willing (1994), by Todd Verow

Programmed by the Film Arts Festival Committee.

A co-presentation of the 10th Annual Film Arts Festival and the SF Cinematheque.

**BECOMING AMERICAN:
A KALEIDOSCOPE FOR THE 90'S**

CURATOR, LYNN KIRBY IN PERSON

Thursday, November 10, 1994 Center for the Arts

Welcome to America!

Being and becoming American are elusively definable. Tonight's program—a part of California College of Arts and Crafts' symposium "Immigration and Cultural Identity" (November 6-12)—explores a multitude of American groups with experiences ranging from border crossings by sea and land, to conscious and unconscious "assimilation," to the passing on of an oral history of struggle on this continent. Intersecting personal and familial identities with cultural and political contexts, these stories all aspire to reconcile and reflect on multiple aspects of being and becoming American.

ASSIMILATION/a simulation (1992), by Windy Chien;
16mm, color, sound, 15 minutes

"Assimilation, best practiced blissfully and blindly, is the compliant response to a system of cultural domination." (WC)

Challenging the assumption of "successful" assimilation, Chien dissects two generations of women's conscious and unconscious assimilation and examines the pressure of the exotic Asian woman stereotype as seen through male eyes. The voice-over comments, "It's easier to deal with externalized racism and sexism than the results of those distortions internalized." Chien writes, "By speaking both within and about the film, the filmmaker asserts its very existence as a product of the empowering process both she and Janine (the protagonist) have begun. This is a film in three parts, reality and commentary built in. A simulation. A process. A poem."

Mnemonic Study: Ellis Island Fragments (1985-6), by Joel Katz;
Super-8, color/b&w, sound, 35 minutes

The collaged narrative fragments are all snatches of memories linked by the common experience of entering America through Ellis Island. These are the experiences of many different groups of people, immigrating from Europe, the Soviet Union, Greece, and South Africa. They speak not of a particular cultural identity, but instead of the common isolating experience of passing through Ellis Island to get to a foreign land of promise and opportunity. The film layers oral histories taped in various Senior Centers around New York, with Thomas Edison archival footage, and images shot on Ellis Island before its massive restorations in the late eighties, creating "a ruminative study of the intersections of history, site and memory." (JK)

Part 4: La Migra,
from ***The Mexican Tapes: A Chronicle of Life Outside the Law***
(1984-85), by Louis Hock; video, color, sound, 27 minutes

Hemmed in by beach front condominiums, local business and the Pacific Coast Highway, the Analos Apartments in Solana Beach, San Diego formed a colony of 100 undocumented Mexicans. I lived in this environment for two and a half years, video taping a chronicle of their lives. In the Fall of 1981, the people were driven out of the apartments by redevelopment of the property and an intense series of raids by the U.S. Immigration authorities. The taping continued as I followed community members back to their Mexican

homes. The resulting *Mexican Tapes* are a narrative of three families during this period and the years following. (LH)

This segment focuses on the relation between the Mexicans and la migra, the border patrol. Hock portrays how the threat of deportation and moving across borders is an integral rhythm in the daily lives of these Mexicans living in America. He also points out the blatant racism and discrimination of la migra against Mexican-Americans. Hock writes, "Mexican people have a heritage of migration that has moved back and forth across the border, building and feeding this nation for more than a century. Their presence is not a luxury. They are part of a system of international interdependence that structures the U.S. both financially and culturally."

***One of a Kind* (1994 Premiere), by Patrick Yip; video, color, sound, 15 minutes**

Yip bombards us with a cultural assault: disparate images of Chinese-Americans and mainstream American pop culture and media "history." The voice-over narrative stream observes, "When you're in the place you have to kind of follow the customs. That's the way it is." Segments of Chinese and English are spoken in tandem. The TV shouts, "What is your name?" and "Race with me!" Yip comments, "This piece is a portrait of a young Chinese immigrant facing the pressure of living in America today. He examines his view of the society he sees around him and his own cultural mixture."

***Itam Hakim, Hopiit* (1985), by Victor Masayesva, Jr. ;
video, color, sound, 58 minutes (unsubtitled)**

Itam Hakim, Hopiit translates directly as "We, someone, the Hopi People." It is the story of the Bow Clan as told in archaic Hopi by Ross Macaya, an elder of a storytelling clan, the Tobacco. The structures of the story and of time reveal a great deal about the Hopi culture and the oral tradition of storytelling. Masayesva writes, "It is the process of becoming, this journey to the heart of the North American Continent that is Macaya's story." As a Hopi videomaker working with a Native American crew, Masayesva is attempting to provide representations to counter the widespread appropriation of Native American cultures and experiences. The result is a meditative visualization of Hopi Philosophy and prophecy that eschews Western notions of "interpretation" and documentary practice, opting instead to "tell" its tale quietly with grace, reverence, and fluid majesty. According to Michelle Valladares, "Masayesva believes that one film or one individual filmmaker cannot make a difference but as a community of Indian or indigenous filmmakers we can be an international conscience, demanding accountability."

"I have told you alot. You have learned alot from me, and learned the stories. These stories are going to be put down so the children will remember them. The children will be seeing this and improving on it. This is what will happen. This will not end anywhere."

— Ross Macaya in *Itam Hakim, Hopiit* (1985)

program notes by Carrie Gray

**ARTIST AS FILMMAKER:
ROBERT FRANK'S NEW YORK**

C'EST VRAI & LAST SUPPER

Saturday, November 12, 1994 SF Art Institute

"I became more occupied with my own life, with my own situation, instead of traveling and looking at the cities and the landscape. And I think that brought me to move away from the single image and begin to film, where I had to tell a story. And I guess I most often choose to tell my own story, or part of it, or make up some story that is related to my life."

— Robert Frank

Robert Frank was born on November 9, 1924, in Zurich, Switzerland. In 1941 and 1942 he apprenticed to a photographer, and in March 1947 he came to the United States, earning a living as a commercial photographer for *Harper's Bazaar*, *Life*, *The New York Times*, *Fortune*, *Look*, *Esquire*, *Glamour*, and *Advertising Age* until 1958. In the 1950s Frank's work began to appear in galleries and books, and by 1955 his reputation had developed to the point where he became the first European to be awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. In 1955 and 1956 Frank traveled across the United States in an old Ford, taking the photographs that were to be compiled into his 1958 book, *The Americans*. Although Frank's notoriety as a still photographer was sealed with the release of *The Americans*, it came at the end of that career. In 1958 he declared a series of photographs taken from the window of the 42nd Street bus to be his final photographic project. It was in 1959 that his career as a filmmaker began with *Pull My Daisy*, a collaboration with Alfred Leslie and loosely based on the third act of Jack Kerouac's *The Beat Generation*. Through the intervening decades, film for Robert Frank has become more of a vehicle for personal exploration than for storytelling.

"Robert Frank's strategies as a filmmaker have helped establish an interesting dichotomy between his self-reflexive vision and his still photography. As an autobiographical vision emerged in his photography, he bisected his own perception of personal life by addressing the world around him through the avant-garde cinema. As his films became increasingly personal, zooming in on the intricacies of his own relationships, he reinvented his conception of this world through still photography. For Frank, these two worlds have now become linked as he continues the struggle to break down the barriers between his art and his personal life. In this way he reveals an interior vision that is universal in the questions it asks about everyday life, creating an aesthetic tension which propels his audience into the work."

— Philip Brookman, Curator of Photography and Media Arts,
The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

"In recent decades, as Frank has looked backward and forward at the same time, constantly recycling his own images—from photograph to film, from video to video print—rubbing them together for sparks of new meaning, he has hammered out an original and nakedly autobiographic art...Because it has been a life full of tragedy—his daughter died in a plane crash; his son has been in and out of psychiatric hospitals—the art is often riddled with anger and grief, and with self-doubts that question the reasons for its very existence...[It] is often crude, unafraid to make an emotional mess. But at least no one would ever claim that Robert Frank's clock has stopped."

— Richard B. Woodward, *The New York Times Magazine* (Sept. 4, 1994)

FRANK ON NEW YORK:

"Never have I experienced so much in one week as here. I feel as if I am in a film. Life here is very different than in Europe. Only the moment counts; nobody seems to care what he'll do tomorrow."

— Robert Frank at age 22, in a letter to his parents from New York City (1947)

"I think in New York it's really important for you to believe in yourself, for you never to give up this belief. And in New York it's sort of easy to reinforce that, because artists are egotistical people. They really think about their work, their imagination, their dreams. They put it down; they are able to show that. So New York is very strong; it's very powerful to reinforce that feeling and to make it even stronger."

— Robert Frank, interview by Marlaine Glicksman, *Film Comment* (1988)

Last Supper (1992); 16mm, color, sound, 52 minutes

Set in an open lot in Harlem, *Last Supper* juxtaposes scenes of a writer's friends and family waiting for the author at a book signing party with video footage of neighborhood residents carrying on with everyday life. As in many of Frank's films, there are threads of autobiography and self examination woven into the narrative. Frank's anxieties regarding the artist's engagement (or lack thereof) with family, friends, and the art world emerge in the dialogue about the absent artist. The intercut video footage, together with the final scene of the long awaited last supper, serve to contrast the indulgent obsessions of the party-goers with the broader social context and raise questions about the intersections of art and the world in which it is created. With Zohra Lampert, Bill Youmans, Bill Rice, Taylor Mead, John Larkin, Odessa Taft.

C'est Vrai (1990); video, color, sound, 60 minutes

An unedited one hour exploration of New York's lower east side, which incorporates scripted and improvisational narrative with the actuality of New York's streets. Produced for French television. With Kevin O'Connor, Peter Orlovsky, Taylor Mead, Jim Stark, and Odessa Taft.

ROBERT FRANK PARTIAL FILMOGRAPHY

Pull My Daisy (1959); 35mm, 28 minutes: *The Sin of Jesus* (1961); 35mm, 40 minutes: *OK End Here* (1963); 35mm, 30 minutes: *Me and My Brother* (1965-68); 35mm, 91 minutes: *Conversations in Vermont* (1969); 16mm, 26 minutes: *Life-raft Earth* (1969); 16mm, 37 minutes: *About Me - a Musical* (1971); 16mm, 35 minutes: *Cocksucker Blues* (1972); 16mm, 90 minutes: *Keep Busy* (1975); 16mm, 38 minutes: *Life Dances On...* (1980); 16mm, 30 minutes: *Energy and How to Get It* (1981); 16mm, 28 minutes, *This Song for Jack* (1983); 16mm, 30 minutes: *Keep Busy* (1983); 16mm, 30 minutes: *Home Improvements* (1985); video, 29 minutes: *Candy Mountain* (1987); 35mm, 91 minutes: *Hunter* (1989); 16mm/video, 36 minutes: *C'est Vrai* (1990); video, 60 minutes: *Last Supper* (1992); 16mm, 52 minutes.

program notes by DL & IL

**CHICK'S FAVORITE PICS:
A NIGHT OF FILMS FROM THE EARLY DAYS OF CANYON CINEMA**

CURATED BY CHICK STRAND

Sunday, November 13, 1994 SF Art Institute

Tonight's program initiates a series of guest-curated programs selected from Canyon Cinema, the Bay Area's premier distributor of alternative film. Chick Strand, co-founder of Canyon Cinema with Bruce Baillie, has chosen works that still quicken her heart and that had an important influence in her own creative life.

Strand is herself a major voice in lyrical, experimental filmmaking whose work spans 25 years and whose 18 films range from intimate, poetic documentaries to surreal dream visions to found-footage collage films. Her baptism into experimental cinema came through her friendship with Bruce Baillie and her co-founding, with him, of Canyon Cinema in the early sixties. Canyon's eclectic screenings of underground films took place first on a sheet in Baillie's backyard in Canyon, California, then in an anarchist restaurant in Berkeley (where sometimes one set of customers would have to pay their bill so food could be bought for the next ones), a private girls' school (which subsequently closed its doors to Canyon because it didn't like the sound of "underground"), the Coffee Gallery in San Francisco, Ernest Callenbach's backyard, Strand's house, and the College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland. The tri-weekly screenings were enlivened by wine, popcorn, pillows, chairs borrowed from a nearby mortuary, and Strand in costume, collecting \$1 donations or IOUs in a sewing basket at the door and then, with Baillie, raffling off door prizes (including Baillie's homebaked pies) in the intermission. The screenings subsequently led to the creation of a filmmaking workshop and, with Ernest Callenbach and others, the publication of *Canyon Cinemanews* which included Baillie's recipes as well as information about film festivals and articles on film.

Strand left Canyon and the Bay Area to study filmmaking at UCLA, and Canyon went on to become an important nationally and internationally recognized alternative distributor of independent film, an organization begun and run by and for independent filmmakers, which anyone may join by depositing work and paying a membership fee.

The films in our program tonight are all distributed by Canyon Cinema, and many were screened in the early days when Strand and Baillie were still dressing up and entertaining audiences around the Bay. As Strand says, they are all films which influenced her decision to become a filmmaker in her early thirties, already the mother of two, and they are all films which she loves deeply, which speak to her heart, and which will perhaps also speak to yours.

Pastoral d'Eté (1958), by Will Hindle; 16mm color, sound, 9 minutes

Tung (1966), by Bruce Baillie; 16mm, color/b&w, silent, 5 minutes

Eaux d'Artifice (1953), by Kenneth Anger; 16mm, color, sound, 13 minutes

Window Water Baby Moving (1959), by Stan Brakhage;
16mm, color, silent, 12 minutes

Cosmic Ray (1961) by Bruce Conner; 16mm, b&w, sound, 4 minutes

five minute intermission

Unsere Afrikareise (1961-66), by Peter Kubelka; 16mm, color, sound, 12 minutes

Castro Street (1966), by Bruce Baillie; 16mm, color/b&w, sound, 10 minutes

Billabong (1969), by Will Hindle; 16mm, color, sound, 9 minutes

7362 (1965-67), by Pat O'Neill; 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes

Mothlight (1963), by Stan Brakhage; color, silent, 4 minutes

A Movie (1958), by Bruce Conner, 16mm, b&w, sound, 12 minutes

All My Life (1966), by Bruce Baillie; 16mm, color, sound, 3 minutes

Letter from Chick Strand on tonight's program:

Dear Irina and Steve,

How interesting to be asked to do this. I'm no curator, but then, what was I doing those years with Bruce programming and writing texts for all of the early Canyon Cinema shows, to say nothing of curating all of the films I've shown in my classes over the years? So, basically I knew what I would want to show by the time I phoned you.

I want to show the films that we showed in those early days, for the most part, that influenced me to become a filmmaker, ones that I still love. As it turns out these are films which I see at least once a year because I show them to my students. These choices are not politically correct; as you will notice they are all made by older white men. They are short in order to be able to show many films. Missing are some films which were important to me because they are not in the Canyon catalog or they were too long. We did not show all of these films at Canyon; Baillie's are all made in 1966, a couple of years after other people carried on the work of providing a show place, but, I feel very close to this work since we were close. Kubelka's film we did not show, but we showed others of his, I believe, and if my memory serves me, he was on our mailing list and received all of the Canyon Cinema Newsletters. I didn't see Pat O'Neill's work until I moved to LA in 1966. I met him at UCLA while both students there (he in art).

It is interesting to note that none of the filmmakers are products of film schools. Baillie attended the London School of Cinematography for a very brief time. They learned the skills on their own, inventing techniques, not influenced much by work before their time, since there wasn't all that much to be seen, and no place to see it. Most began art in other mediums and somehow got seduced by the magic of filmmaking. It was when I saw these films that I knew that I could do it, that I wanted more than anything to do it, and so I did it. The work here is what some would call West Coast, somewhat lyrical, incredibly beautiful and poetic. They are basically non-political, personal and emotionally powerful. To me, each is perfect, they speak to my heart and my sense of beauty both in imagery and presentation.

Pastoral D'Ete and *Billabong* by Will Hindle; Although Bruce Baillie and I programmed and arranged for the early showings of Canyon Cinema, now known as the Cinematheque, we often got Will to come and speak about the films. He could hold people glued to their seats, which was very hard to do when we were trying to build an audience for this strange stuff. A gentleman through and through, his work reflects what we mean when (if) we call ourselves visual poets.

Tung, *Castro Street*, and *All My Life*, by Bruce Baillie. We were pals and still are, and had daily contact throughout our partnership at Canyon. He taught me how to shoot a camera, how to edit and deal with sound. We talked endlessly about film and ideas. His work is a big part of my life in film. His in camera supers, using his hand to make dissolves, using distorted glass and bottles in form of the lens, of never letting go of the idea that film is or can be poetry influenced my perspective and creative process.

Eaux D'Artifice by Kenneth Anger. Yeah, I know that by using a very small male dressed up as a woman will make the gardens look larger and more overwhelming, but it tells me, don't take this art making too seriously, don't forget the contradictions or humor from someplace deep inside, mess with it, bring different levels into it, make your work just a little bit askew, put in your secrets, your delicious desires, your other names.

Window Water Baby Moving and *Mothlight*, by Stan Brakhage. Bruce and I were giving Stan a show. But we wanted to have it in a place that was like a theater, maybe to recall all of those Saturdays we had spent as kids in those wonderful theatrical movie palaces when we had got hooked on film. We found a community theater that wasn't what we had imagined. But it did have silly plaster of Paris statues and I think in the end we made it pretty magical. It was my job to go pick up Stan at James Broughton's house. I was young and not very confident about meeting Stan, who was by then famous. I mean, this guy was coming in from Denver, a favorite place for the Beats, how could I make his day peaceful, restful and interesting before his show? Before we were in the car five minutes, he told me that Kenneth Anger's name wasn't Kenneth Anger and the story of Maya Deren's death. After that Stan lived for a while in San Francisco. We gave the West Coast Premiere of *Dog Star Man*. One time Jane Brakhage came with Stan's work and told us her perception of the making of *Window Water Baby Moving*.

Cosmic Ray and *A Movie*, by Bruce Conner. Collage, found footage films. When I first saw *A Movie*, it knocked my socks off. It just chomped into me emotionally. To see, to put together in my mind feelings that were not to be explained in a literary way, that these images painstakingly arranged into a new context drew forth, was absolutely amazing. Making a film out of disparate images, in a way out of nothing, is true magic. When we first showed *Cosmic Ray* at Canyon, the audience would not let us get on with the show until we ran it through again and yet again. They boogied. What I learned, put your foot on the gas and don't ease off.

Unsere Afrikareise, by Peter Kubelka. I saw this film first soon after I moved to Los Angeles. I had long had an involvement with anthropology and documentary film. This film, with its powerful images and unsettling content, showed me a way to unite a documentary style of shooting and personal filmmaking. It showed me not to let off, that there is a way to beauty and poetry while using tough material.

7362, by Pat O'Neill. I met Pat while a film student at UCLA. He was beginning to discover his own lure toward film after working mainly in sculpture. He was in the Art Department, a place totally separate from the Film School. But artists and filmmakers tend to meet and we did. He had begun working on an old contact 16mm printer that somehow had found its way into the photography facility. He simply figured out how to use it by himself and he taught me what he knew. He became the master of optical printing, but this film was made entirely on the contact printer

Love,

Chick

program notes by Irina Leimbacher

**ANNE ROBERTSON: A FILM/PERFORMANCE
FROM FIVE YEAR DIARY & OTHER FILMS**

ANNE ROBERTSON IN PERSON

Thursday, November 17, 1994 Center for the Arts

Anne Charlotte Robertson was born in Columbus, Ohio, on March 27, 1949, at 3:27 p.m., after a 24-hour labor. She has been making films since 1976. Her schooling includes a Bachelor's of Art magna cum laude in art and psychology, from the University of Massachusetts/Harbor Campus, Boston, and a Master of Fine Arts with honors in filmmaking, from Massachusetts College of Art in Boston. She has been diagnosed as a manic-depressive, a conclusion she denies, preferring instead to think of herself as a typical anxiety neurotic of the obsessive-compulsive sort, with marked tendencies for fantasy, joy, and panic. She is no longer a depressive, and film has been the cure. Her avocation is organic gardening, and this too has been a healing force for her. Her films total more than 45 hours running time; her gardens total more than 5,000 square feet. She believes in Super-8, and art (plus life) as therapy...creativity is the source of hope. (ARC)

"I don't think it's me who is a film diarist: it's you! It's you!...Ah, your films are so beautiful...Paradise is not yet lost!"

— Jonas Mekas, Anthology Film Archive (entire 35 hour diary will be shown next June)

Locomotion (1981); Super-8, color, sound, 7 minutes

Overdose, breakdown, rage at system in a stylized mental hospital isolation cell.

Five Year Diary, Reel # 1 (1981); Super-8, color, sound, approx. 26 minutes

Five Year Diary, Reel # 22 (1982); Super-8, color, sound, approx. 26 minutes

Five Year Diary, Reel # 23 (1982); Super-8, color, sound, approx. 26 minutes

Depression Focus Please (1984); Super-8, color, sound, 3 minutes

Intended as a longer film, this proved sufficient to vignette the nuances of my sadness.

Kafka Kamera (1985); Super-8, color, sound + sound on tape, 3 minutes

Filmmaker's paranoia: One day the camera wakes you up, and pursues relentlessly.

Talking To Myself (1985); Super-8, color, sound + sound on tape, 3 minutes

Double-exposed, self faces self, wrangling, complaining, trying to hear oneself think.

Apologies (1990); Super-8, color, sound, 17 minutes

My therapy for excessive apologies, a constant sense of neurotic personal guilt explored.

Five Year Diary, Reel # 76 (1991-1992); Super-8, color, sound, approx. 26 minutes

Anne Robertson on her Five Year Diary:

"Begun November 3, 1981, in Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

78 reels, approximately 26 minutes each, Super-8 and video

"I present my life in multi-media: film (1st visual source), sound from film (when possible, depending upon finances; 1st audio source), audiotape dubbed diary (2nd audio source), on-stage live introduction to each reel (milieu-setting, perspective-giving, autobiographical

storytelling: 2nd visual, 3rd audio source), live narration from-within-the-audience (4th audio source), amid a surrounding environment (as much as is possible to bring to a screening; 3rd visual resource), with myself usually available during intermissions, as the primary source/ resource of information and perspective on my life.

"This diary is a constant work-in-progress, as is every life. It is a matter of collection rather than pre-visualization of scenes; I try to take a documentary approach to life-events and my surrounds, rather than molding my life into a theatrical artifice. Despite the multitude of information offered to the audience via multi-media, the result is not a barrage, but a view into complexity, and themes of personal change. Making my diary has literally saved my life; it is an inspiration to others, that 'examining one's life can help make life worth living.'

"I am a 45-year-old woman, single, with a vow to poverty. The title *Five Year Diary* refers to the little blank books with locks and keys, that allow only a few lines to each day's notation; the audience is invited to be my brother and sister, and see what a life can yield. My present and future hope is to leave a full record of a woman in the 20th century. I have been a diarist since I was a child; likewise I have kept visual records, and artifacts. My training in schools and by myself has been in writing, crafts, theater, photography, psychology, and film. During the past 13 years I have added audio recordings to my diary accumulation, thus approaching the utilization of all the senses that art can present of memory. My work in film is entirely self-produced (except for laboratory processing and technical processes such as video/sound transfer); I am the sole artist, camera, editor, lights, and sound.

"All that surrounds and interests me would disappear in an apocalypse, as surely as the film image disappears after projection. I take as many personal artifacts as possible with me to screenings, to create a 3-D environment, so that even the intermissions are alive for the audience.

"I am an organic gardener also, someone who has deliberately chosen to leave the city after many years, to live among trees; gardens can be planned to a certain extent, but intensive planting calls for spontaneous crowding, a work of art that is similar to my own growth as a artist in multi-media. I am a diarist, a visual artist, a performer, and a storyteller, with my films 'at the mouth of the cave,' telling you all that we are not merely shadows, we are all complex beings needing nurturing, and change, and the acknowledgment and acceptance of changing ourselves."

— Anne Charlotte Robertson

program notes by Todd Wagner

ARTIST AS FILMMAKER: INTO THE PICTURE PLANE

FILMS BY RICHARD SERRA

Saturday, November 19, 1994 SF Art Institute

For almost three decades San Franciscan native Richard Serra has been celebrated by the mandarins of the art world as one of the most innovative of minimalist sculptors. A committed abstractionist, Serra gained prominence as a "process artist" in the late sixties by

conducting sculptural experiments that called attention to the activity of making art. In the following decade, Serra came to the attention of the general public through his controversial, large scale urban sculptures, more than a dozen of which have been erected in Western Europe and North America. Forged with raw, weighty masses of delicately corroding metal, Serra's "site-specific" works have often been received with distrust and hostility. Addressed to such conceptual issues as repetition, space, weight, tension and balance, his nonexpressive minimalist forms give cold comfort to viewers whose aesthetic values are tied to traditional concepts of beauty and art. Serra has been producing film and video work since the late sixties and to date has directed more than twenty works. The films in tonight's program represent in moving images many of the daring ideas that make Serra's sculptures so controversial.

Hand Catching Lead (1968); 16mm, b&w, silent, 3 1/2 minutes

In *Hand Catching Lead*, Serra's first film, his right hand is in frame and he tries to catch pieces of lead as they are dropped through the frame. The artist's hand develops a personality as it rather unsuccessfully attempts to grab these intermittently falling shards of metal.

"Films by artists who primarily practice an art other than cinema are often curious objects because they straddle two traditions—the artist's native one and film—in ways that give the object different, even incommensurate meanings. Serra's *Hand Catching Lead* illustrates this nicely. This film has a rich set of connotations when seen in the context of the recent history of contemporary sculpture, where Serra is a prominent figure, but it doesn't have the same implications when viewed in the context of avant-garde film. The art critic assesses *Hand Catching Lead* as concerned with the material conditions of sculpture—weight and gravity. Thus, the art critic situates *Hand Catching Lead* in the line of works that make their 'thing-ness' their subject. Yet, for the film critic, *Hand Catching Lead* can't count as a reflexive film for the simple reason that the material Serra emphasizes isn't film but lead. As a result, his film doesn't easily fit into the category of avant-garde films that display the material conditions of film. What is a gesture in the direction of the Real, from the viewpoint of art history, is pure symbolism in the context of film. To the extent that the rhetoric of both film and art criticism finds these categories mutually exclusive, the uncommitted film viewer is stuck with two equally compelling but incompatible ways to interpret the film."

— Noel Carroll

Hands Tied (1968); 16mm, b&w, silent, 3 1/2 minutes

Serra's *Hands Tied* is the artist's second foray into the medium of film and is another spirited investigation of the issues approached in his first film, *Hands Catching Lead*. Rather than being a task, *Hands Tied* is the performance of a feat, which lasts as long as it takes Serra, whose hands are tied with rope inside the frame, to untie the knots. The film sets up a dialectic between hands and material as the hands move and strain in attempting to loosen the rope. As in his other films *Hand Catching Lead* and *Hands Scraping*, his hands become the performers and acquire a physical expressiveness of their own.

Frame (1969); 16mm, b&w, sound, 22 minutes

In this film, Serra employs a ruler to measure the dimensions of the camera's field of view against a white wall. In turn, he then projects a film of the field and measures that. The structure of *Frame* demonstrates the disparity in perception between what is seen by the cameraman looking through the lens and what is seen by a person looking directly at the same space.

"Perception has its own abstract logic and it is often necessary to fit verbal and mathematical formulation (in this instance measuring) to objects rather than the other way around. The size, scale and three-dimensional ambiguity of film and photographs is usually accepted as one kind of interpretation of reality. These mediums fundamentally contradict the perception of the thing to which they allude. Objective physical measurement of real and physical depth coupled with apparent measurement of film depth, points to the basic contradiction posed in the perception of a film or photograph. The device of a ruler which functions as a stabilizing or compensating system in the film is the subject of its own contradiction."

— Richard Serra, *Avalanche* (Winter 1971)

Railroad Turnbridge (1976); 16mm, b&w, silent, 19 minutes

More complex than some of his earlier works, Serra's *Railroad Turnbridge* steers away from the minimalist reflexive style of his "hand films" and adopts a stance closer to the art documentary style. As a succinct study of an early 20th century draw span bridge, the film analyzes the structure's mechanism with close-ups of the bridge as it opens, turns and locks. Like *Frame*, this film is also concerned with and emphasizes the effects of framing in camera movement.

"This is a film which frames the landscape through a turnbridge revolving within it. For me, it is fascinating in that it seems to be very much involved with the basic strategies which were laid out in the early 60s. But it also seems to synthesize—quite remarkably, I think—a great deal more in film culture than just the local concerns of American filmmakers during the '60s."

— Richard Serra, interview by Annette Michelson

Steelmill/Stahlwerk (1979) with Clara Weyergraf;

16mm, b&w, sound, 30 minutes

In this film, Serra revises his materialism from a concern with the physical properties of his medium, to one of locating his work in a social matrix. Elliptically, the film documents the production of a 70-ton steel cube which he designed on a commission from the West German government. The film begins with voice-over interviews of the factory workers; all the viewer sees are the title cards translating the off-screen discussions. From the interviews, the film shifts to the mill where we watch the cube processed through the various stages of production.

"Viewed from the context of sculpture, *Steelmill* represents a meta-artistic statement. In their quest for the material conditions of sculpture, Serra and Weyergraf wed a preoccupation with historical materialism to the emphasis on physical materialism. However, when removed from the context of sculpture, *Steelmill* loses these ramifications. Seen as a film, it is indiscernible from a classically made documentary. The film makes no allusions to cinematic forms and stakes out no position on the nature of the medium. Rather than correlating with the cinematic avant-garde, it is a very conventional, nonfiction film. But the issue is not that *Steelmill* is not avant-garde. Rather, it both is and is not in the avant-garde tradition in a way that raises, rather than articulates, interesting questions about the way we talk about such art."

— Noel Carroll

RICHARD SERRA FILMOGRAPHY

FILMS

Hand Catching Lead (1968); 16mm, b&w, silent, 3 1/2 minutes: *Hand Lead Fulcrum* (1968); 16mm, b&w, silent, 3 minutes: *Hands Scraping* (1968); 16mm, b&w, silent, 4 1/2

minutes: *Hands Tied* (1968); 16mm, b&w, silent, 3 1/2 minutes: *Frame* (1969); 16mm, b&w, sound, 22 minutes: *Three untitled films* (1969); 16mm, b&w, silent, 3 minutes: each *Tina Turning* (1969); 16mm, b&w, silent, 2 minutes: *Untitled* (1969); 16mm, b&w, silent, 25 minutes: *Untitled* (1969); 16mm, b&w, silent, 30 minutes: *Color Aid* (1970-71); 16mm, color, sound, 36 minutes: *Paul Revere* (1971), with Joan Jonas; 16mm, b&w, sound, 9 minutes: *Veil* (1971) with Clara Weyergraf; 16mm, b&w, silent, 6 minutes: *Match Match Their Courage* (1974); 16mm, color, sound, 34 minutes: *Railroad Turnbridge* (1976); 16mm, b&w, silent, 19 minutes: *Steelmill / Stahlwerk* (1979); 16mm, b&w, sound, 29 minutes.

VIDEO

Anxious Automation (1971); b&w, sound, 4 1/2 minutes: *China Girls* (1972); b&w, sound, 11 minutes: *Surprise Attack* (1973); b&w, sound, 2 minutes: *Television Delivers People* (1973); color, sound, 6 minutes: *Boomerang* (1974); color, sound, 10 minutes: *Prisoner's Dilemma* (1974) with Robert Bell; b&w, sound, 60 minutes.

All the films in tonight's program presented courtesy of the Castelli Gallery in New York. The films are distributed by Castelli-Sonnabend Videotapes and Films.

Special thanks to Kenneth Baker for his introductory remarks, help and encouragement. Thanks to Rena Bransten at whose gallery Richard Serra's work is currently on exhibit and to Richard Serra himself for selecting the works included in this evening's show.

program notes by Todd Wagner

THE LENSES OF TIME TEMPORAL CONTRACTIONS: FILMS OF THE 1970S

CURATOR DAVID GERSTEIN IN PERSON

Sunday, November 20, 1994 SF Art Institute

Twig (1966) & *Flight of Shadows* (1973), by Michael Mideke;
16mm, b&w, silent, 10 minutes @ 16fps

[In *Flight of Shadows*] I am preoccupied with shadows. The physical, material film is a machine for casting shadows. The experience of film is a mental journey among shadows. Light of the sun is obscured by branches and the leaves of trees, casting shadows on the variegated surfaces of the ground. Shadow shapes make soft images of branches and trees... Spaces between leaves become pinhole lenses, covering the ground with circles of confusion. (MM)

Michael Mideke is one of the truly unknown geniuses of black-and-white filmmaking, in large part because he's chosen to live for the last 20 years without telephone, electricity or running water in the coastal hills of central California. His films have a rhythmic beauty that unfolds into a startling revelation of the physical reality from which they spring.

Some of the image material [in *Twig*] is derived from contact printing and some was photographed from drawings and photographs inspired by work on *Shadowgame* [an earlier film]. The original film was processed by hand in short lengths. It was initially printed by sandwiching picture and raw stock in a synchronizer mounted on a light source.

Chinatown (1978), by Jim Jennings; 16mm, b&w, silent, 43/4 minutes

The silent language of a city in a city. (JJ)

"Jennings' films are songs, in the way that Brakhage established the form of 'film song' permanently with his 8mm songs. They evoke an image, a mood, or a series of images, some memories, some feelings. All of Jennings' films deal with variations and subtleties of one image, one idea. They are marked by a gentle meditative attitude. Jennings meditates on nature, color, movements, slight clashes of forms..."

— Jonas Mekas, *Soho Weekly News* (June 9, 1977)

In the Eye of the Child (1979), by Richard Levine;

16mm, color, silent, 28 1/2 minutes @ 16fps

Many of my images of childhood derive from my father's home movies. I needed to recreate his images so as to reflect my own relationship, both past and present, to those years. I wanted to inspire the breathless spaces of my father's documents with my eidetic memories and daydreams. *In the Eye of the Child* is a resuscitation of my childhood. It is a love/hate homage to Oedipus and a substitution for Freud. It has allowed me to replant myself in my mother's arms and once again play with my brother, contemplate my father, and question myself. As I sit here now, my thoughts concerning those early years are essences in motion. (RL)

"...These pulsating impulses of memory are in a constant state of overlapping and phasing. In the context of this visual excitement certain key images act as grounds. In their representation they become the narrative of the film, icons of personal history...It seems as if the work is generating itself during the screening. There is a sense of immediacy in the way images come into being, as though they have a living order unto themselves. This is, for me, a rare occurrence in film viewing. It seems to be a way into the workings of the memory banks of the mind as well as an opening of a person's heart."

— Ken Ross, *The Downtown Review* Vol. 2 No. 1 (Fall/Winter 1979/80)

Esmerelda and the Turkey Vulture (1978-80), by Gail Vachon;

16mm, b&w, sound, 9 minutes

Children jumping on a trampoline with all the time in the world; drawings of the pre-Columbian cliff-dwellers of the Southwest. The intense music of the film's time—disco—compels our lives. Everyone's longing for something. And the best part is, they might get it. The voices in the last part of the film are adapted from Francine Prose's *Marie Leveaux*, a fictionalized biography of the New Orleans voodoo queen. Wish I could find that book again. (GV)

In the late '70s a new generation of filmmakers (many of them lived in New York) began to rebel against the determinism of "structuralist" filmmaking. They sought a looser, more intuitive feel in their films, often taking advantage of the spontaneity that Super-8 offered. They returned to narrative as a means of confronting the imagist tendencies of their predecessors and carving out an aesthetic territory of their own. Gail Vachon's films incorporated these tendencies without abandoning a precision in her editing choices. *Esmerelda and the Turkey Vulture* occupy a middle ground, with the images creating a web of meanings that derive as much from our emotional as from our rational comprehension.

Whitesands (1983), by Linda Klosky; 16mm, color, sound, 11 minutes

"The location is White Sands, New Mexico. Linda's point of view is moving and horizontal. Her image is the rising and falling horizon across the changing light and then the darkness of a day. The film freezes at intervals. Black dunes rise up and fill the screen, with red light behind them. Or dunes flow like water with translucent blue light at dusk. Her sound, which suggests a muffled engine, and then ghostly, (cricket-like) bleeping,

helps to shift us from romantic desert associations. Here is an experience of landscape which resides in deeper levels of the body, without history or preconceptions, or words even. It is a kinesthetic experience of horizon, which the film creates as it happens. Frames remind me of the luminous paintings of Mark Rothko. In a landscape below words, the film expresses a spirituality of gravity and joy."

— Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge

Condition of Illusion (1975), by Peter Gidal; 16mm, color, silent, 32 1/2 minutes

Seeming continuity as in dominant cinema; discontinuities are brought out; pieces of time assert themselves, in retrospect. There are, for example, similar shots, different enough though to seem at first continuous, then realized as "retake." The lack of difficulty in seeing is meant to work in relation to the obvious (opaque) camera/mechanical usages, specifically: fast back and forward zooms; fast movement "around" the space; abrupt movements, not blurring but annihilating image definition. There is, I think, a virtual and an actual inseparability of abstract from concrete, the way I have used the mechanism of shooting to produce the image-shot segments whatever. There is great difficulty in reading out the space in the film, the connectedness of one representation to another, the area (no construct of the offscreen space is adequately given) is given as a construct. (PG)

Peter Gidal was a major film theoretician during the 1970s. He proposed a direct attack on the viewer's role as passive receiver in relationship to the classic narrative cinema, and linked his attack to the argument that making viewers active participants in the mechanism of film perception was an explicitly political act. Though his antecedents were in the theories of the post-1917 Russian Futurists, his ideas proved especially provocative at a time when the effects of the 1968 student revolts and the radicalization caused by the Viet Nam war were still very much in evidence. Gidal is remembered now (if he's remembered at all) for these theories, but I found his films filled with visual beauty as well as intellectual rigor, and ironically it's my memory of *Condition of Illusion's* exquisite montage that caused me to include it in tonight's program.

program notes by David Gerstein

ALTERED SURFACES: FILMS BY MATTHIAS MÜLLER

MATTHIAS MÜLLER IN PERSON

Thursday, December 1, 1994 Center for the Arts

German filmmaker Matthias Müller has emerged from the *drück und blur* as one of the most promising artists in experimental cinema today. With over twenty films to his credit since his upstart in the early eighties, Matthias has become a *tour de force* both in his native land and abroad. Müller began his career creating experimental short films in collaboration with the Berlin composer, Dirk Schaefer. From there, Matthias helped to found the Alte Kinder (Old Children) Film-Coop in 1985. This provocative West German film collective was established as an alternative to the German film and television industry. Working in pointed contrast to the established industry, Alte Kinder became known for producing films on shoestring budgets but with highly sophisticated results. In addition to his continued involvement with Alte Kinder, Matthias has presented a number of touring programs of

German experimental film work which have won great acclaim throughout Europe and North America. Müller's own films have also seen great success, boasting over twenty awards in international film festivals and competitions. Matthias' degree of artistic accomplishment is due to a truly creative imagination and a dedication to his craft. The films in tonight's program reflect this vision by combining appropriated images with elements of personal autobiography and through the use of iconographics to pay homage to the materiality of the image and of life itself.

The Memo Book (Aus Der Ferne) (1989); 16mm, color, sound, 28 minutes

In this film, Müller treats the death of his friend, the traumatic loss of love and his own mortal fears with both seductive and threatening images. While the film is obsessed with the passing of a friend, it belongs finally to the filmmaker himself, who returns obsessively to his own body to gauge the possibility of moving on.

"That the site of desire should be so resolutely joined to death—or that the passage of death should follow the lines of love—these are the paradoxes beneath which Müller refashions the bodies of film and maker. Müller's virtuosic rephotography, editing and hand processing techniques are hurled into an erotic maelstrom, remaking the divisions of the Word in a continual flux of inside and out, container and contained. Learned in the tradition of Eisenstein, Genet, Anger, and Jarman, *Aus Der Ferne* seeks to remake the male body, not in the service of higher ideals, but in a celebratory flow of communion and despair, mythos and logos. Its elegantly drafted sites live before 'In the beginning was the Word...' and are no less meaningful for doing so."

— Mike Hoolboom, *The Independent Eye*, Toronto (1989)

Home Stories (1991); 16mm, color, sound, 6 minutes

"A brilliantly condensed study of Hollywood melodrama. In the film, a series of actresses from films by Douglas Sirk and other directors repeat a series of highly formalized gestures—opening windows, shutting doors and turning suddenly in alarm. Collaged together, they rhythmically reveal the forms of gender entrapment that structures classical Hollywood cinema, in a manner somehow reminiscent of Abigail Child's *Mayhem*."

— Liz Kotz, *Afterimage* (1991)

The Flamethrowers (1990); 16mm, color, sound, 9 minutes

The original material of this film triptych was a nearly burnt print of *Song of the Road* by Satyajit Ray. The American artist Owen O'Toole sent this film to the members of *Alte Kinder* Film-Coop in Germany, asking to react to it artistically. This was the beginning of a transatlantic mail art game that was further continued by *The Schmelzdahin* film collective.

"A wonderful evocation of a lost tribe, a hybrid of 'fourth world' and 'out of this world'."

"Tentatively a Convenience," Baltimore (1990)

Sleepy Haven (1993); 16mm, color, sound, 15 minutes

"Melancholy, remembrance, resignation: Matthias Müller's *Sleepy Haven* is a meditative work driven by a stream of associations; it tells stories of the body and its poses and of a destructive erotic which gradually ceases glowing."

— Stefan Grisseman, *Die Presse*, Vienna (1993)

"*Sleepy Haven* is explicitly clinging to the spirit of Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks*. Nude bodies of sailors are flaring up in flickering solarization effects; they are given an ardent aura of physical craving by this tattooing of the film emulsion. But it is not only *Fireworks* the film is alluding to, there is yet another classic shimmering through Müller's imagery: Jean Genet's *Un Chant D'Amour*."

— Peter Tscherkassky of Sixpack Film, Vienna (1993)

Scattering Stars (Sternenschauer) (1994 Bay Area Premiere);
16mm, color/b&w, sound, 1 minute

Alpsee (1994 Bay Area Premiere); 16mm, color, sound, 15 minutes

In *Alpsee*, two poles of my previous work fuse: the appropriation of "found footage" and the reference to my own personal biography. Meandering between feature film and experimental collage, *Alpsee* is a crisp portrait of a childhood in the sixties. (MM)

program notes by Todd Wagner

**EL DIABLO NUNCA DUERME
(THE DEVIL NEVER SLEEPS)**

LOURDES PORTILLO IN PERSON

*Saturday, December 3, 1994 SF Art Institute
Co-sponsored by the Goethe Institut of San Francisco*

The Devil Never Sleeps (1994 West Coast Premiere); color, sound

Tio Oscar's death has revived in me the resonance of my own history, my feelings for Mexico, and my unresolved emotions about my own emigration and the life I lost when I left Mexico behind at the age of 13. A deeply personal film, *The Devil Never Sleeps* is an attempt to mine the intersection of numerous routes—between fact and fiction, analysis and autobiography, evidence and hypothesis, melodrama and the police procedural, and finally between film and video. It is a combination of family gossip, local slander, fact, fiction, and truths stranger than Mexican telenovellas. (LP)

When award-winning film-maker Lourdes Portillo tells you in the beginning of *El Diablo Nunca Duerme (The Devil Never Sleeps)* that she will return to Mexico to find out how her uncle died, it seems that this will be a personal exploration, a return to her childhood environment. She speaks in the visual language recognizable as personal or lyrical documentary—family photographs, thoughtful voice-overs, metaphorical imagery. But the moment the family gossip begins to flow, Portillo becomes the star sleuth in a personal journey with the suspense dynamics of a classic murder mystery. As we begin thinking like detectives, all the members of her family become important, not as figures in her personal mythology as much as potential murder suspects. And unlike the research of a more traditional documentary, the appeal of the discovery lays not in its political or social conclusions (which it can still have) but rather in the pleasure of the chase, playing detective. Each interview begins to have innuendo and every statement seems to hold a clue. Rather than pulling us into the drama of her family life through our interest in her personal reality, Portillo draws us into the puzzle, asks questions with us and we wonder if we can solve the mystery before she does. Even the most entertainment-minded viewer pays attention to the whos and hows of her family history.

This strange wedding of murder mystery drama and personal documentary allows new twists for the narrative and its audience. In trying to solve a mystery with traditional elements (including an evil stepmother) the audience begins to read Portillo's less traditional visual style more fluently. She uses film and video in contrast, to connote the

factual, the intimate or the suspicious; to remind us that she is responding to and sifting through the interviews with us, as new facts come to light. She places herself on and off screen as the detective and the mourning niece, the fact-finder and the reminiscing émigré.

Creating the palatable dynamic of the murder mystery plot sets the audience at ease. This liberates Portillo to alter the course of our interest. The basic elements of solving a mystery evolve into revelations which go deeper than "who did it": the loyalty and suffocation of a family community, the destruction of a woman's self-esteem, corruption in Mexican government, environmental tragedy—the loathsome and the beautiful in human nature. Early on the mystery pulls us in, gossip takes on larger than life significance and we pay attention. In this way abstract questions of truth and lying innuendo, fact and family legend, slip in through the back door, until we notice that the authority figures don't speak greater truths than the "gossips." Perhaps more importantly, the relatives transcend the role of suspect or witness and take on the sheen of loved ones.

LOURDES PORTILLO FILMOGRAPHY

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 Paza Mayo* (1986); 64 minutes, made with Susana Muñoz: *Chola* (1982); screenplay commissioned by American Playhouse: *Despues del Terremoto* (1979); 30 minutes.

program notes by Maya Allison

FROM THE BEDROOM TO THE BANQUET

(FROM 51 MCCOPPIN ST. TO 800 CHESTNUT ST.)

Sunday, December 4, 1995 SF Art Institute

"TOTAL MOBILE HOME microCINEMA, San Francisco's newest stationary and now traveling cinema liquefies the sturdy Cinematheque's floor, ceiling and walls. Realtor Rebecca Barten and Domestic Climatologist David Sherman of TMH will transport: 1. their large wooden Canonical Wheel-of-Fortune; 2. the longest co-axial cables ever for audience micro-cinematicity; 3. Star Vocalist Richard McGhee; 4. TOTAL INSTRUCTIONAL slide lecture; 5. the premiere of George Kuchar's *The Cellar Sinema*; 6. other shifting perspectives. Not a sit-and-consume filmshow." (TMH)

see pages 90-92

NEW BY PAULA LEVINE: ORDERING THE CHAOS

PAULA LEVINE IN PERSON

Thursday, December 8, 1994 Center for the Arts

Canadian-American multimedia artist Paula Levine uses video to grapple with the paradox between narrative time and unstructured chaos. Levine uses the fixed frame "as though it

were a seatbelt for the body in a futile attempt to carve out a stable perspective and understanding of the world, ordering the unorderedable." (PL) This evening is Paula Levine's first solo Bay Area show, and she will present a selection of her recent videotapes, including the two channel *East/West*.

Modernist-Not (1992/93); video, color, sound, 1 1/2 minutes

A critique on the modernist's view of the land.

Coyote Cow (1992/93); video, color, sound, 6 minutes

An experimental cowmingling.

Mirror, Mirror (1987); video, color, sound, 2 1/2 minutes

A short vignette on viewing being viewed.

36 Hours on 24th Street (excerpt) (1993); video, color, sound, 24 minutes

One in the series of 24 hour time lapse video portraits of sites. Located on the corner of 24th and Folsom in San Francisco, the camera documents the activity of the corner and the street below the artist's studio and in doing so frames the rhythms inside of rhythms taking place within the city streets.

Imprinting (1994); video, color, sound, two channels, 6 minutes

A story about intimacy when power and longing are veiled as love.

One year of mourning (1994); video, b&w, silent, 12 minutes

Mourning and grieving forge spaces which defy the logic and strategies governing the everyday. *One year of mourning* marks a passage through such a displaced present. Like notations in a journal or notches in a tree, the markers denote not what has passed, but where one has been.

East/West (1992/94 Premiere); video, color, sound, two channels, 18 minutes

Recorded during a residency at the Djerassi Artist in Residency Program in Woodside, California, this is one in a series of 24 hour video portraits of time in place. *East/West* is a portrait of a hill in Woodside, California. Using two cameras to record simultaneously, one camera is situated on the East side of the hill, facing West, the other camera is located on the west side, facing East.

program notes by Paula Levine

WHAT THE TIME CAPSULES LEFT OUT: COUNTER - COMPILATION FILMS OF THE '60S

CURATOR, WILLIAM C. WEES IN PERSON

Sunday, December 11, 1994 SF Art Institute

Time Capsules contain significant and trivial items preserved for the edification of future generations. Compilation films, although designed for present day audiences, are not unlike time capsules in their combinations of archival footage, stock shots, radio and TV

news reports, ads, interviews and many other audio-visual records of major events and minor details drawn from past and present life.

Conventional compilation films borrow these diverse representations of reality in order to illustrate a historical account, provide visual evidence for some sort of argument, or in some other way inform, educate, persuade or entertain. The best of them, as Jay Leyda writes in *Films Beget Films*, compel the spectator "to look at familiar shots as if he [or she] had not seen them before," and thus become "more alert to the broader meanings of old materials." What these films fail to do, however, is challenge the nature and function of compilation itself. A more radical inquiry into "the broader meanings of old materials" only appears in avant-garde films that take their audio-visual material from the same sources as those of conventional compilation films, but deploy it in such unconventional ways that they might better be called anti- or counter-compilation films.

The best known example of such films is Bruce Conner's *A Movie* (1958), which heralded the sudden flourishing of counter-compilation films in the 1960s—and ever since. Conner's films continue to be shown and written about, but comparable work by contemporaries like Stan Vanderbeek and Arthur Lipsett is generally ignored today. Even in the '60s, Lipsett's films (other than his first film, *Very Nice, Very Nice*) received relatively little attention compared to Vanderbeek's work, which was a staple of "underground film" at the time.

Lipsett's failure to gain recognition, even within the circumscribed world of American experimental/avant-garde/underground film, stemmed in part, at least, from the fact that he was a Canadian living and working in Montreal. In addition, he made his films at the National Film Board of Canada, an institution best known for its documentary filmmaking, including the most conventional forms of compilation films. It also had its own system of distribution, which was not suited to the informal network of individuals, co-ops, galleries and ephemeral screening sites through which underground films circulated.

However different their circumstances and reputations (then and now), Conner, Vanderbeek, and Lipsett shared the avant-garde's resistance against the conventional, predictable forms, themes and goals of dominant, commercial films in general, and compilation films in particular. Their own films have much more in common with the arbitrary relationships and dream logic of Surrealism, the irony and iconoclasm of Dadaism, and the disjunctive juxtapositions of collage and photomontage—in short, the techniques and intentions of avant-garde modernist art.

Of course each filmmaker mixes his ingredients differently. The formal unity of Conner's films, with their close attentions to graphic, rhythmic and metaphorical relationships, is missing from Vanderbeek's more chaotic, scrapbook-like collages of original and found footage and collage animation. Vanderbeek, on the other hand draws more heavily on newsreels and television and introduces videographic effects and sound collages to produce a stronger sense of immediacy and engagement with politics, current events and the effects of the mass media. (Conner's *Report* is the exception that proves this rule.) If Conner's films are influenced by the cartoons, serials, trailers, newsreels, short subjects and features which made up a typical Saturday afternoon at the movies during his childhood, Vanderbeek's films incorporate the additional influence of Marshall McLuhan's electronically constructed "global village."

All of these sources inspired Lipsett, in addition to the immediate circumstances of his employment at the NFB, where he had access to the Board's archives and cutting bins (he continually scavenged other filmmakers' outtakes). In form and content, Lipsett's films fall somewhere between Vanderbeek's and Conner's. His sound tracks are like Vanderbeek's

sound collages but his montage of images approaches the formal complexity and metaphorical density of Conner's best work. He exceeds both in the bleak humor with which he manipulates the images and sound of *la comédie humaine*.

All three filmmakers not only draw upon the media for the images, but critically address the media and the roles they play in the public sphere. Lipsett and Conner tend to pay more attention to film than television, and Vanderbeek and Lipsett make more use of the sound track to represent the heteroglossia of the media. Together, however, they reveal a (controlled and critical) fascination with the grandeur and inconsequence, disaster and frivolity, heroism and foolishness that comprise human history—or, more precisely, that constitute the media record of human history that has grown exponentially during our era of mechanical, photochemical and electronic reproduction. (WCW)

ARTHUR LIPSETT FILMOGRAPHY

Very Nice, Very Nice (1961); 16mm, b&w, sound, 7 minutes: *Free Fall* (1964); 16mm, b&w, sound, 9 minutes: *A Trip Down Memory Lane* (1965); 16mm, b&w, sound, 13 minutes: *Fluxes* (1967); 16mm, b&w, sound, 24 minutes.

STAN VANDERBEEK FILMOGRAPHY

Newsreel of Dreams 1 (1968); 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes: *Newsreel of Dreams 2* (1970); 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes: *Breathdeath* (1964); 16mm, b&w, sound, 15 minutes: *Panels for the Walls of the World* (1967); 16mm, b&w, sound, 8 minutes.

TOTAL MOBILE HOME MAIL PROJECT

Dear,

October 21, 1994

From The Bedroom to the Banquet

TMH microCINEMA has been invited to visit The San Francisco Cinematheque on December 4th, 1994. Part of the program that we would like to include in this evening draws upon the contribution of filmmakers and artists from around the country. We plan a slide/audio event that will explore the variations on the concept of HOME as a genesis of creativity: we propose to include your home/workspace/voice in our amalgamation of voices. As a small cinema which is located underneath our own dwelling, we have created this project to highlight our concern with the ongoing relationship between personal and public space/presentation.

please

a. place the circle chart on the floor and place your feet in the center of it. Starting with 1, take a picture at each of the twelve increments, as you turn around(on this one spot) , recording the interior of your home and/or workspace. When you choose your spot, keep in mind that the cameras which we could afford have a low ASA (400) and a small fstop (f.11) . (shooting inside out)

b. the next 12 shots should be an approximate circling of your domicile. If you have a free-standing house, circle your building. If you live in an urban area, walk the parameter of your city block etc. Shoot in the direction of your home.(shooting outside in)

c. please put the enclosed cassette tape in a recorder. press play. You will hear us giving you 2 simple instructions.

we are sending you:

1. a 24 exposure disposable camera
2. a paper circle chart
3. a cassette tape
4. return postage and mailing envelope

Sincerely,

David Sherman
Rebecca Barten
FOUNDERS, TMH

Then please return material ASAP! Our show is December 4, so send back this material within a week of receiving it. **We have chosen you as a participant because we respect and value the work you do.** If you are too busy to contribute, throw everything in the enclosed envelope and send it back to us. We'll recycle the materials. Or if you wish, send us criticism of our project. **You are one of only ten!**

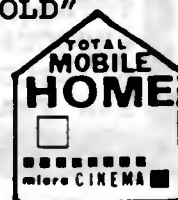
A LIST OF THE COMPONENT PARTS OF
TOTAL MOBILE HOME microCINEMA'S
DECEMBER 4th 1994 SHOW :

*From the Bedroom to the Banquet
(from 51 McCoppin Street to 800 Chestnut Street)*

REBECCA BARTEN : DAVID SHERMAN

proprietors

1. OPENING PIECE: 16MM. FILM "A TRIP DOWN MARKET STREET"(1886) W/ MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT OF CLARA ROCKMORE ON THE THERAMIN.
2. DAVE HAVOC 1 MAN DRUM CORPS ENTERS TO OUR "WELCOME HOME" TAPE LOOP.
3. NAKED VIDEO TRANSMISSION FROM TMH WELCOMES THE AUDIENCE TO "THE BANQUET".
4. STAR VOCALIST HOST RICHARD MCGHEE SINGS "NEW YORK, NEW YORK" OVER OUR VIDEO REFILMING OF ANDY WARHOL'S "EMPIRE"- INCLUDING INTERVIEWS WITH PEOPLE BEFORE AND AFTER THE 8 HOUR FILM.
5. PREMIERE OF GEORGE KUCHAR'S "THE CELLAR SINEMA"- A VIDEO PORTRAIT OF TMHMC.
6. EDISON'S 16MM. FILM: "PANORAMIC TRAIN RIDE" (1898).
7. PREMIERE OF THE TMH MAIL PROJECT (DISSOLVING SLIDE AND AUDIO PRESENTATION). HOMES OF PARTICIPANTS: NINA FONOROFF (MILWAUKEE); ROBERT FRANK (NYC); LLOYD DUNN (IOWA CITY; ORGONE CINEMA (PITTSBURGH); KON PET MOON (COLUMBUS, OHIO).
8. RICHARD MCGHEE SINGS "RETURN TO SENDER"
9. FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE 8 FOOT TALL RUSTED METAL CANONICAL WHEEL OF FILM FORTUNE A-Z. AUDIENCE MEMBER SPINS IT AND LANDS ON P: "PENILESS PSYCHODRAMA"(BRAKHAGE'S "REFLECTIONS ON BLACK"). FILM IS TAKEN FROM CIRCLE OF FILMS AND RACED TO PROJECTION BOOTH WHILE:
10. RICHARD MCGHEE SINGS "WITCHCRAFT".
11. FILM FROM #9 IS PROJECTED.
12. INTERMISSION (DUE TO EXTREME COLD SOME PEOPLE LEAVE)
13. INTERMISSION PIECE: TURN OF THE CENTURY PATHE HAND TINTED HUMAN BUTTERFLY DANCE FILM TO THE MUSIC OF CLARA ROCKMORE ON THE THERAMIN.
14. RICHARD MCGHEE SINGS "FOOLS RUSH IN".
15. CANONICAL WHEEL OF FILM FORTUNE SPIN #2 LANDS US ON K: "KINETIC KNOWLEDGE"- PAUL SHARIT'S "INFERENTIAL CURRENTS". WHILE WE'RE THREADING UP THE FILM, R SINGS "BORN FREE".
16. OWEN O'TOOLE PRESENTS A DOUBLE PROJECTION OF 11 FILMS FROM HIS S-EIGHT FILMER'S ALMANAC W/HIS OWN LIVE SOUND MIX TAPE ACCOMPANIMENT. THE FILMMAKER'S ARE PAUL MILLER, VANESSA VEROT, TERRY POLLACK, MAIJA-LENE RETTIG, JOEL SHAW, ANNE ROBERTSON, WILLIE VARELA, CRISTOPH BARTOLOSCH, PHIL PERKINS, PHIL CUMMINS.
17. RICHARD MCGHEE SINGS "SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW".
18. 16MM. FILM: CHRISTOPHER MacLAINE'S "THE MAN WHO INVENTED GOLD" (1957, 14min.).
19. RICHARD MCGHEE SINGS "THAT'S LIFE".
20. RICHARD MCGHEE SINGS "HIT THE ROAD, JACK" TO CLOSING NAKED VIDEO TRANSMISSION FROM TMH.



"As art sinks into paralysis, artists multiply. This anomaly ceases to be one if we realize that art, on its way to exhaustion, has become both impossible and easy."

-E.M. Cioran The Trouble with Being Born



rsvp 415 434 4007

A T O T A L

A BANNER TERM INVITING INVESTIGATION OF ITS IMPOSSIBILITY.

B M O B I L E

CONSTANT SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES. MOVING.

C H O M E

- DOMICILE
- WHERE THE ♥ IS
- A BURROW
- THE BODY (WE WOULD WISH)
- A TEMPORARY AUTONOMOUS ZONE



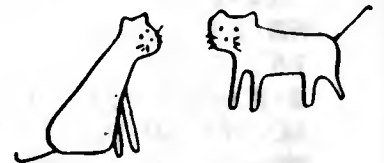
TOTAL MOBILE HOME microCINEMA
REBECCA BARTEN • DAVID SHERMAN
51 MCCOPPIN STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94103

He said, "I want to draw a cat and dog. I don't draw very well."

He made this:

We laughed.

We could not tell the dog from the cat.



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