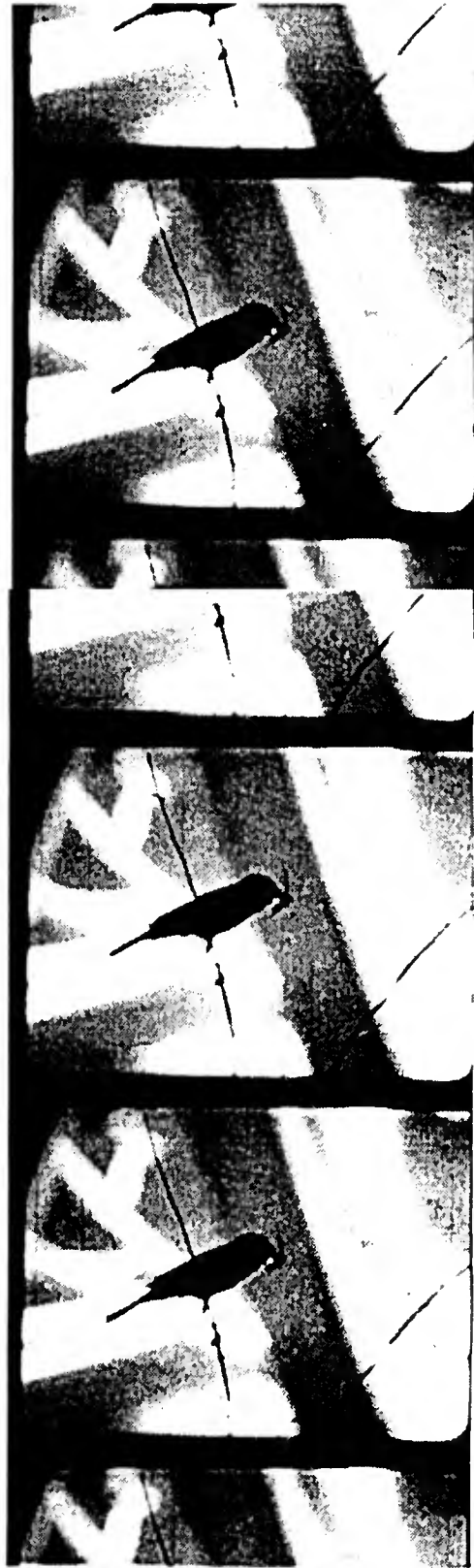
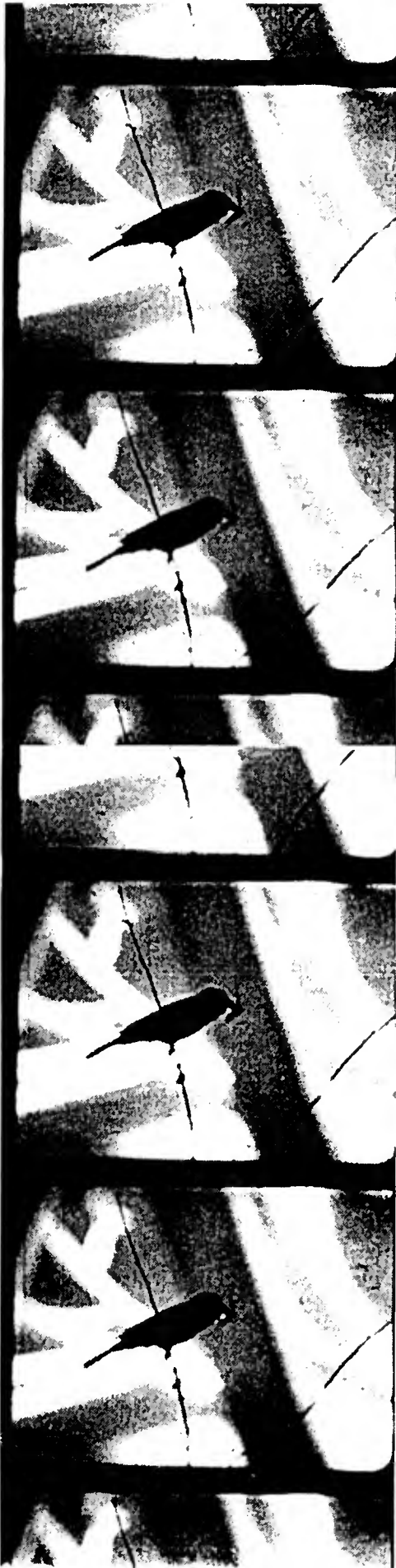




San Francisco
Cinematheque



Program Notes
1997

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San Francisco Cinematheque

1997 Program Notes

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Cover: *if you stand with your back to the slowing of the speed of light in water* by Julie Murray

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VISIBLE TRACES

FROM THE BAY & BEYOND—NEW FILMS I

Thursday, February 6, 1997—Center for the Arts

We begin our New Year with two programs celebrating recent films from the Bay Area and around the country, most of which are premiering or being shown at the Cinematheque for the first time. Tonight's selection includes Jennifer Reeves' high-energy emulsion manipulated *The Girl's Nervy*; Steve Polta's sensory conundrum *Picture Window*, Jeremy Coleman's subtle visual poem *Dust of the Water*, Timoleon Wilkins' *MM*, a meditation on his birth and death and that of film; Jeanne Liotta's tracing of mortality and nothingness *Ceci N'est Pas*, Mark LaPore's beautiful but troubling cultural portrait *A Depression in the Bay of Bengal*, and one of Stan Brakhage's finest hand painted efforts, *The "b" Series*.

The Girl's Nervy (1995) by Jennifer Reeves; 16mm, color, sound, 5 minutes

A study of the single frame and rhythms that can be read by the eye. Constructed by cutting, pasting, and painting both clear film and filmed images. (JR)

Picture Window (1996) by Steve Polta; super 8, color, 2 channel sound, 12 minutes

Picture Window is composed of equal parts, sound, and light which operate together towards the establishment of a specific temporal situation. What is done with this time is ultimately dependent on each viewer. The title can, however, be thought of as a suggestion as well as a description. (SP)

Dust of the Water (1996) by Jeremy Coleman; 16mm, color, silent, 5.5 minutes

A film of tension between progress and nature. This film is a work in progress. (JC)

MM (1996) by Timoleon Wilkins; 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes

MM is a film born spontaneously out of the dark corners of fear and desperation. I was spinning out of control toward an unknown future and new millennium when this footage congealed in a manner guided solely by properties of emotional release. Bruce Conner appears as the mythical pilot of our journey and the narrative follows a simple plot: birth, life and potential death—for both myself and for cinema. (TW)

Ceci N'est Pas (1996) by Jeanne Liotta; super 8 (at 12 fps), b&w, silent, 6 minutes

"The trace function of death and nothing." Hand developed and unedited except for titles, this roll lived in my camera from March to May 1995: a trip to New Orleans, a train ride, the death of a dear friend. This film is the author of itself; it's trace function leaves me behind. Dedicated to B.W., in all its absence. (JL)

A Depression in the Bay of Bengal (1996) by Mark LaPore (Voice-over: Venita Kapur); 16mm, color, sound, 28 minutes

I went to Sri Lanka with the idea that I would remake Basil Wright's 1934 documentary *Song of Ceylon*. After spending three months there I realized just how impossible that would be. Wright's film was formally innovative and visually brilliant but his experience was not to be revisited. Each of the places in which he filmed still exist, but thirteen years of ethnic war have colored the way in which those places can be perceived. I have made a film about traveling and living in a distant place, which looks at aspects of daily life, and where the war shadows the quotidian with a dark and rumbling step. (ML)

The "b" Series (1995) by Stan Brakhage; 16mm, color, silent, 15 minutes

This film is a series of five little hand-painted and elaborately step-printed sections which are individually titled but so inter-related I've decided they should always be shown in this order together, but each such a *distinction* of the essentially un-nameable subject matter they variously facet that they should retain the character of individual pieces within their shared context...a context I've attempted to represent by a small "b" for my name "Brakhage."

The film begins with Old Testament, a 2 1/2 minute historical section titled "*Retrospect: The Passover*" and its evolution of forms is meant to suggest the Biblical story from which the Jewish religious rituals evolve—an essentially blue-green phosphorescence of forms finally in flight through, yes, parted seas of paint and "armies of the night," as one might put it.

"*Blue Black: Introspection*" is, then, the painted meditation upon the previous section—its forms rhythmically interspersed with some stately pauses of solid thoughtful darkness, like jewels of idea embedded in black velvet. It is about 2 minutes in length. It begins with suggestions of "landscape."

The 3.5 minute "*Blood Drama*" section pulses with red, involves glyphic stitches of red amidst its phosphors of blue-greens, all forms tending to take thought-forms of the previous section through to recognition of internal body, the bloody meat of being human.

The 4th section "*I am Afraid: and This Is My Fear*" is a direct reaction to the 3rd section. The "spark" of a "sky-scape" leads to the subsequent evolution of the same forms in "mental flight," as it were. It is approximately 3 minutes.

The 5th and final section is the culmination of all previous visuals, the (by now) very recognizable forms of the original story, of inward speculation on narrative, of the disruption in a sense of a spill, or spell, of blood, the *non*-narrative thought-flight from all this, now (in Finale) becomes an almost unbearable complexity of forms taking on a beseeching "weight" or thickening of those inter-woven shapes. It is an appropriately titled 3 minute section called "*Sorrowing*." (This section dedicated to Gregory Markopoulos)

This work was complexly printed off strips of film which were primarily painted in order to achieve negative color. (SB)

HIDDEN TALES

FROM THE BAY & BEYOND—NEW FILMS 2

Sunday, February 9, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Tonight's program is the second in a series celebrating recent films from the Bay Area and around the country. By varying means, from historical documentation to philosophical pondering, tonight's films offer glimpses of stories hidden beneath the surfaces of everyday life.

And Dream of Blue and Violet Horses (1996) by Tamy Ojala; 16mm, color, silent, 12 minutes

And Dream of Blue and Violet Horses is an optically-printed film exploring spiritual quest for self-identity and deliverance through the interpretation of dreams and imagination....unrestrained memories arise and elucidate how my fantasies bestow me with the power and the courage to function and adjust in the grownup world. (TO)

Fetal Position (1996) by Chana Pollack; 16mm, b&w, sound, 8 minutes

Fetal Position explores the tentative nature of (my own) birth. It is a textured re-imaging of personal history, where the seemingly irreconcilable past and present are bound up together. The images in the film work as a document of some of the ephemera of birth/life/death, while the sound moves us through spaces that have no voice and that no voice can fill. The film was loosely inspired by a short story written by Delmore Schwartz entitled "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities." (CP)

Horse/Kappa/House (1995) by Abraham Ravett; 16mm, color and b&w, sound, 33 minutes

Iwate Prefecture in northeastern Japan is the setting for the *Legends of Tono* (Tono Monogatari), a unique collection of regional folk tales, gathered in the early 20th Century by Yanagita Kunio. The tales manifest and explain invisible forces and malevolent events which shape the psycho-cultural dimensions of Japanese indigenous beliefs and folk faith.

Inspired by *The Legends of Tono*, *Horse/Kappa/House* records the surrounding landscape in a number of small villages throughout Iwate Prefecture in order to create a cinematic space which echoes by implication and association, the external and unseen world in the environment. (AR)

Chapter 20 The Book Club (199-) by Jacalyn White and Joell Hallowell; 16mm

This is a true story. A group of women came together in the late 1960s to read books. Once a month for over twenty years they've continued to meet. This film is a tribute to them. (JH & JW)

Philosopher's Stone (1996) by Stefan Ferreira Clüver; 16mm, color, sound, 15 minutes

Philosopher's Stone is a picture/sound puzzle of alchemy and chemistry in everyday life. It "translates" Ladislav Novák's 1967 Concrete Poem "The Philosopher's Stone" into film. The experimental poem's use of language is mirrored in an equivalent, but uniquely cinematic, arrangement of images and sounds. A dialogue between poetry and the cinema proceeds from the fact that what can be abstract in language must be concrete in the photographic images of film.

In alchemy, the Philosopher's Stone was that mysterious element that could transform one substance into another. The poem suggests that language is the Philosopher's Stone by continually altering our mental image of the repeated word "stone" with a different and unlikely pair of adjectives. This transformation of the idea of "stone" from one line to the next relies on the abstract nature of language. A film must always show a particular stone; its adjectives an inseparable part of its visual representation. The images in *Philosopher's Stone* are concrete, drawn from the events of everyday life and ordinary objects that are the products of chemistry. However, by linking them with a heightened sound world and the metaphysical language of the text, the film suggests a different order of abstraction. One not of words, not of this world, but of the human imagination—of poetry. (SFC)

Joe Was Not So Happy (1990) by Heather McAdams; 16mm, b&w, sound, 3 minutes

I'm not going to pretend that there is any deep meaning in this little film because it's just too ridiculous. It came together a lot like that "monkey/typewriter" theory. After 18 odd years of fooling around with film, two things are bound to just sort of come together all by themselves occasionally, without a whole lot of effort, and it's just my job to send it to the lab. This was the case with the sound and footage of *Joe Was Not So Happy*....I have always liked the idea of taking rather insignificant, trivial, ridiculous, immature but funny stuff and projecting it real big and forcing these real serious "avant-garde" film audiences to deal with it. I guess if there was any reasoning behind this film it would be that and perhaps a more conscious effort to keep some films light and goofy, in this day and age of serious, heavy-handed, expensive narratives and documentaries and everyone switching to video because it's cheaper. When I finished *Joe*, I just kinda threw it in a closet and never gave it a proper premiere. Now, six years later, I'm happy to say that Joe is finally out of the closet. (HM)

S H A D O W L A N D

CO-SPONSORED BY AND PRESENTED AT NEW LANGTON ARTS

Thursday, February 13, 1997—New Langton Arts

Shadow Land accompanies New Langton Arts' exhibition *Real World*, a group of installations by young artists which facilitates alternate understandings of the perceptual world through playful juxtaposition of the real and its reflection. These mostly recent films and videos explore the substance of experience and its realization in the architecture of social consciousness, erecting imaginary landscapes which persist as irrational shadows of the real or impossible reflections of unrealized desire. These thematic concerns are addressed through willful misapplication of contemporary social codes and practices, exploration of the form and significance of memory and rearticulation of histories lost to the cinema and its audience.

The Horse Farm (1996) by Fae Yamaguchi; video, color, sound, 7.5 minutes

Human-sized puppets, as crude and clumsy as those in the children's programs from which they were surely rejected for their painfully awkward grotesqueness and cheerless pathos, stare blankly at the camera and sway as if on the verge of collapse. A simple, yet curiously elliptical story, read in an impossibly precious voice, attempts to cohere successive shots, only intensifying the subtle terror of their emptiness and pathetic ineffectuality. Any resolution is only putative. (FY)

Ellipsis (1996) by Lana Bernberg and Sabisha Friedberg; 16mm, b&w, sound, 8 minutes

"Fin de siècle melancholia via dark masses, careful silhouettes and small gestures. This film, about the architecture of light and the landscape of consciousness, is a mixture of simple animation, photographic abstraction and a familiar nervous system." (From MIX Festival, NYC)

The Secret Story (1996) by Janie Geiser; 16mm, color, sound, 9 minutes

The Secret Story arose as a response to several beautifully decayed toy figures from the 1930s that were given to me as a gift. These figures, and other toys, objects and illustrations that I found from the period between the world wars, suggested a kind of unearthed hidden narrative which I have attempted to re-piece together, as if these figures were the hieroglyphs of a just-forgotten tongue. *The Secret Story* revolves around the central figure of the woman, and her girl-double, who looks somewhat like a version of Snow White. She moves through a landscape of domestic images and family illness which culminates in an ecstatic walk in the forest, suggesting both the dark and the cathartic trajectories of the richest fairy tales. (JG)

Bimbo's Initiation (1932) by the Fleischer Brothers; 16mm, b&w, sound, 6 minutes

A classic Betty Boop 'nightmare' cartoon from the early 1930s in which the identities of people, places and objects turn terrifyingly upside down.

Back In The Saddle Again (c. 1940s) by Bud Sola, found by Scott Stark; 16mm, b&w, sound, 5 minutes

Consumer technology records the very moment of its own collision with the irrational (or at the very least, inexplicable). An anonymous family sings along to its favorite country record, the music complemented by an appropriate woodsy setting, apparently taking advantage of a newly (?) acquired sound camera in what ought to be the most self-evident fashion possible.

Now Pretend (1994) by Leah Gilliam; 16mm, color, sound, 13 minutes

Now Pretend is an experimental investigation into the use of race as an arbitrary signifier. Drawing upon language, personal memories, and the 1959 text *Black Like Me*, it deals with Lacan's "mirror state," theories of beauty and the movement from object to subject. (LG)

Pretty Boy (1994) by Joe Gibbons; Pixel-vision video on VHS, b&w, sound, 5 minutes

Ken meets his match.

Tuning The Sleeping Machine (1996) by David Sherman; 16mm, color, sound, 15 minutes

"*Tuning the Sleeping Machine* maintains a dreamy oscillation between visual abstraction and a disjointedly submerged narrative of sexual menace...[it] recalls our shared experience of late-night television in which lambent images emerge from the screen and turn strange as they percolate through our half-conscious thoughts and reveries."—Paul Arthur, *Film Comment*

Fragments of unidentified and yet strangely familiar films, pregnant with allusion and implication, drift into one another, obscured by the haze of rephotography, electricity and the residue of (al)chemical formulae, renamed time and memory. *Tuning the Sleeping Machine* resurrects the cinema projected on the unconscious, a series of images defined by the gaze of an eye, the presence in an empty room, the creeping darkness that shrouds a strange face. In this conflation of image and subject, the timeless dream of cinema finds its dreamer, and so do we.

Lulu (1996) by Lewis Klahr; 16mm, color, sound, 3 minutes

In the libretto for his opera, *Lulu*, Alban Berg requires that an expository filmic sequence accompany the musical interlude which balances the isometrically constructed score. This particular film was commissioned for a Danish production of *Lulu* which opened in the summer of 1996 in Copenhagen at the Grønnegårds Theater. Although Berg's instructions indicate a more narratively oriented form, Klahr uses his signature style of cut-out animation in a familiarly metaphorical, iconographically loaded fashion, symbolically realizing the key themes of social and moral ascension and decline as implied in the inevitability of a teleological Fate. *Lulu* is played by Constance Haumann, who also starred in the theatrical production.

"A roulette wheel is a central image, at once a harbinger of chance and a Catherine wheel on which the body and soul of this femme fatale is broken...it is like watching an implosion of elements drawn to the center from opposite ends of the story, the moment at which Fate drops its mask of neutrality."—Paul Arthur, *Film Comment*

Test (1992) by Tony Oursler; video, color, sound, 5 minutes

Performance artist Karen Finley recites a series of assertions, ranging in substance from apparently innocuous or straightforward to obviously paranoid or delusional. She indicates that these assertions should be classified as true or false. A wash of water superimposed on her face also obscures her voice, and eventually the words she speaks, and the task she sets becomes improbably absurd.

HERZOG'S LAND OF SILENCE AND DARKNESS AND HAMILTON'S THOSE HEARING AIDS WHISTLE

M. Kahn Hamilton In Person

Sunday, February 16, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Those Hearing Aids Whistle (1992) by M. Kahn Hamilton; 3/4" video, color, sound, 9.5 minutes

"Made with the first-hand experience of living both in the world of the hearing and the hearing impaired, Mark Kahn Hamilton challenges stereotypes often associated with being handicapped. The filmmaker discusses being diagnosed deaf at age six, and how the label of hearing-impaired contradicted his experience of living without sound. Hamilton, now living between the world of the deaf and the hearing, creates with *These Hearing Aids Whistle*, a frank and powerful commentary that resists traditional assumptions associated with the world of the 'impaired.'"—Erin Sax

Land of Silence and Darkness (Land der Stille und der Finsternis) (1971) by Werner Herzog; 16mm, color, sound, 85 minutes

"At first the subject of Werner Herzog's *Land of Silence and Darkness* seems intimidating: a documentary on the world of those who are both deaf and blind. But the results completely defeat one's expectations, for the film is neither morbidly depressing nor heartwarmingly uplifting. In fact, Herzog's perverse effort—a description of

silence and darkness through a medium of sounds and images—transports us to a far-off region where such conventional descriptions become irrelevant.

"The central character of *Land of Silence and Darkness* is a 56 year old woman named Fini Straubinger. As the result of a childhood accident, Fini went blind at 15 and deaf at 18. Completely isolated, she stayed in bed for thirty years. Today, this remarkable woman travels tirelessly throughout Germany, acting as a consultant, educator, and morale-booster for her companions in the land of silence and darkness...."

"The existence of the deaf-blind is so intense and abstract that at times it produces unconscious poetry. The 'land of silence and darkness' of the title is no conceit of the filmmaker, but a remark dropped quite casually by Fini to describe the world of the deaf-blind. She later characterizes this world in terms of two rivers—one black with birds and trees on the banks, the other clear but without sound—meeting to form a somber reservoir. We eventually learn that this world is actually neither silent nor dark: the ears of the deaf are constantly filled with crackling, buzzing, droning noises, just as the eyes of the blind are bombarded by meaningless shapes and colors...."—author unknown

"...I prefer using the word 'documentary' with caution, because we have in our daily language a very precise definition of it, which we carry around with us constantly. Now this concept of a documentary does not truly encompass what my last films really are. But that doesn't matter, since we should help one another. It's like someone who really can't walk, someone whose knee is broken, and who consequently has to use crutches. It's more of an injured man's crutch than a concept. Whatever it is, it helps us to move forward."—Werner Herzog, 1994, quoted in *The Great Ecstasies of the Filmmaker Werner Herzog*

*Thanks to Dan Veltri for sign language interpretation.
Notes compiled by Irina Leimbacher*

B / S I D E B Y A B I G A I L C H I L D

Abigail Child In Person

Thursday, February 20, 1997—Center for the Arts

New York filmmaker Abigail Child returns tonight to the Cinematheque with her first major work since the completion of her seven-part "Is This What You Were Born For?" in 1989. Applying rhythmic construction, poetic license, and a generous eye to bodies in poverty, *B/Side* documents poignantly and beautifully a gritty vision of late 20th Century urban life. Also being shown tonight are *Mayhem* and *Mercy*, parts six and seven of "Is This What You Were Born For?"

Abigail Child is one of America's foremost experimental filmmakers, whose work has been shown at festivals and museums throughout the world. She is also the author of several books of poetry and theoretical texts, including the recent *Mob* (1996, O Books), *A Motive for Mayhem* (1989, Potes and Poets Press), and *From Solids* (1987, Segue Press). Her writing has also appeared in several anthologies. Abigail Child currently teaches in the film department at Sarah Lawrence College in New York.

Mayhem (1987); 16mm, b&w, sound, 20 minutes

Perversely and equally inspired by Marquis de Sade's *Justin* and Dziga Vertov's sentences about the satirical detective advertisement, *Mayhem* is my attempt to create a film in which sound is the character and to do so focusing on sexuality and the erotic. Not so much to undo the entrapment (we fear what we desire; we desire what we fear), but to frame fate, show up the rotation, upset the common, and incline our contradictions towards satisfaction, albeit conscious. (AC)

Mercy (1989); 16mm, b&w and color, sound, 10 minutes

[*Mercy* is] meditative and encyclopedic in the way it regards the body in the social landscape. I've structured it with images of men, unlike most of my other work which focuses on women. The found footage I'm using is funny and disturbing, in the way the men place themselves in relation to the camera. They are machinelike—and who, after all, makes machinery? It's a mimesis of the machine. (AC)

B/Side (1996); 16mm, b&w and color, sound, 38 minutes

B/Side is an experiment in entering imaginatively the delirium of New York's Lower East Side. Framed by footage of the encampment locally known as Dinkinsville, where some of the homeless of Thompkins Square Park settled after the riots of June 1991, the movie begins with the encampment's first night and ends with the fire and subsequent destruction of the lot in October of the same year. *B/Side* has been selected for the 1997 Whitney Biennial.

"Through both cinematic and emotional means, Child keeps her subjects and objects in a sustained and melodic forward motion, both temporal and spatial, to achieve a tight web of dramatic tension. If possession brings a kind of erosion of feeling, Child's use of distance brings to her subjects not sentimentality but sensation, and with sensation, true intimacy. In *B/Side*, a methodology [of looking] becomes the thing itself; the viewer is implicated as witness and part."—Jan Meisner, *New York Talk*

Abigail Child's Filmography:

B/Side (1996)

8 Million (1991); video

Is This What You Were Born For? (1981-1987)

Part 1: Prefaces (1981)

Part 2: Both (1988)

Part 3: Mutiny (1982-1983)

Part 4: Covert Action (1984)

Part 5: Perils (1985-1986)

Part 6: Mayhem (1987)

Part 7: Mercy (1989)

Ornamentals (1979)

Pacific Far East Lines (1979)

Peripeteia 2 (1978)

Daylight Test Section (1978)

Peripeteia 1 (1977)

Some Exterior Presence (1977)

Game (1972)

PANDAEMONIUM AND STIGMATA

FILMS BY LESLIE ASAKO GLADSIJØ

Sunday, February 23, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Leslie Asako Gladstjøl is an award winning Bay Area documentary filmmaker whose work delves into numerous territories ranging from subversive pranksters to dissident journalists in former Yugoslavia, from women artists who pierce and tattoo their bodies to male artists who explore and explode the boundaries between self and machine. Her most recent work is *Une Enfance Gaie*, a documentary on gay and lesbian parents produced for and recently aired on the European television station ARTE. We had hoped to have her here with us this evening to discuss the recent *Pandaemonium* and her earlier *Stigmata*, two provocative pieces which together challenge our notions of the body and how we might reclaim, refine, refuse, replace or rewire it. However, unfortunately for us and fortunately for her, Leslie has indefinitely prolonged her stay in Paris and therefore can't be with us.

Pandemonium (1995) with Richard Curson Smith; 16mm/video, color, sound, 50 minutes

A spectacular film about artists and performers who are exploring the boundary between the human body and machines. As mechanical systems become ever more intelligent and as technology increasingly invades our bodies, these artists envisage the often bizarre and disturbing possibilities of our relationship with machines.

Those featured include San Francisco's own Survival Research Laboratories, who stage explosive extravaganzas in sports arenas in which huge robots built from industrial rubbish destroy each other; Phoenix-based artist, David Thierren, who builds contemporary "machines for the Inquisition" which push the human body to the limits of endurance; Australian artist, Stelarc, who extends his body with a robotic third hand and mounts interactive performances with an industrial robot; and Chico MacMurtrie, whose life-like automata have evolved their own organic forms and behaviors.

Stigmata: The Transfigured Body (1992); video, color, sound, 27 minutes

Through visceral encounters with women who practice unusual forms of body modification such as tattooing, cutting, piercing, and branding, this videotape explores concepts of beauty, self-determination, and the outer limits of female sexuality. The women featured in this documentary include Raelyn Gallina, a professional piercer and jeweler; tattoo artists Cynthia Witkin, Deborah Valentine, and Lamar Van Dyke; Kathy Acker, writer and tattoo collector; and Dianne Evans, a longtime practitioner of corseting. Although they range from wives and mothers to radical S/M lesbians, these women share a desire and determination to use their own flesh as a tool for personal discovery. Rejecting both the antiquated ideals of feminine prudishness and modesty and the more recent dogma of conservative, anti-sex feminism, these women dare to investigate their own unique ideas of pleasure, beauty, and identity.

Leslie Asako Gladsj 's Selected Filmography:

Une Enfance Gaie (1996) with Nathalie Borgers
Pandaemonium (1995) with Richard Curson Smith
Truth Under Seige (1994) with Nathalie Borgers

Survival Research Laboratories:

A Calculated Forecast of Ultimate Doom (1994)
Deliberate Evolution of a War Zone (1993)
San Francisco Museum of Art Groundbreaking (1992)
The Pleasures of Uninhibited Excess (1991)
The Will to Provoke (1989)
Stigmata: The Transfigured Body (1992)
Mechanical Sound Orchestra (1990)
Pranks! (1988)

MOVING PICTURES OF RICHARD MYERS

Richard Myers In Person

Thursday, February 27, 1997—Center for the Arts

Ohio filmmaker Richard Myers has been developing his unique world of dream-films since 1960, films which use meticulous craft to envelop the viewer in subtle but startling dislocations of logic, time and space. A teacher of film in the Art Department at Kent State University in Ohio, Myers has made several award-winning experimental features and shorts including *The Path* (1961), *First Time Here* (1964), *Akran* (1969), *Deathstyles* (1971), *37-73* (1974), *Floorshow* (1978), and *Jungle Girl* (1984). This evening we will screen two of these, *Moving Pictures* and *37-73*.

Moving Pictures (1990); 16mm, b&w, sound, 100 minutes

The film is a blend of dreams and illusions. It's a film about changes, transitions, contrasts...about theater and artifice...about nature and insanity. It's about dashboards and circuses and carnivals...it's about the way we all make our entrances and exits. (RM)

"Most of Myers' movies, including all of his features, are surrealistic works based on his dreams. For Myers, dreams comprise an indispensable link in self-understanding. *Moving Pictures*, his latest film, is a formal tour-de-

force in which everything is captured in slow, horizontal tracking shots. It is a quiet, elegant, meditative work. *Moving Pictures* is also like carnivals of the unconscious with midway attractions that range from collage imagery to free associations. The viewer swoons as he takes in all the sights and sounds on hand—the lights and shadows, the striking compositions, the tantalizing fragments of speech and music, the catchy rhythms, the varied visual textures.”—John Ewing, Cleveland Cinematheque

"*Moving Pictures* is a feature film built upon a single, continuous, horizontal movement of the camera—a relentless right to left tracking of the lens onto a consistently complex and enthralling dream-scape. Like Hale's tours, the principal device is as though from an earlier cinema. An older, Eastern European sounding woman narrates her dreams which we see enacted in a number of overlapping and discontinuous vignettes, connected by faults and lapses and ellipses. The themes of her dreams construct a twentieth-century history of magicians, circuses and cinema which all collide to construct Myers' chronicle. His unspoken conceit may be the notion that the history of our century and the history of cinema (spectacle) are one and the same, both tumbling to the end of the millennium."—Jason Simon, *Dialogue*

37-73 (1974); 16mm, b&w, sound, 60 minutes

"I think 37-73 is an extraordinary work, and the best of Myers' longer films...I am astonished by his skill in image making, and his power to evoke the crazy pain of being an artist. It is a haunting work, with unforgettable scenes..."—James Broughton

"It is Myers' great and particular gift to be able to give exquisitely precise objective form to the stream of his consciousness so that it evokes a profound sense of recognition. Through Myers' so eloquently expressed dream world we're able to perceive the entire panorama of the specifically American imagination. It's as if he's tapped our collective subconscious."—Kevin Thomas, *Los Angeles Times*

REFLECTING TIME

Noren's *The Lighted Field* and Tarkovsky's *The Mirror*

Sunday, March 2, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Tonight's program is an exploration of landscapes, both of the natural world and of the mind, as seen through the camera's eye. Andrew Noren's *The Lighted Field* seamlessly incorporates pre-existing and recorded material into a celebration of vision and memory. Tarkovsky's *The Mirror* is the director's mesmerizing tapestry of documentary and autobiography inspired by his memories of growing up in the war-torn Soviet Union.

The Lighted Field (1987) by Andrew Noren; b&w, silent, 61 minutes

Noren describes this film as a "comedy of mirrors" and a series of "ghost pictures from the 'other' world, which is this world." *The Lighted Field* is the fifth part of an ongoing work titled *The Adventures of the Exquisite Corpse*, now thirty years in the making. Named after an old surrealist game, the series explores the magical activity of light as reflected through familiar objects and Noren's personal landscape.

"The most stunning thing about this film is its blatant illusionism, the oscillation between positive and negative space, the mysterious equivalence of shadow and substance. Noren seems to have discovered his own laws of physics—his camera dematerializes the world into a pure rush of energy."—J. Hoberman

A harvest, record of a year's work in the lighted field—
 shadows of that light, light of its shadows
 the Sun a shadow of the vanished screaming beast
 who dreams our luminous illusion of flesh
 lights of light, shadows of shadow...
 So, light nets, traps for shadow

caught, charged with darkness, charged with lightness
disguised as figures, imprisoned in the grains
raging in the cage of the frame. (AN)

The Mirror (1975) by Andrey Tarkovsky; color, sound, 106 minutes

"*Mirror* was not an attempt to talk about myself, not at all. It was about my feelings towards people dear to me; about my relationship with them; my perpetual pity for them and my own inadequacy—my feeling of duty left unfulfilled."

"In a word, the image is not a certain *meaning*, expressed by the director, but an entire world reflected as in a drop of water."

"The image is indivisible and elusive, dependent upon our consciousness and on the real world which it seeks to embody. If the world is inscrutable, then the image will be so too....The image is an impression of the truth, a glimpse of the truth permitted to us in our blindness....The image as a precise observation of life takes us straight back to Japanese poetry. What captivates me here is the refusal even to hint at the kind of final image meaning that can be gradually deciphered like a charade. Haiku cultivates its images in such a way that they mean nothing beyond themselves, and at the same time express so much that it is not possible to catch their final meaning. The more closely the image corresponds to its function, the more impossible it is to constrict it within a clear intellectual formula. The reader of haiku has to be absorbed into it as into nature, to plunge in, lose himself in its depth, as in the cosmos where there is no bottom and no top."

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

Curated and Presented by Daniel Schott and Charles Lofton

Thursday, March 6, 1997—Center for the Arts

What happens when the newest "avant-garde" cultural producers have been raised on MTV music videos, infomercials, slasher films, CD ROMs, video games, and other latch-key entertainment forms? They re-consume them, and spit them back out at you. This program features work that uses popular entertainment formats—like the music video, CD ROM, the situation comedy—to illustrate life on Earth as a stimulus-craving ritalin-popping media-damaged member of society. Dan Schott is the director of Artists' Television Access and Charles Lofton is a video artist, currently living abroad; both curated programs for recent Mix Festivals in New York and San Francisco.

The Adventures of White Trash Girl (1995) by Jennifer Reeder; video, color, sound, 8 minutes

An endless cast of characters in a volatile back-woods "trailer" (pun intended) for an imaginary white trash sit-com-adventure-mystery show.

Watch Out For Invisible Ghosts (1996) by Kristin Lucas; video, color, sound, 5 minutes

Inspired by 80s video games, 70s and 90s action-adventure shows like *Ultra Man* and *The Power Rangers*.

Alienator (1996) by Texas Tomboy; video, color, sound, 3 minutes

An erotic alien abduction.

27 (1996) by Greg Sax; 16mm, color, sound, 4 minutes

The pain of living during an epidemic; the irony of a generation for whom death is becoming banal.

Corazon Sangrante (1993) by Ximena Cuevas; video, color, sound, 4 minutes

This music video of Mexican performance artist Astrid Hadad uses computer effects and song to underscore the pain pain pain of love love love.

Weirdo Song (1995) by Heyd Fontenot; video, color, sound, 4 minutes

Particularly unsettling after the recent murder of the pageant baby in Boulder, this music video appropriates and distorts little beauty princesses.

Punk Rock Date (1996) by Greta Snider; digital animation, color, sound, 7 minutes

Created in MacroMedia Director, this "interactive game" allows the user to go on frequent dates with a variety of punk-rock boyfriends, all the while unearthing subcultural references.

Downloads (1996) by Daniel Schott and Justin Chin; digital animation, color, sound, 7 minutes

Appropriating pornography downloaded from the internet, this piece critiques how on-line pornography consumption is a little different and a little similar to traditional forms of pornography "use."

Dottie Gets Spanked (1993) by Todd Haynes; 16mm, color, sound, 30 minutes

Dottie is the Lucille Ball-esque character that fills the mind of a small repressed boy. This identification is a bit unsettling to his butch dad and evil schoolmates.

W O M A N / B O D Y / F U N C T I O N

Five Films about Female Stuff

A Benefit for the Women's Cancer Resource Center

Curated and Presented by Wendy Levy and Jay Rosenblatt

Saturday, March 8, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Tonight's program brings together five award-winning, provocative, often funny, short films which deal with a woman's various bodily functions—eating, drinking, bleeding, ovulating, fantasizing, obsessing, inseminating, and healing, among others. They also grapple with the concept of a woman's "functioning" in society, how gender identity is formed and manipulated, and how women re-configure their identities as they come to understand the meaning of their bodily functions within the culture. Capturing formative bodily experiences women go through in all stages of life, and attempting to understand these experiences personally, politically, and culturally, the films also reveal a variety of female "secrets"—commonly-held beliefs, rituals and fantasies that don't often get talked about in mixed company.

Your Name in Cellulite (1995) by Gail Noonan; 16mm, color, sound, 5 minutes

This award-winning animated film addresses the disparity that exists between a woman's natural beauty and the ideal set forth in popular culture. *How far will you contort yourself to attain that impossible image of beauty we are all bombarded with?*

Period Piece (1996) by Jay Rosenblatt and Jennifer Frame; video, color, sound, 30 minutes

Through interviews of mothers and daughters and clips from 1950s educational health films, this documentary demystifies the secreted experience of a girl's first menstrual period.

The Match That Started My Fire (1993) by Cathy Cook; 16mm, color, sound, 19 minutes

Women candidly recall their early childhood experiences in this unconventional and comedic film exploring the process of sexual discovery. Visually stunning and unnerving, the film deals with female fantasies, discoveries, and sexual pleasures.

Tomboy (1994) by Dawn Longsdon, video, color, sound, 18.5 minutes

Poignantly and often humorously, Longsdon presents a portrait of growing up a tomboy in a world of mary janes, lip gloss, and baby doll dresses. This beautifully rendered documentary uses home movie footage and an audio interview track to portray the challenges particular to becoming a woman with a "different" kind of girlhood.

"swim, swim..." Talking to Sperm and Other Desperate Acts (1996) by Wendy Levy; 16mm, color, sound, 11 minutes

"swim, swim..." is a short, hilarious, personal film that deals with the experience of infertility and donor insemination. It gives a whole new twist to the grueling process of trying to conceive a child when one's body and one's culture won't cooperate.

WHEN MOTHER COMES HOME FOR CHRISTMAS...

Co-presented with NAATA's 15th International Asian American Film Festival

Nilita Vachani In Person

Sunday, March 9, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Award-winning filmmaker Nilita Vachani presents in this, her newest documentary, a moving portrait of one of the thousands of women in developing countries forced to abandon country, home and family in order to support the very family they leave behind. Born in New Delhi, Nilita received her BA from the University of Delhi and subsequently completed graduate studies in the arts at both the University of Pennsylvania and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She has worked internationally as a professional filmmaker, and was Assistant Director on Mira Nair's *Salaam Bombay* and Script Supervisor on her *Mississippi Masala*. Her own filmography includes the documentaries *Eyes of Stone* (1990), a compelling journey into the spiritual and domestic life of a young woman believed to be possessed by spirits in Rajasthan, India; *Diamonds in a Vegetable Market* (1992), a story of vendors who peddle trivial wares and elevated dreams aboard an Indian bus; and *When Mother Comes Home for Christmas...* (1996). She is currently based in Athens, Greece.

When Mother Comes Home for Christmas... (1995); 16mm, color, sound, 109 minutes

Asian female migrant workers make excellent nannies in Europe, but their own children are left to a less fortunate fate. Josephine Perera is a housemaid from Sri Lanka who works in a rich suburb of Athens. It is her full-time responsibility to take care of the young Isadora, whose mother usually lives and works in Paris. Josephine's own children have grown up in institutions in Sri Lanka, since poverty forced her to leave her island country ten years ago in search of a fortune abroad.

The camera traverses Josephine's two universes from Glyfada, Greece to Hatton, Sri Lanka. She leaves for a short visit to her home country, her first Christmas with her children in 8 years. In this long-awaited month, Josephine attempts to fulfill her role as mother, to manage her children's lives, and to fulfill her dream to buy them a house, all the while realizing that she has become little more to them than the woman who sends the money.

The film is a poignant look at the contemporary value of female labor and the rather large cost of acquiring a small fortune.

SECRET THOUGHTS: THE FILMS OF MARIE MENKEN

Introduced and Presented by Charlotte Pryce

Thursday, March 13, 1997—Center for the Arts

"Her lens is focused on the physical world, but she sees it through a poetic temperament. She catches the bits and fragments of the world around her and organizes them into aesthetic unities which communicate to us...Does Menken transpose reality or condense it? Or does she simply go direct to the essence of it? ... A rain that she sees becomes the memory of all rains she ever saw; a garden becomes all gardens, all color, all perfume, all midsummer and sun. What is poetry? An exalted experience? An emotion that dances? A spearhead into the heart of man? We are invited to a communion, we dissolve ourselves into the flow of her images, we experience admittance into the sanctuary of Menken's soul. We take part in her secret thoughts, and we become more beautiful ourselves. She puts a smile into our hearts. She saves us from our own ugliness."

—Jonas Mekas

Tonight we present rare films by Marie Menken, one of the major independent American filmmakers of the 1940s-1960s. During a time when even experimental filmmakers were heavily influenced by Hollywood production standards, Menken emphasized and asserted the value of a hand-held camera. Her delicate, highly personal oeuvre—she was the first to film simple daily events, taking "home movies" as art—influenced Anger, Warhol, Brakhage, Mekas, and many others. Menken and her husband, Willard Maas, opened their Brooklyn apartment to this group of young New York filmmakers and organized Gryphon as a cooperative effort for the showing of avant-garde works which had been refused showing elsewhere. During her lifetime, Menken worked as a special effects expert for the Army Signal Corps and as the Letters-to-the-Editor supervisor at *Time Magazine*.

Visual Variations on Noguchi (1945); 16mm, b&w, sound, 4 minutes

"By use of hand-held ambulating camera, unusual editing and a startling experimental score by Lucille Dlugoszewski, the sculptures of the famous Japanese-American artist, Isamu Noguchi are given audacious movement in a controversial art film experiment."—Cinema 16

Eye Music in Red Major (1961); 16mm, color, silent, 5.5 minutes

A study in light based on persistence of vision and enhancement from eye fatigue. (MM)

When asked what her very own innovation in cinema was, Menken wrote that she considered some of the ideas she was exploring in *Eye Music* as innovative. She made this film with static flashlights and a moving camera.

Moonplay (1962); 16mm, b&w, sound, 5 minutes

A lunar fantasy in animated stop motion. (MM)

Arabesque for Kenneth Anger (1961); 16mm, color, sound, 4 minutes

Menken made this film for Anger in thanks for his help in shooting another film in Spain. It was filmed using single frame techniques in one day at the Alhambra in Granada, Spain, allegedly while Anger pointed out details of the Alhambra to her. Menken animated the Moorish structures with a whirling camera and quick-changing focus. This film is considered by P. Adams Sitney to be her most fully achieved.

Bagatelle for Willard Maas (1961); 16mm, color, sound, 5 minutes

A more serious film than *Arabesque*, *Bagatelle* attempts to synchronize into a lyric statement some observations on Versailles...which like Willard is very precious. Also rather naughty and rather wicked. (MM)

"Marie Menken's fountains are the fountains of life. Marie Menken's Versailles is the Versailles of death. The beauty of this film is the alternation of the fountains and Versailles death. Only Marie Menken would have the subtlety, sensibility, sensitivity, receptivity to fuse and fertilize the classical paradoxes in such an immediate visual apotheosis."—Charles Boultenhouse

Glimpse of the Garden (1957); 16mm, color, sound, 5 minutes

"Kaleidoscope vision ranging from rapid pans to freezes, texture into pattern, unusual framing: excellent use of negative space; she leads one to notice the bird in flight, and to become the bird; subtle color: the color is the music; a tribute to Dwight Ripley."—Stan Brakhage

Notebook (1963); 16mm, color, silent, 10 minutes

"It is a very personal film...a masterpiece of filmic fragments, only shown once, but wow!"—P. Adams Sitney

Go! Go! Go! (1963); 16mm, color, silent, 11.5 minutes

Taken from a moving vehicle, for much of the footage; the rest using stationary frame, stop-motion. In the harbor sequence, I had to wait for the right amount of activity, to show effectively the boats darting about; some sequences took over an hour to shoot, and last perhaps a minute on the screen. The "strength and health" sequence was shot at a body beautiful convention. Various parts of the city of New York, the busy man's engrossment in his busy-ness make up the major part of the film...My major film, showing the restlessness of human nature and what it is striving for plus the ridiculousness of its desires. (MM)

Excursion (1968); 16mm, color, silent, 5 minutes

Hurry! Hurry! (1957); 16mm, color, sound, 3 minutes

"A daring film ballet danced by human spermatozoa under powerful magnification...a dance of death made from scientific footage, printed over murky fire."—Cinema 16

A Few Words on Marie Menken

It is my pleasure tonight to introduce to you the work of Marie Menken. This elusive giantess first committed her vision to film in 1945 when she boldly stepped her six-feet-two inches into Isamu Noguchi's sculpture studio and danced, inviting us to enjoy a precarious and fleeting sense of space and form; the daring and now legendary twists of her camera liberating a generation of filmmakers.

A question for me in reviewing her work was how and why she should be "left out" or passed over in many of the histories of experimental film. This was indeed a question I put to P. Adams Sitney recently. His response was revealing. He claims that although he was a close friend of hers and an appreciator of her films, that at the time of writing *Visionary Film* he had not "found a way to write about her." She is not easily fit into the categories delineated by that book. He said that it was not until maybe six years after the publication of *Visionary Film* (say, 1980) that he found the means to approach her work.

I have taken this as an example of the difficulty anthologists and academics have had and continue to have in describing and presenting her films. Unlike Maya Deren, her contemporary, she left few, if any, records indicating her mentors, influences or philosophy. So I have scrambled to put together a few thoughts and facts about her life and method of working.

Marie Menken was born in 1910 in New York, into a family of Lithuanian immigrants. In the 1930s she worked for the Guggenheim Museum. Already showing characteristics which were to later earn her the epithet "den mother," she helped Jackson Pollack and Norman McClaren (among others) secure jobs there. At that time she was painting large canvases: collages of sand embedded with various objects. Although respected for her work, she did not receive the critical acclaim of her friends. However, in the mid 1930s she was granted a residency at Yaddo artists' colony in upstate New York. There she met Willard Maas and fell in love. Their love was to prove most durable--much to the surprise, consternation and astonishment of those around her.

1937 was the year of their marriage, the year that they moved to 62 Montague Street in Brooklyn, a penthouse apartment soon to be the scene of many brawls, extravagant parties, and inspired moments. Marie became pregnant and Willard discovered his homosexuality. Although the baby did not live, and the nature of their relationship was obviously changing, Marie, a Catholic, could not and would not divorce Willard. They lived together in uncertain harmony until 1970, when they died within days of each other.

The story handed down is that when Francis Lee, a painter and friend of Marie's, was drafted in the Second World War, he took his 16mm camera to the pawn shop and gave Marie the ticket. She immediately retrieved the camera and soon began to think about making films. The first experiment was a collaboration with Willard, in the making of *Geography of the Body*. The influence that Marie had on Willard and vice versa is hard to fathom and untangle for one who did not know them. It is apparent from Stan Brakhage's account in *Film at Wit's End*, and confirmed by P. Adams Sitney, that Willard was initially dismissive of Marie's work, considering himself to be the true poet, and her films less consequential. Yet by all accounts it is thanks to Willard that her films were completed and salvaged to be printed. Apparently she would delay and sidestep when asked to present her films, often changing them at the last minute. And although she believed that her films should have titles and music, this aspect of production was definitely secondary to the making of the work. P. Adams also hinted that the titles in many cases were suggested by Willard.

So from where did the inspiration come for her work? Of those making films around her, she was known to love the work of Len Lye. I have been unable to pin down any other known influences. She was, to unofficially quote Sitney, "an absolute original." However, in the 1950s and 60s, the durability of her vision was not apparent. An important date appears to be a screening held at the Charles Theater in 1960, when she showed for the first time *Notebook*, *Arabesque for Kenneth Anger*, *Bagatelle for Willard Maas*, and *Eye Music in Red Major*. Marie, who drank heavily, had for the period of a month before the screening managed to stay sober and in a whirl of activity finished these films. The films were shown without music or titles, yet deeply impressed the audience—in particular Jonas Mekas and Stan Brakhage; and it is their support of her work and in turn her influence on their work that has ensured her respect today.

Tonight I have chosen a sequence of her films which is not chronological but instead groups certain themes. The decision to do so was, I felt, a little tricky. All the time I feel Marie laughing over my shoulder—she who eschewed any attempt to be pinned down.

But here goes:

Visual Variations on Noguchi, *Eye Music in Red Major*, and *Moonplay* share a flying spirit of movement: a dancing camera pulling at our vision, sweeping gracefully, sometimes aggressively, with uncontrolled mirth and subtle rhythms. We will see *Visual Variations on Nogouchi* twice: the first time with sound, the second time after the break, silently. I have taken Marie Menken at her word. She said: "Music or sound was added for kicks and nothing else. To prove this run any of my films without sound and you will get the jolts and rhythms of visual chances, silent as they are to a capacity of feeling."

I have grouped *Arabesque for Kenneth Anger*, *Bagatelle for Willard Maas*, and *Glimpse of the Garden* together. Marie was a pioneer of the portrait film, or rather, films made with a specific person in mind. She photographed the things that these people would have loved or did love, but in such a way as to betray her own thoughts of their character; as ever, cunning and sprightly. "I have a feeling" she said, "about these people and somehow created cinematically speaking what moves them or what has moved me, having what I thought was an insight into their creative work." It is perhaps a stretch to include *Glimpse of the Garden* in this grouping, but as an early film—made in 1957—in the garden of Willard's former lover Dwight Ripley, I feel it is in some ways a portrait of the gardener.

After the break we shall see *Visual Variations on Nogouchi* silently, and three films which have inspired many filmmakers to create filmic diaries. Marie's *Notebook*, full of light scribbings and playful moments, will be followed by *Go! Go! Go!*, in which she recorded the alarming and sometimes hilarious pulse of the city, amidst

which Willard is seen contrasted in his poetic heaven. In *Excursion* we leave land to be escorted around New York, tantalizing in its revelations but explicit in its rhythms and pace.

Finally we shall see *Hurry! Hurry!*, the film Marie claimed to be her saddest, and one which stands apart on several accounts. The images of the spermatozoa were given to her on request by a scientist. Over this microscopic footage she laced a flame and one of her more successful sound tracks. Stan Brakhage has suggested that the film is in some sense a portrait of Willard's life, but if it is so it is also a portrait of Marie's feelings as she stands outside.

I have given a brief outline of her life concentrating on her work, sidestepping where possible second generation gossip. For those of you wishing to see Marie in full swing she appears both in Andy Warhol's *Chelsea Girls* and *Life of Juanita Castro*. Her influence on several generations of New York filmmakers, both in the radical style of her life and her films, is unmistakable.

None has yet dared to write extensively about her; there are no PhDs in progress subjecting this elusive and grandiose lady to scrutiny. So I shall end with a quote from Marie, who when asked about the making of her films said: "It was fun. All art should be fun in a sense and give one a kick."-- Charlotte Pryce

Marie Menken Filmography:

Visual Variations on Noguchi (1945)

Hurry! Hurry! (1957)

Glimpse of the Garden (1957)

Dwightiana (1957)

Faucets (1960)

Eye Music in Red Major (1961)

Arabesque for Kenneth Anger (1961)

Bagatelle for Willard Maas (1961)

Moonplay (1962)

Mood Mondrian (1963)

Drips and Strips (1963)

Wrestling (1964)

Andy Warhol (1965)

Lights (1966)

Sidewalks (1966)

Watts with Eggs (1967)

Excursion (1968)

EARLY ANIMATION FROM THE SILENT ERA

Sunday, March 16, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Animation is usually overlooked when considering films from the first part of the century, but many are remarkably fresh by today's standards. This program presents several rarely seen gems which delight in film's new-found ability to bring still images to animated life.

Drame Chez les Fantoces (1908) by Emil Cohl; 16mm, B&W, silent

The Man in the Moon (1909) by Emil Cohl; 16mm, B&W, silent

Princess Nicotine (1909) by J. Stuart Blackton; 16mm, B&W, silent

How a Mosquito Operates (1912) by Winsor McCay; 16mm, B&W, silent

"Animation should be an art, that is how I conceived it. But I see what you fellows have done with it is make it into a trade ... not an art but a trade ... bad luck."—Winsor McCay

The Pet (1917) by Winsor McCay; 16mm, B&W, silent

This film is the first section of McCay's trilogy, *The Dreams of A Rarebit Fiend*, which also includes *Bug Vaudeville* and *The Flying House*. McCay's son Robert assisted him on these three films, which utilized cel

animation as opposed to his earlier method of drawing on paper. *The Pet* follows a dog which grows to an enormous size and wanders about the city.

Down Where the Limburger Blows (1917); 16mm, B&W, silent

Max und Moritz (c.1920) by Wilhelm Busch; 16mm, B&W, silent

Adam Raises Cain (1920) by Tony Sarg; 16mm, B&W, silent

The Voice of the Nightingale (1923) by Ladjslas Starevitch; 16mm, B&W, silent

The Fortune Teller (1923) by Max Fleischer; 16mm, tinted B&W, silent

Sure-Locked Homes (1926) by Otto Messmer; 16mm, B&W, silent

All films approximately 7 minutes each.

UNSTABLE MIRRORS: FILMS BY PELLE LOWE

Pelle Lowe In Person

Thursday, March 20, 1997—Center for the Arts

And our faces, my heart, brief as photos.

—John Berger

I'm interested in the ways that culture mediates emotion and identity. Does a lack of affect necessarily imply a corresponding absence of subjectivity? How do certain gestures and emotional styles become repressed or ritualized to the extent that they return as something else?—Casually murderous impulses, or the accumulation of capital, for example...

—Pelle Lowe

Pelle Lowe's films and performances have been riveting Boston and New York audiences for years. Tonight, in her first San Francisco appearance, she will show a broad range of Super 8 and 16mm films.

"Unstable Mirrors" is a suite of films and performance about the liquefaction of memory and identity in the digital age by Boston-based filmmaker and performance artist, Pelle Lowe. While they comment on one another, the pieces are entangled in odd ways. The program is decidedly low-tech. Both Super 8 film and LP recording are facing extinction, and analog video and audio are not far behind. This is an homage to time-based media.

Textasy (1997); mixed media performance, 17 minutes

Textasy was generated from computer and phone sex networks. I was trying to imagine how Teresa of Avila might confront virtual reality. The recording is of Greta Garbo and John Garfield in *Queen Christina*, and the video-intertext was [mis]appropriated from Italo Calvino's beautiful prose-poem *Invisible Cities*.

Earthly Possessions (1992); Super 8, b&w, sound, 23 minutes

Earthly Possessions is a meditation about the eroticism of grief. I wanted to make something that worked with the emotional logic of a dream or nightmare. The film cycles and recycles on itself, searching for closure. To fall apart, to come unglued in deep sorrow, is to be in a strangely charged state—possessed, as if by a demon lover.

"In 25 economic minutes, Lowe's risky and purely dazzling *Earthly Possessions* is more like possession than mere recreation, drawing on both *Wuthering Heights* and the memoirs of a 19th century hermaphrodite....Gradually, one

element is constructed (identity), as another is shattered into its parts (the novel). Here in the face of death, meaning is splintered, not absent."—Manohla Dargis, *The Village Voice*

Smoke (1995-1996); Super 8, color, sound, 24 minutes

Smoke is about dispossession, fragmentation, and control—an intimation of the terrible places the obsession with information seems to be leading us. All of the tests in this film are taken from common public questionnaires, such as student aid forms, immigration, credit, and job applications. This is a dark film, but another line from Berger comes to mind: "The naming of the intolerable is the naming of hope."

CITY SYMPHONY:

FILMS BY DOMINIC ANGERAME

Dominic Angerame In Person

Sunday, March 23, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Since 1969, Dominic Angerame has made more than 20 films which have been shown at festivals throughout the United States, winning numerous awards. His approach to filmmaking has evolved from a casual impressionism, a sort of personal diary style, to the almost passionate abstraction of his recent highly imagistic work. Such films as *Continuum* (1987) and *Deconstruction Sight* (1990) rely heavily on the technique of montage and on apparently random (yet most deliberate) sequencing of images that work on the viewer's sensibility, eliciting powerful feelings and ideas which are never stated or limited by Angerame, the filmmaker. A conventional narrative style, aural or visual, will not be found in these films. Truly experimental, yet far from arbitrary, and possessed of an intensely individual aesthetic, Angerame's latest cinema nonetheless packs a punch that reveals an underpinning of consistent social and political awareness, and a driving poetic vision lifted from the self out to the world beyond the self. In all of his work, one can see a painterly delight in the creation of the visual mix, and a painterly style in the execution of the celluloid artwork.

In addition to being a filmmaker, Dominic has also been the Executive Director of Canyon Cinema since 1980. Under his tenure, Canyon Cinema has become the world's largest and most successful distributor of independent films and videotapes. He currently teaches film production, film history, and a literature and film course at the Academy of Art College and University of California/Extension, Berkeley. He has also taught film production at the San Francisco Art Institute, New College of California, as well as the Graduate School of Theology in Berkeley.

"The 'City Symphony' is a collection of four separate and distinct films that I have made since 1987. The subject matter centers around the city environment in a constant state of change. My work is influenced by the avant-garde filmmakers of the 1920s and 1930s and this symphony is an homage to those persons who believe that through their actions in the world, they can affect a change towards a positive end."

—Dominic Angerame

Continuum (1987); 16mm, b&w, live sound, 15 minutes

Special Live Sound by Kevin Barnard

"...*Continuum*, although a film only 15 minutes in length, is one of the more remarkable works within recent cinematic history. In it, the world, the workers within the world, and the labor of making the film itself are equated through montage and a brilliantly concentrated filmic 'painterliness.' The result is an experimental film which is at the same time a document of propaganda in the sense that, at its conclusion, one finds oneself closer to the science of the motion of society in its monumentality, with streets, buildings, the building of them, and the workers and their instruments (drills, tar), creating a constructivist poetry within the eyes.

“Without sloganeering, the filmmaker has nevertheless organized harmonies and dissonances of people and objects to the extent that aesthetics lead to the threshold of revolutionary consciousness, so that *Continuum* is a film that can be received with enthusiasm in both union hall and cinematheque. And that is no mean achievement in a time when sophisticated cultural forms are often so removed from the real needs of the populace, hiding behind masks of liberty that do not get out of the prison of the tyrannies of individuality, and therefore, opportunism.

“The filmmaker’s work...everywhere is informed by a collective sensing that takes hold of the ordinary and makes it mighty in perception...for his latest film is a major event.”—Jack Hirschman

“...the images of *Continuum* certainly haunt me: there was the softest continual casualness of editing (beseeming ‘casualness’, I should say; for I certainly DO know how difficult this is to accomplish), and a steadiness of rhythm, always moving/moving but never as anything ominous to me, or inexorable—something more like very heavy water lapping. Then the blacks and whites, evolving from some gray ‘cloud’ into the stark sharp glistens of ‘stars in the deep of black tar’—for the ‘tar’ too seemed more night than what you’d photographed. It was amazing to me how little evidence there was in the film of the Time in which it was made, or even the location: I found myself tending to forget that these were City-chores, that this was rooftop work, soforth[sic]: just the labor, the continuity of labor, timeless, and ongoing, withOUT inexorable. Bravo.”—Stan Brakhage

***Deconstruction Sight* (1990); 16mm, b&w, sound, 13 minutes**

“A somber, gong-like tone opens *Deconstruction Sight*: the first image is a small light in darkness, a delicate flicker that grows to become a welder’s torch. We are led into the film by suggestive imagistic shorthand; ‘the rise of man’ is attended by the building of structures, and cities, a montage of the emblems of civilization. The end of the film brings a series of unnerving images—one reminiscent of an eerie jack-o-lantern from childhood memory: a skyscraper looming in the night, a bank of windows lit up like its gaping mouth. As fog and clouds rush in fast frame across the sky for a dizzying, synthetic effect, Kevin Barnard’s soundtrack pounds an urgent wail to the rhythm of climax spending itself in question, in philosophical ambiguity, not release. An almost palpable centrifugal force seems to move the final moments of the film into a spinout.

“This is history without narrative, an abstract summation of what happens when human beings move stuff around and make something out of it, grow tired of what they’ve made and demolish it using other things they’ve made, and then start all over again. What we build, what we destroy, what we find useful to do both, how we let our interaction with them describe what we call human—these are some of the ideas Angerame’s *Deconstruction Sight* suggests.”—excerpted from an essay by Barbara Jasperson, 1990

***Premonition* (1995); 16mm, b&w, sound, 11 minutes**

“And when the illusion disappears, that is to say when we see the being or fact as it really exists outside ourselves, we experience a strange feeling, complicated half with regret for the vanquished phantom, half with agreeable surprise for the novelty, for the actual fact.”—Charles Baudelaire

“There’s an exquisite despair and a dooming ambiguity suspended in the cool morning clarity of Dominic Angerame’s new film, *Premonition*. It’s short and bittersweet, like a prelude by Debussy, and promises a broad integration of the aesthetic elements of his work, now full-fledged and ascendant. But with the widening view and depth of field and new heights, there’s also a painful consciousness of the vanity of all things human and of their transience...Transfixed if not much further along the road, we feel like those wide-eyed and well-intended Akkadian stargazers teetering on the edge of a vast new knowledge hovering over us...revealing...revealing...what?

“*Premonition*, despite its sadness, does not judge modernity and its gargantuan feats of engineering, but, on the contrary, admires them, in the fullest aesthetic sense of the word, like a traveler turning a bend in the road whereby an enormity of landscape is revealed, overwhelming his ego, freeing him up toward a larger question while simultaneously diminishing his particularity in the very grandeur of it all...Angerame even loves the works of man, as he loves work itself, but there’s something awestruck before these very works that recalls the child’s wonder before the suddenness of natural disaster, like a five-year old staring into a friend’s gaping wound...

"Modernity, what happened to your highway? You tower over us, then you disappear. The arch and ribs of the guardrails seemed so very real to us, like the backbone of a stegosaurus. Gone. The casually defiant smoked cigarettes upon you. The sincerely healthy played tennis in your shadows. You were close to our places of work downtown. The seagulls' cries echoed in your ribcage. Gone. Submerged in the rising water of time. One more Atlanta vanity.

"The illusion looms high, but passes like the ships you could see from those heights...The frozen freighter at anchor beneath the endlessly (?) spanning bridge, is haunted, and somehow recalls the ghostship from *Nosferatu*, even in its perfect otherworldly calm. The film hides its meaning, comes in like the tide but still disappears...A fragment of a circle, abstracted. Near the bridge. The highway snakes along. Adolescents tagged it. A jogger like a flea on its back. And emptied of cars it's its own worst indictment: now that we're not busy with it, what can it mean?

"The staunch Ferry Building, the swift ferry and its charms, the blimp, the helicopter.—All of them toys when it cast its cool morning shadow their way. We were heading out toward our favorite cafe, unknowing it would come down, like rain...

"*Premonition* is not just about a defunct highway to have done with, it's the painful inventory of a desired and questionable relationship gone down."—Ronald F. Sauer

In the Course of Human Events (1997); 16mm, b&w, sound, 23 minutes

In the Course of Human Events centers its visuals on the demolition of the Embarcadero Freeway which, was structurally damaged during the 1989 earthquake. Considered unsafe for use, city officials determined that the freeway was to be torn down. (DA)

ALSO

Line of Fire (1997); 16mm, b&w, silent, 6.5 minutes

In November of 1993 I was diagnosed as having coronary arterial disease. A subsequent angiogram revealed that open heart surgery was necessary and duly performed. This angiogram was filmed originally on 35mm motion picture film. In March of 1995 my apartment burnt down in the early morning hours and my girlfriend and I escaped with our neighbor down our rear fire escape as lethal smoke was enveloping us. I was able to return to the scene the next day in order to film the aftermath. This film is a blend of footage from these two episodes and explores the temporal nature of the lives we live. (DA)

IMAGES OF DISPLACEMENT

MULTIMEDIA WORK BY JALAL TOUFIC AND CHRISTIAN KEATHLEY

Jalal Toufic and Christian Keathley In Person

Thursday, March 27, 1997—Center for the Arts

Tonight's program features two new multimedia works of considerable magnitude: Jalal Toufic's two-channel video *Ashoura: This Blood Spilled In My Veins* and Christian Keathley's *Snapshots*, a multi-screen film/video presentation.

Jalal Toufic is a prolific writer, film theorist, and video artist. His writing credits include *Distracted* (1991)—a component of the larger multimedia work to which *Ashoura* also contributes; *(Vampires): An Uneasy Essay on*

the Undead in Film (1993), and *Over Sensitivity* (1996). Having left Beirut—a city where "nothing [is] left. Not even leaving" in 1984, Toufic currently teaches critical studies at California Institute of the Arts.

Writer and film/video artist Christian Keathley received his MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and is presently a Ph.D. candidate in film studies at the University of Iowa.

Snapshots (1996) by Christian Keathley; 16mm film and video, color, sound, 28 minutes

Here is a mystery. Within a few decades in the mid-nineteenth century, photography was invented, the physiologies became the first best-selling mass market paperback books, and Edgar Allan Poe wrote the first detective story. What connects these events? And what does Memphis—home of the King of Rock-n-Roll—have to do with it all? (CK)

"Christian Keathley has an unquiet mind. Where others see simple lines of logic, he sees vast webs of connection, terrifying coincidence, conspiracy. This would be just another contemporary case of paranoia except for the fact that this hyperkinesis explains the intervals between the known, construes a world in which all the unknowns are in some way connected. And they are.

"What Christian Keathley does in *Snapshots* is to suggest that the analytical mind has precise patterns of lucidity, wit, and ellipsis. It has its blind spots and heady conclusions, its dead ends and intersections.

"Photography, the catalogue, the mystery novel, appearances and disappearances. Keathley draws together artifacts and stories of a precise moment in time (that of the late nineteenth century) in strange and compelling ways, and instead of making a case for them, speaks about how cases are made, just how plausible the implausible could be.

"The larger case is just this: Keathley attempts to draw together in the most natural way the methods of artmaking and the methods of the lecture. In that he has the history of Cinema to draw from, from the travelling shows of Lyman Howe, from the Warograph, from the 'High class' slide shows and vaudeville interludes. His project is different, perhaps more ambitious. Instead of illustrating, he shows. Instead of showing, he illustrates. Keathley expands the text, suggests that Cinema, or better, moving pictures, are a way of thinking, a way of seeing, a doorway to comprehension that can be arrived at no other way. This kind of expression and logic gives equal weight to the visual in the mind, where words and images can impose and superimpose upon one another, where thoughts shuttle from the analysis of a human motion in a frame to a conclusion about the path of history.

"Arrogant? Ambitious? Dangerous? Brave? All of the above; and welcome too."—Daniel Eisenberg

Ashoura: This Blood Spilled In My Veins (1996) by Jalal Toufic; two-channel video, color, sound, 12 minutes

Through images from the yearly Shiite ritual Ashoura commemorating the slaughter of the grandson of the prophet Mohammed in 680 at Karbala, the two-channel video *Ashoura: This Blood Spilled In My Veins* tries to probe the function of preservation of the image at the beginning stages of the era of digital technology, the era of the loss of (generational) loss. Is the yearly commemoration just to remember the historical event? Or is it even more basically to slowly, along the years, decades and centuries, imbue in Shiites the feeling that that event cannot be reduced to the linear and historical, but belongs also in part to *alam al-mithal* (the Imaginal World), where it is in no need of preservation, but preserves itself? The video functions as one of the components of a multimedia work that includes in addition my book *Distracted*, 1991, as is manifest in the intertitle introducing the video's photo-degeneration section: "*Distracted*, pp. 158-163." (JT)

Handed Out At Show:

"*Distracted*, pp. 158-163, or how—unlike many of those in a state of hypnagogia—not to see faces, eyes, human features in walls, clouds, landscapes, wallpaper; or how not to be nostalgic; or *dhikr*; or 'If the relationship were ending, I would understand that you would try to dissolve my image—to forget me. But you're trying to make it happen at these, its beginning stages; so why this dissolution of my image?'"

DREYER'S *ORDET* PRECEDED BY

PETER HERWITZ' *WINTER DREAM LIEDER*

Sunday, March 30, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Winter Dream Lieder (1993) by Peter Herwitz; 16mm (18fps), color, silent, 11 minutes

A series of simple melodies that are nevertheless meant to capture the dream-like quality of winter scenes and interior moments. The film juxtaposes images of flowers and snow in such a way as is meant to evoke some complicated textures of dreams and a simple dichotomy of blossoming and darkness. (PH)

Ordet (The Word) (Denmark, 1954) by Carl Th. Dreyer; 16mm, b&w, sound, 126 minutes

"I made *Ordet* in order to show myself that I could make a miracle which people would believe in."—Carl Th. Dreyer

"Although Dreyer began as a journalist and made a number of documentaries during his filmmaking career, his creed as a filmmaker was: 'We have got stuck with photography. We are now confronted with the necessity of freeing ourselves from it.' His cinematic style partakes of an exacting but generally simplified realism that invokes a supra-reality, and he believed that this simplification or abstraction must be used by the artist in a way that 'allows his films to be not merely visual, but spiritual,' although 'the transformation must be made without the director losing grip on the world of reality.'"—Carren O. Kaston, "*Faith, Love, and Art: The Metaphysical Triangle in Ordet*"

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"Dreyer's most comprehensive meditation on the place of the spiritual in human life can be found in *Ordet*, or *The Word*. Morten Borgen's demented son Johannes, who believes that he is Jesus Christ, wanders from scene to scene delivering homilies and lectures from scripture. One of the film's greatest achievements is that it is able to portray Johannes as both sublime and ridiculous. There is both grandeur and grandiosity to his character when, for example, he cites the words from scripture, "I am the light of the world but darkness comprehendeth it not," and then puts two candles in the window "in order that my light may brighten the darkness"—when, as Inger points out, it has already started to become light. Earlier he has preached his Sermon on the Mount in an empty field, punctuated by the sound of ghostly white sheets billowing and snapping on a clothesline, a scene both awesome and deflating....

"It is Johannes who ultimately performs the film's miracle, bringing back to life Mikkel's wife, Inger, who has died in childbirth. Yet as both David Bordwell and Kirk Bond point out, when Johannes believes that he is Jesus Christ, he can do nothing; his first effort to speak The Word that can raise the dead comes to naught. It is only when he reappears in contemporary dress at the end of the film, with normal voice, gait, and gaze and apparently restored to sanity, that he can call the dead Inger back to life. By then he is not more than a humble believer assisted only by Maren's faith in the power of his belief. His ability to perform the miracle is thus predicated on his acceptance of his mere humanness. In a discussion in which he attempts to pinpoint the nature of what he calls Dreyer's "transcendental style," Paul Schrader notes, "It is as if Dreyer carefully sets the viewer up for the Transcendent, then reveals the immanent."—Carren O. Kaston, "*Faith, Love, and Art: The Metaphysical Triangle in Ordet*"

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"The adopted son of a Copenhagen typesetter and his wife, Dreyer, by his own account, suffered a childhood of loneliness, devoid of warmth of compassion. In a rare autobiographical sketch, written in the 1940s, Dreyer described his early youth: 'Born in 1889 to a Swedish mother, who died shortly after my birth. Was adopted by a Danish family, Dreyer, who reminded me incessantly that I should be thankful for the food they gave me, and, strictly speaking, that I had no claim on anything, since my mother had cheated [them] from payment by arranging to die.'

"According to [Dreyer biographer] Drouzy, Dreyer was eighteen when, on his own initiative, he sought out the truth about his birth and the fate of his mother, Josefina Nilsson. She had been the overseer of a household on a large farm, Carlsro, in the south of Sweden. When she became pregnant out of wedlock, apparently by the proprietor of the estate, his family paid for her to go to Denmark to have her baby secretly. She left the child in a foster home in Copenhagen, one of the several foster homes or institutions he would experience before he was adopted by the Dreyers at the age of eighteen months. This arrangement was made after his biological mother had placed a newspaper advertisement relinquishing all claims on the child in order to arrange for an adoptive family. Meanwhile, Josefina Nilsson returned to Carlsro, where she was reinstated in her former position. Little more than a year later she became pregnant again, this time by a young man she thought would marry her. Seven months into the pregnancy, however, he refused, and in desperation she decided to abort the child with sulphur, a remedy she heard about from old farmwives. But she did not know precisely how much to take—she swallowed sulphur heads from one and a half packs of the long matches at that time sold all over Sweden—and she suffered a horribly painful death from the overdose. Her body was taken to the Forensic Institute in Kristianstad, then sent on to Stockholm, where it was minutely dissected and used for study purposes before the doctors finally concluded their analyses two months after her death. Poisoning was, as expected, declared the cause of death.

"Dreyer's emotionally deprived upbringing, and his quest for the truth about his and his biological mother's identities, taught him several lessons that would inform his films: those who live their emotions and are trusting (his mother) experience suffering and death as a result of the intolerance of an oppressive social system formed by the deceit of men (proprietors, prospective fathers, doctors). His early experiences formed the emotional basis of Dreyer's life, and can be seen as a fundamental point of departure for the filmmaker's artistic preoccupations and for his uniquely translated compassion and understanding of women's conditions and expressions."—Jytte Jensen, *Heretics, Witches, Saints, and Sinners*"

Quotations regarding Dreyer are excerpted from articles in *Carl Th. Dreyer*, Jytte Jensen, Editor, The Museum of Modern Art, New York: 1988.

Program Notes Compiled by Irina Leimbacher

WHITE LIGHT/WHITE HEAT: THE POWER OF 35MM

Curated by Bruce & Amanda Posner; Co-presented by the Roxie Cinema

Filmmaker Pat O'Neill In Person

Monday, March 31, 1997—Roxie Cinema

Filmmakers Amanda and Bruce Posner have curated a stunning collection of short experimental films made for the powerful and finely detailed 35mm film format.

Stadtraum Remise (1994) by Martin Arnold; 35mm, color, sound, 30 seconds.

The Georgetown Loop (1996) by Ken Jacobs; 35mm, b&w, silent, 11 minutes

Stadtraum Remise (1994) by Martin Arnold; 35mm, color, sound, 30 seconds.

Spook Sport (1939) by Mary Ellen Bute (animation by Norman McLaren); 35mm restored archival print, color, sound, 8 minutes

Trouble in the Image (1996) by Pat O'Neill; 35mm, color, audio by George Lockwood, 38 minutes

Samuel Beckett's *Film* (1965) by Alan Schneider (starring Buster Keaton); 35mm, b&w, silent w/ one sound, 21 minutes

Closing the 9:15pm show:

Disorient Express (1996) by Ken Jacobs; 35mm, b&w, silent, 30 minutes

PAST IMPERFECT: FILMS BY SU FRIEDRICH

Su Friedrich In Person

Thursday, April 3, 1997—Center for the Arts

Originally trained as a still photographer, Su Friedrich was among the earliest of those filmmakers working in the late 70s who sought to bring explicitly feminist concerns to the strategies and techniques of avant-garde film as it had been developed in the intensely subjective cinema of such pioneers as Maya Deren, Stan Brakhage, and others. Over the years, Su has become one of America's most celebrated and groundbreaking independent filmmakers. Moving between intimately personal and politically charged subject matter, Su's films are formally daring yet reach out to many audiences. Tonight's program showcases two of her major autobiographical works, *The Ties That Bind* and *Sink Or Swim*, poetic explorations of the complex relationships between the filmmaker and her mother and father. This Sunday, April 6, Su will join us again for the San Francisco premiere of her newest work, *Hide and Seek*.

The Ties That Bind (1984); 16mm, b&w, sound, 55 minutes

"An experimental documentary about my mother's life in Nazi Germany and her eventual marriage to an American soldier. In the voice-over, she recounts her experiences, while the images portray her current life in Chicago, the assembly of a model German house, contemporary peace marches, archival footage of Germany, sensationalist newspaper headlines, her first years in America, and much more, woven together to create a dialogue between past and present, mother and daughter."

"Let me state very simply that, in making *The Ties That Bind*, I had no intention of creating a general portrait of all Germans, or of all German women, nor did I intend to explain the origins of the war or of Nazism. The film began as a personal investigation of my own mother's life before and during the war, primarily from age 10 to 28. I was often tempted to extend the film beyond the parameters of her own stories, but I decided against that; I wanted to stay close to her text and work within the confines of a single life." (SF)

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

Through a series of twenty-six short stories, a teenage girl describes the childhood events that shaped her ideas about fatherhood, family relations, work and play. As the stories unfold, a dual portrait emerges: that of a father who cared more for his career than for his family, and of a daughter who was deeply affected by his behavior. Working in counterpoint to the forceful text are sensual black and white images that depict both the extraordinary and ordinary events of daily life. Together, they create a formally complex and emotionally intense film.

"I can think of no more corrosively moving refutation of 'the law of the father' than Su Friedrich's extraordinarily precise *Sink or Swim*. Summoning her nerve, Friedrich rather fearlessly refines her previous researches into unexplored areas of memory, dream and desire. *Sink or Swim* shows how, with a few sudden, powerful strokes, the supposedly submerged familial past can overtake and threaten to drown our supposedly buoyant familiar present. Friedrich's film provides a stunningly sensual exploration of the discontinuous interrelationship between voice and image. This exploration effectively dispels the patriarchal force latent—or perhaps not so latent—within the representations of memory."—Ernest Larsen

**HARD AS HELL:
THE LOST GAY EROTICA OF FRED HALSTED**

Friday, April 4, 1997—Castro Theater

Fred Halsted was one of the most notorious gay underground filmmakers of the 1970s. Tonight we present three extremely rare films: *Sex Garage* (1972), *LA Plays Itself* (1972), and the extraordinary *Sex Tool* (1975). The films contain scenes that are censored out of their (impossible to find) video releases. Halsted was one of very few artists working in gay erotic film. His films combine grungy poetic lyricism, brutal sadomasochistic imagery, and an uncompromising vision of masculinity, influencing filmmakers as diverse as Derek Jarman and Bruce LaBruce.

Programmed by Joel Shepard.

SU FRIEDRICH'S HIDE AND SEEK

Su Friedrich In Person

Sunday, April 6, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

"The critique of conventional cinema that is articulated in Su Friedrich's films has roots in two different cultural projects: the development of North American avant-garde cinema and the recent feminist reassessment of modern society (and of the popular and independent cinema). Each of her films represents a different combination of these sources, and she has demonstrated her loyalty to both in her extra-film activities...Her particular gift has been to find ways of combining cinematically experimental means and a powerful feminist commitment in films that, increasingly, are accessible to a broad range of viewers, even to viewers unaccustomed to enjoying either experimental or feminist filmmaking. This accessibility is, to a large degree, a function of Friedrich's willingness to use her filmmaking to explore the particulars of her personal experience. And her success in reaching audiences represents a powerful attack on the assumption that viewers will only respond to conventional film rhetoric."—Scott MacDonald, *A Critical Cinema 2*

Tonight's program marks the San Francisco debut of Su Friedrich's newest work, *Hide and Seek*. Su has long been acclaimed for her complex, provocative, highly poetic filmic explorations. Eloquent yet firmly, her films challenge the boundaries of social and aesthetic personal freedom. *Hide and Seek* continues in this tradition, daringly entering wild, uncharted territory—lesbian adolescence in the 1960s.

Hide and Seek (1996); 16mm, b&w, sound, 63 minutes

Lou is a 12 year old girl who daydreams in a tree house, tries *not* to watch a sex education film, wins a rock throwing contest, and is horrified to discover that her best friend is taking an interest in earrings and boys. Interwoven with Lou's story are the mostly hilarious, sometimes melancholy recollections of adult lesbians who try to figure out how they ever got from there to here. Completing the picture are clips from a wide array old scientific and educational films which blend seamlessly with the beautiful black and white images of Lou's world. *Hide and Seek* is for every woman who's been to a slumber party and every man who wonders what went on at one. (SF)

"*Hide and Seek* is rueful, funny, multifaceted and sharply intelligent."—Stuart Klawans, film critic, *The Nation*

"*Hide and Seek* is *A Girl's Own Story* for lesbians. Friedrich has woven a rich and provocative tapestry that assaults complacent assumptions about pubescent desire and lesbian identity, all the while raising important

questions about the representation of racial and sexual fantasy life...Thoroughly engaging from beginning to end."—Yvonne Rainer

Su Friedrich Filmography:

Hot Water (1978)
Cool Hands, Warm Heart (1979)
Scar Tissue (1979)
I Suggest Mine (1980)
Gently Down the Stream (1981)
But No One (1982)

The Ties That Bind (1984)
Damned If You Don't (1987)
Sink or Swim (1990)
First Comes Love (1991)
Rules of the Road (1993)
Hide and Seek (1996)

The Premiere of

MURDER AND MURDER

BY YVONNE RAINER

Presented by

The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art &
The San Francisco Cinematheque

Yvonne Rainer in Person

Thursday, April 10, 1997—San Francisco Museum of Modern Art,
Phyllis Wattis Theater

MURDER and murder by Yvonne Rainer (1996); 16mm, color, sound, 110 minutes

Yvonne Rainer's seventh film is her most accomplished in years, full of the wordplay and visual flights of fancy that have always characterized her unique cinema. As her life progresses, so do her issues. This time around Rainer speaks through one of her characters: "I think after years of being repressed as a woman, she wanted to be repressed as a lesbian." This is the film in which Rainer comes out. Twice. Once as a lesbian and then a second time as a breast cancer survivor: one breast down, one to go. From the opening scene played to the Jaws soundtrack, this is no conventional treatment of disease or delirium.

This film tells the tale of two women, Doris (Joanna Merlin) and Mildred (Kathleen Chalfant), who find each other in "mid-life" and fall in love; for Doris, in her early sixties, it is the first time with a woman and she throws herself into it with abandon. The two are hardly left to themselves: they are constantly surveyed, criticized, ridiculed, or fretted over by a ghostly team of busybodies representing Mildred as a teenager and Doris's mother—long dead, but here resurrected in fine form. When mom isn't reminiscing about doing piecework in a corset factory, she's fretting over Doris and reassuring Mildred that everything will turn out okay.

Doris and Mildred don't have an easy time of it as they wend their way through a constant power struggle over turf, love, and independence. They even climb into a boxing ring to have a symbolic go at one another. The real test, though, comes when Doris discovers she has breast cancer and has to go into the hospital. The narrative is embellished with on-screen titles that provide statistics on women and cancer.

Lest anyone thinks this is some abstract inquiry, up pops Rainer herself as the film's no-nonsense emcee whose snappy tuxedo parts to reveal her mastectomy scare. Droll as ever, Rainer plugs away at the medical establishment in between letting Doris have her say on "eating pussy." Life for the postmenopausal woman ain't

dull. Yvonne Rainer has never acted her age, and she's not likely to start now. *MURDER and murder* is a stunning film that brings Rainer full circle to the power and energy of her early work. It will be a classic.

FIRST PERSON FILMS FROM COLORADO

Curator and Filmmaker Bruce Cooper In Person

Thursday, April 17, 1997—Center for the Arts

This evening filmmaker Bruce Cooper presents a regional selection of avant-garde works that bring to light emerging Colorado first person cinema makers from the Denver-Boulder area. Many of the artists are graduates of the film studies program at the University of Colorado, Boulder, where Stan Brakhage, Phil Solomon, and Don Yannacito teach production. "Presented silently, the films envision romantic themes: the search for self and love; the holy night when inward eyes open; purity, decay and death; the return to earth and to the stars. Irony and disillusion are evident, yet an inspired vision of truth and beauty unreels through each film." (Bruce Cooper)

Yellow (1991-96) by Bruce Cooper; 16mm, b&w, silent, 14 minutes (18 fps)

"Bruce Cooper's lovely light poem, *Yellow*, is a silent film. A rush of rich black and white imagery evokes a variety of experiences—a marching band, an Alaskan cabin, a snowstrom, fire festival, etc.—connected by exquisite shots of light reflected in the water. It's a spiritual journey, an investigation of peace."—M.S. Mason, *Rocky Mountain News*

Visions of Me (1994) by Joey Thomasik; 16mm, color, silent, 3 minutes

Night Rose (1994) by Timoleon Wilkins; 16mm, color, silent, 4 minutes

A chalky white-on-sepia portrait of my home town, Denver, Colorado, set in a rose garden and Greek-inspired "pavilion" in Cheesman Park. Night mixes with day in a dance of street lights, desolate-looking apartment buildings, plants that reach upward toward the sky. (TW)

First Hymn to the Night—Novalis (1994) by Stan Brakhage; 16mm, color, silent, 3 minutes (18 fps)

This is a hand-painted film whose emotionally referential shapes and colors are interwoven with words (in English) from the first 'Hymn to the Night' by the late 18th century mystic poet Friedrich Philipp von Hardenberg, whose pen name was Novalis. The pieces of the text which I've used are as follows: "the universally gladdening light...As inmost soul...it is breathed by stars...by stone...by suckling plant...multiform beast and by (you). I turn aside to Holy Night...I seek to blend with ashes. Night opens in us...infinite eyes...blessed love." (SB)

Discovery of the Crystalline (1991) by Eric Waldemar; 16mm, b&w, silent, 20 minutes

This film is a futuristic-archaic newsreel in which an expedition to the arctic has consequences that are both magnificent and alarming. (EW)

"...an H.G. Wells-style pseudo-documentary about an arctic expedition made entirely of footage Waldemar salvaged from educational and scientific films that were thrown out by a New York film library."—Alan Dumas, *Rocky Mountain News*

Tree of Life (1995) by Robert Schaller; 16mm, color, silent, 6 minutes (18 fps)

This film sets out to portray six phases of life using only the photographic image of a single tree (supplemented by several other neighboring trees), thus exploring the possibilities of altering our experience by changing the way we think rather than by changing our circumstances. This attention the experience of perception is amplified by the procedure of making the film, which was edited entirely in-camera (except for the black intervals between sections). (RS)

Triptych (1997) by Robert Schaller; 35mm to 16mm, b&w, silent, 3 minutes

This film displays 3 frames of abstract imagery side by side. Except for the final compositing onto one strand, the film is entirely hand-processed and printed, and uses a non-silver emulsion I have been working with, as well as principles of musical organization that I continue to apply to film. (RS)

Dissolution (1996) by Cori Chavez; 16mm, b&w, silent, 3 minutes

A hand-processed film that attempts to communicate the wordless human emotions that are associated with ending a long-term relationship. (CC)

Consolation #1 and Hope (1996-97) by Carl Fuerman; 16mm, b&w and color, silent, 4 minutes

Consolation #1 presented itself to me in a spurt after meditation of the possibilities of hand-painted film via application of developer and fixer to exposed film stock. Filled with a dullness of vision, and a funnelling down of belief that film is inherently dubious, this film appeared as a consolation to these feelings. (CF)

I had been hand-painting onto clear leader for several years during a period in which I had been unable to film or edit, primarily as a result of not having a belief in anything. Yet this hand-painted material continued to collect, and at one point some of it found itself together and became *Hope*. (CF)

Upper Blue Lake (1996) by Jim Otis; Super 8 to 16mm, b&w, silent, 15 minutes

Coming to grips with the land I know and need and love—the land of the west now largely, alas, landscape—via "pseudo-hyper-stereoscopy." Your eyes are 2.5 inches apart, giving viscerally felt depth perception to 25 feet. If your eyes were 400 feet apart, you'd see the solid forms of objects 3 miles distant and think your grasp extended a mile. I established a pair of eye points up to hundreds of feet apart and jogged between them with a camera, at each point shooting a few frames. Since usual depth perception is only out to 25 feet, we see anything in stereo as within that distance; mountains miles away are seen as close and, hence, small. The procedure of the shoot and jog, shoot and jog, takes days and days: time, too, is miniaturized; shadows creep and clouds boil. Seeing land as diorama and time as summary alienates, yet heightens awareness of place and process, fostering engagement. *Upper Blue Lake*, although not the most successfully pseudo-stereoscopic of several such wide-eyed studies, so enthralled me with its various qualities of light and atmosphere, I persevered. (JO)

• program notes compiled by Bruce Cooper •

THREE WOMEN, THREE VOICES

la vida: the strength within by Lawan Jirasuradej, *Lost in the Translation* by Ingrid Schulz,
Far From You by Samirah Alkassim

Ingrid Schulz and Lawan Jirasuradej In Person

Sunday, April 20, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

These three Bay Area-based women each use the cinematic medium to trace connections between present and past, between here and elsewhere, between self and other. While Thai filmmaker Lawan Jirasuradej's exquisitely staged portraits of women in various stages of their life create a vibrant and diverse fresco of female strength, German-American Ingrid Schulz seeks the nature of Post-War and Post-Wall Germany via the spirit of a wandering dead soldier and her own encounters with contemporary Germans and with German culture as reified by American and German television. Finally, Jordanian-American Samirah Alkassim uses the medium to engage with the image and memory of Egyptian singer and world renowned cultural icon Uum Kulthoum, provoking yet refusing our desire to be seduced. Each of the filmmakers is a recent MA or MFA graduate of San Francisco State's Cinema Department.

la vida: the strength within by Lawan Jirasuradej (1996); 16mm, color, sound, 20 minutes

la vida: the strength within is about the life journey of women from birth to aging. It uses rich color, vibrant stagings, and sensitive character portraits to depict real, everyday women on an epic scale. *la vida* is a luxurious look at women in different phases of their lives that helps us appreciate women's strength and spirit, and also provides true insight into aging and the process of life.

Each phase depicted in *la vida: the strength within* is a world unto itself: personal, particular. Rather than trying to generalize about "Woman" at a certain stage of life, *la vida* takes the opposite tack. Jirasuradej and her set designer, Jan Sing, used the histories, personalities, and passions of each woman to create sets which are really extensions of the women themselves: imaginary worlds that express documentary truth in a poetic way; specific inquiries that yield universal insights....

la vida is multi-ethnic and multicultural (in both cast and crew), but the person depicted in the film is not there to 'represent' her ethnic and cultural background. Again, the film relies on the strategy of looking deeply into the individual person. Race, ethnicity, and culture emerge, but are an indivisible part of the woman's identity, history, and expression....

la vida is an inspirational film. Its wisdom and its visual and spiritual beauty passes on to its viewers a positive feeling toward life, and gives them a sense of strength. By recognizing women as deeply complex, vibrant, and artistic, the film provides relief for those of us who have felt unseen and misrepresented. *la vida* also helps us to re-examine our culture's attitude toward aging and death, easing some of our fears and helping us to understand the life cycle and our place in it.—Corey Ohama

Lost in the Translation (1996) by Ingrid Schulz; 3/4 " video, color, sound, 26 minutes

I have chosen to dig into a subject that has been repressed by my parents' generation (those who lived in Germany during the Second World War). The unspeakable horror of Fascism and the Holocaust has caused many Germans from that generation to bury their memories. Most have not gone through a period of introspection and mourning. This generation's inability to confront and mourn their past has caused the post-war generation to inherit a sense of denial rather than one of loss. This legacy of denial and repression has created psychic structures which greatly impede the integration of World War II experiences by the newer generation into a meaningful personal history. This legacy has created an environment that fosters a point of view emphasizing belief in binary opposites and forms the sociopsychological basis for the search for scapegoats.

My ambitious attempt to dig into this unspeakable history and memory is my contribution to the creation of a space in cinema that confronts the legacy of Fascism and the Holocaust. My purpose in such confrontation is to find a way to uncover fragments from this hidden past to synthesize for myself a sense of 'German-ness'. I search for a way to mourn, accept and integrate the past rather than repress it.

For me this 'work of mourning' is a crucial personal process. My father was a tank soldier at the siege of Stalingrad. Both my parents disavowed the war. As a child growing up in the United States, German cultural identity was represented as a pastiche of German kitsch accepted by American culture. This contained both beauty and ugliness at once, but something always remained silenced and obscured. There has always been a sense of guilt over something unspoken—perhaps a fear of pride.

In many ways I made this film to uncover these amorphous cultural fears and memories, and to begin forming an identity for myself and others like me. I wanted to unravel the fabric of which my heritage consists and learn from what I found. As the theoretician Eric Santner says, 'One does not relinquish patterns of behavior, ideas, or fantasies simply because one is told they are wrong, immoral, or even self-destructive. To relinquish something requires an act of mourning, and mourning requires a space in which its procedure can unfold.' *Lost in the Translation* is my attempt to open such a space. (IS)

Far From You (1996) by Samirah Alkassim; 16mm, color, sound, 28 minutes

Far From You is about the mediation of desire and appropriation through the music of Umm Kulthoum, who was a gigantic star in the Egyptian music industry and played a huge role in determining the mood of Arab culture during significant geopolitical shifts of this century. I use the anachronistic quality evoked by the medium of black and white film and the charismatic figures of Umm Kulthoum and Gamal Abdel Nasser, who emblemize the Arab nationalist movement of the 50s and 60s, to raise the aesthetic and political questions of cultural appropriation, authenticity, and transference of memory.

By presenting images of Egypt, including the pyramids and architectural monuments that have been repetitively appropriated by Western photographers and filmmakers, I am also appropriating them to serve a critique of Orientalism. What is being critiqued is the tendency in documentary films about the Middle East and about icons to project a melancholic sentimentality onto the foreign landscape, to hyperbolize the Arab, and reduce that additional Other, the impenetrable star, to folkloric and mythical status. I am de-essentializing the icon Umm Kulthoum by changing her form and shape, alternately making the monumental miniature, and bringing us closer to her, opening her up so that we can actually see. All the technical and formal devices used to conduct my exploration and critique were selected in the service of this circumspection, wanting to comment on and break from the specularization of the object, of the traditional renderings of Umm Kulthoum, produced from both within her own culture and from without. There's a line in the film during an excerpt from Umm Kulthoum's film *Salaamah*, in which the voice-over projects onto the scene of her singing, "She wanted people to feel the meaning of her words, and used repetition and tone color to bring them closer." What is also being stated is that the film form is paralleling her style, using repetition and tone color to bring Umm Kulthoum closer, so that we may see her outside of the field of the aura.

The nostalgia invoked in this film, by the voice/image of the dead star, images of Cairo, of Nasser, and the 67 war, calls for a renegotiation of our relationship to distance. Here, the usual ordering and essentializing of experience is inverted in the option to travel through music and listen through crossing space, forging intimacy through these disjunctions: making palpable an uncompromising presence and its irrepressible absence, and finding a sense of home in this act. We are invited to see something that is not in the image, but at the juncture of image and sound—pictures that are not in the picture, but to which the picture points. The use of photography and its contrast with film, as well as the multiple layers of copying and processing of the image of Umm Kulthoum, undo the hyperbolic specularization of the female and appropriated Arab star. (SA)

FILMS BY CASWELL, ROSS & JONES

Filmmakers Helen Caswell, Rock Ross and Ed Jones In Person

Thursday, April 24, 1997—Center for the Arts

Tonight's program is curated and presented by Ed Jones and features work by himself and two other San Francisco filmmakers who are all well known for their long-time activities in and around 30 Berry Street (soon to be destroyed due to the new stadium) and in the Bay Area independent media community. Helen Caswell is a product of California farm culture who now explores ideas in the writing medium; the three pieces presented this evening are some of her little seen narrative gems. A long-time forerunner in the Bay Area's experimental arena, Rock Ross presents two raucous assaults on the senses. And finally, Ed Jones, a recent Phelan Award winner who has taught film and video in Santa Cruz and San Francisco and is also a musician and a sometime-corporate editor, presents several of his short videos from the last few years: a birthday card, swacked travelogue, talking back to tv, instructive media analysis and more.

Cake (1980) by Helen Caswell; 16mm, b&w, sound, 3 minutes

A film exercise in which Woody Herman's *Blue Flame* ignites a young man's tasty fantasies. (HC)

Naomi (1983) by Helen Caswell; 16mm, color, sound, 12 minutes

An experimental narrative about a born-again Christian minister who becomes infatuated with a married woman. (HC)

Fragrant Night (1987) by Helen Caswell; 16mm, color, sound, 19 minutes

An experimental narrative/tone poem in which teenage farm kids stay out all night looking for a lost dog. The film has been described as a cross between Terence Malick and Wim Wenders. Made with grants from the AFI and NEA. (HC)

Sosue me (no year) by Rock Ross; 16mm, b&w, sound, 7 minutes

My first surfing movie. I don't remember making it. (RR)

The Evil Vehicle of Accomplishment (no year) by Rock Ross; 16mm, color, sound on cassette, 3 minutes

My most recent work, it speaks for itself. (RR)

Soul Pollution (1996) by Ed Jones; video, color, sound, 4 minutes

Music video made for The Extruders, ex-members of Psychotic Pineapple. (EJ)

The Ballad of Dinky and Rascal, (1992) by Ed Jones with Helen Caswell; video, color, sound, 4 minutes

Music video made with Helen Caswell about her aunt's and cousin's dogs. (EJ)

Reflections on a Birthday, (1995) by Ed Jones; video, color, sound, 3 minutes

A video birthday card for Ruth Bradley. (EJ)

Mike Henderson at his Opening (1994) by Ed Jones; video, color, sound, 3 minutes

A video of the opening of a friend's painting show. (EJ)

Selected Excerpts from the 1992 Republican Convention (1993) by Ed Jones; video, color, sound, 8 minutes

Musings on televised politics in America. (EJ)

Curbing This Player (1995) by Ed Jones; video, color, sound, 5 minutes

A meditation on a curved window installed in the home of a litigious rich man by a friend's boyfriend. (EJ)

Rush to Bend Over (1995) by Ed Jones; video, color, sound, 4 minutes

Musings on televised politics in America. (EJ)

Athens On Hocking '93 (1994) by Ed Jones; video, color, sound, 8 minutes

A travelogue of Ohio combined with how-to tips on being a film festival guest. (EJ)

Media Studies: The Use of the Colon in Film and Video Titles (1996) by Ed Jones; video, color, sound, 12 minutes

Combines educational elements with sour grapes. (EJ)

DONNA CAMERON: A RETROSPECTIVE (1984-1997)

Donna Cameron In Person

Sunday, April 27, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Tonight the San Francisco Cinematheque presents a partial retrospective of the work of Donna Cameron, an artist whose films combine sculptural, painterly and photographic concerns into her own hand-crafted idiom. Much of her work involves a special paper-emulsion-on-film technique which she invented, creating uniquely cinematic and textured light-plays. "Donna Cameron works with memory, feelings, poetry, texture, and follows her intuition...If Donna can't make something one way, she'll find another. In a way she's a chameleon: all styles are fair game. But at the core, there's always a moral center." (Adrienne Mancina, *The Museum of Modern Art*)

Mobius I/Honigbiene II (1997); 16mm, color and b&w, sound, 8 minutes

A diptych. Filmicly, digitally, texturally, this light painting celebrates four seasons, especially the coming of spring. (Premiere) (DC)

The Clown (1997); 16mm, color, sound, 13 minutes

A clown's personal tale of woe is recounted in the third person. The clown's frustration and inner turmoil is alluded to by original paintings and charcoal drawings by the filmmaker. Her drawings are based on motion studies by Eadweard Muybridge, from his landmark 1887 work *Animal Locomotion*. (California Premiere) (DC)

Mosaic # 4 (1996); 16mm, color, sound, 4.5 minutes

"All in a summer's day"—as it happens 9 a.m.-9 p.m., July 3rd of any year, in any plain old place on earth. Shot on digital Hi-8, 4 frames at a time. One of many such studies by the filmmaker. Transferred to 16mm via rank. (California Premiere) (DC)

Dragon (1995); 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes

The dragon motif has always been an essential one in humanity's attempt to liberate itself from moral struggles. In this film light, the dragon glowers quietly, hopefully, through a vicious, tangled web of living (gargantuan plant) and recycled (paper emulsion) celluloid fibers. Shot on ECO, an extinct Kodak filmstock, hoarded in the freezer for over 10 years. Processed in Detroit. (DC)

Autumn Leaves (1993); 16mm, color, sound, 6.5 minutes

A reel of paper emulsion and fallen leaves unwinds amid calling birds, laughing children, and a recording of the filmmaker ripping and tearing papers. (Juror's Award, 1995 Black Maria Festival) (DC)

"In *Autumn Leaves*, Donna Cameron explores the spatial locus of the projector gate itself, seeming to shift our focus from within the camera, through the film and onto the world beyond the lens. Her skillful confusion of conceptual and perceptual fields can only be described as pure poetry."—Tom Drysdale, Artist & Founder, Photography Dept., Tisch School of the Arts, NYU

End (1987); 16mm, color, sound, 5 minutes

A paper emulsion color xerography collage. (DC)

"Brooklyn native Donna Cameron's films are warm, humorous and well-crafted, whether she's working with found footage, color xerox collage, or strictly naturalistic, semi-narrative imagery. The remarkable thing about her collage work is her sensitivity to the rapid flow of textures...Cameron's technique has evolved into a highly sculptural form of motion picture painting."—Helen Knode, *Pick of the Week*, *L.A. Weekly*

Unicorn (1994); 16mm, color, sound, 18 minutes

Presenting the unicorn, symbol of transformation. Shot in Europe and the USA. (DC)

Donna Cameron, a painter and filmmaker, has had three cineprobes and fourteen solo shows at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Over the last twenty-five years she has produced over eighty short films and videos. Her paintings have been represented by the Joy Horwich Gallery in Chicago and have been collected internationally. Donna Cameron's stories and photographs have been published by the *Miami Herald*, the *L.A. Times*, the *Manhattan Arts International* magazine and the *Independent*.

Cameron's films and videos are now distributed by the Museum of Modern Art Circulating Film and Video Library, Canyon Cinema, and Lightcome in Paris. They are included in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art and the Avery Fisher Media Center, the Bobst Library, and New York University. Cameron teaches production at NYU Tisch School of the Arts, School of Film and Television.

GEORGE AND MIKE KUCHAR'S
REFLECTIONS FROM A CINEMATIC CESSPOOL

A Publication/Screening Party with George and Mike Kuchar In Person

Saturday, May 3, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

The Kuchars make movies like rabbits having young—prolifically...Their sensuous use of color and camera angle not only work well within their own erotic terms but are, at the same time, satire on the erotic movie in general.—Los Angeles Free Press

*George and Mike Kuchar, twin brothers who don't even vaguely resemble each other, made their first film in 1954. It was in 8mm, entitled *The Wet Destruction of the Atlantic Empire* and produced in the bedroom of their Bronx home. They threw a projector beam on a wall and had the actors walk in and out of the beam, holding candles under their chins for additional lighting effect. *Wet Destruction* might have dampened, indeed destroyed, most careers, but for the teen-age Kuchars it was an oddity item that launched them into the avant-garde underground of film-making.—John Stanley, *SF Examiner**

*They've become living legends in the world of experimental film.—Roger Ebert, *Chicago Sun-Times**

For over three decades the irrepressible filmmakers George and Mike Kuchar have been making some of the funniest films in the U.S. Key figures in the alternative filmmaking of the 60s, the legendary Kuchar brothers have influenced generations of independent filmmakers. Tonight the Cinematheque celebrates the release of the Kuchars' latest collaboration, *reflections from a cinematic cesspool* (Zanja Press). In this autobiography, the brothers Kuchar let loose with a behind-the-scenes collection of hilarious memories, low-budget film-making philosophy, and practical tips on making films and videos. They candidly reveal their flickering universe and the famous and infamous who 'plop into it from time-to-time'. To top off the evening and to commemorate over half a century of filmmaking, George and Mike will present a surprise program of old and new films and videos.

George Kuchar has taught at the San Francisco Art Institute since 1971. He worked as a commercial artist while making 8mm and 16mm films which were embraced by the underground movie scene of the 1960s. During the 1970s, he began making sync-sound movies, and in the 1980s, began experimenting with video. Kuchar has won the Maya Deren Award from the American Film Institute, a National Endowment for the Arts grant, a Worldwide Video Festival First Prize Award, and a Los Angeles Film Critics Award. His work was honored at the 1991 San Francisco International Film Festival with a four-program retrospective. Two full-length programs of George's work are currently included in the collection of the British Film Institute, and several of his over seventy films and videos are

in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley, and the Anthology Film Archives in New York.

Mike Kuchar has also been making films and videos since the 1950s, having been involved in the underground, avant-garde film movement of the time. From 1972 to 1984, he taught in the film department of the San Francisco Art Institute, and he has also taught at the Collective for Living Cinema and the Millennium Film Workshop. Mike has lectured and screened at Yale and Princeton universities, the Carnegie Institute, the American Museum of the Moving Image, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. His work is included in the collections of the Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley and New York's Anthology Film Archives. Mike has also worked as a cinematographer for numerous independent features, and his cartoon art has been published and exhibited widely.

Films and Videos Screened By George Kuchar:

Ochoppug (16mm, color, sound, 17 mins.)
Back to Nature (16mm, color, sound, 10 mins.) 1976
Oasis of the Pharoahs (video, color, 13 mins.)
Aqueerius (16mm, b&w, sound, 10 mins.) 1980
Eclipse of the Sun Virgin (16mm, color, sound, 15 mins.) 1967

By Mike Kuchar:

Cupids Infirmary (video, color, sound, 30 mins.) 1992
The Bridled Dagger (video, color, sound, 20 mins.) 1997
Statue in the Park (video, color, sound, 19 mins.)

PHANTOM CINEMA

A Program of Experimental Work Co-Presented by the San Francisco International Film Festival, the San Francisco Cinematheque, and the Pacific Film Archive and curated by
Kathy Geritz, Pacific Film Archive and Steve Anker, S F Cinematheque

Dominic Angerame, Kerry Laitala, Greta Snider, and Timoleon Wilkins In Person

Sunday, May 4, 1997—Kabuki Theater
Tuesday, May 6, 1997—Pacific Film Archive

Cinema by its very nature is ephemeral, ending when the theater lights come up. "Phantom Cinema" investigates the mysterious territory between absence and presence, loss and times past. In *The Secret Story* by Janie Geiser, toy figures and old illustrations re-articulate lost narratives. Fragments of a life are re-exposed in Greta Snider's *Flight*, while Kerry Laitala's *Secure the Shadow* uses antique medical images of the disturbed body to develop a haunting meditation on mortality. Dominic Angerame's *Line of Fire* links telling details of his damaged body and destroyed home. Guy Sherwin's *Under the Freeway* is a subtle record of an urban site in daily flux. Stan Brakhage's *The "b" Series* is a hand-painted introspection on ephemerality and impermanence, and the inevitability of loss also figures in Timoleon Wilkins' *MM*. Finally, images culled from cinema's earliest days are magically transformed in Ken Jacobs' *The Georgetown Loop*.

The Secret Story (1996) by Janie Geiser; 16mm, color, sound, 9 minutes

The Secret Garden arose as a response to several beautifully decayed toy figures from the 1930s that were given to me as a gift. These figures, and other toys, objects and illustrations that I found from the period between the world wars, combined with several figures that I made in the spirit of these found objects, suggested a kind of unearthed hidden narrative which I have attempted to re-piece together, as if these figures were the hieroglyphs of a just-forgotten tongue. *The Secret Story* revolves around the central figure of a woman, and her girl-double, who looks

somewhat like a version of Snow White. She moves through a landscape of domestic images and family illness which culminates in an ecstatic walk in the forest, suggesting both the dark and the cathartic trajectories of the richest fairy tales. (JG)

Flight by Greta Snider (1996); 16mm, b&w, silent, 5 minutes

An imprint of my dad's photographs and some other things he left me...About the process of going to heaven. (GS)

Secure the Shadow (1997) by Kerry Laitala; 16mm, color and b&w, sound, 9 minutes

The stereographs' original function was to provide an index in order to properly identify a particular pathology. They now serve as repositories of evidence of lives lived, and the violence of disease provides the reason for their corporeal visage to have been rendered and embalmed in time. By placing them in a mythical historical context they have been re-animated, entrapped or free to roam on the surface of celluloid. (KL)

Line of Fire (1997) by Dominic Angerame; 16mm, b&w, silent, 6.5 minutes

In November of 1993 I was diagnosed as having coronary arterial disease. A subsequent angiogram revealed that open heart surgery was necessary and duly performed. This angiogram was filmed originally on 35mm motion picture film. In March of 1995 my apartment burnt down in the early morning hours and my girlfriend and I escaped with our neighbor down our rear fire escape as lethal smoke was enveloping us. I was able to return to the scene the next day in order to film the aftermath. This film is a blend of footage from these two episodes and explores the temporal nature of the lives we live. (DA)

Under the Freeway (1995) by Guy Sherwin; 16mm, color, sound, 17 minutes

Images and sounds recorded on the streets beneath a freeway in San Francisco, using a fixed camera and long takes. (GS)

The "b" Series (1995) by Stan Brakhage; 16mm, color, silent, 15 minutes

This film is a series of five little hand-painted and elaborately step-printed sections which are individually titled but so inter-related I've decided they should always be shown in this order together... I've attempted to represent [their shared context] by a small "b" for my name "Brakhage".

The film begins with Old Testament, a 2.5 minute historical section titled "*Retrospect: The Passover*" and its evolution of forms is meant to suggest the Biblical story from which the Jewish religious rituals evolve—an essentially blue-green phosphorescence of forms finally in flight through, yes, parted seas of paint and "armies of the night", as one might put it. "*Blue Black: Introspection*" is, then, the painted meditation upon the previous section—its forms rhythmically interspersed with some stately pauses of solid thoughtful darkness, like jewels of idea embedded in black velvet. The 3.5 minute "*Blood Drama*" section pulses with red, involves glyphic stitches of red amidst its phosphors of blue-greens, all forms tending to take thought-forms of the previous section through to recognition of internal body, the bloody meat of being human. The 4th section "*I am Afraid: and This Is My Fear*" is a direct reaction to the 3rd section. The "spark" of a "sky-scape" leads to the subsequent evolution of the same forms in "mental flight", as it were. The 5th and final section is the culmination of all previous visuals, the (by now) very recognizable forms of the original story, of inward speculation on narrative, of the disruption in a sense of a spill, or spell, of blood...It is an appropriately titled 3 minute section called "*Sorrowing*". (This section dedicated to Gregory Markopoulos) (SB)

MM (1996) by Timoleon Wilkins; 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes

MM is a film born spontaneously out of the dark corners of fear and desperation. I was spinning out of control toward an unknown future and new millenium when this footage congealed in a manner guided solely by properties of emotional release. Bruce Conner appears as the mythical pilot of our journey and the narrative follows a simple plot: birth, life and potential death—for both myself and for cinema. (TW)

The Georgetown Loop (1905/1996) by Ken Jacobs; 35mm, b&w, silent, 10 minutes

"Elegantly reworking some 1905 footage of a train trip through the Colorado Rockies, the dean of radical filmmaking printed the original image and its mirror side by side to produce a stunning widescreen kaleidoscope effect."—J. Hoberman, *Village Voice*

Proyecto ContraSIDA Por Vida Presenta

FIVE REVOLUTIONARY FILMS ABOUT
"FAMILIA Y PASIÓN"

Co-Sponsored by: San Francisco Cinematheque and Cine Acción
Curated and Presented by Janelle Rodriguez

Friday, May 9, 1997—PCPV, 2973 16th St. @ Mission

Pretty Vacant by Jim Mendiola

A tale of two cultures, a sassy and sabrosa cinema-novela about a punk-rocking Chicana whose guitars, gigs and zines keep interfering with la familia's annual pilgrimage to Mexico.

One Hundred Eggs a Minute (1996) by Anita Chang; 16 mm, b&w, sound, 23 minutes

A film that beautifully explores the struggle between values of self-sacrifice and the pursuit of happiness for a second-generation Chinese American woman.

Tick Tock Bio Clock by Lexi Leban and Julie X. Black

A frenzied and humorous panic attack about the ticking away of one woman's biological clock.

O Happy Day by Charles Lofton

A film using images of the late 60s and early 70s films to reassess the erotic elements of the Black Power movement and the revolutionary moments of the the gay movement.

Silencio by Michael Arago

Set in 1951, a young Filipino gets caught in the struggle between forced assimilation and family allegiance.

CHANTAL AKERMAN'S

NIGHT AND DAY

Chantal Akerman In Person

Sunday, May 11, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

If I have a reputation for being difficult, it's because I love the everyday and want to present it. In general people go to the movies precisely to escape the everyday.—Chantal Akerman

When I made my first film... I was interested not in style or form but in saying something that was on my mind... then I started to think about style and form, and then only about them... [A]nd then there are phases...as in painting. I passed through a phase in which it was inconceivable to be 'figurative' or 'narrative'; you had to go through abstraction. Now, with the conquest of the abstract, you can again make either the figurative or the abstract. But this figurative will never be the same again.—Chantal Akerman

Belgian filmmaker Chantal Akerman is one of the most prolific, versatile, audacious and controversial women working in film today, and her thirty-plus films are arguably the single most important and coherent body of work by a woman director in the history of cinema. Born in Brussels in 1950 to Polish Jewish parents, Akerman saw Godard's *Pierrot le fou* at fifteen and immediately felt 'a violent desire to make films'. Still a teenager, she went to film school at the INSAS in Brussels for four months, dropped out and started earning money to produce her first film by selling \$3 shares at the diamond market in Antwerp. The result was *Saute ma ville*, a thirteen minute black and white film in 35mm starring herself and completed in 1968. In 1971-72 Akerman went to New York for the first of many stays and there came in contact with the American experimental film scene, seeing the work of Warhol, Snow and Mekas at Anthology Film Archives. It was during this stay that she also began her long collaboration with the cinematographer Babette Mangolte. At the age of twenty-five and back in Europe, Akerman made what has been hailed as the feminist masterpiece of cinema and a paradigm of the much-desired alliance of feminism and anti-illusionism, *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles*. Her subsequent work crosses and mixes genres of all sorts—experimental, autobiographical, musical, documentary, psychodrama, etc., all with Akerman's characteristic formal and female audaciousness. Akerman is in town to show her recent self-portrait made for French television, *Chantal Akerman by Chantal Akerman*, at the San Francisco International Film Festival, and the San Francisco Cinematheque is honored to welcome her at our screening of her 1991 feature *Night and Day*.

Night and Day (1991); 16mm (original in 35mm), color, sound, 90 minutes

"Ten years after *Toute une nuit*, Akerman returns, very differently, to the notion of the cycle. *Toute une nuit* stretches out a single night by bringing ever more characters to this hot, orgiastic summer dark-to-dawn. But finally, albeit reluctantly, it concedes to the reappearance of day. In *Night and Day* (1991), the characters try to trick time. By refusing to sleep, Julie, the film's protagonist, rejects the notion of the natural cycle. In an attempt to balance night and day, her desire for her lover Jack and her desire for her lover Joseph, she lives the bliss of love as a kind of vagueness, a happier version of the liminal state of another Julie—the character Akerman herself plays in *Je tu il elle*. That earlier film's liminality and shifterlike character are somehow given a plot in *Night and Day*, through Julie's more obviously existentialist fiction of freedom. This simpler narrative of deterritorialized desire ends with Julie leaving the apartment she has shared with Jack, with a purposeful walk—she knows where she is going. ..."

—Ivone Margulies, *Nothing Happens: Chantal's Akerman's Hyperrealist Everyday*, 1996

"Insomnia has long been a basic element of Akerman's nocturnal poetics—especially in *Les rendez-vous d'Anna*, *Toute une nuit*, and *The Man with a Suitcase*. But until now Akerman's take on it has seemed troubled and neurotic. [...] In *Night and Day*, by contrast, insomnia seems a kind of precondition for utopian romance—a

sentiment expressed at the very outset by Jack and Julie as they lie together in bed: 'Are you sleeping?' 'No. Are you?' 'No.' 'You and I never sleep.' 'Never when we are together.' 'We like movement better.' 'Yes, it's true.' 'When I sleep, I don't live.' 'Neither do I.' 'Right now, I prefer living.' 'So do I.'

"[...] The musical-comedy like rhythms of their dialogue are far from accidental. Roughly speaking, *Night and Day* is Akerman's third and most successful attempt at capturing the feel of a musical—after *Les années 80* (1983), an inspired feature-length trailer for one, and *Golden Eighties* (aka *Window Shopping*, 1986), a charming if somewhat disappointing fulfillment of the earlier prospectus. This one succeeds in part because it's less literal in this endeavor than its two predecessors.

"[...] One might conclude that Akerman has taken a big step with *Night and Day* toward making a conventional narrative feature. But the painterly persistence remains throughout the film; Jack and Joseph's physical resemblance, the repetitions of various camera movements and angles, the similarities of Julie and Joseph's various hotel rooms, and the recurrences of some Paris locales [...] are all manifestations of this. And these rhyme effects have thematic as well as stylistic consequences. (Julie's nightly routines become increasingly ritualistic, and at times the two male lovers seem interchangeable.) On the other hand, it might be argued that these rhyme effects are ultimately less painterly or narrative than they are musical; if the film's music gradually decreases in importance, and disappears entirely in the final sequence, one might argue that the film's rhythms have by this time been taken over by certain visual refrains. (Throughout the film, the feeling of summer nights in Paris is so palpable that one can almost taste it, and this delicious taste may be the film's loveliest achievement in painterly persistence.)[...]"

—Jonathan Rosenbaum, *The Reader*, March 1993

Chantal Akerman Filmography:

- Saute ma ville (Blow up My Town)*, 1968, 35mm, 13 minutes
L'Enfant aimé ou Je joue à être une femme mariée (The Beloved Child or I Play at Being a Married Woman), 1971, 16mm, 35 minutes
Hotel Monterey 1972, 16mm, 65 minutes (silent)
La chambre 1 (The Room 1), 1972, 16mm, 11 minutes
La Chambre 2 (The Room 2), 1972, 16mm, 7 minutes (silent)
Le 15/8, 1973, 16mm, 42 minutes, co-directed with Samy Szlingerbaum
Hanging out-Yonkers 1973, 1973, 16mm, 90 minutes (unfinished)
Je tu il elle (I You He She), 1974, 35mm, 90 minutes
Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles, 1975, 35mm, 200 minutes
News from Home 1976, 16mm, 85 minutes
Les Rendez-vous d'Anna (Meetings with Anna), 1978, 35mm, 127 minutes
Dis-moi (Tell Me), 1980, 16mm, 45 minutes
Toute une nuit (All Night Long), 1982, 35mm, 89 minutes
Les Années 80 (The Eighties), 1983, video/35mm, 82 minutes
Un Jour Pina m'a demandé (One Day Pina Asked Me), 1983, 16mm, 57 minutes
L'Homme à la valise (The Man with the Suitcase), 1983, 16mm, 60 minutes
J'ai faim, j'ai froid (I'm Hungry, I'm Cold), 1984, 35mm, 12 minutes
Family Business: Chantal Akerman Speaks about Film, 1984, 16mm, 18 minutes
New York, New York bis, 1984, 35mm, 8 minutes (lost)
Lettre de cinéaste (A Filmmaker's Letter), 1984, 16mm, 8 minutes
The Golden Eighties (Window Shopping), 1985, 35mm, 96 minutes
La Paresse (Sloth), 1986, 35mm, 14 minutes
Le Marteau (The Hammer), 1986, video, 4 minutes
Letters Home, 1986, video, 100 minutes
Mallet-Stevens, 1986, video, 7 minutes
Histoires d'Amérique/(American Stories/Food, Family and Philosophy), 1988, 35mm, 92 minutes
Les Trois dernières sonates de Franz Schubert (Franz Schubert's Last Three Sonatas), 1989, video, 49 minutes
Trois strophes sur le nom de Sacher (Three Stanzas on the Name Sacher, by Henri Dutilleux), 1989, video, 12 minutes

Nuit et Jour (Night and Day), 1991, 35mm, 90 minutes
Le Déménagement (Moving In), 1992, 35mm, 42 minutes
Portrait d'une jeune fille de la fin des années 60, à Bruxelles (Portrait of a Young Girl from the Late Sixties in Brussels), 1993, 35mm, 60 minutes
D'Est (From the East), 1993, 35mm, 107 minutes
Un divan à New York (A Couch in New York) 1996, 35mm, 109 minutes
Chantal Akerman by Chantal Akerman, 1996, video, 63 minutes

Notes Written and Compiled by Irina Leimbacher

FOR DANIEL BY ERNIE GEHR

Ernie Gehr In Person

Thursday, May 15, 1997—Center for the Arts

Gehr's quiet and thoughtful personality is all over his films, which can best be described as human and humanizing. His film expression is a means to grow as a person, and one can't help participating in his personal odyssey while sitting in the darkness of a screening room.

—Steve Goldstein, *Film/Tape World*

Ernie Gehr began making films in the 1960s and has since completed more than 24 films. A self-taught artist, Gehr has established himself as one of the true masters of film form, and his graceful sense of style and subtle, poetic sensibility have deeply affected the cinematic avant-garde. His films have screened internationally, and he has received awards and grants from numerous institutions. Having lectured and taught internationally, Gehr has been a member of the film faculty at the San Francisco Art Institute since 1988. Previous Cinematheque screenings of his work include a four-part retrospective of his work in 1993 which was accompanied by the publication of a monograph, *The Films of Ernie Gehr*, and the Adeline Kent Award Screening in 1995. Tonight the Cinematheque presents the latest of his works, *For Daniel*.

For Daniel (1996); 16mm, color, silent, 72 minutes

Before my son was born, friends would ask, "Will you make a baby movie now?" "Of course not!" I would answer. Yet, right after Daniel was born I found myself filming him, not with the intention of making a *film*, but with a need to retain, hold on to some moving images of this early and miraculous stage of his life. I kept filming. Sort of snapshots with a movie camera. Very much in the tradition of home movies: all focused on my subject and no concern with film form or syntax. Time passed. The rolls kept accumulating. Three or four months later, they were developed. As I began to look at the footage I sensed the need to keep on filming as well as the possibility of giving the material a form of its own and eventually perhaps sharing the work with a few other individuals in the world. While I continued to film as before (not systematically but intermittently, as the occasion and the need presented itself), tentative shape containing footage of Daniel's first three months was arrived at in early 1993. After a couple of viewings, it became apparent that limiting the work to that period of Daniel's life would not suffice. In addition, there was something about my approach to film here that attracted me and I felt that I needed a larger expanse of time to work with. Sometime in 1995 the earlier edited material was revised and expanded. In the summer of 1996 the decision was made to conclude *For Daniel* with footage recorded in May 1996.

Having just completed the work, what can I say?...First of all I need some distance to see and re-experience the film from the outside in order to be able to articulate in words what so far I have pursued instinctively and intuitively, working out and resolving issues largely through felt perceptions and using verbal language minimally.

The title implies the work is for my son and that I am for him. My main interest in the film is Daniel. In conjunction with that, one thing that moves me about the work is its casual, intimate, quiet, person-to-person, home-movie character; its focus on observing and celebrating little moments of everyday life, such as a yawn, a smile, an expression of pain, a gesture here, a half gesture there, quiet acknowledgments of growth and metamorphosis, the passage of time. (EG)

FILM & VIDEO WORK BY BETH B

Beth B In Person

Sunday, May 18, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

A forerunner of the New York New Wave scene of the late 1970s, Beth B first garnered critical acclaim co-directing short films and features. These works, such as *Black Box* (1979) and *Vortex* (1983), updated the film noir sensibility of classic B movies, and starred such performers as Jack Smith, Lydia Lunch, and John Lurie. Throughout the 80s, B produced and directed a number of feature films, shorts, and music videos, including *Dominatrix Sleeps Tonight* (1984), *Salvation!* (1987), and the 12-minute video *Belladonna* (1989) which was made in collaboration with artist Ida Applebroog and shown at the Whitney Biennial of the same year.

Beth B's work has consistently investigated institutional and domestic power as it relates to the individual in a cultural context. B's work in film, video, graphics, and editorial journalism explores the divisions between the poetic and the horrific. Her engagement of the macabre and of violence in general, purposely aims at re-sensitizing a world numbingly riddled with images of destruction and despair. Voicing what is taboo and confronting that which is forbidden, B gives center stage to repressive factors which, when left unspoken, lead to both interpersonal and systemic violence.

Continuing to work in an astonishing array of media and investing each with a razor sharp critical edge which dissects social attitudes and psycho-sexual dynamics, Beth B's recent work includes two feature-length films—the most recent of which is *Visiting Desire* with Lydia Lunch, showing at the Roxie Theatre this week; multi-media installations (*Portraits & Playthings*, a series of photographs dealing with female genitalia, is now touring the country); a bilingual newspaper; television programs and several short videos. For tonight's program she will show a video version of the Super 8 *Black Box*, made with Scott B, as well as videos from two of her multi-media installations—*Out of Sight*, *Out of Mind* and *Under Lock and Key*.

Black Box (1979) by Beth and Scott B; Super 8 (shown on video), color, sound, 25 minutes
Black Box was inspired by an Amnesty International report of a torture device—known as "The Refrigerator"—manufactured in Houston for use by foreign regimes "friendly" to the U.S. (Chile, Uruguay, Iran under the Shah). The Bs constructed their own version of the refrigerator for their half-hour Super 8 film which intercuts a tightly scripted narrative with footage from television and still pictures of torture victims in Uruguay.

"A passive innocent (Bob Mason) leaves his tawdry room—neon Big Brother sign blinking ominously through the window, *Mission Impossible* flickering on the TV, and amorous girlfriend draped across the bed—to be kidnapped Patty Hearst-style by a gang of punk thought-police. Menaced by an ogreish mad scientist, stripped, hung upside down, and tormented by surly, 'shut up and suffer', Lydia Lunch, Mason is finally crammed into the dread refrigerator, where he, and we, are bombarded by a 10 minute crescendo of sound and light.

"[...] Working in the tradition of Orwell, Hitchcock, and Burroughs, the Bs conjure up a parallel sense of seedy and malignant totalitarianism. The film's title evokes the whole artifice of filmmaking and filmviewing, as its depiction of theatricalized suffering recalls one of the movies' most enduring spectacles. In a formal sense, *Black Box* reflects on the mind control exerted by every 'thriller' from *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* to *Halloween* (a favorite of theirs). The least that can be said for the Bs' blatant identification with their film's thought-police is that, given their roles as

directors, it's not hypocritical. Although my hunch is that the film misses a beat in its box-to-box progression, the Bs' light machines repressed content may be the punk *Wavelength*. [...]"—J. Hoberman

Under Lock and Key (1993); video, color, sound, 30 minutes

Commissioned by the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, the installation piece *Under Lock and Key* combines video and audio elements with a sculptural installation to address issues of imprisonment, isolation, betrayal, and violence. Within four enclosures resembling solitary confinement cells, visitors hear recorded descriptions of enclosure and isolation—quotes from Jack Henry Abbott's chilling account of his life behind bars, *In the Belly of the Beast*. On the exterior wall are two video projections. On one, five individuals recount their own stories of coping with domestic trauma. B asked photographers Nan Goldin and Tomas Gaspar, performance artists Philip Horovitz and Robbie McCauley and painter Jerry Kearns to compose letters to persons in their lives who had abused or attacked them. Now, years following the original incidents, they speak directly to their attackers. On the adjacent screen, a young man offers seemingly random, yet disturbing comments revealed in the end to be excerpted from interviews with serial killer Ted Bundy, portrayed by actor Clark Greg. Phasing in and out with periods of blackness and silence, the dual video images address viewers directly, establish a dialogue between one screen and the other, and offer a provocative counterpoint to the soundtrack inside the barren cells. In the video screened this evening, the two videos have been intercut and combined into one.

"*Under Lock and Key* carries a tremendous amount of psychic baggage—the soul-destroying weight of a faltering culture. It presents the various kinds of force and violence that are used on the battle fronts of class, racial and sexual warfare. Ironically it forces itself upon the viewer. And it succeeds in its intentions: it opens the door to the prison-like psyche of society's victims."—Dennis Toth, *Columbus Guardian*

Out of Sight, Out of Mind (1995); video, color and b&w, sound, 5.5 minutes

Created for Temple Gallery in Philadelphia, *Out of Sight, Out of Mind* combines video projection, audio texts, and sculptural components, coordinated to construct a provocative, associative approach to social ideologies, particularly forms of insanity. The installation is composed of four elements: two large sculptures—an 8' by 9' rotary machine, an obsolete device constructed for use in psychiatric hospitals during the 1820s, and 6 padded isolation cells; inside the latter the viewer hears a selection of audio tapes of texts by well-known artists who were at one time deemed mad or committed suicide (e.g. Van Gogh, Artaud, Valerie Solanas, Marilyn Monroe, Kurt Cobain); and through a glass window of each cell, the viewer can see a large-scale video projection.

The video portion of the installation, which is screened tonight, consists of talking-head interviews of people talking about an unidentified boy who committed a violent act. Intercut with black and white archival footage of acrobatic dare-devils, the story and characters reveal themselves with devastating results: Eric Smith, a 13 year old boy murdered a 4 year old child. The court refused to allow Eric Smith the insanity plea and convicted him of second degree murder as an adult.

"Merging fact and fiction, B offers an indictment of a system in which media sound bites catapult anti-social behavior into the limelight without apparent consciousness of the consequences of murderous actions. Something is rotten in the state here, and B forces us to face this."—Kathy Brew

THE CINEMA OF OWEN LAND

Owen Land In Person

Thursday, May 22, 1997—Center for the Arts

The most impressive avant-garde filmmaker of the 1970s was George Landow. Since 1969, when he released Institutional Quality and thereby found a place for his astonishing verbal wit in his cinema, he has produced a coherent body of aggressively original films and has asserted, through those films, a unique position in opposition to the very genre in which he works...

The problem [addressed in his films] is the relationship of the self to truth. Rather than "solving" the problem of defining its limits, Landow's films have dramatized the elusiveness of that truth, the instability of the self, the inadequacy of cinema to represent either the self or truth, and the urgency of the need to do this very thing for which it is ill-equipped, and to do nothing else. Landow cultivates the paradox. It is not surprising that his films are enthusiastically received even by those whom he attacks; for he instinctively locates the axis of truth at the point of maximal absurdity in his films.

—P. Adams Sitney

Tonight the Cinematheque welcomes Owen Land (a.k.a. George Landow) on his first return to the Bay Area since 1985. This evening's program features a selection of the works that have comprised his widely-hailed career and which were made between 1965 and 1980. A painter as well as a filmmaker, Land recently finished a script for a new film which he hopes to shoot in the Bay Area.

The Film That Rises to the Surface of Clarified Butter (1968); 16mm, b&w, sound, 9 minutes

A breakthrough film in the American cinema, one of the first that calls attention to the conditions of its own making and existence.

"...as profoundly strange as its title."—James Stroller, *Village Voice*

Remedial Reading Comprehension (1970); 16mm, color, sound, 5 minutes

Two kinds of material are used: 1) Material in the tradition of the "psycho-drama" or "personal film;" 2) Material of the sort used in industrial, educational, or advertising film. Questions are raised about the necessity of using acceptably "artistic" material to make a work of art, as well as about the relationships between "personal" and "impersonal" works. (OL)

"Land's film does not try to build up an illusion of reality, to combine the images together with the kind of spatial or rhythmic continuity that would suggest that one is watching 'real' people or objects. It works rather toward the opposite end, to make one aware of the unreality, the created and mechanical nature, of film."—Fred Camper, *Film Culture*

New Improved Institutional Quality: In the Environment of Liquids and Nasals a Parasitic Vowel Sometimes Develops (1976); 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes

A reworking of an earlier film, *Institutional Quality*, in which the same test was given. In the earlier film the person taking the test was not seen, and the film viewer in effect became the test taker. The newer version concerns itself with the effects of the test on the test taker. An attempt is made to escape from the oppressive environment of the test—a test containing meaningless, contradictory, and impossible-to-follow directions—by entering into the imagination. In this case it is specifically the imagination of the filmmaker, in which the test taker encounters images from previous Land films... As he moves through the images in the filmmaker's mind, the test taker is in a trance-like state, and is carried along by some unseen force... At the end of the film the test taker is back at his desk, still following directions. His "escape" was only temporary, and thus not a true escape at all. (OL)

Wide Angle Saxon (1975); 16mm, color, sound, 22 minutes

Earl Greaves is polishing the grille of his Cadillac Coupe de Ville. He used to work as an assistant cameraman for a television station. On one program there was an interview with "Lamb," a messianic Jewish folk duo comprised of Joel Chernoff and Rick "Levi" Coghill. Lamb's main purpose is to minister to Jews, that's why they use Jewish terminology like calling Jesus by his Hebrew name Yeshua. Earl isn't Jewish, but hearing Joel and Rick made him decide to read the gospels—and he is convinced... Earl is troubled by the possibility that his own possessions might be a barrier between him and God. One evening he goes to a film showing at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. The film is long and boring, consisting of shots of red paint being poured on "a wide variety of objects," the last of which is a hotplate. Earl is so bored that his mind wanders all over the place. One of the places it wanders to is the realization that he is in fact too attached to his possessions, and he determines to do something about it... (OL)

I'm often asked questions like: "Why did you choose the color red in the paint pouring sequence in *Wide Angle Saxon*?" and am unable to answer them. Recently I've come to understand that this inability to discuss my motivations behind specific choices is a result of an unconscious desire to avoid tampering with one of my primary sources—my own unconscious. (OL)

On the Marriage Broker Joke as Cited by Sigmund Freud in Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious or Can the Avant-Garde Artist Be Wholed? (1979); 16mm, color, sound, 18 minutes

"Two pandas, who exist only because of a textual error, run a shell game for the viewer in an environment with false perspectives. They posit the existence of various films and characters, one of which is interpreted by an academic as containing religious symbolism. Sigmund Freud's own explanation is given by a sleeper awakened by an alarm clock."—P. Adams Sitney

Noli Me Tangere (1983); video, color, sound, 6 minutes

"...sexual and technological anxieties converge in a single obsessive image."—Amy Taubin, *Village Voice*

The Box Theory (Japanese title: *Ireko Riron*) (1985); video, color, sound, 16 minutes

STIFF AND VEGAS

A CAVEH ZAHEDI DOUBLE FEATURE

Caveh Zahedi In Person

Sunday, May 25, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Basically, Zahedi is willing to make the biggest fool of himself in the world if it'll make for a better film. He has no qualms over baring his blemishes on celluloid. The inner conflicts and contradictions resting within us all come tumbling into our collective laps watching Zahedi emotionally undress ...

—Michael Mordler, *Filmmaker Magazine*

This evening the San Francisco Cinematheque is honored to present director-actor Caveh Zahedi in person with both his feature-length films, *A Little Stiff* (co-directed with Greg Watkins) and *I Don't Hate Las Vegas Anymore*. With a number of experimental and narrative shorts behind him—one of which we'll see as a film-within-a-film tonight. Caveh began making his idiosyncratic feature-length narratives while still in film school at UCLA. Playing with the fine line where the real and the performed intersect and converge, Caveh's formal concerns are somewhat reminiscent of Jean Rouch's early notions of *cinéma vérité*—to film life not as it is but as it is provoked—and of the Iranian cinematic tradition of Kiarostami and Makhmalbaf (of which, ironically, he was ignorant when making his films); yet the camera and our eyes are directed not at others but primarily at himself.

His unrelenting honesty, his penchant for self-exposure, his disrespect for conventional boundaries, ("I have no respect for privacy in life. I don't respect it in other people and I don't demand it for myself"), his faith in the metaphysical origin of events, and his ironic yet loving humor make watching his films an experience which is at once provocative, irritating, and sublime. ---Irina Leimbacher

A Little Stiff (1991) co-directed with Greg Watkins; 16mm, b&w, sound, 85 minutes

A Little Stiff is a comedy about infatuation. A young man has a problem: he cannot tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty, especially in relationships. His therapist encourages him to try to dwell with the uncertainty. He tries to do so, but his attempts are a little stiff. As much a meditation on cinema as it is a film about unrequited love, *A Little Stiff* ultimately achieves a kind of zen apotheosis by virtue of its singular attention to the subtle details of everyday life.

"Minimal in budget as well as in style, form, and content—the entire production is said to have cost a mere \$10,000—this black-and white 16mm tragicomedy was shot by two UCLA film students chiefly on and around their own campus. Both filmmakers play themselves in the movie, as do all the other characters; the slender plot is a literal restaging of events that actually happened, with everyone re-creating his or her original role. A single subject—Zahedi's unrequited love for, or infatuation with, Erin McKim over the space of what appears to be two or three months—is the focus of practically every scene and shot. The film's minimalism is not merely the result of its limited number of settings, camera angles, characters, and dramatic situations but also of the limited number of emotions and behavioral patterns available to the characters. [...] The film's multiple repetitions lampoon the monotony of romantic obsession and the monotony of a life-style that simultaneously supports and thwarts such an obsession." —Jonathan Rosenbaum, *The Chicago Reader*

I Don't Hate Las Vegas Anymore (1994); 16mm, color, sound, 83 minutes

I Don't Hate Las Vegas Anymore is a real-life comedy about a filmmaker who uses a road trip to Las Vegas with his father and half-brother as a means of proving the existence of God. He does this by setting out to make a film with no preconceptions as to what the film will be about. He posits that if God exists, and if God is indeed omniscient, omnipotent and omnibenevolent, then God will make sure the film is entertaining. But the filmmaker's faith is weak, and he very quickly starts to doubt God's existence in the absence of any clear signs from God. In his growing panic, he decides to try to force God's hand and precipitate events. Amazingly enough, he succeeds.

"Part docu-diary, part theological quest, part family therapy session, Caveh Zahedi's second feature, *I Don't Hate Las Vegas Anymore* is a one-of-a-kind talkfest that's as compelling as it is abrasive. Infectiously funny, morally questionable, and excruciatingly egocentric, this elaborate home movie stands to cleave any audience neatly down the middle."—David Rooney, *Variety*

"*I Don't Hate Las Vegas Anymore* is an enchanting, intelligent mood elevator of a film with the staying power of a Raymond Carver story and the rare hilarity of the Tobacco Industry's squirming liefest to Congress. ...[It] is a playful, naive vision—elegant in its simplicity—that will follow behind you for days, always just out of sight, making you smile."—Gary Danchak, *The Riverfront Times*

"As for the film itself, I did not like it. ... Caveh is the one that coerces his family to do bad things in front of the camera. He claims that he was never close to his family, and I understand why. Caveh is just some irritating drudge that I just want to shoot. He totally takes advantage of people."—film student

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Caveh Zahedi was born in 1960 in Washington, D.C. He went to Yale University to study philosophy but spent most of his time there making short films and experimenting with hallucinogens. After college, he decided to go to France to work with Jean-Luc Godard, but Godard politely declined, as did François Truffaut, Eric Rohmer, Jacques Rivette and the rest of the French New Wave. Undeterred, Caveh got a job as a film critic, and was soon making obscure, unpopular and unremunerative films.

A sudden nostalgia for the U.S. led Caveh to champion *Ghostbusters* as the greatest film of all time, an opinion for which he was fired from his job. Penniless and baffled by the French intelligentsia's utter disinterest in him and in his work, he decided to return to the U.S. to attend UCLA film school, hoping to make more commercially viable films. Instead, he made *A Little Stiff*, a feature-length exercise in understatement, in which he re-enacted his unrequited love for an art student by persuading the real-life art student to play herself (and by persuading her then-boyfriend to play himself as well).

Much to his surprise, *A Little Stiff* was invited to premier in competition at the 1991 Sundance Film Festival. The film received rave reviews and was one of only two American features chosen for the New Directors/New Films at the Museum of Modern Art in New York that same year. *A Little Stiff* received a limited U.S. theatrical release, a nationwide video release and a late-night broadcast from German television station WDR. Just this year it was also bought by the Sundance Channel.

After making *A Little Stiff*, Caveh wrote a screenplay about his family's obsession with gambling for which he received several modest productions grants. In fact, the grants were so modest that he was forced to throw out the screenplay in order to keep down costs. The result, *I Don't Hate Las Vegas Anymore*, premiered at the Rotterdam Film Festival and was awarded the Critics' Prize. It went on to offend audiences worldwide.

Caveh recently received a Guggenheim Fellowship and a grant from the now defunct National Endowment for the Arts Media Program to make *I Am A Sex Addict*, a re-enactment of his ten-year addiction to prostitutes. The film promises to be his boldest and most personal to date.

Notes Compiled by Irina Leimbacher

RIVERGLASS

A RIVER BALLET IN FOUR SEASONS

Andrej Zdravic In Person

Thursday, May 29, 1997—Center for the Arts

Andrej Zdravic began making films in 1973, inspired by his passion for music and for nature which has forever marked his work. In the course of his many journeys, the filmmaker explored the spectacles of the planet to rediscover an innocence of the eye by elevating natural elements to an emotional leitmotiv. Are we to see in Zdravic a manifestation of new age cinema, an allegiance to a pagan ritual, or a metaphysical reflection of a sage amidst a world that went mad? In any event, we are taken by the magnificence of the images heightened by delightful sonorities, mixing music and natural sounds. The films of Andrej Zdravic are a liturgy from which we emerge appeased, for we return from a different world, a world where the energy is spectacle; illuminated, imbued with—alas, too evanescent—serenity

—Jean-Michel Bouhours, Centre Pompidou

Riverglass (V steklu reke)—*River Ballet in Four Seasons* (1997); Beta, color, sound, 40 minutes

"I filmed *Riverglass* with the camera immersed in the aerial clarity of the river Soca (Slovenia). *Riverglass* is not a documentary film about Soca. The crystalline river itself is a medium, its energy colours and rhythms breathing in music-like harmony are a source of philosophical and spiritual insights. The river is like a liquid lens, a looking-glass, through which we perceive, perhaps for the first time, the magical world of turquoise volumes, flying bubbles, palpating sun membranes, dancing stones...reminiscent of a *river ballet in four seasons*.

"*Riverglass* is not burdened with spoken word. I created its music score with natural sounds of water cadences and the surrounding sonic atmosphere. This film is the result of my everlasting fascination with the therapeutic

force of movement in nature that contains universal principles of life and a great potential for a new, different kind of narrative cinema."—Andrej Zdravic

"What is most striking about Zdravic's work...is a vivid sense of how the frame of the screen traps—and thus compresses and heightens—the energy of movement. And there's a converse awareness for the ephemerality of his image-subjects which are destroyed and remade in movement."—Amy Taubin, *Soho Weekly News*

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Born in Ljubljana in 1952, Andrej Zdravic received his education in Ljubljana, Algiers and the USA, studying film and sound at the State University of New York at Buffalo. He has created more than 25 personal films in which he explores elements as diverse as water, volcanoes, microsurgery, and cities....His films have been featured in more than a hundred one-person shows in the US and Europe, and he had retrospectives at the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 1995 and at Cankarjev Dom Cultural Center in Ljubljana in 1996. He is also the author of an original concept *Time Horizon*, embodied in two permanent video installations: *Water Waves* which he created in 1993 for the Exploratorium in San Francisco and which has been seen by over two million visitors, and *Secrets of Soca*, made for the Triglav National Park Information Center in Trenta, Slovenia in 1995. He has also taught filmmaking at universities in Buffalo, Milwaukee and San Francisco.

HARSH 70S REALITY:

FILMS BY ROBERT FRANK & ALAN ARKIN

Sunday, June 1, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Life Dances On (1979), by Robert Frank; 16mm, color and b&w, sound, 30 minutes

...the films I have made are the map of my journey through all this living. It starts out as a 'scrapbook of footage'. There is no script. There is plenty of intuition. It gets confusing to piece together these moments of rehearsed banalities, embarrassed documentation, fear of telling the truth and somewhere the fearful truth seems to endure. I want you to see the shadows of life and death flickering on that screen. —Robert Frank

Life Dances On is one of Frank's most personal and emotional works because it deals directly with his family and close friends. The film is dedicated to his daughter Andrea and to his friend and collaborator Danny Seymour, both deceased. The film is composed of delicately balanced, intuitive moments that merge Frank's own sense of loss for two people close to him with several filmed portraits of those who share his life, including his family and people on the street in New York City. He tries to picture what he can not see by photographing the wind. With no apparent beginning or end, the film appears as a slice of life, cut from his intimate observations. Combining his experiences with few references to their continuity, Frank details the passage of time and its minute effects, colored by the movement of film itself. His wife June Leaf asks "Why do want to make these pictures?". Throughout the film he tries to answer and later writes, "Because I'm alive."

Little Murders (1970) by Alan Arkin; 16mm, color, sound, 100 minutes

Starring Elliot Gould, Donald Sutherland, Marcia Rodd, Alan Arkin. Screenplay by Jules Feiffer.

1971's *Little Murders* is a seldom-seen gem still awaiting critical rediscovery. Perhaps it was too bleak for that still flower-powered original era, and perhaps it remains too deadpan for current excavators of 60s and 70s cinematic weirdness. Based on Jules Feiffer's Broadway play, it's a cruel lexicon of urban-paranoid indignities as terminally perky NYC lass Marcia Rodd plucks photographer Elliot Gould from his mire of passive amorality. This rescue operation proves fateful, however, as the bride's optimism falls prey to everyday awfulness, and her family (Vincent Gardenia, Elisabeth Wilson, etc.) proves as malleable as molten steel within reach of the Michigan Militia. The funny-horrific fable seemed extreme in High Nixonian days; now its intended absurdism suspends by a thread above everyday city life. It's a great movie—barely touched by the era's modishness, by turns hilarious, freaky, and plain serious. —Dennis Harvey, *SF Bay Guardian*

WHY LIVE HERE?

AND OTHER FILMS BY MARK STREET

Mark Street In Person

Thursday, June 5, 1997—Center for the Arts

Mark Street joins us this evening in San Francisco—where he used to live—all the way from Brooklyn—where he now lives—with a new piece made while living in Tampa called *Why Live Here?*. Examining three people's relationships and reactions to the places they live, it is his most recent and longest work to date. Mark has made nine film or video pieces in the last seven years, and these range from abstract hand-manipulated material to recontextualizations of found footage, to personal diary and documentary work. Attempting to investigate new terrain with each work, Mark's projects include a graphic silent film for three projectors (*Triptych*, 1992), a diary film (*Lilting Towards Chaos*, 1991), and a reworking of pornographic footage (*Blue Movie*, 1994), among others. Over the last eight years he has worked as a film lab technician, an animation cameraman, a bike messenger and a college professor. He now lives in Brooklyn with filmmaker Lynne Sachs and their daughters, Maya and three-week-old Noa Street-Sachs. Tonight the Cinematheque will screen two older works, *Missing Something Somewhere* and *Winterwheat* along with *Why Live Here?*

Missing Something Somewhere (1992); 16mm, color, sound, 17 minutes

A film made by exposing print stock without a camera. *Missing Something Somewhere* is a textured celebration of that which can't be apprehended, or burdened with specific meaning. Three visual chapters appear, each with its own rhythm, each suggesting a different sense of place. Snatches of narrative and fragments of memories brush up against each other as truncated images burst into being and then disappear again just as quickly. (MS)

Winterwheat (1989); 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes

Made by bleaching, scratching, and painting directly on the emulsion of an educational film about the farming cycle. The manipulations of the film's surface create hypnotic visuals while also suggesting an apocalyptic narrative. (MS)

Why Live Here? (1996); 16mm, color, sound, 50 minutes

Why Live Here? explores three characters' reactions to their environments—San Francisco, Florida and Montana. In the film each character develops a particular relationship to place. One moves back to Montana to help with a family business, another moves to San Francisco for the cultural climate, and a third moves to Tampa, Florida for a temporary job. All wonder why they are where they are, and what they might be missing elsewhere. Through the musings of the three characters, the film considers notions of home and community in an age when people move all over for all reasons. (MS)

Mark Street's Selected Filmography:

Winterwheat (1989); 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes

Lilting Towards Chaos (1990); 16mm, color, sound, 21 minutes

Echo Anthem (1991); 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes

Missing Something Somewhere (1992); 16mm, color, sound, 17 minutes

Triptych (1992); 16mm, color, silent, triple projection, 13 minutes

Excursions (1994); 16mm, color and b&w, sound, 26 minutes

Blue Movie (1995); 16mm, color, sound, 5 minutes

Why Live Here (1996); 16mm, color, sound, 50 minutes

SPECTACULAR WOMEN

Josef von Sternberg and Luther Price

Sunday, June 8, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Tonight's program pairs two fantasy creations of female exotica, Luther Price's new tour-de-force feature *A* (1996, 79 min., super-8mm, sound) and Josef Von Sternberg's *The Scarlet Empress* (1934, 109 min.). Luther's most ambitious film to date (*Roses are red, blood is black*, L.P.) reveals the fantasies of 'Edie,' a character unleashed by the obsessions created through countless hours spent watching brilliant women movie stars of the past. *The Scarlet Empress* is one of Sternberg's most bizarre and beautiful concoctions, his lushly stylized vision of Marlene Dietrich as Catherine the Great in Czarist Russia.

The Scarlet Empress (1934) by Josef von Sternberg; 16mm, b&w, sound, 109 minutes

"I returned to the treadmill to make the last two of the seven films with [Marlene Dietrich]. These last two, in which I completely subjugated my bird of paradise to my particular tendency to prove that a film might well be an art medium, were not bad, but audience and critics turned thumbs down. I took note of that with deep regret. *The Scarlet Empress*, the penultimate film, deserved to be successful by any standard then existing or now prevalent, but with few exceptions it was greeted as an attempt to assassinate a superb actress. The film was, of course, a relentless excursion into style, which, taken for granted in any work of art, is considered to be impardonable in this medium. The tapestry of the Russia of Catherine the Great was evoked in all its grandeur, though it was a recreation and not a replica. The story of the rise of a guileless young princess to a mocking and ruthless empress could not be dull even if it were derailed for a moment to show a locket of her faithless lover falling from branch to branch of a wintry tree to dangle for a second before it drops into the snow. As the now enraged gentlemen of the jury pointed out, every single scene bore my imprint."—Josef von Sternberg

"The coming of the Code to the Hays Office in no way inhibited [von Sternberg's] sexual fantasies but seemed to spur them to new heights. *The Scarlet Empress* begins with the dreams of the sweet, blonde, seven-year-old child who later becomes Catherine the Great of Russia. The child's nighttime visions are sado-masochistic fantasies, including the agonizing screams of tortured men on the rack and, in what may be the most de Sade-like image ever filmed, the hanging of male bodies inside huge bells, so that their swinging legs and heels can bang against the bells and send their reverberating peals out over the town and countryside...

"What is equally striking about *The Scarlet Empress* is that it is essentially a silent film. Von Sternberg reveals his roots in the visual richness of the silents by shooting whole scenes with only musical accompaniment: the spectacular wedding ceremony that alternates long shots of the immense cathedral, its columns and candles, with agonizingly immense close-ups of Miss Dietrich's face shot through her lace veil; the Bacchanalian wedding feast with its sensational traveling shot spanning an immense table covered with steaming broths, littered plates, and the sugared carcasses of beasts. Most of all like the silent film, *The Scarlet Empress* does not attempt to tell its story with dialogue (or even with pictures). The film probably devotes more screen time to printed titles than any film made since 1930."—Gerald Mast, *A Short History of the Movies*

A (1996) by Luther Price; Super 8, color, sound, 70 minutes

"Roses are red, blood is black..."—Luther Price

"This Super 8 feature, scored with scratchy lounge music, shows the fantasies of 'Edie' (played by the director), a frozen-faced drag queen in a fleabag apartment who spends her time rehearsing dramatic entrances and being 'courted' by men who seem to exist in some unrelated space. Price's juxtapositions are often hilarious and inspired—witness sampled footage of Lassie racing to 'rescue' poor Edie from somewhere far outside the narrative."—Gary Morris, *SF Weekly*

The narrative structure of *A* is determined by its primary reference, Andy Warhol's film *Lupe* with Edie Sedgwick, which distills the story of Lupe Velez, Hollywood star and famous suicide, into a series of extended tableaux. Much as Warhol eschews the traditional dramatic, mimetic function of narrative in order that the "star quality" or narcissism of a performer might become the foundation of a second-order, metaphorical narrative, an acting through rather than of subjects, Luther Price performs through Edie Sedgwick, implicating her in the narrative which she inhabited. Price's "Edie", a spastically sexy drag queen, her face frozen into a rictus-like grin, obsessively restaging fantasy sequences and repeating gestures past meaninglessness, recalls both the formal violence of the gender transgressions of Factory transsexuals and the willful vapidness of Edie Sedgwick.

Luther Price's style is characterized by excess, a visceral spilling over in all aspects of his work which defines a paradoxical and ambivalent relationship to the often self-contradictory positions he adopts. Simultaneously ridiculous parody and serious psychodrama, *A* both valorizes and excoriates its subject and themes, acting out a violent disgust for the posturing it cherishes. The trashy kitschiness of his sets and their pathetically inadequate attempts to glamour, the awkward staginess of the performances, the hokey found or appropriated images, coalesce into an astonishingly subtle, emotionally powerful meta-narrative of abject desire, pathos and ego-destroying narcissism.

Price's gestures and studied, self-conscious relationship to the camera recall quite strongly the work of Jack Smith, especially his roles in Ken Jacob's films *Blonde Cobra* and *Little Stabs at Happiness*. This similarity is strengthened by the peculiar psychosis of the primary "Edie" character, reminiscent of the disturbing tone to Jack Smith's voice in his rambling, irrational monologues. Price also references the work of Kenneth Anger, especially *Scorpio Rising* and *Fireworks*, through the reiterative, fetishistic quality of the editing, a strangely similar tone to certain aspects of the camerawork, and the restaging of some shots, notably a Navy sailor with a sputtering Roman candle marking his phallus.

Program Notes by Brian Frye

VIPER 96

NEW EXPERIMENTAL WORK FROM EUROPE AND JAPAN

Programmed by Irina Leimbacher

Thursday, June 12, 1997—Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

The VIPER Film and Video Festival held in Lucerne, Switzerland is one of Europe's premier showcases for experimental media. In last October's festival the Bay Area was amazingly well-represented with works by several local artists including Bruce Conner, David Sherman, Vicki Funari, John Turk, Lynn Hershman, and 2nd Place Winner in the International Program, Barbara Klutinis, among others. In the spirit of creating a space for dialogue between artists working on different continents, tonight's show brings some of the best European and Japanese work from last year's festival here to the Bay.

The selection screened tonight is not intended to be representative of the festival as a whole, but rather is the idiosyncratic fruit of my own three days at the festival as an audience member, and my subsequent ability—or lack thereof—to track down artists and works about which I felt strongly. Several of the pieces in the festival were either on 35mm film or in other media which we at the Cinematheque cannot show (including the 1st Place Winner of the International Program, Eija-Liisa Ahtila's *If 6 Was 9*, which was available either on 35 mm film or on 3 synced video projectors). Additionally, all the video works I've selected were on BETA masters, but unfortunately are being screened tonight on VHS. I *have* tried to show work from a variety of countries, work which plays with and expands upon a variety of genres, and work by young emerging video artists as well as by more seasoned filmmakers.

VIPER (the name originates from the combination of Video and PERformance) started in 1979 as a weekend for Super 8 films, organized by a small group of freaks and fans of experimental film and performance art. From quite early on, VIPER included video as an artform and was regularly showing experimental work. VIPER has built up a reputation as being the first stop for visually innovative media in Switzerland, and its focus is not on a specific genre or a specific medium but rather on works which one might call border-crossers, works which use diverse media depending on the artist's approach to their subject. The festival has also always included mixed-media-work and is considered to have a critical and cutting-edge perspective on the current multimedia-world.

VIPER's current framework consists of several simultaneous competitive and non-competitive sections held over a week-long period every year in Lucerne, Switzerland. There is a large competitive International Program (with two awards—one for film, one for video); a competitive 'Swiss Video on display' section (also with an award); a 'Swiss Video Focus' section (carte blanche for Swiss Video Artists); and, alongside these, a changing thematic program consisting of lectures, panel discussions, performances, project-presentations (of websites, CD ROM etc.) and a wide-ranging program of films and videos, which together allow participants to delve into a number of questions raised by the topic. Last year this thematic section was entitled 'Simulation/Stimulation', a reflection on the transformation of human sensory perception in the context of the ever-increasing rate of media development, and it included a wide range of media works, performances, online presentations and a panoply of international guest speakers and panelists—performers, writers, artists, critics, activists and even Terrence McKenna!

VIPER does its best to support artists whose work is selected for the program with subsidies for travel-expenses and accomodation. Due to changes in the location of the festival in Lucerne, the next festival has been postponed until April 1998, with entry forms available starting in November '97. VIPER's homepage (<http://www.viper.ch>) will be updated in July.

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Zone (1995) by Takashi Ito, Japan; 16mm, color, sound, 13 minutes

I created an image-collage of memory, fantasy, and desire. I try to express in this work a real image of myself. (TI)

Takashi Ito studied film at Kyushu Institute of Art and Technology with Toshio Matsumoto and has made several award-winning short films.

ORWA (1995) by Esther Schlicht and Petra Trefzger, Germany; video, color, sound, 13 minutes

ORWA is about the biggest film factory in the former Eastern world. The technical standards in this huge factory (about 8000 employees, most of them women) were very low. Some machines were 60 years old. When we started with our research in 1995, the factory was almost closed down. No film was produced anymore. Our interest was not so much the social consequences of the closing, but the value of this extreme kind of work itself. What is work worth and what does it mean not to see the product? How can one get rid of the darkness, and how do the senses adjust to the darkroom? In a way it is also a reflection on media, trying to make a film about the making of film. The 'birth' of film can never be documented, because the light necessary for making pictures would destroy the silver font. [...] The moment we arrived in Wolfen (**ORWO** means **OR**iginal **WO**lfen) was a historical moment. The era of production was over and the era of museum had not begun. The video plays with this contradiction: making a film about a site where you are not allowed to turn the light on in a vacuum of history. (PT)

Esther Schlicht and Petra Trefzger have made 3 videos and a 16mm film together while studying at the College for Art and Design in Karlsruhe. **ORWA** grew out of their research into the post-reunification changes in Eastern industry and the socialist way of working. Their most recent collaboration is a film about the oldest sugar factory in Germany.

Weg Van Het Vlees (1996) by Marten Winters, Netherlands; video, color/b&w, sound, 14 minutes

A poetic story based on childhood memories. Taking place in a small village in the very north of the Netherlands (Friesland), the video tells about a closed community and the strange things that happen there. The main theme is the death of animals and people and a little boy who is questioned about that. The Dutch title of this film, roughly translated as "the way of all meat," has three meanings, the first referring to the way meat is produced—"a calf becomes a cow, a cow lives for some time, goes to the butcher, gets consumed, etc."; the second is "to go away from meat"; and the third, "to have a fascination for meat." (adapted from material by Marten Winters)

Marten Winters is a young artist working in many media: drawing, painting, sculpture and installations as well as video. He is currently working on a multimedia 'opera' and multimedia installations.

Bus Stop (1995) by Matthew Robinson, Great Britain; video, color, sound, 2 minutes
Waiting for the bus to come...A comic video. (MR)

Matthew Robinson did post-graduate studies in Electronic Imaging at Duncan of Jordanstone College, University of Dundee. He has made numerous videos and installations.

Thought, Language and Communication (1995) by Hannu Puttonen, Finland; video, b&w, sound, 27 minutes
Internet is the most revolutionary step in media since Gutenberg. World Wide Web is the fastest spreading means of communication. So what? [...] We are so closely stuck with our screens and mouses on the numerous cool routes around the Net, that we have totally forgotten what's going on in real life or whatever we used to call it. As the language empties itself of substance and becomes replaced by hypnotic chants and unintellectual slogans, "Internet," "Information Super Highway" represent telling examples of the mantras of techno believers. [...] *Thought, Language and Communication* demythologizes the rhetoric of electronics and tears down the hype discourse and utopian slang of Nethematics. [...] It's trying to calm down the hype and laughing at the revolutionary rhetoric. In order to do this, I consciously chose the archaic 60s style of shooting the images, in order to avoid all the clichés of techno visuals. (HP)

Hannu Puttonen has made numerous documentaries, shorts and music videos, many of which reflect on current media and communication practices, and now works in interactive multi-media which, with its convergence of technologies paradoxically represents "a return to richer, pre-print modalities of expression, as if we were coming to our senses after the anaesthetic of monochrome words."

Departure on Arrival (1996) by Barbara Meter, Netherlands; 16mm, b&w, sound, 22 minutes
Departure on Arrival is merging of past and present, in moments which appear and disappear. Shot on 8mm, enlarged to 16mm, with many parts re-worked through optical printing: a wealth of personal and varied material, its form fragmented, and yet a unity. (BM)

"...*Departure on Arrival* draws the viewer into a world which is both historically specific and powerfully emotive. The film gives a strong sense of a European life, possibly though not necessarily Jewish, lived in the middle and latter parts of the present century, with references further back: to Imperial Germany and to the succeeding inter-war period. [...] Meter achieves a materiality in this film which is central to the way in which it deals with transience. She allows us to feel both the uniqueness of a life, its particular memories and referents, and to appreciate at the same time the way most kinds of experience are held, either more or less widely, and with infinite variation, in common."—Nick Collins

Barbara Meter has been making films—documentaries and features as well as experimental works—since the early 70s. She was recently an Artist In Residence at the San Francisco Art Institute.

Notes written and compiled by Irina Leimbacher

With many thanks to Conny Voester, VIPER Artistic Director, without whom this program would not have been possible, who provided the background information about VIPER, and who sends her regards to the Bay Area media community.

PRATIBHA PARMAR

NEW LESBIAN WORK & SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS

Pratibha Parmar In Person

Sunday, June 15, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

The Cinematheque is honored to have radical documentary and fiction filmmaker Pratibha Parmar with us this evening from London with a selection of some of her earlier groundbreaking works as well as a sneak preview of *Jodie: An Icon*. Parmar's work has been celebrated for the sophisticated, intelligent and engrossing way it consistently deals with questions of oppression, race and sexuality. Her style and choice of subject matter are determined by diverse aesthetic influences, from Indian cinema and cultural iconography to pop promos and 70s avant-garde films. Using the poetic and the performative to explode stereotypes and to create a vision so forceful and empowering that one cannot help but be transformed, Parmar's work has always challenged traditional documentary form. In 1993 Parmar was the recipient of the Frameline Award, and her films and videos have won awards in numerous countries and festivals. She just finished a short on lesbian love and cybersex entitled *Wavelengths* which we would have screened this evening were it not still in the lab, and she is currently in pre-production on a feature film, *Crossover*, which is in script development with the actress/writer Rita Wolf.

Sari Red (1988); video, color, sound, 11 minutes

Made in memory of Kalbinder Kaur Hayre, a young Indian woman killed in 1985 in a racist attack in England, *Sari Red* eloquently examines the effect of the ever-present threat of violence upon the lives of Asian women in both private and public spheres. In this moving visual poem, the title refers to red, the color of blood spilt, and the red of the sari, symbolizing sensuality and intimacy between Asian women.

Khush (1991); 16mm, color, sound, 24 minutes

"Khush" means ecstatic pleasure in Urdu. For South Asian lesbians and gay men in Britain, North America, and India (where homosexuality is still illegal) the term captures the blissful intricacies of being queer and of color. Inspiring testimonies bridge geographical differences to locate shared experiences of isolation and exoticization but also the unremitting joys and solidarity of being "khush." Accentuated by beautifully lit dream sequences, dance segments and a dazzlingly sensuous soundtrack, this uplifting documentary conveys the exhilaration of a culturally-rooted experience of sexuality.

"*Khush* is lyricism and documentary, art and commentary, and an important lesson in social history."—Noreen Barnes, *Bay Area Reporter*

Double the Trouble, Twice the Fun (1992); video, color, sound, 24 minutes

A rare and lively examination of disability and homosexuality as it affects both women and men, *Double the Trouble, Twice the Fun* advocates acceptance rather than pity for the participants of this video. Interviews with a wide range of disabled lesbian and gay people are intercut with dramatic recreations and performances.

Jodie: An Icon (1996); 16mm, color, sound, 25 minutes

Jodie is a fast paced, breezy look at the transatlantic phenomenon that has made Hollywood actress Jodie Foster an icon for lesbians who identify with, adore and celebrate the screen personas of her remarkable career. Fans and queer cultural critics share their favorite "iconic" moments, giving illuminating lesbian readings of Foster's key films which trace the charismatic actor's progression from early tomboy parts as a child star to mature performances depicting active, strong-willed women with attitude.

Pratibha Parmar Filmography

Wavelengths (1997)

Jodie: An Icon (1996)

Memsahib Rita (1994)

Khush (1991)

Flesh and Paper (1990)

Bhangra Jig (1990)

<i>The Colour of Britain</i> (1994)	<i>Fostering and Adoption</i> (1989)
<i>Warrior Marks</i> (1993)	<i>Memory Pictures</i> (1989)
<i>Taboo</i> (1993)	<i>Sari Red</i> (1988)
<i>Double the Trouble, Twice the Fun</i> (1992)	<i>Reframing AIDS</i> (1987)
<i>A Place of Rage</i> (1991)	<i>Emergence</i> (1986)

Notes written and compiled by Irina Leimbacher

*(unless otherwise noted, film descriptions from the Women Make Movies catalogue.
Women Make Movies distributes most of Parmar's work in the US.)*

SECOND GLANCES:

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SEASON

Thursday, June 19, 1997—Center for the Arts

Tonight we resume our "Second Glances" series of year-end highlights, a chance to see some of the new or recently-rediscovered films from this past season's programs (October, 1996—March, 1997). Our Year in Review continues on Sunday and features an added bonus—the special premiere of Stan Brakhage's remarkable *Yggdrasill Whose Roots Are Stars in the Human Mind*.

Scotch Tape (1962) by Jack Smith; 16mm, color, sound, 3 minutes

"A master sense of spiritual nothingness... the most recent explosion of a major creative force in cinema has in this film filled a New Jersey junkyard with life and movement and spiritual weightlessness."—Jonas Mekas

B/Side (1996) by Abigail Child; 16mm, b/w & color, sound, 38 minutes

B/Side is an experiment in entering imaginatively the delirium of New York's Lower East Side. Framed by footage of the encampment locally known as Dinkinsville, where some of the homeless of Thompkins Square Park settled after the riots of June 1991, the movie begins with the encampment's first night and ends with the fire and subsequent destruction of the lot in October of the same year. *B/Side* has been selected for the 1997 Whitney Biennial.

"Through both cinematic and emotional means, Child keeps her subjects and objects in a sustained and melodic forward motion, both temporal and spatial, to achieve a tight web of dramatic tension. If possession brings a kind of erosion of feeling, Child's use of distance brings to her subjects not sentimentality but sensation, and with sensation, true intimacy. In *B/Side*, a methodology [of looking] becomes the thing itself; the viewer is implicated as witness and part." —Jan Meisner, *New York Talk*

Smoke (1995-1996) by Pelle Lowe; S8mm, color, sound, 25 minutes

I was looking for work when I began *Smoke*, and subject to more than the usual daily invasions of privacy. The more menial the job, the more lengthy and demeaning the interrogation. No news that contemporary capital relations require the obliteration of identity and one's sense of place in the world. Something's changed. Something's horribly familiar. (PL)

SECOND GLANCES 2 — SEASON HIGHLIGHTS
AND YGGDRASILL BY STAN BRAKHAGE

Sunday, June 22, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Part 2 of the Cinematheque's exhibition year in review through this calendar (Fall 96—March 97) continues tonight with season highlights by Nathaniel Dorsky, Marie Menken, Elise Hurwitz and Robert Fenz. Also included is the Bay Area premiere of Stan Brakhage's intricate *Yggdrasill Whose Roots Are Stars in the Human Mind* (1997).

1) *Triste* (1976-1996) by Nathaniel Dorsky; 16mm, color, silent, 18 minutes

In *Triste*, because the images are a complicated variety of things from normal life, seen very carefully, the challenge became to create a montage that in each moment could not be reduced to verbal or conceptual interpretation—therefore opening to the viewer a greater sense of the present moment. (ND)

Shot in California in the 1980s, *Triste* marks a significant achievement in the filmmaker's development of a mature film language that reveals our daily iconography through a series of "unseen" connectives. An evocative directness of camera is combined with an off-rhymed montage to enliven the screen itself into a speaking character.

2) *Arabesque for Kenneth Anger* (1961) by Marie Menken; 16mm, color, silent version, 4 minutes

Menken made this film for Anger in thanks for his help in shooting one of her films in Spain. It was filmed using single frame techniques in the course of one day at the Alhambra in Granada, Spain, allegedly while Anger pointed out details of the Alhambra to her. Menken animated the Moorish structures with a whirling camera and quick-changing focus.

3) *Bagatelle for Willard Maas* (1961) by Marie Menken; 16mm, color, silent version, 5 minutes

A more serious film than *Arabesque*, *Bagatelle* attempts to synchronize into a lyric statement some observations on Versailles...which like Willard is very precious. Also rather naughty and rather wicked. (MM)

"Marie Menken's fountains are the fountains of life. Marie Menken's Versailles is the Versailles of death. The beauty of this film is the alternation of the fountains and Versailles death. Only Marie Menken would have the subtlety, sensibility, sensitivity, receptivity to fuse and fertilize the classical paradoxes in such an immediate visual apotheosis."—Charles Boultenhouse

4) *Yggdrasill Whose Roots Are Stars in the Human Mind* (1997) by Stan Brakhage; 16mm, color, silent, 18 minutes

"Yggdrasill in northern mythology, the world tree, an ash, representing all living nature, which connects heaven, earth, and hell."—*Oxford Companion to English Literature*

This film, a combination of hand-painting and photography, is a fulsome exposition of the themes of *Dog Star Man*. In that early epic I had envisioned The World Tree as dead, fit only for firewood; and at end of *Dog Star Man* I had chopped it up amidst a flurry of stars (finally Cassiopia's Chair): now, these many years later, I am compelled to comprehend Yggdrasill as rooted in the complex electrical synapses of thought process, to sense it being alive today as when Nordic legendry hatched it. I share this compulsion with Andrei Tarkovsky, whose last film *The Sacrifice* struggles to revive The World Tree narratively, whereas I simply present (one might almost say "document") a moving graph approximate to my thought process, whereby The Tree roots itself as the stars we, reflectively, are. (SB)

5) *Metal Cravings* by Elise Hurwitz (1996); 16mm, b&w, silent, 6 minutes

Emulsion dripping off the frame. Made from the desire to coat emulsion unevenly across film, tired of Kodak's product. Rough, uneven film that wouldn't get the stamp from Inspector #1. (EH)

6) *Vertical Air* by Robert Fenz (1994-1996); 16mm, b&w, sound, 28 minutes

Vertical Air, with soundtrack by AACM member Leo Smith, is an electric look at America. Images attack from every angle—the perspective of a bird in flight, or a scarring insect. Music and image exist side by side, individual and equal. (RF)

THE DARK SIDE OF GLAMOR

WILLIAM E. JONES' *FINISHED*

William E. Jones In Person

Programmed by Joel Shepard

Co-Presented with the San Francisco International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival

Wednesday, June 25, 1997—Roxie Theatre

"You're finished in this business." These are the words that Alan Lambert never wanted to hear. As a performer in gay pornography, Alan knew that his time as a hot commodity was limited, and he acted on this knowledge in a way that has its own grotesque logic. He did not want to experience the eventual decline that comes with aging, so he killed himself—at age 25—in Montreal, Quebec.

Finished, admittedly initiated by Jones' lust, tries to answer a host of questions surrounding the unanswerable "why" of Lambert's final act. A man who listened to Mozart while he turned tricks in his apartment and had bookshelves filled with Marx, Lambert reportedly once told a porn-film co-star that he was "superior to most human beings." He espoused radical but confusing political theories, eagerly anticipated the fall of capitalism, and was obsessed with the apocalypse. Most of the revelations paint him as insufferably pretentious. But the film goes beyond Lambert's life. It offers pungent critiques of society's definitions of masculinity and gender. It challenges the aesthetics of porn, even as Jones admits their power. But *Finished* delivers its most devastating blows in showing how politics, commerce, sexuality, and the individual are engaged in a deadening if not deadly dance. As Jones observed, "Commodities borrow their aesthetic language from human courtship, but then the relationship is reversed and people borrow their aesthetic expression from the world of commodity."

William E. Jones was born in Canton, Ohio, and now lives in Los Angeles. He teaches film production at California Institute of the Arts. His works include the short video, *Other Families* (1992) and the feature-length film, *Massillon* (1991).

Finished (1997); 16mm, color, sound, 75 minutes

Finished examines the life of Alan Lambert, a young gay porn actor who flamboyantly committed suicide in public. He left behind an intricate suicide note, over a dozen films (including *Boot Camp* and *Pool Boy*), and many friends and lovers. Setting out to make a cautionary film about the vanity of contemporary gay culture, director Jones found a much deeper story. Using haunting, frozen images of Lambert and the desolate places he worked and lived, the filmmaker weaves an emotional life story—attempting to make sense of a life cut tragically short, and of his own obsessions. *Finished* is a potent reflection on the ephemeral nature of glamour and the dark power of the moving image.

BEYOND ASIAPHILIA BY VALERIE SOE

Valerie Soe In Person

September 25, 1997—Center For the Arts

Why do I make art? Mainly because I'm annoyed that with upwards of fifty channels available on cable tv, there's still nothing to watch. As a species we surely must be able to come up with something more thought-provoking than reruns of The Partridge Family. With that attitude I've gone about making my own tv, since I can't find anything I like made by the people who supposedly know how.

—Valerie Soe

Valerie Soe is a writer and award winning experimental videomaker living and working in San Francisco. Her video installation *Binge*, recently exhibited at the Armory Center for the Arts in Pasadena, CA in the exhibition *Muses*. Soe also writes art criticism and has been published in *Afterimage*, *High Performance*, *Cinematograph* and *The Independent*, among others. She curated the exhibiton *Girl To Woman: Stories For the New Feminism* at the University of California Irvine's fine arts gallery and has programmed several shows at Artist's Television Access and the San Francisco Cinematheque on teen videomakers. She is also on the Board of Directors for Film Arts Foundation and is a founding member of X-Factor, an experimental film and videomaker coalition. She chairs the film/video program at the California State Summer School for the Arts and is currently a member of the faculty at San Francisco State University.

"ALL ORIENTALS LOOK THE SAME" (1986); video, color, sound, 2 minutes

A brief exploration of the title phrase, this tape takes a common misperception and turns it on its head, provoking the viewer to confront his or her own prejudices and misconceptions about Asian Pacific Americans and the contradictions inherent in those beliefs. (VS)

Black Sheep (1990); video, color, sound, 6 minutes

Using the technique of direct address, this piece tells the story of the artist's 'black sheep' uncle, examining the creation of difference within and without a marginalized community. (VS)

Walking the Mountain (1994); video, color, sound, 2 minutes

This videotape was the main element of an *ofrenda* to my aunt Lula, who died from a nosebleed at age four in Phoenix, AZ. The installation, consisting of sand, cacti, magenta taffeta, video and text, recounted the sad fate of my grandparents' cherished second daughter, born into a climate too arid for her genotype. The piece used cacti hanging on the wall and surrounding the video monitor as a metaphor for human tenacity, and lamented the inability of Lula to adapt successfully to her new homeland. On the righthand wall the legend 'STAY HYDRATED' reiterated the first rule of human survival, one which Lula was unable to maintain because of her environment, age and circumstances. (VS)

Picturing Oriental Girls: A (Re) Educational Videotape (1992); video, color, sound, 12 minutes

Geisha girls, china dolls and dragon ladies populate this visual compendium of representations of Asian women in American film and television. Juxtaposed with text from mail-order bride catalogs, men's magazines and popular literature, these clips from over 25 films and television programs explicate the orientalism and exoticism prevalent in mass media images of 'oriental girls'. (VS)

Beyond Asiaphilia (1997); video, color, sound, 14 minutes

Beyond Asiaphilia looks at miscegenation, lust, masculinity, and Hong Kong cinema. As a Chinese American kid raised in the California suburbs, I had limited contact with Asian male role models. Now that I'm smitten by Chow Yun-Fat's singular way with a gun, I've fallen in love with Hong Kong.

Through film clips, first-person narration, and interviews with various Asian American males, *Beyond Asiaphilia* explores our culture's rapidly changing definition of masculinity, exoticism, desire and power. (VS)

Full Contact (1992) by Ringo Lam; 35mm, color, sound, 99 minutes

"Lam's understanding and use of violence makes the film both effective and disturbing. He puts us in such close proximity to the violence that the spray of blood lands directly on the camera lens. Additionally, he often places the camera behind his victims, knowing that exit wounds are more disturbing than the entry wounds other filmmakers generally focus on. Working with action director Lau Kar Wing, Lam creates some vibrantly choreographed action sequences where physical grace and efficiency alternate with messy, brutal and irreversible violence...The adrenaline-pumping violence's epic proportions and Jeff[Chow Yun Fat] and Judge's[Simon Yam] larger-than-life rivalry moves the film into a self-indulgent hyper-realism that suspends time in order to revel in characterizations" —Beth Accomondo & Grant Foerster, *Hong Kong Film Magazine*

Valerie Soe Videography:

"ALL ORIENTALS LOOK THE SAME" (1986)

Black Sheep (1990)

Cynsin: An American Princess (1990)

Destiny (1991)

Heart of the City (1992)

Mixed Blood (1992)

Picturing Oriental Girls: A (Re) Educational Videotape (1992)

Walking the Mountain (1994)

JACK SMITH'S NORMAL LOVE

**Expanded Restored Version Presented By Jerry Tartaglia
plus Jack Smith Performance Reel**

September 28, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Could art be useful? Ever since the desert glitter drifted over the burnt out ruins of plaster lagoon thousands of artists have pondered and dreamed of such a thing, yet, art must not be used anymore as another elaborate means of fleeing from thinking because of the multiplying amount of information each person need to process in order to come to any type of decision about what kind of planet one wants to live on before business, religion, and government succeed in blowing it out of the solar system.

Let art continue to be entertaining, escapist, stunning, glamorous, and NATURALISTIC—but let it also be loaded with information worked into the vapid plots of, for instance, movies.

—Jack Smith

Jack Smith stands as one of the most idiosyncratic and visionary of the American underground filmmakers to emerge in the 1960s, his films reveling in their adoration of the movies themselves and erasing the distinctions between underground, Hollywood, and "naughty" films. His infamous feature *Flaming Creatures* became the stuff of legend: a seminal film of gay cinema, revered and lauded by heavyweight critic Susan Sontag, disregarded by most mainstream press as pornographic and tawdry, hassled by the fuzz, and eventually pulled from the light of the screen only to resurface this decade. Smith was as J. Hoberman points out "an artist's artist whose boundless irony, formal integrity, visual wit, underdog passion, and fantastic pageantry were an inspiration to and source of ideas for generation upon generation of underground filmmakers, performers, and playwrights." Smith's performance pieces combined slides, film, and selections from his record collection to create exotic spaces in which the audience was encouraged to dream and to think about that dream. His films function in the same

way, opening that space in the audiences mind that is entranced by the fantasia of the movies and the spectacle of dreaming.

Normal Love (1963); 16mm, color, sound, 93 minutes

"Smith's second feature length film...is shot in rich color, at outdoor locations including the swamplands of Northern New Jersey and suggests the archetypal gardens of the human imagination. It derives from his adoration of Maria Montez, the B-movie star, best known for her performance in *Cobra Woman*. *Normal Love* features a variety of 30s horror film monsters, a mermaid, a lecher, and various creatures performed by a cast that included Mario Montez, John Vaccaro, Diane Di Prima, Francis Francine, Tiny Tim, and others. This restored version includes the lost 'cobra scene' with Beverly Grant and a musical track from Smith's recovered music collection."

—Millennium Program Notes

"*Normal Love* doesn't have *Flaming Creatures* stone-age quality, despite the scene in which a slime-covered, druggy-looking Werewolf rises from the primeval muck to assault the Mermaid (the equally dazed camera spinning overhead) and offer her a Coke. It's less an orgy than a pastoral or even a reverie. That the action is punctuated with shots of the Mermaid's milk bath reinforces the suggestion in Smith's papers that much of the movie might be taking place in her 'inner psychotic world'." —J. Hoberman, *The Village Voice*

Films by Jack Smith (restored and released to date)

Scotch Tape (1962)

Flaming Creatures (1962-63)

Overstimulated (1963)

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

No President? (1969)

Wait for Me at the Bottom of the Pool: The Writings of Jack Smith, edited by J. Hoberman and Ed Leffingwell, was recently published by Serpent's Tail.

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

FROM THE BAY AREA AND BEYOND—NEW WORKS I

RETROACTIVE CONNECTIONS

October 2, 1997—Center For the Arts

The first of two programs devoted to mostly new films and videos features work which combines often disparate footage (autobiographical, observational, theoretical) the artists tied together through reflections on the material and their subsequent life experience. Collective and personal memories collide as past events are reconfigured to provide a context for the future, whether it be personal, political, or aesthetic.

On Any Given Thursday (1997) by Thad Povey; 16mm, color, sound, 7 minutes

"Kind of a David & Goliath situation, where they're very big, very tall, very muscular, oh, and before we go any further, can any of you tell me what the word 'direction' means?" (TP)

Thad Povey works in film, both "found" and "obtained" as a means to explore the peculiarities in the human animal. The things which make our species both ridiculous and terrifying may lie between the mumbled lines and off-camera moments, or possibly it's as his 11-year old niece Melanie once rhetorically asked, "It's just a bunch of

pictures, right?" He is a recipient of the 1996 Phelan Award for California born filmmaker and may well be a father by the time you read this.

As Far Away As Here (1997) by Jerome Carolfi; 16mm, color, sound, 23 minutes

The film is structured around footage I shot while on a road trip through the western US. with my former partner in 1991. Sometimes fleeting, always walking a fine line between the chaotic and the lyrical. The journey in this film's context is a metaphor, however oblique, for the relationship. It is an interpretation, some attempt to come to terms with the emotional and physical separation that comes from the loss of a wounded lover from a lover who is wounded, who wounds, who...lover who had been taken for granted. Yet despite its flaws and weaknesses, like its maker, this film is a physical manifestation of my desire to give something back to the goodness of my ex-lover's memory and to what was our love for each other. (JC)

Jerome Carolfi graduated with a B.A. in communications from the University of Wisconsin and received his MFA in filmmaking from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1987. His films have been screened at the Ann Arbor Film Festival, the San Francisco Cinematheque, the San Francisco Art Institute, Film in the Cities and the Madison Art Center. He has won several awards, and in addition, his work has screened internationally in Germany, Norway and Spain. He is currently continuing his filmmaking work and pursuing writing, photography and any other arts which embrace the ongoing currents of his life.

Footprints (1992) by Bill Morrison; 16mm, color, sound, 6 minutes

"One of [Morrison's] most virtuosic, *Footprints*, in a six-minute riff on technology and evolution that combines the 20th-Century-Fox logo, Muybridge, *Island of Lost Souls*, running animals, and a Deren-inspired walk in the sand."—Manhola Dargis, *The Village Voice*

Bill Morrison has been described by *The Village Voice* as a "conspicuously talented filmmaker...(who) makes densely textured, optically reworked shorts out of both found and original material." His films *Footprints* and *The Death Train* have been acquired by the Museum of Modern Art in New York for their permanent collection. In 1995 he received a year-long fellowship to work at Fabrice, the experimental visual image studio operated by Oliviero Toscani of the Benetton group.

the vision machine (1997) by Peggy Ahwesh; video, color, sound, 20 minutes

"...the 'girls only' party scenes in *the vision machine* have both the ruddy look of overexposed home movies and the richly burnished texture of Renaissance paintings crackling under their veneer. A riff on Duchamp's *Anemic Cinema* (Ahwesh, with Keith Sanborn's collaboration, inscribes the lyrics of "Wild Thing" on a warped video version of roto-relief) and on Bunuel's *Viridiana* (here the lowlifes invading the manor are women artists), *the vision machine* is an inspired depiction of girls dressing up and acting out, pleased as punch to have taken over the screen."—Amy Taubin, *The Village Voice*

Peggy Ahwesh has been making films for more than fifteen years, and stands as one of the most highly regarded film/videomakers of her generation. Her films combine a textured feel for the material of the mediums she uses with a concern about the body and female sexuality. She recently programmed a retrospective of her films (*The Scary Movie*, *The Dead Man*, *The Color of Love* among others) at the Whitney Museum of American Art's New American Film and Video Series entitled: *Girls Beware!*

Flamingo(1997), by Robert Frank; video, b&w, 5 minutes

From instructions for a slide show to descriptions of the sky, a female narrator guides us through Robert Frank's meditation of the construction of the future, embodied in the construction of a house and physical activity, to the construction of memory, exemplified by looking at old photos and postcards. All the while the process of building the house is transformed into a black and white memory as Frank's camera captures the excitement and apprehension of preparing for a future that will soon become the past.

Robert Frank is one of the most important and influential photographers in post-war America. He has also created a body of film and video work that is strikingly iconoclastic and personal. In his films he has collaborated with such diverse people as Jack Kerouac in *Pull My Daisy*, the Rolling Stones in *Cocksucker Blues*, and with Tom

Waits and Rudy Wurlitzer in *Candy Mountain*. His work continues to be shown around the world, most recently at The Film Society of Lincoln Center and the Whitney's retrospective of the Beat movement and the arts.

The Shanghaied Text (1996) by Ken Kobland; video, color, sound, 20 minutes

"From a collage of found and original footage veteran videomaker Ken Kobland creates a new landscape for the end of the millennium. Montana plains collide-or mesh-with classic Soviet films, Hollywood Westerns, and Parisian student demonstrations from the 60s. At times dissonant, and at others harmonious, the tape bears witness to the heroic, farcical, and erotic images that have underwritten our century."—The Film Society of Lincoln Center

Ken Kobland is a videomaker who has worked with both found and original footage. His work has screened at Anthology Film Archives, and the Collective for Living Cinema. His videos include: *Picking Up the Pieces*, *The Communists Are Coming*, *Flaubert Dreams of Travel but the Illness of His Mother Prevents It*.

SECONDS IN ETERNITY: FILMS OF GREGORY J.
MARKOPOULOS

SWAIN, TWICE A MAN, AND MING GREEN

Presented by Robert Beavers

October 5, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Organized by Temenos, Inc. Co-sponsored by The Speros Basil Vyronis Center for the Study of Hellenism, and the Pacific Film Archive.

Gregory J. Markopoulos (1928-1992) has been described by P. Adams Sitney as "the American avant-garde's supreme erotic poet." A contemporary of Anger, Brakhage and Jack Smith, he was one of the key influences on American independents during the 50s and 60s both in terms of the impact of his films, and as a leading advocate and theoretician of the avant-garde. His complex, sensual films range from landscape and portraiture to films inspired by literature and mythology. Markopoulos' nuanced visual patterns and his radical use of montage created a unique sense of the mysterious—what he called "a landscape of emotion." In the late 60s, Markopoulos left the United States for residency in Europe, withdrawing all of his films from U.S. distribution. His films are being presented for the first time in this country following the Whitney Museum's major retrospective in 1996. During the last years of his life, Markopoulos' devotion to filmmaking continued, and he produced a monumental yet still unprinted series of over one hundred films in the form of 22 cycles, *Eniaios*. Robert Beavers, Markopoulos' life-long companion, himself a noted filmmaker, will introduce the films.

Swain (1950); 16mm, color, sound, 24 minutes

Only with the discovery of Hawthorne's [*Fanshawe*] did the outline of *Swain* become apparent. And as always in the tradition of the filmmaker's most important personal revelation, it gathered its content through the filmmaker's very soul and visual powers after and beyond the tale by Hawthorne...The opening pages of the book reveal in great detail, 'the present state of Hadley college...'. However, as I recall, this is not what intrigued me, rather it was the following passage which is a description of one of the characters in the book referred to as the Stranger. The Stranger was like one, "...a ruler in a world of his own and independent of the beings that surround him." It was thus this character of the Stranger that blended in my own imagination with the figure of young Fanshawe that gave immediate birth to those mysteries of creativity to *Swain*, the hero of the film. (GM)

"*Swain* is an evocation in gentle images and visual symbols of a subconscious rejection of the stereotyped masculine role that society and women insist upon. This rejection takes the form of escape: flight into fantasy from what is visually conceived as crude, repelling sexuality into the purity of creative activity, of nature, and of individual personalities left inviolate." —Donald Weinstein, *Filmwise*

Twice a Man (1963); 16mm, color, sound, 49 minutes

I propose a new narrative form through the fusion of classic montage technique with a more abstract system. This system involves the use of short film phrases which evoke thought-images. Each film phrase is composed of a certain select frames that are similar to the harmonic units found in musical composition. The film phrases establish ulterior relationships among themselves; in classic montage technique there is a constant reference to the continuing shot: in my abstract system there is a complex of differing shots being repeated. (GM)

"In *Twice a Man*, 1963 (a film inspired by the myth of Hippolytus and Phaedra) a staggeringly complex 'musical-mathematical' structure, prefaced by two minutes of black leader and the sound of falling rain, is formed from frames and clusters of frames that not only introduce and establish characters, but also signal subtle shifts in weight between past, present and future. Markopoulos later chose to shatter the film's dialogue—which is spoken only by Phaedra and is juxtaposed with music and other sounds, and silence—into rhythmic syllabic fragments. Suggesting many layers of consciousness, *Twice a Man*, reinvents cinematic and literary paradigms." —Kristen M. Jones, *Artforum*

Ming Green (1966); 16mm, color, sound, 7 minutes

...the reason the film is called *Ming Green* is because it's about an apartment, a very simple apartment painted Ming green, which is a sort of Chinese-y color, and that's why the film is called *Ming Green*. Stan Brakhage gave me the idea. He said mine was the only apartment in New York City that he could stand to come and visit, because it was very, very quiet. The apartment itself was the subject of the film, which took about two days to do. And the important thing to understand about it is that it wasn't preplanned in any way. Not even notes. It was simply that I wanted to make a document of this particular apartment, because I was giving it up to go and live in Europe. (GM)

"...a loving souvenir of an apartment in which Markopoulos was living, and a tour-de-force of in-camera editing that fuses jeweled color to music through a complex, flickering rhythm, reaching a climax with the image of a pink rose that pulses by pulling in and out of focus."—Kristen M. Jones, *Artforum*

Selected Filmography:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <i>A Christmas Carol</i> (1940) | <i>The Divine Damnation</i> (1968) |
| <i>Du sang, de la volupté et de la mort</i> (1947-1948) | <i>Gammelion</i> (1968) |
| 3 parts: <i>Psyche, Lysis, Charmides</i> | <i>The Mysteries</i> (1968) |
| <i>Un duil perpetual (A Perpetual Sorrow)</i> (1948) | <i>Index—Hans Richter</i> (1969) |
| <i>Christmas U.S.A.</i> (1949) | <i>The Olympian</i> (1969) |
| <i>The Dead Ones</i> (1949) | <i>Political Portraits</i> (1969) |
| <i>The Jackdaw</i> (1950) | <i>Sorrows</i> (1969) |
| <i>L'arbe aux champignons (The Tree of Mushrooms)</i> (1950) | <i>Alph</i> (1970) |
| <i>Swain</i> (1950) | <i>Genius</i> (1970) |
| <i>Flowers of Asphalt</i> (1951) | <i>Hagiographia</i> (first version) (1970) |
| <i>Father's Day</i> (1952) | <i>Moment</i> (1970) |
| <i>Eldora</i> (1953) | <i>Cimabue! Cimabue!</i> (1971) |
| <i>Serenity</i> (1961) | <i>Doldertal 7</i> (1971) |
| <i>Twice a Man</i> (1963) | <i>Saint Actaeon</i> (1971) |
| <i>Galaxie</i> (1966) | <i>35, Boulevard General Koenig</i> (1971) |
| <i>Ming Green</i> (1966) | <i>Hagiographia</i> (second version)(1973) |
| <i>Bliss</i> (1967) | <i>Heracles</i> (1973) |
| <i>Eros, O Basileus</i> (1967) | <i>Meta</i> (1973) |
| <i>Himself As Herself</i> (1967) | <i>Prospographia</i> (1976) |
| <i>The Illiac Passion</i> (1967) | <i>Eniaios</i> (1948-c.1990) |
| <i>Through a Lens Brightly: Mark Turbyfill</i> (1967) | |

WE CAN'T ALL HAVE COME FROM THAT ISLAND IN GREECE

BY LIDIA SZAJKO

plus other scintillating lesbian shorts

Lidia Szajko In Person

Thursday, October 9, 1997—Center for the Arts

Lidia Szajko is an award-winning filmmaker who's short, *A Constant State of Departure*, won the 1990 Isabella Liddell Art Award for Most Promising Woman Filmmaker at the Ann Arbor Film Festival. She has served as a director of photography on a number of other award winning films and videos. Lidia teaches 16mm film production at the Film Arts Foundation and film history at San Francisco State University's College of Extended Learning.

Her Tattoo, a Skin Flick (1997) by Lexi Leban; 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes

It's history, 'cause it happened at the Lexington club, the only seven day a week Lesbian tavern in San Francisco. Lovely local ladies of all kinds expose their inky scars for all who dare to take a peek. Not for the squeamish. (LL)

Badass Supermama (1996) by Etang Inyang; video, color, sound, 16 minutes

"Badass Supermama is a playful but questioningly personal exploration of race, gender, sexuality and adolescent notions of beauty, body image and representation. These multilayered, interconnected issues are intimately examined through 1970s 'blaxploitation' movie goddess Pam Grier and her characters, particularly Foxy Brown. The videomaker tries on the powerful, badass supermama role of Foxy Brown, while exploring the space between body and image. This lyrical video is gently critical, playing with the idea of masquerade as well as childhood and adolescent fantasies of black womanhood." —Frameline Catalogue

We Can't All Have Come From That Island in Greece (1997) by Lidia Szajko; 16mm, color, sound, 45 minutes

In *We Can't All Have Come From That Island in Greece*, anatomically correct dolls sport lesbian fashion statements, a prose-poem reconstructs a childhood memory of being called 'faggot' while a woman steps out of her bath to climb naked across an urban construction site, and small, intimate groups of lesbians talk with each other and the camera.

We Can't All Have Come From That Island in Greece is a forty-five minute experimental documentary that turns any notion of a homogenous lesbian community sideways by taking a frank and humorous look at the diversity of lesbian identities, language, and images. Five years in the making, the work is a triumph of grassroots collaboration and tenacity. Despite a lack of foundational funding, community support and enthusiasm has been overwhelming and the project was funded entirely by individual donations.

We Can't All Have Come From That Island in Greece weaves together the conversations of seven groups of lesbians who represent diverse ethnic, cultural, generational and class backgrounds. These women discuss language, being out, passing, stereotypes, 'gender trouble', the politics of media visibility, men who are threatened by female power, role models, the multiple oppressions of being a lesbian and a woman of color, and many other topics.

We Can't All Have Come From That Island in Greece combines engaging discussion with poetry and symbolic imagery to involve the viewer in a process of inquiry. Whenever it is shown, it sparks animated debates among viewers. In its explosion of old meaning and unearthing of new, it transforms the way lesbians see themselves and are seen by others. (LS)

Special thanks to Wendy Levy and Kerry Hefferman of the Autumn Moon Cafe in Oakland and Elizabeth Falkner of Citizen Cake in San Francisco for providing refreshments for the reception.

SECONDS IN ETERNITY: FILMS OF GREGORY J.
MARKOPOULOS

THROUGH A LENS BRIGHTLY: MARK TURBYFILL AND EROS, O
BASILEUS

October 12, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Organized by Temenos, Inc. Co-sponsored by The Speros Basil Vyronis Center
for the Study of Hellenism and the Pacific Film Archive.

Gregory J. Markopoulos (1928-1992) has been described by P. Adams Sitney as "the American avant-garde's supreme erotic poet." A contemporary of Anger, Brakhage and J. Smith, he was one of the key influences on American independents during the 50s and 60s both in terms of the impact of his films, and as a leading advocae and theoritician of the avant-garde. His complex, sensual films range from landscape and portraiture to films inspired by literature and mythology. Markopoulos' nuanced visual patterns and his radical use of montage created a unique sense of the mysterious—what he called "a landscape of emotion." In the late 60s, Markopoulos left the United States for residency in Europe, withdrawing all of his films from U.S. distribution. His films are being presented for the first time in this country following the Whitney Museum's major retrospective in 1996. During the last years of his life, Markopoulos' devotion to filmmaking continued, and he produced a monumental yet still unprinted series of over one hundred films in the form of 22 cycles, *Eniaios*.

Through a Lens Brightly: Mark Turbyfill (1966); 16mm, color, sound, 15 minutes

The creative film spectator who would pursue the Indian trails of the New American Cinema, who would ascend along the sharp golden threads that lead to that incredible illusion which is the Irreality of the film, must spin their own threads of reality and weave their own patterns of intelligibility, to paraphrase L. Eldredge writing of the Greeks and the nature of Greek culture. To those creative film spectators who would understand the [film], *Through a Lens brightly: Mark Turbyfill*...I suggest the following:

A—Do not attempt to single out any one film frame or series of film frames passing across the screen, and thus neglect others. Such abstraction would lead to total misunderstanding...

B—To view the film as an image composed to image, regardless if it is only a single frame. It is the Invisible that the film spectator must seek. This Invisible leads him forwards and backwards and ultimately towards the Future; the future in this case is the understanding of the film... (GM)

Eros, O Basileus (1967); color, sound, 45 minutes

"I am tempted to describe whole sequences in order to make explicit the remarkable balance and measure of the editing...the measured lengths, the measured pauses, the single-frame intercutting within the shots like the panning caresses along Eros' body which are introduced into shots in the helmet scene and which build in the next scene to the erotic crescendo in which Eros presses himself to his own image. It would not be inappropriate to talk of the choreography and orchestration of the body, the measured deliberate movements and the measured rhythms of the fades and editing (...an arm lifted, a foot, the fall of a shoulder, a tapping finger, now all of the body.) It is a style both derived from and completely, beautifully distinct from the overlapping fades of editing in the camera and the formal, almost mathematical, effects of flashing or single frames."—Tom Chomont, *Film Culture*

"There is no plot to *Eros O Basileus* and no other character complicates the action, which is altogether a series of plastic arrangements...Doubtless Markopoulos' basic achievement here is that, with no information about the filmmaker's identity, we would realize unhesitantly that such a prolonged and minute attention to the youthful male nude could only be the occupation of another male—a male whose exclusiveness of eye denotes supremely personal engagement."—Parker Tyler, *Screening the Sexes*

FROM THE BAY AREA AND BEYOND II:
REVELATIONAL ECHOES

Thursday, October 16—Center For the Arts

The films tonight deal with notions of reverberating images and sounds, as revealing repetitions, subtle variations of captured gestures, or as unexpected schism.

Sailboat (1967) by Joyce Wieland; 16mm, color, sound, 3 minutes

"...has the simplicity of a child's drawing. A toy-like image of a sailboat sails, without interruption on the water, to the sound of roaring waves, which seem to underline the image to the point of exaggeration, somewhat in the way a child might draw a picture of water and write word-sounds on it to make it as emphatic as possible. The little image is interrupted at one point by a huge shoulder appearing briefly in the left hand corner. Joyce Wieland makes a very special type of film. The same sense of humor, tenderness and feeling for the more humble details of life that is present in her painting and plastic constructions are given further dimensions in her films. There is somewhat of a sense of sadness and nostalgia in all her work...a sense of lost innocence." —Robert Cowan, *Take One*

Retrospectroscope (1997) by Kerry Laitala; 16mm, color, silent, 4 minutes

"Wraith infested spools spark to life. In 1895 Georges Demeny invented the revolving glass disc phonoscope/bioscope. This apparatus was designed for animating chronophotography and 'to indulge the curiosity to commit a series of piquant indiscretions.' Putting a new spin on this paracinematic apparatus, Laitala built a kind of sibling rival to that previous invention, made out of plexiglass transparencies and set in motion—the retrospectroscope."—M. McElhatten, *New York Film Festival Program Notes*

Through Wounded Eyes (1996) by Joel Haertling & Stan Brakhage; 16mm, color, silent, 7 minutes

This film was inspired by an eye aberration caused by a childhood eye injury that resulted in a detached retina. It approximates what is seen through wounded eyes and is a collaboration between Joel Haertling and Stan Brakhage. Brakhage provided painted film loops and treatments of photographed images. Haertling provided tooled film loops that were bipped with Brakhage's film in the lab. These film elements were combined with other painted film by Haertling and superimposed upon each other up to eight times as edited by Haertling and Brakhage. (JH)

if you stand with your back to the slowing of the speed of light in water (1997) by Julie Murray; 16mm, color, sound, 17 minutes

This film attempts allusions to the influence of water touching water (and other fractal equivalents) upon the ordinary confounding anxiety of complex relations, mannerisms and exchange between the animate and the inert. Combined with loose ascriptions of flaws in the medium itself to subject and content throughout, it aims to illuminate a vital sense innate to perception where inversion is counterbalance, and focal myopia the articulation of space. (JM)

Figuren (1997) by Edward Schindler; 16mm, color and b&w, sound, 4 minutes

Figuren is a film which explores the psychological play between absence and presence, and the vacillating sense of loss which accompanies this polemic. The formal properties of the film (i.e. rack focused, hand processed, and optically printed material) cause commonplace objects to intermittently lose their sense of time and place. (ES)

Pensao Globo (1997) by Matthias Müller; 16mm, color sound, 15 minutes

A man faces his approaching death. He takes a journey, his last perhaps, and ends up at the "Pensao Globo" in Lisbon, where he sets out on an aimless excursion through the city. The film depicts a life in a state of transition. "Sometimes it's like I'm already gone, become a ghost of myself." (MM)

SECONDS IN ETERNITY: FILMS OF GREGORY J.
MARKOPOULOS

SORROWS AND THE MYSTERIES

October 19, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Organized by Temenos, Inc. Co-sponsored by The Speros Basil Vyronis Center
for the Study of Hellenism and the Pacific Film Archive.

Gregory J. Markopoulos (1928-1992) has been described by P. Adams Sitney as "the American avant-garde's supreme erotic poet." A contemporary of Anger, Brakhage and J. Smith, he was one of the key influences on American independents during the 50s and 60s both in terms of the impact of his films, and as a leading advocae and theoretician of the avant-garde. His complex, sensual films range from landscape and portraiture to films inspired by literature and mythology. Markopoulos' nuanced visual patterns and his radical use of montage created a unique sense of the mysterious—what he called "a landscape of emotion." In the late 60s, Markopoulos left the United States for residency in Europe, withdrawing all of his films from U.S. distribution. His films are being presented for the first time in this country following the Whitney Museum's major retrospective in 1996. During the last years of his life, Markopoulos' devotion to filmmaking continued, and he produced a monumental yet still unprinted series of over one hundred films in the form of 22 cycles, *Eniaios*.

Sorrows (1969); 16mm, color, sound, 6 minutes

"Markopoulos filmed *Sorrows* in Tribschen, Switzerland, a village near Lucerne. Its subject is the house that King Ludwig II of Bavaria built for Richard Wagner. Again using natural light and only two rolls of film, as he had done with *Bliss*, he shot the first roll outdoors and the second indoors—all four sides of the house had windows on all floors. An excerpt from Beethoven's *Fidelio* overture, which Wagner regarded highly, was used on the soundtrack."—Matthew Yokobosky, *Gregory J. Markopolous: Mythic Themes, Portraiture, and Films of Place*

The Mysteries (1968); 16mm, color, sound, 80 minutes

"*The Mysteries*, 1968, is a mournful work in which, as in many earlier films, the rhythmic repetition of imagery evokes poetic speech, and changes in costume emphasize shifts in time, space, and emotion. Here, a young man's struggles with memories of love and intimations of death are set alternately to deafening silence and the music of Wagner. For him, as for other beautiful protagonists in Markopolous' work, love involves as much anguish as pleasure, inducing a fracturing of identity signaled by flashes of imagery that seem to transport the character to other places and times. Significantly, Josef von Sternberg, with whom Markopolous studied was among the few Hollywood filmmakers who he felt matched his filmic ideal, and in his work there are echos of Sternberg's depiction of erotic passion as at once excruciatingly painful and yet the only persistant truth. In Markopolous' singularly pure vision, desire and art are inseperable—the filmmaker, he wrote, should 'ravish the screen with his own vision.'"—Kristin M. Jones, *Artfoum*

EARLY INTERACTIVE CINEMA
OF BARBARA HAMMER

BARBARA HAMMER IN PERSON

Sunday, October 26—San Francisco Art Institute

In the mid-1970s I was concerned with the passivity of audiences during film screenings. I was also interested in the manner in which projected light worked on various textures and three dimensional forms. I began to make films for interactive projections which required the audience to move in order to view the image. (BH)

Barbara Hammer is well known to San Francisco's film audience as one of the first filmmakers during the 1970s who forthrightly identified herself with the Lesbian community. A longtime resident of San Francisco, now living in New York, Hammer is one of the most versatile living independent film and video makers. She has completed over 40 works in both mediums, ranging from experimental to essay. Her award winning first feature, *Nitrate Kisses* (1992), documented the secret histories of lesbian and homosexual life. Tonight the Cinematheque is pleased to present earlier works by Hammer that challenge notions of viewership and spectacle by introducing chance elements and inviting different modes of viewing.

Two Bad Daughters (1988) with Paula Levine; color, sound, 12 minutes

Two media makers rebel at the restrictions of post-modern critiques of "the author" in a patriarchal world. (BH)

Pools (1980) with Barbara Klutinis; 16mm, color, sound, 7 minutes

An underwater exploration of the two swimming pools at the Hearst Castle designed by Julia Morgan. (BH)

Stillpoint (1989); 16mm, color and b&w, sound, 8 minutes

"Hammer's four-screen multiple images evoke beauty and pain, home and homelessness, and a deep sense of the experience of being caught between several worlds at once yet taking a special joy in each. Her films aren't easy, but they're emotionally and physically understandable and warm. Hammer is an artist at the peak of her powers."—Vito Russo, *The Advocate*

Available Space (1978); 16mm, color, sound, 20 minutes

Available Space is projected on architectural site specific space determined by the venue. I had a lazy Susan rotating table top built for the projector so I could project around the room. I renamed this "an active Annie." At the time, I felt restricted in my emotional and sexual relationship so the images and the manner in which they are projected directly relate to this situation. (BH)

Pond and Waterfall (1982); 16mm, color, silent, 15 minutes

...a silent film shot in a natural water system that included a vernal pond, stream, waterfall, rain and ocean. I wanted the audience to be aware of their own internal systems while we visually explored another natural system. I brought stethoscopes to my screenings and asked viewers to listen to their own heartbeat while they watched the film. (BH)

Sanctus (1990); 16mm, color, sound, 20 minutes

With a music score by Neil B. Rolnick. This film made with archival medical moving image x-rays of Dr. James Sibley Watson were rephotographed with an optical printer to enunciate the fragility of both the human body and the film medium. Tonight's balloon projection will be the first. (BH)

THE UNKNOWN WILL HINDLE
Part 1 of a 2 Part Retrospective

Presented by Timoleon Wilkins

Thursday, October 30, 1997—Center for the Arts

For the first time in 10 years, San Francisco Cinematheque is proud to present a retrospective of Will Hindle, one of the founding figures in Bay Area experimental cinema. In the less than 20 year period between 1957 and 1976 Hindle completely immersed himself in the art of film, made 10 works each of a unique character and clarity, received the highest accolades for a number of them and became a generous and active presence in the San Francisco film scene. Despite all of this, Hindle's work is virtually unknown to today's audiences. Existing prints of Hindle's work date back to the times of their completion and luckily retain the stunning color and beauty which he originally intended. Hindle's films occupy a territory where many have ventured but few have succeeded in the history of the avant-garde. Executed with extreme detail and planning, Hindle combined the elements of lyricism, documentary and narrative and achieved a supreme technical perfection, yet he never once strayed from a single minded dedication to his own inner eye. Trusting in the irrational integrity of dreams and free association, his films seem to rise up from the ashes of the subconscious and command unexplained and overwhelming empathetic responses from his subjects, both on screen and before it. Beautiful, mysterious, disturbing, transformative, and relaxing, Hindle's films remain imminently watchable—speaking (for themselves)—like coded messages to be deciphered later in the deeper regions of our own collective dreams.

Pastorale d'Ete (1958); 16mm, color, sound, 9 minute

This is Hindle's first completed film, a work which marked the renaissance in the making of the personal film in San Francisco. Without instruction, without ever having operated a motion picture camera before this time, Hindle shot the work "on instinct" alone, using music as one would a script. The music is Honegger's; the mountains are those of Northern and Central California in the quiet heat of high summer when "hills look like giant loaves of bread and the oak trees like sprigs of parsley stuck in them." (WH) Hindle devised his own editing equipment for *Pastorale*—without the benefit of rewinds or synchronizer he used only a clean table and a twelve inch ruler. In over 350 feet of editing a displacement of only one frame occurred...

FFFTCM (1967); 16mm, color, sound, 5 minutes

Renewed income and the ability to work on one's own-produced this feeling and this work. A Promethean awakening, debonding of the human spirit...reaching for the unfiltered blaze of Light and Life. The driving sounds of beatbeat, fanfare for the Common Man and devotional chants. A time for sharing...a touch of vision in the night. (WH)

Chinese Firedrill (1968); 16mm, color, sound, 25 minutes

In two short weekends the desires and filmic abilities which had been in waiting for over a decade came into focus when an empty warehouse was made available to Hindle. All fell into place in precise order and on time. The editing was completed in less than a month. Hindle himself "stars" in this, his most famous, yet most cryptic and mysterious of films.

TASCHENKINO: A POCKET CINEMA EVENT

Gustav Deutsch In Person

Sunday, November 2, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Several years ago Viennese filmmaker Gustav Deutsch was given a pocket viewer as a present. In this micro-viewer was an 8mm sex film loop depicting an eternal copulation. Deutsch bought more viewers in a Hamburg sex shop and prepared his own films for an imagined mini-cinema. In the Pocketcinema Event 100 Super 8 film-loops, showing 100 scenes of repetitions in life and in film are presented in 100 micro viewers, distributed to the audience. For one hour only light will be projected on the screen, and the audience will change the viewers in a half a minute rhythm, directed by a soundsignal. The event also includes a 20 minute lecture about the film machinery of early film history, to which this project is referring to.

100 Film Loops for Everywhere

100 film loops for 100 film viewers. Each loop deals with one basic aspect of repetition in life and film. The essential characteristics of each aspect become evident by endless repetition in the loop. The various aspects have been comprised in chapters.

About Repetition in Life

Rhythmically repeated movements were a presupposition for the origin of our life. From our first breathing on rhythmically repeated movements of heart and lungs regulate our blood circulation and respiration—day by day, night by night. Regularly repeated phases of being awake and asleep keep us alive. Because of rhythmically repeated motions we are able to move. The repetition of everyday rituals sets our daily course. Repetitions determine our working life and characterize sports. Music and dance, poetry and rhetoric are based upon repetition. Meditation, rituals, religious acts rest upon repetition and therefore enable mind-expansion.

About Repetition in Film

The film loop unites the beginning with the end and in this way creates a self-contained continuum. Each single scene, endlessly self-repetitive, therefore becomes itself a perpetuum. Each element of a scene is multiplied according to its characteristics. Linear movements become flowing and gliding, circular movements become spinning and rotating. Self-contained movements (360° pan) become *real* loops, not self-contained ones (drive ahead) become *unreal* loops. *Real* loops simulate a veritably existing perpetuum (a pendulum), whereas *unreal* loops simulate a fictitious continuum. The loop combines in itself reduction and expansion. The dynamics of each isolated element generates the rhythm of the film loop.

About Endless Repetition in Life and Film

In film as in life endless repetition is above all a matter of material, and therefore, fiction. For a spectator of the fiction of film is at the same time a real experience, and so an opportunity to sharpen his perception and to expand his mind. A method for focused perception is reduction. A method for mind-expansion is repetition. The film loop combines both methods.

With the Pocketcinema project I want to trace the repetitions in life and film as an attempt at the essential elements of film-motion and time.—Gustav Deutsch

Gustav Deutsch (1952) is a Viennese artist who draws, makes music, takes photographs, designs architecture and makes videos and films.

Selected Gustav Deutsch Filmography:

Asuma (1983)
Wossea Mtotom (1984)
Adria (1990)
Welt/Zeit 25812 in (1990)
Internationaler Sendeschluss (1992)
Augenzeugen der Fremden (1993)
55/95 (1994)
Taschenkino (1995)
FILM ist mehr als FILM (1996)

**FILMMAKER AS ARCHAEOLOGIST:
JAY ROSENBLATT'S *HUMAN REMAINS***

Jay Rosenblatt In Person

Thursday, November 13, 1997—Center For the Arts

Jay Rosenblatt has been making films for the past 17 years. His films have won several awards and have screened all over the world. Jay has been a film and video production instructor for the past eight years at various film schools in the Bay Area including S.F. State University, S.F. Art Institute and the College of San Mateo. He also has a Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology and, in a former life, spent many years working as a therapist.

Blood Test (1985); 16mm, b&w, sound, 27 minutes

A man visits his parents and empties the contents of his mind through a series of absurd and serious vignettes. The film explores the dynamics which form identity and self and at the same time help to deny them. The therapeutic relationship is enacted metaphorically with the parents "on the couch" and the son as the therapist. Some chilling moments are reached. (JR)

Short of Breath (1990); 16mm, b&w, sound, 10 minutes

A woman bends over backwards trying to be a good wife and mother. Her head is cut off from her heart. A doctor picks her brain. A boy inherits his mother's depression. *Short of Breath* is a haunting, emotional collage about birth, death, sex and suicide. It's like a punch in the stomach. (JR)

"*Short of Breath* is a Rorschach test with moving images instead of ink blots."—Vincent Canby, *The New York Times*

Human Remains (1997); 16mm; color and b&w; sound, 30 minutes

Human Remains illustrates the banality of evil by creating intimate portraits of five infamous dictators. We learn the intimate and mundane details of their everyday lives such as what were their favorite foods, films, habits and sex lives. There is no mention of their public lives or of their place in history. They are presented as people. Their personalities and psychological make-up are revealed through the details they share. The intent is not to "humanize" them, but rather to see them as human beings. The first person narration combines direct quotes and facts sifted from biographies. The intentional omission of the horrors for which these men were responsible hovers over the film. (JR)

Filmography of Jay Rosenblatt:

Human Remains (1997)

Period Piece (1996) co-directed with Jennifer Frame

The Smell of Burning Ants (1994)

Short of Breath (1990)

Brain in the Desert (1990) co-directed with Jennifer Frame

Paris X 2 (1988)

Blood Test (1985)*Doubt* (1981)

FILMS BY RUDY BURCKHARDT

Rudy Burckhardt In Person

Sunday, November 16, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Born in Switzerland in 1914, Rudy Burckhardt came to New York in 1935 and began filming New York City street scenes. Since those early films Burckhardt has completed more than fifty films and has collaborated with a wide variety of artists including painters Alex Katz and Red Grooms, poets John Ashberry and Edwin Denby, filmmaker Joseph Cornell, and dancers Paul Taylor and Douglas Dunn. His films have been characterized by an intense lyric imagination in their exploration of everyday phenomena. His films serve as a testament to the growth of a truly independent filmmaker, constantly observing and commenting on the world around while remaining true to his own vision of the role of the artist in society.

Up and Down the Waterfront (1946); 16mm, b&w, sound, 10 minutes

A documentary of what New York's waterfronts looked like: wholesale markets, tugboats, old wharves, longshoreman pitching pennies, sailor bars. With piano by Willy the Lion Smith. (RB)

Eastside Summer (1959); 16mm, color, sound, 11 minutes

Avenues A, B, C, D, between Houston and 14th Street, before the poets moved there. Small shops, storefront churches, teeming life in the street and on fire escapes, Tompkins Square Park and shopping for bargains on 14th Street. With piano, "Functional," by Thelonius Monk. (RB)

Caterpillar (1973); 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes

Looking down on nature's small works in the woods and fields of Maine, the up at the sky, and looking down again at the goings-on of a caterpillar that turned out to be an inchworm. Bird sounds recorded on a summer dawn by Jacob Burckhardt. (RB)

Dancers, Builders, and People in the Street (1986); 16mm, color, sound, 15 minutes

"A huge white tractor-trailer narrowly interrupts the process of a plug of people crossing a busy Manhattan Avenue. They back off barely to give it the alley it needs to pass and continue mechanically on. This is the pragmatic choreography of the city. This is also the opening sequence of *Dancers, Builders, and People in the Street*, the title of which comes from Edwin Denby's profoundly incisive book of essays on dance. The infinitely energetic visual display of the city has been a primary subject for Burckhardt's camera for over forty years. Here the display of New York textures and cross-sections is juxtaposed with the creation of a dance work, *Jig-Jag*, by choreographer-dancer, Douglas Dunn and his remarkable company. The natural humor and classically tender abruptness of their gestures and phrases are beautiful enlargements or details of, in human scale, in animal scale, body to body, the vectors of form and relation in the carefully eyed city life outside. The tension between these two worlds is masterfully edited back and forth and builds to a lovely conclusion in the night."—Reed Bye

Mobile Homes (1979); 16mm, color, sound, 34 minutes

"Rudy Burckhardt's latest movie opens with a banana still-life vignette seen ripening through time-lapse photography for several days on a rooftop. The energy-charged New York Marathon follows, suggesting the rush of locations and pace about to unfold. The sense of traveling is persistent, we are taken from the Marathon in New York, to breakfast in Maine, back to busy city streets, to the Grand Canyon, sky, the dancer Dana Reitz working out in the woods, poets posing, and the journey goes on. There is hardly a breather. Lines of David Shapiro's poem 'When a Man Love a Woman' are printed occasionally across the screen. In one segment we hear Alice Notley read her poem 'A Woman Comes Into the Room.' Essentially a collage of images and sound the precise order of events is unimportant. Overlays of time, season and location become a fulfilling and cumulative experience, the particular sequence cuts on a diamond."—Joe Giordano

Tree Street (1996); 16mm, color, sound, 15 minutes

Selected Rudy Burckhardt Filmography:

The Uncle's Return (1940)
Up and Down the Waterfront (1946)
The Climate of New York (1948)
Mounting Tension (1950)
A Day in the Life of a Cleaning Woman (1953)
What Mozart Saw on Mulberry Street (1956) with Joseph Cornell
Eastside Summer (1959)
Millions in Business as Usual (1960)
Shoot the Moon (1962) with Red Grooms and Mimi Gross
Daisy (1966)
Square Times (1967)
Paradise Arms (1968)
Money (1968)
Tarzan (1969)
Summer (1970)
Inside Dope (1971)
Doldrums (1972)
Avenues of Communication (1973)
Slipperella (1973)
Caterpillar (1973)
Default Averted (1975)
Sodom and Gommorrah, New York 10036 (1976)
Good Evening Everybody (1977)
Six Days (1978)
Mobile Homes (1979)
Sonatina and Fugue (1980)
Cerveza Bud (1981)
All Major Credit Cards (1982)
Around the World in Thirty Years (1951-1983)
Five Car Pile-up (1983)
Indelible, Indelible (1983)
Central Park in the Dark (1985)
In Bed (1986)
Dancers, Buildings and People in the Street (1986)
Digital Venus (1986-87)
Tree Street (1996)

HISTORY AS LIVED TIME

DANIEL EISENBERG'S PERSISTENCE

Daniel Eisenberg In Person

Thursday, November 20, 1997—Center For the Arts

Daniel Eisenberg was born in Israel in 1954 and emigrated to the United States with his family in the late 1950s. He studied film at the State University of New York at Binghamton with Ernie Gehr, Larry Gottheim, Klaus Wyborny, Saul Levine and Ken Jacobs. Dan Eisenberg has been making films since 1975. In 1991/92, he stayed in Berlin as a guest of the DAAD (Berliner Künstlerprogramm). At present, Dan Eisenberg teaches at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Persistence (1997); 16mm, color, sound, 86 minutes

Persistence is the final film in a trilogy of films that began in 1981 with *Displaced Person* and followed with Eisenberg's *Cooperation of Parts* (1987). *Persistence*, like the other films in the series, is about the process of historical inscription and its relation to the individual.

Persistence was shot in 1991-92 in Berlin and edited along with films shot by US Signal Corps cameramen in 1945-46 that were obtained from Department of Defense archives. Interspersed through the material are filmic quotations from Rossellini's *Germany: Year Zero*, also shot in 1946. *Persistence* is a meditation on the time just after a great historical event, about what is common to moments such as these, about the continuous and discontinuous threads of history.

The film is about various kinds of cinematic observation: personal, documentary, fictional, and our attachment to these traditional modes of observation which, by necessity shape our view of events....

The construction of historical time into convenient linear relationships such as past, present, futures, is cumbersome and outmoded. These words have been insufficient for understanding or representing the continuous and discontinuous in history and no longer serve our conception of what "lived time" really is. What is present may also have been present before. What is absent may be present tomorrow.

If, to stand Santayana's dictum on its head, we are doomed to repeat history, not because we don't know it, but because we do, because it provides the model for all future histories, then we are looking into a hall of mirrors which makes it impossible to know what precisely is past, what is present, what is persistent, what is absent, what is imminent...what aspects of the moment are unique and which are in fact recurrent. (DE)

Filmography:

Matrice (1975/79)

Design and Debris (1979)

Mexican Sketches (1980)

Displaced Persons (1980/81)

Two Motion Studies (1981)

Native Shore (1984)

To a Brother in Asia (1984)

Cooperation of Parts (1987)

A Short Note About Representation (1980-91)

Persistence (1997)

CULTURAL SABOTEURS:
LAIBACH & NEGATIVLAND

Michael Benson's *Predictions of Fire*
and Craig Baldwin's *Sonic Outlaws*

Sunday November 23, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

As we head full throttle towards a new millennium, the changing face of artistic production and reception becomes increasingly problematic. Long standing borders have been dismantled; the space between art and propaganda in popular culture has disintegrated. As artists and corporations (sometimes jointly) vie for the power to express, aestheticize and shape the world around them, the avant-garde increasingly exists to be co-opted. Cultural exchange between our technological culture and the artists who spring from it has escalated at such a fast pace that yesterday's avant-garde is today's television commercial. Politics and consumer culture use art as a means to sell and propagandize, leaving contemporary artists in a position of uneasy vulnerability. The films tonight explore these issues by examining and presenting musicians and artists who turn the tables on the cultural system and appropriate for use the products of capitalist and historic structures in order to offer critiques of those structures and mirrors that reveal the structures for what they are.

Predictions of Fire (1996) by Michael Benson; 16mm, color, sound, 94 minutes

"In the dark time will there be singing?

Yes, there will be singing about the dark time."

—Bertolt Brecht, quoted in *Predictions of Fire*

Michael Benson's *Predictions of Fire* is a film about statehood: what does it mean to be in a state? what are the functions of the state? what is the role of an individual or group within a state apparatus? what does one do when the state breaks down? will new states form to replace the old states? Deftly mixing history lesson, performance, philosophical questioning, and artistic manifesto, Benson's film gives us a look at the NSK (Neue Slowenische Kunst/ New Slovenian Culture), a radical conglomeration of artists whose retro-avant-garde aims include making "art in the image of the state." Laibach stand at the forefront of the NSK which also includes the art collective, Irwin, and the theatrical company Red Pilot. Laibach's appropriation of fascist imagery and aesthetics plays like the real thing; kitsch and camp are nowhere to be found and this lack of irony is central to Laibach's mission: the pressure is put on the audience and the state to recognize the arbitrariness and mythic nature of political structures. As Slovenian psychologist, Slavoj Zizek comments: Laibach's power lies in their willingness to "take the system more seriously than the system takes itself." Benson captures Laibach as they reveal through the intensity of their performances the construction of rock icons and their similarity to political and military figures: "Art is a noble calling which requires fanaticism," says one member of the group during a television interview. During a 1990 concert in Belgrade, one of the members of the group heads to the microphone and delivers a dead on political diatribe that is polemically in both German and Serbian. At another point in the film, a map of Eastern Europe is used as a screen for slide projections. The map is overlaid with arrows, symbols, and boundary lines that continually flux as if the world itself is a space upon which shadows flicker, shift, and fade away. The NSK shift the parameters of art, using politics for art's sake and constructing new icons that act as troubling mirrors to the political and cultural icons that are already here.

Michael Benson, a filmmaker, journalist and photographer, lived in ex-Yugoslavia during the early 80s and in the Republic of Slovenia during that country's recent transition to statehood. His work with the NSK art movement is one result of his long-term interest in the problematic territory where art and politics meet. In the 80s Benson was the first American journalist to document the Soviet underground rock counter-culture. Benson, who attended the NYU Graduate Film School, has made numerous short films; he also wrote a one-hour documentary for MTV titled *Tell Tchaikovsky the News*, which was also on Russian rock.

Sonic Outlaws (1995) by Craig Baldwin; 16mm, color, sound, 87 minutes

My film, through and through, is sarcastic, confrontational, provocative. It's not what you'd call a boutique type film or some sit-back-and-enjoy European art film. It's rough, it's raw...(CB)

Far from Slovenia, other aesthetic impulses and artistic spaces are opening up, and giving rise to a new activist, folk art that appropriates and recontextualizes mass cultural offerings to demystify and call attention to the corporate and capitalist domination of American consumer consumption. As filmmaker Craig Baldwin states it: "I think the power relations with the media are such that there has to be some kind of payback. So I'm the avenger, I'm Robin Hood." Donning cape and camera, Baldwin goes underground to unearth those artists that are challenging the typical modes of artistic creation and bending laws to do so. Starting with the motto: "Copyright infringement is your best entertainment value," *Sonic Outlaws* shows us Negativland, a group of musicians whose use of samples landed them in a vat of hot water with U2's lawyers while Bono was still free to spout hot air. Mixing eight formats, including pixelvision and priceless found footage (U2 stand-in Beau Bridges as a loincloth wearing giant!), the film appropriates as it disseminates, introducing us to other merry outlaws like the Barbie Liberation Organization, the Situationists, John Oswald, the Tape-Beatles, and other righteous jammers of the culture. Baldwin's fast paced film flies at you like a cultural karate-kick, sending us hurling forward into a world where artistic possibility is as close as your tape recorder and phone.

Craig Baldwin is a San Francisco based filmmaker whose groundbreaking work molding found footage into paranoid revisionist narratives that challenge the way we look at history, culture, and film itself. His films include *Wild Gunman* (1978), *RocketKitKongoKit* (1986), *Tribulation 99: Alien Anomalies Under America* (1991), and *O No Coronado!* (1992). He is also programmer of the ATA's Other Cinema.

Program notes written and compiled by Jeff Lambert

VOICES OF THE VISIONARIES

RARE INTERVIEWS WITH NEGLECTED FEMALE GENIUSES OF THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY

Curated and Presented Aline Mare

Thursday, December 4, 1997—Center For the Arts

In the first of a continuing series local artist and scholar, Aline Mare, will discuss and show films dealing with three influential but still little known women artists from the 30s through the 60s.

Colette (1977) by Edouard Bruce; 16mm, color, sound 13 minutes

Colette, writer/chanteuse, weaver of tempestuous tapestries, yet another artist working way ahead of her time, in her fearless investigations into the intelligence of sensuality from a female perspective. (AM)

Kay Sage (1977) by Marilyn Rivchin & Kells Elmquist; 16mm, color, sound, 20 minutes

Kay Sage, a modern master/mistress of the internal architecture of the dream, remembered by her circle of peers who included Tanguy and Miro, speaks out from her notebook of despair. (AM)

When I'm tight

I write.

To paint

I must be sober.

There must be something in this
that I should think over.

—Kay Sage, from "Occupations"

Leonor Fini: Portrait of an Artist (1987) by Chris Vermorcken; VHS, color, sound, 87 minutes

Leonor Fini, a significantly overlooked, fiercely independent painter, designer, mystical artist whose rich body of work, eccentric lifestyle and flamboyant beauty are revealed in a unique documentary made towards the end of her life in *Portrait of an Artist*. (AM)

"Leonor Fini's world is a glacial dreamscape populated by voluptuous sphinxes and phantom felines, a world where vindictive dwarfs and cruel virgins perform elaborate rituals of perpetually unsatisfied desire. It is an airy universe overrun by a cast of characters out of Sigmund Freud or the Marquis de Sade. Over the decades since World War II, that world has become a familiar element in the European art scene [...]

At the age of 17 she moved to Paris and quickly caught the eye of the intelligentsia. In Postwar Paris she was a flashing feminist figure among the surrealists—though she sturdily insists that she never joined their movement. She was close to Sartre, to Genet, to Max Ernst. She designed costumes for Milan's *La Scala* and the Comedie-Francaise and the bottle for Elsa Schiaparelli's perfume 'Shocking.' She attended fancy-dress balls in complex costumes of her own creation—and resolutely refused every invitation to dance[...]

Leonor Fini is at once a *very* European painter and a very literary one. The ghosts of an old and possibly exhausted culture march through her vision and give it a rare depth. For all the decadence and the hopelessness that invest her canvases, each is a pure visual joy. Each is, as Fini would call it in her own peculiar vocabulary, a complete and awesome 'ceremony.'"—Scott Sullivan, *Newsweek*

BRAIN DRIZZLES:

SUPER-8 FILMS BY MARTHA COLBURN & DANNY PLOTNICK

MARTHA COLBURN & DANNY PLOTNICK IN PERSON

Sunday December 7, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Super 8 filmmaking is alive and well as witnessed in the works of the two makers presented tonight. Despite marginalization and corporate oppression, the format thrives as a subversive, punk rock bird flipped at the man. The low-budget nature of the medium creates a field of spontaneity and risk that is sorely lacking from contemporary cinema. Directly disrespectful and willfully abrasive the format works against standard cinematic modes of reception, becoming a highly personal and subversive means of making movies. The films tonight contain a sense of visible joy and playfulness with the filmstrip itself; nothing is wasted and what is produced is some of the most energetic and spastic film being produced today. As a special treat the first 15 people in the doors tonight will get to shoot 20-second films that will be hand-processed during the show by local hand-processing guru, Ken Paul Rosenthal.

Martha Colburn is a self-taught filmmaker and musician, who "lives in delightfully frightful Baltimore." Martha collects films ("usually when someone's throwing them away") and has worked on over 4,000 individually collaged record covers. Using collage and found footage, Colburn creates noisy portraits of our most simultaneously dreadful and beautiful desires (cholesterol-ridden food, alcohol, smoking, and a bit of sex too) to create a world where every image is in constant flux, shifting from glorious, colorful stability to scratchy, flickering cacophony all in a matter of micro-seconds. Like the punk-rock offspring from a glue-sniffing union of Carol Burnett and Bruce Conner, Colburn shows us, through found-footage and a camera that won't sit still the reality of our sick, seventies heritage; unlike the safe, clean nostalgia provided by recent film portraits of that era, her films scratch it up, filtering it through layers of color and grime to reveal the uneasiness that accompanies the freewheeling attitudes that make up our current cultural unconscious. Besides found footage, Colburn reinvests animation with its more fantastical elements, creating sprawling Melies like fairy tales that are at once celebratory (detailed landscapes and underground tunnels colliding with musical collaborators such as Jad and Jason Fair and

her own group, The Dramatics) and grotesque (severed heads and limbs along with numerous monsters and other such creatures). These are films made for the Attention Deficit Disorder Generation.

Local Super 8 maverick Danny Plotnick creates films that "are a laff-riot, smartly utilizing the gut-level immediacy and urgency inherent in the Super 8 medium. Krisp, kinky color is the backdrop for razor sharp cynicism." (DP) Tonight Danny will show *Pillow Talk* (imagine if Warhol superstar, Ondine, were allowed to direct an episode of "The Honeymooners"), *Go Go Willie* and others. The recent film issue of *Raygun* magazine compared Plotnick's films to such aesthetically diverse predecessors as the stand-up comedy of Andy Kaufman and the early episodes of "Scooby-Doo." Imagine the tension between Kaufman's abrasiveness and Scooby's crowd-pleasing narratives and get ready for films that combine a purity of form and vision that is quite striking (difficult tracking shots, detailed lighting, and an uncanny ability to place the camera just at the point between beauty and uneasiness) and tendency to push grotesque, infantile comedy to exhaustingly pure extremes. Plotnick currently works at the Film Arts Foundation right here in San Francisco.

Program Notes Written by Jeff Lambert

FILMMAKING BEFORE 1300:

PRESENTATION BY JEROME HILER

Filmmaker and Stained Glass Artist Jerome Hiler In Person

Thursday, December 11, 1997—Center for the Arts

Often overlooked because of their difficult proximity to casual viewers, Jerome Hiler has recorded hundreds of never-before reproduced details resulting from years of dedicated study in many of Europe's greatest cathedrals. Formally daring and imaginatively startling, discovering this fabulous heritage—mostly created by anonymous artists—will be a great eye-opener to all lovers of modern cinema.

"What we call cinema today is a celebration of a series of mechanical inventions over the past 100 years. Previous to that there had been perhaps innumerable situations in which light, color, projection and other effects were used to create environments of visual intensity where the inherent illusion of perception were let loose. During the Middle Ages, the cathedrals of Europe were the grand theaters that reflected the life of the community. The vast dark space of their vaultings was the realm of the early artist in glass. Tonight we will sift through the dazzling shards of what is left in the black box of Medieval vision. Culling from my large collection of slides taken over several trips to Europe, we will meet the living presence of our own selves in another time."

—Jerome Hiler

BIG CITY DREAMS:
SCENES ALONG THE ROAD FROM "US" TO "ME"
STREET SCENE & IT SHOULD HAPPEN TO YOU

Sunday, December 14, 1997—San Francisco Art Institute

Jerome Hiler closes Cinematheque's 1997 season with two Hollywood classics: "Films set in 'old New York' representing the consciousness and attitudes of successive generations. *Street Scene* (1931, King Vidor) takes place entirely on the front steps of a meltdown-pot tenement of the early 1930s. Constant racial tension and enmity are barely relieved by a few kind hearts. The only solution, unforeseen even by the Marxists, is to move to Queens. Years later in the 1950s, McCarthyism has squelched all political dialogue and it's safe for young hopefuls to move back to Manhattan in pursuit of fame for lack of dreams. *It Should Happen to You* (1954, George Cukor) presents us with a new tool to help unravel the questions of the human dilemma: a 16mm movie camera."—Jerome Hiler

Street Scene (1931) by King Vidor; 16mm, b&w, sound, 80 minutes

"I remember my approach to making a film of the one-set play *Street Scene*. The play took place in front of a New York City tenement house on four floors. I considered the possibility of going inside some of the flats and going to other exterior locations in order to inject some kind of action into the film. While I was pondering this possibility, a fortunate thing happened. On the studio lot, I passed a workman sleeping out part of his lunch hour and I noticed that a very active fly roamed about his face without awakening him. The fly seemed very interested in the hills and valleys of the workman's face. The thought struck me that, to a camera lens, the variety of details of the front, sidewalk, and street of a tenement building can be unlimited. Through ever-changing camera set-ups, through carefully planned composition and design, the film could have much more actual movement than with the conventional set-up of a camera at eye level in a western film with stage coaches, cowboys, and Indians galloping by ad infinitum."—King Vidor, *King Vidor on Filmmaking*

King Vidor began making films in 1914 and didn't stop making them until the mid 1960s. His films which include, *Our Daily Bread* (1934), *Hallelujah* (1929), *The Crowd* (1928), *Stella Dallas* (1937), and *Duel in the Sun* (1946), among others, stand as some of the most radical films to ever come out of Hollywood. He was as Clive Denton wrote "far more an epic poet, given to large, almost abstract expressions of man's role in nature and society."

It Should Happen To You (1954) by George Cukor; 16mm, b&w, sound, 100 minutes

"All these films by Garson and Ruth are about something...We shot a lot in New York, we used Central Park...during a heat wave, which brings all the mad people out. You can see lots of mad people in the park and sitting on the steps in front of houses. And it was Jack Lemmon's first chance; he'd been a television actor before. When we came to shoot the scene when he and Judy Holliday have a row in a restaurant, they rehearsed it and did it very well, but I said, 'I don't believe it, I don't believe one damn thing. Jack, what do you do when you get angry?' He said, 'I get chills and cramps, I get sick to my stomach, but you can't use that.' 'Oh,' I said, 'do that!' So in the height of fury he suddenly clutches his stomach, and it makes all the difference."—George Cukor, *On Cukor*

George Cukor worked on Broadway before beginning a career in Hollywood in 1930 with *Grumpy*. He went on to direct such films as *Holiday* (1938), *The Philadelphia Story* (1940), *A Double Life* (1947), and *Adam's Rib* (1949) among others. As Gavin Lambert put it, Cukor was the kind of artist whose work is "a mode of pleasure and a way of expressing curiosity about the film."

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Appendix A

Early Evening Experimental Programs

February 23, 1997

Schmeerguntz (1996) by Gunvor Nelson and Dorothy Wiley
Fuses (1964-7) by Carolee Schneemann
Djune/Idexa (1994) by Salome Milstead

March 16, 1997

Regular 8mm films:

Ivan's Scarf (1965)
Note One (1968) and *Note to Pati* (1969) by Saul Levine
The Web (1974) by Marjorie Keller
Matrice (1974) by Daniel Eisenberg
Splitting You Splitting Me Still (1988) by Scott Stark
Diary Footage (1996-7) by Greg Pierce
Rhesus Monkey Peanut Butter Cups (1994) by Michael Johnsen

April 6, 1997

The Passion of Joan of Arc (1927) by Carl Dreyer

April 27, 1997

Regular and super 8mm films:

Winter Counts 1, 2, 4, & 9 by Gary Adkins
Untitled #6 and *Flowers for Tara* by Greg Sharits
Diary Footage by Greg Pierce

May 11, 1997

Is This What You Were Born For? (1981-87, 56 min.) by Abigail Child.
Also *Prefaces*, *Mutiny*, *Covert Action*, *Perils*, *Mayhem*, *Both* and *Mercy*.

June 15, 1997

Reminiscences of a Journey to Lithuania (1971, 82 min.) by Jonas Mekas

September 28, 1997

Quick Billy (1967-70) by Bruce Baillie, Kodachrome print with unedited camera rolls.

October 12, 1997

31/75: Asyl (1975) and *32/76: An W & B* (1976) by Kurt Kren
Adebar (1956-67), *Schwechater* (1957-58), and *Arnulf Rainer* (1958-60) by Peter Kubelka
I'll Walk With God (1994) Scott Start
Home Stories (1991) Matthias Mueller

Appendix A

Early Evening Experimental Programs

November 2, 1997

Morning (1968), *Wait* (1968) by Ernie Gehr

See You Later/Au Revoir (1990) by Michael Snow

passage a l'acte (1993) by Martin Arnold

November 16, 1997

Unstrap Me (1968) by George Kuchar

December 7, 1997

No Zone (1993) by Greta Snider

Suddenly I Burst Into Another: The Life and Times of Henry Tanner (1983) by Erik Saks

Anger (1987) by Maxi Cohen

Appendix B

List of Filmmakers in Person & Date of Appearance

Akerman, Chantal	5.11.97	Kuchar, Mike	5.03.97
Angerame, Dominic	3.23.97 5.04.97 5.06.97	Laitala, Kerry	5.04.97 5.06.97
B, Beth	5.18.97	Land, Owen	5.22.97
Burckhardt, Rudy	11.16.97	Lowe, Pelle	3.20.97
Cameron, Donna	4.27.97	Myers, Richard	2.27.97
Caswell, Helen	4.24.97	O'Neill, Pat	3.31.97
Child, Abigail	2.20.97	Parmar, Pratibha	6.15.97
Colburn, Martha	12.07.97	Plotnick, Danny	12.07.97
Cooper, Bruce	4.26.97	Pryce, Charlotte	3.13.97
Deutsch, Gustav	11.02.97	Rosenblatt, Jay	11.03.97
Eisenbert, Daniel	11.20.97	Ross, Rock	4.24.97
Friedrich, Su	4.03.97 4.06.97	Schulz, Ingrid	4.20.97
Ernie, Gehr	5.15.97	Snider, Greta	5.04.97 5.06.97
Hamilton, M. Kahn	2.16.97	Soe, Valerie	9.25.97
Hammer, Barbara	10.26.97	Street, Mark	6.05.97
Hiler, Jerome	12.11.97	Szajko, Lidia	10.09.97
Jirasuradej, Lawan	4.20.97	Toufic, Jalal	3.27.97
Jones, Ed	4.24.97	Vachani, Nilita	3.09.97
Jones, William E.	6.25.97	Wilkins, Timoleon	5.04.97 5.06.97
Keathley, Christian	3.27.97	Zahedi, Caveh	5.25.97
Kuchar, George	5.03.97	Zdravic, Andrej	5.29.97

