

Program Notes 1999

SAN FRANCISCO

CINEMATHEQUE

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San Francisco, California
2007

San Francisco Cinematheque

1999 Program Notes

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SAN FRANCISCO
CINEMATHEQUE

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BIG AS LIFE : AN AMERICAN HISTORY OF 8MM FILMS

The Pacific Film Archive and San Francisco Cinematheque continue their monthly series condensed from the 50 plus retrospective organized by The Museum of Modern Art Associate Curator Jytte Jensen and Cinematheque Director Steve Anker. Created with "low-end" equipment and miniscule budgets, these films and videos convey an intimacy rarely encountered in the public cinema.

FANTASIZING THE INTIMATE OTHER

Tuesday, January 19, 1999 — Pacific Film Archive

Four recent Super-8 sound films which use drama and performance to create intimate fantasies and metaphorical visions touching on sexuality and identity. *Earthly Possessions* (1992) by Pelle Lowe; *Dark, Scenes from the Barn* (1992) by Robert Huot; *Our Us We Bone One So Naked Known* (1992) by Anie Stanley; and *Warm Broth* (1988) by Tom Rhoads.

INSECT SHORTS

Curated by Gary Brewer and Marina McDougall
Presented in conjunction with the exhibition THEM at Somar Gallery

Sunday, January 31, 1999 — San Francisco Art Institute

"...then you don't like all insects?" the Gnat went on, as quietly as if nothing had happened.
"I like them when they can talk," Alice said. "None of them ever talk where I come from."
—Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*

Flea-sized visitors find themselves in a sticky fix when they check into *The Cobweb Hotel* (1936, 8 minutes) of animator Max Fleischer's imagination.

Working in the tradition of photographer Eadweard Muybridge and French physiologist Etienne Jules Marey, biodynamic engineer, Dr. Robert Full, head of UC Berkeley's Poly Pedal Laboratory, researches insect locomotion in studies that capture centipedes and cockroaches running along treadmills at speeds up to 1,000 images per second. Dr. Full will appear In Person to describe how these motion studies have become the basis for 3-D computer models and the design of robots that move like insects. (30 minutes)

To illustrate the physics principle of "friction" this whimsical education film, *A Million to One* (5 minutes), employs New York City's renown Heckler's flea circus.

Ant City by Moss (Paul F.) & Thelma Schnee (1951, 10 minutes) is an educational film classic about the social insect, the ant. The improvisational quality of the narration delivered by Moss Schnee with his heavy Brooklyn accent reveals as much about human notions of organized society as animal ones.

Karl Von Frisch's *Indications of Distance and Direction in the Honey Bee* (1979, 19 minutes) studies the amazing wiggle and waggle in the round dances of the honey bee which are performed among bees to communicate the location of flowers.

Mark Thompson's astonishing *Immersion* (1987, 7 minute excerpt) captures a performance in which the artist places a queen bee on the crown of his head. Over a period of about an hour, worker bees attracted to the queen slowly cover Thompson's entire head—his eyes, mouth and ears—hanging together in chain-like formations. In order to experience this "immersion" into the hum of the hive, Thompson maintains Buddha-like concentration and calm throughout.

Special thanks to the Liz Keim, Film Program Director of the Exploratorium and Rick Prelinger of Prelinger Archives for their generous loan of prints for this program.

—Program Notes by Gary Brewer and Marina McDougall—

**SPACE VALUE:
NEW BAY AREA EXPERIMENTS ON FILM AND VIDEO**

Thursday, February 4, 1999—Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

Space Value is a program of new works by Bay Area film and video makers who challenge conventional notions of spatial perception through various techniques of visual fragmentation and temporal abstraction. In each work the appearance of events is not taken at face value but used to examine perceptual, kinesthetic and cinematic experience.

Wax Vine (1994–1998) by Claire Bain; two Super-8 projectors, b&w, sound, 5 minutes

Wax Vine is about various types of relationships and the suspense of hanging around. The main character in this piece is the bloom of a wax vine, a house plant which has been with me since my mother placed it in the window of my childhood bedroom. The supporting role is played by my 9th floor apartment in downtown San Francisco, where both my reels were shot. There are people in the apartment: me, two friends and my lover as a child with his parents in old photographs. There are people walking in the alley below. The wax vine is a constant as relationships unfold involving change, light, liquid, suspension, self/other, interior/exterior, known/unknown, rest/movement, nature/artifice, here/there, near/far, us/them, past/present. (CB)

Untitled 1998 (1998) by Elizabeth Powers; unsplit 8mm, color, sound, 4 minutes

Untitled 1998 uses the multiple image format of unsplit regular 8mm to document a landscape and explore the landscape of memory. (EP)

Estuary #1 (Constant Passage) (1998) by Steve Polta; Super-8mm, color, sound, 11 minutes

Light ripples through vibrating sonic fields. A solid moment, suspended within a space of constant vibrating activity. (SP)

Intermittent Suspension by Le T. Tran; hand-cranked 35mm, color, silent, 1 minute
Cinema suspended intermittently; suspended cinema. (LTT)

Motion Studies No. 11, 13, 7, 3, 2, 5, 14, and 9 (1995–1998) by Mark Wilson; 16mm, b&w, silent, 8 minutes

Motion Studies No. 11, 13, 7, 3, 2, 14, and 9 were made with Jennifer Nelson. *No. 5* was made with Eduardo Morell. (MW)

“Effectively a conflation of the mutually exclusive projects of Muybridge and Marey, the *Motion Studies* are simultaneously intensely dynamic and absolutely static. Where Muybridge captures the object in motion and Marey represents the motion of the object, Wilson isolates these properties while displaying them simultaneously, implying temporality in single frames and objecthood as a function of duration.” (Brian Frye)

in.side.out (1999) by Scott Stark; hi-8 video, color, sound, 10 minutes

in.side.out is a very personal piece. On the surface it's about the changes taking place, over a two-year period, in an empty lot and a decrepit old building next to my house. Deeper down it's about the walls and windows between my interior and exterior selves, and how the fragile constructs of identity are etched, eroded, re-shaped and transformed by outside forces. (SS)

Bare Strip by Luis A. Recoder; 16mm, b&w, sound, 10 minutes
Cinema stripped bare; barely cinema. (LAR)

Black and Blue All Over by William Z. Richard; 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes

A collage of nature examining the details of flowers, leaves and a super-natural blue, black and purple forest. An exploration of nature and an amazingly versatile film stock, which sadly has been discontinued by Kodak. The title refers to the abuse which has and continues to be leveled against the environment. (WZR)

Juliette by Matthew Swiezynski; 16mm, b&w, sound, 20 minutes
Soundtrack by Matthew Swiezynski and Tarl Morley.

“A man possessed of a famished dog might have been sought out, whose business brought him, accompanied by his dog, past Mr. Knott's house every evening of the year, between the hours of eight and ten. Then on those evenings on which food was available for the dog, in Mr. Knott's window, or some other conspicuous window, a red light would be set, or perhaps a green, and all other evenings a violet light, or perhaps no light at all, and then the man (and no doubt after a little time the dog too) would lift up his eyes to the window as he passed, and seeing a red light, or a green light, would hasten to the house door and stand over his dog until his dog had eaten all the food, but seeing a violet light, or no light at all, would not hasten to the door, with his dog, but continue on his way, down the road, with his dog, as though nothing has happened.” (Samuel Beckett)

TWO EVENINGS WITH SADIE BENNING

Co-sponsored with the San Francisco Art Institute

Sadie Benning In Person

Sunday, February 7, 1999 and Monday, February 8, 1999
San Francisco Art Institute

The story of Sadie Benning's sudden and luminous entree into the world of experimental video has by now become something of an art-world fable, a kind of bedtime story for young film students. On the occasion of her fifteenth birthday, the story goes, Sadie's father, filmmaker James Benning, gave her an old Fisher Price Pixelvision camera (the PXL2000) and so provided her with both the inspiration and the means to make her first series of videos. These wistful, openly amateurish works were received with such instant critical and popular acclaim that Benning became a "star" almost overnight: ironically, she appeared to be successfully living out the very type of fantasy that countless misfit teens have entertained in their own most introverted, alienated moments. But if the Cinderella qualities of Benning's story, as it has so often been told, have an air of uncanny familiarity, this is perhaps not unfitting. What these early works seem to offer might aptly be described as an art of transforming the mundane, a personalized scrapbook of scenarios which are at once surprisingly typical and astonishingly unique.

Each of these films is involved in the negotiation of treacherous boundaries: between childhood and adulthood, masculinity and femininity, ordinary and extraordinary desires, between the "in here" and the "out there," they confront the thresholds which every individual encounters in his or her own life, but never in precisely the same way. The setting for these works, Benning's own bedroom in her parent's home, also appears as a deeply familiar one. In its capacity to provide the stage for the reveries and resentments which will give shape to our future social identities, the adolescent bedroom occupies a special place in the topography of our inner experience. As we are reintroduced to this space through the dreamy eye of Benning's Pixelvision (notably, a camera initially marketed by its manufacturer as a child's toy), we are reminded of how that intimate setting could also become the site of fantastic self-transformations.

Where Benning's embrace of her own "outsider" status propels the personal inwardness of these films, it also evokes the sort of self-imposed isolation which seeks to re-imagine the world from the vantage point of its own privileged sense of separateness. Subversively restaging pop music clichés and hackneyed Hollywood plots by using only the most everyday of props—Barbie dolls, fake mustaches, toy cars—Benning rescales the dimensions of these often oppressive constructs, bringing them literally closer to home and down to a level where they not only seem less powerful, but where they can become subject to her own playfully erotic manipulations. To suggest that Benning's works exhibit a fascination with the plastic in mass produced, objectified fantasies is not only to point out their sharply critical interest in exposing what is superficial and hollow in the consumerist trappings of childhood, it is also to suggest that they reveal how the very substance in which our ideals of

gender and romance have been stereotypically molded can become unexpectedly and gratifyingly malleable when it enters into the forge of the adolescent imagination.

While the candor and wit of these works have extended their appeal to a broad range of audiences, there also remains a degree of urgency in these pieces that will strike an especially familiar chord in gay and lesbian viewers. The utopian edge of Benning's revisionary imagination should not be blunted by our own nostalgia for "the limitless possibilities of youth," nor should her works be read as simply the documentary traces of a "passing phase." Indeed, what seems to impel Benning's acts of reinvention most forcefully is a queer suspicion that one must rewrite the script of the world if one is ever to find a part for oneself in it.

— Program Notes by David Conner —

San Francisco Cinematheque and the San Francisco Art Institute are proud to host two nights of Sadie Benning and her work. Sunday's presentation will consist of several early Pixelvision pieces, while Monday will feature the San Francisco premiere of *Flat Is Beautiful*, the hit of the New York Video Festival, along with *German Song* and *The Judy Spots*.

PROGRAM FOR SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1999

A New Year (1989); video, b&w, sound, 4 minutes

In a version of the "teenage diary," Benning places her feelings of confusion and depression alongside grisly tales of tabloid headlines and brutal events in her neighborhood. The difficulty of finding a positive identity for oneself in a world filled with violence is starkly revealed by Benning's youthful but already despairing voice.

Me and Rubyfruit (1989); video, b&w, sound, 4 minutes

Based on a novel by Rita Mae Brown, this tape chronicles the enchantment of teenage lesbian love. Recorded against a backdrop of pornographic images and phone sex ads, Benning portrays the innocence of female romance and the taboo prospect of female marriage.

If Every Girl Had a Diary (1990); video, b&w, sound, 6 minutes

Training her Pixelvision camera on herself and her room, Benning searches for a sense of identity and respect as a woman and a lesbian. Acting alternately as a confessor and accuser, the camera here captures Benning's anger and frustration at feeling trapped by social prejudices.

Jollies (1990); video, b&w, sound, 11 minutes

Benning gives a chronology of her crushes and kisses, tracing the development of her nascent sexuality. Addressing the camera with an air of seduction and romance, Benning allows the viewer a sense of her waitful angst and special delight as she comes to realize her lesbian identity.

A Place Called Lovely (1991); video, b&w, sound, 15 minutes

Types of violence individuals find in life, from explicit beatings, accidents, and murders to the more insidious violence of lies, social expectations, and betrayed faith, are referenced here. Throughout she uses small toys as props and examples, handling and controlling them the way we are in turn controlled by larger, violent forces.

It Wasn't Love (1992); video, b&w, sound, 20 minutes

A lustful encounter with a "bad girl" is illustrated by Benning through the gender posturing and genre interplay of Hollywood stereotypes—posing for the camera as the rebel, the platinum blonde, the gangster, the '50s crooner, and the heavy-lidded vamp.

PROGRAM FOR MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1999

German Song (1994); video, b&w, sound, 6 minutes

Benning's lyrical short muses on a disengaged youth and grey afternoons spent wandering and features the hard-edged music of Come, an alternative band from Boston.

The Judy Spots (1995); video, color, sound, 13 minutes

These five short videos introduce Judy, a papermache puppet who ruminates on her position in society. Like Judy of the famous Punch and Judy, Benning's Judy seems to experience the world from the outside, letting things happen to her rather than making things happen around her.

Flat Is Beautiful (1998); video, b&w, sound, 56 minutes

"I wanted to deal with a period of my own life that did happen, but I wanted to make a caricature of a lot of the relationships I had as a child. Before, my videos were a lot more about depicting something as it was happening. In relation to identity and sexuality as well as class dynamics, making tapes was a kind of celebratory or positive reinforcement, trying to make something that made me feel validated.

"...the mask is a metaphor for what's going on underneath. And in relationship to the ambiguity of Taylor's gender, this split between the head being a cartoon and the body being real makes the audience more attuned to body language." (Sadie Benning, interviewed by Gavin Smith, *Film Comment*, Nov/Dec 1998)

"[Flat Is Beautiful] is an autobiographical portrait of the solitary world of a 12-year old girl called Taylor, a latchkey child subsisting on a diet of TV dinners, video games, and television in a poor Milwaukee neighborhood in the mid-eighties. Left to her own devices by a loving but over-taxed working mother and frustrated by her trained long-distance relationship with her self-involved father, she experiences an emotional isolation and pre-pubescent sexual confusion scarcely mitigated by the presence of a sympathetic gay man who rents a room in the house. A sense of malaise and socio-economic construction prevails, exacerbated by peers who look askance at her tomboy androgyny.

"[Benning's] most audacious gambit is that all the performers wear puppet masks with hand-drawn faces, imposing a constant element of stylization onto an otherwise naturalistic representation. This initially distancing device is rapidly recuperated and normalized, paradoxically enabling Benning to ascend to a high lever of emotional engagement and psychological nuance." (Gavin Smith, *Film Comment*, Nov/Dec 1998)

**FILMS TO GO ON LIVING:
AN EVENING WITH ANNE ROBERTSON**

Anne Robertson In Person

Thursday, February 11, 1999—Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

Anne Robertson is a filmmaker who, as Scott McDonald observed, made celluloid her “outer skin.” This skin is imprinted with her exteriorized experiences and thoughts as well as with “third person stories” not necessarily coming from her imagination, as the psychiatrists like to claim, but which might be easily seen as echoes of the ordinary, “normal,” nine-to-five world. This world, which itself could probably be diagnosed as more paranoid and schizophrenic than any “case subject” hospitalized in a mental institution, is made a part of Anne Robertson’s completely personal, diaristic film–life–therapy–performance.

This evening we will show extracts of her *Five Year Diary*, “a constant work of progress, as is every life.” The filmmaker presents and reflects her life in multi-media, consisting of several visual and audio sources, such as film itself, sound on film, her audiotape dubbed diary, on-stage live introduction to each reel (milieu-setting, autobiographical storytelling), live narration from within the audience and usually making herself available to the audience during intermissions.

“The title *Five Year Diary* refers to the little blank books with locks and keys, that only allow a few lines to each day’s notation; the audience is invited to be my brother and sister, and see what life can yield. My present and future hope is to leave a full record of a woman in the 20th century.” (AR)

Niagara Falls (1983); Super-8mm, color, sound on audiotape with live narration, 26 minutes

Diary film in which I explore Niagara Falls and various things a beginning filmmaker is interested in. It was shot silent and has cassette sound. (AR)

Emily Died (1996); Super-8mm, color, sound with live narration, 27 minutes

This is Reel 80 of my Super 8mm opus *Five Year Diary*. It covers the period May 14 to September 26, 1994. Within is personal documentary; midway occurs the death of my 3-year-old niece Emily; the impact of her death is explored.

My niece Emily was born April 25, 1991. She was a charming child, petite, constantly hugging everyone and telling us “I love you.” My sound camera wasn’t working, so I have only silent footage of her. My last film of her is on the porch, waving goodbye.

She had begun to have convulsions when her blood sugar was low, and had been in intensive care several times, covered with monitors yet constantly asking to be held. She came home again.

July 16th, 1994, she awoke in the morning, asked for a glass of water, drank it, then died in her father’s arms. Emergency medical technicians, then hospital personnel, worked on her for hours, but she could not be resuscitated. The results of her autopsy: an enlarged heart, and evidence of a rare condition concerning blood sugar uptake.

My sister is a pediatric nurse. I cannot talk to her about this film. Her grief is so huge, it almost cannot be shared.

My grief was so immediate that it surfaced as absolute denial, and a psychotic breakdown. (I have been diagnosed as having a schizoaffective disorder.) I was hospitalized for 17 days (following the shot of the full moon, and sounds of my ravings) then emerged to take up the daily camera again.

What had been ordinary diary, raps in my studio, friends, family, observations of the world, daily life, now all seemed to revolve around the loss of my niece, who was only 3 years old. I feared death and "blinking out like a lightbulb" or never having children of my own; I wished for a Paradise with gardens as beautiful as Emily was, our little flower. As I gathered flowers for her ashes' interment, I heard her speak in my head, "Be sure to leave some pink and purple ones, because the bees love them." Can there be messages from beyond?

When my youngest brother Andrew died in 1967 at the age of 9, my father wrote a poem; it is in bronze on our family gravestone: *On the morrow, in the sun, we will see you, hold hands, rife the morning star, and stand together on the high mountain top overlooking all.*

If my film succeeds, it is because grief is a common human condition, and the death of a child causes the ultimate grief, which you share. Yet this is also the story of a mind's survival, using art as therapy. Carrying the camera through this time helped me transcend psychosis, and convey the sense of our darling little girl to you all. I give you my sense of loss, and a hope to see Emily again someday. (AR)

Mourning Emily (1995/6); Super-8mm, color, sound with live narration, 25 minutes

This is Reel 81 of my Super 8 opus *Five Year Diary*. It covers the period September 27, 1994 to January 29, 1995. Within is personal documentary; one of the themes is the impact of the death of my 3-year-old niece, Emily. (AR)

Melon Patches, or Reasons To Go On Living (1994); Super-8mm, color, sound on audiotape with live narration, 28 minutes

Gradually, life-affirming images (seeds, gardens, babies) replace depressing images (pills, smoking, drinking.) Sound is of four children when very young, who are also in the film, and of joyous birds. (AR)

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

**OUT OF THE TIME CLOSET:
THE LONG FORM, EAST COAST 1969-71**

PROGRAM ONE

KEN JACOBS' *TOM, TOM, THE PIPER'S SON*

Sunday, February 14, 1999, San Francisco Art Institute

Continuing its tradition of resurrecting neglected avant-garde classics, this winter Cinematheque presents *Out of the Time Closet: The Long Form, East Coast 1969-1971*. Comprised of works whose reputation and influence is matched only by the infrequency of their public screening, the three-part series will feature films of long duration which intensify concentration of minute detail and the transformation of visual material over time. While Michael Snow's *La Région Centrale* contemplates nature's space and Ernie Gehr's *Still* contemplates urban space, tonight's film by Ken Jacobs explores and delves into the space of film itself.

Tom, Tom, The Piper's Son (1969) by Ken Jacobs; 16mm, b&w and color, silent, 115 minutes at 16 fps

Fans of the American underground film scene will undoubtedly be most familiar with Ken Jacobs as the longtime collaborator and partner-in-cinematic-crime of Jack Smith. The two met in New York in 1956 through their mutual friend, filmmaker Bob Fleischner. Jacobs was, at the time, an aspiring Action Painter, but he found himself equally drawn to the emergent form of the Happening, as it was then being pioneered by artists like John Cage, Jim Dine and Allan Kaprow.

In his early films with Smith (*Saturday Afternoon Blood Sacrifice*, *Little Cobra Dance*, *Star Spangled to Death*), Jacobs' emphasis was on capturing his "star's" manic capering in recognizably everyday settings: the empty streets of the Lower East Side, the rooftop of an apartment building on W. 57th, various junkyards and abandoned construction sites. Aided and abetted by Jacobs' camera, Smith's very presence would turn these scenes of modern urban banality into stages for his own nomadic and irreverent brand of Performance Art. Although this evening's film appears to mark a significant shift in Jacobs' concerns as a filmmaker, it is still possible to witness the continuing influences of both Abstract Expressionism and the Happening even within its more obviously structuralist interests in exploring the fundamental elements of cinema.

Tom, Tom begins and almost ends with the "primitive" 1905 film of the same name, re-presented each time in its entirety. The almost seventy-minute interim might best be described as an extended fugue state, in which the original film is obsessively rephotographed and subjected to a hypnotic array of temporal and optical manipulations. As we are encouraged to delve ever deeper into the physical details of these images (which are themselves rephotographed from paper contact prints in the Library of Congress, it should be noted), we find ourselves crossing over the thresholds of figural perception entirely and entering into new territories of vision. Where certain moments in the film will inevitably recall abstract painting, we are also reminded that abstraction, at its best, also allows us an unobstructed encounter with the sensuous materiality of its medium.

There is something of the Happening to be discerned in the film as well, particularly in the ways that the film acts to disrupt our own ingrained habits of perception. If Jacobs and Smith were interested in the possibilities of expanding the domain of art into the zones of the everyday, then this

film might be considered as an attempt to shift that project into the interior realms of spectatorship itself. Watching the film, one begins to sense how Alice must have felt when she passed through the looking glass: Jacobs' hallucinatory reconstruction of this simply staged nursery rhyme inexorably begins to erode all of our conventional expectations about what film is and what it can do, where aesthetic experience begins and where it ends. Jacobs demonstrates how unimagined worlds and fantastic dramas can be extracted from even the most apparently insignificant or unintentional detail, and as we reemerge from this adventure, we discover that it is difficult to look at our own everyday world in quite the same way that we did before.

Annette Michelson has suggested that this film occupies a special place in film history because it marks both the apotheosis and the end of a certain strain of *cinophilia*—that consuming passion for the movies which energized so many of the artists of the American Underground. Where it was the luminous enchantment of the filmed body (i.e., the Star) which provided the most reliable source of inspiration for the films of Jack Smith and Andy Warhol, Michelson suggests that for Jacobs, these “expressive erotics” are now “deflected, reoriented, sublimated and articulated through the body, the corpus, of film itself. And *cinophilia* will now assume the guise of meta-cinema.” Critic Paul Willemen's speculations on *cinophilia* also stress the importance of that passion for the experimental film movements of the sixties, but he also insists that *cinophilia* is never too far removed from *necrophilia*. To love the cinema in the age of television, he suggests, is to love an absence, an unmournable loss. But as Jacobs' own comments on his film seem to imply, even in the deepest throes of an obsessive melancholia for a cinema long since dead, we will still find a vibrant, living drama in the very act of *looking* itself.

“Ghosts! Cine-recordings of the vivacious doings of persons long dead... My camera closes in, only to better ascertain the infinite richness (playing with fate, taking advantage of the loop-character of all movies, recalling with variations some visual complexes again and again for particular savoring), searching out incongruities in the story-telling (a person, confused, suddenly looks out of an actor's face), delighting in the whole bizarre human phenomena of story-telling itself and this within the fantasy of reading any bygone time out of the visual crudities of film: dream within a dream!

“And then I wanted to show the actual present of the film, just begin to indicate its energy. A train of images passes like enough and different enough to imply to the mind that its eyes are seeing an arm lift, or a door close; I wanted to ‘bring to the surface’ that multi-rhythmic collision-contesting of dark and light two-dimensional force-areas struggling to edge for identity of shape... to get into the amoebic grain pattern itself—a chemical dispersion pattern unique to each frame, each cold still... stirred to life by a successive 16-24 f.p.s. pattering on our retinas, the teeming energies elicited (the grains! the grains!) then collaborating, unknowingly and ironically, to form the always-poignant-because-always-past illusion.” (KJ)

Works Cited

- Michelson, Annette. “A Case Study of *Cinophilia*” October 83 (Winter 1998): 3-18.
- Sitney, P. Adams. Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943-1978. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.
- Willemen, Paul. “Through the Glass Darkly: *Cinophilia* Reconsidered” In Looks and Frictions: Essays in Cultural Studies and Film Theory. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994.

—Program Notes by David Conner—

**WOMEN ON THE VERGE:
THE MULTIPLE PERSONAE OF ANNE MCGUIRE
AND CLAIRE BAIN**

Anne McGuire and Claire Bain In Person

*Thursday, February 18, 1999
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts*

Anne McGuire and Claire Bain both place their bodies and beings at the center of their work. Mixing autobiographical elements with performance, and idiosyncratic alter egos with an inquiry into the nature of 'self,' 'truth' and 'story,' they create multiple screen personae to exorcise demons and achieve psychic catharsis. Internationally acclaimed video artist Anne McGuire will screen *Joe DiMaggio 1, 2, 3*, in which she stalks and serenades the former baseball star; *When I Was a Monster*, a performance in the aftermath of an accident; *I Am Crazy, and You're Not Wrong*, in which the performer's breakdown is the performance itself; and *The Telling*, in which she reveals the true identity of her father. Muralist, Super-8 film and video maker Claire Bain will show her Super-8 opus *Vel and the Bus*, in which Vel suffers an identity crisis as a result of a bus accident; and two new videos, *Jennifer!* in which Jennifer explains the meaning of her "art" and *As Long As It Takes* in which an answering machine becomes the filmmaker's alter-ego.

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Anne McGuire's and Claire Bain's films and videos are avant-garde works that call for a radical redefinition of the function of the cinematic medium. Breaking narrative conventions while still telling stories, and focusing on visceral emotions while still expressing complex abstract thoughts, they deconstruct notions of what is acceptable representation. The main thread of this distinctly different form of expression is also the most salient formal meeting point of the two artists: their conscious and physical presence in their work. This uncompromised exposure of the artist's whole being isn't merely an ornamental addition to the visual texture, but is rather the *raison d'être* of the artwork itself.

By making their presence central to their work, the two filmmakers open up the filmic space for new content and challenge conventional representations of women on screen. Claire Bain and Anne McGuire definitely make very "female" and "personal" films, but films which shatter one's very expectations of the female screen persona and personal filmmaking. It is precisely because of the filmmakers' merciless cutting into their own psychic tissue and exteriorizing of their own fantasies, fears, obsessions, beliefs and drives, that their films come across as mind-blowingly direct and reflexive personal statements. At the same time, the displacement of the gap between the representation and its referent—because artist-and-actress both are and are not one and the same—make these films both more complex and more provocative. As spectators we experience a good old Brechtian estrangement effect, where the familiar stretches its meaning, becomes uncanny and eventually has to be rethought. Revealing and playing with their own identity/subjectivity, Anne McGuire and Claire Bain invite the spectator into an active, critical viewing that amounts to a questioning and reexamination of the viewer's own imagery of her/his identity and subjectivity. (Maja Manojlovic)

Joe DiMaggio 1,2,3 (1993) by Anne McGuire; video, color, sound, 11 minutes

Finds the artist stalking and serenading the former baseball great. (New York Video Festival)

When I Was A Monster (1996) by Anne McGuire; video, color, sound, 6 minutes

An unflinching appraisal of alienation from one's own image. A performance about the artist's experience in the aftermath of an accident. (AM)

I Am Crazy, and You're Not Wrong (1997) by Anne McGuire; video, b&w, sound, 11 minutes

Described by the New York Video Festival as "A Kennedy-era TV singer on the brink." (AM)

The Telling (1994-1998) by Anne McGuire; video, color, sound, 4 minutes

A revealing conversation between the artist and two friends. Simultaneously shot by three cameras. (AM)

Vel and the Bus (1993) by Claire Bain; Super-8mm, color, sound, 30 minutes

Vel and the Bus was completed in 1993, the fourth in a series of super 8 films featuring Vel Richards. Vel first manifested herself in 1989 when a landlady gave me and my roommates a box of old clothes which included a pair of gray polyester pants, and a polyester shirt to go with them. They were the same kind of pants that my mom wears, with an elastic waistband. I was inspired to put them on and become the type of stereotyped person that my mind associated with that type of clothing. It was a middle-aged woman from middle America. It was me in ten years, if I had taken a different path through a parallel universe, stayed in New Mexico or been one of the people I saw in the grocery store. But many of my characters, Vel included, are much more than imitations of other people. They are aspects of my own experience of identity, focused on and magnified into full-blown characters. They, like everyone, have much more dimension than whatever categories their outward appearance has, by social definition, placed them in. Vel, for example, appears conservative, straight-laced and hick-like with her polyester clothes and southwestern drawl. But in Vel's raw aftermath of the Accident the camera reveals that Vel has her own share of wild fantasies, and in the end she finds healing in solitude and nature. (CB)

Jennifer! (1998) by Claire Bain; video, color, sound, 12 minutes

Jennifer appeared one day when I was stuck and blocked and the apartment was a mess and I had no other way out till I stepped aside and let her through. She is the same age I was when Vel first appeared 10 years ago. She is hip, New Edge, The-Mission-artsy-recent-grad-school-fartsy-knows-what-she-wants... with a social conscience and her own cross to bear. (After that I was able to attend to all of the other pressing business—thank you Jennifer.) (CB)

As Long As It Takes (1998) by Claire Bain; video, color, sound, 4 minutes

As Long As It Takes is an experiment whose outcome I like. It is a collaboration between me and the machines used to make it. "But what does it mean?," you ask. As Jennifer would say, "You can figure it out!" Seriously, I would like to get some feedback from the audience as to what you get out of it without having had it explained. No big mystery—it's just so familiar to me and I'm curious about how others see it. (CB)

Anne McGuire is an internationally recognized video artist whose works contain elements of impersonation and performance, personal exorcism and media critique, autobiography and humor. Her videos "employ genre conventions derived from popular culture (variety show, talk show, rock video) [and her] presence as a performer amplifies the sense of strangeness that lies at the heart of the familiar, creating a vertigo between form and content." (Pleasure Dome, Toronto) Distributed by Video Databank in Chicago and London Electronic Arts in the UK, her pieces have shown at IMPAKT, VIPER, PANDAEMONIUM, Filmcore, LA Freewaves, the New York Video Festival and numerous other festivals. McGuire graduated from the San Francisco Art Institute's MFA program in 1994. She is currently working on a six minute black & white tv show incorporating both her own performance and that of actors, as well as on her first 16mm film. (AM)

Claire Bain was born in New Mexico and moved to San Francisco in 1983. She got her BFA in film from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1989, and since 1993 she has also been painting community murals and teaching art to children. Her film work focuses on the formal and narrative characteristics of the medium in and of themselves and as setting for her characters, while her videos are primarily concerned with characterizations as a vehicle for personal expression, but also contain formal reflections. She finds that painting, film/video and working with children and communities informs all of her work and broadens her sensibilities. Currently she is raising funds to do a large community video project in her neighborhood, the Mission, that will involve residents in making their own videos in ways that expand on and depart from the usual narrative, documentary or TV forms. (CB)

**OUT OF THE TIME CLOSET:
THE LONG FORM, EAST COAST 1969-71**

PROGRAM TWO

MICHAEL SNOW'S *LA RÉGION CENTRALE*

*Sunday, February 21, 1999 — San Francisco Art Institute
see February 14, 1999, for series overview*

While Ken Jacobs' *Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son* (February 14) methodically peels away layers of representation and Ernie Gehr's *Still and Untitled: Part One, 1981* develop timeless urban situations, Michael Snow's *La Région Centrale* imagines a world, and a way of looking, beyond human capacity.

La Région Centrale (1971) by Michael Snow, 16mm, color, sound, 190 minutes.

"*La Région Centrale* is Michael Snow's epic portrait of an isolated patch of Canadian landscape; a three hour machine-eyed spherical panorama of sky and earth. When Snow seems to say that there is no fusion of nature and the human, but an action that excludes us, he suggests the primal Canadian experience: the encounter with a hostile, alien landscape and a recoiling human

presence. This drama, a mythical one, is replayed through out the form of *La Région Centrale*.”
(Bart Testa)

“More than five years ago I started speculation on how you could make a real landscape film, a movie of a completely open space. *Wavelength* (1966-67), *Standard Time* (1967), and \longleftrightarrow (1969), used closed, rectangular spaces, each for a different composition from what one might call ‘landscape.’ I wanted to make a film in which what the camera-eye did in the space would be completely appropriate to what it saw, but at the same time, equal to it. Certain landscape paintings have achieved a unity of method and subject. Cezanne for instance produced, to say the least, an incredibly balanced relationship between what he did and (apparently) saw.” (MS)

“In planning for the film *Snow* had two principal needs: 1) the appropriate electronic apparatus and mechanical device for his camera capable of executing the movements he sought; and 2) a location suitable to his concerns with movement and space. He made sketches of what the machinery might look like, but the feat demanded the expertise of an engineer. Then in 1969 a filmmaker friend in Canada put Snow in contact with Montreal technician Pierre Abeloos. In approximately a year’s time Abeloos developed the appropriate electronics and machinery. After innumerable trips into the wilds of Quebec, Snow was still unable to find the location he wanted. Paradoxically, he sought an area totally untouched by man and man-made devices—not even a telephone pole—yet a place which would be easily accessible by car for hauling the equipment and crew. After resorting to maps and aerial photographs, Snow finally discovered the place he was looking for by helicopter—a mountain top with stones, boulders, surrounding hills and mountains, overlooking a lake—about one hundred miles north of Sept-Iles in Quebec. Since the place had no name, Snow considered using another nonverbal title like \longleftrightarrow . It was Joyce Wieland who saw the words “*La Région Centrale*” in a physics text in a Quebec City bookstore and suggested it to Snow as a possible title.

Abeloos designed the mounting device according to Snow’s specifications for a movement in such a way that no part of the mount was filmed in the course of shooting, although at times its shadow was purposely recorded by the constantly moving camera. Sets of axles on the machine mount permitted multiple kinds of movements simultaneously. Snow prescored the kind of camera movements he wanted to achieve. The options for movement were horizontal, vertical, rotational, zoom, and camera start, along with speed variables for each one. As Snow described the set up: ‘Pierre [Abeloos] worked out a system of supplying the orders to the machine to move in various patterns by means of sound tapes. Each direction has a different frequency of an electronic sine wave assigned to it. It makes up a layer of tones divided into five sections starting very high, about 10,000 cycles per second, down to about seventy cycles. The speed information is in terms of beats or pulse going from slow to fast... The machine can be operated with a set of dials and switches.’” (Regina Cornwell)

“When I’m talking about my films it sometimes worries me that I give the impression that they’re just a kind of documentation of a thesis. They’re not. They’re experiences: real experiences even if they are representational. The structure is obviously important and one describes it because it’s more easily describable than other aspects; but the shape, with all the other elements, adds up to something which can’t be said verbally and that’s why the work ‘is,’ why it exists. There are a lot of quite complex things going on, some of which develop from setting the idea in motion. The idea is one thing, the result is another. In \longleftrightarrow , for example, there were some qualities that I couldn’t possibly have foreseen but which were organically appropriate and which I tried to strengthen in the

editing. *Wavelength* was like a song, like singing, but with $\leftarrow\rightarrow$ I wanted to do something that emphasized rhythm. One of its qualities is a kind of percussive rawness, but it goes through various stages of effects and qualities at the different speeds. When it's very slow one is more interested in identifying everything; as it gets to a medium speed there's the rickety quality, a kind of futurist staggering. Faster, and the image begins to smear, to blur. The continuous side to side motion is so ongoing that it sets up its own (real) time and the things and people that are caught up in the scanning process become consumed by it. The film has a time of its own which overrides the time of the things photographed. The people photographed seem victimized by it, but the film wins out and so does the real live spectator. *La Région Centrale* grew from this.

"In seeing *One Second in Montreal* (1969) you have to be able to live with what is happening for a certain length of time in order to begin to understand it, to start to speculate with it. It is literally made with lengths of time. In a completely different way this applies to *La Région* too. It is a big space and it needed a big time. It's manageable however. Three hours isn't 'that' long. You can see three hours. Within the terms of 'my' work I had in the back of my mind Bach's great religious works like The St. Matthew Passion, B Minor Mass, The St. John Passion, The Ascension Oratorio. What an artist! I wish he could hear and see *La Région Centrale*. In various philosophies and religions there has often been the suggestion, sometimes the dogma, that transcendence would be a fusion of opposites. In $\leftarrow\rightarrow$ there's the possibility of such a fusion being achieved by velocity. I've said before, and perhaps I can quote myself, '*New York Eye and Ear Control* (1964) is philosophy, *Wavelength* is metaphysics and $\leftarrow\rightarrow$ is physics.' By the last I mean the conversion of matter into energy. $E = mc^2$. *La Région* continues this but it becomes simultaneously micro and macro, cosmic-planetary as well as atomic. Totality is achieved in terms of cycles rather than action and reaction. It's 'above' that." (MS)

**CINE-PHANTASMS:
AN EVENING WITH ZOE BELOFF
AND GEN KEN MONTGOMERY**

*Thursday, February 25, 1999
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts*

Tonight Cinematheque is honored to present Cine-Phantasms, a live cinema and sound performance by Zoe Beloff and Gen Ken Montgomery. The audience will be presented with a series of "attractions," in a spirit that spans a hundred years from 19th century lantern lectures to the current craze for virtual reality. Through this work Beloff wishes to show how the concept of the "virtual" that grew out of the marriage of science and sideshow was, from its inception, deeply imbued with the desire to resurrect the dead—a conjuring up of phantoms that dates all the way back to Robertson's *Phantasmagoria*. Beloff will begin with a demonstration from *Beyond*, an interactive film on CD-ROM, then show the 16mm film *Plastic Reconstruction Of A Face, Red Cross Worker, Paris*, and conclude with a séance using an imaginative reconstruction of *The Mechanical Medium*.

Beyond (1997); CD-ROM

Beyond operates in a playful spirit of philosophical inquiry exploring the paradoxes of technology, desire and the paranormal posed since the birth of mechanical reproduction. From around 1850 to 1940, there was an almost magical element in the way people saw these developments, an issue I feel important to bring to light as we enter the digital realm. The evening's

performance will focus on the production of spirit photography, and will allow the audience to witness to a number of famous seances where such phenomena were produced. (ZB)

Plastic Reconstruction Of A Face, Red Cross Worker, Paris (1918) by unknown director; 16mm, b&w, silent, 4 minutes

I discovered this film at the National Medical Library in Washington DC. It is, I believe, a document of the fragility of the flesh and of shadowy borderland between the animate and the inanimate, the living and the dead. It conjures up before our very eyes the ravages of the First World War.

"Mothers, sisters, wives and sweethearts who have lost their beloved in the war find their souls hungering for them. They search for the assurance that these lost are persisting in a life hereafter. The true believers in personal immortality have multiplied into a vast host. You, it becomes known, are investigating the problem, the question whether personality persists after so-called 'body-death.' Mr. Edison the confidence in you throughout the world is great. People are anxiously awaiting a word from you." (ZB)

A Mechanical Medium (1999) collaboration between Zoe Beloff and Gen Ken Montgomery; performance for Model B Kodascope 16mm projector, Stereo Slide projector, 78 rpm hand-cranked phonograph, Tri Signal Telegraph Unit Toy and other sound making machines, 60 minutes

Few know that the "Electric Wizard," Thomas Edison, devoted the last ten years of his life to the search for a machine to communicate directly with the dead, in his words, "A Mechanical Medium." This performance is inspired by interviews with Edison on the subject of the hereafter, and accounts of his purported communications through various New York mediums subsequent to his death in 1931. For those members of the audience who wish to try this at home, a manual titled *Instructions For Operating The Mechanical Medium* published by the Society for Etheric Research will be available at no extra charge.

Artists' statements

I've worked in a variety of cinematic imagery, film, stereoscopic projection performance, and interactive media. I see my work as the production of philosophical toys, objects to think with and through, more or less tangible. All my work centers around a desire to get beneath the skin of everyday life by "dreaming" my way back into the past. For years I have collected film, primarily home movies. I'm not interested in their value as historical documents but as passages into certain psychological states. More and more I find myself fascinated by phantoms, by images that, "are not there." I would like to think of myself as an heir to the 19th century mediums whose materialization seances conjured up unconscious desires, in the most theatrical fashion. Though lacking psychic abilities I confess to relying on cinematic illusionism or one could say the cinematic "medium." (Zoe Beloff)

(Zoe@interport.net. For further information see: <http://www.users.interport.net/~zoe>)

In the process of defining my work I have been involved in creating projects and events which bring people together to produce sounds and/or focus on the experience of listening. I have become increasingly appreciative of the enduring impressions that arise out of transitory moments of heightened listening. I use sound as a form of transportation. Recently I have been enhancing the pre-existing sounds of objects whose primary function is seemingly unrelated to the sounds they produce (an ice crushing machine, a film projector, a laminator, a shoe shine machine). I like to confront limitations by utilizing them. Performances are often made in total darkness or amongst the

public, but rarely on a stage. In pursuit of a spontaneous creative idea I strive to overcome the fear of producing something stupid or boring. (Gen Ken Montgomery)
(atmotw@bway.net. For further information see: <http://www.bway.net/~atmotw/>)

Zoe Beloff's Filmography

Films:

A Mechanical Medium (film/stereo slide/sound performance). A collaboration with sound artist Ken Montgomery. (San Francisco Cinematheque premiere, 1999)

Lost (1997)

A Trip To The Land Of Knowledge (1994)

Life Underwater (film/stereo slide/ music performance). A collaboration with composer John Cale (1994)

Echo (1992)

Vanished (1991)

Wonderland USA (1990)

Nightmare Angel (1987)

Digital:

Where Where There There Where (CD-ROM) (1998) produced in collaboration with the Wooster Group.

Beyond (CD-ROM) (1997)

BIG AS LIFE AN AMERICAN HISTORY OF 8MM FILMS

PROGRAM SIX

REALISM-AS-PORTRAIT

Sunday, February 28, 1999—San Francisco Art Institute

Confidential, Part 1 (1979) by Joe Gibbons; Super-8mm, color, sound, 25 minutes

Confidential, Part 2 (1980) by Joe Gibbons; Super-8mm, color, sound, 25 minutes

"Most narrative films depend on our willingness to identify with, and to assume the position of, the camera. It is not the camera that stands before the door of the haunted house while we watch from a safe distance, but we who stand there. This identification can take place even when there is no narrative structure within which camera roughly equals character-point-of-view. When the actor in a TV commercial or the anchorperson on the seven-o'clock news talks directly into the camera, we more or less believe that he/she is talking directly to us. In *Confidential I* and *II*, Joe Gibbons puts an interesting twist in this convention and attempts to speak to the camera, to make with it a personal relationship from which we are excluded. By treating the camera as if it were human, he makes evident that which most films try to hide: cameras are not persons. Although the fantasy of

having a 'relationship' with a camera seems unreasonable, it is probably not much more so than the fantasies we all have entertained about inappropriate *human* love objects.

"Interestingly, Gibbons succeeds in building a real narrative made up solely of broken beginnings. He never gets further than openers, than the attempt to find the right approach, the approach that will gain him the desired but impossible response. He changes the physical positions, the locations, with each three-minute roll of film, but his obsessive start, break off, start again action remains constant. The relationship acquires a history which he can refer back to with a 'Do you remember when we tried...' while he propels it into the future through his desire for union.

"Gibbons is a superb performer with the recessive manner that cameras 'love.' He sustains his films through the subtlety of his acting with its constant potential for violent eruption as well as through the power and indecisiveness of his basic filmmaking conceit." (Amy Taubin, *Village Voice*)

Joe Gibbons has continued to create humorous, confessional Super-8 films including *Punching Flowers*, *Deadbeat* and *Living in the World*, as well as later experiments with Pixelvision. Whether it is a monologue with his dog in 1991's *Elegy*, or psychotherapy sessions which milk the cultural connotations of Barbie and Ken (*Multiple Barbie* and *Pretty Boy*), Gibbons remains a prolific and entertaining filmmaker. His first feature, *The Genius* (co-directed with Emily Breer), stars Gibbons in an art world satire featuring Karen Finley, Tony Conrad, Tony Oursler, Henry Hills and Adolfas Mekas.

She Had Her Gun All Ready (1978) by Vivian Dick; Super-8mm, color, 30 minutes

"The inspiration and encouragement to start producing low-budget films came from New York, especially from strong women I saw around me, who were part of the emerging punk scene or were doing it in dance, theatre, and photography." (VD)

"With Lydia Lunch and Pat Place, and set in the Lower East Side, NYC, this is a film about unequal power between two people (of any gender), or the repressive side of a person in conflict with the sexual powerful side... Dick has a great feel for scuzz-lyricism and skillfully mismatched inserts... her camera is a kind of third camera throughout [character?], asserting itself with choppy zooms and sudden movements." (J. Hoberman, *Village Voice*)

"Vivienne Dick's Super-8 films, dating from the mid 1970's in New York [and her more recent work in England and Ireland] are points on the itinerary of an Irish filmmaker, born in rural Donegal, who has worked in two of the world's largest metropolises. In these different places she explores the colonial dislocations oscillating in unstable identities, creating a kind of urban ethnography of different groups living at the edge of the city." (Rod Stoneman)

Vivienne Dick was one of the original 'no wave' filmmakers of the 1970s in New York City (along with Beth B and Scott B) to turn to the Super-8 technology, rejecting both the blown out Hollywood spectacle and the pretentiousness of the formalist cinema. Dick was interested in making politicized commentaries on and in her immediate surroundings in works such as *Guérillère Talks* (1978), *She Had Her Gun All Ready* (1978), *Beauty Becomes the Beast* (1979), *Liberty's Booty* (1980) and *Visibility: Moderate* (1981). For her later works (*Images of Ireland* (1988), *London Suite* (1989) and *A Skinny Little Man Attacked Daddy* (1994)), Dick turned to the Betacam and 16mm format, as well as returning across the Atlantic to England and her native Ireland.

**TRANS FIXED
AN EVENING WITH MARK LAPORE**

Mark LaPore In Person

Thursday, March 4, 1999 – Center for the Arts

Mark LaPore joins us with his sensuous and disturbing films recorded while he was living in Sri Lanka and India: *A Depression In the Bay of Bengal* (1996) and *The Five Bad Elements* (1997), preceded by *India Rolls*, 10 minutes of camera rolls shot in Calcutta last spring. In LaPore's work, "the serendipitous orchestration of the world composing itself in time within the domain of the fixed frame is set in a delicate equipoise with the sensibility and organizing vision of the filmmaker. With his exquisite observational acuity (visual, anthropological, sociological) and formal severity, LaPore's approach aspires to a kind of rich transparency. ...LaPore is expanding a tradition of experimental documentary filmmaking practiced by Cavalcanti, Wright, Rouch, Gardner, the MacDougalls, Hutton and Gehr, conducting profoundly cinematic, highly distilled personal investigations into the nature of cultural flux and reverie." (Mark McElhatten)

India Rolls (1998); 16mm, color, silent, 15 minutes

15 minutes of camera rolls shot in Calcutta in spring of 1998.

A Depression in the Bay of Bengal (1996); 16mm, color, sound, 28 minutes

I went to Sri Lanka with the idea that I would remake Basil Wright's and John Grierson's 1934 documentary *Song of Ceylon*. After spending three months there I realized just how impossible that would be... Each of the places [Wright] filmed still exist, but thirteen years of ethnic war have colored the way in which those places can be portrayed... *A Depression in the Bay of Bengal* is both diaristic and metaphorical, both an account of my observations of everyday life as well as an indirect record of the war and of the tense atmosphere which permeates life there. The overwhelming sensation in the film is that of both physical and metaphorical distance: the distance between the traveler and the Sri Lankans, the miles traveled as indicated by the persistent sound of trains, the distance between the camera and the subject, time as distance as evoked both by the historical footage and the notion of trains as a nineteenth century mode of transportation, and by the black leader at the close of the film over which an article about an explosion in Sri Lanka is read. (ML)

The Five Bad Elements (1997); 16mm, b&w, sound, 27 minutes

"A dark and astringent film that allows the filmmaker's personal subconscious drives and the equivocal bad conscience of ethnography to bleed through into overall content... The hand held camerawork and the particular leverage of *The Five Bad Elements* both pushes and works against LaPore's previous tendencies in order to create compound fractures of potent abbreviations and overextended, unexpurgated scenes in which sight is caught actively probing or transfixed in seeming paralysis. By interrupting already truncated and mysterious unmoored images with sections prolonging the durations and decay time of images normally torn from our sight, LaPore offers not provocation or obsession as much as permission to travel deeper into the image. The image as it pertains to actual experience—not only a filmic event or an approximate residue. That stands in for

something else as all images do. Refusing to satisfy curiosity with information, LaPore frustrates the usual complicities between image and documentary fact by dealing with representation as an execution of likeness, while still reckoning with the standard exchange rate of the image in its metaphoric fidelity to the real, the elusive and the tangible aspects to the image. LaPore's audacities are almost camouflaged by his refined sense of restraint, his austerity and lyrical contemplativeness... By building the film on normally inadmissible evidence, telegraphed inferences, metaphoric leaps and omissions, damaged testimonies and scattered remains, the film fabricates an impeccable and elegant architecture from a materially incomplete and unsound body. In the fragmented corpus of human beings and continents which is *The Five Bad Elements*, LaPore has created a film which itself acts as an absorbent object, a kind of metastatic sin eater that aims at expiation through its own contamination, redistributing poisons into a netherworld that still clearly resides at the core of its own physical and visible existence." (Mark McElhatten)

**RADICAL RE-PRESENTATION
WOMEN, SURREALISM AND FILM**

PROGRAM ONE

Sunday, March 7, 1999 — San Francisco Art Institute

This is the first installment of a three-part program entitled Radical Re-Presentation: Women, Surrealism and Film presented in conjunction with the exhibition *Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism, and Self-Representation* currently on view at San Francisco's Museum of Modern Art. The three evenings of film are co-organized by Exhibition Curator Whitney Chadwick, Cinematheque Director Steve Anker, and Bay Area filmmaker/historian Sandra Davis and will be presented on three consecutive Sundays in March. Each program will explore female subjectivity and self-representation in contemporary film and video as mediated by Surrealist strategies. Tonight we consider new narrative tendencies and psychological displacements in Germaine Dulac's *Theme and Variations*, Chick Strand's *Mujer de Milfuegos*, Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon*, Mona Hatoum's *Measures of Distance*, Yoko Ono's *Fly*, and Stephanie Beroes' *The Dream Screen*.

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Theme and Variations (1928) by Germaine Dulac; 16mm, b&w, silent, 9 minutes

"Should not cinema, which is an art of vision, as music is an art of hearing, on the contrary lead us toward the visual idea composed of movement and life, toward the conception of an art of the eye, made of a perceptual inspiration evolving in its continuity and reaching, just as music does, our thought and feelings?" (Germaine Dulac, *The Essence of the Cinema: The Visual Idea*)

One of the first in France to take the cinema seriously as a major art form, Dulac manifested her emotional gifts and visual sense in *Les Soeurs Ennemies* (1916) and *Venus Victrix* (1917). *La Fête Espagnole* (1919) established her name as one of the strongest forces in the French Impressionist school, and in 1928 Dulac created her masterpiece *La Souriante Madame Beudet*, a critique of middle-class married life. With *La Coquille et le Clergyman* and her short visual

symphonies set to music (*Disque 927* and *Theme and Variations*, the latter created as a feminist response to Léger's *Le Ballet Mécanique*), Dulac joined the "second avant garde." Her later years were spent developing film societies in France.

Mujer de Milfuegos (1976) by Chick Strand; 16mm, color, sound, 15 minutes

"A kind of heretic fantasy film. An expressionistic, surrealist portrait of a Latin American woman. Not a personal portrait so much as an evocation of the consciousness of women in rural parts of such countries as Spain, Greece and Mexico; women who wear black from the age of 15 and spend their entire lives giving birth, preparing food and tending to household and farm responsibilities. *Mujer...* depicts in poetic, almost abstract terms, their daily repetitive tasks as a form of obsessive ritual.

"The film uses dramatic action to express the thoughts and feelings of a woman living within this culture. As she becomes transformed, her isolation and desire, conveyed in symbolic activities, endows her with a universal quality. Through experiences of ecstasy and madness we are shown different aspects of the human personality. The final sequence presents her awareness of another level of knowledge." (CS)

Chick Strand, co-founder (with Bruce Baillie) of Canyon Cinema and the San Francisco Cinematheque in 1961, painter and maker of almost 20 films, was the 1998 recipient of the James D. Phelan Art Award in Filmmaking. Strand's work ranges from intimate, poetic documentaries to surreal dream visions to found footage collage films.

Meshes of the Afternoon (1943) by Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid; 16mm, b&w, sound, 14 minutes

Deren's classic film of dreamscapes and haunting symbolism portrays a woman's awakening sexuality with an emotional ambivalence where fear and anxiety mingle with aggression and self-destruction. A classic example of the 'trance film,' it can be seen as an avant-garde reworking of Hollywood 40's film-noir or a development of the symbolist-surrealism of Cocteau's world of doubles, mirrors and projected fantasies.

"Deren defied categorization. She was neither feminine in the demure sense nor a feminist in the modern sense. She actively contributed to her own legendary status less to advance a myth of herself as artist than to promote a common cause... [Deren's] attraction to Voodoo possession ceremonies, to dance, play, games, and, especially, ritual, stemmed from a belief in the vital necessity to decenter our notions of self, ego, and personality." (Bill Nichols, SF Museum of Modern Art's *Maya Deren* series)

Measures of Distance (1988) by Mona Hatoum; video, color, sound, 15 minutes

"In this resonant work, Palestinian-born video and performance artist Mona Hatoum explores the renewal of friendship between mother and daughter during a brief family reunion in war-torn Lebanon in 1981. Through letters read in voice-over and Arabic script overlaying the images, the viewer experiences the silence and isolation imposed by war. The politics of the family and the exile of the Palestinian people are inseparable." (*Women Make Movies* catalogue)

Fly (1970) by Yoko Ono; 16mm, color, sound (music composed by John Lennon), 25 minutes

"Inspired by a newspaper cartoon, *Fly* stars a young nude woman, apparently sedated, identified in the credits only as 'Virginia Lust.' In extreme close-up, the camera follows first one and soon several flies as they gradually explore every detail of her anatomy. Ono assumed that the

film would create a mixed response on the part of many viewers—"I wondered how many people would look at the fly or at the body?" Far from being flip or voyeuristic, Ono saw her film as a protest against the degradation of women." (American Federation of Arts' 1981 *The Films of Yoko Ono* program)

"Yoko Ono's relationship and partnership with John Lennon have given her access and opportunities she might never have achieved on her own, but her status as pop icon has largely obscured her own achievements as an artist. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the area of filmmaking. Between 1966 and 1971, Ono made substantial contributions to avant garde cinema... She remains one of the world's most visible public figures and the most widely known conceptual artist." (Scott MacDonald, *A Critical Cinema 2*)

The Dream Screen (1986) by Stephanie Beroes; 16mm, b&w, sound, 45 minutes
With excerpts from *Pandora's Box* (1929) by G.W. Pabst and *Lulu in Hollywood* by Louise Brooks.

"Stephanie Beroes' concern is with the positioning of woman in the cinematic and cultural imagination. She employs, as her central trope, the legend of Pandora's box—a focus that allows her to examine woman's figuration in both a classical film and an ancient myth. *The Dream Screen* proceeds as a multilayered experimental narrative that operates on three distinct levels. It intercuts footage from the silent film *Pandora's Box*, with Beroes' own drama of a modern-day equivalent of Pabst's 'femme fatale.' Superimposed on these segments is a third tier of interview material with a contemporary Louise Brooks look-alike, who discusses her problematic relationship with her father. Through this intertextual montage, Beroes not only rewrites the Pabst classic, but examines the mythification of woman, and its articulation in the cinema." (Lucy Fischer, *Canyon Cinema Catalog*)

"[Beroes] is a filmmaker who was active in Pittsburgh and San Francisco before moving to New York, and who doesn't mind showing in her work how deeply cinema touches her." (David Sterrit, *Christian Science Monitor*)

PANIC BODIES
BAY AREA PREMIERE OF
MIKE HOOLBOOM'S NEWEST FILM

Thursday, March 11, 1999—Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

Panic Bodies is Mike Hoolboom's new feature-length experimental film in which he confronts and displays his own battle with AIDS and explores the body's various transformations in sickness and in cinema. One of Canada's most important filmmakers, media theorists and art activists, Hoolboom mixes visual poetry and personal confession (his own and others) with visceral, transgressive explorations of the human body. "Filmed in the shadow of AIDS, *Panic Bodies* is Mike Hoolboom's testament to the permanent impermanence of the flesh. The film's six parts show the range of Hoolboom's engagement with mortality, from rage to reverie... Whether he's remixing *Terminator 2* or concocting a female paradise, Hoolboom finds a balance between razor-sharp intellect and

palpable love for images and sounds. To watch *Panic Bodies* is to see what it means to live and die in the cinema" (Cameron Bailey, "Orphan")

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In his *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, Gilles Deleuze diagnosed the loss of our belief in this world as follows: "The link between the man and the world is broken. Henceforth, this link must become an object of belief; it is the impossible, which can only be restored within a faith. Belief is no longer addressed to a different or transformed world. Man is in the world as if in a pure optical and sound situation. The reaction of which man has been dispossessed can be replaced only by belief. Only belief can reconnect man to what he sees and hears. The cinema must film, not the world, but belief in this world, our only link." Deleuze concludes that belief can be restored "simply by believing in the body as in the germ of life, the seed which splits open the paving-stones, which has been preserved and lives on in the holy shroud or the mummy's bandages, and which bears witness to life, in this world as it is." (*Cinema 2*, pp. 172-173)

Mike Hoolbloom's films *Frank's Cock* and *Panic Bodies* give to contemporary cinema the body that is often missing. They have the power to recall the belief in the body as it is—as flesh. Alive, changing, resisting any cerebral interpretation and (re)affirming itself as a presence with an existence of its own. Body is not just an inferior outgrowth of brain or mind, but is capable of an equal amount of thought and memory—it has and *is* history. *Panic Bodies* is composed of six parts, differing formally but experimenting and examining the same body/mind relationship. In *Positiv*, the first part of *Panic Bodies*, Hoolboom begins by saying: "I am a body" and thus marks a break from the conventional association of words with the mind to affirm the body as a carrier of discourse. We just see Hoolboom's head, but the presence of his body is rendered manifest through his words emanating from the painful attacks of AIDS. In *A Boy's Life* Hoolboom focuses on the body as such, evoking its personalized sensuality without exploiting its eroticism, so easily lending itself to a habitual voyeuristic pleasure. There is desire, pleasure and the need for satisfaction in the body (the masturbating sequence); however, instead of placing the spectator in his/her typical position of the interpreter of images, the filmmaker puts us in touch with the human tissue, with its visceral experience. The images of *Eternity* spiral further into the spiritual life of the body, exploring the combination of sensual (with the sound of water, with light) and extrasensory experiences that constitute it. The body is close to a near-death experience. *1+1+1* leads us back to the industrial view of the body as a mechanism, ready to be molded into a specific (sexual) identity. In *Moucle's Island* the director turns (even more directly than in *A Boy's Life*) towards the body in relation to memory. If *Moucle's Island* is looking into the individual memory of a woman's sensual body, then *Passing On* goes on to visualize Hoolboom's personal memory of family and furthermore, the collective memory of the human body through the thousands of years of its evolution—its history.

Frank's Cock (1994); 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes

Frank's Cock is a film on friendship, desire and love as well as a celebration of the intensity of life. It ends with the abrupt, cold presence of death. (MH)

Panic Bodies (1998); 16mm, color, sound, 75 minutes

Positiv (1998); 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes

A monologue about AIDS, rendered in four screens generously furnished with images from *Terminator 2*, science flicks, Michael Jackson and home movies. Its four screens play

simultaneously. In the upper right hand corner a man speaks about the body and AIDS. On the upper and lower left hand screens a storm of pictures issue, culled from science films, rock videos, horror flicks and sci-fi movies. This montage of association features bodies grown large and small, frozen and burning, crumbling to ash and reforming, tortured and pleased. On the bottom right hand screen home movies play children at play, and then visits to the doctor, blood tests and drug inhalations. Here the body has been divided, cracked open, its myriad reflections in the media allowed to issue like an open wound. (MH)

A Boy's Life (1998); 16mm, color, sound, 15 minutes

Featuring Toronto performance artist Ed Johnson, this first person monodrama shows a man in flight from the sins of his childhood, his attempted escape through a masturbatory revel that is so shattering he loses his prick, and his ensuing search for his missing organ. (MH)

Eternity (1998); 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes

A film in the form of a letter written to me by New York filmer Tom Chomont. In it he speaks of the white light after death, Parkinson's and his brother's last moments in an emergency ward. The scrolling text appears over dark pictures shot in Disneyland, its dark inhabitants floating on rivers of light and sound. (MH)

I+I+I (1998); 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes

A pixilated couple plays dress-up and undress-up as Earle Peach's industrial-strength audio track pulsates and ebbs with churning tides of sound. (Geoff Pevere)

Moucle's Island (1998); 16mm, color, sound, 12 minutes

Featuring Viennese filmmaker Moucle Blackout, this all-woman reverie centers on two kinds of recall, the first to childhood where untrained early gestures are re-learned as an older woman, and the second in a lesbian idyll, looking back in a joyous nostalgia at a geography that might bear, if only for an afternoon, the impress of one's own naming. (MH)

Passing On (20 minutes)

"Children playing emerge from overexposed film spoiled by time. It is snowing. These solarized images deal with memory in this film of maturity by Mike Hoolbloom. The tone is serious, his voice evokes his brother, his parents. People appear onscreen as though they were disappearing. Hoolbloom records the loss of loved ones whose features he stares at with long lasting affection. Beautifully simple recurring shots of the white square with black lines crossing it represent the realm of the hereafter, where the ghosts go. With contained and poignant lyricism, *Passing On* addresses itself to death as something familiar, death which prowls and throws into relief the images of cinema trying to resist another death, no doubt worse, a white death of memories forgotten, without images." (Jean Perret)

RADICAL RE-PRESENTATION
WOMEN, SURREALISM AND FILM

PROGRAM TWO

Sunday, March 14—San Francisco Art Institute

see March 7, 1999, for series overview

Tonight's program includes films by nine women filmmakers who examine images of women's bodies in relation to form, sexuality and mortality.

White City (1994) by Cathy Lee Crane; 16mm, b&w, sound, 11 minutes

As the cacophony of memory opens onto the deep quiet of mourning, this poetic journey explores mortality and the physical, psychic space of dwelling. A personal expression of the emotional landscape of loss in the age of AIDS, this film, inspired by Rainer Maria Rilke's Symbolist poem, *Lament*, features the filmmaker and images of her recently departed friend. (CLC)

An Architecture of Desire (1989) by Sandra Davis; 16mm, color, silent, 15 minutes

"Davis' earlier explorations of the body and sensuality (*Soma*, *Maternal Filigree*) are fully realized in *An Architecture of Desire*. Through rigorous cross-cutting and the use of extreme close-ups, man-made and natural manifestations of architecture merge with the physical body into palpable delineations of form and function." (San Francisco Cinematheque Program Notes)

Take Off (1972) by Gunvor Nelson; 16mm, b&w, sound, 10 minutes

"Ellion Ness, a thoroughly professional stripper, goes through her paces, bares her body, and then, astonishingly and literally, transcends it. While the film makes a forceful political statement on the image of women and the true meaning of stripping, the intergalactic transcendence of its ending locates it firmly within the mainstream of joyous humanism and stubborn optimism." (B. Ruby Rich)

Dyketactics (1974) by Barbara Hammer; 16mm, color, sound, 4 minutes

A popular lesbian commercial, 110 images of sensual touching montages in A, B, C, D rolls of kinesthetic editing. (BH)

Covert Action (1984) by Abigail Child; 16mm, b&w, sound, 10 minutes

"*Covert Action* disrupts the rhythm of remembrance by subverting the institution of the Super-8 home-movie. It loops footage of two heterosexual couples on holiday... The effect is a kind of choreographed dislocation dance, a man with one woman, then another, then two women together. Child subverts the truncated language of conventional narrative cinema by interjecting title cards *à la* silent cinema as ironic counterpoints and uses a dialogue between two poets to confound any hypothesis regarding the footage... A sexual politic steeped in deception, a story only half revealed." (Madeleine Leskin)

Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy (1972) by Joan Jonas; video, b&w, sound, 17 minutes

Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy is based on Jonas' 1972 performance of the same name, the first in which she used video. In an enigmatic ritual of identity, Jonas performs as herself and as her masked double, Organic Honey. Dressed in a feathered headdress and costumes, Organic Honey

is the embodiment of artifice, masquerade and narcissism—a female alter ego whose guise is a frozen doll's face. This elliptical non-linear narrative performance explores themes that are emblematic of Jonas' early video work: the study of female gestures and Archetypes, both personal and cultural, the use of disguise and masquerade, ritual objects and ritualized self-examination, and an inquiry into subjectivity and objectivity. The work's formal elements—the layering of mirrors and mirrored images, manipulation of reflected space and spatial ambiguity and the use of drawing to add further layering of meaning—are also Jonas' signatures. (*Electronic Arts Intermix Catalogue*)

Department of the Interior (1986) by Nina Fonoroff; 16mm, color, sound, 9 minutes

I had been thinking about the nature of echo, as both an acoustical and visual phenomenon. I had hoped to de-familiarize material which seemed to adhere to the demand of wholeness. My aim was not to represent or express a particular state of mind or emotion, but to endeavor to generate a set of possibilities for new connections between sensory experience and the experience of meaning. (NF)

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

This bold, stunning exploration of a mother who undergoes a radical mastectomy and her black daughter who embarks on a modeling career reveals the profound effects of body image and the strain of racial and sexual identity on their charged and loving bond. (*Women Make Movies*)

Man + Woman + Animal (1970-73) by Valie Export; 16mm, color, sound, 23 minutes

"*Man + Woman + Animal* shows a woman finding pleasure in herself. The whole film is a kind of assertion and affirmation of female sexuality and its independence from male values and pleasure... a sexuality like that of childhood—one motivated by curiosity, prosaic pleasure in looking, but free from fantasy." (Joanna Kiernan)

BIG AS LIFE
AN AMERICAN HISTORY OF 8MM FILMS

PROGRAM SEVEN

WILLIE VARELA AND JANIS CRYSTAL LIPZIN IN PERSON

Tuesday, March 16, 1999—Pacific Film Archive

Overview retrospectives of two major artists who have each devoted over 25 years to small-gauge film and video making. El Paso based Willie Varela presents his distinctive range of diaries, lightplays and cultural critiques in *The Cube*, *Detritus*, *House Beautiful*, *Ghost Town*, *Recuerdos De Flores Muertas* and others. Bay Area based Janis Crystal Lipzin's unique blend of the conceptual and sensual forms of cinema will be seen in three decades of work: *The Bladderwort Document*, *Trepanations*, and *Seasonal Forces, Part 1*.

IN HIS OWN VOICE
AN EVENING WITH WILLIE VARELA

Willie Varela In Person

Thursday, March 18, 1999 — Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

For his first Cinematheque show since 1990, El Paso-based media artist Willie Varela presents a selection of work showcasing his distinctly personal cinematic vision, one both visually lyrical and critically observant of the society around him.

“Super-8mm film has often been associated with the twin poles of domestic documentary and uncontrolled, often disruptive surveillance. Filmmaker Willie Varela plays with these associations by including obvious references to his own domestic life as well as surreptitious glances at neighborhood violence. These passages are simply one part, however, of a much larger personal meditation on the aesthetic of small gauge film, iconicity and narrative, and the border between the United States and Mexico. Moreover, in all three films no one of these interests ever seems to outweigh or overwhelm the others—Varela is constantly posing these questions to each suite of sound and images.

Varela’s aesthetic is dominated by a rapid-fire montage regimented by a controlled, precise rhythmic relationship to the soundtrack. This attention to rhythmic detail dissipates any sense of chaotic movement; instead it calls attention to its own insistent beat and gives these films a firm foundational structure. Layered on top of this is a love of the tactile quality of small gauge film, which can appear soft, rounded and impressionistic in the hands of this filmmaker, especially given the inevitable comparison with the hard linear quality of much video.”

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A House of Cards (1988); Super-8mm, color/b&w, silent, 12 minutes

A portrait of dark unhappiness in a seemingly idyllic domestic world. (WV)

Apposition (1989); Super-8mm, color/b&w, silent, 3 minutes

A critique of montage as the carrier, or creator, of “meaning.” (WV)

Detritus (1989); Super-8mm, color/b&w, silent, 5 minutes

A critique of the American death wish intercut with a commercial narrative, DePalma’s *Sisters*. (WV)

Recuerdos De Flores Muertas (1982); Super-8mm, color, sound, 7 minutes

A portrait of a cemetery in El Paso and my first sound film. (WV)

George Kuchar (1984); Super-8mm color, sound, 7 minutes

A rough yet loving portrait of one of the truly great comedic sensibilities in the personal cinema. (WV)

Juarez Diary (1993); Hi-8 video, color, sound, 33 minutes

In this piece, I witness my "neighbors" across the border, yet I remain an American, in spite of it. (WV)

His Hidden Presence I (1998); Hi-8 video, color, sound

This film-to-video piece came about as a result of a long, complicated passage from film to video and then back to a kind of hybrid of the two. This film, and *Death By Ideology*, both represent my responses to a world gone mad with war, competition, the "spectacle" of sport, the exploitation of the body, and an ongoing, and almost out of control death wish that has seized a culture bent on mindless self-gratification and entertainment. As for the title, it is a rather obscure reference to the lack of a guiding spiritual hand in our contemporary world, a hand that would guide our thoughts and desires with wisdom and compassion. Perhaps it could be the hand of God, if one is so inclined. At any rate, as Luis Buñuel once said, "We are not living in the best of all possible worlds." (WV)

**RADICAL RE-PRESENTATION
WOMEN, SURREALISM AND FILM**

PROGRAM THREE

Curated and Presented by Sandra Davis

Sunday, March 21, 1999 — San Francisco Art Institute

see March 7, 1999, for series overview

"The masculine can partly look at itself, speculate about itself, represent itself and describe itself for what it is, whilst the feminine can try to speak to itself through a new language, but cannot describe itself from outside or in formal terms, except by identifying itself with the masculine, thus by losing itself."

—Luce Irigaray, *Woman's Exile* (quoted by Whitney Chadwick in *Mirror Images: Women Surrealism and Self-Representation*, from the SF MOMA exhibition).

In these transgressive works by women, we will see how the concept of naming (through image and sound) becomes a powerful creative gesture in which women affirm, from the inside, their unique being and experience. Such films defy traditional modernist notions of style, newly separating the concepts of voice and style in creative language. The concept of witnessing (filming what *is* in front of the camera, emphasizing the photographic reality), and the concept of confronting (the subversive double of mirroring), are also strategies evident in a number of these films. The work of women in the avant garde has challenged psychological, social and cultural constructs (namings) of the female. They simultaneously astonish us with new awareness of the creative power of an evolving symbolic process which moves outward from a preverbal level into the works before us. Our point of departure is the Cornell film, the first found-footage film, and itself a subversive work: subversive of the potential tyranny of the rational world and the rapidly evolving world of Hollywood's formal

narrative codes, designed to mimic rational causality in representational events and linear time and space.

Rose Hobart (1936) by Joseph Cornell; 16mm, color, sound, 19 minutes

Cornell contrasted the aesthetic weakness of the then new sound film by referring to the power of silent film to “evoke an ideal world of beauty.” Using parts of *East of Borneo* (1932), some footage from scientific films, a recording of Brazilian music, a colored glass filter and rigorously methodical editing, he creates a fluid filmic space for his continuously seeking, and repetitively recoiling heroine, Rose Hobart. The fluidity of the imaginal world is propelled forward by constant ruptures of narrative time and space as he destroys carefully constructed Hollywood continuity. His Rose is enticed, entrapped and seduced by what? By whom?

Go Go Go (1962) by Marie Menken; 16mm, color, silent, 11.5 minutes

Menken posits a new “eye,” intimate yet non-ego oriented, in her observation of public and private life in NYC. The eye of the camera *is* the self-mirrored, not the heroic vision of the lone artist genius of modernism (is that him making a cameo appearance as her husband, Willard Maas, tearing out his hair in a creative frenzy?). The grandmother of single-framing explores the rhythmic patterns of daily activities in this tour-de-force finger-on-the-Bolex-trigger dance with the world. That’s her waving.

My Name Is Oona (1969) by Gunvor Nelson; 16mm, b&w, sound, 10 minutes

Nelson incantates (in collaboration with her daughter) the birth of a strong and sensual female self, who repeatedly and assertively gazes back at the camera, at the filmmaker and the spectator. In contrast to the character played by Rose Hobart, who is contained and trapped as much by the stasis of the filmic space as by the Prince, this girl dynamically names and possesses herself in the space of the film.

Miss Jesus Fries On Grill (1973) by Dorothy Wiley; 16mm, color, sound, 12 minutes

Wiley’s shocking juxtaposition of a news article describing a gruesome death with images of the bathing of a newborn recalls with a twist Breton’s “beauty will be convulsive...” But here there is not the male Surrealists’ aggressive dialectics, but rather a tenderness of observance and spectatorship. Midway through the film, she gently forces a reversal of the traditional privileged filmic positions of observed/observer as the baby opens its eye.

Elasticity (1976) by Chick Strand; 16mm, color, sound, 25 minutes

Strand explores female spirituality and consciousness through a lyrical collage of original and found footage, sound and word. She has said “the history of film is my personal history.” The Bunuel-Dali film *Andalusian Dog* is referenced in the sound track, and images of the filmmaker searching for the film’s structure with her projector, center the work.

Tr’cheot’my P’y (1988) by Julie Murray; Super-8mm, color, sound, 3.5 minutes

Murray exposes the interrelationship between media images and sexual violence in her explosive clusters of narrative, commercial, pornographic evocations of body and embodiment. Mirroring a culturally “named” female identity, she counterattacks.

Peace O’ Mind (1987) by Mary Filippo; 16mm, b&w, sound, 8 minutes

Filippo creates a fabric in which both found and original footage challenge the notion of the cultural “heroic” and establish an audio lament for the lack of a “heroine.” She forces a shifting

perspective of the spectator which parallels the shifting, searching identity of the filmmaker, looking for safety at "home." That's her beating her head against the wall.

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

Nelson names through witnessing and mirroring with her/our camera eye the process of dying, evoking at once the struggling spirit. Framing and lighting recall painting traditions of death portraits and northern European domestic interior painting; here an ironic tranquility prevails. The self-reflection of maker and spectator culminates in a discrete bow to her feet.

The Red House (1994) by Janie Geiser; 16mm, color, sound, 11 minutes

Geiser creates a powerful portrait of a self/artist newly bonding mind and body, fusing images of the creative process itself with that of hands-on physical creation in the animation of the birth of the "house." The dialectic of a dwelling as trap/shelter seen in other works is also evoked here in the red vs. black and geometric vs. organic form, and one image recalls the Woman-house series by Louise Bourgeois.

—Program Notes by Sandra Davis—

ALWAYS AT THE AVANTE-GARDE
OF THE AVANTE-GARDE UNTIL PARADISE AND BEYOND

Presented live by the French section of *the international front of supercapitalist youths*®

Tuesday, March 25, 1999—Pacific Film Archive

Some people might live happier ever after if they understood better why the letterists make these types of movies instead of simply making well-made films, good old war films, tear-jerking love films, gadget-filled science fiction films, action-packed karate films or kung fu films, like Steven Spielberg, Michael Snuf, or Jean-Luc Grolard. Cinema being like god, the letterists (who as some anonymous sources indicate, gave it the last blow) have been pissing on its grave ever since 1951, which may explain why their films alone will be remembered by future generations. Anyway, you are cordially invited to contribute to the radical critique of political economy and civilization in general by donating any piece of paper, newspaper clipping, sticker, photograph, slide, piece of film, vinyl record, audio cassette, audio tape, videocassette, compact disc, floppy disc, etc., which you might have in your possession. (Once given, contributions will not be returned.)

—The council of the French section of *the international front of supercapitalist youths*®

Imagine, infinitesimal film by Albert Dupont, 1978. *The Evidence*, infinitesimal film by Roland Sabatier, 1966. *Vomit Cinema*, *Spit Cinema*, *Snot Cinema*, *Excrement Cinema*, *Excretion Cinema*, esthapeïrist film by Maurice Lemaître, 1980. *Like a Silent River: The Happy Deaf and Blind Man's Film*, esthapeïrist film by Maurice Lemaître, 1980. *To Make a Film*, supertemporal film by Maurice Lemaître, 1963. *A Super-Commercial Film*, infinitesimal and supertemporal film reduced solely to cinema's economic dimension by Roland Sabatier, 1976. *Your Film*, infinitesimal film by Maurice Lemaître, 1969. *A Sentimental Film*, esthapeïrist and hyperchronist film by Maurice Lemaître, 1980. *Presence(s)*, imaginary, nonexistent, or impossible infinitesimal film by Frédérique Devaux, 1980. *A Film to Be Made*, esthapeïrist and hyperchronist film by Maurice Lemaître, 1970.

The Supertemporal Film (The Auditorium of Idiots), supertemporal film by Isidore Isou, 1960. *Contribution to the Radical Critique of Political Economy and Civilization in General (pseudo-subfuturist plagiarism)*®, by the French section of *the international front of supercapitalist youths*°, 1997. *Our Cinema*, supertemporal film by Maurice Lemaître, 1982. *Disco*, accepted and denied esthapeïrist and supertemporal film by Roland Sabatier, 1978. *The Infinite Cinematographic Innovation*, supertemporal film by Isidore Isou, 1965. *A Film to Take Home*, infinitesimal film by Maurice Lemaître, 1979.

Total running time: c. 2-1/2 to 3 hours, with thanks to the lettrist filmmakers and to the council of the French section of *the international front of supercapitalist youths*. °

OUT OF THE TIME CLOSET
THE LONG FORM, EAST COAST 1969-71

PROGRAM THREE

ERNIE GEHR'S *STILL WITH UNTITLED: PART ONE, 1981*

Thursday, March 25, 1999 — Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

see February 14, 1999, for series overview

Untitled: Part One, 1981 (1981); 16mm, color, silent, 30 minutes

Untitled is a half-hour series of brief close-ups of people on the street, shot from a high but intimate angle, as though Gehr were working out of a first story window, a tenement stoop, or the stairs of a elevated train station. In a constant interplay of figure and ground, the film shows fragments of feet, heads, hands and elbows against the backdrop of an ancient sidewalk. (No one ever acknowledges the camera.) Gehr periodically blurs the focus to emphasize their shapes, editing to create imagery interactions. At times, his subjects saw the air like magicians to conjure the next shot. Most frequently, Gehr practices a kind of visual rhyming in which different subjects of similar shapes “complete” each other’s movements over the course of several shots—such match-cutting produces a heady, spiral rotation of human forms around an empty patch of weathered pavement. (J. Hoberman, *Ernie Gehr: The 1995 Adaline Kent Award Exhibition Catalog*)

Still (1969-1971); 16mm, color, sound, 55 minutes

In *Still*, Mr. Gehr’s picture of place feels more like home. We look at a bit of Lexington Avenue, between 30th and 31st street, the one-way traffic and the people going by, crossing the street, entering and leaving a luncheonette—nothing out of the ordinary except for the superimpositions, the ghostly presences, of the people, other cars and buses and trucks inhabiting the same place. These are not supernatural but material ghosts, conjured without mystification or technical fuss. And yet this technique works wondrously to evoke the mysterious interplay of different times of day or different seasons or different years in the life of a place. This is a film about place in time, and in time we sense that this is a place happily haunted by its ghosts. (Gilberto Perez, *New York Times*)

Memory, memory—the seductive memory of the mood and atmosphere of summer morning, afternoon and evening—Gehr has succeeded in making what I believe to be the first “objectification” of atmosphere film, in which the objects and relationships between them end up RADIATING the mood which heretofore I had only been able to think of as a “container” rather than the contained. The moving and remarkable thing is that in this fifty-odd feet of New York City street front that we view for sixty minutes or so, nature and dreams of the forest and sky and wind and wildness end up being more forcibly present than in any film ABOUT nature and forest and sky, etc. (Richard Foreman, *Film Culture*)

ARTISTS AND FILMS: CROSSOVER PIX

PROGRAM ONE

Curated and Presented by Charles Boone

Saturday, March 27, 1999 — San Francisco Art Institute

Exploration beyond the limits of particular media has been a significant part of artists' endeavor in the twentieth century and the fascinating “tradition” of crossover art seems to get richer and more varied as we approach the present moment. Composer Arnold Schoenberg made paintings deemed worthy of presentation by Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Mark in their ground-breaking *Blue Rider* exhibit and publication of 1912. About the same time, Kandinsky wrote a series of poetic texts, *Klänge (Sounds)*, in which he worked not only with words but also, simultaneously, with metaphorical ideas of sound. Paul Klee, Kurt Schwitters and Jean Arp were other visual artists with significant poetic works to their credit. Pablo Picasso even wrote a play!

In our own time, the composer John Cage pushed the notion of crossover art definitively over the edge; the cultural commentator Richard Kostelanetz calls him a polyartist because of his ground-breaking, equally important work in music, the visual arts, writing, perhaps also in philosophy. Cage even had important things to say about dance and architecture, not to mention mushrooms. It is no surprise that film and video have caught the attention of artists coming from other media, nor is it a surprise that film and videomakers have availed themselves of the ideas and services of colleagues in music, literature, and so on. All this is what the present series, “Crossover Pix: Artists and Films,” is about.

Two films by Peter Kubelka (b. 1931, Austria)—he completed only six, so two is a significant number—are indebted to his close association with the Viennese artist Arnulf Rainer. Rainer's most familiar works are his “paintovers,” in which canvases are covered more or less completely with a single color; black, as often as not. In this evening's homage to his colleague, *Arnulf Rainer* (1958–60), Kubelka took off from this idea by reducing his visual means simply to black and white frames and his sonic means to sound (white noise) and silence. Kubelka must have been thinking of music (he was a Vienna Choirboy as a child) when he composed this film; his working notes and “score” are as complex and considered as a those of, say, his countryman, the composer Anton Webern, with whose intense, compact works Kubelka's films have often been likened.

Gordon Matta-Clark (1943-78, New York) is remembered as the artist who sliced houses in half and bored vast tunnels through larger buildings. Although the film *Conical Intersect* (1975) goes beyond straight documentation of his twisted, cone-shaped intervention in a 1690s Paris building—Les Halles and the Plateau Beaubourg—that was being destroyed to make room for redevelopment around the new Centre Georges Pompidou, which one glimpses in the film from time to time. Matta-Clark called his light-filled cone a kind of “constantly changing, silent *son-et-lumière*.” As soon as it was completed, the powers-that-be hastily bricked up the entrance, barring the interior from being viewed publicly. Fortunately, Matta-Clark was able to gain access to make this film.

The signature mixed-media works of John Baldessari (b. 1930, California) sometimes include brightly colored painted dots which obscure the faces of anonymous characters who people his found-photo art objects. Again, as with Arnulf Rainer, the covering of what is there (or implied) achieves a new level of complexity and questioning. With Rainer, the paintings are finished when we view them; with Baldessari’s films, such as we see tonight, we witness his processes. These film works are remarkable for their conceptual clarity and succinctness. They represent sharp explorations of time and real motion by an artist whose two-dimensional, wall-hung works only suggest these other possibilities. *Ice Cubes Sliding*, *New York City Post Card*, and *Blackout* all date from the early seventies and bear close kinship with Baldessari’s other visual work.

Visual artists Fernand Léger and Man Ray teamed up in with cinematographer Dudley Murphy and composer George Antheil for the 1925 film *Ballet Mécanique*, one of the pioneering works of film animation and multi-disciplinary collaboration. George Antheil’s music (he was born in 1900 in New Jersey and died in 1959 in New York) was conceived as an integral part to the film, but has seldom been seen with it. The composition is notable for its crazy, Stravinsky-inspired rhythm and daring use of percussion and noise instruments; it includes an on-stage airplane engine among other unexpected and raucous sound sources. Originally, of course, the score was played live with the film; it was just before the arrival of talkies. Although it was meant to fit rather precisely with the visual images, it was never synchronized. Thanks to the splendid and informed work of Cal Arts film historian William Moritz, a synchronized version has finally been made and it is this we view tonight.

Artist Paul Kos (b. 1942, Wyoming), a long-time San Franciscan, has been an Art Institute faculty member for more than twenty years. His conceptually based work employs a wide variety of media, not least important and copious of which is his work in video. *Riley Roily River* (1974) and *Lightning* (1974) communicate clearly and directly through simple visual and textual/sonic information. *Sympathetic Vibrations* (1986) documents an installation at the original Capp Street Project site. For this, Kos installed eight bells ranging in weight from 25 to 1000 pounds. These were rung at regular intervals in traditional Slovenian rhythms the artist knew from childhood experiences. Of *Briefstauben* (1987)—homing pigeons, in English—art curator Stacey Moss wrote that the piece was “inspired by the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union to withdraw cruise missiles from Europe. Kos engaged homing pigeon fanciers to train 100 homing pigeons to live in the Galerie Hans Christian Hoschek in Graz, Austria, which had invited Kos to participate in a group exhibition. From sites in Italy, Germany, Yugoslavia, and Austria, Kos released the pigeons, each with a tiny, pea-sized bell and a World War II message capsule... containing an American or Soviet flag attached to its leg. The inspiring, even awesome sound of the bells was like a clapping of freedom, and specifically from the tyranny of nuclear weapons.” *La Vache* (1996) features bells, once again, a recurring theme in Kos’s work.

Ronnie Davis and Saul Landau joined filmmaker Robert Nelson (b. 1930, San Francisco) in writing *Oh Dem Watermelons* (1965). The film was originally shown as part of *A Minstrel Show, or Civil Rights in a Cracker Barrel*, a production of the San Francisco Mime Troupe, of which Davis was a director. In typical Mime Troupe manner, the play was a protest—this time against segregation—and the film reflects that by poking fun at a derisive Black stereotype: the watermelon. Nelson asked then emerging composer Steve Reich (b. 1936, New York) to make music for the film and what resulted is a classic of early minimalism—a musical style San Francisco can be proud to have nurtured from the very beginning.

—Program Notes by Charles Boone—

COMPULSIVE REPETITIONS
AN EVENING WITH MARTIN ARNOLD

Martin Arnold in Person

Sunday, March 28, 1999 — San Francisco Art Institute

The conventions of Hollywood filmmaking and its inherent repressions are the targets in Austrian filmmaker Martin Arnold's trilogy of ratcheting cinematic deconstructions. Tonight, Arnold returns to San Francisco for the West Coast premiere of *Alone. Life Wastes Andy Hardy*, which fluidly mixes scenes from three Garland/Rooney vehicles into a brief summary, exposing their latent subtexts and creating sinister new narratives. *Alone* will be accompanied by *pièce touchée* and *passage à l'acte*, Arnold's two earlier examples of his frenetic analysis of kitsch culture and tour-de-force optical printing. "There is always something behind that which is being represented which is not represented. And it is exactly *that* that is most interesting to consider." "If *pièce touchée* expresses sexuality and *passage à l'acte* aggression, then perhaps Andy Hardy finds melancholia." (MA)

PEGGY'S PLAYHOUSE
A PEGGY AHWESH RETROSPECTIVE

PROGRAM ONE

DEAD MEN

Co-Presented with Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
Curated by Center for the Arts Film & Video Curator Joel Shepard

Peggy Ahwesh In Person

Thursday, April 1, 1999 — Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

"Anger makes me free to speak and to speak is to make fiction"
"The only true opposite of fantasy is pain"
—from *Nocturne*

Peggy Ahwesh is a cinematic alchemist with a penchant for transforming the banal into the sublime. A rare combination of technophile and mystic, Ahwesh has been making experimental and avant-garde films and videos since the seventies, when she first started shooting Super 8 films in Pittsburgh while programming for Pittsburgh Filmmakers and working on George Romero's films. In her own early films, she assembled "a kind of sketchbook of people's behaviors in relation to the camera," as she describes it; "people always 'sort of' performing. But somehow some Sisyphian act of performance."

—Jeremy Lehrer, *The Independent*, March 1999

One of the most exciting and challenging media artists working today, Peggy Ahwesh is the Center for the Arts' first Wattis Film/Video Artist-in-Residence, and she will be present for a unique retrospective of her work paired with works which have influenced her. With a low/no-budget aesthetic and a penchant for exploring sexuality, violence and language, Ahwesh's work breaks all the rules— fearlessly confronting both the civilized and transgressive elements that contribute to our socially inherited histories and private notions of self. Along with Ahwesh's major films and videos, the series also includes work by Tod Browning, Doris Wishman, Andy Warhol and others.

The first night of this five-part retrospective features Ahwesh's latest film *Nocturne*, a horror film which combines Pixelvision with images from Mario Bava's *The Whip and the Flesh* and text from Kathy Acker, the Marquis de Sade and Steven Shaviro. Ahwesh will also screen Jean Painlevé's 1944 *The Vampire*, a haunting documentary about the life of bats; followed by *As Tears Go By*, two versions of the song by Marianne Faithful—perky and sweet in 1966 and sad and slow in 1987— revealing the devastating toll of drugs and rock and roll. Also included is Ahwesh's *The Color of Love*, featuring two women and a dead man in a decaying '70s porno flick.



Peggy Ahwesh's work—and especially *The Deadman Trilogy*—seems to be marked by the consistent drive to subvert the institutionalized patriarchal narrative codes faithfully reproduced by pervasive hollywoodized film production. Her films refuse to conform to the myth-weaving category of dominant, hierarchically determined discourses; instead, they deconstruct them and re-form them into new meanings, and into images whose meaning is still unutterable but definitely perceptible. In *The Color of Love*, Ahwesh transposes the bodies featured in a decaying porn flick from the early seventies into a painterly, sophisticated choreography under the rhythm of Astor Piazzola's nostalgic tango. The eroticism—usually lacking in pornography—is evoked here by images imbued with pulsating blotches of color, reminiscent of art nouveau, Klimt in particular. As Peggy Ahwesh once commented: "Erotic is completely subjective. Erotic is a smell of a flower, the wind in the trees. Bodies are not the easiest things to evoke erotic feelings with. It's easier to do it with other things: sheets, patterns of color, food." In short the 'male gaze' is undermined not only by the visible story, driven entirely by the two women's desire, where the man "isn't even a prop—he's set decoration" (Gavin Smith), but by the blatant refusal to conceal the 'falseness' of the narrative, renouncing any claim to its 'truthfulness.' The audience is clear on the fact that all of the dead men in *The Deadman Trilogy* are *not* dead. They're the material springboards for telling a story, for creating fiction. Ahwesh creates fiction that opens up space for a different kind of vision and consequently different ways of seeing. In *Nocturne* she uses Pixelvision to give the subjective point of view of a woman who killed her lover. The existence of p.o.v., however, doesn't indicate any kind of reliable point of reference regarding the 'truth' of the story. It only figures as one of the many coexisting though mutually exclusive potentialities (alternative realities). Through the meaningful juxtaposition of images, the possible, the imaginary and the fantasized reveal themselves as legitimate alternatives to a hierarchical way of seeing, ruled by the binary oppositions of our in so many ways still deeply phallogocentric system of thought and perception. But meaningful is not literal. As Peggy Ahwesh explains in *The Independent*, March 1999: "I was using a woman as a main character to show the inherent violence in relationships between lovers. A certain amorality is involved in sexual relations. And trying to flip over the typical terms of horror movies, empower the woman and allow her to act out. Not that I think that women should go out and kill people." (Maja Manojlovic)

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The Color of Love (1994); 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes

"*The Color of Love* resurrects a piece of garish silent found footage from a hardcore porn film discovered in a state of advanced chromatic decay: through the lurid poetics of film decomposition, the tawdry is transformed into sublime. It's a triumph of exquisite disfigurement, of the beneficial defect.

"Found footage films are sometimes called cameraless filmmaking because they're creations of pure editing. *The Color of Love* is not entirely cameraless, however. Although Ahwesh presents the optical/color deterioration exactly as found, she optically reframed, step-printed, and reedited certain passages for emphasis. The reediting lends the film's rhythm an intermittently abrupt, slightly disintegrating lilt that suggests the jumpy, disjunctive quality of print wear-and-tear." (Gavin Smith, *Film Comment*, July/August 1995)

Nocturne (1998); 16mm, b&w, sound, 30 minutes

A psychological horror film based on fear, disquietude and the anticipation of violence... among the shadows of the night and the lurid dreams of the imagination, with no clear division between fact and hallucination, between life and death, between dread and desire. Combines plot

elements culled from Italian horror films and texts from Acker, Shaviro and de Sade. *Nocturne* finishes a trilogy with *The Deadman* and *The Color of Love*. (PA)

“I see our style of filming as a classically female approach—an emphasis on relationships. The audience is the silent third, peering through the keyhole. I could only do this with a woman behind the camera. I don’t trust the male camera to find the female codes buried in an image. Women are aware of them by conditioned instinct. I can be the vulnerable subject in Peggy’s movies because she is in the swamp with me. She can’t say exactly what she wants, she can only articulate it with the camera.” (Margie Strosser, co-director of *Strange Weather* (1993) and early collaborator of Peggy Ahwesh)

POP RESURRECTION : A WARHOL WEEKEND

April 3 and 4, 1999—San Francisco Art Institute

It is fortuitous for us, living here on the cusp of the millenium, that many of Warhol’s early Factory films are now finally finding their way back into circulation. At perhaps no other point in history has an audience been better prepared to revisit these films than we are at this particular moment. Consider, for example, the many Warholian excesses of the long media scandal that we have all just survived. It started with those taped phone conversations from A to B and back again, the same form adopted by Warhol and Pat Hackett for their 1975 book, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*. Then came that report which promised to serve up lots of scandalous dirt about famous people, provided that the reader was willing to wade through page after page of mind-numbing minutiae—much like Warhol’s voluminous diaries. And, of course, there followed those interminable video-taped interrogations which were recorded entirely with a static camera and which featured a berating, inquisitory voice-off—the very same formal devices which Warhol had used in a number of his early sound films, like *Beauty #2* and *Screen Tests #1* and *#2*. Even after the supposed audience for this spectacle had lost all interest in it (and would have left the theater, if that could have entailed anything less than emigration), it just kept going on and on, seemingly indifferent to questions of taste, aesthetics, or even political responsibility. Warhol’s films predicted it all—the salaciousness, the growing ennui, the sneaking suspicion that we were all being taken for a ride—and he did it even as early as 1962, when he made that exasperating film about a blow-job that we never actually got to see.

If Warhol, at this point, deserves to be recognized as one of our most prophetic artists, it is because he was so committed to engaging with American culture at its most superficial and naive. Throughout his career, one of Warhol’s primary concerns was with the changing conditions of celebrity in an age of mass-media saturation, and that fascination is nowhere more evident than in the four selections presented this weekend. Not coincidentally, the second highest rated show of the 1962-1963 television season—the year that Warhol began making films in earnest—was *Candid Camera*. Many of these works seem to have taken to heart the show’s breezy, but somehow dire warning: “When you least expect it, you’re elected. You’re the star today...” Warhol was convinced that the manna of “star quality” could be found anywhere, as long as there was a camera around to capture it. And since cameras are everywhere, the entire world just has to bide its time until

everyone and everything in it has been “discovered,” even if the resulting fame will only last for fifteen minutes.

Warhol’s ingenuous celebration of all things “pop” is well-known, but these films provide us with a glimpse of something rather more sinister at work in our insatiable fascination with the myths of mass-produced glamor. Each of the offerings in this two-day program might be considered an extended meditation on the social constructions of celebrity—rigorous, at times even sadistic, interrogations into the hollow mysteries of media stardom.

Outer and Inner Space (1965); 16mm, b&w, sound, 33 minutes

“I don’t know if I was ever capable of love, but after the ‘60s I never thought in terms of ‘love’ again. However, I became what you might call *fascinated* by certain people. One person in the ‘60s fascinated me more than anybody I had ever known. And the fascination I experienced was probably very close to a certain kind of love.” (Andy Warhol)

Although Warhol does not mention this person by name, it was almost certainly Edie Sedgwick, the woman who served, by turns, as his tragic muse and his ego-ideal. *Outer and Inner Space*, one of Warhol’s many star-vehicles for Sedgwick, seems to represent the direct cinematic expression of just this kind of lovelorn “fascination.” As the author of this fractured and obsessive fan letter, Warhol here assumes his favored role of the distant, impassive observer, preferring always to look instead of touch. The doubly-projected film also both mimics and undermines the conventional form of the celebrity interview: we can make out some of the details that Sedgwick is telling her offscreen interlocutor, but not all of them. As with his serially repeated silkscreens of Hollywood icons, the technical multiplication of Sedgwick’s image tends to flatten out the “inner” psychological space opened up by her onscreen confessions. Where our access to this personal “inner space” has been systematically frustrated, Warhol visually relocates that space in the television set behind her, in an image literally projected through a vacuum. The divisions between outer and inner space—privacy and publicity, secrecy and disclosure—ultimately threaten to dissolve into the electronic ether of a media-born hyperspace.

Hedy (1966); 16mm, b&w, sound, 66 minutes

This film was one of Warhol’s last collaborations with scenarist Ronald Tavel, the man who would go on to become one of the most important practitioners of the Theater of the Ridiculous, along with Charles Ludlam, John Vaccaro, and Bill Vehr. Although some critics have claimed that the genius of many of Warhol’s early “talkies” should be attributed to Tavel entirely, Tavel himself always insisted on the importance of Warhol’s participation. With *Hedy*, in particular, Warhol’s distracted camera style actively undercuts Tavel’s own intentions: “I hated it when I first saw it because it came very close to destroying my script....As the action would move towards the most dramatic, move toward its point, its shattering, unbearable thing, the camera eye would move away....would become bored with the action, with the story, with the problem of the star, kleptomania, and so forth, and would begin to explore the ceiling of the Factory.” While the film’s overt themes of glamor and abjection make it one of Warhol’s campiest works, Tavel has also insisted that Warhol’s idea of camp was very different from his own: “I’m naturally prone to exoticism and fantasy and epic, which he detested, he couldn’t tolerate that at all.” Warhol’s camp sensibility was equally far removed from that of his greatest cinematic influence, Jack Smith. Although several of Smith’s “creatures” make an appearance in this film—Mario Montez (in the title role), Arnold Rockwood, and even Smith himself (who bookends the film in the role of The Doctor)—Warhol’s austere style entirely rejects the overripe, decadent sensuality of Smith’s works.

The story itself, of course, is pure camp: a narcissistic, aging star is unable to face the terrifying prospect of an ordinary life, and so she makes the predictable turn to crime. The scenario is based on Hedy Lamarr's real-life arrest for shoplifting on January 28, 1966, a humiliating episode which she recounts in her biography, *Ecstasy and Me*. Most of the "facts" in the film are accurate: Hedy did marry several times (actually six, not five), she was carrying \$14,000 in checks when she was arrested, and the store detective who collared her was indeed a woman (played in the film by the smoldering Mary Woronov). The real Hedy Lamarr, however, was found "not guilty" at the end of her lengthy and very public jury trial. But even before this scandalous fall from grace, Lamarr had been something of a second-rate luminary. In much the same way that Jack Smith's idol, Maria Montez, was declared a cheap imitation of Dorothy Lamour, Lamarr was brought to MGM in the vain hope that she would become the next Garbo. Despite having played Delilah, Helen of Troy and Joan of Arc in the course of her spotty career, Lamarr never came close to achieving a stardom of Garbo's magnitude. But, undoubtedly, a large part of Warhol's attraction to Lamarr (whom he had met personally) came from her stubborn persistence in believing exactly what the studio publicity department had told her in 1938: that she was "the most beautiful woman in the world."

Tavel's restaging of her pathetic ordeal with all the lurid trappings of high Greek tragedy is irreverent at best, mean-spirited, at worst. However, beneath the restless and indifferent gaze of Warhol's camera, whatever moralizing message Tavel intended to convey about "the problem of the star, kleptomania, and so forth" becomes entirely secondary, if not totally illegible. Instead, the performers themselves begin to seem almost heroic, as they doggedly persist in the theatrical illusion despite the camera's obvious lack of interest. As Warhol recasts stardom as a form of martyrdom without salvation or even recognition, he comes very close to touching upon perhaps the only deep truth that camp has to offer. Suffering the world's cruelty is one thing, but it takes a tragic heroine (or a drag queen) to keep up the performance even after the audience is no longer bothering to watch.

Screen Tests, Reel H (1964-65); b&w, silent, 30 minutes

This selection of 10 "screen tests" represents only the tip of the iceberg of the total number of 3-minute camera-portraits that Warhol produced in the mid-60s. While these works are still in the process of being recovered and catalogued at the Warhol Museum, estimates of their final count range upwards of 500. Warhol's directions to his subjects in these films were brutally simple: according to Baby Jane Holzer (who appears in the last two tests on this reel), he would say, "Look at the camera and don't blink." The result was that these exercises often became, in the words of Gerard Malanga, "studies in subtle sadism." As painful staring contests between the human participants and an unblinking machine, these screen tests should perhaps more accurately be called "screen trials." Marian Zazeela (an artist and another of Jack Smith's original "creatures") actually weeps in the first of these tests, and her purely physical "performance" sets an uneasy and tense tone for the portraits that follow. The subjects who appear in the remainder of the tests are, in order: Edie Sedgwick, Charles Henri Ford, Susan Sontag (the author of "Notes on Camp," among other things), a woman identified only as "Cathy," Mary Woronov, Debbie Caen, Willard Maas and Jane Holzer.

Horse (1965); b&w, sound, 99 minutes

This perverse parody of the Hollywood Western genre ranked as Ronald Tavel's favorite of all his collaborative efforts with Warhol, even "the best of all his films." According to Tavel's account, the initial inspiration for the film came from Warhol's idea to make "a movie for a horse." Tavel immediately went about writing the scenario and hiring the actors: among them, Gregory Battcock ("really uptight"), Larry LaTrae ("a runaway"), and Tosh Carillo ("a bonafide sadist" with "educated toes" who, by day, worked as a florist specializing in funeral wreaths!). Tavel had been

reading Konrad Lorenz's *On Aggression* at the time and was most interested in exploring how a bestial, sadistic side of human nature can emerge in situations of extreme duress. Warhol seemed to have a somewhat different agenda in mind: he shot an entire reel of film featuring just the horse, as it stood around patiently in the Factory, and inserted it between the two, more dramatically engaging acts. The effect is disruptive, certainly, and even boring, but it undeniably shifts the tenor of the entire piece.

Upon the completion of his eight-hour, one-shot epic, *Empire*, Warhol famously declared, "The Empire State Building is a star!" A similarly non-sensical logic seems to be at work in the middle reel of this film, only this time, it's the horse who becomes the star. Warhol here offers another parodic twist on the ritual of the celebrity interview. LaTrae brings the boom mike right up to the horse's mouth, but the best he is able to get is a snort or a puff of breath. The massive, mute presence of the horse eventually begins to appear as a kind of silent counterpart to the unmoving camera. As the narrative dimensions of the film are reconfigured around these two poles—the animal versus the machine—the human activities which are going on in the space in-between begin to assume an unfamiliar, unreal quality. Edie and Andy's phone conversations in the background, for instance, start to take on some of the characteristics of LaTrae's failed interview, appearing as one-way attempts at communication with something that cannot and does not respond. When the actors return for the third reel, and things begin to get randy again, all of the ensuing eroticism and perversity seems to have been somehow demoted in significance. Even Tavel himself, as he wanders into the frame to give the actors directions, begins to seem incidental to the camera's main object of fascination—the horse.

As with the screen tests, Warhol's attempts to capture and objectify the ineffable origins of "star quality" take him beyond the domains of the human. If Warhol's ongoing explorations of the culture of celebrity have often seemed monotonous or pointless to many spectators, it is because these films foreground something endemic to our culture which we would all much prefer to ignore: that the manufacturing of stars, and of the commodified dramas which support and enhance their allure, is only intended *for us* to the extent that we support the continuing existence of the machinery itself. Within the logic of the big budget spectacle—regardless of whether it comes out of Hollywood or Washington—the individual spectator only counts as a cipher, a statistic in the abstract calculation of potential gains and losses. Where Warhol confronts us directly with a machine-like indifference, he brings us one step closer to the recognition that this indifference has become the fundamental condition of late-capitalist social life.

—Program Notes by David Conner—

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ONE EYE ON THE CAMERA, THE OTHER ON THE WORLD
A VAN DER KEUKEN TRIBUTE

PROGRAM ONE

LIVING SPACES

Johan van der Keuken In Person

Sunday, April 18, 1999—San Francisco Art Institute

The important point is not to show that something is this way or that. The important point is to show how it is, how it is to be in a given space, how it is to be a given space.

—Johan van der Keuken, 1969

Eminent Dutch filmmaker and photographer Johan van der Keuken is in town to accept the San Francisco International Film Festival's 1999 Golden Gate Persistence of Vision Award, and Cinematheque joins the Film Festival, the Pacific Film Archive, the Berkeley Art Museum and the Robert Koch Gallery in co-presenting **One Eye on the Camera, the Other on the World**, a retrospective which includes two exhibits of photographs and several screenings of films from his substantial and varied body of work. This evening Cinematheque hosts van der Keuken at the San Francisco Art Institute with a program entitled **Living Spaces**, and on April 29th he will be present at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts for **Uneasy Essays** which includes the rarely screened short *Velocity 40-70* and the feature-length *The White Castle*. He will receive his award at a screening of *Brass Unbound* at the Film Festival on April 30th.

Van der Keuken is probably best known for his essay films which combine socio-political inquiry with a personal search for meaning and a lyrical, avant-garde sensibility. It is difficult to generalize about his body of work, which now includes about fifty films spanning four decades and consisting of a wide range of subjects and forms, including documentary, fiction and avant-garde. From portraits of children, musicians and artists to depictions of a given place or time, from more abstract explorations of philosophical ideas to political analyses of geo-socio-economic systems, Van der Keuken's work has also always been engaged in an ongoing dialogue with the language of film. His attention to the image and the image's hold on meaning; his notions of montage and collage as the driving forces of the film essay; his love of interjecting surprising digressions, whether personal or formal; combined with his serious commitment to exploring the lived social world, make his work unique. If there is a unifying thread in his films, it is probably the omnipresent sense of his passion

and personal conviction—regarding the subjects he explores, the people he encounters and the medium itself.

The relationship between individual lives and the social, physical and geo-political spaces in which they unfold is a major theme in much of van der Keuken's work, from the early *Beppie* through the recent *Amsterdam Global Village*. Spanning almost 30 years, the three stylistically diverse pieces in tonight's program each explore an aspect of this relationship—in Amsterdam in the '60s, Paris in the '80s, and Sarajevo in the '90s. *Four Walls* (1965) is an exquisitely shot and edited exposé of housing conditions in Amsterdam. In the lyrical tradition of Joris Ivens, with beautiful black and white cinematography and few words, the film is a moving testimony to the harsh living conditions of Amsterdam's poor. The hour-long *The Mask* (1989) was commissioned as a bi-centennial portrait of French society, as viewed by an outsider. Van der Keuken looks at Paris through the life of a young homeless man, whose 'mask' becomes a metaphor for the unhealthy lies we, and our societies, create in order to survive. Finally, the short *Sarajevo Film Festival Film* (1993) looks at how that city's residents manage in the midst of the unpredictable chaos of war.

***Four Walls* (1965); 16mm, b&w, sound, 22 minutes**

Made for VPRO Television, *Four Walls* looks at the housing shortage in Amsterdam in 1965 and the deplorable conditions under which many people live. According to van der Keuken, the film is not primarily a denunciation of the housing crisis, but, through the description of inhabited space, it becomes the construction of a mental space in which the walls of each room are the interior walls of a skull.

***The Mask* (1989); 16mm, color, sound, 55 minutes**

On the occasion of the Bicentennial of the French Revolution a non-French filmmaker was asked to create his personal view of French society today. A story of a boy who has lost his mother... is told in the period in which the public images of the Revolution are projected. Dream images, empty images, the official fantasies of power. (JvdK, quoted in *Border Crossings*)

Van der Keuken met Philippe, a twenty-three year old French man, in the offices of Médecins du Monde (Doctors of the World) in Paris. His life had fallen apart when his mother died, and he was caught in a vicious circle of those who have neither home nor job. He dreams of a new suit—his mask—of having the "look" of a bourgeois, while shuttling between the Salvation Army shelter, the outskirts of the city and the train station. In counterpoint to Philippe's commentary on his life on the margins, Paris prepares for the celebration of the Bicentennial of the French Revolution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man.

***Sarajevo Film Festival Film* (1993); 16mm, color, sound, 14 minutes**

Both [*Sarajevo Film Festival Film* and *On Animal Locomotion*] ... are about my inability to understand what I see—my deep-seated inability to see, to be there. To film that demands commitment despite everything. To say that it all means nothing, as the great Fred Wiseman appears to do, is too modest, I do not agree with that. Certainly, there is nothing, but in that nothing, something is always made. It cackles and talks, it blabs and tattles and tries to exist... (JvdK, in *DOX*, 1994)

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Johan van der Keuken was born in Amsterdam in 1938. He began experimenting with photography at the age of twelve and published his first book of photographs in 1955, *We Are 17*. In 1956 he was given a scholarship to the prestigious IDHEC film school in Paris. From then on, his career as filmmaker and photographer developed around the theme of "reality perception." Van der Keuken is also a film critic, and since 1977 he has written a regular column for the Dutch film journal *Skrien*. He has taught seminars in Geneva, Hamburg, Brussels, Annecy, Beaconsfield, Stuttgart, Berlin, Ludwigsburg, Amsterdam, Paris, Munich, Mülheim, New York, Denmark and California. His body of work includes over fifty films, ranging in length from 4 to 245 minutes. In 1997 and 1998 his photographs, films and installations were presented in a huge exhibit in the Netherlands and Paris called *The Body and the City*. Last year *Cahiers du Cinéma* published a major new book of and about his work, *Johan van der Keuken, Aventures d'un regard*.

Selected Filmography

<i>A Moment's Silence</i> (1960)	<i>The Master and the Giant</i> (1980)
<i>Blind Child</i> (1964)	<i>The Way South</i> (1981)
<i>Beppie</i> (1965)	<i>Iconoclasm—A Storm of Images</i> (1982)
<i>Four Walls</i> (1965)	<i>Time</i> (1984)
<i>Herman Slobbe/Blind Child 2</i> (1966)	<i>I♥\$</i> (1986)
<i>A Film for Lucebert</i> (1967)	<i>The Eye Above the Well</i> (1988)
<i>Big Ben/Ben Webster in Europe</i> (1967)	<i>The Mask</i> (1989)
<i>The Spirit of Time</i> (1968)	<i>Face Value</i> (1991)
<i>Velocity 40-70</i> (1970)	<i>Brass Unbound</i> (1993)
<i>Diary</i> (1972)	<i>On Animal Locomotion</i> (1994)
<i>The White Castle</i> (1973)	<i>Lucebert, Time and Farewell</i> (1994)
<i>The Reading Lesson</i> (1973)	<i>Amsterdam Global Village</i> (1996)
<i>The New Ice Age</i> (1974)	<i>To Sang Fotostudio</i> (1997)
<i>Filmmaker's Holiday</i> (1974)	<i>Last Words- My Sister Yoka</i> (1998)
<i>The Palestinians</i> (1975)	
<i>The Flat Jungle</i> (1978)	

See the Film Festival Guide and the Pacific Film Archive flyers, both on the table outside, for upcoming shows of van der Keuken's films. Cinematheque has its second screening, *Uneasy Essays*, on Thursday, April 29 at 7:30 pm at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts which is located at 701 Mission Street, at the corner of Third Street.

Thanks to Susanna Scott, Ideale Audience, for making the European prints available to us.

—Program Notes by Irina Leimbacher—

ONE EYE ON THE CAMERA, THE OTHER ON THE WORLD
A VAN DER KEUKEN TRIBUTE

PROGRAM TWO

UNEASY ESSAYS

Johan van der Keuken In Person

Thursday, April 29, 1999—Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

...montage is the movement of the spirit itself, the thinking which sets matter in motion...

In my attitude to film, this idea of collage still plays a significant role. It is a certain kind of freedom that you grant to the images. You don't have any pretense about knowing all the feasible potentials of every image. There is a remainder, a more or less remote region where the image means nothing. And the more freedom you give the image at the start, the more leeway you have to create complicated relations between images, to play a fascinating game between reality and the imagination, in which meanings are rounded off like a buoy. You also move further and further away from the social arena, where battles are not only fought with concepts but with real weapons as well. The more progress you make as a film-maker, the more you view your work as a force, be it perhaps a modest one, in the social struggle. One of the repercussions is then that the free, autonomous image often has to be subordinated to the image as the bearer of meaning,

—Johan van der Keuken, in *Skrien*, 1977

...the less you feel obliged to understand from the outset where the film is going and the more you allow yourself to understand nothing at all, the more easily you will "travel" within my films.

—Johan van der Keuken, in *DOX*, 1998

Van der Keuken's body of work now includes fifty films, spans four decades and consists of a wide range of subjects and forms, including documentary, fiction and avant-garde. From portraits of children, musicians and artists to depictions of a given place or time, from more abstract explorations of philosophical ideas to political analyses of geo-socio-economic systems, van der Keuken's work has also always been engaged in an ongoing dialogue with the language of film. His attention to the image and the image's hold on meaning; his notions of montage and collage as the driving forces of the film essay; his love of interjecting surprising digressions, whether personal or formal; all combined with his serious commitment to exploring the lived social world, make his work unique.

The driving force behind much of his work is his search for connections, for illuminating links—between the private and the political, between diverse cultural landscapes and global economic systems, between one image and sound and another. The two films we screen this evening are both major essay films from the 1970s which are very much about investigating and seeking such connections. *Velocity 40-70* (1970) is the most experimental of such essays, and it stands out as a provocative and enigmatic exploration of the image's hold on meaning and film's ability to speak about history. Commissioned by the Dutch government as a commemoration of World War II, it uses only images of the present to speak

about the past, thus revealing the profound imbrication of the two and creating a powerful visual evocation of oppression. *The White Castle* (1973), part two of his *North-South Triptych*, brings together images shot in Formentera, with its recently developed tourist industry; several factories in Holland; and a poor community in Columbus, Ohio. A critical meditation on the isolation and suffering caused by the “system” and on the lives of some of those whom it casts aside, uses up, or drags into its net, the film eschews verbal explanations, creating instead a powerful poetic and political collage of images and lives.

Velocity 40-70 (1970); 35mm, color, sound, 25 minutes

In 1970 the city of Amsterdam commissioned van der Keuken to make a film as part of its official commemoration of World War II. The fruit of this commission is one of his most intriguing films, *Velocity 40-70*, a poetic and mysterious work made without any recourse to archival footage. Shot in Holland and Italy, van der Keuken has described it as “the breath of things”.

“*Velocity 40-70* is not concerned with the past, but with the things of right now, the reality which is ‘seen’ through the ‘signs’ in which it is manifest. Within the framework of van der Keuken’s film, the hierarchic relationship between the sign and what it signifies, the symbol and the real thing, is abolished. There is an overpowering, continuous game of musical chairs, with the observed signs-of-reality as the players—just as in Kouwenaar’s poem [recited on the sound track].” (H.S. Visscher, *The Lucid Eye*)

The White Castle (1973); 16mm, color, sound, 78 minutes

Part two of his *North-South Triptych*, *The White Castle* brings together images shot in Formentera, Holland, and Columbus, Ohio. “A conveyer belt runs across the world. Walking feet on a road... People, utterly fragmented. Images, utterly fragmented. Every image seeks to join forces with every other image.” (JvdK)

“In *The White Castle*... the individual shots are ‘elements’ which can be arranged and continually rearranged within the framework of the mosaic, so that there ‘significance’ keeps changing and new associations are suggested...”

“The main theme is once again the split right down the middle of life, the dividedness of the unity of life—the very life which van der Keuken loves so passionately and which, at the same time, drives him to despair. The cause of this dividedness is ‘the system’. In Formentera, three communities live completely isolated from each other: the local population...; the ‘migrant workers’ imported from Spain...; the tourists... In Columbus, Ohio, one isolated group is focused on: the ghetto people, discarded by ‘the system’ as useless and worthless. In Holland, the camera is primarily aimed at the workers, the assembly line workers, who are used and used up by ‘the system,’ but just in so far as and as long as the conditions of that system deem them necessary.

“The film can be divided into three main parts. The first is an observation of the brokenness, the dividedness and the sense of isolation... In the second part, much the same visual data are transformed from social into existential data. It is existence, life itself, which is destroyed and ruined by the system... The third part of the film deals primarily with the disastrous effects of this ‘fragmentation’...” (H.S. Visscher, *The Lucid Eye*)

...To me, a combination of images seemed to be strong if it would make that seeing [the seeing of seeing which is the origin of film] tangible and visible, providing the sensation and sharpening the consciousness at the same time... Even for the most trifling moment, attention was demanded and although the combination of those moments in the collage certainly produced meanings, they were never final. The image was always victorious over the idea.

Suddenly you no longer know a single name, a single place, a single number, you have gone blind from too much seeing.

—van der Keuken, 1986, describing filming New York's Lower East Side for *I ♥ \$*

Johan van der Keuken was born in Amsterdam in 1938. He began experimenting with photography at the age of twelve and published his first book of photographs in 1955, *We Are 17*. In 1956 he was given a scholarship to IDHEC (Institute of Higher Cinematographic Studies) in Paris. From then on, his career as filmmaker and photographer developed around the theme of "reality perception." Van der Keuken is also a film critic and since 1977 he has written a regular column for the Dutch film journal *Skrien*. He has taught seminars in Geneva, Hamburg, Brussels, Annecy, Beaconsfield, Stuttgart, Berlin, Ludwigsburg, Amsterdam, Paris, Munich, Mülheim, New York, Denmark and California. His body of work includes over fifty films, ranging in length from 4 to 245 minutes.

EYES WIDE OPEN: NEW CURATORIAL PERSPECTIVES

PROGRAM ONE

RE-FRAMING LEBANON: FOUR RADICAL VISUAL ACTS AN EVENING OF LEBANESE SHORTS

Curated and Presented by Tarik Elhaik and Khalil Benkirane
Co-presented with the Arab Film Festival

Mahmoud Hojeij In Person

Saturday, May 8, 1999—San Francisco Art Institute

In recent years Lebanese independent cinema has undergone an extraordinary development which infuses Arab film with an unusual avant-gardist impulse. Sensitive to the historical, political and cultural mutations of contemporary Lebanon and alert to the democratic potential of video technology, pioneer video makers Jayce Salloum (*This is not Beirut*), Walid Raad, Mohamed Soueid and Akram Zaatari have developed a brilliant cinematic language/sensibility which blends the traditions of experimental film, video art and the cinema verité of Jean Rouch and early Chris Marker. These audio-visual experiments (both in form and/or content) are breathing life in a new generation of young Lebanese film/video makers such as Mahmoud Hojeij, a Golden Spire winner at the 1999 San Francisco International Film Festival in the New Visions Video category. Interweaving different modes of representations, these innovative artists are gradually carving a visual/aural space of resistance to hegemonic and official interpretations of culture, social reality, uses of technology, and individual experience, and they present a *different* material which probes conventional visual habits. Through a painstaking and audacious interpolation of the visual order, these videos could very well signal the downfall of the old moralizing "scopic regime" in Lebanon, and indeed in other Arab nations. Tonight's program features four shorts which conjure up the dynamism, the complexity and the radicalism of the Lebanese *new wave*.

Majnounak (Crazy of You) (1997) by Akram Zaatari; video, color, 26 minutes

Set in the industrial suburbs of Beirut, *Majnounak* portrays three young men who openly recount the beginning, middle and end of a sexual encounter. Through a careful look at the shaping of the body, sexual language, songs, fantasies, T.V. and video game stereotypes, this polemical video explores concepts of the "masculine." The image they want to project of themselves in front of the camera is the one of being "courageous, seductive." In such a context, desire is transformed into a commodity, thereby generating a complex discourse on sexuality and gender relations.

Born in 1966 in Saida, Lebanon, Akram Zaatari was awarded a B.A. in Architecture from the American University of Beirut in 1989 and an M.A. in Media Studies from the New School for Social Research, New York in 1995. He worked as the Executive Producer of a daily morning show *Aalam Al-Sabah* at Future Television in Lebanon where he produced most of his video work and taught photography and design at the American University of Beirut. He is also a founding member of The Arab Foundation for the Image. *All Is Well on the Border Front*, his brilliant tribute to Godard's *Ici et ailleurs (Here and Elsewhere)*, will be screened at the 1999 Arab Film Festival.

Cinema Fouad (1994) by Mohamed Soueid; video, color, 28 minutes

A documentary on the life and ambitions of a young Lebanese cross-dresser. The video follows her journey from soldier to cabaret dancer in an effort to raise funds for her sex change operation. Shot in Beirut, *Cinema Fouad* uses cinema verité interview techniques and weaves a complex story of sexuality, identity and desire.

Born in 1959 in Beirut, Lebanon, Mohamed Soueid studied Chemistry at the Faculté des Sciences in Beirut. He is involved in an impressive range of activities—from film criticism to television production to film/video screenwriting. He has published numerous works on Arab cinema and silent film in Lebanon and taught a course on the history of Arab and Lebanese cinema at St. Joseph University in Beirut. Along with Jayce Salloum, Walid Raad and Akram Zaatari, M. Soueid has been a pivotal agent in the revival of Lebanese documentary filmmaking.

The Dead Weight Of A Quarrel Hangs (1998) by Walid Raad; video, color, 17 minutes

More experimental in form than the other pieces in this program, *The Dead Weight Of A Quarrel Hangs* problematizes the re-presentation of historical, sociological and anthropological evidence through a cautious and multi-layered investigation of the Lebanese civil war (1975-1991). A three-part video project composed of "fake documentaries," the video is described by the artist as an amalgam of "hysterical symptoms that present imaginary events constructed out of innocent and everyday material."

Walid Raad is an independent media producer and Assistant Professor of Video and Cultural Studies at Queens College, CUNY. Raad holds a Ph.D. from the university of Rochester (USA) in Cultural and Visual Studies. Walid's media installations and productions have been exhibited widely in the USA, the Middle East and Europe.

Beirut-Palermo-Beirut (1998) by Mahmoud Hojeij; video, color, 17 minutes

A parody of performance, success, acting, interview format and video technology, this short does not lend itself to easy categorization and establishes an ambiguous relationship between form and content. Sounds and images are manipulated in order to create a non-linear piece which challenges habitual ways of seeing.

A winner of a Golden Spire at the 1999 San Francisco International Film Festival, Mahmoud Hojeij received his B.A. in Communication Arts from the Lebanese American University and will pursue his graduate studies at the New School For Social Research. His previous video *Once* (which will also be screened in the 1999 Arab Film Festival) won a Palme d'or at the Palermo International Sport film festival in 1997.

—Program Notes by Tarik Elhaik—

Eyes Wide Open: New Curatorial Perspectives is a series of eight programs conceived and produced by emerging local curators from diverse communities as part of San Francisco Cinematheque's Spring 99 Season. Funded by grants from the San Francisco Art Commission's Cultural Equity Fund and the LEF Foundation, our *Eyes Wide Open* programs take place on May 8, 9, 22, 29 and June 5, 12, 19 and 26 and feature work by local, national and international makers. From radical Lebanese videos to Latina personal docs to South Asian identity crises, from fitting in (or out) to the color of sex to notions of home, these wide-ranging programs showcase daring and provocative work where the personal and the political, form and message, are inseparably linked. Please join us for opening and closing receptions for the curators and filmmakers on Sunday, May 9 and Saturday, June 26.

Cinemayaat, the Arab Film Festival, takes place September 8-15 in San Francisco, Berkeley and San Jose.

**TIME LAPSES:
A PROGRAM OF EXPERIMENTAL FILM**

Curated by Steve Anker, Kathy Geritz and Irina Leimbacher
Co-Presented by the 42nd San Francisco International Film Festival,
the Pacific Film Archive and San Francisco Cinematheque

Shuo-wen Hsiao and Luis Recoder In Person

Sunday, May 2, 1999—AMC Kabuki Theatre

The recent experimental films on tonight's program are as much about the time of viewing as the viewing of time itself. Contemplative, revelatory and sensual, each piece explores time's passage in a unique way, obstructing or accentuating, personalizing or altogether obliterating its purportedly inevitable forward thrust.

Flight (1998) by Guy Sherwin; 16mm, b&w, sound, 4 minutes

A bird perched on a tree is caught in the image. Its motion is stilled, magnified; time halts and then takes off again.

shipfilm (1998) by Stephanie Barber; 16mm, color, silent, 4 minutes

The beginning of a narrative of failure and faith, of unexpected proportions and elegant construction.

Painting the Town (1998) by Jim Jennings; 16mm, b&w, silent, 11 minutes

Last Autumn on a series of weekend nights I went to "The Crossroads of the World" with a camera and a tape recording of an opera I love. I played the Opera and shot film for hours at a time. Later in the editing room, I removed what merely documented and braided the sublime. (JJ)

Intrude Sanctuary (1999) by Shuo-wen Hsiao; 16mm, color, sound, 12 minutes

A commuter train takes us on a meditative journey into time, embodied by exquisite light and unexpected motion.

Last Hymn to the Night... Novalis (1997) by Stan Brakhage; 16mm, color, silent, 17 minutes

A lush hand-painted film whose beauty obliterates our sense of time.

Bare Strip (1998) by Luis A. Recoder; 8mm to 16mm, b&w, sound, 10 minutes

An interlude from an old softcore film is transformed into a reflection on the temporal and spatial confines of the film frame.

"Cinema stripped bare; barely cinema." (LR)

Family Dinners (1997) by James Otis; 16mm, color, silent, 7 minutes

Eighteen years of dinners are condensed in this affectionate family portrait which grew out of a family tradition of taking slides of holiday dinner posing.

Floating Under a Honey Tree (1999) by Mary Beth Reed; 16mm, color, sound, 7 minutes

An image of a child on a swing leads us into a mesmerizing journey through veils of time and memory.

Time Flies (1997) by Robert Breer; 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes

A whimsical reflection on aging and the inevitable passage of time created through live action, drawings and collage animation.

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Founded by two Bay Area filmmakers in 1961, San Francisco Cinematheque is one of the oldest showcases for non-commercial, personal and experimental film in the United States. Striving to make experimental film and video a part of the larger cultural landscape, Cinematheque presents over seventy programs each year, with artists present at many of the screenings; publishes program notes and a journal, Cinematograph; and regularly collaborates with a number of other arts organizations. For more information or to become a member, call 415.558.8129.

The Pacific Film Archive is one of the world's most important film archives, film studies centers and exhibitors of film art. Their exhibition program offers a wide variety of world cinema from its earliest days through the present, highlighted by prints of exceptional quality, with different public screenings almost every night of the year. They have one of the finest archival programs devoted to the preservation of experimental film. For more information or to become a member, call 510.642.1412.

EYES WIDE OPEN: NEW CURATORIAL PERSPECTIVES

PROGRAM TWO

HOMEGIRL VISIONS

Curated and Presented by Cristina Ibarra
Co-Presented with Galería de la Raza

Nora Cadena, Veronica Majano, Consuelo Moreno and Marta Tejeda In Person

Sunday, May 9, 1999—San Francisco Art Institute

Memory and migration cross paths in this collection of new Latina and Chicana short films and videos. Challenging conventional forms and English-only hegemony, these “homemakers” rebuild an understanding of homeland through diary, narrative, documentary and experimental visions of immigration. Homegirls hit the streets to show home as mobile, temporary, and shifting from private to political due to gentrification and the US backlash against immigrants.

The shifting lenses we will look through tonight go back and forth between remembered homes and the creation of new ones. We get stuck in between these worlds, feeling a disorienting sense of uprootedness as each filmmaker takes us on personal and political journey of empowerment.

The Paradise of Her Memory (1999) by Jennifer Maytorena Taylor; video, b&w, sound, 5 minutes

This lyrical representation of a woman’s childhood memory is brought to life in Taylor’s roaming lens. The aural sensations that brings to life this Super 8 footage place us at the opening of the treasure chest that is her memory, allowing us to forget the question of who is being described and instead focus on the only constant which is movement itself.

Jennifer Maytorena Taylor is an award-winning independent filmmaker based in San Francisco. Among her credits are the feature documentary film *Paulina* (Producer and Co-Director) and *The Great Dykes of Holland* (Director).

From Cananea to Cardiff (1999) by Consuelo Moreno; Super 8mm, color, sound, 17 minutes

This is a family portrait of Mexican settlement in the San Diego area. “I wanted to retell some of my relatives’ stories; to show just how much we have become a part of the community throughout the generations. I wanted to address the fact that Mexicanos and Latinos are here and are part of this country’s history.” (CM)

Consuelo Moreno is a student in the Cinema Department at San Francisco State University. This is her first film, which she produced independently.

Going Home: Al Otro Lado (1997) by Yolanda Cruz; video, color, sound, 30 minutes

Yolanda Cruz takes a video camera to Mexico on a visit to her hometown, Cieneguilla. We travel with her; recalling stories of her past, she takes us on a tour of her hometown then to a marketplace in

Oaxaca and finally back to her new home of Olympia, Washington. Cruz's narration accents the subtleties contained within the visuals of her home-movie style footage. A Oaxaca marketplace, for example, is a crossroads of immigrants as far apart from each other as a family of vendors who travel from Cieneguilla to Oaxaca, and the American tourists placing sombreros on a couple of children for a quick tourist snapshot.

Yolanda Cruz is the only Chicano currently enrolled in UCLA's Directing Program where she is finishing her MFA.

Danza Azteca (1998) by Marta Tejeda; Super 8mm, b&w, sound, 7 minutes

Joining the spectators of local danzates, ritual mesmerizes and Victoria Lena Manyarrows' poetry, *Danza Azteca* celebrates the interconnection between this indigenous culture and the immigrant struggle.

Marta Tejeda is a student in San Francisco State's Cinema Department. Her film recently screened at SF State Film Finals, the 38th International Film Festival, and the Women in the Director's Chair Festival in Chicago.

"My intention was for people to place themselves as being an other and to learn from that experience." (MT)

Ni Aquí Ni Allá (1999) by Nora Cadena; video, color, sound, 26 minutes

In this film, we witness the struggles and desires of the vendors along Mission Street whom we pass by every day. Cadena voices the immigrant dream of the street vendors of our quickly changing local Latino neighborhood. This is a personal look at the necessary reality of immigration in the wake of Proposition 187 and anti-immigrant sentiment across governmental policies.

Nora Cadena is an award winning independent filmmaker and producer. Originally from Laredo, Tejas, she has been living in San Francisco for the past 14 years.

Calle Chula (1998) by Veronica Majano; 16mm, color, sound, 12 minutes

When Calle wakes up and cannot remember where she is, the "old" Mission is compared to the "new," directly showing the effects of the gentrification process in one of San Francisco's oldest Latino neighborhoods. We feel Calle's sense of uprootedness as she tries to figure out what happened to her neighborhood.

Veronica Majano received FAF's STAND grant for first-time filmmakers with which she made *Calle Chula*. She also received a pre-production grant from the Serpent Source for Women to work on her latest piece, *Prince Saves* (working title).

—Program Notes by Cristina Ibarra—

see May 8, 1999, for series overview

Galería de la Raza is a Mission-based community arts organization located at 2857 24th Street at Bryant. Currently on exhibit is *Open Studio Corrido*, upcoming artists presented next to original prints from *Galería's* archives.

LOVE, LANGUAGE AND VIOLENCE
RECENT WORK BY DIANE BONDER, RAY REA
AND MACHIKO SAITO

Diane Bonder, Ray Rea and Machiko Saito In Person

Thursday, May 13, 1999—Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

New York-based film and video maker Diane Bonder joins local makers Ray Rea and Machiko Saito for a program of potent personal works which don't hesitate to tread into psychic territories where desire and violence, language and madness, meet and mingle. Each of these artists explores how processes of socialization and naming, in the context of family, relationships and society as a whole—and the implicit and often explicit violence of these processes—affect the construction of subjectivity and sexual identity.

Bonder's newest piece, *The Physics of Love*, uses multiple forms of story telling to powerfully evoke the multi-faceted and culturally inscribed violence in her own and other mother-daughter relationships. Her earlier *Parolé* examines the construction of sexuality through the discourses of medicine and psychology. Ray Rea's *Hear* contrasts the noise of psychosis with the authoritarian and silent language of institutionalization, while *Third* is a laconic short narrative exploring the dynamics of power, inertia and flight in a lesbian relationship. Machiko Saito's *Premenstrual Spotting* is a powerful and cathartic piece dealing with her own childhood abuse and its effects, resulting in escapism through fetishes, self-abuse, alcoholism and drag. *Femme TV*, which grew out of her TV show providing an uncensored voice to the queer and transgender community, is a visually stunning examination of gender issues, femme and butch identities and the struggles for personal empowerment through sexual preference, dominance, submission and drag.

The Physics of Love (1998) by Diane Bonder; video, b&w and color, sound, 25 minutes

The Physics of Love is an experimental work which tells the story of an unresolved relationship. Using the laws of science as a metaphor, the work explores domestic labor, disease, violence and desire and the way in which the social becomes inscribed on the body. While the laws of physics anchor reality, the work of ghosts unhinges it. (DB)

Parolé (1993) by Diane Bonder; Super-8mm on video, b&w, sound, 9 minutes

Loosely based on a case study by Havelock Ellis of a lesbian who murders her lover, *Parolé* is an experimental film which examines the construction of sexuality through the discourses of medicine and psychology. These institutions have historically linked sexual identity to criminal and pathological behavior while naturalizing this construct through "scientific" studies. (DB)

Hear (1991) by Ray Rea; video, color, sound, 4 minutes

Hear is an experimental triptych contrasting the noise of psychosis with the authoritarian silence of institutionalization. (RR)

Third (1996) by Ray Rea; 16mm, color, sound, 9 minutes

An experimental narrative on inertia and the hope of exit. (RR)

Premenstrual Spotting (1997) by Machiko Saito; video, color, sound, 12 minutes

"*Premenstrual Spotting* is a testimony to the manifold ways that fantasy and reality create and transform each other, whether it is through the sexual exploitation of a child or an adult survivor's reclamation of her own desire. Saito's performance uses the props of this commodified, denaturalized femininity and reshapes it into her own paradoxes of sexual identity. Breezy Broadway show tunes serve as ironic and dramatic counterpoint to the monologues and performances... The film's density serves to illustrate the impossibility of cleanly separating pleasure from pain, harassment from abuse, sexual expression from perversion. In fact, it is the 'perversity' of Saito's performance which transforms them into such cathartic expressions of sexuality." (Eve Oishi, *Asian American Screen Cultures*)

15 Minutes of Femme TV (1998) by Machiko Saito; video, color, sound, 16 minutes

Initially *Femme TV* was created to be a one hour, bi-monthly alternative to mainstream late night television, with the intention of providing an uncensored televised voice for the queer and transgender community in San Francisco... Through defiant documentation, enticing interviews and the showcasing of queer films and events, *Femme TV* has created an innovative vehicle for community expression, interaction and exposure that is conveniently accessible to the public. An ideal solution for those nights when voyeurism is the most comforting option. *Femme TV*... "what a drag! Watching other people live their lives, while you stay in bed." (MS)

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Diane Bonder is a New York City-based filmmaker whose work is consistently dedicated to personal experimental vision and often explores issues of gender and sexual identity. *The Physics of Love* won the Grand Prize at the United States Super-8 Film Festival and other awards at the Locarno International Film Festival and the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Film and Video Festival. *Parolé* won awards at the Atlanta Film and Video Festival, the Charlotte Film and Video Festival and the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Film Festival. Her other works include *Dear Mom*, *Tongue in Chic*, *Dangerous When Wet*, *Stick Figures* and more.

Ray Rea is a local filmmaker, assistant editor and sex educator whose experimental and narrative work has been screened locally, nationally and internationally. Rea's latest piece, *Special* (1998), continues his explorations of internal states up to and including insanity and madness. It screened at last year's Film Arts Festival. *Third* won an award at the Vermillion Film Festival.

Machiko Saito lives and works in San Francisco. She has a background in theatre, film, fashion design, photography, dance and illustration. *Premenstrual Spotting* has had numerous local and national screenings and it won Best Experimental Film at the Chicago Underground Film Festival and a Golden Gate Award at the San Francisco International Film Festival. She is currently writing a solo performance piece, two screenplays and illustrating her ideas for an animated short film.

**Y2K PROPHECIES
NEW VIDEOS BY CHIP LORD, GUSTAVO VAZQUEZ AND
GUILLERMO GÓMEZ-PEÑA**

Presented in Association with Film Arts Foundation.

Chip Lord, Gustavo Vazquez and Guillermo Gómez-Peña In Person

Thursday, May 20, 1999—San Francisco Art Institute

What is Y2K? For many it supports a paranoia, sustains an inherent distrust in the computer age that somehow has insinuated itself into our society. Y2K also suggests the opportunity for change, for betterment, leaving the old age behind by creating a marker where we can initiate new resolutions for a new millennium. Largely, though, Y2K is the apt moniker for what our future holds for us. The information superhighway (like it or not) is the latest version of the Appalachian Trail and Route 66. Just gear up and click yourself away. The world is at our fingertips, literally, yet these fingers which once were used for sensory purposes now work towards the creation of a virtual reality. This is partly what Chip Lord is addressing in *Awakening from the 20th Century*.

Since Y2K is the future, however, and if hope and change for a more equal, perhaps better, nicer and balanced existence is to be anticipated, we must first acknowledge where we are today. With *The Mojado Invasion (The Second U.S.–Mexico War)*, Gustavo Vazquez and Guillermo Gómez-Peña dare to satirize the political reality of our current U.S./Mexican relations through a parody of the documentary form.

Awakening from the 20th Century (1999) by Chip Lord; video, color, sound, 35 minutes

The advent and development of broadcasting and netcasting has opened the possibility for human contact to be replaced by virtual contact. We may not lose “touch” with the world, yet the possibility exists for the elimination of the sensual experience of touching; of interacting with a physical community rather than the global community of the World Wide Web. San Francisco stands as a symbol where the two worlds of the real and the virtual co-exist, and Lord interviews people engaged in the “virtual” life of the multimedia/internet activity to ponder whether the computer world can honestly replace the tangible pleasures, and it doesn’t. Musicians still like to feel that analog tape in their hands, the Real Player doesn’t fulfill the desire for social interaction, and no computer can replace the thrill of riding along the Great Highway with your convertible’s top down. Lord finds that people still need to “wear the city” despite the online malls, banks, medical services, and every virtual institution to come; and they are coming... quickly. Y2K.

Chip Lord is a media artist who has worked with video as a creative medium since 1972. As a founding member of Ant Farm and TVTV, he produced such video classics as *Media Burn*, *The Eternal Frame* and *Four More Years*. With his Ant Farm partners he created *Cadillac Ranch* in 1974. His video works include *Easy Living* (1984), *Media Hostages* (1985) with Muntadas and Branda Miller, *Motorist* (1989), *The Aroma of Enchantment* (1992), *Mapping a City of Fragments v.2* (1997) and *Awakening from the 20th Century* (1999). Lord has also produced the video installations *Picture Windows* (1990), with Mickey McGowan, and *Fashion Zone* (1992). He lives in San Francisco and teaches in the Department of Film and Digital Media at the University of California at Santa Cruz.

The Mojado Invasion (The Second U.S.-Mexico War) (1999) by Gustavo Vazquez and Guillermo Gómez-Peña; video, color, sound, 26 minutes

"The most reverse racist movie in the history of cinema," according to Rush Limbaugh writing from the Chino Penitentiary in 1999. And why shouldn't we believe it? American media has yet to accept the fact that American pluralism exists en masse, and that ethnicity is not something we sprinkle onto our palettes for flavor. Using stock footage from hundreds of misrepresentations of Chicanos on film and video, Vazquez and Gómez-Peña have created a postmodern chronicle of the future of U.S./Mexican relations. Pointed and vicious, the videomakers bombard us with narrative and imagery, creating a "historical documentary" from an atypical point-of-view: Y2K. "The nation-state has collapsed. The ex-US of A has fragmented into a myriad of micro-republics loosely controlled by a multi-racial junta and governed by a Chicano prime minister, 'Gran Vato.' Spanglish is the official language. Panicked by the New Borders, Anglo militias are desperately trying to recapture the Old Order" (GV). While challenging what the filmmakers hope will become outdated Chicano representations, *Mojado Invasion* assaults the viewer and his own complacency with the images he absorbs, and forces him to ponder in ideological terms about what Y2K can offer to "culti-multiculturalists."

Gustavo Vazquez, a film/videomaker originally from Tijuana, now living in San Francisco, holds an M.A. in film from San Francisco State University (1991) and a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute (1979). Vazquez is a founding member of Cine Acción, and was the 1996 film festival director for Festival ¡Cine Latino! As an artist-in-residence at the San Francisco Exploratorium, Vazquez curated *Mexico Videowaves*. His works include *The Indian Queen* (1997), *Al Tiro* (1997), *Lunada* (1995), *Free from Babylon*, *Treehouse Joe*, *Comedy of the Underground*, a self-made portrait of George Kuchar, and *The Mojado Invasion (The Second U.S.-Mexico War)* (1999). Recently he won two major awards for his achievements in film: The Rockefeller Media Fellowship Award and the Eureka Visual Artist Fellowship from the Fleishhacker Foundation.

Guillermo Gómez-Peña is a writer and performance artist born in Mexico City who has lived in the United States since 1978. His work explores border issues, cross-cultural identity, and U.S./Latino cultural relations with the use of multiple media including journalism, performance, radio art, video, bilingual poetry and installation art. Gómez-Peña was a founding member of the Border Arts Workshop/Taller de Arte Fronterizo. He has recently completed a performance trilogy, *BORDERscape 2000*, that followed *The New World Border* and *Dangerous Border Game*. Each of the three performances in the trilogy interrogates the dynamics of fear and desire, fetishization and paranoia, that characterize Anglo-American attitudes toward Latino and Mexican immigrants. Gómez-Peña received the Prix de la Parole at the International Theatre Festival of the Americas (1989), the New York Bessie Award (1989) and a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship (1991).

—Program Notes by John K. Mrozik—

EYES WIDE OPEN: NEW CURATORIAL PERSPECTIVES

PROGRAM THREE

THE SEX OF BODIES IN COLOR

Curated and Presented by Celine Salazar Parrenas

Co-Presented with Frameline and Stanford's Race & Sex Workshop
and Asian American Studies Graduate Group

Anne Keala Kelly, Celine Salazar Parrenas and Dawn Suggs In Person

Saturday, May 22, 1999—San Francisco Art Institute

In ten short films, women of color filmmakers look at the sex act as a site where racial identities form and transform, rupture and erupt. In these scenes sex acts are both public and private, in us and around us, representing bodies and desires not limited to the bedroom or the genitals but as sites and actions that intersect with political pain and pleasure. The filmmakers showcased tonight explore how sex acts, explicit and implicit on celluloid, help us envision the intimacy of sex to the framing of social problems, freedom and joy.

She Left the Script Behind (1993) by Dawn Suggs; 16mm, b&w and color, 6 minutes

Dawn Suggs has produced 6 short films and videos. She completed her MFA in Film Directing at UCLA. Her jobs in independent community media include Director and Producer of an AIDS awareness video commissioned by the AIDS Prevention Team of Los Angeles in 1995; co-producer of *War on the Homefront*, a Paper Tiger/Deep Dish documentary; and Distribution Manager of Black Film Foundation of New York City. She has received reviews and citations in *Black Film Review*, *The Village Voice*, *LA Weekly*, *The Boston Globe*, *Chicago Times*, *Deneuve*, *Afterimage* and *Out Magazine*.

Nice Colored Girls (1987) by Tracey Moffatt; 16mm, color, 16 minutes

At a bar Aboriginal women meet white men in this short film that captures a small moment within the contemporary sexual economy of race relations. The film shows how similar early colonial encounters echo and resonate in the present as material legacy and relation.

Tracey Moffatt is a well-known Australian Aboriginal filmmaker. Her celebrated film works include the 1996 feature, *Bedevil* and the 35mm short, *Night Cries: A Rural Tragedy* (1990). Well-known for the visual and emotional power and style of her films and photographs, she has exhibited her work widely. Recently, she held a one-woman show at the prestigious DIA Center in New York, and screenings include the Cannes and Vancouver International Film Festivals.

Wavelengths (1997) by Pratibha Parmar; 16mm, color, 6 minutes

Pratibha Parmar is a London-based filmmaker, writer and editor. She co-edited the anthology *Charting the Journey: Writings by Black and Third World Women and Queer Looks*. She began her film and video work as a community activist. Now an internationally renowned filmmaker, her works include *Emergence* (1986), *Sari Red* (1988), *Khush* (1991) and *A Place of Rage* (1993).

Stretchmark (1997) by Veena Cabrerias-Sud; video, 9 minutes

The single brown woman as mother is confirmed by the visibility of her son inside and outside the home, on the body and in the spirit. The interior life of motherhood as anger, desire, violence and isolation is told through poetic images and a voice that maps the pains of the body.

Veena Cabrerias-Sud is an award-winning Indian-Filipina American filmmaker based in New York City. Formerly the Distribution Director of Third World Newsreel in New York, she is completing her MFA in Film at New York University.

Prey (1995) by Helen Lee; 16mm, 26 minutes

Helen Lee shoots the powerful sexual dynamics between a Native Canadian man she meets at her Korean immigrant family's convenience store. Bodies, bullets and generations collide in this gorgeous telling of race, sex and love.

From the award-winning and internationally screened experimental film, *Sally's Beauty Spot* (1990) to the prize-winning *My Niagra* (1992), Helen Lee's films involve sexual narratives intertwined intimately with racial and ethnic identities.

The Message (1992) by Cauleen Smith; video, 3 minutes

A woman turns her camera on to the body of a black man so as to explore the power of her own desires.

LA-based Cauleen Smith's feature film *Drylongso* premiered at the 1999 Sundance Film Festival. Currently touring with the Dockers Classically Independent Film Festival, the film will screen in San Francisco on June 7 at the Castro Theater. *The Message*, shot in San Francisco, is an early work by a filmmaker recently singled out by *Variety* magazine as one to watch.

Eating With Jude (1997) by Anne Keala Kelly; 16mm, color, 26 minutes

A mixed woman living in Latino LA feeds everyone in the neighborhood while her own body withers with hunger, exasperation and thirst.

Anne Keala Kelly lives in Los Angeles where she is producing her current project, *If I Were A Hawaiian Terrorist*, a feature film on the tourist industry and more. *Eating With Jude* won the 1996 Spotlight Award at UCLA where Keala took her MFA in Film Directing.

Firefly (1997) by Dawn Suggs; 16mm, color, 26 minutes

A young African American girl's life intersects with her maternal ancestors. Emotional subjection across generations, told with fire, passion and torment, testifies to the complex legacies of slavery and freedom today.

Mahal Means Love and Expensive (1993) by Celine Salazar Parrenas; 16mm, color, 10 minutes

"A movie of 'colonized sex,' *Mahal* drips red passion as it moves between a story of two lovers and the harder terrain of desire and love in a postcolonial reality." (San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival, 1995)

Celine Salazar Parrenas works as a filmmaker, film curator and Ph.D. Candidate in Stanford University's Modern Thought and Literature Program. She has taught in Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley and teaches Cinema Studies at San Francisco State University. Her films are screened nationally and internationally, receiving awards and prizes from several film festivals. She has also produced and designed independent films for PBS, ITVS, and Channel Four-London.

The Body of a Poet (1995) by Sonali Fernando; 16mm, color and b&w, 26 minutes

Mixing personal narrative, poetry and memory, this beautiful film imaginatively and richly concretizes the experiences, body, life and legend of Audre Lorde.

Sonali Fernando is a filmmaker based in the U.K. She filmed *The Body of a Poet* in Los Angeles. Her work has shown widely including the Montreal International Film Festival and the NY and LA Lesbian and Gay Film Festivals.

—Program Notes by Celine Salazar Parrenas—

see May 8, 1999, for series overview

Frameline is a non-profit media arts organization based in San Francisco and the only national distributor solely dedicated to the dissemination of gay and lesbian film and video. The Annual International Festival is coming up in June.

The Race and Sex Workshop and *Asian American Graduate Group* are interdisciplinary research clusters at Stanford.

ALTERNATIVE ENTERTAINMENT FILMS BY KONRAD STEINER

Konrad Steiner In Person

Thursday, May 27, 1999 — Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

“We’re going to decorate a little piece of time for you.”

— Frank Zappa, introducing a Mothers of Invention concert

It’s with that attitude i would like to present these films, enjoy them as an ornament to your life. After all, these are “abstract” films in this culture. There will be no “introduction” to the show tonight. Instead we will show the films in this order:

Five Movements (1988-90 18 fps version; re-edited for 24 fps: last week); 16mm, color, sound, 12 minutes

The lights will be dimmed and the film will be shown as accompaniment to the music.

Lyric Auger (1985); 16mm, color, silent, 9 minutes

A set of three short films full of secret clues. These refer to the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. Don’t look for the moment Orpheus loses his love by glancing at her too soon, you might miss something else. Later on he’s torn to bits. You may never need to get any of that to have a good time during these nine or so minutes of silent montage.

Remains (1989); 16mm, color, silent, 13 minutes

This material came from the same journey to Europe as *Five Movements*.

After i told him of a shot that was taken out in the final edit, a close friend once said about this film that it is about the shot that was left out. In other words, the film is what remains.

Remains started as a pair of films called *Midwinter Dances*, each with a soundtrack (they were shown at the Cinematheque in the late 80s as a work in progress). I spent a LOT of time on the sound collage for these films, getting farther and farther away from making the sound and image mean anything to each other.

Experiments ended in the face of a) these efforts that weren't unifying the sound and picture and b) a diminishing interest in the results of a free interaction of sound and picture. I retreated from a willingness to let things collide and fuse or scatter, come what may: the openness of John Cage that at its best trains your alertness at each performance of a work. At its worst (what i feared) it bores you enough to leave the auditorium. That requires a certain effort against an authority that i was not willing to relinquish at the time.

On the contrary i increased the amount of control over the image flow. Dan Barnett's film *Dead End Dead End* and various films of Saul Levine showed the possibilities of collision montage. Speed began to create a quality of spaciousness because it goes too fast to "follow." As you surrender to the flow of speed—which you must do to keep your eyes from watering—the very chaos of that speed keeps it from becoming a message, which interested me, because i wasn't interested in saying anything.

That said, while in Berlin, i thought about filming the forbidding architecture of Berlin and the environment of walls within which The Wall almost blended in. All walls and fences and cobblestones made from the rubble of the bombed city, so that, more poignantly than in every other city, its residents tread on their history.

At the time i was reading a story (translated into German) by Sartre called "The Wall" about a man waiting for the officials to call him to the firing squad, or not. The wall of the story represented the boundary of your potential experience and understanding in the form of death, and therefore the ultimate source of the meaning of your life. Even the non-lethal walls of Berlin stood for that: how people set up those boundaries for themselves and others, righteously serving the purpose of creating various forms of meaning.

Film images are a remainder, what's left after a photochemical etching process. So is an eggshell after the egg is eaten and also the refuse you'd toss out of sight behind billboards that themselves are layers of leftovers. So are the monuments to triumph, and the footprints in snow, so are the bread crumbs you'd feed the gulls. But my friend was very astute, because the film was also about the thrashing pain of loss, when you feel that the rest of your life is just a residue.

Five Movements (1988-90 18 fps version; re-edited for 24 fps: last week); 16mm, color, sound, 12 minutes

The safe route to a sound film is to use somebody else's sound, so here is Anton Webern's *Opus 5* (1909) set to images. What he could achieve with a note is beyond cinema. I share some of his essentialist impulse: sound is used for what sound can only express, and so for images.

Unfortunately, i loved this music so much that i began to think that it could be matched with the tiniest events that might occur in the course of a simple shot. You may or may not agree that i have the right shots, but this is my rendition of "Webern cinema." The only other filmmaker i know who's tried this is Peter Greenaway, and he embedded his "Webern film" in one of his early catalog films, attributing it to one of his fictional characters.

The first movement is very expressionistic, and the montage follows that drama. But the succeeding movements turn ever more sublime. The final movement is the longest, most highly articulated sigh ever imagined for string instruments on this planet.

Originally this was shown only as a film with cassette sound, and the pizzicato moments of when and how the music would influence the picture and vice versa were always a surprise and delight.

Sometimes the montage follows the musical phrasing, sometimes the phrasing alters the sense of the montage in mid-shot, and sometime the two run independently of each other. On the print we're now seeing- the sound now married to the image- we're getting one "version" of this.

From a preface to the score: "This composition dates from 1909. Webern was 26 at the time, and primarily occupied with finding the means of earning a living, an undertaking at which he was only moderately successful."

Floating by Eagle Rock / She is Asleep (1996-99); 16mm, color, sound, 20 minutes

The cinematography in this film is the explicit result of trying to emulate the kind of contact that Nick Dorsky is able to achieve. I admire his skill of really being brave enough on the spot to make his shots almost a caress. I had the confidence that, if i could find that courage and cool in myself, opening up to the situation of the shot i would be able to bring that intimacy to the screening.

But it didn't work that way, because i have different strengths and weaknesses and also interests. So i began working more and more with in-camera multiple exposure, and decided to use the music of John Cage a counterpoint. You will hear his composition "She is Asleep" during the second two of three parts of the film. The first part is quiet.

19 Scenes Relating to a Trip to Japan (1989-98); double-projected 16mm, color, sound, 15 minutes

Two moving pictures side by side relating to each other in various simple ways, to my visit to Japan, and to a woman playing koto and singing 6 songs about ephemeral love. The imagery is edited to the text of the songs, sometimes matching it illustratively, sometimes metaphorically, sometimes whimsically, and if you don't know Japanese, not at all.

That here is no lasting union, only passing relation, is a recurring statement in Japanese poetry. This idea is taken with a light heart in linked poetry (a peculiar kind of sport-art), and with a tragic sense in love poems. i tried to arrange the material to accommodate both movements, pleasant and melancholic.

Perhaps there is a school of flower arranging that tries to arrive at this strange mixture. Certainly an arrangement that has begun to hint at wilting is in that state. Much of the film used in *19 Scenes* has been processed at home for this effect, a decaying image.

So in conventional terms the pictures lack something, but for me they gain. Through photographic process, also by superimposition, rapid alternation and the double screen format, there's a constant refraction of your attention through textures and events. The shifting of the differences between what you're looking at, what you think you're seeing and what it means to you are a little like the instabilities you feel thinking about your own life. I think the songs also refer to this.

Here is a rough translation of the text of the songs:

Hien no Kyoku

I cherish the old days
When she waved her cloud-like sleeves.
Less enduring than the dew on flowers
Is my person, not yet passed on.

She was the thousand diamonds,
lighting the sky—
a maiden with a jeweled hairpin
playing in the moon.

Her rare beauty was like dew
on a crimson flower—
Awakening-it's just clouds—
a flood of tears on my sleeves.

O, how I linger on the scent of the past,
my damp sleeves still drying—
Look! A friendly swallow comes
around the screen.

His heart turned
To the unmatched beauty of this flower
Day by day passion deepens
into revery.

“Blossoms are easily scattered in the wind.”
I thought it spoke of others,
but I changed, too.
One cannot blame the wind for blowing.

—*Program Notes by Konrad Steiner*—

EYES WIDE OPEN: NEW CURATORIAL PERSPECTIVES

PROGRAM FOUR

FITTING IN

**Curated and Presented by Karl Bruce Knapper
Co-Presented with Frameline**

Kim Laden and Erik Deutschman In Person

Saturday, May 29, 1999—San Francisco Art Institute

Where do I fit in? A question asked by many of us as we cope with the stress and strain of finding a place to belong—a community or communities to call “home”—and as we approach a new millennium amidst the flux and fluidity of a postmodern, fast-becoming-multicultural global village. As current notions of home and community become increasingly transitory, ambivalent and/or ambiguous, and earlier notions seem increasingly quaint, archaic and/or bankrupt, pre-millennial outsiders struggle to dispute the unsolicited and unwelcome identities foisted upon us by a more mainstream and oftentimes alien culture, while attempting to find identities/communities to call our own.

Put Your Lips Around Yes and *New World Dictionary* employ flash-card visuals to engage the seductive and multicultural capacities of language. *Ostranenie* is a provocative contemplation on the elegiac power of suffering, loss and death. *Thick Lips, Thin Lips* depicts the quiet strength found in crossing the boundaries of interracial love. *Blue Diary* is an evocative reverie on the melancholy of unrequited love. A man grapples with contemporary gay sexuality while confronting his own identity in *Split*. *The Absolution of Anthony* compellingly portrays the burgeoning sexuality of a gay Latino teenager. *O Happy Day* and *My Wolverine* approach contemporary African-American experience from vastly different, but equally intriguing perspectives.

These works contend with conceptions of individuality and community, challenging the headlong rush into assimilation and conformity, and ultimately explore the constructive re-appropriation and creation of self-defined identities and homes we can call our own.

Put Your Lips Around Yes (1991) by John Lindell; video, b&w, sound, 5 minutes, print from Frameline
Linguistic erotics and the seductive capacity of language are visualized through flashing words set to the pulsating music of My Bloody Valentine in an exploration of the often contradictory, confrontational and provocative boundaries of identity, fantasy and reality.

New World Dictionary (1997) by Kim Ladin; 16mm, color, sound, 5 minutes, print from Kim Ladin/Riot Brrd Productions
A crash course in the lexicon of multiculturalism.

Blue Diary (1998) by Jenni Olson; video, color, sound, 6 minutes, print from Frameline
One lesbian's reverie on an ill-fated sexual encounter with a straight woman.

Thick Lips, Thin Lips (1994) by Paul Lee; video, color, sound, 6 minutes, print from Frameline
A moving meditation on the power of queer interracial love's ability to overcome racist and homophobic violence/hatred that acknowledges the difficulty and importance of sustaining that love in a hostile world.

O Happy Day (1996) by Charles Lofton; video, color, sound, 6 minutes, print from Frameline
A meditative provocation on the analogous and revolutionary natures of Black gay male sexuality and Black Nationalism.

Ostranenie (1994) by Christien G. Tuttle; 16mm, b&w, sound, 6 minutes, print from the maker
A melancholy rumination on life, loss, AIDS, death, the body and yearning

Split (1997) by Erik Deutschman; video, color, sound, 12 minutes, print from the maker
A man struggles to confront his own identity while contending with the equivocal nature and vagaries of contemporary gay sexuality and existence.

My Wolverine (1997) by Lorna Ann Johnson; video, color, sound, 12 minutes, print from the maker
A black woman humorously expresses her rage and finds strength in her identification with a comic book hero.

The Absolution of Anthony (1998) by Dean Slotar; 16mm, color, sound, 13 minutes, print from the maker

A good Catholic boy pursues phone sex with the neighborhood boys and winds up communing with his priest.

—Program Notes by Karl Bruce Knapper—

see May 8, 1999, for series overview

CONCRETE SURFACES / DEMATERIALIZING PRACTICES
FILMS BY LUIS A. RECODER AND STEVE POLTA

Luis A. Recoder and Steve Polta In Person

Thursday, June 3, 1999—Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

Film is an inherently paradoxical object: formed by both material and the withdrawal of this material. Made from material (it *is* material), it begins to dissolve from the moment it is projected. Tonight's program, featuring the work of local filmmakers Steve Polta and Luis A. Recoder, addresses this paradox in which film is forever bound and unbound. If projection is a practice of dematerialization, can this gesture be further mined and appropriated, rather than combatted in the usual materialist manner? Working exclusively with found-footage, Recoder strips the referent of its substance to produce (and counter-produce) what he refers to as "barely cinematic objects." Conceiving film as fleeting event rather than descriptive act, Polta skirts the edges of representation through suppression of optic and acoustic clarity, creating suspended and indistinct boundaries between objects and their surrounding spaces.

Composite Cinema (Re)Cycle In Three Parts (1997-99) by Luis A. Recoder

Magenta 1; 16mm, color, sound, 9.5 minutes

Möbius Strip; 16mm, b&w, silent, 12 minutes at 18fps

Ballad Film; 16mm, color, sound, 25 minutes

The *Composite Cinema* cycle employs the bipacking technique commonly used in the optical printer. In brief, bipacking is the stacking of two exposed films in the projector for their eventual reconstitution onto the single unexposed strip in the camera. This is standard practice in the optical printing room. Less common, however, is the bipacking of the projector in the screening room. *Magenta 1*, *Möbius Strip*, and *Ballad Film* are three elaborations—different in each case—of bipacking outside the field of any recording apparatus whatsoever (other than the mind). (LAR)

"Luis A. Recoder simultaneously maintains distance and intimacy in relationship to his films. His use of found footage, though seemingly impersonal, fronts the sentimental attachment to the tactile, material nature of film, which at the dawn of the digital age is in danger of collecting dust on the under-appreciated back shelf of moving images. In search of new ways of seeing in an artistic medium that is far from exhausting its possibilities, Recoder's "subversions" address issues within the medium itself. Many of his films are entirely uncut and unedited, but not untainted. They are often manipulated in such a way as to turn the films onto themselves, a description best appreciated literally when considering his

bipack looping method: the same print passing twice through the projector and varying several frames with every projection.” (Jamie Peterson)

Luis A. Recoder was born, raised and still lives in El Sobrante. He studied at UC Berkeley and got his MFA at San Francisco Art Institute in 1998. His ‘cinematic objects’ have been screened at the San Francisco International Film Festival, the Robert Beck Memorial Cinema in New York, Other Cinema, the Pacific Film Archive, and San Francisco Cinematheque as well as at other Bay Area venues.

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Pistle/Pastel (1998); Super-8mm, color, silent, 6 minutes

1997B (Departure) (1997); Super-8mm, color, two-channel sound, 8 minutes

Estuary #1 (Constant Passage) (1998); Super-8mm, color, sound, 11 minutes

1997A (Arrival) (1997); Super-8mm, color, sound, 11 minutes

Estuary #2 (Night) (1999); Super-8mm, color, sound, 9 minutes

This set of films is best experienced with little prior explanation. They seek to activate the screening space—which is temporal as well as physical—and to involve the individual viewer *directly* within this space (the space shared by the viewer and the film). These films are “sculptural” in the sense that they are concrete physical experiences to be encountered and dealt with, rather than systems to be decoded or understood textually. Super-8 is an ideal format in which to work toward these goals—the smallness and physical intimacy of the camera and the capability of recording long durations allow one to approach a “getting inside of,” an intense temporary habitation of small small details from the outer world. There is a sensation of bringing it inside of oneself. Its capacity for synchronous sound recording (now an impossibility) affords amazing coincidences and translations when lifted from the world and brought into the screening space.

As the titles would indicate, the quintet of films includes samples from separate series. They are presented achronologically but not randomly. The sequence is similar to the linear arrangement of songs on a record—building on each other, speaking to each other in the viewer’s experience, and accumulating and mingling in memory. (SP)

Steve Polta was born in Minnesota and grew up in Escondido CA (the subject of his first film). After getting a truck driving license in his early twenties, he decided to take up filmmaking while at UC Berkeley and got his MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute. His films have shown at the New York Film Festival, the Museum of Modern Art in New York (as part of ‘Big of Life: An American History of 8mm Films’), Chicago Filmmakers, the Robert Beck Memorial Cinema, the Boston Film Society, as well as at several Bay Area venues. He is currently the Office Manager at the San Francisco Cinematheque and also works at Canyon Cinema and the San Francisco Art Institute.

EYES WIDE OPEN: NEW CURATORIAL PERSPECTIVES

PROGRAM FIVE

IDENTITY CRISES

CRITICAL REVISIONS FROM THE INDIAN DIASPORA

Curated and Presented by Ivan Jaigirdar
Co-Presented with NAATA

Prajna Paramita Parasher In Person

Saturday, June 5, 1999—San Francisco Art Institute

Movie posters, clips from Bollywood musicals, historical monuments and made-for-India Pepsi ads become the site of multiple layers of reflection and refraction in these works from the South Asian diaspora. Each piece uses such constructed, ideology-laden icons only in order to challenge, counter or destabilize the link between image and identity, myth and reality. Tonight's program begins with Amitav Kaul's trance mix *Ustra* which combines images from Satyajit Ray films with the animated frenzy of New York City. Then Anula Shetty's *Cosmic Egg* juxtaposes temple sculpture, scenes from Bollywood films and personal anecdote to comment on the idea and reality of sex. Shashwati Talukdar's mockumentary *My Life as a Poster* subverts the conventions of first-person film to provoke playful reflection on identity politics, "Indian culture" and the maker's positioning as a "Third World Filmmaker." In the spirit of reflecting on the advertising industry's attempts to seduce us into a desire for identification with its images, these shorts will be interrupted by Sprint ads (special effects by Darshan Bhagat, director of the recent *Karma Local*). Finally, we are honored to have Prajna Paramita Parasher join us from Pittsburgh for this West Coast premiere of *Yeh hi hai Hieroglyphics of Commodity*, a powerful personal essay combining reflections on identity, home, history and memory with ruminations on advertisements and the intrusion of the commercial into the realm of the private.

Ustra (1998) by Amitav Kaul (sound by Karsh Kale); video, color, sound, 7 minutes

The short experimental film *Ustra* is a visual narrative about discovering the underlying spiritual subconscious with the chaotic, multi-culturally compressed environment of New York City. Combining original films, composites, animations and manipulated samples, it is a live visual/audial mix that was spontaneously composed (via two video decks and a mixer), within the seven minute duration of its soundtrack. (AK) (*Ustra* is an Indian-American artist collective focused on creating multi-media projects.)

Amitav Kaul is a Kashmiri-American filmmaker and writer/producer based in New York City. Existing and living between India/Asia and America, his work is focused on combining the modern and mythological inspirations of the "polyvolving world" that we live in today. Besides doing his own projects as an independent artist and writer, Amitav has directed/produced promos, advertisement and programs for MTV India/Asia and Polygram records.

television ad for Sprint, special effects by Darshan Bhagat

Cosmic Egg (1995) by Anula Shetty; video, color, sound, 5 minutes

This short piece was originally made as part of Termite TV Collective's twentieth show, *Promiscuous Virgin*. "When the promiscuous virgin visits the continents everyone contemplates their own virginity; how they lost it, what they gained and where to go from there. In India, the Promiscuous Virgin searches for the cosmic egg and finds a hairbrush instead. This show makes you wonder: Am I promiscuous or am I still a virgin?" (Termite TV)

Anula Shetty studied filmmaking at Temple University and has made several short videos as part of the Termite TV Collective in Philadelphia. Her most recent work, *Paddana, Song of the Ancestors* is a forty minute narrative film about three generations of Indian women in a small village. It screened at NAATA's 1999 International Asian American Film Festival.

My Life as a Poster (1996) by Shashwati Talukdar; video, color, sound, 8 minutes

"*My Life as a Poster* tells the fictional story of the filmmaker and her sister's life. Through images of Indian popular film stars, flowing camera angles and a thought-provoking voice-over, Talukdar evokes and provokes exploration of 'Indian culture,' identity politics, feminist ideology and her positioning as a 'Third World Filmmaker.'" (NAATA distribution)

Shashwati Talukdar also studied filmmaking at Temple University, and her recent video *Snake-Byte* (made with Dina Mendros) screened at NAATA's 1999 International Asian American Film Festival. She is currently finishing a 'surreal film-noir supposedly taking place in Old Delhi, India' called *Eunuch Alley*. "Identity Politics dictates that a 'Third World' woman filmmaker must tell only 'women's stories' from the 'Third World'. Since this gives us a 'voice', where we had none. I strongly believe that I must make work that reflects my experience and background, and the image of the oppressed Brown Woman who must eternally weep for her 'voice' is not an image I can subscribe to with any integrity..." (ST)

Yeh hi hai—Hieroglyphics of Commodity (1998) by Prajna Paramita Parasher; video, color, sound, 40 minutes

"At one level I tell the story of dislocation through a mother's desire to tell her child of a recent past that disappears even as we look at it. At another level the video examines the signs and hieroglyphics of commodity (Pepsi-cola's presence in India) to see how this entertainment in a bottle can be read cross-culturally within a global context.

"This tape also elaborates the multiple migrations of 'home' and 'identity.' In these imaginings the unfamiliar grates against the familiar and out of this encounter the profile of the self is born. The video combines documentary and experimental narrative techniques to deal with the idea of home, and the difficulty of locating this idea in a real, changing world. The American-Indian child has to construct his double bind out the fragments available to him from the various things that identify—public places, historical buildings—which become the repository for memory, personal and cultural. But how does the child read these images? How does the mother read them? How does the audience read them? Such questions are explored through a mix of voices, styles and formats which interweave, tied together by a first person voice over. The video thus presents familiar and unfamiliar images in various meanings. An image (hieroglyphic) so recognized it has become part of our being becomes multiple as soon as it is shared. What is meant to unite us also divides us." (PPP)

Prajna Paramita Parasher is an independent filmmaker born in the Himalayan region of India. She received her Ph.D. in Film Studies from Northwestern University and currently teaches at Chatham College in Pittsburgh. Her film and video work focuses on issues such as nation, history, modernity, postcoloniality, women and labor and cultural dislocation through a complex system of politicized representations. She is currently working on a project that has to do with Haiti. "I feel most effective in positioning the camera so that the subjects do the 'looking' instead of the camera; I allow the national or

postcolonial subjects to speak, instead of becoming their spokesperson. My work deals with problems of representation, and involves a shifting frame and different forms of identification and misidentification, in order to articulate the problem of authentication. As my efforts continue over the years, I hope to investigate the myriad forms in which the migrant woman presents herself to us.”

see May 8, 1999, for series overview

Thanks to NAATA for co-presenting this program.

EYES WIDE OPEN: NEW CURATORIAL PERSPECTIVES

PROGRAM SIX

CONSTELLATION OF HOME

**Curated and Presented by Michella Rivera Gravage
Co-Presented with NAATA**

Anita Chang and James Hong In Person

Saturday, June 12, 1999—San Francisco Art Institute

Looking at the different ways histories of immigration and diaspora inform identity, this program brings together compelling stories of immigration and US experiences that are specific and poignant to our present political climate. These challenging works approach their subject matter through provocative and experimental ways, expanding notions of belonging and home.

Ekleipsis (1998) by Tran T. Kim-Trang; video, color, sound, 23 minutes

“I came across a New York Times article about a group of hysterically blind Cambodian women in Long Beach, California, the largest group of such people known in the world. Hysterical blindness is sight loss brought about by traumatic stress with little or no physical cause.”(TKT) This video delves into two histories: the history of hysteria and of the Cambodian civil war. It examines the ascendant quality of personalities that survive great trauma and loss and looks at how individuals normalize experiences and histories of “unassimilatable” pain.

Tran T. Kim-Trang was born in Saigon, Viet Nam and immigrated to the United States in 1975. She is a media artist whose video work has been exhibited internationally. Tran currently teaches at the University of California at Irvine. She is also active as an independent curator. *Ekleipsis* is the fifth tape in an eight-tape series investigating issues of blindness and vision, to be completed in the year 2000.

After the Earthquake (1979) by Lourdes Portillo; 16mm screened as VHS, b&w, sound, 23 minutes

This poignant film follows Irene, a young Nicaraguan immigrant woman, as she faces the challenges of life in the United States and reevaluates her relationships with her boyfriend and family.

Lourdes Portillo is a local filmmaker whose work focuses on complicated issues in the Latino community. Her films, which include *The Devil Never Sleeps*, *La Ofrenda* and *Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo* (with Susana Muñoz), have won many national and international awards. Her most recent film, *Corpus: A Home Movie for Selena* was in the this year's San Francisco International Film Festival and will be playing on public television.

***Take Your Bags* (1998) by Camille Billops; 16mm, b&w, sound, 11 minutes**

My take on slavery: When Africans boarded the ships bound for America, they carried in their "bags" all their memories of home. When they arrived in the New World, their bags had been switched, and in them they found "nigger," "beast," "slave." ...Many Generations later, the children of these Africans toured the Museum of Modern Art to see the sculptures and art of Picasso, Braque and Matisse. Lo! There were the beautiful icons of their ancestors, the images that had been stolen from their bags. (CB)

Camille Billops is an acclaimed printmaker, sculptor, muralist and photographer in addition to being an award winning director. She grew up in Los Angeles, and learned creativity and artistic expression from her mother, a seamstress as well as a maid and defense plant worker, her father, a chef and merchant seaman, and her stepfather, whose Bell and Howell camera recorded home movies for more than 20 years. Before becoming a director (she never went to film school), Billops created sculptures and prints that were often of her family members. Her other works include *The KKK Boutique*, *Ain't Just Rednecks* and *Finding Christa*.

***Behold the Asian: How One Becomes What One Is* (1999) by James T. Hong; 16mm, b&w, sound, 10 minutes**

The film is based on the last recordings of ZiJian Tien, born 1970, died in Death Valley 1996. Identity politics for everyone and no one. (JTH)

James T. Hong was thrown into California penniless but hopeful. Unemployable and unskilled, Mr. Hong languished in economic and spiritual depression until he joined ZUKUNFTSMUSIK PRODUKTION, a small artistic collective. With its help, Mr. Hong began making short films and funding them with what little he could siphon off the machine of multinational capitalism. Before producing *Behold the Asian: How One Becomes What One Is*, James T. Hong completed 2 short films: *Decade Null* and *Condor: A Film From California*. He is currently producing a film about the gentrification and imminent destruction of San Francisco entitled: *The Spear of Destiny: a Film for Everyone and No One*.

***Imagining Place* (1999) by Anita Chang, 16mm, color, sound, 35 minutes**

In this experimental documentary, *Imagining Place*, a cross-section of individuals respond to the question, "What does belonging feel like in America?" As a recent member of a diaspora, I have always been curious as to what belonging feels like for people. Thus, for one year I talked to people and actively wrote in my journal about the small and big events that happen in one's life which highlight the question of belonging. In an era of increasing technological, environmental and social fragmentation, *Imagining Place* seeks to provide an opportunity for audiences to examine their internal and external sense of place, whereby they may imagine a longing or reconnection to some place, however near or distant. (AC)

Anita Chang is a San Francisco-based filmmaker whose works have screened nationally and internationally, and won awards. Her films have been broadcast on local PBS channel for the last two years and shown on Northwest Airlines' Independents in Flight program. Ms. Chang is interested in engaging film as a tool for telling personal stories in a manner that accentuate the complexities of the subjects' inner and outer worlds. By working with the surface of the filmic medium, manipulating time and rhythm and using sound in unconventional ways, she is always discovering ways to experiment with content and form that

brings the “real life” moving image genre to another level of interpretation and viewing. She teaches film and video production in the Bay Area.

see May 8, 1999, for series overview

Thanks to NAATA for co-presenting this program.

EYES WIDE OPEN: NEW CURATORIAL PERSPECTIVES

PROGRAM SEVEN

MI CINEMA, UNA VOZ POETICA

Curated and Presented by Adriana Rosas-Walsh
Co-Presented with Cine Acción's *Festival ¡Cine Latino!*

Susana Donovan In Person

Saturday, June 19, 1999—San Francisco Art Institute

Female sexuality projected by the male lens is almost always the point of view of male desire. Within the male framing, female genitalia serves no other purpose than for birth or pleasure for the viewer, and Latina sexuality is solely limited to the desire of others. This program will examine female sexuality through the lens of Latina desire as the videomakers display their point of pleasure and reveal their forbidden need. Susana Donovan's *Boy Frankenstein* questions the taboos of female body parts. Through *Paper Bodies* by Ximena Cuevas, a romantic bolero is the setting to explore a sensuous tale of love and jealousy between two women, while Adriana Rosas-Walsh's *No Words* uses poetic visuals and verses to describe the touch, thought and love of you. Finally the hour-long *A Passion Named Clara Lair* by Ivonne Belén depicts the private world and soul of the Puerto Rican poet Mercedes Negrón Muñoz. Using powerful images, music and poetry, it examines her youth and her later self-imposed seclusion and estrangement from reality.

***Boy Frankenstein* (1994) by Susana Donovan; video, color, sound, 9 minutes**

A collage of images and sounds form a compelling narrative on the way identity is patched together. (SD)

This sweetly “patched together” piece critiques the nuclear family and its politics when born female. Donovan weaves together Super 8 film, Hi8 video and stock footage to create a lyrical dance around the female body. Screened in Cine Acción's First Annual *Festival ¡Cine Latino!* 1994. Spanish with English subtitles.

Susana Donovan is a San Francisco-based mediamaker and received an MA in Interdisciplinary Arts from San Francisco State University. While living off and on in Spain, Donovan developed a passion for the culture and its language. Her close relationship with an Argentinian helped her

understand the complexities within Latin culture. Donovan is currently finishing *Haunt #451*, a short experimental film about desire and how stories get told.

Paper Bodies/Cuerpos de papel (1997) by Ximena Cuevas; video, color, sound, 4 minutes

“A romantic bolero is the setting to explore an explosive tale of love and jealousy between two female lovers.” (The Sixth Annual *Festival ¡Cine Latino!* 1998) Frame within frame, picture box within picture, we are invited to witness what triggers a lovers’ quarrel and their end. Spanish with English subtitles.

To Love You/Para Quererte (1994) by Ximena Cuevas; video, b&w, sound, 3 minutes

A music video with actress Ofelia Medina, star of “Frieda: Naturalesa Viva” (1983) from her recording “Sor Juana Today” about the contradictory emotions which a couple experiences when they separate. Screened in the Fourth Annual *Festival ¡Cine Latino!* 1996. Spanish with English subtitles.

Ximena Cuevas was born in Mexico City in 1963. Daughter of the artist José Luis Cuevas, she grew up in an art environment. She began working at sixteen, restoring film at the National Film Archives, and later in the art department of Costa Gavras’ *Missing*. In 1981-1983 she studied film in New York. Later she trained on script supervising in John Huston’s *Under the Volcano* in Mexico. She’s worked on over 20 feature films as script girl, assistant director, stand in, as well as in the art and production departments. In 1991 she acquired an 8mm video camera and devoted herself solely to the medium. In 1992 she received a national grant (Beca Jovenes Creadores del Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes) for a video project called *Cuaderno de apuntes (Notebook)*. That same year she made the award winning *Corazón Sangrante (Bleeding Heart)*. In 1995 she completed *Medias Mentiras (Half Lies)* about the private life in Mexico City, funded by an intercultural video grant of the Rockefeller-McArthur-Lampiarda Foundations. Her video work shows internationally at such festivals as Sundance, New York Film Festival, MediopolisBerlin, Viennale Filmfestwochen Wien, Le Nouveau Festival de Montréal and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. In 1998 she returned to the movies to edit Arturo Ripstein’s *Evangelio de las Maravillas*, shown at the Cannes and Toronto film festivals. Presently she’s working on *Dormimundo (Sleepworld)*, a video about the discomfort of being Mexican.

Una Pasión Llamada Clara Lair/A Passion Named Clara Lair (1996) by Ivonne Belén; video, color, sound, 55 minutes

“The private world and soul of the Puerto Rican poet Mercedes Negrón Muñoz, Clara Lair (1985-1973) is depicted through a succession of powerful images, music, sounds, silence and poetry. The self-imposed seclusion of her later years as well as her eventual estrangement from reality is examined through interviews with friends and colleagues. In visual counterpoint to this cloistered existence, we see a young Clara Lair, a Puerto Rican woman ahead of her time.” (The Fifth Annual *Festival ¡Cine Latino!* 1997). Spanish with English subtitles.

Ivonne Belén is a filmmaker based in Puerto Rico. Her previous work with the Society for Development and Preservation of Puerto Rican Culture is recognized throughout the Latino community.

No Words (1999) by Adriana Rosas-Walsh; 16mm, b&w, sound, 2 minutes

This film short expresses love of and for *you* through poetic verses and images.

Adriana Rosas-Walsh resides in San Francisco. Originally from Wisconsin, she emerged as one of the few Latina mediamakers who has literally survived the cold winters of the midwest and received a

BFA in Film from the University of Wisconsin. Cine Acción's Fifth Annual *Festival ¡Cine Latino!* premiered her myriad festival winner *Dark Cloud, beaten dog*.

see May 8, 1999, for series overview

**Thanks to Cine Acción for co-presenting
and use of their *Festival ¡Cine Latino!* archives for this program.**

EYES WIDE OPEN: NEW CURATORIAL PERSPECTIVES

PROGRAM EIGHT

PASSION ON THE EDGE

Curated and Presented by Anita Chang

Matthew Abaya, Susan Brunig, J. G. Chapman, Al Hernandez,
Etang Inyang, I. H. Kuniyuki and Camera Obscura In Person

Saturday, June 26, 1999—San Francisco Art Institute

This final program of **Eyes Wide Open** features provocative short experimental films and videos by West Coast makers, in which content and form intersect at the hyper-sensuality of the moving image medium, and a passion that finds its roots in the makers' particular cultural bias. Seeking to share, with wit and humor, the artists' own personal and political reverie, they become portraits of what impassions the makers—of what is urgent—from the beautiful to the tragic.

28 (1997) by Greg Sax; 16mm, color, sound, 12 minutes

This film explores the question, "What happens when a person takes your breath away?"

Greg Sax is a filmmaker living in Los Angeles and currently working on an experimental narrative documentary called *Push, A Portrait of a City*.

New Freedom (1993) by Camera Obscura; 16mm, b&w, sound, 8 minutes

A delightful tale depicting a young girl's solution to the stress incurred by menstruating at school amidst all her classmates' ridicule.

Camera Obscura was born in Hollywood, California in 1961, the Year of the Rat. After applying to USC film school five times, she was finally admitted and one year later, expelled. She was also kicked out of grad school at NYU. Obscura cites her cinematic influences as Jack Smith, Leni Riefenstahl, Maya Deren, Ozu and Roman Polanski. She says she would give her eyeteeth to have been the girl involved in the infamous Polanski controversy. *Virtue*, her first feature film, will be showing at the Lumiere Theater from July 30-August 5. It is the story of a woman searching for a computer program to replace her husband who dies of autoerotic asphyxiation.

Your Tax Dollars at Work (1997) by J. G. Chapman; 16mm, b&w, sound, 3 minutes

Occasionally, one wonders what democratic processes accomplish. In a moment of legislative nebulum, this film abruptly arrives at the question: What are we paying these people for? This film was made without any laboratory assistance. (GC)

J. G. Chapman has worked in and around audio/visuals in San Francisco since 1985. As recording engineer, he has been involved in hundreds of recordings ranging from *Thinking Fellers* to *Faith No More*. With devotion and respect reserved for the non-commercial, otherwise obscure, or projects somehow placed under the vague guise of higher meaning, he has worked in composing, recording and producing music and sound for films. He has written, directed and produced numerous shorts, and a feature, *...and then god became disoriented in the forest of higher animals....* Chapman is owner of non productions, a small audio/visual factory, and works as a technician, consultant, negative cutter, among other duties, in an effort to finance his personal projects.

Splayd Molecular Time (1995) by I. H. Kuniyuki; video, color, sound, 8 minutes

About the experience of the moment of time before its end: death. "The moment when time is extended and distorted, where pain, pleasure, torment and beauty are one." (IK)

I. H. Kuniyuki is a Seattle-based film/videomaker. In pre-school, she was constantly scolded for not staying in the lines when coloring books. At 5, she needed glasses. She has a BFA in Photography from University of Washington. Kuniyuki currently teaches art to at-risk youth, curates shows in the Pacific NW, and still refuses to "stay in the lines."

Operculum (1993) by Tran T. Kim-Trang; video, b&w, sound, 14 minutes

Operculum is the second of Tran's eight-tape series on blindness and its metaphors, to be completed in the year 2000. This video focuses on blepharoplasty (eye operation) with cameo appearances by Beverly Hills' and West Hollywood's top eye surgeons. Footage from initial consultations offered to an Asian female is juxtaposed with a subverting parallel vein of text.

Tran T. Kim-Trang was born in Viet Nam and immigrated to the U.S. in 1975. She received her MFA from California Institute of the Arts in 1993. Her video works have been exhibited internationally and nationally. Tran currently teaches at the University of California at Irvine, and has also taught at the California Institute of the Arts, UC San Diego, and Otis College of Art & Design.

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

This video is a playful, but questioning examination of the maker's race, gender, and sexual identities. Notions of beauty, body image, sexuality and representation are filtered through the 1970's blaxploitation movie goddess Pam Grier, *aka*, Foxy Brown.

Etang Inyang is an independent film/videomaker living in Oakland, CA. She has an MA in Documentary Film and Video Production from Stanford. Her works are personal, intimate and lyrical. She explores the multi-layered themes of race, gender, sexuality, identity, representation and sexual violence. Her work has been widely screened in the United States and abroad. Inyang is currently a California Arts Council artist-in-residence and faculty member at the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, a community-based arts education program for children in Richmond, CA.

Earthworms (1998) by Matthew Abaya; video, color, sound, 18 minutes

A dark comedy following the life of Dr. Seeman Lee, a scientist obsessed with worms. After a series of unconventional experiments, we bear witness to his psychological decline.

Matthew Abaya studied film at College of San Mateo and City College of San Francisco. He is currently wrapping up production on a 16mm short surreal vampire flick, *Embrace Madness*, with friends and colleagues Jeffrey Lei and Rosa Lau.

That Mission Rising! (1994) by Al Hernandez; Super-8mm, b&w, sound, 7 minutes

“The world as it has been known for thousands of years will now change. The trees are angry and the earth quivers to shake off the restless itch of modern man’s concrete straightjacket. There is a tendency for human beings to separate from life and from the land when they are separated from each other. A blanket is then cast over the sky. But this is not about the past; it’s about actively remembering the present.” (AH)

Al Hernandez is a native Californian who has been making films for over 20 years. His filmmaking has been a way to expand his life and create a deeper relationship to nature and reality.

Francine Rises (1994) by Susan Brunig; 16mm, color, sound, 4 minutes

A tale of an abused woman’s survival. “The film stocks are primarily hand-processed allowing the images to parallel the powerful complexities of the text.” (SB)

Susan Brunig has worked in photography and filmmaking for over 19 years. At Binghamton University in upstate New York, she won the Departmental Award for Creativity in Cinema. Her film work includes a large degree of optically-printed and hand-processed film stocks which enhance the images with grain and texture. Her photographic work is experimental in nature as well, including liquid emulsions painted on glass, metal and linen surfaces. She is currently finishing her MFA in Film at San Francisco State University and teaches hand-processing workshops in the Bay Area. She has just completed her first short narrative, *Vodka Sonnets*, in which a waiter and waitress take respite from their pathetic lives in vodka and poetry.

see May 8, 1999, for series overview

National Asian American Telecommunications Association is dedicated to advancing the ideals of cultural pluralism in the United States and to promoting better understanding of the Asian Pacific American experience through the media arts. NAATA supports APA filmmakers through production grants, public TV programming, educational distribution and exhibition.

WHATEVER IT (FUCKIN’) TAKES FILMS FROM THE EDGE

An 8mm ANONYMOUS Event

“Mr. 8mm” In Person

Friday, October 1, 1999—66 Sixth Street: Midnight

Who says film is an expensive medium? Certainly not us. Sort of a filmic version of Malcolm X’s take-no-prisoners “By Any Means Necessary.” This show will highlight work that personifies that point. Produce a “nut card” (regional Transit Connection Discount Card) or other form of proof [in the form of: Food stamps (booklet), GA check receipt, etc.] you’re on either S.S.I. or Welfare & get in free. Also, bring a film either made, found, “borrowed,” stolen, bartered, traded, or similarly acquired for \$25 or less & get in free [For example, *Russian Propaganda/Documentary* (1970s, 16mm, sound, \$5), *Home*

Movie of Thailand (1960s, Regular 8mm, 25¢), *The Secret Life of Sandra Bain* (1970s, alcohol addiction, 16mm, sound, \$1)]. As usual, we'll be giving away film & other things [including an 8mm projector] to the first five people, this time. & free food (carrot soup?)...A "Spaceless" program. Look for future flier. ("q 8mm")

INTERSTICES
VIDEO MAKING IN AND OUT OF MOROCCO

Curated by Khalil Benkirane and Tarak Elhaik
Co-presented with the Arab Film Festival

Saturday, October 2, 1999—San Francisco Art Institute

Tonight's program foregrounds recent developments in video making in and out of post-colonial Morocco. Four video and installation artists question inherited definitions of the body, rituals, language, self and other. By examining the raw and sheer materials of identity, Tilsaghani, Bouziane, Fatmi and Bachiri negotiate new paradigms of identification, opposition and difference. Utterances, interviews, choreography and collage techniques are juxtaposed in an effort to construct interstitial spaces where autonomous practices take place.

Temps Figés (1999) by Nour-Eddine Tilsaghani; video, color, 2 minutes

The video decomposes a *Lila*, a trance ceremony accompanied by Gnawa music, into a series of arresting snapshots.

A native of Marrakech, Nour-Eddine Tilsaghani began experimenting with photography at an early age. Along with many other young Moroccan talents who gravitate around the radical University of Casablanca-Ben M'sik, he has turned to video technology to explore new forms of expression.

Yellow Nylon Rope (1994) by Yasmina Bouziane (text by Anissa Bouziane); video, color, 18 minutes

In a world of falling and fluctuating borders, how does one succeed in creating a sense of self when that self is to be composed of cultures and faiths scattered on all sides of linguistic, national and religious identity from a piecing together of cultural fragments.

Imaginary Homelands (1993) by Yasmina Bouziane; video, color, 20 minutes

Imaginary Homelands confronts and explores the issue of human intolerance towards race, gender, religion and social class that lead to "exile as a state of mind." Using dance and text, the video examines the multi-faceted aspects of women's voice in relation to sexuality and the body. The dance portion is constructed according to classical and modern Arab-Islamic discourse, specifically concentrating on Sharazad's tales of the *Thousand nights and one night*.

Yasmina Bouziane is Moroccan/French photographer and video artist who has been living in the United States for the past ten years. Both her photographic and video work have been exhibited and screened nationally and internationally. She holds an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design and has completed both the Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Program and the New York University Certificate in Film. Cultural theorist Gayatri Spivak says that in Yasmina Bouziane's work "what you are seeing is the self stag[ing] a lesson...in learning how to speak otherwise."

***Survival Signs* (1998) by Mounir Fatmi; video, color, 12.5 minutes**

The work deals with the problem of language as an organ of taste. Using electronic language, ultrasound and televised images, *Survival Signs* examines the loss of understanding and the inability to communicate. With a pen dipped in acid, Mounir Fatmi excavates the mine-field of language and pays tribute to the children of Post-Gulf War Iraq whose tongues have been cut off. What language would we like them to speak? That of having or that of being? Or, do we simply hope that they die without uttering a word?

***Solitude and Fragments* (1999) by Mounir Fatmi; video, color, 17 minutes**

"In which forest, in which tree, in which fragment can we find the words to offer? Which route, which road must we take? This video is about words that lose their dignity, their value, their use in communication. Can we still use them or must we search for other words that are free and without history?" (Mounir Fatmi). A reflexive and tender essay, *Fragments and Solitude* creates vignettes out of archival and personal footage, including images of his wife, his father and the writer (here silent), Paul Bowles, and exposes the fragility that (dis)associates things.

Born in 1970 in Tangiers, Mounir Fatmi has already proved his talents in the plastic arts and now he is devoting himself to video art. He pursues his artistic journey, working with video installations, performances, animation, etc. He draws his inspiration from the field of media: aerial photography, television and scientific images such as ultrasounds. At age 29, Mounir Fatmi has an impressive videography and has participated in a number national international festivals including the Casablanca Art Video Festival; Instants Videos in France; the Tokyo Video Festival; and the Art Video Festival, Colombia. He has infused Moroccan visual arts with a unique avant-garde impulse and is, without a doubt, the most prolific young video artist in Morocco today.

***Sacred Night* (1993) by Brahim Bachiri; video, color, 6 minutes**

Initially a video installation for two monitors, this portion of the work uses non-voyeuristic computer-altered images and sounds to contrast violence with ritual.

Born in 1965 in a small mining village, Brahim Bachiri moved at age 12 to the suburbs of Casablanca. At 20, he entered the College of Arts in Tourcoing, France where he was awarded a Bachelors in Plastic Arts. A painter, a sculptor, and a video installation artist, he is well-known in Europe and was recently invited by the Alliance Française in Rotterdam to present his work. Adamantly critical of national definitions of the self, he has produced several videos dealing with the themes of exclusion, marginality and violence.

—Program Notes by Khalil Benkirane and Tarak Elhaik—

**YOUR CHANCE TO LIVE!
SURVIVING EARTHQUAKES, FIRES, FLOODS,
ASSORTED CALAMITIES AND MORE**

Curated by Melinda Stone and Bill Daniel in conjunction with Southern Exposure

Sunday, October 3, 1999—San Francisco Art Institute

In conjunction with the Southern Exposure exhibition *Survivalist*, curated by Mary Tsiongas and Harrell Fletcher, this evening provides filmic evidence of the human will to persevere (or to at least keep filming) through adversity. Works include *Seasons of Sorrow*, from George Kuchar's *Weather Diaries*, a report on tornado-chasing in America's heartland; Thad Povey's *Media Darling*, a mock news report from the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake; Chela Fielding's *Crescent City Tsunami*, Super-8 interviews with survivors; a film by silt and the San Francisco premiere of @Tmark's *Is Your VCR Y2K Compliant?*, preparing us for technological disasters yet-to-come. Also: a variety of lost and found footage including the 1960s Japanese extravaganza *Earthquake* and excerpts from *Deadly Mantis*, *Swim to Live*, and *Flood!* The show will kick-off with a sing-a-long. *Survivalist* runs from October 1 through October 30 at Southern Exposure, Project Artaud. (Mary Tsiongas)

Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head (1999) sing-a-long with Melinda Stone

Flood! by The Civil Defense Preparedness Agency; 16mm, color, sound

Media Darling (1991) by Thad Povey; 16mm, b&w, sound

Approach to the Prediction of Earthquakes by The Earthquake Research Institute of Tokyo; 16mm

Crescent City Tsunami by Chela Fielding; Super 8mm

Aspiratia (1994) by silt; Super-8mm, color, sound

Swim to Live by The Office of War Information; 16mm, b&w, sound

Season of Sorrow (1996) by George Kuchar; video, color, sound

Deadly Mantis (1957) by Nathan Juran; 16mm, b&w, sound

Is Your VCR Y2K Compliant? (1999) by @Tmark; video, color, sound

Thanks to Craig Baldwin, Harrell Fletcher, Steve Polta and Mary Tsiongas

CONSCIOUSNESS CINEMA

PROGRAM ONE

DAWNING OF AWARENESS

Presented in conjunction with the California College of Arts and Crafts Institute's exhibit
Searchlight: Consciousness at the Millennium

Tuesday, October 5, 1999 — CCAC Institute

Cinematheque and CCAC Institute co-present seven programs curated by Steve Anker, Irina Leimbacher and David Sherman, in conjunction with CCAC's major exhibition, *Searchlight: Consciousness at the Millennium*. Curated by Institute Director Lawrence Rinder, *Searchlight* is an ambitious attempt to experience 50 significant visual art works by 30 artists of the past few decades through the lens of recent breakthroughs in scientific and cultural understandings of consciousness. Since its inception more than 100 years ago, film has been at the center of the twentieth century's understanding of consciousness. These programs present 36 works by 31 moving image makers which speak strongly to the key ideas of this seminal show.

In this first program, *Dawning of Awareness*, artists summon the vision of childhood to unlock an unfettered awareness of the world. These works trace a journey from the origins of consciousness through the development of language and initiation into the social order of adults.

Epilogue (1986-87) by Matthias Müller and Christiane Heuwinkel/ *Alte Kinder*; Super-8mm, color, sound, 16 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

"A manipulation of the retina of a very special kind, which is almost impossible to describe. A mixture of abstract art, archeology, memories of the childhood and the landing on the moon. It is of a very fascination—only two years old and a classic already." (Alexandra Jacobsen, "Neue Westfälische," 1988)

"This film goes further into abstraction in its depiction of childhood imagination. The film is thick with recycling, re-filming projections until forms lose definition and singularity as through the cataracts of memory or the child's mind when eyes are closed, before society fits its focus, before the child is ready—or not—to shout: 'Here I come.'" (Owen O'Toole, "Experimental Film Coalition Newsletter," 1988)

Scenes From Under Childhood Section #3 (1969) by Stan Brakhage; 16mm, color, silent, 25 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

The first, daily impulse to make *Scenes from Under Childhood* was to see my children... to begin a relationship of better seeing, or entering their world. But I felt that I had to do something much more than that, which was to remember my childhood, to relate in that way... get into a more "daily living" sense of working with thought processes of... and of living. So an attempt to understand the children became involved in memory process, and through that, becoming specific about what it is that a person—say, that I do most of each day, and how I do it. So the film evolves into being very involved in

particularities of daily living. The kitchen table, and the bathroom, and the sunlight moving across certain plants in one way at one time of year and a different way in another. (SB)

Peggy and Fred in Hell: Prologue (1984) by Leslie Thornton; 16mm, b&w, sound, 20 minutes, print from the Film-Makers' Cooperative

A room overstuffed with the detritus of culture is the setting in which the young Peggy and Fred "learn to talk." They scramble over the surfaces of meaning like little imperfect recording machines, getting everything wrong, with a feeling and conviction that is both marvelous and frightening. The children are being inscribed into the symbolic order, he alienated from himself, but not language; she from language, but not herself. He builds their House and she looks for their Voice. (LT)

My approach to examining the predicament of the present and threats or promises of the future is to look at the body, actually the body and objects, and to represent the body as the surface on which all else is inscribed (the objects representing culture, order, production, ideology...) And the way I will point to this inscription, this writing of the body into the folds of the norm, is by making things not work, not fit, not happen, not make sense. For example. A face will have not one expression in response to something, but ten simultaneous and inscrutable expressions, flowing one into another. So what we see is, Expression. It's simple. And what we see is the machine (Language) that secures the fictions of 'order' or Culture, because it's not working, not making order. (LT)

Zorns Lemma (1970) by Hollis Frampton; 16mm, color, sound, 60 minutes, print from the Museum of Modern Art Circulating Film Library

"Frampton seems really concerned mainly with presenting pieces of time... Tight units of stretched space in time; piece of film, taut, at once conceptual and purely physically existent. Units determined at each end by a splice." (Peter Gidal, "Notes on *Zorns Lemma*," *Structural Film Anthology*)

"In the tradition of the great pedagogical primers, Frampton's *Zorns Lemma* is divided into three parts. The first, which has sound but no images, is concerned with verbal language experienced aurally. Uninflected black leader is accompanied by a male voice reading *The Bay State Primer*, a combination catechisms and elementary reading manual from the eighteenth century... The second part, which is silent, is concerned with the visual experience of words and images; it is organized in cycles of twenty-four shots, each twenty-four frames long. The matrix for these cycles is initially established by shots of words photographed from signs in the streets of a modern city, and arranged alphabetically according to their first letters... One-second shots of continuous, live-action imagery, without verbal inscription, are then progressively substituted for the shots of words... The third part, which has both image and sound, combines visual images with spoken language... It depicts two people and a dog walking away from the camera across some fields towards a woods. On the sound track, six voices read, at a rate of one word per second, a medieval scientific text, Robert Grosseteste's "On Light or the Ingression of Forms." (David James, *Allegories of Cinema*)

"The essence of *Zorns Lemma* is the attempt to break down the authority of language, that rationalistic 'truth' of the verbalized materiality and spirituality of existence... the film still attempts a breakdown into images, non-logical, non-hierarchical, non-narrative ones. Images are designated as meaningful only in that their presentation has been determined by the film-maker in a certain sequence. But there is no mystification, no illusionism, as to the reasonableness of the image-choice. There is no model set-up of what is 'correct' or 'incorrect', though the film does imply a moral system to the extent of its attempted destruction of a specific domination, namely that of language. (Gidal)

NERVOUS KEN SHAKES UP THE HEADLANDS

Ken Jacobs In Person

Presented by the Headlands Center for the Arts
in conjunction with San Francisco Cinematheque

Saturday, October 9 and Sunday, October 10, 1999
Headlands Center for the Arts

Ken Jacobs returns to the Bay Area with four programs of new Nervous System performances at Headlands Center for the Arts (Oct. 9 & 10), Pacific Film Archive (Oct. 12 & 13) and a lecture (Push and Pull Motion Pictures) on his teacher, painter Hans Hoffman, at the Berkeley Art Museum (Oct. 14). "For more than forty years, film artist Ken Jacobs has explored the cinematic experience in unfailingly innovative ways. His lifelong project has been the aesthetic, social, and physiological critique of projected images—images that by turns lull and assault the viewer as the artist manipulates them. Jacobs investigates the rarely examined territory between 2-D and 3-D in his ambitious Nervous System pieces. In these works, Jacobs uses found archival footage whose visual detail and historical and social significance are richly observed through his role as projectionist-performer." (The Museum of Modern Art, 1996) "The Nervous System runs (no, walks; holds by the hand and walks) twin film prints through projectors capable of single-frame advance and freeze. A spinning propeller intercepts the images, introducing motion and running circles around our normal perceptions of both movement and depth. Undreamt of sights spill from *between* filmframes." (KJ)

"The Nervous System consists, very basically, of two near-identical prints on two projectors capable of single-frame advance and 'freeze' (turning the movie back into a series of closely related slides). The twin prints plod through the projectors, frame...by...frame, in various degrees of synchronization. Most often there's only a single-frame difference. Difference makes for movement and uncanny three-dimensional space illusions via a shuttling mask or spinning propeller up front, between the projectors, alternating the cast images. Tiny shifts in the way the two images overlap create radically different effects. The throbbing flickering is necessary to create 'eternalisms': unfrozen slices of time, sustained movements going nowhere unlike anything in life (at no time are loops employed). For instance, without discernable start and stop and repeat points a neck may turn...eternally.

"I enjoy mining existing film, seeing what film remembers, what's missed when it clacks by at Normal Speed. Normal Speed is good! It tells us stories and much more but it is inefficient in gleaning all possible information from the film-ribbon. And there's already so much film. Let's draw some of it out for a deep look, sometimes mix with it, take it further or at least into a new light with flexible expressive projection. We're urban creatures, sadly, living in movies, i.e.. forceful transmissions of other people's ideas. To film our environment is to film film; it's also a desperate approach to learning our own minds.

"What I'm trying to do is shape a poetry of motion, time/motion studies touched and shifted with a concern for how things feel, to open fresh territory for sentient exploration, creating spectacle from dross...delving and learning beyond the intended message or cover-up, seeing how much history can be salvaged when film is wrested from glib 24 f.p.s. To tell a story in new ways, relating new energy

components (words are energy components to a poet) in a system of construction natural to their particularity. To memorialize. To warn." (KJ)

PROGRAM ONE

Saturday, October 9, 8:00 pm

New York Street Trolleys 1900 (1999) 35mm on the Nervous System, b&w, sound

Coupling (1996) 35mm on the Nervous System, b&w, sound, 60 minutes

PROGRAM TWO

Sunday, October 10, 4:00 pm

Bi-Temporal Vision: The Sea 35mm on the Nervous System, b&w, sound

FACING FEAR

PROGRAM ONE

Co-Curator Akira Mizuta Lippit In Person

A Co-Presentation with the SF Arts Commission Gallery

Sunday, October 17, 1999—San Francisco Art Institute

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines fear as an "emotion of pain or uneasiness caused by the sense of impending danger, or by the prospect of some possible evil," while characterizing anxiety as an "uneasiness or trouble of mind about some uncertain event." The related states of fear and anxiety are separated by the function of a source: known sources cause fear, unknown ones trigger anxiety.

The films and videos assembled in *Facing Fear* tremble between the poles of fear and anxiety. They move from mild charges of anxiety to moments of deep panic and phobia. At times they render the sensation of fear or anxiety, at others they produce it. Drawn from an array of media, styles, histories, and genres, these works explore the depths of fear and its phantasmatic trace, anxiety. Each work in this program addresses an aspect of fear or anxiety, exposing the multiple facets of uneasiness. Traversing the graphic, sexual, existential and linguistic dimensions of unease, *Facing Fear* reveals the capacity of film and video to represent fear and incite anxiety. (Akira Mizuta Lippit)

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

Clepsydra is an ancient Greek water clock (literally, 'to steal water'). This film envisions the strip of celluloid going vertically through a projector as a projected waterfall (random events measured

in discrete units of time), through which the silent dreams of a young girl can barely be heard under the din of an irresistible torment. (PS)

Immer Zu (1997) by Janie Geiser; 16mm, b&w, sound, 9 minutes

“The dark-meshed moires of the memory book in its pulp fiction form, obsidian riddles that cut time to ribbons. Life puts us in the critical condition of having to play espionage with our own stolen recollection of events, preserving them in a code often difficult to retrieve as it sinks into the limited access of the mental underworld.” (New York Film Festival, 1998)

Alpsee (1994) by Matthias Müller; 16mm, color, sound, 15 minutes

“Photographed with an exquisite eye for interiors and a restless invention, *Alpsee* stages a boy’s coming of age, that painful rend between infant dependency and mature individuation. Nearly wordless, Müller proceeds by analogy and synecdoche, gathering up precisely framed moments within the home and collecting them as evidence. Its gorgeous chromatic scheme and high key lighting mark a significant departure from Müller’s narrow gauge efforts of the ‘80s, yet he maintains his characteristic syncopation, his grand eye for detail, and his resolute focus on the traumas underlying the subject.” (Mike Hoolboom, “Scattering Stars: The Films of Matthias Müller,” 1995)

Breakdown (1956) by Alfred Hitchcock; 35mm screened as video, b&w, sound, 28 minutes

“The originally-intended premiere episode—and one of only 20 directed by Hitchcock himself—from the ‘Alfred Hitchcock Presents’ television series. Joseph Cotton is featured as an aggressive, macho businessman/patriarch who is rendered immobile after a car crash. The remaining ‘action’ is seen completely from his limited point of view, as he lies paralyzed in the hospital able only to move his eyes and hear the voices of others. Paralyzed in a car accident, the only thing that saves the man from a premature autopsy is emotion: his tears alert the coroners that he’s still alive.” (Akira Mizuta Lippit)

Desistfilm (1954) by Stan Brakhage; 16mm, b&w, sound, 7 minutes

Called the best film in the 1950s by Willard Maas, *Desistfilm* partakes of and comments on drunken revelry and is one of Brakhage’s earliest works. “The strongest impression the film gives is that these people are always looking at each other. Finally, at the end, staring becomes distorting. Eyes are the seat of despair because they distort. Conscious vision through the eyes brings out the horror of our unconscious...If *Desistfilm* wants to put an end to anything, it is eye-vision.” (Dan Clark, *Brakhage*, 1965)

Quarry Movie (1999) produced by Greta Snider (filmed and processed by: Nathan Corbin, Michael Ginsburg, Gretchen Hogue, Shin Homma, Shannon Insana, Lisa Krist, Mary Molina, Max Rubinstein, Greta Snider, and Tony Stone); 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes

This movie began as an attempt to document a place...not only its image as lensed, but its weather, its soil, and its toxins. Ten filmmakers fanned out over the landscape, seeing it through twenty eyes. In the avant-garde tradition of messing with the surface (the ‘environmental film’ has been around in various incarnations for years, e.g. silt), the film documents this place outside of the camera as well. The organisms in the water and the soil have made their marks on it; the water’s physical erosion acts upon the image; even the leached metals in this exhausted quarry pit’s waters can be seen in the chemicals used to process the film. The idea in the *Quarry Movie* was not to use techniques to achieve a “look,” but rather to achieve a presence, and then see what it looks like. The *Quarry Movie* comes out of a fruitful combination of documentary and avant-garde interests.(GS)

Restricted (1999) by Jay Rosenblatt; video, color, sound, 1 minute
Frantic found-footage collage. "This film is restricted." (JR)

Belladonna (1989) by Beth B, co-directed with Ida Applebroog; 3/4" video, color, sound, 13 minutes
By taking the horrors of different situations and juxtaposing them against one another, we tried to let the audience make up its own mind about the people who are speaking. So the viewer can see what his or her own personal reaction is to the kind of violence that's being described. Maybe by not knowing who is speaking or where the source material comes from, the viewer can hear and understand what's being said more than they would if the identity of the speakers was known." (BB)

After Lumière (1995) by David Lynch; video, b&w, silent, 1 minute
David Lynch's contribution to *Lumière & Company*, an anthology commemorating 100 years of cinema.

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The *Facing Fear* series continues next Sunday, October 24 with a two-part event: *Crimes of Courage and Fear*, a selection of films curated by Rebecca Barten, including work by Kurt Kren, Manuel De Landa, Frank Tashlin, Luther Price and Paul Sharits and *Subtitled: an interdisciplinary performance* by local artists Margaret Tedesco, Susan Gevirtz, Zoey Kroll, Minnette Lehmann and Susan Volkan. The series is presented in conjunction with the media exhibit, *Facing Fear*, currently on display at the San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery from September 22-October 30.

Cinematheque will present Matthias Müller In Person with two brand new works as well as a selection of his previous films in March 2000. Sign up to be placed on our mailing list and look out for our next calendar!

CONSCIOUSNESS CINEMA

PROGRAM TWO

FLOWS OF PERCEPTION

Tuesday, October 19, 1999—California College of Arts and Crafts

see October 5, 1999, for series overview

This second program explores the phenomenology of mind through the experiential and structural possibilities of cinema. Films map out the terrain from the origins of cinematographic movement and stereoscopic vision through modern philosophical concepts of experience as fragment and epiphany, flow and rupture.

1997B (*Departure*) (1997) by Steve Polta; Super-8mm, color, sound, 9 minutes, from the maker

This film seeks to activate the screening space—which is temporal as well as physical—and to involve the individual viewer *directly* within this space. The film can be thought of as “sculptural” in the sense that it provides concrete physical experiences to be encountered and dealt with, rather than systems to be decoded or understood textually. This experience approaches a “getting inside of,” an intense temporary habitation, of small small visual, aural and temporal details. The viewer and the film must work together on this process. (SP)

Short Film Series (1975-1999) by Guy Sherwin; 16mm, color, 33 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

“Guy Sherwin’s *Short Film Series* was undertaken between 1976 and 1980. Eventually he issued about thirty of them. Some are single studies of light, focused on the reflections in an eye shot in close-up. Others are domestic, as in the *Portrait With Parents* or *Breathing*. Many deal with two rates of time measurement, as in *Clock and Candle*, or construct visual paradoxes, as in the shuddering stasis of *Metronome*— an illusion caused by the clash between the spring-wound mechanisms of the Bolex camera and of the metronome itself. In *Barn Door* the semi-strobe effect of light pulsations flattens the distant landscape. Interestingly, Sherwin has recently returned to the series after almost twenty years, with studies of animals and insects which in part recall the fascination with the ‘invisible’ side of nature felt by the surrealists, and seen in the scientific writing of Roger Caillois and the films of Jean Painlevé during the 1930s.” (A.L. Rees, *A History of Experimental Film and Video*)

Glass (1998) by Leighton Pierce; 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

“A not-so-still life in the backyard with children, water, fire and a few other basic elements. This is another contemplative painterly piece in Leighton Pierce’s on-going ‘Memories of Water’ series. While the ultimate effect is intended to be poetic (and maybe even transformative), it is simultaneously a study in the laws of optics—an exploration of refraction, diffraction, diffusion, reflection and absorption. ‘A window pane is a paradox of sorts, as it unifies two opposing functions. On the one hand it separates the ‘inside’ from the ‘outside’ while the two spaces still remain visually connected. Glass, like water, can also flow, and both substances also share the qualities of transparency, refraction, and reflection. It is in this last quality that ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ can merge into one image. The accompanying crystal clear soundtrack, which ranges from a groaning swing to a crackling fire, very effectively contrasts the diffuse qualities of *Glass*.” (Impakt Festival)

3.95 Untitled (1995) by Brian Frye; 16mm, b&w, silent, 3 minutes, print from the maker

“Records of a symbolic city in which the mark of historicity manifests itself despite the static continuity of alienated architecture, and the spectra of specificity blooms in the shadow of the careless machine. The true name of spaces is broken and their secret lives can be realized only in moments.” (Jackson P. Broadway)

Don’t Even Think (1992) by Scott Stark; Super-8mm, color, sound, 15 minutes, from the maker

Tongues flapping, lips smacking, teeth clacking, vocal chords squawking; it sounds like speech, but it’s in a language where intellect and vocabulary impede comprehension. To really hear what’s being said, don’t talk; don’t even think. (SS)

Opening the 19th Century: 1896 (1896/1991) by Lumiere Brothers/Ken Jacobs; 16mm, b&w and color, sound, 9 minutes, print from the Film-Makers’ Cooperative

“Ken Jacobs’ *Opening the 19th Century: 1896* continues his life-long investigation of the relationship between depth, motion, perception and projection. Like his well-known Nervous System performances, this film re-presents a cinematic artifact—in this case, the first footage ever to be shot

from a camera moving through space, filmed by the Lumiere Brothers. In this case however, the intervention is very subtle. The simple act of filtering one eye brings this material to new life, giving the frame (the *entire* frame—including its edges, its dust and its scratches) an expansive new life. Left is right; up is down; in is out; past is future.

“Viewing Instructions: place one filter over the right eye; view the film with *both* eyes open. At the mid point of the film (indicated by a length of red leader) move the filter to the left eye. This process creates a situation of retinal rivalry between the unfiltered eye, which sees ‘normally’, and the filtered eye, which is placed into a state of ‘night vision’ (in which in-gathered light is ‘stored’ briefly in the eye before passing to the brain). In this condition, the eyes are temporally out of phase, perceiving images and frames at slightly different times, only one in present tense.” (Steve Polta)

Serene Velocity (1970) by Ernie Gehr; 16mm, color, 23 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

“*Serene Velocity* takes the most perverse orientation towards perspectival space imaginable by shooting down a recessive hallway from a central position so that the converging orthogonals etch a central X into the frame. The central vanishing point, the doors at corridor’s end, have been considerably marked with an EXIT sign. But if the viewer’s gaze is strongly solicited, if not channeled, down this path of exit, the structure of the film (alternating every four frames—or fourth of a second—between different focal settings) constantly yanks the viewer into and out of this depth. As the difference between lens settings increases, the viewer is hard pressed to maintain a coherent sense of depth or even hold onto the constancy of objects on the screen.” (Tom Gunning, “Perspective and Retrospective: The Films of Ernie Gehr”)

S:TREAM:S:S:ECTION:S:ECTION:S:S:ECTIONED (1968-1971) by Paul Sharits; 16mm, color, sound, 42 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

“If the direction of time is defined as that of decreasing order, of increasing entropy, then, on the average, there is no direction at all.” (Hawkins, *Philosophy of Nature*) NO WET SCREEN ‘ILLUSION’ (S)ections of a mountain creek, one block long, unstripping of superimpositions, the visual effect being: increasing negentropy (in terms of the illusional levels of ‘order’), i.e., water, in a stream, flows in serial-linear directionality and the effect of flows, superposed, going in ‘all’ directions at once, while sustaining a definite sense of ‘motion’, cancel each other ‘out’—thus, non-directive motion as layers of illusional direction are stripped off each other, a correlation between effect and ‘reality’ is approached...” (Paul Sharits, “*UR(i)N(ul)LS:TREAM:S:S:ECTION:S:SECTION:S:S:ECTIONED (A)(lysis)JO: 1968-70*,” *Film Culture* 65-66)

ROBERT BECK MEMORIAL (NOMADIC)
CINEMA (DOUBLE FEATURE)

Bradley Eros and Brian Frye In Person

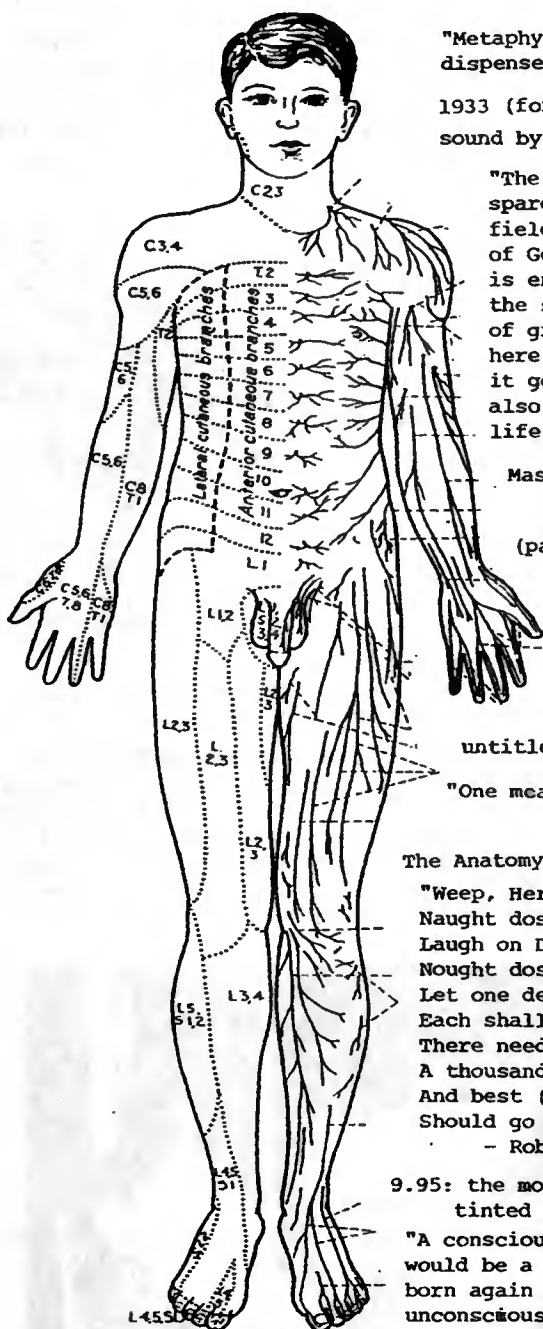
Thursday, October 21, 1999 — Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

New York’s Robert Beck Memorial Cinema founders, Bradley Eros and Brian Frye, appear tonight with personal works. Media-Mystic Eros presents *Fixed Splices: Voluntary Crystallization*, including: *The Anxious Creature* (1974), *Mutable Fire!* (1984), *Pyrotechnics* (with Aline Mare, 1984), *Dervish*

Machine (with Jeanne Liotta, 1992), *X Times X* (1998) and others. Frye presents *L'or du Temps*, a study in lost moments and ecstatic phenomena, including *The Most Important Moment in My Life (Infinite Set)* (1995), *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1999), *1933* (1999), *Francois Boue Services the Fragrance Machine at Bloomingdale's* (1999) and others. "Viewed from the inside, an absolute is a simple thing; but seen from the outside, relative to other things, it becomes, in relation to the signs which express it, the gold coin from which we may never cease to give change." (Henri Bergson)

L'or du Temps

Films by Brian Frye



"Metaphysics, then, is the science which claims to dispense with symbols." - Henri Bergson

1933 (for Joyce Wieland); Std-8mm, B&W, sound, 10 min
sound by Elaine Kaplinsky

"The time for writing is ripe, for I must spare nothing of what I have spoiled. The field has not yet been plowed: ... The time of Geometry is ended, the time of artistry is ended, the time of philosophy is ended, the snow of my misery has gone; the time of growth is ended. The time of summer is here; whence it comes, I know not, whither it goes, I know not: it is here!... And so also is come the time to write on the blessed life and the eternal." - Paracelsus, Credo

Masquerade (courtesy Kerry Laitala);
16mm, B&W, silent, 3 minutes.

(parenthesis); 16mm, B&W, sound, 9 minutes.
sound by David First

"Viewed from the inside, an absolute is a simple thing; but seen from the outside, relative to other things, it becomes, in relation to the signs which express it, the gold coin from which we may never cease to give change." - H.B.

untitled; 16mm, B&W, silent, 3 minutes.

"One measures a circle, beginning from any point."

- Charles Fort

The Anatomy of Melancholy; 16mm, B&W, sound, 10 minutes.

"Weep, Heraclitus, for this wretched age,
Naught dost thou see that is not base and sad:
Laugh on Democritus, thou laughing sage,
Nought dost thou see that is not vain and bad.
Let one delight in tears and one in laughter,
Each shall find his occasion ever after.
There needs, since mankind's now in madness hurled,
A thousand weeping, laughing sages more:
And best (such madness doth prevail) the World
Should go to Antacyra, feed on Hellebore."

- Robert Burton, The Anatomy of Melancholy

9.95: the most important moment in my life (infinite set); 16mm,
tinted B&W, silent, 3 minutes.

"A consciousness which could experience two identical moments would be a consciousness without memory. It would die and be born again continuously. In what other way would one represent unconsciousness?" - Henri Bergson

BRADLEY EROS Mediamystic

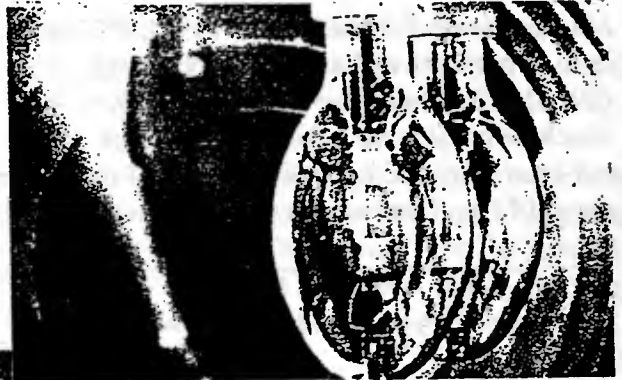
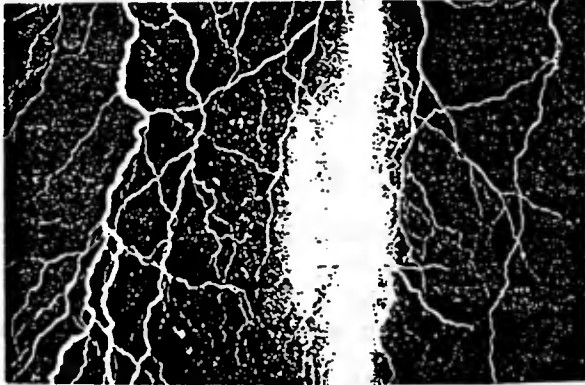
the soles of our feet are black stars, but ours is the theme of the light
W.S. Merwin

prologue : lux et umbra,
dust & mold

(1980-1999) slides

some in collaboration with
Aline Mare or Jeanne Liotta

The mystery of cosmology is
consummated in the harvest
of its fruits. -Paracelsus



Mutable Fire!

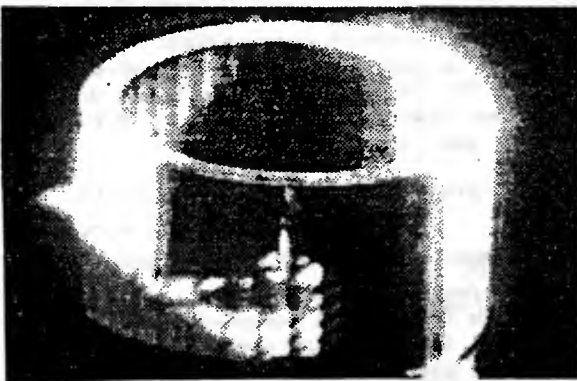
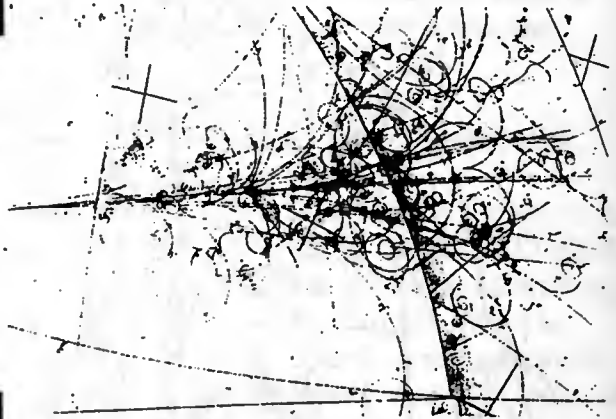
(1984. super-8, color, sound, 7min)

Totems of destruction & desire.
An operation on the combustible
urges in a junk black mass. A
swiftly-sliced nightmare of his-
tory and erotic autobiography.

Pyrotechnics

(1986. super-8, color, sound, 11min)
made with Aline Mare/Erotic Psyche

Telepathic music from the lab.
The human tabula rasa and the
pregnant androgyne in the ecstasy
of transmissions. Science-friction
myths of bio-electric energy.



Dervish Machine

(1992. 16mm blow-up, B&W/color, sound, 10min)
made with Jeanne Liotta/Mediamystics

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

eros.ion

(1999. 8mm & super-8, color, sound, 10min)

image:

contamination. chemical corrosion. ocular
decay. hand-pulled. off-kilter. out-of-whack.
sedimentary meditation... a film upon the film.

sound:

miked projectors. digital manipulation.
transducer. flanger. echo. delay. et hoc genus omne.

make the secrets productive

-Joseph Beuys



FACING FEAR

PROGRAM TWO

CRIMES OF COURAGE AND FEAR: A FILM PROGRAM
WITH
SUBTITLED: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PERFORMANCE

Rebecca Barten, Margaret Tedesco, Susan Gevirtz, Zoey Kroll,
Minnette Lehmann and Susan Volkan In Person

Sunday, October 24, 1999—San Francisco Art Institute

San Francisco Cinematheque and San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery present their second program in conjunction with *Facing Fear*, a media exhibit on display at the Arts Commission Gallery (Sept. 22–Oct. 30), that raises questions about the changing face of fear. The first part of this evening's program is a series of short films entitled "Crimes of Courage and Fear," curated by Rebecca Barten. This will be followed by the live performance "Subtitled: An Interdisciplinary Performance".

CRIMES OF COURAGE AND FEAR: A FILM PROGRAM

People in the Middle Ages who were locked up in towers and suddenly broke out screaming—it wasn't to call for help, it was to hear their own voice, to see that they were alive, to say, 'I'm still alive.'

—Edmond Jabes, *Writers at Risk*

The warriors enter the mental forest rocking with fear, overwhelmed by a great shudder, a voluminous magnetic whirling in which we can sense the rush of animal or mineral meteors. It is more than a physical tempest, it is a spiritual concussion that is signified in the general trembling of their limbs and rolling eyes. The sonorous pulsations of their bristling heads is at times excruciating—and the music sways behind them and at the same time sustains an unimaginable space into which real pebbles finally roll.

—Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*

My own ideas, the ones I had, roamed loose in my mind with plenty of gaps in between them. They were like little tapers, flickering and feeble, shuddering all through life in the midst of an appalling awful world.

—Louis-Ferdinand Celine, *Journey to the End of the Night*

Courage and fear, two poles of the same disease, which consists in granting an abusive sense and seriousness to life... It is the lack of nonchalant bitterness which makes men into sectarian

beasts; the subtlest and crudest crimes are perpetrated by those who take things seriously. Only the dilettante has no taste for blood, he alone is no scoundrel...

—E.M. Cioran, *A Short History of Decay*

Mean and agonized poetry: The artist is Artaud's victim burnt at the stake, signaling through the flames, rhetorically amplifying limited gesture into a spastic navigational device. And deformed with menace and fear, he continues to dance. Seated on our chairs, we are scared of monsters and hungry. (Rebecca Barten)

Clown, Part I (1991), by Luther Price; Super-8mm, color, sound, 13 minutes

The Fuck-it Suck-it-Clown, that butch latex-headed molester has a three word repertoire. He also has a hole stamped in his fake face to stick his real fat tongue out of. Then, someone else (or is it?): A thin airless wail, pitched high into the wind, suffocated and coquettish, framed and frozen in beatific opacity. (Rebecca Barten)

“There is no transition from a gesture to a cry or sound; all the senses interpenetrate, as if through strange channels hollowed out in the mind itself.” (Antonin Artaud)

10/65 Selbstverstümmelung (Self-Mutilation) (1965) by Kurt Kren; 16mm, b&w, silent, 6 minutes

“Kren's *10/65* is developed from a Gunter Brus action. What the film emphasizes is the surrealistic drama of symbolic self-destruction that Kren drew out of Brus's action pacing out each gesture so that one gets a tense iconoclastic revelation of a man covered in white plaster lying surrounded by razor blades and a range of instruments looking as if they have been taken from an operating theater. The blades, scissors and scalpels are gradually inserted into him in a ritualistic self-operation.” (Stephen Dwoskin)

Judgment Day (also known as *Massive Annihilation of Fetuses*) (1982) by Manuel De Landa; Super-8mm screened as video, color, sound, 7 minutes

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

The Case of the Stuttering Pig (1937) by Frank Tashlin, musical direction by Carl Stalling, Warner Bros./Looney Tunes (1937); 16mm., b&w, sound, 8 minutes

“I'm going to get rid of the pigs.” (Lawyer Goodwill)

If Bugs Bunny is the embodiment of suave transexuality, then Porky Pig is decency possessed with (later on, very pink) fear and trembling, deliriously unsettled yet always good and alive. (Rebecca Barten)

Rapture (1987) by Paul Sharits; video, color, sound, 20 minutes

“His crazed body fluids, unsettled and commingling, seem to be flooding through his flesh. His gorge rises, the inside of his stomach seems as if it were trying to gush out between his teeth. His pulse, which at times slows down to a shadow of itself, a mere virtuality of a pulse, at others races after the boiling of the fever within, streaming with the consonant aberration of his mind, beating in hurried strokes like his heart, which grows intense, heavy, loud; his eyes, first inflamed then glazed; his swollen

gasping tongue, first white, then red, then black, as if charred and split—everything proclaims an unprecedented organic upheaval.” (Antonin Artaud)

“There is an antecedent for this videotape contained in the remarkable paper print collection of films in the Library of Congress that includes a series of clinical documents of people afflicted with epilepsy filmed at the turn of the century. Those films present a paradox for the viewer: observing events (seizures) where pain remains trapped mutely and invisibly within the confines of the body even as its shadow is projected as a measured mass across the indexical grid of the cinematic recording device. I imagine *Rapture* as another look at the inarticulateness of pain—the inadequacies of the recording device for fixing the radical subjectivity of pain—or ecstasy. In *Rapture* we are presented with a wounded and relentlessly objectified body demonstrating, with almost clinical control, the varieties of its own objectification.” (Barbara Lattanzi)

SUBTITLED: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PERFORMANCE

“Against the shifting backdrop of a silent film, five performers inhabit the orchestra pit. Flick go the lights. We do not suspect that a figure in the dark may grab our throat, press a knife to our side. The cutting must take place only on the screen. For ninety minutes it takes our breath away, suspends us in the reel, knocks the daylights out of us in a sweet choking embrace. We trust our lives to the conventions of this haunted house known as a cinema.”

—Margaret Tedesco

Warning Shadows (Schatten) (1923) by Arthur Robison; screened as video, b&w, silent, 32-minute excerpt

The decade following the end of the first world war has come to be known as the Golden Age of the German cinema. The best films of the period were products of the expressionist style that had been incorporated into German art, theater and literature. They featured abstract, stylized art direction and set design; deliberately exaggerated bizarre camera angles; artificial lighting which emphasizes shadows and contrasts; and an acting style that is anything but subtle. This classic of the German expressionist cinema, subtitled *A Nocturnal Hallucination*, is by far the best-known work of Arthur Robison, a doctor who became first a stage actor, then a script editor and screenwriter and, in 1916, a film director. It's the stark, eerie psychological study of a count, who's insanely jealous of the attentions his wife pays to “the Lover” and various other suitors. The situation comes to a head when a showman/ mesmerist puts on a “shadow play” for them all, in which their emotions and passions are mirrored. Paul Rotha, the film theorist, calls this “a remarkable achievement. its purely psychological direction, its definite completeness of time and action, its intimate ensemble were new attributes to the cinema... the continuity of theme, the smooth development from one sequence into another, the gradual realization of the thoughts of the characters, were flawlessly presented. it carried an air of romance, of fantasy, of tragedy.” (Margaret Tedesco)

— The Performers —

Susan Gevirtz lives in San Francisco. She was an Assistant Professor for ten years at Sonoma State University and now continues to teach in the Bay Area. Her books include *Dwarf of Passage*, forthcoming; *Black Box Cutaway*, Kelsey Street Press, 1999; *Narrative's Journey: The Fiction and Film*

Writing of Dorothy Richardson, Peter Lang, 1996; *Prosthesis::Caesarea, Potes and Poets*, 1994; *Taken Place*, Reality Street, 1993; *Linen minus*, Avenue B, 1992; and *Domino: point of entry*, Leave Books, 1992.

Zoey Kroll is an interdisciplinary artist tangling with mother tongues and twisters, head shrinkers and hysterics, pubescent pleasures and nocturnal contortions. She has performed and exhibited at various venues in San Francisco including Southern Exposure, The LAB, Jon Sims Center, and SF Camerawork. More recently she performed in Paris, France for Les Pénélopes live webTV show, and participated in *Numero 8*, a public art poster project in Marseilles, France.

Minnette Lehmann, San Francisco artist, most recently performed *Nicaragua*, a tribute to Christine Tamblyn, at the University of Nevada at Reno and the Santa Monica Museum. Her digital collage work is represented in the book, *The Art of the X-Files*. Minnette, who taught photo at SF State for many years, had her last major exhibit at NYU's Grey Gallery. She will have a show at The Lab in 2000.

For over 20 years **Margaret Tedesco** has made and performed solo and collaborative interdisciplinary works nationally. She has also curated and produced dance/performance evenings and was an artist in residence in movement arts with California Arts Council school programs in So. Cal. She established Tedesco/Burnaby Danceñ-a seven-year performance collaboration. She has exhibited at various venues in San Francisco including San Francisco Art Institute, The Luggage Store, SF Art Commission's Market Street Art in Transit Program, exhibited SF's Public Art Projects at the SF Art Commission Gallery and was invited to curate and create a street mural journal, for an ongoing public art exhibit in France. She co-produces (with David Cook) the Moving Target Series, an ongoing performance series of new music, poetry, and movement at venues around the Bay Area. She was recently awarded the Bay Area Award for Performance from New Langton Arts, 1999.

Susan Volkan is an actress, vocalist, and director who is best recognized for her work with George Coates Performance Works where she appeared in numerous productions including Twisted Pairs, Nowhere Band, Nowhere Now Here, Box Conspiracy, The Desert Music, Invisible Site, and The Architecture of Catastrophic Change. She is a founding member of The Enormous Ensemble, a vocal trio that performs an eclectic array of ethnic and art songs as well as offensively violent puppet shows. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in Interdisciplinary Art, making videos about hysteria and hypochondria, recording a pop music CD with composer Marc Ream, and working as a commercial actress and acting coach.

CONSCIOUSNESS CINEMA

PROGRAM THREE

IN SEARCH OF SENSE AND SEQUENCE

Tuesday, October 26, 1999—College of Arts & Crafts Institute

see October 5, 1999, for series overview

The creation/discovery/imposition of order and meaning is a ubiquitous urge of conscious life. The pieces in this program endeavor to make some "sense" of experience, whether by sequentializing it, narrativizing or creating elaborate and mysterious systems of signs with which we transcend it altogether. Program includes: *Test* (1996) by Kerry Laitala; *An Algorithm* (1977) by Bette Gordon; *The Amateurist* (1998) by Miranda July; *The Adventures of Blacky* (1998) by Jeanne C. Finley and John H. Muse; *Poetic Justice* (1972) by Hollis Frampton; *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1999) by Brian Frye; and *I'll Walk With God* (1994) by Scott Stark.

Test (1996) by Kerry Laitala; 16mm, b&w, color, sound, 10 minutes, print from The Film-Makers' Cooperative

"*Test* is a 'found footage' film in the *most* basic sense, in that the only element added by the 'maker' is the gesture of projection. This re-projection of an obsolete microfilm format transforms an archaic and banal didactic trivia game into an unintelligible rapid-fire barrage of text and image, moving the 'content' away from a condition of coherent rationality and towards one of chaos, confusion and exhilaration." (Steve Polta)

An Algorithm (1977) by Bette Gordon; 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

A (pos.) = 160

B (neg.) = 140

C (pos.) = 120

A (neg.) = 160

B (neg.) = 140

C (neg.) = 120

20 (160) = 3,360

24 (140) = 3,360

28 (120) = 3,360

A visual, kinetic rhythm produced by looped footage (mathematical curves) in and out of phase with each other. Explores the relationship between the viewer's cognitive systems and the systems established within the film. The effort to locate structures generates transformation of actual structure and perceptual response. (BG)

The Amateurist (1998) by Miranda July; video, color, sound, 17 minutes, tape from Video Data Bank

"An exercise in formal contiguity that both naturalizes numerical symbols and de-naturalizes a female body's configurations. July creates her own language system within the work, relying on the uneasy relationship between the synthetic shape of the numbers and their projected reflections in the gestures of the girl trapped within the television screen. Playing both captor and captive, July raises

questions regarding divisive self vs. other crises without lapsing outside of its constructed world and reciprocal identities." (J. Serpico)

The Adventures of Blacky (1998) by Jeanne C. Finley & John H. Muse; video, color, sound, 9 minutes, tape from the makers

The Adventures of Blacky is part 3 of *O Night Without Objects: a Trilogy* by Finley & Muse.

"*The Adventures of Blacky*... is the story of a cartoon family of white dogs whose one black member is a young female named Blacky. The tests pose questions about scenes of their interaction. ...[The video offers] glimpses of the interviewer's script [from a psychological test devised in the 1950's by one Gerald Bulm, PhD] and the Freudian jargon by which the child's responses are to be sorted. Terms such as 'oral sadism' and 'anal compulsiveness' breeze by. Even before we notice them, we sense that traps are being set. The interviewer's reassurance that there are no wrong answers is the first sign." (Kenneth Baker, *San Francisco Chronicle*)

Poetic Justice (1972) by Hollis Frampton; 16mm, b&w, silent, 32 minutes, print from Film-Makers' Cooperative

"Frampton presents us with a 'scenario' of extreme complexity in which themes of sexuality, infidelity, voyeurism are 'projected' in a narrative sequence entirely through the voice telling the tale—again it is the first person singular speaking, however, in the present tense and addressing the characters as 'you,' 'your lover,' and referring to an 'I.' We see, on screen, only the physical aspect of a script, papers resting on a table... and the projection is that of a film as consonant with the projection of the mind." (Annette Michelson)

The Anatomy of Melancholy (1999) by Brian Frye; 16mm, b&w, sound, 12 minutes, print from Film-Makers' Cooperative

"Weep, Heraclitus, for this wretched age, Naught dost thou see that it is not base and sad; Laugh on Democritus, thou laughing sage, Nought dost thou see that it is not vain and bad. Let one delight in tears and one in laughter. Each shall find his occasion ever after. There needs, since mankind's now in madness hurled, A thousand weeping, laughing sages more: And best (such madness doth prevail) the World Should go to Anticyra, feed on Hellebore." (Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*)

I'll Walk with God (1994) by Scott Stark; 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

"Airline emergency cards create a poignant and ironic valentine to the unsung duties of flight attendants and passengers as they eternally prepare for an imaginary crash landing. At once kitschy and transcendent, Stark's film creates a distilled experience of familiar 'movie-empathy,' shorn of narrative connotations, and, ironically, in a place we least expect it." (*Consciousness Cinema: An Art of Its Time*)

1999

RECENT WORK BY ELI RUDNICK AND MICHAEL RUDNICK

Eli Rudnick and Michael Rudnick In Person

Thursday, October 28, 1999—Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

11-year-old Eli Rudnick has been working with video since he was 8 years old. Praised as a “movie mogul” by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Eli has completed twenty-five movies in just over two years. The subjects of his short videos range from horror spoofs to domestic violence. Tonight’s program includes a selection of videos in which he acted, directed, edited, wrote and shot. Michael Rudnick’s motion picture art is presented in diverse ways and a variety of forms. Combining filmmaking, sculpture and digital images, he creates 3-D kinetic film art. Tonight’s program will feature his most recent film and digital video including collaborations with filmmaker Rock Ross and composer/musician Nick Phelps. There will be live performances with the spoken word of Christina Svane, the jazz guitar of William O’Hara, the accordion music of Chuck Borsos and the theramin of Lorelei David.

To My Father On His Day by Eli Rudnick

You Can Make Anything Small by Michael Rudnick

Memory for Madeline by Michael Rudnick, Christina Svane, Katharine Honey

Reorientations by Michael Rudnick, Christina Svane, William O’Hare

I Am The I Am by Michael Rudnick, Christina Svane, William O’Hare, Chuck Borsos

These Boys by Eli Rudnick

Different But The Same by Eli Rudnick

1999 by Michael Rudnick and Lorelei David

Truck Stop by Michael Rudnick, Christina Svane, William O’Hare

2001 B.C. by Michael Rudnick, Rock Ross; music by Nick Phelps & The Sprocket Ensemble

Terror for the Dead by Eli Rudnick

Negative by Eli Rudnick

Still by Eli Rudnick

Inside the Body by Michael Rudnick, Christina Svane, Chuck Borsos

Tell Me How The Sea Knows Me by Michael Rudnick, Christina Svane, Chuck Borsos

Fade by Michael Rudnick and William O’Hare

CONSCIOUSNESS CINEMA
PROGRAM FOUR
FLESH OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Tuesday, November 2, 1999 — California College of Arts and Crafts

see October 5, 1999, for series overview

In this fourth program, consciousness is rooted in the body and bound to the flesh. These films present an embodied consciousness which locates itself across and in time, aware of its unbearable fragility, its imminent transformation and decay, and, finally, its certain death.

Plastic Reconstruction of a Face, Red Cross Worker, Paris (1918) by unknown director; 16mm, b&w, silent, 4 minutes, print from Zoe Beloff

"I discovered this film at the National Medical Library in Washington DC. It is, I believe, a document of the fragility of the flesh and of shadowy borderland between the animate and the inanimate, the living and the dead. It conjures up before our very eyes the ravages of the First World War.

Mothers, sisters, wives and sweethearts who have lost their beloved in the war find their souls hungering for them. They search for the assurance that these lost are persisting in a life hereafter. The true believers in Personal immortality have multiplied into a vast host. You, it becomes known are investigating the problem, the question whether personality persists after so-called 'body-death'. Mr. Edison the confidence in you throughout the world is great. People are anxiously awaiting a word from you." (ZB)

Magenta I (1997) by Luis Recoder; 16mm, color, sound, 9.5 minutes, print from the maker

Symptoms of the flesh: A.) To be incorporated into that patchwork of a body called cinema; B.) In a concentrated effort to read the sign of death; C.) More accurately, of a call to assist in the death of our dying patient. (LS)

"*On the location of color in film:* Cross-section of a color transparency in which the layer 'magenta' is buried just beneath the protective cutaneous surface. *Redness*, as if to elaborate our apparatus along vascular lines *so as to approach the corporal condition signaling a state of emergency.*" (from the artist's *Notebook of Film Care*)

Sirius Remembered (1959) by Stan Brakhage; 16mm, color, silent, 12 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

I was coming to terms with decay of a dead thing and the decay of the memories of a loved being that had died and it was undermining all abstract concepts of death. The form was being cast out by probably the same physical need that makes dogs dance and howl in rhythm around a corpse. I was taking song as my inspiration and for the rhythm structure, just as dogs dancing, prancing around a corpse, and howling in rhythm-structures or rhythm-intervals might be considered like the birth of some kind of song." (SB)

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

"This extraordinary film manages to craft a delicate portrait of her mother through time and refracted light while unfolding in purple silence the relationship of Nelson and her mother as well." (Crosby McCloy)

Mother (1988-98) by Luther Price; Super-8mm, color, sound, 25 minutes, from the maker

"[A] sympathetic portrait of his mother as mirror of one of Luther's own multiple personas. Invoking the power of Warhol's unflinching camera, he documents the beauty and jaded sadness of an image that is both his mother and himself." (*Consciousness Cinema: An Art of Its Time*)

Parallel Space: Inter-View (1992) by Peter Tscherkassky; 16mm, b&w, sound, 18 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

Parallel Space: Inter-View is made with a photo camera. A miniature photo 24 by 36mm is exactly the size of two film frames. Originally, I had a strict, formal concept. The visual space of the Renaissance locked in the optics of the film and still camera. In front of our eyes the landscapes of the film spread out and allow themselves to be conquered; a constellation which is then subverted by letting the hardware and the software slip minimally. If I take a photograph with a strict, central perspective (the vanishing point in the middle), it gets smashed when projected. The spatial lines plunge towards the lower edge of one frame, to be ripped apart at the top of the next. Optically it resembles a flickering double exposure; the former temporal and spatial unity disintegrates into pieces which have a correspondence with each other. Soon these spatial constructions were not enough. I began to interpret the content of both spatial halves—to lead the spectators separation from the surrounding reality into another sequence of binary opposites: listener/speaker; viewer/viewed; public/private; man/woman; sensuality (emotion)/reason; sexuality/taboo, and so on. In addition, I took the psychoanalytic setting and drew a comparison with the cinema setting. In both cases there is a narrator who does not see or know his listener. Film makers, in common with the analysand, produce a very intimate flow of pictures which are met with highly concentrated attention but still fall into the anonymity of the audience... (PT)

The Five Bad Elements (1997) by Mark LaPore; 16mm, b&w, sound, 33 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

"A dark and astringent film that allows the filmmaker's personal subconscious drives and the equivocal bad conscience of ethnography to bleed through into overall content... The hand held camerawork and the particular leverage of *The Five Bad Elements* both pushes and works against LaPore's previous tendencies in order to create compound fractures of potent abbreviations and overextended unexpurgated scenes in which sight is caught actively probing or transfixed in seeming paralysis. By interrupting already truncated and mysterious unmoored images with sections prolonging the durations and decay time of images normally torn from our sight, LaPore offers not provocation or obsession as much as permission to travel deeper into the image. The image as it pertains to actual experience not only a filmic event or an approximate residue. That stands in for something else as all images do. Refusing to satisfy curiosity with information, LaPore frustrates the usual complicities between image and documentary fact by dealing with representation as an execution of likeness, while still reckoning with the standard exchange rate of the image in its metaphoric fidelity to the real, the elusive and the tangible aspects to the image. LaPore's audacities are almost camouflaged by his refined sense of restraint, his austerity and lyrical contemplativeness... By building the film on normally inadmissible evidence, telegraphed inferences, metaphoric leaps and omissions, damaged testimonies and scattered remains, the film fabricates an impeccable and elegant architecture from a materially incomplete and unsound body. In the fragmented corpus of human beings and continents which is *The Five Bad Elements*, LaPore has created a film which itself acts as an absorbent object, a kind of metastatic sin eater that aims at expiation through its own contamination, redistributing poisons into a netherworld that still clearly resides at the core of its own physical and visible existence." (Mark McElhatten)

LYRICAL FORMS
SUPER-8MM FILMS BY
CÉCILE FONTAINE & MARCELLE THIRACHE

Cécile Fontaine & Marcelle Thirache In Person

Thursday, November 4, 1999—Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

French filmmakers Cecile Fontaine and Marcelle Thirache will be on hand to present a selection of their films, all of which originated on Super-8mm. Resolutely non-narrative in character, both achieve astonishingly vivid expression through the rhythms and mysteries of pure form. Whether through re-photography or direct manipulation of the film material itself, Thirache and Fontaine each create wonderfully tactile experiences which are distinctly their own. "To be visual, to reach the feelings through harmonies, chords, of shadow, of light, of rhythm, of movement, of facial expressions, is to address oneself to the feelings and to the intelligence by means of the eye." (Germaine Dulac, "Visual and Anti-visual Films," 1928) (Steve Anker)

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"Light: A redundant artifice, since cinema is above all the recording of light. Light carves forms! Light writes on the film like (better than) a brush on a canvas! With my camera, I draw on the film, what a fantastic adventure to tame light, the source of every living thing, what is visible and what makes itself visible!

"My cinema... captures only the image and its transformation, a little girls habit of watching space while adults don't leave us any room, hence my definition of the word, 'contemplate': to look a long time. This time, which is long, allows us to seek what makes itself visible. The transformation of the image is minute. What transforms it is light and therefore light creates movement. Yet my cinema is not a series of long static shots where everybody 'looks for one's cat.' The shots in my films are fast and filled with movements, and I impose my version of looking on the viewers." (Marcelle Thirache)

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"I was indirectly lead to use found footage as a result of my previous work in direct animation on Super 8. At the time, I manipulated my own footage with bleach and ammonia to create special effects, cutting and taping directly into the film material, a fastidious work that could be more easily handled in 16mm. So I started to use 16mm footage that were hanging around in the studio for A and B editing practice. "I applied methods already tested in Super 8, like scraping the film to move the emulsion off the base, displacing bits or sections of it or disintegrating it. I experimented with new techniques like the 'rayograms' or the optical printer. I combined previous experiences to new applications, like tearing apart in layers to crumpling it in a wet or dry process, or to retaping it on another part to bring new colors. I tried new chemicals, soaking the films into them to alter their images....
"In doing so, I deconstruct the original footage to create new ones full of lines, patterns, colors, and textures, with many overlaid or juxtaposed images of different sources." (Cécile Fontaine)

“[Cécile Fontaine] works with what can be called the margins, the excluded parts of cinema, revindicating scratching, soaking, de-collage and so filmmaking passes as a primarily plastic activity, with almost no material resources, renewing at once with the first major steps of the Dadaists in their collage—principally in the works of Schwitters and especially the collage of Hannah Höch executed with a kitchen knife—and the work of recycling or how to make art without having the air to have touched it.” (Yann Beavais, “Lost and Found,” from *Found Footage Film*)

Abstract Film en Couleurs (1991) by Cécile Fontaine; Super-8mm, color, silent, 3 minutes, print from the maker

A Color Movie (1983) by Cécile Fontaine; Super-8mm, color, silent, 5 minutes, print from the maker

Abstraction No. 2 (1994) by Marcelle Thirache; Super-8mm, color, silent, 3 minutes, print from the maker

Clair de Pluie (1986) by Marcelle Thirache; Super-8mm, color, silent, 3 minutes, print from the maker

L'Ange du Carrousel (1993/94) by Marcelle Thirache; Super-8mm, color, sound, 12 minutes, print from the maker

Silver Rush (1998) by Cécile Fontaine; 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes, print from the maker

La Peche Miraculeuse (1995) by Cécile Fontaine; 16mm, color, silent, 10 minutes, print from the maker

Overeating (1984) by Cécile Fontaine; 16mm, color, sound, 3 minutes, print from the maker

Palme d'Or (1993) by Marcelle Thirache; Super-8mm, color, silent, 4 minutes, print from the maker

Song Shu (1996) by Marcelle Thirache; Super-8mm, color, silent, 4 minutes, print from the maker

Jeux d'Ete (1999) by Marcelle Thirache; Super-8mm, color, silent, 3 minutes, print from the maker

Lion Light (1996) by Cécile Fontaine; 16mm, color, silent, 2.5 minutes, print from the maker

Almaba (1988) by Cécile Fontaine; Super-8mm, color, silent, 7.5 minutes, print from the maker

Encre 08/02/97 (1997) by Marcelle Thirache; 16mm, color, silent, 4 minutes, print from the maker

Pigmentation Secrete (1997) by Marcelle Thirache; 16mm, color, silent, 7 minutes, print from the maker

Cruises (1988/89) by Cécile Fontaine; 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes, print from the maker

CONSCIOUSNESS CINEMA

PROGRAM FIVE

CONTESTED PERSONAS

Tuesday, November 9, 1999 — California College of Arts and Crafts

see October 5, 1999, for series overview

It is within a shared social world that consciousness is born and comes of age and that identities are imposed, contested, and performed. This program examines several sites of struggle and affirmation in the power plays inherent in the socio-historical awareness of self and other.

Les maîtres fous (1955) by Jean Rouch; 16mm, color, sound, 36 minutes, print from UC Berkeley Extension Media Library

“This film, crucial to the development of Rouch’s work and later ethnographic film practice, concerns the annual ceremonies of the Hauka cult which started in the late ‘20s in the Upper Niger region. Persecuted by the French colonial administration and denounced by orthodox Islam, many of its practitioners moved to Ghana in the thirties, working as migrant labourers throughout the Gold Coast region. The Hauka are ‘the new Gods,’ spirits of power and of the winds. During the ceremonies the initiates become possessed by these powerful spirits which take the form of figures of authority in the Western colonial administration. In a state of trance the possessed take on these roles and act like the white figures of authority.

“Rouch was asked to make the film after he and his wife, Jane, had given a lecture at the British Council in Accra. In the audience there were several Hauka priests and initiates, many of whom originally came from the area of Upper Niger where the shorts shown by Rouch at that lecture had been filmed. He was approached by them and asked to make a film of their annual ceremony. The priests wanted a film not only as a record of the ceremony but also so that it could be used in the ritual itself. Whilst in Accra, Rouch attended many of the smaller Hauka ceremonies and was cabled by the priests on 15 August, 1954, in Togo, where he was traveling, to return as the big ceremony was about to be held.

“The reason *Les maîtres fous* is one of Rouch’s masterworks is that it ingeniously brings together the complex themes of colonization, decolonization and the ontology of trance, in thirty-three minutes of extraordinary cinema. In a direct manner, Rouch thrusts the ‘horrific comedy’ of Songhay possession upon his viewers, challenging them to come to grips with what they are seeing on the screen... *Les maîtres fous*, like Rouch’s Songhay ethnographies and some of his other films [...] documents the existence of the incredible, the unthinkable. These unexplicated scenes challenge us to decolonize our thinking, to decolonize ourselves.” (Paul Stoller)

Smoke (1995-96) by Pelle Lowe; Super-8mm, color, sound, 24 minutes, from the maker

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)

Mute (1991) by Greta Snider; 16mm, color, sound, 14 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

Mute is an irresolute web of shifting power positions. It is a malevolent bed-time story whose focal character, while deviating herself from the grip of the narration, firmly maintains her ambivalence toward her state of menace. Included is subtitled information, which is the running contrapuntal perspective of the 'other,' the mute. This commentary blossoms out in the long silent sections, from a discussion of her own involuntary objectification to her problematic 'fascination' with a foreign culture. (GS)

Chronicles of a Lying Spirit (by Kelly Gabron) (1992) by Cauleen Smith; 16mm, color, sound, 5.5 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

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

Perfect Film (1986) by Ken Jacobs; b&w, sound, 23 minutes, print from the Film-Makers' Cooperative

"More than a time-capsule, *Perfect Film* is a study of how news is made, literally. These outtakes have their own integrity. There's a structure here, even a revelatory drama. What's 'perfect' is the demonstration that an anonymous workprint found in the garbage can be as multilayered and resonant, revealing and mysterious as a conscious work of art." (J. Hoberman)

Epileptic Seizure Comparison (1976) by Paul Sharits; 16mm, color, sound, 30 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

The films are of two patients, extracted from a medical film study of brain wave activity during seizures. Of course, the patients volunteered for these tests. The black and white footage of each patient entering convulsive stages was temporally and tonally articulated on an optical printer and rhythmic pure color frames were added to these images. Everything was done to allow the viewer to move beyond mere voyeurism and actually enter into the convulsive state, to allow a deeper empathy for the condition and to also, hopefully, experience the ecstatic aspect of such paroxysm. (PS)

**DELUGE
A PROGRAM OF RECENT WORK
BY BRITISH ARTIST TONY SINDEN**

Tony Sinden In Person

Thursday, November 11, 1999—Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

For over three decades, Tony Sinden has been active in film-video making for exhibition in the cinema, gallery and open space. He began working with experimental film, sound and expanded cinema in 1966, progressing to making major installations for galleries in England. Sinden also co-founded the group HOUSEWATCH, a collective of artists who took film projection, video, performance and site-specific installations into public spaces. His recent film and video installation work has been

commissioned for museums and public buildings in Japan, Canada and the United States; in addition to England. Tony will present several multiple-image pieces for both film and video projectors. He will also show documentation and discuss his site specific installations which explore contemporary notions of landscape, time and space, producing transitional structures for different kinds of cultural environments.

“Tony Sinden has long been committed to the quintessentially contemporary media of film, video and installation. The urge to push experience to the limits, and find new ways of sharing it with the viewer, informs his approach to landscape and decision to set up his video camera beside a Teesdale waterfall. The images he has recorded, and then edited with concentrated finesse, confronts us with the energy of nature in a work at once exhilarating and disorienting. Far from viewing his turbulent subject at a cautious distance, Sinden leads us into an ever more direct encounter with the fury of *High Force Falls*. Having established their identity at the outset, he proceeds to immerse us in the water’s overwhelming thrust. We find ourselves so caught up in the vortex that it is no longer possible to decide on our position. Are we inside the flow looking out, or vice versa? Sinden does not tell us, but he leaves no doubt about the water’s sheer unstoppable.

“*Deluge*, the title of his recent exhibition, assails us, relentlessly, with a cataclysm of images and sounds alike. At its most tumultuous, Sinden’s imagery is immensely demanding to watch. We feel dazed by its impact, and almost incapable of following the water’s irrepressible momentum with our eyes. *Fountainhead*, a video triptych, is at the furthest conceivable removed from landscape art at its most soporific. Sinden presents us with an invigorating vision. It challenges anyone who basks in cozy preconceptions about nature to put them to the test. Direct, accessible and ultimately mesmerising, *Deluge* deserves to be seen by the broadest possible audience. Ultimately, though, it helps us realize that, as Henry David Thoreau wrote in his *journal* at the end of August 1856, ‘it is in vain to dream of a wildness distant from ourselves. There is none such. It is the bog in our brains and bowels, the primitive vigour of Nature in us, that inspires that dream.’” (Richard Cork, Chief Art Critic of *The Times*, April 1998)

The selection will include film-video structures made for multi-projection and documentation of site-specific installations exhibited at major international venues in the UK and Japan 1992–1998.

Introduction with documentation of earlier installation work 1974–1988.

Turbulence (1992)

Terrestrial Stream (1998)

Fountainhead (1997)

High-Force: Descending (1998)

Fallow Field: Flux (1994)

Paper House, Imaginary Opera, Conservatory, Revolver: Video Documentation of Site-Specific Architectural Pieces (1992-1997)

Running time: approximately 120 minutes.

“In my work I have tried to keep an open mind and to develop a way of working that leaves room for experiment. I endeavor to use whatever medium is best suited to the ideas that I have at a particular moment, and not just a medium for its own sake, or as a fetish.” (Tony Sinden, *Studio International*, 1981).

*The programme was made with production assistance from Picture This (Bristol, UK).
Funded by The Arts Council of England, Southern Arts, Northern Arts, Southwest Arts, The National Lottery (UK), The British Council, South Bank Exhibitions, The Lux Center (London), Arts Admin, Durham Cathedral, Paul Hamlyn, The 4th Contemporary Music Forum of Kyoto, Sharp (Japan), University of East London, Housewatch Collective (UK).*

HOMAGE TO JAMES BROUGHTON *ECSTASY FOR EVERYONE*

Joel Singer & Janis Crystal Lipzin In Person

Sunday, November 14, 1999 — San Francisco Art Institute

“When I was 30 my greatest consolation was the thought of suicide. But that was three years before I began to make films. What a lot of vicissitude, ecstasy and ennui I would have missed!”

“I am not talking here about going to the movies. I am talking about making cinema. I am talking about cinema as one way of living the life of a poet. I am talking about film as poetry, as philosophy, as metaphysics, as all else it has not yet dared to become.”

“Going to the movies is a group ceremony. One enters the darkened place and joins the silent congregation. Like mass, performances begin at set times. You may come and go but you must be quiet, showing proper respect and awe, as in the Meeting House or at Pueblo dances. Up there at the altar space a rite is to be performed, which we are expected to participate in.”

“Alchemy is the ancient art of transforming the raw matter of nature into a valuable essence. Sometimes, though rarely, this emerges as precious gold. Usually the alchemist is lucky if he gets quicksilver. But this is an appropriate enough element for the silver screen.”

“The cinematic alchemist works in the dark of his laboratory for hours, days, months, years, seeking the seemingly impossible task of metamorphosis. With his various paraphernalia he tries to transform the invisible in to the visible, or as Redon said, to ‘put the logic of the visible at the service of the invisible.’”

— James Broughton, *Seeing the Light*, 1977

“If a man keeps wonder in his eye, compassion in his heart, frolic in his balls, and abandon in his limbs, he can dance hand in hand with his life and his death and reap a full harvest of love.” (JB)

Tonight San Francisco Cinematheque celebrates the great artist and San Franciscan James Broughton, who died in May 1999 at the age of eighty-five. After World War II, San Francisco, enjoying its now-legendary "Renaissance," flowered as a center of avant-garde filmmaking and pre-Beat poetry. James Broughton was a key figure in both worlds, making his first solo film, *Mother's Day* in 1948 (following the legendary *Art In Cinema* premiere of *The Potted Psalm*), while concurrently reading poetry with such luminaries as Robert Duncan, Kenneth Rexroth and Madeline Gleason. In 1968, after a 13-year hiatus, James returned to filmmaking with *The Bed* and began a fruitful tenure as Professor at the S.F. Art Institute, which lasted from 1968 to 1981. In 1976 James and his life-companion Joel Singer began their collaboration which was to finally include seven films, including *Song of the Godbody* (1977), an intimate portrait of James, *The Gardener of Eden* (1981), filmed during their Sri Lankan "honeymoon," and *Devotions* (1983). Tonight's program was co-curated and will be presented by Joel Singer and James' long-time SFAI colleague and friend, filmmaker Janis Crystal Lipzin.

James Broughton presented 16 evenings of his films and poetry between July 30, 1970 (the earliest year for which we currently have Canyon Cinematheque records—the organization began in 1961) and November 11, 1993, the latter being the occasion of his 80th Birthday Celebration. James last appeared at the San Francisco Art Institute with Sidney Peterson on March 20, 1996, in an evening co-sponsored by SFAI and Cinematheque as part of the Art Institute's 125th Anniversary Celebration. The large majority of James' one-person Canyon/San Francisco Cinematheque shows featured premieres of his films.

PROGRAM

- 1) Opening Remarks by Janis Crystal Lipzin
- 2) Reading/Commentary by Jack and Adele Foley
- 3) *Past Present Future Present*, ca. 20 minutes, video, produced by Kush of the Cloud House Poetry Archives, recorded between 1977-1993
- 4) Introduction of evening's films by Joel Singer
- 5) Films by James Broughton:

Mother's Day (1948); 16mm, b&w, sound, 23 minutes

The Bed (1968); 16mm, color, sound, 20 minutes

Song of the Godbody (1977); 16mm, color, sound, 11 minutes

Films by James Broughton & Joel Singer:

The Gardener of Eden (1981); 16mm, color, sound, 8.5 minutes

Devotions (1983); 16mm, color, sound, 22 minutes

Filmography

The Potted Psalm (1947, with Sidney Peterson)

Mother's Day (1948)

Adventures of Jimmy (1950)

Four in the Afternoon (1951)

Loony Tom (1951)

The Pleasure Garden (1953)

The Bed (1968)

Nuptiae (1969)

The Golden Positions (1870)

This Is It (1971)

Dreamwood (1972)

High Kukus (1973)

Testament (1974)

The Water Circle (1975)

Erogeny (1976)

Hermes Bird (1979)

With Joel Singer:

Together (1976)

Windowmobile (1977)

Song of the Godbody (1977)

The Gardener of Eden (1981)

Shaman Psalm (1981)

Devotions (1983)

Scattered Remains (1988)

On the occasion of James Broughton's 80th Birthday Celebration, San Francisco Cinematheque produced a monograph on the artist's work, "Inciting Big Joy," featuring an original essay by poet/scholar Jack Foley.

CASPAR STRACKE'S CIRCLE'S SHORT CIRCUIT

Caspar Stracke In Person

Thursday, November 18, 1999—Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

Caspar Stracke was born in Darmstadt, Germany and studied painting and film at Academy of Fine Arts in Braunschweig. He has also studied at New School for Social Research in New York and in England. His films have won awards at several festivals, including the New York Film & Video Expo and the Oberhausen Film Festival, and they have screened across Europe and North America. *Circle's Short Circuit* is his first 35mm feature-length film, and San Francisco Cinematheque is proud to present it in its Bay Area premiere.

Circle's Short Circuit (1999); 35mm, color, sound, 85 minutes

With: John Kelly, Kyle deCamp, Charles Duval, Annie Iobst, Ishmael Houston-Jones, Richard Move, Anastasia Sharp and Avital Ronell. Director of Photography: James Carman. Music composed by: Hahn Rowe, David Linton, Koosil-ja, Owen O'Toole, DJ Olive and Paul Schutze. Produced by: MMM Filmproduktion / Ulrike Zimmermann, the video kasbah, NYC.

As the title proposes, this experimental feature film involves circularity. It has neither a beginning nor an end, and is virtually able to start from any random point. It moves through a circle consisting of five interlocked episodes that describe the phenomenon of interruption in contemporary communications in various forms and modes, investigating causes, impacts and side-effects. Along the path of this circle the

genre changes with each episode: moving from documentary, to essay, to collage, to simulated live-coverage, and to silent film. As this phenomenon of interruption is pervasive in these media, the film attends to the very act of watching moving images (such as in the silent-film episode "Hobart" and the non-linear narrative episode "Hooks"). The theme of interruption then revolves through the inter-communicative and time-related conflicts of "The Conference," the permanent surveillance system of "Doublestream," and "Electric Speech," a documentary segment on the origin of the biggest upheaval in communication history, initiated by the "man who contracted space," Alexander Graham Bell and his invention of the telephone. "Electric Speech" features an interview with Avital Ronell, a theorist/philosopher who thematically ties up and in between the wires of telephonic circuits and their transcendental counterparts. *Circle's Short Circuit* includes homages to the deconstructive tool-maker Jacques Derrida, the French writer Boris Vian and the ghost of the Japanese experimental theater and cinema, Shuji Terayama. (CS)

Caspar Stracke's Filmography/Videography

Bump and Bump (1986); 16mm blow-up, 6.5 minutes
Chewing Gum: Open/Close (1987); 16mm blow-up, 7 minutes
Kopf Motor Kopf (1989); 16mm, 13.5 minutes
Rorschach (1990); 16mm, 21 minutes
Sad Sack (1991); 16mm, 13 minutes
Sil Very (1993); 16mm, 19 minutes
Nach Wanyusha (1994); 16mm, 40 minutes
The Captured City (1994); U-Matic, 45 minutes
Afterbirth (1995); 16mm
Everyone His Own Soccerball (1995); Betacam SP; 5 minutes
Deconstructed Educational Sport Series (1996); 16mm/Betacam, 8.5 minutes
Sad Sack - A Remix (1997); Betacam, 2 minutes
Locked Groove (1997); Betacam, 10 minutes
Circle's Short Circuit (1997-99); 35mm, 85 minutes
Mary (Memory Scan, DanceKK) (1999); Betacam, 7 minutes
Threads (1999) (work-in-progress; collaboration w/ Mike Hoolboom)
Read Me (1999); Betacam, 6 minutes

37TH ANN ARBOR FILM FESTIVAL TOUR

A Co-Presentation of San Francisco Cinematheque
and San Francisco State University Cinema Department

November 19 and 20, 1999—San Francisco State University

On November 19 and 20, San Francisco Cinematheque and San Francisco State University Cinema Department host the 37th Ann Arbor Film Festival Touring Program. The Ann Arbor Film Festival is the oldest experimental film festival in the United States, held in Ann Arbor, Michigan since 1963, and it has become a renowned showcase of short 16mm independent films from around the United States and

the world. The 1999 Touring Program, a showcase of eighteen award-winning films, includes an eclectic range of experimental, personal, documentary and animation films shown in two 2-hour programs.

A total of 355 films were submitted and 107 films were screened at this year's festival which took place March 16-21, 1999. The awards jurors were experimental filmmaker Mike Hoolboom, documentary and experimental filmmaker Lynne Sachs, and experimental animator and narrative filmmaker Chel White.

San Francisco filmmakers have had a longstanding relationship with the Ann Arbor Film Festival, and many Bay Area experimental filmmakers have received recognition there. This year two Bay Area filmmakers are featured as part of the Touring Program, San Francisco State University graduate Daven Gee, whose *Chemistries* was the recipient of the Most Promising Filmmaker Award, and San Francisco Art Institute graduate William Z. Richard, whose film *Black and Blue All Over* won the Old Peculiar Award. Filmmaker Jay Rosenblatt has been an advisor of the festival for the last two years, and former San Francisco resident Lynne Sachs was one of its jurors.

PROGRAM 1

Friday, November 19, 1999

The Geometry of Beware by Richard Raxlen; Victoria, BC, Canada, 7 minutes (*Honorable Mention*)

In 1980 the filmmaker bought an old tin projector in a junk shop with a remnant of a one-minute yellowed-with-age 1926 *Mutt and Jeff* cartoon on the reel. This film uses and samples that footage to create a re-worked animation.

The Shanghaied Text by Ken Kobland; New York, New York, 20 minutes (*Mosaic Foundation Best of the Festival Award*)

A collage of images from the films of Vertov and Dovchenko to erotic clips to verité footage of 1968 Paris riots.

Flight Fm2 by Matt Blauer; Portland, Oregon, 1.5 minutes (*Honorable Mention*)

An animated film about phobia and possibility brought to life through a Nikon and a Murphy bed.

Chemistries by Daven Gee; San Francisco, California, 9.5 minutes (*Tom Berman Most Promising Filmmaker Award*)

A tale of personal longings and family secrets, fantasies and sexuality.

Mind's Eye by Gregory Godhard; Sydney, NSW, Australia, 5 minutes (*Peter Wilde Award for Most Technically Innovative Film*)

An animated journey through a world where the facades of reality are transcended.

Women Are Not Little Men by Lisa Hayes; Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 15 minutes (*Honorable Mention*)

A mock-documentary exposing and critiquing the widespread belief in the existence of a weaker sex using archival footage and a 1950s industrial training manual.

Black and Blue All Over by William Z. Richard; San Francisco, California, 8 minutes (*The Old Peculiar Award*)

A collage of nature examining the details of flowers and leaves and a supernatural blue, black and purple forest. Title refers to the abuse which has and continues to be leveled against the environment.

Come Unto Me: The Faces Of Tyree Guyton by Nicole Catell; Ann Arbor, Michigan, 31 minutes (*Michigan Vue Magazine Best Michigan Filmmaker Award + Detroit Filmmakers Coalition Award*)

The story of Detroit folk/installation artist Tyree Guyton's struggle to create art from inner city rubble, even as he faces heated opposition from the city of Detroit.

Tito-Material by Elke Groen; Vienna, Austria 6 minutes (*Honorable Mention*)

Filmmaker has used fragments of a film from the rubble of cinema in war-torn Mostar. Dated from 1978 the weathered film shows a public and private Tito.

Egypt by Kathrin Resetarits; Vienna, Austria, 11 minutes (*Audiovisions/Amazing Audio Best Sound Design Award*)

An almost silent film about deaf mutes and their sign language which like the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs, links the symbolic terminology of words with the mimetic and analogous representations of graphic gestures.

Sid by Jeff Scher; New York, New York, 3.5 minutes

There's no such thing as too much for the flying dog. Filmed with a Beaulieu r 16 and a Century 9mm lens on Shelter Island last summer. Music by Ween.

PROGRAM 2

Saturday, November 20, 1999

Where Lies the Homo by Jean-Francois Monette; Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 34.5 minutes (*Liberty St. Video Best Gay/Lesbian Film Award*)

A film diary that explores the construction of gay identities through an analysis of media clips and coming out tales. From Disney to underground gay cinema, from Hollywood divas to grainy home movies, this experimental collage demystifies the stereotypical representations of queerness in film.

L'Arrivee by Peter Tscherkassky; Vienna, Austria, 2 minutes (*Honorable Mention*)

The filmmaker goes back to the beginning, back to *lumiere* and the Lumieres who once upon a time made a film of a train arriving. The material comes from *Mayerling*, a 1968 Terence Young melodrama.

Meditations On Revolution, Part 1: Lonely Planet by Robert Fenz; Tivoli, New York, silent, 13 minutes (*Film Craft Lab/Kodak Best Cinematography Award*)

An observation in long shots of the serene rhythm of Havana's street life. Concerned with space, time, movement and light, it is a structured improvisational homage to Cuba's endurance.

Hepa! by Laura Margulies; New York, New York, 7 minutes

This animated film explores the world of Afro-Brazilian dance with a new perspective.

Okay Bye Bye by Rebecca Baron; La Jolla, California, 41 minutes (*Marvin Felheim Special Jury Award*)

Told through a series of unsent letters, this documentary is about the chance discovery of a scrap of film on a San Diego sidewalk that leads the filmmaker to reckon with a history of Cambodia from the unlikely vantage point of Southern California.

Cars Will Make You Free by Lyn Elliot; Iowa City, Iowa, 3 minutes (*Prix de Varti Funniest Film Award*)

A short experimental documentary that touches upon the American addiction with the automobile.

Alone. Life Wastes Andy Hardy by Martin Arnold; Vienna, Austria, 15 minutes (*Chris Frayne Best Animated Film Award*)

Along with his earlier films *pièce touchée* and *passage a l'acte*, this film completes a trilogy of compulsive repetition in which the filmmaker has created a campaign of reconstruction of classic Hollywood film codes, this time turning to film music for the repetition.

Descriptions of films provided by the 37th Ann Arbor Film Festival

CONSCIOUSNESS CINEMA

PROGRAM SIX

CONSCIOUS SPACES

Tuesday, November 23, 1999
California College of Arts and Crafts

see October 5, 1999, for series overview

The experience of time is commonly understood as movement through space. These films explore space and architecture through their existence in time. Presence and absence, emotion and reflection are recorded in the time of these spaces; the viewer's consciousness becomes the vehicle of these spatio-temporal navigations.

Wavelength (1966-67) by Michael Snow; 16mm, color, sound, 45 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

I wanted to make a summation of my nervous system, religious inklings and aesthetic ideas. I was thinking of planning for a time monument in which the beauty and sadness of equivalence would be celebrated, thinking of trying to make a definitive statement of pure film space and time, a balancing of "illusion" and "fact," all about seeing.

[The continuous zoom and fixed camera], the setting, and the action which takes place there are cosmically equivalent... The sound on these occasions is sync sound, speech and music, occurring simultaneously with an electric sound, a sine wave, which goes from its lowest (50 cycles per second)

note to its highest (1200 c.p.s.) in 40 minutes. It is a total crescendo and a dispersed spectrum which attempts to utilize the gifts of both prophesy and memory which only film and music have to offer.

Life is in the film. One of the subjects of the film or perhaps more accurately what the film *is* is a “balancing” of different orders, classes of events and protagonists. The image of the yellow chair has as much “value” in its own world as the girl closing the window. In life (?) the film events are not hierarchical but there is a kind of scale of mobility that runs from pure light events, the various perceptions of the room, to the images of human beings. The inert: the bookcase that gets carried in, the corpse, visually, dying being a passage from activity to object. Inertia. It is precise that ‘events *take place.*’ (MS)

Paris and Athens, June (1994) by Lynn Kirby; video, color, sound, 14 minutes, tape from the maker

Another in the series of window explorations, with a portable video camera, of two rooms and the views out their windows. Using the theme of travel to explore intimacy, the piece works with the interactions between a couple to reveal the ideas about “scripted” and “real” dialogue, “constructed” and “actual” sound, while exploring video properties of light, movement and stillness. (LK)

“One of the exemplary instances where Godard’s proposition that framing is not a matter of space but also of time is Lynn Kirby’s *Paris and Athens, June* where the image intermittently, at varying intervals, freezes. In Kirby’s video, when the image freezes, the diegetic sounds (footsteps, etc.) frequently continue. This confers on sound a double power: that of betraying the image (as the Ren, Sakeem and Khu can betray the ancient Egyptian’s body from which they separate once the latter has died); but also of saving the dead; after neither images nor smells reach us any longer from the world of the living, a reality that is no longer available to us, the voice still reaches us, that of the Tibetan monk or ancient Egyptian lector priest reciting from their respective books of the dead.” (Jalal Toufic)

News from Home (1976) by Chantal Akerman; 16mm, color, sound, 90 minutes, print from World Artists

“I lived [in New York] the first time for a year and a half, and during this whole time I was getting letters from my mother. In relation to what I was experiencing, in relation to New York, it was very moving. Like a kind of amorous complaint, repetitive, always accompanying me. For my mother, who is from old Europe, America is still the myth of the new America. And she was writing to her daughter who had come to succeed in life. Obviously it wasn’t said like that, because it was very simple language, direct.... The film seems to me to be very European, it’s a film of construction... It’s a film about being off-center: me and New York, which is a city without a center, and this shows up in the construction of the film. Generally speaking, but not systematically, the film is composed of shots in the subway (the subway is very important in New York, I love everything that has to do with subways, trains...) and of exteriors. And you never know where you are, never. The same construction shows up on the level of sounds and the letters which are read voice-over. At times they disappear and I let the sounds speak, at times they’re scrambled and you can’t understand them rather like leit-motif. It’s like a love song that you listen to or don’t listen to, and at the same time it’s like a hold that is slipping...” (CA)

ARTISTS AND FILMS: CROSSOVER PIX

PROGRAM THREE

Curated and Presented by Charles Boone

Sunday, November 21, 1999—San Francisco Art Institute

This ongoing series explores work by artists who generally focus on media other than film and video, as well as media artists who cross the boundaries of their usual areas of specialization. It also seeks to point up works that are either collaborative (composers and other artists, for instance) or else would simply not be the way they are were it not for their makers' close associations with colleagues in other arts disciplines.

Mary Miss is well known for her (literally) ground-breaking work in landscape- and architecture-scaled sculpture and installation projects. Her pieces are all meant to be experienced in time and space—one walks through and around them—and are discovered and learned about as a result of the active, physical participation of the viewers. Her films *Blind* and *Cut-off*, both from the mid-1970s, change this equation somewhat: she herself selects what we are to see and for how long. They are quiet meditations on the acts of making and viewing.

Linearity (1968) by Richard Felciano—he conceived both the music and video concepts—was composed during the heyday of San Francisco public television when KQED was not just a recreative, but a truly generative force in Bay Area arts. The piece was created as part of a Rockefeller-sponsored interdisciplinary project that explored the role television might play in collaboration with other, more established, art forms. Felciano's work for harp and video was the first of its kind, a chiaroscuro hybrid whose images and sounds were interwoven and subjected to various forms of electronic modification.

Viewed thirty years later in our present color-shocked era, the fluid poetry of its black and white imagery is refreshing. Felciano and his colleagues were limited to black and white—that's about all there was at the time—the horizontal lines of which suggested 19th century engravings to him. A harp was chosen because of the vertical linearity of its strings and because the lower strings are wound horizontally with metal, whose reflected light allows the string's actual vibrations to be seen. Video processing included multiple images, reverse polarity, and keying—emptying the contents of an image, maintaining its silhouette, and filling it with different contents. Richard Felciano is Professor Emeritus in music at the University of California, Berkeley. (Adapted from notes by Howard Hersh)

Being always on the lookout for new media and materials, it is no surprise that Robert Rauschenberg has tried his hand at film and video. *Canoe* (1966) was originally made as a sound piece for performers, but once it had been used for that purpose, its independent filmic qualities became evident and it has been presented as a film ever since. The original found footage was divided into three categories (water, people in the water, and people in or with canoes or canoeing apparatus) and then cut into units of varying lengths, ranging from three frames (one-eighth of a second) to forty-eight frames (two seconds). Juxtaposition of images was done on the basis of visual sameness with intercutting of transitional material of subsequent sections. The subject matter—canoeing—remained, but the reorganization of the original elements completely altered its character. It might be useful to recall Rauschenberg's close friendship with the composer John Cage; it was only a few years before *Canoe* that Cage made his first

compositions using sounds recorded on magnetic tapes whose editorial cuttings and splicings were governed by chance procedures. (And, incidentally, be sure to see the Rauschenberg/Cage collaborative piece from 1951—an automobile tire print on a long paper scroll—recently purchased by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.)

Rauschenberg was one of a number of vanguard painters in the '60s who wanted to break down barriers separating different art forms. As part of this effort, *Linoleum* was a performance piece that featured the artist himself plus his colleagues Deborah and Alex Hay, Trisha Brown, Steve Paxton (seen munching fried chicken) and Robert Breer (who contributed a motorized box sculpture for the performance). What we see in this film goes well beyond pure documentation of the 1966 performance in Washington D. C. Rauschenberg directed the operation of the video effects mixer used to superimpose images from the cameras to make a work distinctly independent of the performance piece on which it is based.

For their 1951 film portrait of the painter Jackson Pollock, Paul Falkenberg and Hans Namuth initially mixed together a sound track from recordings of Indonesian gamelan music. When Pollock heard what they had done, however, he said, "This is exotic music. I am an American painter!" At that point, the artist Lee Krasner, Pollock's wife, proposed that 25-year-old Morton Feldman—an American, of course—write the music for the film. Even as a fledgling, aspiring composer, Feldman was part of the inner circles of New York's avant garde art world in the '50s, but this commission was a kind of official coming out for him. Feldman wanted to write for solo cello, but Falkenberg asked for a duo. What we hear on the film is, in fact, played by a single cellist whose sounds were dubbed together. Incidentally, the recording engineer was Peter Bartok, son of the distinguished Hungarian composer Bela Bartok.

For *In Between*, his 1955 film portrait of Jess, a very different sort of artist from Jackson Pollock, Stan Brakhage used what he had at hand; namely, Bay views, rooftops and other architectural details of San Francisco, plus local friends and colleagues who populate the film. (The guy in the hat at the beginning is poet Robert Duncan.) In addition, he used recorded sounds of John Cage's prepared piano music. The prepared piano, a Cage invention, produces unusual sounds because its strings have been dressed up with nuts and bolts, rubber erasers, and other sorts of "preparations." This film is a perfect example of artists in lively collaboration who, at the same time, seem to be having a ball in the process.

It is clear that Jonathan Reiss did *not* use what he had at hand. For *A Bitter Message of Hopeless Grief* (1988) he worked with artists Matt Heckert and Mark Pauline of Survival Research Laboratory fame to create wildly hellish creatures and landscapes with their respective, daunting noises. Animal skulls and bones given new life, vaguely humanoid machines with horrible pincers, collapsing walls, fire and brimstone, big destruction. They all combine both to scare the wits and cause smiles. Hell is a messy, unfriendly place, but in this extravagantly staged case, it is also amusing and constantly fascinating.

—Program Notes by Charles Boone—

**ITALIAN SUBVERSIVES 1965:
PIER PAOLO PASOLINI'S *HAWKS AND SPARROWS***

Thursday, December 2, 1999—Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

“there is almost total identity between me and the crow.”
—Pier Paolo Pasolini, interview with Oswald Stack, 1968

As its first evening of Italian Subversives 1965, San Francisco Cinematheque presents Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Uccellacci e uccellini*, or *Hawks and Sparrows*. Pasolini's fifth full-length feature—made after *Accatone*, *Mamma Roma*, his documentary essay *Comizi d'amore* and *The Gospel According to Matthew*—was the fruit of a profound political and ideological crisis and marked a major shift in his film work. Of all his feature films, *Uccellacci e uccellini* is absolutely unique in its approach to storytelling, its use of humor, metaphor and irony, and its deeply personal expression of Pasolini's self-criticism of the position of the intellectual in society and of his earlier style of filmmaking.

Both mordant political critique and off-beat comedy (Pasolini called the film “ideo-comic”), *Uccellacci e uccellini* is an allegorical road movie following a father, his son and a talking Marxist crow—a self-critical embodiment of Pasolini himself—as they wander along empty highways towards an unknown future Italy. The film proceeds in a series of vignettes which defy narrative cohesion and closure and move from neorealistic poeticized poverty (with references to Rossellini and Fellini) to delightfully ironic sequences commenting on contemporary Marxist ideology, the role of the Church, the Neo-Capitalist system which Pasolini so despised and the place of the Third World. Also included is documentary footage of the 1964 funeral of Communist Party leader Palmiro Togliatti, whose death symbolized the end of a utopian belief in traditional and paternalistic Marxist teleology. Pasolini's film provides no clear answers, but is rather an open-ended, multi-layered and deeply felt exploration of his own ideological crisis. Even the death of the crow near the end of the film—his own or the Leftist intellectual's death—is, as he has said, both an act of cannibalism and an act of communion, a dispensing with and an incorporation of, an assimilation.

Tonight's film will be preceded by a short documentary on Pasolini made in 1970. Though the print is in bad shape and the film is dubbed rather than subtitled, it does offer insight into Pasolini's convictions, his work at the time, and his relationship with several of his colleagues, friends and collaborators.

***Pier Paolo Pasolini* (1970)** by Carlo Hayman-Chaffey; 16mm, color, sound, 29 minutes

This 1970 documentary, made after the completion of Pasolini's *Medea* and five years before his death, includes interviews with novelist and critic Alberto Moravia, screenwriter (*Bicycle Thief*, *Miracle in Milan*, *Umberto D*, etc.) Cesare Zavattini, friend and collaborator Sergio Citti, actors Franco Citti and Ninetto Davoli and others.

***Uccellacci e uccellini* (1965-66)** by Pier Paolo Pasolini; 35mm, b&w, sound, 86 minutes

With Totò and Ninetto Davoli, cinematography by Tonino Delli Colli and Mario Bernardo, music by Ennio Moricone

“I never exposed myself as I did in this film. I never chose for the theme of a film one so explicitly difficult: the crisis of [the] Marxism of the Resistance and the 1950s... suffered and viewed from the

inside by a Marxist who is not however ready to believe that Marxism is over... Naturally it is not over insofar as it is able to accept many new realities hinted at in the film (the scandal of the Third World, the Chinese, and, above all, the immensity of human history and the end of the world, with the religiosity which this implies—and which constitutes the other theme of the film).” (PPP, 1966)

“[*Uccellacci e uccellini*] is about the end of neo-realism, particularly the beginning about two characters living out their life without thinking about it—i.e. two typical heroes of neo-realism, humble, humdrum and unaware. All the first part is an evocation of neorealism, though naturally an idealized neo-realism. There are other bits like the clowns episode which are deliberately intended to evoke Fellini and Rossellini. Some critics accused me of being Fellinian in that episode, but they did not understand that it was a quotation from Fellini; in fact immediately afterwards the crow talks to the two of them and says ‘The age of Brecht and Rossellini is finished.’ The whole episode was a long quotation.” (PPP, interview with O. Stack, 1968)

“The acute political and existential crisis Pasolini experienced in the mid-1960s is, precisely, the theme of *Uccellacci e uccellini*. This most unusual of films—dubbed by one critic ‘a fable, an essay, a confession, a pamphlet, a subtitled lesson, a picaresque saga’—signaled a turning point in Pasolini’s career even as it raised crucial questions concerning the direction of Italian Marxism. For Lino Micciché, *Uccellacci e uccellini* is not only one of the most beautiful films of 1966 but a ‘symptomatic document’ of a critical moment in Marxist ideology—a moment in which the ‘ungrounded’ hopes of the past seemed but the prelude to a very uncertain, if not ‘impossible’ future. Always playing against expectations, in *Uccellacci e uccellini* Pasolini filters weighty historical and political issues through veils of whimsy and metaphor. This gives rise to what he called an ‘ironic and formal distance’—a ‘distance’ sharply opposed to the passionate tone of *La rabbia* and *Il Vangelo*. Still, as *La ricotta* had made clear, Pasolini was never more engaged, certainly never more personal, than when deeply ironic.” (Naomi Greene, *Pier Paolo Pasolini, Cinema as Heresy*, p. 80)

“For [Pasolini], meaning was in crisis because reality was in crisis. Perspective and representation had to be questioned because reality no longer tolerated a totalizing image. Instead of representing this situation through analogy, that is, by narrating the crisis of one or more individuals in this historical moment, Pasolini chose to take this situation as the very subject of the story. He decided to make three different short films unified by the fairy tale device of staging talking animals. Each of them was supposed to refer to contemporary reality by means of fragmentary, allegorical tableaux, punctuated by Brechtian intertitles and shot with the technique of the cinema of poetry. After viewing the rushes, however, Pasolini decided to eliminate the episode with Totò and the Eagle, and to make one film only. The result is a provocative anti-narrative sequel of panels, each of them having its own autonomy and yet cleverly dependent upon the rest. This stylistic pastiche and narrative anarchy allowed Pasolini to say what he wanted to say about the situation of crisis, while keeping at bay the dangers of naturalist fiction and of avant-garde opacity. Hence the perceptive judgment of Luigi Faccini, who hailed the film as ‘the first example, in Italy, of realistic cinema. That is of a cinema that does not represent society in a naturalistic way but is—realistically and stylistically—homologous to its concrete structures.’” (Maurizio Viano, *A Certain Realism: Making Use of Pasolini’s Film Theory and Practice*)

“...Pasolini’s own definition of the film as ‘ideo-comic’ proves that ideology stays but not longer has the same power. It is assimilated into the comic register and thus incorporates irony and laughter. The idea of ‘the low’ assimilating ‘the high’ is most effectively communicated in the film by the last sequence when Totò and Ninetto eat the raven. It is the rebellion of the body that no longer tolerates the tyranny of the mind. It is, above all, the inversion of the relationship between word and image. Tired of being verbally explained and fed up with its ancillary status, the image eats the word. The wandering image of

Totò and Ninetto does not want to be forced into one meaning by the word. Significantly, the last three shots of the film portray the leftovers of the raven. The dismemberment of the raven warns us against remembering it as a unified image, an univocal answer to a single question. It reminds us that just as reality cannot suffer the same totalizing image for a long time, so ideology's main role is that of liberating humans from the slavery of noncontradictory certainties. Ideology is there to enhance and broach the crisis, not to foreclose it." (Maurizio Viano, *A Certain Realism: Making Use of Pasolini's Film Theory and Practice*)

—Program Notes written/compiled by Irina Leimbacher—

CONSCIOUSNESS CINEMA

PROGRAM SEVEN

SLEEP OVER

Friday, December 3, 1999

California College of Arts & Crafts, Oakland Campus

see October 5, 1999, for series overview

Come sleep with Warhol. This special midnight/all night screening of *Sleep* embodies the paradoxes of film and consciousness first hand as the audience drifts in and out of consciousness in perfect synchronicity with the silvery image of gorgeous masculine slumber and the flickering eye of the projector.

Sleep (1963) by Andy Warhol; 16mm, b&w, silent, 330 minutes, print from the Museum of Modern Art Circulating Film Library

It is hard to imagine a more appropriate conclusion to the Consciousness Cinema series than this all-night screening of Andy Warhol's *Sleep*—a film which both records and invites the lapse into unconsciousness. If the gesture seems a bit literal-minded, especially in the context of such a subtle and sophisticated curatorial effort so far, then so much the better. For indeed, what could be more literal-minded than Warhol's earliest Factory films? In giving us exactly what their titles promise—sleeping, eating, kissing, the cutting of hair—they practically *dare* their viewers to find anything else in them beyond the banality of these everyday activities. Of course, there have been plenty of commentators and critics prepared to argue that they do, in fact, give us much more than that. Surprisingly enough, *Sleep* found one of its strongest advocates in Stan Brakhage. Jonas Mekas recalls that when Brakhage saw the film for the first time, he was singularly unimpressed and pronounced Warhol a fraud. Mekas somehow succeeded in convincing Brakhage to watch the film again—this time projected at its intended speed of 16 frames per second. After spending six more hours in the Filmmakers' Co-op screening room, Brakhage emerged a convert: "We found Stan walking back and forth, all shook up, and he hardly had any words. Suddenly, he said, an entirely new vision of the world stood clear before his eyes. Here was an artist, he said, who was taking a completely opposite aesthetic direction from his, and was achieving as great and as clear a transformation of reality, as drastic and total a new way of seeing reality, as he,

Stan, did in his own work.” Stephen Koch has found similar moments of epiphany in *Sleep*: “The Image glows up there, stately and independent. Its cinematic isolation on the screen exerts a bizarre fascination beyond its immediate pictorial allure. Even if one only glances at the image from time to time, it plunges one into cinematic profundity.”

While there’s no denying that such conversion experiences are certainly possible watching *Sleep*, one would be hard pressed to come up with less *Warholian* responses to the film than these. From the artist who declared “if you want to know all about Andy Warhol, just look at the surface...There’s nothing behind it,” “profundity” would seem to be the last thing we should expect to encounter. Throughout all of his work, Warhol appears to be much more interested in gauging the *limits* of consciousness, in reaching those points where the individualizing experiences of depth, meaning, and sensation become quite literally exhausted before the impersonal functioning of the machine. Unlike, say, Bill Viola—another artist for whom sleep has been an important trope—Warhol has never been concerned with exploring transcendental states of awareness either. When Warhol discusses his own films, it is always in the most rigorously superficial way: “You could do more things watching my movies than with other kinds of movies: you could eat and drink and smoke and cough and look away and they’d still be there. It’s not the ideal movie, it’s just my kind of movie.” Perhaps the most illuminating commentary that Warhol provides for this film comes from one of his more abstract, “philosophical” observations: “Being born is like being kidnapped. And then sold into slavery. People are working every minute. The machinery is always going. Even when you sleep.” What is *Sleep*, really, if not a literalization of this very idea—the performance of a machine that keeps going even when its subject and its spectators are no longer awake?

Since the topic of this series is “consciousness” and its history, it might be worth noting that sleep has played an especially important role in the two institutions which have dominated that history in our century: cinema and psychoanalysis. For Freud, of course, sleep was primarily important because it generated dreams—his “royal road” to unlocking the secrets of the unconscious. “Sleep” was also, for Freud and for his predecessors, the first command in hypnosis. Film theorists since Freud have speculated that cinema produces a kind of “suggestibility” in its spectators which is not too different from the experience of being hypnotized. Lulled into a state somewhere between wakefulness and drowsing, movie audiences will perceive a film in much the same way that they experience their own dreams. Where Warhol’s intervention into the history of narrative cinema has often been hailed as radical, very few critics have been willing to suggest that his early films have any bearing at all on the parallel history of psychoanalysis. But throughout his life, Warhol maintained a far more explicit animosity towards the psychiatric establishment than he ever did towards the commercial cinema. Warhol’s own experience with psychoanalysis in 1959 was brief and unproductive, and he later commented that “it could help you if you don’t know anything about anything.” His own therapeutic advice was characteristically anti-interpretive: “Sometimes people let the same problem make them miserable for years when they could just say, ‘So what.’ That’s one of my favorite things to say, ‘so what.’” If that trick didn’t work, there was always the tape recorder: “The acquisition of my tape recorder really finished whatever emotional life I might have had, but I was glad to see it go. Nothing was ever a problem again, because a problem just meant a good tape, and when a problem transforms itself into a good tape, it’s not a problem anymore.” Warhol’s refusal of depth, alongside his identification with the machine, seemed to go hand in hand with his resistance to both of these “consciousness industries”—institutionalized psychiatry as much as, if not more than, conventional narrative film.

On both fronts, Warhol’s preferred tactic was to be as *literal-minded* as possible. In 1966, Warhol and his Factory coterie were invited to the annual banquet of the New York Society for Clinical Psychiatry. As soon as the second course was served, the Velvets took the stage, and Gerard Malanga started into his infamous “whip dance;” Jonas Mekas and Barbara Rubin rushed in with bright lights and

camera equipment and asked the attendees questions like: "What does her vagina feel like?"; "Is his penis big enough?" The next day, the *New York Tribune* headline read: "Shock Treatment for Psychiatrists." For Warhol, the Factory's culture of total visibility would eventually bring the psychoanalytic era to an unceremonious end. In an age where every sexual secret had been revealed and recorded, Freud's science of consciousness, which had for so long staked itself in the excavation of repressed meanings, would become increasingly obsolete. Perhaps Warhol's most literal-minded gesture against psychoanalytic presumptions came with *Couch* in 1964. In that film, a series of perfunctory sexual acts takes place on the most sacred site of Freud's talking cure: on the couch, the very place where concealed sexual meanings were supposed to be carefully deciphered, Warhol simply gives us sex itself. Where sleep, too, has been one the most of the productive sites for the elaboration of psychoanalytic "problems," Warhol's *Sleep* might instead be understood in its pointedly *unprofound* resistance to that mode of interpretation.

Sleep, then, would seem to offer an appropriate conclusion to the Consciousness Cinema series in more than just the obvious, literal-minded sense. Or, more precisely, it is because *Sleep* is so relentlessly literal-minded that it provides such a fitting end to this program. The film is nothing if not an endurance test, as it certainly will be for you here tonight. But for Warhol, the unwinnable contest that the film stages between the machine and consciousness has a much broader allegorical resonance. Like the film itself, the machinery of the world will go on working, even when the historical and intellectual "problem" of human consciousness has finally lost its power to captivate.

—Program Notes by David Conner—

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A MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO RUDY BURCKHARDT

Bill Berkson & Nathaniel Dorsky In Person

Sunday, December 5, 1999—San Francisco Art Institute

"The great filmmaker, photographer and painter Rudy Burckhardt died on August 1 in Maine at 85 years of age. Born in Basel, Switzerland, he came to New York in 1935 and made it his home as well as the hero of most of his works. Burckhardt filmed what he likes and lets you see it that way too. The power is formal and sympathetic, never editorialized—though the films are as much edited as shot. Sensations of

the obvious or commonplace are lifted sky high. With what Edwin Denby called “a visual grandeur he keeps as light as it is in fact,” Burckhardt shows what’s livable and true in everyday life.” (Bill Berkson)

“Rudy Burckhardt showed his first two films in 1937. He has made more than fifty since, few longer than half an hour, all minimal budget. From the start they have been personal, unmistakably his. Their influence on other filmmakers has been described as mainly toward unpretentiousness. Unpretentious they are. Their subject matter is like that of amateur ‘family’ movies—short documentaries of unimportant sights anyone could find, or silent-screen type comedies with friends for actors. The photography is objective, the images are ordinary facts, the style is direct and clear. The films look simple, but they are not elementary for a moment. The great pleasure they offer is to see with Burckhardt’s eye. The difficulty is seeing the large, unexpected image fast enough—the subject, the environment, the light that unites and spreads so to speak beyond them. The images are full of fun, wit, and humor; they also catch live people and places during moments of unconscious beauty and even grandeur. The live light in them is memorable. Burckhardt keeps catching the personal grace of young women, each a different individual; children, men, animals, plants, landscapes, buildings—he keeps catching their individuality, like beautiful and funny both in their own unconscious gesture. Burckhardt improvises all this with a very light touch. The films look as if anybody could have done it; gradually you discover the sophisticated variety, the wealth of imagination and sympathy.” (Edwin Denby)

“Rudy was a natural cosmopolitan. Wherever he found himself he disappeared effortlessly into the crowd, wearing his inbred sophistication like a suit off a rack. Blending high-born European manners with a streetwise democratic spirit, Rudy was a constellation of oxymorons: a Swiss Walt Whitman wired into the free-flowing electric charge of the metropolis, but incapable of overstatement; a multitalented artist, connected to virtually every major figure of the New York School, but curiously indifferent to the fate of his own work.” (Robert Storr, *Artforum*, November 1999)

Tonight’s program, curated by Bill Berkson and Nathaniel Dorsky, will also include slides of Burckhardt’s still photography and paintings.

What Mozart Saw on Mulberry Street (1956); 16mm, b&w, sound, 6 minutes

Filmed with Joseph Cornell, edited by R.B. to the slow movement of a Mozart piano sonata. A plaster bust of Mozart in a small shop surveys the goings-on in the street—children playing, an old man wrapped in thought, a cat slinking by in a parking lot. The mood is melancholy.

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.

Millions in Business as Usual (1961); 16mm, color, sound, 15 minutes

A piano sonata by Josef Haydn and New York City. The first, allegro movement is choreographed by midtown crowds, crossing every which way, often barely avoiding collision. For the long, slow second movement we see quiet, stately buildings, their columns, cornices, portals and ornaments, with only the camera providing movement at times. The very fast, final part is in color, around Times Square, the movement speeded up and frantic.

Caterpillar (1973); 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes, print from Film-Makers' Cooperative

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

Julie (1980); 16mm

Night Fantasies (1991); 16mm, color, sound, print from Yvonne Jacquette

Yvonne Jacquette both co-directed and composed the music.

ITALIAN SUBVERSIVES 1965
MARCO BELLOCCHIO'S *FISTS IN THE POCKET*

Thursday, December 9, 1999—Center for the Arts

"...the more ones' fists remained clenched in the anguish of a progressive incapacity to act, the more uncontrollably and fatally the desire to revolt and the compressed inclination to evil will finally explode." —Marco Bellocchio, 1966

As its second evening of Italian Subversives, 1965, San Francisco Cinematheque presents Marco Bellocchio's rarely screened first feature *I pugni in tasca* or *Fists in the Pocket*. Made with a group of friends and fellow students from the Centro Sperimentale when he was in his mid-twenties, *Fists in the Pocket* is a brilliant, agitated tale of decadence and self-destruction in a bourgeois family and an exploration of an individual's relationship to a repressive society. Filled with unparalleled rage and urgency in its depiction of the complex and incestuous web of relations that bind a blind mother and four dysfunctional siblings in the Italian Provinces, the film definitively signaled the death knell of the glorified Italian family and revealed its darkest side ever.

Bellocchio is one of the most prolific Italian directors. He has made more than twenty-five films, the most recent of which—*The Wetnurse*—opened the 1999 New Italian Cinema Events Festival. *Fists in the Pocket* was hailed as a tour-de-force directorial debut when it came out in 1965 and is still considered one of Bellocchio's best and most original films. His filmography includes several films from original screenplays, documentaries on the treatment of mentally ill and on cinema, and numerous literary adaptations from Chekov to Kleist to Pirandello. Thematically, his films have frequently dealt with psychological and political themes and often explore repression and revolt, gender relations and the possibility of social and psychological transformation.

I pugni in tasca (1965) by Marco Bellocchio; 16mm print, b&w, sound, 107 minutes

With Lou Castel, Paola Pitagora, Marino Masé, Liliana Gerace, Pierluigi Troglia.

"The core of your film is a kind of exaltation of the extraordinary and the abnormal against the norms of bourgeois life, against the institution and against the mediocre level of bourgeois familial life. It is an angry revolt from the inside of the bourgeois world... I could say that your film is the film of a beat, of a hippy. It reminds me in some way of the poetry of Ginsberg, that is profoundly on the outside

of all schools, poetic currents, ideologies etc. etc. which have characterized Italian cinema up until now. And I believe it is, together with Bertolucci's film [*Before the Revolution*], the first case of an Italian film which has gone beyond neorealism..." (Pier Paolo Pasolini, in a letter to Bellocchio published with the screenplay of *Fists in the Pocket*)

"The film, which premiered at the Lido in Venice in 1966... was greeted with an ovation. Even more than for its coherence and stylistic maturity, its mastery of montage, its perfect assimilation of the lessons of Buñuel, Rocha and the *Nouvelle vague*, the film is striking for its explosive charge, its rage, its destructive force, its claustrophobia, its blasphemous intentions. Against a closed world, sick and paralyzed in its conventions, it provokes an angry reaction which, in perspective, becomes a symptom and index of the growing protest of an entire generation. With the distance of time, the judgement on *Fists in the Pocket*'s quality and expressive originality blurs and the impression that it is one of the first important manifestos of the student protest is reinforced." (Gian Piero Brunetta, *Cent'anni di cinema italiano*, vol. 2)

"I chose a subject so seemingly grim because of my experience and because of a distrust in a certain beginner's cinema which is preoccupied with describing diffuse atmospheres, variegated emotions, subtleties which are not subtleties. I believe, on the other hand, that there are contradictions so blatantly obvious in society that—at least as regards cinema, Italian cinema—they have not been sufficiently explored. Therefore I thought it was justifiable and useful to make a violent film." (Marco Bellocchio, *Sceneggiatura*)

"I only hope to have irritated the spectator, even though I have no illusions concerning the efficacy of provocation. I believe that cinema has always fought battles from the rear-guard, that it has explored themes that literature, for example, had already exhausted from its own point of view. Cinema has revived and put new life into these themes. Several reviews recognized in the protagonist [of *Fists in the Pocket*] an angry attitude with regard to certain bourgeois values, against which he was impotent and which would have ultimately integrated him. But these bourgeois values no longer exist culturally; Alessandro, the protagonist, more than banging his head against these values, tries to liquidate, to burn at the stake, things which are already dead, already inexistent: they no longer exist as cultural values but as an opposition which is fundamentally economic." (Marco Bellocchio, *Sceneggiatura*)

"For some progressive directors it is necessary to create a positive character who embodies all the moral values which they are anxious to save.... In *Fists in the Pocket*, on the contrary, the morality is entrusted only to the style: a style which is cold, objective, ruthless, which reveals an attitude of permanent irony and distance from the unhealthy and seductive material, so as to avoid ambiguity on the part of the spectator and to allow for constructive disapproval..." (Marco Bellocchio, *Filmcritica*)

"La Mamma: who has never imagined killing one's own mother? I believe that all of us have wanted to do so and I wanted to affirm this." (Marco Bellocchio)

Program Notes written/compiled by Irina Leimbacher; quotations inelegantly translated from Gian Piero Brunetta's *Cent'anni di cinema italiano*, vol. 2 and Marco Bellocchio, *Catalogo ragionato a cura di Paola Malanga*, Edizioni Olivares, 1998

SANDRA DAVIS'
A PREPONDERANCE OF EVIDENCE

Sandra Davis In Person

Sunday, December 12, 1999 — San Francisco Art Institute

“Thou hast it now—
As the weird women promised...
May they not be my oracles as well,
And set me up in hope? ...”

—Banquo, from *Macbeth* (Act 3, Scene 1, l.1-2, 9-10)

How do inner conflicts of intimacy, sexual need and violent impulses emerge in personal relationships? Three women tell their own stories in local filmmaker Sandra Davis' newest work, *A Preponderance of Evidence*. Notions of race, culture, and gender emerge through historical anecdotes, personal testimonies, and pop-culture film relics. The evidence accumulates as Davis explores her own varied and idiosyncratic story, which includes images of the archaic Florida swamp, elegant forms of European and medieval architecture, footage of Congress challenging Anita Hill, as well as abstract color and light explorations.

Sandra Davis came to filmmaking in 1978, influenced by painting and a love of classical and baroque musical forms. Many of her works center around the body as the site of imagistic and dynamic foundations that structure human impulses, feelings and thought. Imagery of natural landscape and architecture recur. All her films, as any rhythmic forms, are meant to be understood through the body and senses, as well as the conceptual mind. Editing tactics contrast fluid image and lyrical tempos with jagged, metric rhythms. Contradictory meaning can emerge and traditionally understood meaning can collapse in the parallel streams of images, which pulsate together until one of them takes over. Her films utilize a variety of cinematographic techniques including optical printing, which emphasizes the light-infused and textural qualities of the photographic frame. Davis has received numerous grants and awards, and her work was included in major retrospectives at the Museum of Modern Art (New York) and Georges Pompidou Center (Paris).

“The media has created the commodification of and participated in the fetishizing of woman and nature. Culture/male, nature/female? Who said? The positing of evil onto the woman. Nature that persists in its own identity, that cannot be controlled. What and who are fragile, and strong?” (SD)

A Preponderance of Evidence (1989-1999); 16mm, color, sound, 53 minutes, print from the maker
“Entering the single-file line to the exhibition, she thought how different was the experience from the usual museum show. The room ahead was dark, and she entered through a narrow corridor. Inside, a number of large black boxes occupied the room of black walls, floor, and ceiling. With no daylight, the little artificial light revealed persons peeking into round holes cut at heights sufficient for both adults and children to peer into the boxes.

“The room was very quiet, and she thought back, as she approached the first box, to walking into the operating rooms. One entered in silence and moved toward the group of people peering down at the body of the person on the table...” (Voice-over from the “Dead Bride Sequence”)

Sandra Davis Filmography:

Alleluia Pool (1975)

Shadow Faun (1976)

Soma (1977)

Maternal Filigree (1980)

Matter of Clarity (1981-85)

An Architecture of Desire (1988)

Evident/Evidence (1992)

Au Sud (1991-99)

Une Fois Habitée (1992-99)

A la Campagne (1992-99)

A Preponderance of Evidence (1989)

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