titled “The situationists and new politics and art” appeared in *Uniste* #11 (October 1967). He began by saying that we have stuck principally to subversion of forms, categories inherited from the 19th century. That was not the question by means which proceed with.

It is not however a matter of a passing of philosophy, the realization of politics; it is a matter of taking out of our journal, in areas where it
He then outlines a new offensive a
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Introduction

The San Francisco Cinematheque provides program notes at our screenings as a regular feature of our exhibition activities. We prepare these notes in order to give a context for the films and videotapes that make up our schedule, and to provide an introduction to works that often are new and unfamiliar. All too frequently, there is scant information -- let alone critical writing -- available for these works, and the little that does exist is contained in hard-to-find or out-of-print journals, or in film distributors’ catalogues that are not readily accessible to our viewers. Our program notes help to remedy this lack of information and offer our audience a chance to gain some background on the films and tapes that they’re about to experience.

The Program Note Booklet contains the collected program notes that accompanied the Cinematheque’s film and video exhibitions during 1990. Of course, these notes didn’t simply pop out of a hat but were the product of many hours of viewing and research by individual writers. Bruce Cooper, Emily Cronbach, Kurt Easterwood, Susanne Fairfax, Matt Fein, Thyrza Goodeve, Crosby McCloy, Eric S. Theise and Don Walker all volunteered their time for the project, and we heartily thank them for the energy and insight they brought to the enterprise. The number of program notes that included original essays increased dramatically during 1990, part of our continuing effort to advance the critical dialogue surrounding independent film and video. We hope to broaden that dialogue through this Program Note Booklet as well as our other publication activities, such as artist monographs and Cinematograph, the Cinematheque’s journal of film, video and related media art.

The production of monographs by the Cinematheque is a new program that we initiated in 1990. The first two monographs we produced were in conjunction with major retrospectives of the films of Andy Warhol and Yvonne Rainer. They featured original essays as well as detailed filmographies and bibliographies. The 1990 Program Note Booklet includes a listing of the films shown in each retrospective along with extracts from the essays and notes that the monographs contained. The monographs themselves, as well as Vol. 4 of Cinematograph (the current issue) and previous years’ Program Note Booklets, are available through the Cinematheque’s office.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the many individuals and organizations who helped to make the Cinematheque’s 1990 season such a success: Dominic Angerame, Paul Baker, Gail Camhi, Portia Cobb, Bill Daniel, Jennifer Durrant, Phil Elie, Lissa Gibbs, Walter Hernandez, Charlotte Hill, Liz Keim, Thomas Korschil, Rupert Jenkins, Albert Kilchetsy, Adrienne Lanier Seward, Toney Merritt, Marina McDougall, Chris Miller, Alan Mukamal, Michelle Sabol, Lynne Sachs, Kristin Sherman, Bruce Smithhammer, Greta Snider, Valerie Soe, Konrad Steiner, Daria Stermac, Jerry Tartaglia, Laura Tielen, Michael Wallin, Ted White, and Jeanie Weiffenbach; the Canadian Consulate-General, Canyon Cinema, The Exploratorium, Film Arts Foundation, Film-Makers’ Cooperative, Galeria de la Raza, Goethe-Institut of San Francisco, Headlands Center for the Arts, New American Makers, New Langton Arts, Pacific Film Archive, Roxie Cinema, San Francisco Camerawork, San Francisco International Film Festival, and the Walter/McBean Gallery. We would also like to thank the San Francisco Art Institute and the Eye Gallery, without whose support our exhibition programs would not have been possible.

The production of the Cinematheque’s Program Note Booklet was made possible in part through a grant provided by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation as well as support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, San Francisco’s Grants for the Arts Program, The San Francisco Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Fleishhacker Family Fund and the Friends of the Cinematheque.
THE FILMS OF ANDY WARHOL: A SEVEN-WEEK INTRODUCTION

January 28 - March 11, 1990

“It's the movies that have really been running things in America ever since they were invented. They show you what to do, how to do it, when to do it, how to feel about it, and how to look how you feel about it. When they show you how to kiss like James Dean or look like Jane Fonda or win like Rocky, that's great.”

—Andy Warhol, America, 1985

Warhol. Drop the name and release the flood of Pop images: myriad silk screened canvasses of Campbell's soup cans and Coca-Cola bottles, Marilyn Monroe and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, auto collisions and electric chairs. By applying the mechanical and repetitive process of silk screening to the canvas, Warhol outraged the brushstroke-heavy Abstract Expressionists and sent fine art thudding back to the concrete and, as a consequence, back to the public interest.

More so than his contemporaries — Jim Dine, Robert Indiana, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, Marisol, Claes Oldenburg, Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist, Tom Wesselman — Warhol's art in the 1960s was a Duchampian celebration of the art in every thing and artist in every one. His subjects were blatantly anti-Art, portraying bland consumer icons or “found” photographs: publicity stills, UPI wire photos, or glossy magazine spreads. According to the prevailing legend, Warhol left not only the production of his paintings to others, but the artistic decision making. His assistants, friends, and strangers often chose subject, colors, size, and composition, with the only directive being to make it look nice.

Andy. By the end of his life, Warhol's fame had eclipsed that of the subjects of his 1960s portraits. Marilyn. Liz. Marlon. Jackie. Elvis. Names as much a part of the American Pop vernacular that, except for the occasional Troy, last names were superfluous. Warhol's own public persona was stoked by his incessant socializing with glamorous trendsetters and by his droll witticisms, the best of which are as much cultural artifacts as his soup cans or silver pillows. America's fascination with Warhol peaked after his death in 1987, the now legendary Sotheby's auction taking in over 25 million dollars from the sale of his personal effects. Over a quarter of a million dollars were spent to acquire Warhol's kitschy collection of cookie jars alone.

Despite his more-than-fair share of the public eye, few people recall that, in the mid-60s, Andy Warhol earned a significant reputation as an avant-garde filmmaker by adapting his working methods to the film medium. Some film historians have gone so far as to liken Warhol's development to the history of cinema itself. From his initial silent period, through his experiments with sound, drama, color, and expanded cinema, Warhol remained a prolific filmmaker for five years, churning out hundreds of reels of film.

It was some measure of his films' impact that Warhol received the Film Culture Sixth Independent Film Award in 1964 for Sleep, Haircut, Eat, Kiss, and Empire. These films, silent, in black and white, combined long gazes from a fixed-camera position with exaggeratedly slow action. Warhol filmed these works at the usual 24 frames per second, but insisted that they be projected at 16 f.p.s. This transforms the two-minute, 45 seconds or recorded time into four-minutes, 10 seconds of screen time, prolonging the already minimal movement. Jonas Mekas, director of the New York Film-Makers' Co-operative, became an active proselytizer of Warhol's films, providing the key to viewing these works:

"The film starts rolling, the audience sits quietly, for a minute or two. The catcalls and crack remarks begin. In the forth or fifth minute, however, they begin to realize that I have no intention of stopping the film, and the reports
from the back lines reach the front lines, that the reel is big.... After ten minutes or so the impatient ones leave or give up, others resign, and the rest of the show proceeds quietly. Later, from the discussions, it becomes clear that there is always... a period of jumping the reality gap... of adjusting to the aesthetic weightlessness, to the different gravitational pull... from there on everything becomes very rich. You are watching now from a new angle, every detail reveals a new meaning, the proportions and perspectives change... a whole new world opens because of this shifted angle of vision, of seeing, a world in which there is as much action, suspense, tension, adventure, and entertainment as on the former plane — and more!"

—Jonas Mekas, “Notes After Reseeing the Movies of Andy Warhol”, 1970

Whether he felt that he had reached the zenith of silent picture making with the 8-hour Empire, or rather that he discovered making sound films was within his grasp (financially and technically), Warhol made the transition to sound film with Harlot, which was filmed in December, 1964. Sound brought with it collaborators and new directions:

“Academic art historians have little trouble dealing with the silent Warhol. The graphic qualities and neo-Dadaist aesthetics of Sleep, Eat, Haircut, and Kiss, fit right into the context of his paintings — post-Duchamp conceptual art. But in 1965, when Warhol’s films began to talk, most of these commentators became silent, and those that did not showed precious little understanding of the centrality of homosexuality of Warhol. A spectral presence in such silent works as Kiss, Blow Job and Sleep, and especially Couch, homoeroticism dominates the sound period, bringing with it a theatre-literary tradition that can best be described as that of the homosexual hipster.”

—David Ehrenstein, Arts Magazine, Summer, 1989

If there was a direct influence on Warhol’s filmmaking during this period, it would have to be Jack Smith, an infamous filmmaker, performance artist, actor and playwright whose film Flaming Creatures became the cause celebre of the New American Cinema in 1962 when police confiscated it along with Genet’s Un Chant d’Amour. Although Smith’s and Warhol’s filmmaking was antithetical, they both drew on the same source for much of their work, specifically a camp sensibility that included (in Ehrenstein’s words) a “baroque nostalgia for Hollywood in general.”

Prior to Chelsea Girls (1966), Warhol was becoming increasingly stuck on the idea that he was developing into a property that Hollywood studios might want to get a hold of. The minor success of My Hustler (minor in terms of commercial cinema, but major for Warhol) had put in his mind the idea that soon Hollywood might be around the corner, an extremely naive thing for Warhol to presuppose, given the nature of his films up to that point (including My Hustler). Although he liked to fancy himself as someone ready at any minute to answer Hollywood’s call, the fact of the matter is that even after the success of Chelsea Girls, the closest Hollywood would meet Warhol was by way of Midnight Cowboy (1967). Whatever else one can say about Warhol’s films (and specifically, the world of those films), the plain fact remains that they were just too damn seedy for Hollywood; too damn real. Dustin Hoffman as “Ratso” was infinitely more preferable than Ondine as Ondine. Method was palatable. The Underground wasn’t.

The Factory residents represented to the “straight” world the underbelly of the “free love” Sixties. When that Underground peeked its ugly head above the moral equator with the success of Chelsea Girls, it was all the critics (film, social, and otherwise) could do to push it back and tell it to stay under, to stay within the reflective tin-foil and silver painted walls of the Factory.

Although Warhol didn’t know it yet, the Factory days were becoming increasingly numbered as 1968 rolled around, and soon Warhol himself would begin to get weary (and more importantly, wary) of those hangers-on
around him. One of those people was Valerie Solanis, the sole member of a group she called the Society for Cutting Up Men, or S.C.U.M. for short. Solanis had been a bit player in Warhol’s film I, a Man, and also a frustrated screenwriter. Claiming that Warhol “had too much control over me,” Solanis one day went to the Factory and attempted to kill Warhol. Although she failed at her goal, she did put Warhol into the hospital for two months.

Concurrent with Warhol’s recuperation in the hospital from the assassination attempt was Paul Morrissey’s usurping of film production at the Factory. Morrissey had been a part of Warhol’s coterie of assistants for some time and his influence on Warhol had been steadily rising as other assistants like Gerard Malanga and Billy Linich (Billy Name) became less and less involved with the running of the Factory. According to Ondine, Morrissey was “a garbage collector and a cultivator of lice.” Something of an anomaly among those who worked for Warhol, he was puritanical in his views on drugs, not to mention a philistine when it came to appreciating Warhol’s work. His continuing obsession was to get Warhol to stop making “art films,” and while Warhol was in the hospital, he made Flesh, which superficially bore some resemblance to Warhol (at least the later Warhol of Lonesome Cowboys). When Warhol regained his health, he was content to let Morrissey continue directing, and Warhol’s role in the making of films was eventually reduced to that of producer. The period of Andy Warhol, filmmaker, was effectively over.

The story of Stan Brakhage undergoing a St. Augustine conversion in the face of Warhol’s early silent filmmaking once he discovered that the films were meant to be seen projected at 16 frames per second was one propagated by Mekas with typical hyperbole. It was as if he was trying to magically cover holes just then starting to open up in film; rifts which proceeded along the same lines as those between the Abstract Expressionist and the Pop Artist. Brakhage was not the only filmmaker to find himself on the opposite side of Warhol — others were Gregory Markopoulos and Peter Emanuel Goldman. Film history would prove Mekas right to worry about the gap, for as the Sixties progressed, the gap widened, with the Structural film movement picking up the filmic pieces that Warhol had left them.

This has been excerpted from the "Introduction" to The Films of Andy Warhol: A Seven Week Introduction, by Kurt Easterwood and Eric S. Theise, published by San Francisco Cinematheque (1990)

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Schedule of Film Screenings:

January 28

Kiss (1963); 16mm, B&W, silent at 16 f.p.s., 58 minutes.

Beauty #2 (1965); 16mm, B&W, sound, 66 minutes. Written and co-directed by Chuck Wein.

February 4

Sleep (1963); 16mm, B&W, silent at 16 f.p.s., 42 minute excerpt from the 6 hour original.

My Hustler (1965); 16mm, B&W, sound, 67 minutes. Directed by Chuck Wein.
February 11

*Empire* (1964); 16mm, B&W, silent at 16 f.p.s., 48 minute excerpt from the 8 hour original.

*The Life of Juanita Castro* (1965); 16mm, B&W, sound, 66 minutes. Written by Ronald Tavel.

February 18

*Eat* (1964); 16mm, B&W, silent at 16 f.p.s., 37 minutes.

*Blow Job* (1964); 16mm, B&W, silent at 16 f.p.s., 37 minutes.

*Vinyl* (1965); 16mm, B&W, sound, 66 minutes. Written by Ronald Tavel.

February 25

*Henry Geldzahler* (1964); 16mm, B&W, silent at 16 f.p.s., 100 minutes.

March 4

*The Chelsea Girls* (1966); 16mm dual projection, color/B&W, sound, 196 minutes.

March 11

*Lonesome Cowboys* (1967); 16mm, color, sound, 109 minutes.

*Nude Restaurant* (1967); 16mm, color, sound, 95 minutes.

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The 1990 exhibition season continued the Cinematheque's free five o'clock screenings which were designed to increase exposure and access to new and historical film and video works. Another View: Selected Works Re-Screened offered repeat screenings of works recently included in The Cinematheque's regular program. Framing Cinema: A Re-presentation featured often canonized but seldom seen films from the history of cinema.

**Another View: Selected Works Re-Screened**

**Sunday, January 28, 1990, 5 p.m.**

*Munich-Berlin Wandering* (1927), by Oskar Fischinger; 16mm, B&W, silent, 3 minutes.

*Ariel* (1983), by Nathaniel Dorsky; 16mm, color, silent, 16 minutes.
**Kongostraat** (1989), by Dana Plays; 16mm, color, sound, 12 minutes.

**Max’s Shirt** (1975), by Bob Fleischner; 16mm, color, silent, 5 minutes.

**Banners** (1965), by Bob Fleischner; 16mm, color, silent, 3 minutes.

**Visions in Meditation**: #1 (1989), by Stan Brakhage; 16mm, color, silent, 20 minutes.

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**REDISCOVERING THE 1920’S AVANT-GARDE:**

Filmmaker and historian William Moritz in person

**Thursday, February 1, 1990**

**Lichtspiel Opus Nr. 1** (Lightplay, Opus #1, 1921), by Walter Ruttmann; 16mm, color (hand-tinted), 10 minutes.

**Le Retour à la raison** (Return to Reason, 1923), by Man Ray; 16mm, B&W, 2 minutes.

**Ballet mecanique** (Mechanical Ballet, 1924) by Dudley Murphy with Fernand Léger and Man Ray; 16mm, B&W/color (hand-tinted), 18 minutes. Music by George Antheil.

**Entr’acte** (Intermission, 1924), by Rene Clair with Francis Picabia; 16mm, B&W, 20 minutes. Music by Erik Satie.

**R-1 ein Formspiel** (R-1 is a Form-play, 1925-27, triple-projection), by Oskar Fischinger; 16 mm, color, 6 minutes.

**Theme and Variations** (1928), by Germaine Dulac; 16mm, B&W, 5 minutes.

**Disque 957** (Phonograph recording #957, 1929), by Germaine Dulac; 16 mm, B&W, 6 minutes.

**In der Nacht** (In the Night, 1931), by Walter Ruttmann; 16mm, color (hand-tinted), 6 minutes

* * *

The following is excerpted from an essay by William Moritz that appeared in the catalog for the International Experimental Film Congress, held May 28 - June 4, 1989, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada:

“The ‘avant-garde’ films of the 1920s have been often mis-appraised, either from purely practical obstacles (unavailability of authentic prints with original tinting, music, speed) or from spurious academic practices (the failure to conduct first-hand scholarly research, or the false assumption that the 1920s films were primitive forerunners of post-World War II experimental films). This retrospective seeks to redress that situation by presenting a broad selection of reasonably authentic prints that demonstrate the astonishing accomplishments of the film artists of the 1920s....
"No one should find the question of the nature, scope, and canon of the 1920s avant-garde an easy one. At that time, all independent and experimental work was categorized together and circulated through the chain of small theaters which eventually became the Associated Cine-Clubs and the League of Independent Film. This meant that adventurous features (like Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, Battleship Potemkin, Prince Achmed, or Smiling Mme. Beudet), creative documentaries (such as Cavalcanti’s Nothing But Time, Ivens’s Rain, or Cabellero’s Essence of Verbena), and innovative art films (like Ruttmann’s Opus films, or Ballet mécanique) rubbed shoulders without reservations or prejudice. Critics and artists used terms such as Absolute Film, Pure Cinema, and Integral Cinema (Germaine Dulac’s term which might better be translated ‘Self-Sufficient’ or ‘Complete’ cinema) to stress that these works — all of them — functioned only as cinema art: that they could not exist in any other medium because their essential effect arose from the unique potential of the cinematic mechanism, such as flexible montage of time and space, measured pacing and control of gaze, exact repetition, single-frame diversity and continuity, superimposition and its related split-screen imagery.

"The small canon of some dozen films that are usually screened and written about today as the 1920s avant-garde — mostly associated with famous artists — hardly represents the whole output of that era. There are nearly two hundred shorter films mentioned in contemporary documents of screenings. Nor was the field strictly limited to ‘film,’ since the historic Berlin Absolute Film show (May 3, 1925), which brought together Entr’acte, Ballet mécanique, Ruttmann’s Opus 2, Opus 3, and Opus 4; Eggeling’s Diagonal Symphony, and Hans Richter’s half-minute Film is Rhythm, also included Hirschfeld-Mack’s Color Sonata in Three Movements, performed as a live ‘light-show’ using the Reflecting Color Instrument that he had constructed at the Bauhaus.

"Perhaps the filmmakers of the 1920s were more open to experiments with colour-organs and dance performances because they themselves aspired to create films that rivaled the condition of music — not illustrations of music (Eggeling, for example, insisted that his films be screened in silence). Rather, they brought a visual imagery that could perform a spectacle as free, subtle, and complex as music: free from the constraints of gravity and single viewpoint, richly layered and textured, and capable of evoking dynamic responses through nuances of rhythm, tensions of harmony, and dissonance. This ‘musicality’ was not at odds with other artistic goals. For example, Eggeling’s fellow Dadaists seem to have seen his non-objective experiments as compatible with their own: something to replace the bourgeois art that Dada was busy ridiculing and destroying.

"The International Congress of Independent Cinema at La Sarraz in 1929 is usually cited as the ‘end of the Avant-Garde,’ but that conference was followed by a second International Congress at Brussels in 1930 (with Germaine Dulac as keynote speaker), and a number of other subsequent gatherings. The Great Depression certainly curtailed production, but despite economic strictures (which are again upon us), an unbroken line of experimental filmmaking (and gathering) culminates in Toronto in 1989. If connective films (for example, Jirí Jivocek’s Magic Eye or Rhythm, or the Robbins/Barlow/Hay/Hirsh Even as You and I) have generally fallen out of our critical discourse and our daily repertoire, the fault is ours, not theirs....

"Walter Ruttmann’s Light-Play Opus 1 was the first experimental film to be shown publicly in theaters as a work of cinematic art (during the month of April 1921). The film was hand-tinted, with a live musical score specially composed for it.

"About the same time, Viking Eggeling and Hans Richter received their first animation tests back from the UFA studios: an unsatisfactory beginning of Eggeling’s Horizontal-Vertical Orchestra, and a half-minute test that Richter would later show as Film is Rhythm.

"Ruttmann continued with an Opus 2 in 1922 and, in connection with Lotte Reiniger’s Prince Achmed, completed Opus 3 and Opus 4 in Berlin during 1923 and 1924, the same time as Oskar Fischinger was preparing his Wax Experiments in Munich, using a special machine of his own invention. Meanwhile, Man Ray, in Paris, composed Return to Reason for the Dada Soir e du coeur a barbe (Evening of the Bearded Heart), July 1923. Dudley Murphy's
Ballet mécanique and Rene Clair's Entr'acte were both premiered in the late fall of 1924, at the same time that Eggeling was finishing his Diagonal Symphony. Duchamp's Anemic Cinema (filmed by Marc Allegr et and Man Ray) only appeared publicly in 1927, after Man Ray's own superb Emak Bakia. After thirteen years as a distinguished experimental feature director (including several music-oriented masterpieces such as the 1923 Smiling Mme. Beudet) Germaine Dulac, in the face of the relative failure of her wonderful Seashell and the Clergyman (1928), decided to concentrate on the purer, non-narrative abstractions in her Arabesque and Disque 957. And Ruttmann, despite his enormous success in poetic documentaries, returned to musical abstraction for In the Night, ten years after his first Opus."

William Moritz teaches in the film and video faculty at the California Institute of the Arts. The author of numerous articles on abstract film, Moritz is also a filmmaker himself, having made twenty-nine short films and videos.

RECENT FILMS BY PETER HERWITZ

Saturday, February 3, 1990

The Poet's Veil (1988); Super-8mm, color, silent, 12 minutes. "I am fascinated by veils, surfaces, anything that obstructs a clear view. These veils of color, distance, detached symbols are both painterly in form and related to the acts of reading and writing seen throughout the film. The obscuring of the word represents my struggle to create an unnameable world of poetic mystery and nuance."—P.H.

The Painted Veil (1988); 16mm, color, silent, 5 minutes. "The closest I have come to a diary film, yet seen through veils. The luminosity and clarity of 16mm placed in the hands of a Super-8 miniaturist provides for some interesting if unresolved tensions."—P.H.

Musique de Tenebres (Music of the Dark, 1989); Super-8mm, color, silent, 17 minutes. "The word 'tenebres' in French has several shades of meaning—as darkness, murkiness, but also depth and mystery. Inspired by the early musical-liturgical form, 'Lecons de Tenebres' (literally, lessons in darkness), and baroque music in general, the film reflects my intense desire to create cinematic structures that approximate musical forms and to evoke the spiritual passion of the musical counterparts. Structured in five sections, each is introduced by a painting."—P.H.

From In the Shape of Waking: Meditations (a series of four films — two of which are complete — which "represent a kind of luminous waking from a dark dream world of the past (in my other films)" [P.H.]):

Body of Light (1989); 16mm, color, silent, 6 minutes.

In the Rhythm of Falling (1989); 16mm, color, silent, 8 minutes.
FREE LOVE: WHAT PRICE AMOUR?

Saturday, February 10, 1990

Love Novellas by Jerri Allyn; audio will by played before the screening of films/tapes

True Romance by Jan Millsapps; 16mm, 22 minutes

Der Kuss by Kim McLeod; 16mm, 2 minutes

Drawn and Quartered by Lynne Sachs; 16mm, 4 minutes

Ana/Vermont by Miguel Alvear; 16mm, 4 minutes

Will You Be My Friend, Cleo? by Paul McLeod; 3/4" videotape, 6 minutes

Dear Dennis by Susan Mogul; 1/2" videotape, 4 minutes

Blizzard of Hearts by Dana Atchely; 1/2" videotape, 1 minute

Refrigerator Husband by Rebecca Radner; poem

The Tower by Trish Henry; installation

Love Regimen by Bonnie Kaplan; performance

No No Nookie TV by Barbara Hammer; 1/2" videotape, 10 minutes

Point 'n Shoot by George Kuchar; 1/2" videotape, 6 minutes

As the Worm Turns by Christine Tamblyn; 3/4" videotape, 16 minutes

Catscan by Michelle Handelman & Monte Cazazza; S8, 7 minutes

Another View: Selected Works Re-Screened

Sunday, February 11, 1990, 5 p.m.

Refried Broccoli (1985), by Leslie Singer; 3/4" videotape, 5 minutes.


Green (1988), by Tom Rhoads; Super-8mm, color/B&W, sound, 36 minutes.

Ecce Homo (1989), by Jerry Tartaglia; 16mm, color, sound, 7 minutes.
THE MACHINE THAT KILLED BAD PEOPLE BY STEVE FAGIN
Artist in person
Roxie Cinema, 3117 16th St., San Francisco
Co-sponsored by Film Arts Foundation

Wednesday, February 14, 1990

The Machine that Killed Bad People (1989); 3'4" videotape, 120 minutes.
"...The Machine that Killed Bad People focuses on what is particular to television: assassination, touchdowns, earthquakes and revolution, that is the reworking of the present tense. The nineteenth century seems doomed to live under the death sentence of remorse and regret. The twentieth century seems doomed to live in this terminal state of the present tense. U.S. media has decided what is special about our everyday lives and this ‘special’ is global trauma. What is done with these global traumas is quite interesting: they are used to rework our unconscious and to supplant a privatized primal with a social one. Television, like in a sequence of Videodrome, takes away our little Oedipal scenarios and replaces them, not only with events but with all the accessories: neurosis, symptoms, needs and death drive, and then these are read back. To reinvent our own sense of personal histories, my intention was to accept this radical surgery as a rather extraordinary invention and see what could be done with it. This is the goal of the piece, to shift the interpretation of the event, to, so to speak, reprogram.

"...The tape ends, more accurately reaches its point of exhaustion, with the grand guignol finale. The stage of spectacle is now almost ritualistically purified of the real, the piece no longer is documentary but now an allegory, reaches its apocalyptic child’s play ending. But meaning and politics have held on for the whole ride. This is one of the goals of the piece, to keep up with the displacement and energy of spectacle, not asking it to grind to a halt, yet still being able to maintain an analysis; not to concede spectacle to the right wing; to work within and against the grain of the irrational, not in a judgmental/oppositional manner, thinking that change will occur if we simply enlighten, inform, make guilty. This is no way to change a television junkie. To concede the irrational is too close to conceding the terrain of desire; like it or not, this is where the struggle must begin."

—Steve Fagin,


AN EVENING OF FILMS BY MIKE HENDERSON
Artist in person
Co-sponsored by the Walter/McBean Gallery (SFAI)

Thursday, February 15

A native of Northern California, Mike Henderson is the recipient of the 1990 Adaline Kent Award from the San Francisco Art Institute, and his achievements as painter, filmmaker, and musician have made him one of San Francisco’s most celebrated local artists. Tonight’s program includes several short early, personal films, as well as an excerpt from one of Henderson’s “Blues profiles.”

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The Last Supper (1968), 16mm

Art (1970), 16mm
San Francisco Cinematheque

**Down Here** (1975), 16mm

**The Shape of Things** (1984), 16mm

**Too Late To Stop Down Now** (1982), 16mm

**Ducksarenodinner** (1983), 16mm

**Mother's Day** (1970), 16mm

**When and Where** (1981), 16mm

**How To Beat A Dead Horse** (1980), 16mm

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**IS THIS WHAT YOU WERE BORN FOR? BY ABIGAIL CHILD**

Filmmaker Abigail Child in person.

**Thursday, February 22, 1990**

In using found footage (TV commercials, Fifties educational films, old blue movies) and traditional rubrics of cinematic form (home movies, *film noir*, silent slapstick comedy), the films of Abigail Child position the viewer from the start within a familiar landscape. And yet, ultimately there is nothing comforting about this familiarity: it breeds not just contempt but more importantly, consciousness. If anything, Child takes this loaded baggage of cultural detritus and in the process of dumping out the contents, opens a larger Pandora's box of received notions: how we should lead our lives, and who should lead our lives.

The found images and found forms of Child's work collide with a complex use of sound (itself often of a found nature) to comprise a relentless examination of societal convention. Her assemblages are assaulting, but in the most positive sense of the word. They serve as a wake-up call to the life we are living, and to a life we could be living, searing complacency, breaking illusions. While the charge can be made that the films verge on the didactic, one must remember that Child has posed her films not in the form of a singular statement but of a collective and urgent question, "Is this what you were born for?" It is up to us to supply our own answers, and as paradoxical as it may seem, there is some comfort to be had in that.

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**Ornamentals** (1979); 16mm, color, silent, 10 minutes.

"Composing from an accumulation of footage gathered over a number of years....The intuitive is shaped into and by a structure of color and expansion, increasing connotation through what repeats in time and what is seen....This film was/is crucial to my understanding of composition, to my desire for an encyclopedic construction (the world 'out' there), and reaffirmed my allegiance to rhythm, specifically the rhythm of body/nerve/mind."

**Is This What You Were Born For?** (In seven parts):

"Is This What You Were Born For?" is conceived as a way to bracket my ongoing film investigations in the context of the aggressions of the late Twentieth Century: the title is from an etching by Goya, part of the 'Disasters of War' series. The work is in seven detachable parts, each of which can be viewed by itself for its own qualities. The films don't form a single line, or even an expanding line, but rather map a series of concerns in relation to the mind, to how one processes material, how it gets investigated, how it gets cut apart, how something else (inevitably) comes up."
Prefaces (Part One, 1981); 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes.

"Prefaces is composed of wild sound constructed along entropic lines held to a tension by bebop rhythms and a surfacing narrative cut from the words of the great vocal innovators and a dialogue with Hanna Weiner, poet. The tracks are placed in precise and asynchronous relations to images of workers, the gestures of the market place, colonial Africa and abstraction to posit questions of social force and gender relations/subordination. The investigation is into sound/image relationships; the context that of developing identity from a 'underdeveloped' or colonized consciousness into one of active participation."

Mutiny (Part Three, 1982-83); 16mm, color, sound, 11 minutes.

"Mutiny employs a panoply of expression, gesture, and repeated movement. Its central images focus on women: at home, on the street, in the work place, at school, talking, singing, jumping on trampolines, playing the violin. The dyspeptic syntax of the film reflects both the possibilities and the limitations of a speech which 'politically, physically and realistically' flirts with the language of opposition."


Both (Part Two, 1988); 16mm, B&W, silent, 3 minutes.

"Child's camera creates a small masterpiece in Both. It is a richly textured film that is simultaneously revealing and mysterious as a study of the nude in light and movement."

—Cecilia Dougherty, 1989 San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival.

Perils (Part Five, 1985-86); 16mm, B&W, sound, 5 minutes.

"A homage to silent films: the clash of ambiguous innocence and unsophisticated villainy. Seduction, revenge, jealousy, combat. The isolation and dramatization of emotions through the isolation (camera) and dramatization (editing) of gesture. I had long conceived of a film composed only of reaction shots in which all causality was erased. What would be left would be the resonant voluptuous suggestions of history and the human face. Perils is a first translation of these ideas."

Covert Action (Part Four, 1984); 16mm, B&W, sound, 11 minutes.

"I wanted to examine the erotic behind the social and remake those gestures into a dance that would front their conditioning, and as well, relay the multiple fictions the footage suggests (the 'facts' forever obscured in the fragments left us). The result is a narrative developed by its periphery, a story like rumor: impossible to trace, disturbing, explosive."

Mayhem (Part Six, 1987); 16mm, B&W, sound, 20 minutes.

"Perversely and equally inspired by de Sade's Justine and Vertov's sentences about the satiric detective advertisement, Mayhem is my attempt to create a film in which Sound is the Character and to do so focusing on sexuality and the erotic. Not so much to undo the entrapment (we fear what we desire; we desire what we fear), but to frame fate, show up the rotation, upset the common, and incline our contradictions toward satisfaction, albeit conscious."

Mercy (Part Seven, 1989); 16 mm, color, sound, 10 minutes.

"Mercy, the last in the series, is encyclopedic ephemera, exploring the public and private visions of technological and romantic invention."

All quotations are by Abigail Child unless otherwise noted.
STARTING FROM SCRATCH:  
A LIVE-ANIMATION/MUSICAL PERFORMANCE
Filmmaker Pierre Hébert and Composer/Performer Bob Ostertag in person
Co-Sponsored by the Canadian Consulate-General

Saturday, February 24, 1990

It is easy to get a sharp, lean, thin line by scraping off the black emulsion. The resulting white line (when projected) can be easily colored with felt-tipped pens and many people find that the results are the most pleasing form of cameraless film. In "scratch" films, the screen is black except for the images that have been etched onto the surface of the leader...

Cameraless animation requires a lot of working time and yields relatively little viewing time. Here are some hints on how to stretch out the screening of your films and, in the process, extend their impact upon an audience.

Loops. If your piece of finished film is not too long (between 5 and 15 feet), you can thread it through the projector in a way that allows it to repeat itself continuously without rethreading... you will have to manually "feed" the film out the rear of the 16mm projector and into the front so that the film doesn't snarl up or touch the floor...

Musical Accompaniment. Whenever you can, play music as you screen your cameraless animation. It's weird to discover that no matter what kind or what tempo of music you select, it always seems to work with the visual segment. And if you experiment with enough different music tracks, you'll come upon one that will appear to have been made just for your film. Both records and audio tape recorders are easy ways of providing musical accompaniment to your movies. But it is also valuable to try creating your own original tracks to go with these movies...

—Kit Laybourne, The Animation Book (1979)

A decade ago, when Laybourne was compiling his how-to book on animation, the scratch film must have seemed like an open-and-shut case. The technique had a tradition, but one that was overrun with cute films, rather than serious- or fine-art films. Given animation's overall propensity to produce lightweight, whimsical work, the scratch film was often written off as a second generation bastard. The genre has its masterpieces — most notably, Len Lye's Free Radicals (1958), a mesmerizing 4-minute scratch-abstraction set to an equally intense soundtrack of African drumming by the Bagirmi tribe — but for the most part, it has served as a way to introduce film students to cameraless animation or to alter the surface of regularly-exposed film. The usual assumptions behind the scratch film fit squarely with the Laybourne excerpt quoted above.

Of course, the field that has been most codified is the one most ripe for innovation. Since 1987, Montreal-based filmmaker Pierre Hébert has been responsible for transforming the scratch film from an isolated, exacting, time-consuming activity at the animator's light-table to a collaborative, spontaneous, improvisational performance form. By scratching loops of black leader as they thread through the projector, Hébert has taken the form from one that "requires a lot of working time and yields relatively little viewing time" to one where the filmmaker and the audience are party to exactly the same evolutionary temporal experience. Hébert's method has been compared to the Jackson Pollock school of action painting; there are similarities, but Pollock's drips and splatters were primarily an internal performance, a studio-confined catharsis. Only upon exhibition was the product subject to public discussion, and although the creative process could be imagined — one of the pleasures of viewing Pollock's work — it was not witnessed. Hébert's expressionism is subject to instantaneous feedback, his most recent goulge projected within split-seconds of the gesture; in this, his method is more akin to jazz, blues, or the Chicago Uptown Poetry Slam style of reading.

Pierre Hébert dropped his sociological studies in 1965 to pursue filmmaking at the National Film Board of Canada. His films include Op Hop (1965), Around Perception (1968), Santa Claus is coming tonight (1975),...

Returning to the opening quote, there is some truth to the suggestion that “no matter what kind or what tempo of music you select, it always somehow seems to work with the visual segment.” Harry Smith’s Early Abstractions (1939-62?) contains masterpieces of another variety of cameraless animation: painting, batiking, and stenciling on clear leader. Although Smith is rumored to have meticulously synchronized several of the Abstractions to Dizzy Gillespie scores, the prints in distribution feature “Meet the Beatles” played straight through on the soundtrack. Last summer I attended a screening of Smith’s films in Boulder, CO — he was present — and The Beatles were buried under ultra-lo-fidelity recordings of the Butthole Surfers and local garage bands. The films put forward their rhythms, the soundtracks imposed theirs; clash and dissonance prevailed over synergy. While it is, perhaps, instructive to throw a static piece of celluloid up against “Guacha Guero,” “All My Loving” and “The Shah Sleeps in Lee Harvey’s Grave,” my recollections of that screening are those of contention and chaos.

Potrero Hill’s Bob Ostertag, on the other hand, is a skilled and sensitive improviser and composer whose gift for adapting electronic studio techniques to a live setting is analogous to Hebert’s. Ostertag studied electronic music at Oberlin, where he met and eventually toured with Anthony Braxton. Relocating to New York in the late 1970s, he became part of the emerging “downtown” scene (The Knitting Factory, The Kitchen, etc.), playing and recording with Fred Frith, John Zorn, Ned Rothenberg, and Eugene Chadbourne. After Frith’s Rift Records sent Ostertag to Nicaragua to record indigenous music, he and his wife (Mother Jones editor, Sara Miles) decided to settle there. Ostertag spent most of the 1980s away from music as a political activist and journalist. He and his wife returned to the United States in 1988 to begin a family, and Ostertag, after catching up with the digital and computer revolutions in music, renewed his working relationship with Frith. He, too, performed in In memory; Keyboard Magazine wrote, “a gleeful savagery, with the droll wit of Satie’s piano pieces, the breathless silence of Japanese music, the collaged clutter of Stockhausen’s shortwave radio suites, and the political bite of Weill/Brecht songs.”

(E.S.T.)

Another View: Selected Works Re-Screened

Sunday, February 25, 1990, 5 p.m.

Kindering (1987), by Stan Brakhage; 16mm, color, sound, 3 minutes.

An Architecture of Desire (1988), by Sandra Davis; 16mm, color, silent, 15 minutes.

It Scares Me To Feel This Way (1987), by Sallie Fuchs; 16mm, B&W, sound, 11 minutes.

Misconception (1977), by Marjorie Keller; 16mm, color, sound, 43 minutes.
Journeys from Berlin/1971 (1980), by Yvonne Rainer; 16mm, color/B&W, sound, 125 minutes.

"...My own involvement with narrative forms has not always been either happy or wholehearted, rather more often a dalliance than a commitment. The reason lies partly in the nature of the predominating form of the narrative film. The tyranny of a form that creates the expectation of a continuous answer to 'what will happen next?' fanaticallly pursing an inexorable resolution in which all things find their just or correct placement in space and time—such a tyranny having already attained its epiphany in the movies (I think of Gertrud, Senso, Balthazar, Contempt, Lulu), such a form has inevitably seemed more ripe for resistance, or at least, evasion, than for emulation.

"My own forays into this territory border on a kind of banditry, the need for which has slowly evolved out of a dilemma imposed by subject matter. The dilemma has become more clarified for me on the completion of each of my films, presenting itself in the form of basic, though variously oriented, questions, asked — and not always answered — by each of these films, and having, I would hope, wider application than my own work.

"Can the presentation of sexual conflict in film, or the presentation of the experience of love and jealousy, be revitalized through a studied placement or dislocation of cliche’s borrowed from soap opera and melodrama? Can specific states of mind and emotion, or subtleties of social interaction, be conveyed in film without being attached, or by being only provisionally attached, to particularities of place, time, person, and relationship? And can such subject matter be presented without being ‘acted out’ — in both the theatrical and psychoanalytic senses — via simulated dialogue and action? Are faces such as belong to Katherine Hepburn and Liv Ullman the only vehicles for grief and passion? Can a film achieve comparable impact through means other than these (faces)? And why in the world would one ever want to achieve an effect comparable to that wonder of art and nature, the smile fading from Hepburn’s face?..."


"Is Journeys From Berlin/1971...autobiography or fiction? Is it dadaist vaudeville or legitimate filmic research? Is its politics a set-up, a rigid game, mere window dressing thinly masking a formalist adventurism? Are its armchair terrorists and self-absorbed narcissists worthy of being made to voice serious moral-political concerns? Can I claim redeeming social value for this film? Is its emphasis on the individual act — the ‘attentat’ or the act of suicide — in relation to totalitarian absolutism, is this emphasis an admission of the hopelessness of working for social change? Are its humanist yearnings and confessions a substitute for political practice?

"Without delay a short grammatical intervention: Wasn’t it Gertrude Stein who said the sentence is more important than the paragraph? Flitting and dapping are more to my liking than soaring and arcing. Stumbling over the hit-and-run of the quote and the snort is more habitual to my mode of thought than the intricacies of binary logic. The latter is my nemesis, I mean amanuensis. Inadvertent puns tripped over my mother’s mouth where you would have expected malapropisms. A condition in itself not totally surprising, for, as one well-known critic once said of her (mother), ‘She must suffer because she has no education.’ (Mercy, pity, compassion: gimme, gimme,...)

"Postscript to a false ending, or another little trailer: The phone rings. The therapist answers it. A voice like Jimmy Durante raps: ‘My daddy called me Cookie. I’m really a good girl...I’m not one for fussing. Not like those movie women: Kate Hepburn facing the dawn in her posh pad with stiff upper chin. Merle Oberon facing the Nazi night with hair billowing in the electric breeze. Roz Russell sockin’ the words ‘n’ the whiskey to the best of them. Rita Hayworth getting shot in the mirror and getting her man. Jane Wyman smiling through tears. I never faced the music, much less the dawn; I stayed in bed. I never socked anything to anybody; why rock the boat? I never set out to get my man, even in the mirror; they all got me. I never smiled through my tears; I choked down my terror. I never had to face the Nazis, much less their night. Not for me that succumbing in the great task because it must be done; not for me the heart beating in incomprehensible joy; not for me the vicissitudes of class struggle; not for me the uncertainties of political thought...."

--Yvonne Rainer, "Beginning with Some Advertisements for Criticisms of Myself, Or Drawing the Dog You May Want to Use to Bite me With, and Then Going On to Other Matters," Millennium Film Journal No. 6, Spring 1980.
"I used to think that, as a performer, I was invisible, or that most of me could, in performance, escape unnoticed. Manipulating small objects on a table top with some or all of the fingers of both hands, I imagined (no, believed) that, from the wrists up, I was irrelevant to the performance and that the audience would register their implicit agreement with this assumption by regarding me from the wrists down.

"But, based on comment after comment from one audience member after another, I came to realize and, sadly, to admit (to myself, all of myself) that my entire corpus had indeed been espied during performance — had, as it were, been caught in the act, the act of performing.

"Nevertheless, I don’t know of a better place for me to hide than in performance. For by exhibiting only predetermined acts in public, I absolutely exclude from view all acts of an unpredetermined nature — all unartistic, ‘natural’ acts. On stage, I am not natural, therefore not real, therefore not myself. And what better place for the self to hide than in the midst of its own illusion of non-existence? This is what I tell myself in order to give myself the courage to perform in public. It is a technical strategy to get myself to do what I most wish not to do — expose myself in the act of pretending not to exist, playing the part of a man with no part to play."

—Stuart Sherman, “Stuart Sherman’s Invisible Theater,” The ACT (1990)

"...Sherman’s theater is a homemade world which he presides over like a giant, laying down his rules for the tiny objects in his tabletop domain. Indeed, he looks like a child playing with his toys, but the ultimate significance of this resemblance is not childlike innocence but rather the childlike wish to be God...

"In Sherman’s films, his concerns with the magical become quite pronounced. Many of the shorts are of the genre of the trick film. Objects will mysteriously disappear when the camera tilts away from them for a moment. Or they will unaccountably migrate from one shot to the next. For instance, in one image we see a portly woman dropping bathroom towels off a pier; then we see Sherman standing in a kitchen with the wet towels draped over the oven and the table.

"Film seems to be a natural extension of Sherman’s performances, because editing provides an almost inexhaustible means for working out intricate associative patterns. Also, one feels that Sherman must be attracted to the medium because editing amplifies his demiurgic powers, allowing him to manipulate not only mere toys but to shuffle and reshuffle pieces of live action. The world is at his fingertips, so to speak, as he makes his magic, transforming the universal unconscious wish to be God into art."

—Noel Carroll, Soho News (1978)

Videotapes:

_Berlin (West)/Andere Richtungen_ (1986); 3/4” videotape, 6 minutes.
Camera: Martin Koerber.

_Gray Matter_ (1987); 3/4” videotape, 1 minute.

_Video Walk_ (1987); 3/4” videotape, 1 minute.
Five Flowers (1979); 3/4" videotape, 1 minute
Camera: Elizabeth Chitty.

Films:

Skating (1978); 16mm, B&W, silent, 2 minutes.

Edwin Denby (1978); 16mm, B&W, silent, 1 minute.

Flying (1979); 16mm, B&W, silent, 1 minute.
Camera: Octavio Molina, Mark Daniels. Editing: Mark Daniels.

Roller Coaster/Reading (1979); 16mm, B&W, silent, 3 minutes.
Camera/Lighting/Editing: Mark Daniels. Cast: Stuart Sherman.

Golf Film (1982); 16mm, color, sound, 1 minute.
Voices: Scotty Snyder, Bob Fleischner, George Deem, Julia Heyward, Stuart Sherman.

Scotty and Stuart (1977); 16mm, B&W/color, silent, 2 minutes.
Camera/Lighting/Editing: Ken Ross. Cast: Scotty Snyder, Stuart Sherman.

Hand/Water (1979); 16mm, B&W, silent, 2 minutes.

Rock/String (1980); 16mm, B&W, silent, 1 minute.

Fish Story (1983); 16mm, color, silent, 1 minute.

Black-Eyed Susan (Portrait of an Actress) (1989); 16mm, color, sound, 9 minutes.

Mr. Ashley Proposes (Portrait of George) (1985); 16mm, B&W, silent, 2 minutes.
Camera/Lighting/Editing: Jeff Preiss. Cast: George Ashley.

Eating (1986); 16mm, color, sound, 6 minutes.

Portrait of Benedicte Pesle (1984); 16mm, B&W, sound, 1 minutes.

The Discovery of the Phonograph (1986); 16mm, color, sound, 6 minutes.
Performance:

The Fourteenth Spectacle —
Song; Smoking May be Dangerous to Your Health; Nightmare; Kiss and Make Up

All works written, conceived and directed by Stuart Sherman.

RETHINKING ETHNOGRAPHY
Films by Trinh T. Minh-ha and Laleen Jayamanne

Thursday, March 22, 1990

Tonight’s films deal with problems of ethnography and representation of the “Other.” Both explicitly challenge the idea of documentary omniscience.

Reassemblage (1982), by Trinh T. Minh-ha; 16mm, color, sound, 40 minutes.
“From silences to silences, the fragile essence of each fragment sparks across the screen, subsides and takes flight. Almost there half-named.”

—Trinh T. Minh-ha

In a remote village, people have decided to get together to discuss certain matters of capital importance to the well-being of their community. A meeting is thus fixed for a definite date at the marketplace at nightfall. On the day and at the time agreed, each member eats, washes him/herself, and arrives only when s/he is ready. Things proceed smoothly as usual, and the discussion does not have to begin at a precise time, since it does not break in on daily life but slips naturally into it. A mother continues to bathe her child amidst the group; two men go on playing a game they have started; a woman finishes braiding another woman’s hair. These activities do not prevent their listening or intervening when necessary. Never does one open discussion by coming right to the heart of the matter. For the heart of the matter is always somewhere else than where it is supposed to be. To allow it to emerge, people approach it indirectly by letting it come when it is ready to come. There is no need for a linear progression which gives the comforting illusion that one knows where one goes.”

—Trinh, Women, Native, Other

A Song of Ceylon (1985); by Laleen Jayamanne, 16mm, color, sound, 51 minutes.
Laleen Jayamanne’s film makes reference to Basil Wright’s 1935 Song of Ceylon, with the significant addition of the indefinite article.
"Male artists and philosophers have gained much mileage through the fabulation of Women as Other. Women working in processes of symbolization can learn a thing or two from this, but not, however, by simply reversing that very same logic of opposition. Rather, what is sought after is something partial, fragmented, in order to arouse interest...Those women who may have various complicated investments in male sexuality may profitably redirect their energies from only parodying sexist behavior in men to something that produces male bodies and voices in surprising configuration..."

—Nami Schor in *The Female Body in Western Culture*, Susan Suleiman, ed.

Quoted by Laleen Jayamanne, *Screen* (E.C.)

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**AFROCENTRICITY: DEFINING OURSELVES**

Curated and Presented by Valerie Soe

*Saturday, March 24, 1990*

"Afrocentricity" refers to a distinct African-American perspective, an alternative to the Eurocentric tradition of mainstream American culture in which artists such as William Shakespeare, Wolfgang Mozart and James Joyce are masters while Alice Walker, Chuck Berry and Spike Lee are considered "pop". Afrocentricity does not seek to displace the aesthetic canon, however, but to supplement and expand it to include work by makers from all backgrounds and heritages.

Afrocentricity is an outgrowth of concepts first formulated in the civil rights and black power movements of the 1960s in which the African-American community began advocating political and social empowerment through control of economic and cultural development. These videotapes deal with concerns and issues of the African-American community ranging from spiritual rediscovery to racial violence, from an Afrocentric perspective.

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A brief yet forceful statement on self-image that asserts the right of people of color to decide their own identity and destiny.


Found footage, music and interviews interweave in this videotape exploring the plight of the African-American male.

*Black Steel in the Hour of Chaos* (1989), by Public Enemy; videotape, 4 minutes, and *Night of the Living Baseheads* (1989), by Public Enemy; videotape, 5 minutes.
Two music videos with rap group Public Enemy, the “Black Panthers” of hip-hop music, who are known for their controversial nationalist stance. These videos, respectively dealing with blacks in the prison system and the crack problem, display PE’s typical intensity and showmanship in dealing with socially relevant subject matter.

Why Can’t We Be Friends? (1989), Robert Wheaton with Lo-Ki, directed by Forest Whitaker; videotape, 5 minutes.
Taking a more conciliatory, unifying stance than does Public Enemy, this video, with music by Los Angeles rap group Lo-Ki, questions the roots of gang violence and black-on-black crime. Director Forest Whitaker is best known for his portrayal of Charlie Parker in Clint Eastwood’s screen bio Bird.

Paper Tiger Television teamed up students from a video production program at a South Bronx high school to produce this video examining the epidemic of racial violence. Particular attention is paid to the media’s role in perpetuating racist stereotypes which exacerbate racial hostilities, as seen in coverage of two events last summer — the Central Park “wilding” rape of a female jogger and the murder of a black youth in Bensonhurst.

Water Ritual #1: An Urban Rite of Purification (1988), by Barbara McCullough; 3/4” videotape, 10 minutes.
A humorous and fascinating look at one woman finding inspiration in her African roots in her quest for spiritual growth and awareness.

Self-Divination (1988), by Ulysses Jenkins; 3/4” videotape, 12 minutes.
Eloquent and arresting, this tape looks to the maker’s dual heritage in the African and Native American cultures, recognizing the power of those legacies to revitalize the spirit.

—Valerie Soe

THE FILMS OF ROBERT FRANK PROGRAM I:
Autobiographical Films

Sunday, March 25, 1990

Anybody doesn’t like these pitchers dont like potry, see? Anybody dont like potry go home see Television shots of big hatted cowboys being tolerated by kind horses. Robert Frank, Swiss, unobtrusive, nice, with that little camera that he raises and snaps with one hand he sucked a sad poem right out of America onto film, taking rank among the tragic poets of the world. To Robert Frank I now give this message: You got eyes.

—Jack Kerouac in the “Introduction” to The Americans (1958)

1960. A decision: I put my Leica in a cupboard. Enough of lying in wait, pursuing, sometimes catching the essence of the black and the white, the knowledge of where God is. I make films. Now I speak to the people who move in my viewfinder. Not simple and not especially successful.

—Robert Frank in Robert Frank (1985)
The films I have made are the map of my journey through all this ... living. It starts out as “scrap book footage.” There is no script, there is plenty of intuition. It gets confusing to piece together these moments of rehearsed banalities, embarrassed documentation, fear of telling the truth and somewhere the fearful truth seems to endure. I want you to see the shadow of life and death flickering on that screen. June asks me: Why do you take these pictures? Because I am alive ...


Robert Frank was born on November 9, 1924, in Zurich, Switzerland. In 1941 and 1942, he apprenticed to photographer H. Segesser, remaining in Switzerland until 1947 working for various photographic studios. He came to the United States in March, 1947, and until 1958 earned a living as a commercial photographer for Harper's Bazaar, Life, The New York Times, Fortune, Look, Esquire, Glamour, and Advertising Age. In the 1950s, Frank's work began to appear in galleries and books, and by 1955 his reputation had developed to the point where he became the first European to be awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. In 1955 and 1956, Frank traveled across the United States in a old Ford, taking the photographs that were to be compiled into his 1958 book, The Americans.

I think that trip was almost pure intuition — I just kept on photographing. I kept on looking. I think that at that time I was compassionate. I had a feeling of compassion for the people on the street. That was the main meat of the book — that gave me the push — that made me work so hard until I knew I had something, but I didn’t even know I had America.

—Robert Frank in an interview with Dennis Wheeler, Criteria (1977)

Although Frank's notoriety as a still photographer was sealed with the release of The Americans, it came at the end of that career. In 1958, he declared a series of photographs taken from the window of the 42nd Street bus to be his final photographic project.

In 1959, his career as a filmmaker commenced with Pull My Daisy, a collaboration with Alfred Leslie. The film was loosely based on the third act of Jack Kerouac's play, The Beat Generation, which in turn was loosely based on an incident that took place at On The Road hero Neal Cassady’s home in Los Gatos. A tea-sipping bishop, accompanied by his mother and sister, innocently pays a visit to the central characters’ loft/home. There he is greeted by poets and musicians who drink, get high, and question him on the holiness of baseball and girls in tight skirts, the American flag and children’s toys. The film features Kerouac’s spontaneous narration and jazz and baroque compositions by David Amram on the soundtrack. It stars Amram, poets Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, and Peter Orlovsky, painters Larry Rivers and Alice Neel, and Richard Bellamy, Delphine Seyrig, and Frank’s son Pablo. The film, which screened at the Exploratorium yesterday in conjunction with their Capturing Light exhibit, is, along with Christopher Maclaine’s The End (1953), one of the masterworks of Beat period film.

Through the intervening decades, film for Robert Frank has become more of a vehicle for personal exploration than for storytelling. Interestingly, his experiences with filmmaking have led him back to still photography, with recent nontraditional uses of serial imagery and words scratched into Polaroids.

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Pablo and Andrea go to school in Vermont. I went there to confront them and myself with camera and microphone and photos of the past. A tense and painful experience for all three of us.

—Robert Frank in The Lines of My Hand (1989)
Throughout *Conversations in Vermont*, we are reminded of Robert Frank’s career as a still photographer and filmmaker, and the effects of his profession on his family. Contemporary footage of his son Pablo, then 18, and daughter Andrea, aged 15, at their communal school in Vermont is juxtaposed with contact sheets and slides of Frank’s work from the 1950s. Many of the photographs are of his children and ex-wife Mary; sometimes they are displayed in his Bowery loft, other times he and the children stretch out on the grass and sort through them. Towards the end of the film, Frank mixes in footage from his first experiments in 16mm filmmaking: Provincetown beach scenes of Mary being courted by a variety of friends and Neptune emerging from the sea. The effect is only occasionally nostalgic.

Frank is obsessed with his perception of his mistakes as a parent: that he did not spend enough time with his children, that they were not brought up in a “normal” environment, that they learned to depend on each other out of necessity, that they do not remember his taking many of the photographs in which they appear. As interviewer, Frank alternates between gentle father and provocateur. The effects on his son, Pablo, are chilling; the distance between father and son being greater than that between father and daughter. Yet the pastoral scenes of schoolmates sitting in the sun and singing choral music indoors seem relatively unaffected by the intrusion of the camera and sound crew roaming the buildings and fields. One leaves the film with the hope that the community provided by the school will help Andrea and Pablo to form lives free of their emotional baggage.

*LIFE DANCES ON...* (1980); 16mm, B&W/color, 30 minutes. Director, Producer: Robert Frank. Cinematography and sound: Robert Frank, Gary Hill, Danny Seymour. Editor: Gary Hill. With Pablo Frank, Billy, Marty Greenbaum, Sandy Strawbridge, June Leaf, Finley Fryer, and others.

Yeah, it was sort of dedicated to them [Andrea Frank and Danny Seymour]. But also the film took three characters then — my son Pablo, who lived in Vermont at that time, and Marty Greenbaum, who was an old friend struggling to be an artist and Billy, a bum I got to know on the street. And I felt that each one of these people was walking on the edge. And that's what made the film. And it had these references to my daughter, and I was always in it. It was always me who forced these people to talk, who made them talk about themselves or expose themselves in a way, I didn't hide that... brutality that pushes a filmmaker to get something out of people...

—Robert Frank in an interview with Marlaine Glicksman, *Film Comment* (1988)

*LIFE DANCES ON...* opens with the dedication “in memory of my daughter Andrea 1954-1974” — followed by unused footage from *Conversations in Vermont* — “and for my friend Danny Seymour 1945-?” supplemented with footage I suspect is from the rarely screened Rolling Stones film, *Cocksucker Blues* (1972). Although the film is ostensibly for these two intimates of Frank, it is not primarily a film about them. Rather, it cycles through footage of Frank’s son Pablo, then 29, a Bowery chum named Billy, and Marty Greenbaum. Only towards the end does the film turn towards Danny Seymour and Andrea Frank.

In the footage with Pablo we witness his resentment at the continual presence of Frank’s camera, and his fascination with the unexplained: he wants to investigate Mars and UFOs, he talks of volcanos and rainbows, and he refers us to biblical scripture for explanation. Although he is lucid and charming with Sandy Strawbridge we sense that he is indeed very close to the edge.

Billy, a grinning toothless hulk, is tormented by delusions of his fame — “Marcus Welby, M.D.” plots are based on his life — and paranoia — Ralph Kramden and others read his mind from thousands of miles away. In the most remarkable single long take in the film, Billy saunters down a lower East Side street, touching objects to make contact; in the background, a man tying his shoe falls off a lamppost, a one-legged man heads in the opposite direction on crutches, another man angered the intrusion furiously but ineffectually hurls street garbage at the camera. These moments — random and unrehearsed — are among the grittiest and truest in Frank’s filmmaking. Billy eventually leaves the film, betrayed by Frank, his camera another mindreader.

Marty Greenbaum, the third central character, is the angriest. He gets into meaningless street arguments with strangers, and hurls a telephone receiver at the filmmaker; yet he, too, is capable of a fleeting happiness, as we
learn in a final scene where he plays drums. Around these three central characters, Frank weaves footage of his wife June, his meeting with an excursion of photographers, only one of whom has heard of him, a color sequence where a blind man is taught to film the wind, and the exquisitely beautiful and haunting sequences that pay tribute to his daughter Andrea and friend Danny. Life Dances On shows Frank at the height of his intuitive powers as a filmmaker.

Home Improvements (1985); 1/2" video, 29 minutes Director, Producer, Cinematographer, Sound: Robert Frank. Editors: Michael Bianchi and Sam Edwards. With Robert and Pablo Frank, June Leaf, and others.

So Robert Frank's dear son Pablo grown up, working with strange synthetic Chemical iridescent photoprints later had cancer, operation, struck a blow by life, years in help hospitals, later Bronx State across a huge muddy field from an elevated Subway Stop, later recovery. Some kind of reverse Kaddish come true ...


Home Improvements is Robert Frank's only videotape to date. Recorded with a portapak, it is his most recent — and most disturbing — examination of family. His birthday celebration is contrasted with June's description of a new mother: "now she's got something she's finally going to do right." June's failing health is revealed over an empty notepad, later soiled while Frank recites: "fight ... wait ... win ... lose ... survive ... okay ... listen again." Though his wife's eventual hospitalization ends successfully, Pablo has been committed to the Bronx Psychiatric Treatment Center for eating glass and rocks. Frank again: "Here are people flying away, here are people traveling; here people are being locked up." Later, Frank asks a friend to drill holes through stacks of his photographs for want of a spike to drive through them; yet he continues to record life, focusing on the this-ness of taking out the garbage on a cold winter morning in Mabou, Nova Scotia. The video ends flipping through local television news: a demonstration to protect children from an unspecified threat and a revival of gospel fiddling.

Partial Filmography

Pull My Daisy (1959); 35mm, 28 minutes
The Sin of Jesus (1961); 35mm, 40 minutes
OK End Here (1963); 35mm, 30 minutes
Me and My Brother (1965-68); 35mm, 91 minutes
Conversations in Vermont (1969); 16mm, 26 minutes
Life-raft Earth (1969); 16mm, 37 minutes
About me - a Musical (1971); 16mm, 35 minutes
Cocksucker Blues (1972); 16mm, 90 minutes
Keep Busy (1975); 16mm, 38 minutes
Life Dances On ... (1980); 16mm, 30 minutes
Energy and How to Get It (1981); 16mm, 28 minutes
This Song for Jack (1983); 16mm, 30 minutes
Home Improvements (1985); 1/2 inch video, 29 minutes
(There Ain't No) Candy Mountain (1987); 35mm, 91 minutes

I'm always doing the same images. I'm always looking outside, trying to look inside, trying to tell something that's true. But maybe nothing is really true except what's out there. And what's out there is always different.

—Robert Frank in Home Improvements
RECENT PORTRAITS AND LANDSCAPES BY PETER HUTTON
Filmmaker Peter Hutton in person

Thursday, March 29, 1990

New York Portrait: Chapter One (1978-79); 16mm, B&W, silent, 16 minutes.

New York Portrait: Chapter Two (1980-81); 16mm, B&W, silent, 16 minutes.

New York Portrait: Chapter Three (1990); 16mm, B&W, silent, 15 minute.

Landscape Portrait Two (In Titian's Goblet) (1990); 16mm, B&W, silent, 15 minutes.

"Hutton is a person whose perception of the world is inescapably aesthetic. Any view, simple or complex, springs to life through its qualities of light, motion and coherence. For him there is neither ordinary nor extraordinary, and this puts him in the tradition of the earliest cinema ..."

—Mitch Tuchman, Los Angeles Times

"Peter Hutton took up a camera after the American avant-garde explosion of the sixties had nearly spent its force. His works develop apart from the methods associated with the structuralist filmmakers, turning back to the personal interiority more typical of the fifties and early sixties....Photographed in black and white and projected without sound, [Hutton's] films are a diary evolving from spontaneous glimpses of experience to more carefully crafted impressions of landscape and mood. Hutton's non-narrative cinema dismisses linear temporality for an eternal present exhibiting a formal growth and thematic unity that allows one to chart the artist's progress through the seventies. In shifting the locale of his films from west to east, Hutton testifies to the California-New York connection, but his spirit sounds allegiance to the rustic splendor of the Pacific coast. His films resist the cool, formal ironies of the Manhattan school to cultivate an introspective sensibility working toward a rapport with the forces of nature...."

"In New York Portrait: Chapter One ... the landscape has a majesty that serves to reflect the meditative interiority of the artist independent of any human presence. Whereas the California [of Hutton's early films] was shaded by the lush foliage of a seemingly endless July, New York is framed in the dark nights of a lonely winter. The pulse of street life finds no role in New York Portrait; the dense metropolitan population and imposing urban locale disappear before Hutton's concern for the primal force of a universal presence. With an eye for the ordinary Hutton can point his camera toward the clouds finding flocks of birds, or turn back to the simple objects around his apartment struggling to elicit a personal intuition from their presence. One might expect the rainy winter landscape to evoke a nightmare of urban decay and human isolation reminiscent of Brakhage's Reflections on Black (1955), but Hutton finds a harmonious, if at times melancholy, rapport with the natural elements that retain their grace in spite of the city's artificial environment. The city becomes a ghost town that the filmmaker transforms into a vehicle reflecting his personal mood. The last shot looks across a Brooklyn beach toward the skyline of Coney Island's amusement park. A January wind shifts sand across the abandoned shore, and the roller coaster and ferris wheel sit deserted and still as if they will never move again. The quiet park evokes the once frantic city smothered by winter. Nature continues its eternal cycles impervious to the presence of man, the aspirations of society, or the decay of the metropolis."

—Leger Grindon, Millennium Film Journal, nos. 4/5, Summer/Fall, 1979
MAKING IS CHOOSING..., A SUPER-8 FEATURE BY WILLIE VARELA
Filmmaker Willie Varela in person

Saturday, March 31, 1990


The creation of Super-8mm (and before it, Regular-8mm) was predicated on its viability as a home-movie format: it was cheaper and less technically cumbersome than 16mm, and its smaller image size was analogous to the domesticity of home movies which localized experience as opposed to the worldlier project of Hollywood movies in 35mm or the industrial and educational usages of the 16mm format.

One of the many cultural shifts concurrent with the Reagan 80s was the displacement of Super-8mm as the format of choice for making home movies. The increasing affordability of video cameras, commingled with video’s sense of instant gratification and its use of that domestic mainstay, the television set, for its “projection” have all served to render Super-8mm an endangered species.

Yet Super-8mm remains alive and kicking as a format for personal filmmaking, and for filmmaker Willie Varela, a format still viable for portraying one’s home life. Yet, Making is Choosing... is not an innocent or naive “return” to an outmoded or outdated practice: it is an ironic attempt to come to terms with its own jaded existence as an artifact of the Reagan 80’s. Varela’s use of Super-8mm and sound is an idealistic choice, but one which co-exists with and informs what comes across as an overwhelming sense of inefficacy.

Making is Choosing... is ostensibly a diaristic portrait of six years of Varela’s life, a time marked by the birth of a daughter to he and his wife, and a move of the Varela home from San Francisco to El Paso, Texas. The film is not a linear diary but rather is made up of impressionistic observations organized in a way that testifies to the “fragmented life” of the film’s full title. Separated by crude “home-made” titles which are at turns descriptive (“Colma, CA”), cryptic (“FDIC Insured”) or bitterly ironic (“The Merry Month of May”), the sections of Making is Choosing... reflect a struggle for completeness in life which inevitably results in the antithesis of such, “a broken line.”

Much of the struggle of the film seems to revolve around a tension between representing everyday familial life such as Varela’s wife’s pregnancy, the birth of their daughter, and family trips on one hand, and a more subjective, less representational view of the filmmaker’s life on the other, the latter by necessity an abstracted vision more concerned with ephemeral imagery and light and shadow. Both of these modes of expression are played against what emerges as the center of Varela’s domestic life, the television, which pervades the film with its own set of ways of representing and infiltrating domestic life.

Snake handlers, New Age hucksters, professional wrestlers, and of course, Ronald Reagan—these mix with images from both commercial and “art” films (Rollerball, Godard’s Alphaville, Herzog’s Fitzcarraldo) to form a melange of scanlines and video static that exudes an inescapable malaise. The television set is constantly being re-framed by Varela’s Super-8mm camera so that its imagery does not function as a body of reference points on a map of popular culture that beg to be appropriated of subverted, but rather as a solid entity which must be grappled with whole. Varela’s re-framing is an attempt to wrest control at the same time as it documents TV’s own domineering frame.

To label Making is Choosing... a “feature” is part of the film’s ironic status as a personal statement. With connotations of “Hollywood,” “narrative” or “first-run,” the term “feature” carries with it an economic and cultural base at odds with the film’s identity as a document originating from the hearth/heart of home life. However, Varela is not so much concerned with his film’s place vis-a-vis dominant cinema as he is with his own place as father and filmmaker within a home life that is constantly being exteriorized and enlarged, but not fulfilled, by the outside world.

(K.E.)
THE FILMS OF ROBERT FRANK PROGRAM II: Narrative Digressions

Sunday, April 1, 1990


I met Jack Kerouac on a hot summer night — a party in New York City. We sat down on the side walk, I showed Jack the photographs for The Americans. He said, 'Sure I can write something about these pictures ...'

—Robert Frank in The Lines on My Hand

... what poems can be written about this book of pictures some day by some young new writer high by candlelight bending over them describing every gray mysterious detail, the gray film that caught the actual pink juice of human kind. Whether 'tis the milk of humankind-ness, of human-kindness, Shakespeare meant, makes no difference when you look at these pictures. Better than a show.

—Jack Kerouac in the “Introduction” to The Americans (1958)

“This Song for Jack is based on footage Robert Frank shot at ‘On the Road: The Jack Kerouac Conference,’ held at the Naropa Institute, Boulder, Colorado, from July 23 to August 1, 1982. The film is dedicated to Kerouac, Frank’s late friend and collaborator on Pull My Daisy and The Americans.”

—program notes for In the Margins of Fiction: the Films of Robert Frank


“About Me: A Musical was planned as cinematic study of indigenous American music. Robert Frank decided instead to make the film about himself. An actress (Lynn Reiner) plays Frank. He examines his life symbolically, questioning the personal toll his work has taken and the value of his contribution as a photographer. His search for freedom is represented by the music. The film cuts back and forth between theatrical and documentary scenes that show different forms of music making: Allen Ginsberg rocking at the piano, the Hope Freaks wailing into a New Mexico sunrise, a whistle player on a New York street corner, a gospel choir in a Texas prison. The musical sequences were shot in expository close-up with a hand-held camera. In contrast, the scenes with actors were carefully laid out and scripted with a confessional dialogue.”

—program notes for In the Margins of Fiction: the Films of Robert Frank

Keep Busy (1975): 16mm, B&W, sound, 38 minutes.

1975. I travel in California. I teach. June and I get married and go back to the icy sea. It’s nice to be alive, isn’t it? I make a film. People who live, who barely survive, in huts on an island. Winter comes. The man who takes care of the lighthouse by himself, at the top of the island, talks to me about the weather and tells me what it was like before ...

—Robert Frank in Robert Frank (1985)
Keep Busy, written by Rudy Wurlitzer and completed in 1975, is an improvised story about a group of islanders who are played by friends and neighbors of Frank and Wurlitzer in Mabou. It is one of the most abstract films Frank has made ... The islanders are shown to be obsessed with the dailiness of their lives and the cycles of nature. Therefore they are subjugated by the lighthouse keeper and his messenger, who have access to the only radio, giving them control of all the news. "One of the interesting things about the film is that we used actors and real people," says Wurlitzer. "What interested me was questioning where the boundaries of fiction lie and where the margins are, how to use reality on one level and fictional approach on the other. They mutated where you use them together."


To make films:
In making films I continue to look around me; but I am no longer the solitary observer, turning away after the click of the shutter. Instead I’m trying to recapture what I saw, what I heard and what I feel. What I know! There is no, “decisive moment.” It’s got to be created. I’ve got to do everything to make it happen in front of the lens:

searching... explaining... digging... watching...
judging... erasing...
pretending... distorting...

...lying... judging... recording... crying... singing...

exhorting... cutting...
whispering... hoping...
talking... hoping... directing...
shouting... hoping... helping...

...trying... trying... trying...

running... telling a truth...
running... crawling... working towards the truth.

what a mess until it is done!

—Robert Frank in Robert Frank (E.S.T.)

FILMS BY JIM CAMPBELL AND JAN MILLSAPPS
Both filmmakers in person

Thursday, April 5, 1990

Letter to a Suicide (1985), by Jim Campbell; 16mm. B&W, sound. 29 minutes.
The letter addresses the audience in place of the filmmaker’s brother, who killed himself thirteen years after being diagnosed schizophrenic. The filmmaker and his parents speak directly from video monitors set varyingly in a
sparsely furnished room or in darkness. The viewer can take on a schizophrenic position through being simultaneously spoken to as the beloved dead man, identifying emotionally with the family and their grief, and being conscious of the originality and formal strength of the film image created out of that grief.

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_Folly Beach Journal_ (1982), by Jan Millsapps; 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes.

"Folly Beach is washing away and no one can stop it. I didn’t try but some people did. When I first arrived, a week after a hurricane, there were huge bulldozers working night and day, whenever low tide came, to scoop sand from the lower beach and stack it into dunes. It didn’t help.” (From the soundtrack of the film.)

The combination of animation and live action in _Folly Beach Journal_ revolves around the meeting points of reality, the physical presence of the ocean, and subjectivity, the powerful meanings we apply to the ocean, both individually and collectively. The filmmaker says that she eventually came to trust the beach to hold out as long as she needed it to, emphasizing the mark the beach has left in her mind. She counterpoints this with images of marks people have made on, and of, the beach.

_Maternal Life_ (1989), by Jan Millsapps; 16mm, color, sound, 30 minutes.

Millsapps’ newest film is an examination of the “motherhood issue” that gives equal voice to the irrational side of a woman’s decision of whether or not to have a child. _Maternal Life_ depicts a succession women in the role of potential mother, with the cinema-verite style birth sequence as evidence that the filmmaker, for one, did choose motherhood. However, what is emphasized by the multiplicity of viewpoints and heightened color and sound is that no woman can decide one way or another without trying on several subjective perspectives. The images are illuminative surprises to anyone who imagines motherhood to be a perfect fulfillment which all women desire.

(E.C.)

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**SLOW SHUFFLES, FAST GLANCES: NEW WORK FROM BOSTON**

Curated by Saul Levine

_Saturday, April 7, 1990_

_Movies and Pearls_ by Janet Callahan; Super-8mm, sound, 4 minutes.

_Vacant Lot_ by Lynn Toland; Super-8mm, silent, 3 minutes.

_Dot to Dot_ by Lynn Toland, Super-8mm, silent, 3 minutes.

_Fall_ by Dana Moser, Super-8mm, silent, 13 minutes.

_Echoes_ by Chris Nickerson, 16mm, silent, 5 minutes.

_Trouble Is_ by Chris Nickerson, 16mm, silent, 3 minutes.
San Francisco Cinematheque

Caitlin No. 2 by Ann Steuernagel, Super-8mm, silent, 5 minutes.

Henry, My Henry by Ann Steuernagel, Super-8mm, silent, 3 minutes.

Kaleidoscope by Lynn Toland, 16mm, silent, 2 minutes.

Haze by Lynn Toland, 16mm, silent, 2 minutes.

No Orchids by Janet Callahan, Super-8mm, sound, 4 minutes.

Sodom by Luther Price, Super-8mm, sound, 21 minutes.

EARLY RAUL RUIZ

Sunday, April 8, 1990

Born in Chile, Raul Ruiz began as a writer of stage plays before shooting his first film La Maleta (unfinished) in 1960. He was forced into European exile after a coup displaced the socialist government of Salvador Allende in 1973. Ruiz has worked for many years in French television. A recent wave of critical acclaim has lifted him out of obscurity into a leading position within the French avant-garde. Ruiz has been described as "a total filmmaker, for whom theater, music, literature, and visual arts are familiar territory, Ruiz successfully combines intellectual inquiry with Latin American hedonism" (Z.M. Pick).

The Penal Colony (Chile, 1971), 68 minutes.

"The Penal Colony is very loosely based on Kafka's story about a perfect execution machine, but transferred to a Latin American island, Captiva, once a penal colony, but now an independent republic ruled by a capriciously dictatorial president. Its only industry is the manufacture of news (mostly disasters and atrocities) about Latin America for the international news agencies. A woman journalist arrives to prepare a report. The President denies that there is any repression or torture; but the journalist witnesses bizarre scenes of punishment and execution in the prison. After inspecting the bodies in the morgue, the journalist prepares a favorable report."

—from International Film Circuit Inc.

Of Great Events and Ordinary People (France, 1979), 65 minutes.

"Commissioned by French television as a personal view of the 1978 elections, Of Great Events... functions as both the commentary of an outsider on internal French politics and as a capsule history/critique of the forms and uses of the documentary. Ruiz began by dutifully interviewing his friends and neighbors as to their reactions to the elections; the course of the shoot, however, raised questions about such interviews, what they reveal and what they conceal, and how they are conducted. A Latin American refugee discusses Montesquieu’s Persian Letters; a Canadian filmmaker complains that 'it’s easier to make documentaries in the Third World than in Europe.' The voiceover commentary written by Ruiz in Spanish and sight read by another Chilean refugee into French — with its inevitable hesitations, repetitions, and mistakes — becomes a constant reminder of the filmmaker as foreigner-observer."

—from Judy Bloch, Pacific Film Archive
THE FILMS OF DOMINIC ANGERAME
Filmmaker in Person

Thursday, April 12, 1990

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

—Barbara Jaspersen Voorhees

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A Ticket Home (1982); 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes.

I'd Rather Be in Paris (1982); 16mm, B&W/color, silent, 16 minutes.

Hit the Turnpike! (1984); 16mm, B&W/color, sound, 2 minutes.

Voyeuristic Tendencies (1984); 16mm, B&W, sound optional. "Voyeuristic Tendencies is not so much a film about voyeurism as it is about our tendency to be voyeuristic. That tendency, nurtured by the filmmaker's carefully crafted succession of visual teases and exploited by the camera's ability to become our eyes, becomes increasingly evident as the film progresses. The camera teases the viewer, in this case, co-voyeur, not with sexual or erotic innuendo, but rather with graphic and aesthetic challenges. The partially opened window of a women's dressing room, for example, forces us, the viewers, to realize our urge to see more. That urge comes not so much from a longing for exposed breasts, but more as a need to make the picture whole, and to know more about these hidden worlds."

—Roger Nieboer

Continuum (1987); 16mm, B&W, silent, 15 minutes. "In Dominic Angerame's Continuum, the world, the workers within the world, and the labor of making the film itself are equated through montage and a brilliantly concentrated filmic 'painterliness'. The result is an experimental film which is at the same time a document of propaganda in the sense that, at its conclusion, one finds oneself closer to the science of the motion of society in its monumentality, with streets, buildings, the building of them, and the workers and their instruments (drills, tar) creating a constructivist poetry within the eyes.

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

—Jack Hirschman

**Deconstruction Sight** (1990); 16mm, B&W, sound, 13 minutes.  
“Since the Industrial Revolution our civilization has suffered from a growing discrepancy between ideological potentiality and actual realization.” (Laszlo Moholy-Nagy)

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**LANCELOT OF THE LAKE**  
By Robert Bresson  
Preceded by Michael Snow’s Breakfast

**Sunday, April 15, 1990**

**Breakfast** (1972-76), by Michael Snow; 16mm, color, sound, 14 minutes.  
Snow’s *Breakfast* recalls his earlier and better known *Wavelength* in that it consists of a continuous forward movement of a camera, here moving across the space of a sumptuously laden breakfast table, creating what Deke Dusinberre called “a grand metaphor for indigestion.”

**Lancelot of the Lake** (1974), by Robert Bresson, 85 minutes.  
The Arthurian legends of Britain have yielded a rich source of material for such diverse films as John Boorman’s Wageman *Excalibur*, Joshua Logan’s kitschy musical *Camelot* and tonight’s *Lancelot of the Lake* by French director Robert Bresson. Bresson’s film eschews the musical theatricality of both Boorman’s and Logan’s films, and instead creates a formal, comfortless and unspectacular vision of the end of chivalry.

*Lancelot...* begins with the failure of King Arthur’s knights to secure the Holy Grail — a task Bresson makes clear is tantamount to a quest for God Himself. As leader of the grail knights, Lancelot bears the responsibility for the failure of the quest. Unable to renounce his earthly love for his Queen Guinevere, Lancelot lacks the purity of spirit necessary to attain the pure and holy love for God represented by the grail. Neither Lancelot nor Guinevere can inspire any but the most formal and joyless expressions of love for each other: he kisses the hem of her gown in a gloom-filled loft; fights a mechanical tournament for her honor against indistinguishable armoured knights; cries her name aloud as he throws his dying body on the junkheap of Arthur’s slaughtered regiments. In the end it is Arthur’s cunning bastard son Mordred who emerges victorious and Guinevere is left to mourn “Poor Lancelot. Trying to stand firm in a shrunken world.”

Bresson says that the mythological content of the Knights of the Round Table story attracted him. Since the legends are so well known Bresson can dispense with crucial plot elements and pick up the story at the decisive point of the Knight’s return. The acting is in Bresson’s traditional deadpan style, employing amateurs whom the director uses more as models than performers. “It’s not a question of directing a person,” says Bresson, “ it’s a matter of directing oneself. The rest is telepathy.”
Films by Phil Solomon
Filmmaker in person
Thursday, April 19, 1990

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

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

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

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Nocturne (1980, revised 1989); 16mm, B&W, silent, 10 minutes.
“Finding similarities in the pulses and shapes between World War Two night bombing footage, lightning flashes, and my own experiments in ‘open shudderings,’ I induced the War at Home.”—PS.

What’s Out Tonight Is Lost (1983); 16mm, color, silent, 8 minutes.
“This film began in response to an evaporating relationship, but gradually seeped outward to anticipate other inevitable and imminent ‘disappearing acts’: youth, family, friends, time....I wanted the tonal shifts of the film’s surface to act as a barometer to the changes in the emotional weather. Navigating the schoolbus in the fog, the lighthouse in disrepair.”—PS.

Remains to be Seen (1989, revised 1990); Super-8mm, color, sound, 15 minutes.
“Using chemical and optical treatments to coat the film with a limpid membrane of swimming crystals, coagulating into silver recall, then dissolving somewhere between the Operating Theatre, The Waterfall, and the Great Plains.....my wish for a ‘moving painting’ finally realized. Dedicated in loving memory to my mother, Ruth Solomon.” —PS.

Songs: Charles Ives: “At the River” (1916)
“Serenity” (1919)
**The Exquisite Hour** (1989); Super-8mm, color, sound, 15 minutes.

The Exquisite Hour  
by Paul Verlaine

The white moon  
shines in the woods;  
from every branch  
there comes a voice,  
under the arbor,  
o well-loved

The lagoon  
a deep mirror  
reflects the silhouette  
of the black willow  
where the wind moans.  
Let us dream! It is the time for it.

A vast and gentle  
calm  
seems to be descending  
from the heavens,  
iridescent with stars.  
It is the exquisite hour.

“A new work, which is in many ways a companion piece with *Remains to be Seen*. Partly a lullaby for the dying, partly a lament at the dusk of cinema. Culled from the following songs:

‘The Exquisite Hour’ (1891)—written at the dawn of cinema; words by Verlaine, music by Reynaldo Hahn.

A song overheard in the backyard of my parent’s home, sung by a young Hasidic girl, in the dark.

‘Bondo;Mbola’—A divine song, sung by two Aka Pygmy girls sitting in a hut.

‘Mo Boma (A lullaby)’—‘my eyes are still full of sleep...be quiet, my child, so I can sleep a little more.’ Sung by Aka pygmy girls in a hut of leaves.

‘A Farewell to Land’ (1925)—words by Byron, music by Charles Ives.

“This film is dedicated to the memory of my grandparents, Albert Solomon (whose voice is heard on the track), who was a projectionist for ‘FOX,’ and Rose Solomon, who ripped tickets at the Loews Paradise theater on the Grand Concourse in the Bronx.”—P.S.

**Rocket Boy vs. Brakhage** (1973-??); 16mm, B&W/color, sound on tape, 25 minutes.

“Okay, well, this film started out as a punk Joke, made 10 minutes before class, in 8mm, shot Brakhage, camera jammed, used accident to shoot him down again, in order to move on, you know what I mean? But now...the whole thing is gettin’ out of hand. I keep adding more chapters whenever I get pissed off, or incredulous at the whole Avant number, like when the Faust films came out, I knew it was time to go to work again......

PART ONE (structured after Dog Star Man, soundtrack ‘Starman’ by Jack Nietsche)—in which the young, impressionable (green) boy is awestruck by the Master from the Mountains, only to discover that there’s still baseball to be played.
PART TWO—THE UMPIRE STRIKES BACK.

Brakhage and the Babe compete for the young boy's affection; the New Kid in town, Mike Snow, brings Back and Forth to the classroom, the kids get confused, trying to figure out how to make Structural Films, Brakhage gets pissed, invokes the Muses (or the Moses, Blue Moses, as it were) and Rocket Boy drops the big one, let's call the whole thing off.

PART THREE—DOG STAR MAN RIDES AGAIN.

Our hero returns, learns to drive in his new costume, and resorts to closed eye vision in a time of crisis. A trailer.

PART FOUR—WHO'S ON FAUST?

An educational film for those youngsters thinking about Avant-Garde Filmmaking as a profession; finally, Abbott and Costello meet Brakhage in Hell, before Rocket Boy rescues Stan the Man from his mid-wife crisis....Dedicated to Jack Smith, who was once a "MEKAS COLLABORATOR".....

The whole Series is dedicated to Jane and the Kids......

MADE POSSIBLE BY A GRANT FROM THE ROCKETFELLAH FOUNDATION, THE WARREN SONBERT FUNDS FOR POOR FILMMAKERS FOUNDATION, AND THE PERSONAL GENEROSITY OF ABIGAIL CHILD'S DECONSTRUCTION COMPANY."—P.S.

(K.E.)

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TEN TO ELEVEN - MADE FOR TV
by Alexander Kluge
Program I

Saturday, April 21, 1990

Tonight’s program includes four episodes of the series Ten To Eleven produced for West German television by Alexander Kluge. Since the early 60s Kluge has made his mark as a filmmaker, theoretician and neglected member of the New German Cinema movement of the 60s and 70s. Kluge’s rational for choosing to work in television is that “if people do not leave their homes anymore, and they look through this so-called window which is television, then we have to go to people and not just wait in the cinema.” However, far from abandoning the cinema Kluge sees television as a tactical end-around route through a private, domestic distribution system on the way to reclaiming the movie houses from escapist fare. “We will come through television to cinema again,” says Kluge.

In Ten To Eleven Kluge works with the materials of popular fantasy — film, radio, cartoons, advertising and television — into an analog of 19th century opera. Each episode is an amalgamation of cultural fantasies synthesized into a magazine show format. Despite his manipulation of many pre-existing texts (including his own films), Kluge never dominates the materials, allowing them to retain their own integrity and leaving the meanings of his manipulations up to the audience. Nor does Kluge see Ten To Eleven as a postmodern endeavor which he equates with domination. Instead he identifies with both the avant-garde and the derriere-garde saying, “If we have to lead something... at this time, it may be necessary to be behind and bring everything forward.”
Madame Butterfly Waits (1988); 3/4" videotape, 15 minutes.  
19th century opera is evoked in silent film, postcards, and radio. An executive serenades his lover with the aria from Don Carlos (“She never loved me...”) recalling the words as best he can from popular memory. Films play to an empty theater with mysterious interruptions by a curious glowing ball.

Antiques of Advertising (1988); 3/4" videotape, 15 minutes.  
Commodity-based greed is subverted when defunct or foreign products appear in unusual contexts: Nazi movies, space scapes and Soviet fashion shows.

Die Valkyrie, Othello, Madame Butterfly, Carmen, Aida in the imaginary operas “of our lives in big format.” The dark heroine meets a fatal end while her white lover returns home to tell the tale.

Blue Hour Tango Time (1988); 3/4" videotape, 25 minutes.  
The tragic tale of Argentine tango star Carlos Gardel plays against a computer backdrop of a theater showing his 1935 film.

(B.C.)

FILMS BY EMILY BREER AND MARY FILIPPO  
Artists in person  
Thursday, April 26, 1990

Emily Breer is a New York-based filmmaker whose work combines live action, found footage and animation is absurdist conjunctions.

Brute Charm (1989); 16mm, color, sound, 25 minutes.  
“Lion Sex, Flamingo Death and a yellow rubber glove in the Kenyan wild. There’s a mud in your eye easier than an Elephant through the eye of a beholder. Brute Charm consists primarily of images of animals I shot in Africa combined with animation on an optical printer. A steady stream of conscious and unconscious visual choices, loosely constructs a journey through the animal kingdom and my thoughts which developed around it. Brute Charm is an exploration into our unsocialized selves.” —E.B.

“The film looks as though it is about to fall apart from some degenerative film disease. Breer’s narrator proposes ‘this film is about inflammation...the response of tissue to injury,’ as if to explain its style. Exposures are varied, editing loose and the humor broad and vulgar...The subject is brutality, but the charm of the film is in its forthright acknowledgement of the touristic subjectivity represented.”

—Marjorie Keller

Moona Luna (16mm work-in-progress, shown on videotape), 10 minutes.  
“Moona Luna winks at film vocabulary and conventions with a pell-mell spontaneity that belies the complex relationships created between sound and image and within the image itself.

“Moona Luna is about my first trip to the moon. I painted a set into my apartment to allow for Dr. Goodfriends to become Mr. Bad Actors. Virgins always tell all so I always took the first take. Cast includes 3 French boat workers, no whales and a host of ‘others.’” —E.B.
Mary Filippo has been working in film since 1978. She is currently teaching video art and computer graphics at the School of Visual Arts, New York City, and the Center for Media Arts, respectively.

**Who Do You Think You Are** (1987); 16mm, B&W, sound, 11 minutes.

"Filippo herself plays a woman addicted to smoking, who feel guilty for making a film on that seemingly slight subject when there's a war going on, baby...she thinks she'd better concoct works 'that would change the world.' No one else has dealt with the powerful mimicry that comes from watching too many old movies..."

—Katherine Dieckmann

[Filippo] uses everything including the kitchen sink (as her last shot) to try out her role as an important filmmaker — found footage, computer generated imagery, acting, simulated documentary, first-person commentary. And none suffice, so you might say that the film's success is its representation of failure. It refuses ideology, just as it refuses to be tied to a single form or technique. If post-modern means eclectic, then Filippo’s film is our most post.”

—Marjorie Keller

**Feel the Fear** (1990); 16mm, B&W, sound, 20 minutes.

For Filippo’s characters, subjectivity is entirely learned from the outside. Emotion is prompted by television, desire by advertising, and conscience by self-help books. The characters attempt to “measure up” to the mythic figures of media by drinking or smoking the same brands as their heroes — the only material emulation possible. For the filmmaker, this extends to the use of found footage, both as a tool for social dissection and as an addiction itself.

"Let’s see how alcohol affects a fish. 4-3-2-1. A spokesman for the tribe said, ‘they must be from another planet, the way they treat this one.’ They responded, ‘God wants nothing more of us than the ability to make the outer world a perfect mirror of our own minds.’ Blast off. God hasn’t overlooked you in the space age. Why then this feeling of vague discontent, pessimistic melancholy, world sadness? He has given you a little computer. Could it be gravity? It is the size of a walnut and it is sitting between your ears right. now. Actually it might be.” (from the soundtrack to Feel the Fear.)

—(E.C.)

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**TEN TO ELEVEN - MADE FOR TV**

*By Alexander Kluge*

*Program II*

*Saturday, April 28, 1990*

Tonight’s program presents three more episodes of the series Ten To Eleven produced for West German Television by Alexander Kluge.

**The Eiffel Tower, King Kong and the White Woman** (1988); 3/4" videotape, 25 minutes.

Some one has stolen the Eiffel Tower and transported it to the American west. King Kong takes a cruise and plays...
bridge in his white dinner jacker — standing in for the hero who is mysteriously absent. In the meantime, France has won World War I and is busy photographing its victory.


Chamberlain and Mussolini attend a 1938 performance of the opera *Macbeth* in Rome. Graphic signs in the opera expose Chamberlain’s inability to fantasize a result Hitler invades and conquers Czechoslovakia. Two bodies address each other on the battlefield. Finally, French soldiers in 1918 celebrate the end of war.

**Changing Time (Quickly)** (1988); 3/4" videotape, 25 minutes.

Recurring images of clocks shape human experiences which are reproduced across time from 1812 to 1988.

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**A TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS**

Curated and Presented by Michael Wallin

Sunday, April 29, 1990

**Burroughs on Bowery** (1978) by Marc Olmsted; 16mm, color, sound,.5 minutes.

**Energy and How to Get It** (1981) by Robert Frank; 16mm, B&W, sound, 28 min.

**The Discipline of DE** (1978) by Gus Van Sant; 16mm, B&W, sound, 9 minutes.

**Towers Open Fire** (1963) by Antony Balch; 16mm, B&W, sound, 10 minutes.

**Bill and Tony,** by Antony Balch; video, 6 minutes.

**William Buys a Parrot** by Antony Balch; video, 2 minutes.

**The Cut Ups,** by Antony Balch; video, 20 minutes. (The works by Antony Balch were produced in the period 1962-1972. Dates of individual works are unclear; they were films in their original form. Their availability on video is due to Mystic Fire Video.)

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I first came upon the writings of William S. Burroughs through the writings of Jack Kerouac, and those through the liner notes from Tom Robinson’s TRB II album. I hadn’t connected with Salinger’s *Catcher in the Rye* as a teenager — ah, the Chicago public school system — so in my early twenties *On the Road*, *Desolation Angels*, and *The Town and the City* provided a valve for venting my pent-up rebellious male adolescent angst. There, in the background of Kerouac’s novels and in the foreground of his biographies, lurked the sinister, shady, trench-coated figure of William Seward Burroughs.

Can anyone’s view of the world escape untainted from a reading of Burroughs’ first published novel? *Naked Lunch* judiciously fills in the details of a Boschian hell-on-earth, recounting tale after tale of sexual perversity, aggressive medical malpractice, and inept attempts by the government to control its insect-eyed, paraffin-skinned, junk-sick citizens. The last book to be banned in Boston, it renders its shelfmates — *Ulysses*, *Fanny Hill*, *Tropic of Cancer*, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* — prudish and repressed. When the Massachusetts Supreme Court lifted the censorship of *Naked Lunch* in 1965, it was a two-edged sword: recent swings in the pendulum notwithstanding, the possibilities for artistic expression and exploitative pornography were changed forever.
For me, Burroughs-the-writer has never matched *Naked Lunch*. Immediately after that text, he devoted himself to experiments with the cut-up technique, a Surrealist exercise developed with the late painter Brion Gysin. Text, any text, is sliced into strips and rearranged; though the results can produce hilarity and brilliant insight, they are equally likely to induce a tedious delirium. Eventually abandoning his use of the technique, Burroughs has devoted himself to exploring peripheral literary forms: science fiction and, most recently, the Western, with his trilogy *Cities of the Red Night, Place of Dead Roads*, and *Western Lands*.

However, Burroughs-the-personage continues to be a source of fascination. His nasal, contemptuous, measured voice, harrumphing and thfunking down his nose, is as deadly a weapon as the shotguns he has brandished through the years. And his physical presence — tall, reedy, wielding a cane, wearing three-piece suits of questionable fabric — predictably turns all heads, commanding attention whether in person or on the movie screen (as in Gus Van Sant’s *Drugstore Cowboy*).

In recognition of his presence as novelist and counter-culture hero, filmmaker Michael Wallin (*Decodings*) has assembled tonight’s film tribute to the 76 year old Burroughs. The films and tapes on the program explore Burroughs' writings and methods, public image, and excursions into acting.

Burroughs aficionados will be most interested in two oft-discussed, but rarely seen films by Antony Balch: *Towers Open Fire* and *The Cut Ups*. Balch, a British filmmaker, traveled in the same circles (New York to Paris, London to Tangiers) as Burroughs, Gysin, and Ian Sommerville during the heyday of the cut up experiments. While the technique was a revolutionary and controversial form for producing text, Balch recognized it as an alternative form of montage, a different structure for making edits.

*Towers Open Fire* is the shorter and more narrative of the two films. The script is made up of Burroughs’ texts, and he plays the film’s central characters: narrator, chairman of the board, commando, junkie, man on the street. Amidst racist diatribes and cut up texts, the stock market crashes and aliens invade. Folded into the film are shots of Gysin’s Dream Machines, flickering zoetrope-like sculptures that were designed to induce alpha waves in the viewer. The black and white footage, reportedly shot in 35mm, veers between exquisite naturalism and comic trickfilm gestures, and the soundtrack alternates between a harsh, driving composition and one with fife and drums.

Yes. Hello. Look at that picture. Does it seem to be persisting? How does it seem to you now? Good! Thank you. These phrases are central to the soundtrack of *The Cut Ups*. Apparently shot at the same time as *Towers Open Fire*, the film dismisses narrative in favor of cyclical montage. Footage of New York and Paris streets — the Horn and Hardart Automat near Times Square, the Hotel Chelsea, the Beat Hotel — is combined with Brion Gysin painting, a less-than-chaste doctor’s examination, and various cafe scenes. Although the film functions on one level as a ripe time capsule, it also, through its concerns with phase and repetition, has a surprisingly contemporary feel.

Gus Van Sant’s interest in Burroughs goes back at least as far as 1978, when he made a low budget adaptation of the *Rolling Stone* piece, “The Discipline of DE.” The film tells the story of one retired Colonel Sutton-Smith who, in the course of writing his memoirs, discovers the simple and basic discipline of DO EASY; a way of doing everything in the easiest, most relaxed, quickest, and most efficient way. *The Discipline of DE* faithfully excerpts about two-thirds of Burroughs’ story; the trims, combined with snappy edits and more trickfilm gestures, result in a delightful film.

Robert Frank’s *Energy and How to Get It* is a natural choice for this program. Burroughs is in the film physically and philosophically; he has a minor role as the Energy Czar and, more importantly, Frank, Rudy Wurlitzer, and Gary Hill draw from his vision in this subjective documentary on electronics experimenter Robert Golka. Golka may or may not have the solution to the energy crisis; he clearly has something capable of manipulating high voltages, but the fictional Energy Czar and a very real police force combine to thwart this renegade genius. With appearances by John Giorno and Robert Downey, music by Dr. John and Libby Titus.

Also on the program: *Burroughs on Bowery* by Marc Olmsted and two other Balch films (on video): *Bill and Tony* and *William Buys a Parrot*. Olmsted mixes Super-8mm footage of Burroughs with rephotographed images.
of gangster movies and Japanese science fiction films. While the found footage is sufficiently campy and the process yields and interesting palette of steely blues and fiery oranges, the film suffers from being on the same program as *The Cut Ups*, which addresses similar concerns with greater sophistication. In *Bill and Tony*, Burroughs and Balch permute voices as they recite texts; Burroughs’ facial gestures, pursing his lips after delivering each line, is the film’s most noteworthy contribution. And *William Buys a Parrot* is an odd fragment featuring a dapper Burroughs entering a doorway for oceanside cocktails with a cockatoo; harmless at a minute and a half.

(E. S. T.)

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**HOME MOVIES IN THE PARK**
*Washington Square Park*
*Co-sponsored by The Exploratorium*

**Thursday, May 3, 1990**

Tonight’s program was selected by Lissa Gibbs, Liz Keim, Alan Mukamal, and Bruce Smithhammer.

*Coyne-Kiernan Wedding* (circa 1947); 16mm, 10 minutes.

*Gramp’s Hawaii Footage* (1972), submitted by Kurt Easterwood; 16mm, 3 minutes.

*Underwater Vacation*, by Josh Wallace; Super-8mm, 10 minutes.

*Pool Scenes and Easter* (1968), by Neal Smithhammer; Super-8mm, 6 minutes.


*Brother’s Communion 1969* (1969), submitted by Al Hernandez; Super-8mm, 3 minutes.

*Dad with Duke*, by Lisa Bostwick; Regular-8mm, 3 minutes.

*Vacation 1939*, by A. Cedric Gordon; Regular-8mm, 15 minutes.

*Courtship*, by A. Cedric Gordon; Regular-8mm, 15 minutes.

*Dad’s Home Movies*, by Ed Holmes; Regular-8mm, 10 minutes.

*Carlsbad Caverns*, submitted by Scott Amis, Regular-8mm, 3 minutes.

*Hillegass St.*, submitted by Scott Amis; Regular-8mm, 3 minutes.

*Kelly Dancing*, submitted by Scott Amis; Regular-8mm, 3 minutes.

*San Francisco*, submitted by Scott Amis; Regular-8mm, 3 minutes.

*San Francisco 1952*, by Dr. Schmid, Regular-8mm, 3 minutes.
ENRAPTURED IMAGES:
New films by Gunvor Nelson and Warren Sonbert
Co-sponsored by the San Francisco International Film Festival, Kabuki Theater

Sunday, May 6, 1990

“The films of Gunvor Nelson are psychological, emotional, humorous and erotic. Her style of filmmaking uses fast-paced editing combined with striking, often symbolic, images. Her work is characterized by a strong feeling for the graphic, textural qualities of the film image, for expressive potentials inherent in shape and color.”

—Fred Camper

Gunvor Nelson, a native of Sweden, moved from a career as a painter to bring her visions to film. Amos Vogel said that she is the “true poetess of the visual cinema.” Nelson, who teaches at the San Francisco Art Institute, has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, an American Film Institute grant, two grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, two Western States Regional Media Arts Fellowships, and a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship this year. Her work has been the subject of many one-person shows, as well as of retrospectives at the Museum of Modern Art, NY (1985) and the Anthology Film Archives, NY (1989).

Natural Features (1990), by Gunvor Nelson; 16mm, color, sound, 30 minutes.
“The fifth film in the series of collage films I call ‘field studies.’ Here I used cut-outs, photographs, mirrors, water, toys, paint, ink...in many different combinations. The central theme is faces. A dark delicacy lingers.”—G.N.

Gunvor Nelson Filmography

Schmeerguntz (1966); co-maker: Dorothy Wiley
Fog Pumas (1967); co-maker: Dorothy Wiley
My Name Is Oona (1969)
Kirsa Nicholina (1970)
Five Artists BillBobBillBobBillBob (1971); co-maker: Dorothy Wiley
Take Off (1972)
One & The Same (1973); co-maker: Freude
Moons Pool (1973)
Trollstenen (1976)
Before Need (1979); co-maker: Dorothy Wiley
Frame Line (1983)
Red Shift (1984)
Light Years (1987)
Light Years Expanding (1988)
Field Study #2 (1988)
Natural Features (1990)

* * *

Warren Sonbert’s films have been shown in many film festivals throughout the world, including the Berlin Film Festival, the London Film Festival, and the New York Film Festival. His work has been selected for four
Whitney Biennials, and he has been the subject of retrospectives at the Whitney, the Vienna Film Museum, the Paris Centre Beauborg, the London National Film Theatre, the Munich Stadt Museum, and the Bologna Cinematheca. In October of this year, Sonbert’s work will be featured in his sixth “Cineprobe” at the Museum of Modern Art, NY.

**Friendly Witness** (1989), by Warren Sonbert; 16mm, color, sound, 32 minutes.

“*Friendly Witness* is comprised of material shot by myself over the last 23 years. The locales include Europe, North America, North Africa, the South Pacific, Australia and Asia (including those hot spots Iran and Afghanistan)....Spectacle, public domain, objective (god’s eye) point of view is the aesthetic approach with the constant idea that all this activity is perhaps occurring simultaneously. Hence the irony/tragedy that dire events (via montage) are canceled out or at least ‘laughed at’ by the more mundane, the banal, the quotidian which is given equal visual status throughout and is, in fact, used to set off the spectacular. Elements of a dance of death, of retribution for lightheartedness (a viewer’s chuckle is invariably answered by a more upsetting image) and a diabolical skirting-of-the-surface is evident throughout....There is a lot for the viewer to decide, to choose and to consider. Connections between images may be a geometric shape, a color, a trajectory, a directional pull, a visual pun or a slap in the face contradiction. Whatever the energies, all is not perfect; that is not an ideal world out there (though this also does not dissipate the fitful glimpses of paradise or contentment). These latter occur usually when the singular takes on the crowd, when the individual is set in opposition to the mass: the benign, the positive, the approving is then the stance—and indeed has the last word by being the last image in that metaphor for the contemplative artist. But this does not vitiate against so much mindless aggression that has dominated the visual palette for so much of the film. For me that’s what montage can do best—to juggle disparate reactions in a struggle against viewer complacency and easily derived judgments.”—WS.

“Sonbert makes us feel how joy is inseparable from the primacy of looking, of sight. [*Friendly Witness*] offers a meditation on how the act of seeing is intimately tied to narrative, and how individual images (as well as the way they are accumulated) tell their story. Rather than deconstructing narrative into its essential images like, for instance, Raul Ruiz, Sonbert constructs images in such a way that they reveal the irreducibility of narrative.”

—Lisa Katzman, *Film Comment*, December, 1989

**Warren Sonbert Filmography**

*Truth Serum* (1965)
*Amphetamine* (1965)
*Where Did Our Love Go?* (1966)
*Hall of Mirrors* (1966)
*The Bad and the Beautiful* (1967)
*Carriage Trade* (1971)
*Rude Awakening* (1975)
*Divided Loyalties* (1978)
*Noblesse Oblige* (1981)
*A Woman's Touch* (1983)
*The Cup and the Lip* (1986)
*Honor and Obey* (1988)
AUSTRIAN EXPERIMENTAL FILMS OF THE '80s
Filmmaker Martin Arnold in Person

Thursday, May 17, 1990

_Souvenirs_ by Lisl Ponger; Super-8mm, color, silent, 12 minutes.
"...Especially the camera makes everyone a tourist in other people's reality and eventually in one's own." (Susan Sontag, _On Photography_)  

_Tabula Rasa_ (1987), by Peter Tscherkassky; Super-8mm, color/B&W, sound, 18 minutes.  
The film theory by Christian Metz (based on Jacques Lacan) considers the screen as a mirror, with the audience under the impression that they are creating the film through an identification with their own inherent voyeuristic act of watching. Tscherkassky eventually deprives the viewer of this impression, by substituting the figurative with the abstract.  

_Shot-Countershot_ (1987) by Peter Tscherkassky; Super-8mm, b&w, silent, 1 minute.
"The Great Syntax of Film" by Christian Metz divides autonomic segments into autonomic shots and syntagmas, whereby the last mentioned sub-divides into non-chronological and chronological syntagmas. The latter subdivide again into descriptive and narrative. The narrative syntagmas can be broken down into the categories alternating syntagmas and linear narrative syntagmas. The shot-countershot technique is a typical linear narrative syntagma.  

_The Murder Mystery_ (1988), by Dietmar Brehm; Super-8mm, B&W, sound, 16 minutes.
"...a pornographic-sadistic phantasy of murder in flickering black-and-white and torn images..."

___Pumping Screen___

_Kugelkopf — An Ode to IBM_ (1985), by Mara Mattuschka; 16mm, B&W, sound, 6 minutes.  

_Paramasympatica_ (1986), by Mara Mattuschka; 16mm, B&W, sound, 4 minutes.  

_Es Hat Mich Sehr Gefreut (It Was My Pleasure)_ (1987), by Mara Mattuschka; 16mm, B&W, sound, 1:50 minutes.  

_Piece Touchee_ (1989), by Martin Arnold; 16mm, B&W, sound, 18 minutes.  
Originally taken from 18 second of an American movie, I manipulate the sequence of the frames, creating a new cinematic reality. _Piece Touchee_ uses optical printing techniques to bring out the hesitation and discomfort in a Hollywood B-movie coupe heading towards a kiss. --M.A.  

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_Another View: Selected Works Re-Screened_

_Sunday, May 20, 1991, 5 p.m._

_Vinyl_ (1965), by Andy Warhol; 16mm, B&W, sound, 64 minutes.
THE GERMANS AND THEIR MEN
By Helke Sander

Sunday, May 20, 1990

The Germans and Their Men: Report from Bonn (1989), dir. by Helke Sander. 16mm, color, sound, 105 minutes. Starring Renee Felden as Lieschen Müller; photographed by Lilly Grote; edited by Claudia Vogeler, Sander; script by Sander.

Helke Sander’s most recent film establishes from the outset a documentary mode with its definitive and all-encompassing title. This mode is further stressed in the film’s subtitle, “Report from Bonn,” with its connotations of an authority-laden, official government document. Yet Sander’s film is not a report sanctioned by the German state, but rather a personal examination of that state as it is characterized and defined by its men.

Sander achieves the personal by using the fictional character of a woman on a quest for a husband in Bonn. By focusing the film on Lieschen Müller’s very real (but fictional) search for a man “who will look me in the eye and not at my breasts,” Sander re-routes the documentary impulse from a documentarian putting forth facts in support of an agenda, to a character whose personal needs result in questions that comprise an agenda.

Müller, on vacation from her native Austria, decides to spend her holiday in Germany to look for a husband. Bonn is the likely choice in that as capital of the Federal Republic, it is therefore the seat of thousands of men. Note pad in hand, Müller sets out to interview these members of Parliament, State secretaries, taxi drivers, civil servants, salesmen, and even the Federal Chancellor, eventually recasting herself as documentarian.

The fiction of Müller the husband-seeker goes hand in hand with that of Müller the documentary interviewer. In the end, it is the latter fiction which proves the more subversive, for it is the pose (which is after all only half feigned) of documentarian that gives Müller (Sander) the access to their subjects. Although some of the interviewees are clearly put off by the questions they are asked, most willingly respond. To be interviewed is seen by them as a measure of their own importance, a signification as steely and empty as a bureaucrat’s tie.

Whether investigating the significance of men’s ties (who wears what type, and when) or probing larger questions of male responsibility and shame by conflating the raping of millions of German women with the extermination of the Jews, Müller is both documentary interviewer (acting on) and protagonist (acted upon). The questions she deems important to ask of prospective husbands become in the end questions all women must ask, and which all men must face up to.

Ultimately, Sander’s fact-finding “report” results, like Müller’s search for a husband, not in answers but in more questions. More importantly, though, it also results in more people being interested in those questions.

(K.E.)

RED FISH IN AMERICA: PROGRAM I
New Independent Film and Video from the Soviet Union
Igor and Gleb Aleinikov in person

Thursday, May 24, 1990

While Western audiences have gained access recently to Soviet feature films and documentaries that were previously banned or excluded from export, very little has been known of the existence, not to mention the output.
of independent media artists from the USSR. A small but growing community has, in fact, existed since the pre-
glasnost days of the early 1980s. This exhibition, curated by Marie Cieri of The Arts Company and Moscow
independent filmmaker Igor Aleinikov, features a cross section of the best new experimental short films and
videotapes produced outside Soviet government funding and control.

Like independents in the West, Soviet media artists often deal with themes that are outside mass market
consumption and do so in ways that are provocative and stylistically inventive. Until very recently, they were not
able to show their work publicly for lack of government sanction, but now are receiving a surprising amount of
attention and new opportunities to make and show their work.

The exhibition is divided into two programs containing a total of 15 works dating from 1985-1990 by 13 different
artists working individually or in groups. This is the first time most of these films and videotapes are being seen
outside the USSR. All of the works were made in Moscow, Leningrad or Riga, where independent media is
strongest.

Revolutionary Etude (1987), by Georgij Ostretsov, Evgenij Kondratiev, and Gleb and Igor Aleinikov; 16mm,
B&W, sound, 8 minutes.
The Kremlin, a speech by Brezhnev, a worker at his machine-tool. Pioneer [communist children’s organization]
songs, verse by Mayakovsky, Red Square, the Aviator’s March (a well-known Soviet song of the 1930s).
Journeying through all these Soviet riches are the Engineer, the Athlete, and the Artist, stereotypes of the Soviet
Man. These images entered the film from the pictures of G. Ostretov, who in early 1987 began to sing the praises
of perestroika, but not for long. This film is a collaboration of artists from Moscow and Leningrad.

The struggle for communism requires untiring efforts of the party to educate all parts of society, especially youth.
And this struggle is inextricably linked to the struggle against bourgeois propaganda...
—Leonid Brezhnev

War and Peach (1989), by Vladimir Zakharov; 16mm, B&W, sound, 10 minutes.
A contemporary reinterpretation of that famous Russian title. This is Zakharov’s second film.

Game of Ho (variation) (1987), by Boris Yukhananov; video (originally VHS), 25 minutes.
An ardent exploration of Russian identity and the Jewish emigration question from Moscow video and theater
artist Yukhananov.

The film [video] is built on an inductive game which Theater Theater [Yukhananov’s performance group] came
up with in 1985-86. The game became fashionable in the Leningrad and Moscow underground at the time.
The game is constructed on the interrelationship between two symbols central to the ‘new culture’ of the 1980s: the
symbol of the cross and the symbol for zero. [The Russian word for “ho” is written “XO.” The Russian letter “X”
is also the first letter in the word “Christ.”]

“Both these symbols run through the consciousness of the contemporary Soviet underground and appear in
pictures, poetry, lyrics, and music. The concept of a ‘cross’ — this is my life, and I’m crossing it out — this
interpretation came from Russian Orthodoxy. After life is crossed out, a zero takes shape. At the present time, the
symbol of the cross is the multiplication sign. The syllable ‘HO’ [Russian ‘XO’] is also formed, something you
find in a person who laughs at his own life: ‘Ho - ho - ho.”—B.Y.

Damn It (1989), by Ilze Petersone (Riga); video, 4 minutes.
“This work is a video of the Latvian punk rock group Zig Zag, with their song entitled The Devil Take It. Latvia
(my land) is now a big garbage can. In the space of a few years everyone who had the urge has dumped all their
garbage here. And now I, you, we all walk on this filth, run from it, maybe from ourselves.”—I.P.

First two sections of a music video by the Moscow-based Aleinikov brothers. Music by free jazz group Three Os
and Asian vocalist Sajikho Namchilak.
Untitled selections of material (1989-90), by Yuris Lesnik; video (originally VHS), 16 minutes. Leningrad painter, musician, and video artist Lesnik has been developing principles for the selection of video material for the past year. Lesnik recently edited much of this material in Paris. He is a great admirer of Nam June Paik.

**Tractors** (1987), by Gleb and Igor Aleinikov; 16mm, B&W, sound, 13 minutes.

An ironic recasting of the language and symbols of communism. The tractor has been a very popular and frequently occurring image in Soviet films from the 1920s through the 1980s.

Funding for this exhibition, its national tour and catalog have been provided by the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities, the Trust for Mutual Understanding and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

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**RED FISH IN AMERICA: PROGRAM II**

*New Independent Film and Video from the Soviet Union*

*Igor and Gleb Aleinikov in person*

**Saturday, May 26, 1990**

**Orderly Werewolves** (1985), by Evgenij Yufit; 16mm (on video), 3 minutes.

First film by the founder of Leningrad black humor and "necrorealism" (before making films, Yufit practiced necrorealism in photography and painting).

From an article by I. Iljina outlining the 11 basic characteristics of necrorealism in the catalog of the Molodost Film Festival, Kiev, 1989:

**Spring** (1987), by Evgenij Yufit and Andrej Myortvyj; 16mm (on video), 12 minutes.

A nightmarish but curiously whimsical tale reflecting the brutality of past regimes.

**Dreams** (1988), by Evgenij Kondratiev; 16mm, B&W, silent, 11 minutes.

Set in Soviet Central Asia where the Leningrad-based Kondratiev used to live.

"Evgenij Kondratiev's recent works, Dreams, Fire in Nature, and Vertical Cinema, are noted for an almost academic clarity and rhythmic virtuosity. The film Dreams was made in Khakassia and is reminiscent of visual meditation. Vast empty spaces, roads leading beyond the horizon, fast panorama of the sky and water are joined with close-ups of human faces and movements. An almost magical image of reality is born, an image created by means of "pure cinema.""

—Sergei Dobrotvorskij

**Supporter of Olf** (1987), by Inal Savchenko, Evgenij Kondratiev, K. Mitenev and A. Ovchinnikov; 16mm, B&W, 9 minutes.

An example of the freewheeling Leningrad style of scratch animation, images of Bohemianism, and "life after death."

**Crazy Prince Kuzmin, Part II: "Actor"** (fragment) (1989), by Boris Yukhananov; video (originally VHS), 6 minutes.

It is not possible to translate this text, even in Russian. —Igor Aleinikov
Soviet art emerging from "the underground" in the obsessive "cinema verite" style of Moscow theater artist Yukhananov.

"For the viewer, [directorial] refinement is proving to be too much. Film seems boring, drawn out, but the culture of perception is gradually changing, and subtleties which used to go unnoticed will be clear to future viewers. A new esthetic canon is being developed, a rhythm is beginning to be felt in all the nuances and details. Episodes which used to seem dead are now coming to life.

The unit of measurement for video is not a frame, but a cassette. When I shoot, I only use pauses. A full cassette, the original, is the matrix. Then we can edit it in copies as we see fit. Thus, video can exist as a theme with variations. The next cassette, edited from the matrix, is the variation."

—Boris Yukhananov, "Your Head is in your Hands"

**Mission in Kabul** (1989), by Andejs Ejtis; 16mm, 4 minutes.
A biting war vignette by Riga filmmaker Ejtis. This piece won first prize at an international festival of amateur films in Leningrad last year.

**Homo Rullis** (1989), by Dainis Klava (Riga); video, 6 minutes.
All [my] films are constructed on the base of documentary associations. *Homo Rullis* is video art on the theme of the legend of Salome.—D.K.

**Waiting for de Bil** (1989), by Gleb and Igor Aleinikov; 16mm, B&Wm, sound, 23 minutes.
A dog with the nickname Bobr [beaver] lived in the professor’s apartment (it was said that the dog moved in before the arrival of the professor), and the professor was very kind to it. The dog wasn’t eager to go outdoors in the spring. Judging by Bobr’s appearance, shaved right down to his pink skin, and by the way the spot under the dog’s tail shone in the moonlight, one could assume that the dog also had an obliging nature.—G.A.

Program notes compiled from the catalog accompanying “Red Fish in America”

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**Another View: Selected Works Re-Screened**

**Sunday, May 27, 1990, 5 p.m.**

**Is This What You Were Born For?** (in seven parts, 1981-89), by Abigail Child

*Prefaces* (Part one, 1981); 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes.

*Mutiny* (Part three, 1982-83); 16mm, color, sound, 11 minutes.

*Both* (Part two, 1988); 16mm, B&W, silent, 3 minutes.

*Perils* (Part five, 1985-86); 16mm, B&W, sound, 5 minutes.

*Covert Action* (Part four, 1987); 16mm, B&W, sound, 11 minutes.

*MAYHEM* (Part six, 1987); 16mm, B&W, sound, 20 minutes.

*Mercy* (Part seven, 1989); 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes.
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE THIRD NEW YORK
LESBIAN AND GAY EXPERIMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL
Curated by Jerry Tartaglia

Sunday, May 27, 1990

Is there some inherent quality about gay artists’ work that can be said to comprise a separate and distinct aesthetic from that of heterosexual artists? This question of whether there is such a thing as a “gay aesthetic” has been bandied about by both academic and artist, straight and gay, for some time.

The above question is one that invariably comes up in the context of festivals like New York’s Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival. The problems of such a question are obvious: while the notion of a gay aesthetic speaks to a sense of solidarity among gay artists, it also tends to elide other elements of a person’s cultural make-up (sex, race, economic status) that might equally inform their work, not to mention the multifarious issues of concern to gays and lesbians.

The question of a gay aesthetic co-exists with other questions regarding lesbians’ and gays’ relation to the cultural mainstream: Do such festivals provide voice to those who might not be heard from otherwise? Or do they further ghettoize a group already marginalized? That they probably do both is a measure of one of the dilemmas that lesbians and gays find themselves in: how to avoid the assimilationist fantasy of the homophiles of the 50s, while still being afforded equal rights.

AIDS of course is a major concern of the gay community, and many of the films on tonight’s program deal expressly with the disease. Whether detailing the physical effects of the disease or the more societal and political effects the disease has wrought on the gay community, AIDS presents itself in these works not as an insurmountable problem but one which has engendered hope despite all the death and pain.

* * *

Cirque du S.I.D.A. (1989), by Robert Hilferty; Super-8mm, color, sound on cassette, 4.5 minutes.
“Gay people have been the trapeze artist, acrobats, jugglers and contortionists throughout human history, especially now in this age of AIDS. By combining footage of New York’s Gay Pride Weekend in 1988 and Cirque du Soleil (a Montreal-based circus troupe), I have attempted to show the colorful struggle of gays and lesbians in a hostile environment, one in which the spectre and spectacle of AIDS predominates. Music by Diamanda Galas.” (R.H.)

D.H.P.G. mon amour (1989), by Carl M. George; Super-8mm, color, sound on cassette, 10 minutes.

Home Avenue (1989), by Jennifer Montgomery; Super-8mm, color, sound, 18 minutes.
Jennifer Montgomery’s Home Avenue at its most basic level is a re-telling, from the victim’s point of view, of the experience of being raped. But here the “victim” is Montgomery herself, who ten years later addresses the camera (and viewer) both as subject and filmmaker. The use of direct address is both therapeutic and assertive, enabling Montgomery to redress the terms by which her life has been defined — a victim, “scared and scarred” — while at the same time making real (i.e. external) an experience for which there was “no physical evidence.”

It is this notion of “evidence” on which both the rape experience and film turn. Those in positions of authority (the physician, her mother) are suspicious the act ever happened, because the rapist didn’t ejaculate (thereby reinforcing male superiority, back-handedly). As such, Montgomery’s experience is doubly ignominious, her “innocence masquerading as guilt, facts masquerading as secrets.” In re-presenting (as opposed to confessing) the facts, Montgomery sets the record straight about misplaced suspicion and guilt. But Home Avenue is also a demand for a world where openness doesn’t lead to victimization.

Dream and Desire (1986), by Tom Chomont; 16mm. color, sound. 5 minutes.
Boys/Life (1989), by Phillip Roth; 16mm, black and white, sound, 10 minutes.
“An autobiographical film which explores the contrast between the sexual freedom I’ve felt as a gay man in private situations with the constraints and inhibitions I’ve felt in expressing affection with other men in public.” (P.R.)

Song From an Angel (1988), by David Weissman; 16mm, color, sound, 5 minutes.
“The triumphant final performance of San Francisco actor/dancer Rodney Price. A founding member of the Angels of Light theatrical troupe, Rodney performed this lighthearted song and dance about his own death two weeks before he died of AIDS.” (D.W.)

Still Point (1989), by Barbara Hammer; 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes.
“Movement, relationship, home and homelessness revolve around the point of centeredness in a 4-screen multiple image. The still point of the turning world — ‘That’s where the dance is’ (T.S. Eliot).” (B.H.)

Fragments (1967), by Mike Kuchar; 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes.

Automonosexual (1989), by Edgar A. Bares; 16mm, black and white, sound, 3 minutes.
“The term automonosexual describes the psychological state in which an individual is able to achieve sexual gratification by viewing his/her reflection during masturbation. [This film] depicts the fantasy and self-fascination necessary for sexual narcissism, and serves as an autobiographical account of the sexual frustration and isolation felt in the face of AIDS.” (E.A.B.)

Ecce Homo (1989), by Jerry Tartaglia; 16mm, color, sound, 7 minutes.
“Thanks to AIDS hysteria, all gay sexuality is once again seen as pornographic, politically incorrect, sinful, or a public health hazard. One wonders in this film whether the taboo is against the sex or against the ‘seeing’ of the sex.” (J.T.)

THE SUPER ’80s: AUSTRALIAN SUPER-8MM FILMS OF THE 1980s
Curated and presented by Michael Hutak

Thursday, May 31, 1990

Carumba! (1986), by Nick Meyers; Super-8mm, color, sound, 4 minutes.

Hoard (1981), by Stephen Harrop; Super-8mm, 9 minutes.

Twisted Legend (1985), by Richard De Souza & Rhondda Kelly; Super-8mm, 6 minutes.

Untitled (1984), by Merilyn Fairskye; Super-8mm, 3 minutes.

Suspect Filmmaker (1984), by Rowan Woods; Super-8mm, 10 minutes.

S.S.S. (1986), by Andrew Frost; Super-8mm, 6 minutes.

Shock Corridor (1985), by Mark Titmarsh; Super-8mm, 4 minutes.
Westworld Story (1984-5), by Catherine Lowing; Super-8mm, 6 minutes.

Ropo’s Movie Night (1986), by The Marine Biologists; Super-8mm, 15 minutes.

Macbeth’s Greatest Hits (1987), by Michael Hutak; super-8mm, 22 minutes.

* * *

This program charts particular moves within a peculiar film scene: Australian Super-8mm film in the ’80s.

Historically, the emergence of a renewed local Super-8mm film culture around the turn of the decade sprang from a perceived winding down of 16mm activity in the late ’70s.

Super-8mm was championed by practitioners as almost a democratic medium offering direct and easy access to the contemporary image maker. After the success of the first Annual Sydney Super-8mm Film Festival in 1980 a new scene was quickly defined and promoted as the “Super-8mm Phenomenon.”

Local art journals such as On The Beach and Tension were in the forefront of promoting the scene as straddling both independent film and the visual arts, with many artists, writers, and mixed-media artists trying their hands in both theory and practice.

The scene reached a peak of activity around ’84-’85 with the festivals of those years giving birth to the notorious “theatre of cruelty.” Here any film which exhibited a sincere or self-important posture was greeted with howls of derisive laughter from the rowdy audience. The festival was replaced with a mixed-media event — The Sydney Film & Video Event — in 1988 and Super-8mm as a popular phenomenon has been on the decline ever since.

The works which sprang from this milieu had at least one thing in common: absolute diversity. Therefore this program makes no claim to represent any wider field of practice but rather displays some of the more engaging films by artists who produced a body of work during the period.

One significant feature which the artists here do share is an absence of a self-conscious foregrounding of national identity: Australia more a state of mind than a birthright, and while not easily denied, can certainly be ignored. Made by citizens of the world, these films celebrate the decade when the world went global!

—Michael Hutak

THE ONE REELER SHOW
Curated by Steve Bade, Bill Daniel, Greta Snider and Ted White

Saturday, June 2, 1990

Short films rule! The “less is more” approach to filmmaking is examined tonight in a program of Super-8mm (which fit on a 50-foot reel) and 16mm (which fit on a 100-foot reel) films. The one-reel genre often demonstrates
compression, immediacy, 1:1 shooting, and serendipitous in-camera editing. We will see 28 films, including 2 samples from Owen O’Toole’s international The Filmer’s Almanac. Don’t forget-short films save you time! They’re convenient and ecologically sound!

—Bill Daniel

Crystal’s Birth by Elizabeth Sher; Super-8mm, silent.

Exclaim Her Limitless Wisdom by Rock Ross; 16mm, sound.

Dmitri and Ramona by Alex Prisadsky, 16mm, silent.

Leaving by Kary Fefer; 16mm, silent.

Hype Hype Media Hype by Steve Perkins; 16mm, sound.

The Snake Handling Movie by Steve Sandage; Super-8mm, silent.

Sugar Butt by Danny Plotnick; Super-8mm, sound.

Untitled by Al Hernandez; Super-8mm, silent.

Vép And The Earthquake by Claire Bain; Super-8mm, sound.

Francis’s Trip to Morocco by Greta Snider; Super-8mm, sound.

Panhandler by Bill Daniel; Super-8mm, sound.

Crazy by Scott Stark; Super-8mm, sound.

October 5* by Schmelzdahin; Super-8mm, silent.

Straight to Hell by Rock Ross; 16mm, silent.

Roger by Bill Daniel; Super-8mm, silent.

Cleanliness Is Next To Godliness* by Volker Schönwart; Super-8mm, sound.

Footage by Robert Arnold; Super-8mm, silent.

Speed by Stephen Federico; Super-8mm, sound.

Meet Jesus by Chris Simons; Super-8mm, Silent.

Animal Mar by Miguel Alvear; 16mm, silent.

Whattaya Doin Brian by Elizabeth & Brian & Pablo; Super-8mm, sound.

Me Against You by Konkapot: Big Boys in S8: Super-8mm, sound.
San Francisco Cinematheque

*All The Fun Is Getting There* by Steve Bade; Super-8mm, silent.

*Blood Story* by Greta Snider; 16mm, sound.

*Untitled* by Paul Lundahl; 16mm, sound.

*Water Lily* by Alex Prisadsky; 16mm, sound.

*Bad News* by Ted White; 16mm, sound.

*From the Filmers’ Almanac*

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*Another View: Selected Works Ré-Screened*

*Sunday, June 3, 1990, 5 p.m.*

*Eat* (1963), by Andy Warhol; 16mm, B&W, silent, 27 minutes.

*New York Portrait: Chapter 3* (1989), by Peter Hutton; 16mm, B&W, silent, 16 minutes.

*Letter To A Suicide* (1985), by Jim Campbell; 16mm, B&W, sound, 29 minutes.

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**OTHER CULTURES, OTHER FORMS**

*New work by Larry Gottheim, Mark LaPore & Leslie Thornton*

*Sunday, June 3, 1990*

*I do not intend to speak about. Just speak nearby.*

That modest declaration, voiced by Trinh T. Minh-ha in her seminal 1982 film, *Reassemblage*, spoke directly to the problematic engendered by her engagement with the (often complementary) practices of documentary filmmaking and ethnographic study. By situating herself and her camera in a “Third World” country, Minh-ha became by default the inhabiter of the roles of both documentarian and ethnographer; the resulting film was as much as attempt to redress these roles as it was a film on/in Senegal.

Ultimately Minh-ha’s precious intellectual voice-over subverted its own revisionist intentions, and the film seemed to fall into the colonialist trap it set out to avoid. But in spite of its problems, or perhaps because of them, *Reassemblage* very clearly pointed up the thorny issues inherent in trying to represent (an)other culture via an apparatus (camera) that bespeaks of scientific objectivity but which only works when at the service of human subjectivity.
Each of tonight’s three works deal in various ways, and with varying levels of commitment, with those heady questions surrounding the representation of “other” cultures. Whether overtly set within another culture (as in Machete, Gillette...Mama), or our own (Dung Smoke Enters the Palace) or somewhere in between (The Sleepers), each work cannot escape the confines it places itself within. In the end these confines have less to do with a culture, other or otherwise, that may be depicted, than they do with the filmmaker’s own position vis-a-vis that culture.

* * *

(Dung Smoke Enters the Palace) (1989), by Leslie Thornton; 16mm and 3/4 inch video, sound (video), B&W, 16 minutes.

Peggy and Fred in Hell is a series of films and videotapes that Leslie Thornton has been working on since 1981. To date, four “episodes” have been produced. They include Peggy and Fred in Hell (Prologue), Peggy and Fred in Kansas, Peggy and Fred and Pete and (Dung Smoke Enters the Palace).

“...It is precisely in the interplay of difference and recognition that otherness is revealed. By working closely to our traditions, our stories, our media, our narratives, the project Peggy and Fred in Hell destabilizes the familiar. It points to an otherness within. To recognize an otherness within is to see ourselves. Peggy and Fred in Hell reinscribes the ethnographic gaze, bringing about reflection upon our own culture, our own society, our own otherness....

“Peggy and Fred in Hell does what it can to spread open the stories we tell ourselves, about ourselves. And that is why it is disturbing—because it is familiar yet at the same time alien. Peggy and Fred in Hell looks for the structures we rely on to make sure ‘reality’ flows by us invisibly, so that we flow within its stream. It does this by working with children, because children are not quite us and not quite other. They are our others. The are becoming us. Or they are becoming other. They are at a dangerous point....”—L.T.

The Sleepers (1989), by Mark LaPore; 16mm, color, sound, 15 minutes.

The Sleepers, while verging on the confessional, never loses sight of a world whose structures it must try to penetrate. The discourse quoted in the film, although profoundly insightful about the situation of pre-capitalist third world cultures in a period of global totalization of technology, are never simply illustrated by the images, which range from North Africa to New York’s Chinatown. In this film LaPore speaks to the profound deterritorialization of the twentieth century in a way [that is] neither documentary nor lyrical, neither diaristic nor didactic, but employing elements of all these discourses in order to weave a language of ambiguity and sensual specificity.”

—Tom Gunning, Motion Picture, Winter 1989-90.

Machete Gillette...Mama (1989), by Larry Gottheim; 16mm, color, sound, 45 minutes.

“The film is deliberately not documentary in form or character, but chooses to live at the conjunction of the real, the narrative, the formally experimental. This is not just a matter of negative gestures—the avoidance of conventional interviews, translations, explanations, background music—but a series of positive cinematic acts which reach for a purer, more authentic relationship both with the ‘subjects’ depicted in the film and the audience which looks and listens. This is nowhere more apparent than in the active disjunctive style which is based on the intensity of actual seeing and interacting, penetrated by significant intervals of darkness as the dense soundtrack is punctuated and enlivened by intervals of silence.

“The form and style of the film partly grow out of an awareness of the problems involved in the representation of ‘other cultures’ in our time, but the film stays clear of an easy address to the marketplace of current theory, opting instead for the vitality of sensual truth and the deepest mysteries that grow between the self and the other.”—L.G.
CANADIAN FILMMAKERS — OLD AND NEW
Curated by Daria Stermac and Mike Hoolboom

Thursday, June 7, 1990

The Maltese Cross Movement (1967), by Keeuatin Dewdney; 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes.
'The film reflects Dewdney's conviction that 'the projector, not the camera, is the filmmaker's true medium.'...The film is organized around the principle that it can only complete itself when enough separate and discontinuous sounds have been stored up to provide the male voice on the soundtrack with the sounds needed to repeat a little girl's poem.'

—William Wees

Current (1986), by Elie Epp: 16mm, color, silent, 2.5 minutes.
The rhythmic pulsing of shafts of blue light here in this short film create a silent musicality. Resembling a pipe organ, these luminescent lines are conduits for an ever ebbing and flowing intensity that has as much to do with darkness as it does with light.

No. 5 Reversal (1989), by Josephine Massarella; 16mm, B&W sound, 8.5 minutes.
'The idea for No. 5 Reversal arose spontaneously, out of personal experience, imagination, and memory. Although my ideas are not the results of programmed deliberation on a certain topic or theory, during editing and shooting I often hold the idea 'up to the light,' testing it for originality and clarity. I prefer to leave as much open to interpretation as possible without losing sense.' --J.M.

See You Later/Au Revoir (1990), by Michael Snow; 16mm, color, sound, 18 minutes.
By taking a banal, common event — one which probably lasted a half a minute in real time — and stretching it out over the course of an 18-minute film, Michael Snow does not heighten or increase the banality of the event but rather questions if the event was so banal in the first place. The original action of a man (Snow) leaving an office and saying goodbye to the secretary is stripped of its ordinariness and instead acquires a poignancy rarely accorded to the mundane.

Allowing, as opposed to forcing — a verb too often mistakenly associated with Snow's work — the viewer to contemplate both the action and the environment where that action occurs, a new space opens up for the viewer that isn't tangibly present but palpable nonetheless. Snow's very deliberate use of color, shapes and geometric patterns is played against the varying quality of light and shadow to create an emotional space not at odds with the scene's original banality but rather one tied up in that banality. The simple passage of a man from inside to outside is not unlike that 45-minute zoom that drove Snow's landmark Wavelength (1967). Movement here, as there, is both mediated and inevitable, open to examination yet finally irreducible — nothing very simple after all.

Condensation of Sensation (Reel One) (1987), by Carl Brown; 16mm, color, sound, 35 minutes.
"In these frames are the essence of my sensations carefully nurtured and felt over and over again out of these frames these frames and you These sensations are what are common between us take them with you use them when you like Tell me a riddle" —C.B.
OPEN SCREENING HIGHLIGHTS, 1989-1990
Curated and presented by Lissa Gibbs

Saturday, June 9, 1990


The History of America (1990), by Andy Meade; 16mm, B&W, sound, 8 minutes.

Pure Horseradish (1990) by Bruce Smithhammer, Super-8mm, color, sound, 11 minutes.
My father had told me about his moving out to California from the East Coast in the early fifties, and I got to thinking about how that type of trip can no longer be experienced in quite the same way; the architecture which early highway culture gave rise to, the difference in the kind of relationships that people had with their automobiles, the fact that three thousand miles was a much greater distance then. It has nothing to do with nostalgia. This is a film about that and what can occur when it’s cold enough and the fish aren’t biting.—B.S.

Town of Day (1989), by Jerome Carolfi; 16mm, color, sound, 13.5 minutes.
The film straddles the boundaries between the personal and the documentary. The sensibility behind the film comes from a realm where documentary is free of having to pretend to objectively “present reality” and the poetic is allowed to enter into the work. The film interweaves bits and pieces of family history with historical and archival sources to achieve its effect. Many of the voice-overs in Town of Day are by my mother Eleanor, my sisters Jeannie and Ruthie and myself. Many of the images were drawn from the State Historical Society’s archives in Madison, Wisconsin. The assemblage is concerned as much with the poetics of the image and sound as it is with wanting to “inform” or create narrative structure.—J.C.

The Pain of Goats (1989-90), by Michael Perkins; 16mm, color, sound, 13 minutes.
First from a group of optically printed films called the The Vampire Series that are inspired by metaphorical parallels between the vampire myth and certain qualities of our culture of consumption and of cinema. An optically printed, rhythmic onslaught of images about consuming and personal transformation.—M.P.

Michael G. Page’s Laundry (1989), by Duncan Macleod; Super-8mm installation.

A Piece of Skin (1989), by Katherine Enos; 16mm, B&W, sound, 7 minutes.
An experimental film about vulnerability and the ambiguity of touch.—K.E.

Untitled (1989), by Wallace King; 16mm, B&W, silent, 3 minutes.

Condemnation (1989), by Kevin Deal; 16mm, color, sound, 6 minutes.
An exploration of personal and social alienation through stream of consciousness editing and motion graphics. By dealing with high speed information and transitions as imagery, the film comments on the manipulative power of current media.—K.D.

Red (1990), by Kent Howie; Super-8mm, color, silent, 2.5 minutes.
This tiny film is from my heart. I know you should mistrust what I say about my work. Stuttering and stammering won’t help. I looked at this magazine and it turned around and looked back at me. It’s just a dismemberment of a discarded commodity like the ones from my childhood that I always found crumpled and rolled up in the wood box. After I sorta’ read them, I would roll them back up and lightem’ up. It’s really about temporality and awakenings. It reminds me in a funny way like the sound that the leaves make when the wind is in the tops of the cottonwood trees.—K.H.
History of Texas City (1990), by Bill Daniel; Super-8mm, B&W, sound, 1.5 minutes.
A portrait of a Texas refinery town as told by the history of country music. — B.D.

Cement City Expedition (1990), by Bill Daniel and Elizabeth House; Super-8mm, B&W, sound, 9 minutes.
Dallas urban archaeologist, Alex Troup, leads an unofficial search for the lost graveyard of cement factory workers. — B.D.

Untitled (1989), by Kurt Easterwood; 16mm, B&W, sound, 1.5 minutes.
In this footage found inside a Daddy’s closet the loneliness of a long distance runner is pitted opposite a maelstrom of male bodies clumsily tackling problems of nature. Will boys be boys? Do nice guys finish last? Remember, it ain’t over till it’s over. — K.E.

Little 8’s (1989), by Phyllis Christopher; Super-8mm, color, sound, 2.5 minutes.
Little 8’s is a humorous glimpse at the effects of repetitive work as it invades that space between waking and dreaming. — P.C.

UPA: RARE ANIMATION FROM A REBEL STUDIO
Curated and presented by Reed Kirk Rahlmann and Russell Merritt

Sunday, June 10, 1990

UPA occupies a unique position in the history of animation, influencing both avant-garde and commercial animation. It is also considered the first politically involved studio, championing progressive causes that no other studio dared touch. Today its influence can be felt in the work of the Zagreb animation studio in Yugoslavia, the surreal work of the Pannonia studio in Hungary, and — closer to home — in the experimental shorts of the National Film Board of Canada.

It is customary to write of the UPA “style” — the famous experimental look that appeared flat and abstract, the graphic counterpart to UPA’s contemporary, off-beat humor. Yet although the UPA films were as immediately recognizable as the Silly Symphonies of the 1930s, the artists never limited themselves to a single pictorial model. As we will see, the dark, brooding backgrounds Paul Julian painted for The Tell Tale Heart have little in common with the bright pasteboard look of “Hell Bent for Election,” and neither seems related to the garish colorings of The Man in the Flying Trapeze. As UPA production manager Herb Klynn told Charles Solomon, “No two UPA pictures were ever done in the same style. Every time we did something, it became a creative experiment and an innovative search.” The true trademark of UPA was its constant experimentation with modernist styles, tamed to entertain middle-class America.

From the start UPA was conceived as a commercial studio that combined liberal idealism with hardheaded business sense. Its origins can be traced back to 1943, when Stephen Bosustow joined Zack Schwartz and Dave Hilberman to form the Industrial Film and Poster Service — a studio set up to provide film strips, graphic materials, and animated shorts to defense contractors and the military. The studio was an immediate success. Soon IFP had won so many assignments that the company began farming out work to animators at rival studios. Top animators, excited by the creative freedom IFP gave them, were eager to moonlight as free lancers. With the success of their
most famous industrial film — *Hell Bent for Election* — the partners re-christened their company United Productions. Within months Bosustow bought out his partners and recruited many of the most important designers and animators in the business.

As a company shaped in post-war America, UPA was on the cutting edge of the new markets opened up by advertising, television, and the new enthusiasm for animation among adults. Above all, UPA saw itself as the antidote to Walt Disney. Most of the staff, in fact, were Disney ex-employees, who had been purged in the ruinous Disney strike of 1941. Among them were the three UPA founders themselves, their most famous directors, John Hubley and Robert “Bo” Cannon, and most of their top animators. This was the studio that would turn the Disney formulas on their head, both organizationally and creatively.

Less frequently observed was UPA’s equally emphatic reaction against Warner Brothers animation. Robert Cannon, who had worked for both Disney and Warners, was particularly vehement in his reaction against the slapstick animation he had done for Chuck Jones. According to UPA writer Bill Scott, the two things UPA writers had to avoid were “Disney cute” and “Warner Brothers violent humor.” The challenge was to find ways to entertain and provoke without assaulting an audience.

### "HELL-BENT FOR ELECTION" (1944), Directed by Chuck Jones

The break-through film that established the unique UPA style when the studio was still called the Industrial Film and Poster Service. *Hell-Bent* was commissioned by the United Auto Workers as a campaign film for Franklin Roosevelt’s 1944 campaign, and from all accounts became a labor of love for those who worked on it. Chuck Jones directed the film at nights after putting in a full day at Warner Brothers. Earl Robinson and Yip Harburg, soon to run afoul of HUAC, wrote the music.

So far, it remains a one-of-a-kind cartoon: the first and last time an animated film has been commissioned for a presidential election.

### "THE MAGIC FLUKE" (1949), Directed by John Hubley

The Fox and Crow were part of the unwelcome baggage UPA inherited when it signed with Columbia. The two characters had been created at Columbia in 1941, and had quickly degenerated into the kind of banal animal clowns UPA had been formed to attack. Nobody at UPA wanted to work with any animal characters, let alone this pair. John Hubley took the assignment under protest, directed three of them, and won an Academy Award nomination for this one.

### "THE RAGTIME BEAR" (1949), Directed by John Hubley

The start of Mr. Magoo; often cited as the first theatrically released cartoon made in the UPA style. In 1949 UPA initiated the Jolly Frolics series with this film, in an effort to supplant animal cartoon characters with human caricatures.

Those anticipating the genial puttering uncle in the later Magoos may be startled by the original conception, modelled on W.C. Fields. “Magoo was very spiky when Art Babbitt animated him,” UPA coworker Bill Hurtz told Charles Solomon. “He was all flint and outthrust jaw. His head was much smaller than the baby-doll head he got later, and he walked with this purposeful, aggressive stride.”

### "GERALD Mc BOING BOING" (1951), Directed by Robert Cannon

This won UPA its first Oscar for one of its most famous films. According to Bill Hurtz, “We worked out this crazy linear pattern that plays all the way through the film, almost on a continuous line. Where the character ends up in one scene is where he picks up in the next. Also the props were all silent characters. You couldn’t tell what the
rooms in that house were like, so the animation carved out the space. That was the strong thing that Bob Cannon was really excited by.”

*The Oopahs* (1952), directed by Robert Cannon; 16mm. 8 minutes
Cannon's most abstract work yet; this one stars a tuba and his rebel son, a Dixieland trumpet, animated figures entirely free of anthropomorphic detail. These extremely odd characters speed around in bright abstract decor, caught up in the most prosaic of middle-class father-son disputes.

*Rooty Toot Toot* (1952) directed by John Hubley; 16mm, 8 minutes.
Hubley took his inspiration for this tour de force from a Broadway musical comedy that had featured a ballet treatment of “Frankie and Johnny.” The splenetic be-bop rhythms and compulsive movements — the combination of strongly-held key poses with unevenly spaced in-betweens — could not be further from the silky smoothness of Cannon's UPA style.

This was the only UPA film to be censored. In the original, when Nellie Bly claims she’s a singer, Frankie replies, “She’s no singer, she’s a...” Columbia knew bawdy when it heard it, and scissored out the “she’s a...”

*Willie the Kid* (1952), directed by Robert Cannon; 16mm. 7 minutes
Cannon's preference for innocent, whimsical fantasies often led him to make films about children. In this one, he outdid himself in blending the make-believe world of children and the prosaic routine of adults in the suburbs. James Thurber regarded this as UPA's most perfect film, and its influence on John Hubley's later independent work, notably *Moonbird* and *Cockabooty*, is pronounced.

*The Tell Tale Heart* (1953), directed by Ted Parmelee; 16mm. 8 minutes
Design and color by Paul Julian.
Probably UPA's most influential film; this was UPA's pioneering effort at showing what can be done in animation with serious literary material. The style is derived from the theatrical designs of Jo Miélsiner, blended with the Surrealist landscapes of de Chirico and Dali. The film was shot in 3-D to intensify the broad expanse of the dream sets, but released only in flat versions.

*The Man on the Flying Trapeze* (1954), directed by Ted Parmelee; 16mm, 7 minutes
Parmelee's follow-up to *Tell-Tale Heart* that works with a new set of painterly and theatrical sources to create UPA's most cynical film. Here Parmelee is decisively shaped by the garish circus world of Toulouse-Lautrec and the Fauves. As a satire directed against Victorian melodrama and notions of true love, the film is marked by bright dissonant colors, distorted drawings, and the joyful pyrotechnics of syncopated animation.

*Fudget's Budget* (1954) directed by Robert Cannon; 16mm, 8 minutes
For all his stylistic virtuosity, Cannon's themes remain remarkably consistent. “Bobe and T. Hee were agreeable components of a very agreeable pattern, doing small quiet things with an original turn of mind,” designer Paul Julian remarked. “But there was never any bite to them — it was if Bobe didn’t have any front teeth.” The harrassed, henpecked husband matched with the prim, conventional wife, became as much a Cannon trademark as the ever-increasing tendency towards graphic abstraction.

*The Jaywalker* (1965), directed by Robert Cannon; 16mm, 8 minutes
By the end of 1955, UPA had established itself at the forefront of the animation industry. Bosustow had opened a UPA office in NYC at Fifth & 53rd to handle UPA's advertizing and industrial accounts, responsible for almost half the studio's revenues. Then, UPA opened a London branch, to compete head-on with European animation companies. Back in Hollywood, all three Oscar cartoon nominees were UPA films, a feat that even Disney never rivaled. *The Jaywalker* lost to *Mr. Magoo's Puddle Jumper*.

—Russell Merritt
**METAPHORICAL JOURNEYS: NEW BRITISH AVANT GARDE**
*Curated and presented by Moira Sweeney*

_Thursday, June 14, 1990_

Tonight's program represents contemporary work by women in Britain. The films, taken together, are informed by the juncture of feminist film theory and psychoanalysis theory (more influential in Europe than in the U.S.). They share concerns of interior/exterior space and identity in terms of subjectivity, while questioning the denial of visual pleasure seemingly advocated by "classic" feminist theory. The program was curated by filmmaker Moira Sweeney, who is the film programmer for the Arts Council of Great Britain.

* * *

**Looking for the Moon** (1986), by Moira Sweeney; 16mm, color, silent, 7 minutes.
Evoking an iconography that stems from the work of Maya Deren, Sweeney uses both movement within the frame and editing as choreographic elements. The tension created is between the pull of an off-screen person's hands and the private world the woman sees through her window.

"Tentative gestures of hands and body become symbolic of opposing emotions involved in the closeness to one person; trust — the need to escape. Actions merge into one continual unresolved movement." —M.S.

**K** (1989), by Jayne Parker; 16mm, B&W, sound, 12 minutes.
"Starkly photographed in a bare room, a woman pulls her insides out through her mouth. The precise minimalism of the film is reminiscent of modern dance and performance art emphasizing pure movement. Here, the object is as assertive as the movement... the woman weaving her intestines into a garment she does not put on.

Divested of all external trappings, the artist pulls out her own intestines, to finally knit the tangled mass at her feet into a symmetrical structure. _K_ is concerned with facing up to fears, exerting control and gaining strength. Its balance, structure and serene pacing reflect the artist's ultimate imposition of order." —M.S.

**Kugelkopf — An Ode to IBM** (1985), by Mara Mattuschka; 16mm, B&W, sound, 6 minutes.
"Another of Mara Mattuschka's witty and daring films. In _Kugelkopf_ a woman shaves and bandages her head, cuts it with a razor and proceeds to make patterns and marks with the blood from it on a glass wall. This ritual is performed with ease and almost delight. It is one of those rare films which transcends any simple notion of masochism, allowing for a compelling view of the line between pleasure and pain" —M.S.

The only one of tonight's films made outside Britain, _Kugelkopf_ is present as a contrast to the British work in its treatment of women's bodies. Historical in its striking black and white images and staccato motion, it makes reference to Buñuel's _Un Chien Andalou_ (1928) but puts a woman in control of violence against herself.

**Beauty in the Most Profound Distortion** (1989), by Sophia Phoca; 16mm, B&W, 10 minutes.
"Beginning as a crisp dance of shadows, its flowing movement is disturbed and complicated by rippling water, refracting and expanding the image. Authority defines its own antithesis. Antitheses defines its own authority." —M.S.
Three Paces (Moving Through the Mirror) (1989), by Alia Syed; 16mm, B&W. 15 minutes.

"Based on Tennyson's poem The Lady of Shallot, the film is a disturbing play of misrecognition and idealization between two women, place in different spheres (inner and outer worlds) and on opposite planes of a mirror. It unfolds in a series of discontinuous images and sounds reflecting the fragmented reality of the characters. A collision of elliptical traces which form the multiplicity of desire." —M.S.

“In a memorable sequence, a couple in a cafe chat and order tea. They are observed from a variety of angles and in extreme close-up with sudden shifts in focus and depth of field. Their conversation is caught in snippets which switch in and out of sync, while elsewhere there are only mute lip movements. A regular pattern of sync, voice-over and silence is established suggesting an autonomous formal structure that sometimes coincides with the actions of the characters and sometimes does not, and the interaction of these two strands gives the film much of its energy and appear.”

—Nicky Hamlyn

Imaginary (1988-89). by Moira Sweeney; 16mm, color, silent, 18 minutes.

“The most concerned with film as material of any on the program, Imaginary succeeds in creating a tactile experience in the viewer. Glass bottles near a window recur with a arm nostalgia. The camera skids gently over a nude male body with the tentative quality of a finger reaching out—a quality in contrast to usual images of women filmed by men.

"Fragments of countryside, objects, houses, interior spaces and outer worlds, by also almost bodily gestures of tenderness between camera and people. A dream like reality is created, the mosaic of life, a diary of electrical shadows, pure form of cinema.”

—Alf Bold

The Pavement (1989), by Diana Mavroleon; 16mm, color, sound, 14 minutes.

“The film convincingly blurs everyday life with a fertile and imaginary world created by four very different women for themselves. This montage weaves Indian film music and Gothic opera into a dreamy evocative and unsettling piece where female interior and exterior worlds shift and collide." —M.S.

The Pavement endows prosaic events with operatic passion as four women are drawn together in reaction to the malice of the public sidewalk.

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SAUL LEVINE: POLITICS AND VISION
Filmmaker in person

Saturday, June 16, 1990

The Big Stick/An Old Reel (1967-73); 16mm blow-up from Regular-8mm, B&W, silent, 15 minutes.

Raps and Chants, Part One (1981); Super-8mm, color, sound, 12 minutes.
Notes After Long Silence (1989); Super-8mm, color, sound, 14 minutes.

New Left Note (1968-82); 16mm blow-up from Regular-8mm, color, silent, 25 minutes.

A Brennen Soll Columbusn’s Medina (1976-84); Super-8mm, color, sound, 15 minutes.

Preview (1989); Super-8mm, color, sound, 10 minutes.

* * *

The films of Saul Levine are tenacious works which command respect at the same time as they sear notions of what is acceptable film practice. The technical rawness of the work flies in the face of such distinctions as are made between “professional” and “amateur,” while confronting the viewer with a style that refuses to be easily accessible, or to produce easy conclusions. However, Levine’s is not a cinema of negation: it is a direct response to the world and Levine’s vision of that world. The tenor of this vision is gritty and aggressive, to be sure, but also humorous and sad as well.

Levine’s films are frenetic tapestries created by a radical juxtaposition of images — often with lightning speed — and his employment of the visual and aural lacerations that arise from using the “smaller” gauges of Regular- and Super-8mm. In the end, it is these lacerations that help shape the dominant impressions one garners from these films, for they epitomize both the violence and displacement of Levine’s experience. The splice marks that divide the frame in both The Big Stick/An Old Reel and New Left Note are on one hand symbolic of the frenzied activity of the events depicted, while also reflective of a tenuous attempt to make some cohesive statement about a contradictory society.

With the addition of sound, Levine has gone one step further in dislocating his films (and consequently the viewer) from any easily legible reading. The disjunction of sound and image that occurs when editing single-system Super-8mm sound is the aural complement to the splice bars of the earlier Regular-8mm films. The lack of a synchronous relationship between sound and image goes directly to the center of what Levine’s “music” is all about: how to sift through the multiplicity of viewpoints one is bombarded with, while keeping in sync with one’s identity.

Within the conviction of these films there also lies a sense of frustration, and it is this sense which renders the insistency of Levine’s style more of a revelatory gesture than a didactic attack. In the end, these “notes” by Saul Levine reveal that they are the product of an idealism that just won’t go away, and as such, they are both tenacious and tenuous.

(K.E.)

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Another View: Selected Works Re-Screened

Sunday, June 17, 1990, 5 p.m.

Films by Stuart Sherman:

Roller Coaster-Reading (1979); 16mm, B&W, silent, 3 minutes.

Flying (1979); 16mm, B&W, silent, 1 minute.
San Francisco Cinematheque

Camera-Cage (1978); 16mm, B&W, silent, 3 minutes.

Baseball-TV (1979); 16mm, B&W, silent, 1 minute.

Films by Phil Solomon:

Nocturne (1980, revised 1989); 16mm, B&W, silent, 10 minutes.
The Exquisite Hour (1989); Super-8mm, color, sound, 15 minutes.

In the Shape of Waking: Meditations (1989-90), a series of four films by Peter Herwitz:

Body of Light (1989); Super-8mm, color, silent, 6 minutes.

In the Rhythm of Falling (1989); Super-8mm, color, silent, 8 minutes.

Encircling the Shadow (1990); Super-8mm, color, silent, 4 minutes.

As You Lift Your Eyelids, Tracing Lightly (1990); Super-8mm, color, silent, 7 minutes.

YASUJIRO OZU: SILENT MASTERWORKS

Sunday, June 17, 1990

“The Japanese continue...to think of Yasujiro Ozu as the most Japanese of all their directors. This does not mean he is their favorite, although he has been given more official honor than any other. It means that he is regarded as a kind of spokesman; Ozu, one is told, had the real Japanese flavor. This Japanese flavor has a more definite meaning than, say, the American way or the French touch if only because Japan remains so intensely conscious of its own Japaneseness. Modern civilization, only a century old, remains a Western veneer over an Asian culture that has endured for two millenia.”

— Donald Richie, Ozu: His Life and Films

Tokyo no Onna (Woman of Tokyo, 1933); 16mm, B&W, silent at 18 f.p.s., 47 minutes.
Script by Kogo Noda and Tadao Ikeda, after a story by Ernst Schwartz, a pen name for Ozu. Photographed by Hideo Shigehara. With Yoshiko Okada, Ureo Egawa, Kinuyo Tanaka, Shinyo Nara, and others. Released February 9, 1933.
"Ozu's theme here is reminiscent of the "social realist" films Kenji Mizoguchi began making at about this time ... all of which deal with women who sacrifice themselves for the betterment of young men they love. One brief diversion from his sad story — and Ozu was always fond of diversions — has Ryoichi and Harue off to the movies (of course) to see If I Had A Million, a 1932 omnibus film; the part we see is the segment directed by Ozu's favorite, Ernst Lubitsch, and featuring Charles Laughton."

— David Owens of the Japan Society, Ozu


"Restless, shifting, fugacious as time itself are certain groups of people who lead the life of floating weeds, as it were, transient forever in their place of residence, transient in heart and mind. Homeless, they have many homes, to which they flit one after another, as their irregular orbits may take them to those out-of-the-way small towns in various parts of Japan. They are traveling troupers, who furnish the inhabitants of such towns with their cheap versions of famous Kabuki plays and added vaudeville acts."

— New Yorker Films

It's something I always say —
most important thing for me is me
And in that me the most important position
is that of work.

— From Ton Satomi's Shikaru, quoted by Ozu in his diary entry of April 6, 1935

JIKKEN EIGA:
New Japanese Experimental Films
Presented by Artist/Curator Tatsu Aoki

Thursday, June 21, 1990

Cherry Blossom Time (1989), by Noriko Harada; Super-8mm, color, sound, 26 minutes

My Collections (1989), by Kohei Ando; 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes

Prelude (1989), by Makoto Tezuka; 16mm, color, sound, 15 minutes

Story of the Worm (1989) by Keita Kurosaka; 16mm, B&W, sound, 15 minutes

Shi-Shosetsu 3 (1989), by Nobuhiro Kawanaka; 16mm, color, sound, 21 minutes
**Chicago-based Innocent Eyes and Lenses (Jikken Eiga) and Tokyo’s IMAGE FORUM co-present tonight’s program of recent Japanese films.**

The seeds of an experimental film movement were planted in Japan as early as the 1920’s with the introduction of small-format cameras and filmstocks from the West. While this event marked the beginning of personal exploration in film the true experimental film movement in Japan did not blossom until much later. To all accounts the first Japanese experimental film was Kinecalligraphy produced in 1955 by an artist’s group called “Graphic Shudan.” The movement gained momentum throughout the 1960’s, and in 1966 American and European avant-garde films became available for the first time in Japan. In the period of 1968-1970 a film art festival, Japanese filmmaker’s corporation, and a Cinematheque were all established, laying the soil for an unprecedented flowering of film activity in the 1970’s and 80’s. Since 1985 IMAGE FORUM and Innocent Eyes and Lenses have organized a touring exhibition of new Japanese films bringing international recognition to many of tonight’s artists.

“In the Japanese films, the notion of an autonomous self, which in one way or another haunts virtually every American avant-garde film, hardly even arises. One is born inside a grand mechanism, and one’s existence consists of the variety of smaller mechanisms found along life’s journey.”

—Fred Camper

“The free senses of the individual artist was the catalyst needed to refresh the established system. As with the pen of the poet and the brush of the painter, the camera and film of the filmmaker has allowed cinema to be emancipated, freely and fluently, from cinema.”

—Filmmaker Nobuhiro Kawanaka

(B.C.)

Videos by Erika Suderburg/Films by Julie Murray

Julie Murray in person

Saturday, June 23, 1990

Erika Suderburg is a video maker working in Los Angeles. Her tapes deal with history, politics and memory in the context of images both enigmatic and insistent.

*Tapel/Bernadette Devlin* (1981); 3/4" videotape, 6 minutes.

An anti-memorial to the Irish activist combines unstable hand-held footage, television news excerpts, photographs and terse intertitles. The tape conveys a chaotic and shifting world, as information on Devlin is fragmentary and fleeting.

*Trick Performed/Dance Interference* (1981); 3/4" videotape, 10 minutes.

The camera remains fixed on a dancer in a bare room, stationary as the woman’s movements grow more violent and frenetic. The undercurrents of the piece come from the soundtrack; piercing noises and the thud of the dancer’s body hitting the floor. Another woman entering the room may be an enemy, rescuer, or intrusion.
Displayed Termination: The Interval Between Deaths (1988); 3/4" videotape, 25 minutes.

"This tape is both a eulogy and the start of a question. It is about the transfer of history, via electronic signal over the airwaves into the headphones: illustrative images. The tape was meant as a place where images merge into constant illogical and 'substitute' pictures. On a more basic level it is about war, storytelling and the location and speaking of (or telling of) cultural and physical death.

"There are (contained within the tape), stories obsessed over, cultivated and never absent that belonged to someone who is now dead. They are images that were brawn out form modern 'history' and gnawed at until they became bedtime stories that refused to have the covers drawn over them. Stories that bear an uncanny familiar resemblance to one another, that speak of cultural and historical amnesia.

"In this setting death in life is no longer able to offer any resistance - mourning is a selective means of remembering. Perhaps the dead may indeed strive to signal us, but we are unable to hear them. We suffocate them out of a sense of duty or guilt or from sheer love with flowers, prayers; tears. Once buried the suicide ceases to offend our sense of decorum and order. In time, we even stop asking ourselves, Why.' (from The Fall of Summer by Walter Abish)" --E.S.

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Julie Murray is an Irish-born artist who has been working in San Francisco for the past five years. Her Super-8mm films are texturally rich, accumulating layers of images in such a way that they collide with and comment on each other.

Fuckface (1986); Super-8mm, color, sound, 10 minutes.

"3 years worth of collected footage in a variety of formats culled from all sources from dumpsters to video. It is put together in such a way as to provide miniature, almost instantaneous fictions, confined and numerous, where meaning can occur between the frames as much as it might in the frames. The original condition of the found footage (damaged, scratched, etc.) and the methods and processes of re-photography, are intended to be as much a vital part of the film as is the content represented." --J.M.

Tr'cheot'my p'sy (1988); Super-8mm, color, sound, 4 minutes.

"A hiccuping audio news segment to which the footage is loosely choreographed. 3D postcard images are mixed with found footage, re-photographed film and video, and combined with the audio to fragment the information and aggravate the flow of any would-be sequiturs." --J.M.

Expulsion (1989); Super-8mm, color, sound, 10 minutes.

"A compilation of found and live footage assembled in such a way as to present a different, more ambiguous view of Ireland and its predominant religion, Catholicism, in a fragmented and frantic way, liberally peppered with visual and aural references to a main aspect of the religion — patriarchy. This is coupled with a brief hint at an ancient Irish space program as a way to rationalize the presence of the many round towers that exist there. The stereotypical image of the peasant is cut alongside images of recognizably American characters emphasizing the blurring of distinctions and confused identity that occurs when cultures are melded together as the cannonball of global internationalism picks up speed." --J.M.

"Molly Bawm, why leave me pining
while lonely waiting here for you
the stars above are brightly shining
because they've nothing else to do..."

—John McCormack
A Legend of Parts (1990); Super-8mm, color, sound on cassette, 8 minutes. Murray returns to her images the way some filmmakers return to the same actors in film after film. Her films dissect the patriarchal eye implicit in disparate footage from kitschy porn to Disneyesque ski movies. Images and sounds are related by Murray’s understanding (and efforts to frustrate) our all-encompassing urge to construct narratives, cause-effect connections between things we see and hear.

(E.C.)

Another View: Selected Works Re-Screened

Sunday, June 24, 1990, 5 p.m.

The Deadman (1989), by Peggy Ahwesh and Keith Sanborn; 16mm, B&W, sound, 38 minutes.

Sodom (1989), by Luther Price; Super-8mm, color, sound on cassette, 21 minutes.

FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

Sunday, June 24, 1990

Street of Forgotten Men (1935); 16mm, B&W, sound, 3 minutes. A short newsreel showing life on the streets of the post-depression Bowery.

Howie (1978), by Chuck Hudina; 16mm, color, sound, 52 minutes. "Howie, a 70 year old alcoholic and ex-sailor, sums up his life in the following terms: ‘Travel and drink, drink and travel, that’s all I’ve ever done.’ The film Howie redefines its subject in terms of the present, documenting Howie’s two year hiatus in a small college town, his confrontations with the townspeople, and his relationship with the filmmaker. A fusion of narrative and documentary, Howie neither romanticizes its subject nor regards it as a specimen for analysis, but emerges as an expression of caring and a restitution of dignity.”

—Elizabeth Cleere

On the Bowery (1956), by Lionel Rogosin; 16mm, B&W, sound, 65 minutes. "...a film made from the inside.... In the bars and on the sidewalks, the camera leans sympathetically across a table or grating towards these men and women who have reached the point of no return, and have reached a hideous sort of happiness achieved at best by gin and whiskey, and at worst by a shared squeeze from a can of metal polish. We are with these people and we hear what they say. And Rogosin insists that we must love them he seems to say, with Dostoyevsky, that ‘the sense of their own degradation is as essential to those reckless unbridled natures as the sense of their own generosity.’”

—Basil Wright, Sight and Sound
OPEN EYES, OPEN EARS, OPEN MOUTHS:
An Evening of Film, Video, Poetry and Performance

Saturday, June 30, 1990


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Splatter Trio - music by Dave Barrett, Myles Boisen, and Gino Robair.

Steve Benson performing with Splatter Trio

Genny Lim

Dorothy Allison

Bye-Bye Brünhilde by Camille Roy; performed by Camille Roy, Gina Hyams, and Dey Ehrlich

Fireworks (1947), by Kenneth Anger; 16mm, B&W, sound, 15 minutes.

Martina's Playhouse (1989), by Peggy Ahwesh; Super-8mm, color, sound, 20 minutes.

She Begins (1989), by Hrafnhildur Gunnarsdottir; 3/4" videotape, 9 minutes.

Boycott Folgers Coffee, advertisement by Neighbor-To-Neighbor, presented by Denise Bergez; 3/4" videotape, 30 seconds.

Against Censorship, work-in-progress by Dirk Dirksen; 3/4" videotape, 10 minute excerpt.

Barrett Watten

Ruthanne Lum McCunn

Lucha Corpi

Secret Garden performed by Kevin Killian and Mark Ewert

Dodie Bellamy and Dennis Cooper in performance

Hermes Bird (1979), by James Broughton; 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes.

Near The Big Chakra (1972), by Anne Severson; 16mm, color, silent, 16 minutes.

Ronnie (1972), by Curt McDowell; 16mm, B&W, sound, 7 minutes.

Sodom (1989), by Luther Price; Super-8mm, color, sound on cassette, 21 minutes.

The San Francisco Bay Area Coalition for Freedom of Expression would like to thank the San Francisco Art Institute and Video Free America for the use of their facilities in making tonight's event possible.
Collage, ambiguity, resonance, accretion—the very nerve center, narrative theory and drive which catalyze the narrative threads of her films. Films which over the past twenty years work through, question and interrogate the layers and gooey webs of desire, oppression, passion, love, work, war, power, politics, relations and their ships. To approach her films is to approach work that doesn’t sit still but moves on and through a series of questions in relation to practices and experiences of various kinds: artistic, social, historical, cinematic, individual/personal, political, unconscious, theoretical. The territory and texture she explores is thick with contradiction and confusion, which is necessary and generative, interrupting and exploding the textures and methods through which flesh and spirit have been formed and deformed. "Any such problematizing, calling into question, or ‘playing off’ of the terms of signification of necessity involves an ‘unfixing’ of meaning, a venturing into ambiguity, an exposing of the signs that constitute and promulgate social inequities." [Rainer] Through a rebellious form of cinema, Rainer travels into and through dominant modes of narrative authority, white privilege and masculinist desires, assumptions and technologies. Maybe it is only in the verb form—as process—that one can get at the substance of and in her work. If anything describes and qualifies her six films from 1972 to 1990, it is that those problems that arise in the spaces between each work—historically, personally, theoretically as well as artistically—engender the questions and nodal moments of what is to follow. The move from dance into film, taking the body into cinema, marked the turn through a desire—"what pushed me toward narrative and ultimately cinema was ‘emotional life’" [Rainer]—for narrative: "The conventions of cinematic narrative seemed to offer more possibilities, were more interesting to me to operate both within and against than were the conventions of dramatic theatrical narrative, i.e., the play dialogue and monologue format. In fact, I didn’t even question it. There was no decision to make. I was already thinking in terms of framing and voice-over." Nonetheless, she refused the conventions of the body in dance, Body into words, words into action, and therefore the conventions of that translation into film.

"More Kicking and Screaming from the Narrative Front/Backwater "—Rainer chewing away at the edifices of narrative authority:

"I didn't need it anymore, I told myself.... What a thrilling idea: to be free of the compelling and detested domination of cinematic narrativity with its unseen, unspoken codes for arranging images and language with a 'coherence, integrity, fullness, and closure,' so lacking in the imperfect reality it purports to mirror. Upon closer examination, however, it became clear that a particular aspect of narrative, namely character, is a consistent presence... it seems to me that I am going to be banging my head against narrative for a long time to come."

**Journeys From Berlin/1971 (1980)**—a “deep-sea dive into the wreck of the psyche and the violence of history” which is utterly and inescapably produced and interrogated by the kicking and screaming from the narrative front/backwater. History is interrogated here (as in all of her recent films) not as the fine-tuned white line of history that appears in the news and history books but as one scarred and burned by individual and collective memory and struggles. From the more formal *Lives of Performers* (1972) to the moving and meditative *Journeys From Berlin/1971* to her most recent film *Privilege* (1990) form: narrative ("... a continual flirtation and side stepping, not fox trotting, but sidestepping,"

 ) slips through the skin making it ideologically, theoretically, and politically necessary to voice those places outside the white line of narrative history. "Play off different, sometimes conflicting authorial voices. And here I'm not talking about balance or both sides of a question like the Almighty news, or about finding a 'new language' for women. I'm talking about registers of complicity/protest/acquiescence within a single shot or scene that do not give a message of despair."

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**THE FILMS OF YVONNE RAINER**

**A Retrospective**

**September 9 - October 7, 1990**
Wanting very much not to produce despair but a kind of active agency — rumination — around the critical questions of vision and social change, this is how Rainer's production of "moral or ethical feelings" just might work. Privilege is engaged in a range of such productions. "Spectator of my dreams—will my filmmaking pr... will my films ever produce you?" Menopause is the film's narrative center, explored through various testimonies, perverse medical documentaries, and an array of information and statistics, constituting Privilege as among the bravest and most poignant films on the taboo and muted topic of women and aging. "Aging is such an emotional subject for me. No one told me how many hours of the day I'd spend mourning — what — my self?" [character in Privilege]

Spinning around and through the discussions of menopause, Privilege examines the contradictory positions among people inhabiting separate areas of narrative and social space. Economic, geographic, and cultural positions are explored in an accretion of detail and embedded narrative, through and at the viewer. The movement from contradiction and risk into narrative progression allows for a political vision to be drawn from the many voices and experiences of struggle. This move marks the substance and form of Privilege. The film could be seen as the apotheosis of Rainer's work, aligning and transforming her debate with narrative—as a site of Oedipal contagion and renewal—by furiously reshaping this thing called woman; that thing which has been so ever-presently and all too easily transferred back into film as of one never aging—or only aging (the wise old woman separated from the woman of desire and passion)—white mind and body.

This has been excerpted from "Yvonne Rainer: Risks, between you and me," by Thyrza Goodeve, from Yvonne Rainer: Declaring Stakes, a monograph produced by Kurt Easterwood, Susanne Fairfax and Laura Poitras, published by the San Francisco Cinematheque (1990). Footnotes have been omitted for space considerations.

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Schedule of Film Screenings

September 9 (Yvonne Rainer in person)

Lives of Performers (1972); 16mm, B&W, sound, 90 minutes.

Trio A (1968/1981); 16mm, B&W, silent, 10 minutes. Directed by Sally Banes.

September 11 - 13 (Yvonne Rainer in person September 11)

Privilege (1990); 16mm, color/B&W, sound, 100 minutes.

September 16

Film About A Woman Who... (1974); 16mm, B&W, sound, 105 minutes.

September 23

Kristina Talking Pictures (1976); 16mm, color/B&W, sound, 90 minutes.

September 30

Journeys From Berlin/1971 (1980); 16mm, color/B&W, sound, 125 minutes.

October 7

The Man Who Envied Women (1985); 16mm, color/B&W, sound 125 minutes.
Tonight’s program marks the beginning of a series showcasing works by local film and video makers. Established to create a forum where local work can be seen and considered on an ongoing basis, this series is a direct reflection of the range and diversity of work being produced in the Bay Area. Tonight’s program represents works by both new and established artists.


“What constitutes pornography? Is it ‘pornographic’ for a woman (artist) to talk about masturbation and present it as art? In *Overlay*, I’m calling into question what pornography is. It is a refutation of the idea that women aren’t sexually stimulated by visual pleasure. In both a playful and serious process of writing/speaking, I am questioning who has access to pornography, sexuality; and whether we even have access to ourselves.”—J.F.L.

*Hymn* (1989), by Claire Dannenbaum; 16mm, B&W, sound, 11 minutes.

*Memory Eye* (1989), by Alfonso Alvarez; 16mm, color, sound, 6 minutes.

“*Memory Eye* examines the process of remembering: a flickering memory, images emerging from childhood, glimpses of an old photo, a familiar sound or smell. This is a filmic exploration of the places where memory is held and the importance of its flickering images. The main body of the film was shot on VHS, Video 8 and Super-8mm, then rephotographed and optically printed as many as six to eight times.”—A.A.

*Transplanted Seven Years Later* (1986), by Leslie Alperin; 16mm, B&W, silent, 2 minutes.

“An experimental portrait of my parents in their backyard. This film was prompted by an incident which made me abruptly aware of my parents’ advancing years and my desire to create a daughter’s version of a home movie.”—L.A.

*Clementine* (1990), by Kurt Keppeler; 16mm, B&W, sound, 10 minutes.

“A miniature anti-road film under amber. *Clementine* is a desperate and futile attempt to throw a cloak over a transitional moment. A sepia ballad on the verge of evaporation. Whole modes of labor, sentiment and narrative are giving and must given away. Notions of causality in particular are cast in doubt. We may no longer know what orders the break of the cue ball; what is really spilling the blood?”—K.K.

*Weather Diary #6, Scenes From a Vacation* (1990), by George Kuchar; 3/4" videotape, 30 minutes.

“This latest installment in the *Weather Diary* series has no natural sounds or running commentary by me...it’s all music on the audio. The social interactions are there, somewhat, but they take a back seat to the passing parade of clouds and springtime thunderstorms in central Oklahoma. The 8mm Video was shot with a small Sony camcorder (TR-5) and edited in-camera. The events depicted are a condensation of a visit which lasted about a month. I got a chance to use all the buttons and special features built into that camcorder plus try out the new wide-angle lens I purchased for it. Although plagued by faulty plumbing, tragic neighbors and dangerous weather, loneliness is absent in this tape (for the most part), and the tone is one of a sing-along travolgue with operatic inclinations.”—G.K.

*Fractious Array* (1990), by Mark Street; 16mm, color, silent, 7 minutes.

“*Fractious Array* was made by hand painting a variety of camera and print stocks. The images were created in a random and at times accidental way. However, the segments of the film are arranged so as to investigate issues concerning editorial manipulations and control within the framework of abstract imagery.”—M.S.
A Different Kind of Green (1989), by Thad Povey; 16mm, color, sound, 6 minutes.
"Gazing back at the child watching me
I glimpse a sense
of the nonsense
that defines me currently."—TP.

JENNIFER MONTGOMERY/MATTHIAS MÜLLER
Both artists in person.
Saturday, September 22, 1990

Home Avenue (1989), by Jennifer Montgomery; Super-8mm, color, sound, 18 minutes.
Home Avenue at its most basic level is a re-telling, from the victim’s point of view, of the experience of being raped. Here the victim is Montgomery herself, who ten years later addresses the camera (and viewer) both as subject and filmmaker. Montgomery’s use of direct address is both therapeutic and assertive, enabling her to redress the terms by which her life has been defined—a victim, “scared and scarred”—while at the same time making “real” (read external) an experience for which there was “no physical evidence.”

It is this notion of “evidence” on which both the rape experience and film turn. Those in positions of authority (the male physician, the mother) are suspicious the act ever happened, because the rapist didn’t ejaculate (thereby reinforcing male dominance, back-handedly). As such, Montgomery’s experience is doubly ignominious, her “innocence masquerading as guilt, facts masquerading as secrets.” In re-presenting (as opposed to confessing) the facts, Home Avenue clears the record of misplaced suspicion and guilt at the same time as it demands a world where openness isn’t an open door to victimization.

Age 12: Love With a Little L (1990), by Jennifer Montgomery; Super-8mm, color, sound, 24 minutes.
Object and subject, and their sometimes attendant corporal corollaries, objectivity and subjectivity (you can’t have one without the other, or you have a lack of communication) are the steadfast and slippery standards against/through which Montgomery’s memory works. Like Home Avenue, autobiography forms the basic material which Montgomery draws on in Age 12.... But here, autobiography could be a dream, or at least its narrative path more closely follows the unreality (logic) of a dream. Or perhaps autobiography is only what Montgomery wants to remember, for there is a confusion in the film as to whether memory is subjected to Montgomery’s wants and wishes, or the other way around. Obviously, the two, Montgomery and her memories, are not mutually exclusive.

“I tell this story through the use of salvaged pieces of memorabilia: fetishized objects, photographs, and correspondence, thus establishing for myself and the viewer a safe distance from the messiness of childhood events....

“These nostalgic remembrances are sporadically interrupted by jarring, awkward, and fleshly scenes from the present—the intervention of adult sexuality.... These scenes function as a kind of reverse flashback: rather than being haunted by the past, it is the eternal return of the present, with the confusions and obscenities of real human contact, that haunts me in my attempts to lay out a neat picture of the past....

“Since my material is autobiographical, the stakes for Truth are even higher—yet in retracing my past I discover
the fault lines of my own memory. There is catharsis both in reconstructing the past and in realizing that your memories are not monolithic. I try to use film to neutralize the spectacular function of nostalgia, and yet validate the act of remembering.” —J.M.

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Aus der Ferne (The Memo Book, 1989), by Matthias Müller; 16mm blow-up of Super-8mm, color, sound, 28 minutes.

"Begun with the AIDS-related death of a close friend, Aus der Ferne is both eulogy and science fiction, closing hands with an indiscriminate contagion without succumbing for fatalism or despair.

"That the site of desire should be so resolutely joined to death—or that the passage of death should follow the lines of love—these are the paradoxes beneath with Müller refashions the bodies of film and maker. While the film is shot throughout with the passing of a friend, it belongs finally to the filmmaker himself, who returns obsessively to his own body to gauge the possibility of going on....

"Aus der Ferne seeks to re-make the male body, not in the service of higher ideals, but in a celebratory flow of communion and despair, mythos and logos."

—Mike Hoolboom, Independent Eye, Toronto (1989)

(K.E.)

FORBIDDEN IMAGES BY BIRGIT AND WILHELM HEIN

Birgit Hein in Person

Co-sponsored by the Goethe-Institut

Thursday September 27, 1990

Birgit and Wilhelm Hein have been influential in German experimental film, nurturing its infancy in the 1960's and lasting long past many of their contemporaries. Their first film was accepted for the fourth International Experimental Film Competition. Together with other filmmakers and film journalists, they founded XScreen, the first exhibition venue for avant-garde film in Germany. Their first international success came with Rohfilm in 1968. In 1971 the paperback Film im Underground by Birgit Hein appeared — the first German publication on the subject of underground film. They organized the Dokumenta Film as Film exhibition in 1977. In an interview in The Independent Eye, Birgit marks this exhibition as the end of their formal film work:

"The hope was that somehow radical avant-garde practice could affect society. After awhile we understood that what we were discussing was anti-art, and that it would all lead, like Dada or Fluxus, to a discussion within the art frame. No one outside the codes understood the work. This was the problem of the separation of art and life, you want to get your life with your art but you can’t. So something has to change.” —B.H.

In 1978 they stopped making films and began doing performance, going outside the art circles to perform in German pubs. They performed with big paper dolls made to masturbate in front of slides and films projected on screens. "This performances were very much [about] getting into life after ten years of structural film,” says Birgit.
When given a grant for a performance and year’s residence in New York, they gradually worked themselves back into film with *Love Stinks* (1982), embarking on their new concern of sex and alienation.

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*Verbotene Bilder (Forbidden Images)*, 1985) by Birgit and Wilhelm Hein; 16mm, color, sound. 90 minutes.

"Everybody has his or her own individual forbidden images, of course. The film doesn’t deal with these phantasies, as a kind of common pornography. The forbidden images in this film come from the forbidden voyeurism of a child, from its suppressed jealousy, that resulted in the loss of the voice for more than three years. It shows a presence of sexual obsession, aggression, hatred and fascination and tries to find the reason for it in the past. Memories, phantasies and dreams are interwoven with reality to one stream of consciousness. When I look at the film now, it beats me how much it tells the truth." —B.H.

(S.F.)

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**A GRIN WITHOUT A CAT**

*by Chris Marker*

*Saturday, September 29, 1990*


The following is excerpted from a review of the original *Le Fond de l’Air est Rouge* (1977) by Will Aitken, Take One, September, 1978:

"...*Le Fond de l’Air est Rouge* is remarkable for what it shows, for how it shows what it shows and finally for what it says.

"What it shows, with startling range, detail and clarity, is the last fifteen years of revolutionary struggle across the world (although emphasis is mainly on events in the West). Subtitled ‘Scenes de la troisieme guerre mondiale — 1966-1977,’ the film divides into two fairly equal parts, the successes and hopes of the sixties — ‘Les mains fragiles’ — and the defeats and pessimism of the seventies — ‘Les mains coupees.’

"There is very little in all this that could be called director Chris Marker’s own footage. He dedicates *Le Fond de l’Air* to ‘the real auteurs of this film...the innumerable cameramen, soundmen, witnesses and militants whose work ceaselessly opposes that of the Powers That Be, the Powers that would have us forget.’...

"The repetition of violence and the futile gestures against it [in the film] would become deadening were Marker not so keen in forwarding one of the central points of his film: that in the twentieth century, revolution can in no way be seen through the Romantic eyes of the nineteenth. His point is not just that Revolution is Hell but that it is a nearly hopeless struggle. The other side has the technology, the money, the training, the experience and all the skilled brutality these combined can muster. They have the air and only at the very edges can we see a tinge of red. *Le Fond de l’Air* gives little reason to hope for success while offering every conceivable reason for continuing the struggle.

"And yet all this is accomplished with us sensing little of the doctrinaire in Marker himself. His commitment to changing a world where the vast majority are allowed to possess one-sixth of its wealth is unquestionable, but he avoids by a long shot being hagiographer of the Left. The footage assembled here is too strong and immediate to allow much idealization...
"Marker — Godard referred to him once as Magic Marker — by moving events into opposition, by providing a consistent, albeit continually revised, viewpoint that is always instructive but too ironic to ever be didactic, gives us back our pasts, provides us with the collective memory he says those in power would deny us. Taking the contradictory headlines, the columns of newsprint, the blotchy wirephotos, the glossy TV newscips, the amateur footage, he somehow fits them all together until they make, not just good sense, but historical and political sense too.

"Beyond imposing a coherent viewpoint, Marker brings a pragmatism of a kind one doesn't expect to find in a film this wide-ranging: he's not so much interested in designating which revolutionary line is the correct one to tow as he is in examining whether the struggles of the Left have given the results originally hoped for...."

Partial Filmography

*Olympia 52 (1952)*
*Dimanche a Pekin (1955)*
*Letter From Siberia (1958)*
*Cuba Si! (1961)*
*La Jetee (1962, released 1964)*
*Le Joli Mai (1963)*
*The Koumiko Mystery (1965)*
*Far From Vietnam (1967, producer, editor)*
*Jour de tournage (1969, released by SLON)*
*Cuba: Battle of the 10,000,000 (1970)*
*Le train en marche (1971, credited to SLON)*
*The Battle of Chile (1975-6, co-producer only)*
*Le Fond de l'Air est Rouge (1977)*
*Sans soleil (1982)*
*A.K. (1985)*
*Homage a Simone Signoret (1986)*

*In 1966, Marker formed the production company, SLON, specifically for the production of Far From Vietnam. In post-May 1968, Marker reactivated SLON (which, as well as being the Russian word for "elephant," is an acronym for Societe pour le Lancement des Oeuvres Nouvelles) for the production and distribution of agit-prop material. The group, like the similarly-inspired Dziga Vertov Group and those filmmakers involved in producing Cinetrips, had a decidedly anti-"auteur" stance, and several of the films were shot by workers from the plants and factories mentioned in the films' titles.*

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**THE IMMEDIATE IMAGE: DIRECT MONTAGE**

_Curated by Konrad Steiner and Nathaniel Dorsky_

_October 4, 1990_

*Pneuma* (1987/90), by Nathaniel Dorsky; 16mm, color, silent, 26 minutes.

*Renga* (1990), by various artists; 16mm, color/B&W, 6 minutes.

*Simulated Experience* (1990), by Caroline Avery; 16mm, color, silent, 30 seconds (shown twice).

*Cassandra* (1990), by Avery; 16mm, color, silent, 2 minutes.

*Remains* (1990), by Konrad Steiner; 16mm, color/B&W, silent, 13 minutes.

*Senseless* (1962), by Ron Rice; 16mm, B&W, sound, 25 minutes.
This group of films illustrate what I'm (now) calling "responsive montage." The emphasis on sequencing of disparate images and the challenge to use all modes of linkage at our disposal may make these works appear overly formal to some. But I believe the density of cinema (or its potential) has not been fully realized. This is especially true in film, where the image largely retains its sensual aspect. As such, a rich contemplative form of expression is possible in contrast to TV/video 's more social, gregarious and sometimes aggressive style.

Responsive montage means simply that the cut is the expression of the response to an image (shot). One can read and/or feel the cuts as movements of images with respect to each other or as indicative of a point of view (e.g. the filmmaker's). The range and depth of montage gesture is enormous. The basic impulse exhibited in this program is reflective or lyrical.

In *Pneuma* texture, color and movement (agitation) are the formal parameters. The image consists of film illuminated, revealing the grain pattern of the substrate on which "pictures" are light-etched. At various times dazzling, sublime and curious, this "inventory" of outdated filmstocks is a delightful parade of effects. Shifting veils, boiling, seething, shimmering liquids, pelting rain, windy amber fields, etc., all there for the eye to imagine: will any two people see the same film? The marvelous repose of the montage allows these "shots" to resonate and contrast with minimally imposed structure. (To make this film function, Dorsky was obliged to withdraw all intention and search for a best fit of the textures at his disposal.) The film's metaphorical achievement is the condensation of the world of perception and thought to elements that insist on Mind's aesthetic responsiveness.

The Japanese verse form of "linked poetry," or *Renga*, later "Haikai," was a form of entertainment at parties. With refinements (Sogi in the late 15th century, Basho's circle in the late 17th, and Buson in the late 18th) the linked poem became a high comic art, not without the poignant lyricism and brevity of the Buddhist ethos. You could think of a renga party as a round of storytelling. Each verse traded was a vivid detail meant to evoke a precise scene, but in a vague enough context for the following player to plausibly respond with a new verse, linking to the prior scene using conventions defined by poetic practices of the ages.

It is kalaidoscopic in this way, and *Renga* reflects this in its montage by an alternation of abstract, fleeting forms and intimate details. As far as we know, this film is unique in being made by 12 people each contributing at every decision, unlike the traditional divisions of labor in Hollywood, or the supreme authority of the personal filmmaker. The film was made for a class of Nathaniel Dorsky's at SFAI. Dorsky served in the role of Renga Master: part consultant, part umpire, part contributor. The resulting work is not a film any of these people could have made, and its strength lies in its dexterity and momentum.

*Simulated Experience.* After the title the film suggests a "critique of pure image," that is, the effect of our image making on our knowledge of the world, filtering, forming, distorting — a creative yet detergent effect. The brevity and "crudeness" characterize Avery's approach: sensual, wary of argument.

*Cassandra* was cursed by prescience without credibility. The paint-on-film idiom is a hard one to work in. The achievement is apparent here when you observe the scaled, reptilian rhythmic aspect transform to the flowing veils-over-veils aspect, when you observe the form of smooth motion that can occur within the rigid stepping (the film was "step-printed" to an effective speed of nine frames-per-second).

The inspiration for *Remains* was the present (1988) form of Berlin, city of remains (ruins) that remains (endures), and that by now has found itself reborn. What will remain of its legacy? The architecture itself is a clue to the spirit of Berlin. Hulking buildings, family "barracks" (however brightly colored), the Nazi-era Olympic Gates which verge on prison walls. The Wall can be set in the context of a culture with an emphatic sense of order, yet a deeply ambivalent obedience to authority.

Finally, the film responds to the anarchy of graffitti on the Wall, as a forum for the public anger and despair, its therapeutic and mischievous aspects, and its effulgent color — a layering of voices and image.
A film called Senseless is what every filmmakers wants to make at some point. One way a diary film can succeed is to embrace life. This could be a cynical title to some, but to Ron Rice it is at its best equanimous. There is a passage when the scope of the film is most illuminated. After discovering passion in nervous protesters scated, blocking the AEC in San Francisco, in a lusty show of a woman, in friends playful for the camera, we get this montage of a bullfight/hot kiss/pregnant woman which clinches it as a celebratory, beatnik ode, striving to comprehend life's breadth (like Jack Chambers' Hart of London). Senselessness is enlightened wonder, and the final shot of a gull flying plays in my mind against the equally moving final image of a gull freezing and dropping in a film about the dark side of passion, Dan Barnett's Dead End Dead End.

—Konrad Steiner

THE BLACK FOLK DRAMAS OF SPENCER WILLIAMS
Program I

Thursday, October 11, 1990

The Blood of Jesus (1941); 16mm, B&W, sound, 50 minutes. Produced by Amergo Films/Sack Amusement, Inc.

Go Down Death (1944); 16mm, B&W, sound, 50 minutes. Produced by Harlemwood/Sack Amusement Corporation.

* * *

"Between 1910 and 1950 scores of individuals and corporations in major cities across the United States entered the genre of Black films. They may have been motivated by profit, altruism, or both. Many of these enterprises were short lived; some never produced any films at all. Some we only fronts for White backers who recognized the potential of a Black consumer market. Of these, several were managed by White independents who specialized in producing all-Black movies for Black theatres. For a few (like the Ebony Film Corporation, and the later ventures of Alfred Sack and the Goldberg Brothers), business was relatively good. Still, their films paled next to those produced by the competition in Hollywood...

"The appeal to Black audiences of these 'race' movies, as they were often called, lay in their complementarity of the social themes that formed constant undercurrents in Afro-American life. Among these were upward mobility, racial pride, social achievement, and patriotism...'Social uplift' films did not constitute the total output of Black filmmaking in the early years of its development.... Mysteries and westerns satisfied the taste of Black audiences for adventure....Whether shaped by Black middle-class aspirations and values, or recast into worn Hollywood formulas, or both, these films offered dreams in place of reality, and valuable emotional options that kept hope alive...

"Only a very few of the films made to cater to a Black consumer market in the 1920s, 1930, and 1940s deliberately tapped the African-American cultural and expressive folk tradition. At least one filmmaker, however, did attempt to experiment with folk forms as suitable material for films and Black film audiences: Spencer Williams.

—Adrienne Laniarc Seward

"Luckily for Williams, sometime in 1940 he grasped the opportunity to make race movies in concert with Alfred Sack in Texas. Of all the white entrepreneurs, only Sack trusted the instincts of black filmmakers. Among the others, Buell lost interest, the Goldbergs focused on imitations of Hollywood. Savini turned to potted musical revues, and Teddy combined buying up old film rights with making eye-rolling Mantan Moreland comedies.

"The alliance of Sack and Williams resulted in a unique opportunity to make race movies outside of Hollywood and New York, thereby inspiring a fleeting black genre, made outside the established circles of technological skill.

"Their first release was The Blood of Jesus, an evangelical tract done in the spirit of black Southern theology. Rather than Hollywood sources, it emerged from a black point of view and focused on an anatomy of black religion. It was like the work of Eloise Gist, a black evangelist who roved the South showing her pious movies in church halls in the 1930s. Williams built on her raw style and carried it into black Southern houses...

"Shamelessly literal and fundamentalist, yet densely packed with powerful symbols, The Blood of Jesus, even if it cannot stand as art, nevertheless was a generic gem because of its anatomy of black folk religion. An assertion of folk faith, the second half of the film becomes a struggle for the woman’s soul. The devil, appropriately dressed in white, topped by a rakish fedora, sends an emissary to claim her. His evil dominance is seen in the same earthy urban terms perceived by ‘de Lawd’ in The Green Pastures: saloons, jitterbugs, a woman in white picking a pocket. Graphic signs literally define the sides in the combat — one pointing ‘To Hell,’ the other ‘To Zion.’ In the end, the God of the Christians wins her soul, for we see an angel above the bedstead and hear heavenly voices singing ‘A Little Child is Coming’ and we see the blood of Jesus drip from the portrait. Is this too fundamentalist? Alfred Sack, just before his death, remembered that The Blood of Jesus ‘was probably the most successful of all Negro films and lived the longest...and possessed that certain chemistry required by the Negro box-office’...

"Williams’ [Go Down Death] spoke to its audience through a primitivism so un-self-conscious that it could be seen as a form of genre film — pristinely black in its advocacy, locale, point of view, social ethic, and its resolutely non-Hollywood folk technique. Williams’ combination of primitive verisimilitude on location and his simplistic theology compare in manner, if not devices, with the earliest achievements of post-War Italian ‘neo-realism.’ Even then, Lugigi Zampa and the other Italians knew far more about filmmaking and therefore merely used primitivism as a style or strategy, in the way an advertisement might use a child’s drawing to sell candy. Nevertheless, even among Afro-Americans, audiences probably divided into indifferent and scoffing Northerners and faithful Southern fundamentalists...

—Thomas Cripps,


Selected Filmography (All films originally 35mm, B&W, sound).

The Blood of Jesus (1941); 50 minutes. Produced by Amergo Films/Sack Amusement, Inc.
Go Down Death (1944); 50 minutes. Produced by Harlemwood/Sack Amusement Corp.
Of One Blood (1945); 60 minutes. Produced by Sack Attractions.
Beale Street Mama (1946); 67 minutes. Produced by Sack Entertainment.
Dirty Gertie from Harlem USA (1946); 60 minutes. Produced by Alfred Sack.
The Girl in Room 20 (1946); 63 minutes. Produced by United Films.
Juke Joint (1947); 67 minutes. Produced by Harlemwood/Sack Attractions

(E.S.T.)
EYE FOR I: VIDEO SELF-PORTRAITS
Program I
Co-sponsored by New American Makers and The Oakland Museum

Friday, October 12, 1990

Tonight, Cinematheque presents the first of two programs which examine from an historical perspective the seemingly inevitable adaptation of the "self-portrait" form by American and European video artists of the last two decades. The videos selected for the two programs are based on a travelling exhibit guest curated by the French literary and film critic/theorist Raymond Bellour that was originally presented at Whitney Museum of American Art in 1989.

"In the mid-1960's, the development of the less expensive portable video camera and player revolutionized the creative use of the medium. Now individual artists had access to equipment that could record electronic moving images directly onto videotape....The video system, unlike film, produces an immediately recorded image; thus, artists working with the video camera could see what they were recording. The instantaneous nature of video invited the reflexive exploration of the process of art making. As they turned the camera on themselves, artists discovered possibilities for a new form of self-portraiture and a representation of the self as both image and process."

—John Hanhardt (Curator, Film and Video, Whitney Museum of American Art)

* * *

Don't Believe I Am an Amazon (Glauben Sie nicht, dass ich eine Amazone bin, 1975), by Ulrike Rosenbach; 11 minutes.
"Women who want to assert themselves are our Amazons — so say men, who even intend that as a compliment. Films about Amazons show them as beautiful, boot-wearing lesbians. Indeed, that is not quite the image of the 'emancipated woman,' even as seen by our product advertisers!? How are we to present ourselves so that we will be taken seriously? All female characteristics are simplified, clichéd; we are not allowed to be multi-faceted, according to society."—U.R.

Three Transitions (1973), by Peter Campus; 5 minutes.
"This was the first tape I made at WGBH. It deals with duality in an ironic sort of way, but also with the video space I could make with this enormous technological tool. The question of the self is most important as the performer tries to expose the illusions the artist has set up. The performer steps through himself in a two-fold three-dimensional space; then removes the surface of his face to reveal the same face; then burns his living image, leaving only blackness."—P.C.

The Space Between the Teeth (1976), by Bill Viola; 9 minutes.
"Standing there with a camera and recorder, I was fascinated by the fact that the (playback) reality of those recording moments was to be found more in the space through the lens of the camera, on the surface of the vidicon tube, than out in the space where I was standing, hearing, smelling, watching, touching. For me, the focus of those moments (when the recorder was going) was on that magic surface, and my conscious concentration was aimed there inside the camera. I realized that it offered the only way out of the scene I was in, through a little aperture and off into another place which would exist beyond the present time and place."—B.V., excerpt from statement for Red Tape, 1975.
**Hyaloïde** (1985), by Danièle and Jacques-Louis Nyst; 27 minutes.

"Clearly **Hyaloïde** owes everything to childhood. The final image leads directly back to the distant, personal past with the little pink shovel, seen throughout the tape, and placed next to a child's photograph, which surely is a photo of Danièle Nyst as a child. But we arrive at this ambiguous image through a detour, that of fiction, a path planted with simultaneously encyclopedic initiatory and ironic associations. The path winds around a series of language games, both written and verbal, which take us from one place to another, and from one image to the next. It is a journey recalling one of the components of the self-portrait, those wild verbal lists that are the distant echo of the great taxonomies of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance...."

—Raymond Bellour

**Vertical Roll** (1972), by Joan Jonas; 20 minutes.

"My first video performance piece, Organic Honey's **Visual Telepathy** (later Organic Honey's **Vertical Roll**), evolved as I found myself continuously investigating my own image-making in the monitor....I became obsessed with following the process of my own theatricality as the images fluctuated between the narcissistic taboo and a more abstract representation. I played the sorceress working with qualities peculiar to video. In this way the video tapes and performances developed simultaneously. In **Vertical Roll**, a tape that came from these investigations, I used the rolling bar as a structuring device to make images that seemed to roll by like frames in a film. Action was performed in relation to the roll. I moved in and out of sync with its rhythm. There are no edits in **Vertical Roll**. The process of taping was a performance."—J.J.

**Vito Acconci: One Minute Memories** (1971-74, compiled in 1989), by Raymond Bellour; 23 minutes.

Between 1971 and 1974, Vito Acconci shot numerous tapes in real time with an almost static camera. With his permission, Raymond Bellour compiled the first minute of each of the twenty-three extant tapes to create **One Minute Memories**.

"I was thinking in terms of video as close-up, video as place where my face on-screen faces a viewer's face off-screen—a place for talk, me talking to you, the viewer. So, at that time, I did a lot of videotapes and the beginning question would always be, 'Where am I in relation to the viewer? Am I face to face? Am I at one end of a table, viewer at the other end? Am I below the viewer? Am I to the side of a viewer?'" —V.A.

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**EYE FOR I: VIDEO SELF-PORTRAITS**

**Program II**

**Saturday, October 13, 1990**

Tonight the Cinematheque presents a second program of video self-portraits selected from a travelling exhibition curated by the French theorist and critic Raymond Bellour.

"The self-portrait [in literature] is distinguished from autobiography by the absence of a story one is obliged to follow. Narration is subordinated in the former to a logic, a collage of elements ordered according to a series of rubrics, or thematic types. The self-portrait clings to the analogical, the metaphorical, the poetic, far more than
to the narrative. Its coherence lies in a system of remembrances, afterthoughts, superimpositions, correspondences. It thus takes on the appearance of discontinuity, of anachronistic juxtaposition, of montage. Where autobiography closes in on the life it recounts, the self-portrait opens itself up to a limitless totality. The self-portraitist announces: 'I'm not going to tell you what I've done, but I am going to try to tell you who I am.'...

"The tradition [of the self-portrait] is to be found, with all the expected displacements, in certain obscure corners of the modern cinema. Here the impossible autobiography of cinema tends toward the forms of the self-portrait in various ways, more or less fragmentary, more or less developed. And it is this same movement that appeared about fifteen years ago in video art, only endowed with a new force and specific possibilities. This happened first in American video art, which took shape in this sense at the beginning of the 1970s. Soon after, the same idea took hold in European video art, with both similar effect and undeniable difference, especially in light of the more profound connection European video art had maintained with cinema...."


* * *

**The Contradiction of Memories (Der Widerspruch die Erinnerungen, 1982),** by Marcel Odenbach; 13 minutes.

"Chains of associations along a drive, set to the rhythm of a Steve Reich composition. Reality and imagination alternate with one another; caesuras mark losses of information and simultaneously allow new memories to emerge. Or, also: the story of a friendship (with Rudolf), the interchangeable, or double identity of both friends, the interchangeability of their actions." —M.O.

**Portrobot (1984),** by Gerd Belz; 5.5 minutes.

"A self-portrait realized as an electronic first ascent of the head and upper body by the video camera. All editing took place during recording, by proper application of the 'Live-assemblecut,' i.e., by making use of the pause/play function while recording. The sound consists of the mechanical clicking of the on/off switch. It was recorded directly from the machine. I chose to have editing and sound rhythm correspond with each other in a mechanical way. Portrobot is derived from the French. The term stands for the vague sketch of a criminal yet to be caught, made up of the descriptions of various eyewitnesses. Images valid for the time being." —G.B.

**The Looking Glass (1981),** by Juan Downey; 28 minutes.

"...Las Meninas, a painting by Velasquez that reflected across the gallery in a small mirror. The magic atmosphere of the full room, where the natural light entering from a side window, enveloped me many times, in the illusion that I was within the Baroque space of the painting, as if it were possible for me to walk around the fuzzy-edged figures of the Maids. I could feel my body disappearing behind the Infanta's bright silky torso: my skin becoming brown ochre and painterly-textured. Charged with fire many times, after these total art experiences, I would have to rush to the men's room and quickly throw cold water on my face, heart beating fast, blood rushing to my head, similar to an orgasm during which I visualized the voluptuousness of the Italian paintings on the second floor."

—J.D.

**Scénario du film Passion (1982),** by Jean-Luc Godard; 54 minutes.

"I didn't want to write the screenplay, I wanted to see it. It's actually a quite terrible story, because it goes back to the Bible. The question is, can you see the Law, or has the Law already been seen, and then written on tablets by Moses. I personally think that you see the world first, and then it's written. And with the world represented in Passion, it had to be seen first, to see if it existed, in order to film it." —excerpt from Scénario du film Passion.
THE BLACK FOLK DRAMAS OF SPENCER WILLIAMS
Program II

Sunday, October 14, 1990

Of One Blood (1945); 16mm, B&W, sound 60 minutes.
Produced by Sack Attractions.

Dirty Gertie from Harlem USA (1946); 16mm, B&W, sound, 60 minutes.
Produced by Alfred Sack.

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"...Of One Blood (1945) and Dirty Gertie from Harlem USA (1946) — suggest an on-going flirtation with themes of religious faith. In Dirty Gertie..., which resembles a loosely adapted version of Somerset Maugham's Rain, the allusions are vaguely mystical and psychological rather than tied to any specific tradition in Afro-American fundamentalism. The appearance of a conjure woman, 'Hager' (Hager), played by Williams, doesn't fully succeed in making the cultural connection that her name and role suggest. Of One Blood uses the biblical theme of the Deluge to introduce the story of brothers separated and later reunited. The film is flawed by the incredible circumstances set up in the narrative, and the moral urgency created in the first scenes dissipates all too quickly. In Williams' other films of the 1940s, such as Juke Joint (1947) and The Girl in Room 20 (1946), he entirely abandoned the successful formula that he had used in The Blood of Jesus."

—Adrienne Lanier Seward, Whitney Museum of Modern Art
New American Film and Video Series program notes

DISPUTED IDENTITIES, PART I
Curated by Portia Cobb
Sharon Jue & Portia Cobb in Person
Co-sponsored by San Francisco Camerawork

Saturday, October 20th, 1990

Tonight the Cinematheque and San Francisco Camerawork present the first of two programs which attempt to acknowledge a shared and collective vision between image-makers living within the marginality of the Western Diasporas of Britain and the United States.

Works invited for exhibition in Disputed Identities (which include works by still photographers currently on exhibit at S.F. Camerawork) are representatives of two very different independent sectors. The individual subjectivities are very distinctly and specifically informed by locality, but share in common a reconstructed memory, understanding and experience of transition, migration and institutionalized racism.

The preoccupation is with the reconstruction of cultural identity of a "present" presence here in the "new world," one that often reveals what W.E.B. DuBois once described as the "double-consciousness." It is both individual and multiple and its on-going process is not one that remains fixed or frozen within the fantasy of lost origins.

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**Affirmations** (1991), by Marlon Riggs (U.S.A.); 3/4" videotape, 10 minutes.
This is a powerful provocative continuation of the filmmaker's confrontation with issues surrounding the black gay male identity which was initiated with the previous tape *Tongues Untied*. This time specific dialogic references are given to separation, exile, and displacement from the African-American community.

**Buckwheat: The Dinner Hour** (1989), by Alfonso Moret (U.S.A); 3/4" videotape, 5 minutes.
The acceptable exploitation of a cultural icon is put to the test by Moret as he deconstructs the destructive and demeaning lenses that the American media has provided 'us' of the Buckwheat caricature. Moret then reconstructs Buckwheat with dignity.

**All Orientals Look the Same** (1989), by Valerie Soc (U.S.A.); 3/4" videotape, 2 minutes.
An extract of a longer piece which was created for a multiple monitor installation, *All Orientals...* is a brief, to-the-point confrontation with a cultural misgiving which is often based in racist and culturally ignorant notions and presumptions about cultural identity.

**My Mother Thought She Was Audrey Hepburn** (1989), by Sharon Juc (U.S.A.); 16mm, color, sound, 17 minutes.
Juc proves that the irony of assimilation here in the "new world" is not without humor. *My Mother...* is an autobiographical sketch of her own understanding and grip on the pitfalls of assimilation. Her mother's cultural identity is won over by that of Jackie Onasis and Audrey Hepburn, using isolated and collective memories that capture the reality of cultural changes brought about by immigration and disenfranchisement.

**Territories** (1984), by Isaac Julien (U.K.); 16mm, color, sound, 25 minutes.
Julien is the maker of *Looking for Langston* and a founding member of British Sankofa Film and Video Workshop, where this earlier work was produced. Using a montage of images shot at a Notting Hill Carnival, he recreates an atmosphere of public/private boundaries and social divisions in which social identities seem to be constructed.

—Portia Cobb

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**WEBS OF EVIL: TRAFFIC IN SOULS AND SPIES**

**Sunday, October 21, 1990**

**Traffic in Souls** (1913); 16mm, B&W, silent, 50 minutes.

It all began, it seems, back in the '90's when Dr. Parkhurst went into the Tenderloin of New York and came forth with the revelations of the vice world which resulted presently in the famous Lexow investigation, and for twenty years a long sequel of similar revealing movements in many centers... it became apparent to the usually unconscious public that there was a national and international traffic in "white slaves," well organized and capably managed...

Carl Laemmle, the president of Universal... was of short patience with young men who wanted to bother him with such details — especially since Tucker admitted that he wanted to spend $5000 on this picture. That was enough money to make a dozen Imp program pictures. George Loane Tucker found himself and his little white slave idea
talking to themselves in the hall at 1600 Broadway with the door shut behind them. Tucker went back to the studio to report defeat. A conspiracy was born. Five of the enthusiasts plotted to make the picture even without the approval of the big boss, and then, if in last resort he could not be won by a screen demonstration, to pay the costs themselves...

While [Mark M. Dintenfass, owner of the Champion brand pictures on the Universal program] was busy concentrating his attention on the affairs of the Powers-Laemmle war, the boys in the studio were merrily engaged in photographing Traffic in Souls, a scene at a time in odd moments when opportunity permitted, keeping up meanwhile the continuous grind of one and two-reel pictures.... In four weeks the picture was photographed. It was ten reels long, without tites.... It became the text of a violent meeting of the board of directors.

"All right, I'll take the picture off the company's hands and pay $10,000 for it," Laemmle shouted.

Then came a lull, a whispering in conference. Dire suspicion arose in the opposition.

"If you'll put up ten thousand it must be worth a million," taunted the opposition, crying a bid of $25,000. This resulted in the picture remaining the property of Universal...

Traffic in Souls opened at Joe Weber's theatre on Monday afternoon, November 24, 1913. The announcing advertisement read:

**TRAFFIC IN SOULS.** — The sensational motion picture dramatization based on the Rockefeller White Slavery Report and on the investigation of the Vice Trust by District Attorney Whitman — A $200,000 spectacle in 700 scenes with 800 players, showing the traps cunningly laid for young girls by vice agents — Don't miss the most thrilling scene ever staged, the smashing of the Vice Trust.

The picture played to thirty thousand spectators in the first week. There were four showings daily and five on Sunday. The admission price was a flat 25 cents all over the house. In a short time the picture was playing a total of twenty-eight theatres in Greater New York. Its gross receipts totaled approximately $450,000.

—Terry Ramsaye,

*A Million and One Nights: A History of the Motion Picture* (1926)

**Spies (Spione, 1928):** 16mm, B&W, silent, 85 minutes.

After the monumental styles of his two previous films, *Die Nibelungen* (1924) and *Metropolis* (1927), Lang returned to the adventure-film serial form of *Dr. Mabuse* (1922). Master criminal Haghi is a banker who is also a spy. Government agents try in vain to identify and capture him, until one is successful because one of Haghi's spies falls in love with him. Haghi and the agents appear in innumerable disguises. Lang's avoidance of the establishing shot and emphasis on objects, details, expressions, and movement places the film in a paranoid fantasy context. Haghi sits like a spider in his web in a chaotic and violent universe filled with machinery in motion, while in his underground headquarters all is ordered, calm, and rational. Lang's earlier films emphasized the supernatural and mysticism, but here he moves toward a psychological realism built of gestures and expressions. The film retains the episodic form of the serial, and therefore this version, though abridged by half for the American release, still contains the original flavor.

—The Museum of Modern Art
Odile & Odette began several years ago, when I first saw a photograph of two girls arm-in-arm, looking up at a couple in a window across a barbwire barrier. The poet Norma Cole had found the photograph in a newspaper somewhere (Liberation in Paris?), named the girls Odile & Odette, and had written a dialogue for them. I was immediately drawn to the two girls in the photograph, and I began to write letters to them. At various times over the course of this correspondence, Odile & Odette became Norma & my wife, Gret, or my two older sisters, or other women & men, or word & image, Old World & New World, past & future, good & evil....They came to represent the relation between dualities. I could address anything I wanted to say to them. Last February I went to Berlin, ostensibly to cover the Berlin Film Festival for several magazines, but actually to look for Odile & Odette.

What I am most interested in is the relation between words and images; what has been called “the third image,” what happens between the two.

“What I love is the relation of the image and the text, a very difficult relation but which thereby provides truly creative enjoyment, the way poets used to enjoy working on difficult problems of versification. The modern equivalent is to find a relation between text & images.”

Barthes, The Grain of the Voice

Odile & Odette is an ongoing correspondence in word & image, and an inquiry into their relations. It is part lyric, part essay, part travel diary and part memoir. It juxtaposes quotations from appearances (photographs) with quotations from the writings of myself & others. It juxtaposes things which don’t necessarily go together, but as soon as they are placed together, they begin to have to do with one another. They become related. “I am divided for love’s sake, for the chance of union.” The “scale of resemblances & disresemblances” runs from “illustration” to more complicated rhymes. Fact & fiction intermingle, as always.

Somewhere behind it all is the White Swan & the Black Swan of Swan Lake, with the ruined chapel in the distance.

—David Levi Strauss
BLOOD, HISTORY & THE BODY: THE ART OF SILVIA GRUNER
Media/performance artist Silvia Gruner in person
Co-sponsored by Headlands Center for the Arts and Galeria de la Raza

Saturday, October 27, 1990

Silvia Gruner was born in Mexico City where she presently lives and works.

"Silvia Gruner’s work, with the simplest of materials, opens up a wealth of associations that speak of Mexico’s history, religion, economics and ecological problems... The strength of Gruner’s work lies in her facility for visual, philosophical and historical languages. There is an interesting simultaneity in her work, where a multiplicity of time and identity operate, creating a dialectical argument, a forum of questioning and reclaiming.

“A major elemental theme of Gruner’s work is the crossing of borders/boundaries. This is most obviously evident in her inter-disciplinary approach to artmaking. Sculpture, installation, video, photography, film, assemblage are all equally utilized and developed. She is both literally and figuratively multi-lingual.”

—Mark Alice Durant

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I Am That Symmetry (Yo Soy Esa Simetría, 1990) performance

“I am that symmetry — I am the act that annuls my desires.” —Paul Valery

In this piece my body is represented as a “still life” ready to be examined by the audience through magnifying glasses. The text by Paul Valery tries to describe, watch and quantify the body as a measurable object.

Arena (1986); Super 8mm, silent, 6 minutes.
In this film I explore the physical erosion of the body caused by the repetitious rolling of my body down a sand dune.

The Original Sin/Reproduction (El Pecaso Original/Reproduction, 1978); Super-8mm, silent, 5 minutes.
This is a self portrait that explores the representation of women in art. I embody both the physical poses and the psychological roles adopted by the models and deconstruct them through irreverent acting and a hysterical and accelerated camera operated by me.

Untitled (Sin Titulo, 1987); Super-8mm; color, silent, 6 minutes.
This film is a diptych in which I use my skin as a screen, both absorbent and reflective. That is, it becomes a receptacle for memory.

Gypsy Song (Cancion Gitana, 1987); Super-8mm, color, sound, 3 minutes.
This short film uses sound to react to a state of friction within a love relationship.

Question (Pregunta, 1988); Super-8mm, B&W, silent, 6 minutes.
This film explores the ephemeral nature of film and memory — “Is there anything more tenacious than memory?” “Yes, forgetting.”

The Flight (El Vuelo, 1989); 3/4” videotape, 19 minutes.
El Vuelo is about the simultaneous expression of contradictory states of mind: death and desire; escape and returning; flying and being bound to the ground. This videotape was part of a cumulative installation that also incorporated sculptural structures, objects and a performance.

—Silvia Gruner
Tonight, the Cinematheque presents three bone-chillin’ masterpieces of low budget Mexican horror. Dating form the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, these films assimilated the form of 30’s and 40’s Hollywood horror into a decidedly Mexican product.

“During the 50’s, 60’s and early 70’s, the horror/chiller genre proved to be an integral part of Mexico’s film industry. Familiar beings of terror mythology turned up in one form or another; vampires and mad doctors rubbed shoulders with Aztec curses or witches. Produced on modest budgets, many of these films managed to evoke an effective atmosphere in keeping with their eerie or Gothic themes.

* * *

**The Vampire’s Coffin** (1958), by Fernando Mendez; 16mm, B&W, sound, 85 minutes.
An undead fiend returns in this slightly campy chiller in the traditional vein. A doctor, seeking to investigate the truth behind whether or not there really was a vampire, removes the staked corpse form its crypt. A petty crook, trying to steal a valuable medallion from the body, removes the stake from the vampire’s heart...and the city becomes the happy haunting ground for the blood-hungry Count Lavud who plans to make the film’s heroine his undead bride.

**The Robot vs. The Aztec Mummy (La Momia Azteca Contra El Roboto Humano)**, by Rafael Portillo; 16mm, B&W, sound, 65 minutes.
Dr. Krupp, the villain of *Curse of the Aztec Mummy*, returns once again (even after his supposedly “certain” death in the last film), still eager to get his greedy hands on the Aztec treasure. But this time he has a weapon to deal with, the unstoppable Aztec guardian mummy; a “human robot” powered by radium that will destroy the undead creature...or at least its supposed to.

**The Brainiac (El Baron del Terror)**, by Chano Ureta; 16mm, B&W, silent, 65 minutes.
A baron accused of many sordid misbehaviors, including sorcery and the “seduction of other men’s wives”, is burned alive by order of the inquisition. While inflamed he vows to return 300 years later in order to avenge his death. Flash forward to 1960 and the Baron has returned to keep his promise via comet. Something must have happened during those 300 years — although he may look suave, underneath there is a creature whose appetite in inclined towards sucking the brains out of his victim’s heads.

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**MATTRESS**
A Sound Picture
by Jun Jalhuena
Eye Gallery, 4pm - 9pm.

**October 30 - November 6, 1990**

IT’S NEVER TOO LATE TO BE OUT OF DATE, THE HI-STORY’S CALLED HISTORY, THE TERRAIN IS TALK, HEAVY ON THE SAVVY CAUSE IT’S STICKY, SAYS HELLO LIKE UP YOUR NOSE, SO YOU FOAM IN THE MOUTH AND GOT A MATTRESS FOR LIPS, IT’S A KIND OF CONFUSED CARRESS.
**MATTRESS** is basically prerecorded sound and mattresses in a room with a big picture window overlooking the Greyhound bus station. It’s a set-up, with the light changing to night. Jun Jalbuena works with media and is based in San Francisco.

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180min. cycle

tape 1
EXPLORER IN THE MISSION (VISIONARY)
EXPLORERS DEMAND DESIRE
BOREDOM KILLS THE KINGDOM (THE MOB DOES THE JOB)
ABSOLUTE BLACK
I SAW YOU EAT EACH OTHER
HUMOR EXPLOITS THE SPIRALING RHYTHM OF LANGUAGE
ROMEO YOU’RE A BLAST
GOD IS DEAD (STOP FUCKING ME UP WITH YOUR LOOKS)
SNORE

tape 2
PERFECT LOVE - IT’S AN OPEN SECRET
THE GAS WAR IS A GAS (PRETTY COOL LADY THAT WOMAN)
PLEASE DON’T GO (MAGELLAN - LAND ON WATER)
I STILL SEE YOU EATING EACH OTHER
THUNDER STORM

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THE GALLERY IS NEUTRAL, BUT IT’S GROSS, IT’S FULL OF ECHOES, SOUND RE-SOUNDS, KEEPS BOUNCING ALL OVER THE PLACE AND WARMS YOU UP TIGHT WITH ITS RAP.

MATTRESS IS A CUSHION FOR LIARS.
CUSHIONS THE IMPACT
WATERS IT DOWN WITH A FLOOD
LIKE SHIT HITTING THE FAN.

DISPLACEMENT AND REPLACEMENT
RE-SITUATING THE HI-STORY IN THE GROSSNESS OF A STERILE CHAMBER. IT’S SO FUCKING PERSONAL, IT’S FUCKING PUBLIC.
BASICALLY YOU GOT THIS GOD THING GOING ON,
HEARING THE VIBRATIONS OF A BIG MOUTH.
TOUCHING THE ORAL TRADITION
AND THE FIRE POWER OF THE BURNING TONGUE
TALKING, EATING AND ROMANCE.

VOICE AND REJOICE
BE HEARD AND BE A HERD
GO ON THE RAMPAGE, THIS PAGE OF HISTORY IS YOURS.
THE MOB DOES THE JOB.
"SET UP THE MATTRESSES" IN AMERICAN GANG WAR MYTHOLOGY, THE SOLDIERS OF THE MOB FORTIFY THEMSELVES IN A ROOM FULL OF MATTRESSES. IT WAS AN ASYLUM RIDDLED WITH BULLETS. IT LEFT YOU NUTS, WELL HUNG, OR ELECTRIC LIKE GLOW BABIES. THE RHYTHM IS HUMAN AND INSANE, WARM AND BLOODY, WARFARE FOR WELLFARE, THEY LEARN WHEN THEY BURN, DEFACE AND ERASE, FIRST TEAR THEIR FUCKING FACES OFF, THEN WIPE 'EM OUT, OR PUT IT THIS WAY, DISMEMBER THEIR MEMBER AND THEY'LL REALLY REMEMBER.
INSULT GETS RESULTS, IT ALWAYS WORKS, MAKE 'EM MINIMAL, IT'S CLEANER THAT WAY.

COMMENTS: THE SITUATION IS THICK, AND THE TIME FRAME IS A FUCKING LONG STRECH, STRECH OUT 'CAUSE YOU'RE STRESSED OUT, IS THE 3 HOUR COMPONENT FEASIBLE?

—JJ

LIVING IN THE AMERICAN DREAM
Films and Videotapes by Lewis Klahr, Tom Rhoads and Eric Saks

Saturday, November 10, 1990

Tonight’s program consists of work that subverts the familiar world of pop commodity and communication, transforming everyday objects into absurd, compelling icons.

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Mr. Wonderful (1988), by Tom Rhoads; Super-8mm, color, sound, 10 minutes.
Positive-reinforcement with the spooky, frozen image of Mr. Rogers. Three entire songs and lots of words to live by. Do you leave your children alone with this man?

Tales From the Forgotten Future, Part Two: Five O’Clock Worlds (1990), by Lewis Klahr.

Klahr’s films combine drawn and painted images with cut-out photographs, objects and occasional live footage in collages describing a surreal interior Americana. These three installments continue his four-part cut-out animation series, all of which “integrate the dream logic of an experimental film with the emotional continuity of a Hollywood feature” (L.K.)
Tales From the Forgotten Future consists of nine films in three parts. Five O’ Clock Worlds is the second part, comprised of the following films:

The Organ Minder’s Gronkey (1990), by Lewis Klahr; Super-8mm, color/B&W, sound, 16 minutes.
The main character of The Organ Minder’s Gronkey wanders over a still image of cars on a freeway, their stillness and anachronism implying, not a photograph, but frozen time. His search for “organ minders” seems impossibly distant as he rests in a decaying YMCA in 1957.
Hi-Fi Cadets (1990), by Lewis Klahr; Super-8mm, color/B&W, sound, 10 minutes.

"Real" and imaginary photographs are increasingly indistinguishable in Hi-Fi Cadets. The fantastic and the everyday are combined, given equal weightlessness, floating on the surface of an unfamiliar space. Sailing ships succumb to dragons under a boundless sky of TV white noise and JFK drinks Mr. Boston Lemon Gin while a high school teacher visits outer space in a coffee cup.

Verdant Sonar (1990), by Lewis Klahr; Super-8mm, color/B&W, sound, 2.5 minutes.

Verdant Sonar builds a noirish crime/escape fantasy out of music and the most minimal visual elements.

Don From Lakewood (1989), by Eric Saks and Pat Tierney; 3/4" videotape, 22 minutes.

You Talk/I Buy (1990), by Eric Saks; 3/4" videotape, 8 minutes.

"When Fisher-Price introduced its ‘Pixelvision’ camcorder to the American market a few years ago, the company really only meant it as a toy for kids. But here was an actual video camera available for about $100; the word quickly got around to the various media communities, and soon all sorts of artmakers were exploring its potential...Los Angeles filmmaker Eric Saks is the first filmmaker I’ve heard of who’s really exploring and promoting the use of Pixelvision beyond its toy intentions. The camera is a curious anomaly, says Saks, because it’s not really a new technology, but a ‘divergence from technical development’ that’s extremely low-fi. In addition, Fisher Price no longer makes them, and although some stores still carry them, it’s a medium that could very soon become extinct.

"The soundtrack (of Saks’ and Pat Tierney’s Don From Lakewood) is a series of phone conversations Tierney had with a furniture salesman in L.A. from whom he’s trying to buy a couch. It’s illustrated with cardboard sets and puppet figures...the Pixelvision image giving it a seedy used-furniture store tone..."

"In You Talk/I Buy Saks uses a similar technique; juxtaposing his telephone conversation with a used car salesman (‘I’ll give you a deal on everything’) against a collage of car parts, talking thumbs, old home movies and Saks himself wearing an indefinite headpiece. Since the salesman does all the talking, the video acts as Saks’ reply."

—Kurt Wolff, Bay Guardian

(E.C.)

Framing Cinema: A Re-presentation

Sunday, November 11, 1990, 5 p.m.

Lights (1964-66), by Marie Menken; 16mm, color, silent, 6 minutes.

New York Street Scene and Brooklyn Bridge (both 1897), Lumièrc Productions; 16mm, B&W, silent, approx. 1 minute each at 16 f.p.s.

Window (1964), by Ken Jacobs; 16mm, color, silent, 12 minutes at 16 f.p.s.
3/60 Trees in Autumn (1960), by Kurt Kren; 16mm, B&W, sound, 5 minutes.

Sirius Remembered (1959), by Stan Brakhage; 16mm, color, silent, 12 minutes.

Boston Fire (1979), by Peter Hutton; 16mm, B&W, silent, 8 minutes.

Notes on the Circus (1966), by Jonas Mekas; 16mm, color, sound, 12 minutes.

TOO EARLY, TOO LATE
by Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet

Sunday, November 11, 1990

Too Early, Too Late (1981), directed by Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet; 16mm, color, sound, 100 minutes. Photography by Willy Lubtchansky, Caroline Champetier, Robert Alazraki and Marguerite Perlado; script by Straub and Huillet, based on the writings of Friedrich Engels and Mahmoud Hussein.

"...Central to the unique impact of Too Early, Too Late...is the resonance it gives to specific places, particularly in the second part; no other film has come even remotely close to making me feel I’ve been to Egypt, which this film does. A lot of this has to do with tempo, rhythm, pacing: the sight and sound of a donkey pulling a cart down a road towards the camera is recorded in long shot and at leisure, with no sense of either ellipsis or dramatic underlining according to any principle other than the placement of camera and microphone in relation to the event. The extraordinary result of this technique is that one almost feels able to taste these places, to contemplate them — observe and think about them. Some spectators find this activity tedious; many of the first spectators of Jacques Tati’s Playtime complained about it in a comparable manner, claiming that “nothing happens.” Yet the significant relationship between Straub-Huillet’s long shots and Tati’s is that something is always taking place in them, if only the spectator can learn to watch and listen without expecting to be led by the nose through the sequence.

"Discovering this capacity in one’s self is part of the experience the film potentially offers. Is there any other film about the countryside and landscape — barring only such special cases as James Benning’s work and Snow’s La Region centrale — in which something is always happening in the shot? It’s the absence of plot and characters that causes one’s initial feelings of loss, absence and/or boredom; yet once the feel and complexity of these places begin to seep into one’s consciousness, without the confusions and distractions of a story or a too-rigid thesis that might regiment or codify them, something at once mysterious and materialistic starts to take place. (Many American critics, myself included, have committed the error of identifying the mysterious aspect of the film as ‘religious’ — an assumption I believe a European critic with more familiarity with a Marxist tradition would be less likely to make. It is ideologically interesting that Americans find it difficult to recognize any intense practice that is not capitalistic under any category except religion or mysticism. The intensity of Straub-Huillet’s materialism may indeed seem ‘religious’ and/or ‘mystical,’ but such labels in this case may well run the risk of confusing more than they clarify.) Too Early, Too Late may have no characters, but it is the most densely populated and inhabited of all Straub-Huillet’s films — a paradox that the entire film is structured around...."

"...[In overpopulated Egypt], the fields are no longer empty, fellahs work there, one can no longer go anywhere and film anyone any which way. The terrain of performance again becomes the territory of others. The Straubs (whoever knows their films realizes that they’re intransigent on this matter) accord much importance to the fact that a filmmaker should not disturb those whom he films. One therefore has to see the second part of Too Early, Too Late as an odd performance, made up of approaches and retreats, where the filmmakers, less meteorologists than acupuncturists, search for the spot — the only spot, the right spot — where their camera can catch people without bothering them. Two dangers immediately present themselves: exotic tourism and the invisible camera. Too close, too far. In a lengthy 'scene,' the camera is planted in front of a factory gate and allows one to see Egyptian workers who pass, enter and leave. Too close for them not to see the camera, too far away for them to be tempted to go towards it. To find this point, this moral point, is at this moment the entire art of the Straubs. With perhaps the hope that the 'extras' thus filmed, the camera and the fragile crew 'hidden' right in the middle of a field or a vacant lot would only be an accident of the landscape, a gentle scarecrow, another mirage carried by the wind.

"These scruples are astonishing. They are not fashionable. To shoot a film, especially in the country, means generally to devastate everything, disrupt the lives of people while manufacturing country snapshots, local color, rancid back-to-nature museum pieces. Because the cinema belongs to the city and no one knows exactly what a 'peasant cinema' would be, anchored in the lived experience, the space-time of peasants. It is necessary therefore to see the Straubs, city inhabitants, mainland navigators, as lost. It is necessary to see them in the middle of the field, moistened fingers raised to catch the wind and ears pricked up to hear what's it's saying. So the most naked sensations serve as a compass. Everything else, ethics and aesthetics, content and form, derives from this."


Filmography:

* Machorka-Muff (1962)  
* Not Reconciled (1965)  
* Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach (1967)  
* The Bridegroom, the Comedienne and the Pimp (1968)  
* Othon (1969)  
* History Lessons (1972)  
* Introduction to Arnold Schoenberg’s “Accompaniment to a Cinematographic Scene” (1972)  
* Moses and Aaron (1975)  
* Fortini-Cani (1976)  
* “Every Revolution Is a Throw of the Dice” (1977)  
* From the Cloud to the Resistance (1978)  
* Too Early, Too Late (1981)  
* En Rachdchant (1982)  
* Class Relations (1984)  
* The Death of Empedocles (1987)

**Jean-Marie Straub**  
Born 1933, Metz, Lorraine  
**Danièle Huillet**  
Born 1936, Paris  

(K.E.)
JOURNEYS TO MISREPRESENTATION

Featuring:
Tribulation 99: Alien Anomalies Under America by Craig Baldwin
Filmmaker Craig Baldwin in Person

Thursday, November 15, 1990

Know Your Enemy (1967?), produced by the U.S. Army. 3 minute excerpt.
U.S. Army editor “Max” deconstructs and re-contextualizes an appropriated discourse of the ‘Other’.

Crisis in the Americas (1985), produced by the Coalition for Peace through Strength. 4 minute excerpt.
The plane that the CIA camera-rigged to frame the Sandinistas with a very ambiguous photo turned out to be the same one—The Fat Lady—later shot down with Eugene Hasenfus aboard.

Attack on the Americas (1980), produced by the Coalition for Peace through Strength. 7 minute excerpt.
Jean Kirkpatrick bemoans the loss of the canal. Plus the familiar ‘Oil Factor’.

Civil Defense Compilation (mid 50’s). 10 minute excerpt.

The Deadly Mantis (1957), produced by William Alland. 2 minute excerpt.
Insect-monster breaks free from giant ice cube after earthquake in the Arctic, super-imposing itself on a lot of stock footage on its way to Washington.

The Mysterians (1957), by Inoshiro Honda. 4 minute excerpt.
Spectacular special effects in one of the last releases from RKO, sold by Howard Hughes so he could devote more time to espionage work. (Lab reject).

Your Chance To Live (mid 70’s?). 6 minute excerpt.
Weird whirlwinds from an unknown producer.

The Black Giant (late 30’s). 4 minute excerpt.
South American adventure/travelog short; source of excellent volcano footage, but shrunken.

Adam of the Andes (early 60’s), produced by Maryknoll Missionaries. 1 minute excerpt.
Quechua India turns to Christ amongst the ruins of Macchu Picchu.

Pan American Bazaar (1940’s). 4 minute excerpt.
Trade show report. Shrunken Kodachrome.

Journey to Banana Land (1950), produced by the United Fruit Co; Technicolor ?. 10 minute excerpt.
The people, the land, the fruit, and the many ways we can eat it. Though they boast of their railroad-building, it was their reneging on a rail agreement that led Arbenz to implement the land reform program of 1954.

Journey to the Seventh Planet (1962), by Sidney Pink. 10 minute excerpt.
Swedish sci-fi cheapie, set in 2001, featuring Cinemagic effects and a heavenly theme song under the end credits.

Ba Balu (1942), with Corinna Mura. 2 minute excerpt.
Latin “soundie” with the dancing Agrillo.
Tribulation 99: Alien Anomalies Under America (1990), by Craig Baldwin; 16mm, B&W/color, sound, 48 minutes.

"...Points out with graphic clarity the way in which our world is on a collision course with destruction...Baldwin has a singular way of bringing together the most fearsome and most glorious aspects of the spiritual warfare of our present age... A timely film of great value to those who stand with God and those that do not."—Zola Levitt (TV talk-show host).

—Craig Baldwin

DISPUTED IDENTITIES, PART II
Curated by Portia Cobb
Valerie Soe & Portia Cobb in person
Co-sponsored by San Francisco Camerawork

Saturday, November 17, 1990

Tonight the San Francisco Cinematheque and San Francisco Camerawork will present its second of two programs designed as pilot screenings to highlight Camerawork’s current exhibition entitled Disputed Identities, which surveys the work of British and American image-makers of color.

Striking similarities in discursive and cinematic representation have led to a powerful kinship of politicized memory. This kinship that is noticeably manifest in the realism and subjectivity of the work of the artists in both the exhibition and film and video programs is not a collaborative trans-Atlantic undertaking, yet it echoes a strong sensibility of shared social, political and historical experiences.

* * *

New Year (1987), by Valerie Soe (USA); 3/4" video installation for two monitors, 5 minutes.
An autobiographical memory of growing up in a family that struggled to hold onto its Chinese culture in the suburbs of Pinole, California. The irony of these childhood memories are grounded and the struggle to maintain a sense of cultural identity becomes unapologetically poignant when juxtaposed with racist and stereotypical images that existed and continue to exist in the American media.

Coffee Coloured Children (1989), by Ngozi A. Onwurah (UK); 16mm, color, sound 15 minutes.
This is a semi-autobiographical narrative fiction based on an unsettling memory of the reality of a child’s perception and defense to racist harassment. It is the tale of the remembrance of self-hatred inflicted as a result of being the offspring of a white mother and a black father and caught in the social barricade of racial prejudice. Profound internalized grief leads two children to the drastic measure of attempting to remove the color of their coffee colored skin with a bleaching cleanser.

Dreaming Rivers (1988), dir. by Martina Attille; produced by the Sankofa Film and Video Workshop (UK); 16mm, color, sound, 30 minutes.
Haunting in its fictionalized depiction of exile and migration brought to life in the memory of three adult children eulogizing their mother, who seemingly died from the despair of being displaced by the unfulfilled promise of migration to the “new world.” The film’s beautiful imagery was inspired by UK painter, Sonja Boyce.
**Measures of Distance** (1988), by Mona Hatoum (UK); 3/4" videotape, 15 minutes.
An exploration of feeling evoked by separation and seemingly self-imposed exile. The Palestinian-born videomaker and performance artist Hatoum integrates intimate photographs of her mother's nude body with handwritten Arabic text of personal letters, her mother's voice and her own translation. All of this is realized against a backdrop of contemporary traumatic social rupture and the politics of displacement.

**Hairpiece: A Film for Nappy Headed People** (1985), by Ayoka Chenzira (USA); 16mm (show on videotape), color, sound, 10 minutes.
A satirical comment on the question of self-image for black women. Chenzira locates the black female in her subjectivity with an historical, internalized view of unattainable ideals of beauty standards as dictated by the dominant white culture.

**One Drop Rule** (1990), by A. Malaika Williams (USA); 3/4" videotape, 25 minutes.
This is yet another approach to the complexities of “two-ness.” A personalized investigation of a law which declared that having one drop of “negro” blood determined which side of the tracks one would live and legally love. Williams examines the long term effects on the psyches of adult children of integrated families, brought about by a rule created by white supremacist ideology in order to preserve Anglo-Saxon civilization.

---Portia Cobb

**Another View: Selected Works Re-Screened**

**Sunday, November 18, 1990, 5 p.m.**

**Crazy** (1987), by Scott Stark; Super-8mm, color, sound, 3 minutes.

**Simulated Experience** (1990), by Caroline Avery; 16mm, color, sound, 30 seconds (shown twice).

**A Different Kind of Green** (1989), by Thad Povey; 16mm, color, sound, 6 minutes.

**Vél and the Earthquake** (1989), by Claire Bain; Super-8mm, color, sound, 3 minutes.

**Fudget’s Budget** (1954), by Robert Cannon (UPA studios); 16mm, color, sound, 7 minutes.

**Weather Diary #6, Scenes from a Vacation** (1990), by George Kuchar; 3/4" videotape, 30 minutes.

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**CHARLES BURNETT’S KILLER OF SHEEP**

*Preceded by Burnett’s Horse*

**Sunday, November 18, 1990**

**Horse** (1972), by Charles Burnett; 16mm, color, sound, 14 minutes.

**Killer of Sheep** (1978), dir. by Burnett; 16mm, B&W, 87 minutes.

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"*Killer of Sheep* is a moving portrait of Stan, a young black man employed in a Los Angeles slaughterhouse. His grueling work, gutting and cleaning carcasses of dead sheep, infects his whole life, including his relationships with his wife, children and friends. Burnett unfolds Stan's story with compassion and honesty. His film hauntingly evokes the physical details and the bittersweet emotions of working-class life. The extraordinary soundtrack, made up of a wide range of musical styles, together with the film's mood and powerful vignettes, dramatically suggest a vast social and historical experience beyond the individual hardship and tragedy of one person."

—Third World Newsreel

"*[Killer of Sheep]* makes its protagonist, Stan, a gun sight for the camera's eye. Stan (Henry Sanders) works in a slaughterhouse where sheep are butchered and processed. The disheartening work deadens the spirit. 'I work myself into my own hell,' he tells a friend with resignation. 'I can't close my eyes at night. Can't get no peace of mind.' Not only is he insomniac, he also is unable to respond to the loving overtures of his supportive wife.

"Though colored by Stan's depression, his surroundings still teem with life. Burnett's script, camera and direction refuse sentimentality; there is a good deal of offhand humor in small touches, visual and musical. There is no neat resolution of the problems raised and mercilessly examined in *Killer of Sheep*. In the end, the living are shown to be both sheep — passively accepting the social system that shuts out spiritual nourishment — and slaughterer."


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**LA DIALECTIQUE PEUT-ELLE CASSER DES BRIQUES**

**CAN DIALECTICS BREAK BRICKS?**

*by René Viénet a.k.a. ?land Gerard Cohen*

*Presented by Keith Sanborn*

*Saturday, November 24, 1990*

This is a situationist film. This is not a situationist film.

*La Dialectique* was made in 1973; the Situationist International disbanded in 1972. René Viénet was a member of the SI from 1963 until February, 1971 when he resigned. As a member of the SI, he wrote on film and its possible uses. His essay entitled "The situationists and new forms of action against politics and art" appeared in *Internationale Situationniste #11* (October 1967). He begins by noting: "Up to now, we have stuck principally to subversion through the utilization of forms, categories inherited from revolutionary struggles principally from the last century." He continues: "I propose that we bring to fulfillment the expression of our contestation by means which proceed with no reference to the past. It is not however a matter of abandoning forms within which we have made battle on the traditional terrain of the surpassing of philosophy, the realization of art, and the abolition of politics; it is a matter of taking through to the end the work of our journal, in areas where it is not yet operational." He then outlines a new offensive against politics and serious culture based on four tactics:

1) experimentation with the détournement of the photo-roman and porno pictures
2) promotion of guerrilla tactics in the mass-media: the seizure of radio and tv stations, pirate radio, etc.
3) the further development of situationist comics and the strategic alteration of public signage
4) the realization of situationist films

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His outline for the realization of "situationist films":

The cinema, which is the newest and most serviceable means of expression of our era has been marking time for 3/4 of a century. By way of review, let us say that it has in fact become the 7th art dear to cinephiles, cine-clubs, PTAS. Let us state that for our purposes the cycle has come to an end (Ince, Stroheim, the one and only L'age d'or, Citizen Kane and Mr. Arkadin, the lettrist films); even if there remain to be discovered at foreign distributors or in cinematheques certain masterpieces, but of a classical and recitative making. Let us appropriate the stammerings of this new writing; let us appropriate above all its most achieved examples, the most modern ones, those which have escaped artistic ideology even more than American B-movies: newsreels, trailers, and above all advertisements.

In the service of the commodity and of the spectacle, that is the least that one can say, but free of its means, advertisements have established the basis of what Eisenstein glimpsed when he spoke of filming The Critique of Political Economy or The German Ideology.

I am confident I could make a film of The decline and fall and the spectacular-commodity economy in a way which would be immediately comprehensible to the proletarians of Watts who are ignorant of the concepts implied in such a title. And this new development of a form will without any doubt deepen and exacerbate the "written" expression of the same problems; this we could verify, for example, by shooting the film Incitement to murder and debauchery before publishing its equivalent in our journal, Correctives to the consciousness of a class which will be the last. The cinema lends itself particularly well, among other possibilities, to the dismantling of the processes of reification. Certainly historical reality can be attained, known and filmed only in the course of a complicated process of mediations which permit consciousness to recognize one moment in another, its end and its action in destiny, its destiny in its end and its action, its own essence in this necessity. A mediation which would be difficult if the empirical existence of the facts themselves was not already a mediated existence which takes on the appearance of immediacy only insofar as the facts have been ripped out of the network of their determinations, placed in an artificial isolation and poorly joined together in the montage of classical cinema. This mediation has been deficient precisely, and must necessarily have been deficient, in the presituationist cinema, which stopped at the point of so-called objective forms, in the taking up of politico-moral concepts, aside from the recitative of a scholarly type with all its hypocrisies. Ibis is more complicated to recognize in reading than to see when filmed and this is only so many banalities. But Godard, the most celebrated of the pro-chinese Swiss, will never be able to comprehend them. He will be able to recuperate, as is his habit, what has come before — that is to say in what has come before to recuperate a word, an idea, like that of film advertisements — he will never do other than to brandish a few novelties taken from elsewhere, a few images, a few star words of the era which have without a doubt a certain resonance, but which he cannot grasp (Bonnot, worker, Marx, made in U.S.A., Pierrot le Fou, Debord, poetry, etc.). He is in fact a child of Mao and coca-cola.

Viénet concludes: "The cinema can express everything, as can an article, a book, a tract or a poster. That is why we must henceforth require that each situationist be capable of making a film, as well as of writing an article (cf. Anti-public relations, [IS] #8, p. 59). Nothing is too beautiful for the blacks of Watts." The cinema is one medium among many — though a privileged one — for articulating revolutionary insights through détournement.

"Détournement" was variously defined by the SI; it is most simply "the reemployment in a new entity of preexisting artistic elements." In "Détournement as Negation and Prelude" (IS #3 December 1959) we are referred to Jorn's détourned paintings, Debord's film Sur le passage de quelques personnes a travers une assez courte unite
de temps, Constant’s projects for detourned sculpture, and Jorn and Debord’s detourned book *Memoires*. In the “Definitions” section of IS #1, (June 1958) we find: “détournement is employed by way of abbreviation for the formula: détournement of prefabricated aesthetic elements. Integration of current or past productions in the arts into a superior construction of the milieu. In this sense there can be no situationist painting or music, but a situationist usage of these means. In a more primitive sense, détournement within old cultural spheres is a method of propaganda, which bears witness to the exhaustion and loss of importance of these spheres.” We note in passing that Viénet’s later essay specifically contradicts the letter if not the spirit of this definition by calling for “films situationnistes.”

This is a situationist film. This is not a situationist film.

With specific reference to film, Debord and Wolman in *Les Levres Nues* #8 (May 1956) published a year or so before the founding of the SI, in “Instructions for détournement” speak of detourning “a sequence from Eisenstein.” They develop their analysis in detail using Griffith:

The powers of the cinema are so extended, and the absence of coordination of these powers so flagrant, that almost all films which surpass the poor average can feed infinite polemics between various spectators or professional critics. Let us add that only the conformism of these people prevents them from finding charms as enticing and faults as glaring in the films of the latter category. To dissipate this risible confusion of values, let us say that *Birth of a Nation* by Griffith, is one of the most important films in the history of the cinema by the mass of new contributions that it represents. On the other hand, it is a racist film: it absolutely does not merit being projected in its current form. But its pure and simple interdiction could pass for regrettable in the domain — secondary but susceptible of improvement — of the cinema. It is much better to detourn it in its entirety, without there being any need whatsoever of changing its montage, by means of a sound track which would make a powerful denunciation of the horrors of the imperialist war and of the activities of the Ku-Klux-Klan which, as one knows, persist even now in the United States.

Such a decidedly moderate détournement is nothing more in sum than the moral equivalent of the restoration of old paintings in museums. But the majority of films do not merit anything more than to be dismembered in order to compose other works. Obviously, this reconversion of preexisting sequences will not go without the concurrent use of other elements: musical, pictorial as well as historical. Since up to now, all the special effects of history, in the cinema, align themselves more or less with the kind of bufooneries of the reconstructions of Guitry, one can make Robespierre say before his death: in spite of so many trials, my experience and the greatness of my task force me to conclude that all is well. If Greek tragedy, opportunely revived, serves us on this occasion to exalt Robespierre, let us imagine in turn, a sequence of the neo-realist sort, before the zinc, for example, of a truckstop bar-one of the truck drivers saying seriously to another: Morality was in the books of the philosophers, we’ve put it into the governing of nations. One sees what this encounter adds as it radiates out to the thought of Maxmilien, to a dictatorship of the proletariat.

*La Dialectique* stands as a model — in fact our only even remotely accessible model even on video since Debord refuses to allow his work to be seen — of détournement in film by a member or former member of the Paris-based SI. The theoretical and technical sophistication of *La Dialectique* compares instructively with such a bludgeon as *The Situationist Life* by Thorsen, a member of the Situationist Bauhaus, started by Nash and a part of the “Second
International.” Whatever one may think of the personal or nationalistic aspects of the expelling of the Scandinavian Nashists and the German Spur Group from the SI, the tension between the realization and suppression of art insisted upon by Debord and his partisans in Paris against the privileged position for “art” maintained by the Second International, clearly gives an edge to La Dialectique which is absent from the film work of the Second International whether by design or default.

Viénet’s project is the heir to a body of nearly twenty years of theoretical reflection and practice by the SI. It is also a product of his interest in and knowledge of China. He taught Chinese at the Faculte des Langues Orientales of the University of Paris. Actuel, rumor and Ralph Rumney have it that recent years have found Viénet in the PRC from which he is now banned for having translated several pamphlets critical of Mao, later at a university in Taiwan, and currently as a stock-broker in either Hong Kong or Taiwan. He made two films in 1977: Chinois: encore un effort pour etre revolutionnaire [Chinese: a little more effort to be revolutionary], and Mao par lui-meme [Mao in his own words], both allegedly scathing critiques of Mao’s China. His interests in Reichian sexual political analysis brought him to make a series of detoured porno films, including L’aubergine est farcie [The eggplant is stuffed], Une soutane n’a pas de bragoue [A cassock has no fly], Les filles de Kamare [The girls of Kamare] and Une petite culotte pour l’ete [A pair of panties for summer]. Viénet’s book, Enragis et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations, soon to be republished in English by Semiotexte, remains the definitive text both on a documentary and an analytical plane on May ’68 by someone who was there.

One should note that much of the dialogue and many of the voiceovers of La Dialectique consist of detourned phrases, drawn from a body of texts which form a code meant to reflect the original texts and to refer to a particular reading of the texts involved by those who understand the connections within the network of allusions. It is fair to say that this practice is both a defensive labyrinth — consciously modeled on the tactics of secret societies in China whose members would use part of a famous line of poetry for a password — intended to deflect the casual spectator or recuperator and an integral, critical and historically-grounded view of the world.

This film is translated and presented without Viénet’s help and without his permission. If you find mistakes or have improvements to offer please let me know. It is done not to parade a corpse embalmed among the sainted heroic dead of some cinematic or political pantheon, but in order to add to historical understanding and to release what remains of its revolutionary analysis and praxis — in short, its orgone energy.

— Keith Sanborn

HAUNTED MEMORIES:
Rare Films by Douglas Sirk & Edgar G. Ulmer

Sunday, November 25, 1990

In the ‘50’s, Douglas Sirk and Edgar G. Ulmer, both German expatriates, made melodramas that, while fulfilling studio and audience demands for conventional stories and happy endings, subverted these conditions and contained implicit social criticism. Through visual elements that function as expressions of emotions disguised in the narrative, and irony (often, as in Sirk’s film, in the title), the proof is provided that the happy ending is impossible.

There’s Always Tomorrow (1955) directed by Douglas Sirk; 70 minutes

“This is the kind of ‘if only’ picture on which soap operas are based: ‘If only I was twenty years younger’; ‘If only his phone hadn’t been busy’; ‘If only I knew you didn’t love me anymore.’ These correspond to a series of invented
choices that, had they been made at some time in the past, would have made everything fine in the present. It is a cheap kind of manipulation of audience wishes — a pornography of feeling. ‘If only she had told me that she loved me’ was the basis of the film. It proved my theory that no true happiness is ever possible — that you can never go back.”

—Douglas Sirk, American Film, April 1988.

“After seeing Douglas Sirk’s films, I am more convinced than ever that love is the best, most insidious, most effective instrument of social control.”

—R.W. Fassbinder.

“And so here the curtains part to reveal the blissful household of Fred MacMurray with perfect wife Joan Bennett (one of the most devastating characters in all cinema: so wretchedly unknowing in her smothering of her husband, so cheerfully oblivious of all the pain around her, the only personage to escape even a tinge of anguish, existing in a dream world of smug politeness; when her husband has to flee to the piazza for a moment of brooding sanity, she calls back to the bedroom with the admonition ‘You might catch a cold’ with the solicitude of pure strangulation) a charming Father Knows Best trio of offspring (watch their faces at the dinner table and try not to quake), and a lucrative toy-manufacturing concession. Enter Barbara Stanwyck. The man who plays with toys grows up but it’s too late. At the end Stanwyck leaves alone on a plane to start anew. And...the unknown is better than the reality we’ve just witnessed. In no other movie does the claustrophobia of domestic rigidity become so shattering as in this Greek drama of a complacent, insulated man becoming aware. After you see it you’ll be glad you’re not straight.”

—Warren Sonbert

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Strange Illusion (1945) directed by Edgar G. Ulmer; 97 minutes

“If there is an odder mix of high- and low-art than Strange Illusion, I’ve never run across it. This ‘noir Hamlet’ was made for Producer’s Releasing Corporation, the lowest of low-budget studios, by Edgar Ulmer, best known for the hauntingly deranged Detour but also director of such engagingly titled items as Girls in Chains and St. Benny the Dip. In [Strange Illusion], a weak-willed young man could (as Hamlet puts it) count himself a king of infinite space, were it not that he has bad dreams. Haunted by his criminologist father’s accidental death, he’s pushed over the edge by the father’s post-mortem letters, and by his mother’s unseemly surrender to a pin-striped and mustachioed lover, engagingly overacted by Warren William. When Mom consigns a treasured portrait of dear old Dad to the back room, all evidence points to foul and most unnatural murder, and the gloomy adolescent concocts fake insanity to ferret out the killer. The production is slapdash (Ulmer typically shot at least sixty set-ups a day at PRC), but with a neurotically urgent style, laced with schoolbook Freudianism and psychiatrists. As one of them explains, hopefully, ‘We’re facing in the direction of normality.’ Ulmer’s film itself faces the other way.”

—Scott Simmon

(E.C.)

N.B.: The Cinematheque was not able to show Ulmer’s Strange Illusion because of the severely degraded quality of the 16mm print rented.
SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF ANDY WARHOL

Thursday, November 29, 1990

Super-Artist Andy Warhol (1967), by Bruce Torbet; 16mm, B&W/color, sound, 23 minutes.
With Warhol, Henry Geldzahler, Billy Name (Linich), Paul Morrissey, Ondine, Edie Sedwick, and many others.

Andy Warhol's Exploding Plastic Inevitable with the Velvet Underground (1967), by Ronald Nameth; 16mm, B&W/color, sound, 22 minutes.

"Andy Warhol’s hellish sensorium, the Exploding Plastic Inevitable, was, while it lasted the most unique and effective discotheque environment prior to the Fillmore/Electric Circus era, and it is safe to say that the EPI has never been equaled. Similarly, Ronald Nameth’s cinematic homage to the EPI stands as the paragon of excellence in the kinetic rock-show genre. Nameth, a colleague of John Cage in several mixed-media environments at the University of Illinois, managed to transform his film into something for more than a mere record of an event...

"EPI was photographed on color and black-and-white stock during one week of performances by Warhol’s troupe [at the defunct Mr. Kelly’s in Chicago; Lou Reed was absent due to a bout of hepatitis]. Because the environment was dark, and because of the flash-cycle of the strobe lights, Nameth shot at eight frames per second and printed the footage at the regular twenty-four fps. In addition he developed a mathematical curve for repeated frames and superimpositions, so that the result is an eerie world of semi-slow motion against an aural background of incredible frenzy...

"Watching the film is like dancing in a strobe room: time stops, motion retards, the body seems separate form the mind. The screen bleeds onto the walls, the seats. Flak bursts of fiery color explode with slow fury. Staccato strobe guns stitch galaxies of silverfish over slow-motion, stop-motion close-ups of the dancers’ dazed ecstatic faces...

"The final shots of Gerard Malanga tossing his head in slow-motion and freezing in several positions create a ghostlike atmosphere, a timeless and ethereal mood that lingers and haunts long after the images fade. Using essentially graphic materials, Nameth rises above a mere graphic exercise: he makes kinetic empathy a new kind of poetry’’

—Gene Youngblood, Expanded Cinema

Taylor Mead Dances (1963), by Paul Morrissey; 16mm, B&W, sound on tape, 16 minutes.
With Taylor Mead, Tony Crowther, Katherine Cody, Mohammed Ali, Roberts Blossom.

"Taylor travels in his white Rolls Royce to The Second City nightclub, where he dances.”

—Paul Morrissey

Anyone who has flipped through the pages of the New York Film-makers’ Cooperative catalog knows this experience: you discover an early film by someone who later became famous. No one is willing to rent it. No one sees the film.

In the same spirit as our 5:00-on-Sunday shows, we thought we’d take a chance on screening this unseen work by the director who went on to direct the "Warhol" films that weren’t Warhol films: Flesh, Trash, L’Amour, Andy Warhol’s Frankenstein, and Andy Warhol’s Dracula. While the content goes further than Morrissey’s terse description — Mead daydreams in the sunlight, picks up an exotic companion, passes out riches to children and
well-wishers, and becomes the center of attention during a Bowery brawl — the film remains the work of a young filmmaker attracted to the glamor of New York high life.

*Scenes from the Life of Andy Warhol* (1990), by Jonas Mekas; 16mm, color, sound, 35 minutes.

With Warhol, Peter Beard, Brigid Berlin (Polk), Joe Dallesandro, Henry Geldzahler, Allen Ginsberg, Tuli Kupferberg, John Lennon, George Maciunas, Paul Morrissey, Nico, Yoko Ono, Peter and Julius Orlovsky, Lee Radziwill, Lou Reed, Barbara Rubin, Ed Sanders, and many, many others.

“Since 1950 I have been keeping a film diary. I have been walking around with my Bolex and reacting to the immediate reality: situation, friends, New York, seasons of the year. On some days I shoot ten frames, on others ten seconds, still on other ten minutes. Or I shoot nothing. When one writes diaries, it’s a retrospective process: you sit down, you look back at your day, and you write it all down. To keep a film, (camera) diary, is to react (with your camera) immediately, now, this instant: either you get it now or you don’t get it at all. To go back and shoot it later would mean restaging, be it events or feelings. To get it now, as it happens, demands the total mastery of ones tools (in this case, Bolex): it has to register my state of felling (and the memories) as I react. Which also means that I had to do all the structuring (editing) right there, during the shooting, in the camera.”

—Jonas Mekas, quoted by P. Adams Sitney in *Visionary Film*

Read More:
David Bourdon, *Warhol*, Harry Adams, 1989

(E.S.T.)

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**KIDLAT TAHIMIK: A DIFFERENT PATH**

Film/videomaker in person

*Preceded by films commemorating DAY WITHOUT ART*

**Saturday, December 1, 1990**

*Confessions* (1971), by Curt McDowell; 16mm, B&W, sound, 16 minutes.

*How To Be a Homosexual, Part II* (1982), by Roger Jacoby; 16mm, color, silent, 8 minute excerpt.

In support of **DAY WITHOUT ART**, a national day of action and mourning in response to the AIDS crisis, Cinematheque will donate all proceeds from tonight’s event to San Francisco AIDS groups.

Kidlat Tahimik, one of the most renowned and resourceful Filipino filmmakers, brings attention to “process” and to unexpected connections, in both the topics of his films and in his own particular brand of filmmaking. Accepting his “third world” budget and equipment, and plugging away “one cup of gas at a time,” Kidlat discovers paths that reveal the steps taken. His woven films, at first glance innocent, simple stories of the people who surround him,
unearth subtle social, cultural and political threads and build unanticipated bridges between them. In his first film, *Perfumed Nightmare* (1977), he journeyed in a Filipino jitney across the bamboo bridge of his heritage and planted the seeds of reflection that are picked up in his latest work, *Take Dera Mon Amour*.

"...one day you will understand the quiet strength of the bamboo".

—from the soundtrack of *Perfumed Nightmare*.

* * *

**Take Dera Mon Amour: Diary of a Bamboo Connection** (1990), videotape, 62 minutes.

"When an irresistible force like 4 year old Haru-Hito (Spring Being) meets an irrepressible cineaste like 45 year old Kidlat Tahimik (Quiet Lightening) . . . in an irreplaceable place like 450 year old Take Dera (Bamboo Temple) . . . some things cosmic (and comic) gotta give" —K.T.

“This video was made over a seven-year period of time (1982-89) and incorporates footage shot on 16mm and transferred to video. It is a diary of the bamboo connection between the crazy family of a Filipino filmmaker and the conservative family of a Buddhist priest in Japan. In his first venture into the video-letter format, Kidlat Tahimik plays around with the medium (reflectively), breaking down cross cultural barriers to reach Haru-Hito, his family, and the audience.”

—Collective for Living Cinema program notes (1990)

**How The West Was Won** (installation)

“This piece is part of a film-cum-performance/installation series which I present around the world. As my films can take 5-10 years to complete, I have branched out to performances and sound-object installations.

“Since my first film, *Perfumed Nightmare* (1977), the colonization of the mind has been central to my work, having been raised in the ‘cocoon of Americanized dreams.’ Third World cultures share the same experience as native Americans — conquistador’s swords and cowboy’s bullets were only the first steps for the ‘taming’ of the wild west (or east or south . . .) I see Hollywood cinema (and the idiot box extension into our living rooms) as modern-day Trojan Horses planted to perpetuate the spinning of this cultural cocoon.” —K.T.

(S.F.)

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**Framing Cinema: A Re-presentation**

**Sunday, December 2, 1990, 5 p.m.**

**Behind the Scenes** (1975), by Ernie Gehr; 16mm, color, sound, 4 minutes.

**I, an Actress** (1977), by George Kuchar; 16mm, B&W, sound, 10 minutes.

**Eaux d’Artifice** (1953), by Kenneth Anger; 16mm, B&W (tinted), sound, 13 minutes.

**Rube and Mandy at Coney Island** (1903), by Edwin S. Porter; 16mm, B&W, silent, 10 minutes at 20 f.p.s.

**9-1-75** (1975), by James Benning; 16mm, color, sound, 22 minutes.

**All My Life** (1966), by Bruce Baillie; 16mm, color, sound, 3 minutes.
THE MECHANIZED EYE:
The Man With the Movie Camera by Dziga Vertov
Preceded by The Camera Goes Along!

Sunday, December 2, 1990

Born Denis Kaufman in 1896, Dziga Vertov (the name means “spinning top”) began working in cinema in 1918. He worked on a film journal (Cinema Weekly) between 1918 and 1919 and his first films were historical compilations and newsreels of everyday life in the new Socialist society. The Man With the Movie Camera is regarded as the culmination of both his filmmaking and his film theory. Its impact is still widely felt in contemporary documentary.

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The Camera Goes Along! (1936), written and edited by Hans Schipulle; 16mm, B&W, sound, 12 minutes. “The Camera Goes Along! is an instructional short subject designed to acquaint German audiences with the newsreel and to explain its production methods, from on-location shooting through the final editing process. Most notable are its views of Nuremberg Party Rallies, the 1936 Winter Olympics, aerial daredevilry, fires, and miscellaneous news events.”

The Museum of Modern Art Circulating Film Library Catalog

The Man With the Movie Camera (1929), by Dziga Vertov; 16mm, B&W, silent, 90 minutes at 18 f.p.s. “Dziga Vertov’s progress in evolving a newsreel technique appropriate to the times was punctuated by a number of manifestos in which he outlined his theoretical position. These manifestos — which, with commendable zeal, demanded the complete annihilation of the fiction-cinema — served mainly to propound the principle of the ‘Kino-eye.’

“The point, briefly, was this. The cine-camera is endowed with all the potentialities of human sight — and more. It can peep with unblinking gaze into every corner of life, observing, selecting and capturing the myriad details of appearance and transaction which constitute the reality of our epoch. The camera should therefore be used to record not the stimulated emotions of paid actors in locales created by the plasterer and set-decorator, but the authentic and unrehearsed behavior of real people in the streets and houses in which we live. All artifice should be eliminated, except in the unavoidable process of editing. And this process should be used to create, from the elements of unvarnished reality, an edifice of fact which would face us with the world, its joys and its sorrows, and hence with our own responsibilities towards and within it.

“(The Man With the Movie Camera) is...about the Kino-eye. It is not only an application of the theory, but at the same time an attempt to prove it. Thus we are shown the cameraman setting up in the most exacting circumstances: climbing by iron rungs up a tall factory chimney; walking along the girders of a bridge; and being hoisted by crane above a surging torrent. The camera can go anywhere. (He fits the telephoto lens.) And see anything. At one point an eye, in big close-up, swivels round in one direction and another; and this is intercut with quick, uncomprehending pans backwards and forth. The iris closes over the lens, and the screen blacks out. To make a film to prove the potentialities of filmmaking — rather than to exploit them — may have an air of circularity. This is only the start.

“Persistently we are shown the mechanics of what we are seeing. The shadow and reflection of the camera appear in the picture; and a woman smiles at the cameraman, miming his cranking action. Slow and fast motion and various split-screen effects are used not only — or even mainly — for dramatic purposes, but to remind us that what is before us is merely an image, and that true reality lay in the subject of the shot. The Man With the Movie
Camera is, in fact, a study in film truth on an almost philosophical level (the levity of its treatment — the fact that it is argued in the mode of fun — does not disqualify this judgement). This film does deliberately what most others try hard to avoid: it destroys its own illusions. It refuses to allow us to accept the screen as a plane of reference for reality, and instead seeks to dissolve all such planes of reference, successively, as soon as they are formed, in the hope that reality will ‘emerge’ from the process not as a creature of screen illusion but as a liberated spirit.”

--Dai Vaughan, Films and Filming, November 1960

ENDLESS AND OTHER FILMS BY DANIEL BARNETT
Filmmaker in person

Thursday, December 6, 1990

The Ogre ((1970); 16mm, B&W, sound, 10 minutes.

Endless (1987-90); 16mm, B&W, silent at 18 f.p.s., 45 minutes.

Popular Songs (1975-78); 16mm, color, sound, 18 minutes.

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I lived in Chicago briefly when I was 19, 26, and 43. Each time I was moved in a way that was assertively and profoundly neutral. The city struck me as the gimbal in a compass of existence, and has been an inspiration in much of my major work. Chicago also flies in the face of my nescience — the feeling that I don’t know what I’m doing, a feeling I have long accepted and which has become a goal of my method — to do without knowing. Chicago knows what it is doing, it is a paradigm of artifice and throws my personal sense of scale into a chasm, a kind of relief. My films live in this chasm beneath the slipping feeling of gaining and losing one’s sense of scale.

The gimbal, an anvil to break the halves of dichotomies, separates the moving and the less moving, lets them rub, and become palpable. The eye, the frame and the world, moving in relation to one another, create a lense to hyperlife.

Being at the gimbal, on the anvil, looking at the picture from the perspective of the frame, requires one to proceed from fallout rather than direct observation. The fallout produces more tools not more data, the data is inferred from the look of the tools, tools used without a reasoned method: a circular version of progress where the quality and style of movement is where the information lies, information of an avowedly hermetic view.

I try, a little reluctantly, to share the hermitage with you this evening, with these three films, together for possible the only time. The films replace chants and practices and it’s hard for me not to get a little pious about them; and not feeling especially voluble, in fact felling pained at words, I would like to beg your indulgence and not discuss them with you in the here and now. However, I would be pleased to answer earnestly posed questions at a future time of mutual convenience (my Phone # can be had through the Cinematheque).
There are people I am glad to have the chance to thank for Endless: Mary Ann Blair for a stimulus and a deep sense of correctness; Hiromi Matsuoka for spiritual guidance from the beginning to whatever degree I ultimately have been able to attain; Konrad Steiner for the concept of “The Lyric Augur”; Nick Dorsky for a fundamental challenge about the limits of cinema; and Carl Castro for a seminal conversation about mathematics and imagery.

The Ogre is my student film, it’s the only film I made completely during my very short career as a grad student in an art school. It remains one of my favorite and most durable films. I made it in order to learn something in particular and I don’t know if I know it yet.

Popular Songs fell together around me as I became magnetized by one side of an RCA VIC mono recording of “Unforgettable Performances of Favorites from the Italian Operatic Repertoire” which is, almost unedited, the soundtrack. The footage is found, though I’ve found myself often involved in the making of very similar work, a mild but inclusive nightmare, hence the undercurrent of malicious glec.

—Daniel Barnett

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37°49'N/122°22'W: NEW BAY AREA WORK
Program II

Saturday, December 8, 1990

El Balance (1990), by Dinorah de Jesús Rodríguez; video, 8 minutes. “A lyrical quest for balance in thematic, formal, cultural, spiritual, organic tones. Animation design by Bábara Sasille. Still photography by Alain Diallo and Liliana Blanco. Original music performed by three Bay Area artists: Ustad HabibKhan with Auschim Chaudhuri; William R. Jack; and Conjunto Céspedes.” —D.R.

Madeleine’s Variety Television #12: Surf Show (1990), directed and produced by Madeleine Altmann, video switching by Philip Jackson; 15 minute excerpt. “MVTV is a live interactive show on Cable Channel 25 every Thursday night at 6 p.m. The Surf Show is a high spirited send up of California beach culture and an assault on broadcast standards. The tumescent humor breaks through the densely mixed and degraded video sources.” —M.A.

Flipper (1990), by Leslie Singer; video, 6 minutes. “Sissy has a vision of being Angie. To be Angie is to be free and cool. Sissy is in love with football player Willie “Flipper” Anderson because with him she can be Angie. Then Angie and Flipper can drive to the disco wearing matching fur coats in a red Jaguar.” —L.S.

Parenthetical Trap (1990), by Emily Cronbach and Elizabeth Day; 16mm, color, sound, 7 minutes. “Originally conceived of as a remake of Disney’s Parent Trap, the Parenthetical Trap was made by the women who are often mistaken for each other. We explore the resentment and affection that accompany mistaken identity. We were concerned with determining the cause of our resemblance — sugar addiction — and with the concept that all women are interchangeable in the movies. This film incorporates 8mm, 16mm, Letraset, and borrowed sound.” —E.C.
San Francisco Cinematheque

Who are you? An Oakland Story (1990), by Portia Cobb; video, 4.5 minutes.
“This short began as an inquiry into the identity of a monadic black woman seen for years in parts of East Bay communities. Dressed in white, she wore a blond wig, and pale white foundation covering her face, hands, and neck. She has been called by some ‘The White Witch’, by others ‘Miss Oakland’, and by a few who have come to know her more intimately, as ‘Frankie’. There are varying speculations as to why she began painting herself white.

“This video was created as part of a longer anthology entitled Unstvilized which was commissioned by the Festival 2000.” —PC.

Marecage (1990), by Rupert Jenkins; Super-8mm, B&W, sound, 7 minutes.
“Marecage is essentially a travelogue - a celluloid trophy from a visit to Spain and Morroco in 1988. The title of the film, a hybrid of ‘maroc’ and ‘collage’, also translates directly from the French as swamp, a state indicative of both the turbulent seasonal landscape and my state of mind at the time.” —R.J.

Protective Coloration (1990), by Scott Stark; 16mm, color, sound, 17.5 minutes.
“In general the title Protective Coloration refers to zebras’ and other animals’ fur patterns, which evolved naturally as a sort of camouflage to allow them to hide from predator. The irony is that it is these same Patterns which make the animals more visible to human predators, since humans are, unlike most other animals, attracted to their visual uniqueness. What evolved as protective coloration now serves as a beacon, especially when the animals are transplanted from their natural habitat. This is a concept that underscores in many ways modern humanity’s relationship to the natural world.

“This idea, though not overtly addressed in the film, provides a context for the film’s more apparent structuring. The images, which overlap onto the optical soundtrack area of the film, generate their own sounds, a process which exemplifies the patterns’ attention-grabbing qualities in the context of modern human society.

“The film is a succession of visual and aural ‘notes’ which are arranged and re-edited into a complex musical architecture, developing intricate rhythms not unlike the complex syncopations found in traditional African music. Elements of sand, dirt, light and shadow cross-reference the film’s emulsion with evolutionary history, and provide a second level of musical structuring through which the first layer is necessarily filtered.” —S.S.

Framing Cinema: A Re-presentation

Sunday, December 9, 1990, 5 p.m.

31/75 Asyl (1975), by Kurt Kren; 16mm, color, silent, 9 minutes.

Rhythmus 23 (1923), by Hans Richter; 16mm, B&W, silent, 3.5 minutes.

Munich-Berlin Walking Trip (1927), by Oskar Fischinger; 16mm, B&W, silent, 4 minutes.

2/60 48 Heads from the Szondi-Test (1960), by Kurt Kren; 16mm, B&W, silent, 5 minutes.

The Melomaniac (1903), by Georges Méliès; 16mm, B&W, silent, 3 minutes.

My Name is Oona (1969), by Gunvor Nelson; 16mm, B&W, sound, 9 minutes.

Mindfall, Parts I and VII (1977-80), by Hollis Frampton; 16mm, color, sound, 36 minutes.
Music is considered to be the purest form of human expression and communication, virtually a universal language. Tonight’s program features two works by artists who have incorporated musical forms, either directly as a musician or indirectly through the rhythms of poetry, to find expression.

This video provides an intimate conversation with jazz musician Nedra Wheeler as she elaborates on the origins of jazz, the importance of family and her commitment to life.

“A Conversation with Nedra grew out of the many conversations Nedra and I often shared while graduate students at an art school. Often time we would stop to say hi, and eventually end up talking for hours about our work and events of the day. This interaction went on for about a year. Finally I decided to sit Nedra down in front of a camera and just let her talk. At the time I had no idea as to where this conversation would lead, but I knew the idea was to good to push aside.

“I used one camera, a soft box light, and a rim light for the background. I think this set-up works because it makes Nedra appear as if she’s sitting in a void. My cameraman, after a trial and error session, suggested photographing Nedra in a lose, somewhat haphazard style. This, he later told me, will reflect the tone, structure and artistic approach jazz music often demand. After viewing the recorded material, I agreed.”

—Jerome Thomas.

*Right On: Poetry on Film* (1971), directed by Herbert Danska; 16mm, color, sound, 77 minutes. Produced by Woodie King.
“This film features The Last Poets, three young black men (Gylan Kain, David Nelson and Felipe Luciano) who recited their poetry on rooftops with the accompaniment of conga drums. The Last Poets drew on the vernacular of the working class, employing ‘street’ language of the time to alert their community to the dangers of racism and to extol the diversity of black life in America.”

—Toney Merritt.

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**SYSTEMS OF AUTHORITY, METHODS OF REPRESSION BY LINDA TADIC**
*With Leslie Thornton’s Adynata*
*Filmmaker Linda Tadic in person*

**Thursday, December 13, 1990**

*Systems of Authority, Methods of Repression* (1990), by Linda Tadic; 16mm, color, sound, 40 minutes.
“The pitting of anti-racist and anti-sexist struggles against one another allow some vocal fighters to dismiss blatantly the existence of either racism or sexism within their lines of action, as if oppression only comes in separate, monolithic forms. Thus, to understand how pervasively dominance operates via the concept of hegemony or of absent totality in plurality is to understand that the work of decolonization will have to continue within the women’s movements.” (Trinh T. Minh-ha)
Using a voice-over recounting her experience as a sexually abused child with politically and commercially invested footage, Linda Tadic globalizes her personal concerns to delineate patriarchal abuse of power. By examining complicities on personal and institutional levels, Tadic questions the nature of language, media, family structures and governmental interest. These seemingly disparate territories are revealed in her combinations of texts, images, and sound as illustrating homologous power stratification — one based on oppression. Systems of Authority, Methods of Repression unravels the self-perpetuations of the paradigms of political and sexual violence by expressing the danger of privatization if separatism is maintained between the different forms and scopes of abuse. She summons strength from the articulation of their interdependencies and offers in Tadic’s words, “a positive and challenging call to action and resistance against personal, social, political, and cultural victimization.”

Adynata (1983), by Leslie Thornton; 16mm, color, sound, 30 minutes.

"In Adynata, within the perceptible -in its endless play- strategies of reading double back, interrogating, abrogating, the order of discourse that establishes a fixity, an invariance, a range, a bias, a dominance in signification. It is an endless mese-en-abyme, an endless disavowal of the privilege of method, of singularity, of a discrete subject of or author of knowledge. Similarly it denies the completeness of specular or pleasurable consumption; its pleasure resides in artifice, in punctae, in the veil that it is, in the lack that it obscures. It is ‘about’ the impossibility of a language capable of closure in relation to truth, about the irrecoverability of signs (films) without loss, as opaque to theoretical appropriation as to pleasurable consumption.

"Adynata is the name of that rhetorical trope which defines a ‘stringing together of impossibilities; sometimes a confession that words fail us.” —L.T.

Through her richly colored and voluptuous images, Leslie Thornton probes the cultural construction of Orientalism within a Western perspective. The density of the images in Adynata seem to contain what is clearly or obscenely Eastern or Western, but her manner of juxtaposition overturns this concrete interpretation and provides instead an ambiguous site where desire is marked simultaneously by racism, imperialism and misogyny. The interplay of the overly saturated images and sounds titillates the viewer/auditor intellectually, politically and sexually. The story never gets told, yet is compelling because it exposes the viewer/auditor as wanting the Otherness of Asia and/or Woman. The extravagance and overdetermination of her collage questions what is seen, what is attributed to it, and the complexity of exoticism.

(C.M.)

LYNN HERSHMAN: RECENT VIDEO WORKS
Videomaker Hershman in person

Saturday, December 15, 1990

Lynn Hershman has achieved an international acclaim for her bitingly honest videotapes. Desire Incorporated and Shadow’s Song offer sharply contrasting explorations into the video essay as personal experience, each marked by Hershman’s unyielding intent to directly confront and implicate the viewer.
Desire Incorporated (1990); 3/4" videotape; 26 minutes.

"In March of 1989, I placed four 'seduction ads' on several local cable stations. These were each 30 seconds long and sold only the idea of 'response,' giving a call back phone number. These ads were randomly aired and the context shifted according to the access at each station, shifting the context from The Black Entertainment station to a sequence on rape of 'Cagney and Lacy.' A wide range of responders phoned, and they were in turn interviewed on video. This tape is about 'the seduction of the media and how it infiltrates the audience with ideas of desire that are then incorporated into our belief systems. The tape also incorporates ideas about the female body as the site of reproductive technology and notes how primal erotic impulses that result from early (non-responsive) fantasy projections become prime sexual motivations later on.'—L.H.

"Lynn Hershman is a master of inductive reasoning. Her daring confessional tapes have leaped the bounds of self-indulgence, infusing television with a forceful 'I,' both particular and communal. Desire Incorporated continues this emotive enterprise, but now emphasizing the medium's role as internuncio between desire and the phantoms that service it. With a powerful pimp like television, Hershman suggests that the eyes have it."

—Steve Seid

Shadow's Song (1990); 3/4" videotape; 32 minutes.
Part 4 of The Electronic Diary

"Two very different people, a black male dog trainer and a white female professor face their mortality when each discovers they have a life threatening illness. The camera itself is used as an instrument with which to record death. One lives, one dies during the process of this work."—L.H.

N.B.: Due to incompatible video playback equipment, The Cinematheque was unable to show Desire Incorporated in its entirety.

Another View: Selected Works Re-Screened

Sunday, December 16, 1990, 5 p.m.

A Legend of Parts (1990), by Julie Murray; Super-8mm, color, sound, 8 minutes.

Age 12: Love with a Little L (1990), by Jennifer Montgomery; Super-8mm, color, sound, 25 minutes.

Blood Story (1990), by Greta Snider; 16mm, color, sound, 3 minutes.

The Original Sin/Reproduction (1987), by Silvia Gruner; Super-8mm, color, silent, 5 minutes.

Gypsy Song (1987), by Silvia Gruner; Super-8mm, color, sound, 3 minutes.

Notes After Long Silence (1989), by Saul Levine; Super-8mm, color, sound, 14 minutes.
"There are things that only an animator can get away with — things like transitions and transformations. Even if you’re telling a story, you can just have someone melt into another character, or radically juxtapose things, or shuffle drawings at random or in rhythmic ways. Animation permits you to take film to its most primal unit: the single frame." —Paul Glabicki

Recurrents (1987), by John Adamczyk; 16mm, color, sound, 6 minutes.
"State-of-the-art computer animation exploring the Mandelbrot set and fractal geometry, a new mathematical technique developed in the 1970s that holds promise in solving certain formerly intractable engineering problems such as the turbulent flow of fluids, and has graphic applications in creating reasonably credible images of chaotic forms like coastlines, mountain ranges, forests, clouds, snowflakes, and organic patterns such as the branching of trees and blood vessels. One property of Mandelbrot-generated forms is ‘self-similarity’: the image can be magnified infinitely and the same geometric patterns will be observed at all levels of magnification — a good model for seeking an ‘order’ underlying apparently chaotic phenomena. Adamczyk and his contemporaries make use of the computer and Mandelbrot mathematics to take the viewer into realms previously unseen in the brief, half-century history of abstract cinema."

—John Luther Schofill, Experimental Film Coalition (Chicago) program notes

Playing with Blocks (1986), by Stephen Kirklys; 16mm, B&W, sound, 8 minutes.
Made at the Rhode Island School of Design, Stephen Kirklys’ Playing With Blocks contrasts clinical and emotional views of the psychological effects of the death of a parent on two children. Kirklys’ own cell animation (reminiscent of Glen Baxter’s non-sequitur cartoons) combines with treated found footage and cutouts of medical and technical diagrams to produce a wry and sombre discourse on childhood trauma and adult self-occupation. One child’s fleeting happiness is played against the other’s pain while the audience is asked to contribute the solution to an algebra problem.

Fecundation (1981), by David Hauptschein; 16mm, color, sound, 9.5 minutes.
Face it: clay animation, tradename Claymation, is usually associated with the technically accomplished but highly commercial work of Will Vinton (The California Raisins). David Hauptschein’s Fecundation, with its suggestive shapes, glistening dews, and razor blades, is about as far-removed from “cute” as clay animation can get. Clearly having to do with repression and aggression in relationships, Hauptschein maintains that the film is equally concerned with digestion. You decide.

Since Fecundation, Hauptschein’s eyesight has deteriorated to the point where he can no longer make or even view films. He still lives in Chicago, and directs his artistic talents towards science fiction writing and public performance of his works.

Face Like a Frog (1987), by Sally Cruikshank; 16mm, color, sound, 5 minutes.
Sally Cruikshank is legendary for her attempts to revive character animation in the tradition of Betty Boop. Most of her films — Quasi at the Quackidoro, Quasi’s Cabaret Trailer — feature the same cast of characters twisting through bizarre misadventures. Quasi’s Cabaret Trailer was produced and marketed in an effort to raise money
for the feature-length Quasi project. Instead of getting Hollywood’s support for her own projects, Cruikshank has been able to turn her talents to creating opening titles for films such as *Ruthless People* and *Mannekin*. Oingo Boingo’s Danny Elfman, who scored *Face Like a Frog*, has also succeeded in Hollywood, crafting music for *Beetlejuice, Batman*, and other projects.

*Under the Sea* (1989), by Paul Glabicki; 16mm, color, sound, 24 minutes.

"...*Under the Sea* required three years of ink drawing, followed by one year of intensive additions of color. Since each drawing in the film is unique, I had to do every aspect of it myself. It would have been impossible for me to delegate the work to an assistant. Even the shooting process is totally personal...

"I began *Under the Sea* immediately upon completion of *Object Conversation* in 1985. I wanted to extend the multilayered visual and aural dialogues of *Object Conversation* into a narrative structure. After continuous years of work on a succession of animated films, I decided to use *Under the Sea* as a surrogate travel opportunity. I began reading novels that involved travel and realized that although they were different in genre, the novels contained overlaps. The books which became my final sources were *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, *Gulliver’s Travels*, *Madame Bovary*, *Frankenstein*, and *The Voyage of the Beagle*.

"I also designed my own hieroglyphic alphabet, which appears throughout the film. The alphabet consists of twenty-six minianimation sequences that range from twelve to twenty-four drawings each. The moving hieroglyphs are very abstract and are all designed as variations on an L-shape, which refers to two sides of the film frame: one vertical side and one horizontal side. I ‘spell’ out words and dialogue with this alphabet as yet another ‘foreign language’ of my own invention. I also have included English titles and subtitles throughout the film, as well as a variety of Japanese Kanji and Kana letter forms/symbols as special messages for my Japanese audiences.

"The animation for *Under the Sea* is the most complex I have ever attempted. The compositions are both abstract and figurative and are designed to be interpreted in a variety of ways. For example, one sequence features a sphere covered with rotating lines and shapes floating over a background of rotating shapes. At one point this sequence seems to refer to Dr. Frankenstein’s sound track dialogue about experiments with electricity — lightning and thunder are also heard on the sound track to cement the connection. Later on, the sequence reappears juxtaposed to Gulliver’s description of the Floating Kingdom. Visual and sound clues appear throughout the film in an attempt to draw the viewer into the multiple transformations and transitions that weave throughout the film.

"The opening title of the film is preceded by two sentences from *Twenty Thousand Leagues*: ‘I was thrown high over the rail of the ship and fell into the sea...but did not lose my presence of mind.’ I would think that this could sum up the experience of entering the animation and sound structure of *Under the Sea*. It seems contradictory, but the film is an abstract-narrative film.

*Under the Sea* represents a kind of finale to one direction in my work. From my first animation experiments in Super-8mm in 1986, I always saw film as an extension of my work in painting and drawing. I have continued to produce non-film work, but animation has dominated my work over the last decade. In both *Object Conversation* and *Under the Sea*, I have become more involved with the unique color and character of each individual drawing. In a real sense, each drawing is a separate painting. Although one sees continuous motion on the screen, a frame-by-frame look at the film would reveal that each drawing is unique in some way. In *Under the Sea*, I took great pains to make each drawing a different interpretation of the sequence of which it is a part. A collage bit, special color detail, or drawing detail distinguished each frame of the film.

"I now find myself wanting to work on separate images only and intend to spend the next several years focusing on painting and drawing. So I find that I’ve come full circle and now intend to produce drawings and paintings
San Francisco Cinematheque

as an extension of my work in film. I will be working toward future gallery exhibitions. I have already produced a series or large paper pieces based on my experiences in Japan and on images from Under the Sea. Under the Sea my be my last handdrawn film."

—Excerpts from "An Interview with Paul Glabicki" by Lilly Ann Boruszkowski, The Velvet Light Trap 24, University of Texas Press, Austin, Fall 1989

Suspicious Circumstances (1985), by Jim Blashfield; 16mm, color, sound, 12 minutes. "The man who is known as Portland’s premier experimental and personal (or as one colleague puts it, ‘oddball’) filmmaker has been working obsessively for two-and-one-half years on Suspicious Circumstances, a recently completed animated film. What is unique about it is that it is made from color photocopies in a process which, to his knowledge, has never been used before. As the first step in the process, he snapped hundreds of photographs of the film’s two primary characters and of various background objects. After turning the shots into slides, he photocopied them and cut out select portions and images. Then the various elements were placed under a sheet of glass set beneath a wooden animation stand and arranged into scenes, which are altered slightly between filmed frames to create the illusion of movement...

“This surrealistic action adventure-comedy might best be described as a Raiders of the Lost Ark for Dadaists.”

—Karen Brooks, Animator, Portland Art Association, Fall 1985

If Blashfield’s film has a familiar look to it, it’s likely that you’ve seen some of his commercial work. Blashfield tells the story that his girlfriend, unbeknownst to him, sent a copy of Suspicious Circumstances to Talking Heads Management. A few weeks later came the phone call from David Byrne. A few months later came the completed animation for And She Was, followed by animations for Joni Mitchell (Good Friends) and Paul Simon (Boy in the Bubble). When I met Blashfield in the fall of 1987 he was under contract of Michael Jackson, though I’m not sure that any project was ever completed. At the time, Blashfiled was obsessed with the technique of encircling objects with a ring of still cameras and capturing an instant from 360 degrees. A baby hurled upwards into such a device, then rotated cinematically, was the most striking image in the Boy in the Bubble piece.

Master of Ceremonies (1986), by Christopher Sullivan; 16mm, color, sound, 9 minutes. Using relatively minimal materials — brown paper, light pastel chalks, spare soundtrack — Christopher Sullivan has created a terrifying series of vignettes about Death as an active principle. Death starts a fire in a family’s house, going about his business in an unflinching, completely professional way. The family slowly wakes to this disaster-in-the-making and horror and chaos ensue. Religion and familial bonds cannot postpone or derail this tragedy. (I’d actually forgotten about the parade of Christian and holiday images, coming to rest on the Santa Claus mugs.) Death takes a little time out to tell jokes, play guitar, and do circus tricks before salvaging some remnants from the destroyed household.

Sullivan made Master of Ceremonies while living in Minneapolis. He has since relocated to Chicago where he teaches in the filmmaking department of the city’s Art Institute. Sullivan has at least one earlier film to his credit, The Beholder, and a recent nearly feature-length animation.

Agnes Escapes from the Nursing Home (1988), by Eileen O’Meara; 16mm, color, sound, 4 minutes. If Master of Ceremonies represents accidental death, Eileen O’Meara’s Agnes Escapes from the Nursing Home deals with natural death. Set to the aria from Catalina’s La Wally, sung by Wilhelmina Wiggins Fernandez, the
film portrays the stately Agnes as she comes to terms with Death during the last of her interminable games of chess played at the nursing home. The death Agnes faces is surreal (witness the decor by de Chirico), but no less sure than that faced by Sullivan’s doomed family. But rather than going out as a struggling, outraged angel, Anges’ departure is a joyous, liberating, and peaceful one.

Read more:
Picture Start 1991 Collection, 221 E. Cullerton, 6th Fl., Chicago, IL 60616.

(E.S.T)
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