



## CANDIDATES FOR HUMANITY

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8:30pm

presented by

REDCAT

Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater

California Institute of the Arts

CaLARTS

*We gratefully acknowledge that we operate on the traditional lands of the Tongva, Tataviam, and Chumash peoples—including the Gabrieleño, Fernandeño, and Ventureño; members of the Takic and Chumashan language families; and other Indigenous peoples who made their homes in and around the area we now call Los Angeles. We honor their ancestors past, present, and future, and recognize their continued existence and contributions to our society..*

# CANDIDATES FOR HUMANITY

A miscellany of shorts ranging from obscure internet musings to institutional cartoons to experimental documentary to musical numbers, this program offers a meditation on the probationary and pending, acting and reflecting on the comedy of the "appeal"—a qualification to prove a bona fide existence to an authority. The "document" (the paper, the written word, evidence) has inextricable links to the formation of the nation state, the formation of visibility within bureaucratic law and the idea of the "right to exist."

An appeal for what? To humanity, to comedy, to basic existence within our own bodies, within country lines. An appeal to whom? To our real community: to those who see us and know us, to those that don't, to those who put us in danger.

**In person: Gavin Mottram, Jorge Ravelo, Alan S. Tofighi**

"Like a worried internal monologue, beneath Christopher Logue's reading plays a hushed litany of obscenities, cut and pasted from *The F\*\*\*king Fulfords* (a 2004 documentary about a foul-mouthed, and cheerfully destitute, aristocratic English family). Hopefulness is always talkative and fretful; Sutcliffe's speakers are all haunted by the same (very British) worry: 'What if I fuck up?' "

– Sam Thorne, *Frieze Magazine*

"One mystified audience member at Windsor's Media City Fest put it best. After another punishing screening of silent landscape movies, out strolled one of [Steve Reinke's] candy-coloured, post-pop confections. It was brighter, smarter and harder than anything else in the room"

– Mike Hoolboom

"Multimedia artist and DJ Tony Cokes has for nearly thirty-five years fused text, sound, and image into critical essay films that flicker with primary colors, snippets of pop-cultural detritus, and multivalent voices."

– Canada Choate, *Flash Art*

## **PROGRAM**

Program curated by Gavin Mottram, Jorge Ravelo & SNEAL

**Stephen Sutcliffe: *O come all ye faithful* (2007) 1 min**

English poet Christopher Logue reads from his poem "O come all ye faithful," a sermon on the unity of all humankind through love, after which Logue sheepishly glances off-camera and asks, "Did I read it right or should I do it again?" As Logue reads, a barrage of curses - an edit of excerpts from *The F\*\*\*king Fulfords*, a 2004 documentary about an aristocratic English family in financial straits - can be heard somewhere beneath Logue's words suggesting an anxious internal

monologue fretting over the authenticity of the speaker's conviction. Sutcliffe's "O come all ye faithful" jabs at the impotence at the heart of the sovereign class to which "intellectuals" such as Logue belong.

**Stephen Sutcliffe: *The Herbivores* (2012) 4 min**

*The Herbivores* is made in response to playwright Michael Frayn's description of Britain's "radical middle-classes" as "gentle ruminants, who look out from the lush pastures which are their natural station in life with eyes full of sorrow for less fortunate creatures, guiltily conscious of their advantages, though not usually ceasing to eat the grass." Employing a Sunday newspaper supplement and a well-known weekly satirical magazine, Sutcliffe explores the concerns of *The Herbivores*.

**Tony Cokes: *Black Celebration: (A Rebellion Against the Commodity)* (1988) 17 min**

Tony Cokes's *Black Celebration (A Rebellion Against the Commodity)* attempts to read and understand the uprisings that took place in Black neighborhoods in Los Angeles, Boston, Newark, and Detroit in the 1960s. In Cokes's words, "The intent of the piece is to introduce a reading that will contradict received ideas which characterize these riots as criminal or irrational." The subtitle of the work alludes to the economic conditions that underscore the experience and construct of race in America. Cokes suggests that the "race riots" that marked the 1960s were motivated by a frustration with the racist logic of capital. The rebellions that ensued throughout the country's cities sought to rupture the social and economic value derived from Black labor and culture. Cokes's video utilizes samples of text from Guy Debord, Barbara Kruger, Martin Gore, and Morrissey alongside edited newsreel and documentary footage of the riots. The texts and images are set to music by the industrial rock band Skinny Puppy. The film shows an indiscernible sci-fi space where pain and celebration are articulated to those in power, and maybe the police can finally be accountable for their bullshit. Violence against property and infrastructure is shown as the only way a government or institution would ever feel threatened to respond. The buildings end up feeling abstracted, or rather exposed.

**Rox Lee: *ABCD* (1985) 5 min**

Rox Lee's "The 12 Commandments of Independent Filmmakers":

1. Thou shall shoot only original movies with original storyline. Shoot whatever available medium, What is important is the concept.
2. Be resourceful, always look for potential sponsors. Shoot films with limited budget but with unlimited ideas. If possible, thou shall only have a maximum of 2 takes per scene.
3. Thou shall not be blinded by the stars. If you can eliminate the star complex the better.
4. Thou shall not patronize very commercial and trashy movies.
5. Thou shall not limit yourself. Always aim for the international release of your films. Remember, your film can be your passport.
6. Thou shall not be disrespectful of other filmmakers even if they make bad films.

7. Thou shall not be greedy. Share your equipments, film stocks and ideas with other aspiring filmmakers.
8. Thou shall not lose hope even if you have little audience for now, maybe the bigger audience will be the next generation to come.
9. Thou shall not always aspire for financial gain but always strive for cinematic excellence.
10. Thou shall not be bothered by bad reviews of your films. Put in mind there are bad critics everywhere.
11. Thou shall not have the feeling of a great director. But humble and recognize the existence of the Supreme Being above.
12. Thou shall not lose the passion of making films, just work and work up to the last breath.

**Steve Reinke: *Squeezing Sorrow From an Ashtray* (1992) 6 min**

The 21st offering in Reinke's *The Hundred Videos* series. A triumphant, offhanded materialization of John Cage's musing:

*"We know the air is filled with vibrations that we can't hear. In Variations VII, I tried to use sounds from that inaudible environment. But we can't consider environment as an object. We know that it's a process. While in the case of the ashtray, we are indeed dealing with an object. It would be extremely interesting to place it in a little anechoic chamber and listen to it through a suitable sound system. Object would become process; we would discover, thanks to a procedure borrowed from science, the meaning of nature through the music of objects."*

**Steve Reinke: *Stentor* (1996) 1 min**

The 84th entry in Reinke's *The Hundred Videos*. Speculations on a new libido, informed by the idiosyncrasies of the single-celled. An essay—and a call to arms, on behalf of new Life.

*"The Stentor has no decisions to make, no personal dilemmas, and so has no need of a subconscious. This stems from its basic design, which keeps a constant, unstoppable motion. With no time to think, there is nothing to think about."*

**Sompot Chidgasornpongse: *Bangkok in the Evening* (2005) 16 min**

In Bangkok, a city that is at once a record of transpiring change, where everything is seemingly in motion, where all activities happen concurrently and continuously, there is a time, each evening, when everything comes to a pause and everyone seems to leave this freneticism behind.

'Bangkok In The Evening' was shot at various locations throughout the city, for only 40 seconds a day at 6pm, when the Thai National Anthem is played throughout the country. The film can be viewed as a requiem or a serenade for Bangkok, and for Thailand.

**Alan S. Tofighi: *Reformatted Artifice I: Culturcide - Star Spangled banner* (2019) 1 min**

Selection from the cycle *Reformatted Artifice: Love is a Cattleprod* analyzing the state and potential of progress via the 1/1 replication of Culturcide's landmark appropriation work *Tacky Souvenirs for Pre-Revolutionary America* (1986) and its effects in the present.

**Alan S. Tofighi:** *Post I Memory Composition of Visceral Residue (sped up) (2019) 5 min*

Video originally to be accompanied by Cagean Foley via notated actions performed in backwards order to a projected series of scenes that are relayed and dis/assembled by the audience through inherent pattern building systems. Content sourced by selecting the first scenes that came to mind in the production of sound, violence, extremity, and the non-human represented, abstracted, and exorcized.

**Luna Galassini:** *a minha menina (2018) 5 min*

Spontaneously recorded in her graduate studio in her first semester at CalArts, Luna Galassini's "A minha menina" couples a webcam dance performance with a journal excerpt about image-making, the class implications of formalized study, and "meta-crying" at movies. Moyra Davey's "Notes on Photography and Accident" and Elena Ferrante's Neapolitan novels act as jumping off points for allusions to more personal histories, juxtaposed with the title song by Os Mutantes.

**Aitziber Olaskoaga:** *Una alegría loca (A Crazy Joy) (2015) 6 min*

Filming the city of Los Angeles presupposes entering a dialogue about the displaced representations of reality that Hollywood cinema produces of the city. Paradoxically, the city of cinema par excellence has erased from the big screen the working class, its industrial heritage and the communities formed by people of non-European origin. The protagonist of *A Crazy Joy* is undoubtedly LA. Its streets, despite the fact that too often we hear no one travels through them, appear as a living territory full of characters, constituting a portrait outside the industry.

**GJS:** *certified sampler (2022) 15 min*

A prayer for "the good ones," a sampling of judgments—media repositioned through the state-of-the-art "approve or deny" system. A pastiche of original works and found footage assembled by the curators—variations on the main theme—using analogue video mixing and synthesizing for digital compositing.

**Prap Boonpan:** *จดหมายจากความเงียบ (Letters from the Silence) (2006) 6 min*

This silent film depicts two letters written in 2006 following a military coup in Thailand that ousted then prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra. The first was written by a group of environmental activists in support of democracy and social justice, and the second by a taxi driver, Nuamthong Prawn, who slammed his taxi into a military tank in protest of the coup.

**GJS:** *certified sampler pt. 2 (2022) 2 min*

An offer to the shopkeep. Not a theft.

A psalm. Not stealing.

*Is your shop right down on the ground? / Then let us lift it, lift it for you.*

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Stephen Sutcliffe** (b.1968, Harrogate) is an artist who lives and works in Greenock, Scotland. Sutcliffe creates film collages from an extensive archive of British television, film sound, broadcast images and spoken word recordings which he has been collecting since childhood. Often reflecting on aspects of British culture and identity, the results are melancholic, poetic and satirical amalgams which subtly tease out and critique ideas of class-consciousness and cultural authority. Recent solo exhibitions include, Künstlerhaus Stuttgart (2019). Talbot Rice Edinburgh, Hepworth Wakefield (2017), Rob Tufnell, London (2015), Tramway, Glasgow (2013) Stills, Edinburgh (2011), Whitechapel Auditorium (2010), Cubitt, London (2009) and Art Now, Light Box, Tate Britain (2005). Group exhibitions include: Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, Cubitt, London, Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon and Gaudel De Stampa, Paris (2015). In 2018 he participated in the Manchester International Festival in collaboration with Graham Eatough on a film for the Whitworth Gallery, for which they won the Contemporary Arts Society Award. He has been shortlisted for the Jarman Award twice and in 2012 he won the Margaret Tait Award. In 2019 he had two books published, *'at Fifty'* (Sternberg Press) a monograph and *'Much Obligated'*, (Book Works) a kind of autobiography. He has recently curated an exhibition of items from the Herbert Read Archive at the Brotherton Library in Leeds University with the arts group Pavillion, which was accompanied by a new video, *'City of Dreadful Something'*.

**Tony Cokes** makes video and installation projects that reframe appropriated texts to reflect upon capitalism, subjectivity, knowledge and pleasure. Sound always functions in his practice as a crucial, intertextual element, complicating minimal visuals. His works have been exhibited internationally at venues including Centre Georges Pompidou, Whitney Museum, Museum of Modern Art, SF MOMA, ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany, and La Cinémathèque Française. Cokes has received fellowships from The Guggenheim Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and Getty Research Institute. He resides in Providence, RI, and is a Professor in Modern Culture and Media at Brown University.

Roque Federizon Lee, a.k.a. **ROXLEE**, is a Filipino animator, filmmaker, cartoonist, painter, rock star, and many considered as the God Father of the Filipino young filmmakers. The man who created "Cesar Asar" together with his brother Mon Lee. Apart from this Lee brothers is their nephew Topel Lee, a film, TV and music director of GMA Networks.

**Steve Reinke** is an artist and writer best known for his single channel videos, which have been screened, exhibited and collected worldwide. He received his undergraduate education at the University of Guelph and York University, as well as a Master of Fine Arts from NSCAD University. The Hundred Videos — Mr. Reinke's work as a young artist — was completed in 1996, several years ahead of schedule. Since then he has completed many short single channel works and has had several solo exhibitions/screenings, in various venues such as the Museum of Modern Art (New York), the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), The Power Plant (Toronto), the Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto), the International Film Festival Rotterdam and the Argos Festival (Brussels), Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Tate (London).

**Alan S. Tofighi** is an Interdisciplinary artist who lives and works in Southern California. Utilizing a background in research, performance, sound, video, emergent and low tech; Tofighi's work deals with analyses of the dispersion, obfuscation, and (de)formation of information/history to renegotiate narratives of history/power in the present. Tofighi utilizes the infiltration of legal parameters, social structures, myth, (dis)information, and extensive research of these cells as they shift from fringe culture to central in their infiltration/engineering of dominant culture.

**Luna Galassini** is an artist, performer and filmmaker based in Northern New Mexico. Her work is anchored in place: her practice began in Rochester, New York, the birthplace of Eastman-Kodak, with analog photography, and her graduate work at California Institute of the Arts was motivated by the gated communities of the Los Angeles County suburbs and its encroaching tumbleweeds. Some of her current projects include turning abandoned mine gates into giant subwoofers, documenting the history of the adobe casita where she lives (her bedroom was once a butcher shop), and building very low frequency receivers to pick up on the sounds of the sunrise. She holds a BA from Bennington College with a concentration in music, and an MFA from CalArts.

**Aitziber Olaskoaga** Aitziber Olaskoaga majored in cinematography at the ESCAC (Cinema and Audiovisual School of Catalonia) in Barcelona. In 2016 she moved to Los Angeles (USA) to study at California Institute of the Arts. In recent years she has worked as a film projectionist and has carried out artist residencies at Ikusmira Berriak (Donostia, Basque Country), (S8) Mostra de Cinema Periférico - LIFT (Toronto, Canadá), and BilbaoArte (Bilbao, Basque Country). She has also been a fellow at the Flaherty Film Seminar (USA).

**Prap Boonpan** is a filmmaker engaged in political activism. His films have been screened and awarded at the Thai Short Film and Video Festival, and also shown at the Singapore Art Museum.

**Ivor Cutler** (15 January 1923 -- 3 March 2006) was a Scottish poet, songwriter and humorist. He became known for his regular performances on BBC radio, and in particular his numerous sessions recorded for John Peel's influential radio programme, and later for Andy Kershaw's programme. He appeared in The Beatles' Magical Mystery Tour film in 1967 and on Neil Innes' television programmes. Cutler also wrote books for children and adults and was a teacher at A. S. Neill's Summerhill School and for 30 years in inner-city schools in London. He told Andy Kershaw on his radio show that he also gave private poetry lessons to individuals. Cutler earned a faithful cult following. John Peel once remarked that Cutler was probably the only performer whose work had been featured on Radio 1, 2, 3 and 4. Cutler was a member of the Noise Abatement Society and the Voluntary Euthanasia Society. He retired from performing in 2004, and died on 3 March 2006. The reception room of his home contained a number of pieces of ivory cutlery, intended as a pun on his name.

**Sompot Chidgasornpongse** graduated with a bachelor's degree in architecture from Chulalongkorn university, and an MFA in Film/Video from California Institute of the Arts. His films explore the possibility of representing everyday life in a creative, critical, and thought-provoking way. They were shown at various international film festivals around the world, such as

Oberhausen, Rotterdam, Viennale, Visions du Réel, IndieLisboa, etc. He's also a Berlinale Talents, and Talents Tokyo alumnus. His first feature documentary, 'Railway Sleepers' had its world premiere in Documentary Competition at Busan International Film Festival, European premiere in the Forum section at Berlinale, and later at True/False, Sheffield, Melbourne IFF, RIDM, TIDF, and many other festivals worldwide.

Sompot has also been working closely with Apichatpong Weerasethakul as assistant director in many films, including 'Tropical Malady', 'Syndromes and a Century', 'Cemetery of Splendour', and most recently 'Memoria'. Sompot is now based in Bangkok and currently working on his new feature film.

## ABOUT THE CURATORS

**Gavin Mottram** is an artist based in Los Angeles.

**Jorge Ravelo** is a filmmaker, educator and currently unemployed from Miami, Florida. His film work concerns filial tensions, Miami *Gusanería*, reproductions of pop culture media, and community based film screenings. He is based in Val Verde, CA.

**SNEAL** is an artist and musician who's currently working on an album and a movie about a different album.

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