



DANA BERMAN DUFF: SHORT FILMS

JUNE 6, 2022

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..

DANA BERMAN DUFF: SHORT FILMS

Program curated by Steve Anker

Dana Berman Duff has long been a vital force in Los Angeles' media arts. Astonishing in her versatility, Duff moves fluidly between Super-8mm and 16mm film, video, multi-channel installation, photography, drawing, and sculpture. Regardless of the medium, Duff's work is infused with her subtle wit, tactile delight, and deeply reflective conceptual structure. Tonight's program includes selections from the *Catalogue Series*, in which fantasy tableaux and objects from the pages of a designer furniture knock-off catalogue are reworked into contemplations on the control and selling of desire.

Los Angeles premieres

In-Person: Dana Berman Duff and Steve Anker

"Desire is learned. Desire is cultivated. It's a habit formed through continuous repetition of a particular class of interactions. Desire is the most important of all industrial products."

— Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema* (1970)

"All the more hallucinatory for their general languor and fragmented intensive gaze, these films manage to simultaneously disorient and act as beacons of embedded memory."

— Deborah de Boer, Antimatter Film Festival

The filmmaker would like to acknowledge with gratitude Steve Anker on the occasion of his retirement after leading the CalArts School of Film and Video and establishing and co-curating Film At REDCAT, along with Bérénice Reynaud, from 2003 until 2020. This screening was originally scheduled for May 11, 2020, which would have been Steve's last program at REDCAT, but was delayed two years because of Covid 19. Film At REDCAT has profoundly changed the scope of moving image art in Los Angeles. Thank you, Steve!

PROGRAM

A POTENTIALITY (2020, 16:25, 16mm and digital)

NOTE: The first 7 ½ minutes are silent. *A POTENTIALITY* is a short, structured film about looming totalitarianism that adds the elements of time and sound to a graphic artwork by Susan Silton and joins the front pages of the 1933 New York Times with a mythic opera composed in a Nazi concentration camp in 1944. The newspaper has local reports mixed with the increasingly disturbing accounts of events abroad, which have an uncanny echo in our current news. *POTENTIALITY* makes a close comparison of printing dots and film grain which break apart the elements of language that support meaning.

Winner FIDMarseille Alice Guy Special Mention award

The Catalogue Series (selections)

The Catalogue Series is a suite of 16mm black-and-white films and videos; each takes one volume of an 11-volume retail furniture catalogue as its subject.

Catalogue (2014, 7:03, 16mm on digital)

Catalogue is a silent 16mm black-and-white film that considers the time it takes to look at desirable objects, in this case, the objects for sale in a mainstream furniture catalogue. The catalogue presents de-saturated photographs of staged rooms shot and printed to resemble sets for film-noir era movies, hypothetically increasing their desirability. In these photographs the designer furniture knockoffs are indistinguishable from the original pieces. The film gazes at page after page of objects, each one exquisite and exquisitely photographed, minding the time it takes for the rise of desire and its dissolution.

Catalogue Vol. 4 (2016, 4:30, digital)

Catalogue Vol. 4 takes the RH "Lighting" catalogue as its subject and uses a pulse of electronic sound and light to represent each fixture, shot in the order that they were found in the original catalogue. The intervals of black were derived by a matter of taste: items that the filmmaker found less appealing were excised from the sequence.

Catalogue Vol. 6 (2016, 11:28, 16mm on digital)

Catalogue Vol.6 was shot with audio clips from a horror movie that mention the words "house" or particular rooms, or "upstairs" etc. playing in the studio so that each shot acquired a random diegetic "soundtrack". Then the film clips were organized as a "tour" through the rooms of a house: foyer, living room, dining room, kitchen, study, bathroom, and ending with the bedroom.

Catalogue Vol. 3 (2017, 2:43, digital and CGI)

Catalogue Vol.3 was made using the RH "Small Spaces" volume of the 2014 catalogue with an Arne Jacobsen Series 7 chair as protagonist. This is a computer-generated rendering of the original chair, which was the inspiration for the knock-off version in the RH catalogue. The Series 7 is arguably the second most successful object in the world, after the ubiquitous white plastic molded chair. The Series 7 has been knocked off by so many furniture manufacturers that I imagine, at the end of world, these chairs will be popping up to the surface all over the planet.

Catalogue Vol. 10 (2017, 6:00, digital and 16mm)

Catalogue Volume 10 is a dystopia of moving text and moving image; Modernist chairs, Georges Perec's *Things: A Novel of the Sixties*, and underwater photography using 16mm, GoPro, and DSLR.

The House Is Empty (2020/2022, 9:50, iPhone, Super 8, and 16mm)

The House is Empty is an environmental disaster film that portrays, to the ovations of a billion cicadas, a cockroach, a woman, and a dramatic encounter in a closet—from the roach's point of view. Inspired by *The Passion According to G.H.* (1964) by Clarice Lispector. The house is "played" like an instrument by A.J. McClenon.

Total: 58 minutes

ABOUT THE FILMMAKER

Dana Berman Duff was named a Cultural Trailblazer by the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs in 2020. In 2019, she mounted a large multi-channel video installation titled “What Does She See When She Shuts Her Eyes” (in collaboration with the late Sabina Ott) at Aspect Ratio in Chicago and Alchemy Moving Image Festival in Scotland. Her film *A POTENTIALITY* was awarded an Alice Guy Special Mention at the 2020 FIDMarseille Film Festival and *The Gringas* was winner of Best Documentary Feature at the 2014 Mexico International Film Festival. Her works in small format film and video have been screened in the Toronto International Film Festival, International Film Festival Rotterdam, Edinburgh International Film Festival, ExISFestival (Seoul), Experiments in Cinema (Albuquerque), Rencontres Internationales (Paris/Berlin), Dortmund/Cologne International Women’s Film Festival, San Francisco Cinematheque’s Crossroads, and in over forty other festivals. Her sculpture and drawings are included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the New Museum of Contemporary Art and the Brooklyn Museum in New York City, the Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, and the Phillips Collection in Washington D.C., as well as in a number of private collections. Duff taught art and experimental film at NYU, Bennington, UCLA, Art Center Pasadena, and for many years at Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles, where she was founding director of Sculpture/New Genres and a founding faculty member in the Master of Public Practice program. Duff studied at Cranbrook Academy of Art (BFA) and California Institute of the Arts (MFA). She lives and works in Los Angeles and rural Mexico.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Steve Anker, Dean of CalArts’ School of Film/Video from Fall 2002 through Spring 2014, began screenings as Program Director for the Boston Film/Video Foundation (1977-1980), was Artistic Director of the San Francisco Cinematheque (1982-2002), and began and co-curated, with Bérénice Reynaud, Film At REDCAT (Los Angeles) from 2003 until his retirement in 2020. Anker has curated film programs for the Museum of Modern Art, Pacific Film Archive, UCLA Film and Television Archive, London International Film Festival, the Austrian Cultural Ministry, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Sharjah Art Biennial, and Ann Arbor Film Festival. Anker has taught at Massachusetts College of Art, San Francisco Art Institute, Bard College, and San Francisco State University as well as at CalArts.



The Jack H. Skirball Series is organized by Bérénice Reynaud and Eduardo Thomas and funded in part by the Ostrovsky Family Fund.



KCRW is the Official Radio Sponsor of REDCAT

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram: @calartsredcat
For more information, email info.redcat@calarts.edu or visit redcat.org