

## FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS

**Mon Feb 3 | 8:30 pm |**

Jack H. Skirball Series

\$12 [members \$9]

## Sins of the BROTHERS KUCHAR

REDCAT is delighted to welcome legendary artist Mike Kuchar for a program of films and videos made by himself and his late twin brother George. Iconic figures who helped define Underground film in the early 1960s, George and Mike began making no-budget 8mm films in the Bronx while still in their teens. Working with neighbors and friends, the Kuchars created lurid and hilarious takeoffs of Hollywood weepies that made huge impacts on notions of camp and new possibilities for queer cinema, and that have inspired generations of filmmakers. Mike Kuchar, whose recent erotic paintings are on display at L.A.'s François Ghebaly Gallery, will be on hand to show his recent videos and reminisce.

Films and videos include *I Was a Teenage Rumpot* (George and Mike Kuchar, 1960, regular 8mm on 16mm, 12 min.), *Cattle Mutilations* (George Kuchar, 1983, 16mm, 23 min.), *Scarlet Droppings* (George Kuchar, 1991, Super-VHS on Digital, 15 min.), *The Stranger in Apartment 9F* (Mike Kuchar, 1998, MiniDV on DVD, 17:37 min.), *Meltdown* (Mike Kuchar, 2012, MiniDV on DVD, 11 min.) and *Fallen Angels* (Mike Kuchar, 2013, MiniDV on DVD, 10 min.).

*Los Angeles Premieres*

### In person: Mike Kuchar

"George and Mike Kuchar's films were my first inspiration... complete crackpots without an ounce of pretension, outsiders to even 'underground' sensibilities."

— John Waters, Introduction to *Reflections from a Cinematic Cesspool*

"Commandeering the foundational basement of the frat house of cinema, twins George and Mike Kuchar have long wreaked havoc, creating fetid splendors too numerous to list..." — *Artforum*

### The Artists:

**George and Mike Kuchar** were born in 1942 in The Bronx, New York. The Kuchar twins became iconic figures of the New York underground film scene in the 1960s with no-budget 8mm and 16mm films that parodied and paid homage to Hollywood epics, romances, and sci-fi B movies. Earnest yet weepy, tender yet luridly flamboyant, Kuchar films such as *Sins of the Fleshapoids* (1965), *Hold Me While I'm Naked* (1966), *The Craven Sluck* (1967) and *Pagan Rhapsody* (1970) made a major impact on emerging discussions of camp and non-normative cinema.

**George Kuchar** (1942-2011) trained as a commercial artist at the School of Industrial Art, now known as the High School of Art and Design, a vocational school in New York City. He graduated in 1960 and drew weather maps for a local news show. During this period, he and his brother Mike were making 8mm movies that were showcased in the then-burgeoning underground film scene alongside films by Andy Warhol, Kenneth Anger, and Stan Brakhage. Ken Jacobs brought attention of their work to Jonas Mekas, who championed them in the *Village Voice*. After being laid off from a commercial art job in New York City, George was offered a teaching job in the film department of the San Francisco Art Institute, where he taught from 1971 until early 2011. In San Francisco, he became involved with underground comics via neighbors Art Spiegelman and Bill Griffith. They both wound up in his movies while George's comics wound up in their publications.

George Kuchar directed over 200 films and videos (including over 15 with Mike), many of them short films by students in his courses at the San Francisco Art Institute. In the Critics' Poll of the 100 best films of the 20th century, appearing originally in *The Village Voice* (4 January 2000), *Hold Me While I'm Naked* was ranked 52<sup>nd</sup>.

George Kuchar produced several dozen video dramas and diaries from his everyday life. The best known are *The Weather Diary Series*, which chronicle George's annual pilgrimages to El Reno, Oklahoma, to observe tornadoes.

In the 1970s, **Mike Kuchar** began to split his time between the Bronx and San Francisco, a hotbed for the underground comics scene where Mike's drawings would find a home in the pages of gay erotic magazines like *Gay Heart Throbs*. At first something of a day job to support his filmmaking, these drawings have taken on a trajectory of their own, critically praised for achieving irrepressible joy within unabashed lewdness. In *Broken Gods*, which centers on drawings from

2018, gladiators, pirates, hippies, jocks, androids, devils and warlocks run amok with hyperbolic anatomy, lovingly rendered contours, and ingenious coloration. A special limited edition set of prints of three recent drawings will also be available.

Mike Kuchar's films and videos have been shown internationally at numerous screenings and festivals, including the Tate Modern, London; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, among many others. His drawings have been in solo and group exhibitions at Anton Kern Gallery, New York; Institute of Contemporary Art, London; Jan Kaps, Cologne; and Kimmerich, Berlin. Mike Kuchar was the recipient of John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship Award in 2017, an Avant-Garde Masters Grant from the National Film Preservation Foundation in 2012, and a United States Artists Fellowship Award in 2006.

*Broken Gods*, Mike's second solo exhibition at the François Ghebaly Gallery, will be on display through February 2, 2020.

Mike Kuchar lives and works in San Francisco.

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