



Tuesday Sept 29 | 8:30 pm

Jack H. Skirball Series

Alpert Award Artist

\$9 [students \$7, CalArts \$5]

Locative Enigma – Frameshape of Hard Mettles – A Personal Problem

Projection Performances by Bruce McClure

“Bruce McClure doesn’t make films, he performs them... Twirling knobs, flipping switches, and adjusting lenses, he coaxes a bank of whirring projectors into producing images impossible to record.”

– *Brian Frye, The Brooklyn Rail*

Straddling the interstitial space of cinema and live performance, Bruce McClure prefers the appellation of performer to film artist, and calls the powerfully immersive, light-pulsing, sonically percussive shows he creates, “projection performances.” The New York-based Alpert Award-winner orchestrates his screenings much like a musician working in light and sound. His instruments are the basic apparatus of the cinema: film projectors and filmstrips (loops of clear or patterned leader alternating with black emulsion), complemented by transformers and metal plates inserted into the projector gate to modulate the intensity, form and texture of the projected light, and increasingly of late, a mixing console and guitar-effects pedals to modulate the sound.

“Projection performance and projective geometry share the self-evident view that parallel lines converge on a point capturing my imagination,” McClure writes in explaining his method. “Over the past eight years I have traveled camera-less in favor of projector placements, tympanic still lives, membranes that cross between inside and out. The movie projector analogously reciprocates sight and audition and I have liberated it from the role of passive fidelity to an instrument of sensory happenstance at 24 frames per second. This construct usurps film’s hegemony turning our attention to the mechanisms of transport by light and sound. The ‘monster’ lurking over an audience’s shoulders, once a source of technical annoyances can now be appreciated for its blending of dissonant elements and recognized as an inexhaustible beauty.”

McClure has performed extensively in cinematheques, festivals and museums in the United States and abroad, including recent dates with the British avant-garde band Throbbing Gristle in New York and Chicago, as well as solo appearances in Italy, Spain and at the Rotterdam International Film Festival.

Well-known for the enigmatic handwritten program notes he shares with audiences before his shows, McClure will announce the line-up for his REDCAT performance closer to the date of the event.

In person: Bruce McClure

On Bruce McClure

"A practicing architect, McClure has been based in New York since 1985. Long preoccupied with visual perception and the illusion of motion intrinsic to cinema, in 1994 he began constructing phenakistiscopes – pe-cinematic devices that create the illusion of animated motion. These experiments led him to the work of stroboscopic flash photographer Harold Edgerton, who had created nearly identical devices in the 1930s. Continuing his investigation of the moving image, McClure soon started working with film loops and their simultaneous projection.

McClure plays his projectors as if they're instruments of light and sound. Working from a 'score' of alternating flicker films or, according to him, 'ink sneezes,' he projects his filmstrips simultaneously to create an illusory sense of movement and a density of abstract textures. Each performance is unique, neither improvised nor fixed. He works intuitively within certain parameters determined by each piece's structure."

– *David Dinnell*, Millennium Film Journal

"McClure creates an amazing array of works that pulse, flicker, strobe, and worm their way into the visual cortex. Some are minimal, almost color-field works (think Mark Rothko with a strobe light); others center on simple geometric forms: the crosses in *Nethergate* (06) or circles in *Christmas Tree Stand* (05).

Throughout these variations McClure explores form and space on screen (geometric shapes and changing planes of focus), in front of it (several compositions have a palpable three-dimensional presence), and within the rest of the room (the pulse of light bouncing off the screen can fill a given space with uncanny energy). These are perhaps natural areas for McClure's interest, given that his day job is architecture."

– *Patrick Friel*, Film Comment

"Looking down from the scaffold renders circumstances unfamiliar; perspective is held in suspension as flattened repetition of identical units proceeds with no horizon in sight. In an instant, the gate is activated, clearing the way for a measured whoosh forestalled by a tautening rope. During that interval, seemingly eternal scenes flash before one's eyes, cut

short by a final whack and bounce of light. The assembly, shrouded by the staging and the loop, is seized by duration as it simultaneously approaches and recedes. Gallows humor is a grim simile for a projection performance, and if this is a joke then where is the punch line? Answer: There is never enough time before an execution."

– *Bruce McClure, notes on* Locative Enigma – Frameshape of Hard Mettles – A Personal Problem

Selected Works

Evertwo Circumflicksrent... Page 298 (2007)
Nethergate (2006)
Christmas Tree Stand (2005)
Crib and Sift Series: Circle Jerks (2002), Chiodo (2003), Presepe (2003)
Quarter Draw (2001)
Indeterminate Focus (1999)
Divorce American Style (1999)
The Southern Star Passes Without Pressure (1998)

Selected Performances and Screenings

Throbbing Gristle Tour; solos sets in Brooklyn, NY and Chicago, IL (2009)
Kuiturni Center Lojze Bratuz, Spring School di Gorizia, Italy (2009)
Xperimenta 2009, Centre de Cultura Contemporania de Barcelona, Spain (2009)
Rotterdam International Film Festival, Netherlands (2003, 2007, 2009)
Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis, MN (2009)
Media City Numbers 8 - 15, Windsor, Canada (2002 - 2009)
Kill Your Timid Notion Tour organized by Arkira, Edinburgh; solo performances at the British Film Institute, London; Spike Island, Bristol; and the Centre for Contemporary Art, Glasgow (2008)
Filmmuseum, Vienna, Austria (2008)
Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbia, OH (2007)
San Francisco Cinematheque, CA (2007)
Evolution Festival (2004, 2007)
Images Festival, Toronto, Canada (2003, 2005, 2007)
Wurttembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart, Germany (2006)
Performa Biennial, White Noise, White Box Gallery, New York, NY (2005)
Image Forum Festival, Tokyo and Kyoto, Japan (2005)

Program curated by Steve Anker

Funded in part with generous support from Wendy Keys and Donald Pels. Additional support is provided by The Herb Alpert Foundation. The Alpert Awards in the Arts, a fellowship program that supports innovative practitioners in the fields of dance, film/video, music, theater and visual arts,

are administered by CalArts on behalf of The Herb Alpert Foundation.

###