



FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS

Christine Panushka and Alberto Araiza ***Mosca and the Meaning of Life***

Mon Oct 26 | 8:30 pm

Jack H. Skirball Series

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

World Premiere

Mosca and the Meaning of Life is a groundbreaking multimedia piece in which animated characters leap off the screen and join up with a live performance crafted by award-winning filmmaker and animator Christine Panushka and theater and spoken-word artist Alberto "Beto" Araiza. *Mosca and the Meaning of Life* questions our belief systems, customs and social values, the truths and lies with which we live out our lives, motivated as much by misinformation and desperation as by hope. The program also includes *The Sum of Them*, *Singing Sticks* and other films by Panushka, as well as an excerpt of *Biting the Pillow*, a performance by Araiza.

A professor at the University of Southern California, Panushka studied with the legendary animator Jules Engels at CalArts, and has won critical accolades for work that "explores the female psyche and uses stillness and small gestures to describe internal emotional and spiritual states." (USC School of Cinematic Arts) Named an Absolut Visionary in 1996, the artist has also reached beyond filmmaking and teaching to create web projects and curate for animation showcases and film festivals internationally.

Araiza is a theater artist, published playwright, actor and teacher whose work encompasses both collaborative and solo plays and performances. He has performed and taught throughout the US, Canada and Europe since the early 1970s, and is the recipient of several literary awards. *Biting the Pillow* is his latest play, currently in the final stages of development.

In person: Christine Panushka and Alberto Araiza



Program

Note: Program notes below are adapted from the artists' descriptions. The program order is subject to change.

Mosca and the Meaning of Life (2009, multimedia and live performance, approx. 30 min.)

By Christine Panushka and Alberto Araiza

Originally commissioned by New Town Pasadena for *Speak/See: Six Virtuosi of the Spoken Word, Six Masters of Experimental Animation, Six Collaborative World Premieres*, *Mosca* is an experiment in multidisciplinary collaboration, pairing spoken word with animation. An animated character comes off the screen and is integrated into a live performance. Simple line-drawn characters take on life onstage equal to that of the performer.

Co-creators Panushka and Araiza explain: "From our earliest beginnings as larvae, up to and beyond the very moment we emerge from our pupae, we search for answers; many of which we create ourselves out of misinformation, desperation, fear and hope. Thus we create our belief systems, customs, social values, the truths and lies with which we live out our lives." The *LA Weekly's* film critic Holly Willis calls *Mosca*, "[uniting] performance and multiple screens to create a rich exploration of the search for truth."

Biting the Pillow (2009, live performance, 20 min. excerpt)

Written and performed by Alberto Araiza

A stylized, urbanized world devoid of integrity, character, accountability and humanity, as exemplified by three characters: Playwright, Chrome-Magnum Man and Crystal-Meth Mama.

The Sum of Them (1984, 16mm, 4:30 min.)

By Christine Panushka

Simply-drawn portraits of women casually stare at us. Some wear clown-like make-up and some wear surreal bodily adornments. Their images are intercut with words like "gait, flank, breath, pulse, cleave, strain and enclose." Sprinkled over all the images are familiar, subdued sounds – running water, birds chirping, even glass breaking. In the film's penultimate moment, all the portraits come together, resulting in a delicate word-sound poem that coalesces discrete elements of sensory awareness into an experience of human fulfillment.

Nighttime Fears and Fantasies: A Bedtime Tale for a Young Girl (1985, 16mm, 6:42 min.)



By Christine Panushka

Nighttime presents a gallery of mythical beasts, angels and devils, drawn in a style that suggests their ultimate harmlessness. Disconnected heads, falling mummies, a chorus of singing skulls – they come and go very quickly, but still have time to spook the viewer. Most of the beasts seem part-human, part-animal, with hair that often turns into a Medusa-like pile of snakes.

Singing Sticks (2001, 35mm, 3 min.)

By Christine Panushka

A folkloric dance reveals a ritual held secret for centuries. This work was created entirely with hand-carved rubber stamps.

Marrow (2002, 35mm, 4 min.)

By Christine Panushka

A meditation on nature's cycles. Of the 9,000 drawings originated for this film, 3,000 were used.

Curated by Steve Anker

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