

**FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS****Sharon Lockhart**
Lunch Break
with *Exit*

Los Angeles theatrical premieres
2008, 80 min. and 41 min., HD

Mon Apr 19 | 8:30 pm
\$9 [students \$7, CalArts \$5]
Jack H. Skirball Series

In her new series on the state of American labor, artist and filmmaker Sharon Lockhart turns her meditative gaze to workers at the Bath Iron Works shipyard in Maine. *Lunch Break* revisits cinema's second-greatest invention after the close-up: the tracking shot. In one long, sensuous, uninterrupted take, the film moves through a factory corridor where workers linger while on their lunch break. The camera "tracks down," literally, the minute, humble signs of humanity, captured at such a quotidian level that the viewer cannot help but be moved to the core. In the confines of an industrial setting, imperfect bodies unfold as sculptures in time as Lockhart's evocative soundscape, designed with filmmaker James Benning and composer Becky Allen, extends from the drone of machinery to Led Zeppelin. *Lunch Break* is followed by the companion film *Exit*, in which Lockhart reverses the gaze, with a fixed camera and a nod to Lumière.

Lunch Break and *Exit* were world premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, then internationally premiered at the Rotterdam International Film Festival. Last fall, they were presented, along with three series of photographs, in an installation form in Sharon Lockhart's solo exhibition at the gallery Blum & Poe. The REDCAT screening marks the first time Los Angeles audiences can appreciate the films projected on the large screen, in their full visual and aural splendor.

In person: Sharon Lockhart



“Though the camera moved, the footage it gathered has been slowed down dramatically: Six minutes pass before the first figure is beyond the frame, and another seven elapse before the camera reaches the next trio of relaxing employees. As it progresses, every detail of the claustrophobically hemmed-in environment is revealed in sharp focus: dented garbage cans and putty-colored lockers, some adorned with stickers; olive-green tool chests and brightly colored plastic coolers; gauges that cling to pipes stretching from floor to ceiling; and tubes and hoses that extend every which way, all beneath drab, uniform fluorescent light. The dilatory pace emphasizes the sheer amount of material (and visual detail) packed in to this place, and highlights how successfully 35-mm film can capture that plenitude.”

– Brian Sholis, *Artforum*

The challenge posed by *Lunch Break* – once the original 35mm footage was slowed down and transferred to HD – was to find an appropriate sound-track. In collaboration with fellow filmmaker James Benning, Lockhart mixed the droning sound of the machinery and vents with unintelligible bits of conversation recorded through a long period of time, a Led Zeppelin song suggesting a hidden transistor radio, and composer Becky Allen’s abstract sounds. This, in turn, intensifies the contrast with *Exit*. Here, a fixed 16 mm camera captures the flood of workers as they leave the shipyard, in real time and in sync sound. Lockhart shoots the workers from the back, and then repeats the shot, on five consecutive days, at exactly the same time. In the bright July afternoon light, we are treated to a fascinating array of spontaneous body language, released from the confines of the plant and the previous film’s congealed time and choreographed operatic grandeur. We hear thousands of footsteps (made by the rubber soles of ubiquitous sneakers), scraps of conversation, even discrete narrative threads. Most of the men carry empty lunch boxes... Their wives must have carefully prepared their lunch, at dawn, when they were shaving. These lunch boxes are the sign of their domestic status, but also the anchor that keep them fastened. There’s no way you can go boozing or partying when you carry an empty plastic lunch box. No, these men are going straight home. As the film unfolds, I realize the multitude of these details that were offered to my gaze and that I had ignored at the beginning. I can’t wait to see the film again. *Lunch Break* and *Exit*



will remain not only as a high point in the history of experimental film, but a significant moment in the representation of American labor."

– *Senses of Cinema*

Sharon Lockhart received her MFA from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena in 1993. She has been a Radcliffe fellow, a Guggenheim fellow and a Rockefeller fellow. She has had solo exhibitions of her photographic work at international venues including Wiener Secession, Austria; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Sala Rekalde, Bilbao, Spain; Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen Rotterdam; Kunsthalle Zürich; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Wolfsburg Museum, Germany, and MAK-Austrian Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna. Her films have been included in the New York Film Festival, Vienna International Film Festival, Berlin Film Festival, and the Sundance Film Festival. Well known for her previous involvement with communities as varied as a city on the Amazon River, a Japanese basketball team, or the youth of a small town in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, in *Lunch Break* and *Exit* Lockhart shifts her attention toward a community of workers.

Lockhart is currently an associate professor at USC's Roski School of Fine Arts. She lives and works in Los Angeles.

Filmography

2009: *Podworka* (31 min.)

2009: *Double Tide* (99 min.)

2008: *Lunch Break* (80 min.) 2008: *Exit* (41 min.)

2005: *Pine Flat* (138 min.)

2003: *NO* (32:30 min.)

1999: *Teatro Amazonas* (40 min.)

1997: *Goshogoaka* (63 min.)

1999: *Shirley* (14 min. 44 sec.) co-directed with Daniel Marlos

1994: *Khalil, Shaun, A Woman Under the Influence* (16 min.)

Curated by Steve Anker and Bérénice Reynaud.

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