

Nostalgic recreation of dreamland Kansas 1947 in Toto. Theme music from *I Love a Mystery* radio programs (Jack, Doc, and Reggie confront the enigmatic lines of railroad trains, sheep, black cars, women exercising in an open field, grandma at the farm ...) Meanwhile, 13-year-old boy confronts reality. Sibelius grows old in Finland and becomes a national monument.

LOOKING FOR MUSHROOMS (1967, color/so, 16mm, 3 min.)

LOOKING FOR MUSHROOMS (1996 version, 16mm, color/so, 14.5m.)

Music by Terry Riley: *Poppy Nogood and the Phantom Band*, 1968 - BMA - Publisher: Ancient Word Music.

This is the same film footage as edited in the earlier short version of *LOOKING FOR MUSHROOMS* released in 1968. It is made longer with five frames for each original frame but still remains the same edit (but with a new soundtrack by Terry Riley) and nothing added, nothing lost, always the same, neverending

Award: Best Experimental Film, Ann Arbor Film Festival, 1997

EASTER MORNING (2008, DVD, color/so, 10 min.,).

Departing from an inimitable film repertoire of tour-de-force editing technique, visual comedy, and apocalyptic themes, avant-garde master Bruce Conner envisioned *EASTER MORNING*—a metaphysical quest for renewal beyond the natural and ephemeral worlds—to be his last finished masterpiece. Keeping with his ritualistic reworking and re-imagining of his films, the image source originates from the 8mm Kodachrome footage of *EASTER MORNING RAGA* (1966), expanded in duration, gauge, and frame rate to devise an effect of visual transcendence.

ABOUT BRUCE CONNER

Born and raised in MacPherson, Kansas, **Bruce Guldner Conner** attended college in Wichita, Kansas, Nebraska, and Brooklyn, New York. In 1957 he moved to San Francisco with his new wife, Jean Sandstedt, and there he began a career that would exert unmatched creative influence in the film world and beyond.

Among the Beat community of San Francisco—with a splicer borrowed from Larry Jordan—Conner made his seminal *A MOVIE* (1958) employing the then unheard-of practice of found-footage filmmaking.

Initial notoriety for his eerie assemblages found Conner determined to avoid pigeonholing: Known for his frequent disagreements with the art establishment, Conner diversified into drawing, photography and collage while continuing to innovate in film. Politics, consumerism, war, female beauty, and the metaphysical are but a few of the thematic echoes between Conner's works—yet in each medium, he attained uniquely independent refinement.

After meeting **Dennis Hopper** in the early 60s, Conner became an unofficial consultant for *Easy Rider* (1969). In the late seventies, Conner began photographing early Punk shows at the Mabuhay Gardens in San Francisco, leading to film collaborations with Devo, David Byrne and Brian Eno.

In 1984, Conner contracted a rare liver disease and was given only a year to live. Unpredictable as always, Conner survived for 24 years—artistically active even through years of illness, he remained a steadfast advocate for the film medium and an outspoken opponent of academic art-making. – Timoleon Wilkins

UPCOMING FILM /VIDEO PROGRAMS

March 9: Takahiko Iimura: On Time in Film

March 30: Robert Todd's Cinema of Discovery

April 20: Joanna Priestley: Fighting Gravity

April 27: Zoe Beloff: Conjuring Specters

BRUCE CONNER'S EXPLOSIVE CINEMA: A TRIBUTE, PART 2

March 2, 2009

8:30 pm

presented by

REDCAT

Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater

California Institute of the Arts

CALARTS

REDCAT

BRUCE CONNER'S EXPLOSIVE CINEMA: A TRIBUTE, PART 2

March 2, 2009 | 8:30 pm
Jack H. Skirball Series

Influential maestro of found footage Bruce Conner (1933–2008) was often described as the father of MTV-style editing. His reply: "Don't blame me!" An artist of explosive intensity and enigmatic allure, Conner displayed a legendary mastery of assemblage, drawing, collage and film. At once voluptuous and razor-edged, Conner's compact, cinematic bombs are an inspired mix of heartfelt meditation and tragicomic political satire. Surveying the filmmaker's work over a 50-year span, the program includes **A MOVIE, MARILYN TIMES FIVE, PERMIAN STRATA, MEA CULPA, LOOKING FOR MUSHROOMS, LOOKING FOR MUSHROOMS** (1996 version), **REPORT, TELEVISION ASSASSINATION, TAKE THE 5:10 TO DREAMLAND, VALSE TRISTE** and **EASTER MORNING**.

In person: Dennis Hopper, longtime Conner friend and co-conspirator, and guest of honor Jean Conner

Curated by Timoleon Wilkins, Michelle Silva and Steve Anker. Co-presented with UCLA Film & Television Archive and Los Angeles Filmforum. **Bruce Conner's Explosive Cinema: A Tribute, Part 1** was co-presented by the UCLA Film & Television Archive and the Hammer Museum at the Billy Wilder Theater on Saturday, February 28. For more info, please visit www.cinema.ucla.edu

Funded in part with generous support from Wendy Keys and Donald Pels.

"Bruce Conner's ecstatic films...are a blast—witty, exuberant, despairing, engaged, apocalyptic."
— *The New York Times*

MEA CULPA (1981, DigiBeta, b & w/so. 5min.)
Music by David Byrne and Brian Eno from *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*.

In his first collaboration with David Byrne and Brian Eno, Conner used footage from educational films to create a rhythmically austere image-track for music from their pioneering "sampling" album *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* (1981).

A MOVIE (1958, 16mm, b&w/so 12 min.)

"... a montage of found materials from fact (newsreels) and fiction (old movies). Clichés and horrors make a rapid collage in which destruction and sex follow each other in images of pursuit and falling until finally a diver disappears through a hole in the bottom of the sea - the ultimate exit. The entire thing is prefaced by a girl from a shady movie lazily undressing. By the time **A MOVIE** is over she has retrospectively become a Circe or Prime Mover." - Brian O'Doherty, *The New York Times*

MARILYN TIMES FIVE (1968-1973, 16mm, b&w/so, 13.5m.) With Arline Hunter.

"A young woman, allegedly Marilyn Monroe, is seen with pitiless scrutiny in the arena of an old girlie film. The reiteration of five cycles rotates the commodity of her moon-pale body as her song repeats five times on the sound track ... 'I'm through with love.' The last shot terminates a final reward of stillness as she is seen crumpled on the floor." - Anthony Reveaux

The image, or Anima, of Marilyn Monroe was not owned by Norma Jean any more than it was owned by Arline Hunter. Images can sometimes have more power than the person they represent....MX5 is an equation not intended to be completed by the film alone. The viewer completes the equation.

PERMIAN STRATA (1969, 4 min.)
Sound effects by Robert Zimmerman.

"The style of STRATA marks a departure from Conner's earlier collage forms. Conner chooses the significant footage from the found film and simply sets it off against the music. There's no cutting between the scenes."
- Judd Chesler

"Scientists know that occasional interludes of violence overtook the earth. One such time of crisis was the Permian Age." - Leonard Engel, *The Sea*

REPORT (1963-1967, 16mm, b&w/so, 13 min.)

"Society thrives on violence, destruction, and death no matter how hard we try to hide it with immaculately clean offices, the worship of modern science, or the creation of instant martyrs. From the bullfight arena to the nuclear arena we clamor for the spectacle of destruction. The crucial link in *REPORT* is that JFK with his great PT 109 was just as much a part of the destruction game as anyone else. Losing is a big part of playing games." - David Mosen, *Film Quarterly*

TELEVISION ASSASSINATION (1963-1995, 16mm, b&w/so, 14 min.)

Filmed from TV set 1963-1964 by Bruce Conner - Patrick Gleeson music: 1995 - Lee Harvey Oswald - View from window, Texas School Book Depository - Eternal Flame, Arlington National Cemetery - President Kennedy - Funeral Flowers at Dealey Plaza, Dallas - Kennedy Inaugural Parade - PT 109 Official Warren Commission Report - Texas School Book Depository - Kennedy Motorcade - Mail Order Bolt Action Rifle - Oswald in custody - Jack Ruby shoots Oswald - TV roll bars - multiple exposures - Lincoln Memorial - chalk board diagrams - White House - military guard at Kennedy grave - Baked Turkey commercial for Thanksgiving Day Dinner - Oswald - et cetera.

"A remarkable film. The score by Patrick Gleeson is every bit as effective as his pieces for earlier Bruce Conner films and transforms the experience of seeing these familiar - but also transfixing - images. The humor that leavens the genuine sadness of the material is given gentle boosts here and there acoustically."
- Bruce Jenkins, Director, Film/Video, Walker Art Center

TAKE THE 5:10 TO DREAMLAND (1977, 16mm, sepia/so, 5.5 min.)
Music by Patrick Gleeson.

"... it contains very few images but Bruce Conner collages them in ecstatic orders and they work in miraculous ways."

"... the state produced by a film like *5:10 TO DREAMLAND* is very similar to the feeling produced by a poem. The images, their mysterious relationships, the rhythm, and the connections impress themselves upon the unconscious. The film ends, like a poem ends, almost like a puff, like nothing. And you sit there, in silence, letting it all sink deeper, and then you stand up and you know that it was very, very good."
- Jonas Mekas, *The Soho Weekly News*

VALSE TRISTE (1979, 16mm, b&w/so, 5 min.)

VALSE TRISTE is a frank and graceful autobiographical allusion to Conner's Kansas boyhood. Here, the period of the 1940s of his source materials parallels his own life experiences.