

*Amateur Psychoanalytic Society and their Circle.* The show will open in the summer of 2009 to celebrate the centennial of Freud's visit to Coney Island.

Beloff has collaborated with artists from other disciplines. In 1994 she created *Life Underwater* with composer John Cale, a live show performed at St. Ann's that brought together film, 3-D slides, music and the spoken word. In 1996 the Wooster Group Theater invited her to make her CD-ROM *Where Where There There Where*, in conjunction with their play *House Lights*. Composer, singer and performance artist Shelley Hirsch created the score for her installation, *The Somnambulists*.

Zoe has been awarded fellowships from Guggenheim Foundation (2003), The Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts (1997) and NYFA (1997, 2001). She has received individual artist grants from foundations that include NYSCA (1996, 2001, 2004, 2009) The Jerome Foundation (1998, 2000), and Experimental Television Center Finishing Funds Award (1996, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2007). She has had residences at Harvestworks Digital Media Arts, Hallwalls in Buffalo and Tesla in Berlin.

Program curated by Adele Horne.

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

REDCAT is located in downtown Los Angeles at the corner of W. 2nd St. and S. Hope St., inside the Walt Disney Concert Hall complex. Tickets may be purchased by calling 213.237.2800 or at [www.redcat.org](http://www.redcat.org) or in person at the REDCAT Box Office on the corner of 2nd and Hope Streets (30 minutes free parking with validation).  
Box Office Hours: Tue-Sat | noon-6 pm and two hours prior to curtain

#### **UPCOMING FILM/VIDEO PROGRAMS**

April 29: The Cinema Cabaret: Live Film Narration

April 30-May 2: CalArts Film/Video Showcases

May 4: William E. Jones: Le Grand Mash Up

May 11: Cheryl Dunye: *The Watermelon Woman*

## **ZOE BELOFF:** CONJURING SPECTERS

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April 27, 2009

8:30 pm

presented by

REDCAT

Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater

California Institute of the Arts

CALARTS

REDCAT

# ZOE BELOFF: CONJURING SPECTERS

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Mon. April 27 | 8:30 pm  
Jack H. Skirball Series

New York artist Zoe Beloff's unique and mesmerizing films are philosophical toys: objects with which to think. Her work has especially borne on "phantoms," on images that are "not there," and on a precinematic version of the virtual, created by means of a stereoscopic Bolex camera that produces spectral 3-D images.

***Shadowland Or Light From The Other Side*** (2000, 32 min., 3-D 16mm, b/w), starring Kate Valk of The Wooster Group, locates a link between Victorian spiritualism and the birth of cinema in late-19th century "Ghost Shows," where actors interacted with magic lantern slides and stereoscopic views. ***Charming Augustine*** (2004, 40 min., 3-D 16mm film, b/w) is an experimental narrative inspired by one of Charcot's most famous patients at the Salpêtrière in turn-of-the-century Paris. It explores connections between photographic documentation of hysteria and the prehistory of narrative film: Augustine captivates the doctors with her theatrical and photogenic hysterical attacks and in the process becomes a star, the "Sarah Bernhardt" of the asylum.

## In person: Zoe Beloff

"Beloff exists as the consummate time traveler, floating between the two eras of cine-technology."  
—Jeffrey Skoller, *Shadows, Specters, Shards: Making History in Avant-Garde Film*

## PROGRAM

***SHADOWLAND OR LIGHT FROM THE OTHER*** (2000, 32 min., 3-D 16mm, b/w)

For the better part of a hundred years, moving images have been thought of as a "window onto another world." Zoe Beloff's films reach further back to an earlier conception of the virtual: the 19th century's magic lantern slides and stereoscopic views, which allowed virtual images to co-exist with real objects in space, rendering the cinematic spectacle an interactive, three-dimensional experience. Beloff's ***Shadowland or Light from the Other Side*** is a three-dimensional 16mm projection with a visually striking vertical aspect ratio. An air of vaudeville pervades the screening event, as viewers don 3D glasses and Beloff projects from within the theater space onto a portable silver screen.

***Shadowland or Light from the Other Side*** traces links between pre-cinematic projections and 19th century spiritualist mediums, who function as mental "projectors," conjuring specters to interact with the sitters at a séance. The film's title and narrative are taken from the 1897 autobiography of Elizabeth D'Espérance, a materializing medium who could produce full body apparitions.

As the story of Elizabeth D'Espérance (played by Kate Valk of the Wooster Group) unfolds, we discover a lonely little girl who conjures imaginary friends that appear, to her, completely real. This remarkable ability causes her much suffering: upon reaching adolescence, she is pronounced mad because she sees people who are not there. Later in life she finds a way to cultivate her gifts within the spiritualist movement. The film explores how the psychic projections of 19th century mediums like D'Espérance demonstrate a deep cultural ambivalence around the role of women. The female medium was considered an especially suitable conduit to the next world because of her "passive nature." Yet she produced phantoms that displayed an

exhibitionistic sexuality that radically transgressed her Victorian upbringing. The film explores these phantoms as a kind of limit case of the virtual, a three-dimensional representation of psychic reality, and relates their production to another contemporary theatricalization of the unconscious, the performances of Charcot's hysterics.

The phantoms that appear in ***Shadowland or Light from the Other Side*** are drawn from magic lantern slides, glass negatives, and scenes from the earliest films of the 1890s. Staged with exquisite detail and photographed in a lustrous black and white, the film's otherworldly apparitions haunt and fascinate the audience.

## CHARMING AUGUSTINE

***Charming Augustine*** is an experimental narrative based on the real case of a fifteen-year-old patient, Augustine, admitted to the famous Salpêtrière insane asylum in Paris in the 1880's and diagnosed with hysterical paralysis. The doctors were captivated by her frequent hysterical attacks, which were extraordinarily theatrical and photogenic. Augustine became the "Sarah Bernhardt" of the asylum, documented in a series of photographs and texts published as *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière*.

***Charming Augustine*** explores connections between the doctor's attempts to document Augustine's mental states and the prehistory of narrative film. Working with cameras similar to those used in the motion studies of Marey and Muybridge, the doctors aimed to unlock the secrets of their patients' minds by studying the mechanics of their bodies. Beloff's film demonstrates how patients like Augustine supplied the psychic drive that would come to flower in the works of D.W. Griffith. ***Charming Augustine*** appears at first as a straightforward medical document, then begins to reflect Augustine's interior perceptions and hallucinations. Finally, Augustine becomes "disenchanted," both in the contemporary sense of that word and in its original meaning of being awakened from a magnetic sleep or hypnotic trance.

By filming in a stereoscopic format, with a vertical aspect ratio that resembles a gaze through a doorway rather than the window of most cinema screens, Beloff conjures up a time just prior to the invention of cinema, suggesting a different direction that cinema might have taken had it been invented in the 1880's. ***Charming Augustine*** conveys a fragile, spectral "what if...," a moment in time when the moving image was on the brink of existence in a form not yet standardized.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

**Zoe Beloff** grew up in Edinburgh, Scotland. In 1980 she moved to New York to study at Columbia University where she received an MFA in Film. Her work has been exhibited in museums, cinemas and galleries internationally, including MoMA, The Museum of Jurassic Technology, Rotterdam Film festival, and Pacific Film Archives, and the 1997 and 2002 Whitney Museum of American Art Biennials. Her interactive works are in the collections of the Kiasma Museum of Modern Art Helsinki and the Pompidou Center in Paris. She is represented by the Bellwether Gallery in New York.

Beloff is engaged in re-invigorating technologies such as stereoscopic imagery and dioramas that have largely been abandoned since the invention of the cinema. Sometimes she uses archaic apparatuses, sometimes, new analog/digital hybrids. She works with film, live 3-D projection performance, interactive cinema on CD-ROM and video installation. She would like to think of herself as an heir to the 19th century mediums whose materialization séances conjured up unconscious desires, in the most theatrical fashion. Though lacking psychic abilities she confesses to relying on cinematic illusionism or one could say the cinematic "medium." Each project aims to connect the present with the past, to create new visual languages where modern media will once again be invested with the uncanny. She is currently working on an exhibition: *The Coney Island*