

BARBARA HAMMER: EXPERIMENTING IN LIFE AND ART

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California Institute of the Arts

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BARBARA HAMMER: EXPERIMENTING IN LIFE AND ART

Monday, January 24 | 8:30 pm

Jack H. Skirball Series

West Coast premiere and Los Angeles premiere

Barbara Hammer has made over 80 films in a career that spans 40 years, and is widely celebrated throughout the world as a pioneer of queer cinema. This screening presents the West Coast premiere of **Generations** (2010) made with Gina Carducci, a film about the ongoing tradition of personal filmmaking, the last days of Coney Island's legendary Astroland, and the aging of the film medium itself; and the Los Angeles premiere of **A Horse Is Not A Metaphor** (2009) with music by Meredith Monk, a richly textured filmic tapestry that reflects upon Hammer's bout with cancer, her return to her experimental filmmaking roots, and her drive to change illness into recovery through travels and pilgrimages in New Mexico, Wyoming and Woodstock. Hammer's book, *HAMMER! Making Movies Out of Sex and Life* was published last spring, and she was recently given a career retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art.

In person: Barbara Hammer

"Generations invites us to pause and actually feel the meaning of our relationships and legacies."

– Sloan Lesbowitz, MIX Festival, NYC

"Hammer's intense productivity places her on the scale of Brakhage or Warhol as a major force in the independent cinema; Hammer neatly inverts the patriarchal forces implicitly and often 'invisibly' at work in independent cinema practice." – Wheeler Winston Dixon, *The Exploding Eye, A Re-Visionary History of 1960s American Experimental Cinema*

Generations

2010, 30 minutes, 16 mm film, color/sound, made with Gina Carducci.

A film about mentoring and passing on the tradition of personal experimental filmmaking. Barbara Hammer, 70 years old, hands the camera to Gina Carducci, a young queer filmmaker. Shooting during the last days of Astroland at Coney Island, New York, the filmmakers find that the inevitable fact of ageing echoes in the architecture of the amusement park and in the emulsion of the film medium itself. Inspired by Shirley Clarke's *Bridges Go Round* (1958), both filmmakers edited picture and sound separately joining their films in the middle when they' finished making a true generational and experimental experiment.

A Horse is Not a Metaphor

2008, 30 minutes, DVD, Color/B&W/Sound by Meredith Monk

Teddy Award for Best Short Film, 2009 Berlin International Film Festival.

The filmmaker, fighting ovarian cancer, stage 3, returns to her experimental roots, in a multilayered film of numerous chemotherapy sessions with images of light and movement that take her far from the hospital bed. A cancer 'thriller' rather than 'survivor', Barbara Hammer rides the red hills of Georgia O'Keefe's Ghost Ranch in New Mexico, the grassy foothills of the Big Horn in Wyoming, and leafy paths in Woodstock, New York changing illness into recovery.

The haunting and wondrous music of Meredith Monk underscores and celebrates in this film that lifts us up when we might be most discouraged.

ABOUT BARBARA HAMMER

Barbara Hammer (American, b. 1939) is renowned for creating the earliest and most extensive body of avant-garde films on lesbian life and sexuality. In the late 1960s she was drawn to experimental film while studying film at San Francisco State University. During that time she came out as a lesbian, an act that helped radicalize her approach to directing. Galvanized by the second wave of feminism in the 1970s, she soon became a pioneer of queer cinema. Hammer has since directed more than eighty films, using avant-garde strategies to explore lesbian and gay sexuality, identity, and history, along with other heretofore unrepresented voices. In the 1970s her films dealt with the representation of taboo subjects through performance, and in the 1980s she began using an optical printer to make films that explore perception. In the 1990s she began making documentaries about hidden aspects of queer history. Hammer says, 'It is a political act to work and speak as a lesbian artist in the dominant art world and to speak as an avant-garde artist to a lesbian and gay audience. My presence and voice address both issues of homophobia [and] the need for an emerging community to explore a new imagination'." – NY Museum of Modern Art

Barbara Hammer's memoir, *HAMMER! Making Movies Out Of Sex and Life* was published by the Feminist Press at CUNY in spring 2010 to coincide with a retrospective at The Museum of Modern Art in New York City, the Reina Sophia in Madrid, and the Tate Modern in London.

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

- 2007 *Diving Women of Jeju-do*
- 2006 *Lover/Other, Video*
- 2003 *Resisting Paradise*
- 2001 *My Babushka: Searching Ukrainian Identities*
- 2000 *History Lessons*
- Devotion, A Film about Ogawa Productions*
- 1998 *The Female Closet*
- 1995 *Tender Fictions*
- 1994 *Out in South Africa*
- 1992 *Nitrate Kisses*
- 1990 *Sanctus*
- 1987 *Place Mattes*
- No No Nooky T.V.*
- 1986 *Snow Job: The Media Hysteria of Aids*
- 1985 *Optic Nerve*
- 1983 *Bent Time*
- 1982 *Pond and Waterfall*
- 1981 *Sync Touch*

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY continued

1979 *Available Space*
1978 *Double Strength*
1977 *The Great Goddess*
1976 *Multiple Orgasm*
Superdyke Meets Madame X
1975 *Jane Brakhage*
1974 *Dyketactics*
1972 *A Brakhage Song*
1968 *Schizy*

Curated by Steve Anker and Bérénice Reynaud.

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

On Friday, January 28, 4:00-7:00, in the “Bijou Auditorium” of the California Institute of the Arts, Barbara Hammer will present and discuss *LOVER OTHER* (2006, 55 min.)

Focusing on the mythical and often mysterious figure of the artist/writer/ revolutionary activist Claude Cahun, the film examines an intriguing chapter in lesbian cultural history. Cahun is famous for her photographic self-portraits where she appears in a great variety of costumes and disguises, most notably with a shaved head. Ignored or underestimated for years by mainstream art history, her work is currently being rediscovered, written about, and exhibited.

California Institute of the Arts, 24700 McBean Parkway, Valencia, CA 91355. (661)255-1050. Free Parking on campus.

UPCOMING FILM/VIDEO PROGRAMS AT REDCAT WINTER/SPRING 2011

February 14: Animating Mayhem: Collage and Painted Films by Martha Colburn

February 21: Body and Mind: The Primordial Cinema of Fred Worden

February 22: In Focus: The Humorous Recent Video Art from Israel, Japan and Mexico

February 28: The Artist Theater Program: A Group Show of Film and Video Work by Visual Artists

March 8: The Birdwoman and Her Dreams: Animated Works by Nancy Andrews

March 10: *COINTELPRO 101*

March 26–Apr 10: REDCAT International Children’s Film Festival

March 28: Victory Over The Sun: Films and Videos by Michael Robinson

April 4: Betzy Bromberg’s *Voluptuous Sleep Series*

April 6–9: Between Disorder and Unexpected Pleasures: Tales from the New Chinese Cinema

April 18: Eija-Liisa Ahtila: *Where is Where?*

May 2: Specks of Existence: Hartmut Bitomsky’s *Dust*

May 4–7: CalArts Film/Video Showcase