

JENNIFER REEVES: *WHEN IT WAS BLUE*

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JENNIFER REEVES: *WHEN IT WAS BLUE*

Los Angeles premiere
2008, 68 min., dual-projection 16mm

Jack H. Skirball Series

This double-projector performance by New York-based filmmaker Jennifer Reeves pays rapturous homage to the endangered beauty of our blue planet. Composed in four parts to represent the four seasons and cardinal directions, *When It Was Blue* traverses the globe and its diverse ecosystems from New Zealand to Iceland, the Americas and beyond, rejoicing in myriad fauna and flora, mountains, forests, oceans, the splendor of seasonal change—in short, the expanse of life as it exists on earth. Reeves hand-paints frames and optically prints other images to create impressionistic textures in what critic Mark Peranson calls “a wide-ranging play on the notion of ‘blue’—the color, the sensation, the sinking realization that the natural world (and 16mm film) must be captured as much as possible before it disappears.” New York-based, Icelandic bass player and composer Skúli Sverrisson (who is also Laurie Anderson’s music director) plays his soaring score live.

In person: Jennifer Reeves and Skúli Sverrisson

“Reeves’s captivating tour de force explodes all preconceptions about both experimental and environmental film.” – Mark Peranson *The Globe and Mail*

Drawing as much from the feminist surrealism of Peggy Ahwesh, the interior psychological exploration of Stan Brakhage, and the globalized interiority of Warren Sonbert as from Dziga Vertov’s heritage, Reeves turns the screen into a materialist writing-pad that moves at the speed of private thought. In all of these respects, it is logical that Reeves begins her global exploration at sea. Like all the other dualities at work in *When It Was Blue*, the ocean is a polyvalent emblem, both material and metaphorical, the clearest physical representation of travel and its difficulty as well as the depth of the unconscious, the mind in turbulent, undifferentiated sensation. Reeves’ ability to connect all levels of experience—the celestial, the terrestrial, the bodily, and the microscopic—directs us to Brakhage. As with him, the ability to forge comparisons both sustains itself and breaks down by entering an “oceanic” zone of total engulfment. Reeves’ superimpositions not only allow her to present multiple tracks of material (and multiple trains of thought) at the same time, but also allows for the divisions between distinct things to start to melt down and become porous... Yet, The feminist impulse throughout her work is the major new contribution she brings to this filmmaking tradition. Reeves engages with the cinema, and with the world, without the purported luxury of invisibility and objective distance accorded her male predecessors. As much of her earlier filmography has articulated in brutally frank, often harrowing terms, she is a subject who has particular cause to view the larger world as a space of potential threat. – Michael Sicinski *CinemaScope*

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Skúli Sverrisson (b. 1966 Reykjavik, Iceland) studied bass and composition with Jon Sigurdsson and made his first recording with his group Pax Vobis in 1984. He later appeared on over 30 recordings with various Icelandic artists.

In 1987 Sverrisson attended Berklee College of Music in Boston where he received his B.M. degree. During that time he quickly became a first-call bassist in the music scene performing with several notable artists such as Bob Moses, Danilo Perez, Wolfgang Muthspiel and Mino Cinelu and started his ongoing collaboration with multi-instrumentalist Carsten Tiedemann.

In 1989, he Formed MO BOMA with Carsten Tiedemann, a group that later included Jamshied Sharifi. MO BOMA have recorded four albums for EXTREME, "Jijimuge" and the acclaimed trilogy, "Myths of the Near Future 1-3". The same year, he also joined Sony recording artists FULL CIRCLE and recorded with them the critically acclaimed album "Secret Stories", voted best jazz album at the Boston Music Awards. He toured with them in both Europe and U.S.A.

Through his interest in avant-garde music, film and writers of, he became aware of the importance of improvisation as means of creating new music. Working with composer/trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith also inspired new ideas in improvisation. Sverrisson has improvised with Derek Bailey, Peter Brotzmann, Tim Berne, John Lurie, Nana Vasconcelos and numerous other notable musicians.

Sverrisson joined The Allan Holdsworth Band in 1991 and toured the world with the group. He performed on the 1994 recording, "Hard Hat Area". He has also collaborated with Arto Lindsay, Towa Tei, Blonde Redhead and Peter Scherer.

Although working in many different genres his principal focus is tape composition. Sverrisson describes the process as taking audio snapshots of the interior architecture of sound. In his solo work, his interest in electronics and extended techniques of his instrument meet.

<http://www.xtr.com/artists/skuli-sverrisson/>

Jennifer Reeves (b. 1971, Ceylon) is a New York-based filmmaker working primarily on 16mm. Her films have shown extensively, from the Berlin, New York, Vancouver, London, Sundance, and Seoul Film Festivals to many Microcinemas in the US and Canada, the Robert Flaherty Seminar, Princeton University, and the Museum of Modern Art. She has made experimental films since 1990 (or since 1986 if you consider high-school video-making). She does her own writing, cinematography, editing, and sound design. Her subjective and personal films push the boundaries of film through optical-printing, film stock "mis-use", and direct-on-film techniques (including hand-painting and sewing 16mm film). In 2007 Reeves performed her double-projection films *Light Work Mood Disorder* (with music by Anthony Burr) and *He Walked Away* (several scores with different composers) at the Rotterdam Film Festival, the Wexner Center, AFI Fest, Diapason Gallery in New York, Kino Arsenal in Berlin, and the Contemporary Art Museum of Strasbourg. Reeves has been the proud recipient of a 2007 Wexner Center Capital Residency Award, which made it possible for her to complete production and post-production on *Light Work Mood Disorder*, and gave partial completion funds for *When It Was Blue*. The MacDowell Colony and the Experimental Television Center also gave support to the project.

Since 2003 Reeves has collaborated with some of the finest composer/musicians today, including Anthony Burr, Skúli Sverrisson, Elliott Sharp, Zeena Parkins, Marc Ribot, Erik Hoversten, Pitt Reeves, Hilmar Jensson, John Stone, Eliza Slavet, and Dave Cerf. In 2005, she was commissioned to make a silent film for the Bard Music Festival. *Shadows Choose Their Horrors* premiered with the American Symphony Orchestra's performance of Aaron Copland's *Grohg*. Reeves has also made a number of experimental narratives, most notably her highly acclaimed feature *The Time We Killed* (2004), which won the FIPRESCI Critics

prize at the Berlin Film Festival, Outstanding Artistic Achievement at OUTFEST, and Best NY, NY Narrative Feature at Tribeca Film Festival, and was later screened at the 2006 Whitney Biennial.

Reeves teaches film at Bard College's Milton Avery School of the Arts, The Cooper Union, Millennium Film Workshop and the School of Visual Arts in the Photography and Related Media MFA program.

home.earthlink.net/~jennreeves/

Curated by Steve Anker and Bérénice Reynaud.

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UPCOMING FILM/VIDEO PROGRAMS

May 3: Gregorio Rocha: *The Lost Reels of Pancho Villa* with Edmundo and Felix Padilla:

The Vengeance of Pancho Villa

May 6–8: CalArts Film/Video Showcase

May 10: Starting to Go Bad: New Narratives by Pat O'Neill

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May 15: Teen Animation, Photography, Puppetry and Video Screening

May 16: Ring Festival LA: Considering Wagner featuring Villa Aurora Composers-in-Residence

June 2–3: Partch: Even Wild Horses

June 4–5: Dance Camera West

June 5: CAP/Sony Pictures Media Arts Program Screening

June 13–14: Studio: Summer 2010

July 8–September 5: Chen Chieh-jen: *Empire's Borders II*

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