

FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS

Mon Nov 5 | 8:30 pm |

Jack H. Skirball Series

\$10 [members \$8]

The Poetics of Place: Films By Rose Lowder

Rose Lowder is one of Europe's most influential and celebrated cinematic treasures – a filmmaker and scholar who first trained as a painter and sculptor, then later studied with filmmaker Jean Rouch. Since 1977 Lowder has made more than 50 films that create complex single-frame matrices, bordering eerily on the edge of animation. Whether filming the view from her Avignon window, the French countryside, or centuries-old structures, Lowder composes highly charged, multiple-perspective mosaics that explore nature's visual wonders and the underlying ecology of specific places. She investigates the world around her with a scientist's precision, and exalts it with a singular vibrancy of form and color. The program includes the early masterwork *Rue des Teinturiers* (1977), the series of stunning one-minute cinematic studies, *Bouquets 11–20* (2005–10), and the recent tour-de-force *Jardin du sel* (*Salt Garden*, 2011).

In person: Rose Lowder

"Lowder is not only a major master of our time but a kind of inevitability, one of the essential pillars of cinema as a material artform." – Michael Sicinski

"The most memorable of Lowder's films create distinct visual experiences that, in their reduction of day-long phenomena into brief, precise, intense cinematic moments, sing the potential of an ecological film aesthetic." – Scott MacDonald, *Millennium Film Journal*

"Drawing from the pattern, color and texture of the lush landscape of Avignon, Lowder focuses her lens on the world outside her window, capturing nature in pure and radiant moments."
- Tara Merenda Nelson

"Brimming with vibrant images of blossoms, orchards, insects, and grasses, the works of celebrated French filmmaker Rose Lowder

literally buzz with life. For over thirty years, she has crafted a body of stunning structuralist portraits of the pastoral environs around her home in southern France. Often shot one frame at a time and composed through elaborate, pre-designed in-camera edits, each of her films also explores the possibilities of photographic and visual perception." – *Proximity Magazine*

Program

Roulement, rouerie, aubage (1978, 15 min)

Roulement means rotation of the wheel reflecting the camera's mechanisms; *rouerie*, wiliness reflecting the focusing of the image in relation to the frame; and *aubage* is the functioning of the paddle wheel as a visual unit. Edited within the camera, the film shows two paddle wheels on the Sorgue River. Lowder uses series of cross-references that are set up between two operating mechanisms: a selection of elements belonging to the rotating wheels and a certain number of visual features accentuated by the filming procedures chosen to record the frames. The image remains on a borderline in between the graphic or photographic characteristics and the representation, thus allowing one to shift regularly from one to the other way of seeing things.

Rue des Teinturiers (1979, 31 min)

The focus of each image, recorded frame by frame, is adjusted so that graphic features of items in the rue des Teinturiers are extracted and inscribed onto the film strip: when projected, their characteristics are seen as part of a spatiotemporal situation stretching from a position on a balcony over a canalized river to the road. The film is composed of twelve reels, each filmed on a different day throughout a six-month period, joined together in a slightly non-chronological order.

Impromptu (1989, 8 min)

Edited frame by frame in-camera by rewinding the reel several times during filming, the film interweaves images recorded at two or three different periods. The mingling of mobile forms in each space represents a particular spatiotemporal experience. Initially a work in progress, *Impromptu* was not designed to be screened in its present form. At least the film bears up to its title: unplanned distribution, fortuitous sound supplied accidentally by the lab, unexpected actors, an end title produced by chance... Filmed in Fort St. André's courtyard,

Villeneuve-lez-Avignon, Gard; on the way to Carpentras, Vaucluse; near Séderon, Drôme; and in the village of Brantes, Vaucluse.

Les Coquelicots / Poppies (2000, 2.7 min)

Worn out by the sea, the fishing boats from Sète harbor decide to spend a day in the country amongst the poppies surrounding Arles, Bédarrides and the Thouzon Grottos.

Bouquets 11-20 (2005-2010, 10.30 min)

Filmed in Italy, Switzerland and France, these ten short films (1 minute or 1440 frames each, with No 16 being 23 frames longer than the others) continue the work begun with the series *Bouquets 1-10* and *21-30*. This consists of an in-camera weaving of the visual aspects of the filmed reality, in order to bring into existence specific features of the cinematographic image – hopefully placing us on a boundary outside the traditional roles of description or abstraction. Content-wise the graphic-aesthetic process is related to social/economical politics and philosophy. Nearly every civilization disappeared due to mayor environmental issues and we are, in heading in that direction, repeating history. - R.L.

- *Bouquet 11* – Oasis de La Roche Bleue, near Plaisans, Drôme
- *Bouquet 12* - La Mhotte farm, Saint Menoux, Allier
- *Bouquet 13* - La Baraque agroecological site, Aujac, Gard
- *Bouquet 14* - Le Vieil Eclis, Asserac, Loire-Atlantique
- *Bouquet 15* - Azienda Agricola Cascina Piola, Serra-Capriglio, Asti, Nord Monferrato, Piemonte, Italy
- *Bouquet 16* - Silvai Confiture (jam), Haute Bléone, Prads, Basses-Alpes
- *Bouquet 17* - Beau-Site guest house (European ecological label), Chemin sur Martigny, Switzerland
- *Bouquet 18* – Crozefond farm, Saint Aubin, Lot et Garonne
- *Bouquet 19* - Les Jardins du Marais, Parc Naturel Régional de Brière, Hoscas, Loire Atlantique
- *Bouquet 20* - La Baraque agroecological site, Aujac, Gard

Jardin du sel / Salt Garden (2011, 16.11 min)

The production of a sea salt flower is a process of seawater concentration-saturation to form crystallization. The agricultural character of the activity is evoked in the phrase "salt garden." Six poetic pictures: five based on the sun, the wind and the sea, while the

last rests on a small park left fallow. Music by François Alexis Degrenier.

All films are in 16mm.

After training as a painter and sculptor in artist's studios and art schools in Lima (The Art Center, La Escuela de Bellas Artes) and in London (Regent Street Polytechnic, Chelsea School of Art), **Rose Lowder** worked in London as an artist while earning a living as an editor in the film industry. From 1977 onwards she concentrated on studying the visual aspect of the cinematographic process, and was encouraged by Jean Rouch and his staff at the University de Paris X to present some of her work as a thesis under the title *The experimental film as an instrument towards visual research* (1987). Since 1977 Lowder has been active programming rarely shown films. In order to make this body of work available to a wider public, she constituted a collection of films and paper documents, The Experimental Film Archive of Avignon (1981). Since 1996 Lowder has also been associate professor at Paris I University.

"One of the reasons I started to work that way was that I had studied certain problems in perception. We have two eyes, but the camera has only one eye. I'd looked into the different stereo processes, which try to create volume artificially. I'm not trying to do that. If you put a camera in front of a scene and let it run normally, what you get is something that is visually poorer than if you you'd been sitting looking at the scene yourself.

You have two eyes, so you experience volume; and you're aware of a lot of things which would normally be outside of the film frame: when you're watching a film, you are in a dark room where all your other sensory input is cut off, and you're looking at one isolated little rectangle out of all there is to see. It seemed to me that if you wanted to create, not *reality* – that's not interesting at all; you might just as well see reality – but if you want to make a work of film art that is as rich as what one is used to in reality, you have to enrich the film image somehow. One way is to continually focus on slightly different focus points that allow you to see around the corners of things just a bit.

In certain scenes in *Rue des Teinturiers*, you'll notice that at some points you can actually see through the flowering laurel tree trunk in the middle of the balcony. You are seeing *behind* it as well as *it*, because one of the focus points is giving you what is behind the laurel's trunk and another focus point is the trunk itself, and still another is in front of the trunk. Because I use all these focus points

over and over, you see multiple things in the same space, which in reality is physically impossible. This gets back to the loops where you can see something on the screen that in reality you can't have on the film." - Rose Lowder

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Curated by Steve Anker and Bérénice Reynaud

This screening is part of a West Coast tour of the films of Rose Lowder. An additional Los Angeles screening will take place on **Sunday Nov 4 at 7:30 pm** at *Los Angeles Filmforum* at the Velaslavasay Panorama at 1122 West 24th Street (by Hoover) Los Angeles, CA 90007

www.lafilmforum.org

Tickets: \$10 general; \$6 students/seniors, free for Filmforum members, available at

<http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/284253>

Filmforum Program:

Parcelle (1979, 3 min., silent, color, 16mm)

Couleurs mécaniques (Mechanical Colours) (1979, 16 min., silent, color, 16mm)

Champ Provençal (Provençal Field) (1979, 9 min., silent, 16mm)

Les tournesols (Sunflowers) (1982, 3 min., silent, 16mm)

Bouquets 1-10 (1994-95, 11.33 min, silent, 16mm)

Two Pictures (in collaboration with Carl Brown) (1999, 12 min, 16mm) Sound : Carl Brown

Habitat, Batracien/Batrachian (2006, 8.31 min., color, silent, 16mm)

Beijing 1988 (1988-2011, 12:17 min., 16mm)