

FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS

Mon April 28 | 8:30 |

Jack H. Skirball Series

\$10.00 [members \$8.00]

The Art Of Collision Montage Films By Henry Hills

Uncovering the ethereal in the mundane and the abstract in the naturalistic, Henry Hills activates a heightened attentiveness in viewers through his signature use of montage—intensely concentrated, rhythmically complex, and replete with eccentric wit. A celebrated maker of experimental film since 1975, Hills has collaborated with New York “Language” poets, composer John Zorn and choreographer Sally Silvers, among other artists. The former longtime resident of the East Village now teaches at FAMU, the Czech national film academy in Prague, and lives in Vienna. Hills’ recent short *arcana* (2011, digital video, 30 min.) has collected top prizes at Curtas Vila do Conde in Portugal and the Melbourne International Film Festival.

In person: Henry Hills

“Hills breaks down standard sounds and images, transforming them into perceptive alternatives, political critiques, and a search for occult, creative expressions that have not been said or explored before.” — Mónica Savirón

"Henry Hills...has been a distinguished film artist for several decades. He is intimately connected and acknowledged by many of the most influential poets in the United States as one of the filmmakers most closely connected to the poetics of the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E movement." – P.Adams Sitney

in collaboration with Los Angeles Filmforum

Program

Porter Springs 3 (6 min, silent, 1977)

This “painterly” work consists of basically one image: reflections of trees on the lake broken by a line of waterlilies, an hallucinatory love poem.

These beautiful, intricately animated reflections were unfortunately shot in ECO which has proved to be remarkably unstable, turning blue before an internegative was made. Therefore, this is one of only three prints of this "elegant and serene experience" (Pat O'Neill).

Kino Da! (2 min, 1980)

Shot in sync with wind-up Bolex. Sound recording: Mark McGowan. Portrait of North Beach Communist cafe poet & gentle comrade, Jack Hirschman: KINO DA! (ah, ke, ke) KINO DA! The Dead die die dada low king quanto zong MOVE! (ur, ur) Grey todays it-a clear to the quick ear, quicker z'heels The Poe (pay, po, pee, pick-pick), nuf of "D" yet Call Vertov (beep, beep)...

Money (15 min, 1985)

Filmed primarily on the streets of Manhattan for the ambient sounds and movements and occasional pedestrian interaction to create a rich tapestry of swirling colors and juxtaposed architectural spaces in deep focus and present the intense urban over-flowing energy that is experience living here. MONEY is thematically centered around a discussion of economic problems facing avant-garde artists in the Reagan era. Discussion, however, is fragmented into words and phrases and reassembled into writing.

Little Lieutenant (7 min, 1994)

A look back at the late Weimar era with its struggles and celebrations leading up to world war, a period piece. Scored to John Zorn's arrangement of the Kurt Weill song, "Little Lieutenant of the Loving God," and drawing its imagery both from the original song and its somewhat idiosyncratic rearrangement, the film presents an internal reading of Silvers' solo scored to the same musical piece, "Along the Skid Mark of Recorded History." Closely following the Zorn arrangement, the film was storyboarded in 30 scenes (the arrangement changes approximately every four measures) and principally shot in a small studio employing rear projection, with foreground movement choreographed to interact with the projected imagery which reflects themes apparent in the song and its arrangement.

Failed States (10 min, 2008)

Conceived, directed, shot, & edited by Henry Hills

"Guru Guru Gatha" performed by Jackson Mac Low

Boys love to spin until they collapse. Is the world then spinning out of control? Preparations for renegotiating the Nonproliferation Treaty.

"arcana" (30 min, 2010)

A 30-minute cut-up epic that takes footage – both found and shot by the filmmaker – and crosses it in an almost arithmetic manner with a pre-arranged soundtrack. The basis is a written film treatment of the musician John Zorn, in which 254 scenes, bundled into 15 sequences, are captured in short, sometimes cryptic descriptions. Hills, very much in the style of a Harry Smith or Bruce Conner, has collected takes of radically differing origin for each of the 254 script directions and funneled them into a complexly ramified stream of associations. The sequence of scenes is underscored, or rather, interlocked, with pieces from the John Zorn composition "The Bribe" (1986), a musical tribute to crime fiction writer Mickey Spillane. -Christian Höller (Translation: Charlotte Eckler)

Henry Hills will be presenting a different program

Friday May 4th | 7:30 pm
Los Angeles Filmforum

At the Velaslavasay Panorama
1122 W 24th St, Los Angeles, CA 90007
(213) 746-2166

For more event information: www.lafilmforum.org, or 323-377-7238

Tickets: \$10 general, \$6 students/seniors; free for Filmforum members. Tickets at the door or available by credit card in advance.

Henry Hills has been making dense, intensely rhythmic experimental films since 1975. A longtime resident of New York's East Village, he has been primarily living in Vienna since 2008. His work, which seeks abstraction within sharply-focused naturalistic imagery, the eternal within the temporal & the ethereal within the mundane, promotes an active attentiveness through a relentlessly concentrated montage.

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, he received an M.F.A in 1978 from the San Francisco Art Institute. He edited the avant-garde film journal CINEMANEWS from 1977-80. Moving to New York 1978, he began ongoing working relationships with the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Poets, composer John Zorn & various musicians in the Downtown Improv

scene, and choreographer Sally Silvers. Since 2005 has been Visiting Professor at FAMU, the Czech national film academy in Prague, where he administers a visiting filmmaker series and programs avant-garde films for the Czech National Film Archive at their theater Ponrepo. He edited the last three features by his wife, Austrian documentary director Martina Kudlacek (*In The Mirror of Maya Deren, Notes on Marie Menken, Fragments of Kubelka*).

Hills was a 2009 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship recipient, and his films are included in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art. His most recent work, "*arcana*", was awarded Best Experimental Film at both Curtas Vila do Conde festival in Portugal and the Melbourne International Film Festival in Australia. A retrospective of his work was presented by the Austrian Film Museum in October, 2013

"A polymath steeped in multiple fields of avant-garde creativity and a key figure for the consideration of "composition" as a practice across disciplines, Hills's filmwork is inseparable from his involvement with the (sorry to use the contested term) "language poets" as well as the Downtown NY experimental music and dance scenes. The music of John Zorn, Christian Marclay and Tom Cora wends its way throughout Hills's key films, along with fragments of writing and speech by Charles Bernstein, Ron Silliman and Bruce Andrews. Hills shares with these highly distinctive artists a focus on the structures of signification, the poetics of colliding fragments, and above all a Futurist commitment to the intellectual power of clamor and speed, only this time - this is crucial! - harnessed for the political left. Hills's films display a preference for what Peter Kubelka called "strong articulations," extreme differences between edits and even frames which push our capacities for understanding to the limit and then some...Henry Hills is such a form-buster that watching his films inevitably prompts a momentary disquieting thought: what's it like inside this guy's head?"
- Michael Sicinski

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Curated by Steve Anker and Bérénice Reynaud