

FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS

Mon Oct 13 | 8:30 pm |

Jack H. Skirball Series

\$11 [members \$8]

The Camera in the World: Films by ROBERT FENZ

Duly hailed for his exquisite compositions and sympathetic feel for the lived rhythms of his cinematographic subjects, peripatetic filmmaker extraordinaire Robert Fenz also brings a keen contextual understanding to his lyrical 16mm explorations of the human condition in locales around the globe. The program features the early breakout work *Meditations on Revolution, Part V: Foreign City* (2003, 32 min., b/w); *Correspondence* (2011, 30 min., color and b/w, silent), Fenz's homage to the late ethnographic filmmaker Robert Gardner; *La Nuit* (2014, 12 min., silent), a haunting portrait of nighttime Marseilles; and *Toros* (2014, 6 min., b/w), a meditation on bullfighting. Fenz's films have been screened at the Whitney Biennial, MoMA, Cinémathèque Française, and the Rotterdam and Locarno festivals, among other showcases.

"Mixing improvisation with luminous photography, [Fenz] offers a poetic but political worldview."

- Mark Webber, BFI London Film Festival

In person: Robert Fenz

The German philosopher, Georg Simmel (whose classes Walter Benjamin took), questioned the links between the artist and traveler, and in 1911 he plotted out the Fenzien program: "It is well within the essence of a work of art to cut off a piece of the infinitely continuous sequences in the world, or in life, to free it from the groups that it forms, with everything that is above, or below it, and to give it a form that will only suffice its own self, and which is maintained as if by an interior core."

- Nicole Brenez, *Experimental Film and Anthropology*, 2014

Meditations on Revolution, Part 5: Foreign City

(32min., 2003, 16mm, B+W, Sound)

Foreign City is the final work in my five-part series *Meditations On Revolution*, filmed over a seven-year period. This body of work explores the basic theme of revolution in its purest definition: the radical transformation of a subject from one state to another and the various forms that transformation can take. Silver gelatin film was used due to the chemical process that is essential to its development, a process that transforms the material physically from one state to another.

"Mr. Fenz's film is a cinematic poem that surveys the grimier neighborhoods of New York City, mostly at night, and goes on a subway ride to Harlem. The accumulated images and accompanying soundtrack of the city portray New York as a mysterious, alien place of ominous power and unending restlessness. At the center of the film is an autobiographical monologue by the aged artist and jazz musician Marion Brown, delivered in a voice that is at once proud and fatigued. His experiences and his music fuse with the urban imagery to create an intimate slow dance between art and the city in which they collapse into each other like weary partners at the end of a dance marathon."
– Stephen Holden, *New York Times*

Correspondence

(30min., 2011, 16mm, B+W/Color, Silent)

"This 30-minute New York Film Festival standout follows closely in the indelible, adventurous footsteps of Robert Gardner, returning to the distant Ethiopian, New Guinean, and Indian sites of Gardner's influential ethnographic trilogy in order to mark the passage of time and establish a critical and poignant distance from documentary classicism. Fenz uses lush, shadowy, and silent black-and-white 16mm in response to Gardner's exotic colors and stentorian voiceover, offering a subtly poetic meditation on the ambitious dreams and poignant failures of the ethnographic project. With its striking imagery and rigorously hypnotic montage, *Correspondence* confirms Fenz, together with Nathaniel Dorsky and Ben Rivers (note the unremarked upon "correspondence" between these two young filmmakers), as one of the last great, heroic artists of the photochemical avant-garde."
– Haden Guest, *Film Comment*

La Nuit

(12min., 2014, 16mm, Color, Silent)

Night time in Marseille filmed on 16mm, 7250 Ektachrome. A discontinued Kodak stock often used for documentaries in the 1970s and 80s. Pushed to the limit of its capacity to record light, images emerge and disappear into vibrating grain and darkness. LA NUIT is a silent film in unusual and intriguing color tones portraying the textures and lights of quiet streets and a sleeping city which are mirrored in the unpredictable material qualities of this expired stock.
– adapted from Courtisane, festival 2014 catalogue.

Toros – Window

(1min., 2014, 35mm, B+W, Silent)

Toros

(4min., 2014, 35mm, B+W, Silent)

Toros – Field

(1min., 2014, 35mm, B+W, Silent)

A three film meditation on bulls, shot in Spain in 2013. Part of an ongoing series of short films that document events or single actions from beginning to end. My first work in 35mm.

Robert Fenz (1969, Ann Arbor, Michigan) is an artist working with analogue film and photography, currently based in Berlin and Los Angeles. His films were featured in the Whitney Biennials of 2002 and 2008 and have been the subject of solo screenings at New York's Museum of Modern Art; the Harvard Film Archive, Cambridge; the Cinémathèque Française, Paris; Cinema du Reel, Centre Pompidou, Paris; the Rotterdam and Locarno International Film Festivals; and worldwide at many other recognized venues. He is the recipient of a Jerome Foundation Grant (1998); a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship (1999); a Guggenheim Fellowship (2004); and a LEF Foundation Production Grant (2008). In 2006 he was an artist in residence of the DAAD in Berlin. His first solo gallery exhibition, *The Sole of the Foot* was presented in 2011 at the DAAD Gallery, Berlin. His film *Tea* premiered in Forum Expanded, 64th Berlinale (2014) and a retrospective of his films was shown at the 16th BAFICI, Buenos Aires (2014).

Additional Filmography:

Tea (2014)

Memorizing Lou (2014)

Books (2014)

The Sole of the Foot (2011)

Crossings (2007)

Meditations On Revolution, Part 4: Greenville, Ms (2001)

Meditations On Revolution, Part 3: Soledad (2001)

Meditations On Revolution, Part 2: The Space In Between (1997)

Meditations On Revolution, Part 1: Lonely Planet (1997)

Vertical Air (1996)

Passage (1993)

Duet For Trumpet And Camera (1992)

Presented as part of the Jack H. Skirball Series. Curated by Steve Anker and B er enice Reynaud.