

FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS

Mon March 30 | 8:30 pm |

Jack H. Skirball Series

TRANSFORMING SPACES: NEW FILMS FROM L.A. FILMMAKERS

The art of the moving image is at an unprecedented juncture that is encouraging artists to explore the qualities of different media, and how each can be meaningful in the light of changing technology and key historic work. Digital tools continue to be refined while celluloid film becomes more difficult to use, and many filmmakers work across lines of definition. Moving image artists can either be trapped into working in familiar modes, or they can expand into new territories, crossing paths with each other and with cinema in new ways.

Transforming Spaces presents recent film and digital works by artists who use media to explore ways in which space can be transformed and articulated for today's consideration. The films included are, for the most part, contemplative and reflective. The image space can be a window through which city or rural landscapes are transformed by sound and visual movement, or it can be a stage on which ephemeral light plays flicker into meaning. The screen can also be seen as the surface it is, remodeled and into the kind of experience rarely made possible. Recorded images move between objective clarity and abstracted detail, between documented reality and expressively controlled composition. Some play with storytelling, keeping narrative flow mysteriously ambiguous and evocative. Others use the theater itself, and the internal world of each viewer, as spaces given shape through the time created by film projection.

Common through all is a singular use of sound, creative in myriad ways that equal and amplify the images. Each work is a dual sound-picture composition in which imagery is accompanied by a web of carefully considered sound rather than canned music. In the era of Pro-Tools, artists have an ever more heightened sensitivity to the possibilities and expressiveness of audio.

Transforming Spaces is the first in a REDCAT series showcasing new work by Los Angeles-based moving image artists, and tonight's selection ranges broadly across the CalArts non-student community (faculty, alumni, and frequently returning visiting artists). While a wide range of artistic sensibilities is represented by these nine works, all share a formal and conceptual rigor that are recognizable features of the CalArts workshop environment.

Curated by Steve Anker and Bérénice Reynaud

Kinesthesia Series - Abigail Severance

(2014, 8 min. 10 sec., 16mm film to Digital, b&w/color, sound)

"*Kinesthesia Series* is an on-going exercise in motion, repetition and the wily experience of time and memory. Made for abstract, rhythmic and existential pleasure, it consists of short interludes between 30 seconds and 3 minutes long that are shot on 16mm, tightly edited, sound designed and finished digitally. The result is a hypnotic fluctuation between abstraction and documentation. The series has varying iterations and durations, this one finished in 2014." (A.S.) ***U.S. Premiere***

A powerful departure for Abigail Severance, *Kinesthesia Series* is a play of semi-abstracted movement and light that is reminiscent of films by Baillie, Menken and Brakhage, but achieved here through a subtle blending of film and digital with the filmmaker's strong feel for rhythm and a play of forms.

About 11 Minutes - Madison Brookshire
(2014, 10 min., 51 sec., 16mm film, color, sound).

"A musical made of 15,625 frames of continuous material analyzed and interpreted by a machine to produce both light and sound for 10 minutes, 51 seconds." (M.B.) **World Premiere**

Madison Brookshire's film is the most direct and simplified experience of celluloid film possible, and it transforms the screen and theater into active spaces that aren't hidden by illusion. It is an intimate, sensual, and constantly revealing experience. In *About 11 Minutes* Brookshire has created a distilled coda to his magisterial 16mm paean to cinematic light, *Color Series*.

Society of Motion - Andrew Kim
(2015, 3 min, 16mm film, color, sound)

"Intently look at the flame. Do not think of think of qualities of the flame, of the light. Just look at the flame. You don't look at the candle. You don't look at any objects around. Just the flame. Take a few deep breaths. Then close your eyes. This may be of help to you..." (A.K.) **World Premiere**

At first glance Andrew Kim's *Society of Motion* is reminiscent of Shirley Clarke (*Bridges Go Round*) and Scott Bartlett (*OffOn*). However, this play of mirrored shapes stands alone. Kim's imagery is that of an animation stand, the tool with which he made this film. Abstract details flow with graphic nuance and a fevered sense of rhythm, and the screen becomes a space that barely contains the propulsive machine movements. The sound is provocative and musical, enlivening the illusory space in a haunting way that extends beyond the film's brief running time.

Utah - Kate Brown
(2014, 20 min. 25 sec., 16mm film, color, sound)

"I traveled from the Southwest to the Northeast of Utah filming and recording sound, over several years. Most editorial decisions were made in the camera. Shots are seen in their original order and length. The film goes from summer to winter, and day to night. I was not looking for monumental Utah, but for the state as I found it. This is part of a filmmaking and curatorial project to make films of the 50 US states, using 16mm." (K.B.) **World Premiere**

Kate Brown uses a 16mm Bolex to record landscapes of urban and rural Utah that are static and suggest the otherness of this locale. Brown's subtle filmic compositions situate the scenery in classic aesthetic terms that seem distant yet familiar, and that bring into question whether old technology can continue to be singularly expressive and valuable.

H-E-L-L-L-O - Cauleen Smith
(2014, 11 min., 6 sec., Digital, color, sound)

"This film uses charged historical sites in New Orleans to track the sounds and history of Bass throughout the city. The musicians all play Bass Cleff instruments. Each was asked to riff off of the 5 note musical sequence prominent in the Spielberg's film, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* - a note sequence used by the aliens to say "hello" to earthlings." (C.S.) **West Coast Premiere**

One of two films on the program that work with non-California open space, Cauleen Smith's *H-E-L-L-O* takes place on iconic streets, parks and docks of New Orleans. Smith reveals the character of each place through evocative camera movements and pointed depth of field, but it is the witty on and off screen musical performances that most fully inform and humanize each location.

Port Noir - Laura Kraning

(2014, 11 minutes, Digital, b&w, sound)

"Within the machine landscape of Terminal Island, the textural strata of a 100 year old boat shop provides a glimpse into Los Angeles Harbor's disappearing past. Often recast as a backdrop for fictional crime dramas, the scenic details of the last boatyard evoke imaginary departures and a hidden world at sea." (L.K.) ***West Coast Premiere***

Laura Kraning uses High Definition digital in ways that are reminiscent of classical filmmaking, and her elegant, black and white compositions echo film noir as well as earlier visual explorations of spatial locations. Kraning's eye sensitively details texture, form and plays of light, and uncovers details of a seaport at night that are otherwise hidden to the naked eye.

womannightfilm - Lee Anne Schmitt

(2014, 6 min., 38 sec., 16mm film to Digital, color, sound).

"A meditation. The menace of night and the memory of trauma. A film about violence and the trace it leaves. 'There is a woman that watches me, who watches me from her window. She watches me. Every night she watches me.

Until one night, she is gone.' Shot on 16mm over a number of years, the film rephotographs and rephotographs, until the image itself is a ghost.

It is moment in time, and then that moment is gone." (L.A.S.) ***U.S Premiere***

End Reel - Julie Murray

(2014, 7 min. 38 sec., Digital, Color, Sound)

"*End Reel* convolves certain aberrations in two image-making technologies; film and video, to produce a complex and largely abstract image without detaching entirely from the narrative contained in the reel. The final minutes of a 35mm Hong Kong action film examined over a light-box on an editing bench with hand-crank rewinds and recorded with a lo-res pocket camera shows fuzzed out fight scenes in an epic triumph of good over evil but lingers just as often on the scars and water damage blooms in the film emulsion itself. Sounds move between sync (creaky rewinds + scraping reels) and added recordings. The decay on the film surface, blur of its movement and arbitrary stop and starts on image frames, create unpredictable associations. The pulsing of the pocket camera's AWB (automatic white-balance) and the native 60Hz pulsing pattern between the video and the light-box's florescent bulb add to this, too. These spontaneous textures of unfolding process, like human imprints in sand, form the heart of this moving image work." (J.M.) ***West Coast Premiere***

Julie Murray has made several films that use material cannibalized from old movies, but *End Reel* is the first that features an actual strip of 35mm film as its total source of imagery. An appreciation and deconstruction of celluloid, Murray gives 35mm to a new rhythmic life, revealing its physical essence through movement and decay and

how looks and sounds when transferred to digital. Threads of narrative are suggested as individual frames come fleetingly into focus.

The Hummingbird Wars - Janie Geiser

(2014, 10 min. 43 sec., Digital, color, sound)

"A theatrical fiction, collapsing time and place: turn-of-the-last-century performers apply stage makeup as if for war, to engage in battle for the soul of the world. The injuries are more emotional than physical, but cut deeply just the same. A visual/aural collage film, drawing on sources as seemingly disparate as Ibsen's *A Doll House* (the spoken text), Japanese Gagaku music, makeup illustrations for actors, the biography of a Shakespearean performer, blooming and decaying flowers, and a World War 1 First Aid Book, *The Hummingbird Wars* suggests theater in a time of war, which is the theater of any time." (J.G.) **West Coast Premiere**

Janie Geiser creates worlds in which found and crafted objects are unified into tableaux layered with multiple meanings. The frame becomes the stage for a kind of ephemeral puppet play, in which lushly textured three-dimensional objects mingle with old photographic portraits. A sense of the horrific hovers over the film, witnessed by fleeting glimpses of a hummingbird, a tiny creature that is both delicate and astonishingly strong. The sound cuts between shards of old movie dialogue, stock music, and specific sounds that echo the moving figures. Here is a spectral domain in which multiple spaces are magically transformed.

Biographies:

Madison Brookshire is an artist and filmmaker who frequently collaborates with musicians and composers. He has screened his work at the Toronto International Film Festival, the New York Film Festival, International Film Festival Rotterdam, Bradford International Film Festival, Migrating Forms, Exploratorium, Los Angeles Filmforum, REDCAT, and the Hammer Museum. He has also had solo exhibitions at Parker Jones, Culver City, CA and Presents Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; has been in group shows at the Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, CA; Gallery 400, Chicago, IL; and Heliopolis, Brooklyn, NY; and has had performances at the Museum of Contemporary Art, the wulf, and Betalevel, Los Angeles, CA; TBA Festival, Portland, OR; and The Lab and Artists' Television Access, San Francisco, CA.

Kate Brown is an artist based in Los Angeles, making 8 and 16mm films, and works on paper. Her films have shown at venues in Los Angeles, Arizona, Illinois, Pennsylvania and New York, as well as Shanghai, China. Her works on paper have been exhibited in Los Angeles at Artist Curated Projects. As a curator she has presented shows of the 16mm films of Owen Land, the preserved 16mm films of Tom Chomont, and 16mm films and videos by artists from Los Angeles and beyond.

Janie Geiser is an internationally recognized visual/theater artist and experimental filmmaker, whose work is known for its investigation of the emotional power of inanimate objects, its sense of mystery, and its strength of design.

One of the pioneers of the renaissance of American avant-garde object performance, Geiser creates innovative, hypnotic works that integrate a singular visual aesthetic, puppets, film/video and performing objects. Geiser's performances have toured nationally and internationally, and her films have been screened at museums and

festivals around the globe. Geiser has been recognized with an a Guggenheim Fellowship, an OBIE Award, and funding from the NEA, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Henson Foundation, Creative Capital, Jerome Foundation, MAPfund, the Center for Cultural Innovation, The Durfee Foundation, and others. Geiser received a 2011 Fellowship for Visual Artists from the California Community Foundation. She received a 2006 City of Los Angeles Visual Artist Fellowship for her installation *The Spider's Wheels*.

Geiser is a Co-Director of AUTOMATA, a Los Angeles nonprofit dedicated to the creation, presentation, and preservation of puppet and object performance, experimental film, pre-cinematic attractions, and other lost and neglected forms. Geiser is on the faculty of the CalArts School of Theater, where she teaches object performance and interdisciplinary performance.

Andrew Kim makes films inspired by the practice of analogue filmmaking and various photochemical processes. In his work, the exact mechanics of 16mm filmmaking are often employed to understand and articulate abstract concepts, feelings, and ideas. His films have screened at a variety of venues and festivals including the Ann Arbor Film Festival, International Film Festival Rotterdam, Festival du Nouveau Cinema (Montreal), BAFICI (Buenos Aires), UnionDocs, and Los Angeles Filmforum, among others. Andrew is a staff member at the Echo Park Film Center and teaches film production at the California Institute of the Arts.

Laura Kranig is an experimental documentary filmmaker whose work navigates landscape as a repository for memory, cultural mythology, and the technological sublime. Through textural images and sounds, she explores absence and the fluidity of time, evoking liminal spaces of neither past, nor present, but a landscape of the imagination. Laura's work has screened widely at international film festivals and venues, such as the New York Film Festival's Views from the Avant-Garde, International Film Festival Rotterdam, Festival du Nouveau Cinema (Montreal), Centre Pompidou (Paris), Ann Arbor Film Festival, Visions du Réel (Nyon), Buenos Aires Museum of Modern Art, National Gallery of Art (D.C.), Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival, and Los Angeles Filmforum, among others. She is the recipient of the 2010 Princess Grace Foundation John H. Johnson Film Award, Jury Award at the 2010 Ann Arbor Film Festival, and New Visions Golden Gate Award nomination at the 2012 San Francisco International Film Festival. Laura currently resides in Los Angeles where she teaches in the Program in Film and Video at California Institute of the Arts.

Julie Murray has made more than twenty-five film and digital works which have been exhibited at numerous national and international venues including the New York Film Festival, the Hong Kong International Film Festival, the International Film Festival Rotterdam, Centre George Pompidou (Paris), the London Film Festival and the Flaherty Film Seminar. Her work was featured in the 2004 edition of the Whitney Biennial and her films are part of the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Abigail Severance makes experimental and narrative films that in different ways consider memory, the body and the powerful act of witnessing. Her first film, *Pump*, won five festival awards and her work has screened widely in the U.S. and abroad, including MOCA Los Angeles, New Museum, Sundance, Los Angeles Film Festival, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco Cinematheque, Wexner Center for the Arts, RedCat, Ann Arbor Film Festival,

Hallwalls, Black Maria Film & Video Festival, Antimatter, Curta Cinema, Women in the Director's Chair, Studio Museum Harlem, Philadelphia Film Festival, London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, Mix Experimental Festival and the National Museum of Women in the Arts, among other venues.

Severance has a BA in cultural studies from Hampshire College and an MFA in film directing from UCLA. She has taught at CalArts since 2005, where she is also an Associate Dean of the School of Film/Video. Her current projects include the narrative features *Winterkill* and *The Summer We Drowned* (FIND Lab and Sundance Creative Producers Conference project) as well as *Acadia*, an essay/memoir about homesickness and running from the law in Nova Scotia.

Lee Anne Schmitt is a filmmaker and artist who creates evocative, deeply felt works that consider everyday elements of American life as cultural ritual, including a series of cinematic investigations of the intersections of landscape with personal memory (Las Vegas), with the history of the American Left (*Awake and Sing*), and corporate land abandonment (California Company Town). Her work has screened at venues that include the Museum of Modern Art in New York, SFMOMA, The Cinema du Reel at the George Pompidou Center in Paris, Anthology Film Archives in New York, and the Pacific Film Archives in Berkeley.

She worked extensively with the artist Lee Lynch to create a series of films detailing the processes of American History, including *The Last Buffalo Hunt*, *The Wash* and *Bowers Cave*.

Recently she completed a series of short works about the experience of motherhood, ritual and the threat of violence. Among these *Williams Lake* and *womannightfilm*, which premiered in the Viennale of 2014. She is currently completing her third feature, *The John Brown Project*, based on the journey undertaken by the radical abolitionist John Brown in the moments just before the Civil War. A graduate of CalArts' Live Action program in 2002, Schmitt is recipient of a Creative Capital Grant in 2015. She is the Associate Director of the Film Directing Program in CalArts' School of Film and Video.

Cauleen Smith is an interdisciplinary artist whose work reflects upon the everyday possibilities of the imagination. Smith's films, objects, and installations have been featured in group exhibitions at the D21 Leipzig, Germany; Studio Museum of Harlem, NY; Houston Contemporary Art Museum, TX; the Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX; San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art, CA; Yerba Buena Center for Arts, CA; and the New Museum, NY. She has had solo shows at The Kitchen in New York City, MCA Chicago and Threewalls in Chicago, and *Women & Their Work* in Austin, TX. Smith is the recipient of several grants and awards including the Rockefeller Media Arts Award, Chicago 3Arts Grant, and the Foundation for Contemporary Arts. Smith earned an MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles. She currently lives in Chicago while teaching at the Vermont College of Fine Art low-residency MFA program.