

## FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS

**Mon Apr 6 | 8:30 pm |**

Jack H. Skirball Series

## THE FILMS OF GREGORY J. MARKOPOULOS

Presented in collaboration with Los Angeles Filmforum and the Getty Research Institute

Gregory Markopoulos (1928-1992) was a great figure in American independent cinema, an artist who completed three-dozen films by 1976, when he began the epic-length *Eniaios*, an eighty hour reworking and expansion of his oeuvre. Poetic, romantic and formally rigorous, Markopoulos's work is deeply rooted in mythological associations and ritual dimensions of cinema. Despite Markopoulos' huge influence as an artist and polemicist (he was co-instigator of the New American Cinema), his films have been mostly unavailable for over forty years. Tonight's program, including *Bliss* (1967, 7 min.) and *Gammelion* (1968, 54 min.), will be the first of four co-presented with The Getty Center, LA Filmforum, and the UCLA Film and Television Archive. Curator Mark Webber, editor and publisher of the new, exquisite printed book, *Film As Film: The Collected Writings Of Gregory J. Markopoulos*, will be on hand to present the series.

### **In person: Mark Webber**

"The American avant-garde cinema's supreme erotic poet."  
– P. Adams Sitney

"Gregory Markopoulos was one of the true visionaries of the post-WWII American avant garde. Across his exquisitely stylized, oneiric early films and through his dazzling master works of the late Sixties and Seventies, Markopoulos defined a unique film language of incomparable formal rigor, visual beauty and haunting lyricism."  
– Haden Guest, Harvard Film Archive

This screening celebrates the publication of "Film as Film: The Collected Writings of Gregory J. Markopoulos", edited by Mark Webber with a foreword by P. Adams Sitney, published by The Visible Press, London. Visit [www.thevisiblepress.com](http://www.thevisiblepress.com) for more details or to order online.

See review of the book:

<https://artforum.com/inprint/issue=201503&id=50266>

*Film as Film* is available at [www.thevisiblepress.com](http://www.thevisiblepress.com).

"Brandished by the same absolutes and passion that fuel his films, *Film as Film* is a seminal addition to film scholarship and film history, and includes some of the most original writing on the art of cinema, not unlike that of Jean Cocteau and Pier Paolo Pasolini."

– Andréa Picard, Toronto International Film Festival

### Program

#### *Bliss*

1967, Greece, 16mm, color, sound, 6 min

*Bliss* was the first film Markopoulos made after relocating to Europe. This exquisite portrait of the interior of a Byzantine church on the island of Hydra was composed in-camera in the moment of filming (MW)

#### *Gammelion*

1968, Italy, 16mm, color, sound, 54 min

Markopoulos's elegant film of the castle of Roccasinibalda in Rieti, Italy, (then owned by patron, publisher and activist Caresse Crosby) employs an intricate system of fades to extend six minutes of footage to an hour of viewing time. This inventive new film form, in which brief images appear amongst measures of black and clear frames, was a crucial step towards Markopoulos' final work *Eniaios* (1947-91). Though seemingly an abstract architectural study, *Gammelion* is based on Julien Gracq's surrealist novel *Chateau d'Argol*, and incorporates elements found at the site to represent the characters and events of the book's narrative. (MW)

**Two additional programs of the films of Gregory Markopoulos are taking place this spring in Los Angeles:**

**Tue Apr 7 2015: Los Angeles Getty Research Institute**

*Galaxie*

<http://www.getty.edu/research/>

**Sun Apr 12 2015: Los Angeles Filmforum**

*Psyche / Xmas-USA-1949 / Eldora / Swain*

<http://www.lafilmforum.org>

"For me, personally, the Cinema is music; is music with its contrapuntal elaborations," Gregory J. Markopoulos wrote in 1955. "Cinema is the noble metaphysical Art of our age, and of our one world without boundaries. Cinema can show us in what aspects we differ from one another, and in what aspects we remain the same. Cinema can draw nations together, and dissolve boundaries between groups of men. Lastly, Cinema is the representative of Life, which no other Art can give us, so truly."

"Fortunate is the filmmaker who possesses a daemon, and who passes naturally from season to season, always with renewed energies, to that crucial point where he is able to recognize what constitutes the sunken attitudes of his art; what constitutes the portent, eagle-shaped attitudes. Attitudes which in a season of plenty soar beyond the frailties and grievances of the creative personality. Forgotten and released are the self-acknowledged limitations, the often comical, continuous demands upon friends and acquaintances in the name of one's art. Finally, the total illusion that has been inherent from the beginning in one's striving shimmers, quivers, and sets one aflame." (Gregory J. Markopoulos, *Correspondences of Smell and Visuals*, 1967)

**Gregory J. Markopoulos** (1928-92) was one of the most original filmmakers to emerge in post-war American cinema. His films, which often translated literary or mythological sources to a contemporary context, are celebrated for their extraordinary creativity, the sensuous use of color and innovations in cinematic form. A contemporary of Maya Deren, Kenneth Anger and Jonas Mekas, Markopoulos was amongst those at the forefront of a generation that liberated cinema by developing new modes of expression. Having made his first 16mm film (*Psyche*) in 1947, he went on to produce several key works of the avant-garde such as *Twice a Man* (1963) and *The Illiac Passion* (1964-67).

At the end of the 1960s, Markopoulos moved to Europe to pursue a very individual path, withdrawing his films from distribution and making them almost impossible to see. Firmly believing that a filmmaker should be responsible for all aspects of his work, he conceived the Temenos, a monographic archive for the presentation, preservation and study of his films. Late in life he chose to re-edit his entire oeuvre into a monumental 80-hour long film (*Eniaios*, 1947-90) to be shown only at a remote location near his ancestral home in Greece. This speculative project is being realized posthumously at an open-air screening event that has taken place in the Peloponnese

every four years since 2004, and is currently being planned for June 2016.

Markopoulos's films encompass mythic themes, portraiture and studies of landscape and architecture. By employing complex editing techniques and spontaneous in-camera superimposition, he sought to unlock the mystery and energy contained within the single frame.

– Mark Webber

**UPCOMING FILM/VIDEO PROGRAMS  
AT REDCAT WINTER/SPRING 2014**

**Mon Apr 20: KIDLAT TAHIMIK: *Perfumed Nightmare***

**Mon Apr 27: "Race Movies" Visionary:**

**SPENCER WILLIAMS and *The Blood of Jesus***

**Mon May 4: HOU HSIAO-HSIEN's *Flowers of Shanghai***

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**To contact the curators of the Film/Video series and/or get on "Film at REDCAT" mailing list please send an email at [redcatfilm@earthlink.net](mailto:redcatfilm@earthlink.net).**