

FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS

Mon Dec 14 | 8:30 pm |

Jack H. Skirball Series

\$11 [members \$8]

Mike Kelley Single Channel Videos

<http://www.redcat.org/event/mike-kelley-single-channel-videos>

When Mike Kelley passed away in 2012, he left the legacy of a body of deeply innovative work mining American popular culture and both modernist and alternative traditions. This screening features a selection of Kelley's videos, from the sassy/melancholy *Superman Recites Selections from 'The Bell Jar' and Other Works by Sylvia Plath* (1999) to the threatening histrionics of *Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstruction #1 (Domestic Scene)* (2000), as well as collaborative pieces, such as his minimalist exploration of sado-masochistic relationships in *100 Reasons* (1991) – among others.

Special thanks to the Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts and Electronic Arts Intermix.

Program introduced by Mary-Clare Stevens, Executive Director, the Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts. Other speakers TBA.

"One of the most influential artists of the past quarter century and a pungent commentator on American class, popular culture and youthful rebellion." – *The New York Times*

Mike Kelley (1954-2012) has had a long-time association with CalArts, where he obtained a Master of Fine Arts in 1978, and REDCAT where, in January 2007, we organized the world premiere of *Day is Done* (2005-2006). At CalArts, Kelley studied with John Baldessari, Laurie Anderson, David Askevold, Douglas Huebler, Jonathan Borofsky and Judy Pfaff, and created the band *Poetics* with fellow students John Miller and Tony Oursler. He returned to CalArts as faculty member in 1986-87.

While visiting the largest retrospective of Kelley's work at the Geffen Contemporary at MOCA (Mar 31-July 28, 2014), curated by former Stedelijk Museum Director Ann Goldstein, in cooperation with the Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts. and organized by MOCA Curator Bennett Simpson – the idea was formed to offer some of Kelley's video work a theatrical screening, so they could be appreciated as moving images in optimal screening conditions.

Program

Out O' Actions

Mike Kelley and Paul McCarthy
1998, 4:25 min, color, sound

Out O' Actions documents Kelley and McCarthy's preliminary activities in organizing a project for the Visitor's Gallery of the Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles during the inaugural exhibition of "Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object 1949-1979." Mimicking the editing structure of Kurt Kren's documentation of Otto Muehl's action *Mama und Papa* (1964), the documentation of Kelley and McCarthy's curatorial preparations is presented as performative activity itself.

Camera: Catherine Sullivan, Damon McCarthy. Editor: Catherine Sullivan

Family Tyranny

Paul McCarthy. With Mike Kelley.
1987, 8:05 min, color, sound

"In a public access television studio, Paul McCarthy built a rough set approximating the type seen in television situation comedies. He called me in to help him out. When I asked what I was supposed to do he said, 'I'm the father, and you're the son.' That was it. When I arrived at the studio the cameras were turned on and, I would guess, at least six hours of tape was shot. The two tapes that came out of the taping are just short sections of this mass of material." – Mike Kelley

Starring: Mike Kelley and Paul McCarthy. Director/td: Nancy Buchanan. Lighting/Camera: Kevin Brechner. Technical Assistance: Larry D. Jones, Stuart Wesolik. Production/Postproduction: Choice Television. This videotape was funded & produced as part of Open Channels, a program of the Long Beach Museum of Art. Supported by

grants from the California Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

100 Reasons

Bob Flanagan, Sheree Rose, and Mike Kelley.
1991, 6:41 min, color, sound

"Bob and Sheree are old friends of mine. Bob Flanagan is a respected Los Angeles writer and Sheree Rose is a photographer who was known primarily as a documenter of the L.A. poetry scene. In recent years their work has come more and more to reflect their sadomasochistic sexual relationship. This tape grew out of an event that Bob and Sheree put together to celebrate the ten-year anniversary of their relationship. They invited many of their writer friends to read from their works. In my case, Bob asked me specifically to read a section of my book *Plato's Cave, Rothko's Chapel, Lincoln's Profile*. The section he requested is called *One Hundred Reasons* and it is a list of one hundred appropriate names for a paddle. Bob was surprised at the event when "Mistress Rose" chose to spank him once for each name — one hundred times. Which, of course, he didn't mind. The result was so popular that we decided to recreate it for video. What separates this work from much of the recent spate of S&M performance is its humor, its deadpan truthfulness and its refusal to fall into dimwitted neoprimitive expressionism." – Mike Kelley

Text: Mike Kelley. Camera: Bob Evans.

Superman Recites Selections from 'The Bell Jar' and Other Works by Sylvia Plath

1999, 7:19 min, color, sound

"In *Superman Recites Selections from 'The Bell Jar' and Other Works by Sylvia Plath* an actor portrays Superman and does exactly what the title describes. Superman directs these lines to Kandor, the bell jar city that represents his own traumatic past, for he is the only surviving member of a planet that has been destroyed. Kandor now sits, frozen in time, a perpetual reminder of his inability to escape that past, and his alienated relationship to his present world. For us, Kandor is an image of a time that never was — the utopian city of the future that never came to be.

This videotape was originally produced as an element for the installation work *Kandor-Con 2000*, which was presented as part of the exhibition *Zeitwenden* at the Kunstmuseum Bonn in 2000. The title mimics the term comic-con, which is a comic book collector's

convention, and the piece is meant to be reminiscent of the kinds of displays found at such events." – Mike Kelley

With: Michael Garvey. Camera: Greg Kucera. Editing and Post: Greg Kucera. Crew: Dave Huges, Catherine Sullivan, Won Ju Lim.

**Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstruction #1
(Domestic Scene)**

2000, 29:44 min, b&w, sound

Kelley has constructed a half-hour drama inspired by a photo found in a high school yearbook. The original, a still from a school play, depicts two young men in a shabby apartment. From this image Kelley has re-staged a 'Domestic Scene': the protagonists' unnerving, at times histrionic, relationship.

Producers: Mike Kelly, Greg Kucera, Catherine Sullivan, in conjunction with Galleria EMI Fontana. With: Darrel Guilbeau, John Engmyr, Julia D'Agostino. Director of Photography: Greg Kucera. Cameras: Greg Kucera, Florian Stadler, Tony Garcia. Assistant Camera: Rebecca Carter. Sound Recording: Damon O'Steen, Mayo Thompson. Editing and Effects: Greg Kucera. Sound Arrangement: Mark Reveley. Organist: Adam Benjamin. Production Assistants: David Huges, Abram Boosinger, Chris Boosinger, Farhad Sharmini, Cameron Jamie, Elaine Brandt, T. Kelly Mason.

Bridge Visitor (Legend-Trip)

2004, 18:30 min, color, sound

Bridge Visitor's subject matter relates to what is known as a 'legend-trip' in folkloric studies – in this case the ritualized journeys taken by teenagers to 'spooky' locales in search of darker knowledge. The tape plays with various adolescent infatuations with Satan. Two examples culled from Mike Kelley's own youth include divination through the melted remnants of plastic garbage bags burned ceremoniously at parties and the fire bombing of a country bridge to invoke a spirit. Various juvenile tropes are featured in the tape and are laid out in the following sections: The invocation of Satan: a fire bomb is tossed onto a rural bridge at night. The voice of Satan: a burning 'zilch bag' produces an eerie vocal sound. He who has no form: the appearance of morphing reflections of the face of death. The creator/destroyer of worlds: juvenile fantasies of power are projected upon the changing continent-like forms of urine suds. The dweller in the depths: a camera is sent down to explore the underworld of Kelley's studio.

The tape is made up of three sections: initiation (the tape's opening invocation of Satan), fulfillment (made up of 'portraits' of Satan and retrospection (the final reiteration of the invocation in which the artist appears in the guise of Satan). – New York Video Festival

Edited and Mixed by Mike Kelley and Scott Benzel. Additional Editing: Molly Fitzjarrald. Technical assistants: Abel McHone, Thomas Rugani, Mary Clare Stevens. Made for the exhibition "100 Artists See Satan," organized by Cal State Fullerton in response to an ICI exhibit (curated by John Baldessari and Meg Cranston) "100 Artists See God."

"If there is a dark underbelly or disavowed desire that Kelley brings to light, it is certainly that of the art world itself. With its carnival atmosphere, ADD pacing, calculated irreverence, snarky quotations of junk culture and unabashed kinkiness, Mike Kelley has finally made high art as good as MTV." – *Artnet Magazine*

"Mike Kelley as a canonized master. Mike Kelley as an unredeemed rebel. Mike Kelley showing those youngsters a thing or two..." – *Frieze*

"Kelley, for all his art's low-down sources in the ephemera of popular culture and the rag-tag crudeness of many of his materials, was a brilliantly well-read intellectual. He often returned to themes and revisited materials, deepening his explorations as he went and extrapolating among them." – *Los Angeles Times*

"I believe that art is socially useful. If it is destructive, it is constructively so. What helps some, hurts others—all art is not made for the same audience. We are in a very restrictive period where many think it is necessary to narrow the limits of what is allowable, to set up a unitary reality and condemn the idea of multiple 'realities.' I support an art of multiplicity, which is why I am an 'anti-classical' artist. In fact, I like to think that I make my work primarily for those who dislike it. I get pleasure from that idea." – Mike Kelley

Widely regarded as one of the most influential artists of our time, **Mike Kelley** (1954-2012) produced a body of deeply innovative work mining American popular culture and both modernist and alternative traditions - which he set in relation to relentless self and social examinations, both dark and delirious. Born in Detroit, Michigan,

Kelley lived and worked in Los Angeles from the mid-1970s until his death at the age of fifty-seven. Over his thirty-five year career, he worked in every conceivable medium - drawings on paper, sculpture, performance, music, video, photography, and painting - exploring themes as diverse as American class relations, sexuality, repressed memory, systems of religion and transcendence, and post-punk politics, to which he brought both incisive critique and abundant, self-deprecating humor.

Moving to Southern California in 1976 to attend the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), Kelley remained in Los Angeles after graduating, quickly becoming influential as an artist, teacher, collaborator, and experimental musician. A former faculty member at CalArts and the Art Center College of Design, Kelley is represented in numerous international collections, as well as those of the Hammer Museum, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), and MOCA.

Kelley returned time and again to certain underlying themes - the shapes lurking underneath the carpet, as it were - including repressed memories, disjunctions between selfhood and social structures, as well as fault lines between the sacred and the profane. The work Kelley produced throughout his life was marked by his extraordinary powers of critical reflection as well as a creative—and surprising—repurposing of ideas and materials.

– Adapted from MOCA’s program notes.

Curated by Steve Anker and Bérénice Reynaud. Presented as part of the Jack H. Skirball Series.