

FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS

Mon Sept 26 | 8:30 pm |

Jack H. Skirball Series

\$11 [members \$8]

Laura Kraning: Spectral Landscapes

<http://www.redcat.org/event/spectral-landscapes-videos-laura-kraning>

Laura Kraning's uncanny moving image work combines richly detailed imagery and sound to transform unseen places into liminal landscapes of the imagination. Plays of light and movement specific to each location summon what is absent in the visible—the past that continues to haunt the present. Kraning takes us to the last Los Angeles drive-in (*Vineland*, 2009, 10 min.), a flood-control dam with a fire-scarred history (*Devil's Gate*, 2011, 20 min.), a boatyard of bygone dramas (*Port Noir*, 2014, 11 min.), a mirrored field of watchful machines (*Irradiant Field*, 2016, 10 min.) and, finally, an otherworldly landscape distilled from a mass of archival images (*Meridian Plain*, 2016, 18 min.). Her work has previously screened at the New York, Ann Arbor, Edinburgh, Rotterdam and Visions du Réel festivals, among other venues.

In person: Laura Kraning

"Esoteric archeology."— Visions du Réel

"A spectral quality characterizes all the images and sounds."

– *Millennium Film Journal*

"Kraning, who was an abstract painter before turning to filmmaking, practiced this patient looking to craft the award-winning *Vineland*."

– KCET

Program

Vineland (2009, DV, 10 min)

At the last drive-in movie theater in Los Angeles, dislocated Hollywood images filled with apocalyptic angst float within the desolate nocturnal landscape of the City of Industry. In this border zone, re-framed and

mirrored projections collide with the displaced radio broadcast soundtrack, revealing overlapping realities at the intersection of nostalgia and alienation.

"...A spectral quality characterizes all the images and sounds, both those that emanate from the screen in the night sky, and those of the surrounding cityscape. *Vineland* speaks quietly and eloquently of fantasized image-making, of the sheer presence and scale of Hollywood's imposition on the landscape, both that of the nation and the one in our minds." - Tony Pipolo, *Millennium Film Journal*

"Kraning, who was an abstract painter before turning to filmmaking, practiced this patient looking to craft the award-winning *Vineland*, which is less a documentary profile than a visual exploration of the layering of windows, mirrors and screens that in turn sift together divergent layers of reality.

The film was shot entirely at night at the drive-in, and the camera continuously frames and reframes the world on and beyond the theater screens. Shafts of light from passing cars intersect with the projector beam, illuminating the night sky with flickering brilliance.

Kraning's film is part of a larger history of 'city symphonies,' or films made in celebration of the city. It's also a tribute to the specifics of cinema - light, the frame, and the magical moment of inspired juxtaposition - but most of all, it's about exploring the world around us, or making it unfamiliar for a moment so that we can see it anew."
- Holly Willis, *KCET*

"I've always been attracted to drive-ins. In every city I've lived in, I've always sought the one last drive-in, usually on the outskirts of town. I was fascinated by the location, and even just the fact that there's a place called 'the City of Industry.' Then when I saw the Metro trains going by the screen at night, I was stunned. The light obliterates the movie image for a moment, and I don't know if other people think about how odd it is, but there's this interference with the cinema experience, and I love it. It's the real world interacting with cinema in these overlapping realities. It all becomes an illusion." - Laura Kraning

Devil's Gate (2011, HD, 20 min)

Tracing the metaphysical undercurrents of a Southern California landscape scarred by fire, *Devil's Gate* unearths a subconscious of the landscape, as the echoes of the past reverberate in the present and infect our perception and experience of place. The film merges an observational portrait of a landscape transformed by fire, ash and

water with a fragmentary textual narrative, providing a view into man's obsession with controlling and transcending the forces of nature and spirit.

"Earth, water, air, and fire are the major actors in an expanse in which the time allotted to man seems prescribed. Geometric figures drawn by the highways, stains on the concrete and the noise of the river in the background create a symphony in which one can easily get lost. Filmed in sharp black and white to the rhythm of Prokofiev's *Violin Concerto No. 2*, *Devil's Gate* emerges as a sample of esoteric archeology." – Carlo Chatrian, *Visions du Réel*

Port Noir (2014, HD, 11 min)

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.

"*Port Noir* captures the remnants of the decaying Fish Harbor and Al Larson Boat Shop (built in 1903) at L.A. Harbor's Terminal Island, whose name itself appropriately describes a nearly forgotten and desolate place that often makes a cameo as a backdrop in film and television. The wiggling strands of well-lit reflections of water dance and flicker onscreen in a meditative look back at a lost world, as slats of wood, metal wires, and creaking grating form their own compositions in carefully framed shots. Ephemera of long-gone seafarers, such as old-time safety-match posters, pinups, and occasionally menacing images, peel away to reveal the ravages of time. The film's sound is just as compelling, with man-made noise contrasting with songs of wildlife and the subtle sounds of the sea. All told, the film adeptly reflects this L.A.-based CalArts Film and Video instructor's experimental approach to documentary filmmaking."

- Tanja M. Laden, *KCET Artbound*

Irradiant Field (2016, HD, 10 min)

Mirroring sky and earth, solitary mechanical sentinels follow the sun, while metal grids rain in a parched California landscape. *Irradiant Field* is a visual and sonic portrait at the intersection of nature and machine - a desert mirage of light, wind, water, and metallic reflection.

Los Angeles premiere

Meridian Plain (2016, 2K, 18 min)

Meridian Plain maps an enigmatic distant landscape excavated from hundreds of thousands of archival still images, forecasting visions of a possible future, transmitted from a mechanical eye.

World premiere

About the Artist

Laura Kraning's moving image work navigates landscape as a repository for memory, cultural mythology, and the technological sublime. Exploring absence and the fluidity of time, she evokes liminal spaces of neither past, nor present, but a landscape of the imagination.

Kraning's work has screened widely at international film festivals and venues, such as the New York Film Festival's Views from the Avant-Garde and Projections, Edinburgh International Film Festival, International Film Festival Rotterdam, Ann Arbor Film Festival, Visions du Réel, Festival du Nouveau Cinéma, Rencontres Internationales, Buenos Aires Museum of Modern Art, National Gallery of Art, REDCAT, and Los Angeles Filmforum, among others.

She is a recipient of the Princess Grace Foundation John H. Johnson Film Award, the Leon Speakers Award and Jury Awards at the Ann Arbor Film Festival, and the Film House Award at the Athens International Film and Video Festival.

Kraning currently resides in Los Angeles where she teaches in the Program in Film and Video at the California Institute of the Arts.

The Jack H. Skirball Series is curated by Steve Anker and Bérénice Reynaud and supported, in part, by the Ostrovsky Family Foundation.