

## FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS

**Mon Nov 21 | 8:30 pm |**

Jack H. Skirball Series

\$11 [members \$8]

# Deborah Stratman *The Illinois Parables*

*Los Angeles premiere*

After its world premiere at Sundance and its European premiere at the Berlinale, a winner of the Stan Brakhage Award in Ann Arbor, Deborah Stratman's latest experimental documentary comes to REDCAT—a vibrant, sassy and often disturbing exploration of unmarked landscapes as visible traces left by a fraught history. The rigorous composition of her frames is seductive, as is the playful juxtaposition of image and texts, archival footage and re-enactments. Linked together by a brilliant and haunting soundtrack, 11 parables relay histories of settlement, removal, technological breakthrough, violence, messianism and resistance—all occurring on territory that is now the state of Illinois. A “convenient structural ruse,” according to Stratman, the notion of state allows histories to become allegories, and allegories to become questions.

2016, 16mm, 60 min.

### **In person: Deborah Stratman**

“A beautiful ghost of a film, a 60-minute poem, shot on 16 millimeter film, exploring an almost comical breadth of the state's history of natural and human-made disasters; religious and ideological intolerance; atom-splitting; and the way a landscape reveals its current history while concealing its former self. Stratman makes intuitive and delicate connections between her subjects.”

– *Chicago Tribune*

“The best film I saw at this year's Berlinale: Stratman's rhythms are seductive, her chosen histories fascinating, her modes of address playfully demanding. Stratman accelerates through fourteen centuries with maximalist abandon.” – Michael Pattison, *rogerebert.com*

## Notes about the film

An experimental documentary comprised of regional vignettes about faith, force, technology and exodus.

Eleven parables relay histories of settlement, removal, technological breakthrough, violence, messianism and resistance, all occurring somewhere in the state of Illinois. The state is a convenient structural ruse, allowing its histories to become allegories that explore how we're shaped by conviction and ideology.

The film suggests links between technological and religious abstraction, placing them in conversation with governance. Locations are those where boundaries between the rational and supernatural are tenuous: "thin places" that bear a heavy past, where desire and displacement have lead us into, or erased us from the land. What began as a consideration of religious freedom eventually led to sites where belief and/or invention triggered expulsion. The film utilizes reenactment, archival footage, observational shooting, inter-titles and voiceover to tell its stories and is an extension of previous works in which the director questioned foundational American tenants.

The *Illinois Parables* consider what might constitute a liturgical form. Not a sermon, but a form that questions what morality catalyzes, and what belief might teach us about nationhood. In our desire to explain the unknown, who or what do we end up blaming or endorsing?

## In order of appearance

Ravenwolf – Raven Wolf C. Felton Jennings II

Jacques Marquette – José Oubrierie

Alexis de Tocqueville – Daniel Verdier

Ralph Waldo Emerson – David Gatten

Enrico Fermi – Joshua Frieman

Wanet McNeill – Anna Toborg

Hanrahan's Raiders – Chris Bournea, Riley Cruttenden, Joshua Finnell, Paul Hill, Peter Morgan, Blake Turner, Adrian Waggoner

Tornado Eyewitnesses – Pauline Gardner, Bob Hill, Mary Holder, Minnie Rieckenberg, Dolly Schwebel, Raymond Schwebel, Mark Wells, Josie Taylor Wells

Music: Okkyung Lee, Olivia Block, Jeanne Demessieux, Arvo Pärt, Les Porte-Mentaux, Lunenberg Travelers, Hauschka, György Kurtág, Gurdjieff & DeHartmann, Alfred Schnittke, Barry Adamson, JS Bach

### Key Credits

Director, Producer, Screenplay, Camera, Edit, Sound Design:  
Deborah Stratman

Sound Recordists: Steve Badgett, Melinda Fries, Edgar Jorge, Jennifer Lange, Chris Salveter, Deborah Stratman

Intertitles: Edgar Jorge

Sound Mix: Jacob Ross

### About the Artist

Artist and filmmaker **Deborah Stratman** makes work that investigates issues of power, control and belief, exploring how places, ideas, and society are intertwined. Recent projects have addressed freedom, sinkholes, comets, orthoptera, surveillance, manifest destiny, infrastructure, levitation and faith.

She has exhibited internationally at venues including MoMA NY, Centre Pompidou, Hammer Museum, Mercer Union, Witte de With, the Whitney Biennial and festivals including Sundance, Viennale, CPH/DOX, Berlinale, Oberhausen, Ann Arbor, Full Frame and Rotterdam. Stratman is the recipient of an Alpert Award, Fulbright, Guggenheim and USA Collins Fellowships and grants from Creative Capital, Graham Foundation and Wexner Center for the Arts. Stratman holds a MFA from the School of Film/Video of the California Institute of the Arts and teaches at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

### Film and videography

*Xenoi*, 2016, 15:15 min., video

*The Illinois Parables*, 2016, 60:00 min., 16mm

*Second Sighted*, 2014, 5:05 min., video

*Hacked Circuit*, 2014, 15:08 min., video

*Immortal, Suspended*, 2013, 5:50 min., video  
*Musical Insects*, 2013, 6:30 min., video  
*The Name is not the Thing named*, 2012, 10:30 min., video  
*Village, silenced*, 2012, 7:00 min., video  
*A Throb*, 2011, 1:14 min., video  
*...These Blazing Starrs!*, 2011, 14:15 min., 16mm  
*Ray's Birds*, 2010, 7:07 min., 16mm  
*Shrimp Chicken Fish*, 2010, 5:13 min., video  
*FF*, 2010, 2:45 min., video  
*Kuyenda N'Kubvina*, 2010, 40:00 min., video  
*O'er the Land*, 2009, 51:40 min., 16mm  
*The Memory*, 2008, 2:00 min., video  
*Butter and Tomatoes*, 2008, 4:00 min., video  
*The Magician's House*, 2007, 5:45 min., 16mm  
*It Will Die Out in the Mind*, 2006, 3:50 min. video  
*How Among the Frozen Words*, 2005, 0:44 min., video  
*Kings of the Sky*, 2004, 68:00 min., video  
*Energy Country*, 2003, 14:30 min., video  
*In Order Not to Be Here*, 2002, 33:00 min., 16mm  
*Untied*, 2001, 3:00 min., 16mm  
*The BLVD*, 1999, 64:00 min., video  
*From Hetty to Nancy*, 1997, 44:00 min., 16mm  
*On the Various Nature of Things*, 1995, 25:00 min., 16mm  
*Iolanthe*, 1995, 4:30 min., video  
*Waking*, 1994, 7:00 min., video  
*Palimpsest*, 1993, 3:00 min., 16mm  
*In Flight: Day No. 2,128*, 1993, 2:00 min., 16mm  
*the train from la to la*, 1992, 8:00 min., video  
*Possibilities, Dilemmas*, 1992, 10:00 min., video  
*A Letter*, 1992, 7:00 min., video  
*Upon a Time*, 1991, 10:00 min., 16mm  
*My Alchemy*, 1990, 7:00 min., 16mm

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