

FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS

Mon October 9 | 8:30 pm |

Jack H. Skirball Series

LAURA POITRAS: Short Film Disclosures

Laura Poitras is best known for her feature length documentaries *My Country, My Country* (2006), *The Oath* (2010), the Academy Award winning *CITIZENFOUR* (2014) and *Risk* (2016), yet her expansive practice also includes installations and short-form work. Tonight we will screen four of her short films along with selected titles produced by Field of Vision, the documentary unit she co-created to commission fast responding films that combine cinematic innovation with visual journalism.

In all of her work, Poitras bridges many artistic concerns: the documenting of pivotal actions with analytical precision, weaving together multiple threads that work on different levels, and formally challenging viewers with unexpected uses of sound and image.

Poitras' recent films deal with one of our society's most explosive issues, the systematic and covert ways that individual freedom is being undermined and threatened. Poitras faces deeply disturbing subjects with unwavering honesty, creating portraits of people and situations with an artistic complexity and sense of humanity that transcends conventional political documentaries. While dedicated to the potential of documentary film as a tool for artistic expression and the raising of consciousness, Laura Poitras never repeats herself, approaching each project as a unique personal and formal challenge.

In person: Laura Poitras

"...Poitras compels us to rethink how an artist can explore and convey the nature of power, expand our understanding of the larger world, and shape our sense of responsibility."

- Jay Sanders, Curator, Whitney Museum of American Art

Program:

O'Say Can You See (2016, 15 min.)

Directed by Laura Poitras

O'Say Can You See is the prologue to a trilogy of films about post 9/11 America. It is a split screen revision from a double-projection installation.

".... videos captured in dark cells in Afghanistan around the same time in the fall of 2001. These clips show the U.S. military interrogations of prisoners Said Boujaadia and Salim Hamdan, who were both later transferred to Guantánamo. Hamdan was Osama bin Laden's driver, and one of the subjects of *The Oath*." - Liz Pelly, *In These Times*

Death of a Prisoner (2013, 10 min.)

Directed by Laura Poitras

"Adnan Farhan Abdul Latif recently died in solitary confinement at Guantánamo at age 36, after nearly 11 years of imprisonment there, despite never having been charged with a crime. His body was returned to his family in Yemen, but we are left with many unanswered questions about his imprisonment and death. Mr. Latif's death is under investigation by the United States military, which claims he committed suicide from an overdose of prescription medication complicated by acute pneumonia. But that's hard to take at face value." – Laura Poitras

The Above (2015; 8 min.)

Directed by Kirsten Johnson

In Kirsten Johnson's *The Above*, a U.S. military surveillance balloon floats on a tether high above Kabul, Afghanistan. Its capacities are both highly classified and deeply mysterious.

Project X (2016, 10 min.)

Directed by Henrik Moltke and Laura Poitras

"The eerie time of night when all is quiet and still, and most people are asleep, is the perfect setting for filmmaker Laura Poitras to investigate the elusive journey from the National Business Park to a windowless skyscraper in downtown Manhattan. Elevated by the understated

narration of guidelines from classified National Security Agency documents (read by familiar voices Rami Malek and Michelle Williams), this is a thrilling proposal of the degree to which government secrets are unknown to the public. Directed with Henrik Moltke—a journalist who collaborated with Poitras in reporting on the Snowden documents—*Project X* is an exemplary dissection of espionage."

- Kate Rogers, Full Frame Fest

Best of Luck With The Wall (2016; 7 min.)

Directed by Josh Begley

A voyage across the US-Mexico border, stitched together from 200,000 satellite images.

A Night at The Garden (2017; 7 min.)

Directed by Marshall Curry

In 1939, New York's Madison Square Garden was host to an enormous—and shocking—gathering of 22,000 Americans that has largely been forgotten from our history.

FIELD OF VISION is a filmmaker-driven documentary unit that commissions and creates original short-form nonfiction films about developing and ongoing stories around the globe.

See <https://fieldofvision.org/> for more information

Laura Poitras is a filmmaker, journalist, and artist. *CITIZENFOUR* (2014), the third installment of her post-9/11 Trilogy, won an Academy Award for Best Documentary, along with awards from the British Film Academy, Independent Spirit Awards, Director's Guild of America, German Filmpreis, Cinema Eye Honors, Gotham Awards and others. Part one of the trilogy, *My Country, My Country* (2006), about the U.S. occupation of Iraq, was nominated for an Academy Award. Part two, *The Oath* (2010), focused on Guantanamo and the war on terror, and was nominated for two Emmy awards.

Astro Noise (2016), her first solo museum exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art curated by Jay Sanders, was a series of immersive installations. Poitras' film *Risk* premiered at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival and was released in 2017, and *Project X* (with Henrik Moltke), screened at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival.

Poitras' reporting on NSA mass surveillance (based on Edward Snowden's disclosures) won the George Polk Award for national security journalism, and shared in the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service.

In 2006, the U.S. government placed her on a secret watchlist and, through 2012, she was detained and interrogated at the U.S. border each time she traveled internationally. In 2015, the Electronic Frontier Foundation filed a FOIA lawsuit against the U.S. government to obtain her FBI and other government files. Over 1,000 pages have been released.

She has received many honors for her work, including a MacArthur Fellowship, Guggenheim Fellowship, Creative Capital grant, and a Peabody Award. She has attended the Sundance Institute Documentary Labs as both a Fellow and Creative Advisor. She is on the board of the Freedom of the Press Foundation, and is Co-Creator of the visual journalism project Field of Vision.

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