

FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS

Fri Oct 26 | 8:30 pm |

Jack H. Skirball Series

\$12 [members \$9]

Recent Films by Robert Beavers: The Poetry of Living Space

Robert Beavers is a master of 16mm personal filmmaking whose films (*From the Notebook of...* 1971/1998, etc.) are landmarks of independent cinema. Following his magnum opus 18-film cycle, *My Hand Outstretched to the Winged Distance and Sightless Measure*, Beavers released several works that are considered among the great films of recent decades. Beavers' focus is on intimate spaces and how they reflect qualities of human character and life. His art is unsurpassed in its sensitivity to seemingly ordinary details, the astonishingly sensual sound and imagery, and its deep grounding in the classical arts. The program includes five recent films, including *Pitcher of Colored Light* (2007), cited as the second best experimental film of the decade, 2000-2010, in *Film Comment's* poll of international critics, and his early *Amor* (1980).

Los Angeles premieres

In Person: Robert Beavers

"I think of filmmaking like architecture: the entire process is nourished through many stages of development, and the vision of each part leads to the next. The work does not exclude spontaneity. The filming reaches forward and extends a central impulse. It has a chronology. Observation draws out an interior richness." — Robert Beavers

Program

Pitcher of Colored Light, color, optical sound, 24 min., 2007

I have filmed my mother's house and her garden. The shadows play an essential part in the mixture of loneliness and peace that exists here. The seasons move from the garden into the house, projecting rich diagonals of

early morning or late afternoon light. Each shadow is a subtle balance of stillness and movement. A voice within the film speaks to memory. We experience a place through the perspective of where we come from and hear another's voice through our own acoustic. The sense of place is never separate from the moment. R.B.

Among the Eucalyptuses, 16mm, color, silent, 4 min., 2017

Late afternoon quiet and a silent figure seated on a bench in Nafplion; the historic figures of Kolokotronis and Kapodistrias; plus the old factories and machinery, warehouses and train lines that are part of a Piraeus, now disappearing. (Filmed circa 2000, edited 2017). R.B.

Listening to the Space in My Room, 16mm, color, sound; 19 min., 2013

"There were several other fascinating portraits on view in the experimental Wavelengths section at Toronto, but none so invigorating as Robert Beavers' aptly titled *Listening to the Space of My Room*. Imagine someone boiling down all the impermanent sensations, routines, memories, and emotions that make a home a home into an intensely flavorful reduction, and you begin to understand Beavers' stunning film. He and his housemates are crystallized at work: the camera sways with the hands of an older man bowing his cello; observes an older woman tending her garden from inside the darkened house; mirrors Beavers himself examining individual frames of film to stage his somatic cuts. The intricately interlaid tracks of sound and image do not abide any standard measure of continuity, and yet there's something immediately comprehensible in this exquisitely tuned song of the body in space." – Max Goldberg, *Fandor*

The Suppliant, 16 or 35mm, color, sound, 5 min., 2010

"Robert Beavers's *The Suppliant* (2010) is an exquisitely wrought, five-minute portrait, both of the small statue of the title and of the artist/friend in whose apartment it resides. Its arms raised in appeal to an absent being—perhaps a deity, or, as the shot of the figure seen from the back implies, the radiant sun that blazes through the windows—the figure is crosscut with an unmade bed, an anatomical drawing, a painting of a male nude, and views of Lower Manhattan seen from a nearby Brooklyn promenade. Beavers pans briskly up and down the figure's sleek surface, as if to summon its spiritual, nurturing power, cutting these moves with shots of its head, its torso, and an arm gracefully poised. Sounds are minimal and precise: A gentle scratching suggests the friend at work, perhaps shading in a pencil sketch. Without a single shot of the apartment's occupant, images and sounds carve a portrait of a solitary life comforted by art." – Tony Pipolo, *Artforum.com*

"Der Klang, die Welt..." 2018, 16mm, color, sound, 4.5 min.
Filmed in Zumikon, Switzerland.

"Filmed in the same site as *Listening to the Space in My Room*, "Der Klang, die Welt..." was intended as a gift to Cécile Staehelin, who now lives alone in the house. In my film, Dieter Staehelin, now deceased, is speaking about the place of music in his life, and we see him and Cécile playing an Arabesque by Bohuslav Martinů. She had once told me of her wish that her life end like the last notes in this piece of music." R.B.

About the artist

Robert Beavers began making films while still a teenager, after leaving his home in Weymouth, Massachusetts, for New York City at age sixteen. A few years later, he left for Europe and was joined by Gregory J. Markopoulos, with whom he would share his life until Markopoulos' death in 1992. Markopoulos was both a mentor and champion for Beavers' work, but neither artist circulated their films in the last decades of Markopoulos' life, making them practically invisible.

When Beavers' films did emerge in the beginning of this century — most notably in several programs through the 1990s for the New York International Film Festival's "Views From the Avant-Garde" and a retrospective as part of the Toronto international Film Festival's twenty-fifth anniversary in 2002 — they were a revelation. Eighteen films were eventually released as a full thematic cycle, collected under the title *My Hand Outstretched to the Winged Distance and Sightless Measure*. The films, as Beavers says, grew "out of my relation to Gregory Markopoulos, protected by solitude and the spirit that came from our dedication to filmmaking." As such, seeing them in relationship to Markopoulos' films shows both a dialogue and unique counterpoint between the two filmmakers.

During the past decade, Beavers has begun to show his films widely — and his substantial body of work has been met with tremendous critical acclaim. "Add Robert Beavers to the pantheon. This is an epochal event," Nathan Lee, for example, wrote in *The New York Sun* on the occasion of a 2005 retrospective at the Whitney Museum.

Beavers mixes lyrical autobiography with a precise formal beauty that displays a thoughtful command of all aspects of filmmaking. Beavers' films have received in-depth profiles in *Artforum* and *Millennium Film Journal*, and he has had retrospectives in New York, Cambridge, San Francisco, Vienna,

London and Berlin. Robert Beavers' films are regularly included in international film festivals.

Curated by Steve Anker and Bérénice Reynaud as part of the Jack H. Skirball series. Funded in part by the Ostrovsky Family Fund.

Other presentation by Robert Beavers in Los Angeles:

Downtown Independent Theater (251 S. Main Street)

Wed Oct 24, 8:00pm

Selection of early films (*Los Angeles premieres*)

Presenters: LA Filmforum, Acropolis Cinema and REDCAT

www.lafilmforum.org; or 323-377-7238

<https://www.acropoliscinema.com/>