

FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS

Mon Nov 12 |8:30 pm|

Jack H. Skirball Series

\$12 [members \$9]

VIVIAN OSTROVSKY

L'humour du geste

An intimate – yet humorous – act of cultural resistance, the cinema of Vivian Ostrovsky is a gesture, involving the filmmaker's entire body – as she travels around the world, carrying the gear and framing/ gathering images with a Super-8 camera. She playfully edits these original shots with images found in her personal archives, or borrowed from the history of cinema. Multiculturalism and polyglotism are woven into the poetics of displacement. Born in New York and raised in Rio, Ostrovsky studied film in Paris, and her global experiences range from work with early women's film festivals and distribution outfits to Centre Pompidou and the Jerusalem Cinematheque.

An anti-travelogue of sorts, the program will take a viewer on a serendipitous voyage in time and space and history to include films from the early 80s such as the aptly titled *Movie* (1982) to Ostrovsky's more recent work, including the "beach extravaganza" *ICE/SEA* (2005), *DizzyMess* (2017) as well as her moving tribute to Chantal Akerman, *Mais ailleurs c'est toujours mieux* (2016) and *Hiatus* (2018), about Ukrainian-Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector.

Los Angeles premieres

In Person: Vivian Ostrovsky

"Looking at the formidable *ICE/SEA*, one understands that it's not enough to be 'a tourist' to make films. Using her own archives in Super-8, mini-DV, VHS and Beta, the American-French-Brazilian artist pans from Salvador de Bahia to Recife, Patagonia, Camargue, Brittany and Varna in Bulgaria – prompting us to reconsider the 'immediacy' of the *amateur* filmic gesture." – *Libération*

Program

Movie (V.O.)

8', 16mm, b/w & clr, 1982, shown on DCP

By Vivian Ostrovsky; edit: Vivian Ostrovsky, Gisèle Meichler; sound edit: Vivian Ostrovsky, Patrick Genêt.

With a super 8 camera from Paris to Berlin, from Amsterdam to Rio, from Jerusalem to New York shooting only at night. Hungarian crooners, Indian tribal chants, opera arias, and an occasional samba make up the sound track of this "hand-held" diary.

Losing The Thread

8', b/w & clr, 2014, shown on DCP

By Vivian Ostrovsky; edit: Ruti Gadish; sound edit: Ruti Gadish, Vivian Ostrovsky; sound mix: Sharon Shama, titles: George Griffin

Super 8 reels of Paris catwalks I shot in 1979/1980 were supposed to become an experimental short meditation on couture culture. Its authority has unraveled some since and Deleuze's definition of style: 'creating a foreign language in one's own language,' encouraged me to loosen the threads of this pursuit. To ponder how fashion and style are interwoven but also influenced by individual flare and whimsy, I stitched together Coco Chanel, Courrèges, Cole Porter and Kaiser Karl with vintage film moments (from *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* and *Flaming Creatures* to *Une Femme mariée* and *Duck Soup*). Then, as now, to grasp the whole cloth of this interface involves finding, but also Losing the Thread... (VO)

American International Pictures

5', b/w & clr, 1997, shown on DCP

By Vivian Ostrovsky; edit and sound: Vivian Ostrovsky, François Sculier

Absorb these images, "breathing slowly, quietly, and very calmly. Sinking softly, silently..." Drift into a relaxing reverie.

ICE/SEA

31', Super8, mini DV, 16mm, 2005, b/w & clr, shown on DCP

By Vivian Ostrovsky; edit, sound edit: Vivian Ostrovsky, François Sculier, Ruti Gadish; animation: George Griffin

"...a celluloid aperitif for summertime, combining found footage of the world's beaches with the director's own archive of coastal material.

Fun and free-associative, the movie ventures to Rio, Miami, Montpellier, the Dead and Black seas, and elsewhere, keeping a visual diary of lumpy beach bods, boardwalk architecture, and celebrity sightings (Esther Williams, Elvis Presley in his Hawaiian incarnation). *ICE/SEA* also showcases a zoo's worth of beachcombers: dogs, birds, a marauding tiger, and rounding out the first half of the title, smooching penguins. Enjoy those icebergs while they last!" – *The Village Voice*

The Title was Shot

9', b/w & clr, 2009, shown as a videofile with English subtitles
By Vivian Ostrovsky; edit: Ruti Gadish, Claude Mercier, Vivian Ostrovsky; sound edit: Claude Mercier, Vivian Ostrovsky

The Title Was Shot was commissioned for a conference of film theoreticians in Berlin in 2009 entitled: *The Cinematic Configurations of 'I' and 'We'*. Composed of fragments from over 25 films dating from the 1920s to the 90s, this mischievous short features cowboys, Indians and damsels in distress; Tarzan, Jane, a transgender gorilla, and a menacing lion tango from frame to frame, prodded by Wittgenstein, Gilles Deleuze and Slavoj Zizek's philosophical considerations. A fast-paced, heart-pounding cinephilic farce.

DizzyMess

7', b.w & clr, 2017, shown on DCP
By Vivian Ostrovsky; images: Vivian Ostrovsky; editing: Ruti Gadish

Dizziness, in the sense that it inspires artists and filmmakers to move beyond their known borders. Or how a state of altered perception, instability, and confusion can be a catalyst for exploring new surroundings. Let go of the ground and attain giddiness or perhaps even foolishness?

Statues of dictators fall in the wind of history, a very pissed off Silvana Mangano is surrounded by scenes involving Charlie Chaplin or Harold Lloyd, who are themselves in conversation with Truffaut's *400 Blows* and Medvedkine's *Happiness* – demonstrating "... the virtuosity of a filmmaker who is aware that every element of a film functions as a metonymy of its discourse." – Traverse Video Catalogue

CORrespondência e REcorDAÇÕES

10', b/w & clr, 2013, Portuguese with English subtitles, shown on videofile
By Vivian Ostrovsky; images Vivian Ostrovsky; edit/sound: Ruti Gadish, V. Ostrovsky; sound mix: Eric Lonni (Digital Salade)

Based on a correspondence between Brazilian artist Ione Saldanha and the filmmaker, this portrait was made for an exhibition at the MAM (Museum of Modern Art) in Rio de Janeiro. Ione Saldanha (1919-2001) was a contemporary of Lygia Clark, Sonia Delaunay, and Vieira da Silva, who were also her friends. She abandoned painting on canvas for more sculptural supports like batten and bamboos, which she shaped with color. The film recreates her intimate creative universe, from the inspiration she drew from Matisse, to her favorite musics (Bellini, Purcell, Haedel) and films (*The Night of the Hunter*, *Viaggio in Italia*, *Foolish Wives*).

But elsewhere is always better

(Mais ailleurs c'est toujours mieux)

By Vivian Ostrovsky; edit: Ruti Gadish

4', b/w & clr, 2016, English subtitles, shown on DCP

Starting with her first meeting with Chantal Akerman in the early 1970s, Ostrovsky uses her own footage to remember a few moments expressing the personality of the groundbreaking Belgian filmmaker. Forty years of friendship condensed into four minutes...

"One of the five top movies of 2016." – *Sight & Sound*

Hiatus

6' b/w & clr, 2018, Portuguese with English subtitles, shown on DCP

By Vivian Ostrovsky; edit: Ruti Gadish

The film is based on a single TV interview conducted in 1977 with the reclusive, introspective Ukrainian–Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector (1920-1977) – that was broadcast only after her death. I found what she said at the time to be still relevant, as it corresponds to this feeling of 'in-betweenness' that I have been experiencing all my life.

About the Artist

"Manhattan, New York was where I happened to be born. After 6 months of stress, I boarded the first plane to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with my parents and sister. My primary and secondary school was not too far from Ipanema.

My university years were spent in Paris, suffering at a Psychology major. To make life less tedious, I ended up seeing an inordinate amount of films of all kinds. After a B.A. in Psychology I majored in Film Studies at the Sorbonne (Eric Rohmer's classes) and at the Cinemathèque Française (Henri Langlois' classes).

In the mid 70s I traveled throughout Europe with a friend in a rundown Renault pick-up van, organizing women's film festivals and distributing films made by women. Our distribution company was called Cine-Femmes International. In 1980, I co-directed *CAROLYN 2*, an experimental film and slide installation about choreographer/dancer Carolyn Carlson. Many films followed, mostly shot in super-8 then blown-up to 16mm. Today I shoot video but still use super-8 whenever possible. Sound has been and is always a vital part of my work.

Installations consisting of multiple projections on different surfaces have been a new adventure. They are always site-specific, ephemeral works that are immersive and in dark spaces. I have presented them in Israel, Portugal, and Austria, together with my collaborator Ruth Gadish.

Simultaneously my film-related activities have expanded to curating programs for venues such as the Jerusalem Cinematheque. *Intersections*, a program of Avant-garde films and videos was initiated to introduce the public to cutting-edge works at the Jerusalem Film Festival every year. Other venues I have programmed include the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris and the Escola de Artes Visuais Parque Lage in Rio de Janeiro.

"Home" is wherever I feel at home – and that might be in a hotel or on a plane or on my way to an unknown destination with a camera and recorder in my bag." (VO)

"Ostrovsky reduces and minimizes, selects from enormous masses of material, from an overabundance of material that has been shot, and cuts back radically. The shooting ratio is 1:almost infinite, and that which is left out becomes that which is left over, becomes the film. Film becomes remains. What remains is the poem itself. Ostrovsky's elegant, slender and idiosyncratic oeuvre – these 'minimal movies' – have their place in a specific cinematographic tradition of experimental film, whose impetus has always been to give their images freedom, or perhaps to give them back their freedom." – Kunsthaus Basel

Vivian Ostrovsky's films have been shown in dozens of venues around the world, such as Anthology Film Archive, the Lincoln Center, Film Forum, Tribeca International Film Festival, MoMA (New York), the Melbourne International Film Festival (Australia), the Viennale (Austria), Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro, Rio International Film Festival (Brazil), Festival Nouveau Cinéma, Toronto International Film Festival Toronto Cinematheque (Canada), Forum des Images, Cinémathèque française, Centre Pompidou, Créteil International Women's Film Festival, Festival du court-métrage de Clermont-Ferrand (France), Berlinale, Berlin Arsenal, Oberhausen Film Festival, Kassel

Documentary Film and Video Festival (Germany), Jerusalem Cinematheque (Israel), Image Forum (Japan), Curtas, Vila do Conde (Portugal), Seoul Independent and Documentary Film Festival (South Korea), Museo nacional Reina Sofia (Spain), Locarno Film Festival, Kunsthhaus Basel (Switzerland), Women Make Waves, Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival (Taiwan), Rotterdam International Film Festival (The Netherlands), London Film Festival (UK), among others.

Curated by Steve Anker and Bérénice Reynaud as part of the Jack H. Skirball screening series