

FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS

Mon Dec 9 | 8:30 pm |

Jack H. Skirball Series

\$12 [members \$9]

Alexandra Cuesta ***Camera Notes (Part One and Two)*** ***Notas de Cámara (Parte Uno y Dos)***

World premiere

Known for her experimental, precise and hypnotic portraits of places and people shot in 16mm (*Recordando El Ayer, Beirut 2.14.05, Piensa En Mí, Despedida, Territorio*), Alexandra Cuesta expands her cinematic vocabulary into an "intimate ethnography," shot over three years in upstate New York, Los Angeles, Japan, and Chile. Setting up the process of regularly shooting a "film gesture" almost daily, *Camera Notes* records "fragments of the everyday intimate." Cuesta lives and works between the United States and Ecuador and was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial fellowship in 2018. *Camera Notes (Part One and Two)* will be preceded by a selection of her earlier work.

<https://www.redcat.org/event/alexandra-cuesta-camera-notes-part-one-notas-de-camara-parte-uno>

In person: Alexandra Cuesta

"What is immediately apparent, is Cuesta's talent for both framing and editing, with each of her discreetly composed images held long enough to give all the delicate shifts they contain a chance to breathe." – *Senses of Cinema*

"Cuesta's lovingly observed cinematic long takes exude a living sense of place and time that renders microscopic gestures and environmental sounds credibly present." – *Artforum*

"Cuesta is a delightfully playful director and acts as her own cinematographer. Like James Benning, she is an auteur walking the tightrope between cinema and media art." – *Reverse Shot*

Program

Recordando El Ayer,

2007, 16mm black and white reversal, 9:00', sound

Memory and identity are observed through textures of everyday life in a portrait of Jackson Heights, home to a large Latin American immigrant population. Images of street, people, and daily rituals render passing of time in a neighborhood that becomes a mirror not just of another place, but also of the past. The meaning of home is explored and built upon collective recollection.

Beirut 2.14.05

2008, 16mm, 8:00', sound

A journey into a foreign country begins with a handheld camera looking through the window of a car. Raindrops in the glass abstract the cityscape separating the inside from the outside. Guided by fragmentation we see mirrors, reflections and shadows. The imminence of danger is at once palpable as it is distant. Shot during the production of *Ça Sera Beau (Wale Nourredine 2005)*, the narrative springs from in-between moments, carrying with it a sense of urgency and chance that render like quick entries in a diary.

"Cuesta captures and edits these images into fragments with the certainty of a dream. *Beirut 2.14.05* is both honest and masterly, a miniature at the roots of poetry, where the palpable echoes the visible." – The Viennale

Piensa En Mí

2009, 16mm, color, 15:06', sound.

Moving from east to west and back, the windows of a bus frame fleeting sections of urban landscape. Throughout the day, images of riders, textures of light and fragments of bodies in space come together to weave a portrait in motion; a contemplative meditation on public transport in the city of Los Angeles. Isolation, routine and everyday splendor, create the backdrop of this journey, while the intermittent sounds of cars construct the soundscape.

"For all of its documentary qualities, Cuesta's work is eerily elusive—the effect of the films closer to reverie than reportage. Watching *Piensa En Mí* is like daydreaming while looking out the bus window—at once, near and far, objective and abstract." – Madison Brookshire

Despedida

2013, 16mm, color, 10:06', sound.

Shot in Boyle Heights in East Los Angeles, this transitory neighborhood resonates with the poetry of local resident Mapkaulu Roger Nduku. Verses about endings, looking and passing through open up the space projected. A string of tableaux gather a portrait of place and compose a goodbye letter to an ephemeral home.

***Camera Notes (Notas de Cámara)*, 2019-2020**

Intending to create an image as a daily practice, I found myself *looking* again, this time both at the public and the private spheres. A collection of objects, spaces, people, and moments, which in time hold different meanings as they have absorbed personal narratives, real or fictional. The film was shot over the span of three years, during a peripatetic time, in Upstate New York, Chile, Japan, Los Angeles, the California Desert, Miami and Mexico. It is composed of six parts. (AC)

From a real body, which was there, proceed radiations that ultimately touch me, who am here; the duration of the transmission is insignificant; the image of the missing being will touch me like the delayed rays of a star.

– Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*

The action of editing is disorienting because it is the only instance in life where past is present. Jean-Luc Godard

Camera Notes, Part One

2019-2020, 16mm, color and black and white, 18:45', sound.
(Screened on DCP or Digital File)

A foreign city, the filmmaker's surroundings, daily life. An accumulation of poetic and experiential instances that describe inhabiting a post-industrial landscape, the end of a love story, and the politics of the private and the public. Shot in 16mm the film explores the aesthetics of solitude and invokes the apparition and exorcism of spectra by articulating the emotional function of cinema.

World premiere

Camera Notes, Part Two

2019-2020, 16mm, color, 5:58', sound. (Screened on DCP or Digital File)

An afternoon exercise of piecing together minimal details for safekeeping: my grandmother's garden, her music, recipes for well-being.

World premiere

About the Artist

Alexandra Cuesta's films and videos combine experimental film traditions along with documentary practices, and investigate the reciprocity of the gaze in time-based representation. Her images often depart from the public sphere, and highlight the poetics of the common experience.

Territorio (2016), her first feature length film, premiered in the Official Selection of the FID Marseille Film Festival in France in 2016. It has screened in a number of festivals, museums, and cultural institutions, including the Viennale International Film Festival, The Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles MOCA, First Look Festival at the Museum of the Moving Image, BAFICI, Bienal de Arte Contemporáneo de Cuenca, the Ann Arbor Film Festival, and the III Fronteira Festival Internacional Do Filme Documental E Experimental in Goiania- Brazil, where it received a Special Jury Award (2017), among many others. *Territorio* was selected among the 25 best Latin American films of 2017 by Cinema Tropical.

Her award winning 16mm films have been presented in the New York Film Festival, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Cinema Du Reel, Palacio Nacional de Bellas Artes, Habana Film Festival, BFI Film Festival, Oberhausen, Courtisane, FICValdivia International Film Festival, Anthology Film Archives, Image Forum Tokyo, among others. Early in her career Cuesta was included in "25 Filmmakers for the 21st Century" by *Film Comment*.

She is the recipient of Guggenheim Fellowship Award in Film and Video (2018).

She received her MFA in Film and Video from the California Institute of the Arts and her BFA in Photography from Savannah College of Art and Design.

Funded in part by the Ostrovsky Family Fund, with Special support provided by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Curated by Steve Anker and Bérénice Reynaud, as part of the Jack H. Skirball Series.