

FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS

Mon Feb 10 | 8:30 pm |
Jack H. Skirball Series
\$12 [members \$9]

JEANNE C. FINLEY

Journeys Beyond The Cosmodrome

**In Collaboration with Lyazzat Khanim
and Composer-Performer Kri Schlafer**

Featuring a live performance by The Threshold Choir

Jeanne C. Finley's *Journeys Beyond the Cosmodrome* (2019, 53 min.) is a riveting portrait of a remote Eurasian culture as revealed through fantasies and fears of its adolescents. On the vast Kazakhstan Steppes, nine 16-year-olds prepare to graduate from the Akkol orphanage. Rockets launched from the nearby Cosmodrome inspire their dreams as they write about and perform imagined future-selves. Guided by the nomadic spirit and natural beauty of the Steppes, each explores questions of time and truth in relation to the challenging reality of their lives. Finley, a highly accomplished narrative and documentary video artist, seamlessly interweaves traditional Kazakh culture, global popular iconography, space travel, and individual performances to create a compelling vision of their journeys into an uncertain adulthood.

The evening will conclude with live song from the *Journeys'* soundtrack, composed by Kri Schlafer, director of the Portland Threshold Choir. The Threshold Choir is comprised of over 200 choirs internationally that sing for those at the Thresholds of life. Members of the Orange County and Westside Choirs will sing at the conclusion of the screening.

Los Angeles Premiere

Jeanne C. Finley is the 1998 recipient of The Herb Alpert Award in the Arts in Film/Video

In person: Jeanne C. Finley

"From the majestic Kazakh steppes, the young artists use a mixture of words, pictures, and music to craft mesmerizing prophecies of what adulthood and independence will mean to them."

— Brendan Peterson, Pacific Film Archive

"Finley's stunning, brilliantly collaborative movie puts Kazakh teens at the center of a universe. As they prepare to graduate, the teens devise visionary tales to protect and guide them. With unforgettably beautiful images and music, the film fashions these stories into talismans, bending the cosmos around each child." — Laura Marks

"The work of Jeanne C. Finley and John Muse is powered by the friction created between despair and its antidote, engaged storytelling. Finley+Muse marries the fictional with the documentary, the still with the moving image, the vernacular with cultivated elegance, the mythic with the mundane, and monumental social forces with the most humble of narratives." — Mark Alice Durant

Program:

Book Report

(Co-Directed with John Muse, 2017, 13:30, Quicktime)

The film is a meditation on the weaponization of language. It combines short sequences Don Draper reading books in the *Mad Men* series with relevant facts about the 2016 presidential campaign—including a history of the hashtag #trumpbookreport, and notes on a payment to the mysteriously named "Draper Sterling" ad agency. A voice-over chorus, drawn from the infamous Hollywood Access tape, revises the misogynist "locker room talk," turning it against the original speaker.

Journeys Beyond the Cosmodrome (2019, 54 min., DCP)
created in collaboration with Lyazzat Khanim, and with music composed and performed by Kri Schlafer.

On the vast Kazakhstan Steppes, nine 16-year-olds prepare to graduate from the Akkol orphanage. Rockets launched overhead from the nearby Cosmodrome inspire their dreams as they write about and perform their imagined future-selves. Guided by the nomadic spirit and natural beauty of the Steppes, the teens explore questions of time and truth in relation to the challenging reality of their lives. Traditional Kazakh culture, global popular iconography, and space travel are

infused throughout their performances and imaginatively used as protective talismans on their journey into an uncertain adulthood.

Lyazzat Khanim's Russian voice-over intertwines her reflections on her two summers spent working with the teens with her own childhood memories. Only a few years older than the teens, Lyazzat becomes part of their chosen family group. Time-lapse imagery of the cosmos intertwines with microscope footage of earthly materials such as flowers, metals, grass and dirt. As the teens perform their futures, these images spiral around them, making vivid their tie to the land and their dreams of flight.

An original score composed from the teenagers' written words recalls the imagined futures the teens carry as they leave the home that has guided them to this threshold, and to which they can never return.

The Artists:

Jeanne C. Finley creates hybrid documentary and expanded cinema projects that utilize engaged participatory events to reflect on the contested past, the turbulent present, and the unpredictable future. Her projects employ collaborative processes with artists, scientists, audience, and subjects. Finley's films have shown at festivals internationally including IDFA, SF Film Festival, New York Film Festival, the Guggenheim Museum, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Museum of Modern Art (New York), Whitney Museum, and the George Pompidou Center. She has received a Rockefeller Media Arts Fellowship, Guggenheim Fellowship, Creative Capital Foundation, Cal Arts/Alpert Award, National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and Phelan Award. She is a Professor at the California College of the Arts.

Kri Schlafer is a singer, songwriter and director for the Portland chapter of the Threshold Choir, a growing community of people worldwide who sing with and for those at the thresholds of life. Kri works part time at the public library and as an Original Play practitioner in schools and private homes. She was ordained in 2005 by Buddhist monk, poet and peace activist, Thich Nhat Hanh and completed her MA in Embodied Peacemaking in 2009. Growing up in the north woods of Wisconsin, she has a deep love for the natural world: lakes, rivers, forest, rocks, sky, mountains, wildflowers and wild creatures. Kri currently resides in a houseboat in Portland, OR.

Lyazzat Khanim is a Kazakh artist and fashion designer based in Istanbul whose sensibility is influenced by the multicultural environment of Eastern and Asian cultures. She graduated from

Parsons New School for Design, with bachelor's degree in Fashion Design in 2017. Her film and fashion work is strongly influenced by the tenuous relationship between society and Earth. With a conceptual emphasis on sustainability, Lyazzat creates functional garments made of eco-friendly organic fabrics with gender-neutral aesthetics that speak to both men and women. Lyazzat Khanim together with Oluchi Mavi are founders of the clothing brand 5:45 AM.

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