

## FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS

Mon Feb 24 |8:30 pm|  
Jack H. Skirball Series  
\$12 [members \$9]

### **Shocks to the System: An Evening With MANUEL DELANDA**

On Skype from New York City, renowned philosopher and moving image-maker Manuel DeLanda will introduce and discuss rarely shown videos and films, including *Electric Arthropods* (2017), the (in)famous *The Itch Scratch Itch Cycle* (1977) and the haunting *Raw Nerves: A Lacanian Thriller* (1980). After relocating from Mexico to New York City in the 1970s, DeLanda created a body of radical films that were visceral and raw, and that also had profound theoretical underpinnings. Unique for being lauded by punk, experimental and academic communities, DeLanda's work defied definition, taking seemingly familiar genres into outlandish and unexpected territories. DeLanda is now an internationally respected philosopher, author and teacher who has also created a stream of astonishingly original and kinetic videos. Regardless of medium, DeLanda is a great contemporary provocateur who brings a sense of danger, excitement and renewal to each experience.

*Los Angeles Premieres*

### **In person (via Skype from New York City): Manuel DeLanda**

"Radically conceived and frantically edited, DeLanda's energetic, semiotic cinema earned him instant acclaim in the international experimental film world. Unique among the films of their era (or of any other for that matter), DeLanda's movies have a highbrow philosophical tinge, lowbrow wit, and punk rock style. Out of circulation for nearly two decades and newly restored... these utterly distinctive films will undoubtedly rearrange your synapses."

– J. Hoberman, "2015 Ten Best List," *Artforum*

"An anarchist who studies analytical philosophy, Manuel DeLanda makes aggressive, wild movies that simultaneously leap all over the place and stand absolutely still. His punchy Dada-like stances have a certain built-in versatility insofar as they manage to defy The System while both embodying and benefiting from it... In both *The Itch Scratch Itch Cycle* and *Incontinence*,... the willed perversity of the structures created defines the properties of DeLanda's jazzy style. The tacky

settings and ugly male-female quarrels of both films are redolent of the campy Mexican effect, which is also underlined by the deliberately strident acting.” – Jonathan Rosenbaum

“Audacious. Outlandish. Subversive. Intense. Insane. These are just a few of the inadequate adjectives that fail to describe Manuel DeLanda’s fantastically disarming and deeply funny films. Known today as an author, teacher, and philosopher, DeLanda’s iconic celluloid works remain among the most innovative, abrasive, and hypnotic films produced in the 70s and early 80s.” – Steven Rodriguez

**Program:**

**Digital Videos:**

Digital films from the collection of the artist.

***Electric Arthropods (2017, 3:39”, digital, sound)***

“Macro shots of various insects, electrically colorized with animated particle backgrounds.” – MDL

***Anonymous Multitudes (2015, 7:41”, digital, sound)***

“My take on New York City crowds. Some effects involve tracking individual faces and a lot of masking work, others use multiple slices of the same shot, offset a few frames, to stretch all moving figures in strange ways.” – MDL

***Fractured Landscapes (2014, 10:53”, sound)***

“Using multiple layers of the same shot and animating masks on each produces a wide variety of effects that fracture and distort the shot. These were used here for NYC buildings, to create a dissonant urban symphony. The music is classical piano pieces played backwards.” – MDL

***Molecular Populations (2012, 13:10”, digital, sound)***

“This is NYC using populations of particles as the means to do image processing. The music was done by layering loops downloaded from the net.” – MDL

## **16mm Films:**

16mm Prints from Anthology Film Archives.

### ***The Itch Scratch Itch Cycle***

(1977, 8 min., 16mm, color, sound)

"Part of the process of transplanting the narrative space of bourgeois theatre and novels to film involved learning to use off-screen space meaningfully. The main function assigned to it was the homogenization of the space of action. This is the subject matter of my first two films.

In *The Itch Scratch Itch Cycle* the editing technique called 'shot-countershot' is explored. The rhetorical figure is very important because it sutures the body of film. The film consists of five different versions of the same scene. The 'real space' of a four-wall set is actually traversed by the camera in a figure-eight dolly movement around both characters in the first variation. The space thus produced is then subjected to extreme optical violence in each of the following variations which alter, one at a time, some of the principles on which the editing technique in question works (e.g., unity of point of view, unity of the scene depicted, relative plausibility of the angles of framing, etc.)" – MDL

### ***Incontinence: A Diarrhetic Flow of Mismatches***

(1978, 18 min., 16mm, color, sound)

"In *Incontinence*, optical violence is done to matching techniques by forcing them to operate in extreme situations, but also to one of the main elements of their mechanism: the image of the body. Each one of the coordinates that guarantee the unity of a character's body image is systematically altered. Thus the integrity of the image is destroyed by making it lose its size, change its relative position, vary in its permanen-ce in time or space, switch identity, etc. This concerted destruction reaches its peak when one of the characters actually blows up." – MDL

### ***Raw Nerves: A Lacanian Thriller***

(1980, 30 min., 16mm, color, sound)

"Originally subtitled *A Lacanian Thriller*, *Raw Nerves* jacks up the level of its narrative disruptions to the point of near-incomprehensibility. A film noir shot in luridly artificial colors (inspired, DeLanda has said, by brightly-hued "Mexican expressionism"), *Raw Nerves* uses the voice-over narration of a Philip Marlowe crime flick, rapidly switching among

just a few dark rooms, including a bathroom stall covered in fluorescent-pink DeLanda cartoons, intercut via a series of baroque optical effects—overlapping chevrons, hypnotic swirls, comic-book starbursts—set to a sonic turbulence of electronic gurgles and bleeps.”  
- Ed Halter, Museum of the Moving Image

***Massive Annihilation of Fetuses (aka: Judgment Day)***  
(1982, 7 min., super-8mm on 16mm, color, sound)

“This film is my tribute to the real master race that will soon inherit the planet... Cockroaches have not only invaded the flip side of my house (i.e., the back of my kitchen, the other side of my walls, etc.) but they have also taken over some areas of my unconscious... Since I started the film the structure of my nightmares has changed, almost as if I had violated their laws and they were getting ready for revenge.” – MDL

### **Artist’s Statement**

*“The space of cinema is alive. It has its own body, a very wet body, very different from the dry, dessicated structure which semioticians and philosophers of language would want us to believe it has. Film’s body is constantly traversed by flows which carry chunks of codes (linguistic, gestural, behavioral, ritual, etc.), some old some new. But the overall movement of these currents of meaning, as we will see, never has a code of its own...”*

*The body of film is a vampire like creature. It lives on energy expended by the audience in exercising the information processing skills necessary to understand the plot, skills that range from the simple detecting of regular patterns to the complex drawing of logical inferences. This movie creature seduces the audience, elicits its labor and thus keeps itself alive.”*

*“There is only one point of contact between my artistic and philosophical work: the concept of emergence. In philosophy, the concept of an emergent property is defined as the property of a whole that does not exist in its component parts, but that arises from interactions between its parts. When the concept was introduced into philosophy in the mid nineteenth-century, the example often used was water. Its components (oxygen and hydrogen) are both fuels which, if added to a fire, will make it burn with more intensity. Yet, water has the opposite effect: it will put out the fire. The concept of emergence has not been as widely discussed in art, despite the fact that many artistic effects in painting and music arise from the interactions*

*between individual brushstrokes or sounds. But in the case of film, the concept is hard to avoid: a sequence of motionless photographs projected at the right speed gives rise to a vivid appearance of motion. The effect is indeed magical, so much so that it was magicians who first exploited it as a form of entertainment."*

## **The Artist:**

**Manuel DeLanda** (born 1952) is a Mexican-American writer, artist and philosopher who has lived in New York since 1975. He is a lecturer in architecture at the Princeton University School of Architecture and the University of Pennsylvania School of Design. He also teaches architectural theory as an adjunct professor of architecture and urban design at the Pratt Institute and serves as the Gilles Deleuze Chair and Professor of Philosophy at the European Graduate School. He holds a BFA from the School of Visual Arts (1979) and a PhD in media and communication from the European Graduate School (2010).

After moving to New York, DeLanda created several experimental films between 1975 and 1982, some as part of an undergraduate coursework at the School of Visual Arts. While at SVA, DeLanda studied under video artist Joan Braderman; they were subsequently married in 1980 and collaborated on several works - including Braderman's *Joan Does Dynasty* (1986), DeLanda's *Raw Nerves: A Lacanian Thriller* (1980), and *Ismism* (1979) before divorcing at an indeterminate point.

Influenced by the No Wave movement, DeLanda's Super 8 and 16mm films also served as methodical, theory-based approaches to the form. He pulled them from circulation after the original negatives were lost; in 2011, Anthology Film Archives restored and reissued them.

Cited by filmmaker Nick Zedd in his Cinema of Transgression Manifesto, DeLanda associated with many of the experimental filmmakers of this New York based-movement. In 2010, he appeared in Céline Danhier's retrospective documentary *Blank City*.

DeLanda is the author of many well-known books, including *Philosophy and Simulation* (Continuum, 2011), *Deleuze: History and Science* (Atropos Press, 2010), *A New Philosophy of Society* (Continuum, 2006), *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy* (Continuum, 2002), *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History* (Zone Books, 1997) and *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* (Zone Books, 1991).

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