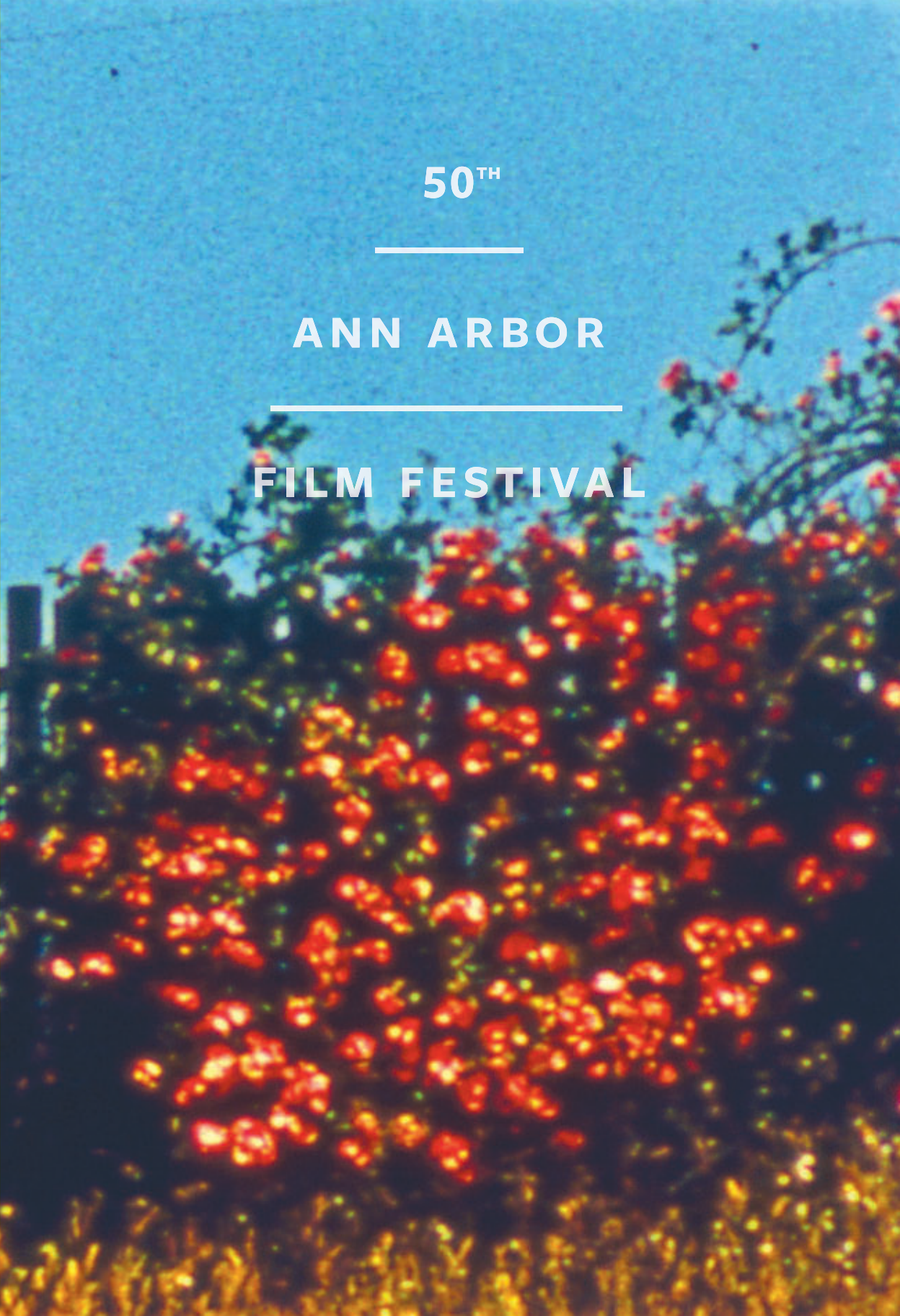
50TH
ANN ARBOR
FILM FESTIVAL

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50TH

ANN ARBOR

FILM FESTIVAL

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35 **Tu** Opening Night Reception & Screening

37 **W** Wednesday

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RESOURCES

124 Print Sources

127 Film Index

128 Venues Map

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tu
TUESDAY

Opening Night Reception
6–8 PM
Michigan Theater Grand Foyer

Opening Night Screening
FEATURE IN COMPETITION
8:15 PM
Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

AFTERPARTY
Sava's
10 PM – 2 am | FREE

W
WEDNESDAY

Peter Rose
JUROR PRESENTATION
12:30 PM | FREE
Michigan Theater Screening Room

Music Videos in Competition
3 PM | $5 Tickets
Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Films by Robert Nelson
4:30 PM | FREE
Michigan Theater Screening Room

Student Film Showcase
5 PM | FREE
Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Voluptuous Sleep
FEATURE IN COMPETITION
7:00 PM
Michigan Theater Screening Room

Films in Competition 1
7:15 PM
Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Films in Competition 2
9:15 PM
Michigan Theater Screening Room

Out Night with Barbara Hammer
9:30 PM
Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

AFTERPARTY
SH\aut\ & \aut\BAR
11 PM – 2 AM | FREE

Th
THURSDAY

Michael Robinson
JUROR PRESENTATION
12:30 PM | FREE
Michigan Theater Screening Room

Future of Preservation
PANEL & SCREENING
3 PM | FREE
Michigan Theater Screening Room

Spatial Shift Artists' Talk
3 PM | Gallery Project | FREE

PENNY W. STAMPS PRESENTS
Craig Baldwin: Masochism of the Margins of the Society of the Spectacle
5:10 PM | FREE
Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Poetic Injustice: Short Films from the Arab World
7 PM
Michigan Theater Screening Room

Bruce Baillie Retrospective 1
FILMMAKER IN ATTENDANCE
7:15 PM
Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

The Strawberry Tree
FEATURE IN COMPETITION
9:15 PM
Michigan Theater Screening Room

Films in Competition 3
9:30 PM
Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

AFTERPARTY
The Ravens Club
11:30 PM – 2 AM | FREE

F
FRIDAY

Kathy Geritz
JUROR PRESENTATION
12:30 PM | FREE
Michigan Theater Screening Room

Leighton Pierce Artist Talk
3 PM | FREE | UM Slusser Gallery

Rooted not Retro
PANEL DISCUSSION
3 PM | FREE
UMMA, Helmut Stern Auditorium

SPACE / TIME
JAPANESE AVANT-GARDE FILMS OF THE 1970s & 1980s
5 PM
Michigan Theater Screening Room

All Divided Selves
FEATURE IN COMPETITION
7 PM
Michigan Theater Screening Room

Films in Competition 4
7:15 PM
Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Films by Phil Solomon
FILMMAKER IN ATTENDANCE
9:15 PM
Michigan Theater Screening Room

Animated Films in Competition
9:30 PM
Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Paul Clipson Compound Eyes 1 – 5
SUPER 8MM FILMS W/ LIVE MUSIC
11:30 PM | $5 Tickets
The B-Side @ Neutral Zone

Midnight Movie: *THX 1138*
12 AM | $6 Tickets | State Theatre

AFTERPARTY
The B-Side @ Neutral Zone
11 PM – 2 AM | $5 Admission
FREE FOR PASSHOLDERS

Sa
SATURDAY

Films in Competition 5
(APPROPRIATE FOR AGES 6+)
11 AM | $5 Tickets
Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Films in Competition 6
12:30 PM
Michigan Theater Screening Room

Bruce Baillie Retrospective 2
FILMMAKER IN ATTENDANCE
1 PM
Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Films by Omar Amiralay
3 PM
Michigan Theater Screening Room

Films in Competition 7
3:30 PM
Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

This Our Still Life
FEATURE IN COMPETITION
5 PM | $5 Tickets
Michigan Theater Screening Room

As Above, So Below
FEATURE IN COMPETITION
7 PM
Michigan Theater Screening Room

Films in Competition 8
PAT OLESZKO PERFORMS AT 6:45PM
7:15 PM
Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Palaces of Pity
FEATURE IN COMPETITION
9:15 PM
Michigan Theater Screening Room

Films in Competition 9
9:30 PM
Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Midnight Movie: *THX 1138*
12 AM | $6 Tickets | State Theatre

AFTERPARTY
Red Room @ The Necto
11 PM – 2 AM
PASS & TICKET HOLDERS ONLY

Su
SUNDAY

Films in Competition 10
11 AM
Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

What The Hell Was That?
11 AM | FREE
Michigan Theater Screening Room

Films in Competition 11
1 PM
Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

In Praise of Shadows
JAPANESE AVANT-GARDE FILMS OF THE 1990s & 2000s
1:30 PM
Michigan Theater Screening Room

This Is Not A Film
SPECIAL FEATURE DOCUMENTARY
2 PM | FREE
UMMA, Helmut Stern Auditorium

Two Years At Sea
FEATURE IN COMPETITION
3 PM
Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Quick Billy
Bruce Baillie Retrospective 3
3:30 PM
Michigan Theater Screening Room

AWARDED FILM PROGRAMS

Award Screening 1
6 PM
Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Award Screening 2
8 PM
Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

AFTERPARTY
Tap Room @ Arbor Brewing Company
10 PM – 1 AM | FREE

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Fiftieth. It's been a concept since I first joined the Ann Arbor Film Festival five years ago and a phrase I've heard, uttered, thought about countless times. It's also an opportunity to look to the future as we honor and appreciate the past. Welcome to the 50th Ann Arbor Film Festival – we have arrived.

The Festival has a remarkable history of independent and experimental film exhibition, serving as the oldest of its kind in North America. Since George Manupelli boldly envisioned and embarked on the first edition in 1963, the AAFF has screened more than 5,000 films. We are honored to have George join us again this year, along with other key figures that helped shape the story of the AAFF, such as Pat Oleszko, Ruth Bradley, Rob Ziebell and Vicki Honeyman. We are also pleased to share within these pages a collection of memories, musings and tall tales from a broad set of individuals whose stories intersect significantly with the AAFF (pg. 20).

Our 50th season celebrations started in September 2011 with a monthly retrospective screening series featuring guest artists and curators (pg. 16). Thanks to support from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, we are able to continue these retrospective efforts and present significant films from our five decades of exhibition history. We are honored to welcome legendary avant-garde filmmakers Bruce Baillie, Barbara Hammer, Peter Rose, Phil Solomon and Craig Baldwin for special programs of their work. Additional historic films are presented from artists, including George Kuchar, Karen Aqua, Robert Nelson, Robert Breer, Pat O'Neill, Gunvor Nelson, Gus Van Sant, Greta Snider and many others. In total, more than 60 historic films are included in the 233 films screened at the 50th AAFF.

The focus of the Festival continues to center on films at the forefront of independent and experimental cinema. Our Films in Competition programs, welcome many new artists to the AAFF, such as Simone Rapisarda Casanova with *The Strawberry Tree*, Rei Hayama with *Emblem*, Gabriel Abrantes and Daniel Schmidt with *Palaces of Pity* and Jilian Mayer with *Life and Freaky Times of Uncle Luke*. We also welcome filmmakers returning to the Festival with exciting new works in competition, such as Betzy Bromberg's *Voluptuous Sleep*, Sarah J. Christman's *As Above, So Below*, and Suzan Pitt's *Visitation*.

As part of our 50th Festival celebrations we have expanded the scope of the Festival to engage our community with 50 SCREENS, featuring: major installations by Leighton Pierce and Phil Solomon at University of Michigan Art & Design galleries; group exhibitions at Gallery Project and the Nickels Arcade; interactive works in the Michigan Theater; and installations throughout downtown Ann Arbor (pg. 14). Additionally, the AAFF started significant archival projects in partnership with The Bentley Historical Library and the Ann Arbor District Library (pg. 12). We encourage a visit to the Bentley Library or the AADL's website (aaff.aadl.org) to view the creative pieces that help tell fifty years of the AAFF's story.

I feel fortunate to be a part of this incredible history and supported by a passionately dedicated staff, board of directors, community of artists, film-enthusiasts, supporters, critics, partners, advisors and audience-goers. I look forward to celebrating *The Fiftieth* with you.

Sincerely,

Donald Harrison
Executive Director

AWARD JURORS

Peter Rose

Since 1968, Philadelphia-based artist Peter Rose has made over thirty films, tapes, performances and installations. Many of the early works raise intriguing questions about the nature of time, space, light, and perception and draw upon Rose's background in mathematics and on the influence of structuralist filmmakers. He subsequently became interested in language as a subject and in video as a medium and generated a substantial body of work that played with the feel and form of sense, concrete texts, political satire, oddball performance, and a kind of intellectual comedy. Recent video installations have involved a return to an examination of landscape, time, and vision. Rose has been widely exhibited, both nationally and internationally, having been included in shows at the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Biennial, the Centre Pompidou, the Rotterdam International Film Festival and many more.

Free Presentation
Wednesday 12:30 pm
See Page 38 for Details

Michael Robinson

Michael Robinson (b.1981) is a film and video artist whose work explores the joys and dangers of mediated experience. Borrowing the formal skins of structural film, the emotional cues of pop songs and employing a woozy toggling of public and personal memory, his work strives to cultivate new resonances between seemingly disparate elements, harnessing the surface connotations of specific landscapes, television shows, texts, songs and sounds as psychological triggers, ripe for reconfiguration. Robinson's films and videos have screened internationally in both solo and group shows at a variety of festivals, cinematheques, museuems and galleries. His work has been discussed in publications such as Cinema Scope, Artforum, and Art Papers, and he was listed as one of the top ten avant-garde filmmakers of the 2000's by Film Comment magazine. He was awarded Most Promising Filmmaker at the 45th AAFF in 2007 and is one of the artists at the 2012 Whitney Biennial.

Free Presentation
Thursday 12:30 pm
See Page 50 for Details

Kathy Geritz

Kathy Geritz is a film curator at Pacific Film Archive, where she has worked since 1981. She is co-editor of the recent book, Radical Light: Alternative Film and Video in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1945-2000, and co-curated the accompanying film tour. Her film related activities have included curating the Flaherty Film Seminar in 2002, co-curating an annual program of avant-garde cinema for the San Francisco International Film Festival, and serving as an ongoing pre-selector for the Oberhausen International Short Film Festival. She has served as a juror on numerous grant and film festival panels. She teaches an annual film curating internship at UC Berkeley. She recently programmed the 8th annual Brakhage Center Symposium in March 2012.

Free Presentation
Friday 12:30 pm
See Page 60 for Details

FILMMAKER AWARDS

The Ann Arbor Film Festival is committed to providing direct support to filmmakers. Our 2012 awards competition presents over $22,000 to filmmakers through cash and film stock/processing. Winning an award at the AAFF means not only prestige and financial support, but can also qualify filmmakers for Oscar®-nomination by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in the short film category (qualifying awards: Best of Festival, Best Experimental Film, Best Animation, Best Narrative).

Ken Burns Award for Best of the Festival *$3,000*

Presented to the film of any genre or length that best represents the artistic standards of excellence for the festival. This award is generously provided by influential documentary filmmaker, Ken Burns, a graduate of Ann Arbor's Pioneer High School.

Lawrence Kasdan Award for Best Narrative Film *$1,000*

The narrative film that best makes use of film's unique ability to convey striking and original stories will receive this award distinction. A notable Hollywood filmmaker, Lawrence Kasdan got his start in Ann Arbor at the University of Michigan and continues his connection through support of this festival award.

Chris Frayne Award for Best Animated Film *$1,000*

Recognizing the animated film that delivers the best style, creativity, and content. This award is given in honor of the spirit of Chris Frayne, a key participant in the festival's early years, whose approach to life was reminiscent of his colorful cartoon characters. Special thanks to Ann Arbor's colorful Quack!Media for lead support of this award.

The Barbara Aronofsky Latham Award for Emerging Experimental Video Artist *$1,000*

This award intends to provide support to the most promising video artist at the inception of her/his career. Distributed by the Video Data Bank, the award was conceived by the Aronofsky family to honor the late Barbara Aronofsky Latham, a Chicago-based experimental video artist who passed away in 1984.

Prix DeVarti for Funniest Film *$1,000*

Awarded to the film likely to create the most laughs in the festival. This prize honors the 40-year friendship between Dominick's pub and the Ann Arbor Film Festival, and honors the memory of Dominick and Alice DeVarti.

Gus Van Sant Award for Best Experimental Film *$1,000*

Honoring the film that most successfully showcases the use of experimental processes, forms, and topics. Acclaimed director Gus Van Sant supports this award, as his early short experimental films won awards at the Ann Arbor Film Festival in the 1980s.

Michael Moore Award for Best Documentary Film *$1,000*

The best non-fiction film of the festival will receive this award from documentary filmmaker Michael Moore, who received inspiration from hundreds of films he viewed over the years at the Ann Arbor Film Festival. Proceeds from his film, *Roger and Me*, fund this annual award.

Stan Brakhage Film at Wit's End Award *$1,000*

For a film artist whose work exemplifies the ideals of the individual creating, through deep personal necessity, a revealing and thought-provoking visual expression of formal innovation and integrity.

Kodak/Colorlab Award for Best Cinematography
$3,000 [$1,500 of film plus $1,500 processing]

For the film that demonstrates the highest excellence and creativity in cinematography. The recipient of this award will receive $1,500 worth of 16mm or 35mm film stock from Kodak and $1,500 of film processing from Colorlab, a full-service film laboratory and telecine house since 1973.

Tom Berman Award for Most Promising Filmmaker *$1,000*

This award is intended to support an emerging filmmaker that the Award Jury expects will make a significant contribution to the art of film in the course of his/her filmmaking career. This award is endowed by the Berman family in honor of the memory of Tom Berman, who was a University of Michigan film student, an early festival supporter and close friend to many within the festival community.

AWARDS SCREENINGS

Announcement Sunday, April 1 at 6 pm
When Sunday, April 1 at 6 pm and 8 pm

Where Michigan Theater Main Auditorium
Tickets $10 | $7 Students/Seniors/AAFF Members

Art & Science Award *$750*

This award honors the filmmaker whose work best uses the art form of film and video to explore scientific concepts, research natural phenomena or embrace real world experimentation. Provided by Gil Omenn who seeks to encourage a positive exchange between the arts and sciences.

Peter Wilde Award for Most Technically Innovative Film *$500*

The film which displays the most pioneering, cutting-edge technical innovations will receive this award. Peter Wilde was a long-time projectionist for the festival and master of special effects. This award honors his creativity and pursuit of new techniques.

\aut\FILM Award for Best LGBTQ Film *$500*

This award honors the film that best addresses and gives voice to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Queer (LGBTQ) issues. The \aut\BAR of Ann Arbor contributes this award to promote a diversity of voices that achieve excellence in filmmaking.

Ghostly Award for Best Sound Design *$500*

Given for excellence and originality in sound design, this award is provided by Ghostly International, a multi-platform cultural curator founded (and still located) in Ann Arbor by University of Michigan alumni Sam Valenti IV.

Vimeo Audience Award *$1,000*

Selected by the audience, two awards of $500 will be awarded to the two highest-rated films in competition at this year's festival. Vimeo is proud to award the films deemed most deserving by the Ann Arbor Film Festival audience.

George Manupelli Founder's Spirit Award *$500*

Provided to the filmmaker that best captures the bold and iconoclastic spirt of the founder of the Ann Arbor Film Festival, George Manupelli, whose vision for the festival continues to this day.

The Eileen Maitland Award *$500*

This award is to be given to the film that best addresses women's issues and gives voice to female voices. It was created to honor of the spirit and memory of Eileen Maitland who was a dear friend and long-time supporter of the festival, as well as a patron and practitioner of the arts.

Award for Best International Film *$500*

Granted to the film produced outside of the United States which most strongly wins over our Award Jury. This award is provided by Tios Mexican Cafe, serving Ann Arbor since 1986.

The No Violence Award *$512*

Provided to reward the film that best exemplifies themes and images of peace, whether addressing the topic directly or simply turning the mind toward gentleness. No depictions of weaponry or fighting, human or animal suffering, or destructive activities. Provided by Ann Arbor residents Matthew Graff and Leslie Lawther.

Award for Best Music Video *$500*

Provided to recognize excellence in the art form of music video, which serves as a unique collaborative relationship between musician and film/video maker. This award is supported by Ann Arbor's beloved and independently owned Encore Records, Wazoo Records and Underground Sounds.

Jury Awards *$2,250*

Remaining prize monies that are distributed at the awards jurors' discretion as special recognition for films of distinction and artistic accomplishment.

THANKS TO THE ACADEMY

The Ann Arbor Film Festival would like to acknowledge special grant support of its 50th edition from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to present archival films and programs spanning the Festival's five decades of groundbreaking exhibition history.

The inclusion of important archival and historic films within many programs of the 50th AAFF creates a dialogue between artists of several generations. It also provides audiences with a rich opportunity to better understand the development of modern cinema culture and emergence of independent film.

More than 50 archival and historic films will screen as part of the 50th Festival with Academy support. Works by visiting filmmakers, Craig Baldwin, Barbara Hammer, Phil Solomon and Bruce Baillie, will screen along with influential films by artists including: Chick Strand, George Kuchar, Greta Snider, Gus Van Sant, Janie Geiser, Robert Nelson and Arthur Lipsett.

All Academy supported historic films are denoted and are not eligible for competition awards given during the festival.

ACADEMY AWARD® QUALIFYING

The Ann Arbor Film Festival is recognized as a qualifying film festival for the short film category of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences. A short film that wins the following awards at the AAFF is eligible: Best of Festival, Best Experimental, Best Narrative, Best Animation.

There are currently two dozen qualifying festivals in the U.S. For Academy Awards consideration, a short film that is not more than 40 minutes in running time (including all credits) and which falls into the animated (cel animation, computer animation, stop-motion, clay animation, puppets, pixilation, cutouts, pins, camera multiple pass imagery, kaleidoscopic effects and drawing on the film frame itself for example) or live-action film categories, can qualify in one of two ways:

1. The film must have been publicly exhibited for paid Los Angeles County for a run of at least three consecutive days (no fewer than two screenings a day) or
2. The film must have participated in a "recognized" competitive film festival and must have won the best-in-category award.

Furthermore, short films in either category must be composite prints in 16mm, 35mm or 70mm, in English or English subtitles. Television or internet exhibition anywhere does not disqualify a film, provided such exhibition occurs after its Los Angeles theatrical release, or after receiving its festival award. Documentaries, previews, trailers or advertising films are excluded.

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$3,000

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$1,000 – $1,500

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MEMBERSHIP / SUPPORT Experience all the Ann Arbor Film Festival has to offer by becoming an AAFF member! All members receive discounts and tickets to the 50th festival. Members can also receive our new DVD collection, festival passes, access and recognition.

Core Benefits

- Invitation to exclusive member only screening salons
- Priority mailing of festival program calendar to your home
- Our monthly newsletter with special offers, exclusive content and news of the festival

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Casa Dominick's

Filmmakers' Brunch
Selma Cafe

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UM School of Art & Design
UM Slusser Gallery
Work Gallery – Ann Arbor

Extra Thank You's George Manupelli, Bruce Baker & Genie Wolfson, Myrna Jean Rugg & Rick Cronn, Theodore Kennedy, Ruth Bardenstein, Leighton Pierce, Wendy Lawson, David Gatten, Julie Murray, Ruth Bradley, Mike Hoolboom, Cynthia Nicely, Constance Crump, Marilyn Brakhage, Elvira Feldman, Heidi Kumao, Stephen Connolly, Julie Crichton, Holly Hughes, Jeremy Wheeler, Shelley Salant, Marcy Saude, Jack Cronin, Olivia May, Lou Glorie, Alice Anne Parker Severson, Jeff Scher, Amanda Scotese, Omari Rush, Jill McDonough, Vicki Honeyman, Rob Ziebell, Mark Nielsen, Jamie Lausch Vander Broek, Scott MacDonald, Jill Godmillow, Michael Sicinski, Chris Stults (Wexner Center for the Arts); John Powers (University of Wisconsin-Madison, WFF); Sarah Deragon (Frameline); Dan Herwitz (UM Institute for the Humanities); Jane Ozanich (UM Center for Japanese Studies); Shawn Guthrie (Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences); Neel Hajra (Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation); Gregory Tom, Colin Blakely (Eastern Michigan University); Lee Doyle (University of Michigan); Jonathan Marlow (Fandor); Ralph McKay (Sixpack Film Americas and Film Bank New World); Rich DeVarti (Casa Dominick's); Len Coombs (Bentley Historical Library); Rebecca Meyers (Studio7Arts); Mark Johnson (Harvard Film Archive); Phil Hallman, Stashu Kybartas, Johannes van Moltke, Terri Sarris, Alan Young, Chris McNamara (UM Screen Arts & Cultures); Mike Sperlinger, Gil Leung (LUX Artists' Moving Image); Russ Collins, Amanda Bynum, Brian Hunter, Lee Berry (Michigan Theater); Mohammad Shawky Hassan (ArteEast); Steve Emshwiller (VGKids); Andrea Slovakova (Jihlava International Documentary Film Festival); Laurie Blakeney (Ann Arbor School of Yoga); Mads Mikkelsen and Niklas K. Engstrøm (CPH:DOX); Scott Northrup (College for Creative Studies); Cindy Keefer (Center for Visual Music); Mary Scherer and Tom Colley (Video Data Bank); Ross Lipman(UCLA Film & Television Archive); Amy Nesbitt (Ann Arbor Summer Festival); Jeremy Rigsby, Oona Mosna (Media City); Markus Nornes (UM Screen Arts & Cultures/Center for Japanese Studies); Larissa Fan (Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Center); Ben Hernandez (Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit); Mona Nagai (Pacific Film Archive); Amy Cantu, Andrew Sullivan, Eli Neurberger (Ann Arbor District Library); Mark Toscano, May Haduong (Academy Film Archive); Dominic Angerame, Linda Scobie (Canyon Cinema); Mark McElhatten, Gavin Smith (Views from the Avant Garde, NYFF); Chrisstina Hamilton (UM Penny Stamps Speakers Series); Len Coombs (Bentley Historical Library at UM); Bryan Rogers (UM School of Art & Design); Michaela Grill (Sixpack Film); Eric Farrell (327 Braun Ct.); Keith Orr, Martin Contreras (\aut\BAR); Andrea Picard (Wavelengths, TIFF); Lisa Iacobellis (Rare Books and Manuscripts, OSU Libraries) Jane Gutteridge (National Film Board of Canada); Ruth Slavin (UMMA)

BEYOND THE FESTIVAL

Our Mission

To support bold, visionary filmmakers, advance the art form of film and new media, and engage communities with remarkable cinematic experiences.

Eye to Eye – AAFF's Media Literacy Program

The Ann Arbor Film Festival launched its new Eye to Eye media literacy program in September 2011 thanks to support from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation. Filmmaker C. Jacqueline Wood, who developed the program and serves in the role of Educator, has conducted more than 30 free workshops in nine high schools within Washtenaw County, including: Huron, Skyline, Community, Ann Arbor Tech, Willow Run, Saline, Dexter, Ypsilanti and Chelsea. Students learn about film as an art form, with creative possibilities beyond commercial or entertainment content. In some workshops they even participate with hands-on 16mm filmmaking. Participating students are invited to attend the 50th AAFF to further enrich their experience of independent, artist-made cinema.

DVD Collection Vol. 4

A collection of eight films from the 49th Ann Arbor Film Festival is now available for purchase, featuring award-winning and favorite short films:

RAY'S BIRD'S Deborah Stratman | Chicago, IL | 7 min

LITTLE BROTHER Callum Cooper | London, England | 7 min

I TOUCHED HER LEGS Eva Marie Rødbro | Denmark | 15 min

BROAD CHANNEL Sarah J. Christman | Brooklyn, NY | 13 min

MIRAMARE Michaela Müller | Croatia/Switzerland | 8 min

IN THE ABSENSE OF LIGHT, DARKNESS PREVAILS Fern Silva | USA/Brazil | 13 min

THE FLORESTINE COLLECTION Helen Hill, completed by Paul Gailiunas | 31 min

28.IV.81 (DESCENDING FIGURES) | Christopher Harris | Oviedo, FL | 3 min

Archives

The AAFF is proud to announce the creation of two archives with two Ann Arbor institutions: The Historic Bentley Library and The Ann Arbor District Library. A paper archive was started at The Historic Bentley Library where it will be housed for the public to use for years to come. The Ann Arbor District Library has digitized all of the Festival's archival materials and made them free and available for the public to browse on their website.

Tour

The 49th AAFF Traveling Tour visited 30 cities in the U.S., Canada and England with award-winning and select short films from the 2011 Festival. All filmmakers participating in the tour receive income for each screening of their work, providing direct support to independent artists. To learn more about the AAFF traveling tour, please visit: www.aafilmfest.org/tour

Albuquerque, NM
ASUNM SOUTHWEST FILM CENTER
Nov. 3–6, 2011

Bar Harbor, ME
COLLEGE OF THE ATLANTIC
Oct 17, 2011

Boston, MA
THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART BOSTON
Apr. 29, 2012

Bowling Green, OH
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY
Sept. 13, 2011

Brooklyn, NY
UNIONDOCS
Feb. 25, 2012

Charlottesville, VA
THE BRIDGE
Feb. 23, 2012

Chicago, IL
COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO
Nov. 14, 2011

SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO
Nov. 15, 2011

Cleveland, OH
CLEVELAND INSTITUTE OF ART CINEMATHEQUE
Sept. 24, 2011

Detroit, MI
MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART DETROIT
Nov. 19, 2011

Durham, NC
DUKE UNIVERSITY
Feb. 7, 2011

Farmington Hills, MI
OAKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Dec. 2, 2011

Glen Arbor, MI
LAKE STREET STUDIOS ARTS COLLAGE
Jul. 31, 2011

Grosse Pointe, MI
GROSSE POINTE PUBLIC LIBRARY
Mar. 8, 2012

Hamilton, NY
COLGATE UNIVERSITY
Feb. 28, 2012

Houston, TX
AURORA PICTURE SHOW
Mar. 2, 2012

Keene, NH
KEENE STATE COLLEGE
Nov. 29 & Dec. 1, 2011

Knoxville, TN
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE–KNOXVILLE
Oc. 7–8 & Nov. 4, 2011

Los Angeles, CA
LOS ANGELES FILMFORUM
Aug. 7 and Dec. 11, 2011

Milwaukee, WI
UWM UNION THEATRE
Feb. 14 & 28, 2012

Monroe, MI
MONROE PUBLIC LIBRARY
Dec. 14, 2011

Montgomery, AL
CAPRI THEATRE
Aug. 13, 2011

Montreal, Canada
CINEMASPACE AT THE SEGAL CENTRE FOR PERFORMING ARTS *Jan. 19 & 22, 2012*

Northfield, MN
ST. OLAF COLLEGE
Feb. 23, 2012

Oberlin, OH
OBERLIN COLLEGE
Feb. 15, 2012

Ormskirk, England
EDGE HILL UNIVERSITY
Feb. 1, 2012

Philadelphia, PA
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS *Feb. 9, 2012*

Pittsburgh, PA
PITTSBURGH FILMMAKERS
Oct. 1, 3–4, 2011

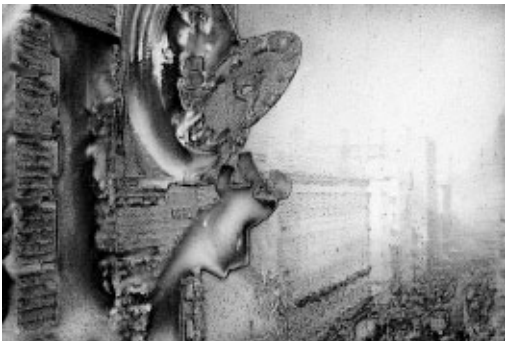
Providence, RI
RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN *Nov. 9 and 30, 2011*

Traverse City, MI
STATE THEATRE
Nov. 27, 2011

Webster Groves, MO
THE WEBSTER UNIVERSITY FILM SERIES
Oct. 9, 2011

50 SCREENS FOR 50 YEARS

The 50th Ann Arbor Film Festival presents 50 SCREENS, a city-wide series of free film, video and moving image installations. Throughout film festival week local, national and international artists will illuminate more than fifty screens in galleries, theaters, shops, outdoor locations and non-traditional screening spaces in Ann Arbor. The intention of this expansion beyond traditional cinema screenings is to more widely engage the public with film as an art form in celebration of Ann Arbor's five decades of groundbreaking exhibition history.



UM SLUSSER GALLERY

Threshold of Peripheral Induction

Leighton Pierce

2012 | 4 Channel Video, 8 Channel Audio

March 26 - April 2

The premiere of Pierce's multi-channel video and audio installation creates an environment for proto-narratives *(see page 62)*.

WORK GALLERY

American Falls

Phil Solomon

2010 | 55 min | 3 Channel Video, 5.1 Audio

March 25 - April 2

Solomon's acclaimed American Falls multi-channel, surround sound installation "is a magisterial, meticulous survey of the promise and failure of a cracked American dream." *(see page 69)*

MICHIGAN THEATER

Wed-Fri : noon-midnight
Sat/Sun : 10:30am-midnight

Exquisite Motion Corpse

Martin Thoburn & Chris Sandon

2012 | 4 Channel Video & iPad

LOBBY | March 28 - April 1

Empire

Phil Solomon

2010 | HD video

ADJCENT TO THE SCREENING ROOM
March 28 - April 1

[bike-cycle]

Jodie Mack

2012 | Zoetrope

MEZZANINE | March 28 - April 1

Urban Fairy Mini-Theater

Fairyologist: Jonathan B. Wright
Video: Heidi Kumao

2012 | Mixed Media, Video

THEATER ENTRANCE
March 27 - indefinite

The NeverEnd Story (1: Memento Mori)

Alex Moeller

2011 | Video

BOX OFFICE SCREEN
March 28 - April 1

UR Videohead

Rick Cronn

2010 | Video : Taconite, Coke, Limestone

LOBBY | March 28 - April 1

NICKELS ARCADE

Document

Bill Brown

2012 | 16mm/Laser Printer Transfer to Video

BEAGLE BRAIN | March 19 - April 1

When You Arrive, Let Me Know Where You Are Going

Adrianne Finelli & Dan F. Friedlaender

2012 | HD and Cellphone Video

PARRISH FRAMING AND ART
March 19 - April 1

Areas in Manhattan

Sean Curtis Patrick

2012 | HD Video

WENDY | March 19 - April 1

Brother Can You Spare a Station

Gary Schwartz

2011 | Video Installation

MAISON EDWARDS TOBACCO SHOP
March 19 - April 1

One Gif Compositions

Evan Roth

2012 | HTML and Found Animated Gifs

VAN BOVEN CLOTHING
March 19 - April 1

Reckoning 3 (sample)

Kent Lambert

2012 | Video

VAN BOVEN SHOES | March 19 - April 1

Unsubscribe #2 : All Eyes on the Silver Screen

Jodie Mack

2010 | 16mm to DV

UNIVERSITY FLOWER SHOP
March 19 - April 1

GALLERY PROJECT

Spatial Shift Exhibition

Tu-Sa : noon–9pm

Su : noon–4pm Mon : closed

On Location

Chris McNamara

2011 | Video, Mixed Media

March 7 - April 15

I Could Walk Forever (If There's Nowhere For Me To Sit)

Scott Northrup

2012 | Multi-channel Video, Dimensions Variable

March 7 - April 15

Thirteen Views in Arid Lands

Potter-Belmar Labs

2011 | Digital Video

March 7 - April 15

Spline Describing a Phone

Jen Proctor

2012 | iPhone, Pico Projector, and Fog

March 7 - April 15

Map of Forgotten Places

Kyle Kramer

2012 | 3D Video, 5.1 Surround Sound

March 7 - April 15

OTHER LOCATIONS

#43.3, Lichenometry

Joost Rekveld

2012 | Video

BURTON BELL TOWER
March 27 - April 1

I Will Always Love You

C. Jacqueline Wood

2012 | Multi-Channel Video

ENCORE RECORDS | March 9 - April 1

Dream House

Margaret Parker

2011 | Video and Recycled T-Shirts

MARK'S CARTS | March 27 - April 1
Tu-Sa : 12pm-7pm
Fri : noon-midnight
Su : 12pm-4pm

Ann Arbor Stripped Bare By Her Film Festival, Even

Gary Schwartz

2012 | Zoetrope Installation

SILVIO'S | March 7 - April 1

You Have a Computer in You

Aaron Valdez

2012 | 16mm Found Footage, 2 Channel Video

UM SHAPIRO UNDERGRADUATE LIBRARY
March 19 - April 1

Joints 4tet for Ensemble

Charles Atlas

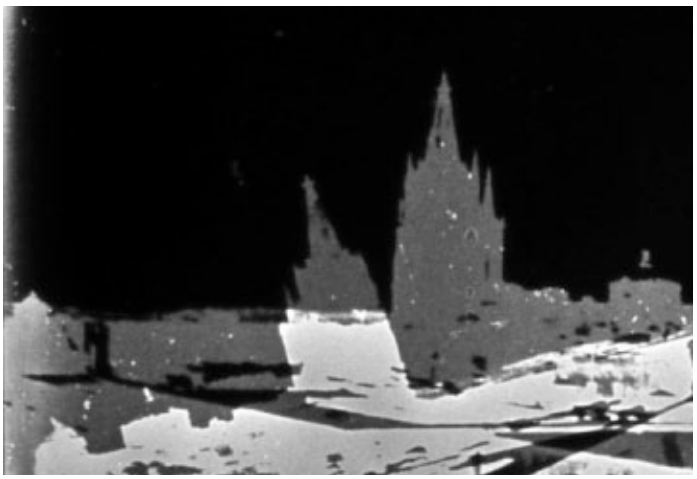
2011 | 10 Channel Video, 4 Channel Audio

UM INSTITUTE FOR THE HUMANITIES
February 15 - March 31
M-F : 9am-5pm | Sat : 11am-3pm

See PAGE 128 for map of installation locations. For descriptions and more details go to AAFILMFEST.ORG/50

UNDERWRITING SUPPORT BY : SCHOOL OF ART & DESIGN ROMAN J. WITT residency program

RETROSPECTIVE IN REVIEW



From September 2011 through February 2012 the Ann Arbor Film Festival presented five retrospective programs of films from the Festival's five decades of groundbreaking exhibition. Special guest curators were invited to select and present films from the more than 5,000 titles exhibited over the AAFF's history. The series was supported by the Institute for the Humanities at the University of Michigan and presented in partnership with the Michigan Theater.

SEPTEMBER 22, 2011

Filmmaker Alice Anne Parker Severson screens several of her works and guest curates additional films.

I Change I Am The Same
1969 | 1 min | 16mm

Riverbody
1970 | 7 min | 16mm
Screened at 8th AAFF in 1970

Near The Big Chakra
1971 | 17 min | 16mm
Screened at 10th AAFF in 1972

Introduction to the Humanities
1972 | 5 min | 16mm

The Struggle of the Meat
1974 | 5 min | 16mm
Screened at 12th AAFF in 1974

The Off-Handed Jape... And How to Pull It Off
Robert Nelson and William T. Wiley
1967 | 9 min | 16mm

Take-Off
Gunvor Nelson
1972 | 10 min | 16mm
Screened at 11th AAFF in 1973

Best of May, 1968
Jay Lash Cassidy
1973 | 3 min | 16mm
Screened at 11th AAFF in 1973

OCTOBER 20, 2011

Guest Curator: Film preservationist for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Mark Toscano

Dialectic Definitions
Dana Hodgedon
1977 | 8 min | 16mm
Screened at 16th AAFF in 1978

Grain Graphics
Dana Plays
1978 | 6 min | 16mm
Screened at 17th AAFF in 1979

Iota
Carolyn Faber
1998 | 6 min | 16mm
Screened at 38th AAFF in 2000

Roseblood
Sharon Couzin
1974 | 8 min | 16mm
Screened at 13th AAFF in 1975

Xfilm
John Schofill
1968 | 14 min | 16mm
Screened at 7th AAFF 1969

What Ignites Me, Extinguishes Me
François Miron
1990 | 9 min | 16mm
Screened at 28th AAFF in 1990

The Man Who Could Not See Far Enough
Peter Rose
1981 | 33 min | 16mm
Screened at 20th AAFF in 1982

NOVEMBER 30, 2011

Guest Curator:
Filmmaker David Gatten

Time Out For Sport

Paul Winkler
1996 | 18 min | 16mm
Screened at 34th AAFF in 1996

Filter Beds

Guy Sherwin
1998 | 9 min | 16mm
Screened at 38th AAFF in 2000

If You Stand With Your Back to the Slowing of the Speed of Light in Water

Julie Murray
1997 | 17 min | 16mm
Screened at 38th AAFF in 2000

Devotio Moderna

Michelle Fleming
1993 | 9 min | 16mm
Screened at 33rd AAFF in 1995

Landscape with the Fall of Icarus

Christopher Sullivan
1994 | 24 min | 16mm
Screened at the 32nd AAFF in 1994

JANUARY 25, 2012

Guest Curator:
Filmmaker Mike Hoolboom

Asparagus

Suzan Pitt
1979 | 19 min | 35mm
Screened at 17th AAFF in 1979

Meditations on Revolution Part One: Lonely Planet

Robert Fenz
1997 | 12 min | 16mm | Silent
Screened at 37th AAFF in 1999

Al Neil: A Portrait

David Rimmer
1979 | 40 min | 16mm
Screened at the 18th AAFF in 1980

FEBRUARY 22, 2011

Forest of Bliss

Robert Gardner
1986 | 90 min | 35mm
This influential landmark feature documentary screened at the 24th AAFF.

50*FORWARD*

In an effort to sustain the AAFF beyond its 50th season, we launched the 50*FORWARD* campaign in summer 2011. This included a public fundraising initiative with videos from filmmakers, an online auction, special events and archival projects. Earlier in the year a small group of AAFF stalwarts also started an endowment fund to help secure the Festival's future. Thank you to everyone who contributed to our 50th season through planning, ideas, inspiration and direct support.

50th Honorary Committee

Ken Bawcom
Ken Burns
Constance Crump and Jay Simrod
Martha Darling and Gil Omen
Peter and Rita Heydon
Vicki Honeyman
George Manupelli
Christen Lien McArdle
Myrna Jean Rugg and Richard Cronn

50th Advisory Committee

Bruce Baker
Ruth Bardenstein
Tom Bray
Barbara Brown
Russ Collins
Chrisstina Hamilton
Dan Herwitz
Theodore Kennedy
Heidi Kumao
Wendy Lawson
Mark Toscano

SILENT AUCTION

After a half-decade hiatus the popular AAFF Silent Auction has returned for the 50th Ann Arbor Film Festival!

The Silent Auction takes place upstairs at the Michigan Theater, starting March 27th and closing on the final day of the festival, April 1st.

With nearly 100 items to choose from, the AAFF Silent Auction will offer a fantastic range of items from filmmakers, artists and local businesses. All winning bids support the Ann Arbor Film Festival, a mission-driven non-profit organization.

THE 50TH AAFF SILENT AUCTION DONORS INCLUDE

We would ilke to thank our generous donors for this year's auction.

16 Hands Gallery

Advanced Therapies Massage- Jane Anderson

Al Dente Pasta

Andrew Taylor

Ann Arbor Brewers Guild

Ann Arbor Cooks!

WQKL-FM
Ann Arbor's 107one

ARTSearch

Barbara Brown

Barbara Hammer

Baron Glassworks

Beaded Iris

Big City Small World Bakery

Bill Plympton

Bona Sera Supper Club

Café Zola

Chrissy Deiger

Christopher Taylor, Esq.; Hooper Hathaway, P.C.

Coleman Miller

Craig Baldwin

Crazy Wisdom Bookstore & Tea Room

Danny Mooney

Don Hertzfeldt

Eddie Rubin

Elevated Press

Emily Milton

Encore Records

Everyday Wines

Fantasy Attic

FOUND

FOUND Magazine

Frances C Burgos

Geoff George

Glass Shack Studio

Heavenly Metal, by Vicki Honeyman

Jeff Scher

Jeremy Wheeler

Jim Burnstein

Jim Roth

Jodie Mack

Joey Ostrander

Juicy Kitchen

Katchen Schibilsky

Legacy Land Conservancy

Leland Austin

Leslie Sobel

Lisa Gottlieb

Lisa Steichmann

Logan

Maker Works

Main Street Ventures

Margaret Parker

Miette Sweets

Melange

Myrna Jean Rugg

Pacific Rim

Pat Oleszko

Paul Hickman/Urban Ashes

Photo Studio Group

Produce Station

Radius Garden, LLC

Rebecca Lambers, Couture

Relax Station

Russ Collins

Scott Lankton

Selma Cafe

Sherri Green

Sky Pics
(by John Sullivan)

Sweet Heather Anne

The Ark

The Purple Rose

Vault of Midnight

Zingerman's Community of Businesses

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Institute for the Humanities

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ttm

the ann arbor chronicle

Recollections, Myths and Half-truths

The scent of yellowing paper and old cardboard permeated the festival office this past summer as we sorted, identified and often paused to read the files, admired the posters & tickets (along with some original paste-ups) and perused past festival catalogs which had been stored for decades in various boxes and basements. Much of this material went to the Bentley Historical Library, which now houses an archive for the Festival. Prior to reaching the Bentley, many of these documents were scanned and made available online in a digital collection through the Ann Arbor District Library. Of course, the real joy of these five decades exists as lived history. This is most revealed through the particular experiences of the individuals that have both shaped and have been shaped by this ongoing AAFF experiment. We asked a few people – filmmakers, festival organizers, supporters, loyalists, and viewers – to send us some of their favorite AAFF memories and musings. By no means is this definitive, or necessarily even accurate, but it is a start. We hope you enjoy.

FULL BODY EMERSION

BY DAVID GATTEN

I was born in Ann Arbor in 1971, although I did not start making films for almost 25 years. But by the time I did start, I knew I wanted to show them at the Ann Arbor Film Festival. Imagine my pleasure when my first film was accepted in 1996. I travelled from Chicago where I was in grad school and had an amazing week. I started bringing my fellow students to the Ann Arbor Film Festival in 1997, which was also the year my film HARDWOOD PROCESS was awarded the Best of the Festival.

For the next several years, when I was finishing my MFA and then teaching at SAIC, it was mostly grad students who came with me, maybe 5-8 folks and we stayed wherever we could. It was in 1998 that I started the "What The Hell Was That?" panels at the invitation of Vicki Honeyman, following my being accosted(!) in the lobby by an audience member who demanded to know from me "What the Hell was that?!" after seeing my film WHAT THE WATER SAID. These panels became places for my students, other film students and locals to meet and discuss the particularly far out works from the night before.

From 1999 until 2005 I brought 18-28 students a year to the AAFF from Ithaca College. We stayed each year at the Lamp Post Inn. Wake-up call was for 9am. A group breakfast each morning at Angelo's was followed by open student screenings at Noon in the Screening Room, followed by the Jury shows, the Competition shows, etc in the main theater, until usually around midnight. Then we all went back to the Lamp Post and took a 30 minute break. At around 1:00am all the students would assemble in my hotel room - along with visiting filmmakers from around the country who had shown their works that night. We would then systematically go_through the 25-30 films shown that day and discuss each one in the order we saw them, with special attention to the works of any filmmakers present with us. Discussion usually went until around 5:00am, then the students would "unwind" until 6:00ish, then wake-up call again at 9:00am. It went like this, every day, for the full six days of the festival.

This "full body emersion" experience became somewhat legendary with the students after a few years, to the point where I had so many interested students that I had them submit application essays to go on the trip. Many of my filmmaker friends are of course teachers and they saw this whole phenomenon - and some decided to make the plunge. Instructors from Boston, Gainesville, Chicago, Milwaukee and Toronto started to bring their students to join mine, starting in 2002. We had quite a thing going for a while!

Eventually, I moved from Ithaca to Brooklyn to teach Cooper Union and so those golden Ithaca <--> Ann Arbor years came to a close. I'm a bit too old now for the 21-hour-a-day schedule we kept back in those days, but I do hope to bring some of my Duke University students up to the Festival in coming years. I found it one of the greatest teaching experiences of my career and I am looking forward to the chance to pass along the experience to another generation of students. Happy Birthday to the Ann Arbor Film Festival!

David Gatten has attended the AAFF for more than two decades as a filmmaker, visiting professor and 45th Festival juror.

THE PLEASURES OF BEING YOU

BY MIKE HOOLBOOM

When I was in film school, there were only two real cities in America. The first of course was New York City, this was the place where all ideas came from. And the second great city of the United States? That of course was Ann Arbor, Michigan, which hosted the most important event in the cinematic universe. I'm speaking of course about the Ann Arbor Film Festival. And I'm not only referring the legendary green room orgies, the all night reefer sprees, the ageless staff that seemed to need not even a moment's sleep during the festival's hurricane of pictures. What impressed us about the Festival was that the most arcane and obscure and impossibly too long and bewildering movies and therefore the most important and significant moments of motion picture history (which was the only part of history we were interested in then) could actually be shown in a real movie theatre. And the audience wouldn't be young, wannabe avant garde hopefuls with bad haircuts and a right hand that permanently twitched if there wasn't a beer to hold it down. No, these were real people, in fact, these were The People. This was The People coming home.

While folks all over the world were cueing up to see expensive American movies, here in Ann Arbor the future of movie going had already happened – or so it seemed to us Canadians, from the comfortable distance that the border afforded. You had already entered what we thought of as the next phase. We thought of experimental movies like sushi or thin crust pizza or vibrators or bike lanes. If people would only give it a taste, give it a try, they would leave behind the superheroes and action figures forever. And once the pictures changed, then everything would change.

The Ann Arbor Film Festival looked like science fiction to us, in part because of the movies, that looked like the future of cinema, but mostly because of you. Because you kept showing up, year after year, filling all these seats. And it seemed that you were showing up because of the most politically dangerous reason of all. The reason that would eventually undermine every CIA wet dream and imperial slaughter, or so we imagined at the time. When we came here for the first time, we looked at your faces in wonder, I have to admit it, we came for the movies, but we spent most of our time looking at you, looking at your slack jawed, open eyed faces, soaking in these difficult emulsions. Because what we saw confirmed our deepest hopes. That you had come for pleasure, and not out of duty. And armed with those new pleasures, there was no doubt that we would bring down the Pentagon and arrest Sheriff Arpaio. We would end the remnants of slavery and the apartheid state hangovers. We would bring equality to every gender and invent three new ones. We would take politics back from the politicians and we would do it by legalizing everything that made us feel good. It was our pleasure that could no longer be contained. We would expand our pleasures until the system simply burst and collapsed. It was that simple, it was that complicated. We would watch these impossible movies, with their plotless ruminations on light, and we would learn to look into each other's faces again, and find them more interesting than anything on television. We would broaden the spectrum of our joy and our love, and these movies would show us the way. They would demonstrate the secret life of trees, the infinity of a nose, the view out a window. They would vault us past the armour of our preferences, of our old standards of beauty, of what was acceptable, of our own moral orders, and it would make us soft and accepting, even when we faced the most difficult moments of our own lives. Especially when we faced the most difficult moments of our own lives. These movies challenged us to open and to keep on opening and to keep on loving, until we had untied every knot, until we had unearthed everything inside and outside of us that said no. Until we had lived every revolution.

What can I say? We were young. The Wizard of Oz lived in the Emerald City. But the Wizards of the avant-garde lived in Ann Arbor, specifically, in the Michigan Theater, once each year, in the spring, when everything was beginning again.

Mike Hoolboom has screened his films in fourteen editions of the Ann Arbor Film Festival, beginning in 1988. He was a juror for the 37th AAFF.

BEST JOB IN THE WORLD: DIRECTOR OF THE ANN ARBOR FILM FESTIVAL

BY VICKI HONEYMAN

Festival week was great, no doubt about it, but for me, the apex of the AAFF was the screening process. That was the film festival. As a group, 7 people versed in independent and experimental film took on the task of looking at every entry. In its entirety. Screened on a Pageant projector, projected onto a classroom pull-down screen. This took place in the festival office on E. Ann St., in the backroom of my haircutting shop where for years the two jobs kept me and the Ann St. storefront utterly alive.

Every night, 5 nights a week for at least 7 weeks, we gathered to screen the entries on that trusty old Pageant. Crowded together in our small office that was full of bins of 16mm films, office equipment, and general film fest paraphernalia, making for a cozy and overheated space.

After I'd hung up my haircutting apron at 6pm, everyone arrived from their workdays and found their chosen place to sit. First we discussed who was delivering dinner that night (local restaurants, friends, and screener Ken Bawcom provided our nightly meals, saving us precious time), looked over our screener sheets, and then turned off the lights to get the films rolling.

That was how we spent our winters: this intimate group, some of whom were friends, some of whom wound up marrying, some of whom we wanted to kill at times, all of whom were there for the exact same reason: to get to watch every film entered and to determine what would represent that year's submissions.

We trudged forward, never counting the weeks or days, until we'd seen every entry. When spring bulbs were just beginning to pop through the snow, we'd find ourselves done. Voila! Without taking a break, we then forged through our democratic voting process, with the highest number of votes being in the running. Films were discussed at length. Fierce arguments would ensue. Emphatic pleas that such-and-such a film was the best of the fest or an all-time favorite — eliciting emotions we probably still aren't able to talk about. We took it 500% seriously to select those films that were the strongest representations of that year's entries and were worthy of being programmed in the Ann Arbor Film Festival.

I miss it. Watching the films. Getting to follow makers works over the years and discovering new filmmakers. The relationships developed with a number of filmmakers. I especially miss getting to see their new work, hear or watch their stories on screen, and watch them grow through their art.

I miss programming. When I took over the festival, and during my years as Director, the programs weren't categorized. Instead, every program was a mix of genre, subject, image, feeling, sound, reaction. After I had each program determined, a few of us would look at each evening's show and check, film to film, to make sure no film was followed by a similar look, subject, attitude, genre. From serious to humorous, educational to painful, thought-provoking to downright silly, black and white to color, found sound to sync sound, silent to musical, musical to grating, documentary to animation, experimental to narrative. Every film that followed the previous was completely unique in every way.

I had the best job in the world. I don't miss the 14-hour days and not seeing my friends and family for the entire winter, but I was fortunate to have been the Festival Director while 16mm film was vibrant. I treasure having had the opportunity to screen those thousands of entries and to have had impact on the careers and successes of many filmmakers. I loved my job.

Now, 10 years after my departure, I am proud to have made it possible for the festival to celebrate its 50th year.

Vicki Honeyman was AAFF Director for the 26th – 40th Festivals and was actively involved for many years prior.

NOT ANOTHER OSCAR SPEECH

BY CONSTANCE CRUMP

There are no Oscar speeches at the Ann Arbor Film Festival, but if there were, this would be mine.

Since 1969, I've missed it only twice. Countless happy hours – and a few excruciating ones – have kept me coming back to view bizarre films of every description. Total immersion is the only way to go – miss one show and your only chance to view many of these rarities is gone.

So many memories: in the early days, it took a will of iron to persevere through three shows a night in Lorch Hall's spartan auditorium. Often, the last reel wrapped up long after midnight. The remaining few festival-goers staggered out into the night at 2am or 3am.

Pat Oleszko kept us coming back the next night, despite exhaustion. What would she do – and wear – next? See for yourself this coming Saturday night. The original spirit of the AAFF will burn brightly on the Michigan Theater's stage when she appears.

When the AAFF moved to the beautiful Michigan Theater, festival life became much more tolerable – not only because the seats are comfortable but also because the schedule stepped back to two shows a night. And don't forget the fabulous popcorn.

Over time, the tickets have evolved from a stapled batch of flapping paper – one per show – to today's sleek lanyard and tag. The packrats at my house have accumulated a pile of all ticket styles, including the rare JFK assassination series from the early 70s. AAFF graphics themes often wandered far from the cinema arts in those days. A public archive is now available for viewing at the Bentley Library.

My deepest appreciation is reserved for the long-suffering directors of the AAFF. They are saints, every one – even the ones I have railed against during their tenures. The AAFF would not have survived without your efforts. Special thanks to Christen Lien, whose incisive reforms brought the AAFF from cult to classic status. Your verve and imagination served us well.

My love and thanks to my posse, the members of The 630 Club. We've hung out together in the historic auditorium of the Michigan for more hours than I care to recall...cinema addiction is a cruel mistress but don't ever say "No."

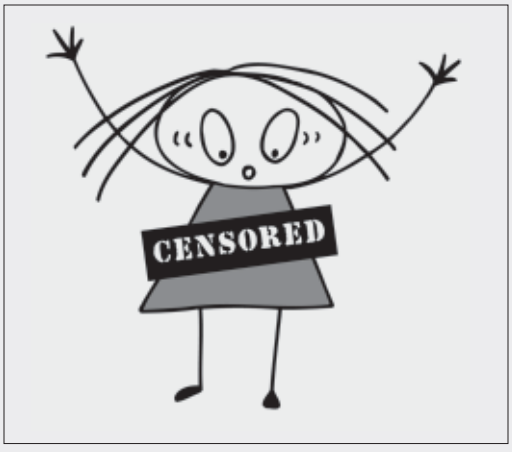
We won't see the 100th AAFF but I sincerely hope it takes place. There is far too much ordinary in the world. The AAFF reminds us that normal can encompass a wide range of realities.

Indie and experimental filmmakers: keep framing the world. We need your alternate visions to help us understand it.

Constance Crump is a writer based in Ann Arbor, MI.

A LETTER TO THE AAFF

BY CHRISTEN LIEN MCARDLE



Boobie Girl image courtesy Brooke Keesling

Dear Ann Arbor Film Festival,

Don't take ~~shit~~ from anybody.
Happy 50th anniversary!!

Yours in Truth, Creativity and Integrity,
Christen Lien McArdle

Christen Lien McArdle was AAFF Executive Director for the 44th – 46th Festivals and Artistic Director for the 47th Festival.

TICKET DESIGN

BY DAN BRUELL

When I arrived on the scene as a Film Video student in the late 70's, the Film Festival was held in the Old Architecture & Design Building (Old A&D), presently Lorch Hall. It was a huge annual event with decorations, posters, special tickets, program slides between each movie and every element was infused with a raw creative energy. The festival was humorous, political, socially aware, and sexy. In my mind it was as close to the Dada and Surrealism movement from the earlier part of the century as anything I had ever seen, had access to, or been immersed in.

In those days the film festival was largely staffed by students and faculty advisors from the campus film societies; with the core group mostly from Cinema Guild. Films were presented on campus most nights of the week, year 'round. And, I need to digress - as an undergrad I would often stop by Lorch Hall on my way back from studying and pop in to see a movie without any idea what was showing; I knew it would have some relevance or redeeming quality and I was never let down. That trust in the programmers carried over to the film festival even though, as in any film festival, one couldn't possibly like everything.

Having a need and want to belong to this vortex of energy that showcased films throughout the year, and the annual film fest, I became a member of Cinema Guild. I quickly found that my creative energy was in sync with the look and feel of that time. Three of my mentors at that time (although they didn't know they were mentoring me) Rob Ziebell, Reed Lenz and Angelica Pozo welcomed my pursuits and I eased into ever larger projects. Initially designing and hanging flyers for weekly films, designing the semester program on newsprint, and ultimately - for the film festival - taking over the design for tickets. Often during pre-screening some common elements would be revealed and those would be incorporated into the design - bass, possum, toy cars or other references to events leading up to the festival. Aside from the business of identifying which show a ticket was for, the graphic could be anything.

Early AAFF ticket designs

Designed on 11x17 sheets with 6 tickets to a sheet, each ticket needed to stand on its own as a little work of art. Every ticket needed a little party, something akin to Sergio Arogenes' marginal art. I did this for about 10 years or so and for me, this annual public art project, giving to the spirit of the film fest, was incredibly gratifying. Happy 50th Ann Arbor Film Festival !!!

Dan Bruell was actively involved in the AAFF for two decades in various roles, participated twice as a filmmaker and has been projecting films for the Festival and the Michigan Theater for many years.

GET IT! GET IT! GET IT!

BY KEN BAWCOM

The Comp Film was already a tradition when I started screening in 1989. Back then, the Screening Committee met as a group, five to seven nights a week. We watched every submission - all on 16mm film - projected on a screen. We watched together, we ate together, we went out together, we became a family. We had a 16mm Bolex, single frame shutter release cable attached, pointed at the screen. The object of the Comp Film was to capture a few frames of every film submitted.

The shooting honors fell to a single screener every year. Of course the designee snapped frames that interested them. But they also obliged others in our tight-knit family of screeners by snapping frames to urgent cries of "Get it! Get it! Get it!" from screener-siblings struck by a few frames of film. Sometimes, the desired frames were actually captured.

If we liked a film, and particularly if it was long, a dozen or more frames might be shot, sometimes two or three frames in rapid succession. Even if we didn't like a film, we shot a few frames, sometimes urgently, as the film was ending. I think that some people on the trigger tried to remember the last frames shot, and watched for frames in the next film that might have some sort of a connection. For others, I guess it was just what caught their eyes. At the end of screening, we sometimes had a few frames left. Those were exposed in the Festival office, often with glimpses of the screeners.

One year, shooting duty fell to me. Of course I took the usual "Get it!" requests. But, I wanted a modus operandi. We often commented that every year some image or object seemed to recur from film to film. Not in all films, of course, but in a lot of them. It might be pigeons. It might be scarves, balloons, or falling leaves. Every year seemed to have its own theme. Of course you'd have to be well into screening before it became apparent. Yet I wanted to try to capture that theme, without knowing it from the start. I don't recall the theme I shot. I do recall feeling moderately successful, and having great fun catching those frames!

What do Comp Films look like? Stark, intense and very fast, of course. I'd say they even seemed apocalyptic, building like crescendos. That was appropriate. They were shown at the end of the Festival, after the films in competition. A searing coda of all that had come before, and more. I miss them.

Ken Bawcom started attending the AAFF in 1967, served on the Screening Committee for 18 years and helped program several editions of the Festival

TIME OUT FOR SPORT

BY DAN GUNNING

I started going to the Ann Arbor Film Festival because Vicki Honeyman told me to. It was 1977. At her suggestion, I attended all the screenings that year and I've been hooked ever since. A decade later I moved to San Francisco and thought I might not need the festival anymore, but the convenience of having the greatest 100 films of the year carefully selected and showcased in a single week drew me back, so I've been flying in and going to every show for over 20 years now.

I'm not a filmmaker, film isn't even my primary interest, so there have been times that I've wondered if it was worth all the trouble, but these are usually the best films I see all year, and they're so difficult to see elsewhere. Sometimes I will recall a particularly strong character or image and be surprised to realize it was from a film I had only seen once, a dozen years ago, in the middle of this visual maelstrom of a week. Some filmmaker took his best shot and it stuck.

The most striking epiphany was over a decade ago in the middle of festival week. I wasn't at the Michigan Theater when it happened, I was at my friends house on a weekday morning taking a bath. I remember I was washing my hair, I dipped down below the water level to rinse the soap out of my hair. When I came up, I opened my eyes and looked around the room. The sunlight streamed in through the window and blasted my eyes. I recognized that what I was seeing in those moments of mundane everyday life closely resembled the previous night of revolutionary cutting edge avant garde film. It occurred to me that narrative, Hollywood films are an artificial form of storytelling. It's the abstract experimental films that are the realistic ones. In fact, the most jarring non linear art we ever see pales in comparison to the actual sensory input we are subjected to filter through in every daily life.

Dan Gunning has attended the AAFF for more than 30 years and resides in San Francisco, CA.

IMAGINE THAT

BY GERRY FIALKA

Flash! AAFF incites collective potential for new perception.

The AAFF community of filmmakers and viewers are social engineers of perpetual motion machinery who have musicalized a symphony of cinema, needling somnambulism and actualizing the "abnihilization of the etym" (James Joyce's words for making something out of nothing). The AAFF is a way of seeing the paradoxical exuberance of being through community. Founder George nurtured growth via love, which I felt so deeply at a party to design program graphics as he sang Marlene Dietrich's Falling In Love Again.

I've interviewed many filmmakers for my AAFF history book. When I asked Jay Rosenblatt about Chris Marker's influence, he said that what really inspired him was how he imagined how Marker made Sans Soleil.

Craig Baldwin imagined that when he first got to Ann Arbor for the Festival the MC5 would be kickin' out the jams on the streets in raucous righteous revolution.

I imagined that the screening of Willard Small's controversial Disco Dog would cause riots in the lobby of the Michigan Theater. Small radically combined Un Chien Andalou and bloody Vietnam execution footage. It had previously flipped viewers out at the 8mm Festival, so I encouraged him to blow it up to 16mm.

Who could imagine?...

Dental hygiene films causing dilemmas.

Fish hooks taped onto celluloid.

George Manupelli, Woody Sempliner, and Ruth Bradley; photo by Rob Ziebell

Iconic hippie stripper Pat Olesko blending performance art, costume design and live interaction with her filmic self.

The Velvet Underground, Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen, Blue Gene Tyranny, Friends Roadshow, Arwulf and my wife Suzy Williams tearing the roof off the sucker as pre-show acts. Learning from Frank Mouris that Marshall McLuhan's pard Tony Schwartz played a big role in the success of Frank Film.

Pat O'Neill's films consistently recalling "the memory of image," and asking the question "Is the screen an illusion or an object?"

Former teen sports writer Craig Baldwin reading one too many copies of Covert Action Bulletin to Bruce Connerize and invent a new genre, the fake-fake documentary Tribulation 99 (and winning).

Coleman Miller fusing Tex Avery and Ernie Kovacs to create Bruce Conner's favorite fake experimental film Uso Justo (and winning).

Who could imagine? WE COULD, WE CAN, WE WILL.

We can all imagine what director Woody Sempliner learned from George when they watched from behind the screen at Old A&D and saw second sight, projection of/on projection, a tetradic flip into Gaugin's questions: "Where have we come from? What are we? Where are we going?"

Who could imagine that George Manupelli's vision would inspire 50 years of community exploring the mysteries of art? His "The things you think you can do are the things you can do the best of all" lives. Thanks George!

Gerry Fialka started attending the AAFF in 1971, participated as presenter six times and was actively involved for many more. He resides in Venice, CA.

SCRATCH FILMS & SPITTOONS

BY BILL BROWN

Ann Arbor was a rumor. It was a place where fur-capped voyageurs and coureurs des bois projected 16mm movies onto icebergs. I was living in a frontier town in Texas in those days. I had an old Plymouth Arrow with 150,000 miles on it. I submitted a movie about UFO's. I packed the movie in a felt-lined box and handed it off to an old riverboat captain I knew, a man with gray mutton-chops and a smoker's rasp who promised to deliver it. Up the Mississippi. Through hundreds of miles of wilderness. Following cairns and carved blazes. To Michigan.

Ann Arbor was a secret. It was an oasis. It was a Republic of Flicker Films. You couldn't find it on a map. I heard rumors and I sent workprints. Sometimes I'd get an answer back by morse code. The faint, faraway clicking of electric arcs: Send an exhibition copy. Stop. Include tooth powder. Stop. And good whisky. Stop.

Ann Arbor wasn't the only place. There were a few others, scattered across the territories. A striped tent and a string of incandescent bulbs. A few rows of folding chairs inside. Portland. Austin. Iowa City. Places the old timers talk about. "I had to walk 20 miles through a blizzard to see a movie with moth wings taped to it," they'd claim. Lies. Tall tales. Fables.

There were always rumors of its demise. Swallowed up by a big fish. Pulverized by a meteor. But year after year, the express rider would unpack a catalog from his mochila and hand it to me, along with a plug of tobacco, a clutch of film cores, and a 1/2 oz bottle of moonshine and movie film cement.

Bill Brown's films have been included in eight editions of the Ann Arbor Film Festival, beginning in 1996. He was a juror for the 46th AAFF.

MANAGING THE FILM FESTIVAL, OR HOW I LEARNED TO LOVE THE MOVIES

BY JOHN CALDWELL

Once upon a time, when I co-managed the festival in the 1970s, the hundreds of entries were all on 16mm film. The only things digital were the fingers that were used to thread the movies onto a projector.

I had always loved the festival and considered it a glamorous event in Ann Arbor. Where else could you see naked ladies and men, child birth, dental surgery, mind bending animation, drag queens in musicals, anarchist diatribes, and bizarre experimental narratives? The AAFF was definitely cool.

When George Manupelli began teaching at York University in Toronto he handed over the day-to-day festival management to Jay Cassidy. When I expressed interest in being part of this "glamorous" festival, George and Jay asked me only one thing: "Do you have a strong back, boy?" I didn't know what to think...but it sounded kinky.

I quickly learned that there is a cost to being part of the glamour. 16 mm film reels are heavy. The AAFF was receiving about 300 entries per year, which equated to many thousands of pounds of films. A post office bag, packed full of heavy films, needed to be picked up every day. I had an office across the street from the post office. So because of my strong back and good location, I was recruited as a festival manager.

The films piled up in the screening room until there were only narrow aisles to walk through. The selection committee convened and watched each and every film in its entirety: the gems and the bombs. I learned there's something magical about sitting in a dark room with a group of film watchers. The AAFF is a shared experience: it's tactile, not digital.

Then the films were carefully returned to the filmmakers, and the screening room was empty. No more movies to watch and love or hate: we'd all have to be patient and wait till next year. For me that was the heart of the AAFF, always knowing that the next great movie was yet to be seen.

John Caldwell was AAFF Co-Manager for several years in the late 1970s and resides in Venice, CA.

REFLECTIONS ON THE ANN ARBOR FILM FESTIVAL

BY CLARK CHARNETSKI

The 2012 Ann Arbor Film Festival will be my 49th—I missed the first one.

The festival originally was held in the old Architecture and Design Auditorium in what is now called Lorch Hall. It held about 400 people, and because of its small size, tickets could be hard to get. Its location within what was then the art school gave the festival a more artsy atmosphere than now. The Sunday evening screenings of the winners were held in both the A&D Auditorium and Auditorium A in Angell Hall.

I recall Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen providing pre-show music like the Michigan Theater Barton Organ does now. Attending the early festivals were local high school students Ken Burns and Iggy Pop. USC film school student George Lucas submitted his short film with the long title *Electronic Labyrinth: THX 1138 4EB*. He later made a feature film version of it.

Of course there was the live performance of *The Exploding Plastic Inevitable* by Andy Warhol and The Velvet Underground. Nico was singing on stage with the band while images of her were projected onto the screen behind her as well as on the walls and ceiling. Meanwhile Andy was shoving a projector up and down the center aisle so that an image of Nico projected on her costume went from small to large.

The Black Panthers submitted a series of films in the late sixties depicting the evils of capitalism and other political messages. *Selective Service System* recorded a young man actually shooting himself in the foot with a rifle to avoid being drafted during the Vietnam War. *Free Gingival Graft*, which depicted an oral surgery procedure, quickly emptied the auditorium. But the audience sat quietly and attentively while watching the activities of a nude couple in *Porch Glider*. (One can never tell the subject of a movie by its title.) A refreshing break from the sometimes pretentious festival fare were the children's films produced by Yvonne Andersen's Yellow Ball Workshop.

Beside the films, the Film Festival made it possible to meet many fine people. I met some just once, while other have become longtime friends. Each year I look forward to new films and old friends.

Clark Charnetski is an engineer residing in Ann Arbor, MI.

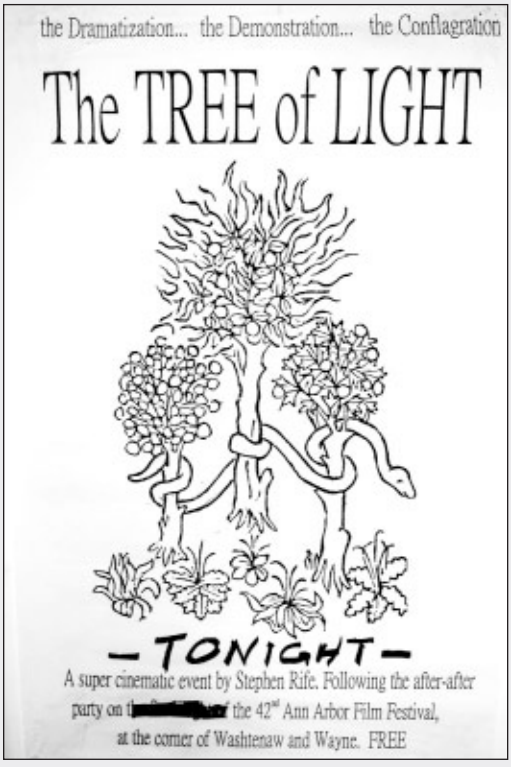
AAFF Technical Director Peter Wilde (d. 1989); photo by Rob Ziebell

THE TORCH

BY CHRISSTINA HAMILTON

What a pleasure to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Ann Arbor Film Festival! While the festival's journey has not been without controversy, regardless of trials encountered, the festival emerges as an unsinkable ship sailing on a sea of imagination with passion filling her sails. Her resilience lies not in institutional experience but in the dynamic relationship she provides the community of makers and viewers who comprise her. For posterity and to present her enduring spirit, I offer a glimpse of her essence through an untold story - the night we burned the tree at Washtenaw and Wayne.

It was Saturday night of festival week and the last light of the "films in competition" had just danced off the screen. A motley crew of 200 revelers had gathered for the late late after party hoping for continued immersion in the SuperCinematic offerings of the day. In front of a rambling home on Washtenaw's fraternity row, the expectant crowd assembled in the middle of the street facing an enormous maple tree.



Flyer for the after-after party : 42nd Ann Arbor Film Festival

The tree was meticulously wrapped head to foot in silver nitrate celluloid footage. This highly flammable gauge of the early moving image had been procured by fire artist Steve Rife of Minneapolis in honor of the opening of the festivals doors to all formats. A performance incantation encapsulating the past and beaconing the future – the tree became a torch.

The experience of the burning I cannot properly express more than to recount the heat, golden light and flickering shadows on the faces of the crowd. The image is forever emblazoned on my mind - a moment of eternity with a duration of five minutes. As the flames receded, the tree stood exactly as before – as if untouched. But as witnesses we were forever changed.

And then miraculously, as if on cue, the heavens erupted! In that instant as the last waft of smoke cleared, a lightning bolt and thunderclap gave way to torrential downpour. We all ran inside the house to find a symphony of 16mm projectors whirring with images of pink almond blossoms burgeoning against a clear blue sky. Someone exclaimed joyously "it's spring, it's spring!" And it was. In that very instant we had crossed a threshold and spring came into being...

The AAFF is a space for us to deconstruct, reconstruct, and transform; for ideas to spark ideas. An institution built to challenge and awaken, where our minds are free to make meaning. A revelatory machine. It comes alive in the convergence of maker and viewer. Existing in the union of the courage to translate perspective and the fertile ground of the Ann Arbor community.

The AAFF endures through love and dedication. To bring us out of individual isolation through direct encounters – and recognize ourselves as part of the larger whole. Just as the tree was transformed in a singular moment by fire – as the films play on the AAFF screen, each of us is a flame in the fire that consumes them. Each of us is a piece of this precious real estate that exists only when we all come together to celebrate, to witness, to attend.

Chrisstina Hamilton was AAFF Director for the 41st – 42nd Festivals, Programming Director for the 43rd and was Managing Assistant Director for the 38th – 40th.

WHEN REEL BEGAT REAL: THE GO FORTH DIMENSION

BY PAT OLESZKO

The old Architecture & Design was a formidable six story walk-up, a misbehaving beehive of art and activity that was the town's cultural center located right across the street from Dominick's, the Sardi's of Ann Arbor where much planning, plotting and carousing took place. Events, happenings, parties and protests were carried out gleefully amidst the political foment and ferment of the 60's.

But the most compelling event was always the Film Festival. George Manupelli started this annual film orgy with plenty of passion and almost nothing else. The University grudgingly allowed George to teach one film class in a tiny storage room under the stairs, and provided a single manual splicer as the sum total of his equipment. Films came from all over, challenging, weird, boring, and transgressive stuff, some entertaining, some fabulous and others Godawful. Filmmakers and notables arrived to be entertained, argued and slept with, there were parties, drinking, and strange performances in the halls, parking lot, and showcases. A whirled was created for five, six daze, and we were it.

For me, it all started innocently enough. With Nico plaintively crooning "And what costume shall the poor girl wear, to all tomorrow's parties," I was merely answering the perennial art school plight. The first year, on each successive night my sartorial splendor became more elaborate. The second year, having viewed some 40 hours of film, I thought I deserved my own chair front and center for which my garb was inherent in the same design of the chair. After that, I stepped, suit-ably enhanced, onto that small stage and never willingly got off of it. Every year I premiered a series of six five-minute pieces: Film Rating Code De-Coated, Patty O's Danz Crass, Six Comic Strips and so on, and sew forth. George featured me on his work o' art tickets as the Festival Girl and I kept coming back with more, even after I had moved to New York. It became my out-of-town trial for new work.

There was always much encouragement and plenty of help for these ventures. Peter Wilde at 'Art was the projectionist who could do anything and everything with nothing, and did. "Blue" Gene Tyranny made the music poignant and peculiar, and I eventually even had roadies from the Dixie Gas House. How I became a Pa't of the fabric of the festival was because I wove it myself, an inch, a foot, and a reel at a time.

Pat Oleszko is a performance artist based in New York, NY.

6th Ann Arbor Film Festival poster by George Manupelli

LET US EULOGIZE CELLULOID

BY RUTH BRADLEY
AND ROB ZIEBELL

2012: a year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Ann Arbor Film Festival; 2012 will also be remembered as the year Eastman Kodak filed for bankruptcy, and when many film distributors announced that within the year, few, if any celluloid prints will be available for exhibition. The Digital Age has fully arrived, and has definitively consolidated its hegemonic rule of the world of motion pictures.

So, let us eulogize celluloid, and recall some AAFF memories from the old days, when "video" was a dirty word, DVDs didn't exist, and QuickTime files on jump drives would have been mistaken for stash containers.

Those memories: Light had to pass through an image and be enlarged. Focus could be a problem and had to be spotted with telescopic grain focusers. Persistence of vision was the magic that made it move. Screens had to reflect.

And in the great expanse of the Michigan Theater, we got to stand behind the screen and watch the images dance in reverse. And from that perspective, if you stared long enough through the pin-holes of the new vinyl screens you could see the faces of the audience enjoying, laughing, crying, and being amazed at the films. And the magic of the light twinkling in the distance from the projection booth high above where Peter Wilde, Projectionist Extraordinaire, was the evil genius at work with some new idiosyncratic projection system he devised with clothespins and paper clips.

And in the prescreening room, neat stacks of film prints grew into towering objects making a strange installation that you had to tiptoe around to avoid causing a major catastrophe. Between the pizza boxes, knitting needles, and cases of longneck Strohs, they continued to fill whatever downtown empty space the festival had rented for its rag-tag group to view all of the entries every night for three months. Watching, while always hoping to get to that magic number of 315 entries, which would signal that we could pay the bills and have enough money for next year's festival.

And before and after each film we would clean the projector gate (a Kodak Pageant, of course); we never scratched the filmmakers' prints. And the touch and feel of the prints, even sometimes their smell, when an entry came directly from a lab (ah, chemistry!). These were OBJECTS, beautiful in their own right, to be touched and venerated. Rewinding them with a set of hand rewinds, where you could SEE the images in each frame, watching films run through the projector (extraneous light needed to keep prescreening notes).And the sound of the projector, its regular beat a singular constant amidst the potential chaos and ennui of watching all the entries — the good, the terrific, and the bone-crushing terrible. But always someone watching so not to miss a curve-ball, a surprise ending, or a naked body.

Then lugging those heavy films and cans way up to the booth at the Michigan Theater, Lorch Hall, or to and from the office. God, why did we start showing 35mm prints? They were even heavier.

Picking up late-arriving prints at the airport cargo location to make the last-minute screening. Or even the bus station. We had ways to make the prints arrive at the theater on time!

And what films! What a privilege to watch brand new films by the likes of Tommy Palazzolo, Chick Strand, Gunvor Nelson, Curt McDowell, George Kuchar, James Benning, Bruce Connor, and the incomparable Richard Myers (the list goes on and gets pretty big). And lesser-known visionaries as well; artists who didn't make the avant-garde A-list, or who didn't make it past the AIDS debacle, or who found the excruciating challenge of making films simply beyond their reach. They often had one or two good films in them, and we got to see them in Ann Arbor. Everything came to Ann Arbor.

Celluloid may be dying (there are a few hold-outs out there, and we applaud you, but let's be "reel": it's getting nearly impossible to continue). But Ann Arbor IS still here and it seems it has a future: artists won't stop making work, won't stop discovering things, or gnawing on ideas, or refusing to capitulate to the lure of being a commercial hack for hire. As long as artists make the work, Ann Arbor will, hopefully, keep showing the work, and sharing it as a public celebration of the possibilities of this evolving thing, digital or analog, called motion picture art.

Goodbye Kodak. Goodbye negative and reversal. See you later, Celluloid. You were lots of fun, it's been real....

Hello Instagram, You-Tubes, and Vimeos. But we still want to be part of an audience! A group experience.

So Happy Birthday Ann Arbor! Nice to see you again! You are keeping up with the times. It's been a while.

What's going on? What's new and different? Show us! We are thrilled to be here!

Ruth Bradley was AAFF Director for the 20th – 24th Festivals, incorporated the Festival as a non-profit in 1983 and was actively involved for many years prior.

Robert Ziebell was actively involved in the AAFF during the late 1970s/80s. Ziebell designed several Festival posters/tickets as well as installations in the Michigan Theater and participated as a filmmaker multiple times.

CRUMBS FROM THE TABLE OF DIMINISHING RETURNS

BY GEORGE MANUPELLI

If you made experimental films before 1963, you mostly sent them to Jonas Mekas in New York. If he liked them he showed them and wrote about them in the Village Voice. If you did and he didn't, you waited until you made your next film and repeated the process. Life seemed too short for this even then and so the First American Film Festival, almost immediately renamed the Ann Arbor Film Festival, was born. Admission was 50 cents; the entry fee was $5; no one got paid!

The Festival would be open to anyone who saw film as art. There would be no tastemakers managing the festival. The festival's main purpose would be to serve as a collaboration between filmmakers and audiences. There would be no press by the Festival mentioning one film over another, no categories, no film would ever be too long to screen, no censorship at any cost. New films were started and finished during the festival itself and screened publicly before it ended. People seemed to understand and films flooded in, especially from San Francisco filmmakers, always among the festivals' best friends.

The shades were drawn and the houselights dimmed in the old Architecture and Design Auditorium at 7pm that night in May, 1963, when the projector struggled against the inertia of an overloaded reel, lurched forward and launched the First Ann Arbor Film Festival. But it was hot and airless. The audience countered with marijuana. The old 19th century blinds were as effective as cheesecloth in darkening the hall that time of year, and while the audience huffed and puffed for the sun to set, Pat Oleszko, costumed in satin as a giant penis seated in front of the auditorium, slowly worked herself into a seven foot tall erection. I remember Bruce Baillie, Ed Emshwiller and Richard Myers talking about film and the festival in the dim light of an Ann Arbor living room. I think they are still there; things aren't quite right with art.

The 3rd Festival poster design was a very provocative one – two women close together, scantily clothed and embracing, all in a stylistic, dignified manner. This was 1965 and The John Birch Society raged through the local press that the University of Michigan was showing pornographic films. As a faculty member I was hauled before the Vice President for Academic Affairs:

"Alright, Manupelli. Yes or no. Did you show a film that depicted masturbation explicitly?" said the Vice President.

I said, "Sir?"

"Don't give me any shit Manupelli. I want an answer right now!"

Well, we had a film called Jerovi and it showed a young man in a loincloth and, I believe, a wreath on his head prancing through Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. Toward the end of the film he laid down and the camera went to his face, which had some sort of ecstatic look. And that was the extent of the film. I was married with two kids at the time and made $7,000 a year. I prayed for guidance and just the right words.

"I'm waiting for your answer Manupelli!"

"Well, sir, I have never masturbated, nor have I ever watched anyone masturbate. Can you give me some idea of what it looks like so I can answer you?"

"Get out, Manupelli, get out of here. I don't ever want to see you again!"

So I left, I guess at least, with my job.

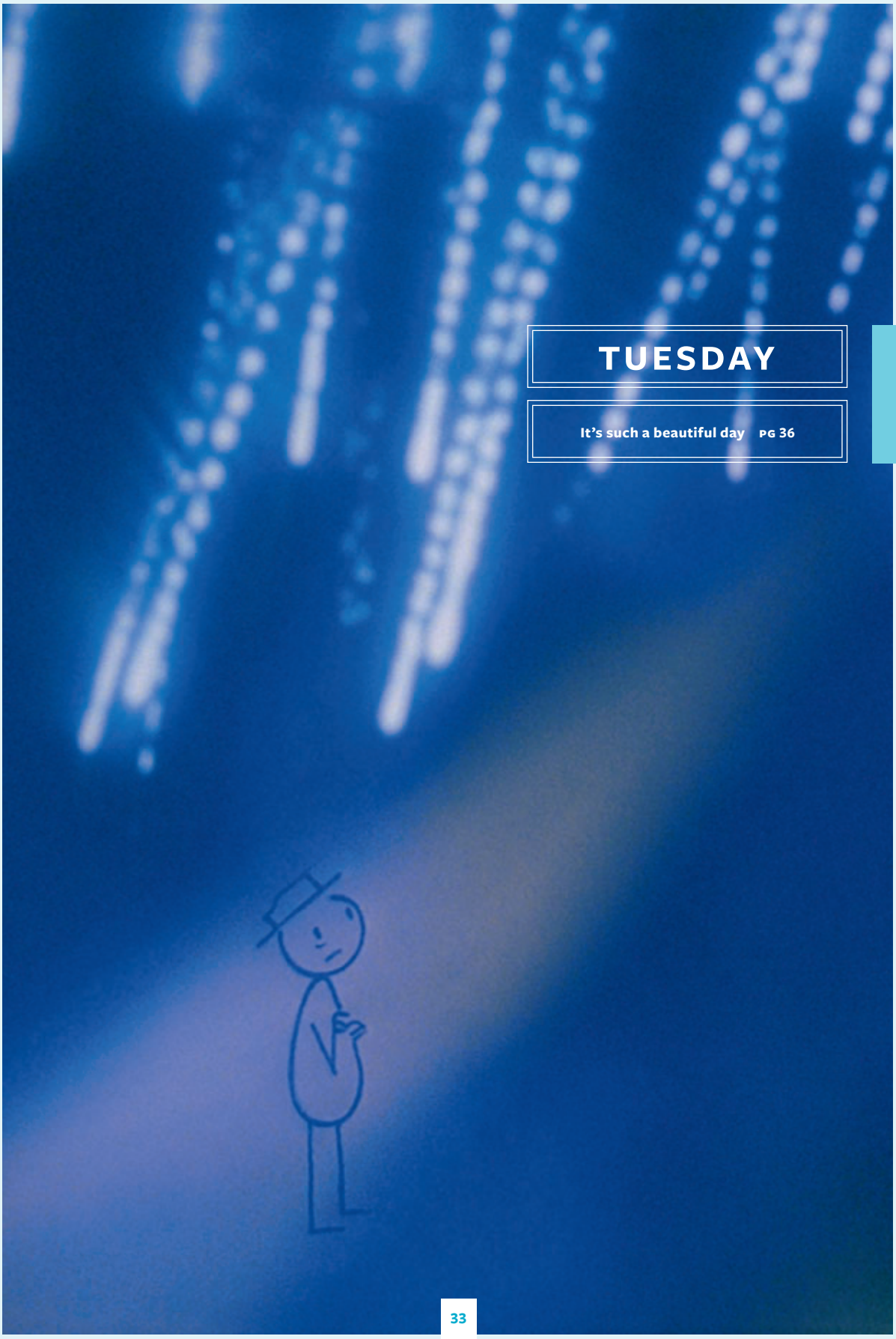
The first Festival corps was a close-knit group. They were friends and in some cases lovers. There were all talented, students, faculty, artists from every discipline. Some were taken all too soon: Chris Frayne, Tom Berman, Peter Wilde, Marvin Felheim, Dominick and Alice DeVarti, Ellen Frank and Cynthia Liddell. When the houselights are dimmed one can feel their presence; a glow surrounds them; we can almost makeout the words in their whispers.

After 20 years it was time to retire as Festival Director. I said that the Festival would continue as along as filmmakers continued submitting films and audiences continued attending screenings. That is the function of the Festival administration, to service this collaboration between filmmakers and audiences.

Fifty years and counting. I'll make the 100th if you do!

George Manupelli founded the Ann Arbor Film Festival in 1963, participated as a filmmaker and was the Festival's Director for two decades.

[Adapted in 2012 by GM from original version in 35th program guide]



TUESDAY

It's such a beautiful day PG 36

OPENING NIGHT SCREENING

Taxonomy

Karen Aqua (1954–2011)
2011 | 4 min | Video

The animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms reside in a state of constant flux, reflecting a world of transience, mutability, and impermanence. Through the metaphor of visual transformation, this film explores the themes of malleability, instability, and interconnectedness.

Shadow Cuts

Martin Arnold
Vienna, Austria | 2010 | 5 min | 35mm

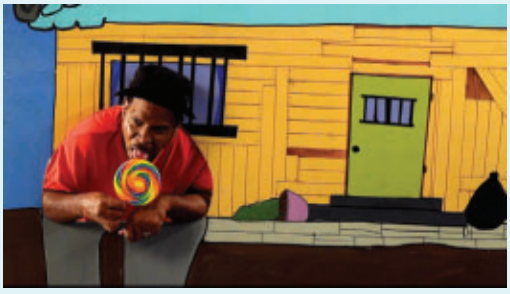
The first in a four-film series, Martin Arnold directs his deconstructive impulses to the heritage of Walt Disney. The result is a neurotic re-animation that comes to life in the darkness between images, where the viewer meets his dreams and demons.

River Rites

Ben Russell
Paris, France | 2011 | 11 min | 16mm on video

"Animists are people who recognize that the world is full of persons, some of whom are human, and that life is always lived in relationship with others." – Graham Harvey, *Animism*

A trance dance water implosion, a newer line drawn between secular possession and religious phenomena. Filmed in one shot at a sacred site on the Upper Suriname River, the minor secrets of a Saramaccan animist everyday are revealed as time itself is undone. Rites are the new trypps; embodiment is our eternal everything. – BR



Life and Freaky Times of Uncle Luke

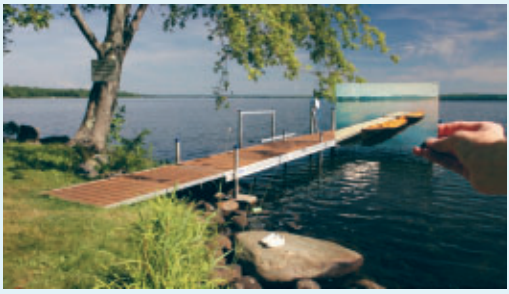
Jillian Mayer
Miami, FL | 2011 | 13 min | Video

A modern Miami adaptation of the 1962 French short film *'La Jetee*, the film recounts Luke's (Uncle Luke, legendary rapper from the hip-hop group 2 Live Crew) rise to fame as he changes the face of hip-hop and fights for first amendment rights and later as he ushers Miami into a golden era of peace and prosperity as Mayor. Everything changes when the Turkey Point Nuclear Reactor has a meltdown and turns Miami into a post-apocalyptic wasteland. – JM

Pluto Declaration

Travis Wilkerson
Los Angeles, CA | 2011 | 4 min | Video

Restore the classical definition of planet! Bring back planet Pluto! The solar system needs its twelfth planet. – TW



The Sea [is still] Around Us

Hope Tucker
Boston, MA | 2011 | 4 min | Video
WORLD PREMIERE

The postcard of a vacation spot usually enhances the reality. The contrast is more stark in Corinna, Maine, a former woolen mill town on the shores of Lake Sebasticook, where unregulated dumping of pesticides and industrial waste contaminated the water supply. – HT

Snakes and Ladders

Katherin McInnis
Brooklyn, NY | 2011 | 3 min | Video

A flicker film of possible narratives, including an excavation of the Lindbergh baby kidnapping and associated tabloid frenzy, and the cyclical nature of financial crisis. Soundtrack by Akiko Suzuki. – KI

Tokyo – Ebisu

Tomonari Nishikawa
Binghamton, NY | 2010 | 5 min | 16mm

JR (Japan Railway Company) Yamanote Line is one of the Japan's busiest lines, consisting of 29 stations and running as a loop. The film shows the views from the platforms of 10 stations in Yamanote Line, from Tokyo Station to Ebisu Station clockwise. The in-camera visual effects and the layered soundtrack may exaggerate the sense of the actual happenings at the locations. The film also exhibits the shooting and recording methods. – TN

Craig's Cutting Room Floor

Linda Scobie
San Francisco, CA | 2011 | 2 min | 16mm
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

Craig is a collage artist with an eclectic archive of 16mm prints. His floor is full of spliced off and discarded film frames left to pile, corrode and live out their inevitable chemical life spans. After many months of collecting these deteriorating treasures, I decided to make a film. The result is an ongoing subliminal flurry of singular moments seemingly superimposed onto each other. A fragmented journey through cinema's history taken right off the cutting room floor. – LS

It's such a beautiful day

Don Hertzfeldt
Austin, TX | 2011 | 23 min | 35mm

Bill finds himself in a hospital struggling with memory problems, in this final chapter to Don Hertzfeldt's *Everything will be OK* trilogy.

Irma

Charles Fairbanks
Brussels, Belgium | 2010 | 12 min | Video

Irma is an intimate musical portrait of Irma Gonzalez, the former world champion of women's professional wrestling. Filmed in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl – a notorious district of Mexico City – *Irma* contradicts everything we have come to expect from stories reported from Mexico. Featuring music written and performed by Ms. Gonzalez, Irma's story surges with love and deceit, masculine strength, feminine charms, and an extraordinary sense of humor.

A Man and His Dog Out for Air

Robert Breer (1926–2011)
1957 | 2 min | 16mm
SCREENED AT THE 2ND AAFF IN 1964 : NOT IN COMPETITION

"[A] brilliant and astonishing ballet animated with unprecedented virtuosity!" –Noël Burch, Film Quarterly

AFTERPARTY

Sava's | 10 pm – 2 am | FREE
Continue the Opening Night celebration with drink specials and champagne toast compliments of Sava!

WEDNESDAY

Voluptuous Sleep PG 42

PETER ROSE

"Some of us work in a proximate relation with our intended audiences, speaking familiar languages so that the archetypes of our culture may be recognized; and some work out a self-creating interiority from which, if we are lucky, we bring back the shape of a newly imagined alphabet of feeling. I find myself oscillating between these two agendas and find the dialectic a productive one, a reflection of the complex, contradictory nature of our times." –Peter Rose

Incantation

1970 | 8 min | 16mm

Using rapidly edited, superimposed images of plants, trees, water, the sun and the moon, *Incantation* weaves a dynamic tapestry of organic forms and textures, combining its images with a fierce rhythmic intensity so as to suggest a kind of natural force. The film was shot entirely in the camera, in 8mm, according to a pre-arranged, music-like score, and then blown up to 16mm using a home-made optical printer. The accompanying sound track, a chant taken from Islamic liturgy, is breath-based and brings the film into the form of a prayer.

The Man Who Could Not See Far Enough

1981 | 33 min | 16mm

The man who could not see far enough uses literary, structural, autobiographical, and performance metaphors to construct a series of tableaux that evoke the act of vision, the limits of perception, and the rapture of space.

Secondary Currents

1982 | 16 min | 16mm

An improbable narrator speaks an extended assortment of nonsense in this "imageless" film in which the shifting relationships between voice-over commentary and subtitled narration constitute a peculiar duet for voice, thought, speech, and sound.

The Gift

1996 | 6 min | Audio

The Gift, an audio drama, was adapted from a serial bedtime story Rose told his daughter over a period of six years. It is a parable that explores the conflict between language and innocence, between sounds and ideas, and that offers a strange connection between time, language, and self.

Odysseus in Ithaca

2006 | 5 min | Video

Odysseus moors his boat in an alien architectural machine, a labyrinth with echoes of De Chirico and Escher- a place of mystery and power where the rules of visual perspective are transformed and another space erupts.

The Indeserian Tablets

2011 | 15 min | Video w/ live narration

An annotated nocturnal portrait of a vanished culture- its stories, scripture, technology, religious practice, art and poetry as reconstructed from fragments found in the archive at Kiens. Offered in the spirit of Calvino and Borges with a nod to Greenaway. – PR

MUSIC VIDEOS IN COMPETITION

New music videos play alongside several groundbreaking historic films, including Devo's AAFF award-winning 1976 film *In the Beginning Was the End: The Truth About De-Evolution*.

In the Beginning Was the End: The Truth About De-Evolution by Devo

Chuck Statler
1976 | 10 min | 16mm
SCREENED AT 15TH AAFF IN 1977 : NOT IN COMPETITION

Transmission (Playmobil Version) by Joy Division

D.O. Roth
Leipzig, Germany | 2011 | 4 min | Video

Circles by The Soft Moon

Ron Robinson
San Francisco, CA | 2010 | 4 min | Video

Replica by Oneohtrix Point Never

Daniel Lopatin
Brooklyn, NY | 2011 | 5 min | Video

Adam Roberts by Cave

Isaac Sherman
Milwaukee, WI | 2011 | 5 min | Video

Not Enough by J Mascis

Chad VanGaalen
Calgary, Canada | 2011 | 3 min | Video

Go Outside by Cults

Isaiah Seret
Los Angeles, CA | 2011 | 4 min | Video

In the Middle (I met you there) by Matthew Dear

Morgan Beringer
London, England | 2012 | 3 min | Video

Envelop by Julianna Barwick

Cam Archer
Santa Cruz, CA | 2011 | 6 min | Video

The Third Reich 'n Roll by The Residents

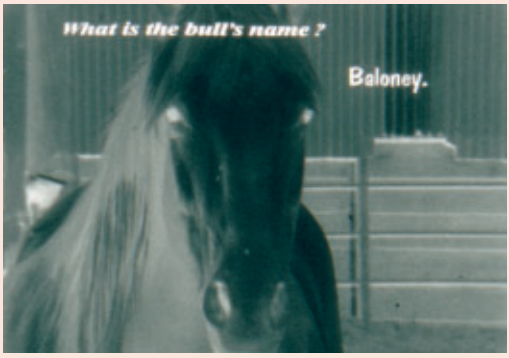
The Residents
1976 | 5 min | 16mm
Print Courtesy of Pacific Film Archvie
SCREENED AT 16TH AAFF IN 1978 : NOT IN COMPETITION

Mongoloid by Devo

Bruce Conner (1933 – 2008)
1978 | 3 min | 16mm
SCREENED AT 17TH AAFF IN 1979 : NOT IN COMPETITION

FILMS BY ROBERT NELSON

SUPPORTED BY THE ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES When Robert Nelson died this past January, the independent film world lost one of its greats. Co-founder of Canyon Cinema, inspirational filmmaker and teacher, painter, sculptor, builder, poet, philosopher, mountaintop guru, and a generous friend to many, Nelson was known most for his finely crafted, unpredictable, and often drop-dead funny films. This program will pay tribute to Nelson and his profound influence, with a selection of films infamous and rare curated by Mark Toscano. *Prints courtesy of the Academy Film Archive*



Special Warning

1999 | 5 min | 16mm

Special Warning is like a poem more than a narrative or story. It suggests states of isolation, barrenness, sexual guilt and sin, but even these punishing afflictions can have a humorous aspect when accompanied by horns. - RN

Deep Westurn

1974 | 5 min | 16mm

A 'film wake'. Though celebratory in mood, it has a mournful subtext... death and dying. We dedicated it to Dr. Sam West, departed friend and patron of the arts, trusting that his ghost would approve our hi-jinx and seeming irreverence. - RN

Bleu Shut

1970 | 33 min | 16mm

"Even when we know the game is an illusion, the experience of *Bleu Shut* is entirely a pleasure: the 'game' is fun, the Nelson/Wiley debates, infectiously funny; and Nelson's choice of imagery, quirky and amusing. *Bleu Shut* reveals, and allows us to enjoy, our gullibility within the pervasive absurdity of modern life." –Scott MacDonald
Starring Robert Nelson, William T. Wiley, and Diane Nelson. Music by Blue Crumb Truck.

Hauling Toto Big

1997 | 46 min | 16mm

AWARDED BEST OF THE FESTIVAL 36TH AAFF IN 1998

"In the mid 1990s, Nelson started assembling this film from a large stack of b/w footage he had kept from sketches, unfinished projects, class assignments, outtakes, and other assorted remnants, informed by jazz music, poetry, and the I Ching in its construction. A dense and ecstatic work of fragmented narratives, dream states, chaos and serenity, verité footage rendered into poetry, this is Nelson's most recently completed film to-date, and a culmination of his cinematic interests. *Hauling Toto Big* is a dense and ecstatic work of fragmented narratives, dream states, chaos and serenity... a culmination of Nelson's cinematic interests." –Mark Toscano

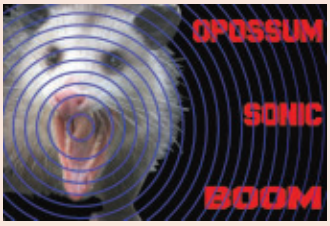
5 PM • Michigan Theater Main Auditorium • FREE

STUDENT FILM SHOWCASE

A selection of the best recent short films created by regional film students.

Dullahan
Chelsea Carl
College for Creative Studies
2011 | 3 min | Video

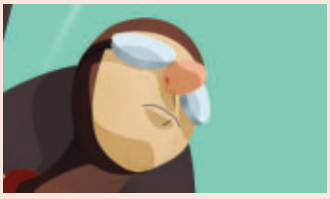
My Favorite Planet
Gus Péwé
Interlochen Arts Academy
2011 | 6 min | Video



The Arson of History
Kristen Zelenka, Elizabeth Double, Sven Hentschel and Hyun Yoojin
UM Screen Arts & Cultures
2011 | 12 min | Video

Rekord
Sean Thompson
UM School of Art & Design
2011 | 3 min | Video

A Piece of Life
Chase Becsey, Jamie Lee
UM Screen Arts & Cultures
2011 | 3 min | 16mm



Geekdown
Steven Smith
College for Creative Studies
2011 | 2 min | Video

Listen
Jeremy Liesen, Deron Ross, Shane Law, Zack Sly, Adam Hagopian-Zirkel
Washtenaw Community College
2011 | 7 min | Video

Instructions for Urban Exploration
Perry Janes, Noah Stahl, Sadie Yarrington
UM Screen Arts & Cultures
2011 | 5 min | Video

A Series of Kinetic Sets Tell A Story
Shannon Kohlitz
UM School of Art & Design
2011 | 5 min | Video

Belle Isle Zoo
Barb Morrissey
Washtenaw Community College
2011 | 3 min | Video

Mediator
Joshua Tad Mulligan
College for Creative Studies
2012 | 3 min | Video

Turn the Camera Around
Scott Allen
Washtenaw Community College
2011 | 14 min | Video

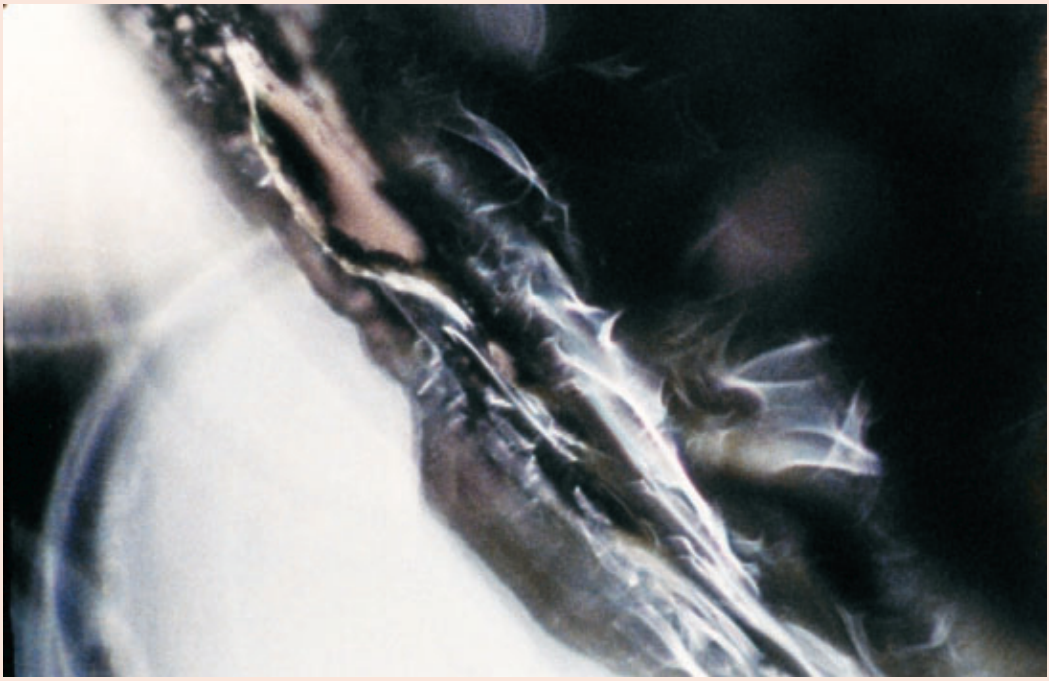
Dubstep Informational Nature Video Series
David Gazdowicz
Eastern Michigan University
2011 | 2 min | Video

The Date
Cynthia Greig
Oakland Community College
1988/2011 | 3 min | Video

Forward Aikido Roll
Dan Bifano
Washtenaw Community College
2011 | 3 min | Video

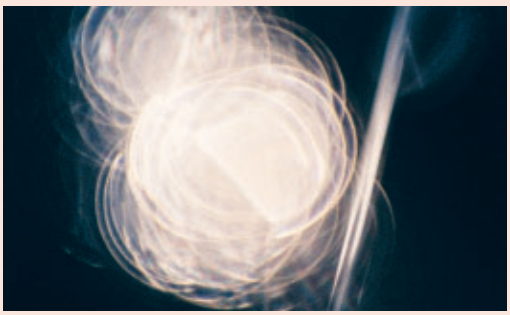
VOLUPTUOUS SLEEP

Betzy Bromberg | Tujunga, CA | 2011 | 95 min | 16mm



"*Voluptuous Sleep* is a mesmerizing two-part 16mm meditation on the nuances of light, sound and feeling as evoked through the poetic artifices of cinema. Bromberg's close-up lens becomes a tool of infinite discovery that reveals as much about our bodily sensations as it does the natural world. Paired with two intricately composed soundtracks, *Voluptuous Sleep* is an emotional tour de force that serves as a rapturous antidote to the fragmentation of modern life and offers a new experience of cinematic time and memory."
– Steve Anker (Redcat Program Notes)

"Forces of desire." – Betzy Bromberg



{I} Language is a Skin
SOUND AND MUSIC BY Dane A. Davis, Zack Settel, Jean-Pierre Bedoyan, Pam Aronoff, James Rees, and Betzy Bromberg

{II} And the Night Illuminated the Night
SOUND AND MUSIC BY Robert Allaire
PERFORMED BY the Formalist Quartet

FILMS IN COMPETITION 1

Assassination in Dreamland

David Sherman
Bisbee, AZ | 2011 | 6 min | Video
WORLD PREMIERE

A work inspired by the uncanny juxtaposition of the political murder of America's 25th President during the fantastically realized 1901 World's Fair, as filmed by Thomas Alva Edison. *Assassination in Dreamland* uncovers a hidden continuum of cinema, terrorism and spectacle.

Sangre de Cristo

Marcy Saude
Los Angeles, CA | 2011 | 27 min | Video

In *Sangre de Cristo*, the titular mountain range is examined as a site where embedded layers of oppositional history converge and are revealed through traces of the past in the present landscape. Included are the 18th century conflict between Spanish colonialists and Comanches, seen through historical markers and a play on horseback; a visit from the Virgin Mary as an inspiration for murder post Mexican-American war; an interview with an anarchist activist who transitioned to a hunter-gatherer life in the Sangres in the 1970s; architecture as a physical manifestation of counter-culture; text appropriated from a Rudolph Wurlitzer novel; and- mountains.

Untitled

Neil Beloufa
Paris, France | 2010 | 15 min | Video

A cardboard decor and photographs reconstitute a luxury Californian-type villa in Algeria. Its inhabitants, neighbors and other protagonists speculate why and how the house remained occupied by terrorists in the 1990s.

Village, silenced

Deborah Stratman
Chicago, IL | 2011 | 7 min | 16mm on video

A reworking of Humphrey Jennings' 36-minute 1943 doc-udrama *The Silent Village* , wherein coal miners from the Welsh village of Cwmgiedd collectively reenact the Nazi invasion and annihilation of the resisting Czech village of Lidice, a mining town itself. Principal focus in this re-mix is upon the way sound is used as a mode of social control, and the larger historical implications of repetition. – DS

RocketKitKongoKit

Craig Baldwin
1986 | 30 min | 16mm
SCREENED AT 24TH AAFF IN 1986 : NOT IN COMPETITION

Constructed like a plastic model kit, this kaleidoscopic collage-essay traces an alternative history of post-colonial Congo, the CIA, and military adventurism.

FILMS IN COMPETITION 2

What's Out Tonight Is Lost

Phil Solomon
Broomfield, CO | 1983 | 8 min | 16mm | Silent
Print courtesy of the Academy Film Archive
NEWLY RESTORED 16MM PRINT : NOT IN COMPETITION

Adopting its title from a poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay, *What's Out Tonight Is Lost* is an elegiac film sifting through the unrecoverable. The film is a reflecting pool where vision breaks up. The home we recognize is swallowed in the brume, the light barely penetrates; and the yellow school bus steals us away, delivering us into new clouds, embracing fear. The film has a surface of cracked porcelain and intaglio: the allergic childhood skin of cracks and bruises. This is a film of transubstantiations, the discorporation of human forms into embers. Air looms and blossoms into solidity and nearness ... I hear it breathing ... – Mark McElhatten

Pilgrimage (Pèlerinage)

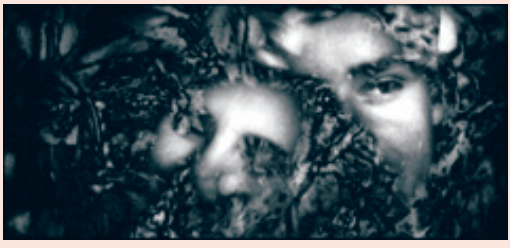
Marc Pelletier
Montreal, Canada | 2011 | 10 min | Video
US PREMIERE

A simple walk in the park can become a spiritual experience, a moment of discovery, a pilgrimage. This film explores the meditative nighttime allure of the Parc Lafontaine in Montreal, Canada, turning this public space into a form of sanctuary. – MP

Heavy Eyes (Schwere Augen)

Siegfried A. Fruhauf
Vienna, Austria | 2011 | 10 min | 35mm
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

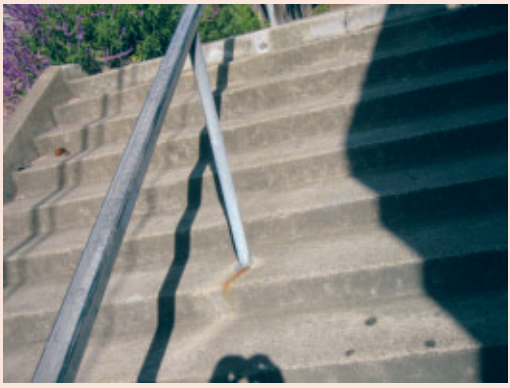
In this hand-processed inscription of cinema negation, unnamed players in found-footage fragments shimmer hypnotically in faint exchanges as a sound engine bears down heavily from above. Darkened figures outline themselves over and over as doppelgängers in negative and positive, unfolding endlessly as though calyxes hidden within mercurial emulsion.

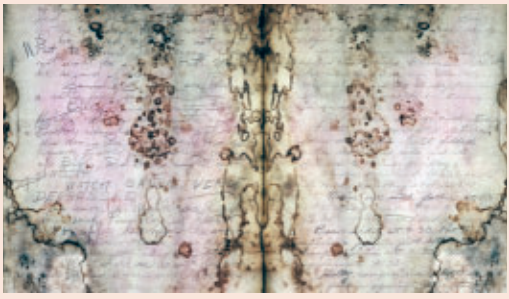


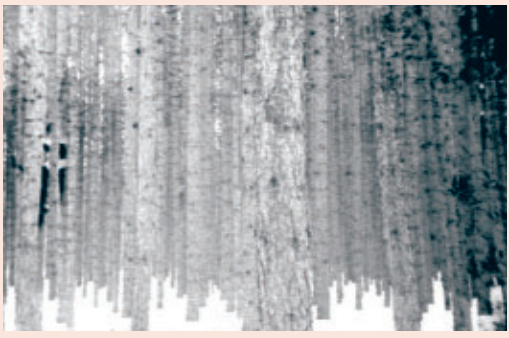
Traces

Scott Stark
Austin, TX | 2012 | 6 min | 35mm
WORLD PREMIERE

A series of short 35mm films generated from digital still images and printed onto movie film. The top and bottom half of each image alternate in the projector gate, and the images are arranged in a dizzying array of rhythms and patterns. The images also bleed onto the optical soundtrack area of the film, generating their own peculiar sounds. – SS







349 (for Sol LeWitt)

Chris Kennedy
Toronto, Canada | 2011 | 1 min | Video | Silent

A digitally animated version of Sol LeWitt's *Wall Drawing #349*. Recreating LeWitt's geometric vocabulary and primary colour palette, *349* careens through emblazoned emblems, lifted from walls and transported into dialogue with LeWitt's exploration of spatial systems. – Andréa Picard, Toronto International Film Festival

If the War Continues

Jonathan Schwartz
Brattleboro, VT | 2012 | 6 min | 16mm
WORLD PREMIERE

For ascending: "and before I could be noticed again and taken to task, I spoke to the tiny blessed star within me, shut off my heartbeat, made my body disappear into the shadow of a bush, and continued my previous voyage without thinking about returning home ever again." – H.Hesse

Verses

James Sansing
San Francisco, CA | 2008–2012 | 6 min | 35mm
WORLD PREMIERE

A film that animates counselors logs that were found in an abandoned juvenile detention center. The ink stains and mold growth thread their way through the veins of the paper, making Rorschach patterns. This natural phenomenon illustrates the psychological aspect of this institution's affect on the kids who were detained there. – JS

Runs Good

Pat O'Neill
Los Angeles, CA | 1970 | 15 min | 16mm
SCREENED AT 9TH AAFF IN 1971 : NOT IN COMPETITION

A darkish journey down memory lane, to visit some news events, folkways and thought patterns associated with the late forties and early fifties. The film is also concerned with such perceptual phenomena as color-space, "false tones" caused by varying black-white alternations of simultaneously seen rhythms set up by multiple repetitive actions, and the use of image outlines as "containers" for other imagery. Sound by Cisko Curtis.

By Foot-Candle Light

Mary Helena Clark
Chicago, IL | 2011 | 9 min | Video

Scenes from the proscenium wings. A film imagined and recounted by foot-candle light. You close your eyes and, suddenly, it is dark. – MHC

OUT NIGHT WITH BARBARA HAMMER

In the 11th edition of the Out Night program at the AAFF, we celebrate the historic nature of this year's 50th Festival by exploring the representation of LGBTQ lives in cinema across five decades. We are honored to welcome Barbara Hammer back to Ann Arbor to present this program, including several of her own iconic works.

Dyketactics

1974 | 4 min | 16mm

The first lesbian lovemaking film made by a lesbian, *Dyketactics* reveals Hammer's aesthetic connecting sight and touch. 110 images in 4 minutes make this sensate film a "lesbian commercial". Touch precedes sight ontologically, and, in lesbian perception according to Hammer.

Multiple Orgasm

1976 | 6 min | 16mm | Silent

Did we ever see what our orgasms looked like? Picturing 4 vaginal and 4 facial contractions, this film was purposefully made silent so that the audience could hear themselves breath.

Our Trip

1980 | 4 min | 16mm

A comic travelogue of a camping and hiking trip to the Andes, *Our Trip* mixes conventions of the slide show with hand-painting and animation to create playful juxtapositions between travellers and their surroundings.

AFTERPARTY

SH\aut\ & \aut\BAR | 11 pm – 2 am | FREE

Out Night continues at SH\aut\ & \aut\BAR with complimentary appetizers and firepits in the courtyard!

No No Nooky T.V.

1987 | 12 min | 16mm

Using a 16mm Bolex and Amiga computer, Hammer creates a witty and stunning film about how women view their sexuality versus the way male images of women and sex are perceived. The impact of technology on sexuality and emotion and the sensual self is explored through computer language juxtaposed with everyday colloquial language of sex. *No No Nooky T.V.* confronts the feminist controversy around sexuality with electronic language, pixels and interface. Even the monitor is eroticized in this film/video hybrid that points fun at romance, sexuality, and love in our post-industrial age.

Barbara Hammer was born on May 15, 1939 in Hollywood, California. She is a visual artist working primarily in film and video and has made over 80 works in a career that spans 30 years. She is considered a pioneer of queer cinema. Her experimental films of the 1970's often dealt with taboo subjects such as menstruation, female orgasm and lesbian sexuality. In the 80's she used optical printing to explore perception and the fragility of 16mm film life itself. *Optic Nerve* (1985) and *Endangered* (1988) were selected for the Whitney Museum of American Art Biennials ('85,'89). Her documentaries tell the stories of marginalized peoples who have been hidden from history and are often essay films that are multi-leveled and engage audiences viscerally and intellectually with the goal of activating them to make social change. *Nitrate Kisses* (1992) was chosen for the 1993 Whitney Biennial. Her memoir, *HAMMER! Making Movies Out Of Sex and Life* was published by the Feminist Press at CUNY in spring 2010 and coincided with retrospectives at The Museum of Modern Art in New York City, the Reina Sophia in Madrid, and most recently the Tate Modern in London.

Jerovi

Jose Rodriguez-Soltero (1949 – 2009)
1965 | 11 min | 16mm | Silent
SCREENED AT THE 3RD AAFF IN 1965

A sexual probe of the Narcissus myth, *Jerovi* departs from earlier experimental work by Cocteau, Curtis Harrington, Willard Maas and others, which drew upon the Narcissus myth to explore the filmmakers' Freudian unconscious and homosexual desire. Rodriguez-Soltero's film celebrates narcissistic desire and the physical act of self-love. A product of the sexual revolution of the 1960s, Jerovi loves himself without shame, in a lush, colorful, natural setting.
– Ronald Gregg

Frank's Cock

Mike Hoolboom
Toronto, Canada | 1993 | 8 min | 16mm
AWARDED BEST DRAMATIC FILM AT 32ND AAFF IN 1994

In *Frank's Cock*, a man talks about his friend Frank in a bold, funny, moving monologue about being born, living, fucking and dying as a gay man. Frank was queer from birth. He loved sex, he changed the world, and he died. Another of Hoolboom's casually brilliant pieces of writing, *Frank's Cock* is a sharp elegy to a lover lost to AIDS. Callum Rennie performs the monologue with appropriate wit and remembrance, and Hoolboom marries his words to a simple, formal design that incorporates abstract and pop styles. -Sandra Cunningham, Toronto International Festival

Lady

Ira Sachs
New York, NY | 1994 | 28 min | 16mm
SCREENED AT THE 34TH AAFF IN 1996

A portrait film of a purposefully unsettling kind, starring Dominique Dibbell of The Five Lesbian Brothers. The exact identity of the redhead at the center of *Lady* is impossible to pin down. Is she a woman playing a man playing a woman, or more specifically, a lesbian playing a gay man playing a heterosexual woman? This purposeful ambiguity invites the audience to question the blurred parameters of sexuality, desire, and female identity.

Looking for Jiro

Tina Takemoto
San Francisco, CA | 2011 | 6 min | Video
THIS FILM IS IN COMPETITION

Looking for Jiro is a queer meditation on the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. At age 38, Jiro Onuma was imprisoned at Topaz concentration camp in Central Utah. He worked in the prison mess hall and liked muscular men. Jiro was also an avid fan of homoerotic male physique magazines. How did this dandy gay Issei bachelor from San Francisco survive the isolation, humiliation, and homophobia of imprisonment? This queer musical mash-up video features drag king performance, U.S. war propaganda footage, muscle building, and homoerotic bread making.

80
CAS

THURSDAY

Castro Street PG 54

MICHAEL ROBINSON

Over his prolific career, Michael Robinson has created a rich store of strange and hypnotic fictions within a collection of short films and videos, the earliest incarnation of which dates to when the filmmaker was a mere 10 years of age.

This program presents a group of his most engaging pieces and includes *Carpenter* (2001), "a get-well card in celluloid and tape", which screened at the 40th AAFF as well as his most recent works.

And We All Shine On
2006 | 7 min | 16mm

These Hammers Don't Hurt Us
2010 | 13 min | Video

The General Returns From One Place To Another
2006 | 11 min | 16mm on video

All Through the Night
2008 | 4 min | Video

Light Is Waiting
2007 | 11 min | Video

If There Be Thorns
2009 | 13 min | 16mm on video

Line Describing Your Mom
2011 | 6 min | Video

Carpenter
2001 | 3 min | 16mm

Victory Over the Sun
2007 | 13 min | 16mm

For film descriptions, please see additional program notes available at The Festival.

3 PM • Michigan Theater Screening Room • PANEL & SCREENING

FUTURE OF PRESERVATION

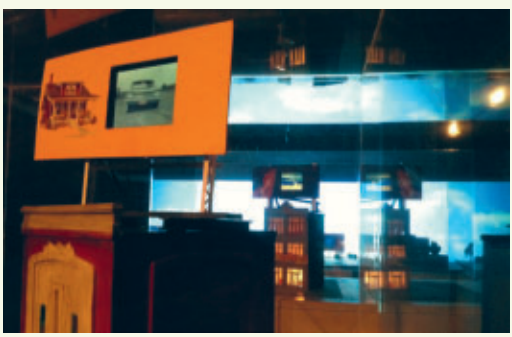
SUPPORTED BY THE ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES

Film preservationists **Mark Toscano** (Academy Film Archive) and **Ross Lipman** (UCLA Film & Televsion Archive) will be joined by **Tom Colley**, Collection Manager at Video Data Bank, to discuss the current state of film and video preservation, the future directions of archiving film, video and digital media and dispensing practical advice for artists to preserve their own moving-image work. Each will be screening, in whole or part, a recently preserved film or video.

3 PM • Gallery Project • FREE

SPATIAL SHIFT ARTISTS' TALK

A walk through and discussion of video based installations by Chris McNamara, Scott Northrup, Potter-Belmar Labs, Jen Proctor and Kyle Kramer. These works are part of Gallery Project's *Spatial Shift* exhibition and 50 SCREENS of the 50th AAFF, on view March 7–May 15.



On Location

CHRIS MCNAMARA | 2011 | Video, Mixed Media

This multimedia diorama addresses the ways certain late-capitalist cities are fetishized and looted in the name of cultural production and discourse. And, on a more fundamental level, this piece explores the ways in which cities function as sites for elusive memory.

I Could Walk Forever (If There's Nowhere for Me to Sit)

SCOTT NORTHRUP | 2012 | Multi-Channel Video Installation

The piece is a vigil of sorts for my maternal grandmother, a woman of great faith who was haunted by nightmares and fascinated by the inexplicable. She never learned to drive a car and always slept with the TV on.

Thirteen Views in Arid Lands

POTTER-BELMAR LABS | 2011 | Digital Video

This collection of time-lapse, panoramic videos was shot using custom-built equipment in the American SouthWest. The unique form of their presentation alludes to traditional Chinese landscape meditation scrolls, hand-cranked canvas panoramas of 19th century North America, and early penny arcade peephole spectacles.

Spline Describing a Phone

JEN PROCTOR | 2012 | iPhone, Pico Projector and Fog

A loving remake of Anthony McCall's 1973 sculptural light installation, *Line Describing A Cone*. Originally made with smoke and a 16mm film projector, this remade version explores the effects of the shrinking scale of technology and shift toward digital image systems.

Map of Forgotten Places

KYLE KRAMER | 2012 | 3D Video, 5.1 Surround Sound

An installation in stereoscopic 3D that explores abandoned production zones in the industrial Midwest.

5:10 PM • Michigan Theater Main Auditorium • FREE

Penny W. Stamps Distinguished Speaker Series presents

CRAIG BALDWIN: MASOCHISM OF THE MARGINS OF THE SOCIETY OF THE SPECTACLE

Many people don't even dare to negotiate the gnarly media-archeological mess that is my basement studio. But—believe it or not—comfort and joy CAN be found within the dangerous subculture of underground film! And there CAN be pride in the autonomous exercise of ingenuity and resourcefulness in the face of zero budgets through improvisation and re-use of tools and materials, at hand or in the dumpster, rather than the mindless consumption of the next (expensive) gadget. And there CAN be enlightenment in researches into history and its filmic representation that we can conduct through our treasured folk archives and personal libraries of books, vinyl, tapes, and celluloid. And there CAN be joy in the discovery of unexpected meanings in collage and recombinatory forms, in the semiotic play of hybrid artworks, inter-media, and expanded cinema. And there CAN be social good that comes with redeeming our collections of sounds and images, from both pop- and sub-culture, in comic and critical ways through culture-jamming and media intervention. And there CAN be genuine fraternity in opening up a social space—in the good old-fashioned physical world—for friends to meet fellow filmmakers, local and out-of-town, to screen and discuss work in an intimate setting.

Baldwin first showed his work at the Ann Arbor Film Festival 25 years ago with Rocketkitkongokit, which will screen at the 50th AAFF on Wednesday, March 28th in the 7:15pm Films in Competition 1 program.

7 PM • Michigan Theater Screening Room • CURATED BY IRINA LEIMBACHER

POETIC INJUSTICE
SHORT FILMS FROM THE ARAB WORLD

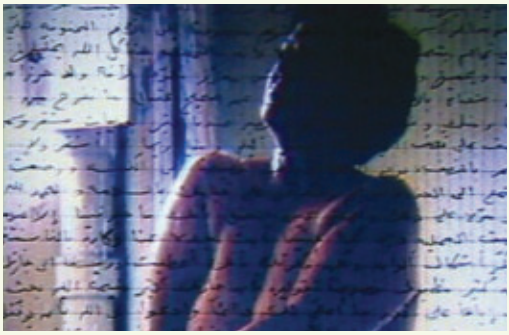
Curator Irina Leimbacher will present films and videos from the past 25 years from Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, and Morocco. What does it mean to speak one's history and the dreams and nightmares that inevitably accompany it? How is history told, and perhaps more importantly, how is it felt? These six short films from the Arab world take very different approaches. From familial intimacies to unfamiliar leaps of the imagination, from straightforward cartographic narratives to twisted and brilliant allegories, each work forcefully and passionately evokes political realities that, for the most part, still define our world today.

The Dead Weight of a Quarrel Hangs

Walid Raad

Lebanon | 1998 | 17 min | Video

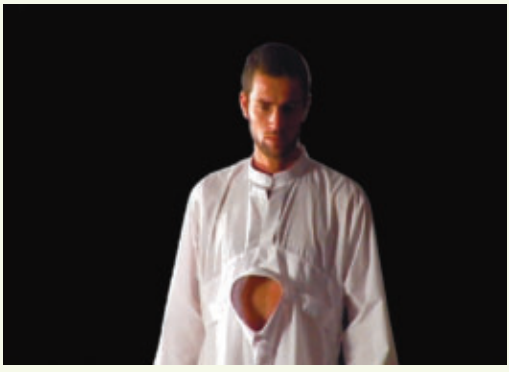
This piece investigates the possibilities and limits of writing a history of the Lebanese civil wars (1975–1991). The videos offer accounts of the fantastic situations that beset a number of individuals, though they do not document what happened. Rather, they explore what can be imagined, what can be said, what can be taken for granted, what can appear as rational, sayable, and thinkable about the wars.



Measures of Distance

Mona Hatoum
England | 1988 | 15 min | Video

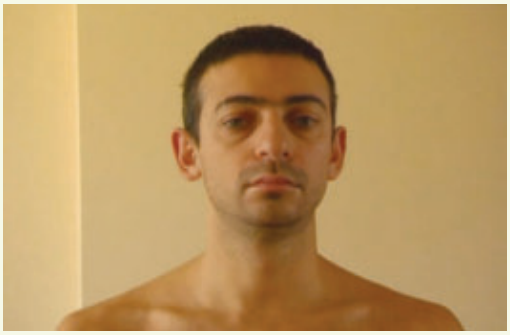
In this resonant work, Palestinian-born video and performance artist Mona Hatoum explores the renewal of friendship between mother and daughter during a brief family reunion in war-torn Lebanon in 1981. Through letters read in voice-over and Arabic script overlaying the images, the viewer experiences the silence and isolation imposed by war. The politics of the family and the exile of the Palestinian people are inseparable in this forceful, moving video.



Chic Point

Sharif Waked
Israel | 2003 | 7 min | Video

Chic Point was shot in a fictional location: the occupied catwalk. Employing all the elements of a fashion show, models reveal their abdomens in outfits designed especially to suit Israeli checkpoints. For Israelis in the present time, the individual Palestinian body is the most dangerous weapon there is, and it is therefore the subject of ongoing and humiliating surveillance.



Slippage

Ali Cherri
Lebanon | 2007 | 12 min | Video

A reflection on the aftermath of the war: is it time to abandon Beirut, now that it has abandoned itself? Filmed in 2006 during the July War between Lebanon and Israel.

Ninha / Nous

Danielle Arbid
Lebanon | 2005 | 13 min | Video

"My father was dying. I shot him to keep some evidence. I was afraid to lose everything I thought about him, all my anger against him, all my memories." –Danielle Arbid

Mapping Journey #5

Bouchra Khalili
Morocco / France | 2010 | 11 min | Video

Khalili travelled to Marseilles, Ramallah, Bari, Rome, Barcelona and Istanbul– the arteries of trafficking and trade. She walked around each city with maps and a fistful of permanent markers in her bag. She didn't go searching for her subjects but rather waited for an occasion to meet them. In each of the videos teased from Khalili's encounters, the subject describes his or her journey and draws its shape. In *Mapping Journey #5*, a young man, dreaming of Italy, zigzags from Dhaka to Delhi, Moscow to Skopje, back to Dhaka and then, trying again, to Dubai, Mali, Niger and Libya, eventually washing up on the shores of Lampedusa, Sicily, five years later. -Kaelen Wilson-Goldie, Frieze Magazine

BRUCE BAILLIE RETROSPECTIVE 1

SUPPORTED BY THE ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES

The Ann Arbor Film Festival is honored to have Bruce Baillie in attendance for the presentation of three programs of some of the most important films to emerge from American avant garde filmmaking. These programs comprise the core of a large and astonishing series of masterworks created by the artist over five decades. In addition to making films, Baillie was a central figure in the burgeoning Bay Area film scene in the 60's and 70's, and along with filmmaker Chick Strand, co-founded Canyon Cinema, a distribution collective for avant garde and independent films. Baillie (b. 1931, Aberdeen, South Dakota), began making films in 1960. In 1963, during the 1st AAFF, an entire program was devoted to Bruce Baillie's films. Baillie and his work continued to be a strong and consistent presence through the first decade of the AAFF.

Baillie will be joined onstage in conversation with noted film author Scott MacDonald.

Here I Am

1962 | 11 min | 16mm

One of Baillie's earliest films, *Here I Am* is an extraordinary portrait of children at the East Bay Activity Center, a school in Oakland, California started in the 1950s to help emotionally disturbed children.

To Parsifal

1963 | 16 min | 16mm

A tribute to Wagner and the myth of the Holy Grail and the Parsifalian hero. Various scenes, first in the Pacific, mainly in the fog (including passing under the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge), then along the Southern Pacific Railroad's main line over the Sierra Nevada Mountains, set to selections of Wagner's *Parsifal*.

"He who becomes slowly wise." – BB

Mr. Hayashi

1961 | 3 min | 16mm

One of several "Canyon CinemaNews" reels that Baillie made in the early to mid 1960s, the film *Mr. Hayashi* has "an immediate basis in necessity" as Baillie described, and is a fleeting, evocative portrait of a Japanese gardner looking for work.

Tung

1966 | 5 min | 16mm

One of Baillie's sensuous tone poems, *Tung* is a portrait of a friend; sandy skin and flaxen hair in the early-morning light. –Scott MacDonald

All My Life

1966 | 3 min | 16mm

"Caspar, California; old fence with red roses." – BB

Mass for the Dakota Sioux

1964 | 20 min | 16mm

A film Mass, dedicated to nobility and excellence. The film begins with a short introduction – "No chance for me to live, Mother, you might as well mourn." Sitting Bull, Hunkpapa Sioux Chief. Applause for a lone figure dying on the street.

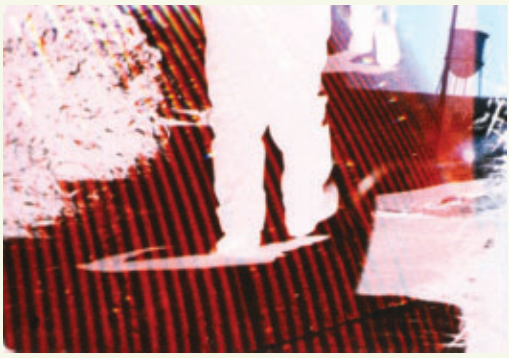
INTROIT. A long, lightly exposed section composed in the camera. KYRIE. A motorcyclist crossing the San Francisco Bridge accompanied by the sound of Gregorian chant, recorded at the Trappist Monastery in Vina, California. The sounds of the "mass" rise and fall throughout. GLORIA. The sound of a siren and a short sequence of a '33 Cadillac proceeding over the Bay Bridge and disappearing into a tunnel. The final section of the Communion begins with the OFFERTORY in a procession of lights and figures to the second chant. The anonymous figure from the introduction is discovered again, dead on the pavement. The body is consecrated and taken away past an indifferent, isolated people, accompanied by the final chant. The Mass is traditionally a celebration of Life; thus the contradiction between the form of the Mass and the theme of Death. The dedication is to the religious people who were destroyed by the civilization which evolved the Mass. – BB

Castro Street

1966 | 10 min | 16mm

An extraordinary technical achievement and a poetic masterpiece, *Castro Street* is a layered portrait of the Standard Oil Refinery in Richmond, California which Baillie describes as "coming of consciousness".

"I wanted to visualize that ancient, universal fact of opposites that are one, both in conflict and harmony – opposing each other and abiding together and requiring each other." – Bruce Baillie, in an interview with Scott MacDonald, A Critical Cinema 2



SOUTHERN
PACIFIC

THE STRAWBERRY TREE

with *FLIGHT*

The Strawberry Tree (El árbol de las fresas)

Simone Rapisarda Casanova
Montreal, Canada | 2011 | 71 min | Video

The remarkable first feature-length film by Sicilian-born and Montréal-based filmmaker Simone Rapisarda Casanova. Existing between anthropology, documentary and reverie, *El árbol de las fresas* (*The Strawberry Tree*) is a mesmerizing cinematic poem that portrays with rigorous restraint the final sigh of one of Cuba's last fishing villages.

The film was shot in the remote hamlet of Juan Antonio, only weeks before it disappeared at the hands of Hurricane Ike. Located where Columbus first set anchor in his 1492 discovery of the New World, the village hosted a singular fishing community, where traits and habits of the Taìno indigenous population had survived and mixed with those of the Spanish colonizers. The film primarily focuses on the daily routines of two families while they prepare for Children's Day and the next day's fishing expedition.

Through a candid observation of the villagers and of the peculiar relationship that develops between them and the filmmaker, *El árbol de las fresas* renders a sensitive portrait of a unique culture into a meditation on documentary film-making and on humanity on the edge of time.

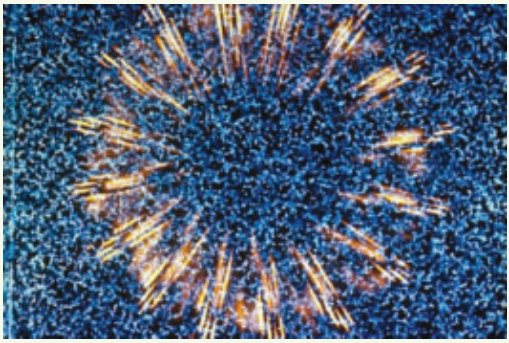
FLIGHT

Greta Snider
San Francisco, CA | 1997 | 5 min | 16mm

SCREENED AT 36TH AAFF IN 1998 : NOT IN COMPETITION

My father's photographic legacy, compiled and transformed into light. His family photographs, his hobbyist pictures of trains and roses, his airplanes and his obsession with birds circling...these images are imprinted onto the film, like a fingerprint or trace. The film is hand-processed and hand-exposed without a camera (as with Ray-O-Grams). –GS

FILMS IN COMPETITION 3



Chakra

Jordan Belson (1926–2011)
1972 | 6 min | 16mm

SCREENED AT 11TH AAFF IN 1973 : NOT IN COMPETITION

One of the greatest artists and filmmakers who created non-objective, abstract films; Jordan Belson made over 30 films between the late 1940s and 2005. *Chakra* was one of six films of his screened at the AAFF during the 1970s.

"Usually the subjects I chose to build images around had some kind of traditional form of their own that I found useful in constructing my film. Take *Chakra*, for instance. If you study the chakras (the psychic centers in the body), you find that there are seven of them...They're usually depicted as arranged along the spinal column and described starting from the bottom, going to the top. Each chakra has its own unique characteristics, and centuries of elaboration and analysis have accumulated around these characteristics. ... In *Chakra*, I was able to transfer the traditional order of the chakras into a film, starting with the first (lower) chakra and working up to the seventh (top) chakra... " -Jordan Belson, interview with Scott MacDonald, from *A Critical Cinema 3*

still from *Chakra*, (c) Jordan Belson, still image and 16mm preservation print courtesy Center for Visual Music

Solar Sight

Lawrence Jordan
San Francisco, CA | 2011 | 15 min | 16mm

A question I had in mind was: what's the place of the human being in the cosmos? More and more we think about what is 'beyond.' Less and less is art concerned. I don't know why. The question seems a bit grandiose, but I approached it quite simply. I have never worked with color photography as primary background to cut-out animation before. I was surprised that the result was so powerful (helped by John Davis' very resonant music). It was liberating to release hu- man figures into an apperception of suggested space, along with the primordial enigma of the revolving sphere. – LJ

Curious Light

Charlotte Pryce
Los Angeles, CA | 2011 | 4 min | 16mm Silent

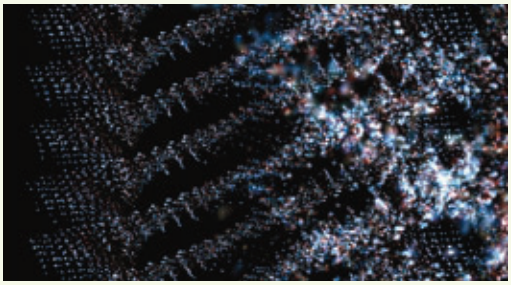
A manuscript illuminated: illustrations retreat into the fiber of the page; a fleeting light dissolves into the emulsion of the film: an elusive story is revisited. – CP

SPONSORED BY : yelp

Emblem

Rei HAYAMA
Japan | 2012 | 16 min | Video
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

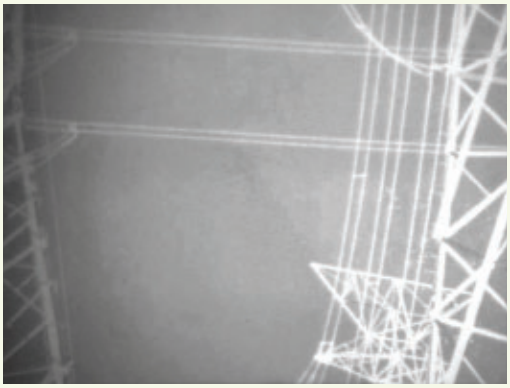
Using a fixed camera remotely operated within a bird sanctuary and trained on a mess of twigs and leaves, Rei Hayama's *Emblem* uses the steady and unbroken gaze of this standard ornithological research tool as a resting place for a busy mind's eye. The film contemplates the power of an imagination which can vest itself so completely in an invented world as to happily know it to be nature itself.



Vexed

Telecosystems
Rotterdam, The Netherlands | 2012 | 29 min | Video
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

As physicists are closing in on the particle described as the fundamental building block in our understanding of the Universe, Telcosystems show a far less conclusive particle theory; one that describes a digital world that is unstable and multimodal by nature, only revealing itself through bits and pieces traveling at superluminal velocity. At these speeds even the slightest fluctuation or disturbance un- leashes a cascade of shapeshifting sono-optical movements, constantly challenging and redefining the rules by which this pattern-defying universe is pulled from stasis into turbulent chaos.



The Electric Embrace

Norbert Shieh
Los Angeles, CA | 2011 | 2 min | 16mm | Silent

This silent, hand-processed and optically printed film shifts like an electric current between positive and negative spaces to examine the electric pylons by the Los Angeles River. The geometric and graphic nature of these structures is further explored through double exposures, step printing, and pixelation. – NS

AFTERPARTY

The Ravens Club | 11:30 pm – 2 am | FREE
Enjoy independent and experimental mixology in a 1920's speakeasy setting.

FRIDAY

American Falls PG 69

KATHY GERITZ

SUPPORTED BY THE ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES

Kathy Geritz, curator for the Pacific Film Archive, presents a program of eight historic and influential films that have screened at the AAFF over the past 50 years.

Peyote Queen

Storm de Hirsch
1965 | 9 min | 16mm
SCREENED AT 6TH AAFF IN 1968

A further exploration into the color of ritual, the color of thought; a journey through the underworld of sensory derangement.

Schmeerguntz

Gunvor Nelson & Dorothy Wiley
1966 | 5 min | 16mm
SCREENED AT 4TH AAFF IN 1966

Schmeerguntz is one long raucous belch in the face of the American Home. A society which hides its animal functions beneath a shiny public surface deserves to have such films as *schmeerguntz* shown everywhere - in every PTA, every Rotary Club, every club in the land. For it is brash enough, brazen enough and funny enough to purge the soul of every harried American married woman. – Ernest Callenbach, Film Quarterly

—------ (Short Line Long Line)

Thom Andersen & Malcolm Brodwick
1967 | 11 min | 16mm
SCREENED AT 7TH AAFF IN 1969

"A documentary about rock 'n' roll. A sequence of picture-sound equations with randomly chosen terms. Vertically, —------ is completely structured; horizontally it is completely random. A pastiche of cinematography, a parody of montage. 1:2. 3:7. Right, left. Right to left-left to right. Up-down. Stasis, motion. Orange, magenta. Yellow, blue. Red, green. Magenta, orange..." – Thom Andersen

Necrology

Standish Lawder
1970 | 12 min | 16mm
SCREENED AT 8TH AAFF IN 1970

"In *Necrology*, a 12-minute film, in one continuous shot he films the faces of a 5:00 PM crowd descending via the Pan Am building escalators. In old-fashioned black and white, these faces stare into the empty space, in the 5:00 PM tiredness and mechanical impersonality, like faces from the grave. It's hard to believe that these faces belong to people today. The film is one of the strongest and grimmest comments upon the contemporary society that cinema has produced." – Jonas Mekas, The Village Voice

Washing Walls with Mrs. G.

Tony Buba
1980 | 6 min | 16mm
SCREENED AT 19TH AAFF IN 1981

Every year I washed walls for my grandmother. When my grandmother was 87, I made this film while washing her walls. The cameraperson was Nick Mastandrea, who has gone on to be one of the top A.D. in Hollywood. Nick never shot anything before this and he said what do I do. I told him don't pan, tilt or zoom, just keep my grandmother in the frame. – TB

The Red Book

Janie Geiser
1994 | 11 min | 16mm
SCREENED AT 33RD AAFF IN 1995

An elliptical, pictographic animated film that uses flat, painted figures and collage elements in both two and three-dimensional settings, The Red Book explores the realms of memory, language and identity from the point of view of a woman amnesiac. As the film progresses, the submerged images of her stored memory appear and collide with the present world in circular rhythms, and there is a sense of irretrievable loss.

Egypt

Kathrin Resetarits
1997 | 10 min | 16mm
SCREENED AT 37TH AAFF IN 1999

A film about deaf mutes, or rather about their sign language, a language which, like the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs, links the symbolic terminology of words with the mimetic and analogous representations of graphic gestures. Sober black and white scenes show how "shark", "widow", "Marilyn Monroe", a James bond sequence, a Viennese song or the account of a treasure hunt undertaken by two holidaymakers in Egypt look in the sign language. It is a very modest indication, an introduction to an unfamiliar way of experiencing the world, where one sees the sounds without hearing them. – Drehli Robnik

Sarabande

Nathaniel Dorsky
2008 | 15 min | 16mm | Silent
SCREENED AT 47TH AAFF IN 2009

"Dark and stately is the warm, graceful tenderness of the Sarabande." – ND

3 PM • UM Slusser Gallery • **FREE**

LEIGHTON PIERCE ARTIST TALK

Filmmaker and installation artist Leighton Pierce leads a gallery walk-through and discussion of his major multi-channel video installation *Threshold of Peripheral Induction* on view at the UM Slusser Gallery March 26–April 2. **CO-PRESENTED BY UM ROMAN J WITT RESIDENCY**

Threshold of Peripheral Induction

Leighton Pierce
2012 | 4 Channel Video, 8 Channel Audio
UM Slusser Gallery (*see page 128 for map and address*)
March 26 – April 2

Pierce's installation creates an environment for proto-narratives. The imagined camera constantly moves as if an entity through real yet abstracted space. Small events occur, yet a plot never takes hold. This is the proto-narrative—events seem to be linked in time and across space, but likely outcomes are never encouraged.

Through specific arrangement of a "U" shaped projection object, Pierce has made it impossible to see more than two projected images at once. The observer must continually change their viewing position –a move which simultaneously eliminates some images from view. The purposeful lack of an ideal viewing position forces an engagement with memory and forgetting as the observer integrates visual, aural, and spatial impressions into an internal shifting coherence.

The images themselves are both beautiful and uncanny. The bulk of the material was shot in natural light at night, much of it in a rural setting away from most artificial light sources. Pierce shot thousands of handheld long-exposure digital stills that he later wove into video "shots." He moved the camera during each of these long (several seconds in most cases) exposures, painting with the low light and strange color shifts of night onto the image sensor. In these images, both the light of night and the markers of time due to intentional motion blur create a sense of familiar strangeness.

Pierce's process of shooting embodied an attentional effect, which he continued to explore throughout the editing and arrangement of the finished piece. The difficulty of capturing handheld moving stills to be later animated into video, forced an attention to kinesthetic memory while shooting. Each hour long "shoot" (required to gather material for a one or two minute shot) was a continuous dance with the camera. Coupled with the necessary live calculations of simultaneous time streams (1 – each exposure's duration and the unnaturally slow movement required to shoot in this stop-motion manner and 2 – the anticipated duration and temporal flow of the completed video shot), this created a production environment in which he could embed a quality of attention into the process of making itself, from the very first moment.

3 PM • UMMA, Helmut Stern Auditorium • **PANEL DISCUSSION** • **FREE**

ROOTED NOT RETRO

An oral history project aimed to serve as an extension of Recollections, Myths and Half-Truths, the Bentley Historical Library archival collection and the digital archive housed at the Ann Arbor District Library; In-person stories shared from the Festival's 50 years, including AAFF founder George Manupelli, performance artist Pat Oleszko, past festival director Ruth Bradley, long time festival goer and presenter Gerry Fialka and other special guests. Attendees are encouraged to participate and contribute their own festival experiences and stories.

GEORGE MANUPELLI founded the AAFF in 1963 and was the Festival's Director for two decades. As an artist he designed the first 20 years of AAFF posters and participated as a filmmaker with more than a dozen of his films, including the iconic *Dr. Chicago*. Manupelli was a Professor at the University of Michigan, School of Architecture and Design, Dean of the San Francisco Art Institute, and a Professor at York University. He resides in Bethlehem, New Hampshire.

RUTH BRADLEY was AAFF Director for the 20th – 24th Festivals, incorporated the Festival as a non-profit in 1983 and was actively involved for many years prior. In 1985 she completed her dissertation "The Ann Arbor Film Festival, 1963 – 1982: A History of Illustrating the Genres of American Avant-Garde Cinema" for a doctoral degree in American Culture at the University of Michigan. She is currently the Director of Ohio University's Athens Center for Film and Video, Executive Director of the Athena Cinema and has served as Director for Athens International Film and Video Festival for 25 years.

PAT OLESZKO created legendary performances and wearable artworks during the early years of the AAFF. The body is Oleszko's armature for ideas. Utilizing elaborate costumes and props, she has created lithe performances, films, and installations that include trees, knees, breasts, and elephants. She received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1990 and was a Witt Artist in Residence at the University of Michigan School of Art & Design in 2009. She currently resides in New York City.

GERRY FIALKA began attending the AAFF in 1971, participated a presenter six times and was actively involved for many more. He is a film curator, writer & lecturer and has conducted research into the history of the AAFF, with more than 50 interviews of filmmakers and audience-goers. In 1990 he founded the PXL THIS film festival, one of the longest-running in Los Angeles, CA. He currently resides in Venice, California.

Read the Panelists' Essays

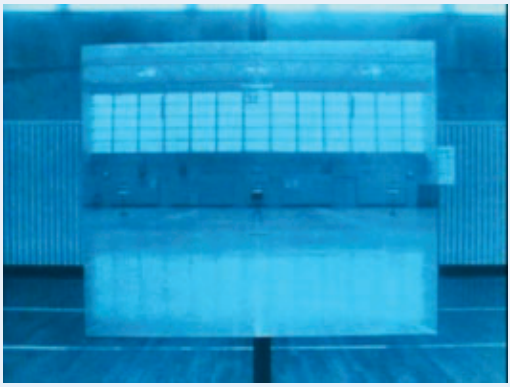
George Manupelli: pg. 32
Pat Oleszko: pg. 30
Ruth Bradley: pg. 31
Gerry Fialka: pg. 26

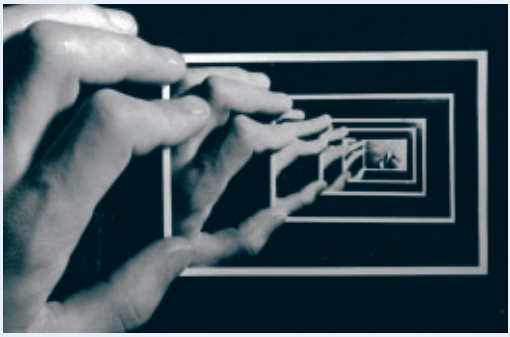
5 PM • Michigan Theater Screening Room • **CURATOR TOMONARI NISHIKAWA IN ATTENDANCE**

SPACE / TIME

Japanese Avant-Garde Films of the 1970s & 1980s

CO-PRESENTED BY CENTER FOR JAPANESE STUDIES SPACE / TIME collects ten 16mm films from the 1970s and early 1980s, created within a vibrant and prolific Japanese avant-garde film scene which experimented with the material and structure of the film form and explored some fundamental ideas of inscription in a photographed world. The program features several rarely seen works such as Sakumi Hagiwara's *Kiri*, Hiroshi Yamazaki's *Heliography*, and Nobuhiro Kanawaka's *Switchback* along with landmark films of the era including Toshio Matsumoto's *Atman* and Takashi Ito's *Spacy*. *Curated by Tomonari Nishikawa & David Dinnell*





KIRI
Sakumi HAGIWARA
1972 | 8 min | 16mm

Heliography
Hiroshi YAMAZAKI
1979 | 6 min | 16mm

At Yukigaya 2
Mako IDEMITSU
1974 | 11 min | 16mm

My Movie Melodies
Jun'ichi OKUYAMA
1980 | 7 min | 16mm

Orandajin no Shashin
Isao KOTA
1974 | 7 min | 16mm

Atman
Toshio MATSUMOTO
1975 | 12 min | 16mm

Spacy
Takashi ITO
1981 | 10 min | 16mm

Un Relatif Horaire
Yo OTA
1981 | 2 min | 16mm

Switch Back
Nobuhiro KAWANAKA
1976 | 9 min | 16mm

Like a Train Passing 1
Kohei ANDO
1978 | 3 min | 16mm

For film descriptions, please see additional program notes available at The Festival.

ALL DIVIDED SELVES

Luke Fowler | Scotland | 2011 | 93 min | 16mm on video

All Divided Selves, a new feature length film by the artist Luke Fowler. Following hiscelebrated works *What You See Is Where You're At* (2001) and *Bogman Palmjaguar* (2007), this is the third of Fowler's works to take up the legacy of radical psychiatrist R.D.Laing.

The social and cultural revolutions of the 1960s were spearheaded by the charismatic, guru-like figure of Glasgow born Psychiatrist R.D. Laing. In his now classic text *The Politics of Experience* (1967) Laing argued that normality entailed adjusting ourselves to the mystification of an alienating and depersonalizing world. Thus, those society labels as 'mentally ill' are in fact 'hypersane' travelers, conducting an inner voyage through aeonic time. The film concentrates on archival representations of Laing and his colleagues as they struggled to acknowledge the importance of considering social environment and disturbed interaction in institutions as significant factors in the aetiology of human distress and suffering. *All Divided Selves* reprises the vacillating responses to these radical views and the less forgiving responses to Laing's latter career shift; from eminent

psychiatrist to enterprising celebrity. A dense, engaging and lyrical collage- Fowler weaves archival material with his own filmic observations—marrying a dynamic soundtrack of field recordings with recorded music by Éric La Casa, Jean-Luc Guionnet and Alasdair Roberts.

FILMS IN COMPETITION 4

The Discipline of DE

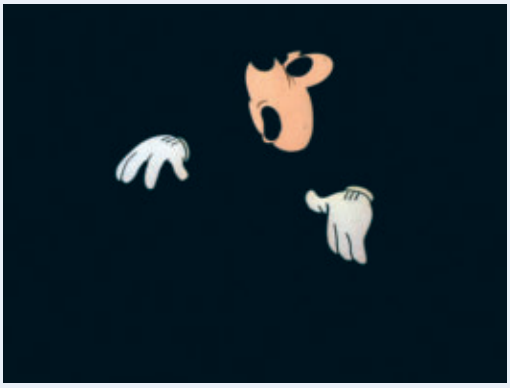
Gus Van Sant
1978 | 9 min | 16mm on Video
SCREENED AT 17TH AAFF IN 1979 : NOT IN COMPETITION

Gus Van Sant's early short film, adapted from a short story by William Burroughs. *The Discipline of DE* demonstrates an extremely efficient way of doing things.

Conjuror's Box

Kerry Laitala
San Francisco, CA | 2011 | 5 min | 35mm | Silent

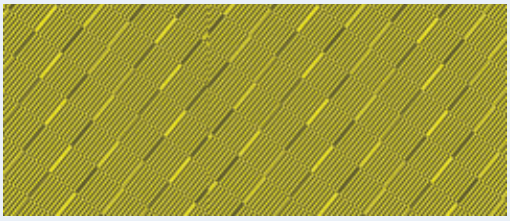
The last work in the recently finished the hand-made, hand-processed films entitled the *Muse of Cinema Series, Conjuror's Box*, was made using several D.I.Y. collage techniques including: cinegramming, hand-painting, and the re-animation of magic lantern slides. This film takes the viewer through the looking glass, to immerse them in a fiery pane of hand-painted wonders.



Soft Palate

Martin Arnold
Vienna, Austria | 2011 | 3 min | Video

The second film in Martin Arnold's series of Disney deconstructions; *Soft Palate* rhythmically builds Mickey's sleeping body out of the darkness of his bedroom one body part at a time, revealing hands and mouth and tongue all set to Arnold's fabricated sense of the Mouse's hypnotic nighttime whistle-snore.



Vergence

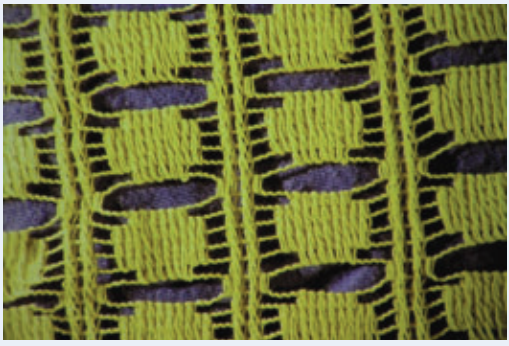
Tina Frank
Vienna, Austria | 2010 | 7 min | Video

This video focuses on the threshold of spatial perception. Like a chromographic pendulum, yellow-black patterns contract, unfold and overlap. They evoke rapid speed mementos of Brion Gysin's Dreamachines as well as Tony Conrad's *The Flicker* or of Gestalt Theory from the early 20th century. After an induction period of some minutes the viewer can no longer tell if what he sees are afterimages from the color space or if these psychedelic visions are part of the videosequence. - TF

A Lax Riddle Unit

Laida Lertxundi
Los Angeles, CA | 2011 | 6 min | 16mm

In a Los Angeles interior, moving walls for loss. Practicing a song to a loved one. A film of the feminine structuring body. – LL



Point de Gaze

Jodie Mack
Lebanon, NH | 2012 | 5 min | 16mm | Silent
WORLD PREMIERE

Named after a type of Belgian lace, this spectral study investigates intricate illusion and optical arrest. – JM

Undergrowth

Robert Todd
Boston, MA | 2011 | 12 min | 16mm

A blind predator dreams through its prey's eyes. – RT

In the Open (Im Freien)

Albert Sackl
Vienna, Austria | 2011 | 23 min | 35mm | Silent

Using time-lapse technique Sackl explores the energetic interaction between man-made construction and camera rhythm, cant, and shudder in the textural particulars of a remote mountainous landscape in Iceland. One image every three minutes condenses three months into 23 minutes with a technical precision sharply defined amid continuously changing skies and fidgeting ground.

Ricky

Janie Geiser
Los Angeles, CA | 2011 | 11 min | Video

The realms of childhood, war, and loss echo through *Ricky*. Double vision illuminates, and simultaneously obfuscates, what can be remembered, lost, or retrieved. A found sound recording forms the spine of the film...a scratched audio letter from father to son.

FILMS BY PHIL SOLOMON

A program of works drawn from three decades of profoundly elegiac cinema of Phil Solomon. From his exquisitely bejeweled hand processed 16mm films to the more recent digital pieces, appropriating landscapes from Grand Theft Auto, Solomon has created one of the most deeply transportive bodies of film and video work of recent years.

Nocturne

1980 | 10 min | 16mm | Silent

Nocturne: Finding similarities in the pulses and shapes between my own experiments in night photography, lightning storms, and night bombing in World War II, I constructed the war at home. – PS

Snowman

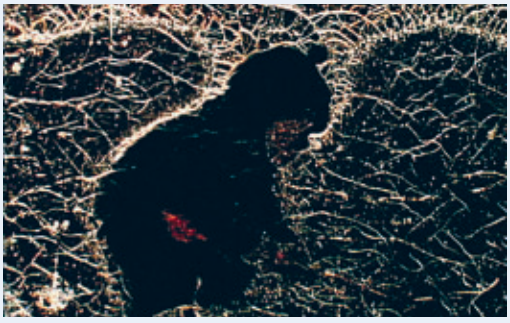
1995 | 8 min | 16mm

A meditation on memory, burial and decay – a belated kaddish for my father. – PS

Psalm II: Walking Distance

1999 | 23 min | 16mm

Inspired by Kiefer and Ryder, dedicated to Stan Brakhage. Imagining one of those rusted medieval film cans having survived centuries, a long lost Biograph/Star, a Griffith/Méliès co-production, a two-reeler left to us from, say, the Bronze Age, a time when images were smelted and boiled rather than merely taken, when they poured down like silver, not be to fixed and washed, mind you, but free to reform and coagulate into unstable, temporary molds, mere holding patterns of faces, places, and things, shape-shifting according to whim, need, the uncanny or the inevitable... *Walking Distance* is a simple Golden Book tale of horizontals and verticals, a cinema of ether and ore... – PS



Crossroad

2005 | 5 min | Video
Created with Mark LaPore

Mark and I made this film for our friend David Gatten, as a prayer, an offering, a "get well soon" card... for all three of us. It was made on the last night that I saw Mark, my best friend of 32 years. – PS

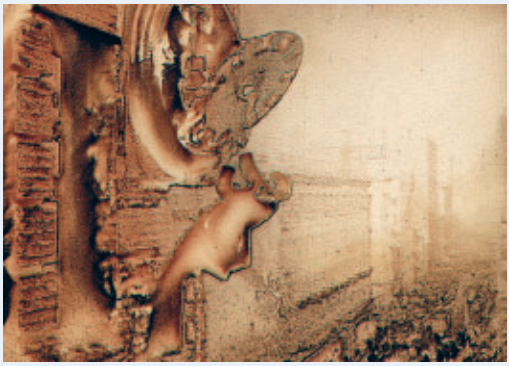
Rehearsals for Retirement

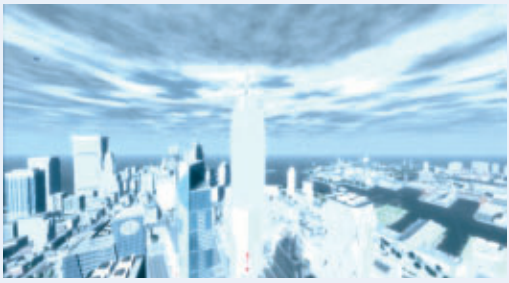
2007 | 10 min | Video

Last Days In A Lonely Place

2008 | 22 min | Video

In the first two works of the acclaimed trilogy *In Memoriam: Mark LaPore*, Solomon transforms atmospheric landscapes generated in Grand Theft Auto game-play, into brooding depopulated scenes haunted by figures occasionally glimpsed through shimmering light and seeming endless torrential rain.





American Falls

2010 | 55 min. | 3 Channel Video 5.1, Audio

American Falls, Phil Solomon's epic cross-examination of 20th Century American history, begins with an image of Annie Edson Taylor, who became the first person to survive a plunge over Niagara Falls in a barrel in 1901. The idea of "falling," both literal and metaphorical, becomes the guiding concept of this three-channel installation, as Solomon applies his trademark "image alchemy" (a process that involves applying chemical solutions to film emulsion) to images that somehow seem conjured from the collective unconscious. Begun at the dawn of the Bush era and completed as Obama took office, *American Falls* is a magisterial, meticulous survey of the promise and failure of a cracked American dream. – John Powers

American Falls will be on exhibition at the University of Michigan School of Art & Design's Work gallery from March 25 – April 2.

Empire

2008 | 45 min | HD Video

Phil Solomon's *Empire* ushers Warhol's conceptual classic into the age of computer graphics. Solomon's digital ready-made is a static shot from the videogame Grand Theft Auto IV of the Liberty City (née Manhattan) skyline in perpetuity. As much as *Empire* deals with Warhol and the city, it also is a contemplation of Grand Theft Auto IV (GTA). On the ground, the GTA environment seems to consist solely of cement, neon, and lead, but Empire shows us Rothko-like skies, cyclical moons, shimmering bodies of water, and other dazzlingly beautiful phenomenon that are otherwise invisible. Warhol – always simultaneously astute and simple – surely intended his title to conjure thoughts about meanings of the word *Empire* beyond the literal building. Solomon takes up this idea to reflect on the current state of the American empire, creating an elegant diptych with American Falls. – Chris Stults, exceprted from his essay, *Empire*

Empire will be exhibited in the Michigan Theater, adjacent to the Screening Room, for the duration of the 50th AAFF.

ANIMATED FILMS IN COMPETITION

Perpetual Motion

Karen Aqua (1954–2011)
1992 | 5 min | 16mm
SCREENED AT 30TH AAFF IN 1992 : NOT IN COMPETITION

A shrine to ritualized time. This film celebrates the cyclical nature of time, and the symbols and rites, which have been created to mark and honor its passage.

Walt Disney's "Taxi Driver"

Bryan Boyce
San Francisco, CA | 2011 | 5 min | Video

Walt Disney's re-imagineering of Martin Scorsese's classic film *Taxi Driver* follows Mickey Mouse-obsessed Travis Bickle as he looks for love in a rapidly transforming NYC.

The Renter

Jason Carpenter
Los Angeles, CA | 2011 | 10 min | Video

A young boy is dropped off at an elderly woman's home for the day. A lone man, who rents a room, adds to the unsettling atmosphere. The savage slaughter of a chicken makes this daycare a harsh and confusing world for the boy, who learns caring can be shown in unexpected ways. – JC

Fiesta Brava

Steven Woloshen
Montreal, Canada | 2011 | 4 min | 35mm
US PREMIERE

For one day each year, bulls will run wild on the streets of Pamplona, Spain. This is what their stampede would look like. – SW

A Different Bunny

Danijel Zezeij
Brooklyn, NY | 2010 | 3 min | Video

A small bunny in a big city looks for love in the wrong place. -DZ

Secret Bee

Gina Kamentsky
Somerville, MA | 2010 | 3 min | Video

Secret Bee ventures toward the sweet honey- spot where representation and surface push and pull each other like a two-headed lama. Film footage was produced frame by frame, painting and drawing directly on found film stock resulting in a cavalcade of color and image. – GK

Self Control

Martin Arnold
Vienna, Austria | 2011 | 4 min | 35mm

The third film in Martin Arnold's recent series.

SiSiSiSiSiSiSiSiSiSi

Juan Camilo González
Los Angeles, CA | 2011 | 6 min | Video
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

The never-ceasing repetition of polite gestures. A micro-universe is created in four sets of eleven pieces of paper with hand drawn animated cycles. – JCG

In Between Shadows

Tianran Duan
Beijing, PR China | 2011 | 6 min | Video

While the sunshine casts on buildings, either on walls, stairs or floors, shadows will appear and form infinite space and mysterious structures, a combination of memories, subconscious and past time. – TD

Soil

Meejin Hong
Val Verde, CA | 2011 | 3 min | Video

He flayed his skin to feed the people who donned it for twenty days straight. A rite of passage emerged from the rot as new life sprung from the old. – MH

Maska

Quay Brothers
London, England | 2010 | 24 min | 35mm

With music composed by Krzysztof Penderecki and an adaptation of Stanislaw Lem's novel, the Quay Brothers' latest film is set in a technologically developed but feudal world. Beautiful Duenna was created in order to carry out a certain mission. However, she will be forced to choose between accomplishing the task she was created for and love.

Lázsló Lassú

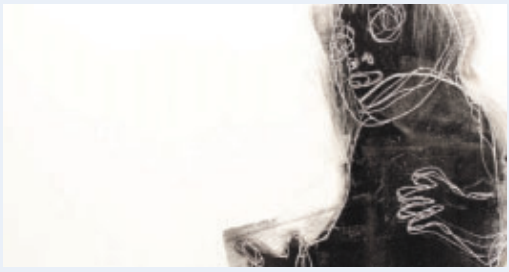
Ben Popp
Portland, OR | 2011 | 4 min | Video

A music film for the band A Hawk and A Hacksaw that tells the story about a couple torn apart by the recesses of space. The only thing which will bring them back together again is the music they loved to play with one another. -BP

BIRDBOY

Pedro Rivero, Alberto Vazquez
Spain | 2010 | 13 min | 35mm

A terrible industrial accident changes Little DINKI's life forever. Now DINKI's fate may ride on the wings of her eccentric friend BIRDBOY, a misfit who hides in the Dead Forest lost in his fantasies...



11:30 PM • The B-Side @ Neutral Zone • Afterparty • FREE for passholders $5 Admission

SUPER 8MM FILMS BY PAUL CLIPSON

San Francisco-based filmmaker Paul Clipson presents his Super 8mm films.

Compound Eyes 1-5

2011 | 27 min | Super 8mm

Studies of insect and animal life, viewed within a succession of environments in unexpected ways; with live music by **Matthew De Gennaro**.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS
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Sketches from the Field

2012 | 45 min | Super 8mm

A moving collage; this amorphous journey through landscapes, indeterminate spaces and fields of darkness, color and light, presents within the environment of a live performance by Chicago musician **Scott Tuma**, an ephemeral dimension of associated sounds, images, and latent impressions.

Another Void

2012 | 10 min | Super 8mm

WORLD PREMIERE

A vertiginous study of movement, color and darkness, that continues an exploration of the process of filmmaking and its close relation to music. With music by Jefre Cantu-Ledesma.

12 AM • State Theatre

MIDNIGHT MOVIE: THX 1138

George Lucas | 1972 | 86 min | 35mm

The feature version of George Lucas' student film, which screened at the 6th AAFF in 1968. Set in the 25th century, the story centers around a man and a woman who rebel against their rigidly controlled society.

THX 1138, LUH 3417, and SEN 5241 attempt to escape from a futuristic society located beneath the surface of the Earth. The society has outlawed sex, with drugs used to control the people. THX 1138 stops taking the drugs, and gets LUH 3417 pregnant. They are both thrown in jail where they meet SEN 5241 and start to plan their escape.

SATURDAY

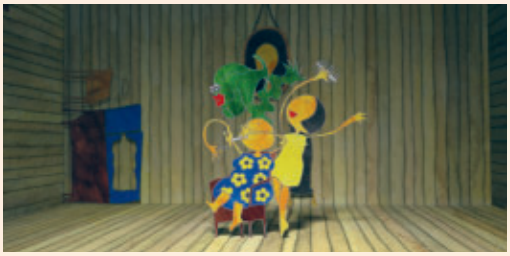
Landfill 16 PG 85

FILMS IN COMPETITION 5 (AGES 6+)

UFOs

Lillian Schwartz, Ken Knowlton
1971 | 3 min | 16mm
SCREENED AT 10TH AAFF IN 1972 : NOT IN COMPETITION

Recently restored 16mm film print of this pioneering work of computer-generated animation. UFOs was created at Bell Laboratories where Schwartz was a consultant and artist-in-residence. UFOs will be presented in 3D for this screening.



The House (Das Haus)

David Buob
Berlin, Germany | 2011 | 7 min | 35mm

The dream of the little girl is to care for her grandmother, but aunt and mother do not let her do so. There is only one way out. – DB

Another Dress, Another Button

Lyn Elliot
Kansas City, MO | 2011 | 3 min | Video

The spare buttons have a field day on the dresser top. The spare button savers talk about why they do it, and how it makes them feel. – LE

Silly Bears

Matt Brunson
Athens, OH | 2011 | 6 min | Video

A maximalist and super-colorful interpretation of Akron/Family's music that follows a wayward cosmonaut's search for a lost teddy bear into every corner of the universe. – MB

663114

Isamu HIRABAYASHI
Tokyo, Japan | 2011 | 8 min | Video

Every 66 years a cicada emerges from the ground, ascends a tree and sheds its skin. This tale depicts an unexpected change in this endless cycle.

Back to Land

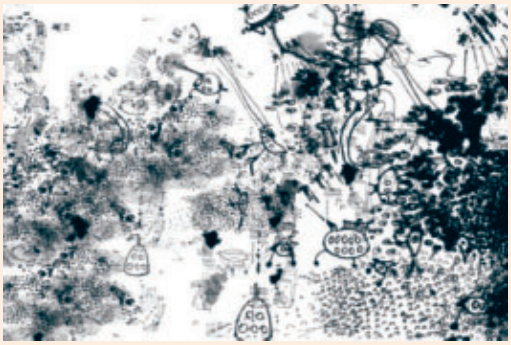
Tijana Petrovic
Belgrade, Serbia | 2010 | 4 min | 16mm

Back to Land is a meditation on the sight of a blue whale beached on a California shore. The film observes the on-lookers and the nature of their looking. – TP

TATAMP

Mirai Mizue
Toda, Japan | 2011 | 6 min | Video
US PREMIERE

One living thing. One sound. Becomes chaos. Becomes melody. – MM



The Arousing of Thought

Luciano Zubillaga
London, England | 2012 | 6 min | Video
WORLD PREMIERE

An act of faith sets the pace for a structure, a protocol of work and a wordless semantic form of writing. Then a 1991 music theme remix develops into an epic narrative with semi-abstract starships and battles over a white space. – LZ

August Song

Jodie Mack, Emily Kuehn
Lebanon, NH & Chicago, IL | 2011 | 5 min | Video

A collaboration with Kent Lambert's musical group Roommate, documenting a feline daydream.

The Scratchman

Heather McAdams
1980 | 3 min | 16mm
NOT IN COMPETITION

Filmmaker and cartoonist Heather McAdams humorously transforms footage of a droning bureaucrat through simple etchings onto the film emulsion.

12:30 PM • Michigan Theater Screening Room

FILMS IN COMPETITION 6

The city is a huge image machine. A slot machine for the solitaries. Coins of reverie, of poetry, secret passion, religious madness, it converts them all. A force illegible. -Charles Simic, *Dimestore Alchemy*

21-87

Arthur Lipsett
1964 | 10 min | 16mm
SCREENED AT 2ND AAFF IN 1964: NOT IN COMPETITION

A landmark film from Arthur Lipsett, comprised of disparate views of various cities. "Few films are as movingly bleak as Lipsett's little-known *21-87*, (it is) a stunning evocation of dehumanization." – Fred Camper

Forest Walk

Mike Hoolboom
Toronto, Canada | 2011 | 8 min | Video
US PREMIERE

This brief black and white sojourn finds a father and son wandering, midway upon the journey of their lives, as the saying goes. To know what one fears is to know what one wants. -MH

SPONSORED BY: MICHIGAN RADIO

Quest (Cautare)

Ionuț Pituresc
Bucharest, Romania | 2010 | 30 min | Video
US PREMIERE

Two persons, a carriage and a horse. Nobody knows who they really are. Few wonder. Less care. Where are they going? Towards what? Joy, torment and undefinable music. Vulnerable, yet they do not surrender. They are the poets of time. – IP

The Impossibility of Knowing

Tan Pin Pin
Singapore | 2010 | 12 min | Video

This film was borne out of the humble realisation that there is no way one can know everything significant about Singapore. The documentary visits and films locations where crimes or accidents have taken place, long after the events have happened to find out if these places can transcend time to engender their own significance. They cannot. These places only have meaning in so far that they have meaning in relation to individuals or communities. And meaning has to be teased out with research and further questioning. Moreover, one locale can bear infinite shades of meaning for different people.

Berlin Tiger 13h00-16h00

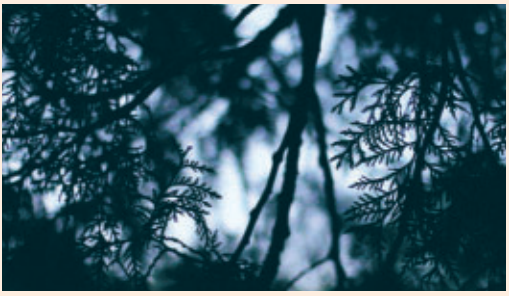
Shiloh Cinquemani
Berlin, Germany | 2012 | 3 min | 16mm
WORLD PREMIERE

A tiger in captivity.

Tin-Pressed

Dani Leventhal
Brooklyn, NY | 2011 | 7 min | Video

"Opening with jarring violence, Dani Leventhal's *Tin Pressed*, proceeds to negotiate a balancing act between the bewildering tonal variances of daily life – with all of its unnamable and enchantingly fragmented specifics – and the gravitational urge to construct both private and shared narratives. The world discovered through these images revolves around multiple centers. The camera's odd equanimity feels both generous and dangerous. Leventhal's deft oscillation between elision and inclusion reveals a brief but vast taxonomy of beauty, peace, longing, and terror."
– Jeremy Hoevenaar



Remote

Jesse McLean
Chicago, IL | 2011 | 12 min | Video

Dream logic invokes a presence that drifts through physical and temporal barriers. There is a presence lingering in the dark woods, just under the surface of a placid lake and at the end of dreary basement corridor. It's not easy to locate because it's outside but also inside. It doesn't just crawl in on your wires because it's not a thing. It's a shocking eruption of electrical energy. – JM

BRUCE BAILLIE RETROSPECTIVE 2

SUPPORTED BY THE ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES

The second of three programs celebrating the work of Bruce Baillie features two masterworks *Quixote* and *Valentin de las Sierras*, preceded by the rarely seen *Yellow Horse* and *Termination*. Baillie will be in attendance, program introduced by Scott MacDonald. Scott MacDonald is author of several books on avant-garde film, including the five volume Critical Cinema series. He is currently Visiting Professor of Art History at Hamilton College.

Yellow Horse

1965 | 9 min | 16mm

"Cycle scrambles poem. Bass solo by Pat Smith, LA." – BB

Quixote

1965 | 45 min | 16mm

"One-year journey through the land of incessant progress, researching those sources which have given rise twenty years later to the essential question of survival." – BB

The bearded figure at the beginning of *Quixote* resembles Walt Whitman and the great poet's influence is palpable in Bruce Baillie's kaleidoscopic convocation of midcentury America, an under-acknowledged masterpiece of 1960s cinema. *Quixote* describes a journey across the land and soul of a divided land with the same melancholic wanderlust that infused Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and Robert Frank's *The Americans*. Four distinct movements collect a litany of highway signs, Mexican farmhands, desert tarantulas, skyscrapers, high school basketball players, Indian reservations, old time religion, circus acrobats, antiwar demonstrators, wild horses, tycoons, supermarkets, comic books, jazz and the Vietnam War. The land is primary, though its meaning is held suspended in Baillie's s swooning camera movements and preternatural optical effects. Praised as "the greatest American film you've never seen" by critic Chuck Stephens, *Quixote* remains an entirely unique atlas of the country's spiritual currents.
– Max Goldberg, Fandor

Termination

1966 | 5 min | 16mm

Another of the Canyon CinemaNews reels, this time credited to the "Canyon Cinema Documentary Film Unit"(Paul Tulley and Bruce Baillie and others). *Termination* was made in Spring 1966 for a small community of Indian people near Laytonville, California.

Valentin de las Sierras

1967 | 10 min | 16mm

"This ten minute portrait of lives lived in rare air and under sunlight of liquid gold is, simply put, one of the most beautiful films ever made." –Chuck Stephens

"In *Valentin* I just shot simply but used a telephoto lens with an extension tube on the back, which gives you a very limited focal plane, a few inches. No one I know ever uses it with a long lens, especially with a moving subject, but I really liked the way it looked. I had to get into the flesh of that town, with the merciless sun beating into the bricks of the street and all the death-every night there'd be something or somebody killed, lying in the street in the morning. I had met up with this (archetypal) young girl, riding her pony. And I was afraid to meet her father. I'd sent word out trying to see her, and he sent word back to come meet him, and I thought, "Oh, God!". But he turned out to be a very nice fellow: Manuel Sasa Zamora, of Jalisco. They were very poor and lived behind a big gate and had a horse and a dog named Penquina. That horse didn't like me and would not let me film. I had to give it up for a while. Later, I named my horse after the film - Valentina." – BB

FILMS BY OMAR AMIRALAY

Three films by Omar Amiralay (1944–2011), Syria's greatest documentary filmmaker, presented by Irina Leimbacher.

The program includes *Tabaq el-Sardin* (*A Plate of Sardines*, 1997), Amiralay's powerful reflection on personal and political memory; along with two of his earliest films, *Film-Muhawalah 'An Sadd al-Furat'* (*Film-Essay on the Euphrates Dam*, 1970) and *al- Dajaj* (*The Chickens*, 1977) – essays on the government's failure to provide basic amenities to the poor. Amiralay's new approach to documentary filmmaking gradually became recognized in the Arab world and Europe. His cinema has become canon for generations of documentary filmmakers in the Arab world.

"Speaking of the nation and its upheavals, it pains me to inform you that I live in a country steadfastly marching on its hooves to its own demise, after it was betrayed by its rulers, deserted by its brainpower and abandoned by its intellectuals, thinkers and artists [...] All my films were conceived out of a desire for a dialogue with life and people, wherein questions and doubts were raised, and characters and events reclaimed their history, resurrected from obsolescence, forgetting or denial." – from "Were It Not for Cinema," an essay by Omar Amiralay

Film-Essay on the Euphrates Dam (Film-Muhawalah An Sadd al-Furat)

1970 | 12 min | 35mm on Video

Amiralay's first short film is an enthusiastic and lyrical depiction of the Ba'athist regime's construction of the Assad dam on the Euphrates River. Its cinematic exuberance with regard to large-scale economic development projects is reminiscent of Soviet films of the late 1920s and early 1930s.

A Plate of Sardines (Tabaq el-Sardin)

1997 | 17 min | 35mm on Video

"The first time I heard of Israel, I was in Beirut, and the conversation was about a plate of sardines. I was six years old, Israel was two." In this film Amiralay visits the village of Quneytra (which was destroyed by Israel in the 1967 war and then taken back by Syria in 1973, but deliberately left as a ruin). Accompanying him is fellow Syrian filmmaker Mohammad Malas, who was born in Quneytra and whose film The Night evokes his parents' memories of the then bustling, now lifeless village. A powerful symbol of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the ruins of Quneytra and the plate of sardines inspire a reflection on memory, both personal and political, and on the force and fragility of a generation's political imaginatio

The Chickens (al-Dajaj)

1977 | 40 min | 35mm on Video

Amiralay's third documentary was produced by and for Syrian state television, though it was subsequently banned. Its focus was the new chicken farming industry in a pilot village in the Syrian steppe. In fact, it documents not so much the chicken farms themselves (although the creatures feature in a number of metaphorically loaded shots), but the government economic policies that were leading to the abandonment of artisanal trades in favor of industrial egg production. With government subventions, the chicken farms briefly burgeon and just a quickly meet their demise. Set in the photogenic village of Sadad, where various faiths and cultures mix, the film's exquisite black & white cinematography and unforgiving montage make it a masterpiece of mordant social commentary.

"With this film, vanity overpowered ideology. [...] Sarcasm became itself the ideological framework. I no longer viewed people and life from the purview of philosophy. I used the cast of irony to represent symbols of authority, religion and backwardness. I quickly became aware of what I was doing and reclaimed the philosophical essence of irony, never sparing anyone, neither authority nor people." –Omar Amiralay

FILMS IN COMPETITION 7

An Incomplete History of the Travelogue, 1925

Sasha Waters Freyer
Iowa City, IA | 2012 | 10 min | 16mm
WORLD PREMIERE

A lyrical essay film which captures the spirit of excess and adventure embodied by <The Great Gatsby> (published in 1925) in fragments from home movies of a wealthy American family abroad in Europe and North Africa – illuminating truth as historically fleeting a la Walter Benjamin's dialectical image. This subversive, amateur ethnography contemplates the human condition found in this ephemera – a condition which, as we already know, defies conclusive explanation... – SWF

Woman with Flowers (Senora con flores)

Chick Strand
1995 | 15 min | 16mm
NOT IN COMPETITION

"A Mexican flower seller's story of personal tragedy is delicately illuminated in an intimate and moving act of portraiture that is both unsettling and liberating. In her final film, Chick Strand mixes brutal heartbreak and palpable joy into a transformative vision of dignity and vitality."
– Mark Toscano

Chick Strand finished the picture and sound edit on this film in 1995, the film was printed in 2011 through the Academy Film Archive, print courtesy of the Academy Film Archive

Correspondence

Robert Fenz
Berlin, Germany | 2011 | 30 min | 16mm

Fenz returns to the locations of three classic films made by the pioneering American ethnographic filmmaker Robert Gardner. *Dead Birds* (1964) was filmed in *West Papua*, *Rivers of Sand* (1974) was filmed in Ethiopia and *Forest of Bliss* (1986) was filmed in Benares, India. "*Correspondence* is not a straightforward commentary on Gardners's films; it is an elegy for a kind of image-making that is in the process of disappearing." – Robert Fenz

Peril on the Antilles

Fern Silva
Brooklyn, NY | 2011 | 6 min | Video

Filmed early November 2010 in Haiti. At this specific time, the cholera epidemic was on its way to Port-au-Prince, Hurricane Tomas was on the horizon, presidential elections were in a couple weeks and the first Gede (day of the dead) took place since the January quakes. Along the way I acquired a very curious copy of Michel "Sweet Micky" Martelly's (Haiti's newest president and once bad boy of Compas) music video from his early 90's heyday...shot in a familiar location... rajé gain´ zoreille... – Fern Silva

SPONSORED BY: Detroit Public TV

Saskatchewan

Richard Wiebe
Iowa City, IA | 2011 | 16 min | Video

16mm footage and Edison Voicewriter recordings introduce to me a family I never knew. I see my dad, age 7, in 1943 stand in front of a movie camera. I see my grandparents, my aunt, my uncle and others now gone. I was born in North Carolina, and decades later, but I imagine the movie we would make together about Saskatchewan. – RW

Lack of Evidence (Manque de Preuves)

Hayoun KWON
Paris, France | 2011 | 10 min | Video
US PREMIERE

The father of O is the village chief. One day, his father tried to kill his two sons during a ritual ceremony: O managed to escape but saw his brother being murdered. Having fled across his country, he succeeded, by chance, in leaving Nigeria and going into exile in France. In this context, he applied for asylum but his application was refused because he could not produce any proof...

5 PM • Michigan Theater Screening Room • FEATURE IN COMPETITION

THIS OUR STILL LIFE

Andrew Kötting | England / France | 2012 | 57 min | Video | North American Premiere

Comprised of video and 8mm footage dating back to 1989, artist and filmmaker Andrew Kotting has created an exceptionally warm yet unsentimental portrait of his family life in the French Pyrenees where he lives with his wife and his daughter Eden, who has Joubert syndrome.

"The film moves through the four seasons, but mostly it's a flickering and wilful impression of family life, characterised by found footage edited together with Kötting's thoughts and a score by Scanner. There's a sadness running through the film's reflection on time passing on periods of melancholy, but there's also joy at familial love and, above all, the bond between a father and daughter." –Dave Calhoun, Time Out London

PRECEDED BY

Kid Beat Box: Twenty-Two Tapes, Edit Nine

Stephen Wetzel
Milwaukee, WI | 2012 | 9 min | Video
WORLD PREMIERE

Kid Beat Box: Twenty-two Tapes, Edit Nine consists of thirty-five 10-second bits of video lifted from twenty-two standard digital video tapes.

AS ABOVE, SO BELOW

with *Amos Fortune Road*

As Above, So Below

Sarah J. Christman
Brooklyn, NY | 2012 | 55 min | 16mm on video
WORLD PREMIERE

That which is below is like that which is above
and that which is above is like that which is below
to do the miracles of the one only thing.
–The Emerald Tablet, *Translation by Isaac Newton*

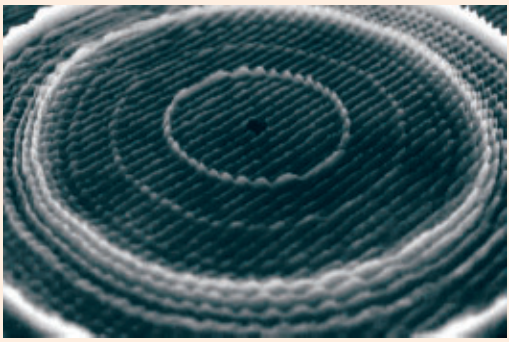
For thousands of years, alchemists toiled to synthesize rare substances and universal cures, to manipulate the speed of natural processes. Today, my mother has her husband's ashes transformed into a memorial diamond. Precious metals are extracted from obsolete electronics. What was once the world's largest landfill-- now also the final resting place of the World Trade Center's remains-- is being converted into a public park. The film intimately examines various transmutations, both microscopic and massive, that reshape matter and its meanings. What separates the permanent from the impermanent, the things we discard from those we preserve?

Amos Fortune Road

Matthew Buckingham
Brooklyn, NY | 1996
20 min | 16mm
SCREENED AT 35TH AAFF IN 1997 : NOT IN COMPETITION

Less than twenty tattered business receipts are the only source of information on the life of Amos Fortune: in 1769, at the age of 59, Fortune bought his freedom from slavery, moved to New Hampshire from Boston, and opened a leather tanning business. Little else is known about this man, who becomes the absent center of the film *Amos Fortune Road*. A roadside historical marker inscribed with his name provokes the curiosity of two fictional characters: a teacher, Sharon, and her student, Maryanne. The film interweaves their personal lives and seemingly endless drives along rural New Hampshire roads with their investigation of Fortune's identity. When Sharon discovers that most of the information they have gathered originated in two fictionalized biographies, one for children and one for adults, she also realizes that the 200-year-old roads they have been traveling are the same roads Amos Fortune used every day—a quotidian link to a suppressed historical subject.

FILMS IN COMPETITION 8



20 Hz

Semiconductor
Brighton, England | 2011 | 5 min | Video

20 Hz observes a geo-magnetic storm occurring in the Earth's upper atmosphere. Working with data collected from the CARISMA radio array and interpreted as audio, we hear tweeting and rumbles caused by incoming solar wind, captured at the frequency of 20 Hertz. Generated directly by the sound, tangible and sculptural forms emerge suggestive of scientific visualisations. As different frequencies interact both visually and aurally, complex patterns emerge to create interference phenomena that probe the limits of our perception.

Visitation

Suzan Pitt
Los Angeles, CA | 2011 | 9 min | Video

Visitation unwinds through a dark landscape of unending life and death; steeped in the alchemical and inner dream-life the film explores a black and white landscape of gothic figures who enact evolving metaphysical dramas. Surrealistic and strange, cast in grainy 16mm images, the film allows an imaginary glimpse within "an outer-world night." The visions in the film are summoned from the film maker's imagining of a mythical eternity which is beautiful but fraught with pain, exposed by the ether voices and figures which inhabit the eternal ballet beneath our consciousness.

Circle

Minna Parkkinen
Helsinki, Finland | 2010 | 6 min | 35mm
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

Circle illustrates the devastating sorrow caused by the death of a loved one, the interim survival, and slow recovery. The film, which is the final part of a trilogy, depicts the joy of life returning and the perception of beauty and mystery in everyday life.

Guañape Sur

János Richter
Berlin, Germany | 2010 | 23 min | Video

A barren rock island off the coast of Peru. No soil, no water, but hundreds of thousands of birds. For a period of ten years, only two guards may live on Guañape Sur. In the eleventh year though, hundreds of workers arrive for the harvest of the birds' excrement.

flower, the boy, the librarian

Stephanie Barber
1996 | 6 min | 16mm
NOT IN COMPETITION

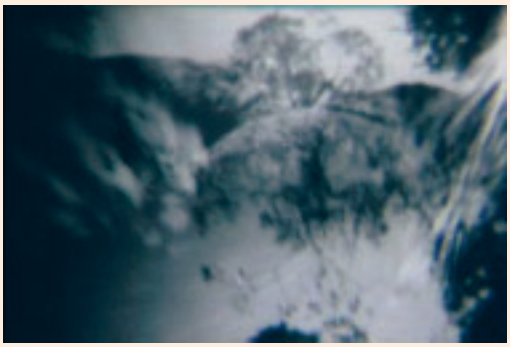
"...A submerged haiku-esque narrative..."; Stephanie Barber's 1996 film *flower, the boy, the librarian* is composed of three bits of footage in succession: a blossom wriggling in re-edited motion; the head of a boy, looking to the right; and a young woman with glasses, looking left, and then abruptly covered by a red gel that juts into the frame. The soundtrack is that of a man reading what sounds like typing lessons, each letter intoned with a flat rhythm. At first, the letters are meaningless strings intended merely to train the movement of the fingers ('j, m, j, space') but by the film's end they seems to spell out something more significant with the command 'n, e, e, d, semicolon, space'. The semicolon, a means of conjoining; the space, a separation.
- Ed Halter, Afterall.

The Deep Dark

Laura Heit
Portland, OR | 2011 | 7 min | Video

An elliptical cinematic song cycle, *The Deep Dark* journeys into the psyche with animation, projected shadows, fleeting lights, and ethereal vocal incantations.

The film is composed of layers and cycles edited to early experiments of a looping rhythm and vocal track by songwriter and experimental musician Emily Lacy. Music was originally performed live and has been recorded in one track.



Under the Shadow of Marcus Mountain

Robert Schaller
Ward, CO | 2011 | 6 min | 16mm | Silent

Made with a rudimentary pinhole technique, traces of a mountain landscape are captured in black and white. "The structures of our thought filter what we see, and in fact there is no seeing apart from those structures. This film is part of an ongoing project to show where I am in a natural landscape in a way that reflects those structures of thought." –Robert Schaller

A Preface to Red

Jonathan Scwartz
Brattleboro, VT | 2011 | 6 min | 16mm

A single recording, recorded in a tunnel that one passes through after exiting a boat taking you from one continent to another, where people are selling bright colored toys and bright white sneakers. For the brief variations in the movement on the periphery. –JS

PALACES OF PITY

with *And I Will Rise If Only To Hold You Down*

Palaces of Pity (Palácios de Pena)

Daniel Schmidt, Gabriel Abrantes
USA & Portugal | 2011 | 58 min | Video

Palácios de pena is about a culturally inherited fear in Portugal, linked to political and social oppression during the Inquisition and Fascism. It revolves around two upper-middle class adolescent Portuguese girls, juxtaposing their budding identities to a trial condemning two Moorish homosexuals to burn at the stake. Their ailing grandmother gives them an awareness of their heritage through the mechanism of desire, describing a dream where she is a judge of the Inquisition. The grandmother's and the girls' guilt is complicated by their relationship, that of family and love. As they love each other, so does what they represent: ignorance and the will to violently oppress. – Gabriel Abrantes & Daniel Schmidt

Palaces of Pity is packed with all sorts of odd juxtapositions... Arch parody dissolves into utter sobriety. Metaphors become literalized and wander the world of flesh and blood. The dance of these disparate registers and textures does not always reveal more than the pleasure created by their unlikely proximity, but the choreography is never less than astonishing. – Colin Beckett

And I Will Rise if Only to Hold You Down

Jennifer Reeder
Chicago, IL | 2012 | 24 min | Video
WORLD PREMIERE

This short narrative chronicles an evening with a family on the verge of dissolve. *And I Will Rise, if Only to Hold You Down* is a darkly humorous story about slow jams, bad magic and coming closer.

FILMS IN COMPETITION 9

New Improved Institutional Quality

Owen Land (formerly known as George Landow)
1976 | 10 min | 16mm
NOT IN COMPETITION

New Improved Institutional Quality: In the Environment of Liquids and Nasals a Parasitic Vowel Sometimes Develops bears Landow's odd, convoluted humor and singular wit. Landow made 30 films between 1961 and 2009; several of which were screened at the AAFF in the 1970s.

Ceibas: Epilogue – The Well of Representation

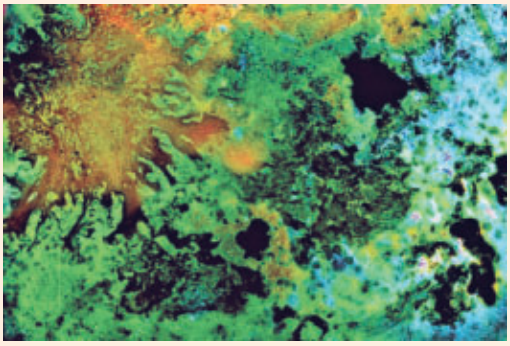
Evan Meaney
Knoxville, TN | 2011 | 8 min | Video

In part a remake of Hollis Frampton's *Gloria!* (1979), in part a repurposing of hacked, 16-bit video game technology; *Ceibas: Epilogue - The Well of Representation* asks us to reconsider our fear of the liminal.

Moxie

Stephen Irwin
London, England | 2011 | 6 min | Video

A pyromaniac bear misses his mother.



Landfill 16

Jennifer Reeves
New York, NY | 2011 | 9 min | 16mm

Exhumed 16mm film from my own landfill in Indiana, constitute the canvas of *Landfill 16*. After finishing my double-projection *When It Was Blue* I was horrified by the bulk of outtakes that would normally go to a landfill. So I temporarily buried the footage to let enzymes in the soil begin to decompose the image, and then hand-painted that film to give it new life. Within this pulsating, abstract moving painting I attempt to express my dread of man-made waste. This "recycling" is a meditation on nature's losing battle to decompose relics of our abandoned technologies (16mm) and productions. – Jennifer Reeves

Sounding Glass

Sylvia Schedelbauer
Berlin, Germany | 2011 | 10 min | Video

A man in a forest is subject to a flood of impressions; structurally rhythmic waves of images and sounds give form to his introspection.

SPONSORED BY: vitaminwater

Haunted House

Martin Arnold
Vienna, Austria | 2011 | 4 min | Video
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

The frames of a 40's cartoon film are dispersed into their original graphic elements by means of digital de- and reanimation, the character in the foreground as well as the house behind it. Mental connections to Freud and Lacan are most welcome.

Passage Upon the Plume

Fern Silva
Brooklyn, NY | 2011 | 7 min | 16mm | Silent

"Those who go thither, they return not again."
Plumes dust the arid land, east to west, shapeshifting as they lift in ascension. Something lowers. An ark ran aground where revolution took root: ropes raise stones in baskets. Hearts heavier and lighter than the feather, permitted passage. Tethered or freed, resting from life or dawning anew. – Charity Coleman

MIDNIGHT MOVIE

THX1138 | 12 AM | State Theatre
See page 72 for details and description

Within

Robert Todd
Boston, MA | 2012 | 5 min | 16mm
WORLD PREMIERE

Into the darkness, into the light, a labyrinth of veils... – RT

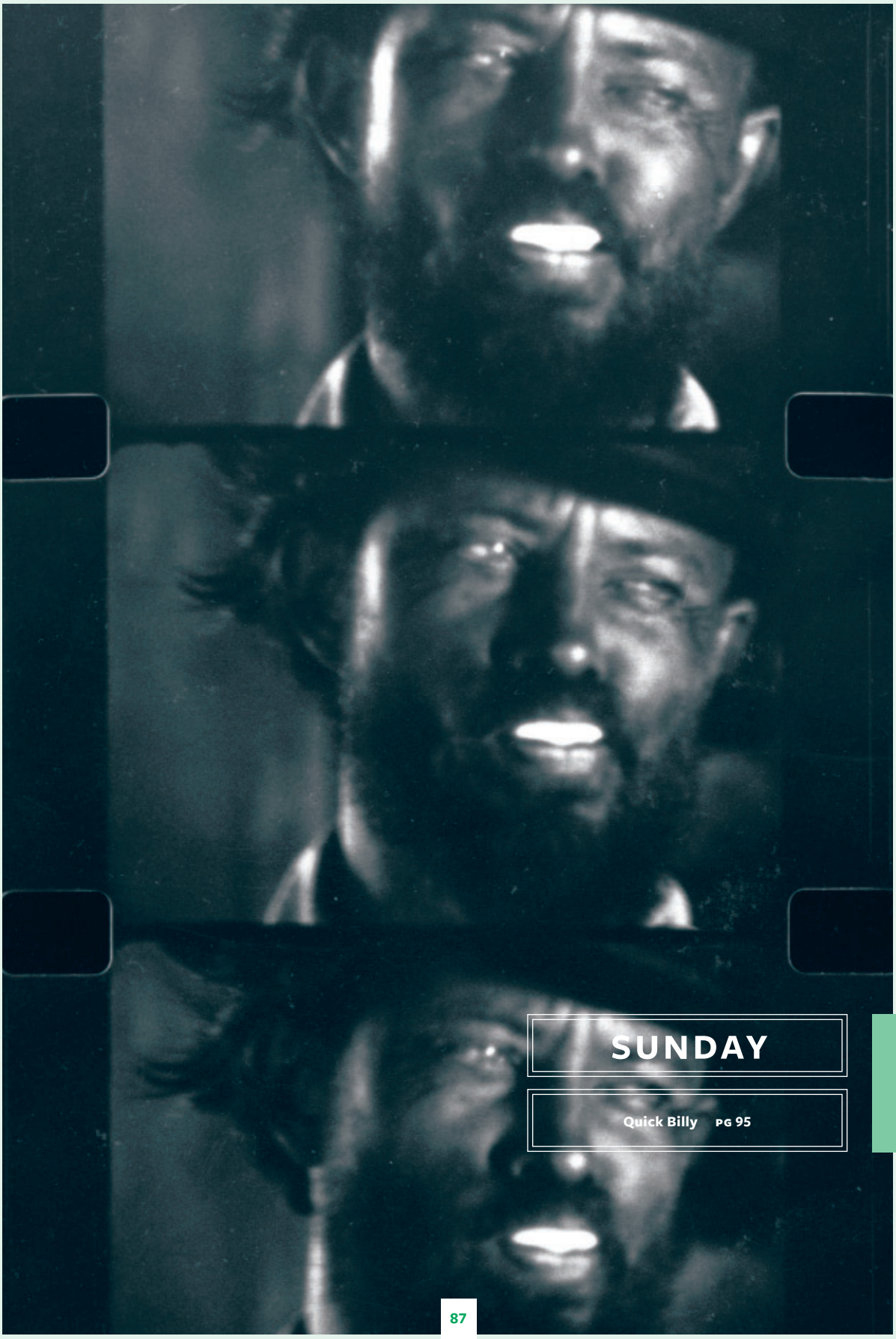
Sack Barrow

Ben Rivers
London, England | 2011 | 21 min |16mm

Sack Barrow explores a small family run factory in the outskirts of London. It was set up in 1931 to provide work for limbless and disabled ex-servicemen until the factory finally went into liquidation this year. The film observes the environment and daily routines of the final month of the six workers. Years of miniature chemical and mineral processes transform the space into another world. Towards the end an extract of *The Green Child* by Herbert Read describes the descent into a watery cave world.

AFTERPARTY

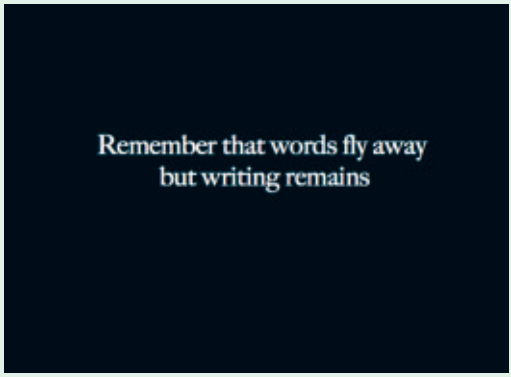
Red Room @ The Necto
11 pm – 2 am | Pass & Ticket Holders only
Go underground with DJs Sarah Gardiner & Shelley Salant.



SUNDAY

Quick Billy PG 95

FILMS IN COMPETITION 10



The Matter Propounded, of its possibility or impossibility, treated in four Parts

David Gatten
Shedtown - Salina - Four Mile Canyon, CO
2011 | 13 min | 16mm | Silent

Because life is short
We must remember to keep asking it the same question
Until the repeated question and the same silence become answer
In words broken open and pressed to the mouth
And the last silence reveal the lining
Until at last this thing exist separately
At all levels of the landscape and in the sky
And in the people who timidly inhabit it
The locked name for which is open, to dust and to no thoughts
Even of dying, the fuzzy first thought that gets started in you and then there's no stopping it.
It is so much debris of living, and as such cannot be transmitted
Into another, usable substance, but is irreducible
From these glares and stony silences and sharp-elbowed protests.
But it is your landscape, the proof that you are there,
To deal with or be lost in
In which the silent changes might occur.
- John Ashbery

To Quit, To Quiet

JB Mabe
Chicago, IL | 2011 | 4 min | 16mm | Silent

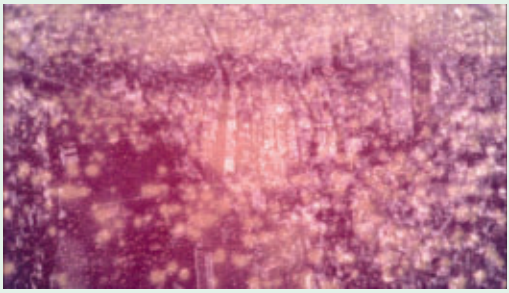
A christmastime film in my grandparent's living room. "But to the end of time certain places of the world remain defined for him as the place where those sensations were; and his only possible answer to the question where anything is will be to say 'there,' and to name some sensation or other like those first ones, which shall identify the spot. Space means but the aggregate of all our possible sensations. -William James

Porch Glider

James Herbert
1970 | 25 min | 16mm | Silent

SCREENED AT 8TH AAFF IN 1970 : NOT IN COMPETITION

Porch Glider is James Herbert's rarely seen masterpiece, one of over a dozen films by Herbert screened at AAFF from the late 1960s to the mid 1970s. The film is a meditative and frankly sensuous observational portrait of a coterie of friends and acquaintances who wile away afternoons and nights in the garden, on the porch, and among the many rooms of an old Southern house.



Generator

Takashi MAKINO
Tokyo, Japan | 2010 | 20 min | Video
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

The images reach realms beyond our comprehension as they transform and invite us into our own personal memories. Filled with uncertain yet overwhelmingly reminiscent images, the film opens up before our eyes. When the unfixed transformations of light eventually shift into aerial shots, images capable of mutual recognition, we are able to transcend 'the body' and 'personal recollections' into inter-personal memories that reach back into our ancestral imagination. We may be able to feel as living beings a part of our star for the first time if we recognize our 'body' as a small universe, realize our city as an enormous living body and ourselves as merely one cell. –Takashi MAKINO
with an original score by Jim O'Rourke

Forms Are Not Self-Subsistent Substances

Samantha Rebello
London, England | 2010 | 23 min | 16mm

Flesh, blood, milk and meat are the subject of a film which tries to get inside "substance" via medieval imagery. An attempt to explore "what things are" through juxtaposing bestiary illuminations, Romanesque carvings, medieval bells and living things, throwing into relief the strangeness and violence of being. –Samantha Rebello

"And indeed the question which was raised of old and is raised now and always, and is always the subject of doubt, viz. what being is, is just the question, what is substance?" –Aristotle, Metaphysics VII,1028b 2-4.

11 AM • Michigan Theater Screening Room • **FREE**

WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?

Started by filmmaker David Gatten at the 36th AAFF in 1998 as an improvised and extemporaneous discussion about perplexing films screened that year, What the Hell Was That? continues into the present. The panel will be led by film critic Michael Sicinski and will feature films screened at the 50th edition. Mysteries may be revealed, curiosity will be rewarded. Michael Sicinski is a teacher and film critic based in Houston. His writings appear regularly in publications such as Cinema Scope, Cineaste, and online at Moving Image Source, Cargo, MUBI and on his own site academichack.net.

FILMS IN COMPETITION 11

Hold Me While I'm Naked

George Kuchar (1942–2011)
1966 | 15 min | 16mm
NOT IN COMPETITION

Kuchar screened this film when he was a special guest at the Ann Arbor Film Festival Anniversary Conference, held in conjunction with the 30th AAFF in 1992.

"A very direct and subtle, very sad and funny look at nothing more or less than sexual frustration and aloneness. In its economy and cogency of imaging, *Hold Me While I'm Naked* surpasses any of Kuchar's previous work. The odd blend of Hollywood glamour and drama with all-too-real life creates and inspires counterpoint of unattainable desire against unbearable actuality." – Ken Kelman

"This film could cheer an arthritic gorilla, and audiences, apparently sensitized by its blithely accurate representation of feelings few among them can have escaped, rise from their general stupor to cheer it back." – James Stoller, The Village Voice

XXX!

Dietmar Brehm
Linz, Austria | 2011 | 8 min | Video
NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

A dark rose montage of image-things, their sequence and arrangement veiled by an untold story in the ghostly cast of white shadow and black candle flame. Wig-sporting skulls, wedding cake dolls, a dental x-ray and a pair of Teletubby toys hold time immobile while a downpour, punctuated by air-splitting thundercracks, vests this parade of tender vestiges with a forceful and timeless melancholy.

The Evil Eyes

Bobby Abate
Brooklyn, NY | 2011 | 20 min | Video

An homage to the death of the soap opera, *The Evil Eyes* is a 1960's era story of a grandmother faced with her mortality, a mother in mid-life crisis, and a son realizing his sexuality - a dysfunctional family whose unspoken angst manifests in the latest episode of their beloved supernatural soap opera, *Before Dawn*.

Tina Sloan, 26-year veteran of *Guiding Light*, stars as the soap's the death-cursed matriarch whose daughter slowly vanishes into thin air and grandson channels the family's fate using his crystal ball. On the other side of the screen, a woman is so desperate for her family's attention she figures the only way to get it is to be on television.

Cinematographer Bradford Young evokes a dreamlike atmosphere using monochromatic studio cameras of the era. Filming took place at St. Cecilia's Convent in Brooklyn, New York. In contrast, the colorful 1960's living room was shot separately in high definition on location in suburban New Jersey.

Kudzu Vine

Josh Gibson
Durham, NC | 2011 | 20 min | 35mm

Through images of kudzu-covered forms, photographed in black and white and radiating with the luminance of early cinema, this ode to the climbing, trailing, and coiling species Pueraria lobata evokes the agricultural history and mythic textures of the American South, while paying tribute to the human capacity for improvisation. – JG

Joshua City

Kevin T. Allen
Brooklyn, NY | 2011 | 4 min | Video

A cross-cultural camera roll of two desolate landscapes. One half shot in the Mojave Desert of Joshua Tree in California, the other half in the industrial ghost town of Industry City in Brooklyn, NY. An in-camera exquisite corpse.

Chevelle

Kevin Jerome Everson
Charlottesville, VA | 2011 | 8 min | 35mm

Kevin Jerome Everson captures two workhorse GM cars at a moment of drastic transformation. A junkyard crusher puts metal to metal and smashes the cars into tidy rectangular shapes while the life juices and hydraulic fluids drain out of them. The resulting film is partially formalist metaphor and partially the sheer pleasure of seeing stuff get really smashed up. – Chris Stults, Wexner Center for the Arts

1:30 PM ◦ Michigan Theater Screening Room ◦ CO-CURATED & PRESENTED BY TOMONARI NISHIKAWA

IN PRAISE OF SHADOWS

Japanese Avant-Garde Films of the 1990s & 2000s

CO-PRESENTED BY CENTER FOR JAPANESE STUDIES

In Praise of Shadows consists of nine Japanese experimental works from the 1990s and 2000s, made with various techniques via chosen media. All show the artists' exploration of moving images, investigating the possibilities of art of cinema. Some may show more of the process of making the works, while other may show more of the poetic montage with light and shadow.

The program begins with Kano's *Still*, expressing the atmosphere with the mixture of the sense of the past and the presence via still and moving images. *Plate #24 (solid of revolution)* is a found footage film by Ito, showing visual and sound as a result of contact printing a sheet of films in different formats. Sonoda's *Garden/Ing* wonders the apparent dimension on the screen by visuals composed with a series of still pictures on the window in her room. Ishida's masterful frame-by-frame drawing animation is found in *Gestalt*, focusing on the perspectives in two- and three-dimensional spaces and the movements through time. *Eve* shows Makino's total control in exposure and movements, which evokes the tensions and the beauty found in the eternal shadow. Matsuyama's *Flower* displays the organic changes in colors and shapes through micrograph images, which may seem the everlasting expansion of the universe. *A Burning Star (Short Version)* is an acclaimed film by Onishi, which exhibits the sequence of mundane activities, occupying the empty space in his house and his desolated mind after his father's death, along with the images of the cremation. Sueoka has revived a damaged found home movie and made *Ambiguous Funeral*, revealing a funeral scene in the pre-WWII period in Japan, added to the decay of the film medium. The program ends with Mizuyoshi's *Like Flowing, Like Spinning*, which expresses his interests in film material, ephemeral images, and fading memories. – Tomonari Nishikawa

Curated By Tomonari Nishikawa & David Dinnell

Still
Shiho KANO
1999 | 15 min | Super 8mm on video

Plate #24 (solid of revolution)
Ryusuke ITO
2004 | 3 min | 16mm

Garden/ing
Eriko SONODA
2007 | 7 min | Video

Gestalt
Takashi ISHIDA
1999 | 7 min | 16mm

EVE
Takashi MAKINO
2004 | 3 min | 16mm

Flower
Yuiko MATSUYAMA
2004 | 6 min | 16mm

A Burning Star (short version)
Kenji ONISHI
1995 | 20 min | Super 8mm on video

Ambiguous Funeral
Ichiro SUEOKA
2004 | 12 min | 16mm

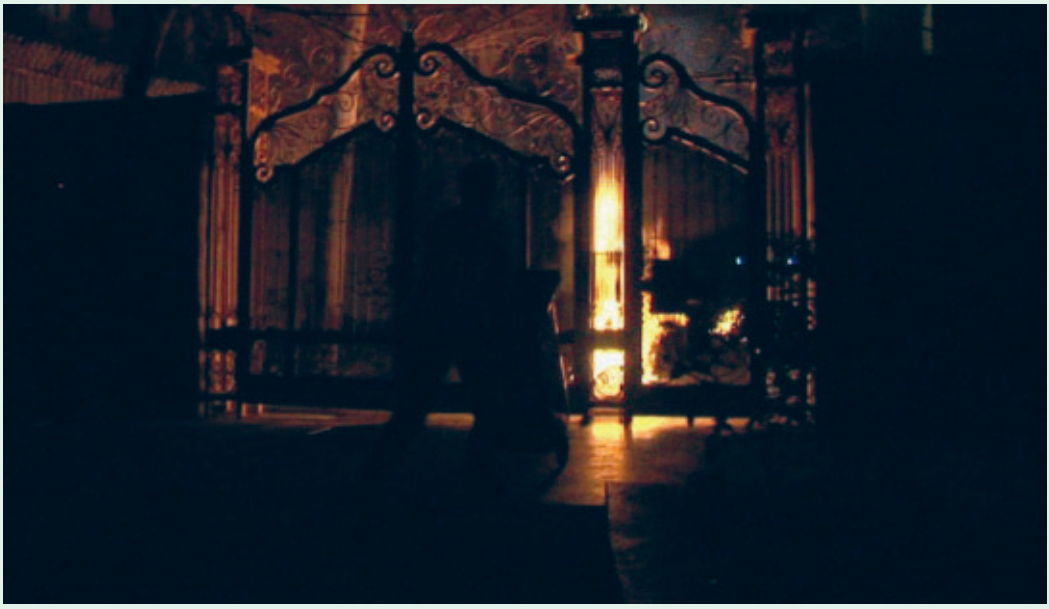
Like Flowing, Like Spinning
Akira MIZUYOSHI
2009 | 6 min | 16mm

For film descriptions, please see additional program notes available at the festival.

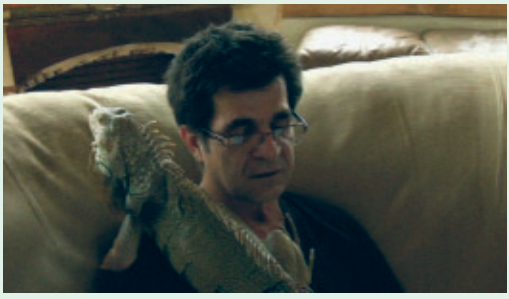
2 PM • UMMA, Helmut Stern Auditorium • SPECIAL FEATURE DOCUMENTARY • FREE

THIS IS NOT A FILM

Jafar Panahi | Iran | 2011 | 75 min | Video



This is Not a Film is a day-in-the-life documentary of Jafar Panahi's experience of being under house arrest, filmed almost entirely inside his apartment in Tehran, as he creatively expresses his frustration of not being allowed to do what comes so naturally to this passionate writer and filmmaker: make films. Jafar Panahi, the Iranian writer/director of internationally acclaimed films such as *The White Balloon*, *The Circle*, and *Offside,* is under house arrest and a twenty year ban on making films, leaving Iran, and talking to the media. *This is Not a Film* is a courageous effort by Panahi and his co-director Motjaba Mirtahmasb to fight against censorship and for the human rights of not only his colleagues in the Iranian film industry, but of filmmakers everywhere.



Acclaimed filmmaker Jill Godmilow will be in attendance to introduce this program. Godmilow has earned a substantial reputation during more than four decades of film and video making. She is considered one of the primary practitioners in the American non-fiction genre. Since 1973 her films have been screened internationally, including at the Ann Arbor Film Festival.

3 PM • Michigan Theater Main Auditorium • **FEATURE IN COMPETITION**

TWO YEARS AT SEA

Ben Rivers | London, England | 2011 | 86 min | 35mm

Two Years at Sea is the first feature length film by Ben Rivers, whose short film works have screened regularly at the AAFF since 2008. Rivers' film, by way of a sparse and minimal narrative, forms a nearly wordless portrait of Jake, who lives in isolation in the middle of a remote forest in northeastern Scotland. It follows the character's unconventional life, reflecting Jake's own, capturing moments of profound beauty. Jake is seen in all seasons, surviving frugally, passing the time with strange idiosyncratic projects, living the radical dream he had as a younger man, a dream he spent two years working at sea to realize.

"I made a short film about Jake five years ago, and as time has passed and other films have been made, I have had a continual feeling that I should go back to make another film where I, and then the audience, can spend more time hanging around Jake's place in the forest. I want the film to embrace the different perception of time that Jake and his environment have, which is much more patient and relaxed than my own urban living. The film has at its core the relationship between a person and the place they have chosen to live out their life, and the deep connection there is between them." – Ben Rivers

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3:30 PM • Michigan Theater Screening Room

BRUCE BAILLIE RETROSPECTIVE 3

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Quick Billy

1970 | 60 min | 16mm

Part Eastern philosophy, part gunslinger Western, Quick Billy plays as a "horse opera in four reels" and meditation on the transformation of life to death. Film critic Michael Sicinski will introduce this masterpiece of the American avant-garde, presented from a recently restored print.

Roslyn Romance (Is It Really True?)

Intro I&II

1974 | 17 min | 16mm

The work seems to be a sort of manual, concerning all the stuff of the cycle of life, from the most detailed mundanery to ... God knows. -BB

AWARDED FILM PROGRAMS

The 50th Ann Arbor Film Festival closing event provides two screenings with selections of award-winning films as chosen by our Award Jury. Awarded Film Program line-ups will be posted late afternoon on Sunday, April 1st at the Michigan Theater and at aafilmfest.org.

AWARD SCREENING 1

6 pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

Onstage announcement of the 50th juror awards, followed by a select screening of awarded films. The program will be preceded at 5:30pm by a screening of work from the "clear leader" station, a new film created by you – the audience – throughout festival week. This hands-on filmmaking activity was a popular part of the AAFF for many years and we are excited to present its return on 35mm at the 50th festival. Soundtrack created by Ed Special.

Security Anthem

Kent Lambert
Chicago, IL | 2003 | 3 min | Video

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An ode to flowers, fear, potatoes, and paranoia, with a special appearance by former U.S. Attorney General and war criminal John Ashcroft.

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AWARD SCREENING 2

8 pm | Michigan Theater Main Auditorium

A second select screening of awarded short films from the 50th festival.

Scratchman II

Heather McAdams
Chicago, IL | 1982 | 3 min | 16mm

Through direct scratching on the film emulsion, filmmaker and cartoonist Heather McAdams transforms a mundane government film into something humorous and silly.

AFTERPARTY

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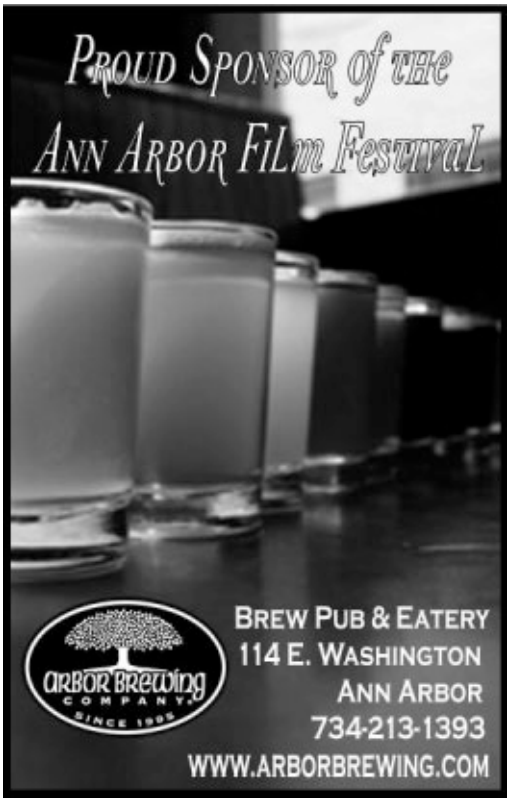

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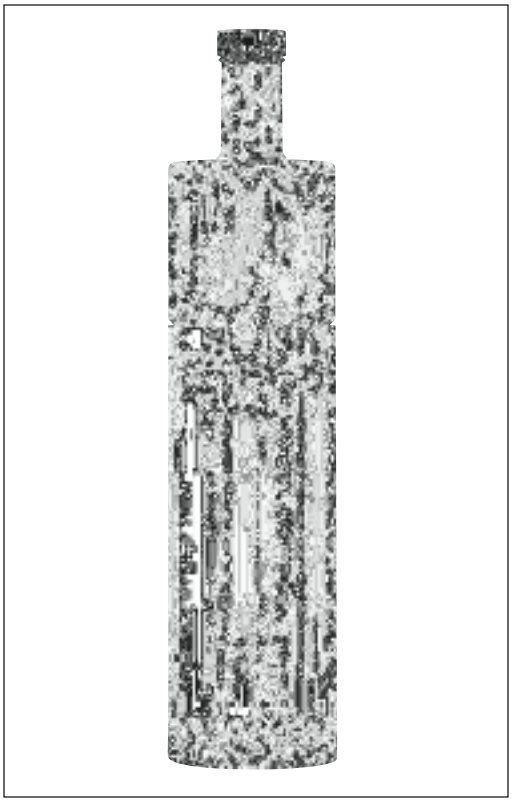

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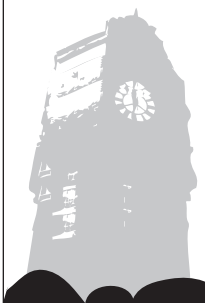

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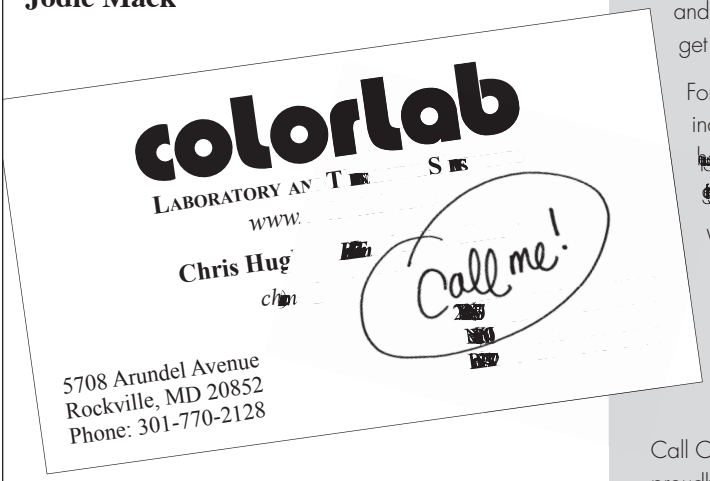

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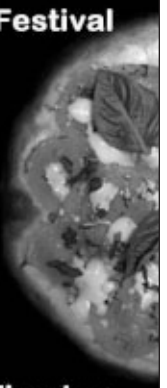

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B Michigan Theater
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C Red Room at The Necto
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D Sava's
216 South State St

E State Theatre
233 South State St

F SH\aut\ & \aut\BAR
315 Braun Court

G The B-Side at Neutral Zone
310 E. Washington St

H The Ravens Club
207 South Main St

I UMMA Helmut Stern Auditorium
525 South State St

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Behind Hill Auditorium
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K Encore Records
417 E. Liberty St

L Gallery Project
215 S. Fourth Ave

M Mark's Carts
210 South Ashley St

N Nickels Arcade
326 South State St

O Silvio's Organic Pizza
715 North University Ave

P UM Institute for the Humanities
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Q UM Shapiro Undergraduate Library
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R UM Slusser Gallery
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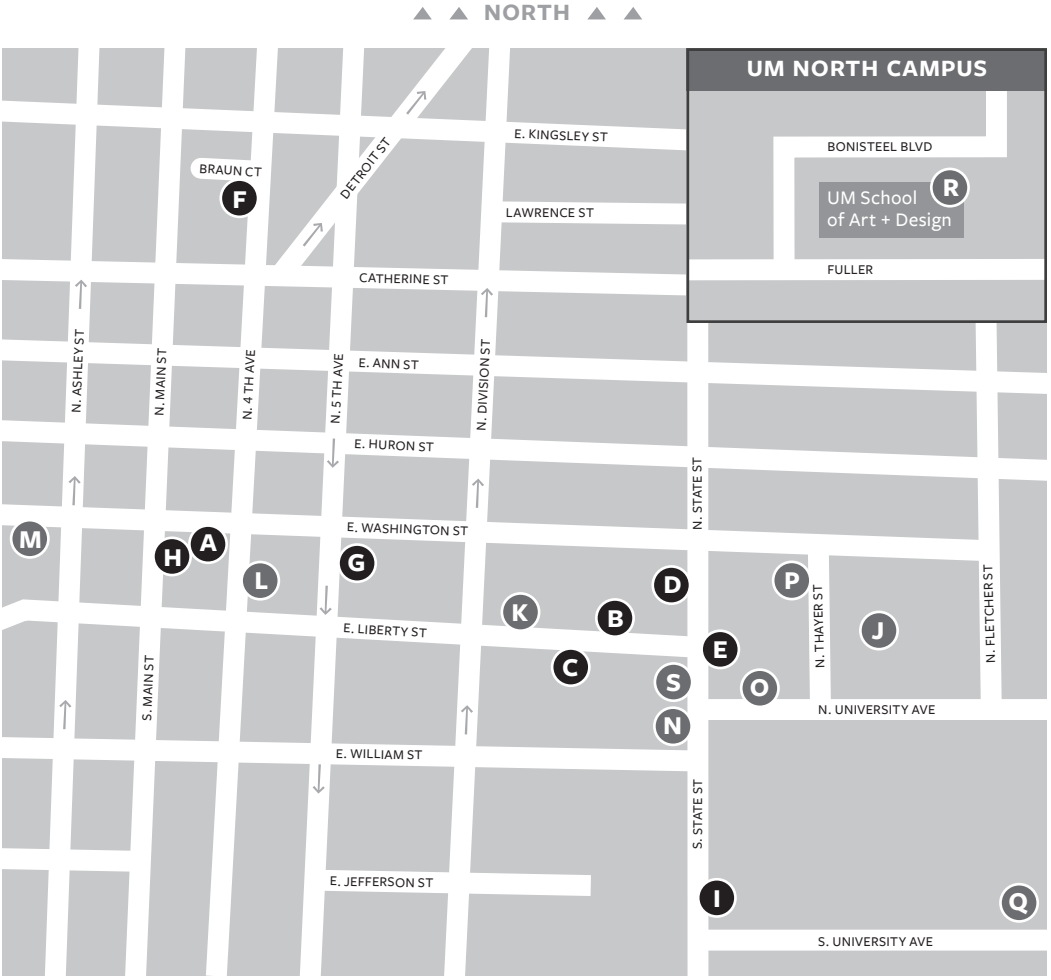

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