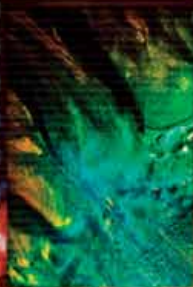


ALTERNATIVE PROJECTIONS

Experimental Film
in Los Angeles 1945–1980

11.12.10 – 11.14.10



USC

Los Angeles Filmforum

Visions and Voices: The USC Arts and Humanities Initiative
and the USC School of Cinematic Arts

welcome you to

ALTERNATIVE PROJECTIONS

Experimental Film in Los Angeles 1945–1980

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12–SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2010

The Eileen Norris Cinema Theatre, The Ray Stark Family Theatre
and the SCA Gallery at the School of Cinematic Arts

This three-day symposium aims to expand understanding of how experimental filmmaking evolved in Los Angeles and to contextualize its place in postwar art history. The project places focus on the community of filmmakers, artists, curators and programmers who contributed to the creation and presentation of experimental cinema in Southern California in the postwar era. It will add to the definitive overview of the topic provided in David James's book *The Most Typical Avant-Garde: History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles*, while creating a complementary archive of resources for future scholars.

The symposium will feature four panel discussions comprising sixteen presentations on various aspects of filmmaking and exhibition during the postwar era in LA. It will also include three film screenings and two panels of filmmakers.

Alternative Projections: Experimental Film in Los Angeles 1945–1980 is part of Pacific Standard Time, an unprecedented collaboration in which more than 50 cultural institutions across Southern California are coming together from October 2011–May 2012 to tell the story of the birth of the LA art scene. Core support for Alternative Projections is provided by the Getty Foundation.

In 2011–2012, Alternative Projections will continue with a sixteen-part screening series at Los Angeles Filmforum as part of Pacific Standard Time. This exciting series will focus on both canonical and forgotten films produced by Los Angeles artists and avant-garde filmmakers from 1945 to 1980.



USCSCHOOLofcinematicarts

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12

2:00 PM–8:00 PM

Alternative Projections Exhibition
SCA Gallery

6:00 PM–7:30 PM

Welcome Reception
Lobby, Steven Spielberg Building, School of Cinematic Arts Complex

Opening Remarks by Elizabeth Daley, Steven J. Ross/Time Warner Professor and Dean, USC School of Cinematic Arts

7:30 PM–9:00 PM

Film Screenings to Complement Panels
Eileen Norris Cinema Theatre

THE WORMWOOD STAR by Curtis Harrington (1956, 10 min., 16mm, color) Print courtesy of the Academy Film Archive

"I have recently been making a film called *THE WORMWOOD STAR*. It is a film in color, and presents a symbolic portrait of an extraordinary artist, a painter who is named Cameron. The film is an attempt to apotheosize the artist cinematically while she yet lives. She is presented as an alchemist, we observe the Great Work, and out of that mysterious complex of action and magic the ultimate transmutation takes place: the flesh turns to gold."—Curtis Harrington, "A Statement by Curtis Harrington," 1956, first published in *Film Culture*, vol. 29, Summer 1963, reproduced in Amy Greenfield, *Curtis Harrington: Cinema on the Edge*, Anthology Film Archives, New York, 2005, pp. 22–3

FLESH OF MORNING by Stan Brakhage (1956, 21 min., 16mm) Print courtesy of the Academy Film Archive
Flesh of Morning was one of several essays in the mode of Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* that were made in Los Angeles. Photographed by Brakhage himself as well as being the first film in which he played his own protagonist, it also resembled Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks* and Curtis Harrington's *Fragment of Seeking* in featuring a sexually traumatized youth who encounters the images of his desires in an environment onto which he projects his torment.—David James

PASSION IN A SEASIDE SLUM by Robert Wade Chatterton (1961, 28 min., 8mm to video)
Courtesy of Anthology Film Archives

In this silent color 8mm film shot in Venice Beach in 1961, Taylor Mead plays "the faggot" who persistently cruises a butch guy intent only on fishing in one of the canals. Mead uses the magic wand of a radio antenna to transform himself into ever more implausible drag figures in his attempts to garner the guy's interest, but only succeeds in soliciting his amused laughs. "I played eight or more roles in this film—all bizarre, outrageous, non-pornographic but upsetting to many mores." (Taylor Mead)

SHOPPERS MARKET by John Vicario (1963, 22 min., 16mm, color, sound)

"A documentary film of marked lyrical and experimental tendency which was photographed and recorded in an L.A. supermarket. It consists of five sequences: 1) description of people 2) Comedy 3) choreographing natural movements 4) transformation of visual reality 5) empathy."—Filmmakers Coop

A PAINTER'S JOURNAL by Renate Druks (1967, 10:32, 16mm to video)

"Renate Druks shows you herself, woman, poet, artist, filmmaker, lifting veil after veil, intimately revealing her sensual mysteries, her vulnerability and her longing."—Underground Cinema 12 Calendar. Druks was a painter and filmmaker whose friends included Kenneth Anger, Anais Nin and Curtis Harrington.

NUN AND DEVIANT by Nancy Angelo & Candace Compton Pappas (1976, 20:28, video)

"A classic example of feminist performance videos of the 1970s, which often incorporated autobiography, expansion of self through personae, and assertions of a new identity for women. In *Nun and Deviant* the performers come to happier terms with their identities both as women and as artists. As Angelo and Compton don and dismantle stereotypical guises before the camera/viewer, *Nun and Deviant* explores how repressive representations circulating in our culture are formulated as opposites such as Madonna-whore (nun-deviant)—clichés that force women to assume restrictive, paradoxical roles."—Video Data Bank

REJECTED EXPLOSION ANIMATION TESTS FROM STAR WARS by Adam Beckett (1976, 1 min, 35mm scope) Print courtesy of the Academy Film Archive and the IotaCenter

8:30 AM–9:30 AM

Coffee available in the lobby of the George Lucas Building

9:30 AM–12:00 PM

Panel #1: Shopper's Market: Exhibition, Distribution and Canonization
Ray Stark Family Theatre, SCA 108
Moderated by David James

TIM LANZA: Raymond Rohauer as a Presenter, Sponsor and Distributor of Experimental Film Work in '50s/'60s LA

ADAM HYMAN: Censorship and Liberation: The Exhibition of the Avant-Garde in 1960s Los Angeles

ALISON KOZBERG: Canonization in the 1970s: Curatorship at Los Angeles's Theatre Vanguard

KEN EISENSTEIN: John Vicario's *Shopper's Market* vs. "The Cool School"

12:00 PM–8:00 PM

Alternative Projections Exhibition
SCA Gallery

12:00 PM–1:00 PM

Lunch Break
Mobile lunch trucks with food for sale will be stationed on 34th Street just outside of the School of Cinematic Arts Complex.

1:00 PM–3:30 PM

Panel #2: Subcultures Scene and Seen
Ray Stark Family Theatre, SCA 108
Moderated by George Baker

ALICE HUTCHISON: Scarlet Woman on Film: *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (1954) and *The Wormwood Star* (1956); Kenneth Anger, Curtis Harrington, Cameron and Los Angeles Alternative Film and Culture in the Early 1950s

ERIKA SUDERBURG: Deviant Bicentennial Redux 1976

MARC SIEGEL: Taylor Mead, a Faggot in Venice Beach in 1961

MIKE OLENICK: The Inauguration of Renate Druks

4:00 PM–6:30 PM

Panel #3: Blurred Boundaries: Outsider/Insider Filmmaking & Group Identities
Ray Stark Family Theatre, SCA 108
Moderated by Mark Toscano

JESSE LERNER: ASCO and Muralism

JULIE TURNOCK: Not Just a Day Job: Experimental Filmmakers and the Special Effects Industry in the 1970s

PAULINE STAKELON: International Identities and Local Influence: The Development of Visual Communications

ROSS LIPMAN: Kent Mackenzie's *The Exiles*: Re-inventing the Real of Cinema

6:30 PM–8:00 PM

Catered Dinner Reception
Lobby, Steven Spielberg Building, School of Cinematic Arts Complex

8:00 PM–10:00 PM

Special Presentation by Single Wing Turquoise Bird
Eileen Norris Cinema Theatre
Followed by a panel with members of the group; moderated by Adam Hyman

About the Single Wing Turquoise Bird Light Show

The Single Wing Turquoise Bird Light Show was the most significant light show group in Los Angeles from 1967 to 1975, a "collective improvisation performance group" that used film, slide projections and oils to marry the artistic possibilities of music, painting and moving images. The SWTB first played behind bands such as the Velvet Underground and the Grateful Dead, then conducted its own performances in a loft space above the Fox Venice Theater. During the past two years SWTB has reformed to rehearse, perform and record new work. The SWTB members—which varied over time but included such artists as Larry Janss, Peter Mays, Jeffrey Perkins, Jon Greene, David Lebrun and Michael Scroggins—sought to raise consciousness in their remarkable multimedia presentations.

The screening will include:

THE SINGLE WING TURQUOISE BIRD LIGHT SHOW FILM by SWTB (1970, 4 min., SD)
This is the only record of the original Single Wing Turquoise Bird light show. Shot in 1970, it was featured in the Visual Music Exhibition at Los Angeles MOCA and the Hirshhorn Museum in 2005.

ADAGIO FOR JON AND HELENA by Michael Scroggins (2009, 5 min., HD)
This silent film is the uncut filmed record of a single liquid plate performance.

METAMORPHOSIS by David Lebrun (2010, 14 min., HD)
An animated excursion through the history of man-made forms, patterns and symbols, based on material originally created for Single Wing Turquoise Bird in 1968.

YOGA-SUTRAS by Peter Mays (2010, 12 min., HD)
An extended meditation, derived from 3D animations created for Single Wing performances.

SLUM GODDESS GOES TO NEW MEXICO by Larry Janss (2010, 7 min., SD)
An homage to wanderlust in the '70s.

JACKPOT by Shayne Hood (1991, 3 min., SD)
An abstract animation.

FLUXUS FILM #22: SHOUT by Jeff Perkins (1991, 3 min., SD). Camera by Yoko Ono.
This 16mm silent film premiered at the first Fluxus Film Festival in NYC in 1966.

INVOCATION by Amy Halpern (1982, 2 min., 16mm film)
A tiny step in the attempt to carve the immaterial.

OUT OF OUR DEPTH by SWTB (2010, 34 min., HD; World Premiere)
A journey through multiple worlds recorded from live, in-studio improvisation by the resurgent Bird.

The panel will include current Light Show members:

AMY HALPERN
SHAYNE HOOD
LARRY JANSS
DAVID LEBRUN
PETER MAYS
MICHAEL SCROGGINS

11:00 AM-3:00 PM

Alternative Projections Exhibition
SCA Gallery

11:00 AM-11:30 AM

Coffee available in the lobby of the George Lucas Building

11:30 AM-2:00 PM

Panel #4: High Concepts: Cross Section of Art and Film
Ray Stark Family Theatre, SCA 108
Moderated by Russell Ferguson

CARLOS KASE: Storm, Stress and Structure: The Films of Roberta Friedman and Grahame Weinbren

KATHERINE KERRIGAN: Urban Landscape and Psychogeography: Jon Jost's Los Angeles Films

LIZ KOTZ: Paul McCarthy, Conceptualist Media of the Late 1960s

GRAHAME WEINBREN: Pat O'Neill in Monument Valley

2:00 PM-3:00 PM

Catered Lunch Reception
Lobby, Steven Spielberg Building, School of Cinematic Arts Complex

3:00 PM-4:30 PM

A Screening of Works by Members of the Los Angeles Independent Film Oasis
Eileen Norris Cinema Theatre

About the Los Angeles Independent Film Oasis

The Los Angeles Independent Film Oasis was an experimental film screening organization from 1976 to 1981. Founded and run by a group of filmmakers, it also functioned as a nurturing meeting place to exchange information and ideas. Oasis—whose members included Pat and Beverly O'Neill, Morgan Fisher, David and Diana Wilson, Grahame Weinbren, Roberta Friedman, Amy Halpern, Tom Leeser and Susan Rosenfeld—operated as a collective where each member could suggest programming, and it held approximately 150 screenings, primarily focused on works of contemporary experimental filmmakers.

Screening will include:

FILAMENT (THE HANDS) by Amy Halpern (1975, 6 min., 16mm, b/w, silent)
Mikis Theodorakis conducting his own music in Philadelphia, U.S.A., 1972

PROJECTION INSTRUCTIONS by Morgan Fisher (1976, 4 min., 16mm)
Frame in center.
Focus normally.

SEWINDER'S DELTA by Pat O'Neill (1976, 20 min., 16mm)
"When a giant trowel is plunged into the floor of Monument Valley, it's as though John Ford had hired Claes Oldenburg to dress his set. The film, O'Neill's most ambitious to date, with a dreamy, narrative subtext underlying its sensuous surface, is framed by abstract animations which

denote scratches or scraped-off emulsion in much the same way that Roy Lichtenstein offered a benday-dot brushstroke as a painterly gesture."—J. Hoberman, *The Village Voice*

PRESENCE OF MIND by David Wilson (1976, 17 min., 16mm) Print courtesy of the Academy Film Archive
Ouray County, Colorado, 1976

FOUR CORNERS by Diana Wilson (1978, 10 min., 16mm) Print courtesy of the Academy Film Archive
Picture is to window as sound is to wall.—D.W.

MURRAY AND MAX TALK ABOUT MONEY by Grahame Weinbren & Roberta Friedman (1979, 15 min., 16mm) Print courtesy of the Academy Film Archive
"We are always interested in constructing ways of evoking the pleasures of cinema without implicitly accepting an ideology—of passivity, manipulation, and repressed violence—that we would explicitly reject. Can there be films that remain cinematic without indulging in one form of pornography or another? Murray and Max...is, in part, a proposal, a blueprint, for such a form of cinema."—Roberta Friedman and Grahame Weinbren

GRATUITOUS FACTS by Tom Leeser (1981, 12 min, 16mm)
From the past, a hollow echo of "morning in America" reverberates through this exhumed cinematic relic. A relic that has poetically predicted a technological dystopian future—a future that has foreclosed on our past countercultural utopias.

4:30 PM-6:00 PM

Panel Discussion with Members from the Los Angeles Independent Film Oasis
Eileen Norris Cinema Theatre
Moderated by Terry Cannon

Panel will include:

- MORGAN FISHER
- ROBERTA FRIEDMAN
- AMY HALPERN
- TOM LEESER
- BEVERLY O'NEILL
- PAT O'NEILL
- GRAHAME WEINBREN
- DAVID WILSON



ABOUT THE MODERATORS

GEORGE BAKER is Associate Professor of Art History at UCLA, where he has taught modern and contemporary art and theory since 2003. A New York and Paris-based critic for *Artforum* magazine throughout the 1990s, he also works as an editor of the journal *October* and its publishing imprint October Books. He regularly offers courses on all aspects of modernism and the historical avant-garde, on the history of photography in the 19th and 20th centuries and on specialized topics in post-war and contemporary art history. Professor Baker is the author, most recently, of *The Artwork Caught by the Tail: Francis Picabia and Dada in Paris* (MIT Press, 2007), and several other books. Currently, he is working on a revisionist study of Picasso's modernism and a shorter book on the work of four women artists—Zoe Leonard, Tacita Dean, Moyra Davey and Sharon Lockhart—to be entitled *Lateness and Longing: On the Afterlife of Photography*. The latter is part of a larger project that Baker has termed “photography's expanded field,” detailing the fate of photography and film works in contemporary cultural production.

RUSSELL FERGUSON is the Chair of the Department of Art at the University of California, Los Angeles. He has also served as Deputy Director for Exhibitions and Programs and Chief Curator at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, and he remains an adjunct curator. From 1991 to 2001 he was at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, first as Editor, then as Associate Curator. While there, he edited *Art and Film since 1945: Hall of Mirrors*. He has organized an impressive number of exhibitions throughout his career, including *The Undiscovered Country* (2004) at the Hammer and *Survey of various approaches to representation in painting and Open City: Street Photographs Since 1950* (2001) for The Museum of Modern Art at Oxford. Ferguson is also the editor of two collections of critical writing: *Discourses: Conversations in Postmodern Art and Culture* and *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, both published by the MIT Press.

MARK TOSCANO previously acted as Assistant Director of avant-garde distributor Canyon Cinema before starting work as a film preservationist at the Academy Film Archive in Los Angeles in 2003. He specializes in the preservation of experimental cinema, and has worked on films by Robert Nelson, Morgan Fisher, Roberta Friedman, Standish Lawder, the Whitney brothers, Pat O'Neill, Kathy Rose, Adam Beckett, Satyajit Ray, Ray Harryhausen and many others. His largest ongoing project is the restoration of the complete film output of renowned experimental filmmaker Stan Brakhage.

TERRY CANNON, ADAM HYMAN AND DAVID JAMES
Biographies are located under About the Organizers.

THE GALLERY EXHIBITION

During select hours over the course of the symposium, there will be an exhibition in the SCA Gallery and Spielberg Building Lobby. The lobby includes several display cases with historic posters, filmmaking artifacts, catalogues and original artwork. The exhibition is curated and mounted by Terry Cannon, who is an advisor on the Alternative Projections project team.

The SCA Gallery contains *SIDE PHASE DRIFT 1965* by John Whitney Jr. *Side Phase Drift 1965* is an abstract three-screen performance projection piece. Each frame was composed of sets of images that were manipulated in form, color, superimposition and time. The image sequences are logical permutations of a progressively evolving order. The images were realized on a mechanical analogue computer system called a CAM machine and an Optical Printer at Motion Graphics, Inc. The Optical Printer was modified with controls and accessories to facilitate the color sequencing which was based on complementary color relationships utilizing a hierarchical system.

Side Phase Drift 1965 has been shown/performed all over the world, including a tour in the early 1970s under the auspices of the United States Information Services throughout Western and Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

Thanks to Motion Graphics, Inc., founded by John Whitney, Sr., 1962, for use of its studio facilities. For her contributions, special thanks to Glo Minaya, Technical Director, Digital Production, DisneyToon Studios, who has donated her time and resources to re-render the film in high resolution for this presentation.

USC, Los Angeles Filmforum and the filmmaker wish to gratefully acknowledge both the loan of the digital projector from Epson America, Inc., and the high-gain projection screen from IMAGE Screen.



BOOK SALE

David E. James's *The Most Typical Avant-Garde: History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005) is available for sale during the symposium at the USC Bookstore on Saturday and Sunday.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

TERRY CANNON has been involved in the artistic and cultural life of Southern California since the mid-1970s. In 1975, he founded Pasadena Filmforum (now Los Angeles Filmforum), and served as its Executive Director for nine years. In 1984, after leaving Filmforum, Cannon founded *SPIRAL*, a quarterly magazine which examined significant topics related to experimental film and which featured writings and artworks by the filmmakers themselves. Cannon edited and published nine issues before the magazine's demise in 1986. Since 1988 he has served as President of the Board of Directors of the Museum of Jurassic Technology. In 1996, Cannon founded the Baseball Reliquary, a Pasadena-based nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering an appreciation of American art and culture through the prism of baseball history and to exploring the national pastime's unparalleled creative possibilities. He continues to serve the Baseball Reliquary in the capacity of Executive Director.

ADAM HYMAN is Project Supervisor for Alternative Projections. He is Executive Director and Programmer for Los Angeles Filmforum. He has programmed over 200 shows since 1998, including historical retrospectives, tributes and contemporary practitioners. Hyman has also been a documentary filmmaker for the past fourteen years, producing and/or writing a variety of historical and archaeological documentaries that have aired on the PBS, the History Channel, the Learning Channel and others. He co-produced the 2007 Oscar-nominated and Emmy-winning feature documentary *Operation Homecoming: Writing the Wartime Experience* and *The Old, Weird America: Harry Smith's Anthology of American Folk Music*. He is currently directing and producing a film on R&B sax legend Big Jay McNeely. A native Angeleno, Hyman has an MFA in Film Production from the University of Southern California School of Cinema-Television.

DAVID E. JAMES is presently on the faculty of the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California. His teaching focuses on avant-garde cinema, culture in Los Angeles, East Asian cinema, cinema and music and working-class culture. He has published widely in these fields, including, most recently, *Power Misses: Essays Across (Un)Popular Culture* and *The Most Typical Avant-Garde: History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005: <http://www.ucpress.edu/book.php?isbn=9780520242586>). He also

edited *The Sons and Daughters of Los: Culture and Community in L.A.* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003: http://www.temple.edu/tempress/titles/1631_reg.html) and *Stan Brakhage: Filmmaker*. Together with Michele Pierson, he edited the forthcoming *Optic Antics: The Amazing Cinema of Ken Jacobs*.

STEPHANIE SAPIENZA is an archivist who specializes in access for archival and historical moving images. Currently she is the Project Manager for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's American Archive project. Before this (very recent) development she was the Managing Director of the iotaCenter, an organization that promotes experimental film and abstract animation by linking historical work to contemporary. She has a master's degree in Moving Image Archive Studies from UCLA. Before entering that program, she worked for six years as a researcher and producer of documentary films and television series. She has been volunteering for Filmforum doing outreach and publicity since 2001, and was elected to the board in 2004. She currently serves as Board President.

ABOUT LOS ANGELES FILMFORUM

Filmforum was incorporated in 1975. Its mission is to promote a greater understanding of film as an art form and the filmmaker as an artist by providing a forum for independently produced, experimental films, which have little opportunity of reaching the general public through normal channels of commercial distribution. It showcases alternative media that aims to inspire, enlighten and empower, as well as to entertain. By featuring the underrepresented voices and visions of truly independent filmmakers, Filmforum exposes audiences to the full range of artistic expression, cultural perspectives and critical inquiry. It continues as the city's longest running organization that screens experimental and avant-garde film and video art, documentaries and experimental animation. For more information, visit www.lafilmforum.org.

The advisory committee for Alternative Projections includes Adam Hyman, Project Supervisor; Stephanie Sapienza, Project Director; George Baker; Terry Cannon; Russell Ferguson; Amy Halpern; David James; Angie Pike; and Mark Toscano.



USCSCHOOLofcinematicarts

WWW.USC.EDU/VISIONSANDVOICES

WWW.USC.EDU/CINEMA

WWW.LAFILMFORUM.ORG



IMAGES: *Introspection* (1947) by Sara Kathryn Aledge, *Kitsch in Synch* (1975) by Adam Beckett, *Single Wing Turquoise Bird Light Show 1* Photograph by Andy Romanoff, *Hand Held Day* (1975) by Gary Beydler, *Single Wing Turquoise Bird Light Show 3* Photograph by Andy Romanoff, *Sidewinders Delta* (1976) by Pat O'Neill, *3rd LA Film-Makers Festival Poster* by Wallace Berman