

SAN FRANCISCO
CINEMATHEQUE

Celebrating Canyon

Pioneers of Bay Area Filmmaking

Presented in association with Canyon Cinema
Curated by Dominic Angerame

Sunday, November 11, 2007 at 7:30 pm — Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

San Francisco Cinematheque and Canyon Cinema join forces to celebrate Canyon Cinema's 45th anniversary with a special series highlighting new works from Canyon Cinema's vaults and Bay Area pioneers in experimental/ avant-garde film. Owned and operated by filmmakers, Canyon distributes over 3000 motion picture films by more than 325 international filmmakers, and is the world's premiere distributor of artist-made film.

Filmmaking in the Bay Area has an explosive history and has had a far lasting dynamic effect around the world. Explosive new forms of film have emerged from the Bay Area community over the years to reveal unheralded new visions of the medium and explorations into its aesthetic properties. This program presents a sampling of experimental cinema by artists in the Bay Area from the late 1940s and 1950s. (Dominic Angerame)

Horror Dream (1947) by Sidney Peterson; 16mm, color, sound, 12 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema
"A Choreographic interpretation of a dancer's anxiety before starting upon her theatre routine."
(C16, citation from *Sidney Peterson—A Celebration*, published by the Collective for Living Cinema, March 1984)

Clinic of Stumble (1947) by Sidney Peterson; 16mm, color, sound, 16 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

"A lovely, comically solemn dance film composed of superimposed images." (Vincent Canby, *The New York Times*)

"It's an astonishing little dance film because the film and the ballet are indivisible—neither could exist without the other. It's not just a photographed dance. It's an organic work of art." (Joseph Gelmis, *Newsday*)

Things to Come (1948) by Patricia Marx; 16mm, color, sound, 4 minutes, print from the Academy Film Archive

Obmaru (1948) by Patricia Marx; 16mm, color, sound, 4 minutes, print from the Academy Film Archive
"These two [*Things to Come* and *Obmaru*] non-objective films represent an advanced development of a well-known school of filmmaking here in San Francisco: the non-objective film, which was started by Harry Smith and Jordan Belson." (Patricia Marx, *Art In Cinema* Program Notes, Friday, October 16, 1953)

Four In the Afternoon (1951) by James Broughton; 16mm, b&w, sound, 15 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

Four poetic variations on the search for love; four odd characters living out their daydreams: Game Little Gladys, The Gardener's Son, Princess Printemps, and The Aging Balletomane. Based on Broughton's own poems, this film blends image, music and verse in moods from the farcical to the elegiac. (Canyon Cinema)

"Lovely and delicious, true cinematic poetry." (Dylan Thomas)

"The best film poetry ever made." (Willard Maas)

Notes on the Port of St. Francis (1952) by Frank Stauffacher; 16mm, b&w, sound, 20 minutes, print from private collection

“Based on a text by Robert Louis Stevenson, spoken by Vincent Price, this film by photographer Frank Stauffacher shows San Francisco old and new, ending with a prophecy of doom for the city.” (British Film Institute)

Divertissement Rococo (1952) by Hy Hirsh; 16mm, color, 12 minutes, print from the Academy Film Archive

Eneri (1953) by Hy Hirsh; 16mm, color, 7 minutes, print from the Academy Film Archive

“Hirsch's finest remaining work is *Eneri* (almost certainly made for 3-D), which recalls McLaren's *Around is Around* or Alexeieff's *Fumees* (*Smoke*, 1951); a complex film, it includes a brilliant use of the split-screen and a reappearance of Hirsch's fireworks theme (presented here in a figuratively coherent manner).” (Giannalberto Bendazzi, *The Enigma of Hy Hirsch*, <http://www.iotacenter.org/program/publication/Hirshsite/bendazzi.htm>)

In Between (1955) by Stan Brakhage; 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema
Portrait of Jess Collins: a daydream nightmare in the surrealist tradition. (Stan Brakhage)

Logos (1957) by Jane Conger Belson Shimane; 16mm, color, sound, 2 minutes, print from the Academy Film Archive

Odds & Ends (1957) by Jane Conger Belson Shimane; 16mm, color, 5 minutes, print from the Academy Film Archive

Beat (1958) by Christopher MacClaine; 16mm, color, sound, 6 minutes, print from the Film-Makers' Cooperative

“As one looks at the film *Beat* one sees more of the humor in his camera movements. People are made to walk fast a look jerky in his films, and this is intentional humor; he was not content to shoot at eight frames a second—he skips frames so that people skip ridiculously in a way that rhythmically captures their intrinsic self-centeredness... One can look at this as humorous or as unbearably horrible. If you can regard it as both delightful and horrifying, you are close to the balance that makes MacClaine as artist. To me, *Beat* evokes that era to a T—beautifully precisely, wittily and terrifyingly.” (Stan Brakhage, *Film at Wits End*)

Gratitude is extended to Mark Toscano of the Academy Film Archive
and Larry Cuba of the iotaCenter for their assistance with this screening.

Special thanks to Angie Pike and the Creative Film Society
for their contribution to keeping these films alive
and making them available for today's audiences.