

## Crazy Rays Science Fiction and the Avant-Garde

Curated by Ed Halter

Thursday, December 13, 2007 at 7:00 pm — Roxie New College Film Center

**Crazy Rays:** Six riffs on the intersection of science fiction and experimental cinema, featuring: utopian scheming, techno-skeptical apocalypses, brooding bio-terrors, tail-finned space kitsch and investigations of alien consciousness.

Crazy Rays, Program Five

### James Fotopoulos / Leah Gilliam

Leah Gilliam remixes the racial politics of the *Planet of the Apes* in *Apeshit* and a free-form sense of foreboding and invasion inhabits James Fotopoulos' ontological horror-film *The Nest*. (Ed Halter)

**Apeshit** (1999) by Leah Gilliam; video, color, sound, 6 minutes 23 seconds, tape from Video Data Bank

“Employing footage from an obscure 8mm film trailer for *Battle for the Planet of the Apes* to highlight the unstable relationship between the real, historical past and the distant, imaginary future, this project revolves around a central question: Is alien-ness indeed the metaphor for the 20th century as power relationships have been embodied within our subconscious? Is there a relationship between these forgotten formats and the discontinued political ideologies that they depict? Transferred from Super-8 and then processed using a combination of high-end digital and vintage analog processing techniques, *Apeshit* emphasizes the contradictory references found in both the original text and its adaptation. Serving up *Battle for the Planet of the Apes* as proof, *Apeshit* puts forth tolerance as an outmoded technology.” (Video Data Bank)

**The Nest** (2003) by James Fotopoulos; 16mm, color, sound, 78 minutes, print from Film-Makers' Co-op

“Somewhere in the Midwest, a young couple's starter apartment discharges the anomie stored in its cool, white walls and sparse, angular furnishings. The eponymous nest and the true star of this suburban gothic, its light fixtures ooze bilious greens and overripe ambers onto surgically extracted blocks of cheap architecture that each emit their own pitches and grinds of white noise. A nonstop 3am panic attack of drywall-crawling despair, this is the field on which James Fotopoulos assembles his latest assault on the senses. To pin down and enumerate what happens in *The Nest* is to do violence to it. Better to list effects, colors, and key phrases, cut up and drawn from a hat, than offer any kind of chronology. More textural than textual, it distills dramatic tensions to a 78-minute environment of pure narrative: out of time, unencumbered by plot or rounded characters and demanding to be taken as a story that happens chiefly to the audience rather than to the figures in its landscape.

“*The Nest's* physiological and psychological are one and the same, perhaps making it his most nakedly emotional feature yet, and firmly positioning his narrative work in that slender alternate stream inhabited by filmmakers like Bresson, Warhol, and (in the right mood) Sokhurov. In the coolness of its surface construction, its sly wit, and the surprising heat of its emotions, *The Nest* suggests that other great suburban tract of the '80s, Don DeLillo's *White Noise*, but rather than being about a toxic airborne event, *The Nest* simply is one.” (Spencer Parsons, *Cinematexas*)

# Crazy Rays

## Science Fiction and the Avant-Garde

Curated by Ed Halter

Thursday, December 13, 2007 at 9:30 pm — Roxie New College Film Center

**Crazy Rays:** Six riffs on the intersection of science fiction and experimental cinema, featuring: utopian scheming, techno-skeptical apocalypses, brooding bio-terrors, tail-finned space kitsch and investigations of alien consciousness.

Crazy Rays, Program Six

## Victor Faccinto / James June Schneider

James June Schneider's *1,2,3, Whiteout*, making its US premiere, offers up a low-fi retro-futurist romance while in Victor Faccinto's last cut-out film, *Shameless*, is an underground-comix-inspired animation set in a multidimensional space pad; a pervy, groovy adults-only erotic romp. (Ed Halter)

***Shameless*** (1974) by Victor Faccinto; 16mm, color, sound, 14 minutes, print from Film-Makers' Co-op  
"Cut-out puppet animation. Not recommended for gentle sensibilities. Plagued by his redundant existence, Video Vic follows his instincts into an outer space environment, where he is faced with the cruel realities of his linear life. "Victor Faccinto's last cut-out film SHAMELESS exhibits a tension within the form. As real penises penetrate paper vaginas, and cut-out men investigate life-sized female parts, the film implies a potential synthesis of metaphoric and real action; the film also suggests the exhaustion of purely cut-out imagery by manipulation of materials, only now it is the film itself which is scratched, painted or cut." (Ian Birnie, *Art Gallery of Ontario*)

"I seek to explore and document the limits of my fantasy behavior. To quote Charles Manson, 'Do what you want, when you want.' Applied to one's personal psychological playground, this statement has been the basis for much of my film work. Sad as it may be, it is my duty to tell the truth. Animation is the idea media for acting out behavior prohibited or repressed by the social order. It allows complete freedom of expression. The animation artist is God, and each frame a cell in his creation of life." (Victor Faccinto)

***1,2,3, Whiteout*** (2007) by James June Schneider; 16mm, color, sound, 75 minutes, print from filmmaker

"Often I have created the soundtrack before shooting or editing the image as with *Median Strip* (1999). The soundtrack for *1,2,3, Whiteout* was made so it can stand on it's own as an audio performance or a radio show just as the picture track of the film can function without the sound. In other words, the two were constructed to operate as independent forces which work in counterpoint. But it was the collaboration with different electronic sound artists which was vital for creating this film. The soundtrack is composed of found, sampled, and synthesized sound as well music/songs composed for the film. The latter were created by Elmapí and AE and the soundscapes were recorded and composed by Richard Harrison and Michael J. Schumacher amongst others." (James June Schneider)