

## Celebrating Canyon

Program One: New Films from Canyon Cinema

Presented in association with Canyon Cinema

Curated by Michelle Silva and Dominic Angerame

Sunday, October 14, 2007, 7:30 pm — Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

**Celebrating Canyon:** San Francisco Cinematheque and Canyon Cinema join forces to celebrate Canyon Cinema's 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a special series highlighting new works from Canyon Cinema's vaults, Bay Area pioneers in experimental/ avant-garde film, and a special appearance by Cinematheque and Canyon's founder, Bruce Baillie. 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. (Dominic Angerame)

**Hot Leatherette** (1967) by Robert Nelson; 16mm, b&w, sound, 5 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

A kinetic film sketch designed to involve the viewers muscles. The rocky seaside cliffs near Stinson Beach, California, hold the wrecked carcass of a '52 pickup that is a rusting monument to Hot Leatherette. (Robert Nelson)

**Orchard** (2004) by Julie Murray; 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

Much of the footage that comprises *Orchard* is of a 19c ruins that included a walled orchard in an area known as Rostellen in southwest Ireland. It is set deep in the woods and the crumbling brick and mortar of the broken walls has become the anchor for the roots of slender trees, so uninhibited for all this time that they reach twenty feet in height and have thick roots that follow like slow lazy trickles of water and in other places branch and wind over the brickwork in an apparently intelligent arterial arrangement reminiscent of the human body. Some footage of Central Park is in there, as well as Niagara Falls, the main Dublin-to-Cork road and a thin smoking woods on the outskirts of Rosslare, Co. Waterford.

These facts may be incidental to the film's eventual form, which winds the images into an arrangement of continuous wandering. All this is attended by environmental whispering sounds until a voice calls out toward the end, in dream-bound recognition, to a figure from the far, far past. (Julie Murray)

**Bouquets 21-30** (2001–2005) by Rose Lowder; 16mm, color, silent, 14 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

*Bouquets 21-30* is a part of the ecological *Bouquets* series, consisting of one-minute films composed in the camera by weaving the characteristics of different environments with the activities there at the time. The filming basically entails using the filmstrip as a canvas with the freedom to film frames on any part of the strip in any order, running the film through the camera as many times as needed. Thus each bouquet of flowers is also a unique bouquet of film frames. (Rose Lowder)

**Ber-Lin 99/00** (2000/2003) by Andre Lehmann; 16mm, color, sound, 21 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

A journey through the urban landscape of Berlin follows the seam of the formerly segregated city, a boundary still clearly visible ten years after the fall of the wall. With an evenly alternating view to the East and to the West this seam is stitched together by the kinetic energy of the medium film.

Visually, the speed of image change is preventing our habit of fixing images, thus challenging the boundaries of our perception and, at the same time, creating space for a more subliminal absorption of what can, or seemingly can't, be seen.

The sound reinforces another aspect of the film, the rhythmically more irregular but continuous mutation, growth and decline of a city. (Andre Lehmann)

**Startle Pattern** (2005) by Eric Patrick; 16mm, color, sound, 13 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

*Startle Pattern* is a deconstruction of spectatorship and authorship in the moving image. In the late age of film, emulsion, this essay is a call of the cinematic gaze to a state of crisis. An interior space of a puppet becomes increasingly reflective, revealing the artifice of his own creation, and leaving his form tattered and decayed. The narrative of isolation hints at the film Protagonist's delicate relationship with reality, voyeurism and the apparatus. (Eric Patrick)

**Errata** (2005) by Alexander Stewart; 16mm, color, silent, 7 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

*Errata* is an animation made by photocopying copies of copies. Starting with a blank sheet of paper, each successive copy becomes a frame of animation, meaning that each on-screen image is a copy of the last. All movements, pans and zooms in the film were accomplished using standard zoom and shrink features on copy machines; the animation camera used to shoot the copies onto 16mm film was not used to manipulate or direct the film's motion. Comprising thousands of copies made on a dozen copiers, the resulting imagery is a moving Rorschach test of analog textures, bleeding ink spots and pareidolic cloud formations. (Alexander Stewart)

**Silver Screen** (2004) by Thorsten Fleisch; 16mm, color, sound, 5 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

A film made entirely with foil paper, exploring its possibilities in the realm of the audiovisual. For each frame a new foil paper landscape was created changing the parameters of light and perspective. In order to match the rapid flow of images several foil paper sounds have been restructured and edited. (Canyon Cinema)

**You Be Mother** (1990) by Sarah Pucill; 16mm, color, sound, 7 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

*You Be Mother* uses stop-frame animation to disrupt the traditional orders of animate and inanimate, the fluid and the solid. An hallucinatory space is set up when a frozen image of the artist's face is projected onto weighty pieces of crockery atop a table. Ears, eyes, nose and mouth, all become spatially dislocated as a determined hand begins to reposition, decant and mix. Events unfold to the amplified sounds of grinding, pouring and stirring. (Sarah Pucill)

**SSHTOORRTY** (2005) by Michael Snow; 35mm, color, sound, 30 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

Writing about my films has sometimes discussed the "narrative" aspect or "reading" of some of my "pictorial" nature, which is much more important. Reflecting on this, I realized that I have never wanted to make a purely narrative film, never had and therefore perhaps I should. Perhaps I should finally make a film that really tells a story. Thus *SSHTOORRTY*.

This can be seen but can it be said? I wrote the script, designed the set, directed the shoot and supervised the sound-mix and edit. The staged action was shot beginning with a camera hold on the apartment's inner doors. A man arrives carrying a wrapped-up painting. He is greeted by a woman. He unwraps the painting, shows it to her. The camera follows them to a central position in the apartment. A dispute develops and the painter smashes the painting he's just brought over the head of the woman's husband. The camera follows the painter and the wife/lover back to the door. He exits, she walks away. There is dialogue, in Farsi, but there are subtitles in English.

The film of the above-described scene was cut exactly in half and the two halves of sound and picture was superimposed. This makes a simultaneity of actions that occurred "linearly". Before and After become a Transparent Now. Arrival and Departure are united. It's truly "filmic", one transparent film over another.

It's a "painting" about a painting. I was very concerned with the mobile color mixing that would eventually happen. Colors were carefully chosen as I tried to predict how they would mix and interact. I make "pictures" and the experience of looking at them is more important than the "elsewhereness" of a story, even in this, my most "story-telling" film. In that respect, part of the perception or "reading" of the film involves one's choices of what went before and what came after in the actual pre-filmic event. The use of Farsi and the over-laying of the English subtitles were ways of adding two other layers of complexity. The film was designed to be seen several times, not just once. In my 1974 four-and-a-half-hour film *Rameau's Nephew*, I used many different languages. One's hearing of an unfamiliar language tends the mind toward the ways in which one listens to music. Speech is then more purely sound than sense. Meaning doesn't cancel hearing. A modest political edge: adultery and drinking alcohol can be severely punished in Iran. Part of the original conception was that one could satisfyingly see/hear the episode-on-episode several times. Repeated viewing reduces the strength of the realism and makes it possible for one to see truly the artifact (or, the construct), the artificiality, the art. There are, literally, layers to it and I believe that each time one sees "it" one sees it differently. One may concentrate for example, on the moving color-mixing, or what happen to the painting or the subtitles, or the way the speech and music are superimposed on each other. And as memory can be questioned, one may question one's memory as to whether each repeat is in fact the same. Were alterations made? The title is of course the word "short" printed right on top of the word "story". (Michael Snow)