

Truth and Reconciliation

program two

Reconciliation

Thursday, September 13, 2007 — Roxie New College Film Center
presented in association with Headlands Center for the Arts

Truth and Reconciliation is a two-part series of short and feature-length films created primarily by current and alumni artists in residence of Headlands Center for the Arts.

In the films featured tonight, fabrication and nonfiction collide, meld and intertwine to confront truth, reality and expression. 1999 Headlands alumnus Aline Mare's *S'Aline's Solution* expresses with haunting complexity the agony and affirmation of an abortion. Roger Deutsch's *Mario Makes a Movie* is the story of a developmentally disabled man who learns how to use a movie camera. Deutsch's film mimics the style of personal documentary leaving the viewer to question, "Who really is Mario?" In *The Stillness in the Room*, current Headlands MFA Awardee, Vanessa Woods, evokes the poetry of death, mourning and decay in the visual imagery of Queen Victoria's "weeping veil" and by putting the celluloid itself through a process of decay. Todd Herman's *Forbidden Acts* explores the limits that social institutions attempt to impose on the expression of the body, sexuality and disability. *Who is Bozo Texino?* by 1999 Headlands alumnus Bill Daniel, explores the truths of vagabond subculture and reveals the romantic appeal of wanderlust in American society. (Caroline Savage)

S'Aline's Solution (2001) by Aline Mare; video screened from DVD, color, sound, 9 minutes, DVD from the maker

I made this video 15 years ago as a testament to the painful yet powerful right of women to choose. I wanted to find a voice for the pain, an acknowledgment of the courage involved in choosing to have an abortion—a voice I felt had been silenced in our culture.

I was coming out of a body of work produced in New York in a collaborative partnership (with Bradley Eros) known as Erotic Psyche (1986-1991), which had been well known for its mixed media performances, videos and films dealing with a myriad of taboo subjects utilizing languages of the unconscious.

The saline procedure is induced at the end of the first trimester with a local anesthesia of 200 milligrams of hypertonic saline solution. It is a fairly traumatic birthing process, which includes dilation, contractions and a chemically induced early labor.

The video was greeted with much controversy. Many women felt I had played into the hands of the Right, appropriating "Back to Life" imagery and humanizing the embryo. Others felt it was too personal, too visceral, the politics were ambiguous, and that the tone was heavy handed.

I believe the piece stands up on its own as an emblematic statement about an issue that remains central and vital in the present.

I became pregnant with my son two years later. (Aline Mare)

Mario Makes a Movie (2004) by Roger Deutsch; video, color, sound, 12 minutes, tape from the maker

"The pieces should seem familiar. A noble but ne'er-do-well teacher. Students pulled from the last photos of Diane Arbus. Rustic 8mm aesthetics. But instead of assembling these pieces into a neatly wrapped gift from the Hallmark store, Deutsch sets them ablaze through subtle, clever turns of narration. *Mario Makes a Movie* is an indictment of filmmaking and filmmakers, which spares neither subject, nor author, nor audience. And while no one is beyond contempt, the creative process still seems to offer some relief, even in the hands of the hopeless." (Jason Cortlund, CinemaTexas)

“From the first frames—a series of portraits of adults with special needs—we engage in this moving, emotionally dense human drama. The integration of text, image, music, and heartfelt dialogue is masterfully constructed as we navigate between issues of truth, beauty, reality and intuitive image-making. Mario’s images are often painfully beautiful, and the closing sequence of family footage is simultaneously illuminating, troubling, and deeply touching.” (Black Maria Film Festival)

Roger Deutsch’s website: www.ottofilms.org

The Stillness of the Room (2007) by Vanessa Woods; video, b&w, sound, 9 minutes, tape from the maker

A memento mori of sorts, *The Stillness in the Room* explores 19th century English death and mourning rituals within a framework of time, growth and decay. The film draws upon the regimented mourning procedures set fourth by Queen Victoria, characterized by a strict dress code which included the black “weeping veil”—a veil of black crepe worn during the first year of grieving. In the film, the veil is a dominant trope that serves to reveal fragments of imagery, ritual, and emotive experience. The films edits are also fluid and malleable like the veil. Much of the film was put through various processes of decay, thereby physically implicating the subject of the film in its physical structure. The “Stillness in the Room” is generated through a subtle, quiet soundtrack that incorporates components of Emily Dickinson’s funeral poems. (Vanessa Woods)

www.vanessawoods.com

Forbidden Acts (2006) by Todd Herman; digital video, b&w, sound, 12 minutes, DVD from the maker

Confrontative, meditative, and sensuous, *Forbidden Acts*, a film by Todd Herman, showcases three poems by black disabled advocate and writer Leroy Moore. Herman’s provocative imagery seamlessly intertwines with Moore’s explicit poetry and takes a head-on look at issues of body image, sexuality and disability—relative to politics, medicine, and race. With naked honesty, Herman and Moore combine advocacy, social critique, visual poetry, and spoken word while subtly addressing many of the stereotypes prevalent in disability imagery. *Forbidden Acts* is an engaging glimpse into Moore’s exploration of his own sexuality and the limits that social institutions attempt to impose upon its expression. It is a potent film that ultimately sees beyond the barriers between disability and sexuality, and opens new doors for the expression of sexual desires and frustrations among our disabled brothers and sisters. (www.todd-herman.com)

Who Is Bozo Texino? (2005) by Bill Daniel; video, b&w, sound, 56 minutes, tape from the maker

“It’s possible Bill Daniel is the most inspiring filmmaker of our day. With an impressive filmography that includes work on Craig Baldwin’s *Sonic Outlaws* and *Spectres Of The Spectrum* and as Vanessa Renwick’s long-time collaborator, Daniel has crafted a remarkable first feature with his twenty-years-in-the-making *Who Is Bozo Texino?*, a documentary about modern day hoboes, rail workers and a forgotten outsider subculture. Shot entirely aboard speeding freight trains, it’s amazing Daniel didn’t fall right out of the boxcar. Presented in dreamy 16mm black and white, Daniel’s film mixes experimental and documentary film techniques to provide a captivating look at a little-known art form. Tracing the origins to boxcar graffiti from over 100 years ago, Daniel follows rail graffiti’s evolution to modern day hobo gatherings, freight hopping trips and secret hobo jungles only known to tried and true hoboes. Along the way Daniel interviews numerous old timers who have spent years on the rails drawing their monikers, among them graffiti legends Colossus of Roads, The Rambler, Herby (RIP) and yes even the ever-illusory Bozo Texino. The interviews provide a fascinating glimpse into the harsh realities of tramp life while also providing a unique backdrop for the more ambient railroad-blues infused soundtrack. Trying to catch up with Daniel is almost as elusive as his film. Constantly on tour screening his documentary or traveling from arts center to film festival to artist residency, Daniel has in fact pioneered a different way in which to experience movies—one fiercely committed to independent DIY ideals and fostering a new sense of community. *Who Is Bozo Texino?* is a different kind of movie for those unfamiliar with truly independent cinema...and the kind you’ll want to watch over and over again.” (Joe Biel, Microcosm)

www.billdaniel.net