

## Alone in the Dark Projected Phobias

Thursday, November 4 at 8 pm — Exploratorium

What are you afraid of? Is it things that go bump in the night or a particular night something bumped? Death? Spiders? Earthquakes? Monster movies and scary scenes?

Experience life *After Dark*, a cutting edge evening series exclusively for adults that mixes cocktails, conversation, and playful, innovative science and art events. Not a theater, cabaret, or gallery, *After Dark* contains aspects of all three. Tonight through film, activities and exhibit experiences we will explore fear—the line between it and anxiety, its effects on our brains and the manipulation of our fears for good and ill. We'll explore the relationship between fear and pleasure, phobias, fright, flight and what heightened stress of fear and anxiety might be doing to our bodies and brains. After a night of Fear at the Exploratorium you might have a different take on what you are afraid of. (Melissa Alexander)

As part of tonight's *After Dark* program, San Francisco Cinematheque presents films that explore the territories of fear.

While the horror genre is a long-revered staple of cinema, the films on tonight's program go deeper, addressing the genre's common tropes while stabbing into the collective forebrain to explore deeper psychological states of unease. Following the startling revelations of subliminal messaging found in the semi-anonymous trailer, *Psychorama/A Date with Death*, Jay Rosenblatt's *Afraid So* meditates on the varieties of fear while Kerry Laitala's *The Adventure Parade* conjures ghosts from cinema's past to haunt the present. And while Luther Price's *Inside Velvet K* picks apart '70s TV to produce a disturbing meditation on death and morbidity, Peter Tscherkassky explodes the 1981 feature *The Entity* into glittering shards of light and sound in his *Outer Space*. Similarly ecstatic, if ultimately dark, Stan Brakhage's silent and hand-painted *Paranoia Corridor* sees the artist confronting his ultimate existential horror. Finally, *In Absentia* by the Brothers Quay (in collaboration with Karlheinz Stockhausen) evokes German expressionism and creeping paranoia in a claustrophobic portrait of madness and obsession. (Steve Polta)

***Psychorama/A Date with Death (trailer)*** (1959) by Harold Daniels; 16mm, b&w, sound, 6 minutes, print from Other Cinema

***Outer Space*** (1999) by Peter Tscherkassky; 16mm, b&w, sound, 10 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

"A young woman, night, an American feature film [*The Entity* (1981), directed by Sidney J. Furie, starring Barbara Hershey]. She enters a house, a dark corridor, a thriller. While she forces her way into an unknown space together with the viewer, the cinematographic image-producing processes go off the rails. The rooms telescope into each other, become blurred, while the crackling of the cuts and the background noise—the sound of the film material itself—becomes louder and more penetrating.

"The pace becomes frenetic, the woman is being pursued by invisible opponents, pushed against a mirror, walls of glass burst, furniture tilts and the cinematographic apparatus which the heroine begins to attack in blind fury also collapses. The images jump and stutter, the perforation holes tilt into the picture, the sound track implodes in a will o' the wisp destruction scenario—something which only film can do so powerfully. In ten minutes *Outer Space* races through the unsuspected possibilities of cinematographic errors..." (Stephan Grissemann)

***Afraid So*** (2006) by Jay Rosenblatt; digital video, color, sound, 3 minutes, DVD from the maker  
Poem *Afraid So* by Jeanne Marie Beaumont. Read by Garrison Keillor.  
[www.jayrosenblattfilms.com](http://www.jayrosenblattfilms.com)

***The Adventure Parade*** (2000) by Kerry Laitala; 16mm, color, silent, print from the maker

"Listen to our Bullhorn recitation. Our procession imparts the darkest of reveries for you to recoil from or embrace as the origin of our entrapment. However, the sprightly buttress overshadowing this cinema, submerges it further. As we see fit to excoriate our visage to you the audience, we reveal everything. We present to you an unveiling and beguiling presence.... Now that we have exposed our deepest inner-most thoughts, what do you have to offer in recompense?" (Anonymous)

"The films of Kerry Laitala evoke a glowing world in which spirits, memories and moldering artifacts swirl into feverish dreams recalling gothic conditions of poetry and decay. Seeming to hover on the borders between life and death, madness and sanity, these haunting alchemical films raise the dead from long slumbers to become luminous phantoms of flickering cinema." (Steve Polta, 2001)

***Inside Velvet K*** (2006) by Luther Price; 16mm, color, sound, 10 minutes, print from the maker

"Apocalyptic post card ....." (Luther Price)

"Luther Price is responsible for some of the most searing, grotesquely beautiful, inimitable, heart wrenching, gut wrenching meticulous films ever conceived. Artists from Todd Haynes to Bruce Nauman have taken note. Best known for his notorious film *Sodom* and performances like *Meat* as well as the more recent festival award winning film *Kittens Grow Up*. Featured recently at Courtisane in Ghent, Belgium, the London Film Festival, and other international venues, Price is the planned featured guest for an upcoming retrospective at Oberhausen Film Festival." (Mark McElhatten, *Luther Price: If Huckleberry Finn Could Paint Like Hieronymus Bosch*)

***Paranoia Corridor*** (1995) by Stan Brakhage; 16mm color, silent, 3 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

"This film is an elaborately hand-painted step-printed work composed primarily of luminescent greens and blues in constantly shifting symmetrical shapes which suggest, rather than delineate, passage through a corridor. An increasingly menacing evolution of patterns is finally interrupted by a series of static shapes which almost appear to be symbols of resolution, ending on an almost-thigh-bone image." (Stan Brakhage)

***In Absentia*** (2000) by the Brothers Quay; 35mm screened as video, b&w, sound, 20 minutes, DVD from Zeitgeist Films

*How did In Absentia come about?*

It was a film commissioned by the BBC as part of a series called 'Sound on Film International,' born from the collaborations between musical composer and filmmaker. Each filmmaker was assigned a musical passage which became the starting point for the construction of a short film. We worked on a composition by Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Zwei Paare*. The day we listened to the piece for the first time there was a release within us of a torrent of ideas and visual flashes. We then started immediately with the direction of the film without having a real and proper work plan, but developing it as we went along."

*In the closing credits we learn that the film was inspired by a real life event...*

For the story we based ourselves on the real life event of a woman who was enclosed in a psychiatric hospital, who would write love letters every day to a particular man. The surprising thing is that when Stockhausen saw the film at an avant-premiere he was moved to tears. We only later learned that his mother was imprisoned by the Nazi's in an asylum, where she later died. Even for us this was a very moving moment, especially because we directed the film without knowing any of this. (Brothers Quay interviewed by Roberto Aita; Donato Totaro trans. [www.horschamp.qc.ca/new\\_offscreen/quay.html](http://www.horschamp.qc.ca/new_offscreen/quay.html))