

After Day Comes Night, and After That, Day Comes Again **A Tribute to Chick Strand**

Friday, October 23, 2009 — Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
presented in association with Canyon Cinema
curated by Dominic Angerame

introductions and appearances by
Dominic Angerame, Steve Anker, Bruce Baillie and Irina Leimbacher

Chick Strand (1931–2009) was one of the more renowned pioneers in the Bay Area experimental filmmaking community. Canyon Cinema was born in 1961 when Strand and Bruce Baillie began to show films outdoors in Canyon, California. She was a long time advocate of the art of avant-garde filmmaking and an inspiration to more than two generations of filmmakers. Her spirit lives on today with the continued growth of both Canyon Cinema and San Francisco Cinematheque. Both organizations have flourished over the past forty-eight years and this is a testimony to the passion and dedication of Chick Strand. Tonight's program will include several of her films, including: *By the Lake*, *Artificial Paradise*, *Coming Up For Air*, *Loose Ends*, *Cartoon le Mousse* and others. (Dominic Angerame)

Celebrated West Coast filmmaker Chick Strand passed away this past summer, leaving behind a body of sensual and smart work significant for its exploration of the space between documentary and poetry, truth and fiction, and the politics and pleasure of representation. A key figure in the development of the American independent and avant-garde filmmaking movements, she helped co-found the seminal film exhibition and distribution collective Canyon Cinema in the mid-1960s. She began her own filmmaking career at the age of thirty-four, combining a background in photographic collage and academic training in anthropology into a series of poetic documentaries shot in Mexico while an ethnography student at UCLA. "Ethnographic films" Strand once wrote, "should be works of art, symphonies about the fabric of a people." (Amy Beste, School of the Art Institute of Chicago)

*Strand's work also includes a collection of cine-poems, such as the erotic and fleshy *Fever Dream* and the dazzling, lyrical study in light, *Kristallnacht*, and a series of experimental anthropological films. She taught for a number of years at Occidental College, where, I'm told, she would sit in the back of the room next to the projector, screening experimental films and smoking like a chimney.*

*We screened Strand's elliptical first film *Angel Blue Sweet Wings* from 1966, outside in the woods, treating bewildered family members to a three-minute study of textures, movement and the quality of light; the film is very dear to me, not just for its beauty but for the attitude it represents: it's about pleasure and joy, and insists that we can know and experience the most amazing things if we simply look at the world right in front of us, up close. (Holly Willis)*

This screening is a celebration of Chick Strand's films. Most of the work being shown tonight is seldom seen in public exhibition. Although Chick Strand has a powerful and significant filmography, there is a severe lack of critical writings or review of her films. Chick was always encouraging to other filmmakers in the creation and promotion of her films, yet she was humble in the exhibition of her films. She inspired more than three generations of filmmakers through her dedicated teaching at Occidental College.

Chick Strand, through her example, always championed the rights of filmmakers. She constantly insisted that filmmakers be paid for showing their work and that they be treated properly. She also believed that filmmakers should organize and operate their own exhibitions and distribution of films.

