

Radical Adults Lick God Head Style New Weird Urbanism and the Rapture of Decay

Thursday, October 13 at 7:30 pm — Artists' Television Access

From Baltimore to Providence to Chicago to San Francisco, we lurch, drift and dream. In moldering back alleys and along gentrified promenades those with eyes to see create poignant cine-poems of decay, rebirth and love among the ruins. A cinema of desperation and possibility, these films jump between documentary, narrative and even surveillance genres in their exposition of the new weird America. Screening: Alee Peoples' freewheeling *Lonelyville*, a wandering byway drift through depressed Providence, documenting the so-called housing market crash along the way; *Crowning Glory* (also by Peoples), a psychic punk/patriotic attempt at resuscitating loaded political icons (with a spastic dose of perverse pageantry); Gibbs Chapman and Catherine Lam's "lecture on leaderless organization," *I know something is going on back there*; Doug Katelus' *Lost in the Flood*, a tribute to Valencia Street nighttime and a reflection on a life left behind; and *724 14th Street*, Ching Yi Tseng's time-lapse song of life in our city. Finally, based ostensibly on a dimly recalled mis-telling of M. Somerset Maugham's story of postwar dissolution, Stephanie Barber and Xav Leplae's *razor's edge*, as weird and joyful as it is lugubrious, follows wandering lovers through shopping malls, back yards and the barbershops of Baltimore on a long slow spiral into oblivion. Program commences with *Scotch Tape* by none other than the patron saint of moribund joy himself, Jack Smith. (*Steve Polta*)

Scotch Tape (1962) by Jack Smith; 16mm, color, sound, 3 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

"...shot in 1959, using Ken Jacob's Bell & Howell camera at one of Jacobs' *Star Spangled to Death* [1957–59, completed 2003–4] the rubble-strewn site of the future Lincoln Center on Manhattan's West Side.

"Jacobs, who appears in the film, frantically dancing and mugging along with another *SSTD* performer Jerry Sims, proposed that Smith call his film *Reveling In The Dumps*, and even drew titles. Instead Smith chose to name his movie after the dirty piece of tape that had wedged itself inside the camera gate..." (J. Hoberman, *Jack Smith and his Secret Flix*, published 1997 by the American Museum of the Moving Image)

Lonelyville (2009) by Alee Peoples; digital video, color, sound, 11 minutes, tape from the maker

"secret friend in control tower, watching the housing market crash in his front lawn." (Alee Peoples)

www.aleepeoples.com

I know something is going on back there (2010) by Gibbs Chapman and Catherine Lam; digital video, color, sound, 19 minutes, tape from the makers

"Compiled from surveillance recordings from an urban apartment building, the activities of the inhabitants provide evidence for the theory of emergent behavior, and direct analogies between human and animal behavior. What is being sprayed upon whom? Why is the man burning his armchair? What exactly is the man expecting to find in the trash? And many other questions posed in this lecture on leaderless organization." (Gibbs Chapman/Catherine Lam)

www.gibbschapman.com

724 14th Street (2010) by Ching Yi Tseng; digital video, color, silent, 10 minutes, from the maker

"...contains my Super-8 diary footage from 2007–2009 when I lived in San Francisco. These moving images, and the sounds they create, make a sense of spatial reality. This sensation comes from fragment and moment, which disappear quickly the next second. However, rhythm integrates these fragments into a whole, which disintegrate again." (Ching Yi Tseng)

Lost in the Flood (2010) by Doug Katelus; 16mm, color, sound, 11 minutes, print from the maker

"The final film in a trilogy about transition this one brings us further down the endless road. Shot in San Francisco, Albuquerque, New Jersey, Buffalo, Pittsburgh and New York... well at least where I recall shooting. An anti road trip movie and a love story of sorts, the road is seemingly never ending without a direct purpose of being or much anything at all... at least nothing tangible. But at the same time I could be wrong about all this." (Doug Katelus)

www.douglaskatelus.com

Crowning Glory by Alee Peoples; digital video, color, sound, 5 minutes, tape from the maker

"Radical Adults Lick God Head Style." (Alee Peoples)

"This is really awesome." (Melissa Cha)

razor's edge (2010) by Stephanie Barber and Xav Leplae; 35mm screened as digital video, color, sound, 44 minutes

"Also afflicted by the traumas of war, though at a far remove, was Stephanie Barber and Xav Leplae's *razor's edge* (2010), a dramatization of the Somerset Maugham novel *The Razor's Edge*. Maugham's story of postwar dissolution is only vaguely remembered in Barber and Leplae's escapade, more an occasion of the friends' reconnection after long years of absence than any kind of adaptation, and the film could be understood as the wild, unpredictable flowering that grows from the settling of things past. As the pair dances in an extreme wide shot on a downtown Baltimore rooftop, or passes an invisible mass of energy back and forth in the background of a Korean restaurant, their melodramatic theatrics are met with quizzical looks from bystanders. They are misunderstood by the world around them, and probably a fair number of people in the audience, yet however removed or inscrutable the creative logic underpinning their collaboration, it's impossible to miss the film's effervescent sense of joy. Stuffed in a too-tight leisure suit, Leplae fumbles with the objects in a barbershop, while Barber, dressed in a mustard yellow evening gown, stumbles drunk across the front of an abandoned grocery store. Like a pair of silent film comedians, they move gleefully against the rhythms of the city, and in the process they create their own intrepid and improbable itinerary through Baltimore's empty lots and the pages of Maugham's book. (Genevieve Yue: "Acts of Perception: New York Film Festival's Views from the Avant-Garde, 2010, *Reverse Shot*. www.reverseshot.com/article/views_avantgarde_2010)

"One friend tells another friend what she remembers from reading the Somerset Maugham novel *The Razor's Edge* ten or fifteen years ago. It is a sketchy and slanted remembering. They decide to shoot a film of this memory, a foggy tale with scant connection to the original but feeling the patronage of that text. Being artists and tricksters, they do it as a game, all in one week, with donated short ends and gestural implications to narrative. What they really do is visit after years of not visiting. Endless talks about the state of the planet and our access to knowledge—power or ineptitude of art. All this talking and the film turns out with almost no dialogue, sweeps silently through the story and the city of Baltimore, which is often destitute, tropical and friendly." (Stephanie Barber)

www.stephaniebarber.com