

Elemental Dispositions

New and Recent Works by

*Deborah Stratman, Diane Kitchen, Samantha Rebello, Scott Stark,
Charlotte Pryce and Makino Takashi*

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This program of new and recent short work by local and international film and video artists delves into the tactile, the sublime, and the provocative. Relationships to our environments—natural, terrestrial, and constructed—are explored and re-configured, evoking and provoking impressions that mediate along, delve and transcend the surface.

The films in this program eschew a naïve interpretation of our relationship to nature. Instead, they offer an engagement with the complexities of representation, of observation, of subjecthood, of attempts to absent and/or be present within our environs. These complexities find their form through diverse approaches, from the re-contextualization of text in *It Will Die Out in the Mind* (or of the mundane in *the object which thinks us: OBJECT 1*) to the subtle and delicate nuances of light, color and line in *Ecstatic Vessels*. A layering of the pictorial with the filmic in *The Parable of the Tulip Painter and the Fly* and the stereoscopic sculptural vision of *Speechless* both engage with representation along parameters of flatness and depth, while the material and sonic processing of *Elements of Nothing* works towards a perceptually immersive experience. There is in each, however, a tendency, perhaps a desire, to allow for beauty to unfold, for the richness of the intricacies of experience—be it metaphysical, arboreal, domestic, sexual or terrestrial—to speak on its many levels, and also at moments, to just be. (Vanessa O'Neill)

It Will Die Out in the Mind (2006) by Deborah Stratman; video, color, sound, 3.5 minutes, tape from the maker

A short meditation on the possibility of spiritual existence and the paranormal in our information age. Texts are lifted from Andrei Tarkovsky's film *Stalker* in which the Stalker's daughter redeems his otherwise doomed spiritual journey. She offers him something more expansive and less explicable than logic or technology as the conceptual pillar of the human spirit.

The title is taken from a passage about time from Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Possessed*:

Stavrogin:in the Apocalypse the angel swears that there'll be no more time.

Kirillov: I know. It's quite true, it's said very clearly and exactly. When the whole of man has achieved happiness, there won't be any time, because it won't be needed. It's perfectly true.

Stavrogin: Where will they put it then?

Kirillov: They won't put it anywhere.

(Deborah Stratman)

Ecstatic Vessels (2008) by Diane Kitchen; 16mm, color, silent, 20 minutes, print from the maker

The film transitions between quiet observations and subtle abstractions through exquisite delicacies of movement, line and color. Flickers of light, the quivering of branches and playful gestures of leaves surprise and entice. (VO)

Blaze in the trees
Blaze on the brow.

Incidents, spontaneity and presence circle wildly in the natural world. (Diane Kitchen)

The object which thinks us: OBJECT 1 (2007) by Samantha Rebello; 16mm, color, sound, 7 minutes, print from the maker

Tight close ups, sometimes out of focus, offer a disorientating, uncanny representation of everyday household objects. (Samantha Rebello)

Speechless (2008) by Scott Stark; 16mm, color, sound, 13 minutes, print from the maker
Sound by Greg Headley

Stereoscopic photographs of human vulvae, taken from a set of View-Master 3D reels that accompanied a textbook entitled *The Clitoris*, are animated and interwoven with surfaces and textures in natural and human-made environments. In *Speechless*, Scott Stark's investigation of perceptual possibilities with 3D imagery, concerns with human sexuality and confrontations with provocative material reach new ground and cohere in a stunning and complex work. (VO)

In a medium usually reserved for travel photography, cartoons, science fiction and television stills, these View-Master reels become studies of the subtle and not-so-subtle variations on the dense topography of this usually-hidden and highly iconized part of the female body... Yet it soon became apparent that the material was problematic. Should I even be looking at these images with "artistic" eyes? Could I work with them in a way that transcended their clinical nature? And did I want to foist them on my viewers, some of whom would find the experience uncomfortable and might question my use of them as a heterosexual male? ...I decided to put the questions on hold, and threw myself into the project from a formal and very physical, sensual perspective, discovering and exploiting a rich array of intense perceptual phenomena. The film became, for me, a celebration of a raw, mysterious and sometimes fearful beauty, exploding with images of power and presence, of a part of the female body that is, one could argue, under-represented and seldom looked at, except when crudely sexualized in modern porn or subjected to the sterile scrutiny of the physician's gaze...the images in *Speechless* also invite pleasure; animated, they might appear to be speaking, forming words and sentences using a vocabulary that, with our unversed eyes and ears, we're unable to parse, and hence assume the speakers' voices muted; but perhaps it is we who are left speechless. (Scott Stark)

The Parable of the Tulip Painter and the Fly (2008) by Charlotte Pryce; 16mm, color, silent, 4 minutes, print from the maker

The process of creating images and the desire therein to capture, with a sense of both wonderment and detachment, unfolds in layers of rich color and brief luminous impressions. (VO)

Having grown the exquisite tulip, I feel deeply under its spell—an affliction shared by an artist from another time and place, yet the dilemma we faced was shared: to fall for such luxurious and temporary beauty raised a fear (a reminder—a fly) of the transience of life. (Charlotte Pryce)

Elements of Nothing (2007) by Makino Takashi; 35mm screening as digital video, color, sound, 19 minutes, tape from the maker

Music by Jim O'Rourke

I created noises from the aggregate of the organic subject. The organic lump which lost its meaning and name, lets viewers' consciousness free and gives them new images. In this film, the images are shown as an experimental moment composed by light and sound, more than by words. (Makino Takashi)