

Suspended Belief: Nine Films From Northern California

September 21, 2017 at 7:30pm — Center for New Music
presented in association with Canyon Cinema Foundation

A selection of films (all created in Northern California 1966–2016) reflecting direct physical engagement with the tools of cinematic expression and a turn toward intimacy, introspection and anti-linguistic exploration. Includes films by Malic Amalya, Bruce Baillie, Nathaniel Dorsky, Will Hindle, J.M. Martinéz, Gunvor Nelson, Vanessa O'Neill, Ken Paul Rosenthal and Karly Stark. Curated by San Francisco Cinematheque for EXIS 2017 (Seoul) this program is presented locally by popular demand.

With its precarious positioning at the tectonic edge of the U.S., the San Francisco Bay Area has long been home to dreamers, artists, activists and experimenters of all stripes. With a media history tracing back to the photographic experiments of Muybridge, the region boasts a vibrant film/video history, one which takes many forking paths and which parallels the rich countercultural currents of the region and which is impossible to summarize in a single short program. *Suspended Belief*—presented as a microscopic intro to films of the region. Opening with Bruce Baillie's 1966 classic *All My Life*, the films on this program reflect direct physical engagement with the tools of cinematic expression, anti-linguistic explorations of light and landscape and a turn toward intimacy and introspection. Also screening: Will Hindle's *Billabong* (1966), an impressionistic view of a Oregon boy's camp; Gunvor Nelson's luminous animated collage, *Field Study #2* (1988); Ken Paul Rosenthal's 1996 work *Spring Flavor*, a study in hand-processing, re-photography and natural dyes, filmed in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. More recent films include Karly Stark's luxuriously intimate cinematic love letter *I Am Delighted By Your Alchemy, Turning Everything in My Kingdom to Gold* (2014); J.M. Martinéz' crystalline forest view *Cyclical Refractions* (2016); Malic Amalya's *Roadsides & Waste Grounds*, in which human forms and insects merge with ephemeral landscape and Vanessa O'Neill's twin-projected seascape, *Suspension* (2012). NOT TO BE MISSED: screening also includes Nathaniel Dorsky's *17 Reasons Why* (1987), a tour-de-force in "unslit" 8mm camerawork and an overwhelming activation of projection screen as energy field. (Steve Polta)

Cyclical Refractions (2016) by J.M. Martinéz; digital video, color, sound, 3 minutes, exhibition file from the maker

Cyclical Refractions took a couple of viewings to fully reveal itself to me. Shot in the woods, it primarily captures the glint of light through trees, in particular the bright haze when morning light can make brown pine needles seem a greenish-gray, or an otherworldly red color seems to mar the otherwise pristine sky.

"But using a specially constructed lens, Martínez creates a kaleidoscopic effect wherein the forest floor is curling, convex and inverted, around the center image, which is slightly distorted and taking in the lion's share of the sunlight. Combined with this are bumps and squeaks on the soundtrack as Martínez records the close-contact audio of his mic on the ground or inside of hollow logs. Lovely, original, and smart.

(Michael Sicinski. www.letterboxd.com/msicism/film/cyclical-refractions/1/)

www.cargocollective.com/lucidcine

Roadsides and Waste Grounds (2012) by Malic Amalya; digital video, color, sound, 2 minutes, exhibition file from the maker

A field guide from the Oakland Hills, in collaboration with Rachel Zingoni. (Malic Amalya)

www.malicamalya.com

I Am Delighted By Your Alchemy, Turning Everything in My Kingdom to Gold (2014) by Karly Stark; digital video, color, sound, 3 minutes, exhibition file from the maker

I Am Delighted By Your Alchemy... explores the memory of a sexual relationship, revealing what one remembers and what one is trying to forget. The film is an intimate portrait of the filmmaker's past relationship, using superimposition to queer the notion of sex and memory, as well as to blur the boundary between the filmmaker and the subject.

I remember I told you that the universe looks like a whole lot of something up close, but now I feel like I am orbiting around it. (Karly Stark)

www.karlystark.com

All My Life (1966) by Bruce Baillie; 16mm, color, sound, 3 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema Foundation Caspar, California. Old fence with red roses. (Bruce Baillie)

Billabong (1966) by Will Hindle; 16mm, color, sound, 9 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema Foundation Empathetic in the extreme. (www.canyoncinema.com)

Field Study #2 (1988) by Gunvor Nelson; 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema Foundation

"Another collage film. Part of the on-going series of *Field Studies* (which includes *Frame Line*, *Light Years* and *Light Years Expanding*) combining live action with animation. Superimpositions of dark pourings are perceived through the film. Suddenly a bright color runs across the picture and delicate drawings flutter past. Grunts from animals are heard. (Gunvor Nelson)

Spring Flavor (1996) by Ken Paul Rosenthal; 16mm, color, silent, 3 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema Foundation

Originally Super 8. The alchemy and texture of film is celebrated with images of sun-splintered reed that have been re-photographed, hand-processed, buried beside a pond, and soaked in cooked wild berries. (Ken Paul Rosenthal)

www.kenpaulrosenthal.com

Suspension (2012) by Vanessa O'Neill; 16mm double projection, b&w/color, sound, 10 minutes, prints from the maker

The film layers a toned and black and white reel creating subtle shifts of hue and tone of abstracted seascape. (Vanessa O'Neill)

17 Reasons Why (1987) by Nathaniel Dorsky; 16mm, color, silent, 19 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema Foundation

17 Reasons Why was photographed with a variety of semi-ancient regular 8 cameras and is projected unsplit as 16mm. These pocket-sized relics enabled me to walk around virtually "unseen," exploring and improvising with the immediacy of a more spontaneous medium. The four image format has built-in contrapuntal resonances, ironies, and beauty, and in each case gives us an unpretentious look at the film frame itself... the simple and primordial delight of luminous Kodachrome and rich black and white chugging thru these timeworn gates (Nathaniel Dorsky)

www.nathanieldorsky.net

This program is presented in association Canyon Cinema Foundation
www.canyoncinema.com

www.sfcinematheque.org