

Center of Gravity Gunvor Nelson and Dorothy Wiley

Program 2

Thursday, November 16, 2017 at 7:30 pm — Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
presented in association with Canyon Cinema Foundation and FilmForm, Stockholm
Curated and Presented by Tanya Zimbardo
Short Films 1967-1973

As friends living in Marin County, Gunvor Nelson and Dorothy Wiley began making films together in the 1960s that foregrounded their personal experiences while examining issues of family, parenthood, partnership and domestic life in the contexts of '60s/70s feminism and Northern California culture. Featuring original soundtracks, their collaborative and solo films explore the poetics of everyday life, from portraits of motherhood to close studies of various bodies. Nelson, who is now based in Sweden, and Wiley were among the earliest members of the cooperative Canyon Cinema. (Tanya Zimbardo)

My Name is Oona (1969) by Gunvor Nelson; 16mm, Color, sound, 10 minutes, print from exhibition file from Canyon Cinema Foundation

"*My Name is Oona* captures in haunting, intensely lyrical images fragments of the coming to consciousness of a child girl. A series of extremely brief flashes of her moving through night-lit space or woods in sensuous negative, separated by rapid fades into blackness, burst upon us like a fairy-tale princess, with a late sun only partially outlining her and the animal in silvery filigree against the encroaching darkness; one of the most perfect recent examples of poetic cinema. Throughout the entire film, the girl, compulsively and as if in awe, repeats her name, until it becomes a magic incantation of self-realization." (Amos Vogel, *The Village Voice*).

Letters (1972) by Dorothy Wiley; 16 mm, color, optical, 11 minutes, print from exhibition file from Canyon Cinema Foundation

"One day I was watching my son write a letter - making marks on paper, folding it, slipping it into another folded paper, putting a name on it, a little picture in the corner, sending it flying through the air. Every movement seemed so packed with love energy that I began to think of all letters as Valentines. I thought of all the incredible letters Wiley and I had received over the years so I filmed four of them - a letter from Judy, a letter from worms, a letter from bugs, and a letter from Ethan. Wiley and Bob and Diane Nelson whistled popular favorite classics for the soundtrack." (Dorothy Wiley)

Miss Jesus Fries On Grill (1973) by Dorothy Wiley; 16mm, color, optical, 12 minutes, print from exhibition file from Canyon Cinema Foundation

"*Miss Jesus Fries on Grill* is a mysterious striking evocation of pain and the short-circuiting sensations of living in this predicament of death. It is a short film and again the color is fine and sharp as a good paring knife. "Beginning with a newspaper clipping, written in a remarkably detailed manner of a bizarre accident in which a Miss Jesus was killed when a car smashed into the cafe where she was eating. The impact threw her on the grill, heated to 500 degrees. It is impossible to convey the combination of counterpointing feelings this film arouses. Like all great art, it is mysterious in its working. Dorothy Wiley has such a clear but tender eye for life. Tender, not sentimental. *Miss Jesus* is a simply constructed, highly poetical film." (Mike Reynolds, *Berkeley Barb*)

Weeny Worm or the Fat Innkeeper (1972) by Dorothy Wiley; 16mm, sound, optical, 11 minutes, print from exhibition file from Canyon Cinema Foundation

"I first saw these creatures at the Bodega Bay Marine Biology Lab. I was amazed - I lived on this planet so long not knowing I was sharing it with weenie worms. They only live a few places in the world. Victor had been working with them for several years doing DNA experiments." (Dorothy Wiley)

Moon's Pool (1973) by Gunvor Nelson; 16mm, digital, color, 15 minutes, print from exhibition file from FilmForm, Stockholm

"Gunvor Nelson's oceanic lyric dissolves dualities of male and female, emotion and form, inside and outside, image and reflection. In the midst of a characteristically dense soundtrack, we hear the words: "Today, I see you see me in my body," a cause for celebration in this literally immersive film. Utterly and pleasurably disorienting, *Moon's Pool* follows the siren's song of exploration and elation." (Max Goldberg)

Fog Pumas (1967) by Gunvor Nelson and Dorothy Wiley; 16mm, color, mono, 25 minutes, print from FilmForm, Stockholm

"A surrealistic fantasy populated by human beings, imaginary creatures, strange places and objects against a backdrop of psychedelic music." (FilmForm)

This program is presented in association Canyon Cinema Foundation and FilmForm

www.canyoncinema.com

www.filmform.com

www.sfcinematheque.org