

INFRARED

In Celebration of the Compton Transgender District
program 4

Jeff Preiss' STOP

November 6, 2018 — CounterPulse
Jeff Preiss in person

In 2017, the City of San Francisco indicated intention to designate a portion of its Tenderloin neighborhood (a portion which includes CounterPulse and the office of San Francisco Cinematheque Cinematheque) as the “Compton’s Transgender, Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual District” in reference to a 1966 protest action held at Compton’s Cafeteria, located at the intersection of Turk and Taylor Streets in San Francisco. This pre-Stonewall action is recognized as a significant milestone in queer and transgender political activism. In celebration of this designation—the first legally recognized municipal transgender district in the world—San Francisco Cinematheque is proud to present INFRARED, four nights of experimental films by and about transgender, nonbinary and gender nonconforming artists curated by transgender filmmaker Malic Amalya.

From the 1969 Stonewall Riots to Standing Rock; from the 1992 presidential election to post-apocalyptic communes: these programs showcase trans experiences perspectives, and legacies. These films survey light refractions and the art of hair flipping, craft orifices and sites of injections into portals of transcendence, and extol anti-police riots and community uprisings. INFRARED begins with Madsen Minax’s experimental narrative, Kairos Dirt and the Errant Vacuum. Amid the post-industrial decay of the American South, a middle school lunch lady, an androgynous student, and an astrologer-life coach-phone sex operator discover a fantastic and carnal alternate dimension occupied by a transworldly apparition. Program 2: Dislocation of Existence is a collection of short films that contemplate the weight of being and disintegration of knowing. Program 3: Slow/Sheltering/Shattering features short films that unpack moments of seismic shifts, unveil the intricacies of prolong permutations, and make demands for immediate social restructuring. INFRARED concludes with Jeff Preiss’ experimental documentary, STOP, filmed over the course of sixteen years. In the tradition of home movies, STOP begins in his child’s early years and concludes in his child’s teenage years—in this case, coinciding with his child proclaiming gender self-determination. (Malic Amalya)

INFRARED: program 4: Jeff Preiss' STOP

In the tradition of home movies, Jeff Preiss’ experimental documentary *STOP* begins in his child’s early years and concludes in his child’s teenage years. In brief, rhythmic flashes, subjects repeat in cycles while others form isolated episodes. The formation of an art gallery entangles with family celebrations. Quotidian violence—including a white man in a Native American costume—intertwines with transportation and television programs. London and New York City are captured as they mourn the loss of Princess Diana and react in shock to the September 11th attacks. Silence and atmospheric ambiance alter, while light leaks and jump cuts pulse throughout the film. Over the course of sixteen years, Priess’ child is the only reliable marker of time. The film not only chronicles advancing age. It also maps the advancing self-awareness that differentiates from parental expectations. Preiss’ camera does not distance, judge or sensationalize but provides a platform for his child to proclaim his gender identity. (Malic Amalya)

STOP (1995–2012) by Jeff Preiss; digital video, color, sound, 120 minutes, Blu-ray disc from the maker

“Airplanes, holidays, tigers, funerals, friends, dogs, car crashes, dead birds, the Twin Towers, 14th Street, clouds, windshield wipers, rain, buildings, terraces, babies, kids, old people, Stan Brakhage, art, movies, Planet of the Apes, a monkey reading a newspaper, New York, Seoul, Paris, Berlin, Boston, apartments, fireworks, flags, houses, terraces, beaches, trains, cars, driftwood, billboards, Los Angeles, September 11, Ground Zero, George W. Bush, the Iraq War, chicken nuggets, French fries, pizza, döner kebab, airports, haircuts, dentists, doctors, laptops, cell phones, 23rd Street, subways, Chet Baker, SlutWalk, coffee, bagels, dresses, advertisements, skirts, ties, bathing suits, Orchard Street, traffic. This is a sampling of what enters the world of Jeff Preiss’s *STOP*, a film of beautiful observations and revelations, chronicling magnificent transformations and recent history with a feverish urgency.” (Giampaolo Bianconi: “In Retrospect: Jeff Preiss’ *STOP*. *The Brooklyn Rail*. www.brooklynrail.org/2012/11/film/in-retrospectjeff-preiss-stop)

“Among the stops referred to in the title, one was the act of assigning an end within the accumulating mass of my personal archive—so that a film could be possibly shaped. Many converging threads of ends and transformations were candidates: the nearing end of celluloid film and the end of the 4 x 3 video standard—or the end of an archival set as I approached camera roll #2500. But most evident was the quintessential end of nearly all home-movie cycles: the awkward end of my child’s prepubescence—in this case hinging on a heroically decisive transformation of gender expression.

“It was not until this particular end was in sight that I began to consider the possibility of illusionary synchronized sound. Maybe the spring-driven Bolex I used exclusively had made too convincing a case as the sole-silent technology—but now moved by the connection-disconnection of the two media channels somehow mirroring the fit/non-fit of the body, I started assigning alternating sections to be post-synchronized—and having on no occasion recorded sound along with the film, this required a process diametrically opposed to shooting’s immediacy, one that was entirely fictional.

“In all sixteen years, on only one occasion did I have access to simultaneously recorded sound. It was just by chance that a friend was shooting video alongside me and sometime later realized it would be useful. Only a few seconds of my kid speaking directly to camera declaring the right of gender self-determination.” (Jeff Preiss)

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