

THE COLOR OF RITUAL, THE COLOR OF THOUGHT:
Women Avant-Garde Filmmakers in America 1930–2000

PART I June 29–July 30, 2000

PART II September 5–October 1, 2000



WHITNEY

Whitney Museum of American Art



Chick Strand, Still from *Elasticity*, 1976

THE COLOR OF RITUAL, THE COLOR OF THOUGHT: Women Avant-Garde Filmmakers in America 1930–2000

Filmmakers in "The Color of Ritual, The Color of Thought": Peggy Ahwesh, Sara Kathryn Arledge, Diana Barrie, Louise Bourque, Noll Brinckmann, Mary Ellen Bute, Donna Cameron, Maryette Charlton, Doris Chase, Abigail Child, Shirley Clarke, Beverly Conrad, Sharon Couzin, Storm De Hirsch, Maya Deren, Betty Ferguson, Holly Fisher, Nina Fonoroff, Su Friedrich, Sallie Fuchs, Silvianna Goldsmith, Bette Gordon, Amy Greenfield, Barbara Hammer, Marjorie Keller, Karen Kramer, Alexis Krasilovsky, Amy Kravitz, Lee Krist, Helen Levitt, Lana Lin, Jeanne Liotta, Janis Crystal Lipzin, Janice Loeb, Eva Lothar, Babette Mangolte, Carole and Eugene Marner, Heather McAdams, Marie Menken, Julie Murray, Gunvor Nelson, Yoko Ono, Alice Anne Parker, Claire Parker, Jenny Perlin, Dana Plays, Yvonne Rainer, Jennifer Reeves, Barbara Rubin, Lynne Sachs, Carolee Schneemann, Rosalind Schneider, M.M. Serra, Amie Siegel, Greta Snider, Chick Strand, Elaine Summers, Amy Taubin, Anita Thacher, Leslie Thornton, Jacalyn L. White, and Joyce Wieland.

handmade-paper films of Donna Cameron.

Marie Menken's painterly experiments with "cinema concret" provide a context for films by Janis Crystal Lipzin, Joyce Wieland, Barbara Hammer, Marjorie Keller, Holly Fisher, and others, all of which focus on the elemental composition of film. Menken's delicate use of light is examined in the weekend program *Invisible Light*, alongside a number of films made using hand-processing techniques, including a live presentation of recent handmade films by Lee Krist projected with a hand-cranked 35mm projector.

The radical films of Yoko Ono highlight an important moment in the early 1970s when filmmaking by women began to assert itself with a newfound confidence. In conjunction with Ono's works, programs of films by Barbara Rubin, Anita Thacher, Carolee Schneemann, M.M. Serra, and Jennifer Reeves address issues of the body politic, from erotic desire to bulimia, aging, and death. The psychological struggles of childhood, adolescence, and adult womanhood are explored in films by Gunvor Nelson, Sallie Fuchs, Leslie Thornton, and Amy Taubin, among others.

The films of Chick Strand draw out several disparate themes: the realistic and poetic studies of men and women living in rural South America; the erotic life of women; the profound sense of loss symbolized by the fate of Anne Frank, and the formal and social implications of collaged found-footage film. Works by Dana Plays, Abigail Child, Julie Murray, and Gunvor Nelson, as well as Betty Ferguson's found-footage films of the 1960s, are brought together in this final weekend program.

At a moment when the dominance of digital media has stimulated a revival of the more tactile medium of film, this group of films by women underlines both the achievements of women filmmakers since the beginnings of American avant-garde film in the 1930s and the enduring nature of film as an irreplaceable medium of artistic expression.

Part II September 5–October 1, 2000

Since the 1930s, women filmmakers have played a major role in the history of avant-garde film in America. This series reveals the breadth of their influence and achievement, from Mary Ellen Bute's early experiments with abstraction to the radical social docudramas of Shirley Clarke. Recent works by contemporary filmmakers such as Peggy Ahwesh, Abigail Child, Leslie Thornton, and Su Friedrich are also screened.

Each week of Part II of "The Color of Ritual" focuses on one of the following featured filmmakers: Mary Ellen Bute, Marie Menken, Yoko Ono, and Chick Strand. On weekdays, one or two key films from the featured filmmaker's career are presented in continuous screenings. During these programs, in a departure from conventional screening methods, the Kaufman Astoria Studios Film & Video Gallery will be emptied of seats so viewers can experience these films in a "gallery" setting. On weekends, the seats return as a range of films are shown that broaden themes highlighted in the featured filmmaker programs.

In the early 1930s, Mary Ellen Bute was the first American artist to make abstract films and show them publicly. Her experiments will be screened with other early abstract films by Alexander Alexeieff, Claire Parker, and Sara Kathryn Arledge, as well as recent work by Amy Kravitz and the

PART II SCREENING SCHEDULE

WEEKEND PROGRAMS

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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Featured Filmmaker: Mary Ellen Bute

On Sunday, September 10, we will be screening a program of films by Mary Ellen Bute. Her work is a blend of experimental and narrative film, often exploring themes of identity and the human condition. Her films are characterized by their unique visual language and innovative editing techniques.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Film Abstractions

1 pm

Alexander Alexeieff and Claire Parker. *Five pin-screen films*, 1933–80. Black-and-white; 27 min.
Mary Ellen Bute. *Synchrony No. 2*, 1935. Black-and-white; 6 min.
Greta Snider. *Flight*, 1996. Black-and-white; 5 min.
Donna Cameron. *Fauve*, 1991. Paper film; 10 min.
Mary Ellen Bute. *Mood Contrasts*, 1953; 7 min.
Amy Kravitz. *The Trap*, 1988. Black-and-white; 5 min.

3 pm

Sara Kathryn Arledge. *Interior Garden*, 1978; 7 min.
Doris Chase. *Squares (Kleinsinger)*, 1973; 8 min.
Beverly Conrad with Tony Conrad. *Straight and Narrow*, 1970. Black-and-white; 10 min.
Diana Barrie. *Magic Explained*, 1980. Silent; 4 min.
Chick Strand. *Angel Blue Sweet Wings*, 1966; 4 min.
Storm De Hirsch. *Third Eye Butterfly*, 1968. Dual-screen film; 10 min.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Dreaming Narratives

1 pm

Sara Kathryn Arledge. *What Is a Man?*, 1958; 10 min.
Mary Ellen Bute. *Passages from Finnegans Wake*, 1967. Black-and-white; 97 min.

3 pm

Maya Deren. *Meshes of the Afternoon*, 1943. Black-and-white; 14 min.
Chick Strand. *Elasticity*, 1976; 21 min.
Peggy Ahwesh. *Nocturne*, 1998. Black-and-white; 30 min.

4:15 pm

Su Friedrich. *Gently Down the Stream*, 1981. Black-and-white, silent; 14 min.
Amie Siegel. *The Sleepers*, 1999; 45 min.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

Featured Filmmaker: Marie Menken

On Tuesday, September 14, and Friday, September 15, we will be screening a program of films by Marie Menken. Her work is a blend of experimental and narrative film, often exploring themes of identity and the human condition. Her films are characterized by their unique visual language and innovative editing techniques.



Lee Krist. Still from *Willa*, 1998

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

Cinema Concret

Noon

Marie Menken. *Wrestling*, 1964. Black-and-white, silent; 8 min.
Joyce Wieland. *Catfood*, 1967–68. Silent; 13 min.
Bette Gordon. *Noyes*, 1976. Silent; 3 min.
Janis Crystal Lipzin. *L.A. Carwash*, 1975; 9 min.
Jacalyn L. White with Doug Dunderdale. *Cetology*, 1977. Black-and-white; 12 min.
Marie Menken. *Sidewalks*, 1966. Black-and-white, silent; 7 min.
Marie Menken. *Go Go Go*, 1962–64. Silent; 12 min.
Holly Fisher. *Soft Shoe*, 1987; 20 min.

2 pm

Marie Menken. *Notebook*, 1962–63. Color and black-and-white, silent; 10 min.

Marie Menken. *Glimpse of the Garden*, 1957; 4 min.

Marie Menken. *Arabesque for Kenneth Anger*, 1961; 5 min.

Barbara Hammer. *Arequipa*, 1980. Color and black-and-white, silent; 8 min.

Janis Crystal Lipzin. *Periodic Vibrations in an Elastic Medium*, 1973–76. Silent; 16 min.

Holly Fisher. *The Wildwest Suite, Part III: Ghost Dance*, 1980. Silent; 25 min.

The Answering Furrow

3:30 pm

Marjorie Keller. *The Answering Furrow*, 1985; 20 min.

Alice Anne Parker. *Animals Running*, 1974. Black-and-white; 23 min.

Babette Mangolte. *The Sky on Location*, 1982; 77 min.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

Invisible Light

1 pm

Jeanne Liotta. *Ceci N'est Pas*, 1997. Black-and-white, silent; 7 min.

Louise Bourque. *Fissures*, 1999; 2 min.

Jenny Perlin. *Lost Treasures*, 1999; 3 min.

Greta Snider. *Flight*, 1996. Black-and-white, silent; 5 min.

Jeanne Liotta. *Muktikara*, 1999. Color and black-and-white, silent; 11 min.

Storm De Hirsch. *Sing Lotus*, 1966; 14 min.

2 pm

Donna Cameron. *Fauve*, 1991. Paper film; 10 min.

Chick Strand. *Waterfall*, 1969; 3 min.

Joyce Wieland. *Hand Tinting*, 1967. Silent; 6 min.

Gunvor Nelson. *Frame Line*, 1984. Black-and-white; 22 min.

Jennifer Reeves. *We Are Going Home*, 1998; 10 min.

Hand-Processed Cinema:

Big Films by Lee Krist

3 pm

Willa, 1998. Black-and-white, 100 feet

Self-Portrait, 1999. Black-and-white, 50 feet

Twoness, 1998. 35mm film, black-and-white, silent, 200 feet

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 -

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

Featured Filmmaker: Yoko Ono

On Tuesday, September 19,

and Friday, September 23,



Yoko Ono, Still from *Fly*, 1971

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

The Body Politic

1 pm

Yoko Ono, *Fly*, 1971; 25 min.

Amy Greenfield, *Dirt*, 1971; 3 min.

Yoko Ono, *Freedom*, 1971; 3 min.

2 pm

Su Friedrich, *Scar Tissue*, 1979. Black-and-white, silent; 7 min.

Amy Taubin, *Like*, 1975. Black-and-white; 3 min.

Amy Taubin, *In the Bag*, 1981; 20 min.

Lynne Sachs, *Following the Object to Its Logical Beginning*, 1987; 9 min.

Bette Gordon, *Exchanges*, 1979; 15 min.

Desire

3 pm

Carolee Schneemann, *Fuses*, 1964–68. Silent; 22 min.

Anita Thacher, *Permanent Wave*, 1966; 3 min.

Peggy Ahwesh, *The Color of Love*, 1994; 10 min.

Chick Strand, *Fever Dream*, 1979. Black-and-white; 7 min.

M.M. Serra, *Just for You Girls!*, 1998; 2 min.

Abigail Child, *Mayhem (Part 6)*, 1987. Black-and-white; 17 min.

Jennifer Reeves and M.M. Serra, *Darling International*, 1999. Black-and-white; 22 min.

Interval

Barbara Rubin, *Christmas on Earth*, 1963. Two reels, superimposed on one screen, black-and-white, sound on audiocassette; 29 min.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

What Do Women Want?

Noon

Gunvor Nelson, *My Name Is Oona*, 1969. Black-and-white; 10 min.

Rosalind Schneider, *Andrea Acting Out*, 1974; 12 min.

Peggy Ahwesh, *The Scary Movie*, 1993. Black-and-white; 9 min.

Marjorie Keller, *The Web*, 1977. Standard 8mm film, silent; 10 min.

Leslie Thornton, *Jennifer, Where Are You?*, 1981; 10 min.

1 pm

Marjorie Keller, *Daughters of Chaos*, 1980; 20 min.

Abigail Child, *Covert Action (Part 4)*, 1984. Black-and-white; 8 min.

Sallie Fuchs, *It Scares Me to Feel This Way*, 1987. Black-and-white; 11 min.

Peggy Ahwesh, *The Vision Machine*, 1997. Color and black-and-white; 20 min.

2 pm

Lana Lin, *Stranger Baby*, 1995. Black-and-white; 14 min.

Su Friedrich, *Sink or Swim*, 1990. Black-and-white; 48 min.

3:30 pm

Gunvor Nelson, *Time Being*, 1991. Black-and-white, silent; 8 min.

Gunvor Nelson, *Red Shift*, 1984. Black-and-white; 50 min.

4:30 pm

Abigail Child, *Mutiny (Part 3)*, 1982–83; 10 min.

Peggy Ahwesh, *Martina's Playhouse*, 1989. Super8 film; 20 min.

Nina Fonoroff, *Accursed Mazurka*, 1994; 40 min.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30
FEATURED FILMMAKER: CHICK STRAND
CONCERN: THE BODY POLITIC
SCREENINGS: 11:00 AM AND 3:00 PM

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

1 pm

Abigail Child, *Peripeteia 1*, 1977. Silent; 9 min.

Abigail Child, *Peripeteia 2*, 1978. Silent; 12 min.

Abigail Child, *Ornamentals*, 1979. Silent; 10 min.

Chick Strand, *Loose Ends*, 1979. Black-and-white; 24 min.

2 pm

Heather McAdams, *We Hope You Enjoy This Film*, 1979. Black-and-white; 4 min.

Julie Murray, *Fuck Face*, 1986. Super8 film; 10 min.

Heather McAdams, *Black Coffee*, 1985. Color and black-and-white; 4 min.

Betty Ferguson, *Telephone Film*, 1972; 14 min.

3 pm

Chick Strand, *Elasticity*, 1976; 21 min.

Chick Strand, *Soft Fiction*, 1979. Black-and-white; 54 min.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1

1 pm

Chick Strand, *Guacamole*, 1976; 10 min.

Dana Plays, *Across the Border*, 1982; 8 min.

Chick Strand, *Mujer de Milfuegos*, 1976; 14 min.

2 pm

Sharon Couzin, *Deutschland Spiegel*, 1980; 12 min.

Chick Strand, *Kristallnacht*, 1979. Black-and-white; 7 min.

Gunvor Nelson, *Before Need Redressed*, 1995; 42 min.

The Overflow of Ecstasy into Speech

3:30 pm

Leslie Thornton, *X-Tracts*, 1975. Black-and-white; 9 min.

Leslie Thornton, *All Right You Guys*, 1976. Black-and-white; 16 min.

Leslie Thornton, *The Great Invisible*, work-in-progress; 60 min.



Jennifer Reeves and M.M. Serra, Still from *Darling International*, 1999

Curated by Chrissie Iles, curator of film and video. Assisted by Nathalie Dubuc, former senior curatorial assistant, film and video, and Genevieve Yue.

Yoko Ono's films are screened in conjunction with the major retrospective YES YOKO ONO at the Japan Society, New York, opening on October 18, 2000, and touring to several leading museums in North America through 2002.

Screenings in the Kaufman Astoria Studios Film & Video Gallery are free with the price of general admission to the Whitney Museum. A one-day pass to the Kaufman Astoria Studios Film & Video Gallery only is available for \$5.

This screening schedule is also available on our website, www.whitney.org.

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