

EMPAC

Doa Aly
Marwa Arsanios
Yto Barrada
Mohammad Fauzi
Morgan Fisher
Jorge Jácome
Ulysses Jenkins
Joan Jonas
Naeem Mohaiemen
Beatriz Santiago Muñoz
Deimantas Narkevičius
Shelly Silver
Hito Steyerl
Martine Syms
Ana Vaz
Joyce Wieland

OTHER USES

FILM SERIES

OTHER USES

The moving-image works presented in the screening series *Other Uses* utilize a variety of in-camera and post-production techniques to reframe objects, places, histories, and people that might otherwise remain off-screen.

The series' title is borrowed from the English translation of *Otros usos*, a 16mm film shot in a former US Naval Station in Ceiba, Puerto Rico, by Beatriz Santiago Muñoz. Filmed through mirrored sculptures, or “malascopios” as the artist describes them, *Otros usos* projects shifting, unstable viewpoints as multiple prismatic images that are arrayed in a single frame. Together, these refracted shards of ghostly architecture, land, sea, and the fishermen who work on it produce a composite time-scale that gestures not only to the region's colonial past but also to the militarized present.

This destabilization of perspective, geometry, and structure within the film frame is a common characteristic of the artworks in this series. Although vivid in surface and rigorous in technique, the films and videos deliberately resist the spectacle of the singularly imaged “event” in order to transform everyday surfaces into the cinematic.

CURATOR: VICTORIA BROOKS

FILM NOTES: VICTORIA BROOKS, LUCAS MATHESON, AND CONSTANZA ARMES CRUZ

FILMS BY:

Doa Aly
Marwa Arsanios
Yto Barrada
Mohammad Fauzi
Morgan Fisher
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OTHER USES / Martine Syms

SEPT 6, 7:00 PM

On the final night of her EMPAC commissioned multi-channel video installation, *An Evening with Queen White*, Los Angeles-based artist Martine Syms will present her new feature-length video as part of the film series *Other Uses*.

PROGRAM NOTES

Martine Syms, *Incense, Sweaters, and Ice* (2017)

Digital video, color, sound, 69:00 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and Bridget Donahue, New York

Incense, Sweaters, and Ice follows three protagonists, Mrs. Queen Esther Bernetta White, Girl, and WB (“whiteboy”). Through Hollywood film tropes as well as the visual language of social media video platforms like Vine and Instagram, Syms follows in a long cinematic history of using camera motion to create the illusion of subjectivity. Intertwining technique and narrative, the video drives at the tension between surveillance and self-promotion that pervades our many avenues of self-documentation and broadcast. Shot in locations that trace the route of the Great Migration (Los Angeles, Chicago, and Clarksdale, Miss.), the video employs distinct camera techniques to foreground the camera itself as a central character.

Each scene marks a shift of viewpoint in relationship to the action, illustrating the impossibility for the camera’s gaze to be neutral. We watch as Girl gets ready, waits, kills time, and flirts. In each instance, the camera switches personas and performs a different role: as the boyfriend, the audience, the surveillance camera, the documentary maker, the director. The camera is recast again as Girl relaxes reading in the apartment. A wide, fixed frame transports us to the family dinner and surveils her hotel room as she gets ready. Text messages periodically disrupt the onscreen action to reveal her digital interactions with another screen, her smartphone.

Although shot primarily on-location, *Incense, Sweaters, and Ice* includes interludes by Queen White, which were filmed at EMPAC and woven into the episodic structure of the film.



Martine Syms (b. 1988) is an artist based in Los Angeles. Her work has been exhibited extensively, including a recent solo exhibition at Museum of Modern Art, New York and presentations at the Berlin Biennale, Manifesta 11, ICA London, the Hammer Museum, the New Museum, the Studio Museum in Harlem, the Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. An artist, performer, and designer, Syms also founded the imprint Dominica Publishing, which publishes artist books exploring Blackness as a topic, reference, marker, and audience in visual culture. Her book *Implication and Distinctions: Format, Content and Context in Contemporary Race Film* considers performances of blackness in mainstream cinema from 1990 to the present. Other work includes the *Mundane Afrofuturist Manifesto*, which calls for the culture of the African diaspora to focus its energy on Earth rather than toward transcendence in the cosmos.

OTHER USES / Morgan Fisher, Mohammad Fauzi, Marwa Arsanios, Hito Steyerl, and Deimantas Narkevičius

OCT 5, 7:00 PM

The films and videos presented in the second program of this series complicate the relationship between still and moving images. They foreground how images are produced in order to reveal obscured narratives and the way that photographic representations are captured and circulated.

PROGRAM NOTES

Morgan Fisher, *Production Stills* (1970)

16mm, color, sound, 11:00 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and Maureen Paley, London

Morgan Fisher's *Production Stills* is an 11-minute continual take in which a series of Polaroid production stills—photographs usually taken of the on-set actors for use as promotional materials—are pinned to the wall one after another in front of the camera's lens. Synched sound captures the voices of those making the film in the studio as they work in “real time.” *Production Stills* reveals the multiple time-scales of film production by photographing the interaction between the apparatus and the film crew that usually remain out of frame. By foregrounding or quite literally “imaging” the activity of those involved in the film's making, Fisher attends directly to those whose profession usually requires them and their work to remain invisible in the finished film.

Morgan Fisher was born in 1942 in Washington, D.C. He studied art history at Harvard University and then film in Los Angeles. He lives and works in Santa Monica, California and has exhibited his films and artworks at numerous institutions worldwide. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Conversations*, Aspen Art Museum, Colorado, USA, 2012; *The Frame and Beyond*, Generali Foundation, Vienna, Austria, 2012; *Films and Paintings and In Between and Nearby*, Raven Row, London, 2011; *Translations*, Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, Germany, 2011; *Portikus Looks at Itself*, Portikus, Frankfurt, Germany, 2009; *Standard Gauge: Film Works by Morgan Fisher, 1968-2003*, Museum of Contemporary Art, MOCA, Los Angeles, California, USA, 2006; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA, 2006; *Standard Gauge: The Films of Morgan Fisher*, Tate Modern, London, 2005. His work was included in the 2014, 2004, and 1985 Whitney Biennials.



MORGAN FISHER, *PRODUCTION STILLS*, 1970.

Mohammad Fauzi, *The Rain After* (2014)

Digital video, color, sound, 12:00 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and ARKIPEL international Documentary and Experimental Film Festival, Jakarta

A group of children gather together for a photograph, jostling for position and posing. However, the image we see on screen is a moving one, as the video camera captures not the split second of a single photo but the action that goes on before and after it. In *The Rain After*, Fauzi poignantly reveals the tension of projecting oneself as part of a collective image. As the group tires of holding the posed configuration, their fidgeting produces the opposite effect to a photograph, resulting in a portrait of a group in constant motion. With a sudden downpour, they scatter, rushing in all directions until the camera stands alone on the wet street. *The Rain After* was shot in the first apartment complex built in Jakarta during the Soeharto regime and is part of a wider series, *Waiting the Rain Falls*, filmed by Fauzi in different Jakarta neighborhoods.

Mohammad Fauzi is a researcher and filmmaker based in Jakarta, Indonesia. His work has been shown in OK. Video “FLESH” 5th Jakarta International Video Festival, Indonesia Art Festival (ARTE), Hamburg International Short Film Festival, ARKIPEL Jakarta International Documentary & Experimental Film Festival, and BFI London Film Festival (Experimenta).

Marwa Arsanios, *Have You Ever Killed a Bear? Or Becoming Jamila*

(2013-2014)

Digital video, color, sound, 26:19 minutes

Courtesy of the artist

Have You Ever Killed a Bear? Or Becoming Jamila was produced in the wake of a performance that focused on the Algerian freedom fighter Jamila Bouhired. The film seeks to question the agency that women have over (and perhaps through) their own image. It traces the myriad uses of Bouhired's representation not only in cinema, but also in the Egyptian cultural milieu as her image is highlighted for its progressive and feminist values towards the cause of socialist projects. *Have You Ever Killed a Bear? Or Becoming Jamila* questions, in essence, what it means to play an iconic role, and what happens when the resulting iconic image becomes dislocated from its original context and circulated in order to serve political ends.

Marwa Arsanios was born in Washington, D.C. in 1978. She currently lives and works in Beirut, Lebanon. Arsanios works with video, performance and installation to expose and reconfigure narratives of personal and collective identities. Her practice explores the aesthetics of nation building, and its impact on the intertwined experiences of labor, consumption, and the body. Recent solo exhibitions include presentations at Hammer Projects, Los Angeles (2016); Witte de With, Rotterdam (2016); Kunsthalle Lissabon, Lisbon (2015); and Art in General, New York (2015). Based in Beirut, she is a founding member of 98weeks, an artistic organization and project space in the city, which focuses its research on a new topic every 98 weeks. She won the Sharjah Art Foundation's Production Programme grant in 2014, and the Pinchuk Future Generation special prize in 2012. She was also nominated for the Sovereign Asian Art Prize in 2012.



Hito Steyerl, *November* (2004)

DV, single channel, color, sound, 25:00 minutes

CC 4.0 Hito Steyerl.

Courtesy of the artist and Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York

Hito Steyerl's celebrated *November* time-travels through the archives. Using the artist's own footage as a Berlin teenager hamming it up for the camera with her friend Andrea Wolf, the film follows the subsequent photographic representations of Andrea after she enlists in the Kurdish liberation movement. As her image is then circulated for different ends by the Kurds, Turkish security forces, and German government, Wolf is variously branded a revolutionary, a martyr, or a terrorist depending on the political cause. In the wake of Andrea's disappearance, her image remains, circulated and endlessly transformed.

Hito Steyerl (born 1966 in Munich) is a German filmmaker, visual artist, writer, and innovator of the essay documentary. Her principal topics of interest are media, technology, and the global circulation of images. Steyerl holds a PhD in Philosophy from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. She is currently a professor of New Media Art at the Berlin University of the Arts, where she co-founded the Research Center for Proxy Politics, together with Vera Tollmann and Boaz Levin. Recent Solo Exhibitions include: 2017 *Hito Steyerl: Liquidity Inc*, The

Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA; 2016 *Hito Steyerl: Factory of the Sun*, HMKV, Dortmund, Germany; *Hito Steyerl: Factory of the Sun*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; *Number Thirteen: Factory of the Sun*, Julia Stoscheck Collection, Düsseldorf, Germany; 2015 *Duty-Free Art*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid KOW gallery, Berlin; Liquidity, Inc., Tensta Konsthall, Spånga, Sweden; *Too Much World*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia.

Deimantas Narkevičius, 20th July 2015 (2016)

Stereoscopic video projection, color, sound (Lithuanian and Russian spoken / English subtitles) 15:08 minutes

©Deimantas Narkevičius, Courtesy of Maureen Paley, London

Deimantas Narkevičius' film takes as its starting point a different sort of image: not a photographic representation but a series of socialist realist monuments erected in 1952 on the Green Bridge in central Vilnius, Lithuania. Tracing the dismantling of such commemorative sculptures in the former Soviet Bloc, the artist seeks to record this historic moment in 3D in order to create images that are adequate to the dimensionality of the subject. However, he not only films the monuments' unceremonious removal at 2 AM on *July 20, 2015* with a distanced documentary approach, but also constantly references the act of filming itself, such as the setting up of the shot and the hand clap used to synch the sound. With this gesture, he attends to the fleeting nature of images, the recording of prosperity, and the erasure of memory that comes with political change.

Deimantas Narkevičius was born in 1964 in Utena, Lithuania and lives and works in Vilnius. Originally trained as a sculptor, Narkevičius began working with film in the early 1990s. His films examine the relationship between personal memory and political history, particularly in relation to the profound social changes experienced in Eastern Europe. Employing archival footage, voice-overs, interviews, re-enactments and found photographs, Narkevičius' films and videos reinterpret historical events by playing with different narrative structures, such as memoir, documentary and drama. He represented his country at the 49th Venice Biennale in 2001 and exhibited as part of Utopia Station in the 50th Venice Biennale in 2003. In 2008, he won both the Lithuanian National Culture and Art Prize, and the Vincent Award at the Vincent van Gogh Biennial Award for Contemporary Art in Europe.



OTHER USES / Joyce Wieland, Yto Barrada, Ana Vaz, Shelly Silver, Joan Jonas, and Doa Aly
OCT 19, 2017

The third program in the series turns the lens on unseen processes, people, and objects. The motion we see in the works—whether produced through montage, camera movement, or distortion of the recorded image—directly connects the action on screen to the hand of the artist.

PROGRAM NOTES

Joyce Wieland, *Solidarity* (1973)

16mm, color, sound, 11:00 minutes

Courtesy of the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Center

In *Solidarity*, we hear, rather than see, the protest of Ontario's Dare Cookie Factory workers, and we hear it as a full family affair. Men's, women's and children's voices form a textured soundscape as the camera resolutely fixes on the demonstrators' tired feet. They shift weight onto one heel and back onto the other. The camera brings out the monotony of the picket, deliberately camouflaging the spectacular banner-waving images of militant cinema in order to leave the voices to do the political work. It is perhaps a gendered camera that bothers to look at such things in the first place—to be concerned for

bodies, not just minds and politics, and to listen to what might otherwise go unheard. Meanwhile, the word “Solidarity,” printed continuously across each frame, provides a primary point of entry through which to read the film. *Solidarity* marked Wieland’s shift towards a more overtly political approach to filmmaking than the structural films she made in New York during the 1960s, a time in which she described being marginalized by the predominantly male avant-garde filmmakers.

Joyce Wieland (1930-1999) is celebrated as one Canada’s foremost artist filmmakers. A self-described “cultural activist,” she is well known for exploring Canadian national identity and ecology, and for bringing forward feminist issues within the predominantly male art culture of the time. Initially a painter and filmmaker, she also used traditional “women’s” media such as quilts and sewn collages. Her retrospective at the National Gallery of Canada in 1971 was the first afforded to a living Canadian woman artist.

Yto Barrada, *Beau Geste* (Beautiful Gesture, 2010)

16mm transferred to digital, color, sound, 4:00 minutes

© Yto Barrada, 2017. Courtesy Pace Gallery, London; Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Hamburg, Beirut; and Galerie Polaris, Paris.

Narrated by the artist, *Beau Geste* documents a titular “beautiful gesture”, the attempt to save a palm tree in Tangier from destruction by property developers. Under the city’s laws, the sale of land for construction on which these protected trees stand is prohibited, with the result that the practice of illegally poisoning palm trees is commonplace. By documenting the attempt to save a single tree, this film presents a small gesture of resistance that has the poetic potential to not only delay the tree’s destruction, but to retain a historic image in a city gripped by the process of capitalist homogenization.

Yto Barrada (born 1971, France/Morocco) studied history and political science at the Sorbonne and photography in New York. Her work—including photography, film, sculpture, prints and installations—began by exploring the peculiar situation of her hometown Tangier. Barrada’s work has been exhibited at Tate Modern (London), MoMA (New York), Renaissance Society (Chicago), Witte de With (Rotterdam), Haus der Kunst (Munich), Guggenheim (Berlin), the Centre Pompidou (Paris), the Walker Art Centre (Minneapolis), Whitechapel Gallery (London), and the 2007 and 2011 Venice Biennales. She was the Deutsche

Bank Artist of the Year for 2011, after which her exhibit RIFFS toured widely. Barrada is also the founding director of Cinémathèque de Tanger. She is a recipient of the 2013-2014 Robert Gardner Fellowship in Photography (Peabody Museum at Harvard University), the 2015 Abraaj Group Art Prize and a 2016 Canon Tiger Award for Short Film. In 2016, she was nominated for the Marcel Duchamp Prize.

Ana Vaz, *Há Terra!* (There is Land!, 2016)

16mm transferred to digital, color, sound, Portuguese with English subtitles, 12:00 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and Light Cone, Paris

Statements of fact come with a perspective; definitions contain subjectivity. Who has the power to say what something is, or where something is? That it exists at all? These questions are applied to a Brazilian context in *Há Terra!*, with particular emphasis on the legacies of colonialism in that country. European illustrations of indigenous peoples and of colonization are juxtaposed with an interview of a young woman, who sits on the ground and recalls an encounter with a snake that brings her in closer contact with the earth. The titular words “Há Terra” (equivalent to the literary “Land ho!”) of Vaz’s piece are repeated throughout the video, slowly transforming from a neutral statement of fact into a recognition of the power of definition for those with power and those without it. The land was always there of course, but now it’s there for someone else. By the time the video concludes, we neither see nor come to know exactly who makes the declaration of the land’s presence. In marking that absence, Vaz encourages a questioning of the identity and location of those who have the power to define places and peoples.

Ana Vaz (born 1986) is an artist and filmmaker whose films, installations and performances speculate upon the relationships between myth and history, self and other, through a cosmology of references and perspectives. Assemblages of found and shot materials, her films combine ethnography and speculation in exploring the f(r)ictions imprinted upon cultivated and savage environments. A graduate from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and Le Fresnoy, Vaz was also a member of the SPEAP (School of Political Arts), a project directed by Bruno Latour. Recent screenings of her work include the NYFF, TIFF, Courtisane, Cinéma du Réel (Grand Prix) and specific focuses dedicated to her work at the Flaherty Seminar in the United States and Doc’s Kingdom in Portugal. Her work has featured in major group shows such as the Moscow Biennial of Young Art and the Dhaka Art Summit.

Shelly Silver, *April 2nd* (1994)

Video, color, sound, 10:00 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and EAI, New York

In what is perhaps Silver's best-known work, a camera follows several men around the bourgeois Marais district in Paris. These men, aware that they are being surveilled, react with discomfort, even to the point of running away. Through this surveillance Silver's camera performs two main actions. In a social sense, the camera becomes a tool, even a weapon, for restructuring what it means to be a woman on the street with men. What is normally a site dominated and defined by men—one recalls the flaneur, the dandy wandering and gazing aimlessly through Paris—becomes a space of unwelcome attention. In a structural sense, Silver employs the capacity of the camera to place figures in immediate relation to the viewer who shares the camera's gaze. These two actions are not distinct, however, and the meaning of each bleeds into and shapes the other. By implicating us with the act of tailing these men and their subsequent discomfort, *April 2nd* reveals the camera's power to structure meaning both in art and in lived "on the street" experience.

Shelly Silver (born 1957) is a New York-based artist working with the still and moving image. Her work explores contested territories between public and private, narrative and documentary, and—increasingly in recent years—the watcher and the watched. She has exhibited worldwide, including at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Tate Modern, Centre Georges Pompidou, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, the Yokohama Museum, the London ICA, and the London, Singapore, New York, Moscow, and Berlin Film Festivals. Silver has received fellowships and grants from organizations such as the Guggenheim Foundation, the NEA, NYSCA, NYFA, and Anonymous was a Woman. Her films have been broadcast on a variety of public television networks and she has received a variety of fellowships. She is currently Associate Professor and Director of Moving Image at the Visual Arts Program at the Columbia University School of the Arts.

Joan Jonas, *Vertical Roll* (1972)

Video, b/w, sound, 19:38 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and EAI, New York

The rhythmic movement of frames structures the whole of *Vertical Roll*. That movement is caused by a rolling vertical bar (a television malfunction) and linked with a cacophonous clanking introduced through an early shot of Jonas hitting the camera lens with a spoon. That banging sound continues throughout the video, marking the abrupt movement of the image back into the center of the frame. These images are visible to varying degrees, made difficult to see by the gentle rhythmic movement and the sudden knocking back into place. Jonas' body, always fragmented and in various states of dress and undress, is the subject of the camera's vision. The film's great climax involves the artist slowly showing her face on screen, revealing that what the viewer has been watching is in fact a recording of a video playing on a monochrome CRT screen. One of the great masterpieces of early video art and a work of great complexity, *Vertical Roll* positions the television as a mechanism simultaneously under the artist's control and beyond it, a site of both individual agency and of possession by the sight of unknown viewers in their homes.

A pioneer of performance and video art, Joan Jonas (born 1936) works in video, installation, sculpture, and drawing, often collaborating with musicians and dancers to realize improvisational works that are equally at home in the museum gallery and on the theatrical stage. Drawing on mythic stories from various cultures, Jonas invests texts from the past with the politics of the present. From masquerading in disguise before the camera to turning mirrors on the audience, she turns doubling and reflection into metaphors for the tenuous divide between subjective and objective vision, and the loss of fixed identities. Jonas received a BA from Mount Holyoke College (1958), attended the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (1958-61), and received an MFA from Columbia University (1965). She is a professor emerita at MIT, and currently lives and works in New York and Nova Scotia, Canada.

Doa Aly, *Hysterical Choir of the Frightened* (2014)

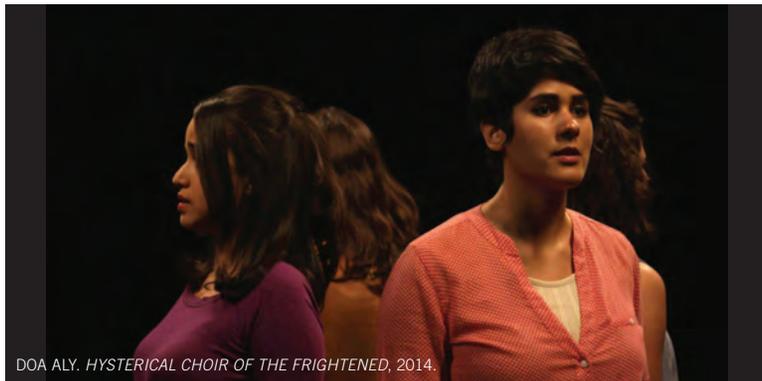
Digital video, color, sound, 3:45 minutes

Commissioned by Eva International 2014: "AGITATIONISM." Text from the Marquis de Sade's *Justine* (1791).

Courtesy of the artist and Gypsum Gallery

What's shown on screen is simple: a continuous shot of four women standing in a circle, all staring outward with disaffected glances. They function like a choir, their appearance is unassuming, and their diction is even and calm, rather than the hysteria implied by the title. Yet what they say belies that simplicity, as cold-blooded murder and its justification are variously on their lips, in words taken from the Marquis de Sade novel *Justine*. They speak asynchronously, for the most part talking over each other but occasionally their speech aligns as one voice. "Hysteria" derives its meaning from the Greek word for womb and has been deployed in the West for hundreds of years as a catchall term for women suffering mental illness. The word carries a particularly sexist meaning, suggesting an image of women beyond control and understanding, and therefore beyond help. Made as a reflection on the violent suppression of people in Tahrir Square celebrating the anniversary of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, Aly demonstrates the uncanny power of language to make cruelty palatable and complicates understandings of protest, community, and comprehension itself.

Doa Aly (born 1976) attended the Faculty of Fine Arts in Cairo, earning a BFA in painting in 2001. Her work, which spans video, drawing, and performance, has been exhibited at the D-Caf Festival, Warsaw Museum of Modern Art, Eva International Biennial (Limerick City), Huis Marseille Museum of Photography (Amsterdam), the New Museum, Tate Modern, Haus Der Kunst Munich, 7th Busan Biennial, 11th Istanbul Biennial, Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam) and the International Center for Photography (New York). Doa Aly was shortlisted for the 2017 Abraaj Group Art Prize.



DOA ALY. HYSTERICAL CHOIR OF THE FRIGHTENED, 2014.

OTHER USES / Beatriz Santiago Muñoz

NOV 30, 2017

Beatriz Santiago Muñoz's artworks attend to current issues of ecology, indigeneity, sovereignty, and colonialism, with a particular focus on the unresolved territorial dynamic between Puerto Rico and the United States military that impacts the landscape and its inhabitants. Through the lens of her camera, she transforms those who are caught up in and displaced by the struggle, including laborers, activists, archaeologists, and those who grew up on these contested lands. Each of Santiago Muñoz's artworks has an individuated structure that remains readable as a trace in her images. Her recording process and the modulation of framing as it is routed through this approach creates an extraordinary proximity to the subject. Through continual experimentation and eschewing of the authoritative documentary voice, Santiago Muñoz literally makes visible the mundane care of that which is unseen or forgotten, not only to shine a light on these subjects, but also to transform every surface and action into cinema.

The fourth program in this series, these two films were produced in 2014 by the artist at a former coastal US Naval Station in Ceiba, Puerto Rico. They are related in terms of time and location, but were produced using two very different techniques. Beatriz Santiago Muñoz will introduce these films and others in conversation with curator Victoria Brooks.

PROGRAM NOTES

Beatriz Santiago Muñoz, *Otros usos* (2014)

16mm transferred to digital, color, sound, 7:00 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and Galería Agustina Ferreyra, San Juan

Otros usos is shot through mirrored sculptures, or "malascopios" as the artist describes them, to project shifting, unstable viewpoints as multiple prismatic images are arrayed in a single frame. Together these refracted shards of ghostly architecture, land, sea, and the fishermen who work on it produce a composite time-scale that gestures not only to the region's colonial past, but also to its militarized present. *Otros usos*, like many of Santiago Muñoz's other artworks, conceives a cinema that reaches into the long history of image making, but rather than an adherence to structural conformity, this prismatic apparatus transforms its subject into multiple versions of itself. The "event" of military occupation at this particular site has passed, and Santiago Muñoz captures its afterimage through the architecture and its inhabitants.

Beatriz Santiago Muñoz, *Post Military Cinema* (2014)

Digital video, color, sound, 11:00 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and Galería Agustina Ferreyra, San Juan

Post-Military Cinema attends to the upkeep of an abandoned cinema in the face of its new use by those not authorized to inhabit it: a hive of bees and encroaching vegetation. Santiago Muñoz approaches the building in a way that reflects its original purpose by filming the interaction of its key ingredient, light. However, in this “post-military cinema,” sunlight is the projector beam. As it is animated and obscured by the fluttering vegetation, outside images are projected onto the thickly crumbling architecture. Open doors frame the exterior action, and spider webs transform into glittering projection surfaces. Smoke drifts in plumes through the surrounding trees while the bees, a new and far more benign generation of colonizers, buzz like military helicopters.

Beatriz Santiago Muñoz’s (b. 1972, San Juan, Puerto Rico) projects grapple with the slippery distinctions between ethnography, fiction, and documentary film and examine the symbolic and material histories of the communities she observes with her camera. Santiago Muñoz has had solo exhibitions at Espacio 1414, San Juan, Puerto Rico (2008); CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco (2008); Telic Arts Exchange, Los Angeles (2010); and Gasworks, London (2013). Her work has also been included in a number of important group exhibitions including Bienal del Caribe, Museo de Arte Moderno, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (2003); El Museo’s Bienal: The (S) Files, The Selected Files, El Museo del Barrio, New York (2005); Infinite Island: Contemporary Caribbean Art, Brooklyn Museum, New York (2007); Careos/Relevos, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico, San Juan (2010); the Trienal Poli/Gráfica de San Juan, Puerto Rico (2011); and Materia Prima, Centro de Arte Contemporáneo, Quito (2013). Santiago Muñoz’s honors include the first prize from Certamen Nacional de Artes Plásticas, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, San Juan, Puerto Rico (2002).



BEATRIZ SANTIAGO MUÑOZ. *OTROS USOS*, 2014.

BEATRIZ SANTIAGO MUÑOZ. *POST MILITARY CINEMA*, 2014.



ULYSSES JENKINS, *REMNANTS OF THE WATTS FESTIVAL*, 1972-73

OTHER USES / Ulysses Jenkins

MAR 26, 2018

The fifth screening in the *Other Uses* film series features the work of Ulysses Jenkins, whose videos examine television's power to shape current events and historical episodes.

Ulysses Jenkins is an artist who has given particular consideration to the portrayal of Black men in America. This installment features documentary and performance videos Jenkins made from the 1970s to the present, beginning with the artist's filming of the Watts Festival. Alternating between clarity and obscurity, the forms and content of television are redeployed to challenge the perceived neutrality of the televisual record.

Jenkins is a video/performance artist whose work has been shown in a number of national and international venues, including the Maryland Institute College of Art, the Hammer Museum, and the Getty Museum. He was the recipient of the California Arts Council's Multicultural Entry Grant as artistic director of Othervisions Studio, an interdisciplinary media arts production group. He is a three-time recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts' individual artist fellowship and was awarded the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame first place award in the experimental video category in 1990 and 1992. He is currently Professor of Art at University of California, Irvine.

GUEST CURATOR: LUCAS MATHESON

PROGRAM NOTES

Ulysses Jenkins, *Secrecy: Help Me to Understand* (1994)

Video, color, sound, 5:20 minutes

Speaking desperately into a telephone, Sidney Poitier begs his interlocutor: "Help me to understand. What went wrong? And I don't mean this morning!" Taken from the 1965 film *The Slender Thread*, which stars Poitier as a man tasked with saving a despondent woman who calls a suicide hotline, this snippet of dialogue generates the video's organizing question: How is it that mass media has come to damage the lives of African-Americans, and where did this damage begin? Across five minutes, Jenkins appropriates clips from the whole gamut of '90s pop culture: music, cinema, televangelism, sports, and late-night TV. A number of celebrities make appearances, including Michael Jackson, Mike Tyson, Marlon Brando, and Arsenio Hall, but the star-power of these appearances is contrasted with allusions to the exploitation of Black people's suffering. In addition to snippets from 1933's *King Kong*, the OJ Simpson trial, and Mike Tyson's incarceration, Jenkins includes part of an interview between Barbara Walters and Desiree Washington, the woman whom Tyson was convicted of raping in 1992. Jenkins blurs these clips together so that their sound and images overlap, destabilizing the certainty of what is seen. Clichés pulled from interstitial segments of cable news appear throughout, phrases like "Television...So Many Choices," "You Decide," and "It's Sports, It's Fun, It's News, It's Special Moments, It's Everything!" The film closes with Rodney King's epochal question: "Can we all get along?" The inquiry is left open.

Ulysses Jenkins, *Part Two of Remnants of the Watts Festival*

(1972-73, compiled 1980), video, b/w, sound, 25:50 minutes

This historically significant footage documents the excitement and hope of the Watts Festival, first organized in 1966 to celebrate the community of Watts, an historically working-class African-American neighborhood in Los Angeles. It begins with the following epigraph from the artist: "Back in the days when the myth of public access was being preached, I put down my paint brushes and grabbed a Porta-Pak and went to visit one of the greatest Afro-American events in the history of the United States. This event lasted ten years, yet it has become a myth. The following information and images are what I have left to share from the Remnants of the Watts Festival."

Part One considers the origins of the festival, its community-organized structure, and the increasing corporatization of the event over time. Near the end of this section, Claude Booker, then-president of the Black Art Council and a pivotal advocate of Black artists in Los Angeles, gives a short tour of the festival's art exhibition and interviews exhibiting artists. Booker goes on to speak of the exclusion of Black artists from museums, predicting a return to functional art making in which "art won't be so precious." As he starts to elaborate on this idea, mentioning an encounter he had with a truck "that was selling watermelons and paintings," Part One ends abruptly. Part Two shifts the focus from the organization to the experience of the festival itself, combining concert footage and impromptu interviews with festival-goers to share what it was like to celebrate with the people of Watts.

Ulysses Jenkins, *Mass of Images* (1979)

Video, b/w, sound, 4:16 minutes

Jenkins' first performative video casts the artist as a mysterious sage, speaking directly to the camera with a rhyming, poetic cadence. He has come bearing the following reminder: "You're just a mass of images you've gotten to know from years and years of TV shows." Stills from early American movies appear on screen throughout the video, emphasizing the integral role that anti-Black racism plays within the historical formation of American cinema. These epochal films, like *Birth of a Nation*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and *The Jazz Singer*, are interspersed with images of white actors in blackface and African-American actors playing stereotypical, caricatured roles. Standing before a stack of televisions, Jenkins' character struggles with a sledgehammer, lifting it above his shoulders as if preparing to strike, but ultimately declines to do so. He goes on to declare that "I don't and I won't relate. And I think for some it's too late." A clear statement of resistance to legacies of portrayal in cinema and television, in deciding not to destroy the monitors Jenkins character demonstrates the aspiration of video art to struggle with and change existing modes of moving-image representation.

Ulysses Jenkins, *Inconsequential Doggerel* (1981)

Video, color, sound, 15:19 minutes

A doggerel is a poem with an irregular rhythm that often features a trivial meaning. That rhythmic irregularity appears throughout *Inconsequential Doggerel*, one of Jenkins' densest works. The video stops and starts, looping and repeating short scenes or bits of audio. That repetition reveals the bizarre, even disturbing, quality of television's style that hides just out of view. How might the "slashing" of prices be related to the violence casually depicted in sporting events and nightly news broadcasts? One particular sport, football, appears throughout as a strange and recurring image. Jenkins holds one while wandering naked in a park, another is repeatedly tossed over the shoulder of a woman sitting on the ground, and a man forces a football into his partner's chest as she lies in bed. The combination of the footballs, Jenkins' nudity, and the overblown language of news broadcasters generates a strange and obscure effect. As the ironic title suggests, television's power lies somewhere in a strange triangulation of rhythm, triviality, and the "real."

Ulysses Jenkins, *Vulnerable* (2000)

Video, color, sound, 5:04 minutes

Two men meet in a station of the newly-opened Los Angeles Metro. A moonlit night, the mood is eerie and tense. They eye each other on the platform, on the escalator, and on the metro car they share. This short neo-noir, which Jenkins describes as a "psychodrama," considers who is safe in a public space, and who is suspicious. The use of this new public transit system questions the possibility of new beginnings in new spaces. Yet Jenkins also shoots on location at two of the most-filmed spaces in downtown Los Angeles, the 2nd Street Tunnel and the Angels Flight funicular railway, recalling the way that years of Hollywood cinema have come to define urban space. Can the script be flipped? Can the young black man be considered vulnerable in such a space, or is he destined to play the role of the threat? The Othervisions Art Band, the musical component of Jenkins' multimedia practice, provides the video's soundtrack. Jenkins has noted that in recent years his band has come to play the song as a memorial for Trayvon Martin, the 17-year-old high school student killed by George Zimmerman in 2012. *Vulnerable* stands as a reminder that the way people look at each other can never be neutral, that legacies of seeing are omnipresent.

Ulysses Jenkins, *Planet X* (2006)

Video, color, sound, 6:27 minutes

This science-fiction journey considers the destruction of Hurricane Katrina through the lens of astronomical bodies. Jenkins, acting as narrator, describes an imagined asteroid on a possible collision course with Earth, with a likelihood purported by experts to be “close to zero.” Looming in the background is the United States government’s mismanaged deployment of aid to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. News clips depicting the aftermath of the hurricane and its victims appear alongside astronomical diagrams of the solar system. The water in an animation of the failed levees slowly transforms into a galaxy, and legendary jazz musician Sun Ra is heard speaking about the “very evil things” that will befall Black people through God’s power. He goes on to note that space travel is “right around the corner.” The video ends on a meditative note, a looped clip of Sun Ra humming juxtaposed with images of swirling galaxies. What will the future hold?

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JORGE JÁCOME, *FLORES* (2017)

OTHER USES / BEATRIZ SANTIAGO MUÑOZ, JORGE JÁCOME, AND NAEEM MOHAIEMEN

APR 26, 2018

For the final episode of the yearlong film series *Other Uses*, three films chronicle the afterlives of sites that time has suspended, abandoned, or reclaimed.

Beatriz Santiago Muñoz captures the convergence of plants, animals, and the local Puerto Rican population in *Ojos para mis enemigos* (*Eyes for my enemies*) as they covertly share a decommissioned US military base in Ceiba. Jorge Jácome’s *Flores* transforms the autonomous Portuguese Azores Islands into a landscape rendered uninhabitable by the proliferation of hydrangeas, and a man is stranded at a disused Olympic airport in Naeem Mohaiemen’s first fiction feature *Tripoli Cancelled*.

PROGRAM NOTES

Beatriz Santiago Muñoz, *Ojos para mis enemigos* (*Eyes for my enemies*)

(2014), *digital video, sound, 14:14 minutes*.

Courtesy of the artist and Galería Agustina Ferreyra

The namesake tree of the small Puerto Rican municipality of Ceiba sprouts with cotton-covered seedpods. Ceiba State Forest stretches down the north-east end of Puerto Rico, populated by mangroves, ceiba trees, and local fauna. The municipality is only a short distance from Vieques Island nature preserve, formerly home to a US naval base known for nuclear testing. Similarly, there are several former US military bases in Ceiba, some left abandoned as the land slowly encroaches upon the concrete complexes. *Ojos para mis enemigos* intimately follows local resident Pedro Ortiz as he walks through the undergrowth, past pools of standing water, and into the cavernous hallways. The animals, insects, and plants make their homes here, termites living in cracks in a wooden gymnasium floor, iguanas skittering through vine-covered passageways, coquíes perched on plastic detritus floating in cloudy water. Broken light strip covers and abandoned objects are deliberately placed by Ortiz as a circle of light from above moves slowly across the dusty ground. The chirps and squeaks of animals and gentle pattering of rain are punctuated by the crunch of leaves and branches under Ortiz’s feet.

Beatriz Santiago Muñoz's (born 1972, San Juan, Puerto Rico) projects grapple with the slippery distinctions between ethnography, action, and documentary film and examine the symbolic and material histories of the communities she observes with her camera. Her films begin with research into specific social structures, individuals or events, which she transforms into performance and moving image. Santiago Muñoz's recent work has been concerned with post-military land, Haitian poetics, and feminist speculative fictions. A 2016 USA Ford Foundation Fellow, her recent exhibitions include: *Song, Strategy, Sign* at the New Museum, *A Universe of Fragile Mirrors* at the Pérez Art Museum of Miami, *MATRULLA*, Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, México City; *Under the Same Sun*, Guggenheim Museum of Art; *Post-Military Cinema*, Glasgow International; *The Black Cave*, Gasworks, London. She is also co-founder of Beta-Local, an arts organization in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Jorge Jácome, *Flores* (2017)

Super 16mm transferred to digital, color, sound, 26:00 minutes.

Courtesy of the artist and Portugal Film

The Azores, a group of islands 900 miles off the Iberian coast, have been invaded by hydrangeas. The growth of these invasive plants has reached such extremes that human life can no longer be supported. As a result, the islands are largely abandoned. Although the local residents have been evacuated to continental Portugal, a few groups remain and a documentary filmmaker has come to record their activities. A Dutch flower company harvests the overwhelming bounty, while a honey production facility capitalizes on the newly-flourishing bee population. Soldiers stationed on a military base have nothing to do but clean fallen petals from their vehicles, yet find time for moonlit swims. A statue of the Virgin Mary is cast out to sea in an inflatable raft. With its ambiguous scenes and soft pink hues, *Flores* casts humanity's dependence on the natural world as a beautiful plague lying somewhere between a dream and a nightmare.

Jorge Jácome (born 1988, Viana do Castelo, Portugal) graduated with "felicitation du jury" from Le Fresnoy - Studio national des Arts Contemporains in 2016. His work is based on an intuitive and sensorial process that results in films made of narrative drifts, unexpected relationships and unusual encounters. Jácome's short films have been shown at film festivals in Portugal, Spain, France, Germany, Slovenia, Poland and Israel, and in retrospectives at the New Bedford Whaling Museum, Palais de Tokyo, Maison Européenne de la Photographie, CalArts, and at Georgetown University.



NAEEM MOHAIEMEN, *TRIPOLI CANCELLED*, 2017

Naeem Mohaiemen, *Tripoli Cancelled* (2017)

Digital video, color, sound, 88:00 minutes.

Courtesy of the artist and LUX

Tripoli Cancelled documents the quotidian activities of a man trapped alone at an abandoned airport in Athens. Surrounded by dynamic markers of international air travel, here time is stilled—baggage carousels full of luggage are stationary, flight announcements static, and boarding cards litter the floor. Loosely based on his father's experience of being stuck passport-less at the same airport in the late 1970s en-route to Tripoli, and registered through the contemporary lens of Syrian refugees recently held at the same site, the disorientation of days passed endlessly waiting is echoed in the vast emptiness of the airport. Architectural geometries—painted lines on the tarmac shot from above or a staircase reflected in a mirror-smooth puddle on the floor—are precisely framed to distort our viewpoint and suspend our sense of time.

Naeem Mohaiemen (born 1969, London, UK) is an artist and writer working in Dhaka and New York. In his films, installations, and essays, Mohaiemen researches memories of leftist political utopias, and the contemporary legacies of decolonization. Mohaiemen is a member of Gulf Labour, an artist coalition working to ensure the protection of migrant workers' rights in Abu Dhabi and was a member of the Visible Collective from 2001 to 2006, which addressed the impact of 9/11 in the United States on no-fly lists, racial profiling, deportations, and other anti-Muslim security measures. *Tripoli Cancelled* was commissioned for Documenta 14 in Athens, and was followed by a solo exhibition of his work at MoMA PS1 in New York.

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