

# EMPAC



WED / SEP 09, 7:00 PM

FILM / VIDEO

## ON SCREEN/SOUND NO. 02

### *My Name is Oona*

Gunvor Nelson

### *Jump (Hysterique Bourré)*

Charles Atlas in collaboration with Philippe Découflé /  
Music: Joseph Biscuit

### *Jewel*

Hassan Khan

### *Passage a l'acte*

Martin Arnold

### *Ditch Plains*

Loretta Fahrenholz / Sound design: Steffen Martin

### *Twenty Eight Nights: Endnote*

Akram Zaatari



Rensselaer

## ON SCREEN/SOUND

This year-long film series takes a close look at—and listen to—the way filmmakers have employed the sonic dimension of their form to complement, challenge, and reconsider our experience of the moving image.

Presenting cinematic performance, artists' moving image, and Hollywood feature films, each *On Screen/Sound* program delves into the relationship between movie sound and image tracks, highlighting some radical examples of the aesthetic power and technical potential of sound in cinema. From musical theater to the music video, experimental shorts to industrially produced features, the series explores the affective and technical relationship between sound and image through the art of Foley, experimental music, found footage, soundtrack imaging, synched, multi-channel, and non-diegetic sound.

**ON SCREEN/SOUND** IS CO-CURATED BY EMPAC'S VICTORIA BROOKS, CURATOR OF TIME BASED VISUAL ART, AND ARGEO ASCANI, CURATOR OF MUSIC.

## ON SCREEN/SOUND: NO. 02

SEP 09, 7:00 PM

### **My Name is Oona** (1965)

Gunvor Nelson

### **Jump (Hystérique Bourré)** (1984)

Charles Atlas in collaboration with Philippe Découflé / Music: Joseph Biscuit

### **Jewel** (2010)

Hassan Khan

## INTERVAL

### **Passage a l'acte** (1993)

Martin Arnold

### **Ditch Plains** (2013)

Loretta Fahrenheit / Sound design: Steffen Martin

### **Twenty Eight Nights: Endnote** (2014)

Akram Zaatari

The second program of *On Screen/Sound* presents a series of shorts from the past five decades that use human movement to embody the connection between image and sound.

Inspired by the repetitive looping structure of Steve Reich's musical compositions, **Gunvor Nelson** edited footage of her daughter to the increasingly abstracted and overlaid repetition of her voice. This tactility of the body, as a cypher through which sound and image can create a new psychological space, is reversed by **Martin Arnold**, who distorts the frame-by-frame flow of a short excerpt from *To Kill A Mockingbird*, deliberately stuttering the bodily gesture and creating a new film that violently transforms both sound and image tracks.

**Loretta Fahrenheit** creates a similarly precise and repetitive effect in her collaboration with Ringmasters Crew, whose constrained and tight gestures appear to punch out every sound. Both **Hassan Khan** and **Charles Atlas**, however, use the joyful intensity of dance to project the energy of the music. Meanwhile in **Akram Zaatari's Endnote**, the movement is transmitted in the choreography of lights, while the protagonists sit oblivious in the foreground.

## FILM NOTES:

### **My Name is Oona**

Gunvor Nelson

1969, 10:00 min, b/w, 16mm

*Courtesy of Canyon Cinema, San Francisco*



Inspired by Steve Reich's looping technique, Gunvor Nelson recorded and edited both sound and image for *My Name is Oona*, and, after asking Reich for his opinion, she received a recording he had made of her daughter Oona at a previous event. Tethering the lilting movement of Oona riding across a beach to the

looping voice, the film matches ethereal images to an increasingly abstracted soundtrack to create a corporeal connection that builds throughout the film.

Swedish artist Gunvor Nelson moved to the USA in 1953 and settled in San Francisco in the late 1950s where she became a key member of the pioneering generation of artists experimenting with film throughout the 1960s and 70s. Here she developed her own dreamlike film-language to create intimate portraits that consistently strive to illuminate intimate subjects. Often manipulating footage using animation and painting, she utilizes a dynamic and rhythmic editing style to create what she describes as "personal films." Nelson moved back to Sweden in 1993 and began creating new work in video and installation.

*"Her films are sensual immersions into sound and image, where every flicker contributes, through its rhythm and texture, to the content on the composition."* —STEVE ANKER

### **Jump (Hysterique Bourréé)**

Charles Atlas in collaboration with Philippe Découflé / Music: Joseph Biscuit

1984, 14:43 min, color, video

*Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix, eai.org*

In this theatrical, post-punk collaboration between current EMPAC artist-in-residence Charles Atlas and French choreographer Philippe Découflé, the energy of the dancers' bodies moving to "The Residents" by Joseph Biscuit is matched by Atlas' active camera and visual effects.

A consistent pioneer of the synthesis of technology and performance, Charles Atlas has worked at the intersection of the moving image, visual art, and choreography for over four decades. His work has been seminal in defining a vivid cinematic language for articulating dance on screen and deliberately eschews the documentary model of dance films through an active, mobile camera that mediates our experience of movement in space. In his films, the camera is not just witness but also dancer, creating an image wholly inseparable from the dance it records.

Philippe Découflé is a French choreographer, dancer, mime artist and theater director, who has run his own dance company as well as working for Lyon Opera Ballet. Aside from his theatrical productions, he has choreographed music videos such as New Order's "True Faith" and Fine Young Cannibals' "She Drives me Crazy."





### **Jewel**

Hassan Khan

2010, 6:00 min, color, HD video

*Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris*

Hassan Khan's use of two hypnotic men dancing around a speaker creates a rhythmic action upon which the symbolism of the audio speaker as a "cultural/technological transmitter" can become the conduit through which the music is introduced into the social economy. The film starts ambiguously with the image of an angler fish, which then dissolves into the speaker as the site of the music, a framing metaphor that the artist has described as creating a connection of a deep time or memory with contemporary life. Whilst the bodies perform the music's rhythm in a choreography based on those that the artist witnessed on the streets of Cairo, the music is composed by Khan based on the popular Egyptian chaâbi songs.

Hassan Khan works with image, sound, text, space, and situation. His work has been the subject of numerous exhibitions around the world, and as a musician he has composed soundtracks for theater as well as performing his own compositions. His album *tabla dumb* is available on the 100copies label, and he has published widely in Arabic and English.

### **Passage a l'acte**

Martin Arnold

1993, 12:00 min, b/w, 16mm

*Courtesy of Canyon Cinema, San Francisco*

Through frame-by-frame repetition and forward-and-back looping, Martin Arnold stutteringly exposes a deep distrust for gendered relationships in his appropriation of an 18-second sequence of the 1950 movie *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The progression of frames transforms the soundtrack of voices, slamming doors, and scraping chairs into a hammering rhythm, creating a psychologically charged space where the family's bodies suffer to act out the disjuncture of societal relations.

Martin Arnold approaches filmmaking as a gesture of deconstruction that, through pacing and repetition, exposes the mechanics, ideologies, and counterfactual narratives of industrially produced images.

"Arnold, trained in psychoanalysis in Vienna, carries Freud's investigation of the 'Psychopathology of Everyday Life' into the placid surface behavior of the classical film text, shattering those carefully contained fantasies by elevating them to staged psychic tableaux. Moreover, Arnold's virtuosic image and sound editing creates a hypnotically rich rhythmic visual and sonic field, which lends both grace and savagery to the films' analytical work. The physical vitality re-found in the image, accompanied by equally complex variations on the soundtrack, make his films work as dance and music as much as ironic inquiry." —MICHAEL ZRYD



## Ditch Plains

Loretta Fahrenholz / Sound design: Steffen Martin

2013, 29:00 min, color, HD video

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin

Performed on-location in Brooklyn after Hurricane Sandy by members of the Ringmasters Crew, *Ditch Plains* features bodies moving with constraint and expressive precision, framed by Fahrenholz's tight, claustrophobic camera. Steffen Martin's sound design—combining Foley with a huge range of contemporary New York music—is seamlessly synched to every gesture, producing the effect of sound becoming indivisible from the body that annotates it.

“Like avatars running the levels of an apocalyptic video game, Ringmasters Corey, Jay Donn, and Marty McFly hallucinate the city and its networks as a space of terror, mutation, and magic. ‘Flexing,’ ‘bone breaking,’ ‘pausing,’ and ‘connecting’ in nighttime streets, hotel hallways and a posh Park Avenue apartment, the dancers improvise dream-like scenes suggesting digital death matches, stop-and-frisk situations, and catastrophic man-machine interfaces. Meanwhile, documentary shots of Far Rockaway show the city's attempt to manage disaster in real life: police patrol the shattered flood zone as citizens line up with jerry cans. Scenes on iPhone screens play like Vine transmissions in a blacked-out world where no survivors or friends can receive them. Referencing contemporary pop spectacles such as *Step Up Revolution*, as well as Jean Rouch's *The Mad Masters*, *Ditch Plains* imagines a sort of End of Days street party while free-styling an abstract narrative about the fatal coupling of subjects and systems under conditions of permanent crisis.” —LORETTA FAHRENHOLZ

Loretta Fahrenholz is an artist based in Berlin and New York. Recent films include: *Grand Openings Return of the Blogs* (2012), *Implosion* (2011), *Que Barbara* (2011) and *Haust* (2010).

Founded in 2007, Ringmasters Crew is a competitive street dance crew based in New York. Ringmasters Crew has appeared on MTV's *America's Best Dance Crew*, *Entertainment Tonight* and *America's Got Talent*, as well as in music videos by Nicki Minaj and Black Eyed Peas.

*Ditch Plains* was made with: Ringmasters Corey, Jay Donn, Marty McFly, Jim Fletcher, VibeZ, Asha Flasha, Damian “Gucci-ino” Buchanan, Lil Buck, Spyda Da HatMan, Modesto Flako Jimenez, Princess Lockeroo, 8 Ball, Ace, Dez, DVS, Flizzo, Maze, Optimus, Problemz, Scorp, Lakela Brown, Marie Karlberg, Jackie Klempay, Michael Stynes, Vanessa Cintron, Prynce Ptah, Michael Sanchez.

## Twenty Eight Nights: Endnote

Akram Zaatari

2014, 5:00 min, color, HD video

Courtesy of the artist and Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Beirut

Overlaid with the slow build of hypnotic dance music, two men sit concentrated in front of a laptop, apparently oblivious to the energetic build up of colored disco lights visible in the next room. *Twenty Eight Nights: Endnote* is a stand-alone artwork as well as the final sequence from Akram Zaatari's new feature-length film *28 Nights and A Poem* (2015), whose central narrative revolves around the archive of the Scheherazade photo studio. Photographer Hashem el Madani opened the studio in 1953 in the Lebanese city of Saïda after spending years photographing people at work and leisure. Taking its title from the song *Fil bahr* (At Sea) as it extols the moon in 28 different ways, Zaatari investigates what he calls “the archeology of gesture” as variations on repetitive actions. Presenting the archive as mediated by changing technologies of the recording of image and sound, Zaatari exposes the changing variations of our own gesture and affect for the same ends.

Akram Zaatari is a video artist and curator who lives and works in Beirut and has been exploring issues pertinent to the Lebanese postwar condition, particularly the mediation of territorial conflicts and wars through television, and the logic of religious and national resistance. Other works focus on the the circulation and production of images in the context of a geographical division of the Middle East, and representations of male sexuality. Co-founder of the Arab Image Foundation (Beirut), he based his work on collecting, studying, and archiving the photographic history of the Middle East, notably studying the work of Lebanese photographer Hashem el Madani, as a register of social relationships and of photographic practices.



**ON SCREEN/SOUND #3 WED / SEP 23, 7:00 PM**

The third screening in the series *On Screen/Sound* is introduced by Brooklyn-based filmmaker and archivist Andrew Lampert.

***Beach Boys/Geto Boys* / Cory Arcangel**

***All Magic Sands (Chappaqua)* / Andrew Lampert**



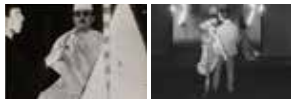
Beach Boys/Geto Boys  
All Magic Sands  
(Chappaqua)

**ON SCREEN/SOUND #4 WED / SEP 30, 7:00 PM**

The fourth screening in *On Screen/Sound* brings together painting, architecture, fashion, dance, and music for an evening of modernist and surreal cinema.

***Plastic Haircut* / Robert Nelson**

***L'inhumaine* / Marcel L'Herbier / Music (lost): Darius Milhaud**



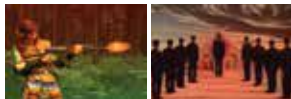
Plastic Haircut  
L'inhumaine

**ON SCREEN/SOUND #5 WED / OCT 28, 7:00 PM**

The fifth screening in *On Screen/Sound* grapples with ideas of the real, acted, and reenacted as intertwined in both image and music.

***Hilvarenbeek* / Jimmy Joe Roche and Dan Deacon**

***Mishima: A Life in Four Parts* / Paul Schrader / Music: Philip Glass**



Hilvarenbeek  
Mishima: A Life in Four  
Chapters

**ON SCREEN/SOUND #6 WED / NOV 04, 7:00 PM**

The sixth screening in the series *On Screen/Sound* features two works composed exclusively using light: Lis Rhodes' *Light Music* and Henning Lohner and John Cage's *One<sup>st</sup>* and *103*.

***Light Music* / Lis Rhodes**

***One<sup>st</sup> and 103* / Henning Lohner and John Cage**



Light Music  
One<sup>st</sup> and 103

**ON SCREEN/SOUND #7 WED / NOV 18, 7:00 PM**

The seventh screening in the *On Screen/Sound* series examines the influence of Foley and sound effects on moving image.

***Hacked Circuit* / Deborah Stratman**

***Yozakura Quartet: Hana no Uta No.7* / Kou Matsuo**

***Blow Out* / Brian de Palma**



Yozakura Quartet: Hana  
No Uta No. 7  
Hacked Circuit  
Blow Out

**ON SCREEN/SOUND #8 WED / DEC 02, 7:00 PM**

Introduced by London-based artist Cally Spooner, the final fall event for the *On Screen/Sound* series presents an evening exploring the specificities of transforming the musical from theater to screen.

***And You Were Wonderful, On Stage* / Cally Spooner**

***Gold Diggers of 1933* / Mervyn Le Roy**



And You Were Wonderful,  
On Stage  
Gold Diggers of 1933

# STAFF

Geoff Abbas / Director for Stage Technologies  
Eric Ameres / Senior Research Engineer  
Argeo Ascani / Curator, Music  
David Bebb / Senior Systems Administrator  
Peter Bellamy / Senior Systems Programmer  
Michael Bello / Video Engineer  
Victoria Brooks / Curator, Time-Based Visual Arts  
Eric Brucker / Lead Video Engineer  
Michele Cassaro / Guest Services Coordinator  
John Cook / Box Office Manager  
Roxanne De Hamel / Web Developer  
David DeLaRosa / Production Technician  
Zhenelle Falk / Artist Services Administrator  
William Fritz / Master Carpenter  
Kimberly Gardner / Manager, Administrative Operations  
Johannes Goebel / Director  
Ian Hamelin / Project Manager  
Katie Hammon / Administrative Specialist  
Ryan Jenkins / Senior Event Technician  
Shannon Johnson / Design Director  
Eileen Krywinski / Graphic Designer  
Carl Lewandowski / Production Technician  
Eric Chi-Yeh Lin / Lead Stage Technician  
Stephen McLaughlin / Senior Event Technician  
Josh Potter / Marketing and Communications Manager  
Alena Samoray / Event Technician  
Candice Sherman / Business Coordinator  
Avery Stempel / Front of House Manager  
Kim Strosahl / Production Coordinator  
Jeffrey Svatek / Audio Engineer  
Dan Swalec / Master Electrician  
Todd Vos / Lead Audio Engineer  
Michael Wells / Production Technician



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