



# EMPAC

## KOYAANISQATSI

GODFREY REGGIO

MUSIC: PHILIP GLASS

THU / MAR 03 / 7:00 PM

ON SCREEN/SOUND: NO. 12



## WHAT DOES UNSTABLE TIME EVEN MEAN?

CHARLES ATLAS

MUSIC: ERIC HOLM



## MANY THOUSANDS GONE

EPHRAIM ASILI

MUSIC: JOE MCPHEE



## THE DECCAN TRAP

LUCY RAVEN

MUSIC: PAUL CORLEY



## FADE TO SLIDE

CHRISTIAN MARCLAY

MUSIC: BANG ON A CAN

ALL-STARS

## ON SCREEN/SOUND

This year-long film series takes a close look at—and listen to—the way film-makers 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. 12

MAR 03, 7:00 PM

*On Screen/Sound: No. 12* gets speechless with a selection of films that work in sound and image but without the use of words. From a dance-film to a live video score, the evening culminates in a cult classic featuring meditative imagery and washes of sound.

### **What does unstable time even mean?** (2015)

Charles Atlas / Music: Eric Holm

### **The Deccan Trap** (2015)

Lucy Raven / Music: Paul Corley

### **Fade to Slide** (2015)

Christian Marclay / Music: Bang on a Can All-Stars

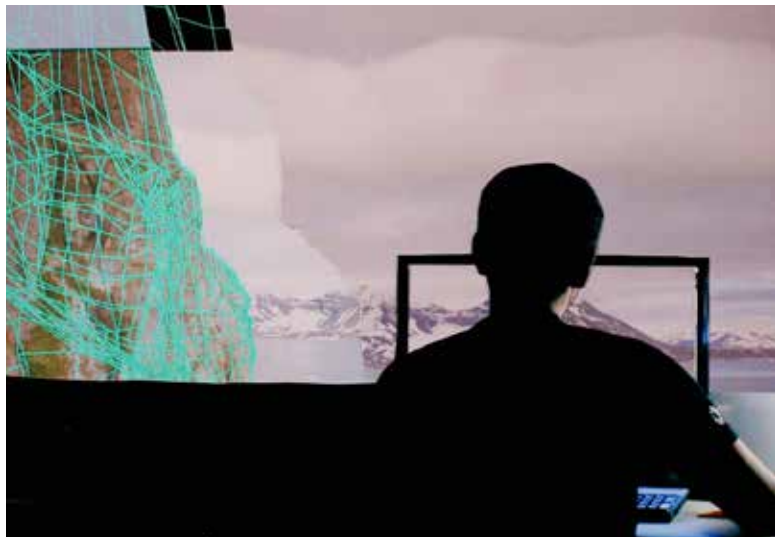
### **Many Thousands Gone** (2015)

Ephraim Asili / Music: Joe McPhee

### **Koyaanisqatsi: Life Out of Balance** (1982)

Godfrey Reggio / Music: Philip Glass

*Approximate runtime: 107 minutes*



THE DECCAN TRAP, LUCY RAVEN



MANY THOUSANDS GONE, EPHRAIM ASILI

## FILM NOTES:

### What does unstable time even mean?

Charles Atlas

2015, digital projection, 5 mins

Filmed on site in EMPAC's Studio 1, *What does unstable time even mean?*, by American artist Charles Atlas, finds two dancers in an otherworldly scene of smoke and light, encircled by an unknown observer.

A consistent pioneer of the synthesis of technology and performance, 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. He 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.

Atlas' collaborators, choreographers Silas Riener and Rashaun Mitchell, are equally driven by the potential of choreography to reach beyond the limits of its inherent language. They engage dancers' bodies as a lens through which to see how social relations—such as the accumulation of training and environmental context—build up in a body through time. In this new moving image work, made specifically for television, the camera moves with the dancers as a dense fog swirls at their feet. Framing their duet, it delicately switches positions from observer to participant. The camera's mobile viewpoint traces a liminal space beyond a theatrical language, into the cinematic realm and the otherworldly dimensions of the screen.

*What does unstable time even mean?* was produced by the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC) at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, with support from Frieze Foundation and Channel 4 (UK) and is an accompaniment to a long-form stereoscopic film and performance currently in development by Atlas, Mitchell, and Riener at EMPAC.

### **The Deccan Trap**

Lucy Raven / Sound: Paul Corley  
2015, digital projection, 4:19 mins

Composed from a series of photographic collages, *The Deccan Trap* follows Lucy Raven's multi-year research into how stereoscopic 3D images are made. The animation is made up of landscapes, architecture, and technology in a shifting photo-collage that charts the artist's journey from Hollywood post-production studios based across the world—in India, China, Canada, and the UK—to India's ancient bas-reliefs. Paul Corley's score traces the same terrain, both dramatizing and exposing the circulatory routes of 3D filmmaking.

Lucy Raven works with animation, installation, sound, and the live format of the illustrated lecture. Raven was an EMPAC resident artist in 2014–15 in which she developed and presented *Tales of Love and Fear*, which will be toured to The Artists Studio at The Park Avenue Armory in September 2016. Raven's films and installations have been exhibited internationally, including at MoMA, New York; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; mumok, Vienna; the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; Portikus, Frankfurt; and the 2012 Whitney Biennial. Upcoming shows include a solo exhibition at the Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, OH; and a two-person exhibition with Sam Lewitt at Pilar Corrias Gallery, London.

### **Fade to Slide**

Christian Marclay / Music: Bang on a Can All-Stars  
2015, digital projection, 7:25 mins

The Christian Marclay film, *Fade to Slide*, was commissioned by the new-music ensemble the Bang on a Can All-Stars as part of their Field Recordings series. As founder David Lang describes it, "We asked composers from different parts of the music world to find a recording of something that already exists—a voice, a sound, a faded scrap of melody—and then write a new piece around it." Marclay created a film that consists solely of a montage of scenes with identifiable sounds and the background music removed. Existing as a visual score, the film is meant to be interpreted by live musicians. The performance is by the Bang on a Can All-Stars.

### **Many Thousands Gone**

Ephraim Asili / Music: Joe McPhee  
2014, 16mm transferred to digital video, 8 mins

"Filmed on location in Salvador, Brazil (the last city in the Western Hemisphere to outlaw slavery) and Harlem, New York (an international stronghold of the African diaspora), Ephraim Asili's *Many Thousands Gone* draws parallels between a summer afternoon on the streets of the two cities. A silent version of the film was given to jazz multi-instrumentalist Joe McPhee and 'sight read' in real time to create the score."

— ANN ARBOR FILM FESTIVAL, 2015

*Many Thousands Gone* connects the people that inhabit both cities with a historical and collective memory of place. In a joyful film-poem that elevates the everyday, Asili explores the complex history of slavery, migration, and media representations of the African Diaspora community. Shot on 16mm, the rich texture of the film stock inscribes its material processes onto the images. The saturated color and delicately shifting grain resonate with the long cinematic history of the "city film," while Joe McPhee's improvised soundtrack gestures towards the deeply embedded jazz lineage of these communities.

Ephraim Asili is an African-American artist, filmmaker, DJ, radio host, and traveler. Inspired by his day-to-day wanderings, Asili creates art that situates itself as a series of meditations on everyday experience and media culture. Through audio-visual examinations of societal iconography, identity, geography, and architecture, Asili strives to present a personal vision. The results are perhaps best described as an amalgam of pop, African-American, and "moving image" culture, filtered through an acute sense of rhythmic improvisation and compositional awareness. Currently, Asili serves as Technical Director for the Film and Electronic Arts Depart-

# KOYAANISQATSI



ment at Bard College and hosts a radio show on WGXC 90.7 FM Hudson, New York.

## **Koyaanisqatsi: Life Out of Balance**

Godfrey Reggio / Music: Philip Glass

1982, digital projection, 87 mins

Although it diverts slightly from tonight's theme by vocalizing its title in the opening, *Koyaanisqatsi* remains one of the most iconic "sound and image" films since Disney's *Fantasia*. A film with no characters and no narrative, *Koyaanisqatsi* is still clearly about something—size, scale, the passing of time—that taps into the part of our brains that enjoys day-dreaming while gazing at clouds. Guardian critic Leo Hickman refers to the film as the "quintessential environmental movie—a transformative meditation on the current imbalance between humans and the wider world that supports them."

Premiered in 1982 as the first film in a planned trilogy (with *Powaqqatsi* in 1988 and *Naqoyqatsi* in 2002), *Koyaanisqatsi* garnered a lukewarm reception by critics. *The New York Times* wrote that "*Koyaanisqatsi* is an oddball and—if one is willing to put up with a certain amount of solemn picturesqueness—entertaining trip." But, in the ensuing 30 years, the film has found a cult-like status, getting shown sporadically on large screens, but more often screening in living rooms and film studies classrooms across the world.

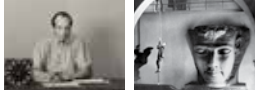
The images—filmed at points with time-lapse and high-speed techniques—have been so often imitated that they might now feel cliché. But *Koyaanisqatsi* still has the power to connect emotionally to its audience. This is, no doubt, due in part to the swirling, hypnotic score by Philip Glass. The music, considered by many to be one of Glass' finest sonic pairings with images, creates a perfect synthesis, often strived for but rarely achieved. Glass, very early in his film scoring career, seemed to have an innate ability to weave his music in and out of the film, describing each section as alternately "under the image," "on top of the image," and "next to the image."

## ON SCREEN/SOUND

**THU / FEB 04, 7:00** ON SCREEN/SOUND #9

*Picture and Sound Rushes* / Morgan Fisher

*Blackmail* / Alfred Hitchcock



**THU / FEB 18, 7:00** ON SCREEN/SOUND #10

*Pierre Vallières* / Joyce Wieland

*The Arbor* / Clio Barnard



**THU / FEB 25, 7:00** ON SCREEN/SOUND #11

*It Heat Hit* / Laure Prouvost

*3# Manifesto A Track #1* / Tony Cokes

*Slow Zoom Long Pause* / Sara Magenheimer

*Der Grosse Verhau (The Big Mess)* / Alexander Kluge



**THU / MAR 03, 7:00** ON SCREEN/SOUND #12

*Koyaanisqatsi: Life Out of Balance*

Godfrey Reggio / Music: Philip Glass

*What does unstable time even mean?*

Charles Atlas / Music: Eric Holm

*Many Thousands Gone* / Ephraim Asili / Music: Joe McPhee

*The Deccan Trap* / Lucy Raven / Music: Paul Corley

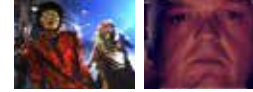
*Fade to Slide* / Christian Marclay / Music: Bang on a Can All-Stars



**THU / MAR 24, 7:00** ON SCREEN/SOUND #13

*Thriller* / John Landis and Michael Jackson

*Berberian Sound Studio* / Peter Strickland / Music: Will Slater



**THU / APR 08, 7:00** ON SCREEN/SOUND #14

*Ornament Sound Experiments* / Oskar Fischinger

*Study No. 7*

Oskar Fischinger / Music: *Brahms' Hungarian Dance No. 5*

*Polka Graph*

Mary Ellen Bute / Music: Shostakovich's Polka  
from *The Age of Gold*

*Tarantella*

Mary Ellen Bute / Music: Edwin Gerschevski

*Sirens* / Ryoichi Kurokawa / Music: Novi\_sad



**THU / MAY 12, 7:00** ON SCREEN/SOUND #15

*Untitled (The Ghost of Modernity)*

Miguel Angel Rios

*La Région Centrale* / Michael Snow



# STAFF

Geoff Abbas / Director for Stage Technologies  
Eric Ameres / Senior Research Engineer  
Argeo Ascani / Curator, Music  
Eileen Baumgartner / Graphic Designer  
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  
David DeLaRosa / Production Technician  
Zhenelle Falk / Artist Services Administrator  
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  
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