

EMPAC

Untitled
(The Ghost of Modernity)

MIGUEL ANGEL RÍOS

La Région Centrale

MICHAEL SNOW

ON SCREEN/SOUND: NO. 15 **THU / MAY 12, 7:00 PM**

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. 15

MAY 12, 7:00 PM

The final *On Screen/Sound* program of the spring season presents two films with sonic and visual elements constructed through complex tracking shots.

In Miguel Angel Ríos' *Untitled (The Ghost of Modernity)* (2012) a cube floats across a desert landscape, while a spare Cageian composition punctuates this modernist exploration of silence and space. Shot with an automated camera that could be controlled to move in 360 degrees, Michael Snow's *La Région Centrale* documents the landscape of northern Quebec and was scored using the sine waves and electronic pulses of the technical camera apparatus itself.

Untitled (The Ghost of Modernity) (2012)

Miguel Angel Ríos

La Région Centrale (1971)

Michael Snow

Approximate runtime: 190 minutes

FILM NOTES:

Untitled (The Ghost of Modernity)

Miguel Angel Ríos

2012, 3.25 mins, digital projection, sound, color

Courtesy of the artist and Sicardi Gallery, Houston

Filmed, like Snow's *La Region Centrale*, in a desert location with a moving camera, Miguel Angel Ríos' *Untitled (The Ghost of Modernity)* suspends a transparent floating cube over the landscape. Shot near Saachila Oaxaca Mexico, Ríos references high Modernism—with direct nods to John Cage, Marcel Duchamp, and Donald Judd—in the midst of the Mexican desert.

“The moving camera establishes a dialogue with the floating and rotating cube choreographed to music composed by John Cage in 1947 for the feature of Marcel Duchamp's roto-reliefs in the surrealist film by Hans Richter, *Dreams That Money Can Buy*. Performed by Juan Hidalgo in pianoforte preparato (its notes muted), this untitled piece by Cage was among the first projects in which he explored the idea of silence systematically. *Untitled (The Ghost of Modernity)* employs the silence of the landscape, the empty walls of the structural cubes, and the transparent and reflective surfaces of the glass cube to immerse the viewer... Was the project of modernization of the Americas based on the idolatry of an out worldly platonic figure? Is this ghostly geometric figure a lens through which the world can be reinterpreted? Or is it the paradigmatic principle of modernist thought that organizes the world around it? Are we inside or outside the cube?”

— AKINCI GALLERY

Miguel Angel Ríos studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires before moving to New York in the 1970s to escape the military dictatorship in Argentina. He subsequently relocated to Mexico and now divides his time between the U.S. and Mexico. In his work, Ríos pairs a rigorous conceptual approach with a meticulously constructed, handmade aesthetic. Since the 1970s, he has made work about the concept of the “Latin American,” using this idea as both an artistic strategy and a political problem. In the 1990s, he began creating a series of maps, which he carefully folded and pleated by hand. Marking the 500th anniversary of the “discovery” of the Americas, the maps indicate long histories of power and colonial experience, and they reference traditional indigenous arts in the Americas, including the Andean quipu.

Since the early-2000s, Ríos has also delved into the medium of video to create symbolic narratives about human experience, violence, and mortality. His videos of spinning tops—trompos—use the childhood game of tops as a backdrop for a meditation on the transience of life, and the mechanics of power.



UNTITLED (THE GHOST OF MODERNITY)
MIGUEL ANGEL RÍOS

La Région Centrale

Michael Snow

1971, 180mins, 16mm, sound, color

Courtesy of Canadian Film Distribution Center

“...an unimaginable film, literally like nothing you have ever seen before...”

— JOHN W. LOCKE, *ARTFORUM*, NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1973

Shot over 5 days on the top of a deserted mountain in Northern Quebec with a custom-designed camera mount, *La Région Centrale* is a film that captured a series of images previously impossible to view with the human eye. More than just a document of a location, *La Région Centrale* is a meditation on space and time, on the viewer’s relationship to that which is being viewed, on the ability to create a fully automated cinema.

With the assistance of Pierre Abaloos, Snow developed a camera mount that could freely rotate 360° on several axes at variable speed. The pre-programmed series of movements become progressively disorienting—up and down lose all meaning, and often invert. The resulting 180-minute film is described by Snow as “three hours wide.”

The soundtrack is composed of the electronic sounds of the programmed controls of motion—sometimes in synch with the changing framing on screen and sometimes not.

“Description: A film, three hours long. The film begins with the camera scanning slowly and moving upwards, over the mountain location in a ‘deserted’ part of Quebec. The film continues, in various ways, to take in the region. The apparatus for the film’s making was constructed so that the camera could swivel and turn, up and down and around and in on its low axis. It could also zoom and change aperture. Snow composed the camera movements and created an overall plan for the film. Pierre Abbeoos of Montreal worked out a system of patterns by means of sound tapes...

... At some point of attained camera-movement speed, the relativist transference (as in back and forth) takes place. No longer is the camera moving over the (designated) central region. The frame ‘becomes’ static. The flow is from without, more distanced thus than when the machine was seemingly doing physical work. The illusion of frame-stillness is constantly broken

down and reiterated through sheer knowledge. This relativism simplified the relativism that is inherent in matter and consciousness. The Central Region is out there, a film, 3 hours, five reels, and to end with a quote from the filmmaker: ‘I decided to extend the machine aspect of film so that there might be a more objective feeling, you wouldn’t be thinking of someone’s expressive handling of the thing, but perhaps how and why the whole thing got set in motion.’ Snow’s words on Central Region: ‘You are here, the film is there, it is neither fascism nor entertainment.’ Had I not read that, I would have written it.”

— PETER GIDAL, *LIGHT ONE* (JUNE 1973)

Michael Snow works in many mediums: film, photo-work, holographic work, music, bookworks, video and sound installation, sculpture, painting, drawing. His visual artworks are broadly collected and have been exhibited worldwide, including solo exhibitions at the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), The Hara Museum (Tokyo), The Museum of Modern Art (New York) and Centre Pompidou (Paris). His films have been shown extensively in festivals (London, New York, Rotterdam, Berlin) and are in such collections as the Oesterreichisches Filmmuseum (Vienna) and Royal Belgian Film Archives (Brussels). Snow has also been a professional musician since the 1950s, for 30 years focusing on free improvisation, with concerts in Canada, USA, Europe, Japan—usually with Toronto-based CCMC—and has made many recordings. Snow’s solo releases include compositions using multi-track studio recordings (*The Last LP*, 1987, re-released as *The Last LP CD*, 1994) among others. His work includes digital works such as the film **Corpus Callosum* (2001) and interactive DVD ROM *Anarchive 2-Digital Snow* (2002), an encyclopedia of Snow’s work in all mediums. Snow considers his work “sensuous philosophy.” He asks, “What essential aspects of a medium distinguish it from other mediums?” The materials of cinema, for example, are light and duration, not movement or narrative.

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

Berberian Sound Studio / Peter Strickland / Music: Will Slater



FRI / 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 Gerschefski

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 Network Administrator
Peter Bellamy / Senior Systems Administrator
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 / Desktop Support Analyst
Zhenelle Falk / Artist Services Administrator
Kimberly Gardner / Manager, Administrative Operations
Johannes Goebel / Director
Ian Hamelin / Project Manager
Ryan Jenkins / Senior Event Technician
Shannon Johnson / Design Director
Carl Lewandowski / Production Technician
Eric Chi-Yeh Lin / Lead Stage Technician
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Josh Potter / Marketing and Communications Manager
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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