

Close at Hand

Curated by Chris Kennedy & Vanessa O'Neill

presented in association with SFAI Film Salon

Sunday, March 2, 2008, 7:30 pm — Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

Close at Hand, a series of landscape films, investigating the filmmakers place within their surrounding environments. These films harness the forces of nature by attending to rich details of scenery and encounter. The view is both panoramic and intimate, held close through the processes of filmmaking and the intensity of discovery.

gun/play (2006) Canada, John Price; 35mm, b&w, CD sound, 9 minutes, print from CFMDC

John Price is one of the most prolific of the younger generation of Canadian hand-made filmmakers. He has made over thirty films in the last fifteen years and has recently moved most of his practise towards finishing on 35mm. *gun/play* was shot on Super 8 and blown up to 35mm using a home set-up and inexpensive soundtrack stock. Delivered as a triptych, it is a haunting look at the threat of violence hidden in the landscape, whether through the danger of the hunt or the enveloping threat of water.

Narrows Inlet (1980) Canada, David Rimmer; 16mm, color, silent, 10 minutes, print from CFMDC

David Rimmer's film practise extends back forty years, with his best known work (*Real Italian Pizza, Surfacing on the Thames, Variations on a Cellophane Wrapper*) emerging during the height of the structural film movement. Canadian fringe film scribe Mike Hoolboom has noted that Rimmer's optically printed masterpieces have, "the uncanny ability to take small moments—the view from a window, the tiniest scrap of discarded footage—and rework them into panoramas of attention" (from *Inside the Pleasure Dome: Fringe Film in Canada*). *Narrows Inlet* was shot during the lifting morning fog in a secluded part of British Columbia. Rimmer later re-worked the footage with an optical printer, creating an image somewhere between a drawing and a photograph as the fog slowly lifts.

Drift (1995) Canada/UK, Chris Welsby; 16mm, color, sound, 17 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

British-born and Vancouver-based, Chris Welsby works with film and video, in creating both single channel and installation works that incorporate the mechanics of the medium toward a reception and investigation of landscape. In *Drift*, Welsby turns the camera toward a fog-enshrouded sea in which a navigation of space unfolds in mysterious veils of greys, ocean blues and greens.

Qualities of Stone (2006) Robert Todd; 16mm, color, sound, 11 minutes, print from maker

Robert Todd is a Boston based filmmaker whose background as a painter is reflected in his attention to the rich and expressive details of composition, color and light. His poetic works seek out the beauties and complexities of experience, treating subjects that bridge personal, political and environmental territory. *Qualities of Stone* is the third in a series on urban naturalism in which "stone" is analog to "mineral", the common denominator between organic and inorganic life (as crystalline forms).

Concerning Flight: Five Illuminations in Miniature (2004) Charlotte Pryce; 16mm, color, sound, 9 minutes, print from maker

Charlotte Pryce's body of work offers the beautiful possibilities of film as miniature, wherein brief filmic glimpses offer depths of suggestion and inquiry. In *Concerning Flight...*, Pryce explores the mystery of insect flight offering illuminations of the mythological and fantastical.

things we want to see (2004) Rebecca Meyers; 16mm, color, sound, 7 minutes, print from maker

Rebecca Meyers works often addresses the complicated relationship of the individual to the natural world. In *things we want to see*, the frailty of life is posited against the forces of nature, such as Alaskan ice floes and the Aurora Borealis.

Roulement, rouerie, aubage (1978) France, Rose Lowder; 16mm, b&w/color, silent, 15 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

Rose Lowder pursues filmic studies of perception in relation to her environs. Each film is a study and an exploration that rewards in new discoveries and transformations of place, most often by means of single frame photography. In *Roulement, rouerie, aubage, (rotation, sly tricks, paddle wheel)* one of her earliest works, Lowder takes as subject a water wheel, cross referencing its operational mechanics with those of the color and textural qualities of film stocks and her camera framing.

View of the Falls from the Canadian Side (2006) Canada, John Price; 35mm, color, silent, 7 minutes, print from CFMDC

John Price nods to the history of cinema by filming the tourists at Niagara Falls using a hand cranked 35mm camera nearly identical to the Edison camera used by William Heise to film the same scene in 1896. The only true difference is Price's use of an anamorphic lens, which creates a large visual spread onto which to project the play of hand-processing and exposure irregularities that create an otherworldly ambience to a time-honored tradition of Canadian tourism.

The **SFAI Film Salon** is a weekly screening series devoted to exhibiting artist film to students and the local community. Inaugurated in the fall of 2006 by filmmaking MFA students Chris Kennedy and Vanessa O'Neill, the series was conceived as a way to reinterpret the San Francisco Art Institute's archive of 16mm films in dialogue with contemporary 16mm film practise. Each screening aims for surprising and intuitive juxtapositions of the old and the new. The focus on 16mm practise is a commitment to continuing the rich history of SFAI, which has been a central institution in the history of artist filmmaking. For more information on the screening series, please email ckennedy@webmail.sfai.edu or voneill@webmail.sfai.edu.