

**ROSS LIPMAN**

**Portfolio      2008**

## **ROSS LIPMAN**

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**SELECTED COMMENTS ON THE FILMS OF ROSS LIPMAN**

“Lipman’s films are wonderful. ...strong and delicate at the same time; it’s unique. The rhythm and colors are so subtle, deep and soft.”

-- Nicole Brenez, curator, Cinémathèque Française

on *THE INTERVIEW*

“I loved *The Interview*, a very moving piece. I saw it probably two months ago but still remember not only the film itself, but many images. The style is very powerful, and the acting too. It is a beautiful work. “

-- Marina Goldovskaya, filmmaker

“exquisitely rendered in muted colors, and a soundtrack worthy of comparison to Bresson's best. Under Lipman’s direction, Babette Mangolte creates a muted atmosphere with her lighting and framing which is further enhanced by subtle color shifts affected by Lipman in the lab. The result is a psychological study of a tense moment of transition. The film is the fruit and marriage of Lipman’s earlier portrait and collage investigations with his knowledge of the film medium.”

-- Konrad Steiner, filmmaker, curator, San Francisco Cinematheque/Kino 21

“Haunting. Beautifully shot in muted, forgotten colors, this modest and unsettling short fuses repetitive dialogue, deliberately stiff performances, and an evanescent story line to create a curious and affecting work of art that plants its sly social critique so delicately that some will not notice it at all. Highly recommended.”

--Theresa Schwartzman, Venice International Film Festival

“a delicate flower of a film, but also a horror film”

-- Berenice Reynaud, critic

“a beautiful piece”

-- Gail Silva, Director, Film Arts Foundation

on *RHYTHM 93*

“quite possibly a work of genius” -- John Columbus, Director, Black Maria Film Festival

“how lovely to see a film that’s been *shot* and *edited*, and refers to life beyond the confines of cinema—these essential qualities are absent in virtually all contemporary work”

-- Nathaniel Dorsky, filmmaker, author, *Devotional Cinema*

on *10-17-88*

“uses deft optical printing and a fascinating musical collage to yield a densely layered combo of sound and image”

-- Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Chicago Reader* “Critic’s Choice”

**BIOGRAPHY**

Born in Chicago in 1963, Ross Lipman is well known for his film/video and performance work, as well his writings and restorations of independent cinema. His 16mm and 35mm experimental films have screened throughout the world at venues ranging from the London International Film Festival to the Chinese Taipei Film Archive. In the early 1990's he was a member of Budapest's Bela Balazs Studio, where he made the short film *Kino-i*. His subsequent *Rhythm 93* claimed Director's Choice at the Black Maria Film Festival. *The Interview*, a 35mm experimental drama, was selected for the celebrated touring program of the Oberhausen International Film Festival in May, 2004.

In recent years he has been designing films, videos, and performance works exploring urban decay as a marker of modern consciousness. He is currently at work on *Keep Warm, Burn Britain!*, a feature length memoir of the squatting movement in East London in the 1980's.

Filmmaker/curator Konrad Steiner writes, "Lipman's films chronicle the lives of men and women on the periphery of our vision; who slip through the cracks in the system, who walk invisibly by us each day. His medium ranges from photographs to Super-8, 16mm and 35mm film, and each work orchestrates light, language, and silence to create cinematic portraits that fall on a spectrum between document and story."

Lipman is also one of the world's leading figures in the restoration of experimental and independent cinema. He lectures internationally and his writings on film history, aesthetics and technology have been published in numerous books and journals. In 2007 he was honored with the National Society of Film Critics' Film Heritage Award.

## **ARTIST'S STATEMENT**

## **RUIN AS METAPHOR**

Permanence is an illusion. Everything that's built crumbles in time: buildings, cultures, fortunes, and lives. The detritus of civilization tells us no less about our current epoch than an archeological dig. The urban ruin is particularly compelling because it speaks of the recent past, and reminds us that our own lives and creations will also soon pass into dust. These film, video, and performance works explore decay in a myriad of forms—architectural, cultural, and personal.

## **PHANTOM NARRATIVES**

Tales of non-telling. These works subvert or ignore the boundaries of contemporary narrative, integrating storytelling and visual artworks in different permutations. Each has a deep investment in its story, while simultaneously transforming common notions of narrative form.

## **PERSONAL ETHNOGRAPHIES**

In the beginning ethnography was distant and neutral; so we told ourselves. Then, as in physics, we realized the effect of the observer upon the observed.

These works are neither avant garde cinema or traditional ethnography. I report on groups or environments of which I'm already a part. They include portraits and documents, landscapes and stories. They take the form of films, videos, photos, and recordings that tell something about a person or group of people: how they live and how they relate to each other. They're both removed and engaged, observing and participating, impersonal and extremely personal. And yes, they are artworks, with all the ambiguities the word implies, not reports or studies. No matter how much I claim otherwise.

## **CINEMA OF ABSENCE**

Ross Lipman's films and cinematic performances combine a technical mastery of diverse media with a rigorous sparse aesthetic to create sound/light environments that are at once ethereal and riveting. Looking back to classical notions of form and forward to new technology, these works utilize carefully controlled sensations of absence to point outwards to the fullness of lived experience. Spanning collage work in the 1980's, narrative portraiture in the '90's, and his current video and pictorial essays, Lipman's oeuvre both utilizes and challenges conventional notions of the boundaries of cinematic art.

## **ROSS LIPMAN: PORTFOLIO**

### **FILM/VIDEO**

Keep Warm, Burn Britain!

experimental documentary. with music by Thoth.  
35mm, color. 70 minutes. Los Angeles/London. (in progress)

Rhythm 06

experimental. with performer Carolyn Roy, music by Michael Whitmore.  
35mm, color. 9 minutes. San Francisco/Los Angeles, 2008.

in the treeless forest

experimental documentary. DV, color. 9 minutes. Los Angeles, 2008.

Ocean Beach/Point Lobos

experimental. DV, color. 10 minutes. San Francisco/Los Angeles, 2008.

Afternoon in Bottle Village

experimental documentary. with music by Monotrone.  
DV, color. 3 minutes. Los Angeles, 2007.

Songs of Innocence and Experience

experimental documentary. DV, BW, silent. 4 minutes. San Francisco/Los Angeles, 2007.

The Interview

narrative. (Writer/Director/Editor). with Julie Queen, Lisa Black.  
in association with Film Arts Foundation.  
35mm, b&w/color. 30 minutes. San Francisco/Los Angeles. 2004.

Michael Barrish Screen Test

experimental documentary. with MB.  
Super-8mm, color. 3 minutes. San Francisco, 1997.

Rhythm 93

experimental. with performer Carolyn Roy.  
16mm, color. 9 minutes. London/San Francisco, 1993-94.  
Distributed through Canyon Cinema.

Rhythm 92

experimental. 16mm, color. 2 minutes. London, 1992-93.  
Distributed through Canyon Cinema.

Kino-i

experimental. Bela Balazs Studio. 16mm, B/W. 9 minutes. Budapest, 1991.  
Distributed through Canyon Cinema, Bela Balazs Studio.

10-17-88

experimental. Audio collage by John Shaw.  
16mm, color. 11 minutes. Chicago, 1989.  
Distributed through Canyon Cinema.

Green Bike Video

experimental documentary. with Green Bike Collective.  
3/4" U-matic, color. 36 minutes. Ann Arbor, 1984.

Shoe + (horn)

experimental documentary.  
3/4" U-matic, color. 5 minutes. Ann Arbor, 1984.

## **PERFORMANCE**

The Starving Artist

Neo-benshi presentation by the Disembodied Theater Corporation of a film by  
J. Stuart Blackton. Music by Laura Steenberge. 9 minutes, 1907/2007.  
Bedlam/1947 Project (LA), 2007.

Enter Godot: A Thought Experiment

Magic Lantern/PowerPoint performance by the Disembodied Theater Corporation.  
45 minutes. Presented as work in progress at Pioneer Theater,  
Public Opinion Laboratory, NY, 2006.

#### No Way Out But Onward

Magic Lantern/PowerPoint performance by the Disembodied Theater Corporation.  
Music by Laura Steenberge. 45 minutes, 2006.  
Velaslavasay Panorama (LA), Sixpackfilm (Vienna), ATA (SF).

#### Keep Warm, Burn Britain!

Magic Lantern/slide performance by the Disembodied Theater Corporation  
Music by Thoth. 10 minutes, 2005. (excerpt from full-length work-in-progress).  
San Francisco Cinematheque, Oblivio Series (NY), LA Film Forum, Sixpackfilm (Vienna).

#### Kali Beheaded

Dance/Theater Performance (creator/director). In collaboration with choreographer/performer  
Leigh Evans, and musicians Peter Whitehead and Elaine Buckholtz. 35 minutes (excerpt from  
three-act scenario), 1995. Based on the Hindu myth, as adapted by Marguerite Yourcenar.  
Bindlestiff Studio, San Francisco.

#### Yn

Theater/Performance (writer, principle director, stage/lighting designer).  
In collaboration with Theater Oobleck/Streetlight Theater.  
60 minutes, 1987. Based on the works of Thomas Pynchon.  
Performance Network, Ann Arbor.

## **EVENTS**

#### Report from the Ghost City

produced by The Disembodied Theater Corporation. 2006, 2007, 2008.  
LA production: Jewlia Eisenberg, Rebecca Greeley, Steve Gregoropoulos, Jen Hofer, Nora  
Keyes, Ross Lipman, Heather Lockie, Claire McKeown, Lee Ann Schmidt, Anna Simpson,  
Laura Steenberge, Joe Tepperman.  
SF production: Jodie Baltazar, Marit Brook-Kothlow, Judith Fischer, Mike Ibarra, Charles  
Kremenek, Bruce Landick, Kerry Laitala, Ross Lipman, Katherin McInnis, Laura Steenberge,  
Konrad Steiner, Anjali Sundaram.  
NY production: Bryan Papciak, Julia Solis, Ross Lipman

#### Inquiry Towards the Practice of Secular Magic

produced by The Disembodied Theater Corporation. 2006.  
NY production: Andrew Boyd, Leigh Evans, Ross Lipman, Danny Thompson.

## **SELECTED HONORS**

Anthology Film Archives 2008 Film Preservation Award  
National Society of Film Critics 2007 Film Heritage Award  
Sammlung Goetz, Munich – museum purchase of The Interview, 2005  
One-person screening, Los Angeles Film Forum, 2005  
Oberhausen Film Festival and Archive - international touring program selection and 35mm print purchase, 2004  
Bernier Charitable Trust Award, 1999  
Fleishacker Foundation Visual Artist's Grant, 1998  
Oppenheimer Camera Filmmaker's Grant, 1998  
Two-person retrospective (with Charlotte Pryce), Total Mobile Home microCinema, 1996  
Director's Choice, Black Maria Film Festival, independent film production, 1995

One-person screening, San Francisco Cinematheque, 1995  
Best of the Exploding Cinema screening, 1993  
Bela Balazs Studio Grant, film production, 1991  
American Film Institute Focus Competition Finalist, video production, 1985

## **SELECTED SCREENING AND PERFORMANCE VENUES**

Anthology Film Archives (New York)  
Director's Lounge (Berlin)  
Sprocket Society (Seattle)  
One Night Cinema (Phoenix)  
Bedlam (LA)  
ATA (SF)  
Velaslavasay Panorama (LA)  
Killradio (LA)  
Seven Dudley Cinema (LA)  
Bijou Theater/Cal Arts (LA)  
Pioneer Theater (NY)  
Public Opinion Laboratory (Brooklyn)  
Sixpackfilm/Top-Kino (Vienna)  
Film Forum (LA)  
Echo Park Film Center (LA)  
Cork International Film Festival (Ireland)  
AMIA (Austin, Minneapolis)  
Oberhausen Film Festival (+ touring program)  
SF Cinematheque/Yerba Buena Center  
SF Cinematheque/San Francisco Art Institute  
Oblivio Series/Bowery Poetry Club (NY)  
Odeon Cinema (London)  
Cinema Borealis (Chicago)  
Chinese Taipei Film Archive  
Flower St. Studio (LA)  
Temescal Art Center (Oakland)  
Total Mobile Home microCinema (San Francisco)  
Black Maria Film Festival (+ touring program)  
Bindlestiff Studio (SF)  
Exploding Cinema (London)  
Bela Balazs Studio Cinematheque (Budapest)  
Links Hall (Chicago)  
Rainbow Club (Chicago)  
London International Film Festival  
Athens International Film Festival  
Theater Oobleck (Chicago)  
Lower Links (Chicago)  
Performance Network (Ann Arbor)  
Ann Arbor Super-8 Festival

## **SELECTED PUBLICATIONS, DOCUMENTARY WORKS, LECTURES**

"Mingus, Cassavetes, and the Birth of a Jazz Cinema," *forthcoming* in [The Journal of Film Music](#), Vol. 2, No 2, Fall 2008.

"Tillie's Punctured Celluloid: the Restoration of Charlie Chaplin's First Feature," *forthcoming* in Griffithiana, No. 74, 2008.

"Order, Disorder, and Point of Order! (The Cropping of the Spectacle)," presented at Orphan Film Symposium, New York University, 2008.

"Anger Rising: The Restoration of Films of Kenneth Anger," presented at Reel Thing Technical Symposium, Eastman Kodak, Theater on the Ridge, Rochester, 2007; and Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Linwood Dunn Theater, Los Angeles, 2007.

"At the Dolores" (documentary short), in Killer of Sheep: The Charles Burnett Collection, Milestone Film & Video, 2007.

"The Films of Stephen Lighthill," in Mining the Home Movie: Excavations in Histories and Memories, edited by Karen Ishizuka and Patricia Zimmerman, University of California Press, 2007.

"In Search of the Lacuna: The Elusive Art of Film Preservation," presented at Harvard Film Archive, Carpenter Center for the Arts, Cambridge, 2006.

*Sid Laverents Oral History* (video document: interviewer), DVD directed and authored by Amy Sloper, Association of Moving Image Archivists Oral History Project, 2006.

"The Grey Zone: Charles Burnett's Killer of Sheep," presented as part of Out of the Past: Film Restoration Today, James Bridges Theater, UCLA Film & Television Archive, 2005.

"The Restoration of John Cassavetes' Shadows" (documentary film: author/narrator), in John Cassavetes: Five Films, The Criterion Collection, 2004.

"A Short Survey of Experimental Cinema Preservation," presented at Association of Moving Image Archivists Conference, Montreal, 1999.

"Technical Aesthetics in the Preservation of Film Art," in Big as Life: An American History of 8mm Films, New York Museum of Modern Art/San Francisco Cinematheque, 1998.

"A Brief Note on Dye Stability," in Journal of Film Preservation, Vol. XXVI, No. 54, 1997.

"Problems of Independent Film Preservation," in Journal of Film Preservation, Vol. XXV, No. 53, 1996.

## SELECTED FILMS RESTORED

*Films restored in 35mm for UCLA Film & Television Archive unless otherwise noted.*

## EXPERIMENTAL

Film

Rabbit's Moon

Kustom Kar Kommandos

Scorpio Rising

Fireworks

Samuel Beckett/Alan Schneider (1964).

Kenneth Anger (reconstruction, 1971 original release).

Kenneth Anger (1965).

Kenneth Anger (1963).

Kenneth Anger (1947).

Multiple Sidosis  
One Man Band  
It Sudses and Sudses and Sudses  
Dawn to Dawn

Sid Laverents (1970). 35mm and 16mm.  
Sid Laverents (1964). 16mm.  
Sid Laverents (1962). 16mm.  
Josef Berne (1933). In collaboration with Anthology Film Archives.

## **NARRATIVE**

The Connection  
The Exiles  
  
Woman Under the Influence  
Faces  
Shadows  
Matewan  
Lianna  
Return of the Secaucus Seven  
Killer of Sheep  
The Horse  
Several Friends  
Please! Don't Bury Me Alive!  
Tillie's Punctured Romance

Shirley Clarke (1961). In collaboration with the British Film Institute.  
Kent Mackenzie (1961). In collaboration with USC Moving Image Archive. Distributed through Milestone.  
John Cassavetes (1974). Distributed through Faces International.  
John Cassavetes (1968). Distributed through Faces International.  
John Cassavetes (1959). Distributed through Faces International.  
John Sayles (1987). Distributed through IFC.  
John Sayles (1981). Distributed through IFC.  
John Sayles (1979). Distributed through IFC.  
Charles Burnett (1977). Distributed through Milestone.  
Charles Burnett (1973). Distributed through Milestone.  
Charles Burnett (1969). Distributed through Milestone.  
Efrain Gutierrez (1977).  
Mack Sennett (1914). In collaboration with British Film Institute.

## **DOCUMENTARY**

Word is Out: Stories of Some of Our Lives  
  
The Times of Harvey Milk  
  
Sunday  
La Onda Chicana  
In the Year of the Pig  
  
Point of Order!  
  
USA Poetry: Allen Ginsberg  
USA Poetry: Anne Sexton  
Sao Paulo de Ontem, Sao Paulo de Hoje  
It's All True (original camera footage)

Peter Adair/Mariposa Collective (1978),  
Distributed through New Yorker.  
Robert Epstein and Richard Schmiechen (1984,  
Academy Award). In collaboration with Telling Pictures.  
Distributed through New Yorker.  
Dan Drasin (1961). In collaboration with the Orphan Film Symposium  
Efrain Gutierrez (1977).  
Emile de Antonio (1968). In collaboration with the Wisconsin  
Center for Film and Theater Research and Nancy de Antonio.  
Emile de Antonio/Dan Talbot (1964). In collaboration with Wisconsin  
Center for Film & Theater Research, New Yorker Films, Nancy de Antonio.  
WNET (1965/75). American Poetry Archives. 16mm.  
WNET (1965/75). American Poetry Archives. 16mm.  
Anonymous (Brazil, 1943).  
Orson Welles (1941).