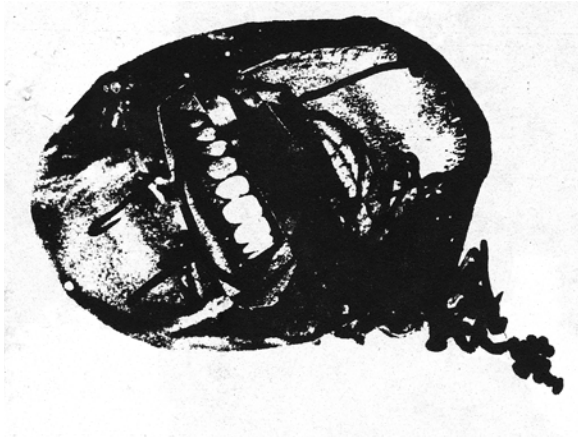


DIRTY LOOKS is a roaming series held on the last Wednesday of the month. Curated by Bradford Nordeen, Dirty Looks is a screening series designed to trace contemporary queer aesthetics through historical works, presenting quintessential GLBT film and video alongside up-and-coming artists and filmmakers. A salon of influences, Dirty Looks is an open platform for inquiry, discussion and debate.

The logo for 'Dirty Looks' is written in a stylized, handwritten font. The word 'Dirty' is in a larger, more prominent script, while 'Looks' is in a smaller, more delicate script. The letters are black and have a slightly irregular, ink-like quality.

“Deliver us from Daddy! Dirty Looks sets its sights on artist film and video that pierces dominant narratives, wanders with deviant eyes or captures the counter in salacious glares.”

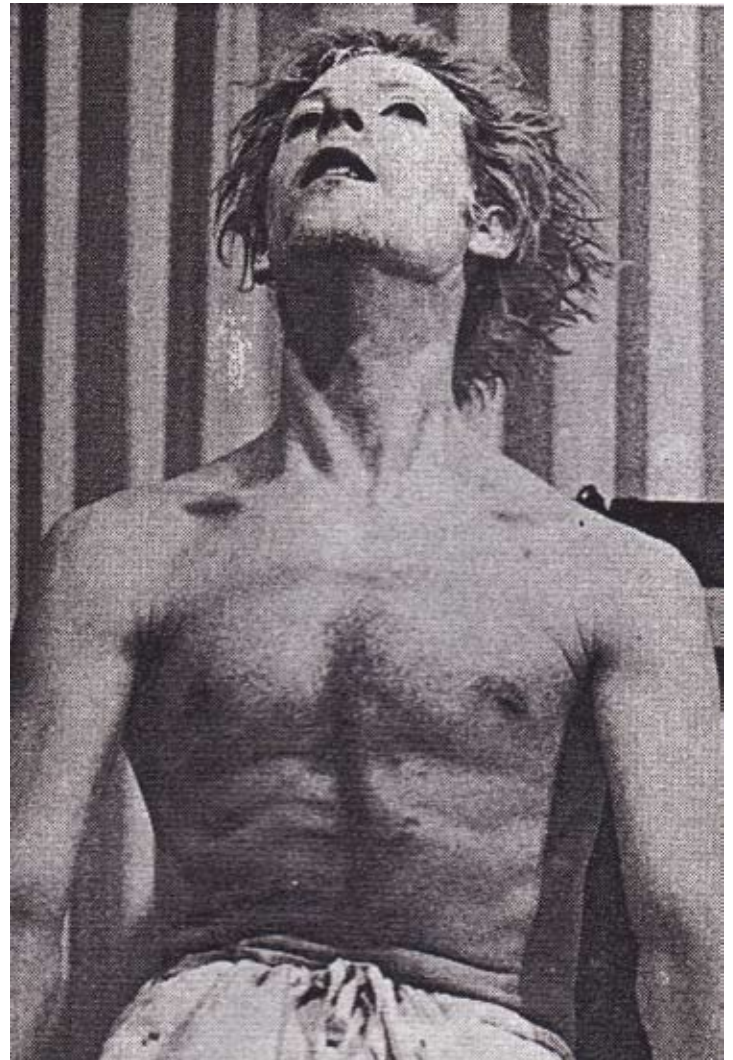


LUTHER PRICE received a BFA in Sculpture and Media/Performing Arts from Massachusetts College of Art and Design, where he studied with Saul Levine. He is an experimental filmmaker whose work has been widely screened in the United States and Europe at such venues as the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the San Francisco Cinematheque. He is a professor at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design. His films, shot primarily on Super 8 mm, often include controversial subject matter, found footage, the artist performing in a variety of persona, and physical interventions into the actual material of the film, sometimes incorporating live performance. His films are distributed by Canyon Cinema in San Francisco, The Film-Makers' Cooperative in New York, Light Cone in Paris and others.

All images courtesy of the artist.

LUTHER PRICE

Fancy Days, Fancy Times



Ribbon Candy, 16mm, 2003/4, 7min.

Silk, 16mm, 2006, 10min.

Ritual 629, Super-8mm, 1999, 13min.

Me Gut No Dog Dog, Super-8 on DVD, 1995, 45min.

Sodom, 16mm, 1989, 15 min.



Luther Price

grew up in Revere, Massachusetts with his sister Sally. Together the siblings would obsessively watch daytime broadcasts of woman's melodramas on their black and white t.v.—films like *Imitation of Life* or *Mildred Pierce*—re-enacting the histrionics on a reel-to-reel recorder. This obsessive kind of self-dramatization and hysterical re-enactment continued throughout Price's career, first through the various, self-invented monikers that he adopted while earning his undergraduate degree in Fine Arts at MassArt (personas included LA, Laija Brie Aethy, Brigk Aethy, Brick, Fag and Tom Rhoads), and then in his later performative revisitations of traumatic incidents like a gunshot wound, deaths in the family and childhood nightmares.

Larry Paradiso, Laija Brie Aethy, LA, Brick and Fag were all predominantly sculpture and performance artists, with different logic structures built into each. These characters were not performances, per se. Rather, the artist would form personalities in order to execute his fine art projects, often assuming these characters' mannerisms or affectations, full time. Laija Brie went to Nicaragua on a cultural exchange program in 1985, and adapted to his surroundings, becoming Brigk Aethy. There, Brigk was accidentally shot at close range by his 15-year-old bodyguard, a devastating wound that forced his return to Boston by emergency means and left him teetering between life and death. *Eat Fuck Live Shit Want Need* was a sculptural installation that the artist created, in immediate response, once he maintained some semblance of health. Permanently scarred, the event fundamentally changed Brigk for years to come. The artist turned to filmmaking, as an extension of his sculptural practice, inventing the persona Tom Rhoads to plumb his childhood traumas – particularly the circumstances surrounding the suicide of his aunt Sally, at the age of 23 and on the day of Price's birth.

"Tom Rhoads was a nice guy who would buy you an ice cream cone," Price explained, an adult manifestation of Price's haunted childhood. Rhoads made frightening Super8mm visions of a fecund homecoming, dressing as his mother in *Warm Broth*, 1987/88 and using those original reel-to-reel performances with his sister for *Green*, 1988. These early performance films were so startling in their raw vitality that they were championed by filmmakers, curators and critics, alike, who responded to their urgency of vision and alarming psychological complexity—frequently citing the use of super8mm as a medium to reconstruct memory or a traumatic past. As Rhoads evolved, it became clear that the work was becoming too harsh, too brutal for such a childlike filmmaker.

Tom Rhoads started *Sodom* in 1988, but the artist soon realized that "he [Tom] couldn't have made *Sodom*." So cleft was that film between such opposing forces, he was forced to invent his longest-running persona, Luther Price, out of his apotheosis of good – Martin Luther King Jr. – and that of evil – Vincent Price.

The resulting film and filmmaker would make an immense impact on the avant-garde film community of Boston and the world over. *Sodom* is extreme, as horrifying as it is whimsical. Made of found gay pornography and biblical disaster footage, the voracious boys of the pornographic footage are sutured into sequences of cataclysm via a rudimentary hole-punch technique. Halos circle these victims of dogma, victims of plague, victims of hedonism as they dance in a sea of religious calamity, celebrating and damning, all in the same frame. *Sodom* sparked a zealous coup among film programmers and audiences, who were fiercely divided by what some found an hier Kenneth Anger and Jean Genet while others, a homophobic zealot. *Sodom* provides no easy answers for viewer. With its gorgeous organic aesthetics, hypnotic soundtrack, gruesome and graphic depictions, the piece performs a harsh rebuttal to the ideals of contemporary gay lifestyle.

Price continued, prolifically producing two strains of film work: Price's performative films carried on from previous efforts, with the filmmaker embodying physically and emotionally grueling characters, as seen in the feature-length *A*, 1995 and the *Clown* and *Meat* series, 1992-94 and 1990-1999 (the latter of which revisited his traumatic shooting, then later, the loss of his entire family from Cancer in the span of one year – a body of work which includes *Ritual 629*, 1999); Price's other strain assembled found footage, imposing an emotional sense upon this chaotic world for future, foreign scrutiny. Early works in this vein included *Bottle Can*, 1993, *In Black and White* and *Jelly Fish Sandwich*, both 1994, pieces in which Price builds new associative structures of logic, "an attempt to put history into time capsules and send them into space, in the hope that someone will get the right message. However," Lia Ganigano writes, "as the films' scrambled forms suggest, the message has degenerated, history has become a series of misdirections."

Price finished *Me Gut No Dog Dog* in 1995. A found footage film that culls army recruitment propaganda, gay pornography, family home movies and some amateur Karate narrative, Price uses the barrage of leisure-time footage and outmoded training films to build a personal past. Price fascinatingly coagulates these random scenes into a film that recreates his childhood dread of the Vietnam draft. The impending horror of this institutionalized violence is layered against his dormant homosexuality and the army's homosocial climate, a conflicted fear and thrill of being caught or forced into brute sexual encounters. The film recounts a loss of innocence, with (as in many of Price's films) the voice of Karen Carpenter ringing its close, as she coos a pathetic rendition of The Beatles "Ticket To Ride." Children file down communion isles as a pretty teen slams his head on a pillow, bracing against some aggressive, off-screen penetration and the tune's chorus lyric, "he's got a ticket to ride and he don't care," suddenly acquires an ominous, thanatotic drive.

Due to duplication issues brought about by the explicit content of *Me Gut No Dog Dog*, Price has since only produced unique films, hand splicing, painting or warping existent footage in one-of-a-kind cycles of work. These hands-on processes are obsessive and laborious for Price, who still considers himself more a sculptor than filmmaker. Never one to linger on any one process, each new body of work almost becomes a skillful disavowal from its predecessor. The *Inkbot* series (1998 – 2008) is the result of the laborious hand-painting techniques, often working from nothing but clear leader, while the *Biscuits* series re-edits 13 identical 16mm copies of footage shot in an African American retirement home in Boston to arrive at a more emotionally accurate documentation of these living situations. *Silk* and *Ribbon Candy* (the latter, part of the *Ribbons* series) belong to this decade of abundant production. These works show the filmmaker re-creating contexts and revising the past, remolding existent images and narratives, in lieu of shooting additional material. Price has worked in this manner for the past decade, *Ritual 629* being one of the last original footage pieces that he has created. Not that this slows him. The filmmaker, who still lives in Revere, produces 10 or so films a year.



Ribbon Candy

16mm, 2006

Part of a series of ribbon films i began in 16mm during 2002 while held up w/ a broken foot.....i call them ribbons because they kind of look like ribbons.....and feel like ribbons.....two cute guys fucking in black and white mixed in w/ pritty plastic flowers shot in kodachrome.....i use double stick tape to sandwich small guage on to 16mm clear leader.....the flowers i shot in super8 actually ride along what would be the optical track so the image becomes this intense sound.....making the film feel very turbulant along with the image which glides unregistered through the projector.....the film realy feels like it's going to self destruct.....but it ends with a kiss instead.....

Silk

16mm optical sound film, 2006

used this guy on guy footage i optically printed in 1990.....super8 to bl/ wh 16mm.....i used handmade lenses during the rephography to create my own crude optics.....i think it looks like a gay slot machine.....the footage is cut with early 70s bl/ wh found footageBoston rascial tention.....police rounding up black people and arresting them.....i grew up during that timeI remember "bussing".....My parents moved to an apartment right across the street from school.....but we still had to be "bussed" way across town to another school.....they kept us home instead , in protest.....i watched tv all day sucking my thumb and silking my blanket.....

Ritual 629

super8, 1990

i was shot june 26th 1985.....left me with a hole in my gut and a paralyzed leg.....istuff my hole with guase three times day to change the dressingat night , i would have night mares of being raped by a big violent hairy monster fucking the side of my stomack here i was shot.....so i thought i'd ritualize the whole event.....by fucking myself with a plunger over and over.....it's kind of my monster film.....i stopped having the night mares after that too.....but my ass was realy sore

Me Gut No Dog Dog

Super8 on DVD, 1995

Fall of 1967, I was on my way to the first day of pre-kindergarten in my father's white Pontiac convertible. The top was down and my mother's kerchief was blowing in my face. I sat in the back seat crying I didn't want to go. I'd rather be playing tent in my room. It was very traumatic. But when we got to the school, my mother turned around and said "Oh Daddy he doesn't have to go He's going to have to go to Vietnam some day...so we went for ice cream instead.

But as I Sucked up the tears from my face and wiped my nose, I counted on my fingers how many years it would be before I had to go to war... I missed Vietnam, but it was always there.

LUTHER PRICE





Luther Price: All Cinema is Live Cinema

A Fed Ex box arrived shortly after discussing the topic of this book with Luther Price. It mostly contained the following: *Shit Rag I* (by Tom Rhoads, 1985-86), *Shit Rag II* (Tom Rhoads, 1986-87), *Meat I* (Luther Price, 1992), *Meat* (Luther Price at Eye Gallery, San Francisco, 1992) *Clown II*, *Scary Transformations* (Luther Price at Total Mobile Home, San Francisco, 1994), and *Glitter Fat Fashion Maggot* (Luther Price at New York Underground Film Festival, CBGB Gallery, 2000). From this careful assortment of motley videotapes, Luther unambiguously outlined what has perhaps been latently apparent in his work, regarding the cyclical processes of performance and film that characterize his particular elaboration upon what Jack Smith manifested as “expanded cinema.”¹ In addition to incorporating cinematic and live performance experiences, Luther adds the long-term interplay of ritualistically extracting performances from his films and films from his performances. This time-based, seemingly repetitive practice of returning to previous works, and cycling back to processes left persistently open (also visible in Luther’s films themselves) is central to his work.

“Images of ruptured flesh and ghostly birthday parties are further ruptured and drained of life by Price’s torturous manipulations of the film, which can include chemical processing, filters, optical printing, re-photography, and even holes punched in the frame. What emerges is Price’s great subject—the breaches, breakdowns, and collapse of body, family, and society, and by extension all of life, in the face of unstoppable philosophical forces.”²

SHIT RAGS

In *Shit Rags I* and *II*, authored by Tom Rhoads, one of Luther Price’s most notable pseudonyms, performative screen tests for future characters are established. What begins with Rhoads, wearing a loose-fitting floral dress, apron, socks, and bad wig, seemingly alone in an unadorned room with a camera and record player (playing Hank Williams singing “a picture from life’s other side, a life that has gone by the way...”)—a picture of a livid woman emerges. This scary mom, in constrained yet furious lip-synch, utters (with and without sound): “motherfucker, cocksucker, cunt, fuck you....” Her grinding teeth and snarled lipstick create an obscene hole when closely framed by the camera.

Later in *Shit Rag I*, different props are introduced: a dainty flowered sugar bowl and creamer, breakfast foods, dolls. Another performer (Laurie McKenna a.k.a. Bud Scrape), wearing the same matronly outfit, repeats some of the same actions, adding further obscenities of motherhood, performed with a doll, to the repertoire. She provides the title as she smokes and angrily sighs, “bunch of shit rags.” Bud Scrape and Tom Rhoads later share the character of the Cunt in *Warm Broth* (1987-88).

Shit Rag II features performances by Rhoads, refining the character, woman/mother/cunt, whose mouthing of repeated profanities seems to tell the whole story of her life. From sitting, smoking, swearing to swearing, gagging, spitting—her actions seem to foreshadow later incarnations: the Cunt from *Warm Broth*, the woman in *Green* (1988), some clowns, and even a glimpse of Edie from *A* (1995). *Shit Rag II* goes from sound, to silent, to just text corrupting the floral wallpaper backdrop: cunt, motherfucker, fuck you.

These *Shit Rags* were made shortly after Rhoads’s life-altering gunshot wound in Nicaragua in 1985. Upon his return to Massachusetts College of Art, where he had previously made sculpture and installation, he began making non-static works in performance and film, based on his recollections of his life prior to his injury, namely, his recollections of childhood and his mom in the 1960s: “The cunt washes dishes while the prick takes a shit.”³

Other films from this period such as *Green* began with childhood nightmares and fears, with a strong focus on his mother, who he filmed in 1986 with the explicit purpose of gathering a few specific shots for *Green* (her confused face) and *Warm Broth* (hand with wedding ring). These portrait sittings required his mom to recreate his memories of her from when he was a 6-year-old kid, retrieving outfits from the time, drinking from the same coffee cup. Luther shot film only during the periods his mother thought the camera was off. This footage, the outtakes from *Warm Broth* and *Green* (films in which Luther predominantly plays his mother), would later be utilized for the portrait film, *Mother* (1988). Drawn only from actual footage of her, *Mother* strips away the pretense of performance and brings forth a confrontation that simultaneously disunites and melds the identities of the filmmaker and his longtime subject.

The relationship between Luther’s methods and characters and his own life (sometimes conflated with that of his mother) has always remained fundamental to the making of his work—a process he refers to as possessed time. During the making of *Green*, he assumed the persona of Tom Rhoads, a character who had matured in the film, full-time. Such open-ended processes of extracting films from performances and life performances from films would remain characteristic of Luther’s work, following his public suicide as Tom Rhoads in 1989 (by overdosing on thirty-seven candy pills, the same number of Sominex pills his mother’s sister Sally had taken the day she died, the day Luther was born).

MEAT

Methods of constant revision and repetition also correspond to Luther’s practice of making several versions of the same film, as he had done with *Warm Broth*, and for which he became notorious with *Sodom* (1989)—of which no two prints are the same. In the early 90s, Luther became focused on his traumatic injury and hospitalization with material emanating from an exhausting two-hour performance, *Meat* (1992). In this performance, Luther meticulously manipulates various meats into plastic tubes, arranges and dissects animal parts with medical utensils, swabs them with cotton and gauze, and performs all manner of useless durational surgeries. When Luther, dressed in lab coat and pale white makeup, presents the largest of his butchered animal parts, he proceeds to drill out a large hole with a power tool and remove a large chunk of meat, not unlike the wound he himself had sustained. He then examines the hole by placing his hands inside, pours in fluids, and fills the hole with yards of gauze. He methodically bandages and unbandages the hole, removes the gauze, and sprays disinfectant intermittently, which mingles with the smell of liver cooking on a hotplate.

The film version of *Meat* incorporates found medical footage, images of wounds, pornography, a hand clutching hospital sheets, and Luther as a character that he describes as being transformed from human to maggot form. This stream of imagery is punctuated by the equivalent of filmic scabs created by punching holes in the film and replacing them with circular images of glistening raw flesh and flies. In a two-day installation/performance/screening of *Meat* at Eye Gallery in San Francisco in 1992, a hotplate of cooking liver was placed amidst a live audience seated in front of a large-scale projection of *Meat*, surrounded by monitors that were fed live



images of a performance taking place behind the screen in three adjacent miniature vignette studios. Like the initial performance, the actions occurring off-stage on the first night of the performance involved the ritualization of various methods of sterilizing and reconfiguring animal flesh. On the second night, Luther stuffed a hole in a wooden carcass, fashioned as the next specimen/patient, with maggots and gauze. He then proceeded to remove the thirty or so feet of gauze, periodically inspecting the cooking liver, which continued to burn since the night before. The screening/performance culminates with Luther as human maggot eating the rancid, charred liver, gagging. He then changes into Karen Carpenter drag, approaches the microphone, and sings “Reason to Believe” with burned flesh and blood marring his white pancake makeup around the mouth.

In the late 90s, following the death of his sister, Sally, Luther would make a number of films that recuperated family footage as well as footage from the time he made *Meat*. As in previous cycles, Luther ritualistically returned to former material, making films such as *Meat Blue 03*, *Meat Dry 02*, and *Meat Situation 04* by extracting them from their original sources in an attempt at resolution. These later films were derived from video footage of performances, re-photographed on Super 8 (where they had begun with the original *Meat* film) and edited in-camera. With time, Luther’s methodical viewing and selecting of footage implies an objectivity towards his own performance and video documentation—selecting certain passages left open in their initial iterations.

Versions of these films were premiered during his solo exhibition at Thread Waxing Space in 1999, which included three evenings of theatrical screenings (co-curated by Mark McElhatten and Gavin Smith) that occurred in an installation punctuated by film stills, documentation, and buckets filled with canned vegetables and assorted foodstuffs. Placed in each bucket was a plunger, a gob of Vaseline on each wooden handle tip, a prop used by Luther in the film *Ritual 629*. A video of The Carpenters was projected continuously. For the opening, a table was prepared with various raw meats covered with clown sprinkles. The performative aspect of screening Luther’s Super 8 films was well dramatized during the Thread Waxing Space program, with the achievement of sometimes complex multiple projections and the inclusion of one-of-a-kind, “unclean” films that we hoped would pass through the projector unharmed.

CLOWN

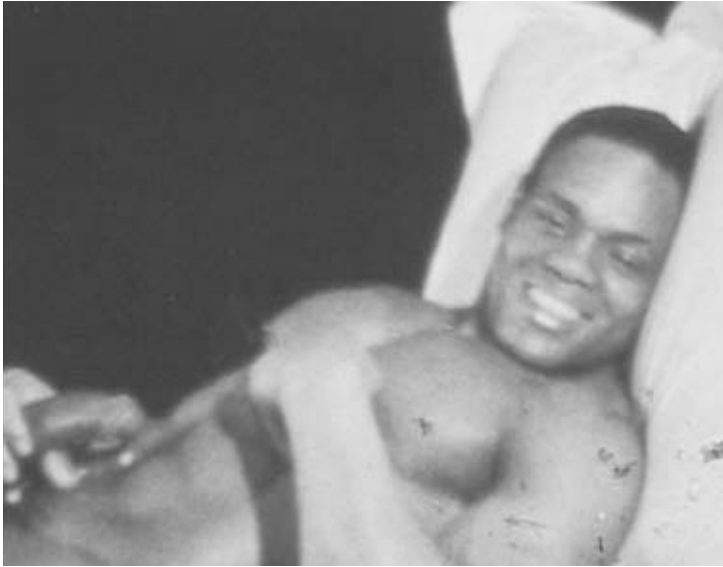
Methods of cyclical return to processes and characters can also be observed in Luther’s now iconic *Clown* works. Existing initially in the form of Super 8 screen tests for various masturbatory, sadistic clowns, *Clown Part II: Scary Transformations*, comprised a durational performance/screening at Total Mobile Home, San Francisco in 1994. Following a lengthy disco dancing introduction amidst a birthday party set with balloons, streamers, and strobe light, Luther begins to undress (and re-dress, drawing from a large repository of thrift store clothing gathered on stage), revealing an imposing dildo which he wears for the duration of a two-hour performance. *Clown* ears, make-up, party hats match the intermittent, lengthy passages of children’s music that play as the clown takes an electric sander to numerous dolls’ faces. This happens again and again, on and off-screen, melding performance and projected films. Luther adjusts lighting, opens the curtains of a makeshift theatrical screen, and turns the projector on and off to punctuate his live versions of the clown’s deviant actions.

A found film of a “Baby” Jane Hudson-style kid in a tutu with a party clown is projected as another clown persona emerges with Luther adding some clothes. He smokes, pops some balloons, and, with the addition of a plastic clown mask, fully transforms into an obscene nightmare clown. An audience member audibly screams in fear of this clown, who begins to use the telephone. It is the Fuck It Suck It clown. Calmly sitting and dialing local numbers, the clown screams, gags, and coughs out the same basic words: “Fuck It. Suck It,” to those who answer. Members of the audience start feeding numbers to the clown, which he dials. These numbers glean more aggressive recipients of the clown’s prank phone calls—whose responses to the clown are audible to the audience.

These live communications are followed by another screening, in which we see the screen version of the Fuck It Suck It clown, as well as other of Luther’s clown classics: the Screaming Clown, the Gar Har Clown, the Masturbating Clown. Luther walks in and out of the screening, fiddling with things on set as the Super 8 films play. He talks to himself: “Change the atmosphere a little bit; play a record.” He sings along to Dionne Warwick. The Laughing Clown rubs a doll’s face off on asphalt. Luther re-appears for the finale, rearranges the lighting, and repositions a kinetic balloon chandelier. It is Halloween night and his ultimate costume is an ice cream sundae. Removing some clothes, he begins to cover his body with ice cream scooped from large containers that have been sitting on stage. He adds bananas, sprinkles, hot fudge—but recalls later that the ice cream almost gave him hypothermia.

For the 2002 Fruit Farm Film Festival in McMinnville, Oregon, a festival taking place on the farm of Ramsey McPhillips, Luther was invited to screen a film. For the occasion, he re-edited a new version of *Clown*. However, the screenings occurring in a large dilapidated barn with hay bales for seating had their share of technical difficulties. The film had sound, the projector did not. For no apparent reason, the film commenced, and the resurrected clown began his guttural assault of coughing, wheezing, and shouting of profanities. Unrecognized by many audience members due to the impeccably synchronized soundtrack, the sound was emanating from behind a hay bale where Luther had snuck with a microphone to perform a spontaneous, secret live audio accompaniment. His trembling knees were sometimes visible from behind the bale.

Ed Halter invited Luther to screen films for the 2000 New York Underground Film Festival. He declined, asking Halter if he could do a fashion show instead. Halter agreed, facilitating the one-time performance of *Glitter Fat Fashion Maggot*, which revived Luther’s tendency to cook disinfected meat on stage, only this time as accompaniment to a runway show of meat fashions: plastic wrap and meat purses, bacon skirts, and sausage dildos were worn by numerous models. Seemingly chaotic from the back stage dressing area, several cycles were performed for the audience: neat meat outfits with red Prada-style accents made with inches of tape; adult diapers for baby-themed meat accessories; pom-poms stuck to skin with Crisco for clown accents; and hot fudge sauce and glitter for a scatological finale. Perhaps the clean-up most vividly congealed this particular mixture of glistening blood, grease, chocolate, and smoke from burning flesh into the conglomeration of numerous of Luther’s previous film utterances into spontaneous performance.



"It had passed like a ritual sacrifice, with fear and pity climaxing with the immolation of the (black) heroine.... This movie experience had had a quality I would call 'sacramental' but which Douglas Sirk, following his beloved Arthur Schopenhauer, preferred to call 'irony'-in the Aristotelian sense: art's ability to clarify and anneal."⁵

During the writing of this text, Luther recited, over the phone, large portions of his life story as they pertained to the making of his films and performances. Upon our final reading, he noted: "Life and film certainly fuse and there's a reason believe... but within all of the acceptance you have to scrape away and find the beginning, in order to move on and then scrape some more...."

LIA GANGITANO

For PERFORMA 05, Biennial of Visual Art Performance, Luther partnered with painter and longtime collaborator Katharine Finneran to stage a live film installation, *Project Cotton Candy* (organized in conjunction with The Roberta Beck Memorial Cinema) incorporating 16 mm and Super 8 films, multiple slide and video projections, text, light boxes, paintings, and miscellaneous objects. Creating a sort of medical conference gone awry, Price and Finneran, costumed as doctor and nurse, tended to their collaborator-patients (including the Roberta Beck Memorial Cinema team dressed in scrubs: Bradley Eros, Joel Schlemowitz, and Glen Fogel; as well as Shawn Cotter with a large make-up head injury and a neck brace) while multiple projections filled the gallery space. Images of free-floating human organs, copious obsolescent projection/medical equipment, parasitically infected pin-up girl paintings, kinetic sculptures made of garbage, and specimens obsessively collected from the dusty corners of the artists' apartments congealed into a spatial microscope revealing the parasitic corruption of the American home. Somewhere between the familial pathos of Price's curdled home movies and the medical horrors of *Meat*, *Project Cotton Candy* casts unwholesome light on these tainted institutions.

If Luther Price's insistence on the materiality of film, through obsessive physical manipulation (at times of each individual frame), drains his films of life, perhaps their resuscitation through ritual performance conjures the vampiric sensibility he intends to invoke.⁴ In addition to soundtracks recorded by his sister and mother from the time he was growing up (used in films such as *Green*), music specific to his generation also plays a considerable role in the unique vastness of the grief he elicits in his work. Music and politics, at that time, were particularly intertwined: war in Vietnam, supergroups, and Nixon-era sweethearts, The Carpenters. Embodying the myriad contradictions of this point in American history, Karen Carpenter figures broadly as the perpetually undead. A Carpenters' medley, for example, comprises the majority of the soundtrack to *Jelly Fish Sandwich* (1994), a film that combines footage of catastrophic war, football games, and Chinatown. Luther considers it essentially a film about misinformation, blaming the bombing of Pearl Harbor on the Chinese. Not unlike the lyrics to The Carpenters' "Calling Occupants of Interplanetary Craft," this film marks an attempt to put history into a capsule and send it into space, in the hope that someone will get the right message. However, as the film's scrambled form suggests, the message has degenerated, and history has become a series of misdirections. That Luther continues to try, however, is a testament, perhaps, to his love of film, and, in particular, to one of his mother's favorite films, Douglas Sirk's *Imitation of Life*.



1. "Smith was both filmmaker and performance artist. After a period of about eight years (1961 - 1969) in which Smith showed the films in their completed forms in conventional film screening settings, he began to incorporate the films and his slides into the performances. He developed this technique called "Expanded Cinema" in many of his performance pieces of the period... [...] Smith created startling stage effects through the spontaneous re arrangement and interplay of recorded imagery on film and slides, with the live action on the "stage," editing and re-editing the film images on the spot, in the midst of the performance." Scott Stark, Flicker, www.hi-beam.net

2. Gary Morris, "Home Movies from Hell: The films of Luther Price," www.brightlightsfilm.com/29/lutherprice.html

3. Luther Price, conversation with the author, April 2008.

4. "The vampire is neither alive nor dead, but exists in an accursed state of irremediable tension and anxiety. Although his symbolic identity is complex and goes beyond its function in this analysis, he embodies a certain sense of cosmic grief, which is a diffracted image of a concrete historical uneasiness. ...[T]he vampire signifies not simply the unwillingness of the old regime to die, but the fear that the new order has unwittingly inherited something corrupted and evil from the old, and is in the process of unconsciously engineering itself around an evil centre." Jeff Wall, Dan Graham's *Kammerspiel*, (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1991): 61.

5. Tag Gallagher, commenting on his first viewing of *Imitation of Life*, in "White Melodrama: Douglas Sirk," *Film Comment*, Volume 34, Number 6, November-December, 1998: 16.