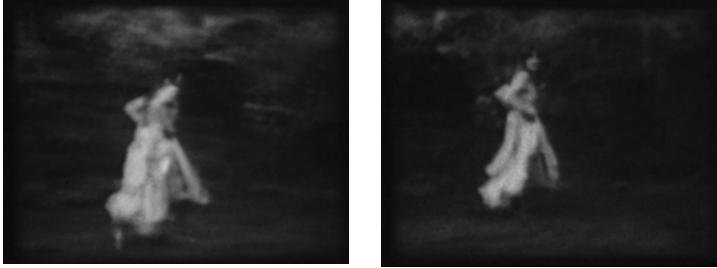


DIRTY LOOKS is a roaming series held on the last Wednesday of the month. Curated by Bradford Nordeen, Dirty Looks is a screening series designed to trace contemporary queer aesthetics through historical works, presenting quintessential GLBT film and video alongside up-and-coming artists and filmmakers.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

Dirty Looks



“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.”



Cecilia Dougherty works in video and photography. She has been making experimental videos since 1985, and her themes have been largely about psychology, language, sexuality, outsider interpretations of popular culture, and everyday life. Her videos have screened extensively in the US and abroad, including the New York Film Festival, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New Museum, NY, Irish Film Center, Dublin, the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio, and at every major gay/lesbian film festival in North America and Europe. She has had numerous gallery screenings and retrospectives, including Vox Populi, Philadelphia, Pacific Film Archives, Berkeley, Thread Waxing Space, NY, the Nelson-Atkins Museum, among others, with works ranging from essay to documentary to narrative and video installation.

Dani Leventhal was born in Columbus, Ohio in 1972. At once tender and savage, Dani Leventhal's video diaries capture the banal and the horrific to reveal the transcendent beauty and pain of daily life. In the award-winning *Draft 9* (2003), Leventhal cuts between skinned animals, salsa dancers, a Holocaust-survivor, and her own romantic liaisons to create, in the words of critic Genevieve Yue, "something that is extraordinarily immediate, both fresh and painful, hard to watch and yet impossible not to watch." In *Show and Tell in the land of Milk & Honey* (2007), Leventhal juxtaposes bucolic shots of farm life with tales of sexual harassment and sick chickens while living and working in Israel. Her video *Skim Milk & Soft Wax* is part-fiction part-documentary. Leventhal studied sculpture at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and received an MFA in Film/Video from Bard College. She received the Visual Arts Award from the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice and produced a limited edition book and video, *Skim Milk and Soft Wax* at the Women's Studio Workshop with the support of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Andy Warhol Foundation. In 2011, she received the Wexner Center for the Arts Capital R Award. She lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Leslie Thornton began developing her unique insights regarding technology and ethics at a very young age. She first studied filmmaking at the State University of New York at Buffalo, then at MIT. Her film and media works have been exhibited worldwide, in venues including the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Biennial Exhibition, Centre George Pompidou, Rotterdam International Film Festival, New York Film Festival, capcMusée, Pacific Film Archives, and festivals in Oberhausen, Graz, Mannheim, Berlin, Austin, Toronto, Tokyo and Seoul, among many others. Her ongoing work *PEGGY AND FRED IN HELL* was cited in several "Year's Best" lists, including the Village Voice and The New York Times, and she was the only woman experimental filmmaker included in Cahiers du cinema's "60 Most Important American Directors" issue.

Thornton's extensive body of work has also garnered her many prestigious awards throughout her career including the Maya Deren Award, the first Alpert Award in the Arts for media, a nomination for the Hugo Boss Award, two Rockefeller Fellowships, and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, New York Foundation for the Arts, Jerome Foundation, and Art Matters. She is currently a professor of modern culture and media at Brown University and a visiting professor in the Transmedia Programme at the Academy Sint Lukas in Brussels, Belgium. She lives and works in New York City and Providence, Rhode Island.



Wednesday, November 30, 2011

PROGRAM

Dani Leventhal

Tin Pressed, HD video, 6.29min. 2011

Cecilia Dougherty

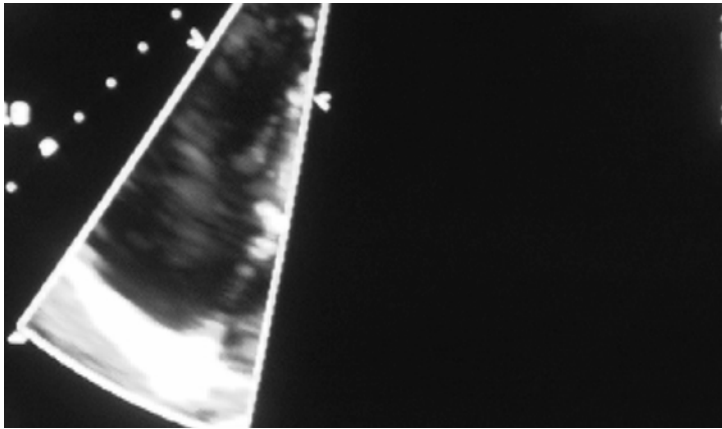
Laurie, video, 11min, 1998

Leslie Thornton

There Was An Unseen Cloud, Moving, video, 60min. 1987

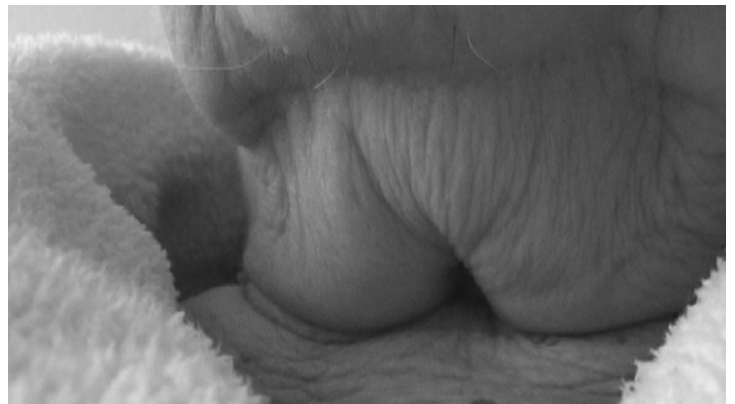
PARTICIPANT INC

DANI LEVENTHAL



Tin Pressed 6 minutes 2011

Tin Pressed negotiates a balancing act between the bewildering tonal variances of daily life - with all of its unnamable and enchantingly fragmented specifics - and the gravitational urge to construct both private and shared narratives. The world discovered through these images revolves around multiple centers. The camera's odd equanimity feels both generous and dangerous. Leventhal's deft oscillation between elision and inclusion reveals a brief but vast taxonomy of beauty, peace, longing, and terror. - Jeremy Hoevenaar





Laurie (1998, 11:02)

Laurie, the first one of a series of videos portraits of writers whose work I love, was inspired by Laurie Weeks' uncanny ability to simultaneously embody her characters and write them from a clear distance. The text in question is just a few paragraphs from the novel *Zipper Mouth*, her novel that was more than ten years in the making, published this fall by the Feminist Press. The character is Weeks the addict, but the substance of her continual addiction is not the heroin of the story, but the real junk of a life of refusal - refusal to be a girl and not relinquish a girl's true insight and desires; refusal to participate in our corrupted cultural heritage yet be a witness, an embedded journalist, a chronicler of a more authentic culture. The video is a bit romantic, a portrait of a character more than of the author herself. As Laurie does in her own writing, I conflate the persona of the writer with that of her characters, creating a portrait that is both real and fantasy, and creating a fantasy that is, at its roots, a true story.

One of my own goals was to work intuitively, and to shoot and edit the piece with as little interference as possible. I wanted to work with blinders on, to not listen to the voices of an imagined audience, and to make the piece for Laurie. This allowed me freedom to go into and out of narratives - the one I was creating about the author, the one we were both creating about the fantasy of the author, and the one that is the story in the quoted text - to foreground impressions and to visualize the strength of the writing in *Zipper Mouth*.

LESLIE THORNTON

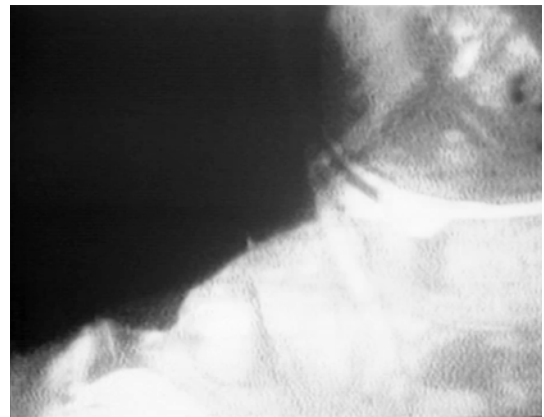
There Was An Unseen Cloud, Moving, 1987

When avant-garde filmmaker Leslie Thornton created *There Was an Unseen Cloud Moving*, Islamic culture was not yet defined by antiseptic, then turbulent images of unresolved Gulf Wars (or conveniently stigmatized as the face of terrorism) but rather, by the evocation of alien landscapes, life-altering adventures, mysticism, isolative awakening, and passionate rendezvous of films such as *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Casablanca*, and *Pepe le Moko*. It is these ephemeral notions of an exoticized otherness, fugue, and meditative search for enlightenment that undoubtedly also propelled the spirit of the film's appropriately amorphous heroine and nineteenth century adventurer, Isabelle Wilhemina Eberhardt (who, in the film is portrayed by several actresses). Dubbed "Le Bonne Nomade" and "L'Amazone du Sable", Eberhardt was the well-educated, illegitimate daughter of a Russian aristocratic mother, Nathalie Moerder and her children's tutor, an anarchist, bohemian, and ex-Orthodox priest and Moslem convert named Alexandre Trophimovsky. Seeking in part to escape a turbulent home life, Eberhardt traveled to Algeria at the age of 20 on a quixotic quest for spiritual enlightenment where, after the untimely death of her mother, she continued to live in North Africa (due in part by her denial of inheritance as a result of her illegitimacy) as a Moslem man in order to move freely within Arabic tribes in Tunisia and Algeria, and in the process, author a series of articles and journals that collectively would be described as "one of the strangest human documents a woman has given to the world."

Thornton creates a playful, tactile, and insightful experimental biography of the iconoclastic heroine through an impressionistic collage of found film, archival photographs, mixed media (film and video) reenactments, and textured annotations that serve as an appropriately abstract yet incisive and instinctually cohesive representation of Eberhardt's equally strange and unorthodox, yet remarkable life. In one episode, the seeming alienness of the desert landscape is juxtaposed against archival footage of the lunar landing in order to subvert not only the notions of alterity, space, and time, but also to introduce the themes of terrestriality and immanence, as Eberhardt figuratively sheds her gender, culture, and identity by assuming the guise of a Moslem man named Si Mahmoud Essadi and, in essence, becomes extraterrestrial in her liberation from the body to become a figurative wandering spirit completely assimilated into the fibers of Arabic society, able to penetrate the secret brotherhoods of Islamic culture (such as the Sufi brotherhood of Qadriya) that a European woman could not. Moreover, through the fragmented superposition of grainy, defocused, concealed, high contrasted, or otherwise obscured images throughout the film, Thornton reflects not only Eberhardt's existential state of acorporeality and elusive search for spiritual enlightenment, but also her cultural immersion within the haze of intoxicating, escapist rituals - and false transcendence - of alcohol consumption, drug use, and liberated sexuality. This recurring image of immersion would also subsequently underscore the poetic irony of Eberhardt's untimely death in 1904 from a literal immersion - the fatal, flash flooding of the village of Ain Sefra where Eberhardt had reunited with her husband, an Algerian officer named Slimane Ehnni, after a long separation. Ending with this tragic evocation of the harshness and atemporality of landscape, Eberhardt's chronicle of cultural immersion in Islamic society becomes an equally inscrutable human document that, like the unseen cloud cast by a significant, yet little understood parallel civilization - remains visible, but unregistered, in the periphery of the occidental gaze.

Acquarello

Strictly Film School



A fragmented, experimental biography of the 19th-century poet and writer Isabelle Eberhardt, whose brief, unusual life ended abruptly in a flash flood in the desert. The tape makes no claims to telling the "truth" about Isabelle, choosing rumors about her tyrannical, nihilistic father, and her flight to Armenia, where she dressed as a man and "wrote one of the strangest documents a woman has ever given to the world." Following Eberhardt's travels and the strangely syncretic vision of her father, Thornton creates a portrait of cultural cross-breeding in which "neither this world nor the other remains." In all, *There Was An Unseen Cloud Moving* is an arresting mixture of rare and iconic images that undermines its authenticity through re-enacted "historical" scenes and deliberate anachronisms that place Neil Armstrong in 19th-century Geneva.

Description Courtesy of Video Data Bank