

and everywhere together, strangely present, even if they can also hardly be conclusively placed. ♦

Side Effects by André Siegers

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In *Preserving Cultural Traditions in a Period of Instability*, images flutter through the film like a butterfly, moving back and forth, sometimes assuming the shape of a dog, sometimes turning into abstract surfaces, blue pixels, a swimming pool or the sea. The film is based on image artifacts, the actually undesirable side effects of digital compression processes that here define and fill the image plane. They are accompanied by the off-screen voice of Stan Brakhage, who expresses culturally pessimistic thoughts about digital development, the use of computers, and art in general. The loss of poetry that he bemoans and the ephemeral that he ascribes to the digital are further pursued and explored on the image plane. This reference to the past is also reflected in how the images move back and forth. The structuralist principle is taken up on the sound level by a repetitive sound. The image artifacts narrate the unstable relationship between the pictures and what they depict, their defects revealing how they were generated.

Artifacts emerge during the compression of information. In them, the imperfection of this compression, the corruption of information, becomes visible. In this film, the digital compression process ultimately turns into a poetic process. The faulty images assume their own meaning here, and no longer merely refer to something that they defectively depict, but repeatedly elude this relationship of representation. In this way, the damaged image finds itself. The defects are lost, because the pictures are suddenly allowed to exist in their own right. Thus the viewer's gaze glides past the representation and illumination to the beauty of the pixels and abstract surfaces, which now stand for themselves and condense to form something new and original. In this case, digital compression is just another term for poetry. ♦

Coming soon to Acropolis:

- *A. Rimbaud* (Dir. Patrick Wang, 2026)—Los Angeles premiere, Oct 16 at the Lumiere Music Hall, with Wang in person
- *A Woman Escapes* + 3D Short Films (Dir. Blake Williams, 2009-2025)—Los Angeles premiere, Oct 18 at the Culver Theater, with Williams in person
- Channel Surfing: Experimental 3D Shorts Curated by Blake Williams (Dir. Various, 2006-2026)—Oct 19 at 2220 Arts + Archives, with Williams in person

Acropolis Cinema presents:



September 24, 2026 – Now Instant Image Hall

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Movements of a Nearby Mountain (Dir. Sebastian Brameshuber, Austria, France Nigeria, 2019, 86 min)

At the foot of the Austrian Alps, a Nigerian mechanic works in a garage, repairing and exporting cars to his homeland. In the distance is Erzberg, a mountain that's been mined for iron ore since Ancient Rome. Against this backdrop, the mechanic toils away in relative solitude, his routine labor standing in stark contrast to the resources being mined for capitalist gain in his periphery. A result of director Sebastian Brameshuber's friendship with the film's real-life subject and framed around a centuries-old legend of the mine's mysterious creation, *Movements of a Nearby Mountain* commingles fact and fiction, myth and memory, in a meditation on man's place in our globalist economy.

Preceded by:

Preserving Cultural Traditions in a Period of Instability (Dir. Sebastian Brameshuber, Austria, 2004, 3 min)

In a voiceover Stan Brakhage articulates his resentments about the use of computers for art production and in general. This comment is contrasted by video imagery turning more and more abstract until it bursts into a sea of square pixels. The video is an ironic illustration of Brakhage's views as these “defunct” images reveal a kind of beauty of their own.

Of Stains, Scrap & Tires (Dir. Sebastian Brameshuber, Austria, France, 2014, 19 min)

A remote industrial site in a valley in Upper Styria has new users. Cliff, a young man and native of Nigeria, has been managing a company exporting used cars. It is a Nigerian microcosm in the middle of the Styrian nowhere which seems to have fallen out of time and space.

TRT: 108 min

In person: Sebastian Brameshuber

Movements of a Nearby Mountain by Alejandro Bachmann

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I. Beyond the race for technological innovation, cartel-like collusion in the auto parts industry, and the ominous interplay of marketing and emission levels, at the base of the Erzberg mine in Styria (central-western Austria), Sebastian Brameshuber discovers a part of the automobile market that is seemingly not so alienated. A Nigerian immigrant in Austria, Cliff buys old cars in order to salvage them in a dilapidated warehouse on the side of a federal highway in the woods. Yet “salvage” hardly seems to describe what *Movements of a Nearby Mountain* shows us of this work. One would come closer to what Cliff carries out in summer and winter in nearly complete isolation if one were to

name each of the procedures one by one — the selection, evaluation, disassembly, ordering, labeling, packing, and reconditioning for the market in his former homeland — that Cliff himself performs. With false romanticism, the film also depicts (relatively) honest work. How it feels, what happens with breathing and movement, and the relationships between worker and product that emerge from them are soaked up in images that always remain at a slight distance (no silly close-ups of sweaty bodies or fractured cars), expressed in the calm, relaxed, but nevertheless dynamic editing, and conveyed in the concentrated density of the sound. Everything being considered here through images and sounds is to a special degree bound to or drawn from the protagonist's material world. In this sense, the film is a documentary.

II. *Movements of a Nearby Mountain* is however also a film about myths and histories and systems and ideas created by realities (and markets): the block of text at the beginning of the film briefly summarizes how the iron in the Erzberg (literally: ore mountain) has been mined since the Roman era and the legend according to which it will never dry up. Cliff twice tells the myth of the waterman who brings people iron for all eternity — once in German, once in Igbo. Not only is iron, not only are brake disks and spark plugs exported. An idea and a promise are also exported. With each of Cliff's resold cars, Erzberg also comes closer to Nigeria. Behind the visible, physical work, the film reveals a narrative dreaming of the global market: when Cliff disassembles the motor of a chosen vehicle that is elevated in the air by a forklift and encased in plastic wrap, it somewhat resembles a gemstone and a cocoon and the soon to be exported motor becomes a symbol of a wish for the constantly renewed creation of value. One wants to think that the trip to Nigeria does not feel like a homecoming for Cliff. He even looks isolated in the market and later goes on a walk alone in the woods. Not a return to nature, but rather the feeling of isolation; the presence of animals and insects, the wind and the ground. Pausing, he looks at his phone for a while, just as he did at the beginning of the film. We see an image of his friend Magnus on it who is (probably) sitting on a rock near the warehouse in Styria, a little like a waterman, in blue overalls and with a phone to his ear. Magnus appears again and again during the film. A ghostly presence, we do not hear his foot- steps, but he nevertheless speaks — very concretely — about auto parts and taxi businesses in Nigeria. Stories and thoughts constantly jump out of the documentary observations, incidental and yet insistent, and create connections between the objects and people.

III. On a diffused, foggy threshold *Movements of a Nearby Mountain* moves between the material world and the ghosts surrounding it — the market, money, and myths deposited in it. On one hand, the world's concrete, haptic physicality, the presence in the present and its impermanence, the rust (which is also repeatedly a subject of the minimalistic “poetics of negotiation” between Cliff and occasional buyers who pop up), traces of the neighboring, abandoned paintball field, and the feeling that Magnus was once there, entirely real, as Cliff's friend, brother, or business partner. On the other, the myth of eternity, the legends of never-ending raw materials, and the chain of exploitation derived from them, the suspension of time and space. At the end, the sound of Nigeria's heat in December is laid over a long, hypnotic phantomride through a wintry Erzberg landscape, a foggy mountain in the distance. Cliff, the iron, the market — they are always