

Los Angeles Filmforum and Acropolis Cinema present
Stan Brakhage: Life, Death, And The Elements
New Restorations From The Academy Film Archive
Sunday April 15, 2018, 7:30 pm
At the Echo Park Film Center

Los Angeles Filmforum is the city's longest-running organization screening experimental and avant-garde film and video art, documentaries, and experimental animation. 2018 is our 43rd year!

All 16mm prints of restored films! With archivist Mark Toscano in person.

Touching on some of Stan Brakhage's (1933-2003) most recurring and fundamental themes, this selection of five films pairs an early, celebrated masterpiece (Scenes From Under Childhood) and a truly monumental but neglected work made the year before his death (Panels for the Walls of Heaven). Three other short films - all distinctly visually striking and reflecting a palpable viscosity - balance out this program of new restorations from the Academy Film Archive, the majority appearing here in their first public screenings in the Academy's new 16mm prints.

The Academy Film Archive has been home to the Stan Brakhage collection (comprising his originals, printing elements, and other film materials) since 2004. Since that time, Academy film preservationist Mark Toscano has worked to inspect, catalog, identify, and document the collection, as well as preserve, restore, and reprint over 80 of Brakhage's films, with additional titles always in progress.

Program curated by Mark Toscano. All films restored by and courtesy of the Academy Film Archive. Fire of Waters restored by the Academy Film Archive and The Film Foundation, with funding provided by the George Lucas Family Foundation.

We gratefully acknowledge the UCLA Film & Television Archive for initiating this weekend's Stan Brakhage screenings.

Learn more about Acropolis Cinema at www.acropoliscinema.com

Screening:

All films showing in new 16mm prints, courtesy of the Academy Film Archive.

SCENES FROM UNDER CHILDHOOD (section one)

1967, color, sound, 24 min.

"A visualization of the inner world of foetal beginnings, the infant, the baby, the child - a shattering of the "myths of childhood" through revelation of the extremes of violent terror and overwhelming joy of that world darkened to most adults by their sentimental remembering of

it ... a "tone poem" for the eye - very inspired by the music of Oliver Messiaen. (The visual imagery was inspired by Messiaen - NOT the Sound Track.)" (Stan Brakhage)

STATELY MANSIONS DID DECREE

1999, color, silent, 5.5 min.

"This hand-painted, elaborately step-printed film begins with what appears to be torn fragments of thick parchment erupting upward, out of which emerges a series of landscapes, gardens, exteriors of mansions, castles and the like, then (as yellow predominates over vegetable greens, sherwood greens and deep floral reds, blood reds) interior corridors and rooms, as if lit by chandeliers and candelabras - all of which eventually bursts into flames, explosions, which somewhat 'echo' visually the beginning of the film." (Stan Brakhage)

FIRE OF WATERS

1965, b&w, sound, 6.5 min.

"Inspired by a statement in a letter from poet Robert Kelly - "The truth of the matter is this: that man lives in a fire of waters and will live eternally in the first taste" - this film is a play of light and sounds upon that theme." (Stan Brakhage)

SELF SONG & DEATH SONG

1997, color, silent, 4 min.

"Self Song / Death Song was made while I was undergoing chemotherapy and I fully expected to die. ... I do not know of course, not remembering what reincarnation I was, a bird or whatever, but I suspect there is some general truth that creatures know, each in their own way, as well as we do, when death is coming upon them. So there is a centering on the self, and you can see that in some strange way. ... If one does die I think there should indeed be a song, as well as anything else. Existence is song. Death also ought to be song." (Stan Brakhage)

PANELS FOR THE WALLS OF HEAVEN

2002, color, silent, 31 min.

"This film is an entirely hand-painted film composed of a combination of highly complex step-printed super-impositions of hand-painting (at variable speeds), and raw and highly textured strips of hand-painted original film run at speed (24 distinct frames every second).

"Purple flashes are followed by a curtain of purple and blues, first seemingly static and then in motion. Close-ups of textures of paint evolve into flashes of jewel-like red, then more cascading blues and purples and white - 'falling,' seemingly, down from the top of the screen, at other times multi-directional bursts of rolling colors. Red, blue and yellow course through in an up-down motion, then blues and yellows enter from left and right in a complex medley of not solidly formed, but very vibrant pulsations of color, at times only slightly hinting at a solidity of "wallness" upon which the paint might exist. But it is a "wall" suffused with light. Suggestions of fire and water, textures of paint on wall, sparkling jewels, and chunks of blue-white ice arise, as the textures of paint at times become a riotous rainbow of tumbling hues flowing in a river of light, creating the paradoxical experience of a fully substantial insubstantiality

"The film clearly echoes back to earlier Brakhage films, including "A Child's Garden" and the "seriousness" of the sea, as well as hand-painted works such as SPRING CYCLE and STELLAR. The image holds briefly on a vision of depth of black with jewel-colored edges, followed by a wash of yellow, more 'panels' of color, then sheets of ice-like blues joined by red and finally turning to dark green. There is a seeming movement into the details of the paint itself. Curtains of black web-like lines explode once again into tumbling yellows and mauves, slowing, then becoming faster again, going into a step-like movement, frame to frame, of views of walls that are not walls, showing an increasing tactility, with occasional apparent "holes," and then resuming a multi-directional flow, and moving on into a recapitulation of some earlier forms: greens, reds, blues, red/black, greens and yellows, with sparkling blacks and swatches of red, loosening up once again on a whiter ground, with forms reminiscent of swimming spermatozoa and ending finally on a cumulative repetition of earlier visual themes." (Marilyn Brakhage)

total = 71m

This program is supported by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and the Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles. We also depend on our members, ticket buyers, and individual donors.

Coming soon to Los Angeles Filmforum:

Fri-Sat, April 20-21 – Malena Szlam in person from Montreal @ Echo Park Film Center

Sunday, April 29 - James N. Kienitz Wilkins' The Andre Trilogy, co-presented with Acropolis Cinema @ Downtown Independent

Thursday May 10 - Still Moving: Cinema, Photography, and the Real @MOCA

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