

Gravitational Lensing: Feminist Film Dialogues

Program 1: Body as Film/Film as Body

Shapeshifters Cinema, June 8, 2024

***China Girls*, Michelle Silva / 2006 / 16mm, shown on DV / 3 min**

A short composition of women posing for skin tone and color slates used in film leaders.

***DKK*, Deborah Garfinkle / 2020 / 16mm, shown on DV/ 2:53 min**

DKK is an experimental film shot in 16mm and transferred to digital that explores the racism and sexism inherent in the development of exposure and color correction technologies for film - where standards are calibrated to white skin, leaving the features of Black and Brown subjects underexposed—in effect, invisible. The title, DKK, refers to the Digital Kolor Kard, developed, like *Leader Ladies* and *China Girls* at the beginning of films, to conform to the norms of white feminine beauty, that render subjects either invisible or hyper-visible to the white male gaze.

***River Body*, Alice Anne Parker / 1970 / 16mm / 7 min**

A continuous dissolve of 87 male and female nudes. – Canyon Cinema Catalog

“The film’s fascination lies with the suspense of that magic moment, halfway between two persons, when the dissolve technique produces composite figures, oftentimes hermaphroditic, that inspires awe for the mystery of the human form.” – B. Ruby Rich

***Lumen*, Sarah Seené / 2009 / Super 8, shown on DV / 1:41 min**

Lumen (meaning "light" in Latin) is a very short documentary shot on Super-8, portraying a young girl with oculocutaneous albinism. Despite the hypersensitivity caused by this genetic disease, the depigmentation of her skin and eyes gives her an extraordinary aura.

***Close the Lid, Gently: A Home Document Scan*, Ariana Gerstein / 2013 / DV / 5:45 min**

An examination of an intimate space, its inhabitants, and a particular image making process using equipment once common in a home or office. The glass surface of the scanner is a physical barrier/screen but also a point of shared touch between the performer, the recording device (scanner), the person controlling the recording device (the artist), and the audience who comes to meet it with their eyes and with their own bodies' understanding of touch and of barriers.

***Traces on My Body*, Yue Hua / 2023 / 16mm, shown on DV / 3:30 min**

A film about self-acceptance, and a conversation with self. In spring 2023, a physical illness forced me to re-examine my relationship with my body. Scars, spots, skin, hair, and my unflattering voice, everything belongs to my body.

***Loretta*, Jeanne Liotta / 2003 / 16mm / 4 min**

An abstract moving rayogram in the form of a woman or an aria. Living in time experienced as high drama, dissolving into the infinite. A dialectical manifestation of phenomena in flux, like any other movie.

***A True Story of Edges: Chapter Two*, Jessica Wimbley / 2023 / DV / 1:50 min**

Edges, a play on the African American vernacular for the fine hairs along the hairline, features Wimbley and her afro, using her hair as a mutable space of memory and storytelling. Text from the *Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology* by Michele M. Wright along with images of protest, Audre Lorde and Alice Walker interviews, family photos, nature, space, are collaged throughout the hair of the figure, generating multiple and simultaneous narratives.

***Adaptation: Je Ne Sais Plus [What Is This Feeling]*, Kristin Reeves / 2019 / 16mm projector performance, shown on DV / 4:05 min**

Reeves meditates on the materiality of the body and the struggle to achieve personal sovereignty within its bounds. "Je Ne Sais Plus" is Lesley Gore's French version of "You Don't Own Me." The translation of je ne sais plus is I don't know what I once knew, or I don't know anymore. What is this feeling? A digital re-staging of expanded cinema "Je Ne Sais Plus [What Is This Feeling]" 2012 - present. Built on 27, 10-second 16mm film loops constructed from optically printed found footage and direct laser-animation techniques. An obstacle course between the heart and the doctor's office leads to [DESTINY.]

***Sanctus*, Barbara Hammer / 1990 / 16mm / 19 min**

Sanctus is a film of the rephotographed moving x-rays originally shot by Dr. James Sibley Watson and his colleagues. Making the invisible visible, the film reveals the skeletal structure of the human body as it protects the hidden fragility of interior organ systems.

*** INTERMISSION ***

***Cosmetic Emergency*, Martha Colburn / 2005 / Super 8 & 35mm, shown on DV / 8:05 min**

A stop motion animated 16, Super8 and 35mm film about cosmetic surgery in history, art and war with a collaged soundtrack featuring musicians Hilary Jeffery, Mick Hobbs, Coco Solid and Jad Fair.

***Wayward Emulsions*, TT Takemoto / 2018 / 35mm, shown on DV / 4:10 min**

Queer glimpses of a wayward woman captured in bits of emulsion lifted from stray reels of a 35mm Asian drama.

***tape erotics comma sexy tender*, Sailor Dinucci-Radley / 2023 / DV / 1:49 min**

Breakdowns in analogue transference create generative glitches, in which the the taxonomies of self-portraiture dissolve into erotic transformation. 'Queerness' as the embodiment of a liminal or marginal space, here oriented as distortions in the video stream; gaze is arrived at as a function of ecstasy, where the agent meets the object in an exchange of feedback, noise, and grain.

***Flesh to Spirit*, Alima Lee / 2019 / DV / 9:10 min**

A poetic meditation on discovering and loving one's body. Video interference disrupts the gaze of the viewer who is granted access to subjects performing gestures that waver between vulnerable and erotic.

On the Other Side Of, Mia Felic / 2024 / DV / 6 min

Felic's work explores the transgender and non-binary body in transition through the 19th century photo-chemical process of mordantage which chemically alters the silver gelatine of photographic prints, causing them to undergo slow, gradual transformation. The tissue of the body and of the print breaks, allowing new life and new forms to be born.

Light Work Mood Disorder / Jennifer Reeves / 2007 / 16mm double projection / 27 min

Light Work Mood Disorder mixes and subverts symbols of science, industry, medicine and illness, as it meditates on the deteriorating celluloid and physicality of the pre-digital age. Two screens and pulsating, layered music immerse the audience in colorful rhythmic molecular forms, morphing frequencies and visual textures. Reeves sewed together 20th century educational films and affixed dissolved pharmaceuticals directly to the film. The projector acts as a microscope enlarging thread, crystallized antibiotic, heart, and mood medications, forming a concentrated fusion with Burr's composition of sine-waves, organ and multi-tonal bass clarinet. The animated abstractions rupture and echo the images of brain dendrites, synapses, human x-rays, scientific experiments and factory machine. The rhythmic and visceral imagery is reflected in the movement of Burr's austere and hypnotic soundtrack as it envelops the audience.



Gravitational Lensing: Feminist Film Dialogues is dedicated to exploring the visions, voices, concerns and lineage of women, non-binary, genderqueer and trans filmmakers through public film screenings, workshops, conversations and presentations.

Curators: Amy Reid and Kathleen Quillian

Advisory Board: Erina C Alejo, Bill Basquin, Miriam Campos-Quinn, Adrienne Finelli, Kristy Guevara-Flanagan, Irene Lusztag, Rocio Olivares, Elena Pardo, Rosario Sotelo, Anjali Sundaram, Ellie Vanderlip, Patricia Ledesma Villon, Leila Weefur

<https://shapeshifterscinema.com/gravlens/>