

# **Gravitational Lensing: Feminist Film Dialogues**

## **Program10: Craft, Tradition & Ritual**

### **Shapeshifters Cinema, Friday, August 22, 2025**

***Thread* by Abigail Smith, 2022, 35mm film leader shown on DV, 2 mins**

*Thread* uses machine sewn techniques to create abstractions on film that explore the medium's relationship to motion and mechanics, the relationship between passing film through a sewing machine and film passed, or "threaded" through a camera or projector.

***Nana* by Kani Kamil, 2021, DV, 4 mins**

*Nana* highlights the essential, yet often unrecognized role of women in the textile traditions of Iraqi Kurdistan—their labor, spinning, weaving, and crafting that underpins a practice typically credited to men. Inspired by the artist's grandmother, who turned her unfulfilled dreams of poetry into handmade art, the film explores how textiles become vessels for memory and creativity. It honors the quiet power of women's artistry and the stories woven into everyday fabric.

***On the Inside We Are Color* by Elena Pardo, 2024, 16mm film shown on DV, 12.5 mins**

In Santa María Tlahuitoltepec, Oaxaca, the women's organization Poj Kaa maintains a community herbarium. Foraging for plants is a way to share knowledge with grandmothers, midwives, healers and shamans. In Teotitlán del Valle the Ruiz family makes their own journey in search of colors, which they find inside plants and insects that are used to dye the wool with which they weave rugs. Both practices involve exploring the territory, recognizing it, naming it and relating to everything in it.

***Water Ritual #1* by Barbara McCullough, 1979, 16mm film shown on DV, 6 mins**

Made in collaboration with performer Yolanda Vidato, *Water Ritual #1* examines Black women's ongoing struggle for spiritual and psychological space through improvisational, symbolic acts. Shot in 16mm black-and-white, the film was made in an area of Watts (L.A.) that had been cleared to make way for the I-105 freeway, but ultimately abandoned. Though the film is set in contemporary L.A., at first sight, the woman and her environs (burnt-out houses overgrown with weeds) might seem to be located in Africa or the Caribbean, or at some time in the past. Structured as an Africanist ritual for Barbara McCullough's "participant-viewers," the film addresses how conditions of poverty, exploitation and anger render the Los Angeles landscape not as the fabled promised land for Black migrants, but as both cause and emblem of Black desolation. (Jacqueline Stewart)

\*\*\* INTERMISSION \*\*\*

***Primitiva* by Azucena Losana, 2023, 16mm film shown on DV, 5 mins**

From the "light bugs" series, this is the portrait of Doña Vivi, maker and alchemist of the original light that is offered to the souls that come to visit every year. This is her home and ceremonial beeswax candle factory, in Teotitlán, Oaxaca, Mexico.

***Seeing Her* by Lindsay McIntyre, 2020, S-16mm film shown on DV, 3:30 mins**

A silent portrait of the filmmaker's great-grandmother's amauti—a traditional eastern Arctic Inuit parka, designed to keep a baby warm on their mother's body while leaving her hands free to work. This analog animation weaves the beaded textures that give space to the labor, skill, and memories that this amauti holds.

***Le Tarantole Dormono Sotto Le Pietre* by Giada Cicchetti, 2023, 16mm shown on DV, 27 mins**

Tarantismo is an ancient Italian magical-religious practice involving ritualized, convulsive movements of people—mostly women—who were said to have been bitten by a tarantula. The film explores the evolution of ritual in the present, in a dance of gestures and visual correspondences that question us on the theme of relationship and care. The maker films her mother and weaves together a dialogue between different generations about motherhood, daughterhood and femininity.

**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 Lusztig, Rocio Olivares, Elena Pardo, Rosario Sotelo, Anjali Sundaram, Ellie Vanderlip, Patricia Ledesma Villon, Leila Weefur

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