

**Los Angeles Filmforum presents  
Wraiths and Reveries  
Saturday, August 24, 2024, 7:30 pm  
At 2220 Arts + Archives**

Los Angeles Filmforum is the city's longest running organization dedicated to weekly screenings of experimental film, documentaries, video art, and experimental animation. 2024 is our 49th year. [www.lafilmforum.org](http://www.lafilmforum.org)

**In person: MARAL, Martha Colburn, Annapurna Kumar, Ellie Thatcher, Jackie Turpin, and curator Sam Gurry**

The thickness of late summer melts everything. Thawing colors, forms, and textures coalesce into one. Even our minds feel hazy and everything is harder to parse out. To dream, to be certain. An unsteady foot crosses a mountain, a dimly lit doll sits in an alcove, and a wall of rock seems to have sprung up around you. Wraiths linger in the quiet corners of our reveries, where we become kings in lands of endless possibilities.

Showcasing a variety of techniques, this program features films that feel like an oddly familiar hand slipping into yours. Seeping impasto fog meets ragged digital edges, creating a visual symphony that is both jarring and comforting. These films explore the boundaries of the erotic, the mundane, and the sacred, weaving them together into a tapestry of sensory experiences. Each piece invites you to lose yourself in its dreamlike narrative, where the line between reality and imagination fades, and you are left to navigate the shifting landscapes of your own perception.

Join us for a cinematic journey through the melting pot of late summer's essence, where the familiar becomes strange and the strange becomes familiar. Embrace the blur, the uncertainty, and the beauty of these films as we melt together.

Program by Sam Gurry; Notes by Sam Gurry except where indicated

**Screening:**

**Jumping Joan**, by Petra Freeman

UK, 1994, digital, color/sound, 9 min.

“This animated film was inspired by the old children’s rhyme:

'Here am I, little Jumping Joan,

When nobody’s with me, I’m all alone'.

With the dark resonance of the nursery rhyme from which it is drawn, this river story probes isolation and imagination, all painted directly onto hard plaster.”

The protagonist in Freeman’s Jumping Joan seems to always walk with darkness nearby. Has it always been with her or is it a recent visitor? The paint on glass destructive animation ebbs into an enchanting isolation. With every step she takes, the last one still leaves a whisper on the frame.

**Hopes Return**, by Danski Tang for MARAL

USA, 2024, digital, color/sound, 1:48. Los Angeles premiere!

A collaboration between Danski Tang and MARAL resulting in a richly colored race to oblivion. Tang’s approach to traditional digital 2D animation is filled with the warmth and jagged beauty of puddles left after the rain. The elements lick at the heels of those running, running, running.

**Metamorfoza**, by Martha Colburn

USA, 2014, 16mm to digital, color/sound, 7 min.

“Metamorfoza' is inspired by Dmitri Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony. After the 1917 revolution Shostakovich remained in the Soviet Union, where he got the brunt under the Stalin regime. The theme of transformation through isolation, struggle, war and trauma, is central to the film 'Metamorfoza'. In this film a young girl in her 'Russian doll-house-home' plays with toy soldiers, only to find herself in a war-zone, and a metamorphosis results of the trauma she experiences...The composition for the film was written by Mexican-Dutch composer Juan Felipe Waller and performed live with the film by the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra. The film was made possible by Collection de Bruin-Heijn (Cees and Inge de Bruin-Heijn /Aveline de Bruin, curator) and the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra. The conductor is Yannick Nézet-Séguin.” - Juan Felipe Waller

**What's on**, by Martha Colburn

USA, 1997, 16mm, color/sound, 2 min.

“Set to the chaos-poetry of New York poet “99 Hooker”, *What's On* is a hyper-speed rant on the evils and absurdities of American television. An over-the-top tumble in a TV mindscape in which there are attacking baboons, a mutating Michael Jackson, game shows based on body parts and more.” - Martha Colburn

**Skelehellavision**, by Martha Colburn

USA, 2002, 16mm, color/sound, 8 min.

A lust-filled perdition scratched into life on hand painted found pornography. What waits below the flesh? What waits beyond the mortal coil? Fleshy Super 8mm mounds contort against a cacophonous musical collage.

**Setar Rock**, by Annapurna Kumar & Jackie Turpin for MARAL

USA, 2023, digital, color/sound, 4 min.

Distilled from a series of real time performances, Setar Rock blends the timeless and the new in a tapestry of sound and image. MARAL's soundtrack, a dialogue between Iranian folk traditions and the heavy, distorted rhythms of the present, provides landing and inspiration for the smeared visuals of Annapurna Kumar and Jackie Turpin. Created in a game engine, Kumar and Turpin explore a world of their own making with this iteration lapped over video footage. This is part of an almost decade-long on-going collaboration between MARAL and Kumar.

**Ground Groove**, by MARAL & Brenna Murphy

USA, 2023, digital, color/sound, 15 min.

Ground Groove is wall to wall digitally constructed rhizomes that rise and fall in gentle oscillations. Frequent collaborators MARAL and Murphy originally conceived this a stand-alone piece before the former built an album out from it. The color-filled tides move between the vibrant “folk club” soundtrack constructed by MARAL, featuring Iranian folk, pop and classical LPs from the artist's familial collection.

**Mirror Products**, by Annapurna Kumar

USA, 2024, digital, color/sound, 4 min. California Premiere!

“I wish I was a machine. The machine that produces the image” clarifies a voice from within Kumar's Mirror Products. Based on an existent catalog from the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the film conjures the women behind the uncredited models as emissaries of their own agency and image. Using both traditional analog collage animation and contemporary CG, the women are as richly varied as the mirrors themselves.

**Aziz-e-man**, by Annapurna Kumar for MARAL

USA, 2021, digital, color/sound, 3:10

Another collaboration between Kumar and MARAL, Aziz-e-man beckons us to start a maze. A maze where the walls continue to malform into other paths, potentials, and desires. In her continued exploitation of hybridization, analog media, and color Kumar breathes fire into this surreal, psychedelic fantasy.

**Junk DNA**, by Ellie Thatcher

USA, 2024, digital, color/sound, 18 min. World premiere!

Stemming from traditional stop-motion puppetry work, Thatcher's Junk DNA wraps itself in thick duvets of shadow, refraction, and heat-soaked video effects. A companion to the artist's album, Plains of Radiance, Junk DNA features 8 tracks exploring the seedy population of a fractured city. An immediacy rips through each vignette leaving sticky fingerprints on every door frame.

**The Easter Rain**, by Milly Yencken

Estonia, 2023, digital, color/sound, 9 min. Los Angeles premiere!

"If the rain were to fall indoors, but never outdoors – where would we begin to look for shelter? The school bell would ring, but no one would hear it."

Through a palimpsest fog *The Eastern Rain* emerges. This richly textured film evokes impasto painting through its undulations and rippling color. Bells chime and the paint never dries.

**Adam**, by Evelyn Jane Ross

UK, 2017, digital, color/sound, 3 min.

"In the beginning of them, She created us."

Formerly a ballet dancer, Ross uses clay in an endless glissade, sliding from one position to the next. Adam is a subversion of the creation myth situating a woman at its center tenderly clawing her way into existence.

**Biographies:**

**Petra Freeman** grew up in Cornwall. Studied at Falmouth School Of Art, Wimbledon School Of Art and the Royal College Of Art. After leaving college Petra has continued to work on animated films and other art projects as well as teaching in Art Schools. Married with two children, she currently lives and works in Bath, Somerset.

Originally from China, **Danski Tang** is an animation filmmaker and artist now based in Los Angeles. Specializing in 2D hand-drawn animation, visual art, and experimental documentary, Danski uses animation as a means to investigate themes of memories, subconscious, cultural indoctrination, and body politics. Her work has been shown in numerous international film festivals such as MoMA DocFortnight, Melbourne International Film Festival, Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, Annecy International Animated Film Festival, Hiroshima International Animation Festival, Vienna Shorts Festival. Her latest film "Umbilical" won the Pardino d'argento (Silver Leopard) SRG SSR at the International Competition at the 72 Locarno Film Festival, the Eileen Maitland Award at the Ann Arbor Film Festival, and the Best Animated Short at the San Diego Asian Film Festival 2019. Danski holds an MFA in Experimental Animation from California Institute of the Arts and a BFA in animation from Guangzhou Academy of Fine Art. She currently teaches at Cal Arts and Cal State University Long Beach.

**Maral's** sonic palette incorporates a collage of Iranian Classical & Folk samples and explores genres of experimental electronic production such as noise, punk/post-punk, and dub. Maral has released two critically acclaimed records, Ground Groove (2022) and Push (2020) on Leaving Records. She has collaborated with artists such as Lee "Scratch" Perry, Panda Bear, Penny Rimbaud of Crass, Anika and more.

Born in rural Pennsylvania, **Martha Colburn** is an artist and filmmaker based in Los Angeles, CA. She has a B.A. from Maryland Institute College of Art and was a resident at the Rijksakademie Van Beeldende Kunst in the Netherlands. In 2010 two of her films joined the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the

Philadelphia Museum of Art. Her work is in museum and private collections and she has performed with music and film projections since her early 20's. Currently she performs with the group Tedious Limbs, and is producing music films for Brian Marsella and other composers and/ or musicians. She has an upcoming solo exhibit at Dat Bolwerck (NL) in 2025 and is currently in the Paper Biennale 2024 titled 'Animal Farm' at Museum Rijkswijk (NL).

**Annapurna Kumar** is a filmmaker whose work is largely inspired by machines and gaming, but which manifests as diaristic, playful fantasies with a very human touch. Themes of fertility and mortality, ecological utopia, erotic fantasy, maze navigation, and a preoccupation with plastic recur throughout her short films, which are fast-paced, non-linear, and at times, totally abstract. Her work blends CGI and drawn animation, 16mm filmmaking techniques, and camera-stand stop-motion. She is currently a Visiting Lecturer at UCLA Design Media Arts and an adjunct faculty member in the Cal Arts Experimental Animation Department.

Net artist **Brenna Murphy** uses computer programs to craft digital forms inspired by her observations of the physical world. Made using a variety of open-source programs, such as Blender, her complex, abstract forms find synthesis between different digital disciplines. Murphy combines her digital prints with found objects, collages, videos, and even performance work in gallery spaces, seeking to cultivate relationships between these forms and bring digital work into the realm of the physical. "I add and carve until the arrangement is balanced in a way that creates a perfectly cohesive, vibrating ecosystem," she says of her process

**Jackie Turpin** is an artist living in Los Angeles, CA. Her practice is rooted in animation and takes the form of saturated, hyper-kinetic short films, installations, and performances that explore the interweaving of personal mythology, pop culture, and media history. Her work has been shown in film festivals, galleries and museums.

**Ellie Thatcher** is an experimental self-taught animator and musician based in Chicago, IL. Her work focuses on exploring moody and surreal alternate worlds, and the feeling of unfamiliarity through her hybrid human and animalistic characters.

**Milly Yencken** is a softly spoken artist, retracing her ancestral roots. Her work fuses traditional techniques of animation, with contemporary methods of painting. For her aim is to tell wordless stories, evocative and devoid of any clear narrative structures. Yencken is based in Australia.

**Evelyn Ross** is an interdisciplinary artist with a focus on claymation and stop-motion animation. She's had experience with Aardman Animations, LAIKA, Nickelodeon, and Shadow Machine. She's a BAFTA nominated director from the 2017 Student Film Awards. Her graduation film "Adam" has screened at more than 100 festivals worldwide and has won several awards. She recently animated on Guillermo Del Toro's academy award winning film "Pinocchio".

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