

**Los Angeles Filmforum presents
Experimentations: Imag(in)ing Knowledge in Film
Programs 18: Science of the Word
Sunday, February 16, 2025, 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. 2025 is our 50th year. www.lafilmforum.org

Experimentations: Imag(in)ing Knowledge in Film is Filmforum's expansive film series and upcoming publication that investigates the ways that experimental and scientific films produce and question the visualization of the world. Combining artist films utilizing scientific imagery, science and natural history films, and films of indigenous and traditional knowledge, the series examines how science, nature, and technology films shape our understanding of humans, nature, gender, knowledge, and progress. The multi-venue public screening series presents analog and digital time-based media incorporating diverse scientific and experimental film traditions from across the globe. The series will include eighteen screenings between September 2024 and February 2025, with films and digital works from 1874 to today from around the world, multiple guests, panels and wonderful collaborations that will reveal the possibilities and circumstances of cinema in this realm.

Experimentations: Imag(in)ing Knowledge in Film is among more than 70 exhibitions and programs presented as part of PST ART. Returning in September 2024 with its latest edition, PST ART: Art & Science Collide, this landmark regional event explores the intersections of art and science, both past and present. PST ART is presented by Getty. For more information about PST ART: Art & Science Collide, please visit: pst.art.

Major support for *Experimentations: Imag(in)ing Knowledge in Film* is provided by the Getty Foundation and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Additional Support from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Department of Arts & Culture, and the Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles.



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DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
City of Los Angeles

Science of the Word

In person: Jheanelle Brown and filmmaker Mariam Ghani

Aimé Césaire, the late writer, politician, and co-founder of the Négritude movement, proposed a new hybrid science in 1946 — a science of the Word. He argued that the study of the Word (*mythoi*, a poetics of knowledge) will condition the study of nature (*bios*). Philosopher Sylvia Wynter, inspired by Césaire’s idea, stated that humans must now collectively undertake a rewriting of knowledge as we have known and understood it. Can science deal with and make sense of the human predicament, as Wynter calls it? How can scholars, artists, scientists, and the general public reconcile the tension between scientific and technological advancement, the earth-centered mandate of indigenous wisdom, and righting historical legacies colonial violence?

Curated by Jheanelle Brown.

Jheanelle Brown is a film curator/programmer, educator, and arts administrator based in Los Angeles. Her curatorial practice creates frameworks to explore the boundlessness of Black life in experimental and non-fiction film and video. She is interested in the space between fugitivity and futurity and elevating an ethic of care, with a special interest in the sonic in film, political film and media, and West Indian film/video. Jheanelle is project director and curator of Los Angeles Filmforum’s “Experimentations: Imag(in)ing Knowledge in Film.” She is currently on faculty at the California Institute of the Arts and curates Film at REDCAT. Her current exhibition, “KAOS Theory: The Afrokosmic Media Arts of Ben Caldwell,” is on view at Art + Practice, presented by the California African American Museum.

Mariam Ghani is an artist and filmmaker, whose work operates at the intersections of language, loss, migration, memory, and history. Her films, public projects, and installations have been presented worldwide, notably in Times Square and LaGuardia Airport; the Guggenheim, MoMA, Smithsonian, and Metropolitan Museums; Documenta 13 and the Liverpool, Lahore, Yinchuan, and Sharjah Biennials; and the Rotterdam, CPH:DOX, SFFILM, DOC NYC, and Ann Arbor film festivals, among others. Ghani’s first feature, the critically acclaimed documentary *WHAT WE LEFT UNFINISHED*, premiered at the 2019 Berlinale, was released theatrically by Dekanalog, and had its streaming premiere on the Criterion Channel. Her second feature film, *DIS-EASE*, premiered at the Tate Modern in August 2024. Ghani teaches film/video at Bennington College. mariamghani.com

Screening:

JÍÍBIE

By Laura Huertas Millán

2019, digital, color, sound, 24:46

Conversations are rituals. The Murui Muina, Amazonian and Colombian first nation, have particularly elevated this art and its political implications through the ritual de la palabra dulce, a collective conversation allowed by the use of the coca plant powder, called mambe or jiibie. During the ritual, the most pressing political questions are discussed collectively: subjects such as neo-colonialism, ecology, activism but also questions of family and intimate life are considered. In this film, the fabrication of the coca powder in preparation for the ritual unveils an ancestral myth of kinship. The coca plant is neither a product nor an object, but a person, a sacred interlocutor, a kin, the beating heart of a collective body.

The Fire This Time

By Mariam Ghani

USA, 2022, digital, color, sound, 26:08

A kaleidoscopic trip through the intertwined histories of pandemics, riots, and colonial violence. An archive constantly haunted by its possible collapse.

Featuring the voices of science journalist Sonia Shah, poet and literary scholar Anjali Raza Kolb, medical anthropologist Christos Lynteris, epidemiologist Keiji Fukuda, economist William A. Darity Jr., and historians Nayan Shah, Kellie Carter Jackson, and Nancy Tomes.

内共生 (Inside the Shared Life)

By Erin Espelie

USA, 2017, HD video & 16mm, color, sound, 9:13

This film combines sounds of marine life with moving images of the circulatory system, life at different scales, and Lynn Margulis's words on accepted versus iconoclastic science. She talks also about time, how the new is privileged over the true. This film has a captivating slowness. Among other things, it seems to be about epistemology, how we know or don't know. -- Dorion Sagan for [Vdrome](#)

Dust to Data

By Larry Achiampong and David Blandy

UK, 2021, digital, color, sound, 15:25

Dust to Data tracks through the colonial history of archaeology, to current parallels in the data mining of DNA and social media image banks. Working with the Department of Archaeology at the University of Liverpool, Larry Achiampong and David Blandy interrogate the construction of a 'civilisation' and its racist 'origin' stories that define people into categories: some as human and neutral, others as non-human and/or abnormal.

In the film, Achiampong and Blandy employ motifs, such as the recurring gleaming pyramid as an image of order and hard simplicity, and 3D models of Australopithecine skulls (extinct close relatives of humans who lived around two million years ago). The film also features a fragment

of a letter from William Du Bois, author of the seminal book about race and society *The Souls of Black Folk*, rebuking one of the pioneers of modern archaeology, William Petrie.

Dust to Data explores how science has been used to justify prejudice. This can be found in the origins of archeology, exposing the archaic mathematical tactics employed by Petrie to justify his own assertions about white supremacy. Although debunked by his contemporaries, Petrie embraced eugenics - the practice of altering or 'improving' the human species through selective breeding - as a tool for social control. This view was integral to the birth of archaeology, and its pseudo-scientific legacy still permeates fractious assumptions within the field and in wider culture today.

The Violence of a Civilization without Secrets

By Adam Khalil, Zack Khalil, Jackson Polys

USA, 2017, digital, color, sound, 9:45

Filmmakers Adam and Zack Khalil, in collaboration with artist Jackson Polys, investigate the recent court case that decided the fate of the remains of a prehistoric Paleoamerican man found in Kennewick, Washington State in 1996. The video is an urgent reflection on indigenous sovereignty, the undead violence of museum archives, and post-mortem justice.

Los Angeles Filmforum screenings are supported by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Department of Arts & Culture, 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:

February 23, 3:00 pm - Experimentations: Imag(in)ing Knowledge in Film: Images of Broken Light: Indexicality in Astronomy II

February 23, 7:00 pm - Experimentations: Imag(in)ing Knowledge in Film: The Universe in a Grain of Sand

February 27, 7:30 pm - Experimentations: Imag(in)ing Knowledge in Film: Our Heavenly Bodies, with live music by Dave Harrington & Friends, at Brain Dead (Rescheduled)

March 9, 1:00 pm - Experimentations: Imag(in)ing Knowledge in Film: Natural History in Experimental and Artist Animation

March 9, 7:30 pm - Then<>Now: Taiwan Experimental Film and Video Arts, Part 2, at 2220 Arts + Archives

March 16, 7:00 pm - Nothing Bad Will Ever Happen Again: The Films of Victoria Vincent

Memberships available, \$40 Student \$75 Individual, \$125 Dual, or \$225 Silver Nitrate

Contact us at lafilmforum@gmail.com.

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