

Los Angeles Filmforum presents
Footprints of the Forgotten: Video Works on Immaterial Archives
Sunday, March 3, 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

In person: Artists Carmen Amengual, Hande Sever and programmer Jorge Ravelo

Four world premieres, one US premiere!

Taking Jenny Sharpe's definition of "immaterial archives" as a departing point, this program showcases a constellation of video works exploring and counteracting the paucity of documented records concerning the lives of people omitted from the archiving process.

Commencing with Hande Sever's *To Thread Air*, and culminating with Ali El-Darsa's use of water as an allegory of journeys in *The Image Remains the Same*, the films unearth formerly disconnected historical fragments. By contextualizing these fragments within both colonial histories and ongoing crises, the program aims to contemplate how societal change emerges from salvaging overlooked historical threads. The intertwined connections between memory, colonial pasts and societal shifts explored in the films transcend official history, inviting reflection and reclamation.

Program:

***To Thread Air* by Hande Sever**

2023, HD, Color, 8 min, World Premiere

To Thread Air is structured around a montage of footage excavated during the artist's research at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, CA. Sever began producing *To Thread Air* in 2019 after coming across the archival remnants of a ceremony held in the White House in which Kenan Evren—the right-wing leader of the 1980 Turkish coup—received the legion of merit from President Ronald Reagan. Using the relationship between the two politicians and their reciprocal exculpations to structure the work, *To Thread Air* questions the deployment of artistic and creative practices to falsify information and revise historical events for personal and political gain. The film essay juxtaposes Ronald Reagan's acting career, including his involvement in the US Army Air Forces First Motion Picture Unit, with Kenan Evren's retirement career as a painter, considering the use of creativity as a tool for revisionism and redemption in the hands of the major perpetrators of violence.

Before my, your, her, his, our, your, their faces/ Delante de mis, tus, sus, nuestros, vuestros, sus rostros
by Carmen Amengual

2022, HD, Color, 14 min, World Premiere!

Before my, your, her, his, our, your, their faces (2022) was conceived as a three channel video installation based on a set of letters from 1973 that the artist's mother received from friends while she was living in

Paris, and later, in Algiers. In the piece, a set of teapots analogically animated, sing and give voice to the letters as they discuss some major historical events from the Global South - alongside personal matters. Their language depicts a complex landscape of affective textures, one that speaks of how subjective positions arose from a collision with historical events, and of how micro-political emancipatory drives intertwined with macro-political and collective movements.

***Fragments From Algiers* by Carmen Amengual
2019, Super 8 to HD, B&W, 4 min, World Premiere!**

Fragments from Algiers is an investigation in-progress on an episode in the movement of solidarity among Third World countries in the 1970s: the first Third World Filmmakers Meeting, held in Algiers in 1973. Stemming from a tenuous archive (a pile of slides, some objects and letters) left by the artist's mother, in addition to research and collection of oral histories, this project explores the story of four South American friends who, after organizing the encounter, made plans to film a documentary on the decolonial movements in the region.

Rather than providing a historical account, the project attempts to trace the dreams, desires, and imagery of this group of friends in their pursuit of personal and political emancipation through film.

***DELIRIO GÜERO. 1825, 2018, 2211 y de vuelta* by Nina Höchtl
2018, HD, 54 min, Color, US Premiere**

This essay film/fake history show/future re-enactment addresses “delirio güero” (White delusion) in Mexico and takes a deep dive into the nitty-gritty of the outlandish acts of 19th century self-appointed discoverer/artist Jean-Friedrich Waldeck, and architect/researcher/photographer Teobert Maler. The colonial imperial undertakings of the monarchs Charlotte of Belgium and Maximilian of Hapsburg as well as the experiences of the swindler Anton “Toni” Mayr — a follower of Maximilian and a distant relative of the güera (White) filmmaker/artist — in Mexico, and the moderator La Güera's fantastic interpretations of early 21st century Mexico recall the ways in which colonial practices under the influence of delirio güero continue to underwrite dominant ways of knowing, interpreting, feeling, and making/showing art. Undergirded by archival images and boosted by eating pineapple, La Güera comments the complexities of delirio güero and connects historical interpretations, artistic outpourings, scientific explorations with family chronicles. Meanwhile, a ghost from the future scrutinizes La Güera's hi/stories and shows how the delirio güero is intertwined with current and future relations of power and processes of struggle.

***The Image Remains the Same* by Ali El-Darsa
2023, HD, Color, 19 min, World Premiere**

A collage of personal and public accounts, *The Image Remains the Same* contemplates water as an allegory of journeys filled with desire, belonging, hope, and demise stretching from the shores of the Pacific Ocean in Los Angeles to the Mediterranean Sea, specifically the El-Mina port of Tripoli, where Ali El-Darsa speaks to locals about emigration from the shores of Tripoli to Europe.

Bios:

Carmen Amengual, Artist

Carmen Amengual is an interdisciplinary artist from Argentina, currently based in Los Angeles.

Through engagement with research, archives, literature, myths, and oral histories, her work examines the interstices between memory, biography and history. Her projects encompass research, film, sculpture, painting, sound, text, and installation strategies to explore the emergence of collective imaginaries, identity formations, and conceptions of time and history that condition the political imagination. Her works examine the way historical experience is transmitted intergenerationally, rearticulating (hi)stories of individual and collective resistance, and excavating their emancipatory potential. Her most recent project fabricates a memory for a forgotten event: the first Third World Filmmakers Meeting (Algiers, 1973) and reimagines a 1974 failed documentary project about the anti-colonial struggles in Africa intended for a Latinamerican audience. She obtained her MFA from the Art Program at the California Institute of the Arts in 2016, after completing her studies in Comparative Literature at the University of Buenos Aires.

Nina Höchtl, Artist

My research based projects weave documentary and creative fiction strategies together with performative elements as means to produce knowledge through storytelling.

Over the past 16 years I have literally crossed geographical borders (and oceans) back and forth (mainly between Vienna and Mexico City). In this time, I have also moved across disciplines, questioning cultural and socio-political processes of translation and transformation, and my role as an artist within them. Archival research is located at the core of my creative process. Using video, creative writing, music, and through convening events and curating exhibitions, I explore the performative aspects of identity and history as they are inscribed in archival materials. In the exhibition format I often combine these elements as installations.

I often work collaboratively in the fields of art, education, and activism in order to challenge hegemonic narratives. Since 2012, together with Julia Wieger as the Secretariat for Ghosts, Archival Politics and Gaps (SKGAL) in Vienna, we aim at grappling with historical events and their repercussions from a feminist perspective. In 2018, SKGAL's feature film HAUNTINGS IN THE ARCHIVE! (2017) won the WOMEN'S VOICE NOW BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE AWARD.

From 2013 to 2022 I was part of INVASORIX a queer/cuir-feminist working group in Mexico City, reflecting on gender roles and precarity while dreaming about alternative ways of living and being.

Hande Sever, Artist

A research based artist working across media –notably video, performance and sound– Hande Sever (b. Hande Lara Sever) was raised in Istanbul, Turkey. She received her MFA in Art and Technology from the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) and her double BA in Visual Arts and Computer Science from Emory University. Informed by transdisciplinary processes, her work often takes up her family's history of persecution to explore divergent lines of inquiries, including military violence, surveillance and censorship. Sever's transdisciplinary and concept-driven practice combines lens-based image making with organic materials such as ash, resin and soil to unearth the shared materiality underpinning colonial histories.

Ali El-Darsa, Artist

Ali El-Darsa works in moving image, performance, sound and installation. His work examines structures of belonging in transnational contexts, emphasizing the specificity of time-based media's significance to creating networked, mediated memories and narratives. His interdisciplinary research in performance opens onto fields of text, word, sign and languages, questioning collaboratively the ways in which language influences thought systems and, by extension, the discourses and interpretations of a work of art, both in its matter and metaphorical sense. It approaches the notion of communication through its means, methods and media, whether oral, written or coded; through the transmission of customary, historical or contemporary stories. El-Darsa holds a Master of Visual Studies from the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design at the University of Toronto. His work has been internationally exhibited.

Jorge Ravelo, Curator

Jorge Ravelo is a filmmaker, performance artist, educator and community film organizer based between Los Angeles and Miami. His art practice is centered around political and filial tensions within the Caribbean diaspora of Miami, whether it'd be confronted through experimental documentary, community screenings or performance. His curatorial practice focuses on showcasing local unrepresented filmmakers, programs that highlight current political issues through both archival and contemporary works, as well as a specific focus on rarely screened Caribbean cinema. He has had work showcased at Coaxial, The PAMM, LACA, Thymele Arts, and Automata Gallery, and has curated for RedCat, Self Help Graphics, The Echo Park film Center and his backyard. He holds an undergraduate degree from CalArts, and is currently teaching in various schools and non-profit art centers around Los Angeles.

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

Coming Soon:

- March 8 - *La Région Centrale*, by Michael Snow, at UCLA
- March 16 - 1:00 - Luther Price: *New Utopia and Light Fracture*
- March 24 - *Gaza Ghetto*, on 16mm
- April 2 - Scott Stark
- April 17 - *Race d'Ep*
- April 21 - The Films of Nora Sweeney

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