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The
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Museum
of Art

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Nelson-Atkins' Spring *Electromediascope* Series Celebrates Oral Tradition

Artists Tell Stories of Life on This Planet through Film and Video

KANSAS CITY, Mo., March 26, 2006—Discover the beauty and magic in everyday life by viewing works of personal cinema screened in this spring's *Electromediascope* film, video and new-media series April 14, 21 and 28 at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.

The Spring 2006 *Electromediascope* season, *Songs, Cycles and Stories*, will be presented at 7 p.m. on three consecutive Fridays in the Museum's Atkins Auditorium. All programs are free, and tickets can be reserved by calling 816.751.1ART.

Film and video selections this season celebrate and re-imagine the age-old oral tradition of storytelling, presenting the complexity and diversity of human experience in a time-based visual form.

“As storytellers, these artists experiment with relationships between sound and image, and combine fictional, appropriated and documentary techniques while exploring personal identity and self-discovery within a changing world,” said Patrick Clancy, Chair of the Photography and New Media Department at the Kansas City Art Institute. Clancy is co-curator of *Electromediascope* with Kansas City-based visual artist Gwen Widmer.

The first program, April 14, spans the familiar – works on everyday life and experiences by Leighton Pierce, a film and video artist on the faculty of the University of Iowa – to the exotic – a series of video portraits by Ellen Zweig, a performance and video artist fascinated with China as seen through Western eyes.

April 21 embraces the theme of *Songs, Cycles and Stories*, presenting short, visually poetic works by five U.S. artists.

The season concludes April 28 by revisiting works by Leslie Thornton, whose stories appeared in the first *Electromediascope* program 13 years ago. Her seminal *Peggy and Fred in Hell* is an ongoing project, in which the Brown University filmmaking instructor returns to, rethinks and reworks episodes in the lives of two children.

The *Electromediascope* program is funded through the generosity of Rheta A. Sosland. The Department of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Nelson-Atkins provides administrative support for *Electromediascope*.

Program notes for the upcoming *Electromediascope* series follow. A full listing with descriptions is available online at nelson-atkins.org under “Exhibitions.”

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April 14

Five works by Leighton Pierce (USA), video

Wood, 2000, 8 min.

“Pierce constructs an exquisite lesson in seeing and hearing, heightening the seemingly trivial and mundane into an almost painfully beautiful Whitmanesque song to the ordinary, the everyday.”—Jon Jost

Water Seeking its Level, 2002, 5:30 min.

“Dad and daughter are at the water race of an abandoned monastery. The scene pivots on her words, ‘Look Dad.’ He IS looking while he waits for the resolution of the moment – water through her fingers.”—Leighton Pierce

Fall (three parts), 2002, 13 min.

A struggle to hold onto the world, the various worlds we try to inhabit.—Leighton Pierce

Pink Socks, 2002, 4 min.

A brief documentary on the Piazza San Marco in Venice.—Leighton Pierce

Viscera, 2004, 11:05

“This flowing video explores absence and how it transforms and influences perception, memory and imagination.”—Leighton Pierce

HEAP, a series by Ellen Zweig (USA), video

HEAP is a collection of experimental video portraits of Westerners who have studied, invented, misunderstood and loved China.—Ellen Zweig

(tongue tongue stone) G. W. Leibnitz, 2002, 9:36 min.

“Leibnitz is said to have invented binary arithmetic because of a misunderstanding of the I-Ching.”—Ellen Zweig

(The Chinese Room) John Searle, 2001, 7:30 min.

“The philosopher, John Searle, wrote about a thought experiment called ‘The Chinese Room.’ He needed a foreign language to prove his point; he chose Chinese.”—Ellen Zweig

(unsolved) Robert van Gulik, 2003, 18:03 min.

“Referring to the Dutch diplomat van Gulik’s many interests, this video is a mystery story with no resolution...and an attempt to learn to be Chinese.”—Ellen Zweig

(flick flight flimsy) Ernest Fenollosa, 2005, 9:35 min.

“A poet and a sinologist talk about Ernest Fenollosa, whose essay, ‘The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry’ has been an inspiration to poets and an embarrassment to sinologists.”—Ellen Zweig

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April 21

Two works by Helen Mirra (USA), video

The Ballad of Myra Furrow, 1994, 5:00 min.

A young person sings a sea shanty, a social critique of traditional gender roles.—Video Data Bank

I, Bear, 1995, 5:00 min.

A personal and highly poetic exploration of the construction of self.—Video Data Bank

Three films by Matt McCormick (USA)

Grounded, 2004, 4:30 min., 16mm film shown on video

An examination of size and weight through the culmination of heavy industry, urban wildlife, a Bolex, and a Casio SK-1.—Matt McCormick

Towlines, 2004, 22 min., 16mm film shown on video

This film pays homage to the great workhorses of the maritime industry, the tugboats.—Matt McCormick

Going to the Ocean, 2001, 8 min., 16mm film

A textured mood swing and a trip to the beach. An examination of seaworthy vessels?—Matt McCormick

Behold Goliath by Tom Kalin (USA), video

Two short excerpts from an ongoing feature-film project based on the stories of writer and critic Alfred Chester.

Every Evening Freedom, 2002, 2:45 min.

A brief visual essay on work, freedom and the division of public and private lives.—Electronic Arts Intermix

Some Desperate Crime on my Head, 2003, 2:57 min.

Text from Chester's *The Foot* provides the central concern for this work: wigs, hats and public appearance.—Electronic Arts Intermix

The Star Eaters, Peggy Ahwesh (USA), 2003, 24 min., video

Telling her story in voiceover, a woman drifts through real and remembered relationships that speak to risk-taking and transgression.—Electronic Arts Intermix

Lake, Rebecca Dolan (USA), 2000, 2 min., video

The voice behind the camera seems to animate the water.—Rebecca Dolan

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April 28

Peggy and Fred in Hell, Leslie Thornton (USA), 1984 – 2005, 92 min.

Peggy and Fred in Hell: The Prologue, 1984, 20 min., 16mm film

Peggy and Fred in Kansas, 1987, 10 min., video

Peggy and Fred and Pete, 1988, 20 min., video

(Dung Smoke Enters the Palace), 1989, 16 min., simultaneous 16mm film and video

Introduction to the So-Called Duck Factory, 1990, 7 min., video

Have a Nice Day Alone, 2001, 7 min., video

Paradise Crushed, 2003, 12 min., video

“Forever unfinished, Thornton’s magnum opus resembles nothing else known in the cinema avant-garde; two children, Peggy and Fred, in a setting that could have been invented by an elder, pessimistic brother of Samuel Beckett, talk, dance, sing and squabble with each other as they move through the history of the 20th century.”—Bill Krohn

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The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

The Campus Transformation Project currently under way at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art encompasses the addition of the new 165,000-square-foot Bloch Building by Steven Holl, the renovation of the original 1933 Nelson-Atkins Building, the reinstallation of its encyclopedic collection, and the expansion of the Museum’s renowned Sculpture Park. The project, which includes major endowment initiatives, will increase Museum space by 71 percent, providing new galleries, expanded educational facilities and Museum-support spaces. The expanded resources of the Museum will ensure that the institution continues to attract and engage the next generation of audiences, and is equipped to present and interpret the art of the past, present and future.

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art of Kansas City is recognized nationally and internationally as one of America’s finest encyclopedic art museums. The Nelson-Atkins serves the community by providing access and insight into its renowned collection of more than 34,500 art objects and is best known for its Asian art, European paintings and modern sculpture. Housing a major art research library and the Ford Learning Center, the Museum is a key educational resource for the region and a national model for arts education. The Nelson-Atkins’ expansion is also leading a field of new investments in local cultural infrastructure that is becoming known as Kansas City’s “\$6 Billion Renaissance.”

The Nelson-Atkins is located at 45th and Oak streets, Kansas City, Mo. Hours are Tuesday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Friday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. Admission to the Museum’s permanent collection is free to everyone. For Museum information, phone 816.751.1ART or visit its website at www.nelson-atkins.org.