CONVERSATIONS AT THE EDGE CELEBRATES TEN YEARS; NEW SEASON OPENS THURSDAY

Spring season brings compelling artists' film, video, new media, and animation to Chicago

Conversations at the Edge—the screening and visiting artist series organized by the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's Department of Film, Video, New Media, and Animation (FVNMA) in collaboration with the Video Data Bank and the Gene Siskel Film Center—begins the second season of its ten-year anniversary on Thursday, February 9. The complete schedule for this newest season is available below and on the web with presenter interviews, preview videos, critical reviews, and more at blogs.saic.edu/cate.

This spring’s ten-week season begins with We Began By Measuring the Distance, a program of works by women from or connected to Palestine, including Mona Hatoum, Annemarie Jacir, and Basma Alsharif. Ms. Alsharif will be in attendance. Additional highlights include appearances by Laure Prouvost (recent winner of the Max Mara Art Prize for Women), Tomonari Nishikawa, Sara Ludy, Brent Green, Yvonne Rainer, and James Benning.

FVNMA Department Chair Gregg Bordowitz notes, "For the past ten years, Conversations at the Edge has provided Chicago’s audiences and emerging artists with the opportunity to lead important discussions about the role of media in society—how artists can respond to historical and technological change in meaningful ways."

All programs take place Thursdays at 6:00 p.m. at the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 North State Street, unless otherwise noted.

Tickets
$11 general admission, $7 students, $6 GSFC members
$4 Art Institute of Chicago staff and SAIC faculty and staff
FREE to SAIC students with a valid school ID
All tickets may be purchased at the Film Center Box Office. Both general admission and Film Center member tickets are also available through Ticketmaster, 800.982.2787, ticketmaster.com, and all Ticketmaster outlets.

For more information about the Gene Siskel Film Center, call 312.846.2800 (24-hour movie hotline) or 312.846.2600 (general information, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday–Friday), or visit siskelfilmcenter.org.
ABOUT CONVERSATIONS AT THE EDGE
Founded by FVNMA in 2001, Conversations at the Edge (CATE) is a weekly series of screenings, artist talks, and performances by the most compelling media artists of yesterday and today. Bringing together experimental film and video, contemporary art, performance, music, new media, and more, CATE cultivates "conversations" across a range of artistic practices, as well as among makers and audiences.

Having featured over 250 artists to date—from Sharon Lockhart and Michael Snow to Dara Birnbaum and Ryan Trecartin—CATE's programming augments and extends SAIC's renowned interdisciplinary curriculum, providing students and the larger public alike with meaningful connections to diverse practices and practitioners. In turn, this exchange inspires the next wave of talented media-makers; notable alumni from the FVNMA department include Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Paul Chan, Deborah Stratman, Ben Russell, and So Yong Kim.

ABOUT THE VIDEO DATA BANK
Video Data Bank (VDB) is a not-for-profit international video art distribution organization representing video by and about contemporary artists. VDB provides video art, documentaries made by artists, and taped interviews with visual artists and critics for both rental and purchase to a wide range of audiences. For a comprehensive catalog and more information about exciting new releases, please visit vdb.org

ABOUT THE GENE SISKEL FILM CENTER
Celebrating 39 years of excellence in film programming, the Gene Siskel Film Center of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago is a world-class cinematheque dedicated to showcasing emerging artists, world cinema, independent filmmakers, and the classics. Presenting more than 1,500 screenings and 100 visiting filmmaker appearances annually, the Gene Siskel Film Center is Chicago's premier movie theater. For more information about the Gene Siskel Film Center, call 312.846.2800 (24-hour movie hotline) or 312.846.2600 (general information, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday–Friday), or visit siskelfilmcenter.org

PROGRAM DETAILS
February 9, 6:00 p.m.
We Began By Measuring Distance
Introduced by Tirtza Even, SAIC Professor in Film, Video, New Media, and Animation
Basma Alsharif in person

We Began By Measuring Distance reflects on intrinsic and imposed distances—physical, logistical, and psychological—represented in works by women filmmakers from or connected to Palestine, including Jumana Emil Abboud, Basma Alsharif, Mona Hatoum, and Annemarie Jacir. Curated by artist and SAIC Professor Tirtza Even, these short films are informed by stories of loss and violence. Together, they invoke and
measure the space between past and present, mother and daughter, as well as home and exile. The landscape depicted is irreparably estranged, fragmented, and torn, offering no safe anchor and no available return.

1989–2011, Multiple directors, Egypt/Israel/Lebanon/Palestine/UK, Various formats, ca 80 minutes + discussion

February 16, 6:00 p.m.
Radical Light: Alternative Film and Video in the San Francisco Bay Area
New Prints/New Preservation
Introduced by Steve Anker, curator and Dean of the School of Film/Video at CalArts

Since the 1940s, San Francisco has been both a haven and inspiration for an influential constellation of moving imagists. Radical Light grows out of a decade-long research project into the history of experimental film and video in the Bay Area, helmed by curators at the Pacific Film Archive and CalArts. Showcasing a number of recently preserved prints, tonight’s program explores the faces, places, and iconoclastic spirit of the region through films by the Miles Brothers, Jane Belson Conger Shiman, Alice Anne Parker Severson, Dion Vigne, Bruce Baillie, Robert Nelson, Mike Henderson, Scott Stark, and Leslie Thornton.

The program will be followed by a book signing for Radical Light: Alternative Film and Video in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1945–2000. Thanks to PFA Collection Curator, Mona Nagai. Additional “Radical Light” programs are being held by Block Cinema (2/2) and Chicago Filmmakers (2/24).

1906–84, Multiple directors, USA, 16mm, ca 82 minutes + discussion

February 23, 6:00 p.m.
George Kuchar: HotSpell
Introduced by Abina Manning, Executive Director of the Video Data Bank

George Kuchar became a legend with his Super 8 and 16mm melodramas from the 1950s and ‘60s, influencing artists including Andy Warhol, John Waters, and Todd Solondz. He turned to video in the mid-1980s, crafting hundreds of often diaristic videos from “the pageant that is life.” For the last quarter-century, the Video Data Bank has collected and distributed this work; it now houses the artist’s complete archive of nearly 300 videos. This evening Executive Director Abina Manning presents his “greatest hits,” including his last video, the remarkable and revealing HotSpell (2011). Co-presented by the Video Data Bank.

1989–2011, USA, Various formats, ca 85 minutes + discussion

George Kuchar (1942–2011) ranks as one of America’s most influential and prolific
independent film and video artists. With his homemade Super 8 and 16mm potboilers and melodramas of the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, he became legendary as a distinctive and outrageous underground filmmaker whose work influenced many other artists including Andy Warhol, John Waters, and David Lynch. After his 1980s transition to the video medium, he remained a master of genre manipulation and subversion. In 1984 Kuchar received the Los Angeles Film Critics Award in the experimental/independent category. In 1992, he received the prestigious Maya Deren Award for Independent Film and Video Artists from the American Film Institute. In 1996 he received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Chicago Underground Film Festival. He taught at the San Francisco Art Institute for 40 years, where he made many videos in collaboration with his students.

March 1, 6:00 p.m.
**Laure Prouvost: Don't Look Up**
Laure Prouvost in person

The brilliantly anarchic videos of Laure Prouvost run wild with the rules of narrative and language. Prouvost’s fast-paced works often feature surreal tales jarringly interrupted by self-conscious text, unsettling imagery, or the artist herself undermining and adding new meaning to the original story. This evening Prouvost, who is also the founder and former director of tank.tv, will present her own videos alongside a selection of contemporary and historical works by other artists, including John Latham and Owen Land.

1968–2012, Multiple directors, France/Italy/UK/USA, Various formats, ca 90 minutes + discussion

**Laure Prouvost** (b. 1978, Croix-Lille, France) graduated from Central Saint Martins College of Arts in 2002, and in 2009 she completed the LUX Associate Artists Programme. Her work, which includes painting, video, sound, and site-specific work, has been exhibited widely in exhibitions and screenings, most recently at the 2011 Frieze Art Fair; Tate Britain; Sculpture Center, New York; Whitechapel Art Gallery, London; BFI, London; EAST International, Norwich, UK; MOT Gallery, London; Guangzhou Triennial; and St. Gervais Centre, Geneva. She is the founder and was the director of tank.tv, an online platform for artists’ work in moving images. Prouvost is also the recipient of numerous awards and prizes, including the 2009 EAST International Award 2009, the 2010 and 2011 Short Film Principle Prize from the Oberhausen Film Festival, the 2011 Film London Artists’ Moving Image Network award (FLAMIN) in 2011, and most recently, the 2011 Max Mara Art Prize for Women.

March 8, 6:00 p.m.
**Tomonari Nishikawa**
Tomonari Nishikawa in person
Working in formats ranging from Super 8 to 35mm still photographic film, Tomonari Nishikawa constructs his films through precise single-frame shooting, elaborate masking, superimposition, and in-camera editing. He transforms the elements of urban life into multilayered abstractions of light, movement, and space. This evening Nishikawa will present a selection of his own works alongside a survey of films by other contemporary Japanese filmmakers working in small-gauge formats.

2005–11, Multiple directors, Japan/USA/Thailand, Various formats, ca 80 minutes + discussion

**Tomonari Nishikawa** (b. 1969, Nagoya, Japan) works in both single-channel and installation formats, using 35mm, 16mm, and Super 8mm film. His films have screened at major film festivals worldwide, including the Berlinale, Edinburgh International Film Festival, Hong Kong International Film Festival, P.S.1, International Film Festival Rotterdam, Media City Film Festival, New York Film Festival, Singapore International Film Festival, and Toronto International Film Festival. His installation works have exhibited at Disjecta Art Space in Portland, Headlands Center for the Arts, San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery, and Still Motion in Toronto. Nishikawa has curated screenings around the world, including the Yebisu International Festival for Art & Alternative Visions in Tokyo, and he is one of the co-founders of KLEX: Kuala Lumpur Experimental Film and Video Festival in Malaysia. He holds an MFA in Film from San Francisco Art Institute and currently teaches in the Cinema Department at Binghamton University.

March 15, 6:00 p.m.
**Sara Ludy: A Space In-Between**
Sara Ludy in person

The work of SAIC alumna Sara Ludy (BFA 2003) spans a wide variety of formats including photography, video, animated gifs, live performance, and large-scale installations. She explores the representation of domestic interiors, suburban architecture, and landscape design in virtual and real environments. This evening Ludy presents a selection of work, including videos from her ongoing *Space Portraits* (2010) series; clips from her *Projection Monitor* (2010–ongoing) project; and exhibition footage from *Wallpapers* (2011–ongoing).

2010–12, USA, Various formats, ca 75 minutes + discussion

**Sara Ludy** (b. 1980, Santa Ana, CA) holds a BFA in New Media from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She is a member of the online art collective Computers Club and the band TREMBLEXY. Her work has been widely exhibited in the United States and Internationally at São Paulo Cinemateca Brasileira, 319 Scholes, Berkeley Art Museum, Luminary Center for the Arts, Hex Gallery, Armory Show, Artisphere, Ghost Gallery, Fe Gallery, [bubblebyte.org](http://bubblebyte.org), Fabien Fryns Fine Art, Heaven Gallery, and Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.
March 29, 6:00 p.m.
March 31, 12:30 p.m.

**Brent Green: Gravity Was Everywhere Back Then**

Brent Green’s folk-punk films interweave drawing, puppets, hand-built sets, and stop-motion animation to spin tales of transformation and loss. This evening Green presents his acclaimed animated feature *Gravity Was Everywhere Back Then* (2010). Based on the true story of a Kentucky hardware clerk who attempted to transform his house into an eccentric healing machine to save his dying wife from cancer, the film was shot in a full-scale model of the house Green built in his rural outdoor studio in Pennsylvania. Mirroring the architecture of the house itself, *Gravity* is a crazy-quilt of fantastic imagery, fabulist narration, and themes of love, obsession, and spirituality. Presented in collaboration with SAIC’s Visiting Artists Program, which features a lecture with live musical accompaniment by Brent Green on March 28, 6:00 p.m., The Art Institute of Chicago, Rubloff Auditorium, 230 South Columbus Drive.

2010, USA, Blu-Ray, 75 minutes + discussion

**Brent Green** (b. 1978, Baltimore) is a visual artist, filmmaker, and storyteller. Green’s films have screened at MoMA, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Walker Art Center, International Film Festival Rotterdam, and the Sundance Film Festival. His sculptures and film sets have appeared in solo exhibitions at the ASU Art Museum, SITE Santa Fe, and the Berkeley Art Museum, among others. His latest EMPAC commissioned work, *Too Many Men Strange Fates Are Given*, a multimedia sculpture featuring a new hand-drawn animation, premiered at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival.

April 5, 6:00 p.m.

**Handsworth Songs**

Founded against the backdrop of rising neo-fascism, police brutality, and extreme racial unrest of 1980s Britain, the Black Audio Film Collective (BAFC) produced some of the period’s most poetic and provocative works before disbanding in the 1990s. BAFC’s acclaimed essay film, *Handsworth Songs*, examines the 1985 race riots in Handsworth and London. Interweaving archival photographs, newsreel clips, and home movie footage, the film is both an exploration of documentary aesthetics and a broad meditation social and cultural oppression through Britain’s intertwined narratives of racism and economic decline.

1986, John Akomfrah/Black Audio Film Collective, UK, 16mm, 60 minutes + discussion

**The Black Audio Film Collective** (1982–98, UK) included John Akomfrah, Reece Auguste, Edward George, Lina Gopaul, Avril Johnson, David Lawson, and Trevor Mathison. The group produced films, videos, slide-tape pieces, installations, posters, exhibitions, and performances, including *Handsworth Songs* (1986), which garnered
seven international awards, Testament, which premiered at the Semaine de la Critique at Cannes International Film Festival in 1988. These and subsequent works such as Twilight City (1989) and The Last Angel of History (1995) staked a claim for a new kind of moving image work that was resolutely experimental and confidently internationalist. Throughout their career, the BAFC worked within and between the media of art, film, and television, participating in British survey exhibitions such as From Two Worlds (Whitechapel Gallery, 1986), The British Art Show (Hayward Gallery, 1990) as well as international exhibitions such as Documenta X (1997) and Documenta XI (2002). BAFC is the subject of the recent retrospective and catalog, titled Ghost of Songs: The Art of the Black Audio Film Collective (2007, Liverpool University Press).

April 12, 6:00 p.m.
**Yvonne Rainer: Lives of Performers**
Yvonne Rainer in person

For the last half-century, Yvonne Rainer has played a central role in the American avant-garde with her influential works in dance, film, and print. This evening she presents her acclaimed first feature, Lives of Performers (1972). Embodying Rainer’s aesthetic rigor and wit, the film combines fiction and documentary, script readings, dance snippets, still photos, and tableaux vivants to explore issues of power and gender that influence the emotional lives of her performers. Presented in collaboration with the Society for Contemporary Art at the Art Institute of Chicago, which features a lecture by Yvonne Rainer on April 11, 6:00 p.m., The Art Institute of Chicago, Fullerton Hall, 111 South Michigan Avenue.

1972, USA, 16mm, 90 minutes + discussion

**Yvonne Rainer**’s (b. 1934, San Francisco) work spans dance, choreography, performance, writing, and film. She has exhibited internationally at museums, film festivals, and other venues. Rainer trained as a dancer at the Martha Graham Dance School and the Merce Cunningham Dance Company and was a founding member of the Judson Dance Theater. Retrospectives of her films have been held at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Film Society of Lincoln Center in New York City. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including two Guggenheim Fellowships (1969, 1988), three Rockefeller Fellowships (1988, 1990, and 1996), a MacArthur Fellowship (1990–95), and a Wexner Prize (1995). In 2010 Yvonne Rainer: Dance and Film, the first major European survey of Rainer’s work, was presented at the Tramway in Glasgow, Scotland. A premiere collection of Yvonne Rainer’s poetry, Poems, was published by Badlands Unlimited (2011).

April 19, 6:00 p.m.
**James Benning: Twenty Cigarettes**
James Benning in person
Celebrated for his minimal, monumental landscape studies, James Benning turns to the intimacy of the portrait in his latest film, Twenty Cigarettes. Referencing Warhol’s screen tests, 1930’s Hollywood glamour, and the disappearing cigarette break, the film captures 20 of Benning’s friends (including filmmaker Sharon Lockhart, cultural theorist Dick Hebdige, and book editor Janet Jenkins) satiating their smoke cravings. Each shot’s length is determined by the time it takes each subject to smoke a cigarette, and over the course of the film a dynamic range of personalities emerges out of an array of physical characteristics, distinctive settings, and personal relationships to the camera.

2011, USA, HDCAM, 99 minutes + discussion

James Benning’s (b. 1942, Milwaukee) filmic meditations on the social and political dimensions of American landscapes have played a vital role in history of experimental film. His films have screened internationally at festivals and other institutions, including the Vienna International Film Festival; London Film Festival; Sundance Film Festival; International Film Festival Rotterdam; International Forum des Jungen Films, Berlin; Image Forum, Japan; Los Angeles Museum of Art; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Walker Art Center; Reina Sofia, Madrid; and the Whitney Museum of American Art. He is a recipient of a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship. In addition to filmmaking, Benning is a professor at the California Institute of the Arts, and has taught at Northwestern University, Bard College, University of Wisconsin, University of Oklahoma, and the University of California, San Diego.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO (SAIC)
A leader in educating artists, designers, and scholars since 1866, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) offers nationally accredited undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate programs to nearly 3,200 students from around the globe. Located in the heart of Chicago, SAIC has an educational philosophy built upon an interdisciplinary approach to art and design, giving students unparalleled opportunities to develop their creative and critical abilities, while working with renowned faculty who include many of the leading practitioners in their fields. SAIC’s resources include the Art Institute of Chicago and its new Modern Wing; numerous special collections and programming venues provide students with exceptional exhibitions, screenings, lectures, and performances. For more information, please visit saic.edu.

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