CONVERSATIONS AT THE EDGE (CATE) OPENS NEW SEASON SEPTEMBER 13

Fall 2012 season brings compelling artists' film, video, new media, and animation to Chicago.

Chicago, IL—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, returns to the big screen Thursday, September 13 with the Chicago premiere of artist and filmmaker Wu Tsang’s documentary feature *Wildness*. New York Times art critic Holland Cotter writes, "If you think identity politics has no more to tell us in art, you should think again, and keep an eye on Mr. Tsang to see where the action is." The complete schedule for this newest season is available below and with presenter interviews, preview videos, critical reviews, and more at blogs.saic.edu/cate.

Additional highlights include appearances by Brenna Murphy, Laida Lertxundi, Vincent Grenier, Lawrence Jordan, John Akomfrah, and former TVTV members Allen Rucker and Tom Weinberg. Other features include films by Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, Hito Steyerl, and the late Robert Nelson.

FVNMA Department Chair Jon Cates says, "A spectrum of approaches to experimental Media Art makes Conversations At the Edge a literal meeting place for a series of investigations into the making of meanings and changing cultures."

All programs take place Thursdays at 6:00 p.m. at the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 North State Street. Full schedule and program descriptions are below and at blogs.saic.edu/cate.

**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 am–5:00 p.m., Monday–Friday), or visit siskelfilmcenter.org.
Program Details:

WU TSANG: WILDNESS
September 13, 6:00 p.m.
Wu Tsang in person!

Rooted in the underground of Los Angeles nightlife, magical realism meets documentary in Wu Tsang’s *Wildness* (2012), a portrait of the Silver Platter, a landmark Latin/LGBT bar for half a century. Narrated from the perspective of the bar itself, the film depicts the cross-generational relationships, conflicts, and creativity that materialize after artist-led performance parties emerge at the historic Los Angeles club. Featuring original score by NGUZUNGUZU & Total Freedom.

2012, Wu Tsang, USA, HDCAM, 75 minutes + discussion

Wu Tsang (b. 1982, Worcester, MA) is an SAIC alumnus (BFA 2004), artist, filmmaker, and performer based in Los Angeles. His work has been shown at the 2012 Whitney Biennial and *Ungovernables* Triennial at the New Museum in New York, the ICA Philadelphia, MOCA Los Angeles, and upcoming at the 2012 Gwangju Bienniale in South Korea. His first feature film *Wildness* (2012) premiered this year at MoMA’s Documentary Fortnight in New York, SXSW (South by Southwest) in Austin and HOT DOCS in Toronto, with support from Good Works Foundation, Frameline, Wexner Center for the Arts, IFP Labs, Art Matters, Tiffany Foundation, and Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

ROBERT NELSON: SPECIAL WARNING
September 20, 6:00 p.m.
September 22, 12:30 p.m.
Both programs introduced by curators Lori Felker and Mark Toscano

Renowned for their exuberance and inventive cinematic wit, Robert Nelson’s films established him as a leading member of the West Coast avant-garde and post-Beat culture of the ’60s and ’70s. Curated by FVNMA faculty member and filmmaker Lori Felker and Academy Film Archive archivist Mark Toscano, this two part mini-survey pairs recently struck prints of Nelson classics like *The Great Blondino* (1967) and *Bleu Shut* (1970) with lesser known, but nevertheless vital works, to provide a new perspective on the artist’s output and influence.

The Thursday, September 20 program includes six films from 1967, including *The Great Blondino, Hot Leatherette, Penny Bright and Jimmy Witherspoon, and Grateful Dead. 1967, Robert Nelson, USA, 16mm, ca. 90 minutes + discussion*

The Saturday, September 22 program includes five films that span Nelson’s career including *Bleu Shut* (1970), *Special Warning* (1998), and *Hauling Toto Big* (1997). 1967–98, Robert Nelson, USA, 16mm, ca. 90 min + discussion
Robert Nelson (1930–2012, San Francisco, CA) studied painting at San Francisco State University and the California School of Fine Arts, where he was introduced to a circle of Bay Area artists that converged into the California Funk Art movement of the 1960s. Nelson taught at various institutions, including the San Francisco Art Institute, Sacramento State, and CalArts, before landing a teaching job at UW Milwaukee in 1979 until his retirement in the mid-1990s. He then retreated in self-imposed isolation to a remote house in the mountains of Northern California, returning to painting and photography. Nelson has influenced a number of major filmmakers, such as Peter Hutton, Fred Worden, and Curt McDowell. He was the main force in co-founding the independent distribution company Canyon Cinema in 1966, hiring his former student Edith Kramer (later the head of the Pacific Film Archive) as its first director. He died in January 2012.

BRENNA MURPHY

September 27, 6:00 p.m.
Brenna Murphy in person!
Presented in collaboration with Lampo (lampo.org)

Mixing raw footage with sophisticated 3D graphics, Portland-based artist Brenna Murphy creates videos, soundscapes, and downloadable virtual realms in an on-going exploration of psychedelia across physical and virtual realities. For her premiere Chicago appearance, she presents a collection of her videos “structured to function as a temporal mandala” and a performance entitled SkyFace~TextureMappr (2012). Created especially for CATE and Lampo, Murphy’s performance explores a brand new virtual space and is accompanied by textured soundscapes generated from a homemade analog synthesizer and her own voice.

2011–12, Brenna Murphy, USA, multiple formats, ca. 60 minutes + discussion

Brenna Murphy (b. 1986, Edmonds, WA) works with video, interactive games, sound, performance, and installation. Her work has been featured at Arratia Beer (Berlin), Philadelphia Art Museum (Philadelphia), Bitforms Gallery (New York), and Green Gallery at MDW Fair in Chicago. Solo exhibitions in 2012 include Future Gallery (Berlin) and Gloria Maria Gallery (Milan). Murphy graduated from Pacific Northwest College of Art in 2009. She also collaboratively creates sculptural analog synthesizers, interactive sound installations, and ritualistic performances with her art collectives MSHR and Oregon Painting Society.

HITO STEYERL: LOVELY ANDREA & IN FREE FALL

October 4, 6:00 p.m.
Presented in collaboration with the Art Institute of Chicago’s Department of Contemporary Art, which presents focus: Hito Steyerl November 1, 2012–January 27, 2013.

Hito Steyerl’s masterfully orchestrated video essays chart the lives of images, objects, and places to arrive at provocative new conclusions about their meaning. This program
features two of these video essays, Lovely Andrea (2007) and In Free Fall (2010). Through interviews, appropriated footage, and her own personal Super-8 and photographic archive, she imaginatively explores the shifting social, political, and economic implications of her subjects.

2007–10, Hito Steyerl, Germany/USA, multiple formats, ca. 63 minutes

Hito Steyerl (b. 1966, Munich, Germany) is a video artist, filmmaker, theorist, author, and journalist. Her work has been featured at exhibitions such as the 2004 Berlin Biennial, Manifesta 5, 37th International Film Festival Rotterdam, documenta 12, and the 2008 Shanghai Biennial. She holds a PhD in philosophy and works on the borderline between cinema and visual art, combining elements of experimental film, auteur cinema, documentary, and video art to undertake cutting post-colonial and feminist critiques of representation. She is a professor for media art at the University of Arts Berlin and has taught film and theory at (amongst other institutions) Goldsmiths College and Bard College, Center for Curatorial Studies.

THREE FILMS: JEAN-MARIE STRAUB AND DANIÈLE HUILLET
October 11, 6:00 p.m.
Presented in collaboration with the Italian Cultural Institute of Chicago


2008–09, Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, 35mm, France/Italy, 87 minutes

Jean-Marie Straub (b. 1933, Metz, France) and Danièle Huillet (1936–2006, Cholet, France) created more than two-dozen films together from 1963 up until Huillet’s death in 2006. Working mainly in Germany, the two became leading figures in New German Cinema. Their films have shown at acclaimed festivals worldwide, including Cinéma du Réel International Documentary Film Festival at the Centre Georges Pompidou, the National Gallery in Washington D.C., Cannes Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, and the Kunsthall Antwerpen in Belgium. Their films have earned nominations for the Golden Lion Award at the Venice Film Festival and awards at the British Film Institute and German Film Critics Association. Straub continues to make work on his own, including the 2011 shorts Schakale und Araber, Un hérîtier, and L’Inconsolable.

LAIDA LERTXUNDI: A LAX RIDDLE UNIT
October 18, 6:00 p.m.
Laida Lertxundi in person!
Shot within and around Los Angeles, Laida Lertxundi’s seductively enigmatic films mix soul music and art punk as non-actors lounge within sublime beachscapes, cheap motels, and light-flooded apartments. Sequences repeat and mirror one another to evoke half-memories and walking dreams. For this program, Lertxundi weaves together her own pieces with films that have influenced her practice, including work by Hollis Frampton, Bruce Baillie, and Morgan Fisher.

**1966–2011, Multiple directors, USA, multiple formats, ca. 60 minutes + discussion**

Laida Lertxundi’s (b. 1981, Bilbao, Spain) work has shown at the 2012 Whitney Biennial, MoMA, LACMA, Viennale, “Views from the Avant Garde” at the New York Film Festival, and the Rotterdam International Film Festival. She received the Tom Berman Award for Most Promising Filmmaker at the 48th Ann Arbor Film Festival and was named in Cinematheque’s “Best of the Decade” reviews and as one of the “25 Filmmakers for the 21st Century” in Film Comment’s Avant-Garde Poll. She is a film and video programmer in the U.S. and Spain, and has published various articles on film, most recently in the anthology *La Risa Oblicua* and *Bostezo* magazine. She teaches film at the University of California San Diego and lives in Los Angeles, California.

**TVTV: FOUR MORE YEARS**
October 25, 6:00 p.m.
*Allen Rucker and Tom Weinberg from TVTV in person!*

*Presented in collaboration with the Video Data Bank (vdb.org)*

Video collective TVTV defined the radical video documentary movement of the 1970s. *Four More Years* (1972) is an iconoclastic view of the American electoral process, captured through TVTV’s irreverent, candid coverage of Richard Nixon’s 1972 presidential campaign and the Republican Convention in Miami. TVTV co-founder Allen Rucker introduces this classic work and is joined for the Q&A by former TVTV member Tom Weinberg.

**1972, TVTV, USA, DVD, ca. 75 minutes + discussion**

TVTV (Top Value Television) formed in 1972 by Michael Shamberg, Megan Williams, Tom Weinberg, and Allen Rucker, and enlisted the support of media collectives including Raindance, Ant Farm, and the Videofreex to provide alternative coverage of the 1972 presidential nominating conventions. The democratic tape, *The World’s Largest TV Studio* (1972), and its Republican companion piece, *Four More Years* (1972) were among the first video documentaries to be broadcast on national TV. The convention tapes provided candid interviews with delegates and protestors alike, while exposing the foibles of the media, showing viewers “the underbelly of broadcast TV.” TVTV subverted conventions of television news and documentary reportage with its alternative journalistic techniques, countercultural principles and pioneering use of portable, low-tech video equipment. TVTV disbanded in 1979.

**VINCENT GRENIER: TABULA RASA**
November 1, 6:00 p.m.
Vincent Grenier in person!

For nearly four decades, Vincent Grenier has sought to capture what he describes as “the ineffable, untranslatable, revelations of light, color, form, and composition.” The result is a sensuous, meditative, yet energized body of work across a range of approaches and formats. This program brings together films and videos from across his career, including 16mm films like While Revolved (1976), which immerses the viewer in a subtly shifting sea of color, to videos like Les Chaises (2008), a patient backyard portrait of two red chairs textured by light, among others.

1976–2011, Vincent Grenier, USA, multiple formats, ca. 75 minutes + discussion

Vincent Grenier (b.1948, Quebec City, Canada) has made experimental films since the early seventies when he received an MFA at the San Francisco Art Institute in California. Grenier's work has been showcased at Views from the Avant-Garde; the Rotterdam Film Festival; the Onion City Film Festival, Chicago; and Media City Film and Video Festival; MOMA, Anthology Film Archives; Pacific Film Archives; Whitney Museum of American Art; Collective for Living Cinema; and Cinéma Parallel in Montréal. Grenier's films and videos were the subjects of retrospectives at Media City, Windsor, Ontario and the Images Film & Video Festival's Canadian Images Spotlight, Toronto. His films and videos have earned him nine production grants from the Canada Council in the period between 1974 and 1992, and in New York State, from CAPS (1979), NYFA (1995), ETC (1992 & 1994), NYSCA (2007–08), and John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship (2010–11).

LAWRENCE JORDAN: BEYOND ENCHANTMENT
November 8, 6:00 p.m.
Lawrence Jordan in person!
Presented in collaboration with the University of Chicago’s Film Studies Center, which screens a second program of Jordan’s work November 9 (filmstudiescenter.uchicago.edu)

Best known for his singular cutout animation style, the films of avant-garde great Lawrence Jordan channel the unconscious through surreal compositions of found graphics, drawings, and engravings. Jordan co-founded Canyon Cinema, collaborated with the likes of Stan Brakhage and Joseph Cornell, and continues to make groundbreaking work to this day. This program includes the celebrated classic, Our Lady of the Sphere (1969), the poetic documentary Visions of a City (1978), and recent collage films Beyond Enchantment and Cosmic Alchemy (2010), among others.

1964–2010, Lawrence Jordan, USA, 16mm and 35mm, ca 68 minutes + discussion

Lawrence Jordan (b. 1934, Denver, CO) is an independent filmmaker who has been working in the Bay Area in California since 1955, and making films since 1952. He has produced some 40 experimental and animation films, and three feature-length dramatic films. He is most widely known for his animated collage films. In 1970 he received a Guggenheim award to make Sacred Art of Tibet, and his animation has
shown by invitation at the Cannes Film Festival. Jordan is one of the founding directors of Canyon Cinema Cooperative, and he has shown films and lectured throughout the country.

JOHN AKOMFRAH: THE NINE MUSES
November 15, 6pm
John Akomfrah in person!

The Nine Muses (2011), the latest feature by British filmmaker and artist John Akomfrah, is a stunning exploration of the history of African and Caribbean migration to post-war Britain through the lens of Homer's revered epic poem The Odyssey. Using archival imagery, desolate shots of the Alaskan wilderness, readings from sources as varied as Emily Dickinson and Rabindranath Tagore, and the music of Arvo Pärt and the Gundecha Brothers, Akomfrah meditates on exile, alienation, and home while charting a haunting path through myth, landscape, and history.

2011, John Akomfrah, Great Britain, HDCAM, 94 minutes + discussion

John Akomfrah (b. 1957, Accra, Ghana) is a leading British filmmaker, moving-image installation artist, and cofounder of the Black Audio Film Collective. Akomfrah’s work has been shown in galleries and museums including Documenta (Germany), the De Balie (Holland), Centre Georges Pompidou (France), the Serpentine and Whitechapel Galleries (UK); and the Museum of Modern Art (USA). A major new retrospective of Akomfrah’s gallery-based work with the Black Audio Film Collective premiered at the FACT and Arnolfini galleries (UK), and is now making a tour of galleries and museums throughout Europe. In 2000 Akomfrah was awarded the Gold Digital Award at the Cheonju International Film Festival, South Korea, for his innovative use of digital technology. John Akomfrah is currently a Governor of Film London, a visiting professor of film at the University Of Westminster (United Kingdom), and an officer of the Order of the British Empire.

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