

Acropolis Cinema presents

BETWEEN TWO CINEMAS  
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December 04, 2018 ~ 8:00pm ~ Downtown Independent

## ABOUT THE FILM

Over thirty years in the making, this unique autobiography looks back at filmmaker/archivist Ross Lipman's winding path through a gaping no-man's land between international art cinema and the American avant-garde. Including restorations of his old films plus a new documentary/essay linking them, it uncovers previously unseen archival material on Stan Brakhage and Andrei Tarkovsky, and adds new collaborations with artists including visionary experimentalist Bruce Baillie, *Jeanne Dielman* cinematographer Babette Mangolte, Bela Tarr composer Mihaly Vig and synthesizer pioneer Patrick Gleeson. *Between Two Cinemas* is an enthralling exploration of discord and resonance between two divergent cultures, and the worlds from which they emerge. (Corpus Fluxus)

*Panel discussion about the unique relationship between experimental and arthouse cinema to follow the screening, featuring Lipman; filmmakers Thom Andersen, Lewis Klahr, Pia Borg, and Janie Geiser; writer and actress Lisa Black; and composer Patrick Gleeson.*

84 min // US // 2018

### **Reverse Engineering the Wheel by Ross Lipman**

*Between Two Cinemas* is on the surface that most indulgent of projects; a look in the mirror. Yet having worked diligently in this unforgiving medium for over 40 years, I feel I've earned the right take that look, and would be a fool not to.

I began making films at 13, but don't find glimmers of a voice 'till my early 20's, so that's where the story begins. Upon viewing *10-17-88*, my former professor Cynthia Sowers at the University of Michigan said she thought the emotional and intellectual aspects of the film were at war with each other. I felt that comment held a key to understanding my path; the trick would be in finding their balance.

She suggested I read Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence*, to help "kill the father," who for me in those days was novelist Thomas Pynchon. The fathers would change, but the task remained. This film looks at my forebears, and as such risks being misconstrued as an egocentric comparison to canonical artists. For me the point of discussing my inspirations is to consider ideas. I ask the viewer to put qualitative comparison aside, and look at the process.

As poet/filmmaker James Broughton said, "What does it matter if *Mother's Day* was influenced by *Blood of a Poet*, *The Andalusian Dog*, or *Meshes of the Afternoon*? That sort of thing is only a critic's means of putting one in one's place (or some place where he can file you away) so that originality can be discounted."

The Broughton quote is from his incantational poetics *Seeing the Light*. As I was completing the edit of *Between Two Cinemas*, the book literally fell on the floor at my feet.

Returning it to the shelf, it fell again. When it fell a third time I thought, "OK, I'm supposed to look at it." Opening to a random page, this is what I found:

"Don't waste your time making a film like anyone else's. That's duplication of effort. Besides, it won't be any good. Your business is to make something that neither you nor I have ever seen before. Your business is to make a wonderful new kind of mess in your own way."

Seen individually, these works consciously work with pre-existing forms. Together, they hopefully point to something unique. As Broughton says,

"If it doesn't fit into any kind of recognizable category for the festivals and critics that's too bad. About them."

This film is the story of how I learned to make my own mess.

—June 12, 2018

**Ross Lipman** (born 1963) is an independent filmmaker, essayist, and archivist. Formerly Senior Film Restorationist at the UCLA Film & Television Archive, his many restorations include Charles Burnett's *Killer of Sheep*, Kent Mackenzie's *The Exiles*, the Academy Award-winning documentary *The Times of Harvey Milk*, and works by Charlie Chaplin, Orson Welles, Shirley Clarke, Kenneth Anger, Barbara Loden, Robert Altman, Bruce Conner and John Cassavetes. He is a three-time winner of the National Society of Film Critics' Heritage Award, and a 2008 recipient of Anthology Film Archives' Preservation Honors.

Lipman's films have screened internationally and been collected by museums and institutions including the Oberhausen Kurzfilm Archive, Budapest's Balazs Bela Studios, Munich's Sammlung Goetz, The Academy Film Archive, Anthology Film Archives, and Northeast Historic Film. His recent documentary feature, *Notfilm*, premiered at the London International Film Festival in 2015 and was named one of the 10 best films of the year in *Artforum*, *Slate*, and numerous other publications. *Notfilm* is distributed internationally by Milestone, the British Film Institute (UK), Carlotta Films (France) and Reading Bloom (Italy/Switzerland).

Lipman's writings on film history, technology, and aesthetics have been published in *Artforum*, *Sight and Sound*, and numerous academic books and journals. His most recent live documentary, *The Exploding Digital Inevitable*, on Bruce Conner's CROSSROADS, premiered in 2017 at the Rotterdam International Film Festival.

*For more information, reviews, awards, filmographies, and screening histories see:*  
[www.corpusfluxus.org](http://www.corpusfluxus.org), [www.notfilm.film](http://www.notfilm.film)

## Ross Lipman filmography / live essays

- The Exploding Digital Inevitable* (2017)
- Notfilm* (2015)
- The Book of Paradise Has No Author* (2010)
- Keep Warm, Burn Britain! – prologue* (2010)
- The Cropping of the Spectacle* (2008)
- Personal Ethnographies* (video cycle; 2007 - 2013)
- The Perfect Heart of Flux* (video cycle; 2007 - 2013)
- Rhythm 06* (2008)
- No Way Out But Onward* (2006)
- The Interview* (2004)
- Michael Barrish Screen Test* (1997)
- Rhythm 93* (1993-94)
- Rhythm 92* (1992-93)
- Kino-i* (1991)
- 10-17-88* (1989)
- Green / Bike / Video* (1984)

"One of the most original essay film artists now working in the U.S. I don't know another body of work even remotely similar to his."

— Thom Andersen, filmmaker/historian, *Los Angeles Plays Itself*

"How lovely to see a film [*Rhythm 06*] shot and edited with such intent, that refers to life beyond the confines of cinema. These essential qualities are absent in virtually all contemporary (experimental) work."

— Nathaniel Dorsky, filmmaker/author, *Devotional Cinema*

"Like Ozu and Bresson, Lipman evokes a hidden spirituality in the everyday... *The Interview* is a fully realized work about marginal people, made outside the margins of what people understand as cinema today."

— Brecht Andersch, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Film on Film Foundation ♦



@AcropolisCinema



/AcropolisCinema



AcropolisCinema@gmail.com

[www.acropoliscinema.com](http://www.acropoliscinema.com)