

**Los Angeles Filmforum presents
Collision Center: Movies by Mike Stoltz
Sunday September 24, 2023, 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. 2023 is our 48th year. www.lafilmforum.org

In Person: Mike Stoltz

Including US and local premieres!

Dedicated to Bérénice Reynaud

Artist, filmmaker, curator, educator, musician, all-around sound and image maker Mike Stoltz has been an integral presence in the Los Angeles film community and the international experimental film landscape for over a decade now. His cinematic explorations are deeply engaging, thrilling, sometimes cacophonously energetic experiences that truly give us radical and fresh ideas about representation, space, and the very nature of seeing and hearing. But much more than mere audiovisual experiments, Stoltz's films challenge our relationship to urban and domestic landscapes, politicizing them on a formal and material level, underscoring and heightening our empathetic response and conceptual consciousness. Themes of humanity, incarceration, liberation, and the latent embedded complexity of our inhabited landscapes mix thoughtfully in a brew that also employs the fundamental intensities of film and cinema to create a visceral connection to his subject matter.

Mike Stoltz is currently on leave from Los Angeles, but we're thrilled to welcome him back to town for this special solo screening, comprising the majority of his cinematic works, almost all showing in their original 16mm. Come celebrate his presence and his work with us in an eye- and ear-popping feast of radical abstraction/figuration, optical fragmentation, and some of the richest and gnarliest audiovisual collisions around.

Program and notes by Mark Toscano. Please note that this program contains flicker.

Mike Stoltz is a Los Angeles-based moving image artist whose practice is dictated by process, working directly with the tools of cinema (images, sound, and time) to reexamine the familiar, the communal, and the medium itself. His works are rooted in a bodily encounter with the subject. This manifests on screen in instances of engaging with performers from behind the camera, chance-based interventions in landscape, moving the camera in concert with architectural structures, and directly addressing the audience. Special effects are created by hand through in-camera techniques, rephotography, and directly manipulating video signals. Physicality continues in the process of editing the pieces, cutting directly on 16mm film and composing the soundtracks from tape music and live sound generated with collaborators.

Stoltz's 16mm films and videos have screened internationally at venues such as Toronto International Film Festival, New York Film Festival, Hong Kong International Film Festival, Courtisane, Buenos Aires International Independent Film Festival (BAFICI), Light Field, International Film Festival Rotterdam, REDCAT, International Documentary Filmfestival Amsterdam, and the Ann Arbor Film Festival.

He has programmed film screenings for Magic Lantern Cinema, The Echo Park Film Center, VISIONS, and The Arroyo Seco Cine Club. He is currently faculty in the Cinema Department at Binghamton University.

Screening:

Spotlight on a Brick Wall

2016, 16mm, 8m (made w/ Alee Peoples)

A performance film that navigates expectations of both the audience and the makers. A series of false starts. Dub treatment on the laugh track.

With Pluses and Minuses

2013, 16mm, 5m

A ground-less and boundless 16mm film in which a wall becomes a window to a swirling landscape. "...Stoltz shakes and dislocates audio and image with volume and pitch variations, editing the 16mm film in camera, varying the focus and the shot length of every frame, shifting background and foreground, turning and spinning the camera hand-held positions, and allowing sequences of black that punctuate the image's algorithms. The filmmaker's dance transforms abstraction into personal experience. He is an active agent of the surrounding world, and of the opportunities that open and close before us." -Mónica Savirón, LUMIÈRE Fall 2013

Half Human, Half Vapor

2015, 16mm, 12m

This project began out of a fascination with a large sculpture of a dragon attached to a Central Florida mansion. The property had recently been left to rot, held in lien by a bank. Hurricanes washed away the sculpture.

I learned about the artist who created this landmark, Lewis Vandercar (1913-1988), who began as a painter. His practice grew along with his notoriety for spell-casting and telepathy. Inspired by Vandercar's interest in parallel possibility, I combined these images with text from local newspaper articles in a haunted-house film that both engages with and looks beyond the material world.

In Between

2010, 16mm, 4m

An exercise in permeable architecture, an attempt to walk through walls.

Something to Touch that Is Not Corruption or Ashes or Dust

2019, 16mm, 7m, US Premiere!

"Mike Stoltz's Something to Touch That Is Not Ashes or Corruption or Dust is my favorite film that I never got to show in Light Field's 2020 program. It starts abstractly, with black and white shapes and modulated distortions of static and sound. Palm trees whiz by. A symmetry of bars and barbed wire form a fenced-in perspective. The grid of a windowpane zooms out so fast it aches. Patterns close in, torquing around the bend. In the final moments of the film, the screen fills—a full, flickering square, fishing between the dark and the light. Watching it in isolation, the taut claustrophobia in my chest opens up so that feeling rushes in, vast and perplexing. Something to Touch helps me stay present in this moment of

opacity and sickness. I breathe to the soundtrack, I let myself wonder: how long are we to be contained? Is this how we escape? Could this be our death?" -Trisha Low, Art in America

Holographic Will

2023, 16mm, 6m

A domestic swirl filmed while the building was being sold. How much longer can we afford to stay? Shot frame-by-frame, moving the camera between every image. Single frames move forward in time, creating after-image combinations without superimpositions. A phased drum machine soundtrack emphasizes the percussive quality of the image. (With gratitude to neighbors and the Los Angeles Tenants Union Northeast Local)

Under the Atmosphere

2014, 16mm, 14.5m

Filmed on the Central Florida "Space Coast", site of NASA's launch pads. Dormant spacecraft, arcane text, activated landscape, and the surface of the image work towards a future-past shot reverse shot.

Ten Notes on a Summer's Day

2012, 16mm, 4.5m, Los Angeles premiere!

"...The camera in Ten Notes on a Summer's Day fixes on a young woman standing against a painted blue wall, the sun partially lighting her face, the sound of distant traffic in the background. Offscreen, a guitarist plucks single notes, and the woman hums along. When the music falls outside of her vocal range, she switches to a lower octave, her mouth turned up in a small grin. Later, she frowns slightly, seemingly unable to find her note. Gradually her confidence builds and her smile returns, though her humming is no longer anywhere close to the guitar's pitch. Ten Notes is a marvel; it's as unhurried and refreshing as this woman's singing, which, though off-key, produces an unexpected harmony, a little song discovered in the process of its own making." -Genevieve Yue, Reverse Shot Issue 33

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:

- Oct 1 – Narcisa Hirsch transgenérico, at 2220 Arts
- Oct 8 – Janie Geiser: Double Vision and The Fourth Watch, at 2220 Arts
- Oct 16 – L'Inferno (1911) with live music by Montopolis, at Secret Movie Club
- Oct 22 – Films by and with Harry Smith, with live music, at 2220 Arts

Memberships available, \$40 Student \$75 Individual, \$125 Dual, or \$225 Silver Nitrate

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