

**Los Angeles Filmforum presents
Luther Price: New Utopia and Light Fracture
Saturday, March 16, 2024, 1:00 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. 2024 is our 49th year. www.lafilmforum.org

In person: Tara Merenda Nelson, Curator and Director of Public Programs, Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester NY

In celebration of Visual Studies Workshop's publication of *Luther Price: New Utopia and Light Fracture*, Filmforum is delighted to welcome VSW's Tara Merenda Nelson to present the slide work of Luther Price.

Luther Price. One of the weirdest, most wonderful, most fascinating, most unique filmmakers (and humans) ever to live. As an artist, Price would just go for it—dive deep into his weirdness, his queerness, his obsessiveness—and grind out these insanely freaked out, beautiful, violent films in which themes of personal/family life, sexuality, mortality and bodily experience screamed out like mutant screaming monstrosities, as if he were ripping bandages off of gnarly wounds. His films swirl in never-ending maelstroms of repetition and perpetuity and are the most intense, beautiful/ugly, most harrowingly cathartic experiences ever to be had: insanely weird, funny, frightening, baffling, overwhelming... (Steve Polta: Remembering Luther Price)

Luther Price (1962–2020) was a filmmaker known for deeply personal and aggressively visceral film work. His early Super-8 films (some made as pre-Luther identity Tom Rhoads), including *Jellyfish Sandwich*, *Sodom*, *Green and Warm Broth*, enacted primal domestic psychodramas and/or probed the psychosexual extremes of physical experience while later 16mm found footage and hand-painted film work was equally overwhelming in its obsessive physicality. In the last decade of his life, Price created breathtaking collages on 35mm slides, combining the techniques he had mastered in his film works to culminate in single frame compositions—"rotted slides, slides of hair and dust, slides of dead ants, slides made from old strips of film, slides filled with colored sugar." (quote from Ed Halter: "Yesterday Once More", published in *Luther Price: New Utopia and Light Fracture*.)

Virtually unseen locally, Price's stunning work with slides is documented in Visual Studies Workshop's *Luther Price: New Utopia and Light Fracture*, a 2023 publication featuring copious images derived from the depths of Price's 35mm collages as well as intimate email correspondence from Price to VSW editor Tate Shaw 2017–18 and an essay by Ed Halter of *Light Industry*, Brooklyn. In celebration of this publication, Filmforum is thrilled to present two sets of Price's double-projected slides—*New Utopia* and *Light Fracture* (both 2017) and to welcome Visual Studies Workshop's Tara Merenda Nelson to speak on the publication, the slides and on Price. Two Super-8 films by Price will also screen.

Special thanks to Steve Polta, SF Cinematheque

Program:

Clown by Luther Price

1990-2002, super 8mm, 24 fps, color, sound on mag, 13 min.

FANTASTICANOTHER BRIGHT CLEAR DAYTHE SKY IS JUST THICK BLUEAND ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN..."CLOWN" 1990-2002...LUTHER PRICE
...SUPER 8 COLOR SOUND FILM.....now here ,....siting in my bongalou on the beach in reveremany years later with my three boy catsi find myself in the situation i always knewmy peaceful thoughts surround me nowmy cats sleep 17 hours a daybut the rest of the waking day ,,makes up for that and more ,,,,,im like them and that too.....i wanted to talk a bit about "clown" ...1990- 2002.....i found the mask at a thirift store in CAMBRIDGEWHERE I WAS LIVING IN THE 90'SIT WAS 1990.....I BOUGHT THE MASK AND BROUGHT IT HOMEPUT IT ON IN THE MIRROR IN THE BATHROOMAND STARTED TO SAY "FUCK IT SUCK IT"AND CHASED MY FRIEND ,LISA OUT OF THE HOUSEI BOUGHT SOME SUPER 8 COLOR SOUND FILMAND PLANNED A WEEKEND AT MY PARENTS HOME ON THE BEACHTHE BACK YARD HAD A SEA WALL.....THIS MADE A BRILLIANT AND MOST WONDERFUL STAGE TO WORK WITH THE HORIZON AND CHANGING SKY.....I HAD WORKED THIS WAY BEFORE , WITH "WARM BROTH " AND "GREEN"THE LANDSCAPEWAS ALWAYS AMAZING AND WAITINGso ,....in the back of my parents home on the oceani filmed my clown chaptersthey began with the idea of filming "CLOWN" CHARACTERS IN ON SUPER 8 COLOR SOUND 3MIN CARTRIDGESHOT AT 24 FRMS.....SO , IN CAMERA ...I WANTED TO MAKE A SEEM LESS IN CAMERA STORY "CLOWN".....THIS IDEA WENT ON FOR A WHILETHE SCREAMING CLOWN CAME ABOUT BECAUSE WE WERE HAVING A SURPRISE BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR "ARREA'.....SHE WAS ONLY A VERY SMALL CHILD BUT WE ALL GOT IN CLOWN DRAGAND HID WHEN SHE CAME IN WITH HER MOTHER AND SURPRISED HER ,.....WITH CAKE / CONFETTI AND BALLOONSSHE WAS AFRAID AT FIRST.....BUT SHE KNEW IT WAS USI HAD DEVELOPED THE SCREAMING CLOWN FOR THAT ,...HER BIRTHDAY.....as time went on ,.....and i had a SUPERB 8 PRINT MADE OF THE FILM.....I CONTUED TO FILM MORE CHAPTERSI COMPLETED THE FILM IN 2002.....A SUPER 8 SOUND COLOR FILMIN SOME OF THE OTHER CHAPTERS ,I MAY HAVE TAKEN THINGS A BIT FAR ...BUT THATS OKHAVE A NICE DAY/ BUT OHHOW I MISS SUPER 8 COLOR SOUND FILM.....I'D SUCK A DICK FOR A BRICKOF FILM.....LUTHER PRICE

Jellyfish Sandwich by Luther Price

1994, super 8mm, 24 fps color, sound, 17 min.

Why are you so stupid ... and what are you trying to say
I had a horrible dream that a big big elephant
walked on a piece of cake
and fell through it like quicksand
and disappeared
all that was left was a big floppy gray earlobe
Someone with a small head and tiny body stuck a note in it
then it sank into the cake too.
I remember running upside down
snagging my entire body against a screen of thread.
I could hear silver songs of red white and blue
and some guy walked by with a nice chunk of butt
wearing flesh-colored bikini underwear
I pulled them down and his ass was purple.
Half the street I was standing on blew up.
The birds in the sky made sounds like upset stomach
and feathers fell hard on the top of my head.
I squint my eyes for a second but nothing changed.
Too many people had party on same day ...

Slides from *Luther Price: New Utopia and Light Fracture*

Luther Price (January 26, 1962 – June 13, 2020) was a prodigious artist whose work unearthed the deepest, darkest corners of the human experience. Working in film, sculpture, and performance, his haunting portrayals are often manifestations of personas drawn from lived traumas, thickly layered with paint, glitter, glue, and bodily fluids. Price's films are sculptural compositions in which images of eviscerated bodies, raw meat, hardcore gay porn, and laughing clowns occupy the same psychic space as quiet scenes of street corners, blue skies and empty clotheslines. Born in Marlborough, Massachusetts, Price attended the Massachusetts College of Art in the early 1980's, where he studied sculpture and performance before turning to Super 8 film after being shot in Nicaragua in 1985. With the support of Super 8 filmmaker Saul Levine, his teacher at MassArt, Price pushed the boundaries of the "home movie" medium, stepping into each role of the fractured family to conjure complicated apparitions on the scratched surface of the film. His practice evolved to include found footage and "handmade film" techniques, incorporating ink, dirt, spit, splices and the process of decay into the production. Price's work with 16mm found footage is some of the most sophisticated in the tradition, with more than 80

original titles created in the course of his career. In the last decade of his life, Price created breathtaking collages on 35mm slides, combining the techniques he had mastered in his film works to culminate in single frame compositions. A selection of these slides can be seen in *New Utopia, Light Fracture* by Luther Price.

Tara Merenda Nelson, Visual Studies Workshop Curator and Associate Editor for the VSW Press/Film Art Book, is a filmmaker, curator, programmer and lecturer working with film and digital media. At VSW Tara oversees the cataloging, preservation and interpretation of the VSW collections, and is the programmer for the VSW Salon and Workshop Series. She is also the assistant editor of VSW Press's Film Artist Book (FAB) imprint. Prior to VSW, Tara worked as an intern at the Harvard Film Archive and WGBH's Antiques Roadshow, and lectured at Ithaca College, University of Rochester and Cornell. Tara has an MFA from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design (2011).

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:

March 24 - *Gaza Ghetto*, on 16mm

April 2 - Scott Stark: Alternating Frames – dual projector pieces

April 17 - *Race d'Ep*

April 21 – The Films of Nora Sweeney

April 28 – Films by Pat O'Neill with live music by Vinny Golia Holden King and others

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

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