

Los Angeles Filmforum and Vidiots present  
**Experimentations: Imag(in)ing Knowledge in Film**  
**Program 3: Between Land and Sky, Accounting for the In-Between**  
**Thursday, September 19, 2024, 7:30 pm**  
**At the Eagle Theatre at Vidiots**

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](http://www.lafilmforum.org)

*Experimentations: Imag(In)ing Knowledge in Film* is Filmforum's expansive film series and upcoming publication that investigates the ways that experimental and scientific films produce and question the visualization of the world. Combining artist films utilizing scientific imagery, science and natural history films, and films of indigenous and traditional knowledge, the series examines how science, nature, and technology films shape our understanding of humans, nature, gender, knowledge, and progress. The multi-venue public screening series presents analog and digital time-based media incorporating diverse scientific and experimental film traditions from across the globe. The series will include eighteen screenings between September 2024 and February 2025, with films and digital works from 1874 to today from around the world, multiple guests, panels and wonderful collaborations that will reveal the possibilities and circumstances of cinema in this realm.

*Experimentations: Imag(in)ing Knowledge in Film* is among more than 70 exhibitions and programs presented as part of PST ART. Returning in September 2024 with its latest edition, PST ART: Art & Science Collide, this landmark regional event explores the intersections of art and science, both past and present. PST ART is presented by Getty. For more information about PST ART: Art & Science Collide, please visit: [pst.art](http://pst.art).

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Andy Warhol

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts



DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
City of Los Angeles

**Experimentations: Imag(In)ing Knowledge in Film, Program 3**  
**Between Land and Sky, Accounting for the In-Between:**  
**Nostalgia for the Light** by Patricio Guzmán

This program takes Césaire and Wynter's call for a science of the word as a point of reference. Chile's Atacama Desert is a natural environment where the heat of the sun keeps human remains intact (such as those of Pre-Columbian mummies; 19th century explorers and miners; and the remains of political prisoners, "disappeared" by the Chilean army after the military coup of September, 1973). Astronomers also flock to the foot of the mountains to study space while the surviving relatives of the disappeared search for their bodies nearby. Guzman, a stalwart and champion of third cinema, the anti-capitalist, socialist cinema movement of Latin America, Africa, and Asia, uses the Atacama Desert as a stand-in for the expanse of the human condition, undergirded by the scientific wonder that the desert propagates. His feature film *Nostalgia for the Light* will be preceded by *Solar Eclipse*, the first known moving image captured of space as a way to orient the audience towards the wonders of our solar system before challenging the way it is romanticized in popular media and *Brilliant Noise*, a granular and intimate look at the Sun.

Curated by Jane de Almeida and Jheanelle Brown.

**Screening:**

**Solar Eclipse**, by Nevil Maskelyne

1900, digital version, b&w, silent, 1 min.

'Nevil Maskelyne, celebrated magician, proprietor of the Egyptian Hall and astronomy enthusiast, filmed this solar eclipse in North Carolina on May 28, 1900. Recently discovered in the collection of the Royal Astronomical Society, the film is believed to be the first surviving astronomical film in the world. It is a fragment showing the corona around totality and the 'diamond ring' effect.' – British Film Institute

**Brilliant Noise**, by Semiconductor

2006, digital, b&w, sound, 5:47

Brilliant Noise takes us into the data vaults of solar astronomy. After sifting through hundreds of thousands of computer files made accessible via open access archives, Semiconductor have brought together some of the sun's finest unseen moments. These images have been kept in their most raw form, revealing the energetic particles and solar wind as a rain of white noise. This black and white grainy quality is routinely cleaned up by NASA, usually hiding the processes and mechanics in action behind the capturing procedure. Most of the imagery has been collected by satellites orbiting the Earth as single frames, or files of information, that are then reorganised into spectral sequences. The soundtrack brings to light the hidden forces at play upon the solar surface, by directly translating the intensity of the brightness into audio manipulation.

**Nostalgia for the Light**, by Patricio Guzmán

2010, digital, color, sound, 90 min.

Master director Patricio Guzmán, famed for his political documentaries capturing the history and politics of Chile (*The Battle of Chile*, *Salvador Allende*, *The Pinochet Case*), traveled 10,000 feet above sea level to the driest place on earth. Atop the mountains of the Atacama Desert, astronomers from all over the world gather to observe the stars. The sky is so translucent that it allows them to see right to the boundaries of the universe.

So while astronomers examine the most distant and oldest galaxies, at the foot of the mountains, women, surviving relatives of the disappeared whose bodies were dumped here, search, even after twenty-five years, for the remains of their loved ones, to reclaim their families' histories.

Melding the celestial quest of the astronomers and the earthly one of the Chilean women, *Nostalgia for the Light* is a gorgeous, moving, and deeply personal odyssey.

“At the Alma observatory (Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array) built in the Atacama Desert in Chile, data is obtained by antennas. The idea of finding the tower with the telescope, or a dome at the top of the mountain was replaced by the magnificent landscape of the plateau with the charming antennas (now, 66 in total). The eyes of ear-shaped telescopes obtain the most distant data in the universe. Patricio Guzman's film *Nostalgia for the Light* (*Nostalgia da luz*, 2010) shows Alma in a reflection on the politics of Pinochet's dictatorial regime and the remains of political prisoners who are buried in the desert. The place of the stars' dream of the future is overlaid by the search for the bones of those who disappeared during the dictatorship.

“Alma collaborates with international agencies and has been very successful in its astronomical results, taking the investigation of stars to a distance that is difficult to be comprehended by the human mind. The search for the origins of the universe contrasts in a radical way with very primitive and medieval religious searches in the region.”  
– Jane de Almeida, “Images drawn by nature, itself”

**Semiconductor** - For over 25 years, UK artist duo Ruth Jarman and Joe Gerhardt, aka Semiconductor, have explored the human experience at the intersection between science and technology. Their innovative works confront us with the seemingly unknowable ephemerality of the natural world around us, contextualizing scientific data into captivating sculpture, moving image and drawings that encourage us to expand our perceptions of reality and question our role as observers.

Known for their meticulous research, Semiconductor utilizes a different technological approach with each piece, often spending months in science laboratories around the world studying the devices used to make sense of the natural world, these include; CERN, Geneva (2015); NASA Space Sciences Laboratory, UC Berkeley, California (2005); Mineral Sciences Laboratory, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History (2010); Extreme Light Laboratory, University of Glasgow (2023) and the Charles Darwin Research Station, Galapagos (2010). Semiconductor also has their work “Spectral Constellations” in the exhibition “Seeing the Unseeable: Data, Design, Art” at the Williamson Gallery at the ArtCenter College of Design as part of PST Art: Art and Science Collide. <https://www.artcenter.edu/about/exhibitions/seeing-the-unseeable-data-design-art.html>

**Patricio Guzmán** was born in 1941 in Santiago, Chile. As an adolescent, inspired by the work of Chris Marker, Frederic Rossif and Louis Malle, he was drawn to documentary. He studied filmmaking at the Film Institute at the Catholic University of Chile and at the Official School of Film in Madrid, where he earned his degree in Film Direction in 1970.

Guzmán returned to Chile in 1971, and directed his first documentary, *The First Year*, which covered the first 12 months of Salvador Allende's government. The film was released in commercial theaters that very year. Chris Marker, impressed by the film, offered to help get it seen in France. Two years later, Marker again provided invaluable assistance again when he donated the raw stock necessary to commence filming *The Battle of Chile*, Guzmán's 4 and ½ hour documentary trilogy about Allende's final year.

The day of the coup, Guzmán was imprisoned in Chile's National Stadium, where he remained for 15 days. After regaining his freedom, he left for Europe with his footage. Eventually, the Cuban Film Institute (ICAIC) offered to support the editing and post-production. Guzmán flew to Havana and finished the film a few years later.

Among his many other renowned documentaries *In God's Name* (1987) (Grand Prize, Florence '87) about the Catholic Church's fight for human rights in Chile; *The Southern Cross* (Grand Prize, Marseille '92) about the theology of liberation and popular religion in Latin America. In 1995, *Town in Stasis* focused on the historical memory of a Mexican village.

In 1997, *Chile, Obstinate Memory* looked into collective political amnesia in Chile. 1999 brought *Robinson Crusoe Island* about the remote Chilean island of the same name. In 2001, *The Pinochet Case* examined the case brought against General Augusto Pinochet (Grand Prize, Marseille '01). In 2002, he completed *Madrid*, a look at Spain's capital.

Guzmán's acclaimed, award-winning film *Salvador Allende* (2006) tells Allende's story, from his youth in Valparaiso and his early presidential campaigns, to his bold nationalist reforms and his death during the violent rightist coup of September 11, 1973.

The master filmmaker's gorgeous and personal meditation work, *Nostalgia for the Light* (2010), won the Best Documentary (Prix ARTE) at the European Film Academy Awards. It was named to the Top Ten Best Movies of 2010 by Sight & Sound. He lives in Paris with Renate Sachse, who collaborates on the scripts for his films.

Interdisciplinary researcher **Jane de Almeida** works in the arts, film and new media fields, investigating the intersection among media, subjectivity and perception. As a professor and researcher, she was Visiting Scholar in the Department of Philosophy at Boston College (1999), Visiting Fellow in the Department of Architecture and History of Art at Harvard University (2005), guest researcher at MediaLabMadrid (2006), and Visiting Scholar in the Dept. of Communication at University of California, San Diego (2007). She holds a Master degree and a Ph.D. in Communication and Semiotics from the Catholic University of Sao Paulo. Currently, She has been teaching at Mackenzie University in São Paulo, Brazil and at the Visual Arts Department at University of California, San Diego. She has been a member of the editorial and Scientific Board of FILE since 2005. She also organized a seminar about Digital Media called Aesthetic and New Technology.

**Jheanelle Brown** is the Project Director and Curator for *Experimentations: Imag(In)ing Knowledge in Film*, leading project management, offering scholarly and curatorial guidance to project scholars, developing several film programs, developing the overall curatorial framework of the film series, and serving as co-editor of the resulting publication. Jheanelle is a film curator/programmer, lecturer, and arts administrator based in Los Angeles whose curatorial practice creates frameworks to explore the boundlessness of Black life in experimental and non-fiction film and video. She is currently Special Faculty at California Institute of the Arts. She has co-curated *Time Is Running Out of Time: Experimental Film and Video from the L.A. Rebellion and Today* and the traveling film showcase *Black Radical Imagination: Fugitive Trajectories* from 2018 to 2019.

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Coming soon to Los Angeles Filmforum:

Sept 22 - Mykola Ridnyi, with *Kyiv to LA*, at 2220 Arts + Archives

Oct 4 – Experimentations 4: Repossessing the Spirit of Myths in Africa Through Cinema: *Yeelen*, at the Autry Museum

Oct 6 – Experimentations 5: Ritualizing Knowledge Systems, at 2220 Arts + Archives

Oct 20 – The Wolf House, at 2220 Arts + Archives

Oct 27 – Experimentations 6: Documentary and Science Fiction: Locating the Uncanny in 1980s Chinese State-Sponsored Films, at 2220 Arts + Archives

Nov 3 – Experimentations 7: Carolina Caycedo, with VPAM, at 2220 Arts + Archives

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

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