

**SCREENING NATURE NETWORK:
FLORA, FAUNA AND THE MOVING IMAGE**
Saturday 18 - Sunday 19 May 2013



In a symposium and a series of film programmes covering more than a hundred years of cinema, **Screening Nature** explores the ecology, ethics and aesthetics of the relationship between human and nonhuman animals, nature, and the moving image.

The weekend will kick off with a symposium on **Screening Nature: Flora, Fauna, and the Moving Image**, at Queen Mary, University of London, with **keynotes by W. J. T. Mitchell (University of Chicago) and Claire Colebrook (Penn State)**, and an artist talk by **Rose Lowder**. Events continue on Saturday evening at the Whitechapel Gallery with the first of five programmes of screenings and discussion, to be continued throughout Sunday. A wide range of films will be shown, from early cinema to brand new artists' films: Lumière brothers, Joris Ivens, Susanne Bürner, Percy Smith, Stan Brakhage, Kenneth Anger, Joyce Wieland, Mike Marshall, Vladimir Tyulkin, Rose Lowder, Helga Fanderl, Ed Chell & Jason Creasey, Erin Espelie, Chen Sheinberg, Anthea Kennedy & Ian Wiblin, Lucy Powell, Yervant Gianikian & Angela Ricci Lucchi, Sergei Dvortsevov, Bev Zalcock & Sara Chambers, Guy Sherwin and many others. Sounds from Mike Blow, David Chapman & David Cottridge, Johanna Hällsten

Curated by Anat Pick and Silke Panse in association with Queen Mary, University of London, the University for the Creative Arts, the Whitechapel Gallery and the Goethe-Institut. <http://screeningnature.com>

SCREENING NATURE SYMPOSIUM

Saturday 18 May 9.30am – 4.30pm

Venue: Queen Mary, University of London, Mile End Road, London E1 4NS, Arts One, Lecture Theatre

Book (for free) on Eventbrite: <http://screeningnature.eventbrite.co.uk>

- 9.30am Registration
- 10.00am Introduction (Anat Pick and Silke Panse)
- 10.15am **Keynote:** W. J. T. Mitchell (University of Chicago), 'The Nature of the Screen and the Screening of Nature'
- 11.15am Coffee and tea break
- 11.30am Jody Berland (York University), 'A Visitor's Guide to the Virtual Ménagerie'
- 12.10pm Rose Lowder, 'Interpreting Nature at the Present Time Within an Ecological Context'
- 12.50pm Lunch break
- 2.00pm **Keynote:** Claire Colebrook (Penn State), 'Sex and the (Anthropocene) City'
- 3.00pm Coffee and tea break
- 3.15pm Silke Panse (University of the Creative Arts), 'Planes in the Plane of Immanence or: Who or What Moves the Leaves?'
- 3.45pm Roundtable Q&A
- 4.15pm Travel to Whitechapel Gallery for the 5:30pm screening programme

SCREENING NATURE SCREENINGS

Saturday 18 May and Sunday 19 May

Venue: Whitechapel Gallery, Zilkha Auditorium, 77-82 Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

Tickets: Sat 18 May, £8 (£6 concs. / Close-Up members), Sun 19 May £11 (£8 concs. / Close-Up members) for the morning or afternoon programme, £20 (£15 concs. / Close Up members) for the full day.

Booking: info@whitechapelgallery.org, 020 7522 7888

WASP SYMPHONY

Mike Blow, GB, 2011, looped sound

A multi-channel sound piece composed by Oxfordshire wasps greets visitors on their way in and out of the Zilkha Auditorium.

Saturday 18 May 5.30pm – 8pm

FLORA (Curated by Silke Panse)

Programme 1: Leaves in the Wind

This programme presents a variety of relations between the movement of the images and of the movement of the leaves – between the human artist, the medium and what it depicts. It reflects historical differences in approaches to filmed plant nature as well as in the use of celluloid – often silent and edited in the camera – or digital video. The programme is inspired by one shot in James Benning's digital video *Ruhr* (2009): of airplanes filmed through leaves where the wind in the trees is generated by the planes. It presents a couple of films of planes shot through plants. The 'Leaves' of the title are sometimes loosely interpreted as petals.

LE REPAS DE BÉBÉ (BABY'S DINNER)

Lumière brothers, France, 1895, DVD (35mm), bw, 1', sil.

A famous example of early cinema. The leaves' action in the background triggered far more excitement in the audience than the human action in the foreground.

PASSANTEN (PASSERS BY)

Helga Fanderl, Germany, 2000, DVD (Super 8), bw, 3'15, sil.

The shrubs in the foreground provide the anchor. We are watching the passing humans from the shrubs' perspective.

BOUQUET 1

Rose Lowder, France, 1995, 16mm, colour, 1', sil.

Here the flowers and the humans share the same space only on the celluloid strip and are merging exclusively in our vision through montage.

FÜR M. (FOR M.)

Helga Fanderl, Germany, 2008, 16mm blow-up (Super 8), colour, 3'13, sil., 18fps

Psychedelic flowers present themselves.

LES TOURNESOLS (SUNFLOWERS)

Rose Lowder, France, 1982, 16mm, colour, 3', sil.

A crowd of sunflowers assumes a twitching presence. Their movement in the wind is enhanced by the animation in the camera.

BOUQUET 2

Rose Lowder, France, 1994, 16mm, colour, 1', sil.

Flowers are moving furiously as if to catch our attention. Their action is generated by the speed of the wind and the camera.

FILTER BEDS

Guy Sherwin, GB, 1990/98, 16mm, bw, 8'09, sound

A phenomenological view of planes seen through long grass and branches. Nature is shot self-consciously and fragmented in the artist's impressions with an emphasis on the medium.

FLUGZEUGE II (AIRPLANES II)

Helga Fanderl, Germany, 2001, DVD (Super 8), colour, 3'20, sil.

More airplanes shot through trees. Because the film is edited in the camera, we are aware that each plane flying behind the trees is a different one and that these are not copies of the same shot. The stuttering images are like repeated attempts to get looking at the world right.

BOUQUET 4

Rose Lowder, France, 1994, 16mm, colour, 1', sil.

In a non-epic struggle between plant and fence matter, camomile flowers wrestle with a mural painting and other things over their dominance of the image we see. The sea air of the Carmargue has contributed to the fence mural by stripping off some of the paint.

LEAVES

Susanne Bürner, Germany, 2009, Blu-ray (HDV), colour, 8'20, sound

The wind in the trees is generated by a wind machine in a park similar to the site of a murder in Antonioni's *Blow-Up*. In *Leaves* we only see plant action – or do we fill the space devoid of human narrative with projections of nature's plotting to dispose of humans?

LEAF AND WIND

Edward Chell and Jason Creasey, GB, 2012, mobile phone DV, colour, 4'09, sound

One leaf is very moved by the wind in autumn. The sound recorded in spring imbues its fate with optimism.

IMPROMPTU

Rose Lowder, France, 1989, 16mm, colour, 8', sound

The artist is in control of the movement of the leaves. A tree stops being animated when people enter the frame. Humans are presented in their 'natural' pace, while the trees assume artificial movement.

A PRISM SPLITS LIGHT

Mike Marshall, GB, 2011, HDV, colour, 8'39, sound

An olive grove in Cyprus is tended by two Vietnamese labourers. Work on the land is depicted in beautiful images with the pleasing glow of shallow focus. Manual labour provides a content background for the plants which populate the areas that are in focus. A worker saws off some branches of an olive tree.

Total running time: 55mins

Screening to be followed by filmmakers, speakers and audience discussion

Drinks reception at the Whitechapel Gallery, 7pm – 8pm

Sunday 19 May 11.00am – 12.10pm

FLORA ctd. (Curated by Silke Panse)

Programme 2: Water

This programme looks at water in its different material compositions, from 'natural' states such as rain, snow, ice and the sea, to its distribution through human-made sprinklers, fountains and sewers. It observes water in its interface with humans and how it affects human motion in relation in its diverse states. The 'Flora' screenings end with a sober nod to 'Fauna.'

REGEN (RAIN)

Joris Ivens and Mannus Franken, Netherlands, 1929, 16mm (35mm), bw, 14', sil.

In this early silent film, water from the sky produces different assemblages with human and nonhuman surfaces.

WASSERFALL (CASCADE)

Helga Fanderl, Germany, 2000, DVD (Super 8), colour, 1', sil.

Water drops are cascading from a fountain in the light.

EAUX D'ARTIFICE

Kenneth Anger, Italy/USA, 1953, 16mm, colour, 13', sound

More fountains with camp water in queer nature – shot when it was deemed liberating to view water as artificial.

WASSERTANZ II (DANCING WATER II)

Helga Fanderl, Germany, 2007, 16mm blow up (8mm), colour, 1'30, sil.

Splashing water gets the close-up treatment.

DAYS LIKE THESE

Mike Marshall, GB, 2003, HDV, colour, 3'20, sound

A sprinkler unceremoniously waters the plants in a very green garden.

SCHLITTSCHUHLAUFEN (ICE SKATING)

Helga Fanderl, Germany, 2002.16mm blow-up (Super 8), colour, 3'20, sil. 18fps

Ice skaters glide across the image tracked through leaves by an inquisitive camera. The leaves prevent a full view on the ice-skaters, who on occasion seem to merge with their image.

SNOW BUSINESS

Silke Panse, GB, 2012, HDV, colour, 5', sound

There's snow business like show business! Human figures make their way across the frame through the snow in manifold ways. In this snowscape, it is the snow that shapes (scapes) human movement, not the other way round. The sound is also directed by the snow, which made the microphone wear a cap.

VOLUME AND FREQUENCY

Mike Marshall, GB, 2009, HDV, colour, 6'40, sound

The wind is in the trees, but also in the waves. Surfers have to submit to the rhythm of the sea and wait to catch a wave.

BOUQUET 8

Rose Lowder, France, 1994, 16mm, colour, 1', sil.

Sails apparently operated by windsurfing humans are sped up in their movement in the water through the pace of the film in the camera. A tranquil holiday scene is transformed into a scene of frantic activities of non-organic movements.

AM SIEL (BY THE DIKE SLUICE)

Peter Nestler, West Germany, 1962, Blu-ray (35mm), bw, 12'11, sound

Narrated from the perspective of the water: 'If you cast your eye on the little stream that is me, me the sewer.'

LEVIATHAN (Trailer)

Verena Paravel and Lucien Castaing-Taylor, USA/France/UK, 2012, HD, colour, 4'10, sound

One shot of the effect of human intervention through consumption into sea life leads over to the 'Fauna' programme on a sombre note.

Total running time: 65mins

12.10pm – 2.00pm: LUNCH BREAK

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Sunday 19 May 2.00pm – 4.00pm**FAUNA** (Curated by Anat Pick)**Programme 3: Love**

Animal films often deal with empathy and care in human-animal relationships. But affection is frequently rooted in unequal power relations between animals and their human companions. This collection of shorts explores the different encounters between humans and animals that cinema manufactures, captures, or records. The slippage between power and love that humans and animals experience is a recurring theme. The title of this programme is, at least in part, ironic.

MADAME BABYLAS AIME LES ANIMAUX (MADAME BABYLAS LOVES ANIMALS)

Alfred Machin, France, DVD (35mm), 1911, bw, 6', sil.

Madame Babylas loves animals too much. As her house slowly transforms into a domestic zoo, her frustrated husband plans his revenge. This is the first of two films by Machin, the neglected pioneer of animal cinema, included in the 'Fauna' programme.

MON CHIEN (MY DOG)

Georges Franju, France, digibeta (35mm), 1955, bw, 15', sound

The sad tale of an abandoned dog in a Paris dog pound. As in his 1949 *Blood of the Beasts*, Franju includes animals in his bleak reflections on postwar France.

PRO IYUBOV (ABOUT LOVE)

Vladimir Tyulkin, Kazakhstan, 2005, Beta SP, colour, 26', sound

A woman lives with seventy abandoned dogs in her one-bedroom flat.

V TEMNOTE (IN THE DARK)

Sergei Dvortsevov, Russia, 2004, digibeta (35mm), colour, 41', sound

An elderly blind man lives alone in the suburbs of Moscow. His sole companion is a white, mischievous cat.

IVERET (BLIND)

Chen Sheinberg, Israel, 2001, DVD (8mm video), colour, 3'19, sound

A blind stray cat navigates her way by sound alone in a back yard of Tel Aviv. The cat's sightless gaze 'sees' us.

HAYONA HAILEMET (THE MUTE DOVE)

Chen Sheinberg, Israel, 2012, HD file (mobile phone DV), colour, 3'49, sound

A mute, earthbound dove observed crossing a Tel Aviv street.

PASHT

Stan Brakhage, USA, 1965, 16mm, colour 6', silent

'In honour of the cat, so named, and the goddess of all cats which she is named after (that taking shape in the Egyptian mind of the spirit of cats), and of birth (as she was then giving kittens when the pictures were taken), of sex as source, and finally of death (as this making was the salvage therefrom and in memorium)' (Stan Brakhage).

ELEGY

Anthea Kennedy and Ian Wiblin, GB, 2001, Beta SP (miniDV), bw, 3'25, sound

'A film in memory of a cat, depicting her nocturnal space as imagined by us. This space is our "garden," a dank and decaying backyard full of weeds and wildlife, a place that belonged more to her than to us. Various creatures join in the process of mourning, on and off screen' (Ian Wiblin and Anthea Kennedy)

DOG ROSE AFTERNOON

Bev Zalcock and Sara Chambers, 2004, Beta SP (8mm), colour, 4'30, sound.

Birds and bees provide the soundtrack. 'Made on a zero budget, it is a tribute to Maisie the dog star and to the spirit of nature and the underground' (Bev Zalcock).

Total running time: 109min**Screening to be followed by filmmakers, speakers, and audience discussion**

Sunday 19 May 4.30pm – 5.30pm**FAUNA ctd.** (Curated by Anat Pick)**Programme 4: Observation and Spectacle**

The programme begins with a selection of early shorts made during, or just after, the period Tom Gunning called the 'cinema of attractions.' Here, living animals are the spectacle, performing tricks, used to shock, or reinforce cinematic authenticity. The films reveal the key role of animals in the development of the medium. In the latter part of the programme, we shift from spectacle to observation, a more interrogative and reflective approach to looking that questions the spectacular value of cinematic animals as well as viewers' assumptions about them.

THE ACROBATIC FLY

Percy Smith, GB, 1908, Beta SP (35mm), bw, 3', sil.

Smith's trick film in which flies are engaged in virtuoso feats of juggling was an early sensation.

LA PEINE DU TALION (TIT FOR TAT)

Gaston Velle (Pathé Frères), France, 1906, DVD (35mm), colour, 4'40, sound.

One of Pathé's 1905-6 colour films, this trick-féerie film uses the polychrome stencil colouring process to depict a ballet of insects. The film includes a comical 'insect revenge' against human dominion.

DOG OUTWITS THE KIDNAPPERS

Lewis Fitzhamon, GB, 1908, DVD (35mm), bw, 7', sil.

The sequel to Cecil Hepworth's 1905 hit *Rescued by Rover* is arguably more vibrant than its better-known precursor. The film reunites Blair the dog, and Hepworth's daughter Barbara in a fast and furious adventure.

NUIT DE NOËL (CHRISTMAS EVE)

Pathé Frères (director unknown), France, 1908, digibeta (35mm), bw and colour, 13', sil.

The film proceeds as a light-hearted comedy until the last shot. Though it falls outside the period of the 'cinema of attractions,' the film's coda combines animal spectacle and shock.

EISBÄR (POLAR BEAR)

Helga Fanderl, Germany, 1992, DVD (Super 8), bw, 2', sil., 18fps

A captive polar bear swims in the zoo's little pool.

PIRKUS (CONVULSION)

Chen Sheinberg, Israel, 1998, miniDV (35mm), colour, 3'30, sound

A dung beetle struggles to flip itself over, and cries out for help. The sound in the film is the original sound of the insect.

LEAHAR MITKEFET HAARBE (AFTER THE LOCUST ATTACK)

Chen Sheinberg, Israel, 2013, HD file (HD), colour, 3'37, sound

Rumours of a locust attack were greatly exaggerated. In place of the menacing 'swarms,' Sheinberg encountered a lone, injured locust, looking directly at us.

TRUE-LIFE ADVENTURE I & II

Erin Espelie, USA, 2013, Blu-Ray (HD), colour, 8', sound

The world premiere of *True-Life Adventure* parts I & II. The first was seen here in last year's London Film Festival. Espelie trains her camera on the myriad life forms that coexist within a small area around a mountain creek. 'When nature writes the screenplays, she doesn't abide by crescendos.' (Erin Espelie)

Total running time: 45**Screening to be followed by filmmakers, speakers, and audience discussion**

Sunday 19 May 6.00pm – 7.30pm

FAUNA ctd. (Curated by Anat Pick)

Programme 5: Political Animals

Although unacknowledged as political subjects in their own right, animals have been intrinsic to our understanding of politics. This programme looks at animals' place—as agents, victims, symbols, or pawns—in a variety of political enterprises, from colonialism to revolution. Animals' role might seem incidental or allegorical, but the films suggest, explicitly or in subtext, that politics is never exclusively human. The programme proposes opening up politics to the ecology, ontology, and ethics beyond the human.

LA CHASSE À LA PANTHÈRE (PANTHER HUNTING)

Alfred Machin (Pathé Frères), France, 1909, Blu-ray (35mm) bw and colour, 8', sil.

The second Alfred Machin films in the programme. In one of Machin's series of hunting films, white hunters proudly display their spoils in a lush African landscape. The film is shot in Pathécolour. Its unabashed attitude towards its human and nonhuman subjects is an example of the colonial underpinnings of many early travel and safari films.

VÖGEL AM CHECKPOINT CHARLIE (BIRDS AT CHECKPOINT CHARLIE)

Helga Fanderl, Germany, 2001, 16mm blow-up (Super 8), bw, 3'20, sil, 18fps

Bird formations above the invisible line between the eastern and western parts of Berlin.

UNSERE AFRIKAREISE (OUR TRIP TO AFRICA)

Peter Kubelka, Austria, 1966, 16mm, colour, 13', sound

Images of a European hunting safari are intercut with the bourgeois travellers merrily chatting. The mismatch between sound and image delivers a powerful critique of colonialism.

KLEINKRIEG (WAR IN MINIATURE)

Kurt Blank-Kubla, Germany, 1938, 16mm, bw, 14', sound

A 'kulturfilm' about insects and pests that threaten Germany. The solution to the problem is the use Zyklon B gas, the cyanide-based pesticide. A thinly veiled National Socialist allegory on the extermination of 'undesirables.'

ANIMALI CRIMINALI (CRIMINAL ANIMALS)

Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi, Italy, 1994, DVD (16mm), colour, 7', sound

'Oh nature, where is your providence, where is your beauty? You that armed the animals, one species against another, and man against all' (*Diderot*)

RAT LIFE AND DIET IN NORTH AMERICA

Joyce Wieland, Canada, 1968, 16mm, colour, 16'18, sound

Rats, often seen as 'vermin,' are representatives of the oppressed and dispossessed in the American prison system (represented by cats). The rats rebel and set up a free, just, and ecological community in Canada.

ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

Lucy Powell, Germany, 2009, DV, bw, 3'30, sil.

A film with no images, only text, depicting the ecological devastation of the sub-Antarctic island of Macquarie.

HARK 2

David Chapman and David Cottridge, GB, 2007, 5.1 surround sound, colour, 8'8

Collected bio-acoustic and environmental recordings from Gunpowder Park. These recordings are used as the source material for the composition of a number of soundscapes, shaped through digital processing and presented via 'surround sound' technology.

ONLOOKER'S DOUBT

Johanna Hällsten, Sweden/UK, 2009, 5.1 surround sound, looped, 9'9

A dialogic sound piece in which human, bird, and other environmental sounds like engines and sirens converse. The result is a material web of expression.

Total running time: 84mins

Screening to be followed by filmmakers, speakers, and audience discussion

Bar will be open until 8.00pm