

THE **B**IG **PICTURE** **g**



a new take on film in chicago

This series is a co-presentation of the Gene Siskel Film Center,
the Chicago History Museum, and the Chicago Film Archives.

The Big Picture: A New Take on Film in Chicago
Screening at the Gene Siskel Film Center in November 2007
Flanked by the Hollywood storytelling machine to the West, and the legacy of art cinema and cinema-verite documentary to the East, film production in the Chicago metropolis has historically been relegated to the realm of the industrial, commercial, and educational film. In collaboration with the exhibition 'Big Picture: A New View of Painting in Chicago' at the Chicago History Museum, these programs explore the connections between these traditions of industrial production and the under-valued amateur and artistic cinematic output of filmmakers working in Chicago and the Midwest.

Saturday November 3rd at 3:00pm & Tuesday November 6th at 6:00pm
Cityscape As Landscape: The City As An Ever Variable Constant

Saturday, November 10th at 3:00pm & Tuesday, November 13th at 6:00pm
Domestic Portraiture

Sunday, November 18th at 5:00pm & Tuesday, November 20th at 8:00pm
Form Becomes Function: The Institute Of Design And The Art In Industry

Sunday, November 25th at 3:00pm & Tuesday, November 27th at 8:15pm
An Accidental Avant-garde

Programming and notes by Michelle Puetz and Andy Uhrich of the Chicago Film Archives, with programming assistance from Jim Dempsey.

The exhibition, "Big Picture: A New View of Painting in Chicago," is on display at the Chicago History Museum until August 2008, and was curated by John Corbett and Jim Dempsey. For more information, please visit: www.chicagohistory.org

For more information about Chicago Film Archives, please visit: www.chicagofilmarchives.org

"The Big Picture: A New Take on Film in Chicago" serves as a companion piece to a concurrent art exhibit curated by John Corbett and Jim Dempsey at the Chicago History Museum with a very similar title, "The Big Picture: A New Look at Painting in Chicago." Both the "Big Picture" painting exhibit and this film series attempt to look at their respective mediums through a new lens, and are organized thematically rather than historically. This non-linear organization allows us to tell stories that have been forgotten, and brings together modes of artistic production previously seen as disparate and far flung. While we are interested in drawing broad connections between all of these films, we also tried to remain sensitive to each individual work's defining characteristics and differences.

Organized around similar themes – the cityscape of Chicago, domestic and social space, the figure and abstraction – these two exhibitions provide complimentary viewpoints on Chicago's history and culture, and accent the particularities of the mediums of film and painting. They present a fantastic opportunity to map out creative ties in Chicago, and illuminate unexpected and intriguing overlaps between the art world and film industry. For example, filmmaker and painter Tom Palazzolo, who was associated with the 1960's art group the "Hairy Who" and is a key figure in Chicago's underground film world, is included in both "Big Picture" exhibits.

The four "Big Picture" film programs are a sweeping look at an alternative history of film production in Chicago, and have left many questions unanswered and paths open for exploration. Many important artists and filmmakers didn't make it into this series, including experimental filmmaker Madeline Tourtelot (who also ran an art gallery in Chicago in the 1950's) and Bert Van Bork (who worked as an educational filmmaker for Encyclopedia Britannica while creating vivid expressionistic paintings.)

If the history of painting in Chicago is one that is still in need of elaboration and exploration, the story of film in Chicago is even more neglected, woefully bypassed, and insufficiently recorded. The history of film production in the Chicago metropolis has typically been relegated to the realm of the industrial, commercial, and educational film – completely disregarding visionary, individual, and idiosyncratic voices. This trend implicitly denigrates the industrial filmmaker to the realm of mere commerce, and overlooks the inventive and personal work often found in these productions. It is our hope that these four programs will explore the connections between traditions of industrial production and the under-valued amateur and artistic output of filmmakers working in Chicago and the Midwest, as a way to begin bringing the big picture of Chicago filmmaking into sharper focus.

Michelle Puetz and Andy Urich, Chicago Film Archives

Saturday November 3rd at 3pm & Tuesday November 6th at 6pm

Eleanor and Wayne Boyer in person on Tuesday!

**CITYSCAPE AS LANDSCAPE:
THE CITY AS AN EVER VARIABLE CONSTANT**

CITYSCAPE AS LANDSCAPE presents the ever-changing Chicago skyline as a backdrop for various cinematic interpretations of urban life. While these films range in date from the 1930's to the late 1970s, the focus of this program is on the turbulent mid-century years - when Chicago architecture experienced a dramatic shift from the stately organic turn of the century work typified by Louis Sullivan to the minimalist Miesian structures of Skidmore, Owens, and Merrill, among others. This transformation, driven by modernist idealism and the often unforgiving economic realities of post-war America, drastically affected the citizens of Chicago. Charting the resulting personal and psychological upheavals, these films reveal the deep and, at times, irrational connections between buildings and the people who reside in and among them.

Approximate running time: 87 minutes.

CHICAGO BREAKDOWN

Gary A. Brown, 1976, sound / color, 16mm, 14 minutes

Opening with the sound of an audience applauding in conjunction with images of the city streets at night and the sun rising over the downtown skyline, Gary Brown's bizarre city symphony immediately implicates the viewer as a participant in its playful examination of 1970's Chicago. Historically, the city symphony is an avant-garde film genre (popular primarily in Europe in the 1920's and 30's) that celebrated the architectural sites of the urban landscape in conjunction with representations of speed and movement, industrial development, and the human momentum of its inhabitants and workers. Brown's vision of Chicago steers away from the industrial production of its citizens, and rather focuses on celebrating the city as a diverse and kinetic organism.

The three movements of the film are bounded by musical accompaniment, and noises of the living city penetrate the film's energetic soundtrack. Intercutting scenes of firefighters, mercantile exchange traders, and a Playboy magazine photographer and his model, Brown represents the work that happens inside the downtown skyscrapers and city buildings, alongside motion animated sequences of moving cars and picturesque long-shots of the cityscape.

Brown was assigned to create a film that was an "uncensored look at the city of Chicago" (presumably as a publicity appeal to potential investors and tourists), and his work was partially funded by the Committee for Economic and Cultural Development under the administration of Mayor Richard J. Daley. Upon completion of *CHICAGO BREAKDOWN*, Brown was asked by the city administration to remove the Playboy photo shoot footage, and when he refused, the film was shelved by the city and never publicly screened with their support. The film was eventually screened on WTTW in Tom Weinberg's "Image Union" program, a weekly television show devoted to the work of independent filmmakers, video artists, and producers.

CHICAGO LOOP

James Benning, 1976, sound / color, 16mm, 9 minutes

Benning's dizzying and propulsive examination of three different and distinctly Chicago sites (the Lakeshore, downtown Wacker Drive and State/Michigan, and Wrigley Field) is in keeping with the structural and formal concerns of most of his experimental film works, yet the locations he chose for his 180 and 360 degree pan fluctuations lend the film a critical edge. As typical tourist destinations, these three settings provide a background for Benning's unnerving looped audio recitations and mathematical camera movements, and challenge the viewer to investigate the locations, as Chicago-specific sites, in new and unsettling ways.

THE BUILDING: CHICAGO STOCK EXCHANGE

Wayne Boyer, 1975, sound / color, 16mm on video, 12 minutes

THE BUILDING is a record of the 1972 destruction of Louis Sullivan and Dankmar Adler's Old Stock Exchange Building, formerly at 30 North La Salle, and the effort by architect John Vinci and photographer/preservationist Richard Nickel to salvage its Trading Room (which is now housed at the Art Institute of Chicago). Told without narration, Boyer utilizes a variety of documentary techniques, including black and white cinéma vérité style interviews, time lapse footage of the actual demolition, and color interludes exploring the visual beauty and complexity of the building's ornamentation, to examine the powerful emotional connection between the public and a building. More than just a document of the tearing down of a building, the film is a melancholy paean to Adler and Sullivan's architecture of idealistic humanism, and a eulogy to both its, and Nickel's, passing.

Boyer and fellow instructor in the Photography, Film and Animation program at UIC, Bill Mahin, rushed to document the demolition of the building once the attempts to save it had failed. A graduate of the Institute of Design, Boyer was introduced to Richard Nickel by Aaron

Siskind, a teacher they had both studied with. According to Boyer, the brief shot of Nickel speaking in *THE BUILDING* is the only time the reserved photographer spoke on camera during the shoot. Boyer has worked in film in Chicago since the early 1960's as an animator and educator in realms often considered disparate: design and advertising work with Goldsholl Design's film division; personal, experimental film practice (his work has been exhibited in various Chicago avant garde film venues); and educational and instructional videos made with his wife Eleanor, herself a videomaker who has worked extensively in Chicago's political video art community

EQUITABLE BUILDING

Jack Behrend, 1964, silent / color, 16mm, 2 minute excerpt

EQUITABLE BUILDING is short excerpt of raw footage shot in time-lapse by Chicago-based industrial filmmaker Jack Behrend, which documents the building of Skidmore, Owens, and Merrill's 1965 Equitable Building. Sped up just enough to make the construction methods employed clearly visible, but not fast enough to quickly show the construction to completion, the film denies the pleasure we come to expect from similar time lapse films. In combination with *THE BUILDING*, these two films highlight the tumultuous struggle in post-war Chicago between the preservation of older architectural styles and the creation of a new, and more modern, Chicago skyline.

Now retired, Behrend worked in Chicago for over 40 years and played a crucial role in the city as both the owner of a film equipment rental house and a mentor to many young filmmakers. While he was often hired by clients to test their products using high speed or infra-red cameras to reveal flaws otherwise unnoticeable (cf. *GOLF HIGH SPEED FOOTAGE* and *BABBIT BLAST* - playing in other screenings in this series), this footage was shot for his own pleasure. Shot from a friend's editing room at 333 N. Michigan, Behrend recorded the entire building's entire construction from, in his words, "the ground-breaking to the flag-raising on top."

13 TOKENS

Margaret Conneely and Central Cinematographers, 1967, silent / color, 16mm, 15 minutes

Chicago architecture is the site of desire and erotic longing in this humorous and ribald narrative short by a local group of amateur filmmakers. An accidentally discarded packet of telescope tokens for the observation tower of the Prudential Building allows a bow tie bedecked man to spy into the apartments of the Marina Towers. Recently completed, the Towers fantastically capture the spirit of the changing times of the 1960's, including various sexual freedoms, go-

go dancing hippy chicks, and crazy artists. The voyeur is stuck in the older, styled Prudential Building, and can only (frustratingly) observe these exciting goings-on through a telescope - an inadvertent comment on both the changing times and mores, and newer styles of architecture.

This film and the others by Conneely included in this series are examples of the once thriving and interconnected groups of amateur film clubs which existed through most of America. Starting around the 1930's, these groups allowed motivated home moviemakers to engage in their hobby with a collaborative community - blurring the distinctions between the amateur and the professional. Margaret, who died last year at the age of 91, played an important role in that world through her contributions to the Photographic Society of America and professional work as a medical filmmaker at Loyola.

Note: While the end titles designate a sound credit, this print is silent and no separate sound track has been found.

SUPER UP

Kenji Kanesaka, 1966, sound / color, 16mm, 14 minutes

Kenji Kanesaka, one of the founding members of the "Film Independent" group and the Japan Filmmakers Co-op in Tokyo, is an experimental filmmaker and photographer who famously organized an experimental film festival with Takahiko Jimura at the Sogetsu Art Center in Japan (probably the most important exhibition space for alternative and avant-garde art in Japan in the 1960's), and documented Fluxus happenings - art performances by collectives such as Hi-Red Center - and the vibrant, often chaotic, underground art scene in Tokyo at the end of the 1960's. Kanesaka visited the States frequently in the 1960's, and while little is known about his time in Chicago, he was commissioned by local producer Marv Gold to make *SUPER UP* while he was visiting here in 1965/66.

The film is an exceptional critique of the structures of racial and class segregation, consumerism and lust, sexual energy and desire, and the domination of (and link between) advertising, consumption, sexuality, and the police. In the context of this program, *SUPER UP* represents a critical counterpart to utopian visions of urban growth and development through both its content and display of the degraded architecture and burned out tenement buildings of the Near North and South Side. The film's central character rebels against the ubiquity of brand name products, the sexualized allure of consumer desire and capital, and races through a city that is summarized by an onslaught of signs, advertisements, and products. The Chicago represented in *SUPER UP* is a city that is a dystopian site of manic consumption and

capitalist lust. The film's exuberant energy, hodge-podge portrayal of the beauty and decay of the city, and its interjection of race, sexual desire, and consumerism into the form of experimental cinema make it an incredibly unique and powerful document. Directed by Kenji Kanesaka; produced by Marv Gold; edited by Ron Clasky; photographed by Dick McConnell.

RIVERVIEW

Caille Family home movie from the collection of David Drazin, late 1930s to 1943, silent / b&w, 16mm on video, 4 minute excerpt

This home movie footage of a trip to Chicago's Riverview theme park starts with an ascension up the "Bobs" roller coaster and the resulting, vertiginous plunge. It then continues through (now long-gone) rides such as the Chutes, the Flywheels, the Strat-O-Stat, the Flying Scooters, and the Pair-O-Chutes. From 1904 to 1967, Riverview existed at the intersection of Belmont and Western, and occupied, for Chicago, a role similar to that of New York's Coney Island – it was a place where the anxieties of modern city life could easily be cast away in thrills. Thrills, of course, which safely exploited the most common fears related to modern travel (speed) and architecture (height). Shot both in black and white and a fairly recent invention from 1935, color Kodachrome, the film aptly expresses the stomach dropping experience of the park and its rides from the standpoint of spectator and thrill seeker.

CHICAGO: CITY TO SEE IN '63

Margaret Conneely, 1962, sound / color, 16mm preservation print, 12 minutes

The city as theme park and visual museum is expanded in Margaret Conneely's film *CHICAGO: CITY TO SEE IN '63*, which advertised the Photographic Society of America's 1963 convention held in Chicago. An idiosyncratic take on both city symphony films and films for local tourism, the film follows a young couple as they take in and photograph Chicago's famous buildings and neighborhoods. Made for amateur photographers and filmmakers always looking for the best shot, it comes replete with fantastic footage of Chicago buildings and neighborhoods including the Wrigley Building, the Merchandise Mart, Maxwell Street, the Robie House, neon lit nightlife, and various shots of the Marina Towers under construction - a testament to how quickly the towers captured the local imagination. A sense of oddball whimsy is added by the acerbic and witty off-screen narrator, who composes a secret mash note to the city like a secret admirer who loves both the flaws and glories of the object of their desire.

Saturday, November 10th at 3pm & Tuesday, November 13th at 6pm

DOMESTIC PORTRAITURE

This program illustrates the manner in which cinematic conventions are embedded in amateur film production, as well as the various ways in which non-professional films challenge the candy-coated portraits of domestic life presented by Hollywood and television. The home becomes a battleground of sorts in Margaret Conneely's wonderful illustration of a group of fed-up housewives' revenge on their husbands in *MISTER E* (1959), while in Peter Kuttner's *MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB* (1966), a young African American couple's budding romance is the front line in the struggle between the sacred and the secular.

Approximate running time: 75 minutes.

THE DEDICATION OF TEMPLE SHOLOM

Abraham and Edward Weiss, 1940/1928, silent / b&w, 16mm on BetaSP video, 10 minutes

This recently preserved amateur film documents the 1928 dedication of Temple Sholom, located at 3480 N. Lake Shore Drive. With the synagogue barely under construction, the focus of this film is not on the building itself, but rather on the community which has jubilantly gathered together to consecrate its creation. While this footage is from 1928, the opening credits were made in 1940, making this film both a record of an earlier community event, and a visualization of a group's shared memory. Designed by three Chicago students in 1921 at what later became the Illinois Institute of Technology, the Temple was finished in 1930 and remains an important meeting place for the local Jewish community. This film was preserved through the efforts of members of Temple Sholom, in recognition of its importance to their cultural and religious history.

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB

Peter Kuttner and the Pre-College Film Workshop, 1965, silent / b&w, 16mm, 8 minutes

A recent graduate of Northwestern's film program, Peter Kuttner was hired in 1965 as part of a program funded by President Johnson's War on Poverty campaign to conduct a filmmaking workshop for African-American high school students in New Orleans. Acted, written, shot, and directed by these students with technical advice given by Kuttner, *MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB* is a revealing look into the private lives of black teenagers - a community and a topic rarely captured on film during the 1960's. On the surface, the film is a simple story of a young couple that falls in love and the troubles that inevitably threaten to tear

them apart. But, the source of the couple's friction is religion, and the way in which they overcome their differences adds a melancholy twist to the story.

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB presents the viewer with a sense of the wider cultural struggles involved in negotiations of the sacred, the secular, deep-seeded traditions, and a "modern" way of life. While obviously not shot in Chicago, the film is a perfect example of the work of socially responsible and politically motivated filmmakers who started filming in Chicago in the 1960's (such as Kartemquin and the Film Group). Kuttner has continued using film to connect politics and the private lives of the under represented in his work with Kartemquin and Chicago Newsreel, and in films such as *TRICKBAG* and *THE END OF THE NIGHTSTICK*.

DOUBLE EXPOSED BABY

Home movie from the collection of Nick Osborn, exact date unknown (1950's), silent / color, 8mm on video, 5 minutes

This odd and visually stunning home movie is a ghostly look at a baby boy in various stages of his infancy. Most likely an accidental in-camera double exposure, this 8mm reel shows the baby simultaneously bassinet-bound and sitting up on the floor and sucking his thumb. Mix in some footage of a parade superimposed over shots of baby's diapers, and almost perfectly matched shots of (presumably) mother and daughter holding the little boy, and you've got one creepy document of baby's first year.

THE 45

Margaret Conneely, 1960, sound / color, 16mm, 14 minutes

This extremely troubling, and, at times, darkly funny portrait of one woman's unabashed efforts to protect her man is an unsavory look at the politics of sexuality and power in 1950's America. As Conneely said of the film, the concept for *THE 45* came about as the result of only two elements – a prop and an actress – perhaps unconsciously echoing Godard's statement that all a film needs for a plot is a woman and a gun. Linking consumption and sex, Conneely presents us with a woman who understands that the way to win over a man isn't always through his stomach. Conneely shoots the disgusting man's insatiable appetite for wine and cake in a series of extreme close-up shots, and then later links the man's unending gustatory desire to his sexual appetite. The film's ending is a sad twist, as *THE 45* shows that the domination of male desire, needs, and ambitions in the 1950's posed a very real threat to the average American housewife's independence and sexuality.

DANCE PARTY

Home movie from the collection of Nick Osborn, exact date unknown (1950's), silent / color, 8mm on video, 5 minutes

Opening with an outstretched hand which beckons either the cameraman or a fellow guest to come closer, this short home movie from the Chicago area is a beautiful abstraction of moving bodies. Swatches of fabric and color move and sway as couples dance in front of the camera lens. Presumably shot in extreme close-up because the cameraman didn't have a shorter lens on-site, this document of a dance party in the family living room becomes more of an exercise in the abstraction of form than just a memory of one evening's fun.

RICKY AND ROCKY

Jeff Kreines and Tom Palazzolo, 1972, sound / color, 16mm, 15 minutes

After his intensely febrile takes on Chicago culture and politics in the late 1960s (recently preserved by Chicago Filmmakers and screened at the Film Center in September 2007), Tom Palazzolo teamed up with sound engineer Jeff Kreines and made a number of cinéma vérité-style documentaries. *RICKY AND ROCKY* is a wry, but respectful, look at a surprise wedding shower and follows the unfolding activities of this ritual in an almost ethnographic manner. Refusing to pretend that the camera is a unseen and uninvolved observer of events, Kreines and Palazzolo matter-of-factly participate in the proceedings - at times following the orders of the groom's mother as if hired hands, while at other times acting as a sounding board for the barely hidden anxieties felt at such family gatherings. Mischievously humanistic, the film pokes fun at commonly shared foibles and inoffensively inane customs without being mean spirited or insulting. *RICKY AND ROCKY* remains a perfect time capsule of working class Chicago family life and traditions in the early 1970's. Tom Palazzolo, in both his films and paintings, is still documenting Chicago in all of its kooky and endearing glory, while Kreines is an invaluable designer of specialized and vital film preservation technology.

THE BRAT

Caille Family home movie from the collection of David Drazin, exact date unknown (1932 - 1943), silent / b&w, 16mm on video, 6 minutes

While we don't have any substantive information about the Caille Family, this short comedy has the feel of a film that was produced by two die-hard amateur cinema enthusiasts (or just two frustrated parents). The sophisticated intertitles illustrate a technical proficiency that is rare among home movies, and indicate that the film's makers were either involved in the amateur cinema league, which was

extremely popular in the middle of the century, or were avid readers of popular amateur film magazines such as *Movie Makers*, *American Cinematographer*, and *Photoplay*. Local amateur film clubs were popular ways for small gauge filmmakers to meet and exhibit their films, and a film like the Caille's *THE BRAT* must have drawn quite a few laughs in its day. From local musician and internationally known silent film accompanist David Drazin's personal collection of amateur films, *THE BRAT* is one of a series of films shot by a local Chicago family, identified only by their last name - Caille.

MISTER E

Margaret Conneely, 1959, sound / color, 16mm, 12 minutes

A cynical examination of the hidden underbelly of suburban America in the 1950's, Conneely's *MISTER E* focuses on an unhappy housewife's revenge on her gambling and absent husband. The dialogue overdubbing and 1950's interiors seem as though they could have inspired the experimental films and camp aesthetics of filmmakers like George and Mike Kuchar and John Waters, yet *MISTER E* is a completely unique example of Conneely's bizarre aesthetic and sense of narrative progression. A striking lack of causal logic runs through the film, and the narrative seems to veer off into the realm of the crime-spoof-absurd after the introduction of the mysterious mannequin man, "Mister E." After Mister E appears, the film's plot really ceases to make much sense, and this is exactly what makes it so indicative of Conneely's strange sensibility. As a female filmmaker working in the 1950's who gained a great deal of respect and notoriety for both her award-winning films and her involvement in the Photographic Society of America, Conneely's focus on issues that pertain exclusively to the plight of the American woman in the 1950's make her films of particular interest to feminist and cultural historians. *MISTER E* is a perfect antidote to the whitewashed histories of the mid-century American household presented by popular television programs such as "Leave It To Beaver," "The Donna Reed Show," and "Father Knows Best."

THE POSTMAN

Home movie from the collection of Nick Osborn, exact date unknown (1950's); silent / color, 8mm on video, 20 seconds

"Please Mr. Postman, look and see, if there's a letter in your bag for me . . ."

Sunday, November 18th at 5pm & Tuesday, November 20th at 8pm

Hattula Moholy-Nagy in person at both screenings!

FORM BECOMES FUNCTION:

THE INSTITUTE OF DESIGN AND THE ART IN INDUSTRY

In 1937, László Moholy-Nagy moved from London to Chicago and founded the New Bauhaus with the intention of bringing the teaching and design methods of the Bauhaus to America. The New Bauhaus lasted only one year, but Moholy-Nagy persevered by founding the School of Design (which, over time, evolved into the Institute of Design at the Illinois Institute of Technology) and left a lasting legacy on the industrial and commercial creative output of the city of Chicago.

Joining films directed by Moholy-Nagy with the work of his students and associates, this program examines the intersections of art and functionality, inspiration and occupation, and the visionary and the market-driven in works that range from pure abstraction to the purely utilitarian. Often made by students and teachers of the school's photography department, the films from ID combine a focused attention to the possibilities of the New Vision of the camera with an astute and concerned eye to the world around them. Additionally, the program begins to tentatively explore the connections between the forward-thinking design philosophy of the ID and the larger film world in Chicago – notably through the films of ID students who went on to work in graphic design, educational film production, animation, advertising, and experimental filmmaking.

Approximate running time: 72 minutes.

LICHTSPIEL SCHWARZ-WEISS-GRAU (LIGHTPLAY BLACK-WHITE-GRAY)

László Moholy Nagy, 1930, silent / b&w, 16mm, 5 minutes

While LICHTSPIEL was made 7 years prior to Moholy-Nagy's move to Chicago, it is an exemplary example of his overarching desire to integrate artistic principles with the functionality of design. The film is an experimental documentary (of sorts) of Moholy-Nagy's kinetic sculpture, the "Light-Space Modulator," which was publically presented in 1930 and considered to be the first example of an environmental light machine. The film uses re-photography, in-camera matting, negative stock, prisims, and multiple-exposure techniques that are visually reminiscent of Constructivist imagery and Moholy-Nagy's groundbreaking photograms, to create a film in which shadows, light-plays, layered abstractions, and the mechanics of the machine are integrated into a dense and perpetually shifting visual landscape. Moholy-Nagy's critical writings on film from this period focused on what he considered to be the basic tenants of the still, relatively young

medium: light, movement, and sound. LICHTSPIEL is a visually stunning examination of Moholy-Nagy's preoccupation with the cinema as a new tool for examining what he and Alfréd Kemény termed "the dynamic-constructive system of forces" in which both kinetic sculptures and the cinema could tease out connections between "man, material forces, and space." In Moholy-Nagy's own words (published as a proposal-synopsis of the film in 1928-30), he created, with LICHTSPIEL, a work of art in which ultimately, "all concrete shapes dissolve in light."

DESIGN WORKSHOPS

László Moholy-Nagy, 1944, silent / color, 16mm on video, 33 minutes
Screening on Sunday, November 18th only

Made with funding from a larger grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, DESIGN WORKSHOPS functions as promotional film for the teaching methods of the ID, a record of its creative activity, and a visual summation of Moholy-Nagy's guiding principles. The output of the different workshops are highlighted and show the wide array of objects produced at the Institute - from the potentially practical to the pleasingly abstract. Examples include beautifully simple chairs, a light bulb oven, plexiglass chess sets, mobile sculptures of paper, and wartime camouflage designs. The objects are frequently shown under construction, revealing the creative impulse at the genesis of the design, as well as the important role teaching exercises playing in revealing the possibilities of material. Additionally, the designs are shown functionally, which must not only have justified the work of the ID to donors and backers, but also acknowledges the critical importance Moholy-Nagy placed on designing objects that reflect the biologic needs of people. At times, the footage of the students' work focuses on its formal qualities and the way the objects reflect light and shadows, abstracting the designs in a manner similar to Moholy-Nagy's earlier film, LICHTSPIEL. Finally, the students themselves are shown enthusiastically engaged with their work, and their zeal for Moholy-Nagy's idealistic mission remains infectious 63 years later.

DO NOT DISTURB

Motion Picture Class of the Institute of Design under the direction of László Moholy-Nagy, 1945, originally silent / color (music added later), 16mm on video, 19 minutes

Screening on Tuesday, November 20th only

DO NOT DISTURB is a class project made by ID film students under the tutelage of Moholy-Nagy – a collaborative teaching method later employed by filmmakers and teachers such as Tom Palazzolo – bringing to life a twenty year-old photomontage made by Moholy-

Nagy. And while this certainly highlights the transmission of knowledge, skills, and style from teacher to student, the class discovers (and uncovers) the psychological undertones hidden in the formally constructed photomontage by their instructor. Similar to the Freudian explorations of the subconscious by contemporaneous avant-garde film artists like Maya Deren and Sidney Peterson, the students utilize experimental camera and editing techniques to portray a shared dream world of seduction and frustration. By incorporating art and design works by fellow students into this story of a feverish psycho-sexual state, they reveal a source of the creative impulse and provide an emotionality to work that is easily seen as cold and abstract. However, being students of the Institute of Design (with its strong emphasis on the physical materiality of the object), the film ends with an image of scissors cutting a roll of 16mm film – an action that draws attention to the film being watched and the act of its production.

UNION PIER 1942 FILM EXPERIMENTS

Morton and Millie Goldsholl, 1942, silent / b&w, 16mm, 14 minutes

Mildred and Morton Goldsholl both attended the School of Design in the late 1930's and early 1940's, and their later film work straddled the worlds of design, experimental filmmaking, advertising, and educational film production. Morton ran his own design firm, Goldsholl Design Associates, which, alongside graphic design work (such as creating the Motorola "M"), produced commercials for Revlon and 7-UP, animated children's films, and made personal art films with Millie. Made while Millie was at the School of Design (possibly as a school project), and certainly nothing like a finished film, this footage typifies the school's emphasis on the importance of a thorough understanding of material. The Goldsholls use the capabilities of film and the camera to examine the visual possibilities of a subject, starting with a bouncing ball - a reference to the child-like sense of exploration that was central to Moholy-Nagy's pedagogical method.

GOLF HIGH SPEED FOOTAGE

Jack Behrend, 1975, silent / color, 16mm, 2 minutes

While not a student or direct associate of the Institute of Design, Jack Behrend (and this product design testing film), are representative of the wider film industry in Chicago. Made for Wilson Sporting Goods, the film was shot at 10,000 frames per second - slowing down the point of impact enough that product designers could study the duration of contact between club and golf ball. The white background and measured black lines visible in the film recall the pre-cinematic motion study work of Muybridge, and are a reminder of the scientific origins of

film. Still, even in this work concerned solely with function and technical knowledge, the camera reveals an interesting and original view. In Moholy-Nagy's writings on the art of photography, he often included work from the fields of a science and advertising as examples of the boundless possibilities of the medium, and it is in this spirit that this film is included in this program.

DROP CITY

Wayne Boyer, 1968, sound / color, 16mm, 6 minutes

ID graduate Wayne Boyer's experimental documentary on the 1960's geodesic dome commune in Colorado, *DROP CITY* is a portrait of an attempt to realize a new relationship between architecture and society. While the utopian potential of design was the motivating purpose for Moholy-Nagy's foundation of the school, this film definitely captures the creative, chaotic, inspired, messy, and seemingly unlimited potential of the time in which it was made. Boyer uses the technique of a film inside a film – amazingly done in-camera with mats and double exposure – implying that the new times required a new way of seeing in addition to the new ways of living shown at the commune. Historical aside: while teaching at the ID in 1948-49, Buckminster Fuller and his students realized an early model of the geodesic dome.

33rd AND LASALLE

Ken Josephson, 1962, silent / b&w, 16mm, 10 minutes

Known for his photographs which skillfully combine an examination of the art of photography with the intimate and personal, Ken Josephson made this film soon after graduating from the Institute of Design with a Masters degree in Photography. The title locates the action of the film, and *33rd AND LASALLE* portrays a building under demolition to make way for the Dan Ryan Expressway. Josephson focuses on the examples of photography found in and on the building (such as old movie posters on an outside wall), and he credits the film with inspiring his important "Images Within Images" photography series. The film aptly demonstrates the ID's attention to medium and its concern with the wider surrounding social environment.

Sunday, November 25th at 3pm & Tuesday, November 27th at 8:15pm
AN ACCIDENTAL AVANT-GARDE

This final program emphasizes Chicago's unique contribution to art cinema and the filmic avant-garde. While most of these films can be categorized as experimental in form, they were produced by filmmakers who made a living by making films ranging from sponsored and educational films to the purely amateur. Films screening will include an unusual selection of regional home movies, Red Grooms' TAPPY TOES (1968), a comic-musical depiction of the late-60's art group the "Hairy-Who" starring Ed Paschke and Lori Gunn, and Don Klugman's NIGHTSONG (1965), a portrait of Chicago's Near-North nightclub scene which features legendary African-American folk singer Willie Wright.

Approximate running time: 77 minutes.

LET'S MAKE A PICTURE!

Caille Family home movie from the collection of David Drazin, exact date unknown (1932-1943), silent / b&w, 16mm on video, 5 minutes

Another great example of amateur cinema, LET'S MAKE A PICTURE is particularly distinctive because of its self-reflexive parody of amateur filmmakers and film societies. By the early 1950's, there were over a dozen amateur movie clubs in the Chicago area, and as camera equipment and film stock became less expensive and more readily available, aspiring filmmakers and film enthusiasts were cropping up all over the United States. Amateur film clubs provided a forum for members to share information and equipment, a group of dedicated cinephiles for members to present their in-progress and completed films to, as well as a built in base of crew members who could help with the various production jobs required on even the most casual of sets. LET'S MAKE A PICTURE! is an early look into the behind-the-scenes activity of a local amateur film chapter, and provides a humorous take on the frustrations of the moving picture business. It's self-deprecating sense of humor, slightly lewd overtones, and use of basic live-action animation and in-camera tricks make this amateur film a real gem.

SAGA OF THE FIRST AND LAST

Margaret Conneely, 1954, sound / color, 16mm original on 35mm, 4 minutes

A charmingly humorous morality play by amateur filmmaker Margaret Conneely on the dangers of smoking, SAGA OF THE FIRST AND LAST stars her then 11-year old son John, placing him under the thrall of a forgotten pack of Lucky Strikes. The deleterious effects of

nicotine are displayed in a surreal riot of color, visually evincing the nausea of the first puff. Ahead of its time in addressing the negative effects of nicotine, Conneely ignores the fact the her son is shown unattended with a firearm – evidently three minutes is only enough time to address one threat.

TAPPY TOES

Red Grooms, 1968, sound / color, 16mm, 19 minutes

Envisioned as a sort of comedic-grotesque look behind the scenes at a song and dance revue, Red Grooms' amazing film traces the burgeoning love and stage career of two stand-in singers and tap dancers, played by Lori Gunn and Ed Paschke (whose painting can also be seen in the "Big Picture" painting exhibit.) The film's brilliant color, trashy glitter and glamour aesthetic, hilarious dialogue over-dubbing, and over-the-top acting style make it no surprise that the beloved master of on-screen camp, George Kuchar, worked on the film. TAPPY TOES was filmed by fellow Chicago artist Edward Flood (also exhibiting in the "Big Picture" painting show) when Grooms, a School of the Art Institute drop-out, returned to the Windy City in 1967 to build a large-scale installation titled "The City of Chicago" at the Allan Frumkin Gallery. The film mixes live action sequences of its dancing queens with outrageous painted cut-out animation. Songs with titles such as "I'd Like to Loop the Loop With You," structure the film's loose narrative, yet the animated paintings and three-dimensional diorama-like cityscape created by Grooms steal the show.

A particularly brilliant sequence pictures Mayor Daley as a sort of human King Kong character who wreaks havoc on the city's architectural landmarks and people. A virtual who's who of mid-1960's Chicago artists, in particular members of the "Hairy Who" art group, TAPPY TOES is an incredibly fun look at a distinctly Chicagoan and revolutionary artistic sensibility. Directed and produced by Red Grooms; camera by Edward C. Flood; animation designed by Red Grooms with Mimi Gross; animation camera by Rudy Burckhardt and Arthur Cohen; music by John Herbert McDowell. Starring Ed Paschke, Lori Gunn, Mimi Gross, Karl Wirsum, Ellen Lanyon, Sarah Canright, Richard Hunt, Inara Carroll, Paul Carroll, Andrew Ginzel, Rusty Morgan, Red Grooms, Lisa Ginzel, and Roland Ginzel.

NIGHT DRIVING

Mildred and Morton Goldsholl, 1957, sound / color, 16mm, 9 minutes

Students at the School of Design in the early 1940s, the Goldsholls were a married couple working in Chicago in the fields of design, film, and architecture. NIGHT DRIVING is their first completed film, and it is a dizzying vision of speed that marries the thrill and freedom of the

combustion engine with the driving pulse of early rock and roll. Using a soundtrack of songs by Bill Haley and the Comets (years before Kenneth Anger's influential use of pop music in *SCORPIO RISING*), the film is an abstracted vision of the neon city at night with light and color and sound blinking in and out of rhythm, and coming into focus only at the briefest interludes for a stop sign. The Goldsholls employ a visual idiom of streaking blurred images used in still photography to indicate motion - intensifying the film's frenetic kineticism.

2 SOLAR ECLIPSES

Home movies from the collection of Nick Osborn, exact date unknown (1950's), silent / color, 8mm on video, 6 minutes

The photographer of the first of these two anonymous short films seemed to have no problem focusing on his lady-friend's physique, yet the purported solar eclipse is rendered as a blurry, shaky mess of clouds and telephone cables. The second solar eclipse film (both are from local amateur film and photography enthusiast and historian Nick Osborn's vast collection), titled "His Majesty: The Sun," captures a solar eclipse in brilliant shades of fuschia and gold. These unusual colors could be the result of an in-camera filter, and lend the time-lapse footage of the jumping orb of light an eerie aura.

NIGHTSONG

Don B. Klugman, 1965, sound / color, 16mm, 22 minutes

Like many young filmmakers in the Midwest during the 1960's, Don Klugman made a living working on industrial and educational film productions in order to supplement his personal film practice. While *NIGHTSONG* is a unique experimental film (due, in part, to its integration of high "production values" into a low-budget production), its real significance lies in its critical depiction of the racial and sexual tensions present in mid-1960's Chicago. *NIGHTSONG* is a rare and unique portrait of the Chicago Near-North folk club and nightlife scene during this time, and centers around the struggles and romantic desires of the film's protagonist, played by long-forgotten African-American folk sensation Willie Wright.

NIGHTSONG won the "Coupe Kodak-Pathe" prize at Cannes in 1965, was named one of the "Ten Best Winners" in the Amateur Cinema League's 1964 International Film and Video Festival, and was acknowledged at the time of its release for its extraordinary and expressive use of color. The film features rare exterior and interior footage of legendary hot spots such as The Fickle Pickle, Mr. Kelly's, the Kismet Club, the Esquire, and the Tender Trap, and contains what is likely the only extant performance footage of Willie Wright, an African-American performer who crossed from the doo-wop and soul

music scenes of Chicago's South Side into the Near-North side's burgeoning folk music community. Wright, who gives an incredibly charming and heartfelt performance both on stage and as a man struggling for respect and survival as an African-American artist in a primarily white musical genre and neighborhood, achieved a small amount of recognition in the 1960's for his folk performances, but quickly fell into obscurity.

BABBIT BLAST

Jack Behrend, 1982, silent / color, 16mm, 12 minutes

BABBIT BLAST is comprised of footage of a drilling blast for the Reserve Mining Corporation of Minnesota which was shot at 8000 frames per second as confirmation that all blasts detonated correctly. While created for purely utilitarian reasons – incorrect blasts garnered a huge refund from the explosive suppliers – the extreme stretching and elongation of time in BABBIT BLAST de-emphasizes the violent explosion itself and turns the resulting dust cloud into a languorously unfolding event. The camera transforms the unseen into the viewable and the destructive into the meditative.