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News

Toronto Sets Future Projections

by Peter Knegt (August 11, 2009)



The 34th Toronto International Film Festival has announced its Future Projections programme, a city-wide event of moving-image art projects, inspired by the history and culture of cinema. The programme was initiated to "call attention to this new trend in exceptional visual artwork and performance that TIFF will soon welcome into its new home, TIFF Bell Lightbox." This year's edition includes work from major international artists and filmmakers such as Candice Breitz, Don McKellar, Isabella Rossellini, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Jesper Just and Christopher Doyle, and also celebrates the City of Toronto's 175th anniversary with the North American premiere of Mark Lewis's acclaimed new work created for the Canada Pavilion at the 2009 Venice Biennale and the world premiere of the new installation by Governor General's Award-winning duo Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak.



The Toronto skyline. Photo by Peter Knegt.

"Since its inception, we intended Future Projections to expand the traditional definition of film," said Noah Cowan, Artistic Director, TIFF Bell Lightbox, in a statement. "Stories based on the history and culture of cinema dominate many media - TV, video games, the popular stage and media art in the gallery. The more we look, the more we see the power of film in the work of artists everywhere. By expanding into public spaces such as Nathan Phillips Square, Metro Square and Yonge-Dundas Square, we are giving Torontonians an epic-scale preview of what we hope to achieve in TIFF Bell Lightbox: a space where cinema can interact with other art forms and disciplines in an exciting, accessible way."

This year's Future Projections presentations include work by the following artists and filmmakers (with descriptions provided by the festival):

Isabella Rossellini

In *Green Porno: Scandalous Sea*, Isabella Rossellini adapts her Sundance Channel-produced shorts about sexual hijinks in the great oceans into a sculptural installation. Rossellini will appear in multiple projected episodes, surrounded by delicate and large paper sculptures of crustacean phalluses, demonstrating the mating rituals and ecological travails of the great beasts of the sea. In addition, a screening and talk, *Green Porno: Bon Appetit*, will take place on September 10 with Isabella Rossellini and marine biologist Claudio Campagna at the Cineplex Odeon Varsity Cinemas, 55 Bloor Street West, 2nd floor. It will emphasize the environmental context of the project and feature world premieres of new *Green Pornos* and a short documentary about elephant seals and their mating habits. *Green Porno: Scandalous Sea* is curated by Noah Cowan and Francisco Alvarez, presented in collaboration with the Royal Ontario Museum's Institute for Contemporary Culture, The Spirit House, main floor, ROM 100 Queen's Park. September 10 through September 20, from Tuesday to Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Mark Lewis

Straight from Canada's Venice Biennale Pavilion this year, Mark Lewis: In a City features the North American premiere of three new filmed artworks by Mark Lewis. Commissioned by the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery and co-produced by the National Film Board of Canada, these new works will be presented in the context of a selection of Lewis's works about Toronto. The exhibition traces his experiments with stripped down cinema techniques to comment on the history of visual art, architecture and cinema. Lewis's exquisitely beautiful films utilize minimal camera movements to reveal unexpected stories within familiar landscapes. Lewis will speak about his work at a special public lecture at the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery on September 8 at 6 p.m. Curated by Barbara Fischer. Presented with special project support from the Toronto Friends of the Visual Arts and the Toronto Arts Council. From September 9 to October 26, 2009, at Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, Hart House, University of Toronto, 7 Hart House Circle. Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday until 8 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Lecture sponsored by Partners in Art with the additional support of the Ontario Association of Art Galleries through Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada and the Canada Council for the Arts.

In conjunction with Mark Lewis: In a City, special screenings of Lewis's Backstory (2009) and Cinema Museum (2008) will take place during the Festival. These two documentaries explore the history and culture of cinema, fusing Lewis's curiosity about historical filmmaking techniques with a carefully aestheticized approach to cinema as both a fan-based and industrialized cultural phenomenon. Backstory (2009) explores the personalities and artistry behind rear projection technology in Hollywood and Cinema Museum (2008) visits a unique collection of memorabilia in a private collection in London. The screenings will take place on Thursday, September 10 and Friday, September 11 at the Cineplex Odeon Varsity Cinemas, 55 Bloor Street West, 2nd floor.

There will also be two collateral events related to Mark Lewis and his work. The Art Gallery of Ontario will feature three recently acquired works by Lewis from September 9 to January 3, 2010 (paid admission). During TIFF Cinematheque's upcoming Fall season, Lewis will present five examples of masterful rear projection filmmaking along with a limited run of Backstory in October, 2009. Details will be available as of September 22 at tiff.net/cinematheque.

Candice Breitz

On September 14, Future Projections presents The Origins of Factum, a unique on stage conversation during which South-African born, Berlin-based Candice Breitz will present excerpts from her newly-commissioned series of multi-channel video works titled Factum, and clips of films that inspired the work, including David Cronenberg's rarely seen Camera. Factum focuses on the lives of identical twins and was commissioned for Candice Breitz: Same Same, an extensive and ambitious solo exhibition at The Power Plant and the artist's first major North American survey, which will open during this year's Festival. Breitz is an internationally acclaimed artist whose works investigate contemporary media culture using the language of the entertainment industry, including pop music, television and Hollywood films. The exhibition will feature a selection of her multi-channel video works. Candice Breitz: Same Same is curated by Gregory Burke. The exhibition is presented with support from the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund. Factum commissioning partner: Partners in Art. From September 19 through November 15, Tuesday to Sunday from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Wednesday from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Power Plant, 231 Queens Quay West. Opening reception September 18 from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. The talk and screening with Candice Breitz during the Toronto International Film Festival will take place on September 14 at the Cineplex Odeon Varsity Cinemas, 55 Bloor Street West, 2nd floor.

Christopher Doyle

With Picture Start, the famous Director of Photography Christopher Doyle (Happy Together) reconsiders how images evolve before the director's call to "action" and what happens to them after the "cut." Doyle superimposes directives from traditional film leader on to the processed still film and filmmaking images he has created during his extensive career. The show will be accompanied by a short video installation along the same principles and is dedicated to the memory of Doyle's friend and Asian cinema champion Wouter Barendrecht. Picture Start is curated by Noah Cowan. From September 2 through October 11 from Wednesday to Sunday from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. at INDEXG, 50 Gladstone Avenue.

Don McKellar

Don McKellar's Imaginary Lovers is a multi-channel installation that resulted from McKellar's self-described obsession with the intimate and authentic aesthetics of the cell phone. The acclaimed actor, director and

Tony-award winning writer has created a series of carefully constructed films, each featuring a different woman in a different foreign locale, reciting a tender and heartfelt personal video-phone message for an unnamed and deeply missed lover. Part travelogue, part contemporary epistolary form, the installation resonates around issues of desire and displacement, as well as the complicated politics of travel and human intimacy. Curated by Agata Smoluch Del Sorbo and Noah Cowan. From September 10 through 19, Tuesday to Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Stephen Bulger Gallery.

Adam Pendleton

Adam Pendleton's multi-disciplinary and irreverent practice finds fertile ground in his new work, *BAND*. In a part performance, rock show, installation and film screening, this cutting edge New York artist refashions *Sympathy for the Devil*, Jean-Luc Godard's 1968 film paean to The Rolling Stones and the Black Panthers, into a contemporary art happening. Celebrated indie art-rock/post-punk band Deerhoof will be at the center of the action. Their own rehearsal footage, shot in Toronto, and images from the original film will be cross-cut during a free live concert at Yonge-Dundas Square which will, in turn, be filmed with interventions from Pendleton. Curated by Wayne Baerwaldt and produced in collaboration with the Illingworth Kerr Gallery at the Alberta College of Art + Design, Calgary, The Kitchen, New York and de Appel, Amsterdam. September 17 from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. at Yonge-Dundas Square.

Eclectic Method

The infectious live, improvised audio visual mash-ups of Eclectic Method, London natives Jonny Wilson, Ian Edgar and Geoff Gamlen, feature television, film, music and video game footage sliced and diced into blistering, postmodern dance floor events. Their unique and innovative craftsmanship helped pioneer the emerging art of audiovisual mixing and has pushed the boundaries of club and concert visuals and events around the world. In a free performance at Yonge-Dundas Square on September 19, the renowned trio will thrill film and music lovers with a live video remix set incorporating clips from the films included in *The Essential 100*, the opening show of TIFF Bell Lightbox. Timed to coincide with the Toronto International Film Festival Closing Night, it will be a night of celebration for all film lovers in Toronto. Special guests include Clyde Stubblefield and others. Curated by Noah Cowan. September 19 from 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. at Yonge-Dundas Square.

Jeremy Shaw, Marco Brambilla and Oliver Pietsch

These three emerging artists reinvent cinema's past through dreams and hallucinations with three feverishly urgent works. Presented as a kind of audio visual baptism for TIFF Bell Lightbox, they will be projected against the John Street side of the building as a continuous loop each night of the Festival. Berlin-based, Vancouver punk artist Jeremy Shaw's *This Transition Will Never End #6* is a spinning vortex of appropriated footage where spiraling tunnels suggest the slippage of time. The work attests to Shaw's ongoing interest in psychedelic art, rock video, drug culture, experimental and documentary film and the collision of mainstream and subculture. Artist and filmmaker Marco Brambilla presents *Civilization*, a CGI pastiche of film and pop culture moments. Brambilla invites the viewer on a journey from Hell to Heaven in a single tracking shot rendered to look like something between Hieronymus Bosch and a video game. German artist Oliver Pietsch explores the nature of dreams in cinema with a thematic sequence that is both elegiac and entertaining. From *Nosferatu* to *Aliens* Pietsch's *The Shape of Things* presents the cinematic dream in all its guises, from nightmare and psychological torment to erotic fantasy. Curated by Noah Cowan. From September 10 through September 19 from 8 p.m. to 12 a.m. at TIFF Bell Lightbox.

Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak

Speak City delivers a unique glimpse of Toronto through its most omnipresent yet most innocuous markers street signs. The world premiere of the newest installation by Governor General's Award-winning duo Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak is an intriguing single channel piece structured around the 140 official neighbourhoods designated by the City of Toronto. Over a two-year period, Steele and Tomczak documented the street signs of one intersection within each one of Toronto's designated neighbourhoods. The result is a 30-minute video that recreates the artists' journey through their own city. *Speak City* is a work of urban contemplation; its only reference to human existence comes through the sounds of an occasional distant object or site-specific sound. The work is presented as part of the Toronto International Film Festival's celebration of the 175th anniversary of the City of Toronto. Curated by Steve Gravestock. From September 5 through September 19, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Nathan Phillips Square, TIFF Box Office Tent.

Apichatpong Weerasethakul

Critically acclaimed Thai artist and filmmaker Apichatpong Weerasethakul (*Syndromes and a Century*) presents

Phantoms of Nabua, a single channel installation that extends many of the recurring themes in his internationally celebrated feature films into a more politically conscious terrain. Focusing on the Thai border town of Nabua, the site of bloody confrontation between Communist farmers and the army in 1965, Weerasethakul engages the local boys - descendants of the persecuted farmers - and captures their masculine juvenescence in light and in shadow. A haunting and ethereal meditation about light, ghosts, reincarnation and transformation, Phantoms of Nabua is one segment from the artist's larger multi-platform project, Primitive, which explores themes of remembrance and extinction in his home country. The piece is presented in conjunction with A Letter to Uncle Boonmee in Wavelengths 2009. Commissioned by Animate Projects, London with Haus der Kunst, Munich and FACT, Liverpool. Curated by Andrea Picard. From September 10 through September 20 at the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art at 952 Queen Street West. (Tuesday to Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Thursday and Friday 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.) Opening reception on September 10 from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Jesper Just

Danish artist Jesper Just returns to Future Projections with a new signature work. Jesper has long been interested in the mechanics of film drama and the emotions it evokes in its audience: melancholy, longing, solitude and male vulnerability. The protagonists in A Vicious Undertow whistle to a slowed-down, instrumental Nights in White Satin, as desire overtakes them in an elegant bar. As in his previous films, unnamed characters dance, sing, watch and cry in emotionally ambiguous tableaux. This time, however, he is as interested in the female gaze as he is in the male. Curated by Mia Nielsen. Courtesy Galleri Christina Wilson, Copenhagen. From September 10 through September 19 it will screen on the front windows of The Drake Hotel from 9 p.m. to 4 a.m.

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