

Canyon  
Cinema  
Foundation

# 2021 Year-in-Review

After more than 50 years, [Canyon Cinema](#) remains committed to reimagining what it means to be a reliable, artist-centered distributor of some of the most adventurous filmmaking being done outside the mainstream.

An essential resource for educators, researchers, students, and cinephiles, Canyon is one of the world's preeminent sources for independent, avant-garde, and experimental media, distributing the works of 300 artists to an international assortment of vibrant festivals and historic cinematheques; to an underground teeming with microcinemas, itinerant and one-off showcases, and unsponsored, unpublicized living-room gatherings; to a thousand classrooms filled with enchanted students; and now, to an increasingly networked, online audience. In 2021 we continued to meet the needs of both our clients and audiences by actively promoting, preserving, and providing access to the work of our artist members; and by developing new tools, programs, and collaborations that have enabled Canyon to operate and evolve more effectively in the digital space. We have also endeavored to make the collection more inclusive, more representative of contemporary forms and practices, and more global, adding 16 new artist members during the past year; while allocating more resources (such as support for the digitization of

film prints) to filmmakers historically underserved by Canyon Cinema and the field of experimental media more broadly.

This report highlights some of this year's major accomplishments, which were made possible by the steadfast commitment of our major supporters: The Hobson/Lucas Family Foundation, The Owsley Brown III Philanthropic Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, California Humanities, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and National Endowment for the Humanities; as well as our artist members, individual benefactors, and [Friends of Canyon Cinema](#) community members. In addition, grants from the National Film Preservation Foundation (to preserve 10 at-risk films by Toney W. Merritt) and California Revealed (to digitize our collection of Bruce Baillie ephemera along with our complete run of print catalogs and supplements), as well as our new scanning partnership with the Harvard Film Archive, have greatly boosted our preservation and digitization activities, thereby facilitating greater access to Canyon's holdings. We were also thankful to receive a California Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant in 2021, as well as a second draw Payment Protection Program loan, which helped us maintain our regular operations though the pandemic.

# COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND NEW ACQUISITIONS

Our distribution program continues to grow and thrive despite the unusual and uncertain conditions brought about by COVID-19. In 2021, we welcomed new artists from across the country and around the world into the fold, including Che Applewhaite, Mónica de Miranda, Nazlı Dinçel, Markus Maicher, Brigid McCaffrey, Michael A. Morris, Christina C Nguyen, Elena Pardo, Tulapop Saenjaroen, Rajee Samarasinghe, Barron Sherer, Wenhua Shi, Deborah Stratman, Paige Taul, and, most recently, the computer animation pioneers John and James Whitney. We are also delighted to welcome back longtime member Rock Ross.

Since the start of the pandemic, Canyon has prioritized growth and promotion of its digital collection through outreach to members, new digitization initiatives, streaming collaborations, and our Canyon-on-Demand series. In 2021, Canyon added nearly 200 films and digital files to the catalog.

Our collection now includes [more than 1000 titles](#) for distribution in digital formats. Over the past year, we received new digitizations from longtime members Larry Gottheim, Christopher Harris, Curt McDowell, Toney W. Merritt, Dana Plays, Greta Snider, Naomi Uman, Babeth VanLoo, Dorothy Wiley, and many more. Meanwhile, established filmmakers such as Nathaniel Dorsky, Jerome Hiler, Jodie Mack, Lawrence Jordan, and Scott Stark continue to deposit new prints and recent works at Canyon. Thanks to the Academy Film Archive, we are excited to be rolling out fresh prints of films by Stan Brakhage, Robert Breer, Sharon Couzin, Barbara Hammer, Peter Rose, Chick Strand, and John and James Whitney, among others. A brand new print of Carolee Schneemann's classic *Fuses* is also now available from Canyon, courtesy of the Carolee Schneemann Foundation, Anthology Film Archives, The Andy Warhol Foundation, and University of Chicago's Film Studies Center. Meanwhile, Dominic Angerame, Brice Bowman, Bill Brown, Anna Kipervaser, Alexis Krasilovsky, Kate McCabe, and Lynne Sachs are among the many artist members who placed new work with Canyon over the past year.

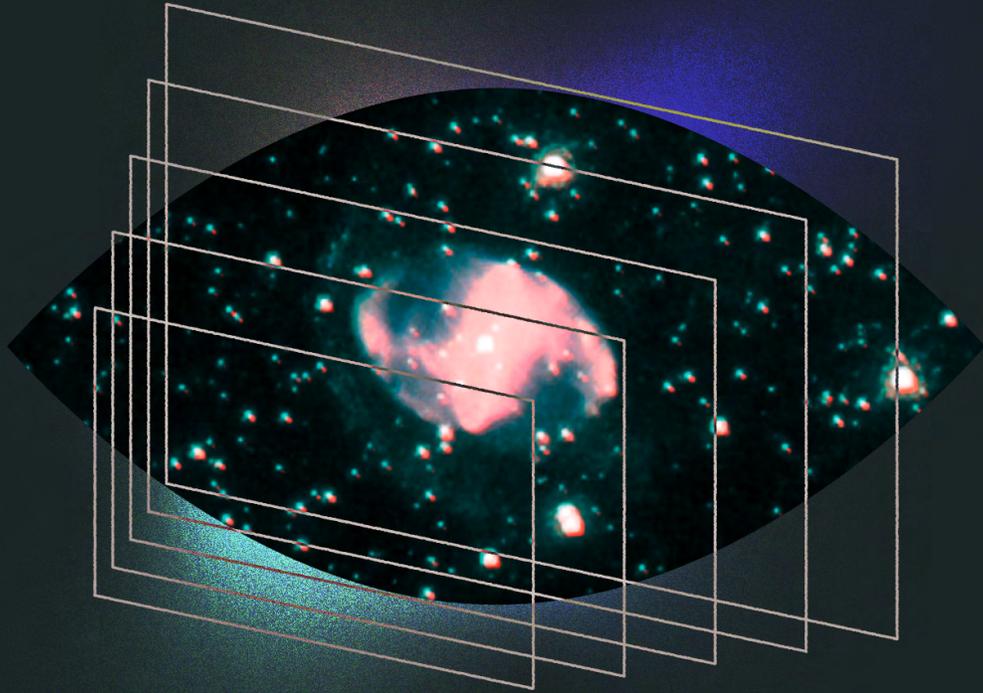


BY THE NUMBERS

**192**  
**New film prints,  
digitizations, and  
born-digital works  
in distribution**

**106**  
**New titles**

**16**  
**New artists represented**



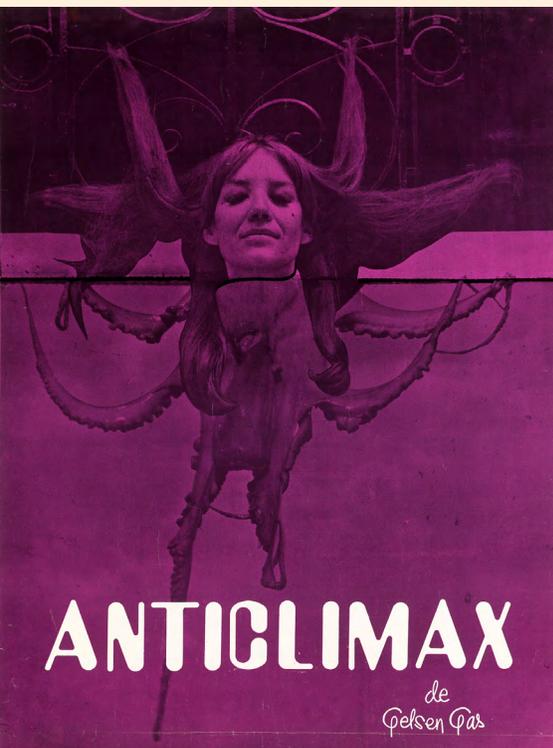
## CANYON CINEMA DISCOVERED

In 2021, Canyon Cinema embarked on an ambitious new curatorial endeavor: Canyon Cinema Discovered. This multifaceted, year-long fellowship program aims to engender fresh perspectives on experimental cinema and to meaningfully develop Canyon's role as an access point for this key strand of American media art. From a pool of nearly 200 applicants, four curatorial fellows – Aaditya Aggarwal, Juan Carlos Kase, Chrystel Oloukoï, and Ekin Pinar – were selected to assemble programs from Canyon's unique collection of artist-made films. As a point of focus, the cohort was encouraged to activate undervalued and underseen works and to incorporate recent acquisitions as well as complementary works from outside of the collection, with the aim of broadening Canyon's offerings and directly engaging with the continuing evolution of experimental cinema and media. These programs will debut in Spring 2022, with a tour to follow. A full-color exhibition catalog, designed by Helen Shewolfe Tseng and featuring new essays by the Discovered fellows, will accompany the screenings and tour.



# PUBLICATIONS

2021 saw the publication of *Canyon Cinemazine* #7, “[Dear Folks: Notes and Letters from Bruce Baillie.](#)” The issue – our largest to date – is dedicated to Canyon Cinema’s founding filmmaker, who died in April 2020 at his home on Camano Island; nearly 60 years after first welcoming friends and neighbors to a night of backyard cinema in Canyon, California. Collected here are some of Baillie’s many dispatches to and about Canyon Cinema, ranging from a 1962 announcement co-signed with Chick Strand to voicemail messages left on the Canyon office answering machine in the last years of his life. The bulk of this material derives from the *Canyon Cinemanews*, which began in 1962 as a newsletter to solicit and circulate “fugitive information” related to a fledgling independent film movement. Years before Canyon was formally organized as a distribution cooperative, the participatory pages of the *Cinemanews* demonstrated that there was such a community of filmmakers to be incorporated.



We are now in the process of finishing *Canyon Cinemazine* #8, “Cine-Espacios,” guest edited by Walter Forsberg and Tzutzumatzin Soto. As an ode to cinematographic culture and the cinephiles who sustain it, this forthcoming *Cinemazine* seeks to capture as many details about Mexican cinema spaces as possible, while those in the know are still around. Comprising love-letters to bygone movie palaces, horse’s mouth testimonials from microcinema progenitors, and a generous gravy of filmic ephemera and artefacts, “Cine-Espacios” is a 200+ page, full-color chronicle in not one, but two, languages! A special edition includes stickers and a limited audio cassette soundtrack reissue from ZAP Cassettes of Gelsen Gas’s 1968 movimiento pánico experimental feature film, *ANTICLÍMAX*. With contributions from: Viviana Besné García, Ximena Cuevas, Walter Forsberg, Gelsen Gas, Rita González, Manu Guerrero, Brett Kashmere, Betty Kirk, Laboratorio Experimental de Cine, Jesse Lerner, Seth Mitter, Salvador Novo, Elena Pardo, Ezekiel Reyes, Isabel Rojas, Tzutzumatzin Soto, Nelly R. Tobón, Naomi Uman, Daniel Valdez Puertos, Aisel Wicab, Federico Windhausen, and many others!

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# PUBLIC PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS + COLLABORATIONS

## Canyon at The Roxie

In August, Canyon launched an ongoing programming collaboration with San Francisco's historic Roxie Theater. Bringing into focus visionary Bay Area film artists of past and present, Canyon at The Roxie is a monographic screening series that blends classic, overlooked, new, and restored films from Canyon Cinema's collection, presented in their original 16mm splendor. The inaugural program, co-presented with Canyon's sister organization, the San Francisco Cinematheque, highlighted some of Bruce Baillie's most beloved films alongside lesser-known gems, Canyon newsreels, and rarities. Upcoming programs will feature work by Alfonso Alvarez, Greta Snider, Barbara Klutinis (in memoriam), and many more!



## Canyon Cinema (Virtual) Salons

Since 2014, Canyon Cinema's Salon series has provided a free, informal platform for dialogue and engagement with moving image artists. In the past, these events have taken the form of artist-led screening-and-discussions, staged in an intimate setting. Expanding into the digital space in 2020 due to the necessity of physical distancing, we have further opened the forum to scholars and curators to present their research alongside experimental cinema and media artworks. In 2021, the Canyon Cinema Salon continued as a virtual series. In January we partnered with Oakland's Shapeshifters Cinema to present an illustrated journey through expanded cinema past and present, inspired by Jonathan Walley's new book, *Cinema Expanded: Avant-Garde Film in the Age of Intermedia*, and highlighting the paracinematic and projector-performance works of Kerry Laitala. And in February we partnered with Bay Area programming collective Light Field and the streaming platform PARACME to broadcast an online screening curated from Canyon's collection, featuring films by Julie Murray, Dana Plays, Rajee Samarasinghe, Paige Taul, Sarah Pucill, Toney W. Merritt, and Barbara Hammer. Our goal is to return to in-person salons in early 2022, beginning with a suite of urban landscape films from Canyon's collection in which the filmmakers transform their found environments into a playground and space of contemplation, curated by Topiary Landberg.

# PUBLIC PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS + COLLABORATIONS *(continued...)*

## Canyon-on-Demand

In addition to the virtual salons, Canyon also produced or facilitated a number of limited-run “video-on-demand” offerings in 2021. Three seasonal programs of recent acquisitions highlighted work by new members Che Applewhaite, Mónica de Miranda, Brigid McCaffrey, Michael A. Morris, Christina C Nguyen, Elena Pardo, Tulapop Saenjaroen, Rajee Samarasinghe, Barron Sherer, Wenhua Shi, Deborah Stratman, and Paige Taul, as well as newly digitized films by Curt McDowell, Toney W. Merritt, Greta Snider, Naomi Uman, Babeth VanLoo, and Dorothy Wiley. In addition, we collaborated with the Kentucky College of Art & Design to stream a program of films from Canyon’s collection that explore the “homed body” as a site for critical reflection

and creativity; organized in conjunction with the studio course “Homed Body: Performance, Conformity, and Madness.” We also joined up with the University of Udine’s International “Spring School” to host two virtual screenings of Canyon films and to provide a history and present account of the organization.

## Streaming Collaborations

Over the past year Canyon Cinema entered into collaborations with a number of new streaming services, including Kinoscope.org, Paracme.com, and – launching soon – Projectr.edu. In addition to our ongoing partnership with Kanopy, these new initiatives have extended and amplified Canyon’s presence in the digital space.

KINO  
SCOPE

SHORTS ▾ FEATURES ▾ RETROSPECTIVES ▾ PUBLICATIONS 🔍

### Canyon Cinema Foundation



#### Castaic Lake

US / 2010 / 29 minutes / NR  
dir. Brigid McCaffrey

Taking its course, the camera drifts in to the coves and surveys the shorelines of a multi-use reservoir to unearth fragments of its young history and consider a series of possible relationships to this artific...



#### Around

US / 2013 / 5 minutes / NR  
dir. Bill Basquin

The film consists of three 360-degree landscape shots: “I used a tripod for the first two shots - the third shot is handheld.” The whole of the film functions to invite the viewer into an embodied visual experi...

← Previous 1 2

Canyon Cinema Foundation Presents

### No Land

dir. Emily Chao

VIEW FILM

PARACME

PARACME

Photopia

SUBSCRIBE NOW

\$5 a month or \$50 a year

UNLIMITED STREAMING

WATCH EVERYWHERE

NEW RELEASES

## COLLECTION ACCESS

Canyon Cinema continues to serve as a major point of access for schools and departments that place an emphasis on historical and contemporary artist-made cinema and experimental film and media. Encouraging scholars and researchers to engage our collection remains a keystone of our educational mission. Through our distribution program, films that often exist exclusively on celluloid are introduced each year to students in classrooms across the United States. Meanwhile, our digital distribution program and digital site licensing have extended our collection's availability even further. Over the past year, films from the catalog were taught in online and in-person classes at Bard College, CalArts, Cornell University, Emerson College, Le Fresnoy, Hamilton College, Harvard University, UC Berkeley, and USC, among others.

In 2021, Canyon carried on in its role as partner and resource for many of the world's preeminent film exhibition venues. Major programs,

retrospectives, and exhibitions of Canyon filmmakers were presented at the Museum of Modern Art, Pompidou Centre, National Gallery of Art, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Lightbox Film Center, EXiS Festival, Walker Art Center, Flaherty NYC, European Media Art Festival, Maysles Documentary Center, Los Angeles Filmforum, Conversations at the Edge, Light Industry, Northwest Film Center, among others. We were proud to provide support for a number of exciting virtual screening initiatives as well, such as the online Prismatic Ground and CROSSROADS festivals, Media City Film Festival's THOUSANDSUNS CINEMA, which featured 13 Canyon filmmakers, and the Museum of the Moving Image's online retrospective, *Lynne Sachs: Between Thought and Expression*. The career-spanning survey, curated by Edo Choi, is now available to rent from Canyon. In addition, a new 2K digitization of Christopher Harris's *Reckless Eyeballing*, supported by Canyon Cinema Foundation and the Academy Film Archive, premiered as part of SFMOMA's online exhibition, *Assembly of Images: On Histories of Race and Representation*, curated by Gina Basso.

VOID  
VISION

Tokyo - Ebisu

99  
CLERKENWELL  
ROAD

A Kiss Of Death

THE LAST DAY OF NOVEMBER

Belle du Jour

SHADES  
OF  
MEANING

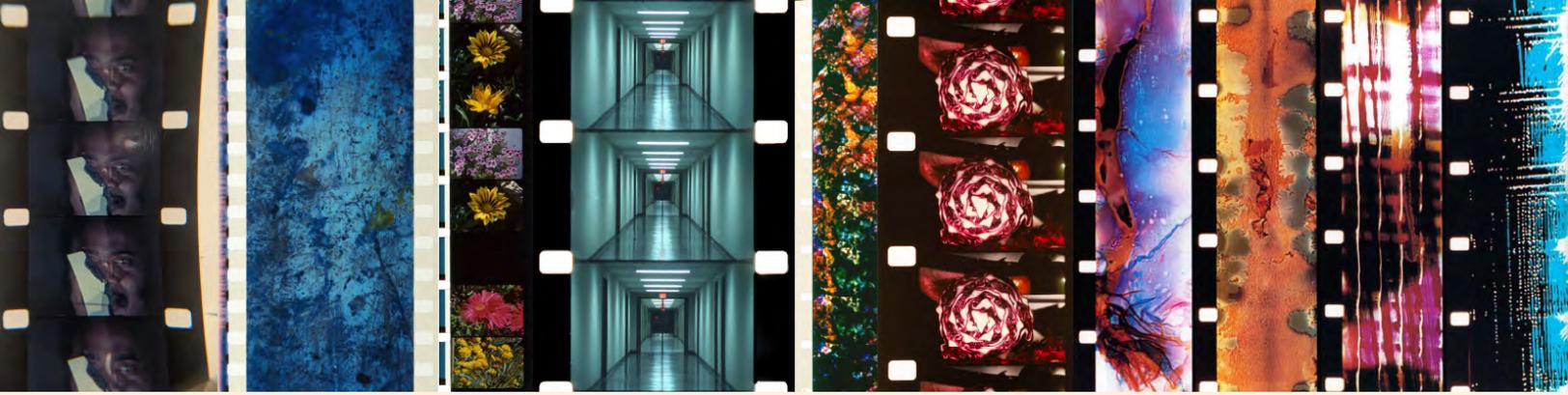
THE MERCIFUL &  
COMPASSIONATE?

BEYOND KABUKI

What's good Bruce?

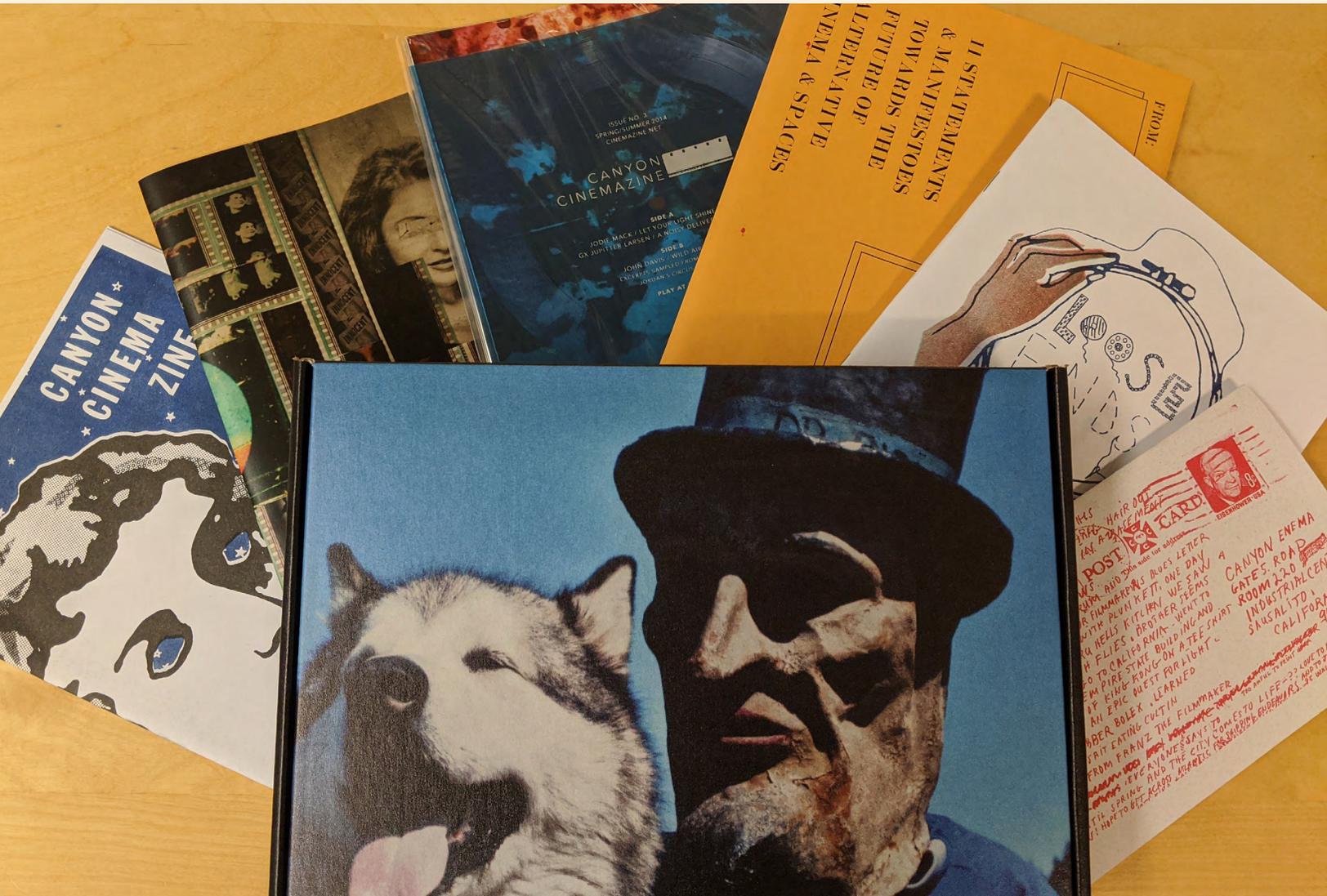
GLITCH  
ENVY

BAGLIGHT



## FRIENDS OF CANYON CINEMA

Established in 2018, the Friends of Canyon Cinema is our ongoing membership and rewards program. Through this program we invite lovers of experimental cinema to make a pledge of support to the organization to help ensure that the community of avant-garde and experimental media artists continues to thrive, receives the enrichment it deserves, and gains in esteem and social impact through Canyon's dogged distribution, enthusiastic advocacy, and continued promotion of scholarship. Each year, we offer a set of rewards to donors to show our appreciation for their support as we continue to look to the future. Current Friends members receive free access to "Canyon-on-Demand" streaming programs, a subscription to the *Canyon Cinemazine*, 20% off Canyon merchandise, plus member-only updates, previews, and more. As of October 2021, you can now join the Friends of Canyon Cinema on [Patreon!](#)



# IMAGE CREDITS

## Page 1

Clockwise from top left: *Hub City* (Bill Brown, 1997); *Ember Days* (Nathaniel Dorsky, 2021); *Belle du Jour* (Lawrence Jordan, 2021); *Mountain View* (Markus Maicher, 2018); *Churubusco Inventory* (Elena Pardo, 2019); *Lapis* (James Whitney, 1966); *Figure and I* (Lynne Sachs, 2021); *the Rose* (Wenhua Shi, 2019); *Squish!* (Tulapop Saenjaroen, 2021); *The Illinois Parables* (Deborah Stratman, 2016)

## Page 2

Clockwise from top left: *Reckless Eyeballing* (Christopher Harris, 2004); *Blue Movie* (Michael A. Morris, 2016); *Between Relating and Use* (Nazlı Dinçel, 2018); *No Garden Beyond* (Anna Kipervaser and Rhys Morgan, 2019); *Mobile Phone Studies Nos. 1-25* (Barron Sherer, 2020); *By the Sea* (Toney W. Merritt, 1982); *A New England Document* (Che Applewhaite, 2020); *People on Sunday* (Tulapop Saenjaroen, 2020); *10:28,30* (Paige Taul, 2019); *No-Zone* (Greta Snider, 1993)

## Page 3

Top: Canyon Cinema Discovered illustration by Helen Shewolfe Tseng

Bottom row: Aaditya Aggarwal, Juan Carlos Kase, Chrystel Oloukoï, Ekin Pinar

## Page 4

Right: *Canyon Cinemazine* #7. Photos by Helen Shewolfe Tseng.

Left: Poster for *ANTICLÍMAX* (Gelsen Gas, 1968). Courtesy of SF International Film Festival records of the Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

## Page 5

Right (top): The Roxie Theater. Photo by Lynn Friedman.

Right (bottom): Poster for *Good Skies Almost All the Time: Bruce Baillie Memorial Screening and Publication Launch*. Image: *Still Life* (Bruce Baillie, 1966). Design by Courtney Fellion.

Left (clockwise from top left): Installation view of *Retrospectroscope* (Kerry Laitala, 1996), from "Timeless Motion," SOMArts Gallery, San Francisco, 2016; Cover (detail) for *Cinema Expanded; everyday star* (Rajee Samarasinghe, 2018); *Across the Border* (Dana Plays, 1982); *Anathema* (Julie Murray, 1995); *Milk and Glass* (Sarah Pucill, 1993)

## Page 8

Top row: *EF* (Toney W. Merritt, 1979); *sound of a million insects, light of a thousand stars* (Tomonari Nishikawa, 2014); *Bouquets 11-20* (Rose Lowder, 2005-2009); *Serene Velocity* (Ernie Gehr, 1970); *Chartres Series* (Stan Brakhage, 1994); *Cabbage* (Dorothy Wiley, 1972); *Ariel* (Nathaniel Dorsky, 1983)

Bottom: *Canyon Cinemazine* issues #1-6 with a custom-made box by Courtney Fellion. Photo by Seth Mitter.



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Photographs of Canyon Cinema office by Terri Loewenthal, 2021.

Design: Helen Shewolfe Tseng

## About Canyon Cinema Foundation

[Canyon Cinema](#) is dedicated to educating the public about independent, non-commercial, experimental, avant-garde, and artist-made moving images. We manifest this commitment by providing access to our unrivaled collection to universities and cultural organizations worldwide, as well as cultivating scholarship and appreciation of artist-made cinema. We ensure the experience of rare film works in their original medium while also reaching new audiences through our growing digital distribution project.

Canyon Cinema's unique collection of artist-made films – comprised of digital media, 8mm, Super 8, 16mm, and 35mm prints – traces the vital history of the experimental and avant-garde filmmaking movements over the past century. With a strong emphasis on American West Coast and San Francisco Bay Area filmmakers, we are the access point to 3,500 ground-breaking works, representing 300 artists.

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