

For Immediate Release

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Los Angeles, April 28 – Los Angeles Filmforum is proud to present two screenings with the genre-defying, highly original filmmaker **Ericka Beckman**. Described as a key figure of the Pictures Generation, Beckman often uses games as structuring devices in films and videos that combine minimalist and punk aesthetics. As Amy Taubin writes: “Milking the Surrealist roots of Pop, Beckman creates brightly colored, psychologically threatening, sexually charged worlds in which her avatars are hurled to and fro, trapped inside a game plan whose rules they desperately try to discern.”

In person: Ericka Beckman

What: Los Angeles Filmforum at MOCA presents Ericka Beckman

When: Thursday, May 22, 2014 – 7pm

Where: MOCA Grand Avenue, Ahmanson Auditorium
250 South Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Tickets: \$12 general admission; \$7 students with valid ID

Tickets available at moca.org

FREE for MOCA and Los Angeles Filmforum members; must present current membership card to claim free tickets

INFO 213/621-1745 or education@moca.org

What: Los Angeles Filmforum presents Ericka Beckman

When: Sunday, May 25, 2014 – 7:30 pm

Where: Spielberg Theatre at the Egyptian
6712 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90028

Tickets: \$10 general; \$6 students/seniors

FREE for Filmforum members. Tickets available in advance at <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/554021> or at the door.

INFO www.lafilmforum.org or 323/377-7238

“Like primitive cartoons, Beckman’s enigmatic allegories are filled with nervous activity and comic violence, sexual imagery and syncopated energy, perceptual game-playing and ingenious homemade optical effects.” --J. Hoberman, *Artforum*

Details:

May 22, 2014

Los Angeles Filmforum at MOCA presents Ericka Beckman

MOCA Grand Avenue, Ahmanson Auditorium

7pm

Coinciding with the exhibition *Mike Kelley*, Ericka Beckman will present three of her works, *The Broken Rule* (1979) and *Cinderella* (1986), in which Mike Kelley stars; and *Switch Center* (2003). Bennett Simpson, MOCA curator, will introduce the program.

***The Broken Rule*, 1979**

Super-8 to 16mm; color, sound; 23 minutes.

Produced, directed, shot and edited by Ericka Beckman; Starring: Mike Kelley; Featuring: Jim Casebere, Matt Mullican, James Welling, Jim Isermann, Diane Buckler, Kirby Dick, Tom Radloff, David Fick

“*The Broken Rule* is my reaction to the American education system, where learning blocks must be acquired by the group before any individual can progress to the next level. My film pictures learning blocks as relay races conducted by male players, where the girls are scores, and the goal is to enter the working world by the end of the game. Mike Kelley, the lead player in my film, makes a ritual out of his mistakes to escape the consequences of his mistakes. In this film, one person’s work is another person’s play, and play creates competition, a component of work.” --EB

“Riveting in its choreography of space and rhythm *The Broken Rule* is a sort of Marxist musical. Oddly suggestive of Tashlin, the film is constructed with the precision of an animated work, and wit the formal humor of a Landow.” --Bruce Jenkins, "New Film/ New York," *Media Study Magazine*, 1980

***Cinderella*, 1986**

16mm; color, sound; 30 minutes

Produced, directed, shot and edited by Ericka Beckman; Starring Gigi Kalweit and Mike Kelley; Sound track composed by Brooke Halpin; Vocals by Katy Cavanaugh Produced with funds from The Jerome Foundation and The New York State Council on the Arts

“*Cinderella* is a musical treatment of the fairy tale. I have broken apart the story and set it as a mechanical game with a series of repetitions where Cinderella is projected back and forth like a ping-pong ball between the hearth and the castle. She never succeeds in satisfying the requirements of the ‘Cinderella Game’.” --EB, 1984

***Switch Center*, 2002**

16mm; color, sound; 12 minutes

Shot, Edited and sound design by Ericka Beckman
Produced in collaboration with BALAZS BELA STUDIO, Budapest, Hungary, Artslink, USA, Hungarian Moving Pictures Foundation, Fővárosi Vizművek Rt., Budapest, and Televizija Slovenska, Bratislava, Slovakia

“When I began preparing the film in Budapest in 2000, I found myself surrounded by the remnants of the Soviet’s Modernist Architecture. I was instantly captivated by these buildings not because they were aesthetically appealing, but because they embodied not only their purpose but also the ideology upon which they were built. They were not constructed to last but a few years, but rather to endure through millennia, corresponding to the expected lifespan of the regime. The fact that they still stood – solid, defiant even – while the empire had crumbled into dust, made them all the more appealing to me. I chose an abandoned water purification plant on the outskirts of Budapest as the setting for *Switch Center*. In conceiving of this film, I was inspired by Leger’s early avant-garde picture, *Ballet Mechanique*. In my film, the structure itself comes to life through the manipulations of the employees who work inside it. I wanted to make a tribute to the kind of futuristic pragmatism expressed by

these buildings that are now being razed to allow space for shopping malls and corporate offices.” --EB, 2002

Sunday, May 25
Los Angeles Filmfoum presents Ericka Beckman
The Steven Spielberg Theater at the Egyptian
7:30pm

Beckman's second Los Angeles screening presents a further selection of films and a new digital video from her important and highly original oeuvre, including *Out of Hand* (1980); *You the Better* (1983), which nearly caused a riot at its premiere at The New York Film Festival; as well her more recent work *Hiatus* (1999); and *Tension Building*, a work in progress.

***Out of Hand*, 1980**
Super-8 to 16mm; color, sound; 30 minutes

Produced, directed, shot and edited by Ericka Beckman; Music and vocals by Beckman/Brooke Halpin; Starring Paul Mc Mahon; Featuring James Welling, Matt Mullican, Nancy Chunn, April Gornik

“*Out of Hand* is a search film, where a small boy returns to a house that is being evacuated, to search for something that he left behind. His method is to follow hidden clues in this house and to respond to the hidden aids in his memory. Back and forth, between inquisition and logic, he constructs a search with two unknowns – ‘What it is’ and ‘Where it is.’ Each object he chooses has multiple functions, which extend both into the physical space of his search, and into the imaginary world of his perception and memory.” --EB, 1980

***You the Better*, 1983**
16mm; color, sound; 30 minutes

Produced, directed, shot and edited by Ericka Beckman; Starring Ashley Bickerton; Music and vocals by Beckman/Brooke Halpin

“*You the Better* is a film based on games of chance, and as games such as roulette, or craps go, this one is closed – meaning that the player cannot really affect the outcome. A team of uniformed players, led by the artist Ashley Bickerton, performs the mechanics of a game servicing an off-camera betting entity, the ‘House.’ Although the game keeps changing and players are swapped out, one thing remains the same, the ‘House’ is hidden and controls the bets, the ‘chance’ of winning is nil. The game, in fact, is not between the players, but rather between the ‘House,’ and the ‘Bettor.” --EB, 1983

“As one of the protagonists, against all odds, repeatedly wins at the wheel of fortune, his adversaries grow hostile and jealous--the very moods provoked in Beckman's NY Film Festival audience, who were busy feigning not to understand. Beckman's was the one truly vanguard achievement in the Festival, and the only analysis and indictment of the competition that keeps the wheel of fortune spinning. Beckman made an art movie, when the audience clamored for Art.” --Carrie Rickey, *Artforum*, December 1983

Hiatus, 1999

16mm; color, sound; 30 minutes

Produced, directed, shot and edited by Ericka Beckman; Starring Madi Distefano and Daniel Ruth; Sound Design by Bruce Darby

Produced with funds from The National Endowment for the Arts, Massachusetts Council on the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, and the Experimental Television Center

Hiatus features a woman playing a VR interactive game with logged-on game players and game identities, which confuse and trick her into consciousness. In this game, MADI, a female player, enters Level One, where the player has been asked to create a habitat that she feels most comfortable in, that she has complete control over and which empowers her. MADI creates a “virtual garden” and a construct of herself (called WANDA) to move around in his world. In Level Two she enters an “identity game” using technological power for the benefit of the entire community rather than her own gain. Here she encounters an adversary, “WANG,” who threatens her field, property, and power with his own aggressive and expanding encoded architecture... A virtual reality sketch of WANG’s Palace was built in CAD, rendered and modeled on AVS software and runs off VR software written for DEC Alpha system 5000 workstation.

Tension Building (work in progress)

16mm to HD; color, sound; 9 minutes

Shot and edited by Ericka Beckman

Tension Building is a composite of linked architectural spaces, some are real and some are models. It combines stop motion and live action filmmaking shot at the Harvard University Coliseum in Boston (1935) and the Municipal Stadium in Florence (1932), built in by Luigi Nervi. It features Boston Symphony Orchestra percussionist Richard Flanagan, and the U Mass Minute Man Marching Band. I used my camera like a surveyor’s transit and created some rules for its path around the stadium. Funding in part by the LEF Foundation of New England 2007.