

april 23  
6 p.m.

spring 2015

conversations  
at the edge  
experimental media series

# Projections, Portraits, and Picaresques

Works by Mary Helena Clark, Mariah Garnett, and Latham Zearfoss

2011–14, US, multiple formats, ca 70 min + discussion  
Mary Helena Clark, Mariah Garnett, and Latham Zearfoss in person!

Artists Mary Helena Clark, Mariah Garnett, and Latham Zearfoss self-reflexively play with portraiture and autobiography in a cultural landscape dominated by selfies and shifting social media platforms. Each artist articulates personal identity in relation to aesthetic and community, fiction and truth.

Mary Helena Clark (b. 1983, Santee, SC) is a filmmaker based in California. Her films explore genre tropes, the materiality of film, and the pleasure of tromp l'oeil. Bringing together observational, appropriated, staged and abstract footage, they operate on dream logic until disrupted by moments of self-reflexivity. Clark received her MFA from University of Illinois at Chicago. She has exhibited internationally, including at the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Anthology Film Archives, New York; and Brooklyn Museum of Art.

Mariah Garnett (b. 1980, Portland, ME) mixes documentary, narrative, and experimental filmmaking practices to make work that accesses existing people and communities beyond her immediate experience. Using source material that ranges from found text to iconic gay porn stars, Garnett often inserts herself into the films, creating cinematic allegories that codify and locate identity. Garnett holds an MFA from the California Institute of the Arts in Film/Video and a BA in American Civilization from Brown University. Her work has been screened internationally, including at REDCAT, Los Angeles; White Columns, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Venice Biennale (Swiss Offsite Pavilion).

Latham Zearfoss (b. 1980, Xenia, OH) is an artist and cultural producer living and working in Chicago. His artwork often centers on reclaiming historical and mythological texts, and revising them to incorporate radical notions of love and sex, possibility and probability. Zearfoss graduated from SAIC with a BFA in 2008 and the University of Illinois at Chicago with an MFA in 2011. His commitment to art and activism has also manifested in the creation of sporadic, temporary utopias like Pilot TV and Chances Dances.

## program

### *Home Movie*, Latham Zearfoss

(2012, Video, Color, Sound, 6 mins. 30 secs.)

This video held the working title *Recycle Binge* for quite some time. Fitting, since I was trying to find a creative use for all this video footage I'd acquired through shitty cameras and cell phones and a few not-so-shitty cameras too. *Home Movie* is the resulting work, an attempt at aestheticizing the contradictory impulse to capture and record moments that are either personal or of little interest to a public audience.

### *Picaresques*, Mariah Garnett

(2011, 16mm transferred to video and HD video, Color, Sound, 20 mins.)

*Picaresques* experiments with documentary and fictional structures, weaving portraits of three seemingly disparate protagonists to ultimately create a film about the act of making something. The filmmaker sets out to make a movie about Catalina de Erauso, a nun-turned conquistador from the 16th century who wrote a memoir. She quickly becomes side-tracked, however, by a relationship she develops with a 10-year old through the process of casting, and the film turns in on itself.

### *Orpheus (Outtakes)*, Mary Helena Clark

(2012, 16mm, B&W, Sound, 6 mins.)

Using footage from Cocteau's *Orphée*, Clark optically prints an interstitial space where the ghosts of cinema lurk beyond and within the frames.  
– Andrea Picard

### *Encounters I May Or May Not Have Had With Peter Berlin*, Mariah Garnett

(2012, 16mm, Color, Sound, 14 mins.)

This film deals primarily with monumentality, narcissism and the ways in which our heroes are embedded into our identities, and manifested through the body. Through a variety of gestures, the pervasiveness of this practice is highlighted alongside its ultimate, inevitable failure. The viewer moves through various stages of anxiety, idolization and actual touch-down with 1970s gay sex icon Peter Berlin himself, capturing both the apparent and the hidden. The film guides the viewer through the process of making contact with a figure who exists only in his own photographs.

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Film, Video, New Media,  
and Animation



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## program continued

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### ***Love Is A Stranger*, Latham Zearfoss and Mary Helena Clark**

(2012, Video, Color, Sound, 4 mins.)

This is a karaoke video. Sing along!

### ***The Dragon is the Frame*, Mary Helena Clark**

(2014, 16mm, Color & B&W, Sound, 13 mins. 30 secs.)

An experimental detective film made in remembrance: keeping a diary, footnotes of film history, and the puzzle of depression.

*What are you thinking?*

*I am thinking of how many times this poem*

*Will be repeated. How many summers*

*Will torture California*

*Until the damned maps burn*

*Until the mad cartographer*

*Falls to the ground and possesses*

*The sweet thick earth from which he has been hiding.*

*What are you thinking now?*

– Jack Spicer, *Psychoanalysis: An Elegy*