

CANYON CINEMA

2019 in review

With modest means and lots of heart, Canyon Cinema has for over fifty years served as one of the world's preeminent sources for avant-garde and experimental media, distributing the works of over 275 artists to an international network of vibrant festivals and historic cinematheques, to an underground teeming with microcinemas, to a thousand classrooms filled with enchanted students. Over the course of its long history, Canyon has become an essential element of the experimental film community, and an indispensable resource for educators and curators invested in the study and exhibition of this vital art form. In 2019 we continue to support artists by managing, promoting and distributing their work, programming local and nationwide screenings and exhibitions, and assisting with the preservation, documentation, and celebration of the historic avant-garde of which they form such a major part.

This report highlights some of this year's major accomplishments. We thank the steadfast commitment of our major supporters: George Lucas Family Foundation, Owsley Brown III Philanthropic Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, the filmmakers who participate in our distribution program, our individual donors and the growing Friends of Canyon Cinema community.

Collection Access & New Acquisitions

Canyon continues to serve as a major point of access for schools and departments that place an emphasis on avant-garde and artist-made cinema. Encouraging scholars and researchers to engage with the 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. Higher education institutions including University of Southern California, Duke University, Hamilton College, California Institute for the Arts, and University of Chicago are among the most frequent users of our collection. In addition to its expansive classroom network, Canyon worked with a number of prestigious and emerging international festival and cinematheque partners in 2019, including EXiS (South Korea), Museum of Modern Art (New York), Festival Internacional de Curtas de Belo Horizonte (Brazil), Message to Man Festival of St. Petersburg (Russia), Australian Cinematheque (Brisbane), and Documental Ambulante (Mexico) to name a few.

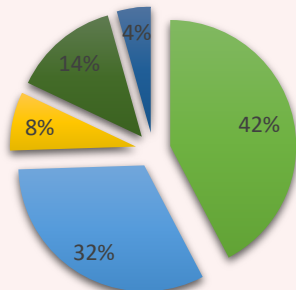


Happy Birthday (2010, Jonathan Schwartz)

As the primary international distributor for filmmaker Peter Hutton, Canyon facilitated a tour of regional cinemas in France and Belgium, as well as a European festival showcase and retrospective of the films of Jonathan Schwartz – extending the reach of these films to new appreciative audiences. We also supported and provided prints for memorial recognitions for legendary and influential 20th century filmmakers Barbara Hammer and Jonas Mekas at cinemas globally.

Canyon Cinema's catalog and distribution program remains an unparalleled resource for independent artist-made cinema. In 2019 the collection continued to grow through substantial new deposits by longtime members and the estates (Stephanie Barber, Lawrence Jordan, Rob Todd, James Broughton, Jodie Mack, Larry Gottheim, Robert Huot, Barbara Hammer), and saw the addition of several new and returning filmmakers to our catalog (Joel Singer, Anna Kipervaser, Bill Basquin, Unseen Cinema Collection).

WHO USED CANYON CINEMA'S COLLECTION IN 2019?



*figures as of November 2019

- University and Colleges (classroom use)
- Media arts organizations, film festivals, distributors
- Individuals (independent curators and scholars, enthusiasts) and misc.
- Museum and art Galleries (national and international)
- Libraries (higher education, public)

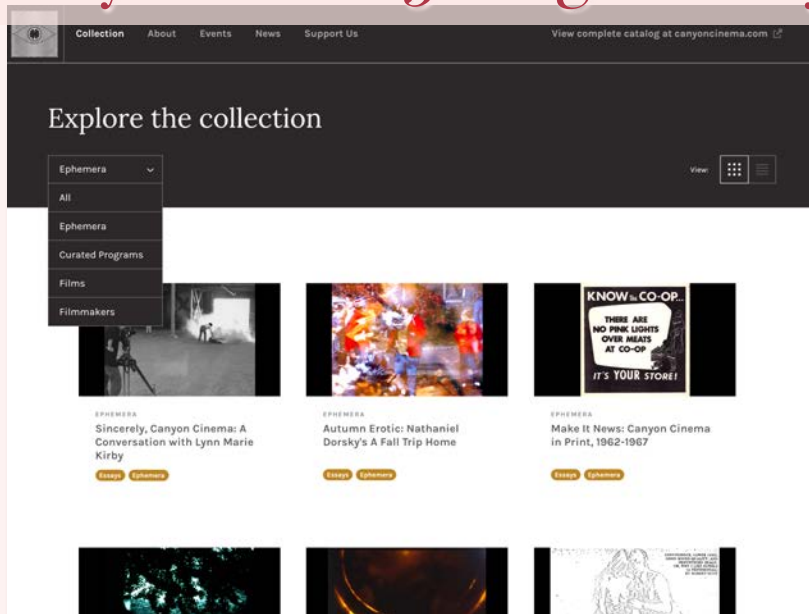
COLLECTION GROWTH BY THE NUMBERS:

New titles: 157

New film prints and digital copies of works in distribution: 131

New Filmmakers represented: 4

canyoncinema50.org & Canyon Cinema Connects



In 2019 we saw the much-anticipated launch of canyoncinema50.org. Designed with an eye for encouraging discovery, this site introduces a new model for searching the works in Canyon's catalog which is buttressed by interviews, essays and ephemera related to the Canyon Cinema 50 project, our organization's history, and ongoing public programming. The Ephemera section is a highlight of the site and continues to grow with new collections of historical documents, interviews with artists and new writing being added monthly.

In 2020, the Canyon Cinema Connects project will build on the architecture of canyoncinema50.org to dramatically improve capacity to engage users with our collection and services by providing a dynamic access tool for filmmakers, curators, scholars, and the general public, as well as filmmakers represented by Canyon. This technical infrastructure project will allow Canyon to implement new collection, constituent and business management software to replace antiquated systems as well as to better meet the needs of our widening community of patrons. The total budget for the Connects project is \$100,000. A \$25,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts provides the seed funding for this initiative and we are actively working to raise the balance through fundraisers and grants applications.

Publications



Fostering new writing and scholarship about the works in our collection is a key way in which Canyon seeks to raise awareness about the films and filmmakers in our collection. This new initiative that invites the community of writers and scholars focused on artist's film to participate in these efforts. 2019 saw the publication of a series of commissioned writings illuminating underrecognized works and artists found at Canyon Cinema. These writings were published on canyoncinema50.org as well as in the print issue of *Canyon Cinemazine 6: Missed Connections*.

Contributors include: Apitchapong Weerasethakul, Janis Crystal Lipzin, Talena Sanders, Adrienne Finelli, Max Goldberg, Zachary Epcar, Jon Davies, John Davies, Susannah Magers, Brett Kashmir, Max Goldberg, Jesse Cummings, Elizabeth Block, Dominic Angerame, Holly Willis, Dustin Zemel, Claudia Gorbman, Tess Takahashi and more.

These writings add to a growing repository of resources Canyon provides to scholars, educators and the public and puts us on the path to meeting a strategic goal of becoming an authoritative source for the study and history of experimental and artist made cinema.

Canyon Cinema Discovered



One woman waiting (1984, Josephine Massarella)

Canyon Cinema Discovered is a multifaceted initiative designed to engender fresh perspectives on experimental cinema and meaningfully expand Canyon's role in providing access to this key strand of American media art. Throughout 2020 a diverse team of curatorial fellows will be invited to assemble programs from Canyon's collection, with a special emphasis placed on activating undervalued and underseen works. Canyon Cinema will organize a San Francisco Bay Area screening series and national touring exhibition based on these specially curated programs, and these exhibitions will feature newly created 16mm prints and digitizations. Programs will be further enriched by newly commissioned critical writing to be published on Canyon's soon-to-be revamped website and in a special edition of the Canyon Cinemazine publication.

The project will benefit artists represented in Canyon's collection by providing necessary community-building and infrastructure work for expanded access to their work. In spite of their considerable achievements, a number of the filmmakers in Canyon's collection—many of them still producing work—remain little known outside the experimental film world. Canyon Cinema Discovered seeks to raise the profile of these historically overlooked figures, bringing them into dialogue with the work of contemporary moving-image artists, curators, and scholars.

Public Programs & Collaborations



Black Sheep Boy (1995, Michael Wallin)



Glistening Thrills (2013, Jodie Mack)

Screenings and public programs continue to be paramount among our efforts to introduce new audiences and generations to alternative cinematic visions. Canyon Cinema is actively building on its legacy as an organization that fosters community through these shared experiences, and does so through free screenings, collaborations with programmatic partners and by participating in community events. In 2019 we presented or participated in 27 events across the Bay Area.

2019 PUBLIC PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- SFAI FILM X CANYON – a series of four free Salon screenings produced in collaboration with the San Francisco Art Institute in celebration of the 50th anniversary of inception of the film department. Participating filmmakers included Scott Stark, Kerry Laitala, Mark Ellinger/Curt McDowell and Mike Henderson.
- SAN FRANCISCO ART BOOK FAIR – participation at this most important Bay Area arts community event gave our organization meaningful exposure to thousands of attendees. The Book Fair marked the release of *Canyon Cinemazine 6: Missed Connections* and we presented a curated screening in the Minnesota Street Project's media room.
- Collaborations with San Francisco Cinematheque highlighting the works of filmmakers Barbara Hammer, Phil Solomon, Jonas Mekas and Jonathan Schwartz.
- Canyon Cinema Salon – now in its fifth year, continued with events featuring artists Malic Amalya, Zachary Epcar, Janis Crystal Lipzin, and Lana Z Caplan.
- New and Continuing Partnerships with San Francisco Arts Commission Galleries, upstart gallery Slash Art San Francisco, The Roxie Theatre, BAMPFA, Exploratorium, and SFFILM.



Waterfall (1968, Chick Strand)

Preservation & Collection Care

Canyon Cinema Foundation is the custodian of one of the world's major collection of artist-made films, housing and caring for more than 3700 film prints and a growing digital media repository of works belonging to the 275 artists represented in Canyon's catalog. Recognizing both the value and rarity of this collection, as well as the endangered state of film in the 21st century, Canyon has focused new efforts on collection care and preservation. Canyon's preservation goals are guided by dual commitments to support exhibition of artist's films in their original medium whenever possible, and to adhere to recognized best practices in handling and care for the films placed Canyon's custody. 2019 saw landmark progress toward these goals:

- Installation of new shelving meeting standards for archival storage of motion picture film was completed in August 2019. With Funding provided by a series of National Endowment for the Humanities Preservation Assistance Grants, Canyon Cinema is carrying out the recommendations of a 2016 NEH-funded collection assessment and report by making improvements in storage environment for its film collections. This includes installation of archival shelving, re-housing films into archival enclosures and implementation of environmental monitoring practices.
- Canyon Cinema was among a small group of worldwide organizations holding collections of avant-garde, experimental, or artists' films selected to attend a week-long "Caring For Artist's Films" workshop held at the Museum of Modern Art (New York) in June 2019. Our Collection Manager Seth Mitter worked with leading authorities in media conservation and colleagues at peer organizations sharing knowledge and training in collection care practices unique to artist's films.

