

X (Unknown Quantity) Presents:
Clouded Vision: The Films of Yo Ota
Saturday, May 6th, 8:00pm
A.P.E. Gallery, 126 Main St., Northampton, MA
Free Admission



Clouded Vision is a program of short films by the Japanese filmmaker, Yo Ota. A former student of Peter Kubelka, Ota has been working in experimental film since the late 1970s. His films center on the exploration of time and space, employing diverse technical effects to trouble the moving image's presumed realism and create alternative spatio-temporal forms. Existing at the intersections of experimental documentary, the landscape film, and structural film, his work combines contemplative depictions of natural and manmade environments with complex—yet playful—examinations of filmic representation. *Clouded Vision* gathers together films that span four decades of Ota's artistic career. The program foregrounds works in which Ota utilizes experimental techniques (varying frame rates, matte work, etc.) to reorganize the viewer's perception of the world. It also features a number of films that respond creatively to the work of contemporary Japanese artists in other disciplines, such as sculpture, painting, and installation. Recurring at intervals throughout the program, Ota's characteristic time-lapse footage of cloud formations situates his subjects within an expansive durational field uniquely visible to cinema.

Featuring:

Städel, 1985, 16mm, color, silent, 7 min

“Peter Kubelka... was teaching at Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste – Städelschule (Städel) at the time. His classes, filmmaking and cooking, were very unique, and this film was made around the time I was studying with him at Städel... This is a single-shot film, moving along the passageway using a handmade dolly. I used an Arriflex 16ST camera, and I changed the filming speed from 48fps to 4-6 fps while shooting.”

Distorted “Tele” Vision, 1997, 16mm, color, sound, 11 min

“The visual harmony of the landscape is disturbed by a screen that allows us to see into the distance (television). The film is composed of six scenes that feature a television in the landscape. The speed of the television (in NTSC) is 30 frames per second, and never changes in this film. But the landscape views pass at different speeds.”

Distorted Movi Sion, 1998, 16mm, color, sound, 8 min

“The structure of human vision is the visual knowledge of the world. Individuals do not visually understand the world through the eyes, but through the brain. That is to say, human vision has been formed by knowledge and experience. The film can show a new vision, provided that the cinema is also a kind of visual experience and visual knowledge.”

Temps Topologique, 1981, 16mm, b&w, silent, 10 min

“One can not speak of time as a thing in itself. It is movements and variations that give the feeling of time. Men have always linked time and spatial movement.”

Incorrect Intermittence, 2000, 16mm, color, sound, 6 min

“This film offers a metacinematic study of tempo and change and a figure of velocity... Ota recorded [three different locations in Tokyo] at the interval of hours, and sometimes even days, by using different filters and by alternating the camera speed. The result... represents an inquiry into the abstract space-time of cinema where Ota plays with the physical fact that time is a ‘function of movement in space.’” (Malin Wahlberg)

Incorrect Continuity, 1999, 16mm, color, sound, 9 min

“Sequences of space-time manipulation that raise the problem of continuity in the shot.”

Installation Time, 1989-90, 16mm, color, sound, 6 min

“Mr. Tsuguō Yanai makes paper objects. He installs these objects in a gallery in Tokyo. The camera was also installed in the gallery. It filmed all of the time of installation and its preparation... Yet the film is not the documentary of an installation, but of installation time.”

Inclined Horizon, 2007, 16mm, color, sound, 8 min

“My attempt at a filmic interpretation of Haraguchi Noriyuki’s ‘Inclined Horizon,’ a three-dimensional physical work featured in the ‘Dance Hakushu 2006’ exhibition held in the Hakushu district of Hokuto City, Yamanashi Prefecture. Haraguchi’s work was modeled out of earth that

will return to its original form after about a month, and my aim was to resurrect the concept of this work on film.”

Reflex/reflection, 2009, 16mm, color, sound, 8 min

“This film was made for an event that included an exhibition of artwork by Eishi Yamatomo. Yamatomo’s metal sculpture is often finished with a chromium plating, which reflects its surroundings. For this project, I tried to obtain the image of a metal sculpture as an existing entity and its reflection as an illusion on a film medium, which can hold an image as an object. It was originally shot on 8mm film, hand-processed, edited, then re-photographed on 16mm film.”

ULTRAMARINE, 2014, 16mm, color, sound, 5 min

“The ‘exhibition’ held by ‘artist’ Katsuhiko Fujimura in Tokyo during the very hot summer of 2013 was one that made viewers suffer. The ‘painting’ that stood leaning against the window had very faint colors and regular scratches that could not be seen very well because of the light streaming in from the outside. The light changed with the time of day, and the surface of the painting also shifted. The paint on the front of the panel can only be perceived as ‘color’ by reflecting light. The fact that if the light changes what is seen also changes is quite obvious, but because it is a ‘painting’ viewers find this hard to accept.”

Nebukawa, 2012, 16mm, color, sound, 4.5 min

“There was an art event at a closed school, Kataura Junior High School, in Nebukawa, Kanagawa Prefecture. If I did not participate in this event to show my films, I would never have got off at Nebukawa Station. I saw the sea from the school building. The installation by Tetsuya Imuro was placed in a science room at the school, where one could see the ocean through the windows.”

TRT ca. 82.5 min

Bio:

Yo Ota (b. 1953, Tokyo) began studying experimental cinema in 1977 at Université Paris 8. He continued his studies at Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste – Städelschule in Germany, where he learned filmmaking and cooking from Peter Kubelka. In 1982, his 16mm film *Temps Topologique* was shown at the Biennale de Paris. His films have screened at EXiS: Experimental Film and Video Festival in Seoul, Hamburg International Short Film Festival, International Film Festival Rotterdam, Ann Arbor Film Festival, and at venues throughout France and Japan. Today, he continues to work on the medium of celluloid film, mainly 16mm. Additional information about Yo Ota can be found at his website: www.tokyo100.com/ota/

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