

The Festival of (In)appropriation #13

Founded in 2009, the Festival of (In)appropriation is a preeminent international showcase for experimental, found-media film and video. Every year, the Festival attracts artists working across an astonishing array of moving-image formats while probing the limits of collage, machinima, re-mix, détournement, mash-up, and more. The raw material for their work derives from the abundant new sources of audiovisual media to have surfaced in recent decades, from official state and commercial archives to vernacular collections, home movie repositories, and digital databases of every stripe. By exploiting and refashioning these pre-existing materials, such creations generate novel juxtapositions and recombinations, often producing ideas and meanings that were unintended or unimagined by the original makers. These remarkable works, in other words, are “inappropriate” in the profoundest sense of the term. Sponsored by Los Angeles Filmforum, the Festival of (In)appropriation strives to evince the remarkable range, sophistication, and critical impact of this vital aesthetic practice. This year’s program was curated by Jaimie Baron, Jennifer Proctor, and Adam Sekuler.

Tulipomania: You Had to Be There (US, Cheryl Gelover, Tom Murray 2022, 3:45, color)

Magnification doesn’t always yield detail. Maybe you had to be there... When the observer and the observed exchange places – at what point do we hold ourselves accountable? *You Had to Be There* is the first music video for *Tulipomania*’s soon to be released new album *Dreaming of Sleep*. The animation was created frame by frame including animated lip sync as well as vintage found footage in an exploration of varied states of disintegration and recombination created on thousands of individual sheets of black or white paper.

Headspace (US, Sophia Haboush, 2023, 4:44, color)

Headspace is an experimental film that expresses the feelings of anxiety and peace through composites of archival video and images. Taking inspiration from the principals and techniques of dada and surrealism, my film uses unorthodox techniques and focuses on the internal space. With collaboration between visuals, music, and sound design, we were able to create a world that depicts what the headspaces of anxiety and peace could be like.

Collage 42 (Spain, Luis Carlos Rodriguez, 2022, 2:26, color)

An audiovisual “divertimento” based on the work in the Public Domain. The Great St. Louis Bank Robbery (1959) by Charles Guggenheim, *Collage 42* is part of a broad experimental audiovisual research project that seeks to explore, through the construction and deconstruction of classic film scenes in the public domain and, from the point of view of artistic-expressive activities, questions that encompass formal, structural, narrative, and aesthetic aspects of the Audiovisual Arts.

Her Violet Kiss (US, Bill Morrison, 2021, 5:00, color)

A woman attends a party where she encounters a mysterious stranger.

Time Scraps: Film Threads and Sprocket Holes (US, Krista Leigh Steinke, 2023, 8:15, color)

An homage to the women who worked in the motion picture industry in the early part of the 20th century. Scraps from old footage – sprocket holes, light leaks, film leaders, scratches (parts of the film material not intended for viewing) – are hand painted, collaged, and stitched together as a way to reclaim and honor their skill and labor as film editors and colorists. Here, color bleeds outside of the lines, while other moments break from convention and become chaotic and unruly. Visuals are contrasted against male narrators who dictate directions and explain how to correctly handle cinema technology.

Date Night (Canada, Jean-Pierre Marchant, 2023, 1:29, color)

Queen of Dots (Japan, Michael Lyons, 2020, 2:02, color)

The Queen of dots is also a queen of Instagram and Tumblr.

Motor (Austria, Grzegorz Kielawski, Alexander Bayer, 2023, 18:04, color)

Farmers, truckers, and gamers stream live on a daily basis. MOTOR offers a glimpse of their content. The flow of images and words is condensed into a chamber play on working conditions, time structures and professional identities. Simulation and documentation merge, work and play interlace.

Dreams Under Confinement (US, Christopher Harris, 2020, 2:30, color)

“Frenzied voices on the Chicago Police Department’s scanner call for squad cars and reprisals during the 2020 uprising in response to the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, as Google Earth tracks the action through simulated aerial views of urban spaces and the vast Cook County Department of Corrections, the country’s third-largest jail system. In Christopher Harris’s *Dreams Under Confinement*, the prison and the street merge into a shared carceral landscape.”—New York Film Festival

Another Set of Jaws (Canada, Jean-Pierre Marchant, 2023, 0:57, color)

OilMoonNight (Germany, Anna Malina Zemlianski, 2022, 5:26, color)

A revenge fantasy. A corrupted & glitched daydream. A futile endeavor to cope with visions of terror... Sunflower Fields Forever! I cut scenes from various films by necrorealist filmmaker Yevgeni Yufit into a new narrative influenced by the pain unleashed by Russia’s recent invasion of Ukraine. This new cut was data moshed and printed with an inkjet printer. As I allowed the ink cartridges to run empty, the prints and colors became faulty, adding another layer of glitching. For some scenes the prints were manipulated even further by collaging, applying water to the ink or using sticky tape to tear off parts of the images. The sound too is made entirely with sounds found in the same films which I collaged and manipulated as well.

Home (Iran, Yasaman Baghban, 2:51, 2020, color)

The war in Afghanistan has resulted in immense suffering and displacement for many of its citizens. Two Afghan painters were among those affected and were forced to flee their home country. They found refuge in Iran, a country that has generously taken in thousands of Afghan refugees since the conflict began. However, despite the warm welcome, the painters have faced challenges in adapting to life in a new place, and the effects of the trauma they have experienced cannot be overlooked. The experience of living in the diaspora has had a profound impact on their memories and has shaped their lives in ways that are not easily forgotten. The trauma of war has taken a toll on these individuals, and it is important to recognize the difficulties they face as they try to rebuild their lives.

A Heated Exchange (Canada, Jean-Pierre Marchant, 2023, 1:15, color)

Skyscraper Film (Italy, Federica Foglia, 2023, 7:56, color)

Can I use the film strip structure as an architectural element? Is it possible to use the celluloid from the film as a cement? Can these skyscrapers be turned into something else? Can solid lines blend into sensual, natural curves? Can I melt skyscrapers? *Skyscraper Film* was created to try to give a visual answer to these questions, arising from the artist’s relation to urban maps of various locations and their respective skylines, populated by imposing skyscrapers and reinforced concrete panoramas: Quebec, Kingston (Canada), Maryland, Pittsburgh, Baltimore (USA) etc. Cities are presented to us as an abstract handmade camera-less collage, created from scraps of orphan 16mm films from the 1980s.

Cupid’s Fever (Canada, MilleFeuille, 2021, 16:00, color)

Child hunters look through scope-cam rifles to aim for the heart. A found-footage portrait of love told through YouTube vlogs of relationship breakups and psycho exes. *Cupid’s Fever* is part of the feature ‘I Went to a Party Alone’ in which YouTube vlogs of random, daily life are recast as dramatic events imbued with cinematic qualities and mythic allusions. When the hard cuts and juxtapositions reveal a landscape of oppressive social control, the vloggers’ mundane normal soon gives way to the surreal. Seemingly innocuous recordings are fraught with foreboding as the vloggers who yearn for freedom, love and self-expression find themselves unable to escape society’s haunting bondage.

Long Time No Techno (Germany, Eugenia Bakurin, 2022, 3:44, color)

The footage comes from the archive of the Odesa Film Studio, which was the first film studio established in the Russian Empire. During the Soviet era, many films were shot there, which shaped the childhood of millions of people. However, today the film studio, like many other cultural monuments in Ukraine, is threatened with destruction by the Russian army. The video features dancing moments from children’s films of the 70s and 80s, which provide a glimpse into a carefree time of adventure, fantasy trips, and freedom. These scenes serve as illusions of a time that has since passed.

Total running time: approximately 90 min.