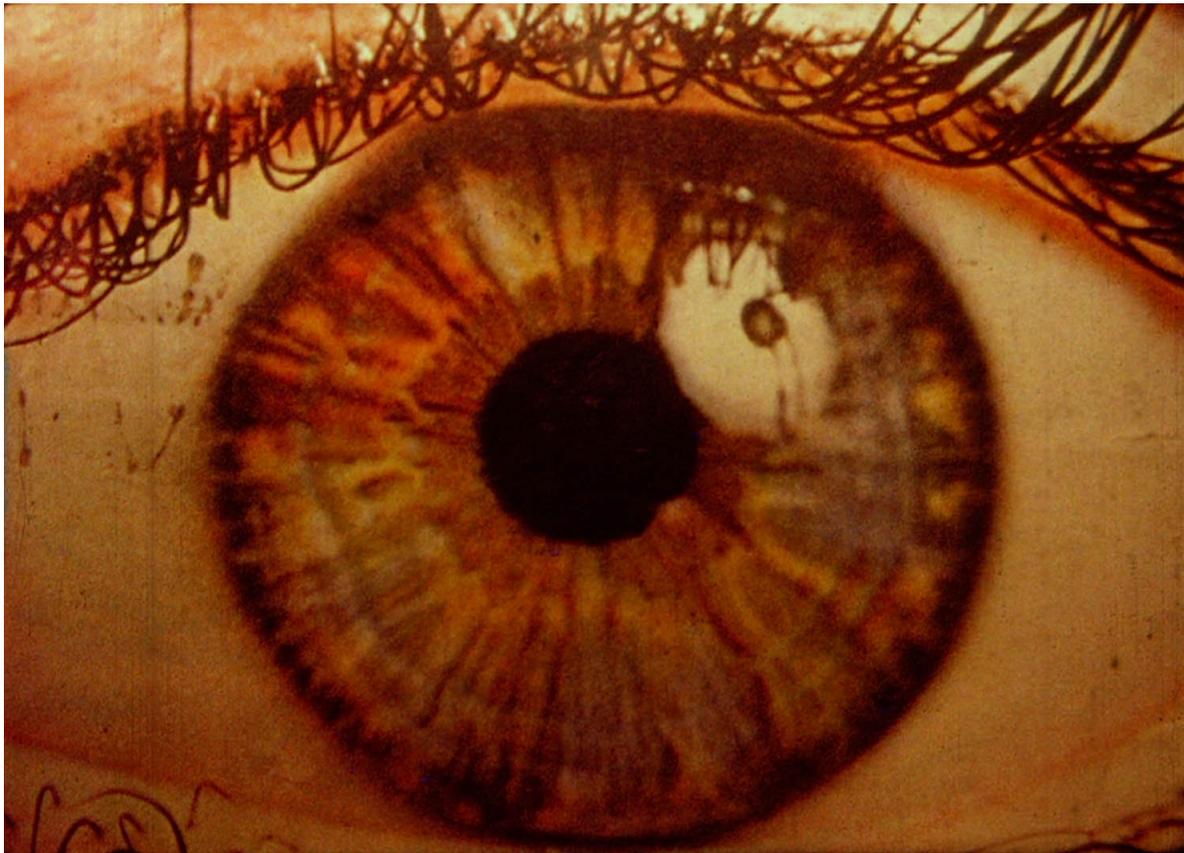




Los Angeles Filmforum presents
Ism, Ism, Ism: Experimental Cinema in Latin America
Ismo, Ismo, Ismo: Cine Experimental en América Latina
www.ismismism.org

Ism, Ism, Ism is the first comprehensive, U.S.-based film program and publication to treat the full breadth of Latin America's vibrant experimental film production. The screenings feature key historical and contemporary works from Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, Puerto Rico and the United States. Revisiting classic names and forms from the experimental canon, the film series daringly places them within a completely novel scope and breadth. The film series takes both the aficionado and open-minded viewer through a journey into a wealth of materials culled from the forgotten corners of Latin American film archives integrated with recent production from across the continent. *Ism, Ism, Ism* presents new constellations, recalls neglected textures, and restores the singular and collective visions of the history of experimental cinema in Latin America.

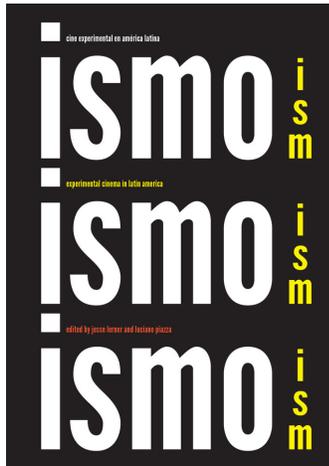
Ism, Ism, Ism is accompanied by a bilingual publication entitled *Ism, Ism, Ism: Experimental Cinema in Latin America*, co-edited by Jesse Lerner and Luciano Piazza, and published by the University of California Press.



Jorge Honik, *El Inmortal*, Argentina, 1963.

Publication

[*Ism, Ism, Ism: Experimental Cinema in Latin America* \(University of California Press\)](#)



The publication is unprecedented in its subject matter and approach. Prior to this endeavor, the bulk of publications on Latin American experimental cinema had been national histories only available in Spanish or Portuguese. This collection places Latin American and Latino production within a broader dialogue, as it establishes productive connections between periods, national contexts, and filmmakers, exploring the diverse ways of seeing and modes of image-making practiced by Latin American and diasporic producers. Our book is unique in its ability to span countries, media, and time periods, and will thus be an invaluable resource for scholars, curators, artists and others interested in the history of Latin America, modern art, small-gauge film, political and Third Cinema as well as other genres of non-commercial cinemas. This mosaic will furthermore be an important reference for broad United States audiences to approach experimental Latin American film, as well as the first time Latin American audiences will see these works in concert.

***Ism, Ism, Ism* Team**

Project Directors and Co-Curators: Jesse Lerner / Luciano Piazza

Project Coordinator: Brenda Contreras

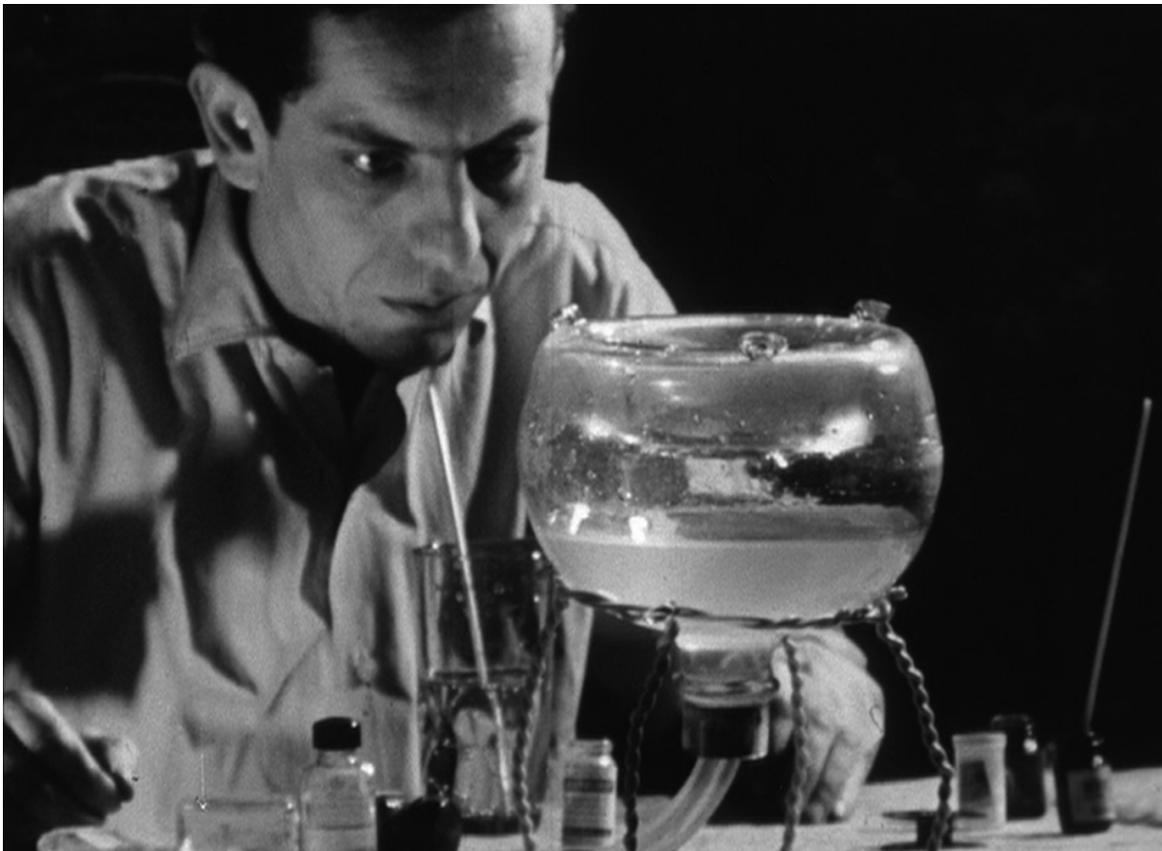
Project Supervisor: Adam Hyman

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Jesse Lerner is a documentary filmmaker, curator, and writer based in Los Angeles. His books include *The Maya of Modernism*, *F is for Phony: Fake Documentary and Truth's Undoing* (with Alex Juhasz), *The Shock of Modernity*, and *The Catherwood Project* (with Leandro Katz). As a curator, he has organized exhibitions for the Flaherty Seminar, Mexico's National Palace of Fine Arts, and *The Mexperimental Cinema*, a traveling retrospective of 60 years of avant-garde film and video from Mexico. He is a professor in the intercollegiate media studies program of the Claremont Colleges.

Luciano Piazza is a filmmaker, writer and critic born in Buenos Aires based in the United States. He studied literature at the University of Buenos Aires, creative writing at New York University and film and video at the California Institute of the Arts. He has collaborated as an art and literary critic in a wide variety of Latin American media outlets. Piazza is co-editor and co-curator of *Ism, Ism, Ism: Experimental Cinema in Latin America* (University of California Press - Los Angeles Filmforum), Los Angeles Filmforum's contribution to the Getty Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA.

Curated programs



Raúl Ruiz, *The Suitcase*, Chile, 1963-200.

1) Countercultures and Undergrounds

Experimental film is often intimately connected with a variety of countercultural movements, some global in reach, others very specifically local. Some of these filmmakers explicitly embrace these movements' radical political goals, and at other times their ideological concerns are simply implicit, but all of these films are unified by their allegiance to a range of underground, youth, or countercultural phenomena. Several of these films document performances, ephemeral actions, or interventions in public space. *Marabunta*, for example, a 1967 film and performance directed by Narcisa Hirsch, with the collaboration of Marie

Louise Alemann, and Walther Mejía, involves the interaction of an audience--coming out of a theater where they had seen the Buenos Aires premiere of Antonioni's *Blow Up*-- with fruit, live pigeons, and a giant plaster skeleton, documented in 16mm by radical filmmaker Raymundo Gleyzer. Enrique Pineda Barnet's extraordinary *Juventud rebeldía revolución* offers documentation of a performance by an international collective lead by Cuba's *Grupo de Teatro Experimental*. In the spirit of Situationist *détournement* and punk pranks, Manuel Delanda's *Ismism* captures the filmmaker's own interventions on Manhattan billboards, rendered across the city with an X-Acto knife. In *Esplendor do Martirio*, Sérgio Péo rehearses his theory of Super 8 that would later be materialized in his poem/manifesto "Super 8 as an Instrument of Language." *Esplendor do Martirio* visualizes a group of intellectuals occupying and disrupting the urban space, later to be removed by the Brazilian military. Rolando Peña, iconic figure of Venezuela's avant-garde, produces an impossible dialogue that takes place within the noisy scene of a construction site of the Caracas Metro, echoing the complex relationship between intellectual debates and the noise of "progress." Alfredo Gurrola's super-8 trip, based on a poem by exiled Spanish writer Tomás Segovia, points to some of the preoccupations of a counterhegemonic, radical, alternative culture.

Juventud, rebeldía, revolución

Enrique Pineda Barnet, 1969, 30 min, 35mm (projected as a digital file), color, sound, Cuba
No preview available.

Ismism

Manuel DeLanda, 1979, 5:57 minutes, Super 8mm (projected as digital file), color, silent, Mexico/USA

<https://vimeo.com/170957226>

* Distributed by Anthology Film Archives

Marabunta,

Film and performance by Narcisa Hirsch, performance assisted by Marie Louise Alemann & Walther Mejia, camera by Raymundo Gleyzer, 1967, 8 min., 16mm film (projected as digital file) black and white, sound, Argentina

<https://vimeo.com/134139975>

(password: super8)

Esplendor do martirio

Sergio Peo, 1974, 9:30, Super 8mm (projected as digital file) color, sound, Brazil

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qEblw-TBos>

Cotorra 2

Rolando Peña, 1976, 10 min., Super 8mm (projected as digital file), color, sound, Venezuela

<https://vimeo.com/243469092/9c233f4c5a>

Segunda Primera Matriz

Alfredo Gurrola, Mexico, 1972, 13:00, color, sound, Super 8mm projected as digital file.

<https://vimeo.com/243161275/2510f3dfa1>

2) Dark Matter: Collective, Singular and Parodic Resistance



Grupo Los Vagos, *Zona intertidal*, El Salvador, 1980

Created during and between military coups, civil wars, diverse authoritarian regimes, and invasions led by the United States, experimental cinema in Latin America has not escaped the impact diverse forms of social upheavals and violence. In many of these contexts, resistance, even social commentary, can be a precarious, even dangerous, project, and tonight's program surveys some of these expressions. In the war-torn El Salvador of 1980, the collective "Los Vagos" shot documentaries and one fiction film, *Zona intertidal*, a poetic treatment of the politically motivated assassination of a leftist professor by death squads. In 2014, in the town of Iguala, in Southern Mexico, 43 students from a rural teachers' college were detained by the military and handed over to a local criminal organization. Forensic specialists have only been able to identify the remains of two of the students among the numerous mass graves excavated during the ensuing search for clues to their disappearance, a process which Bruno Varela comments upon in *Materia Oscura*. Zigmunt Cedinsky takes a satirical approach in *La Guerra sin fin (I'm very Happy)*, while the Colombian filmmaker Camilo Restrepo's *Impresión de una Guerra* visits textile factories, tattoo parlors, print shops, and punk rock concerts to offer up an essayistic reflection on the lasting legacies of decades on his homeland.

Zona intertidal (Intertidal Zone)

Grupo Los Vagos, 1980, 14 min, 16mm, color, sound, El Salvador

<https://vimeo.com/21117830>

Tristezas (Sorrows)

Paz Encina, 2016, 7 min, digital, color, sound, Paraguay

<https://vimeo.com/153711048>

Materia Oscura (Dark Matter)

Bruno Varela, 2016, 8 min, digital, b&w and color, sound, Mexico
<https://vimeo.com/187208547>

Post-Military Cinema

Bea Santiago Muñoz, 2014, 11 min., HD video, color, sound, Puerto Rico
<https://vimeo.com/album/2368170/video/112457710>

La Guerra sin fin (I'm very happy) [The Unfinished war (I'm very happy)]

Zigmunt Cedinsky. 2006, 7:30 min, 35mm, color, sound, Venezuela
<https://vimeo.com/45563128>

Impresión de una Guerra

Camilo Restrepo, 2015. 26 min., 16mm/DCP, color, sound, Colombia/Francia
<https://vimeo.com/132924864>
Password: LIDUG

3) Bilingual Aesthetics: Negotiations Between Languages

Hundreds of languages are spoken in Latin America, beyond the Spanish and Portuguese imposed with the Conquest. In the context of the Conquest of the Aztec Empire, the role of la Malinche, Hernán Cortés' translator, interpreter, and lover, was a central one, and she remains a potent and contested figure. This program explores the movement between languages as a manifestation of identitary pluralities. Unleashing the multiplication of heritage and affiliation in our contemporary landscape, these films reveal language as a will to power. In her monograph *Bilingual Aesthetics* the failure of language only makes language's success all the more sweet, Doris Sommer observes. This program ranges from explicit negotiations about land ownership in *The Land Belongs to Those Who Work It*, in which the dialogue switches between Spanish and Tzeltal, to a more abstract exploration of a religious Inca celebration of change and new beginnings in *Pawqartampu*. The chief of the Guarani Mimbíá tribe narrates the extinction of the Tupinambá tribe in Sérgio Péo's *Ñanderu Panorâmica Tupinambá*. Vincent Carelli and the Centro de Trabalho Indigenista have for many years used video as a tool for activism and intercultural communication in remote Amazonian regions, as the short documentary *A Arca dos Zo'é* vividly illustrates. Mexican media artist Ximena Cuevas takes a humorous approach with a poolside language lesson for a North American tourist. In *Dilemma I: Burundanga Boricua*, the Puerto Rican artist Poli Marichal combines the official representations of Puerto Rico as a shining star with a shining scar, mixing animation, documentary footage, and hand-painted film.

Meeting Ancestors / A Arca dos Zo'é

Vincent Carelli and Dominique Gallois (*Video in the Villages*), 1993, 22 min., color, sound, video screened digitally, Brazil

* Distributed by Video Data Bank

Ñanderu Panorâmica Tupinambá

Sérgio Péo, 1991, 8 min., color, sound, 16mm transferred to digital, Brazil
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9yKj5-BjJM>

The Land Belongs to Those Who Work It

Chiapas Media Project, 2005, 15 min., color, sound, digital, Mexico

<https://vimeo.com/45615376>

Pawqartampu

Felipe Esparza, 2015, 8 min., b&w, sound, digital, Peru

No screener available

Estela

Bruno Varela, 2012, 8min., b&w/color, sound, Super8 and digital transferred to digital, Mexico

<https://vimeo.com/51365254>

Dilemma I: Burundanga Boricua

Poli Marichal, 1990, 18 min., color, sound, Super 8, transferred to digital, Puerto Rico

No screener available

Estamos Para Servile (We're Here to Serve You)

Ximena Cuevas, 1999, 02:40 min., color, sound, video, Mexico

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-9aPm1yYlQ>

4) Recycled Cinema

In the spirit of Oswald de Andrade's landmark 1928 provocation, the *Manifiesto Antropófago*, this program features a works of artists, dating from the 1950s up to today, that engage in found footage filmmaking, a subaltern practice of decolonization and critique through the collage of appropriated images and audio. This practice, sometimes called "recycled cinema," "détournement," or "cinema of appropriation," has particular resonance in the region, where outsiders' misrepresentations often dominate the local cinematic productions on screens. Nuyoriquen artists Raphael Ortiz Montañez took a 16mm print of *Winchester '73* (Anthony Mann, 1950), a Hollywood Western in which Rock Hudson plays a Native American, and hacked the reels to pieces with a tomahawk "to release their evil." Placing the film fragments in a medicine bag, he performed a ritual exorcism inspired by his Yaqui grandfather before splicing together the random fragments, some upside down and others right side up, that comprise the *Cowboy and 'Indian' Film* (1958). A Cuban newsreel from 1960 shows the triumphant supporters of the Revolution taking over the former offices of major Hollywood studios, and repurposes the reels found within. The progeny of these forerunners are diverse in their strategies and aims, ranging from Ricardo Nicolayevsky's mile-a-minute cinematic sprint to Artemio's mash-up of Walt Disney's adaptations of *Winnie the Pooh* and Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979). Eduardo Menz's *Las mujeres de Pinochet* (2005) juxtaposes the testimony of Carmen Gloria Quintana, an activist badly burned by the Chilean soldiers while protesting against the brutality of Augusto Pinochet's regime, with footage of the dictator congratulating Cecilia Bolocco, the nation's first successive Miss Universe contestant. Through reframing and repetition, the contradictions of these two women's experiences and of the totalitarian state's parameters for acceptable female behavior slowly and painfully emerge.

No D.R.

Alfredo Salomón, 2002, 1 min., color, sound, digital, México

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXbrARp5ffw>

Newsreel 49

Instituto Cubano de Artes e Industrias Cinematográficas, 1960, 1 min., b&w, 35mm transferred to digital, Cuba
No preview available

'Cowboy' and 'Indian' Film

Rafael Montañez Ortiz, 1958, 2 min., b&w, sound, 35mm reduced to 16mm and transferred to digital, USA
No preview available

Desde la Havana ;1969! Recordar

Nicolás Guillén Landrián, 1969, 17 min., b&w, sound, 35mm transferred to digital, Cuba
<https://vimeo.com/243469769/dbfefe7d93>

The Bombing of Washington

Luis Ospina, 1972, 1 min., b&w, sound, 16mm transferred to digital, Colombia/EEUU.
No preview available

The Big Wack

Ricardo Nicolayevsky, 2002, 2 1/2 min., b&w, sound, digital, México
<http://www.riconico.com/> -Video- Foundfootage

Prayer for Marilyn Monroe

Marisol Trujillo, Miriam Talavera, and Pepín Rodríguez, poem by Ernesto Cardenal, 1983, 8 min., b&w, sound, 35mm transferred as digital, Cuba
<https://vimeo.com/243469854/12208ccb1a>

Apoohcalypse Now

Artemio, 2002, 8 min., color, sound, digital, México
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqAjN-imcnM>

Las mujeres de Pinochet (Pinochet's Women)

Eduardo Menz, 2004, 12 min., color, sound, digital, Canada/Chile
<https://vimeo.com/13790952>

* Distributed by Light Cone

Las ruinas de Bahía Blanca (The Ruins of Bahía Blanca)

Nicolas Testoni, 2012, 5:20, color and b&w, sound, digital, Argentina
<https://vimeo.com/64952041>

Pobre del cantor

Taller Independiente de Cine Experimental, 1978, 2 min., color, sound, super-8 transferred to digital, México
<https://vimeo.com/243469529/886f1917ad>

Chapucerías (Sloppy Work)

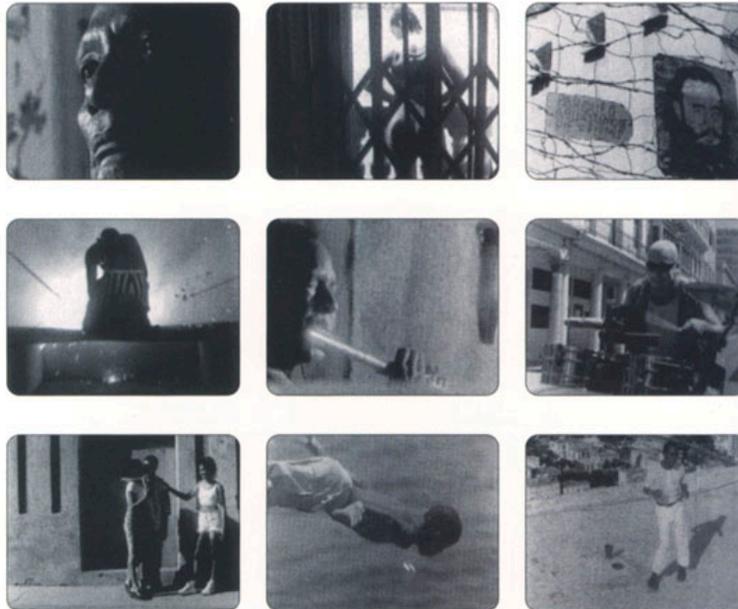
Enrique Colina, 1987, 11 min., color, sound, 35mm transferred to digital, Cuba
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqj0sT8SrY8>

5) Urban Harmonies/Dissonant Cities

At the end of the silent era, an international cycle of films celebrated the modern city as modern utopia. These films, known as city symphonies, were edited to a musical score. The rhythm and succession of the images were immensely important for the filmmakers. In Latin America, some of the earliest experimental films participated in this cycle of city symphonies. For example, *São Paulo: a Sinfonia da Metr pole*, by Rodolfo Rex Lustig and Adalberto Kemeny, and Humberto Mauro's film-poem about his home town in Minas Gerais, Brazil, *Sinfonia de Cataguases*. Ever since those early efforts many filmmakers have maintained a fascination with the city, as Latin American cities were transformed by unfettered growth, industrialization, and massive rural to urban migrations. This program offers a range of urban visions—some more celebratory, others more critical—of the architecture, daily life, public spaces, and transportation of cities such as Buenos Aires, Havana, Lima, Bogot , Los Angeles, Santiago, and London.

Habana Solo

Juan Carlos Alom, 2000, 15 min, b&w, 16mm transferred to digital, Cuba
<https://vimeo.com/77244905>



Juan Carlos Alom, *Habana Solo*, 2000

At your heels

Azucena Losana, 2017, 2:36 min, 16mm, color, sound, Argentina/Czech Republic

Machinery No. 1 (Maquinaria No. 1)

Luis Soldevilla, 2011, 3 min, color, sound, video, Per 
<https://vimeo.com/141604725>

Inútil Paisagem

Louise Botkay, 2010, 6 min, b&w, 16mm transferred to digital, Brazil

<https://vimeo.com/15010171>

Constitución (Constitution)

Melisa Aller, 2013, 4 min, b&w, sound, Super 8 transferred to digital, Argentina

<https://theaudienceawards.com/films/constitucion53461>

Despedida (Farewell)

Alexandra Cuesta, 2013, 10 min, color, sound, 16mm transferred to digital, Ecuador/USA

<https://vimeo.com/243233376/9f85ab9b63>

La Poubelle

Felipe Ehrenberg, 1970, 16 min, color, sound, video transferred to digital, México

<http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/felipe-ehrenberg-la-poubelle>

Cali de película

Luis Ospina y Carlos Mayolo, 1973, 13 min., color, sound, 16mm projected as digital archive, Colombia.

<https://vimeo.com/94448658>

6) Altered Surfaces: Psychedelia and Abstraction

Abstraction has been a recurring strategy in Latin American visual cultures since long before the European Conquest. Over the past century, and often in dialogue with artists elsewhere, Latin Americans working in diverse media have explored both abstraction, or in the case the Concrete art movement, who rejected the term “abstract” art as too suggestive of a link to a figurative realm that is being abstracted, “pure” explorations of color and form. Not surprisingly, filmmakers have participated actively in this process of exploration, often in collaboration with artists from other media. Enrique Pineda Barnet’s *Cosmorama* (1964) uses the kinetic sculptures of the Romanian-Cuban artist Sandú Darié Laver as a point of departure, much like the way Luís Ernesto Arocha’s *AZILEF* (1971) draws on the process of Colombian sculptor Feliza Bursztyn. Other filmmakers proceed from urban and architectural references, such as the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Teo Hernández’ *Nuestra señora de Paris* (1981-1982), and render these in ways that cross back and forth between abstraction and recognizable representations, while still others reference the altered sensory perceptions and exaggerated color palettes of psychedelic experiences. Laborde’s *As within so without* documents the reflective surfaces of the filmmaker’s inscrutable sculptures. Together, like the diverse approaches of the concrete, neo-concrete, geometric abstraction, “*grupo Madi*,” “*grupo Ruptura*,” and other movements in the visual arts, these filmmakers pursue colors, light, shadows, and forms as the basis for their work.

Cocktail de rayas

Eduardo Darino, 1964, 2 min., 16mm projected as digital archive, color, sound, Uruguay.

No screener available

Cosmorama

Enrique Pineda Barnet

1964, 5 min., 35mm film transferred to digital, color, sound, Cuba

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7hXlt7Tcg9Q>

Vadi-Samvadi

Claudio Caldini, 1981, 6:39, Super 8 projected as digital archive, color, sound, Argentina.
<https://vimeo.com/266538267>

Nuestra señora de Paris

Teo Hernández, 1981-1982, 22 min., 16mm, 18 fps, color, sound, France
<https://lightcone.org/en/film-1634-nuestra-senora-de-paris>

El Quilpo sueña cataras

Pablo Mazzolo, 2012, 11 min., Super 8 projected as digital archive, color, sound, Argentina.
No screener available

Becky's Eye

Willie Varela, 1977, 3 min., Super 8, color, silent, USA
<https://vimeo.com/230753799>

As without so within

Manuela de Laborde, 2016, 25 min, 16mm, color, sound, Mexico/USA/United Kingdom.
<https://vimeo.com/160776169>
Password: AWSW

7) Umbralés: Experimental Women Filmmakers from Latin America

This program showcases female filmmakers who sought to carve out a place within the male-dominated world of Latin American independent audiovisual production. Key works, such as Argentine filmmaker Narcisa Hirsch's *Come Out*, exemplify the defiant position toward gendered and essentializing aesthetics expected of Latin American women filmmakers. The program also includes pioneering Uruguayan filmmaker Lydia García Millán's *Color*, one of the first abstract experimental films from Latin America, the politically charged Super 8 experiments by Puerto Rican underground artist Poli Marichal, an imagined dialogue with an iconic painting of Diego Rivera by Silvia Gruner, and a comic video essay by Mexican artist Ximena Cuevas.

Come Out

Narcisa Hirsch, 1971, 11 min, Super 8 transferred to digital, Argentina
<https://vimeo.com/141265024>

Color

Lydia Garcia, 1955, color, sound, Uruguay
<https://vimeo.com/243064448/e257a2215a>

Desnudo con alcatraces

Silvia Gruner, 1986, 1:50 min, Super 8mm, b/w, silent, Mexico
<https://vimeo.com/243237550/6acf0f3ad3>



Vivian Ostrovsky, *Copacabana Beach*, 1983

Popsicles

Gloria Camiruaga, 1982- 1984, 4:42 min, video, USA-Chile

<https://vimeo.com/243397735/cb4b17f8b7>

Umbrales

Marie Louise Alemann, 1967, 19 min, color, 16mm, Argentina

<https://vimeo.com/243469221/92a5cf1e34>

Paracas

Cecilia Vicuña, 1983, 18:26 min, color, sound, 16mm transferred to digital, USA/Chile

<https://vimeo.com/156309298>

Devil in the Flesh

Ximena Cuevas, 2003, 5 min, B&W and Color, Stereo, Mexico

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Uobcq9Zm7Q>

Copacabana Beach

Vivian Ostrovsky, 1983, 10:08 min., Super 8 transferred to digital, color, sound, Brazil

<http://www.vivianostrovsky.com/item/copacabana-beach/#page-1>

Blues Tropical

Poli Marichal, 1982, 3:30, color, sound, Super 8 transferred to digital, Puerto Rico

<https://vimeo.com/244031017/792c371c98>



Support

Ism, Ism, Ism is part of Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA, a far-reaching and ambitious exploration of Latin American and Latino art in dialogue with Los Angeles. Explore more at www.ismismism.org, lafilmforum.org, and www.pacificstandardtime.org.

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About Los Angeles Filmforum

Filmforum was formed in 1975, with the mission to promote a greater understanding of film as an art form and the filmmaker as an artist by providing a forum for independently produced, experimental films, which have little opportunity of reaching the general public through normal channels of commercial distribution. It showcases alternative media that aims to inspire, enlighten, and empower, as well as to entertain. By featuring the underrepresented voices and visions of truly independent filmmakers, Filmforum exposes audiences to the full range of artistic expression, cultural perspectives, and critical inquiry.

www.lafilmforum.org
www.ismismism.org