

# ***The Medical Film Symposium***

## **SCHEDULE**

### **Wednesday, January 20**

**Note: Admission to all events is free for symposium registrants. Please check in at the box office or registration desk at each event.**

#### **International House of Philadelphia**

3701 Chestnut Street

7:30pm: **Film Screening: *A Man to Remember***

Admission: \$8 General admission, \$6 students and seniors (Open to the general public)

Presented by Nico de Klerk of the Nederlands Filmmuseum

*Dir. Garson Kanin, US, 1938, 35mm, 80 mins, b/w*

Preceded by opening of *Radiologic Images* exhibit in lobby (begins at 6:00pm)

### **Thursday, January 21**

#### **International House of Philadelphia**

3701 Chestnut Street

7:00pm: **Film screening: *Experimental Medical Films***

Admission: \$8 General admission, \$6 students and seniors (Open to the general public)

Curated by Barbara Hammer. All filmmakers will be in attendance

- **Twist of Fate**  
Karen Aqua, US, 2009, 35mm,  
9 mins, color

With experimental animation and collage techniques, Karen Aqua presents a beautiful and astonishing account of her experience with cancer. *Twist of Fate* is less a literal representation of events than an expressionistic rendering of Aqua's diagnosis, treatment and recovery. The film improbably explores a frightening experience with a surprisingly light touch.

- **A Horse is Not a Metaphor**  
Barbara Hammer, US, 2008,  
BetaSP, 30 mins, color

Fighting stage 3 ovarian cancer, Barbara Hammer returns to her experimental roots in a multilayered film blending numerous chemotherapy sessions with images of light and movement that take her far from the hospital bed. A cancer 'thriller' rather than

'survivor', Hammer rides the red hills of Georgia O'Keefe's Ghost Ranch in New Mexico, the grassy foothills of the Big Horn in Wyoming and leafy paths in Woodstock, New York, changing illness into recovery.

- **Sanctus**

Barbara Hammer, US, 1990, 16mm,  
20 mins, color

Hammer manipulates the re-photographed x-rays of Dr James Sibley Watson to highlight the central contradiction of these rare and beautiful images. Though the original 'films' reveal the miracle of the human body and its internal structures in motion, they also question the value of medical imaging when the very process of visualization is dangerous itself. *Sanctus* is a fascinating and elegant investigation of the life and death forces.

- **Qualia Diaries**

Emily Mode, US, 2009, DVD,  
17 mins, color

After her diagnosis of a seizure disorder, Emily Mode explores her place between reality, fantasy and memory. While describing the horrifying side effects of several anti-convulsive prescriptions, Mode recounts the origins of her condition and identifies its earliest symptoms from her childhood games.

- **Colon Karaoke**

Brina Thurston, US, 2008, DVD,  
6 mins, color

*Colon Karaoke* is taken from a documented medical procedure where the song Sledge Hammer comes on the radio in the operating room. A voice-over was added in postproduction of the patient singing along to the radio. *Colon Karaoke* highlights the absurdity we endure in the most personally penetrating modern day experiences. It also plays with issues of power, sex and humility in popular culture.

## **Friday, January 22**

Pennsylvania Hospital  
800 Spruce Street

7:00pm: **Film Screening: PROJECTO DYSFUNCTION: Acute Projections by The Orgone Archive & Public Opinion Laboratory**

A multi-format expanded cinema production designed by Greg Pierce and Andrew Lampert

This screening is open only to pre-registered symposium attendees. Enter the hospital from the main entrance on 9<sup>th</sup> Street. Please bring a picture ID and check in at the front desk. Screening is in the Surgical Amphitheatre in the historic building.

Symposium attendees are also encouraged to visit the exhibit "From Pastels to PDA's: Medical Education from the 18th C. to the 21st C." The exhibit, located outside the Medical Library one floor below the surgical amphitheatre, shows reproductions of the hospital's collection of sixteen Jan Van Rymdyk anatomical drawings for the first time together in one display.

## **Saturday, January 23**

### **The Mütter Museum at The College of Physicians of Philadelphia**

19 S. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street

9:00am to 5:00pm: **Presentations and Papers**

The symposium will take place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Admission to the Mütter Museum exhibits will require separate admission.

**9:00 a.m.:** Introduction by Robert D. Hicks, Director of The College of Physicians of Philadelphia Welcomes from Joanna Poses and Dwight Swanson

### **9:15a.m.–10:45a.m. First Session. Moderator: Dan Streible**

Scott Curtis, "Between Photography and Film: Early Uses of Medical Cinematography"

From the beginning, medical researchers and physicians eagerly appropriated the new technology of motion pictures. For some, especially those interested in a more "scientific" approach to medicine, film represented an improvement upon and transformation of serial photography--that is, they regarded motion pictures as a series of still images. Others extended medical photography's more common use as documentary evidence to their application of cinema. Still others emphasized the spectacular and moving quality of the cinematic image in their promotion of film as an educational tool, often distinguishing it from photography. This presentation, then, will survey the professional perceptions and uses of medical cinematography in its first two decades and compare those uses to the functions, genres, and venues of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century medical photography.

Michael Sappol, "Difficult Subjects: Working with Films from the Collection of the National Library of Medicine"

Historical medical film is notable for its representation and documentation of "difficult subjects"—the interior of the body, death, disfigurement, radical medical intervention, infliction of pain on patients and research subjects, behavioral disturbance, venereal disease, emotional and physical distress, etc. Although publicly available, such films are rarely screened and, as a result, rarely studied. This presentation will screen a selection of these difficult films, explore their unique history, uses and abuses, effects on viewers, and the larger issues that they raise.

**10:45 a.m.–11:00 a.m.: Break****11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.: Second Session**

Barbara Hammer and Patti Doyen, “Complexities and Enigmas of Cinefluorography in the work of Dr. James Sibley Watson and Colleagues”

This presentation will explore through Watson et. al.'s text and images the discoveries and problems of the Rochester medical team that led to mechanical inventions that enabled views of the interior of the human body. The uses and abuses of the techniques will be highlighted as well as the artistic curiosities Watson pursued in spectacles that had no scientific purpose.

**12:00 p.m.–1:00 p.m.: Lunch Break****1:00 p.m.–1:45 p.m.: Third Session**

Kirsten Ostherr, “‘Spectacular Problems in Surgery’: Medical Motion Pictures at the American College of Surgeons”

Early in the twentieth century, the American College of Surgeons was a leading national force in the use of motion pictures for educational purposes. This movement encompassed all facets of the motion picture industry (ranging from education to entertainment), and established the ACS as a central institution in the history of cinema. Moreover, the ACS became an important vehicle for international medical education through motion pictures after World War II, and this aspect of ACS activities provides an important and unique perspective on the varied global uses of medical media in the postwar era. This presentation will address the medical motion pictures produced, reviewed, distributed, and exhibited by the ACS, from the late 1920s to the present. The talk will be based on research at the American College of Surgeons archive, which contains paper records related to a vast range of medical motion pictures. These films were primarily technical medical films produced by specialists for other specialists, as well as for medical student and resident training. Since the ACS films were concerned not only with medical education but also with the public image of the medical profession, this history serves a critical function in assessing the role of visual images in shaping the popular and specialist cultures of medicine throughout the twentieth century.

**1:45 p.m.–3:30 p.m.: Fourth Session. Moderator: Mara Mills**

Devin Orgeron, “Edgar Ulmer and the National Tuberculosis Association: Fighting Faith in the War Against TB”

From the late 1930s through the early 1940s, well-known “B” movie director Edgar Ulmer (sometimes called the King of PRC) directed eight health shorts for the National Tuberculosis Association. A strain of fatal contamination runs

though all of Ulmer's work and is brilliantly, if oddly articulated in these tuberculosis films, many of which are aimed at specific American racial minorities and the inadequacies of their sometimes imported faith in the face of the disease. Along with their fit within Ulmer's career, I hope to illustrate the role these films played in shaping 1930s/1940s notions of race, religion, and disease.

Mara Mills, "Telephone Operator, Camera-Operator: Laryngoscopy and High Speed Motion Pictures at Bell Labs"

During the early twentieth century, telephone engineers became authorities on psychoacoustics and otolaryngology. In the interests of visualizing speech production and the movement of circuit components, they also made key contributions to high speed motion picture photography. This talk will survey the history of laryngoscopy through the 1940s, concluding with a few remarks about the nature of the "telephonic gaze."

Oliver Gaycken, "The Flow of Life: Moving Images of Magnified Blood"

A staple of medical moving-image presentations was the spectacle of blood as seen under a microscope projected onto a screen. This talk will consider some examples of this tradition that range from nineteenth-century lantern lectures to reminiscences of researchers to the incorporation of this genre into the medical motion picture.

**3:30 p.m.–3:45 p.m.: Break**

**3:45 p.m.–4:45 p.m.: Fifth Session. Moderator: Lance Wahlert**

Timothy Wisniewski, "Research, education, and patient care: archival medical film collections at academic health institutions"

This presentation will focus on the institutional context of archival film collections produced within academic health centers, using the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions as the primary example. The presentation will look at historical examples of centralized and decentralized models of film production at Johns Hopkins, and compare genres of medical film as produced for educational, clinical, or biomedical research purposes. Finally, the presentation will discuss the value of making these often unprocessed or restricted collections accessible for research and use by diverse groups of users.

R. Nick Bryan, M.D., "The Body Visible"

While mankind has always been driven by morbid curiosity to see inside its own body, medical practitioners have had a more urgent need to do so – their business lies there-in. The spatial complexity of the body demands imaging not only for diagnosis but for successful treatment. However, the unaided human

visual system that depends on visible light cannot see below the skin. Prior to Rontgen's discovery of x-rays in 1895, the interior of the body could be imaged only by cutting through the skin and 'letting the light in.' Unfortunately, until the late 19th Century, such invasive medical imaging was usually performed after or immediately prior to death. Despite an initially slow and crude start with 'Rontgenography', the eternal goal of real time, safe, non-invasive, detailed imaging of the living human body has come to dramatic fruition in the past decade. With modern CT, nuclear, MR and ultrasound scanners, vivid static as well as moving images of all major organ systems are now routinely performed, as will be illustrated by videos of, "My Body", a self-exposé by the presenter.

**4:45 p.m.–5:00 p.m.: Closing Discussion**

## **Saturday, January 23**

### **Moore College of Art & Design**

20th Street and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway

8:00 pm **Film Screening: A MEDICAL FILM CABINET OF CURIOSITIES**

Admission: \$7.00 (Open to the general public)

Curated by Skip Elsheimer & Jay Schwartz

The program will include:

- **Feet and Posture** (1920s) - This reel, from the earliest era of 16mm educational films, aims to explain the physiology of feet and how to best take care of them. It demonstrates through x-rays how the well-dressed young flapper of the time often did not choose the best footwear. Made with the cooperation of M.I.T. and the American Posture League.
- **Cell Wars** (1987) A lively introduction to immunology that shows kids how the body's cells defend themselves against invading germs. Crazy-costumed actors and dazzling video effects demonstrate what happens after germs enter the body through a skinned knee.
- **Cryoextraction** (195?) - A sales and demonstration film showing off the Thomas Cryopter--a device which resembles a power router, which is then shown in use for eye surgery.
- **Colds and Flu** (1975) - Kids dressed in armor battle each other to seize control of a giant-mouthed castle.
- **Achieving Sexual Maturity** (1973) - At a time when DEEP THROAT played in neighborhood cinemas alongside traditional Hollywood fare, educators struggled as to how to best meet increasingly rebellious high school and college students on their own terms. It was during this possibly unique moment in pop culture that ACHIEVING SEXUAL MATURITY was successfully sold to school districts around the country. Its use of graphic

live photography of nude males and females to explain and illustrate sexual anatomy from conception to adulthood is today quite surprising.

- **Non-Syphilitic Venereal Disease**(195?) - This short film made for the medical community--in still-stunning Kodachrome color -- details a variety of exotic venereal diseases, in close-up after horrifying close-up. This mainstay of Secret Cinema Halloween screenings is guaranteed to have audiences screaming in terror.
- **Just Awful** (1972) This film was made to help eradicate any fears children may have about visiting the school nurse.

## **PRESENTERS**

Karen Aqua is an independent animation filmmaker.

R. Nick Bryan, M.D., Ph.D., is chair of the Department of Radiology at the University of Pennsylvania Health System and School of Medicine

Scott Curtis, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the Department of Radio/Television/Film at Northwestern University

Patti Doyen is an archivist and independent filmmaker working in collection management at The George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film.

Skip Elsheimer is the founder of A/V Geeks and maintains one of the world's largest archival collections of 16mm educational and industrial films.

Oliver Gaycken, Ph.D., is on the faculty of the English Department at Temple University.

Barbara Hammer is an independent filmmaker and visual artist

Nico de Klerk is the researcher at the Nederlands Filmmuseum

Andrew Lampert is an artist, filmmaker and archivist in New York City

Mara Mills, Ph.D., is a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in the English Department at the University of Pennsylvania

Emily Mode is a media artist living in New York

Devin Orgeron, Ph.D., is Director of Film Studies at North Carolina State University

Kirsten Ostherr, Ph.D., is Associate Professor in the English Department at Rice University

Greg Pierce is a co-founder of The Orgone Archive, a motion picture exhibition group and archive in Pittsburgh, PA

Michael Sappol, Ph.D., is a historian in the History of Medicine Division of the National Library of Medicine

Jay Schwartz is founder of The Secret Cinema, a Philadelphia-based floating repertory film series that has shown rare and alternative viewing fare in a variety of traditional and nontraditional locations

Brina Thurston is a video artist living in New York

Timothy Wisniewski is Visual Projects Archivist at The Alan Mason Chesney Medical Archives at Johns Hopkins University

## **Transportation**

All of the symposium's venues are reachable by SEPTA, Philadelphia's subway and trolley system. See [www.septa.org](http://www.septa.org) for details and a trip planner.

Nearest stops to the symposium venues are as follows:

The Mütter Museum at The College of Physicians of Philadelphia: 22nd Street and Market Green Line (trolley) stop

International House: 36th Street/Sansom/UPenn Green Line (trolley) stop or the 34th or 40th Street Market-Frankford subway line

Pennsylvania Hospital: 8th Street and Market-Frankford subway line (walk 6 blocks south to Spruce Street)

Moore College of Art & Design: 19th or 22nd Street and Market Green Line (trolley) stops