

The **Getty** presents:

Modern Art in Los Angeles: Beat Film  
Kenneth Anger, Curtis Harrington, and Larry Jordan

Cover image  
Film still from Larry Jordan, *Our Lady of the Sphere* (1969)



The Getty Research Institute

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Thursday, October 30, 2003  
7:30 P.M.

Harold M. Williams Auditorium  
The Getty Center

## Modern Art in Los Angeles: Beat Film Kenneth Anger, Curtis Harrington, and Larry Jordan

The Getty Research Institute's Modern Art in Los Angeles project aims to document the history of modern and contemporary art in Los Angeles in the second half of the twentieth century. This fall the focus is on the Beat era of the 1950s and the interaction between Los Angeles artists and their colleagues in the Bay Area.

### Film Program

*Fragment of Seeking*, Curtis Harrington, 1946, 16 mm, 16 min.  
*On the Edge*, Curtis Harrington, 1949, 16 mm, 6 min.  
*Fireworks*, Kenneth Anger, 1947, 16 mm, 15 min.  
*Puce Moment*, Kenneth Anger, 1949, 16 mm, 6 min.  
*Kustom Kar Kommandos*, Kenneth Anger, 1965, 16 mm, 3 min.  
*Visions of a City*, Larry Jordan, 1957-1978, 16 mm, 8 min.  
*Triptych in Four Parts*, Larry Jordan, 1958, 16 mm, 12 min.

Following the screenings, please join us for a discussion with all three filmmakers, moderated by Rani Singh, research associate, Contemporary Programs and Research, the Getty Research Institute.

### Related Panel Discussion

Modern Art in Los Angeles: The Beat Years  
Walter Hopps, George Herms, Charles Brittin, and David Meltzer  
November 18, 2003, 7:30 P.M., Harold M. Williams Auditorium

Thank you to Michael Friend, Matthew Reynolds, Charles Brittin, Kristine McKenna, the Coronet Theatre, and Dominic Angerame at Canyon Cinema. A special thanks to Michael Pogorzelski and Mark Toscano of the Film Archive at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and Larry Jordan for providing new film prints for this occasion.

### Kenneth Anger

Kenneth Anger has created a poetic and dazzlingly original body of work. His biography is as steeped in mythology as the subject matter of his films. Born in Los Angeles, he claims to have first appeared on-screen in MGM's 1935 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as the unbilled Changeling Prince. As a teenager, Anger found inspiration in figures as diverse as D. W. Griffith and Sergei Eisenstein and was enamored by both the technical innovations of the early Soviet avant-garde and the glamour and decadence of old Hollywood, a world he re-envisioned in his *Hollywood Babylon* books. A life-long devotee of Thelemic magician Aleister Crowley and an avowed practitioner of "magick" (defined as "the science and art of causing change in conformity with will"), Anger's films *Scorpio Rising* (1963) and *Kustom Kar Kommandos* depict an almost alchemical transformation of the everyday tokens of consumer culture: film, music, clothes, and cars. These works reveal the dark, trance-like power such objects hold over our lives. Anger has continued his exploration of the role of myth, symbolism, and light versus darkness in such films as *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* (1966), *Invocation of My Demon Brother* (1969), and, most recently, *The Man We Want to Hang* (2002). Kenneth Anger continues to live and work in Los Angeles.

### Curtis Harrington

A veteran of the horror and suspense genres, Curtis Harrington's career fuses the worlds of both underground and commercial cinema. Part of the post-World War II Los Angeles bohemian scene that included Kenneth Anger, Maya Deren, and Gregory Markopoulos, Harrington made his first experimental films as a student at USC. His early psychodramas, including *Fragment of Seeking*, *On the Edge*, and *Picnic* (1948), showed a stylistic affinity with German expressionism and film noir, while exploring issues of identity and sexuality. Along with Anger, Harrington started Creative Film Associates to distribute their independent films, advertising their works in *The Partisan Review*. Their collaboration continued when Harrington appeared in Anger's film *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* as Cesare the Somnambulist. A protégé of Roger Corman, Harrington achieved recognition as a successful cult filmmaker with titles such as *Night Tide* (1961), *Queen of Blood* (1966), *Games* (1967), and *Who Slew Auntie Roo?* (1971). In the 1970s and 1980s, he directed television shows like *Baretta*, *Charlie's Angels*, *Dynasty*, and *Hotel*. His most recent project is *Usher* (2002), an adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's classic tale *The Fall of the House of Usher*. He is currently working on his memoirs.

### Larry Jordan

Born in Denver, Colorado, Larry Jordan attended high school with filmmaker Stan Brakhage and composer James Tenney. Inspired by Brakhage's iconoclastic vision, European surrealists such as Max Ernst and Jean Cocteau, and the poetic lyricism of the Beat era's counter-culture, Jordan produced such groundbreaking works as tonight's *Visions of a City* and *Triptych in Four Parts*. An integral member of the San Francisco Beat scene, Jordan also worked as a collage artist, animator, and photographer. His landmark films of the era such as *Duo Concertantes* (1964), *Our Lady of the Sphere* (1969), and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1972) expanded the possibilities of animation within experimental cinema and established Jordan as a central figure in the West Coast avant-garde. Former instructor and chair of the film department at the San Francisco Art Institute, Jordan continues to live and work in the Bay Area. His most recent exhibition of kinetic sculptures is currently on display at Art Works Downtown in San Rafael, California.