

# WAVELENGTHS

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL  
SEPT. 2004



EXPLORING THE CINEMATIC VISIONS  
OF AVANT-GARDE FILMMAKERS

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*Le Fantôme de l'opératrice*

## Terrace 49

**Janie Geiser**  
USA, 2004  
No Dialogue  
6 minutes ■ Colour/16mm

## The Observatory

**Alexi Manis**  
CANADA, 2004  
No Dialogue  
5 minutes ■ Colour/16mm

## Chateau/Poyet

**Lawrence Jordan**  
USA, 2004  
No dialogue  
6 minutes ■ Colour/16mm

## Le Fantôme de l'opératrice

### The Phantom of the Operator

**Caroline Martel**  
CANADA, 2004  
French, English  
66 minutes ■ Colour and Black and  
White/Digital Betacam

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Four works united by their sense of mystery and creative use of found footage and source materials.

Janie Geiser's *Terrace 49* combines images of impending disaster from adventure cartoons with filmed objects (graph paper, charts, calligraphy books), which are then animated and superimposed to create a sense of mystery. Geiser further divides the frame into shards, creating composite images as fractured as memory and as fragile as glass. The film's heroine has the ability to become invisible and represents a positive spirit in this curiously circular imaginary world.

An ambient track of evening sounds (crickets, cicadas and the occasional owl hoot) accompanies rephotographed sketches of the night sky by Jerry Spevak in *The Observatory*. Alexi Manis films the pencil drawings on an animation stand, bringing a delicate touch to this wonderfully abstract treatment of the stars in the galaxy.

*Chateau/Poyet*, by veteran experimental filmmaker Lawrence Jordan, is a cut-out animation of images from the early twentieth century which depict such activities as man's early attempts at flight, a tightrope walker and men jousting. Jordan's masterful yet subtle collage films are distinguished by their ability to make new meaning out of disparate images and create mysterious worlds in which the progression of movement is continually surprising.

Caroline Martel's *Le Fantôme de l'opératrice* is an inspired essay film which examines the history of the telephone operator: the rise of this occupation for women and the fate of the profession in the computer age. An entertaining exploration which mines the

wealth of corporate films produced by Bell Laboratories and Western Union, the film shows us the faces of these invisible female workers. Martel deviates from a strict linear historical approach in order to punctuate her argument with examples from more contemporary periods. *Le Fantôme de l'opératrice* reveals how women were trained to deliver efficient and courteous customer service, work the assembly lines during World War II and personify "the voice with a smile" for the phone company.

— Liz Czach and Susan Oxtoby

**Janie Geiser** is an internationally recognized filmmaker and theatre artist based in Los Angeles. Her films include *The Red Book* (94), *Immer Zu* (97), *Lost Motion* (00), *Ultima Thule* (02) and *Terrace 49* (04).

**Alexi Manis** is a Toronto-based filmmaker and projectionist. Her films include *Luminous* (01), *The Finite* (04) and *The Observatory* (04).

**Lawrence Jordan** lives in Petaluma, California and has made over sixty experimental and animated collage films and three feature-length dramatic films. His works include *Duo Concertantes* (64), *Our Lady of the Sphere* (69), *Cornell, 1965* (78), *Sophie's Place* (86), *The Visible Compendium* (91), *Enid's Idyll* (04) and *Chateau/Poyet* (04).

**Caroline Martel** lives in Montreal, where she is a documentarian, cinema operator and artistic programmer of Studio XX. *Le Fantôme de l'opératrice* (04) is her first feature-length film.

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Daylight Moon (A Quartet)

**Concerning Flight: Five Illuminations in Miniature**

**Charlotte Pryce**  
USA, 2004  
No dialogue  
9 minutes ■ Colour/16mm

**Enid's Idyll**

**Lawrence Jordan**  
USA, 2004  
No dialogue  
15 minutes ■ Colour/16mm

**Flushing Meadows**

**Joseph Cornell**  
USA, 1965  
Silent  
8 minutes ■ Colour/16mm

**Daylight Moon (A Quartet)**

**Lewis Klahr**  
USA, 2002-2004  
English  
40 minutes ■ Colour/16mm

The Quartet consists of:

**Valise**  
2004  
15 minutes ■ Colour

**Hard Green**  
2004  
5 minutes ■ Colour

**Soft Ticket**  
2004  
6 minutes ■ Colour

**Daylight Moon**  
2002  
13 minutes ■ Colour

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Four evocative explorations on themes of myth and heroism.

Charlotte Pryce's strikingly beautiful *Concerning Flight: Five Illuminations in Miniature* is comprised of five brief fictions in which the mystery of insect flight is explored and, as the filmmaker notes, "interpretations of a mythological and fantastical nature [are] illuminated in motion and time." The film emanates from a poetic tradition and speaks to the fragility of life as evidenced by Pryce's deft handling of sound-image relationships, rhythmic editing and precise use of colour.

Lawrence Jordan's *Enid's Idyll* is a cut-out animation piece depicting the ravages of war with music by Gustav Mahler. Set in an ancient time of knights, courts and castles, Jordan's surreal image combinations belie the battle-weary soldiers, while revealing enchanted forests and strangely idyllic moments of romance. The animated twinkling of an eye or an occasional bolt of lightning injects mystery and a sense of hope to this ironic meditation on war.

Lawrence Jordan collaborated with artist-filmmaker Joseph Cornell (1903-1972) on a number of film projects in the sixties. He photographed *Flushing Meadows* for Cornell in 1965 and we are honoured to present this work in the centenary year of Cornell's birth.

In keeping with the themes of myth and heroism, the programme concludes with Lewis Klahr's *Daylight Moon (A Quartet)*, an exploration rooted in primal experiences from the filmmaker's youth. Beginning with a Hawaiian legend of the Bora Bora gods, the film leads us on an emotional journey of remembered and imagined places. Klahr's image collage celebrates early childhood memories of middle America,

evoking a deep sense of time and place while maintaining a critical distance which prevents the treatment from becoming nostalgic. Klahr's talent for selecting music and evocative sound recordings adds depth to this atmospheric study of sadness and particular pleasures. *Daylight Moon (A Quartet)* is a puzzle for us to piece together, rich with fantasy and poetic associations.

— Susan Octoby

**Charlotte Pryce** is based in Los Angeles. Her films include *X* (88), *Why* (89), *Cold Polished Pictures-disturbed* (92) and *Concerning Flight: Five Illuminations in Miniature* (04).

**Lawrence Jordan** lives in Petaluma, California and has made over sixty experimental and animated collage films and three feature length dramatic films. His works include *Duo Concertantes* (64), *Our Lady of the Sphere* (69), *Cornell* (1965/78), *Sophie's Place* (86), *The Visible Compendium* (91), *Chateau/Poyet* (04) and *Enid's Idyll* (04).

**Lewis Klahr** is based in Los Angeles and has been making films since 1977. His experimental films and cut-out animations have been screened extensively in the United States and Europe. Works include *Picture Books for Adults* (83-85), *Tales of the Forgotten Future* (87-91), *Engram Sepals (Melodramas 1994-2000)* (00), *The Aperture of Ghostings* (99/01), and *Daylight Moon (A Quartet)* (02/04).

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