



BROAD BROAD UNDERGROUND UNDERGROUND FILM SERIES FILM SERIES



Infrastructuralisms

7pm • Wednesday • 15 March 2017 • (Scene) MetroSpace
110 Charles St., East Lansing, MI 48823

This program features a range of film and video work devoted to the poetics and politics of infrastructure. The work seeks to make visible the buried networks and systems that bring modern communities into being, inspire political activity and imagination, and organize bodies, labor, and commodities. Infrastructure, this work insists, has been—and continues to be—at the heart of debates about citizenship, democracy, access to common resources, and visions of a just public life.

Programmed by Lyn Goeringer & Justus Nieland

Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum & the Film Studies Program, Department of English

Trade Tattoo (Len Lve, 1937, 5 min)

Commissioned by the GPO to make a film about the need to ‘post early’. Len Lve conceived of the British working day as having an overall rhythmic pattern like a tattoo (a mass display with music). He was influenced by Walther Ruttmann’s 1927 film *Berlin* which presented a day in the life of that city as a ‘symphony’. Lve, who shared the working-class sympathies felt by many of his GPO colleagues, described *Trade Tattoo* as an attempt to convey “a romanticism about the work of the everyday, in all walk/sit works of life”. —Roger Horrocks

Fifteen an Hour (Kevin Jerome Everson, 2011, 6 min)

One of two of Everson’s BP Oil Spill films, “fifteen an hour” is the amount of pay of the nighttime workers received for cleaning the beaches of Pensacola, Florida following the BP oil spill. Courtesy of Madeleine Molyneaux.

Half On, Half Off (Kevin Jerome Everson, 2011, 3:36)

A companion film to *Fifteen an Hour*, *Half On, Half Off* documents a team of workers on a Pensacola, Florida beach dealing with the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon Spill. Filmed one frame at a time, compressing hours of work into a single three-minute roll of 16mm film. The title refers to the work schedule of the cleaners, who work in half-hour shifts punctuated with pauses of the same length. Courtesy of Madeleine Molyneaux.

Throwing Mail into Bags (American Mutoscope and Biograph, 1903, approx. 1 min)

A fifty-five second look at the precise sorting activity of a US Postal Service facility in Washington, D.C, *Throwing Mail into Bags* offers a glimpse of the physical infrastructure through which mail miraculously arrives in the boxes of individual citizens. What larger systems can be inferred from this single integrated operation? Retrospectively, the film anticipates remote Internet servers and cloud-based forms of data processing that distribute information-as-content today.

The Packaging System (Rhodes Patterson, 1961, excerpt, 6 min)

Trained at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Rhodes Patterson worked as a filmmaker for the Chicago-based cardboard manufacturer, the Container Corporation of America. At Container, Patterson made dozens of “useful,” industrial films about CCA’s operations and products, as well as training films for new workers. *The Packaging System* frames CCA’s industrial production of paper as a complex managerial process unfolding from forest to kitchen. A kind of logistical poem or managerial hymn, *The Packaging System* places cardboard within an integrated complexity of actions transpiring along the production-consumption circuit, unfolding from forest to kitchen, and connecting material, structure, research, marketing, and—in this excerpt—design.

Power (Cynthia Hooper, 2014, 10 min)

A short observational documentary video about Humbolt Bay’s power infrastructure, including electrical, gas, formerly nuclear and renewable energy. The work is part of Hooper’s interdisciplinary video and essay project *A Negotiable Utopia: The Humbolt Bay Project*, which examines the built environment of Humbolt Bay—California’s second-largest estuary. Power is one of six videos in the project, which are available (with accompanying essays) at www.cynthiahopper.com.

liminal (Lyn Goerginer, 2011, re-edit 2017, 11 min)

Originally an installation work for two screens, *liminal* features videos of streetlights turning on from two different perspectives. The screen on the left offers us the view of the lamp itself turning on at sunset, while the screen on the right offers us the view of the street below the lamp itself. The videos were taken at sunset in Providence, Rhode Island, in an effort to capture the lights turning on in their natural setting. The audio combines two separate sound recordings: One, the drone that is the most prominent feature, is of the electromagnetic wave fields (EMF) that come from the light bulb and fixture itself. The second component is of a surround sound field recording of the location itself, providing us with audible glimpses of cars, people, and extraneous sounds.

In Order Not To Be Here (Deborah Stratman, 2002, 33 min)

“An uncompromising look at the ways privacy, safety, convenience and surveillance determine our environment. Shot entirely at night, the film confronts the hermetic nature of white-collar communities, dissected the fear behind contemporary suburban design. By examining evacuated suburban and corporate landscapes, the film reveals a peculiarly 21st century hollowness...an emptiness born of our collective faith in safety and technology. This is a new genre of horror movie, attempting suburban locations as states of mind. Original electronic music by Kevin Drumm.” Courtesy of Video Data Bank

Bridges Go Round (Shirley Clarke, 1958, 8 min)

Clarke collaborated with documentarians Willard Van Dyke, Richard Leacock, D.A. Pennebaker, and Francis Thompson on series of short films on the American “way of life” commissioned by the State Department and screened at the U.S. Pavilion at the 1958 Brussels World’s Fair. From footage leftover from these films, Clarke composed *Bridges Go Round*, which converts what is immobile in monumental NYC infrastructure into a mobile, musical abstraction. She made two versions of the film, first with an experimental electronic score, and then with jazz score by Teo Macero.