

For Immediate Release:

New Media Program Amplifies Resonant Themes in the Exhibition and Novel *Orlando*



Zackary Drucker, *Unison*, 2013–2017, HD digital video, color, sound, 8 min. Courtesy the artist and Luis De Jesus Los Angeles

certainty is becoming our nemesis

Guest curated by Steve Polta
February 7 – May 2, 2020

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, December 17, 2019 – McEvoy Foundation for the Arts (MFA) premieres *certainty is becoming our nemesis*, a program of experimental media works guest curated by San Francisco Cinematheque director Steve Polta, to accompany the West Coast debut of *Orlando*, February 7 – May 2, 2020. The hour-long program runs concurrently with the exhibition with an opening reception scheduled for Saturday, February 8, 5–8pm.

certainty is becoming our nemesis presents ten short films on themes of transformation and self-invention, gender fluidity, performance, and family that are inspired by the resonances of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* in the exhibition and *Issue #235* of *Aperture* magazine. Opening with the continuous dissolve of male and female bodies in Alice Anne Parker's *Riverbody* (1970), the program traces the blurred boundaries of self-expression and how ambiguity of identity manifests as an emotional survival strategy. Zach Blas' *Facial Weaponization Communiqué: Fag Face* (2012) critiques the participatory surveillance of the twenty-first century with a protestation of biometric facial recognition as it is applied to oppressed and marginalized communities. Zackary Drucker's *Unison* (2013–2017), with its lush visualization of intergenerational transgender identity in rural Pennsylvania, embraces the complex fluidity of time and place as indispensable conditions of the construction of identity. While flirting with

notions of timelessness and perpetuity, these works refute notions of stability in favor of transformative existence and radical gestures of intimacy.

Polta cites a section of Swinton's introduction to Issue #235 as a framework for considering the program, in which Swinton writes "I've been thinking about how certainty is becoming our nemesis. [...] How the once essential search for a definable, and immutable, identity has become stifling to our sense of development and the possibilities of finding true fellowship with other complex, variously wired, hesitant sensitive beings." *certainty is becoming our nemesis* celebrates these assertions of the self as critically important: artistically, culturally, and politically. The international program features works from Austria, Spain, Sri Lanka, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States that illustrate a breadth of filmic practice and extends the impact of Woolf's prescient text.

The program repeats at the top of the hour and runs continuously during MFA's gallery hours.

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Featured Works

Zach Blas, *Facial Weaponization Communiqué: Fag Face*, 2012

Nazli Dinçel, *Shape of a Surface*, 2017

Julia Dogra-Brazell, *Between Dog and Wolf*, 2018

Zackary Drucker, *Unison*, 2013–2017

Pere Ginard, *Métamorphoses du Papillon*, 2013

Rosa John, *Rote Linie*, 2015/2016

Alice Anne Parker. *Riverbody*, 1970

Rajee Samarasinghe, *The Queen of Material*, 2014

Karly Stark, *the problem is that everything is fleeting*, 2015

Antoinette Zwirchmayr, *Jean Luc Nancy*, 2018

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Steve Polta is a writer, archivist, historian, and the Director of San Francisco Cinematheque where he has worked since 1998. He is the co-founder and current curator of Cinematheque's CROSSROADS film festival, founded 2010, now presented annually at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. In 2014 he was awarded a Curatorial Research Fellowship from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts for the study of contemporary and historic performance cinema which resulted in *Perpetual Motion*, an extensive series of live cinema performances presented in San Francisco in 2016. He holds an MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute and a Masters of Library and Information Science (MLIS) from San José State University. He is co-editor with Brett Kashmere of *Craig Baldwin: Avant to Live!* documenting the film and curatorial work of the Bay Area artist to be published in collaboration with *Incite: A Journal of Experimental Media* in 2020. He lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.

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Orlando

February 7 – May 2, 2020

Orlando presents recent and newly commissioned photographs that extend guest curator Tilda Swinton's longtime exploration of the central themes of Virginia Woolf's prescient 1928 novel: gender fluidity, limitlessness, and the deep perspective that is earned from a long life. Featuring Zackary Drucker, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Paul Mpagi Sepuya, Jamal Nxedlana, Elle Pérez, Walter Pfeiffer, Sally Potter, Viviane Sassen, Collier Schorr, Mickalene Thomas, and Carmen Winant, *Orlando* offers a panoply of colors and tastes that seek to liberate traditional portraiture from the constructs of prescriptive gender or social norms. The exhibition's West Coast debut is presented by McEvoy Foundation for the Arts and augmented with resonant artworks from the McEvoy Family Collection.

Orlando is organized by Aperture, New York. A series of public programs that activate *Orlando* for diverse cultural communities is to be announced in January 2020.

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McEvoy Foundation for the Arts

The McEvoy Foundation for the Arts (MFA) presents exhibitions and events that engage, expand, and challenge themes present in the McEvoy Family Collection. Established in 2017, MFA creates an open, intimate, and welcoming place for private contemplation and public discussion about art and culture. Rooted in the creative legacies of the San Francisco Bay Area, MFA embodies a far-reaching vision of the McEvoy Family Collection's potential to facilitate and engage conversations on the practice of contemporary art. MFA invites artists, curators, and thinkers with varied perspectives to respond to the Collection. Each year, these collaborations produce exhibitions in MFA's gallery, new media programs in the Screening Room, as well as many film, music, literary, and performing arts events each year.

McEvoy Foundation for the Arts

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Tuesday–Saturday: 10am–6pm

Saturday: 11am–5pm

Sunday–Monday: Closed

Beginning January 2, 2020, MFA's gallery hours are changing to Tuesday–Saturday, 11am–6pm.

Exhibitions are free and open to the public.

High-resolution images and additional materials are available by request to press@mcevoyarts.org.

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Acknowledgments

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Special thanks and recognition to Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, the Canyon Cinema Foundation, and Luis De Jesus Los Angeles for their support and inspiration for *certainty is becoming our nemesis*.

Aperture Foundation

Aperture, a not-for-profit foundation, connects the photo community and its audiences with the most inspiring work, the sharpest ideas, and with each other—in print, in person, and online. Created in 1952 by photographers and writers as “common ground for the advancement of photography,” Aperture today is a multi-platform publisher and center for the photo community. From its base in New York, Aperture Foundation produces, publishes, and presents a program of photography projects and programs—locally, across the United States, and around the world.

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