

## Closer to home than you could've ever imagined

curated by Erik Martinson

A lifeless cloth doll and a wire frame body with a head. Two mothers, one bottle, and one unsuspecting non-human primate. The wire frame body with a head has the bottle... just to see, to prove. The test subject clings monkey-body to motionless cloth doll for comfort, visits the wire frame mother only to eat. And it goes on.

Harry Harlow's ethically contestable experiment with infant rhesus macaques in the 1950s set out to examine mother-infant bonds; the non-human body standing in for the human. Linking development with consoling touch, close contact becomes theorized as crucial nourishment parallel to what's in the bottle. Of course, as many looking back on this have no doubt pointed out, the experiment also demonstrates the latent cruelty of human-primates. The kind of cruelty that doesn't recognize itself. It simply perpetuates.

Like it is with the care-givers of cloth and wire, we perform ourselves to get what we need, investing the appropriate amounts of time in each case. We hope there is a unified response to this investment, unlike the experiment. To be held in return. Nourished. Action receiving reaction. Sometimes this isn't the case with living care-givers, sometimes it gets complicated. Sometimes signals aren't received, and sometimes they aren't even sent; care-giver and care-seeker are sometimes on level ground, sometimes not.

This program considers, with intricate variance, selves conveying and not conveying their needs, frustrations, and defiance. At times raw and direct, at other times with the subtlety of non-verbal language. Hints at inner lives puncture through, selves searching for a face to put forward, to question, to name, to confound. Anxious, depressed, on the spectrum, all of the above, none of the above. Self defined. Terms float, are interrogated, or ignored. Selves shake their heads, up and down, left and right, simultaneously, to answer the same question. All this, and it becomes clear: it's all of us. It's closer to home than you could've ever imagined.

### Program:

*Being Fucked Up*, Emily Vey Duke & Cooper Battersby, 2001, 10:16

*gains + losses*, Leslie Supnet, 2011, 3:26

*Sight*, Thirza Cuthand, 2012, 3:33

*Flares for the Melodic Forest*, John Forget, 2009, 8:00

*Scrapbook*, Mike Hoolboom, 2015, 18:49

*Per Se*, Deirdre Logue, 2005, 4:00

*Love and Numbers*, Thirza Cuthand, 2004, 9:00

*Assplay*, Steve Reinke, 1995, 1:37

*Amethyst Visions*, Leslie Supnet, 2012, 3:41

Runtime: 61:53

Thanks to Chalton Gallery  
(Helena Lugo, Javier Calderón, Cristina Ramos González)

Print sources, with thanks: Leslie Supnet and Vtape  
(Wanda Vanderstoop, Natalie Dunlop, et al.)



## **Program Notes:**

### ***Being Fucked Up, Emily Vey Duke & Cooper Battersby, 2001, 10:16***

"This ordinary life is hopeless. I have no mission or strong conviction. It seems like everything I find beautiful is crying about this hopelessness, and about the irreducibility of being alone. I wish I was a pervert with something inside me that burned and could never be made manifest. My secrets are so boring. I don't believe in art or socialism. I am bitterly jealous of people who are good or successful. I think romantic passion is by nature fleeting. I lie to my mother. I hate myself..." (EVD & CB)



### ***gains + losses, Leslie Supnet, 2011, 3:26***

Through situational vignettes, *gains + losses* illustrates the filmmaker's thoughts on death and other personal, day-to-day anxieties. The work touches on internal grief, tempered with a playful sense of humour and lo-fidelity charm. (LS)



### ***Sight, Thirza Cuthand, 2012, 3:33***

Super 8 footage layered with Sharpie marked lines and circles obscuring the image illustrates the story of the filmmaker's experience with temporary episodes of migraine related blindness and her cousin's self induced blindness later in life. Paralleling the experience of Blindness with Mental Illness, Cuthand deftly elucidates that any of us could lose any of our abilities at any time. A commission for 8fest. (TC)



### ***Flares for the Melodic Forest, John Forget, 2009, 8:00***

My first tape featuring ostensibly myself (well, my hands and handiwork at least) opening up some "music boxes" - offering several curios inside to composers and musicians as tools for new melodic birth. Cyndi Lauper's "Time After Time" melody line on a "music producer as invisible man" keyboard sets up the optional loop. (JF)



### ***Scrapbook, Mike Hoolboom, 2015, 18:49***

Lensed in Ohio's Broadview Developmental Center in 1967 by secret camera genius and audio visual healer Jeffrey Paul, *Scrapbook* tells the story of audacious autistic Donna Washington in her own words, as she encounters pictures of one of her former selves fifty years later. (MH)

"...the film asks fundamental questions about how a camera can be like a face: can open; can be a gift, given and received; can be an empathy machine; can be a site of recognition—of others, of ourselves in our own Otherness to ourselves, and of the face of which we are all a part." (Justus Nieland)



### ***Per Se, Deirdre Logue, 2005, 4:00***

"What I really wanna say is private, so what makes it so hard to say is that I don't really understand it, Per Se. And so what I really wanna know is how I can say it even though it's still private and you can know it without me telling you, Per Se." Part of *Why Always Instead of Just Sometimes*, a selection of 12 short works about aging, breaking down and reparation. They are works that describe our need for intimacy and our fears of exposure. They are always, when we really wish they were just sometimes. (DL)



### ***Love and Numbers, Thirza Cuthand, 2004, 9:00***

A Two Spirited woman surrounded by spy signals and psychiatric walls attempts to make sense of love, global paranoia, and her place in the history of colonialism. Spliced in between her monologues are the binary codes of all the psychiatric drugs she has taken. (TC)



### ***Assplay, Steve Reinke, 1995, 1:37 (No. 67 of The Hundred Videos)***

"Recently my psychiatrist dismantled his practise in favour of becoming a baker. My interminable analysis had been going on since the first days of his practise so I hoped to get the brown leather couch which my shoulders and back had worn into their likeness. There was no more comfortable place in the world for me...." (SR)



### ***Amethyst Visions, Leslie Supnet, 2012, 3:41***

'Auroratones' were abstract musical films used in mental institutions and army hospitals after WWII as a means of soothing post-traumatic stress disorder and general mental disturbance, invented by film enthusiast Cecil Stokes who was continuing on nearly two centuries of previous pseudo-scientific attempts to correlate colour with musical notes. A commission for *The Aurotone Project*, Film POP, Montreal. (LS)

