

16/11/2019 at 19:00



Baltic Analog Lab presents

## **Almost No Memory**

In the short story 'Almost No Memory' by Lydia Davis an unnamed woman is reckoning with her diminished grasp on her memory while still retaining "a very sharp consciousness." She turns to the mnemonic device of recording events and details in notebooks, creating a substantial library. At times she would re-read these memories with interest, the entries would "seem all new to her, and indeed most of it would be new to her." She would contemplate making further notes on them, sometimes doing so, and "(o)ther times she would want to make a note but choose not to, since she did not think it quite right to make a note of what was already a note, though she did not fully understand what was not right about it." From this uncertainty comes an inescapable tension between remembering and forgetting and the difficulty of being aware of this process happening.

The plight of the protagonist in Davis' story feels much like a film flowing forward, each frame overtaking the last; building toward something while the past is taken up on a separate reel. Sometimes what you've seen and heard feels like a distant thought in a library of notebooks, though you are pretty certain it happened. Perhaps it wasn't that experience or film, but another one, but it happened, you might think. It's a problem of cognition, of our interaction with playback, not playback itself.

Laura Mulvey describes the narrative cycle of film in 'Death 24x a Second.' Narrative can be represented by time's forward push and is not necessarily reliant on the arc of a story. Film begins from "inertia to which it returns at the end." Mulvey references "Freud's concept of 'the death drive' ...movement towards an end as the desire to return to an 'earlier' state." There was no flicker; then there was a flicker; then no flicker once more.

There is, however, the potential for the flicker's return. Like writing that's on a page in a notebook on a shelf somewhere, the images and sounds attached to the frame exist on a reel on a shelf (or hard drive / cloud / whatever) as well. Returning to 'Almost No Memory' the protagonist "wanted to make a note of a note she was reading, because this was her way of understanding what she read, though she was not assimilating what she read into her mind, or not for long, but only into another notebook. Or she wanted to make a note because to make a note was her way of thinking this thought." Sometimes there is a need to make films to recall other films, to recall past selves, and so many fleeting thoughts / feelings / impressions. Sometimes we also need films to help our own entropy along, to be ok with not remembering.

In another story by Davis called 'Lost Things' a button and a ring are missing. "They are lost from me and where I am, but they are also not gone. They are somewhere else, and they are there to someone else, it may be." Others will find our shelves when we are gone. Though, crucially, even if not found by others: "the ring is, still, not lost to itself, but there, only not where I am, and the button, too, there, still, only not where I am." It might be that shelves of notebooks, film reels, hard drives are forgotten, or otherwise left behind. Even so, they have somehow managed to exist beyond mere mnemonic cycles, and we can be assured that they still exist.

Featuring films by: Lydia Nsiah, Sarah Forrest, and Sky Hopinka. Curated by Erik Martinson.

Programme:

***to forget*, Lydia Nsiah, 2019, 17:00**

***April*, Sarah Forrest, 2018, 21:30**

***Lore*, Sky Hopinka, 2019, 10:16**

duration: 48:46

Programme Notes:

***to forget*, Lydia Nsiah, 2019, 17:00**

*to forget* is a filmic journey on the potentialities of forgetting and its resemblance to remembering. Recorded on expired Super-8 and 16mm-film only, forgetting becomes productive and 'visible' in non-existing, fading and colour-transformed film exposures. This (non-)documentation of possibly empty and fading spaces (to be) is further highlighted by Jejunio's trance-like and uncanny sound composition: The abyss is present. (LN)

***April*, Sarah Forrest, 2018, 21:30**

*April* began with a period of research into Second Sight (*An da shealladh* literally translated from Gaelic means 'the two sights'), a prophetic phenomenon particular to the highlands and islands of Scotland. To this subject, Sarah was bringing questions pertinent to her wider creative practice that consider appearance, perception, doubt and belief. The film's narrative, however, does not address the subject of second sight directly but considers, and through its cyclical structure, performs the sensation of being uncertain of whether what you are seeing and hearing is what was previously seen or heard.

In order to do this, *April* plays with a looping structure that folds the narrative that it tells back in on itself. Its form is repetitious, both visually and structurally, using a limited palette of imagery and sound. The work is set and filmed on the Isle of Lewis in the Western Isles of Scotland, and it is this island's landscape that is seen for the majority of the film. Voiced by a Scottish female narrator, the film's text tells a story that shifts from one female character's perspective to another, following the journey of an unseen but verbally described photograph. (SF)

***Lore*, Sky Hopinka, 2019, 10:00**

Images of friends and landscapes are cut, fragmented, and reassembled on an overhead projector as hands guide their shape and construction in this film stemming from Hollis Frampton's *Nostalgia*. The voice tells a story about a not too distant past, a not too distant ruin, with traces of nostalgia articulated in terms of lore; knowledge and memory passed down and shared not from wistful loss, but as a pastiche of rumination, reproduction, and creation. (SH)

\*Paldies: to the artists, Ieva Balode and Baltic Analog Lab.