

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EARLY COMPUTER MOVIES, AVANT-GARDE AND MAINSTREAM, EXPLORED IN WEEKEND PROGRAM

Personal appearances by computer-animation pioneers including Larry Cuba, Lillian Schwartz, and Dean Winkler; animator/historian Tom Sito, and scholars Rebekah Rutkoff and Andrew Johnston

November 15–17, 2013

Astoria, NY, November 8, 2013—Before the clones attacked, before the Na'vi Hometree was destroyed, before Buzz Lightyear went to infinity and beyond, avant-garde film and video pioneers were expanding the bounds of the moving image by harnessing computer technology to create radical new ways of seeing. Museum of the Moving Image will present a weekend program devoted to exploring early works of computer animation, organized by guest curators Leo Goldsmith and Gregory Zinman. This series of screenings and conversations, ***Computer Age: Early Computer Movies, 1952–1987***, will take place November 15 through 17, 2013. Screenings include avant-garde works ranging from oscilloscope experiments to computer-assisted psychedelia; formative digital advertising and music videos; as well as feature films that incorporated these techniques into the mainstream.

“By presenting these works side-by-side, we hope to bring forth a fresh perspective on art, technology, and the emergence of computer-generated imagery,” said Zinman.

Among the rarely shown experimental works in the series are those by John Whitney, considered by many to be the “father of computer graphics,” his son John Whitney, Jr., whose *Side Phase Drift* (1965) will screen for the first time in New York in over 40 years, and Whitney’s collaborator Larry Cuba. Cuba will appear in person on Saturday, November 16, and will participate in a post-screening conversation with Andrew Johnston. Other artists featured in the series include Stan VanDerBeek, Barbara Hammer, John Stehura, Pierre Hébert, Nam June Paik, Norman McLaren, and Dean Winkler.

Filmmaker Dean Winkler will also appear in person for a conversation moderated by Tom Sito, animator, historian, and author of the new book *Moving Innovation: A History of Computer Animation* (MIT Press, 2013) on November 17. A book signing will follow in the Museum Store. Other guests include artist Lillian Schwartz, another

pioneer of computer-mediated art, who will screen new work and participate in a conversation with scholar Rebekah Rutkoff on November 16.

Feature-film screenings include Donald Cammell's cult film *Demon Seed* (1977), in which a HAL-like computer seeks revenge on humans; *TRON* (1982), the popular and innovative Disney film which introduced extensive use of 3-D computer animation; and *The Last Starfighter* (1984), which included a stunning 20-minute CGI sequence in its story of a video-game playing teen recruited to save the world.

About the curators

Leo Goldsmith is a PhD candidate in the Department of Cinema Studies at New York University, co-editor of the Film section of *The Brooklyn Rail*, and a curator at Heliopolis Project Space. His writing on film and media has appeared in *Artforum*, *Cineaste*, and *The Los Angeles Review of Books*.

Gregory Zinman is an ACLS New Faculty Fellow in the Film Program at Columbia University and is the scholar-in-residence at the New York Filmmakers' Cooperative. He is currently completing a book, *Handmade: The Moving Image in the Artisanal Mode*, and co-editing, with John Hanhardt and Edith Decker-Phillips, a collection of Nam June Paik's writings. His writing on film and media has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Film History*, *American Art*, and *Millennium Film Journal*.

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SCHEDULE FOR 'COMPUTER AGE: EARLY COMPUTER MOVIES, 1952–1987,' NOVEMBER 15–17, 2013

Unless otherwise noted, screenings are free with Museum admission (and free for Museum members) and take place in the Sumner M. Redstone Theater or Bartos Screening Room at Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35 Avenue, in Astoria.

Welcome to Computer Age

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 7:00 P.M.

Demon Seed

Dir. Donald Cammell. 1977, 94 mins. 35mm. With Julie Christie, Fritz Weaver, Gerrit Graham, and Robert Vaughn. Equal parts *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), and Buster Keaton's *Electric House* (1922), and showcasing an exquisite cybernetic psych-out sequence aided by visionary artist-guru Jordan Belson and visual effects wizard Ron Hays, this post-humanist thriller unveils supercomputer Proteus IV: the latest invention of corporate monolith ICON that can cure leukemia, develop mining techniques, and ruminate on Buddhism with equal facility. When threatened with HAL-scale data-wipe, the hubristic machine seeks self-preservation by infiltrating the high-tech home of ICON's lead scientist, trapping his wife and preparing her to propagate a new hybrid life form with his eponymous synthetic spermatozoa.

Preceded by:

Let's Groove. Dir. Ron Hays. 1981, 4 mins. Digital projection. Music video by the band Earth, Wind & Fire.

**John Whitney / John Whitney, Jr. / Larry Cuba Program
With Larry Cuba and Andrew Johnston in person**

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2:00 P.M.

This compilation program evinces the arrival of the Computer Age film as an art form, showcasing works by foremost motion graphics pioneer John Whitney, his son John Whitney, Jr., and his key collaborator Larry Cuba. Whitney's masterful digital abstractions earned him the first spot as IBM's artist-in-residence in the 1960s, and is perhaps best-known for his collaboration with Saul Bass for the breathtaking opening titles of Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958).

3/78 (Objects and Transformations). Dir. Larry Cuba. 1978, 6 mins. Digital projection. **Arabesque.** Dir. John Whitney. 1975, 7 mins. Archival 16mm. **Calculated Movements.** Dir. Larry Cuba. 1985, 6 mins. Digital projection. **Permutations.** Dir. John Whitney. 1968, 6 mins. Archival 16mm. **Robert Abel And Associates Demo Reel.** Dir. Robert Abel. ca. 1974, 8 mins. Digibeta. **Side Phase Drift.** Dir. John Whitney, Jr. 1965, 8 mins. Digital projection. **Terminal Self.** Dir. John Whitney, Jr. 1971, 8 mins. Archival 16mm. **Two Space.** Dir. Larry Cuba. 1979, 8 mins. Digital projection. **Vertigo Title Sequence.** Dir. John Whitney, Jr., Saul Bass. 1958, 2 mins. Digital projection.

Studies in Perception: Early Computer Shorts

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 3:30 P.M.

In the 1950s and 1960s, artists and animators turned the computer into an experimental tool as a means of altering perception and expanding consciousness. Works such as Norman McLaren and Evelyn Lambert's oscilloscope film *Around is Around* and Pierre Hébert's *Around Perception* are displays of overwhelmingly vivid geometric cutouts set against color fields, flicker patterns, and swirling vortices; James Whitney's *Lapis* is a marvelous montage of kaleidoscopic mandalas; and John Stehura's *Cybernetik 5.3* is a mind-bending array of computer graphics, photography, and optical printing.

Works include: **Abstronic.** Dir. Mary Ellen Bute. 1952, 7 mins. Digital projection. **Around Is Around.** Dir. Norman McLaren, Evelyn Lambert. 1951, 10 mins. Digibeta. **Around Perception.** Dir. Pierre Hébert. 1966, 16 mins. Digibeta. **Cybernetik 5.3.** Dir. John Stehura. 1960–65, 8 mins. Digibeta. **Computer Movie No. 2.** Dir. CTG. 1969, 8 mins. Digital projection. **Digital Experiments at Bell Labs.** Dir. Nam June Paik. 1966, 4 mins. Digital projection. **Lapis.** Dir. James Whitney. 1966, 9 mins. Archival 16mm. **Poemfield No. 2.** Dirs. Stan VanDerBeek, Kenneth Knowlton. 1966. 6 mins. Digital projection. **Symmetricks.** Dirs. Stan Vanderbeek, Wade Shaw. 1972, 6 mins. 16mm. **The Incredible Machine.** Dir. Bell Labs, AT&T. 1968. 15 mins. Digital projection.

**Lillian Schwartz in Conversation
Moderated by Rebekah Rutkoff**

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 5:00 P.M.

Computer artist Lillian Schwartz explores the relationship between her early experiments at Bell Labs and her contemporary digital explorations. Schwartz will present new work and participate in a conversation with scholar Rebekah Rutkoff.

TRON

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Steven Lisberger. 1982, 96 mins. 35mm. With Jeff Bridges, Bruce Boxleitner, David Warner, Cindy Morgan, Barnard Hughes. This groundbreaking feature follows rebel computer programmer Kevin Flynn as he is scanned and transported into an autocratic universe of zipping vectors and shiny surfaces, somewhere inside of the mainframe of an arcade game. An expensive and risky venture for Disney at the time, *TRON* is notable for its sophisticated sets and elaborate costumes designed by renowned French comic-book artist Moebius (*Alien*, 1979), but perhaps its true innovation lies in its extensive use of 3-D CGI and bold amalgam of traditional and computer-generated images.

A New Age: Computer Shorts

With Tom Sito and Dean Winkler in person

Followed by book signing

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2:00 P.M.

Computer-generated imagery entered its adolescence in the 1970s and 1980s as artists began to develop new ways of envisaging the world through groundbreaking single-channel works and pioneering music videos.

The program will be followed by a book signing in the Moving Image Store. Tom Sito's new book, *Moving Innovation: A History of Computer Animation* (MIT Press, 2013) is the first full-length history of computer-generated imagery and the "math nerds, avant-garde artists, cold warriors, hippies, video game enthusiasts, and studio executives" who made it all happen. Works include: ***Adventures in Success***. Dirs. Lynn Goldsmith, Joshua White. 1983, 3 mins. Digital projection. ***Aquarelles***. Dirs. Dean Winkler, Tom DeWitt, Vibeke Sorensen. 1980, 7 mins. Digital projection. ***Big Electric Cat***. Dirs. John Sanborn, Kit Fitzgerald, Dean Winkler. 1982, 5 mins. Digital projection. ***Delta 1***. Dir. Ron Hays. 1981, 6 mins. Digital projection. ***Explanation***. Dir. Woody Vasulka. 1974, 12 mins. Digital projection. ***Human Vectors***. Dir. Dov Jacobson. 1982, 2 mins. Digital projection. ***La Faim (Hunger)***. Dir. Peter Foldès. 1974, 11 mins. Digibeta. ***No No Nooky Tv***. Dir. Barbara Hammer. 1987, 3 mins. Digital projection. ***Sunstone***. Dir. Ed Emschwiller. 1979, 4 mins. Digital projection. ***Treecuts***. Dir. Steina Vasulka. 1980, 8 mins. Digital projection. ***Vol Libre***. Dir. Loren Carpenter. 1980, 2 mins. Digital projection. ***Voyager 2 Flyby***. Dir. Jim Blinn and Charles Kohlhase. 1981, 3 mins. Digital projection.

The Last Starfighter

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 5:00 P.M.

Dir. Nick Castle. 1984, 101 mins. DCP. With Lance Guest, Robert Preston, Catherine Mary Stewart, Dan O'Herlihy, Norman Snow. Having demonstrated his superior arcade-game prowess, average trailer-park-teen Alex Rogan lands a job with the Rylan Star League to defend the universe from the tyrannical Xur and his armada of evil, leathery Kodans. More than an elaborate exercise in childhood wish-fulfillment, it was one of the first feature films to employ images primarily made from computer animation, marked by an unforgettable twenty-minute animation sequence, overseen by artist-filmmaker John Whitney, Jr. and CGI genius Gary Demos, using the Cray X-MP supercomputer, the world's fastest computer at the time. Preceded by: ***Brilliance***. Dir. Robert Abel and Associates. 1984, 30 seconds. Digital projection. Canned Food Information Council television commercial.

MUSEUM INFORMATION

Museum of the Moving Image (movingimage.us) advances the understanding, enjoyment, and appreciation of the art, history, technique, and technology of film, television, and digital media. In January 2011, the Museum reopened after a major expansion and renovation that nearly doubled its size. Accessible, innovative, and forward-looking, the Museum presents exhibitions, education programs, significant moving-image works, and interpretive programs, and maintains a collection of moving-image related artifacts.

Hours: Wednesday-Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday, 10:30 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, 11:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Film Screenings: Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, and as scheduled. Tickets for regular film screenings are included with paid Museum admission and free for members.

Museum Admission: \$12.00 for adults; \$9.00 for persons over 65 and for students with ID; \$6.00 for children ages 3-12. Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free.

Admission to the galleries is free on Fridays, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. Tickets for special screenings and events may be purchased in advance by phone at 718 777 6800 or online.

Location: 36-01 35 Avenue (at 37 Street) in Astoria.

Subway: M (weekdays only) or R to Steinway Street. Q (weekdays only) or N to 36 Avenue.

Program Information: Telephone: 718 777 6888; Website: movingimage.us

Membership: <http://movingimage.us/support/membership> or 718 777 6877

The Museum is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and located on the campus of Kaufman Astoria Studios. Its operations are made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation). The Museum also receives generous support from numerous corporations, foundations, and individuals. For more information, please visit movingimage.us.

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