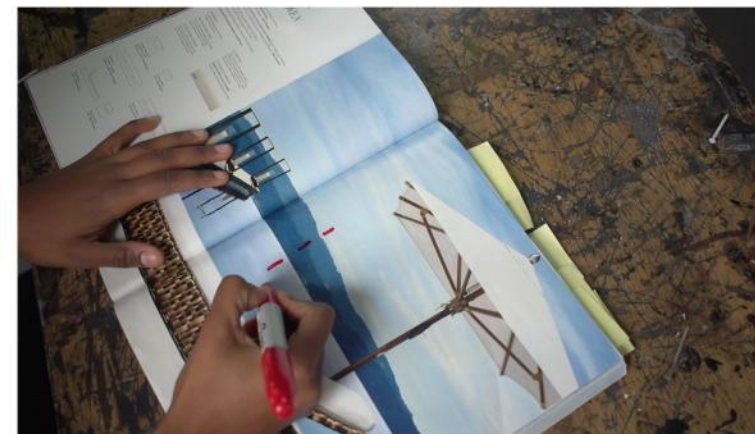
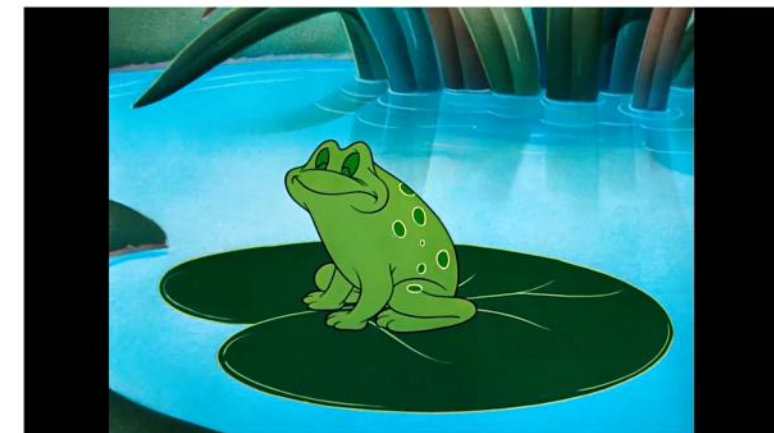




FAILURE MACHINES
NOW INSTANT IMAGE HALL
8.8.19



The first thought that came to me while watching Nick Flessa's *If I Forget You, Jerusalem* was whether he made the film using a video camera from his childhood, possibly one belonging to his deceased mother. The pallid, low-res video image floats above a Flessa burial plaque just before we're shown the film's main title card. Most of us grew up with these consumer-grade cameras sitting around at home in black nylon bags with unruly straps, dead batteries, miniature tapes full of youth gymnastics footage. They are inextricably tied to Al Bundy's America, channel surfing itself into the next century. To pick one up nowadays and go filming is to reawaken a cultural desire which welcomed the reproducibility of "magic moments, forever", to quote a JVC ad.

Through the film's intro--a nightscape of housing construction, so dark that the video image nearly collapses on screen--I became fixated on this concept of adopting a bygone camera if for no other reason than to raise the dead. If you're an artist returning to the neighborhood of your teenage years to shoot a film, it would make a lot of sense to use the technology of that time. Moreover, the very idea of shooting the burbs in Hi8 was a way for Nick to get closer to his characters and maybe even synchronize with some kind of memory he holds of the place. A generational vision built upon the technology of the 90s and baby boomer ideals--which would manifest themselves in sprawling subdivisions, four-sided dining room tables, 10pm bedtimes to the sound of Peter Jennings' voice. Raising the dead, in this case, could then mean something much more than a seance for fallen parents.

Note the date on Janna Flessa's inscription: 2010. Peculiar, given this outlives nearly any indication of the Obama, nay Bush years in the film. As apparent as Flessa's travels in time create an artifact of beginnings, the foregrounding of his mother amidst an older suburban Cincinnati points to our shared, slippery present.

Tonight's program developed from this idea of the 'home movie'. That is, those images which frame together family and documentation, youth and boredom, amateur cameramen and driveway entertainers. It extends its focus to include the bordering line between America's middle-class and nature. The threshold of wooded land at the edge of vast housing communities marks both the beginning and end of the nuclear family, where shingle roofs become leafy canopy and the smell of microwaved steak and potatoes disappears, allowing something new to take control. Life is in a state of near suspension at these sites--a relationship between old and young sharing time across the humid redolence of cut lawns, carpeted living rooms and under-lit basements.

-WL

Big Water

Weston Lyon is a video maker and photographer living in Los Angeles. His recent work deals with the history of animation, its popular styles and business models of production. Lyon's work has been in exhibition and screened at places like the Torrance Art Museum, Henry Art Gallery, Deslave, Human Resources, as well as film festivals in the US and abroad. He received his MFA from ArtCenter College of Design in 2017.

Remote Viewing

Karissa Hahn is a visual artist based in Los Angeles who works between film and video to accumulate a storm of 'spectra ephemera.' Hahn has shown around planet Earth in various cinemas, galleries, and institutions such as the New York Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, Museum of Modern Art MoMA, Crossroads at SFMOMA, International Film Festival Rotterdam, Ann Arbor Film Festival, New Orleans Film Festival, Tai Kwun Contemporary in Hong Kong, Sala Luis Miro Garland Museum in Peru, Kumu Art Museum in Estonia, Microscope Gallery, and the Anthology Film Archives.

Camera Traps Turned Up Empty

Ren Ebel is an artist working primarily in time-based media. He studied film at the University of California, San Diego and received his MFA from ArtCenter College of Design in Pasadena, California. He currently lives in Bilbao, Spain with his wife and daughter.

Red Sourcebook

Iilana Harris-Babou received an MFA in New Genres from Columbia University and a BA in Art from Yale University. She has exhibited her work throughout the United States and Europe including SculptureCenter, Kunsthau Hamburg, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

If I Forget You, Jerusalem

Filmmaker, musician and artist Nick Flessa hails from Cincinnati, OH but has spent the better part of his adult life in Los Angeles, CA. Nick's current musical ventures are his own band, Nick Flessa Band and a free-form trio called the Ken Burns Effect. Nick's work has been seen in places like REDCAT, Echo Park Film Center, UCLA and the University of Puget Sound. He helps guide the programming and printing at Los Angeles Contemporary Archive, where he presented his solo exhibition Death Production: The Archive of Janna Flessa (executed by Nick Flessa) in 2018. His book Case Number: 87-447 can be found in national and international library collections including MACBA Barcelona, The Getty Research Institute and Wendy's Subway (NYC).

Kate Rouhandeh is a film programmer in Los Angeles. She is currently an MA candidate in Curatorial Practices and the Public Sphere at USC Roski.