

the wooden lightbox: a secret art of seeing

alex mackenzie, 2007-2009, ~50 mins, performance.

contact: alexgmackenzie@gmail.com
604.255.4162 www.alexmackenzie.ca

description

the wooden lightbox: a secret art of seeing is Alex MacKenzie's exploration and reconfiguration of cinematic apparatus and emulsion. Part of an extended cycle of films that use the early development of cinema as a marker for cultural, technological and economic change, these film cycles draw from turn of the century cinematic prototypes and long forgotten ideas surrounding the moving image and its early promise. At the core of this approach is the use of a homebuilt hand-cranked projector in an expanded cinema format to present a striking array of handmade and processed emulsion. The vast potential of the film frame is drawn out through imagery both archaic and contemporary in shape and form. Hypnosis, panorama, motion studies, expectation, magic, the dreamworld and sleight of eye conspire in this intimate and immersive framework. TWL had its world premiere at Victoria's Anti-Matter Underground Film Festival, and has screened at the Rotterdam International Film Festival, Lightcone (Scratch Projections) Paris, le 102 Grenoble, (k-raa-k)3 festival Brussels, Grand-Guignol Lyon, WNDX festival of film and video art Winnipeg, Struts Gallery Sackville, Halifax Independent Filmmakers Festival, and will be performed in Toronto and across the British Isles in late 2009.



The Wooden Lightbox is about remembering, about throwing ourselves back to a time when audience expectation was open, with the projection of films equally non-rigid. The degraded quality of the images, often created through the alternative emulsions and hand processing of the film, helps to reinforce the notion of lost memories and decaying history...we are reminded that not all paths in the past were fully explored, not all creative ventures are completed. We do not always need to look to the future for fresh and worthwhile ideas, the past is strewn with buried treasure, and experience is the true buried pleasure. -Gerald Saul

see full review here: http://experimental-film-review.blogspot.com/2007_10_01_archive.html

details

the wooden lightbox: a secret art of seeing is performed live with a hand-cranked 16mm projector built and assembled from various relic 16mm projector and rewind parts and framed in a wooden box. Ten "chapters" are presented over the course of 4 reels. Film speed is varied manually by cranking more quickly or more slowly, while direction of the action is controlled by winding forward and backward. An average of 8 frames of 16mm can be cranked for every second of time elapsed. Colour gels are used to tone the black and white images while lens and hand interference are used to distort and/or partially obscure the image. Sound consists of a series of tracks shaped for the specific chapters and acting as guides to the progression of the images. TWL is an ongoing work in progress, an assembly of images entirely handprocessed and contact printed, transforming and developing as new materials are added and deleted.

still images: www.alexmackenzie.ca/lightbox.html (scroll down thru text)

screening/tech requirements

>the projector is operated with a dim bulb (50W), and so **full darkness and relatively small image size in the screening space is crucial**. the piece is most effective in a small screening space or gallery. this enhances the intimacy and places the projector and performer in amongst the audience.

>with two lens options, throw is as follows (with image brightness dimming as the throw increases):

2 ft wide image=6 OR 12 foot throw
4 ft wide image=12 OR 24 foot throw
5 ft wide image=15 OR 30 foot throw
8 ft wide image=24 OR 48 foot throw
10 ft wide image=30 OR 60 foot throw

>audio requires a line running to the same location as the projector, preferably with a mixer there as well. The line out is ipod style - 1/8" mini female, and so requires a 1/8" mini male out to run to mixer and speakers. power (AC) is required at this same location.

bio

Alex MacKenzie is a media artist working in film, video, light projection and performance. He received a Bachelor of Arts Degree with Honours from Carleton University, and has worked with a variety of independent film organizations over the past 15 years including Mainfilm, Pacific Cinematheque, Cineworks, and Doxa. He was the founder and director of The Edison Electric Gallery of Moving Images, The Blinding Light!! Cinema and the Vancouver Underground Film Festival, and currently works as an independent curator, graphic designer and writer. His works have screened internationally.