

# Playing in the Shadows

Tate Modern, Starr Auditorium and The Tanks  
Friday 26 October 2012, 14.00 – 18.30

Responding to the subterranean darkness of the Tanks and the pioneering experiments in projection and action included in the Tanks' opening programme, this symposium examines how artists and filmmakers have critically occupied the spaces between light and darkness, image and action. The symposium highlights a new generation of scholars whose work explores expanded media and intersections between art, film and the live event.

Friday 26 October 2012, 14.00 – 18.30

- 14:00** **Welcome and Introduction by Stuart Comer**
- 14:10** **Lucy Reynolds *Free Agent: Filmaktion's Radical Spectatorship***  
For the handful of young artists working with film in late 1960s London, their reference points were not the cinema auditorium or narrative cinema, but experimental music and the happening. This paper examines the radical intent which infused their experimental mix of film, performance and sculpture shaped by the opportunities, ethos and contingencies of London's counter-cultural milieu.
- 14:35** **Lars Bang Larsen *Good Shit***  
A reading of a text written for Dexter Bang Sinister's current research project on black and white psychedelia at Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen. Deconstructing the cliché-ridden psychedelic visuality and erotic myths of the summer of love through the triad of black, white and brown, the text dramatises the historiography of the sixties counter-culture as a meeting between escatology and the scatological.
- 15:00** **Q&A chaired by Stuart Comer**
- 15:30** **Melissa Ragona *Black Abstraction and White Noise: Discursive Sound Objects in the work of Aldo Tambellini, Hollis Frampton and Lis Rhodes***  
This presentation examines how Aldo Tambellini, Lis Rhodes, and Hollis Frampton experiment with the relationships between sonic and visual abstraction, exposing the troubled histories of race, gender, and sexuality beyond the more coherent and easily accessible realm of 'identity'.
- 15:55** **Duncan White: *Black and Light: Observation and Destruction in Post-War Artists' Film***  
For Paul Virilio, war and cinema are inextricably linked by technologies of light that illuminate the dark fields of war, 'where observation and destruction... develop at the same pace'. This paper looks at artists' violent and destructive practices responding to this doubling of war and cinema, including Jeff Keen, the Viennese Actionists, Gustav Metzger and Jack Goldstein.
- 16:20** **Q&A chaired by Gil Leung**
- 16:50** **Tea and coffee will be served in the Starr Auditorium Foyer**
- 17:05** **Welcome back to the final session**
- 17:10** **Keynote: Noam Elcott *In Praise of Darkness***  
Darkness has a history and a specifically modern form. Divorced from night, black, evil, and the unconscious, a new technology of darkness emerged in the middle of the nineteenth

century and took root in science and art, media and architecture. *Artificial Darkness* traces a counter-history to the modern art and media histories we have inherited from excessively enlightened generations.

17:55 Q&A chaired by **Stuart Comer**

18:25 Closing remarks

18:30 Break

## Speakers' Biographies

### In order of appearance

**Stuart Comer** is Curator of Film, Tate Modern

**Lucy Reynolds** is a writer, artist and curator of artists' moving image. She presents talks on artists' moving image at arts venues across the UK and runs the Moving Image pathway on the MRES: Art programme at Central St Martins School of Art. She has published extensively on artists' moving image work, recently including *Magic Tricks? Shadow Play in British Expanded Cinema*, in *The Expanded Cinema: Art, Performance, Film* by Afterall/Tate publications. She is Features Editor of MIRA:J, the Moving Image Review & Arts Journal.

**Lars Bang Larsen** is an art historian and a curator. He has co-curated exhibitions such as *Pyramids of Mars* (2000), *Populism* (2005), and *A History of Irritated Material* (2010). His PhD was about psychedelic concepts in neo-avantgarde art, and his books include *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society (1968)* (2010) and *The Critical Mass of Mediation* (with Sören Andreasen, 2012).

**Melissa Ragona's** essays have appeared in *October*, *Frieze*, *Art Papers* and in the edited collections *Lowering the Boom: Critical Studies in Film Sound* (2008), *Women's Experimental Cinema* (2007), and *Andy Warhol Live* (2008), among others. Her book *Readymade Sound: Andy Warhol's Recording Aesthetics* is forthcoming from University of California Press. She is an Associate Professor of Critical Theory and Art History in the School of Art at Carnegie Mellon University.

**Duncan White** is a Research Fellow at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design. He is the co-author and co-editor of *Expanded Cinema: Art Performance Film* (Tate Publishing, 2011).

**Gil Leung** is a writer and curator based in London. She is Distribution Manager at LUX and editor of *Versuch* journal. She writes for Afterall and other independent publications.

**Noam M. Elcott** teaches the history of modern art and media in the department of Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University. He is currently at work on a book-length study titled *Artificial Darkness*. Recent essays have appeared in *Grey Room*, *October*, *Aperture*, and many catalogues and anthologies. Elcott is an editor of the journal *Grey Room*.