

## Restoring Appearances to Order: Filmmaker Coleen Fitzgibbon

Tuesday October 25, 2011 | 7PM

**Coleen Fitzgibbon** is an active experimental film artist who previously worked under the pseudonym "Colen Fitzgibbon" between the years 1973-1980. A student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Whitney Independent Study Program, she studied with Owen Land (aka "George Landow"), Stan Brakhage, Yvonne Rainer, Carolee Schneemann, Vito Acconci, and worked on film and sound projects for Dennis Oppenheim, Gordon Matta-Clark, and Les Levine. Coleen formed the collaborative X&Y with Robin Winters in 1976, The Offices of Fend, Fitzgibbon, Holzer, Nadin, Prince and Winters in 1979, and is best known for co-founding the New York based Collaborative Projects, Inc. (Colab) in 1977 through 1981, along with forty plus artists.

For the past few years, Coleen has been actively preserving and screening her Super-8 and 16mm films, many of them not screened since the mid 1970s. Her films of this period can be considered as part of a second wave of structural filmmakers. Influenced by the modernist cinema of the mid-to-late 1960s and heralded by P. Adams Sitney as "structural film" – an emerging canon of work which included films by Owen Land, Michael Snow, Paul Sharits, Tony Conrad, Hollis Frampton, Joyce Wieland – Coleen's films are deeply rooted in the high formalist aspirations of the avant-garde. Tonight's program looks at Diary Films, intimate cinematic sketches, portraits, travelogues, and home movies.

**Gym** by Coleen Fitzgibbon with Christa Maiwald [1974, video, color, sound, 4 min.]

Made in Chicago with Christa Maiwald. "The girls go for exercise in Chicago, with two 8mm cameras, with sound." – Coleen Fitzgibbon

**L.E.S.** [1976/2011, video, color, sound, 17 min.]

Shot in the lower eastside of Manhattan, NYC circa 1976, *L.E.S.* tells the story of the collapse of the problematic island of Manhattma, whose inhabitants worshiped the god of mamon, John Doe.

**X Magazine Benefit** by Coleen Fitzgibbon with Alan W. Moore [1978/2011, video, b&w, sound, 11 min.]

Colab's *X Magazine Benefit* documents the punk rock performances of DNA, James Chance and the Contortions, and Boris Policeband in NYC in the late 1970's. Shot in black-and-white Super 8 and edited on video, the film captures the gritty look and sound of the music scene during that era. The film/video was made by Alan Moore and Coleen Fitzgibbon and finished in 2009.

**Trip to Carolee** [1974/2011, video, color, sound, 6 min.]

*Trip* starts in NYC as Coleen and friend drive up to multidisciplinary artist Carolee Schneemann's for the weekend to take care of her cat, Kitch, and to relax in the country. They are exhausted from life in the big city.

**Make a Movie** [1975/2011, video, color, sound, 9 min.]

**Restoring Appearances to Order in 12 minutes** [1975, 16mm, b&w, sound, 12 min]

In *Restoring Appearances To Order In 12 Minutes*, the filmmaker performs her solitary act of cleaning. A static camera tightly frames the studio sink that is dirty with paint and other residue while the artist engages in a concerted ritual of scrubbing and scrapping. We see only the back of the artist as she moves within the frame, blocking the sink here, revealing the sink there.



**Found Film Flashes** [1973, 16mm, b&w, sound, 3 min.]

After a rapid flickering interlude of upside-down footage depicting a sleeping woman, the screeching sound of cued audio-tape on a reel-to-reel player signals the radical rupture between sound and image. A collage of recurring speech fragments such as "process normal," "this tape was made at the speed of 9.5 centimeters," "this voice sounds normal," and "do you think she uses words purely for the rhythm" provides a patchy voice-over "commentary" which skids across a sampling of found film.

**FM/TRCS** [1974, 16mm, color, sound, 11 min.]

*FM/TRCS* is a study of image destruction and its subsequent effect on recognition and suggestion of new images. The film is a series of images and recorded sound of a woman getting dressed re-edited into short sequences and optically printed until the high contrast characteristics of the film refuses to carry the image. I attempted to combine my images with the film process carried to its extreme processes of disintegration. By using film's own process of increasing contrast in copying the image passes beyond recognition. Not merely rephotographing, but using that process which is always an increase or decrease of light through the original to the print, exaggerating this process by certain high contrast film stocks. Rephotography or duplication interests me as a natural occurrence to all film reprinted over several generations of film; it is a slow evolution of image recognition. Disintegration is one method of examining established structures similar to painters and sculptors. – Coleen Fitzgibbon

"**Colab**" is the commonly used abbreviation of the New York City artists' group, "Collaborative Projects, Inc." Colab was formed in 1978 after a series of open meetings to determine new venues for showing and creating work. Throughout its first ten years of activity, Colab was distinguished from other contemporary New York artists' groups by its regular open meetings and open membership and collaborative productions of art shows, magazines, media production, performance, theater and film shows. Early group media efforts included the weekly live cable shows *All Color News* (non-fiction), 1978, *Potato Wolf* (fiction), 1979-86, *Red Curtain* (fiction & non-fiction) 1979-83. During this period from 1978 through 1986 over 100 video shows were generated by the Colab membership in these group productions.

Colab's numerous accomplishments include *X Magazine* 1978-79; the New Cinema screening room for punk and no wave films 1979; the Real Estate Show, December, 1979, which created the ABC No Rio cultural center, 1980-82 (ABC is ongoing); the Times Square Show, a large open exhibition of over 150 artists near the center of New York's entertainment district, June, 1980; MWF Video Club, est'd 1986. See below for a complete list of Colab projects and member related projects.

Members of the group are presently involved in individual pursuits as artists, musicians, filmmakers and writers. Colab membership is also currently assisting in creating the Colab archival project.

<http://collaborativeprojectsarchive.wikispaces.com/>

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