

Los Angeles Filmforum presents:
Memory Imaging: Explorations of the Personal & Collective
Online, Sunday, June 20 - Sunday, June 27, 2021

Los Angeles Filmforum is the city's longest-running organization dedicated to weekly screenings of experimental film, documentaries, video art, and experimental animation. 2021 is our 46th year. www.lafilmforum.org

***Conversation with featured filmmakers, moderated by guest programmer Xavier Lang
(Date/Time TBD)**

This program presents the work of filmmakers and artists Miko Revereza, Simon Liu, Suneil Sanzgiri, and Lei Lei as they grapple with notions of collective memory, diaspora, trauma, and identity. Using archival material, animation, and personal recordings, the filmmakers explore the overlap of individual and shared experiences.

The works use personal realizations and contemplations to wade into the unknown and forgotten. The program opens with Simon Liu's *E-Ticket*, where the artist meticulously splices his archive of 35mm photos into a document of rapid collage. The result is an amalgamation of spliced memories and stylish montage that give new life to the photos taken during the artist's formative years. Miko Revereza's *Distancing* follows; serving as part-diary, part-memoir, the film documents the artist's decision to leave the country he was raised in. As a way to convey his position as an undocumented person, Revereza draws on examples of statelessness in cinema to bolster his retelling of life in the United States. Suneil Sanzgiri's *Letter from Your Far Off Country*, overlaps archival images, animation, and screen recordings to reflect on ancestral memory and history as a means to, "reclaim the past from erasure." The final work, Lei Lei's *A Bright Summer Diary*, combines images from postcards, propaganda from the Mao era, screenshots from an important film in modern Chinese cinema, and interviews with his mother to uncover a forgotten history.

Through their explorations of the past, these four films wade through similar waters, posing the questions: How do you visualize a shared experience? How does memory overlap with media? Where do personal histories meet collective nostalgia?

Programmed by Xavier Lang

Works in the Program:



E-Ticket

Simon Liu, 2019, 13 mins, *Los Angeles Premiere

E-Ticket is a frantic re-cataloguing of a personal archive and a vehicle for the re-birth of forgotten images. 35mm still photographs are obsessively tape-spliced together, one frame at a time, in evolving rhythmic patterns – views shift between a school trip to India and culminate in documentation of a violent 2005 protest at a World Trade Organization summit in Hong Kong. A retelling of Dante's Inferno for the streaming age; freedom of movement reserved for the modern cloud.



Distancing

Miko Revereza, 2019, 10 mins

Shot on 16mm color film, *Distancing* documents the logistics and poetics of Miko Revereza's decision to leave the United States and return to the Philippines. 'My ticket is one way', the filmmaker explains to his grandmother as she suddenly realizes he isn't coming back. *Distancing* is a film about this personal realization; to leave and thus become exiled from the country where he was raised. The film acts as a memoir and cites a lineage of statelessness in cinema. It is a personal document of the moment anticipating a great departure.



Letter From Your Far-off Country

Suneil Sanzgiri, 2020, 17 mins

In this film shot on 16mm, Sanzgiri traces lines and lineages of ancestral memory, poetry and familial history. It's a search for solidarity in the sounds and colours of a spontaneous movement in Delhi led by Muslim women, an Iqbal Bano song, images of B.R. Ambedkar – a radical anti-caste Dalit intellectual – all revolving around a letter addressed to a distant relative. He seeks to reclaim the past from erasure, and provide a journey towards a potential future.



A Bright Summer Diary

Lei Lei, 2020, 27 mins, *Los Angeles Premiere

A boy and his mother sit in a cardboard car in front of a painted landscape. This postcard from his childhood is what triggers Chinese artist Lei Lei to go on a journey down the rabbit hole of memory. Put together with his signature style of melancholic collage, time jitters in and out of its usual flow as screenshots, found photos and propaganda images appear in succession as if pulled through an archaic machine to explore how truth is coloured by nostalgia.

TRT: 67 mins

Artist Bios:

Simon Liu is a film artist seeking to build a lyrical catalogue of the rapidly evolving psychogeography of his place of origin in Hong Kong through alternative documentary forms, abstract diary films, multi-channel video installations and 16mm projection performances. Liu's work has been presented at festivals and museums globally including IFFR: Tiger Short Competition, TIFF: Wavelengths, New York Film Festival, Sundance Film Festival, New Directors/New Films, BFI London Film Festival, The Shed, M+ Museum, Tai Kwun Contemporary, Cinéma du Réel, Sheffield Doc/Fest, Punto de Vista, TIDF, RIDM, 25fps, Light Industry, Images, IMAGE FORUM, "Dreamlands: Expanded", and an upcoming solo-program at the Museum of Modern Art as part of their Modern Mondays series. Liu's work is in the Permanent Collections of MoMA and the M+ Museum. He is a 2019 Jerome Hill Artist Fellow, a teacher at the Cooper Union School of Art, and a member of Negativeland; an artist-run film lab in Brooklyn. Liu is currently editing his first feature film, *Staffordshire Hoard*.

Miko Revereza (b. 1988. Manila, Philippines) is a filmmaker raised in California and currently residing between the Philippines and Mexico City. His upbringing as an undocumented immigrant and current exile from the US informs his relationship with moving images. *DROGA!* (2014), *DISINTEGRATION 93-96* (2017), *No data plan* (2018) and *Distancing* (2019) have screened at festivals such as Locarno Film Festival, International Film Festival Rotterdam, NYFF Projections, Film Society of Lincoln Center's Art of the Real and at institutions such as National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., and Whitechapel Gallery. *No Data Plan* is recognized with Sheffield Doc Fest Art Award as well as being listed in BFI Sight & Sound Magazine's 50 Best Films of 2019, Hyperallergic's Top 12 Documentary and Experimental Films of 2019 and CNN Philippines Best Filipino Films of 2019. Revereza holds an MFA from Bard College, is a 2019 Flaherty Seminar filmmaker and 2021 Vilcek Prize Recipient.

Suneil Sanzgiri is an artist, researcher, and filmmaker. His work spans experimental video and film, animations, essays, and installations, and contends with questions of identity, heritage, culture and diaspora in relation to structural violence. He graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with a Masters of Science in Art, Culture and Technology in 2017. His film *At Home But Not At Home* made its World Premiere at the International Film Festival Rotterdam, in January 2020, with a nomination for the Found Footage Award. His follow-up film *Letter From Your Far-Off Country* made its world premiere at the New York Film Festival in the fall of 2020, and was entered into the Ammodo Tiger Shorts Competition at IFFR in 2021. Sanzgiri's work has been screened extensively at festivals and galleries nationally and internationally. Sanzgiri was a 2016 resident of the SOMA program in Mexico City and will be a resident of the Pioneer Works Studio Residency in Spring 2021.

Lei Lei

Artist / Filmmaker

1985 Born in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province.

In 2017 he worked in the CalArts Experimental Animation program as Faculty. In 2018 he was invited as a New Academy Member for the Short Films and Feature Animation branch. In 2019 his first feature film *Breathless Animals* was selected by Berlinale Forum.

Los Angeles Filmforum screenings are supported by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Department of Arts & Culture, the Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles, the Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts, the National Endowment of the Arts, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, and the California Community Foundation. We also depend on our members, ticket buyers, and individual donors.

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