

**Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film Archive and Los Angeles Filmforum present  
Ism, Ism, Ism: Dark Matter: Collective, Singular and Parodic Resistance  
Tuesday - Thursday, September 29 – October 1, 2020  
Online**

Los Angeles Filmforum is the city's longest-running organization dedicated to weekly screenings of experimental film, documentaries, video art, and experimental animation. [www.lafilmforum.org](http://www.lafilmforum.org)

**Livestream Conversation with co-curator Jesse Lerner and filmmakers Zigmunt Cedinsky and Bruno Varela  
Wednesday, September 30, 8:30 PM PDT**

Created during and between military coups, civil wars, diverse authoritarian regimes, and invasions led by the United States, experimental cinema in Latin America has not escaped the impact of diverse forms of social upheavals and violence. In many of these contexts, resistance, even social commentary, can be a precarious, even dangerous, project, and tonight's program surveys some of these expressions. In the war-torn El Salvador of 1980, the collective "Los Vagos" shot documentaries and one fiction film, *Zona intertidal*, a poetic treatment of the politically motivated assassination of a leftist professor by death squads. In 2014, in the town of Iguala, in Southern Mexico, 43 students from a rural teachers' college were detained by the military and handed over to a local criminal organization. Forensic specialists have only been able to identify the remains of two of the students among the numerous mass graves excavated during the ensuing search for clues to their disappearance, a process which Bruno Varela comments upon in *Materia oscura* (2016). Zigmunt Cedinsky takes a satirical approach in *La guerra sin fin (I'm very Happy)* (2006), while the Colombian filmmaker Camilo Restrepo's *Impresión de una guerra* (2015) visits textile factories, tattoo parlors, print shops, and punk rock concerts to offer up an essayistic reflection on the lasting legacies of decades of war on his homeland.

**Screening:**

***Zona intertidal / Intertidal Zone***

Grupo Los Vagos, 1980, 14 min., color, sound, 16mm, El Salvador

The intertidal zone is an oceanographic concept designating a region at the sea's edge, a region between limits of the high and low tides, one with its own physical characteristics, flora and fauna. This film aims to describe the agony of a biology teacher who finds himself in a place of limits, at the edge of life and death. The film is set in the years just prior to El Salvador's civil war, years in which teachers were targeting and brutalized.

The group called the "Vagos Workshop" began a theater collective in 1969. Manuel Sorto and Guillermo Escalón were part of this collective, and later used this same name for their first cinematic efforts. *La zona intertidal* was their only completed fiction film. They later made political documentaries during the period of armed struggle under the name "Collective Zero on the Left."

***Tristezas / Sorrows***

Paz Encina, 2016, 7 min., color, sound, digital format, Paraguay

Weaving together original audio and archival materials from the 35-year period in which Paraguay was ruled by military dictator Alfredo Stroessner, this film reconstructs the reflections of a man who has been sentenced to house arrest.

***Materia oscura / Dark Matter***

Bruno Varela, 2016, 8 min., color and b&w, sound, digital format, Mexico

Audiovisual footage from the 54 thousand page report, divided into 85 volumes (with 13 appendices) about the Iguala Case (the disappearance and presumed murder of 43 student activists by an organized crime group, in collusion with the local government in southern Mexico), made public by the federal attorney general's office (PGR) in 2015. A scavenger exercise based on reports and digital archives available on-line. The re-reading of this audiovisual materials, by pauses, enlargements, and superimpositions, aims to open these up, to create collisions and other forms of pressure that might then oblige them to reveal, at least partially, their story of forced disappearance.

***Post-Military Cinema***

Beatriz Santiago Muñoz, 2014, 11 min., color, sound, HD video, Puerto Rico

This film was shot in Ceiba, Puerto Rico in a cinema that was once part of the now decommissioned Roosevelt Roads US Naval Base. The entire mechanism (light, audience, projected image, sound) and the idea of cinema are a frame through which to make visible the new event now taking place. A beekeeper manages the bees that are part of the soundtrack. The afternoon light streams into the theater for 45 minutes to an hour every day and projects images of the forest that has grown in the 10 years since the closing of the base.

***La guerra sin fin (I'm very happy) / The Unfinished War (I'm very happy)***

Zigmunt Cedinsky, 2006, 8 min., color, sound, 35mm, Venezuela

This is a film about a "new world order" that first became visible between 1999, the year in which this film was begun, and 2005, when it was completed. It presents an Orwellian state of endless war that seems to have established itself all over our planet, one which the Catalan philosopher Eduardo Subirats calls a "besieged existence."

***Impresión de una guerra / Impressions of a War***

Camilo Restrepo, 2015, 26 min., color, sound, 16mm/DCP, Colombia-France

For over seventy years, Colombia has been confronted with internal armed conflict. Over the years, the divisions within this conflict have grown indistinct. A climate of generalized violence has gradually settled over the society as a whole. Violence and barbarity have worked their ways into every aspect of daily life, and their traces mark the cities' streets. Through these multiple traces, perhaps the outline of this conflict's

narrative will finally take shape. *Impressions of a War* offers a vision of some of these deliberate, accidental, fleeting or dissimulated marks. They are often signs of a struggle against oblivion, indifference, and impunity.

This screening is part of Los Angeles Filmforum's screening series ***Ism, Ism, Ism: Experimental Cinema in Latin America (Ismo, Ismo, Ismo: Cine Experimental en América Latina)***. ***Ism, Ism, Ism*** is an unprecedented film series —the first in the U.S.— that surveys Latin America's vibrant experimental production from the 1930s through today. Revisiting classic titles and introducing recent works by key figures and emerging artists, *Ism, Ism, Ism* takes viewers on a journey through a wealth of materials culled from unexpected corners of Latin American film archives. Key historical and contemporary works from Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, Puerto Rico and the United States are featured. The online screenings in Fall 2020 will conclude the touring portion of *Ism, Ism, Ism*. [www.ismismism.org](http://www.ismismism.org)

***Ism, Ism, Ism*** is accompanied by a [bilingual publication \(from University of California Press\)](#) placing Latino and Latin American experimental cinema within a broader dialogue that explores different periods, cultural contexts, image-making models, and considerations of these filmmakers within international cinema.

***Ism, Ism, Ism*** was originally part of *Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA*, a far-reaching and ambitious exploration of Latin American and Latino art in dialogue with Los Angeles that occurred in 2017-18. Explore more at [www.ismismism.org](http://www.ismismism.org)

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*Pacific Standard Time* is an initiative of the Getty. The presenting sponsor is Bank of America.

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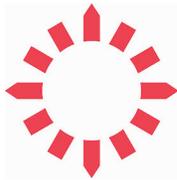
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Los Angeles Filmforum is the city's longest-running organization dedicated to weekly screenings of experimental film, documentaries, video art, and experimental animation. 2020 is our 45<sup>th</sup> year.

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