

**Los Angeles Filmforum presents
Stacey Steers: Alchemical Collages
Tuesday April 14, 2026, 7:30 pm
At 2220 Arts + Archives**

Los Angeles Filmforum is the city's longest running organization dedicated to weekly screenings of experimental film, documentaries, video art, and experimental animation. 2026 is our 51st year. www.lafilmforum.org

In person: Stacey Steers in conversation with Sam Gurry

Los Angeles premiere of her newest film, *The Stars Watch from Long Ago*

Weaving together archetype, allegory, and wonder, Stacey Steers' films create a mythos all their own. Her heroines, lifted from early 20th-century silent films, ebb toward eternity, inky waves alight in their swell. Their collaged effigies move through narratives of personal recollection, environmental anxiety, and science fiction convention. Ruminative and unfixed, Steers' worlds are steeped in implication, yet unclaimed by certainty. The material becomes mercurial as exploratory dreamscapes reimagine these appropriated images, loosening them from their original contexts and allowing new meanings to surface. Working through an intuitive, labor-intensive process, Steers prints, hand-processes, and photographs each frame on 35mm film, imbuing the work with a tactile, almost alchemical presence that bridges cinema's past with an unsettled, speculative present. – Sam Gurry

Stacey Steers is known for her process-driven, labor-intensive animated films composed of thousands of handmade works on paper. Her recent work employs images appropriated from early cinematic sources, from which she constructs original, lyrical narratives.

Steers' films have screened widely at venues including the Sundance Film Festival, Telluride Film Festival, New Directors New Films (New York), IFFR Rotterdam, Locarno IFF, MoMA and the National Gallery of Art (Washington, DC). Recently she has expanded her work to include collaborative installations that join invented, three-dimensional production elements with film loops, creating a new context for experiencing her films. Stacey Steers is a recipient of major grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, Creative Capital and the American Film Institute. She is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. She lives and works in Boulder, CO.

Sam Gurry is an interdisciplinary artist, educator, and curator based in Los Angeles working with the moving image, often across documentary, animation, and hybrid forms. Their work has screened internationally at TIFF, SXSW, Slamdance, IFFR, Outfest, Ann Arbor Film Festival, and the Ottawa Animation Festival.

They hold an MFA in Experimental Animation from CalArts and lecture at Cal State LA, USC, and NYU. Gurry is a member of the programming board at LA Filmforum and the founder of Animation Brüt, an internationally touring series focused on experimental animation. They also host Smear Frame Podcast, a hybrid podcast and newsletter pairing interviews with essays.

Screening:

All screening digitally, TRT 72 min.

Phantom Canyon

2006, 35mm screened digitally, b&w, sound, 10 min.

Phantom Canyon is an exploration of memories and a personal reflection on a pivotal journey taken years ago. The film metaphorically circumnavigates this experience and is a surreal meditation on the filmmaker's process of interpretation. Music and sound by Bruce Odland.

“Stacey Steers creates an utterly distinctive style of low-tech animation that is at once antiquated and completely contemporary. Composed entirely from over 4,000 handmade photomontages, her film brings to life images from 19th century science photographer Eadweard Muybridge. Eerily surreal and visually stunning, Phantom Canyon mixes its gorgeous imagery with an equally beautiful, if not equally bizarre, score to create a true work of art.”

—Ann Arbor Film Festival

Night Hunter

2012, digital, color, sound, 16 min

In this meticulously crafted film, the actress Lillian Gish is scrupulously lifted from silent-era cinema and plunged into a new, haunting role. Night Hunter summons a disquieting dreamscape drawn from allegory, myth, and archetype to create an evocation of the uncanny and a reflection on the creative process. Music and sound by Larry Polansky.

“Night Hunter is amazing, brilliant. A true horror movie of absolute essence, evoking the darkest of fairy tales and dream worlds from the deepest and most disquieting recesses of the mind-body experience. Very disturbing in its haunting beauty and fluid, evocative (nothing so static as ‘symbolic’ would imply) imagery, tensions, paradoxes—all the way through to the final ‘escape’ (into the dark forest); Lillian Gish is archetypically mesmerizing. In fact, it all seems quite perfect—the rich and complex collages, the developing rhythms, the sound. A great work. Beyond words—of course.” —Marilyn Brakhage

Tbilisi Silk

2024, super 8 and HD screened digitally, color, sound, 4:43

Made for the State Silk Museum in Tbilisi, Georgia. Los Angeles premiere!

Tbilisi Silk is a lyrical short film that explores the city of Tbilisi, the tradition of silk making in Georgia, the life cycle of the silk worm, and the restoration of the 19th century in Tbilisi State Silk Museum. The film freely explores these themes, alluding to their intersections and parallels. Tbilisi Silk incorporates archival footage from the National Film Archive in Tbilisi, and images from books found in the Silk Museum collection. In a metamorphosis similar to the silk worms, the museum is re-emerging restored to its former 19th century stature. This film is a collaboration between Stacey Steers and John Romano. Georgian title designed by Mariam Natroshvili.

Edge of Alchemy

2017, digital, color, sound, 19 min.

Mary Pickford and Janet Gaynor, seamlessly lifted from early silent films, are cast into a surreal epic with an upending of the Frankenstein story and a contemporary undercurrent of hive collapse. In this handmade film, Stacey Steers selects sequences from early cinematic sources, prints the frames, and re-contextualizes the action, allowing the “story” assembled from appropriated images to evolve. She inserts her actors into newly imagined collage environments, built by hand from fragments of nineteenth-century engravings and illustrations. Edge of Alchemy is the third film in a trilogy examining women's inner worlds. Music by the Polish composer Lech Jankowski.

“Edge of Alchemy is the epitome of Stacey Steers’ unique vision of collaged re-examination animations, an uncanny way to carry on in the great tradition of surrealist cinema. Max Ernst would refer to Lautréamont’s sewing machine and umbrella to define the structure of the surrealist painting as “a linking of two realities that, by all appearances, have nothing to link them, in a setting that by all appearances does not fit them.” I would add, making it all feel so seamlessly inevitable and inexplicably right...the “feeling of form,” as Suzanne K. Langer might have put it...” —Phil Solomon

Edge of Alchemy was completed with generous support from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation and the Creative Capital Foundation.

The Stars Watch from Long Ago

2026, digital, color, sound, 22 min. Los Angeles premiere!

Starring Lillian Gish, Janet Gaynor and Ana Torrent

Sound design: Udit Duseja

A tiny farmhouse spins through the cosmos. On board is silent film actor Lillian Gish, alone in the vastness. A dreamlike construction conjures a surreal meditation evoking wonder and longing, connection and loss. Wildfires, an existential threat in Colorado where the filmmakers live, emerge as a key element. Meticulously crafted from thousands of handmade collages, the film features Gish and Janet Gaynor, alongside Spanish actor Ana Torrent. For each of them, image sequences are extracted from their early films and recast to create a contemplative, uncanny epic.

This film is a collaboration between Stacey Steers and John Romano. Stacey conceptualized the film, sourced the collage elements, and designed and crafted all the handmade collages, which she then shot in sequence. John edited the footage granularly, expanding the film’s vocabulary through the construction and editing process.

Stacey discovered the poem “Rain Light” by W. S. Merwin five years into the project and was startled by how beautifully Merwin had rendered in language the sense of the world she had been working to build visually. With permission from the Merwin estate, the poem is woven into the film’s structure. The title comes from the poem’s opening line. Music and sound design are by London-based artist Udit Duseja.

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. We also depend on our members, ticket buyers, and individual donors.

Coming soon:

Sun April 19, 1:00 pm - The Films of Gordon Matta-Clark, with curators Jessamyn Fiore, Director of the Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark, and Dylan Adamson in person, at 2220 Arts + Archives

Sat April 25 - Harry Smith & the Alchemy of Abstraction, Featuring Devandra Banhart & Friends Live!, at the Philosophical Research Society

Tues May 12 - Kevin Jerome Everson in person, at 2220 Arts + Archives

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