



Bruce  
Baillie

Somewhere

from  
Here

to  
Heaven

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### III

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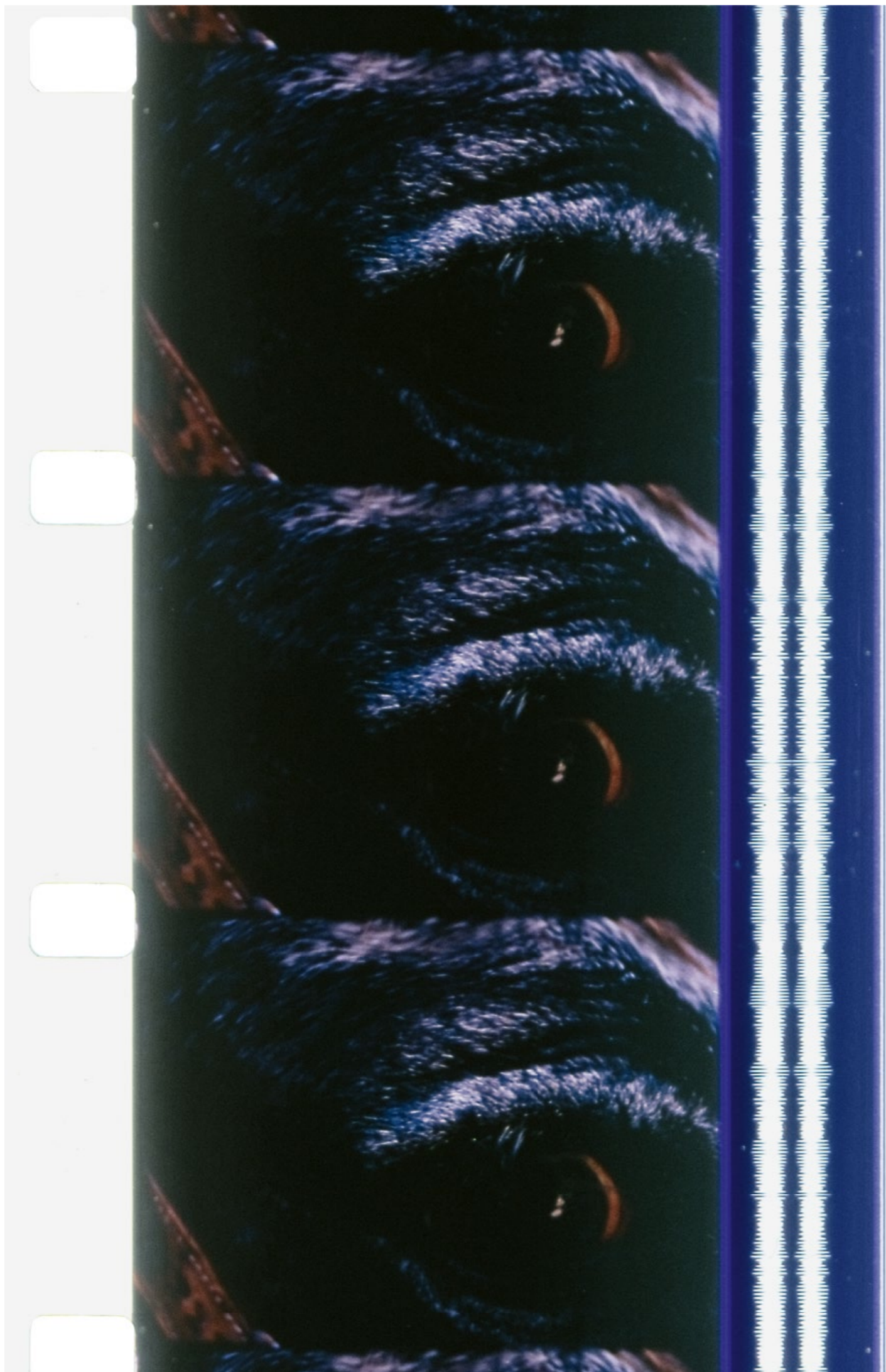
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about that film. *Everyman*—I don't know! It's funny to forget my own films! I think there's at least one print of all of those films. Some of them were with Willard Morrison, a friend who loved films and for a time was the manager of the San Francisco Audio Film Center. He moved to Costa Rica; I haven't heard from him. His distribution became Macmillan Films in Mount Vernon, New York.

SM How long did you do the filmed newsreel?  
 BB Maybe two years—it gradually merged with our personal filmmaking. A little later, Chick [Ernest] Callenbach invented the written and printed *Canyon Cinemanews*. My mother took over the business of it and it grew fast. Chick had his own job, so Chickie Strand and I edited it, and later Paul Tulley and I. We discovered a great logo, the front and back pen drawing of a beautiful guy from a nineteenth-century medicine catalogue: *The Exothematic Method of Cure*. It was a little kit with platinum-tipped needles: you punctured yourself and used the "Olium" that came with the needles. By this "advanced method" you were supposed to be able to rid yourself of "morbid matter." We really loved that; we had the image reproduced and it went on our news. Later, we had it made into stamps, stickers, and it went on the reels of film the Coop distributed.

SM When did distribution begin? And who was involved?

BB First, there was a woman who ran it, over in Sausalito, and Bob Nelson ran it for a while. And Bruce Conner, Larry Jordan, Edith Kramer. It took me a long time to back out of it. So much was dependent on the cinema manager.

SM When did you get out of Canyon Cinema?

BB Oh gosh, I guess in the mid-or-late 60s, when I made *Castro Street* and the other more difficult films. I was at Morningstar, a commune near Santa Rosa. Lou Gottlieb was the owner. He was a Limelighter [the Limelighters were a popular folk group during the 60s], a real neat guy who opened up forty acres; a friend named Ramon Sender, a San Francisco composer, moved up there, and a great painter, Wilder Bentley; a lot of people were coming and going. I made my strongest films there. We all lived outdoors in the woods, alone in different spots. I lived with my dog in a homemade canvas tent with a kerosene lamp. We had a building where we ate and took turns cooking. I couldn't have been directing Canyon Cinema then. It was about this time I met Will Hindle, who was to have quite an influence on me, and Scott Bartlett, another great friend.

SM What do you think are your strongest films?

BB *Castro Street*, *All My Life* [1966], *Quixote*, *Quick Billy*, and even though *Mr. Hayashi* is a very crude film, I love it because of the person in it. I like *To Parsifal*. It's a little awkward, but mostly good. And *Mass*. I suppose that's it... Oh gee, I like *Roslyn Romance* quite a bit, the introduction especially. And *Valentin of the Mountains* [*Valentin de las Sierras*] I like very much.

SM You said that if your parents hadn't left their house to you, you'd probably be on Skid Row.

BB Like the guy in *On Sundays*, yes. I met him living in an abandoned car under the Bay Bridge.

SM It struck me that there was an interesting prescience in that film: there's this Skid Row guy chasing this young Asian woman...

BB Oh yeah! Just like me and Lorie. [laughter]

SM Obviously, you're not homeless, but the thought of that seems to have been in your head a long time.

BB Well, it hasn't, actually—at least, not that I'm aware of. Only in recent years when I came to realize what the result of not following the "American Plan" can be and usually is: you have nothing when you get older, after you've used your energy. All the systems are designed, more and more, to take care of employees. I've only been an employee occasionally, to earn a little more to go on being an unemployed artist. In the American value scheme, people who are not employed aren't holding up their end.

But whatever someone else might see in *On Sundays* must be there for the seeing.

SM While not a conventional narrative, it has a lot of conventional narrative elements, and it's interesting that the next two—*The Gymnasts* [1961] and *Have You Thought of Talking to the Director?* [1962]—are both narratives, but each story seems only a pretext for a trip into a mental state. There's a development from learning how to tell a story to learning how to externalize what you're thinking or feeling. Could you talk about those early developments?

BB Hard to recall. Generally, each film showed me what it wanted, as the Eskimo carvers say. I was slowly coming to understand more about my medium. I do recall deciding to proceed slowly with this huge task and to proceed in a conventional way, while looking around and seeing others going off into modern art and expressing themselves in their own unique ways. I simply couldn't at first.

I was just pushing on to uncover hidden ground. Looking back on that time, I think of a Japanese garden with all the neatly laid stones you walk along that emulate the randomness of nature and yet have the exactness of the Zen Buddhist's mind. I look back and see that each step, each stone, was something I laid of necessity, my own necessity, the necessity to know myself. I would make each film as it came along; I'd smell in the air when the time had come again.

I remember more clearly what prompted me to work on the later films. In *Castro Street* it was the color quality of the Standard Oil tanks in Richmond, California, on a particular rainy day. For *All My Life*, it was the quality of the light for three summer days in Casper, California, up the coast where Tulley lived. It looks like Cork, Ireland, or used to. The managerial class, as usual, invaded that lovely little place and neutralized it. But it was a beautiful place for a while. There were three days: the peak day was the first day I noticed the light. I had this outdated Ansco film I wanted to use. But I didn't want to make a

On Sept. 14, 1966, Baillie's  
only entry in his journal was  
the following:

*It gets to be everything  
you do is wild and sacred*

II

# Bruce maitea

## Peter Hutton

Bruce maitea,

Ez dakit gogoratuko zaren nitaz, baina hainbat aldiz egon ginen elkarrekin 1960ko hamarkadan, eta, gero, 1970ekoan. Orain idazten dizudan gutun hau aspaldi idatzi behar nizun, zure lan harrigarri osoarekiko dudan begirunea adierazteko. 1980ko hamarkadaren erdialdetik Bard College-n ari naiz lanean, eta hor ikusi zintudan azkeneko. Jon Rubin-ek Massachusetts-etik ekarri ninduen, orduan han ematen baitnien eskolak, Hampshire College-n. Etxetxo batean zeunden basoan, Manor House-tik gertu. Gogoan dut txakur bat zegoela. Ni hunkitu nintzen zu ikustean, baina zu neka-neka eginda zeunden eta zera esan zenidan: «Peter, neka-neka eginda nago, benetan, eta etzan beharra dut pixka batean». Uzkuritu eta lo hartu zenuen... Eta hori izan zen dena. 1980ko hamarkadaren erdialdean azkenik Bard-era itzuli nintzanean, etxetxoa behera erorita zegoen eta azkenean orubetik kendu zuten. Garai hartan pentsatu nuen filmatu behar nuela, baina sekula ez nuen egin, eta damu dut.

Bardeko zinema-programa ezin hobeto doa eta eutsi egiten dio bere espiritu esperimentalari. *All My Life* lanaren kopia bikain bat dugu, 16 mm-koa, eta beti proiektatzen diet zinematografiako lehen mailako ikasleei. Daukagun pelikularik bikainena da. Duela urte batzuk *Quixote* erosi nuen DVDan, eta atzo bertan jarri nuen Paisajismo eskolan. Seguruena hogeia aldiz ikusita edukiko dut, baina beti liluratzeko naute, hala zure kamera-lanaren edertasunak, nola zure esku-hartze poetikoek, prisma eta gainjartzeekin, mate eta iragazkiekin. Maisulana dela esatea gutxieste da. Beti edukiko dut oroimenean iltzaturik bi agure indigenen irudia, zigarreta bat errez eta kafetegi batean hizketan. Zamaketaria ere hor dago, purutxoarekin; hain haserre, non lehertzeko zorian dagoela ematen baitu. Beti galdetu izan diot neure buruari nola lortu zinen hainbeste hurbiltzea Estatu Batuetako barnealdeko negozio-gizon absurdo horiengana, denek berdinak ematen baitute afari handi horretan; eta zuk txerrien irudiak tartekatzen dituzu, jatenaren gainera oldartzen, eta saskibaloi-partidako mutil argaltxoak ere bai, batetik bestera doana zomorro jauzilari baten gisa. Irudi ahaztezinak dira denak, *All My Life* bezala, zalantzarik gabe, amerikarra den zerbait dute, eta, nire ustez, 1960ko hamarkadako AEBetako politika eta kultura ikasten duen edonork ikusi beharko lituzke.

Izugarri pozten nau jakiteak agian etorkizunean aukera egongo dela zure obraren atzera begirako erakusketa ibiltari bat egiteko. Espero dut zure pelikulekin joan zaitezten. Etxetxoa jada ez dago, baina zure presentzia ezin ezabatuzko zirrara da oraindik.

Begirunez eta mirespenez,  
—Peter Hutton  
Annandale-on-Hudson, NY  
2015ko Urriaren 20an.

## Querido Bruce

### Peter Hutton

Querido Bruce,

No sé si me recordarás, pero nos vimos varias veces en la década de 1960, y después en la de 1970. Te escribo una carta que debería haber escrito hace mucho tiempo para transmitirte la consideración que me merece toda tu asombrosa obra. Desde mediados de la década de 1980 trabajo en Bard College, donde te vi por última vez. Jon Rubin me trajo desde Massachusetts, donde yo daba clase en Hampshire College. Estabas en una casita en el bosque, cerca de Manor House. Recuerdo que había un perro. A mí me emocionaba verte, pero tú estabas muy cansado y me dijiste: «Peter, estoy realmente cansado y necesito echarme un rato». Te hiciste un ovillo y te dormiste... Eso fue todo. Cuando por fin regresé a Bard a mediados de la década de 1980 la casita se había venido abajo y al final acabaron retirándola del solar. En esa época pensé que debía filmarla, pero nunca lo hice; algo de lo que me arrepiento.

El programa de cine de Bard va de maravilla y conserva su espíritu experimental. Tenemos una estupenda copia en 16 mm de *All My Life* que siempre proyecto a los estudiantes de cinematografía primerizos. Es la película más sublime que tenemos. Hace unos años compré *Quixote* en DVD y ayer mismo se la puse a mi clase de Paisajismo. Probablemente la haya visto veinte veces y siempre me maravilla tanto la belleza del trabajo de tu cámara como tus intervenciones poéticas, con prismas y superposiciones, mates y filtros. Decir que es una obra maestra es minimizarla. Siempre llevaré grabada en la memoria la imagen de los dos ancianos indígenas echándose un pitillo y conversando en un café. También está el estibador con su purito, que parece a punto de estallar de lo enfadado que está. Siempre me pregunté cómo lograste acercarte tanto a todos esos absurdos hombres de negocios del interior de Estados Unidos, que parecen todos iguales durante esa gran cena, y que tú intercalas con imágenes de cerdos lanzándose sobre la comida, y también al chaval flacucho del partido de baloncesto, que va de un lado a otro como un bicho saltarín. Todas son imágenes inolvidables que, al igual que *All My Life*, tienen algo innegablemente americano, y a mí me parece que cualquiera que estudie política y cultura estadounidense de la década de 1960 debería verlas.

Me anima muchísimo saber que quizá en el futuro exista la posibilidad de montar una retrospectiva itinerante de tu obra. Permíteme que te diga que espero que acudas con tus películas. Aunque la casita ya no esté, tu presencia sigue constituyendo una impresión imborrable.

Con respeto y admiración,  
—Peter Hutton  
Annandale-on-Hudson, NY  
20 de octubre de 2015



Film strip from *All My Life*, 1966

# Filmography



*On Sundays*

1961, 27.5 minutes, b&w, sound, 16mm

*Mr. Hayashi*

1961, 3 minutes, b&w, sound, 16mm  
Preserved by Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA), 1995.

*The Gymnasts*

1961, 8 minutes, b&w, sound, 16mm  
Preserved by BAMPFA, 2012

*Here I Am*

1962, 11 minutes, b&w, sound, 16mm  
Preserved by Anthology Film Archives

*Have You Thought of Talking to the Director*  
1962, 15 minutes, b&w, sound, 16mm

*The News #3 (The Peace Rally)*

1962, 3 minutes, b&w, sound, 16mm  
Preserved by BAMPFA, 2012

*David Lynn's Sculpture* (unfinished/unreleased)

1962, 3 minutes, b&w, sound, 16mm

*Friend Fleeing*

(unfinished/unreleased)  
1962, 3 minutes, b&w, sound, 16mm

*Everyman*

1962, 6 minutes, b&w, sound, 16mm

*Cherry Yogurt*

(unfinished/unreleased)  
1963, 3 minutes, color, silent, 16mm  
Preserved by Academy Film Archive, 2012

*To Parsifal*

1963, 16 minutes, color, sound, 16mm  
Preserved by BAMPFA, 2012

*A Hurrah for Soldiers*

1963, 4 minutes, color, sound, 16mm

*Mass for the Dakota Sioux*

1964, 20 minutes, b&w, sound, 16mm  
Preserved by BAMPFA, 1995

*The Brookfield Recreation Center*

1964, 6 minutes, b&w, sound, 16mm  
Preserved by BAMPFA, 2012.

*Yellow Horse*

1965, 9 minutes, color, sound, 16mm

*Quixote*

1965, 45 minutes, color and b&w, sound, 16mm  
Preserved by BAMPFA, 1995

*Tung*

1966, 5 minutes, color and b&w, silent, 16mm  
Preserved by BAMPFA, 1995.

*Termination*

1966, 5 minutes, b&w, sound, 16mm

*Still Life*

1966, 2 minutes, color, sound, 16mm  
Preserved by Academy Film Archive, 2013.

*Show Leader*

1966, 1 minute, b&w, sound, 16mm

*Little Girl*

1966, 9 minutes, color and b&w, sound, 16mm  
Preserved by Academy Film Archive, 2013.

*Castro Street*

1966, 10 minutes, color and b&w, sound, 16mm  
Preserved by BAMPFA, 1995. Preserved by Academy Film Archive, 2000.

*All My Life*

1966, 3 minutes, color, sound, 16mm  
Preserved by BAMPFA, 1995.

*Port Chicago Vigil*

1966, 9 minutes, b&w, sound, 16mm

*The Holy Scrolls: Reel 1 (Licho)* (unfinished/unreleased)

1967, 6 minutes, b&w, silent, 16mm  
Preserved by BAMPFA, 2012

*Valentin de las Sierras*

1968, 10 minutes, color, sound, 16mm  
Preserved by BAMPFA, 1995. Preserved by Anthology Film Archives.

*Quick Billy*

1970, 60 minutes, color and b&w, sound, 16mm  
Preserved by BAMPFA, 1995. Quick Billy rolls preserved by Academy Film Archive, 2015

*Roslyn Romance (Is It Really True?)*

1974, 17 minutes, color, sound, 16mm  
Preserved by Academy Film Archive, 2016.

*Roy Eldridge*

1986, 2 minutes, color, sound, video

*Dr. Bish Remedies Show #1*

1987, 55 minutes, color, sound, video

*Dr. Bish Remedies Show #2*

1988, 55 minutes, color, sound, video

*I Wish I Knew*

1989, 4 minutes, color, sound, video

*The P-38 Pilot*

1990, 15 minutes, color, sound, video

*Will Hindle* (with Wind Baillie)

1991, 18 minutes, color, sound, video

*Commute* (with Lorie Baillie)

1995, 57 minutes, color, sound, video

*The Holy Scrolls*

(unfinished/unreleased)  
ca. 1966-1998, 11 hours (approx.), color and b&w, sound and silent, 16mm and video:

- *Day Ashore*

1966, 110 minutes

- *Reel I*

1967-1969, 30 minutes

- *Reel I-A*

1966, 7 minutes

- *Roslyn Romance (Is It Really True?) Intro I & II*

1972- 1975, 18 minutes

- *Reel II (Romance)*

1972-1973, 30 minutes

- *Reel III*

1973-1975, 30 minutes

- *Spokane River*

1974, 25 minutes

- *Mosebar's*

1974, 18 minutes

- *Aspen*

1975, 38 minutes

- *Reel IV*

1977, 30 minutes

- *Reel IV-A*

1977, 23 minutes

- *Reel V*

1976-1983, 30 minutes

- *Reel VI*

1972-1976, 45 minutes

- *Reel VI-A*

1973, 12 minutes

- *Reel VII-A*

1975, 12 minutes

- *Rokeby (NY)*

1975, 35 minutes

- *Reel VIII*

1978, 30 minutes

*The Cardinal's Visit*  
ca. 1980, 2 hours (approx.):

- *Reel A*

1980, 50 minutes

- *Reel B*

1980, 54 minutes

*Introduction to the Holy Scrolls*

1998, 5 minutes, color, sound, video

*Pietà*

1998, 2 minutes, color, sound, 35mm  
Made for the Viennale Film Festival.

*Salute*

1999, 20 minutes, color, sound, video

*Robert Fulton*

2011, 8 minutes, color, sound, video

*Spring – The Laundry Lesson*

2016, 19 minutes, color, sound, video

Steve Anker

Scott MacDonald

Max Goldberg

Erika Balsom

Apichatpong  
Weerasethakul

Ben Rivers

Ana Vaz

Eduardo Williams

Peter Hutton

J.P. Sniadecki

Jonas Mekas

Garbiñe Ortega (ed.)

