

# the mini

## microcinema

Saturday, October 27, 2018 (4:00 PM)

Freedom Over Fear: Susan Stein's Feminist Avant-Garde Cinema Curated by Mónica Savirón

Presented by the UC Center for Film and Media Studies

"At age 17, artist Susan Stein was the workshop coordinator at the London Filmmakers' Co-operative. In 1979, with Lis Rhodes, Felicity Sparrow, Annabel Nicolson, Tina Keane, Mary-Pat Leece, and Joanna Davis, she cofounded Circles, the first feminist distribution network for film, video, and performance. Her 16mm films are often driven by the sound of a female voice, her own, speaking up against forced, abusive, fear-based structures. In her work, Stein examines language in the context of the femme-led writings and political movements of the time, and in contrast with the grainy imagery of her sensitive cinematography. With a precise layering of reworked sequences containing photo collages, newspaper cutouts, poetry, essays, and personal and archival footage, the artist reflects on concepts of female incarceration, invisibility, servitude, and silence. After 30 years working for BBC News as a camerawoman, Stein is coming full-circle with a new film in preparation. Freedom over Fear is the first-ever retrospective of her avant-garde films, and the first time that her work is shown in the United States."—Mónica Savirón.

### PROGRAM:

She Said, by Susan Stein

1982, UK, 16mm transferred to video, b/w, sound, 27 minutes

"This film is a collage of collected words and references to the seen and unseen work of women, while also developing a rhythm of falling images, which escape out of the cinematic frame. It reverses the light of the film G, moving to a dark and sometimes dense and indistinct landscape. 'But, am I allowed to, do you think?', she asks.... and we travel through a mesh of thoughts and references"—Susan Stein.

Between Lines, by Susan Stein

1978, UK, 16mm transferred to video, color, sound, 4 minutes

"The domestic interior is a sort of imprisonment where the she looks out. Venetian blinds make strong, colorful shadows of themselves, while being manipulated. The sound is harsh and aggressive. Both metal and material take on a different aspect and transform into abstraction"—Susan Stein.

G, by Susan Stein

1979, UK, 16mm transferred to video, b/w, sound, 6 minutes

"This came from many readings of women writers and it is a look at how we write, how we think about writing, and the difficulties encountered with language. A loud and incessant clock ticks noisily and is slightly speeded up, while they keys of a typewriter are hit decisively. This is contrasted with my voice speaking through the English alphabet and attaching words to each letter. The film also uses a pulse of fades to clear celluloid of differing lengths (from 24 frames to 120 frames), giving the film a feeling of disappearance, while the clear aspects light-up the audience's faces"—Susan Stein.

Journey, by Susan Stein

1976, UK, 16mm transferred to video, b/w with vegetable dye, sound, 4 minutes

"This was my first piecing together after seeing some Kenneth Anger short films and joining the London Filmmaker's Co-operative. The style of repetition of short sequences, determined in part by the soundtrack, was also an exploration of celluloid itself, learning about the medium of film. There is a sort of youthful love element, romantically detached players, never meeting but desiring"—Susan Stein.

Returning, by Susan Stein

1980, UK, 16mm transferred to video, b/w and color, sound, 7 minutes

"The location for Returning was London, as with most of my work, and Derbyshire. There is the sense of the domestic interior as a kind of entrapment as well as a known history. It refers to waiting and expectation, both of the surety of a return and a sort of safety, but also the threat of intrusion. The Cromford interior reflects a mixture of nostalgia and loss of not being able to return to a specific past. Repetition of images and words connect in and out of each other"—Susan Stein.

Tracks, by Susan Stein

1989, UK, 16mm transferred to video, Color, sound, 28 minutes

"The film is photographic, animated, live-action in parts and has a teacher-mother theme connecting areas of pre-feminism, early contraception, later feminist writings, and class/poverty, particularly in relation to women. It is part a reworking and rewording of individual experiences, and also a reflection of personal and public imagery, re-made and manipulated, layered and textured, while taking a critical look at certain feminist theories"—Susan Stein.

Running time: 76 minutes.

Special thanks to Cinenova, Charlotte Procter, María Palacios Cruz, Maud Jacquin, C. Jacqueline Wood, Michael Gott, and Susan Stein.

"At age 17, artist Susan Stein was the workshop coordinator at the London Filmmakers' Co-operative. In 1975, with Lis Rhodes, Felicity Sparrow, Annabel Nicholson, Tina Keane, Mary-Pat Leese, and Joanna Davis, she co-founded Circle, the first feminist distribution network for film, video, and performance. Her film work is often driven by the sound of a female voice, her own speaking up against forced, abusive, fear-based structures. In her work, Stein examines language in the context of the female-led writings and political movements of the time, and in contrast with the grainy imagery of her sensitive cinematography. With a precise layering of textured sequences containing photo collages, newspaper cutouts, poetry, essays, and personal and archival footage, the artist reflects on concepts of female incarceration, femininity, sexuality, and silence. After 30 years working for BBC News as a camerawoman, Stein is coming full-circle with a new film in preparation. Freedom over fear is the first ever retrospective of her avant-garde films, and the first time that her work is shown in the United States.—Monica Svrtón

PROGRAM

The said by Susan Stein  
1981, UK, 16mm transferred to video, b/w, sound, 17 minutes  
"This film is a collage of collected words and references to the seen and unseen work of women, while also developing a rhythm of falling images, which escape out of the cinematic frame. It reverses the light of the film, moving to a dark and sometimes dense and indistinct landscape. But as I allowed to do you think... she asks... and we travel through a mesh of thoughts and references.—Susan Stein

Between lines by Susan Stein  
1978, UK, 16mm transferred to video, color, sound, 4 minutes  
"The domestic interior is a sort of imprisonment where the looks out. Venetian blinds make strong, colorful shadows of themselves, while being manipulated. The sound is harsh and aggressive. Both metal and material take on a different aspect and transform into abstraction.—Susan Stein

D. by Susan Stein  
1979, UK, 16mm transferred to video, b/w, sound, 6 minutes  
"This came from my readings of women writers and it is a look at how we write, how we think about writing, and the difficulties encountered with language. A loud and incessant clock ticks noisily and its slightly speeded up, while they keys of a typewriter are hit decisively. This is contrasted with my voice speaking through the English alphabet and attaching words to each letter. The film also uses a pulse of faint to clear collages of differing lengths (from 24 frames to 128 frames), giving the film a feeling of disappearance, while the clear aspects light-up the audience's faces.—Susan Stein

Journey by Susan Stein  
1975, UK, 16mm transferred to video, b/w with vegetable dye, sound, 4 minutes  
"This was my first project after seeing some Kenneth Anger short films and joining the London Filmmakers' Co-operative. The style of repetition of short sequences, determined in part by the soundtrack, was also an exploration of celluloid itself, learning about the medium of film. There is a sort of youthful love element, romantically detached players, never meeting but desiring.—Susan Stein

Returning by Susan Stein  
1980, UK, 16mm transferred to video, b/w and color, sound, 7 minutes  
"The location for Returning was London, as with most of my work, and Berlin. There is the sense of the domestic interior as a kind of entrapment as well as a known history. It refers to waiting and expectation, both of the surety of a return and a sort of safety, but also the threat of intrusion. The Cornford interior reflects a mixture of nostalgia and loss of not being able to return to a specific past. Reception of images and words connect in and out of each other.—Susan Stein