

# Marcus Guidance

## Intermittent Musings on Minnesota Motion Pictures

by John Akre



Sunday, January 6, 2019

### CAVE 3 Day 3



CAVE 3's third and final day was yesterday. Kevin Obsatz, our second set of MC eyes, started off the 3 pm program of experimental documentaries saying that the festival itself was experimental, and that some of the work we would see was newly finished, or still in draft form, or might never be finished.

Jonathan Rattner of Nashville put together the program of short experimental documentaries that, like traditional documentaries, walked us to places we might never visit without film, but did so without the confident strut of traditional documentary. Instead, the makers made films that weren't sure if they should be looking or listening or not, and whether and what they should be presenting to the likes of us, people who might not even have any business walking in those other peoples' shoes.

The show began with Robin Starbucks' "The Stag's Mirror," and with Starbuck present as well to introduce the film, which combined super 8 film she shot in Chiapas with the text of an allegory native to the people she was filming. She regularly disturbed her sober observational images with animation that recalled the weave pattern of improperly interlaced video and fragments of images we would see later in the film, and sometimes blotting out the text of the native story by re-writing it upon itself.

Other films in the program used alienating strategies like frames and interruption to complicate their stories of home and looking. Lisa Danker's "Foreclosed Home Movie" used a linoleum print of a welcoming front door to tell a story of real estate boom and bust in Miami. Sometimes we saw just parts of the print skipping by, stamped directly on 16mm film. At the end we saw repeated printings with less and less ink to say goodbye to the house after foreclosure.

Ratter's own "Southern Refuge," which he said he was re-cutting that very morning, looks inside or around the corner of or doesn't quite look into the work of a Nashville resettlement agency for recent immigrants, refugees working to start a new life in Nashville USA. As they tell Rattner and us about the horrible experiences that led them to the US to try a new life, Rattner withholds focus, just barely showing us one person's broken hand, and just barely shows us others through fogged 16mm end rolls. But he also surrenders his camera to the children at the agency, as they mob him and us in extreme close-up, pressing themselves tight to pose and smile and dance their identity with it.

#### About Me



**hubertzork**

John Akre writes, draws, animates, makes videos and teaches. He believes that he is a living, breathing, thinking and being human animal, but his creator, Dr. Hubert Zork, one of the nation's least well-respected mad scientists, will tell you otherwise.

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CAVE 3 ended with a 7pm show of work by Sky Hopinka, currently of Cambridge, MA. Hopinka's films took us into and out of the body of this continent, beginning and ending with the two parts of his "Cloudless Blue Egress of Summer," which approaches the land from the sea and then takes us back to the sea at the end. This first and last film takes us on a journey through Castillo de San Marcos in St. Augustine, Florida, a five hundred year old fort built by the Spanish invaders that looks like an instrument of torture when seen from above. Hopinka shares with us the stories and faint pencil drawings of the fort's indigenous prisoners before releasing us back to the horizon line of ocean.

Hopinka's films are all about the horizon. The horizon line, often horizontal but also sometimes vertical, leads us through the texts and places he takes us to. At times he doubles the horizon, with land above and below and sky between, a powerful sandwich of creation that also might feel like the end of time.

In "Jaaji Aprox," Hopinka tries to find and remember and learn and understand a father who might be his father or one of the fathers, but someone distant but also full of light and history. After the film played, Hopinka read in the dark theater an alienated academic essay he wrote to explain the film and then footnoted that with deeply personal recollections of the people and places that those images and sounds came from. Illuminated only by the penlight he used to read, the only real light besides the Exit signs, he held us spellbound as he spoke the supreme DVD commentary track.

Leaving us drowning in the ocean off the coast of Florida, Hopinka waved goodbye and CAVE 3 was completed.

Posted by [hubertzork](#) at [6:17 AM](#)

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