

## Crazy Rays

### Science Fiction and the Avant-Garde

Curated by Ed Halter

Thursday, October 11, 2007, 7 pm — Roxie New College Film Center

**Crazy Rays:** Six riffs on the intersection of science fiction and experimental cinema, featuring: utopian scheming, techno-skeptical apocalypses, brooding bio-terrors, tail-finned space kitsch and investigations of alien consciousness.

Crazy Rays, Program One

## Ed and Peter Emshwiller

Ed Emshwiller won five Hugo awards for his science fiction magazine covers and involved notable science fiction authors in his moving image work. *Carol* is a short portrait of Emshwiller's wife, an award-winning science fiction writer. *Image, Flesh and Voice*, a feature-length experimental work, weaves together conversations by New Wave science fiction authors, including Damon Knight, Harlan Ellison, Keith Laumer, Gordon Dickson, James Blish and many others talking about society, politics and philosophy with carefully shot near-abstract monochrome images; Shot by the Emshwillers' then-11-year-old son Peter, *Jr. Star Trek* is an all-kid remake of the legendary TV show—complete with Ed himself as an alien monster. (Ed Halter)

***Jr. Star Trek*** (1969) by Peter Emshwiller; 16mm, color, sound, 8 minutes, print from the Film-Makers' Cooperative

Peter and his fifth grade buddies talked me into being a technical advisor and an alien monster for this epic. A must for "Star Trek" fans! (Ed Emshwiller)

***Carol*** (1970) by Ed Emshwiller; 16mm, color, sound, 6 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

Off and on, [renowned science fiction author] Carol [Emshwiller] and I spent a few days in the woods filming. We got some images of her, some of trees, leaves, twigs and logs. These I combined with sounds from a thumb piano, which were sometimes modified electronically. The results: what seems to me to be a gentle, lyrical film. (Ed Emshwiller)

***Image, Flesh and Voice*** (1969) by Ed Emshwiller; 16mm, b&w, sound, 77 minutes, print from Canyon Cinema

This is a film about Images (visual and psychological). Flesh (sensuality), and Voice (as a revelation and as a textural element in the film). The pictures range back and forth from the completely spontaneous to very formal choreography. The voice track, a collage edited into thematic sequences from a mass of interviews and informal discussions, gives an inner portrait of men and women candidly revealing their relationships. It is a non-story-telling feature film, a structured interplay of sound, image and sensual tensions. (Ed Emshwiller)

***Crazy Rays: Science Fiction and the Avant-garde*** continues:

Thursday, November 8 at 7 pm: Anne McGuire's *Strain Andromeda The*

Thursday, November 8 at 9:30 pm: Craig Baldwin's *Tribulation 99* and Ximena Cuevas' *Cinopolis, the Film Capitol*

Thursday, December 13 at 7 pm: James Fotopoulos' *The Nest* and Leah Gilliam's *Apeshit*

Thursday, December 13 at 9:30 pm: Victor Faccinto's *Shameless* and James June Schneider's *1, 2, 3, Whiteout*

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Crazy Rays, Program Two

## Max Almy / Roddy Bogawa

Combining an early-80s New Wave androgynous flair and a plugged-in proto-cyberpunk sensibility, Almy's delirious data-trip, *Leaving the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, remains one of the most formidable experimental videos of its decade. For his 16mm feature, *Junk*, Roddy Bogawa turns to a later set of musical influences: the post-apocalyptic tendencies of post-punk noise. (Ed Halter)

***Leaving the 20th Century*** (1982) by Max Almy; video, color, sound, 11 minutes, tape from Video Data Bank

Believing that we are, “dragging our feet into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” Almy made this video trilogy to celebrate technology and the future in an ironic mélange of politics, sociology, sexuality, and economics. Flawlessly melding sound and image, the tape moves through three sections, *Countdown*, *Departure*, and *Arrival*. In the end, Almy posits this paradox: technology as a human development is rapidly making humans obsolete and interpersonal contact impossible, making the future of man's presence and very existence uncertain. (Video Data Bank)

*Leaving the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* is a compelling science fiction narrative of televisual time-travel via the electronic circuit and computer chip. Almy dramatizes a three-part transition—countdown, departure, arrival—to a technological future, foreclosed and dehumanized. The stylized visuals and ironic humor (“She left because there was nothing good on television...”) belie the poignancy of Almy's vision. Applying computer graphics and digital effects to critique the manipulative, mediating effects of technology, Almy simulates the hyper-reality of a futuristic “landscape with no detail or points of reference,” a space without perspective or point of view. No longer seduced by television or spectacle, the subjects depart and are transported as objects, arriving at a place where human relations and communication fail, transmission is terminated, the message is not received. (Electronic Arts Intermix)

***Junk*** (1999) by Roddy Bogawa; 16mm, color, sound, 85 minutes, print from the maker

In a mundane world of arrested technology, Warholian surveillance and aberrant weather patterns, max. r. (William Schefferine) and Christina (Tara Milutis) meet and share a brief fleeting existence together. A love story that is as much science fiction as it is film noir, *Junk* explores the world around us and the world imagined—its past, present, and possible future. ([www.rodzybogawa.com](http://www.rodzybogawa.com))

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