

MoMA

## An Evening with Robert Beavers

Held on Mon, Sep 9,  
2024, 7:00 p.m.

MoMA, Floor T2/T1, Theater 2

The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2



MoMA presents the world premiere of Robert Beavers's most recent film, *Dedication: Bernice Hodges* (2024), presented alongside *Early Month Segments* (1968–70/2002) and *Pitcher of Colored Light* (2000–07). Following the screening, which also celebrates Rebekah Rutkoff's new book *Double Vision: The Cinema of Robert Beavers* (2024), Beavers and Rutkoff will participate in a conversation moderated by MoMA curator Joshua Siegel.

Rich in painterly beauty and in literary and musical allusion, the 16mm films of Robert Beavers are also celebrated for their arresting shifts of tone and rhythm and their intimate observations of time's passing. Like a character in a Henry James story, Beavers (b. 1949) has been an American abroad for more than a half century—he left his native Weymouth, Massachusetts, for Europe in 1967—and he seems to embody the classical tradition of the Grand Tour in his devotion to arts and antiquities, Ancient Greek poetic forms and Renaissance painting and architecture, and an

artisan's mastery of hand and eye. Wedding the mathematical to the musical, the erotic to the stoic, Beavers has in such celebrated work as *My Hand Outstretched to the Winged Distance and Sightless Measure* reflected on the presence and absence of the human body in the serenely eternal landscapes of Venice, Florence, Hydra, and the Swiss Alpine countryside; on geometries of sunlight in the domestic interiors of his mother's home and an apartment in Brooklyn; and on friendships both cherished (Gregory Markopoulos, Tom Chomont, Dieter and Cécile Staehelin, Ute Aurand) and imagined (Ruskin, Leonardo, Valéry, Ponge, Sadowski, Borromini).

***Early Month Segments.*** 1968–70/2002. Among the first of Robert Beavers's films, *Early Month Segments* is an intimate portrait of the artist and his partner, the filmmaker Gregory Markopoulos, in their Swiss apartment—a time, he recalls, when they were “protected by solitude and the spirit that came from our dedication to filmmaking.” The film would become the opening section of Beavers's cycle *My Hand Outstretched to the Winged Distance and Sightless Measure*. 33 min.

***Pitcher of Colored Light.*** 2000–07. “I have filmed my mother's house and her garden. The shadows play an essential part in the mixture of loneliness and peace that exists here. The seasons move from the garden into the house, projecting rich diagonals in the early morning or late afternoon. Each shadow is a subtle balance of stillness and movement and shows the vital instability of space. Its special quality opens a passage to the subjective. A voice within the film speaks to memory. The walls are screens through which I pass to the inhabited privacy. We experience a place through the perspective of where we come from and hear another's voice through our own acoustic. The sense of place is never separate from the moment” (Robert Beavers). 23 min.

***Dedication: Bernice Hodges.*** 2024. “I walked into Bernice Hodges's garden when I was seven years old and asked her to read to me. She was in her mid-seventies. Out of this came an important friendship. In 1966, I tried to film her—it was perhaps the second time that I had put a roll of film in the Bolex camera, and I was very nervous; part of the time I inadvertently left the lens cap on while filming. I was so disappointed that I threw the footage away except for two short film strips. Decades later, during the making of *The Sparrow Dream*, I re-filmed these two film strips on my editing table and objects associated with her, such as a wooden tray that she had carved. She was the first person to explain to me what an artist might be and in teaching me how to carve wood, I learned how to go with the grain or against it” (Robert Beavers). 5 min. Program approx. 95 min.

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