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Projections #13: The films of Ute Aurand, Robert Beavers and Gregory J Markopoulos

By Ruby Arrowsmith-Todd, curator, film



Still from *The Illiac Passion* (director Gregory J Markopoulos, 1967)

This weekend-long program celebrated the work of three major experimental filmmakers – Ute Aurand, Robert Beavers and Gregory J Markopoulos – with Beavers and Aurand in attendance.

This expansive program explored the trio's individual filmmaking practices alongside their shared bonds as collaborators from 1960s America to present-day Berlin. Presented on the artists' own 16mm prints, the survey spanned diary, portrait and landscape films and concluded with a feature film reimagining downtown New York as an ancient Greek underworld (with Andy Warhol cast as Poseidon on an exercise bike). United by a fascination with the physicality of celluloid, Aurand, Beavers and Markopoulos's cinema offers images of exquisite beauty spun from rapid cuts, repetition, mattes, colour filters, superimpositions and sensuous textures.

Following critical acclaim at retrospectives at Whitney Museum in New York and Tate Modern in London, the films of these artists had their first presentation in Australia at the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Projections #13 was guest curated by Audrey Lam and Keegan O'Connor.

The series screened at the Art Gallery of New South Wales on Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 October 2023.

About the artists

Gregory J Markopoulos (1928–1992) was a Greek–American filmmaker who began making films in the 1940s as a student at the University of Southern California’s Film School. In 1960, he moved to New York, where he engaged with several key figures in the burgeoning New American Cinema and completed major works including *Twice a man* (1963) and *The Illiac passion* (1964–67). In 1967, he relocated to Europe with Robert Beavers, where both filmmakers lived and worked until Markopoulos’s death in 1992.

Robert Beavers (born 1949) is an American filmmaker who has been working between Europe and America since the 1960s. Growing up in Massachusetts, he made his first film at the age of 16 in New York, where he met the filmmaker Gregory J Markopoulos. Markopoulos and Beavers relocated to Europe together in 1967.

Ute Aurand (born 1957) is a German filmmaker who has been a central presence in Berlin's experimental film scene since the 1980s. She studied filmmaking at the Deutsche Film und Fernsehakademie Berlin, and has been making her own 16mm films since 1985.

Films

- **28 October – Robert Beavers: introduction and early films**
Early monthly segments (selected) (director Robert Beavers, US, 1968–70/2002, 16mm)
From the notebook of ... (director Robert Beavers, US, 1971/1999, 16mm)
- **28 October – Ute Aurand: introduction and short films**
OH! Die vier Jahreszeiten ('OH! The four seasons') (director Ute Aurand and Ulrike Pfeiffer, Germany, 1988, 16mm to DCP)
Am Meer ('At the sea') (director Ute Aurand, Germany, 1994, 16mm)
A walk (director Ute Aurand, Germany, 1994, 16mm)
Kopfüber im Geäst ('Hanging upside down in the branches') (director Ute Aurand, Germany, 2009, 16mm)
Paulina (director Ute Aurand, Germany, 2011, 16mm)
Franz (director Ute Aurand, Germany, 2011, 16mm)
Sakura, Sakura (director Ute Aurand, Germany, 2015, 16mm)
Zuoz (director Ute Aurand, Germany, 2008, colour)
- **28 October – Gregory J Markopoulos in the 1960s: session 1**
Twice a man (director Gregory J Markopoulos, US, 1963, 16mm to DCP)
Ming Green (director Gregory J Markopoulos, US, 1966, 16mm)
Bliss (director Gregory J Markopoulos, US, 1967, 16mm)
- **29 October – Rasendes Grün mit Pferden ('Rushing green with horses')**

- **28 October – *Flussendes Grün mit Fischen* (Flushing green with fishes)**
(director Ute Aurand, Germany, 2019, 16mm)
- **29 October – *Robert Beavers: recent films***
 - Pitcher of coloured light*** (director Robert Beavers, US, 2000–07, 16mm)
 - The suppliant*** (director Robert Beavers, US, 2010, 16mm)
 - Among the eucalyptuses*** (director Robert Beavers, US, 2017, 16mm)
 - 'Der Klang, die Welt ...'*** (director Robert Beavers, US, 2018, 16mm)
 - The sparrow dream*** (director Robert Beavers, US, 2022, 16mm)
- **29 October – *Gregory J Markopoulos in the 1960s: session 2***
 - Sorrows*** (director Gregory J Markopoulos, US, 1969, 16mm)
 - The Illiac passion*** (director Gregory J Markopoulos, US, 1964–67, 16mm)



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Film

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