

EDUCATOR GUIDE

Story Theme: Through the Lens
Subject: Kerry Laitala
Discipline: Visual Arts (Film)

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Avant-garde filmmaker Kerry Laitala talks about her process. Still image from SPARK story, 2005.

SECTION I - OVERVIEW

EPISODE THEME

Through the Lens

SUBJECT

Kerry Laitala

GRADE RANGES

K-12 & Post-secondary

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Visual Arts & Language Arts

OBJECTIVE

Understand the development of personal works of art and their relationship to broader social themes and ideas, abstract concepts, and the history of art

Develop visual, written, listening, speaking and artmaking skills through looking at, creating and talking about contemporary art films

Cultivate understanding of avant-garde and experimental film as a genre

STORY SYNOPSIS

SPARK watches experimental filmmaker Kerry Laitala's painstaking process as she works on her ongoing tribute to the film medium itself, [The Muse of Cinema](#).

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Group oral discussion, review and analysis, including peer review and aesthetic valuing as a group

Teacher-guided instruction, including demonstration and guidance

Hands-on individual projects in which students work independently

Hands-on group projects in which students assist and support one another

Critical reflection on personal expressions and how they are seen and received by others

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

To introduce students to experimental film as a vehicle of artistic expression

To provide context for the understanding of film as a visual arts medium

To inspire students to engage with experimental and art films

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

SPARK story about Kerry Laitala on DVD or VHS, and related equipment

Computer(s) with Internet access, navigation software, sound card, speakers, and access to a printer

Macintosh computer(s) with iMovie digital movie-making software

MATERIALS NEEDED

Access to libraries with up-to-date collections of periodicals, books, and research papers

Pencils, pens, and paper

Examples of experimental and/or avant-garde film (see Web and Bay Area Resources)

Discarded photographic negatives, pencils, pens, paint and other 2-D art materials

INTELLIGENCES ADDRESSED

Bodily-Kinesthetic - control of one's own body, control in handling objects

Interpersonal - awareness of others' feelings, emotions, goals, motivations

Intrapersonal - awareness of one's own feelings, emotions, goals, motivations

Spatial - ability to manipulate and create mental images in order to solve problems

Logical-Mathematical - ability to detect patterns, reason deductively, think logically



See more information on [Multiple Intelligences](http://www.kqed.org/spark/education) at www.kqed.org/spark/education

SECTION II – CONTENT/CONTEXT

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Kerry Laitala is an experimental filmmaker who is interested in how films are made – one frame at a time. Laitala hand-builds her films, manipulating the surface of the celluloid and exposing each frame individually to create works that stand at the edge of both film and art. SPARK follows Laitala’s painstaking work on her ongoing tribute to the film medium itself, The Muse of Cinema.



Film is a strip of celluloid. Film made and used today is usually manufactured on a cellulose acetate or ester base, which is also called safety

film because it not combustible. (Until the 1950s, celluloid was produced with nitrates, and was highly flammable.) Although it comes in varying lengths and speeds, all film is comprised of identical individual frames, just as a roll of photographic film is made up of individual photographs. Film has light-sensitized silver halides coated in an emulsion that forms images when exposed to light. The images are invisible to the human eye (latent) until the film is processed and the images become visible.

For the Muse of Cinema Series, Laitala produces “direct films,” exposing the film directly with a light source not using a movie camera. This method often physically alters the surface of film. The techniques Laitala uses include placing objects directly on unprocessed film stock and then exposing and developing it. Filmmakers using this method also paint, scratch, or otherwise manipulate processed film. The resulting images, though photographic, retain a handmade, unrefined quality that characterizes the direct film aesthetic.

As a practice, direct manipulation of film is a slow, laborious process because of the number of frames required to make a film of any substantial length. Film that appears “normal” is shot and played at 24 frames per second (fps) – that is, 24 individual frames are projected in one second. The perception of motion created by the individual frames can be changed by increasing and/or decreasing the fps. Images can be made to blur or to shake by increasing and/or decreasing the rate of frames as they move through the projector.

Two feet of film equals just over one second on screen when projected. Laitala intends for The Muse to be a series that is feature-length (60-90 minutes), requiring that she produce over 3,000 feet of film. The Muse series will be a combination of 35mm and 16mm films that address early cinema technology and use various frame-by-frame techniques. Right now the film is about 700 ft. long and is the first film in a series of three 35mm films for a hand crank projector. When Laitala finishes the first film, it will be about 1,000 ft. long, although her cranking speed usually ranges between 8 and 24 fps, so the length varies according to each individual performance. These will be screened with three 16mm films, so that she can rewind film reels and re-thread the films.

The Muse of Cinema is an ongoing project that began when Laitala found a box of early 20th century magic lantern slides at a flea market. Slides such as these were used to entertain audiences during technical difficulties, giving the projectionist a chance to solve a problem with the projector. Laitala transferred these slides onto 35mm motion picture film, which became the first footage for her project. The rest of the film is being shot on film intended for use in an X-ray camera, a kind of film that is not sensitive to red light called “orthochromatic.”

Working under red light in her apartment, Laitala places a variety of objects on the celluloid stock film, and then exposes the film with the help of a flashlight. She then processes the film using a hand-cranked processing tank. Laitala’s interest in the

tactile, hand-manipulated qualities of film extends to the way in which her films are screened. For The Muse of Cinema, Laitala purchased and restored a vintage 1928 Acme film projector, which is hand cranked, requiring the projectionist to move at just the right speed in order for the motion to be perceived as the filmmaker intended. Laitala studied film and photography at The Massachusetts College of Art and The San Francisco Art Institute. She has screened work internationally, and has won various awards including the Princess Grace Award. She also held residencies at the prestigious Akademie Schloss Solitude outside of Stuttgart, Germany in 1999 and 2001.



Avant-garde filmmaker Kerry Laitala checks out some film. Still image from SPARK story, 2005.

THE BIG PICTURE

Experimental film--sometimes called avant-garde or art film--is a term that applies to a wide variety of cinematic practices that in some way deviate from mainstream narrative cinema. It is impossible to find single characteristics that apply to all experimental films, but it is often true that experimental films dispense with coherent narrative structure, or else manipulate narrative structure in order to reveal the way it is constructed. Experimental films also generally try to reveal something about the possibilities of the medium usually obscured by the conventions of narrative film.

Experimental film is roughly 80 years old, its beginnings extending to the earliest animation and experiments with the technological possibilities of cinema. The first self-conscious art films, however, were produced by artists of the Surrealist movement, such as Luis Buñuel. Buñuel created images in his films that were often sexually suggestive, violent, or disturbing. Rather than creating the usual narrative

films, Buñuel sought to mimic a dream form, avoiding logical connections between various shots and scenes.

While it is difficult to name the first American avant-garde film, artists Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler produced a film called Manhattan in 1920. Other avant garde filmmakers from this time period include Lot in Sodom (1933) and The Fall of the House of Usher (1928) by Watson and Webber, and Enchanted City by Warren Newcomb (1922). In 1936, collage artist Joseph Cornell produced Rose Hobart, one of the first American experimental films to use exclusively found film material.

Throughout the 1940's Maya Deren made a tremendous impact with Meshes of the Afternoon (made with Alexander Hammid) and several other films. Deren was instrumental in bringing this kind of film work to venues and universities, and lecturing on this genre of filmmaking. Throughout the 1940's makers such as Sidney Peterson, James Broughton, Kenneth Anger, Harry Smith produced some of the most important films of the time, including Smith's complex "direct cinema" films such as "Early Abstractions" on which he painted and used batik.

Throughout the 1950's and 60's filmmakers such as Christopher MacLaine, Stan Brakhage, Bruce Connor, Ron Rice, Robert Nelson, Marie Menken, Larry Jordan, Gregory Markopoulos, Stan Vanderbeek, Robert Breer made innovations in the field and expanded the notions of avant-garde film. Brakhage, probably the most prolific filmmaker of the experimental genre, became known for lyrical and disorienting camera movements that created kaleidoscopic spectacles of pure color and movement. In his 1964 film Dog Star Man, Brakhage tells a mythic story through a hypnotic succession of images, colors and movement that together tell sort of visual allegory of the evolution of human consciousness.

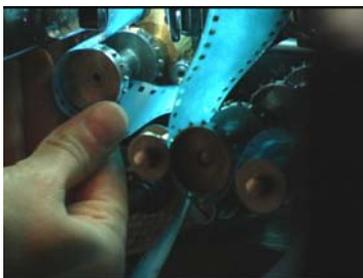
In the early 1960s, Brakhage's films became the backdrop for what came to be known as Structural film, which attempted by the simplest means to isolate those aspects of visual perception that are specific to movie watching. Andy Warhol's actionless or near-actionless early films accomplish this by making the spectator's expectant gaze and the duration of the film the subject of the film. In his 1964 film Empire, Warhol filmed the Empire State

Building for eight hours from nighttime until daybreak. The subject of the film is the moviegoer's attention and awareness of time, which changes as he or she adjusts to the extended viewing time. Another example of such filmmaking is Tony Conrad's Flicker (1966), a film made up entirely of alternating black and transparent frames. Flicker reduces film to its barest essentials, a shadow play of light and dark, stripped of narrative and of any representational imagery.

Where Structural film isolated the visual experience of cinema, film critic Gene Youngblood believes the realm to which these forms of film belong – an "Expanded Cinema" – is one that emphasizes film as a total environment into which the spectator becomes absorbed. Youngblood contends that the new widescreen and experimental technologies premiered for the first time at World's Fairs and international expositions in the mid and late 1960s. In fact, the Expanded Cinema is closest to today's multi-media and virtual reality environments, wherein the spectator is completely immersed into an illusory, though highly realistic world.

The 1960's and 1970's saw emerging work by makers such as: Paul Sharits, Gunvor Nelson, Warren Sonbert, Shirley Clarke, Hollace Frampton, Bruce Baillie, Jonas Mekas, Carolee Schneemann, Chick Strand, and Joyce Wieland, Ernie Gehr, George Kuchar, Will Hindle, Jordan Belson, George Landow, Ken Jacobs, Tony Conrad, Pat O'Neil, Storm De Hirsche, Susan Pitt.

Throughout the 1980's to the present, the number of filmmakers has grown internationally and the interest and cinematic explorations are continuing to expand. This partial listing mainly focuses on the work made during this time frame in the US.



Laitala runs her film through a projector. Still image from SPARK story, 2004.

RESOURCES – TEXTS

Curtis, David. Experimental Cinema: A Fifty Year Evolution. London, Universe Books, 1971.

Dixon, Wheeler Winston and Gwendolyn Audrey Foster. Experimental Cinema, The Film Reader. London: Routledge, 2002.

James, David E. Allegories of Cinema: American Film in the Sixties. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Metz, Christian. Film Language: A Semiotics of Cinema. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Rees, A. L. A History of Experimental Film and Video. London: British Film Institute, 1999.

Rush, Michael. Video Art. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2003.

Shaw, Jeffery and Peter Weibel, eds. Future Cinema: The Cinematic Imaginary after Film. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003.

Sitney, P. Adams. Film Culture Reader. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 2000.

Sitney, P. Adams. Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde in the 20th Century. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

RESOURCES – WEB SITES

Bright Lights, a San Francisco-based online film journal - <http://www.brightlightsfilm.com>

Canyon Cinema – A San Francisco resource for avant-garde film - <http://www.canyoncinema.com>

Film-Makers' Cooperative (The) - A New York Based resources for Experimental film - <http://www.film-makerscoop.com>

CyberCinema: An Introduction to Film, including avant garde cinema - <http://www.miracosta.cc.ca.us/home/gflore/F-avant.htm>

Film Arts Foundation, with information on how to make and distribute films - <http://www.filmarts.org>
Flicker - San Francisco-based Web site dedicated to

experimental and alternative cinema - <http://www.hi-beam.net/cgi-bin/flicker.pl>

Movies Unlimited – A source for purchasing films of all kinds - <http://www.moviesunlimited.com>

Other Cinema, a San Francisco based organization that screen and distributes experimental film - <http://www.othercinema.com>

Pacific Film Archive - <http://www.bampfa.berkeley.edu>

San Francisco Cinematéque - a showcase for experimental film and cinema - <http://www.sfcinematheque.org/>

San Francisco Film Society - <http://www.sffs.org>

Stark, Scott - <http://www.scottstark.com>

VIDEO RESOURCES

Bleu Shut, by Robert Nelson. City Limits Films [1970], US (33 min.) Color

Vertical Roll, by Joan Jonas [1972] US (21 min.) Color

L'age d'Or, by Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali. [1930] France (62 min.), Black & White; in French - no English subtitles.

The Seashell and the Clergyman, by Germaine Dulac, written by Antonin Artaud [1928] French, produced in England (58 min.) Black & White; Silent with musical score; title cards in French

Mr. Frenhofer and The Minotaur, written and directed by Sidney Peterson, produced by Workshop 20 [c1949] US (21 min.), Black & White

Un Chien Andalou, by Luis Buñuel, based on a scenario by Salvador Dali and Luis Buñuel [1929?] France (16 min.): Black & White; in French with English subtitles

Our Lady of the Sphere, by Larry Jordan [1969] U.S. (9 min.): Colour ; Triacetate print; Collage animation

The Blood of a Poet, written and directed by Jean Cocteau [1930] France (53 min.): Black & White; in French with English subtitles

Derek Jarman - A complete list of films by contemporary filmmaker Derek Jarman can be found at <http://jclarkmedia.com/jarman>

Empire, by Andy Warhol, [1964] US (8 hrs, 5 min.) Black & White; Silent

Dante's Quartet, by Stan Brakhage, [1987] US (7 min.) Color

Angel Beach, by Scott Stark, [2001] US (25 min.) Color; Silent

BAY AREA RESOURCES

Artist's Television Access

An organization providing equipment, education, and a screening venue for independent film and video to artists and the community in San Francisco. 992 Valencia Street

San Francisco, CA 94110

(415) 824-3890

<http://www.atasite.org>

Canyon Cinema

One of the best film resources in the US, including a vast quantity of experimental, avant-garde, and independent films for rent and sale.

145 Ninth Street, Suite 260

San Francisco, CA 94103

415-626-2255

<http://www.canyoncinema.com/rentsale.html>

The Pacific Film Archive

2575 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, CA

General Information (24-hour): (510) 642-0808

PFA Program Information (24-hour): (510) 642-1124

<http://www.bampfa.berkeley.edu>

San Francisco Art Institute

The SFAI's Walter and McBean Galleries and the

McBean Distinguished Lecture Series regularly

feature Conceptual Artists and topics and are open to the public. 800 Chestnut Street, (btwn Leavenworth &

Jones Sts.) San Francisco, CA 94133

415/771-7020

Email: sfaiinfo@sfai.edu

<http://www.sfai.edu/database/pubprog.htm>

SF Cinematheque
Showcase of experimental film and video
145 Ninth St., Suite 240
San Francisco, CA 94103
415/552.1990
<http://www.sfcinematheque.org/>

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
The SFMoMA has a large permanent collection as well as continuing visiting exhibitions featuring works of Conceptual Art.
151 Third Street (btwn Harrison & Mission Sts)
San Francisco, CA 94103
<http://www.sfmoma.org>

San Jose Museum of Art
The SJMoMA has a permanent collection as well as continuing visiting exhibitions featuring works of Conceptual Art.
110 South Market Street
San Jose, CA 95113
408/271-6840 - 24-hour Recorded Info – 408/294-2787
<http://www.sjmusart.org>

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
An acclaimed arts center and theater that presents exciting local artists in context with their national and international peers; and provide the Bay Area with an eclectic and wide-ranging slate of exciting exhibitions, performances, films and educational programs.
701 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103
415/978.ARTS (2787)
<http://www.ybca.org>

SECTION III – VOCABULARY

VOCABULARY & CONCEPTS IN THE SPARK STORY

Acme projector

The early Acme motion picture projector was widely used in the 1920s and patented in 1918. The flame lighting Acme projector created the flickering effect that can be seen in Kerry Laitala's work. The flicker of the first film in the *Muse* series is caused by the shutter which is in front of the lens in the projector. The original light source was a large light bulb that has been replaced with a modern bulb and fixture from a new projector.

Alchemy

A miraculous power or transformation; a term derived from the chemistry of the middle ages which combined science, philosophy and magic. The term alchemy is used in the story as a philosophic metaphor of changing base, common materials into something precious and rare.

Celluloid

A thermoplastic composed essentially of cellulose acetate or ester (polyester) base.

Complexity

Difficulty or complication

Direct cinema

In contemporary experimental cinema the term is used to refer to hand-made film. As illustrated in the Kerry Laitala story, this involves working directly on the film, scratching, painting, and marking the celluloid directly and subsequently hand-processing the film without the use of a camera. Sometimes called D.I.Y. or "Do-It-Yourself" these techniques are also used on "found footage" - footage that has already exposed and processed. Found footage can be *found* at flea markets, archives and Ebay, as well as schools and other institutions who decide to discard old films.

Enamored

Charmed by, taken with, fascinated by

Experimental film

Some avant-garde or alternative films are called "experimental," a term popularized by David Curtis in his text *Experimental Cinema* (1971). Experimental film is an approach to filmmaking that embodies a very different aesthetic from conventional or commercial cinema. Experimental filmmakers are interested in film as a visual art form; they are concerned with the properties of film and the structure and surface of film, rather than the representation of "reality" and/or narrative. Filmmaker Germaine Dulac wrote in 1928 that avant-garde film was "cinema that is not enslaved by narrative and theater." But as Stan Brakhage and others have confirmed, experimental film is not just a reaction of narrative cinema. The intention is to position the viewer in a different way i.e. at a more critical and self-conscious distance.

Experimental films are to be distinguished from avant-garde narrative cinema, and are generally exhibited in "alternative" venues, often in university and art institute settings.

<http://www.hi-beam.net/fl-defs.html>

Genre

Categories and classification systems that identify recurring, recognizable patterns, subject matter and techniques or conventions; in film, generic classification relates to one or more of the following criteria: setting, content and subject matter, theme, period, plot, narrative structure, style, situations, recurring icons, characterization and often stars. Some of the most common film genres are comedy, action, thriller, drama, horror, science fiction, epic, documentary, crime, musical and Westerns. Many films straddle several film genres, such as a romantic comedy. Experimental film can be seen as a genre within which there are wide-ranging approaches, but in broad terms the conventions work as explained above under *Experimental film*.

Laborious

Arduous, difficult, hard work

Labor-intensive

Associated with blue collar and manual work
Physical work

Latent image

An image captured on film but not yet made visible
by chemically developing the film

Mainstream

Conventional, established in terms of institutions,
ideas or practices

Meditative

Thoughtful, reflective; given to contemplation

Methodical

Systematic, ordered, logical; clearly organized in a
sequence

Muse

From the Greek myth, a muse is one of the nine
goddesses of the arts and sciences; something, a
person usually, but also a place or a thing that
inspires an artist in their work

Obsolete

Out-of date, no longer used, old-fashioned

Organic

Fundamental part of a living organism: part of the
structure

Photogram

The process of laying an object directly on paper or
light sensitive material and exposing it to light

Physicality

Intensely physical orientation; a predominance of
the physical at the expense of the mental, spiritual,
or social sensory perceptions

Self-empowerment

To make oneself strong and confident; to be in
control of oneself

Sensitized

To be made responsive to or sensitive to (e.g. camera
film sensitized to light)

Tactility

Being tactile, touchable, tangible

SECTION IV – ENGAGING WITH SPARK

STANDARDS-BASED ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION POINTS

Exploring Experimental Film

Begin by asking students to explain what they understand by “mainstream” or “commercial” cinema. Try to draw out the following elements as fundamental to mainstream production.

- *Commercial film is produced for mass entertainment*
- *The film industry is motivated by profit*
- *Commercial films are narrative in structure - they tell a story*
- *“Stars” are central to the enterprise to attract audiences*

Play the Kerry Laitala story on SPARK to introduce experimental film practice to students. To offer a sense of the range of approaches within this field, screen another example or two of other experimental or avant-garde films, such as those by Derek Jarman, Andy Warhol, Luis Buñuel, Jean Cocteau, Jean Luc Goddard or Peter Greenaway, which are available for rent or purchase (see **Resources**). Examples of works by experimental Super 8 filmmakers such as Stan Brakhage, Scott Stark or Kenneth Anger visit <http://www.hi-beam.net/hi-beam/middle6feet.html> - although an 8mm or 16mm projector would need to be rented to screen many of these movies. Canyon Cinema in San Francisco rents the films and the necessary equipment.

Invite students to respond to the following questions:

- *Comment on the look of these examples of experimental film – the grain, texture, clarity of image, visual effects, approach to representation and realism etc.*
- *Comment on the subject matter or content*
- *How accessible is the material?*
- *Comment on the director’s personal vision or intention in making this film*

It may be helpful to compare experimental film to other abstract art forms. For example, Modernist art is concerned with the material process of painting, the paint, brush strokes and surface of the canvas, rather than narrative or figurative representation. Similarly experimental filmmakers, although as wide-ranging as abstract artists in terms of personal vision, are interested in the properties of film, the surface of the film with its own history, scratches, dust particles, chemical traces and light sensitivity etc. They are interested in the rhythm and structure of successive frames that create this illusion we call “cinema,” rather than the objective of mainstream cinema, which is to offer a window on a “real” world through an invisible medium.

Encourage students to suspend judgment in their responses to different approaches to film as a visual art, and invite them to reflect upon the ways in which the work is unique, challenging or evocative.

RELATED STANDARDS VISUAL ARTS

Grade 4

1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

1.5 Describe and analyze the elements of art (color, shape/form, line, texture, space and value), emphasizing form, as they are used in works of art and found in the environment.

Grade 6

2.0 CREATIVE EXPRESSION

2.1 Use various observational drawing skills to depict a variety of subject matter

Grade 8

1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

1.1 Use artistic terms when describing the intent and content of works of art.

4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

4.2 Develop a theory about the artist’s intent in a series of works of art, using reasoned statements to support personal opinions.

4.3 Construct an interpretation of a work of art based on the form and content of the work.

Grade 9-12 Proficient

1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

1.3 Research and analyze the work of an artist and write about the artist’s distinctive style and its contribution to the meaning of the work.

1.5 Analyze the material used by a given artist and describe how its use influences the meaning of the work.

To broaden students' appreciation of experimental film and its history, ask them to research ONE of the following topics and write a 1,000-word essay.

- Trace the history of experimental film in the US in the 20th century
- Describe the work and personal vision of Kerry Laitala OR another contemporary, experimental filmmaker
- Discuss the European avant-garde in film in the 1960s & 1970s
- Describe the characteristics, differences and similarities of avant-garde film compared to mainstream film, using specific films as examples

The last topic may interest 11th or 12th grade students who would enjoy researching the European film world. "Avant-garde" was a French term popular in Europe in the 1960s and 70s for a group of people, usually in the arts, who were in advance of their time, leading the way in creative ideas and innovative cultural practices. In film, this movement embraced a wide range of aesthetic and ideological approaches, many of which positioned film as a radical and counter culture practice. Experimental film may be seen as a sub-genre of this avant-garde movement or what is termed "alternative" or "underground" cinema in the USA today.

Ensure students have an opportunity to share their findings by reading extracts from their essays or presenting an overview or summary of their research for discussion.

**RELATED STANDARDS
VISUAL ARTS**

Grades 9-12 Advanced

2.0 CREATIVE EXPRESSION

2.1 Create original works of art of increasing complexity and skill in a variety of media that reflect their feelings and points of view.

3.0 HISTORICAL & CULTURAL CONTEXTS

3.2 Identify contemporary artists worldwide who have achieved regional, national, or international recognition and discuss ways in which their work reflects, plays a role in, and influences present-day culture.

4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

4.1 Describe the relationship involving the art maker (artist), the making (process), the artwork (product), and the viewer.

4.2 Identify the intentions of artists creating contemporary works of art and explore the implications of those intentions.

SPARKLER:

*Suggest that students try to attend the San Francisco Art Institute's Regular 8mm Film Festival, co-presented by the SF Cinematheque, to get a flavor of the enthusiasm and aesthetic concerns of Super 8 filmmakers.

Hands-On Activities

Kerry Laitala is interested in the craft of filmmaking, hand crafting images on film frame-by-frame and hand-processing her film. As she explains, she enjoys the "tactility" of film.

a) Invite students to draw or paint an image on a chosen theme, which can be freely interpreted. Alternatively they could photocopy an image from a newspaper, magazine or journal or download and print an image from their computer. Ask students to "enhance" their image with watercolors, pens, pencils, pastels, charcoal or crayons, allowing them sufficient time to explore the effect. Move on to show the group how to make a slide of their image using a 35 mm camera – visit the Web site *How to Make Slides of Your Painting* for detailed guidance on this process

http://painting.about.com/cs/careerdevelopment/ht/Howto_Slides.htattendm

Using a slide projector organize a slide show to showcase the work and invite students to comment on their artwork.

b) If students produce a number (8 or more) drawings or images around the theme, consider scanning the images to digitize them. Import the scanned images into a computer program such as iMOVIE (Mac specific application) and sequence them into a timeline. Suggest that students record a voiceover or soundtrack to go with their image sequence, which explains their vision, feelings or thoughts about the images. This can be a poem, descriptive, reflective or narrative piece.

Celebrate this work with a group screening. (Since artwork can be very personal or exposing, it may be appropriate to respect individual reticence about sharing a piece.)

c) Drawing directly on Laitala's work, ask students to bring in negatives from photographs that are no

longer going to be used to make prints. Play the segments of the SPARK story on Kerry Laitala that focus on her handcrafting process, and then invite students to paint, scratch, outline, scrape, write or draw on the negatives. If there is time ask students to work on the negatives as a strip.

Place the negatives on a light box or shine a light through the negatives so that students can view the effect and talk about what they see.

NOTE: It is possible to use old film stock for this exercise but the effects can be disappointing and students would need to work on both sides of the negatives to produce a clear effect.

SPARKLERS:

*Suggest that students construct a pinhole camera. They can be made out of any light tight containers, such as shoeboxes, oatmeal boxes, film cans, or specially made containers. For clear instructions visit the following Web Sites

<http://www.astro.wisc.edu/~mukluk/pin.html>

<http://www.fi.edu/pieces/myers/shoebox.html>

*If students have access to a darkroom with an enlarger, introduce them to the photogram - a form of photographic silhouette art. Kerry Laitala demonstrates producing a photogram in the SPARK story, although she uses her own process. Visit the following site for guidance.

<http://www.fi.edu/pieces/myers/photogram.html>



Man Ray
(Emmanuel
Rudnitzky).
Rayograph. 1922.
Gelatin silver print.
Museum of Modern
Art. Gift of James
Thrall Soby. © 2002
Man Ray Ray
Trust/Artists Rights
Society (ARS), New
York/VG Bild-
Kunst, Bonn

A photogram is a picture made on photographic paper without the aid of a camera. Many artists make photograms, including Man Ray (below). To make the one below, Ray exposed the paper light multiple times, each time placing different objects on the paper, which act like stencils. In the case of the image below, Ray included hands, a couple kissing,

and darkroom trays. With each exposure, the paper darkens where it was not masked by an object.

DIGITAL SPARKLER:

*If students enjoy the iMovie activity, encourage them to find out about digital stories at <http://dsi.kqed.org> - digital technology is used to create stories "by weaving images, music, narrative and voice together."

Researching the Local Scene

Invite students to work in small groups to explore experimental film in the Bay Area. Each group should focus on one aspect of this research project.

- Who are the Bay Area experimental filmmakers? Describe their work
- Where do they work?
- Where do they exhibit?
- What other experimental film is exhibited?
- What organizations in the Bay Area support this work?

Extend the activity to include not only film, but also experimental art installations using film or video.

Students should include the following exhibition venues in their research Artists' Television Access, Werepad Movie Lounge, Pacific Film Archive, Yerba Buena Center, and SF Cinematheque (see **Resource** section).

For art installations using film, and for screenings of art films, visit San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art, or Yerba Buena Center

Both the *Bay Guardian* and *Datebook* in the Sunday San Francisco Chronicle list current shows.

Invite each group to write up their research and then compile a class listing of experimental filmmakers, their work, exhibition spaces, what is on show, support organizations, as well as venues that exhibit experimental art installations using film and video.

Using this information suggest that students attend a screening of an experimental film at one of the venues they have identified or view an art exhibit that incorporates film or video. Encourage them to

collect publications about the work that is available at the venue.

Organize a discussion group for students to talk about what they have seen and their feelings about the work. What have they learned? What have they enjoyed?

**RELATED STANDARDS
LANGUAGE ARTS**

Grades 9 & 10

1.0 LISTENING AND SPEAKING STRATEGIES

1.1 Formulate judgments about the ideas under discussion and support those judgments with convincing evidence.

1.0 WRITING STRATEGIES

1.1 Establish a controlling impression or coherent thesis that conveys a clear and distinctive perspective on the subject and maintain a consistent tone and focus throughout the piece of writing.

1.3 Use clear research questions and suitable research methods (e.g., library, electronic media, personal interview) to elicit and present evidence from primary and secondary sources.

For more information about SPARK and its educational content, including the Visual & Performing Arts Standards, visit the Web site at <http://www.kqed.org/spark/education>.



For more information about the California Visual & Performing Arts Standards, visit the CA Dept. of Education at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/index.asp>.

**RELATED STANDARDS
VISUAL ARTS**

Grades 9-12 Proficient

1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

1.3 Research and analyze the work of an artist and write about the artist's distinctive style and its contribution to the meaning of the work.

1.5 Analyze the material used by a given artist and describe how its use influences the meaning of the work.

3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

3.2 Identify and describe the role and influence of new technologies on contemporary works of art.

Grades 9-12 Advanced

2.0 CREATIVE EXPRESSION

2.1 Create original works of art of increasing complexity and skill in a variety of media that reflect their feelings and points of view.

2.3 Assemble and display objects or works of art as part of a public exhibition.

2.5 Use innovative visual metaphors in creating works of art.

4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

4.1 Describe the relationship involving the art maker (artist), the making (process), the artwork (product), and the viewer.

4.2 Identify the intentions of artists creating contemporary works of art and explore the implications of those intentions.

5.0 CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, APPLICATIONS

5.1 Speculate on how advances in technology might change the definition and function of the visual arts.