

within a relatively dark room (an unreal darkness: the exposure is set to the light of the window, this is not simply a space as it was). After two seconds, she cuts in to a close view of the swaying tree, its flowers turning the frame into an all-over composition in shades of white. Two seconds of black, and then the same tree framed closer still. A narrative is already proposed: we will isolate a single decisive flower, perhaps even a single petal, which will stand as a sign of perfect equanimity. But the possibility of this narrative is discarded just as quickly when the subsequent shot returns us to the initial composition, a progression arriving back to its root.

An examination of any other ten-second stretch from García's work would, I suspect, yield similar results. Confronted with humble observation, we are inclined to justify it, an inclination which goes on being frustrated—there is no more reason to it than there is to breathing. I find this understanding of the nature of producing moving images to be naïve, in the most modern and productive sense: recording the world is just what we do. It doesn't hurt that García has a remarkable eye: she's particularly deft at working in the subtle gradations of the low end of the visible spectrum. While this provides durable pleasures, what goes on drawing me back to her films is the feeling that they are at once deeply impersonal—the way anyone might hope to see the world, attention in a state of leisure that's grown hard to come by—while at the same time they insist on a personal presence which is purely generous, one that delights in sharing

what has delighted it: "But never Stranger justified/The Curiosity/Like Mine."

Jorge Suárez-Quifones Rivas is, like García, a deeply curious artist. Though he has ventured into the realms of 16mm and expanded performance—he presented the 16mm triple projection *Healing Ray* at MOMI—his finest work is also in-camera Super 8, though his focus, and in turn his rhythm, is comparatively severe. *Meihôdô* (2020), shot on location at a kind of martial-arts monastery near Japan's Mount Aso, strives to match its cutting to the action of its subjects: a pair of men train beneath a waterfall, punching first with the right hand, then with the left, as the images alternates precisely between the two, drawing out the graphic harmony implicit within this ritual practice.

Twelve Seasonal Films (2020), a cycle consisting of one cartridge per month designed to be viewable as both a whole and individual parts (Anthology showed three films), expands the range of both form and content dramatically. *Laura*, the August cartridge, presents a geography of the body, studying the tattooed limbs and surfaces of its protagonist alongside the ritual carving of a gorgeous watermelon. *Chubusangaku*, from February, is a bathhouse portrait in burnished golds and ochres shot through the diffuse light of snow-frosted windows and steaming water; though its use of the male nude is an uncommon pleasure in contemporary cinema, the real savour is in its synaesthetic blending of hot and cold, the degree



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to which it confirms the haystack lesson that sufficient attention to light alone can express an atmosphere in its absolute fullness.

On that convergence of hot and cold, we can turn to Valentina Alvarado Matos, whose 16mm double projection *Propiedades de una esfera paralela* (2020), made while in residency at Toronto's LIFT, early on sees the artist's hand rubbing snow onto a sheet of paper printed with the question, "¿Como incendiar la nieve?"—that is, "how to set the snow aflame?" An answer to this riddle is finally offered, though the route to it forks regularly into paths leading to unexpected forms for picturing a landscape (the dominant motif again involves the artist's hand, which paints on clear panels placed between the camera and its subject, collapsing two forms of representation into a third).

Alvarado Matos, the only of these four artists whose work was entirely new to me, also presented *fuegofocfire* (2020-23), a translation for voice and four 16mm projectors of the installation *Y si vera el fuego*, both of which were made in collaboration with Carlos Vásquez Méndez. Alvarado Matos works at a stately pace, combining images in a montage guided by conceptual and visual likeness. The initial image, on the second from the left of four horizontally aligned frames, shows a low orange sun (one wonders straight away if it's rising or setting). It holds the screen alone for a dozen or so seconds, and is then joined, in the frame immediately to its right, by a crackling campfire. The relationship of one to the other does not depend on language: we might reasonably expect any viewer to understand that they are seeing two instances of the same energy. With this cyclical structure in place, the film steadily expands its grammar, allowing in a range of causal relations across frames—the clouds shift in one, the light falling on trees shifts in another.

While language piles up into the voluptuous nonsense of pure sound during the imageless second movement of *fuegofocfire*, it serves a more practical purpose in the films of Bruno Delgado Ramo,

whose baroque, layered compositions depend on rigorous pre-planning. (*Lumière* has helpfully made scans of these notebooks available as part of the dossier published in conjunction with the series.) The 16mm *Unabridged Maneuver* (2022), also made as part of the LIFT residency, pushes these complications to levels that reasonably stand comparison with the early work of Robert Beavers, from whom Delgado Ramo has borrowed the gesture of smoothing cuts into fine arabesques by twisting the lens turret, allowing the image to wash in and out darkness. The echo of waves here is significant: the film alternates between views of Toronto's ports, inclusive of the commercial vessels trafficking them, and the artist at work in his studio. Heavy use is made of filters, frames, and mirrors, all in the service of forcing the frame to operate at maximum efficiency.

I'll conclude with an image from Delgado Ramo's Super 8 *Spinoza/Ongodist* (2021), one of the oddest films made by anyone in recent memory. Near its conclusion a pair of hands appears holding an antique book, turning it around, finally opening it for examination. The figure, whose glasses and hair occasionally creep into the upper right corner of the frame, then takes up the scissors waiting on the table and begins to deconstruct the book, carefully snipping its binding and removing clusters of pages. A cut into a detail confirms what we might already know: this is the *Ethics*, Spinoza's geometrically precise accounting of the nature of being. Delgado Ramo leaves us with the image of the book broken into chunks, which are stacked in perpendicular alternation one atop the other. The page he shows us in close-up, the seventh lemma of the book's second part, reads, "The individual thus composed will, moreover, retain its nature whether it move as a whole or be at rest, or whether it move in this or that direction, provided that each part retain its own motion and communicate it as before to the rest."

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