



The Renaissance Society

at The University of Chicago

Michel Auder

Retrospective: 1969-2001

March 10 – April 21, 2002

Opening reception: Sunday, March 10, 2002, 4:00 - 7:00 pm
featuring a talk with the artist at 5:00pm

[this side]
Keeping Busy
1969
Film still (Louis Waldon)

[that side]
Vanuatu Chronicles
1998
Video still (Auder with parakeet)

The Renaissance Society

Museum Hours:
Tuesday - Friday: 10 am - 5 pm
Saturday, Sunday: 12 - 5 pm
Closed Mondays

Non-Profit Organization
US Postage
PAID
Chicago, IL
Permit No. 2336

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The Renaissance Society
at The University of Chicago
5811 South Ellis Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60637
Phone: (773)702-8670
<http://www.renaissancesociety.org>

Straight to video

Video recording was invented in 1956 as an intermediary in live broadcast television. It was a cheap means to pre-record and edit regularly scheduled programs taped from live events. Roughly twelve years later, conceptual and minimalist artists would take an interest in the medium, making "artist videos" at a time when there was no such thing as a video artist. Michel Auder is an exception. He chose video as his primary means of expression well before video was accepted as a practice in its own right.

Born in Soisson, France, in 1945, Auder began making films at the age of 18. As an aspiring young filmmaker, he fell under the influence of the French New Wave and experimental cinema, most notably Jean-Luc Godard and Andy Warhol. In 1969, Auder met and eventually married Viva, one of Warhol's principal talents. A year later, they moved to New York where Auder has since resided. That same year, he purchased a Sony Portapak, one of the first commercially available video cameras. Since 1970 he has persistently documented the people, places and events that are his life.

Video allowed Auder to translate Warhol's talent for making the banal glamorous and the glamorous banal

into a diary practice which Auder himself did not consider fine art. His earliest works are simply called *Chronicles*. They have no narrative structure, but are lengthy excerpts culled (not edited) from hundreds of hours of raw footage. This material formed the basis for video travel logs and endearing portraits of friends from a cultural milieu including the likes of Hannah Wilke, Alice Neel, Annie Sprinkle, Cindy Sherman, Louis Waldon, and Larry Rivers, to name a few.

The label "video artist" was applied retroactively when Auder began exhibiting his work in 1980. At that time he produced a series of discreet works, some of which were from scripted biographical material and others that were video collages appropriating material from television. As technology improved and access to editing facilities increased, Auder's skills as an auteur became more apparent. He is a consummate voyeur, one who literally reads scenes of intimacy, exchange and daily life as verses of poetry unto themselves. In addition to continuous screenings of twenty works from throughout the course of his career, the exhibition will feature *Five Ring Circus* (1997), a work screened on five adjacent video monitors. It is

composed of footage taken from the artist's life poignantly interspersed with footage taken from television.

Auder's compatriot Guy DeBord stated that cinema could have been any number of things, "historical examination, theory, essay, memories." Ultimately Auder's work is all of these which explains why he accepts the title of video artist somewhat begrudgingly. His work functions as memory three times over—as personal document, as a portrait of a particular cultural milieu, and as a history of the video medium from reel-to-reel to Mini-DV. This exhibition does not survey a life's work, it surveys a life that went straight to video.

Related Events

**Opening Reception
and Talk with the Artist
Sunday, March 10
4:00 to 7:00 pm**

The talk will begin at 5:00pm and take place in Cobb Hall Room 307, directly below the gallery. FREE.

**Video Screenings
Tuesday, March 19, 7:00 pm
Wednesday, March 20 7:00 pm**

Curated by Jennifer Reeder, these two evenings will feature a range of notable talents including Kirsten Stoltmann, Joe Gibbons, Emily Vey Duke and Cooper Battersby, Miranda July, Steve Reinke, Paul Chan, Donigan Cumming, Les Leveque, Alfred Guzzetti, Jenn Robbins, Leah Gilliam, Van McElwee, Patrick Wright and Rebecca Dolan, Kristen Van Deventer, Ben Rubin, Paul Simpson, and Bjorn and Ronald Melhuis.

These events are free and will take place in Cobb Hall Room 307 (Directly below the gallery.)

**Concert
Wednesday April 17, 7:00 pm
Harry Sparnaay, bass clarinetist**

With over a hundred solo works written for him, Sparnaay has been credited with extending the bass clarinet's technique and repertoire. He has played solo at festivals throughout the world; has been a featured performer with many major orchestras and ensembles including the ASKO Ensemble, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra; and has appeared with leading conductors including Luciano Berio, Peter Eötvös, Diego Masson, and David Stock. The evening's bill features compositions by Larry Moss, Joji Yuasa, Claudio Ambrosini, Riccardo Piacentini, Maki Ishii, Roderik de Man and Wayne Siegel. This event is free and will take place in the gallery.

This exhibition has been made possible by Étant Donnés, The French-American Endowment for Contemporary Art, and France Chicago Center. Additional support has been received from the Chicago Community Trust; the CityArts Program of The Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, a municipal agency; the Danielson Foundation; the Dorothy and Gaylord Donnelley Foundation; the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; The Lanman Foundation, The LLWW Foundation; The Peter Norton Family Foundation; The Pritzker Foundation; Regents Park by The Clinton Companies; The Sara Lee Foundation; The Siragusa Foundation; WPWR-TV Channel 50 Foundation and our membership. Indirect support has been received from The Institute of Museum and Library Services, a federal agency offering general operating support to the nation's museums.

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