

The Anchorage

(Anders Edström, C.W. Winter, 2009, 35mm, 87')

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Conversation with Anders Edström and C.W. Winter

TERRASSEN

DEN DANSKE FILMSKOLE

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Rock My Religion

(Dan Graham, 1984, video to DCP, 55')

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Looking for Mushrooms

(Bruce Conner, 1959-67/1996, 35mm, 14')

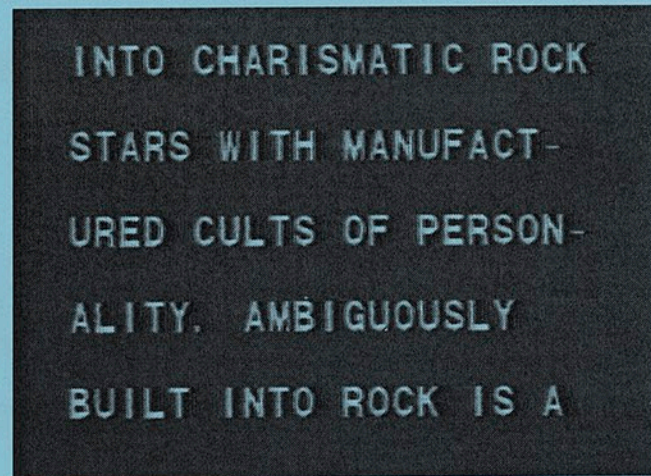


The Anchorage

(Anders Edström, C.W. Winter, 2009, 35mm, 87')

Two things at once. A trembling openness and a scope of intention moving in closer. Letting the material waft in the wind and taking hold of it. *The Anchorage* sustains one's gaze. On a woman, a forest island, the trails she knows so well, lake swimming, the rhythms and minor variations of the everyday. *The Anchorage* lets go of one's gaze; lets it wander to the back of the image, to the making of the image; lets one see the ethos behind it – the interest in recording sounds, in mapping a territory (impossible cartography), registering movements, working with familiar spaces, making them strange, repeating actions, regaining familiarity, producing ripples. A film practice of discovering, accumulating, and forgetting it all again. Reaching for something fundamental and uncomplicated, nothing original or creative. A cinema with an aura of expectancy. Blocks of images and sounds, leaning up against each other, in continuation and disjunction, turning the knobs. *The Anchorage* is a fiction made on trust. Trust in work, trust in working at it. Trust in not knowing it all, and in external conditions. Trust in the landscape; it will reveal some of its secrets if one works patiently and with discipline. Trust in the landscape; it will keep other secrets hidden, will reject the camera a bit, remain uncapturable, autonomous. In *The Anchorage*, it's all there, a fiction and the act of making fiction, hiding in plain sight. It begins with darkness. Not a black space, but a darkened image, the darkness of a thick forest. Darkness, some light. Then early morning, light, some darkness.

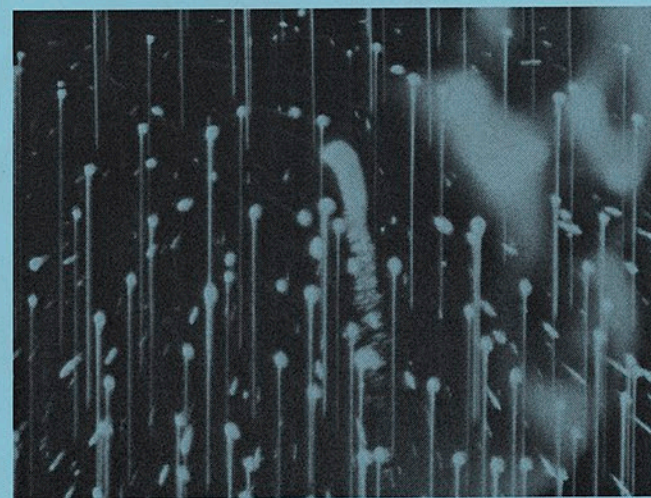
In 2021, Edström and Winter were Artists in Focus at the Courtisane Film Festival in Ghent. On this occasion, they presented a strand of audiovisual works by other artists to contextualize their work. Inspired by this, Terrassen invited Edström and Winter to do a similar, smaller carte blanche. The following texts are written by C.W. Winter and first appeared in the Courtisane '21 catalog >



Rock My Religion

(Dan Graham, 1984, video to DCP, 55')

Cinema without talking about cinema. A non-cinephilia. From an artist who's used music to inspire everything from video to theater to essays to glass pavilions. Patti Smith, Jerry Lee Lewis, Eddie Cochran, etc. And the Shakers. A coming together of voice-over, singing and shouting, jarring sounds, and overlaid texts that propose a genealogy of rock music and an ambitious, needn't-be-quite-so thesis about the origins of North America's popular culture. Largely due to its ardent embrace of aggressive music, lo-fi aesthetics, political interest, and free-wheeling historiography, the video has become a landmark work of artists' moving image. But it has remained, possibly for the same reasons, one of Graham's least written about works —underappreciated and possibly misunderstood by the critics who otherwise celebrate him.



Looking for Mushrooms

(Bruce Conner, 1959-67/1996, 35mm, 14')

A mulligan film. A re-do of Conner's first color movie. From footage shot while living in Mexico in 1961-62. As well as some earlier shots of him and his wife, Jean, in San Francisco. Before the hippies. A psychedelic travelogue of rural Mexican nature, towns, and religious iconography. A document of a search for psilocybin mushrooms. Occasionally with Timothy Leary. Gone is The Beatles' "Tomorrow Never Knows" that we heard in the original version. In this re-do, each frame is repeated 5 times. And Terry Riley takes over the score assignment providing "Poppy Nogood and the Phantom Band".

At the beginning, we didn't want our reach to exceed our grasp. We thought we'd keep things contained. Just images and sound. So we spent much of one summer at Anders' family's house in the Stockholm Archipelago. For the sake of scope, we set out to make a film about mosses and lichens. Some sort of austere psychedelic movie we thought. Some weeks into filming, Anders' mother, Ulla, came out to join us. Over dinner one night she told a story of a time, many years prior, when, during moose hunting season, an unfamiliar hunter arrived by boat and set up camp. She told of the disquieting experience of realizing that, on multiple nights, the hunter was walking out around the periphery of the largely glass-walled cabin, just at the edge of the tree line. And I realized that this bit of information, this fragment of a family folk story, was enough material from which we could make a whole fiction film. It took some time to figure out how, but three years later, in 2006, we returned and shot our first feature, *THE ANCHORAGE*. And from there forward our interest has been fiction.

Our films, among other things, are films about their own making. To the degree that it's possible, a stripping away of motivated reasoning. A departure from the fiction mode of the overly-determined or the pre-ordained. A departure from the capital-driven model of the dominant film culture, with its elaborate and costly apparatuses resulting in eyes ever-nervously fixed on the ledgers. With a minimal kit and a crew of four, we can work cheaply and with greater agility. With scenes written or outlined on set, maybe the morning of, or maybe the day before. A topological re-working of the real into the fictional.

An adaptive landscape is something that is gone through over time. A set of evolutions marked by peaks of contingencies. And the way that we work is very much based on embracing contingency. This shouldn't be confused with chance or improvisation. What we're doing finds more sympathy maybe with someone like Nathalie Sarraute and her interest in tropisms, moves made due to external forces.

Contingency is a set of befallings. Contingere. Events that impose themselves. Like black swan events or other befallings at smaller scale. In the case of this film: deaths, storms, snake bites, etc. The types of events that would disrupt or derail the expensive productions with all their built-in costs and financial leveraging. Perhaps our only leveraged move is taking an advance on common sense. Our approach is more anti-fragile. More to do with tinkering. Of defeasible ideas that can be confirmed or disconfirmed by our engagement with a place. Something like Louis Agassiz's spirit of learning by getting the earth between one's fingers. With a bit of Dewey's art as experience, or, since you mentioned indeterminability, maybe something like Keats' notion of giving oneself over to negative capability. "Not everything can be resolved."

It's an adaptive landscape that extends into the post-production as well. Of peaks of work. Just work.

^ Excerpts from "Abundance and repetition", an interview with Anders Edström & C.W. Winter by Martin Grennberger und Philip Widmann (Cargo-film, 2020).

C.W. Winter (US) is currently a Research Fellow at the University of Oxford and a Visiting Tutor at the Royal College of Art. His writing has appeared in Cinema Scope, Moving Image Source, Purple, and Too Much.

Anders Edström (SE) is a photographer. His work has been exhibited at such venues as the Centre Pompidou, and the MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt. His work appears in Self Service, AnOther, Dazed & Confused, among others. He has released six books including Shiotani (AKPE, 2021).

Together, they have made two shorts, *Green Light/White Shirt* and *The Untangler* (2001), a medium length, *One Plus One 2* (2002), and two feature films, *The Anchorage* and *The Works and Days* (of Tayoko Shiojiri in the Shiotani Basin) (2020). The latter is a monumental eight-hour film about work and non-work, landscapes, heterogenous fictions, sounds, and image-making. *The Works and Days* was shown at CAFx '21 in collaboration with Terrassen.

Terrassen is a roving cinema in Copenhagen that engages with the social life of film. All screenings are free and everyone is welcome.

THANK YOU

Anders Edström + C.W. Winter + Martin Grennberger + Philip Widmann + Stoffel Debuysere (Courtisane) + Det Danske Filminstitut + Den Danske Filmskole + General Asst. + Statens Kunstfond

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