

To Be Here: The Films of Ute Aurand

21. -22. February 2014 curated by George Clarke

The playful and poignant films of German filmmaker Ute Aurand, a key figure in Berlin's experimental film scene since the 1980s, emerge from her intimate relationship with people and places

Drawing on traditions of the diary film, feminism and artisanal practices, her handcrafted 16mm films are filled with joy at the small details of life – from observations of landscapes to friends filmed over many years. Her exuberant films reflect on memory as much as they celebrate the here and now. These screenings presented by the artist will highlight the range and breadth of Aurand's filmmaking.

Curated by George Clark, Assistant Curator Film, Tate Modern

21. February 2014

[Ute Aurand 1: to be here](#)

Ute Aurand has established herself since the 1980s as a key filmmaker in the personal or diary tradition of Margaret Tait, Jonas Mekas and Marie Menken, creating intimate and responsive films that capture fleeting moments, glimpses and snippets of life around her. This opening screening features a selection of recently acclaimed films combining poetic portraits and studies of place. As Ute Aurand has stated 'filming portraits allows me to emphasize private gestures and moments beyond narration and documentation. Sometimes I collect footage for years before deciding to edit a portrait, [like] *Susan* or *Hanging Upside Down in the Branches*, then again a portrait like *Lisbeth* was filmed only on two occasions and edited shortly afterwards.' Together with these is *Zu Hause* a self-portrait and her ambitious work *To Be Here* 2013 a free-wheeling exploration of North America, drawing on footage and experiences from New England with the all female Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts to New York and the Hopi reservation in Arizona.

Susan + Lisbeth

Ute Aurand, Germany 2012, 16mm, colour/black & white, sound, 7 min

Hanging Upside Down in the Branches / Kopfüber im Geäst

Ute Aurand, Germany 2009, 16mm, colour/black & white, silent, 15 min

To Be Here

Ute Aurand, Germany/USA, 2013, 16mm, colour/black & white, sound, 38 min

At Home / Zu Hause

Ute Aurand, Germany 1998, 16mm, colour, 2.50 min

<https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/be-here-films-ute-aurand/ute-aurand-1-be-here>

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Ute Aurand 2: Berlin Babylon

These films celebrate the alternative film culture in Berlin that emerged in the 1980s. Ranging from the joyous *OH! The Four Seasons* (1988) featuring a series of improvised performances with Ulrike Pfeiffer in Berlin, Paris, Moscow and London to *Bärbel and Charly* (1995) a portrait of fellow filmmakers ranging from a re-enactment of *Singing in the Rain* to the excitement of putting on screenings at Berlin's Babylon cinema in Kreuzberg. Aurand's first film *Deeply Absorbed in Silent Conversation* 1980 presents an introspective portrait of the artist in Berlin, and marks the beginning of her evolving visual style while *Detel + Jón* (1988-93) is a playful portrait showing life in the city and in Iceland filled with happiness and love. The text by Jonas Mekas that he reads at the start of *OH! The Four Seasons* (1988) sums up the exuberant and inventive nature of these films "Improvisation is, I repeat, the highest form of concentration, of awareness, of intuitive knowledge, when the imagination begins to dismiss the pre-arranged, the contrived mental structures, and goes directly to the depths of the matter."

Bärbel and Charly

Ute Aurand, Germany, 1994 16mm, colour/black & white, sound, 35 min
With Bärbel Freund and Karl Heil

Deeply Absorbed in Silent Conversation / Schweigend ins Gespräch vertieft

Ute Aurand, Germany 1980, 16mm, colour/black & white, sound, 8 min

Detel + Jón

Ute Aurand, Germany 1988/93, 16mm, colour/black & white, sound, 23 min
With Detel Aurand and Jón Sigurgeirsson

OH! The Four Seasons / OH! die vier Jahreszeiten

Ute Aurand and Ulrike Pfeiffer, Germany 1988, 16mm, colour, sound, 20 min

<https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/be-here-films-ute-aurand/ute-aurand-2-berlin-babylon>

Ute Aurand 3: Young Pines

Ute Aurand's filmmaking is often inspired by a deep relationship to place. *Young Pines* 2011 was filmed on various trips to Japan where Aurand captures distinct areas of the country from Yokohama, Kyoto to Tokyo prior to the nuclear meltdown of Fukushima, which occurred while Aurand was in the midst of editing her film. The film explores the relationship between culture and nature, a concern present throughout Aurand's work from the *At the Sea* 1998 made on the car-free German island of Hiddensee, with a soundtrack by Japanese filmmaker Utako Koguchi to *Half Moon For Margaret* 2004 that combines a dizzying array of footage from a lunar eclipse to family celebrations inspired by the work of Scottish filmmaker Margaret Tait (1918-1999). The screening will open with Tait's 1955 film *The Leaden Echo And The Golden Echo* an inspired response to Gerard Manley Hopkins poem of the same name, a film about youth and beauty as well as the impermanence of all things.

The Leaden Echo And The Golden Echo

Margaret Tait, UK 1955, 16mm, colour, sound, 7 min

At The Sea / Am Meer

Ute Aurand, Germany, 1998, 16mm, colour, sound, 3 min

Half Moon For Margaret / Halbmond für Margaret

Ute Aurand, Germany 2004, 16mm, colour, silent, 15 min

Junge Kiefern/Young Pines

Ute Aurand, Germany/Japan 2011, 16mm, colour/black & white, sound, 43 min

<https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/be-here-films-ute-aurand/ute-aurand-3-young-pines>

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The Films of Ute Aurand: To Be Here

Audio recording of The Films of Ute Aurand:

To Be Here, a part of film screening programme at Tate Modern

<https://www.tate.org.uk/audio/films-ute-aurand-be-here>