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## ACCLAIMED ANIMATOR LEWIS KLAHR CELEBRATED

### RESIDENCY AWARD HELPED FUND CREATION OF NEW FILMS

MONTHLONG SERIES PAIRS KLAHR'S WORKS WITH OTHER FILMS OF HIS CHOICE;  
PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS; DVDs TO BE EXCLUSIVELY AVAILABLE AT WEX



Clockwise from above: *Nimbus Smile* from Klahr's *Prolix Satori* series; *Altair* from Klahr's *Engram Sepals* series; and a scene from the *Two Minutes to Zero* Trilogy  
Images courtesy Lewis Klahr

"In the age of industrial sound and light, Lewis Klahr makes special-effects movies that are almost insanely artisanal—one man, labor-intensive animations that are at once crude and poetic, blunt and enigmatic, as funny as they are inventive... [He is] the reigning proponent of cut and paste."—J. Hoberman, *Village Voice*

"While many artists have engaged with mass culture, few have rendered its mix of seduction, imaginative stimulation, and destructive smoothness as elegantly and precisely as Klahr does."—Fred Camper, *Chicago Reader*

**Columbus, OH**—In May, the Wexner Center presents a tribute to collage animator and filmmaker **Lewis Klahr**, this season's **Wexner Center Residency Award** recipient in media arts. In Klahr's work, images from mid-20th-century advertisements, comic books, and other ephemeral talismans of American commerce and popular culture are "re-animated" to produce submerged narratives about the emotional and dream lives of his memory-haunted characters. Known for their resonant and savvy use of music (ranging from Frank Sinatra to the Velvet Underground, and from Igor Stravinsky to Glenn Branca), Klahr's films also play off of and are deeply invested in Hollywood genres, especially melodrama and film noir.

The **monthlong retrospective** of Klahr's short films includes celebrated pieces and rarely seen treasures, and—to explore the links between his animations and the genre traditions that he's working with and against—his films will be paired with feature films that have inspired and influenced him. **The L.A.-based artist will be in town** to kick off the series with an onstage appearance and Q&A on May 1, followed by a public "masterclass" on May 4 and an introduction on May 6. He will also work for a week in the center's Art & Technology video editing suites.



Lewis Klahr  
Photo: Nika Bohinc

With his Residency Award, **Klahr completed several new works**: *Wednesday Morning Two A.M.*, a tale of lost love set to music by The Shangri-Las that had its world premiere at the 2009 New York Film Festival and won a Tiger Award at the 2010 Rotterdam Film Festival. In addition, Klahr's Residency Award has supported the creation of four new animated melodramas—*Lethe*, *Nimbus Smile*, *Nimbus Seeds*, and *Cumulonimbus*—that inaugurate a major new series of films titled *Prolix Satori*.

Also under the auspices of the residency, Klahr is creating **four DVDs of his film work**, which will be available exclusively in the Wexner Center Store and at [wexarts.org/store](http://wexarts.org/store) in June. These DVDs will cover most of Klahr's film output between 1983 and 2004. A limited-edition box set will be available as well.

"We're pleased to support Lewis Klahr's work through this residency, and to bring his adventurous animations to a wider audience," says Wexner Center film assistant curator Chris Stults, organizer of the retrospective. "While we have shown his work in the past, this

monthlong tribute will serve to highlight his singular style and concerns. His fusion of pop-culture artifacts with astute musical selections creates mysterious and moving reveries on time, memory, love, America, storytelling, history, art, and the movies."

Klahr, who serves on the faculty at the California Institute of the Arts, has been making films since the late '70s. He has also written screenplays, including for the *The Mothman Prophecies*, and has created special effects and animation for television shows, music videos, commercials, and movies. Klahr's work has been featured in three Whitney Biennials, among many other exhibitions, and he received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1992.

Interview footage from a visit to Klahr's studio (with clips from his films) is available at <http://vimeo.com/10551713>.

**The schedule for the retrospective follows** (all events take place in the Wexner Center's Film/Video Theater, 1871 N. High St.). Unless otherwise noted, each evening is \$7 general public, \$5 members/students/seniors. 614 292-3535 or [wexarts.org](http://wexarts.org).

## VISITING FILMMAKER: LEWIS KLAHR

### Saturday, May 1 at 7 pm

#### ***Prolix Satori* featuring Q&A with Lewis Klahr**

Klahr often groups his short films into larger series, and his residency award invigorated him to create a flurry of videos that inaugurate a major new open-ended series, *Prolix Satori*, which Klahr foresees working on for the rest of his career. At tonight's screening Klahr will be on hand to unveil (at least) six new *Prolix Satori* animations. *Wednesday Morning Two A.M.* (2009), the winner of a Tiger Award for short film at the 2010 Rotterdam Film Festival, is a twice-told tale of lost love set to songs by 1960s' girl-group The Shangri-Las. *Lethe* (2009) presents an affecting 22-minute melodrama scored to a plangent symphony by Gustav Mahler. *False Aging* (2008), also part of this series, was voted one of the best films of the decade by several participants in a recent *Film Comment* poll. In addition, the program features samples of Klahr's exquisite 16mm film work, including his masterful *Daylight Moon* (2002), which offers a child's view of film noir. A discussion with Klahr will follow the screening. (Total program app. 100 mins., video and 16mm)

### Tuesday, May 4 at 4 pm

#### **Masterclass with Lewis Klahr Free admission; open to the public**

In this "masterclass," Klahr leads a shot-by-shot tour through one of his best-known animations, *Pony Glass* (1997, 14 mins.), which he also introduces in the May 6 screening. Through Klahr's signature method of collage animation, the film chronicles the anxiety-filled sexual awakening of Superman's pal Jimmy Olsen. Audience members will get a deep level of insight into the film's themes and imagery, as well as the techniques and materials used by this remarkable artist. *Pony Glass* is part of the Museum of Modern Art's permanent collection.



From 1941's *The Shanghai Gesture*, one of the movies Klahr chose to show with his own

### Thursday, May 6 at 7 pm (2nd film 8:40 pm)

#### **Lewis Klahr introduces *Engram Sepals (Melodramas 1994–2000)* (Lewis Klahr, 1994–2000) *The Shanghai Gesture* (Josef von Sternberg, 1941)**

*Engram Sepals* is a feature-length series of seven moving and exhilarating short films that, as Klahr says, "trace a trajectory of American intoxication—both sexually and substance-wise—from the Second World War into the 1970s." Going back to the original meaning of "melodrama" (music + drama), this music-filled program features several of Klahr's most acclaimed films. (81 mins., 16mm)

Accompanying *Engram Sepals* is a rarely screened cult classic directed by Josef von Sternberg, who created some of the most sumptuous melodramas ever made. *The Shanghai Gesture*, one of the most decadent films to come out of classic Hollywood, follows Gene Tierney into a Shanghai gambling den. There she becomes entranced by the hedonistic goings-on and obsessed with the house hunk, Victor Mature. *Time Out Film Guide* calls the film "subversive cinema at its most sublime." (106 mins., 35mm)

### Thursday, May 13 at 7 pm (2nd film 7:55 pm)

#### ***The Pharaoh's Belt* (Lewis Klahr, 1993) *The Thief of Bagdad* (Ludwig Berger, Michael Powell, and Tim Whelan, 1940)**

The recipient of a special citation for experimental work from the National Society of Film Critics, *The Pharaoh's Belt* is an epic collage-animation journey through a midcentury suburban boy's imagination. As Klahr's longest film to date, *Belt* turns an astonishing range of advertising imagery into a surreal domestic playground where a child's subconscious tries to free

itself from "the morass of Betty Crocker chocolate icing, Formica kitchens, and parental phantoms toward a mastery of the imagination and the attaining of true love." (Tom Gunning) (43 mins., 16mm)

Another journey into a world of fantasy and imagination, *The Thief of Bagdad* is one of the most spectacular fantasy films ever made. Based on *The Arabian Nights*, the film is full of wondrous special effects, color, and adventure as a prince teams up with a boy (played by Sabu, in his most famous role) to travel through a land of marvels, magic, heroism, and romance in an attempt to regain his royal title. Codirected by the great Michael Powell (whose own classic *The Red Shoes* screens at the Wexner Center in a new print June 25–26). (106 mins., 35mm)

**Thursday, May 20 at 7 pm (2nd film 9:25 pm)**

***Tales of the Forgotten Future*** (Lewis Klahr, 1988–1991)

***Vinyl*** (Andy Warhol, 1965)

"Arguably the definitive portrait of the postwar America of secretly toxic dreams and treacherous surfaces," is how critic Michael Atkinson describes *Tales of the Forgotten Future*. Klahr's breakthrough series traces an alternate history of 20th-century America in a collection of 12 diverse shorts. From the nuclear paranoia of *The Organ Minder's Gronkey* to *Hi-Fi Cadets*, where JFK is employed as a janitor in a neighborhood high school, Klahr's lo-fi animation style astutely captures the anxieties, dreams, disappointments, and promises of our recent cultural history. (133 mins., video)

One of the most striking, perverse, and radical of Andy Warhol's narrative films, *Vinyl* is a druggy, fetishistic adaptation of Anthony Burgess's novel *A Clockwork Orange* (made six years before Stanley Kubrick's version was released). In Warhol's trademark unblinking, minimalist style, his superstars Gerard Malanga, Ondine, and—in her first substantial screen appearance—Edie Sedgwick are crammed into the frame, where frugging to pop records and other more debased activities are as important—if not more so—than the lines they recite. (66 mins., 16mm)

**Thursday, May 27 at 7 pm (2nd film at 8:45 pm, 3<sup>rd</sup> at 9:15 pm)**

***Out of the Past*** (Jacques Tourneur, 1947)

***The Two Minutes to Zero Trilogy*** (Lewis Klahr, 2004)

***Point Blank*** (John Boorman, 1967)

This triple-fisted night of hard-hitting noir is not to be missed! First, in the nuanced atmosphere of *Out of the Past*, former private eye Robert Mitchum gets lost in his memories and old double-dealing relationships when he tries to start up a new life. *Time Out Film Guide* calls this tale of narrative immersion, "one of the most bewildering and beautiful films ever made...once seen, never forgotten." Jane Greer and Kirk Douglas also star. (97 mins., 35mm)

Then Klahr's *Two Minutes to Zero Trilogy* presents three short films of decreasing length that tell three increasingly compressed versions of the same crime-filled Los Angeles noir story. The film's imagery comes entirely from issues of the *77 Sunset Strip* comic book, and the music ranges from dreamy 1960s' psychedelic rock to hard-edged New York 1980s' no-wave instrumentals. (33 mins., 16mm)

In *Point Blank*, one of the defining films of the late 1960s, Lee Marvin is a left-for-dead gangster in California who has nothing on his mind except getting the money he is owed from the organization that double-crossed him. Marvin's stoic menace has never been sharper, or more out of place, in an increasingly depersonalized urban landscape. The film's jagged editing famously upends time and place. (92 mins., 35mm)

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## WEXNER CENTER RESIDENCY AWARDS

An essential part of the Wexner Center's role as a multidisciplinary art center that supports the creation of new work as well as the presentation of art in all disciplines, the center's generous Residency Award program serves the field while complementing The Ohio State University's mission as a leading research institution. Chosen by the center's curators and director, residency artists receive significant financial resources, along with technical, intellectual, professional, and moral support to develop new work. Click to <http://www.wexarts.org/about/residencies/> or more information.

## FILM/VIDEO SUPPORT

Significant contributions for the Wexner Center's 2009–10 film/video season are made by the Rohauer Collection Foundation. The preferred airline of the film/video program is American Airlines/American Eagle. All film/video programs and events also receive support from the Corporate Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation and Wexner Center members, as well as from the Greater Columbus Arts Council, The Columbus Foundation, Nationwide Foundation, and the Ohio Arts Council.