



28 November 2013 - 1 February 2014

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The collection of seven films presented in the exhibition at La Loge represents over three decades of work by American independent filmmaker Peter Hutton. The exhibition features a number of early works including *Boston Fire* (1979) and *Landscape (for Manon)* (1986-87) and traces the artist's oeuvre through to the present. The main highlight of the exhibition is the debut of Hutton's latest films, *Three Landscapes* (2013) and *At Sea* (2004-2007) in the form of an installation.

Throughout his career, Hutton has used film to capture subtle moments in time in a way that reflects a powerful, contemplative method of viewing the world. In each of his films, he positions himself as a witness; he uses the camera to make a record of chosen landscapes filmed from a distance. Therefore, a tangible line can be felt in his films, separating the filmmaker from the reality that he is filming. His entire body of work results from patient observation as opposed to constructing a manipulated or staged reality.

Before becoming a filmmaker, Hutton spent a decade living and working on large merchant ships. He paid his way through art school with the money he earned at sea.

The experience of witnessing the world by boat undeniably forged the artist's sense of looking as a means of experiencing time and reality with a more intense focus on the subtleties of vision. The artist explains that, "there's a kind of culture of survival when you're out at sea, where you have to develop a kind of visual acuity to know where you are going and what's happening." Another defining aspect of Hutton's work is his early artistic career as a painter. Though the artist abandoned painting for film in the mid-1970s, his films convey a visual connection to the methodologies of painting. As Hutton describes, film is "about painting with the language of cinema."

Born in Detroit and a current resident of the Hudson River Valley, Hutton's personal connection to specific places is evident in his work. His long appreciation for the beauty of the Hudson River Valley is expressed in a number of his films including *Landscape (for Manon)*, *Study for a River* and *Three Landscapes*. His cinematic treatment of this area has been linked to the mid-19th century painting of the Hudson River School, an American art movement known for romantic depictions of the natural landscape surrounding the Hudson River.

Often using his daily environment as inspiration, Hutton believes in the adage that truth is stranger than fiction.

Hutton's oeuvre consists of a rich collection of over twenty films that portray a sense of meditative timelessness. The seamless movement of man and nature appear as continuous forces untouched by time.

About the artist

Peter Hutton received his BFA and MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute. Hutton has taught at CalArts, Hampshire College and Harvard University. He currently teaches at Bard College. In 2008, his work was the subject of a retrospective at MoMA. His films have been featured in a number of international film festivals including New York, Vienna, Rotterdam, London and Toronto. His work has also been exhibited at the Whitney Biennial (1985, 1991, 1995, 2004), George Eastman House, Museum of Contemporary Art Oslo, among others. He is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, DAAD/Berliner Künstlerprogramm, Rockefeller Foundation, etc. His work can be found in the collection of many museums including MoMA, Centre Pompidou and the Austrian Film Museum.

Films in the exhibition

Ground floor

Three Landscapes, 2013

47 min. in 3 sections, colour, silent

Peter Hutton's latest series consists of three landscape studies: a steel mill located in the industrial area of Detroit where he grew up, the fields of the Hudson valley where the artist currently lives and the Dallol Depression in Ethiopia, one of the hottest and most remotely inhabited places on earth.

The choice of this last location was driven by filmmaker Robert Gardner who suggested that Hutton continue the study he started in 1968, namely a short film about the salt harvests of Afar camel herders.

Each study records the precise movements of human labour within a particular geography. The sequences appear as dreamy, mirage-like depictions revealing labour as abstract forces.

At Sea, 2004-2007

60 min. in 3 sections, colour, silent

At Sea was shot over a period of three years and examines the birth, life and eventual death of a modern container ship. The "birth" of the ship is represented through scenes from a technologically advanced shipping yard in South Korea where a ship is being constructed.

The second part of the film follows the journey of a ship as

it sails across the sea through treacherous waters.

The last section of the film is shot amidst the ship "graveyards" located on the coast of Bangladesh, where the landscape is filled with the abandoned and rotting hulls of massive container ships.

Basement

Boston Fire, 1979

8 min., black & white, silent

Beginning with close-ups of white smoke against a black plane, a succession of filmed sequences slowly reveals a raging fire. Small, silhouetted figures of fire fighters are captured as they attempt to tame the flames.

Without reference to the cause or the source of the blaze, the film presents a stark contrast between the shifting movements of the amorphous clouds of smoke and the dark surrounding foreground, which is visually and literally being consumed by the elusive fire.

New York Portrait: Chapter II, 1981

16 min., black & white, silent

The second chapter of a three-part portrait of New York, this film is comprised of carefully captured moments in the daily life of the city. From the ordinary and tragic, to the picturesque and monumental, Hutton portrays the city as he sees it. Each sequence is a miniature study and when combined together, they create a dynamic portrait of the complex microcosm that is New York City.

Landscape (for Manon), 1987

19 min., black & white, silent

Made up of 22 different shots of ranging length, the film captures landscapes from around the Hudson River Valley. Each cut is given its own space with moments of black in between. Many of the cuts appear to be stills, but through close observation the stills come alive as the eye adjusts to subtle changes and movements.

As a tribute to the artist's daughter, Manon, we see a train moving at the start that later reveals itself to be a toy train. The final cut is of Hutton's daughter as a child, with modulating light reflecting across her face.

Łódź Symphony, 1993

20 min., black & white, silent

This film is a succession of cinematic "postcards" of the city of Łódź in Poland. These individual still-lives capture the melancholy moments of a faded and fragile city undeniably shaken by its traumatic past. Cuts of empty streets and dilapidated facades slowly shift to images depicting activity and industry, subtly suggesting that the city is in the process of recovery.

Study of a River, 1997

16 min., black & white, silent

This film is the first in a series of studies that examine the Hudson River and its surrounding landscapes.

Hutton, a long-time resident of the Hudson River Valley, has a strong affinity with the river. The film, shot during winter, references both the natural beauty of the river and its historical role as the purveyor of industry and commerce.

Events:

Workshop with Peter Hutton for students of l'erg
(closed workshop)
Friday 29 November 2013

Talk by Peter Hutton, moderated by Anne-Claire Schmitz
Saturday 30 November 2013, 16:00
Language: English
Entrance: 3€

Please note capacity is limited. We recommend arriving on time to ensure admission.

Further events related to 'Figures, Landscapes & Time' will be announced on our website and via our newsletter.

La Loge is a privately initiated nonprofit association.

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