

# The Situated Cinema Project; in-camera

**September 10 - 13:** The Toronto International Film Festival®'s  
Festival Street (Intersection of King Street West & Peter Street)

**September 14 - 16:** 8-11 Gallery (233 Spadina Ave)

**September 17 - 20:** Artscape Youngplace (180 Shaw Street)

**Artist talk - September 12** @ 7:30pm; Artscape Youngplace (180 Shaw Street)

**Reception - September 17** @ 6pm-10pm; Artscape Youngplace (180 Shaw Street)

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# PD

25 years of artists' moving images

## Pleasure Dome



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Many thanks to the Canada Council for the Arts for their assistance for this project through a Media Arts Initiatives Grant, and to our programming partners, The Toronto International Film Festival®, 8-11 Gallery and Artscape Youngplace.

### **Pleasure Dome is made possible through the ongoing support of:**

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For more information on artist talks and other on-site activities please go to: [www.pdome.org](http://www.pdome.org)

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# **The Situated Cinema Project; in-camera**

*The Situated Cinema Project; in-camera* is a portable micro-cinema commissioned by Toronto-based media arts exhibition group Pleasure Dome to celebrate their 25th anniversary. Created by Halifax-based filmmaker Solomon Nagler with architects Thomas Evans and Jonathan Mandeville of passage studio, the structure features “pilgrimage”—an experimental 16mm film loop created by Nagler and his artistic collaborator Alexandre Larose. From September 10-20, the *Situated Cinema* will travel to three Toronto locations, hosted by the Toronto International Film Festival®, 8-11 Gallery and Artscape Youngplace. As it travels, the architectural structure of the cinema will intervene in the city, creating unexpected situations where chance encounters and dislocated spaces forge new relationships between the spectatorial body and the urban landscape. Inseparable from its context, the *Situated Cinema Project; in-camera* explores intersections of film and architecture through a rejection of conventional cinematic representation, reinventing the cinema space as temporary and mobile.

## **pilgrimage (2015)**

Drawing on issues of memory, decay, palimpsest and the rubbing together of archive, fiction and situations, “pilgrimage” was constructed from found strips of 8mm amateur footage that the artists gleaned together during a residency in Sydney, Australia. The original footage—a tourist’s voyeuristic, filmed impressions of a pilgrimage in a crowded urban space, where the faithful painfully stumble before the entrance of a temple—was reworked using an optical printer and other hand-made techniques. It is presented as a 16mm loop in the *Situated Cinema*, which is particularly resonant, as the ephemerality of this analogue, mobile cinema re-frames the presence of the spectators; watching while watched in an experimental architecture and in urban space.

# Filmmakers



**Solomon Nagler** is an experimental filmmaker who works and resides in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He is an associate professor of film production at NSCAD University, and co-founder of WNDX: Festival of the Moving Image in Winnipeg. His work has screened internationally, including retrospectives in Canada, France, Australia and New Zealand. Most recently he has been creating 16mm celluloid installations that engage with experimental architecture in galleries and public space. [www.cinemaofruins.com](http://www.cinemaofruins.com)



**Alexandre Larose** is a French-Canadian artist based in Montréal. His critically acclaimed films have been shown internationally since 2006. His work has been screened and in curated programs at major institutions including: European Media Art Festival, Osnabruck; Art Gallery Ontario; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; New York Anthology Film Archive; Austrian Film Museum, Vienna; Media City Film Festival, Ontario; International Film Festival Rotterdam; Jihlava

International Documentary Festival; Ann Arbor Film Festival; and Images Festival, Toronto. His recent installation work has been exhibited at the Audio Foundation, Auckland and the John Michael Kohler Art Center, Sheboygan.

# Fabricator

**hollis+morris** is a design firm based out of Toronto; specializing in modern furniture. Our goal is to create timeless pieces of furniture that strive for progression while maintaining a simple elegance. Inspired by classic traditions, hollis+morris use the highest grade materials, weaving them together to produce honest and innovative pieces. [www.hollismorris.com](http://www.hollismorris.com)

# Architects



**Thomas Evans** graduated from Dalhousie University in 2009 with a Masters in Architecture and is currently an Intern Architect in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. He has worked on a variety of projects for theatre, interiors, temporary pavilions and mobile structures. He has a working background in finish carpentry and joinery. This is the fourth iteration of The Situated Cinema Project that he has been involved with. Thomas is currently in

the process of developing a new design and architecture office with Jonathan Mandeville.



**Jonathan Mandeville** graduated from Dalhousie University in 2007 with a Masters of Architecture and is an Architect in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He has worked on various types of projects: studios, residential, social housing, mixed-use projects, a city library, and a worship space. He balances office work with teaching design and building systems integration at

Dalhousie's School of Architecture. This is the second iteration of The Situated Cinema Project that he has been involved with. Jonathan is currently in the process of developing a new design and architecture office with Thomas Evans.

**passage studio** was formed by Thomas Evans and Jonathan Mandeville in 2015 during the design of the fifth situated cinema project: in-camera. Seeking to explore and find inspiration in the margins of traditional architectural practice, the studio challenges design categorization and enjoys merging the fields of architecture, products, furniture, and graphics. passage embraces an interdisciplinary approach, working with fabricators, artists, and clients to inform a holistic design response to each unique project that they work on. Both Thomas and Jonathan believe in the importance of education in its relation to practice, and teach freelabs and design courses at Dalhousie's School of Architecture. [www.passagestudio.ca](http://www.passagestudio.ca)

# Sidewalk Apparitions: *The Situated Cinema Project;* *in camera*

**Melanie Wilmink and Solomon Nagler**

An uncanny architecture on the sidewalk invites closer inspection. This new obstacle in the familiar cityscape is the *Situated Cinema Project; in camera*, a temporary and portable micro-cinema commissioned by Toronto-based media arts exhibition group Pleasure Dome in celebration of their 25th anniversary. Designed by Halifax filmmaker Solomon Nagler with architects Thomas Evans and Jonathan Mandeville, the structure features an experimental 16mm film loop called "pilgrimage" (2015) created by Nagler and his frequent collaborator Alexandre Larose, a filmmaker from Montréal. Positioned around issues of situation and public art, the project engages the radical potential of a cinema unrestrained by convention.

You have come across the cinema in one of its three locations over the course of ten days in September 2015. The first assemblage occurs at the intersection of King Street West and Peter Street (September 10-13), as part of the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival's Festival Street, where it presents an intimate experience of experimental analogue filmmaking within the hustle and bustle of the large-scale TIFF event. Installed on a closed off portion of King Street West, this first location literally interferes with a traffic zone that is usually set aside for vehicles. After Festival Street closes, the cinema moves to 8-11 Gallery at 233 Spadina Avenue (September 14-16), where it is sited in a large plaza in front of a tiny structure which houses the gallery and shares a space with *Interim Measures*, an 8-11 exhibition and performance by Chris Lee, Brady Cranfield, Jamie Hilder. Located in the heart of Toronto's Chinatown district, the cinema rubs up against the unusual gallery space, the politically charged artwork, the neighbourhood shops, and the encroaching gentrification of condo towers that fill Toronto's skyline. Finally, on September 17, the cinema travels to its last destination in front of Artscape Youngplace (180 Shaw St), settling into the landscaping until the closing of the project on September 20th. Here the cinema sits slightly off the sidewalk, building a relationship with the heritage building that houses artists studios and galleries, accessibility structures such as a wheelchair ramp, outdoor gardens, and an often-ignored driveway that acts as a key entry point for the day-to-day operations of the building and its inhabitants. This situation draws attention to the juxtaposition of modern and historical architecture, the evolving purposes of urban spaces, and the double-

-edged role that art plays in neighbourhood revitalization, which can often exclude low-income members of the community even as it works with the best of intentions to create a space that is beautiful and vibrant for other residents. It is possible that the cinema similarly displaces in its act of occupation.

The placement of the structure on a road, in a plaza, and on the sidewalk interrupts a normally transitory experience of public space in the city. Like the pedestrians which pass it, the cinema is simply a temporary visitor to these concrete, motionless, and enduring spaces. Although a city changes over time, that duration is glacial compared to human experience—architectural change happens over months and years while memory often fades after minutes, hours, or days. The form of the *Situated Cinema* mimics architectural permanence, but is actually ephemeral—disassembling and collapsing before re-assembling elsewhere. This disjunction between how the cinema operates, and how architecture normally acts, asks us to consider the differences and similarities between the two objects, and how they co-exist within the city. It may raise questions around architectural design and the place of less formal buildings in an urban landscape that often flows at breakneck speed. In this sense, the *Situated Cinema* proposes a rupture in the durational, architectural and normative sense of dwelling and urban space.

As a cinema, the mobile, temporary nature of this structure emphasizes the construction of viewing space as something both physical yet intangible. Movies transform the theatre into any other space and time simply by turning off the lights and turning on a projector. Ghostly light streams down the aisles, to wrap around the viewers' bodies and caress the screen in front of them. Through that invisible touch, light shapes the space into something completely new—a tropical forest, outer space, Paris, Mumbai, the Canadian tundra. Spectators are transported from their physical site into an imaginative space conjured in the duration of viewing. Even the most vivid photograph just cannot have the same effect: it is only by spending time in that newly-created place that viewers can feel as if they have actually visited there. The cinema creates a theatrical zone—a bubble where space and time can operate differently—that enables the spectator to step into an alternate reality. However, it also contains a simultaneous disruption of this illusion, by staging the spectator's body alongside the screen in the *Situated Cinema* (unlike a traditional theatre which forces distance). The two almost rub against one another, and when viewed through the visual portholes, external spectators glimpse the internal, cinematic space and time, while remaining outside of it.

Solomon Nagler and Alexandre Larose's film "pilgrimage" (2015) is inseparable from the experimental architecture of the *Situated Cinema*. The four and a half minute film loop was created by manipulating found footage of a pilgrimage in a crowded urban space, where the faithful stagger on their knees in front

of a temple. By stepping into the *Situated Cinema* spectators enter a temple of their own, dedicated to viewing the ephemeral and transitory, where their bodies are contorted to fit the space and react to a relationship with the vision that appears before them. The spectator's standing body relates to the kneeling figures, watching through the camera's eye like one of the figures observing from the plaza. However, though the footage is clearly photographic, it does not completely support the realistic and immersive cinematic transportation typical of a narrative film. Tinted with nostalgia, the old Super 8 footage is bleached and scratched, and the manipulations done by the artists emphasize a kind of abstractness in the image. Figures are blurred and haloed with colour, scratches and distortions of light often obscure the action, and the materiality of the film itself becomes the space that the spectator must enter. This faded and cracked footage resembles fragmented human memory—or the spiritual visions that are sought by the pilgrims—more than a realistic experience of unfolding events.

Like the pilgrims, the film ritualistically repeats its actions, spinning from beginning-to end-to beginning endlessly. The projector that constructs the illusion of moving images heats up and wears away at the fragile film images, destroying it at the same time as it brings it to life. Time in the filmic narrative moves differently than it does in the world outside of the cinema. It jerks and stutters, unfolding in a halted momentum that emulates the kneelers, and the film loop whirring mechanically through the projector. This friction between what we know is real-time and what we experience on screen prevents complete immersion into the illusion of the projection. It draws attention to the architecture that envelops the spectatorial body, the open city with skyscrapers and buildings that host the cinema, and to the other spectators who peer through the small apertures in the skin of the structure, watching you watch and contort in the service of the space.

Much of the dialogue around this work is positioned around issues of situation and public art. In the 1950's and 60's, the Situationist International Movement outlined situations as "spatio-temporal events" that constructed powerful moments where everyday life took on new meaning (Guy Debord. "A Report on the Construction of Situations", 1957). These events were art happenings that interfered with existing mainstream images and ideology. Most often their ideas remained just that—ideas—as they created texts, pamphlets, and images that were circulated to their membership; however many of their concepts were anchored around performances or large-scale architectural disruptions of living and public space in an effort to make their surroundings uncomfortable or strange. The Situationists thought art could stimulate a new attention to the world around them, in order to transform viewers' clichéd experiences of spaces to which they had grown accustomed. The motivation behind this act was to use art as a catalyst for social and political transformation. Although less political, this project similarly positions moving image art and the cinema

space as a medium for public intervention. It removes cinematic experiences from the formal, rigid architecture that is designed to disappear with darkness, and instead deconstructs and reconstructs cinematic experience into something unexpected. A Situationist situation forces a reconsideration of our ways of being in the world. By making the cinema mobile, redefining the body in terms of the screen and projector, and asking spectators to consider their role within the theatre and within their urban spaces, this project aims to do just that.

In disrupting expectations, this work provides a new type of engagement, one which consists of layered memory, fictions, and contexts. Spectators in the mobile theatre simultaneously experience multiple contexts: the *Situated Cinema*, their ideas of a cinema experience, the film-image itself, the temporary location, and the broader urban environment. Images and situations overlay on the sky and cityscape, rubbing together in a complex gesture of writing and erasure, with each context layering on the next, and creating a palimpsest of experience that enables spectators to bring their own stories and memories into the project. This overlay underscores the multiplicity of our experiences, and is heightened by the intersections between projection and architecture. Enabling spontaneous discovery and audience interactions, the unusual space and situation of the structure draws attention to the ways in which cinema shapes our bodies and culture, while creating an unforgettable embodied experience.

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**Melanie Wilmink** is a doctoral student in Art History and Visual Culture at York University and a recipient of the 2014 York University Elia Scholars Award and a 2015 SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship. Her research examines the inter-connectivity between spectatorial experience and exhibition spaces, and aims to determine how public art situations act as vehicles for metaphoric and physical transportation. Her ongoing research was developed through her experience as Programming Coordinator for the Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers and its \$100 Film Festival (an avant-garde Super 8 and 16mm event established in 1992), and her current curatorial work through the Toronto-based Pleasure Dome media arts exhibition collective.  
[www.mwilmink.wordpress.com](http://www.mwilmink.wordpress.com)

***Pleasure Dome*** is a Toronto-based exhibition group dedicated to the presentation and appreciation of contemporary and historical artists' moving images. With a curatorial mandate to program time-based work from local, national and international artists, in a variety of genres, styles and traditions from those of the historical avant-garde to contemporary works that re-imagine the experimental tradition, Pleasure Dome produces innovative programming in both theatrical and "expanded" presentations including installation and other unconventional exhibition formats, all with a low admission cost.

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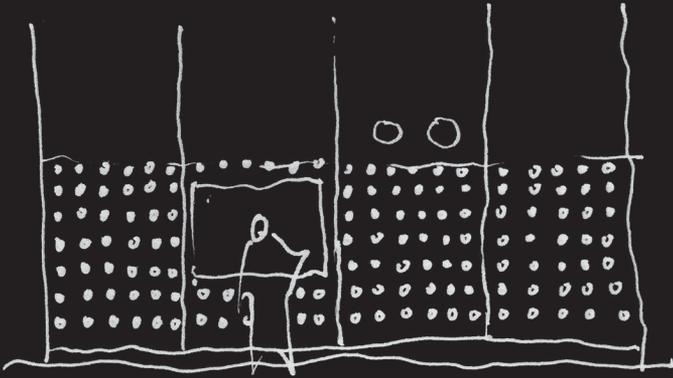
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