

## CYNTHIA MADANSKY

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I am a multi-disciplinary artist with a major concentration in film and video. I work in 16mm, super 8 and video, creating films and videos which integrate hybrid forms and traditions including experimental tropes, cinema vérité, scripted narrative, ethnographic observation and dance and performance. My work engages with cultural and political themes, such as identity, nationalism, the transgression of borders, displacement, nuclear arms and war, foregrounding the human experience and personal testimony. I am interested in portraying the consequences of politics on the daily lives of individuals, focusing on issues of US foreign intervention and interrogating the concept of personal and national accountability.

Trained as a painter, I continue to pursue painting and drawing as an integral part of my practice. My current painting and drawing installation work reflects on automatic writing and the subliminal landscape.

### Education

Mason Gross School of Fine Arts, Rutgers University, MFA, 1993  
Whitney Independent Study Program, NYC, 1988  
Cooper Union School of Art, NYC, 1987  
Bezalel School of Art, Jerusalem, Israel, 1985-87  
Hebrew University School of Social Work, Jerusalem, Israel, BSW, 1982

### Teaching

Smolny State University, St. Petersburg, workshop 2018  
American University in Cairo, workshop 2018  
Hampshire College, Film and Video, One Year Associate Visiting Professor, 2017-2018  
Minot, State University, Film and Video Workshop, 2007  
Polytechnic University, Undergraduate, Design, 2002-2005; Graduate New Media Program, 2003-2005  
Rutgers The State University, Mason Gross School of Fine Arts, Undergraduate Design Studies, 1991-1995

## CYNTHIA MADANSKY

2019

### **ESFIR**

16mm, video, 70 min.

**ESFIR** is a feature length contemporary feminist reinterpretation of an unrealized experimental script by Esfir Shub entitled *Women*.

### **Leyla x 2**

16mm, 15 min.

**Leyla x 2** is a dance film reflecting on the novella entitled *What Remains* by Turkish writer Leyla Erbil, performed by Turkish dancer Leyla Postalcioglu. §(work in progress)

### **AA**

16mm, 15 min.

**AA** reflects on the visual art and poetry of Russian artist Anna Alchyk who was found dead in a river in Berlin. (work in progress)

2018

### **KG**

Super 8 film, 10 min. (work in progress)

**KG** reflects on the writing in *Three Clicks Left* by anarchist poet and actress Katerina Gogous.

### **Willie and Brewsie**

16mm, 12 min.

**Willie and Brewsie**, a landscape film of the Northeast, reflects on the contemporary resonances of the last play written by Gertrude Stein in 1946 entitled *Brewsie and Willie*.

2017

### **ḤARĀM**

16mm, 47 min.

**ḤARĀM** is an essay film that interrogates the existing political landscape at the Haram Al-Sharif / Noble Sanctuary, in the Old City of Jerusalem. The film explores the growing contemporary Jewish movement that aims to build the Third Temple on the very site of the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aksa Mosque, contextualizing the ideology of the movement with the strategies of reclamation employed to gain sovereignty over the site.

### **GRACE + GRAVITY**

16mm, 7 min.

**Grace + Gravity** is an experimental performance film based on excerpts from the philosophical writings entitled *Gravity and Grace* by Simone Weil.

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2016

### **A Portrait of Primo Levi**

Archival 16 mm footage, 8 min

Portrait of Primo Levi is a film commissioned by the Centro Primo Levi, NY in honor of the publishing of a complete edition of his works translated into English. The film premiered at the Library of Congress, USA.

### **The Hiroshima Panels Project**

HD, 8 min.

This dance film integrates elements from a live performance by Eiko Otake set against the backdrop of the Hiroshima Panels, a series of 15 folded panels painted by Iro and Toshi Maruki produced over thirty years, depicting the atrocities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The Hiroshima Panels Project is a collaboration between musicians Sam Sadigursky (clarinet), Meg Okura (violin), Dan Tepfer (piano), filmmaker Cynthia Madansky, dancer Eiko Otake and educator Kathleen Sullivan who created an immersive experience through music, art, dance and testimony to National Sawdust on 21 October. Also in attendance were atomic bomb survivors who shared their testimony with an audience of local high school students who were learning about current nuclear realities and disarmament.

2015

### **E42**

16mm, 33 min.

**E42** is an experimental documentary that excavates the layered identity of the Esposizione Universale di Roma (EUR), a site that embodies the city's past, a utopic vision of its future and its complex resonance in contemporary life. **E42** portrays the pathos and specter of the original ideology of the EUR as a site of scenography.

### **Anna, Pina, Teresa**

16mm, 6 min.

**Anna, Pina, Teresa** is a dance film that reinterprets the pivotal scene in Rossellini's "Roma Città Aperta" where Anna Magnani, who plays the character Pina, (which is based on the story of Teresa Gullace,) is murdered on the streets of Rome by the fascist police. Made in collaboration with the dancer Marta Ciappina, and filmed in the Sala Scherma at Foro Italico (the former fencing studio of Mussolini), **Anna, Pina, Teresa** reveals the contemporary and historical dynamics between an urban fascist space and movements of resistance.

### **Viva Agua**

16mm, 12 min.

**Viva Água** is an experimental narrative that reflects on the philosophical text *Água Viva*, by the Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector.

2014

### **White Sands**

16mm, 3 film projections, 8 min.

White Sands is an experiential film installation about the nuclear legacy of New Mexico, a meditation on the affects of the nuclear fuel trajectory on the air, water, land and people who live there.

### **Dear**

Super 8mm, 15 min.

**Dear** is a portrayal of a friendship between two teenage Chinese girls who live in Chinatown, NYC, illuminating struggles with integration and the brutal realities of gentrification.

### **Tarlabaşı**

HD, 6 min.

**Tarlabaşı** is a direct response to the state-sponsored urban renewal project in downtown Istanbul that has transformed a vibrant urban landscape into a demolished slum, a ghost town, a spectacle of what was once there. The film integrates dance performances in the everyday movements and gestures reflecting on the effects of neo-liberal urban transformation.

### **If Not,**

15 min. 16mm

This live projection piece filmed in Ephesus, Turkey and the Gowanus, Brooklyn interprets Sapphos poetry translated by Anne Carson.

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2013

### **1+8 Installation**

SALT, Galata, Istanbul

Co-directed and produced in collaboration with Angelika Brudniak

**1+8** is a dynamic eight-screen video installation about Turkey and her eight neighbors integrating the extensive archive of footage of landscapes, architecture, direct address interviews and performances from the bordertowns. The viewer experience is achieved with the help of a custom made algorithmic computer program that creates a dynamic projection drawing edited sequences from an extensive database of videos filmed at the eight borders of Turkey. The result is a unique viewer experience, as the choreography of videos on the eight screens is created dynamically and never appears the same way twice. The simultaneous presence of all eight borders/projections highlights the complexity of Turkey's geopolitical gestalt and draws the viewers' attention to the wide range of relevant issues concomitant at the country's contour.

2012

### **1+8**

HD, 131 min.

Co-directed and produced in collaboration with Angelika Brudniak

**1+8** is a two-hour film about Turkey and its unique geo-political position between East and West. The film portrays Turkey along its borders exploring the contemporary demarcations that connect and separate Turkey and its eight neighbors. Filmed along Turkey's borders with Greece, Bulgaria, Georgia, Armenia, Nakhchivan/Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq and Syria **1+8** is an intimate portrayal of the people on both sides of the borders, communicating the diversity that lies behind "Turkish" identity and the relevance of Turkey's relationships with Europe, the Caucasus and the Middle East.

2011

### **Spellbeamed**

16 mm, 13 min.

Creation of hand painted film on clear 16mm leader, based on the notations in Walter Benjamin's Archive Project. This film commission was used as a moving score for a performance piece entitled Spellbeamed which was composed by Zeena Parkins in collaboration with Ne(x)works and the Jack Quartet.

### **Orta Anadolu**

16mm, 6 films, Installation, 3 min each

Co-directed with Angelika Brudniak

Dance films shot in an old shipyard on the Golden Horn, Istanbul. Choreography by Candas Bas, Ciplak Ayaklar Kumpanyasi.

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2007

**Minot, North Dakota**

16 mm, video, 18 min.

Co-directed with Angelika Brudniak

Minot, nicknamed the “Magic City”, is the proud home of a U.S. Air Force base guarding 150 nuclear missiles buried underneath the ground in northern North Dakota. *Minot, North Dakota* is a portrait of the highly charged landscape and how people living there cope with these bombs in their backyard.

2005

**Elle**

16 mm, 15 min.

Filmed in a semi industrial and residential landscape in Brooklyn **Elle** interrogates everyday movements of falling and getting.

**Alex & José**

16 mm, 4 min.

A meditation on gender, a male flamenco dancer and a pregnant woman move through an urban landscape.

**The PSA Project No. 1-15**

16 mm, Super 8 mm, video, 3 min. each, 2004-2006

Appropriating the fast-motion, color-saturated cinematography of the televised world, **The PSA Project** is a startling visual reminder and protest of the American war in Iraq.

2004

**Devotion**

16 mm, 34 min.

A sparing and minimal travelogue of Istanbul — a foreigner meditates on the unraveling of a relationship while moving from hotel room to hotel room. In a city simultaneously devoted to Islam and secular nationalism, she finds refuge in the frailty and severity of the rituals of devotion.

**Winter**

7 min. Super 8mm, silent

A portrait of Winter 2004, shot in India, NY, Istanbul and in flight over Greenland.

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2003

**Still Life**

35 mm, 15 min.

Gazing unflinchingly at the violent territorial war in Gaza and the West Bank, **Still Life** observes the eerie architecture of a Palestine collapsed under Israeli occupation. This portrait provides brutal witness to how government sanctioned destruction metes upon structures of home and state in the Occupied Territories.

2002

**Past Perfect**

16 mm, 43 min.

A meditation on the elusiveness of Jewish history set against the backdrop of contemporary Poland.

**I Dream of the Bosphorous**

Video, 5 projections, 3 min. each

A series of five art videos filmed on the Bosphorous.

**Ritual By Rote**

Super 8, projection, 5 min loop

A portrayal of obsessive rituals.

1998-2001 (selected works)

**Treyf**

16 mm, 54 min.

Co-directed with Alisa Lebow. **Treyf** —“unkosher” in Yiddish— is an unorthodox documentary by and about two Jewish lesbians examining the Jewish identity of their upbringings and its impact on their contemporary queer lives.

**Internal Combustion**

Super 8mm, 8 min.

Co-directed with Alisa Lebow. An experimental video which addresses the silence surrounding lesbians and AIDS, portraying the unspoken tensions of this epidemic— survival and power, mourning and loss.

**We At Her**

Super 8mm, 8 min.

An experimental film about a young woman living in Jerusalem who becomes mentally ill.

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### Film Screenings Selected list)

Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow  
MUSAC, Leon  
MAXXI, Rome  
Museum of Modern Art, NYC  
Walker Art Museum, MN  
National Gallery of Art, Washington DC  
Library of Congress, USA  
Jewish Museum, Paris  
Cinema du Reel, Paris  
Wavelengths, Toronto Film Festival  
Berlinale, Berlin  
International Film Festival Rotterdam  
Edinburgh Film Festival  
VidoeX, Zurich  
DocuFest. Kosovo  
International Film Festival Lima Independiente  
Istanbul Film Festival  
Documenta Madrid  
Jihlava Film Festival  
Jeonju International Film Festival  
Diagonale Film Festival  
Trento Film Festival  
Ghent - COURTisane Festival  
Kassel - Dokumentarfilm- & Videofest  
Milano International Film Festival  
Iran Documentary Film Festival, Tehran  
Int. Short Film Festival, Uppsala, Sweden  
Viennale - Vienna Int. Film Festival  
Wiesbaden - exground on screen  
Transmediale, Berlin  
Dortmund / Köln - Internationales Frauenfilmfestival  
Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival  
Melbourne - Int. Film Festival  
Nashville Film Festival  
Eurodoc Documentary Film Festival, Oslo  
Filmwinter, Media Art Festival, Stuttgart

Tribgoyor Film Festival, India  
San Francisco International Film Festival  
Women in the Directors Chair, Chicago  
Indy/Media Conference, Austin  
Images Festival, Toronto  
Puglia Cultural Festival  
Homeworks III, Beirut  
Hallwalls Art Museum, Buffalo  
National Museum for Women in the Arts, Wash DC  
San Francisco Cinematheque  
Calcutta Women's Film Festival  
Brisbane International Film Festival  
Margaret Mead Film Festival, NY  
Seoul Independent Documentary Film and Video Festival  
Huesca International Film Festival  
Human Rights Film Festival, NY  
Fid Marseilles Documentary Film Festival  
Oberhausen Short Film Festival  
L'Alternative, Festival de Cinema Independent de  
Barcelona  
Curta Cinema, Rio de Janeiro  
Cinema Delle Donne, Torino  
Festival De Popoli

### Film Retrospectives

MUSAC, Leon, Spain, 2014  
La Enana Maron, Madrid, 2007  
Yerba Buena Art Center, 2007  
San Francisco Cinematheque, 2006

### DVD Collections

Still Life, Talents 3 DVD, The Art Video Collection. Paris,  
PSA No. 11, For Life Against the War, Filmmakers  
Cooperative, NYC.  
The PSA Project, no. 1-15, compilation DVD, Films for  
Peace, India

### Reviews [selected list]

m-3, Review of 1+8, Ilhan Ozan  
Alisa Lebow, Alt Yazı, Review of 1+8  
David Rakoff, Review of Past Perfect  
Sobhi Zobeidi, Review of Still Life, Asking All the Wrong  
Questions, Art School Palestine and presentation at  
Cinema Studies Conference, 2006  
Alisa Lebow, First Person Jewish, Writings about Treyf  
and Past Perfect  
Terri Ginzberg, Presentation at MLA 2007 on Still Life  
and The PSA Project, forthcoming monograph  
Kamal Al Solaylee, Review of On the Jewish Question,  
YYZ  
Sue Wechter, Review of Devotion, "Offering Female  
Perspective", University of Buffalo  
The PSA Project, "Demokrasiyle Gelen Filmler", Culture  
and Art Section of Haber, Istanbul  
Lauren Berlant, Review of The PSA Project, On the  
Desire for the Political, University of Chicago 2008  
James Wagner, Review of exhibition with The PSA  
Project at Momenta Gallery  
Ori Z. Soltes, Jewish Artists on the Edge, review of  
installation "On the Jewish Question"

### Broadcast

Sundance Channel  
Channel 13  
Al Jazeera, London

### Awards

Subversive Film Festival  
Documenta Madrid  
Cinema du Reel, Paris  
Salzburg Film Festival  
Images Festival, Toronto  
Huesca Film Festival  
Mediterraneo Film Festival  
New Festival, NY

## CYNTHIA MADANSKY

### Art Exhibitions

MAXXI, Rome, 2016  
Cinque Mostre, American Academy in Rome, 2015  
MAXXI, Rome, 2014  
Fridman Gallery, NYC, 2014  
1+8, SALT, Istanbul, Turkey, 2013  
Momenta Gallery, Brooklyn, NY, 2005  
White Hot, Smack Melon Gallery, Brooklyn, NY, 2000  
Jewish Artists on the Edge, Santa Fe, NM, 1999  
On the Jewish Question, YYZ, Toronto, Canada, 1998  
Here and Elsewhere, YYZ, Toronto, Canada, 1996  
Update Exhibition, Copenhagen Denmark, 1995  
Center for the Visual Arts, Denver, CO, 1994  
Esperanza Gallery, San Antonio, TX, 1993  
Zimmerli Museum, New Brunswick, NJ, 1993  
National Gallery of Australia, Sydney, Australia, 1992  
Artists Space, NYC, 1992  
Salon Show, Art in General NYC, 1992  
10 on 8 Installation, NYC, 1991  
Cooper Union Houghton Gallery, NYC, 1989  
Young NY Artists, Sala Mendoza, Venezuela, 1989  
Whitney Independent Study Program, NYC, 1989  
Maps and Madness, Bronx Council on the Arts, 1988  
“New Work”, Marine Midland Bank, NYC, 1987  
“Queer Art”, New Langton Arts, San Francisco, 1987  
CUNY Graduate Center, NYC, 1987  
LI University Gallery, NY, 1987  
Houghton Gallery, Cooper Union, NYC, 1987

### Artist Presentations

Master Class, IFFR, 2015  
MUSAC, Leon, Spain, 2014  
Bilgi University, Istanbul, Turkey, 2013  
Escola Tècnica Superior d'Arquitectura del Vallès (UPC),  
Barcelona, Spain, 2007  
Society for Cinema Studies Conference, Chicago, 2007  
Minot State University, ND, 2007  
Trivandrum Art School, Kerala, India, 2006  
NYU Film School, NY, 2005  
Oberlin College, OH, 2005  
Hunter College, NY, 2005  
San Francisco Art Institute, CA, 2005  
Art Institute of Chicago, IL, 2005  
California College of Design, CA, 2005  
Hamilton College, NY, 2002  
Rutgers University, NJ, 1995

### Grants

Fulbright Fellowship, 2018-19  
Lightworks Grant, 2018  
NYSCA, 2017  
Lightworks Grant, 2017  
Guggenheim Fellowship, 2017  
CES, Fellowship, St. Petersburg, Russia  
Wurlitzer Foundation, Taos, NM, 2017  
Rome Prize, American Academy of Rome, 2015  
Art Omi, NY, 2014  
NYSCA, 2014  
Art Matters, 2011  
NYSCA, 2011  
NYSCA, 2009  
North Dakota Historical Society Grant, 2006  
NYSCA, 2006  
Santa Fe Art Institute, Artist Residency, 2006  
Jerome Foundation, 2004  
Experimental Television Center Grant, 2004  
Ucross Foundation, Artist Residency, 2000  
NYSCA, 1999  
NYSCA, 1998  
National Foundation for Jewish Culture, 1997  
New York Foundation for the Arts, 1997  
Jerome Foundation, 1997  
Vito Russo Award, 1996  
Paul Robeson Funding Exchange, 1995  
Astraea Foundation, 1995  
Art Matters Grant, 1990  
Art Matters Grant, 1989