

Sign up for monthly art deliveries on our Patreon!



## Julia Louis-Dreyfest Interviews Kathy Kasic (MINT Film Festival)

September 15, 2018 in Interview, Film

Julia Louis-Dreyfest and Waste Division are teaming up to help sponsor the DREYFEST EXPERIMENTAL & MUSIC FILMS block at MINT Film Festival Saturday, September 15th at 2905 Montana Ave. in downtown Billings, MT. Here we have an interview with director Kathy Kasic about her featured piece “The Stainless Stealer Steals the Universe.” Waste on...

# WASTE DIVISION

Art Collective

Welcome to the Waste Lands

Dreyfest

Visual Art

Music

Literature

Podcasts

Projects

No Good Scum



by Jordan Finn

[Shop](#)[Contact Us](#)[Become A Contributor](#)**Where did this idea for "The Stainless Stealer Steals the Universe" originate?**

The owners of Tippet Rise loaned the Stainless Stealer from the Hirshhorn Museum in DC. It was deep in a storage space, where it was confined and out of sight. At Tippet Rise, because of the projector and space considerations, it had to be placed in the corner of the concert hall, so it felt as though it went unnoticed. I was making other poetic films and documentaries for Tippet Rise, and they asked me to make one about the sculpture to bring some visibility to it. So I read lots of books about Calder, and became particularly drawn to his pathway going from engineer to artist. I loved this scientific-artistic mix, the planetary motion and inherent playfulness in his sculptures. I eventually drafted a script where I imagined his sculpture to be absorbing, or stealing the universe like a black hole, inverting the artwork to be a reflection, a window into the universe. I wanted it to be about the expansiveness of space and the simultaneous simplicity of our human state, about how we try to tap into the movement, colors and notes of the universe, but our vision and hearing is so limited. It's about finding what would make us all realize we are together in this life, on one small planet. While we were shooting, I felt as though I imagined Calder there, that I was a conduit for him, bringing life to the work. I hope he would like it if he were alive.

**What were some of the roads not taken when delineating the short? Or did you have a firm sense of how you wanted this film to look and feel from the get-go?**

The film followed the script somewhat closely. We thought about having someone sing, but it didn't fit. I did want more leaves flying around, but it worked without that. The projections into the sculpture of the Sun, Earth and Moon were much more exciting than we realized. I wanted to shoot that for hours. Each time the sculpture moved it created a new pattern with different movement and meaning. I realized at some point that I had to stop or we would never finish shooting.

**Immediately I felt an obvious yet strong sense of suspension when watching this short. What were some of the qualities that you wanted both the sculpture, the music, and by default the film to be unified by?**

I wanted the sense of circular movement. Our lives are defined by cycles, by orbits, by circles and spheres. The sculpture had to move how Calder intended, the Earth

had to spin and the music had to play in rhythm with the Earth and sculpture. Everything had to be in motion.

**The music has a very sculptural feel to it in the same way the film has a musical rhythm to it. How did you collaborate with Julien Brocal and the composition itself? Did one come before the other or was there a reflexive birthing of both the music and the film itself?**

We had no idea how the music would work until Julien arrived two days before. He just about composed the piece on the spot. I said - Julien - I want it to feel like it is moving in a circle. And he said ah yes, like this? And he played the start that was perfect, an idea he had being loosely playing around with already. While we were shooting he didn't have the middle of the piece fully worked out, so I said don't worry, just play the beginning and the end! And that's really all we needed on camera. He finished the piece about two days later. Julien is really a musical genius.

**For a film so deceptively minimalistic there's a lot going on. Did you have a larger and general message that you wanted your film to convey or did you want the film's function to remain ambiguous with these mediums and images speaking for themselves, until the cryptic poem at the short's end?**

The producer Mickey and I had been having many conversations about our planet and about how we are all connected to each other. I often imagine myself standing on the moon, looking at the Earth, feeling how tiny I am, how small my problems, and how we are all alone on this one planet together in a vast universe. I love that image the astronauts from Apollo 8 saw where they were standing on the moon looking at the Earth rise, small and distant.

I wanted people to become human again, to have empathy, to treat each other as we are all one Earth, and to treat life with more value than we do. I wanted to show how art is capable of allowing us to feel the expansiveness of the universe, to see the Earth as small, to show us our unique connection to each other. If we could comprehend that there is more out there than we realize, like the last line in Peter Halstead's poem at the end, perhaps we can make steps towards greater empathy between us.

Something that particularly struck me was the way *The Stainless Stealer* functions as a conduit or intermediary between man (the piano player) and space (the spheres). How did you like to think about the installation (*The Stainless Stealer*) when considering art and reflection in the consummation of your film?

Yes, for me the *Stainless Stealer* is definitely the conduit between humans and space, between art and nature, between life and death. The sculpture allows us to reflect, first on the very material of stainless steel and then on the window of the projected planets in the universe. Julien becomes the human- small, fragile and questioning of our larger humanity. Maybe he is asking, will we ever find a vision for living on our planet peacefully, where we recognize our place in the universe?



♥ 0 Likes   ♥ Share

Prev / Next

Comments (0)

Newest First

Subscribe via e-mail

Preview POST COMMENT...