

## **Fred Camper**

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## **Short Bio**

I am an artist, and a writer and lecturer on film, art, and photography. I have taught at several colleges and universities, have been publishing articles on cinema since I was 18, have been an art critic and arts journalist from 1989 until 2007, and have been working on the cinema-inspired art I am now exhibiting, photo-based digital prints, since 2002. By my mid-teens, I was interested in math, physics, poetry, classical music, and cinema, especially in avant-garde film (Brakhage, Markopoulos, Kubelka, Breer) and classical Hollywood (Hitchcock, Hawks, Ford). By 17, I was trying to make my own films, and was writing my earliest film criticism. By my early 20s I had a number of critical articles published, completed five 16mm films, and by 1984 had made a version of *SN*. By then my film ideas had grown impossibly ambitious in comparison to my resources, while I had already, for other reasons, been thinking about combining multiple still photographs in ways that would be somewhat cinematic, something I continued to think about for two decades. Then, in 2002, I started taking digital photos. I first began completing art works using them in 2005, and began exhibiting in September, 2007.

## **Publications**

*My Web site, [www.fredcamper.com](http://www.fredcamper.com), has a large amount of my film writing, and some of my art writing.*

On January 14, 2023, my book, *Seeking Brakhage*, was published by Eyewash Press in Paris. It is 445 pages, with 56 color stills from Brakhage films that I made and selected, and collects my writings on the filmmaker Stan Brakhage from 1966 to the present, and is available in print and ebook form.

I began publishing on film in 1967, and my film writing has appeared in a wide variety of books, catalogues, and periodicals - both academic and general interest. Filmmakers I've published on include Roberto Rossellini, Josef von Sternberg, Douglas Sirk, Kenji Mizoguchi, Frank Borzage, Claude Lanzmann, Stan Brakhage, Ernie Gehr, Robert Breer, Ron Rice, Hollis Frampton, George Landow, Su Friedrich, Louis Klahr, Janie Geiser, and many others. I've written on sound and film and on the differences between cinema and video. Periodicals I've published in include *Film Culture*, *Artforum*, *Screen* (UK), *The Journal of the University Film and Video Association*, *The New Art Examiner*, *Spiral*, *Motion Picture*, *Cinema* (UK), *The Center Quarterly*, the *Chicago Reader*, the *Soho Weekly News*, *Boston After Dark*. I've also

written essays for books, exhibition catalogues, monographs. A number of my articles have been reprinted in books, anthologies of critical writing, and catalogues, and my work has been discussed in books on film and film criticism. My writing on film has been translated into French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Polish, Croatian, Slovenian, Lithuanian, Chinese, and Japanese.

I wrote on film for the *Chicago Reader* from 1986 until 2011, both long reviews and over 1,000 capsule reviews, and have written for many scholarly film periodicals. I've lectured on avant-garde film extensively in North America, and throughout the world. I've also written extensively on narrative film, and on other types of cinema.

In addition to writing and publishing about film beginning in the late 1960s, I began writing and publishing on art in 1989, and was a close to full time arts journalist (writing about painting, photography, sculpture, film, video, and other media), principally for the *Chicago Reader* but also for *ArtNEWS*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *American Craft*, *The New Art Examiner*, and other publications, 1993-2007. Most of my art writing has been on contemporary art, but I'm deeply engaged by art of all periods.

In 2020, I completed a 1900 word catalogue essay on the artist Vera Klemens for Zolla/Liberman Gallery. This was to accompany her solo show in April. Soon after my manuscript was accepted came the shutdown. Prior to this, I have written about ten catalogue essays for artists, for gallery shows in Chicago and New York.

### **Teaching**

1972-75: Teaching assistant, and then Instructor, Department of Cinema Studies, New York University. Taught Contemporary Cinema and a course of my own design, Four American Directors: von Sternberg, Hawks, Borzage, and Sirk.

1974: Instructor, Richmond College (now College of Staten Island). Co-taught a course in Italian cinema.

1975: Instructor, the William Paterson College of New Jersey. Taught film history.

1976-7: Instructor, Filmmaking Department, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. 1977-82: Assistant Professor and (1977-81) Chairperson, Filmmaking Department, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Taught filmmaking, film history, film aesthetics, graduate seminars, and advised graduate and undergraduate students on their work. Member, Faculty Senate; Chairperson, School Budget Committee.

1997: Visiting Instructor, Photography, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Taught a reading course in art issues.

2000: Visiting Instructor, Film History, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Taught a course of my own design, American Film Melodrama.

2007: Senior Lecturer, Film Department, University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, teaching a graduate seminar.

2010-present: Adjunct Instructor, Columbia College, Chicago, teaching an introductory film course, Moving Image Art, a course on *The Searchers* and its influences, Cinema Notebooks, World Cinema I and World Cinema II.

2012-present: Lecturer, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In Fall 2012 I taught American Cinema of the 1950s, and in Fall 2015, a course I designed, *Cities in Cinema*. Since Spring 2013 I have been teaching first year English and writing courses of my own design, Writing About Art and Film, Writing About Film, and Writing About Art

## **Art Work**

### EXHIBITIONS

#### SOLO

"Figments," Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York, September 10 through October 9, 2009.

Exhibit at Caro d'Offay Gallery, Chicago, June 14, 2008, through August 2.

"Trips," at Beyond Baroque, Venice California, October 19, 2007, through December 15, 2007.

#### GROUP

Multiple Perspectives, (three-person show), Evanston Art Center, March 24 - April 22, 2018

Bridgeport Art Center, annual competition show, 2018

Bridgeport Art Center, annual competition show, 2016 (second prize)

Bridgeport Art Center, annual competition show, 2015 (second prize for photography)

Artists of Eastbank Spring Show, April 19 through May 10, 2013

Artwork 6, January 19 through February 1, 2013, Sullivan Galleries of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Critical Encounters, Image & Implication, Faculty Exhibition, at Columbia College Chicago, 600 S. Michigan, 8th Floor, March 3 through August 1, 2011.

Répertoire, Zolla/Lieberman Gallery, Chicago, February 18, through May 5, 2011

David Leonardis Gallery, Chicago December 4, 2009, through May 29, 2010.

Humanities Residential Art Show, Pacifica Graduate Institute, Carpinteria, California, August 13 through August 29, 2009. This show included the complete *Details 1: Largo Argentina, Rome*.

Group show, Born of the Moment and Method: Photography, Scans & Video, at Walter Randel Gallery, New York, New York, December 12, 2008 through February 7, 2009.

Group show, "FOTOWERK 2007," FLATFILEgalleries, Chicago, September 7-October 26, 2007.

### PRESS COVERAGE OF MY WORK

Print articles are below. The link above leads to a page that includes Web and audio coverage. Review of my exhibit at Caro d'Offay Gallery, by Michael Weinstein, from *Newcity*, July 3, 2008.

Critic's Choice by Noah Berlatsky, *Chicago Reader*, June 12, 2008.

A review by Victor Cassidy, *Focus*, April 2008.

An interview with me by John Neff, *BAT 5*, 2007.

## COLLECTIONS

### Corporate

Deloitte, Chicago

Tandemodus, Chicago

### Individual

Kian S. and Ursula Bergstrom, Chicago

Amy Bodman, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Marilyn Brakhage, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada Rosa

Ileana Boudet and Felipe Herba, Santa Monica, California

Steven Conrad, Chicago.

David Coons, ArtScans Studio, Culver City, California.

Robert Edelstein and Janet Hutter, New York

Terry Evans, Chicago

Daniel Eyny, New York

Yaniv Eyny and Amy Vogel Eyny, New York

Ernie Gehr and Myrel Glick, Brooklyn, New York

Lois Greenfield and Stuart Liebman, New York

Joe and Carol Hall, Chicago

Brian Robert Hischer, Pleasantville, Illinois

Tim Hunter, Los Angeles

JB Mabe, Chicago

Sarah Markgraf and Gregg Biermann, Hackensack, New Jersey

William Thurmond, Chicago

Richard Modiano and Gail Takamine, Mar Vista, California

Herbert R. and Paula Molner, Chicago and Aspen

John J. Murphy, New York

Harvey Nosowitz and D'Anne Bodman, Carlisle, Massachusetts

Matt Smith, Chicago

Michael Strasser and Patricia Zedalis, New York

David Sterritt and Mikita Brottman, Baltimore, Maryland

Jeremy Sterritt and Tanya Van Sant, New York, New York

Christopher and Deborah Taw, Wisconsin

Scott Trotter, Chicago

Carolyn Faber, Chicago

Private collections, Chicago

Private collection, Duluth, Minnesota

### **Films Made**

*Joan Goes to Misery* (1967, 8 minutes, 16mm, sound).

*A Sense of the Past* (1967, 4 minutes, 16mm, silent).

*Dan Potter* (1968, 39 minutes, 16mm, silent).  
*Welcome to Come* (1968, 3 minutes, 16mm, sound).  
*Bathroom* (1969, 25 minutes, 16mm, silent).  
*Ghost* (1976, 1 minute, super-8, silent).  
*SN* (1984, c. 110 minutes, super-8, silent)

### **Education**

S.B., Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1971.  
M.A. Degree in Cinema Studies, New York University, 1974. Student in the Ph. D. program in Cinema Studies, New York University, 1971-76, completed most coursework toward Ph. D.

### **Lectures**

I've given lectures and introduced lecture-screenings on film around the world, in Turin, Naples, Madrid, Hong Kong, Brazil, Poland (four different cities), Croatia (Zagreb, Split, and Dubrovnik), and at various public events, conferences, and colleges and universities in New York City (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York University, American Museum of the Moving Image, Anthology Film Archives); Toronto (opening speaker and participant, International Experimental Film Congress, 1989; Cinematheque Ontario, 1997); San Francisco (San Francisco Cinematheque, the San Francisco Art Institute); Berkeley (The Pacific Film Archive at the University of California), Los Angeles (the LA Filmforum); Toledo, Ohio (the University Film and Video Association, 2004); Waterville, Maine (Colby College); Woodstock, New York; Norman, Oklahoma; Boston; Cambridge, Mass; Andover, Mass. I was a speaker-participant at the Dartmouth College (conference on the films of Douglas Sirk, 1997). I've introduced a number of programs of both avant-garde and classical Hollywood cinema at Northwestern University and the University of Chicago.

### **Curating and Consulting**

In 2017, one of two judges for the Bridgeport Art Center annual competition. In 2005, I was a juror in the 25 FPS International Film Festival, Zagreb. I curated and spoke on two programs of avant-garde films presented in Naples, Italy, in 2002, and a four program series of Brakhage films in Brazil in 2003, as well as a number of other programs of avantgarde films. I curated and spoke on four programs of Brakhage films in Warsaw, 2003, and spoke on four Brakhage programs at the Hong Kong International Film Festival in April 2004. In 2005 I organized two national tours for the filmmaker Peter Kubelka. In 1980, curated a circulating three-program film series, *By Brakhage*, for the American Federation of Arts, and wrote accompanying booklet. I curated and wrote the catalogue entries for the collection of experimental films distributed by Audio-Brandon, 1977. In 1965 I cofounded, and then ran, the MIT Film Society.

### **Awards**

Second Prize, Bridgeport Art Center competition, 2018.  
Second Prize for photo-based work, Bridgeport Art Center competition, 2016.

Anthology Film Archives' "Film Preservation Honor," 2001. This award has only gone to a small handful of writers in the over a decade that it had been offered up to 2001.

Lisagor award, 1999, given to Chicago journalists; mine was for the most outstanding article in arts journalism, *Men on the Street*, on two Chicago street photographers.

### **Selected Other Activities**

2017, co-juror, with James Yood, Bridgeport Art Center Competition.

In 2002-2003, I was a consultant on the two-disc DVD set, by Brakhage, issued by Criterion, selected to be "his eyes" (as Criterion put it) in supervising the transfers; I also wrote the liner notes and a short biography. One of the world's few "Brakhage experts," I have been writing on, showing, and lecturing on his work for almost 50 years. I also knew him reasonably well from 1967 until his death. I have curated and presented multi-program Brakhage screenings in Brazil and Poland, and lectured on Brakhage retrospectives in Hong Kong and Madrid.

I maintain many Web resources on avant-garde film-makers, the largest being on the work of Stan Brakhage, which includes a Brakhage filmography and images of strips from his films. Organized a series of seven lecture-screenings, delivering three of them myself, which constituted an introduction to film history, at the Arts Club of Chicago, 1998-1999.

From 1995-1998 delivered regular short radio commentaries on WBEZ on current art and photography exhibits in Chicago.

I was a founding member of, and active participant in, the Chicago Art Critics Association, 1998-2009.

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In 1995 and again in 1999, appeared on *Chicago Tonight*, a Chicago television program on WTTW discussing current art exhibits.

In 1994, panel member, discussion at N.A.M.E. Gallery, Chicago, on the influence of Robert Smithson on recent artists.

In 1987, one of two jurors, Onion City Film Festival, Chicago.

1965-71: Co-founded, and either programmed or co-programmed, and wrote numerous program notes for, The M.I.T. Film Society.