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VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP ANNOUNCES SPRING 2024 SALON EVENT SERIES



Image caption: Still from *Home R Where The Heart Is* (2019) by Blake Andrews/Barnyardia event at VSW presented on April 25.

Rochester, NY (January 19, 2024) **Visual Studies Workshop (VSW)**, the nationally-known nonprofit center dedicated to experimental and expansive approaches to photography and media arts, announces its 2024 Spring VSW Salon + Workshop event series.

Tara Merenda Nelson, Curator of VSW says, “The VSW Salon is unlike any other art engagement in the Rochester area. This season we invite participants to play experimental video games, gather in the studio with internationally renowned artists, join an online presentation by a scholar of visual culture, and enjoy playful screenings from the Visual Studies Workshop film archive. If you are looking for an expansive experience in an intimate setting, the VSW Salon is for you.”

This Spring, Visual Studies Workshop will host filmmakers, photographers, gaming artists, and other experimental and boundary-pushing media artists from the UK, Perry, Brooklyn, Long Island and NYC, NY; Providence, RI; and beyond. The VSW Salon film screenings, artist talks, interactive events, and installations will explore wide-ranging topics and themes including archival engagement; choreography and movement; experimental gaming; imperialism; colonialism; and more. A detailed schedule is below.

The [VSW Salon](#) is a bi-monthly event series in the VSW microcinema featuring film screenings, artist talks, Community Curator events, performances, photo presentations, and conversations. The VSW Salon showcases the work of local and national artists, and invites them to present their work in an intimate “microcinema” equipped to show 16mm, Super 8, digital photography and video on state of the art equipment.

Most VSW Salon events begin at 7pm, occasionally preceded by a one hour Open Studio with the current VSW Resident Artists. All events are in-person (at 31 Prince Street, Rochester, NY) unless otherwise indicated, with limited seating. Many Salon events are also streamed, with videos available post-event on [Twitch](#).

All Salon events are pay-what-you-choose, with a suggested donation of \$10. VSW Members attend for free. ASL interpreters will be made available upon request at least two weeks before the event. Email accommodations@vsw.org with access questions.

Click [here](#) for a PDF of the Spring 2024 VSW Salon calendar, and to read about past Salon events.

VSW SALON, SPRING 2024

Thursday, January 25, 7 pm

Peggy Ahwesh: OR119 Screening

Visual Studies Workshop Project Space Resident and experimental film and video artist Peggy Ahwesh (Brooklyn, NY) will present *OR119*— her recent collaboration with filmmaker Jacqueline Goss (Tivoli, NY) – a theoretical musical based on the ideas of radical psychologist Wilhelm Reich. *OR119* includes quotations by Reich set to songs and imaginary conversations between Reich and a number of contemporary feminist thinkers.

This event includes a film screening and discussion with Ahwesh and one of the stars of the film: filmmaker and longtime collaborator Jennifer Montgomery (Hyde Park, MA). VSW Curator Tara Nelson will host the post-screening discussion. [More info and registration.](#)

This event will take place in person and on VSW's TWITCH channel

Thursday, February 8, 7 pm

SLUDGE Film Screening

The Visual Studies Workshop Film Archive contains more than 5,000 16mm films primarily originating from the Rochester Public Library and regional universities. 16mm film is media evidence of the cultural values of 20th century America, a format both dictating and reflecting educational standards and national viewpoints of yesteryear. Film archives are left to reckon with this cultural heritage, confronting a varied field of broadcast values that, in 2024, can feel strange and distant, yet foundational and familiar.

SLUDGE takes its name from an extrasensory TikTok fad of simultaneously showing two or more unrelated videos on one screen – an extreme example of the evolution of attention spans. How can we confront old media with our new attention spans and global perspectives? The ***SLUDGE*** Film series offers an evening's experiment of mashed up titles and topics from VSW's 16mm collection, making new meaning from old formats and playing with new tempos of media consumption. This series is curated and projected by Mary Lewandowski, VSW's Curatorial & Research Associate. [More info and registration.](#)

Thursday, February 22, 7 pm

The world like a jewel in the hand - Unlearning imperial plunder II: A film screening and discussion with Ariella Aïsha Azoulay (*Online Event*)

Ariella Aïsha Azoulay (Israel/USA) is an artist, filmmaker, author, curator and theorist of visual culture. For more than ten years, her work has focused on developing and demonstrating potential history, a radical concept that contends with imperial violence and erasure. Azoulay defines potential history as “a form of being with others, both living and dead, across time, against the separation of the past from the present, colonized peoples from their worlds and possessions, and history from politics.” *The world like a jewel in the hand* is the second film in her series titled *Unlearning imperial plunder*, which goes beyond the movement to repatriate looted museum objects, and questions the very foundation of imperialism. Azoulay's film, within this widened landscape, focuses on the destruction of the Jewish Muslim world in North Africa. Her film insists on making it imaginable and inhabitable again.

The screening of *The world like a jewel in the hand - Unlearning imperial plunder II* will be followed by a virtual discussion with Ariella Aïsha Azoulay and Hernease Davis, VSW's Assistant Curator of Education and Public Programs. [More information and registration.](#)

This event will take place in person and on VSW's TWITCH channel

Thursday, March 14

Open Studio with Project Space Residents Sophie Schwartz and Robert Doyle

6 pm: Open Studios

7 pm: Artist Talks in the Microcinema (in-person and on TWITCH)

8 pm: Open Studios

2024 VSW Project Space Residents Sophie Schwartz (New Haven, CT & New York, NY) and Robert Doyle (Perry, NY) will open their studios to the public and discuss their respective practices in an Artist Talk held in the VSW microcinema.

[Sophie Schwartz](#) is a Cleveland-born photographer and book artist living in between New Haven and New York. Their research positions collaboration as an entry point to investigate grief, memory, and queerness. At the core of their practice are interpersonal relationships and the dance of making images with other people.

[Robert Doyle](#) is a photographer and artist interested in generational memory passed not only through stories, but through place, landscape, location, image, sound, and smell. His work explores the exchange/mutation/synthesis of reality and memory, and how the mind edits, files and stores images & memories.

[More information and registration.](#)

This event will take place in person and on VSW's TWITCH channel

Thursday, March 28 7 pm

In Dialogue with Mara Ahmed

[Mara Ahmed](#) (Long Island, NY) is an interdisciplinary artist and award-winning activist filmmaker whose documentaries center marginalized voices and communities grappling with nuanced experiences around racism, colonization and islamophobia. She studied art at Nazareth College, and film at the Visual Studies Workshop and the Rochester Institute of Technology. As part of VSW's [In Dialogue](#) series, Ahmed will present a program of her own work along with films she has researched and chosen from the VSW Film/Video Archive. She will also present excerpts from her latest film, *Return to Sender: Women of Color in Colonial Postcards & the Politics of Representation*, which was awarded a NYSCA film grant. The evening will culminate in a discussion with Ahmed and Hernease Davis, VSW's Assistant Curator of Education and Public Programs. [More information and registration.](#)

Thursday, April 11

Open Studios with Rianna Jade Parker, SLUDGE screening

6-7 pm: Open Studios with Rianna Jade Parker

7-9 pm: SLUDGE screening in the Microcinema

Meet VSW Project Space Resident, [Rianna Jade Parker](#) (South London, UK) as she opens her studio to the public for questions and conversations. Parker is a writer, historian, critic and

curator based in South London where she studied her MA in Contemporary Art Theory at Goldsmiths College. Her practice-based research in fine art uses various manners and methodologies of inquiry, embracing a pluralistic approach towards research that unfolds through the written word, moving images and printed matter.

7-9 pm: SLUDGE screening in the Microcinema

The SLUDGE Film series offers an evening's experiment of mashed up titles and topics from VSW's 16mm collection, finding new meaning in old formats and playing with our new tempos of media consumption. 16mm film is media evidence of the cultural values of 20th century America, a format both dictating and reflecting educational standards and national viewpoints of yesteryear. SLUDGE takes its name from a contemporary TikTok fad of watching multiple unrelated videos simultaneously. How can we confront old media with our new attention spans and global perspectives? This series is curated and projected by Mary Lewandowski, VSW's Curatorial & Research Associate. [More information and registration.](#)

Thursday, April 25 7 pm

hardware and software by Barnyardia

VSW will host a one-night pop-up arcade with Barnyardia, a NYC-based experimental games collective pushing the boundaries of gameplay, interaction, and controllers. Their work focuses on live, collaborative play through subversive or silly game mechanics and alt-controllers. Barnyardia (New York, NY) will have an interactive installation of a dozen games of varying length for audience members to play and participate in. The evening will culminate in a live performance. This event is curated by nilson carroll, Assistant Curator and Preservation Specialist at VSW.

Barnyardia is Blake Andrews and Frank DeMarco. [Frank DeMarco](#) creates games, game hardware, and arcade installations. He has cooked and sold chicken nuggets as a game for years in various forms, one of which is a device called the Playzing which is a toaster oven that is also a video game console. His games have been featured at alt.ctrl GDC, Experimental Gameplay Workshop, MAGFest, Wonderville, and Play NYC, and have been covered in PC Gamer, Polygon, VICE Motherboard, and Kill Screen. He is currently working on a web game called Cakefoot for release in 2024.

[Blake Andrews](#) is a game designer, illustrator, animator, and instructor living in Brooklyn, New York. Blake has published hundreds of short experimental web games since 2013 on websites like itch.io and Glorious Trainwrecks. Primarily, Blake has posted under the aliases snakesandrews, everythingstaken, Pumpkin Clowning, April Ghoul, and Yoke Mart. Blake has published larger scope games with the game collective JRPG Combat Systems. Blake is currently developing their No Quarter commissioned party game called Motor Away Trip.

[More information and registration.](#)

May 9-16: In Dialogue with Sarah Friedland: Social Guidance *

Opening: May 9, 7-9 pm

Gallery Hours: Monday - Friday, 10 am -6 pm

VSW Project Space Resident [Sarah Friedland](#) (New York, NY) is a filmmaker and choreographer working at the intersection of moving images and moving bodies. For this exhibition, Friedland has chosen films and videos from the VSW archives that resonate with a selection of her own videos, and created a site-specific multimedia installation for the VSW microcinema. This engaging installation focuses on the movements found in social guidance films and how they stage choreographies that attempt to mold, train, and make-up the social body. Friedland's project, *Movement Exercises Trilogy*, will be in conversation with works from the VSW archive which perform exercises, drills, and instructions for moving bodies at home, at work, and at school. [More information and registration.](#)

**rescheduled from Fall 2023*

About Visual Studies Workshop: Visual Studies Workshop nurtures experimental and expansive approaches to photography and media arts, and builds community among artists and the public through exhibitions, publications and residencies. VSW was founded in 1969 in Rochester, NY by artist and curator Nathan Lyons (1930–2016), and became one of the earliest independent, not-for-profit, artist-run spaces in the country. More than 50 years later, the organization's mission is reflected in its core programs: VSW Salon, Project Space Artist Residencies, and VSW Press. In support of VSW programs, the organization holds photography and moving image research collections and an art library for artists, critics and the general public to explore, research and reuse. vsw.org

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