

# ALTERNATIVE PROJECTIONS

Experimental film in Los Angeles, 1945 - 1980

## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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### INTERVIEW SUBJECT: Beth Block

#### Biography:

Beth Block was born in 1952 in Buffalo, New York, and has lived and worked in Los Angeles since 1977. As a filmmaker and artist, she has innovated animation techniques that have given her a prominent place in the film industry's visual effects field. She attended Kent State for her BA, starting out studying painting, but falling in love with experimental film after being exposed to work by Pat O'Neill and Stan Brakhage in a class taught by Richard Meyers. In 1976, she enrolled in the MFA program at CalArts where she produced *FILM ACHERS* (1976), a widely-screened optically printed film that has been purchased by the Library of Congress and The Canadian Filmmakers Archives.

After graduating from CalArts in 1977, she moved to Los Angeles where she continued to make experimental films and began a prominent career working in the film industry creating visual effects. Throughout the 1980s, Block produced and directed three films. *VITAL INTERESTS* (1982), her personal favorite, is a live action experimental film made in response to nuclear proliferation that condensed 10 years of radio newscasts to 15 minutes. During the 1990s, Block began compositing digital visual effects for films big budget Hollywood films.

In 2009, she made her first high definition video, *THE BATHTUB SHOT* (2009), which she describes as "an hallucinogenic daydream of the artist contemplating the procrastination of her

creative process,” and she continues to work with digital media. Her installations and digitally enhanced photographs have been exhibited at Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE), The Cinematheque, San Francisco, Los Angeles Downtown Federal Building, Los Angeles Filmforum, Southwest Alternate Media Project (SWAMP), El Paso, TX.

Block was a founding member of NewTown Pasadena Foundation, an artist-run, non-profit arts organization started in 1996, and from 1985-1995 was a Los Angeles Filmforum board member. She is a member of the Animation Guild and past member of the Cinematographer's Guild and the Writer's Guild of America, West. Her films are distributed by Canyon Cinema.

### **Filmography:**

- 2010 *Massage*, 27 min. 1080p digital, color, sound.
- 2010 *Leaky Mountain*, 11 min. 1080p digital, color, sound.
- 2009 *57 Jobless*, 26 min., 1080p digital, color, sound.
- 2009 *The Bathtub Shot*, 11min., 1080p digital, color, sound.
- 2007 *True or False*, 7 min. b&w, silent, large screen 720i video installation.
- 1989 *Just For Fun*, 40 min. 16mm, color, sound.
- 1986 *The Art of Survival*, 30 min, 16mm, sound.
- 1982 *Vital Interests*, 15 min. 16mm, b&w, sound.
- 1977 *The Lovers*, 3 min. 16mm, color, sound
- 1977 *Twelve*, 10 min., 16mm, color, sound.
- 1976 *Film Achers*, 8 min., 16mm, color, sound.
- 1974 *Titles*, 20 min., 16mm, color, sound.
- 1974 *Graduated*, 3 min. 16mm. b&w, sound.
- 1972 *Nocturnal Omission*, 10 min. 16mm, b&w, sound.

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**Interviewer:** Adam Hyman

**Cameraperson:** Chris Komives

**Transcript Reviewer:** Elizabeth Hesik

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**Interviewer:** Adam Hyman

**Cameraperson:** Chris Komives

**Transcript Reviewer:** Elizabeth Hesik

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**Interview date:** February 14, 2010

**Interviewer:** Adam Hyman

**Cameraperson:** Chris Komives

**Transcript Reviewer:** Elizabeth Hesik

## **TAPE 1: BETH BLOCK**

**01:07:21**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Okay. Tell me about what did you study at Kent State?

**01:07:52**

**BETH BLOCK**

I went to Kent State to study painting and did that for two years and then you have a mid residency review and my painting teacher very gently suggested I try something else. I was pretty devastated until I, the next term took a film class and that was it, no looking back. [technical]

**01:08:21**

**ADAM HYMAN**

What do you remember about your film classes at Kent, what, tell me about your learning about film at Kent State and what did you learn?

**01:08:35**

**BETH BLOCK**

I was so fortunate to be in Richard Meyers' class. I remember most of it despite a lot of artificial stimulants. I remember my first film class, he prefaced the class with if you're smart, you'll walk out of here now because this is going to take all your time and all your money and it's going to bring you a lot of grief and so I suggest each of you just drop this class right now, which is of course a good enticement to keep going.

**01:09:08**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

He was an amazing teacher, an amazing human being, even though we were really isolated, he was responsible for bringing in the Ann Arbor Film Festival and putting us in touch with the rest of the world. He brought filmmakers, we had Gunvor Nelson come, we had Stan Brakhage come, we had James Broughton come to this little school in Ohio that was distinguished only by the fact that four people got shot there.

**01:09:39**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Richard was just holding this entire thing together. We had weekly film screening called the Tuesday Cinema Film Society and we would balance between experimental films and moneymakers. So one week we would show Hollis Frampton and the next week we would show *KING KONG* and interestingly enough we would sometimes get local bands to play and one of the bands who really enjoyed playing with *KING KONG* was Devo. So it was a very strange mixture of stuff, *REEFER MADNESS* was a big moneymaker.

**01:10:11** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

So we would do one or two of those shows and that would finance all the stuff we really wanted to show. So it was a very small, not even department. It was Richard and maybe five or six film majors and then another five or six who would take the first class and then go on. But as part of the class and as a filmmaker, you would participate in his films, you would be in his films and he really brought a lot that, much more than you would have expected in a small mid-western school.

**01:10:48** **ADAM HYMAN**

So are you in any of Richard Meyers' films?

**01:10:49** **BETH BLOCK**

Yes. I'm in 3773.

**01:10:54** **ADAM HYMAN**

What is that film, what are you in it?

**01:10:56** **BETH BLOCK**

Well most of the lead characters were his friend Jake and his wife Pat and the same cast of characters. He worked with his family. And his students and well-wishers would come and be extras. So we would be brides, we would be spectators; we'd be riding on trucks. We would do whatever he told us to do and we thought he was so sophisticated because he had a Bolex, he was shooting sync sound with his Bolex and that was way beyond anything we were doing.

**01:11:30** **ADAM HYMAN**

What was Richard Meyers doing then?

**01:11:32** **BETH BLOCK**

Making movies.

**01:11:34** **ADAM HYMAN**

How did he end up at Kent State?

**01:11:36** **BETH BLOCK**

He was born in Massillon, Ohio, which he's quite proud of. Shot all of his films in that area. I don't know if he attended Kent State. I can't remember, but that's where his family was and family plays a big part in his work. And that's just where he was and he was a filmmaker and he shot what was there. And that's what he taught us.

**01:11:58** **ADAM HYMAN**

What films did you see there that had the most impact on you?

**01:12:02**

**BETH BLOCK**

No question, two films, *SAUGUS SERIES* by Pat O'Neill and *ZORNS LEMMA* by Hollis Frampton, which he showed and, you know, he mentioned it for a certain amount of time and after class was over. I stayed after class. I think I watched it. It's an hour long film. I watched it five or six times, you know, because you're sort of filling in the pattern there and I watched that thing all day and each time was newly blown away by it.

**01:12:31**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

So I think those were definitely the two biggest influences.

**01:12:34**

**ADAM HYMAN**

What did *SAUGUS SERIES* do for you?

**01:12:38**

**BETH BLOCK**

It sort of opened up the world of optical printing. We did have initially two Bolexes, a Bolex body as a projector and then a Bolex that was of course half the camera department that you could bolt down on this board and like all optical printers the Bolex was shooting the image projected in the other camera. And there was, you know, Bolex's are not known for their great registration and the lens was not that great, but that was a start. And so I had developed an interest there.

**01:13:13**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I think at the time he was making his film *ZOCALO*, which was his optical printer film, he shot in Mexico City in Zocalo Square. And as a film student respecting and liking your teacher a lot, that has a big influence on you. And so I can't remember specifically what it was about optical printing, but I was drawn there and I was very much bitten by the bug and I believe it was 1974 Ann Arbor Film Festival is where I saw *SAUGUS SERIES*.

**01:13:42**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I was introduced to Pat's work and that just blew me out of the water partially because of the imagery and also because Pat like Richard and unlike a lot of other experimental filmmakers, they both used a very strong sense of dramatic structure so in that way I'm fairly traditional. I like a film with a beginning, medium and end even though, especially in Pat's film to say why a hat floating on a piece of water is an end, you can't really say. You can't really say why is this funny? You know, I would always show that film to my optical printing class.

**01:14:21**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

It always got a laugh. Why is that funny? It just is and that's something that Pat does very well, I don't know if it's unconsciously, but I think it's not done here, it's done here. I think it was the combination of the beautiful imagery and the structure is what really made me love it.

**01:14:42**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Hollis' film though is, you know, it's not quite the same, well no, *ZORNS LEMMA* has a really fabulous...

**01:14:49**

**BETH BLOCK**

Right, he's a structuralist.

**01:14:50**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Yeah.

**01:14:51**

**BETH BLOCK**

So that has been a life long influence on me. I like a film that goes somewhere. I'm puzzled by films that start and stop and you don't know why are you stopping here? Why are there three things instead of four things or two things? And with his film, I haven't seen it in years, but as I recall it's about the alphabet. And so when you get to the end of the alphabet, you know the movie's over and I'm a simple soul and that appeals to me.

**01:15:23**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Cool. I just saw it last week. After the, after the alphabet ends, there's an additional ten minute segment with two people walking across a snowy field as additional dialogue goes over on the soundtrack. Do you recollect that part of it?

**01:15:38**

**BETH BLOCK**

No.

**01:15:39**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Is that; is that part of the experience of the film for you?

**01:15:41**

**BETH BLOCK**

No. That's interesting. I totally forgot that. I remember the symbols being replaced by the letters and that's what stuck with me so I'm sorry missed that show. I was dying to see it again. [technical]

**01:15:59**

**ADAM HYMAN**

So what drew you then from Kent State to CalArts?

**01:16:07**

**BETH BLOCK**

Pat O'Neill and the weather. I hated winter. I grew up in Buffalo. It was great as a kid, but I got a brochure of CalArts and there was a picture, I still remember the picture, a black and white picture of two kids sitting outside with a caption that said January and so I decided only to apply to schools in Florida and California. So Will Hindle I was interested in studying with him at Tampa and Cal Arts was my first choice.

**01:16:38**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

When I got accepted there to study with Pat, it was my dream and there was no question about it. It still is one of the happiest days of my life.

**01:16:47**

**ADAM HYMAN**

What had, what films had you completed prior to that? What films did you complete at Kent State?

**01:16:52**

**BETH BLOCK**

Well my first film, which I had conveniently blocked from my memory until I started shooting this USC class and was fairly despondent over their first projects and then I remembered mine was your classic suicide lots of blood in the sink slitting your wrist films that was just in retrospect appalling and mostly out of focus. Then I stayed in Super 8 and made sort of a stop motion film with turtles and then as I was doing a duo major in the honor's college and the art school and my thesis film there was called *NOCTURNAL OMISSION*, which was heavily influenced by Richard.

**01:17:35**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

It was black and white, fairly surreal imagery, dream sequence type of thing. No that wasn't my thesis film. My thesis film was *TITLES*, a film I am still embarrassed about to this day because it's all up here and I had reasons for doing everything, but of course once the film is over you forget the reasons and all that's left is the film and it's incredibly boring and academic and I can't remember what I was thinking at the time.

**01:18:13**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

It's the film I show least of all of every film I ever made. I haven't seen it myself in probably 30 years.

**01:18:19**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Sounds pretty like a very structural hit, starts from a structuralist place we'll say.

**01:18:24**

**BETH BLOCK**

It started and ended from a structuralist place. What I remember is this soundtrack. I had been doing these sound projects where I was overlaying songs, jazz songs in weird time signatures, like "Take Five" by Dave Brubeck over a Sousa march. Great in concept, nothing but noise when you put it together, but I couldn't give up that thing and composed a soundtrack in 12 parts that was singing and, yeah I still can sing the soundtrack. I don't even remember what else, but there was very specific mental reasons for everything that I don't think came through in the final project.

**01:19:09**

**ADAM HYMAN**

So what was the starting point behind *NOCTURNAL OMISSIONS*?

**01:19:15**

**BETH BLOCK**

I don't remember that. I think it was my first venture into 16 and it was much less academic and intellectual and more, more influenced by Richard. Should have stayed there and more visual, a little bit of optical printing. There was a lot of optical printing in *TITLES*. And it was more of a very abstract story line. There was no story in *TITLES*. Actually yes, there was a history of art. [laugh] So that, that's what that film was about.

**01:19:53**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I remember it now. It was about the history of art. I showed it all in about 20 minutes.

**01:19:58**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Wow. Do you remember your philosophical take on it now?

**01:20:00**

**BETH BLOCK**

Yeah, yeah.

**01:20:01**

**ADAM HYMAN**

What was it? So this is *TITLES* that we're talking about now.

**01:20:05**

**BETH BLOCK**

Yeah. Actually I eventually ended up making, remaking that to a certain degree in the film *TWELVE* I made. But it started out with one being probably positive and negative space and form and color and time. I had a time lapse of a sun rising and falling. I can't remember what that represented, but that it went into the degradation of art and there was burning and candles and destruction. And I'm not sure exactly what it all means now, but it was very significant at the time.

**01:20:45**

**ADAM HYMAN**

And what was the nominal story line of *NOCTURNAL OMISSION*?

**01:20:50**

**BETH BLOCK**

It stared my little brother as a boy, obviously it's a pun and he's influenced by the women in his life. He's one of my friends who is quite attractive and my great grandmother... [technical]

**01:22:37**

**ADAM HYMAN**

So tell me about your, your move to CalArts.

**01:22:43**

**BETH BLOCK**

It was very welcome. When I moved to CalArts, I couldn't wait to get out of Ohio. I graduated. I always make a habit of graduating during recessions and there's never any work. So after I graduated from undergraduate school I was, I had what was called a CETA job, building trails. I was on welfare. I worked in a bar, the sleaziest bar in the entire universe, great music. I worked for the audio visual department running a follow spot for ice shows, all kinds of stuff.



**01:23:21** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And so I very much looked forward to moving out there. I had saved up enough money for one term and then couldn't afford it after that. I had already broken with my parents financially and philosophically and so I was all on my own. So I went out there. I was working more than I was going to school. There were three women in the film school out of 80. No women faculty when I started. I loved it. I initially was in very high resistance to the more traditional filmmaking.

**01:23:59** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

The school was run by Sandy Mckendrick and I was supposed to have taken the film production workshop and dramatic structure and film grammar and I of course knowing more than all these teachers lobbied heavily to get out of these classes and then after a year had to go back on my hands and knees and beg him to get into his classes. And he was kind enough to let me do that and that was extremely valuable even as an experimental filmmaker.

**01:24:29** **ADAM HYMAN**

Why?

**01:24:32** **BETH BLOCK**

Because of a lot of experimental films are boring, too long, they don't go anywhere and I don't think that experimentation and cohesion need to be mutually exclusive and I credit Sandy with teaching me those things.

**01:24:51** **ADAM HYMAN**

So who are the other women in the film department when you started?

**01:24:55** **BETH BLOCK**

The only other live action students were Beverly Bernacki [sp?] and Sarah Pasanin [sp?]. There were several women, many women in experimental animation and being interested in optical printing, that was always and still is visual effects. It always still falls between the cracks of it's not animation, it's not live action, it's something else and it, that's the place it was there. So I knew I wasn't an animator. I took one animation class from Jules Engel, he did the bouncing ball, which looked like a fine pancake and I went okay I'm not an animator.

**01:25:34** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

But Pat sort of had his little people and we learned so much from him. And unfortunately after one term he had a very severe illness, left the school. I think it was the following term that he was replaced by Chick Strand who was fabulous and a woman, outrageous, and for some reason they didn't bring her back. And I still don't know, you know, as a student you don't really think about teachers as people and it's interesting being on the other side of it now.

**01:26:11** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

But for whatever reason they didn't bring her back and so I would do things like go into the film school office and write on the back, blackboard help wanted, experimental filmmaker and eventually raised enough noise that Don Levy claimed me. I was a student of his for the following year and he was wonderful too and taught us as much about living as about filmmaking.

**01:26:42** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

He was very much a purist. He made one film, *HEROSTRATUS*. He was extremely particular about where he would show it and how he would show it. The niche he filled at CalArts was the depressing Friday afternoon film class where after working two jobs and doing all your school work and never sleeping, you'd go in there at four o'clock on a Friday afternoon, fight to stay awake and he would show the most outrageous films. Some of them that come to mind are *NIGHT AND FOG*. I think he showed Herzog's *IN THE LAND OF SILENCE AND DARKNESS*, one of the more difficult films I've ever seen in my life, fabulous film.

**01:27:24** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And he sort of filmed the art feature. He was responsible for the art feature niche there. And sort of merged that gap between Hollywood filmmaking and experimental filmmaking. And the lessons he taught in holding out for excellence and finding balance in your life between art and living, that's what has stayed with me all these years.

**01:27:53** **ADAM HYMAN**

Can you describe any more about Don since he's no longer with us?

**01:27:59** **BETH BLOCK**

Don Levy was more of a guru than a teacher. He was held in awe by his students. He had a masters class that had a waiting list, a huge waiting list as I recall and it was an honor to be even admitted to that class. And what went on there again much of that period is a little vague, but the depth of the questions that were asked and the openness of the people in that class were truly amazing.

**01:28:34** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

There was one woman who had mental problems... she was a painting student. It wasn't just film students. And it was like her critique was like probably ten years of psychotherapy. There was a man in the class who came out as being gay in that class and coming out not something that was really done during that time period. So he was able to establish the ambience of intimacy where it was a safe environment and you would be challenged and you would be criticized, but it was always about the work.

**01:29:21** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

It wasn't about you and so people could really open up and go really deep into that class and I've never seen anything like that before or since.

**01:29:31**

**ADAM HYMAN**

And who did you hang out with when you were at CalArts?

**01:29:37**

**BETH BLOCK**

I hung out with my dogs and lived in the back of my truck and all these guys that were wild and fairly violent and aggressive, when I took Pat's first optical printing class I stood on a ladder at the back of the class so I could see. They're all taller than me, they're all crowding up front. They would be blowing things up and killing things. It was not a real social environment. I was there to work. I wasn't there to have a relationship. I wasn't there to make friends.

**01:30:17**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I was there to make movies and that's what I did. Sarah and Beverly who I mentioned earlier just by virtue of the fact that they were women were pretty solid allies, but it was a lonely time, but I don't remember feeling lonely because I was just so into the work I was doing.

**01:30:37**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Can you describe what Pat was like as a teacher?

**01:30:41**

**BETH BLOCK**

Pat was as a teacher as he is in any other venue. Pat is probably one of the more consistent people I've ever met. He was just natural, easygoing, soft spoken. I remember the class where he first introduced the concept of traveling mats to us. And he would draw a square and a circle and a rectangle on the blackboard and explained how to hold out the circle by a rectangle. Very simple language and to me this was so profound. I had mainly been doing image manipulation, but the idea of doing compositing and matting completely opened the door to me to everything I've done since then.

**01:31:27**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

You know, first in traditional filmmaking and then in digital. And that was the class where it happened and he was not academic, he was not intellectual. He was just a quiet, regular guy who turned out this fantastic work. He didn't place emphasis. He didn't think what he was doing was particularly important. He was not really well recognized. At that point West Coast filmmakers were very much looked down upon by the East Coast filmmakers. But I would attend experimental film conferences.

**01:32:10**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

There was very little mention of what was going on in the West Coast. Usually Pat and maybe Scott Bartlett were mentioned parenthetically as yes this happens on the West Coast too, but it was a much more intellectual East Coast and also Stan Brakhage who was definitely not East Coast, but much closer in style to what was going on there than here. I think the West Coast filmmakers were more visually oriented and less academically oriented. And so Pat just made it a fun thing to do.

**01:32:50**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Yes, somebody was, who mentioned it; maybe it was David James in one of his introductions related to Frampton, which had to do with, you know, the West Coast filmmakers were seen as with all that optical printing and stuff, were just seen as like decadence.

**01:33:05**

**BETH BLOCK**

Yeah. Yeah, it was, I think it's much more visual and having first seen the West Coast films when I was living in Ohio, just the sheer change in scenery was profound. Cactus, people are making films about cactus and these spiky bushes and skies that are blue and that was just a very radical difference. You could tell that these films were not made in the East Coast by the color of the sky. They also seemed to me a light heartedness and a sort of joy of visual images that appealed to me and I guess didn't appeal to many of the East Coast filmmakers.

**01:33:51**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Hollis Frampton, the essence of the East Coast filmmaker.

**01:33:57**

**BETH BLOCK**

Yeah, but he had his own aesthetic. He was not; I don't know how to describe it. I could sort of put Jonas Mekas and Stan Brakhage, James Broughton to a certain degree, but I think he was more West Coast wasn't he.

**01:34:13**

**ADAM HYMAN**

San Francisco.

**01:34:14**

**BETH BLOCK**

Yeah. Well he had a certain visual style, but because he was working to his poetry, it did have sort of a cerebral overtone to it whereas Pat, Scott Bartlett, who else? They're the two that come to mind as being the ones that I saw during that time period. The films were driven by the images rather than by the concepts.

**01:34:45**

**ADAM HYMAN**

What about Morgan Fisher?

**01:34:49**

**BETH BLOCK**

Well I would have to definitely put him in terms of his filmmaking as more of an East Coast ideology, but he wasn't an East Coast person. Any time you try to divide people up by East Coast, West Coast, this or that you're going to find overlaps thanks goodness because that's going between the cracks and not categorizing people. As soon as you start categorizing people you eliminate any possibility for subtlety in your work or having them change the style that they're working in.

**01:35:24**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Even if Pat were to make an entirely different kind of film, he would still be a West Coast filmmaker and Morgan Fisher is a good example of someone who did live on the West Coast who ideologically speaking was probably closer to the East Coast.

**01:35:43**

**ADAM HYMAN**

So what else, do you remember any particular film discoveries also that you made that were great inspirations while you were at CalArts, things that you saw that, you know, hit you in the same way as those two films by [unintelligible]?

**01:36:01**

**BETH BLOCK**

All of Pat's films, each one that came out took it to a new level, both the sophistication of the imagery and the technical stuff. Pat did, I think it was after CalArts, do you want to go there at this point or do you want to stay at CalArts?

**01:36:25**

**ADAM HYMAN**

I'm trying to stay in CalArts.

**01:36:27**

**BETH BLOCK**

Okay. I saw so much work at CalArts that it's all sort of a blur. The films that I mainly remember were the films that Don Levy showed in his Friday class. *LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD*, *NIGHT AND FOG*, *THE LAND OF SILENCE AND DARKNESS*, all of Hertzog's films. I discovered Nicholas Roeg, through him, Goddard, Rene, that's what I remember. Interestingly because I was making experimental films, but after Pat left, I remember Chick's films, a whole different kind of filmmaking.

**01:37:16**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I need to definitely add her to the influences of West Coast filmmakers. Her films are just visual joy. The close-ups was an inspiration. Pat had a very formal camera use. He would set everything up whereas Chick, you were looking through her eyes really close up at her cutting, her invisible cutting between people and horses and water was wonderful and inspiring in a whole different way, not to mention the fact that my goodness, she's a woman, she's actually done this, outrageous.

**01:37:53**

**ADAM HYMAN**

And do you remember who else, who else was of that caliber at that time student wise?

**01:37:59**

**BETH BLOCK**

David Wilson was there, David Berry was there, Chris Casady, John Seay, Rob Lutrell, Ric Stafford, John Gianvito was one of Don's students, very much influenced by Don. John Scheele. Then there was the Sandy McKendrick group, people sort of hung around with their mentors. So that, what I've been talking about was the Pat/Don group. Sandy McKendrick had his people. Jack Valero, FX Feeney, that's all I can remember at the moment. I was, the people were secondary. [technical]

**01:39:32**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Do you remember what other things, like during your CalArts period, do you remember attending things that weren't film at CalArts that affected you in any way? So theater, music, whatever.

**01:39:45**

**BETH BLOCK**

Very little. I was working so much and making my own films and going to classes that to do anything else was quite unusual. Also I didn't have a car my first year and then the second year I bought a van and lived in it. So it wasn't really a going out thing. So the big ventures out would be to go to Film Oasis, which was huge for me, going into L.A., not having a car I can't go anywhere.

**01:40:13**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And so going to Oasis and seeing films outside of CalArts was a big treat. Oasis was a big influence.

**01:40:24**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Okay. So you know if Oasis was already, wait, was Oasis already going at that point?

**01:40:31**

**BETH BLOCK**

Uh-huh, uh-huh.

**01:40:33**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Let's, let's go ahead then, tell me about Oasis, tell me about how you discovered it, where was it screening, what were memorable screenings of it for you?

**01:40:42**

**BETH BLOCK**

Well because I didn't have a car, I couldn't really go anywhere unless I got a ride from someone. And I don't remember particular screenings. It might have been when Richard Meyers came out the first time after I moved here that I had to get there and somehow found a way to get there. But I remember Grahame [Weinbren] and Roberta [Freidman] and Pat and Beverly [O'Neill] and...

**01:41:06**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Could you mention that this is at Film Oasis again?

**01:41:08**

**BETH BLOCK**

Okay, sorry. When I would go to Film Oasis, it was a big event for me because I didn't have a car and I believe how I discovered it was when Richard Meyers had come out to do a screening there and I missed him terribly and wanted to go see there and somehow got there. And part of the allure was the venue, you know, Melrose Place and, and L.A. City which was quite a big thing. I don't remember specifically what films I saw there other than that I would go as often as I can and everything I saw was a joy to see.

**01:41:54**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Where were they speaking at?

**01:41:56**

**BETH BLOCK**

At the Theater Vanguard.

**01:42:00**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Where was the Theater Vanguard?

**01:42:02**

**BETH BLOCK**

The Theater Vanguard was I think on Melrose Place in that weird little area I haven't been to in years, sort of near the Bodhi Tree I believe where Melrose became Melrose Place and there were upscale restaurants and people could go out someplace and not have to drive there from the theater and filmmakers would go and get together afterwards. I thought that was delightful.

**01:42:30**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Do you remember, can you describe physically the Theater Vanguard?

**01:42:37**

**BETH BLOCK**

Theater Vanguard was as I recall and I hope I'm not wrong, I remember it as a large theater seating perhaps a hundred people. And that's all I recall.

**01:42:54**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Okay. Remember what the street, the lobby, décor, how do you buy tickets, okay. Did you become friendly with programming or anything like that or would you just go and leave?

**01:43:06**

**BETH BLOCK**

No, I was, I've never been shy except around people that I hold a lot of respect for, like Pat. Even to this day I get so shy around Pat and I worked for him for years and I know him well and yet the people I have the greatest respect for I approach the least and I'm not sure why that is.

**01:43:30**

**ADAM HYMAN**

So when did you start working for Pat?

**01:43:34**

**BETH BLOCK**

I don't remember what year it was, but he had set up a commercial optical printing business in his garage when we lived in Laurel Canyon. Tom Leeser I believe was there before me and then Tom left and then I came in and I worked there I think about five years and it was a combination of commercial work. I know we did some of the Superman movies and Return of the Jedi, we did the Will Vinton California Raisins commercial; that was a big thing.

**01:44:13**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

But the reason I stayed there mainly was because I was doing the optical printing on his film *WATER AND POWER* and that was just a privilege to work on and to get an insight into how he made films. Shall I elaborate there?

**01:44:29**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Yeah.

**01:44:31**

**BETH BLOCK**

One of the things that most intrigued me about Pat's films was his use of color. He has a very strange pallet, a lot of strange greens and I discovered as I was working there he had some kind of color perception thing going on. So he would pick wedges. Wedges are a way of doing exposure tests. You can determine the right exposure for a shot. And he would always go very heavy on the green side and I think it was a perceptual thing with him where he either didn't see green or for some reason he had a different way of seeing green.

**01:45:09**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And so I would always find it interesting on his films looking at the wedges, you know, there's the one where the color balance was normal, right and he would pick that one. And it was always that one and so there was a consistency there that I found very interesting and to see his process unfold, he would doodle things. I would give him phone messages or write down notes from clients and come back and there would be doodles all over to the point where you couldn't read what was on the paper.

**01:45:49**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

He was so laid back. What time should I come in? Yeah, you could come in tomorrow. Okay, when should I come in? I don't know, morning would be good. All right, early morning, late morning, you know, you couldn't get this out of him. And it would be like whatever and so that was nice in a way. He would lose his film. I have a credit in *Water and Power* - the finder of lost negatives - because he very frequently would put film rolls in the wrong box.

**01:46:24**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

As I worked with him over time I sort of found his logic and so I was able to find in the stack of 30 or 40 boxes the roll that should have been in this box that we need right now. [technical]



**01:47:06**

**BETH BLOCK**

Pat worked very intuitively. Optical printing is not an intuitive thing. You need to write down numbers and descriptions of what needed to be done and on *WATER AND POWER* these shots were...the limitation was how much film could you fit the magazine, 400 feet, ten minutes, some of these shots were ten minutes and would take all day to shoot. I remember one shot in *WATER AND POWER* that involved a birthday candle, a birthday candle and a burning calendar.

**01:47:43**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And a line up sheet would be, it would tell you what roll of film to put in, what frame to start on, what frame to end on and a description, reposition candle to bottom. And he would not be there a lot of the time. He'd be up and down from the house, he'd be running errands, he'd be doing other stuff. And I remember that one note in particular was very confusing for me and I waited for him to come back and he didn't come back and I feel bad, I'm on the clock.

**01:48:12**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Do I do the shot, do I not do the shot? Well I'll give it a try. You know it's like an eight hour shoot. I'd get done, he walks in, Pat, Pat, what do you mean by put reposition to bottom? I positioned it to bottom academy and he meant no, he wanted it bottom up here. Oh god, no, I ruined it, I ruined it. He goes ah, that'll be fine and it was fine and he liked it and it stayed in the film. So even though he would tell you what to do, he was very open to what happened in the moment.

**01:48:44**

**ADAM HYMAN**

How does that work? Like, I mean, so you, you made a good idea here actually sort of answered it, but I want to say like if you did the optical printing on Water and Power, what did Pat do?

**01:48:55**

**BETH BLOCK**

Pat did all of the motion control shooting. That was the first motion control film I'd ever seen. Our eyes and our minds, when we see something that we don't know how it's done, we want to file everything. What is that? I haven't seen that before, you know. That can't be this, it can't be this, it must be that, but it's not that. So the concept of motion control was very new at that time.

**01:49:18**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Even in commercial films. He had hooked up this now primitive system where he could take his camera out and work with this little computer and do a move that would just be say a pan and a zoom in. And then he could take that information, go back in the studio, stick a plastic bag over his head, go like this and do the same move. He would then give me those elements. I'd put them together in the optical printing and because they're moving together, your mind wants to think that they are taking place.

**01:49:53** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

It's real; the movement makes it real. And it was such a mind-boggling thing to see this for the first time that because your, your brain didn't have a place to file this. This was not like anything anybody had ever seen before and it was magical. And unfortunately when you work on them after you see it for a while and now we look at movies and go [makes noise] motion control. But at the time it was completely new and I had never seen anyone do that before.

**01:50:22** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

So what Pat did is he would decide to take the guy and the plastic bag going like this and combine it with a fan or combine it with a landscape or combine it with footage of various commercial films. So that's what Pat did. It was the combination of imagery. That's the brilliance, you know, the fact that you can print one and then print another, print them both together, that's easy. [technical]

**01:51:03** **ADAM HYMAN**

So when you were finished with CalArts, what did you first, where did you first go for work? What did you first find? What was your life immediately after CalArts?

**01:51:14** **BETH BLOCK**

Once again there was a recession when I graduated from CalArts. There was no work. There was really not a lot going on. There was, you know, people talk about the CalArts mafia. There was no CalArts mafia. There was nothing. There was you and a lot of bills and no money and I lived way out in the middle of nowhere. My van got washed away in the flash flood. I applied for welfare, but I couldn't get welfare because I didn't have a van to take me to the Welfare office to fill out the last form I was supposed to fill out. It was a bad time.

**01:51:49** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I took refuge with my friends in the area, Adam Beckett, Chris Casady, couple of other people, everybody was living out in Val Verde. Nobody had any money at all. I think my first film job, I don't remember how I got it, was doing props on somebody's short film. Occasionally I would get a job where I could make a hundred dollars here and there, but I was living cheap. What really changed things was when *STAR WARS* came out. [technical]

**01:52:26** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

*STAR WARS*, Robby Blaylock worked on it, Adam worked on it, and I was finally hired, Robby started his own company with Jamie Short called MPI and I was hired as a combination optical printer operator and driver. And everything else, the first show we had in was Carl Sagan's *COSMOS* and I'm debating how much of this to tell. We didn't have a motion control system; I'll put it that way. We had a human motion control system that was a dolly, a camera, a roll of masking tape and Sharpies.

**01:53:09**                    **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And we would lay out the tape on the floor, mark it with Sharpies, frame one, Sharpie, shoot, move the dolly forward, frame two, Sharpie, shoot, etc., etc. That's your beauty pass, a planet with rigging around it, maybe spinning, but that was a big deal, usually just still. When that was done you would bring the dolly back to the beginning, they would put in a roll of high con, black and white film stock to do the mat pass.

**01:53:39**                    **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

You'd line the dolly up with the first marker, shoot another frame, shoot another frame, etc. Then you would go into the optical printer and have to hand line up every picture to every mat frame for frame and that was our optical, optical control system. He had the first computerized optical printer that I ever saw. The computer itself was about the size of a refrigerator, twice as tall as a normal refrigerator. The room had to be kept about 60 degrees.

**01:54:16**                    **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And it was run by other computers upstairs. The information was stored on these things that looked like, almost like 35-millimeter film cans only bigger. And all of that was designed to be able to program in your moves and repeat them and it never really functioned very well.

**01:54:40**                    **ADAM HYMAN**

So what other shows were you working on in that period?

**01:54:42**                    **BETH BLOCK**

We worked on some fun shows. We worked on *ALTERED STATES*, actually Scott Bartlett started out being the art director or something like that and he treated us as if we were not filmmakers ourselves, but Hollywood scum. And we didn't know anything and this was his vision. And I think he eventually got fired from the film. I don't remember specifically, but we ended up completing the sequence and there was, I think three hallucinatory sequences. Ours was the one that began; the moon became black as sackcloth.

**01:55:24**                    **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

It's odd what you remember from films. It was a hallucination sequence. We also worked on for a very long time on *WOLFEN*, which turned into sort of a cult film many years after the fact. That was really fun because we came up with the idea of wolf vision in which we were doing color separation manipulation. It was for Michael Wadleigh who had done the Woodstock documentary and he was very open to trying lots of things. The producer I still remember, Rupert Hitzig was very wide open.

**01:55:59**                    **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

It went on way too long, thank goodness because we were having a ball. That was a very fun show and we eventually came up with this red for green for blue color separation that is still pretty cool.

**01:56:13**

**ADAM HYMAN**

How do you do that?

**01:56:15**

**BETH BLOCK**

When you preserve film for archiving, you take an original negative and you expose it on panchromatic black and white with a red filter on one piece of film, a green filter on another piece of film and a blue filter on a third piece of film. Normally what you do is then you take that red separation, which is just black and white, use red filter, do one pass on color film, rewind it. Then take the green, the green sep, "sep" is what it's called, use it with green light, expose it again, wind the camera back and then do the blue separation.

**01:56:52**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Well we thought, well golly what happens if you take that red, red separation and expose it with blue light or if you take the green one and expose it with red light? And it's fairly predictable. The sky is blue. So if you print that with green light you get a green sky or if you take a red separation for flesh tones you get green or cyan flesh tones. And so we did all of this testing, which having done it is all fairly predictable based on what the original color was, but it was a great revelation, very fun figuring it out.

**end of tape**

## TAPE 2: BETH BLOCK

02:01:22

ADAM HYMAN

Well let's go back to that optical house briefly. Where was that and how long did you work there and things like that?

02:01:34

BETH BLOCK

MPI was in North Hollywood, right on the landing pattern of planes for Burbank Airport that would go by several times a day at about a hundred feet. And it was... [technical]

02:02:41

ADAM HYMAN

MPI was on the landing...

02:02:43

BETH BLOCK

MPI was on the landing strip for Burbank Airport and so the thrill was to go out and watch the planes go by a hundred feet above your head. It was a very creative place to be. It was my introduction to the visual affects industry. Bob came out of CalArts, just coming off his glory and his Oscar from *STAR WARS*. *STAR WARS* generated a lot of interest in visual affects and we definitely capitalized on it. It was a very decadent place. This was the late '70s, party time, drug time.

02:03:22

BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)

We would have three-day rap parties, one from another. There was just an aura of creativity there where we weren't trying to duplicate what had been done before. We were always trying to come up with something more. It eventually dissolved in personality conflict, but while it was there I think it had what to me, to this day be the only all girl optical department, myself, Laurel Click [sp?], Donna Tracy, Patty Harrison was in and out of there, several women.

02:04:07

BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)

We alternated as drivers and optical people. Rob was extremely paranoid and only reluctantly parted with the information that we needed to do blue screens, which optically done was a very intricate and complicated process, much more so than it is now digitally. But that was like the goal was learning Rob's blue screen process and we did learn that. And did a lot of experimentation developing color separations to different gammas, to play with contrast and improving upon the techniques.

**02:04:41** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

His girlfriend at the time was Suzanne Lacy who was a feminist and a performance artist so I think that's where a lot of the women came in. Laurel was a feminist and Donna was part of that movement also. It was just really, really nice to work with women especially after having come out of CalArts.

**02:05:02** **ADAM HYMAN**

Suzanne Lacy is getting some like; I saw a little thing saying that she's getting some little special award.

**02:05:07** **BETH BLOCK**

I saw that, yes.

**02:05:10** **ADAM HYMAN**

I wonder if that's, because there's a whole project also going on about the Women's Building...

**02:05:16** **BETH BLOCK**

Right, yeah, my friend Laurel's involved with that. We've all stayed friends. Laurel and Donna and I are still close friends to this day because of that initial relationship.

**02:05:25** **ADAM HYMAN**

What do they do now?

**02:05:27** **BETH BLOCK**

Laurel is in an independent visual effects supervisor and teaches After Effects at I think Mount Sierra College in Monrovia. Donna got out of the film industry, went back to school, got her MFA and hated the politics of teaching so much that she went back into visual effects. She interestingly enough she was there with *COSMOS* with Carl Sagan and still collaborating with one of the two Canadian men who were sort of in charge of the art directing. Adolph, I don't remember his last name, but they still collaborate.

**02:06:11** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Donna still has a huge interest in astronomical stuff. I worked with her at Flight 33 on the Universe and she was definitely the in house expert on this, this is what a, she's funny, that's not what a black hole looks like. This is what a black hole looks like. Donna how do you know? She knew. You didn't argue. She knows what a black hole looks like. [laugh]

**02:06:36** **ADAM HYMAN**

A black hole doesn't look like anything. It's black.

**02:06:40** **BETH BLOCK**

No, but there was a big discussion on whether it had soft edges or hard edges and scientifically speaking I believe it has very hard edges that you're either in the hole or not in the hole and it's not like stuff going down the toilet.

**02:06:58**

**ADAM HYMAN**

And then so what years are MPI?

**02:07:00**

**BETH BLOCK**

Those years I actually remember. That was 1978 to 1981 and I left in 1981 because they were getting in a project called *THE DAY AFTER* about nuclear war. I still had my political leanings and I objected very strongly to the fact that the film focused on the survivors of a nuclear war. And I left, rather than work on the project and interestingly enough Chris Reagan replaced me got an Emmy for that show, but I'm still sort of glad I left.

**02:07:37**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I left to go to Mexico with John Really, Jr. [sp?] and do a screenplay and shoot a film about Washoe Indians that he had had a relationship with for 20 years.

**02:07:50**

**ADAM HYMAN**

What was that? Tell me about what, what was that project ended up being and so forth?

**02:07:55**

**BETH BLOCK**

That was one of those people who have one film in them, projects and so lots of trailers and lots of research and lots of writing and lots of re-writing and nothing really ever came of it. But it was a great time. I was the production manager in Washoe Indian territory and second assistant camera so all the horses would have wooden saddles so I walked most of the time. And working with the Indians was really interesting. We were there for six weeks and filmed and participated in the peyote ceremony.

**02:08:34**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Slept on a board, but the people were wonderful. The culture was wonderful and that's been a life long influence.

**02:08:44**

**ADAM HYMAN**

What other elements of it have been an influence, in what way?

**02:08:49**

**BETH BLOCK**

Well I had done a lot of screenwriting before then, both in school and after school. I was in a Columbia writers workshop and was writing screenplays and so it was a really nice opportunity to go and do research. We would go and stay with the Indians and then go back to Mexico City and write and while we would film documentary footage in a format, I don't think he invented it. He discovered it called TechnoScope, which is taking 35-millimeter raw stock, which has sort of a squarish aspect ratio and most of the time you only use the top and bottom so you're wasting about half the frame.

**02:09:30** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

So TechnoScope was a format that is two perf 35, so you end up, and uses the soundtrack area, similar to super 35 sort of. So it was a way of saving raw stock and it was great except that there's no way to project it. [laugh] [technical]

**02:09:51** **ADAM HYMAN**

Shall we go back and mention George Lockwood?

**02:09:54** **BETH BLOCK**

Yes.

**02:09:55** **ADAM HYMAN**

Okay. Tell me about, how you met George Lockwood and so on.

**02:09:59** **BETH BLOCK**

George was a close, he was one...

**02:10:00** **ADAM HYMAN**

[overlapping] Give me his full name.

**02:10:02** **BETH BLOCK**

George Recall Lockwood was a friend at CalArts and he and his buddy Randy who were inseparable were down the hall from me and George was learning to play the violin and they didn't really get into the violence and the aggression that many of the other men there at the time had. We became friends. We lived in the same house together and that's what brought us together. And we were together for 13 years and it was very nice to be able to have pillow talk about blue screen processes and Pat's films and we shared a lot of interest.

**02:10:41** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

He became increasingly more interested in music and increasingly more of a night owl to the point where he would stay up all night and sleep all day, which presented social problems and he was probably even more socially retarded than I am, which says something. But we were very close. We both worked for Pat. At the point where I left Pat that was because I had an extremely severe, horrible back problem that eventually required surgery. It became really awful working at Pat's so I would go in the back room, close the door to change the magazine and just lie on the floor and cry in pain.

**02:11:26** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And after the whole thing was over, I just couldn't bring myself to go back to that environment, but when I went down with my back, it was George that stepped in and covered for me. So I never saw him because he was busy doing my job and, and he, that's how he and Pat got established and he's been with Pat ever since.



**02:11:48**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Yeah doing the sound.

**02:11:49**

**BETH BLOCK**

Doing the sound. George did, George had one of the first computerized sound set ups that I used in one of my films. And was always one step ahead of the curve and he and Pat had, both had that same sort of laid-back attitude. It's a very good match and I still have a lot of respect and affection for George.

**02:12:14**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Great. So what were the years that you did work with Pat?

**02:12:20**

**BETH BLOCK**

I'm guessing early '80s. I know that my back problems took me out in the fall of '85 and I left then and I didn't come back mainly just because that room became the nightmare room because of the pain in my back. I don't think I ever told Pat that.

**02:12:37**

**ADAM HYMAN**

When did *WATER AND POWER* finish?

**02:12:39**

**BETH BLOCK**

'86 I think, something like that. I don't remember. But most of it was done.

**02:12:46**

**ADAM HYMAN**

I think it was even later than that. I keep thinking like it won at Sundance in like '89 or '90.

**02:12:51**

**BETH BLOCK**

That's possible. Pat took his time making movies, but I, but I think most of the opticals were done.

**02:12:57**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Bring on George to finish the sound.

**02:13:02**

**BETH BLOCK**

I do remember that Pat and George would meet. George's apartment, the living room was the sound studio, the kitchen was the office. There was no house. The filing cabinet was next to the sink and he and Pat would sit down and George would be talking and talking and talking and Pat would go, yeah, and that was it. Pat never really said a whole lot, but they had a really good way of communicating with each other. That was many fond memories of seeing them work out that sound.

**02:13:43**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Okay, when did you discover Filmforum and how?

**02:13:53**

**BETH BLOCK**

Oh I think Film Forum discovered me rather than me discovering it. I think Terry called me about showing some films there and I don't think I had heard of it. And I had a screening there. Pasadena was like a million miles away at the time. I was living out in Val Verde so it was about an hour away. And so I didn't go there very much at first, but it was just nice folks. And at that point it was in the old bank building in Pasadena. That I do remember the lobby, that I do remember the theater.

**02:14:26**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I do remember Mary Sarah being the ticket taker, the world's most exotic beautiful ticket taker with her long hair and her red lipstick. And Bill Scaff was around, Michael Guccione, all of Terry's old buddies. And Terry Cannon was his own unique person as he still is. David Wilson was around a lot at that time too and the screenings were fairly small, 20 people was a good crowd as I recall, 50 was astounding. And again I have difficulty remembering specifically what I saw there, but that was I think at that point, this was after Oasis I believe.

**02:15:15**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

The only refuge that I knew of for experimental film. And they were dedicated to it. I don't know if they got any funding at all. If they did it wasn't much and it was a labor of love.

**02:15:28**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Can you describe Terry, how you remember him at that time? And we did an oral history with him, but I want you to describe him.

**02:15:46**

**BETH BLOCK**

Terry Cannon is one of the most individual and unique people I have ever known. He had his own aesthetic. He was mainly interested in jazz and I don't know how he became interested in experimental film. He seemed to be so straight and Mary his wife was so straight and they were so quirky. I remember going to their house and Mary had like a zillion song birds and they were, they lived in a little tiny place on El Nido in Pasadena.

**02:16:20**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And it was filled with jazz records and films and Mary's birds, all sort of co-existing together. Terry just had this single minded passion and created Film Forum and kept it going for I don't know how many years and did pretty much everything himself with Buddy. Buddy became involved, Buddy Kilchesty who eventually became the programming director. It was a very small group. Pasadena at that time was like Skid Row in downtown, L.A.

**02:16:56** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

There was no place to go after a show, which is unfortunate because one of the nice things about having that experimental film screenings is the very rare ability to talk to other experimental filmmakers because we're not inherently social butterflies. And so that was really nice and yet there really wasn't a place to go at that original venue. And then they moved downtown and that was even worse. Then they were on Skid Row.

**02:17:25** **ADAM HYMAN**

At what point did you then like get involved with it, worked on the board and so on?

**02:17:35** **BETH BLOCK**

I remember when Terry called me and invited me to be on the board and I'm not sure why I remember that. But I was in Robb Blalock's next company incarnation at work and he called and asked me if I wanted to be on the board. And I said yes. Wait a minute, I'm getting confused because then Trish Knodle, I know when I actually began attending board meetings. Trish Knodle was running it so I am unclear as to how that transition took place. I'm sure you have other people can tell you.

**02:18:11** **ADAM HYMAN**

Well, yeah, Terry, Terry stopped in '84 and Trish took it over for a year and then Richard and Buddy took it over.

**02:18:14** **BETH BLOCK**

Okay, thank you, so that's my timeframe then. Terry invited me to be on the board, but by the time I actually got there I think Trish was doing it. And at that time Doug Edwards was President of the board and Doug was an amazing human being. He was a Medici sort of guy. He worked for the Motion Picture Academy at their main facility on Wilshire Boulevard and we would have our board meetings in the Motion Picture Academy boardroom.

**02:18:44** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I remember when I first became President and I got to use the gavel that Gregory Peck used for board meetings. It was very profound. But Doug was so dedicated to experimental film. I think he was working on restoring some of Stan Brakhage's work and yet he was in the middle of this mainstream bureaucracy, but he arranged for benefit screenings and use of the Academy for us and was just a wonderful, wonderful, helpful, dedicated human being.

**02:19:19** **ADAM HYMAN**

So did you ever go to an Encounter Cinema?

**02:19:22** **BETH BLOCK**

What was Encounter Cinema?

**02:19:24** **ADAM HYMAN**

That was one that Doug programmed for a bit.

**02:19:26** **BETH BLOCK**

When was that? No, I didn't know.

**02:19:28** **ADAM HYMAN**

1980 ish, '79, no, he was running Theater Vanguard, then that ended and then did Encounter for like, it was like '80, '81.

**02:19:39** **BETH BLOCK**

I missed that and that's very interesting. Doug being connected to Theater Vanguard which tells me that's probably the Oasis connection too, although I don't know that. I wasn't involved with Oasis. I was a student during that time.

**02:19:54** **ADAM HYMAN**

On Bill Morris, and, and he worked with Bill a lot with programming?

**02:19:57** **BETH BLOCK**

I know that and I knew Bill a little bit and I never really had much of a relationship with him.

**02:20:03** **ADAM HYMAN**

Cool so when, then how was it then when Buddy and Richard took over Filmforum?

**02:20:13** **BETH BLOCK**

Buddy and Richard had a great relationship.

**02:20:15** **ADAM HYMAN**

Oh you've got to say both of their names.

**02:20:18** **BETH BLOCK**

Oh sorry. When Buddy Kilchesty and Richard Amromin took over from Trish Knodle it was a very different kind of relationship. Trish was very professional and polished and was concerned about image and venue whereas Buddy was as hardcore experimental as you can get. Buddy was the academic. He was into Super 8 filmmaking and very difficult films. Richard at the time had been a film composer. I don't know how he got involved. What was he doing there?

**02:20:56** **BETH BLOCK**

I'm glad he was there. He handled the administrative end and they had a great relationship. They must have had their differences, but I never saw that. It was always a very unified front. Buddy very much held the banner of purist experimental film. Neither one of them was very concerned about crowds. We don't need to increase our numbers. We want to show the best films. I remember they did a screening of Michael Snow's *WAVELENGTH*. I think we started with seven and we ended up with three.

**02:21:32** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And they were both thrilled, they were both thrilled. It was about the movies, it was about the filmmakers. They were both very dedicated and we had almost no money and neither one was getting paid anything of what they deserved, anything that approximated the time and effort that they put in.

**02:21:52** **ADAM HYMAN**

The eternal Filmforum traditional. The unpaid person running it. Anyway...

**02:21:58** **BETH BLOCK**

[overlapping] John got chicks...

**02:21:59** **ADAM HYMAN**

That's what John got for three years.

**02:22:00** **BETH BLOCK**

Yes.

**02:22:03** **ADAM HYMAN**

And then what was your involvement during that period with Buddy and Richard?

**02:22:07** **BETH BLOCK**

I don't remember at what point I became President of the Board, but I was on the Board when they started. It was a supportive role. What can we do to help you and they would tell us what they needed and we would try to do it. They needed some money. We would hold a fundraiser. I remember one, Betzy was on the Board for a while, Betzy Bromberg was on the Board. I remember we held a fundraiser at somebody's house, right when microwaves had been invented.

**02:22:42** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Betzy and I put this foil thing in the microwave, but something bad happened. [laugh] But we didn't really know what we were doing, but people had a lot of energy and a lot of good will and somehow there was enough money to keep it going somehow.

**02:22:59** **ADAM HYMAN**

Who also was on the Board at that period? Do you remember?

**02:23:02** **BETH BLOCK**

Betzy Bromberg, David James was also a voice of purity on that Board and dedication to showing experimental film. You know on any board you get the people that want to expand and increase the audience and play it to a broader venue, which nobody had any objections to. More money is always good, but I remember David James' especially of holding that vision. David and Doug Edwards held that vision, keep it pure. Yes, if we can expand it, great, but this is for us. There are venues for other films, other places, that's the part I remember.

**02:23:44**

**ADAM HYMAN**

And then you mentioned a period where you took over for a brief, for a bit?

**02:23:48**

**BETH BLOCK**

Yeah.

**02:23:49**

**ADAM HYMAN**

When was that and what did you do?

**02:23:50**

**BETH BLOCK**

I don't remember when it was. It certainly wasn't a choice on my part. Richard Amromin had a heart attack, fairly severe one, he was gone. And Buddy Kilchesty's lung collapsed. I don't remember what happened first, but they were both in short order and suddenly we had nobody running it. I was pretty dedicated to the group. I don't remember what I was doing in my professional life at that point or my film life, but I was not the right person to be doing it.

**02:24:25**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And yet it was not going to die under my watch and we held it together. I think Lisa Mann was involved at that point. We somehow kept it going. We somehow scheduled shows and the main thing that we did was initiate a search for a new director. Both Richard and Buddy had long-term health stuff they were dealing with. Buddy moved away at that point. He'd been living in Chino, like the worst air in the entire world and he had to get out.

**02:24:56**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And Richard was just down for the count at that point. So we did a search and we ended up with John Stout who came in gung ho and ready to go and it was with great relief that we handed it to him and he took over.

**02:25:16**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Do you remember how you found him?

**02:25:18**

**BETH BLOCK**

We had been advertising in various publications, you know, there was no Internet at that point. I don't remember specifically where we placed the ad. I remember he was living in Buffalo interestingly enough where I grew up. So we had that in common. But it was a, a very obvious choice. I don't even remember who else we considered. I think there were three people. I don't even remember who the other two were. John had the background, he had the energy and he had the enthusiasm.

**02:25:53**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Do you remember anything about his background? We don't have a plan to interview John?

**02:25:56**

**BETH BLOCK**

I believe he had been involved with Hall Walls in Buffalo. That's all I remember. [technical]

**02:26:08**

**ADAM HYMAN**

And do you have any particular recollections of other, of memorable shows during your period? [technical]

**02:27:05**

**BETH BLOCK**

John, I believe initiated the project Inside the Belly of the Beast [Editor's note: *SCRATCHING THE BELLY OF THE BEAST*].

**02:27:10**

**ADAM HYMAN**

*SCRATCHING THE BELLY OF THE BEAST.*

**02:27:11**

**BETH BLOCK**

*SCRATCHING OF THE BELLY OF THE BEAST* and I never really understood the title there, but I know he put a lot of work into it. It went outside of our normal venue, which at that time it started out at the Wall and Boyd Center and then we moved to, no we'd already been at LACE [Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions]. Wallenboyd was Trish Knodle. Then we moved to LACE with Buddy and Richard and then John, we were also still at LACE I believe in the world's most uncomfortable chairs.

**02:27:45**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

It was mainly a gallery space. Each time we went in we had to set up this god-awful chairs and the projection. It did have a decent projection booth. I think Lisa Mann was projecting during that time. Again the shows that stand out were Richard Meyers coming out. I think we did a multi media Kathy Rose thing that was memorable mostly for its multi media ness. Then Michael Snow, this was under Richard and Buddy, the Michael Snow thing.

**02:28:16**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

John was very into expanding Filmforum and getting increased funding so he could be paid for his efforts, which is certainly a fair thing to ask. When you get concerned about your audience and your funding, you often lose your edginess. And I believe once John got in and settled and it was apparent that Filmforum was thriving once again, I think that's the point at which I stepped back and Richard got the idea for new talent, sent me dinner and it was anything you want Richard. [laugh]

**02:28:58**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Let's go back, just any recollection of memorable shows that Buddy and Richard, that Buddy curated?

**02:29:04**

**BETH BLOCK**

Buddy curated a really nice Super 8 show. A guy from Texas, Willie Arella [sp?]; I remember that, that was very nice. Again it didn't, you know, it didn't draw a lot of people. Super 8 was looked down on by some and that was Buddy's passion. Buddy liked difficult films so he did show a lot of Super 8 films, a lot of abstract films, a lot of Brakhages I recall. There was one show we did in the midst of summer about water.

**02:29:50**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Boy I don't remember who did that, but we showed Will Hindle's what's it called, Watersmith? The swimming one, fabulous, half hour, great movie, great movie. [technical]

**02:30:24**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Tell me about the *LA. FILMMAKER'S CATALOG*.

**02:30:28**

**BETH BLOCK**

The *L.A. FILMMAKER'S CATALOG* was a labor of love. Sometimes at board meetings he would talk and it becomes about business and it becomes about funding. I was getting a little frustrated at the lack of attention to experimental filmmakers' needs. Yes we have this venue and that's a wonderful thing, but what else can we do? You know, always holding fundraisers, it's always about money. Can't we do something else for a change? So I think it was my idea, but I don't remember and if it was somebody else's idea I apologize, but I became the editor of it.

**02:31:07**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

The idea was to contact every experimental filmmaker in L.A. and get their filmographies and put it all in the same place and send it out to programmers. Again pre-computers, pre-Internet. Well I guess we had computers at that point, but we weren't using them. So we put out a call to artists. It was announced that Filmforum shows and various publications that I don't remember exactly what they were, but I think we got about 40 people or so responding.

**02:31:41**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And it was all hand typed, hand published, the cover was done as I recall by Bill Scaff by hand and it took a long, long time for reasons I can't remember. But finally it was done and the participation was good and we sent it out to every experimental film programming venue in the United States, which sounds big, but really isn't that we could think of at the time. What I wished we had done was to include some kind of response thing from the filmmakers because what was lacking there was our way of knowing the effectiveness of this.



**02:32:25** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Who did get a copy of this? Canyon Cinema of course existed and many of the filmmakers were also at Canyon Cinema, but the thing that appealed to us was that it was a very proletarian effort. If you send us something, you will be in this catalog. You don't have to pay to be in this catalog. We are not going to pass judgment on whether you are worthy to be in this catalog. If you've made something that you consider to be an experimental film and you'd like to participate, you are welcome and we encourage you to do so.

**02:32:59** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I think the people we sent it out to was like 40 or 50 places, various other sister organizations, museums that we knew of that had screening programs and the efficacy is unknown, but it was a big project and I remember being extremely glad to finally stick those things in the mail and get them out.

**02:33:22** **ADAM HYMAN**

It's a good thing we still have it though because I mean there's a lot of stuff in there that is current.

**02:33:26** **BETH BLOCK**

It was neat to find it again.

**02:33:28** **ADAM HYMAN**

Yeah. Okay, so oh tell me, can you describe Adam Beckett to me please?

**02:33:38** **BETH BLOCK**

Adam Beckett was a larger than life individual in every respect that you think of an individual. Physically he was huge, well over six feet tall, initially built like a football player and then got larger from there. He had a huge booming bass profundo voice. He was charismatic. He was very talented in both filmmaking and musically. He had an ego to match his physical size. There was something about him when he entered the room. He captured everyone's attention and if for some reason anybody missed him, he would make sure to capture their attention.

**02:34:22** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

His life was tremendously changed by STAR WARS. Up until that point he was an experimental filmmaker. He had begun to get the recognition he deserved. What he did on the optical printer I don't think has ever been equaled in terms of sheer technical dedication. He would do films with 40 or 50 passes. You shoot a pass. You rewind the camera. You offset it a frame or two. You do another pass. Any mistake in any of those passes and the entire thing would be destroyed and that was his methodology.

**02:35:01**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And he did it just beautifully. And in addition to his technical expertise, he, he was a kick ass animator with a very fertile, sexual imagination. And so the mixture of the very raw animation essentially line drawing animation with a sophisticated optical printer techniques made for some films that were interesting on many levels. When *STAR WARS* happened I don't know what he had been up to ahead of time. I should have never known Adam. The only way I knew Adam is he kept hanging around CalArts after he graduated.

**02:35:44**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

He graduated before I started. And yet there's this big, loud guy sitting in the middle of the sub level-playing guitar, singing at top volume, no one in sight. Hi I'm Adam, who are you? I'm Beth. Hi Beth, welcome to CalArts. He was, he was just sort of the ghost of the sub level on a good way. Spent most of his time there out of work I think. He had done some work for Bob Abel but when *STAR WARS* came out he was thrilled.

**02:36:15**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And he came back and he invited a few of us there to work on the film. Chris Casady went, Pete Curran [sp?] went and I chose not to go. I chose to stay and finish school and I've never really regretted that decision although I know my life would have been very different had I made it. He was so excited about *STAR WARS* at first and he was its main promoter. I would go down to see him at work.

**02:36:45**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

He'd show us around the model shop. All these creative people. I didn't know Rob at the time, that he introduced me to Rob and the optical printer. I was far more interested in the optical end than the animation end. But he assured me I could be a rotoscoper if I wanted to and I didn't really want to be a rotoscoper so that was certainly part of the decision. When the film came out David Berry was also there and I think I went as Adam's guest to the cast and crew screening, which was a big deal with little Plexiglas *STAR WARS* placeholders and excitement and a big dinner.

**02:37:31**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Everybody was so tremendously excited and of course the film became what it became. Adam went through a lot of hurt during there. He was thrilled with his ideas and yet a lot of them were rejected by Lucas. It was also a time period not just for Adam, but I think for everybody involved where there was a lot of drug using, a lot of egos, a lot of long nights that were made easier with various stimulants.

**02:38:05** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Adam sort of became bitter at some of his stuff not being used. After it came out, Rob and Adam were often, I think of them sort of as the white knight and the dark knight. I won't say anything about which is which, but they were the two CalArts guys that made their name on this film. Rob got the Academy Award, Adam had his scene not used in the film and he was really, really bitter about that.

**02:38:44** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

After it was over the drug use continued. Feel free to edit this out, but I found it extremely ironic that at the Adam Beckett tribute this summer the same men sitting on the panel were the same guys that wouldn't return his phone calls at the end of his life, probably justifiably so. But there was, it was quite ironic and something that didn't come out during that panel that was interesting.

**02:39:25** **ADAM HYMAN**

That's often how it works isn't it?

**02:39:34** **BETH BLOCK**

Wow. I wasn't expecting that.

**02:39:39** **ADAM HYMAN**

Yeah, talk about it for a while.

**02:39:40** **BETH BLOCK**

Yeah.

**02:39:41** **ADAM HYMAN**

Yeah.

**02:39:44** **BETH BLOCK**

I lived on his way home in his final days and final years and he would go out and get loaded and stop by my house. [laugh] And he never knocked on a door. We were lucky if it stayed on the hinges. [makes noise] Hey I'm here, sorry that was bad, let me try that again. He would knock on the door and burst through the door. Hey I'm here. One night I was on the phone with my 90-year-old aunt. He burst in the door, tripped on the coffee table, broke the coffee table, started screaming and swearing, took the phone out of my hands, started screaming and swearing at my aunt, hung up the phone, I threw him out of my house.

**02:40:25**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

The aunt called back 30 seconds later what was that? Excuse me; I think she'd just called. I convinced her she had the wrong number. There was one memorable occasion where he had been invited to the Acker mansion; Forest Acker was a science fiction guy who had a whole museum. And he took me and Rick Stafford and my 19-year-old cousin who had just come out west for the first time with his big Afro haircut to the Acker mansion and we saw Robby the Robot and all this stuff.

**02:41:02**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Adam was out of his mind wasted driving home. He always insisted on driving. We were in his VW van. He pulls into the center divider at the Hollywood Freeway in the Cahuenga Pass at rush hour, just puking and puking as we think we're going to be killed. Like get in the car, let us drive, no, no, no, I'm good, I'm good. See I'm good and drove off in fear for our lives, but there was something about him that was absolutely irresistible even then.

**02:41:38**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And a talent that was not to be denied and I, I, I, when people say what happened to him, how did he die? I say the '80s killed him with all the excess of the '80s.

**02:42:00**

**ADAM HYMAN**

After your period on, do you remember what you were doing, what other, what industry films have you worked on that you have found to be particularly memorable experiences? We've already talked about a couple, MPI, so after that, anything.

**02:42:19**

**BETH BLOCK**

There's really nothing I've done in the industry that I'm particularly proud of. It's always been work for pay, a way to stay current with the technology, often times other artists stay in touch with other artists who are also doing the same thing. The only film that I'm particularly fond of that I worked on was *JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH*. That was done for Disney. Other than that it was a way to make a living and to learn my craft, to use technology that would not be available to me otherwise.

**02:43:07**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Yeah, it was not an artistic endeavor. It was a creative problem solving endeavor and that's one of the reasons I enjoyed it is that if you take the concept of how do you get five moving Chihuahuas to stand on each other and sway together as an abstract creative problem, it's very interesting in terms of a shot or an accomplishment.

**02:43:33**

**ADAM HYMAN**

How has the work in the industry been related to your own filmmaking in the economics or the technology or both actually?

**02:43:41**

**BETH BLOCK**

My work in the film industry is what allowed me to make 16-millimeter films as long as I did. There's no money in making 16-millimeter films and it was extremely expensive and I'm pretty proud that I continued to do it for about twelve years after I graduated. I bought my own camera with the money I got from the screenplay and was able to accumulate equipment, which I would not have been able to do without working in the film industry. Through the work that I did optical printing, I was able to increase my knowledge of that craft.

**02:44:16**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

There was always a time conflict, but you made good money so the way I worked it is I would work until I had accumulated enough money to take some time off, make a film, spend the money, get horribly, horribly in debt and then go back to work. At the point where I finished my film just for fun, I was \$15,000 in debt and just went I can't keep doing this and there was a decision as to whether to make another film or buy a house and god maybe spoke to me and I got the house.

**02:44:58**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Because I had been living in squalor and cold, cold winters and hot, hot summers and filth and it was time to get some balance in my life. So when I stopped making 16-millimeter films it was a very conscious decision. It was the house over the film and I never regretted making the decision, but I horribly, horribly miss making films. And I didn't make a film for 20 years. It was my work in the film industry that maybe kept me from doing that because I could never bring myself to shoot video.

**02:45:40**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I just didn't like scan lines through my image. I didn't like the res and when digital started happening in the film industry, which was probably early '90s, I got into that by my friend Laurel Click, Laurel Click, who I mentioned earlier had gone to New York and learned it and moved out here and there was going to be a, a company opening to do *THE LAST ACTION HERO* with Arnold Schwarzenegger. I followed Arnold from film to film for some reason.

**02:46:17**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

She said you, you learn Unix, you got a job. Well it's very difficult to learn Unix without a computer because at that time it was Unix computers, SBI stations, \$250,000 bucks a piece, but what I did have was a book and I sat right over there with my book and memorized the glossary over three months and went okay I'm ready to work and they hired me and I knew all the stuff, but I couldn't pronounce it right because I just read it some days Unix terms like files called .CSHRC, which is your resource file.

**02:46:52**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I called my “Cishrick” file. So I would go there and go I don't know how to buy my “Cishrick” and these people would go what's she talking about, but I knew how to do it. I just didn't know how to say it. So that was how I got introduced and knowing that and seeing the possibility of digital filmmaking as far back as like early '90s made it all the more difficult to resign myself to shooting in these flunky little video cameras.

**02:47:20**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

So I made due with photography and Photo Shop eventually and installations and it was all an extremely poor substitute for making movies. And I didn't even realize the depth of that until I heard about the Sony PMWEX1 camera. It was like, you know, I picture a cartoon where someone finds their love mate. That's what was happening when I heard about this camera, under \$10,000. My 16 camera cost twelve thousand bucks without the lens. Here is a camera with a lens, digital, high def, at last after 20 years.

**02:48:04**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I thought now don't go rushing out and try anything, so I rented it once. I made my first digital film, which took place, my feet in the bathtub and so here I am shooting digital for the first time ever on a very expensive, rented camera. [technical]

**02:48:56**

**ADAM HYMAN**

So you were making your first, your rental, [unintelligible] .

**02:49:00**

**BETH BLOCK**

So I rented the camera and there I am sitting in the bathtub, you know, you can't film someone else sitting in the bathtub and shooting their feet. I was scared. I was shaking. I got the footage back, it was very unsteady, but it's digital, I could study it and at last I got to use software. I made this film for free. Yes I bought the computer. Yes I bought the camera. Everything I've done since then I've made three and a half, almost four films, not a cent. It's free.

**02:49:34**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

You're not buying footage. It's not like a taxicab where every time you turn on the camera the meter's running and you're watching your savings go down the tube. Now that's good and bad because when you're not limited by finances, you need to know when you turn the camera on and off. I think at first your tendency is to film everything and you end up with 20 hours of dailies to go through and you don't really need it. So I sort of compensated the other way, I shot way too much film.

**02:50:00**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

But finally I can do what I wanted to do without finances being a factor. And it was like giving somebody who'd been starving for 20 years unlimited food. And I think it was coincidentally I started teaching at CalArts at that time. Interestingly what I'm teaching is the optical printer, having sworn off optical printers for myself for all eternity, sworn off the optical printer for work for all eternity, thrilled to be doing this stuff digitally, now I'm teaching optical printing.

**02:50:38**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I still liked it and the students were still exciting. The technology was horrible. They used a printer driven by a 1989 PC with big old floppy disks. While I was teaching that class about two and a half, two years, three years, every time the phone rang I was sure it was the part that couldn't be gotten. I spent far more time cruising the Internet. The only thing I've never found on the Internet is parts for an optical printer.

**02:51:09**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I'd be in e-mails with people from Russia trying to replace things. You know, I'd get these e-mails that were like a "Saturday Night Live" parody, yah, we got parts; you want part? And, and finding the technology was really difficult. So interestingly the timing of that, of finally being able to do my own work again while doing the optical stuff was weird and yet CalArts is a stimulating environment. The faculty was extremely inspiring to be around, the respect for each other, the work that they were doing was all great.

**02:51:46**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And so when I lost my job last May when their endowment crashed I was very devastated.

**02:51:51**

**ADAM HYMAN**

I'm sorry.

**02:51:55**

**BETH BLOCK**

So I could even start doing drugs again, but then that would take more money so I said no. I will make movies. So I made this film in three weeks, a half hour film, cost me fifteen bucks for paint. And I looked at my unemployment as a government subsidy for my filmmaking and I had the most creative period of my entire life. For six months I worked 12 to 16 hours a day every single day and did exactly what I wanted to do. I completed three films and almost made it through a fourth and then got work, which was okay.

02:52:30

BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)

So that's a little bit on hold now, but to me the digital technology is so promising for filmmakers because it takes away that money factor. Always in filmmaking it's what you could afford. Can you afford a decent tripod? Can you afford any tripod? Can you afford a good lens? And it removes that. It levels the playing field so it's about the ideas, it's about what you have to say, it's about the actual images and it's not about who can afford what technology and what film stock.

02:53:00

ADAM HYMAN

Let's go back from there to, well we're going to go through your films now. We've done two, but we have a few more to go through. So, but... [technical]

end of tape



## TAPE 3: BETH BLOCK

03:00:41

ADAM HYMAN

Let's go back to do that memorable show for you, at Filmforum.

03:00:46

BETH BLOCK

David Wilson and I had gone to school together at CalArts. And I remembered he made the film *SATURN SUCKLES*. Good film. And he was one of the few people to settle down after school and have a family. He and Diana had their girls. And he was sort of marginally around. He would show up for shows frequently. And then there was a show...

03:01:12

BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)

And then there was a show at Filmforum at the Wallenboyd. I believe Trish Knodle was running it at that time. It might have been Buddy and Richard's early days. But it was an installation. Right in the lobby. Which was not a big lobby.

03:01:28

BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)

And it was sort of a museum case. And you look through a microscope and you saw what was, theoretically, underneath the microscope. Which no one was really sure if that's really what was in the microscope. We sort of thought it wasn't, but it was really weird, and it wasn't quite art. It certainly didn't appear to be science.

03:01:48

BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)

But he was dead earnest about it. This thing is real. Okay. David. Good. What are you going to do? I'm going to do more of them. All right, David. Have fun. And he sort of distanced himself from the film making community, and had his family and stuff. The rest is history. But at the time, it was such an unusual piece. Because...

03:02:14

ADAM HYMAN

[overlapping] Why don't you describe it a little bit more.

03:02:16

BETH BLOCK

It looked old, but it really wasn't old. And it had new technology. But it was all hidden. And you weren't really sure whether it was real or not. Or if it was science or if it was art. And when you talked to him about it, he was totally serious about this, and that it was going beyond just this piece.

03:02:45

BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)

Nobody really quite knew what to make of this. He didn't fall into any nitch. He was not an installation artist. They had their own aesthetic, and this certainly wasn't a part of that. And it wasn't conceptual and it wasn't performance, and it wasn't film making.

**03:03:02** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And what was it doing at Filmforum? But if we didn't show it, who would? So it was quite unique for its time. Even in its current incarnation, it's still unique for any time.

**03:03:15** **ADAM HYMAN**

What were you seeing when you looked through the...

**03:03:19** **BETH BLOCK**

I want to say it was about butterflies, but I'm not sure. Maybe an x-ray of butterfly. I don't even remember specifically what it was. I just remember the case, and looking through this lens at something that couldn't really be what it was supposed to be. But David was swearing up and down that's what it was.

**03:03:41** **ADAM HYMAN**

Cool. All right, let's go back to your films. So for each of these, just review, like, what was its genesis, how did you make it, how you feel it came out. So we've already done *NOCTURNAL OMISSION* and *TITLES*, so the next in the list here, at least, is *FILM ACHERS*.

**03:03:59** **BETH BLOCK**

*FILM ACHERS*. [Ed note: correct pronunciation is "filmmakers."]

**03:04:01** **ADAM HYMAN**

*FILM ACHERS*.

**03:04:02** **BETH BLOCK**

Pronounced like us, but a parody. I guess that's two parodies.

**03:04:06** **ADAM HYMAN**

Yeah. Which that is still the only film of yours I've seen, I think.

**03:04:08** **BETH BLOCK**

*FILM ACHERS* was done in a post, my last LSD trip, fog, as a reaction to the male aggression that was going on at CalArts. It stars Chris Casady, who I was sharing an editing room at the time with. I made the whole thing in about three months. I remember very little about the time. It was supposed to have been just a very simple, two color, high-con film.

**03:04:44** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I accidentally butterflied the two layers, meaning I flopped one by accident. And so, instead of having one person sitting at an editing table like this, I ended up with two on top of each other, like, you know, like a Rorschach thing. And I edited the picture to Peter Pan's, *I WON'T GROW UP*, which has always been one of my favorite songs.

**03:05:09** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And just cut the sound the same way I was cutting the picture, intercut the sky editing, with the sound became a scream. The picture became film reels turning. And just increased the frequency of the cut. It was edited on a synchronizer, without listening to the sound. The length was determined by the, well it started out being the length of the, of the song.

**03:05:37** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

But by the time I had chopped it up, you couldn't tell what anything was, anyway. And I just ended up shorter and shorter cuts, four frames, two frames, one frame. And then expanded it quickly back out to the film reels. [technical]

**03:05:59** **ADAM HYMAN**

I'm curious if you're able to elaborate on the male aggression aspect, or, if you want us to edit it out, we can. But it's just a perspective I haven't heard in any of the other interviews. [technical]

**03:06:15** **BETH BLOCK**

CalArts has always been a place for individuals to express themselves. When I was there, most of the individuals were men. I liked men. I was at CalArts to work. I wasn't particularly interested in having a relationship at the time. Cost too much. I can do that later.

**03:06:35** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I was surprised, having come from Kent State, where I always was the only woman in the film program, to go to CalArts, and there were three women out of 80, which proportionately I guess is less woman than one out of eight. And I was taken aback by, I guess maybe you could just call it exuberance of the men.

**03:07:03** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And how that expressed themselves. Shooting fireworks into ceilings. Killing rabbits and making movies about it. There was a film called Cute and Fuzzy, made by Chris Casady and John Seay, in which they, they killed some rabbits.

**03:07:27** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

There was a lot of testosterone in the air. So, perhaps better than, what came off to me as aggression could have just been, just, testosterone. But it was something I reacted to quite strongly, taking refuge with the, with Sarah and Beverly. Because I just wasn't used to it. George and Randy were a welcome change from that. They had their own thing.

**03:07:57**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

They were just beatnik buddies. And pretty much stayed out of that. But the competitiveness of the men. I think everybody was A Type personalities, but I think women have a different way of expressing that than men. And it was just my first encounter with that. And that's certainly not the last. [technical]

**03:08:53**

**ADAM HYMAN**

So, we also interviewed Chris, as well. So, but, but nonetheless, you were able to share an editing room with him, despite the fact that he had made a film in which he had killed a rabbit.

**03:09:03**

**BETH BLOCK**

Chris and I got along fine. We have stayed close. It was wonderful to see him at the Adam Beckett show. We'd sort of fallen out of touch. And it was like picking up with old friends. So when I say this stuff about the guys, it's not a reflection on any particular person, or anything that was done. I think it's more a reflection of my own attitude towards being around so many guys.

**03:09:27**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Chris was outgoing. He was often in films that we made. We did a lot of impromptu stuff. I don't know if he talked to you about the Hugh Hefner Mansion shoot we did. Bunch of us went over to Hugh Hefner's house and stood outside the entrance, where there was a video camera. And Chris, I think, had on a clown suit. And performed for security until we were all booted away.

**03:09:51**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

So there was a lot of just impromptu, hey, let's go harass this, or do that. So, it was, I didn't mean, I don't want it to be all negative. It was just a little overwhelming. But there were some fun moments.

**03:10:07**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Cool. So, okay. Now, had you made any other films that are of note, prior to *FILM ACHERS*, at CalArts?

**03:10:16**

**BETH BLOCK**

I did *FILM ACHERS*, that would have been my second year, fall semester. I remember the last LSD experience as a time frame there. I was in a, pretty much don't remember anything about that period, or actually doing the printer work on it.

**03:10:37**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

The only thing that stands, two things stand out. One was getting the film back and discovering I had flopped one of the elements. The other was, there was an earthquake one day when I was in the optical printer. And I ended up with a punch. Everybody who made an optical printer film ended up with a punch.

**03:10:53** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

That's how you sync your film. Anybody's optical printer film, if you look at it really carefully, probably has a punch where they overshot. This was before printers turned themselves off. And so you would be sitting there doing these tedious shoots, and an earthquake happened. Just a little one.

**03:11:09** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

But I was from Ohio, and I wasn't quite used to them yet. And I completely lost my place. And had to struggle with, is it okay that I have a punch in my film? But having seen punches in Pat's films, too, I went, it's okay.

**03:11:24** **ADAM HYMAN**

What do you mean, though, by a punch?

**03:11:27** **BETH BLOCK**

When you work on an optical printer, you have one strip of film in the projector. That's what you normally think of, this is rephotographing a strip of film. Some printers have two projectors. That way you can have one in this projector and one in that projector.

**03:11:43** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

CalArts didn't, and doesn't, have an Aerial [sp?] head printer. So if you wanted more than one strip of film at the time, you would load another strip in the camera as a bipack. And you need to punch your raw stock so that when you take this film in and out, you were back at your zero point.

**03:12:03** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And then you'd wind some off. And then you'd begin your shoot. And if you went too far, you'd get that punch in the gage. Or if you had a punch in the projector at zero, and your first frame was on frame one, which everybody tells you never do that, but, hey, you don't want to go to the trouble of splicing out later, so you do it, and then you end up with your punch. So the punches were a way of keeping sync.

**03:12:27** **ADAM HYMAN**

And you'd just some times get it in your shot?

**03:12:29** **BETH BLOCK**

Yeah. It comes, it's part of the territory.

**03:12:30** **ADAM HYMAN**

Okay, cool. So tell me about *TWELVE*.

**03:12:34**

**BETH BLOCK**

*TWELVE* was my thesis film at CalArts. I had actually started it in Ohio, right after I graduated. I was dying to keep making movies, and I was penniless. You know. Here we go again. Cold house, no heat, no money, working in a bar. And so I did a paint on scratch film just on leader. Where I was bleaching individual frames, and scratching individual frames and writing on individual frames.

**03:13:02**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

That film was in three parts. That was the first part, is just that black and white stuff. I had actually finished that before I got to CalArts, and I didn't know about film scribes, which were real nice on your hand. So I was working with a pin stuck in a pencil eraser. And I would have bleeding fingers and blisters.

**03:13:23**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I would write out the numbers one through 12, with various backgrounds. I was sort of picking up where *TITLES* left off. Again, I'm dealing with the history of art. So this was about positive and negative space, black and white.

**03:13:42**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

So I had finished that. Then I came to Cal--no. Actually, I finished the first part in Ohio. Then I wanted to incorporate the use of masks. I didn't know anything about masks or how they were made at the time, so again, in Ohio, I took construction paper, and with an Exacto knife, cut out shapes, 12 different shapes. And very carefully cut out the pieces, kept them in tact, and would stick another piece of plastic behind them, and glue them down.

**03:14:15**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

So I ended up with a positive and a negative. Not really technically sophisticated and not really well registered, either. But that's what I had. So I had started that, when I moved to CalArts. And then I discovered, oh, this is why God invented high-con and this is how you really make masks, thank you Pat.

**03:14:33**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

So I rephotographed them on to high-con. And so the second part of that film uses those hand cut masks. And so you see weird registration things happening. Also a strange phenomenon happened where I guess one was a little farther from the camera than the other, and so you get this back and forth of the planes changing, which I liked.

**03:14:56**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

So that was the second part, and that was done in the optical printer. Then the third part was *The History of Motion Pictures*, meaning camera images. So I incorporated a bunch of footage I had shot that used rotoscoping. Which is hand drawn, at that time, hand drawing every single frame to create a mat, which sometimes they're in sync and sometimes they're out of sync.

**03:15:23**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

If you grab two pieces of paper instead of one, you get out of sync. So you see that in the film. And a little bit of face printing. And it eventually ends in abstract color. That was the first three parts I shot. Part four, that was straight live action. It was four people eating pancakes and blowing bubbles. I can't remember the logic of doing it now, but it never made it in the film. [technical]

**03:16:27**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Why is it called *TWELVE*?

**03:16:30**

**BETH BLOCK**

I can't remember why it's called *TWELVE*. It was originally supposed to be 12 parts. I still think about those parts. I may go back to it some day. Three was when I graduated. They booted me out, took the keys, and I couldn't get to the optical printer any more. So that's why there are three parts.

**03:16:52**

**ADAM HYMAN**

And your evaluation of it today?

**03:16:55**

**BETH BLOCK**

I like *TWELVE*. I think it still holds up. I'm not sure why. People seem to be able to relate to it. Visually it's strong, and it does have a structure. A weird structure. But I like the increasing complexity of the images, combined with the primitive painting and scratching on film. And for me, it's sort of an evolution of my own technical ability. Starting from the pin and eraser going to optical printing.

**03:17:28**

**ADAM HYMAN**

How about *FILM ACHERS*? What do you think of it now?

**03:17:34**

**BETH BLOCK**

*FILM ACHERS* was just sort of a nice, fun film. I think it, it's a really good document of what was going on at CalArts at the time, and my feeling about it. Just the love hate relationship with the people and the film and just getting immersed in it. And [makes noise] it all ends up in the scream. [makes noise] But it was a nice scream.

**03:17:58**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Okay, so let's go on to *THE LOVERS*.

**03:17:58**

**BETH BLOCK**

*THE LOVERS* was a film I made for Don Levy's class. Everybody in the class was making a three minute, one roll film, about one of the cards in the tarot deck. And the way he set this up, is everybody picked the card they wanted to do, and then had to choose a card out of the deck.

**03:18:23** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I picked *THE LOVERS* for a reason, and I can't remember. I chose that card out of the deck. So I got first choice. I was the only one to pick the card that I had chosen, for whatever reasons. The images, I'm thinking about it now, that's another film I haven't seen in a really, really long time.

**03:18:47** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I liked some of the images. The images of the hand crawling up the wall, going for the meat, it's something I have on my website, I think it's a strong image. To tell you what I think, I'd have to see it again. I haven't seen it in a very long time. It was easy. It was fun to make. And I remember thinking it was successful when I made it.

**03:19:06** **ADAM HYMAN**

What were, what are the images in it? I haven't seen it.

**03:19:13** **BETH BLOCK**

The hand crawling up the wall for the meat. That's the only thing I remember. Sorry.

**03:19:18** **ADAM HYMAN**

Cool. So do you remember anything else about the philosophy behind it, or what you were aiming for, the concept?

**03:19:25** **BETH BLOCK**

The concept was to create a visual representation of that card without making it a literal interpretation. Some people took, you know, like *The Patriarch*, or *The King*, I forget exactly what tarot deck we were using, and used a character called *The King*. There were, there was no people, there was no lovers. And it was more about, I believe, the pursuit of love, than using actors or people to portray the characters depicted by the card.

**03:20:00** **ADAM HYMAN**

Cool. All right. And then, *VITAL INTERESTS*.

**03:20:02** **BETH BLOCK**

*VITAL INTERESTS* is my favorite film that I've made. I like the political aspect. That one I have seen recently, and I remember shooting it well. It was all shot at home, using what I had there. I made a model set. I played around with various shooting techniques. And the sound was all edited newscasts. And it covered the period between John Lennon's assassination, that's where it began, and then it sort of developed into sort of a fictional Armageddon.

**03:20:38** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I liked using representations of political events. I spent a lot of time cutting together KPFK newscasts. Mark Cooper, at that point, was doing KPFK News. I still can't stand the sound of his voice, from editing that film, and listening to his voice doing all the newscasts.



**03:20:59**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

But, it, it covers economics and the war. This was the late '70s, I believe. That was a time where we were not at war, as such, but nuclear...

**03:21:18**

**ADAM HYMAN**

[overlapping] Proliferation.

**03:21:18**

**BETH BLOCK**

Nuclear proliferation was a big factor at that time. And a concern. And that's when, you know, Han Caldecott [sp?] is talking about Five Minutes to Midnight on the atomic clock, which I hear we've just gone to six minutes to midnight, recently.

**03:21:34**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I liked that it addressed political issues. Because one thing that we as film makers are always grappling with is to what extent is it film for film's sake, versus commenting and trying to deal with all the terrible stuff that's going on in the world. I go both ways. Two extremes. And that was my extreme political one.

**03:21:59**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And even though the events seemed quite old, I think that it still holds up over time. And it reflects my not buying into the whole non violent issue. There are things worth fighting for.

**03:22:15**

**ADAM HYMAN**

So is this done entirely after you're done with CalArts?

**03:22:17**

**BETH BLOCK**

Yeah.

**03:22:18**

**ADAM HYMAN**

So are there any other films at CalArts that I've overlooked?

**03:22:20**

**BETH BLOCK**

No, no.

**03:22:23**

**ADAM HYMAN**

So Lennon was killed in '80. So, '81, '82. That's what I remember. Like nuclear arms were like a big thing in the early Reagan years. Now people don't talk about them any more.

**03:22:41**

**BETH BLOCK**

Okay, say that again. Nuclear proliferation...

**03:22:42**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Nuclear proliferation armament issues were really big during the Reagan era.

**03:22:46**

**BETH BLOCK**

Because of the Cold War.

03:22:47 ADAM HYMAN  
And it's like, nobody ever talks about them now.

03:22:51 BETH BLOCK  
There's no more Cold War. There's still all the nuclear arms.

03:22:53 ADAM HYMAN  
Still are weapons, yeah.

03:22:53 BETH BLOCK  
But there's not the likelihood of using it and there's not this bullshit...

03:22:57 ADAM HYMAN  
Or the apparent likelihood.

03:22:58 BETH BLOCK  
Well yeah, good point. But that's when he was pushing is Star Wars defense. And it became a, if not a likelihood, at least a distinct possibility that oh, now we can actually use these cool toys. So, I think the fall of the Berlin Wall certainly changed the whole climate and, and ended The Cold War. But yes, those, all those weapons are still around.

03:23:24 ADAM HYMAN  
Yep. I know someone who just did a nuclear proliferation doc, just showed at Sundance. [technical]

03:23:35 ADAM HYMAN (CONTINUED)  
So in terms of *VITAL INTERESTS*, then, oh, so you shot it all at home, cut it at home?

03:23:40 BETH BLOCK  
I cut it at home on an Acme Comp Editor, which I donated to CalArts last year. Cool device. Motorized sync block. So you could load in your picture on the picture head. It had just a viewer sized screen, about that big. Then three or four sound heads that you could throw in and out of sync.

03:24:02 BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)  
So you could sync things up. And a little mixing thing on the side. And take ups that were just awful, that wouldn't work, it wouldn't work, it wouldn't work. And then they'd work, and they'd take it up, and the film would break. But, I got through it. And was just really happy. I'm always happy when I'm making films. [technical]

03:24:30 ADAM HYMAN  
Okay, so next is *THE ART OF SURVIVAL*.

03:24:35 BETH BLOCK  
*THE ART OF SURVIVAL* also came about as the result of the nuclear issue. It was early '80s, I believe. And there was going to be an event called Target LA, that was a citywide, mainly a weekend long event.

**03:24:56** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

The events leading up to it took six months to a year. It involved most of the major artists in LA. Cheri Gaulke from The Woman's Building was the coordinator. Rachael Rosenthal participated. David Clennon, who is a very fine actor, did a performance that I, I loved, that's in there. In which he represents the Defense Department. He's sort of a PR guy for the Defense Department.

**03:25:28** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And makes his argument for the need for nuclear arms. A very strong piece. David Linley performed. We saw The Chambers Brothers performed. And there was a huge installation in a parking lot. The whole thing took place in this parking structure in downtown LA, the main event.

**03:25:50** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Ed Pearl was on the board, from the Ash Grove. And it had a lot of artists. It was just nice. It's always nice, especially when you're working in the film industry, to maintain contact with other artists. And never to lose touch with what really matters to you. So again, it was a labor of love. And I just started from the first organization meeting.

**03:26:15** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And followed it through. I didn't really know where it was going. I also can't stand now, the sound of Cheri Gaulke's voice for the same reason of cutting sound. It's funny when you edit someone's voice, what happens. But everybody was totally committed. The event was great.

**03:26:32** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I think it was one of the hottest days ever. It was well over 100 in this parking lot in downtown LA. Several stories of the parking lot filled with beautiful art. A really nice event.

**03:26:45** **ADAM HYMAN**

So what is the film?

**03:26:47** **BETH BLOCK**

The film is the documentation of event, and how it came to be. So I was filming the steering committee meetings, the events leading up to it. There's a montage of the installations, performances. Some of the ones I mentioned. And it is the story of the unfolding of this event. That I don't think anything like it's ever been done since then.

**03:27:12** **ADAM HYMAN**

Was that your first experience doing that sort of documentation?

**03:27:14**

**BETH BLOCK**

Yeah. I had never done a documentary before. And I liked it. Documentaries are always dangerous. When do they end? So if you can do an event centered documentary, that's one thing it taught me. Is at least there's an end point, you know.

**03:27:31**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

If you get into people, oh, but then this happens, and oh, then that happens, and this turn. And, you know, you see a lot of documentary film makers who never finish their films. So it's really nice to work within something that is time constrained.

**03:27:48**

**ADAM HYMAN**

How did you end up getting, being in the position to be the documentress of this?

**03:27:55**

**BETH BLOCK**

Well people were not knocking down the door, dying to make movies about this. I knew Cheri a little bit. And said hey, I'm interested in this. Can I make a movie about it? And this was really early on. They said sure and everybody was very open. Filmed all the meetings. Most of which were not real interesting. And just did it.

**03:28:18**

**ADAM HYMAN**

On 16?

**03:28:19**

**BETH BLOCK**

On 16. Shot a lot of footage. Another very expensive film, and I never got any money for it.

**03:28:27**

**ADAM HYMAN**

How long did that film end up being?

**03:28:29**

**BETH BLOCK**

The finished film is about a half hour, I think.

**03:28:34**

**ADAM HYMAN**

All right. Let's, and *JUST FOR FUN*, this [unintelligible]

**03:28:39**

**BETH BLOCK**

That's, *JUST FOR FUN* was my last 16 film. It came about as a result of recovering from the back injury that took me pretty much out of the world for at least a year. I had to learn to walk again when I was done. Another year after that to be able to pick up the camera. And then I could pick up the camera, and I had recovered.

**03:29:03**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And I was just happy. I wanted to do, just something to celebrate the happiness of my being able to pick up the film camera again. I was limited, and I had to haul stuff around in a wagon, but that's okay. I began by just shooting things that were silly and fun.

**03:29:31**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I can't remember how the framework came in, but I framed it around an alien, the premise of the film, it's a mockumentary. An alien comes to earth with the idea the aliens want to take over the earth. But there's this concept of fun that nobody can grapple with. What is its purpose? It makes people loose cannons.

**03:29:50**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

They're not predictable. Before they can take over the world, they send this alien here to study this human thing. So, I built this alien. And first I built the alien out of Jell-o. And lit it underneath. And the whole thing collapsed on the Jell-O-o guy. [laugh]

**03:30:06**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Okay, back to the drawing board. This time I'm going to make a real alien. And I spent months with latex and chicken wire and built this life-sized latex rubber thing. And I wanted him to be alive. And so I had balloons in there hooked up to plastic tubes, and inside this alien were, when I shot the alien, I think I had a dozen people, most of them film makers.

**03:30:31**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Pat was there. I think Betsy was there. And everybody's like [makes noise] to get this alien pulsating. Completely invisible in the final product. After the first shoot I just gave up on the blowing things and just sort of trotted around in the costume, or made other people do it. But that's a framing device, at the beginning and the end.

**03:30:52**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

But it's a voice over narration. And I shot every weird thing I could think of. Parades, races, amusement parks, dancing, Rockettes. Little girls, pie eating contests. It was tons of fun to film. And I'm in this celebratory, my body works again phase.

**03:31:13**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I was very happy with the film when it was done. The traditional experimental venues hated it. They just hated it. And then I also had a little problem in that I was using sound that was like, oh, Bing Crosby, Vince Scully, baseball was a part of it. I smuggled the camera into Dodger Stadium.

**03:31:35** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Filmed Dodger Stadium, which was a good thing, because I eventually ended up selling that to a stock footage company. So this ended up being the only film I ever made that made money. And a lot of the stock, a lot of the footage I sold to stock companies. So I actually made money. This happened several years later.

**03:31:51** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

But I finished the film. I liked the film. I was happy. All of the museums and festivals and experimental film venues sort of went, oh. I was devastated. I was really devastated. I thought it was a good film. I still think it's a good film. It's not an art film, it's a fun film. It's a mockumentary about film.

**03:32:17** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

But it hurt. I just couldn't see continuing to spend that kind of money for so little reward. You know, my other films had gotten into festivals, they'd been screened. And this just went, I think I had one or two film screenings everywhere and it just died. I just went, I can't go through this any more. And that's when I stopped. So I have bitter sweet memories of that.

**03:32:48** **ADAM HYMAN**

Yeah. For a museum it has to be dour and serious.

**03:32:51** **BETH BLOCK**

It has to be serious. Danny has an expression that he uses. Old Arlo Guthrie, Alice's Restaurant. You know, he goes in for his draft physical, and the Group W Bench, right, they all moved away from me on the Group W Bench. That's sort of what happened with *JUST FOR FUN*.

**03:33:09** **ADAM HYMAN**

Yep. And then, okay, so *THE BATHTUB SHOT*, we sort of talked about briefly.

**03:33:18** **BETH BLOCK**

*THE BATHTUB SHOT* was 20 years in the making. And it's a film about not making a movie for 20 years. And how you justify that to yourself. So I'm, I, you know, I finished it about six months ago. It's out to festivals. Nothing heard yet.

**03:33:34** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

It's also an essay film, like *JUST FOR FUN*. It's also sort of a passionate, personal, not intellectual film like *Just For Fun*. So I'm not expecting much from it. But this was the film about not making a film for 20 years.

**03:33:50** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And it was also an opportunity to take some of the technology I'd been using at work. I have this fabulous technology, great software, that, up until very recently, could not be used at home. And due to various things that Apple did, and I won't get into how evil Apple is, but they are evil. They took my favorite software Shake and discontinued it. Terrible crime. Travesty.

**03:34:17** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

They made it affordable. People could buy it for \$500 and use it on a MAC. Apple bought this beautiful, state of the art, used in every film facility in the world, technology, bought it, and quit supporting it. So for a few glorious years, students, independent film makers, could buy and use this technology.

**03:34:40** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And then they discontinued it. Now the good news is, is that it's now free. And anybody can use it. And we can share it. It's still, it's what I'm using on my job at work, instead of the one that costs \$8500. And \$1000 a year support.

**03:34:59** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

So this was my chance to do some visual effects on my own. So shot the whole thing in pretty much a weekend. Went back and did some pick ups. And then spent almost a year doing visual effects. That was really fun. I got totally carried away, over the top. And had a ton of fun.

**03:35:22** **ADAM HYMAN**

So how long is that one?

**03:35:24** **BETH BLOCK**

It's ten or 11 minutes.

**03:35:26** **ADAM HYMAN**

So what sort of visual effects? What other software do you work, have, have you had previous opportunities, really, I mean, it's been 20 years, to use, whatever, the tools you have at work, on your own films?

**03:35:38** **BETH BLOCK**

I've never had the opportunity to use the tools at work on my own films. Because of the price. And because of the infrastructure. And so it wasn't until, I wasn't into pirating software. You know, there are always guys at work who would bit torrent software and use it. And I just didn't want to do that.

**03:35:57** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

A, I was paranoid, and B, I didn't think, I just wasn't there. I didn't have the camera to shoot. So now that I had the camera to shoot, and Shake was really cheap, I bought it. I used it. And you asked what kind of effects. Every kind of effects. Palm trees growing out of someone's toes, 100 flies landing on someone's leg. Feet disintegrating. Perspective changing. Fun stuff.

**03:36:22** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Mainly what I did was study the shots that I shot because I was so horribly nervous. And using this new camera that was so much lighter than a 16 camera. Heavy camera, less, less wobbling. I spent a lot of time steadying shots. And, of course, it's not enough to just steady the shots and then zoom in for the black edges.

**03:36:43** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I had waited 20 years for my 2K pixels. I was not about to lose one. So I spent months repainting in all of the black areas and tracking them in. To keep its full 2K glory. There were also little things, like six weeks I spent painting out my pubic hair, that was, it's a factor in the film and could not be revealed until the proper moment. And just general fix it stuff. So I definitely shot my visual effects wad on that one. I won't be going back there for awhile.

**03:37:14** **ADAM HYMAN**

What's involved in steadying a shot?

**03:37:18** **BETH BLOCK**

What's involved in steadying a shot is tracking, which is fairly simple. You take a couple of points on the shot, and either manually or, usually manually, sometimes the computer can follow it, but even manually it's not a big deal. You position the point on this frame, you position the point on that frame. You apply the move. It steadies the shot to a certain degree.

**03:37:41** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

The problem with that is that if there's blurs in the shot, now the shot is steady but the blurs are still there. So you have to replace the blurs. And then, where, the shot was down too low and you've raised it, you now have black. Obvious solution, zoom in. Oh, no, I'm not going to lose any of my precious 2K. I'm going to paint in from another frame, all of the black of the frame. And I just got carried away.

**03:38:08** **ADAM HYMAN**

Okay. And *57 JOBLESS*.

**03:38:11** **BETH BLOCK**

*57 JOBLESS* I made after I lost the job at CalArts and was really freaking out.

**03:38:20** **ADAM HYMAN**

How did you get that job at CalArts?

**03:38:21** **BETH BLOCK**

It was offered to me. I had never really wanted to teach. Betzy Bromberg and I had sort of paralleled in the visual effects industry, working together and being friends for many, many years. And for some of that time she was teaching at CalArts part time. And I just, Betzy, why do you bother?



**03:38:40**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

How can you even do this? You know, you get so tired. She just had a passion for teaching, and fine. You know. If she supervised me and I supervised her, it's like oh, she's got to leave to go do that stupid class. So, okay, go. Get back here.

**03:38:59**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And then when she was supervising, it didn't matter what, she had to go teach her class. I really didn't have a lot of interest in going with her. But when it was offered to me, I just took it. I don't know why. There was really no question that I would take it.

**03:39:13**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Who offered it?

**03:39:14**

**BETH BLOCK**

Betsy. And I loved it. I, teaching the printer class was a love hate relationship, because I was so, so tired of the technical problems from optical printing. You do everything right and the lab screws it up. You do it again, and you come out with a scratch. You do it again, you remake your elements, and now they don't fit.

**03:39:34**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

So the technical, I'd have lost my mind if I was optical printing these all these years. But I love the kids, I love the environment. That's the class they give me, great. I did the best I could and I think it went well. So when I lost that job and I was no longer in that environment and the visual effects industry has been going through this whole shaking out, where most of the work now is going overseas or Canada or London or New Zealand.

**03:40:04**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Right now I'm on a show where there's 500 people in China and two of us here. So that whole industry has gotten quite shaky. Salaries have come down. So I was also keeping my eyes open. But, what happened was I just fell in love with teaching. I had thought about teaching. I even applied for a teaching job after I graduated.

**03:40:24**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And they started talking retirement. I'm like 25 years old. And this is not all I want to do. How can you expect me to teach, I haven't lived yet. And so I felt like I wasn't old enough to teach anything until the last few years. And now I feel like, well now I have enough experience, now I have something to say.

**03:40:43**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

But to see someone who spends their entire life in school, graduates and goes out and teaches, what is it you're teaching? So, it was an idea who time had come, and so I missed it a lot. And I was freaking out. And one day, as has gotten me through the last 20 years, when all else fails, bring out the paint. Go to the Home Depot store and by the "oops" shelf paint. Five bucks a gallon.

**03:41:11**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Great, bizarre colored paints. I painted plants. I took pictures of plants. I manipulated plants. I painted this, I painted that. A poor substitute for film making, but it was something to do. So, in the midst of this freak out, I think I lasted about three days, and it was one of those you need to get up right now and take out your beautiful camera and do something.

**03:41:36**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

So I don't know how I got the idea of paint. I think I'd been talking to the optical printer class about doing digital color separations. So I got some color paint and poured it around and made this abstract film. Half hour film. I made it in three weeks for \$15.

**03:41:53**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

So that's my, and it's interesting, because I call it a digital optical printer film, because as we've discussed in other context, the digital vocabulary, I'm up on the technology, but the vocabulary is not there yet. And so what do you call digital optical printer film? Well you can say it's visual effects, but visual effects is flies crawling on someone's legs. It's not an abstract paint movie. So, it was sort of going way back with the new technology and that was tons of fun, too.

**03:42:28**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Fun. Now, wait, that's all I have here. Is there another film?

**03:42:32**

**BETH BLOCK**

There's two other films.

**03:42:33**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Okay, what are those?

**03:42:34**

**BETH BLOCK**

*LEAKY MOUNTAIN*. That's eight minutes. I finished that the day before I started this job, thank goodness. I haven't, still haven't made the DVD. *LEAKY MOUNTAIN* was an accident. A glorious accident. It was God's, I feel like I represented every film maker who had it rain on a shoot. It all came back, in this gift to me, on this thing.

**03:43:00**                    **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I had been thinking about filming graffiti and stuff, I had been going around with my cameras. And I'm lucky enough to live right near the hills. And one of the areas I hiked to was this water tower, up behind the house. And so I had gone up there and graffiti comes, they paint over the water tower, the graffiti goes.

**03:43:19**                    **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

So I went up there and I'd been putting it off, because it was getting hot. And it was getting hotter. And I still hadn't done it. I wanted it dry. We had a burn a year ago, and I definitely wanted it before the rains came. So finally 105 degree day, I took out the camera and went up there. And I was playing around with the shutter and I did something bad. Trying a new, more filmic shutter, and the whole thing came out smeared.

**03:43:55**                    **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Shit. Bad stuff. I've got to go up there and do it again. So of course, I put it off again, and it just kept getting hotter. You remember that really hot spell. That's the day I chose. Take two. Haul everything up there. This time I brought a tripod. And it's probably a good mile up a hill like this.

**03:44:14**                    **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

So I had a little cart. And I put the camera and the tripod in to go film this dry burned terrain graffiti. And I'm walking up the road, and suddenly I hear this whooshing of water. That's weird. It can't be water. And I get to the bottom of the hill below the water tower and there, coming out of the side of the mountain, is water. Gushing out of the hill. And I'm like, oh, my God.

**03:44:45**                    **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Now, do I film it right here? Or do I go there, where I'll have a better angle. I'm like, this can't go on very long. I mean, we were talking hundreds of gallons of water coming out of this mountain. Get it now, you know. Roll one. Coverage. Get it now. So I, I shot it from the base of the hill. Good thing I had the tripod because I'm like shaking with excitement.

**03:45:04**                    **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I'm like thank you film gods, thank you film gods. I get the shot. But the real good angle is up at the top looking down, which is another half mile up this hill on this hot day. Dying of the heat. I get my ass up there as fast as I can, and I film it from the top looking down. It's still going. I get that shot, too.

**03:45:27**                    **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Whoa. This is cool. Now I'm, so now I'm just a couple hundred feet from the water tower, I can get to the water tower. And that's leaking, too. And I get up there, and I just filmed up there for four hours. I, I had forgotten my water. It's 105 degrees out. But, there's this water tower, with all this water pouring out.

**03:45:46** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

So I, I of course didn't want to spare one moment until everything was shot. But the moment everything was done, I just stood underneath this water and marveled at what I had been given here. So I, I got the footage. It edited itself, pretty much. And I made this eight minute movie in about a week or two. For zero money. So that was fun.

**03:46:11** **ADAM HYMAN**

When you say you get the footage, what do you mean? Cause it's on your cards, you're just uploading the card to your editing system, no?

**03:46:18** **BETH BLOCK**

I don't understand what you mean.

**03:46:20** **ADAM HYMAN**

You're shooting on video, no?

**03:46:22** **BETH BLOCK**

I'm shooting on digital. Digital is not video. Video has scan lines and is a tape medium. Digital is pixels. It's zeroes and ones.

**03:46:31** **ADAM HYMAN**

Okay, so when you say you get the footage, you made it sound like it was after you had shot it. So I was just interpreting.

**03:46:38** **BETH BLOCK**

Well you never really know what happens until you watch the dailies.

**03:46:42** **ADAM HYMAN**

Okay, that's fine.

**03:46:44** **BETH BLOCK**

It's, it's just a matter of, do you go to the lab or not? I don't look at stuff in the camera while I'm shooting. I don't play back stuff. I suppose, you know, I've never done that. Maybe it's just the film background.

**03:46:58** **ADAM HYMAN**

That's interesting, because for me, I've, I don't distinguish, I haven't distinguished digital from other video in that manner. I mean, I interpreted it as both digital and analog video.

**03:47:12** **BETH BLOCK**

I'm going to get a t-shirt that says digital, it ain't video. It ain't video. There are no scan lines. There's no interlacing. There's no 3-2 pull down. It doesn't run at 30 frames a second. It runs at 24 or 23.98 frames a second. It's an entirely different medium. There's no comparison. I'm sorry, that is my soap box.

**03:47:36**

**ADAM HYMAN**

All right. So then, one more of the uncompleted, the film that you're working on, about massage, do you want to talk about that yet?

**03:47:42**

**BETH BLOCK**

Massage? Oh yeah.

**03:47:43**

**ADAM HYMAN**

Sure. Okay.

**03:47:44**

**BETH BLOCK**

I've been shooting a larger documentary, unfortunately not event driven, with all of the repercussions in how does it end. Although I haven't even gotten really started. This is just a film about women and how women take pleasure and relax and find joy with each other.

**03:48:05**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

So as a part of this film, I was going to shoot some women getting a massage. One of the, I have a group of women, and we celebrate birthdays and they're really not intimidated by cameras or clothing or wording. They're loose. And we've been friends a long time. So I talked to them about shooting them. And I'd shot some stuff and everything was going along fine.

**03:48:27**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

So I was going to shoot a little sequence, one of the woman is a masseuse. And so she was going to, I sent out an email, we, you know, we have our little group email. I'm going to shoot massages. Free massages to the first three people. So this one actually did cost me money, in terms of, I wanted to pay her for the massage.

**03:48:46**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

But I got three women, like in three minutes, who volunteered to be massaged, in exchange for letting me film them. And of course, in a massage, I mean, there's all this propriety with the blanket up to here, and of course, the first thing that I did was remove the blanket.

**03:49:03**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

They were fine with it. And so I shot, and the moment I looked through the camera, it became something entirely different. With this camera I'm able to shoot macro photography. So I'm able to fill up a high def screen with this much of a person's body. And these women are my age or slightly younger or slightly older.

**03:49:25**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I just found the pores and the wrinkles and the scars and the body parts just beautiful. So within about four minutes, I had what I needed for this documentary. I still was like, you know, I had 50 minutes of this massage, and two more people. It was just like a visual feast. And so I just kept filming.

**03:49:50** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

It became, I mean, I didn't even have to look at the footage. I went, this is its own movie. So now I have a hole in the other movie. But, it became its own movie. Editing it, I tried a couple of different approaches. Is it about different parts of the body?

**03:50:09** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Is it about the difference between women? And what it became about was the process of the massage. Then I started thinking about trying to give the viewer vicarious massage. So the picture editing went pretty quickly. And the sound has been awful.

**03:50:31** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

You know, usually when you start working on sound, I always cut picture first. And then do the sound. You know, the picture's got to hold up on its own. And I tried all kinds of things. Classical music, jazz music, new age music.

**03:50:47** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

You know, with the internet, you can download stuff or just play stuff and nope, nope, nope, nothing worked. And then I heard about this woman called Hildegard Von Bingen, who, a friend of mine, Vivian Miller Bontampo [sp?] is a classical music singer.

**03:51:06** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And I knew I wanted some. I discovered early on that men's voices didn't work, but I liked choral. So I called her and I sort of described what I was looking for. And she told me about this woman, Hildegard Van Bingen, who lived about 1000 AD and I think is a saint. And a mystic. And founded an order.

**03:51:27** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I just sort of fell in love with her music. But, as much as I've tried to get the film edited down to a 20 minutes, it will not go there. And it just wants to be a half hour. Films want to be a certain way. And I can't have 20 minutes, you know, 30 minutes of this woman singing.

**03:51:47** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

So it's like, that's fine for part of it, and I just searched and searched and finally I ended up with just breaths. So, I recorded myself breathing. Of course, for us, during the massage, I couldn't use any of that soundtrack because we gabbed the entire time.

**03:52:05** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And then I thought about using that. I may end up with a little of that, just chatter that's in there. But I had finished editing the picture. Had finished, eliminating a bunch of sound, had just started in, and of course, being the compulsive control freak that I am, every breath has to be edited individually, so it's very slow going.

**03:52:29** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I had gotten about three or four minutes, enough to know that yeah, this is sort of working here. Who knows where it's going to end up. But. That's where I am. And then I got this job. I had finished *LEAKY MOUNTAIN* the day before and so, this is now waiting for me to finish these two jobs. I figure, I'm hoping to have it done within a month or two after finishing work.

**03:52:50** **ADAM HYMAN**

Why not silent? [technical]

**03:53:48** **ADAM HYMAN (CONTINUED)**

When you recollect about the coverage in LA of experimental films, or just in terms of speaking about your own films, I mean, you have quotes from reviews from both Linda Gross and Kevin Thomas. And I was wondering if you have any thoughts or opinions about them, or about press coverage of the experimental film scene in LA.

**03:54:11** **BETH BLOCK**

God, I didn't know about the Linda Gross one, I could use that on my resume. [technical]

**03:54:31** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Kevin Thomas I remember, he reviewed *FILM ACHERS* and he said it went beyond, beyond boredom to pain. And he meant it to be really insulting. And I thought he nailed it. I thought, that's the perfect review, and that's exactly my intent.

**03:54:42** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I know Kevin a little bit from Filmforum and press screenings and I know Richard and he were, had quite the relationship. Kevin Thomas was into Richard's grandmother's egg cups. This is apropos of nothing, it just, I remember that. Kevin Thomas was into the egg cups.

**03:55:01** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And Linda Gross, yes, I remember she wrote something, and I think I maybe found it and included it on my CD because I needed stuff. But, I had never paid attention to any of that. I don't like traveling, so my films haven't gotten out. I haven't pursued getting them out.

**03:55:18** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

I think people that write about films are wonderful. It's so, it's something I don't do. I see a film, and I love the film, and I can maybe speak about it to a certain degree. But, for example, Amnon Buchbinder just wrote a wonderful review of *HEROSTRATUS*, Don Levy's only feature film which is being, I hesitate to use the term digitally remastered. I hope that is appropriate?

**03:55:47** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And just was so eloquent about it. And I'm just, really don't have the interest. I have the admiration. I read them. But, God bless them. I'm glad somebody's writing about them.

**03:56:02** **ADAM HYMAN**

Cool. And then, describe, oh, a little bit on the story of how New Town started. And what it is.

**03:56:15** **BETH BLOCK**

So New Town came about around the time that John Stout had come into Filmforum. And was doing a great job. Expanding it, doing lots of stuff. It was in good hands. And Richard and I started getting a little bored. It wasn't the fly by the skin of our teeth, loose cannon, come on kids, let's put on a show, organization that we were used to.

**03:56:44** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

And that's a good thing. You know. It's nice to have a schedule and funding and be able to pay the employees. So, this in no way is a criticism of Film Forum. But for me as a board member, it became about fundraising. And I wasn't that interested in this. So Richard, I don't think had come back, he might have been on the board after he stopped being the administrative director, I don't remember.

**03:57:13** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

But he invited me over for dinner one night. Richard, as you know, is the best cook in the entire universe. He plied me with his dual color, I remember it, dual color, green and red soup. With a dollop of something white in the center. I tasted the soup, it was the best soup I'd ever eaten in my entire life.

**03:57:37** **BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

At that point I'd have died for Richard. He said, I have an ulterior motive for inviting you over tonight. I'm thinking of starting a new group. And I went, anything, Richard. Can I have some more soup? And that was how I began getting involved with New Town. [technical]

**03:58:08** **ADAM HYMAN**

And what was the concept?



**03:58:10**

**BETH BLOCK**

The concept was, hey kids, let's put on a show. And still is. Richard, the only other person I've ever known like Richard Amromin is Doug Edwards. And I think of them both as sort of the reincarnation of the Medici family, without maybe as much money as they had. But they are both Renaissance men.

**03:58:30**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

Completely dedicated to showing art because it needs to be shown. So the concept behind New Town was to show non traditional art, in non traditional places. And from day one, he was the sole artistic director. So he did both the administration and the curating. When I say he did the curating, as you know, it's an artist's board. And so we would hash out the ideas for shows.

**03:59:05**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

But Richard did the nuts and bolts. He got permission from the city. He wrote the grants. He contacted the artists. And got paid nothing. Nothing. I mean, the ongoing, the biggest battle I've had with Richard over the years is, Richard, will you please accept your salary? Richard, can we get you some health insurance? And, and he has just been amazing at his dedication and his perseverance over the year.

**03:59:35**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

With so little compensation for what he does. Minimal recognition. We get, not a whole lot of press. *LA TIMES* won't touch us, I guess cause we're in Pasadena. The *PASADENA STAR WEEKLY*, we are sort of like the odd kid on the block and can sometimes be a novelty for one of our big group outdoor shows.

**03:59:57**

**BETH BLOCK (CONTINUED)**

But beyond those big shows that are geared toward the general public, there's also been an ongoing commitment to cutting edge work. By artists in untraditional venues. And getting that work out to people who may not be expecting to see it, or even choosing to see it.

**04:00:20**

**ADAM HYMAN**

And how is your installation work for New Town fit, or doesn't, with your other art work?

**04:00:25**

**BETH BLOCK**

My installation of work has been a poor substitute for filmmaking. Filmmaking is something I do because I have to. It's not that I want to, it's not that I think about doing it. It's something that if I don't do it, I don't feel complete. And I wasn't doing it, and I didn't feel complete. And I couldn't afford it. So I would try these other things, cause I had to do something. And I enjoyed some of it. Some of it was successful, some of it was good. But none of it was making films.

**end of tape 3**