

# The Museum of Modern Art

## MoMA PRESENTS *NEELON CRAWFORD, FILMMAKER, THE FIRST MUSEUM GALLERY EXHIBITION OF MOVING IMAGE WORKS BY THE MULTIMEDIA ARTIST*

### *Neelon Crawford, Filmmaker*

July 24, 2021–Spring, 2022

The Roy and Niuta Titus and Morita Galleries

**NEW YORK, May 3, 2021 [Updated on July 15, 2021]**—The Museum of Modern Art presents *Neelon Crawford, Filmmaker*, an exhibition and *Virtual Cinema* film series introducing the multimedia artist Neelon Crawford (American, born 1946) to contemporary audiences from July 24, 2021 through Spring, 2022. Crawford was a member of the New York, San Francisco and Ohio independent filmmaking scenes from the late 1960s through the early 1980s. Describing his work from this period as “experiments in the geometry of abstraction made possible by the movie camera,” Crawford’s 16-millimeter films reflected his interests in light, movement and landscape as well as dance, and early computer graphics. Installed in the Titus galleries as a timely meditation on climate crisis and sustainability, the nine newly-restored films on view include *KMK Cane* (1976), *La Selva* (1974), *Laredo Sugar Mill* (1976), *Lago Agrio Gas Burn* (1977), *Banana Leaves* (1977), *Ship Side Steel Plate Lights* (1974), *Light Pleasures* (1970), *Passing* (1974), and *Paths of Fire II* (1976). *Neelon Crawford, Filmmaker* is organized by Ron Magliozzi, Curator, and Brittany Shaw, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Film.

Crawford’s early years as an artist were distinguished by his restlessness, simultaneously trying his hand at photography, drawing, and painting, and as a filmmaker finding inspiration in various avant-garde moving image scenes. Crediting experimental filmmakers like Nathaniel Dorsky and Bruce Baillie as sources of inspiration, Crawford’s treatment of light and motion also reflects his kinship with filmmakers such as Ernie Gehr and Andrew Noren. Supporting his efforts with freelance work in film sound recording led to an infamous encounter with the Hell’s Angel’s recorded in the Maysles’ famous Rolling Stones documentary *Gimme Shelter* (1970).

After an intense period of screening his work in the 1970’s, including two monographic programs in MoMA’s Cineprobe series, Crawford withdrew his films from circulation in the early 1980’s when his focus became photography and painting, in the footsteps of his father, abstract artist Ralston Crawford (1906-1978). MoMA acquired Neelon’s complete catalog of 35 titles in 2016, when it also began the process of preservation. The *Neelon Crawford, Filmmaker* gallery exhibition will highlight nine of these restored films.

The accompanying *Neelon Crawford Filmmaker* film series ran via MoMA’s *Virtual Cinema*, June 10–24. It premiered the Museum’s digital restoration of 23 core Crawford works nationwide, most unseen for nearly 40 years. The film series comprised the nine exhibition works plus noteworthy titles including *Freakquently* (1968), *Prison 1* (1969), *Window Dance* (1971), *Mobius* (1971), *The Vincent* (1979), *For the Spider Woman* (1980) and South American subjects, shot largely in Ecuador (1974-1976). The film series will be repeated on screen in the Titus theaters this autumn.

# CHANEL

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