



Cabin Field (2005)

39:20

digital video + 16mm film

Available screening formats: miniDV, DVD

Distribution: Self distributed. Contact Laura Kissel for preview and purchase.

Credits:

produced, directed, shot, edited by Laura Kissel

additional video/cinematography: Heidi Mehlretter

sound design: Joe Milutis / music composed by Joe Milutis

additional music written and recorded by Jason Treuting and Lawson White

Images:

<http://people.cas.sc.edu/kissel/film+video/cabinfield.html>

high resolution (300 dpi) jpegs can be downloaded from the website

Screenings and broadcasts:

St. Mary's College of Maryland, Experimental Documentary Series, February 11, 2008

NEH Exhibition *The American Farm*, at Old Independence Regional Museum,

Batesville, AK November 1, 2007

ATHICA Gallery, Athens, GA. "Rurburbs and Other Spaces Inbetween: Land Use and

Environmentalism" March - May 2007

Oxford American DVD issue of Southern Film, March 2007

6th Annual Ozark Foothills Film Festival, Little Rock, AK March 30, 2007

Creative Alliance, Baltimore, MD January 19, 2007

Villa Julie College, Baltimore, MD January 19, 2007

North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC September 22, 2006

Bickett Gallery, Raleigh, NC, September 21, 2006

Atlanta Film & Video Festival, Atlanta, GA, June 2006

911 Media Arts Center, Seattle, WA, May 19, 2006

Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland, OR, May 17, 2006

Evergreen College, Olympia, WA, May 16, 2006

Delta International Film and Video Festival, Cleveland, MS, April 2006

Balgan Experimental Film & Video Series, Boston, MA, April 13, 2006

Eyedrum, Atlanta, GA, April 14, 2006

Black Maria Film & Video Festival, 2006

Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival, Ithaca, NY, April 2006

Echo Park Film Center, Los Angeles, CA, March 2, 2006

SCETV Broadcast, *Southern Lens*, March 2, 2006

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Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA, February 24, 2006
Anthology Film Archives, New York, NY, February 8, 2006
University of Georgia, Athens, GA, January 30, 2006
University Film and Video Association, Chicago, IL, August 2005
Appalshop Media Center, Whitesburg, KY, July 3, 2005
Rural Route Film Festival 2005, Brooklyn, NY
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., May 31, 2005 [premiere]
Environmental Documentary Film Festival, Athens, GA, April 10, 2005 [sneak preview]

Awards and other recognition:

Jury Citation Award, Black Maria Film and Video Festival 2006
Best Documentary, Delta International Film and Video Festival 2006
Invited Featured Artist, 25th Anniversary of Women Direct 2006
Honorable Mention, Rural Route Film Festival 2005

Reviews:

The Moving Image Journal, Vol. 7.1, Spring 2007.
University Film and Video Association Annual Conference, Chicago, IL.
Reviewed by Adrienne Carageorge, Rochester Institute of Technology.

Commentary:

“Combining the rich sensibilities to time and place that we associate with environmental writers like Wendell Berry with digital manipulations and experimental film techniques, filmmaker Laura Kissel reveals complex layerings of race and gender, class and labor as experienced over five decades on a small plot of Georgia farmland. The result is fascinating, moving, and strangely disquieting. This is a must-see film for anyone with an interest in environmental history and politics.”

--**Dr. Tom Shevory, Professor of Politics, Ithaca College**

“Like archeologists we are confronted with artifacts of the past that provide direct connection to the present. Kissel has taken on this role of cinematic archeologist in an interesting and challenging way through her use of abstractions that collide with the direct evidence of images captured on film as she peels back the layers of time.”

--**Professor Adrienne Carageorge, Rochester Institute of Technology**

“This visually sumptuous portrait of one mile-long parcel of land demonstrates the power of documentary film to narrate and, in the process, reconfigure the relationship between humans and the landscape. Unlike most environmental documentaries that celebrate the monumental landscapes of the American West or the achievements of environmentalist heroes, Kissel uses an unremarkable agricultural field in rural south central Georgia to weave together an array of stories about those who have labored to make a living from nature. These different groups, including Native American hunters, enslaved and post-Emancipation African Americans, poor white sharecroppers and farmers, lumbermen, and present-day recreation seekers, have each left different traces on the landscape. To reveal this tapestry of human-environmental interaction, Kissel peels back layers of space and time through a variety of different media without imposing a singular plot line about cabin field’s environmental past or future.”

--**Dr. Tom Lekan, Professor of Environmental History, University of South Carolina**

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commentary, continued . . .

“Laura Kissel’s new film *Cabin Field* picks up where many of her previous works have left off as it reads the surface of the land for evidence of the things humans have done there. Through this film Kissel paints a portrait of this site, a mile-long parcel of agricultural land in rural south central Georgia, and of landscape more generally, as a palimpsest, marked and remarked by use through time. Her task, then, is one of excavation, suitably pursued through media old and new—oral histories, maps, digital video, home movies, satellite imagery, and archival film footage. *Cabin Field* dexterously weaves together these materials to show us, rather than simply tell about, the utter richness of the environments we take for granted. Stunning and original work.”

—*Julia Zay, media artist and professor, The Evergreen State College*

Topic areas:

Cabin Field crosses several subject areas and can be used in classroom or symposium settings to illuminate issues related to the following disciplines and subject areas: cultural geography; labor and women’s history; economic change; the industrialization of agriculture; environmental studies; landscape studies. It can also be used in documentary film courses as an example of a documentary that uses an essay style and incorporates archival materials, both as illustration and as commentary.

Descriptions:

61 words

This experimental, non-fiction film explores the site of Cabin Field, a mile-long stretch of agricultural land in Crisp County, Georgia. The experiences of land owners, farmers and day laborers intermingle with ephemeral and material evidence from satellites, aerial maps, and archival film to construct a portrait of a place as a palimpsest—a place that is complex, layered and constantly changing.

64 words

Cabin Field is a regional story about land use, labor and the mechanization of agriculture—all subjects that illustrate the economic and social development of the South. The story of this mile-long, agricultural field in Crisp County, Georgia is primarily a story of material, political and social change, and how the close study of a landscape reveals this story in subtle and dramatic ways.

25 words

An exploration of the landscape of a cotton field in Georgia and the material, political and social change experienced by those who lived and labored there.

268 words

Several wooden and wire fences once stood on Cabin Field, an agricultural site in Crisp County, Georgia. The fences were removed almost thirty years ago, yet recent satellite

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images of the field reveal where they used to stand, like scars on the surface of the land. The fences seem to magically appear in these ghostly, scientific images, like recurring memories. This evidence, though invisible to the naked eye, reveals a history of this place that illustrates how the land has been used and consumed by those who own or labor upon it.

On the surface of the American landscape, there is profound evidence of our collective history and a revealing portrait of our current values. The landscapes that we build and the landscapes that we remember are evocative locations, and never static. They are also sites of struggle and change.

This experimental, non-fiction film explores the site of Cabin Field, a mile-long stretch of agricultural land in Crisp County, Georgia. Through the memories of land owners, farmers, residents and agricultural laborers past and present, "Cabin Field" examines evidence both visible and submerged, material and ephemeral. Evidence of native American inhabitation, the economic structure of sharecropping and the mechanization of agriculture combine with fading memories; scientific and agricultural surveys reveal old home sites and the changing contours of Cabin Field; and archival film images of rural Georgia emerge, like fragments of evidence from the ruins of history and memory, to comment on our understanding of race, gender and the construction of place. Ultimately, Cabin Field weaves a portrait of a place as a palimpsest- multifaceted, complex, layered, ever changing.

