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## *Pollock-Krasner House Discovers Art Behind Film*

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By Michelle Trauring [Sep 2, 2014 12:41 PM](#)

Anita Thacher does not consider herself to be an experimental filmmaker who makes shorts, as many have classified her. She employs surrealism, but does not consider herself a surrealist. She enjoys a good narrative, but it is never her focus. And while she explores conceptual themes, she does not call herself conceptual.

The artist is simply not one for labels—or, perhaps, will accept them only on her own terms.

"If there were a school that was the conception of 'Alice in Wonderland,' I think that's the school I would belong to," Ms. Thacher explained during a telephone interview on a steamy Monday afternoon from her home on Shelter Island. "It would be closer, in terms of characterizing my work."

Taking a break from her Labor Day weekend, the artist—in every sense of the word—chatted over the whir of an air conditioner, teasing to the talk she will give after a handful of her short films screen on Friday night at the Pollock-Krasner House & Study Center in Springs, kicking off the "Artists on Film: Discovery" series, hosted by Marion Wolberg Weiss, who will explore the relationship between the two mediums.

"It's not too odd to think that film has influenced many artists, and that art has had a big influence on the very beginning of film," Ms. Weiss explained last week during a telephone interview. "In the Middle Ages, with the stained glass windows of the churches, each one was an image, a shot. The churchgoers would go from window to window, standing there and walking around. It was like putting together individual images as a film. Film and art together, it's really a good combination—and not as unusual as you might think."

Ms. Thacher takes the interrelated nature of art to the extreme, beginning from the time she was just 5 years old. Her discovery, and love, of music awakened her before she transitioned into ballet, modern dance and poetry—all before the time she graduated from high school.

Art was in the Manhattan air, she reminisced, and ingrained deep within her. "It doesn't seem to be as critical a move as it is for some people," Ms. Thacher said of her artistic nomadism. "It's quite natural for me. I never think, 'Oh, now what's next?' I just don't see it that way. I see it all as pieces of a larger picture."

Ironically, it was during her studies at the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting, and Sculpture that Ms. Thacher first re-imagined her two-dimensional work as film. While collaging her figure drawings, she found herself yearning for unlimited combinations, and soon realized she could have them.

Her initial film idea was abandoned as she worked on her first project, "Permanent Wave," a three-minute, circa-1968 short that set her on an unstoppable course. She immersed herself in film and their revolutionary makers—between the city studios and group share houses on the East End, set against the plentiful Sagaponack potato

fields of yore—before settling down with her husband, producer Kenneth Nochimson, on Shelter Island.

“You felt like you were on the cutting edge of discovering things in film,” she recalled. “There were very few antecedents to this work. There were some, and they were considered the gods of this art form, but you did feel very much like you were pioneering something. And it’s still that way—although nobody’s noticed it now.”

Despite the lack of a traditional audience, Ms. Thacher always finds time for film—between consulting, assisting her husband on his projects and working in other mediums herself. She is currently in the midst of completing a trilogy. The first installment, “CUT,” a re-assemblage of six classic, black-and-white Hollywood films influenced by surrealist strategies, premiered during the 2014 Tribeca Film Festival and is evocative of her earlier work.

“Even now, I feel the kind of focus that I have is something like dessert,” she said. “You can’t take too much of it at once. It’s too rich and dense and intense, so it wouldn’t lend itself to long, narrative form. That’s who I am and I don’t know why I would ever stop. It’s totally engaging and a joy to make art. I’m lucky. Very lucky.”

“Artists on Film: Discovery,” a series of lively screenings and discussions, will kick off with short films by Anita Thacher on Friday, September 5, at 7 p.m. at the Pollock-Krasner House & Study Center in Springs. Additional screenings will continue on Fridays at 7 p.m. with video portraits from “Eyes on Main Street” by Andrea Cote on September 12; “Girl with a Pearl Earring” on September 19; and “Tim’s Vermeer” on September 26. Admission is \$5, or free for members. For more information, call (631) 324-4929.