

INTERACTIVITIES

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San Francisco 1984, with Bernice and Sidney Peterson

### MARJORIE KELLER (1950–1994)

Marjorie Keller, filmmaker, author, and teacher; wife of film scholar P. Adams Sitney and mother of twin daughters Augusta and Miranda Sitney, died suddenly on February 17th 1994, while vacationing in Florida. Her films include *Misconception* (1977), *Daughters of Chaos* (1980), and *Herein* (1992), and her book *The Untutored Eye: Childhood in the Films of Cocteau, Cornell and Brakhage* was published in 1986.

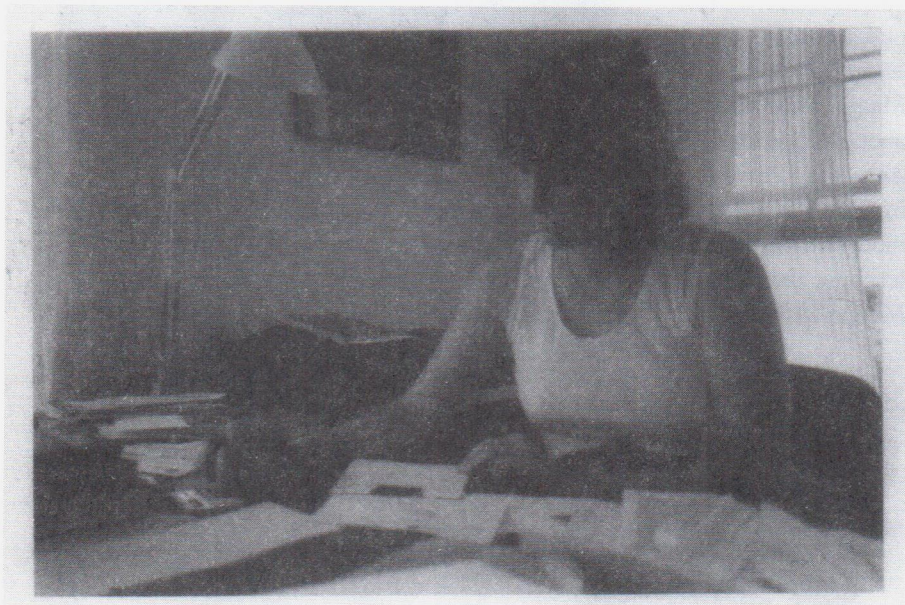
*Dear Margie,*

It's so sad and strange that you're gone. Sometimes your image comes to me so clearly and I feel momentarily consoled, and I think about what I would say to you if I had one more chance.

I would thank you for the time you took to help me write my first budget—I still remember how you laughed at how pitifully small it was and encouraged me to ask for what the project would really cost. Even though you were busy with your own work, you gave me your time and in the process taught me how not to panic quite so much about the bureaucratic side of being an artist. Every time I've done another budget, every time I've helped someone else do one, I've thought about your advice and the example you set. That was of course only one instance of your generosity; you had such a capacity for caring about and for other people.

If I had the chance, I would tell you again how impressed I always was at the range of your interests and talents. I could never quite believe that you could make films, get a Ph.D., publish the dissertation, *and* write and make by hand such a lovely children's book. Oh yes—and be a teacher, a lover, and a mother. All of that doesn't seem possible in one person. And did I forget to mention your insanely generous devotion to the cause of the Filmmaker's Coop? I leaned pretty heavily on you when we were working on that massive catalogue—

**Matunuck, Rhode Island,  
at her work desk**



I always felt that you had such a *sensible* mind: that you always tried so hard to find the best way to solve the thorny problems that beset the Coop, and that you never used a lot of anger or force—a capacity for restraint that I admire, given my lack of it. I guess it was the way you always tried to put into practice your leftist (for lack of a better word), feminist, and aesthetic ideas that made you such an impressive and rare person in my eyes.

Speaking of eyes, there was my experience seeing *Daughters of Chaos* for the first time at the Collective so many years ago. I was just starting to make films and hungry to see more films by women that expressed ideas other than what I'd been seeing. It's not that I didn't admire many of the earlier films that had been made (mostly by men), but I still felt a gap. And I was so excited after that screening—I felt that you had expressed many *almost* intangible but most particular moments of being a girl and a woman, and had done it in such a delicate, playful, and sometimes painful way, and I loved to see that on the screen. I loved being reminded that it was all right and good to speak in one's own voice. We all need that reassurance, and you gave that to me and I'm sure to others as well. You seemed to be someone so full of love for the medium, full of love for the play of ideas, for color and light and movement and sound, and you did as much as you could and then some. In fact, I saw the film again just a few months ago. It was in a program of films about marriage, and it was as full of subtlety and feeling as I'd remembered it.

Besides all this "big stuff," you were just fun to talk to. I'm sorry I didn't see more of you in the last years; that I didn't take the time to come up for a visit—I was too lazy and stuck in the city. I missed the chance to see you with your children, to see more of who you'd grown into after you escaped our bizarre little Forsyth Street enclave.

I have no idea why, where, or how you went away. I guess there is no why. I do hope that you know how much you meant to me, to so many of us, while you were here. I wish I could have found better words to tell you about the mark you made on my life, but these are all I can find. I hope that your kind and curious spirit is still finding pleasure somewhere out there.

*With love from Su.*

Su Friedrich