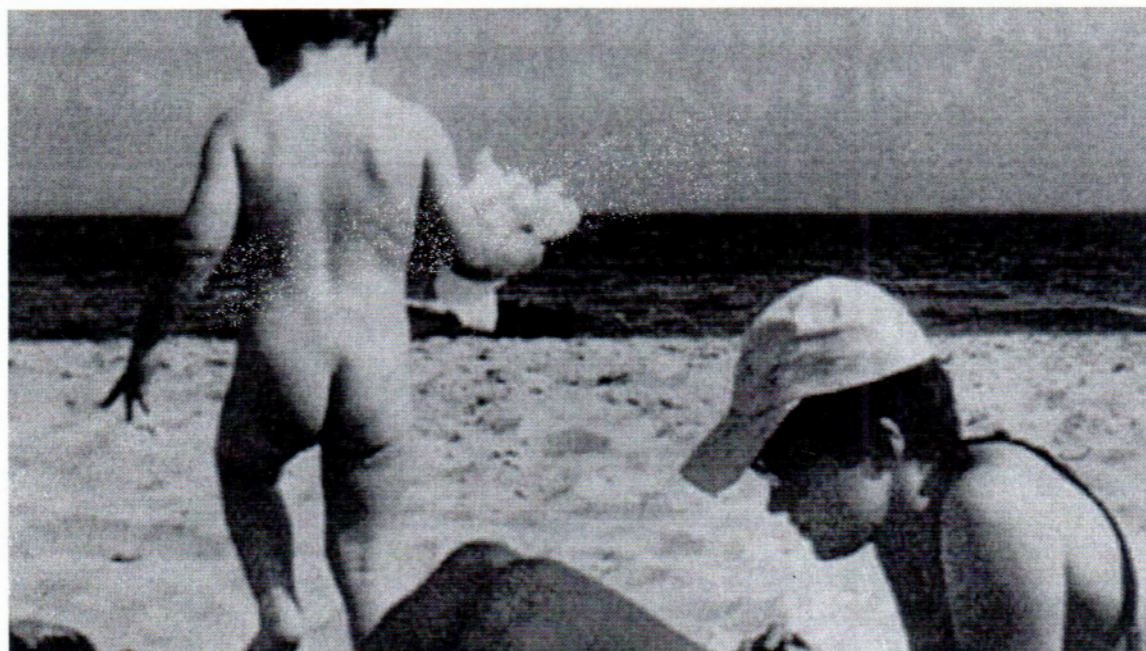


BROOKLYN MAGAZINE

The Best Old Movies on a Big Screen This Week: NYC Repertory Cinema Picks, April 19-25

by Aaron Cutler

April 19, 2017



Sink or Swim (1990)

Directed by Su Friedrich

One of the greatest films in the history of cinema proceeds by reciting the alphabet backwards. The work is New York-based Su Friedrich's 48-minute-long *Sink or Swim*, an elusive personal essay shot on black-and-white 16mm that encircles the filmmaker's relationship with her distant, oft-absent, sometimes emotionally abusive father who ultimately abandoned her with her mother and sister, then reappeared from time to time. Her tale's told in third-person by a young female (Jessica Lynch) who impassively narrates the story of "the girl." Each episode unfolding from "Zygote" through "Memory" through to "Athena Atalante Aphrodite" relates a small parable of a person growing through a primal encounter held between her and her linguist kin. The images build further distance from the pain through sequences of groups that comment indirectly on the girl's isolation, whether they be animals at play or people in a park and on a beach. Su herself appears reflected over the course of the work, emerging finally as an adult during its late passages. By then, the film's two-sided story has been imbedded in resonating fashion: That of a

man who left his child at sea for reasons known only to him, and that of the woman who has spent her whole subsequent life learning, on her own, how to swim.

Sink or Swim—which was named to the National Film Registry in 2015—will screen at Light Industry together with Michelle Citron's 1980 film *Daughter Rite*, a 49-minute-long collage work by the Boston-based director who strives to articulate her complicated feelings about her mother in conversation with two adult sisters speaking with good-humored exasperation about their own. Both films will screen on 16mm, and Su Friedrich will participate in a post-screening discussion. *Aaron Cutler*

(April 25, 7:30pm at Light Industry)

<http://www.bkmag.com/2017/04/19/nyc-repertory-cinema-picks-april-19-25/8/>