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MMoCA MAKES EXHIBITION FILM AVAILABLE ONLINE DURING MUSEUM CLOSURE

JAMES CAGLE'S *EXCAVATION* IS NOW ON MMOCA.ORG

MADISON, WI — Madison Museum of Contemporary Art has placed James Cagle's film *Excavation* (1974) on the MMoCA.org website to ensure that everyone can see the work during the museum's closure.

Excavation, along with Cagle's photographic series, *A Final Meditation on Art*, on display in MMoCA's State Street Gallery, opened just two weeks before the museum closed as a public safety measure due to the coronavirus. *A Final Meditation on Art* will be on view in the museum through July 26, 2020. *Excavation* is scheduled to remain on view in the Imprint Gallery through May 24.

Excavation demonstrates Cagle's engagement with structural filmmaking, an avant-garde movement that emerged in the 1960s and emphasized the physical properties of film, rather than film as a narrative tool. *Excavation* is an example of a "flicker film," a specific type of structural filmmaking where rapid sequences of imagery flash across the screen to create a strobelike, flickering effect.

Composed of both still photographs and live footage, *Excavation* employs extremely short-shot juxtapositions to create disorienting collisions of imagery. To create this piece, Cagle undertook

a painstaking and time-intensive editing process, alternating between exposing one frame of film and blacking out the next.

Through staccato bursts of light, we are shown a flashing collage of seascapes and gravel roads, a woman's face and the naked female form, pointing fingers and pulsating shapes. For Cagle, this film symbolized a personal exploration of, in his words, "techniques and ideas that have accumulated over the years, but had been without expression for one reason or another." A dynamic visualization of his thoughts, it "excavates" both the private workings of his inner world, and also the material components of filmmaking.

The film and images are courtesy of the New York Film-Makers Co-op and New American Cinema Group.

Generous support for Imprint Gallery programming has been provided by Willy Haerberli in memory of Gabriele Haberland.

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