

American artist Ericka Beckman was trained at CalArts in the mid-1970s. There she met a number of artists, friends and later collaborators, Matt Mullican, James Casebere and Mike Kelley.

Beckman finds inspiration from a number of sources, including the developmental psychology of Jean Piaget, as well as American sport culture, Hollywood films, and 1960's cartoons. Integrating these sources to her own vivid imagination, Beckman's films bring to life what she calls "the performance of the image."

Taking especially from Piaget's thesis that physical action is the basis of all language, Beckman creates animated games, incorporating their structural elements of rhythm, repetition, verbal chants, and colorful symbolic imagery. In her Super-8 Trilogy, Beckman explores the child's acquisition of symbolic thought. When the child sets an object in motion, the action becomes a mental image, and once this image is acquired and stable, it establishes a schema of further action.

The sets and props of Beckman's films are hand-made, and then animated by the use of a stop-motion technique. Ericka Beckman uses a technique called in camera superimposition, where she rewinds the film in the camera and shoots several images on top of each other for each scene.

Using this craft-based process of creating objects, instead of employing newer technologies, gives Beckman the concentration she needs. Without an exact pre-knowledge of how each image will materialize, the possibility of "mistakes" is introduced, and then incorporated into the creative process. This keeps her film making active, performative, and filled with surprise.

"Film is creating a reality through the makeshift. My films move backwards, using narrative structures, as does the mind of anyone trying to grasp the meaning of images in his memory. I juxtapose a model of the past, those 'should have been' meanings, with the past as remembered, as known to be riddled with mistakes and breeches of meaning. I reconstruct events and places as models to identify the details of a 'choice' or to locate the moment a 'choice' was available but went by unseized. By recalling the fear evoked by choice, film can fictionalize that fear and provide new consequences." Ericka Beckman, published in the catalogue for *Horror Pleni*, 1980.

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