



Observatory

*Observatory and the Cornelia Street Café present*

**Cornelia Street Observatory**

## **BODY AS FUNHOUSE MIRROR**

### **Cultural Reflections on the Human Form**

*For three nights only in Manhattan's most dynamic cultural venue—see the best of Brooklyn's new salon for curiosities!*

**The Cornelia Street Café:** A downtown venue offering 700 shows a year, from science to songwriting, Russian poetry to Latin jazz. Celebrated for over three decades by died-in-the-wool New Yorker intellectuals, tourists, the press, and sidewalk-café lovers of all stripes...

**Observatory:** Brooklyn's popular new salon for artistic lecture-esque mash-ups of science, historical curiosities and anatomical oddities, the cyberborg and the Grand Guignol, the old school and the futuristic. Turning just three years old in 2012...

**Cornelia Street Observatory:** If it's weird, if it's hip, if it's brainy—if it's created a buzz in Brooklyn—it's probably passed through Observatory. Now Observatory is bringing select offerings from its packed archive to the Big City.

Join us for three Sundays only—one per month in January, February, and April—as Observatory and the Cornelia Street Café explore **THE BODY AS FUNHOUSE MIRROR: Cultural Reflections on the Human Form**. Don't assume you know your body well—or at all! Society and nature can be strange mirrors. But be warned: You may find after gazing into them that it's hard to look away...

- **January 29, we kick off with Amy Herzog's *The Pornographic Arcades Project: Adaptation, Automation, and the Evolution of Times Square (1965-1975)*\***. Herzog's talk challenges our notion of what makes a city (sex)—and who constitutes a voyeur: Motion picture “peeping” machines have existed since the birth of cinema,

and were often stocked with salacious titles. Public arcades devoted to pornographic peep booths only began to appear in the late 1960s, however, although once established, they proliferated wildly, becoming ubiquitous features in urban landscapes... *The Pornographic Arcades Project* is a work-in-progress, asking what a study of pornographic peep show arcades might reveal about the cultural imaginary of the late twentieth century.

**Amy Herzog** is associate professor of media studies and coordinator of the film studies program at Queens College, CUNY. She is the author of *Dreams of Difference, Songs of the Same: The Musical Moment in Film*. She recently curated "Peeps," an exhibition at The James Gallery, CUNY Graduate Center, on the dialogue between pornographic peep loops and contemporary art practices.

([qc-cuny.academia.edu/AmyHerzog](http://qc-cuny.academia.edu/AmyHerzog))

- **February 26, we proudly continue with Sharon Shattuck's *Parasites: A User's Guide*\***. *Parasites* challenges the notions of body, friend, inside, and out—and it's funny! (Not to mention a tad horrific...) The word "parasite" comes with loads of vile connotations, but in nature, nothing is purely good or evil. In the 27-minute experimental documentary *Parasites: A User's Guide*, Shattuck embarks on a journey to decode some of the most misunderstood creatures on earth. The dramatic rise in autoimmune diseases, asthma, and allergies since the turn of the last century has confounded scientists, but some researchers think they have uncovered the key to controlling the skyrocketing rates: tiny parasitic worms called helminths... Through the seeming oxymoron of the "helpful parasite," Sharon questions the nature of our relationship with parasites—and suggests a new paradigm for the future.

**Sharon Shattuck** is a producer/director/ animator with Sweet Fern Productions, the production company she founded. Her previous experience includes work with the Smithsonian Institute, the Field Museum, NPR's *On The Media*, and internships with WNYC's *Radiolab*, and the BBC World Service/Stakeholder Forum. She has an undergraduate degree in forest ecology and a graduate degree in documentary and broadcast journalism. Her first film, the short *Parasites: A User's Guide* (2010), was an official selection of the Traverse City Film Festival, the Camden International Film Festival, the Michigan Film Festival, and the International Science Film Festival. In addition to her work with Sweet Fern, she is a member of the creative team at Wicked Delicate Films.

([sweetfernproductions.com](http://sweetfernproductions.com) / [wickeddelicate.com](http://wickeddelicate.com))

- **And finally, April 29, the illustrious Mark Dery presents *The Pathological Sublime and The Anatomical Unconscious***. Celebrating the publication of his essay collection, *I Must Not Think Bad Thoughts: Drive-By Essays on American Dread, American Dreams* (University of Minnesota Press), cultural critic and cult author Mark Dery will lecture—with unforgettable slides—on the hallucinatory Crypt of the Cappuchin monks in Rome, the uncanny wax mannequins at La Specola in Florence, and the 19th-century Chinese artist Lam Qua's paintings of patients with eye-poppingly bizarre tumors, which so fascinated Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. that he wrote an article exhorting all "worshippers

of morbid anatomy” to see the paintings, a textbook example of what Holmes called “the pathological sublime.” Join Mark for a dark ride through the Pathological Sublime and the Anatomical Unconscious, and pick up a copy of *I Must Not Think Bad Thoughts*, the book *Boing Boing* called “an intellectual journey through our darkest desires and strangest inclinations.”

**Mark Dery** is a cultural critic. He is best known for his writings on the politics of popular culture in books such as *The Pyrotechnic Insanitarium: American Culture on the Brink*, *Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the End of the Century*, *Flame Wars*, and *Culture Jamming*. He has been a professor of journalism at New York University, a Chancellor’s Distinguished Fellow at the University of California, Irvine, and a visiting scholar at the American Academy in Rome. His latest book, *I Must Not Think Bad Thoughts*, is “a head-spinning intellectual ride through American dreams and American nightmares” and will be available at his Cornelia Street Observatory engagement. ([thoughtcatalog.com/author/mark-dery](http://thoughtcatalog.com/author/mark-dery))

If you love Radio Lab, *Cabinet* magazine, the Surreal, the quirky, and the macabre, you'll definitely dig **Cornelia Street Observatory**.

All shows are Sunday at 6 PM, tickets are \$10. Please RSVP to 212.989.9319.

*\*Originally produced by Morbid Anatomy (Joanna Ebenstein) at Observatory in Brooklyn.*

#### **About the producers:**

**Observatory** is an art and events space in the Gowanus neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York. Founded in February 2009 by a group of seven artists and writers, the space seeks to present programming inspired by the eighteenth-century notion of "rational amusement." Observatory is especially interested in topics residing at the interstices of art and science, history and curiosity, and magic and nature. Part of the Proteus Gowanus arts complex, Observatory hosts frequent screenings, lectures, classes, and exhibitions. For a full schedule, visit [observatoryroom.org](http://observatoryroom.org)

**The Cornelia Street Café** has won numerous awards both for its food and for its performances, but it has remained at heart an artists’ café. Cornelia Street now offers some 700 shows a year, two a night, ranging from science to songwriting, from Russian poetry to Latin jazz, from theatre to cabaret. Owned and operated by founder Robin Hirsch, together with Judith Kallas, Bob Siegler and chef Dan Latham, Cornelia Street is open seven days a week, serving breakfast, lunch, dinner, and weekend brunch. For a full schedule, menus, and more, visit [corneliastreetcafe.com](http://corneliastreetcafe.com)

Kid’s book artist/author **Ted Enik** (producer) has worked for most of the better-known publishing houses in New York. He was honored to be tapped to (attempt to) fill Hilary Knight’s venerable shoes by illustrating the latest Eloise hardcover, *Eloise in Hollywood*, and is currently delighted to be an artist for the popular *Fancy Nancy "I Can Read™"* series. Ted gives regular rants at Observatory and is a member of the Hollow Earth Society. To see Ted’s work, visit [tedenik.com](http://tedenik.com)

**Wythe Marschall** (producer) is a writer, producer at Observatory, and former lecturer for the English department of Brooklyn College. Wythe’s stories and essays have appeared

in *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern* and elsewhere. With artist Ethan Gould, Wythe is the co-founder of the para-scientific Hollow Earth Society ("A new world, from the inside out"), whose first two books—*Suspicious Anatomy* and *Suspicious Zoology*—are available via [hollowearthsociety.com](http://hollowearthsociety.com)

**Joanna Ebenstein** is a New York based artist and independent researcher. She runs the Morbid Anatomy Blog ([morbidanatomy.blogspot.com](http://morbidanatomy.blogspot.com)) and the related Morbid Anatomy Library, where her collection of curiosities, books, photographs, artworks, ephemera, and artifacts is made available by appointment. Recent exhibitions include the Great Coney Island Spectacularium, an immersive investigation into the bizarre spectacles of turn of the 20th century Coney Island; *Anatomical Theatre*, a photographic survey of artifacts of great medical museums of the Western World; and *The Secret Museum*, a photographic exhibition exploring the poetics of collections private and public, front stage and back. She is the founding member of Observatory, and annual co-curator of the Congress for Curious Peoples at the Coney Island Museum.