TELLURIDE
MOUNTAINFILM

Light Goes On

Directed by Darren Pearson

In *Light Goes On,* filmmaker/photographer Darren Pearson uses the technique of light painting photography to make more than your average skateboard film. *Light Goes On* was part of Mountainfilm's Kidz Kino program, from the 2014 festival.

Discussing the Film:

The following questions are intended to spark discussion and activities related to both the content and storytelling elements of this particular film.

1.   What were some of the most interesting images from *Light Goes On*? What sights and sounds do you remember the most about the film?

For more information on the filmmakers or to see other tour destinations and films, visit mountainfilm.org.

2.   Did you think that *Light Goes On* is a film about skateboarding? Why or why not?

3.   Why do you think the filmmaker, Darren Pearson, chose a skeleton as the skateboarding subject of his film? What other subject would you have chosen as the main character?

4.   What do you think the locations of *Light Goes On* say about the subject or about skateboarding as a sport?

5.   Does this film remind you of any other stories that you have loved from your past? In what ways?

6.   What other stories could you tell with light painting?

Extensions:

1.   **WATCH**: Check out director Darren Pearson's light painting photographs online at http://www.dariustwin.com/. Also check out his unique clothing line, Danger Brand at http://thedangerbrand.com/.

2.   **WATCH**: Check out some more photographers doing new and different things with light painting: http://petapixel.com/2013/08/27/10-amazing-light-painting-photographers/.

3.   **READ**: Learn more about the technique of light painting photography. Read an extended interview about Darren Pearson's work, his likes/dislikes and how he got started: http://lightpaintingphotography.com/light-painting-artist/featured-artist-2/darren-pearson/.

4.   **DO**: Teachers: Study the online tutorial on light painting photography, find some digital cameras and create a light painting photography project with your students! It's easy, check it out here: http://digital-photography-school.com/light-painting-part-one-the-photography/.

Filmmaker Conversation:
Darren Pearson, director of *Light Goes On*

It seems like you've made a lot of photographs in this style? What is it and how did you get into it?

Darren: It's basically slowing down the shutter on your camera enough to step in front of it and illustrate. This was shot over the course of the year, so it's about 720 individual photographs. I first saw this technique when I came across a image of Pablo Picasso taken in 1949 in *LIFE* magazine. He had

this glowing 3D line around him in the shape of an abstract centaur. I wasn't sure what it was. I had a photographer friend come over to hang out and we did a few light paintings. That was really when I started to get interested in photography. It was the only time you could illustrate through the frame. That was interesting to me as a filmmaker and an illustrator. You have to think like a photographer, but it doesn't hurt to be an illustrator, especially if you have to draw 720 skeletons for a skateboarding film!

How did you create the film and why did you choose the skeleton?

Darren: I had seen films with these animations in them before, but most of them were crude stick figures. I used to skateboard, from junior high through college, and I drove past this handrail every day on my way home from work. The first scene I shot was of that skeleton skateboarder doing a kickflip down that rail. I guess I chose the skeleton because it had depth, but also was relatively challenging figure to animate. Every night I would take a detour home from work and end up in different places shooting another scene to my film. After doing this for about a year I had enough footage to put together this short piece.

Was the film becoming more of a story, night to night?

Darren: I wanted to make a skateboarding film. That means going big, collecting scene after scene, night after night. The idea was to make it look like it was done in a professional skate park. I wanted somewhat of a narrative structure, but more so, the skateboarder in me just wanted cool tricks, especially some tricks that couldn't be done on a skateboard. I think the whole thing was inspired by professional skateboarding right now, and the insane limits that those people push themselves to.

Why are there so many short skateboarding films in our society today? When you see a film on skateboarding, what excites you?

Darren: Well, I knew what I was looking for in a skateboarding film, but *Light Goes On* is more of an ode to skateboarding. To me, a skateboarding film is the style of the movement and the technical nature of the tricks. Going fast is the number one thing: if someone can go mach 5 and and take on the largest gap I've ever seen. Some of these stunts are life and death. There's so much determination on the face of that athlete. He's giving it everything he's got and that's exciting in any sport. People try to capture the rawness of skateboarding and the story that goes along with it, which is "you never know what you're gonna get."

What piece of advice would you give to a student who wants to get into filmmaking?

Darren: I think it's important to find a voice and one that's unique to your situation. You really have to tell a story very honestly and in a way that hasn't been done before. It's easy to do a skate video, but very difficult to do a skate video that everyone wants to see. The story element is the most important

part. Also, the "reveal" is important. Filmmaking is about story. A lot of the time, the most interesting story is in finding your voice.

What's your next project?

Darren: The next project is a film on movement. I'm working on it in the same way that I worked on *Light Goes On*. It's a very slow process but even a little more technical in nature. I think it's evolved so far from the previous film. One of the things that I think make my films interesting is the places I visit at night. A lot of the places are abandoned or spooky. Every single environmental factor comes into play when light is involved. I recently even got into shooting stars at night, especially when there's no moon.