

THE LIGHT AT WALDEN



Walden Pond, Concord, Massachusetts

“Let your life be a counterfriction to stop the machine.” –Thoreau

PABLO FRASCONI, Producer/Director

Artist’s Statement:

THE LIGHT AT WALDEN, a meditation on peace and freedom, interweaves the inspirational writings of Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden* and *Civil Disobedience*, with my experiences as a war resister on a wilderness island in Nova Scotia, Canada during the U.S. / Vietnam War.

The film tells the stories of Thoreau’s experiment “to front only the essential facts of life” at Walden Pond, and my search for a new life in Canada – one of the 125,000 who left the U.S. during the war.

A few months before I was to register for the military draft in 1970, my father, Antonio, a Uruguayan artist, gave me a copy of *A Vision of Thoreau* –which he illustrated. Soon after, I saw a program of transformative films by Stan Brakhage at MOMA in New York City, including *The Act of Seeing With One's Own Eyes*, and *Dog Star Man*. In those few short months, Thoreau's words and Brakhage's films changed the trajectory of my life. Brakhage was committed to exploring light and visual abstraction; Thoreau to living off-the-grid and to peaceful resistance against war and oppression.

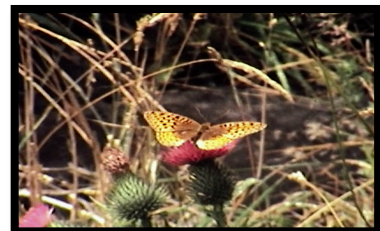
In the spring of 1971 I left home in Connecticut (in an old station wagon full of farming and construction tools, cooking utensils, musical instruments, and cameras) and headed north – first visiting Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, then studying with Brakhage at The University of New Hampshire in Durham. A few months later, I quietly crossed the border into Canada by ship to Nova Scotia, where a friend and I bought a 150 acre island and attempted to live sustainably. My goal was to create a life of community, peace and harmony –safely out of the path of the military draft.

This Light at Walden, photographed on the coast of Nova Scotia in the 1970's and today at Walden Pond, Concord, Massachusetts, is a cine-poem; an illuminated manuscript; a meditation on peaceful resistance.

The film is dedicated to my father, who passed away while I was finishing the film.

Music by John Luther Adams, John Cage, Arvo Part, Charles Ives, Karen Tanaka and others.

“Canada lullabied me into her arms. Pacified the pacifist in me. Saved me.”
–Judith Hill Benson, U.S. poet / expatriate



Morris Island, Nova Scotia, Canada, 1971-2

The Light at Walden premiered in January 2015 at THE WILD AND SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL –“were activism gets inspired”– in a pop-up theater in a 19th century foundry in Nevada City, CA; it was selected as one of 40 films from 10 nations to screen at THE PEACE ON EARTH FILM FESTIVAL at the Chicago Civic Center; won the Merit of Awareness Award at the AWARENESS FESTIVAL in LA; and was recently screened at BEYOND BAROQUE in L.A. – *a place dedicated to the possibilities of language* – part of an evening with with the filmmaker.

"Pablo Frascioni's *The Light at Walden* invigorates the mind and calms the spirit. It awakens the longing for deep peace and serenity. Thoreau's words resonate with today's need for activism and inspire us to take steps towards a monumental shift."
–Gerry Fialka, 7 Dudley Cinema, L.A.

BIOGRAPHY



Pablo Frascioni has been making films since 1969, when, at age 17, he won the National Newsweek-Bolex Documentary Film Contest with "Redevelopment," a critique of conditions in his hometown, South Norwalk, Connecticut. It premiered at the Newsweek Building in midtown Manhattan. Soon after, he left the U.S. during the U.S. / Vietnam war to live on a wilderness island in Nova Scotia, and later to study film in Toronto. He returned to the U.S.

in 1976, and has since made films about the U.S. bicentennial, gentrification, childhood literacy, public art, creativity, civil liberties and poetry. He has received 19 grants and fellowships from national, regional and private entities including the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the American Film Institute.

His films, including, "The Woodcuts of Antonio Frascioni," "Towards the Memory of a Revolution," "Survival of a Small City," and, "The Longing," have been screened throughout the world, including the Festival dei Popoli, Firenze, Italy; National PBS Broadcast; The International Festival of Films on Architecture, "The Future of the City;" the Smithsonian Institution; The Museum of Modern Art; the Havana International Film Festival; The Margaret Mead Film Festival; the Museo de Arte Reina Sofia in Madrid; and have received awards at the American Film Festival; the International Festival of Films on Art and Architecture; and the Black Maria Film Festival. He has worked as

cinematographer and editor for the American Civil Liberties Union, the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Asia Society; and Weston Woods Studios.

His latest film is "The Light at Walden," based on Henry David Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" and "Walden," funded by the Park Foundation, New York, and a grant from USC: Advancing Scholarship in the Humanities and Social Sciences; sponsored by the Center for Independent Documentary, Inc., in Massachusetts, had its World Premiere at THE WILD AND SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL –"where activism gets inspired"– in Nevada City, CA in January 2015.

He is currently Full Professor of the Practice of Cinematic Arts in the Production Division at the School of Cinematic Arts at USC in Los Angeles where he teaches Editing; Creating Poetic Cinema; Nature, Design and Media (in the new Media Arts + Practice Division); mentors advanced graduate projects, and coordinates the first year of the graduate M.F.A. production program. He recently designed and taught the USC-YouTube Creator Institute; the USC/Disney Studios Producing and Directing Course; a seminar in World Building with Alex McDowell; a workshop at the USC Center for Excellence in Teaching on Contemplative Pedagogies; and was invited by the USC Provost to conduct a seminar in Transmedia and Political Engagement, and, Mindfulness, Meditation, and Guided Visualizations. He has previously taught at The New School; the State University of New York, College at Purchase; Occidental College; the University of Hawaii; Cinecitta, Rome, Italy; and the Communication University of China, Beijing. Recent speaking engagements include: Text & Subtext: Creating Poetic Cinema, at the Beijing Film Academy; The Tranvergence Summit: The Future of Content (Transmedia and Cross-Platform Storytelling), Los Angeles; The Source: Mindfulness, Meditation & Visualizations in the Creative Process, Graduate Annenberg Fellows Micro Seminar, USC; and, World Building, Transmedia & Pedagogy at Tecnologico de Monterrey, Guadalajara, Mexico.

His films have been distributed by the American Federation of Arts, NYC; The Museum of Modern Art, NYC, Filmmaker's Library, NYC; and, El Museo del Barrio, NYC.

The Light at Walden is available on BluRay, HDcamSR, and DCP (10.5.15)

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Trailer:

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