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'Appreciating the Universe'

Faith and John Hubley, U.S.

Wayward hats, Zen clowns, dancing women, and shrieking children populate this compilation representing 30 years of shorts by John Hubley and Faith Hubley, who is the Golden Gate Persistence of Vision Award honoree. Some of the pieces, such as "Seers and Clowns" and "Africa," are almost impossible to accurately describe, as every 5- to 10-second scene melts and transforms into something completely different, sometimes recognizable as human or animal forms but often simply shapes, moving and dancing. "The Hat" features the voices of Hubley favorite Dizzy Gillespie and Dudley Moore as a pair of enemy guards bantering over the ownership of an errant hat. "If you do not give me back my hat, we are going to rumble," Dizzy politely insists, and the scuffle escalates into a probing look at the absurdity of fighting wars over man-made borders. Darker films in the program include "Witch Madness," Faith Hubley's 1999 film that exposes the European witch hunts via haunting imagery and somber intertitles ("accuse, torture, give names, burn"), and "Step by Step," in which frightening images of crimes committed against children give way to a loving depiction of global families. Also in the program are "Windy Day" and the Oscar-winning "Moonbird," both of which use the spontaneous, wild sound of the toddler-age Hubley children (including Georgia of Yo La Tengo fame) in an animated study of young, freewheeling imaginations. *Sun/23, Thurs/27.* (Eddy)

