## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berwick New Cinema Features</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berwick New Cinema Competition</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animistic Apparatus</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibitions</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filmmaker in Focus: Kira Muratova</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist in Profile: Marwa Arsanios</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantastika</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propositions</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential Cinema</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children &amp; Young People</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festival Programmers &amp; Contributors</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanks</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We are very grateful to the ongoing support of the following organisations:

Public Funders

Project Funders & Supporters

Festival Partners

Venue Partners
Team

Office
Jennifer Heald  Administration & Finance Officer
Claire Hills  Festival Manager
Peter Taylor  Festival Director
Hamish Young  Programme Coordinator & Associate Programmer

2019 Festival
Botany Studio  Web Design
Katie Chappell  Kaleidoscope Artist Facilitator
Becki Cooper  Volunteer Coordinator
Thea Karagialidis  Guest Services Coordinator
Chloë Smith  Kaleidoscope Artist Facilitator & Education Coordinator
Emer Tumilty  Design & Illustration
Matthew Walkerdine  Graphic Design

Programmers
Letitia Calin  Associate Programmer
Tendai Mutambu  2019 Programming Fellow
Herb Shellenberger  Associate Programmer & Publications Editor

Board
Huw Davies  Chair
Menelaos Gkartzios
Chris Hardie
Joe Lang
Wendy Law
Kelly Ling
Andrew Ormston
Scott Sherrard
Laura Simpson
Matt Stokes

Technical Team
Ashley Green
Jay Horner
Henry Martin
Casey Miller
Liam Murray
Chris Osborne
David Tiernan

Colophon
Published as part of the 15th Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival Thursday 19 to Sunday 22 September 2019

Published by Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival
Company No.: 5622380
Registered Charity No.: 1174274

© Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival
ISBN: 978-1-9995881-1-3
All images are courtesy of the artists except 978-1-9995881-1-3
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrievable system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the publishers.

Design and typesetting by Matthew Walkerdine | matthewwalkerdine.com  Cover, illustrations and map by Emer Tumilty | emertumilty.com
Printed in the UK by Martins the Printers of Berwick-upon-Tweed | martins-the-printers.com
Welcome to the 15th Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival

It is our pleasure to bring you this comprehensive guide to Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival (BFMAF) 2019. Whether you are a Berwicker yourself or a temporary one, I hope that you find this catalogue a rich accompaniment to your visit and a future aide-memoire. Perhaps looking on from afar, back from the future—you will be directed to artists and filmmakers whose work speaks strongly of, to and beyond this moment. Unreliable narrators, militant desires, and trouble-making solidarities abound.

As Elena Gorfinkel quotes Kira Muratova “Harmony doesn’t mean balance”, and likewise disappointment need not necessarily be negative. Exhausted from work during International Film Festival Rotterdam 2013, I barely grazed the surface of Muratova’s full retrospective there, but the experience meant so much. I am delighted that Elena has curated one of the first retrospectives—within living memory—of Kira Muratova in the UK and by the generosity of Dovzhenko Centre Kyiv for making it possible. It is an exciting moment.

Likewise is the arrival of Lav Diaz. Due to teaching commitments he famously did not attend the Cannes world premiere of The Halt this Spring, yet is flying seventeen hours from Manila to make it to a Saturday night North Northumberland screening in Berwick-upon-Tweed! Lav will also join May Adadol Ingawanaj’s Animistic Apparatus to present a dusk till dawn screening of his Philippines origin story epic A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery. Exploring ecologies damaged by colonising ambitions in a programme featuring artists from Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand, Ingawanaj suggests that the ‘potential for change may lie in radical forms of entanglement between ghostly presence, nonhuman beings, and powerless humans’.

Your catalogue contains writing from May and also Fang-Tze Hsu on George Clark’s Double Ghosts, a spectral exhibition commissioned and presented in partnership with Berwick Visual Arts in the Gymnasium Gallery. As ever we are so grateful for their support in realising one of our most ambitious exhibitions to date and George Clark’s first solo exhibition in the UK.

The catalogue is rich with insights from our programming team as well as longer form writing from Paul Clinton on Lionel Soukaz, which will be further expanded on within his Essential Cinema programme. Our Propositions presentations for 2019 will be made by Newcastle-based Holly Argent, artist, curator and DJ Rabz Lansiquot and Artistic Director of Images Festival, Toronto, Steffanie Ling with a selectrospective of solo work by Julia Feyrer. We also have writing from this year’s Programming Fellow Tendai John Mutambu on 2019 Artist In Profile Marwa Arsanios, whose programme he has curated, and our Associate Programmer Herb Shellenberger presents Fantasika, his first thematic programme at BFMAF on folk, folklore and fable in cinema.

We couldn’t do this as a project without so much kindness and tireless hard work from friends and colleagues. We are hugely grateful as ever, and hope that you feel that the festival does you proud! As always, we want to express our huge thanks to our core funders Arts Council England and the British Film Institute, as well as our local supporters Northumberland County Council, the Community Foundation, Simpsons Malt, ‘Welcome Visitor’ Project, Berwick Film Society and a big shout out to Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council, proud first time sponsors of the Berwick New Cinema Award.

Enjoy!!
Peter Taylor
Berwick New Cinema Features allows our signature Berwick New Cinema Competition of short films to expand, incorporating feature and mid-length films which bring original perspectives and new forms into being. Each film will surprise, entertain and provoke, opening up further questions and considerations.

We are proud to present our Opening Film, Carlos Casas’s immersive cinematic and auditory experience *Cemetery* and Closing Film *Rights of Man*, a humourous and painterly story of a rag-tag circus troupe directed by Juan Rodrigáñez. UK Premieres from Lav Diaz, Narimane Mari and Angela Schanelec round up the inaugural slate of Berwick New Cinema Features.
Opening Film: Cemetery
Carlos Casas
France/UK/Poland/Uzbekistan/Sri Lanka | 2019
85 mins | Sinhala with English subtitles

After a devastating earthquake, Nga, an old elephant and probably the last of its species, and Sanra his mahout are about to embark on a journey to find the mythical elephant’s graveyard. A group of poachers follow them closely, while a journey of discovery and mourning starts. The viewer becomes the protagonist on a sonic trip into the cemetery and beyond.

Drawing inspiration from elephant communication, the film presents new ways of using sound as a sensorial bond with the spectator. Through collaboration between sound recording artist Chris Watson, sound engineer Tony Myatt, and bioacoustician and elephant communication expert Joyce Poole, Cemetery presents revolutionary infrasonic recordings of elephants as well as new sound recordings that highlight the amazingly rich (and still unknown) sonic world of the elephants, and their possible interactions with man.

Winner of multiple awards at its world premiere at FID Marseille, Cemetery is an adventure film that unfolds into an immersive cinematic and auditory experience.

“Carlos Casas steadily digs down beneath the surface of everyday perceptions to offer up an extraordinary and almost mystical experience which is a feast for the eyes and the ears.”
— Fabian Lemercier, Cineuropa

Q&A with filmmaker Carlos Casas
UK premiere of Cemetery presented jointly by BFMAF and Tate Modern

Carlos Casas (1974, Barcelona) is a filmmaker and artist whose practice encompasses film, sound and the visual arts. His films have been screened and awarded in festivals around the world, including Venice Film Festival, International Film Festival Rotterdam, Buenos Aires International Film Festival, Mexico International Film Festival and FID Marseille. His work has been exhibited and performed in international art institutions and galleries such as Tate Modern (London); Fondation Cartier, Palais de Tokyo and Centre Pompidou (Paris); Hangar Bicocca (Milan); CCCB Barcelona; GAM (Torino); and BOZAR (Brussels).

Filmography:
The Halt
Lav Diaz

Philippines | 2019 | 283 mins
Tagalog with English subtitles

Berwick New Cinema Features
UK Premiere

The Halt is set in a phantasmagoric dystopian future where madmen control Manila after massive volcanic eruptions have plunged Southeast Asia into darkness. Berlin, Venice and Locarno award-winning director Lav Diaz’s latest film is a potent sci-fi epic. Holding a mirror to present-day despots and invasive surveillance, it concentrates power in the hands of a solitary young woman. Spinning a tale that urges recovery from collective cultural amnesia, The Halt is an immersive and truly one-of-a-kind experience.

“Having frequently set his films in the past as a means of reflecting on the present, Diaz goes the sci-fi route with The Halt, whose phantasmagoric dystopia, set in the year 2034, is a thinly disguised representation of the contemporary Philippines. Not only does everything look the same – a budgetary limitation that the director turns into a Brechtian asset – but the country is ruled by President Nirvano Reyes Navarro, a grotesque despot whose white-shirted outfits and penchant for feeding the flesh of drug addicts to his pet crocodiles clearly signal him as stand-in for the actual president, Rodrigo Duterte.”

— Giovanni Marchini Camia, Sight & Sound

Lav Diaz (1958) studied economics at the University of Notre Dame and attended the Mowelfund Film Institute in Manila. His nine-hour film Death in the Land of Encantos (2007) received a Special Mention at Jeonju International Film Festival, Melancholia (2008) won the Venice Horizons Award at Venice International Film Festival, From What Is Before (2014) received the Golden Leopard at Locarno International Film Festival, A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery (2016) was awarded the Alfred Bauer Prize at Berlinale, and The Woman Who Left (2016) won the Golden Lion at Venice International Film Festival. Diaz is also a screenwriter and musician.

Filmography:
Holy Days
Narimane Mari

Algeria/France | 2019 | 40 mins
No dialogue

Berwick New Cinema Features
UK Premiere

Holy Days pictures a strange ballet of both human and non-human animals in a rural landscape. The film opens with a man digging his own grave, only to soon find solace in a mysterious companion.

Affect and emotion are doled out in no small quantity, conveyed through not only the actors’ movements and interactions, but also through motions, gestures and performances by animals whom we might consider their counterparts. There is a genuine sense of ease, relaxation and relief that permeates the film through the actors’ negotiation of each other. But nothing gold can stay, and soon the arrival of a third element makes everything unclear. The elements, beings and unseen forces throughout the landscape all quiver with delirious energy as a torrent of both eroticism and anguish roll in from the valley below. Punctuated by undulating waves of rhythmic percussion, Narimane Mari’s hypnotic and exploratory film drills deeply into the viewer with immediacy. Through developing a free style of filmmaking, unencumbered by the mediation of language, the film makes categorisations like ‘documentary’ and ‘narrative’ feel obsolete. It is an actuality, with images and emotions spilling onto the screen with utter immediacy, which we must accept on their own terms.

— Herb Shellenberger

Narimane Mari (1969, Algiers) is a filmmaker and producer. She created the Paris-based film production company Central Electrique in 2006, and in 2010 created the Algerian production company Allers Retours Films to produce directors and artists involved in modern history. Mari’s directorial debut was Prologue (2007), about the artist Michel Haas (Museum of Solutré). Bloody Beans (2013), her first fiction film, won awards at FID Marseille, CPH:DOX, and Images Festival. Her second feature Le fort des fous (2017) was selected for many prestigious festivals including Locarno, Wavelengths (TIFF), Projections (NYFF), Experimenta (LFF) and RIDM (Montreal International Documentary Festival), and was presented as an installation at Documenta 14.

Her production credits include Hassen Ferhani’s Roundabout in My Head (2015), Djamel Kerkar’s Atlal (2016) and most recently Hassen Ferhani’s 143 Sahara Street, which had its world premiere at Locarno 2019. She is currently developing Djamel Kerkar’s next film Fireflies in the Dark of Time and editing her next film We Had the Day, Bonsoir.

Filmography:
After living wild for a week, Astrid's 13-year-old son Phillip returns home without saying a word. Only gradually does everyday life get back on track. Astrid now finds herself confronted with questions that provide a whole new perspective on her middle-class existence and her career in Berlin’s cultural sector. At home, it becomes more and more difficult for this single mother to accept that her son is leading his own life. The family may be disintegrating, but only to form itself anew.

With nods to Bresson and Ozu, Angela Schanelec’s masterfully composed *I Was Home, But* often places its camera at a discrete distance, providing its protagonists the space, humour and time they need to rediscover themselves. Parallel narratives are woven together with such breathtakingly simple virtuosity and beauty that Schanelec was rightly awarded the Silver Bear for Best Director at the 2019 Berlin Film Festival.

“When we look for a film’s meaning, what does ‘meaning’ mean? That this is the kind of question raised by […] *I Was at Home, But*… (the apparent reference to Ozu’s *I Was Born, But*… is yet another of its unanswered intrigues) should give you some idea of the kind of film it is. It is gorgeously shot and sound–designed to immersive perfection—a confident doubling-down on the uber-distinctive style Schanelec has evolved over her two-and-a-half-decade directorial career. It is also calmly, radically mystifying, the kind of film through which there appear to run seams of subterranean logic, but follow any one and you’ll only find yourself dangling off its edges: the ellipsis is the most useful clue the title contains.”

— Jessica Kiang, *Sight & Sound*
The Great Indomitable Circus prepares the premiere of their new performance ‘Rights of Man’. Setting up tent in a sleepy northern Spanish town, they devise changes in the style of their show. But their days become mired in meandering vaudevillian arguments, analysing the grandeur of the landscape, the simplicity of the native architecture or the quality of each other’s performances. After much back-and-forth, they end up sticking to their original script.

— Juan Rodrigáñez

Juan Rodrigáñez’s quietly brilliant film has a timeless feel—harkening back to Fellini and Bergman’s images of the circus in La Strada and Smiles of a Summer Night, respectively—and gains steam through sharp interactions between characters who never fully reveal their motives. The filmmaker’s eye for painterly composition allows the viewer to drink in the rich images, observing with great excitement scenes that might unfold over several minutes in front of a static camera. Much is left unexplained and ambiguous, though we feel quite immediately that this is a strange, makeshift family, a band of outsiders who are more suited to performing in front of an audience than existing alongside other humans. — Herb Shellenberger

“Art, like bread, it’s hard on the outside, but soft on the inside,’ is the wisdom offered by one of the circus performers in Juan Rodrigáñez’s delightful Rights of Man. It was one of the last films I saw at FID [Marseille], and a perfect way to conclude the festival: a warm, playful, unpretentious, and quietly hilarious sendup of art and politics.”

— Carmine Grimaldi, MUBI Notebook

Introduction by filmmaker Juan Rodrigáñez

The film is preceded by the 2019 Berwick New Cinema Competition award presentation

Juan Rodrigáñez [1971, Madrid] studied film before finishing his Bachelor of History. Among other diverse activities, he ran the art gallery La verde oliva in Grenada and co-edited the Vera Poetry Review. Rodrigáñez’s first short film A la sierra de Armenia (2008) premiered at ZINEBI (Bilbao International Festival of Documentary and Short Films). In 2015, he produced and directed his first feature Der Geldkomplex (El complejo de dinero) through his own production company, Tajo abajo. Der Geldkomplex premiered in Berlinale Forum, before showing at Hong Kong International Film Festival, IndieLisboa and FILMADRID.

Filmography:
Rights of Man (Derechos del hombre, 2018), Der Geldkomplex (El complejo de dinero, 2015), A la sierra de Armenia (2008)
The Berwick New Cinema Competition comprises our view of some of the most distinctive and unexpected works of new cinema and artists’ moving image being made around the world. Disregarding boundaries of genre, form, filmic conventions and expectations, these are vital works, imbued with a sense of liveness and agency in their resolute visions.

The jury will present this year’s Berwick New Cinema Award, which includes a trophy and £1000 cash prize kindly supported by the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council. Past Berwick New Cinema Award winners include Callum Hill (2018), Sky Hopinka (2017), Camilo Restrepo (2016) and Tamara Henderson & Julia Feyrer (2015).

The 2019 Berwick New Cinema Competition was researched and selected by Festival Director Peter Taylor, Associate Programmers Letitia Calin and Herb Shellenberger, Programme Coordinator Hamish Young and 2019 Programming Fellow Tendai Mutambu.

Berwick New Cinema Competition 🙌 (pages 13–17)

‘Lazy Girl’ is an emblem of refusal. Like Hammer and Deren she moves to her own rhythm, turning resistance into art. So did Eric, a singular figure whose ‘proto-practice’ was poetry but he ran out of time. Marx said all politics reduces itself to the politics of time; too bad this leisurely splash in Montánchez is hardly a refusal of capitalism’s tempo but let’s kill time before it kills us.

Verver (for Barbara), Deborah Stratman | The Prince of Homburg, Patrick Staff | I Got My Things and Left, Philbert Aimé Mbabazi Sharangabo | Subtitles or a love poem in plain language, Lesley-Anne Cao | The Golden Legend, Chema García Ibarra & Ion de Sosa

Berwick New Cinema Competition 🧙‍♂️ (pages 18–21)

From Harlem to Giverny, patrilineal tales to Artaud, nature will give way to febrile artifice. What dizzying force is this—throwing us between opposites: deafening silence vs. slide-projector clicks; glitch-y celluloid vs. HD; projected futures pressed up against the archive? But there’s calm around the corner—a reprieve from the chaos of subjection. “Can I live?”, one voice enquires, rhetorically. Consider how the subtext to our fervid biopolitical project.

Libidinal Empathy / Video to Placate Artaud / Devotional Cinema, Steve Reinke | the names have changed, including my own and truths have been altered, Onyeka Igwe | everyday star, Rajee Samarasinghe | The Giverny Document (Single Channel), Ja’Tovia Gary

Berwick New Cinema Competition ☨ (pages 22–27)

History is what’s happening. It’s constantly unfurling never static and always in flux. Rather than being resigned to it, it’s incumbent upon us to shape and mould it into the gooey, slimy substance that we want our world to resemble. The time is now, the place is everywhere, all at once...

Come Coyote, Dani ReStack & Sheilah ReStack | You Were an Amazement on the Day You Were Born, Emily Vey Duke & Cooper Battersby | horizont / phenomenon, Anya Tsypylina & Sid Iandovka | Culture Capture: Terminal Addition, Adam Khalil, Zack Khalil & Jackson Polys | the time is now, Heidrun Holzfeind

Berwick New Cinema Competition ♠ (pages 28–31)

Ricocheting from point to point, this might lead to discovering new people, ideas and forms of communication, breeching familiar spaces, close and far. Or is it perhaps the eternal return, reconnecting us with family, compatriots or community?

Distancing, Miko Revereza | Dear Babylon, Ayo Akingbade | Meeting Uncle Yuji, Daisuke Kosugi | Receiver, Jenny Brady

Berwick New Cinema Competition ♡ (pages 32–33)

No human is an island. Two short films of grand vision—and great difference—follow their lone protagonists as they negotiate between inner and outer worlds. From the barren but hauntingly militaristic island of Lemnos to a verdant Portuguese forest, both humans rear-range fugitive blocks of cunning and experience to find their point of view.

Reynard, Leonor Noivo | Back to 2069, Elise Florenty & Marcel Turkowsky

12
**2019 Berwick New Cinema Jury**

**Hyun Jin Cho** is film curator at the Korean Cultural Centre UK, where she programmes the London Korean Film Festival as well as year-round film events. In 2015, she co-programmed the first survey in the UK of Korean artist films at Tate Modern. Other recent programmes include ‘Under the Sky of Seoul: The Golden Age of South Korean Cinema’ at Il Cinema Ritrovato (Bologna) and ‘Early Korean Cinema: Lost Films from the Japanese Colonial Period’ at BFI (London). Her background is in Fine Art and Anthropology, with a particular interest in documentary filmmaking.

**Callum Hill** is an artist filmmaker currently based between London and Dublin. Her films move between psychological enquiry, politics and poetry. They are characteristically unpredictable and erratic in narrative, and tend to inhabit an existential and psychedelic mentality towards the human condition. Hill is the winner of the Berwick New Cinema Award at the 2018 Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival, as well as the Artist Film Award at the 2016 Aesthetica Short Film Festival. From 2017-18 she participated in Film London’s FLAMIN Fellowship and was artist-in-residence at Thomas Dane Gallery, Naples. In 2019, she has had solo exhibitions at LUX (London) and PS² (Belfast). She is currently being supported by the Irish Museum of Modern Art where she is currently in the research and development stage on two new film works.

**Julian Ross** is a researcher, curator and writer based in Amsterdam. He is a Programmer at Locarno Film Festival and International Film Festival Rotterdam, a Research Fellow at the Centre for Research and Education in Arts and Media (CREAM), University of Westminster, and Lecturer at Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society (LUCAS). His curatorial projects have been presented in Tate Modern, Art Institute of Chicago, Kunsthall Rotterdam, BOZAR Centre for Fine Arts, Eye Filmmuseum, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Anthology Film Archives, Harvard Film Archives, British Film Institute and Light Industry. Recent publications include book chapters in *The Japanese Cinema Book* (BFI, forthcoming), *A Companion to Experimental Film* (Wiley-Blackwell, forthcoming) and *America: Films from Elsewhere* (2019, The Shoestring Press). He is a research assistant to May Adadol Ingawanij’s project Animistic Apparatus.
Shot at the furthest point of a motorcycle trip Barbara Hammer took to Guatemala in 1975, and stitched through with Maya Deren’s reflections of failure, encounter and initiation in 1950s Haiti, Deborah Stratman’s *Vever (For Barbara)* is a cross-generational binding of three filmmakers seeking alternative possibilities to power structures they’re inherently part of. Grown out of abandoned film projects of Hammer and Deren, Stratman’s film acts as a *vever*—a symbolic drawing used in Haitian Voodoo to invoke a Loa, or god—in offering tribute to kindred spirits and radical women of different eras. — Deborah Stratman

“If history were recorded by the vanquished rather than the victors, it would illuminate the real, rather than the theoretical means to power.” Maya Deren’s words, found towards the middle of Deborah Stratman’s *Vever (For Barbara)* suggest a reappraisal of our entire conception of history. Deren’s provocation is particularly germane within the context of Stratman’s film, which is not a flattening of different histories but rather a palimpsest of images, tones, textures, voices, ideas and cultures. Yes, we see images of Guatemala from 1975: horchata served in a wooden bowl, spotted piglets grazing, women sitting in market stalls and beautiful swathes of nature. But we are also made aware of seeing these images from Barbara Hammer’s embodied (American) first-person perspective. We read the Ukrainian-born Deren’s words written in the thrall of Haitian voodoo, which Stratman extends through the use of the vever as a device. With the addition of Teiji Ito’s Japanese classical music-inspired soundtrack for *Meshes of the Afternoon*, the cultural collage is sent through another spiral. But Stratman skillfully reflects these latent and subaltern vibrations off of a more straightforward element: her phone call with Hammer in which we hear the artist speak quite directly and practically about the beautiful film images we’re lucky to see. — Herb Shellenberger

Deborah Stratman is an artist and filmmaker interested in landscapes and systems. Much of her work points to the relationships between physical environments and human struggles for power and control that play out on the land. Recent projects have addressed freedom, expansionism, surveillance, sonic warfare, public speech, ghosts, sinkholes, levitation, propagation, orthoptera, raptors, comets, exodus and faith. She has exhibited internationally at venues including the MoMA (New York), Centre Pompidou (Paris), Hammer Museum (Los Angeles), Mercier Union (Toronto), Witte de With (Rotterdam), Tabakalera (San Sebastian), Austrian Film Museum (Vienna), Whitney Biennial (New York) and festivals including Sundance, Viennale, Berlinale, CPH/DOX, Toronto, Oberhausen, True/False and Rotterdam. Stratman is the recipient of Fulbright, Guggenheim and USA Collins Fellowships, an Alpert Award, Sundance Art of Nonfiction Award and grants from Creative Capital, Graham Foundation and Wexner Center for the Arts. She lives in Chicago where she teaches at the University of Illinois (UIC).

**Filmography:**


Deborah Stratman was Artist in Profile at BFMAF 2016
Patrick Staff’s new work reinterprets 19th century German writer Heinrich von Kleist’s play *The Prince of Homburg*. The film considers cycles of violence, desire and repression that are embedded in contemporary cultural and political crises. Staff explores dream-like transgressions of law and order and the fraught spaces where queer desires manifest using unconventional filmic structures and experimental techniques. The video cuts together a narration of Kleist’s play with interviews, conversation, found footage, hand-painted animation and song. In a series of fragmented ‘daytime’ sequences—intercut with flashes of the sun and sky, city streets and text—a range of artists, writers and performers reflect on contemporary queer and trans identity and its proximity to desire and violence. Each of these segments is punctuated by ‘night-time’ diversions, narrated by genderqueer writer Johanna Hedva in the dual role of both narrator and Prince.

— Spike Island

Patrick Staff crafts a poly-vocal dreamscape of insurgent infrastructures, a delirious crepuscular journey at the interstices of multiple co-existent realities. The film’s three-part trajectory follows the prince’s descent deeper into exhaustion, coursing through the repressive disciplinary ideologies of rationality and into the final resurrectionary death of a symbolic execution. Employing a cast of friends and kindred accomplices including genderqueer writer Johanna Hedva, trans musician Macy Rodman, lesbian writer and AIDS activist Sarah Schulman, trans femme writer Che Gossett and former lawyer Debra Soshoux amongst others, the film extends its psycho-sexual, spiritual and social conjurations of civil disobedience and counter-hegemonic subjectivities into the plane of a lived reality of consensual collective queer becomings.

— Letitia Calin

Patrick Staff's *The Prince of Homburg* was shown in an exhibition at BFMAF 2018, *Bathing* was shown in BFMAF 2017 and *Dear Hester (Reversed)* was shown in BFMAF 2016.
Eric is no more. On the eve of his burial, his friends meet at his house to spend the night together—finding solace, sharing stories, and bringing to life memories of their dear friend: a once-singular being in a conformist world.

His coterie of friends gathers in Rwanda’s capital of Kigali, communing in the glow of iridescent light and around fires, reciting Eric’s poetry, meditating on their dear friend’s creative legacy and, ultimately, their own paths through life. Personal conversations turn into spirited existential debates before falling into weighted silences in this often-languid and intimate elegy. Mbabazi Sharangabo’s finely-tuned quietude takes us through ritual acts of remembrance and collective acts of mourning, conjuring an emotional universe that rails against an empty solemnity. And like Dambudzo Marechera’s *The House of Hunger*—the short story collection from which it derives its title—I Got My Things and Left reaches beyond the flatness of unalloyed melancholy into the depths of the human condition.

— Tendai John Mutambu

*Philbert Aimé Mbabazi Sharangabo*’s first short film *Ruhago/Destiny FM* won the Signis Award for Best Emerging Filmmaker in East Africa at the Zanzibar International Film Festival. He made three other short films that have screened in many international film festivals before attending Haute École d’Art et de Design in Geneva. His first student film *The Liberators* premiered in competition at Vision du Réel Nyon and later received a Special Mention at Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur in the Swiss Film school category. His film *Versus* screened in competition at Uppsala International Film Festival, International Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, Tampere Film Festival and Message to Man IFF. *I Got My Things and Left* premiered in competition at Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur where it received a Jury Special mention. He is currently writing his first feature film *Republika*, set in Geneva’s Pâquis quarter.

**Filmography:**
Subtitles or a love poem in plain language
Lesley-Anne Cao

Philippines | 2017 | 9 mins
Filipino and English with English subtitles

Berwick New Cinema Competition ♦
UK Premiere

A silent video of analog black and white images, Subtitles or a love poem in plain language is a meditation on the origins of creative acts. Each of its four-second frames contains a line and a photograph; neither illustrates the other. And so, with this mismatch, we are thrown into a dilemma: read the text or interpret the image (which says nothing of an attempt to draw connections, however unintended by the artist). Subtitles began as a response to Édouard Lévé’s celebrated memoir Autoportrait before transforming into an auto-fictional foray into the artist’s creative origins and personal histories. Cao delves, with poetic brevity, into what she calls ‘proto-practices’, or the unassuming creative acts performed in our youth: like the writing and photography of Cao’s childhood, neither of which have, until now, made it into her artistic practice.

— Tendai John Mutambu

Subtitles or a love poem in plain language is about creative acts and their origins, both subconscious and deliberate, from childhood and in what comes after. A silent, single-channel video, it operates on miscombinations of text and image. The text is a series of personal narrations, the images are b/w analog photographs taken over the last few years, and there is no audio to make space for the viewers’ own voices reading in their own heads.

— Lesley-Anne Cao

Lesley-Anne Cao (1992, Philippines) is a visual artist working primarily with objects and installation. Her practice is an inquiry into and a privileging of the quiet and self-effacing in relation to spectacle and significance in the context of exhibitions and art-making. She earned her BFA in Studio Arts from the University of the Philippines Diliman College of Fine Arts. She has also presented work in Indonesia, Thailand, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Australia.
A summer day at the swimming pool of the village of Montánchez, Spain. From above, Our Lady of Consolation of the Castle keeps her watchful gaze.

— Chema García Ibarra & Ion de Sosa

The Golden Legend is a playful ode to a social institution sometimes taken for granted: the public swimming pool. Chema García Ibarra and Ion de Sosa’s narrative short takes place at the piscina municipal de Montánchez, a setting so achingly commonplace that the filmmakers easily transform it into a fictional, comical and subtly fantastical location. Here we find typical pool scenes: children playing with things they’re not supposed to, pool-goers stuffing their faces at the snack bar and sundry beach towels with gaudy illustrations. This is the scene for multiple legends to be told through anecdote, conversation and song, and it’s against this din of normalcy that we witness a divine miracle take place.

Towards the end of the film, a pale, almost invisible rainbow is shown. It’s a good metaphor for García and de Sosa’s film. For such a short work, The Golden Legend creates an enchantingly alluring atmosphere that is as rich and tasty as a piece of Montánchez jamón. The worst part of any kid’s day at the pool is when it closes. And likewise, the film ends abruptly and prematurely, the manager locking up and rolling away on his four-wheeler. Over crystal blue water, a canary yellow, black metal-style title card flashes on-screen, and it’s everybody out of the pool. We’re left dreaming of another day and another pool, though we’ll have to promise to wait 30 minutes after eating before jumping back in next time.

— Herb Shellenberger
Libidinal Empathy is a found footage montage of young men who elicit, in various ways, empathic responses from the viewer that also carry a strongly libidinal charge. Philosopher Levinas speaks about the face, and what it requires of us.

Video to Placate Artaud is a videotape to placate the 20th-century artist Antonin Artaud, who was not very calm. Certainly transgression and nervous energies or violent impulses once went hand-in-hand, but perhaps today requires a calmer, more considered approach.

The artist is inspired the day after seeing Nathaniel Dorsky’s “Arboretum Cycle” to make a video called Devotional Cinema engaging with the natural, botanical world. Thinking, as usual, of the difference between poetry and philosophy.

Libidinal Empathy and Video to Placate Artaud will likely become components of the in-progress series ‘An Arrow Pointing to a Hole: Final Thoughts, Series Five’.

— Steve Reinke

It is no small occasion when Steve Reinke lets out three as-yet-unseen videos onto the world. These three works stack upon each other to create a tower with building blocks of beauty, terror, absurdity and logic. Glenn Gould, Antonin Artaud and Nathaniel Dorsky each prompt concise ruminations on febrile topics which seem obvious once spoken but could only have come from Reinke’s unique viewpoint. Terrifying and tender images and ideas spring forth from these concentrated, short bursts of rhetoric and provocation.

— Herb Shellenberger

Steve Reinke is an artist and writer best known for his monologue-based video essays. His work is screened widely and is in several collections, including the Museum of Modern Art (New York), Centre Pompidou (Paris) and the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa). His videos typically have diaristic or collage formats, and his autobiographical voice-others share his desires and pop culture appraisals with endearing wit. Born in a village in northern Ontario, he is currently associate professor of Art Theory & Practice at Northwestern University in Chicago. In the 1990’s he produced the ambitious omnibus The Hundred Videos, and a book of his scripts, Everybody Loves Nothing: Scripts 1997-2005 was published by Coach House (Toronto). He has also co-edited several books, including By The Skin of Their Tongues: Artist Video Scripts (with Nelson Henricks, 1997), Lux: A Decade of Artists’ Film and Video (with Tom Taylor, 2000), and The Sharpest Point: Animation at the End of Cinema (with Chris Gehman, 2009).


Steve Reinke’s A Boy Needs a Friend from The Genital is Superfluous: Final Thoughts, Series Four! was screened in BFMaf 2016
This is a story of the artist’s grandfather, the story of the ‘land’ and the story of an encounter with Nigeria—retold at a single point in time, in a single place. The artist is trying to tell a truth in as many ways as possible. So the names have changed tell us the same story in four different ways: a folktale of two brothers rendered in the broad, unmodulated strokes of colonial British moving images; a Nollywood TV series, on VHS, based on the first published Igbo novel; a story of the family patriarch, passed down through generations; and the diary entries from the artist’s first solo visit to her family’s hometown.

Onyeka Igwe pushes against the materials of the archive—its distortions, fabrications and embellishments—with her own kind of auto-fictional response. The artist summons a variety of artistic, literary and personal sources to create a singular biographical document of many strands. the names have changed throws the ordinary and the everyday within the archive into relief by daring to write and re-write the stories of diasporic African life against the grain of colonial history’s master narratives using a variety of forms. As witnessed in the choreographed sequence in which Igwe and the British-Nigerian dancer Titilayo Adebayo, both dressed in black, perform a dance that is part-call and response, part-classical chorus in miniature, riffing on the story of the artist’s grandfather as told by her grandmother.

— Tendai John Mutambu

Onyeka Igwe is an artist and researcher working between cinema and installation. She is born and based in London, UK. Her video works have shown at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, LUX, Berlin Biennale, London Film Festival, International Film Festival Rotterdam, Essay Film Festival and Smithsonian African American Film Festival. She has exhibited at articule (Montreal), Trinity Square Video (Toronto), The Showroom (London) and Jerwood Space (London).

Filmography:

the names have changed, including my own and truths have been altered (2019), Specialised Technique (2018), Sitting on a Man (2018), Her name in my Mouth (2017), We need new names (2015), Congregations (2013)
everyday star is a short, silent film by Sri Lankan artist and filmmaker Rajee Samarasinghe. Developing his practice over the last decade, Samarasinghe has examined as many different topics just as he’s experimented with different forms of media (16mm, VHS, HD, 4K) and different aspect ratios and image orientations. That is to say that he is a filmmaker who is just as curious about refining the formal and textural qualities of his work as he is curious about his objects of inquiry—migration, animism, violence and ethnography, to name a few.

While Samarasinghe has built up a substantial body of short-form work which has rightly been exhibited and awarded in many international festivals, everyday star strikes as a particularly significant achievement. Shot at a wide aspect ratio of 2.66:1, the film’s lush images stretch out horizontally, framing close-up shots of faces just as effectively as landscape shots. Simply put, Samarasinghe’s digital cinematography is stunning. The images, especially those of the natural world, interface with those of classic, celluloid-purist experimental filmmakers like Stan Brakhage or Nathaniel Dorsky, but Samarasinghe subverts the traditionalism of these images with digital tools in the same way one could argue he subverts the experimental film canon’s white, Western positioning.

Samarasinghe says everyday star was “inspired by the act of watching light shine through a window onto my father’s decaying body every day during a vicious and prolonged illness which ultimately led to his death in 2008”. Ten years on, he refracts the memory of these powerful moments into a meditation on cosmic light, deep shadow and flickering colour as intrinsic aspects of liminal states and transitional phases.

— Herb Shellenberger

A strange vision caused by intense heat. Everyday states of being and decay are observed through the infinite scope of the cosmos and the restorative light which emanates from it, driving cinematic and photographic impulses. — Rajee Samarasinghe

Rajee Samarasinghe (1988, Colombo, Sri Lanka) is an award-winning Sri Lankan filmmaker and visual artist. Some of his recent work examines contemporary ethnographic practices through associations of family and heritage. He received his BFA from the University of California San Diego and his MFA from the California Institute of the Arts. Rajee’s work has been exhibited at venues internationally. He is currently working on his debut feature film entitled Your Touch Makes Others Invisible.

Filmography:
The Giverny Document (Single Channel)
Ja’Tovia Gary

In this multi-textured cinematic poem, filmmaker Ja’Tovia Gary unleashes a slew of riotous techniques and materials—from direct animation on archival 16mm film to woman-on-the-street interviews and roiling montage. What emerges is an ecstatic document, as vibrant and dynamic in form as it is politically incisive.

The Giverny Document (Single Channel) is a meditation on the safety and bodily autonomy of Black women. It moves from the beating heart of metropolitan New York—where Gary shoots interviews on location, deftly conversing with generations of women and girls in Harlem—to the pastoral surrounds of Claude Monet’s eponymous gardens in Giverny, France. Against the verdant backdrop of the latter, Gary interleaves strands of direct animation like momentary glitches or infections into the scene’s bucolic atmosphere. The artist appears in the shot—at times recumbent, sometimes strolling through the historic French gardens. She is a paragon of self-possession, her own muse. She is, in many ways, a compelling riposte to art-history’s servile negress. And through the interpolated footage of the legendary Nina Simone, Gary reminds us that Black femme performance’s creative, virtuosic force is her lodestar—complemented by the febrile animations woven in and out of this forty-minute polyptych.

The Giverny Document (Single Channel) unleashes a sensibility at once documentary, musical and painterly, pushing the bounds of abstraction and figuration through its whirling mass of forms, sounds and Black subjects—subjects who live in the wake of slavery’s seismic aftermath.

— Tendai John Mutambu
Come Coyote
Dani ReStack & Sheilah ReStack

United States | 2019 | 8 mins

Come Coyote is the second chapter in the trilogy Strangely Ordinary This Devotion (SOTD) by Dani & Sheilah ReStack. Come Coyote continues their investigation of environment, queer desire, motherhood, reproduction and collaboration. This eight-minute video brings together moments culled from our own life, fabricated scenes and footage from friends, artists and filmmakers. One of the central themes in this chapter is the idea of reproduction and its implications—the reality/fantasy of both the logistics and technology of queer reproduction, as well as the differences in our individual commitment and the energetic differentials this produces.

— Dani ReStack & Sheilah ReStack

Come Coyote shows the continuing story of the ReStacks, whose creative and personal partnership has amplified frequencies brought forward from their individual practices into a newly-formed synergetic creative practice. This follows on from the first chapter Strangely Ordinary This Devotion (which screened in BFMAF 2017) in the trilogy of the same title, which we could consider the realisation of an implicit artistic manifesto or perhaps more simply a document of their lives.

Clocking in under eight minutes, the video is full of memorable images and sequences while at the same time not feeling overstuffed. The artists play with the ambiguity between documentary and fabulation, knowing that we might be inclined to receive the video with an assumption of verisimilitude. The heart of the work is a sequence on reproduction, which treats this act often solemn in consideration as a fun and playful act of creative ingenuity within the ReStacks’ queer context. Their work as a whole doesn’t shy away from irreverence, but rather sees life through moments of humour, joy and pain, emotions that puncture our equilibrium and remind us what it is to feel. In this way, Come Coyote is tender but not sentimental, unafraid of exploring conflict and difference, but mostly free to indulge in the pleasures and sensualities that unexpected meetings, situations and settings can bring.

— Herb Shellenberger

Dani ReStack was born in Columbus, Ohio and raised in Geneseo, NY. She is currently an Associate Professor of Art at Ohio State. In 2003 she received an MFA in sculpture from the University of Illinois at Chicago and in 2009 an MFA in film/video from Bard College, Hudson Valley, NY.

Sheilah ReStack was born and raised in Caribou River, Nova Scotia and is currently an Associate Professor of Photography at Denison University. She has BFA from NSCAD University, Halifax and MFA from Goldsmiths College, London.

Filmography:
Come Coyote (2019), Strangely Ordinary This Devotion (2017), A Hand in Two Ways (Fisted) (2017)

Dani ReStack & Sheilah ReStack’s Strangely Ordinary This Devotion was shown in BFMAF 2017
**You Were an Amazement on the Day You Were Born**

Cooper Battersby & Emily Vey Duke

**United States/Canada | 2019 | 33 mins**

**Berwick New Cinema Competition**

**UK Premiere**

**You Were an Amazement on the Day You Were Born** is a visually rich film that follows a woman through a life characterized by damage and loss, but in which she finds humor, love and joy. With a score that follows the span of Lenore’s life—from her birth in the early 1970s to her death in the 2040s—the film takes us from moments of harrowing loss to those of poignancy and dark humor. Her life is told through voice-over, narrated by performers who range in age from nine to sixty-nine, and is beautifully illustrated with images of animals (including humans), insects and landscapes.

The film features Rebecca Manley who has acted in Clio Barnard’s *The Selfish Giant*, the series *This is England 86, 88 and 90*, and Channel 4’s recent adaptation of Phillip K. Dick’s *Electric Dreams*.

— Emily Vey Duke & Cooper Battersby

The new film from Emily Vey Duke & Cooper Battersby has finally reached the end of its life cycle. If we go back and think about its constituent parts, maybe it started as a larva while they were gathering footage of the cats, prairie dogs, dog-dogs, insects and sundry other critters that we find in their work. The pupa stage is perhaps when they developed Le fabuleux destin d’Lenore, the elusive character at the centre of the narrative whose life is related through snippets and vignettes. Finally, its full blossoming into adulthood occurred after repeated massaging, prickling and smoothing of these different stories, threads, images and sounds all into a congealed whole.

— Herb Shellenberger

**Emily Vey Duke & Cooper Battersby**’s work has shown at the Whitney Museum, Walker Art Center, Institute of Contemporary Art, the Musee d’Art Contemporain Montreal, New York Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival and International Film Festival Rotterdam. Their recent work *Dear Lorde* won the Grand Prize at the European Media Arts Festival and showed at Videonale in Bonn, Germany. In 2011, they were shortlisted for the Sobey Art Award, Canada’s most prestigious prize for artists under 40. They have received prizes from festivals across the globe and their work is in the libraries at Harvard University and Princeton University. A book about their work called *The Beauty Is Relentless*, was published by Coach House Press and the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art in 2012. In 2015, *The Illuminations Project*, a book of Duke’s writing in collaboration with Shary Boyle, was published.

**Filmography:**

horizōn
Sid Iandovka & Anya Tsyrlina
Switzerland/Russia/United States | 2019 | 7 mins

horizōn is a short work produced by Siberian-born filmmakers Anya Tsyrlina & Sid Iandovka, friends and collaborators over many years. While they are now based in Switzerland and the United States respectively, their most recent work investigates the unseen and perhaps imperceptible aspects of culture and life in the late Soviet period through moving images made during that time. As such, horizōn is a work of archival collage and repurposing, the filmmakers poring over its celluloid images with myriad digital technologies to produce something not from the past, nor from the future, but out of time completely.

The project was born out of frustration with archival access to images from this context, especially when it is impossible to answer the question of what one is looking for. The only workable solution was to pay a man who digitises a random collection of old film reels he found in the garbage, choosing one at random and forwarding the scan. The surprising images that we see all come from this short reel. There’s the construction of what might be a rocketship, or an undersea vessel. Or are they building the world’s largest film projector? Young women sit in an auditorium. A young man contemplates a caterpillar, the rungs of its body rhyming visually with his inexplicably wavy hair. Crumbling volumes of text are falling in on themselves in a shabby archive, perhaps suggesting that the knowledge accumulated cannot be properly utilised within the current systemic means.

These images are shuffled around, recombined, stretched out and continually visited by a ghostly light with which the people seemingly interact. horizōn certainly works at a level beneath language, its frisson a result of image, sound and light combining to form a compact treatise on the strangeness and beauty of this cultural context. It also provided a process through which their next work phenomenon was completed, though instead of found footage here the filmmakers cut their own archival video footage towards similar ends.

— Herb Shellenberger

Sid Iandovka (based in New York) and Anya Tsyrlina (based in Basel) are Siberia-born visual artists with backgrounds in electronic music and new media, whose current collaborative projects combine the structural and material concerns of experimental cinema with documentary and archival practices. Their moving image work has been screened at film festivals and venues, including International Film Festival Rotterdam, Viennale, European Media Arts Festival, Videoex, Bildrauch, Moscow International Experimental Film Festival, Haus der elektronischen Kunste Basel and Anthology Film Archives.
phenomenon is made from surviving early 1990s Hi8 videotape of ‘schwimmen’, a teenage industrial/noise band from the (then-Soviet) city of Novosibirsk. Comprised of footage shot from and within the seventh-floor apartment where they lived and worked communally, the video radiates a sense of cinematic immediacy, capturing the lost world of immanence of being. It ultimately taps into the vital, uncertain energy of the ephemeral ‘paranormal’ space—both historical and metaphorical—where the only metaphor is optical. The camera pans along frozen squares and zooms into details of the immediate surroundings, innocently reinventing tropes from video-art of the preceding two decades, in which ‘what happens’ is not an event but an experience.

— Anya Tsyrlina & Sid Iandovka

phenomenon attends to the possibility of rendering sensible the psycho-somatic manifestations of a historical moment alongside its material support. The film indirectly maps the conditions pertaining to the imminent collapse of the Soviet Union and the infra-perceptible atmospheres surrounding it. It represents a coming into being of a specific time and place, as well as a conjuring of the ambiental tonalities of an obsolete material reality: the hi8 analog video format and the material conditions of socialism. Departing from the conception of the archival as disembodied, phenomenon resurrects the energetic fields embedded into its footage, animating the electrostatic vibrations immanent to the archival record, its residual excess of meaning as well as its resistant opacity.

— Letitia Calin
Half tongue-in-cheek absurdism and half deadly earnest, *Culture Capture: Terminal Adddition* continues the New Red Order’s ongoing project of ‘culture capture’, recruiting viewers to participate in a program of practical strategies to counter the ‘salvage mindset’ which sets aside Indigenous culture and sovereignty by consigning it to the past.

These strategies include using new, accessible technologies, such as smartphone apps that produce 3D scans of objects, both of Indigenous material that museums and other institutions may hold and public monuments that celebrate and re-affirm the norms of European settler culture. The title of the work—*Terminal Adddition*—highlights the difference between addition and removal. The concept of ‘removal’ is central to current debates about whether to remove problematic historical monuments, for example, Confederate war monuments in the South. It was also in the name of the Indian Removal Act, signed into law by President Jackson, which resulted in the displacement and death of thousands of Native peoples in what we now call the ‘Trail of Tears’. Both present removal as a quick fix. With *Culture Capture: Terminal Adddition*, the NRO recognizes that acts of removal inevitably contain contradictions, and proposes an additive approach instead.

— The New Red Order
the time is now.
Heidrun Holzfeind

Austria/Japan/Sweden | 2019 | 19 mins
Japanese with English subtitles

Berwick New Cinema Competition
UK Festival Premiere

the time is now. is one of two films by Holzfeind about the Japanese shamanic improvisation duo IRO. The couple Shizuko and Toshio Orimo have worked together since 1981. Their music, their activism in the peace and anti-nuclear movement, and their free-spirited way of life reflect an animist and pantheistic worldview that rejects commercialism in all its forms.

The film shows performances of the duo in various locations in the Inter-University Seminar House in Hachioji, Tokyo. The unique modernist complex—whose main building has the shape of a pyramid turned upside down—was designed in 1964 by the Japanese architect and thinker Takamasa Yosizaka (1917–80). Yosizaka’s ideas about the relationship between humans, nature and architecture, individuality and community, sustainability and peace, as well as his critique of Western civilization in many respects concur with the musicians’ worldview. Holzfeind stages Yosizaka’s extraordinary architecture as a set for IRO’s performances, which combine improvisation on Noh and stone flutes, fan drum and kagura bells with their unique punk kagura version of ancient Shinto rituals, indigenous ceremonies and Korean mask theater.

In steady takes and rhythmic cuts, Holzfeind’s film plays with the contrasts and interactions between the brutalist architecture, the surrounding nature, and the musicians’ performance and instruments. Like the recurring motif of the eye, Holzfeind’s colour filters and tinted shots refer to the film Phantom by Japanese experimental filmmaker Toshio Matsumoto (1932–2017). The soundtrack interweaves the instrumental sounds with Shizuko’s chants and the sounds of nature and civilization. At times, it feels like the cicadas and crickets are in dialogue with IRO’s instruments.

— Heidrun Holzfeind

Heidrun Holzfeind is an Austrian-born artist and filmmaker currently based in Umeå, Sweden. Holzfeind is interested in how architecture interacts with people’s everyday lives. She questions immanent architectural and social utopias, exploring the interrelations between history and identity, individual histories and political narratives of the present. Solo shows include Secession (Vienna); Galerie X and Beyond (Copenhagen); Badischer Kunstverein (Karlsruhe); BAWAG Contemporary (Vienna); SAPS (Mexico City); Artists Space Project Room (New York); MUCA (Mexico City); Austrian Cultural Forum (Rome); and Swiss Institute New York project space. Group shows include the Shanghai Biennale; KuanDu Biennale (Taipei); Venice Biennale; Manifesta 7 (Rovereto); and many others. Her films have been screened at MoMA (New York); Austrian Cultural Forum (New York); Lisbon Architecture Festival, Diagonale (Graz), European Media Arts Festival, Videoex (Zürich), Transmediale (Berlin), among others.

Filmography:
Shot on 16mm colour film, *Distancing* documents the logistics and poetics of Miko Revereza’s decision to leave the United States and return to the Philippines. ‘My ticket is one way’, the filmmaker explains to his grandmother as she suddenly realizes he isn’t coming back. *Distancing* is a film about this personal realization; to leave and thus become exiled from the country where he was raised. The film acts as a memoir and cites a lineage of statelessness in cinema. It is a personal document of the moment anticipating a great departure.

— Miko Revereza

Miko Revereza’s new film marks a distinct and pivotal moment in the filmmaker’s life. *Distancing* can be understood as a split point, the beginning of one chapter and ending of another. After living in the United States as an illegal immigrant since childhood—and constantly navigating the system of precarity, injustice and state-sanctioned violence that this requires—Revereza has decided to return to his native Philippines. Though his films have been critically praised and awarded at major festivals, he has described his project—“the goal of circulating these images at festivals and receiving press about [the situation of illegal immigrants in the United States]”—as “pretty risky”. Thus, *Distancing* is an impressionistic collage of just what its title suggests: the artist placing a huge distance between himself and the land that he has known for almost all of his life. It’s a visual notebook of snapshots and fleeting moments, a record of departures. It makes one realize that each moment we are in is the exact moment before the rest of our lives will unfold.

— Herb Shellenberger
The future of social housing is threatened by the AC30 Housing Bill. Set in London’s East End, a trio of art students are eager to raise awareness about their neighbourhood, especially the lives of tenants and people who work on the estate. Dear Babylon is the final film in the ‘No News Today’ social housing trilogy.

Ayo Akingbade’s newest film comes after a string of consistently excellent short form works made over the past several years. Dear Babylon feels like the filmmaker is taking several steps forward at the same time. While the film continues her project of focusing on social housing, it does so through not only through news footage, archival materials and interviews, but importantly establishes its urgency through narrative and fictional elements.

The film begins with the introduction of the fictional ‘AC30 Housing Bill’, which states that London tenants renting from a housing association must pay a flat fee of £18,000 to their landlords to continue their tenancy. This provocation sets the narrative in motion: we’re transported to a gauzy, neon-coloured house party, a disco ball swirling lights around the sound of lovers rock. When news comes down about the bill passing, our trio of protagonists—Ada, Jazz and Rooney—mobilise to interview their neighbours and create a film on the situation. (Though Jazz asks: ‘How is a film going to change public opinion? I prefer my riot idea...’)

Thus, with Dear Babylon, Akingbade narrativizes her own project, cannily avoiding repeating herself after already creating several films on similar topics. The beautifully-shot film is anything but a standard take on gentrification, and makes the viewer encouraged that the artist will continue to find new forms to further continue working on the important topics which her work has sustained time and again.

— Herb Shellenberger

Ayo Akingbade is an artist and film director based in London. Her 2016 film Tower XYZ received a Special Mention Award at International Short Film Festival Oberhausen and won the inaugural Sonja Savić Award at Alternative Film/Video Festival (Belgrade). Akingbade’s films Street 66, A is for Artist and Dear Babylon comprise the social housing trilogy entitled No News Today. She is a recipient of the Sundance Ignite Fellowship and exhibited in ‘New Contemporaries’. Ayo is a graduate of London College of Communication and is currently studying at Royal Academy Schools.

Filmography:
The director, a former insurance man in Tokyo, took chance to build a new life as an artist in Norway. He recalls a vague childhood memory of his Uncle Yuji, the Tokyo hippie who left for New York to play salsa in Spanish Harlem in the late 70’s. This film presents his first meeting with Yuji in his New York apartment in 2015, and the life of a solitary artist who, for the past 40 years, has chosen to not perform for an audience. Mixed emotions of initial admiration and the realisation of what it means to live as an artist through a lifetime is presented both in the story of Yuji’s life and through the making of the film itself.

— Daisuke Kosugi

Meeting Uncle Yuji certainly accomplishes what its title promises: we see the artist Daisuke Kosugi travelling to New York to meet his uncle for the first time. But in the process, as we are presented with this encounter, Kosugi’s film raises more questions than it answers. Is Yuji lonely? What drives his passion for music? Is the music that he makes bad? Or is ‘good’ or ‘bad’ music an irrelevant metric when it comes to personal expression? Nonetheless, Kosugi’s fascinating film provides a strong example of how reality can shatter expectations, at the same time giving us insight into someone we would likely never encounter, a person who keeps to himself and lives a very modest life in one of most crowded cities in the world. We are repeatedly plunged into darkness during the full duration of several of Yuji Kosugi’s recordings and this experience becomes remarkably generative. How rare it is to focus one’s attention so completely onto music of any kind, let alone sounds that are difficult, perhaps naive but also overwhelmingly rewarding.

— Herb Shellenberger
A crossed telephone line propels Receiver into a suite of heated and intimate conversations in which we encounter scenes of protest at a university for D/deaf students, Q&A cross-fire interrogation, vocal confrontations and lip-reading practice. In its various moods the film presents a heady and multi-layered assemblage of Deaf histories, drawing on research into The Milan Conference of 1880 which led to a ban on teaching sign language in schools for deaf people. Receiver considers how we both speak and listen, and the question of who has the right and capacity to be heard.

— Jenny Brady

Continuing Jenny Brady’s practice of visually engaging, affective filmmaking, Receiver confronts the assumptions we have with approaches to sound. The film is a collage of Deaf histories, with its centerpiece the Deaf President Now protest at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. in 1988. A landmark event of resistance, in which D/deaf students protested with demands including the selection of a deaf president of the university, it catalyzed students’ need for representation and their solidarity through direct action. If there is a receiver, there is also a sender, and the film investigates how exchange—of words, feelings, sounds or ideas—is mediated, negotiated, represented and understood. Brady’s sensitive filmmaking finds space for even the most seemingly inconsequential of volleys: a close-up shot of a candle’s flame being extinguished, while we later see the person who blew it out, as well as a similar blow of air into her face from a force off-screen. In this way, Receiver’s short running time belies the fact that the film is brimming with ideas and information that can be unpacked through subsequent viewings.

— Herb Shellenberger

Receiver is fully captioned for D/deaf and hard of hearing audiences
Cunning and slender, harassed and on the run, *Reynard* is a metaphor of a never ending obsession with each breath, each gesture, each thought. Marta seeks in the emptiness of her body a way to arrive to her inner essence, in an abstract search of a free spirit that might end in her own enclosure.

— Leonor Noivo

*Reynard* is an act of collusion between a director and an actress. Together they make a film about a shared secret, a feeling and a “disturbance” that is the basis of their friendship. The film’s title in Portuguese, *Raposa* (or Fox in English), is a metaphor for something fugitive—like the film’s elusive protagonist, plagued by an obsession to control what circulates between her interior and exterior: food, thoughts, emotions. Played with charged quietude by the actress Patrícia Guerreiro, Marta spends her days counting time passed, calories ingested and steps taken. She narrates the workings of her mind as Noivo’s camera records her routines with the density characteristic of 16mm—endowing each mundane action with the weight and sensuality of a ritual. In their calibration of intimacy without intrusion, Noivo and Guerreiro create a meditation on fiction and bodies—and the fictions we tell of our bodies.

— Tendai John Mutambu

Leonor Noivo studied at Lisbon Theatre and Film School (ESTC), where she specialised in Editing and Directing. She attended the Ateliers Varan documentary filmmaking course in 2006. Since 1999, she has worked as script-supervisor and assistant director of fiction films and documentaries with directors such as João Pedro Rodrigues, João Botelho, Pedro Pinho, João Nicolau, Marília Rocha, Carlos Conceição, Tiago Hespanha, Inês Oliveira and many others. She is co-founder of the production company Terratreme Films, a filmmakers platform created in 2008, where she currently develops her own films and collaborates with several directors in different stages of project production.

**Filmography:**
Back to 2069 looks at the eroded landscape of the Greek militarized Aegean island Lemnos, a political space where a myth meets contemporary concerns upon the relation of virtual and real image production. On the island, a solitary man shape-shifts from argonaut to avatar through various hallucinations, experiencing different states of embodiment and disembodiment. Although he exiled himself from Athens to escape the crisis, past and future scenarios of conflict are gradually catching up on him. What appears to be a fiction is made out of documentary footage that interweaves the man’s venture on the island with recorded *Arma 3* video-game sessions from Youtube.

— Elise Florenty & Marcel Türkowsky

Back to 2069 continues Elise Florenty & Marcel Türkowsky’s project of fascinating, visually-sumptuous doc-fiction hybrids. The duo’s complex and layered films inhabit spaces and haunt them like ghastly phantasmagoria. In this film, one might be tempted to say that space is the island of Lemnos. But in truth, the film cycles through so many registers—news footage, maps, video games or cinematography—that it’s hard to tell which space is real and which is virtual.

The film captures the essence of what it’s like to exist in a secluded space, where one can either fold into the surrounding history, or refuse to do so at all and slide deep into technological and virtual realms. Capturing the shifts in space, time, position and frame of mind quite effectively, Back to 2069 argues that one can never fully exit the world no matter how hard he may try.

— Herb Shellenberger

Elise Florenty & Marcel Türkowsky are an artist/film director duo based in Berlin and Paris. They’ve directed together several short and mid-length films exploring specific social-political situations through the prism of altered states of consciousness, delirium and ecstasy. Combining their interests in cinema and sonic anthropology, their films investigate the multiplicity of the self through a spiral of metamorphoses that interrogate our power relation—always shifting—to the ‘Other’ (‘the enemy, the plant, the animal, the spirit, the dead’). Their works have been presented at numerous international film festivals and art institutions including International Film Festival Rotterdam, FID Marseille, DocLisboa, CCCB Barcelona and Centre Pompidou. They have received the European Media Art Festival award for their film works The Sun Experiment (*Ether Echoes*) (2014) and Conversation with a Cactus (2017). Bom Dia Books recently published their first monograph *One Head Too Many*.

**Filmography:**

An early version of Elise Florenty & Marcel Türkowsky’s Conversation with a Cactus was commissioned by BFMAF and exhibited at the 2015 festival.
Animistic Apparatus

Animistic Apparatus is a curatorial project initiated by May Adadol Ingawanij with Julian Ross (University of Westminster) which draws inspiration from Southeast Asia’s ritualistic genealogy of artistic expression. What if contemporary film screenings and moving image installations were reimagined as if they were rituals addressed to nonhuman beings? What if human audiences were a completely unnecessary part of their occurrence? Animistic Apparatus addresses these questions through exhibitions, events and seminars with guest artists.

Animistic Apparatus Seminar 1: Ecologies and Art in Southeast Asia
Meet Animistic Apparatus’s featured artists. In this seminar Lucy Davis, Chris Chong Chan Fui and Tanatchai Bandasak talk about their artistic engagement with ecology, cosmology, and the politics of environment and land in Southeast Asia. May Adadol Ingawanij introduces the project’s speculative method of exploring animistic relations and artists’ moving image.

Animistic Apparatus Seminar 2: Art is Addressing Spirits
Hear tales of what happens when the projector light beam goes outside into animistic spaces. In this storytelling session, George Clark, Sheryl Cheung, Xia Lin, Mary Pansanga, Julian Ross and others recount their recent experiments with projecting and performing at potent sites in proximity with spirits in Thailand and Taiwan.
Animistic Apparatus: Stories of Encounters

May Adadol Ingawanij

What if exhibitions weren’t primarily addressed to humans?

Southeast Asia’s art history includes the long history of making objects and performances as offerings, situating artistic practice in animistic ecologies relating humans with spirits and other nonhuman beings. Itinerant projectionists in Thailand were routinely commissioned to show outdoor movies as site-specific nocturnal rituals addressing those spirits with localised sovereign power over that site, a fascinating form of ritual practice that emerged some time in the mid twentieth century and retains a residual presence to this day.

Animistic Apparatus draws inspiration from Southeast Asia’s ritualistic genealogy of artistic practice and expression. This curatorial project asks what if contemporary film screenings and installations were reimagined as if they were rituals offered and addressed to nonhuman beings. What if artistic ecology positioned humans as precarious makers of offerings, rather than as authors of work or producers of self-expression? What could artistic practices and exhibitions be if humans were situated as one of the mediating parts of the apparatus and ritual of communication with nonhuman beings, and human audiences were an incidental part of the enactment and display of art, neither invited to nor excluded from the ritual or the event?

It is a privilege to be collaborating with our comrade & kin, Berwick Film & Media Festival, to bring Animistic Apparatus to this year’s festival. This second iteration of the project’s speculative exhibition takes the form of site-based installations, performances, and storytelling, featuring visionary Southeast Asian artists Lucy Davis, Lav Diaz, Chris Chong Chan Fui, Tanatchai Bandasak and Apichatpong Weerasethakul. Dispersed across Berwick-upon-Tweed, the installations stage an encounter between the artists’ works and the open air sites and spaces of historical sedimentation of the town, embracing the vulnerability of exposure to its weather, its geographical and infrastructural composition, and nocturnal ambience. Animistic Apparatus also connects in a spirit of kinship with the exhibition and performances by George Clark and lololol collective.

Diaz’s eight-hour epic A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery is being projected through the night here at Quayside as a gesture of offering to our host town, with its ecology of visible and invisible beings. The film is a cinematic address to the dormant revolutionary spirit of the Filipino nation. Set at the end of the nineteenth century, it observes the nihilism gripping the male intellectuals of the nation-in-the-making, and it portrays the ambiguous potency of the mythical creatures of the land who ensorcelled the men and women of the new nation, and whose capacity for destruction rivals that of the colonisers. Diaz’s epic honours the strength of the nation’s daughters, the women who endure as guardians of the memory of struggle and who embody the inexhaustibility of life. How might the practice of film projection be translated into a durational form to chime with the film’s powerful embracing of feminine-inflected life-force in cataclysmic times? Projecting A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery in the open, as if it were a breathing, vulnerable body, and as a quiet gesture of bringing the film to life without the accompanying celebration of spectatorial endurance, is one such experiment. One night, while this corner of the world sleeps, the apparatus of projection enfolds the shadows and wandering figures in the film into the rhythm and expansiveness of night and in anticipation of the new day.
The night as a world of larger-than-human forces, and the potentiality of the nocturnal as the realm of the outside and the unknown, are resonating themes connecting *Fireworks (Archives)* (Weerasethakul), *Camera Trap* (Chong), and *Central Region* (Bandasak). Weerasethakul’s work is shot at night during the current period of Thailand’s descent into dictatorship, using the ground of a nonconformist Buddhist temple in northeast Thailand, an untimely space filled with stone animal figures. The installation ritualistically addresses the forgotten spirits of revolutionaries and dissenters in his northeastern home region through choreographing the interplay of extremity of darkness and illuminative flashes from different sources of light with bodily and photographic gestures. This iteration of the *Fireworks (Archives)* installation further intensifies the nocturnal ambience, enfolding the screen and enveloping its surrounding space by situating the video within the dramatically enclosed chamber of the Bankhill Ice House, a stone construction built into the hillside and historically used to store ice for the salmon trade.

The cavernous ruins of New Tower and Coxon’s Tower become hosts, respectively, of Chong’s and Bandasak’s videos. Chong’s *Camera Trap* deploys an archival process to explore historical and present day usage of camera technology to track animals’ movements and habitat. Part of his long-term, multidisciplinary artistic research into the destructively modern human activity of industrially extracting and profiting from natural resources, the work uncannily juxtaposes Eadweard Muybridge’s animal motion studies with images of creatures in the wild captured by camera devices placed in forests in Sabah, Malaysian Borneo. *Camera Trap* reminds us that filmic innovation is a history implicated in ecological violence. Yet in contemplating the wild animals’ direct look to the surveillance camera, implying this spectral look to be one of the accidental consequences of technological automatism, Chong’s work suggests that the camera simultaneously becomes a tool to teach humans about the limit of our knowledge and capacity.

At the beginning of the project, Animistic Apparatus commissioned Bandasak to make a short video responding to the ways in which animistic practices across Southeast Asia create potent spaces and conceptualise sites as sovereign terrains of spirits of place. We are delighted to premiere his *Central Region* at this year’s festival. Bandasak travelled to Sam Neua in Laos to take footage of the pre-historic standing stones scattered across the highlands. Drawing his inspiration from the notion that the standing stones demarcate sacred space by casting a territorial radius, Bandasak uses the filmic technical capacities of dissolving and superimposing images to transfigure the documentary footage he has compiled into a kind of conceptual animation, highlighting the vibrating, trans-temporal quality of the standing stones as living matter and potent nonhuman beings.

Southeast Asia has long been one of the most ecologically diverse regions in the world, and it is now likely to be one of the worst affected by climate breakdown. Among the artists in the region sustaining a durational and politically committed mode of inquiry into relations between human and nonhuman beings, Lucy Davis stands as an important pioneer. We are honoured to present two installations from the Migrant Ecologies Project, an extensive practice-led research project founded by Davis a decade ago to explore the intertwining of nature and culture in Southeast Asia. The video animation *Teak Road* maps the region through an inspirational artistic process of inquiry into the life of a piece of teak wood that was turned into a bed some decades ago, which the artist found in a second hand shop in Singapore. With a deceptively light touch, the video weaves the memories and speculations of experts and people with first-hand knowledge to create a cartographic tapestry placing this mundane piece of wood into much larger stories of war, colonisation, voyaging, and cosmology.
Migrant Ecologies Project’s Railtrack Songmaps creates a multimedia archive of relations between people and different species of birds along the railtracks at Tanglin Halt, a historic quarter in Singapore undergoing urbanisation and rapid environmental change. Its iteration at the festival takes the form of a sound assemblage installed in Berwick’s Town Hall Old Gaol. The sounds of bird calls, people’s stories of living with and learning from the birds, and the lyricism of the Malay-language pantun verses inspired by bird songs, make their temporary homes in the cells whose passage of time and past dreams of flight are marked by the graffiti on the wooden wall panels, etched by the prisoners that have passed through these cells, of ships and boats in voyage during the eighteenth century.

We are delighted that Davis, Diaz, Chong, and Bandasak are joining this year’s festival. The durational practices and creative processes of Animistic Apparatus’s featured artists explore ecologies and worlds damaged by colonising ambitions where the potential for change may lie in radical forms of entanglement between ghostly presence, nonhuman beings, and powerless humans.

The artists are speaking about their practices at the first Animistic Apparatus seminar ‘Ecologies and Art in Southeast Asia.’ In the second Animistic Apparatus seminar, the project’s curators join lololol, a collective who participated in the project’s recent field trip in northeast Thailand, and exhibiting artist George Clark, to exchange stories of our experiments with using spaces of ritualistic film projection as sites for artistic practice and inquiry.

Animistic Apparatus is a curatorial and book writing project initiated by May Adadol Ingawanij in collaboration with Julian Ross (University of Westminster). This iteration of the project is guest produced by Bangkok-based curator Mary Pansanga. We are grateful for the kind support of the British Academy’s Mid-career Fellowship; the Centre for Research and Education in Arts and Media (CREAM), University of Westminster; and the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF).

May Adadol Ingawanij is a writer, curator and teacher. Her recent texts include ‘Aesthetics of Potentiality: Nguyen Trinh Thi’s Essay Films’ (2019) and ‘Itinerant Cinematic Practices in and Around Thailand During the Cold War’ (2018). Recent curatorial projects include ‘On Attachments and Unknowns’ (with Erin Gleeson, Phnom Penh, 2017) and ‘Lav Diaz: Journeys’ (London, 2017). She is Professor of Cinematic Arts at the University of Westminster and Co-director of the Centre for Research and Education in Arts and Media.
A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery
Lav Diaz

Philippines/Singapore | 2016 | 485 mins
Multiple languages with English subtitles

Animistic Apparatus
UK Premiere

Animistic Apparatus presents an overnight screening of Lav Diaz’s epic film—projected outdoors continuously and ending around sunrise—as a nocturnal offering to the spirits of place and the ecology of visible and invisible beings of Berwick-upon-Tweed.

A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery is a cinematic address to José Rizal’s foundational Filipino novel El Filibusterismo, set during the Spanish crushing of Filipino independence. A search party combs the forest looking for the body of revolutionary leader Andres Bonifacio. They encounter the half-horse tikbalang and other mythical creatures from Filipino lore, who lure the lost to the great liberator’s phantasmatic promised land. As the smoke rises, the destroyed young men of the nation-to-be—imagined afterlives of characters from Rizal’s novels—struggle to resist succumbing to nihilism.

“This expansive and richly detailed story is to the screen what ‘War and Peace’ is to literature. Tracing various character paths and threads throughout the Philippine Revolution of 1896–97, the embroidery on display through calculated measures that redefine patience weave urban legends, local traditions, real-life artistic expressions with the most sensitive chapter of Philippine history.”
— Nikola Grozdanovic, Indiewire

Introduction by filmmaker Lav Diaz

Supported by Simpsons Malt

Lav Diaz (1958) studied economics at the University of Notre Dame and attended the Mowelfund Film Institute in Manila. His nine-hour film Death in the Land of Encantos (2007) received a Special Mention at Jeonju International Film Festival, Melancholia (2008) won the Venice Horizons Award at Venice International Film Festival, From What Is Before (2014) received the Golden Leopard at Locarno International Film Festival, A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery (2016) was awarded the Alfred Bauer Prize at Berlinale, and The Woman Who Left (2016) won the Golden Lion at Venice International Film Festival. Diaz is also a screenwriter and musician.

Filmography:
Fireworks (Archives) is Apichatpong Weerasethakul’s offering to the potent spirits of his home region, shot in the sculpture park of a little-known nonconformist temple in the northeast of Thailand. Two figures silently cross the frame in a nocturnal site filled with stone animals. Flashes of light radiate from the screen then fold back into the dense darkness, while an archival photograph shows a revolutionary whose last words prior to his execution were ‘dictatorship shall fall, democracy shall prevail’. This place, Weerasethakul says, is a manifestation of revolt. Free at heart, but forced to struggle, and to dream.

Weerasethakul earned his BA in architecture from Khon Kaen University in Thailand and his MFA in Filmmaking from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1999, he co-founded Kick the Machine Films, a company that has produced many of his own films as well as other experimental Thai films and videos that could not find support under the established Thai film industry. His art projects and feature films have won him widespread recognition and numerous festival prizes, including three from the Cannes Film Festival: A Certain Regard for Blissfully Yours in 2002, Prix du Jury for Tropical Malady in 2004, and Palme d’Or for Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives in 2010.

Filmography:
Camera Trap is a comparative video using moving images made a hundred years apart. The first half looks at Muybridge as both animal and landscape photographer, compared with the second half which works with current animal camera/video traps from the rainforests of Sabah (Malaysian Borneo). A comparison of domesticated and wild animals. Caged zoo animal sounds to animals in the rainforests. Camera equipment uses then and now.

— Chris Chong Chan Fui

Chris Chong Chan Fui (1972, Malaysia) is an artist and filmmaker whose films have been screened in Directors’ Fortnight (Cannes Film Festival), Wavelengths (TIFF), International Film Festival Rotterdam, Viennale and London Film Festival. He has exhibited works in Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Palais de Tokyo, Eye Filmmuseum, Museum of Canadian Contemporary Art, Singapore Art Museum and Gwangju Biennale. He is a Smithsonian Institute fellow, a Ford Foundation fellow and was awarded the 2019 Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Arts Fellowship.

Filmography:
Commissioned by Animistic Apparatus to make a video responding to Southeast Asian animistic practices of communicating with spirits, Tanatchai Bandasak draws inspiration from the presence of prehistoric standing stones in the highlands of Laos.

*Central Region* combines dissolves and superimpositions with ambient sound, exploring gradual shifts of light, and indexing movements and vibrations illuminating the spaces surrounding the stones. The process evokes the spectral way in which standing stones in Sam Neua, though appearing as inert ruins randomly scattered throughout the landscape, powerfully demarcate potent territories of the undead and the nonhuman sovereign.

— Tanatchai Bandasak

Tamatchai Bandasak (1984) studied at Thammasat University in Bangkok, Thailand, and École Nationale Supérieure D’ARTS Paris-Cergy, France. His work involves video, photography, found objects and installations, and has been exhibited in National Museum (Bangkok), Tang Contemporary Art (Bangkok), Nova Contemporary (Bangkok), Ygree (Paris) and Kadist Art Foundation (Paris). His films have screened at International Film Festival Rotterdam, Recontres Internationales, WNDX Festival of Moving Image and Bangkok Experimental Film Festival. In 2019, he was artist-in-residence at NTU Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA), Singapore.

**Filmography:**
The Migrant Ecologies Project is a collaborative project that brings together various art practice-led inquiries into questions of culture and nature in Southeast Asia. Animistic Apparatus presents two installations—*Railtrack Songmaps* and *Teak Road*—from the Singaporean project.

*Railtrack Songmaps* is a multimedia assemblage of relations between people and birds along the railtracks at Tanglin Halt, a historic quarter of urban Singapore undergoing social and environmental change. This iteration releases the stories, bird calls and Malay pantun poetry into Berwick’s old jail cells.

*Teak Road* contains hand-animated print-fragments of a teak bed found in a Singapore junk store. A project on memories of wood, trees and people, the film traces material, genetic, historic and poetic journeys of this bed to the site of the original tree through DNA tracking technology.
'Double Ghosts' is a multi-part exhibition which traverses the Pacific drawing on historical fragments, traces and ghosts from the coasts of Chile to a mountain cemetery in Taiwan. Exploring the status and potential of unrealised and fragmented histories, the exhibition draws together 35mm film, sound recordings, script fragments, photography and archival material filmed and gathered in Chile, France and Taiwan.

The project draws on research into temple film projectionists and an unfinished film made in Taiwan by prolific filmmaker Raúl Ruiz (1941–2011) who made most of his films nomadically after his political exile from Chile in 1973. Considering issues from cultural displacement, exile and the changing nature of cinema as the hiatus between the real and the unreal ‘Double Ghosts’ employs an open model of production and exhibition to activate divergent cultural, social and geographical contexts.

The incompleteness of Ruiz’s film is the starting point for ‘Double Ghosts’, which considers the echoes of this unrealized project to explore cinematic and political phantoms. Together these materials are formed into a new choreography proposing an archeological method for considering the legacy of lost histories from site specific screenings to ritual actions, exploring the cinema as space of dialogue across dispersed geographies, histories and lives.

— George Clark

George Clark is an artist, writer and curator. His work explores the history of images and how they are governed by culture and technology as well as social and political conditions. His films have been shown at festivals and museums internationally. Recent projects have been presented at the Taiwan Biennale, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Art (Taichung); AV Festival (Newcastle); MMCA, Seoul; Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires; Images Festival (Toronto) and Museo de Artes Visuales (MAVI). He is co-founder of the West Java West Yorkshire Cooperative Movement, a collaborative project with the Jatiwangi Art Factory and Pavilion (Leeds). He has curated projects for museums, galleries, cinemas, and festivals with a focus on broadening the histories of film and video practice globally. Clark has written for numerous exhibition catalogues and publications, and is a visiting lecturer at the Royal College of Art.

Filmography:
Giving Time: George Clark’s ‘Double Ghosts’ and the Alter-Politics of Film

Fang-Tze Hsu

“The film shows when it says and says when it shows (I say that). Isn’t film then a language? Yes, it may be a language, but composed solely of verbs.”

— Raúl Ruiz

Cinema always tells tales of the others but seldom shares its own stories. “The story of cinema, then, becomes a story of redemption”, says Sven Lütticken.2 What is forfeited by this reticence? What can be redeemed by turning the camera lens towards the film camera itself? By addressing film as a time-based medium, the socio-economic life of film speaks directly to the labour theory of value in which the consensus of an exchange depends on a shared ruler of labour-time. As a primarily time-bound experiential consumption, film not only demands time, but also subsumes time under a homogeneous measurement of the clock. As a Foucauldian dispositif that capitalizes time and affective responses, commercial or mainstream cinema renders its audiences into living labours who can be quantified by their units of time spent in the cinema. Indeed, reports about the average length of Hollywood cinema, from WIRED to Business Insider, exemplify the industrial aspect of cinema time. If “[c]apital is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour”, capitalist cinema that is fuelled by orchestrated moments of climax is equally vampiric. This genre of cinema demands not only time but also the affective density of time.

How has the contemporary entanglement between an experiential sense of time and the commercial cinema’s sense of time altered our perception of history? In the age when the meaning of ‘age’ within the word image has been swallowed by a flood of imagery, how far have we been associating historical events with their visual representations rather than the historicity of the events themselves? In History in Motion: Time in the Age of the Moving Image, Sven Lütticken articulates his concerns with regard to the above-mentioned questions by problematizing the notions of history and historical time, echoing Gilles Deleuze’s initial proposition about cinema’s radical potential of becomingness. By engaging with the synthesis of image and time via Deleuze, Lütticken reckons that cinema as a “liberated time-image” can emancipate historical time “by being the reinfusion of history with becoming”.3

George Clark’s ‘Double Ghosts’ is precisely an exhibition about filming the history of cinema, or—in Lütticken’s words—“a story of redemption”. With regard to what gets redeemed, one rightly finds the becomingness of history situated at the core of Clark’s approach to cinema. Yet, unlike his post-cinematic predecessors—Dziga Vertov’s Man with a Movie Camera (1929), Ken McMullen’s Ghost Dance (1983) and Jean-Luc Godard’s Histoire(s) du Cinéma (1998) to name a few—who disenchant film by exposing the mechanism of cinema from within, Clark carries on the cinematic task of historical materialism but updates its progressive linear narrative by following in Chilean-born French filmmaker

1 Poetics of Cinema 2, 2007.
2 Lütticken, Sven, History in Motion: Time in the Age of the Moving Image, 2013, p. 40.
3 Ibid.
Raúl Ruiz’s footsteps. Ruiz once mentioned that “[e]very film always involves another secret film”. Clark’s exhibition responds to this germinating capacity of film by giving the autonomy of time back to its spectator. In other words, instead of taking from its audiences as tokens of capitalist clock time, cinema can engage in the act of gift-giving to its audiences by being present and animistic.

‘Double Ghosts’ comprises three 35mm film works: Double Ghosts (2018), Inner Sage/Outer King (2019) and A Mountain Inside a Cave (2019). Accompanying these three films, research materials, objects and items related to Raúl Ruiz provide extra context. A video work titled Diarios (2018) is also on display in this space. Through reading Ruiz’s diary entries in the year of 1995, Diarios resembles an undercurrent of creative synergy that flows through Clark’s films. ‘Double Ghosts’ takes as its point of departure Ruiz’s unfinished film Comedy of Shadows (1996). Ruiz visited Taipei to make the film, working with local crews and actors, and shooting the majority of scenes in Chin Pao San Cemetery, located in the northeast tip of Taiwan. Clark’s ‘Double Ghosts’ could be defined as practice-based research in which its theorization has pre-exposed itself to fluctuating factors. Without compromising its narrative autonomy to any given forms or genres, Double Ghosts (the 30-minute film which shares its title with the exhibition) assembles a series of asynchronous images and sounds. These are not merely representational with regard to the filming process but are visual and auditory witnesses of the filmmaking event. While the mesmerizing colours of the 35mm film that captures landscapes of Ruiz’s birthplace and other significant locales restitutes Ruiz’s presence through his inevitable absence, sound recordings of WhatsApp voice messages reify Clark’s presence as a silent, sympathetic observer (via his silence as a recipient who shares a pair of consoling ears with his audiences). The non-synchronous time between the seeable and the audible doubles the dialectical tension between the presence and absence, totality and incompleteness, temporality and durée. The fragmentation of Ruiz’s Comedy of Shadows turns into ‘messianic cessation’ as Clark walks through the woods of the germinating forest of films.

With Benjamin’s messianic conception of history in mind, I want to turn to Michael Taussig to think about animism in relation to historical time. Taussig writes that “with its love of rapid disappearances and appearances out of nowhere..., shamanic conjuring helps us understand a little better how this theatre of being presents being as the transformation of being into the beingness of transforming forms. That is animism. Anything but constant”. By taking a sense of incompleteness as his terrain of exploration, and mobilizing Ruiz’s aesthetic apparatus, such as a mirror, Clark forms an epistemological companionship with Ruiz. For instance, the mirror’s appearance can be seen as a homage to Ruiz, especially considering those who hold the mirror include Ruiz’s fellow filmmakers and Chilote compatriots. On the other hand, the act of mirror breaking in Clark’s film refers to an anecdote in the latter part of Ruiz’s life where he breaks seven mirrors in the hope of extending his life in order to make a film about Chiloé Island, his ancestral home. “That is animism. Anything but constant”. If Taussig implies that animism is a mode of perception seeking to connect rather than define, Clark’s ritualization of Ruiz’s mirror and mirror-breaking then reveals a mode of knowing history. It is via Clark’s performance of Ruiz’s past acts that the repetitive action finds a historical time in which the footsteps of people’s past never cease.

To inscribe the historical time in Clark’s film, to take the film away from the cinema and give the cinema back to history, Clark must also inscribe himself in the film as part of a

---

collective pronoun of filmmakers. Since there will never be a complete History, the potentiality of such an incompleteness of history is pronounced through *Double Ghosts*. As an artist, curator, and historian, George Clark’s ongoing artistic endeavour speaks through his historicizing cinema. In order to sufficiently situate Clark’s practice within the context of cinema, one needs to envision Clark’s three different identities in the form of a trinity rather than in a unity of three independent entities. Without prioritizing one identity above the others, filmmaking as Clark’s act of historiography works in a termite-like manner that cuts through boundaries in all possible definitions. In the case of *Double Ghosts*, the project traverses not only physical distance but also imagination about the social lives and even the afterlives of cinema. The 18,209 kilometers between Chile and Taiwan therefore also signifies the common imagination of film history. In a sense, the notions of creation and history are not only predetermined by each other but also dictated by one another. Significantly, the question of what history is becomes reconceived as how history is done. In a sense, Clark’s *Double Ghosts* gives time to its audience and urges them to contemplate upon questions that are initially muffled by territory-bound understandings of history. For example, by asking what the history of Chile has to do with the history of Taiwan, one may encounter the fading political aspirations of socialism under the Global Cold War. By questioning how such an exploration of history then comes to define the creation of a work of art, one might ask if there could have been another cinema. By working through these propositions, we would be able to redeem the question of what politics is when one thinks of history in relation to cinema.

The acts of gift-giving and questioning are both constituted by the notion of reciproc- ity. These acts could probably be visualized through Bronisław Malinowski’s Kula ring, in which the notion of reciprocity comes in a full circle. Referring directly to a ritualistic event of itinerant cinema, which has largely been left out from the Western canon of film spectatorship, *A Mountain Inside a Cave* documents the event of an outdoor film screening where Clark screens his film *Double Ghosts* on a film projector in the car park of the Chin Pao San Cemetery. Appropriately, towards the end of *A Mountain Inside a Cave*, Clark runs a series of intertitles adopted from the Taoist prayer to complete his offering. It is through such an act of relaying alterity that an alter-politics is rendered tangible. Rather than creating something new, Clark’s *Double Ghosts* bridges our presence to a historical time of cinemas—a cinema of offering. It is through his act of giving historical time back to the present that audiences reconsider politics not through meanings of resistance or critique but in moments of convergence and the persistent erosion of borders that transcends any given spatiotemporality. Here, Clark’s filmmaking speaks to what Ghassan Hage calls an ‘alter-politics’—a politics that grows not from opposition to or critique of our current systems, but from attention to another way of being, one that involves other kinds of living and nonliving beings.

**Fang-Tze Hsu** holds a Ph.D. in Cultural Studies from the National University of Singapore. She is currently a Curator at the National University of Singapore Museum.
The Taipei-based artist collective lololol (Sheryl Cheung & Xia Lin) will respond to George Clark’s exhibition Double Ghosts by leading sessions drawing on their practice, exploring experimental ways of working with sound, image, movement and the environment.

Their website lololol.net is an ongoing interpretive manuscript of Taoist-informed experimental practices for mind and body cultivation in contemporary times. Initiated by the artists, the manuscript is collectively written and organically evolving, and includes a decentralized programme of exercises and techniques shared as a community for inspiration towards healthy living.

Future Tao Workout #1: Ecology

This walking tour of Berwick will explore plant life and ecology as material for new performances. Responding to today’s cybernetic lifestyles, lololol aims to improve the circulation between the real and the virtual, drawing on animist practice, Taoist philosophy and an ecological approach life of all kinds.

Future Tao Workout #2: Movement

Multimedia artist Xia Lin guides a session of 3C Xing Yi Quan, a new form of martial arts she developed which imitates the form and essence of products from our daily life. Designed for film-makers and film-viewers, the martial art exercises will help festival attendees find a sense of symbiosis and enjoyment with their new technological nature.

Future Tao Workout #3: Sound

Sound artist Sheryl Cheung’s ‘Internal Motivations’ is a collective listening and improvisation session for energy circulation between people and their environments. Participants explore different relationships between sound and energy. Working with people from the festival, the workshop aims to open Taoist-informed ideas to more universal imaginations and applications.

Future Tao: City Parks

This self-guided map presents a curated experience of experimental mind and body exercises drawing from lololol’s archive of self-cultivation techniques contributed by a vast group of thinkers and creators. lololol will produce a new edition of their City Parks for Berwick and the map will be available for free during the festival at The Gymnasium and The Maltings.

Supported by Connections through Culture, part of the British Council

lololol is a Taipei-based art collective founded by experimental musician Sheryl Cheung and multimedia artist Xia Lin. lololol produces collaborative art projects and community-engaging events that reflect upon nature, embodiment and togetherness. In 2017, lololol initiated Future Tao (http://futuretao.lololol.net) as a long-term project about experimental mind and body practices. They have collaborated with experimental artists, performers, community groups, Taoist priests and martial art practitioners.
In 2012, George Clark shot 900ft (10 mins) of 35mm film of streets, hospitals, sleeping dogs and aero-
bic classes in Bangkok. Three years later, Tanatchai Bandasak, guided by Google Maps, made a series of
field recordings at the same locations. Traversing a period of political change these fragments—assem-
bled for this collective listening event—mark ellipsis and erasure in the city.

This new collaborative performance will assemble materials from the local environment with the artists’
personal archives, from a destroyed 35mm film of the mythic Naga serpent to studies of plant life. The
performance activates the artists’ shared interests in ecology, models of assembly and ways to reframe
ritual practices from ceremonial film projection, Tai Chi, group viewing and listening.
Exhibitions

Artists present recent and newly commissioned moving image works, reinhabiting Berwick’s town walls, animating historic buildings and rewilding its town centre.

O’ Pierrot, Tanoa Sasraku (The Straw Yard)
Douma Underground, Tim Alsiofi (The Main Guard)
Bugs and Beasts Before the Law, Bambitchell (Town Hall Old Gaol)
Now, at Last!, Ben Rivers (Town Hall Council Chambers)
Cinématon, Gérard Courant (Town Centre)
Preemptive Listening, Aura Satz (The Magazine)
Beyond the Field, Matt Stokes (Berwick Museum & Art Gallery)
Animistic Apparatus: Fireworks (Archives), Apichatpong Weerasethakul (Bankhill Ice House)
Animistic Apparatus: Camera Trap, Chris Chong Chan Fui (New Tower)
Animistic Apparatus: Central Region, Tanatchai Bandasak (Coxon’s Tower)
Animistic Apparatus: The Migrant Ecologies Project, Two Installations (Town Hall Old Gaol)
Animistic Apparatus: Double Ghosts, George Clark (The Gymnasium)
O’ Pierrot treads the stock, pantomime narrative of Pierrot the Clown, told this time from a lesbian, mixed-race, British perspective. The quest for British identity, so often played out in too-real grey-scale is here translated in glowing colour via 8mm stock.

The life goal of Pierrot Mulatto (played by the artist) is to catch a giant sycamore seed that spins down every day from the arms of Harlequin Jack, a crazed black man in whiteface, driven mad by his own quest for British acceptance. Jack toys with Pierrot throughout the story, performing a satirical essence of white British sensibility whilst referencing early minstrel troupes’ caricatures of the post-slavery, black populace. Mixed-race Pierrot is encouraged to strive for her ‘white potential’ whilst battling rejection, rage and the bending of time amidst the English countryside. Is British assimilation merely a pipe dream for queer people of colour? O’ Pierrot emerges from Sasraku’s four months at Academy Costumes, in South-East London, as part of The New Flesh Artists’ Residency. Through the design and fabrication of her own costumes, set and props, Sasraku engages in a re-telling of Kenneth Anger’s pioneering avant-garde, queer film Rabbit’s Moon. Costume drives the narrative of Sasraku’s silent fairy tale as the black, British grind enters the realm of the surreal.

Commissioned by The New Flesh as part of the 2019 residency programme, using public funding from Arts Council England

Tanoa Sasraku (1995, Plymouth, Devon) works with themes examining the intersections of her identity as a young, mixed-race, gay woman and the endeavour to draw these senses of self together as one in 21st century England.

Filmography:
O’ Pierrot (2019), Whop, Cawbaby (2018)
With the barrel bombs falling on Ghouta, the Eastern suburbs of Damascus, civilians sought shelter in the basements of their homes. I was one of them, holding on to my camera. I tried to film what I couldn’t express in words.

The words that did come to mind were lines of poetry from Teresa Mei Chuc’s ‘The Bomb Shelter,’ from Saigon to Ghouta, When bombs are exploding outside, It means that there are implosions. Vibrations travel through air and liquid. My amniotic fluid is imprinted with airplanes Dropping bombs and screams and fire. In the bomb shelter in Saigon, My father teaches my two-year-old brother French. “Je m’appelle Chuc Nai Dat.” “Je m’appelle...”

— Tim Alsiofi

Tim Alsiofi’s unflinching document of people sheltering in a city under siege reaffirms the importance of transparency and immediacy in documenting crucially important scenes of unfolding history through moving images.

— Herb Shellenberger

Tim Alsiofi (1994, Douma, Syria) started studying sound engineering and music in 2009. He couldn't complete his studies because of the blockade imposed on the city of Douma and eastern Ghouta. He was forcibly displaced in 2018. During this period, he worked as a director and a sound engineer in Russel Studio in Douma (2014-18). He also worked as a broadcaster and reporter for a several local and international radio stations. After the beginning of his work as a field photographer in 2013, he contributed to the transfer of images from the heart of eastern Ghouta to numerous news agencies. He is a member of Sam Lenses team and a founding member of the voluntary project Humanity in Syria. Tim has also worked as a video photographer and director of photography in a number of short and feature documentaries.

Filmography:
Douma Underground (2018), Still Recording (2018)
Bugs and Beasts Before the Law
Bambitchell (Sharlene Bamboat and Alexis Mitchell)

Canada/Germany | 2019 | 33 mins

Exhibition

UK Premiere

Bugs and Beasts Before the Law explores the history and legacy of the “animal trials” that took place in medieval Europe, in which animals—and other non-humans, such as insects and inanimate objects—were put on trial for various crimes and offences, ranging from trespassing and thievery, to assault and murder. This history of colonial law-making forged political and sometimes profane relationships between humans and animals. Bambitchell’s essayistic film reimagines common perceptions of legal history and, in doing so, produces a world where past and present, fiction and non-fiction, human and animal fuse.

— Bambitchell

Bambitchell’s investigation into the curious phenomenon of animal trials raises huge definitional questions about legality, responsibility, justice and agency. Divided into chapters, the film’s images include observational footage which acts as implicit and inventive staging of speculative sites where these deliberations might have taken place—in countries including France, Brazil, England and Switzerland. While a narrator relates these tales, we encounter noose, gavel and courtroom, symbols and instruments of juridical process. Case studies from the medieval era give way to the film’s final example, which implicates the instrument of film into these legacies of human-on-animal injustice. Invoking the 1903 Edison Studios actuality film Electrocuting an Elephant, Bugs and Beasts Before the Law leaves us questioning whether the animal trial practices which we find so apparently absurd are actually so different from some of the ways in which we view and treat animals today.

— Herb Shellenberger

Bambitchell is the artistic collaboration between Sharlene Bamboat and Alexis Mitchell. Working collaboratively since 2009, their research-based practice takes form in performance, video and installation. They often work with national archives, state documents and historical narratives to rigorously yet playfully disrupt systems and codes of power. Their work has been exhibited at festivals and galleries such as Gallery TPW (Toronto), Berlinale, Articule Gallery (Montreal) and London Film Festival. Their work has been written about in Canadian Art, C Magazine, and the Los Angeles Review of Books, and they are featured in the edited collection Contemporary Citizenship, Art, and Visual Culture. Bambitchell were artists-in-residence at Akademie Schloss Solitude (Stuttgart) and The MacDowell Colony, and have upcoming solo exhibitions at Mercer Union (Toronto), Dazibao (Montreal) and the Henry Art Gallery (Seattle).

Filmography:
Bugs and Beasts Before the Law (2019), Special Works School (2018), Empire Symbol, Or a Man and His Mule (2018)
Ben Rivers’ magnificent film of a sloth doesn’t encourage lazy viewing. Rather, it’s an active, engaging and engrossing experience. Cherry the sloth clambers up her favourite tree in the Costa Rican forest, hangs from it, and in turn the time we experience as viewers becomes suspended as each breath, every movement becomes a theatrical drama unfolding before our eyes. Perhaps implicitly poking fun at the term ‘slow cinema’, Rivers instead gives us an exquisite example of ‘sloth cinema’.

It’s a surprisingly rare proposition that we are able to spend such a quantity of time observing a wild animal in her own habitat, but Now, at last! isn’t a simple nature documentary. Though its observational function is certainly rewarding, Rivers sets off an unexpected flip of the viewer’s expectations at several points throughout the film.

A candy-coloured punctuation of the slow action, the film’s otherwise black and white cinematography is interrupted by colour 16mm, additionally manipulated through separation filters. Atop the immersive soundtrack of the jungle setting, we hear a live version of The Righteous Brothers’ “Unchained Melody”. Singer Bobby Hatfield comments implicitly on the film: “Time goes by so slowly, and time can do so much...”

When one learns the song was written as the theme to a 1950s prison film, extra relevance is placed on our protagonist’s freedom. Cherry is unchained and able to live and love as she wants. We need to make sure that she (and all her sisters and babies) will have the clean, healthy and stable environment to continue to live that way well into the future.

— Herb Shellenberger

Ben Rivers (1972) studied Fine Art at Falmouth School of Art, initially in sculpture before moving into photography and Super8 film. After his degree, he taught himself 16mm filmmaking and hand-processing. His practice as a filmmaker treads a line between documentary and fiction. Often following and filming people who have in some way separated themselves from society, the raw film footage provides Rivers with a starting point for creating oblique narratives imagining alternative existences in marginal worlds. Rivers is the recipient of numerous prizes including Tiger Award for Short Film, International Film Festival Rotterdam; Robert Gardner film award; Artangel Open; FIPRESCI International Critics Prize, Venice Film Festival; the Baloise Art Prize, Art Basel; and Paul Hamlyn Foundation Award for Artists. In 1996, he co-founded Brighton Cinematheque—renowned for screening a unique programme of film from its earliest days through to the latest artist’s film and video—and he co-programmed through to its demise in 2006.

Filmography:
**Cinématon**

Gérard Courant

France | 1978-2019 | 204 hours

---

*Exhibition*

**UK Premiere**

---

*Cinématon* is a major film work composed by Gérard Courant since 1978. The film consists of silent, three-and-a-half minute portraits of artistic and cultural personalities, numbering over 3,000 to date. The person being filmed can do whatever she/he wants. Taken together, they constitute an archive of international art, film, theatre and entertainment scenes of the past four decades. Jean-Luc Godard, Julie Delpy, Terry Gilliam, Babette Mangolte and Sergei Parajanov star alongside a cast of thousands.

— Gérard Courant

Gérard Courant’s epic film *Cinématon* is a superlative film in all forms of the word. It’s likely the film that has been consistently made over the longest period of time, begun in 1978 and still unfurling forty-one years later. It has been composed initially on 16mm and Super-8, then MiniDV videotape and finally through digital video. The film is paradoxically grand in scale while at the same time focusing on small moments, intimate gestures and fleeting encounters. *Cinématon* is made up of close friends and also passing acquaintances, some of whom the artist had major relationships with and others he met only once.

The title, a reference to photomatons, conjures the idea of the film as a collection of cinematic photo-booth portraits. Courant says: “Like photo booths, the essential thing is to reproduce an image without seeking to embellish or improve the subject filmed”. He highlights what he calls the “residue of action” which the screen sends back to us: the movement of an eyelash, a very slight smile, a barely perceptible mimicry. In this way, he says that the viewer discovers “a little of what’s behind the mask” of the subject in front of the camera.

By focusing on faces, Courant highlights best these “moments de rien”, moments of nothing. However, over three thousand “moments of nothing” come to stand together as an archive not only of film, intellectual and celebrity personalities, but a monumental collection of the types of meetings and crossings that one engages in over a lifetime.

We are proud to present the first complete retrospective in the UK of *Cinématon*, as of press time 3,059 portraits in length. Other complete retrospectives of the film have been held at the Cinémathèque Française (1980 & 1991), Centre Pompidou (1981 & 1988), Images Festival (1998) and Brooklyn’s Microscope Gallery (2010). The film screens as an exhibition across five different disused shop fronts in Berwick’s town centre, reinvigorating currently empty spaces with surreal and inviting signs of life.

— Herb Shellenberger

*Supported by Northumberland Cultural Fund and ‘Welcome Visitor’ Project*
Presentation of Cinématon

Gérard Courant

Since the 7th of February, 1978, I have made portraits on film of artistic and cultural personalities that I call Cinématon. Personalities of all sorts like Jean-Luc Godard, Wim Wenders, Joseph Losey, Sandrine Bonnaire, Juliet Berto, Philippe Sellers, Fernando Arrabal, Jacques Monory, Frédéric Mitterand, Sapho, Jean-Paul Aron, Samuel Fuller, Terry Gilliam, Gabrielle Lazure, Marushka Detmers, Jack Lang, Sergei Parajanov or Jean-Francois Lyotard have all accepted to play this game.

There are ten rules for the cinématon, ten commandments that must not be deviated from:

1) A camera on a tripod
2) A camera that does not move
3) A close-up of a face
4) No sound
5) No change in focal length
6) No change in the framing
7) Running-time of 3 minutes and 25 seconds
8) One take only
9) No cutting during the shooting and no editing
10) The person that is being filmed can do whatever he/she wants

The aims of the Cinématon are multiple: the basic aim is to constitute an archive on art, and especially on the film, theater and entertainment scenes in those moments when the subject that is being filmed proposes a great moment of truth about herself or himself. Each Cinématon is preceded by three introductory title cards with the chronological number of the shooting of the portrait, the name of the person that is being filmed, his or her nationality, his profession, the date, hour and place of the shooting.

Cinématon theoretically has no end.

Gérard Courant (1951, Lyon, France) is a filmmaker, author and poet. Besides his monumental Cinématon film series, he is the author of a film diary (Les Carnets) and hundreds of other film projects and series. After growing up in southern France, Courant moved to Paris in 1975 and became heavily involved in experimental film, first as a critic and soon after as a filmmaker. Fusing influences from Dada and Pop Art, the actuality films of the Lumière Brothers and the serial works of Andy Warhol, Courant developed a signature style of filmmaking invested in reality and collaboration. His films have been exhibited widely in major international film festivals, galleries and museums, and he has written many books on cinema, including studies of filmmakers Werner Schroeter and Philippe Garrel. Complete retrospectives of Cinématon have been held at the Cinematheque Français (1980 and 1991), Centre Pompidou (1981 and 1988), Dazibao (Montreal, 1988), Images Festival (1998) and Microscope Gallery (Brooklyn, 2010).

Selected Filmography:
Aura Satz’s *Preemptive Listening* project focuses on sonic obedience and disobedience through the trope of the siren. *The Fork in the Road* comprises trumpet improvisor Mazen Kerbaj’s composition of a new siren sound using circular breathing, and actor/activist Khalid Abdalla speaking on the siren as the emblematic sound of resistance, oppression and lost futures during the Arab Spring. Shot on 16mm, the film is literally driven by its soundtrack, as the voice becomes a beacon, activating emergency rotating lights.

Following the film, a sound installation—featuring Elaine Mitchener (voice), Laurie Spiegel (electronics), Anton Lukoszewieze (cello), Maja Ratkje (voice) and Rhodri Davies (harp)—proposes a speculative re-imagining of emergency signals. Sirens are recomposed through a variety of instruments, infinitely rising tones and more—from loud and defiant to low, mournful or nearly imperceptible.

Aura Satz is an artist who works with sound and film. Exhibitions and screenings include Tate Modern, Tate Britain, Hayward Gallery, BFI Southbank, Whitechapel Gallery, (all London), InterCommunication Centre (Tokyo), Sydney Biennale; High Line Art (New York), International Film Festival Rotterdam and New York Film Festival. She has presented solo exhibitions at the Wellcome Collection (London), Hayward Project Space (London), John Hansard Gallery (Southampton), Dallas Contemporary, George Eastman House (Rochester, New York) and Fridman Gallery (New York). She teaches at the Royal College of Art.

**Filmography:**
In *Beyond the Field*, Matt Stokes uses folk instruments to create the sounds produced by fauna present in the landscape of Berwick-upon-Tweed in the mid-1700s. This was during the Agricultural Revolution when the flower-rich meadowlands described by writers surveying the Tweed Valley were being drained and replaced with crops. The shift in farming practices altered local biodiversity, affecting the plants, insects, birds and mammals present in the area.

These changes were recorded by the Berwickshire Naturalists’ Club, which was founded in 1831 by local resident Dr George Johnston. Beyond the Field draws on their early publications, which are held here at Berwick Museum and Art Gallery. As a forerunner of naturalist societies across Britain, the Club’s records provide vital information about the ecology, history and culture of Northumberland.

The instruments played in the exhibition were also common in the 18th century. These include Northumberland pipes, Half Long (or Border) Pipes, fiddle, hurdy gurdy, tabor, tabor pipe, shawm, Jew’s harp and bone whistles. Sometimes individual instruments can be clearly heard. At other times the sounds of fauna were produced through layering many instruments, or by removing a component such as the reed or bellows from the small pipes.

The insects, birds and mammals represented in *Beyond the Field* are almost all now considered ‘at risk’ or ‘of concern’. Although the installation conjures a place and time specific to Berwick-upon-Tweed, it invites the audience to consider the ongoing impact of human activity across the natural world.

*Commissioned and presented by Museums Northumberland at Berwick Museum & Art Gallery*

---

**Matt Stokes** was born in Penzance, Cornwall and has lived, studied and worked in the North East of England since 1993. He was the winner of the Beck’s Futures Prize in 2006, and in 2009 was shortlisted for the Northern Art Prize. In 2018, he was awarded the prestigious Award for Artists from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.
Filmmaker in Focus: Kira Muratova

Kira Muratova, a critically acclaimed titan of Russian-language cinema, made poetic, eccentric, astonishing films which have still too rarely been seen internationally. Muratova’s brilliantly trenchant imagination spans across twenty-two works, produced between 1961–2012. Tilda Swinton proclaimed in the New York Times that her “epic, rebarbative, wildly chaotic, furious, visionary films have earned her a revered place in the international—intergalactic—canon”.

BFMAF pays tribute to her vision and œuvre, posthumously, with a retrospective of six features and one short film. This retrospective has been curated by Elena Gorfinkel (Kings College, London) and organised in partnership with the Dovzhenko Centre, Ukraine’s national film archive. Gorfinkel and Oleksandr Teliuk (Dovzhenko Centre) will introduce each screening.

Kira Muratova (1934–2018), one of the most significant and original voices of Russian-language cinema, made 22 films over the course of six decades. Born in Romania (present-day Moldova) to a Romanian mother and Russian father, both committed Revolutionaries, she trained in film at Moscow’s VGIK, and after graduating was hired by the Odessa Film Studio. She continued to live and work in Odessa, Ukraine for her entire career. Her idiosyncratic films, frequently featuring unconventional women protagonists, transgressive theatricality, and inventive formal experiment, were severely censored and suppressed during the Soviet era, yet drew belated recognition during perestroika and after as political tides shifted. Her most internationally recognised masterpiece, a feverish vision of late Soviet life, The Asthenic Syndrome (1989) received a Grand Jury Prize at Berlinale. In the 1990s and 2000s, she received five Nika Awards—Russia’s main national prize for films—among them for Best Director for Passions and The Tuner. She was the recipient of a Shevchenko National Prize, a Leopard of Honour at Locarno, and the first Andrzej Wajda Freedom Prize. Retrospectives of her films have been presented at International Film Festival Rotterdam and Film Society of Lincoln Centre, and a forthcoming retrospective will take place at Cinematheque Française.

Filmography:
“Harmony doesn’t mean balance. You must destroy something symmetrically, break the rules. It’s only then that things grab you.”

— Kira Muratova

Kira Muratova’s trenchantly caustic, sonically layered, and furiously sensorial cinema spans twenty-two films made over six tumultuous decades, products of her bracingly original cinematic imagination, one as distinct as Varda’s, Akerman’s or Chytilova’s. A formidable equal of her (post)-Soviet contemporaries Aleksandr Sokurov and Aleksei German Sr., Muratova’s path toward inclusion in what Tilda Swinton calls the “intergalactic canon” of cinematic masters has long been deterred by a lack of wider appraisal and exhibition of her work beyond Eastern Europe, despite resounding critical, scholarly, and cinephile acclaim.

Her challenging and radical oeuvre bodies forth through a set of paradoxes. She was one of the most suppressed (and most transgressive) filmmakers of the Soviet cinema. Party censors considered her films “mannered”, “bourgeois”, “lacking in realism and motivation” and having a “deliberately complicated style”. Through much struggle and several shelved films, she was allowed to make only six films in the period between 1967 and 1987. After the banning of her second film The Long Farewell in 1971, she was “disqualified” from directing at Odessa Film Studio, demoted to scriptwriting for hire. Among the Grey Stones (1983) ended with Muratova removing her name from the credits due to the extremity of cuts made by the studio.

Yet with the watershed of her epochal grenade The Asthenic Syndrome (1989), which won the Silver Bear at the 1990 Berlinale—and after the fall of the Soviet regime—she entered a fertile period, making a film every two or three years well into the twenty first century, becoming one of Russian-language cinema’s most celebrated figures. Considered a ‘national treasure’ and winner of five Nika Awards (Russia’s Oscar), her belated recognition was an irony not lost on the wary Muratova herself. Identified alternately as a Soviet, a Russian, and a Ukrainian filmmaker, Muratova’s Romanian upbringing, and over forty years of living and working in Odessa, Ukrainian city on the Black Sea, marked her complex perspective constitutionally askance to the creative axes of Moscow and St. Petersburg’s film intelligentsia.

Kira Muratova (nee Korotkova) was born in Soroca, Bessarabia in Romania (now present day Moldova). Her mother was a gynaecologist and her Russian father an anti-fascist activist who was executed during the Second World War. She lived with her mother in Bucharest, and eventually moved to Moscow. After her studies with Sergei Gerasimov at the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK), she was hired by the Odessa Film Studio in 1961. Her first three films were co-directed with her then husband Oleksandr Muratov, Spring Rain, From the Steep Ravine and Our Honest Bread, before they parted ways in 1964.

For Muratova, her first proper film was the feature Brief Encounters (1967) a love story told through parallel tracks: two women in love with the same man. The Russian bard,
the young Vladimir Vysotsky plays the gypsy-like geologist Maksim, and the young Nina Ruslanova takes up the role of his rural, young lover Nadia. Muratova starred as the main character Valentina, a disenchanted party apparatchik; she took the role only after the actress she chose proved unsuitable. *Brief Encounters*’ incipient experimentalism was already evident in its non-linear temporality, use of flashbacks and poetic cinematography. Asymmetrical close-ups and domestic décor were exposed to a mournful, ambivalent gaze, in which romantic and ideological idealisms were equally questioned. It was a love triangle in which the earthy bohemian man, object of desire, is envisioned only through the perspectives and memories of two women, never materialising in the film’s present. Neither doubles nor opposites, the two women, and their aspirations and longings, intermingle in the film’s woven tapestry of Soviet provincial life, a mix of growth and stagnation. With the equally remarkable *The Long Farewell*, a coming of age story treating the pains of motherhood, Muratova’s talent was cemented; it also invited years of censure. Both films were little seen by Soviet audiences, but circulated surreptitiously among students at film schools where Muratova’s advocates screened the film.

From first to last, Muratova’s films were witness to and expression of the sea change of political regimes and cultural values, but also spoke to her own obsessions and ideas about theatricality, artifice, predation, passion, women’s desire, authority and power. Dennis Lim dubbed her the “high priestess of Soviet absurdism”. Diverse in their forms and flights, and often bewildering and discomfiting by design, her films never fit neatly into any taxonomic accounting of movements and genre. They spanned promiscuously across romance (*Brief Encounters, Getting to Know the Big Wide World*); comedy (*Passions, Sentimental Policeman*); literary adaptation (*Change of Fate and Chekhovian Motifs*); quotidian horror, tragedy and darkest of farce (*Three Stories, Melody of a Street Organ, The Asthenic Syndrome*); and from relatively straightforward narrative organisation in her black & white ‘provincial melodramas’ of the late 1960s and early 1970s, to a later, freer navigation of elliptical, episodic structures and wild refrains in her films of the post-Soviet period. Muratova and her films have in different measures been considered ‘difficult’ and the acerbic quality (both personal and aesthetic) that she cultivated is an essential ingredient to her aesthetic freedom, self-determination and creative pleasures. She stated: “…your opinions, that of the public are not important to me. I want to construct my own world”. And so, she did.

Critics often state that Muratova’s style is unmappable and that her form is too wild and unfixed to be contained, bordering on a polysemic illegibility. But what is exactly at stake in such proclamations? Muratova’s excoriating brilliance—and yes, her heterodox, ‘wild style’—develops from her fearless rebuke of many Soviet dictums about permissible representation; her absurdist abjuration of conventions of narrativity; and her development of an anti-realist, non-redemptive vision of human energies. These impulses criss-cross her filmography. An unsympathetic, needy mother suffocates her searching teenaged son with the nonsense speech of her exceedingly alienating love in *The Long Farewell*. In *The Asthenic Syndrome*, a grieving widow, shattered by her husband’s death, picks up a homeless drunk who propositions her on the street—he bares himself, full frontal nudity in direct address to the camera (the first scene of its kind in Soviet cinema). A string of *mat* (cursing vulgarities) uttered by a woman on the train at the end of *Asthenic* made it the only film censored during Gorbachev’s perestroika. A triptych of murders narrated by their strangely remorseless culprits in *Three Stories* mordantly relishes in the means and methods of killing as bearing its own absurd, motivation-less logic. In such works, she seems to say that one need not sympathize or enact a moral claim in order to feel. Cinema’s stake rests in sensation. Such examples attest to why, perhaps, Muratova defender Andrei Plakhov described her as a “provincial anarchist”, accounting for her atheistic, unflinching vision of a corrupted, unredeemable world.
Muratova’s energetic and entropic characters tend toward abstraction rather than verisimilitude. As anti-characters, they are assemblages of characteristics, gestures, habits, speech and song, spurning psychological depth, motivation and causality. Witness the obsessive monologues of Renata Litvinova’s nurse in *Passions*, as she details mortician’s vivisections and other morbid scenes in an aspirating, Monroe-esque sing-song; or observe the narcoleptic postures and eruptive poetic recitations of Sergei Popov’s exhausted Soviet teacher in *The Asthenic Syndrome*. A predilection for repetition and the use of local eccentricities and non-professional actors facilitates scenarios in which vernacular tics, banal speech and reiterative oddity indulges figures besotted with their own private manias. Muratova, a vegetarian and animal lover, deploys animals and nonhuman elements to assault spectatorial attention and indict human action. In a pageant of horses galloping on the race track, or of circus dogs being trained to perform, or in the miserable torture of a helpless street cat, Muratova exposes humans’ corrupted grasp of reason, instrument of exploitation and violent control.

Despite what might come off as mere cynicism and negativity, Muratova’s cinema is also slyly enraptured by the astonishments of maximalist beauty, by the capacity of sinuous long takes, and of a staggering cinematography encrusted with photogenic jewels. Examples proliferate: Nina Ruslanova’s beseeching face, suddenly blurred by a rack focus in *Brief Encounters*; grappling hands of young teens in unrequited relation running through dog fur in *The Long Farewell*; and piercing nearly cubistic plays with light and color, with compositions that cleave space and radiate blocks of emotion in *Getting to Know the Big Wide World*. In the latter, Muratova stages a romantic scene of recognition through the spotlight flash of a truck’s lights on the heroine, illuminating her silhouette out of darkness, shaping her in the light of her incipient lover Misha’s automotive gaze.

In an interview with Isa Willinger, pausing on the topic of Bertolt Brecht, Muratova rejects the notion that alienation should be an absolute value: “Estrangement. Not-estrangement. All this is meaningless. I want this and that and something else too. I want people to look at this little brooch, this little bracelet, emotionless or ardently, to just look at it for a long time and not turn away from it. That means I want emotion, and estrangement, and everything else”.

As if looking at that “little brooch”, Muratova’s eye equally delights in the unexpected poetics of the drab architecture, in the overloaded ornamentalism of kitsch Soviet décor, or the extravagant rococo of bourgeois interiors. Throughout her work, the brutish verisimilitude of late Soviet life frequently collided with the grand guignol of parody and farce. In *The Sentimental Policeman*, neighbors bicker and argue in circular prosody as dogs bark and scamper around them. In her penultimate film, *Melody for a Street Organ*, two Dickensian orphans wander the streets of a brutalised and privatised contemporary post-Soviet landscape, desperately observing silent grotesque charades of strange families’ gluttonous consumption through snowy window panes, their gleeful grimaces stretched towards obscenity. Explaining making films under great scrutiny by Communist Party bureaucrats and in the larger context of industry regulation, in which showing cemeteries, toilets or even bedrooms was verboten, Muratova proclaimed: “The more prohibitions, the more imagery. Figurativeness in general grew entirely out of prohibitions, just as all art was born of prohibitions, shame and fear”. Flouting such restrictions with a profusion of indelible images of incongruous, improbable, outraged and outrageous characters, her body of work might represent one of the most distinctive and singular oeuvres of cinematic world-making.
What kind of creatures populate her world? Muratova’s fascination with the human animal unfolds as a menagerie of types: eccentrics, twins, dreamers and obsessives; jilted mothers and bruised construction workers; poet narcoleptics and happy sociopaths; ambivalent bureaucrats and vagabond geologists; horse racers and circus performers; the blithe connivers and the blissfully self-deluded. We alight on horses, dogs, cats, dolls and corpses. Having both worked with and discovered some of the leading talents of post 1960s Russian-language cinema (Nina Ruslanova, Renata Litvinova) she also drew on a repertoire of locals and non-professionals, a parade of outsiders and eccentrics to populate her baroque spaces of superficiality and excess.

Muratova despised state institutions and the hypocrisies of the Soviet intelligentsia class. One can see some of her meta-cinematic reflexivity emerging from her ongoing battles with such petty bureaucrats and the false pieties bestowed upon art as saviour of civilization. Muratova defied such naive notions. Her direction towards ‘dekorativnost/ornamentalism’ was inspired in part by her admiration for the persecuted and imprisoned colleague Soviet filmmaker Sergei Parajanov. But we might also see her cinema as a reprisal and return to Soviet masters of the 1920s avant-garde like Sergei Eisenstein, deriving from the montage of attractions and the idiolects of inflated and exaggerated gestures, a biomechanics retrofitted for doldrums of glasnost. Drawing on Chaplin’s slapstick melancholy, Fellini’s carnivalesques and Pasolini’s free indirect camera, Muratova soldered together a universe that described the lived reality of Soviet and post-Soviet life, especially for the unconventional, ambivalent, ‘freakish’ and transgressive outsiders (often women and children) within it. But she also veered wildly towards anti-realist, fabulating and excessively baroque scenarios and mise-en-scenes, pieced together from the dying republic’s blasted fragments.

What to detractors may have then read as discomfiting cacophony of voices is in fact a richly tuned and modulated aural landscape. Her films are laden with polyphonies and dissonances, full of atonal speech, songs and contrapuntal rhythms; or as Irina Sandomirskaja suggests of The Asthenic Syndrome, a “glossolalia of the Soviet subject.” Muratova magnified how Soviet public life ossified into a leaden tyranny of sanctioned speech, with its catchalls, platitudes and bromides. Muratova’s stilted repetitions, recitations and spoken clichés reanimated such expressive tendencies to expose the absurdism of the reigning ideology’s necrosis of private thought. Even her first film Brief Encounters begins with the rehearsed pomposity of a compulsory public oration, “Dorogiye Tovarische!/Dear Comrades!”, a stentorian turgidity that her heroine Valentina is loath to begin to compose. Speaking of this love for iterative litanies, Muratova stated, “Repetition: that’s my mania, haven’t you noticed? Those endless repetitions are from a desire to rhyme, a desire for a kind of refrain”. The musicality of refrain could be its own source of sonorous poetry, as in Getting to Know the Big Wide World, where women workers slap cement on brick, their humming voices in song, harmonizing contrapunctally as they erect the formless walls around them into solid structures, the red of their kerchiefs slicing across planes of brown and gray, their voices tumbling and chiming over each other.

Repetition, its rote mechanicity, could lead to a kind of arrhythmic alchemy. Such sound compositions can develop from several voices or a crowd, overlapping, bustling and jostling, as in the raucous and interminable queue for fish, or among an asymmetrical chorus spoken by babushkas invoking Tolstoy’s teaching, both in The Asthenic Syndrome. Breeding minute difference, promiscuous patterns chart their own meanings. Like her comrade in chernukha (a perestroika era genre of art emphasising dark, grim social realities) Russian writer Vladimir Sorokin, Muratova recognised the aesthetic potential in Soviet systems of social organisation and public communication. Sorokin’s novel The
Queue, much akin to Muratova’s roiling, noisy impulsive tolpa (crowds), absurdly formalises one of the most definitive experiences of communist collective temporality, waiting in unending lines for consumer goods.

Writing of the returns, recurrences, and cyclical fates that have afflicted the collapsed Soviet state, in the foreclosure of its modes of thinking and imagining promised futures, Svetlana Alexievich announces, “our time comes to us second hand”. Muratova’s films also admit in their frenetic almost cheery cynicism the familiar-unfamiliarity of life’s bits and pieces, those rehearsed, repeated, second-hand scraps of the Soviet historical subject, doomed to relapse and return. But repetition for Muratova allowed an unsentimental way of giving shape to all possibility, a cinema of equanimity that could sustain and give space to the material life of every contingency. This is ultimately an egalitarian plenum, one that abjures the sanctimony of a moralistic gaze. As Nancy Condee notes, Muratova “rejects moral correctives to human error for the simple reason that her sympathies are on the side of the error, not the corrective”.

Her last film, Eternal Homecoming, takes such a notion to its utmost limit, as it signals the apex and encapsulation of Muratova’s vision, a meta-commentary on her body of films, and on cinema tout court. A simple dramatic scenario loops, re-performed by different actors, repeated over and over, in different settings and locations. A man goes to visit an old friend, asking her for advice about whether he should choose his wife or his mistress. She gives her thoughts, and as her visitor remains unsatisfied, she proffers every possible permutation (choose either: wife, mistress, both, none). The whole repertory of Muratova’s past collaborators appear in pairs, enacting this scene over and over, reprising their presence in palimpsest, echoing her past films in myriad settings. A recurring painting (by her second husband, art director and writer Evgenii Golubenko) and ball of string reappears in each scene, as the female character tangles and unthreads it, an emblem of this film’s narrative and all film’s potential.

The slyly reflexive nature of her cinema is made apparent, as we realise we are watching an unseen bit of cinematic production, a backstage document of those casting calls and screen tests, rehearsals for the eyes of artless producers and money-men, who with their vulgar mercantilism, break the diegetic frame. Their conversation announces that the director of the film has died and the film may remain unfinished. Has a film taken place in this liminal zone of casting? What is the status of these purgatory fragments of the unmade work that have unfolded before us? Here is Muratova’s audacity, her grand finale a gesture of finitude, one that betrays the effectiveness of finality altogether. The spool of cinema keeps threading and tangling, threading and tangling.

Elena Gorfinkel is Senior Lecturer in Film Studies at King’s College London. She is the author of Lewd Looks: American Sexploitation Cinema in the 1960s, and is working on a new book about cinemas of exhaustion. She writes criticism for Sight & Sound, Art Monthly and other publications.
Kira Muratova’s first solo feature is a beautifully unfolding love triangle: a roaming geologist, played by cult folk singer Vladimir Vysotsky, the USSR’s equivalent of Bob Dylan; his wife Valentina who can’t stand her work; and a woman who arrives at her doorstep, his lover, Nina Ruslanova in her first film role.

Valentina is a woman who has everything in life: a husband, a good job, high social status. But this does not fill the void around her. Her husband Maksim is always away, her work in public administration tedious, her apartment empty. When young Nadia appears at her apartment, Valentina mistakes her for a cleaning woman. But Nadia has apparently fallen in love with her husband. Valentina processes Nadia’s presence and Maksim’s absence with a mix of compassion, curiosity and detachment.

While reliant on a conventional love triangle, Brief Encounters shows Muratova’s subtly developing affinity for experiment, using an intricate structure of flashbacks that weave past with present from the rhyming perspectives of both women, and their memories of the remote Maksim. The film is remarkable in how it presents the difficulty of reconciling the demands of career and work for many Soviet women. Brief Encounters—like Larisa Shepitko’s Wings, also a film about a professional woman of independent mind—was met with limited distribution in the USSR, ruffling the feathers of censors. In tracing Valentina’s world, it also offered quotidian descriptions of Soviet provincial life amidst growth and stagnation: Valentina’s job in public works sees her in a constant state of battling Odessa’s perennial water problems. Muratova explores the paradoxes of idealism and defeat, as romanticism comes together with disillusionment, and a passionate tonality shifts to ambivalence.

Although she had made several films in the late 1950s and early 1960s with her then husband Alexandr Muratov, Muratova considered this the real start of her turbulent artistic career. The film was also marked by a rare appearance of the director in her own film. When the lead actress was deemed unsuitable, Muratova took on the part of Valentina. She gives an affecting performance in this poetic, vibrant, deeply melancholic film.

— Elena Gorfinkel
Yevgeniya, a divorced mother, is very devoted to her only son, Sasha. When she lets him vacation with his father, he comes back a changed person and tells her that he does not want to live with her anymore, and wishes to move to Novosibirsk. As a portrait of a woman unravelled, this film forms a diptych with *Brief Encounters*. Both are shot in achingly poetic black-and-white. Both are about the nature of romance, even if it’s a romance between mother and son, which Muratova proposes as a metaphor for any male-female relationship. Finally, both films are astonishing portraits of unconventional women, and the pain of yearning, impulsive, irrational loves.

The *Long Farewell* was Muratova’s most lyrical film, a delicate, heart-breaking portrait of loneliness and unrequited longing, yet was banned for almost twenty years. The Soviet censors thought the film had a “deliberately complicated style”, too much “absorption with formal experiments” and was “lacking in realism and motivation”; in short, untowardly bourgeois and insufficiently optimistic in its portrayal of Yevgeniya. Ian Christie notes that The *Long Farewell*’s “almost unbearable tension is explored in a series of fluid, inventive sequences, which bring visual sophistication with acting and music to match...[that] show Muratova [to be] streets ahead of her (male) contemporaries”. Muratova experimented with editing and her penchant for repetition, describing her iterative process in an interview in 1988:

“...In *The Long Farewell*, the love of editing became a principle. I filmed various scenes several times in order to be able to select the best take, and I used nearly all of that double material. I threw away very little. You will have noticed the many repetitions in the film. This wasn’t planned in advance... Every film has its own life... The material contains one way of editing, one optimal use of all possibilities. That’s what I’m trying to extract.”

Keen to discover new talents, especially actors, many of whom became major stars of Russian cinema, Muratova’s revelation here was Zinaida Sharko, who plays the impulsive and fragile Yevgeniya, turning *The Long Farewell* into a profound exploration of motherhood, attachment, and femininity.

— Elena Gorfinkel
Getting to Know the Big Wide World
Kira Muratova

USSR | 1978 | 75 mins
Russian with English subtitles

Filmmaker in Focus: Kira Muratova

Getting to Know the Big Wide World, the chef d’oeuvre of the young Muratova, transforms a conventional love triangle (two men, one woman, all construction workers) into a vividly elusive poem on the origin and inexplicability of love. Through ordinary ‘Soviet’ characters she reveals expressive individuals, transforming the industrial construction site into a tender scene of unspoken tragedies.

The story of the construction of a tractor factory is filmed in a way that was inconceivable at the time. It was shot at Lenfilm, but again displeased the Soviet censors, which led to another limited release. Muratova chose a scenario written by Grigori Baklanov about construction and the fantasy of a love that “isn’t produced in factories”. She rewrote it, added images, lyrics, expressive caesuras and primitivistic collages, a sophisticated assemblage. Picturesque images merge with lifelike scenes full of dust, mud, paint and cement, larded with intermezzi in folksy and Socialist settings.

Muratova uses a poetic cinematographic idiom to give shape to the shapeless void, the unfinished building and the unstable relationships of the characters, played by Nina Ruslanova, Sergei Popov and Aleksei Zharkov. Speaking in a 1988 interview about the aesthetic potential of the work site, Muratova stated:

“A building site is chaos: a sphere where culture has not yet been created, where there’s no concept of beautiful/not beautiful, where there’s no aesthetic (it remains to be created.) Chaos may seem terrible, but to me it is wonderful, because there are as yet no postulates at all. There’s no style, so stylisation is impossible. I wanted to create a culture, a beauty outside existing canons.”

The film marked a transition in her film style towards what she called dekorativnost (“ornamentalism”), as well as extending her exploration of the theatricality of public speech. The film’s visual form was also distinct due to the use of a different cinematographer than her first two features, Yuri Klimenko, who also worked with filmmakers like Ali Khamraev, Sergei Parajanov and Aleksei German. The unfettered emotionality in this film democratises Muratova’s sophisticated art. Muratova frequently spoke of this work as her own favourite of all her films.

― Elena Gorfinkel
Two friends from Odessa try to compose a video message to their pals, emigrants to the United States. One of them rents his apartment to a devious girl who invents various excuses not to pay the rent. *Letter to America* is an exceptional story about ‘Chekhovian’ characters on the verge of despair who nonetheless manage to enjoy life, even if these joys are beyond good and evil.

Jane Taubman, in her book *Kira Muratova*, writes: “*Letter to America* is a black comedy about the desperate predicament of post-Soviet intellectuals...Muratova’s film is itself a letter to America. One of its not so hidden messages is an ironic self-commentary on Muratova’s own situation, and example of what talent can do even in poverty.”

— Elena Gorfinkel
A distraught widow who has just buried her husband is about to destroy everything and everybody, but mainly herself. An exhausted man tries to find an escape from his daily chaos and routine in perpetual sleep. While their paths don’t really cross, the film implies they both suffer from the titular syndrome—a weakness, enervation, fatigue that is equally concrete and allegorical.

Muratova’s most celebrated film, the epic *The Asthenic Syndrome* was winner of the Silver Bear at the 1990 Berlinale and brought her international acclaim. The film has been called a magnificent fresco and an apocalypse. Muratova created vivid images of desperate characters determined to endure, capturing and divining the state of the USSR on the eve of its collapse. A searing portrait of individual malaise and collective apathy, with polyphonic elements and absurdist tableaus, the film stuns the viewer with shock therapy, destroying every illusion. Muratova (an avowed animal lover) shot documentary footage in a dog pound for one of the film’s most harrowing scenes. The film’s only intertitles inscribe a credo, written as if a jolt of recognition to the spectator: “People don’t like to look at this.”

Constructed like Bach’s *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, *The Asthenic Syndrome*’s metier is dissonance. It’s two parts image a doubling asymmetry. The first part, in black-and-white, a film within a film, recalls the aesthetic of Muratova’s first films. The second, in colour, follows the sleepwalking life of an insignificant writer and literature teacher who suffocates in the dull routine of his mindless environment. Whether they confront the brutality and grotesqueries of their surroundings through aggression or passivity, each character wanders without goal, ‘progress’ eviscerated. Muratova’s grim hyperrealism is full of harsh contrasts, as irony, entropy and rage destabilise any single perspective.

Discussing the film in *Positif* in 1991, Muratova stated: “I could dedicate this film to Tolstoy. This is the key to my film. He says things about the naivety of the intelligentsia who believe culture and art can transform the world... I believe we can only draw attention, provoke, make people think. Try to refine the soul and raise the mental level. But the essence of what is inside cannot be changed. This film is a tragedy consecrated to that fact.” melancholic film.

— Elena Gorfinkel
Love affairs, horse races and male duels unfold at an isolated hippodrome by the sea inhabited by excessive, eccentric characters who strut and pose, fanatically declaim and obsess about their own ‘enthusiasms’. The film’s extravagant monologues were written and performed by the charismatic Renata Litvinova, whose screen presence channels equal parts Marilyn Monroe, Jean Harlow and the loquacious self-possession of a Warholian superstar. Litvinova, a professional screenwriter was discovered by Muratova, immediately becoming a member of her on-screen ‘family’, as well as a cult diva of the new Russian cinema.

*Passions* represented a turning point in Muratova’s filmography, marking the final transition from more or less narrative films to ones where the plot is less important than the form, which is always free-ranging and exploratory. This film is her manifesto on the ‘unbearable emptiness of being’. While Muratova could be compared to Federico Fellini, this the only film in which she both reveals and simultaneously undermines the Felliniesque nature of her cinema.

The film’s cheerily obsessive atmosphere, saturated and resplendent color scheme signalled a new direction and extension of Muratova’s sensibility even further into the pleasures of superficiality and the baroque acrobatics of theatricalised performance. Here she presents a cinematic world that spins out to follow each character’s passions down a rabbit hole of fabulation. In this sense, the film is a microcosm of Muratova’s cinema at its most fundamental—a play space, loosened in this moment by a renewed spirit of post-Soviet possibility. Muratova drew on horseman Boris Dediukhin’s memoir and shot at the Askania-Nova Soviet nature preserve, a location housing diverse creatures.

Nancy Condee, in her book *The Imperial Trace*, considers this film as a model of Muratova’s own “preserve,” her overarching filmic universe of human and nonhuman beings: “Muratova’s preserve functions as a similar imperial spectacle of diversity, a topsy-turvy, ecological imperium akin to the Friendship of the Peoples, wherein ‘each has his own mania’... Her compartmentalized eccentrics inhabit a zany All-Union Agricultural Exhibition, revealing social reality as a kind of Soviet zoo-state... Within this preserve, her most beloved eccentrics are those who, as she does, produce their own private art—most characteristically, bad art with no value other than its psychotropic effect.”

— Elena Gorfinkel
A woman is paid a surprise visit by her long-forgotten classmate, who needs her advice: should he choose a wife or a lover? An outrageously burlesque mise-en-scène is repeated many times over, each in a different setting and performed by new actors. While the viewer doesn’t immediately recognise this, the scenes are screen tests with various actors. Towards the finale, Muratova employs a trick: the black-and-white images are disrupted and the film continues in colour. In the screening room, the producer and a potential investor, a sugar magnate, discuss the material of the uncompleted film. The director has died and there is no money to finish the movie. Muratova asked the big stars of Russian cinema and stage (including Renata Litvinova, Oleg Tabakov and Alla Demidova) as well as the amateur actors from her previous films to collaborate on *Eternal Homecoming*, exploring the possibilities of aesthetic transformations between past and present.

In her filming of the process of casting, she once again uses her cherished device of refrains: the repetition of the same scene over and over, with the same replies in different interiors, a number of actors playing the same part, as the intonations and returns accumulate non-trivial significance, growing ironic and philosophical. Describing her predilection for recurrence, Muratova stated in a 1991 interview: “Repetition, that’s my mania. Haven’t you noticed? Those endless repetitions are from a desire to rhyme, a desire for a kind of refrain.”

Muratova is fascinated by the multi-sidedness of one-sidedness and vice versa, and the small differences in performance, staging and speech, open up whole worlds of variability, scrambling and complicating the seeming simplicity of the spare scenario. All repetitions resound towards difference, even as specific elements and props—an ever-present painting or a ball of string ghost the scene—deepen the infinite malleability of the fiction.

Such a bravura tussle with the fundamentals of narrativity might be a most fitting conclusion to an incomparable cinematic career, emblematic of Muratova’s incisive genius. *Eternal Homecoming* is a wittily recombinant grand finale, one that chances to keep the scene of rehearsal infinitely rolling.

— Elena Gorfinkel
Artist in Profile: Marwa Arsanios

Marwa Arsanios has built a distinctive body of work spanning installation, performance and moving image over the last decade. In her incisive interrogations of gendered labour, non-human ecologies and the histories of collectivism she uses research and collaboration to confound documentary’s formal conventions. Her work has been exhibited in major international exhibitions, and she is the winner of this year’s Georges de Beauregard International Prize at FID Marseille. We are excited to welcome Marwa Arsanios to Berwick, where she will present her moving image work in two screenings programmed by BFMAF Programming Fellow Tendai John Mutambu.

Supported by Goethe-Institut, London

Seminar
From research to writing, through performance and film, this seminar led by BFMAF 2019 Artist in Profile Marwa Arsanios follows the different stages of building a work—from the act of reading and writing to performing a text out loud to an audience and in front of the camera. Arsanios will open up different aspects of her practice focusing on the textual, articulating the tensions that emerge from processes of reading, writing and performing. She will also talk about the different methodologies she uses for her research and how the filmic apparatus is used as a tool for research. How can casting or montage, for example, be used as a way for doing research? While articulating the apparatus itself, what kind of images are created and what labour is put into their creation?

Marwa Arsanios is an artist, filmmaker and researcher with a body of work spanning installation, performance and moving image. Gendered labour, non-human ecologies, collectivism, urbanism and industrialisation are some of the concerns that underpin Arsanios’ incisive reconsiderations of mid-twentieth century politics from a contemporary perspective.

Arsanios has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Skuc Gallery (Ljubljana), theBeirut Art Center, Hammer Museum (Los Angeles), Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art (Rotterdam), Kunsthalle Lissabon (Lisbon) and Art in General (New York). Her work has also been shown in a number of group exhibitions, including Warsaw Biennal, Sharjah Biennal, Guangzhou Biennal, Home Works Forum (Ashkal Alwan, Beirut), Venice Biennale and Istanbul Biennal, among others. Her videos have screened at the Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), Berlinale and CPH:DOX. She was awarded the Georges de Beauregard award at FID Marseille 2019, the Special Prize of the Pinchuk Future Generation Art Prize 2012, and was nominated for the Paulo Cunha e Silva Art Prize and the Han Nefkens Foundation award. Arsanios was also a fellow at Akademie Schloss Solitude (Stuttgart) and Tokyo Wonder Site (Tokyo Arts and Space). She is the co-founder of 98weeks Research Project.

Arsanios received a Master of Fine Art, University of the Arts London in 2007 and was a researcher in the Fine Art Department, Jan Van Eyck Academie (Maastricht, Netherlands) from 2011–12. She is currently a PhD candidate at the Akademie der bildenden Kunst in Vienna.

Filmmography:
“I was given the role after the chosen actress refused it” the narrator in *Have You Ever Killed a Bear or Becoming Jamila* tells us. These are the words of the actor chosen to play Jamila Bouhired—a revolutionary of the Algerian anticolonial struggle. Once an extra, our narrator has now been tasked with embodying Bouhired in an imagined film that is a reenactment of the trial in 1957 for her alleged role in a series of bombings and a reprise of her depiction in Gillo Pontecorvo’s *The Battle of Algiers* (1966), excerpts of which are placed judiciously throughout Arsanios’ twenty-five minute film.

Our new lead informs us the now-replaced actress saw Bouhired as “a criminal and nothing more”; she saw in her character a certain monstrosity that threatened to compromise her own self-image. The revolutionary’s legacy is a catalytic force whose trajectory and impact can be hard to predict. As Marwa Arsanios rightly acknowledges, once enlisted by Gamal Abdel Nasser’s Egyptian government in the 1950s and 1960s as an emblem of anti-imperialism, the power of Bouhired’s image was subsumed into the tendentious machinery of a “patriarchal state project”. 1 “Did the government buy the rights to Jamila’s image when they supplied the Algerian anti-colonial movement with weapons?” 2 This is one of Arsanios’ central queries, expressed with as much scepticism as the project calls for.

By the time the protagonist in *Becoming Jamila* encounters Bouhired on the cover of the Egyptian cultural magazine *Al Hilal*, the potentially “monstrous heroine”—whose political capital had been distilled into the stuff of popular agitprop—already belonged to a lineage of historic women whose names and images have stood sentinel at the revolution’s threshold. Unlike the many other women who graced the cover of *Al Hilal*, mostly models and actresses in graceful poses, Bouhired wielded a gun—pointing her weapon at the reader with formidable brio.

But the image of militancy in Arsanios’ work is hardly stable; it wavers and fluctuates. In the artist’s own words: “There is a fine line here where I want to position myself that precisely admits the ambivalence of feelings when facing such an image.” 3 So we sense a contrast between the militant surety of history’s record and the sheepish stealth of *Becoming Jamila*’s protagonist, the extra-turned-leading woman, as she re-enacts the scene in Pontecorvo’s masterpiece during which a bomb is planted. As the once peripheral figure transforms into a gleaming emblem of revolt, a symbol installed for posterity, she reminds us of Bouhired’s historic acts—now cast as gestures that we are fated to repeat.

With *Amateurs, Stars and Extras*, Arsanios returns to gendered labour and performance as themes. She chips away at bourgeois domesticity’s veneer of civility, unravels the mechanisms of the documentary form alongside the unsung labour of the extra in film and television. In the work’s first few minutes, Arsanios takes us behind the scenes into a script reading of sorts. In 2007, a subtitle tells us, a cohort of Lebanese writers, dancers and architects anonymously penned a manifesto from which the following lines have been excerpted:

1 http://www.vdrome.org/marwa-arsanios-have-you-ever-killed-a-bear-or-becoming-jamila
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
The kitchen will be invaded by leisure, waste of time, and time-killing
The kitchen will be invaded by dance and pleasure
The kitchen will be invaded by dance and laughter
The so-called family, the so-called house, will fall and collapse
Invade the kitchen, waste time, resist labour

“We are concerned with our sisters who have travelled very far to work in houses.” This house-work is, to be sure, without security and without entitlements. In one scene, we are taken to the epicentre of this criminal form of servitude: the kitchen. Lila, a young Filipina house-worker, tells the story of being in Lebanon away from her family. She was once sold the false promise of finding a surrogate family in her employers—in exchange for her time, effort, and loyalty; now, as she laments, she is treated like a “robot”. In one particularly memorable moment, she parodies, with childlike relish, her employer’s cruel and ceaseless demands for her attention.

Against a backdrop of pristine furniture, bric-a-brac and art—the markings of refinement—domesticity’s pageantry of familial bliss is always waiting to be staged. But what we call capitalism today has done more than traffic in images of comfortable and fashionable living across borders; it has, for almost two centuries now, made goods and dispensable labour of people whose freedom must necessarily be curtailed to uphold its rapacious enterprise. In the words of the film’s house-workers—all of them women, none of them white—we must be attentive to a resounding plea for gender, race and class to converge in our politics.

Who is afraid of ideology? is a capacious work in which Arsanios has folded a range of ideas and forms. Among them: footage of interviews and conversations; recorded phone calls; a series of white plant illustrations on black; a book of dried plant samples, which open the film’s second part as an introduction to several plant species and their therapeutic uses; the mundane details of daily life—captured in modest and often-languid ways; and the ecological teachings passed down over centuries and so often pitted against the nation-state’s myopic wastefulness and its brutish tendencies.

But Arsanios reminds us that some have sought to resist this encroaching abuse of power—so she gives a glimpse of the women who have and continue to. We witness them in communion—the artist is sometimes with them on couches and on floors in conversation. The film takes us to the village of Jinwar, Northern Syria, where, as one resident informs us, “all women are welcome”. Here, the single, the widowed, the unmarried—and those escaping feckless husbands, as one seamstress says later in the film—make a home away from the demands of patriarchal union.

Central to the life-project that is Jinwar village is the land. Unsurprisingly, the security approval for land purchases in the area has, historically, been difficult for Kurds to gain. Similarly, the prohibition of cultivating anything but cotton and wheat has been used by the state to impede prosperity amongst the village residents in the hopes of curtail-ing their bargaining power and their rights. Yet we see, in the face of such hostility, a classroom, joyful scenes of play and collaboration, the village seamstress in lively confab. What the community of Jinwar has cultivated is camaraderie with the ecologies around them, a kinship that is itself built on a shared communitarian ethos.

Tendai John Mutambu is a Zimbabwean-born New Zealander currently writing and curating independently in London. He is the 2019 Programming Fellow for Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival.
At a remove from cinema’s and television’s alluring veneer, there exists an exploited class of worker—relegated to the margins or hidden behind the scenes. In *Amateurs, Stars and Extras or The Labor of Love*, Arsanios furnishes us with an inversion of this dynamic in which she casts ‘amateurs’ and ‘extras’ in the roles of central characters. And like them, a group of domestic workers, whose care-work is often rendered invisible, is also brought to the fore to become central to the project. In *Amateurs, Stars and Extras*, migrant workers—most of them women of colour—come to embody something beyond displacement or exploitation as subtle but no less trenchant forms of resisting the performance of labour are proffered.

— Tendai John Mutambu
Have You Ever Killed a Bear or Becoming Jamila
Marwa Arsanios

Lebanon | 2014 | 25 mins
Arabic with English subtitles

Artist in Profile: Marwa Arsanios

---

*Have You Ever Killed a Bear or Becoming Jamila* exposes the labour of performance, namely: the work of portraying a historical subject who became an emblem of resistance. In this portrait of the Algerian freedom fighter Jamila Bouhired, Arsanios brings into play this radical figure’s representation in Gillo Pontecorvo’s 1966 film *The Battle of Algiers* and her assimilation and promotion through the Arab cultural magazine Al-Hilal. From the history of socialist projects in Egypt, anti-colonial wars in Algeria, and their relationship to feminism, *Becoming Jamila* examines the marginalisation of women in the public sphere and how certain historic moments of conflict, like the Algerian war, ushered in exceptions to this age-old form of gendered repression.

— Tendai John Mutambu
Marwa Arsanios’ *Who is afraid of ideology?* focuses on ecology, feminism, social organization, nation-building, war and economic struggle. In its formal construction, the film lays bare some of the documentary form’s devices to create a record of shared living and organising—voiced by those within, and in proximity to, the communities documented. Arsanios presents us with two radical women’s movements and their means of survival as a possible solution to the degradation of the commons and the destruction of the earth.

In the film’s first section, self-governance and knowledge production in Rojava’s autonomous women’s movement provide the two pillars of Arsanios enquiry. Using recorded testimony captured in the mountains of Kurdistan, the filmmaker outlines the movement’s practical concerns, among them: how to consume fish within its biological cycles of production, or when to cut down a tree for survival and when to save it. While filming, Arsanios spent her time in reading groups, meeting with ecological, natural medicine and education teams across various locations in the region, later recording additional conversations remotely by phone and Skype. What emerges is a look into how a group of individuals comes together, as guerrillas, to create a radical movement.

The second half of the film extends Arsanios’ research into a farming cooperative in the Lebanese Bekaa Valley, near the Syrian border. With this new work on Jinwar—a women-only village in the north of Syria—Arsanios documents this Lebanese cooperative and its informal, NGO-like structure, which has become a safe space for Syrian refugee women. Through the artist’s close and detailed study we are shown how land was reappropriated by this autonomous movement after 2011 and how this communal feminist project has, in concert with non-human species, decentralised the top-down, partisan ideologies of the nation-state.

— Tendai John Mutambu

*Q&A with Marwa Arsanios*
Fantastika

Fantastika examines the many innovative ways filmmakers have utilised fairytales, folktales and fables in their work over the past sixty years. Curated by BFMAF Associate Programmer Herb Shellenberger, the series is international in scope, with films ranging between a number of genres and forms including art house cinema, stylistic animation, experimental film, documentary and ethnography. Focusing on films which innovate in the sensual, visual and aural elements of cinema—production and set design, costumes and makeup, cinematography, sound and music—Fantastika is a surprising collection of strange, sensual and stirring films.

Folk Legends (pages 81–83)
This shorts programme looks at filmmakers cinematically adapting folkloric legends from their own cultures. Busójárás is an ethnographic documentary on the Hungarian celebration of Busójárás, in which people dress as horned monsters with carved wooden masks. Nigerien filmmaker Moustapha Alassane’s The Ring of King Koda adapts a Zarma legend in which a king tests the loyalty of a fisherman. Nana Tchitchoua’s Impressions from Rustaveli melds the Georgian medieval poet’s writings with the cinematic language of Sergei Parajanov and Jack Smith.

Busójárás, Anna Raffay & János Lestár, 1959, Hungary | The Ring of King Koda, Moustapha Alassane, 1962, Niger | Impressions from Rustaveli, Nana Tchitchoua, 2001, Georgia/United States

Un rêve plus long que la nuit + Hatsukoi (pages 84–85)
This adults-only screening pairs two erotic fairytales by women artists. Niki de Saint Phalle’s rarely-screened feature Un rêve plus long que la nuit is a fairytale trip through the female erotic psyche. Young Camelia, searching for the meaning of life, death and love, finds herself transported to such unpredictable settings as a dreamlike orgy or a raging battlefield. Mari Terashima’s Hatsukoi is a silent, gestural film of gothic symbolism, a story of first love that never comes true.

Un rêve plus long que la nuit, Niki de Saint Phalle, 1976, France | Hatsukoi, Mari Terashima, 1989, Japan

Celestial Wives of the Meadow Mari, Aleksey Fedorchenko, 2012, Russia (page 86)

When the Cat Comes, Vojtěch Jasný, 1963, Czechoslovakia (page 87)

Fairytale Shorts (pages 88–91)
Fairytales and fables form the fulcrum of these short films. Story of the Hare Who Lost His Spectacles is features a dance around the maypole by animals, twin ballerinas and a hefty heaping of pagan symbolism. Zlatko Bourek’s psychedelic-era animation The Cat is a day-glo adaptation of Aesop’s ‘Venus and the Cat’, in which a man falls in love with a cat-turned-woman. American independent filmmaker Anna Biller handmade costumes, sets, props and music for Fairy Ballet, an adaptation of her theatre production. Chilean papier-mâché animation Strange Creatures is a modern fable for the climate change era, in which forest animals discover humans are the truly strange creatures.

Story of the Hare Who Lost His Spectacles, 1973, United Kingdom | Fairy Ballet, Anna Biller, 1998, United States | The Cat, Zlatko Bourek, 1971, Yugoslavia/Italy | Strange Creatures, Cristóbal Léon & Cristina Sitja, 2019, Chile
Fantastika, this year’s thematic strand of the Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival, is a proposition towards a new categorisation of cinema. It’s not easy to describe it outright, but with these five screenings and eleven films—and through this introductory essay—I hope to sketch out some of its parameters. Because while this series is ostensibly based around works which engage fairytales, folktales and fables through their story and imagery, it’s even more an attempt to define connections beyond that in bringing together films made around the world over the last six decades. By letting them rub against each other to expose the frictions, crossovers and complications that result.

The starting point to this project was Niki de Saint Phalle’s *Un rêve plus long que la nuit* (1976, France). Though I had previously seen Saint Phalle and Peter Whitehead’s *Daddy* (1973)—a bad trip through dark psychedelic trauma—I didn’t realise for many years that she had made a second feature. This past winter, I had the good fortune to witness an exceedingly rare screening of the film at Anthology Film Archives in New York. And what I found was that the film is emphatically a fairytale, but not in the sense of being a familiar old story. Instead, the artist devised her own fairytale, showing the coming of age of Princess Camelia, who encounters strange creatures and unthinkable situations on the road towards adulthood.

Though the concept of fairytale revisionism wasn’t completely new to me, it was an exceedingly rare experience to see a film geared towards adults working out serious ideas while using such predictable, childish devices as dragons, court jesters and battle-field sequences. *Un rêve* fires on all cylinders but is also constantly switching gears: scenes of adolescent idealism give way to tech-dystopia, bawdy pornography, delirious action and art-fried performance sequences. Critic Amy Taubin calls it “a modern surrealist film masterpiece” and it’s truly unlike any film I’ve ever seen or will ever see again.

This memorable experience not only sent me on a quest to screen *Un rêve plus long que la nuit* at this year’s festival, but also to think about films which are doing something really very different in their depiction of fairytale and fantasy, as well as folklore and fable—their siblings. Just as Saint Phalle’s film lacks a genre that it fits into neatly, the research and selection of this series knows no bounds: animation, documentary or music clips; forms of narrative both experimental and traditional; content both adults-only and family-friendly are all on the table.

A good technique became focusing on films which innovate in the sensual, visual and aural elements of cinema. Instead of looking simply for fantastikal masterpieces of

---

1 Since this series has a purposeful focus on internationalism, I will identify each film’s country of production alongside the filmmaker and year of release.

2 Feminist revisions of fairytales have been a particularly fruitful subgenre. Examples include *Rapunzel Let Down Your Hair* (Susan Shapiro, 1978, United Kingdom) and *Oh Rapunzel* (Cecilia Condit, 1996, United States).

cinema—a dubious technique in putting together any thematic series—why not lead with the inquiry of films that feature interesting production and set design, costumes and makeup, sound and music or cinematography? Casting out the net for special films with these priorities in mind was a fruitful method in which to work.

All cultures around the world cherish their own myths, legends, superstitions and fables. For this reason, fairytale, folktale and fable can be found in cinema internationally and throughout history. We see these themes and forms engaged by some of the earliest pioneers like Georges Méliès (French) and Segundo de Chomón (Spanish); high priests of the classic animated fable Lotte Reiniger (German) and Ladislas Starevich (Polish-Russian); surreal avant-gardists Maya Deren (Ukrainian) and Jan Švankmajer (Czech); or folklorists Souleymane Cissé (Malian) and Moustapha Alassane (Beninese-Nigerien). The wealth of material available to filmmakers across cultures is one explanation as to why Sergei Parajanov’s four feature film masterpieces adapted legends and customs from Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan respectively, each country in turn counting him amongst their national cinema heroes.

For this reason, Fantastika was organised to be a panorama of international perspectives, disregarding forms and genres while at the same time being drawn across many years. Each of the eleven films was produced in a different country, and this plurality of voices is intended to stack onto each other, providing compelling evidence of this hard-to-define section of cinema which I was seeking out.

Exclusion became another method through which to define my search for the fantastik. Walt Disney’s Cinderella (1950, United States) was not fit for inclusion, but Michael Pataki’s The Other Cinderella, a 1977 American erotic musical starring Cheryl “Rainbeaux” Smith, was. Whereas Hollywood crud like Oz the Great and Powerful (Sam Raimi, 2013, United States) and Snow White and the Huntsman (Rupert Sanders, 2012, United States) were out, other huge national films like The Cave of the Golden Rose (aka Fantaghirò, Lamberto Bava, 1991, Italy) and Perinbaba (aka The Feather Fairy, Juraj Jakubisko, 1985, Czechoslovakia) fit the bill nicely. Ari Aster’s Midsommer arrived in theatres during the period of research and pleasingly hit the target for what I was searching for.

Out of the mass of films that flashed across my eyes during the period of research for Fantastika, there were many which could have surely been included. Restrictions on duration, budget or format impacted some of the exclusions. Even more common were films with no screenable materials, unknown rightsholders or unreachable contacts. The work of a film programmer is sometimes searching only to come up empty-handed.

With that in mind, it feels like a feat to be able to exhibit such rarelyShown films as Mari Terashima’s experimental fever dream Hatsukoi (1989, Japan), Moustapha Alassane’s Zarma folk legend The Ring of King Koda (1962, Niger) and Nana Tchitchoua’s

---

4 Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors (1965), The Colour of Pomegranates (1969), The Legend of Suram Fortress (1985) and Ashik Kerib (1988) were all produced in the Soviet Union but situated within different national specificities outlined above.
poetic 16mm short Impressions from Rustaveli (2001, Georgia/United States). Some of the films are distributed by the filmmakers themselves, whereas others have been loaned by national film archives, production companies or progressive rock groups. Many thanks to all those who have made this series possible.

In the spirit of highlighting exclusions, a supplemental list of potential Fantastika titles follows. Each film belongs to the canon of fantastik cinema in development, and could have been selected for this series. Perhaps future iterations will combine the selected films with those below.

**Fantastika Plus**

**Princess Nicotine; or, The Smoke Fairy**, J. Stuart Blackton, 1909, United States  
**Elsie & the Brown Bunny**, 1921, United Kingdom  
**Jack’s Dream**, Joseph Cornell, 1938, United States  
**Heaven and Earth Magic**, Harry Smith, 1962, United States  
**El Paramo de Cumanday**, Ray Wittlin & Gabriela Samper, 1965, Colombia  
**Emotion**, Nobuhiko Ôbayashi, 1966, Japan  
**In the Thirteenth Hour of the Night**, Larisa Shepitko, 1969, USSR  
**Donkey Skin**, Jacques Demy, 1970, France  
**Pandora**, Derek May, 1971, Canada  
**Szindbád**, Zoltán Huszárik, 1971, Hungary  
**Bible!**, Wakefield Poole, 1974, United States  
**Angel’s Egg**, Mamoru Oshii, 1975, Japan  
**Harpya**, Raoul Servais, 1979, Belgium  
**Savage Hunt of King Stakh**, Valeri Rubinchik, 1979, USSR  
**Freak Orlando**, Ulrike Ottinger, 1981, Germany  
**Conquest**, Lucio Fulci, 1983, Italy  
**Yeelen**, Souleymane Cissé, 1987, Mali  
**A Tale of the Wind**, Joris Ivens & Marceline Loridan Ivens, 1988, France/China  
**Lost in New York**, Jean Rollin, 1989, France  
**Cheese**, Mika Rottenberg, 2007, United States  
**Finisterrae**, Sergio Caballero, 2010, Spain  
**The Mermaids, or Aiden in Wonderland**, Karrabing Film Collective, 2018, Australia  
**The Marvelous Misadventures of the Stone Lady**, Gabriel Abrantes, 2019, Portugal

*Herb Shellenberger* is a film programmer and writer originally from Philadelphia and based in London. He is Associate Programmer & Publications Editor of Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival, where he has worked since 2016.
Busójárás is an ethnographic documentary on the celebration of Busójárás, a six-day festival in the southern town of Mohács, Hungary held each February to mark the end of Carnival season and the death of winter. Busójárás is a tradition of the Šokci people, a South Slavic ethnic group spanning parts of Croatia, Serbia and Hungary who self-identify as Croats. The celebration’s mythology looks back to the 16th and 17th centuries, when the region was under Ottoman rule. The legend states that the Šokci left the town to avoid Turkish troops, living instead in the swamps and forest. One night, an old man suddenly appeared, telling them to carve scary masks and weapons, and that a knight would arrive to tell them when it was time to storm the troops. Wearing animal pelts and carved wooden masks, armed with pikes and spears, and carrying noise-makers, the Šokci stormed the Turks who ran away in fear.

The film shows what a traditional Busójárás celebration might look like, though it would be misleading to consider it a simple documentary. Though there is no dialogue, staged scenes are developed in a linear fashion, with the hazy outline of a love story threaded throughout the tapestry of a narrative. While the film’s ethnographic and educational function is clearly fulfilled, the filmmakers’ consistently breathtaking cinematography, the mixture of traditional Slavic outfits and fantastical monster costumes, and the interplay between humans and seemingly non-human monsters inject a sense of awe and wonder into what could have been quite standard documentary fare.

— Herb Shellenberger

János Lestár (1931–2011) was a Hungarian film director who lived in Budapest. He studied at Színház- és Filmművészeti Egyetem (University of Theatre and Film Arts) and started working in the late 1950s as an assistant at Budapest Film Studio. His first films were directed co-directed with others like Anna Raffay and Ágoston Kollányi, but his first solo directional effort was Színek és képek (Colors and Images) in 1959. Lestár worked in the Hungarian News and Documentary Film Studio as well as the MAFilm Military Studio, where he made many documentaries on military life and military educational films. Lestár was married to Hungarian actress Szilvia Dallos and received a Béla Balázs Award and a Meritorious Artist of Hungary Award.

Anna Raffay was an ethnographer and ethnographic filmmaker who made work documenting folk customs between 1954–80. She was also the author of several instructional books on amateur filmmaking.

János Lestár filmography:

Anna Raffay filmography:
Busójárások (1959)
The Ring of King Koda
Moustapha Alassane

Niger | 1962 | 24 mins

Moustapha Alassane—a pioneering African filmmaker born in Benin and living in Niger for most of his life—came to cinema with an already-developed flair for storytelling. According to writer Nwachukwu Frank Ukadike, “His extreme talent for drawing and his quest for invention prompted him, before he even knew what cinema was, to organize a one-man exhibition in which he projected his colour drawings for his audience by using transparent cellophane wrappers from cigarette packets.”

The Ring of King Koda, his second film, adapts a folk legend of the Zarma people, predominantly found in Niger. The cruel King Koda, also known as Koda ‘Black Heart’, decides to test the loyalty of a poor village fisherman, the so-called Loi de Dieu (Law of God). He gives Law of God his gold ring, saying that he must keep it for three years. If he keeps the ring, King Koda will cede his kingdom to him; if he loses it, he will be killed. The conniving king summons Law of God’s wife Mina, who he tells to steal the ring and return it to him. Though she betrays her husband, Law of God again finds the ring through a twist of fate, moments before he is summoned by the king.

The film’s action is related entirely through voiceover narration by Alassane himself, and his populist films are satirical and darkly humorous, criticising structures of power and wealth in contemporary Africa. Alassane was the first to make animated films in sub-Saharan Africa, though he elected to animate frogs rather than people, finding them funnier to work with. Alassane’s films are warm, imaginative and fantastical, and their vitality has not faded in the decades since they were made.

Filmography:

Nikolaus Perneczky describes it as “among the earliest attempts to extend oral storytelling traditions practiced among tribal communities... to the medium of film”. Though Alassane’s work took many forms—including diverse forms of narrative, documentary and animation—The Ring of King Koda is an exemplary case of illustrating a folk legend while at the same time keeping the function of the storyteller intact.

— Herb Shellenberger
Impressions from Rustaveli
Nana Tchitchoua

Georgia/United States | 2001 | 14 mins

Fantastika

Impressions from Rustaveli is inspired by the 12th century Georgian poet Shota Rustaveli, whose epic poem The Knight in Panther’s Skin is considered a masterpiece of Georgia’s national literature. The poem is dedicated to King Tamara, the first female ruler of the Kingdom of Georgia at the height of its power in the Middle Ages, and is a chivalric romance which nonetheless emphatically affirms equality between women and men.

Georgian artist Nana Tchitchoua’s film reinvigorates Rustaveli’s writings, infusing them in a film collage with painting, drawing, costume and the performative cinematic language of filmmakers like Sergei Parajanov and Jack Smith. Actors in both traditional and ornamental costume gesture to the camera, frontally posed and holding objects, or otherwise interacting with each other while frame separations, solarisations and other analogue film techniques produce blurry, overlapping, impressionistic images. The filmmaker describes the work as a “glorification of love, beauty, friendship and nobility. It portrays the heroes and heroines whose radiant loveliness is represented in terms of bright celestial light”. A ghastly quality of image emerges, with actors’ bodies haloed with bright light.

What emerges in Tchitchoua’s exotic, Byzantine images is an encounter between Western and Eastern cultures. Impressions from Rustaveli is more than a simple adaptation of a folk legend, the film expresses through image, sound, erotics and emotion what can’t quite be represented by words or painting. The language of the film is light in all its beauty and complication.

— Herb Shellenberger

Nana (Nanunka) Tchitchoua (1978, Tbilisi, Georgia) is a Georgian artist who immigrated to the United States with her family in 1992. She studied at California Institute of the Arts, receiving a BFA in Art and an MFA in Experimental Animation. Tchitchoua is an artist working in media from painting and collage to sculpture and film, all of which draw profoundly on her deeply Georgian soul. It has been her focus and a mission to bring a contemporary perspective on Georgian traditions that have survived cultural transition and upheaval for centuries. Her work is a fusion of ancient archetypes, ethnographic treasures and various cultural icons. Since 2002, Nana has been working as the liaison of the Tula Tea Room at the Museum of Jurassic Technology and the Borzoi Cabinet Theatre. Her work harmonizes with the vision of the Museum’s filmic aspirations of limning the culture and tradition of Georgia for audiences worldwide. She is also an independent curator and an initiator of the artists’ exchange projects at the Gregg Fleshman Studio: The Guest Room Projects. Nanuka returns to Georgia regularly to participate in the lively contemporary art culture, and also curator of the American Pavilion of the FestiNova (Cont. International of Art Festival) in Garkula, Georgia. She shows her work in exhibitions and film festivals including ‘TOMORROWLAND: CalArts in Moving Pictures’, MoMA (New York); ‘Fragments from a Lovers Discourse’, RED/CAT Theater, (Los Angeles); and worldwide in Netherlands, France, China, Spain, Norway, Germany and Russia.

Filmography:
Un rêve plus long que la nuit (A Dream Longer Than the Night) is French-American artist Niki de Saint Phalle’s fairytale trip through the female erotic psyche. Most known for her brightly-coloured monumental sculptures and her series of Tirs assemblage paintings—in which she would shoot at the artwork with a gun—Saint Phalle was also an accomplished filmmaker. Her two feature films form a curious diptych externalising hidden and complex impulses of female sexuality. She upheld her convictions by not only writing and directing, but importantly also playing in front of the camera as well.

Originally titled Camelia and the Dragon, Un rêve begins with an introduction to the young Camelia, who throughout the story will search for the meaning of life, death and love. We follow Camelia through a fairytale dreamland in which she meets a dragon, a beautiful birdman and a black witch who grants her wish to become a grown-up. Princess Camelia is now forced to reckon with the increasingly strange and terrifying World of the Grown-Ups. She discovers several unexpected settings: an absurd metal factory where objects are made only to be destroyed; a perverse Boarding School for Young Ladies; and on a battlefield in an all-out war, replete with phallus cannons and fired by a lecherous general.

The film is a stew of ideas and images bubbling up from Saint Phalle’s creative well. She was aided by many friends, patrons and fellow artists—including her companion Jean Tinguely, whose enormous walk-in statue La Tête serves as a central setting of the film. For all its strangeness, sensuality and wonder, Saint Phalle’s film has been little seen since the 1970s. The magical film provides deeper evidence that fairytale was a central theme across the artist’s work.

— Herb Shellenberger

Photo credit: © Laurent Condominas

Niki de Saint Phalle (1930–2012) was a French-American sculptor, painter and filmmaker, widely regarded as one of the most significant women artists of the 20th century. Beginning as a self-taught artist, Saint Phalle’s progression was hastened along by her encounters with the work of Antonio Gaudi, Willem de Kooning and Marcel Duchamp, elements of which would merge in creating her imaginative and monumental sculptures, her wildly sensual mode of figuration and playful streak of conceptualism. Niki de Saint Phalle made two feature films. Daddy, released in 1973 and co-directed with Peter Whitehead, is a surreal, gothic horror film about a deeply-troubled father-daughter relationship. The sadomasochistic film sees the protagonist (played by Saint Phalle) enacting violent rituals onto her father towards the end of his life, their parent-child roles reversed as he is near death. Un rêve plus long que la nuit is a fairytale pastiche, featuring Saint Phalle’s characteristic sexual aesthetic played out across scenes of fantasy.

Filmography:
Un rêve plus long que la nuit (1976), Daddy (with Peter Whitehead, 1973)
Mari Terashima’s *Hatsukoi* was made in 1989 while she was studying under Japanese experimental filmmaking giant Toshio Matsumoto at the Kyoto University of Art & Design. The haunting film, made without any dialogue, is full of gothic symbolism: candles, tarot cards, thorny red roses and white birds shot in close-up. The faint outline of a narrative follows four characters: a pure young girl in a red dress; the older, mustached gentleman in a wheelchair with whom she lives; a boy in a sailor outfit who gazes towards the girl with loving eyes; and an old woman who spreads tarot cards.

The film’s title, which translates to ‘First Love’, clues us in to the tension which drives the interactions between the characters. The boy looks at the girl from afar with a looking glass, and his voyeuristic perspective becomes the viewer’s as well. The first time we see the girl, the small, white bird is perching on her hand. She is full of idyllic wonder sitting by a lilypad-covered fountain in an old palace square. We come to witness the strange and ambiguous relationship she has with the older man, who we might interpret as a father or older relative. In an especially confounding scene, he lifts the top off of a coffin to discover her sleeping sweetly inside.

From here, the film spins wildly out of control, with acts of violence, masked phantoms and a circle of fire among the increasingly sinister revelations. Terashima crafts a beautiful and tortured world within the space of twenty minutes, and the film would cement her signature avant-garde take on narrative, with gestural performance, costumes, production design and props playing a major role in her personal filmmaking style.

— Herb Shellenberger

**Correspondence translation by Kei Masuda**

**Mari Terashima** started making her art films in the mid-1980s, when she studied under Toshio Matsumoto while at Kyoto University of Art and Design. At first, she was making moving image as part of installations, but from the mid-1990s, she started to focus on producing films. Before the term ‘Gothic Lolita’ was coined as a phrase, she was already pursuing this aesthetic philosophy through her art. In 1991, 8mm film *Midori mushi* (*Green Worm*) won an award at Image Forum Film Festival in Tokyo. Her film *The Polyester Dog of Her Majesty the Queen* was screened at ‘Art Now’ at Hyogo Modern Museum in 1994, as well at International Short Film Festival Oberhausen. Terashima followed this up with *Princess Plum Pudding*, which was screened at Split Film Festival (Croatia), Yamagata Documentary Film Festival and Singapore International Film Festival. Terashima was commissioned to make a film as part by Aichi Arts Center. She produced, *Alice in the Underworld: The Dark Märchen Show!!* (2009) which was screened at International Film Festival Rotterdam.

**Filmography:**

The Meadow Mari are a Finno-Urgic ethnic group living on the left bank of the Volga River in central Russia, sometimes called ‘the last authentic pagans in Europe’. Their religion—Mari Paganism—is based on the worship of the forces of nature, and mass prayers are held in sacred groves at specific times according to the positioning of the Moon and the Sun. Mari were persecuted during the Soviet Union, but their faith has been given official status by the Russian government since the 1990s. However, some native religion believers contend that there is still a trend to Russify Mari culture and religion.

It is against this background that Russian filmmaker Aleksey Fedorchenko—a documenter of folk cultures across the country and region through acclaimed narrative and documentary films—decided to take on the culture of the Meadow Mari. Across twenty-three short chapters, *Celestial Wives of the Meadow Mari* presents a catalogue of Mari fairytales and folklore, depicting in painterly tableaux a culture driven by ritualistic appreciation for female beauty and feminine sexuality. Vibrant colours, breathtaking cinematography and a gentle sensibility strike a harmony between scenes variously tender and grotesque.

The chapters alternate between the everyday and the fantastical. In the first, we see a young woman praying to the Mother of Birth (depicted as a white fir tree) to take away her birthmarks, which she says makes her ugly. In others, we see grotesque creatures from the forest deep or women dancing nude, their bodies possessed by spirits. By the end of *Celestial Wives of the Meadow Mari* we understand the film not as switching between the rote and the unusual, but the everyday and fantasy feeding into and off of each other, each necessary to depict this culture which is so alien from our own.

— Herb Shellenberger
When the Cat Comes
Vojtěch Jasný

Czechoslovakia | 1963 | 100 mins
Czech with English subtitles

When the Cat Comes is one of the more quietly subversive films of the Czechoslovak New Wave, and its visual flair, storybook fantasy and absurd humour make it fun for viewers of all ages. The film won the Cannes Special Jury Prize in 1963 thanks to the winning combination of director Vojtěch Jasný, writer Jiří Brdečka—known for his collaborations with animator Jiří Trnka—and lead actor Jan Werich, writing his own dialogue in the dual role of Comrade Oliva and the Magician.

The film begins with Oliva observing the inhabitants of an ordinary Czech village from on high, establishing the townspeople’s archetypal characters. There’s the village gossip, the unmarried lovers, the greedy innkeepers, the pig-headed schoolmaster, his bumbling henchman and of course the cherubic children. Robert, the students’ kind and generous teacher, is the closest we get to a protagonist.

The narrative kicks in when the Magician’s caravan arrives unexpectedly among great fanfare, and with his beautiful assistant Diana and her tomcat Tabby in tow. During their circus performance, the cat’s sunglasses are removed and all hell breaks loose. Tabby has magical powers, unveiling the true characters of the adult humans around him through their physically changing colours: liars become tinged with purple, the unfaithful turn yellow, thieves turn grey and the love-struck turn red.

This turns the adults’ world upside down, their innermost secrets are on show for everyone to see. Fearing that they may lose their positions of power in light of such transparency, a group of the more dastardly among them take Tabby hostage, covering his head with a sack. The children must race against the clock to save their mascot and stop the adults from taking drastic measures. — Herb Shellenberger

Vojtěch Jasný (1925) is a Czech filmmaker who came to prominence during the Czechoslovak New Wave of filmmaking during the early 1960s. His films When the Cat Comes (1963), The Pipes (1966) and All My Countrymen (1968) remain his most acclaimed work, though these were preceded by inventive feature and short film work throughout the 1950s. Jasný was one of many filmmakers who left the country after the USSR invasion of Czechoslovakia following the Prague Spring of 1968. After working in West Germany, Yugoslavia and Austria, Jasný moved to Brooklyn in the early 1980s and taught filmmaking at Columbia University, the School of Visual Arts and the New York Film Academy.

Filmography:
Story of the Hare Who Lost His Spectacles

United Kingdom | 1973 | 7 mins

Part-pagan ritual, part-fairytale, this dance around the Maypole produced by venerable English progressive rock stalwarts Jethro Tull is a fantastical, psychedelic happening. With music and spoken word taken from the group’s 1973 album *A Passion Play*, the film was made as a visual component of their elaborately-produced tour for the album. As such, it is rarely considered on its own outside of the band’s context, but the short film is an exhilarating and humorous work that touches on many aspects of fairytale and folklore.

The film begins with a forest dance. We see two ballerinas emerge from the wood into a field where a maypole is surrounded by potted plants. One eats a giant apple and streamers come flowing down from the top, while a rushing instrumental track builds. The girls are joined by a number of dancing animals, each weaving around the other in a joyous dance.

The second sequence is the story itself: Tull bassist Jeffrey Hammond serves as the narrator, or rather commentator, relating the story to the camera with a microphone. Dressed in a green Houndstooth suit and with an exaggerated Lancashire accent, our host relates an absurd fable, in which anthropomorphic animals try to help the hare find his missing spectacles. All the while during these first two sections, deft little filmmaking touches keep the clip interesting, especially when the action cuts seamlessly from the outdoors to the painted theatrical stage and back again.

With his spectacles finally recovered, the final sequence is—you guessed it—yet another forest dance. This time, the action moves completely outdoors and at night, our ballerinas and animals carrying torches for the surely impending bonfire. The familiar rushing refrain heard at the beginning returns, with the animals and humans dancing around a strange cupcake fountain. Revelry turns into a mosh pit and the action suddenly stops with an abrupt musical finale.

— Herb Shellenberger
Anna Biller’s short *Fairy Ballet* could perhaps be considered an outlier among the American independent filmmaker’s body of work. Most known for films that take on cult and genre cinemas, upending their conventions to infuse a female gaze and perspective not commonly shown, Biller has been hailed by critics and audiences for her features *Viva* and *The Love Witch*, as well as a body of short filmmaking.

But *Fairy Ballet* emerges from a feature film project that was abandoned and transformed into a stage production. *The White Cat* was a planned feature musical adaptation of French fabulist Madame d’Aulnoy’s *conte de fée* of the same title, in which an enchanted princess is turned into a cat. Realising the project’s outsized ambitions, Biller eventually adapted it for the stage instead. This production, titled *The Lady Cat*, was performed at several underground theatres in Los Angeles to acclaim, and was followed by the short *Fairy Ballet* in which a scene of the unrealised film was shot.

The fragment of *The White Cat* which survives in this film begins with a brief introductory scene of the Prince confessing his love for the White Cat. He pleads for her to change into a woman, or else transform him into a cat. She demurs, instead serving him “the afternoon tea of spring” and suggesting a walk through the garden. There the pair witness the awakening of spring, symbolised through a fantastical musical revue, with flowers, bees, fairies, nymphs, satyrs, Cupid and young lovers all prancing and frolicking around the soundstage.

This seemingly saccharine scene is beset with amorousness and sublimated sexuality. But besides this latent feminist revisioning of traditional forms—in this case the music hall opera—another element of continuity between *Fairy Ballet* and Biller’s larger oeuvre is her careful control over all aspects of the production. She not only writes and directs her films, but also crafts music, costumes, sets and production design herself, creating the worlds which her characters inhabit, and in turn bringing the low culture of populist genre cinema into the realms of the art film.

— Herb Shellenberger
The Cat
Zlatko Bourek

Yugoslavia/Italy | 1971 | 10 mins
Italian with no subtitles

The Cat is an interesting meeting of the Yugoslavian animation studio Zagreb Film and Rome’s Corona Cinematografica, a prominent producer of documentaries, animation and experimental films. The short film was directed by Zlatko Bourek, one of the prized animators in the Zagreb School, a term for a group of Yugoslav animators whose works of social satire and modernist design became internationally recognised from the late 1950s through the 1970s. A day-glo adaptation of Aesop’s ‘Venus and the Cat’, The Cat holds many hallmarks of psychedelic-era art and design: shocking colours, marbled or textured backgrounds and Aubrey Beardsley-esque figures, both nude and clothed.

‘Venus and the Cat’ tells of a man who falls in love with his cat. One version of the fable is written as such:

A Young Man became so fond of his Cat, that he made her his constant companion, and used to declare that if she were a woman he would marry her. Venus, seeing how sincere was his affection, gratified his wishes and changed the Cat into a young and blooming woman. They were accordingly married; but at night, hearing a Mouse in the room, the young bride sprang from the arms of her husband, caught the Mouse, and killed it. Angry at this behaviour, and seeing that under the form of a Woman there was still hidden the nature of a Cat, Venus changed her back again to a Cat.

The fable points to the conclusion that nature exceeds nurture. The Cat follows the story closely but with one special twist: the narration is delivered through song. The Italian libretto was purposefully left unsubtitled, the filmmakers finding the words less important than the mood and emotion of the singer.

— Herb Shellenberger

Zlatko Bourek (1929–2018) was an acclaimed Croatian Jewish animator, screenwriter, cartoonist and expert on Jewish culture. He studied sculpture and painting at the Academy of Dramatic Art, University of Zagreb, graduating in 1955. During his career he made several theater set designs, and his work was shown in many exhibitions, including solo exhibitions in Duisburg, New York, Dubrovnik, Varazdin, Osijek and Zagreb. Along with animators like Dušan Vukotić and Vlado Kristl, Bourek was one of the leading figures of the Zagreb school of animators, who broke through internationally around 1960. Bourek wrote his own screenplays and his films Dancing Songs (1966) and The Cat (1971) are hailed as masterpieces of animation. His themes mostly revolved around folklore, literature, the grotesque and naturalism.

Filmography:
“Nothing could alter the calm of the forest... or so it seemed”. *Strange Creatures* is a beautifully stylistic papier-mâché animation which can be understood as a modern fable. The film is the first collaboration between Cristóbal Léon—who has made a number of successful short and feature films over the past years in collaboration with Joaquín Cociña—and illustrator and animator Cristina Sitja. It is an adaptation of Sitja’s 2014 children’s book of the same title (*Extrañas Criaturas* in Spanish) in which she wanted to talk about the effects of human actions on nature.

The film begins in the idyllic forest, with all the creatures—bears, birds and bunnies—enjoying each other’s company in harmony. Frolicking in the grass or eating communally, they share joyous moments together within the safety and comfort of their environment. Until one day, they return from an outing to find the forest cleared and their home destroyed. They immediately set about to find a solution, cobbling together a new domicile out of waste materials left by the loggers, but this doesn’t weather the elements. It’s only when they truly encounter the *strange creatures* of the film’s title—humans—that a solution begins to take shape. They impress on them the importance of the forest and ecosystem, and convince them they all need to work together to create a solution that works for everyone. *Strange Creatures* is a fairytale story that is ripped from our current realities of climate change and eco-disaster. The film has relevance for viewers of any age, and by centring its story around the animals in the forest, it demonstrates how we need to work together to make the planet a balanced ecosystem for the benefit of all forms of life.

— Herb Shellenberger
Propositions

Part screening, part talk or performance, Propositions provides a discursive setting to dive deep into new cinema. Whether filmmakers expand on their work, demonstrating research and contexts, or curators illuminate new perspectives and complications, Propositions shares discoveries encountered through research and practice.

This year’s slate includes a presentation of Aura Satz’s new body of work around the trope of the siren and sonic obedience and disobedience; curator Steffanie Ling presenting a survey of the 16mm films of Canadian artist and Berwick New Cinema Award winner Julia Feyrer; Holly Argent’s lecture performance based around the Polish artist duo KwieKulik and the term ‘art worker’ in contemporary contexts; and Rabz Lansiquot presenting a dialogue between the works of Black British artists Zinzi Minott and Judah Attille in considering lineages of Black British experimental film.
Aura Satz presents the UK premiere of her film *Preemptive Listening (Part 1: The Fork in the Road)* and discusses her wider research on sonic obedience and disobedience through the trope of the siren. Her project proposes a speculative re-imagining of emergency signals—it posits the siren’s loud glissando wail as a conditioned and learned signal, one that can potentially be productively rewired.

The siren as a sonic signal appears to be undergoing a profound transformation, prompted partly by our increasing alarm fatigue, as well as the near-obsolescence of public sound system broadcasts in an ever-noisier acoustic ecology. The project proposes a speculative re-imagining of emergency signals—it posits the siren’s loud glissando wail as a conditioned and learned signal, one that can potentially be rewired. Sirens are recomposed through voice, electronica, chirps, whistles and bells, a trumpet, a harp, a cello, cracking bamboo, infinitely rising tones and more—from loud and defiant to low, mournful or nearly imperceptible.

*Preemptive Listening (Part 1: The Fork in the Road)*—also shown in the festival as an expanded sound installation—is a work made in partnership with Lebanese trumpet improviser Mazen Kerbaj, who has composed a new siren sound using circular breathing, and actor/activist Khalid Abdalla’s account of the siren as the emblematic sound of resistance, oppression and lost futures during the Arab Spring. Shot on 16mm, the film is literally driven by its soundtrack, as the voice becomes a beacon, mechanically activating emergency rotating lights.

— Aura Satz
Steffanie Ling (Artistic Director, Images Festival) presents *Broken Clocks*, a selectrospective of Vancouver-based artist Julia Feyrer’s 16mm films originally shown as installations. By filming their sculptures as props, and the gallery installation as set, each exhibition seeps into the next, creating the causes and conditions for the next film to germinate. Feyrer’s use of ‘practical film effects’—such as physical objects and non-digital special effects made for the verisimilitude of the camera—fashion a world of techniques and materials designed to mirror our own without the pretext of permanence.

An improvisational lightness permeates this selection. The earliest work, *The Composition Kids*, combines jocular compositions and make-shift assemblages that inhabit the Sicilian countryside. This sensibility punctuates a gardenscape as a season elapses in *Sculpture Garden*, and adds a fluttering material layer to the moving image of a drive through Vancouver’s distinct neighbourhoods in *Escape Scenes*. As Feyrer’s sculptural sensibility is activated in their films, we see movement applied to a growing cast of materials — broken clocks, meter sticks, candy — that we otherwise encounter as resting art objects. In their films *Dailies* and *Irregular Signatures* we see the defaced visage of several time keepers, stripped of most composite numbers, and a number of clock faces that read an accusatory “WHO CARES?” as if to refuse the hegemony of a schedule.

The programme concludes with a preview of footage from Feyrer’s most recent exhibition *Background Actors* for their eponymous film-in-progress.

As Feyrer seizes time-based media to show its mechanism manipulated, clogged and cracked, the reliability of measurement turns unpredictable, winks and does a face plant. — Steffanie Ling

**The Composition Kids** (co-director: Pietro Sammarco), 2008, Canada/Italy, 9 mins

**Irregular Time Signatures**, 2011, Canada, 3 mins

**Dailies**, 2012, Canada, 20 mins

**Sculpture Garden** (co-director: Derya Akay), 2014, Canada, 12 mins

**Escape Scenes**, 2014, Canada, 20 mins

**New Pedestrians**, 2018, Canada/United States, 4 mins

**Background Actors**, 2019, Canada, 4 mins

**Q&A with filmmaker Julia Feyrer**

Co-presented with Images Festival

**Julia Feyrer** (1982, Lkwungen Territory, Canada) is a filmmaker and artist who lives and works on the unceded lands of the Tsleil-Waututh, Skwxwú7mesh and Musqueam. They graduated in 2010 with a Meisterschülerin from the Städelschule in Frankfurt, Germany. Julia is also the co-editor of the audiozine Spoox and author of a half dozen artist books published by Perro Verlag.


**Steffanie Ling** lives, works and writes in Vancouver (unceded territories) and Toronto. She is Artistic Director at Images Festival.
Interleaving the archive (Group Action with KK) is a performative lecture by Holly Argent that brings together a spoken semi-fictive narrative, photographic transparencies on an overhead projector, a live video-feed projection and a screening of a number of films by Polish artist duo KwieKulik (Przemyslaw Kwick and Zofia Kulik). Also known as KK, the duo were making work in Warsaw, Poland between 1971–87. Their political and often ephemeral work attempted to expose their situation as artists working under communist rule in the People’s Republic of Poland.

The lecture performance traverses through subjective readings of KwieKulik’s archive and their various activities that included: earning, creating, dancing, mailing, commentating and archive making amongst many more. Told through a number of mediums—written script, song, film and gestures to camera—the cinema is used as a pedagogical space to share a new narrative around the works of KwieKulik, incorporating Argent’s research trips to Warsaw, historical (and seemingly unrelated) moments of resistance and reflections on the term ‘art worker’ in contemporary economies.

Discovering Zofia Kulik’s first UK solo exhibition was held at Zone Gallery in Newcastle, the performance also incorporates Argent’s research into this event. This work was developed during Holly Argent lives and works in the North East of England. Through a research-based art practice, she brings together various materials, often using archives as a starting point. She leads the project ‘Women Artists of the North East Library’, building a resource that contributes to the history of women artists working in the North East of England, existing as an archive and a rolling programme of events. It has previously been an exhibition and public programme at Workplace Gallery (Gateshead) and will be presented in October 2019 at Art Licks Weekend (London) as ‘Rereading the library’. She has presented work in Projections at Tyneside Cinema, The Everyday Political at CGP, Art Houses in Whitley Bay, Studio is Sudden: with Giles Bailey and CIRCA Projects, ‘Can I be me?’ at The Northern Charter and co-curated “Where Do We Go From Here?” at Ex Libris Gallery. Residencies include Hospitalfield and the British School at Rome.

Hospitalfield Interdisciplinary Residency 2019 for Propositions, the artists’ moving image programme at Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle.

— Holly Argent

KwieKulik films shown in Interleaving the archive (Group Action with KK):

- All Souls’ Day, 1978, 16 mins
- Thingy—Monument to the CULTure of Pot-Boiling, 1979, 5 mins
- Supermarket, 1981, 8 mins
- Poetisation of Pragmatics/Equivalent in Money, 1985, 7 mins

*Fi Dem*, Zinzi Minott, 2018, UK, 6 mins  
*Fi Dem II*, Zinzi Minott, 2019, UK, 9 mins  
Minott produces new additions to *Fi Dem* every Windrush Day as a commitment to the Windrush generation, and a continued investigation of Blackness, diaspora and the heritage of her family.

*Dreaming Rivers*, Judah Attille, 1988, UK, 30 mins  
Attille states that *Dreaming Rivers* “illuminates the spirit of modern families touched by the experience of migration”, weaving together the ambition-fuelled dreams and memories of Caribbean-born Miss T. and her family.

**Q&A with Zinzi Minott**

This programme is supported by the Independent Cinema Office as part of a forthcoming project with LUX celebrating films made in and around the Black British film workshops of the 1980s.

*Dreaming Rivers* photo credit: Christine Parry

---

**Rabz Lansiquot** is a filmmaker, DJ and curator who was a leading member of sorryyoufeeluncomfortable (SYFU), a London-based collective that created intentional spaces for deep study, conversation and multi-disciplinary art-making that relates to race and liberatory politics. With SYFU she has curated screenings, collective readings, performances, workshops and discussions and co-curated exhibitions in the UK and Europe. Her audio-visual work and film theory writing is informed by black liberatory thought, Black queer studies and lived experience, seeking to move beyond representation to liberation in the realm of the moving image. Rabz also works collaboratively alongside Imani Robinson under the name Languid Hands producing artworks and curatorial projects.

**Zinzi Minott** is an artist and dancer whose work focuses on the relationship between dance, bodies and politics. She seeks to complicate the boundaries of dance and the place of black female bodies within the form. Her work explores how dance is perceived through the prisms of race, queer culture, gender and class. She is also interested in the space between dance and other art forms, and—though her practice is driven through dance—the outcomes range from performance and live art to sound, film, dances and object-based work. In 2016–17, she was artist-in-residence at both Tate Modern and Tate Britain. Zinzi has also been an artist in residence at Serpentine Gallery, Rich Mix and Dance Research Space, and is currently a resident artist at Somerset House and Once Dance UK Trailblazer. Zinzi is one of two artists commissioned under ‘CONTINUOUS’, a four-year partnership between BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art (Gateshead) and Siobhan Davies Dance to explore the relationship between contemporary dance and the visual arts.

**Judah Attille** is an independent filmmaker and educator. Attille is best known for her critically acclaimed 16mm film *Dreaming Rivers*. During 2017, *Dreaming Rivers* has screened at Hammer Museum (Los Angeles), Nottingham Contemporary and South London Gallery in retrospective shows featuring art from the 1980s. Judah is currently on a Techne Funded Scholarship undertaking her PhD at the University of the Arts London, entitled: ‘Africandescence: How does a Sankofa aesthetic function in a British black female reading of avant-garde films?’.

---

**Propositions World Festival Premiere (Fi Dem II)**
Essential Cinema

Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival’s pluralist retrospective series provides a fresh look at classic works of cinema or a first view of masterpieces, all too rarely-seen in the UK. Providing a provocation on what works of cinema we might consider ‘essential’, most are screened as UK premieres of new restorations. Essential Cinema 2019 features works from 1980s Philippines and post-’68 Lebanon; a queer revolutionary in France; and the final film of a master Senegalese filmmaker. Together, the programme considers the space between militancy and tenderness—arguing that both are found in different ratios among the works of Marilou Diaz-Abaya, Christian Ghazi, Lionel Soukaz and Djibril Diop Mambéty—and reconciling many different forms in telling stories of everyday heroes.
The episodically connected lives of four college friends unfold throughout the incipient martial law years, as they struggle to define their sexual and professional desires and how best to attain them. An observational drama that does not shy away from topics such as abortion, prostitution, patriarchy, homosexuality, military violence and the repressive social conditioning of collective imaginaries, this understated feminist inquiry into the possibilities of sustaining queer kinships stands out as a singular achievement of woman-centred Philippine cinema.

— Letitia Calin

A promiscuous junkie who falls in love with an activist. An ambitious but mediocre singer. A lawyer still in love with her gay ex-husband. A housewife whose husband treats her as nothing more than a baby factory. Moral follows the fractious lives of these four desperate women in what has not only become one of the watershed films but perhaps one of the first thoroughly feminist statements of Philippine Cinema’s so called Second Golden Age and one that remains resonant to this day.

Moral is the second film in a ‘trilogy’ directed by Marilou Diaz-Abaya, between Brutal (1981) and Of the Flesh (Karnal, 1983), which established her as the foremost female director in the Philippines. She brought a new vision on the difficult condition of women in Filipino society over the years.

— Far East Film Festival, Udine

Marilou Diaz-Abaya (1955–2012) was one of the most popular and acclaimed directors in Philippine cinema history. She was a four-time winner of the Filipino Academy of Movie Arts and Sciences (FAMAS) Best Director Award, and in 2019 posthumously received the FAMAS Lifetime Achievement Award. Diaz-Abaya studied at Loyola Marymount University and the London International Film School before directing her debut feature Chains in 1980. Diaz-Abaya and Lino Brocka were credited with bringing Philippines Cinema to international audiences in the 1980s. She often collaborated with her husband Manolo Abaya who regularly served as director of photography and editor on her films.

Filmography:
Christian Ghazi’s incendiary, avant-garde masterpiece *A Hundred Faces for a Single Day* ends with the send-off, “I don’t care when or how I will die, as long as there are armed men who will continue the march, shaking the earth with their uproar so that the world won’t sleep heavily over the bodies of the laborious, miserable and oppressed men.” Through this fiction-documentary hybrid film, Ghazi forged a strong critique of bourgeois society in Beirut during Lebanon’s Golden Age (which would end in 1975 with a gruelling and protracted civil war). An essay on labour, class, social relations and resistance, Ghazi considered the film his “manifesto on cinema”, a powerful and polemical work that reaches back to the early decades of film experimentation while pioneering radical techniques in multivalent sound, disjunctive montage and an embedded perspectives on direct action.

The Lebanese documentarian’s films were so politically volatile that authorities burned them all. Left with no record of his decades of iconoclastic filmmaking, Ghazi received a surprise when a print of *A Hundred Faces for a Single Day* was found in an archive in Damascus, Syria by Lebanese filmmaker Remi Sabbagh. Sabbagh returned the print to Ghazi on the condition that he make another film. *Coffin of the Memory* premiered at the 2001 Docudays International Film Festival in Beirut, where he was given a lifetime achievement award. Nadi Lekol Nas, an organisation founded to preserve, promote and distribute Lebanese and Arabic cultural production, hopes to locate and restore more of Ghazi’s films in the coming years.

Selected by Artist in Profile Marwa Arsanios, who will introduce the film
Lionel Soukaz: Militant Desire

France | 55 mins
French with English subtitles

Lionel Soukaz is a pivotal figure in European queer cinema: a filmmaker, collaborator with queer theorist Guy Hocquenghem and organiser of the first festivals of Cinémas Différents in France. Combining the pop cultural ironies of Jack Smith and Kenneth Anger with protest cinema, his films target the norms of heterosexual and homosexual culture alike, calling for the end of identity and the free reign of desire. Writer/curator Paul Clinton presents two works by Soukaz with an illustrated lecture.

Royal Opera, 1979, France, 24 mins
The fourth and final section of Soukaz’s feature-length essay on the history of modern homosexuality (Race d‘Ep), Royal Opera finds his collaborator Hocquenghem protagonist of a story taking place in present-day, both in a gay bar and out on the streets of Paris.

IXE, 1980, France, 45 mins
The title of Soukaz’s controversial film IXE could be understood multiply as the French pronunciation of the letter X; the X rating of a pornographic or otherwise objectionable film; or a violent shout: “EEKS!”. IXE is a reaction to Race d’Ep’s censorship in which Soukaz pushes extremes in all directions.

Lionel Soukaz (1953) is one of the pioneers of French queer cinema. His work, especially in the first part of his career, reflects a synthesis of the various avant-garde movements he was drawn to in the 1970s and 80s. Affiliated with the activists and intellectuals of FHAR (the Homosexual Front for Revolutionary Action) and the magazine Gai Pied, such as Guy Hocquenghem and Copi, he was also active within the experimental film scene, working to promote Super-8mm filmmaking at the Festival des Cinémas Différents (Hyères) or Cinémarge (La Rochelle), and ultimately organising his own event in 1978: the first Gay and Lesbian film festival in Paris, Écrans roses et nus bleus. His work was the subject of a major retrospective in New York at Anthology Film Archives in 2016, included in curated screenings by Dirty Looks Los Angeles and a solo exhibition at University of Paris VIII in 2013. In 2018, his work was included in Paul Clinton’s exhibition ‘Forbidden to Forbid’ at Galerie Balice Herlting in Paris; his film collaboration with Guy Hocquenghem Race D’Ep was reissued in French language book form by Editions la Tempête; and his late AIDS films were the subject of a radio programme on France Culture hosted by Elisabeth Lebovici.

Filmography:
Lionel Soukaz and Sexual Liberation Today: An Introduction

Paul Clinton

“Even more than the return of a repressed under the thick cloak of conventions, it is an explosion of desire answering the violence of the social order. Lionel’s cinema repeats and insists, like life.”

— René Scherér 1

‘Militant Desire’ is a project based around the experimental films of French gay liberation pioneer Lionel Soukaz. Rather than merely situating his early filmmaking in its historical context, against the backdrop of sexual liberation movements in 1970s France, this project aims to test the current relevance of his works for intersectional and anti-capitalist queer debates in the present.

Of course, this project is partly motivated by the importance and influence of his films, which have nevertheless been under-recognised. He has worked with key cultural figures such as his friend Guy Hocquenghem (‘the father of queer theory’) with whom he made the films Race d’Ep (1979) and Tino (1985). He also knew or collaborated with philosophers Michel Foucault and René Scherér, the artist Copi, writer Hervé Guibert and many others. Yet it has been almost twenty years since he was the subject of a sustained screening series in the UK, and many of his works have either been untranslated or the English editions were previously only available in 35mm.

But Soukaz’s work also feels particularly timely. His films from the 1970s and 1980s constitute a radical critique of assimilationist politics and anticipate contemporary concerns including the commercial and governmental co-optation of queer culture; discrimination against race and ignorance of cultural different within the gay rights movement (such as whether LGBTQ identities mean the same thing in various contexts); the invisibility of working class people within the queer community; and the class and gender divide within revolutionary politics.

Like Hocquenghem, Soukaz rejects sexual and gender essentialism, seeing identities as socially constructed and of only strategic use in revolutionary politics. Both saw the acceptance of a domesticated and private ‘out’ gay identity as a kind of fake tolerance and a tool for economic exploitation. Towards the end of Race d’Ep we hear the compliant: “tolerance, integration ... give us your money, but fuck between yourselves”. Soukaz’s next film IXE (1980), made in reaction to the censorship of Race d’Ep, targets exactly this pseudo-tolerance, in which sexual minorities are accepted only if they abide by existing family values. IXE includes every obscenity to which the censor might object, a despairing and darkly comic act of self-sabotage, it shows that revolution for Hocquenghem and co was either total or not at all. To be truly liberated the individual, sexual roles, family, state, capitalism and the boundaries between bodies had to be rethought—the question now is whether these still feel like desirable or even viable aims for queer activists, or whether queer can challenge market forces.

The last few years have seen renewed interest in this earlier period of sexual politics. In the past year alone two books by Hocquenghem have been reissued, Verso have published titles from British and American 1970s activists Gay Liberation Front and Gay Left Collective, whilst international conferences including Cruising the Seventies and exhibitions like ‘Art After Stonewall’ at Grey Art Gallery and Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art (New York) have also been staged. But each of these projects have historicised their subject, and failed to situate the art of the period in something like its activist setting. Nor have they sought to test the current usefulness of strategies from that time for sexual politics today. Through its use of the open-discussion format of a film forum, borrowing techniques from consciousness-raising, the previous iteration of ‘Militant Desire’ at Gasworks and LUX (London) provided just such an experiment.

Soukaz’s films invite this more socially engaged approach. As film theorist Richard Dyer has written, the historical development of experimental cinema and sexual liberation were closely entwined, and this is particularly the case for Soukaz whose filmmaking was shaped by his activism. He organised film festivals in Paris for the Groupes de Liberation Homosexuel (Group for Homosexual Liberation), the second of which in 1977 was shut down for obscenity by the Ministry of the Interior and attacked by fascist groups. Just as the debates around Rosa von Praunheim’s first film It is Not the Homosexual Who is Perverse… (1970) are credited with kickstarting gay liberation in Germany, so too Race d’Ep would be a much-discussed document of that movement in France.

Such group discussions, known as forums or consciousness raising (CR) sessions, originating in Maoist and feminist collectives of the 1960s, were later adopted by a range of social movements. These strategies of sharing experiences and relating theory to real life, were essential to the era’s guiding mantra: the personal is political. This principle perhaps took its most extreme form in the GHL’s earlier incarnation the Front Homosexuel d’Action Revolutionaire (Front for Homosexual Revolutionary Action), which had darkrooms for sex at its meetings, all the better to become one collective desiring body, as its member Hocquenghem would theorise.

In fact, Soukaz’s films have sometimes been divided into two types, the more polemic and directly political such as Race d’Ep and Tino, and the more overtly personal including IXE, Maman Que Man (1982) and later Château Andalous (1995), but they are actually always a mixture of the two. Even his most intimate work—such as his 8mm short films, featuring scenes of so-called private acts of shaving, shitting and fucking—would see him classified as too political to belong to his contemporaries, the ‘Écoles du Corps’ (School of the Body) gay filmmakers who also used amateur cameras to document their lives. As the epigraph from René Schérer indicates, the personal is for Soukaz mobilised as a counter to the shame and violence of straight society. But for all his activist commitments, Soukaz’s films express his and Hocquenghem’s ambivalence about gay liberation and identity politics through wry comedy. The final sequence of Race d’Ep, in which bourgeois assimilation is denounced, takes place in the Tuileries Gardens, a famous cruising ground. Influenced by

---

2 Dyer, Richard, Now You See It, 1990, p. 211
3 Ibid.
the use of ironic music and montage in the films of Kenneth Anger and Jack Smith, Soukaz, would similarly employ pop songs or incongruous images to undermine or mockingly emphasise his more polemical scenes. Amidst the onslaught of violent and anti-religious footage in IXE, we hear the sweet sentimental sounds of the Singing Nun, all the better to point out the kindly mask used by the governing powers. While struggles for acceptance during the 1970s and 1980s saw most gay filmmakers produce affirmative images of queer life, Soukaz bucked this trend. To give a positive, perhaps even hygenic image of homosexuality was to moralise and repress.

The ironies that Soukaz so wittily identifies are intrinsic to the the liberation ethos in which he worked, and are amongst the reasons it so quickly fell apart towards the end of the 1970s. How to build collective action without assuming shared identity or shared values? And how to practice the key slogan of Parisian radicalism “It is forbidden to forbid”? As a rule against rules and a prohibition against prohibitions, it’s not exactly a workable ethos. Revolutionary groups of that time—such as the FHAR and GHL—would indeed confront their own internal conflicts and laws. IXE arguably captures this best, in showing that such freedom from restrictions is both powerfully defiant and drastically limiting, since it includes transgressing even those norms and identities to which one might willingly adhere. For all those misgivings, however, Soukaz’s work of that period right through to his current films, adheres to this ideal of total political and erotic emancipation, even as he acknowledges its impossibility.

Paul Clinton is a writer based in London, UK. He was senior editor at frieze and Frieze Masters and is currently Lecturer in Curating at Goldsmiths, University of London. His writing has appeared in frieze, Mousse, Art Review, Art Monthly, London Review of Books, and previous curated projects include: ‘duh? Art & Stupidity’, Focal Point Gallery (Southend); ‘Forbidden to Forbid’, Galerie Balice Hertling & Goswell Road (Paris); ‘Art Cinema’, Kunsthalle Charlottenborg (Copenhagen); ‘Strange Perfume’ and ‘Stupidious’, South London Gallery. His book Other Hunting will be published in 2019 by Ma Bibliotheque.
The Little Girl Who Sold the Sun

Djibril Diop Mambéty

Senegal | 1999 | 45 mins
Wolof with English subtitles

The Little Girl Who Sold the Sun follows Sili, a
girl traversing Dakar’s many obstacles with her
crutches. After starting to work as a newspa-
per vendor, she quickly runs afoul of territorial
boys who see her as a competitor. Djibril Diop
Mambéty’s final film is handled with gentle
lightness and grace, providing incontrovertible
evidence of his place not only as a master of
African cinema, but as a pivotal figure in the
history of cinema.

— Herb Shellenberger

“Cinema was born in Africa, because the
image itself was born in Africa. The instru-
ments, yes, are European, but the creative
necessity and rationale exist in our oral tradi-
tion. As I always tell the children, in order to
make a film, you must only close your eyes and
see the images. Open your eyes, and the film
is there. I want these children to understand
that Africa is a land of images, not only because
images of African masks revolutionized art
throughout the world but as a result, simply and
paradoxically, of oral tradition. Oral tradition is
a tradition of images. What is said is stronger
than what is written; the word addresses itself
to the imagination, not the ear. Imagination
creates the image and the image creates cinema,
so we are in direct lineage as cinema’s parents.”

—Djibril Diop Mambéty in conversation
with Nwachucwu Frank Ukadike,
“Transition 78” n. 2, 1999

With the support of the Institut Français
Kaleidoscope is a beanbag cinema presenting a rolling programme of animated films from Cinekid Festival Amsterdam. Hands-on making activities are led by artists Katie Chappell and Chloe Smith.

**After School Film Club (all welcome)**
*A Town Called Panic*

**High School Screening (Years 12 and 13)**
Fanastika Shorts: Story of the Hare Who Lost His Spectacles, Busójárások, The Cat, The Ring of King Koda, Strange Creatures

**Middle School Screening (Years 7 and 8)**
*When The Cat Comes*

**Lower School Screening (years 3 and 4)**
Shorts for Middle Ones from the Discovery Festival, DCA

Working with Newcastle-based moving image collective Film Bee and experimenting with a sequence of Bernadette Mayer’s surrealist writing exercises, the young people at Berwick Youth Project have created a work around an uncanny computer game character, an existentialist chicken piece from a 20 nugget share box, who has to suffer endless days trapped in a computer game intro that makes no sense. This lo-fi film takes its structure and visual language from the group’s close reading of screencasts of popular video game intros uploaded to Youtube.

The work is available to view on the BFMAF youtube channel.
Festival Programmers & Contributors

Letitia Calin is an artist, curator and researcher working at the intersection of artists moving image film programming, art curation, performance history and material culture studies. In her curatorial work she is predominantly preoccupied with manners of staging that enact a valorisation of feminist and collaborative methodologies, and the possibilities afforded by art to engender different kinds of social relations. Her most recent curatorial project is concerned with the sexual politics of female desire and patriarchal social and emotional reproduction. As part of the Research Department at the V&A Museum, she is researching the material conditions of museum exhibition displays in relation to choreographic and dramaturgical principles of object-relations in theatre and performance. In her spare time, she organises book clubs and free film screenings in community spaces across London as part of the curatorial and publishing platform Ingrid.

Elena Gorfinkel is Senior Lecturer in Film Studies at King’s College London. She is the author of Lewd Looks: American Sexploitation Cinema in the 1960s, and is working on a new book about cinemas of exhaustion. She writes criticism for Sight & Sound, Art Monthly and other publications.

May Adadol Ingawanij is a writer, curator and teacher. Her recent texts include ‘Aesthetics of Potentiality: Nguyen Trinh Thi’s Essay Films’ (2019) and ‘Itinerant Cinematic Practices in and Around Thailand During the Cold War’ (2018). Recent curatorial projects include ‘On Attachments and Unknowns’ (with Erin Gleeson, Phnom Penh, 2017) and ‘Lav Diaz: Jour- neys’ (London, 2017). She is Professor of Cinematic Arts at the University of Westminster and Co-director of the Centre for Research and Education in Arts and Media.

Tendai John Mutambu is a Zimbabwean-born New Zealander currently writing and curating independently in London. His most recent project is a series of five film programmes for LUX and British Council touring internationally from April 2019. Previous projects include ‘Twenty-Two Hours’, London Film Festival Experimenta; ‘Sriwhana Spong: a hook but no fish’ and ‘First as fiction, then as myth’, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery; and ‘The Long Dream of Waking’, Len Lye Centre Cinema. He has written for frieze, Ocula Magazine and the British Film Institute.

Herb Shellenberger is a film programmer and writer originally from Philadelphia and based in London. He has curated screenings at institutions such as Anthology Film Archives, Flaherty Seminar, Irish Film Institute, LUX, New York University and Tate Modern. He is a graduate of the Central Saint Martins/LUX MRes Moving Image programme, has lectured on film and contemporary art at museums, universities and art spaces internationally, and has written for Art-Agenda, Art Monthly, The Brooklyn Rail, LUX and Walker Art Center. In 2019, he has been in residence at Rupert (Vilnius, Lithuania) and curated the series ‘Double Vision: Jean Vigo/Ron Rice’ at Lightbox Film Center (Philadelphia); ‘Radical Sex Education: Sexuality, Pedagogy and Avant-Garde Film’ at Auto Italia South East (London); and Pavilion’s inaugural Artists’ Moving Image Network Screening Weekend (Leeds).

Peter Taylor has been the Director of Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival since January 2015. Previously based in Rotterdam, he was a programmer at International Film Festival Rotterdam (2006-16) and curated over 300 film programmes and performances at WORM, the city’s self-styled Institute for Avant Garde-istic Recreation (2007-15).

Before his role at Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival, Hamish Young worked at the 2017 Venice Biennale in both the German and British Pavilions. Prior to that, he worked at the Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh. Hamish also works as an artist and has exhibited around the UK including Collective (Edinburgh), Inverness Museum & Art Gallery, Royal Scottish Academy and DRAF Studio (London).
SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE: 12 NOV 2019

GLASGOWSHORT.ORG

Glasgow Short Film Festival is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), charity number SC049556.

NUNCA

LA VOZ

PUNTO DE VISTA

PAMPLONA - IBUÑEÑA - 2-7 MARZO 2020
INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL OF NAVARRA
Turner
Northern Exposure
Follow in Turner’s footsteps with a new exhibition that retraces the artist’s 1797 tour across the North of England.

The Granary Gallery
Berwick YHA, Dewar’s Lane, Berwick-upon-Tweed, TD15 1DF
25 May – 13 October 2019
Open Tuesday-Sunday, 11am-4pm
(Closed Monday)
Free Admission

Norham Castle, on the River Tweed. c1822-3. Turner, Joseph Mallord William 1775-1851. Tate. Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856. © Tate, London 2019

www.turnernorthernexposure.co.uk

---

Alchemy
Film and Moving Image Festival

30 April - 4 May 2020
Hawick, Scottish Borders

Submissions Deadline:
15 December 2019

www.alchemyfilmandarts.org.uk
Fire Extinguishers

Northumberland and The Scottish Borders

Fire Extinguisher Suppliers, Installation and Maintenance
Call Now: 01361 884373    Mob: 07967 134006
Thanks

Antipode Sales & Distribution: Evgeniya Chulkova
Arts Council England: Nicholas Baumfield, Lauren Healey, Jane Tarr
Artists Moving Image Northern Ireland: Jacqueline Holt, Michael Hanna
Asia Europe Foundation: Mark Dixon
Ballinger Trust: Mark Stevens
Berwick Academy: Pauline Plenderlieth
Berwick Chamber of Trade: Dave Blackman, John Haswell, Stephen Scott
Berwick Civic Society: Lady Zoreen Hill
Berwick Education Association: Jacqueline Holt, Michael Hanna
Berwick Film Society: Genni Poole, John Spiers, Maurice Ward
Berwick Food & Beer Festival: Maurice and Ruth McNeely
Berwick Literary Festival: Michael Gallico, Flora Moxon, Michael Wright
Berwick Museum and Art Gallery: Jane Miller
Berwick Preservation Trust: Jamie Anderson, Alison Douglas
Berwick Tourist Information Centre: Louise Dixon
Berwick-upon-Tweed Community Development Trust: Julian Lake, Becci Murray
Berwick-upon-Tweed Freemens, Berwick Town Hall: Michael Herriott, Liam Henry
Berwick-upon-Tweed Library
Berwick-upon-Tweed Record Office: Linda Bankier
Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council: Gareth Davies, Julian Smith
Berwick Visual Arts: James Lowther, Val Tobiass
Berwick Voluntary Centre: Fiona Calder
Berwick Youth Project: John Bell, Merrick Thompson
BFI: Laura Glanville, Sarah Jane-Meredith, John McKnight
Botany Studio: Bradley Law, Duncan Russell
The British Academy
British Council: Joanna Duncombe, Gary Thomas
British Council Connections through Culture: Sandy Chi
British Council Scotland: Robert Belford
Canada House: Gabriel Araujo
Cheviot Brewery
Cinekid: Alexander Sommers
Community Foundation: Jon Goodwin, Adam Lopardo, Mark Pierce
CREAM, University of Westminster: May Adadol Ingawanij, Julian Ross
Creative Europe Media Desk UK: Alberto Valverde, Cameron Crosby
The Curfew: Gemma Cook
Czech National Film Archive: Kateřina Fojtová, Julia Davies

Arielle de Saint Phalle
Deutsche Kinemathek: Anke Hahn
Discovery Film Festival: Mike Tait, James Dixon
Dovzhenko Centre: Stan Menzelevskiy, Olga Zhuk
Edwin Thompson: Neal Thompson, Karyn Elkin, Oisin Elkin Taylor
English Heritage: Kathyrn Pride, Sophie Howard
Stuart Fallon
Film Bee: Christo Wallers, Mat Fleming
Film Hub North: Alison Kennedy, Sally Folkard, Roisin Mullins
Filmchief: Dennis Pasveer
Firebreak Fire Securities
Glasgow Short Film Festival: Matt Lloyd
Goethe-Institut: Melanie Bono, Maren Hobein
Emily Grieve
Green Shop: Ross Boston, Tony Hacker
Hadrian Trust: Jane Hall and family
Ann and Michael Hamilton
Hop & Bottle: Ray McRobbie
Hungarian National Film Archive: Tamara Nagy
Images Festival: Steffanie Ling
Independent Cinema Office: Catharine DesForges
Institut Français: Agathe Morisse
International Short Film Festival Oberhausen: Hilké Doering
Jerwood Arts: Harriet Cooper, Kate Danielson, Lilli Geissendorfer, Lauren Houlton, Sarah Gibbon, Jon Opie
The Joicey Trust
LNER: Lorna Stemp, Adam Reid
Locarno International Film Festival: Julian Ross, Stefan Ivančić
The Lookout
Los Otros: Shireen Seno, John Torres, Hilary Lowe
LUX: Ben Cook, Anthony Gartland, Alice Lea, Matt Carter, Maria Palacios Cruz
LUX Scotland: Kitty Anderson, Annie Crabtree, Eve Smith, David Upton
Magdalene Fields Golf club
Maltings Kitchen
Narimane Mari
Martins the Printers: Andrew Hardie, Chris Hardie, Kei Masuda
Monica Menis & Clan McHugh
MUBI: Daniel Kasman, Alex Keegan, Chiara Marañón
Mule on Rouge: Sion Gates, Zoe Long
Museums Northumberland: Rachel Adam, Rowan Brown, Elizabeth Ritson
Nadi Lekol Nas – Lebanon: Naja Al Ashkar
The New Flesh: Georgie Brinkman
We look forward to seeing you next year:

16th Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival
Thursday 10 - Sunday 13 September 2020
Accessible Cinema

Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival strives to be as accessible as possible.

We use a variety of venues around Berwick-upon-Tweed which have various levels of accessibility.

Please see our website for more information on each exhibition venue. If you have any further questions or accessibility requirements please do call the Festival and we will assist with anything we are able to.

Our volunteer exhibition assistants at each venue are able to provide more information on where the closest facilities are located.

Large print versions of our Programme Guide and Exhibition information are available.

Please ask for a copy of the large print Programme Guide at our welcome desk in The Maltings or you can find an accessible version on our website.

Large print exhibition information can be found in each venue.

We welcome Guide dogs, hearing and registered assistance dogs in all our venues.

The Maltings

Disabled parking is available in the public car park in front of the venue and ramped access is located to the far-left of the front entrance where there are power assisted doors.

All floors are accessible by the lift.

Adapted toilet facilities are located on floor -3.

Separate Men’s and Women’s toilet facilities are also available.

The Festival actively supports transgender, non-binary and gender-non conforming visitors and staff in their right to use our facilities without facing discrimination. If you experience behaviour which makes you feel uncomfortable when using our facilities, please let a member of staff know.

Baby changing facilities are located on floor -3 (accessible by lift).

Disabled seating is available in both the Main House and Henry Travers Studio. Please let us know when booking your tickets so we can reserve these spaces.

Infrared Hearing Support System is available - please let us know if you would like to use this when booking your tickets so we can have the headsets readily available.

We accept the CEA Card which enables a registered disabled person to obtain a free cinema ticket for a carer to accompany them to a film.