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EARLY KIAROSTAMI

SEPTEMBER 2 – SEPTEMBER 18



Abbas Kiarostami *THE EXPERIENCE*

Known for single-handedly putting Iran on the map of international cinema, Abbas Kiarostami's filmmaking style was shaped by a variety of Persian arts, especially poetry. Reframing the world and the relationships between individuals through his creative involvement with actors—often amateurs, often children—and showing a keen eye for the beauty of landscapes, he produced philosophical works that reinvigorated the genres of documentary and narrative fiction.

Born in 1940, Kiarostami developed a love of painting at a young age, which led him to enroll in Tehran's University of Fine Arts. During the 1960s he was involved in the film and television industry, both as a director of commercials and as a title designer for films. After the initiation of the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (known as Kanoon), which, as part of its artistic activities, provided funding and facilities for the production of films for or about children, Kiarostami joined the organization and made *The Bread and Alley*, a short film about a boy's fear of a stray dog.

Across three decades of work for Kanoon, Kiarostami refined his style, film by film. The simpler the premise, the more cogent the film: typically, a boy wishes to get from A to B and must overcome obstacles along the way. These didactic plots are underscored by a sense of playfulness, displaying the compositional skill of an accomplished graphic artist, as seen in Kiarostami's finest achievement from this period (and his first feature film), *The Traveler*.

Eventually, Kiarostami broadened his engagement with children and their experiences, exploring their interactions with adults, for instance, as crystallized in *Where is the Friend's House?*. This graceful film, about a boy in search of his classmate's house, not only brought the director fame, but also marked the beginning of his association with Koker, a village in northern Iran. Five years after the production, an earthquake hit the area, leaving 50,000 people dead. Kiarostami took his crew in search of the boy from the first film, but, at a certain point, decided to take one of his famous detours and search for signs of life in the devastated area. In the second part of the trilogy, the majestic *And Life Goes On...*, the director encountered a man preparing to wed despite the human disaster, which became the subject of his third cinematic visit to Koker, *Through the Olive Trees*.

In the mid-1990s, from the Palm d'Or-winning *Taste of Cherry* to the UN-commissioned documentary *ABC Africa*, Kiarostami's films became more somber, their trips bumpier, and the point of focus shifted to the subject of death. Women, long absent in Kiarostami's cinema, were eventually given an unprecedented freedom that their male counterparts lacked, as

All programs curated by Haden Guest unless otherwise noted.

On the cover: Lee Kang-sheng as a monk navigating the city in Tsai Ming-liang's Walker. p. 14.

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(1964 - 2017)

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Vlada Petric
1928 - 2019

in *Ten*, in which a young woman drives her car around Tehran, giving lifts to strangers and engaging in conversations with them—all of whom are women except for one passenger, her son. In *Shirin*, 110 actresses from Iranian cinema (plus Juliette Binoche) are filmed in close-up in a screening room, crying at the film they are all watching, but which we never see.

Kiarostami continued to challenge his own ideas about the relations between men and women in *Certified Copy*. Returning to a theme that he had tackled with less success in the semi-autobiographical *The Report* (1977), *Certified Copy* avoided certainties in its sensitive response to the shifting identities of a couple, played by Binoche and opera baritone William Shimell. The sense of incompleteness (in both the story and the identities of the characters) is borrowed from *Close-up*.

A moving and richly layered masterpiece, *Close-up* is also a demonstration of the futility of any attempt to draw a clear separating line between documentary and fiction. It tells the story of Hossein Sabzian, an idler and cinephile who claims to be the renowned Iranian director Mohsen Makhmalbaf in order to inveigle himself into the home of an unsuspecting family. He is eventually exposed by a journalist and put on trial for fraud. However, his actions bring him face to face with another renowned filmmaker, Kiarostami, who makes a film about him. Eventually, he meets Makhmalbaf in the flesh. A lie becomes reality, but just how much of this reality remains a lie is unknowable.

Kiarostami always stood outside the crowd, returning to his solitude by venturing into photography, poetry and installation. Yet even these temporary departures from filmmaking contained the marks of Kiarostami's cinematic thinking, involving a further contemplation on the mechanisms of looking that Kiarostami had demonstrated since his early films.

As with many filmmakers who carry within themselves experiences of living and working through political upheavals and personal tragedies, Kiarostami found a balance between pure cynicism and deep humanism in his work, as it continually questioned life and cinema. — Ehsan Khoshbakht

Descriptions by Brittany Gravely and Haden Guest unless otherwise noted.

A program of Kiarostami's Late Films will be included in the next HFA calendar.

friday september 2 at 7pm

sunday september 4 at 3pm

WHERE IS THE FRIEND'S HOUSE?

KHANE-YE DOUST KODJAST?

The problem isn't that Kiarostami's films are esoteric, simply that they're different from Western and other Iranian films alike: in the way they're put together (without scripts and, in most cases, without professional actors), in the way they address us, and in what Kiarostami includes and leaves out. *Where Is the Friend's House?*, one of his most popular films in Iran, is a miniature epic about a schoolboy trying to return a classmate's notebook. Like the somewhat related *And Life Goes On...* and *Through the Olive Trees*, both shot in the same section of northern Iran, this is a sustained meditation on singular landscapes and the way ordinary people live in them; an obsessional quest that takes on the contours of a parable; a concentrated inquiry that raises more questions than it answers; and a comic as well as cosmic poem. It's about making discoveries and cherishing what's in the world, including things that we can't understand. — Jonathan Rosenbaum

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami. With Babek Ahmed Poor, Ahmed Ahmed Poor, Khodabakhsh Defaei
Iran 1987, DCP, color, 83 min. Persian with English subtitles

Preceded by

THE BREAD AND ALLEY NAN VA KOUTCHEH

Referring to his first film as "the mother" of all the work that followed, Kiarostami focuses on what would be a common subject: the child's journey. Though this film is not a long one, the path is still filled with significant Kiarostamic traits: dynamically graphic framing, suspenseful ambiguity with tangential distractions, a play with expectation and a mischievous Western soundtrack—which, in this case, includes a jazz variation on the Beatles' "Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da" known for the refrain "Life Goes On."

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami. With Reza Hashemi, Mehdi Shahraanfar
Iran 1970, DCP, b/w, 10 min. No dialogue

**HOW TO MAKE USE OF LEISURE TIME: PAINTING
AZ OGHAT-E FARAGHAT-E KHOD CHEGOUNEH
ESTEFADEH KONIM: RANG-ZANIE**

When I was working for the Center for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults [Kanoon], there was no boss to put pressure on us



Abbas Kiarostami *WHERE IS THE FRIEND'S HOUSE?*

to make a certain type of film. But we noticed that most films then weren't suitable for children, so we decided to make educational films about the social relationships of children. I found a Canadian film catalog containing descriptions of over fourteen hundred educational films, including some by Norman McLaren, and I used that as a starting point for thinking up ideas for films of my own. — AK

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami
Iran 1977, DCP, color, 7 min. Persian with English subtitles

friday september 2 at 9pm

A WEDDING SUIT LEBASSI BARAYE AROSSI

One of the lesser-known gems of Kiarostami's early career, *A Wedding Suit* tells the story of a teenage tailor's apprentice pressured by two boys who want to borrow a suit for an evening. A coming-of-age fable about bad friendship and the social codes of adulthood, *A Wedding Suit* is also an evocative poem to Tehran seen from street level, from the point of view of boys longing to become men.

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami. With Hashem Arkan, Mohammad Fassihi, Reza Hashemi
Iran 1976, DCP, color, 54 min. Persian and Azerbaijani with English subtitles

Preceded by

ORDERLY OR DISORDERLY

BE TARTIB YA BEDOON-E TARTIB

Ostensibly an educational film for children, this short seems to condense everything that is wonderful about Kiarostami's cinema into one comical, philosophical, slightly non-fictional, lightly political—and certainly Tati-esque—offering. In his early graphic, trance-inducing style, he proceeds to make comparisons between each of the title's antonyms under different circumstances—until those circumstances fall beyond the control of either the filmmaker or the police officer at hand.

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami
Iran 1981, DCP, color, 15 min. Persian with English subtitles

sunday september 4 at 7pm

FIRST GRADERS AVALIHA

A precursor to his better-known *Homework*, this film is both more ambivalent and more defined. Kiarostami spends most of the film in the office of Mohammad Dadres, the principal of an elementary school for boys in a low-income Tehran neighborhood. In between segments of Dadres meting out punishment to those who step out of line, he leads the students like soldiers in "the ranks" for calisthenics, announcements and occasional playfulness. With an apparently hidden camera, Kiarostami records the complicated reactions and explanations of the young offenders and Dadres' judgements and lectures. Though his is by no means a cruel reign, it is the relentless accumulation of minor infractions and panicked students coolly documented by Kiarostami that points to larger, more disconcerting issues within the family and society.

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami
Iran 1984, DCP, color, 85 min. Persian with English subtitles

Preceded by

SO CAN I MAN HAM MITOUNAM

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami
Iran 1975, DCP, color, 4 min. Persian with English subtitles

THE COLORS RANGHA

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami
Iran 1976, DCP, color, 16 min. Persian with English subtitles



Abbas Kiarostami A WEDDING SUIT

friday september 9 at 7pm

sunday september 11 at 3pm

AND LIFE GOES ON... AKA *LIFE AND NOTHING MORE* ZENDEGI VA DIGAR HICH

[T]his 1992 masterpiece by Abbas Kiarostami uses nonprofessional actors to restage real events. Accompanied by his little boy, a film director from Tehran drives into the mountainous region of northern Iran, recently devastated by an earthquake that killed more than 50,000 people. He searches through various villages for two child actors who appeared in *Where Is the Friend's House?*, but what we find is more open-ended and mysterious: the resilience and, in some cases, the surprising optimism of people putting their lives back together, the beautiful landscapes, the alternating and overlapping viewpoints of the director and his son. A picaresque narrative with a profound sense of presence and a philosophical sense of the long shot that occasionally calls to mind Tati, this [is a] haunting look at what does and doesn't happen to people confronted by natural disaster.... — *Jonathan Rosenbaum*

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami. With Farhad Kheradmand, Buba Bayour, Hocine Rifahi
Iran 1992, DCP, color, 95 min. Persian with English subtitles

Preceded by

SOLUTION RAH HAL-E YEK

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami
Iran 1978, DCP, color, 11 min. No dialogue

saturday september 10 at 7pm

THE REPORT GOZARESH

Kiarostami's first feature-length film takes on the straight-forward manner of the title in its depiction of a few days in the life of Mahmad, a government worker, his wife—Shohreh Aghdashloo in her debut—and their young child. Kiarostami provides a detailed record of bureaucratic convolusion and tedium, as well as the inefficiency, corruption, alienation and boredom surrounding Mahmad and his colleagues' work. Feeling boxed in in their respective roles, most of the couple's discussions are around money, and momentary happiness is quickly exterminated by various rules and regulations or reactions to them. Mahmad uses deception, denial and transgression to escape; she resorts to more drastic means. Shot just before the Iranian Revolution, *The Report* was censored and lingered unseen for many

years. Despite its dystopian take on modern life, the film remains an unwitting record of a period of secularization and Westernization in Iran that would soon disappear and be replaced by an entirely different set of rules.

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami. With Shohreh Aghdashloo, Kurosh Afsharpanah, Mehdi Montazar
Iran 1977, digital video, color, 110 min. Persian with English subtitles

saturday september 10 at 9pm

THE EXPERIENCE TADJROBEH

Similar to the determined protagonist in *The Traveler*, the orphaned, adolescent and essentially homeless Mamad also has set his mind on an elusive goal made difficult, if not impossible, due to his poverty. Working as an errand boy in a photography studio, Mamad seems to be able to survive a nearly loveless life by engaging in an escapist fantasy world, its center a beautiful girl from a wealthy family. Shooting in beautifully composed black-and-white, Kiarostami adapted a story by Amir Naderi—who also co-scripted the film—without excessive melodrama or even music. The camera focuses on the bare-bones existence of an imaginative boy as he sleeps at work, finds places to bathe, endures constant badgering by the adults around him, and, amazingly, is still inspired to sneak and joke around, even if no one—except the film audience—is there to appreciate it. Socially isolated and misunderstood, Mamad is somewhat shielded by a romantic artist's mind that aids in his resilience and optimism, yet it does not always protect him from the raw injustices of life in the margins.

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami. With Hossein Yarmohammadi, Andre Gavalovich, Parviz Naderi
Iran 1973, DCP, b/w, 60 min. Persian with English subtitles

sunday september 11 at 7pm

sunday september 18 at 3pm

THROUGH THE OLIVE TREES

ZIRE DARAKHATAN ZEYTON

The social status of filmmaking among ordinary people, central to Abbas Kiarostami's wonderful *Close-up* and *And Life Goes On...*, is equally pertinent in this entertaining and sometimes beautiful film. *Through the Olive Trees* concludes a trilogy begun with *Where Is the Friend's House?*, which focused on the adventures of a poor schoolboy in a mountainous region of northern Iran. *And Life Goes On...* fictionally recreated Kiarostami and his son's return to the area, which had recently been devastated by an earthquake, to look for two child actors from



Abbas Kiarostami THROUGH THE OLIVE TREES

the earlier film. *Through the Olive Trees* is a comedy about the making of a film, mostly emphasizing the persistent efforts of a young actor to woo an actress who won't even speak to him. Like Kiarostami's *Taste of Cherry*, all three films strategically elide certain information about the characters, inviting audiences to fill in the blanks and, in this case, yielding a mysteriously beautiful and open-ended conclusion. — *Jonathan Rosenbaum*

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami. With Mohamad Ali Keshavarz, Farhad Kheradmand, Zarifeh Shiva
Iran/France 1994, DCP, color, 103 min. Persian with English subtitles

monday september 12 at 7pm

THE TRAVELER MOSSAFER

Shot in black-and-white, Kiarostami's neorealistic first feature is also considered his first masterpiece. Young Qassem becomes consumed by a single passion: to see a soccer game in Tehran at any cost. Despite his misbehaving and failure at school, this quest exposes how resourceful, smart, adventurous and brave the frustrated little rebel is. As his desperation grows, so do the lengths he goes to find money for his trip—including lying, stealing, suffering painful punishment and, most audaciously, taking money for photo portraits of his classmates using a camera that is actually broken. Despite Hassan's monomaniacal focus, Kiarostami creates deep empathy for and identification with this underdog who follows his dreams, no matter how reckless or ridiculous. Hassan takes definitive action despite the most daunting forces standing in his way, yet even this drive can be waylaid by arbitrary capriciousness or, perhaps, mere exhaustion.

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami. With Masud Zandbegleh, Hassan Darabi, Mostafa Tari
Iran 1974, DCP, b/w, 71 min. Persian with English subtitles



Abbas Kiarostami THE REPORT

Preceded by

BREAKTIME ZANG-E TAFRIH

In only his second film, Kiarostami features one of what would be a long line of protagonists up against the powerful forces of civilization, nature and the self. Young Dara is punished at school and later ostracized among his peers for presumably spontaneous, playful gestures. Through the long hallways, walled streets and elongated shadows of Kiarostami's graphic compositions, the outcast flees. As he wanders, his thoughts and goals are his own. In this early work, the filmmaker's appreciation of the emotional and intellectual power of ambiguity and open-endedness is dynamically countered by his eye for sensitive, miraculous detail.

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami. With Siroos Hassanpoor
Iran 1972, DCP, b/w, 11 min. No dialogue



Abbas Kiarostami THE TRAVELER

friday september 16 at 7pm

FIRST CASE, SECOND CASE GHAZIEH-E SHEKL-E AVAL, GHAZIEH-E SHEKL-E DOU WOM

This banned and rarely seen pseudo-documentary by Kiarostami is a testimony to his seldom-acknowledged political shrewdness and his objective, complex perspective on the tumultuous events of the late 70s in Iran, culminating in the revolution. Remarkably, he achieved this without leaving his comfort zone—the classroom setting—and by staying faithful to his inquiring style, with its subtle, imaginative manipulation of recorded reality. Here, he also introduced the interview format into his body of work, putting his finger on the pulse of Iranian society by collaging conflicting viewpoints.

The premise is incredibly simple, almost a variation on his 1975 short *Two Solutions for One Problem*. A teacher is seen drawing a section of an ear on the blackboard (hence the theme of listening/surveillance). A student bangs his pen on the desk every time the teacher's back is turned to the classroom. The teacher asks the students to name the culprit. They refuse. The teacher expels seven of the pupils, warning them that they will only be allowed back if they name the guilty party. The film is interrupted by Kiarostami showing footage of this incident to the parents of the students and some politicians, artists, writers—even the leaders of Jewish and Christian communities—asking them whether the students should stick together or name the guilty party.

The shoot began shortly before the revolution and continued until its aftermath, giving Kiarostami the idea to include the opinions of some members of



Abbas Kiarostami FIRST CASE, SECOND CASE

the new regime. This brought new depth to the film, turning it into a fresh discourse on the key dilemmas of the Iranian revolution: betrayal or camaraderie; moral values or group integrity; human rights or ideological goals? The fate of the interviewees should tell us how right Kiarostami was in his usual wisdom and profound simplicity, as some of them were soon after imprisoned because of their political ideas, and at least one was executed. — Ehsan Khoshbakht

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami. With Mehdi Azadbakht, Mohammadreza Barati, Hedayat Matin Daftari
Iran 1979, DCP, color, 53 min. Persian with English subtitles

Preceded by

TWO SOLUTIONS FOR ONE PROBLEM DOW RAHEHAL BARAYE YEK MASSALEH

In this irreverent parable about revenge, Kiarostami explores the options two friends have when confronted with a dispute.

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami
Iran 1975, DCP, color, 5 min. English and Persian with English subtitles

friday september 16 at 9pm

HOMEWORK MASHGH-E SHAB

At Martyr Masumi School in Tehran on the heels of the Iran-Iraq War, Kiarostami interviews elementary-aged boys about their homework. In his seemingly straightforward “research through images,” he gradually uncovers the darkness and trauma lurking behind their missing homework assignments: illiterate parents who can't help them; emphasis on rote learning over critical, creative thought; internalization of moral judgements; and the overarching punitive threat that hovers over all of them. Providing both his view and that of the children's—either the sunglassed director or his avuncular cinematographer next to the dark eye of the camera lens—Kiarostami continues with a line of inquiry that ultimately unsettles the innocence and charm of the children, who often smile as they describe their punishments. The investigation of a drama that erupts toward the end of the film elaborates the depth of the problems. The film's critical stance marked the end of his relationship with Kanoon and led to the government banning its screening for three years.

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami
Iran 1989, DCP, color, 86 min. Persian with English subtitles

sunday september 18 at 7pm

FELLOW CITIZEN HAMSHAHRI

Reminiscent of grown-up *First Graders*, a stream of drivers aching to pass through the newly installed traffic-calming zone in central Tehran must plea

their cases to one man: Reza Mansouri, the traffic officer, who quickly attempts to distinguish between truth and fiction while fielding the myriad requests and accompanying stories, only occasionally breaking into a smile. Kiarostami takes advantage of this physical and psychological fulcrum pitting desperate or merely inconvenienced people against one pivotal gatekeeper. Though all of them are somewhat at the mercy of higher forces and bureaucratic systems—and consistently locked in slightly claustrophobic medium-shots—Mansouri has been given the responsibilities of a minor god in this car-centric universe.

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami
Iran 1983, DCP, color, 52 min. Persian with English subtitles

Preceded by

THE CHORUS HAMSARAYAN

Once again, Kiarostami uses the simplest of means to convey multiple dimensions. His protagonist—an old man with a hearing aid—“controls” the film's soundtrack as he tunes out the chaos of the city by pulling his hearing aid out during his stroll through the streets. Initially, the viewer may feel left out, but then this enables an oasis of silence and serenity as the camera settles on his peaceful rituals at home. Outside his window, however, his choice not to hear also has an effect on the plot and a gently waxing suspense. Ultimately, it takes a crowd of schoolgirls to band together and finally influence the action, creating the unique event of the title.

Directed by Abbas Kiarostami. With Yoosef Moghaddam
Iran 1982, DCP, color, 17 min. Persian with English subtitles



Abbas Kiarostami HOMEWORK

LEARNING TO BE HUMAN. THE OPEN-ENDED EDUCATIONAL FILM

SEPTEMBER 5

The late 60s and early 70s were not only a remarkably naturalistic period for feature films and documentaries; the low-budget, less-linear, often dark realism of New Hollywood, cinema verité and the avant-garde also worked its way into the rarefied theater of the classroom. Coinciding with progressive developments in education and psychology, adolescent educational films of the social guidance variety were no longer solely comprised of stagey set-ups with clear, moralistic directives. In the era of feminism, civil rights and the anti-war movement, educational films were also breaking away from the patriarchal narrative with ambiguous, irresolute plots featuring discontented children with complex emotions and contradictory behaviors. This nondidactic openness was meant to spark thought, discussion and presumably, in many cases, intense *feelings* among captive, impressionable audiences.

With funny, half-improvised scenes that alternate between children just being children and children *acting* like they think children would, the realistic quandaries of *The Bike* and *The Lost Puppy* are the gentler entries here, compared to emotional bombshells like *The Boy Who Liked Deer*, one of two educational films directed by Barbara Loden years after her brilliant—and only—feature *Wanda* (1970). *The Boy's* counterpoint of tenderness versus mischief is shockingly ambushed by an anguished ending that probably scarred many an unsuspecting youth (though the rebellious film also makes a point that Jason is indifferent to his teacher's showing the mind-blowing classroom staple *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* [1962]). Featuring a different kind of shock value, the deceptively low-key, psychological puzzle piece *I Walk Away in the Rain* revels in its enigmaticness. Both its surprisingly succinct argument pro non-achievement and the sung refrain of the title will stay with you long after class is over. Equally haunting is the dark, experimental *Silent Snow, Secret Snow*—based on Conrad Aiken's short story. The film enters into astonishingly expressionistic, poetic territory in its dreamy, slightly horrific navigation of a boy's complex inner world. Finally, the most fun and perhaps most loaded, *The Fur Coat Club*, playfully depicts the exciting, creative (and latent sexual) side of children's naughtiness and would never be screened in classrooms today.

Less infamous than the gore and emotional manipulation of driver's ed films and less campy than dated mid-century lessons on topics like hygiene or manners, these films are tucked away in their own strange section of our cinematic library and also, perhaps, in the deeper chambers of many adults' psyches. The faded and scratched marvels of this program are just a few examples of what remains one of cinema's curious, earnest and uniquely beautiful phenomena. — BG

Curated by Brittany Gravely. Special thanks: Liz Coffey and Tim Massett



Gene Kearney SILENT SNOW, SECRET SNOW



Barbara Loden THE BOY WHO LIKED DEER

monday september 5 at 7pm

THE FUR COAT CLUB

Directed by Joan Micklin Silver
US 1973, 16mm, color, 18 min

THE LOST PUPPY

Directed by George H. McQuilkin
US 1970, 16mm, color, 13 min

THE BIKE

Directed by George H. McQuilkin
US 1969, 16mm, color, 13 min

THE BOY WHO LIKED DEER

Directed by Barbara Loden
US 1975, 16mm, color, 18 min

I WALK AWAY IN THE RAIN

Directed by David Gleissman and
Don G. Williams
US 1968, 16mm, color, 11 min

SILENT SNOW, SECRET SNOW

Directed by Gene Kearney
US 1966, 35mm, b/w, 17 min



Joan Micklin Silver THE FUR COAT CLUB

LEANDRO LISTORTI'S HERBARIA

SEPTEMBER 19



Leandro Listorti HERBARIA

As a filmmaker, programmer, projectionist and film archivist, Leandro Listorti (b. 1976) enjoys a unique relationship to film from multiple angles, all of which are evident in his latest film *Herbaria*, which is both meticulous and lyrical, scientific and passionate. Located in Buenos Aires for most of his life, Listorti was a programmer at the prestigious BAFICI Film Festival from 2005 to 2015, is a founding member of ARCA (Archivo Regional de Cine Amateur) and a co-founder of the production company Maravillacine. He currently manages the film archive at the Museo del Cine in Buenos Aires, from which he culled pieces of unfinished films to compose his previous work *The Endless Film* (2018), a work fashioned out of the culture of disappearance in Argentina and its effect on film history. His films have won numerous awards and accolades internationally, and as a film archive and theater, we are especially thrilled to welcome Leandro Listorti to the HFA to screen and discuss the wonderful world of *Herbaria*. — BG

Special thanks: Joana Pimenta, Julie Mallozzi, Cozette Russell—Film Study Center, Harvard.

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS
LEANDRO LISTORTI IN PERSON

monday september 19 at 7pm

HERBARIA

Listorti's experimental documentary ponders the care and preservation of both plants and film. Conceptually pressed together like dried flowers onto grainy images often carrying the residue of photochemical reactions, the two subjects connect and diverge as the film's historical, artistic and scientific layers are placed upon one another with enlightening translucence. Through the magic of film, botanists and film archivists work side by side, in their various laboratories in Argentina or Germany—countries whose histories also intertwine—meticulously and methodically conserving their respective materials. Listorti peppers this mix of archival botanical films and his own documentation with facts and figures ("Since 1750 about 500 species of plants have disappeared from the planet. That is more than twice the number of extinct birds, mammals and amphibians combined," and "close to 80 – 90% of silent films have disappeared... Approximately only 50% of 35mm sound films survive..."), while allowing the wildness and mutations to break through, following tangents that sprout up through the surface cracks. For instance, experimental filmmaker Narcisa Hirsch, who lived in both Germany and Argentina—and is also featured in our *iRebeladas!* program—describes her relationship to the plant world, and another filmmaker buries his film in the soil as part of his process. Likewise, the film lingers on the subjectivity and artistry involved in many scientific processes. Like plant species, film can last a long time, if taken care of, under the proper conditions and in a hospitable environment. Listorti's own patiently paced, careful lyricism posits saving and preserving plants, history, art and culture as the antithesis to the world of commerce and the advancement of homogeneity, enabling biodiversity in all aspects. Organic, delicate, mortal yet resilient, both film archives and endangered plants belong to greater ecosystems that suffer greatly from their disappearance.

Directed by Leandro Listorti
Argentina/Germany 2022, DCP, color and b/w, 83 min. Spanish and German with English subtitles



Leandro Listorti HERBARIA

¡REBELADAS! UNA APROXIMACIÓN AL CINE DE MUJERES EN LATINOAMÉRICA ¡REBELADAS! APPROACHING FEMALE FILMMAKING IN LATIN AMERICA

SEPTEMBER 23 – DECEMBER 2

This series proposes a unique encounter between Latin American women film directors across multiple generations and countries. Here, we meet filmmakers who have broken stereotypes and mandates, having rebelled against established representations of the world, advocating for profound interior societal changes with their transformational works. From their many physical locations, they have revealed unique films that lie at the heart of cinematic practice and have imagined a new Latin American temporality, continually seeking new spaces and forms to call their own inside a profoundly masculine film landscape.

iRebeladas! Una aproximación al cine de mujeres en Latinoamérica attempts to represent one counter-history of the region's cinema, without attending to particular times, places or accents. It instead proposes roads, echoes and bridges that unite times and spaces separating filmmakers. Incomplete and tentative, this series runs an alternative route around an extensive map of artists: women who, in their work, explore genders and territories, question the centers and the periphery, reveal diverse universes and explore all their possible representations. These are audacious artists who have depicted the adversities of their times, who have realized innovative projects at both formal and discursive levels and who conceive of their practice as a political and artistic act, reinventing their own perspectives and engaging in deep dialogue with contemporary life.

The program proposes links between artists across time, beginning with those who were ahead of theirs: firstly, it showcases the work of pioneers such as Sara Gómez, Valeria Sarmiento, Narcisa Hirsch, Amanda Lucía Turquetto, Margot Benacerraf, María Luisa Bemberg, Marie Louise Alemann and Lourdes Portillo. All of these artists fought the reigning machismo within a filmmaking scene dominated by men. Each of them, in addition, navigated massive changes in their local film industries and survived, creating work amidst the tensions of dictatorships and new democracies in many territories across Latin America.

The program also presents works of filmmakers who began their careers at the end of the 1990s and early 2000s, who follow the path forged by their predecessors and depict the immense cultural and social changes of their moment. In response to the emergence of neoliberalism, the films, by directors such as Lucrecia Martel and Paz Encina, have become renown internationally for their incisive reflections on older political and social paradigms.

Finally, the program engages in dialogue with filmmakers born in the 1980s, such as Agustina Comedi, Mercedes Gaviria, Lina Rodríguez, Daniela Delgado Viteri, Camila José Donoso, Manuela de Laborde and Juliana Rojas, whose work has developed in the last two decades and accompanied the birth of new Latin American feminist movements that have achieved new rights: legal, safe and free abortions; marriage equality; laws for gender quotas and equality; and laws protecting people on the basis of their gender identity.

Between the earliest and latest generations of artists in this program, some paradigms have shifted while others have remained stagnant, but all of these artists have questioned, and continued questioning, discourses, narrative and aesthetic forms, production models, systems of representation for women and the prospect of diversity onscreen. They are women who, in different ways, have rebelled historically or are engaged in an ongoing rebellion in their current work, and understand that the cinema can respond in a unique fashion to a multitude of tensions: personal, political, social and intimate. — Cecilia Barrionuevo, translated by Alejandro Eduarte

This event is part of the DRCLAS Thematic Initiative, Remapping Latin American Cinema.

Program curated by Cecilia Barrionuevo. All film descriptions written by Cecilia Barrionuevo and translated by Alejandro Eduarte, unless otherwise noted. Brief biographies of all the filmmakers are on the HFA website.

Special thanks: Marcela Ramos—David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies; Joana Pimenta, Julie Mallozzi, Cozette Russell—Film Study Center.



Marie Louise Alemann AUTOBIOGRÁFICO 2



**DAVID ROCKEFELLER CENTER
FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES**
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

friday september 23 at 7pm

CASA ROSHELL

During a trip to Mexico in 2014, after making *Nao-mi Cambel* (2013), the director Camila José Donoso learned about Club Roshell: a private site founded by the trans artist and activist Roshell Terranova in 2004, populated by men looking for somewhere they can assume an alternative gender role and explore their identity. Over six weeks, the filmmaker visited the club, observing, talking to, and generating dialogue with its members, and finally combining them to make this film, which she describes as a “Trans Fiction.” The film is ultimately fictional, but written using real-life historical context and dialogue fragments, and performed, in many cases, by the club’s community members—in hallways, nooks and crannies and mirrors. The distinctive dialogues that happen in the nighttime privacy of *Casa Roshell* are full of agreements, disagreements and spectacular moments, allowing viewers to realize how the multiplicity of trans experiences, which are on full display in the club, are so infrequently seen elsewhere.

Directed by Camila José Donoso
Mexico/Chile 2017, digital video, color, 71 min. Spanish with English subtitles

Preceded by

COLOR-TAINTED DREAMS

UN SUEÑO COMO DE COLORES

The young Valeria Sarmiento made her first short documentary film amidst the political turmoil of 1970s Chile, opening up new possibilities in the cinematic landscape of the moment, which had been largely focused on the politics of the country’s class struggle. With singular aesthetic and thematic freedom, her ten-minute film focuses on questions of gender and makes the invisible visible, painting an intimate portrait of women strippers in the most famous clubs in Santiago. These women emancipated themselves from situations of domestic violence and worked strenuously to maintain their jobs, longing for their children to have easier professional situations and lives. The film was never released as a result of the 1973 coup, and its raw footage was exiled to France, where it was lost and unedited. In 2021, the negatives were found and restored. Fifty years after its production, viewers can finally ap-

preciate the first work of one of the first major filmmakers in Latin American cinema.

Directed by Valeria Sarmiento
Chile 1972, DCP, color, 10 min. Spanish with English subtitles

PLAYBACK

PLAYBACK. ENSAYO DE UNA DESPEDIDA

When the Argentinian dictatorship ended in the early 1980s, the countercultural scene flourished like never before. In Córdoba, a conservative and Catholic city, drag performers La Delpi, La Colo and la Gallega began the group Las Kalas, which performed their musical cover show every weekend at La Piaf, one of the oldest gay clubs in Argentina. For the LGBT community, there was an idyllic world in the friendly intimacy of La Piaf, but outside of the club’s protective walls, the police continued violently targeting them, and the HIV pandemic was wreaking havoc, proliferating without any available treatments. After using VHS archives in her first feature, *Silence is a Falling Body* (2017), Agustina Comedi continued working with them for this film, combining the artifacts with fictional recreations to innovatively depict communal memory, remember a past that never was, and film a future that could have been different.

Directed by Agustina Comedi
Argentina 2019, DCP, color, 14 min. Spanish with English subtitles

saturday september 24 at 7pm

sunday september 25 at 3pm

ONE WAY OR ANOTHER DE CIERTA MANERA

The first female filmmaker in Cuba, Sara Gómez (1942-1974) was, in her lifetime, also the only female director and one of very few black directors in her country. Growing up in Havana’s Guanabacoa neighborhood, she studied music, literature and Afro-Cuban ethnography. Marginalized Afro-Cuban culture imbued her film work, including her first and only feature which she had almost finished editing just before her death at thirty-one.

Dynamic, reflexive and sincere, this revolutionary hybrid—featuring actors, non-actors reenacting and documentary segments—maneuvers freely between multiple narrators, cinematic techniques and points of view in order to illustrate a complex web of relationships—between men and women, fellow



Agustina Comedi PLAYBACK

workers, students and teachers, children and parents—within the shifting political and socioeconomic framework of post-revolutionary Cuba.

The two main characters, Mario and Yolanda, who come from vastly different backgrounds, set up the film’s central dichotomy. She is a progressive teacher, educated and independent; he is a factory worker who is in ways a traditional man steeped in machismo and patriarchy, but “thinks differently” than his friends, drawn to the freethinking Yolanda and the promises of the collective. Even their individual minds are often pulled in different directions as they navigate the realities within oppressed cultures and all of the vagaries of both the old ways and the new ideals. And the stories may not always add up. The filmmaker even introduces a slight warning before the historical, “factual” sections, keeping her audience alert and on guard. Like the recurrent image of a wrecking ball destroying the old slum housing, *De cierta manera* blasted the way for a new cinema that dared to break away from oppressive systems in both its radical, un-patriarchal form and its chorus of diverse voices—with the understanding that the path to decolonization and social equality will not be smooth or simple. — BG

Directed by Sara Gómez. With Mario Balmaseda, Yolanda Cuéllar, Mario Limonta
Cuba 1977, DCP, b/w, 73 min. Spanish with English subtitles

Preceded by

SUGAR, SALIVA AND STEAM

AZÚCAR Y SALIVA Y VAPOR

Manuela de Laborde has barely left her twenties, yet her singular brand of experimental cinema has already left its mark on the festival circuit, hypnotically rhythmical processes of progressive abstraction rendered in glittering celluloid. From Mexico City, de Laborde studied Art at Edinburgh College of Art and Film and Video at the California Institute of the Arts. As is so often the case in Laborde’s work, it’s hard to determine exactly what we’re seeing in *Azúcar y saliva y vapor*: a jittery cosmic landscape, a dewy vegetation bed, a figure carrying out a familiar task in shadow, fuzzy forms chiming perfectly with the blurry 8mm film. — James Lattimer

Directed by Manuela de Laborde
Mexico 2020, DCP, color, 15 min. No dialogue

SHORTCUTS

Daniela Delgado Viteri’s film delves into the imagined ways in which people can retain a sense of individualism and self-empowerment within colonial-



Sara Gómez ONE WAY OR ANOTHER

based, hegemonic governmental systems. Utilizing footage collected in Ecuador and Peru since 2011, Viteri develops her perspectives to demonstrate alternative acts of resistance against corruption rooted in the everyday. — AV

Directed by Daniela Delgado Viteri
Ecuador 2019, DCP, color, 18 min. Spanish with English subtitles

saturday september 24 at 9pm

ARAYA

Released in 1959 and directed by Margot Benacerraf, who would go on to found the Cinemateca Nacional in Venezuela, *Araya* is a breathtaking and intimate documentary portrayal of the self-sacrificing souls who inhabit the Araya Peninsula of Venezuela, toiling from day to night and night to day. Following several characters who work monotonous, drudging patterns on the peninsula in order to survive its harsh terrain, Benacerraf calls attention to the archaic and inhumane methods of manual labor that the Spanish monarchy instilled on their colonized land centuries before. The Araya Peninsula is barren, and survival is dependent on the natural salt mines and fishing in the Caribbean Sea. From birth until death, all of Araya's inhabitants dedicate their existences to these means of subsistence on land where nothing grows. The film culminates in the appearance of industrial machinery, representing an end to the brutal conditions of manual labor on the peninsula, yet introducing a new calamity: How will the manual laborers now make a living on land that has nothing else to provide? With the arrival of modernization to the peninsula, *Araya* serves as a bittersweet time capsule that preserves a way of life and ancient traditions that existed for centuries and would soon become extinct. The scintillating images of the salted terrain and sun reflections on the seawater provide the film with a beauty that works in tension with the trodden and dedicated characters who pass through the frames. This striking work of poetic realism is one of only two films directed by Benacerraf, and following its premiere at Cannes in 1959, *Araya* virtually disappeared for decades. — AV

Directed by Margot Benacerraf
Venezuela/France 1959, 35mm, b/w, 90 min. Spanish with English subtitles

Preceded by

BEFORE MY EYES ANTE MIS OJOS

The physical sites of our world hold countless layers of history. In some places, we can immediately see them, and in others, the traces of the past lie just outside our field of view. Following her feature films *Señoritas* (2013) and *This Time Tomorrow* (2016), Lina Rodríguez reunited with her sound designer to examine a familiar place: the area surrounding Lake Guatavita, which inspired the legend of El Dorado. The filmmaker's cinematic eye sweeps over this sacred landscape, normally filled with tourists—capturing the intensity of the light, the textures of the mountains, the profound scope of the landscape, the movement of the wind and the flow of the water. Filmed using a Samsung S8 smartphone camera and firmly rooted in the contemporary moment, Rodríguez' short reframes this disturbing place, allowing us to consider how the natural world redefines our sense of history.

Directed by Lina Rodríguez
Colombia/Canada 2018, DCP, color, 7 min. Spanish with English subtitles



Margot Benacerraf ARAYA

PLAYA GRANDE

This is one of the four films produced by the Instituto Cinematográfico del Estado in the 1940s under the premise of showing different regions of Argentina through visually plastic and formally sophisticated films. Amanda Lucía Turquetto, a graphic designer close to the concrète movement, directed at least two of these, *Vendimia* and *Playa Grande*, the latter together with the artist Héctor Bernabó (alias Carybé). The awakening of the beachtown refers at some point to the beginning of *Man with a Movie Camera*, but then certain shots bring the film closer to the Nice described by Jean Vigo—although without irony. Other times, the fascination with water is reminiscent of Ralph Sterne's *H2O*. It is possible that these films were on the minds of the directors, but beyond these references appears a beautiful description of women, one that drives them away from the cliché of the mother to which almost all Argentine cinema had destined them; instead we see delicate Amazons who have taken over the beach as if it were a space to which only they deserve access.

— Andrés Levinson

Directed by Amanda Lucía Turquetto and Héctor Bernabó
Argentina 1943, DCP, b/w, 13 min. No dialogue



Lourdes Portillo THE DEVIL NEVER SLEEPS

sunday september 25 at 7pm

THE DEVIL NEVER SLEEPS

EL DIABLO NUNCA DUERME

A documentary which is, above all, a familial, tragicomic melodrama, breaks the conventions of realist cinema and works in the tradition of the Latin American telenovela, depicting the crises that befell the family of the director. The inciting incident is a telephone call informing Lourdes Portillo that her uncle Oscar Ruiz Almeida has been killed by a bullet to the head. Her aunt says it was suicide, others say it was an assassination. Lourdes listens intently to all the gossip and undertakes her own investigation. While she hunts for clues, her family's secrets are slowly unveiled, and the history of Mexico emerges. "Each devil has their devil," says the director. With a forty-year-long career and more than a dozen films, she approaches regional problems of social, political and cultural justice with an intensely personal commitment and style—revealing that making films can be a powerful light against forces of injustice.

Directed by Lourdes Portillo
Mexico/US 1994, DCP, color, 87 min. Spanish and English with English subtitles

Preceded by

EAVESDROPPER OTACUSTAS

Eavesdropper is a film packed with silences and sounds. The outside world emerges to separate the public from the intimate. Secrets are only suggested, and speaking voices utter truths that remain unfinished but clearly understood. Following *The Calm After the Storm* (2020), the young Colombian director and sound designer Mercedes Gaviria Jaramillo enters the vast world of sound in this essay-film. She recounts, "Recently I read Pauline Oliveros' book *Deep Listening*, where she says that silence is the space between two sounds. Silence means we are unable to hear any sound at all." In *Eavesdropper*, the filmmaker reveals that flowers are akin to stealthy witnesses (or spies), and that they can hear human voices and have access to our lives; this major revelation not only stuns us into silence, but also acknowledges the many silent voices we hear in inanimate forms, such as paintings.

Directed by Mercedes Gaviria Jaramillo
Colombia 2020, DCP, color, 10 min. Spanish with English subtitles



Narcisa Hirsch SELF DEFENSE

sunday october 2 at 7pm

GOOD MANNERS AS BOAS MANEIRAS

Juliana Rojas and Marco Dutra met in college and bonded over, among other things, their love of diverse genres of cinema. *Good Manners*, their second feature together after *Hard Labor* (2011), is a terrifying melodrama with science fiction, political and musical elements, its concept originating in a dream Marco had of two women living in an isolated house, breeding a phantom baby. A loose version of a werewolf myth, the film is rife with the sensibility of *Tourneur*, set within an extraordinary futuristic city and the scenery of São Paulo. Ana is an upper-class Latin American woman, pregnant, alone and ostracized by her family, and Clara is a nurse, hired by Ana for around-the-clock medical assistance. Ana is white, Clara is Black. Ana lives in the center, Clara in the periphery. As the film progresses, the dualities between these women multiply, doors open and tensions fester. The full moon kickstarts dramatic transformations that subvert established societal orders. *Good Manners*, full of allegories about the nature of gender, is a terrifying urban fable, with precise political and social critiques.

Directed by Marco Dutra and Juliana Rojas. With Isabél Zuaa, Marjorie Estiano, Miguel Lobo
Brazil/France/Germany 2017, DCP, color, 135 min. Portuguese with English subtitles

Preceded by

TOYS JUGUETES

"What will you do when you grow up?" The question motivates this short film, which was directed by María Luisa Bemberg in Argentina after the 1976 coup, during the country's incipient dictatorship. Seventy girls and boys, between nine and ten years old, are asked this question while visiting the toy exhibition at the Rural Fair of Buenos Aires. The girls answer, "nurses and teachers." The boys answer, "engineers, lawyers, ship captains and doctors." Bemberg said about this film in an interview, "The girls think about getting married, and in many cases they choose careers which are poorly paid—those of teacher and nurse. Not doctors or professors, [they choose to be] stewardesses but not aviators." Accompanied by the cinematography of Chango Monti, Bemberg observes and demonstrates the toys the children are offered at the fair, which provide a window into

cultural conditioning, the restrictions placed on their education and creativity, systemic discrimination and the ways they internalize their lack of autonomy. *Toys* is a rigorous, arresting testimony on traditional gender roles still present today.

Directed by María Luisa Bemberg
Argentina 1978, DCP, b/w, 12 min. Spanish with English subtitles

sunday october 16 at 7pm

MAGNIFICATIONS: NARCISA HIRSCH + MARIE LOUISE ALEMANN

A pivotal figure in Latin American experimental cinema, Narcisa Hirsch (b. 1928) took up artistic practice by first focusing on painting and sculptural objects, then shifting toward public performances and, by the late 1960s, moving into filmmaking. Born in 1928 in Germany and residing in Argentina since her early childhood, Hirsch exemplifies a type of cosmopolitan, émigré artist whose freedom of mobility shaped the subjects and themes of her work. Reflecting, in part, the influence of the art and cinema of the sixties on her practice, Hirsch's films showcase sensorial and corporeal experience across different local and international sites, and at times acknowledge directly her particular gendered perspective. The films also combine the filmmaker's own treatment of existential and spiritual questions with lyrical imagery, much of it shot in the interior spaces of Hirsch's domestic life, the rural landscapes of Patagonia and the urban environments of Buenos Aires.

Born and raised in Germany, Marie Louise Alemann (1927-2015) left Europe in the late 1940s for Argentina. She began her filmmaking practice in the late 1960s, after studying photography in New York and during an intensive period of collaborative performance undertaken with Hirsch and their friend Walther Mejia. Because Alemann was often an onscreen performer, she relied at times on Hirsch, Claudio Caldini and other filmmakers to operate her Super 8 camera. Yet all of her films display a consistent set of visual and thematic concerns. One key feature that distinguishes her cinema is her unique exploration of the filmed performer as a physical presence. Alemann typically presented herself and others in staged and improvised scenarios, populating urban and rural spaces with odd, menacing, or humorous costumes and props (often masking the face), and framing them within visual compositions that ranged from the baroque to the minimalistic. Her longstanding exploration of the camera's ability to capture and transform the body and the face was motivated by the questions she was posing about



Marie Louise Alemann THRESHOLDS



Narcisa Hirsch MARABUNTA

cinema and subjective identity. Her work often asks which aspects of personhood can be hidden and revealed through the visual representation of masks, faces and moving bodies.

Beginning in 1974, both Hirsch and Alemann were instrumental in promoting experimental cinema at the Goethe Institute in dictatorship-era Buenos Aires. Initially under the direction of Ute Kirchelle, the Goethe Institute screened recent work by experimental filmmakers from various countries, gave away Super 8 film, organized film competitions with awards and offered workshops by filmmakers for those interested in making experimental films. Most active as a series of screenings and discussions held between 1974 and 1979, this activity continued throughout the country's most repressive dictatorship. — Federico Windhausen

MARABUNTA

Directed by Narcisa Hirsch
Argentina 1967, DCP, b/w, 8 min

TABLE SCENES ESCENAS DE MESA

Directed by Marie Louise Alemann
Argentina 1979, DCP, color, 7 min

DIARIOS PATAGÓNICOS

Directed by Narcisa Hirsch
Argentina 1972, DCP, color, silent, 11 min

AUTOBIOGRÁFICO 2

Directed by Marie Louise Alemann
Argentina 1974, DCP, color, silent, 5 min

TALLER

Directed by Narcisa Hirsch
Argentina 1974, DCP, color, 11 min. English version

COME OUT

Directed by Narcisa Hirsch
Argentina, 1974, DCP, color, 11 min. No dialogue

SELF DEFENSE LEGÍTIMA DEFENSA

Directed by Marie Louise Alemann
Argentina 1980, DCP, color, 8 min

THRESHOLDS UMBRALES

Directed by Marie Louise Alemann
Argentina 1980, DCP, color, 19 min

The Harvard Film Archive is pleased to welcome back Paz Encina, now as a 2022-23 Radcliffe/Film Study Center Fellow. Encina will be joined in conversation with AFVS Visiting Professor in Film, Dominga Sotomayor, David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies Visiting Scholar Cecilia Barrionuevo and HFA Director Haden Guest.



Paz Encina *EAMI*

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS
PAZ ENCINA IN PERSON

friday december 2 at 7pm

EAMI

Paz Encina (b. 1970) has created a series of spellbinding and visually striking films, all set in her native Paraguay and powerfully meditating on memory, history and the passage of different levels of time—personal, historic, natural. Encina's latest film *EAMI* is a moving and sensitive portrait of the indigenous Ayoreo Totobiegosode people, among the last tribes living in isolation in the Amazon but now threatened by rampant and illegal deforestation of their ancestral lands. Told from the point of view of the eponymous hero, a young boy who is perhaps also the incarnation of a bird-god, *EAMI* embraces the style and structure of indigenous storytelling, with the boy's incantatory narrative intertwined with other tribal voices and perspectives. By blending lyrical ethnography and mythopoetic narrative, Encina crafts a richly textured immersion into the Ayoreo Totobiegosode imagination that never attempts to explain or render their culture fully accessible, but instead seeks to give it intimate voice and dignity. Winner of the prestigious Tiger Award at the 2022 Rotterdam International Film Festival, *EAMI* is an exemplary work of compassionate cinema. – HG

Directed by Paz Encina. With Anel Picanerai, Curia Chiquejño Etacoro, Ducubaide Chiquenoi
Paraguay/Argentina/Mexico/Germany/Netherlands/France/US 2022, DCP, color, 75 min. Ayoreo, Guaraní and Spanish with English subtitles

DISCOVERING GEORGIAN CINEMA—THE SILENT ERA

SEPTEMBER 26 – OCTOBER 24

Whenever Georgian cinema is mentioned, even a seasoned film buff will most likely think of towering auteurs from the 1950s through the 1980s—Otar Iosseliani, Giorgi Shengelaia or Tengiz Abuladze. No doubt, these directors, with their unique combination of visual poetry and insightful reflection on things human and social (think of Abuladze's anti-Stalinist *Repentance* that shook the Soviet Union in 1987; perhaps no less than ten days in October 1917 are said to have shaken the world) more than deserve their renown (and, let us hope, a separate retrospective here at the Harvard Film Archive). Yet, as tends to happen with many a historical myth, by foregrounding an individual epoch we risk reducing the ones that preceded and followed it to mere before and after, a dim antechamber and bleak postscript to the "Golden Age."

The history of Georgian cinema is a case in point. We ought to be wary of singling out the post-war Georgian auteurs at the expense of Georgian silent film legacy or the cinema of independent Georgia (1991 till now). This mini-retrospective is our humble tribute to the former. Silent cinema in Georgia saw three political regimes. It goes back to the last years of the country still being a province of the Russian Empire (1801 to 1917); filmmaking continued during the three years of independent Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918 to its annexation by Soviet Russia in 1921), and then went on into the twenties and thirties when Georgia became a part of the USSR.

With the whole of the Soviet Union its primary market, Georgian films stood out immediately. *Little Red Devils*, arguably the most popular film of the Soviet twenties, was made in Georgia in 1923. With its legendary ancient culture and gorgeously picturesque nature, Georgian filmmakers had literally a lot to show to the viewers. That certainly helped (from our selection, *Eliso* and *Salt for Svanetia* are especially breathtaking in this regard), but it is hardly a sufficient explanation. In addition, Georgia's cultural diversity was a bottomless resource for filmmakers to exploit: from indigenous mountaineers, rural winemakers and traditional local military to urban proletariat, folk artisans and highly educated intelligentsia, and encompassing Christian, Muslim and pagan beliefs and rituals, Georgia, then a nation of less than three million, had it all.

Complementary to Georgia's ancients was a powerful Georgian avant-garde movement in different arts, from poetry to sculpture, that in the 1910s and early 20s nurtured future Georgian filmmakers and powered their appetite for experiment—until, by a direct order from Moscow, artistic experiments and movements were banned anywhere in the Soviet Union (two of our films, *Salt for Svanetia* and *Nail in the Boot*, were banned as well).

All four films we are screening were made by three filmmakers early in their careers. Their backgrounds and subsequent fates were different, but equally telling. Nikoloz Shengelaia was a poet before turning to film, twenty-five years old when he made *Eliso* (1928), a film that remains a cornerstone of his legacy; Shengelaia died at forty in Tbilisi, and was survived by two sons, Eldar and Giorgi, both of whom became prominent Georgian filmmakers. Mikheil Chiaureli made *Saba* (1929), his second feature, at the age of thirty-five, after a serious career in visual art and theater; he went on to make



Nikoloz Shengelaia *ELISO*

films for four more decades before his death in 1973 in Tbilisi, becoming one of the most decorated filmmakers in the Soviet Union, mainly for creation of cinematic *Staliniana* (in the late thirties and forties, he made three films focused on Stalin's life achievements, all to the liking of their subject, who made Chiaureli his frequent drinking buddy). Finally, the director of *Salt for Svanetia* (1931) and *Nail in the Boot* (1932) was born Mikheil Kalatozishvili in Tbilisi and died Mikhail Kalatozov in Moscow. Only one of his films, *The Cranes are Flying* (1957), achieved immediate international acclaim (the only Soviet film ever to win the Palme d'Or at Cannes); several others, including both of the silents we are screening, as well equally daring *Soy Cuba (I am Cuba, 1964)*, were so unusual in film style and technique that they had to wait decades to be rediscovered and to receive the deserved applauses, restorations and, most importantly, screenings. — Daria Khitrova, Associate Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Harvard

Film descriptions by Daria Khitrova. Photos courtesy of the National Archives of Georgia where all, except the still for *Eliso*, are preserved.

Special thanks: Stephen Jones, Program on Georgian Studies, Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard.

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY ROBERT HUMPHREVILLE

monday september 26 at 7pm

ELISO

Verdi, a mountaintop Chechen village in Georgia, is situated so high that, to see clouds, its inhabitants as often look down as they look up. The year is 1864; a local branch of the Russian military administration decides to depopulate the Verdi village in order to provide housing for the Cossack troops serving as the Imperial border patrol. To have this done, the Russians need to deport the Chechens across the nearby border with the Ottoman Empire. A story of deceit and betrayal, violence and resistance, passion and duty, *Eliso* is a pure tragedy, as sublime and pristine as only tragedy, all the way back to the Greek antiquity, can be. The tragic plays out on a number of levels: from a Romeo-and-Juliet pair of lovers, divided by faith (Vajia is Christian, Eliso Muslim), to what we might call today a genocidal exile of a community coerced out of their homes. As a film, *Eliso* is a gem. Director Nikoloz Shengelaia, who also co-wrote the script, was a poet before he was a filmmaker; to say that it shows would be an understatement, be it in grandiose-yet-lyrical mass mis-en-scènes or in serene cinematography set almost exclusively in natural light. An unusual combination of things like virtuoso fencing and virtuoso cutting, the film contains sequences virtually impossible to forget. At the lowest point of moral—and the peak of physical—exertion, the village Elder, counterintuitively, commands his people to dance, and, miraculously, it works: in the final shot, whose composition is so impeccable you almost want to freeze a frame and pin it to your wall, the villagers are back on foot, and soldier on.

Directed by Nikoloz Shengelaia. With Aleksandre Imedashvili, Kokhta Karalashvili, Kira Andronikashvili
Soviet Georgia 1928, 35mm, b/w, silent, 75 min. English and French intertitles



Mikhail Kalatozov SALT FOR SVANETIA



Mikheil Chiaureli SABA

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY ROBERT HUMPHREVILLE

monday october 17 at 7pm

SABA

Saba is a tram operator in Tbilisi. His life spirals downward when he loses his job in the wake of a violent, drunken night. In the course of yet another drinking bout, Saba nearly kills a loved one in a tram crash (the drunken tram driving around the city at night is one of the most daring sequences in the film). He is then given a second chance to sober up for the good of his family and his work. As becomes clear from this description, *Saba* is a temperance drama, a film genre with a long history and a set of well-known clichés. The film abides by them all: a wife (the majestic Veriko Andjaparidze) struggling to draw out her husband from a bar, a playing child wronged by the angry father, etc. At the same time, *Saba* surprises us with unexpected twists—not so much story twists, as twists in the cultural context, ideological messaging and, most importantly, visual style. On *Saba*, Mikheil Chiaureli, a painter-turned-filmmaker, was helped by two other artists, Lado Gudiashvili and Davit Kakabadze—very resonant names in the world of Georgian avant-garde. Their collaboration resulted in a series of contrasting cinematic spaces. Saba and his family live in a basement flat and walk bleak, depressing streets that resemble a German Expressionist movie or Hitchcock's *Lodger* with its eternal night and rain. While looking at Saba and his family's everyday environment, you start wondering if colors really exist; by contrast, the fateful bar that Saba frequents exudes humour, brightness and colorfulness so powerful you forget you are watching a black-and-white movie. Like it or not, the film seems to whisper in your ear—against the grain of being conceived as a cautionary tale—in this environment, the bar is actually where Georgian culture lives, even if in its modern and urban form.

This is where one of the most memorable sequences of the film takes place: a grotesque party of the “ex-people” (people of any social class other than proletariat, in early Soviet parlance) who, the visual sarcasm on the part of filmmakers notwithstanding, hold on to traditional Georgian culture, wine and other celebratory customs included. The film, of course, affirms the importance of class struggle and the like, but as often with silent filmmakers, especially under censorship and ideological pressure, it is more important to look at what they do, not what they say.

Directed by Mikheil Chiaureli. With Aleksandre Jaliashvili, Veriko Andjaparidze, L. Januashvili
Soviet Georgia 1929, 35mm, b/w, silent, 80 min. Russian intertitles with English subtitles

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY ROBERT HUMPHREVILLE

monday october 24 at 7pm

SALT FOR SVANETIA JIM SHUANTE

Svanetia is a small region of Georgia, so high up in the mountains some of its villages may stay inaccessible for months in the winter. There, the beauty of nature contrasts with the toughness of everyday life. Not only do people's livelihoods depend on their cattle; the climate is so unpredictable that a sudden snow in late July can destroy the harvest (consisting solely of barley, the only grain that grows at this altitude). Especially hard for both people and animals is the lack of salt; with no roads connecting Svanetia to the rest of the country, to fetch salt, Svans climb the mountains on foot, under the risk of perishing in an avalanche. *Salt for Svanetia* is a call for help in building roads to ease life on this ancient land.

This film is like no other. Literally, it is impossible to put it in any legible category. Generically, it resides

somewhere between a documentary, propaganda, drama, montage manual and Discovery Channel. Unlike many of his fellow Georgian directors, Mikheil Kalatozishvili (who went by Mikhail Kalatozov, the Russified version of his name, for most of his career) came to film directly, not from other arts: his first job was as a studio projectionist and driver, and, after a series of apprenticeships, he graduated to cinematography and directing. In this film, he proudly credited himself “director-cinematographer,” and it is hard to come up with a more telling description. The way Kalatozov’s camera works is unique: with the angles he chooses, it seems to lose the sense of gravity. Fittingly for a movie about life in the mountains, the shot geometry here leans toward the diagonal; if it makes the viewer a little dizzy, this is exactly what one feels at such a height.

Directed by Mikhail Kalatozov
Soviet Georgia 1930, 35mm, b/w, silent, 56 min. Russian intertitles with English subtitles

NAIL IN THE BOOT *LURSMANI CHEQMASHI*

Around half of this film’s action takes place at a court trial, but this is anything but your typical courtroom drama. A young man has had to deliver an important message from his fellow soldiers defending their armored train against the enemy’s artillery. With his foot injured by a proverbial yet very real



Mikhail Kalatozov NAIL IN THE BOOT

nail in his boot, he fails, and is charged with treason. The courtroom crowd seriously leans toward capital punishment until his last speech, in which he successfully blames them back. You will see why.

This film is radical on all fronts: avant-garde experiments on steroids meet early Stalinist austerity distilled to the state of absolute ether. To be fair, the film had been commissioned by the army film studio for propaganda purposes, and, yes, avant-garde was born with a soft spot for the military force (think

of Italian Futurists), but here the camera lingers on the metallic shine of a shell as if it were Greta Garbo’s face. His inability—due to the foot discomfort—to jump over the barbed wire in the middle of nowhere translates into a scene whose dramatic heat reminds one of King Lear praying in the wilderness; the protagonist’s accidental stepping into the puddle of fuel oil—a natural antiseptic, they say, that apparently heals his wound—and lingering there somewhat ecstatically for a minute or two turns into a miniature melodrama of succumbing to a seduction. When, after all this visual and dramatic frenzy, you learn that there is in fact no actual war going on, you feel like—well, see for yourself. *Nail in the Boot* was immediately banned for “formalism” and unfavorable presentation of the Red Army (I don’t know what they meant: the soldiers all look monumentally heroic here), but I suspect that was not all: on the eve of the epoch of famous show trials, the idea that a defendant can actually raise his voice, defend himself and have his accusers lower their eyes in remorse, couldn’t have sat well with the Soviet authorities.

Directed by Mikhail Kalatozov. With Aleksandre Jaliashvili, Siko Palavandishvili, Akaki Khorava
Soviet Georgia 1931, 35mm, b/w, silent, 58 min. Russian intertitles with English subtitles

THE FACE OF TIME... RECENT FILMS BY TSAI MING-LIANG

SEPTEMBER 30 – OCTOBER 21

Rare and valuable is the filmmaker who expands one’s conception of the cinematic art; rarer still is the filmmaker who enlarges one’s notion of the term “director.” Malaysian-born, Taiwan-based auteur Tsai Ming-liang (b. 1957) accomplished the former with his rigorous, uncompromising and reputation-defining features of the nineties and early 2000s, and ever since his self-declared retirement from narrative filmmaking after 2013’s *Stray Dogs*, he has been anything but inactive while exploring the endless permutations of what it means to be an image maker in the 21st century. Among the many formally adventurous international filmmakers who have struck out for greener pastures in the past decade upon finding the commercial prospects of arthouse cinema distribution increasingly deficient, Tsai has dabbled in the gallery space, the black box theater, virtual reality and the independently run exhibition space as venues to both showcase his uncategorizable work and influence how he produces it. Along the way, he has transformed his very approach to capturing filmic material, and where once a pithy precis for his films existed—Antonioni-esque studies of alienated Taiwanese youth, for instance—there is no longer such a firm summary for exactly what a Tsai Ming-liang project looks like or how it operates.

The one unchanging throughline in Tsai’s cinema of transformation is Lee Kang-sheng, his muse of three decades. As Lee has aged, Tsai’s camera has become fixated on his leading man to a degree that transcends mere director-actor kinship. In 2014, in the throes of separate health issues, the duo absconded to a crumbling home in the mountains outside Taipei and have lived there ever since, a coexistence that has encouraged a documentary-like attention to the rituals of daily life and the painful processes of aging and illness. The critical darling *Days* (2020), which spends ample time chronicling the experimental treatments undergone by Lee for his ailing neck, represents the apotheosis of this newfound attentiveness, though a Buddhist appreciation for the present moment was coursing through his work long prior. In just the most conspicuous example of this tendency, Tsai was commissioned in 2012 by the Hong Kong International Film Festival Society to produce a series of short films for Youku, a Chinese video hosting service, and turned in the radically contemplative *Walker* films, which portray the languorous progression of a monk (a robe-clad Lee) through a frenetic modern world.

An identification with outlier social groups whose experience of reality is out of step with contemporary convention underpins much of Tsai’s work, extending from the migrant laborers wandering through a fog-shrouded Kuala Lumpur in *I Don’t Want to Sleep Alone* (2006) to the homeless family in *Stray Dogs*, whose patriarch (Lee again) yearns for an escape from a miserly existence as a sandwich man. The issue of poverty returns habitually, and yet Tsai’s approach skirts didacticism and socioeconomic specificities in favor of experiential immersion. By focusing on characters in dire straits, his films magnify the gravitas of time passing, the direct effect of environmental conditions on the body and the soul, and the fleeting bits of pleasure to be found within everyday drudgery. Time and time again, Lee has been the vessel through which these interests have flowed, though in recent years Tsai has pivoted from molding his perennial lead into new and unexpected character forms to appreciating his unembellished corporeality as a subject in and of itself—infinately complex and ever-changing.

This curiosity for Lee himself, which has birthed such openly reverent projects as *Days* and *Afternoon* (2015), seems unlikely to ever cease for Tsai, and yet it hasn’t shielded him from finding sufficiently cinematic material elsewhere in his daily life. Not to be confused with his earlier *Face* (2009), an artifact from a more flamboyant



Tsai Ming-liang AFTERNOON

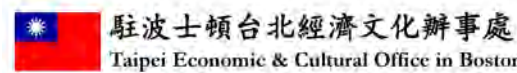
era of Tsai's filmmaking that now seems preserved in amber, *Your Face* (2018) is a Warholian meditation on anonymous elderly faces that Tsai recruited from street casting, while *Light* (2019) observes an empty auditorium as afternoon sunshine penetrates the dark interior. In both cases, Tsai's formal impositions are minimal, and the mere recording of reality—coupled with the filmmaker's usual compositional prowess—proves worthy of sustained attention.

But is this directing as we know it? "This idea of 'depositing images' is the result of the change in my concept of what it means to be a director," Tsai told Devika Girish of *Film Comment* in 2021. "To paint something that you're moved by, that's your creative outlet. When you finish that painting, you don't feel like you need to show it to everybody right away. I think by capturing images in the same way, you can capture reality." The films in this program offer testament to this ostensibly simple mission, which proves itself in year after year of Tsai's meandering career to be capable of producing rich and unanticipated rewards. — Carson Lund

The Harvard Film Archive is delighted to welcome not only Tsai Ming-liang to the theater for two evenings of films and conversation, but also his longtime collaborator Lee Kang-sheng in addition to Lee's *Days* costar Anong Hounghueangsy, and producer Claude Wang.

Film descriptions by Carson Lund.

Special thanks: Dorinda Elliott, Executive Director—Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies; Astrid Ai-yun Chen, Deputy Director and Jonathan Sun, Director-General—Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Boston; and Kanglan Chin—Taipei Cultural Center of TECO in New York.



Tsai Ming-liang STRAY DOGS

friday september 30 at 7pm

STRAY DOGS JIAO YOU

In his first feature-length venture into digital film-making, Tsai expands upon the durational extremes of his monk-led *Walker* series to observe a different kind of stasis within the frantic modern world: that of a homeless sign holder and his two starving children. Played by Lee Kang-sheng in a performance of hauntingly composed agony, Tsai's protagonist plies his demeaning trade for a luxury high-rise development, enduring wind, rain and the indifferent masses for a measly pittance that falls short of putting food on the table for his family. For its first half, *Stray Dogs* offers an embittered slice of social realism as it intercuts between this man's thankless toil and his children's desperate wanderings through the alternately sterile and decrepit heart of contemporary Taipei, only periodically benefiting from the generosity of strangers. In its final stretch, however, the film's seemingly linear timeline disintegrates, and the story relocates to a decomposing underground bunker where a surreal portrait of domesticity and family intimacy emerges. Is it the future, the past, or the imagination? A radically contemplative finale suggests such a question is beside the point, as the longing for another, more just world is as timeless as destitution.

Directed by Tsai Ming-liang. With Lee Kang-sheng, Yang Kuei-mei, Lu Yi-ching
Taiwan/France 2013, DCP, color, 138 min. Mandarin with English subtitles

saturday october 1 at 7pm

GOODBYE, DRAGON INN BU SAN

A decaying Taipei movie palace on its final night of business provides Tsai with one of his richest locations in this turn-of-the-millennium paean to the fading cinemagoing ritual. As King Hu's wuxia classic *Dragon Inn* reverberates around the cavernous auditorium and the shadowy corridors that surround it, Tsai traces the wanderings of the screening's few

lovelorn attendees, all either cruising for a partner in the dark or pining for some succor from the screen itself. Dialogue is nearly nonexistent, but the film communicates an entire spectrum of longing through the inspired use of silence and duration, whereby even the most distant figures in Tsai's expansive compositions can become objects of sympathy and comedy. Far more than a dewy-eyed love letter to the movies, the film offers a broader meditation on the impact of urban development on communal spaces, which gains an added resonance when considering the history of gay cruising in Taipei's cinemas. As the projector creaks to a halt and the patrons wander off into a torrential rainstorm, Tsai offers an aching portrait of the eternal loneliness of outsiders doomed to live just out of pace with a changing world.

Directed by Tsai Ming-liang. With Lee Kang-sheng, Chen Shiang-chyi, Kiyonobu Mitamura
Taiwan 2003, DCP, color, 82 min. Mandarin, Min Nan and Japanese with English subtitles



Tsai Ming-liang GOODBYE, DRAGON INN

saturday october 1 at 9pm

DRAGON INN LONGMEN KEZHAN

King Hu's first film, made in Taiwan after leaving Shaw Brothers, *Dragon Inn* is a rousing period tale about a heroic trio who defy the ruthless secret security forces of a despot to protect a family of political exiles. An exquisite game of cat-and-mouse ensues as each side tests the martial skills of the other. With his new freedom, Hu invigorates the swordplay genre by drawing on Beijing Opera traditions, choreographing the film to the percussive rhythms of the traditional stage. He also began to assemble a group of loyal actors whose careers he helped launch. One of these actors, Miao Tien, would go on to appear prominently in Tsai Ming-liang's films, including Tsai's tribute to this phase of Hu's career, the poignant *Goodbye, Dragon Inn*. — David Pendleton

Directed by King Hu. With Polly Shangguang Lingfeng, Bai Ying, Miao Tien
Taiwan 1967, DCP, color, 111 min. Mandarin with English subtitles

monday october 3 at 7pm

WALKER

Lee Kang-sheng's performances for Tsai are often as physically demanding as they are emotionally intense, even if the latter quality is more regularly remarked upon. The actor's gift for wholly inhabiting unconventional physical tasks defines *Walker*, the inaugural entry in a series of films that center Lee as a monk navigating urban environments with a breathtakingly slow gait. In a procession of cleverly framed images of a bustling, highly commercialized Hong Kong, Lee never breaks his molasses-like stride or wavers in his delicate balance, all while onlook-



Tsai Ming-liang DAYS

ers gawk at him and the cacophony of modern life threatens to disrupt his deep concentration. As much a plea for the value of slowness and silence as it is an experiment in visually manifesting the passage of time, *Walker* compresses many of Tsai's late-career preoccupations into one perversely absorbing exercise.

Directed by Tsai Ming-liang. With Lee Kang-sheng
Hong Kong 2012, DCP, color, 27 min. No dialogue

NO NO SLEEP WU WU MIAN

No No Sleep would seem at first to be an unambiguous continuation of the *Walker* series embarked upon by Tsai three years prior. It begins on an elevated walking path in Tokyo, where Lee, again in a red monk's robe, is cutting a typically unhurried path to the subway station. From here, Tsai presents a six-minute sequence of urban train travel that becomes nearly abstract in its rushing horizontal movement and embrace of the overexposed extremes of the digital camera's sensor. Then, in its third section, a version of Lee that may or may not be the monk from the beginning of the film crosses paths with Japanese actor Ando Masanobu in an otherwise abandoned day spa, at which point the film becomes a spare dramatization of missed connection and unmet urges. The introduction of narrative elements to a short film series otherwise built around the thorough execution of a single concept proves at once jarring and generative, casting notions of temporal immersion in a distinctly personal light.

Directed by Tsai Ming-liang. With Ando Masanobu, Lee Kang-sheng
Taiwan/Hong Kong 2015, DCP, color, 34 min. Mandarin with English subtitles

sunday october 9 at 7pm

YOUR FACE NI DE LIAN

Non-diegetic music is such a rare element in Tsai's filmography that its inclusion throughout much of *Your Face*, courtesy of a minimalist score by Ryuichi Sakamoto, may immediately strike one as odd. But this highly austere film is devoted to the act of seeing familiar surfaces anew, and the use of music only heightens the feeling that we are being given almost none of the usual Tsai trademarks from which to generate meaning. Gone are the spacious wide shots, the dilapidated settings, and the sketches of urban ennui. All that is offered up for contemplation are the faces of thirteen older men and women, each marked in different ways by time. Tsai skirts any expectations of glamour lighting and exposes

the real texture of aged human skin, which, through prolonged observation, metamorphoses from something concrete to something abstract—from a keeper of history and experience to a pure artistic canvas. Encompassing both speaking participants and sleeping participants, those engaged by the camera and those indifferent to it, *Your Face* relinquishes authorship almost entirely to its subjects.

Directed by Tsai Ming-liang
Taiwan/France 2018, DCP, color, 76 min. Min Nan with English subtitles

Preceded by

LIGHT

Where *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* filled a shuttering movie theater with yearning human figures, *Light* presents an actively operating concert hall in a sleepy, depopulated state. Beginning with the exteriors and working his way gradually to the auditorium, Tsai fixates on the fine architectural accomplishments of Taipei's Zhongshan Hall, home to the city's Golden Horse Film Festival and the director's boutique coffee shop. *Light* is plainly a tribute to this cherished building, but it's also an atmospheric study of the way warm afternoon light penetrates a dark interior, and an exercise in the overlapping of diegetic and non-diegetic sound to create the impression of a space with purpose and history.

Directed by Tsai Ming-liang
Taiwan 2019, DCP, color, 18 min. Mandarin with English subtitles

TSAI MING-LIANG & LEE KANG-SHENG IN PERSON

monday october 10 at 6pm

AFTERNOON NA RI XIA WU

As if created to refute the notion that artists are notoriously aloof about discussing their own work, *Afternoon* ostensibly grants Tsai's devoted audience an all-access peek behind the curtain of his decades-long artistic partnership with his muse Lee Kang-sheng. Filmed in one two-hour-long wide shot broken up by periodic cuts to black in the half-furnished mountain home purchased by Tsai and Lee, this rigorous documentary presents a wide-ranging heart-to-heart between two artistic soulmates whose very dispositions—in both their cinematic collaborations and public appearances—skew toward the introverted and nonverbal. The results are surprisingly light and meandering, with Tsai playing the gregarious, vulnerable inquisitor and Lee the deadpan object of fascination, his sparsely deployed re-

marks often tinged with good-natured teasing. No topic is out of bounds, as they discuss their films, their career ambitions (or lack thereof), their travels, their peculiar relationship that is neither fully platonic nor romantic, their anxieties and their sense of morality. What elevates it beyond a niche DVD supplement and into something consistent with Tsai's worldview is the extreme patience it exhibits in the observation of human behavior. The content of what is said is only part of the appeal. Arguably more fascinating is the process by which these feelings are gradually, circuitously articulated, an alchemy we are invited to witness in hypnotic real time.

Directed by Tsai Ming-liang
Taiwan 2015, DCP, color, 137 min. Mandarin with English subtitles

TSAI MING-LIANG, LEE KANG-SHENG & ANONG HOUNGHEUANGSY IN PERSON

friday october 14 at 7pm

DAYS RIZI

Ever since Tsai prematurely announced his retirement from filmmaking following the release of *Stray Dogs*, his output has had a diminishing relationship to narrative, and *Days* provides only the slimmest shell of one. Instead, the director submits to the lengthy observation of two men at different points in their lives: Kang (Lee Kang-sheng) and Non (Anong Hougheuangsy), emblems of solitude in late middle age and young adulthood, respectively. Kang passes his time with silent meditations on nature and experimental acupuncture sessions for his ailing neck (a nod to Lee's actual decades-long condition), while Non lives a solitary urban existence in a cramped apartment. Their day-to-day rituals provide more than enough raw material for Tsai's ever-patient camera, which captures slow nighttime walks and ritualized meal preparation with the same rapt attention and Zen-like indifference to conventional action. In the lone concession to narrative expectation, Kang and Non eventually meet in a prolonged scene of cathartic physical intimacy, but Tsai's delicate touch leaves the film in a state of poignant anticlimax, raising unsentimental questions about what constitutes fulfilling human connection.

Directed by Tsai Ming-liang. With Lee Kang-sheng, Anong Hougheuangsy
Taiwan/France 2020, DCP, color, 127 min. Mandarin with English subtitles



Tsai Ming-liang YOUR FACE



Tsai Ming-liang | *I DON'T WANT TO SLEEP ALONE*

friday october 21 at 7pm

I DON'T WANT TO SLEEP ALONE HEI YAN QUAN

Kuala Lumpur replaces Taipei as Tsai's metropolis of choice in *I Don't Want to Sleep Alone*, but the return to his country of birth certainly doesn't yield any fondness or nostalgia—a sense only strengthened by the Malaysian Censorship Board's outlawing of the film. Oppressively grimy, littered with half-built corporate structures and neglected shantytowns, and eventually draped in the smoke of a nearby wildfire, the Malaysian capital is portrayed as an eerie labyrinth of alienation, where vagrants and loners of various cultural backgrounds scrape by on low-paying construction and service jobs. Lee Kang-sheng embodies a pair of such figures, both unnamed in the film: one a battered immigrant laborer found on the street by a nurturing young man named Rawang (Norman Atun), the other a paralyzed figure who is taken in by a tender coffee shop waitress (Chen Shiang-chyi). As ever, Tsai makes breathtaking use of space, juxtaposing the cramped and tangled interiors of apartment buildings with the cavernous gorges of multi-story construction sites. A peaceful night's sleep with a warm body proves to be the elusive objective of the uniformly taciturn ensemble, and, as such, mattresses join Tsai's rotating set of pet motifs, ultimately featuring prominently in a closing image of exquisite serenity.

Directed by Tsai Ming-liang. With Lee Kang-sheng, Chen Shiang-chyi, Norman Atun
Malaysia/China/Taiwan/France/Austria 2006, DCP, color, 115 min. Min Nan, Malay, Mandarin and Bengali with English subtitles

THE RETURN OF JOÃO PEDRO RODRIGUES AND JOÃO RUI GUERRA DA MATA

OCTOBER 7 – OCTOBER 8

Portuguese filmmakers and Harvard Film Archive favorites João Pedro Rodrigues and João Rui Guerra da Mata are an irrepressible and quietly influential power couple of world cinema. Life partners and frequent co-directors, their polymath talents have together invented an unclassifiable body of resolutely contemporary films that provocatively dance between fiction and nonfiction while also meditating subtly on film history. Their latest collaboration, *Onde Fica Esta Rua? O Sem Antes Nem Delois / Where Is the Street? or With No Before and After* intertwines avant-garde, autobiographical and meta-cinematic threads that have defined their work together while also reflecting ruminatively upon a film that shaped their lives and the path of postwar Portuguese cinema, *Os Verdes Anos / The Green Years* (1963), by Rodrigues' film school teacher and beloved mentor Paulo Rocha. Building on their evocative first feature collaboration, the dizzying neo-noir city symphony *The Last Time I Saw Macao* (2012), their latest film explores pandemic Lisbon as a haunted city shaped and inhabited by intimately personal yet shared cinematic memories, recollections of films shot on the streets, and of the streets seen and fleetingly, lovingly inhabited on the silver screen.

Together with *Onde Fica Esta Rua?*, we also present Rodrigues' new film *Will-o'-the-Wisp*, a deliciously exuberant, irreverent and comic musical that finds a young Portuguese prince joining the national fire force to fulfill his noblesse oblige while discovering his sexuality and learning a thing or two about art history. — HG

With open arms, the Harvard Film Archive welcomes back João Pedro Rodrigues and João Rui Guerra da Mata for a special screening and conversations about their newest work.



João Pedro Rodrigues *WILL-O'-THE-WISP*

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS **JOÃO PEDRO RODRIGUES & JOÃO RUI GUERRA DA MATA** **IN PERSON**

friday october 7 at 7pm

WILL-O'-THE-WISP FOGO-FÁTUO

Music and choreographed movement have been such a staple of Rodrigues' cinema from his debut feature, *O Fantasma* (2000), that a musical has long seemed inevitable, even awaited. *Will-o'-the-Wisp* more than meets expectations with a wonderfully offbeat and comic musical that finds its unique rhythm in the touchingly awkward love that ignites between a nerdy but willful prince determined to be a fireman and the swarthy veteran ready to light his fire. Channeling the spirit of Bob Fosse, and complementing the wonderful blue collar Portuguese musical from 2017 *A Fábrica de Nada* (also produced by the powerhouse company Terratrema), *Will-o'-the-Wisp* is a delightful fantasy animated by Rodrigues' cinephilia and equal love of Titian and Caravaggio. João Rui Guerra da Mata's always exceptional work as art designer contributes to the film's dynamic and self-conscious mise-en-scène. — HG

Directed by João Pedro Rodrigues. With Mauro Costa, André Cabral, Joel Branco
Portugal/France 2022, DCP, color, 67 min. Portuguese and English with English subtitles

saturday october 8 at 6pm

THE GREEN YEARS OS VERDES ANOS

The opening salvo of the Cinema Novo that would reinvent post-WWII Portuguese cinema, Paulo Rocha's debut film is equally a touching coming-of-age narrative and an unintended documentary about the rebirth of Lisbon as a modern city. Shot on location and with a deep lyricism, *Os Verdes Anos* was also the film that launched Isabel Ruth's still incredibly vibrant career as the most important Portuguese actress of her generation or any other. Seen now in a wonderful restoration, Rocha's melancholy and classic master work offers an important reminder that Portuguese cinema has for too long been unrecognized and occluded from film history. — HG

Directed by Paulo Rocha. With Rui Gomes, Isabel Ruth, Ruy Furtado
Portugal 1963, DCP, b/w, 91 min. Portuguese with English subtitles

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS

**JOÃO PEDRO RODRIGUES & JOÃO RUI GUERRA
DA MATA IN PERSON**

saturday october 8 at 8pm

**WHERE IS THIS STREET? OR, WITH NO BEFORE
AND AFTER ONDE FICA ESTA RUA? OU SEM AN-
TES NEM DEPOIS**

Our cinema has always alternated between fiction and documentary—from the more documentary 1997-1999 diptych, directed by João Pedro, to *Red Dawn* (2011), *The King's Body* (2013) and *Iec Long* (2014), to films like *The Last Time I Saw Macau* (2012), *Morning of Saint Anthony's Day* (2012), or *Mahjong* (2013), in which fiction merges with documentary and vice versa. We believe that all of our films, even the most “purely fictional,” are also documentary in genre—*O Fantasma* (2000), directed by João Pedro, or *As the Flames Rose* (2012), directed by João Rui, are also cartographies of the city of Lisbon, physical and emotional documentaries of the places we have filmed, many of which have disappeared or changed over the years, as the city transformed. This theme of transformation and metamorphosis, as a transformative driver of things, characters and desire, shaped most of the films that we have made, between feature films and short films (we have always been interested in alternating formats and genres). This physical metamorphosis in a literal sense, but also in a social and ultimately political sense, has reached a paroxysm in João Pedro's feature, *The Ornithologist* (2016), where he takes the place of the main actor during its climax.

“Look, could you please tell me WHERE IS THIS STREET?” is the first sentence said by the main character Júlio, played by Rui Gomes in the film *The Green Years* by Paulo Rocha (1963), when he arrives at the Rossio train station in Lisbon, from the country. The title *Where is This Street? or, With No Before and After* echoes Abbas Kiarostami's classic *Where Is the Friend's House?* (1987). The disarming simplicity of Kiarostami's film resounds in our film, which goes back to the city of Lisbon filmed by Paulo Rocha in the early 1960s in order to portray contemporary Lisbon. How is the city now, plagued by globalization and gentrification? These words have recently forced their way into our lexicon, as violent as their effects. How can we look now at the places of Rocha's modern city—a faithful and sensitive portrait of the changes to the social, urban and experiential fabric of Lisbon, which suddenly reinvented all Portuguese cinema—without nostalgia or false romanticism? The double title of our film also echoes a line



Paulo Rocha THE GREEN YEARS

of *The Green Years*' title song, “With No Before and After.”

From the window of our apartment in Lisbon, one can see a location of Rocha's film, practically the same perspective from which Rocha filmed it almost sixty years ago. This was the starting point of our new film: from our window, we looked again at *The Green Years*, guided by Paulo Rocha's gaze, to places that are now irremediably different. We return to the theme of metamorphosis that has clearly never left us: what flesh do the ghosts of the 1960s wear today?

Our relationship with Paulo Rocha's cinema began many years ago as spectators the first time we saw *The Green Years*. João Pedro remembers that he immediately recognized the buildings and vacant lots, near which he had always lived. Rocha was João Pedro's teacher at the Lisbon Theatre and Film School, a decisive encounter in his life and train-

ing, and they remained friends until Rocha's death. João Pedro paid tribute to his teacher in the short film *Allegoria della Prudenza* (commissioned for the 70th anniversary of the Venice Film Festival), filming the two tombs of Mizoguchi (one of Rocha's favorite filmmakers), in Tokyo and Kyoto, along with the urn containing Rocha's ashes, kept in the family vault at the Ovar cemetery. João Pedro worked with Jorge Silva Melo on a catalogue on Paulo Rocha, published by the Cinemateca Portuguesa in 1996, during the celebrations of the Centenary of Cinema. But it was João Pedro's first film, *O Fantasma*, set in the Alvalade neighborhood where we live (the same neighborhood where Paulo Rocha lived and where he filmed *The Green Years*), that made this filiation clear.

We started shooting in 16mm in October 2019. Since we were drawing on Rocha's film, it made no sense for us to shoot in any other medium but analog. Another shooting phase was scheduled for May and June 2020, which ended up being postponed again and again due to the pandemic. In the end, we filmed the new ways and rules of living in society brought on by the pandemic: masks were emerging, social distancing was pushing people away, the endless noise of ambulances, police cars, firefighters... After the last period of shooting, in October 2021, one thing became evident: the locations of *The Green Years* were filmed without action or actors. Without knowing it, we had made a film that strangely foreshadowed what would become our reality. Strolling through the empty streets of Lisbon during the state of emergency, we found images similar to those we had filmed before the Covid virus was even heard of! Although it was not originally our intention, the deeper nature of our film changed—a new metamorphosis—following the vortex that upended all our lives. May this film also serve to reflect on this new reality and its unpredictable consequences.

— João Pedro Rodrigues & João Rui Guerra da Mata

Directed by João Rui Guerra da Mata and João Pedro Rodrigues. With Isabel Ruth
Portugal/France 2022, DCP, color & b/w, 88 min. Portuguese with English subtitles



João Rui Guerra da Mata and João Pedro Rodrigues WHERE IS THIS STREET? OR, WITH NO BEFORE AND AFTER

SEPTEMBER 2022

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				01	02 7PM THE BREAD AND ALLEY HOW TO MAKE USE OF LEISURE TIME: PAINTING WHERE IS THE FRIEND'S HOUSE? P. 3 9PM ORDERLY OR DISORDERLY A WEDDING SUIT P. 3	03
04 3PM THE BREAD AND ALLEY HOW TO MAKE USE OF LEISURE TIME: PAINTING WHERE IS THE FRIEND'S HOUSE? P. 3 7PM SO CAN I / THE COLORS FIRST GRADERS P. 3	05 7PM LEARNING TO BE HUMAN. THE OPEN-ENDED EDUCA- TIONAL FILM P. 6	06	07	08	09 7PM SOLUTION AND LIFE GOES ON... P. 4	10 7PM THE REPORT P. 4 9PM THE EXPERIENCE P. 4
11 3PM SOLUTION AND LIFE GOES ON... P. 4 7PM THROUGH THE OLIVE TREES P. 4	12 7PM BREAKTIME P. 5 THE TRAVELER P. 4	13	14	15	16 7PM TWO SOLUTIONS FOR ONE PROBLEM FIRST CASE, SECOND CASE P. 5 9PM HOMEWORK P. 5	17
18 3PM THROUGH THE OLIVE TREES P. 4 7PM THE CHORUS FELLOW CITIZEN P. 5	19 7PM HERBARIA P. 7 leandro listorti in person	20	21	22	23 7PM COLOR-TAINTED DREAMS PLAYBACK CASA ROSHELL P. 8	24 7PM SUGAR, SALIVA & STEAM SHORTCUTS ONE WAY OR ANOTHER P. 8 9PM BEFORE MY EYES PLAYA GRANDE ARAYA P. 9
25 3PM SUGAR, SALIVA & STEAM SHORTCUTS ONE WAY OR ANOTHER P. 8 7PM EAVESDROPPER THE DEVIL NEVER SLEEPS P. 9	26 7PM ELISO P. 12 live musical accompaniment	27	28	29	30 7PM STRAY DOGS P. 14	



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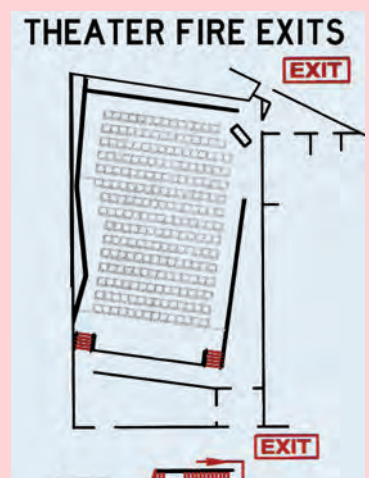
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There is limited metered parking in Harvard Square, which is free after 8pm and all day on Sundays. Parking is also available at several public lots in Harvard Square.



OCTOBER 2022

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						01 7PM GOODBYE, DRAGON INN P. 14 9PM DRAGON INN P. 14
02 7PM TOYS GOOD MANNERS P. 10	03 7PM WALKER P. 14 NO NO SLEEP P. 15	04	05	06	07 7PM WILL-O'-THE-WISP P. 16 joão pedro rodrigues & joão rui guerra da mata in person	08 6PM THE GREEN YEARS P. 17 8PM WHERE IS THIS STREET? OR, WITH NO BEFORE AND AFTER P. 17 joão pedro rodrigues & joão rui guerra da mata in person
09 7PM LIGHT YOUR FACE P. 15	10 6PM AFTERNOON P. 15 tsai ming-liang & lee kang- sheng in person	11	12	13	14 7PM DAYS P. 15 tsai ming-liang, anong hougheuangsy & lee kang- sheng in person	15
16 7PM MAGNIFICATIONS: NARCISA HIRSCH + MARIE LOUISE ALEMANN P. 10	17 7PM SABA P. 12 live musical accompaniment	18	19	20 7PM THE AFRICAN DESPERATE P. 32 martine syms in person	21 7PM I DON'T WANT TO SLEEP ALONE P. 16 9PM THE AFRICAN DESPERATE P. 32	22 4PM REASON P. 22
23 7PM THE AFRICAN DESPERATE P. 32	24 7PM SALT FOR SVANETIA P. 12 NAIL IN THE BOOT P. 13 live musical accompaniment	25	26	27	28 5:45PM TOUR OF AMERICAN DRAG EXHIBIT P. 23 houghton library 7PM THE QUEEN P. 23	29
30 7PM MONA'S CANDLE LIGHT STORMÉ: THE LADY OF THE JEWEL BOX SIMONE BARBÈS OR VIRTUE P. 24 introduction by melissa anderson	31 5:15PM INLAND EMPIRE BOOK SIGNING P. 25 6PM INLAND EMPIRE P. 25 melissa anderson in person					



Marco Dutra and Juliana Rojas GOOD MANNERS P. 10

The Harvard Film Archive is extremely grateful to June Yip, AB '85, and David Wong, AB '85, for their generous support of the HFA's ongoing visiting filmmaker program. Thanks to their generosity the Archive is able to continue inviting filmmakers, artists and scholars to present their work at the HFA and interact with the Harvard film community.

NOVEMBER 2022

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		01	02	03	04 7PM BOMBAY, OUR CITY P. 22 9PM LIANNA P. 24	05
06 7PM IN THE NAME OF GOD WE ARE NOT MONKEYS P. 23 anand patwardhan in person	07 6PM JAI BHIM COMRADE JAI BHIM COMRADE SCREENS P. 23 anand patwardhan in person	08	09	10	11 7PM NOTHING BUT A MAN CORTILE CASCINO P. 26	12 7PM GAS FOOD LODGING P. 29 9PM INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS P. 29
13 3PM CORTILE CASCINO FACES OF ISRAEL P. 26 7PM THE PLOT AGAINST HARRY FACES OF ISRAEL P. 26	14 7PM THE DEAD ZONE P. 29	15	16	17	18 7PM DYING P. 27 michael roemer in person	19 7PM VENGEANCE IS MINE P. 27 michael roemer & brooke adams in person
20 3PM DAYS OF HEAVEN P. 30 brooke adams in person 7PM PILGRIM, FAREWELL P. 27 michael roemer in person	21 7PM DAY OF WRATH P. 28 introduction & discussion with michael roemer	22	23	24	25	26
27 3PM NOTHING BUT A MAN P. 26	28 7PM HAN OKHI AND THE FILMS OF THE KAIDU CLUB P. 31	29	30			



Abbas Kiarostami FIRST GRADERS P. 3
20



Anand Patwardhan BOMBAY, OUR CITY P. 22

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				01	02 7PM EAMI P. 11 paz encina in person	03
04 MEMBER SCREENINGS	05 MEMBER SCREENINGS	06	07	08	09 MEMBER SCREENINGS	10 MEMBER SCREENINGS



Camila José Donoso CASA ROSHELL P. 8



Frank Simon THE QUEEN P. 23

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DO IT ONLY IF IT BURNS WHEN YOU DON'T. ANAND PATWARDHAN'S FILM ACTIVISM

OCTOBER 22 – NOVEMBER 7

During the Cold War it was said that an iron curtain prevented information from getting in or out of the Communist Bloc. Today a velvet curtain of mindless infotainment envelops the globe enforcing a strict censorship of the vital stories of our times. — Anand Patwardhan

The films of Anand Patwardhan document the rise of religious fundamentalism and inequality in India over the last five decades. A fierce documentarian and activist, he has faced legal battles, censorship and threats of violence throughout his career. These hurdles have not deterred him from making films that tell the stories of India's underrepresented minorities to expose the arbitrary, everyday violence directed against them. Patwardhan's films possess a restless energy that is meant to provoke, inviting the viewer to listen to those who are in pain, and become unsettled with the current state of the world. By opening up the space to collectively reckon with the anger and frustration generated by systemic injustice, Patwardhan's cinema of activism brings urgency to the work of building a better, more humane future.

Anand Patwardhan's exposure to progressive politics began at an early age. Born in 1950 in Mumbai, he grew up in a family that participated in resistance against British rule and supported Mahatma Gandhi's campaign for India's independence, and B. R. Ambedkar, a close family friend, visited often. (His role as the leader of the Dalit people is a key subject of several of Patwardhan's films.) Patwardhan received a B.A. in English Literature from Mumbai University in 1970 and a second bachelor's degree in Sociology from Brandeis University in 1972. At Brandeis, he joined his professors and peers at anti-Vietnam war protests while the movement was at its peak. Through this experience, Patwardhan became initiated into a life of activism. He recalls, decades later, about the influence of American intellectuals and civil rights leaders, such as Martin Luther King, on him: "It was the lesson that set me free." After Brandeis, and during the Emergency, he spent five years in Canada, during which period he made two films and received an M.A. in Communication Studies from McGill University in 1982.

From *Bombay, Our City* (1985) to *Reason* (2018), Patwardhan's visual style has undergone a radical evolution, but his journalistic ethos and warrior-like courage in the way he approaches his subjects remains a through line. In each of Patwardhan's films, one could find interview sequences shot from the middle of a crowd: at large events, in the streets, or even in a cramped room where tension builds around Patwardhan's very presence. In *In the Name of God*, for example, contains a scene of a tense exchange between Patwardhan and a group of Hindu worshipers who want to remove the Babri Masjid Mosque against the will of their Muslim neighbors. In *Reason*, Patwardhan is threatened with violence in public by representatives of a religious fundamentalist group. Another hallmark of his style is the masterful use of found footage from television, infomercial and other forms of mass media. By reappropriating material that has already circulated in popular consciousness, Patwardhan crafts an emotional appeal with the aura of objective truth to deliver what he calls "the vital stories of our time." For his work spanning over half a century of filmmaking, Anand Patwardhan has received accolades from festivals and institutions both at home and abroad, including Cinéma du Réel, Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, the IDFA, and so on. Although he has won the prestigious National Film Award multiple times, his films are still subject to censorship in India.

The contradiction between official recognition of the importance of Patwardhan's work and the bureaucratic quagmire that prevents it from circulating to the general public is part of what he has to reckon with as a filmmaker-activist. When the national television channel Doordarshan rejected *Bombay, Our City* for broadcast without clear justifications, Patwardhan went to court to challenge their decision and won. Not only platforms for minority voices to reach a wider audience, Patwardhan's films are media objects; projectiles that disrupt the media landscape and launch these voices into the spotlight. In 1986, when Patwardhan was nominated for a National Film Award for *Bombay, Our City*, he asked a slumdweller who appeared in the film to receive the award on his behalf, using it as a tool to raise awareness of the hardships she and her community faced. His latest film, *Reason*, was never submitted to the censorship board and thus remain unreleased in India. Instead, it is shown at clandestine screenings in university halls, where students can buy DVDs of the film from the director himself.

Armed with the tools of a documentarian, Anand Patwardhan has relentlessly confronted hatred and ignorance by joining his voice with the voices of those speaking out against their own mistreatment. He speaks alongside slum dwellers of Bombay, Muslim victims of religious violence, Dalits who have been fighting against the inhumane caste system, and family members of intellectuals who lost their lives criticizing the excesses of religious indoctrination and superstition. The voices are saying: "I am alive, I am innocent, and I share this space with you." These should not be contentious words, and yet they are routinely dismissed and suppressed. Hatred is an enigma that frustrates and enables indifference. One way it could be stopped is by holding leaders accountable for their actions and words. However, Patwardhan understands that it can only be confronted on the individual level. It is in his power as a filmmaker to initiate the process by asking pressing questions and uncovering uncomfortable truths. — Ton-Nu Nguyen-Dinh

Film descriptions by Ton-Nu Nguyen-Dinh.

saturday october 22 at 4pm

REASON VIVEK

In *Reason*, Anand Patwardhan tackles religious fundamentalism in India head-on by telling the stories of intellectuals who lost their lives speaking out against superstition. Expansive in depth and rigor, *Reason* can be considered a copia of audio-visual sources on religious violence and misinformation in the 21st century. It contains valuable found footage from TV and fundamentalist groups' informational DVDs, as well as recordings of live performances, speeches, street interviews and scenes from the daily life of worshippers. In order to capture these images, the filmmaker had to put himself on the line: in one scene, Anand Patwardhan is openly threatened by Sanatan Sanstha representatives at a press conference for protesting the killing of M. M. Kalburgi, a prominent Indian scholar with influence on public policy who was murdered for his stance against superstition. An ambitious and sprawling work, the film was never officially released in India due to censorship, despite winning accolades both at home and abroad.

Directed by Anand Patwardhan
India 2018, DCP, color, 218 min. Hindi with English subtitles

friday november 4 at 7pm

BOMBAY, OUR CITY HAMARA SHAHAR

Shot on 16mm, *Bombay, Our City* is a visually arresting and unsettling depiction of the precarity of life in the slums of Bombay in 1985. The energy that carries this somber docu-



Anand Patwardhan REASON



Anand Patwardhan **IN THE NAME OF GOD**

mentary forward comes from the contrast between the characters depicted: experts and well-to-do Bombay urbanites who want slums eradicated on one side, and on the other, diverse voices from the slum describing in song and in speech the many ways they have been denied stable living conditions by the people who exploited their labor. The disconnect between these two groups reveals a deeply frustrating truth about inequality in India and how it is exacerbated in a megacity like Bombay. In a way, this discordant chorus is an ideal situation, made possible by cinema, where the voices of the poor and marginalized command as much attention and respect as those of people in power. However, the

filmmaker and his characters recognize that filming alone cannot improve their situation, it is only part of the struggle. That being said, this is a documentary with a rich afterlife that provides a window into Patwardhan's lifelong praxis of film as activism.

Directed by Anand Patwardhan
India 1985, DCP, color, 75 min. Hindi, English, Tamil and Marathi with English subtitles

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS
ANAND PATWARDHAN IN PERSON

sunday november 6 at 7pm

IN THE NAME OF GOD RAM KE NAAM

In The Name of God records the rising tension around the destruction of the 16th century Babri Masjid Mosque in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh by the Hindu nationalist group Vishva Hindu Parishad in 1992. Following this incident, riots broke out across the country, resulting in thousands of deaths. Many consider this event an inflection point in the rise of religious fundamentalism in India. Offering rare last glimpses of the mosque in its final days, the film exposes how political pundits took advantage of ordinary people to turn a place of worship into an ideological battleground. It screens with *We Are Not Your Monkeys*, the music video for a song co-written and filmed by Patwardhan and performed by Sambhaji Bhagat, a prominent Dalit activist and artist. The song reinterprets the Ramayana epic to criticize the current state of caste-based discrimination and violence in India.

Directed by Anand Patwardhan
India 1992, DCP, color, 75 min. Hindi and English with English subtitles

WE ARE NOT YOUR MONKEYS

Directed by Anand Patwardhan
India 1996, DCP, color, 5 min. Hindi and Marathi with English subtitles

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS
ANAND PATWARDHAN IN PERSON

monday november 7 at 6pm

JAI BHIM COMRADE

Jai Bhim Comrade is about the Dalit communities of Mumbai and their participation in the anti-casteism movement founded by B. R. Ambedkar. Ambedkar is an author of the Indian constitution and a spiritual leader to the Dalit people, who lovingly invoke his name with the phrase "Jai Bhim." On July 11, 1997, inhabitants of the Ramabai community in Mumbai awoke to find that a statue of Ambedkar in their neighborhood had been desecrated. Their peaceful demonstration against this hate crime drew a vicious response from the police. *Jai Bhim Comrade* opens on a tragic note: Vilas Ghogre, the Dalit poet and singer whose song is heard throughout *Bombay, Our City*, had committed suicide to protest the brutal killing of ten Dalit demonstrators in Ramabai by the Mumbai police. The documentary that unfolds around this tragedy is not just an unflinching look at the grim reality of caste-based violence but also a celebration of the resilience and ingenuity of Dalit communities. It is a must-see for those seeking to learn about casteism in India and the current state of grassroots resistance to this intractable and insidious form of discrimination.

Directed by Anand Patwardhan
India 2012, DCP, color, 169 min. English, Hindi and Marathi with English subtitles

JAI BHIM COMRADE SCREENS

India 2012/2021, DCP, color, 5 min. Hindi with English subtitles.

AMERICAN DRAG: THE QUEEN

OCTOBER 28

The Queen is presented in collaboration with Houghton Library's exhibition *American Drag*, curated by Matthew Wittmann, running from September 6, 2022 through January 7, 2023. **A tour of the exhibition at Houghton Library will be held at 5:45PM prior to the film screening.**



Frank Simon **THE QUEEN**

friday october 28 at 7pm

THE QUEEN

Frank Simon's rarely screened documentary follows the lead-up to and culmination of the 1967 Miss All-America Camp Beauty Contest held in New York City, in one of the first feature films to point the camera at a then underground scene of drag performers. Instead of dramatizing the culture and people documented in the film, Simon utilizes a "fly-on-the-wall" technique, much like the documentary work of Frederick Wiseman, who released *Titicut Follies* the same year that the beauty contest took place. *The Queen* exposes the authenticity and empathy of its characters as they openly and unabashedly discuss their sexuality, gender, relations with their partners and parents, prejudiced encounters with the US draft board and viewpoints on racial tensions. Filming from a behind-the-scenes perspective, Simon shows audiences the intricate process and preparation work—nails, shaving, wig care, eyebrows, makeup and costumes—that drag queens endure in order to invent their self-styled glitzy and glamorous stage personas. Though well-known icons exist on the edges of *The Queen*—such as Warhol superstar Mario Montez—the film carefully and systematically passes over these celebrities to focus on the true stars of the film: the drag performers themselves. At the time the film was released—prior to the 1969 Stonewall uprising in Greenwich Village—dressing in drag was perceived as a public offence by authorities under nineteenth century "masquerade laws." *The Queen* transcends narrowmindedness to explore the dedication and craft of a select group of brave artists who risked everything to share their true selves. — AV

Directed by Frank Simon
US 1968, 35mm, color, 68 min

MUFF DIVES: THE DYKE BAR IN CINEMA

OCTOBER 30 – NOVEMBER 4

This series—an abbreviated version of a retrospective that first ran at Metrograph in New York City—is devoted to films that immerse viewers, if only for a scene or two, in social spaces that are now perilously close to extinction: nightspots catering to queer women. Some of these movies were shot, however briefly, in situ in actual legendary lez bars (all of which are now shuttered); others in wholly fabricated lavender boîtes. Whether real or fictional, these clubs abound with promise, unpredictability, lust and heartache—the inevitable result of bodies mingling, dancing, flirting and more in close quarters. — *Melissa Anderson*

Series curated and program notes written by *Melissa Anderson*, film editor of *4Columns*. Special thanks to *Thomas Beard*, *L. Franklin Gilliam*, *Erin Johnson*, *Sophia Larigakis* and *Jenni Olson*.



Marie-Claude Treillhou *SIMONE BARBÈS OR VIRTUE*



Michelle Parkson *STORMÉ: THE LADY OF THE JEWEL BOX*

INTRODUCTION BY MELISSA ANDERSON

sunday october 30 at 7pm

MONA'S CANDLE LIGHT

This amateur short takes us inside the eponymous San Francisco lesbian club, which operated from 1948 to 1957 and whose clientele also included Bay Area bohemians and slumming straights. On this particular night, singer Jan Jansen entertains the crowd with some Cole Porter.

Director unknown
US ca. 1950, 35mm, color, 8 min

STORMÉ: THE LADY OF THE JEWEL BOX

Parkerson's detail-dense tribute to Stormé DeLavrie traces the butch icon's trajectory from a singer and emcee at an all-drag revue to her role as the self-appointed "guardian" of West Village lesbians.

We catch her in action, standing sentinel outside the Cubby Hole, one of many NYC dyke bars where she worked as a bouncer for decades.

Directed by Michelle Parkerson
US 1987, 16mm, color, 21 min

SIMONE BARBÈS OR VIRTUE

An unforgettable Paris fantasia, Treillhou's film tracks one long night of its protagonist, an usher at a Montparnasse porn theater. Her shift over, she heads to the lesbian nightclub where her girlfriend works—an outlandish cabaret that showcases Amazonian acrobats, a snowy-haired butch playing a squeeze-box and a dance-punk polemicist.

Directed by Marie-Claude Treillhou
US 1980, DCP, color, 77 min. French with English subtitles

friday november 4 at 9pm

LIANNA

"Lianna Massey eats pussy." So proudly declares the title protagonist of Sayles's compassionate portrait of a newly lesberated woman. Ditching her supercilious husband to embark on a passionate affair with her child-psychology prof, Lianna is introduced to the myriad pleasures of the dyke bar, not least the thrill of being cruised.

Directed by John Sayles. With Linda Griffiths, Jane Hallaren, Jon DeVries
US 1983, 35mm, color, 110 min



John Sayles *LIANNA*

MELISSA ANDERSON PRESENTS INLAND EMPIRE

OCTOBER 31

The second part of Melissa Anderson's visit features her new book *Inland Empire* (Fireflies Press, 2021) which will be on sale before the screening of the film. She will be signing copies outside the theater starting at 5:15pm this evening and also after the screening and conversation.

MELISSA ANDERSON IN CONVERSATION WITH DENNIS LIM

monday october 31 at 6pm

INLAND EMPIRE

Melissa Anderson's freshly published, compact ode to David Lynch's psychological hall of multidimensional mirrors is as much a ballad for the film's adroit star, Laura Dern. "What Dern does with her ectomorphic body, her elastic face, her accented speech," Anderson asserts, "is indispensable to keeping the spectator tethered, if not held rapt, to the psychic entropy of Lynch's film." Likewise, her eloquent essay is a gripping, cogent page turner that connects twisting, tangential threads around her central preoccupation while pondering existential, essential questions about the actors and the authors of so many mesmerizing images and stories produced by and behind the Hollywood dream machine. She eloquently diagrams how personas, characters and people cannily and uncannily intersect in the Lynchian universe and beyond. — BG

Directed by David Lynch. With Laura Dern, Jeremy Irons, Justin Theroux
US 2006, DCP, color, 180 min. English and Polish with English subtitles



David Lynch and Laura Dern on the set of INLAND EMPIRE

MICHAEL ROEMER AND THE RITE OF REDISCOVERY

NOVEMBER 11 – NOVEMBER 27



Michael Roemer

The discovery of an unknown work, or the rediscovery of a forgotten artist and subsequent revelation, reappraisal, or variations thereof, have a tendency to happen very slowly, and then all at once. Commercial trends, critical misunderstanding, archival neglect, outright bias and artistic insecurity all play a role in work being obscured, ignored and forgotten. Yet, once reintroduced and reassessed positively—and there is interest in a career in full—the widespread acknowledgement creates a continuum of excitement for the release of a body of unseen works. A major exhibition may present dozens of canvases in one fell swoop, numerous films maybe restored and screened in a retrospective all at once, but rarely, once the seal is broken, does the available work not get seen or disappear once it has.

A film may be commissioned, discarded and salvaged from a junk heap by the filmmakers themselves. Or a film can be released to initial acclaim, and then find an even more enthusiastic audience as years pass. It could also never be released at all, by the filmmaker's own decision, only be rediscovered (by the filmmaker himself!) two decades later, play major festivals, and then be forgotten again. Or, a film can wait forty years to be released, receive wide acclaim, and occasion a retrospective at the school the filmmaker attended seventy years prior. And there could even be one more feature still waiting a much-deserved theatrical release. In the most extreme example, this can all happen to the same artist, and it did, to one of the great and serious filmmakers of the twentieth century, Michael Roemer.

Michael Roemer was born in Berlin in 1928 and escaped to the UK via Kindertransport in 1939. After his time at a British school for refugee children, he arrived in America to attend Harvard in 1945. It was during these first two decades of Roemer's existence, before his arriving in the United States, that he became conscious of the contradictory notions that he has ruminated on throughout his life and which appear in all his work: the interceding of fate that allowed him to live when so many other Jewish children died, and (persuaded through his schooling) that he was neither victim nor survivor due to chance, and was to assume responsibility for his own life. However obliquely presented in his narrative features, documentaries, published screenplays and essays, there is no separation from these concepts in Roemer's work. Given the intensity of the films, but also of the actual productions and Roemer's self-admitted complete surrender to the making of his films, it shows not just an eternalization of these ideas, but a life led under their direction.

So, to begin at what would be, for someone else, their sentimental education, but, for Roemer already what can be considered, after Europe, the rest of his life: Harvard, where his dedication to cinema began in earnest. Jews were forbidden to see films in Berlin during his childhood, and Roemer saw only a dozen or so films in England during the war. At Harvard, Roemer joined the newly founded campus filmmaking society. Previous classes had graduated students that went to work in the film industry, but it was Roemer's class, the Class of 1949, that produced five future film professionals. Around this time, Roemer met his close friend, and future collaborator, Robert Young.

Most extraordinarily, Roemer directed, to those who are even aware of this historic, precocious feat, what is generally thought to be (recently other contenders for this title have appeared), the first student feature, an hour-long film

entitled *A Touch of the Times*. Premiering at the University Theatre, well-timed on the weekend of the Princeton game, with an enormous crowd gathered in Harvard Square, the film made all its money back from the one show. Commercially, Roemer jokes, it remains his most successful film. All but completely lost to history, this is just the first instance in Roemer's career of an achievement that should, but did not, carve his name, even lightly, into history. This retrospective at Harvard Film Archive will mark the first time Roemer has been invited back to campus to present his work since that weekend.

Following graduation, Roemer spent most of the following decade working, in nearly every capacity, for Louis de Rochemont, co-creator of *The March of Time* newsreels. He also made nearly one hundred educational films, including a hard-to-fathom nearly sixty in the years 1957 and 1958. (Apparently, however remarkable, this was not unheard of.) Around the same time, Robert Young, who had been making scientific films, was now employed at NBC's documentary division, and it was at Young's invitation, and a long-shared desire to work together, that Roemer joined him to travel to Palermo, Sicily to start production on their first collaboration as writers-producers-directors-photographers-editors, *Cortile Cascino*.



Michael Roemer and Robert Young CORTILE CASCINO

One thing becomes evident to any contemporary viewer as soon as *Cortile Cascino* begins, and must have, too, to those at NBC who decided to destroy the negative; this is not the kind of documentary one was used to seeing at the time, and as a few minutes pass, another realization, now, as then, how did they expect this would get on the conservative television of the day? (CBS had broadcast *Harvest of Shame* in 1960, but *Cortile Cascino* is something else entirely.) First, a title card states that the film has "Spoken commentary based on actual recorded conversations," a curious preface, and for the next three quarters of an hour, we meet the residents of Cortile Cascino, per the voiceover, an "ancient slum." Roemer abhorred the narration, and he would remove large segments of it for the version that now exists, but it does deflect somewhat from the extremity of the images by giving people names and identities. Animal slaughter, child labor, crippling poverty and prostitution are all presented as facts of life in Cortile Cascino, as they are facts of life across the earth, should someone look, which American television might not have thought its postwar audiences were yet ready to, even if it was the reality in their own cities. NBC cancelled the broadcast days before the scheduled airdate, yet remarkably, the person tasked with junking the negative admired the film and made a dupe, which is the source that allowed the film to be saved.

In addition to solidifying the Roemer-Young partnership and hinting stylistically at how their non-fiction tendencies would be adapted to their future fiction work, *Cortile Cascino* most significantly reveals a hint of Roemer's inclination and insight, available to very few people, of someone who experiences things—work, conversations, relationships, emotions—more deeply and thoroughly than most and exists separately from the rest of us.

Faces of Israel was the product of a commission from NET to make a film about Martin Buber, an assignment accepted as a research trip for an option Roemer and Young had on Elie Wiesel's *Dawn*, ultimately abandoned as unfilmable. Shot in 1966, for which Roemer spent six weeks of research in Israel before cameras rolled, the resulting film *Dialogue* was eventually aired on PBS. It was a decade later, while teaching at Yale, that Roemer revisited the footage and recut it as *Faces of Israel*, the film never shown, or even intended to be shown, save for a few screenings, and often mistaken as airing in 1966. The film opens with a single still image of an emaciated dead body, presumably a Nazi victim, in a camp or a ghetto, held for just a few seconds: no sound, no text, no narration. Nothing is needed. And then the contemporary images begin. It is as simple and striking an opening as the documentary form has produced.

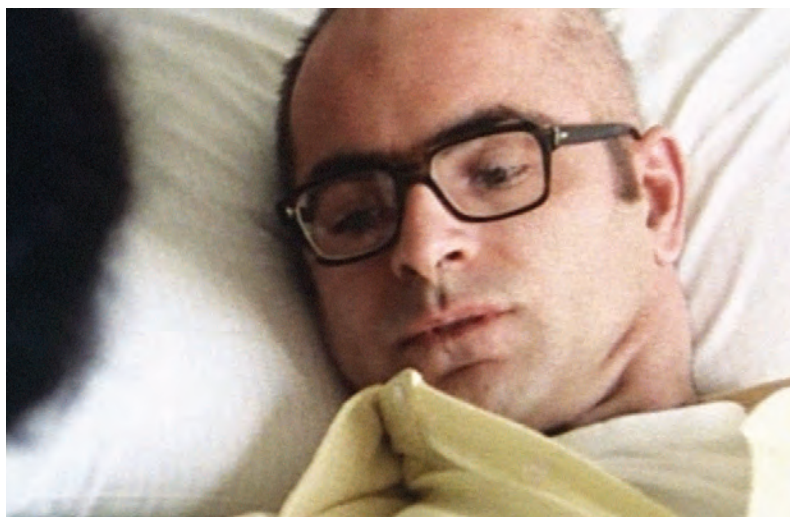
Nothing But a Man, Roemer's first feature film as writer and director (co-produced and shot by Young) was warmly received on release and has continued to grow in stature with each passing generation, and achieving its stature as a classic, it was still twenty years after its opening, when re-released by New Video at Film Forum, that the film began to reach larger audiences. Routinely described as "a landmark," while accurate, perhaps somewhat reduces its significance and greatness as a work of art, as well as the extraordinary performances by the great Abbey Lincoln, Ivan Dixon, Gloria Foster, Yaphet Kotto and Julius Harris. As a depiction of Black American life, it was unprecedented, rightfully lauded for decades, and remains Roemer's most widely known work. Even so, it has been in and out of circulation over the years, most recently re-released in 2012 by Cinema Conservancy from a Library of Congress preservation which premiered at the New York Film Festival. Currently out of print on DVD (a new restoration and Blu-ray release are forthcoming in 2023). *Nothing But a Man*, like all of Roemer's films following, allows for generational discovery, because unlike the majority of their contemporary work, the films simply do not date.



Michael Roemer NOTHING BUT A MAN

Seeing connections between Black and Jewish life, Roemer incorporated into the script for *Nothing But a Man* his own childhood experience of the dissolution of family through his father's abandonment of him as a child, and his displacement due to Nazism. Yet he began to feel, once the film had been released, that the hope he had felt during the making—the notion that the honorable and upstanding wins—was not going to bear itself out in the reality of life. Thus, a reconsideration of storytelling methods began to take shape in Roemer's mind. By Roemer's estimation, in a reversal of centuries-old myths and folktales in which the major events of the protagonists' lives are controlled by destiny or the will of gods, the typical American movie premise highlighted stories in which characters had agency, who could shape their fate, even if it ultimately ended in tragedy. Roemer felt he could no longer tell stories with this premise at their center, an aversion that solidified after the release of *Nothing But a Man*, when he was courted by Hollywood, wrote and developed unproduced scripts for studios and producers, and turned down assignments (including *Goodbye, Columbus*). These experiences, and his aversion to telling stories he felt were lies, lead to his second independent production, *The Plot Against Harry*.

The story of a small-time Jewish bookie freshly out of jail and trying to regain his lost turf, *The Plot Against Harry* is one of the great New York films and, to a contingent of true believers, a total masterpiece, beautifully shot in black and white, again by Young. However, in keeping with Roemer's new path as a writer, Harry is an increasingly desperate and unheroic character who keeps losing, propelled by unbelievable coincidence as he attempts to work his way out from under increasing obstacles completely beyond his control. It is also deadpan in the extreme, specifically ethnic—warts and all—and refuses to telegraph its intentions. Thus, early screenings were met with bafflement, most significantly from anyone who would possibly distribute the film. Roemer decided to shelve it. *The Plot Against Harry* is not a film that was released and failed. It is a film that the creator decided failed and was never released.



Michael Roemer DYING

was interested in exploring the topic, but only from the point of view of those in the process of dying. Three and a half months of interviews with forty people lead to a two-year project and would eventually leave Roemer physically and emotionally depleted. But as a result, *Dying* is unlike any other film in its attempt to address the still most taboo of all subjects, saying on camera what few would under any circumstances.

The reaction was swift and brutal from some, who sputtered in asking why he had made the film, though others recognize it rightfully as a crucial and unique contribution not to only the discussion of death, but of open discussion at all. It is not easy to see Harriet, the soon to be young widow, admit that she is terrified of being alone with two teenage sons, and if her husband Bill is going to die, "Why can't it just be quick," so she could still have a chance to re-marry? Roemer remembers being told at a screening that such an admission would ostracize Harriet from her community. This turned out not to be the case, the community far more understanding of Harriet's honesty than predicted. Painful truth, people's unpredictability and emotional brutality reoccur in Roemer's films, narrative or non-narrative. As he says, "I don't make decisions, I let facts decide for me, just like my fiction films."

Dying remains Roemer's last non-fiction film and its wide acclaim (more widely written about at the time than any of Roemer's other films), lead directly to his final two films. His next, *Pilgrim, Farewell*, revisits themes of *Dying*, but inverts the drama. There is no outward anger displayed by the people in *Dying* who are, in fact, dying. Whereas it was the dying man's wife who was angry in the earlier film, for this narrative of a young woman dying, it is she who is furious at her family and the world. Co-produced by *American Playhouse*, the film would play festivals and receive very positive reviews when broadcast on PBS. Having not made a narrative film in two decades, and in need of raising money to make the film, Roemer conceived of a project that he could not be stopped from making. Staged minimally, in one setting with a small cast, *Pilgrim, Farewell* could be called a four-hander or chamber piece, but more elegantly described as a small symphony. It too remains virtually unseeable.

Earlier this year, at Film Forum in New York, Roemer's *Vengeance is Mine*, originally titled *Haunted*, received its first ever theatrical release, in a new 35mm print from a 16mm blowup, nearly forty years after it was made. Along with *Pilgrim, Farewell*, this was the least known of Roemer's work. More so, the new title, *Vengeance is Mine*, did not reference what little writing existed on the film. Following the discovery of *The Plot Against Harry* twenty



Michael Roemer THE PLOT AGAINST HARRY

The disaster that *The Plot Against Harry* had on his career trajectory as a filmmaker was matched by Roemer's own despondency. It was nearly twenty years later, when transferring the film to video in the lab, that a technician laughed, and Roemer reconsidered the film. On a whim, he submitted it to festivals, and *The Plot Against Harry* finally made it to screens twenty years after it was made, with a major run including Cannes, New York, Toronto and Sundance, followed by a theatrical release, a rave review on *At the Movies with Siskel and Ebert*, and even coverage on *The Today Show*. Here is where the film permanently re-enters consciousness, fully appreciated. And that happens, somewhat, except for the permanent part. Though truly beloved, and, like *Nothing But a Man*, enough of a singular achievement for an entire career to rest, *The Plot Against Harry* also faded from availability over the decades. The DVD, thankfully released by New Video, is out of print, but this too will soon change with a new 4K restoration completed by Duart, and a new 35mm print that will screen in this retrospective and remain in the collection of the HFA.

It would be over a decade before Roemer again shot a narrative film. It was the wide acclaim of Roemer's next film, the documentary *Dying*, that convinced German television to offer a budget towards what resulted in two new films (*Pilgrim, Farewell* and *Vengeance is Mine*). While continuing to teach at Yale and write scripts, Roemer was asked by WGBH if he would be interested in making a film about the rites and customs of death. Roemer



Michael Roemer PILGRIM, FAREWELL

years after it was made, here is another masterpiece receiving its premiere forty years later. Any scenario like the delayed appreciations of *Nothing But a Man* and *The Plot Against Harry* happening to the same filmmaker would be incredible, but with *Vengeance is Mine*, the centerpiece of this series, let's try a third time, work back from there, and make sure all of Roemer's work can now be made available and seen.

Premiering on PBS' *American Playhouse* in March of 1984, *Vengeance is Mine* screened at the London Film Festival and Berlinale the same year. According to Roemer, the film screened nowhere else at the time, and virtually nowhere since, with the exception of a few retrospectives. *Vengeance is Mine* is not a lost film, and not necessarily even a forgotten one, as so few saw it to begin with (and those who did would have known it as *Haunted*). Nearly no writing contemporaneous to the television airing exists, with the exception of a *New York Times* review (not positive), a small capsule in *People* (positive), and a review in the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine*. Roemer was never entirely happy with either *Haunted* or *Vengeance is Mine* as titles (*Haunted*, he thought "weak", *Vengeance is Mine* too explicit). *Nothing But a Man*, by comparison, was originally titled *Duff Anderson*, Roemer thinking the final title tipped the hand of his intentions a bit too much.

Vengeance is Mine opens with Jo (Brooke Adams), in an unbroken take of over a minute, smiling, thinking, closing her eyes, as she flies into her New England hometown, slightly tipsy from onboard drinks. We do not yet know she is fleeing a physically abusive relationship, nor that she is returning to attempt reconciliation and say goodbye to her adoptive mother, before flying back out again to start a new life in Seattle. Within moments of her return, Jo, having shortened her name from the Mary Jo of her childhood, runs into an old boyfriend for whom she has no nostalgia or sentimentality. Through a quick series of occurrences—not wanting to return to her sister's house after being attacked by her estranged husband and instead going to the home of the neighbors she has just met—Jo finds herself witness to a family coming apart under the stress of mental illness, and instead of backing away, is suddenly compelled, or willed, to become more involved in their lives.

In this film, Roemer's ideas of character come to fullest fruition. Roemer has said that his characters believe themselves to be proactive, but are, in fact, *reactive*. They may think they know what they are doing, but, in the end, they are at the mercy of chance. What all of Roemer's work shares is an assuredness of its own pace, in step only with itself, all utterly original works confronting major themes in a minor key.

It is a career not rare in its eccentricities, but unheard of. Singular, brilliant films, all of them. Gratefully, we now have access to all, more widely with each passing day. As if by message in a bottle sent to himself, we are fortunate for the filmmaker's foresight in preserving the original negatives, allowing for new scans and prints to be made.

Since the early 1970s until his recent retirement, Roemer taught at Yale, and has continued to write screenplays, collected in the four volume collection *Film Stories*, as well as essays, notably *Shocked But Connected: Notes of Laughter*. Roemer lives in Vermont.

The author is grateful for the participation of Michael Roemer, with whom many conversations form the basis of much of this piece. — *Jake Perlin*

The HFA is thrilled to screen new 35mm prints of both *The Plot Against Harry* and *Vengeance is Mine*, and welcome Michael Roemer who will grace our theater for three evenings and will be joined by Brooke Adams for the the discussion following *Vengeance is Mine*. The Harvard Film Archive is also honored to screen a beautiful 35mm print of *Day of Wrath*, with Michael Roemer—who personally knew Carl Theodor Dreyer—on hand to introduce and discuss this heralded master work of world cinema.



Michael Roemer VENGEANCE IS MINE

friday november 11 at 7pm

sunday november 27 at 3pm

NOTHING BUT A MAN

Directed by Michael Roemer. With Ivan Dixon, Abbey Lincoln, Julius Harris
US 1964, 35mm, b/w, 95 min

CORTILE CASCINO

Directed by Michael Roemer and Robert Young
US 1962, 16mm, b/w, 46 min

sunday november 13 at 3pm

CORTILE CASCINO

Directed by Michael Roemer and Robert Young
US 1962, 16mm, b/w, 46 min

FACES OF ISRAEL

Directed by Michael Roemer
US 1967, digital file, b/w, 27 min

sunday november 13 at 7pm

THE PLOT AGAINST HARRY

Directed by Michael Roemer. With Martin Priest, Ben Lang, Maxine Woods
US 1969, 35mm, b/w, 81 min

FACES OF ISRAEL

Directed by Michael Roemer
US 1967, digital file, b/w, 27 min

**\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS
MICHAEL ROEMER IN PERSON**

friday november 18 at 7pm

DYING

Directed by Michael Roemer
US 1976, 16mm, color, 82 min

**\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS
MICHAEL ROEMER AND BROOKE ADAMS IN
CONVERSATION WITH JAKE PERLIN**

saturday november 19 at 7pm

VENGEANCE IS MINE

Directed by Michael Roemer. With Brooke Adams, Trish Van Devere, Jon DeVries
US 1984, 35mm, color, 118 min

**\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS
MICHAEL ROEMER IN PERSON**

sunday november 20 at 7pm

PILGRIM, FAREWELL

Directed by Michael Roemer. With Elizabeth Huddle Nyberg, Christopher Lloyd, Laurie Pange
US 1982, 35mm, color, 102 min



Carl Theodor Dreyer DAY OF WRATH

seeks to capture not only the look and feeling of a specific time and place, but also its spiritual dimensions—here a search for redemption in a troubled and fallen world that resonated with Europe during the Second World War and continues to offer stark and moving lessons for attentive viewers to this very day. — HG

Directed by Carl Theodor Dreyer. With Thorkild Roose, Lisbeth Movin, Sigrid Neiiendam
Denmark 1943, 35mm, b/w, 110 min. Danish with English subtitles

MICHAEL ROEMER IN PERSON TO INTRODUCE AND DISCUSS

monday november 21 at 7pm

DAY OF WRATH VREDENS DAG

It is not things in reality that the director should be interested in but the spirit in or behind things. Realism in itself is not art. — Carl Theodor Dreyer

Day of Wrath is the first in the trilogy of extraordinary films about women martyred by rigid patriarchy that marked the final chapter of Carl Dreyer's legendary career. Although set during the 17th century, the film's story of a young woman uneasily married to a widowed older parson and shadowed by suspicions of witchcraft has been read by many as a stark allegory of life during the Nazi occupation of Denmark that was at its darkest moment at the time of the film's 1943 release. An early master of the silent cinema, Dreyer continued to craft stories in the sound era more through image than dialogue, through an inimitable and almost—but not exactly—minimal style defined as much by his careful limitation of characters and settings as the close, even fastidious, attention he gave to period details. In *Day of Wrath*, Dreyer thus uses seemingly quotidian scenes and unremarked moments—the closing of a cabinet, a sideways glance, the sound of a windstorm—to capture and render starkly legible the complex web of guilt and incrimination between the young wife, her elderly husband, his hard-hearted mother and his young son, suddenly returned and immediately attracted to his father's bride. Like *Ordet* after, and recalling *The Passion of Joan of Arc* before, Dreyer's late masterpiece

BROOKE ADAMS, RADIANCE IN PLAIN SIGHT

NOVEMBER 12 – NOVEMBER 20

An actress whose specific strain of naturalistic performance and beauty Hollywood of the 1970s seemed to particularly appreciate, Brooke Adams (b. 1949) enchants audiences with an allure that is somehow both striking and nonchalant, that electrifies when she unleashes that smile, and that she never seems to flaunt. Her characters evince intelligence and self-possession while modestly revealing an undercurrent of self-doubt and vulnerability. Always playing characters to be taken seriously, Adams seems to drop so easily and fully into her parts that her nuanced restraint and her subtle, vast expressiveness may slip past entirely unnoticed.

Appropriately, her breakthrough was a role with relatively little dialogue: the unwittingly heartbreaking Abby in Terrence Malick's *Days of Heaven*. Her Abby is quietly bewitching, keeping her heart well tucked into her sleeve, revealing just enough to keep both Sam Shepard's lovestruck farmer and the audience completely devoted despite her apparent duplicity. In the films that followed—whether horror, science-fiction, family drama or political thriller—she imports a grounding, empathetic warmth, bright mystery, subdued sophistication and steady pragmatism. She anchors even the most fantastic plots with a down-to-earth authenticity and a charisma capable of transforming the onscreen romances into credible, meaningful relationships.

She has since brought that believability to an extensive range of roles in cinema, on television, on the Internet and in the theater, where she has taken on challenging parts in everything from *The Heidi Chronicles* to Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days*, in which her loquacious character spends the length of the play buried in a pile of sand. – BG

The Harvard Film Archive is pleased to present a program of some of Brooke Adams' most memorable roles, including Michael Roemer's rediscovered *Vengeance is Mine*, also showing as part of his retrospective this fall. And we are thrilled that she will be joining the director to discuss that film and will appear again for the now legendary *Days of Heaven*.



Philip Kaufman *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS*

saturday november 12 at 7pm GAS FOOD LODGING

"Women are lonely in the 90s. It's our new phase," deadpans Brooke Adams' cynical Nora to her erstwhile, married beau. Living in a trailer park in a stark Western town, she struggles with raising her two teenage daughters, Trudi and Shade—flawlessly portrayed by lone Skye and Fairuza Balk—on a waitress' salary. Though packed with a motley cast of maverick characters, the trio of women defiantly hold the center of Allison Anders' luminescent, emotionally adventurous coming-of-age story. Even physically bearing some resemblance to her cinematic daughters, Adams disappears into her role, rapidly cycling through a chaos of emotions—exhaustion, exasperation, anger, love, disappointment—and buffered by a defiant survival instinct her daughters have inherited. A highlight of the 90s indie film explosion, *Gas Food Lodging* winds quirkily and enchantingly along a laidback, dusty road glimmering with unexpected richness, rawness, romance and tragedy as each of the women blazes her own trail, however unconventional that may be.

Directed by Allison Anders. With Brooke Adams, lone Skye, Fairuza Balk
US 1992, 35mm, color, 103 min. English and Spanish with English subtitles

saturday november 12 at 9pm INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS

One of those exceptional remakes of a classic film that manages to equal and perhaps surpass the strengths of its predecessor, this earthier variant hones its existential horror with a more subtle, startling naturalism. Philip Kaufman's is set at the end of a socially and politically fraught 1970s in San Francisco where "flower people" still flourish, only a different kind. The film taps into the fear of conformity, submission to authority, corporatization and a deep distrust of a government that is no longer a protector but party to the terror. He also includes a hint of feminist angst in the form of Brooke Adams' Elizabeth, who is the first to notice something is not right with either the strange flowers or her suddenly soulless boyfriend, yet she is initially accused—by Leonard Nimoy's pop psychologist—of just being unhappy in her relationship. Eventually, a small group of radicals—including Jeff Goldblum and Veronica Cartwright's quirky duo, and Elizabeth's coworker/confidant Ben, an empathetic Donald Sutherland—seem the only ones aware that everyone is turning into uncanny shells of their former selves. Adams and Sutherland lend such a believ-

able warmth and tenderness to Elizabeth and Ben's evolving relationship that the shock and heartache of this insidious takeover is all the more terrifying and relatable. With creeping visual details, an eerily minimal soundtrack, sophisticated special effects, and ominous, disorienting camera angles, the film unnervingly envisions this painfully imaginable, always relevant, homogenizing plague for which all the usual remedies no longer exist.

Directed by Philip Kaufman. With Donald Sutherland, Brooke Adams, Jeff Goldblum
US 1978, 35mm, color, 115 min

monday november 14 at 7pm THE DEAD ZONE

Within Cronenberg's beautifully composed horror film, Adams once again provides a kind of grounding security, light and love—even if it is not to be fully realized—for Christopher Walken's Johnny, who is unmoored by the psychic powers he acquires after a car accident. Their burgeoning romance is cut short by his prolonged coma, and he awakens to find her married to someone else. Here, as elsewhere in this program, Adams and her onscreen par amour enjoy a sweet chemistry, exposing his vulner-



David Cronenberg *THE DEAD ZONE*

ability and longing to be without the burden of his “gift.” Their scenes provide a cozy contrast to the horrors of Johnny’s disturbing visions—and their accurate outcomes—which begin to carry increasingly heavier moral responsibility. As with *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, this film spikes its thrills with genuine pathos and scary politics. When Martin Sheen appears as a truly terrifying demagogue in the making, Johnny’s tormenting premonitions are amplified to a global scale as he must attempt to change the fate of this charismatic madman.

Directed by David Cronenberg. With Christopher Walken, Brooke Adams, Tom Skerritt
US 1983, 35mm, color, 103 min

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS
BROOKE ADAMS IN PERSON

sunday november 20 at 3pm

DAYS OF HEAVEN

Terrence Malick’s second film is set in the Texas Panhandle in 1916, with a plot out of the operas and stage melodramas of that era: lovers on the run pose as brother and sister to find work on a farm, only to have the ailing farmer fall in love with the young woman—Brooke Adams in a role that would beguile audiences as well. She and fellow unknowns Richard Gere and Sam Shepard portray their descent from Eden with penetrating looks and laconic dialogue, while a child’s disarming commentary—improvised by Linda Manz—provides a poetic chorus and dis-



Terrence Malick DAYS OF HEAVEN

tanced point-of-view. With World War I just over the horizon, the loss of innocence detailed by the screenplay parallels the pristine landscapes beginning to be despoiled by early modern technology. Cinematographers Nestor Almendros and Haskell Wexler shot almost exclusively with natural light. Their ravishing panoramas and the restrained power

of Malick’s performers bring his imagination to lucid life. — *adapted from a note by David Pendleton*

Directed by Terrence Malick. With Richard Gere, Brooke Adams, Sam Shepard
US 1978, 35mm, color, 94 min

HAN OKHI AND THE FILMS OF THE KAIDU CLUB

NOVEMBER 28

There are two prejudices in cinema as it exists: filmmaking is only a man’s job and movies should be a box office success. We, as outsiders, will break these two stereotypes. — Kaidu Club, Chosun Ilbo, March 30, 1974

Existing filmmakers make films to make money, but we make money to make films. — Kaidu Club, Weekly Woman, February 9, 1975

As filmmaker Barbara Hammer proclaimed in 1993, “radical content deserves radical form.” Few filmmakers in South Korean history have so wholly embraced this call to action as Kaidu Club—credited as Korea’s first feminist film collective—and its founder, Han Okhi (b. 1948). During one of the most oppressive decades of South Korean politics and cinema, Kaidu Club pursued a radically feminist intervention through their spectacular experimental filmmaking. Recently, the confluence of Korean media’s global takeover and a surge in South Korean feminism have prompted film scholars and curators to recognize Han Okhi and Kaidu Club’s pioneering roles in the genealogy of South Korean women’s cinema.

In 1974, Han Okhi assembled the collective of amateur women filmmakers in opposition to the acute misogyny of Korean society and the film industry under President Park Chung-hee’s regime. Like Han, its earliest members—Kim Jeomson, Wang Gyuwon, Yi Jeonghui, Han Sunae, and Jeong Myosuk—were graduates from the elite women’s college Ewha University who lacked formal filmmaking training. Named in the fighting spirit of the unbeatable warrior great-granddaughter of Genghis Khan, Kaidu Club sensationally debuted in 1974 when they hosted the First Experimental Film Festival on the rooftop of the Shinsegae Department Store. Combining their eclectic backgrounds in literature, audiovisual design, fine arts, journalism and dance, they collectively produced and presented 16mm amateur experimental films, multimedia and street performances, and academic presentations for approximately four years.

What makes Han Okhi and Kaidu Club unique trailblazers of Korean feminist filmmaking is their wholly experimental approach. Already a well-read feminist, Han discovered the burgeoning experimental filmmaking movement shortly after completing graduate school and identified within the artform its uniquely visceral power to subvert convention, even beyond the confines of the film industry. The exclusion by Chungmuro (Korea’s “Hollywood”) of women filmmakers and its abysmally sexist representations of female characters prompted Kaidu Club to declare in 1975 that “there are no women in Korean film.” However, Kaidu Club did not seek acceptance within these patriarchal systems as filmmakers or film subjects. Rather, the group employed experimental filmmaking to thoroughly disrupt the very logic of these normative systems of oppression.



Han Okhi

To this end, Kaidu Club imbued every aspect of their practice with unwavering experimentalism and anti-commercialism. The members collectively served as actors, crew members and editors for each other's films. They shot 16mm film spontaneously with handheld cameras and without sets or scripts, even turning the shooting process into a protest performance itself. They adopted a formal style that renounced narrativity and linearity to question conventional meaning-making, much in the vein of the feminist film formalism about which the prominent scholar Laura Mulvey was contemporaneously theorizing. Kaidu Club's cross-pollination of feminism and experimentalism made it a vanguard of both movements and led the collective to produce some of the boldest experimental works of the period.

Though the group dissolved as its members moved onto other projects, Kaidu Club's undying commitment to the power of cinema persists in founder Han Okhi's continued film career. Shortly after the dissolution of Kaidu Club, Han moved to Germany to study theater and film at the Free University of Berlin. After returning to Korea, she founded the Kaidu Production company, directed a handful of personal projects and commissions for various South Korean expositions, and held several esteemed professor and jury positions. She served as a Korean correspondent for the Berlin International Film Festival for more than a decade and, in 1998, published a memoir entitled *People Who Are Crazy for Movies are Beautiful*. Han's illustrious and impactful career has been recently honored around the world by festivals including the Toronto International Film Festival, the Seoul Independent Film Festival, the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen and the Jeonju International Film Festival.

Han Okhi and Kaidu Club's intervention into Korean cinema seemed in many ways before its time. For a "first," Kaidu Club appears something of an anomaly in the lineage of South Korean feminist filmmaking, which, starting in the 1980s, would focus primarily on documentary filmmaking and women's sociopolitical struggles. Yet it is Kaidu Club's powerfully subversive response to its political moment that distinguishes it as a trailblazer of experimental and feminist filmmaking for being uniquely, radically both.

The Harvard Film Archive is proud to host the first program in the United States to feature the historic films of Han Okhi and Kaidu Club in collaboration with the Asia Culture Center in Gwangju, South Korea. Featuring Han's later and rarely exhibited work alongside several of her earliest forays into experimental filmmaking, this program recognizes Kaidu Club's lasting legacy in the realms of South Korean experimental cinema, women's filmmaking and feminism through the present day.
— Hannah Baek

This program will be complemented by additional films streamed online. Check the HFA website for updates.

Program curated and film descriptions by Hannah Baek.

Co-sponsored by the Kim Koo Forum at the Korea Institute, Harvard University. Special thanks: Jiha Kim—Asia Culture Center Cinematheque.

monday november 28 at 7pm

KAIDU CLUB EXPERIMENTAL SHORTS

Presented at film festivals hosted by Kaidu Club, at state film contests and in multimedia art shows, the short films featured in this program are all attributed to Kaidu Club's originating member, Han Okhi. However, the hands of the collective's many members mark them all with an eclecticism of style and technique: cofounding member and painter Kim Jeomson's artwork is featured at the beginning of *Hole*, and she plays the main role in *Untitled 77-A*, alongside a cameo from Han herself. Dazzling in-camera effects, solarization, stop-motion animation, collage and dissonant sound and camera angles converge in Han's work in an all-out attack on perception—as avant-garde artist Jeong Changseung remarked upon their viewing, they act like “a sharp razor blade cutting out the thick dead skin from one's consciousness.” Where the films here roughly span the lifetime of the group's activity, they also reveal a trajectory from loose linearity towards free association as they traverse themes like oppression, mortality, reunification, censorship and heritage. Nevertheless, the constant remains their insistent break from the times' normative modes of production, narrativity and exhibition in the group's radically feminist pursuit of “destroying existing concepts.”



Han Okhi THE MIDDLE DOG DAYS

HOLE GUMEONG

Directed by Han Okhi
South Korea 1974, digital video, b/w, 8 min

THE MIDDLE DOG DAYS JUNGBOK

Directed by Han Okhi
South Korea 1974, digital video, b/w, 7 min

2MINUTES40SECONDS 2BUN40CHO

Directed by Han Okhi
South Korea 1975, digital video, b/w & color, 10 min

COLOR OF KOREA SAEKDONG

Directed by Han Okhi
South Korea 1976, digital video, color, 8 min

UNTITLED 77-A MUJE 77-A

Directed by Han Okhi
South Korea 1977, digital video, color, 6 min



Han Okhi 2MINUTES40SECONDS



Han Okhi UNTITLED 77-A



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carpenter center for the visual arts
24 quincy street
cambridge, ma 02138

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THE AFRICAN DESPERATE BY MARTINE SYMS

OCTOBER 20 – OCTOBER 23

Martine Syms is a 2022 Josep Luís Sert Practitioner in the Arts in the Department of Art, Film and Visual Studies. In collaboration with AFVS and the Carpenter Center for Visual Arts, the Harvard Film Archive is pleased to welcome Martine Syms for a screening and discussion of *The African Desperate* with AFVS Professor and Chair David Joselit.

Co-presented by the Department of Art, Film, and Visual Studies; Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts; and the Harvard Film Archive.

MARTINE SYMS IN CONVERSATION WITH DAVID JOSELIT (THURSDAY)

thursday october 20 at 7pm

friday october 21 at 9pm

sunday october 23 at 7pm

THE AFRICAN DESPERATE

The latest film by interdisciplinary artist and self-named “conceptual entrepreneur” Martine Syms (b. 1988) offers an offbeat and insightfully comic meditation on the 21st century art world, seen from the point of view of Palace, a Black woman artist navigating the disorienting day of, and long night after, the completion of her MFA. Animated by Syms’ mordant humor and the remarkable presence of frequent collaborator and fellow artist Diamond Stingily, the film playfully melds together tropes of 90s rom-com and high theory while exploring the artistic and semiotic dimensions of social media expanded in Syms’ other work. Partially based on Syms’ own time as a graduate student, the film also critically but humorously examines the specificities of Black experience in the art world and, in the process, highlights the unspoken codes of language and performance refined and enforced by MFA programs. *The African Desperate* balances its often-hilarious satire with a genuine affection for its characters and their desires, boldly adding feature length narrative cinema to Syms’ dynamically expanded artistic practice. — HG

Directed by Martine Syms. With Diamond Stingily, Dillon Egyes, Brent David Freaney
US 2022, DCP, color, 100 min



Martine Syms *THE AFRICAN DESPERATE*

in person

LEANDRO LISTORTI september 19

JOÃO PEDRO RODRIGUES & JOÃO
RUI GUERRA DA MATA october 7 - 8

TSAI MING-LIANG, LEE KANG-SHENG,
ANONG HOUNGHEUANGSY &
CLAUDE WANG october 10 & 14

MARTINE SYMS october 20

MELISSA ANDERSON october 30 - 31

ANAND PATWARDHAN november 6 - 7

MICHAEL ROEMER november 18 - 21

BROOKE ADAMS november 19 - 20

PAZ ENCINA december 2

coming soon

FILMS OF THE KOREAN DIASPORA

MED HONDO RETROSPECTIVE

KIVU ROHORAHOZA in person

MOSHEN MAKHMALBAF in person

WANG BING in person