

# HARVARD FILM ARCHIVE



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*All text written by Brittany Gravely, Haden Guest and David Pendleton, unless otherwise noted.*

**On the cover: Agnès Varda's One Sings, the Other Doesn't. p. 20**



*Courtesy Michael Hutcherson*

## DAVID PENDLETON 1964 - 2017

Please join us as we remember and celebrate our beloved colleague David Pendleton who left us, all too soon, on Monday, November 6.

I feel honored and humbled to have worked many years side by side with someone so generous, gentle and wise as David Pendleton. David was passionate and deeply knowledgeable about cinema, but he carried his erudition lightly and was always eager to share his insights about film and film history. During his ten years at the Harvard Film Archive, David refined the art of cinemathèque programming, effortlessly inventing scores of popular yet challenging programs and masterfully inspiring dialogue from even the most recalcitrant or reticent filmmakers with an easy rapport and a sharp, but never prodding, line of questions. David's love for cinema was infectious and true for it was inspired by a real love for bringing people together in intimate community to embark upon the kinds of unique and mind-expanding journeys that cinema alone makes possible. David was also a consummate showman and worked very hard to uphold the HFA's dedication to screen film as film and give audiences the increasingly rare chance to experience great cinema screened in a theatrical setting and in its original historic formats. While our summer-long complete retrospectives of classical-era cinema were a special passion of David, he was equally dedicated to contemporary and historic world cinema. Indeed, David's wonderfully eclectic yet carefully discriminating taste exploded the range of cinematic experiences available to the greater Cambridge and Boston area. Through his programming and through his example, David was a trusted friend and an inspiration to so many at Harvard, in Cambridge and around the world.

It is difficult to express the sense of loss that all of us at the HFA feel right now. I can, however, make clear to you our dedication to the memory and important legacy of David who believed, above all, that the show must go on. – *Haden Guest*

*A special tribute to David Pendleton will take place Sunday December 10 at 5pm in the HFA theater.*

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# OUROBOROS BY BASMA ALSHARIF

NOVEMBER 30 - DECEMBER 1

Now based in Los Angeles, Basma Alsharif (b. 1983) is an artist/filmmaker born in Kuwait of Palestinian origin and raised in France, the US and the Gaza Strip. With a BFA and an MFA from the University of Illinois at Chicago, Alsharif developed her practice nomadically in Chicago, Cairo, Beirut, Sharjah, Amman, the Gaza Strip and Paris. She works between cinema and installation, centering on the human condition in relation to shifting geopolitical landscapes and natural environments. Major exhibitions include the Whitney Biennial, les Rencontres d'Arles, les Modules at the Palais de Tokyo, *Here and Elsewhere* at the New Museum, Al Riwaq Biennial Palestine, the Berlin Documentary Forum and Manifesta 8. She received a jury prize at the Sharjah Biennial 9 and was awarded the Marcelino Botin Visual Arts grant. She is represented by Galerie Imane Farés in Paris, and her works are distributed by Video Data Bank and Arsenal.

Presented in partnership with the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts and the Film Study Center, Harvard.

Special thanks: Daisy Nam—Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts and Cozette Russell—Film Study Center.

## FREE ADMISSION BASMA ALSHARIF IN PERSON

thursday november 30 at 6pm

### BASMA ALSHARIF: DRAWING A LINE THROUGH THE OUROBOROS

Basma Alsharif presents an evening of texts, sounds, and images as references and influences for her first feature-length film *Ouroboros*, which screens the following evening. The event includes excerpts from Pier Paolo Pasolini's documentary *Location Hunting in Palestine*, a brief reading from Carlo Levi's *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, and sounds by musician Yann Gourdon. Also included is Alsharif's short film *Home Movies Gaza* (2013, 24 min), in which she captures the private and public spheres of the Gaza Strip.

## \$12 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS BASMA ALSHARIF IN PERSON

friday december 1 at 7pm

### OUROBOROS

Basma Alsharif's first feature-length film ambitiously expands the exploration of her earlier shorts of the contested geography and history of her native Palestine. *Ouroboros* takes its title from the ancient Egyptian mythological symbol of a snake devouring its own tail and paradoxically signifying both self-annihilation and infinity. Paradoxical movement is also key to Alsharif's film from its remarkable opening image, a mesmerizing and dramatically extended overhead shot of waves lapping, not against, but away from the Gaza shore. A similar reverse force mysteriously guides key sequences throughout *Ouroboros*, most notably a bravura and wordless Steadicam sequence of a woman returning to (or is she leaving?) a home that may or may not be her own. The question and problem of return is written everywhere across a film that refuses any kind of center or narrative destination yet is structured around unexplained symmetries between the intertwined and sundrenched territories through which it glides: Palestine, Los Angeles, the Mojave Desert, Italy and Brittany. Loosely connecting these territories is an enigmatic figure (is he a poet, a spurned lover, a friend?) who reunites with (or does he separate from?) former acquaintances. Shared by these locations as well is a sense of a deeper and partially erased history remembered and testified more expressively by the landscapes than by their inhabitants.

Directed by Basma Alsharif. With Diego Marcon, Neemah Abu Ghenas, Jessica Bellinger  
France/Palestine/Belgium/Qatar 2017, digital video, color, 77 min. Italian, English and Chinook with English subtitles



Basma Alsharif OUROBOROS

## FREEDOM OUTSIDE REASON THE CINEMA OF JAN LENICA

DECEMBER 2 – DECEMBER 4

Well into their careers yet still young, Jan Lenica (1928 – 2001) and Walerian Borowczyk (1923 – 2006) started making films in 1957. Barely liberated from the constraints of socialist realism, Polish art passionately embraced modernism. Abstract painting dominated art galleries. Given the mood of the day, Lenica and Borowczyk's films provided a welcome sight: experimental and modern, they were in tune with the spirit of their time.

*Once Upon a Time...* and *House*, which were respectively the first and third film produced by the duo, proved to be characteristically "modern" on many levels, both formally and content-wise. They did away with the fairytale-like formula that dominated animated films in Poland (and around the globe) at the time. Lenica and Borowczyk's projects were virtually plotless, and as such they were close to abstraction, gravitating toward the new techniques of cutout and collage. Their debut piece, *Once Upon a Time...* made direct allusions to what was particularly en vogue in the culture of the era, i.e., abstract art and jazz music. That these references were misleading, and that the artists' actual knack was for vintage photographs and prints, discarded objects, and naïve art (which inspired their second film, *Love Requited*, based on Jerzy Plaskociński's paintings), was of little importance, because modernism was in fact associated with freedom of expression, and Lenica and Borowczyk's films did seem free, be it in form or content.



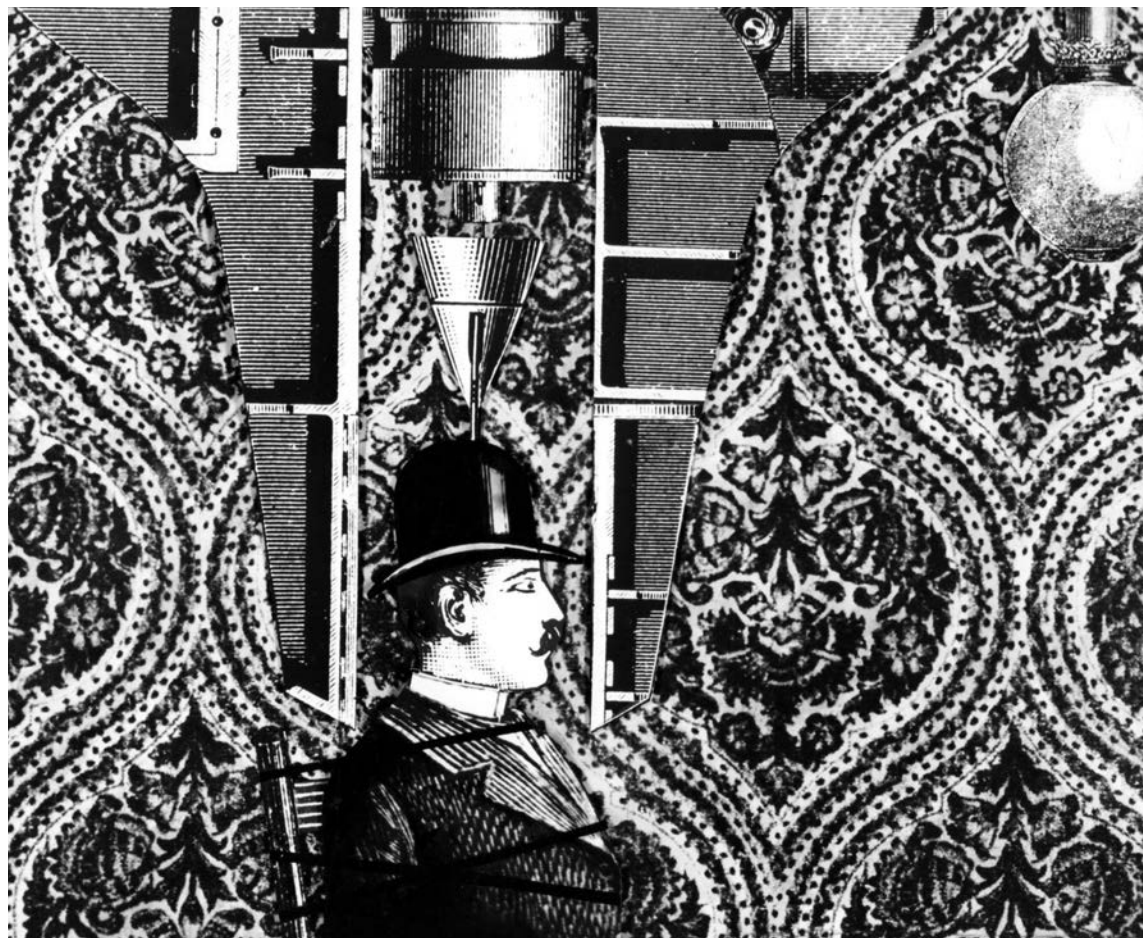
An early HFA logo designed by Jan Lenica

From the outset, Lenica and Borowczyk made no secret of the fact that their true focus rested with cinematic pioneers Georges Méliès and the early French avant-garde. “It is our goal to return to visual cinema, conceptualized in contemporaneous terms, enriched by sound and color,” said the two repeatedly. “We refuse to confine ourselves to one genre, but prefer instead to draw from anything that stimulates the imagination, stirs emotions, entertains, and pleases the eye.”

The success of *House*, which was awarded the Grand Prix at the International Experimental Film Competition in Brussels in 1958, elevated Lenica and Borowczyk to the level of artists whose films were much anticipated by critics. And while they did not fail to live up to those expectations, their internationally acclaimed careers developed along separate lines. Borowczyk followed in the footsteps of early trick film, cinema of metamorphoses, and objects moving without the participation of humans before he reinvented himself as an author of erotic cinema. Lenica remained faithful to his roots in Feuillade’s “Fantomas” films and Chaplin’s burlesque, continuing—with slight exceptions—to work in the grain of what he referred to as a single, lifelong film, albeit cut into smaller chunks.

Lenica’s lifelong film primarily shows that the world is not what it seems to be, making no provisions for romantics and nonconformists. And yet, it also encourages the viewer to continue to bang his head against that brick wall, because a bump on one’s forehead is less compromising than losing one’s face. Last but not least, Lenica reminds his audience that since fads come and go, as do dictatorships and politicians, you should remain true to yourself. The director always stuck to this last principle: he would not yield to novelties and refused to change his style, persistently revisiting the same issues.

In Lenica’s subsequent incarnations of the hero of this never-ending story, everyone can find something related to their dreams, fantasies and experience. In his debut picture, *Once Upon a Time...*, the main character is but an ink spot that wanders about without a specific purpose and engages in duels with a predatory bird. Lenica’s protagonist returns in *Labyrinth*, this time as a full-fledged “man in a bowler hat,” equipped with Icarus’ wings and battling ravenous birds in the film’s finale. He appears from the sky as Fantorro the Superman, and dissolves into thin air on the horse Pegasus as *New Janko the Musician*. In *Monsieur Tête* and *Rhinoceros*, he is a clerk who represses his own defiance, only to abandon everything and embark on a long pursuit of the sense of existence in *Adam 2*. He does his best to help others, but is deceived by appearances: twice, he rescues beautiful women in trouble, unaware that one of them ended up in the clutches of a monster by her own will (*Labyrinth*), while the other was in fact not a victim but an aggressor (*Fantorro le dernier justicier*). It is for these reasons that his nonconformist protest in *Monsieur Tête* and *Rhinoceros* is bound to fail. He suffers defeats, because the world he inhabits provides no safe havens for romantics (or any eccentrics in general) of the sort we see in *New Janko the Musician*. Such individuals are treated with adequate modes of “persuasion,” such as the head-formatting press in *Adam 2* or the thought-trapping cage in *Labyrinth*. Once set in motion, the repressive apparatus acts with mechanical ruthlessness. One anonymous torturer, such as the capital letter A, may be supplanted by another, a no less vicious letter B (A).



Jan Lenica LABYRINTH

Much like a fabulously colorful fish, the visual beauty of Lenica’s gloomy world seems tempting on the outside, luring the unsuspecting victim into a trap. Suggestively erotic flowers (*Adam 2*) and lusciously curvaceous women (*Labyrinth*) bait men (males with avian bodies) into a trap; a mysterious cube encourages us to enter it but turns out to be a maze with no exit (*Adam 2*). *Landscape* is entirely inhabited by such freakish, camouflaged creatures that beguile us and lie in ambush for one another.

The literary inspirations here are quite evident: Kafka (whose name can be seen on a signboard in *Labyrinth*), Schulz, Gombrowicz, Themerson, Mrožek, Mandiargues and Ionesco (the latter two contributed narrations to Lenica’s films), Jarry—so we are talking here about the surrealist grotesque and the theater of the absurd. Far more complex is the visual genealogy of Lenica’s imagery, as he drew on numerous seemingly contradictory styles while managing not to abandon his own expression. This is precisely where his greatness manifests itself to the fullest. One could point to at least four sources of inspiration that impacted Lenica’s oeuvre: nineteenth-century graphics, cinematic (pre)history, art nouveau and naïve art.

Lenica’s art is consistently of the highest quality. His and Borowczyk’s innovations involved the elevation of the visual as a cornerstone of animated film. Traditionally, the visual had been subordinate to the film’s literary layer and functioned as mere illustration or—as was the case with Eggeling’s and Fischinger’s avant-garde films, or with Norman McLaren’s work—acted as a vehicle for expressing movement, rhythm and visual tensions. Such experiments, as a matter of fact, had been reduced to asterisks in the course of cinematic evolution. On the other hand, Lenica and Borowczyk implanted animated film with the idiom of poster metaphors and graphic shortcuts, which they consistently used in their cartoons. An exemplary case can be found in *Monsieur Tête*, where the protagonist eventually tames his rebellious tendencies and becomes a model citizen, to the extent that he is awarded with medals, but at the same time his face loses its features, much as in Lenica’s 1958 drawing. “Finally, my head looks just like any other,” he concludes. In *Rhinoceros*, two bearded intellectuals talk at a café. One of them keeps throwing out names that assume ornate shapes above the table: Dostoyevsky, Sartre, Joyce... his companion responds with short “pffs” that result in the disintegration of the other’s elaborate, wordy construction. A is a single, masterfully plain graphic sign: a human being subjected to the terror of the alphabet, a symbol of an individual embroiled in the apparatus of power.

*Landscape* and *Ubu Roi* (of which two versions exist, although one may consider them as two separate pieces, given that the latter version—*Ubu et la Grande Gidouille*—is expanded and includes material from two of Jarry’s subsequent works) come off as Lenica’s most controversial and mature pictures due to their demanding nature. With *Landscape*, the difficulty stems from its enigmatic, enciphered message, while in the case of *Ubu Roi* the problem lies in its theatrically static form. *Ubu Roi* ranks among some of the best, most intense adaptations of Jarry’s text. At the same time, it allowed Lenica to fully unfold his personal catastrophism, one combined with humor and irony, and to question grandiose politics, sweeping utopias and bombastic language.

*Landscape* metaphorically pictures a piece of Central and Eastern European history. In the film, a certain cruel civilization is superseded by another, scarcely better, that is frantically committed to erecting monuments. Sound familiar? This intriguing film, which Lenica developed during his residency at Harvard, remains one of his most obscure works.

The issue of totalitarianism resurfaced in Lenica's final film, *The Island of R.O.*, which the artist created following a lengthy hiatus. The project has a long history. Its original idea had given rise to *Labyrinth*, whose protagonist was a cosmic castaway in a post-Stalinist world. The character returns after forty years, embodied by the well-known animator Piotr Dumala—*The Island of R.O.* is a live action and trick film.

Unfortunately, *The Island of R.O.* turned out to be the artistic testament of this distinguished, innovative filmmaker, who died in 2001 before he had a chance to see the final cut of his *opus magnum*, and the film was completed by his collaborators. — Marcin Gizycki

Art and film historian, critic and filmmaker, Marcin Gizycki is a professor at the Polish-Japanese Academy of Information Technology in Warsaw, Poland; the Artistic Director of the International Animated Film Festival in Poznan; and a Senior Lecturer at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence. Former Editor in Chief of *Animafilm* magazine (1979-81), he is also the author of several books, over 350 articles, and has made a number of documentary, experimental and animated films.

This retrospective is co-presented by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, with assistance from the National Film Archive, Poland.

Film stills courtesy the National Film Archive – Audiovisual Institute. Film descriptions by Brittany Gravely, unless otherwise noted.

Special thanks: Grzegorz Skorupski, Marta Jazowska, Tomasz Dobrowolski—Adam Mickiewicz Institute; and Marcin Gizycki.

**saturday december 2 at 6pm**

Please join us at a special reception with refreshments provided by Café Polonia.

**INTRODUCTION BY GRZEGORZ SKORUPSKI**

**saturday december 2 at 7pm**

**A**

Lenica's elegant chamber piece is all the more terrifying for its resemblance to a children's book, albeit one in which the usually charming, anamorphic letters become oppressive entities. Trying to exert its will over a lonely, "very quiet" man in his apartment, the alphabet's relentless leader could very well be government, social systems or language itself.

Directed by Jan Lenica  
West Germany/France 1965, 35mm, b/w, 10 min

**STRIPEASE**

Created for the Polish newsreel service, this little joke comes courtesy two simple, torn-paper figures.

Directed by Walerian Borowczyk and Jan Lenica  
Poland 1957, digital video, b/w, 3 min

**HOUSE (DOM)**

An apartment building forms somewhat of a container for Borowczyk and Lenica's non sequitur collaged visions, which unfold like a dream—like the visual triggers of a provocative psychological test or like the free-associative state under which the film was apparently made. Electronic sounds float over cut-out Victorian illustrations, which themselves seem to stimulate further tableaux—including a stop-motion still life wherein a wig consumes all of the artfully staged objects. Switching between "live" action and animation as if switching between planes of reality, Borowczyk and Lenica's final collaboration culminates in a brief romantic union of man and woman, animate and inanimate, before its inevitable dissolution.

Directed by Walerian Borowczyk and Jan Lenica  
Poland 1958, digital video, color, 12 min

**LOVE REQUIRED (NAGRODZONE UCZUCIE)**

Told through intertitles and a series of bucolic—and sometimes eccentric—oil paintings by Jan Plaskocinski, Borowczyk and Lenica merrily agitate a love story.

Directed by Walerian Borowczyk and Jan Lenica  
Poland 1958, digital video, color, 10 min

**THE FLOWER WOMAN (LA FEMME-FLEUR)**

Even in the mixed-up files of Jan Lenica, his slightly tormented ode to art nouveau—and by extension women—is a unique creation. Resembling an educational film with the voiceover to match, it quickly starts showing signs of mordant Lenician lyricism. While reverently elucidating this movement's beatification and conflation of the floral and the feminine, the film's history lessons are tainted by a deadpan elixir of irony, eroticism and dark humor—particularly appropriate to the work of its central stars, Gustav Klimt and Aubrey Beardsley.

Directed by Jan Lenica  
France 1965, 16mm, color, 11 min

**LABYRINTH (LABIRYNT)**

One of Lenica's most famous films is an apocalyptic dreamscape constructed from a disconcerting menagerie of Victorian illustration cut-outs in the spirit of Max Ernst. An Icarus-like figure flies into an unusual ghost town, where floating heads, ambulatory dinosaur skeletons, giant bugs and other mutations make vaguely ominous appearances. The visitor's attempts to participate in Lenica's sci-fi fairytale through traditional means—such as slaying

the dragon and saving the damsel—do not go as planned, and he is instead subjected to much less heroic trials and "processing." Despite its playful appearance, Lenica's carnivalesque world is one of irreverent deception and illusion at the mercy of a greater, darker force.

Directed by Jan Lenica  
Poland 1961, digital video, color, 15 min

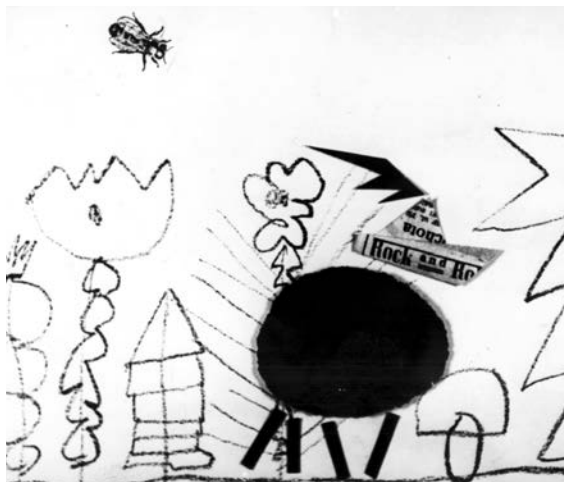
**RHINOCEROS (DIE NASHÖRNER)**

With a graphic look resembling Lenica's film posters, his adaptation of Eugène Ionesco's play seems as if it were originally written with the filmmaker in mind: an Everyman is confounded by absurd events and others' bizarre reactions to them; in this case, it is the gradual transformation of people into rhinoceroses. Lenica morphs the story into an absurdist *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* via Franz Kafka—with the stages of this odd plague devolving from vacant conformity to propagandistic posturing. Seemingly incapable of complying with this mass movement, the main character manages to save the film from a completely catastrophic Lenician outcome.

Directed by Jan Lenica  
West Germany 1963, 35mm, color, 10 min



Jan Lenica *NEW JANKO THE MUSICIAN*



Jan Lenica *ONCE UPON A TIME...*

## INTRODUCTION BY GRZEGORZ SKORUPSKI

sunday december 3 at 7pm

### MOVING PICTURES: THE ART OF JAN LENICA

While Jan Lenica was a visiting artist at Harvard's Film Study Center, the filmmaker and professor Richard Rogers wanted to make a portrait of the master graphic designer and animator in action. Rogers structures his film much like his subject might, in funny fits and starts, with slightly ominous, minimalist shots interrupted by artfully composed, off-kilter perspectives and an underlying mystery and irreverent humor. When a solemn Lenica admits to having "no working method" and trusting visual information over language, Rogers responds with a close examination of Lenica calmly engaged at the animation stand and, later, an experimental cut-up audio track of Lenica's terse aphorisms. After witnessing Lenica drawing, painting and shooting segments of his film *Landscape* in his Carpenter Center studio, Rogers brings them to life so the audience can immediately witness the magical results of Lenica's understated undertaking.

Directed by Richard P. Rogers  
US 1975, 16mm, color, 20 min

### LANDSCAPE

With vestiges of creatures from the films that came before, Lenica's expressionistic, enigmatic *Landscape* seems propelled by somber, more melancholic energies. At a young age, Lenica narrowly escaped concentration camp internment and witnessed gruesome horrors of war. Though oppressive regimes, senseless catastrophe and deep disillusion haunt all of his films, the dreamy ache of *Landscape* seems to signify a more personal catharsis unfolding. Though softer-edged and hand-drawn, his fossil-like forms are riddled with wounds, scars, disease and dismemberment that slice beyond the physical plane to the psychic. Garby Leon's otherworldly soundtrack resonates the beauty and the pain of existing in a world layered with allusion and code, yet denying complete comprehension. "*Landscape* seduces the viewer by being only partly textual," notes writer Steve Weiner. "That is, there are half-formed metaphors and blatant symbols that invite a reading but deny answers."

Directed by Jan Lenica  
US 1975, 16mm, color, 8 min

### THE ISLAND OF JAN LENICA (WYSPA JANA LENICY)

In 1998, Jan Lenica started shooting his new film in Poland titled *Wyspa R.O.* (*The Island of R.O.*), the

first film produced by this distinguished artist in his native country since 1962. This significant event was used as a springboard for a documentary film summarizing over fifty years of Lenica's creative life. Lenica talks about the ups and downs of his career as a cartoonist, poster designer and filmmaker, visits an exhibition of his father's paintings and the Museum of Caricature, for which he has designed a poster. He is also shown directing *The Island of R.O.*—the film he describes as his reckoning with two totalitarian systems that have influenced his entire life. — *Marcin Gizycki*

Directed by Marcin Gizycki  
Poland 1998, video, color, 29 min. Polish with English subtitles

### THE ISLAND OF R.O. (WYSPA R.O.)

Lenica desaturates his final work—which is primarily live action enhanced by various forms of animation and video compositing—and adds select, intense highlights to create a consummately Lenician netherworld with a narrative that appears both more linear and more mystical than in his earlier films. A distant relative of *Labyrinth's* lost soul, a man from space crashes into a seemingly abandoned industrial wasteland riddled with signs of a former totalitarian state: monuments, photographs, records and, apparently, enough humans to play out the oppressive dynamic of the past. Through the magic of animation, the man constructs a friend and, through the incantation of dreams, finds a lover. While love, ingenuity and imagination prove indispensable for inspiration and survival, Lenica allows the hero's ultimate fate to reside in the perspective of each individual viewer.

Directed by Jan Lenica. With Piotr Dumala, Jerzy Nowak, Malgorzata Lipmann  
Poland 2001, digital video, color, 31 min

monday december 4 at 7pm

### ONCE UPON A TIME... (BYL SOBIE RAZ)

The first film from Borowczyk and Lenica is a burst of freedom from any aesthetic or content restrictions. With children's drawings as the background, their abstract, cut-out characters free-associate in a de-

cidedly absurd, adult manner—ultimately revolutionizing animation in Poland and beyond.

Directed by Walerian Borowczyk and Jan Lenica  
Poland 1957, digital video, color, 9 min

### NEW JANKO THE MUSICIAN (NOWY JANKO MUZYKANT)

In addition to contemporary anachronisms and surreal disjunctions, Lenica removes the tragedy from Henryk Sienkiewicz' tale of a musically gifted peasant and inserts some social justice in the form of cosmic intervention.

Directed by Jan Lenica  
Poland 1960, digital video, color, 10 min

### FANTORRO, THE LAST ARBITER (FANTORRO, LE DERNIER JUSTICIER)

Lenica's comic book figure Fantorro—the name a combination of the sadistic Fantômas and the heroic Zorro—is an out-of-shape, very ordinary looking caped crusader whose escapades turn many a storytime trope upside-down and inside-out. As if flipping through a series of slender comic books, Lenica brings four vignettes to life with collage animation and animated photos. The cynical cycles move from Fantorro aiding and abetting a "damsel in distress;" a villain counterfeiting money using pages of Marx's *Das Kapital*; a struggling, suicidal scientist whose latest experiment enlarges his ear to an enormous size; and a grand, fantastic finale combining satiric takes on many of Lenica's ongoing obsessions: wealth, spectacle, conformity, technology, control, freedom and, of course, happy endings.

Directed by Jan Lenica. With Stan Hayward  
France 1971, digital video, color, 11 min

### LABYRINTH (LABIRYNT)

See description in *Saturday's* program.

Directed by Jan Lenica  
Poland 1961, digital video, color, 15 min

### LANDSCAPE

See description in *Sunday's* program.

Directed by Jan Lenica  
US 1975, 16mm, color, 8 min

### MONSIEUR TÊTE

"Aided by Eugène Ionesco," this film is laced with Lenica's usual charming pessimism and disruptive surrealism. His animated expressionist drawings alternate with more intricate collage cut-outs to tell the story of a Lenician Everyman bitten by "the serpent of revolt" yet caught up in the mindless, absurd bureaucracy and utilitarian machinery of modern life. The mindlessness literally catches up with him, and he loses his head, which "thinks too much" anyway and only seems to get him into trouble. Whether or not his exchanging individuality for conformity is a good idea, it is hard not to read a bit of self-referentialism into the much-acclaimed artist depicting the character's facial features disappearing with each honor he receives.

Directed by Jan Lenica and Henri Gruel  
France 1959, 16mm, color, 13 min



Jan Lenica *LABYRINTH*

# THE WORLD OF BOB FOSSE

DECEMBER 8 – JANUARY 21



Roy Scheider and Bob Fosse on the set of *ALL THAT JAZZ*

Remembered today for his spectacularly entertaining films and dance sequences, Bob Fosse (1927 – 1987), in his work from the 1950s to the 1980s, revealed his world to be a place of bright lights and deep shadows, with his subject often show business itself. Spending his life as an entertainer, he recognized both the positive and negative powers of entertainment. The world of Bob Fosse is perhaps most of all a world in tension: spectacular pleasure versus cynicism, exploitation, alienation and hypocrisy. Lying at the heart of his work, that tension was Fosse's ongoing, evolving comment on the postwar US of the 1960s and 70s.

In an age that preferred smooth movements and grand gestures, Fosse's choreography—a repository of American popular dance history—often referred back to dance of the first half of the 20th century. Recalling the eccentricities he had seen from vaudeville performers, his dancers would often slouch or exhibit strange postures and shapes, emphasizing small gestures and movements, which were typically repeated. These gestures were borrowed directly from everyday life, as well as from the worlds of work, of machinery, of sports, of puppetry and ventriloquism, even of the military, often turning his dances into a kind of social satire of the US after World War II. All of these movements that he would import, quote and transform remind us that dance and the body are imbedded in both in history and in the society around us, and vice versa.

In the early 20th century, popular dance acts would perform in theaters all over the US in revues referred to collectively as vaudeville. Through the Thirties, talking pictures, the Great Depression, and the rise of the radio combined to kill vaudeville. What had been a family entertainment was now a form of theater frequented primarily by men: men traveling for work and young single men. The dance acts now included erotic dancers and strippers, who were the main focus of the audience; vaudeville became burlesque. Other, more wholesome acts were often interspersed between the titillating fare.

And so it was in burlesque theaters in Chicago in the early 1940s that a teenaged Fosse first started performing publicly in these interstitial dance numbers. The tawdry atmosphere backstage at the burlesque theaters—where he sometimes felt uncomfortable as a teenager among older women who performed by taking off their clothes—would infuse his later work. Yet the aspect of his work for which he is most famous—the erotic display of the body—he remained extremely ambivalent about, often including it in his critique of the manipulative nature of entertainment.

His talent as a dancer brought him first to New York and then, in 1953, to Los Angeles. Fosse arrived in Hollywood in the wake of the rise to fame of Gene Kelly, whose virile dancing was perhaps at the peak of its dominance. Kelly was known for striking athletic poses and emphasizing the power and prowess of the body, but Bob Fosse's early choreography was instead inspired by the concentrated elegance of Fred Astaire and the more eccentric moves of the vaudeville performers he had loved as a boy.

One of the earliest sequences Fosse choreographed that announced his mature style is in Stanley Donen's *The Pajama Game* (1957), a musical about American labor unions. His number "Steam Heat" features dancers with a typically nostalgic Fosse look—bowler hats, spats and suits—imitating steam valves and dancing in unison to form a kind of human locomotive. In place of Kelly's clean, clear athletic lines, the body in Fosse's dances is more twitchy and bears the marks of the world of machines and work. While the athletic dancing of the typical postwar American musical was often meant to express a kind of rugged individualism, Fosse's dancers (one of whom is a woman) all wear exactly the same costume and often move as if they were all parts of one machine. The gestures of the dancers also refer to the movements of laborers. These movements are quotations, not the expression of the dancers' individual selves.

A likely inspiration was a scene from Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936), which takes place in a factory. Chaplin's gestures with his hands take on a life of their own, as they do so often in Fosse's choreography. In this film, Chaplin's job is to tighten bolts with a wrench on an assembly line. This is the essence of alienated labor—labor that takes physical effort but no thought, tending to separate the mind from the body. When the assembly line breaks down, Chaplin's body unthinkingly continues to repeat the one gesture he has learned. In the repeated gestures of Chaplin and his coworkers, their bodies at work become a dance.

Fosse's first film as a director, *Sweet Charity* extends this concern with alienated movements from labor—the body at work—to sexuality and show business. At the same time that the choreography is wildly entertaining and funny, it is also stripping away any illusions that what goes on in the dance hall is anything other than hard work as alienating as any other assembly line. In fact, the work of the dancers has dissociated their bodies from their heads: the women's bodies are fiercely expressive and their faces blank. Part of the humor of the "Hey, Big Spender" scene is that they're clearly just going through the motions, as they have done hundreds of times before. And part of the pleasure of the scene is that, if the gestures and movements are old to the dance hall girls, they're brilliantly new to us.



Bob Fosse *CABARET*

Quintessential Fosse combines entertainment and its critique. Entertainment here is alienated labor, as surely as Chaplin's on the assembly line. The dance hall girls are using their bodies, but their minds are elsewhere. And we as the spectators are similarly split: we watch and absorb the spectacle but remain motionless in our seats, without having to use our bodies.

The dancers may exhibit individuality, but it is an individuality that does not originate inside them. Instead, they are projections of male fantasies—hence the irony and alienation of their gestures and movements. They seem a bit otherworldly with their dead eyes and their repeated dialogue that is meant to be flirtatious. They resemble puppets, or even zombies, who might at any moment turn violent and attack the men who are paying to dance with them.

Avoiding the notion of dance expressing individuality, Fosse's dancers are often sexy but not unique. In *Sweet Charity*, Fosse is satirizing popular American dances of the late 1960s, like the Frug, exaggerating them so that the dancers end up expressing not individuality but conformism.

When *Sweet Charity* was made, in 1969, *The Sound of Music*, *My Fair Lady* and *Funny Girl* had all been recent successes for Hollywood. A number of other musicals, however, had failed to reach audiences, primarily because of changing tastes in popular music and youth culture. *Sweet Charity* met a similar fate, and it was a few years before Fosse made his next film. When he did, it was a film that revealed him at the height of his powers: *Cabaret*. In *Cabaret*, Fosse's themes mature from social satire to an urgent critique of show business as both distorting mirror and dangerous distraction.

During one of the film's centerpieces, "Mein Herr," performed by Liza Minnelli, the movements and gestures of the chorus girls around her begin as erotic poses, but they become more uncomfortable, even degrading, and finally they end up both animalistic (women on all fours) and militaristic—the women beating with their hands on the stage as if they were marching feet. Thus we see in miniature a society in transition, from sexual freedom to military dictatorship.

The fact that Fosse was able to say all of this with staging, gestures and poses illustrates his newfound mastery of filmmaking. Fosse loved cinema for its ability to isolate parts of the body in close-up and thus reveal the smallest movements. And after *Cabaret*, Hollywood loved him back, awarding him the Oscar for Best Director in 1972, even over Francis Ford Coppola, nominated for *The Godfather*. *Cabaret*'s sophisticated editing, transitions between scenes, and use of the handheld camera affirmed that Fosse had successfully integrated many of his cinematic influences—from Fellini, whom he had long admired, to Stanley Donen.

Donen came to Hollywood as a collaborator with Gene Kelly, and the two ended up co-directing a number of important musicals, including *On the Town* and *Singin' In the Rain*. Later in the 1940s, he directed such innovative musicals as *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* and *Funny Face*, as well as *The Pajama Game* and *Damn Yankees*, both with Fosse's choreography, and at this point, despite Fosse's antipathy for Kelly, Donen and Fosse became friends, with Donen acting as Fosse's mentor. As Donen's own filmmaking career evolved, he was influenced by Hitchcock and, later, the French New Wave. He imparted these influences to Fosse, whose first non-musical film, *Lenny*, draws from the New Wave and from American independent filmmaker John Cassavetes.

Fosse's biopic of Lenny Bruce provides another instance of his critiquing a society that chooses to escape into meaningless entertainment rather than acknowledge its corruption and alienation. A similar theme permeates the Broadway version of *Chicago*, which opened in 1975: the inability of a society obsessed with fame to tell the truth from the lie. Fosse foresaw the ways that show business and politics were already intertwining and had been since at least 1920s Chicago and 1930s Berlin, so that justice and facts took a back seat to whatever people could be tricked into believing in. In a way, Fosse was issuing a warning about the kind of collusion between entertainment and politics that would eventually produce a President Trump.

In any event, the stress of finishing *Lenny* as he was rehearsing *Chicago* led to a heart attack, open heart surgery and a second heart attack. It was these events from which Fosse would draw for his next film, the autobiographical *All That Jazz*. Here the social critique takes a back seat to Fosse's exploration of his own life. But the film still has some tart things to say about the sexual revolution of the 1970s.

In one scene, the Fosse character has been struggling to choreograph a silly song for the Broadway show he has been working on, so to give the song an impact, he adds an erotic edge to the dance. Initially, the choreography has all the hallmarks of the Fosse style: groups of dancers moving as a unit, slouching bodies, bucking hips, hats and gloves, repeated gestures. But after a break in the action, the movements are less frenetic, more poetic and flowing, suggesting the potential of the sexual revolution to release the body's ability to express itself. As the dance progresses, the tempo speeds up, and the number culminates in frenzy after all, with an orgy of repeated gestures and movements, as this coupling turns out to be as alienating as what came before. It ends with the dancers lined up and staring out at the audience threateningly, hearkening back to the dance hall girls of *Sweet Charity*.

Fosse's choreography is always both a celebration and a critique. Even as he criticized entertainment as mere "razzle dazzle," meant to distract and misdirect, he never stopped trying to show us how musical entertainment could also reveal to us this very alienation. Fosse introduced the idea of a gap between the body and the self, showing that dance is not always the expression of the self; it can be ironic, or the exquisite expression of a no-self. — DP

The World of Bob Fosse is dedicated to David Pendleton who delivered a presentation on Fosse this past summer at the Chungmuro International Musical Film Festival in South Korea.

Special thanks: Hannah Prouse—British Film Institute

friday december 8 at 7pm

### SWEET CHARITY

After successfully staging this Neil Simon-scripted musical on Broadway, Fosse was given free reign as director and choreographer to bring it to the screen. The bittersweet results, based on Fellini's *Nights of Cabiria*, chronicle the exploits of an eternally hopeful dance hall hostess—read: prostitute—who only wants to be loved but seldom meets with fortune in her relationships with men. A box-office failure at the time, *Sweet Charity* stands today as a highly enjoyable, beautifully stylized time capsule of the psychedelic Sixties, replete with zealous use of the zoom leans, interludes of still images, and Sammy Davis Jr. memorably singing-preaching "Rhythm of Life."

Directed by Bob Fosse. With Shirley MaLaine, John McMartin, Ricardo Montalban  
US 1969, 35mm, color, 149 min



Bob Fosse SWEET CHARITY



friday december 15 at 7pm  
monday january 15 at 7pm

**ALL THAT JAZZ**

Often compared to Federico Fellini's *8 1/2*, this semi-autobiographical film chronicles the physical and mental disintegration of Joe Gideon—a Broadway director brilliantly portrayed by Roy Scheider—who is unable to confront the challenges and addictions of his personal life. While juggling the direction of a Broadway musical, the editing of an ill-fated film, the seduction of a host of women, and the needs of his daughter, Joe is forced to come to terms with his imminent mortality, personified by the character of the sympathetic Angelique. The musical numbers, from the explosive "On Broadway" to the sobering "Bye, Bye Life," are tours-de-force of set design and Fosse choreography.

Directed by Bob Fosse. With Roy Scheider, Jessica Lange, Ann Reinking  
US 1979, 35mm, color, 123 min

**SPECIAL \$5 ADMISSION**

saturday december 16 at 3pm

**WHITE CHRISTMAS**

See description in the *Saturday Matinee series p. 11.*

Directed by Michael Curtiz. With Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney  
US 1954, 35mm, color, 60 min

saturday december 16 at 7pm

**LENNY**

Fosse's raw and immediate black-and-white film is a stunning portrait of his friend, the infamous 1960s stand-up comedian and iconoclast Lenny Bruce, persecuted in his time for his "obscene" and topical acts. Destroyed by show business and the legal system, Bruce was only celebrated after his death from a drug overdose. Like other Fosse films, *Lenny* is told in flashback to illustrate the insight gained from hindsight. It is also another Fosse statement on the theme of the stage as a forum for exposing the underbelly of life. Hoffman is brilliant in the role of Bruce, and Valerie Perrine—as Honey, the stripper with whom



Bob Fosse *ALL THAT JAZZ*



Bob Fosse *CABARET*

Bruce embarks on a tumultuous marriage—provides strong support.

Directed by Bob Fosse. With Dustin Hoffman, Valerie Perrine, Jan Miner  
US 1974, 35mm, b/w, 111 min

saturday december 16 at 9pm

**STAR 80**

Partly factual, partly—for legal reasons—evasive, and always speculative, Fosse's final film is his most explicit and grim meditation on the downside of fame and the violence perpetrated by machismo. The film deals with the meteoric rise to stardom of naïve girl-next-door type Dorothy Stratten, Playboy's Playmate of the Year in 1980, who was murdered by her estranged and narcissistic husband-manager. Cliff Robertson is cannily believable as Hugh Hefner, symbol of the artificial world of Southern California glitz and glamour, while famed Swedish cameraman Sven Nykvist minimizes that world's luster with his earth-toned cinematography.

Directed by Bob Fosse. With Mariel Hemingway, Eric Roberts, Cliff Robertson  
US 1983, 35mm, color, 103 min

sunday december 17 at 7pm

**MY SISTER EILEEN**

Arguably Richard Quine's most delightful film, *My Sister Eileen* is a musical scored by Jule Styne and Leo Robin and based on the same source material as Comden and Green's irresistible Broadway show *Wonderful Town*. The film follows two sisters from Ohio who are newly transplanted to Greenwich Village and struggling to find work and love in the big city. The first film for which Bob Fosse received screen credit as a choreographer, *My Sister Eileen* is also perhaps the film in which Fosse appears on-screen for the greatest amount of time. A welcome alternative to the somewhat more formal MGM musicals of the period, the film possesses a charm and intimacy of scale that remains as appealing today as it was at its first release.

Directed by Richard Quine. With Janet Leigh, Jack Lemmon, Betty Garrett  
US 1955, 35mm, color, 108 min

monday december 18 at 7pm  
sunday january 21 at 7pm

**CABARET**

Fosse won an Oscar for Best Director for his masterful handling of sociosexual and political themes in the form of a musical, a genre previously reserved for lighter subject matter. Liza Minnelli stars as Sally Bowles, an émigré aspiring to stardom in a decadent Weimar Germany nightclub full of crossdressers, gay men, lesbians, and members of Berlin's middle classes enjoying unprecedented sexual freedom. Just as the world affects the body (as Fosse's choreography tells us), implanting gestures and movements, so show business is not immune from changes in the political order, even if—or especially if—it seems to be completely separate from the outside world. Minnelli and Joel Grey, as the devilish master of ceremonies, also earned Academy Awards, as did Geoffrey Unsworth for cinematography.

Directed by Bob Fosse. With Liza Minnelli, Michael York, Joel Grey  
US 1972, 35mm, color, 123 min

**SPECIAL \$5 ADMISSION**

saturday january 20 at 3pm

**THE LITTLE PRINCE**

See description in the *Saturday Matinee series p. 12.*

Directed by Stanley Donen. With Richard Kiley, Steven Warner, Bob Fosse  
US 1974, 35mm, color, 88 min

sunday january 21 at 4:30pm

**KISS ME KATE**

"From this Moment On" was not only a Cole Porter musical number in George Sidney's 3D, musical version of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, it was literally *from this moment on*, that Bob Fosse's career flourished (though not in way he had originally envisioned—that he become the next Fred Astaire). Playing Hortensio, a role so small that the name does not even receive a mention, Fosse convinced Hermes Pan to choreograph his jazzy dance scene with Carol Haney, and the result—which is under a minute long—is so memorable that it attracted not only the audience's attention, it led to Fosse's choreographing the dances in *The Pajama Game*. The HFA will screen the 2D version of *Kiss me Kate*, where feuding divorcees reunite as co-stars, everyone quarrels offstage, and gangsters help you "Brush up your Shakespeare."

Directed by George Sidney. With Kathryn Grayson, Howard Keel, Ann Miller  
US 1953, 35mm, color, 109 min



Richard Quine *MY SISTER EILEEN*

# THE ART OF VISION BY STAN BRAKHAGE

DECEMBER 9

Shown in a new print, this monumental work, regarded as one of Stan Brakhage's greatest films, contains within it the same materials he used to construct the better-known *Dog Star Man*. It depicts the filmmaker as woodsman, scaling a snow-covered mountain, along with associative images of his wife and child; here the stuff of home movies attains a cosmological status by way of its experimental approach. *The Art of Vision* employs nearly all the poetic techniques Brakhage had mastered by this point—including saccadic camera movement, radically variable focus, lens distortion, image inversion, painting on film, emulsion scratching, and more—yielding an anthology of perception's myriad forms.

"*The Art of Vision* is the higher coefficient of what seemed, in the early 1960s, to be Stan Brakhage's extraordinarily ambitious film project, *Dog Star Man*. Between 1961 and 1965, he furiously produced his first serial work, an epic film in five sections: *Prelude* (1961), *Part One* (1962), *Part Two* (1963), *Part Three* (1964), and *Part Four* (1964). All but *Part One* were articulated with layers of densely edited superimpositions. During the same years he wrote his groundbreaking, polemical book of film theory, *Metaphors on Vision*. As he was completing the book, the idea struck him that he should also exhibit a version of *Dog Star Man* in which all the layers of superimposition would be shown separately, and all the possible permutations of layering for each of the parts as well. In homage to J.S. Bach's *Art of the Fugue*, he called the expanded version *The Art of Vision*." – P. Adams Sitney

"Imagine an eye unrul'd by man-made laws of perspective, an eye unprejudiced by compositional logic, an eye which does not respond to the name of everything but which must know each object encountered in life through an adventure of perception. How many colors are there in a field of grass to the crawling baby unaware of 'Green'? How many rainbows can light create for the untutored eye? How aware of variations in heat waves can that eye be? Imagine a world alive with incomprehensible objects and shimmering with an endless variety of movement and innumerable gradations of color. Imagine a world before the 'beginning was the word.'

To see is to retain—to behold. Elimination of all fear is in sight—which must be aimed for. Once vision may have been given—that which seems inherent in the infant's eye, an eye which reflects the loss of innocence more eloquently than any other human feature, an eye which soon learns to classify sights, an eye which mirrors the movement of the individual toward death by its increasing inability to see.

But one can never go back, not even in imagination. After the loss of innocence, only the ultimate of knowledge can balance the wobbling pivot. Yet I suggest that there is a pursuit of knowledge foreign to language and founded upon visual communication, demanding a development of the optical mind, and dependent upon perception in the original and deepest sense of the word." – Stan Brakhage, from *Metaphors on Vision*

We conclude this season's multi-part tribute to Stan Brakhage with a screening of an archival print of his rarely screened epic *The Art of Vision*, with an introduction by legendary small-gauge filmmaker and long-time MassArt professor and programmer Saul Levine.

Text courtesy Light Industry. Print preserved by the Academy Film Archive.

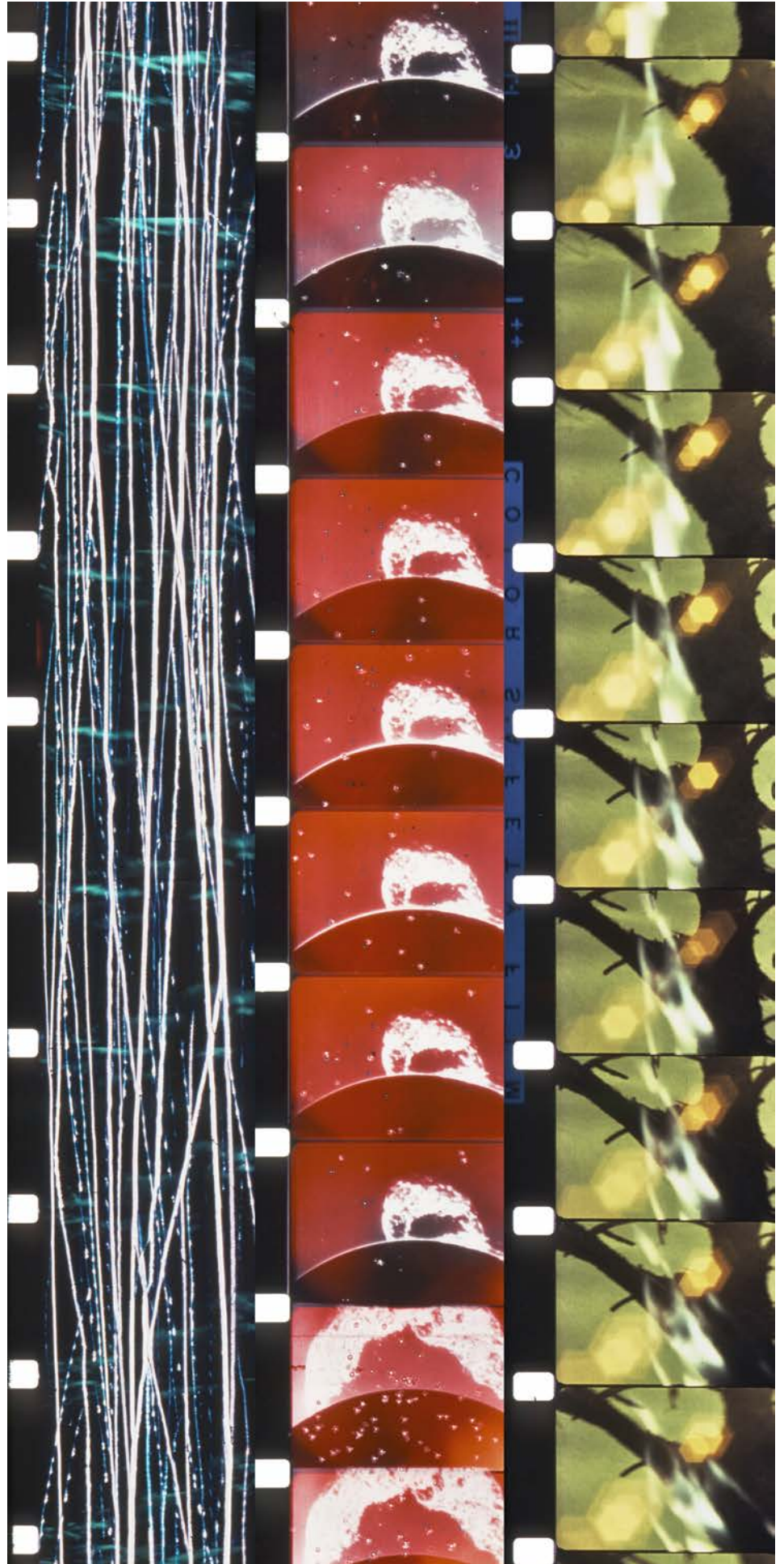
Special thanks: Marilyn Brakhage, Fred Camper and the Academy Film Archive.

## INTRODUCTION BY SAUL LEVINE

saturday december 9 at 5pm

### THE ART OF VISION

Directed by Stan Brakhage  
US 1961-65, 16mm, color, silent, 270 min



Stan Brakhage *THE ART OF VISION*  
Courtesy the Estate of Stan Brakhage and [www.fredcamper.com](http://www.fredcamper.com)



# JODIE MACK'S POSTHASTE PERENNIAL PATTERNS

DECEMBER 11

Expanding upon notions of anti-animation set forth by experimental practitioners like Paul Sharits and Robert Breer, the studies in this program apply formal principles of abstract cinema while pursuing an interest in found materials, evolving modes of production, and forms of labor. Questioning the role of decoration in daily life, the films extend the temporal concerns of the structural film while calling for a critical formalism. These films refute abstraction by reflexively activating the referential properties of objects, foregrounding questions of Romanticism surrounding metaphor and exchanging lyrical and mythopoeic modes for those of economic observation. In *Persian Pickles*, a swimming study of paisley patterns traces this motif from its origins in Persian weavings to appearances in Irish quilting and American counterculture. The ongoing *Blanket Statement* series uses quilts to evoke issues of domestic security, citing appearances of quilts in the fine arts from Michelangelo Pistoletto to Beryl Korot. *Point de Gaze* and *Razzle Dazzle* feature handmade and machine-produced laces, tatting, and intricate weavings to meditate upon the industry of desire and the phenomenology of cinema.



Jodie Mack POINT DE GAZE

Using domestic and recycled materials, the program illuminates formal and cursory elements shared between fine-art abstraction and mass-produced graphic design. Questioning the role of decoration in daily life, these works unleash the kinetic energy of overlooked and wasted objects. — Jodie Mack

Jodie Mack (b. 1983) is an experimental animator who received her MFA in film, video, and new media from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2007. Her 16mm films screen regularly at venues across the globe—in both solo shows and as part of festival programs. She currently works as an Associate Professor of Animation at Dartmouth College, where she co-organizes an experimental media series, *EYEWASH*. She is a 2017/18 Film Study Center Fellow and Roberta and David Logie Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University.

Presented in partnership with the Film Study Center, Harvard. Special thanks: Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard.

All films and descriptions by Jodie Mack, unless otherwise noted.

## \$12 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS JODIE MACK IN PERSON

monday december 11 at 7pm  
POSTHASTE PERENNIAL PATTERN

Rapid-fire florals and morning birdsongs bridge interior and exterior, design and nature.

US 2010, 16mm, color, 3.5 min

## POINT DE GAZE

Named after a type of Belgian lace, this spectral study investigates intricate illusion and optical arrest.

US 2012, 16mm, color, 4.5 min

## PERSIAN PICKLES

Fractile phonics accompany a delicate study of paisley patterns.

US 2012, 16mm, color, 3 min

## BLANKET STATEMENT #1: HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

Discordant dysfunction down to the nitty griddy.

US 2012, 16mm, color, 3 min

**BLANKET STATEMENT #2: IT'S ALL OR NOTHING**  
A quilted call and response, a battle of extreme extremes.

US 2013, 16mm, color, 5 min

## RAZZLE DAZZLE

Tacky threads luminesce at a firefly's pace, twinkling through remnants of chintzy opulence and gaudy glamour "prestissimo brillante."

US 2014, 16mm, color, silent, 5 min

## THE FLORESTINE COLLECTION

Upon discovering more than 100 handmade dresses in a trash pile one Mardi Gras Day in New Orleans, Hill set out to make a film about the dressmaker, an elderly seamstress who had recently passed away. This project was completed by Helen's husband, Paul Gailiunas, after she passed away.

Directed by Helen Hill and Paul Gailiunas  
US 2011, 16mm, 31 min



Michael Curtiz WHITE CHRISTMAS

## SATURDAY MATINEE

DECEMBER 16 – FEBRUARY 10

On Saturday afternoons the Harvard Film Archive presents monthly screenings of family-friendly features and shorts for children, teenagers and their families. Whether drawn from the HFA collection, fellow film archives, or from international cutting-edge festivals, these classic and contemporary films are screened in their original formats and are guaranteed to expand young and older minds alike. The special admission fee for these daytime screenings is only \$5 and the rewards of regular attendance are immeasurable. — Karin Kolb

### SPECIAL \$5 ADMISSION

saturday december 16 at 3pm

## WHITE CHRISTMAS

Celebrate the holiday season with the Harvard Film Archive's screening of one of the biggest box office hits in 1954, the Technicolor musical spectacle *White Christmas*. What could top the



Stanley Donen *THE LITTLE PRINCE*

Oscar-winning Irving Berlin song; an all-star cast of Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Ellen; costumes by Edith Head and direction by Michael Curtiz—famous for *Casablanca*, *Mildred Pierce* and *Yankee Doodle Dandy*? It's Bob Fosse, the uncredited choreographer of Paramount's first VistaVision musical, indisputably demonstrating that "The Best Things Happen While You're Dancing."

Directed by Michael Curtiz. With Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney  
US 1954, 35mm, color, 60 min

**SPECIAL \$5 ADMISSION**

**saturday january 20 at 3pm**

**THE LITTLE PRINCE**

Of course only Stanley Donen, famous for his 1952 film *Singin' in the Rain*, could come up with the idea to turn Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's beloved 1943 novel into a campy Technicolor musical. He joined forces with the famous lyricist and librettist team Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe, of *Brigadoon* (1954)

and *My Fair Lady* (1964) fame, and trusted on the talents of two stellar sidekicks—Bob Fosse as The Snake, and Gene Wilder as The Fox. Fosse, who had complete control over his "moonwalk" dance routine, certainly inspired Michael Jackson when he slithers all in black. And Wilder, all in orange, has one of the film's most memorable scenes when he tells the little prince that "It's only with the heart that one can see clearly; what's essential is invisible to the eye." Bring your parents to this astounding piece of widescreen storytelling, because "All grown-ups were once children ... but only few of them remember it."

Directed by Stanley Donen. With Richard Kiley, Steven Warner, Bob Fosse  
UK/US 1974, 35mm, color, 88 min

**SPECIAL \$5 ADMISSION**

**saturday february 10 at 3pm**

**THE PRINCESS AND THE FROG**

Ironically it was John Lasseter, the founder of Pixar—acquired by Disney in 2006—who finally reinstated Disney's ousted hand-drawn animation

department. After a five-year hiatus, Ron Clements and John Musker—the animation duo of *The Little Mermaid* (1989)—were able to release their traditionally animated, musical version of a Brothers Grimm story about the potential dangers of kissing a frog, with some important changes. As the *New York Times* bluntly proclaimed, "For the first time in Walt Disney animation history, the fairest of them all is black." Seventy-two years after *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, Disney tried to make up for its stereotyping sins of the past by presenting Tiana in 1920s New Orleans as a feisty, headstrong waitress who is sidetracked from her dream of opening her own restaurant by Prince Naveen, a smooth-talking frog. Upon the inevitable kiss, she too transforms. Accompanied by Randy Newman's Dixieland jazz soundtrack, they make their way through the mystical, adventurous bayous of Louisiana to find the magical antidote and become human again.

**Age recommendation:** 8+. **Content Advisory:** scary images.

Directed by Ron Clements and John Musker. With Anika Noni Rose, Bruno Campos, Keith David  
US 2009, DCP, color, 97 min



Ron Clements & John Musker *THE PRINCESS AND THE FROG*

## VINTAGE HOLIDAY SHOW

**DECEMBER 17**

You will certainly get your money's worth at this year's program of short Christmas and winter-themed films. Culled from the vast collections of the Harvard Film Archive, the family-friendly program is on motion picture film, international in scope, appropriate for young and old alike, and free of charge! Our gift to you.

— Liz Coffey, *Film Conservator*

**FREE ADMISSION**

**sunday december 17 at 4:30pm**

**THE GREAT TOY ROBBERY**

This funny, animated Christmas Western has become an HFA holiday show staple. *Howard E. Burr Collection*

Directed by Jeff Hale. Canada 1963, 35mm, color, 6 min

**DUPONT THEATER: THREE YOUNG KINGS**

Three boys get into trouble for taking to heart a Latin American Christmas tradition in this heartfelt television program. *Jason Camuti Collection*

Directed by Richard Kinon. US 1956, 16mm, b/w, 27 min

**SANTA'S WORKSHOP**

This classic cartoon reveals what happens behind-the-scenes at Santa's North Pole workshop. *Robert Gitt Collection*

Directed by Wilfred Jackson. US 1932, 16mm, color, 7 min

**WINTER ON THE FARM**

In one of the first color Encyclopaedia Britannica educational films, children do winter chores on the farm and watch animals going about their business. *Somerville High School Collection*

US 1948, 16mm, color, 11 min

**WINTER CAROUSEL**

Animals enjoy ice skating in this charming puppet film by a pioneering animator. *Boston Public Library Collection*

Directed by Wladyslaw Starewicz. France 1958, 16mm, color, 12 min

**COLD PIZZA**

This short follows the misadventures of two boys who try to earn money by delivering pizza in snowy Montreal. *Boston Public Library Collection*

Directed by Larry Kent. Canada 1972, 16mm, color, 18 min

## TWO LITTLE FROSTS

Two chilly ghosts try to give people the shivers in this lively puppet film. *Boston Public Library Collection*

Directed by Jiri Trnka  
Czechoslovakia 1953, 16mm, color, 13 min

## THE PONY

Two children in rural Canada want a pony for Christmas. Will their parents agree to it? *Boston Public Library Collection*

Directed by Lawrence Cherry  
Canada 1958, 16mm, b/w, 30 min



Jiri Trnka TWO LITTLE FROSTS

# CINEMA OF RESISTANCE

JANUARY 26 – FEBRUARY 19

At a time when so many feel called to resist the White House's attacks on numerous fronts, we at the HFA feel compelled to do our part. Cinema has always been a method of examining the world as it is, with the possibility of raising understanding, inspiring change, and imagining other possibilities. *Cinema of Resistance* is a monthly series of films that embraces these alternate possibilities, animated by the spirit of protest and designed to call out oppression and demand justice. These screenings will be designed to spark discussion, beginning in our theater directly after the screening. – DP

## DISCUSSION WITH STEVEN BROWN AND JACK LENG

friday january 26 at 7pm

### THE GLEANERS AND I (LES GLANEURS ET LA GLANEUSE)

Once again using the documentary format as a jumping-off point for an expressionistic diary in which her own life intercedes, Varda, with a hand-held digital video camera, searches for modern-day gleaners in rural France and the alleys and dumpsters of Paris. Varda expands the definition of a gleaner to include herself, someone who gleans images and stories from the world around her. True to form, *The Gleaners and I* functions as a kind of diary, a poetic exploration of gleaning, poverty, and the history of gleaning in France.

After the film, Steven Brown of First Church Shelter in Cambridge and Jack Leng of the Boston Area Gleaners will moderate a discussion. This film is also screening as part of the Agnès Varda retrospective, p. 20.

Directed by Agnès Varda  
France 2000, 35mm, color, 82 min. French with English subtitles



Theo Anthony RAT FILM

## THEO ANTHONY IN PERSON

monday february 19 at 7pm

### RAT FILM

"It ain't never been a rat problem in Baltimore," notes the philosophic Baltimore exterminator Harold Edmond. "Always been a people problem." This exhilarating, circuitous documentary creatively excavates the layered, sometimes shocking and often bizarre depths of that reasoning. Born and raised just outside of the city and currently a resident, director Theo Anthony adopts Baltimore's number one pest as his gateway to an infinite labyrinth of sociological, political, racial and behavioral theories and investigations. In the midst of an eccentric, entertaining assortment of hunters, owners and charmers of the rat,

Anthony turns to key social science experiments—in which these ubiquitous lab animals star as human proxies—with disturbing implications for city populations. Meanwhile, the history and potential future of Baltimore is overlaid via urban planning maps, disorienting Google Earth views and an impenetrably cool voiceover. As the rat's path strangely crisscrosses with the segregation and racism inherent in Baltimore's design, the film itself deviates from any authoritative, unified point of view. Bent on subverting and destabilizing itself at every turn, *Rat Film* expands its circles to incorporate vaster and trickier questions, answering them by asking them.

Directed by Theo Anthony  
US 2017, DCP, color, 82 min



Agnès Varda THE GLEANERS AND I

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				<b>NOV. 30</b> 6PM DRAWING A LINE THROUGH THE OUROBOROS P. 3 basma alsharif in person free admission	<b>01</b> 7PM OUROBOROS P. 3 basma alsharif in person	<b>02</b> 6PM JAN LENICA SPECIAL RECEPTION 7PM JAN LENICA PROGRAM ONE P. 5 introduction by grzegorz skorupski
<b>03</b> 7PM JAN LENICA PROGRAM TWO P. 6 introduction by grzegorz skorupski	<b>04</b> 7PM JAN LENICA PROGRAM THREE P. 6	<b>05</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>08</b> 7PM SWEET CHARITY P. 8	<b>09</b> 5PM THE ART OF VISION P. 10 introduction by saul levine
<b>10</b> 5PM A TRIBUTE TO DAVID PENDLETON	<b>11</b> 7PM JODIE MACK'S POST-HASTE PERENNIAL PATTERNS P. 11 jodie mack in person	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 7PM ALL THAT JAZZ P. 9	<b>16</b> 3PM WHITE CHRISTMAS P. 11 special \$5 admission 7PM LENNY P. 9 9PM STAR 80 P. 9
<b>17</b> 4:30PM VINTAGE HOLIDAY SHOW P. 12 free admission 7PM MY SISTER EILEEN P. 9	<b>18</b> 7PM CABARET P. 9	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>

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S	M	T	W	T	F	S
07	08	09	10	11	12 MEMBERS' SCREENINGS	13 MEMBERS' SCREENINGS
14 MEMBERS' SCREENINGS	15 7PM ALL THAT JAZZ P. 9	16	17	18	19 7PM HIGH SCHOOL P. 17 9PM HOSPITAL P. 17	20 3PM THE LITTLE PRINCE P. 12 special \$5 admission 7PM HIGH SCHOOL II P. 18
21 4:30PM KISS ME KATE P. 9 7PM CABARET P. 9	22 7PM PRIMATE P. 18	23	24	25	26 7PM THE GLEANERS AND I P. 13 discussion with steven brown and jack leng	27 7PM CLEO FROM 5 TO 7 P. 20 9PM LA POINTE COURTE P. 20
28 5PM DAGURRÉOTYPES P. 20 7PM BOXING GYM P. 18	29 4PM FREDERICK WISEMAN NORTON LECTURE sanders theatre, 45 quincy st 7PM TITICUT FOLLIES P. 18	30	31			



Kevin Jerome Everson *EMERGENCY NEEDS* P. 24



Bob Fosse *ALL THAT JAZZ* P. 9

## Harvard Film Archive

Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts  
24 Quincy Street  
Cambridge MA 02138  
617.495.4700  
[hcl.harvard.edu/hfa](http://hcl.harvard.edu/hfa)

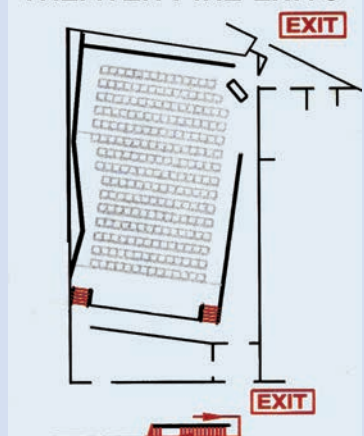
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There is limited metered parking in Harvard Square, which is free after 8pm and all day on Sundays. Parking is also available at several public lots in Harvard Square.

## THEATER FIRE EXITS



# FEBRUARY 2018

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				01	02 7PM POLLY ONE TONSLER PARK P. 23 9PM THE BEACHES OF AGNÈS P. 20	03 7PM THE STORE P. 18 9PM ONE SINGS, THE OTHER DOESN'T P. 20
04 2PM NEAR DEATH P. 18 frederick wiseman in person	05 4PM FREDERICK WISEMAN NORTON LECTURE sanders theatre, 45 quincy st 7PM SOMETHING ELSE P. 23 HOW CAN I EVER BE LATE P. 24 QUALITY CONTROL P. 23	06	07	08	09 7PM ERIE P. 24 kevin jerome everson in person	10 3PM THE PRINCESS AND THE FROG P. 12 special \$5 admission 7PM KEVIN JEROME EVERSON SHORT FILMS P. 24 kevin jerome everson in person
11 5PM PUBLIC HOUSING P. 19	12 7PM BROWN AND CLEAR SUGARCOATED ARSENIC RHINO SOUND THAT P. 25	13	14	15	16 7PM L'AFRANCE P. 27 free admission 9PM ANDALUSIA P. 27 free admission	17 12PM PARK LANES P. 25
18 6PM AT BERKELEY P. 19	19 7PM RAT FILM P. 13 theo anthony in person	20	21	22	23 7PM FACES PLACES P. 21 agnès varda in person	24 7PM VAGABOND P. 21 agnès varda in person
25 7PM CINÉVARDAPHOTO P. 21	26 4PM AGNÈS VARDA NORTON LECTURE sanders theatre, 45 quincy st 7PM BZV THE ISLAND OF ST. MATTHEWS P. 26	27 4PM AGNÈS VARDA NORTON LECTURE sanders theatre, 45 quincy st	28	MARCH 01	02 7PM FELICITÉ P. 27 alain gomis in person free admission	03 7PM LITTLE LIGHT AUJOURD'HUI P. 27 alain gomis in person free admission
04 5PM DOCUMENTEUR P. 21 7PM JACQUOT DE NANTES P. 22	05 7PM HAPPINESS P. 22					

The Archive is extremely grateful to June Yip, AB '85, and David Wong, AB '85, for their generous support of the Harvard Film Archive'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.

Frederick Wiseman *TITICUT FOLLIES* P. 18



# 2018 NORTON LECTURES IN CINEMA FREDERICK WISEMAN

JANUARY 19 – FEBRUARY 18

It was first as a teacher of criminal law that Frederick Wiseman (b. 1930) ventured down the shadowy corridors of the institutions he would later conscientiously illuminate on film. His inaugural foray into documentary cinema, the seminal *Titicut Follies*, proved so shocking in its unadorned rendering of a state mental institution that it remains the only American film to have been completely censored for reasons other than obscenity or national security. Yet the controversy in no way deterred Wiseman from continuing to maneuver through similar halls, uncovering the unruly humanity and institutional psyche within them.

From court, hospital, school, public housing development and military base, to monastery, meat-processing plant and even the entire town of Belfast, Maine, most of his films comprise a dramatic social chronicle of the American Institution—in all of its variously rigid and amorphous manifestations. Whether revealing corners of society hidden from view or enlarging the perspective on those too familiar to be seen, Wiseman's panoramic views of social microcosms offer both vital records of American lives and ideologies and artful expositions of the human condition.

In line with the “direct” and “observational” movements in documentary filmmaking, Wiseman invented his own technique of what he half-jokingly calls “reality fiction”—acknowledging his subjective, yet remarkably evenhanded, act of interpreting reality. Exceptional even among his like-minded contemporaries, Wiseman keeps dramatic manipulations, filmmaker intervention and judgment to an absolute minimum and includes no narration, music, explanatory intertitles or interviews. Recording sound while longtime collaborator John Davey (and before him, William Brayne) shoots 16mm film, Wiseman then spends a long, intensive and monastic period editing the footage—abandoning standard narrative structure in favor of a more intuitive, dynamic placement around the accurate portrayal of his central protagonist: *the place*.

Time seems to unfold naturally, patiently immersing the viewer into the middle of the drama on the same footing as those filmed. Lengthy scenes expand into a comprehensive yet undefined view where multiple, minute revelations can erupt within the most mundane of situations. Apparently guided by a moral obligation to both his subjects and his viewers, Wiseman refuses exploitive manipulation and voyeuristic titillation. Instead, *all* are respectfully invited to navigate humanity's complex web on their own. Steering clear of the sensational, saccharine, and patronizing tone of “expert” commentaries, the audience is activated into paying attention to the nuance and details where the critical questions, arguments, laughter, anxiety, silence, discomfort and heartache reside.

Wiseman's cinema is a consummate and caring witness to the full spectrum of human heroics and follies—from the inarticulate to the eloquent, the convoluted to the beautiful, dark to light, the ordinary to the extraordinary. Drawn to both the well-worn stage of everyday life and that of the professional performance, Wiseman later traveled across the Atlantic to document the dancehalls and theaters of Paris, where he also filmed *The Last Letter* (2002), a fictional excursion—and an exhaustive contemplation of London's National Gallery. Returning to his ongoing mosaic on American life, Wiseman has recently completed *In Jackson Heights* (2015), *At Berkeley* and his latest, much acclaimed epic *Ex Libris* about the New York Public Library. In these, as in all of his work, Wiseman gently wrings the heart of the most unassuming situations in order to reveal the myriad constellations of beliefs, laws and lifestyles that together comprise the soul of a nation. – BG

*The Harvard Film Archive welcomes Frederick Wiseman back to accompany a second retrospective after his first here in 2011. Joining Agnès Varda and Wim Wenders as 2018 Charles Eliot Norton Professors in Poetry, he will deliver two of this year's Norton Lectures on January 29 at February 5 at Sanders Theatre.*

Co-presented with the Mahindra Humanities Center, Harvard.

Special thanks: Homi Bhabha, Steven Biel, Sarah Razor, Mary Halpenny-Killip—Mahindra Humanities Center; the members of the Norton Lectures Committee: Haden Guest, Sylvaine Guyot, Robin Kelsey, Robb Moss, Richard Peña, Eric Rentschler, Diana Sorenson, David Wang, Nicholas Watson; and Jennifer Ivers, Assistant Dean for Faculty Development, FAS, Harvard.

friday january 19 at 7pm

## HIGH SCHOOL

From the chaos and controversy of *Titicut Follies*, Wiseman moved on to the comparatively placid hallways of public high school for his second film. Yet from his fragmented sequences, visual puns, unsympathetic close-ups, and witty cuts, he produces an ultimately scathing evaluation of North East High School in Philadelphia, considered one of the top schools in the city at the time. Droning an incessant message of control, repression and conformity to a generally listless student body, teachers and administrators prowl the hallways, ridicule independent thought, dictate, manipulate, confuse and simply bore the teenagers into submitting to a generic existence. By the film's end, the familiar institutional languor and disciplinary monotone of public schools offers a shockingly smug confirmation of its own moribund purpose.

Directed by Frederick Wiseman  
US 1968, 16mm, b/w, 75 min

friday january 19 at 9pm

## HOSPITAL

Rather than an excoriating review of Metropolitan Hospital in New York City, Wiseman's film mainly depicts a tireless crew of healthcare workers humanely managing a chaotic center of stress, pain,



Frederick Wiseman *HIGH SCHOOL*

confusion and trauma—at times with great humor. The doctors and nurses wear multiple hats—acting as social workers and health care advocates for a financially and socially distressed population. A nurse contemplates taking home for the night a little boy who has neither a hospital bed nor a responsible parent; a psychologist basically supports a troubled man's gay lifestyle—despite its illegal aspects; a female doctor patiently counsels an older man embarrassed by his intimate issue. Many of those who

grasp the complexity of the human situation fight against bureaucrats in an office on the other end of the phone. Overwhelmingly, most of the cases on view—alcoholism, drug abuse, domestic violence, negligence—represent the deeper afflictions of a dysfunctional civilization with few safeguards in place for their poor, elderly or mentally ill.

Directed by Frederick Wiseman  
US 1969, 16mm, b/w, 84 min

**saturday january 20 at 7pm**

### **HIGH SCHOOL II**

A possible solution to the problems witnessed in Wiseman's first visit to a public high school comes in the form of his second visit—this time to New York City's Central Park East Secondary School. An untraditional educational system founded on the "Five Habits of Mind"—skills for critical, open-minded thought—this institution successfully handles its racially diverse, inner city student body with respect, honest communication and a collaborative learning environment. Unlike the earlier *High School*, the standard here appears to be one-on-one interactions with students, patiently listening to students and their parents, and actually helping those in crisis—as when a fifteen-year-old mother wants to return to school—rather than detaining or suspending them. Filmed during a charged time shortly after the Rodney King incident, their encouragement of "political citizenship" and positive conflict resolution is readily apparent: from the organization of student-led protests to a mediation session held by older students with younger children who were fighting. Wiseman also includes an extended, candid and stereotype-shattering conversation among a group of teenagers discussing the realities of their challenging lives. Says an administrator of their high, but realistic, ambitions: "We want to change the world but we also want to prepare kids to be able to live in the world." With most of their graduates accepted into college, this seems attainable.

Directed by Frederick Wiseman  
US 1994, 16mm, color, 220 min

**monday january 22 at 7pm**

### **PRIMATE**

Riddled with scenes reminiscent of both horror and science fiction films, *Primate* displays behavior of both the human and non-human kind at the Yerkes Primate Research Center. However, it is the latter who are housed like prisoners and subjected to an endless barrage of tests and invasive procedures. Even intimate moments—such as an orangutan with her newborn—and the occasional affection, play or cute nickname seem like cold compensation for an institutionalized existence. While repeatedly demonstrating that the creatures they have caged are



Frederick Wiseman *PUBLIC HOUSING*

intelligent, sensitive beings, the scientists carry on with experiments that occasionally veer into the bizarre. Wiseman allows the viewer to experience a confusion and fear similar to that of the lab's residents: being injected with an unknown substance or anxiously awaiting whatever terrors or rewards are in store when a white-coated figure opens the cage. Regardless of the argument for or against animal testing, Wiseman's harrowing record might be asking what else humans are sacrificing in this unsettling exchange.

Directed by Frederick Wiseman  
US 1974, 16mm, b/w, 105 min

**sunday january 28 at 7pm**

### **BOXING GYM**

The remarkably diverse clientele of men, women, children and families—sometimes with animals or babies in tow—exercise their physical, mental and spiritual muscles at Lord's Gym in Austin, Texas. Former professional boxer Richard Lord oversees his domain with passion and compassion, adapting regimens to the wide range of individual needs and doling out a little fatherly advice on the side. Somewhat off the beaten path with an old-fashioned air, the tight space of the gym unfolds under Wiseman's keen eye into an oasis taking many shapes, deepening

in complexity as the film progresses. Eventually, the various sonic rhythms of the place—punching, bouncing, thumping and beeping—seem to symphonize the choreographic patterns of the preparation and the act. Among the film's many revelations is fighting as camaraderie and connection—with even the experience of being beaten described by one young patron as exhilarating.

Directed by Frederick Wiseman  
US 2010, 16mm, color, 91 min

**monday january 29 at 7pm**

### **TITICUT FOLLIES**

Still his most infamous work, Wiseman's first film was banned until 1989 from being screened except under extremely limited educational conditions. Capturing the cruel environment of the State Prison for the Criminally Insane in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, this film—shot by ethnographic filmmaker John Marshall—may also be Wiseman's most expressionistic and surreal. Evoking the grotesque beauty and existential comedy of the Theatre of the Absurd, the shock is that these are the inimitable follies of real people in a real place. Here, the cartoonishly inept psychiatrist makes less sense than his schizophrenic patient and, at times, the good-natured guard appears more like an inmate than his captive audience. On this stark stage, humanity seems stripped down to its brutal, illogical, and extraordinary edges.

Directed by Frederick Wiseman  
US 1967, 16mm, b/w, 84 min

**saturday february 3 at 7pm**

### **THE STORE**

With *Model* (1981) and *The Store*, Wiseman swerved over from investigations of generally stark, ethically compromised institutions into the glossier, more glamorous end of American industry. Though financially exclusive, the Neiman-Marcus department store and its headquarters in Dallas may seem like a more superficial and less concealed choice: its excesses are transparently promoted and world renown. However, in his multidimensional view of all facets above, behind and below Neiman-Marcus' well-engineered, highly staged universe, Wiseman allows the viewer a fascinating ringside seat, not as a consumer but as sociological observer. Filmed during the 1982 holiday season, *The Store* may provide slightly quieter, less shocking revelations, but the banal, the comical and the seemingly trivial gestures accrue and coalesce into larger patterns of behavior that Wiseman has impeccably arranged. On particularly exquisite display are the entertaining array of performances—from those on both sides of the counter—at every stage of making the sale.

Directed by Frederick Wiseman  
US 1983, 16mm, color, 188 min

### **\$12 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS FREDERICK WISEMAN IN PERSON**

**sunday february 4 at 2pm**

### **NEAR DEATH**

Wiseman's longest film is perhaps appropriately dedicated to the Great Inevitable—focusing on the medical workers, patients and relatives of those facing the end of life at the Medical Intensive Care Unit at Boston's Beth Israel Hospital. The duration of the film makes death no easier or more difficult to confront, but it does allow the viewer the space to fully



Frederick Wiseman *THE STORE*



Frederick Wiseman *NEAR DEATH*

contemplate exquisite slices of heightened reality where humans seem their most human. Featuring all the frightening, absurd, graphic, painful, tender, awkward and peaceful moments alongside the clinical, casual, mundane and chilling, *Near Death* is also a study in the delicate communication of death, the minute considerations and cautious preparation—which the medical staff approach with an admirably conscientious care. As for the film’s duration, time itself stretches or shrinks for those waiting, hoping, watching or, finally, saying “goodbye.” Watching the film, time loses meaning. It becomes about life, these particular lives, and the human and mechanical systems in place to determine whether to prolong or curtail.

Directed by Frederick Wiseman  
US 1989, 16mm, b/w, 358 min

**sunday february 11 at 5pm  
PUBLIC HOUSING**

Dense social histories, desperate entanglements and thwarted dreams course through every interaction—from a drug counseling session to an exterminator visit—at the Ida B. Wells public housing development in Chicago. Even the 24-hour circling ice cream truck and its unrelenting refrain epitomize the strange combination of an old-fashioned, if dysfunctional, familial camaraderie within an oppressive architecture of surveillance, vigilance and continual police presence. Surrounded by poverty, addiction, abuse, crime and unemployment, the advocates for change fight an uphill battle or, at times, a backwards one—as suggested by a condom demonstration to a room of teenage mothers and their crying babies—yet their gallant efforts toward inspiration

and empowerment are unflagging. From police confrontation to sewing circle, it is the unending compassion and grace that astonishes perhaps more than the chronic frustration and hopelessness.

Directed by Frederick Wiseman  
US 1997, 16mm, color, 195 min

**sunday february 18 at 6pm  
AT BERKELEY**

Wiseman’s panoramic portrait discloses the internal workings of a giant entity that not only exemplifies many fundamental American ideals at work, but also seems to come startlingly close to striking a balance between the human and the institution. Wiseman’s visit coincides with a fragile point when state funding was dramatically disappearing from the University of California at Berkeley’s coffers. Under this pressure, the university still manages to increase financial aid to a newly threatened middle class, admit the largest number of low-income students in their history, and persuade faculty to take pay cuts in order to save hundreds of lower-paid staff positions. Remaining influenced by the area’s famously freethinking Sixties heyday, the community at Berkeley appears to earnestly strive to be inclusive and egalitarian while retaining its academic rigor. The four hours clip along, moving from frank discussions on unconscious racism to PhD students troubleshooting their prototype for a machine that enables the paralyzed to walk. Mirroring Wiseman’s similarly lucid lens, Berkeley’s conscientious, progressive approach to education does raise the optimistic possibility that a number of these passionate thinkers may indeed change the world.

Directed by Frederick Wiseman  
US 2013, 16mm, color, 244 min

## 2018 NORTON LECTURES IN CINEMA: AGNÈS VARDA

JANUARY 26 – MARCH 5



On the set of *CLEO FROM 5 TO 7*

One of the most influential and inventive artists associated with the French New Wave, Agnès Varda (b. 1928) has created a remarkable body of films that playfully and insightfully dance between, and beyond, the traditional categories of fiction/non-fiction, poetry/prose and cinema/photography. Wonderfully prolific, Varda premiered her latest film *Faces Places* at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival, and it has been received with critical acclaim at festivals around the world. A moving testament to Varda’s uniquely humanist cinema and her long love of portraiture, *Faces Places* affirms her status as one of the legendary filmmakers still active today. With *Faces Places* Varda returns once more to the alternately playfully and philosophical mode of the essay film which she pioneered together with her close friends and occasional collaborators Alain Resnais and Chris Marker. The high points of Varda’s long and still active career are equally marked by pioneering narrative features such as *Cleo from 5 to 7* and *Vagabond* as by ruminative essays such as *Daguerréotypes* and *The Gleaners and I*.

Varda studied art history and still photography before turning to film at the age of twenty-five. Incredibly, she had no experience behind the camera when she began directing her first film, *La Pointe Courte*, and admits to having seen only a small number of movies prior to launching her storied directorial career. In 1962, Varda married the filmmaker Jacques Demy, a partnership that lasted until his death in 1990 and resulted in her touching tribute, *Jacquot de Nantes*.

Varda coined the term *cinécriture*, or “cine-writing,” to describe her unique method of filmmaking, whereby every aspect of the film is carefully planned in order to extract the greatest possible resonance from the juxtaposition of word and image and to define an overall rhythm and tempo defined by an often intricate editing structure. The result is a combination of the deeply personal and the

sociological, providing Varda with the unique means to indulge in the documentary impulses that have guided her throughout—shooting on the streets, casting non-professional actors to play roles similar to themselves—while crafting complex and moving narratives involving fictional characters whose stories are reflected in and enhanced by the documentary details discovered by Varda’s ever inquisitive eye.

The subject of a 2009 Harvard Film Archive retrospective, Varda returns to Harvard now as a Charles Eliot Norton Professor in Poetry, invited to deliver two of the 2018 Norton Lectures, alongside Frederick Wiseman and Wim Wenders. Together with the honorary Oscar awarded Varda this past November, the Norton Professorship recognizes Varda as one of the greatest and most original filmmakers of our times. – HG

Co-presented with the Mahindra Humanities Center, Harvard.

Special thanks: Homi Bhabha, Steven Biel, Sarah Razor, Mary Halpenny-Killip—Mahindra Humanities Center; the members of the Norton Lectures Committee: Haden Guest, Sylvaine Guyot, Robin Kelsey, Robb Moss, Richard Peña, Eric Rentschler, Diana Sorenson, David Wang, Nicholas Watson; and Jennifer Ivers, Assistant Dean for Faculty Development, FAS, Harvard.

## DISCUSSION WITH STEVEN BROWN AND JACK LENG

friday january 26 at 7pm

### THE GLEANERS AND I

#### (LES GLANEURS ET LA GLANEUSE)

After the film, Steven Brown of First Church Shelter in Cambridge and Jack Leng of the Boston Area Gleaners will moderate a discussion. See description in the *Cinema of Resistance* series, p.13.

Directed by Agnès Varda  
France 2000, 35mm, color, 82 min. French with English subtitles

saturday january 27 at 7pm

### CLEO FROM 5 TO 7 (CLÉO DE 5 À 7)

Varda’s international breakthrough film shows, in real time, an hour and a half in the life of a singer as she travels across Paris while waiting for the results of a biopsy. Vain, childish and selfish at the start, Cleo’s journey through Paris is also a journey of self-discovery—she transforms in the course of the film from a passive woman on whom others’ expectations are projected into an active participant in her own life. Cleo’s metamorphosis is reflected in her movements through Paris; the film’s first half is dominated by a shopping excursion in which Cleo is surrounded by mirrors, and in the second half, she literally sheds her false image in order to actively observe the city, eventually striking up a friendship with a soldier on leave.

Directed by Agnès Varda. With Corinne Marchand, Antoine Bourseiller, Dominique Davray  
France 1961, 35mm, b/w and color, 90 min. French with English subtitles



Agnès Varda *CLEO FROM 5 TO 7*

saturday january 27 at 9pm

### LA POINTE COURTE

With her first feature, Varda set the example for the New Wave, filming on location in the port city of Sète with a small crew and without the benefit of unions or the confines of the strict French studio system. Other than the two leads, actors borrowed from her day job at the Théâtre National Populaire, *La Pointe Courte* is populated with local fishermen and their families playing versions of themselves, a practice Varda would continue in future films. Nominally based on William Faulkner’s *The Wild Palms*, *La Pointe Courte* follows two storylines loosely connected through their location: a young couple whose

marriage is on the brink of dissolution visit the husband’s childhood home, while the local fishermen run afoul of government inspectors and manage their day-to-day family lives. Relying on her remarkable eye—honed by her years as a still photographer—Varda crafts visuals of arresting beauty and texture in which Sète and the working life of the village become the focus through which the characters’ actions are refracted.

Directed by Agnès Varda. With Philippe Noiret, Silvia Monfort  
France 1955, 35mm, b/w, 82 min. French with English subtitles

sunday january 28 at 5pm

### DAGUERRÉOTYPES

Varda has lived and worked on the rue Daguerre in Paris since the 1950s, but it wasn’t until 1974, when she was at home with her two-year-old son, that she turned her inquisitive eye on her neighbors and began working on this documentary about the street and its inhabitants. As in *La Pointe Courte*, the physical location is inextricably linked to its denizens, and their relationship with the space and the creation of a community drives the film. Tied together by a magician’s street performance, *Daguerréotypes* follows its mix of shopkeepers and artists as they move through their small street, the world in microcosm.

Directed by Agnès Varda  
West Germany/France 1975, 16mm, color, 80 min. French with English subtitles

friday february 2 at 9pm

### THE BEACHES OF AGNÈS (LES PLAGES D'AGNÈS)

“If you opened people up, you would find landscapes,” Varda says in the opening voiceover. “If you opened me up, you would find beaches.” Varda’s latest work is an autobiographical essay that takes a nostalgic yet penetrating look back at her life and films. Using photographs, recreations and scenes from her films, Varda illustrates the various stages of her life, from her marriage to Jacques Demy and his death in 1990 to her childhood memories of Sète, the fishing village that would become the subject of her first film. Woven through these reminiscences are lonely, dreamlike sequences shot on the beaches that have influenced and inspired her.

Directed by Agnès Varda  
France 2008, 35mm, color, 110 min. French with English subtitles

saturday february 3 at 9pm

### ONE SINGS, THE OTHER DOESN'T

#### (L'UNE CHANTE, L'AUTRE PAS)

Varda’s most overtly feminist film, *L'une chante, l'autre pas* follows the friendship of two very different women over the course of two decades. Pomme is a middle-class rebel whose singing career coincides with her radicalization; Suzanne is a young working-class mother whose financial hardships bring about



Agnès Varda *LA POINTE COURTE*

Courtesy Ciné Tamaris



Agnès Varda *FACES PLACES*

Courtesy Cohen Media & Ciné Tamaris

her activism. Using her trademark blend of fiction and documentary to underscore the historical importance of the nascent women's movement in France, Varda crafts an uplifting portrait of feminism in the 1970s, capturing the optimism and buoyancy of the moment.

Directed by Agnès Varda. With Thérèse Liotard, Valérie Mairesse, Ali Rafie  
France 1977, 35mm, color, 120 min. French with English subtitles

**\$12 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS  
AGNÈS VARDA IN PERSON**

**friday february 23 at 7pm  
FACES PLACES (VISAGES VILLAGES)**

A return to her earliest artistic roots as a still photographer, Varda's newest film is both a touching companion piece to her beloved *The Gleaners and I*—and, like that earlier work, a road movie essay film that effortlessly interweaves the personal and political. United with French muralist-artist JR, Varda sets out on a deliberately and poignantly minor voy-



Agnès Varda *CINÉVARDAPHOTO*

Courtesy Ciné Tamaris

age to explore the overlooked corners of a depopulated rural France in JR's giant van, an enormous black box able to create monumental photographic likenesses of locals won over by the seemingly unlikely yet instinctively bonded duo. *Faces Places* is as much about the life stories encountered along the way as about Varda herself, who muses revealingly about her life as a filmmaker, her friendships, memories and regrets. A late and unexpectedly resolved encounter with the paranoically withdrawn Jean-Luc Godard delivers an emotional jolt to the film that allows us to appreciate the singular empathy and genuine humanism that make Varda such a beloved icon and dedicated artist, one whose work continues to resonate with new audiences.

Directed by Agnès Varda  
France 2017, DCP, color, 89 min. French with English subtitles

**\$12 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS  
AGNÈS VARDA IN PERSON**

**saturday february 24 at 7pm  
VAGABOND (SANS TOIT NI LOI)**

Anchored by Sandrine Bonnaire's remarkable performance as a woman whose refusal to be known or understood pushes her into a total detachment from society, *Vagabond* was Varda's biggest success since *Cléo*, and, like *Cléo*, once again focuses on a single female protagonist and her interactions with her environment. Structured in part like a documentary, the film opens on the body of Mona, frozen to death in a ditch on the side of the road. Interspersed with flashbacks of Mona's life as a drifter are reminiscences by the people she met on the road. In spite of Varda's attention, Mona ultimately remains unknowable, even to herself. She is a cipher, misunderstood by those she has encountered even as they recall their impressions and interactions with her for the camera. Ultimately, *Vagabond* investigates not Mona, but the traces and reflections she has left in others.

Directed by Agnès Varda. With Sandrine Bonnaire, Macha Méril, Yolande Moreau  
France 1985, 35mm, color, 105 min. French with English subtitles

**sunday february 25 at 7pm**

**CINÉVARDAPHOTO**

*Cinévardaphoto* offers a novel take on the omnibus film popular during the many New Waves that came to a crest in Europe during the 1960s. Rather than bring together short films by different auteurs, this is instead a grouping of three works by Varda, each a meditation on her work as a photographer and the inextricable, yet often uncanny, relationship between the still and moving image. A portrait of an eccentric collector of Teddy Bears, *Ydessa, The Bears and Etc.* is the longest and most recent of the films and an ode to the act of collecting and memory. At the center is the wonderful *Ulysse*, a touching return to an enigmatic photo staged by Varda in the early 1950s—a scene she dissects with wonderful precision while acknowledging the impossibility of fully knowing the past, even with photographic "evidence" in hand. The final film *Salut les Cubains* looks nostalgically back at Varda's brief time in Cuba during the early years of the revolution, sharing some of the hundreds of black-and-white images Varda shot on the island. A celebration of Cuban music and culture, *Salut les Cubains* is also a wistful tribute to the promise of revolution that swept through the world during the Sixties and would reach a peak in Paris in 1968.

Directed by Agnès Varda  
France 2004, 35mm, b/w and color, 96 min. English and French with English subtitles

**sunday march 4 at 5pm**

**DOCUMENTEUR**

Made during Varda's brief stay in Los Angeles in the early 1980s, the title is a pun on the French words for documentary (*documentaire*) and liar (*menteur*), a juxtaposition that has preoccupied Varda's filmmaking since the beginning of her career. Tracing the alienation of a recent divorcée newly arrived in L.A. with her young son, *Documenteur* uses its extensive



Agnès Varda *DOCUMENTEUR*

Courtesy Ciné Tamaris



Agnès Varda JACQUOT DE NANTES Courtesy Ciné Tamaris

interior monologue to underscore the woman's status as an outsider, vividly using Los Angeles to evoke her sense of loss and loneliness. Varda blurs the line between fiction and documentary by incorporating elements from her L.A. document *Mur murs* and by casting her own son, Mathieu, a practice she would repeat, most notably in *Kung Fu Master*.

Directed by Agnès Varda. With Sabine Mamou, Mathieu Demy, Tom Taplin  
France/US 1981, 35mm, color, 65 min. French and English with English subtitles

**sunday march 4 at 7pm**  
**JACQUOT DE NANTES**

Begun while Jacques Demy was ill and completed after his death, *Jacquot de Nantes* is Agnès Varda's valentine to her husband, a tour through his life and work that is at once joyous and elegiac. Using a combination of recreations based on Demy's memories, onscreen reminiscences and clips from Demy's

films, Varda traces Demy's evolution from a movie-loving boy in the coastal town of Nantes through his career as an accomplished director of films like *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* and *Lola*. Interspersed throughout the film are intimate close-ups of Demy's fragile body, tenderly filmed by Varda in one of her most personal and affecting films.

Directed by Agnès Varda. With Philippe Maron, Edouard Joubaud, Laurent Monnier  
France 1991, 35mm, b/w & color, 118 min. French with English subtitles

**monday march 5 at 7pm**  
**HAPPINESS (LE BONHEUR)**

Unlike the bulk of Varda's work, *Le Bonheur*, with its highly stylized form and refusal to explore the psychology of its characters, is completely removed from reality, rejecting any of Varda's usual docu-

mentary or self-reflexive elements. It is also Varda's most controversial work, revolving around a blissfully happy family man (Jean-Claude Drouot, appearing with his real-life wife and children) who decides, with uncomplicated ease, to expand upon his happiness by taking a mistress. Set in an idyllic landscape of leisurely country picnics and shot in cheerfully vibrant colors, there is nonetheless a distinct chill detectable underneath the film's relentlessly sunny exterior. Although Varda resists any simple moralizing, she has said of *Le Bonheur*, "I imagined a summer peach with its perfect colors, and inside, there is a worm."

Directed by Agnès Varda. With Jean-Claude Drouot, Claire Drouot, Marie-France Boyer  
France 1964, 35mm, color, 82 min. French with English subtitles



Agnès Varda VAGABOND

Courtesy Ciné Tamaris

## KEVIN JEROME EVERSON CINEMA AND THE PRACTICE OF EVERYDAY LIFE

FEBRUARY 2 – FEBRUARY 26

It's a lamentable truth that those seeking fair-minded representations of Black life within the annals of American cinema necessarily have to swim upstream against the mainstream current, burrowing into forgotten crevices or sometimes forcibly dug holes. It's also true, historically, that when there's a dearth of representation pertaining to a particular group of people, sympathetic commentators are often moved to hyperbole and cultural generalization when faced with an artifact made by and about those whose daily lives and labor have been hidden in mainstream representation. Such a tendency leads critics to hail, for example, Charles Burnett's *Killer of Sheep* as a summative statement rather than an evocatively specific dramatization of a unique pocket of Black life.

Enter Ohio-born, Virginia-based artist Kevin Jerome Everson (b. 1965), a fierce original whose plentiful body of work—over 144 films ranging from under a minute to eight hours long—simultaneously represents delicious bait for such anthropologically-minded exegeses and a nifty, sustained rebuke to the very idea of seeking fixed cultural meanings in artwork. Rooted so firmly in African-American settings that any appearance of a white person comes as a surprise (in itself a substantial political act), Everson's films obsessively fixate on the everyday, offering immersive depictions of people working, passing time in their neighborhoods, running errands, going to the doctor, fixing their cars, and enjoying brief respites of leisure. These slivers of quotidian activity stand on their own as "complete" cinematic subjects, not mere fragments of larger narrative scaffolding, and the plainly descriptive titles of Everson's films speak to his unwavering conviction in the seemingly undramatic minutes and seconds that mainstream cinema—or, for that matter, even a wide swatch of documentary and avant-garde cinema—routinely passes over as unworthy of prolonged attention.

With that said, the titles and synopses of Everson's films are deceiving insofar as their directness and specificity gives an expectation of expository comprehensiveness that is utterly belied by the abstraction of his approach. While the employment of handheld camerawork, the regular uses of 16mm, and the embrace of material defects in the footage all give the strong impression of on-the-fly *actualités* left untouched in the editing room, Everson, a professor of art at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, is never less than profoundly self-aware in crafting this aesthetic and generating its associated baggage. The patina of verisimilitude is actually a ruse in Everson's films, which take the stuff of life, and specifically the experiences and communities familiar to the director, and restage it as a dead-ringer facsimile in order to draw out certain truths, patterns, rhythms and gestures that might go unnoticed in more traditional documentaries. Indeed, while the willful hybridization of documentary and fiction modes of filmmaking has come into fashion in recent years, Everson's work has thrived on such mutability for over a decade, forcing viewers to calibrate to each work without assumptions.

The subtle manipulation of reality on display in Everson's films—which extends even to the director's creation of utilitarian props that he inserts into scenes alongside real objects—is especially beguiling given his oeuvre's recurring preoccupation with historical realities that would certainly benefit from conventional elaboration. Of

special importance in Everson's work is the post-WWII Great Migration, which found large quantities of African-Americans migrating from the South to the Midwest in search of new and better opportunities, a resettlement project undertaken by Everson's parents and others in his extended family (*The Island of St. Matthews* is the rare film to focus on those who didn't make the move). Everson communicates the complexity of this topic not with direct discussion of it but through sustained scrutiny of the individual lives affected by the displacement generations hence. Films such as *Quality Control*, *Company Line* and *Park Lanes* center on work environments, labor rituals and the precise forms of expertise accrued within industrialized work. Meanwhile, films such as *Emergency Needs*, *The Reverend E. Randall T. Osborn*, *First Cousin* and *Sugarcoated Arsenic*, all of which incorporate and then intervene with archival audiovisual material, look at a different form of labor, specifically that which occurs in constructing a persona for the general public.

Everson's interest in the processes and procedures dominating his characters' lives is echoed by an obsession with the form and practice of his own cinematic work. Working in the tactile medium of photochemical film, which is sometimes employed for its disorienting aesthetic resemblance to the found footage Everson uses, already bonds him closer to the handicraft on display in his films. When he leverages the full material capacity of the medium, pushing its limits in eleven-minute shots that expend every last frame of a 400-foot roll, the act of filming becomes a full working metaphor for the manual toils of his subjects, who are equally limited and liberated by their resources. This dynamic bond between form and content distinguishes Everson's work from his antecedents in the avant-garde (durational filmmakers like James Benning, Sharon Lockhart and Andy Warhol). Trading static, machine-like surveillance for engaged, responsive handheld work, Everson moves the emphasis away from the fixity of time and space to the evolving role of the human within the mise-en-scene.

Evolution, after all, is an essential concept in Everson's work. The films consider Black life within America on a continuum in which old inequities are repackaged as "sugarcoated arsenic" (to borrow a film title) but perseverance ultimately wins out. Images of resilience flood his body of work: a man shadowboxing to stay warm in *Undeclared*, two clashing music rehearsals continuing in full force side by side in *Erie*, African migrants describing their turbulent paths to Italy in *Rhino*, a plethora of factory specialists masterfully sculpting metal and plastic to compose bowling alley parts in *Park Lanes*, and even a pair of petty thieves on the hunt for Cleveland's copper parts to feed their families in *Fe26*. The seeming offhand simplicity of Everson's films is what most strongly registers on first exposure, but the running subject matter, motifs, themes and formal strategies are impossible to miss once detected. This is an artist with a monomaniacal commitment to his particular niche, and though he asserts that he makes films for his subjects rather than for any perceived audience, the rewards on this side are plenty. — Carson Lund

Presented in collaboration with Harvard University's Hutchins Center for African & African American Research and the Film Study Center with support from the Provostial Fund for the Arts and Humanities, Harvard.

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Dedicated to DeCarrío Antwan Couley (1984-2010).



Kevin Jerome Everson *TONSLER PARK*

**friday february 2 at 7pm**  
**TONSLER PARK**

The contentious 2016 presidential election has been a hot talking point for almost a year now, and yet Everson's *Tonsler Park*, which documents polling station workers in the eponymous Charlottesville, VA precinct on November 8th, stubbornly resists being read as any kind of cultural barometer. Seemingly eschewing topical issues altogether (the words "Trump" and "Clinton," for instance, are never heard), the film instead bears witness to the mundanity of the polling process, the hours burned away staring at computer screens and reciting the same pleasantries to voters over and over. What ul-

timately politicizes this unorthodox conceptual documentary is its choice of setting, not only for it being the notorious site of racist commotion just months later but for the predominantly African-American populace, a considerable sample of which become the subjects of Everson's unblinking gaze. As non-synced ambience from the room hums away on the soundtrack, the director trains his telephoto lenses on the faces of these generous workers, all doing their part, however dispassionately, to ensure democracy is preserved.

Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2017, 16mm transferred to digital, b/w, 80 min

Preceded by

**POLLY ONE**

Everson contemplates the August 2017 solar eclipse over two skyward shots in this tranquil silent short, which plays like a tribute to James Benning's *Ten Skies*.

Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2018, 16mm transferred to digital, color, silent, 6 min

**monday february 5 at 7pm**  
**QUALITY CONTROL**

Anticipating the durational extremes of *Park Lanes*, Everson's *Quality Control* describes life at an Alabama dry-cleaning factory over six takes that each span the totality of a 400-foot film magazine. Unlike a more staunchly formalist examination of blue-collar labor such as Sharon Lockhart's *Lunch Break*, however, Everson shoots handheld, never letting the audience forget the presence of a filmmaker actively aware of his surroundings. Within these slabs of real time, Everson finds much to observe and listen to: the ingrained routines of the laborers, the contrapuntal movement of clothing as it carriages across

the foreground, the chatter of the employees and the background rhythms of an FM radio, all juxtaposed against the relentless hum of the machinery. The overall impression, strengthened by short montages of silent footage around the factory that interrupt the otherwise rigid structural framework, is not of mechanized drudgery but rather a lively, spirited ecosystem, one where workers make the most of their time while plying skills long ago mastered.

Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2011, 16mm transferred to digital, b/w, 71 min

Preceded by

**SOMETHING ELSE**

An extracted clip from the 1971 Miss Black Virginia beauty pageant in which a white journalist interviewing the elated winner reveals a complicated thicket of contemporaneous attitudes toward race in



Kevin Jerome Everson *SOMETHING ELSE*



Kevin Jerome Everson *PARK LANES*

*Something Else*, a scrap of found-footage ephemera that demonstrates Everson's acuity as an archival researcher.

Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2007, 16mm transferred to digital, color, 2 min

#### HOW CAN I EVER BE LATE

Co-directed with his UVA colleague, African-American and labor historian Claudrena N. Harold, the joyous *How Can I Ever Be Late* plays as a kind of alternative music video for Sly and the Family Stone, who are shown to be natural stars even when out of the spotlight.

Directed by Claudrena N. Harold and Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2017, 16mm transferred to digital, b/w, 5 min

#### \$12 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS KEVIN JEROME EVERSON IN PERSON

friday february 9 at 7pm

#### ERIE

Ostensibly a portrait of daily life around the perimeter of the titular Great Lake, *Erie* offers as its second shot the Warholian anti-spectacle of a young girl, framed in medium shot in front of a dreary concrete wall, silently staring at a candle for just over ten minutes. In placing this scene directly after the film's opening title card, Everson effectively calibrates a viewer's expectations and sensitivities for what's to come: a series of decontextualized vignettes in which abstract pleasures—such as meditating on the passage of time and studying the evolution of figures across long durations—precede any potential expository content. With the exception of one scene in which three former employees of a General Motors plant discuss the conditions surrounding their field of work, *Erie* scarcely illuminates the particular social fabrics of its chosen settings, which range from Niagara Falls to anonymous suburban Ohio. What it does offer is a hypnotic fixation on the subject of quotidian perseverance within the Black community, whether through a sustained study of a man tirelessly attempting to shimmy open his locked car door or a virtuosic sequence in a com-

munity auditorium that finds the camera shuffling between a pair of musicians rehearsing a piano ballad and a group of break-dancers emphatically practicing their routines, with Everson's roving camera finding both chaos and harmony in their competing sonic signals.

Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2010, 16mm transferred to digital, b/w, 81 min

#### \$12 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS KEVIN JEROME EVERSON IN PERSON

saturday february 10 at 7pm

#### ROUND SEVEN

Rigorously divided into seven parts corresponding to the seven rounds fought between boxers Sugar Ray Leonard and Art McKnight in a 1978 Mansfield match, *Round Seven* stresses the alternately wistful,



Kevin Jerome Everson *COMPANY LINE*

proud and frustrated recollections of losing contestant McKnight over dreamy footage of the boxer practicing his strokes in a darkened ring.

Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2018, 16mm transferred to digital, color, 19 min

#### EARS, NOSE AND THROAT

DeCarrio Antwan Couley, Everson's son, was murdered in 2010, and *Ears, Nose and Throat* is the second of the director's films (following 2016's *Shadeena*) to reflect on the tragedy. As in the prior film, Everson takes a roundabout angle on the events by centering his attention on Shadeena Brooks, a woman who witnessed the incident in front of her home. Here, her trauma is manifested physically as she undergoes a hearing test at the doctor's office, the left-to-right beeping of which becomes a crucial formal element in the film's construction. As Shadeena recounts the story in voiceover, footage of her misidentifying the directionality of the beeping devastatingly materializes the toll of gun violence on African-American bodies.

Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2016, 16mm transferred to digital, color, 10.5 min

#### UNDEFEATED

In this striking single-panel sketch, a cleverly bifurcated composition shows a man on one half of the frame tending to an engine on the side of the road while another man shadowboxes on the opposite side, possibly to keep warm in the Midwestern winter. Throughout, the 16mm image skips and stutters, creating a visual analogue to the rhythm of the boxer's gestures.

Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2008, 16mm transferred to digital, b/w, 1.5 min

#### EMERGENCY NEEDS

*Emergency Needs* centers around a press conference recorded after the Hough Riots of July 1966 with Carl B. Stokes, then Cleveland's (and the nation's) first Black mayor. Employing split-screen, Everson juxtaposes Stokes' appearance against a word-for-word restaging with actress Erosa Edosomwan, provoking a heightened awareness of the moment-to-moment complexities of the high-pressure public performance.

Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2007, 16mm transferred to digital, color, 7 min

#### Fe26

Everson explores petty criminality as a form of economic necessity in *Fe26* by depicting a pair of copper thieves scouring the streets of East Cleveland for vulnerable manhole covers and crowbars (objects actually sculpted by the filmmaker but placed in the scene as "real"). The men describe their daily routines and struggles atop a montage of their assorted misadventures.

Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2014, 16mm transferred to digital, color, 7 min

#### COMPANY LINE

Shot over a particularly snowy winter in Mansfield, Ohio, the wistful *Company Line* resurrects the submerged history of the town's earliest Black neighborhood via the testimonies of past residents and local workers—among them a pensive plowman whose evening routes through the historic streets form a key structuring element. Alternating between crude prosumer video imagery and warm 16mm color footage while peppering its soundtrack with



various recurrences of a hit song by a sixties African-American girl group, the film creates a poignant weave of past and present, exploring a largely forgotten community through its reverberations into the modern day.

Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2009, 16mm transferred to digital, b/w & color, 30 min

### NINETY-THREE

In this wry comic miniature, a man, presumably celebrating his 93rd birthday, gradually blows out 93 candles on a cake in slow-motion, failing numerous times before finally extinguishing all remaining light.

Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2008, 16mm transferred to digital, b/w, silent, 3 min

monday february 12 at 7pm

### BROWN AND CLEAR

This deceptively simple piece basks in the modest aesthetic pleasures of a neighborhood bar: the golden-hued liquor bottles and the smoky haze of poured whiskey. Shot entirely in tight, shallow-focus close-ups, the film never shows the bartender handling the liquor outside the frame's view, but by tuning into the minutia of his labor, it nonetheless becomes a piece of portraiture.

Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2017, digital video, color, 7 min

### SUGARCOATED ARSENIC

Co-directed and written by Everson's UVA colleague, African-American historian Claudrena N. Harold, *Sugarcoated Arsenic* takes as its starting point a moving speech on civil rights performed by Vivian Gordon during her tenure as the director of University of Virginia's Black Studies program between 1975 and 1980. Then, as in *Emergency Needs*, Everson juxtaposes the historical record alongside a nearly identical recreation, in this case starring actress Erin Stewart. The mock-vérité monochrome images of socializing and camaraderie taken on the university campus are some of Everson's most resonant, and nowhere more so than in the montage of "Black Power" marches that concludes the film.

Directed by Claudrena N. Harold and Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2013, 16mm transferred to digital, b/w, 20 min



Kevin Jerome Everson *ROUND SEVEN*



Kevin Jerome Everson *Fe26*

### RHINO

Revisiting the subject of his 2012 film *Rhinoceros*, Everson's latest imagines the final days of sixteenth-century Italian Duke Alessandro de' Medici, a historical figure of particular interest to the director for being the son of an African servant woman. Working in digital on location in Italy, Everson stages crudely theatrical episodes featuring actors performing as historical figures within modern settings, then intercuts these unorthodox dramatizations with documentary footage of African migrants in the region. The stark juxtaposition, which recalls the work of Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, connects ancient history and today's Europe in a shared plague of intolerance—a sobering outlook at a time when blinkered reactions to refugee crises around the globe run rampant.

Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2018, digital video, color, 22.5 min. Italian and French with English subtitles

### NORTH

A single unremarkable scenario—a man attempts to unfold a map while battling against gusts of wintry wind—becomes a microcosm for a number of recurring Everson preoccupations, chiefly the widespread migration of Blacks from the South to the Midwest following WWII.

Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2007, digital video, color, 1.5 min

### THE REVEREND E. RANDALL T. OSBORN, FIRST COUSIN

Martin Luther King Jr.'s first cousin speaks in an archival clip about race riots in Cleveland in the late sixties, but Everson re-edits the footage to amplify the presence of the black reporter questioning him, multiplying one sympathetic reaction shot to emphasize the procedure involved in moderating the interview.

Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2007, 16mm transferred to digital, b/w, 3.5 min

### SOUND THAT

Everson's fascination with manual labor institutions in Ohio and his ability to find poetry in the mundane is on full display in this immersive procedural tracking the Cleveland Water Department's efforts to locate leaks in underground infrastructure.

Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2014, 16mm transferred to digital, color, 12 min

saturday february 17 at 12pm

### PARK LANES

Expertise takes time to accrue, and so it's only natural that it would take time to appreciate as an outsider. This idea infuses the eight-hour *Park Lanes*, Everson's most severe and challenging experiment with cinematic time and process. Adopting the exact parameters of an average American work day, *Park Lanes'* duration is comprised of the various specialized procedures undertaken around a cavernous metalwork factory devoted to the assembly of bowling-alley parts—a detail that Everson never clarifies through exposition, preferring instead to obsessively fixate on the micro until it gradually reveals the macro. Within this framework, individual employees—many African-American, though Everson puts an uncharacteristic spotlight on Asian-American and white workers as well—stand out for their impeccable mastery of highly niche processes, yet the absence of a larger context around their work draws attention to the impersonal ruthlessness of such an industrial ecosystem. Shot over the course of a week but craftily compressed to suggest one typically regimented day, *Park Lanes* recognizes



Kevin Jerome Everson *SOUND THAT*

and elevates some of the personal craft influencing mass production, and takes no shortcuts in doing so.

Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2015, digital video, color, 480 min

**monday february 26 at 7pm**

### BZV

BZV's title refers to the airport code of Brazzaville in the Republic of Congo, where Everson visited in 2009. A breezy slice of compassionate tourism, BZV is a cinematic record of his time there, capturing in both black-and-white and color a variety of leisure activities in and around the Congo River.

Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2009, digital video, color & b/w, 30 min

### THE ISLAND OF ST. MATTHEWS

The city of Columbus, Mississippi, and the neighborhood of Westport, home to some of Everson's family, has fallen victim to numerous catastrophic floods over the past four decades, and one particular disaster from 1973 made an impact that resonates into the modern day. *The Island of St. Matthews* spotlights the weathered townsfolk whose family heirlooms, photographic archives, clothing, amenities, and loved ones have been whisked away by these calamities. Amidst these running biographies, Everson weaves discrete lyrical interludes, such as lengthy contemplations of the Tombigbee River and the town's mechanically operated dam, recurring episodes focusing on a water-skier's persistent



Kevin Jerome Everson *THE ISLAND OF ST. MATTHEWS*

attempts to keep balance, scenes with a group of teens who perform impromptu baptisms in the water, and one vignette featuring a bell-ringer who fulfills his duty with the same resounding force applied by the madman at the end of Bela Tarr's *Sátántangó*. In its steady accumulation of these motifs of perseverance, the film frames Westport as a place of

constant rebirth while always reminding of the region's overwhelming personal, collective, and historical losses.

Directed by Kevin Jerome Everson  
US 2013, 16mm transferred to digital, color & b/w, 64 min

## THE MCMILLAN-STEWART FELLOWSHIP: ALAIN GOMIS

FEBRUARY 16 – MARCH 3

The films of Alain Gomis (b. 1972) define a richly cinematic mode of narrative portraiture. Each of his four features centers around willful characters overwhelmed by difficult circumstances that force them to question their place within a world that seems indifferent and even hostile to their plight. From the Senegalese graduate student in Gomis' first film *L'Afance*, who must decide whether to stay in Paris without papers, to the mother in his newest feature *Félicité*, whose desperate situation drives her to seek help from friends, family and strangers alike, Gomis' protagonists suddenly find themselves radically disoriented, no longer able to find a stability within a place they once called home. Ultimately, *L'Afance* and *Félicité*—as well as *Andalucia* and *Aujourd'hui*—expand to pointedly question the relationship of the individual and citizen to an uncaring state while also examining the tensions and contradictions of the multi-ethnic and multi-tribal local communities redefining French

and African cities today. A fascination with the vitality and dangers of urban life gives Gomis' films a distinct rhythm and energy as they poetically alternate between the almost stream-of-consciousness perspective of their drifting characters and raw, verité scenes of unruly, violent city streets.

Born in France into a Senegalese and Bissau-Guinean family, Alain Gomis has divided his films between France and Francophone Africa, offering a unique vista over the sharp differences and deep bonds that continue to define the relationship between Europe and its former colonies. In many ways the extreme sensitivity of his characters—who hear, touch and see their world with an acute yet wandering attention—embodies the same position and argument as Gomis' humanist cinema, which gives dignity and moving voice to lives made difficult by socioeconomic and historical injustices while pointing to the world beyond his compelling characters and their urgent stories, toward that vital place glimpsed only from the edge of the story and frame.

Together with the Film Study Center and the McMillan-Stewart Foundation, the Harvard Film Archive is proud to welcome Alain Gomis as the winner of the Film Study Center's 2018 Geneviève McMillan-Reba Stewart Fellowship in Distinguished Filmmaking. – HG

Presented in partnership with the Film Study Center, Harvard.

Special thanks: Lucien Castaing-Taylor, Cozette Russell—Film Study Center.



Alain Gomis *FÉLICITÉ*

**FREE ADMISSION**

**friday february 16 at 7pm**

**L'AFRANCE**

*L'Afrance* tells a tragically familiar tale of victimization by uncaring immigration laws as it follows the vertiginous voyage of an idealistic Senegalese exchange student, El-Hadj, studying in Paris and abruptly transformed into an illegal immigrant when he carelessly allows his visa to expire. Offering El-Hadj as an emblem of the uncertainty faced by so many Africans in Europe, Gomis lingers upon the stark and moral decisions that force El-Hadj to question his national identity and allegiances while destabilizing his closest relationship. The film's striking opening—the recording and playing back of a cassette “letter” from the student's parents in Senegal—stands alone as an evocative poem of the sense of displacement and longing that defines so many immigrants' experiences.

Directed by Alain Gomis. With Djolof Mbengue, Delphine Zingg, Samir Guesmi  
France/Senegal 2001, 35mm, color, 90 min. French with English subtitles

**FREE ADMISSION**

**friday february 16 at 9pm**

**ANDALUCIA**

Gomis regular Samir Guesmi stars as an eccentric outsider, a French-Algerian social worker inspired by a never fully explained identity crisis to abandon family and home to start a new life on the far edge of Paris. Living in a trailer home alongside circus performers, Gomis' awkward everyman drifts in search of a new connection to French society while reconsidering his past, recalled through a series of fragmentary flashbacks. An edgy and formally bold companion piece to *L'Afrance*, *Andalucia* expands upon the earlier film's portrait of Paris as a vibrant yet unstable postcolonial mosaic of displaced immigrant communities.

Directed by Alain Gomis. With Samir Guesmi, Delphine Zingg, Djolof Mbengue  
France 2007, 35mm, color, 90 min. French with English subtitles

**FREE ADMISSION**

**ALAIN GOMIS IN PERSON**

**friday march 2 at 7pm**

**FÉLICITÉ**

Gomis' latest work stars Congolese singer Véro Tshanda Beya Mputu in her first film role as a night-



Alain Gomis *AUJOURD'HUI*



Alain Gomis *ANDALUCIA*

club singer and mother whose life is suddenly turned overturned by the near-fatal accident of her wayward son. Following in the footsteps of Pasolini, Bong Joon-Ho and Ripstein-Garciadiego, Gomis invents an indelible maternal figure who vividly embodies the hard truths and paradoxes of motherhood: the crushing burden of responsibility; the festering resentment between mother and offspring; and the love that nevertheless grows between them, like a stubborn root in rocky soil. Making innovative use of music, *Félicité* adds a new dimension to Gomis' cinema by offsetting Mputu's captivating vocal performances with her real-life collaborators, the Kasai Allstars, against a moody and contrapuntal score provided by a local orchestra whose music floats up to accompany Mputu at some of her most difficult moments. Here, and in unexplained nocturnal dream or fantasy sequences, Gomis holds up melodrama as a construct—pointing to the role of melos, or music, to elicit emotion and empathy. Winner of top prizes in both Berlin and FESPACO, Africa's most important film festival, *Félicité* offers both a moving portrait of resilience and an indictment of the corruption and violence that colors everyday life in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Directed by Alain Gomis. With Véro Tshanda Beya Mputu, Gaetan Clau- dia, Papi Mpaka  
France/Belgium/Senegal/Germany/Lebanon 2017, DCP, color, 129 min. Lingala and French with English subtitles

**FREE ADMISSION**

**ALAIN GOMIS IN PERSON**

**saturday march 3 at 7pm**

**AUJOURD'HUI (TEY)**

How would you spend your last day on earth if you knew exactly when your life would end? So asks Gomis in this gentle existential parable that finds a man given the knowledge of his death and the freedom to live his last hours exactly as he pleases. Taking almost mythological form, *Aujourd'hui* follows the course of this final day as its hero first stands before the judgment of family members and then steps out into the streets of Dakar animated by an intense appreciation of all that passes before his eyes and ears. For his lead actor, Gomis made the unexpected choice of American slam poet Saul Williams, whose inability to understand either French or

Wolof makes hauntingly real his floating distance from the fleeting world and the flood of emotions, accusations and regrets that color his poignant encounters with family, friends and lovers. Embracing a kind of stream-of-consciousness flow as it wanders with Williams on an emotional itinerary, *Aujourd'hui* is also punctuated by intense documentary style—sequences that look beyond its death-driven hero to reveal enraged protesters against the corrupt presidency of Abdoulaye Wade. In these moments, Gomis seemingly refuses his own film's Felliniesque oneirism by reminding us of the stark instability and injustice that has gripped Senegal in recent times.

Directed by Alain Gomis. With Saul Williams, Djolof Mbengue, Anisia Uzeyman  
France/Senegal 2012, 35mm, color, 86 min. French and Wolof with English subtitles

*Preceded by*

**LITTLE LIGHT (PETITE LUMIÈRE)**

Directed by Alain Gomis. With Assy Fall, Djolof Mbengue, Thierno Ndiaye  
France/Senegal 2013, DCP, color, 15 min. French and Wolof with English subtitles

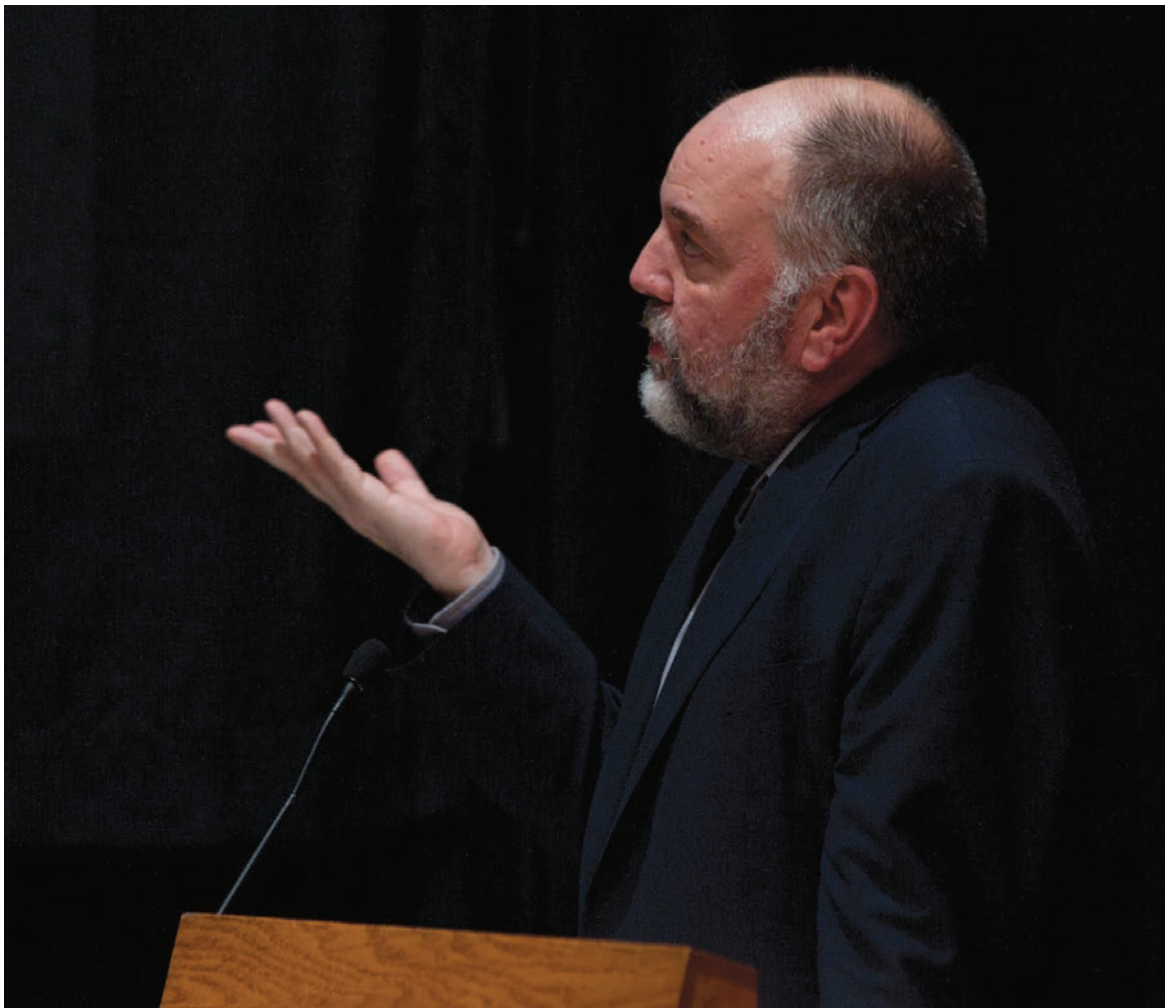


Alain Gomis *L'AFRANCE*



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*Courtesy Michael Hutcherson*

## A TRIBUTE TO DAVID PENDLETON

**DECEMBER 10**

A special tribute to HFA Film Programmer David Pendleton will take place on December 10 at 5pm in the HFA theater. See page 2 for more information.

### in person

BASMA ALSHARIF **nov 30 - dec 1**  
JODIE MACK **dec 11**  
FREDERICK WISEMAN **feb 4**  
KEVIN JEROME EVERSON **feb 9 - 10**  
THEO ANTHONY **feb 19**  
AGNÈS VARDA **feb 23 - 24**  
ALAIN GOMIS **mar 2 - 3**

### coming soon

VALESKA GRISEBACH **in person**  
LEE ANNE SCHMITT **in person**  
LUCRECIA MARTEL **in person**  
WIM WENDERS **in person**