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THE REINCARNATIONS OF DELPHINE SEYRIG

JANUARY 17 – MARCH 2



Marguerite Duras *INDIA SONG*

The remarkable first-to-second-act trajectory of Delphine Seyrig's career has, in recent years, come more fully to light in cinephile communities worldwide. The triumph of Chantal Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles*—which topped the 2022 *Sight & Sound* poll of the greatest films of all time, and which features Seyrig (1932-1990) in the title role—brought attention to her pioneering collaborations with female directors. Meanwhile, new restorations of Seyrig's directorial efforts and a key exhibition at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía dedicated to her involvement with French feminist video collectives of the seventies and eighties have illuminated her radical creative spirit and lifelong commitment to activism. Still, her career tends to be defined along the same narrative: she was a muse to European auteurs like Alain Resnais, François Truffaut, Joseph Losey and Luis Buñuel before repudiating her goddesslike image and pursuing collaborations that challenged and complicated the feminine persona that made her a star.

Reincarnations reframes the French-Lebanese actress's body of work and breaks it out of this before-and-after template. With over forty performing credits to her name in film and television movies, Seyrig was an industrious and intellectually curious artist whose tastes were complex, rooted not only in her feminism but also in her expatriate-bohemian upbringing and her early years in New York City's theater and arts scenes. Before emerging as the face of Alain Resnais' *Last Year at Marienbad*, Seyrig was, essentially, a struggling actress: she had a decade of experience as a stage performer under her belt, had taken courses with Method-pioneer Lee Strasberg, and had played a bit part in a Beat Generation short (*Pull My Daisy*, directed by Robert Frank), but remained virtually unknown before Resnais whisked her back to Paris, where she would live and work until her death from lung cancer in 1990.

Programs curated by Haden Guest and text written by Haden Guest, Brittany Gravelly, Alex Vasile and Sidney Dritz, unless otherwise noted.

On the cover: A playful sloth "hanging out" in the Costa Rican jungle reveals the pleasures of slow cinema in Ben Rivers' gently structural film Now, at Last!—its 2020 HFA premiere, in fact, delayed by the pandemic. This is just one of several innovative films this season that engage the experiences of the animal world. p. 16

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Last Year at Marienbad was Seyrig's big break. Already twenty-nine when the film premiered at the 22nd Venice International Film Festival in 1961, she was discovered at a relatively late age compared to other iconic French actresses at the time and was immediately sought after by leading directors in Europe and Hollywood. Fluent in English, French and German, Seyrig was hailed as "la divine" by French critics for her elegant persona, which recalled the enigmatic dream-women of classic film like Greta Garbo. Several of her most well-known roles (such as the one-time lover of Antoine Doinel in Truffaut's *Stolen Kisses*) played upon this feminine archetype. *Marienbad*—or, more specifically, the buzz around it and the chic modernity of Seyrig's look and costuming—was in many ways responsible for creating this box around her. Yet the film also introduced Seyrig as an actress eager to experiment with performance styles, one whose command of her craft was already sophisticated; thus the eerie depths she plumbs with an entirely wordless performance. Though several of her early works demonstrate her avant-garde proclivities and her fearless, open-minded approach to acting, she eventually came to resent her popularity among big-name directors ("I became a sort of status symbol—hired to create a link with another great director and not a choice for myself," she said).

Seyrig was the rare actress who could simultaneously transform into someone unrecognizable and maintain her star's essence: from the beginning, she was able to play older women with matriarchal aplomb, or playfully plastic gals with hidden agendas; bring to life classic, well-trodden roles like the fairy godmother or the femme fatale with her own signature spin. No matter the guise, her gentle, smoky vocals announced her as Seyrig, and though she increasingly bucked her association with all things timeless and ethereal, she also manipulated this image to expand upon its possibilities and upend the foundations of her own iconic status (as in *Daughters of Darkness* and *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press*).

At the beginning of the seventies, Seyrig started attending meetings of the *Mouvement de libération des femmes* (MLF), becoming a vocal advocate for abortion rights and equal pay, and speaking about the movement's concerns on television and in public trials. The films she made as part of the feminist video collective *Les Insoumuses* ("the defiant muses") will be screened in this series, though several unrestored short works (about women's rights struggles abroad in Vietnam and Brazil) could not be included due to their poor condition.

Reincarnations privileges Seyrig's collaborations with female directors such as Akerman, Marguerite Duras and Ulrike Ottinger, as well as other women whose work has largely been neglected by official film histories—like Liliane de Kermadec. This alternative take on Seyrig's oeuvre paints a different picture of her powers and range: if she were easily cast as an object of male fantasy, she also just as frequently played characters with great fantasies of their own, women teeming with heartache and regret and the memories of their previous lives. Through this lens, Seyrig was a timeless performer not because she conveyed an unrealistic kind of femininity, but because she seemed to carry the past in her bones, always embodying a woman of multiplicities: expressive yet controlled; wise to the ways of the world and the realities of modern womanhood yet breathlessly romantic; capable of great cruelty yet warm and maternal. — *Beatrice Loayza*

Curated by Beatrice Loayza and Haden Guest. Film descriptions by Beatrice Loayza.



Alain Resnais *LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD*

friday january 17 at 7pm

sunday january 26 at 7pm

LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD

L'ANNÉE DERNIÈRE À MARIENBAD

Alain Resnais had discovered Delphine Seyrig at a party in New York—where she lived at the time—when he asked her to play the enigmatic woman at the heart of his second feature. *Last Year at Marienbad* made Seyrig a star in the European film world; her black bob and custom Chanel outfits served as sartorial inspirations for a new generation of modern women, while her phantasmal presence on-screen led French critics to anoint her "la divine." The film, directed by Resnais but heavily dictated by Alain Robbe-Grillet's script, is a nonlinear black-and-white memory piece that takes place in a baroque palace and its surrounding gardens. Seyrig's nameless diva wordlessly slinks in and out of the frame, her status as either a projection of the protagonist's fantasies or a flesh-and-bones human

left seductively ambiguous. Though her role is somewhat ornamental, in keeping with the film's fascination with objects and their (non-)permanence, Seyrig, with her alluringly detached gaze, is the catalyst for the protagonist's spiral, exerting a supernatural influence over him that would come to define Seyrig's stardom.

Directed by Alain Resnais. With Delphine Seyrig, Giorgio Albertazzi, Sacha Pitoëff
France/Italy 1961, 35mm, b/w, 93 min. French with English subtitles

Followed by

MEMORIES OF LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD
SOUVENIRS D'UNE ANNÉE À MARIENBAD

Resnais' second assistant director, Volker Schlöndorff narrates this recently discovered compilation of 8mm footage shot on set by the actress Françoise Spira, who died by suicide in 1965.

Directed by Françoise Spira
France/Italy 1962/2010, DCP, b/w, 46 min. French with English subtitles

saturday january 18 at 7pm

sunday january 19 at 3pm

INDIA SONG

Marguerite Duras' masterpiece revolves around Anne-Marie Stretter, the tortured wife of a disgraced diplomat, played silently by Delphine Seyrig. In fact, the dialogue is delivered almost entirely offscreen: a cacophony of different, disembodied voices commenting on Anne-Marie's love life and emotional deterioration. Set in and around a decadent chateau in Calcutta (though filmed in Boulogne and Paris), this haunting portrait of colonial despair conjures a state of dissociation, with long, static shots of lonely dancers and melancholic aristocrats scored to a memorably doleful piano tune by Duras' regular composer Carlos D'Alessio. Duras, who grew up in the colonial outpost of French Indochina, conveys the horrors of French imperialism and the disorienting state of otherness experienced by women like herself and Anne-Marie, with Seyrig—her slow gestures and anguished introspection—carrying the weight of the film's sorrows.

Directed by Marguerite Duras. With Delphine Seyrig, Michael Lonsdale, Mathieu Carrière
France 1975, DCP, color, 119 min. French with English subtitles

saturday january 18 at 9:30pm

LA MUSICA

Because *La Musica* was Marguerite Duras' first directorial effort, Paul Seban (onetime assistant director to Jean Renoir and Marcel Carné) came on board as codirector to safeguard the production and ensure the film's more widespread appeal. Indeed, *La Musica* is Duras' most formally conventional film (excluding her final feature, the 1985 dark comedy *Les enfants*), more akin to a French New Wave drama than one of her later experiments with sound and image. This black-and-white talkie, an expansion of Duras' one-act play of the same name, is about a couple, played by Seyrig and Robert Hossein, who reunite three years after their divorce. Straddling the calamitous and mundane aspects of broken love,



Luis Buñuel *THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE*

the winding relationship story is the first of several collaborations between the *Hiroshima, mon amour* writer and Seyrig. The actress was immediately taken by Duras' literary approach to cinema and once described the director's vision for the film as being simply about the "dialogue and faces, and that's all."

Directed by Marguerite Duras and Paul Seban. With Delphine Seyrig, Robert Hossein, Julie Dassin
France 1967, DCP, b/w, 86 min. French with English subtitles

sunday january 19 at 7pm

sunday january 26 at 3pm

THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE
LE CHARME DISCRET DE LA BOURGEOISIE

An admirer of Luis Buñuel's work, Seyrig sought out the Spanish director—who was immediately struck by her beauty—and was promptly cast in a small part in *The Milky Way* (1969). Buñuel was fascinated by her apparently bourgeois look and refined manner, which made her a perfect fit for his droll skewering of the entitled in *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*. A married woman in an affair with an ambassador played by Fernando Rey, Seyrig's Simone is part of a crew of six friends consistently sidetracked from enjoying their meal, their minor dramas gradually unveiled in surreal digressions and meta-dream sequences that elude neat interpretation. Performing alongside Bulle Ogier and Stéphane Audran—two other iconic French actresses of the time—Seyrig and company are intentionally vacant characters, wandering complacently down a road to some unknown or perhaps nonexistent destination.

Directed by Luis Buñuel. With Fernando Rey, Delphine Seyrig, Paul Frankeur
France 1972, DCP, color, 101 min. French with English subtitles

friday january 24 at 7:30pm

MASO AND MISO GO BOATING
MASO ET MISO VONT EN BATEAU

Collectively directed by Seyrig, Carole Roussopoulos, Nadja Ringart and Ioana Wieder under the name of their feminist video collective, "Les Insoumuses," *Maso et Miso vont en bateau* is a parodic reconstruction of a televised event. When the United Nations declared 1975 to be the "year of the woman," the French government aired a special on the subject that featured commentary from the male Secretary of State for Women and a host of toxic male guests. The film's title, *Maso and Miso*, stands

for "masochist" and "misogynist," calling attention to the patriarchal underpinnings of French media and politics.

Directed by Nadja Ringart, Carole Roussopoulos, Delphine Seyrig. With Simone de Beauvoir, Delphine Seyrig, Ioana Wieder
France 1975, DCP, b/w, 55 min. French with English subtitles

friday january 24 at 9pm

MURIEL, OR THE TIME OF RETURN
MURIEL OU LE TEMPS D'UN RETOUR

Despite Seyrig feeling pigeonholed as "*la divine*" in the films she made throughout the sixties, a characterization that originated with *Last Year at Marienbad*, her second collaboration with Alain Resnais immediately saw her bucking that archetype. Instead of a glamorous mystery woman, Seyrig plays Hélène, an antique-shop owner who is twenty to thirty years older than Seyrig was at the time. As in *Marienbad*, *Muriel* plays like an abstract assembly of narrative shards, an atmospheric chamber piece that chronicles the return of a repressed past—the characters' experiences of World War II and the Algerian War. As Hélène, Seyrig is *Muriel's* anchoring force, a stubbornly optimistic widow who cuts through the film's doom and gloom, simultaneously lending it an additional layer of eeriness (courtesy of Seyrig's stellar

smile) and grounding it with a sense of hope, however misguided. For her performance, Seyrig won the Best Actress prize at the 1963 Venice Film Festival, proving that her post-*Marienbad* rise to fame was no fluke; she was not just a pretty face, but a consummate performer with shapeshifting abilities.

Directed by Alain Resnais. With Delphine Seyrig, Jean-Pierre Kérien, Jean-Baptiste Thierrée
France/Italy 1963, DCP, color, 116 min. French with English subtitles

saturday january 25 at 7pm – without short

sunday february 23 at 7pm

BE PRETTY AND SHUT UP SOIS BELLE ET TAIS-TOI!

Seyrig's only solo-directorial feature concerns the discrimination faced by actresses in the male-dominated film industry—an issue that soured her relationship to performing and in part motivated her turn to feminist activism in the early seventies. Composed of twenty-five interviews Seyrig conducted with mostly French and American actresses—including Jane Fonda, Maria Schneider, Ellen Burstyn, Shirley MaLaine and Anne Wiazemsky—this impassioned documentary corresponds to a feminist mode of production prevalent at the time in which women speak directly to a video camera. Without artificial lighting and the pressures of a more involved set, the actresses are given the space and privacy to express their hopes and frustrations freely. Originally, Seyrig had intended to film her own testimony, but then realized that the other actresses "spoke the same language, and even better because they spoke spontaneously . . . they spoke for me."

Directed by Delphine Seyrig
France 1981, DCP, b/w, 110 min. French and English with English subtitles

Preceded by

SCUM MANIFESTO

In this short film, a production of "Les Insoumuses," the camera stays fixed on Seyrig and Carole Roussopoulos sitting at a table: Seyrig reads from "SCUM Manifesto," (SCUM stands for Society for Cutting Up Men) a book by the American feminist Valerie Solanas, who spoke openly about being sexually violated by her father as a child, and who gained notoriety for her attempted murder of Andy Warhol. Opposite Seyrig, Roussopoulos transcribes her



Alain Resnais *MURIEL, OR THE TIME OF RETURN*

words on a typewriter, and behind them, footage of world events plays on a television set, the sound from these broadcasts occasionally overpowering Seyrig's voice. This fiercely militant video shows the process (and difficulties) of sharing the text—a foundational document in second-wave radical feminism and out of print at the time in France—with an audience.

Directed by Carole Roussopoulos and Delphine Seyrig
France 1976, DCP, b/w, 26 min. French with English subtitles

saturday january 25 at 9:30pm

BAXTER, VERA BAXTER

In her final film with Marguerite Duras, Seyrig takes a supporting role as an unknown woman who visits the title character—a unhappily married woman played by Claudine Gabay—in her modern villa. Conventional drama is sidelined in favor of charged extended dialogues between, at first, Vera and her husband's ex-lover (Noëlle Châtelet), and then Vera and Seyrig's unknown woman, who questions Vera's understanding of motherhood and marriage. Though Duras did not intend this relationship to carry feminist undertones, the casting of Seyrig with her activist credentials inevitably lend the dialogue an empowering edge.

Directed by Marguerite Duras. With Delphine Seyrig, Noëlle Châtelet, Nathalie Neil
France 1977, DCP, color, 95 min. French with English subtitles



Harry Kümel *DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS*

saturday february 1 at 9pm

DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS LES LÈVRES ROUGES

In preparation for her role as the bisexual vampire Countess Bathory in Harry Kümel's erotic horror movie, Seyrig studied the films of Marlene Dietrich and Josef von Sternberg, finding inspiration in the German actress' languid sensuality and brazen confidence. *Daughters of Darkness* is among the most sophisticated entries in the "lesbian vampire" genre that took the European B-movie industry by storm in the seventies, its pedigree elevated by Seyrig's participation. Yet the film, about a young honeymooning couple bewitched by Bathory and her undead



Jacques Demy *DONKEY SKIN*

underling, was also significant in Seyrig's efforts to break the mold: Bathory is not a loving goddess or object of desire, she is the desiring subject, her lust tantalizingly dangerous. Dressed in blood-red and sequined gowns, sumptuous furs and mesh veils, Bathory is, in Seyrig's hands, a spellbinding puppet-master as well as a major contributing factor to the film's cult fame.

Directed by Harry Kümel. With Delphine Seyrig, John Karlen, Danielle Ouimet
Belgium/France/West Germany 1971, DCP, color, 100 min. English, French, Dutch and German with English subtitles

monday february 10 at 7:30pm

THE GARDEN THAT TILTS LE JARDIN QUI BASCULE

Le jardin qui bascule was one of several films and stage productions that Seyrig starred in alongside Sami Frey, her partner until her death in 1990. This post-New Wave deep cut—directed by Guy Gilles, a pioneer of queer cinema in France whose films were often deemed "unclassifiable"—unfolds a pulpy crime plot involving a hitman out to kill Seyrig's Kate. Instead, he falls in love—unsurprisingly, considering his fabulous target. Moody and romantic with the help of Gilles' signature fragmentary editing style, *Le jardin qui bascule* also includes a cameo by Jeanne Moreau (the only time she and Seyrig would appear in the same film), who delivers an unexpected musical performance.

Directed by Guy Gilles. With Delphine Seyrig, Patrick Jouané, Sami Frey
France 1975, 35mm, color, 92 min. French with English subtitles

saturday february 15 at 6pm

JEANNE DIELMAN, 23 QUAI DU COMMERCE, 1080 BRUXELLES

Delphine Seyrig first met Chantal Akerman as a jury member of the film festival that would award a prize to Akerman's experimental short film *Hotel Monterey* (1972). The veteran actress, who was beginning to define herself as an activist and becoming increasingly involved in the activities of the French feminist movement, made it a point to collaborate with female directors, and the prodigious young Akerman, who was only twenty-four at the time of *Jeanne Dielman's* production, was a natural partner. Much has been written about the significance of the film, Akerman's breakthrough—for one, its pioneering use of duration to express one marginalized woman's lived reality—but somewhat less considered is its place within Seyrig's own artistic evolution. Here,

the actress breaks from her image as an ethereal enchantress, and despite delivering a largely wordless performance (as in *Last Year at Marienbad*), she brilliantly conveys her character's tightly coiled interior. Controlled to a fault, Jeanne is a woman on the edge whose manicured existence only works to conceal her inner chaos and hurt.

Directed by Chantal Akerman. With Delphine Seyrig, Jan Decorte, Henri Storck
France/Belgium 1975, 35mm, color, 201 min. French with English subtitles

sunday february 16 at 3pm

DONKEY SKIN PEAU D'ÂNE

Jacques Demy's biggest box office success, and to this day a holiday classic in France, *Donkey Skin* sees Catherine Deneuve's princess fleeing an incestuous marriage to her father with the help of her feminist fairy godmother, played by a luminous Seyrig. An adaptation of the Charles Perrault story from 1695, updated with Demy's bright and buoyant sensibility, music by Michel Legrand, and references to Apollinaire and Jean Cocteau, the film is the antithesis to Disney princess fare, as equally grotesque and overtly lusty as it is innocent and whimsical. Seyrig is a lilac fairy whose winking charms underscore the film's sly sense of humor and effortless extravagance. She performed in both *Donkey Skin* and *Daughters of Darkness* (playing the opposite of a fairy godmother) in the summer of 1970. These roles drew upon Seyrig's ethereal persona, which proved beautifully suited to the realms of artifice and fantasy inhabited by both films.

Directed by Jacques Demy. With Catherine Deneuve, Jean Marais, Delphine Seyrig
France 1970, DCP, color, 90 min. French with English subtitles

friday february 21 at 9:30pm

GOLDEN EIGHTIES

A decade after their pivotal collaboration on *Jeanne Dielman*, Delphine Seyrig and Chantal Akerman reunited for *Golden Eighties*, a cotton-candy-colored musical that marked an 180-degree-turn away from the austere formalism of their earlier effort. In *Autour de Jeanne Dielman*, a behind-the-scenes documentary directed by Seyrig's partner Sami Frey, the actress confessed her frustration with Akerman's highly methodical approach on that film, which prevented Seyrig from breaking with the restrained performance style. *Golden Eighties*, by contrast, features luminous song and dance numbers, with Seyrig—again cast as a Jewish woman named "Jeanne"—exuding lyrical expressivity. Centered around the romantic upheavals of the employees and patrons of a shopping mall, the film situ-



Chantal Akerman *GOLDEN EIGHTIES*

ates Seyrig's Jeanne as the ensemble's matriarch, a nurturing shop-owner teasingly referred to as a "Virgin Mary, full of grace, trying so hard not to lose face" in a nod to Seyrig's traditionally seraphic screen presence. When a lover from Jeanne's past reappears in her life, her composed exterior cracks, leading not to a violent recoil but an emotional catharsis that lays bare her simmering interiority in what is arguably Seyrig's last major role.

Directed by Chantal Akerman. With Myriam Boyer, John Berry, Delphine Seyrig
France/Belgium/Switzerland 1986, DCP, color, 99 min. French with English subtitles

sunday march 2 at 3pm
ALOÏSE

A rarity by the unsung French-Polish director Liliane de Kermadec, *Aloïse* has long been overlooked in the pantheon of Seyrig's greatest parts—perhaps because it premiered the same year as *India Song* and *Jeanne Dielman*. But as in Chantal Akerman's film, Seyrig's character in *Aloïse* represents a departure from her typically celestial roles. The film is a biopic of Aloïse Corbaz, a Swiss outsider artist forced to work as a governess before being diagnosed with schizophrenia and institutionalized for over four decades. In this revisionist drama—starring a fresh-faced Isabelle Huppert as the young Aloïse—Seyrig is transformed into the frail older version of Aloïse, a part she found greatly rewarding because it allowed her to depict female madness honestly and unsensationally; male directors, according to Seyrig, were often guilty of spectacularizing the conditions of similarly marginalized women. "I don't really know what a madwoman is," said Seyrig. "I only thought to play the part by acting out my reactions to the events [Aloïse] experienced." Seyrig's interest in *Aloïse* and the ethics of portraying mental illness never faded: ten years later, in 1986, she would



Liliane de Kermadec *ALOÏSE*

discuss these ideas with the artist Mary Barnes in Abraham Segal's short documentary *Couleurs Folie*.

Directed by Liliane de Kermadec. With Isabelle Huppert, Delphine Seyrig, Marc Eyraud
France 1975, DCP, color, 115 min. French and German with English subtitles

Preceded by

COLORS OF MADNESS COULEURS FOLIE

Directed by Abraham Segal
France 1987, DCP, color, 12 min. French with English subtitles

sunday march 2 at 7pm

DORIAN GRAY IN THE MIRROR OF THE YELLOW PRESS DORIAN GRAY IM SPEIGEL DER BOULEVARDPRESSED

The lesbian auteur Ulrike Ottinger proudly waved her freak-flag high with dizzyingly stylish films that

radiate rage and lust, which is perhaps why Seyrig, always keen to break with her demure image, gravitated toward Ottinger's work in the latter half of her career. A key figure of the New German Cinema, the director was responsible for some of Seyrig's wackiest roles; Ottinger applied the actress' iconic status in the world of European art film to her efforts to rewrite and queer the canon. Seyrig appeared in *Freak Orlando* (1981) and *Joan of Arc of Mongolia* (1989), but her role as Dr. Mabuse in *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press* stands out. With her signature purr employed toward uproariously sinister ends, Seyrig plays the conniving head of a media empire, a figure so hyperbolically feminine as to disrupt womanhood's association with passivity. Instead, she personifies the seductive decadence of capitalism itself.

Directed by Ulrike Ottinger. With Veruschka von Lehndorff, Delphine Seyrig, Tabea Blumenschein
West Germany 1984, DCP, color, 150 min. English, German and French with English subtitles



Ulrike Ottinger *DORIAN GRAY IN THE MIRROR...*

ROSINE MBAKAM, 2025 MCMILLAN-STEWART FELLOW

JANUARY 27 – FEBRUARY 9



"My intention as a Cameroonian filmmaker is to decolonize myself from what I have learned from film and from what I have seen. African cinema is colonized by other forms of cinema. It is important for me to free myself from all this to find a form that is fair to the people I film." — Rosine Mbakam

Born and raised in Cameroon, now living in Belgium, Rosine Mfetgo Mbakam (b. 1980) has created a respectfully hybrid place for herself in the cinematic landscape, making resounding works that embrace the powers of both documentary and fiction storytelling. Mbakam pulls up the carpet of colonialism and points to its composition while revealing the infinite worlds hidden by its obliterating expanse. Her poetic and intelligent artistry finds expression within an equitable, non-didactic approach to the production process and its participants. As the recent acclaim and recognition confirms, she is a filmmaker giving today's world a cinema it needs.

In Cameroon at the age of twenty, Mbakam began learning about filmmaking through the Italian-based NGO *Centro Orientamento Educativo* and later worked for the private Cameroon channel *Spectrum Télévision* (STV). She traveled to Belgium to further her film studies at the *Institut Supérieur des Arts* in Brussels, where she says in an interview with Criterion that she "really" learned about documentary filmmaking: "And I learned how documentaries were used as a tool to legitimize the strategy of colonialism in Europe—and not only colonialism, but all the ideologies of domination. It was clear that I had to use that same documentary approach to deconstruct the remains of colonialism that exist today in our society..."

By questioning and refusing the documentary's traditional displacement of power, Mbakam creates a compassionate, open space for unheard stories from people generally viewed only in the broad terms of their class, race or economic worth. She exposes both the structures of oppression and the oases that flourish in spite of them. In her documentary *Chez jolie coiffure*, the literal transparency of a Belgium hair salon allows the stylists and clients—all African immigrants—to be observed by all, and yet their lives remain unseen by the white populace. With the exception of the philosophical *Prism*, which begins with the question of technology's built-in prejudices and plunges profoundly into disturbing

questions of representation, this disassembly of the colonial gaze takes place less overtly in her films. Making the cinematic equivalent of deep listening, she is never the focus yet often an active presence engaging in conversations and rituals, participating in what emerges as a collaborative film event.

Her films are largely centered around the lives of African women persevering and making their own way—despite misogyny, racism and systemic injustice—no matter what form that may take: her mother in *The Two Faces of a Bamiléké Woman*, Sabine in *Chez jolie coiffure*, Delphine in *Delphine's Prayers*, Domé in *You Will Be My Ally* and the eponymous heroine of *Mambar Pierrette*. With the exception of Delphine, who is passionately focused on telling her story before the camera, many of the women often converse while working, a pragmatic circumstance that illuminates the essential nature of their labor as well as the care taken and skill required with domestic tasks. Mbakam holds the disregarded work up to the light and delicately folds it into the broader narrative. Within each of the women is a rebellious ingenuity; they creatively find ways around domination, as with the tontine, a communal financial cooperative created by women for women, ensuring their security and, often, independence from their husbands.

In 2014, Mbakam expanded her mission by starting Tândor Productions with editor/producer Geoffroy Cernaix, producing and distributing her films along with those of like-minded contemporaries. A few years later, she added a mobile version in Cameroon, Caravane Cinéma, through which she screens her films at local tontines, schools, companies or other community centers accompanied by conversations and workshops. During festival screenings of *Chez jolie coiffure* and *Delphine's Prayers*, she would usually be accompanied by the respective film's star. Mbakam's films do not simply come to an end, they continue on, participating in the world—and most importantly, in Cameroon—where European-made cinema has taken over. As she proclaims in *Prism*, “For me cinema is the people, those who see it and take it with them back to their reality. It's not a concept.”

Mbakam's expansive, dynamic style has achieved perhaps its most astonishing manifestation in her latest film and first fictive feature, *Mambar Pierrette*, about the everyday existence and quiet majesty of a Cameroonian woman, played by her cousin. Regarding its narrative elements, the filmmaker notes, “I needed a narrative approach to help me make visible what was invisible in her life. Fiction filmmaking here has a specific purpose. That is, fiction can add to the story I want to tell and give weight to it. It's not only Pierrette that we see. We see a generation of Cameroonians working under the same difficult conditions. We also see the legacy of what the generation before was thinking. Fiction helped me to give density to the story.” – BG



Rosine Mbakam *CHEZ JOLIE COIFFURE*

The Harvard Film Archive and the Film Study Center welcome Rosine Mbakam as this year's McMillan-Stewart Fellowship in Distinguished Filmmaking recipient. In addition to several screenings at the HFA, including two in-person appearances, Mbakam will be visiting classes, presenting a workshop at the Film Study Center and meeting with other colleagues on campus.

Film descriptions by Brittany Gravely.

Special thanks: Joana Pimenta, Julie Mallozzi, Cozette Russell—Film Study Center, Harvard; the McMillan-Stewart Advisory Committee and McMillan-Stewart Foundation, including Kibebe Gizaw, President.

monday january 27 at 7:30pm

sunday february 2 at 7pm

THE TWO FACES OF A BAMILÉKÉ WOMAN
LES DEUX VISAGES D'UNE FEMME BAMILÉKÉ

After seven years away, the filmmaker returns to Yaoundé, the village in Cameroon where she grew up, with her white European husband and their young son. Now living in Belgium, Mbakam not only reunites with her family and homeland but embarks upon a revelatory project of exploring her childhood, her parents' lives and the wider stories of Cameroonian women. The “two faces” appear in different guises: from Mbakam's own existence between two worlds—she is an acclaimed filmmaker, yet her mother has only been to the movies once—and the less obvious duality that older Bamiléké women balance on a daily basis, including within unhappily arranged marriages. Mbakam's mother directly experienced the horrific violence of French colonialism and the death of her son, while revealing that her husband's second wife made her miserable. Despite the hardships, what emerges in their tales are actions of quiet, radical rebellion. Many of the women featured work for themselves, find loopholes in tradition or create new, supportive ones, like the tontine. Mbakam, too, has joined these ranks, creatively responding to neocolonial repercussions by renewing the bonds between generations while il-



Rosine Mbakam *THE TWO FACES OF A BAMILÉKÉ WOMAN*

luminating the resilience, wisdom and generosity of Bamiléké matriarchs.

Directed by Rosine Mbakam
Belgium/Cameroon 2018, DCP, color, 76 min. French and Bamiléké with English subtitles

Preceded by

DOORS OF THE PAST *LES PORTES DU PASSÉ*

The traumatic tales of African war refugees emerge through a jarring disjunction, exposing not only the women's neglect and alienation, but the pervasiveness of racial, cultural and economic bias.

Directed by Rosine Mbakam
Belgium 2013, DCP, color, 14 min. French with English subtitles

friday january 31 at 7:30pm

CHEZ JOLIE COIFFURE

Mbakam reveals the unseen worlds contained within the microcosm of a hair salon inside a Brussels shopping mall and in a neighborhood that has become a hub of African transplants. Helmed by the steadfast Sabine, the salon is not only a place of business, but a community center, therapy clinic, or even display window—when the curious white tourists gawk—and at its most precarious, the entire mall becomes a trap where police search for undocumented immigrants. Mbakam spent a year within the glassed-off confines of the salon, filming Sabine as she multitasks. During the intimate swathes of time-consuming hair braiding and styling, shop talk ranges from the misconceptions of life in Europe for African immigrants; the sex trafficking of young African women and everyone's money troubles; to joking, flirting and of

course, love and beauty advice. The latter are usually courtesy of Sabine, who is the gentle guide and the stoic center of this ad-hoc sanctuary. Between helping people with their relationships, finding housing and jobs or recruiting for her tontine, Sabine also discloses her own traumatic tale of a hard-won, precarious independence, one that has taken her far away from Cameroon, yet has enabled her to nurture a new, improvised family making their way on unstable ground.

Directed by Rosine Mbakam
Belgium/Cameroon 2018, DCP, color, 70 min. French with English subtitles

Preceded by

YOU WILL BE MY ALLY TU SERAS MON ALLIÉ

In Mbakam's early short, a Gabonese woman trying to enter Belgium undergoes a belittling interrogation at the immigration office, where they deem illegal "aliens" guilty until proven guilty. By connecting with her ancestors and her feminine powers, she creates an opening to an alternate resolution.

Directed by Rosine Mbakam. With Bwanga Pilipili, Gaël Maleux, Isabelle Anciaux
Cameroon 2012, DCP, color, 20 min. French with English subtitles

friday january 31 at 9:30pm

PRISM PRISME

Filmmakers Rosine Mbakam, An van Dierden and Éléonore Yaméogo collaborate on a multifaceted essay film thinking through questions around Black representation in a cinema historically white-balanced. With the participation of a variety of scholars, artists, actors and fellow filmmakers, the film experimentally explores the depths that this colonization of representation erases. Upon debunking the myth of the technology's neutrality, they creatively crack open the Pandora's box of implications and repercussions. Using a distinctly non-didactic, unconventional approach, the film is a moving and dynamic reclamation, a poetic manifesto for an enlightened, inclusive cinema.

Directed by Rosine Mbakam, An van Dierden, Éléonore Yaméogo
Belgium 2021, DCP, color, 78 min. English and French with English subtitles



Rosine Mbakam *DELPHINE'S PRAYERS*

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS ROSINE MBAKAM IN PERSON

saturday february 8 at 7pm

MAMBAR PIERRETTE

Lingering in a convincing documentary-like state, Mbakam's latest feature is an extraordinary, mesmerizing portrait of an independent, single Cameroonian woman raising two young children, running a sewing business and caring for her elderly mother. Despite her sought-after skills as a creative seamstress, she struggles to make ends meet. At times resembling a contemporary *Jeanne Dielman*, the film carefully details her tasks at work and home, the constant monetary and social negotiations, incremental disasters and setbacks, acts of political resistance, moments of connection and release—all woven seamlessly into the complex fabric of her daily existence. Reminiscent of the manifold roles *Chez jolie coiffure's* Sabine plays in her community, Pierrette is mother, businesswoman, friend and also humble recipient of others' support. There are no

sweeping acts of valor or weighty moments of self-actualization, yet by the end, the undaunted Pierrette has earned heroic status—made even more so upon learning that she, along with most of the cast, is played by a nonprofessional actor. One of Pierrette's friends notes, "You look like you have all of Cameroon's cares on your shoulders." Indeed, the same could be said for the filmmaker, who seems to have meticulously folded every one of those cares into this smoldering, inconspicuous tour de force.

Directed by Rosine Mbakam. With Pierrette Aboheu Njeuthat, Marguerite Mbakop, Duval Franklin Nwodu Chinedu
Belgium/Cameroon/France 2023, DCP, color, 93 min. French with English subtitles

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS ROSINE MBAKAM IN PERSON

sunday february 9 at 7pm

DELPHINE'S PRAYERS LES PRIÈRES DE DELPHINE

As with *Chez jolie coiffure*, *Delphine's Prayers* takes place in a single enclosed space with one woman at its center. Aside from the filmmaker's presence, Delphine is the sole star here. Sitting up casually in her bed, she treats the experience like a video diary, candidly and passionately relating her painful tale for the first time. Compelled by desperate circumstances into sex work and eventually marriage, she describes a life besieged by poverty, loss, violence and trauma. Her confidante, fellow Cameroonian Mbakam, also immigrated to Belgium, yet under very different circumstances. In their collaboration, it is sometimes Delphine who directs, signaling when to end for the day, telling Mbakam to sit down, "or I won't be able to relax." Not merely tragedy, her saga is filled with heroic efforts to help others or to simply stay alive, only to be met with rejection and further abuse from her family and fellow Cameroonians, later by racist Europeans, and now she sacrifices herself for her children's needs, while supporting family back home. In Mbakam's film, Delphine emerges as a defiant survivor and brave warrior, telling her own story for others and praying for a better one for herself. "I am not dead," proclaims Delphine. "I'm still here. Now that I'm here, I can bear witness."

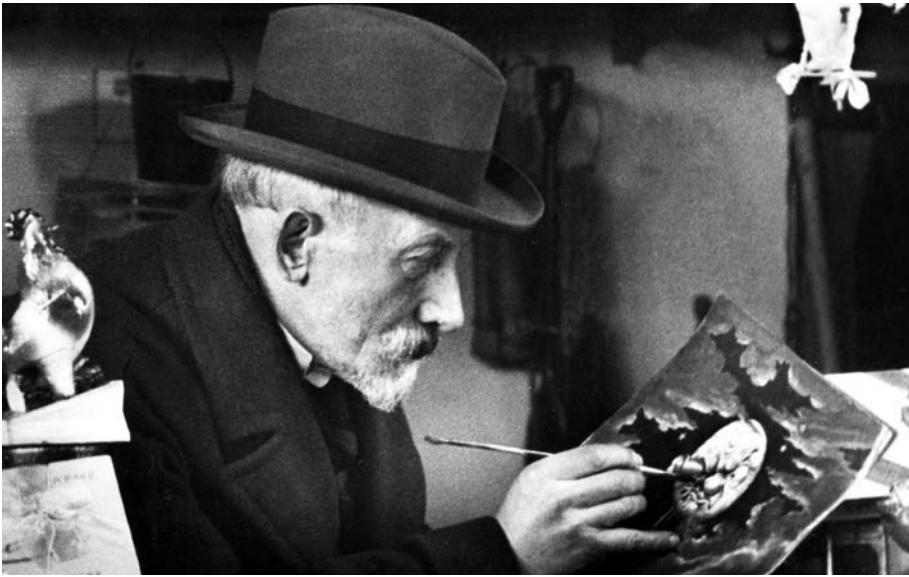
Directed by Rosine Mbakam
Belgium/Cameroon 2021, DCP, color, 91 min. French and Cameroon Pidgin with English subtitles



Rosine Mbakam *MAMBAR PIERRETTE*

THE ILLUSORY TABLEAUX OF GEORGES MÉLIÈS

FEBRUARY 1 – FEBRUARY 9



Georges Méliès in his studio

Marie-Georges-Jean Méliès (1861-1938), better known simply as Georges Méliès, was one of the true pioneers of cinema history not only in his inventive film editing, but also for his unwavering dedication to creating films as Art or as unreal events rather than mere documentations of perceived reality, or "actualités." Influenced by his background as an illusionist, his landmark trick films of the late 1800s and early 1900s were among the first moving images to not simply depict everyday experiences, but also to celebrate cinema's magical possibilities. Though Méliès was not the first to create moving images with a camera, through his magical exploration into the art of filmmaking he far surpassed his contemporaries and laid the groundwork for the movies we experience today.

Georges Méliès was a cinematic innovator in every sense of the word. Through his experimentations, Méliès invented fundamental editing techniques that remain relevant to this day, including jump cuts, double exposures, superimpositions and stop tricks. As folklore has it—and in macabre Méliès fashion—he mistakenly discovered stop-trick editing when his camera temporarily jammed while filming a car on the street; the result was the transformation of a car into a hearse on screen. Even when it came to the perforations that allow film to be pulled through a camera or projector, Méliès came up with

an arduous improvised solution using a hand-operated hammer. American inventor and patent-obsessed businessman Thomas Edison was the only known person with film perforation technology at the time, and he was characteristically unwilling to provide his assistance without claiming monopoly of Méliès' work.

Even the Lumière brothers refused to help Méliès in his technical quest. In December of 1895, Méliès attended a private film projection demonstration of *L'Arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat* (1895) by Auguste and Louis Lumière. He was so enthralled by the experience that he immediately approached the brothers about purchasing one of their moving-image camera machines. The Lumières refused his offer, and in 1896 Méliès decided to try to create his own version of the machine by modifying a Theatrograph 35mm projector designed by British inventor Robert W. Paul. Méliès was successful, and through trial-and-error approaches, he learned to process, develop and print his own films. Unlike the Lumière brothers' fascination with linking filmmaking to the study of history and science in an ethnographic sense, Méliès preferred to utilize the technology as a form of artmaking.

Méliès purchased the Théâtre Robert-Houdin in 1888 in Paris, which was founded by the renowned conjurer Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin. (Houdin also served as the namesake of another magician-actor, Harry Houdini.) Méliès revamped the failing theater and restored its glory, staging intricate and extravagant illusion shows that were extremely popular. By 1896, Méliès began showing his own films at the Théâtre Robert-Houdin beginning with *The Vanishing Lady* (1896). In establishing his own cinema theater, Méliès accomplished yet another momentous feat; he constructed one of the first indoor spaces dedicated to ongoing film-viewing by audiences, rather than just temporarily repurposing various exhibition spaces.

Georges Méliès was truly a one-man show. Not only did he manage the Théâtre Robert-Houdin, but he also wrote, produced, acted in, directed, edited and processed his own films, in addition to designing the costumes and sets. However, there was one element of the filmmaking process Méliès did outsource. From 1897 through 1912, he engaged a firm run by Élisabeth Thuillier and her daughter Marie-Berthe Thuillier to oversee the manual hand-coloring of his prints. Though some of these hand-colored prints have survived and have been restored, many are deemed lost, leaving only the black-and-white versions for posterity. Over the span of his filmmaking career (1896 – 1913), Méliès created more than 500 short films, which included a diverse range of approaches: early Lumière-influenced documentaries, comedies, horror stories, illusions, historical retellings, fantasy fables, dramas and science fiction tales. Of these works, only around 200 are known to exist today.

In 1902, Méliès released one of his most widely recognized films, *Le Voyage dans la lune*. The film was met with phenomenal reception within France and the United States. However, bootleg copies of the film—including prints produced by Thomas Edison—contributed to this positive reaction within the States, and Méliès saw none of the massive profits. This led to the founding of the American division of the production company Star Film by Méliès and his brother Gaston who aimed to ensure that screening royalties were appropriately received and copyright violation avoided. The Star Film trademark was originally patented in 1896 and was one of the earliest production companies in France. A dominating force in the newly established film industry, Thomas Edison founded the Motion Picture Patents Company in 1908 as a means of controlling the production, distribution and exhibition of all moving images within the United States and Europe as well as capitalizing on the work of other motion picture pioneers. Unfortunately, Star Film was not spared, and Méliès was forced to produce films under Edison's corporate umbrella. Edison treated his conglomerate company like an assembly line, requiring Méliès to produce on a weekly basis at least one thousand feet of film.

Despite Méliès' immense impact on the establishment of moving image film as a new medium of storytelling, his career as a filmmaker was relatively short. By 1911, Méliès struck a deal with powerful French film distributor Pathé, who financed his films between 1911 and 1913. Though some of Méliès' longest and most extravagant films came out of this brief era, none of his works were profitable for Pathé and they began taking editing liberties with Méliès' films until he broke his contract with the company by 1913. With the worldwide industrial transition in cinema toward profitable product over creative freedom, Méliès faded from filmmaking.



Georges Méliès *THE KINGDOM OF FAIRIES*

During WWI, the French Army forced Méliès to hand over approximately 400 original prints of his films to be melted down and used as army vestments. By 1923, Méliès had lost most of his cinema empire, including the Théâtre Robert-Houdin. In turn, he burned his own film negatives, costumes and sets and walked away from the film industry altogether.

Though Méliès never produced another film after that point, by the mid- to late-1920s, interest in his impact on the dawn of cinema began to grow. In 1931, he was presented with the medal of the *Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur*, the highest order of merit within France. Decades later, legendary film scholar Tom Gunning would posit Méliès' work as a "cinema of attraction" in which significance is placed on filmic theatricality and spectacle over narrative grounding. This concept concretely recognized Méliès' films as not only foundational pieces of canonical cinematic history, but also as key precursors to underground avant-garde filmmaking.

By highlighting both hand-colored and black and white versions of Georges Méliès' works, *The Illusory Tableaux of Georges Méliès* in part hopes to draw attention to the ways in which hand-coloring techniques were used to enhance and augment filmic storytelling approaches in imaginative ways as precursors to later cinematic coloring techniques. These hand-colored works are unique in that each print was individually colored, making no print exactly alike. The series also draws on Méliès' unbridled interest in the occult, unabashedly displayed in works such as *Le diable au couvent* (1899), *Le chaudron infernal* (1903) and *Les quatre cents farces du diable* (1906). Méliès' background as a performing magician ultimately led him to filmmaking, and works including *Illusions fantasmagoriques* (1898), *Le mélomane* (1903) and *Les illusions fantaisistes* (1909) showcase the ways in which Méliès elevated his illusionary tricks to statures unattainable without cinema magic. In works like *Voyage à travers l'impossible* (1904) and *Le dirigeable fantastique* (1906), Méliès delves into his own fears and fascinations with the technologies of modern times that simultaneously advance and consume humankind. Above all else, Méliès' brilliance as a performer with an unrivaled ability to consider audience perspective and construct artworks that reflect this careful contemplation enthrone him as the world's first cinematic auteur. — AV

Curated by Alexandra Vasile. Film descriptions by Alexandra Vasile and Sidney Dritz.

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY MARTIN MARKS

saturday february 1 at 7pm

THE OPTICAL TRICKS OF A CINEMAGICIAN

As a dedicated showman, Georges Méliès often both directed and acted in his films. In addition to the devil, Méliès frequently portrayed versions of his other stage persona as a magician. One of Méliès' most notable ventures into special effects involved the substitution or stop trick, which is basically a cinematic version of the magician's sleight of hand. He is believed to have first used this effect in *The Vanishing Lady* when a woman transforms into a skeleton before the audience's awestruck eyes. Shooting from a single camera position from the perspective of an audience member, Méliès the actor likewise often addressed the camera as if he were before a live audience with theatrical gestures and playful facial expressions. These classic stage illusion films were often similar to the magic theater shows that Méliès was already performing. As an illusionist, like many other magicians before and during this time, Méliès incorporated magic lantern art into his shows. A precursor to moving image projection, the magic lantern was an early slide projector that used illuminated glass slides to illustrate stories. This focus on phantasmagoria influenced Méliès to portray what was not there or what was not possible, rather than to document everyday life. Though Méliès would eventually move toward longer, more narrative film approaches, his unwavering dedication to illustrious illusions rooted in theatricality and spectacle far surpassed the stories these films told.

THE VANISHING LADY

ESCAMOTAGE D'UNE DAME CHEZ ROBERT-HOUDIN

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1896, 35mm, b/w, silent, 1 min

A TURN OF THE CENTURY ILLUSIONIST, OR AN UP-TO-DATE CONJURER

L'ILLUSIONNISTE FIN DE SIÈCLE, OU L'IMPRESSIONNISTE FIN DE SIÈCLE

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1899, DCP, hand-colored, silent, 1 min

THE MAGICIAN

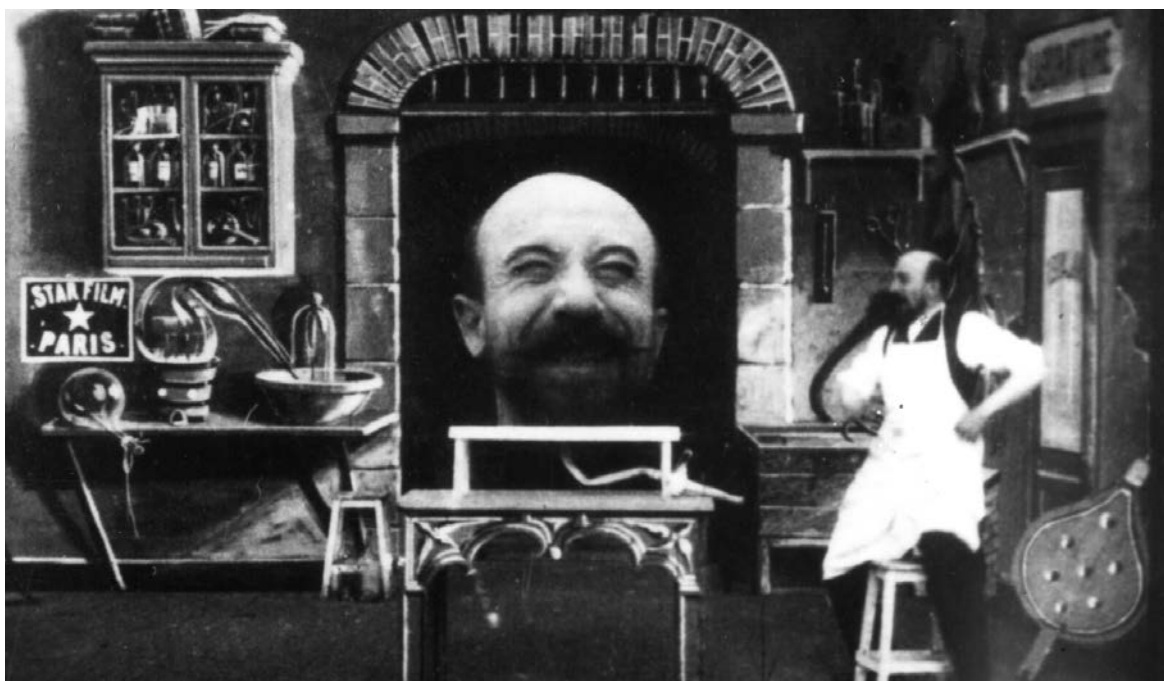
LE MAGICIAN

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1898, DCP, b/w, silent, 1 min

THE FAMOUS BOX TRICK

ILLUSIONS FANTASMAGORIQUES

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1898, DCP, b/w, silent, 1 min



Georges Méliès *THE MAN WITH THE RUBBER HEAD*

WHIMSICAL ILLUSIONS

LES ILLUSIONS FANTAISISTES

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1909, DCP, hand-colored, silent, 5 min

THE MAGIC LANTERN

LA LANTERNE MAGIQUE

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Zizi Papillon
France 1903, DCP, b/w, silent, 5 min

THE MAN WITH THE RUBBER HEAD

L'HOMME À LA TÊTE EN CAOUTCHOUC

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1901, DCP, b/w, silent, 3 min

THE TRIPLE CONJURER AND THE LIVING HEAD

L'ILLUSIONNISTE DOUBLE ET LA TÊTE VIVANTE

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1900, DCP, b/w, silent, 1 min

THE FOUR TROUBLESOME HEADS

UN HOMME DE TÊTES

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1898, 35mm, b/w, silent, 1 min

THE ONE-MAN BAND

L'HOMME-ORCHESTRE

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1900, DCP, b/w, silent, 2 min

THE MELOMANIAC, OR THE MUSIC LOVER

LE MÉLOMANE

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1903, DCP, b/w, silent 3 min

THE MYSTERIOUS PORTRAIT

LE PORTRAIT MYSTÉRIEUX

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1899, 35mm, b/w, silent, 1 min

THE LIVING PLAYING CARDS

LES CARTES VIVANTES

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1904, DCP, b/w, silent, 3 min

THE MAGIC BOOK

LE LIVRE MAGIQUE

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1900, DCP, b/w, silent, 3 min

CINDERELLA

CENDRILLON

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Mlle. Barra, Bleuette Bernon, Carmelli
France 1899, 35mm, b/w, silent, 6 min

THE DIABOLIC TENANT

LE LOCATAIRE DIABOLIQUE

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Charles Claudel, Octavie Huvier, François Lallement
France 1909, DCP, hand-colored, silent, 8 min

THE BEWITCHED INN

L'AUBERGE ENSORCELÉE

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1897, DCP, b/w, silent, 2 min

GOING TO BED UNDER DIFFICULTIES

LE DÉSHABILLAGE IMPOSSIBLE

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1900, DCP, b/w, silent, 2 min

HOW HE MISSED HIS TRAIN

LE RÉVEIL D'UN HOMME PRESSÉ

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1900, DCP, b/w, silent, 1 min

THE COOK'S REVENGE

LA VENGEANCE DU GÂTE-SAUCE

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1900, DCP, b/w, silent, 1 min

THE COOK IN TROUBLE SORCELLERIE CULINAIRE

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1904, DCP, b/w, silent, 4 min

THE SKIPPING CHEESE

LES FROMAGES AUTOMOBILES

Directed by Georges Méliès
France 1907, 35mm, b/w, silent, 5 min

THE WONDERFUL LIVING FAN

LE MERVEILLEUX ÉVENTAIL VIVANT

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1904, 35mm, hand-colored, silent, 3 min

TRT 63 min

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY ROBERT HUMPHREVILLE

sunday february 2 at 3pm

ONLY IN DREAMS: THE EVILS THAT LURK

How unearthly and groundbreaking the moving pictures of Georges Méliès must have appeared to the audiences who first laid eyes on the new spectres, filled with baffling tricks of the eye and unbelievable scenarios. His incorporation of dreams provided narrative license for all of the fantastical images, plots and settings he could imagine. Sometimes expressions of beauty and wonder, the dreams are also usually haunted by demons and macabre creatures of the night, with Méliès himself playing the role of the ever-lurking devil character—a choice alluding to Méliès the director, the true perpetrator of the sinister phantasms conveyed on screen. Through his sense of playfulness influenced by the occult, Méliès challenged perceived reality to achieve illusions made possible by this newly concocted mechanical, photochemical medium. His recurring character Beelzebub, with all the weight of religious and cultural significance that came with the role, serves as a dark memento within an artistic decadence that sought to both repulse and entice. Méliès' films represent not just a form of elated fantasy, but a conflict between the rational and the irrational that only magic could explain. His unflinching dedication to the hauntingly mythical and uncanny supernatural elements of storytelling—enabled by the sense of possibility and impossibility—solidify Méliès as the originator of horror cinema.

A TERRIBLE NIGHT UNE NUIT TERRIBLE

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1896, DCP, b/w, silent, 1 min

BARON MUNCHAUSEN'S DREAM LES HALLUCINATIONS DU BARON DE MÜNCHAUSEN

Directed by Georges Méliès
France 1911, DCP, b/w, silent, 11 min

THE ASTRONOMER'S DREAM

LA LUNE À UN MÈTRE

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1898, DCP, b/w, silent, 4 min

THE DEVIL IN A CONVENT, OR THE SIGN OF THE CROSS LE DIABLE AU COUVENT

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1899, DCP, b/w, silent, 3 min



Georges Méliès *THE LIVING PLAYING CARDS*

THE PILLAR OF FIRE DANSE DU FEU

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1899, DCP, hand-colored, silent, 1 min

THE INFERNAL CAULDRON

LE CHAUDRON INFERNAL

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1903, DCP, hand-colored, silent, 2 min

THE HAUNTED CASTLE LE CHÂTEAU HANTÉ

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1897, DCP, hand-colored, silent, 3 min

THE KINGDOM OF FAIRIES LE ROYAUME DES FÉES

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès, Marguerite Thévenard, Bleurette Bernon
France 1903, 35mm, hand-colored, silent, 17 min

THE WITCH

LA FÉE CARABOSSE, OU LE POIGNARD FATAL

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1906, DCP, hand-colored, silent, 11 min

THE MERRY FROLICS OF SATAN

LES QUATRE CENTS FARCES DU DIABLE

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1906, 35mm, b/w, silent, 22 min. French intertitles with English subtitles

TRT 73 min

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY MARTIN MARKS

sunday february 9 at 3pm

VOYAGES THROUGH EARTH, SEA AND SPACE

Georges Méliès' background as a liberal-minded political cartoonist is most clearly revealed in his cinematic tales of travel, adventure and exploration. At the turn of the nineteenth century, colonization was in the process of enriching major world powers while undermining or destroying indigenous cultures. Méliès recognized this internationally practiced government initiative as a power- and resource-mongering exploitation favoring violence toward and distrust of colonized peoples in the name of modernity. Consequently, many of Méliès' voyage films depict absent-minded, abusive and disaster-prone characters as they bumble through wondrous settings and unknown places, often easily distracted from their missions or halted by missteps. In this way, Méliès illustrated the absurdity of colonialism and provided audiences with a lighthearted yet critical view of the driving foreign policy of the time. Along with Méliès' humorously ineffectual characters, modern technology also proves its unreliability and unpredictability in his films—which are, of course, only made possible by that very genealogy of technological innovation—again revealing Méliès' sense for the ironies of his era. At the same time, Méliès' voyages often blend and overlap with his surreal dreamscapes. *The Inventor Crazybrain and His Wonderful Airship* is as much a fantasy of the blurring of



Georges Méliès *UNDER THE SEAS, OR 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA*

dream and reality as it is a depiction of the spirit of discovery and technological advancement of his age, a commonality which underlines the sense that, for Méliès, the two were inextricably linked. As modernism rolls on from town to town (in panorama, from atop the train!), glimpses of beauty are overshadowed by the need to continue full steam ahead at all costs. If only it were all a dream!

AN ADVENTUROUS AUTOMOBILE TRIP

LE RAID PARIS – MONTE-CARLO EN DEUX HEURES

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Harry Fragson, Louis Maurel, Harry Ralph
France 1905, 35mm, b/w, silent, 10 min

PANORAMA FROM TOP OF A MOVING TRAIN

PANORAMA PRIS D'UN TRAIN EN MARCHÉ

Directed by Georges Méliès
France 1898, 35mm, b/w, silent, 1 min

THE IMPOSSIBLE VOYAGE

LE VOYAGE À TRAVERS L'IMPOSSIBLE

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès, Fernande Albany, Jehanne d'Alcy
France 1904, 35mm, hand-colored, silent, 20 min

DIVERS AT WORK ON THE WRECK OF THE MAINE

VISITE SOUS-MARINE DU MAINE

Directed by Georges Méliès
France 1898, DCP, b/w, silent, 1 min

UNDER THE SEAS, OR 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER

THE SEA 20000 LIEUES SOUS LES MERS

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Manuel, Georges Méliès
France 1907, DCP, b/w, silent, 10 min

THE INVENTOR CRAZYBRAIN AND HIS WONDERFUL AIRSHIP

LE DIRIGEABLE FANTASTIQUE

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès
France 1905, DCP, hand-colored, silent, 3 min



Georges Méliès A TRIP TO THE MOON

THE CONQUEST OF THE POLE

A LA CONQUÊTE DU PÔLE

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Georges Méliès, Fernande Albany
France 1912, 35mm, b/w, silent, 30 min. French intertitles with English subtitles

A TRIP TO THE MOON LE VOYAGE DANS LA LUNE

Directed by Georges Méliès. With Victor André, Bleurette Bernon, Georges Méliès
France 1902, 35mm, hand-colored, silent, 15 min

TRT 90 min

ACTIVISM AND POST-ACTIVISM. KOREAN DOCUMENTARY CINEMA, 1981-2022

FEBRUARY 3 - FEBRUARY 16

These programs and introductions present an overview of *Activism and Post-Activism: Korean Documentary Cinema, 1981-2022* (Oxford University Press, 2024), the first English-language monograph on Korean nonfiction film and video practices in the non-governmental and non-corporate sectors from their foundational period (early 1980s) to the present. Making tripartite connections between the sociopolitical history of Korea (from the 1980s mass anti-dictatorship movement to twenty-first century labor issues, Truth and Reconciliation, feminism, LGBT rights, environmental justice, and key events such as the Sewol Ferry disaster and the Candlelight Protests), documentary's aesthetics and politics, and the shifting institutional and technological evolution of documentary production and distribution, what is unique and particular about this forty-year history of Korean documentary cinema is the intensive and compressed co-evolution of activism (including social change documentaries aimed at engaging social movements in the form of alternative nonfiction media practice) and post-activism (a set of twenty-first-century documentaries whose formal and aesthetic experimentations gesture toward overcoming and renewing the activist tradition). – Kim Jihoon

Kim Jihoon is a Professor of Cinema and Media Studies at Chung-Ang University. His second book, *Documentary's Expanded Fields: New Media and the Twenty-First-Century Documentary*, was published by Oxford University Press in 2022. He has edited a special issue on Korean popular cinema and television in the 21st century for the *Journal of Popular Film and Television* (Volume 47, Issue 1, 2019).

Film curation and descriptions by Kim Jihoon.

Special thanks: Nicholas Harkness, Susan Laurence, Son Dongchan—Korea Institute, Harvard; and Bu Chan Yong, East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard.

INTRODUCTION BY BU CHAN YONG

monday february 3 at 7:30pm

SANGGYEDONG OLYMPIC

This film, which local historiography of Korean documentary cinema has regarded as the “prototype of video activism,” documents the struggles of tenants against eviction due to the large-scale demolition and beautification of dilapidated houses in the old towns of Seoul in preparation for the 1988 Seoul Olympics. Kim Dong-won’s use of the video camera as a tool to film the tenants while living among them for five years fulfilled activism’s demand for a newsreel that would make public their precarious lives neglected by mainstream news



Kim Dong-won SANGGYEDONG OLYMPIC

outlets. The film's collaborative processes satisfied the participatory ideal of the committed documentary to transcend the boundaries between a filmmaker and the subjects, between film and social reality, and between production and reception.

Directed by Kim Dong-won
South Korea 1988, digital video, color, 27 min. Korean with English subtitles

GRAEAE: A STATIONED IDEA

The film charts a young female artist-filmmaker's creative reinvention of the essayistic inquiry into the Cold War and the postcolonial origins of Yongsan Garrison in Seoul (the former headquarters of the US military forces stationed in Korea). This is done through a rich array of images and documents, and through her subjectivity that shuffles between that of a quasi-historian, a collector and a player of Pokémon Go. Reflecting the condition in which our consciousness of space and time, as well as our memory, are fundamentally restructured by dense digital networks, platforms and interfaces, Jeong Yeo-reum offers a contemporary take on how Korean documentary cinema has dynamically expanded its technical and aesthetic boundaries since the early 21st century while also renewing its longstanding commitment to reality and history.

Directed by Jeong Yeo-reum
South Korea 2020, DCP, color & b/w, 35 min. Korean with English subtitles

INTRODUCTION BY BU CHAN YONG

sunday february 16 at 7pm

LABOR NEWS NO. 1

This video was motivated by labor activists' demand for "immediately filming the struggles that occur at different times and making it into a news format." Labor News Production's use of various post-production techniques—evident in the appropriation of a TV news clip on violence during a strike through the interplay of slow motion and a majestic classic music track—attest not only to its pursuit of propagandistic, agitational and pedagogical effects but also to its effort to elaborate on the aesthetics of montage



Hong Jin-hwon MELTING ICECREAM

in seeking nonfiction media's expressive possibilities, an effort distinct from the activist tradition's privileging of on-the-spot realism and its obsession with documentary authenticity. It can also be read as an artifact of alternative media or a "visual magazine," considering the labor activists' growing awareness of visual media as more effective than brochures and breaking-news pamphlets. LNP chose the video camera not merely for accessibility, portability and cheap production costs, but also for circulation of *Labor News* via VHS through labor unions' in-house broadcasting networks. In so doing, LNP pioneered the alternative distribution strategy adopted by other practitioners and collectives from the late 1980s.

Directed by Labor News Production
South Korea 1989, DCP, color, 73 min. Korean with English subtitles

MELTING ICECREAM

The documentary directed by artist-filmmaker Hong Jin-hwon focuses on the processes of restoring water-damaged films of such collectives as the Institute of Social Photography and National Photography

Institute committed to documenting sites of student protests and labor movements in the spirit of *minjung* art in the late 1980s and early 1990s, featuring interviews with the collectives' members. The filmstrips left by the activist photo groups aimed to document people's struggles during the massive anti-dictatorship movement are legitimized as objects of preservation and restoration in contrast to lo-fi amateur videos subject to deterioration and forgetting, audiovisual records charged with the cries and gestures of workers who desperately fight against the legislation of the law that allowed for the mass dismissal of irregular workers in 2007. The film's alternative, material historiography goes so far as to associate the material and technical dimensions of photographic and video documents with a memory war regarding which historical records deserve to be preserved and which are excluded.

Directed by Hong Jin-hwon
South Korea 2021, DCP, b/w, 70 min. Korean with English subtitles

FABLES OF THE RECONSTRUCTION. THE FILMS OF NELSON CARLO DE LOS SANTOS ARIAS

FEBRUARY 7 – FEBRUARY 14



Nelson Carlo de Los Santos Arias COCOTE

The films of Nelson Carlo de Los Santos Arias (b. 1985) are shapeshifting objects that rarely stay in one place for long—not unlike the Dominican-born director himself, who studied cinema in Mexico, Argentina, Scotland and the United States before settling in Berlin in 2019. Similarly restless, de Los Santos Arias' wide-ranging body of work hopscoches between continents as nimbly as it incorporates different film formats and narrative traditions, ranging from speculative fiction to experimental ethnography. Stylistic breadth notwithstanding, a number of themes run throughout his filmography, namely colonialism, cultural memory and language vis-à-vis his standing as a Caribbean artist living and working abroad. With his rhizomatic approach to history and storytelling, de Los Santos Arias—who shoots and edits his films himself—has developed a unique brand of political cinema in which the uncanny and fantastic freely intermingle with more concrete anthropological concerns, a process that has arguably reached its most vivid expression yet with his latest feature, *Pepe* (2024), which reimagines the life and death of one of Pablo Escobar's notorious "cocaine hippos."

De Los Santos Arias' first two features, *You Look Like a Carriage That Not Even the Oxen Can Stop* (2013) and *Santa Teresa and Other Stories* (2015), like his philosophically framed 2014 short *Lullabies*, were made while attending CalArts, and together they reflect both the filmmaker's budding formal ingenuity and his

longstanding interest in marginalized communities. Set in New York and spoken almost entirely in Caribbean Spanish, *You Look Like a Carriage* takes place primarily in the apartment of de Los Santos Arias' real-life aunt and cousin, with whom he films and commiserates as they struggle with the realities of being outsiders in an unwelcoming country. *Santa Teresa*, meanwhile, explodes its predecessor's largely observational conceit through a combination of fact, fiction and fabulation. In this multivalent portrait of an imagined Mexican border city, the director meditates on violence and its representation by freely pulling from not only national history and local myth, but also from Chilean author Roberto Bolaño's unfinished novel *2666*.

Near the end of *Santa Teresa*, a young girl reads a passage from Bolaño's book that evokes the experience of watching de Los Santos Arias' films better than any straightforward description:

*The style was strange.
The writing was clear
And sometimes even transparent.
But the stories that followed,
One after another,
Didn't lead anywhere. [...]
All that was really left was nature,
A nature that dissolved little by little,
In a boiling cauldron,
Until it vanished completely.*



Nelson Carlo de Los Santos Arias *SANTA TERESA AND OTHER STORIES*

Nature indeed plays a key role in both *Pepe* and its predecessor, *Cocote* (2017). In the latter, a gardener returns from Santo Domingo to his rural hometown following the murder of his father. Over the course of a multiday mourning ritual—captured by de Los Santos Arias with verite-esque immediacy—the man is forced to reconcile his religious beliefs with the realization that his family expects him to avenge the killing. Despite its allusions to classic genre cinema, *Cocote* plays something like a hybrid of the director's ethnographic and experimental impulses, a mode he expands into something nearly unclassifiable in *Pepe*. Applying *Cocote*'s dizzying mix of textures, formats and narrative flights of fancy to a true-to-life tale of colonial violence, de Los Santos Arias presents the plight of the eponymous pachyderm not as a mere stranger-than-fiction fable, but as an allegory for the ongoing exploitation and misrepresentation of the Global South. As with all of de Los Santos Arias' work, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, but that doesn't make the parts any less thrilling to behold. — Jordan Cronk

The Harvard Film Archive warmly welcomes Nelson Carlo de Los Santos Arias for two evenings of screenings and conversations including a special free ArtsThursday presentation of his exciting latest feature *Pepe*.

Film descriptions by Jordan Cronk.

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

Special thanks: Marcela Ramos—David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, Harvard; Bailey Thaxton, Lori E. Gross—Office of the Provost, Harvard.



DAVID ROCKEFELLER CENTER
FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
HARVARD UNIVERSITY



friday february 7 at 7:30pm
SANTA TERESA AND OTHER STORIES
SANTA TERESA Y OTRAS HISTORIAS

As its title suggests, de Los Santos Arias' second feature funnels fact and fiction into a cinematic slipstream of historical memory and bygone storytelling conventions. Summoning a rare kind of lyrical fury, the Dominican director nimbly transposes several themes nascent to his prior films—cultural erasure, exploitation, and spirituality—to a fictional border town reminiscent of the notorious Mexican city Ciudad Juárez. Alternately invoking and extrapolating from Chilean author Roberto Bolaño's unfinished, posthumously published novel *2666*, de Los Santos Arias surveys the blood-strewn streets through a va-

riety of female voices who testify to the untold number of disappeared women haunting the region's outwardly religious and festive facade. Images, both still and moving and presented alternately in color and black and white, of tombs and cathedrals, abandoned buildings and crime scene evidence, comprise a montage that regenerates from moment to moment through a subtle latticework of juxtapositions and figural motifs. Rooted in oral customs, the film literally and figuratively speaks to the myths that arise from a combination of local folklore, religion and cultural (mis)representation, all the while hinting at genres (e.g. Westerns, film noir) not typically associated with nonfiction filmmaking. From the ruins of the forgotten, fabricated or simply silenced,

de Los Santos Arias fashions a kind of poetic essay that nimbly traverses time, space and tradition.

Directed by Nelson Carlo de Los Santos Arias
Dominican Republic/US/Mexico 2015, DCP, color & b/w, 65 min. Spanish with English subtitles

Preceded by

LULLABIES CANCIONES DE CUNA

Made while the filmmaker was studying at CalArts, this short film speaks directly to the de Los Santos Arias' roots in experimental cinema. A self-described "false autobiography," it is a work that filters childhood nostalgia through a film-critical lens inspired by the French philosophers Henri Bergson and Gilles Deleuze. In ruminative fashion, the filmmaker reflects, in a combination of voiceover and intertitles, on the relationship between movement and matter and how memory, by way of cinema, has influenced modern conceptions of image-making. Or, put more simply, how images of a rollercoaster or a ballet dancer can transcend context and evoke something poetic through the creative use of montage, superimpositions, lens flares, or even just the presence of artifacts in the celluloid frame. Among other more tangible things, *Lullabies* attests to the fundamentally personal nature of de Los Santos Arias' practice, something that no amount of theoretical or conceptual ambition has thus far been able to obscure.

Directed by Nelson Carlo de Los Santos Arias. With Manuel Barenboim, Nelson Carlo de Los Santos Arias, Jackson McCoy
Dominican Republic/US 2014, DCP, color, 32 min. Spanish with English subtitles



Nelson Carlo de Los Santos Arias *YOU LOOK LIKE A CARRIAGE THAT NOT EVEN THE OXEN CAN STOP*

friday february 7 at 9:45pm

YOU LOOK LIKE A CARRIAGE THAT NOT EVEN THE OXEN CAN STOP PARECES UNA CARRETA DE ESAS QUE NO LA PARA NI LO' BUEYE

De los Santos Arias' little-seen first feature opens with an extended shot of the New York skyline captured from a cable car suspended high above the city streets. From there, things move into the apartment of the director's real-life aunt and cousin, Dominican immigrants doing their best to assimilate in an environment hostile to outsiders. Spoken largely in Caribbean Spanish, the film finds de Los Santos Arias—whose voice can often be heard off-camera—reconnecting with his relatives while simultaneously observing their isolated lives, which are marked by a variety of physical, spiritual and mental health struggles. ("If I was born OK, you'd be fucked!" the cousin tells the filmmaker at one point.) Between occasional visits from neighbors, the two women bicker and gossip about family and friends as days pass by with little differentiation. Unlike most of de Los Santos Arias' subsequent films, *You Look Like a Carriage* can be rightly classified as a documentary, though the young filmmaker's formal acumen is already on display in idiosyncratic camera movements and unexpected breaches in the dramaturgy. Few films make New York feel so cloistered and alien.

Directed by Nelson Carlo de Los Santos Arias
Dominican Republic/US 2013, DCP, color, 84 min. Spanish with English subtitles

**ARTSTHURSDAY FREE SCREENING
NELSON CARLO DE LOS SANTOS ARIAS
IN PERSON**

thursday february 13 at 7pm

PEPE

De Los Santos Arias' highly ambitious latest feature playfully reimagines the life of the titular hippopotamus, brought from southern Africa to Colombia in the late 1970s by infamous drug lord Pablo Escobar. Pitched somewhere between the ethnographic and the fantastic, this speculative fiction is told from the perspective of Pepe himself, who narrates his transatlantic journey in a kind of existential bemusement, commenting on the absurdity of the situation and his eventual death at the hands of local authorities with a sense of wizened omniscience. Skillfully expanding on his montage-based approach to narrative, de Los Santos Arias combines fictional passages—largely centered on a pair of fishermen frustrated by the arrival of the pachyderms to the Magdalena River Valley—with documentary foot-



Nelson Carlo de Los Santos Arias *PEPE*

age of hippos still living in the region, sequences of found audio and news footage related to the murders of both Pepe and Pablo Escobar, and, most cleverly, excerpts from the 1960s Hanna-Barbera cartoon *Peter Potamus*, which the filmmaker discovered as a child on Spanish television under the title *Pepe Pótamus*. At once a parable of unexpected pop-historical synergies and a shrewd allegory for the history of colonialism in the Global South, the film forges a seamless continuum between otherwise disparate cultural, political and cinematic orthodoxies. Bold and unpredictable, *Pepe* breathes with the freedom and conviction of an artist who has fully come into his own.

Directed by Nelson Carlo de Los Santos Arias. With Jhon Narváez, Fareed Matjila, Nicolás Marín Caly
Dominican Republic/France/Namibia/Germany 2024, DCP, color & b/w, 122 min. Spanish, Afrikaans and German with English subtitles

This event is part of ArtsThursdays, a university-wide initiative supported by Harvard University Committee on the Arts.

**\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS
NELSON CARLO DE LOS SANTOS ARIAS
IN PERSON**

friday february 14 at 7:30pm

COCOTE

To date the only film de Los Santos Arias has set in his home country, the rural crime fable *Cocote*

likewise represents his first full-fledged foray into narrative cinema. Alberto (Vicente Santos), a mild-mannered gardener working for a wealthy family in Santo Domingo, travels home for his father's funeral. Upon his arrival, he learns that his father has been murdered, and that he has been summoned to avenge the death—a notion that the deeply religious Alberto has difficulty reconciling. Over the course of a nine-day mourning ritual, Alberto, who keeps a bible tucked firmly under his arm, reconnects with friends and family while threatening encounters with his father's assailants force him to reconsider the efficacy of his faith. Integrating formal elements—chapter titles; a mix of color and black and white film stocks—from his previous experiments in observational and essayistic nonfiction, de Los Santos Arias constructs a feverish revenge drama that blends fiction and ethnography through an array of adventurous narrative and compositional devices that nod to forebears ranging from Jean Rouch to John Ford. A film rich in texture and rife with culturally specific detail, *Cocote* upends genre conventions without betraying the fundamental intrigue of an old-fashioned revenge saga.

Directed by Nelson Carlo de Los Santos Arias. With Vicente Santos, Judith Rodríguez, Yuberbi de La Rosa
Dominican Republic 2017, DCP, color & b/w, 106 min. Spanish with English subtitles

BEN RIVERS, BACK TO THE LAND

FEBRUARY 21 – MARCH 10

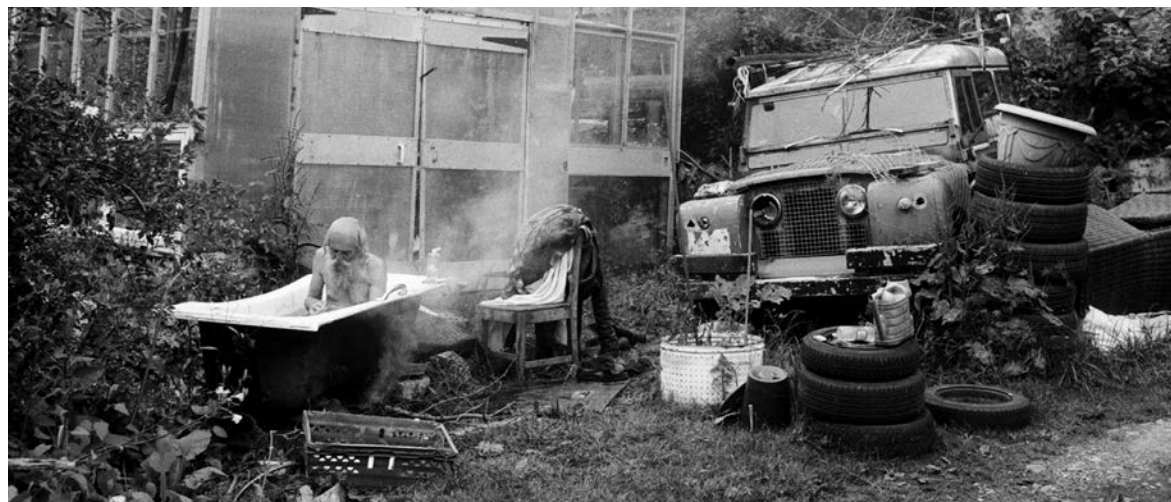
Ben Rivers (b. 1972) emerged in the early 2000s as one of several young experimental filmmakers invigorated by ethnographic technique, but his short films immediately stood out for their curious imaginative leaps, redolent of both science fiction and lyric poetry; their wayward forms of portraiture; their interest in, and practice of, the handmade; and their often-feverish materiality. Twenty years later, Rivers' now expansive filmography constitutes a veritable archipelago of elsewhere, as likely to be found in a factory on the outskirts of London as on the islands of Vanatu. His ambition seems to stem directly from the documentary encounter, such that his subjects frequently overspill the bounds of a single work: Jake Williams, subject of several films in this series, features in shorts (*This Is My Land*, *More Than Just a Dram*), features (*Two Years at Sea*, *Bogancloch*), and even wine promotions; *The Sky Trembles and the Earth Is Afraid and the Two Eyes Are Not Brothers* (2015) was both a film and a book; *Now, at Last!* (2018) a film and installation (perhaps unsurprisingly for an artist so attentive to the dimensions of dwelling, Rivers is unusually adept at translating his film practice to the gallery space). A recent publication attributed to Rivers, playfully titled *Collected Stories* (Fireflies Press), comprises text by nineteen other authors—the latest in a long line of surrealist collaborations.

Rivers' films may be slow, but they never sit still. There is always some sly surprise in the film's form coming to awareness of itself, taking after a sovereign subject. We sense that Rivers makes work to find out what it means, no matter where the films fall on the documentary-fiction continuum (though observation and dream may be the more operative duality). He is finally one of our signal cineastes not so much because of his taste for hand-processed emulsion or *films maudits* but rather because his work holds out hope that the cinema itself may be one of those autonomous zones that so attract him, in which solitudes are joined, time collects, and other worlds and ways of knowing are brought into being. — Max Goldberg

The HFA welcomes longtime friend and frequent guest Ben Rivers to the cinema to discuss his latest cinematic wonder *Bogancloch* as well as *Now, at Last!*, a film originally slated to screen here in 2020 before the pandemic closed the theater. He will also introduce his own addition to the program and influential work, Peter Watkins' shimmering television bio-pic *Edvard Munch* (1974) which coincides with a new exhibit at the Harvard Art Museums, *Edvard Munch: Technically Speaking*.

From Feb 14 until April 5 the Harvard Film Archive will exhibit, in its main office, Rivers' installation Hello?! featuring original drawn film stills and sound collage.

Film descriptions by Max Goldberg, unless otherwise noted.



Ben Rivers *BOGANCLOCH*

friday february 21 at 7pm
TWO YEARS AT SEA

For his first feature film, Ben Rivers reunited once more with Jake Williams, the eccentric hermit whose ramshackle life deep in the Scottish wilderness is the subject of Rivers' *This is My Land* and an episode from *I Know Where I'm Going* (2009). A captivating meditation on solitude and time's passage, *Two Years at Sea* is a vivid and at times mysterious portrait of a man who seems to have found a genuine inner peace in the slow unfolding of his ritualized every day. The stunning imagery and visual imagination of *Two Years at Sea* derive a rare power from Rivers' dramatic use of the pointedly anachronistic 16mm widescreen format—later blown up to 35mm—to cast a swirling photochemical energy around the ragged forest and overstuffed trailer that together constitute Williams' home and universe. Almost entirely wordless, the film uses its richly evocative soundscape and extended long takes to fully immerse the viewer into the resonant tranquility of Williams' life, with photographs and well-worn objects gently hinting but never revealing a past life shed long ago. — HG

Directed by Ben Rivers
UK 2011, 35mm, b/w, 88 min

Preceded by

THIS IS MY LAND

This first portrait of, and collaboration with, Jake Williams, a generously bearded dreamer living back to the land, is full of rough magic. Rivers' 16mm collage takes its own cinematic measure of Williams' self-sufficiency for a vision of solitude that is, paradoxically, infused with a sense of communion.

Directed by Ben Rivers
UK 2006, 16mm, b/w, 14 min

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS
BEN RIVERS IN PERSON

saturday march 8 at 7pm

BOGANCLOCH

Less a sequel than a further sequence of a serial poem, *Bogancloch* sets down in the same Scottish woods as *This Is My Land* and *Two Years at Sea*. Hardly a moment has passed in the life of the house—which in its rambling horizontality seems to demand Rivers' widescreen frame—but its human denizen is visibly older and increasingly given to song. As in the previous films, Jake's routines lend themselves to Bergsonian reveries on the elusive character of steam and the ricocheting sonics of old cassette tapes played over a loudspeaker. These continuities suggest one long arc, the disruptions another: a late sequence of a group of singers around a fire, staging a call and response between life and death, simultaneously draws Jake's character into social reality as it grazes more ancient rites. A closing camera movement suggests that Jake's world is beyond earthly reckoning and makes for a heavenly finish to this inexplicably uplifting film.

Directed by Ben Rivers
UK 2024, DCP, b/w & color, 89 min

INTRODUCTION BY BEN RIVERS

sunday march 9 at 7pm

EDVARD MUNCH

There is a shot in *Edvard Munch* (one which I believe Sokurov may have watched before making his also extraordinary *Faust*) that made me gasp when I first saw the film: a young woman's face, not saying anything but looking in silence and evoking a power like that of the greatest painted portraits—a moment of pause in otherwise nonstop storytelling. Peter Watkins finds this shot in his signature handheld style, as if he and his crew were following Munch, his family and friends, throughout their lives, while a stern voice explains further details of the story of the artist's life. At any given moment within the film's necessary three and a half hours, we are somehow right there with Munch, struggling through his creating one of the great bodies of work. As a filmmaker I have received a vast amount of courage from the radical cinema of Peter Watkins, with *Munch* standing as one of his most unique and strange, much like the paintings of his subject, illuminating the dark corners of humanity. — Ben Rivers

Directed by Peter Watkins. With Geir Westby, Gro Fraas, Kerstil Allum
Sweden/Norway 1974, 35mm, color, 210 min. French, English, Norwegian, German, Swedish and Danish with English subtitles

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS
BEN RIVERS IN PERSON

monday march 10 at 7pm

NOW, AT LAST!

Rivers offers a playful ode, or perhaps manifesto, to slow cinema, to filmmaking set to the inimitable pace of a Costa Rican tree sloth. Alternately a black-and-white observational film and an almost 3D color musical, *Now, at Last!* allows the viewer to delight in the sloth's leisurely passage up tree trunks and limbs while contemplating the ways the camera, and 16mm in particular, give sculpturally moving dimensions to even the slowest and, at times, stillest of creatures. — HG

Directed by Ben Rivers
UK 2018, 35mm, color & b/w, 40 min



Ben Rivers *TWO YEARS AT SEA*

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
12	13	14	15	16	17 7PM LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD MEMORIES OF LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD P. 3	18 7PM INDIA SONG P. 3 9:30PM LA MUSICA P. 3
19 3PM INDIA SONG P. 3 7PM THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE P. 4	20	21	22	23	24 7:30PM MASO AND MISO GO BOATING P. 4 9PM MURIEL, OR THE TIME OF RETURN P. 4	25 7PM BE PRETTY AND SHUT UP P. 4 9:30PM BAXTER, VERA BAXTER P. 5
26 3PM THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE P. 4 7PM LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD MEMORIES OF LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD P. 3	27 7:30PM DOORS OF THE PAST THE TWO FACES OF A BAMILÉKÉ WOMAN P. 7	28	29	30	31 7:30PM YOU WILL BE MY ALLY P. 8 CHEZ JOLIE COIFFURE P. 7 9:30PM PRISM P. 8	



Rainer Werner Fassbinder *ALI: FEAR EATS THE SOUL* P. 22



Carson Lund *EEPHUS* P. 24

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S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						01 7PM THE OPTICAL TRICKS OF A CINEMAGICIAN P. 10 <i>live musical accompaniment</i> 9PM DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS P. 5
02 3PM ONLY IN DREAMS: THE EVILS THAT LURK P. 11 <i>live musical accompaniment</i> 7PM DOORS OF THE PAST THE TWO FACES OF A BAMILÉKÉ WOMAN P. 7	03 7:30PM SANGGYEDONG OLYMPIC P. 12 GRAEAE: A STATIONED IDEA P. 13 <i>introduction by bu chan yong</i>	04	05	06	07 7:30PM LULLABIES SANTA TERESA AND OTHER STORIES P. 14 9:45PM YOU LOOK LIKE A CARRIAGE THAT NOT EVEN THE OXEN CAN STOP P. 15	08 7PM MAMBAR PIERRETTE P. 8 <i>rosine mbakam in person</i>
09 3PM VOYAGES THROUGH EARTH, SEA AND SPACE P. 11 <i>live musical accompaniment</i> 7PM DELPHINE'S PRAYERS P. 8 <i>rosine mbakam in person</i>	10 7:30PM THE GARDEN THAT TILTS P. 5	11	12	13 7PM PEPE P. 15 <i>nelson carlo de los santos arias in person • free</i>	14 7:30PM COCOTE P. 15 <i>nelson carlo de los santos arias in person</i>	15 6PM JEANNE DIELMAN, 23 QUAI DU COMMERCE, 1080 BRUXELLES P. 5
16 3PM DONKEY SKIN P. 5 7PM LABOR NEWS NO. 1 MELTING ICECREAM P. 13 <i>introduction by bu chan yong</i>	17	18	19	20	21 7PM THIS IS MY LAND TWO YEARS AT SEA P. 16 9:30PM GOLDEN EIGHTIES P. 5	22 2PM PUNCH-DRUNK LOVE ALL: FEAR EATS THE SOUL P. 22 7PM EEPHUS P. 24 <i>carson lund in conversation with tom conley</i>
23 3PM HATARI! P. 24 <i>introduction by jessica sarah rinland</i> 7PM SCUM MANIFESTO BE PRETTY AND SHUT UP P. 4	24 7PM COLLECTIVE MONOLOGUE P. 25 <i>jessica sarah rinland in person</i>				28 7PM ERASERHEAD P. 26 <i>presentation by kristine mckenna</i>	



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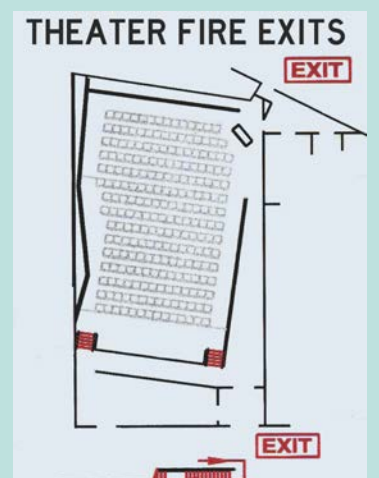
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All programs subject to change.

The Harvard Film Archive is just east of the Harvard Square Red Line T stop and next to the Harvard Art Museums. The HFA is one block north of Massachusetts Avenue between Broadway and Harvard Streets on the Harvard University campus.

There is limited metered parking in Harvard Square, which is free after 6pm or 8pm and all day on Sundays. Parking is also available at several public lots in Harvard Square.



MARCH 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						01 7PM TWIN PEAKS: FIRE WALK WITH ME P. 26 conversation with sabrina sutherland
02 3PM COLORS OF MADNESS ALOÏSE P. 6 7PM DORIAN GRAY IN THE MIRROR OF THE YELLOW PRESS P. 6	03 7PM DAHOMEY P. 27 mati diop in person	04	05	06	07 7PM THE DEATH OF LOUIS XIV P. 28 9:15PM LIBERTÉ P. 28	08 2PM BEAU TRAVAIL BRIEF ENCOUNTER P. 22 7PM BOGANCLOCH P. 16 ben rivers in person
09 7PM EDVARD MUNCH P. 16 introduction by ben rivers	10 7PM NOW, AT LAST! P. 16 ben rivers in person	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 3PM THE DEATH OF LOUIS XIV P. 28 7PM BIRDSONG P. 28	24 7PM HONOR OF THE KNIGHTS P. 28	25	26	27	28 7PM PACIFICTION P. 28 albert serra in person	29 7PM STORY OF MY DEATH P. 28 albert serra in person
30	31 7PM AFTERNOONS OF SOLITUDE P. 29 albert serra in person					

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.

Nelson Carlo de Los Santos Arias COCOTE P. 15

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		01	02	03	04 6PM YOUTH (SPRING) P. 30	05 2PM LA JETÉE IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE P. 23 6PM YOUTH (HARD TIMES) P. 30
06 6PM YOUTH (HOMECOMING) P. 30	07 7PM HARAKIRI P. 40 introduction by peter grilli	08	09	10	11 7PM PREWAR AND WARTIME ANIMATION, PART ONE P. 31 9PM TYOSEN TO THE J**PS: SOUTH KOREAN A-BOMB SURVI- VORS SPEAK OUT P. 31	12 7PM SEA PALACE THE SEA DEMON ON LAND P. 32 9PM AFTERNOONS OF SOLITUDE P. 29
13 3PM UNDERGROUND AND IN THE AIR: MUSICAL EXPERI- MENTS IN YUGOSLAVIA P. 33 7PM ALPE-ADRIA UNDER- GROUND! P. 33	14 7PM BLACK DROP SUBJECT TO REVIEW P. 34 theo anthony in person	15	16	17	18 7PM THE BIG CITY P. 35	19 7PM CHARULATA P. 35 9:30PM THE ADVERSARY P. 35
20 7PM COMPANY LIMITED P. 36	21 7PM PREWAR AND WARTIME ANIMATION, PART TWO P. 32	22	23	24	25 6PM YOUTH (HOMECOMING) P. 30	26 6PM YOUTH (HARD TIMES) P. 30
27 3PM COMPANY LIMITED P. 36 7PM DEVI P. 36	28 7PM ASIA IS ONE P. 32	29	30			



Peter Watkins EDVARD MUNCH P. 16



John Cassavetes A WOMAN UNDER THE INFLUENCE P. 39

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				01	02	03
04	05 6PM YOUTH (SPRING) P. 30	06	07	08	09 6PM DOCUMENT OF COLLISION: THE WHIPLASHED ONES P. 32 yasui yoshio in person 9PM ALL ABOUT MY MOTHER P. 38 free for hfa members	10 5PM NEWS FROM HOME P. 38 7PM ALICE DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE P. 38 9:15PM MOTHER P. 39 all shows free for members
11 3PM A WOMAN UNDER THE INFLUENCE P. 39 7PM MILDRED PIERCE P. 39 all shows free for members	12 7PM MAMMA ROMA P. 39 free for hfa members	13	14	15	16 7PM DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE FOREST P. 36 9:30PM THE ADVERSARY P. 35	17 7PM THE MUSIC ROOM P. 37 9:15PM CHARULATA P. 35
18 3PM DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE FOREST P. 36 7PM THE BIG CITY P. 35	19	20	21	22	23	24



Rosine Mbakam, An van Dienderen, Éléonore Yaméogo PRISM P. 8



Chantal Akerman JEANNE DIELMAN, 23 QUAI DU COMMERCE, 1080 BRUXELLES P. 5

A group of dedicated undergraduate students and ardent cinephiles have curated, organized and written insightful text for another outstanding season of films under the HFA's aegis. Showcasing gorgeous prints—including two from the collection—this program features three spectacular double features on Saturday afternoons.

Film descriptions by Gunnar Sizemore '27 and Aidin Kamali '25.

FREE WITH HARVARD ID

saturday february 22 at 2pm

PUNCH-DRUNK LOVE

Asked what his next film would be after his 1999 epic *Magnolia*, Hollywood wunderkind Paul Thomas Anderson replied, "Somebody I'd really like to use is Adam Sandler. [...] I'm determined it will be 90 minutes. I'm gonna show the whole world..." With this attitude, the director also chipped away at many of his flashy trademarks: sprawling narratives, kaleidoscopic ensembles, voyeuristic camerawork and hubristic protagonists struggling to overcome themselves. In short, *Punch-Drunk Love* represented a leap of maturity and willingness to be unabashedly vulnerable. When toilet plunger salesman Barry Egan stumbles his way into an almost fairytale romance with his sister's coworker, Lena, his mundane reality is elevated to the near-mythic—entailing a Herculean battle of love against hate (and phone-sex operators) that Barry must win when it begins to endanger his new sweetheart. Aided by Jeremy Blake's impressionistic animations versus the scrappy pastiche of textures in Jon Brion's sentimental score, Anderson allows emotion to reign supreme over the film's rhythm, which elevates both the movie's quirky humor and undeniable heart. *Punch-Drunk Love* sees both the director and his protagonist discovering that to communicate the depth of your love—whether for cinema or for your soulmate—you must overcome the greatest obstacle of all: your own habits and insecurities. — Gunnar Sizemore

Directed by Paul Thomas Anderson. With Adam Sandler, Emily Watson, Philip Seymour Hoffman
US 2002, 35mm, color, 95 min

ALI: FEAR EATS THE SOUL

ANGST ESSEN SEELE AUF

The grammatical clumsiness of *Ali's* German title *Angst essen Seele auf* (literally "Fear eat soul up") immediately points to the film's fascination with language. In what was one of his most visually restrained



Claire Denis *BEAU TRAVAIL*



Paul Thomas Anderson *PUNCH-DRUNK LOVE*

efforts since *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*, Fassbinder creates a bilingual experience for the viewer, one in which the visual language communicates what characters cannot fit into spoken words. The tender, patient dolly work that almost exclusively situates Moroccan émigré Ali and his much older lover Emmi within two-shots communicates the attraction each feels for the other, though their conversations are often brief and stilted due to Ali's faulty German. When the town finds out about their relationship, the bigoted protests are often masked by faux-politeness or silence, leaving the camera to create visual distance between the couple and the world. It is only when societal disapproval puts pressure on the relationship that Emmi and Ali reside in their own separate film frames, the sharp pain of their divide punctuated with each tense cut. Fassbinder's poetic approach transforms what could have been just an homage to Douglas Sirk's *All That Heaven Allows* and elevates it to a bittersweet commentary on class, racial prejudice, age and the transcendent qualities of love. — Gunnar Sizemore

Directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder. With Brigitte Mira, El Hedi ben Salem, Barbara Valentin
West Germany 1974, 35mm, color, 93 min. German and Arabic with English subtitles

FREE WITH HARVARD ID

saturday march 8 at 2pm

BEAU TRAVAIL

In Claire Denis' striking adaptation of Herman Melville's novella *Billy Budd*, glances and gestures speak more than words, combat training regimens become tightly choreographed and sensual dances. Modern adaptations and analyses of the tale—featuring a young attractive sailor admired by his crewmates but persecuted by his superior—have focused on its homosexual undercurrents. Denis' sensualizing of the rituals of combat training and her concentration on the all-consuming emotional state of the narrator, played by the ever-gruff and acrobatic Denis Lavant, place it in this lineage as well as in the broader 90s flourishing of queer cinema. The heart

of this film is a forbidden sentiment, in this case, the burning resentment of Galoup, the narrator, against Sentain, the handsome and affable newcomer. Galoup resents Sentain's purity of spirit, remarking that nothing drove him into the Foreign Legion (apparently a haven for outcasts from around the world, rag-tag ramblers with troubled pasts, often criminal, often sexually deviant). Regardless of the characters' feelings for one another, the camera has a distinctly desiring gaze of the beautiful male figures, reminding us of the tension between the taboo of homosexual desire and a military culture in which loving comradeship, solidarity and intense physicality awkwardly mix. — Aidin Kamali

Directed by Claire Denis. With Denis Lavant, Michel Subor, Grégoire Colin
France 1999, DCP, color, 93 min. French with English subtitles

BRIEF ENCOUNTER

Like *Beau Travail*, *Brief Encounter* frames its story through the protagonist's narration of a tabooed desire, in this case, a brush with marital infidelity. Played by Celia Johnson, Laura narrates her falling into love with an affable doctor, Trevor Howard's Alec; they are both married with children. Director David Lean's legend was made in the late 50s and



David Lean *BRIEF ENCOUNTER*

60s with sprawling epics—*The Bridge on the River Kwai*, *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Doctor Zhivago*—but his first four films, including this one, were products of his collaboration with a mentor who ushered him into the director's chair, playwright Noël Coward (who has a brief cameo). In under an hour and a half and with a small cast of characters, Lean expertly weaves the gut-punch emotions of melodrama into a gripping character study amidst forbidden love.

Turning eighty this year, the film seen today feels like an almost-too-perfect model for mid-20th century English middle-class repressed romance. Although David Lean, married six times and often a renegade in film form and in life, might have wanted to push the envelope a bit, Coward, who was privately gay and never drastically threatened public sensibilities, kept this film respectfully restrained for audiences rebuilding their lives, families and country after six years of brutal warfare. — *Aidin Kamali*

Directed by David Lean. With Celia Johnson, Trevor Howard, Stanley Holloway
UK 1945, DCP, b/w, 87 min

FREE WITH HARVARD ID

saturday april 5 at 2pm

LA JETÉE

"Nothing tells memories from ordinary moments," *La Jetée's* narrator observes, "Only afterwards do they claim remembrance on account of their scars." A film told almost entirely with still black-and-white images, Chris Marker's photo journal/sci-fi mini-epic retains only the scars—exploring whether the human being is the author or the victim of memory. For Marker, art seems to be the realization of memory. His post-apocalyptic Möbian riddle ponders the contradictions of art and representation, even ques-



Chris Marker *LA JETÉE*

tioning its own photojournalistic form in a post-WWII world in which global events are understood through media, itself subject to censorship by those trying to control history—manifested via the scientists who fling Marker's protagonist in a rescue mission back and forth across time. The destruction of humanity in the film's fictional WWII has obliterated both the timely and timeless qualities of the human experience, the antithesis to the artist's responsibility. Ironically now secure in the cinematic canon, Marker's existential tale is one in which those who pursue the bliss of eternal virtues are those who feel the mortal erosion of time the most. — *Gunnar Sizemore*

Directed by Chris Marker. With Héléne Châtelain, Davos Hanich, Jacques Ledoux
France 1962, 16mm, b/w, 28 min. French with English subtitles

IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE FA YEUNG NIN WAH

Given that Wong Kar-wai's sixth film sprouted from Liu Yichang's short story *Intersection*, it is fitting that the film situates itself at the stylistic crossroads of his career. Building on a Cassavetes-inspired filmmaking approach that relied on a rough outline and heavy improvisation, Wong chose here to ditch his often-frenzied camerawork—an approach aided by his signature cinematographer Christopher Doyle leaving mid-way through. The style of replacement Mark Lee Ping-bin—longtime Hou Hsiao-hsien DP—contrasted with Doyle's kinetic handheld camera; Doyle shot many of Wong's most famous sequences at a slower shutter speed to achieve the impasto effect of the protagonists somehow outrunning time, smearing elusively across each frame, whereas Lee's sensibilities rest more in control, employing little if any camera movement to create a melancholic awareness of time's constant, irrecoverable passing. Born from this clash of visual philosophy was an electrifying union of bold style and immense restraint—mirroring the relationship of Chow Mo-wan and Su Li-zhen, who conspire in rooms of sensual deep reds and golds yet fail to act on or even verbalize their taboo feelings, remaining locked in respective charade-marriages. Out of this tension and onto the screen bursts Wong's exquisite vision of timeless romance hampered by fickle circumstance. — *Gunnar Sizemore*

Directed by Wong Kar-wai. With Maggie Cheung, Tony Leung Chiu-wai, Siu Ping-lam
Hong Kong/France 2000, 35mm, color, 98 min. Cantonese and Shanghaiese with English subtitles



Wong Kar-wai *IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE*

MAKE WAY FOR TOMORROW. CARSON LUND'S *EEPHUS*

FEBRUARY 22

A founding member of Omnes Films, Carson Lund (b. 1991) has carved a unique place for himself in American independent cinema through his work as a cinematographer on many of the collective's most notable efforts. Founded in 2011 by Lund and a few college friends in Boston, Omnes experienced a breakthrough in 2019 with Tyler Taormina's debut feature *Ham on Rye*, a suburban-set fable shot through with a nostalgic glow that has become Lund's visual signature. Omnes is now based in Los Angeles, and while the city has influenced its output—most notably the Silverlake-set *Topology of Sirens* (2021) which Lund lensed for director Jonathan Davies—there is an unmistakable sense of longing to the films attributable, at least in part, to their bicoastal nature.

While attending Emerson College, Lund began writing program notes for the Harvard Film Archive, where he also worked for a period of years as an usher, taking tickets, distributing print calendars and handing out microphones during Q&As. More importantly, it was during this time that the aspiring filmmaker cut his teeth on the Hollywood classics and international art cinema that would later inspire his work as both a critic and cameraman. (In addition to the HFA, Lund regularly contributes film criticism to *Slant Magazine*.) You can see the influence of these years on the aesthetic of many of the features Lund has shot, including his most recent collaboration with Taormina, *Christmas Eve in Miller's Point* (2024), a multigenerational portrait of a large Italian American family that unfolds like a combination of two very different films from 1982: Barry Levinson's *Diner* and Ingmar Bergman's *Fanny and Alexander*.

Eephus, Lund's directorial debut, was made concurrently with *Miller's Point* and shares a number of characteristics with Taormina's film—namely a preoccupation with bygone traditions and the passing of time. (Both films also premiered in the 2024 Directors' Fortnight in Cannes.) Named for an obscure off-speed pitch, *Eephus* depicts the final game between two New England recreational league teams before the field is torn down to make way for an elementary school. Lund, who also cowrote and edited the film, structures the quasi-real time story in two unequal parts as day turns to night and the players reluctantly retire into the darkness. Imbuing America's pastime with formal and narrative cues taken from Robert Altman, Tsai Ming-liang and Richard Linklater, *Eephus* blends artistic and cultural opposites with the finesse and reverence of a young filmmaker with an old soul, one whose time-honored vision belies his adventurous spirit. — Jordan Cronk

The HFA welcomes Carson Lund back to the theater, this time not as an usher, but as a celebrated filmmaker. Harvard professor and film scholar Tom Conley will join Lund and HFA Director Haden Guest in a post-screening conversation about this successful debut.

Film description by Jordan Cronk.

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS
CARSON LUND IN CONVERSATION
WITH TOM CONLEY

saturday february 22 at 7pm

EPPHUS

Eephus is a sports film unlike any other. Set over the course of a single day, the film centers on two amateur New England baseball teams as they play one final game at their beloved Soldiers Field before it is paved over for an elementary school. Lund's durational approach to the story, which takes place near where he grew up and is based on his experiences in rec league baseball, means that things play out in a manner resembling the time-based narratives of Richard Linklater or Tsai Ming-liang—the latter of whom the filmmaker cites as an inspiration for both the movie's elegiac tone and its quietly unfolding structure, which begins early in the day as the teams arrive and settle into the game's early innings, before descending into darkness as the contest wears on and the players slowly disperse into the night. As in many of the features lensed by Lund under the Omnes Films banner, *Eephus* bears a distinctly nostalgic air, which both eulogizes a once-beloved American pastime and captures a sense of masculine camaraderie rare in contemporary cinema. Narrated by veteran documentarian Frederick Wiseman and dotted with vintage radio ads that waft from analog boomboxes in each team's dugout, the film unfolds in the kind of meticulous detail that both a cinephile and sports fan can admire. Indeed, the ensemble cast, comprised of cult figures from both worlds—including former major league pitcher Bill "Spaceman" Lee and current indie character actors Wayne Diamond and Keith William Richards—only deepens this richly textured film's simultaneous sense of the bygone and under-appreciated.



Carson Lund *EPPHUS*

Directed by Carson Lund. With Keith William Richards, Bill "Spaceman" Lee, Wayne Diamond
 US 2024, DCP, color, 99 min

JESSICA SARAH RINLAND'S COLLECTIVE MONOLOGUE

FEBRUARY 23 – FEBRUARY 24

As a master's graduate of MIT and recent Film Study Center Fellow, Argentine-British artist Jessica Sarah Rinland (b. 1987) is no stranger to this area's arts and film community. She visited the Harvard Film Archive last year with her meditation on museum conservation *Those That, at a Distance, Resemble Another* (2019) and returns this season with her latest captivating exploration, *Collective Monologue*, filmed in Buenos Aires' Jardín Zoológico and other Argentine animal sanctuaries. Screening the day before her documentary, Howard Hawks' African safari adventure *Hatari!* is offered in intriguing conversation with the ecological concerns of Rinland's film..

Special thanks: Marcela Ramos—David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, Harvard.



INTRODUCTION BY JESSICA SARAH RINLAND

sunday february 23 at 3pm

HATARI!

Hatari! in Swahili means *danger*, exposure to liable harm. In Howard Hawks' romantic comedy, *Hatari!* is meant as a warning for humans, who in this case are an assortment of characters hired to capture African animals for zoos worldwide. *Hatari!* is shrieked by a game hunter after a contraption to capture 500 monkeys goes awry. Hunting animals with no stunt-people or animal handlers, the cast—including a fifty-five-year-old John Wayne—is invariably the focus of danger during the eight sublime Technicolor chase sequences spliced throughout the film. But it is the animals who are chased by actors with ropes in jeeps across the vast Tanzanian landscape. Their bodies move with incredible velocity, vehicles struggle to keep up. A noose is flung around a giraffe's neck restraining her movement not only for that moment, but for the rest of her life. Surely, if the animals could speak Swahili we would hear them shouting *Hatari!* over Henri Mancini's famous score. — Jessica Sarah Rinland

Directed by Howard Hawks. With John Wayne, Hardy Krüger, Elsa Martinelli
 US 1962, 35mm, color, 159 min



Howard Hawks *HATARI!*

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS
JESSICA SARAH RINLAND IN PERSON

monday february 24 at 7pm

COLLECTIVE MONOLOGUE

MONÓLOGO COLECTIVO

The cinema and the zoo stand together as nineteenth-century inventions, technologies of visibility that are intimately bound to histories of domination. Jessica Sarah Rinland's *Collective Monologue* uses the first to stage a sensory encounter with the second, claiming the innocence of neither. In her patient observation of zoo workers and the captive animals to which they minister, she does not condemn spaces such as the Jardín Zoológico of Buenos Aires, founded in 1888 and now aspirationally rebranded as an "ecopark"; nor does she celebrate them. Rinland shows that in the zoo, as in so much of the world outside it, care and cruelty can be inseparable, even indiscernible, from one another. Moving across multiple sites in Argentina, she creates a general portrait of a maligned institution in a moment of transformation, as zoos adopt mandates of rehabilitation and preservation that remake their mission for an age of ecocide. What happens to the spectacle of exoticism in which they once trafficked and, in many ways, still do? Such is the concern of *Collective Monologue*.

The zoo is a protective enclosure, and the zoo is a prison. Rinland holds both in hand, retreating from polemic. Her images stand alone, untamed by voiceover commentary or text on-screen, revealing in the ambiguity captured by the nonhuman eye of the lens. She modestly articulates her perspective through the gaze of her 16mm camera rather than through the addition of narration, with a special attention to tactility and gesture familiar from her previous feature, *Those That, at a Distance, Resemble Another* (2019). Every so often, Rinland's cinematography is interrupted by surveillance footage, reminding us that as much as the look of the camera can be a caress, it can also be a policing force. Crucial information regarding the history of the *ecoparque* is gleaned in sequences set in the institution's archives and during a guided tour of its grounds, but the bulk of *Collective Monologue* stays close to the drama of difference and similarity that plays out



Jessica Sarah Rinland *COLLECTIVE MONOLOGUE*

in our encounter with nonhuman animals—a drama of empathy, alterity and fascination. Rinland does not attempt to simulate how turtles or elephants or flamingoes experience the world, but she does seek to dislodge a dominant mode of thought and representation accords the human the privilege of being a subject while relegating the animal to the status of mere object. Something more horizontal emerges, without ever losing sight of profoundly unequal conditions of existence that prevail.

The film concludes with a quotation from developmental psychologist Jean Piaget, shedding light on what might have seemed a cryptic title: "Collective monologue is a period of egocentrism in a young child's life where they see the point of view of the listener as irrelevant. They believe that nature is created for them, and that they can control it." What does this have to do with the zoo? In the final sequence, a female carer cradles the howler monkey Juanita like a baby, in what one might call an in-

terspecies *pietà*. She weeps for the infirm primate. Here, as throughout *Collective Monologue*, Rinland pays tribute to the devotion of the workers, to their sincere commitment to their wards. And yet, in the citation of Piaget that follows, the specter of a different relationship to animal life emerges, one that has been equally present throughout the preceding one hundred minutes. Although animals are so often infantilized, perhaps the period of egocentrism never ends and it is we who are a species of tyrannical children, babbling on to ourselves, understanding the myriad forms of nonhuman life around us only on our terms. The workers speak incessantly to the animals, voicing words of praise, affection, encouragement and frustration. They seek an intersubjective connection. Sounds might be emitted in response, but a dialogue will always elude them. — *Erika Balsom*

Directed by Jessica Sarah Rinland
UK/Argentina 2024, DCP, color, 104 min. Spanish with English subtitles

DAVID LYNCH, NEW DIMENSIONS

FEBRUARY 28 – MARCH 1



David Lynch *TWIN PEAKS: FIRE WALK WITH ME*

The Harvard Film Archive is pleased to welcome two members of the creative inner circle of David Lynch for a pair of events offering unique insights into his visionary cinema and art. Veteran producer Sabrina Sutherland has been working with Lynch since the late 1990s, including on *Lost Highway* (1997), *Inland Empire* (2006) and *Twin Peaks: The Return* (2017) for which she was Executive Producer. Sutherland will present a screening of *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me* and join a conversation about Lynch's disconcerting film and its relation to his groundbreaking television series.

Renowned curator Kristine McKenna has written extensively about Lynch's multifaceted work as visual artist. Over the years McKenna has also given some of the more penetrating interviews of Lynch, a dialogue that gave way to her role as co-author of Lynch's 2018 memoir *Room to Dream*. Accompanying a screening of *Eraserhead*, McKenna will give an illustrated talk on a little-known dimension of Lynch's cinema; the props and objects invented and crafted by Lynch that play crucial roles in his films. Both evenings will feature beautiful vintage 35mm prints from the Harvard Film Archive collection. — HG

Film descriptions by Brittany Gravely.



David Lynch ERASERHEAD

**\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS
PRESENTATION BY KRISTINE MCKENNA**

friday february 28 at 7pm

ERASERHEAD

David Lynch's infamously enigmatic cult classic *Eraserhead* launched the director's wild odyssey of a career thanks to a second release on the midnight movie circuit. His first feature was an independently made labor of love and utterly unique invention born from several years of work on and off, depending upon the ebb and flow of funds. With sets echoing a vaguely midcentury industrial nowhere,

the black and white introspective nightmare features Jack Nance's mild-mannered Henry Spencer struggling in a bleak life with his girlfriend and their unplanned "baby." Punctuated by sparse dialogue with the stilted delivery of an early talkie, the film is an alternate universe of skewed nostalgia where Eros and Thanatos find their unnervingly neurotic, beautiful and absurd expression, both visually and through an intricate, eerie soundtrack. Many Lynchian signatures and tropes—even the carpet pattern of the Red Room in *Twin Peaks*—were born in this formative, singular work of art.

Directed by David Lynch. With Jack Nance, Charlotte Stewart, Allen Joseph
US 1977, 35mm, b/w, 89 min

**\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS
INTRODUCTION & CONVERSATION
WITH SABRINA SUTHERLAND**

saturday march 1 at 7pm

TWIN PEAKS: FIRE WALK WITH ME

Baffling his core *Twin Peaks* audience and many critics, *Fire Walk With Me* was Lynch's unclassifiable prequel to the miraculously surreal broadcast television show that had come to an abrupt end. The film version allowed Lynch to resurrect *Twin Peaks'* near-mythic prom queen Laura Palmer from the dead—tapping into the show's foreboding metaphysical circularity and digging viscerally into the sinister underbelly of the idyllic Washington town. Beginning with the antics of quirky FBI agents trying to decode a murder mystery and apparent tear in the continuum, any eccentric comforts of *Twin Peaks*—including the show's star Special Agent Dale Cooper—sink back and the film takes a delirious dive into Laura's complex, tortured existence. With a breathtaking, emotionally exhausting performance by Sheryl Lee, the film exposes the uncanniness of a horror that unfolds in broad daylight, one that trans-

forms familiar people and mundane objects into otherworldly vessels of terror. Laura's descent into the maelstrom—of this world and another—is also a tale of sexual abuse; in Lynch's universe, the psychological and supernatural are so intertwined they become indistinguishable, resulting in a direct hit to the central nervous system. Too much for audiences to fully grasp at the time, *Fire Walk With Me* now enjoys its rightful reassessment as one of the greatest films of the 90s and essential in the Lynch oeuvre.

Directed by David Lynch. With Sheryl Lee, Ray Wise, Mädchen Amick
US 1992, 35mm, color, 135 min



David Lynch TWIN PEAKS: FIRE WALK WITH ME

MUSEUM HOURS: MATI DIOP'S DAHOMEY

MARCH 3

A vital voice in contemporary art cinema, the French-Senegalese director Mati Diop (b. 1982) has spent much of her two-decade career exploring the fraught postcolonial relationship between Europe and North Africa. It's an issue tied up in her identity as a mixed-race artist, but Diop's cinema is arguably more poetic than it is expressly political, at least by the standards of those making work on similar topics—namely, the European migrant crisis, transnationalism and the slippery nature of cultural heritage, which her latest feature, *Dahomey*, nimbly traces across temporal and geographic lines alike.

Diop, who has said that she prefers to treat immigration not as a subject, but "as an individual and sensitive experience, as a kind of time travel," set the conceptual course for this approach with her 2009 short *Atlantiques*, a hybrid work depicting a group of Senegalese teens as they contemplate the existential implications of illegally crossing the Atlantic for a chance at a better life. Following a run of increasingly ambitious medium-length films—including *Snow Canon* (2011), *Big in Vietnam* (2012), and *Mille Soleils* (2013), the latter a kind of spiritual sequel to her uncle Djibril Diop Mambéty's 1973 classic *Touki Bouki*—Diop emerged with her first feature, *Atlantics* (2019), a return to the themes of the earlier, similarly named short and a metaphysical expansion of its central premise.

Dahomey, which won the Golden Bear at the 2024 Berlinale, concerns a different sort of time travel. Set in November 2021, the film follows the repatriation of Kingdom of Dahomey treasures from a museum in Paris to their original home in present-day Benin. But rather than simply document the process, Diop subtly and creatively dramatizes the journey. Playful but sharply conceived, *Dahomey* quietly forges a self-reflexive dialectic around notions of cultural and cinematic inheritance—ideas that animate the whole of Diop's practice, yet here take on a historical resonance only suggested in her prior work. — Jordan Cronk

Co-presented with the Film Study Center, Harvard.

Special thanks: Joana Pimenta, Julie Mallozzi, Cozette Russell—Film Study Center; and the New York Film Festival.



Mati Diop DAHOMEY

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS
MATI DIOP IN PERSON

monday march 3 at 7pm

DAHOMÉY

Mati Diop's shapeshifting second feature finds the forty-two-year-old French-Senegalese filmmaker directly reckoning with the postcolonial concerns that have long haunted her dreamlike tales of multicultural identity and displacement. In November 2021, following a public repatriation campaign, twenty-six royal treasures from the Kingdom of Dahomey were returned from the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris to their original home in present-day Benin. Diop's film documents these efforts through elegant footage of the artifacts being prepped, shipped and eventually redisplayed in Porto-Novo while simultaneously dramatizing the existential nature of the initiative by giving voice to one of the objects, a stone statue of King Béhanzin that speaks—in voiceover passages penned by the Haitian author Makenzy Orcel—of its memories of Africa and its fear of returning home. As in her first feature, *Atlantics* (2019), a quasi-supernatural romance set against the backdrop of the European migrant crises, Diop forges a temporal link between cultures via issues of inheritance, transnationalism and the ghosts of colonialism—matters that a lesser film would deem resolved but which here are complicated by an extended debate among students at the University of Abomey-Calavi about the value of restitution when thousands of similar holdings still reside in the Paris museum. Suggesting more in its slim sixty-seven minutes than most conventional documentaries manage in twice that length, *Dahomey* speaks powerfully to cinema's capacity to both reanimate the past and illuminate the future.

Directed by Mati Diop

France/Senegal/Benin 2024, DCP, color, 68 min. English and French with French subtitles



Mati Diop DAHOMÉY

ALBERT SERRA, OR CINEMATIC TIME REGAINED

MARCH 7 – APRIL 12

Over the past almost twenty years, Catalan filmmaker Albert Serra (b. 1975) has occupied a singular place in contemporary world cinema through a series of remarkable films that boldly engage canonical texts and traditions long considered “unadaptable.” Serra's first widely seen features, *Honor of the Knights* (2006) and *Birdsong* (2008), together announced the exciting ambition of his filmmaking. Striking versions of *Don Quixote* and the Holy Bible, respectively, the two films gave vivid new form to hallowed texts while also revealing the singularity of Serra's radical approach to image, narrative and performance. Featuring nonactors drawn largely from his hometown, both films showcased Serra's minimalist directorial style of using three cameras to capture the widest range of footage while giving only scant instructions to his cast and even, at times, completely distancing himself from the set itself. Through a painstaking and laborious editing process Serra then drew from that extensive footage to craft mesmerizing works that expand the revelatory time between actions and those crucial moments when the actors go further into and even beyond their given roles. By giving full dimension to gesture and dialogue unfolding, often subtly, in real time, these two films can now be seen as important entries in the so-called “slow cinema” movement that emerged in the early 2000s.

Honor of the Knights and *Birdsong* also revealed the important dialogue between Serra's cinema and intertwined traditions of avant-garde filmmaking defined by Andy Warhol on the one hand and Rainer Werner Fassbinder on the other; pioneering artists whose films similarly oscillated between austere minimalism and stylized theatricality. A baroque Fassbinder turn was, in fact, explored by Serra's three subsequent features—*Story of My Death*, *The Death of Louis XIV* and *Liberté*—a loose trilogy of period films set in the declining demi-worlds of the 16th and 17th century where powdered, bewigged aristocrats and kings embody states of torpor, feverish desire and decay, the later most powerfully figured in the eponymous Louis XIV whose slow bedridden death is poignantly staged as a penumbral chamber drama.

Serra's next features pushed his filmmaking into important new directions, first with *Pacification*, a captivating and hyper-stylized paranoid thriller set in a lush, color-saturated Polynesian paradise and then with his most recent, revelatory film, *Afternoons of Solitude*, a documentary portrait of the celebrated Peruvian bullfighter Andrés Roca Rey set largely in the ring. Bringing Serra full circle with his early Cervantes adaptation, *Afternoons of Solitude* finds him once again discovering an



Albert Serra THE DEATH OF LOUIS XIV

innovative approach to a monumental Spanish tradition. More importantly, however, the film offers an important reminder of the documentary essence of Serra's filmmaking which embraces cinema's quintessence as a photographic and documentary medium able to capture the subtlest of performances—gestures, phrases, emotions—far better than the ever-distracted human eye. Indeed, in many ways, it seems as if all of Serra's films up to now, and the intimacy with performers earned by his ever-patient camera, were training for the intense *corrida* staged by his startling up-close cameras and microphones which render the ancient ritualistic sport of bullfighting a startling emblem of the purest kind of documentary realism. A film quite literally about life and death, *Afternoons of Solitude* is stripped of the explanatory guardrails that have become standard in documentary today, giving way to a direct confrontation of the viewer with the very gaze of the bull itself and the admixture of fear, courage and perhaps madness that is the art and vocation of the toreador. – HG

The Harvard Film Archive is pleased to welcome back Albert Serra—who visited in 2009—now as a Robert Gardner Fellow at the Film Study Center.

Film descriptions by Haden Guest.

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

friday march 7 at 7pm
sunday march 23 at 3pm

THE DEATH OF LOUIS XIV LA MORT DE LOUIS XIV

In a brilliant turn of casting Serra allowed Jean-Pierre Léaud to become the Sun King in the sad days of his slow, crepuscular death and to bring elements of tragicomedy to the attentive but futile rituals of the doctors, servants and sycophants fluttering around the monarch. While embodying the king who symbolically marked both the apogee and end of France as the leading European power, the charged presence of nouvelle vague legend Léaud as the dying ruler should also be taken as a retort of sorts to the tiresomely repeated mantra about the so-called “death of cinema.”

Directed by Albert Serra. With Jean-Pierre Léaud, Patrick d'Assunção, Marc Susini
France/Portugal/Spain 2016, DCP, color, 105 min. French and Latin with English subtitles

friday march 7 at 9:15pm

LIBERTÉ

Expelled from the court of the last French king, the puritanical Louis XVI, a group of sybarites gather secretly for a long night in the dark woods to stage a stylized private revolution to presage the one soon to topple the monarchy. A meditation on eros, perversion and cinematic voyeurism, *Liberté* stands as a darker companion piece of sorts to *La mort de Louis XIV* by allowing the hard lines of class, aristocratic pretension and court ritual to be sharply expressed in the awkward exchanges animating the theatrically extended dalliances between the libertines. A challenging entry in Serra's oeuvre, *Liberté* uses its extended length and solemn pacing to distill cinematic performance to a grim master-servant essence and to explore almost Batallian ideas about the intertwining of eros, boredom and the death drive.

Directed by Albert Serra. With Helmut Berger, Marc Susini, Iliana Zabath
France/Portugal/Spain/Germany 2019, DCP, color, 132 min. French, German and Italian with English subtitles

NEW 35MM PRINT

sunday march 23 at 7pm

BIRDSONG EL CANT DELS OCELLS

Serra recasts the story of the Magi as an elemental epic of man simultaneously lost and found in



Albert Serra *HONOR OF THE KNIGHTS*



Albert Serra *PACIFICTION*

the uncanny beauty of nature. Masterfully shot in black and white on remote, almost extraterrestrial, locations in the Canary Islands and Iceland, *Birdsong* follows the slow, stumbling passage of the kings towards the mysterious birth that beckons them through the long days and dark nights. Like *Honor of the Knights*, *Birdsong* adds a level of humor to gently undercut the sacred qualities of the tale, here by foregrounding the wonderfully profane corporality of the awkward kings who float and fidget in an assertively, refreshingly human manner.

Directed by Albert Serra. With Lluís Carbó, Lluís Serrat Batlle, Lluís Serrat
Spain 2008, 35mm, b/w, 98 min. Catalan and Hebrew with English subtitles

NEW 35MM PRINT

monday march 24 at 7pm

HONOR OF THE KNIGHTS HONOR DE CAVALLERIA

Serra's brilliant and instantly controversial adaptation of *Don Quixote* offers a revelatory portrait of the strangely symbiotic relationship between the knight errant and his loyal scribe. Patiently revealing the bonds of pathos and humor that bind the two misfits, *Honor of the Knights* centers exclusively and unconventionally on the quiet moments between Quixote and Sancho Panza's most famous misadventures. Shot on digital video in breathtaking pastoral locations, Serra's film creates a richly textured, painterly beauty from its technologically humble means, giving equal attention to the wind in the grass and the slow descent of night as to its two remarkable heroes. First-time nonprofessional actor and ex-tennis instructor Lluís Carbó brings a haunting frailty and almost chimerical aura to Quixote, a note of melancholy otherworldliness that gives and elegiac and genuinely moving quality to the film.

Directed by Albert Serra. With Lluís Carbó, Lluís Serrat, Jaume Badia
Spain 2006, 35mm, color, 104 min. Spanish with English subtitles

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS

ALBERT SERRA IN PERSON

friday march 28 at 7pm

PACIFICTION

Serra channeled the energy of New Hollywood paranoid thrillers such as *Night Moves* (1975) and *The Conversation* (1974) into a wonderfully rambling portrait of a well-intentioned but ultimately ineffectual French diplomat trying to deter a possible nuclear threat to the Polynesian islands. Shadows gradually emerge that shift the tone of *Pacifiction*; tropical Technicolor gives way to a creeping dark-

ness that eventually engulfs the film. Once-prominent French star Benoît Magimel delivers a wonderful, offbeat performance inflected with comic touches yet imbued with the melancholy of faded stardom.

Directed by Albert Serra. With Benoît Magimel, Pahoā Mahagafanau, Marc Susini
France/Spain/Germany/Portugal/French Polynesia 2022, DCP, color, 162 min. French, English, Polynesian and Portuguese with English subtitles

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS

ALBERT SERRA IN PERSON

NEW 35MM PRINT

saturday march 29 at 7pm

STORY OF MY DEATH

HISTÒRIA DE LA MEVA MORT

The spirit of Warhol's stylized genre-bending collaborations with the late Paul Morrissey infuses Serra's lush and mournful imagination of an encounter between Giacomo Casanova and Count Dracula. Starring poet and Catalan art critic Vicenç Altaió as a voluble Casanova, *Story of My Death* stages the meeting of the mythical figures as embodiments of distinct ideas of human desire and, perhaps, a charged metaphor for the passage from the Enlightenment to Romanticism.

Directed by Albert Serra. With Vicenç Altaió, Lluís Serrat, Eliseu Huertas
Spain/France/Romania 2013, 35mm, color, 148 min. Catalan with English subtitles



Albert Serra *BIRDSONG*



Albert Serra *AFTERNOONS OF SOLITUDE*

**\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS
ALBERT SERRA IN PERSON**

monday march 31 at 7pm

saturday april 12 at 9pm – without filmmaker

AFTERNOONS OF SOLITUDE TARDES DE SOLEDAD

A cherished project long in the making, Serra's observational documentary follows, with structural precision, the full length of a traditional *corrida* fought by Spain's most celebrated toreador, the Peruvian Andrés Roca Rey. Using almost exclusively close-up cameras and wired microphones that capture the every word and breath of the toreador and the bull alike, *Tardes de soledad* plunges the viewer into the ring to offer a startling, and ultimately salubrious, response to the woeful trend of contemporary documentary in which ever more "dangerous" and edgy subjects are designed as somehow more real and authentic, a trend partially ascribed, locally, to Harvard's own Sensory Ethnography Lab.

Directed by Albert Serra. With Roberto Domínguez, Francisco Manuel Durán, Antonio Gutiérrez
France/Portugal/Spain 2024, DCP, color, 125 min. Spanish with English subtitles

WANG BING'S YOUTH TRILOGY

APRIL 4 – MAY 5

More than two decades after making his monumental *West of the Tracks* (2002), documentary auteur Wang Bing (b. 1967) has released a new cinematic fresco of Chinese workers. Whereas his debut work memorializes the declining Socialist industrial complex in Northeast China and its aging employees, the *Youth* trilogy chronicles the plights of young migrant workers struggling with the vagaries and pressures of a free capitalist market. Between 2014 and 2019, Wang Bing and his crew shot around 2,600 hours of footage in the garment-making township of Zhili, near Shanghai, with hundreds of thousands of seasonal laborers from all over the country sewing children's clothes in some 18,000 workshops. The three installments of *Youth*—*Spring*, *Hard Times* and *Homecoming*—premiered in competition at the Cannes, Locarno and Venice film festivals, respectively. Taken together, this documentary trilogy not only provides a nuanced, empathetic and critical look at China's fashion industry, but could also inspire in its audiences alternative experiences of time, space and the material fabric of our lives.

Like the decentralized organization of Zhili's workshops, *Youth* has a dispersed patchwork structure that spends about twenty minutes per vignette focusing on a handful of characters and their interpersonal dramas. Mostly in their late teens and twenties, the young workers banter, flirt, quarrel and sing along with pop songs from their phones over the relentless whirring of their sewing machines. Under harsh fluorescent lighting that makes it hard to tell day from night, they stitch jeans, lace dresses and padded jackets with breathtaking pace and dexterity. Earning a dollar or two a piece, they engage in protracted rate negotiations with bosses who complain about bad business, so the workers often take what they are offered just to get paid at all. Many of them seem to be in love, but when it comes to marriage and children, they and their families must make savvy, pragmatic calculations for their uncertain futures.

A master of slow cinema, Wang Bing uses time to acculturate into the lives and environment of his subjects, whose typical workday far exceeds the ten-hour duration of the entire film trilogy. Building rapport with their subjects over days, months and years, Wang Bing and his crew earned their trust enough to capture many candid conversations and intimate scenes. Back in their messy dorms and on flimsy beds, workers confide their aspirations and anguish to each other and the camera, sometimes telling the cameraperson what to film and where. Over the Lunar New Year, the film crew took long train and bus rides with workers back to their home villages, meeting their aging parents, taking quick tours of newly built homes and strolling in the vast landscape of the countryside. Neither looking down nor up at his subjects, Wang Bing shows us the world through their eyes, giving us a vicarious sense of the joys and sorrows, energy and exhaustion, conflicts and camaraderie, mobility and entrapment of China's migrant laborers.

The patience and concentration that Wang Bing's work demands of its audience are similar to the quality of attention expected of readers of nineteenth-century realist novels filled with numerous minor but complex characters and mundane but revealing details. Perhaps even more than other works in his oeuvre, the *Youth* trilogy cultivates in its audience new habits of perceiving the material fabric of our everyday lives. When dressing ourselves and our children, we might turn our shirts, pants and jackets inside out to feel the seams and imagine the hands that stitched them together. We might listen for the hum of the sewing machine and the sigh of workers who had been denied the raise of a few pennies on the piece rate despite the difficulty of the intricate designs. We might recognize that our consumer desire to maximize the quality while minimizing the cost of our everyday clothes is in direct contradiction with the young workers' labor conditions and financial aspirations. In the film, the turning sewing machine is reminiscent of a turning projector, and the work of cutting and sewing is akin to cinematic editing and suturing. Ultimately, our clothing might become a movie screen onto which we can project the invisible labor that went into its making at another end of the world. — Jie Li



Wang Bing *YOUTH (HARD TIMES)*

Film descriptions by Jie Li, unless noted otherwise.

Special thanks: Karin Chien, President—dGenerate Films.

friday april 4 at 6pm
monday may 5 at 6pm

YOUTH (SPRING) QINGCHUN

The first in Wang Bing's opus centered on young migrant laborers in Zhili employs his trademark long takes and fixed camera setups, contrasting routine days of sewing, stitching and scissoring with bustling street scenes and after-hours sequences set in the workers' cramped living quarters, chancing upon dramas that inevitably emerge from such a repetitive, cloistered and threadbare existence. While Zhili's privatized structure and incentive-based production model allows for certain advantages over the kind of centrally governed factories seen in earlier Wang films like *West of the Tracks* (2002), it also leaves employees at the mercy of predatory managers, a situation the director depicts as an endless tug-of-war for better pay. With textbook rigor, Wang captures a new economic reality that, for all it promises, has only fostered a new form of exploitation. — Jordan Cronk

Directed by Wang Bing
France/Hong Kong/Luxembourg/Netherlands 2023, DCP, color, 215 min.
Mandarin with English subtitles

saturday april 5 at 6pm
saturday april 26 at 6pm

YOUTH (HARD TIMES) QINGCHUN: KU

Focusing on the factory laborers' economic struggles and workplace conflicts, the second installment of *Youth* follows multiple narrative threads that stretch and tighten, sometimes to a breaking point of violence and despair. A young woman keeps making mistakes and must redo several batches of trousers, while her colleagues discuss ways to dodge the manager's surveillance. Just released from police detention after an altercation with his boss, a young man searches in vain for his lost account book. Parents pore over sewing machines while their child plays with scissors and cell phones. From the balcony outside their shop, a group of workers watch their indebted boss beat up a fabric supplier and run away without paying their wages, so they sell the shop's



Wang Bing *YOUTH (HOMECOMING)*

sewing machines while the landlord cuts the power and water of their living quarters. In another dark dorm, a worker who made tons of unsold denim recounts his participation in a labor riot and the ensuing police brutality. The exhaustion of overtime and deadlines thus alternates with the anxiety of dead time and wasted time, accruing into the bitterness at the core of Wang Bing's trilogy.

Directed by Wang Bing
France/Luxembourg/Netherlands 2024, DCP, color, 226 min. Mandarin
with English subtitles

sunday april 6 at 6pm
friday april 25 at 6pm

YOUTH (HOMECOMING) QINGCHUN: GUI

The final installment of the *Youth* trilogy zooms in on a handful of workers as they return to their villages for the Lunar New Year, meanwhile zooming out spatially from Zhili's garment workshops to China's vast countryside. After seeking payment of

their owed wages, Mu Fei and Dong Minyan board a packed train to Yunnan and take a van up a hazardous mountainside road. In homes decorated with giant Chairman Mao portraits, their parents speak of illnesses and injustices, debts and expenses. Firecrackers, a confetti gang, bride-carrying and karaoke create an exuberant atmosphere at Shi Wei's and Liang Xianglian's wedding. From the southwest mountains, the film moves to the lower Yangtze River to celebrate the God of Prosperity and another wedding banquet. After the holidays, the bride Fang Lingping takes her husband to Zhili and teaches him to sew. The last third of the film revisits familiar characters from *Spring* and *Hard Times* such as Lin Shao and Chen Wenting, no longer teenagers in love but young parents, uncertain how the cycles of seasonal labor will shape their children's future.

Directed by Wang Bing
France/Luxembourg/Netherlands 2024, DCP, color, 160 min. Mandarin
with English subtitles

PLANET AT 50

APRIL 11 – MAY 9

Only superstars are recognizable by a single name, and "Planet" is one of them. This special series celebrates the monumental contributions of the Kobe Planet Film Archive to cinema history as it celebrates its 50th anniversary. A legendary institution and one of the largest private film archives in Japan, Planet by now stores almost 20,000 film prints along with huge amounts of additional material such as film posters, scripts and rare publications. Planet has discovered many seminal films initially thought lost and supplied many of the most well-known film festivals and institutions all over the world with its treasure trove of discoveries. Famous well beyond Japan, it has become a must-visit institution for film archivists, researchers and film festival programmers from all over the world.

Started in 1974 by its director Yasui Yoshio and several other enthusiasts as the Planet Bibliothèque de Cinéma in Osaka, it opened its first screening space in Osaka in 1995, followed by an additional movie theater in Kobe in 2007. Dedicated to the art of film in all its forms, the archive collects feature films, avant-garde documentaries, indie cinema, home movies, animation, pink film, silent film rarities and anything else from (not only) the rich history of Japanese cinema. It is also now a central gathering space for film researchers and historians to hold conferences and workshops, with Yasui himself having edited one of the definitive early works on the history of animation in Japan. Not simply an archive, Planet is a vibrant and internationally networked center of film education and research. With roots in the lively super-indie distribution scene of 1970s Japan, Planet has been driven primarily by volunteer work and individual initiative, above all Yasui Yoshio's singular love for cinema. More recently it has gained increasing support from the city of Kobe and the Japanese government but remains a phenomenal grassroots effort.

This series presents a small selection of fascinating works from the treasure trove that Planet has amassed over the decades. The archive's deep connections to animation are showcased, and its beginnings in screening activist cinema are on display in the extraordinary films of the documentary film collective NDU or the Jishu Film Collective and its founder, experimental film pioneer Ko Hiroh. Most of these films cannot be seen anywhere but at Planet; the Harvard Film Archive is delighted to present this very rare selection of extraordinary films. — Alexander Zahlten

Film curation and descriptions by Alexander Zahlten.

Special thanks: Alexander Zahlten—East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard; Andrew Gordon—History, Harvard; Shigehisa Kuriyama, Director; Gavin Whitelaw, Executive Director; Stacie Matsumoto, Associate Director—Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, Harvard.





Nihon Documentarist Union *ASIA IS ONE*

friday april 11 at 7pm

PREWAR AND WARTIME ANIMATION, PART ONE

While TV anime and Ghibli films dominate the image of animation from Japan, the country's animated past runs much deeper. Though much of that history is inaccessible—some film historians estimate that over 98% of all films made in Japan before 1930 are lost—Planet has always invested considerable energy into retrieving and making available some of Japan's wondrous early animated films. Creating ghosts, fantastical creatures and a huge assortment of shape-shifting phantasms, early Japanese animators initially played to the strengths of animation's ability to showcase marvelous transformations and stretching the limits of the body. By the mid-1930s Japan's increasingly militarized public sphere left its mark on animation as well; while retaining an often whimsical tone and an experimental drive, animators also participated in the fantasies of Japan's imperial project.

Planet's founder, Yasui Yoshio, edited one of the pioneering histories of Japanese animation, *History of Japanese Animated Films*, as early as 1977. Since the beginning, Planet has created new film prints of dozens of historically important animated treasures, allowing for a much more comprehensive view of animated film from Japan. It has even been part of retrieving some of the earliest Disney cartoons thought no longer extant. Roughly divided into a focus on the early 1930s and the late 1930s, these two programs present some of the highlights from Planet's invaluable archive of animated works. We can clearly discern the transition from celebrations of modern life (*A Day in Life of Chameko*) or fantastical themes (*Bandanemon – The Monster Exterminator*) to more inclusion of elements from a colonial and racial imaginary (such as *Taro Overseas*), and the Pacific War leaves its metaphoric mark in a sports competition between teams of dogs and monkeys in *Human Rugby Bullets*.

THE FOREST'S BASEBALL TEAM

MORI NO YAKYUDAN

Directed by Harada Seiichi
Japan 1934, 35mm (from 9.5mm), b/w, silent, 7 min

THE MONKEY GOES FISHING O-SARU NO TAIRYO

Directed by Murata Yasuji
Japan 1933, 16mm, b/w, silent, 9 min

CORPORAL NORAKURO NORAKURO GOCHOU

Directed by Murata Yasuji
Japan 1933, 16mm, b/w, silent, 11 min

**LOVE STORY FROM THE AGE OF GENROKU:
SANKICHI AND OSAYO GENROKU KOI MOYOU:
SANKICHI TO OSAYO**

Directed by Seo Mitsuo
Japan 1934, 16mm, b/w, silent, 10 min

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF CHAMEKO

CHAMEKO NO ICHINICHI
Directed by Nishikura Kiyoji
Japan 1931, 35mm, b/w, 7 min. Japanese with English subtitles

**THE MOVING PICTURE FIGHT OF THE FOX AND
THE POSSUM UGOKUE KORI NO TATEHIKI**

Directed by Ooishi Ikuo
Japan 1933, 16mm, b/w, 11 min. Japanese with English subtitles

PONSUKE IN THE SPRINGTIME

PONSUKE NO HARU
Directed by Ooishi Ikuo
Japan 1934, 35mm, b/w, 6 min. Japanese with English subtitles

THE DANCE OF THE CHAGAMAS

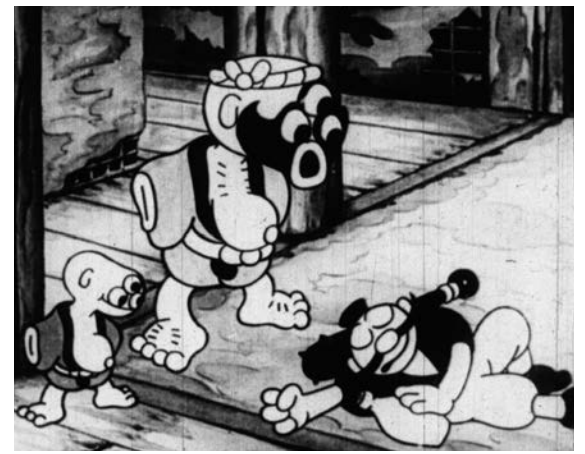
CHAGAMA ONDO
Directed by Masaoka Kenzo
Japan 1934, 35mm, b/w, 10 min. Japanese with English subtitles

TRT: 71 min

friday april 11 at 9pm

TO THE JPS: SOUTH KOREAN A-BOMB SURVIVORS
SPEAK OUT IENOMU E: ZAIKAN HIBAKUSHA
MUKOKU NO NIJUROKU-NEN**

The atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki complicated the postwar discourse in and around Japan—which was now both a perpetrator and a victim. Yet not only Japanese citizens fell victim to the nuclear blasts, many foreign laborers also perished. For this documentary, NDU traveled to Busan in South Korea to follow a group of atomic bomb survivors ignored by the Japanese government and



Ooishi Ikuo *THE MOVING PICTURE FIGHT...*

treated as an embarrassment by the South Korean government. In an extremely difficult and risky undertaking for the time, this group of filmmaking Japanese activists follows several survivors on their trip to Seoul to hand a petition to newly reelected General Park Chung-hee, who was in the process of consolidating his authoritarian rule.

Directed by the Nihon Documentarist Union
Japan 1971, 16mm, color & b/w, 53 min. Korean and Japanese with English subtitles

Preceded by

TYOSEN

This short film was produced by the Japanese empire to promote tourism to the Korean Peninsula (or "Chosen," as it was referred to then). The English voice-over provides insights into how the empire wanted its colonial holdings to be seen (and monetized) through tourism.

Japan 1939, 35mm, b/w, 13 min. In English



Kataoka Yoshitaro *BANDANEMON – THE MONSTER EXTERMINATOR*



Masaoka Kenzo *SEA PALACE*

saturday april 12 at 7pm

This program presents two extraordinary works from the oceanic imaginary of Japanese cinema. The main feature is *The Sea Demon on Land*, a curious mixture of animal documentary, character study and escape film, and one of the most remarkable animal films ever made. The main hero is an actual octopus who flees a box on the way to the fish market and embarks on a long and perilous journey back to the ocean. With similarities to Jean Painlevé's surrealism-influenced octopus films, director Igayama spins a harrowing—and from an animal rights perspective, sometimes disturbing—tale of perseverance that has to be seen to be believed. The film is preceded by *Sea Palace*, a fantastical silent film fable revolving around a mythical “Sea Princess” directed by later animation giant Masaoka Kenzo. Featuring charming special effects, this treasure from early Japanese cinema was digitally restored with funding from the International Film Festival Rotterdam.

SEA PALACE UMI NO KYUDEN

Directed by Masaoka Kenzo
Japan 1930, 35mm, b/w, silent, 9 min

THE SEA DEMON ON LAND KAIMA RIKU O IKU

Directed by Igayama Masamitsu
Japan 1950, 35mm, b/w, 53 min. Japanese with English subtitles

monday april 21 at 7pm

PREWAR AND WARTIME ANIMATION, PART TWO

See description for the April 11 show on page 31.

BANDANEMON – THE MONSTER EXTERMINATOR

BANDANEMON – BAKEMONOTAIJI NO MAKI

Directed by Kataoka Yoshitaro
Japan 1935, 35mm, b/w, 9 min. Japanese with English subtitles

A NIGHT AT THE BAR IZAKAYA NO ICHIYA

Directed by Murata Yasuji
Japan 1936, 16mm, b/w, silent, 10 min. Japanese with English subtitles

CHOPPED SNAKE CHONGIRE HEBI

Directed by Kouchi Junichi
Japan 1930, 35mm, tinted b/w, silent, 16 min. Japanese with English subtitles

TA-CHAN'S UNDERSEA JOURNEY

TA-CHAN NO KAITEI RYOKO

Directed by Masaoka Kenzo
Japan 1935, 35mm (from 9.5mm), b/w, silent, 7 min

TARO OVERSEAS – HOORAY FOR THE NEW

JAPAN KAIKOKUTARO – SHIN NIHONTOU BANZAI

Directed by Suzuki Masahiro
Japan 1938, 35mm, b/w, 8 min. Japanese with English subtitles

BENKEI VS. USHIWAKA BENKEI TAI USHIWAKA

Directed by Masaoka Kenzo
Japan 1939, 16mm, b/w, 13 min. Japanese with English subtitles

FIVE ANIMALS OF THE FOREST MORI NO GOHIKI

NO DOBUTSU-TACHI – GOHIKI NO CHIKARA

Directed by Ashida Iwao
Japan 1937, 35mm, b/w, 7 min. Japanese with English subtitles

KANGAROO'S BIRTHDAY

KANGAROO NO TANJOBI

Directed by Kumakawa Masao
Japan 1940, 35mm (from 16mm), b/w, silent, 9 min. Japanese with English subtitles

HUMAN RUGBY BULLETS TOKYU NIKUDAN SEN

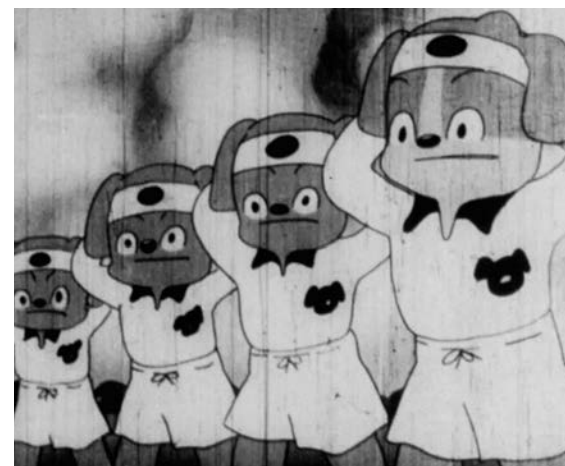
Directed by Kuwata Ryotaro
Japan 1943, 16mm, b/w, 15 min. Japanese with English subtitles

monday april 28 at 7pm

ASIA IS ONE AJIA WA HITOTSU

The remarkable and provocative documentary film-making collective NDU (Nihon Documentarist Union) was active between 1968 and 1973, born from Japan's radical student movement and the “season of politics.” NDU fought out very public and contentious debates with established intellectuals and filmmakers—documentary legend Ogawa Shinsuke among them—and their films generated great attention and controversy, yet they were for a long time not included in canonical film histories, partially due having burned too many bridges with the leftist orthodoxy at the time. Yet at a 1970s moment when Japanese documentary cinema was seen as turning inward towards the highly personal self-documentary or rural self-examination, NDU and its most prominent member Nunokawa Tetsuro went to Okinawa, Taiwan, South Korea, Southeast Asia and Palestine, intent on facing the world as much as Japan's role within it.

The astonishing journey in *Asia is One* begins with former colonial subjects that worked in Okinawan coal mines and remained there after the war, but eventually follows a group of smugglers to Taiwan and a perplexing discovery among the Atayal indigenous tribe in the Taiwanese mountains. Conceiving of Asia not as a set of discrete nations but a profoundly entangled space of flows—geographically as much as between the past and the present—the film maps the deeply complex and often sensation-ally contradictory legacies of Japan's colonial history. Shooting began just before the “reversion” of



Kuwata Ryotaro *HUMAN RUGBY BULLETS*

Okinawa to Japan and several NDU members had to enter Okinawa illegally, as their leftist activism would have barred them from obtaining visas.

Directed by Nihon Documentarist Union
Japan 1973, 16mm, color & b/w, 96 min. Japanese, Chinese, and Atayal with English subtitles

YASUI YOSHIO IN PERSON

friday may 9 at 6pm

DOCUMENT OF COLLISION: THE WHIPLASHED ONES DOKYUMENTO RINKA: MUCHIUTARERU MONO

The Whiplashed Ones uses a riveting experimental mode to explore a dizzying network of issues connected to chronic symptoms affecting Osaka taxi drivers. This major work of postwar activist independent film deploys a radical visual style that shuttles between X-rays and Osaka's rough urban map, seeking out visualizations of a many-layered trauma that is physical and social and inscribed into the city's transit structure. The film is one of the central works of Ko Hiroh (1938-2024), a filmmaker who left his mark on major turning points in Japanese cinema but is almost unknown outside of Japan. As a student in Nihon University's film school in the 1950s he cofounded the first student experimental film group in Japan, kickstarting a new era of experimental and activist cinema. Working as an influential TV director and producer Ko continued to direct independent experimental documentary and founded the influential CO2 film festival. Ko passed away in 2024, and this screening reminds us of his enduring belief in cinema as an agent of change—not only of society, but of our sensorium.

Directed by Ko Hiroh
Japan 1969, 16mm, b/w, 67 min. Japanese with English subtitles



Ko Hiroh *DOCUMENT OF COLLISION: THE WHIPLASHED ONES*

THE YUGOSLAV JUNCTION CONTINUES!

APRIL 13

After nine screenings last fall, *The Yugoslav Junction* returns to the HFA this spring with a double bill. Resuming our exploration of Yugoslav film in its international contexts and connections, the evening will highlight experimental cinema in particular. Matevž Jerman and Jurij Meden's *Alpe-Adria Underground!* (2024) is a feature-length crash course in Slovene amateur (i.e. avant-garde) imagemaking, while the 9pm program will showcase five works at the crossroads of film, music, and counter-culture, 1962-1984. The films in this special coda are ecstatic and educational in equal measure; they are also underseen rarities, seldom projected on the big screen.

Film curation and descriptions by Nace Zavrl.

sunday april 13 at 3pm

UNDERGROUND AND IN THE AIR: MUSICAL EXPERIMENTS IN YUGOSLAVIA

Experimental, nonfiction and alternative film in Yugoslavia was, throughout its history, tightly imbricated with musical (sub)cultures, sonic playfulness, and deconstructions of image-sound relations of various kinds. This screening—the coda and closing salvo of last season's *The Yugoslav Junction*—samples five radically eclectic instances in which sights and soundtracks in the SFRY (1962-1984) came into unexpected, explosive contact. With *Justice*, Ante Babaja's early cartoonish farce, improvised free jazz (courtesy of the Zagreb Jazz Orchestra conducted by Anđelko Klobučar) chaperones and intensifies an otherwise whimsical street brawl. *Music in Grožnjan*, produced by Croatian state television and directed by one of the country's most prolific documentarians, captures the aural ambience of an international summer school in the Istrian town of Grožnjan, in which classical music quite literally floats in the air. Delving underground, Olga Pajek's stunning yet seldom projected *Too Much* is a student exercise that deploys suffocating chiaroscuro lensing to depict the ecstasy and anxiety of a throbbing basement punk club (the infamous Disco FV) in early 80s Ljubljana. Elsewhere that year, Juliana Terek and Miroslav Bata Petrović probed the interfaces of punk iconography and militarism with *Personal Discipline*, a haunting masterwork. At the same time, the enigmatic Sulejman Ferenčak—one of fifty members of the slippery production network OM, which concocted dozens of small-gauge gems in the late 70s and 80s—was more interested in the South African pianist-composer Abdullah Ibrahim, previously known as Dollar Brand. Against a repetitive trance-inducing loop of four carefully excerpted bars from "Ntsikana's Bell" (1974, with Johnny Dyani), Ferenčak launches and spins his Super 8 tripod-attached camera in a methodical sequence of 360-degree rotations. Sky and earth are euphorically, deliriously transcended in what is not so much an homage to Michael Snow's *La Région Centrale*, but rather its spiritual detonation from within.

JUSTICE PRAVDA

Directed by Ante Babaja
Yugoslavia 1962, 16mm, b/w, 12 min

MUSIC IN GROŽNJAN MUZIKA U GROŽNJANU

Directed by Eduard Galić
Yugoslavia 1974, 35mm, color, 18 min

TOO MUCH

Directed by Olga Pajek
Yugoslavia 1982, digital video, b/w, 9 min. Slovenian and English with English subtitles

PERSONAL DISCIPLINE LIČNA DISCIPLINA

Directed by Juliana Terek and Miroslav Bata Petrović
Yugoslavia 1982, digital video, color, 11 min

DISLOCATED THIRD EYE SERIES III: BISMILLAH / IN FOUR MOVEMENTS / SERIJA DISLOCIRANO TRETJE OKO III: BISMILLAH / V ŠTIRIH STAVKIH /

Directed by Sulejman Ferenčak
Yugoslavia 1984, 35mm, color, 29 min

PRE-RECORDED CONVERSATION WITH FILMMAKERS

sunday april 13 at 7pm

ALPE-ADRIA UNDERGROUND! ALI JE BILO KAJ AVANTGARDNEGA?

"Between 2013 and 2023, the Slovenian Cinematheque preserved and digitized 179 short films made in the period of socialism (1945-1991) but mostly outside the state production system. We belatedly recognize these films as experimental and as an important, innovative part of Slovenian film heritage, which can now be seen again after a long time." These sentences open *Alpe-Adria Underground! A Brief and Imperfect History of Artists' Film in the Socialist Republic of Slovenia*. Making use of enthralling multiscreen juxtapositions, energetic editing and a thunderous electro-rap soundtrack, the film makes visible a vast, inexhaustibly rich swath of adventurous (so-called "amateur") moving-image creativity in a compact 98 minutes. More than a dozen outrageously underrecognized filmmakers are highlighted in Jerman and Meden's warp-speed survey: Boštjan Hladnik, Črt Škodlar, Ana Nuša Dragan, Davorin Marc, Karpo Godina, Vinko Rozman, Vasko Pregelj, Naško Križnar, Tone Rački and David Nez, Matjaž Žbontar, Franci Slak, OM Production, Vasja Bibič.



Sulejman Ferenčak *DISLOCATED THIRD EYE SERIES III: BISMILLAH / IN FOUR MOVEMENTS /*



Matevž Jerman and Jurij Meden *ALPE-ADRIA UNDERGROUND!*

Almost half of these names are also featured in *The Yugoslav Junction: Film and Internationalism in the SFRY, 1957-1988*, the series of which this is the post festum epilogue. What the art and film writer Annette Michelson once said of Pavle Levi's *Cinema by Other Means* (another recent and influential work that charted the terrain of previously invisible Yugoslav audiovisual experimentalism) can just as well be applied to this documentary: "Here is a work of truly original thought and research, drawn from material not merely unfamiliar, but hitherto unsuspected of existing." May *Alpe-Adria Underground!* spark manifold imaginations, spurring viewers to dive deeper into a body of work as underseen as it is eye-opening.

Directed by Matevž Jerman and Jurij Meden
Slovenia 2024, DCP, color, 98 min. Slovenian and BCMS with English subtitles

THEO ANTHONY, SUBJECT TO REVIEW

APRIL 14

Everything documentarian Theo Anthony (b. 1989) touches turns into wildly entertaining and mind-expanding gold. He first thrilled audiences at the Harvard Film Archive in 2018 with his unpredictable, multifaceted feature debut *Rat Film* (2016) and returns this year with his improbably ESPN-commissioned short *Subject to Review* paired with an equally provocative film of his choosing, Simon Starling's *Black Drop*. As a Radcliffe-Film Study Center Fellow, Anthony is following up his recent exploration of surveillance culture and visual bias *All Light, Everywhere* (2021) with a new project that begins in Chicago's sewer system and will undoubtedly enter into unforeseen, illuminating territory.

Curated by Theo Anthony and Haden Guest. Film descriptions by Theo Anthony.

\$15 SPECIAL EVENT TICKETS THEO ANTHONY IN PERSON

monday april 14 at 7pm

SUBJECT TO REVIEW

Subject to Review is a case study on the rise of the instant replay system Hawk-Eye in professional tennis, charting how a broadcast gimmick became de facto judge, jury and executioner within the sport. Beneath this investigation, however, pulses deeper questions of spectacle, justice, and the inescapable horizon of imperfect knowledge that seep out from the edges of Hawk-Eye's totalizing frame. Originally broadcast for ESPN's *30 for 30* series, the film turns the traditional sports documentary on its head with Anthony's signature combination of poetic observation, humorous subversion and political conscience.

Directed by Theo Anthony
US 2019, DCP, color, 37 min



Theo Anthony *SUBJECT TO REVIEW*

Preceded by

BLACK DROP

In 1783, scientists from all across the globe raced to the edges of empire with cutting-edge instruments to record one of the rarest of celestial events—the Transit of Venus. Though the measurements produced were largely useless, these instruments, which recorded a series of sequential images in a single film strip, were the direct predecessor to the moving image camera. 130 years later, artist and filmmaker Simon Starling traveled to Tahiti and Honolulu to film the Transit again in 35mm black and white. With the next transit occurring in 2117, this could likely be the last recorded on film—tying a nascent cinematic language to a lineage of scientific inquiry and all the messy questions inherited along with it.

Directed by Simon Starling
UK 2012, digital video, color, 28 min



Simon Starling *BLACK DROP*

FROM THE COLLECTION - SATYAJIT RAY

APRIL 18 – MAY 18

Whether in a colonial-era village or contemporary Calcutta, Ray crafted the style of his films to suit the milieu. The natural world and its cycles seem to dictate the path of *Pather Panchali*, yet by the Calcutta trilogy in the early 70s, Ray experimented with a more chaotic, jarring vision. Through a complex and detailed precision at every level of production, he captured the rich social and physical landscapes of Bengal, with layers of meaning—some of it inscrutable to western viewers, all of it invisibly woven within what then appears on screen as a simply-told tale. “Only if the planning and calculation that go into a scene can be hidden from the audience,” noted Ray, “can the language of a film claim to be successful.”

Emerging from a country newly independent, Ray's films feature characters who are split or in transition between worlds. While focusing on their individuality and essential humanity, he explores the burdens and contradictions inherent in the expectations of people navigating religion, culture and class status in India's ever-changing political atmosphere. Apu wavers on the thresholds of city and village, family and independence, education and tradition. He and his sister Durga, Charulata, Arati from *The Big City*, Siddhartha from *The Adversary*, and even *The Music Room's* decadent *zamindar* share a rebellious independence and idiosyncratic idealism. Rejecting any mold imposed on them by society—or the film audience—the characters sometimes surprise even themselves with their movement against society's grain.

Remarkably for the time, the women in Ray's films not only join their male counterparts in defying convention, but they frequently take center stage. Women may replace men in many of their traditional roles—as breadwinners, rescuers or activators—but more often, they serve as the conscience of the film—as with the forthright Aparna in *Days and Nights in the Forest* or *The Big City's* Arati, who seems to instinctively veer in the direction of equality and justice. Even the prostitute in *The Adversary* is not judged for her choices. She and Siddhartha's sister are seen experiencing a freedom and independence taken for granted by men and they radically

embrace it. And, it is the fiery spirit within Devi that enters into war with her passive, outer self. The brilliant spark we see in her at the start of the film, once captured, bursts into flames.

Contradictorily, it was through his deep dedication to Bengal that Ray became an international star. Much of his successful crossover to the west acknowledges his films' powerful, elemental humanity both despite and because of their very specific locations in time, space and culture. "This uniqueness and this universality, and the coexistence of the two," Ray claimed, "is what I mainly try to convey through my films." Representing different kinds of human experience with empathy, Ray's films discover poetry and truth within everyday minutia, the ephemeral, the ineffable and the subtlest movements. Kurosawa commented that *Pather Panchali* is "the kind of film that flows with the serenity and the nobility of a big river." This sublime power courses through all of Ray's films, in varying manifestations, and seems to enter not through the eyes, but the heart. — BG

A continuation of last December's Apu Trilogy program, this series showcases rare, beautiful and newly acquired 35mm Satyajit Ray prints from the HFA collection.

Film descriptions by Brittany Gravely.

friday april 18 at 7pm

sunday may 18 at 7pm

THE BIG CITY MAHANAGAR

Based on two stories by Narendranath Mitra that take place in the 50s, *The Big City* marked Ray's first depiction of modern urban life. Within the narrow confines of their apartment, a working-class extended family—housewife Arati, her husband Anil, her young son, her teenage sister and Anil's conservative parents—lives on the financial edge. When Arati anxiously decides she should help Anil by getting a job, the shift proves difficult for just about everyone except Arati. Played by a pre-Charulata Madhavi Mukherjee, she quietly amazes herself and her husband by not only enjoying her sales work but excelling at it and still managing to run her household as well. The office also provides a space where women conspire, and they teach her about harnessing her feminine powers in the business world. Meanwhile, Anil undergoes a different transformation, alternating between feeling protective, jealous or completely emasculated. As they run up against each other's expectations, the couple's unpredictable path remains slightly more upbeat than previous Ray films and the original novel. Though it is not without critique of a capitalistic, westernized Calcutta, *The Big City* emphasizes potential upsides for women in particular, and eventually, for their open-minded spouses too.

Directed by Satyajit Ray. With Anil Chatterjee, Madhavi Mukherjee, Jaya Bachchan
India 1963, 35mm, b/w, 133 min. Bengali and English with English subtitles



Satyajit Ray *THE BIG CITY*

saturday april 19 at 7pm

saturday may 17 at 9:15pm

CHARULATA

Basing his film on a story by Rabindranath Tagore called "The Broken Nest," Ray's meticulously rendered adaptation takes place in a Bengal of 1879 with the woman of the title married to the publisher of a political, English-language newspaper. In the miraculous first scene, Ray wordlessly describes Charu's wealth and comfort as well as her constriction,

boredom and loneliness. She is intelligent, creative and playful, yet emotionally distanced from a loving but work-obsessed husband whom she married as a child. This scene also points to the disregarded female "gaze" that Charu reclaims while remaining blind to its transformative powers. She is caught unaware by the arrival of Amal, her literary, playful cousin-in-law, whose carefree camaraderie elicits an earth-shattering awakening. Ray adds subtle political points in his embroidery of a rich psycho-sociological landscape in which the motives of each of the players—including Charu's duplicitous brother and his "traditional," uneducated wife—contribute to the nest's disassembly. As lines are crossed and walls come down, the remarkable melody of this caged bird's song comes as a shock to the men who unwittingly fostered its birth.

Directed by Satyajit Ray. With Soumitra Chatterjee, Madhavi Mukherjee, Shailen Mukherjee
India 1964, 35mm, b/w, 120 min. Bengali with English subtitles



Satyajit Ray *CHARULATA*

saturday april 19 at 9:30pm

friday may 16 at 9:30pm

THE ADVERSARY PRATIDWANDI

Though still a literary adaptation—this time, a novel by Sunil Gangopadhyay, who also wrote *Aranyer Din Ratri*—Ray's first installment of his unintended Calcutta trilogy marked a startling break in style and content. Incorporating footage of actual political protests, *The Adversary* presents the swirling confusion of brutal politics, economic turmoil and rapid change within Calcutta, without ever quite settling. The explosive edits and occasional handheld shots reflect the ambivalent, nervous energy of Sid-dhartha, who dropped out of medical school after



Satyajit Ray *DEVI*

the death of his father and lost his footing. Jarring flashbacks and fantasies jostle Ray's imperfect hero searching for a job and trapped between roles and ideologies, including those of his friends who turn to assorted vices and that of his brother who joins the burgeoning Naxalite—or Indian Maoist—movement, envisioning a violent revolution. Siddhartha also attempts to rescue his sister from another option: capitalist exploitation, yet her income supports the family and unlike her brother, she feels confident and in control. Ray presents no clear adversary here, nor any precise solution. While sifting through the miasma, Siddhartha ultimately follows an existentialist intuition and like Ray with this exhilarating experiment, takes a chance on venturing outside his comfort zone.

Directed by Satyajit Ray. With Dhritiman Chatterjee, Asgar Ali, Arabinda Banerjee
India 1970, 35mm, b/w, 110 min. Bengali with English subtitles

sunday april 20 at 7pm

sunday april 27 at 3pm

COMPANY LIMITED SEEMABADDHA

Unlike *The Adversary's* Siddhartha running, conscience-stricken, through the streets of Calcutta, the westernized Syamalendu exists in a bubble, disconnected from his own city and its struggles as he rises effortlessly to its top. Charming, bright and handsome, he experiences his life's path as natural and inevitable. As in *Days and Nights in the Forest*, Sharmila Tagore appears again as the conscience of the film, though here, as Syamalendu's sister-in-law Tutul, she is completely captivated by him, and they enjoy a mutual attraction while he gives her a tour of his and his wife's newly acquired luxurious lifestyle. Based on Mani Shankar Mukherjee's novel, the second film in Ray's Calcutta trilogy documents Syamalendu's fluid transition into corruption; its systemic encouragement in the corporate world; and Tutul's growing realization of the immeasurable void that exists between them.

Directed by Satyajit Ray. With Sharmila Tagore, Barun Chanda, Paromita Chowdhury
India 1971, 35mm, b/w, 113 min. Bengali and English with English subtitles

sunday april 27 at 7pm

DEVI

Starring a teenaged Sharmila Tagore in her second Ray film after *Apur Sansar*, again with Soumitra Chatterjee as her husband, *Devi* continues the seamless, hypnotic lyricism of Ray's Apu trilogy, here with a woman at the mercy of culture, class, religion, family and, to a devastating extent, the male gaze. Set in the late 19th century, Doyamoyee lives with her husband Umaprasad's wealthy, rural Bengali family while he completes his education in the city. She passively accepts the benign affections of her influential, aristocratic father-in-law until he has a dream revealing that she is the incarnation of the goddess Kali. Suddenly, her confinement and objectification are crystallized and on display for all the world to see. Both reduced to an inert idol and granted su-

pernatural powers, she is alienated from her loved ones who either worship, resent or fear her. Despite not everyone not falling under this trance, the mere question of her deification serves to undermine and unravel the crumbling patriarchal structure, until, under extreme duress, it collapses. Ultimately, Doya does undergo a startling transformation, yet it is not ordained from the heavens, but breathtakingly, heartbreakingly of this fractured earth.

Directed by Satyajit Ray. With Sharmila Tagore, Soumitra Chatterjee, Chhabi Biswas
India 1960, 35mm, b/w, 99 min. Bengali with English subtitles

friday may 16 at 7pm

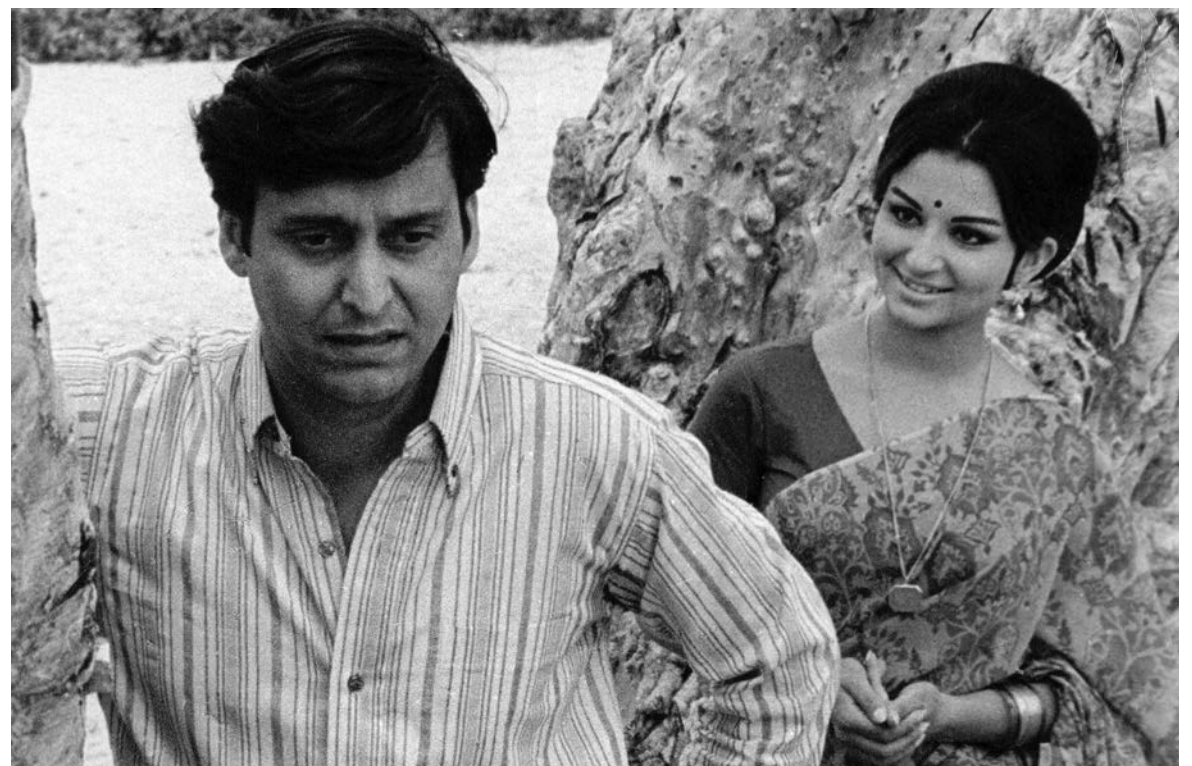
sunday may 18 at 3pm

DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE FOREST

ARANYER DIN RATRI

Claiming a desire to shed civilization's constraints, four male friends from the city take a vacation in "the forest" yet are ill prepared for all that awaits. Significantly altered from Sunil Gangopadhyay's novel to reflect people Ray knew, the bourgeois friends only think about their immediate needs, with little concern for the welfare of those in their way. The film maintains a deceptively breezy humor and lightness, matching the tone of their antics, until the arrival of Aparna and Jaya, fellow tourists who lure them down a path of self-reflection and revelation. With the celebrated memory game scene as its masterful centerpiece, the film achieves a multilayered exposé of their narcissism and neuroses through an accumulation of seemingly minor events and behaviors, eventually shattering the mythic images the men hold of themselves, the forest and its indigenous people—long ago defiled by their colonial forebears. Soumitra Chatterjee, as the alpha male Ashim, and Sharmila Tagore as Aparna, the voice of compassion, crucially reunite for the third time in a Ray film, their characters' intersection offering the possibility of transformation in an alienated world.

Directed by Satyajit Ray. With Sharmila Tagore, Kaberi Basu, Simi Garewal
India 1970, 35mm, b/w, 116 min. Bengali with English subtitles



Satyajit Ray *DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE FOREST*

saturday may 17 at 7pm

THE MUSIC ROOM JALSAGHAR

Ray's attempt to make a more box-office-friendly film, filled with music and dance, instead twisted into this haunted chamber piece. For his retelling of a famous short story by Tarashankar Bannerjee set in the 20s, as the age of the feudalistic landowners, or *zamindars*, was coming to a close, Ray selected the venerable Chhabi Biswas, who was already a legendary character actor in India by the time he played Biswambhar Roy. Obsessed by his love of music and ensconced in his aristocratic eminence, the financially strapped Roy is propelled into his decadent demise through a game of one-upmanship with his crass neighbor Ganguly, a "self-made" man who proudly flaunts his industrialized wealth. In concert with its macabre heart, the film luxuriates in the music Roy so adores. Ordering the chandeliers dusted off for a final showdown, the decrepit Roy triumphantly hosts a *jalsa* that takes up over eight minutes of film—nothing like the hours these soirées would usually last, but in cinematic time, it seems an outrageous extravagance.

Directed by Satyajit Ray. With Chhabi Biswas, Gangapada Basu, Padmadevi
India 1958, 35mm, b/w, 97 min. Bengali and English with English subtitles



Satyajit Ray *THE MUSIC ROOM*

MOTHER'S DAY MINI-MARATHON

MAY 9 – MAY 12



Michael Curtiz *MILDRED PIERCE*

Celebrating a commodity like Mother's Day may feel especially fraught in the face of ongoing threats to abortion access, a global backlash against feminism and widespread queer/transphobia. It is precisely in such times that motherhood must be examined for its pointillistic complexity, to prevent maternal suffering from being crudely distorted. Presented in 35mm prints that make even the murkiest depths of despair shimmer, the Harvard Film Archive's selection of films—Michael Curtiz's *Mildred Pierce* (1945), Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Mamma Roma* (1962), John Cassavetes' *A Woman Under the Influence* (1974), Martin Scorsese's *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* (1974), Chantal Akerman's *News From Home* (1976), Pedro Almodóvar's *All About My Mother* (1999) and Bong Joon-ho's *Mother* (2009)—pulls back the curtain and reveals the mother to be a historical subject with far more contradictory motivations than valiant love.

The films in this series take apart the naturalization of maternal suffering by foregrounding what lies beneath the noble appearance of sacrifice: obsession bred by a fear of rejection, resentment towards the family unit as a usurper of autonomy. The tipping point where selflessness becomes an alienating self-obliteration forms a chasm between mother and child in Michael Curtiz's hugely influential *Mildred Pierce*, a hardboiled maternal melodrama that follows in the footsteps of King Vidor's *Stella Dallas* (1937). In hopes of earning her daughter Veda's love, single mother Mildred becomes fixated on attaining upper-class gentility. Curtiz depicts Mildred in near-constant movement—her transition from cooking and cleaning to shuffling across office buildings and restaurants shows that not only has she always worked, but she has also never dreamed.

This maternal work ethic, which demands private yearnings be placed on the backburner, should be understood as a pained response to history rather than a given virtue. *Mildred Pierce*'s entrepreneurial spirit derives from a refusal to relive the Great Depression; ironically, she cannot protect her children from inheriting a paranoia about never having enough. For his seventies-set tribute to the woman's picture, Scorsese places the heroine of *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* in the overwhelmingly wide expanse of possibility carved out by the women's liberation movement. Shedding her habits as a former housewife, Alice makes an awkward heel-turn towards independence and allows her once-forsaken dream of becoming a singer to no longer be a modest hobby. Released the same year as *Alice*, Cassavetes' claustrophobic *A Woman Under the Influence* takes on this same juncture with measured hope. The film follows stay-at-home mother Mabel's attempts to express her free-spirited nature within her sequestered world, and the increasing discomfort she faces from her husband and his mother. By focusing on Mabel's subjectivity as she incrementally ekes out her autonomy, Cassavetes assigns her private resistance just as much historical significance as the larger political revolution occurring outside.

None of the films explicitly identifies a historical crisis or connects one to the narrative at hand; instead, history is treated as a secret. The sex worker *Mamma Roma* in Pasolini's *Mamma Roma* is overjoyed to relocate herself and her son to postwar public housing built on the outskirts of Rome. But her rose-tinted worldview does little to protect her from the reality of how little Italy has progressed since the war and in turn, how little she has moved from the bottom of the ladder.

The eighteen months Chantal Akerman's mother Nelly endured in Auschwitz are never mentioned in the letters read aloud in *News from Home*, but buried within her words is a palpable separation anxiety. For *Mother*, Bong Joon-ho moves away from the broader context of class inequality in South Korea and focuses on a mother who pursues vigilante justice for her disabled son. Most of the film's tension operates on the sheer audacity of the mother to attempt exercising the same authority as a nation-state.

The filtration of history through the tunnel vision of a mother's survival instincts results in a fractured awareness regarding the lives of others. Both the film *Mildred Pierce* and *Mildred Pierce* herself are kind towards but ultimately uninterested in the maid Lottie, played by Black actress Butterfly McQueen—whether this character also has a family or a dream is a total mystery. And although *All About My Mother* was one of the most successful films featuring trans characters at the time of its release, the film places much weight on the idea that gender transition cannot make a bad father a good mother. To the credit of Almodóvar, who collages his references as ostentatiously as Jean-Luc Godard did in the sixties, *All About My Mother* is a celebration of inauthenticity that dares to say a cisgender mother is involved in just as much of a performance as a lesbian stage actress, a sexually active nun and a trans sex worker.

Rather than lapse into flat narratives of martyrdom, this program interrogates the mother's serpentine mysteries—her desires, her memories, her pain—with risks in genre and form inspired by a shared canon of films about motherhood. As a key progenitor, *Mildred Pierce* lends several expositional details to *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* (an atypically introspective title in Scorsese's oeuvre), and its genre-bending to *Mother*. *All About My Mother* conjoins the sentimentality of the woman's picture with the unwieldy vulnerability embodied by Gena Rowlands (thanked in the film's end credits) in *A Woman Under the Influence* and *Opening Night* (1977). Chantal Akerman expressed great affection for the "documentary dimension" of Pasolini's *Mamma Roma*, in particular its tracking shots (which, in rhythm, resemble those in *News from Home* and, later, *From the East* (1993)). The cross-pollination between these films makes for a wonderfully cohesive assemblage of matrilineal film history. — Kelley Dong

All screenings in this marathon are free for Harvard Film Archive members.

Film descriptions by Kelley Dong.



Pedro Almodóvar *ALL ABOUT MY MOTHER*

friday may 9 at 9pm

ALL ABOUT MY MOTHER *TODO SOBRE MI MADRE*

Considered Pedro Almodóvar's breakthrough into the international sphere, winning him the Academy Award and Golden Globe for Best Foreign Language Film, *All About My Mother* takes place in a world where mothers are given second chances through the patience and grace of other women. Lovingly obvious references to *Opening Night*, *All About Eve* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* form a freewheeling narrative. Filled with regret over the secrets she never told her son before his death, actress-turned-nurse Manuela (Cecilia Roth) leaves Madrid and returns to her old stomping grounds in Barcelona in search of the boy's father. Instead of the immediate closure she wanted, Manuela finds herself in odd community with women whose lives revolve around performance: the actress Huma (Marisa Paredes), the precocious church girl Rosa (Penélope Cruz), the trans sex worker Agrado (Antonia San Juan), each wrestling with what it means to be a modern woman as Spain moves further away from the Franco regime. Through these sumptuously crafted cross-generational connections, Almodóvar

denaturalizes motherhood into something that can be as fleetingly intuitive as a great performance on opening night or as unnatural as a strange haircut mistaken for a wig.

Directed by Pedro Almodóvar. With Cecilia Roth, Marisa Paredes, Penélope Cruz
Spain 1999, 35mm, color, 101 min. Spanish with English subtitles

saturday may 10 at 5pm

NEWS FROM HOME

In the summer of 1976, Chantal Akerman returned to New York City (where she had spent the early 1970s working odd jobs and pursuing her filmmaking dreams within the city's avant-garde film scene) to make *News From Home*. One of her most influential films, *News From Home* is a deceptively simple staging of a battle between sound and image as a metonym for a mother tugging at her self-actualizing daughter. Long takes of New York are accompanied by Akerman's delicate voice reading letters from her mother Nelly. Like those of an Ozu matriarch, Nelly's words are mundane in subject matter but passive-aggressive in tone, rather cleverly collating gossip and remarks on the weather with complaints about

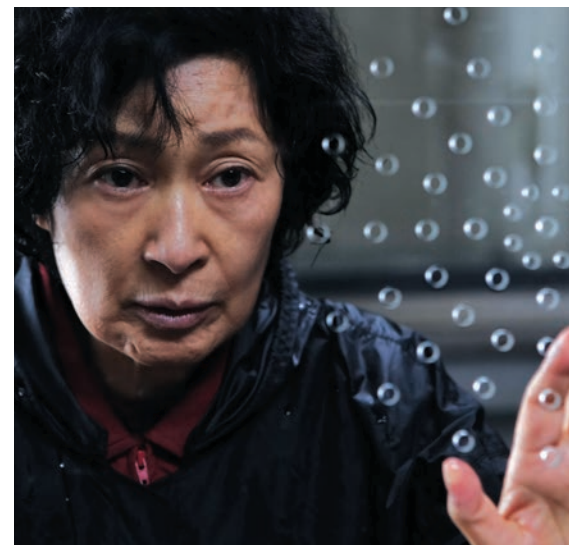
the distance between Akerman and her family. Against the pull of the mother's writing, the daughter's cinema pushes back: passersby stare into the camera and the tripod appears in the window; the city cacophony drowns out the fragile voice of home. As is characteristic of Akerman's brilliant comedic timing, the interjecting noise of the city functions as a sigh, a groan, breaking the suffocating tension between the women. When asked to comment on the film in 2011, Akerman stated: "I love it. Still not free from my mother."

Directed by Chantal Akerman
France/Belgium/West Germany 1976, DCP, color, 89 min. French with English subtitles

saturday may 10 at 7pm

ALICE DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE

An updated take on the woman's picture colored by the growing pains of second-wave feminism, Martin Scorsese's profoundly moving film places at its center a figure and subject typically found in the periphery of his work: the wife and mother, depicted as a survivor of domestic abuse with a surprising degree of candor. Thrust into single motherhood by the sudden death of her violent husband, Alice (Ellen Burstyn, who won an Oscar for her glittering performance) leaves New Mexico for Arizona with her son Tommy (Alfred Lutter). Though she clutches to



Bong Joon-ho *MOTHER*



Martin Scorsese ALICE DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE

her dream of revitalizing her long-dormant singing career in her hometown of Monterey, California, the harsh reality of raising a child as a former stay-at-home mother with no work experience compels the worn-down and affection-starved Alice to settle in both work and romance. With little time to contemplate the past and how to keep a familiar cycle of dependence on domineering men from repeating itself, Alice experiences the full force of total independence with her adoring son as witness to every risk and every mistake.

Directed by Martin Scorsese. With Ellen Burstyn, Kris Kristofferson, Alfred Lutter
US 1974, 35mm, color, 112 min

saturday may 10 at 9:15pm
MOTHER MADEO

Following the record-breaking box office success of *The Host* (2006), Bong Joon-ho set out to scale down from ensemble-based blockbusters and home in on a single character. Slyly structured with razor-sharp tonal shifts, *Mother* is a noir with the sexual undertones of Michael Curtiz's *Mildred Pierce* and Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*. When her developmentally disabled son Do-joon (Won Bin) is arrested for the murder of a high school girl, the titular mother (Kim Hye-ja, who is only referred to throughout as "Do-joon's mother" in a pointed display of Korean teknonymy) takes the task of proving his innocence as a divine calling. Bong wrote the role specifically for Kim, a veteran television actress known in South Korea as "the nation's mother" for her beloved matriarch characters. So grand is the mother's sense of justice that the magnitude of the alleged crime as an act of femicide never registers, calling into question the value of blind maternal love in a patriarchal society that incentivizes internalized misogyny as a means of survival. In an unsettling subversion of expectations, Kim punctuates the character's guttural expressions of care with a hostility that betrays an even deeper hatred towards herself and her child as one being.

Directed by Bong Joon-ho. With Kim Hye-ja, Won Bin, Jin Ku
South Korea 2009, 35mm, color, 129 min. Korean with English subtitles

sunday may 11 at 3pm
A WOMAN UNDER THE INFLUENCE

A Woman Under the Influence is a disarming examination of how love between a man and a woman changes shape as it moves throughout the home and into the outside world. Stay-at-home mother Mabel Longhetti (the legendary Gena Rowlands in what she called her greatest role) is known as a nut to her husband Nick's family and friends. But the symptoms of her supposed ailment—spontaneous song and dance, unbridled expressions of affection—are earnest acts of resistance against the suffocating isolation of her pastel-hued life. As Nick (Peter Falk at the height of his *Columbo* fame) struggles to accept that what he loves most about his wife in private is what embarrasses him most in public, Mabel is left to stand up for herself. Cassavetes financed and distributed *A Woman Under the Influence* himself—with the help of Falk, Rowlands and other friends—and filmed most of its handheld shots. Despite the verisimilitude, the film's dialogue is entirely scripted and its performances carefully rehearsed. Though critics referred to it as a woman's picture, Cassavetes' take on motherhood is less a genre exercise as it is a personal reflection on how husband and wife negotiate the roles of director and actor within the set that is their home. As a construction foreman who works with a large crew, Nick belts orders with the assured authority of a filmmaker; Mabel, on the other hand, fidgets in anticipation of his direction until one evening, she finally refuses to play the part.

Directed by John Cassavetes. With Peter Falk, Gena Rowlands, Fred Draper
US 1974, 35mm, color, 148 min

sunday may 11 at 7pm
MILDRED PIERCE

At once a maternal melodrama about the impossibility of buying unconditional love and a hard-boiled noir about the loneliness of upward mobility, Michael Curtiz's *Mildred Pierce* remains one of the most influential cinematic depictions of motherhood today. Mildred Pierce (Joan Crawford, who won her only Academy Award for the role) arrives at the police department after the murder of her second husband. She is armed only with memories: of a disas-

trous first marriage; of raising two daughters alone; of toiling to satisfy the girls' taste for finer things and to soothe their post-Depression intergenerational fear of poverty; of attaining unimaginable success; of falling for the cheap flattery of frivolous men. Through these recollections, Mildred's eldest daughter Veda (Ann Blyth, as an unforgettably impish femme fatale) emerges as the cold object of her obsessive affections. Born into middle-class stability, Veda's new-money inferiority complex has calcified into narcissistic cruelty. By trimming the scope and context of James M. Cain's 1941 novel, Curtiz crafts Mildred's biography into an all-American myth of stark detail and cosmic devastation. The film was a box office success and marked a comeback for Crawford, whose piercing gaze and glamour makes her sincere plea to be loved even more disarming.

Directed by Michael Curtiz. With Joan Crawford, Jack Carson, Zachary Scott
US 1945, 35mm, b/w, 111 min

monday may 12 at 7pm
MAMMA ROMA

Initially banned upon its release for obscenity and later reappraised as an homage to the golden age of Italian neorealism, Pier Paolo Pasolini's second feature *Mamma Roma* caused significant uproar among both the right and left in Italy. (The director himself was seen throwing punches against neo-Fascists at the film's Roman premiere.) Anna Magnani features as the titular mother, a tough and charismatic sex worker who will do whatever it takes to keep her son Ettore (Ettore Garofolo) off the streets and away from hooliganism. Ettore only halfheartedly indulges his mother's middle-class aspirations, having been so well protected by her from the harsher details of their poverty. Any suggestion of sentimentality is brutally contained within an undeniably potent psychosexual tension and a sober-minded view of the state as having the final say in all matters of human freedom. Despite the noble efforts of *Mamma Roma* to vindicate herself and her son, her life more closely resembles a Greek tragedy than a biblical parable.

Directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini. With Anna Magnani, Ettore Garofalo, Silvana Corsini
Italy 1962, 35mm, b/w, 105 min. Italian with English subtitles



Pier Paolo Pasolini MAMMA ROMA



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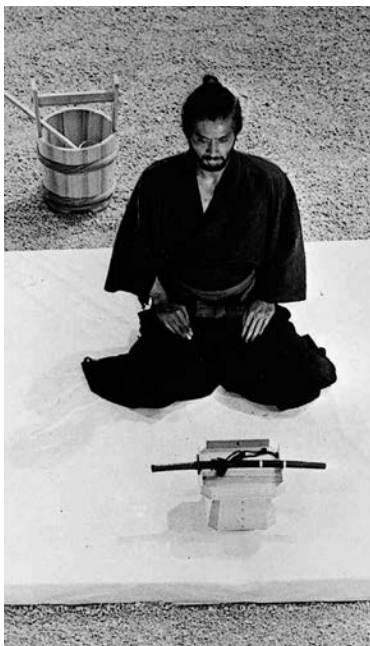
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THE SHOCHIKU CENTENNIAL COLLECTION

APRIL 7

Among the newest additions to the Shochiku Centennial Collection is a stunning new 35mm print, created at Imagica—the renowned photochemical lab in Osaka, Japan—of *Harakiri*, one of several masterworks directed by firebrand director Kobayashi Masaki (1916-1996) during the 1960s.

Special thanks: Jay Sakamoto, CEO; Meri Koyama, General Manager of Shochiku Theaters; Hosoda Hitomi, International Sales—Shochiku Co., Ltd.; Alexander Zahlten—East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard; Andrew Gordon—History, Harvard; Shigehisa Kuriyama, Director; Gavin Whitelaw, Executive Director; Stacie Matsumoto, Associate Director—Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, Harvard.



Kobayashi Masaki *HARAKIRI*

INTRODUCTION BY PETER GRILLI NEW 35MM PRINT

monday april 7 at 7pm

HARAKIRI SEPPUKU

Nakadai Tatsuya sets into motion the slow-burning narrative of Kobayashi's powerful *jidaigeki* epic as a wraith-like *ronin* who appears at the compound of the local ruling samurai clan with an unusual request; to commit *seppuku*, assisted ritualized suicide, in order to end his drifting life. Once inside Nakadai also reveals his equally unusual request to recount a story to his executioners before his death, unfolding a series of increasingly revelatory flashbacks that steadily build the tension until the film's explosive finale. *Harakiri* counts among the greatest black-and-white widescreen films of postwar Japanese cinema, with mesmerizing imagery sculpted by master cinematographer Miyajima Yoshio (and Kobayashi regular, filming *The Human Condition* and *Kwaidan* among others) who uses the format to make dynamically expressive use of traditional Japanese architecture by allowing the built frames-within-frames to embody the rigid power-structure so fiercely critiqued, and in the end literally destroyed, by Kobayashi's powerful anti-samurai film. Pioneering composer Takemitsu Toru in turn offers a stark and riveting score that uses period-Japanese instruments to percussively accentuate the film's haunting austerity and purpose. — HG

Directed by Kobayashi Masaki. With Nakadai Tatsuya, Ishihama Akira, Iwashita Shima
 Japan 1962, 35mm, b/w, 133 min. Japanese with English subtitles

in person

ROSINE MBACKAM feb 8 - 9
 NELSON CARLO DE LOS SANTOS ARIAS feb 13 - 14
 CARSON LUND feb 22
 JESSICA SARAH RINLAND feb 23 - 24
 KRISTINE MCKENNA feb 28
 SABRINA SUTHERLAND mar 1
 MATI DIOP mar 3
 BEN RIVERS mar 8 - 10
 ALBERT SERRA mar 28 - 31
 THEO ANTHONY apr 14
 YASUI YOSHIO may 9

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