

Film
Summer 2014



Film

Summer 2014

National Gallery of Art

with

American University School of Communication

Embassy of France

National Archives

National Museum of American History

National Portrait Gallery



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The National Gallery of Art annual summer preservation festival this year celebrates the work of Canyon Cinema, the historic Bay Area cooperative founded in the early 1960s and dedicated to the non-commercial, experimental, artist-made movies still available from Canyon in original 16 mm print format (all screenings in the series are 16 mm films). Honoring the late French director Alain Resnais, the Gallery joins the Embassy of France in presenting the program *Reminiscence: Alain Resnais*. Again this summer, the annual recap of The Black Maria Festival takes place in July with twenty-five new shorts screened over two days and introduced by festival director Jane Steuerwald. *Master Class: Pina and Tanaquil* features the Washington premiere of *Afternoon of a Faun: Tanaquil Le Clercq* at the National Archives. *Broadcast Culture* is a critical look (in three parts) at programming trends of European television and radio. Later in the summer, the series *A Sense of Time and Place: Peter von Bagh* introduces the work of the famed Finnish critic, author, and filmmaker to Washington audiences. In addition to Peter von Bagh, the Gallery is honored to welcome the following filmmakers to introduce their new documentaries, experimental narratives, and retrospective programs throughout the summer season: Stephanie Barber, Nancy Buirski, Gustav Deutsch, Mark Kendall, Jesse Lerner, Michael Maglaras, and Ramuntcho Matta. The Gallery is very grateful to the five Washington institutions opening their theater doors to our film program during the ongoing renovation of the East Building.

Seating for all events is on a first-come, first-seated basis unless otherwise noted. Doors open thirty minutes before show time. While the East Building is undergoing renovations, screenings take place in the following locations and the venue for each film is noted. For more information, visit www.nga.gov/film, e-mail film_department@nga.gov, or call (202) 842-6799.

WB National Gallery of Art, West Building Lecture Hall

FR Embassy of France, 4100 Reservoir Rd NW

NA National Archives, McGowan Theater, 7th St and Constitution Ave NW

AH National Museum of American History, Warner Bros Theater, 14th St and Constitution Ave NW

PG National Portrait Gallery, McEvoy Auditorium, 8th and F Streets NW

AU American University School of Communication, Malsi Doyle and Michael Forman Theater, McKinley Building

July

12 Sat 2:30 **Canyon Cinema: Origins** p20 **WB**

13 Sun 4:00 **Canyon Cinema: Sweet California** p20 **WB**

16 Wed 7:00 **Resnais: Last Year at Marienbad** p25 **FR**

19 Sat 2:30 **Black Maria Program I** p26 **WB**

20 Sun 4:00 **Black Maria Program II** p27 **WB**

23 Wed 7:00 **Resnais: Coeurs** p25 **FR**

26 Sat 2:30 **Shirley—Visions of Reality** p11 **WB**

27 Sun 4:00 **Shirley—Visions of Reality** p11 **WB**

August

2	Sat	2:30	The Great Confusion: 1913 Armory Show p11 WB
3	Sun	4:00	In the Shadow of the Light p13 WB
9	Sat	2:30	Canyon Cinema: Stan Brakhage p20 WB
10	Sun	4:00	Broadcast Culture: La Maison de la radio p27 WB
12	Tue	1:00	Sol LeWitt p13 WB
14	Thu	1:00 7:00	Sol LeWitt p13 WB Pina p29 NA
15	Fri	1:00	Sol LeWitt p13 WB
16	Sat	2:30	Canyon Cinema: A Minor Cinema p21 WB
17	Sun	4:00	Canyon Cinema: Art World Crossover p21 WB
23	Sat	2:00 2:30	Ciné-Concert: The Big Parade p13 AH Canyon Cinema: Archival Finds p21 WB
24	Sun	4:00	Broadcast Culture: Late at Night—Voices of Ordinary Madness; Silence Radio p28 WB
27	Wed	2:00	Watermark p14 WB
28	Thu	7:00	Afternoon of a Faun: Tanaquil Le Clercq p29 NA
30	Sat	2:30	Canyon Cinema: Revitalization p22 WB
31	Sun	2:00 4:00	Watermark p14 WB Canyon Cinema: Metamorphosis p22 WB

September

6	Sat	2:00 5:30	Peter von Bagh: Remembrance—A Small Movie about Oulu in the 1950s; Splinters—Century of an Artistic Family p31 PG Peter von Bagh: The Count p32 PG
7	Sun	2:00 4:30	Peter von Bagh: The Year 1939 p32 PG Peter von Bagh: The Last Summer 1944 p32 PG
13	Sat	2:30	Jesse Lerner: The Absent Stone p35 WB
14	Sun	4:00	Jesse Lerner: Ruins p35 WB
17	Wed	1:00	La Camioneta p14 WB
19	Fri	1:00	La Camioneta p14 WB
20	Sat	2:30	Peter von Bagh: Olavi Virta; Paavo Nurmi—The Man and His Times p33 WB
21	Sun	4:00	Intimatta p14 WB
26	Fri	7:00	Journey to Italy p15 AU
27	Sat	2:30	Daredevils p15 WB
28	Sun	4:30	Il Sorpasso p16 AU



La Camioneta p14

Special Events

Shirley — Visions of Reality

INTRODUCED BY Gustav Deutsch and Hannah Schimek

SHOWINGS Sat Jul 26 (2:30) and Sun Jul 27 (4:00)

VENUE West Building

Austrian artist and filmmaker Gustav Deutsch renders thirteen of Edward Hopper's iconic paintings to the screen in what is the most compelling Hopper adaptation yet — a sequence of precisely planned and brilliantly lit tableaux enhanced by actress-choreographer Stephanie Cumming's stunning performance as "Shirley," the woman who serenely inhabits each panorama. Additionally, Deutsch inserts historical footnotes by means of a male radio voice, an experiment that creates a slightly contrived though engaging context. (Gustav Deutsch with Hanna Schimek and Jerzy Palacz, 2013, 93 minutes)

The Great Confusion: 1913 Armory Show

INTRODUCED BY Michael Maglaras

SHOWING Sat Aug 2 (2:30)

VENUE West Building

In February and March 1913 thousands of Americans had their very first look at contemporary trends in European art. A huge showcase (known officially as the International Exhibition of Modern Art) opened at the 69th Regiment Armory on New York's East Side. This show (and its critical reaction) roused, bewildered, and often infuriated the public. In general, though, mass exposure to avant-garde artists such as Cézanne and Duchamp (and Americans like Sheeler and Hartley) shaped the way many Americans came to perceive their new twentieth century. *The Great Confusion* uses a variety of sources to recount the history of the Armory Show. (Michael Maglaras and Terri Templeton, 2013, 90 minutes)



In the Shadow of the Light

SHOWING Sun Aug 3 (4:00)

VENUE West Building

One of the only film portraits of Lithuania-born, avant-garde luminary and Anthology Film Archives' founder Jonas Mekas (b. 1922) is Chris Teerink's Dutch documentary. "Documentary... it's when somebody makes a film on a certain subject with the intention of revealing. It is the kind of film *I hate*," declares Mekas. It's clear, though, as he rambles around the Anthology's treasures, holds court with colleagues, and ponders the work that has been his calling, the recording of Mekas' life is a labor of love for the filmmakers and their subject alike. (Chris Teerink and Sarah Payton, 2007, 90 minutes)

Sol LeWitt

SHOWINGS Tue Aug 12, Thu Aug 14, and Fri Aug 15 (1:00)

VENUE West Building

Dutch filmmaker Chris Teerink's portrait of Sol LeWitt is the first-ever documentary on the American conceptual artist who famously refused awards, interviews, and media coverage. A leader of the minimalist movement, LeWitt (1928–2007) was renowned for his immense wall drawings executed by teams of workers using just a basic set of written instructions. "When I learned about the re-installment of wall drawing #801 in Maastricht, I saw an opportunity to create a film on someone who influenced me deeply." (Chris Teerink, 2013, 80 minutes)

Ciné-Concert: The Big Parade

IN PERFORMANCE Andrew Simpson

SHOWING Aug 23 (2:00)

VENUE National Museum of American History

The shock of the Great War is felt through the tender tale of a rich businessman's son (John Gilbert) who enlists, leaves for France, falls for a local girl (Renée Adorée), but loses his youthful American innocence in the trenches. A little-known fact about *The Big Parade* is that artist Andrew Wyeth was fascinated with the film—he viewed it over and over. Many details from Wyeth's paintings (for example, *Winter* [1946], *Christina's World* [1948], and *The*



The Big Parade p13

Patriot [1964]) refer to this silent epic. *The screening is in collaboration with the National Museum of American History.* (King Vidor with George W. Hill, 1925, silent with live music, 140 minutes)

Watermark

SHOWINGS Wed Aug 27 and Sun Aug 31 (2:00)

VENUE West Building

Canadian artist Edward Burtynsky's large-format photographs of altered landscapes are both visually stunning and deeply disturbing — revealing, as they often do, the far-reaching damage brought on by human activity. In *Watermark*, Burtynsky, co-director Jennifer Baichwal, and cinematographer Nick de Pencier take a contemplative (if sobering) approach to that most fundamental of all the elements — water. They travel around the globe to evoke the beauty, mystery, influence, and power of water over the course of time. (Jennifer Baichwal and Edward Burtynsky, 2013, 92 minutes)

La Camioneta

SHOWINGS Wed Sep 17 and Fri Sep 19 (1:00)

VENUE West Building

A lyrical otherworldly allegory, Mark Kendall's debut feature is a portrait of Guatemala's working class and (wrote reviewer Matt Brennan) "a *cri de coeur* from the shadows of affluence." Following the makeover of a decommissioned American school bus into one of the brightly colored *camionetas* that transport the majority of Guatemalans to work each day, *La Camioneta* deploys its transnational tale in a form that is both pointed and understated, while exploring a host of complex themes. "Kendall's eye for untold stories... mark[s] him as a name to watch" — *Variety*. (Mark Kendall, 2013, Spanish with subtitles, 71 minutes)

Intimatta

INTRODUCED BY Ramuntcho Matta

SHOWING Sun Sep 21 (4:00)

VENUE West Building

Roberto Matta (1911–2002) is one of Chile's best-known painters, an innovator in abstract expressionism and surrealism. Directed by the artist's son, this portrait was compiled from dozens of video

recordings and interviews. It also incorporates footage from close friends and other artists that details his fruitful relationships with Le Corbusier, Duchamp, and Breton, and his many involvements with artists in Paris and New York. Ramuntcho had access to his father's unpublished notebooks and other private material, offering a very personal view of the artist's life. (Ramuntcho Matta, 2012, 122 minutes)

Journey to Italy

SHOWING Fri Sep 26 (7:00)

VENUE American University

Traveling through southern Italy, Ingrid Bergman and George Sanders play a mismatched English couple, at odds not only with each other, but also with the setting. Though their marriage is failing, family obligations require that they spend time in the region. Ultimately the landscape, the local *paesani*, their isolation, and the aura of their surroundings (Naples, Pompeii, and other timeless sites) bring them to a near transcendent moment in their lives. Rossellini's modernist masterpiece becomes, in the end, a profoundly moving rumination on the fragility of life itself. (Roberto Rossellini, 1954, 97 minutes) *The screening is in collaboration with American University School of Communication and the Embassy of Italy.*

Daredevils

INTRODUCED BY Stephanie Barber

SHOWING Sat Sep 27 (2:30)

VENUE West Building

Baltimore-based artist Stephanie Barber's first feature is the experimental narrative of a young writer who interviews an established artist and continues to feel reverberations from their discussion throughout the day. "What's set up to seem like a brief opening scene slowly reveals itself as the main event. The easy cinematic corollary here is *My Dinner with Andre*: two people sliding into the comfort of a place of focused non-action, a location for the transmittal of intellect and experience, a space to lengthen the second before elation goes south.... The artist has to go, allowing the details of exterior life to come into relief" — Rachel Rakes. (Stephanie Barber, 2013, 83 minutes)

Il Sorpasso

SHOWING Sun Sep 28 (4:30)

VENUE American University

Wonderfully mismatched costars Vittorio Gassman and Jean-Louis Trintignant embark on a wildly reckless ride in a Lancia Aurelia convertible from Rome to rural southern Italy. Dino Risi's sorely neglected classic of *commedia all'italiana* reads as a sort of elegy on the unfettered energies of the early 1960s—fast cars, jazz, rock 'n' roll, even good fashion sense. "The model for a dozen road movies, from New Hollywood to Alexander Payne, Risi's film is also the most unassuming sort of masterpiece"—Nick Pinkerton. (Dino Risi, 1962, Italian with subtitles, 105 minutes) *The screening is in collaboration with American University School of Communication and the Embassy of Italy.*

From Vault to Screen: Canyon Cinema 16 mm

Jul 12–Aug 31

San Francisco-based Canyon Cinema Foundation has amassed one of the foremost collections in North America of artist-made, independent, and avant-garde film—a veritable archive of American experimental cinema during the last fifty years. For this year's edition of the Gallery's summer preservation festival, eight programs of new and archival film prints survey the exceptional legacy and cultural vitality of Canyon, from its beginnings in 1960 (in filmmaker Bruce Baillie's backyard) through the present day. All films are screened in 16 mm format. With special thanks to Denah Johnston, director of operations, and Antonella Bonfanti, collection manager, Canyon Cinema Foundation.



Angel Blue Sweet Wings (Origins) p20
Following: Pasadena Freeway Stills (Sweet California) p20



Origins

SHOWING Sat Jul 12 (2:30)

VENUE West Building

Short, lyrical films from Canyon's beginnings featuring work by the organization's founding members, including *Have You Thought of Talking to the Director?* (Bruce Baillie, 1962); *Angel Blue Sweet Wings* (Chick Strand, 1966); *My Name Is Oona* (Gunvor Nelson, 1969); and *Hot Leatherette* (Robert Nelson, 1967), among others. (Total running time approximately 95 minutes)

Sweet California

SHOWING Sun Jul 13 (4:00)

VENUE West Building

"I'm definitely not interested in passing along intellectual information about California. There's plenty of that everywhere. I'm trying to get at some feeling state" — Robert Nelson. A personal, intricate essay about his home state, *Tijuana to Hollywood via Death Valley* is the first half of Nelson's travelogue *Suite California Stops & Passes* (1976). It is followed by other films about Californian culture and environment including *Hard Core Home Movie* by Greta Snider (1989) on the '80s punk scene in San Francisco; *Pasadena Freeway Stills* (Gary Beydler, 1974); and *L.A. Carwash* (Janis Lipzin, 1975), among others. (Total running time approximately 100 minutes)

Lost and Found: Stan Brakhage

SHOWING Sat Aug 9 (2:30)

VENUE West Building

A central figure in the American avant-garde, Stan Brakhage (1933–2003) continues to influence generations of experimental filmmakers with his poetic visions. A selection from his prodigious film catalog, spanning forty-five years of work, includes *Reflections on Black* (1955); *Mothlight* (1961); *Made Manifest* (1980); and *I... Dreaming* (1980), among others. (Total running time 88 minutes) *Special thanks to Marilyn Brakhage and Mark Toscano for their support of this program.*

A Minor Cinema

SHOWING Sat Aug 16 (2:30)

VENUE West Building

In response to the inaugural International Experimental Film Congress held in Toronto in 1989, film scholar Tom Gunning published the influential essay "Towards A Minor Cinema: Fonoroff, Herwitz, Ahwesh, Lapore, Klahr and Solomon." Focusing on the work of those young experimental filmmakers, Gunning argued that theirs was a practice that embraced the "outsider" status of personal cinema: "I believe that these filmmakers profoundly understand their place in film history and in the economic realities of film distribution and exhibition. These films assert no vision of conquest, make no claims to hegemony." Including *The Secret Garden* (Phil Solomon 1988); *The Sleeper* (Mark Lapore, 1989); *Department of the Interior* (Nina Fonoroff, 1986); and *Nocturne* (Peggy Ahwesh, 1998), among other titles. (Total running time approximately 90 minutes)

Art World Crossover

SHOWING Sun Aug 17 (4:00)

VENUE West Building

The gallery space and the screen as exhibition sites are very often synonymous, as evidenced by this program of experimental films by artists lauded for their work in both the white cube and the black box. Titles include *Scotch Tape* (Jack Smith, 1959–1962); *Standard Time* (Michael Snow, 1967); *Passage à l'acte* (Martin Arnold, 1993); and *...Remote...Remote...* (VALIE EXPORT, 1973), and others. (Total running time approximately 95 minutes)

Archival Finds

SHOWING Sat Aug 23 (2:30)

VENUE West Building

This program presents only the unique or unusual — archival findings of very rarely screened 16 mm prints. Titles include *In Marin County* (Peter Hutton, 1970) and *Five Artists: BillBobBillBillBob* (Gunvor Nelson and Dorothy Wiley, 1971), among others. (Total running time approximately 95 minutes)

Revitalization

SHOWING Sat Aug 30 (2:30)

VENUE West Building

The decade of the 1990s was important for Canyon Cinema. A new generation of artists' works in 16 mm film resulted in a dynamic resurgence of film art and exhibition during that time. Moving into the new millennium, this program features films by Eve Heller, David Gatten, Naomi Uman, Tomonari Nishikawa, and others. (Total running time approximately 90 minutes)

Metamorphosis

SHOWING Sun Aug 31 (4:00)

VENUE West Building

A glimpse into newer films by artists whose work has been the bedrock of Canyon Cinema as well as of filmmakers working in their influential lineage. The program includes *Jardin du Sell/Salt Garden* (Rose Lowder, 2011); *Entr'acte* (Lawrence Jordan, 2013); and *Little Girl* (1966/2013) by Bruce Baillie. (Total running time approximately 90 minutes)

Reminiscence:

Alain Resnais

Jul 16–23

Two films—an iconic landmark and a recent stylistic experiment—recall the extraordinary career of the late French film director Alain Resnais (1922–2014). The prevailing theme that runs through Resnais's work—the mysteries of memory and reliving the past—is explored from different perspectives. This program is presented in collaboration with the Cultural Service of the Embassy of France. Both screenings take



Last Year at Marienbad p25



place at the Embassy's theater, 4100 Reservoir Road NW, Washington, DC. The screenings are free, but reservations are required. Please visit the links listed below each title to make reservations.

Last Year at Marienbad

SHOWING Wed Jul 16 (7:00)

VENUE Embassy of France

An essential film of the 1960s New Wave and an enduring modern conundrum, *L'année dernière à Marienbad* mingles the past with the present in a puzzling tale about a man and a woman (Giorgio Albertazzi and Delphine Seyrig) who might have been lovers a year ago while staying in the same gilded château where they now find themselves. Hauntingly lush in black-and-white, wide-screen imagery, Resnais's daring escapade into memory is unsettling, dreamy, and possibly even peopled by ghosts. Script by Alain Robbe-Grillet and cinematography by Sacha Vierny. (1961, French with subtitles, 93 minutes) To reserve a seat, visit <http://marienbad.eventbrite.com>.



Coeurs

SHOWING Wed Jul 23 (7:00)

VENUE Embassy of France

Resnais's attraction to theater resulted in several adaptations of plays by the celebrated Yorkshire dramatist Alan Ayckbourn. The latter's cerebral 2004 comedy *Private Fears in Public Places*, a tale of six characters who warily weave through four interconnected stories, was the basis for *Coeurs*. Shooting on soundstages with stylized sets and making use of his own acting company, Resnais shifted the play's setting from England to France but left Ayckbourn's plot intact. The effect is a dreamlike fantasy on longing, "accessible, pleasant, a touch goofy and melancholic" — Manohla Dargis. (Resnais's final film, which was awarded a major prize at the 2014 Berlin Film Festival shortly before his death and has yet to open in the US, is also based on an Ayckbourn play). (2006, French with subtitles, 120 minutes) To reserve a seat, visit <http://coeurs.eventbrite.com>.

Coeurs p25

Black Maria:
Selections from the Festival
Jul 19–20

For more than thirty years the Black Maria has been celebrating creativity and innovation in the moving-image arts. The festival is situated at New Jersey City University, not far from the site of Thomas Edison's original film studio in West Orange. (Edison's employees thought the studio's boxy shape and black tar-paper covering resembled the early "black maria" police paddy wagons.) An annual juried competition of new shorts in all genres, the festival is open to all filmmakers internationally. Selections from the most recent competition are introduced by Black Maria's executive director, Jane Steuerwald.

Black Maria Program I

INTRODUCED BY Jane Steuerwald

SHOWING Sat Jul 19 (2:30)

VENUE West Building

The first program focuses on formal and material experiments, from films that embrace novel shooting or sound recording, to those that find new uses for archival and documentary footage, to others that adopt a deliberately low-tech approach. Films include *Lord I: The Records Keeper*, *Water Color (Fall Creek)*, *Autumn*, *Salmon Deadly Sins*, *Close the Lid*, *Gently: A Home Document Scan*, and *Virtuous Virtuell*, among others. (Total running time approximately 100 minutes)

Black Maria Program II

INTRODUCED BY Jane Steuerwald

SHOWING Sun Jul 20 (4:00)

VENUE West Building

The second program includes new narrative and documentary shorts ranging from *Montauk*, *Something Like Whales*, and *The Apothecary*, to the hour-long *Every Day Is a Holiday*, Chinese American filmmaker Theresa Loong's portrait of her father's complicated and challenging life history. (Total running time approximately 115 minutes)

Broadcast Culture

Aug 10–24

Three new documentary essays from France and the UK represent deeply contrasting views of the broadcast media, their long-standing traditions and standards, and their distinctive approaches to programming.

La Maison de la radio

SHOWING Sun Aug 10 (4:00)

VENUE West Building

Radio France headquarters in Paris is a circular white edifice called La Maison de la radio. Designed by Henri Bernard, it's a landmark beside the Seine in the sixteenth arrondissement. As France's state broadcasting system, seven networks and numerous stations extend their influence deep into Europe's interior. Nicolas Philibert's camera unobtrusively drops in on an interesting cross-section of studio personnel and programming sessions, progressing through the course of a long workday. "The strength of radio is linked to its absence of images, and that's what attracted me to the subject. It's a paradox: a film about radio. Who knows?" (Nicolas Philibert, 2013, French with subtitles, 103 minutes)

Late at Night—Voices of Ordinary Madness

FOLLOWED BY *Silence Radio*

SHOWING Sun Aug 24 (4:00)

VENUE West Building

A playful but satirical assessment of British society posing as a television program, *Late at Night—Voices of Ordinary Madness* features a female newscaster who conducts live interviews with non-traditional TV types: street-gang members, drug dealers, recent immigrants, even rich bankers. The program's "street footage" is concentrated in London's East End, a traditionally multi-ethnic neighborhood that has recently seen an influx of commercial interests. (Xiaolu Guo, 2013, 70 minutes) (*unconfirmed*)

In a provincial French village where the tempo is easy and the routines are rhythmic, the popular local radio station serves to bolster the spirit and soothe the mind. Focusing on the role of broadcasting in the daily life of a rural region, *Silence Radio* paints a many-sided portrait of a complex present-day culture far beyond the urban centers of France. (Valéry Rosier, 2013, French with subtitles, 52 minutes)

Master Class:

Pina and Tanaquil

Aug 14–28

Two of the greatest dancers of our age—Pina Bausch (1940–2009) and Tanaquil Le Clercq (1929–2000)—are the focus of this two-part program presented in collaboration with the National Archives and in association with the National Gallery of Art exhibition *Degas/Cassatt*. Note that screenings take place at the McGowan Theater of the National Archives, 7th Street and Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC.

Pina

SHOWING Thu Aug 14 (7:00)

VENUE National Archives McGowan Theater

German director Wim Wenders was in the midst of filming the groundbreaking modernist choreographer Pina Bausch when she died suddenly in 2009. A visionary whose cogent and compelling work with the Tanztheater Wuppertal transformed the history of dance, Bausch believed in blending the formal vocabularies of theater, dance, sound, and design. Although Wenders stopped all work on the film when his subject died, he was able to complete the project two years later. *Pina* made its debut at the 2011 Berlinale. (Wim Wenders, 2011, 100 minutes)

Afternoon of a Faun: Tanaquil Le Clercq

INTRODUCED BY Nancy Buirski

SHOWING Thu Aug 28 (7:00)

VENUE National Archives McGowan Theater

The story of prima ballerina Tanaquil Le Clercq is an epic tale of genius, grace, uncertainty, and ultimate tragedy. Arguably the greatest American dancer of the twentieth century (and a muse to both Jerome Robbins and George Balanchine), she became a polio victim in her late twenties. Her life history and the incredible set of circumstances that led to her shattering fall are recounted in the film through a wealth of archival footage and sources. (Nancy Buirski, 2014, 91 minutes)

A Sense of Time and Place:

Peter von Bagh

Sep 6–20

Scholar, author, teacher, critic, commentator, and remarkably prolific filmmaker Peter von Bagh (b. 1943) holds legendary status in his native Finland and in the world of cinema at



Remembrance—A Small Movie about Oulu in the 1950s p31

large. Famous for writings that embrace film studies (his texts on filmmaker Aki Kaurismäki are especially well known), Von Bagh has also published nearly forty works about his homeland—including *Song of Finland*, awarded a Finlandia Prize for nonfiction. Using mostly archival materials, his layered films construct a social landscape that is local and specific, yet somehow universal and timeless, and his impassioned work for the preservation of film culture is renowned (he serves as artistic director for two unique annual film forums—one in the north of Finland, and the other in Bologna, Italy). The series is a collaboration with the Finnish Film Foundation, Finnish Film Archive, Embassy of Finland, and the National Portrait Gallery.

Remembrance—A Small Movie about Oulu in the 1950s

FOLLOWED BY *Splinters—Century of an Artistic Family*

INTRODUCED BY Peter von Bagh

SHOWING Sep 6 (2:00)

VENUE National Portrait Gallery

A poetic assemblage of reflections, photos, prose, paintings, and archival fragments linked to the Finnish town of Oulu, *Remembrance* is a city symphony and a private musing on the place where Peter von Bagh spent most of his growing-up years. “Oulu’s bygone days as a thriving port, and its more recent life as a hub for Nokia...the associations never feel forced, and are guided by no agenda other than memory and feelings. All told, it makes for an exceptionally lovely hour of cinema” — Scott Foundas. (2013, 69 minutes)

The arc of Finland’s history from a rustic backwater to a pinnacle of progress is echoed in *Splinters*, the story of the Aho-Soldan family. Juhani Aho wrote the landmark novel *Juha*, his wife Venny Soldan-Brofeldt became Finland’s first prominent female painter, their sons Heikki Aho and Björn Soldan were pioneers of documentary filmmaking, and Heikki’s daughter Claire Aho was one of the country’s leading art photographers. “An immensely moving study of Finnishness, a grand essay on time and memory, and a paean to the arts as pillars of a nation’s self” — Olaf Möller. (2011, 74 minutes)

The Count

SHOWING Sat Sep 6 (5:30)

VENUE National Portrait Gallery

The “count” of *The Count* is Pertti Ylermi Lindgren (b. 1936), con artist extraordinaire. Engaged to seventy-six women and married to none, he charmed them all into giving him money. “Lindgren is the real thing, as far as swindlers go. Playing himself in a film that would reconstruct his greatest moments, trying to get by, being charming in dancehalls and pavilions. Filled with lewd humor and a sprightly sense of the all-too-human, Von Bagh’s only venture into fiction filmmaking is nonetheless a documentary in its own way” — Tromsø International Festival. (1971, subtitles, 92 minutes)

The Year 1939

INTRODUCED BY Peter von Bagh

SHOWING Sun Sep 7 (2:00)

VENUE National Portrait Gallery

Helsinki was scheduled to host the 1940 Summer Olympics but the event never took place for reasons now well known. “Nineteen thirty-nine was a year of anticipation—but of what? *The Year 1939* is an exemplary reconstruction of a historical turning point—over and over, the images and the remembered stories, the songs and the faces of politicians, celebrities, and millions like us just refuse to add up to a vision whole and clear—something is always askew. History is the abyss staring back at us” — Tromsø International Festival. (1993, subtitles, 107 minutes)

The Last Summer 1944

INTRODUCED BY Peter von Bagh

SHOWING Sun Sep 7 (4:30)

VENUE National Portrait Gallery

In Finland’s popular memory, the Winter War became the days of glory, despite the territorial losses and the fighting that went on for more than three years. “*The Last Summer 1944* is a work of collective remembrance—an oratorio, really, a memorial mass for a time and people long gone. Von Bagh uses relatively little archival material here—instead, he gazes long and hard and lovingly into the faces of his now aged informants trying to talk about those last

months of tired drudgery, of time slowing down until the standstill became capitulation. A monument of oral history” — Tromsø International Festival. (1992, subtitles, 105 minutes)

Paavo Nurmi—The Man and His Times

PRECEDED BY *Olavi Virta*

SHOWING Sat Sep 20 (2:30)

VENUE West Building

Olavi Virta (1915–1972) was a national hero, the greatest of Finnish tango singers (*iskelmä*). There is a legend that when *Olavi Virta* was screened for the first time, people in every part of Finland went wild, unable to handle the sight of tango’s greatest voice and the symbol of postwar celebrity. (1988, 30 minutes)

Paavo Nurmi (1897–1973) was one of the greatest athletes of all time, setting more than twenty official world records for long-distance running and winning nine gold and three silver Olympic medals. His story took a darker turn, however, when he was accused of violating his amateur status and died in disgrace. (1978, 61 minutes)

American Originals Now:

Jesse Lerner

Sep 13–14

Jesse Lerner is a documentary filmmaker, photographer, writer, curator, and professor in the intercollegiate media studies program of the Claremont Colleges. His documentary films have won awards at international festivals and have been screened at the Museum of Modern Art, the Sundance Festival, the Robert Flaherty Seminar, and many venues abroad. His books include *F is for Phony: Fake Documentary and Truth’s Undoing* (with Alex Juhász), *The Shock of Modernity*, and *The Maya of Modernism*.



La Piedra Ausente (The Absent Stone)

SHOWING Sat Sep 13 (2:30)

INTRODUCED BY Jesse Lerner

VENUE West Building

In 1964, the largest carved stone in the Americas was moved from the town of San Miguel Coatlinchan in Texcoco to the National Anthropology Museum in Mexico City—a risky and remarkable engineering feat. The extraction of the monolith (representing the pre-Hispanic water deity Tlaloc) set off a rebellion in the town that forced the Mexican Army to intervene. Today this enormous stone is an urban monument, and one of the principal icons of Mexican national identity. Lerner's recent film explores the legacy of the stone, as well as the memories and the longings it still calls to mind. (Sandra Rozental and Jesse Lerner, 2012, Spanish with subtitles, 80 minutes)



Ruins

INTRODUCED BY Jesse Lerner

SHOWING Sun Sep 14 (4:00)

VENUE West Building

Surveying important moments from the history of Mesoamerican antiquarianism (the general collecting or study of antiquities and material remains), *Ruins* suggests how diplomacy and Pan-Americanism framed the recent recontextualization of archeological objects as art objects. Visiting with Brigido Lara, an artist and one-time master forger of pre-Columbian antiques, the film even suggests parallels between documentary film and fake artifacts. (Jesse Lerner, 1999, 78 minutes)

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Film
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