

Film



Winter 2018
National Gallery of Art



Winter 2018

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Outliers and Film, Part 1

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British Film Institute National Archive



With the new year, the Gallery's film program presents more opportunities to explore new cinema series, experience several premieres, and enjoy special restorations of films and media art works on the big screen. Film series include the eight-part *Affinities, or The Weight of Cinema*, uniting short films from international makers with those of noted American film artist Kevin Jerome Everson; a three-program celebration of the *Metaphors on Vision* reissue—Stan Brakhage's 1963 theoretical statement—with projections of seminal Brakhage titles; part one of *Avant-Garde to Underground: Outliers and Film*, organized in conjunction with the exhibition *Outliers and American Vanguard Art*; and *From Vault to Screen: British Film Institute National Archive*, highlighting restorations of works by Ken Russell and Derek Jarman, among others. Jem Cohen returns to the Gallery to present his latest film portraits in person, and George T. Nierenberg introduces restorations of two documentaries on the history of tap dance, featuring Gregory Hines and other masters. Additional highlights include a special look at the work and life of Jackson Pollock; screenings of classic titles by auteurs Jean Renoir, Andrei Tarkovsky, and Robert Bresson; and a live performance by pianist Gabriel Thibaudeau and percussionist Frank Bockius with the recent restoration of the silent 1924 film *Edmund Kean: Prince among Lovers*.

January

Films are shown in the East Building Auditorium, in original formats whenever possible. Seating for all events is on a first-come, first-seated basis unless otherwise noted. Doors open thirty minutes before showtime. For more information, visit nga.gov/film, email film-department@nga.gov, or call (202) 842-6799.

Cover: Andrei Tarkovsky, *The Sacrifice*, 1986, p19

Inside front cover: Bruce Conner, *BREAKAWAY*, 1966, p28

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Image credits

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Jem Cohen

World Without End (No Reported Incidents), 2017

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Special Events

Jan 20 – Mar 25

Jem Cohen: Portraits of People and Place

Jem Cohen in person

Sat Jan 20 (2:00)

Working in the tradition of street photographers and observational filmmakers such as Helen Levitt, Walker Evans, and Humphrey Jennings, Jem Cohen is internationally renowned for his sensitive film portraits. The National Gallery of Art welcomes him back to discuss some of his most recent work, in conjunction with the installation of his 2009 film *Anne Truitt, Working* (part of the exhibition *In the Tower: Anne Truitt*). The program features the 2016 titles *On Essex Road*, filmed in London; *Bury Me Not*, filmed in Brooklyn; the short silent portrait *Peter Hutton*; and the longer-format *World Without End (No Reported Incidents)*, a commissioned portrayal of Southend-on-Sea, a small British town along the Thames estuary. “What I discovered is that the estuary and its insistent tides brought in not only nature and history, but prize-winning Indian curries, an encyclopedic universe of hats, and a nearly lost world of proto-punk music” — Jem Cohen. (Total running time 80 minutes) *Please note: “Benjamin Smoke,” codirected by Cohen, screens on March 3 at 2:00, part of the film series “Avant-Garde to Underground: Outliers and Film.”*

I Cannot Tell You How I Feel

followed by Stand in the Stream

Sun Jan 21 (4:00)

Washington premieres

Two new essays by iconoclasts Su Friedrich and Stanya Kahn address the complexities of end-of-life care from radical, visceral perspectives. Friedrich refers to her 1985 essay *The Ties That Bind*—about her mother’s experiences during World War II and her flight from Nazi Germany to the United States—at the onset of her new work, grounding

viewer and storyteller in a common memory of strength and resistance before unfolding *I Cannot Tell You How I Feel* (Su Friedrich, 2016, 41 minutes). With *Stand in the Stream*, Kahn uses an overwhelming flow of live streaming video, chat room exchanges, home movies, and video games to build a surprisingly lyrical and complex portrait of her mother, Sandra, during the last stages of Alzheimer's disease. (Stanya Kahn, 2011 – 2017, 60 minutes)

Mural: Story of a Modern Masterpiece

Sat Jan 27 (2:00)

In conjunction with the National Gallery of Art installation of Jackson Pollock's *Mural* (1943)—its first time ever on view in Washington, DC—the Emmy-winning film *Mural: Story of a Modern Masterpiece* recounts the mural's commission and creation, its restoration at the Getty Conservation Institute, its recent travels, and the details of its eventual arrival in Iowa City. Special thanks to Ben Hill and the University of Iowa. (Kevin Kelley and Ben Hill for IPTV, 2015, 58 minutes)

Pollock

Sat Jan 27 (3:30)

A passion project for actor-director Ed Harris, *Pollock* required a decade of concentrated research and labor on Harris's part. One of the more credible artist biopics of recent years, *Pollock* owes its success in large part to persuasive performances from Harris as the artist himself; Marcia Gay Harden as his partner Lee Krasner; and Amy Madigan as friend, dealer, and ardent champion Peggy Guggenheim. Scenes at the studio in East Hampton are carefully choreographed, with Harris even mimicking Pollock's balletic movements, famously captured by Hans Namuth's camera in his legendary 1950s footage. (Ed Harris, 2000, 35mm, 122 minutes)

Au Hasard Balthazar

Sun Jan 28 (4:00)

Robert Bresson cast eighteen-year-old Anne Wiazemsky (1947 – 2017) as the young heroine Marie in *Au Hasard Balthazar*, arguably the French director's most admired work.

Ed Harris
Pollock, 2000
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Robert Bresson
Au Hasard Balthazar, 1966
p10



From modest rural origins, Marie comes of age and is fatefully separated from her donkey companion, Balthazar. Following the separate but parallel fortunes of both donkey and young woman, *Au Hasard Balthazar* is “lyrical and devoid of maudlin sentiment... perhaps the director’s most perfectly realized, and certainly his most moving work” — Geoff Andrew. (Robert Bresson, 1966, 35mm, subtitled, 95 minutes)

Day for Night (La nuit américaine)

Sat Feb 3 (4:00)

The routine commotion and confusion of a movie set is (ostensibly) the subject of François Truffaut’s comedy, *La nuit américaine*— the French equivalent for “day for night,” a term referring to the process of simulating night scenes while actually filming in broad daylight, often done to save money or to avoid a night shoot. In fact, the film is a veiled homage to the art of moviemaking itself, constructed as a series of choreographed anecdotes about how things really get done. “Films are more harmonious than life, films keep rolling forward, like trains in the night” — Truffaut, as the film director Ferrand. (François Truffaut, 1973, subtitles, 116 minutes)

Le Crime de Monsieur Lange

Washington premiere of the restoration

Sun Feb 4 (4:30)

Jean Renoir collaborated with screenwriter Jacques Prévert on *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*, a romantic expression of Popular Front camaraderie set in the courtyard of a small Parisian publishing house. Deceitful boss Batala (Jules Berry) absconds when his creditors close in, and the former employees join to form a cooperative. Together, they lucratively publish clerk Amédée Lange’s tales of a fictitious cowboy called Arizona Jim. Told in flashback, *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* is “a remarkable forerunner of political change, and a sign of stiffening battle lines” — Richard Brody. *Restoration supervised by StudioCanal with the support of the CNC, released by Rialto.* (Jean Renoir, 1936, subtitled, 90 minutes)

No Maps on My Taps

followed by About Tap

George T. Nierenberg in person

Sat Feb 24 (2:00)

The definitive tap-dance documentary *No Maps on My Taps* has been restored to its original luster. Dance greats like Chuck Green, Bunny Briggs, Howard "Sandman" Sims, and John Bubbles once again shine, and Lionel Hampton accompanies a dancing duel at the legendary Smalls Paradise in Harlem. When Nierenberg made this film, clubs featuring tap dancers were fading, and many venues were moving over to modern dance. Recently, tap dance has been reviving and the graceful elegance of the form is again visible. (George Nierenberg, 1979, 58 minutes)

Gregory Hines begins *About Tap*, cheerfully chatting about tap-dance legends he saw as a child at the Apollo Theater. Nierenberg's follow-up to *No Maps on My Taps* conjures three prominent American dancers: Steve Condos, Jimmy Slyde, and Chuck Green. (George Nierenberg, 1985, 28 minutes)

Ciné-Concert: Edmund Kean:

Prince among Lovers (Kean ou Désordre et génie)

Gabriel Thibaudeau and Frank Bockius in performance

Sun Feb 25 (4:00)

Russian exile actor Ivan Mosjoukine settled in Paris and became a legend of the French silent cinema. In *Kean ou Désordre et génie* he portrays the troubled career of the fabled British Shakespearean stage actor, Edmund Kean — considered one of the finest actors ever to perform — in a visually striking work by avant-garde Russian screenwriter and director Aleksandr Volkov. Recently restored from original negative by Cinémathèque française in collaboration with the Czech Film Archive and the Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée (CNC), the film's beauty and psychological depth dramatically portray Kean's life and loves while reconstructing (within French movie studios) a set based on the legendary Drury Lane in London's West End. (Aleksandr Volkov, 1924, subtitles, 139 minutes)

George Nierenberg

No Maps on My Taps, 1979

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The Youth of Maxim

Sat Mar 10 (3:00)

The first of two collaborations between Grigori Kozintsev and Dmitri Shostakovich, *The Youth of Maxim* was codirected by Kozintsev and dramatist Leonid Trauberg (they had cofounded the Factory of the Eccentric Actor in Saint Petersburg in 1921). The *Maxim* trilogy, as it's called, "describes the human and political evolution of the title character, a likeable 'guy next door' who steadily grows into a Bolshevik leader...a wisecracking, fun-loving guy, playing the guitar and singing, but never betraying his loyalty to the Party" — Peter Rollberg. The musical score by Shostakovich, upbeat and witty, was his third for Kozintsev and quoted popular tunes in a way that evokes his score for the earlier masterwork, *The New Babylon*. (Grigori Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg, 1935, 35mm, subtitles, 95 minutes) *Presented in conjunction with Post Classical Ensemble.*

King Lear

Sun Mar 11 (4:00)

The greatest of all the cinematic adaptations of *King Lear*, this 1971 production by Grigori Kozintsev is based on a Russian translation by Boris Pasternak, and features the breathtaking black-and-white open-air cinematography of Ionas Gričius. The film's epic sweep and brilliant use of locations balances the breadth of Shakespeare's tragedy, while an imposing title-role performance by Estonian actor Jüri Järvet is arguably the best Lear ever rendered on stage or screen. Shostakovich's score is spare and haunting, with memorable use of woodwind. (Grigori Kozintsev, 1971, 35mm, subtitles, 139 minutes)

City of the Sun

American premiere

Sat Mar 17 (2:00)

Chiatura, a city in the country of Georgia, once produced nearly half the world's manganese, an element essential for the production of steel. Today the town is almost deserted, yet it sustains a distinctive and robust spirit. Georgian filmmaker Rati Oneli lived there, got to know the locals, and created this quietly poetic portrait of a postindustrial place, forsaken but not lonely. Arseni Khachatryan's cinematography

Grigori Kozintsev

King Lear, 1971

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Thomas Piper
*Five Seasons: The Gardens of
Piet Oudolf*, 2017
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juxtaposes scenes of the town's life with shots of a newly green landscape, and Andrey Dergachev's sound design subtly complements the entire experience. The title is a take-off on Tommaso Campanella's seventeenth-century utopian novel *The City of the Sun*. "I became close with the families.... I thought I had the moral right to tell their story" — Rati Oneli. (Rati Oneli, 2017, subtitles, 104 minutes) *Presented in conjunction with the Environmental Film Festival.*

Five Seasons: The Gardens of Piet Oudolf

Sat Mar 17 (4:30)

Dutch landscape designer Piet Oudolf is a leading figure of the New Perennial movement, a tendency in garden design to plant herbaceous perennials and grasses to convey a naturalistic, even unplanned, look. The philosophy encourages forming a direct link with nature. Tom Piper's new film documents the influential work of Oudolf, who was commissioned to design the landscapes for New York's High Line, only one of many influential public and private commissions. Oudolf leads a journey through five seasons, visiting his iconic works and his far-flung sources of inspiration. (Thomas Piper, 2017, 75 minutes)

The Sacrifice

Washington premiere of the restoration

Sun Mar 18 (4:00)

Filmed on the island of Gotland in the Baltic Sea off the Swedish coast, *The Sacrifice*—now in a restored digital print—was the last film of Russia's contemporary cinematic poet Andrei Tarkovsky (1932–1986). Actor (and Ingmar Bergman regular) Erland Josephson, holding court with his free-spirited family, is celebrating his birthday when news of an impending world disaster is announced over the radio. Using a toned-down palette, *The Sacrifice* evokes an ailing Earth in a figurative tale of our collective drift toward self-destruction. "The outcome is indeterminate, but the opening condition of fear, and the later weight of prayer, are as palpable as a roll of distant thunder" — Chris Peachment. (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1986, subtitles, 149 minutes)

Cézanne — Portraits of a Life

American premiere

Sun Mar 25 (4:30)

Award-winning filmmaker Phil Grabsky and his cinema production house known as Exhibition on Screen had access to the creators of the landmark exhibition *Cézanne Portraits*. Filming extensively in Paris and Provence, the team delved deeply into the biography of the great artist. Cézanne's letters are read by Emmy-winning actor Brian Cox. Participating curators include Mary Morton from the National Gallery of Art. (Phil Grabsky, 2018, English and French with subtitles, 85 minutes)

Affinities, or The Weight of Cinema

Jan 6 – 14

The idea behind *Affinities, or The Weight of Cinema* derives from Goethe's classic 1809 novel *Elective Affinities*. The project, playfully adapting Goethe's artistic-scientific theory of attractions to the practice of exhibiting experimental cinema, is presented in person by filmmaker Kevin Jerome Everson and writer Greg de Cuir Jr., who serve as cocurators. Eight programs of international works of film and video art are arranged along various thematic lines that correspond to their shared interests and concerns. Presentations — or “interventions” — by visiting artists take place between screenings. Additional programs will screen at the National Museum of African American History and Culture on January 11. With thanks to Kevin Jerome Everson; Greg de Cuir Jr.; Jon Goff and Rhea Combs of the National Museum of African American History and Culture; Madeleine Molyneux; and all the artists involved.

(top) Kevin Jerome Everson

Rams 23 Blue Bears 21, 2017

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(bottom) Friedl vom Gröller

27.12.2013 St. Louis Senegal, 2013

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An Affinity for Witnessing

Kelly Gallagher in person
Sat Jan 6 (2:00)

Works assembled for this program explore the idea of bearing testament, the notion that visible evidence is as necessary for the experimental impulse in cinema as it is for the documentary urge. Titles include *Ears, Nose and Throat* (Everson, 2016), *Perfect Film* (Ken Jacobs, 1986), *Shoot Don't Shoot* (William E. Jones, 2012), and *From Ally to Accomplice* (Kelly Gallagher, 2015). (Total running time 55 minutes)

An Affinity for the Interval

Claudrena Harold in person
Sat Jan 6 (4:00)

Cinematically, “interval” refers not only to durational elements—how long a work is—but also to the space the work creates. Trinh T. Minh-ha posits that interval can be described as “what persists between the meaning of something and its truth.” Program includes *Oscar at 8903 Empire* (Everson, 2016), *Considerations* (Arthur Jafa, 1982), *Bird's Milk* (Dineo Seshee Bopape, 2009), *Hour Glass* (Haile Gerima, 1971), *Kuhani* (Ntare Guma Mbaho Mwine, 2013), and *Reassemblage* (Trinh T. Minh-ha, 1982). (Total running time 85 minutes)

An Affinity for Labor

Akosua Adoma Owusu in person
Sun Jan 7 (4:00)

A question commonly posed when considering labor is who benefits, and who is exploited? In this case, an alternate question might be: what sort of labor constitutes the practice of both making and viewing films? Works include *Smooth Surface* (Everson, 2015), *Marseille après la guerre* (Billy Woodberry, 2016), *Intermittent Delight* (Akosua Adoma Owusu, 2007), and *Isee you* (Simon Gush, 2013), among others. (Total running time 40 minutes)

William E. Jones
Shoot Don't Shoot, 2012
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An Affinity for Constructivism

Margaret Rorison in person

Sun Jan 7 (5:30)

Historically, constructivism was an artistic philosophy specific to the early twentieth century that espoused the practice of art for the purpose of positive social change for the many, not just the few. Titles in this program offer a contemporary cinematic rendition of the term in both practice and interpretation. Included are *Kinonedelja No. 33* (Dziga Vertov, 1919), *Genet parle d'Angela Davis* (Carole Roussopoulos, 1970), *One Document for Hope* (Margaret Rorison, 2016), and *We Demand* (Everson and Claudrena Harold, 2016), among others. (Total running time 53 minutes)

An Affinity for Color

Christopher Harris in person

Sat Jan 13 (2:00)

Color is explored in this program as a visual quality, a variance of temperatures and the ideas they signify, as well as a racial construct through which to view and know the world. Titles include *Grand Finale* (Everson, 2015), *Feeling Seven* (Tomislav Gotovac, 2000), *Explosion Ma Baby* (Pauline Curnier Jardin, 2016), *Rainbow's Gravity* (Kerstin Schroedinger and Mareike Bernien, 2014), and *Ujamii Uhuru Schule Community Freedom School* (Don Amis, 1974). (Total running time 58 minutes)

An Affinity for Minimalism

Sat Jan 13 (4:00)

Each of the four films assembled in this program could be characterized by reduction, achieving maximum effect through seemingly simple means: *27.12.2013 St. Louis Senegal* (Friedl vom Gröller, 2014), *Several Friends* (Charles Burnett, 1969), *Movies of Local People (Chapel Hill)* (H. Lee Waters, 1939–1941), and *Rams 23 Blue Bears 21* (Everson, 2017). (Total running time 62 minutes)

Margaret Rorison

One Document for Hope, 2016

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An Affinity for the Readymade

Cauleen Smith in person

Sun Jan 14 (4:00)

Whereas the use of found footage in the visual arts conjures the notion of the readymade, the films in this program also repurpose visual and audio recordings original to the makers, to build on tradition and to attain new forms in cinema. The program features *The Citizens* (Everson, 2009), *Nice Biscuits #2* (Luther Price, 2005), *My Only Idol Is Reality* (Martine Syms, 2007), *Our Trip to Africa* (Peter Kubelka, 1966), and *Sugarcoated Arsenic* (Everson and Claudrena Harold, 2013). (Total running time 42 minutes)

An Affinity for Collage

Dirk de Bruyn in person

Sun Jan 14 (5:30)

Assembling elements from the archive, films in this program gain shape from collision and multiplication. "This particular affinity is closely related to the readymade and functions as a complication and extension of the former" — Greg de Cuir. Works include *A Saturday Night in Mansfield, Ohio* (Everson, 2015), *Reckless Eyeballing* (Christopher Harris, 2004), *WAP* (Dirk de Bruyn, 2012), and *Songs for Earth and Folk* (Cauleen Smith, 2013) among others. (Total running time 69 minutes)

Avant-Garde to Underground:

Outliers and Film, Part 1

Feb 3 – Mar 16

The first section of a series organized in conjunction with the exhibition *Outliers and American Vanguard Art* focuses on two key forms of film-making: documentary portraits of outlier artists, and works by experimental filmmakers or makers of so-called underground film. Often self-taught, experimental filmmakers could be called the

Jordi Morató

Creator of the Jungle, 2014

p30



outliers of the art world, making moving images for the love of the medium rather than for commercial reward or recognition. Several contemporary visual artists represented in the exhibition, including Bruce Conner and Zoe Leonard, have used film as well as painting, sculpture, and photography in their practice. Part 2 of the series follows in April and May, with special guests.

Short Films by Bruce Conner

Sat Feb 3 (2:00)

Represented in the exhibition by his sculpture *Rat Purse* (1959), Conner is well known as one of the most prolific and influential American experimental filmmakers. Several of his notorious collage and found-footage films in the program include *A MOVIE* (1958); *CROSSROADS* (1976), with music by Terry Riley; *COSMIC RAY* (1961); the autobiographical *LOOKING FOR MUSHROOMS* (1959–1967, 1996), filmed in Mexico and San Francisco; the memoirlike *VALSE TRISTE* (1979); the frenetic *BREAKAWAY* (1966), featuring dancer and choreographer Toni Basil; and *AMERICA IS WAITING* (1982), with soundtrack by David Byrne and Brian Eno. (Total running time approximately 80 minutes) *With thanks to Michelle Silva and the Conner Family Trust for making these titles available.*

James Castle: Portrait of an Artist

Introduction by Jeffrey Wolf

Sat Feb 24 (4:30)

Born deaf in 1899 in rural Idaho, James Castle mined the local landscape of his family's homesteads and his own deeply private world to produce an astonishing body of drawings, collages, and constructions that eventually gained worldwide recognition. Jeffrey Wolf's acclaimed documentary reveals Castle's life and creative process as told by family members, art historians, curators, artists, collectors, and members of the deaf community. (Jeffrey Wolf, 2008, 53 minutes)

Bruce Conner
A MOVIE, 1958
p28



Benjamin Smoke

Sat Mar 3 (2:00)

A lyrical portrait of the late musician Benjamin Smoke (1960–1999), “a genuine underground figure, an outsider whose difficult life was channeled and transformed by the music that he made, and whose music transformed others. It is a film about the struggle with AIDS and the effects of addiction, but it is also something of a comedy. It depicts a neighborhood in transition, reflecting the colliding forces that are creating America’s ‘New South’” —Jem Cohen. (Jem Cohen and Peter Sillen, 2000, 16mm, 73 minutes)

Creator of the Jungle

Fri Mar 16 (2:00)

Just outside the Catalan village of Argelaguer, a man known as Garrell has been working for decades on a labyrinthine maze of tree houses, tunnels, and waterfalls in a wooded area near a highway. He works at his intricate project incessantly, and invites passersby to tour the premises. Filmmaker Jordi Morató met Josep Pujiula Garrell, the self-described “Tarzan of Argelaguer,” when he was already working on the third incarnation of his elaborately convoluted structure (early versions were destroyed by fire or vandalism). Morató’s footage extends over a period of years, documenting the artist and his unique creation as it rises again from the ashes. (Jordi Morató, 2014, subtitles, 77 minutes)

Stan Brakhage: Metaphors on Vision

Feb 10–11

“Imagine an eye unrulred by man-made laws of perspective, an eye unprejudiced by compositional logic, an eye which does not respond to the name of everything but which must know each object encountered in life through an adventure

Stan Brakhage

Dog Star Man, 1964

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of perception. How many colors are there in a field of grass to the crawling baby unaware of 'green'? How many rainbows can light create for the untutored eye? How aware of variations in heat waves can that eye be? Imagine a world alive with incomprehensible objects and shimmering with an endless variety of movement and innumerable gradations of color. Imagine a world before 'in the beginning was the word.'" So begins Stan Brakhage's classic *Metaphors on Vision*. First published in 1963 by Jonas Mekas as a special issue of *Film Culture*, it stands as the major theoretical statement by one of avant-garde cinema's most influential figures, a treatise on mythopoeia and the nature of visual experience written in a style as idiosyncratic as Brakhage's art. Long out of print, *Metaphors on Vision* has recently been republished by Anthology Film Archives and Light Industry. To celebrate this definitive new edition edited by scholar P. Adams Sitney, the National Gallery of Art presents a series of films central to the development of Brakhage's work. Film scholar and curator Thomas Beard introduces each program.

Stan Brakhage: Program 1

Introduction by Thomas Beard

Sat Feb 10 (2:00)

The first program in *Metaphors on Vision* consists of *Anticipation of the Night* (1958, 16mm, 40 minutes); *Window Water* (1959, 16mm, 12 minutes); *The Dead* (1960, 16mm, 11 minutes); and *Mothlight* (1963, 16mm, 3 minutes)

Stan Brakhage: Program 2

Introduction by Thomas Beard

Sat Feb 10 (4:00)

Dog Star Man depicts Brakhage's magical trek up a snowy slope with his dog as he beholds mystical visions of nature, woman, child, and the cosmos itself. (1961 – 1964, 16mm, 75 minutes)

Stan Brakhage: Program 3

Introduction by Thomas Beard

Sun Feb 11 (4:00)

Scenes from Under Childhood, in four sections, is Brakhage's visualization of how his children might have witnessed the world, "the inner world of fetal beginnings, the infant, the baby, the child—a shattering of the 'myths of childhood' through revelation of the extremes of terror and joy of that world darkened to most adults by their sentimental remembering of it...inspired by the music of Messiaen"—Stan Brakhage. (1967 – 1970, 16mm, 138 minutes)

From Vault to Screen:

British Film Institute National Archive

Feb 18 – Mar 31

Established in 1935, the British Film Institute (BFI) National Archive holds one of the largest film and television collections in the world. Dating from the earliest days of cinema to the live capture of current television content, the collection contains nearly a million titles. The archive cares for a variety of obsolete formats so that future generations may study the United Kingdom's film heritage. These five titles represent recent and unending work in preservation and restoration. With special thanks to Hannah Prouse and the staff of the BFI.

The Informer

Sun Feb 18 (4:30)

Liam O'Flaherty's 1925 novel *The Informer*, set in Dublin in the aftermath of the Irish Civil War, has been adapted for the cinema several times (even by O'Flaherty's cousin John Ford in the 1930s). This restoration from the BFI was



the first adaption. “O’Flaherty claimed in his autobiography that he wrote *The Informer* ‘based on the technique of the cinema, as a kind of high-brow detective story.’ Set in the revolutionary ferment of the newly independent Ireland, among a cadre of poor political activists, this silent version captures the essence of the novel, that atmosphere of a world without possible escape, very like the closed system of later film noir” —Bryony Dixon. The new BFI-commissioned score by Irish composer Garth Knox includes accordion, flute, Irish pipes, and viola d’amore. (Arthur Robison, 1929, 100 minutes)

Shooting Stars

Sat Mar 3 (4:00)

Shooting Stars is the first film of Anthony Asquith (son of H. H. Asquith, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1908 to 1916), whose most celebrated work was the 1952 adaptation of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. “*Shooting Stars* opens in a British movie studio in the 1920s.... It’s a fascinating behind-the-scenes glimpse and a searing comment on the shallowness of the star system. Demonstrably the original work of rising talent Anthony Asquith — his dynamic cinematographic style and professional approach to the design and lighting was a step change in the quality of British features” —Bryony Dixon. The BFI-commissioned score for twelve-piece ensemble is composed by John Altman. (Anthony Asquith, 1928, 103 minutes)

Women in Love

Sun Mar 4 (4:00)

Ken Russell cast the UK’s best acting talents in his visually stunning 1969 adaptation of D. H. Lawrence’s novel: Glenda Jackson, Alan Bates, and Oliver Reed. Although the action is transposed from the late nineteenth century to after World War I, many points of Lawrence’s novel are preserved, with the two couples formed by sisters Ursula and Gudrun Brangwen and their male companions absorbed in contemporary questions of sexual politics and class relations. The film’s original cinematographer, Billy Williams, supervised this new restoration, highlighting the beauty of the compositions,

the English countryside, and later on, the vivid radiance of the Swiss Alps. “This restoration will restore Russell to his rightful place in the pantheon of top British directors” — Jeff Robson. (Ken Russell, 1969, 131 minutes)

Minute Bodies: The Intimate World of F. Percy Smith

Sat Mar 31 (2:00)

“This meditative, immersive film is a tribute to the astonishing work and achievements of naturalist, inventor, and pioneering filmmaker F. Percy Smith. Smith worked in the early years of the twentieth century, developing cinematographic and micro-photographic techniques to capture nature in action. Working in a number of public roles, Smith was prolific and driven, often directing several films simultaneously, on a mission to explore and capture nature’s hidden terrains. *Minute Bodies* is an interpretative edit that combines Smith’s original footage with a new contemporary score by Tindersticks to create a hypnotic, alien, yet familiar dreamscape that connects us to the sense of wonder Smith must have felt as he peered through his own lenses” — Stuart Brown. (Stuart Staples, 2016, from footage of F. Percy Smith, 55 minutes)

Wittgenstein

Sat Mar 31 (4:00)

“Philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein once stated that philosophy ought to be written as if it were poetry, and a poetic intensity typified his life and his work. No wonder, then, that a creative talent such as Derek Jarman should respond with such characteristic energy to a commission from Channel 4 for a film about the philosopher, written by radical literary theorist Terry Eagleton. *Wittgenstein* is a bold offbeat biography, personalized in Jarman’s unique style to address the politics and sexuality of the great but troubled man. The result is no dry treatise, but a treat for eyes and mind alike. Exceeding the limitations of its miniscule budget, *Wittgenstein* is full of arresting visuals and bold performances from Tilda Swinton, Michael Gough, and Karl Johnson, who brilliantly captures Wittgenstein in all his torment and drama” — British Film Institute. (Derek Jarman, 1993, 71 minutes)



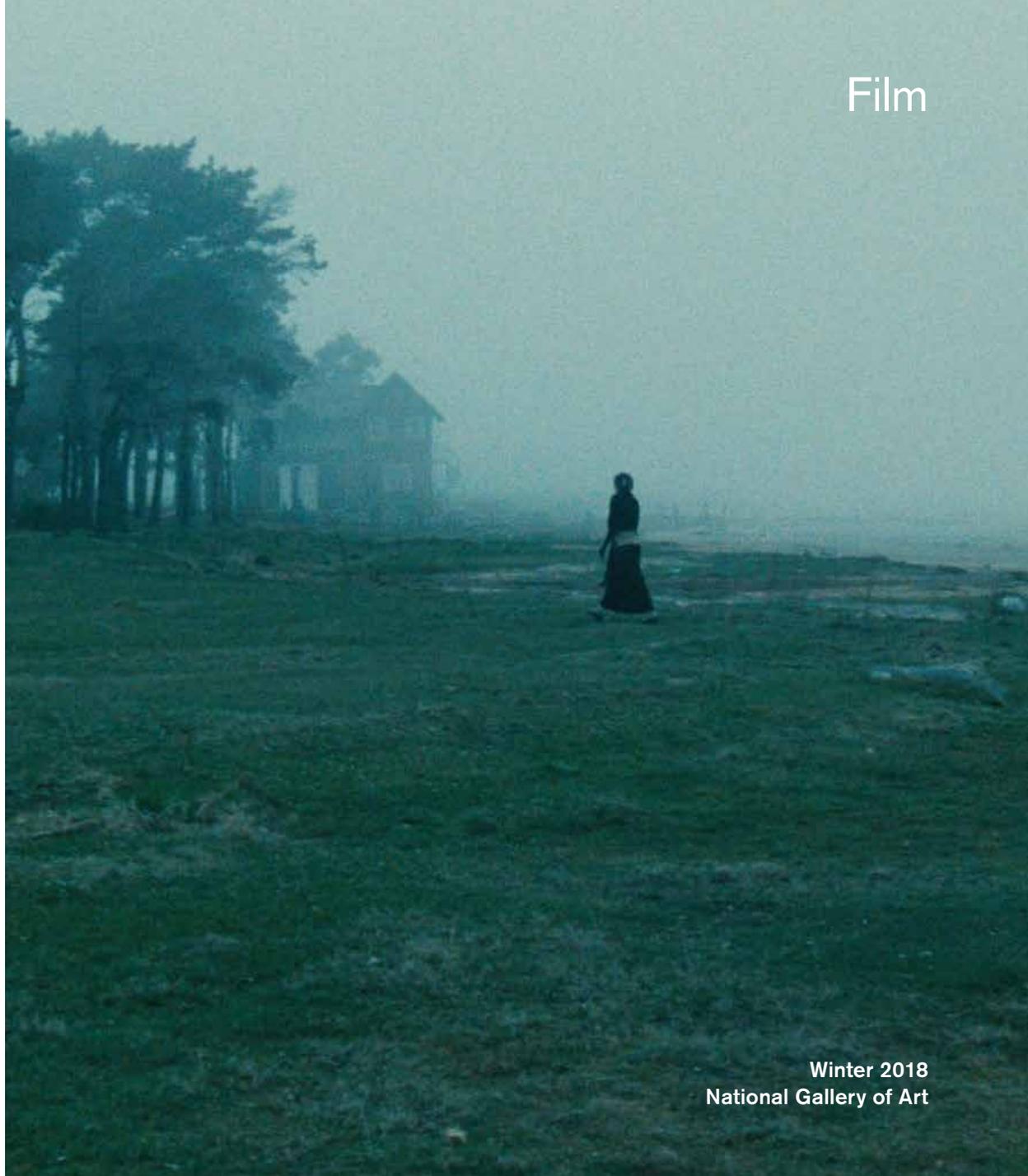
Film



Winter 2018
National Gallery of Art

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