

National
Gallery of Art

Film

Spring 20





Special Events 11

Agnès Varda Viewing Art 17

Julia Reichert: Fifty Years in Film 21

Lucian Pintilie Trio 25

From Vault to Screen: Austria 29



Spring 2020 features four series in the renovated East Building Auditorium. *Agnès Varda Viewing Art* is a tribute to the late, groundbreaking director Agnès Varda (1928 – 2019) through a selection of films in which she engages with art as object, metaphor, and inspiration. *Julia Reichert: Fifty Years in Film*, a retrospective cohosted with the AFI in Silver Spring, Maryland, features six of the award-winning documentarian's titles at the Gallery. *Lucian Pintilie Trio* comprises three later feature films by Romanian director Lucian Pintilie. And *From Vault to Screen* returns, focusing this season on newly restored films from Filmarchiv Austria and sixpackfilm by Austrian artists like VALIE EXPORT, Ruth Beckermann, and Michael Haneke.

Presentations and performances include a collaboration with the Washington Project for the Arts featuring Alisha Wormsley's *Children of NAN: Mothership* and *Cry of the Third Eye: The Last Resort*, a performed live opera film by Li Harris. *Through a Glass Darkly: Early Cinema Looks at Itself* is a presentation by Dimitrios Latsis of Ryerson University about self-referential early cinema. Other special events include screenings of recent nonfiction films, such as *Isadora's Children*, *The Paris Opéra*, *Nijolė*, and *Animus Animalis: On People, Animals, and Things*. *Distant Journey* by Alfréd Radok, presented in association with the Washington Jewish Film Festival, is the first of two restorations from the 1940s; the other is William Wyler's classic *The Memphis Belle, Story of a Flying Fortress*, which is screened on Memorial Day and introduced by the director's daughter, Catherine Wyler.



April

4	Sat	11:00	The Paris Opéra ^{p11}
		1:30	Agnès Varda Viewing Art: Mur Murs; Documenteur ^{p17}
		4:30	Agnès Varda Viewing Art: Varda Shorts: Art and Life ^{p18}

5	Sun	4:00	Agnès Varda Viewing Art: Faces Places ^{p18}
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11	Sat	2:00	Agnès Varda Viewing Art: Cinévardaphoto ^{p18}
		4:00	Agnès Varda Viewing Art: Daguerreotypes ^{p19}

12	Sun	4:00	Agnès Varda Viewing Art: The Beaches of Agnès ^{p19}
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18	Sat	1:00	Julia Reichert: Sparkle; Making Morning Star ^{p21}
		2:30	Lithuanian Nonfiction: Nijolė; Animus Animalis: On People, Animals, and Things ^{p11}

25	Sat	12:00	Julia Reichert: Growing Up Female; Union Maids ^{p22}
		2:00	The Paris Opéra ^{p11}
		4:30	Gold Is All There Is ^{p12}

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.



May

2	Sat	1:00	Julia Reichert: Seeing Red: Stories of American Communists p22
		3:30	Children of NAN: Mothership; Cry of the Third Eye: The Last Resort p13

3	Sun	4:00	Gold Is All There Is p12
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9	Sat	2:30	Through a Glass Darkly: Early Cinema Looks at Itself p13
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10	Sun	4:30	Isadora's Children p14
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17	Sun	4:00	Restoration: Distant Journey p14
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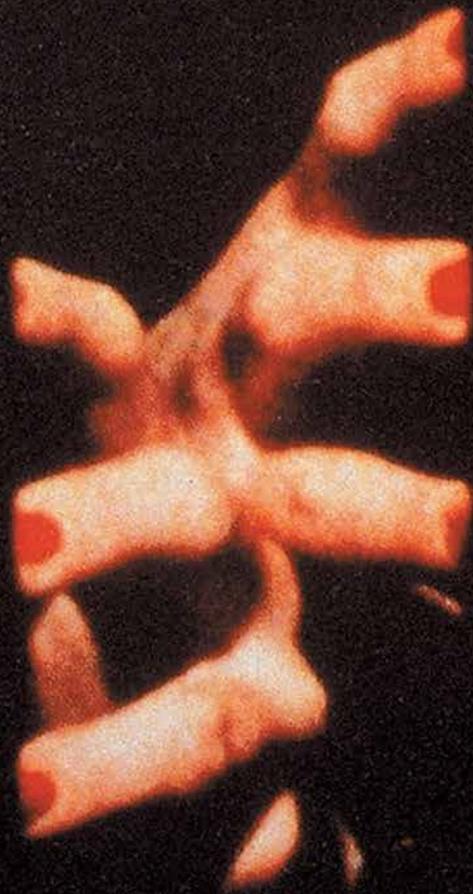
23	Sat	2:00	The Paris Opéra p11
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24	Sun	2:00	The Paris Opéra p11
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25	Mon	2:30	Restoration: The Memphis Belle, Story of a Flying Fortress p15
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June



6	Sat	2:00 4:30	Lucian Pintilie Trio: The Oak <small>p25</small> Lucian Pintilie Trio: An Unforgettable Summer <small>p26</small>
7	Sun	5:00	Lucian Pintilie Trio: Niki and Flo <small>p26</small>
13	Sat	2:00	From Vault to Screen: Ciné-Concert: The Hands of Orlac <small>p29</small>
20	Sat	12:30 2:30 4:30	From Vault to Screen: Maskerade <small>p30</small> From Vault to Screen: The City Without Jews <small>p30</small> From Vault to Screen: The Paper Bridge <small>p31</small>
21	Sun	4:00 5:15	From Vault to Screen: VALIE EXPORT: New Restorations <small>p31</small> From Vault to Screen: The Seventh Continent <small>p32</small>
27	Sat	12:00 2:00 4:00	From Vault to Screen: Notes on Film 02 <small>p32</small> From Vault to Screen: A prima vista <small>p32</small> From Vault to Screen: La Pivellina <small>p33</small>
28	Sun	4:00	From Vault to Screen: Amour Fou <small>p33</small>

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Special Events

Apr 4 – May 25

The Paris Opéra

Sat Apr 4 (11:00)

Sat Apr 25 (2:00)

Sat May 23, Sun May 24 (2:00)



Swiss director Jean-Stéphane Bron has crafted an expansive portrait of L'Opéra National de Paris, which annually presents over 400 performances of ballet, opera, and music. Bron's primary focus is the institution's daily challenges, from labor issues to training to the cost of a ticket. Footage of singers, dancers, musicians, directors, stagehands, maintenance, and managers — the multitude of people who keep the venerable institution going — depicts a life behind the scenes at one of the world's most prestigious performing arts palaces. (Jean-Stéphane Bron, 2017, subtitles, 110 minutes) *Shown in conjunction with the exhibition Degas at the Opéra.*

Lithuanian Nonfiction: Nijolė

followed by *Animus Animalis: On People, Animals, and Things*

Sat Apr 18 (2:30)



Antanas Mockus is a Lithuanian-Colombian mathematician, philosopher, and politician who was mayor of Bogotá, ran as a presidential candidate, and served in the Colombian senate. Lithuanian-Italian coproduction *Nijolė*, however, is not a film about the politician, but about his eighty-eight-year-old Lithuanian mother, the eccentric

and irreverent artist Nijolė Šivickas and her approach to the world — a philosophy that continually inspired her son. “*Nijolė* is an unclassifiable and inspirational cocktail that takes us on an intimate journey to the depths of their lives. From the present marked by the fragility of their bodies, to the Lithuanian roots that Nijolė had to leave behind, we discover two extraordinary, vital stories.” — Dok Leipzig (Sandro Bozzolo, 2018, subtitles, 82 minutes)

In a secluded region of Lithuania — where the local church is decorated with antlers and the children nestle in fur — a tightknit community of hunters and skilled taxidermists doggedly skirts the edge of mortality, searching for game and celebrating life. In the world of *Animus Animalis: On People, Animals, and Things*, hunting is synonymous with love of nature, and animals, dead or alive, are part of community ritual and lore. The impermanence of existence appears to have a quietly mystical significance, closely aligned with the cycle of the seasons and the presence of abundant forests and faunae. (Aistė Žegulytė, 2018, subtitles, 70 minutes) *Presented in conjunction with the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, the Embassy of Lithuania, and the Lithuanian Film Centre.*

Gold Is All There Is

American premiere

Sat Apr 25 (4:30)

Sun May 3 (4:00)



Gold Is All There Is (*Tutto l'oro che c'è*), a beautiful observational documentary set in a remote Italian-Swiss landscape, is a slender tale of five characters — a hunter, a gold prospector, a naturalist, a carabinieri, and a young boy — all exploring the countryside for unique reasons. Their paths never cross, but they are all absorbed in the landscape's swirling trees, singing birds, wondrous skies,

atmospheric mysteries, and occasional traces of civilization. As filmmaker Andrea Caccia draws close to and moves away from his subjects, his manner varies between philosophical and scientific, but never evokes a nature documentary. “Watching the film amounts to taking a healthy break and plunging into a lost dimension in direct contact with nature and the elements. As well as directing and cinematography, Caccia also studied painting, which is evident from his visual setting. This is one of those films that is still worth watching at the cinema in the dark, in full contemplation.” — Vittoria Scarpa (Andrea Caccia, 2019, ambient sound only, no dialogue, 100 minutes) *Shown in association with True to Nature: Open-Air Painting in Europe, 1780–1870.*

Children of NAN: Mothership

followed by **Cry of the Third Eye: The Last Resort**

Discussion with Tsedaye Makonnen, Alisha Wormsley, and Li Harris
Sat May 2 (3:30)



Alisha Wormsley's multimedia work, *Children of NAN: Mothership*, is an archive of video footage, photos, objects, philosophies, myths, rituals, and performances that Wormsley has been compiling for over a decade. Part of this work, a single-channel video is screened at the Gallery. (Alisha Wormsley, 2019)

Cry of the Third Eye: The Last Resort is the final part of a three-act opera film — with live vocals and theremin — that considers generational legacy, intergenerational legacy, loss, and the space of dreams. (Li Harris, 2019) (Total running time approximately 75 minutes) *This event is a component of the exhibition Black Women and the Archive: Space, Moving Image Memory, guest curated by Tsedaye Makonnen at the Washington Project for the Arts, on view through June.*

Through a Glass Darkly: Early Cinema Looks at Itself

Dimitrios Latsis, speaker

Sat May 9 (2:30)

How cinema has typically regarded itself is an interesting and often overlooked facet in the history of film. From the start, films about film were a common convention, as the novelty of the form, the marvels of technology, and the mysteries inside the industry all had their allure. Dimitrios Latsis screens excerpts from a variety of silent films, tracing the technological and popular history of cinema

as a medium. Produced within and beyond the major Hollywood studios and ranging from the quasi-scholarly to the unabashedly promotional, films such as J. Stuart Blackton's *March of the Movies* (1930), Otto Nelson and Terry Ramsaye's *Thirty Years of Motion Pictures* (1925), and Paramount's *The Evolution of the Picture Play* (1919) argued for the cultural and scientific legitimacy of the medium. These short films also shed light on a variety of genres that still flourish today — the educational documentary, for example: a self-reflexive hybrid of advertisement, lecture, and behind-the-scenes tour that is older than many might assume. Dimitrios Latsis teaches at the School of Image Arts at Ryerson University. (Approximately 100 minutes)

Isadora's Children

Sun May 10 (4:30)



Isadora Duncan's two young children, Patrick and Deidre, died in France in 1913, and the famous dancer never completely healed from this loss. She choreographed a dance entitled *Mother*, a tender reflection on her relationship with her children. French filmmaker Damien Manivel has used Duncan's concept to create a delicate fictional tale about art's ability to convey emotion and heal. The film comprises three interconnected stories, each focusing on a ballerina's discipline and rigor, but also conveying emotions to strangers in the audience. "The events on screen are captured by cinematographer Noé Bach in painterly images that lead to moments of everyday transcendence... [Director Damien] Manivel was a dancer before he was a filmmaker and has an instinct for how emotion arises out of composition, trusting the audience to bear with him as, step by step, the composition takes shape." — Sophie Monks Kaufman (Damien Manivel, 2019, subtitles, 84 minutes)

Restoration: Distant Journey

Introduced by Lukáš Přibyl

Sun May 17 (4:00)

Distant Journey (*Daleká cesta*) follows a Jewish doctor, Hana, who falls in love and marries a gentile named Toník. Their love story becomes a nightmare when Hana's family is transported to Theresienstadt (Terezín) and struggles to survive. Although director Alfréd Radok was only half Jewish, he lost much of his family in the Holocaust and was himself imprisoned in a camp near Wrocław, Poland.

He began production on *Distant Journey*, his first film, soon after the war ended, shooting a large portion on location in Terezín, where both his father and grandfather had been killed. By the time Radok finished, the communists had taken over postwar Czechoslovakia, ushering in an era of censorship, and the film was subsequently banned for four decades. (Alfréd Radok, 1949, subtitles, 108 minutes) *Presented in association with the Washington Jewish Film Festival. Discussion with Gabriel Paletz and Lukáš Přibyl follows.*

Restoration: The Memphis Belle, Story of a Flying Fortress

Catherine Wyler in person

Mon May 25 (2:30)



A production team supervised by American film director William Wyler filmed the classic documentary *The Memphis Belle, Story of a Flying Fortress* during the spring and summer of 1943 on the Eighth Air Force bases in the United Kingdom and on bombing missions over Europe. The film was edited in Hollywood and released in April 1944. Since its original theatrical run, copies of *The Memphis Belle* have deteriorated, thanks to laboratory scratches inflicted on the original footage. In 2018, Wyler's original 16 mm negative was found, digitally restored, and more than 500 individual shots were exactly repositioned over the existing soundtrack. This heralded a new kind of film restoration — a literal recutting from scratch, while preserving the content of the original. Catherine Wyler is the daughter of director William Wyler. (William Wyler, 1943–1944, 45 minutes)



Agnès Varda Viewing Art

Apr 4 – 12

Belgian-born pioneer of the French nouvelle vague, Agnès Varda died in 2019 at the age of ninety. Her celebrated filmography signifies not only her agency as a woman in the male-dominated realm of mid-century European cinema but also an endless interest in the arts as subject matter. From her student days at the École du Louvre and École des Beaux-Arts, Varda engaged with the arts on many levels; the space of the museum and culture of the art world, combined with her quirky poetry, were frequent motifs. The filmmaker's later multimedia installations were often featured in galleries. This program includes assorted Varda films that contemplate art — as object, as metaphor, as inspiration — and complements a simultaneous Agnès Varda retrospective at the AFI in Silver Spring.

Mur Murs

followed by **Documenteur**

Sat Apr 4 (1:30)



Mur Murs celebrates the grand Chicano street murals of Los Angeles — an art form that became vital to Varda's experience of living in that city. She refers to these murals “animating” the architecture of her neighborhood. Characteristically, Varda digresses and tells many stories about the people and communities that created the murals. (1981, 85 minutes)

Another outcome of Varda's stay in L.A. was *Documenteur*, a tender fiction about a newly divorced mother and her child (played by Varda's own son) living a quiet life on the city's margins. The protagonist, played by *Mur Murs* co-editor Sabine Mamou, may be a

stand-in for Varda herself, as she had recently separated from her husband. These two L.A. films are interwoven, filled with corresponding images and ideas. (1981, 65 minutes)

Varda Shorts: Art and Life

Sat Apr 4 (4:30)

Styled as a silent film, Varda's early short *Les fiancés du pont Mac Donald* features the cast and director of Jean-Luc Godard's *Bande à part* (1961, 5 minutes). *T'as de beaux escaliers, tu sais* is her amusing homage to the Cinémathèque Française on the institution's fiftieth anniversary (1986, 3 minutes). *The So-Called Caryatids* is a reflection on the caryatids of Parisian architecture, set to Jacques Offenbach's music and Charles Baudelaire's poetry (1984, 12 minutes). In *Le lion volatil*, the filmmaker playfully spins a romantic yarn around Frédéric Bartholdi's famous lion in Place Denfert-Rochereau (2003, 12 minutes), while in *Elsa la rose*, poets Louis Aragon and Elsa Triolet recount moments of a happy youth together (1966, 20 minutes). Finally, in an episode from the miniseries *Agnès de ci de là Varda*, the filmmaker relives moments with art from her perpetual travels — from the Beaubourg in Paris, to the Venice Biennale, to the Cologne Cathedral, to quiet exchanges with artist friends Christian Boltanski and Annette Messager (2011, 45 minutes). (Subtitles, total running time 97 minutes)

Faces Places

Sun Apr 5 (4:00)

Codirected with French photographer and street artist JR (a companion one-third Varda's age), *Faces Places (Visages Villages)* is a buoyant road movie filmed on back roads and in small towns throughout remote regions of France that are now vulnerable to the incursions of modern life. The local workers, farmers, and housekeepers generally welcome the artists, who create huge photographic murals on buildings around the countryside celebrating the people's labors, looks, and mettle. In typical fashion, Varda manages to cover a full range of human emotion in the film — from happiness and love to resentment and nostalgia. (2017, subtitles, 90 minutes)

Cinévardaphoto

Sat Apr 11 (2:00)

A triptych of short documentary segments linked by Varda's photography, *Cinévardaphoto* spans forty years of production and includes *Ulysse*, an essay on memory and art linked to a black-and-white photograph she created three decades earlier (1982, 22 minutes); *Salut les Cubains*, a montage of photos taken while visiting Cuba just after the revolution and narrated by Varda's friend, actor Michel Piccoli (1963, 30 minutes); and *Ydessa, the Bears and Etc.*, her documentation of a memorable museum exhibition that featured forgotten images of treasured teddy bears and their owners (2004, 44 minutes). (Subtitles, total running time 96 minutes)

Daguerréotypes

Sat Apr 11 (4:00)



Daguerréotypes, a sequence of portraits with a title referencing Varda's long-standing interest in the history of photography, presents renderings of the artisans and shopkeepers on Rue Daguerre in Paris's fourteenth arrondissement. Varda lived on this street virtually her entire adult life, and creating these filmic vignettes of her neighbors — couples who own a butcher shop, a hair salon, a bakery, and a notions shop — alludes to her own artisanal past. Varda imposed a shooting constraint while making the film: she filmed only as far from her home as her long electrical cord would stretch, remaining close to her toddler son. (1976, 80 minutes)

The Beaches of Agnès

Sun Apr 12 (4:00)



The Beaches of Agnès (Les Plages d'Agnès), made on the occasion of her eightieth birthday, is an outdoor cinematic art installation in which Varda views her long career in reverse through site-specific three-dimensional works, tableaux vivants, and playful pageants. Varda, who has said that "if we opened up people we'd find landscapes, if we opened up me, we'd find beaches," filmed beside the water. She started at her childhood Belgian home, continued to the Seine and to the sunny coast of California, reliving not only her films but also — mainly — her cherished remembrances of friends and loved ones. (2008, subtitles, 110 minutes)



Julia Reichert: Fifty Years in Film

Apr 18 – May 2

Emmy and Academy Award – winner Julia Reichert — a founder of the groundbreaking collective New Day Films — has created one of the most admired bodies of work in American nonfiction cinema. Her first film essay *Growing Up Female* spawned controversy on its release in 1971. Her most recent film, *9to5: The Story of a Movement* — which is screening at the AFI in Silver Spring in May — revisits the women office workers who famously fueled workplace reforms in Boston during the 1970s. The Gallery is pleased to join the American Film Institute in this Julia Reichert retrospective. The program was organized by David Filipi of the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio, with The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Special thanks to the Chicken & Egg Pictures for support.

Making Morning Star

preceded by **Sparkle**

Sat Apr 18 (1:00)



Sheri Williams, known as Sparkle, has been a star performer with the legendary Dayton Contemporary Dance Company for forty years — an unparalleled record in the dance community. Sparkle is also one of the few dancers outside New York to have been honored with the prestigious Bessie Award for Individual Performance. After this dynamo suffers her first serious injury, she's forced to consider whether she really has the will to return to the stage as her fiftieth

birthday approaches. (Julia Reichert and Steven Bognar, 2012, 18 minutes)

Making Morning Star presents a behind-the-scenes look at the joys and challenges of developing a new American opera in a workshop hosted by the Cincinnati Opera and the University of Cincinnati's Conservatory of Music. Featuring interviews with composer Ricky Ian Gordon, librettist William M. Hoffman, and theater director Ron Daniels, the film captures the delicate balance of personalities in an intense collaboration. (Julia Reichert and Steven Bognar, 2016, 37 minutes)

Growing Up Female

followed by **Union Maids**

Sat Apr 25 (12:00)

Reichert's first effort, *Growing Up Female*, is a documentary of historic reach. Cast with women of different ages from her hometown of Yellow Springs, Ohio, it examines the often conflicting forces that have shaped them. The fifty-year-old film is still screened regularly to illustrate the history of feminism and demonstrate the social dynamics that persist to this day. "One of those painful experiences that's good for you." — Susan Sontag (Julia Reichert, 1971, 52 minutes)

In *Union Maids*, three remarkable women share frequently amusing yet difficult tales about their battles to form industrial trade unions during the early twentieth century. Stella, Sylvia, and Kate left small farms for the dream of greater job opportunities at a time when it was dangerous to demand safe working conditions and determined strikers were frequently beaten by police. *Union Maids* was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature. (Julia Reichert, Jim Klein, and Miles Mogulescu, 1976, 48 minutes)

Seeing Red: Stories of American Communists

Sat May 2 (1:00)

Seeing Red: Stories of American Communists follows ordinary Americans who joined the Communist Party and documents the high price many of them paid during the Red Scare in the 1950s. Compiling more than 400 interviews with former and current party members, the filmmakers deliver an engaging, funny, and human portrait of fifty years of communist activism and retaliation. Personal accounts from iconic folk singer Pete Seeger as well as rank-and-file members have special resonance in today's political climate. The film was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature. (Julia Reichert and Jim Klein, 1983, 100 minutes)





Lucian Pintilie Trio

Jun 6–7

Romanian director Lucian Pintilie's career in theater, cinema, and opera was one of the most notable in contemporary performing arts. He launched his theater career in Bucharest, but went on to direct successful productions in many parts of the world — in 1986 he staged Henrik Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* for Washington, DC's Arena Stage. He remained one of Europe's most inspiring filmmakers for several decades, exploring themes like oppression and repentance. His first film, *Sunday at Six* (1965) so aggravated Romanian censors that he was not allowed to make his next film, *The Reenactment*, until 1968; then, it was banned. (*The Reenactment* screened at the Gallery in 2019 as part of the series *Welcome to Absurdistan: Eastern European Cinema 1950 to 1989*). This program, which is showing simultaneously with *The Romanians: 30 Years of Cinema Revolution* at the AFI in Silver Spring, includes three of Pintilie's most notable later feature films. Special thanks to Oana Radu, Mihai Chirilov, David Schwartz, and Corina Șuteu.

The Oak

Washington, DC, premiere of the restoration

Sat Jun 6 (2:00)

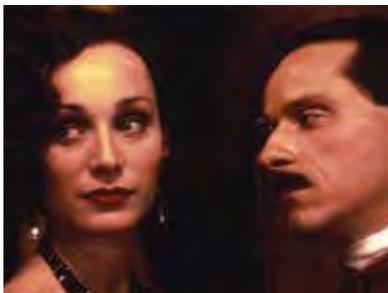


After the fall of communism in Romania in 1989, Pintilie returned to Bucharest and became director of national film production for the Ministry of Culture. *The Oak*, his first film after returning home, follows Nela, a young schoolteacher, after the death of her father,

an official with the country's secret police. On an uneasy odyssey through Romania, she carries his ashes in a Nescafe jar. After many surreal moments depicting the end of Nicolae Ceaușescu's regime, Nela meets a doctor named Mitica. His anti-authoritarian nature makes them instantaneous comrades in arms, but a sequence of surprises works against them, and for a while, nothing seems to go right. "A dada couple in a dangerously absurd world." — J. Hoberman (1992, subtitles, 105 minutes)

An Unforgettable Summer

Sat Jun 6 (4:30)



Based on a short story by Petre Dumitriu, *An Unforgettable Summer* is set in the 1920s in a region that has been part of both Romania and Bulgaria. When the film opens, a young military officer (Dumitriu himself, played by Claudiu Bleont) is about to attend a ball with his wife Marie-Therese (Kristin Scott Thomas). After his wife resists the advances of a superior officer, this stylish cosmopolitan family is relocated to a dreary and desolate post along the Bulgarian/Romanian border, where the couple's marriage and, indeed, their lives are at stake. "The message of the movie is an old one, and yet sadly contemporary: if you kill people because they are not you, someday they will want to kill you because you are not them. Hatred and fear hang in the air at the pathetic little military post and are felt not least by those trying to do the right thing." — Roger Ebert (1994, subtitles, 35mm, 81 minutes)

Niki and Flo

Sun Jun 7 (5:00)

Retired army officer Niki Ardelean lives in a small Bucharest apartment with his ailing wife Poucha, his daughter Angela, and Angela's new husband Eugen. Angela is pregnant, but Niki's excitement is dulled by the fact that the young couple is planning to leave for the United States. He's torn between his wish to see his daughter happy and a desire to have her nearby. Meanwhile, Eugen's father Flo, a domestic tyrant of sorts, slowly exerts his control over Niki. "*Niki and Flo* is a fascinating stylistic hybrid, its observant naturalism infused with a delicate, almost coy sense of the absurd." — A. O. Scott (2003, subtitles, 35mm, 100 minutes)





From Vault to Screen: Austria

Jun 13 – 28

The occasional series *From Vault to Screen* combines recent restorations and overlooked treasures from international film archives. The Gallery is pleased to present ten programs that sample the distinctive cinematic heritage of Austria, beginning with a pioneering expressionist work and concluding with a recent production based on the life of a romantic poet. Contrary to the misconception that Austrian films are emotionally distant or demanding, these films are resonant with thoughtful perceptions and powerful feelings. Filmarchiv Austria is the principal keeper of the country's cinematic heritage. The archive's repository houses not only a collection of more than 3 million films but also one of Europe's most extensive assemblages of historical technology. Special thanks to Filmarchiv Austria; the Embassy of Austria; and sixpackfilm, a nonprofit organization that works to preserve and present Austria's experimental cinema and video art.

Ciné-Concert: *The Hands of Orlac*

Andrew Simpson in performance

Sat Jun 13 (2:00)



Four years after *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*, Robert Wiene completed *The Hands of Orlac* (*Orlacs Hände*), a potent psychological drama based on a literary work by Maurice Renard. The film stars Conrad Veidt as a virtuoso pianist who, following an accident, receives the hands of a condemned murderer — or so he believes. Though its sets are more traditional than those of the

expressionistic *Caligari*, *Orlac* employs other design strategies to convey the characters' seething emotions. Andrew Simpson is a composer, pianist, and organist, and professor of music at The Catholic University of America. (Robert Wiene, 1924, subtitles, 113 minutes)

Maskerade

Sat Jun 20 (12:30)



Two of twentieth-century Europe's most popular actors — Viennese natives Anton Wohlbrück and Paula Wessely ("Die Wessely" to her fans) — lead the radiant cast of the Austrian operetta film *Maskerade*. Wessely's naive art student Leopoldine meets Viennese high society painter Heideneck (Wohlbrück) at an over-the-top carnival ball — the centerpiece in a spirited intrigue set in decadent turn-of-the-century Vienna. Franz Planer's cinematography and Willy Schmidt-Gentner's score (performed by the Vienna Philharmonic) complete the dreamlike enchantment. (Willi Forst, 1934, 35 mm, subtitles, 90 minutes)

The City Without Jews

Sat Jun 20 (2:30)



The City Without Jews (*Die Stadt ohne Juden*) was once considered lost, but this reconstructed version was released in 2019. The film is an adaptation of the 1922 *The City Without Jews: A Novel of Our Time* by Austrian writer Hugo Bettauer, a work now considered prophetic with respect to the Holocaust. Set in early 1920s Vienna, the film depicts a population feeling loss and looming social instability, aggravated by inflation and unemployment. The people are demanding the purging of Jews from the city. "For a story about the forced expulsion of an entire ethnic group, *The City Without Jews*

is oddly good-natured. . . . The scenario was topical, but intended as ludicrous, a be-careful-what-you-wish-for fable whose moral argues for tolerance, if of a somewhat backhanded kind." — Jordan Hoffman. Newly commissioned score by Austrian composer Olga Neuwirth. (Hans Karl Breslauer, 1924, subtitles, 80 minutes)

The Paper Bridge

Sat Jun 20 (4:30)

Ruth Beckermann, a widely admired master of the film essay genre, constructs works that are at once personal and political. Her first-person narrative *The Paper Bridge* (*Die Papierene Brücke*) is a journey through family history and an attempt to reclaim remnants of Jewish life in regions of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. "I don't know exactly why I traveled east that winter. . . . I think I was just curious to know whether there was still any resemblance to the stories I grew up with," she says. On a trip from Vienna to Romania, she visits the sites where her grandmother hid from the Nazis and the place of her father's birth. Survivors of the Holocaust, Beckermann's parents met in Vienna after the war, and her film is in part a meditation on her own identity as a Jewish woman in postwar Austria. (Ruth Beckermann, 1987, subtitles, 95 minutes)

VALIE EXPORT: New Restorations

Sun Jun 21 (4:00)



Since the late 1960s, Austrian artist VALIE EXPORT has traversed and freely combined the disciplines of sculpture, photography, installation, performance, film, and video. This selection of four recently restored short films presents a cross section of feminist concerns, including investigations of the male gaze, female agency, and the culpability of patriarchy in the stifled daily lives of women

and children. In... *Remote... Remote* the artist quietly, patiently disfigures her cuticles with a box cutter and dips her bleeding fingers into a bowl of milk before an image of two children who are wards of the state (1973, 10 minutes). *Adjunct Dislocations* is a black-and-white film incorporating three screens: one showing the artist with an 8 mm camera strapped to the front of her torso and another camera on her back, while the other two screens run the resulting films (1973, 8 minutes). The silent film *Interrupted Line* is a study of cinematic time with the filmmaker always in the present (1971/72, 9 minutes). And *Syntagma* is a collision of the artist's expanded cinematic works, photography, and electronic image processing used to question constructs of public and private, exterior and interior space (1983, 18 minutes). (Total running time 45 minutes)

The Seventh Continent

Sun Jun 21 (5:15)

Michael Haneke's debut feature foretells the artistry of his later masterworks. Based on a news story that the director read by chance, *The Seventh Continent* follows three years in the lives of an average middle-class Austrian family disillusioned by the emptiness and dull routines of their days. Husband Georg, wife Anna, and daughter Eva decide to discover for themselves the nirvana suggested by an Australian tourism poster they pass each day. Typical for Haneke's work, the conclusion is both shocking and redemptive. "It's not a portrait of Austria. It's a portrait of rich countries," Haneke maintains. (Michael Haneke, 1989, 35 mm, subtitles, 111 minutes)

Notes on Film 02

Sat Jun 27 (12:00)

The influence of Austria's lively avant-garde scene is evident in *Notes on Film 02*, as Norbert Pfaffenbichler combines structural filmmaking methods with elements of narrative cinema to investigate the theme of variation and repetition. Content from Robert Frank's *O.K. End Here* (1963) comes in the form of random moments from the life of a married couple arranged on the basis of an alphanumeric editing model. (Norbert Pfaffenbichler, 2006, subtitles, 96 minutes) *This film is presented in association with sixpackfilm, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and presenting Austrian experimental cinema.*

A prima vista

Sat Jun 27 (2:00)

"*A prima vista* (*At First Sight*) is an essay about the innocence of the gaze, that first look at the world which only small children (and great filmmakers) are capable of. Without a trace of inhibition and with the curiosity of someone who has no particular plan in mind, who instead deals with what is there to see, hear, and taste.... Previously unreleased footage that Michael Pilz shot over more than four decades provides the raw material. Italy, Vienna's Wurstelprater (amusement park) — a farm, a Shinto celebration: these elements

are divided, like musical punctuation marks, by self-portraits and portraits of friends. Film is rhythm, intuitive composition. Largo, allegro, then a switch to brief fades in and out which were done in the camera." — Michael Omasta (Michael Pilz, 2008, subtitles, 91 minutes)

La Pivellina

Sat Jun 27 (4:00)

The modest yet colorful tale of a makeshift family of itinerant circus people living on the outskirts of Rome was a subject that attracted Rainer Frimmel and Tizza Covi, an Austro-Italian filmmaking team who specialize in documenting outsider circus communities. The main characters — circus knife-throwers playing themselves — bring an abandoned small child (la pivellina) into their trailer. When all hope of finding la pivellina's parents has gone, they try acclimating her to their unconventional lifestyle. "These... performers represent something lacking in modern life, a sense of family." — Bill Thompson. (Tizza Covi and Rainer Frimmel, 2009, subtitles, 100 minutes)

Amour Fou

Sun Jun 28 (4:00)



The elegant simplicity of Jessica Hausner's *Amour Fou* belies the complexity of the tale — the relationship of German poet and novelist Heinrich von Kleist and Henriette Vogel and the saga of their murder-suicide pact. The two met in 1809, delighting in their mutual fondness for music and literature. Their bonds grew more intense and, in November 1811, they traveled from Berlin to Wannsee after composing farewell letters that, along with an account of their last night together, have become a legendary feature of world literature. The couple's shared grave at Kleiner Wannsee is now a tourist attraction. "An event that could hardly be described as a laughing matter somehow yields a dryly amusing and layered reflection on the absurdity of what humans call *amour fou*." — Justin Chang (Jessica Hausner, 2014, subtitles, 96 minutes)



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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.

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Cover

The Oak p25



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