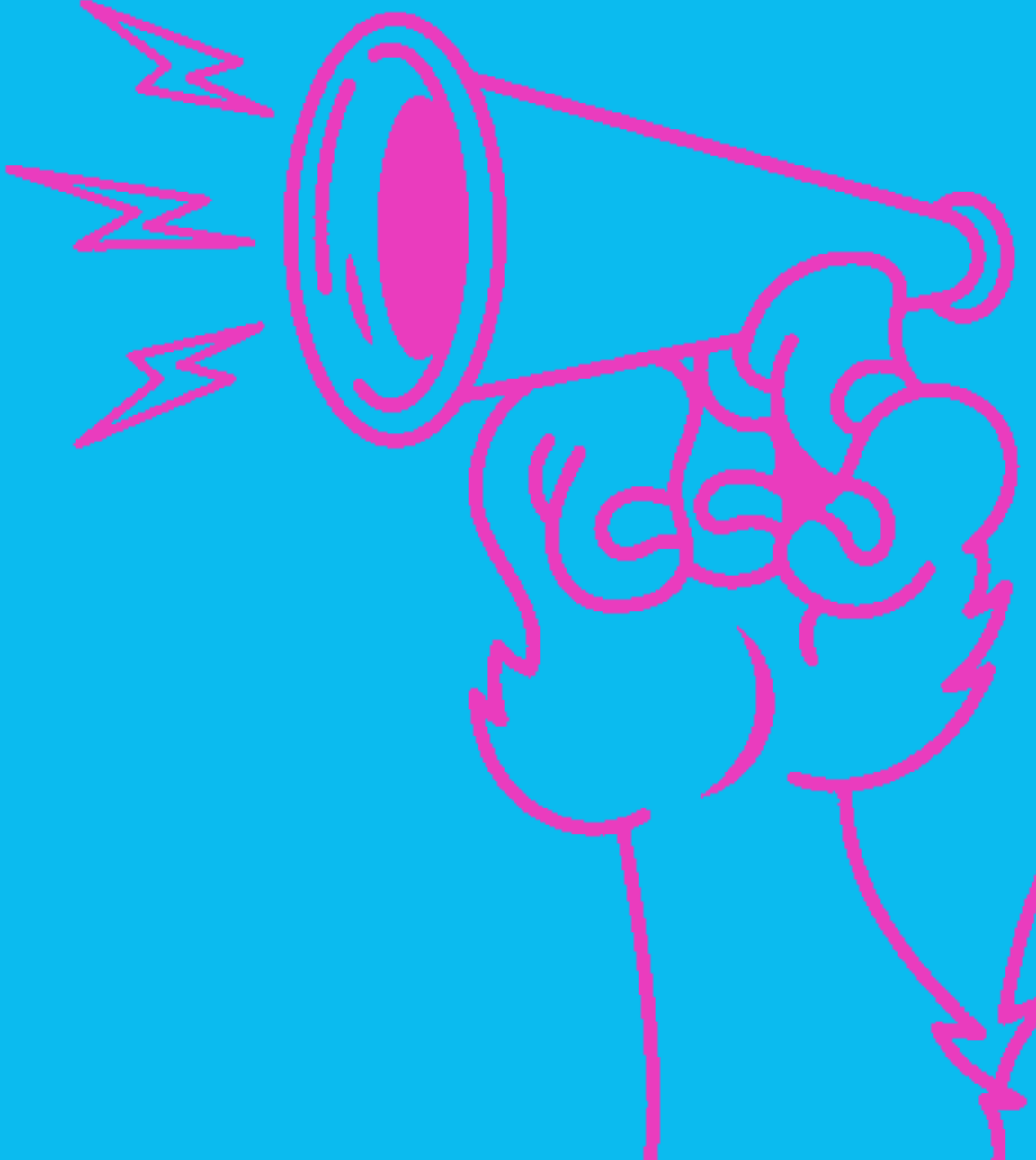



**20TH
BERWICK
FILM &
MEDIA ARTS
FESTIVAL**





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Foreword to the 20th Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival by Festival Director, Peter Taylor

Rajee Samarasinghe's *Your Touch Makes Others Invisible* is our opening film—a hauntingly beautiful, genre-bending work that collapses time, testimony, and myth to confront the unspoken histories of Sri Lanka's civil war. Samarasinghe, a long-time friend of the Festival, takes a bold leap with his first feature, negotiating the space between opacity and direct articulation to confront the violences that Tamil and minoritised peoples endure. It is a film of spectral presences—of people vanished by war and state power.

In times of deep uncertainty and division, we need filmmakers like Rajee—not only to resist but also to forge new memories and fictions. We need them to reimagine the relationships, communities, homelands, and histories that shape us. A cinema camera is where light, time, and power converge to construct history. Here at BFMAF, we hold space for artists and filmmakers who challenge, interrogate, and redefine these forces.

In 2015, Chris Sharratt from a-n news described Berwick as “a good place for a festival that eschews the easy route when the awkward one looks so much more interesting.” I believe that the awkward route is our only choice. Twenty years in, and by design, BFMAF remains a work in progress. In my tenth year as Festival Director, I've come to appreciate how much BFMAF relies on this ethos. Never settling generates a restless, creative energy—one I know well.

We share this practice of learning through making with the artists and filmmakers we collaborate with, spotting connections others might overlook and approaching problems from unexpected angles. Extending this ethos, our inaugural New Cinema Forum, convened by Miranda Mungai, fosters transparency, solidarity, and mutual support—bringing artists, filmmakers, and practitioners together to explore how we can better support one another. In making ourselves vulnerable, we risk being misunderstood, yet compassion and humility are vital—a commitment to learning, listening, and fostering an environment where difficult conversations and artistic risks are embraced as part of a collaborative journey forward. This is our choice. Every screening, exhibition, and event is a moment to celebrate! I’m deeply proud of our work. There’s so much for you to enjoy in the days ahead.



With The Maltings closing for rebuilding on 31 May, this 20th Festival marks the end of an era while looking toward new futures. BFMAF continues to transform, and The Burr of Berwick—our vision for a new Festival home dedicated to community, discussion, and the moving image—has landed at 22 Bridge Street. It launches with Wendy Clarke and Kim Coleman’s *Endless Love Tapes*, creating a space for year-round workshops, screenings, and gatherings. All these developments are just some of the many things that make BFMAF possible—together with the invaluable work of my expert colleagues. Big love and thanks to them.

With deep appreciation for the commitment and welcome investment of our partners—Arts Council England, North East Combined Authority Events Scale-Up Fund, the BFI Audience Projects Fund using National Lottery funds, Northumberland County Council and Create Berwick, Community Foundation serving Tyne & Wear and Northumberland, the British Council, Sir James Knott Trust, Simpsons Malt, Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council, Joicey Trust, Hadrian Trust, North East Museums and the North East Youth Alliance, Berwick in Business, and Martins (the printers of this very catalogue)—I want to express my gratitude to The Maltings team and Festival Volunteers hosting us all.

Your interest, support, and the conversations that flow from our time together in Berwick give the Festival life. Being part of it is truly heartening and inspiring.

Here’s to twenty years of Berwick Film and Media Arts!

NOTES ON THE PROGRAMME



Written reflections opening out some of
the themes, questions and provocations
of the Festival programme.

ON THE EDGE, BALANCING

Marion Scemama's *Relax Be Cruel* by Al Hoyos-Twomey

Marion Scemama's (1983-2023) is set amidst the ruins of downtown Manhattan's once-bustling industrial waterfront, reduced to rubble in the wake of New York's postwar economic decline. Shot on black and white 16mm film in the summer of 1983 (but not completed until 2023), offers one of the only filmed accounts of the Pier 34 project (1983-84), the now-legendary takeover of a derelict Hudson River pier that was initiated in early 1983 by the artists Mike Bidlo and David Wojnarowicz. Seeking to escape the commercialism and competition that had begun to creep into the fledgling East Village art scene, Wojnarowicz and Bidlo invited their artist friends to join them in transforming this dilapidated, city-owned structure into a makeshift gallery and studio space. As word of mouth spread, more and more artists began venturing into Pier 34, filling its decaying interiors with murals, sculptures, installations, graffiti, and other site-specific interventions. Bidlo recalls that Pier 34 quickly became 'the ultimate alternative space, where anybody could come and do almost anything they wanted, if they had the time, the energy, and the effort'.¹ A series of photographs taken by Andreas Sterzing in the spring of 1983 not only capture 'the romantic appeal of [the pier's] ruinous state', as Fiona Anderson puts it, but also the sense of playful camaraderie that prevailed amongst the first wave of artists who worked there.²



By the time Scemama arrived at Pier 34 in the summer of 1983, this collaborative ethos had begun to dissipate. As the scene became more crowded, artists started jostling for space, and work was painted over; by this point, many artists, including Bidlo and Wojnarowicz, had left in search of quieter waterfront sites. captures the ambivalence of this moment, when Pier 34 appeared to be on the brink of a second obsolescence. Against a backdrop of junk-made sculptures and neo-expressionist murals (several of which have been partially covered with graffiti), the film follows an unnamed young punk as she spies on, chats to, fights with, or otherwise avoids the marginal figures who also haunt the pier, including anonymous cruisers, queer photographers, solitary performance artists, and other squatters. Comprising outtakes and unused rushes that were reassembled decades after the original working copy of the film was lost, drifts from scene to scene, with each new encounter offering glimpses of the different communities who move through the space. Throughout the film, Scemama foregrounds Pier 34's extraordinary materiality, lingering over its peeling walls, rotting floors, gaping windows, and the site-specific artworks that engage with these crumbling surfaces. Sound functions differently out here; the pier's cavernous interiors amplify the tiniest internal movements, while muffling the omnipresent rumble of downtown Manhattan. As if to underscore the pier's unique sonic character, the film ends with a car ride through a crowded, neon-soaked Times Square, whose propulsive post-punk soundtrack contrasts with the arrhythmic no-wave used for an earlier scene at the pier. In , Scemama depicts Pier 34 as a site of tremendous creative vitality that is also a condemned space, 'a place about death', suspended beyond the everyday spatio-temporal rhythms of the city.³

Scemama missed Wojnarowicz at Pier 34 that summer, but they were eventually introduced in late 1983 (a few months before the city demolished the pier). Almost immediately, Scemama recalls, there was 'a connection, something really strong' between them.⁴ Despite being unfamiliar with the artistic and cruising cultures that congregated in these sites, Scemama's response to Pier 34 chimed with that of Wojnarowicz, who had been cruising and working in and around the piers since the 1970s. Like 's main character, who describes a lifelong feeling of being 'always on the edge, balancing', the piers had long offered Wojnarowicz a space away from the alienation he felt as a queer working-class artist constrained within what he referred to as 'this killing machine called America'.⁵ Wojnarowicz's attraction to the waterfront as somewhere that was 'as far away from civilization as I could walk' echoes the film's protagonist, who describes Pier 34 as 'like being on the edge of the world, completely removed from society'.⁶ In diary entries, poetry, and an array of artistic projects, Wojnarowicz explored the queer erotic life of the piers, and their remarkable material, temporal, and sonic qualities. For him, the waterfront was characterised by 'a sense of unalterable chance and change, something outside the flow of regularity', where normative experiences of time and space became irrelevant, and he could embrace 'the sense of possibility in living life the way I've wanted to live it'.⁷

In the decades since was filmed, the Pier 34 project has become, in Scemama's words, 'emblematic of the boiling underground scene that exploded in the early 80s', offering 'the last space of freedom' before HIV/AIDS and gentrification radically transformed downtown Manhattan, decimating both the experimental artistic

practices and forms of queer and trans collectivity that flourished among the piers.⁸ To describe either Pier 34 or as ‘pre-AIDS’ or ‘pre-gentrification’ projects, however, is not just to ignore the fact that these forces were already increasingly visible by 1983 (as a shot of John Fekner’s mural suggests).⁹ Such a periodisation also overlooks these waterfront projects’ complex engagements with time and space, which reflected what Anderson calls the ‘strange temporality of this ruined place.’¹⁰ Throughout their collaborative relationship, which was cut short by Wojnarowicz’s death from AIDS-related illnesses in 1992, Scemama and Wojnarowicz continually examined the artistic and political importance of ‘breaking down barriers, whether of time, or history, or spaces of delineations.’¹¹ In (1989-2021), for example, cutting-edge camcorder technology offers a way of compressing the linear process of filming, editing, and viewing a recording into a single action. In (1989), physical touch between two men—an act made taboo by societal homophobia during the AIDS crisis—offers a conduit to the entire history of their bodies, from birth to death. As the closing scenes of make clear, Scemama and Wojnarowicz’s friendship was marked by a recurrent sense of being out of sync, with periods of intense intimacy punctuated by long stretches of estrangement. Viewed from the present, I like to think of Scemama’s as a collaboration with Wojnarowicz across time and space: initiated months prior to their meeting, completed decades after his death, and animated by a shared desire to make sense of the liminal space-time of downtown Manhattan’s ruined waterfront.

- 1 Mike Bidlo, ‘Interview with Mike Bidlo,’ interview by Sylvère Lotringer, in *David Wojnarowicz: A Definitive History of Five or Six Years on the Lower East Side*, ed. Giancarlo Ambrosino (New York: Semiotext(e), 2006), 29.
- 2 Fiona Anderson, *Cruising the Dead River: David Wojnarowicz and New York’s Ruined Waterfront* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2019), 83.
- 3 Marion Scemama, ‘Interview with Marion Scemama,’ interview by Sylvère Lotringer, in *David Wojnarowicz: A Definitive History of Five or Six Years on the Lower East Side*, ed. Giancarlo Ambrosino (New York: Semiotext(e), 2006), 123.
- 4 Scemama, 124.
- 5 David Wojnarowicz, *Close to the Knives: A Memoir of Disintegration* (Edinburgh, UK: Canongate, 2017), 117.
- 6 David Wojnarowicz, ‘The Compression of Time: An Interview with David Wojnarowicz,’ interview by Barry Blinderman, in *David Wojnarowicz: Tongues of Flame*, ed. Barry Blinderman (New York: Distributed Art Publishers, 1990), 54.
- 7 David Wojnarowicz, *In the Shadow of the American Dream: The Diaries of David Wojnarowicz*, ed. Amy Scholder (New York: Grove Press, 1999), 146, 128.
- 8 Marion Scemama, ‘Relax Be Cruel,’ Light Cone, accessed 11 February 2025, <https://lightcone.org/en/film-13788-relax-be-cruel>.
- 9 1983 falls within what the HIV/AIDS activists Alexandra Juhasz and Theodore Kerr call the First Silence (1981-1987), the earliest period of the ‘official’ HIV/AIDS epidemic in the U.S., during which the apathetic and uninformed response from government institutions and the media allowed a once possibly manageable health crisis to escalate into an epidemic. Alexandra Juhasz and Theodore Kerr, *We Are Having This Conversation Now: The Times of AIDS Cultural Production* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022), xiii.
- 10 Anderson, *Cruising the Dead River*, 6.
- 11 David Wojnarowicz, ‘Sylvère Lotringer / David Wojnarowicz,’ interview by Sylvère Lotringer, in *David Wojnarowicz: A Definitive History of Five or Six Years on the Lower East Side*, ed. Giancarlo Ambrosino (New York: Semiotext(e), 2006), 163.

Al Hoyos-Twomey is a PhD researcher in art history at Newcastle University. His research examines the role of cultural production in urban transformation, with a focus on the contested histories and geographies of Puerto Rican art and activism in New York’s Lower East Side in the 1980s.



A WHORE IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD, 2024



KAPOSI'S SARCOMA (A PLAGUE AND ITS SYMPTOMS), 2024



INTIMATE EXCHANGES

The Films of Ayanna Dozier by Hannah Bonner

A woman in a vinyl dress ascends an escalator. Against fluorescent white metro tiles, she rises out of the underground like a phoenix. A scarlet light. As she adjusts her stilettoed footing, she turns to glance at the camera behind her. The frame, almost in tandem, pans down her body, as if averting its eye from her own furtive stare. Later, after the camera follows the woman down a dark New York City street, she regards the camera's gaze without expression as she lights a Nat Sherman Black and Gold cigarette in close-up. Captured on Super8, the grainy stop lights and neon signs further accentuate her red dress: a costume that catches our attention – and holds it tight. And yet. Has our attention been solicited? Or endured? Is her look an invitation? Or a warning? What possibilities of violence lie both within – and beyond – the frame?

“I think intimacy is very political,” artist and writer Ayanna Dozier said last year at the 2024 Prismatic Ground Festival while in conversation with critic Amy Taubin and scholar Genevieve Yue. Dozier's sentiments on intimacy recall bell hooks's assertion, “The ‘gaze’ has always been political in my life” (*Black Looks: Race and Representation* 115). Themes of both intimacy and looking recur throughout Dozier's filmography, not just in her aforementioned 2022 short film *Nightwalker* which she directed, edited, produced, and also starred in as the titular woman walking alone at night.

While one might be tempted to evoke apparatus theory when watching Dozier's films, such an impulse would not be wholly accurate. While Dozier *is* interested in "the all-powerful gaze of the camera" (Sue Thornham 54) and the cinematic apparatus, she's equally interested in subverting that power. Dozier's filmography celebrates Black Femmes and queer desire, while also interrogating the politics of the gaze and the transactional intimacy inherent to most sex work. As a result, her films are less interested in a nameless, faceless spectator, than in an embodied and social audience. Filmed almost exclusively on Super 8 (with the exceptions of *Softer* (2020) and *A Whore in the House of the Lord* (2025) on 16mm) Dozier's films underscore the physical materiality of bodies, capital, and celluloid.

Unlike Classical Hollywood films that historically render (white) women as passive objects to be-looked-at, in Dozier's films some actors look back. In *Bounded Intimacy* (2024), the camera scans the New York City skyline in an aerial shot before zooming in on a woman idling on the sidewalk. The camera subsequently follows her as she crosses the street out of sight. The camera's movements accelerate, attempting to see where she's gone before settling on another woman (or the same one?) donning a red tube top. While the camera positions us as voyeurs in this opening aerial sequence, Dozier then cuts to street level. The handheld camera and the woman approach one another. She stops, captured in a long shot, and poses. She knows she's being watched. The pageantry she performs is that she likes it, as much as she likes exchanging that gaze in return. The look becomes a kind of currency passed back and forth. Whether the enjoyment is authentic is ambiguous, but nonetheless, her labor is clear.

In the silent *Let's Make Love and Listen to Death from Above* (2023), the camera pans across what appears to be a loading dock, the black and white footage grainy and flecked. A pair of legs come into view, as two frantic hands clutch each other's bodies. The camera zooms in on their scuffed sneakers, their jean clad calves. Watching this sequence, I'm reminded of Thomas Edison's *The Kiss* (1896) or the Eadweard Muybridge's *Animal Locomotion* project, reminded of how early cinema animated the magical possibilities, to quote Spinoza, "of what a body can do." But while Muybridge's ethnographic eye had an, at times, prurient (and exploitive) interest in human activity, Dozier's actors revel in their erotic hunger. The camera pans up the men's bodies to a close up of their overexposed faces under a lone lightbulb. They put their fingers in each other's mouths. They suck face. They grope.

In a white supremacist, patriarchal, and capitalist society, witnessing the delight of queer cruising feels like one version of utopia. Public sex in a surveilled state feels like another – or, at least, an ebullient 'fuck you' to the Man. To return to Dozier's earlier sentiments, intimacy is indeed politically defined and understood within these films. In *It's Just Business Baby* (2023) a client and working woman swap roles - and spit - halfway through the film, complicating the exchange, or boundaries, of power. In *Forever Your Girl* (2022), Dozier, clad in PVC heels and a blond wig, approaches a carousel kiddie ride. Her glittering gold nails caress the animal's heads, a gesture that feels at once erotic and plaintive. She then rides the small machine, as if a child, in an act that feels private, personal, and, above all, moving.

If we return to *Nightwalker* as a film that exemplifies these themes and motifs of intimacy, the gaze, and power, Dozier's

voice over midway through states, “In New York, prostitution is a class B misdemeanor, punishable by up to three months in jail and a fine of \$500.” Dozier’s voice over then reads aloud the state’s definition of prostitution, an edict that disproportionately targets Black Femmes and, therefore, perpetuates a racialized criminal stereotype. Onscreen, Dozier and the camera consider one another with passive curiosity, neither affirming nor denying whatever assumptions the audience might be making of her character in real time.

How do we construct desire (and where does that construction crumble?) when two bodies come face to face, trading currency and fantasies in an iterative loop? Dozier’s films complicate our understanding of sex and sex work, the oldest act and profession of all time. In her films, bodies are objects of desire, as well as subjects with their own desires and oppositional gaze. These films, returning to bell hooks, “imagine new transgressive possibilities for the formulation of identity” (130). For now, these identities still exist within systems of institutional violence, but that doesn’t mean they don’t also experience ecstatic abandon, longing, or play. The pleasure of Dozier’s work is how she displays, then subverts, various relationships of power, thus activating new potentials for intimacy amongst her actors, and her audience.

Hannah Bonner is a writer, film programmer, and educator. She has been National Book Critics Circle Emerging Critics Fellow (2023-2024), is Creative Nonfiction Editor for Brink, Film Editor for TriQuarterly, and a CLAS Postgraduate Visiting Writer in Creative Nonfiction at the University of Iowa. *Another Woman* (EastOver Press 2024) is her first book.



The alarms at cancer, poppers and gay men

...ality in the mid-1970s between two
...singl...cally active cells in
... There are too many cells
...suppression antibody production
...important as foreign invaders
...or antibody.
...that gay men have and
...to fall victim to a rare cancer
...infections. We know that
...patients show signs of a viral
...and that their natural defenses
... We also know

...ever having used, although I suspect he
...period ending in early 1977 in his life in
...1977 - three years before the disease
...event" (Lancet, 1982 L 1014, my italics).
...Another report (Lancet, 1982 L 908)
...states that two French victims of Kaposi's
...both gay and with the same immunodeficiency
...history. Had never used any needle. In
...other words, poppers are not always in-
...planted in other immune deficiencies or
...Kaposi's sarcoma.

2) One reason for this fact could under-
...the statistical evidence. Both in
...French report refer

“I AM A BIT FED UP WITH AIDS, AIDS, AIDS!”¹

***Stuart Marshall and AIDS Activist Video 1.0 + 2.0* (extract) by Conal McStravick**

The year 1989 was a frenetic year for Stuart Marshall (1949-1993), video artist, lecturer, curator and AIDS community activist, who in the early-to-mid 1980s innovated the AIDS video activist form.

In March that year, Marshall took four weeks out of his teaching schedule at Chelsea College of Art to undertake a four-week residency with Video In, Vancouver. During the residency, Marshall would curate video programmes and talks, including his recently debuted Channel 4 “OUT” documentary *Desire* (1989) and *Screen Memories*, a public lecture on video art and psychoanalysis. But most significantly, he would begin work on a new video commission, *Robert Marshall* (1991). By contrast, Marshall’s AIDS ennui in the opening quote, disguised complex personal motives and an increasing political urgency before travelling to Canada². In unforeseen ways, 1989 would become more frantic still for Marshall. And yet, this would inspire his next approach to AIDS video.

Video In was one of Canada’s founding and most influential media centres. In 1983, Marshall had represented Great Britain during screenings at Video In for the touring International Festival of Video Art. He was invited, in part, as co-founder of London Video Arts (founded 1976, now LUX), the UK’s foremost video arts organisation³. On the Vancouver leg of the tour, Marshall appeared on Gayblevision⁴ a lesbian and gay cable TV series to discuss “Gay T.V. in England”. In footage, recovered in the last decade, Marshall discusses a dearth of U.K. gay and lesbian TV and his new AIDS video work *Kaposi’s Sarcoma (A Plague and Its Symptoms)*, being screened at the festival.

In this interview, a unique insight into AIDS video at its founding moment, Marshall offered a pointed critique of the UK media response to AIDS, which he described as no more than “a sophisticated form of queer bashing.”⁵ Marshall shared an impassioned commentary on the early gay community response to AIDS in the UK with the Vancouver audience. A city like so many others, just coming to grips with its own community response to the burgeoning crisis⁶. After touring Canada, *Kaposi’s Sarcoma* was shown once in the UK at the *Sexual Meditations* event at The 33, Luton⁷, shortly after Marshall’s return. It was then lost to the archive for over 40 years.

(...)

Fast forward to April 2024, when I finally relocated *Kaposi’s Sarcoma*, Marshall’s missing AIDS video work, during doctoral research at Saw Gallery, Ottawa.

Immediately, it was possible to see insights into Marshall's foundational, intertextual and intersectional AIDS video — that resonated with the later *Robert Marshall*. I located an autofiction sensibility in Marshall's social justice, AIDS video activism 1.0; even more present in the autobiographical and alternative health-themed *Robert Marshall*, Marshall's AIDS video activism 2.0. In *Kaposi's Sarcoma*, Marshall reads from a medical journal article. The article, "Kaposi's Sarcoma in Homosexual Men— A Report of Eight Cases" from *The Lancet* was the UK's first medical report on AIDS, published in 1981. Its title cites the name of a soft tissue cancer, one of the first visible signs of the newly observed immune disease impacting gay men in urban centres of the United States. The subtitle quotes the early queer theorist and AIDS activist Guy Hocquenghem (which in turn cites Artaud): "Syphilis is not just a virus but an ideology too; it forms a phantasy whole, like the plague and its symptoms."⁸

Equally, Marshall's video text narrative taps *Living with Kaposi's Sarcoma and AIDS*, a 1982 article by Canadian AIDS activist Michael Lynch. Wherein Lynch saw in the AIDS response—chiefly, the re-medicalisation and re-pathologisation of gay men—a complete set-back to gay liberation itself.⁹ Marshall enhances this view, turning the tables on a medical consultation-cum-ethical debate with an AIDS clinician, the clone-ish, sparkling Richard Wells. The action takes place in a gay bar, crossing the cruising "look" with the "gaze" of surveillance. The microscope lens of the medical gaze focuses the tyranny of idealised nature, previously seen in images of TV nature docs, wherein medically examined gay men are deemed to be "unnatural" and are ultimately left for dead. The piece concludes with a vivid, nocturnal reflection on what it feels like to live through the first, violent waves of AIDS homophobia.

In *Robert Marshall*, produced between 1989-1991, Marshall took time during his Video-In residency to visit family on Vancouver Island. A motive for his trip is revealed as Marshall watches home movies of his conventional 1950s childhood in Stockport; including images of his deceased father, Robert, for whom the video is named. We are told that Stuart Marshall has "no memory" of his father. A fact explained as he summons the vivid and traumatic scene of his father's death, which he witnessed as a child. The action switches to a domestic kitchen. Marshall reveals that he has been HIV antibody positive since 1986. He juxtaposes his alternative healthcare routine of herbs and acupuncture treatment with a telephone consultation with a San Francisco MD. They discuss the pros and cons of the then controversial AIDS medication, AZT, which Marshall declined as an anti-AZT activist. During his Vancouver trip, Marshall became mired in a public dispute between Positively Healthy, his alternative AIDS healthcare support group, and investigative journalist Duncan Campbell for *New Statesman*. Campbell claimed that Positively Healthy were promoting quack medicine¹⁰. A counter defence played out in LGBTQ+ newspaper, The Pink Paper, that led to litigation between the two papers¹¹ and divided the community.

In 1988, Stuart Marshall was jokingly "fed up with AIDS"; no doubt a consequence of the nauseating culture wars of *Section 28* and AIDS stigma spurred by the doom-laden "Don't Die of Ignorance" adverts of the UK government's moralising AIDS response. By 1989, whether fighting for his medical rights, or against environmental harm and ecocide,¹² Marshall and the wider LGBTQ+ and AIDS activist community had found new zeal and deeper solidarity. He stated: 'I will decide the route that I follow. I refuse anyone,

be they pharmaceutical, industry, doctor, political spokesman, or journalist to tell me how to live. I will live and die on my own terms.”¹³

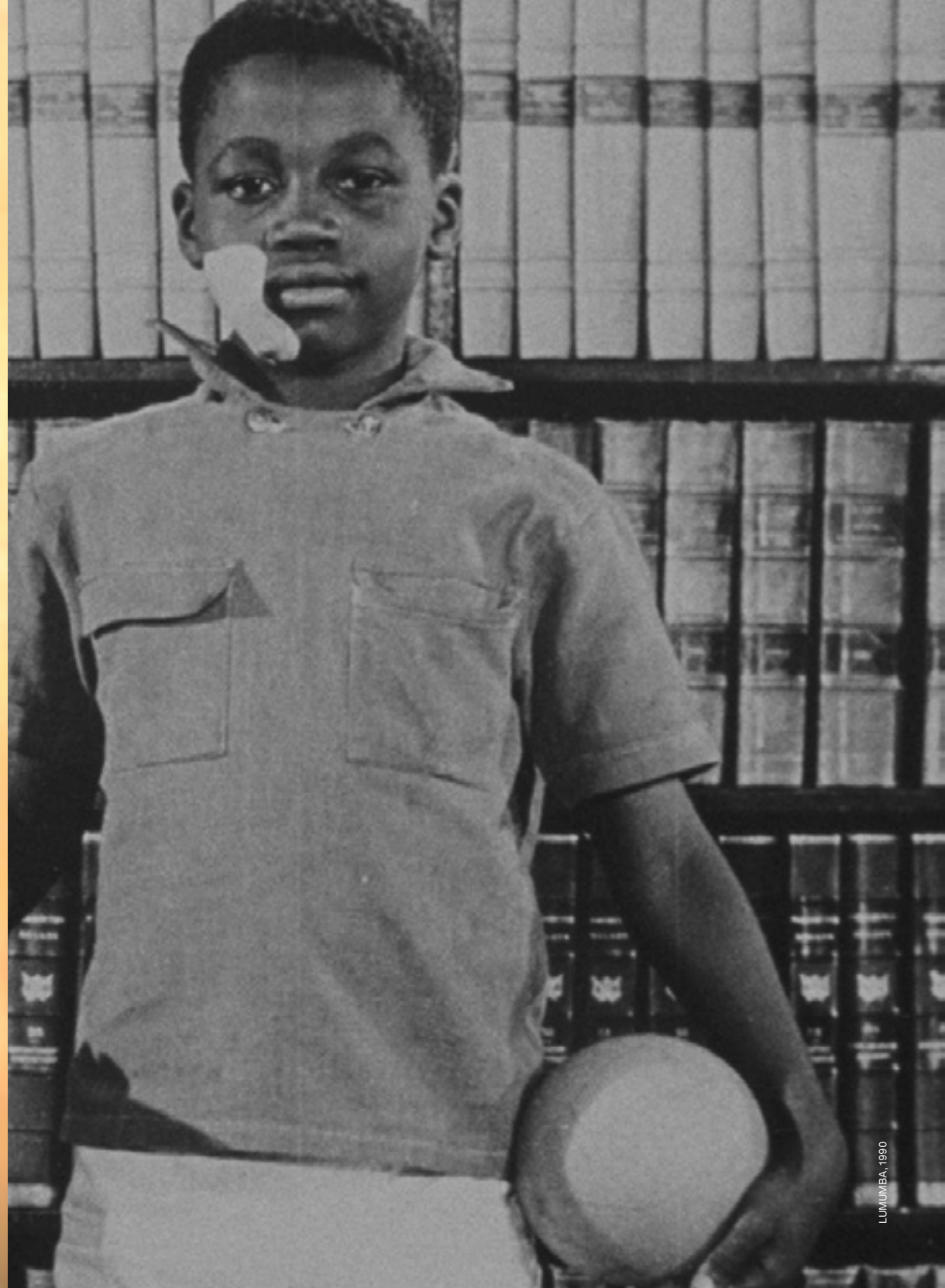
Stuart Marshall died in 1993, aged 44, from AIDS complications. When he fell ill, he was travelling in California and Mexico, researching for a new TV commission titled *Keep Taking the Medicine*, on increasing treatment choices for people with AIDS. Seen together for the first time, *Kaposi's Sarcoma* and *Robert Marshall* illustrate a developing ethics and poetics of collective and “holistic” community resistance, that Marshall located through adversity. These are works that, beyond his lifetime, compel Marshall's audiences to forge new solidarities and recollectivise LGBTQIA+ and AIDS activism.

- 1 Stuart Marshall quoted in a letter to Karen Knights at Video In, July 31st, 1988.
- 2 See David Curtis, *A History of Artists' Film and Video in Britain, 1897-2004*, BFI, 2006, p.274.
- 3 The Saw Gallery International Festival of Video Art toured Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver in April/May 1983.
- 4 *Gayblevision* (1980-1986), was a lesbian and gay magazine series on Cable 10 West End TV in Vancouver.
- 5 Stuart Marshall, “Gay T.V. in England”, *Gayblevision* (Episode 37), TX: 4th and 18th July 1983.
- 6 The first AIDS Information Forum in Vancouver was on March 12th, 1983, two months previously.
- 7 *Sexual Meditations* was organised by Yve Lomax, Stuart Marshall and Steve Dwoskin, Saturday 28th April 1983 at The 33, Luton.
- 8 Guy Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire*, 1978, p.70.
- 9 Michael Lynch, “Living with Kaposi's Sarcoma and AIDS”, *The Body Politic*, No. 88, November 1982.
- 10 See Duncan Campbell, “Positively Unhealthy”, *New Statesman*, September 29th, 1989. Further 1989 *New Statesman* articles by Duncan Campbell titled “Sharp Practice”, “Let Them Eat Shit” and “Pretty Poison”, expand upon the initial accusations.
- 11 Marshall eloquently summed up his feelings in the *Positively Healthy News* article “Don't Blame Me— Reflections on guilt and responsibility”, Issue 2, *Positively Healthy News*, March 1989.
- 12 Stuart Marshall, *ibid*.
- 13 Stuart Marshall speaking at the OXAIDS “Promoting Our Health Conference”, September 11th, 1989, quoted in “Witch Hunt”, *The Pink Paper*, September 16th, 1989.

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KAPOSI'S SARCOMA (A PLAGUE AND ITS SYMPTOMS), 2024



LUMUMBA, 1990

THE PATH TO RESONANCE

By Eri Makihara

The pages that follow are an edited version of the original text
The Path To Resonance by Eri Makihara.

About Eri Makihara

It is very difficult to put myself into words. Especially when I think in Japanese, my second language.

What I can say for sure is that the formation of thoughts that constitute myself are greatly influenced by experiences in my early years.

I remember going to the local ward office with my Deaf mother. There was a sign at the counter that read “Disability Counter”. As we headed there I asked my mother, “Who is disabled?” and she signed, “We are.”

I felt a tremendous sense of discomfort and repulsion, thinking, “Are we disabled?”. I remember vividly the intense strangeness I felt in that moment about the gap in perception between me and the rest of the world, that deaf people fit the category of “disabled.”

I think that was probably when the pursuit of my own independent sense of self was born.



About Music

My family consists of four people: my Deaf parents and my hearing-impaired sister - and our house was always filled with music.

That's because my father, who is Deaf by any standards, still has some hearing so always listens to music with headphones on. CDs of various singers were scattered all over the house, on the shelves and on the floor. Sometimes I would borrow my father's headphones and listen to them at the maximum volume, or I would go to the CD store and fall in love with a cover. I remember listening to the CD of Kubota Toshinobu's "LA• LA• LA LOVESONG" that he bought for me.

To me it was often just a rough sensation of sound.

It is said that listeners can be emotionally stirred by sound. I could always sense the presence of sound from vibrations, but I was never moved in this way. That made me feel deeply uncomfortable, but at the same time I didn't want to force myself to assimilate with people from a different world to me.

In music classes, I really liked the alto recorder. When I blew into it, I could feel the vibrations of air inside the tube directly on my fingers. The more delicate the vibrations, the more comfortable they felt, and the more delicate and sensitive my playing, the higher the marks the music teacher would give me. However, if I wanted to play in unison with friends I had to practice a lot, using my eyes and body to grasp and match the rhythm, speed, and timing of everyone else. Playing harmonies, in particular, proved to be tense moments for me; I didn't feel comfortable, unable to let my heart surrender to the vibrations transmitted to my fingers.

Since leaving school I don't have much interest in aural music, except for research born out of intellectual curiosity. However, I am attracted to "music-like" things, particularly in cinema. There's a moment in Takeshi Kitano's *A Scene at the Sea* (1992) where a man and woman walk continuously with their surfboards without saying anything. When I first watched this film with Japanese subtitles I fell asleep because there were so few lines. But the scene has always stuck in my mind and sometimes the image comes back to me. When I think about it now as an adult, I am moved by the fact that a movie like this exists.

Accumulating these experiences, somewhere along the line I came to feel that the essence of music for me is not sound. And I always fall back on this sense of the world that I felt when I was a small child, when I knew nothing.

About Deaf Music

The first time I discovered that there was something musical about sign language was when I attended a sign language poetry workshop by Shizue Sazawa, a former member of the Japan Deaf Theater. I didn't know about sign language poetry before this because the school for the deaf that I attended was led by hearing people and the use of sign language was prohibited. The only thing we learned in school was the culture and history of hearing people.

When I saw Sazawa perform a song called "Hometown" in Japanese sign language I was deeply moved. She didn't just sign directly from the Japanese words, but translated them into Japanese sign language grammar and expressed it in a way that

made it immediately relatable. Her expression of the scene still comes vividly to my mind - moving her index finger around the side of her head and shaking all the fingers of one hand. It was certainly sign language, but what I saw was something additional that was not language, something like a melody. The experience was an awakening for me. It made me wonder, what is the essence of music?

When I searched the Internet for videos of sign language poetry, I realised I could not feel the same “music” from them that I felt from Sazawa. I was receiving the message of the poetry based on its linguistic translation and I wanted to see its non-verbal base - the beauty of the form it took before it was put into words.

I have come to recognise that the movement of hands and facial expressions, the connection between the shape of hands and their next shape, the flow, the interval, the tempo, the breathing, and many other elements combine in a complex way to give sign language a “hand quality” rather than a “voice quality”.

As such, I have become fascinated by the world of non-verbal language within language.

I Stayed and Faced the Wall

The idea of “Deaf music” came to me when I was a short way into pursuing my ambition to be a film director. I was excited to face the moving memory I had witnessed watching Sazawa and answer my own question of “Is there really no music in the world of the deaf?” through filmmaking.

I was convinced that there must be a whole world of Deaf music, that there are deaf people all over the world who play it with their hands. This is what I wanted to film, a form that was purely enjoyable and empathetic all by itself.

I began by reading a lot of books about music theory and attempting to “translate” classical music into visual forms. As I learned about the combinations of sounds that create consonance, harmony and dissonance, I thought that these must also be analogous in the hand shapes of sign language. However, a wall awaited me.

The project I had in mind was based totally on auditory music, and the cooperation of hearing people who understood it their way. They could not imagine the music-like sound created by sign language.

This frustrated me because I knew it existed. Even when I interviewed various Deaf people, they told me that they understood the idea of visual music in sign language but did not think of it as music in the strictest sense. So I came to the conclusion that I should present Deaf music completely in my own way. I am a filmmaker, not a choreographer nor a musician. I was at a loss as to how to construct Deaf music from this material, so I decided to sculpt it from my own physical experiences and trust that I don't always know, or always need to know, how to explain them to others.

Eri Makihara is a filmmaker working with experimental film and installation exploring the “eloquence” of the human body and space, and the invisible oppressions that exist beyond them.

THE TEMPORAL ENTANGLEMENTS OF ASSIA DJEBAR'S THE ZERDA AND THE SONGS OF FORGETTING

By Philip Rizk

*"The fox runs through the land of the lion with his tail in the air.
The shepherd has become sultan."*

In 1982, on the 20th anniversary of Algerian independence, Algerian novelist and filmmaker Assia Djébar released *The Zerda*, and the *Songs of Forgetting*, a film that digs deep into the French colonization of the Maghreb and the hauntings of anticolonial struggles. The film reappropriates images from the colonial-era archives of Pathé and Gaumont, using remnants that colonial image-makers deemed useless for their propaganda films. French colonial authorities had long used the image in their visual warfare against the national liberation movement in Algeria, where they



carried out a scorched earth campaign against the indigenous population for over 130 years.¹ As soon as the French navy fleet landed on Algeria's shores on June 13, 1830, and before the first town had even been conquered, the colonizers quickly worked to depict their narrative of the conquest in text and image.

*"The battle is not yet joined, they are not yet even in sight of their prey, but they are already anxious to ensure a pictorial record of the campaign."*²



In 1962, after eight years of revolutionary struggle, Algerians liberated their country from their foreign occupier. And yet, in *The Zerda*, and the *Songs of Forgetting*, Djebbar depicts neither the war of independence, nor the leaders of the Front de libération nationale (FLN) who were still in power when the film premiered.

Yesterday's revolutionary heroes emerged twenty years later as neocolonialists claiming to represent the revolution's ideals while legislating the dispossession of large numbers of men and almost all women.³ *The Zerda*, and the *Songs of Forgetting* is an affront to these resistance fighters-turned-politicians who betrayed the revolution in spirit and in letter. When the film debuted, a clique of male filmmakers, whose mission was the circulation of an uncritical nationalist discourse of revolution and independence, shunned it, and state-owned Algerian Television, which had produced the film, tried to prevent it from being screened in international film festivals. The reception of *Zerda* among Algeria's cultural establishment revealed that the post-independence state had, after all, inherited colonial structures of image-making and censorship. While anticolonial in its narrative of the past, the state emerged as brazenly neocolonial in the present.

*"Your heart, O France, is merciless...
You beat us as if we were a drum."*

And today, it is another heart that is merciless.
Today,

*"they surveil,
they watch,
they review the troops,
they inaugurate."*

A partnership maintained.

“The past is never past,” Djébar told Josie Fanon in an interview. “Only if you have a clear view of your relationship with the past can you come back to the present.”⁴ While the men compete for the leading place on the podium of the FLN, a single woman draws a line of coloniality from the past straight into the present. Saidiya Hartman expresses this ethos as “temporal entanglement, where the past, the present, and the future are not discrete and cut off from one another.” “Rather,” she says, “we live the simultaneity of that entanglement.”⁵ And so, Assia Djébar’s is not a Third Cinema that celebrates post-independence state structures, for these have revealed themselves to be a farce. Hers is more akin to a Fourth Cinema, “a cinema that works against all modes of ideological and narratological hegemony.”⁶ *Zerda* references towns, villages, and cities all across North Africa without setting borders; it paints a picture of the greater Maghreb in its pre-colonial form with no mention of Algeria, the nation-state.

During the revolution, Frantz Fanon and Assia Djébar were for a short time colleagues at *Al-Moudjahid*, the FLN’s official organ. The root word of the magazine’s name *ja-ha-da*—struggling, striving, vigorous effort—is a verb that defines both of their lives. After Frantz’s death, Djébar maintained a close friendship with Josie Fanon. It was Djébar who wrote of the FLN’s complicity in Frantz’s murder—a political complicity, not a physical one. It was Djébar who received Josie’s call after protests rose up against the post-independence government in the winter of 1988. It was Djébar who wrote Josie’s obituary.

“Night after night we suffocate her, suffocate her in leaden sleep.”

In *The Zerda*, and the *Songs of Forgetting*, it is the sound, the music, that does the talking; the timbre of voices disrupts the intentions of the colonizer’s images of subjugation. Djébar described her first film, *La Nouba des femmes du Mont Chenoua* (1977), as producing “sound-images.” Keziah Poole describes Djébar’s second film, *Zerda*, as a practice of “sound against image.”⁷ The “gaze of the ear” subverts the “feast of the gaze.”⁸ Philosopher Martin Heidegger considered the “fundamental event of the modern age” to be “the conquest of the world as picture.”⁹ It was through the colonial image that colonizers sought to restore “a little order to disordered souls.”¹⁰ Modernity conquered the eye, but the ear is a revolution. And in Djébar’s *Zerda*, the “complete disorder” of decolonization enters through the ear, disrupting the given order, setting memory in motion, a decolonial cinema “bring[ing] representation to crisis.”¹¹ The film overwhelms the viewer with “a curious dissociation in which, with his eyes wide open where he listens, he surprises himself as if blind to the image.”¹²

In *The Zerda*, and the *Songs of Forgetting*, “a growing chorus of disembodied voices—one of them Josie Fanon’s—permeates the images with protestations, poetry, and song, overwriting their significance and dismantling their ‘silencing’ power.”¹³ Djébar does not recuperate “Algerian women’s voices to make up the gaps in the national/colonial archive,” Poole writes. “Djébar’s films dwell in the radical potential of irrecoverability, exploring new possibilities of feminine resistance from without re/presentation and History.”¹⁴ Her films undermine “the continued submission to its single memory of the peoples whom the West has subordinated in the course of its rise to world hegemony” and show us how we can “fly in the face of a reality, even where one is condemned by, and in, it.”¹⁵

Djebar celebrates not an anticolonial struggle that has as its outcome a neocolonial state but the spirit of a deeper struggle that has long been silenced.

“Brothers of Abd el-Krim and Omar, have you forgotten your ancestors’ thawra?”



She asks. But it is the sisters, the mothers, the grandmothers who have not.

“Documentary, as I understand it, is a way of proceeding,” Djebar tells us in an interview in 1978.”¹⁶ In *The Zerda*, and the Songs of Forgetting, Assia Djebar reminds us of the permanent revolution and the need for its permanent renewal.

Will we heed the call of this radical feminist voice and find in the past an inspiration and then a way to proceed?

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- 2 Djebar, Assia. 1993. *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* (p.8). Portsmouth: Heinemann. 1985
- 3 Brownhill, Leigh. 2009. *Land, Food, Freedom: Struggles for the Gendered Commons in Kenya, 1870 to 2007*, (p 6 & 25). Trenton: Africa World Press. 2009.
- 4 Fanon, Jose. 1977. *A Woman, a Film, a Different Gaze* translated by Sis Matth  . 2021.
- 5 Hartman, Saidiya. 2021. *On working with archives: An interview with writer Saidiya Hartman* in *The Creative Independent*. 2021.
- 6 Khanna, Ranjana. 2021. Cited in Keziah M. Poole, *To the rhythm of feminine memory: Decoloniality and dissonance in the films of Assia Djebar*,” in *Expressions maghr  bines*, Volume 20, Number 1 (p.81). 2021.
- 7 Poole, Keziah M. 2021. *To the rhythm of feminine memory: Decoloniality and dissonance in the films of Assia Djebar*,” in *Expressions maghr  bines*, Volume 20, Number 1 (p.90). 2021.
- 8 Spillers, Hortense J. 2003. *Peter’s Pans: Eating in the Diaspora* In *Black, White, and in Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2003.
- 9 Heidegger, Martin. 1950. *The Age of the World Picture* in *Off the Beaten Track* (p.71). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2002.
- 10 Hafez, Sabry. 1995: *Shifting Identities in Maghribi Cinema: The Algerian Paradigm* in *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, No. 15, *Arab Cinematics: Toward the New and the Alternative* (p.46). 1995
- 11 Khanna, Ranjana (n 6) p.81.
- 12 Calle-Gruber. 2021. Cited in Keziah M. Poole *une curieuse dissociation o  ,   carquillant les yeux l   o   il tend l’oreille, il se surprend comme aveugle    l’image* (p.90). 2021
- 13 Poole, Keziah (n 7) p.89.
- 14 *ibid* 82.
- 15 Wynter, Sylvia. 2020. *Africa, the West and the Analogy of Culture: The Cinematic Text after Man in Symbolic Narratives / African Cinema: Audiences, Theory and the Moving Image* (p29-30) June Giovanni (ed.). London: Palgrave Macmillan. 2000.
- 16 Djebar, Assia. 1978. *Assia Djebar, Wassyla Tamzali A first look* translated by Sis Matth  . 2021.

Philip Rizk’s upcoming edited volume *Neocolonialism and its Dismantling* puts in conversation Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* with the waves of mobilization that have moved across the Arabic-speaking world in the past 15 years, marked by the chant “the people want the fall of the system.” The book is a re-reading of Fanon’s final testament from the global neocolony, with an eye on strategies of its undoing.



LUMUNBA, 1990



ARCHIPELAGO OF EARTHEN BONES — TO BUNYA, 2024



They say that the civilized eat each other

NEW CINEMA AWARDS



Distinctive contemporary filmmaking from around the world, celebrating artists who enliven our relationship with cinema. Works in this programme push beyond boundaries of genre, form and convention to engage the medium as a tool for generative discussion.

a river holds a perfect memory

Dir. Hope Strickland | Jamaica, United Kingdom | 2024 | 17' | English

UK PREMIERE



Water, labour, migration and diasporic memory coalesce in a transporting essay film connecting Jamaica and the UK. Assemblages of archival footage, 16mm and LIDAR scans mobilise water as a medium through which to connect disparate people across the flow of time and against the persistence of colonial erasures.

Verdant, watery landscapes of Jamaica shine with radiance in Hope Strickland's latest work, contrasting with archival footage of industrial Britain to explore different potentialities of water as a transporting and transformational force. Its soft gurgle is accompanied by chimes and birdsong, cultivating an atmosphere of gentle repose. As we journey down a river led by a tour guide, we are invited to listen by our captain. He asks "do we hold ancestral memories in our bodies?"; an invitation to reflect on diaspora and dislocation. (Myriam Mouflih)

A Thousand Waves Away

Dir. Helena Wittmann | Germany | 2025 | 10' | English

UK PREMIERE



The people are in turmoil. The ground from which their enchanted garden grows is trembling. Between bushes and trees, flowerbeds and fountains, everyone has lost their way. Their eyes search for paths, their hands try to remember. Sometimes they spot something. Sometimes they listen. They catch a whisper, a faint promise. They follow the petals downstream. Further.

Around an urban park lake, the film gathers images that shapeshift between matter and omen, slowly dissolving any clear coordinates. What forces simmer and erupt when narrative is minimised, when spaces and people share only subtle or sudden gestures charged with unexplained intensity? This magnetic work echoes Helena Wittman's distinctive search for a sense of immensity (of space and of feeling) refracted in delicate signs and moments that feel both attentively choreographed and visceral. It continues her growing body of works that move along with water (*Human Flowers of Flesh*, *Wildness of Waves*, *DRIFT*, *Tender Noise at Night*) and her close collaborations with composer and sound designer Nika Son, whose pulsating score animates all movement in astonishing flows. (Ilinca Vânău)

An Oscillating Shadow (Una Sombra Oscilante)

Dir. Celeste Rojas Mugica | Argentina, Chile, France | 2024 | 77' | Spanish with English Subtitles

UK PREMIERE



Photographer and filmmaker Celeste Rojas Mugica confronts the political weight of images, revisiting her father's photographic archive developed in exile in Latin America following activist involvement during the Pinochet dictatorship. 51 years later, this gentle, complex and visually resourceful account of densely traumatic history conjures an intimate family portrait from the dark room - opening spaces for reflection and resistance.

An Oscillating Shadow retraces the steps of a photographer in constant movement between borders - some real, some imaginary - capturing a world of alibis. Closing their eyes, daughter and father unravel a jigsaw of memories using the familiar language of childhood games and hand gestures. Seemingly simple acts like counting gain a more complicated density; an extra second in the developer and the image is lost to the chemicals, a hesitation in the framing and the scene is completely, fatally, changed. Blending poetry and forensics image analysis, Rojas Mugica enters and exits images; an Ecuadorian border crossing, a funeral without a body, or a graffiti in progress where the letters V, I, C potentially anticipate the word victory. A luminous feature debut that speaks to a prolonged sense of collective mourning. (Ane Lopez)

Archipelago of Earthen Bones — To Bunya

Dir. Malena Szlam | Australia, Canada | 2024 | 20' | None

UK PREMIERE



Mapping the lines of tectonic plates, Malena Szlam follows a constellation of ancient landforms that contour the shifting face of our environment. Eroded vestiges of volcanic activity and relics of the Gondwana Rainforest trace a path along the central eastern ranges of Australia, illuminated in the afterglows of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga-Ha'apai eruption in 2022. Shot on 16mm and edited with multiple in-camera exposures, the film's environmental evocations are further deepened by field recordings and sonic atmospherics from artist Lawrence English.

Celestial bodies and mountain ranges conjure the rhythms of deep time. Szlam's film finds its intensity in that which exceeds human lifespans, an excess that is neither remote nor transcendental, but omnipresent, embodied, and dazzling. As with her past work, superimpositions open an invitation to consider the multiplicity of each discrete form. Across the homelands of Aboriginal and Zenadh Kes Islander peoples, composite visions shimmer with life - a vast, elemental life, bound to matter, but unbound from a logic of linear time. Through this unruly alchemy and amplified latent sounds, places are sensed as geological and cosmic vibrations. Some oscillate, seemingly unendingly, and others flash for what we modestly call a second - emanating astounding forces hidden in plain sight. (IV)

BAN♥ITS

Dir. Omar Chowdury | Bangladesh | 2024 | 24' | English Subtitles
UK PREMIERE

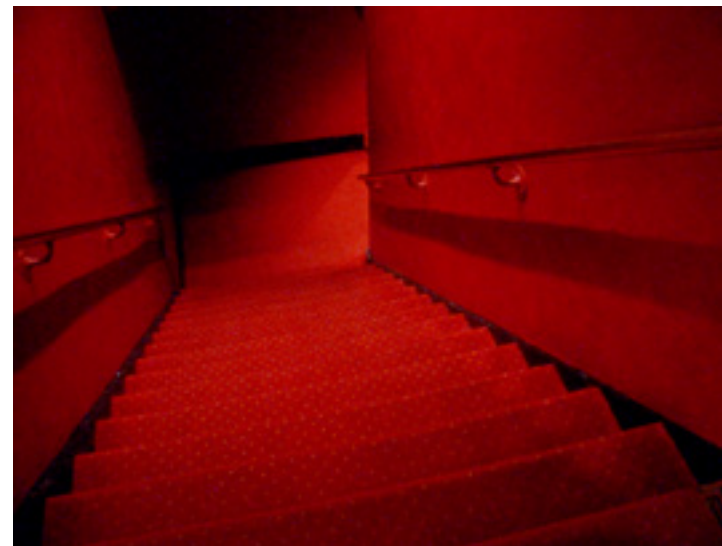


Near the lawless eastern border of Bangladesh and India, a diasporic artist returns with a band of washed up ban♥its obsessed with Heath Ledger's Joker. Comically re-enacting their glorified pasts, they confront divergent histories and philosophies of peasant banditry and political resistance in its many unexpected contexts. The resulting para-fiction questions notions of authorship, morality, and representation. When the art world comes calling, who are the real ban♥its?

Originally produced for the Busan Biennale 2024 under the theme 'Seeing in the Dark', *Ban♥its* oscillates between order and chaos in a luminous, highly musical ritual led by an arrogant and witty former bandit in the Habiganj District. Omar Chowdury's playfulness is apparent from the opening scene which overlaps a modified quote from Mao Tse-tung's *On Guerrilla Warfare* with unapologetic dancing. The colourful inverted imagery brings aesthetic vibrancy whilst also serving as an inventive tool for anonymity and a nod to the eerie nature of military thermal cameras. In contrast with the bravado of the bandits, Chowdury stays out of sight playing the role of a shy, insecure artist in a self aware and refreshing critique of artmaking and privilege. (AL)

Full Out

Dir. Sarah Ballard | United States | 2025 | 14' | French with English Subtitles
UK PREMIERE



In 19th century Paris, at the Salpêtrière Hospital, patients were hypnotized on stage to reproduce the symptoms of hysteria for public audiences. Over a century later, high school cheerleaders are fainting en masse... *Full Out* is the first in a suite of films investigating intricate threads between historical accounts of mass hysteria, the body's capacity for knowing, and ways in which collective resonance can both fracture and heal.

Fractions of spectral images from *Iconographie Photographique de la Salpêtrière (1875-1879)* - a medical journal intended as a visual reference for psychiatric diagnosis - seep into the film's opening mimicking a collective involuntary motor behavior, a synchronised blinking. A piano is scrupulously tuned, its strings tensing and loosening, and the spotlight of a theatre illuminates an unusual clinical spectacle of vulnerability and rebellion. 'At times there seems to be two persons in me, I am at once actor and spectator' claims the voice of the performer. Through exquisite visual abstraction and a deeply electrifying soundscape Sarah Ballard plunges us into an energetic journey of contagious convulsion that reframes contemporary narratives of mass psychogenic illness. (AL)

Half Memory

Dir. Ufuoma Essi | United Kingdom | 2024 | 27' | English
WORLD FESTIVAL PREMIERE



Using Toni Morrison's *The Site of Memory* as a starting point for integration, *Half Memory* is a languid mediation on memory, conurbations, isolation and the histories we live amongst. Oscillating between years, cities, and unfolding images, the film is an examination of the present as an artefact of the past. Shot on Super8 and filmed between the US, France and the UK over the past three years.

In *Half Memory*, Ufuoma Essi continues an exploration of embodied ways of knowing. Moving through various urban geographies, across both space and time, images bounce back and forth creating a temporal interplay between past and present. Dreamlike images of public spaces, populated by blurred figures, work with the film's elliptical rhythm to explore Morrison's concept of re-memory. And through a soundscape composed by artist Shamica Ruddock, the author's voice becomes a spectral presence speaking wisdom that becomes the work's guiding force. (MM)

Invention

Dir. Courtney Stephens | United States | 2024 | 72' | English
UK PREMIERE



In the aftermath of a conspiracy-minded father's sudden death, his daughter inherits his patent for an experimental healing device. Featuring archives from Callie Hernandez's late father, *Invention* explores the process of grieving a complicated parent; the 'fictions and fantasies that follow loss, allowing us to bear disappointment both as individuals and publics in times of national decline' (Courtney Stephens)

In *Invention*, Callie Hernandez and Courtney Stephens tease out the complexity of grief and the banal and often bizarre practicalities that accompany it. Born from a fortuitous meeting at a dinner party, their collaboration draws from their own experiences of losing their fathers, sketching out a shared fictional world in which they ask what it means to play the part of the grieving daughter. As the protagonist played by Hernandez encounters friends and associates of her father, more questions are found than answers and she becomes entangled in a web of grief and conspiracy. (MM)

Language of the Entrails

Dir. Luciana Decker Orozco | Bolivia, United States | 2025 | 13' | No Dialogue
UK PREMIERE



A journey into the entrails of the earth through the digestion of food and images. We reconnect with interstitial spaces of the body and primal gestures that manifest memories of the past in the present. *Language of the Entrails* is inspired by the avant-gardist, indigenist Peruvian writer Gamaliel Churata's novel *El Pez de Oro* (*The Golden Fish*) where a descent into the underworld reveals a grumpy entity who talked only because it could not growl.

Luciana Decker Orozco seeks an ancestral sense of orientation, positioning her attentive gaze on the trail of a line of ants, the multi directional flow of an Interandean waterfall and an impossible tremble in the air. Her unique sensorial gravity moves from the familiar space of a mouth cavity to the mysteries of Earth's concealed chambers where life gestates in the dark and drips of water leave permanent marks on the celluloid. *Puro Andar* (*Language of the Entrails*) dances to a primitive tempo which reminds us of Churata's poetic world where the dead share a pleasurable bond with the living. Decker Orozco explores this bond with playfulness, using a refreshing and porous cinematic vocabulary capable of holding multiple temporalities. (AL)

Melted into the Sun

Dir. Saodat Ismailova | Uzbekistan | 2024 | 40' | Uzbek with English Subtitles
UK PREMIERE



Melted into the Sun tells the story of Al-Muqanna (The Veiled One), an 8th-century mystic and revolutionary from Khorasan who fought for a just society, questioning land extraction, hierarchy and property. Al-Muqanna's proto-socialist ideas and use of magical practices have reverberated throughout the history of Central Asia.

The sun's light is harnessed or revered, echoed in flickering city lights, a mystic's aura, hot embers, and dazzling mirrors. With its glow, Ismailova weaves intricate strands of myth, memory and prophecy across a multiplicity of sites and temporalities. Parts of Al-Muqanna's life and preachings are conjured and embodied anew through the words and performance of poet Jontemir Jondor. Glimpses of rituals and miracles evoke Al-Muqanna and his followers as the film moves between the shores of Amu Darya River, the burial ground of Chillpiq, the skyline of Bukhara, Soviet infrastructure complexes like the Kirov Reservoir and the solar furnace of Uzbekistan. Its many fragments intimate the deep entwinement of magic with political control and dissent, coalescing into an eerie, monumental atmosphere. (IV)

My Senses Are All I Have to Offer

Dir. Isadora Neves Marques | Portugal | 2024 | 20' | Portuguese with English Subtitles
UK PREMIERE



Isadora Neves Marques' subtle queering of the sci-fi genre tells a story of class, family, intimacy and the many distances between us. It follows Lourdes and Lana, a young couple who meet telepathically using "sensory pills", a technology allowing unrestricted access to other's sensations. When they visit the country house of Lourdes' parents an unforeseen storm locks them indoors, bringing news of a missing child.

Isadora Neves Marques continues her subtle investigations into technology through the lens of speculative fiction in this new work which loosely follows her previous film *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages* (2022), revisiting familiar characters decades later. With a playful yet delicate approach, she examines the depth of human connection and our yearning for intimacy. In this world, telepathy offers a way to forge relationships that transcend the corporeal. Through Lana and Lourdes' evolving psychic dynamic the film explores whether an extrasensory bond might foster intimacy or invasion, and how one maintains personal space in such an interconnected union. Together with radiant cinematography by Marta Simões and hypnotic sound by Fá Maria, Neves Marques creates a richly sensual cinematic world that's a pleasure to dwell in. (Alice Miller)

nobody's word

Dir. Camara Taylor | Barbados, Jamaica, United Kingdom | 2025 | 15' | English
WORLD FESTIVAL PREMIERE



A family convenes exactly 500 years after Charles V grants permission to Lorenzo de Gorrevod "to import 4000 Africans into New Spain". The King's act marks the escalation of a rupture, with its origins in 1492, that remakes the world and reverberates into the present. This apparent "start of slavery" becomes an occasion to tell the story of one family's implication across time and space. In *nobody's word* Taylor digitises and disintegrates the family archive in order to reframe accounts, destabilise claims and inhabit spaces between fact and fiction, questioning the narrative impulses that inform the stories we tell.

In Taylor's practice, enquiries into Britain's colonial exploits are made material through sculptures, sound and images - both moving and still. But through this making there is also dissolution. In *nobody's word*, digitised family archives are abstracted; footage skips forwards and rewinds back; images are glitched and fuzzy creating moments of slippage. Alongside a voice recounting a tale of ancestry, discordant electronic tones create a foreboding soundtrack. Taylor unpicks logics that seem inherent, inviting us to reflect through image and sound on our own complicity and desire for an easy narrative. (MM)



ARCHIPELAGO OF EARTHEN BONES — TO BUNYA, 2024



HALF MEMORY, 2024

Oceania

Dir. Valentin Noujaïm | France | 2024 | 24'' | French with English Subtitles
UK PREMIERE



Sixteen-year-old Najib luxuriates in his summer days of gaming until his mother informs him of a neighbour's passing. Taking the keys to their apartment, he quickly discovers an unexpected world of painful questions. “*Oceania* is an ode to tenderness. To a new generation that carries on our struggles, that seeks to remember whilst also moving forward. A tribute to love, to the dead and martyrs, and to present history being dismantled and destroyed.” (Valentin Noujaïm)

Valentin Noujaïm returns to BFMAF with *Oceania*, a tender and elegiac film that honours the heritage and struggles of marginalised communities, looking to the past to imagine liberatory futures. Departing from the dystopian architecture of Paris' La Défense district, in this latest work Noujaïm shifts focus to more intimate, domestic spaces. When his elderly neighbour Mr Albahr dies, the teenage Najib begins secretly visiting his apartment, driven by an unspoken curiosity. Bathed in the ultramarine glow of a VCR screen, the space holds remnants of a life once lived — photographs, diaries, letters, and VHS tapes. As Najib uncovers the neighbour's past loves and losses, he discovers a life forged through grief and resistance, and these fragments enkindle Najib's own burgeoning sense of self. A quietly affecting meditation on identity and remembrance. (AM)

Shuruuk

Dir. Amie Barouh | France, Germany | 2024 | 37' | English, French, Japanese, Kurdish, Romani, Romanian, Tunisian Arabic (dialect) with English Subtitles
INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE



Translating as “rising in the east”, *Shuruuk* follows a dreamlike, diaristic journey from Japan to Tunisia; from Palestine to France. Amie Barouh's intimate, roving camera bears witness to the flow of life and movement from East to West. Five years of documentation form an impressionistic, beautifully honest portrait of diasporic and immigrant communities, and an ode to the resilience of people living life in exile.

Quiet moments are rare in this energetic film, bearing witness to the precarious reality of life experienced by France's immigrant communities. Amongst moments of celebration - convivial scenes of shared meals, a parade or a marriage - we see moments of resistance. Blurred figures at protests in support of Palestine and against US Military presence in Okinawa remind us that our collective struggles for liberation are entangled. Through the film's fast cuts and frenetic energy, Barouh conjures the gentle and surprising chaos life is composed of. (MM)

The Birds Choose the Cards

Dir. Basim Magdy | Egypt, Switzerland | 2024 | 24' | English subtitles



Conceived as a film about tourism, war and sunsets, *The Birds Chose the Cards* pushes Egyptian artist Basim Magdy into new territory. Shot post-pandemic on lush 16mm, his observational collage eschews science fiction elements from previous works to foreground an emotionally resonant first-person narration centering speculations on history, identity and place - accented by a propulsive soundscape bubbling with warmth and dissonance.

The cyclical nature of history is the central focus of Basim Magdy's latest work, *The Birds Choose the Cards*. Through titles on screen, a reflective narrator ponders the reality of living in a world in continual crisis, and together we journey on a quest for understanding that stretches through different temporalities. Magdy's sensitive and inquisitive approach to image making combined with a subdued electronic soundtrack carves out space to ponder the entanglement of our collective fates. (MM)

The Moving Garden

Dir. Inês Lima | Portugal | 2024 | 18' | Portuguese with English Subtitles

UK PREMIERE



A group of hikers embark on a journey through the enchanting landscapes of Arrábida Natural Park between Setúbal and the idyllic fishing town of Sesimbra in Portugal. Accompanied by two botanical guides, they traverse the park's diverse flora and fauna, uncovering evidence of troubling transformations: rather than the work of nature, it becomes clear that human intervention is reshaping this once-pristine environment.

Flowers may have scientific names and hallucinogenic properties just as they may appear enchanted, glowing, casting spells. Through gestural zooms, swellings of sentimental music, and playful acting, the film moves joyously between the realms of romance, tender comedy and fairy tale. The trail of a routine botanical tour is animated by the energy of an erotic, volatile eden that can barely contain its sweetness - an energy that passes half-detected through people enthralled or bored by the park guides, people asleep on the nearby seashore, and through overgrown paths and pods of swimming dolphins. Within this shared collective (un)consciousness, blooms a critical alertness to the tension between lush potential and oppressive limit. (IV)

The Pleasure is Mine (El placer es mío)

Dir. Sacha Amaral | Argentina, Brazil, France | 2024 | 96' | Spanish with English Subtitles

UK PREMIERE



Streetwise hustler Antonio wanders the streets of Buenos Aires in search of money and sex - taking lovers to bed and stealing from them as they sleep. Only his tempestuous mother provides the force that may one day push him to leave the city towards new, alternative forms of happiness. Sacha Amaral's debut feature is a searing, slow-motion portrait of hedonism and discovery overflowing with characters who sink fully and luxuriously into their authentic selves.

Winner of the Grand Jury Prize at BAFICI 2024, Sacha Amaral's debut feature is a bold and provocative work of queer rebellion. Through a nuanced character study of a reckless lothario he delves into themes of desire and disobedience. Protagonist Antonio (played with a perfect blend of insouciance and incivility by Max Suen), is a young man existing on the fringes, earning a living by selling weed and compulsively exploiting the affection of others. The film is shot with a delicate naturalism that teases out the sensuality and casual eroticism of his encounters. Ever restless and self-sabotaging, he drifts through Buenos Aires, irresistibly charming yet undeniably amoral. Amaral's film asks - what drives the desire to deceive, and what truly brings us pleasure? (AM)

Underground

Dir. Kaori Oda | Japan | 2024 | 82' | Japanese with English Subtitles

UK PREMIERE



The final piece of a trilogy exploring the memories and sounds of subterranean spaces, Oda Kaori's haunting docudrama follows a mysterious figure stalking the borderlands between darkness and light. This poetic study of landscapes finds its anchoring deep in the Okinawan gama caves where stories of life emerge from layers of ancient rock - blooming in the shadows of unspeakable human horror.

Following *Aragane* (2015) filmed in a Bosnian coal mine and *Cenote* (2019) filmed in sinkholes in the Yucatán Peninsula of Mexico, *Underground* is an aurally rich ode to a tragic episode of human loss in the Okinawan gamas, tracing the ability of matter to contain memory. Not as concluded past, but as living memory endlessly transmuting across subterranean and domestic places, film projections and shadows, human bones and coral fossils. Memory is further transformed by the mysterious presence of artist and dancer Nao Yoshigai and the cave guide Mitsuo Matsunaga. He narrates the forced mass suicides of Okinawan civilians who took refuge there in 1945, following the invasion of American troops. Oda places this grief in compassionate adjacency to moments of astonishing beauty - silhouettes at the mouth of a tunnel, a glistening spider web, whispers addressed to a tree, and luminous seascapes. (IV)

When the Phone Rang

Dir. Iva Radivojevic | Serbia, United States | 2024 | 73' | Serbian with English subtitles
UK PREMIERE



In the mind of an eleven year old girl, a single phone call erases her entire life. Iva Radivojevic's subtle drama reconstructs fragments of childhood memory to trace the currents of loss and trauma that followed her family's displacement from the former Yugoslavia. With a dreamlike structure and a wistful, unsettling atmosphere, *When The Phone Rang* unearths dissonant relationships between history and memory.

A film that sieves historical shifts through the magic and candour of a child's world, where family and friends, favourite songs and games, and neighbourhood routines draw the only boundaries you know. The film reminisces about an intimate past through the mesmeric protagonist Lana, releasing the grip of a haunting event. Radivojevic's sonic sensibility and fondness for time-warps intersect through compelling reconstructions of 1990s life and dreamlike sequences. The work faces the quiet devastation of returning to a moment neither forgotten nor fully embraced, rendering with poignant precision the atmosphere of memory, where sensations of loss and recovery co-exist. A fragmented yet enveloping story, experienced like an echo – both elusive and unmistakably present. (IV)

Your Touch Makes Others Invisible

Dir. Rajee Samarasinghe | Sri Lanka, United States | 2025 | 70'
English, Russian, Sinhala and Tamil with English Subtitles
UK PREMIERE



When a supernatural entity plagues a village community in war torn Northern Sri Lanka, a mother loses her son. Set in militarily occupied territory marked by 26 years of civil war, this hybrid docufiction made collaboratively, and secretly, with impacted Tamil communities lyrically examines the stories of missing people. A potent, elliptical protest poem moving with grace and purpose between disparate cinematic forms.

Following his 2021 *Filmmaker in Focus*, Rajee Samarasinghe returns to BFMAF with his debut feature. This stunning, multifaceted work of collaboration continues his percipient exploration of the sociopolitical conditions of post-civil war Sri Lanka, where atrocities of the past have given way to agonising injustices of the present. Interweaving documentary and fictional scenes in a way that's subtle yet distinctive, the film sensitively portrays the complexities of an ever-evolving situation. At its emotional heart are profoundly moving testimonies from mothers reckoning with the forced disappearances of their sons - families suspended in grief, left in a tortuous state of unknowing and tirelessly searching. The cinematography is marked with a stillness and elegance, static figures in expansive vistas and spaces imbued with absence. Yet beneath the calm is a quiet rage that demands justice for the missing and those left behind. (AM)

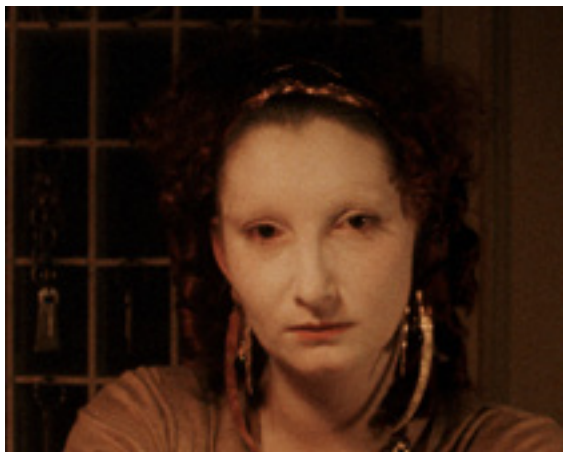
ESSENTIAL CINEMA



A pluralist retrospective series proposing revisions and additions to what might be considered canonical cinema. Across three films from the 1980s we encounter love and cruising in downtown New York, an eerie night in a London hotel, and a tense double wedding in Damascus.

Nightshift

Dir. Robina Rose | United Kingdom | 1981 | 68' | English with English Subtitles
NEW FILM RESTORATION



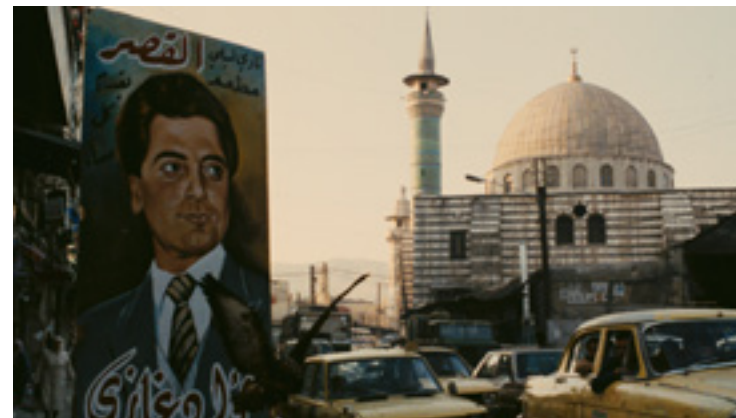
Unfolding over a single night's journey into morning, *Nightshift* distills the comings and goings of a hotel foyer into an eerie series of moods. Time stretches and routine tasks give way to the ethereal fantasies of the hotel's eccentric, nocturnal guests portrayed by prominent figures of countercultural London including poet and actor Heathcote Williams and experimental filmmaker Anne Rees-Mogg.

The soft, lilting chimes of a music box begin to play, a lullaby coaxing us to slumber. Though in Robina Rose's *Nightshift*, we witness little sleeping. Entering a liminal space of arrivals and departures, a threshold between sleep and wakefulness, we are greeted by iconic punk fashionista Jordan Mooney (née Pamela Rooke). Best known for her work with Derek Jarman, here she is cast as an impassive hotel receptionist. With a porcelain-white visage, she surveys the lobby as a procession of transient guests drift by, whiling away the hours with a litany of nightly duties. Rose captures with evocative precision the monotony of hospitality work, particularly women's unseen labour, whilst also offering an escape from that tedium, pulling us into a hazy dreamlike realm where time slows and stretches. *Nightshift* is a spellbinding ode to nighthawks and night workers. (AM)

Nightshift has been digitally restored by Lightbox Film Center (Philadelphia) in collaboration with the British Film Institute and Cinenova. Restoration funding provided by Ron and Suzanne Naples.

Stars in Broad Daylight

Dir. Ossama Mohammed | Syria | 1988 | 105' | Arabic with English Subtitles



A double wedding in a small village turns to high drama when one bride runs away and the other refuses to go on with her marriage. With biting humour and sharp political critique, *Stars in Broad Daylight* exuberantly exposes how the violence of absolute power in a patriarchal society seeps into the family unit. The film remains banned from screening in Syria because of its subversive representation and critical voice. Selected at the 'Quinzaine des Réalisateurs' at the Cannes Film Festival in 1988.

Resurfaced by perfect chance in a time of hopeful rebuilding for Syria, Ossama Mohammad's allegorical feature debut is captivating in its dreamlike visual language and satirical screenwriting. The multiplicity of characters' emotions can be seen, quite literally, from every angle with oppressive interior spaces populated by mirrors, perhaps alluding to the breach of intimacy and a state of vigilance brought about by the Assad regime. "You are so lucky, you are the generation of the future," the women are reminded as they prepare for their arranged marriages, bathing in the darkness of a thick, stone walled room. Yet, following the absurdly catastrophic family reunion Sana departs for Damascus, leaving rural Ramah behind her in search of an impossible freedom that permanently transforms her gaze from one of hope, to one of emptiness. (AL)

Restored by The Film Foundation's World Cinema Project and Cineteca di Bologna at L'Immagine Ritrovata laboratory, in collaboration with Ossama Mohammed. Funding provided by the Hobson/Lucas Family Foundation.

MARION SCEMAMA & DAVID WOJNAROWICZ

Collaboration, Friendship & Fury

French filmmaker and artist Marion Scemama presents four rarely-screened films recorded in 1980s New York. During this time, she was part of the Downtown art scene and formed a close artistic and personal bond with David Wojnarowicz, the political artist, painter, writer, performer, and photographer who died of an AIDS-related illness in 1992.

Scemama arrived in New York in 1981, planning a short stay that stretched into years. In 1983, she discovered Pier 34—an abandoned industrial building that Wojnarowicz and other artists had transformed into a radical, unsanctioned space for artistic and social experimentation, cruising, and partying. Inspired by its unruly energy, Scemama began shooting *Relax Be Cruel*, a fiction film about a punk squatter girl drifting through the Pier's alternative world. Wojnarowicz's murals appear in the background—perhaps their first unspoken collaboration.

The pair met in 1984, sparking a deep friendship that led to periods of intense artistic collaboration until his death. Across photography and video, their raw, intimate works confronted power, poverty, homophobia, and the devastation of the AIDS crisis. Rooted in Wojnarowicz's lived experience, they pulse with rage and resistance, intertwined with a hunger for life, pleasure, and freedom. His art and life were inseparable. As Scemama recalls: "I had this camera that wasn't just an object but an extension of David's mind through my eyes and my arm... a way of pushing away the growing feeling of death surrounding us"

Across the four works, each distinct in form, a portrait emerges of a defining era and a transformative friendship.

In Focus: Marion Scemama joins us for a special in-conversation with the programme's curator Christina Demetriou, founder of Oyster Films.

Relax Be Cruel

Dir. Marion Scemama
France | 2024 | 40' | English

Shot in 1983, *Relax Be Cruel* is a seminal document of the Pier 34 warehouse project in New York. Demolished shortly after filming, the space became emblematic of the liberatory promise of the countercultural arts scene of 80s NYC, whose legacy ran parallel to the emergent AIDS crisis and the phenomenon of expanding gentrification. This newly retrieved and re-edited hybrid fiction film follows a punk artist in need of housing as she cruises the dilapidated space, encountering art and sexuality through holes in the walls and cascading beams of light and shadow.



When I Put My Hands On Your Body

Dir. Marion Scemama
United States | 2014 | 6' | English

One night, David talks to me about his nostalgia for men's bodies and his erotic dreams; the beauty of gestures, the sensuality of a man's mouth on another man's body. He makes me read a text that he has just written, "when I put my hands on your body, it is the whole history of your body that I feel..."

If I Had a Dollar to Spend

Dir. Marion Scemama
United States | 2018 | 4' | English

Footage captured from David Wojnarowicz' performance at the King Tut's Wah Wah Hut, NYC, May 1989.

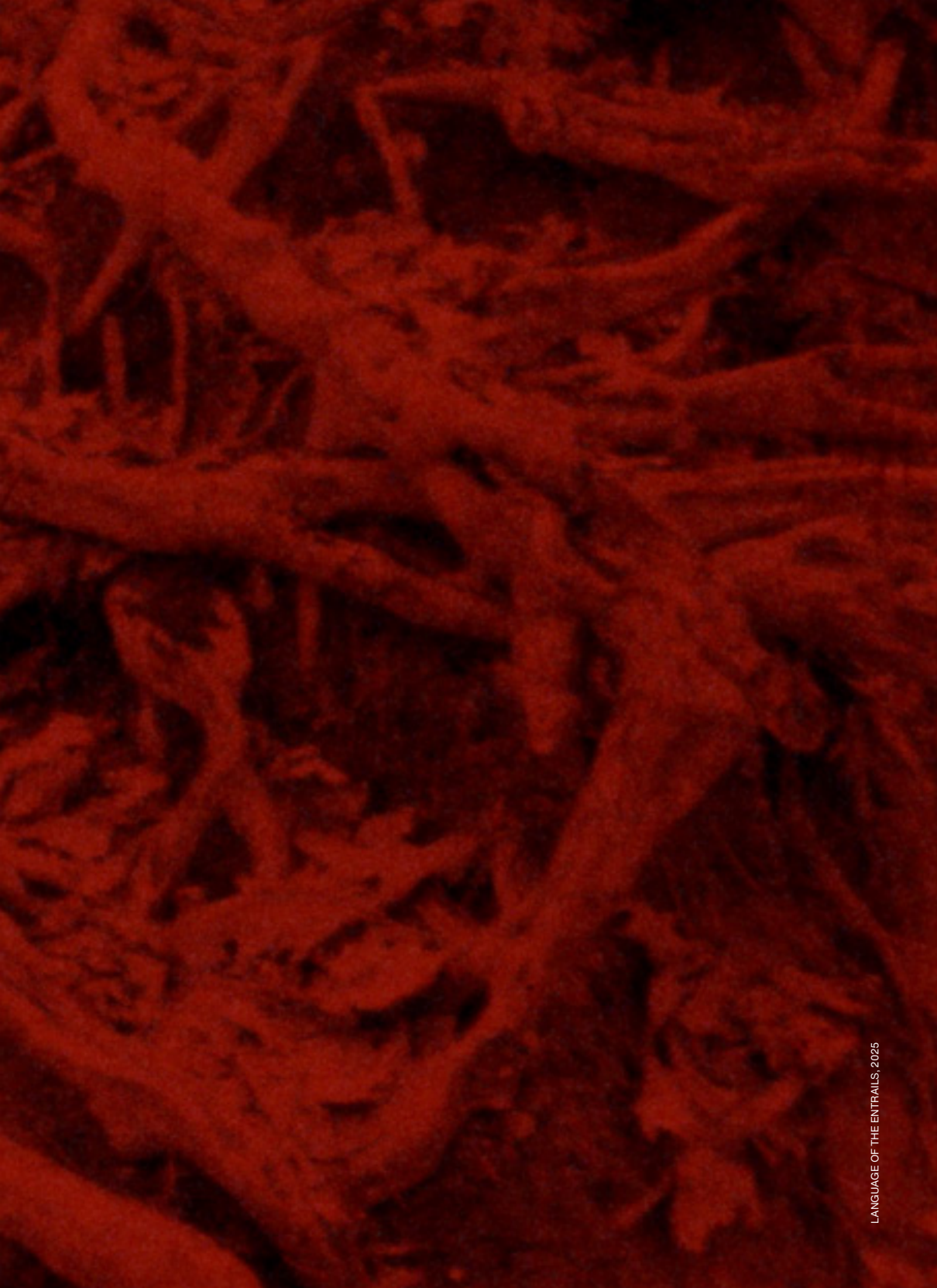
Summer 89'

Dir. Marion Scemama
United States | 2021 | 26' | English

In the summer of 1989 Marion, David and François Pain took a camera with them to the Adirondacks lakes region of New York State. Passing it from hand to hand they captured a video diary of a vacation spent together in freedom, creativity, love and melancholy.



HALF MEMORY, 2024



LANGUAGE OF THE ENTRAILS, 2025

PROPOSITIONS



A discursive setting anchored by a screening, discussion or performance. Artists open out their practice and work to share some of the contexts, research, perspectives and complications that inform its production.



Available Light

Dir. Morgan Quaintance | Japan, United Kingdom | 2025 | 30' | English & Japanese with English Subtitles
UK PREMIERE



Available Light explores notions of home and belonging in contemporary society. Comprising interviews with workers at the Edo Tokyo Open Air Architecture Museum in Tokyo, and fragments of conversations with renters in that city and London, a productive dialectic opens between the museum's preserved historical ideal of the domestic and the often unsettling realities of temporary accommodation in modern cities. Combining trademark immersive sound design with impressionistic images and abstractions, Quaintance crafts an austere, oneiric and subtly affecting portrait of residential precarity.

The film was produced as part of a collaborative project involving sociologist Laura Harris. Although, it is important to state that the film itself is not a collaboration. Rather, Harris and Quaintance worked in parallel at the site creating two autonomous bodies of work: Quaintance produced new moving image work; Harris took photographs and produced an ethnographic study of the site and its staff.

In this BFMAF Propositions screening event, Harris will read from excerpts of the ethnographic text and Quaintance will screen *Available Light*, bookended by two shorter films currently in post-production: *Seikokan III* (2025) and *The Barren Zone* (2025).

ABIBA COULIBALY

Black & Arab Encounters on Screen



Black and Arab Encounters On Screen is an evolving live video essay exploring parallels, strains, convergences and ruptures in on-screen encounters between Black and Arab characters, and the off-screen realities from which they emerged.

Born from the desire to foster a more intersectional understanding of the ongoing genocide in Palestine, the talk explores the Hollywoodisation of radical Black politics and aesthetics, the zenith and aftermath of the Non-Aligned movement, and the history of settler colonialism - while asking what role film has and should play concerning these phenomena. Consisting of a montage of rare and archival footage, and finishing with 'Roadworks', a short filmed performance by Palestinian artist Mona Hatoum shot in Brixton, the hybrid talk examines filmic manifestations of intercontinental solidarity and its limitations, as the topic relates to African and Arab peoples, and all those who fall somewhere in-between the false dichotomy.

STUART MARSHALL

AIDS Video Activism 1.0 & 2.0

In April 2024, Northumbria University/Northern Bridge Consortium PhD researcher Conal McStravick relocated the lost Stuart Marshall AIDS video work *Kaposi's Sarcoma (A Plague and its Symptoms)* (1983), arguably the first AIDS activist video in the global AIDS video canon whilst on research in Canada.

Stuart Marshall (1949-1993), propagated sound and video art practices in the UK and North America in the 1970s, co-founding LVA (now LUX) in 1976. He was an influential lecturer, video arts organiser and curator who innovated within early video art theory, LGBTQ+ video art and AIDS and LGBTQ+ media activism with an international profile. Marshall's *Bright Eyes* (1984) and TV documentary works for Channel 4's "OUT", the first UK LGBTQ+ series, gained plaudits internationally through challenging AIDS representations and uncovering LGBTQ+ histories. Marshall who was gay and HIV positive was a keen advocate of AIDS alternative health. He died in 1993 of AIDS-related complications.

This programme brings two of Marshall's key AIDS video works: *Kaposi's Sarcoma (A Plague and its Symptoms)* and *Robert Marshall* into dialogue for the first time. A follow-up collaborative, live-online hybrid media workshop between McStravick and Toronto/Tkaronto-based artist and community activist, Mikiki, will explore these works through a group feeling, thinking and learning situation at BFMAF.

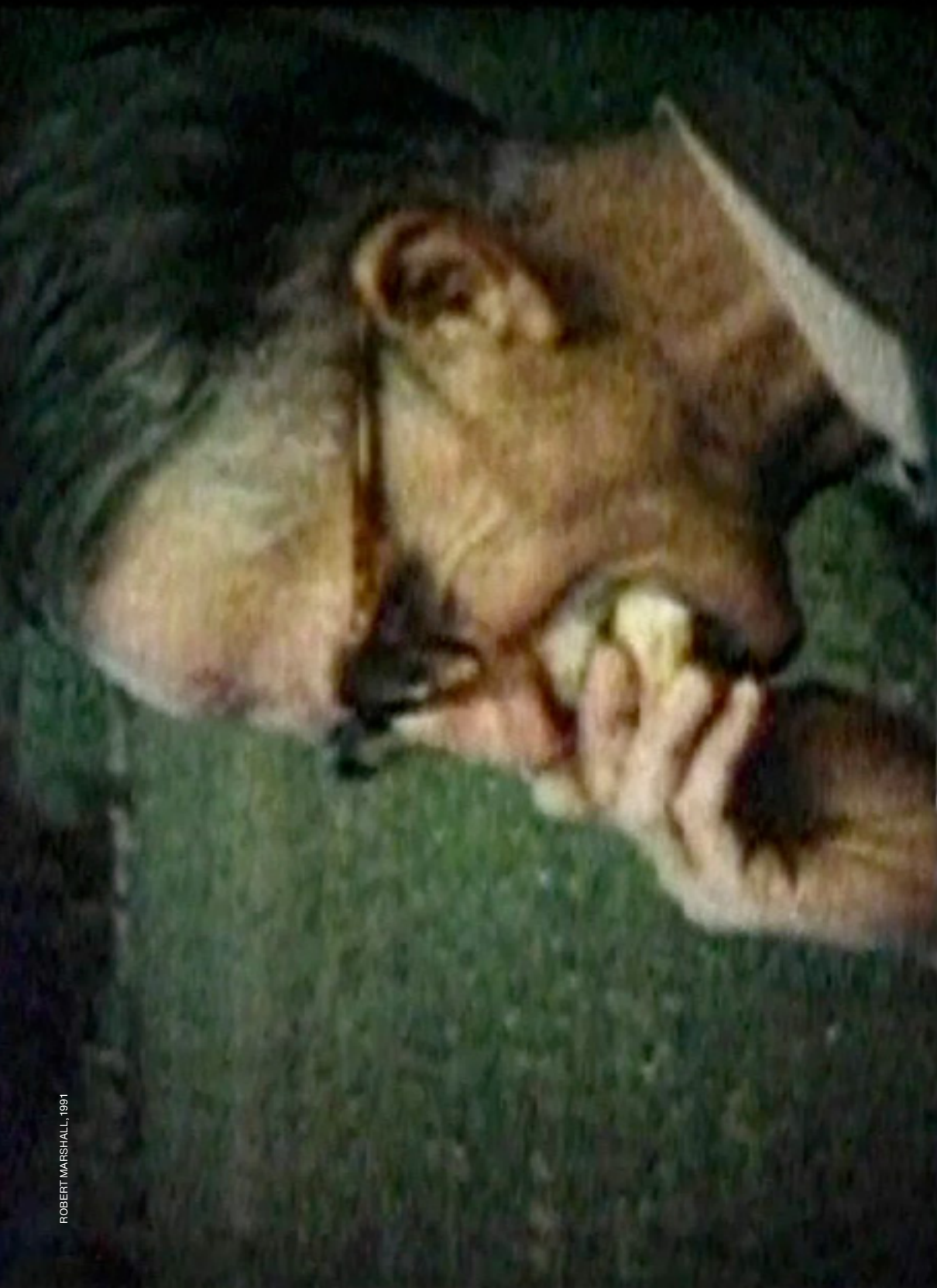
The project continues McStravick's doctoral research project "*Learning in a fantastically public medium*": *Stuart Marshall and Sound, Video and Television as Art and Activist media, 1968-1993*, with events, exhibitions and publishing on Marshall and his context, between 2022-2026.

Conal McStravick (they/them) is a queer, non-binary artist, writer, curator and educator born in Ireland and based in Glasgow, Scotland.

Mikiki (they/them) is a performance and video artist and queer community health activist of Acadian/Mi'kmaq and Irish descent from Ktaqmkuk/Newfoundland, now based in Toronto/Tkaronto, Canada.



KAPOSI'S SARCOMA (A PLAGUE AND ITS SYMPTOMS), 2024



Kaposi's Sarcoma (A Plague and its Symptoms)

Dir. Stuart Marshall | Canada, United Kingdom
2024 | 25' | English with English Subtitles
NEW FILM RESTORATION

Kaposi's Sarcoma (A Plague and its Symptoms) is a 1983 artist's video on the subject of AIDS, by the LGBTQ+ and AIDS video artist and TV documentarian Stuart Marshall (1949-1993). Presumed lost and unseen for almost 40 years, this 25-minute video (of the original 28 minutes) is likely to be the first AIDS activist video in the global archive.

Stuart Marshall made the video in response to the appearance of the 1981 article "Kaposi's Sarcoma in Homosexual Men—a Report of Eight Cases" in *The Lancet*, a leading UK medical journal. This followed the New York Times article "Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals" earlier that year. The title Kaposi's Sarcoma refers to a type of cancer which became one of the first and most visible signs of a new disease effecting young gay men in the urban centres of the United States; with AIDS quickly described as the "gay plague" in media reports. Using appropriated texts, critical cultural analysis and collaboration with the AIDS clinician Richard Wells, Marshall's video constructs a compelling counter narrative to the "homosexuals=AIDS=death" logic of print journalism.

Robert Marshall

Dir. Stuart Marshall | Canada, United Kingdom
1991 | 10' | English with English Subtitles

Robert Marshall is structured in two movements. Through the memories of his father, fragments of the son's youth are revealed, forming both a biographical portrait of Robert and an autobiographical portrait of Stuart Marshall. The second sequence stages Marshall's AIDS alternative health regimen of herbal and acupuncture treatments with a recording of a telephone conversation between Stuart and an HIV physician in San Francisco. The pros and cons of the drug AZT are discussed long-distance. The video offers a poignant yet politicised meditation on memory and trauma, community knowledge and medical ethics.

Living Trees and Stone Soups (Tricksters, Quacks and Queers) (Parts 1,2 & 3) Workshop

A hybrid, participatory movement and performance workshop developed by artist and PhD researcher Conal McStravick and Toronto/Tkaronto-based artist and community activist Mikiki based on the AIDS activist videos of Stuart Marshall (1949-1993). Conal and Mikiki will turn the cinema into a green screen studio, activating media and healthcare workshop techniques and community support approaches common to Marshall's works to produce an environment of group feeling, thinking and learning.

Part of a developing collaborative project between Conal McStravick, Mikiki and BFMAF that reactivates transnational media activist dialogues.

IN FOCUS



Surveying the work of Brooklyn-based artist-writer Ayanna Dozier and Japanese filmmaker and D/deaf community organiser Eri Makiyara, alongside a discursive screening and discussion programme looking at the work of militant thinker and psychiatrist Franz Fanon through the lens of the region he was radicalised in.

AYANNA DOZIER



Ayanna Dozier (PhD) is a Brooklyn-based artist-writer. Her art practice centers performance, experimental film, printmaking and photography, using auto-fiction, surrealist, conceptual, and feminist methods. Her research on film navigates the history of distribution, archaeology, and radical work of Black feminist experimental filmmakers.

While her current research and artwork is dedicated to examining how transactional intimacy - like sex work - redistributes care from the private sector into public, social, and political relations. She is currently an assistant professor in communication, with an emphasis on film, at University Massachusetts, Amherst and is the author of Janet Jackson's *The Velvet Rope* (2020).

In Focus: Ayanna Dozier joins us for a special in-conversation with the programme's curator Myriam Mouflih.

A Whore in the House of the Lord

Dir. Ayanna Dozier | United States | 2025 | 11' | English
WORLD PREMIERE

Inspired by silent films of the 1920s, the film infuses gothic architecture and design with the rituals of rabid Christian fanaticism popularised in the American South.

Bounded Intimacy

Dir. Ayanna Dozier | United States | 2024 | 7' | English
EUROPEAN PREMIERE

Bounded Intimacy examines the histories of various forms of body labor across the Chelsea and Tribeca districts renowned as sites for sex work, sex clubs, and illicit sexual activity.

Forever Your Girl

Dir. Ayanna Dozier | United States | 2022 | 8' | English
EUROPEAN PREMIERE

Inspired by soft-porn aesthetics, but defying its anticipated imagery, *Forever Your Girl* acts out the loss of childhood innocence and desire through the adventures of a hypersexualized subject attempting to ride a carousel.

Softer

Dir. Ayanna Dozier
United States | 2020 | 8' | English

Softer examines the demands of "softening" that are requested of Black women's bodies in society - their voice, their manners, and, critically, their hair - and ways in which they have tried to answer this demand through respectable appearance and behavior.





Maman Brigitte

Dir. Ayanna Dozier | United States | 2021 | 3' | English
EUROPEAN PREMIERE

A ritualised cine-festation, stitching together the intimacy of Maman Brigitte's private Hoodoo manifestation session - a practice that uses natural and supernatural elements to help people manifest their desires and transform their lives through the aurality of the body.

Nightwalker

Dir. Ayanna Dozier | United States | 2022 | 8' | English
EUROPEAN PREMIERE

Nightwalker codes disproportionately target Black femmes or women who "make a display" by wearing clothing that can be deemed risqué by an arresting officer. Dozier's film of the same name draws attention to how the surveillance eye overlaps with the gaze of the would-be predator.

It's Just Business Baby

Dir. Ayanna Dozier | United States | 2023 | 6' | English
EUROPEAN PREMIERE

The first of Dozier's body labour trilogy captures an encounter between a client and a working girl where the lines of care are blurred following a session. The encounter is then repeated with the same actors switching parts, troubling the power dynamics of a transactional relationship.

Let's Make Love and Listen to Death from Above

Dir. Ayanna Dozier | United States | 2025 | 11' | English
EUROPEAN PREMIERE

Foregrounding the act of cruising and public sex, the film is intentionally devoid of a soundtrack. Audiences are encouraged to follow the image free of associative sounds - and to focus on the complex politics of sex.





ERI MAKIHARA



Eri Makihara is a filmmaker and community organiser working tirelessly to advocate for spaces that foster D/deaf culture in Japan. She is Director of Tokyo International Deaf Film Festival and Representative Director of Japan Deaf Arts Association.

As a filmmaker, Makihara's work challenges fundamental assumptions about connection, belonging and communication. Often working collaboratively from within the D/deaf community, she promotes forms of active discussion and representation that reflect a multiplicity of experiences and perceptions that exist for each individual.

Through a mastery of cinematography and as an experienced facilitator working within D/deaf theatre Makihara constructs a unique artistic language - one that radically predicates film through the lens of the D/deaf experience.

Through her collaborations with D/deaf performers, dancers, and sign language poets, she crafts a world where silence is not absence but a space of profound connection and expression. Her work resists the imposed limitations of communication embracing it as something to be seen, felt, and experienced.

LISTEN (リッスン)

Dir. Eri Makihara | Japan | 2016 | 58'
Japanese Sign Language with English Subtitles
EUROPEAN PREMIERE

A song of the seasons in sign language, Makihara's poetic documentary follows a group of deaf people who create visual musical space through motion and expression. A girl sings wind through the trees, a woman screams her soul to the sky, and a couple's love ebbs with the rolling waves.

LISTEN developed following Makihara's discovery of sign language poetry, and her meeting with butoh dancer Dakei. Growing up without hearing aids, using only vibrations and vision, Dakei had always believed that he could never make music. But as he continued to dance and sign, he developed a hybrid language that transcended conventional theories of resonance. Together, the pair proposed to explore the boundaries of a "music of the deaf" through cinema. Casting both internationally active dancers and deaf people without any performing experience, they pursued a viscosity and feeling of music as something like ki - overflowing from the soul.

Dream of My Mother

Dir. Eri Makihara | Japan | 2023 | 21'
Japanese Sign Language with English Subtitles
EUROPEAN PREMIERE

A documentary following a deaf mother and daughter who live together in a municipal housing complex. *Dream of My Mother* explores processes of communication and the sometimes-painstaking nuances of making oneself understood as a disabled person in everyday life. Originally filmed in 2014 and re-edited in 2023.

The Tanaka Family

Dir. Eri Makihara | Japan | 2021 | 60'
Japanese Sign Language with English Subtitles
EUROPEAN PREMIERE

Makihara's delicate drama explores the complexities of family life, centred around the everyday routines of Tanaka Mai - a young woman sharing care responsibilities for her sister's husband in their Tokyo apartment. Austere, painterly images and a near silent soundtrack combine to form a powerful, de-centering work that challenges the dominance of conventional cinematic forms and representations of disability.

Vive L'Amour

Dir. Tsai Ming-liang | Taiwan | 1994 | 118'
Taiwanese with English Subtitles

From acclaimed master of Taiwan's Second New Wave, Tsai Ming-liang, *Vive L'Amour* follows three characters unwittingly sharing a seemingly empty Taipei apartment. Realtor May Lin brings her lover to a vacant unit she has on the market, unaware that it is secretly occupied by a suicidal funeral salesman. A series of precisely staged, tragicomic erotic encounters ensue, exposing the discomfort of proximity.

Chosen by Eri as a seminal text in the development of her own cinematic language, she said: "I sympathise with Tsai Ming-liang's philosophical theories on film. I particularly resonate with the themes of loneliness and the depiction of time in this film."

Presented in a special 2K screening ahead of the highly anticipated 4K restoration, released later in 2025 by Taiwan Film & Audiovisual Institute.

WAYS OF SEEING FANON

Curated by Philip Rizk

Frantz Fanon was a militant thinker, both in his capacity as a psychiatrist and as a member of the National Liberation Front in Algeria. Over 60 years after his death, it is time we read him through the lens of the region he was radicalised in: Africa and the Arabic-speaking region. Doing so entails highlighting the importance of people's struggles as well as the principle of neocolonialism, a common term Fanon re-defines in the third chapter of his final testament *Les damnés de la terre* (*The Wretched of the Earth*). He had the audacity and foresight to predict that the elites of the NLF party, alongside whom he was struggling for Algeria's independence, would follow in the footsteps of their enemies - the colonizers:

"This bourgeoisie which turns its back more and more on the people,... [w]hen this caste has vanished, devoured by its own contradictions, it will be seen that nothing new has happened since independence was proclaimed, and that everything must be started again from scratch. The changeover will not take place at the level of the structures set up by the bourgeoisie during its reign, since that caste has done nothing more than take over unchanged the legacy of the economy, the thought, and the institutions left by the colonialists." (176)

It is this scenario of neocolonialism that Fanon warns his readers of - a system of shared power between inside and outside forces - that we still wallow in today.

This screening and discussion program will elucidate this argument, while also moving beyond it to ask what the militant thinker was not prepared to, or perhaps could or would not admit to himself: What could it mean to disentangle ourselves from the throes of that neocolonialism he saw so clearly in his time?

Screening programme

- *The Founding Violence of Neocolonialism: The Assassination of Patrice Lumumba*
- *Ways of Seeing Frantz Fanon* with Orsod Malik, Mai Taha & Philip Rizk
- *Our Neocolonial Presents: Bon Voyage, Sim / The Terror and the Time*
- *Reclaiming the World's Memory: The Zerda and the Songs of Forgetting*
- *Neocolonialism & its Dismantling: Mapping Lessons*



1 THE FOUNDING VIOLENCE OF NEOCOLONIALISM

Until his final days, Frantz Fanon was deeply shaken by the murder of his friend Patrice Lumumba carried out in coordination between Belgian and CIA agents and their Congolese partners. Lumumba's assassination is the founding violence of neocolonialism that ushered in a new era that we still live today.



Lumumba: Death of a Prophet (Lumumba, la mort d'un prophète)

Dir. Raoul Peck | Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Germany, Switzerland | 1991
69' | English Subtitles

Set in the months before and after the Congo declared its independence from Belgium, this gripping, deeply personal political film from Raoul Peck, who grew up in the Congo, depicts the rise and fall of legendary African leader and first Prime Minister of the Republic of Congo, Patrice Lumumba. Lumumba became a lightning rod of Cold War politics as his vision of a united Africa gained him powerful enemies in Belgium and the US. This new restoration - strikingly photographed in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Belgium as civil war raged in the Congo - mixes Peck's reflections and home movies with archival footage and vivid re-creations of the shocking events that led to the birth of a country.

2 OUR NEOCOLONIAL PRESENTS

Departing from a time of coloniality shared by foreign and local powers, where overthrowing a regime is not sufficient to break the shackles that bind.

Bon Voyage, Sim

Dir. Moustapha Alassane | Niger | 1966 | 5'
English Subtitles

This charming 1966 animation follows Sim, a frog politician and president of "Toad Republic" who revels in the joys of traveling during a triumphant presidential tour. However, when he returns home from neighbouring countries to find a usurper on his throne it's not long before he finds himself tossed into the drink!

Screened with the support of the Institut-francais du Royaume-uni.

The Terror and the Time

Dir. Victor Jara Collective | Guyana | 1979 | 73'
English Subtitles

The terror is British colonialism in Guyana; the time is 1953, the year of the first elections under a provisional democratic constitution. Stylised scenes photographed throughout Georgetown accompany the poetry of Martin Carter to convey the demand for political reform against poverty, repression and silence. The film unfolds against an international backdrop of the 50s: the growth of foreign economic and military interests in the Caribbean basin, the coronation of Queen Elizabeth, the Mau Mau revolts in Kenya, the Cold War, and the U.S.' covert wars against Cuba, Malaysia, Vietnam, Iran and Nigeria. (Courtisane)

3 RECLAIMING THE WORLD'S MEMORY

On the centenary of the founding of the moving image, Sylvia Wynter gave a speech building on V.Y. Mudimbe's critical observation of the occident's violent act of "submitt[ing] the world to its memory" through image-making. Assia Djebar, once Frantz Fanon's collaborator at the National Liberation Front's journal *El Moudjahid*, is a rarely recognised force reclaiming that memory through film.

The Zerda and the Songs of Forgetting

Dir. Assia Djebar | Algeria | 1982 | 58'
English Subtitles

In 1982, on the 20th anniversary of Algerian independence, Algerian author Assia Djebar released her second film, *The Zerda, and the Songs of Forgetting* - a film that digs deep into the French colonisation of the Greater Maghreb and into hauntings of anti-colonial struggles.

For over 130 years, the colonisers had carried out a scorched earth campaign against indigenous peoples, including exercising domination through representation; control of images circulated in the culture. Assia Djebar's collaborative essay film undermines this violence - disrupting the subjugation of colonial imagery.



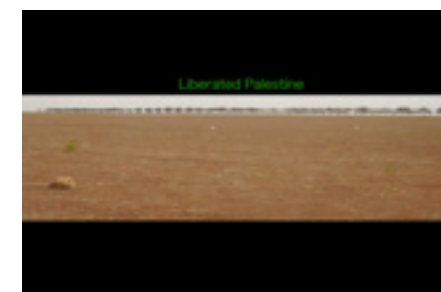
4 NEOCOLONIALISM & ITS DISMANTLING

Mapping Lessons (دروس خرائط)

Dir. Philip Rizk | Egypt | 2020 | 61' | English Subtitles
UK PREMIERE

Departing from the Syrian Revolution, before moving through other moments of revolution and experiments in autonomy from 1936 Spain, Angola, and Palestine, to the Paris Commune, the essay film *Mapping Lessons* reflects on attempts to dismantle the forces of neocolonialism, both internal and external, in the hopes of preparing for next time.

Q&A with director Philip Rizk.





1623—DONALD Mc KX, the celebrated Indian Scout.

EXHIBITIONS



A series of installations in spaces across Berwick's historic old town. Works in the programme explore engagements with archives and archival practices, proposing new ways of remembering and interpreting our collective past and present.

Black Glass

Dir. Adam Piron | United States | 2024 | 9' | English Subtitles

UK PREMIERE



One of Eadweard Muybridge's earliest contributions to the photographic image were stereographs commissioned by the U.S. Army, capturing their war against the Modoc Tribe in Northern California. These stereographs, many of which were staged, are revisited here through violent collisions of image and sound - generating entangled histories of visual technology, genocide and expropriation of Indigenous populations.

Muybridge's Modoc War photographs, commissioned by the U.S. Army, were not just records of conflict. They shaped a colonial narrative that recast the lava beds of Northern California not as Modoc homelands but as battlegrounds. The Modoc people, resisting displacement, appeared not as communities but as obstacles to expansion. Many of these images were staged, their documentary appearance masking constructed violence.

Black Glass revisits these unceded Modoc and Nüümü lands, where 57 Modoc warriors held their ground against an overwhelming U.S. force. Adam Piron shatters Muybridge's stereographic plates with volcanic sound, exposing how photography—and later cinema—became instruments of surveillance, propaganda, and erasure. The war against the Modoc was fought not only in the lava beds but through the mechanics of the camera itself, where light, time, and power converge to manufacture history. (Peter Taylor)

Endless Love Tapes

Dir. Wendy Clarke | United Kingdom | 2025 | 98' | English Subtitles



'If every person on the planet could make a love tape, then you'd really know what it's like to be human.' *Endless Love Tapes* is a pilot project by Wendy Clarke (US) and Kim Coleman (UK), building on Clarke's participatory video project *Love Tapes*—which she began in 1977—an incredible collection of over 2,500 three-minute videos where people discuss their experiences of love. The artists explore how an individual's project can continue indefinitely and truly involve everyone. The pair have crafted a manual enabling people to create Love Tapes in their communities, expanding the collection without direct contact with Clarke. BFMAF25 marks the launch of their *Endless Love Tapes* project, testing its limitless growth.

A deceptively simple yet deeply relevant video project in today's digital era. While social media thrives on curated self-representation, *Love Tapes* offers an unfiltered, vulnerable alternative, resisting algorithmic commodification. Clarke's work showcases video as an intimate, democratic medium - capturing raw emotion and fostering radical human connection. Opposing social media's isolating effects, *Endless Love Tapes* at The Burr highlights video's power to document, connect, and humanise. Over 2,500 participants have joined the process: watching others' tapes, selecting a three-minute song, recording their own, and deciding whether to share or erase it. Watching together, participants realise they are not alone - an antidote to the digital echo chamber. (Dawn Bothwell)

just above the tear duct on each side

Dir. Cáit McClay, Éiméar McClay | Ireland, United Kingdom | 2024 | 20' | English Subtitles

UK PREMIERE



During the 1950s, Ireland had the highest rate of psychiatric hospital use in the world. Using archival documents concerning the defunct St. Conal's Psychiatric Hospital, Letterkenny, *just above the tear duct on each side* looks critically at the evolution of Irish psychiatric institutions across the 20th century, examining the confluence of carceral, therapeutic and socioeconomic incentives that determined their influence.

With diligence and care Cáit and Éiméar McClay continue the complex task of exploring dark cracks in Ireland's social history. Centering their narrative on a visit to the Donegal county council archive, the collaborative duo employ 19th century clinical language to confront institutional erasure and dehumanisation directly across time. Digital dampness, rust, mould and a constant echo of rainfall infuse images of crumbling public bathrooms with an unusual atmosphere of abandonment. A mesmerising celestial light washes over the carefully crafted 3D model sets, juxtaposed with harrowing accounts of suffering extracted from the hospital's treatment books. This coalescence of materialities conjures a hushed vigil for victims and survivors of 'coercive confinement'. (AL)

Stepney Western

Dir. Harry Lawson | United Kingdom | 2025 | 40' | English Subtitles

WORLD FESTIVAL PREMIERE



Stepney Western is a film, installation, and exhibition by artist and filmmaker Harry Lawson, created in collaboration with young inner-city horse riders from Stepney Bank Stables in Newcastle. Reimagining Byker as the Wild West, the project blurs the line between fact and fiction, weaving together recontextualised iPhone footage shot by the riders, archival material from the North East Film Archive, and Lawson's own cinematography. The result is a rich, intergenerational portrait of this unique community, layered with fragments from *The Stables* - a 2004 CBBC series made with Stepney's young riders two decades ago.

Stepney Bank Stables is Newcastle's last surviving site of its kind. Once vital for Byker's industry, the 120-year-old stables now serve as an Alternative Education Provider. Through equestrian care, young people build confidence, resilience, and community. *Stepney Western* highlights this emotional growth and documents the transformative connections formed through the creation of a radical educational model.

Further materials highlighting the archives used to produce the work can be seen at Newcastle Contemporary Art until the 27th April.

Some Strings



If I must die,
 you must live
 to tell my story
 to sell my things
 to buy a piece of cloth
 and some strings,
 (make it white with a long tail)
 so that a child, somewhere in Gaza
 while looking heaven in the eye
 awaiting his dad who left in a blaze—
 and bid no one farewell
 not even to his flesh
 not even to himself—
 sees the kite, my kite you made, flying up above
 and thinks for a moment an angel is there
 bringing back love
 If I must die
 let it bring hope
 let it be a tale

(Refaat Alareer)

Each memory that is freed is the first step for all memories to gather – (Edouard Glissant)

Filmmakers and artists from around the world have formed *Some Strings*, an ensemble of unreleased filmic gestures rooted in Palestine, where poet and teacher Refaat Alareer was targeted by Israeli strikes along with seven members of his family. In his last poem, *If I Must Die*, published five weeks before his murder, Refaat calls on those who live to create a kite - a long-standing object of resistance - with bits of string.

As with each reader, *Some Strings* receives this as a legacy. Its kites represent a diversity of views that share space against the silence, indifference and continued enabling from states who feign confusion about the greatest civilian massacre of the 21st century. The systematic extermination of the Palestinian people on Palestinian soil is taking place before our very eyes, and international diplomacy is failing to prevent war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocidal actions.

Launched in March 2024, *Some Strings* has so far brought together over 100 artists, producing nearly 6 hours of short films. The initiative will continue to build and its diffusion will take place internationally, with no fixed time limit, at cinemas, festivals, community spaces, protest camps and arts centres.

Artists: Alain Gomis, Alain Kassanda, Alexia Roux & Saad Chakali, Ali Arkady, Ali Cherri, Alice Brygo, Amel Alzakout, Amie Barouh, Anhar Salem, Anne Penders, Annik Leroy & Julie Morel, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Aude Fourel, Axelle Poisson, Bahia Bencheikh El Fegoun, Basma Al-Sharif, Baya Medhaffar, Ben Rivers, Ben Russell, Bani Khoshnoudi, Bo Wang, Bruce Clarke, Charlie Shackleton, Christophe Clavert, Claire Fontaine, Collectif Hawaf, Corinne Castel, Dalila Mahdjoub, Dania Reymond, Daniela Ortiz, Declan Clarke, Djamel Kerkar, Diego Mondaca, Douglas Gordon, Dora García, Elena López Riera & Philippe Azoury, Éléonore Weber, Ellie Ga, Eric Baudelaire & Claire Atherton & Marius Atherton, Eva Giolo, Eyal Sivan, Fernanda Pessoa, Francis Alÿs, Franssou Prenant, Génesis Scarlet Valenzuela Valdez, Ghassan Salhab, Hassen Ferhani, Idit Nathan, Ignacio Agüero, Ismail Bahri, Jayce Salloum, Jeremiah Mosese, Jerónimo Atehortúa, Jilani Saadi, Julie Courel, Juruna Mallon, Kamal Aljafari, Khaled Abdulwahed, Kiswendsida Parfait Kaboré, Khristine Gillard & Mohammad Hammash & Filip Momikj, Kyoshi Sugita, Lana Daher, Laura Huertas Millán, Lav Diaz, Léandre Bernard Brunel, Lene Berg, Leos Carax, Lucie Kerr, M'hand Abadou Djezairi & Marcel Mrejen, Mali Arun, Maria Aparicio, Marielle Chabal, Marwa Arsanios, Maryam Tafakory, Mehdi Meklat & Badrouddine Saïd Abdallah, Michaël Andrianaly, Mira Adoumier, Misha Zavalniy, Mitra Farahani, Mohamed Bourouissa, Mohanad Yaqubi, Monica Maurer, Muriel Modr, Nadia Ghanem, Narimane Mari, Naël Khleifi, Niles Atallah, Noma Omran & Ossama Mohammed, Newton Ifeanyi Aduaka, Onyeka Igwe, Pablo Sigg, Philip Rizk, Philippe Parreno, Pierre Creton, Primo Mauridi, Raman Djafari, Renée Nader Messor & João Salaviza, Saif Fradj & Mahshid Mahboubifar, Safia Benhaim, Samir Guesmi, Sarah Beddington, Sarah Wood, Sepideh Farsi, Serge Garcia, Sharon Lockhart, Silvia Maglioni & Graeme Thomson, Simplicie Herman Ganou, Soumeiya Ait Ahmed & Nadir Bouhmouch, Suneil Sanzgiri, Tariq Teguia, Taysir Batniji, Ugo Rodinone, Valentin Noujaïm, Valérie Massadian, Valérie Osouf & Cromix Onana, Victor Missud, Vincent Guilbert, Virgil Vernier, Wendelien Van Oldenborgh & Cathleen Schuster & Marcel Dickhage (Titre Provisoire), Wiame Haddad, Wilmarc Val, Yann Gonzales & Alain Garcia Vergara, Yannick Kergoat, Yohei Yamakado, Yosr Gasmi & Mauro Mazzocchi, Youssef Chebbi (More Strings To Come)

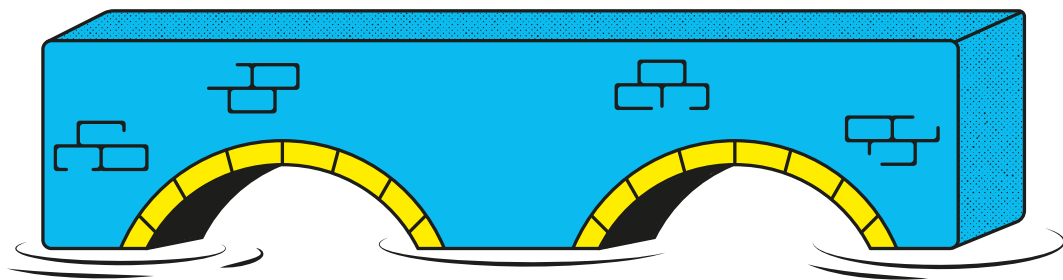


JUST ABOVE THE TEAR DUCT ONE EACH SIDE, 2024



BANKTS, 2024

NEW CINEMA FORUM



The first edition of the New Cinema Forum is an invitation to artists, filmmakers, critics and arts workers to consider new orientations to creating, exhibiting and working collectively. Offering practical ways to sustain and develop practice and community, the NCF provides a space to reflect and make connections.

CONTEXTS FOR PRODUCTION

12.00–13.00, Thursday 27 March 2025
NCF begins with an open conversation between participants and attendees considering the contexts we are all working in; the challenges, contradictions, and persistent sites of possibility that emerge.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

13.30 - 14.30, Thursday 27 March 2025
Working locally, collaboratively and with diverse participation has always been essential for developing and sustaining creative communities in the arts. How can we uphold these spaces, communities and practices in trying times?

With: Lydia Honeybone (OFFLINE), Adam Pugh (ANNE) and Harry Lawson (Artist, Filmmaker). Facilitated by Lucy Parker (Filmmaker).

WORKING WITH ARCHIVE

15.00–16.00, Thursday 27 March 2025
Archives present sometimes-confusing terrain to navigate. This session brings artists, curators and archivists together to discuss forms of preservation and interpretation, and what working practically with archival works can offer to creative culture.

With: Conal McStravick (Artist, Programmer) and Hope Strickland (Artist, Filmmaker). Facilitated by Charlotte Procter (Cinenova, LUX).

THINKING THROUGH PRACTICE

16.30–17.30, Thursday 27 March 2025
Artists and researchers consider the formal and structural nature of research-based practice, how it finds a place in the world and where it sits within and between formal institutions of art and academia.

With: Philip Rizk (Artist, Researcher) and Omar Hmidat (Artist, Researcher). Facilitated by Viviane Saglier (Academic).

DOC SOCIETY FILMMAKER MIXER

12.00–13.30, Friday 28 March 2025
An opportunity to meet with the funders from Doc Society in an informal setting.

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

12.00–13.00, Saturday 29 March 2025
An informal, drop-in roundtable to exchange knowledge and meet people.

REFLECTING ON LOVE TAPES

17.00–18.00, Sunday 30 March 2025
A special screening of the *Love Tapes* recorded over the Festival and a reflection of the Festival experience in conversation with filmmakers Wendy Clarke (online) and Kim Coleman.

UNSETTLED GROUNDS



Curated by artist-filmmaker Gail Pickering, *Unsettled Grounds* brings together works by graduates of the Goldsmiths MA Artists' Film & Moving Image, each engaging with landscapes in states of transformation—whether shaped by environmental change, personal histories, or industrial decline.

Max Blocking's *Tomorrow, the Burning Heavens* revisits 16th-century accounts of celestial events that sparked apocalyptic fears, setting them against the artificial winter landscapes of modern ski resorts. Through this interplay, the film explores how belief, image-making, and environmental intervention continue to shape our perceptions of the world. Jade Sim's *Eternal River* follows a family's quiet acts of maintenance and care as they contend with the uncertain future of their home. As government policies threaten their claim to the space, the film observes their gestures of resilience—routines that hold meaning in a place where continuity can no longer be taken for granted. Fergus Carmichael's *Rhadinace* moves between an oil rig 'graveyard' in northern Scotland and a local fire ritual, adopting a cinematic language informed by eco and folk horror. Seamlessly blending documentary realism with fiction, the film considers extraction, erasure, and the lasting imprints of industry on both landscape and community.

These films, in different ways, navigate the tensions between disappearance, intervention and adaptation, inviting reflection on how places, their communities, and histories remain unsettled.

Tomorrow, the Burning Heavens

Dir. Max Bloching | Germany | 2024 | 22'
German with English subtitles
UK PREMIERE

1560: the beginning of the so-called 'Little Ice Age'. Uncanny celestial events ignite the skies over Germany and Switzerland, leading people to believe the world is ending. *Tomorrow, the Burning Heavens* reconsiders these apocalyptic visions, once captured in hand-colored woodblock prints, and returns to the Alps to observe the industrial production of winter landscapes in a modern-day skiing resort. Here, past and present dreams and nightmares are melted together in a film about the interplay of image-making, technology and faith during times of environmental collapse.

Eternal River

Dir. Jade Sim | South Korea / UK | 2024 | 30'
Korean with English subtitles
INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

Eternal River traces a family's history of resilience in the wake of loss and displacement. The filmmaker's grandfather, who lost both his hand and family during the Korean War, built a home that has anchored three generations. Now, as government dam policies threaten their claim to this space, her uncle and mother persist in their daily rituals—repairing the house, tending the garden. Their gestures carry a quiet awareness that the home will not remain theirs, yet they continue, as if the act of care itself might hold it in place a little longer.

Rhadinace

Dir. Fergus Carmichael | UK | 2024 | 8'
No Dialogue

With their wells depleted, offshore platforms await decommissioning, while on land, oil burns in an annual ritual. *Rhadinace* builds on previous explorations of socio-ecological relationships, investigating an oil rig 'graveyard' in northern Scotland and the surrounding community. Through a partly fictionalised account of the Clavie burning, the film weaves together industry and tradition. Its score and pacing deliberately evoke echoes of eco and folk horror cinema, heightening the tension between extraction, mythology, and the natural world.



PROGRAMMER BIOGRAPHIES

DAWN BOTHWELL is an artist, curator, and researcher producing projects exploring moving image and sound, site and context, with a particular interest in alternative regional histories and sites. Her work has included factory parties and festivals, multi-site exhibitions and artist residency commissions. Currently Public Programmer at Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival, Dawn is developing projects and public programs using artists' moving image to foster community relationships and partnerships. She works with artists who challenge authorities' readings of history through moving image and sound including Giles Bailey, Adam Chodzko, Benedict Drew, Michelle Williams Gamaker, Laura Harrington, Rory Pilgrim and Heather Phillipson.

ANE LOPEZ is a curator and artist raised in Spain and based in Glasgow. She has previously worked as a programmer for Femspectives and Glasgow Short Film Festival and recently she took part in the Scottish Documentary Institute Bridging the Gap Scheme as a Creative Producer. Ane also works as the Programme Administrator for Market Gallery and she is the co-founder of Burnished, a newly formed artist-led initiative located at the heart of a rewilding project in rural East Perthshire, which offers a residency programme as well as opportunities for creative learning.

ALICE MILLER is a film curator and researcher based in Leeds, with an interest in histories of alternative film exhibition. Alice has been part of the programming team at BFMAF since 2021 and is Features Programmer at Leeds International Film Festival. Her programming work encompasses contemporary fiction, documentary, artists' moving image, and archival cinema. Actively involved in community film exhibition, Alice has organised pop-up screenings in spaces across Leeds and is a local organiser for the DIY celebration of cinema that is Scalarama.

MYRIAM MOUFLIH is a curator and reluctant writer based in Glasgow, working across film and contemporary visual art. Myriam has been part of the programming team at Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival since 2020 and has programmed for festivals like London Film Festival and Africa in Motion Film Festival, and organisations such as South London Gallery, Pavilion (Leeds) and The Mosaic Rooms.

PETER TAYLOR (Belfast, 1974) is a Berwick-upon-Tweed-based film curator dedicated to enacting plural, de-centred ideas on cinema, media arts, their histories, and exhibition. Since 2015, he has led BFMAF as its Director. From 2005 to 2016, Peter worked as a programmer at the International Film Festival Rotterdam and WORM. He is on the advisory board for the University of St. Andrews's Centre for Screen Cultures and, in 2023, was a mentor for 3-ACT Myanmar's Cinema in Transition. In 2021–2022, he curated Barbed Wire Love: Artists, Filmmakers and Their North of Ireland Troubles with Myrid Carten for the Glasgow Short Film Festival.

ILINCA VÂNĂU is a curator, researcher, and writer living in Edinburgh, originally from Romania. Ilinca joined the BFMAF programming team in 2022. She is also preselector for the documentary strand at Cork International Film Festival since 2021. Ilinca holds degrees in Film Studies from the University of St Andrews, where she is currently working as teaching assistant and completing her PhD thesis on sound and posthumanism in recent works made by women across narrative, artists' moving image and installation.

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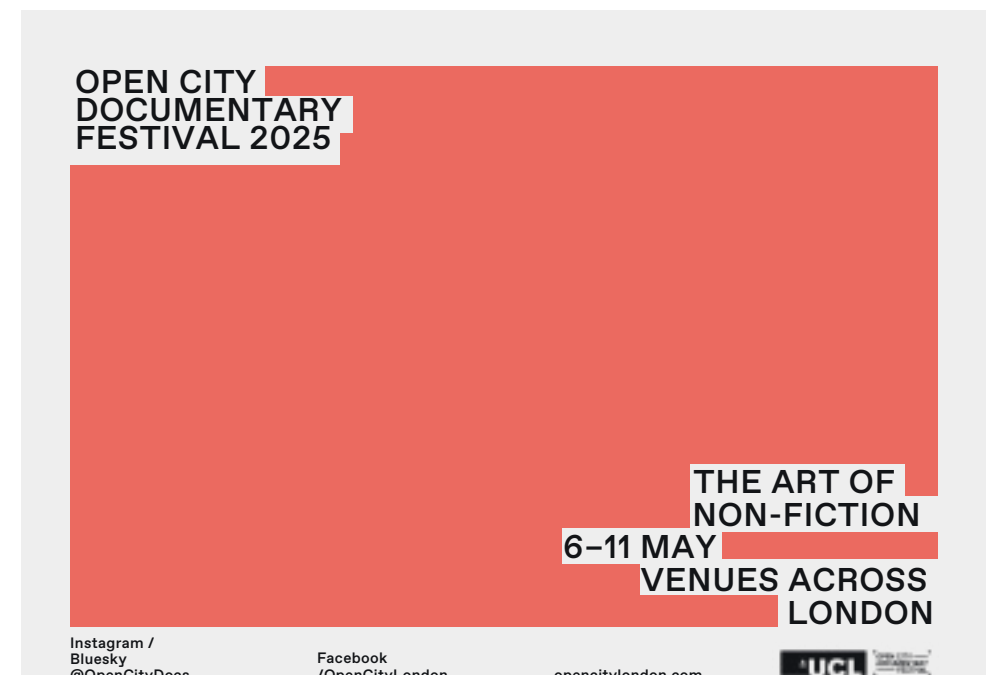
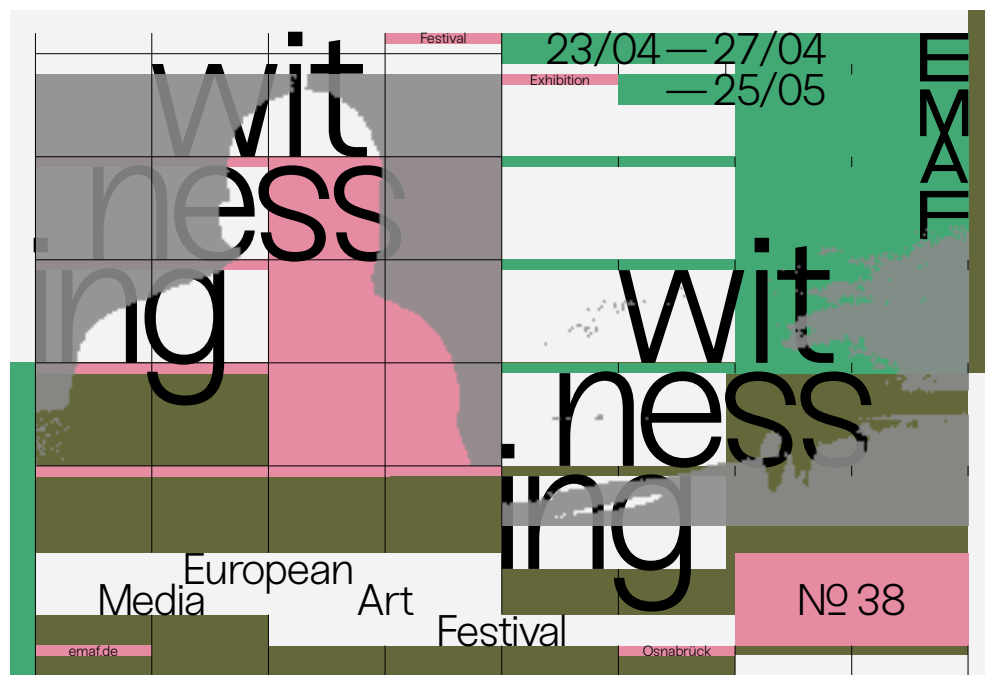
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All films in the programme have **descriptive subtitles** except: Propositions events *Black & Arab Encounters on Screen* and *Available Light*, Exhibition programmes *Some Strings* and *Endless Love Tapes*, New Cinema Awards film *Half Memory*. Essential Cinema film *Nightshift* will have English subtitles only.

Q&As following Eri Makihara's films will be presented with JSL, BSL, English Live Captioning and spoken English.

