

# Rozdzielona Wspólnota — The Inoperative Community II

*Rozdzielona Wspólnota – The Inoperative Community II* is an exhibition of experimental narrative film and video made since 1968 that address ideas of community and the shifting nature of social relations. It draws on work made for cinema, television and the gallery, signalling the overlapping and entangled histories of these sites. Originally conceived for the gallery Raven Row in London, this new iteration for Muzeum Sztuki includes a brand new exhibition design and a revised selection of works.

The exhibition's title combines both Polish and English translations of Jean-Luc Nancy's 1983 essay, *La Communauté désœuvrée*. The essay is translated as *The Inoperative Community* in English, and as *The Divided Community* in Polish. Both these translations diverge from the original meaning in French, pointing to one of the central themes of the exhibition: the contrasting socio-political contexts, on either side of the Iron Curtain, for the production and reception of avant-garde film since the end of the 1960s. These diverging translations also register the complexity of theorizing notions of community from these different perspectives.

The exhibition focuses on a period that could be described as the West's long 1970s (1968–84) – all the works were either made during this time, revisit the aesthetic debates and theoretical discourses, or reflect on the social and political movements of the era. French philosopher Alain Badiou has characterised this period as the “red decade”, beginning with national liberation struggles, mass student movements and workers' revolts, and ending with the abrupt foreclosure of possibilities presented by these events by the rise of neoliberalism.

Encompassing over sixty hours of material the exhibition can be navigated by means of a programme displayed on the back of a large screening room, visible as you enter the gallery, and in this booklet. Each visitor will only be able to see a fraction of the works on display, but connections can be made between works on any particular course through the exhibition.

Within the gallery at ms<sup>2</sup>, makeshift and soundproofed rooms are scattered through the space presenting the visitor with multiple options. The rooms are purposefully provisional in their construction, made of exposed plasterboard, signalling the imposition of cinematic modes of spectatorship on visitors to the museum. The exhibition design suggests that something is under construction and leaves open the possibility of new, yet fragile, communities coalescing. Within each room one film is presented, and screened a number of times during the course of each day.

A larger screening room, positioned in the centre of the gallery takes a more literal approach to the exhibition's theme and periodization. Each day of the week a different programme of films will play. The week begins with films made at the end of the 1960s and concludes each Sunday with Lav Diaz's

monumental *Melancholia* (2008). Correspondences can be found between the films in the galleries and the screening room programmes, and dialogues emerge between filmmakers from different generations and disciplines.

Nancy described the experience of community as a dislocation or loss, recasting community as an ontological concept rather than a social project that could be realised. He attempted to disassociate the word from issues of identity, and described a world where the social body had become atomised into the private order of the individual. This discourse of community represents only one reference point that influenced the selection of films and the exhibition's design. Another was the relationship of narrative film and video – the diary film, essay film and political documentary – to the more formalist or “structural” practices that still dominate histories of experimental film and video. Another still was an interest in modes of spectatorship of moving images now familiar to visitors of museums and galleries.

*Rozdzielona Wspólnota – The Inoperative Community II* doesn't propose a new theory to explain the proliferation of moving images across the institutional spaces of contemporary art and their relationship to cinema, but it does provide a space to think about these migrations, and the modes of attention and distraction that dictate how these images are consumed.

Artists working with film and video in the 1990s often used cinematic devices or appropriated images from Hollywood or European arthouse cinema, re-purposing cinematic images and grammar. In the last ten years, however, there has been a shift away from an interest in deconstructing cinematic grammar and an increased interest in the film avant-gardes of the 1960s and 1970s. Crucially, this period is not viewed as dead history but as a tradition within which filmmakers and artists might operate. Whilst gallery artists have looked to the aesthetic and political preoccupations of avant-garde film of the 1970s, some filmmakers working within the cinema have started using the kinds of conceptual gestures typical of artists' film and video made for the gallery. Whilst taking care not to make a fetish of the cinema nor encourage the kind of distracted viewing practiced by visitors to galleries, the exhibition registers these complex interchanges.

## Ericka Beckman

### **You The Better**

1983

16 mm film transferred to digital

32 minutes

Courtesy of the artist

Ericka Beckman's films use hand-drawn special effects and incantatory soundtracks to conjure up worlds in which individuals and groups compete for mysterious rewards. The logic of game play literally competes with what she has called narrative storytelling's 'sense of duty and need for closure'. *You The Better* tracks an individual's ability to adapt to complex and ever-changing social systems and how power is distributed across cooperative relations. It features the artist Ashley Bickerton as a "player" who must first work out the mechanics of the game in order to compete against the "House". But the game appears to be rigged – whichever strategy is adopted, individual play or teamwork, there seems little chance of winning. In refrains such as "subdivide, subdivide, subdivide" and "the subject in motion has got its own motion" Beckman channels Game theory and the ideas of Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget into her trance-inducing musical soundtrack.

Artists (Galleries)

Ericka Beckman (b. 1951, USA) graduated from California Institute of the Arts in 1974, and first gained recognition for her Super 8 and 16 mm films in the late 1970s. Her work has been shown at Museum of Modern Art, New York, and Tate Modern, London. She was included in the Whitney Biennial, New York, in 1985, 1987 and 1991. In 2015 she had solo exhibitions at VeneKlasen / Werner Gallery, Berlin, and Mary Boone Gallery, New York, as well as at Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis. She lives and works in New York and Boston.

## Luke Fowler

### **The Poor Stockinger, the Luddite Cropper and the Deluded Followers of Joanna Southcott**

2012

HD video

61 minutes

Courtesy of the artist and The Modern Institute/Toby Webster Ltd, Glasgow

Luke Fowler's films listen to and ruminate upon images taken from archives and the documentary films of other filmmakers. But rather than attempt to bring the past "alive", Fowler uses the images to interrogate the present. By inserting his own material, usually shot on 16mm, into found footage he asks the viewer to think about what is missing from the picture. He eschews nostalgia and instead opens a dialogue with abandoned forms and discourses.

The ostensible subject of *The Poor Stockinger, the Luddite Cropper and the Deluded Followers of Joanna Southcott* is the Marxist historian E.P. Thompson. Best well known for his book *The Making of the English Working Class, 1780-1832*, from which Fowler's film take its title, Thompson's words are spoken in the film by Welsh artist Cerith Wyn Evans. Over images of the land- and townscapes of Yorkshire, Evans falteringly intones extracts from Thompson's diaries, kept whilst teaching with the Workers Education Authority.

In one sequence Thompson is seen giving a lecture on three 17<sup>th</sup>-Century Levellers who were executed for refusing to serve in Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army. This footage was taken from Marc Karlin's *For Memory* (1982), which also features in "Rozdzielona Wspólnota – The Inoperative Community II" – see Thursday's screening room programme.

Luke Fowler (b. 1978, UK) is an artist, filmmaker and musician based in Glasgow. His films have been screened at Museum of Modern Art, New York, Tate Modern, London, Glasgow Film Festival and Berlin International Film Festival, as well as in recent solo exhibitions at Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, The Modern Institute, Glasgow, and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne, in 2015.

## Kira Muratova

### The Asthenic Syndrome

1989

35 mm transferred to digital

153 minutes

18+

Courtesy National Oleksandr Dovzhenko  
Film Centre

Born in Romania and based in Ukraine Kira Muratova is something of an anomaly amongst Soviet filmmakers. Her films cut across mysticism – usually seen as the defining theme of Soviet cinema – and universalise the often cruel and absurd nature of Soviet life during the 1980s and into the 90s.

*The Asthenic Syndrome* is split into two sections. In the first we follow a woman, whose mental state degenerates after the funeral of her husband. We see her assault friends, insult strangers in the street and eventually drag a homeless man to her apartment for sex. In the second section of the film a man wakes in a cinema after having fallen asleep watching the film we have just been watching, a film by Kira Muratova. Other viewers have already begun to storm out complaining that their time and their money have been wasted, whilst a film programmer tries pathetically to interest the disgruntled audience in a Q&A with the film's director.

This second section of the film quickly fragments into a hallucination of a film, switching almost randomly from fictional narrative to documentary mode. Although Muratova's film is one of the only films that was actually banned during the period of glasnost, this was for excessive spoken obscenities and not for criticism of the state. The descent into madness of the central character in the first section is echoed in the second by the degeneration and fragmentation of narrative, perfectly capturing the experience of many just prior to the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Kira Muratova (b. 1934, Soroki, Romania) is a director and screenwriter. She graduated from the Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography, Moscow in 1959. Her films include *Change of Destiny* (1987), *Sentimental Policeman* (1992), *Passions* (1994), *Second Class Citizens* (2001), *Chekhov's Motives* (2002). She lives in Ukraine.

**Ben Rivers**

**Ben Russell**

**A Spell to Ward off the Darkness**

2013

Super 16

98 minutes

15+

Courtesy the artists

and Rouge International

*A Spell To Ward Off The Darkness* is divided into three distinct and seemingly disparate sequences, all concentrating on the passage through different environments of one unnamed character played by the musician Robert AA Lowe. He begins his disjointed odyssey in a temporary commune on the small Estonian island of Vormsi. The 14 or so international members of the commune run, somewhat comically, through the gamut of commune activities: they attempt to build a geodesic dome, they cook and eat together, someone picks up a guitar and strums a tune, they have meandering conversations about the possibility of utopian forms of social organisation, and they share a sauna together.

The next sequence sees Lowe transported to the wilderness of Northern Finland, where he treks alone through a dense forest. In the final sequence, shot in Oslo, Norway, he appears on stage as the singer and guitarist of a black metal band. Throughout his odyssey Lowe remains impassive and alone – he emerges from the darkness and returns to the darkness. Rivers and Russell's film is about loneliness and togetherness, and how the two might coexist. Lowe's character seems as alone traipsing through the forest as he is in the commune or performing in a band.

Ben Rivers (b. 1972, UK) is an artist and filmmaker. He is the recipient of numerous prizes including the EYE Art & Film Prize, 2016 and FIPRESCI International Critics Prize, 68<sup>th</sup> Venice Film Festival for his first feature film *Two Years At Sea*. Recent solo exhibitions include: 'The Two Eyes Are Not Brothers', The Whitworth, Manchester, 2016; Solo Exhibition, Camden Arts Centre, London, 2015, 'The Two Eyes Are Not Brothers', Artangel, Television Centre, White City, London, 2015; 'Slow Action', Hepworth Wakefield, 2012; 'A World Rattled of Habit', A Foundation, Liverpool, 2009.

Ben Russell (b.1976, USA) is a media artist and curator. He was the recipient of a 2008 Guggenheim Fellowship and a 2010 FIPRESCI award. He has had solo screenings and exhibitions at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Rotterdam Film Festival; Wexner Center for the Arts; and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. His most recent films include *He Who Eats Children* (2016), *Atlantis* (2014), and *Let Us Persevere in What We Have Resolved Before We Forget* (2013).

## Albert Serra

### Els noms de Crist (The Names of Christ)

2010

HD video

193 minutes

16+

Courtesy the artist

After being celebrated on the film festival circuit for the films *Honour of the Knights* (2006) and *Birdsong* (2008), Albert Serra made his first work for a contemporary art institution. *Els noms de Crist* (The Names of Christ) was commissioned for the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), and is an episodic exploration of the production of a 'difficult film', loosely based on Luis de León's 16<sup>th</sup>-century book *De los nombres de Cristo* (The Names of Christ), in which a series of conversations take place among three friends at a country house, on the subject of the fourteen scriptural names of Christ.

In Serra's transposition, a director (played by Serra himself) and a producer, along with various other characters, wander through the galleries of MACBA discussing the difficulties with the (fictional) film's production. With a running time of over three hours *Els noms de Crist* makes demands that some gallery visitors are simply not going to be able to meet. But for those that do, the film is a complex work that draws parallels between religious asceticism and art, exploring the fragile communities that are necessary to hold together the production of a long narrative film, as well as the problems of translating literature into film and cinema into the spaces of contemporary art.

Albert Serra (b. 1975, Spain) is a filmmaker and artist based in Barcelona. He is best known for his films *Honour of the Knights* (2006), *Birdsong* (2008), and *Story of My Death* (2013). Recent presentations of his films include 'Albert Serra: Divine Visionaries and Holy Fools', Tate Modern, London (2015), 'Singularity', Catalonia (at) Venice (2015), Centre Pompidou, Paris (2013), and documenta 13, Kassel (2012).

## Leslie Thornton

### **Peggy and Fred in Hell: Folding**

1984–2015

16 mm film and video transferred to digital

96 minutes

Courtesy the artist

In Leslie Thornton's *Peggy and Fred in Hell*, an open-ended episodic work that has been in the making for over thirty years, its protagonists, real-life siblings Janis and Donald Reading, fall down a rabbit hole into a post-apocalyptic world where they are the only humans. With only the loosest backstory, Thornton began filming the children – who were her neighbours – in the early 1980s. She continued to work with them as they grew into teenagers and then young adults, and still maintains contact with them now. Over three decades she has continued to rework the material they shot together, periodically producing new 'episodes', and the project has evolved into one of the most singular and complex works of experimental film and video.

Peggy and Fred share their world with what Thornton has called the 'Artificial Intelligence Network', a being whose function is to teach and simultaneously learn from the children. Sifting through the detritus of our culture Peggy, Fred and the AI attempt to learn about each other and the world that has disappeared. One of the ways they do this is by watching TV. Thornton has written that Peggy and Fred only see other people on the TV, so they assume that they are also being broadcast; they 'figure that people are watching and learning from, and ignoring them [...] This constitutes their idea of the social'. The acuity of Thornton's enquiry into surveillance culture, theories of new media and social organisation is as striking now as it was at the end of the cold war.

For "The Inoperative Community" the artist has made a new 95-minute edit of *Peggy and Fred in Hell*, which incorporates footage shot in London whilst in residence at Raven Row during summer 2015. She has also devised a new environment within which to screen the film.

Leslie Thornton (b. 1951, USA) has been working with video and digital media since the 1980s. Her works have been presented at the Serpentine Gallery, London, Museum of Modern Art, New York, Tate Modern, London, the Whitney Biennial, New York, and documenta 12, Kassel. Her first solo exhibitions, 'Binocular' (2011) and 'Luna' (2013), were held at Winkelman Gallery, New York. Thornton lives and works in New York and Providence, Rhode Island, where she is Professor of Modern Culture and Media at Brown University, Rhode Island.

## Screening Room

### Tuesday

Jackie Raynal, *Deux Fois*, 1969, 64 minutes

Pere Portabella, *Vampir-Cuadecuc*, 1970, 75 minutes

Jane Arden, *The Other Side of the Underneath*, 1972, 106 minutes

Stephen Dwoskin, *Central Bazaar*, 1975, 142 minutes

The screening room programmes begin with four films made in the years after the mass social movements, student demonstrations and workers revolts of the late 1960s. The first film in the programme, Jackie Raynal's *Deux Fois*, is about the looks exchanged between the actors on screen – conspiratorial, hectoring – and the film's audience. The editing is minimal and each sequence is seemingly unconnected to the next. At the beginning of the film Raynal announces that "tonight will be the end of meaning", echoing Juliet Berto's exhortation in Jean-Luc Godard's *Le Gai Savoir*, made the previous year, that we must "return to zero".

In Pere Portabella's *Vampir-Cuadecuc* Christopher Lee, the British actor, is filmed at work on the set of Jesús Franco's *El Conde Drácula* (Count Dracula). As in Raynal's *Deux Fois*, Portabella is more interested in exploring discontinuities and fragmentation than following a plot or producing documentary verisimilitude. His film about a film being made drains the colour from Franco's commercial horror flick and overlays his high contrast black and white images with Carles Santos' haunting soundtrack. What Portabella and Raynal share is their attempt to produce something like a cinematic tabula rasa. They also transpose the viewer *into* the film, so that they could be said to be present at its creation and responsible in some way for the production of its meaning.

In *The Other Side of the Underneath* Jane Arden similarly uses avant-garde strategies and eschews traditional narrative tropes to the same ends. The film is split into two parts, both shot in South Wales. The first takes place in a Victorian asylum, where a psychiatrist played by Arden herself unsettles and taunts the female inmates. The second part of the film is more freewheeling and takes place outside the asylum in what appears to be a commune. The troupe of actors that she worked with on the film lived the

film as much as they acted in it – they lived as a collective during the filming, took drugs and workshopped scenes exploring the female psyche and the dark underside of community. All this is captured in an unclassifiable film that is part fiction and part document of a (failed) social experiment.

Where *The Other Side of the Underneath* took its cue from R. D. Laing's experiments in anti-psychiatry as much as the experimental psychodramas of Maya Deren and Kenneth Anger, Stephen Dwoskin explored the 1960s and 1970s phenomenon of the encounter group in his film *Central Bazaar*. Shot in the filmmaker's own living room – adapted especially for the production – a group of strangers spent five weeks exploring fantasies and testing the limits of their social conditioning. Dwoskin edited the results into a taut but open-ended exploration of hidden desires. Gavin Bryar's soundtrack starts with a clap of thunder and incorporates soaring strings, organ drones, bells and prepared piano, laid on top of incomprehensible moans, sobs and breathy exhalations.

One of the key questions asked by Dwoskin's film (and by Arden's) is: what does it mean to represent collectivity, and what is the relationship of this representation to ideas about realism? The films in Wednesday's programme will continue this exploration, and the first film even shares a location with Dwoskin's – one of the central sequences of Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen's *Riddles of the Sphinx* was shot in Dwoskin's living room.

## Jackie Raynal

### Deux Fois

1968

35 mm film transferred to digital

64 minutes 18+

Courtesy Collectif Jeune Cinéma

Jackie Raynal (b. 1940, France) worked as a film editor in the 1960s on many new wave films including *La Collectionneuse* (1967) by Éric Rohmer. She moved to New York in 1975 where she became programmer at Bleeker Street Cinema and Carnegie Hall Cinema. She continued to make films and appeared in a number of others including Yvonne Rainer's *The Man Who Envied Women* (1985). She lives and works in Paris and New York.

## Pere Portabella

### Vampir-Cuadecuc

1970

16 mm film transferred to digital

66 minutes

Courtesy Pere Portabella, Films 59

Artist, filmmaker and politician, Pere Portabella (b. 1929, Spain) began his cinematic career in the 1960s as a producer of fiction films implicitly critical of General Francisco Franco. His production company, Films 59, supported a number of works including *Viridiana* (1961) by Luis Buñuel. In 1977, when democracy returned to Spain, Portabella served as a senator in the Catalan government, taking a hiatus from filmmaking until 1990. Since 2002, his work has been screened at Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, documenta 11, Kassel, Centre Pompidou, Paris, and Museum of Modern Art, New York.

## Jane Arden

### **The Other Side of Underneath**

1971

16 mm film transferred to digital

106 minutes **18+**

Courtesy Jack Bond

Jane Arden (1927–1982) was one of most controversial figures in British theatre and cinema in the 1960s and 1970s. She had a long creative and personal relationship with director Jack Bond with whom she made *Separation* (1967), and *Anti-Clock* (1979), both of which Bond directed. In the theatre she is best known for *Vagina Rex and the Gas Oven* (1969) and *A New Communion for Freaks, Prophets and Witches* (1971), the script from which would form the basis of Arden's only film as solo director, *The Other Side of Underneath* (1972).

## Stephen Dwoskin

### **Central Bazaar**

1976

16 mm film transferred to digital

142 minutes **18+**

Courtesy BFI National Archive

Stephen Dwoskin (1939–2012) was a prolific filmmaker, graphic designer and writer. Born in Brooklyn, New York, he moved to London on a Fulbright Scholarship in 1964 and co-founded the London Filmmakers' Cooperative in 1966.

## Wednesday

Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen, *Riddles of the Sphinx*, 1977, 91 minutes

Marc Karlin, James Scott, Humphry Trevelyan and Jon Sanders, *'36 to '77*, 1978, 85 minutes  
Cinema Action, *So That You Can Live*, 1981, 83 minutes

Marc Karlin, *For Memory*, 1982, 114 minutes

Wednesday's programme shifts the focus exclusively onto the UK independent film scene of the 1970s and 1980s. All these films subject documentary traditions, such as cinema vérité, agit-prop and the essay film, to relentless questioning.

In *Riddles of the Sphinx* film theorists Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen bring their interests in language, Freudian psychoanalysis, avant-garde film and the politics of motherhood to bear on a complex film comprising seven sections. The longest and most elaborate, section four, comprises a series of thirteen 360-degree pans of domestic and public spaces occupied by the film's main protagonists: Louise, her daughter Anna, her friend Maxine and her husband Chris. Mulvey has stated that one of the influences on hers and Wollen's filmmaking was the "rise of the Women's Movement and its collective perception that images of women were a political issue and site of struggle."

The filmmakers of the second film in Thursday's programme were also profoundly influenced by the Women's movement. *'36 to '77* was originally conceived as a sequel to The Berwick Street Film Collective's *Nightcleaners* (1975), a film that chronicled the attempt of the Women's movement to unionise the women night cleaners of London, and through its radical form changed the terms of discussion about political documentary and experimental film in the UK. However, unlike *Nightcleaners*, which questioned the very possibility of representing political struggle on film, *'36 to '77*, which has scarcely been screened since it was made, pursues a more nuanced investigation. The film persistently questions what are the qualities of memory, and the relation of the individual to the collective.

The two films that complete Thursday's programme also subvert expectations of the political documentary. Karlin's *For Memory* is about the production of historical memory and the amnesia that shadows such productions. It is an elliptical essay film that weaves footage of historian and peace activist E.P. Thompson with interviews with Alzheimer's patients and a number of other activists. Cinema Action's *So That You Can Live* was the group's most personal and reflective film. Gone are the political sloganeering and single-issue campaigning of their earlier productions, replaced by a more subtle and revealing study of the life of Shirley Butts, an engineering union convenor who loses her job after a strike over equal pay. The film is framed by cultural critic Raymond Williams' book *The Country and the City* (1973), which towards the end Diane, Shirley's daughter, reads from to camera.

**Laura Mulvey**

**Peter Wollen**

**Riddles of the Sphinx**

1977

16 mm film transferred to digital

91 minutes

Courtesy BFI National Archive

Laura Mulvey (b. 1941, UK) is a professor of film at Birkbeck College, University of London and the director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Moving Image. Her publications include *Visual and Other Pleasures* (1989, new edition 2009), *Fetishism and Curiosity* (1996, new edition 2013), *Citizen Kane* (1996, new edition 2012), and *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (2006).

Peter Wollen (b. 1938, UK) was Chair of the Department of Film, Television and New Media at the University of California, Los Angeles. He was co-writer with Mark Peploe of the original script of Michelangelo Antonioni's film *The Passenger*. His previous books include *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* (1969, new edition 2008) and *Raiding The Icebox: Reflections on Twentieth Century Culture* (1993, new edition 2008).

Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen made six films together: *Penthesilea: Queen of the Amazons* (1974), *Riddles of the Sphinx* (1977), *AMY!* (1980), *Crystal Gazing* (1982), *Frida Kahlo and Tina Modotti* (1983), and *Bad Sister* (1983).

**Marc Karlin, Jon Sanders,**

'36 to '77

**James Scott,**

1978

**Humphry Trevelyan**

16 mm film transferred to digital  
94 minutes

Courtesy BFI National Archive

Jon Sanders is a filmmaker who has worked in television documentary and cinema. His feature films as director include *Painted Angels* (1998), *Low Tide* (2008), *Late September* (2012) and *Back to the Garden* (2013). James Scott is a painter and filmmaker based in Los Angeles. He has made films for television and cinema including *Richard Hamilton* (1969), *Adult Fun* (1972) and *Coilin and Platonida* (1976). He was a member of the Berwick Street Film Collective. Humphry Trevelyan has worked in independent film and TV production since 1969. As a member of the Berwick Street Film Collective, with Scott, Karlin and Mary Kelly he made *Nightcleaners* (1975). From 2003–09 he was Head of the International Film School Wales/Newport Film School. He is currently Senior Lecturer Film Production at Arts University Bournemouth.

<b>Tuesday</b>	10.00	10.30	11.00	11.30	12.00	12.30	13.00	13.30
<b>Wednesday - Sunday</b>	11.00	11.30	12.00	12.30	13.00	13.30	14.00	14.30
1	11.15	11.48	12.21	12.54	13.27	14.00	14.33	
	Ericka Beckman, <i>You The Better</i> , 1983, 32 min							
2	11.10	12.16	13.23	14.29				
	Luke Fowler, <i>The Poor Stockinger, the Luddite Cropper and the Deluded Followers of Joanna Southcott</i>							
3	11.15					13.50		
	Kira Muratova, <i>Astenicheskiy sindrom</i> , 1989, 153 min							
4	11.15				13.15			
	Ben Rivers, Ben Russell, <i>A Spell to Ward off the Darkness</i> , 2013, 98 min							
5	11.15							
	Albert Serra, <i>Els Noms de Crist</i> , 2010, 193 min							
6	11.05			12.42			14.19	
	Leslie Thornton, <i>Peggy and Fred in Hell: Folding</i> , 1984-2015, 95 min							
<b>Screening Room</b>	10.00	10.30	11.00	11.30	12.00	12.30	13.00	13.30
<b>Tuesday</b>	10.15			11.40			13.15	
	Jackie Raynal, <i>Deux Fois</i> , 1969, 64 min		Pere Portabella, <i>Vampir-Cuadecuc</i> , 1970, 66 min		Jane Arden, <i>The Oth</i> , 1972, 106 min			
<b>Screening Room</b>	11.00	11.30	12.00	12.30	13.00	13.30	14.00	14.30
<b>Wednesday</b>	11.15				13.10			
	Laura Mulvey, Peter Wollen, <i>Riddles of the Sphinx</i> , 1977, 91 min			Marc Karlin, James Scott, Humphry Trevelyan and Jon Sanders, '36 to '77, 1978, 94 min				
<b>Thursday</b>	11.15				13.00		14.35	
	Walerian Borowczyk, <i>Goto l'île d'amour</i> , 1969, 94 min		Krzysztof Zanussi, <i>Iluminacja</i> , 1972, 89 min		Véra Chytilová, 1979, 96 m			
<b>Friday</b>	11.30						14.30	
	Yvonne Rainer, <i>Journeys from Berlin/ 1971</i> , 1979, 125 min					Helke Sander, 1980-81, 131		
<b>Saturday</b>	11.15			12.40			14.15	
	Jean-Pierre Gorin, <i>Poto and Cabengo</i> , 1980, 73 min		Jean-Pierre Gorin, <i>Routine Pleasures</i> , 1986, 79 min		Jean-Pierre Gorin, <i>M</i> , 1992, 98 min			
<b>Sunday</b>	11.15							
	Lav Diaz, <i>Melancholia</i> , 2008, 447 min							

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0	14.00	14.30	15.00	15.30	16.00	16.30	17.00	17.30	18.00
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3	15.06	15.39	16.12	16.45	17.18	17.51	18.24		
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*uthcott*, 2012, 61 min

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	15.15				17.15				
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	15.00								
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0	14.00	14.30	15.00	15.30	16.00	16.30	17.00	17.30	18.00
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*The Other Side of the Underneath*,  
in Stephen Dwoskin, *Central Bazaar*,  
1975, 142 min

0	15.00	15.30	16.00	16.30	17.00	17.30	18.00	18.30	19.00
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yan	15.10				16.50				
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Cinema Action, *So That You Can Live*,  
1981, 83 min

Marc Karlin, *For Memory*,  
1982, 114 min

35			16.15						
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Chytilová, *PanelStory*,  
9, 96 min

Andrzej Żuławski, *Na srebrnym globie*,  
1987, 165 min

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Sander, *Der subjektive Faktor*,  
81, 138 min

Johan Grimonprez, *dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y*,  
1997, 68 min

30rin, <i>My Crazy Life</i> ,		16.15		17.15					
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Mati Diop, *Mille soleils*,  
2013, 45 min

Eric Baudelaire, *Letters to Max*,  
2014, 103 min

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## Cinema Action

### **So That You Can Live**

1981

16 mm film transferred to digital

83 minutes

Courtesy BFI National Archive

Cinema Action was founded by Ann Guedes and Gustav (Schlacke) Lamche after they left Paris following the events of May 1968. They made campaign films supporting trade union and left activism for almost twenty-five years. The group's core members included Eduardo Guedes (1941-2000) and Steve Sprung.

## Marc Karlin

### **For Memory**

1982

U-matic transferred to digital

114 minutes

Courtesy the Marc Karlin Archive

(Hermione Harris, Holly Aylett and Andy Robson)

Marc Karlin (1943–99) was a member of the filmmaking collectives Cinema Action and Berwick Street Film Collective, before making his own films. He was active within the film union ACTT and the Independent Filmmakers Association through the 1980s, and was a founder member of the group which set up the journal, *Vertigo*, in 1993.

## Thursday

Walerian Borowczyk, *Goto, Isle of Love*, 1969, 94 minutes  
Krzysztof Zanussi, *Illumination*, 1972, 89 minutes  
Věra Chytilová, *PanelStory*, 1979, 96 minutes  
Andrzej Żuławski, *On The Silver Globe*, 1987, 165 minutes

After focusing on the West, and in particular on the UK, in the first two programmes, Thursday's programme looks towards the East. In the same period we find many of the same themes and formal innovations being developed. However, experimental narrative films made by filmmakers from the East, although formally innovative in many of the same ways, are responding to, and working within, a very different context and tradition of filmmaking.

It is possible to use the same terms when writing about these formally adventurous films from the East and West – avant-garde, feminist, political, experimental, collective – but the meaning changes from one context to the next. Likewise it is possible to compare the Prague Spring to May '68 in Paris, but the by-products and consequences of these struggles are very different. Also different are the parameters within which experimentation can take place. Smuggling subversive content into conventional cinematic forms was just one possibility for "avant-garde" or new wave filmmakers from the communist East. There were many others, as these films prove.

We begin with Walerian Borowczyk's *Goto, Isle of Love*, a mysterious film that is part allegorical fairytale, and part what film historian Daniel Bird has called "social surrealism". Mostly filmed in the remains of Marie and Pierre Curie's derelict laboratory, *Goto* doesn't correspond to logic but neither does it let go of realism entirely. Its black sense of humour and dreamlike atmosphere is as indebted to the surrealists as it is to the books of Witold Gombrowicz. The hero of Borowczyk's absurd tale, a petty thief called Gozo, works his way up the hierarchy of Goto, a bizarre island presided over by melancholic dictator, Goto III. Borowczyk's film invents a cinematic vision that is at once recognisable but also otherworldly. Its critique of totalitarianism and assault on narrative are hidden behind its comic set-pieces and surreal logic. Not hidden enough as it turned out – it was banned in both Communist Poland and Fascist Spain.

The programme continues with Krzysztof Zanussi's *Illumination*, the story of a young man, Franciszek Retman, in search of answers. The film follows Retman as he tries to find his way in the world, at first becoming a student of physics before deciding that it is the science of the past, and switching to biology. His faltering vocational choices echo the messiness of his personal life. Despite its banal and pedestrian narrative *Illumination* is very experimental in its form, combining Wojciech Kilar's restless score and constant jump cuts and interjections to explain the action from a scientific or philosophical point of view. The film opens with Historian of Philosophy, Władysław Tatarkiewicz, delivering a short lecture about St. Augustine's concept of "illumination".

Věra Chytilová's *PanelStory* takes place in a housing estate under construction in Communist Czechoslovakia. Against the background of rubble and chaos the characters attempt to go about their daily lives. It is often claimed that *PanelStory*, for its time, is surprisingly critical of state socialism. But Chytilová is more interested in capturing an abstract sense of chaos and decay than she is in her characters' motivation or "struggle". She also advances a very particular type of feminism, one not necessarily informed by the "perception that images of women were a political issue and site of struggle" but by lived experience and a moral rage. *PanelStory* exists on the edge of disintegration. Chytilová's hyperactive, restless camera finds little to focus on. She creates both an image of destruction and engenders in the viewer the feeling of coming apart at the seams.

The final film in Thursday's programme is the late Andrzej Żuławski's (almost) lost masterpiece, *On The Silver Globe*, based on The Moon Trilogy sequence of science fiction novels written by his great uncle Jerzy Żuławski. The film's radical form is as much a consequence of its tortured production as the director's original intention and aesthetic vision. The film's production was shut down mid-way through the shoot in 1977 for a perceived criticism of the state and anti-religious sentiment. In 1988 Żuławski resurrected the film by filling in the gaps with unrelated images of cityscapes and sunsets and recording his own voiceover describing the missing scenes. The effect is like stumbling across a new avant-garde; a hitherto untried formal solution to the problem of suturing formalism to realism.

## Walerian Borowczyk

### **Goto, Isle of Love**

1968

35 mm transferred to digital

94 minutes **16+**

Courtesy Tamasa Distribution

Walerian Borowczyk (1923–2006, Poland) was a visual artist, scriptwriter, director, writer and designer. He completed a diploma in painting and graphic arts at the Kraków Academy of Fine Arts, and made numerous animated short films in the 1960s before making his first live action feature, *Goto L'île d'amour*, in France. His other feature films include *Blanche* (1971), *Immoral Tales* (1974), and *Story of a Sin* (1975).

## Krzysztof Zanussi

### **Illumination**

1972

35 mm transferred to digital

89 minutes **16+**

Courtesy Cyfrowe Repozytorium  
Filmowe

Krzysztof Zanussi (b. 1939, Poland) is a director, screenwriter, producer and author. He was born in Warsaw and studied philosophy at Jagiellonian University in Kraków and physics at Warsaw University, before graduating from the Łódź Film School in 1966. His films include *Family Life* (1970), *Behind the Wall* (1971), *Camouflage* (1976) and *Spiral* (1978).

## Věra Chytilová

### PanelStory

1979

35 mm transferred to digital

96 minutes

16+

Courtesy National Film Archive Praha

Věra Chytilová, (1929–2014, Czechoslovakia) was a director and scriptwriter, and an important member of the Czech New Wave, strongly influenced by feminist theories. She abandoned her studies in philosophy and architecture and graduated from the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (FAMU). Her films include *Daisies* (1966), *The Apple Game* (1976), *The Jester and the Queen* (1987).

## Andrzej Żuławski

### On The Silver Globe

1987

35 mm transferred to digital

165 minutes

18+

Courtesy Studio Filmowe Kadr

Andrzej Żuławski (1940–2016, Poland) was a director, poet and writer. He studied philosophy at the Sorbonne in Paris and film at the Institut des hautes études cinématographiques (IDHEC). His films include *The Most Important Thing: Love* (1975), *Possession* (1981), *The Public Woman* (1984). He recently won the Best Director award at the 68<sup>th</sup> Locarno Film Festival in Switzerland for his final film *Cosmos* (2015).

## Friday

Yvonne Rainer, *Journeys from Berlin/ 1971*, 1979, 125 minutes

Helke Sander, *Der subjektive Faktor*, 1980–81, 138 minutes

Johan Grimonprez, *dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y*, 1997, 68 minutes

The films in Friday's programme are about political activism and radicalism, made at some distance from the events they depict and discuss. In fact the very subject of these films is distance – and in particular, the distancing effect of certain modes of filmmaking.

Yvonne Rainer and Helke Sander's films were made after the heady early days of second wave feminism and each in different ways reflects on this period. Rainer connects these struggles to earlier ones and Sander rakes over and dramatises her own involvement, asking what kind of community was formed by the feminist movement.

Johan Grimonprez's *dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y* represented a rare 1990s return to both the aesthetics – reviving interest in video montage and the essay film – and the radical politics of the 1970s, subjecting both to sustained scrutiny. Grimonprez recycled passages from two novels by Don DeLillo – *White Noise* (1985) and *Mao II* (1991) – staging a conversation between a hijacking terrorist and a novelist, asking whether the work of one doesn't supplant that of the other. Made four years before 9/11, *dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y* questions the media's active involvement in the representation of political violence.

## Yvonne Rainer

### **Journeys from Berlin/1971**

1979

16 mm film transferred to digital

125 minutes

Courtesy of Zeitgeist Films

Yvonne Rainer (b. 1934, USA) is a choreographer and filmmaker. Between 1972 and 1996 she made seven experimental feature films including *Lives of Performers* (1972), *Film About A Woman Who...* (1974), *Journeys from Berlin/1971* (1979) and *The Man Who Envied Women* (1985) featuring a performance by Jackie Raynal.

## Helke Sander

### **Der subjektive Faktor**

1980–81

16 mm film transferred to digital

138 minutes

Courtesy of Deutsche Kinemathek,  
Museum für Film und Fernsehen

Helke Sander (b. 1931, Germany) is a filmmaker and writer. She was co-founder of the women's group Bread and Roses in 1972. In 1974 she founded the film journal *Frauen und Film* (Women and Film) and was its editor until 1982. Her films include *The All-Around Reduced Personality – Redupers* (1977), *Der subjektive Faktor* (1980/81) and *Der Beginn aller Schrecken ist die Liebe* (*Love is the Beginning of all Terrors*) (1984).

## Johan Grimonprez

### dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y

1997

Video transferred to digital

68 minutes **16+**

Copyright Zapomatik, Brussels

Courtesy of Argos, Brussels

Johan Grimonprez (b. 1962, Belgium) is an artist and filmmaker. He lives and works in Brussels and New York. His films include *dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y* (1997), *Double Take* (2009) and his latest film *Shadow World*, about the international arms trade, is currently in production. His works have been shown at Centre Pompidou, Paris, and documenta X, Kassel.

## Saturday

Jean-Pierre Gorin, *Poto and Cabengo*, 1980, 73 minutes

Jean-Pierre Gorin, *Routine Pleasures*, 1986, 79 minutes

Jean-Pierre Gorin, *My Crasy Life*, 1992, 98 minutes

Mati Diop, *Mille Soleils*, 2013, 45 minutes

Eric Baudelaire, *Letters to Max*, 2014, 103 minutes

Saturday's programme is split into two halves. The first half focuses on the films of Jean-Pierre Gorin and the second on two recent films that explore the social and political history of the 1970s. After working with Jean-Luc Godard under the auspices of the Dziga Vertov Group, Jean-Pierre Gorin moved to San Diego to take up a teaching post at the University of California, alongside his friend, the painter and film critic Manny Farber. In *Routine Pleasures* Gorin reflects on his relationship with Farber. The film is both a meditation on Farber's theory of "termite art" and an exemplar of it. For in Farber's alternative to, or variation on, the auteur theory (about defining directorial signature) the artist voraciously eats holes in his or her art, leaving gaps to be filled by the viewer. Gorin certainly achieves this in the three films that have become known as his "Californian trilogy".

Each film is as much about Gorin's exile as his adopted homeland. *Poto and Cabengo* is ostensibly a documentary about twin girls whose family claimed they had invented a new language. The story aroused frantic media interest when it broke, but Gorin decided to make his film after this had abated, focusing not on the veracity of the claims, but on the nature of language and social organisation. His interest in collectivity as well as twinning continued in *My Crasy Life*, an examination of Samoan gang culture in Long Beach, California. This last film is perhaps the hardest to classify – it takes the essay form in a completely unexpected direction. Gorin has some of the gang members return to Samoa to enact fantasies about their cultural origins. He also equips a policeman's patrol car with a sarcastic talking computer.

Mati Diop's *Mille Soleils* follows Magaye Niang, the star of *Touki-Bouki* (1973) – by Senegalese filmmaker and Diop's uncle, Djibril Diop Mambéty – to a screening of that film over forty years after its release. As a tribute to, and update of, the themes of the earlier film, Diop fuses documentary and

fiction modes, connecting the Senegal of the past and present, whilst re-energizing the post-colonial politics of *Touki-Bouki*. Niang plays himself (or a combination of himself and his alter ego), and at one key point in *Mille Soleils* attempts to convince contemporary viewers of *Touki-Bouki* that he is in fact the star of the film. His dreams of a better life in exile were never realised, and are perhaps in Diop's film shown to be the result of a crisis in cultural identity as much as an escape from war or poverty.

Eric Baudelaire's *Letters to Max* (2014) stages a correspondence between the filmmaker and Max Gvinjia, the erstwhile Minister of Foreign Affairs for the contested nation of Abkhazia, which was violently separated from Georgia in the early 1990s. For over 20 years, Abkhazia went unrecognised by any other nation state. Baudelaire's film explores the paradox of a country that has a government and borders, but that doesn't have the legal status of a country. Or as Baudelaire's puts it: "Abkhazia exists without existing, caught in a liminal space, a space in between realities". This construct gives the filmmaker the opportunity to explore what it means to try to make (or to be part of) a community. The Italian philosopher Roberto Esposito has written: "Community isn't a property, nor is it a territory to be separated and defended against those who do not belong to it. Rather, it is a void, a debt, a gift to the other that also reminds us of our constitutive alterity with respect to ourselves". Max, and the protagonists of many of the other films being screened within "Rozdzielona Wspólnota - The Inoperative Community II)", as well as the visitors to the exhibition, are constantly being reminded of their "constitutive alterity".

## Jean-Pierre Gorin

### **Poto and Cabengo**

1980

16 mm film transferred to digital

73 minutes

### **Routine Pleasures**

1986

16 mm film transferred to digital

80 minutes

### **My Crazy Life**

1992

16 mm film transferred to digital

98 minutes

16+

Courtesy of Janus Films, New York

Jean-Pierre Gorin (b. 1943, France) worked with Jean-Luc Godard as the Dziga Vertov Group between 1968 and 1972. During this time they completed the films *Vent d'est (Wind from the East)* (1969), *Lotte in Italia (Struggles in Italy)* (1970), *Vladimir et Rosa* (1970). Outside of the group they worked on two other films together, *Tout va bien* (1972) and *Letter to Jane* (1972). He left France in 1975 and joined the faculty of the University of California Visual Arts Department. It was here that he made the "Californian trilogy": *Poto and Cabengo*, *Routine Pleasures* and *My Crazy Life*.

## Mati Diop

### **Mille Soleils (A Thousand Suns)**

2013

35 mm film transferred to digital

45 minutes

16+

Courtesy the artist and Anna

Mati Diop (b. 1982, France) is a filmmaker and actress working in both France and Senegal. In addition to *Mille Soleils (A Thousand Suns)* (2013), as a director her films include *Atlantiques* (2009), *Big in Vietnam* (2011) and *Snow Canon* (2012). Her work has screened at the BFI London Film Festival, the Museum of the Moving Image, New York, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, and Valdivia International Film Festival, Chile.

## Eric Baudelaire

### **Letters to Max**

2014

HD video

103 minutes

Courtesy LUX, London

Eric Baudelaire (b. 1973, USA) is an artist and filmmaker who lives and works in Paris. His recent feature films include *The Ugly One* (2013) and *Letters to Max* (2014). His work has been exhibited in solo exhibitions at the Fridericianum, Kassel, Bétonsalon, Paris, Bergen Kunsthall, Beirut Art Center, Gasworks, London, and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

## Sunday

Lav Diaz, *Melancholia*, 2008, 447 minutes

The last programme of the week contains only one film. At almost eight hours, Lav Diaz's *Melancholia* presents a challenge to a cinema audience, and even more so to a gallery audience. In all his films Diaz attempts to represent the plight of the Filipino people, not as history but as a lived struggle. He mixes documentary and fiction modes, switching between different scenarios and conceptual frameworks, whilst maintaining storytelling as the primary mode. *Melancholia* is divided into three non-linear sections. Three characters are established, only later is it revealed that they are adopting their personas as part of a rehabilitation programme initiated by one of the characters to cope with the loss of loved ones in the resistance movement. *Melancholia* is a film about loss and grief, and about the necessary fiction of togetherness.

## Lav Diaz

### **Melancholia**

2008

HD video

447 minutes

18+

Courtesy the artist and sine olivia pilipinas

Since 1998 filmmaker Lav Diaz (b. 1958, Philippines) has directed over twenty films, including *Melancholia* (2008), *Norte, the End of History* (2013) and *From What Is Before* (2014). His most recent film *Hele Sa Hiwagang Hapis (A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery)* (2016) won the Silver Bear Alfred Bauer Prize at the Berlin International Film Festival.

- 1** ERICKA BECKMAN  
**You The Better**  
1983
- S** SCREENING ROOM
- 2** LUKE FOWLER  
**The Poor Stockinger, the Luddite Cropper and the Deluded Followers of Joanna Southcott**  
2012
- 3** KIRA MURATOVA  
**Astenicheskiy sindrom**  
1989
- 4** BEN RIVERS AND BEN RUSSELL  
**A Spell to Ward off the Darkness**  
2013
- 5** ALBERT SERRA  
**Els noms de Crist**  
[The Names of Christ]  
2010
- 6** LESLIE THORNTON  
**Peggy and Fred in Hell: Folding**  
1984-2015

## RELATED EVENTS

**21<sup>st</sup> of May 2016, 5 pm, ms<sup>2</sup>**

Curator's guided tour by Dan Kidner.

**22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2016, 6 pm, ms<sup>2</sup>**

A screening of short films by Leslie Thornton followed by a discussion with the artist.

Please see website for details about the further events: [msl.org.pl](http://msl.org.pl)