

# REVUE DE PRESSE INTERNATIONALE

2021



# SOMMAIRE

également consultable sur [cinemadureel.org](http://cinemadureel.org)

- 3 - Cinemaitaliano - *mardi 23 février 2021*
- 4 - Cinemaitaliano - *mardi 23 février 2021*
- 5 - Cinesinfin - *samedi 13 mars 2021*
- 8 - Cinesinfin - *dimanche 14 mars 2021*
- 11 - Cinesinfin - *lundi 15 mars 2021*
- 13 - Cinesinfin - *mardi 16 mars 2021*
- 16 - Cinesinfin - *mercredi 17 mars 2021*
- 20 - Cinesinfin - *jeudi 18 mars 2021*
- 22 - Desistfilm - *vendredi 19 mars 2021* - José Sarmiento Hinojosa
- 24 - Desistfilm - *vendredi 19 mars 2021* - José Sarmiento Hinojosa
- 27 - Desistfilm - *mardi 23 mars 2021* - José Sarmiento Hinojosa
- 29 - Desistfilm - *mardi 23 mars 2021* - José Sarmiento Hinojosa
- 31 - Desistfilm - *mardi 23 mars 2021* - Mónica Delgado
- 33 - Desistfilm - *mardi 23 mars 2021* - Mónica Delgado
- 35 - Desistfilm - *mercredi 24 mars 2021* - Mónica Delgado
- 37 - Desistfilm - *mercredi 24 mars 2021* - Mónica Delgado
- 39 - Desistfilm - *jeudi 25 mars 2021* - José Sarmiento Hinojosa
- 41 - Desistfilm - *jeudi 25 mars 2021* - José Sarmiento Hinojosa
- 44 - Desistfilm - *mardi 30 mars 2021* - Mónica Delgado
- 47 - DialM - *mars 2021* - Burcu Meltem Tohum
- 53 - DialM - *mars 2021* - Burcu Meltem Tohum
- 57 - Film Fest Report - *lundi 15 mars 2021* - Claire Lim
- 60 - Film Fest Report - *dimanche 21 mars 2021* - Mehdi Balamissa
- 63 - Film Fest Report - *dimanche 21 mars 2021*
- 66 - Film Fest Report - *mardi 23 mars 2021* - Claire Lim
- 69 - Film Fest Report - *samedi 17 avril 2021* - Mehdi Balamissa
- 72 - Il manifesto - *mardi 26 janvier 2021* - Eugenio Renzi

- 73 - Modern Times Review - *jeudi 14 janvier 2021*
- 75 - Modern Times Review - *lundi 1er février 2021* - Lauren Wissot  
~~NCM JOURNAL~~
- 78 - Modern Times Review - *samedi 6 février 2021* - Carmen Gray
- 81 - Modern Times Review - *lundi 8 février 2021*
- 83 - Modern Times Review - *lundi 8 mars 2021* - Carmen Gray
- 86 - Modern Times Review - *newsletter*
- 90 - Modern Times Review - *jeudi 11 mars 2021* - Neil Young
- 94 - Modern Times Review - *vendredi 12 mars 2021* - Sevara Pan
- 97 - Modern Times Review - Hans Henrik Fafner
- 100 - New Cultoframe - *dimanche 14 mars 2021* - Claudio Panella
- 105 - New Cultoframe - *vendredi 26 mars 2021* - Silvia Nugara
- 111 - Otros Cines - *vendredi 12 mars 2021*
- 113 - Senses of Cinema - *mai 2021* - Andrew Northdrop

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CINEMA DU REEL 43 - "Il Momento di Passaggio" a ParisDOC

 Mi piace 0



È "Il Momento di Passaggio" di Chiara Marotta - prodotto dalla società torinese La Sarraz - il progetto selezionato per prendere parte all'edizione 2021 di ParisDOC e a inaugurare il primo appuntamento di "Torino Goes To...".

Documentario in fase di post-produzione, "Il Momento di Passaggio" è stato selezionato da una commissione composta da Film Commission Torino Piemonte, Torino Film Festival e Cinéma du Réel e potrà prendere parte

alla sezione "Work In Progress" di ParisDOC insieme ad altri 7 progetti francesi ed europei.

Come già annunciato infatti, anche per quest'anno FCTP e TFF rinnovano la collaborazione per il progetto "Torino Goes To...", iniziativa inaugurata nel 2020 proprio con ParisDOC e poi con CannesDoc che prevede, attraverso la costruzione di importanti relazioni con festival e mercati europei, la promozione internazionale del cinema documentario piemontese.

Il primo appuntamento del 2021 si terrà nel corso della prossima edizione di Cinéma du Réel (online, dal 12 al 21 marzo 2021) e offrirà alla giovane autrice Chiara Marotta la possibilità di presentare "Il Momento di Passaggio" in un contesto internazionale e di fronte ad una platea di decision makers selezionati.

# cinemaitaliano.info

CINEMA DU REEL 43 - In concorso "Flowers Blooming in Our Throats" di Eva Giolo

 Mi piace 0



Il documentario "Flowers Blooming in Our Throats" di Eva Giolo, presentato in anteprima mondiale al *Rotterdam International Film Festival* 2021, è in concorso alla quarantatreesima edizione del festival del cinema del reale di Parigi (Francia) *Cinema du Reel*, in programma dal 12 al 21 marzo 2021.

Filmato in 16mm subito dopo il lockdown dovuto alla pandemia di COVID-19, "Flowers Blooming in Our Throats" è un ritratto cinematografico intimo e poetico dei fragili equilibri che regolano la quotidianità nel contesto domestico.

16/02/2021, 17:02

Simone Pinchiorri

# CINESINFIN



Publicado el marzo 13, 2021

Tim Leyendekker (2021)

En 2008, tres hombres holandeses fueron acusados de infectar deliberadamente a decenas de otros hombres homosexuales con su propia sangre infectada de VIH. Comenzando con un plano fijo de larga duración que muestra a una agente depositando los objetos que pertenecían a uno de ellos se abre *Feast*, el film de Tim Leyendekker que reconstruye el llamado «caso Groningen» desde la trampa de la objetividad.



A partir de datos y conversaciones reales se reinterpretan algunas situaciones e inventan otras agrupando diferentes enfoques y estilos. La película cuenta con siete directores de fotografía, uno para cada fragmento de la película que explora desde distintos ángulos formales el suceso. Lejos de contar con una narrativa típica, *Feast* se mueve entre la multi-

plicidad de registros para dotar a la realidad de un halo de buscada impostación que por momentos es radical y otras veces manipuladora en el mejor de los sentidos. Desde los «testimonios» acerca de las orgías que mezclaban sadomasoquismo e intercambio de fluidos, tales como la sangre, hasta la violencia ejercida por los dominadores cuya relación con las víctimas es tan terrorífica como interesante (atendiendo a los cambios de luz y de tono cuando los actores que los interpretan hablan de la belleza del sexo y de la muerte) las puertas del pretendido objetivismo se abren para cuestionar al propio espectador sobre lo que está viendo y escuchando. Después de mostrar con extremada cercanía las carnes de dos cuerpos que se rozan con violencia en un continuo ir y venir de pieles que se hacen indistinguibles (y que recuerdan inevitablemente a *Somniloquies* de Lucien Castaing-Taylor y Vérène Paravel), pasamos a ver una representación minimalista y *voayeurista* de *El banquete* de Platón. La atmósfera fría y casi quirúrgica (sin rayar en lo enfermizo) que ofrecen algunos de los planos de esa representación vendrá sucedida por otros retazos de la reconstrucción del caso en forma de entrevistas.



La película de Leyendecker se sitúa en la franja entre la realidad y la ficción para recurrir a la propia actitud crítica que, necesariamente, opera en torno al film. La manipulación del lenguaje, de la imagen y también la manera en que se muestra subyace en lo múltiple de su naturaleza. Se hace difícil no pensar en la apatía o en el languidecer de algunas secuencias que, sin embargo, invitan a construir un propio juicio alrededor. Por ejemplo, en cuanto se subvierte la naturaleza misma de la enfermedad y se la lleva al territorio de lo moralmente aceptable. Tanto por parte del que infectó a esos hombres como por el de una bióloga que relaciona la carga vírica con algo hermoso se leen diferentes propuestas que, lejos de sonar plausibles, se abordan con la naturalidad propia de algo normal. La objetividad inerte de una máquina que registra se opone a los cuerpos que actúan frente a ella, dando una mayor libertad para cuestionar lo que estamos viendo —al igual que sucede en el cine esencialmente documental de Nikolaus Geyrhalter—. No es raro pensar, dados los tiempos que corren, que ciertas ideologías vayan acuñando un preocupante clamor por la defensa de lo perjudicial; desde el aborto hasta el suicidio, pasando quien sabe cuando por la pederastia, el tema de la animadversión a cualquiera que no esté de acuerdo con la total libertad de cada cual para hacer cualquier cosa es sinónimo de veto absoluto. La brillante escena en la

comisaria a la que acude Max, una de las víctimas, se siente como un despropósito buscado y perfectamente equilibrado entre la cuestión de ser agredido y además envenenado y el hecho de que tenga él la culpa por acudir a las orgías y no practicar sexo seguro... Se pone de manifiesto una peligrosa reconsideración de la cualidad de «victima» que da un giro al film y a la realidad misma. Al igual que los límites en una relación sadomasoquista de los que hablada la pareja del agresor, parece que cuando se da una relación de poder abusiva, ya sea física, legal o ideológica, la víctima pasa a ser algo difuso por el hecho de haber accedido a hacer algo que le perjudica. ¿Es que la individualidad del cuerpo y la libertad para tratarlo como una extensión de una decisión tomada bajo unas circunstancias que, obviamente, no tienen por qué ser aceptables permite incluso que se dañe ese mismo cuerpo? ¿Es culpable alguien que disfruta de ser ahogado si lo ahogan? *Feast* se manifiesta como una introspección actualísima que también trata la sordidez y la enfermedad vírica que nos acosa hoy en día. Víctimas del coronavirus o del sida, tras explorar la crudeza y la ignominia de unos hechos atroces, siempre quedarán para nosotros teorías como la de la bióloga que ve belleza en la enfermedad. En una secuencia tan metafórica como interesante (y preocupante) se compara el virus del sida con el que hace cambiar de color los pétalos de un tulipán que será desecharo del ramo para después mostrar los cuerpos muertos de algunos hombres que aparecen tumbados en las calles, parques y playas sin que nadie se dé cuenta de que están sin vida. Inquietantemente y para más desasosiego, tampoco el espectador lo hará porque, objetivamente, parece que no lo estén.



# CINESINFIN



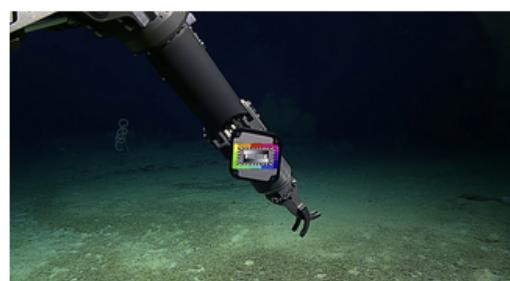
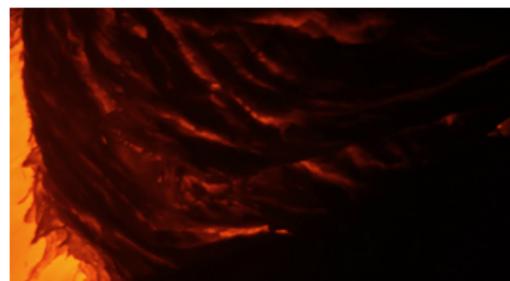
Publicado el marzo 14, 2021

## Fern Silva (2021)

En una encuesta sobre cine de vanguardia realizada hace años en [cubacine](#) figuraba el nombre de Fern Silva —junto a otros que este año presentan películas a competición en el Festival [Cinéma du Réel](#), como Daichi Saïto o Kevin Jerome Everson—. Ha llovido mucho desde entonces y, tras haber realizado un puñado de cortometrajes, a cuál más interesante, el cineasta estadounidense lanza su primer largo, de nombre *Rock Bottom Riser*. Y aunque no hay rastro del tema homónimo de [Bill Callahan](#) en la espléndida banda sonora del film —esto es, toda la pista de audio, a pesar de que se entienda comúnmente el término «banda sonora» solamente como la música de una película—, la forma de esta obra tan extraña se siente deudora del tema en más de un sentido.



*Rock Bottom Riser* es un film híbrido que aúna varias disciplinas formales diferentes con el fin de recalcitrarlas, haciendo de ellas imágenes del absurdo y lo increíble al mismo tiempo. La polinesia y sus volcanes que escupen lava bajo el mar o en la superficie parecen meros recursos visuales vacíos y carentes de unión con las demás imágenes, al margen de lo obvio. A medida que ese magma brota desde el centro de la Tierra hasta el suelo de Hawái, fragmentos dispares que giran en torno al mismo concepto (la isla) irán conformando de una forma también magnética. Lo aparentemente recurrente de un imaginario poderoso va fraguando mientras se expande para terminar dibujando un ejemplo apasionante de narrativa posmoderna que se aleja totalmente de lo que se entiende por montaje en el cine experimental. La mayor parte de la película contiene escenas «planificadas» en torno a una dinámica de cámara flotante que se mueve como un astro alrededor de una serie de cuerpos en movimiento. Tal y como se puede entrever en el film, la irrupción de un plan científico para instalar un telescopio gigantesco en la montaña sagrada de Mauna Kea es uno de los orígenes de la visión cenital u orbital que se aplica a casi la totalidad de los paisajes, objetos y personas de la película. Teniendo también en cuenta que el firmamento se utiliza para navegar desde tiempos ancestrales, el hecho de mezclar elementos que hablen del origen del universo y del destino del patrimonio natural de Hawái parecen no ser en vano... Cada tema contextualizado en una serie de imágenes freáticas arroja una luz tan iluminadora como estéticamente grandilocuente (¡bendita grandilocuencia!) que tiene como eje el espacio exterior, que es desde donde vemos la Tierra y lo que observamos desde ella.



Las películas de Silva que he tenido la oportunidad de ver logran establecer un sentido de continuidad contra todo pronóstico, en un principio, para hacer de la disparidad entre imágenes una coherente fuente de estímulos inesperados. La banda sonora, que actúa como una textura más de la película, se reúne con unas imágenes tan desorbitadas como concupiscentes que, literalmente, dejan atónito y casi sin palabras a un crítico que pretende defender un film que se tildará, sin duda, de pretencioso en el futuro.

«*Soy una roca, soy una isla*» cantaban Simon y Garfunkel con aires «New Age» propiciando un estribillo que reconduce el tema de la independencia y el individualismo explorado junto al poscolonialismo. En este palimpsesto que es *Rock Bottom Riser*, el sincretismo de un territorio amenazado por la lava, por la ciencia e incluso por los extraterrestres acaba por componer un fluido esquema tan atractivo como juguetón que por momentos puede recordar al cine de Khalik Allah mezclado con los vídeos de naturaleza que pueden verse en el Discovery Channel... Fern Silva, valiéndose de la reverberación entre imágenes y sonidos, provoca una avalancha imparable que funciona como extracto mitológico de la cultura posmoderna; un film muy a tener en cuenta en el panorama contemporáneo.

# CINESINFIN



Publicado el marzo 15, 2021

Shengze Zhu (2021)

El cine de Shengze Zhu muta como el caudal del río Yangtze. Su nueva película es una auténtica novedad dentro de su filmografía que, lejos de asemejarse al *found footage* virtual de *Present.Perfect.* (2019), al registro estático y riguroso de una familia durante catorce meses de *Another Year* (2016) o a la «improvisación» de *Out of Place* (2014), toma una deriva heredera del cine de su marido, el también cineasta y productor Zhengfan Yang.



*A River Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces* comienza con un plano fijo de ocho minutos que muestra una calle de Wuhan donde la gente se para a observar algo fuera de campo mientras una bocina estridente no cesa de sonar. Todas las personas que aparecen llevan mascarillas

quirúrgicas dando a entender que la pandemia del Coronavirus ha dado comienzo. A partir de ese plano, la cineasta china va a construir otro registro de la sociedad china a partir de planos fijos de larga duración. Esta vez se va a centrar en los cambios que la ciudad de

Wuhan ha experimentado a lo largo del último año así como a interrogarse sobre el rumbo que ha tomado el Progreso en la ciudad que la vio nacer. Nuevos puentes luminosos se alzan por encima de los suburbios y máquinas gigantescas no cesan en su empresa destructora/constructora de un nuevo paisaje industrial. En la película de Shengze, el sonido dice más que la imagen. Las cartas recitadas que se lamentan por no haber estado con un ser querido en los últimos instantes de su vida, el rugido del cauce del río que es acallado por los morteros y taladros hidráulicos o las sirenas de los barcos que llegan cargados de vehículos a la costa acompañarán a la paciente imagen de la cineasta en su recorrido por el presente y el pasado de su territorio.



Al igual que Zhengfan Yang, Shengze Zhu elabora un proyecto audiovisual que se basa en el registro de la rutina y el día a día de un lugar. Durante el proceso en el que se filman los grandes cambios que están sucediendo en China, las cosas más insignificantes destacan como manchas en un lienzo en blanco. La apacibilidad del cine de la china, sumada a la melancolía estática que desprenden sus planos ofrece una mirada al paso del tiempo como pocas. La ciudad es la protagonista y el río parece ser el alma que hace que el film fluya. Entre los rascacielos que se alzan a lo lejos, en un horizonte que parece cercano, las personas anónimas que se cuelan en la película de Shengze son minúsculos elementos en un paisaje tan enorme. La miopía ejerce como motor de una invisibilidad cada vez mayor con respecto a las personas, para sustituir sus vidas por meros puntos en un paisaje tan enorme como incontenible. «*Drunk with City*» (embriagado de ciudad) de SMZB es el tema que suena al final de *A Rivers Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces*; una canción que describe a la perfección el sentimiento contenido en toda la película. El sonido, natural y manufacturado, como motor del cambio que entronca con las crecidas del río Yangtze y las inundaciones del terreno que, un par de planos antes, veíamos libre de agua. Dentro de esas variaciones puede hallarse una de las claves para apreciar la película en su totalidad, al igual que dentro de cada plano encontramos una dicotomía explícita entre lo cercano y lo distante.

# CINESINFIN



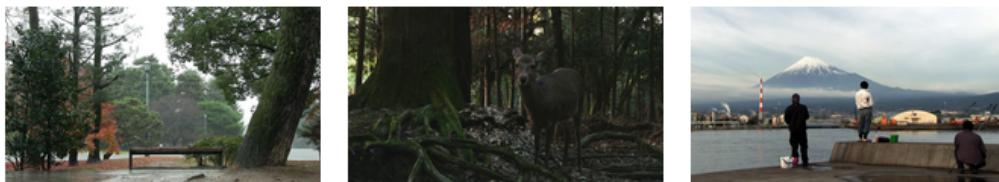
Publicado el marzo 16, 2021

## Jean-Claude Rousseau (2021)

Hace ya mucho tiempo desde que Jean-Claude Rousseau se pasó al digital. Desde esa primera película titulada *Lettre à Roberto* en 2002, han pasado casi veinte años y aquí sigue, capturando la esencia de un sentimiento efímero y encuadrando los paisajes del retiro. En *Un monde flottant*, tercera película que se sitúa en Japón tras *Arrière-saison* (2016) y *Si loin, si proche* (2016) Rousseau se inspira en el poema «*Historia de un mundo flotante*» de Asai Ryōi para navegar libremente por la propia estructura de todo su cine.



El aspecto privado del cine de Rousseau mezcla su visión del exterior mediante el encuadre pictórico, así como la del interior, consigo mismo en escena (normalmente mirando por una ventana), mediante la tensión entre lo que se ve y lo que se mira. El erotismo de las imágenes de Rousseau, quien no *cree* en el montaje, sino que entiende el proceso de unión de las mismas a partir de una atracción física, se adhiere aquí al sentimiento de melancolía y belleza que ha acompañado su obra desde los inicios en súper 8. Escenas de la vida cotidiana como una boda, unas pantuflas depositadas fuera de un tatami o unos pescadores con el monte Fuji de fondo responden a los dos elementos que hicieron que Rousseau comenzase a hacer sus obras: la vanguardia cinematográfica y el cine de Yasujirō Ozu. A partir de los característicos planos estáticos, separados por una imagen en negro que simula la pausa tras el cambio de bobina de sus películas en súper 8, el cineasta consigue un equilibrio entre la línea y la profundidad, dotando a cada imagen de una composición tan estable como reveladora. Con la idea del ukiyo en mente; esa idea que dice que la vida es transitoria y que nada permanece para siempre, Rousseau crea un film capaz de exponer la falta de recompensa tras la muerte y la fijación por lo efímero para terminar sucumbiendo a un terremoto emocional.

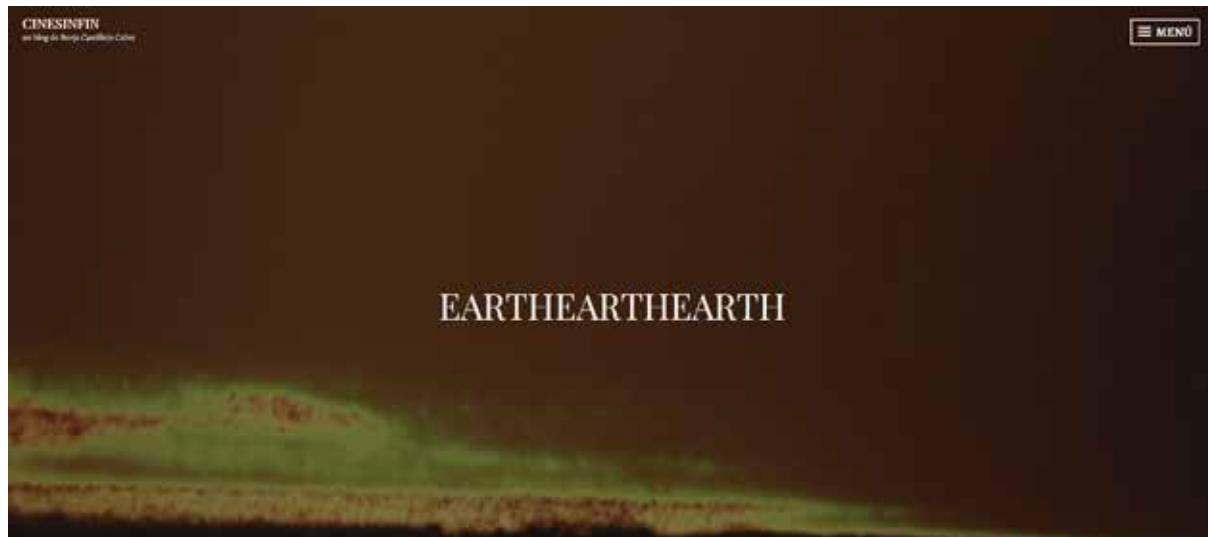


*Un monde flottant* muestra varias imágenes de ciervos desaliñados y débiles que viven entre las personas en los nuevos barrios residenciales y turísticos que han invadido el bosque. Languideciendo, con los cuernos cortados y el pelaje sucio, los animales serán el espíritu de la película más innovadora de Jean-Claude Rousseau. Entre dos repiqueteos de campanas, uno al inicio y otro al final de la cinta, Rousseau aparecerá como un turista y también como una persona que mira la decadencia de lo bello. Él intercambiará posiciones simbólicas para con su cine anterior con el crítico, profesor de cine y amigo Daisuke Akasaka mientras su deriva observational toma un rumbo rupturista. Dos escenas conformadas por movimientos bruscos de la cámara serán la prueba de un seísmo a gran escala dentro de la forma estática de Rousseau y de su propia vida, pues a sus setenta y un años puede que tenga nuevas preocupaciones tanto artísticas como personales.

Es importante recalcar que las películas de Rousseau grabadas en Japón utilizan el formato 16:9 y son en alta definición, un dato bastante esclarecedor para comprender el cambio de registros e incluso de miradas.



# CINESINFON



Publicado el marzo 17, 2021

Daichi Saïto (2021)

No hay nada parecido al cine de Daichi Saïto. Sus fulguraciones se remontan a una época en la que la imagen conservaba su magia sin necesidad de adherir aspectos secundarios. En *eartheartearth*, su décima película hasta la fecha que pasó por Rotterdam y ahora compite en la sección oficial del Festival Cinéma du Réel, es la curvatura de la luz que incide sobre las montañas de los Andes canadienses; donde se desintegran los fotones y aparecen los soles danzantes en un horizonte múltiple.



Partiendo, al igual que *Engram of Returning* (2016), de la improvisación al saxofón de Jason Sharp, la película de Saïto concatena una visión radical del paisaje con la simbiosis entre el sonido y la luz. Como toda su obra, *eartheartearth* nace del trabajo artesanal y el procesado a mano de la imagen fotoquímica para investigar los diferentes estímulos que la luz, el color y las propias formas de lo real generan de manera imprevista. El paisaje montañoso de los Andes se transforma a cada diferente cambio de ritmo que, según Saïto, «está completamente determinado por la pulsación de la luz». Cada mutación lumínica provoca otra pictórica y ésta, a su vez, otra sensorial en un continuo ir y venir de extremas exposiciones que iluminan tanto como ocultan. La belleza del film de Saïto compite con la claridad de su composición. La forma del propio paisaje, lejos de permanecer estática y verse tal como es, adquiere un papel expresivo y tan vivo como puede apreciarse en las imágenes de más abajo. Gracias a los cambios «atmosféricos» provocados por Saïto y su brillante esquema de luces y sombras que otorgan una dimensionalidad crepuscular a cada aparición y desaparición de sus formas, . La luz comunica lo que nada más puede, dibuja contornos y define figuras haciéndolas grandes o minúsculas, sobreponiendo los territorios o haciendo desaparecer las propias montañas...

Las imágenes de *eartheartearth* pueden recordar al viaje interestelar de David Bowman en 2001: *Odisea del espacio* (2001: *A Space Odyssey*, Stanley Kubrick, 1968) pero, lejos de hacer una comparación meramente visual, habría que fijarse bien en cómo Saïto desenvuelve su «trip alienígena». Sin recurrir al contraplano del ojo del hombre que observa atónito, los paisajes psicodélicos (?) de *eartheartearth* mutan impasibles ante una mirada indefinida, libre de una visión antropocentrista del mundo y, más importante, adhiriendo un aspecto esencial que traspasa lo humano. Más allá incluso de la adecuación al propio ojo, lo que se ve parece tan irreal como revelador. Algunos de los movimientos de luz, que escapan a cualquier ánimo de impresionar llegando incluso a provocar un dolor intenso al mirarse, se manifiestan como una manifestación de lo oculto; de lo que subyace en las rocas y en los cielos. Otra dimensión, espiritual y ajena a la «realidad» tangible, que nos alcanza en una especie de emancipación formal del futuro.

*El amanecer donde la tierra es carne,*

*Donde los huesos son ecos;*

*Has sobrevivido a las extinciones –*

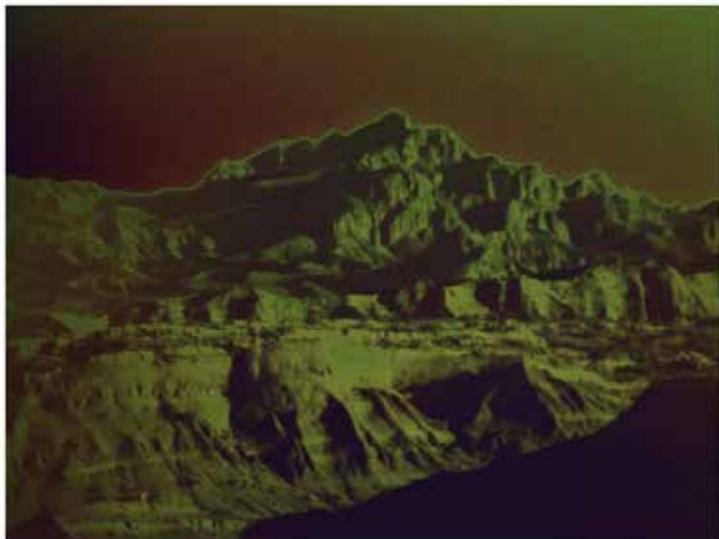
*De estrellas, de cielos, de arenas, de mares;*

*Al final el futuro nos alcanza,*

*Y todos los muertos están frente a nosotros.*

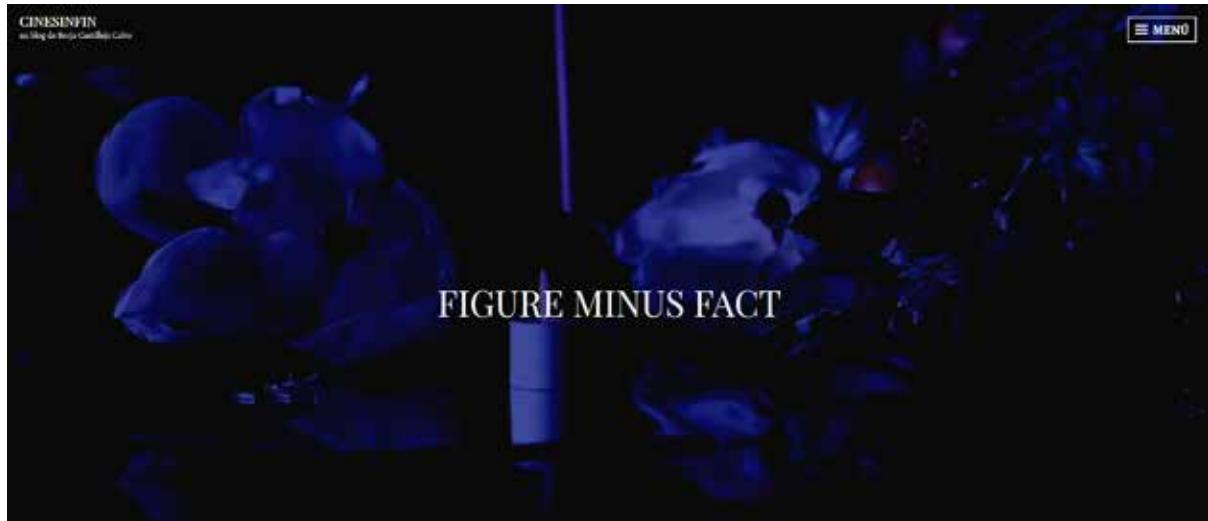
Así reza la sinopsis de una de las películas más impresionantes de toda la sección oficial del festival Cinéma du Réel. Un proyecto que nace de la invitación a filmar la Cordillera de los Andes como parte del programa «**Underground Mines**» coordinado por Oona Mosna y se manifiesta como un majestuoso film rodado en 35 mm cuya geología háptica erosiona los montes. Una experiencia inmersiva que muta conforme a la improvisación estructural

de Jason Sharp quien, usando la cadencia de los latidos del corazón, compone una música cílica tan inestable como la materia visual, pero tan evocadora como las ráfagas de viento lumínico que acontecen.





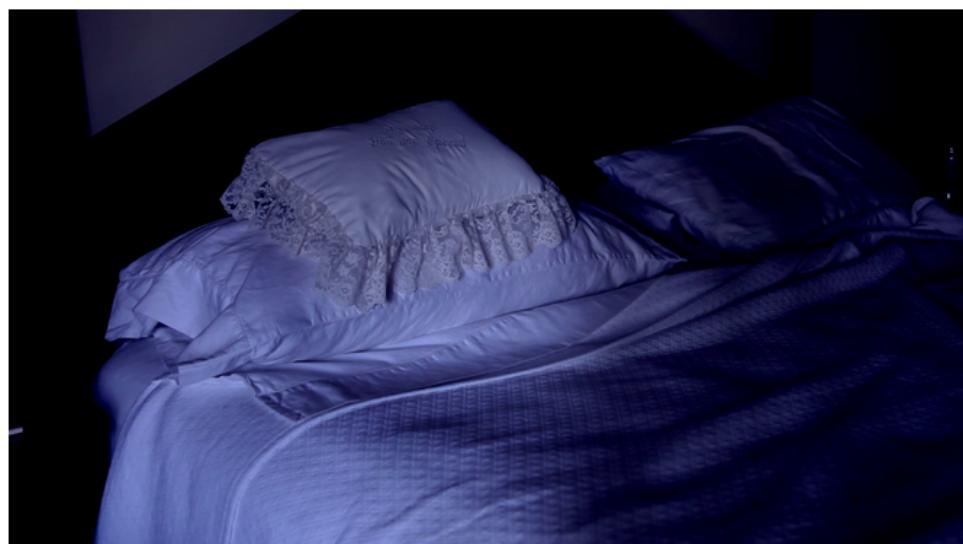
# CINESINFIN



Publicado el marzo 18, 2021

Mary Helena Clark (2020)

Casi al principio de *Figure Minus Fact* se muestra un trozo de papel en el que pone: «no hables a menso que puedas mejorar el silencio». Después la película se desenvuelve en torno a una serie de imágenes relacionadas entre sí o con el aspecto que presentan para demostrar que la ausencia de la palabra hablada merece lo callado de lo escrito. Pero, ¿existe realmente el silencio?



La magia de poner las cosas en relación, algo a lo que se han prestado algunas de las mejores películas del Festival Cinéma du Réel como *The I and S of Lives* de Kevin Jerome Everson, *Armour* de Sandro Aguilar o *eartheartearth* de Daichi Saïto, es lo que representa el cine de Mary Helena Clark. En torno a la incógnita del silencio dentro de una imagen sonora y de un sonido visual, la cineasta teje uniones en torno a objetos, elementos y estados de ánimo que revelan su presencia mediante la gradación de la luz. Lo subexpuesto aparece rodeado de un misterio tan actual en su forma como ancestral en su concepción mientras que los planos con luz natural se sienten parte de una realidad diaria, sin más pretensión que la de exemplificar lo simple. La noche como duelo reconstruye los espacios a través de la ausencia; una cama sin nadie recostado, unas flores sin jarrón, unas campanas sin nadie que las taña... Las formas en el umbral de la percepción amplifican los sentidos para acercarnos a lo que *no se ve*, lo que hay más allá de la imagen. El oído y la vista deben agudizarse para descubrir el insecto tras el camuflaje, la vida tras el velo. Al igual que sucede en ese plano que estudia el libro de entomología y botánica en el que la mirada se ve atraída por lo fascinante de los mecanismos de defensa, el ojo se ve atraído por lo concreto y lo tangible de unos objetos tan vívidos como inciertos.

En la película de Mary Helena Clark existe una tensión entre la mímica del entorno y su verdadera esencia casi nunca comprensible. Confundiendo cada límite con el entorno en el que se dibuja uno puede solamente intuir qué está vivo y qué muerto. La pérdida y el anhelo se convierten en amor y dicha en un sencillo corte entre imágenes que, lejos de tener un observador activo o pasivo, supone la transición de una objetividad casi apresada. La «caza» de los planos de Clark caracteriza las apariencias y dialoga con un mundo verdadero y falso al mismo tiempo. Suponiendo que el cine puede camuflarse con la propia noche, no sería descabellado afirmar que la oscuridad ideada por la cineasta pueda incluso llegar a ocultar otra imagen dentro de ella, un insecto alado no necesariamente analizable.



Figure 3

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## CINÉMA DU RÉEL 2021: ON TWO FILMS BY SANDRO AGUILAR AND JESSICA SARAH RINLAND



*Armour* (2021)

By José Sarmiento Hinojosa

I find myself wondering the exact meaning of “archaeology of the image” (not in the usual sense of archival restore), if as this term could encompass the mental route I’m trying to follow when watching the latest films of Sandro Aguilar and Jessica Sarah Rinland. If by archaeology we understand the recovery or analysis of material culture, how can the image in its materiality be unearthed from its underlying presence to re-signify the use of its moments, to put in context a different narrative linked with the *deleuzian* idea of the time-image?

This is indeed an easy link to make, since Rinland’s film **Sol de Campinas** (2021) deals directly with the process of archaeology itself, the unearthing of memory as a process of the material -which is a path the Argentinian filmmaker has followed before, in works/installations like **We Account the Whale Inmortal** (2012 – 2016) or her previous film **those that, at a distance, resemble another** (2019). But it goes beyond that. Aguilar’s film **Armour** (2021), follows the path of a traditional narrative from a construction of instants, title cards and spaces, building a story from the mere act of re-contextualizing fragments. The story behind **Armour** (and I will dare to say that the “story” itself comes after the structure) is an unearthing of periodical durations of time, which very well could be the essence of cinema, but in this case, the fragments, paths or possibility of routes are concatenated with one another to reconstruct a puzzle which moves forward, such as an archaeology excavation, an exercise to find cohesion from fragmentation, unity from disconnection. The atmosphere of the film plays a

crucial role: we only see the “armour” part of the story peek out for brief moments, and it would seem that we’re in the path of clarity, but, as a process of recovery, it works slowly, it takes its time to build its fragments, like an incomplete skeleton. It becomes archaeology.

Sandro Aguilar, to me, appears as quite an underrated filmmaker (in opposite to his role as a producer, working with people like Eugene Green, Salome Lamas, Manoel de Oliveira, etc.). **Jewels**, his 2013 film, remains in memory as an absolute masterpiece of *fiction-meets-entomology-meets-cybernetics-meets-drama-meets-horror*. The ease in which Aguilar moves in such a hybrid environment of genres speaks milestones of his career as a director, and **Armour** isn’t an exception. Perhaps this innate curiosity of his to choose subject matters open to exploration an even *dissection*, leads to an avenue of pure discovery, which is the essence of any good experimental film (or of any good film, in any case). The drama behind the story of the inebriated, armor wearing character of **Armour**, lies beneath an pure exploration of the possibilities of narratives and atmosphere.



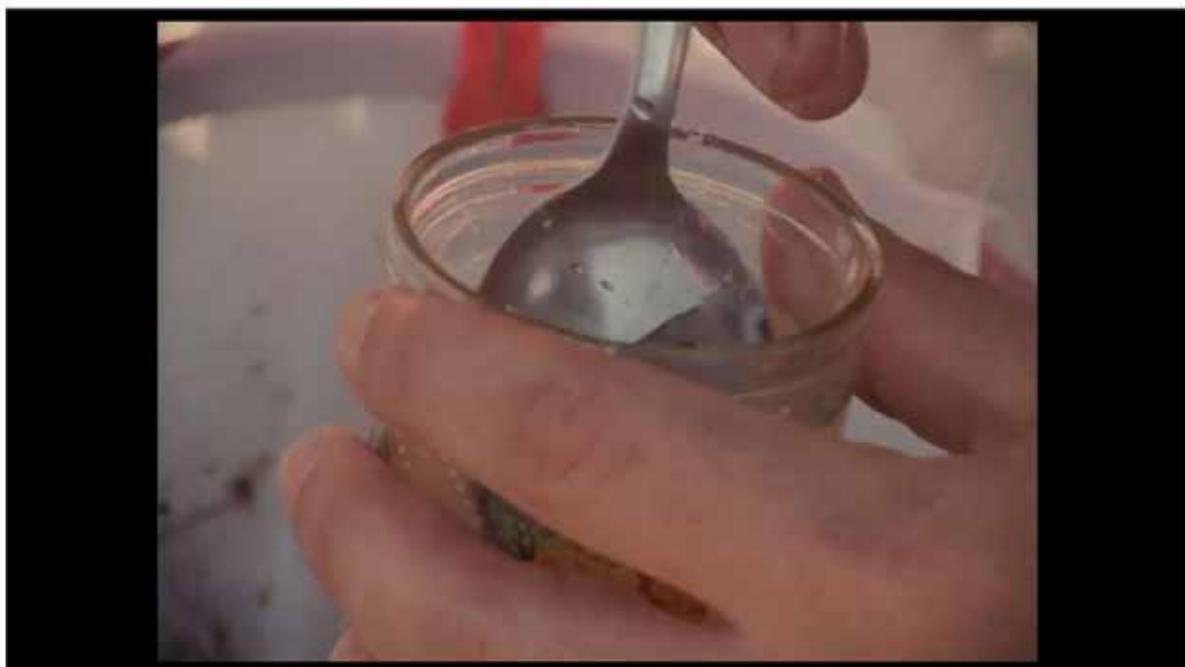
*Sol de Campinas* (2021)

Jessica Sarah Rinland follows her own route of exploration in a more literal sense of the ritual of archaeology and memory. However, one must consider her path as a very particular one, where the tactile, or the exploration has taken a pivotal presence throughout all her filmography. The hands, for example, play a role of infinite discovery, but also are tools of empathy, of connection, of the intrinsic ways of the recovery of something which retains a hidden mystery, recurring themes (a coincidence): entomology (**Black Pond**, 2018), or dissection (**Necropsy of a Harbour Porpoise (Seeing From our Eyes into Theirs**, 2015)), or mere sensuality, (**Expression of the Sightless**, 2016)). **Sol de Campinas** could be an accompanying piece on **those that, at a distance, resemble another**, in certain way: both films are devoted to the process, and the potentiality of the tactile as a method for reflecting about ecology and memory.

But then again, Rinland’s eyes are keen to observe the process as an element of unveiling, and this is shown in her various live performances, his keen efforts to become part of the events she’s trying to shed light on. Her camera (and this is one of the main qualities of her cinema) wonders through the shots like a curious eye, as a biological extension of the arm that wants to be a part of the unearthing, of dust, of hands-on approach and of going through the complicated palimpsests of memory. It isn’t always completely revelatory, it doesn’t always provide answers, but it comes as close as it can, as much as an empathy for a discipline can get, to recover those untold truths, or diffuse answers that dwell between the aesthetics of the moving image. Two intriguing films for a first delivery from Cinéma du Réel.

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## CINÉMA DU RÉEL 2021: FILMS DE SANDRO AGUILAR Y JESSICA SARAH RINLAND



Por José Sarmiento Hinojosa

Me pregunto el significado exacto de la frase "arqueología de la imagen" (no en el sentido habitual de restauración de archivo), y si este término podría abarcar la ruta mental que estoy tratando de seguir cuando veo las últimas películas de Sandro Aguilar y Jessica Sarah Rinland. Si por arqueología entendemos la recuperación o el análisis de la cultura material, ¿cómo se puede desenterrar la imagen en su materialidad, de su presencia subyacente, para resignificar el uso de sus momentos, para contextualizar una narrativa diferente ligada a la idea deleuzeana de la imagen-tiempo?

Este es, en efecto, un vínculo fácil de establecer, ya que la película de Rinland **Sol de Campinas** (2021) trata directamente del proceso de la arqueología en sí, del desenterrar la memoria como proceso matérico, que es un camino que la cineasta argentina ha seguido antes, en obras / instalaciones como **We Account the Whale Inmortal** (2012 – 2016) o su anterior película **those that, at a distance, resemble another** (2019). Pero va más allá de eso.

La película de Aguilar, **Armor** (2021), sigue el camino de una narrativa tradicional a partir de una construcción de instantes, cartulinas y espacios, construyendo una historia a partir del mero acto de recontextualizar fragmentos. La historia detrás de **Armor** (y me atrevería a decir que la "historia" en sí viene después de la estructura) es un desenterrar de duraciones periódicas de tiempo, que muy bien podrían ser la esencia del cine, pero en este caso, a través de los fragmentos, los caminos, o la posibilidad de que las rutas queden concatenadas entre sí para reconstruir un rompecabezas que avanza, como una excavación arqueológica, un ejercicio para encontrar cohesión de fragmentación; la unidad de desconexión.

La atmósfera de la película juega un papel crucial: solo vemos la "armadura" de la historia asomarse por breves momentos, y parece que estamos en el camino de la claridad, pero, como proceso de recuperación, funciona lentamente, se toma su tiempo para construir sus fragmentos, como un esqueleto incompleto. Se convierte en arqueología.

Sandro Aguilar, para mí, aparece como un cineasta bastante subvalorado (al contrario de su papel de productor, trabajando con gente como Eugene Green, Salome Lamas, Manoel de Oliveira, etc.). **Jewels**, su película de 2013, permanece en la memoria como una obra maestra absoluta donde la ficción se encuentra con la entomología, y la cibernetica se encuentra con el drama y el horror. La facilidad con la que Aguilar se mueve en un entorno tan híbrido de géneros habla de los hitos de su carrera como director, y **Armor** no es una excepción. Quizás esta curiosidad innata suya por elegir materias abiertas a la exploración y a la disección, lo lleve a una avenida de puro descubrimiento, que es la esencia de cualquier buena película experimental (o de cualquier buena película, en todo caso). El drama detrás de la historia del personaje de **Armor**, ebrio y con armadura, se encuentra dentro de una exploración pura de las posibilidades de las narrativas y su atmósfera.



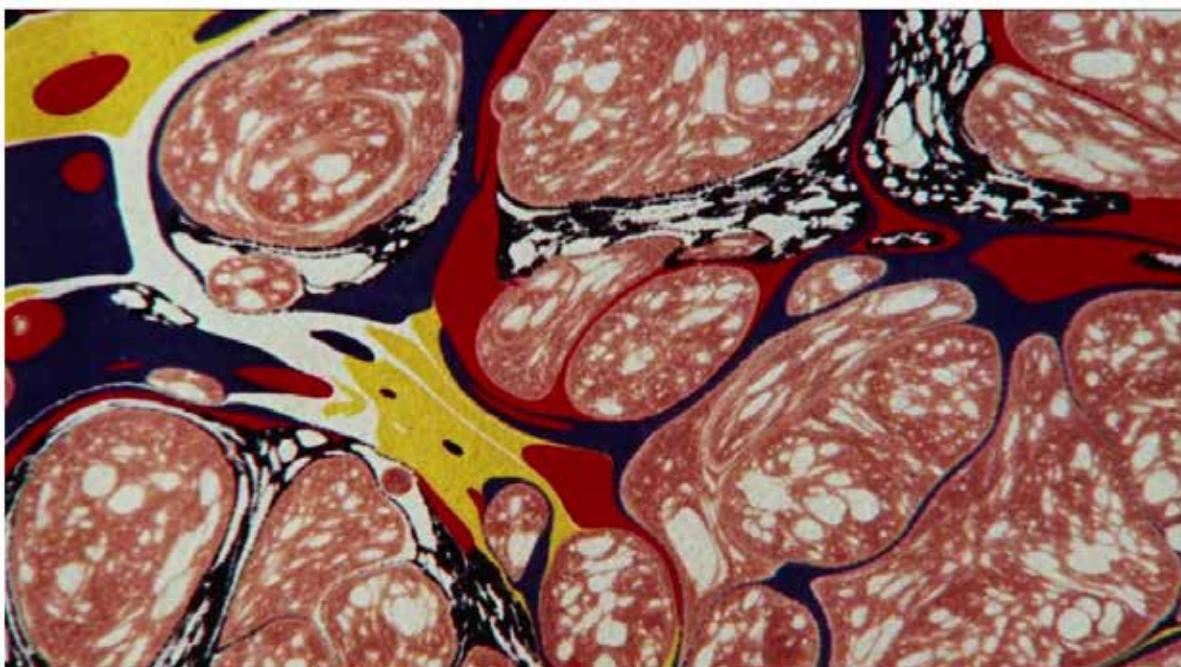
*Armor*

Jessica Sarah Rinland sigue su propia ruta de exploración en un sentido más literal del ritual de la arqueología y la memoria. Sin embargo, hay que considerar su camino como uno muy particular, donde lo táctil, o la exploración, ha cobrado protagonismo a lo largo de toda su filmografía. Las manos, por ejemplo, juegan un papel de descubrimiento infinito, pero también son herramientas de empatía, de conexión, de las formas intrínsecas de la recuperación de algo que conserva un misterio oculto, como temas recurrentes (una coincidencia): la entomología (**Black Pond**, 2018), o disección (**Necropsy of a Harbour Porpoise (Seeing From our Eyes into Theirs)**, 2015), o mera sensualidad (**Expression of the sightless**, 2016)). Mientras, **Sol de Campinas** podría ser una pieza de acompañamiento a su anterior corto **those that, at a distance, resemble another**, en cierto modo: ambas películas están dedicadas al proceso, y a la potencialidad de lo táctil como método de reflexión sobre la ecología y la memoria.

Pero, de nuevo, los ojos de Rinland están ansiosos por observar el proceso como un elemento de revelación, y esto se muestra en sus diversas presentaciones en vivo, sus entusiastas esfuerzos por convertirse en parte de los eventos sobre los que ella está tratando de arrojar luz. Su cámara (y esta es una de las principales cualidades de su cine) se pregunta a través de las tomas como un ojo curioso, como una extensión biológica del brazo que quiere ser parte del desenterrar, del polvo, del acercamiento práctico y de atravesar los complicados palimpsestos de la memoria. No siempre es completamente revelador, no siempre da respuestas, pero se acerca lo más que puede, tanto como la empatía por una disciplina puede llegar a recuperar esas verdades no contadas, o respuestas difusas que habitan entre las estéticas de la imagen en movimiento. Dos películas fascinantes para una primera entrega de Cinéma du Réel.

# desistfilm

## CINÉMA DU RÉEL: FIGURE MINUS FACT BY MARY HELENA CLARK



By José Sarmiento Hinojosa

"Don't talk unless you can't improve the silence"

Before anything, the seemingly fleeting and unconnected images of Mary Helena Clark's **Figure Minus Fact** (2020) speak of a great convergence. It's a convergence of dialectical knowledge, through inherent contingency of images from the apparatus of life, which opens with the mechanism of a bell as a great conveyor for *beginning*. Clarke moves between the microscopic, or the abstract, with the syntax of the *outside / inside*, the womb and birth as a metaphor, and the evidence of life and fleetinglyness from the images of different *still lifes*, which project their presence on the outside, before submitting us to an exploration of our ways of seeing. The night sky and the possibilities of exploration through darkness.

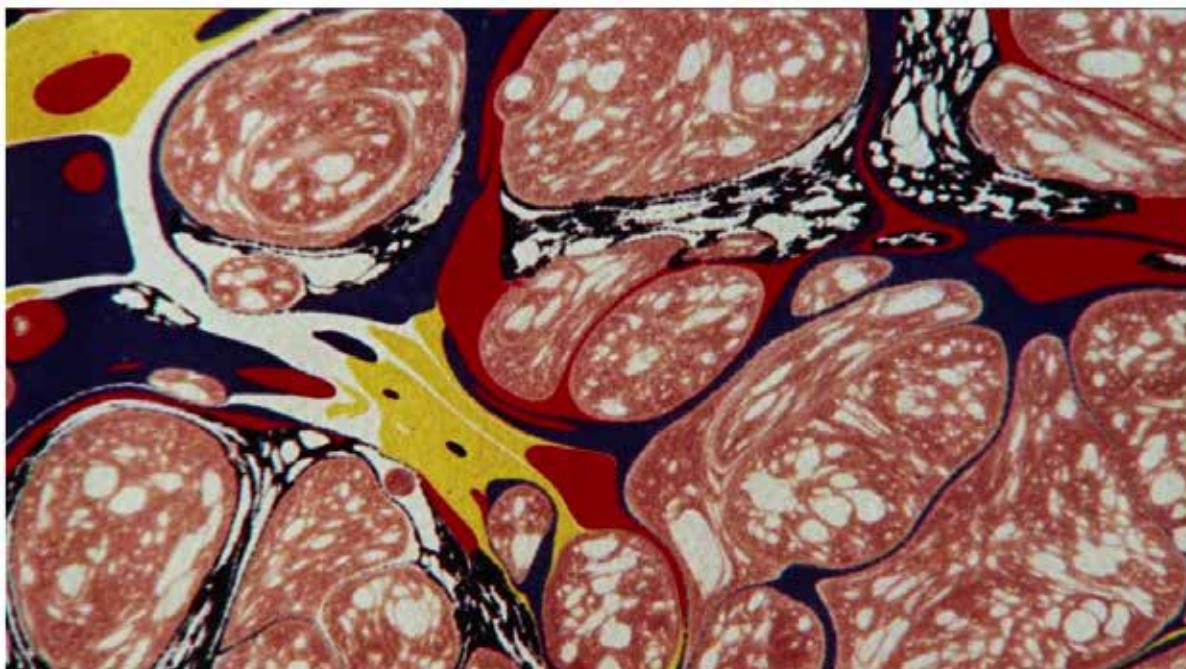
This contingency which leads to a great convergence (inside/outside, figure/fact) begins from questioning our own very methods of seeing, from the microscopic and the entomological to the landscape and its subversion. We're populated with images of the world around us, the quotidian, the tactile, the engravings of an existence which marks our personal experience through the slipping of light in our retinas. The figure minus the fact, is then, not presented in a way of subtracting, but to individualize the components arranged in our perception to present an understanding of a world that deals with a great array of experiences, but also of visual metaphors that deal with the mere existence of this *apparatus of life* through the possibility of letting the same images speak. Thus, we're confronted with a black screen with the subtitle "[silence]" in a moment, as a way to pause the experience of viewing and reflecting on the experience of what isn't being said.

**Figure Minus Fact's** images could be seen as reductive of a universe where birth is sublimated, but this great metaphor of life is projected through a unique perspective of the beginning. Through the words of Quentin Meillassoux: "If we look through the aperture which we have opened up onto the absolute, what we see there is a rather menacing power—something insensible, and capable of destroying both things and worlds, of bringing forth monstrous absurdities, yet also of never doing anything, of realizing every dream, but also every nightmare."<sup>22</sup> Helena Clark's images invite us to realize the possibilities of an image that is able to realize every dream, and open ourselves up onto the absolute.

<sup>22</sup>Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency* (2006)

# desistfilm

## CINÉMA DU RÉEL: FIGURE MINUS FACT DE MARY HELENA CLARK



Por José Sarmiento Hinojosa

"Don't talk unless you can't improve the silence"

Antes que nada, las imágenes aparentemente fugaces y desconectadas de **Figure Minus Fact** (2020) de Mary Helena Clark hablan de una gran convergencia. Es una convergencia de conocimiento dialéctico, a través de la contingencia inherente de imágenes del aparato de vida, que se abre con el mecanismo de una campana como un gran transportador al inicio de los tiempos. Clarke se mueve entre lo microscópico, o lo abstracto, con la sintaxis del exterior/interior, el útero y el nacimiento como metáfora, y la evidencia de vida y fugacidad de las imágenes de diferentes naturalezas muertas, que proyectan su presencia en el exterior, antes de someternos a una exploración de nuestras formas de ver. El cielo nocturno y las posibilidades de exploración, a través de la oscuridad.

Esta contingencia que conduce a una gran convergencia (interior/exterior, figura/hecho) parte de cuestionar nuestros propios métodos de visión, desde lo microscópico y lo entomológico hasta el paisaje y su subversión. Estamos poblados de imágenes del mundo que nos rodea, lo cotidiano, lo táctil, los grabados de una existencia que marca nuestra experiencia personal a través del deslizamiento de la luz en nuestras retinas. **Figure Minus Fact**, entonces, no se presenta a modo de sustracción, sino para individualizar los componentes dispuestos en nuestra percepción para presentar una comprensión de un mundo que trata de una gran variedad de experiencias, pero también de metáforas visuales que tratan de la mera existencia de este aparato de la vida a través de la posibilidad de dejar hablar a las mismas imágenes. Por lo tanto, nos enfrentamos a una pantalla negra con el subtítulo "[silencio]" en un momento, como una forma de pausar la experiencia de ver y reflexionar sobre la experiencia de lo que no se dice.

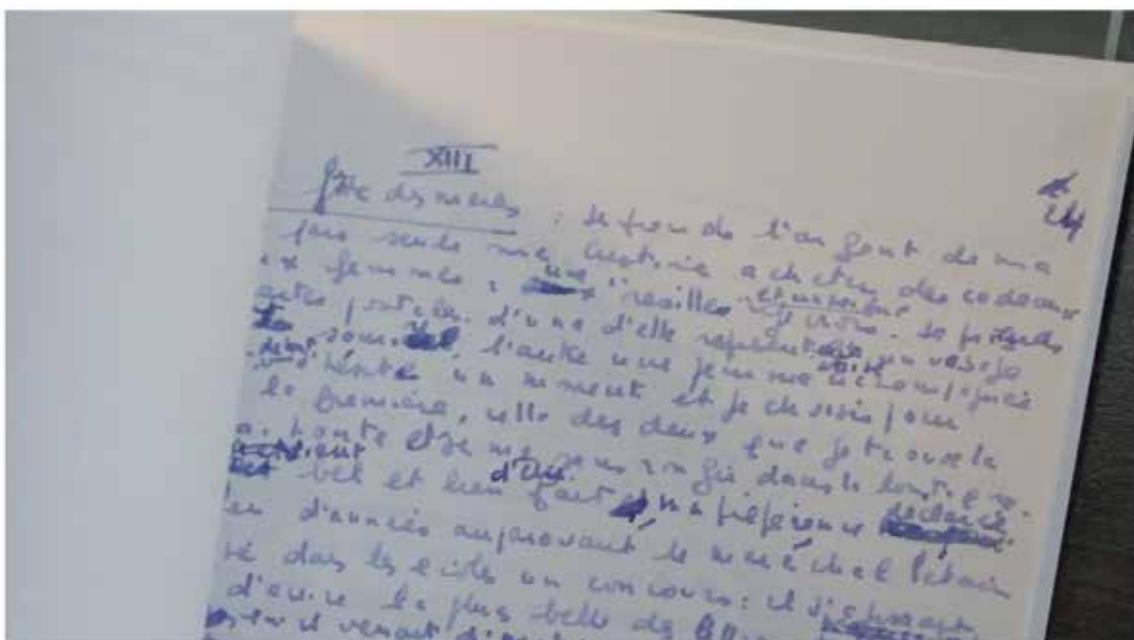
Las imágenes de **Figure Minus Fact** podrían verse como reductivas de un universo donde se sublima el nacimiento, pero esta gran metáfora de la vida se proyecta a través de una perspectiva única del inicio (como fundacional). A través de las palabras de Quentin Meillassoux\*: "Si miramos a través de la abertura hacia el absoluto, lo que vemos allí es un poder bastante amenazador, algo insensible, capaz de destruir tanto las cosas como los mundos, de producir monstruosos absurdos, pero también de nunca hacer nada, de realizar cada sueño, pero también cada pesadilla". Las imágenes de Mary Helena Clark nos invitan a darnos cuenta de las posibilidades de una imagen que es capaz de realizar cada sueño y abrirse a lo absoluto.

\*Quentin Meillassoux, After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency (2006)

Selección internacional Cinéma du Réel  
Dirección y producción: Mary Helena Clark  
Fotografía, sonido y edición: Mary Helena Clark  
EE.UU., 13 min, 2020

# desistfilm

## CINÉMA DU RÉEL: UN SOUVENIR D'ARCHIVES BY CHRISTOPHE BISSON



By Monica Delgado

How to establish a relationship between memory, archive and the present that escapes the usual common meanings of historical documentaries? How to approach the biographical genre without appealing to the classic narrative elements where the interpellation is left out? How to describe the sensitivity and baggage of the archivist in this process of recovery and reinterpretation of memory? In **Un souvenir d'archives** (2021), Christophe Bisson proposes a particular aesthetic, with detailed voices that create a sense of the world and the characters he approaches. In some way, the questions I propose appear as part of the devices that Bisson chooses to enter the figure of the philosopher Sarah Kofman, who committed suicide in 1994.

In the French films section of the recent edition of Cinéma du Réel, I was able to see this new medium-length film by Christophe Bisson, artist, teacher and filmmaker, who through forty minutes shows the archivist and researcher Isabelle Ullern reflecting on passages in the life of the French philosopher, daughter of Poles, Sarah Kofman, while reviewing her files, agendas or photos in a reading room of some institution. From very close shots, both of Ullern's face and of the objects or papers that she reviews, the film is made up of the relationship between the researcher's impressions and Kofman's scribbles, drawings or notes.

From these reflections we get closer to Sarah Kofman, whose life was marked by the disappearance of her father in Auschwitz and the consequences of the Holocaust. The archivist considers that this fact definitely marked her, in addition that it was the main theme that runs through her autobiographical book *Smothered Words*, published in 1987 and that could glimpse the climate that governed her life until her last days. Although the same philosopher said in several interviews that the best autobiography of her was in her works such as her essays on the work of Freud and Nietzsche (the first scenes of the film refer us precisely to annotations by Kofman to editions of these publications).

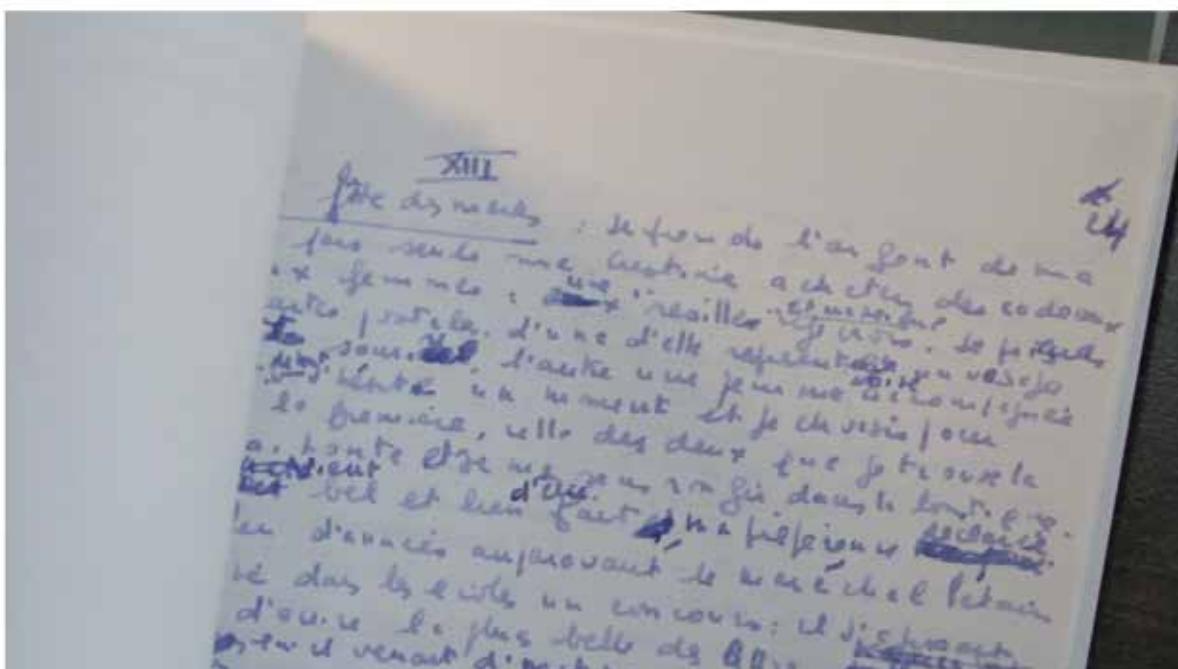
The filmmaker is located inside the reading room, in the Abbey of Ardenne, in the Institut Mémoires de l'Edition Contemporaine (IMEC), where Isabelle Ullern reviews the archives of the philosopher that are kept there. The act of touching, of seeing, of reflecting delicately from these vestiges is what Bisson tries to capture in a very close and sentimental way, from the hands and magnifying glasses of the archivist. And at times it seems that Bisson is more interested in Ullern's sensitive appraisals of her work as an archivist, in a job that requires slowness, observation, giving new meanings to objects a thousand times listened to. However, little by little, Ullern gives in to what these objects intimately awaken, from humanity, sadness, dedication or compassion from her and from the remarkable eye of Bisson. And so the figure of Kofman emerges, from the small details, from texts in her own handwriting, from her vision of the world constructed from the familiar, private, but also, inevitably, from horror. Both Bisson and Ullern willing to contribute their views from the strategies that hang on the past.

**French selection****Director:** Christophe Bisson**Screenplay:** Christophe Bisson with the participation of Isabelle Ullern**Photography, sound:** Christophe Bisson**Editing:** Claire Atherton

France, 2021, 45 min

# desistfilm

## CINÉMA DU RÉEL: UN SOUVENIR D'ARCHIVES DE CHRISTOPHE BISSON



Por Mónica Delgado

¿Cómo establecer una relación entre memoria, archivos y presente que escape a usuales sentidos comunes del documental de tipo histórico? ¿Cómo acercarse al género biográfico sin apelar a los clásicos elementos narrativos donde la interpellación queda afuera? ¿Cómo describir la sensibilidad y bagaje del archivista en este proceso de recuperación y de reinterpretación de memoria? En *Un souvenir d'archives* (2021), Christophe Bisson propone una estética particular, de acercamientos muy detallados y desde voces que van creando un sentido del mundo y de los personajes a los cuales se enfoca. De alguna manera, las interrogantes que propongo aparecen como parte de los dispositivos que Bisson elige para adentrarnos en la figura de la filósofa Sarah Kofman, quien se suicidara en 1994.

En la sección de films franceses de la reciente edición de Cinéma du Réel pude ver este nuevo mediometraje de Christophe Bisson, artista, docente y cineasta, quien a través de cuarenta minutos muestra a la archivista e investigadora Isabelle Ullern reflexionando sobre pasajes en la vida de la filósofa francesa, hija de polacos, Sarah Kofman, mientras revisa sus archivos, agendas o fotos en una sala de lectura de alguna institución. A partir de planos muy cerrados, tanto del rostro de Ullern como de los objetos o papeles que ella revisa, el film se compone de la ilación entre las impresiones de la investigadora y los garabatos, dibujos o apuntes de Kofman.

Desde estas reflexiones nos vamos acercando a Sarah Kofman, cuya vida estuvo marcada por la desaparición de su padre en Auschwitz y las consecuencias del Holocausto. La archivista considera que este hecho la marcó definitivamente, además que fue el tema principal que atraviesa su libro autobiográfico *Smothered Words*, publicado en 1987 y que podría entrever el clima que gobernó su vida hasta sus últimos días. Aunque la misma filósofa dijera en varias entrevistas que su mejor autobiografía estaba en sus obras mismas como sus ensayos sobre la obra de Freud y Nietzsche (las primeras escenas del film nos remiten precisamente a anotaciones de Kofman a ediciones de estas publicaciones).

El cineasta se ubica en los interiores de la sala de lectura, en la Abadía de Ardenne, en el Institut Mémoires de l'Édition Contemporaine (IMEC), donde Isabelle Ullern revisa los archivos de la filósofa que allí están resguardados. El acto de tocar, de ver, de reflexionar delicadamente a partir de estos vestigios es lo que Bisson intenta capturar de modo muy cercano y sentimental, desde las manos y lentes de la archivista. Y por momentos parecía que Bisson se interesara más en las sensibles apreciaciones de Ullern sobre su labor como archivista, en un trabajo que requiere lentitud, observación, darle sentidos nuevos a objetos mil veces auscultados. Sin embargo, poco a poco, Ullern va cediendo a aquello que estos objetos despiertan íntimamente, desde su humanidad, tristeza, entrega o compasión y desde el ojo notable de Bisson. Y así va emergiendo la figura de Kofman, desde los pequeños detalles, desde textos de su puño y letra, desde su visión de mundo construida desde lo familiar, privado, pero también, inevitablemente, desde el horror. Tanto Bisson como Ullern dispuestos a aportar sus miradas desde las estrategias que penden del pasado.

Selección francesa

Dirección: Christophe Bisson

Guion : Christophe Bisson con la participación de Isabelle Ullern

Fotografía, sonido: Christophe Bisson

Edición: Claire Atherton

Francia, 2021, 45 min

# desistfilm

## CINÉMA DU RÉEL: KINDERTOTENLIEDER BY VIRGIL VERNIER



By Monica Delgado

We knew the work of Virgil Vernier from acting and directing fictions like the great *Mercuriales*, so his new work with archive material gives us a different facet from the documentary side. Seen in the French films section of the recent Cinéma du Réel, *Kindertotenlieder* is a reconstruction of the riots in Clichy-sous-Bois, near Paris in 2005, taken from television news videos. The reunion with this material, set up chronologically and in response to the construction of an official television and journalistic discourse, is proposed as a way of rereading these contemporary historical events as a reaction to a vicious circle of power from official institutions.

All the weight of the documentary falls on Vernier's position in the reassembly. Part of the incidents following the death of Zyed Benna and Bouna Traoré, young people of migrant descent who were persecuted by the police in a suburb, electrocuted to death when wanting to hide in a high-voltage zone. This fact sparked a wave of disturbances in response to a repressive system that has already been in place for some months by actions of the then Minister of the Interior, Nicolas Sarkozy. What Vernier achieves is to re-edit all this archive material to give a version of the events, free of sensationalism, frivolity and effectism in favor of the call for order to state power. Vernier edited the images, but also the sounds, since he stripped the television material of the voice of the reporters, the accompanying music or some noises that amplified the dramatic or that re-victimized some protagonists in the news. In this way, Vernier's work is also a reform of television language, either as criticism, recomposition or negation. It is in this idea of the rethinking of the news and the transmission of facts that the interest of *Kindertotenlieder* resides.

The burning of cars (more than nine thousand at the time), especially at the hands of migrant adolescents, is observed by the media as an act of warning and terror; in **Kindertotenlieder** Vernier exposes this event as a ritual scale, of a new Code-based relationship between the enraged people and the hostile and racist police or state system. This archive material, which looks clean, as if it were a direct film record, is ordered according to some elements, such as the axis of the cars burned at night at the point of Molotov cocktails, the affectation of private property or even schools, and the fear of the neighbors, to turn the suburbs into a territory of combat and messages in code.

Curfews, Sarkozy press conferences where he speaks disparagingly about young Africans and Muslims protesting and the police deployment in the suburbs as control mechanisms are seen from this new Vernier perspective. Above all, there's a look at the migrant population, in the neighborhoods of multi-family buildings that look like imprisoned spaces separated from the officiality. On the one hand, the fear of riots is shown, and on the other hand, the expansion of these protests against police actions at the national level. What is clear is that these riots were only the beginning of a wave of confrontations throughout France, where they emerged beyond the topic of criminal control, classism, xenophobia and racism, but also of public policies that promised a better world. A recent past that provides other types of responses to a reality that can explode in a similar way.

French section

Director: Virgil Vernier

Production: Petit Film (Jean des Forêts, Amélie Jacquis)

Editing: Charlotte Cherici

Sound editing and mixing: Simon Apostolou

France, 29 min, 2021

# desistfilm

## CINÉMA DU RÉEL: KINDERTOTENLIEDER DE VIRGIL VERNIER



Por Mónica Delgado

Conocíamos el trabajo del francés Virgil Vernier desde la actuación y dirección de ficciones como la gran **Mercuriales**, así que su nuevo trabajo desde la reedición de material de archivo nos brinda una faceta distinta desde el documental. Vista en la sección de films franceses del reciente Cinéma du Réel, **Kindertotenlieder** es una reconstrucción de unos disturbios en Clichy-sous-Bois, cerca a París, en 2005, a partir de videos de noticieros de televisión. El reencuentro con este material, armado de manera cronológica y en respuesta a la construcción de un discurso televisivo y periodístico oficial, se propone como una manera de releer estos hechos históricos contemporáneos como una respuesta a un círculo vicioso de poder desde las instituciones oficiales.

Todo el peso del documental cae en la posición de Vernier desde el remontaje. Parte de los incidentes tras la muerte de Zyed Benna y Bouna Traoré, jóvenes de ascendencia migrante perseguidos por la policía en un suburbio, quienes murieron electrocutados al querer ocultarse en una zona de alta tensión. Este hecho despertó una ola de disturbios en respuesta a un sistema represor ya en marcha desde hace algunos meses por disposiciones del en ese entonces ministro del Interior, Nicolas Sarkozy. Lo que logra Vernier es reeditar todo este material de archivo para dar una versión de los hechos, libre de sensacionalismo, de frivolidad y de efectismo a favor del llamado al orden del poder estatal. Vernier editó las imágenes, pero también los sonidos, ya que despojó el material televisivo de

la voz de los reporteros, de la música de acompañamiento o algunos ruidos que ampliaban lo dramático o que revictimizaba a algunos protagonistas de las noticias. De esta manera, el trabajo de Vernier es también una reforma del lenguaje televisivo, ya como crítica, recomposición o como negación. Y en esta idea del replanteamiento de lo noticioso y de la transmisión de los hechos es que reside el interés de *Kindertotenlieder*.

La quema de carros (más de nueve mil en su momento), sobre todo a manos de adolescentes migrantes, es observado por los medios como un acto de advertencia y de terror, y que en *Kindertotenlieder* Vernier expone como una escala ritual, de un nuevo relacionamiento con códigos entre el pueblo enfurecido y el sistema policial o estatal hostil y racista. Este material de archivo, que luce limpio, como si fuera un registro de cine directo, es ordenado de acuerdo a algunos elementos, como el eje de los autos quemados por las noches a punta de bombas molotov, de la afectación a la propiedad privada o incluso escuelas, y del temor de los vecinos, para convertir los suburbios en un territorio de combate y de mensajes en clave.

Toques de queda, conferencias de prensa de Sarkozy donde habla despectivamente sobre los jóvenes africanos y musulmanes que protestan y el despliegue policial en los suburbios como mecanismos de control desde esta nueva perspectiva de Vernier. Sobre todo una mirada a la población de migrantes, en los barrios de edificios multifamiliares que lucen como espacios encarcelados o separados de la oficialidad. Por un lado, se muestra el temor ante los disturbios, y por otro lado, la expansión de estas protestas contra el accionar policial a nivel nacional. Lo que queda claro es que estos disturbios solo fueron el inicio de una ola de enfrentamientos en toda Francia, donde más allá del tópico de control de lo delincuencial, asomaron el clasismo, la xenofobia y el racismo, pero también las políticas públicas que prometieron un mundo mejor. Un pasado reciente que brinda otro tipo de respuestas a una realidad que puede estallar de manera similar.

**Sección francesa**

Director: Virgil Vernier

Producción : Petit Film (Jean des Forêts, Amélie Jacquis)

Edición: Charlotte Cherici

Edición y mezcla de sonido: Simon Apostolou

Francia, 29 min, 2021

# desistfilm

## CINÉMA DU RÉEL 2021: TWO FILMS BY CLAIRE SIMON AND NICOLAS KLOTZ / ELIZABETH PERCEVAL



By José Sarmiento Hinojosa

Claire Simon (**Gare du Nord**, 2013) has been dwelling in her own personal form of documentary for years now. "People ring true or false in fiction cinema as well as in documentary cinema." Here, she embarks to a small Provençal village where a garage shop is run by a group of men. The main interest of this gaze is to make the patriarchal apparatus which works in any provincial town visible, but not in a tone of denounce and complaint, but stripping the system bare to allow the viewer to see how this very "male" environment of workers functions with its own rules, and is also subjected to certain mechanisms of power. The revealing side of this **Garage, Engines and Men**, lies in the careful way in which Simon places her own camera/body in the middle of the daily routines of this dynamics of male camaraderie, a place of empathy that shows this men in all their imperfections and clear inherited sexism, but also as every day workers with families who try to keep their work life functioning.

Thus, one is never antagonized against the characters of the film. It's quite clear that the mechanisms of sexism and patriarchal structures are there for the watching (with simple things, like the *Godfather* ringtone of the shop owner, the disputes and conflicts among men, patronizing dialogue with women about family and kids, even some tense moments of intense discussion between former lovers). But Simon places her in a place of understanding which never excuses the attitudes of these men, but just shows them as they are and allow us to take our own personal position against this complex issues.

It's an exercise of observation. One might claim that presence is not enough, that certain position must be taken before these issues, but this documentary is not an exercise of disrupting but a chance of gazing in the problems that arise within a system that upholds men to certain standards of conduct and certain conflicts of character.

**Garage, Engines and Men** (2021) also feels quite "provincial" in its treatment, and somehow gravitates around this universe of small-town European people, which is interesting to see, but falls a little short of being more incisive in certain structural issues of manhood and working class. Still, an interesting documentary to watch.



In the other side of the spectrum we have **Saxifrages, Four White Nights** by Nicolas Klotz and Elizabeth Perceval, a film that works inside this atmosphere of "gothic romanticism" (not my term, but Clémence Arrivé and Catherine Bizern's). The work opens with a poem by surrealist poet René Char, and immediately drags us into a limbo of dark atmospheres which invokes the spirits of Straub-Hulliet, Bresson and Costa. « *In the shadows of Low Life, a secret ceremony dedicated to thirteen guardians of humanity's common treasures, love and resistance, youth and poetry, equality and difference, insurrection and revolution.* » explains the introduction of the film for Cinema du Réel and it's certainly the start point of this wondering around a non-zone of different characters, which enunciate their monologues as living dead inhabiting a certain circle of hell.

Klotz and Perceval are by any means new in this labyrinthine way of placing their characters in a non-space. Films like **Mata Atlántica** (2016), **Low Life** (2011), and Klotz' own **La Blessure** (2004), among others, deal with these spaces inhabited by the disenfranchised, the artist, the minorities: the *other*. This exercise of denounce is incredibly powerful because it reaches a neuralgic place of birth which relates to art as a form of surviving, of existing in a place against all odds, of declaring life as a mere act of resistance, of poetry as a political action. Klotz and Perceval's characters live not as dwellers of a dantesque inferno, but as dark angels who have rebelled against the designation of someone bigger than them. Fallen angels that speak and interact with poetry as a final resource of survival.

A hybrid of fiction and documentary, **Saxifrages, Four White Nights** cements Klotz and Perceval's position as two of the most extraordinary political filmmakers of the 2000's. Their **Saxifrages**, slowly breaking apart the fabric of society, are the pivotal point where their cinema begin: mankind in resistance. *Saxifrages ... These rootless plants' windblown destiny is a soft perseverance doubled by an imperceptible intransigence, which, in time, imposes on the hardness of stones a patience that can break them.*

# desistfilm

## CINÉMA DU RÉEL 2021: DOS PELÍCULAS DE CLAIRE SIMON Y NICOLAS KLOTZ / ELIZABETH PERCEVAL



Por José Sarmiento Hinojosa

Claire Simon (**Gare du Nord**, 2013) ha estado viviendo dentro de su propio documental personal durante años. "La gente suena verdadera o falsa tanto en el cine de ficción como en el cine documental". Aquí, se embarca en un pequeño pueblo de La Provenza, donde un grupo de hombres dirige un negocio de garaje. El principal interés de esta mirada es visibilizar el aparato patriarcal que funciona en cualquier ciudad de provincia, pero no en tono de denuncia, sino para desnudar el sistema para que el espectador pueda ver cómo este ambiente tan "masculino" de trabajadores funciona con sus propias reglas, y también sujeto a ciertos mecanismos de poder. El lado revelador de este **Garage, Engines and Men**, reside en la cuidada manera en que Simon coloca su propia cámara/cuerpo en medio de las rutinas diarias de esta dinámica de camaradería masculina, un lugar de empatía que muestra a este hombre en toda su dimensión, con sus imperfecciones y claro sexismio heredado, pero también como panorama de los días de los trabajadores, con familias, que intentan mantenerse con su vida laboral.

Por lo tanto, uno nunca se opone a los personajes de la película. Está bastante claro que los mecanismos del sexismio y las estructuras patriarcales están ahí para ser observados (con cosas simples, como el tono de llamada del padrino del dueño de la tienda, las disputas y conflictos entre hombres, el diálogo condescendiente con las mujeres sobre la familia y los niños, incluso algunos momentos tensos de intensa discusión entre ex amantes). Pero Simon coloca su mirada en un lugar

de comprensión que nunca excusa las actitudes de estos hombres, sino que simplemente los muestra como son y nos permite tomar nuestra propia posición personal frente a estos temas complejos. Es un ejercicio de observación. Se podría afirmar que la presencia no es suficiente, que se debe tomar cierta posición ante estos temas, pero este documental no es un ejercicio de disruptión sino una oportunidad de contemplar los problemas que surgen dentro de un sistema que mantiene a los hombres en ciertos estándares de conducta y ciertos conflictos de carácter.

**Garage, Engines and Men** también se siente bastante "provinciano" en su tratamiento, y de alguna manera gravita en torno a este universo de gente europea de pueblos pequeños, que es interesante de ver, pero no llega a ser más incisivo en ciertos aspectos estructurales de la hombría y clase obrera. Aún así, un documental interesante para ver.



En el otro lado del espectro, tenemos **Saxifrages, Four White Nights** de Nicolas Klotz y Elizabeth Perceval, una película que trabaja dentro de esta atmósfera de "romanticismo gótico" (no es mi término, sino el de Clémence Arrivé y Catherine Bizern). La obra se abre con un poema del poeta surrealista René Char, y de inmediato nos arrastra a un limbo de atmósferas oscuras que invoca los espíritus de Straub-Hulliet, Bresson y Costa. «A las sombras de **Low Life**, ceremonia secreta dedicada a trece guardianes de los tesoros comunes de la humanidad, el amor y la resistencia, la juventud y la poesía, la igualdad y la diferencia, la insurrección y la revolución», explica la introducción de la película para Cinéma du Réel y es, sin duda, el punto de partida de este deambular por una no zona de personajes diferentes, que enuncian sus monólogos como muertos vivientes que habitan un determinado círculo del infierno.

Klotz y Perceval son nuevos en esta forma laberíntica de colocar a sus personajes en un no espacio. Películas como **Mata Atlántica** (2016), **Low Life** (2011) o **La Blessure** (2004) de Klotz, entre otras, tratan estos espacios habitados por los marginados, el artista, las minorías: el otro. Este ejercicio de denuncia es increíblemente poderoso, porque llega a un lugar neurálgico de nacimiento que se relaciona con el arte como forma de sobrevivir, de existir en un lugar contra viento y marea, de declarar la vida como mero acto de resistencia, de la poesía como acción política. Los personajes de Klotz y Perceval no viven como habitantes de un infierno dantesco, sino como ángeles oscuros que se han rebelado contra la designación de alguien más grande que ellos. Ángeles caídos que hablan e interactúan con la poesía como último recurso de supervivencia.

Un híbrido de ficción y documental, **Saxifrages, Four White Nights** cimenta la posición de Klotz y Perceval como dos de los cineastas políticos más extraordinarios de la década de 2000. Sus saxífragas, que poco a poco van rompiendo el tejido social, son el punto fundamental donde comienza su cine: la humanidad en resistencia. El destino de estas plantas desarraigadas, las saxífragas, es una suave perseverancia duplicada por una imperceptible intransigencia, que, con el tiempo, impone a la dureza de las piedras una paciencia que las puede romper.

# desistfilm

## CINÉMA DU RÉEL: FILMS DE JEAN-CLAUDE ROUSSEAU Y MARION NACCACHE



Por Mónica Delgado

La cámara (o el hombre cámara) está dentro de un vagón del metro observando a los pasajeros que esperan en el andén, afuera. De pronto comienza el viaje y la cámara que mira hacia el exterior capta, en medio de la leve velocidad, a una joven que se acerca a su pareja y le da un sorpresivo beso. El instante queda registrado en el movimiento, irrepetible y espontáneo. En esa captura hay algo de una humanidad que persiste en esos detalles fortuitos, en la delicadeza de la inmediatez, en el ojo ante un ventanal que aún tiene la capacidad de extrañarse ante algo tan cotidiano y súbito. De momentos así de imprevistos o cotidianos está hecho **Un monde flottant**, reciente obra del cineasta experimental francés Jean-Claude Rousseau y que se pudo ver en el marco del Cinéma du Réel, en la sección de films hechos en Francia.

Con más de una veintena de trabajos, tanto en súper-8 como en video digital, Rousseau entrega aquí una continuidad con dos trabajos anteriores **Arrière-saison** (2016) y **Si loin, si proche** (2016), ya que son realizados en alta definición, en formato 16/9, y registrados en algunas ciudades de Japón, bajo el influjo de Ozu. A través de 56 minutos, el cineasta propone diversas viñetas que podrían ser tildadas de observaciones de determinados paisajes, acciones cotidianas o algunas inserciones "poéticas" de ficción, sin embargo el uso de las transiciones, de fundidos en negro o ligeros "pestaños" van estructurando el film en una galería de presencias, de momentos de aparente autonomía, donde hay personajes que responden a una determinada lógica, que asoma por momentos como fantástica o irreal.

A partir de estos "átomos" o partes, Rousseau va componiendo una lectura en coherencia con sus obras previa, en sus ritmos y concatenaciones, en su disfrute tranquilo de este entorno, también de la mano de algunos personajes como el del crítico de cine y docente Daisuke Akasaka. Estos "Sketches and Drawings" (como indica el subtítulo del film) van montando una pieza sobre la contemplación de lo mundano, de paisajes icónicos, pero que tienen aún la capacidad de asombrar o atraer, como el famoso monte Fuji o los típicos jardines plenos de turistas.

Este mundo flotante atravesado por la percepción de aquel que mira y que comparte su lugar como observador, mientras surgen detalles ante una boda, un paseo en tren, o ante el reflejo fantasmal en una ventana. Como en sus trabajos en super-8, donde la unidad de tiempo y espacio se somete a la duración de la bobina, aquí los insertos en negro entre planos van evocando esa finitud. El mundo flotante que despierta y muere en cada escena, liberados en cada visión o encuentro.



En **VENICE BEACH, CA.**, segundo largometraje de la documentalista francesa Marion Naccache, un lugar icónico es también observado desde el asombro o la expectación del detalle dentro de una normalidad. Aquí una famosa playa luce marcada por el otoño, por una intención de auscultarla en otra faceta distinta a la magia veraniega de California. En sus 79 minutos, este film recurre a una fórmula conocida, por momentos muy a *déjà vu*: planos fijos de un determinado espacio confrontados con voces en off que generan nuevos fuera de campo. Sin embargo, Naccache emplea una "metodología" a partir de esa premisa básica, planos amplios del bulevar o malecón, con gran angular o desde una esquina (en perspectiva oblicua o diagonal) mientras voces en off, de testimonios de una galería de personajes anónimos, hombres y mujeres sin techo, van dando cuenta del estado de la cuestión. Venice ya no como espacio de veraneo o solaz sino como extensión del *homeless*, la fisonomía que va cobrando más visibilidad cuando hablamos de Los Ángeles o de EE.UU. a secas. Para Naccache, Venice está atravesada por estos nuevos tiempos de marca Trump, de inequidades y contradicciones.

Las diversas voces que hablan de política, colonialismo, racismo, ecología y demás pueblan las imágenes de deportistas, vendedores, turistas y transeúntes locales, y muestran sensibilidades y percepciones marcando a este paisaje costero y su historia. Si bien vemos Venice, las voces construyen un fuera de campo propio de su invisibilización. Es probable que sean voces de los

personajes que vemos en escena, de los vendedores ambulantes, de los artistas callejeros, de los skaters o de aquellos que increpan a la policía. Y con esta elección, de alguna manera Naccache materializa una realidad, en la que los homeless también son desclasados y omitidos dentro de esta arquitectura urbana que hay que ocultar (y que el cine de alguna manera sigue perpetuando). Estas narraciones de seres incorporeos, que aparecen en escena a través de sus voces y sentidos permiten romper con la opacidad de las imágenes, exploran una cotidianidad puntual, desde la resistencia, a través de amaneceres y mañanas, donde la policía con sus paseos y vigilancias se convierte en un ordenador del mundo.

Con dos trabajos previos similares, es decir, ambientados en entornos costeros como **CONEY ISLAND, (last summer)** o el video ensayo **Arpoador, VENICE BEACH, CA.** visto también en la sección de films franceses del Cinéma du Réel, plantea un acercamiento a una problemática social desde estos lugares emblemáticos, libres del ánimo del "springbreak", sin embargo percibo que son necesarios esos rostros, los gestos en la expresión del hartazgos, de la furia, de la ilusión o esperanza. Imágenes al margen del film y que Venice como espacio no llega a suplir.



## A RIVER RUNS, TURNS, ERASES, REPLACES: Zamanın Hatırlatıcı Formları (Cinéma du Réel - 1)



Bu yıl 43.'sü düzenlenen **Cinéma du Réel Festivali**'nde favorilerimizden biri olan **A River Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces**, (Nehir Akar, Kırılır, Siler, Yerine Koyar) tam anlamıyla **zamana** karşı koyamamanın hikayesini gözler önüne seriyor. Bu karşı koyamama durumu coğrafi olarak şehrin ortasında kendi doğasının yapısını zamanla öyle güçlendiriyor ki adeta bir daha yerinden oynamayacak olan bir kasıni bize gösteriyor. Belgesel film yapımcısı olan **Shengze Zhu**'nun filmografisine baktığımızda bu yapımı haricinde üç belgeselini daha izleyebilmek mümkün. Yönetmen, yapımlarında her ne kadar öznel deneyimlerle ilintili göstergeleri / imgeleri sunmuş olsa da tipik bir belgesel iskeletinden çok daha fazlasını sunuyor. Günümüz dünyasında

hepimizi uzaktan ya da yakından etkileyen gündelik faaliyetler içindeki çelişkilerin tabanında yatan duyu yoğunluklarının akışını **A River Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces** (2021) adlı yapımда bulmak mümkün.

## Figüratif İmgelerin Süreksizliği

Film boyunca zamanın hem doğa hem de insan üzerinde yarattığı değişimleri kısa süre içerisinde, sanki uzun bir döneme tanıklık etmiş gibi izleriz. Bu değişimler her ne kadar yönetmenin sunmuş olduğu imgelerin süreksızlığına işaret etmiş olsa da, bu süreksızlık zamanla taşınması güç olan bir yük olmaktadır tamamen bütünlüğe bildiğiniz bir otoportre haline geliyor. **Shengze Zhu**'nun dikkatimizi en fazla çeken yanı ise gösterdiklerini her ne kadar (henüz) deneyimlememiş olsak da olayların taşıyıcı kimliklerini bize en açık şekilde sunması oldu. Bu şekilde imgeler arasında gözlerimizle dolaşırken olayların kendi kimliklerine dikkat kesilmeden, bizzat olayları yaşayan taraf olduk.



Belgesel türünün her zaman alt tabanında didaktik unsurların olması izleyici üzerinde büyük bir yük bırakabilir ancak **A River Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces**'in kesinlikle bu türden bir ağırlığı olduğunu söyleyemeyiz. Yapımın aktardığı ve sunduğu olayların toplamı bir nevi birbirlerini tanımayan insanlar arasında kabul görmüş bir mücadelenin duyarlığını yansıtırken, bizi de görsel deneyim sürecinin aktörleri haline getiriyor. Yönetmen bunu yaparken belgeselin en başından itibaren izleyiciyi asla dışlamıyor. Daha ilk dakikada kendimizi **Wuhan**'ın sokaklarında sanki bir sokak kamerası olmuş gibi buluyoruz. Olan biten gündelik yaşantıyı hiçbir anlamlandırma olmadan, tamamen nesnel bir şekilde takip ederiz. **Covid-19** ile ilgili duyurunun insanlara yapıldığı o an'a biz de sokaktaki tüm insanlarla beraber tanık

oluruz. Bu da bugün hälā içinde bulunduğuımız durumun tanıklığına bir kez daha farklı (olayın direkt içinden biri olmayarak) tanık oluşumuzu katlandırmıştır. Anlam içinde anlam arayışımızı, hiç hareket etmeyen sabit bir kamera ile tamamen donmuş bir şekilde izleriz. Geçtiğimiz seneyi hatırlayacak olursak aslında hepimiz tam da bu şekilde donmuş vaziyette olayların gelişine tanıklığımızı gerçekleştirmiştik. Bu anlamda yönetmenin “gerçeklik” aynası-yansıtması olarak sabit kamera kullanımı olayların gerginliğini doğal yollardan artırmak yerine içsel bir deneyimi iki ile çarpiyor.



**Shengze Zhu**'nun bu ilk sahnelerden kullanmış olduğu sabit kamera tekniği, izleyicide tam anlamıyla bir sokak kamerası hissi uyandırdığı an bu nesnel tepkime de otomatik olarak doğuyor. Yapım, bu giriş sahnesinden sonra kamerasını başka imgelere, hayatın içinden olan ancak karşı koymamızın pek mümkün olmadığı doğal bir gelişim sürecinin içine götürür. Yönetmenin ilk anlatı unsurlarında bizi yaşayan değil ancak şehrin bir parçası, binası, sokak lambası, ışıklandırması konumuna koyduğu anda insanın bu şehrin duvarlarından seken hüzünlü yapısını daha rahat bir şekilde anlama kavuşturabiliyoruz. Bu belgeselde ne kadar olayların dışında olursak anlam o kadar kendini var ediyor. Bu açıdan da deneyimin bizzat kendisi olmamızın nafileliği üzerinden, dışarıdan bir izleyici olarak deneyimin gözlemcisi olmanın tatlı tarafını da görüyoruz. Öte yandan deneyim içinde olmak insan için her zaman öznel sorular ve cevaplar doğururken, **Shengze Zhu**'nun yöntemiyle olayların dışarıdan bir gözlemcisi olmak, daha toplumsal soru ve cevapları akla getiriyor. Bu da belgeselde kullanılan imgelerin süreksizliğini, diğer bir deyişle özgürlüğünü, ancak bir o kadar da gerçekliğe olan bağlılığını yansıtır.



## Zamanın Köleleri

**A River Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces** izleyiciye zamanın, onun yarattığı koşulların insanı ne kadar kendisinin kölesi haline getirdiğini belli doğa olaylarını kullanarak hatırlatıyor. Daha ilk sahnede sessiz bir sokağın tüm dikkatini çeken duyuruyla sesin varlığının kendisi ile tanışıklığımızı yaptıktan sonra kulaklarımıza hemen bir inşaat mekanındaki makinelerin gürültüsüne kaptırıyoruz. En başta mekanik olmanın sesi, diğer sahnede bir başka mekanik olmanın sesiyle buluşuyor. İnsanı duyguların alımını sadece gördüklerimizle gerçek kılarken mekanik seslerin soyut yansması somut olmanın gerçekliğini ikiye bölmeye. Bunun yanı sıra yapımda kullanılan “yarık” ve “yarığın içinde süzülen gölgeler” (bu bir insan ya da kuşlar topluluğu olabilir), ters perspektiften bize başlangıçtan beri tanık olduğumuz durumlara karşı nasıl bir bakış açısı sergilediğimizin hatırlatıcısı niteliğinde. Bu “yarık” kullanımı ise ikiye ayrılmışa, birinde gölgelerin boşluğunu, diğerinde ise gölgelerin varlığının bu boşluğa olan doğasal yaptırımını hissediyoruz.



Gecenin karanlığından faydalanan bir şehrin ışığı geceleri her zaman gözümüze daha hoş gelir. Bu bir illüzyondur. **Shengze Zhu** bu türden bir illüzyon imgesini kullanarak gündelik hayatı da maruz kaldığımız yanılsamaları hatırlatıyor. Şehrin kıyısında, tam da şehrin nefes aldığıını düşündüğümüz yerde binaların üzerine yansyan ışıklandırmalarla neredeyse bir arınma gerçekleştirdiğimiz doğru. Nehir, su, akışkanlık tam da zamanın, olayların geçiciliğini, ama geçiciliğin de kendi içerisinde bir hatırlatıcı unsuru olduğunu kanıtlar nitelikte.

**Wuhan** bölgesinde yaşanmış olan sel üzerine yoğunlaşan **A River Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces**, anlatım öznesini bu olaydan almış gibi gözüksede aslında tipki bu tür doğa olayları veya doğal afetler gibi insanların da gündelik hayatındaki gelip geçiciliklerini basit bir dille anlatır, yoğunlaştığı olayın benzer aktarıcılarını da işin içine katar. Bunun en güzel örneği ise insanların bir vapur aracılığıyla bir kıyıdan diğer kıyıya her gün gelip gitmesidir. Bizi olayın kendisine tam da bu anlarda hazırlayan yönetmen, nehrin hem altında, hem üzerinde, hem de her yerinde olduğumuza dikkat çekiyor. Bu da aklımıza nehrin hem içinde hem de dışında olduğumuz düşüncesini getiriyor, tipki hem hayatın içinde olup hem de olamamak gibi.



## Geçici Olanların Kalıcı Rüyaları

**Cinéma du Réel**'in yanısıra bu yıl **71. Berlin Film Festivali**'nin "Forum" kategorisinde de gösterilen **A River Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces** için, nehrin taşmasına yapılan objektif bir güzelme de diyebiliriz. Ancak unutmamak lazım ki bu güzelmenin altında akıp giden umutlar, hayal kırıklıkları, bekleyişler, en değerli de kalıcı rüyaların kırıntıları var. Zamanın gelip geçiciliği için çok doğrudan ve anlaşılır bir metafor kullanımı olan nehrin taşıması, selin oluşması ve sonra bu durumun kendini düzeltmesi ve tekrar en baştaki haline geri dönmesi; tam anlamıyla saate bakıp kendimize bir kez daha zamanın tam olarak neresinde durduğumuzu hatırlatmamızı sağlayan çok güçlü bir mecaz aynı zamanda.

**Burcu Meltem Tohum**

A RIVER  
RUNS  
TURNS  
ERASES  
REPLACES

河流，奔跑着，倒映着



## NIGHTVISION: İzleniyor Olmanın Dayanılmaz Artçı Şokları (Cinéma du Réel - 2)



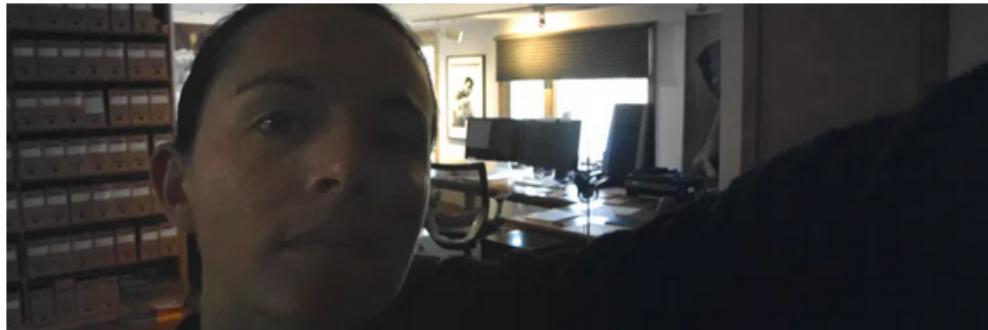
43. Cinéma du Réel Festivali'nden bir diğer favorimiz olan orta metrajlı (37 dk.) **Nightvision** (Gece Görüşü, 2021), tanımadığımız biri tarafından izleniyor olma hissinin ağırlığının boyutlarını katman katman açan bir film. Bir şüphe duygusunun ve dürtüsünün ne denli hızlı bir şekilde içimize zehir gibi aktılabileceğine ve giderek büyüyebileceğine tanık oluyoruz. Ekrandan izlediğimiz ve bizim de yabancı oldugumuz birinin gündelik hayatı bizim yönümüze / ekranımıza doğru çevrildiğinde bir anlamda “izleyici / voyeur”

olarak bizim de konumumuz tehlkeye atılıyor. Ancak bu durum 1960 yapımı **Peeping Tom** filmindekinin aksine, bizi tiksindirmiyor. Oyununun yapıtaşlarını tamamen değiştiriyor. **Nightvision**'da doğrudan suçlanan bir özne yok, sadece öznenin aracı sayılan bir güvenlik kamerası var. Bu da özne olarak tanıdığımız ana karakterin korkusunu, heyecanını bize aktarmada cılız kahyor. Bu anlamda sadece şüphenin en soyut halini görüyoruz ve onun varlığının bir insan üzerinde ne kadar büyük değişikliklere yol açabileceğinin boyutlarını kavriyoruz.



## Anonimlik Kapatılan Bir Güvenlik Açığı mıdır?

**Nightvision**, diğer röntgenci temada sayılabilen filmler gibi izleyiciye doğrudan bir suçlamada bulunmuyor. Yani, filmde olan bitenler nedeniyle hiçbir zaman ortak suçlu konumuna düşmüyorum. Bu da bizi bir nevi gizli, anonim bir boyuta çıkartıyor. Filmin yönetmeni **Clara Claus**, rahatsız edici diye nitelendirilmesi muhtemel olan anlatımı iki ana mercekle aktarmayı tercih etmiş. Bu iki merceğin de dilleri birbirinden farklı; bu anlatılardan biri şüpheli taşyan kişinin bizzat kendisi, dolayısıyla da etkin öznesi; diğer ise şüpheli doğurduğunu düşündüğümüz olayın edilgen nesnesi. Biz "edilgenin" gözünden de bakabiliyor olsak da her zaman "etkin özne" ağzından sonuçlara ulaşabiliyoruz. Ortada bir açıklık söz konusuysa da bu, eşit oranda yargılamaya pek izin vermiyor.



## Tekil Olma Durumunun Açıtığı Sahici Alan

**Nightvision** kesinlikle çoğul bir anlatım yapısı sergilemiyor, daha çok kendi içindeki tekilliğinden çoğulluklar doğurmaya çalışıyor denebilir. Bu da izleyici olarak bizi iç içe geçmiş olan bir süreklilik ve kontrolsüzlüğe yönlendiriyor. Her gece, karanlık tam da zemine çöktüğünde güvenlik kamerası aracılığıyla tanık olduğumuz "yabancı" gerçeklik, (bu bir insan, bir yansima, bir gölge de olabilir) aktarılmak istenen brütal etkiyi kıvamına getiriyor. Buradan hareketle hem olayların bizden sonra ikinci gözlemcisi olan ana karakter için hem de bizim için işlevsel deneyim alanının gösterilmesi mümkün oluyor. Güvenlik kamerasının ardından kim olduğuna dair mevcut bilinmezlik ise her zaman geciktirilen hız ile bağlantılı olabilir. Bu da yapının hem gerçekliğini hem de bir miktar fantastik yanını ortaya çıkarması açısından önemli bir kullanım. Yapının alt mesajını ise "ahlak"ın varlığını sorgulamak amacıyla açtığımızda, olayın kendisinin kuşku dolu olmasından ötürü herhangi bir sonuca varmak güç hale geliyor.

Gözetleme konusu insanın aklına hemen istismar tehlikesini getirse ve bir bakıma izleyici olarak utanma duygusuyla karşı karşıya kalınıyor olsa da, **Nightvision** doğrudan kimseyi parmakla göstermediğinden en az yapımdaki ana karakter gibi biz de sadece şüphenin kendisiyle baş başa kalıyoruz, sonuçları ya da onun kendi yakınlarıyla herhangi bir bağdan uzaktayız. **Nightvision**'nın bu anlamda kendi ismiyle çok yakın bir duruşu var, hepimiz hemfikiriz ki gece görüşünde, karanlıkta olup bitenleri idrak etmek güçtür. Biz de bu yapım boyunca idrak yönümüzü sorgulamak durumunda kalıyoruz.



Gözetleyen kimsenin gözetlenene dönük herhangi bir zararı bulunmuyor. Bu da “Eğer ortada biz gözetleme varsa ama nihayetinde bundan kimse olumsuz yönde -fiziksel olarak- etkilenmiyorsa, eylemin kendisi masum mudur?” sorusunu akla getiriyor. Ana karakterimizle gözetleyen kişi arasında hiçbir şekilde herhangi bir fiziksel sürtüşme yaşanmıyor ancak psikolojik olarak rahatsızlık duyduğu durumlardan ötürü bazı sonuçlara varmak zorunda kalıyor. En masum iyileştirici (**therapeutic**) temanın açık olarak kullanıldığı **Nightvision**, izleyiciyi bu anlamda ikiye bölebilme potansiyeline sahip.

**Burcu Meltem Tohum**

# NIGHTVISION



Festival Highlights  
Mar 15 - Written By Claire Lim

## Cinéma du réel 2021: 'The Filmmaker's House' (Review)

Director Marc Isaacs welcomes us into his home and makes *The Filmmaker's House*, a comedic utopian documentary defying conventional narratives codes.



*The Filmmaker's House* (Dir. Marc Isaacs, UK, 2020)

The **2021 Cinéma du Réel** (Paris International Documentary Film Festival) opened [on Friday, March 12th](#), with online screenings available to France-based audiences. Among this year's program is *The Filmmaker's House*, a feature documentary by Marc Isaacs, one of the current major hits on the documentary film festival circuit, with selections at numerous festivals (Sheffield Doc/Fest, Doc Lisboa, IDFA, Hainan Island International Film Festival, WatchDocs). As part of Film Fest Report's coverage of the 43rd Cinéma du Réel, I took the opportunity to watch and discover Marc Isaac's work.

Serial killers, sex and celebrities : a good recipe to seek financing for a film. Director Marc Isaacs decides to take another route and makes his low budget documentary at home. **The Filmmaker's House is a touching and comedic film that defies conventional codes of documentaries.**

Showing a variety of people that populate London, Marc Isaacs manages to give a quirky portrait of the city. Two English builders, a Colombian housekeeper, his Muslim Pakistani neighbour and a Slovakian homeless man incarnate themselves in the filmmaker's house. Each character is introduced with straightforward features : gender, income, origin, religion. I can say roughly that each of them represents a category of people. Even though those characters could sound stereotypical, their personality added a lot of nuance and depth to the story. **The four main characters living together make the combination unlikely and sometimes surrealist.** Their exchanges output their differences, dislikes and discomfort, highlighting invisible frontiers between people.

Already disturbing while on the streets, the presence of Mikel (the Slovakian homeless man) in the house brings the most in the film. Smelly and dirty, he is humble about his situation but not shy about getting help. While Mikel enjoys his stay at the filmmaker's, **Marc Isaacs' eye is not looking at him with pity, but with sympathy.** Mikel being the centre of attention in the house and in the film, questioned hospitality. **Who do we accept in our space, and what does it take to help others?**

The film starts like a diary documentary: he checks on his mate Mikel at the hospital, says hello to the neighbour Zara, gives orders to his housekeeper Nery, and welcomes the English workers to his house... The shaky shots and the director's voice make the film look like a candid filmed diary, at that moment, I did not ask myself how scripted the film was. **Being naive, I let myself live what I thought was his everyday life.** The camera angle being at a low angle shot, the characters acted somewhat awkward and it made me believe that it was unplanned and unscripted. Most of the film goes as every incident punctuates the film and the day of those protagonists. **Becoming more and**

**more obvious that incidents were not spontaneous, the director reveals a more dramatic and realistic upturn.**

The way the director plays with the impression of an unscripted story, manages to question the essence of a documentary. **With comedic tones, Marc Isaacs succeeds at telling us a dramatic subtext**, in which the surrealism of the combination shows that cohabitation is unfortunately unrealistic. During those 75 minutes, four worlds collided into *The Filmmaker's House* and made me believe in a weird utopia without frontier.

**Review by [Claire Lim.](#)**



Stay tuned to the film festival circuit, [here!](#)



Festival Highlights  
Mar 21 - Written By Mehdi Balamissa

# Cinéma du réel 2021: 'A River Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces' (Review)

Told from the inside, *A River Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces* is an absorbing and poetic mosaic which aims at capturing the soul of Wuhan, an ever-changing city and hometown of director Shengze Zhu.



As we delved into the varied program of the **2021 Cinéma du réel**, we spotted, as part of the **International Competition**, a specimen of unconventional cinematic expression. As metaphorical as its title suggests, *A River Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces* is also an absorbing, contemplative portrait of Wuhan (China), director **Shengze Zhu**'s hometown.

For those willing to see beyond what seems like a demanding, slow-paced film, *A River Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces*' **observational style** offers glimpses of pure beauty and poetry, as it consists of a juxtaposition of long vignettes of the city.

Do not expect the film to unfold its message explicitly to you. Instead, immerse yourself in the film and let yourself go with the flow. **Let your thoughts wander in the very long shots of the Yangtse River**, or on the many construction sites around it. There, **you will find unexpected beauty**. The peaceful and calming effect of the film will help you uncover its silent and hidden message. Anchored by a stunning aesthetics, the film offers us a space to delve into all of its shots. It invites us to take the time to explore each of them, to spot a detail in the landscape and follow its journey through the shot. **At times very inspired, the film is critically visual and proves to be a truly cinematic experience.**

**What director Shengze Zhu is filming is an ever-expanding, ever-changing city.** By using human presence as an element of the film's background, the filmmaker definitely crafts a film about the city, about its shape and its soul. **At a time when the city of Wuhan has become infamous for being the epicenter of the covid-19 global pandemic**, and when the narrative around the city has been appropriated by international media and observers, director Shengze Zhu, who lives in Chicago, goes back to where she grew up to tell us her own story of Wuhan, from the inside. Her tale encompasses fascination, probably a bit of nostalgia, and regret. The regret of seeing her city being transformed by endless constructions, erasing parts of the city's history and memories, to build new infrastructure. **The film captures this constantly evolving**

**environment, always altering the city's shape.** However, one element of the landscape is not affected by this change and remains the same. As inexorable as the transformation of the city seems, **the Yangtse River is still flowing and, as such, represents the city's past, present, and future at the same time.** The river is what keeps alive everything that the city is erasing, little by little. The notion of loss lies at the center of the film. Loss stemming from the covid-19 epidemic, but also loss, as a result of the inevitable transformation of the city. In this regard, four letters from Wuhan's inhabitants are showing on screen over the course of the film. They all express regret, report pain from a loss, whether in the covid-19 context or as a result of a natural disaster. Against that backdrop, **the Yangtse River is the allegory of life. It goes on.** The river and life go on. The river keeps moving forward and flowing despite all the pain and transformation that life brings about.

All this makes the city hard to define. The constant smog engulfing the city, as captured by the film, is a relevant metaphor for a city whose aspect is difficult to picture. It does not seem tangible. It is ever-changing.

Born in 1987 in Wuhan, **director Shengze Zhu crafts an outstanding portrait of her versatile, constantly changing hometown,** that may seem hard to penetrate at first sight, but which **evolves into pure poetry, reminding audiences of the captivating complexity of the rich landscapes of Gu Xiaogang's Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains.**

Shengze Zhu's fourth feature film was presented as part of the International Competition of the **2021 Cinéma du réel**, based in Paris, France. The film will also be shown to the public of the **Berlinale Forum** in June 2021.

Review by [Mehdi Balamissa](#).



[Learn more about Cinéma du réel 2021](#)



Festival Highlights  
Mar 21 - Written By Film Fest Report

## Cinéma du réel 2021: Award Winners

The 2021 Cinéma du réel has come to an end after 10 days of documentary screenings. Discover the Award Winners of Paris-based international documentary film festival.



All good things must come to an end. Even the [Cinéma du réel – International Documentary Film Festival](#). On Sunday, March 21st, 2021, the festival team have announced the Award Winners of the 2021 edition of the festival, held online on March 12-21. We were delighted to cover the event and explore the rich program of the festival. It is now time to acknowledge the **Award Winning documentaries!** Here is the Awards List:

# **NIQM DES JURI REPORT**

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## **ROUTE ONE / DOC AWARD (new prize 2021)**

MORGANE by Charles Moreau-Boiteau

## **COUP DE COEUR STUDIO ORLANDO / ParisDOC Works-in-Progress**

ICI BRAZZA by Antoine Boutet (Produced by Julie Paratia, Sister Productions)

## **"PREMIÈRE FENÊTRE" AUDIENCE AWARD**

WADI JHANNAM (La vallée de l'enfer) by Zoé Filloux

## **CULTURAL INTANGIBLE HERITAGE AWARD**

ODORIKO by Yoichiro Okutani

## **LIBRARY AWARD**

LANDSCAPES OF RESISTANCE by Marta Popivoda

## **TĒNK SHORT FILM AWARD**

UN MAL SOUS SON BRAS by Marie Ward

## **SHORT FILM AWARD (Special Mention)**

NIGHTVISION de Clara Claus

## **SHORT FILM AWARD**

RANDOM PATROL by Yohan Guignard

## **PRIX LORIDAN-IVENS / CNAP / LORIDAN-IVENS / CNAP AWARD (Special Mention)**

DEAR HACKER by Alice Lenay

## **PRIX LORIDAN-IVENS / CNAP / LORIDAN-IVENS / CNAP AWARD**

FEAST by Tim Leyendekker

## **YOUNG JURY AWARD (Special Mention)**

TAMING THE GARDEN by Salomé Jashi

## **YOUNG JURY AWARD**

LES PRIÈRES DE DELPHINE by Rosine Mbakam

# **CINÉMA DU RÉEL REPORT**

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## **ORIGINAL MUSIC AWARD**

ROCK BOTTOM RISER by Fern Silva (Original Music by Sergei Tcherepin & Lea Bertucci)

## **INSTITUT FRANÇAIS – LOUIS MARCORELLES AWARD**

L'ÉTAT DES LIEUX SERA DRESSÉ À ONZE HEURES EN PRÉSENCE DE LA FEMME DU POÈTE by Martin Verdet

## **LA SCAM INTERNATIONAL AWARD**

ODORIKO by Yoichiro Okutani

## **CINÉMA DU RÉEL GRAND PRIZE**

THE INHERITANCE by Ephraim Asili

*Refresh page to find out about more award winners, as the Award ceremony is ongoing!*

[Learn more about the Cinéma du réel 2021](#)

Cinéma du réel - Award Winners - documentary



Festival Highlights  
Mar 23 - Written By Claire Lim

## Cinéma du réel 2021: Three Outstanding Short Films Dealing With Security Issues

We have rounded up a selection of 3 outstanding and thought-provoking short documentary films that we discovered at the 2021 Cinéma du réel.

The 43rd edition of the Cinéma du réel was remarkable on many levels: on top of bringing the best documentaries to France-based online audiences, the festival offered a rich program full of cinematic curiosities. Some of our top picks among the feature films presented at this year's edition were [The Filmmakers' House](#) and [A River Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces](#). Film Fest Report Contributor Claire also got interested in the short film program where she spotted three outstanding short documentaries, revolving around the issues of security, the police and law enforcement, some of which have picked up nice [awards](#) at the festival. Read on to discover three shorts worth watching!

### Nightvision (Dir. Clara Claus)



Clara Claus is an artist and a filmmaker, who assists famous photographer Thomas Hoepker at his house, in the Hamptons (near New-York). At work, she is tasked to erase dust on the film scans, print the photos, send prints to clients.. And she takes the opportunity to film herself during her daily life.

Some day, on security camera footage, she realizes that one man is spying on her during the night. According to the photographer, it is an unfriendly neighbor, who has a troubled past. The footage is in black and white, is very grainy and has poor details, it is apparently impossible for the police to do anything about it.

Thomas has to leave the house for eight days, he asks Clara to stay at the house so she can take care of his dog, Clarita. Even if Clarita's presence brings some comfort to Clara, she has to face this weird and blurry abstraction stalking on her, alone. The atmosphere begins to feel heavier and more worrisome. **Borrowing narrative codes from thrillers and scary movies, director Clara Claus personifies this hazy silhouette as a monster.**

Most of the time on a tripod, Clara's camera is also moving. She never talks to the camera but somehow, I could feel the camera's presence. Could the camera be a character, and could it reassure Clara? **As Ingmar Bergman once said: "Isn't art always, to a certain extent, a therapy for the artist?"**

Nightvision was awarded a [Special Mention for Best Short Film](#).

### Random Patrol (Dir. Yohan Guignard)



In Oklahoma City's suburbs (USA), Matt is an ordinary policeman and has to check that everything is in order. On his random patrol, french director Yohan Guignard followed and interviewed him for thirty minutes. Behind his sunglasses, no emotion seems to show on Matt's face.

While we see the copy-pasted houses through Matt's car window, the neighborhood seems rather empty and falsely peaceful. Hand on the gun when a citizen talks to him, Matt shares to Yohan his obsessed fear of dying. As police brutality got more recognition in the USA (and in other countries as well), the media and population seem to have dehumanized police men. Somehow, this documentary plays on a paradox where director Yohan Guignard gave the voice to a policeman ; but a policeman who got purged from his humanity and compassion, distanced from the people and citizens from his own hometown. Having a glance at who Matt is as an individual was quite impactful, he opens up for a little while and we can see his humanness. **The balance between Matt representing an institution and him being a human seems tricky for him. This film brings nuances to the media's representation of policemen**, it made me wonder: do we criticize the institution or the men?

*Random Patrol* was awarded the [Best Short Film Prize](#).

## Kindertotenlieder (Dir. Virgil Vernier)



On October 27th 2005, teenagers Zyed Benna and Bouna Traoré, who lived in Clichy-sous-Bois (Paris' suburbs), were controlled by the police but they ran and were hunted by policemen. They got trapped into electric units and got electrocuted. Three days later, tear grenades were shot by forces of order near a mosque of the neighborhood while people were praying. Those dramatic events started major riots. Not as a wide and influential as an event as the Black Lives Matter Movement triggered by George Floyd's death, the 2005 riots are part of the French contemporary history - it is the longest and most important riots since May 68, France's major civil unrest movement of the 20th Century.

Director Virgil Vernier, with the authorization of TF1 (France's main television channel), uses old TV footage to make this film *Kindertotenlieder* and reflects on those riots. **Without the voice-over and journalistic comments, the editing and combination of all those archives give off a powerful message on French suburbs' living conditions and the representation of Parisian suburbs in mainstream media.**

The voices were given to the population of the neighborhood, most of them were scared and worried, families with children, people with little salaries staying up all night looking after their cars. The kids conducting the riots were almost never interviewed, their frustration and anger only manifested through what was described as chaos. While most of the interviewed people shared their fears, some people focused on their experience as people of color, facing racial discrimination from the police.

By words and action, people were only asking for justice and a more accurate idea of equality (as the french motto says "Liberté, égalité, fraternité" - "Liberty, equality, fraternity"). In response, the government chose confrontation and violence. In the wake of the Yellow Vests ("Gilets Jaunes") movement, which sparked in late 2018 in France, violence and brutality from the police, once again came to the surface, therefore bringing another question: when will "forces of order" become "gardiens de la paix" (literal translation: "peace guardians") again? In this regard, Virgil Vernier's film echoes David Dufresnes' *The Monopoly of Violence* in which a group of citizens question and confront their views on the social order, and the legitimacy of the use of violent police force.

An article by [Claire Lim](#).



Festival Highlights  
Apr 17 - Written By Mehdi Balamissa

## Cinéma du réel 2021: 'Venice Beach, CA.' (Review)

With a light deftness and enchanting poetry, director Marion Naccache gives a voice to the voiceless and reveals the soul of Venice Beach, in a beautifully crafted documentary.



Venice Beach, CA (Dir. Marion Naccache, 2021)

The 43rd [Cinéma du réel](#), Paris International Documentary Film Festival, wrapped up a successful online edition a few weeks ago. The festival offered us the opportunity to discover and highlight a number of gems, such as Marc Isaacs' [The Filmmaker's House](#), Shengze Zhu's [A River Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces](#), or a couple of powerful short films.

Another title from this year's lineup turned out to be a profoundly poetic documentary: [Venice Beach, CA](#) is an immersive, delicate and heartfelt look at a place like no other in California and in the United States.

Directed by **French filmmaker Marion Naccache**, known for [Coney Island \(Last Summer\)](#), her first feature documentary, which hit the film festival circuit in 2010, [Venice Beach, CA](#) is the fruit of a patient, shrewd and respectful observation and understanding of the particular soul of an iconic place.

**In Venice Beach, CA, the director sets out to explore the relationship between a space and the people who experience it everyday.** Filming only in the early morning, from about 5 am to 9 am, the director captured the daily routine of the numerous homeless people living on Venice Beach's famous boardwalk, **with a light deftness and no sense of intrusion.** At this moment of the day, the sun is rising, the colors in the sky are changing even during one shot, and **the poetry of the film's visuals** stand as a beautiful metaphor for an ever-changing context, and the lives of those homeless people who are always on the verge of something unexpected, and which are characterized by instability.

On screen, **we are offered a collection of long, steady, immersive shots of the boardwalk.** The richness of the cinematography allows the viewers to wander within the image, to spot a detail and follow it. This aspect, that we praised in [A River Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces](#), another delightful documentary presented at the 43rd Cinéma du réel, brings a lot of poetry and enables **a profound immersion** in the space that the director is focusing on. This is all the more relevant that as the sun is rising, the boardwalk starts to be humming with activity. This is the type of place where you will always find something to look at, to observe, to question, to wonder about. In this context, the director's approach proves relevant and efficient.

In voice over, excerpts of exchanges with local homeless people are commenting on the place and their personal relationship with it. The thing is: we never get to see their faces. And **director Marion Naccache deserves credit for such a smart, poetic setup**, for at least two reasons. Firstly, Venice Beach being a famous, iconic touristic place during the day, the film seems to adapt to the fact that, as tourists, when having a walk on this busy, artsy boardwalk, we may tend to look away and not look at the homeless people. They do not belong to the post card, they should not be on it. What's more, it's slightly uncomfortable to be enjoying oneself, while facing such misery and the dramatic manifestation of the tremendous social inequalities raging across America. Anyway, in [Venice Beach, CA](#), director Marion Naccache is not proposing us to finally look at them. She does more than that. She allows us to spend some time with them. At some point, **I felt that the long, steady shots of the boardwalk were what I was seeing, sitting on the side of the boardwalk and watching life unfold in front of my eyes.** And the homeless people speaking in voice over were sitting next to me, sharing their thoughts with me. It seemed a little bit like an out-of-body experience. Secondly, this setup proves extremely interesting insofar as, by **juxtaposing the voices of the ones who truly belong to this place**, because they stay here everyday, even when the tourists are gone at night, and all year long, the director has put together what seems like **the soul of the place**. Their **collective voice**, the assembly of each one's experience and perception of the boardwalk, frame no less than the spirit of the place. And together, they are this place, they are Venice Beach, as suggested by the title of the film, probably aiming at understanding and defining what Venice Beach truly is.



Venice Beach, CA (Dir. Marion Naccache, 2021)

Beside its **relevant and poetic use of direct cinema to purely capture the spirit of Venice Beach** and its homeless community, director Marion Naccache completed *Venice Beach, CA* folding in a very interesting theme. The director could have decided to edit the film in a chronological order, meaning that she could have recreated one morning, out of all the footage she had collected, after filming for days. Instead, **the film is a constant juxtaposition of shots taken at night, then during the day, then in between, and so on.** To me, this brilliant and inspired decision generates two reflections. The first one is the idea of the **endless repetition** of the homeless people's lives in Venice Beach. Everyday, like in *Groundhog Day* (Dir. Harold Ramis, 1993), they wake up and accomplish the same routine, with no future prospects whatsoever. **They are somehow trapped in time.** One scene especially ranks as perhaps the most evocative moment of the film with regard to this idea. While we are offered a shot of the boardwalk, a man enters the frame, walks a few meters until he reaches nearly the center of the frame before unexpectedly turning back and walking back, exiting the frame at the exact same point he entered it a few seconds earlier. Which scene could have been better to convey this feeling of endless repetition? The second thought that I had while seeing the film constantly alternating between day-light and night-time shots, is that this gives the impression of **a mental wander.** To me, this **dreamlike feeling** echoes the collective voice presented by the film: We are a step beyond reality. **We are dealing with the spirit of this place.** And in this regard, the juxtaposition of the shots may seem like a collection of memories that the homeless people living everyday in this place may have in their head. Unlike a tourist who would keep a precise memory of the one time he or she walked down the boardwalk, the homeless people who spend their entire time there, witnessing everyday the same human choreography, have a wide range of visual memories of this place they belong to.

Like Sean Baker portrayed in *The Florida Project* (2017), many Americans live physically so close to the American dream while this dream remains out of reach for them. Venice Beach's homeless community lives and evolves in between tourists, Santa Monica's Amusement Park, the wealthy mansions of the city canals, and large corporations' offices like Google or Snapchat.

In *Venice Beach, CA*, director Marion Naccache exposes the unseen. With respect and poetry, she crafts a beautiful tribute to the ones who are, in spite of everything, the soul of Venice Beach.

Review by [Mehdi Balamissa](#).

# il manifesto

## Le sfide quotidiane nella Francia del lockdown

Che fare con la chiusura dei luoghi dello spettacolo? Invenzioni e «strategie» per una possibile resistenza

Eugenio Renzi  
Parigi

**■**In Francia, chi lavora nel cinema d'autore fa i conti con un piatto che si restringe ogni anno di più e che oggi rende difficile, se non impossibile, quello che fino a pochi anni fa era la norma. Il doppio lockdown non è arrivato come un fulmine a ciel sereno ma come una tempesta di sabbia dopo anni di siccità. Per capire cosa sta succedendo, abbiamo voluto parlare con sei lavoratori e lavoratrici dello spettacolo. A tutti abbiamo chiesto, semplicemente: che cosa fai in questi giorni?

**CATHERINE BIZZON** dirige dal 2018 il festival Cinema du Réel. Il suo è stato il primo festival internazionale ad essere investito dalla pandemia e a dover inventare sul momento un modo di esistere.

d'anno passato, ho fatto lo struzzo. Ed in parte ha funzionato: sono riuscita a fare la serata d'apertura. Ma il giorno dopo abbiamo dovuto annullare tutti gli spettacoli e siamo passati online. Quest'anno abbiamo avuto il tempo di riflettere su cosa vuol dire preparare un festival materializzato – senza peraltro escludere la possibilità di avere le sale, alla quale non rinunciamo per principio. Lavoriamo quindi ad un programma online che sia una sorta di copia esatta di quello in presenza. I film non saranno sempre disponibili, on demand, come ho visto fare altrove. Saranno ordinati in un percorso che comincia con il film di apertura, finisce con la chiusura, e che in mezzo propone una serie di eventi, di incontri, di appuntamenti effimeri. Tipico di un festival è che la sera si discute dei film visti quel giorno. Come un tempo, scendendo al bar o dal panettiere, si commentava quello che si era visto la sera prima alla televisione. Tutti avevano visto la stessa cosa. In fondo, vogliamo ricreatore la televisione).

**SOPHIE LETOURNEUR** ha girato alcuni piccoli gioielli, come «Roc» e «Cappelli, da via a via», che Marin ne aspetta. Il suo cinema, che riprende il testimone di Jacques Rovier, tributarista congegnoso, è in costante ricerca di nuovi modi d'esistere. Il suo ultimo film, «Bouillon», è uscito in sala durante l'estate, segnalato da Stéphane Caridi.

«Sono state certamente per l'Innre. Oltre al Covid c'erano anche altre difficoltà. I distributori non erano molto convinti del film: poi il lockdown ha bloccato tutto e per un po' non se n'è parlato. La stampa ha comunque potuto vederlo a maggio e le reazioni entusiaste della critica hanno finito per far breccia tra i distributori. Caso raro, il lockdown ha giocato a favore del film che ha potuto avere una bella uscita. Il fatto che non ci fossero film americani in quel momento ha aiutato. In questo periodo sto lavorando alla sceneggiatura di un nuovo film. È difficile avere finanziamenti.

Ma per me, stranamente, è un'occasione. Voglio tornare a



Un teatro chiuso in Francia. Sotto Catherine Bizzon, Thomas Ordonneau, Sophie Letourneur e Viviana Andriani

Lavoriamo senza sosta da alcune produzioni. E poi c'è il «Club»: una piattaforma on demand che abbiamo appena lanciato sul nostro sito

Thomas Ordonneau

Stiamo preparando un programma online di Cinema du Réel che sia una sorta di copia esatta di quello in presenza. I titoli seguiranno un percorso

Catherine Bizzon

ci sono stati travolti in pieno dalla chiusura dei luoghi di cultura. La nostra attività normale è

fare dei film a bassissimo budget. Il prossimo che sto scrivendo in questi giorni, lo farò con Emmanuel Chaumet di Eco films – che è stato il mio primo produttore. Sarà un piccolo film, a metà tra finzione e documentario. Come piace a me. Lo gireremo in Italia, a Vulcano. Si chiamerà «Vulcano». Giugno.

Thomas Ordonneau

continueremo a fare i «Chiers» ogni mese! Cercando di una rivista d'attualità, senza l'attualità. Ci manca il presente. E quindi siamo obbligati a inventarcene uno, partendo sempre da quello che c'è. Ma lavoriamo senza quella cornice che le uscite del mese impostano. Concretamente, nel numero di febbraio, che stiamo chiudendo proprio oggi, c'è uno speciale su Coppola. Il pretesto è il nuovo montaggio del «Padre terro» e l'uscita in dvd di alcune pellicole sotto sospetto. Ci siamo aggirati a questa piccola attualità e con un'intervista, qualche ricerca dei testi... Ci abbiamo costruito sopra uno speciale. Cerchiamo di mantenere un taglio critico, anche se la situazione ci spinge ad avere uno sguardo retrospettivo. L'attualità di questi giorni è soprattutto politica. Le seguiamo, ma solo dal punto di vista del cinema. E cerchiamo anche un altro respiro. Nel numero di febbraio ci sarà una tavola rotonda sul cinema di genere in Francia. È un soggetto scivoloso, che ritorna in continuazione, ma sul quale non si sa mai così dire... Vogliamo testare di inquadrarlo. Un momento in cui abbiamo la libertà di porre delle domande che in genere non si ha

mai il tempo di affrontare. Cerchiamo di approfittarne.

Thomas Ordonneau

In Francia è un nome che fu tutt'uso con quello della casa di distribuzione e di produzione Shéhézade, la batteria fondata nel 2002 e che da allora ha portato al cinema molti registi emergenti, tra cui quelli Mignac, Gomes, Juras, Treti, Serge Bozon. Shéhézade è anche un solo, un luogo di incontro: il Gypso a Marigny. Che cosa fa Shéhézade in questi giorni?

La distribuzione è ferma, ovviamente. Le sale sono chiuse, compresa la nostra. Anche se ogni tanto facciamo alcune proiezioni private, per non perdere la mano. Lavoriamo senza sosta ad alcune produzioni. Nella seconda metà del 2020, avevamo alcuni progetti che hanno girato nei festival e nei lab e che vogliamo portare avanti. E poi c'è il «Club»: una piattaforma che abbiamo appena lanciato sul nostro sito. Già da due anni avevamo in cantiere un progetto per il nostro catalogo in Vod, che si è sviluppato in qualche cosa di più ambizioso, con l'obiettivo di fare da interfaccia all'insieme dei nostri mezzi di distribuzione: la sala, il dvd, la vod e ora la vod. L'idea del «Club» è quella di uno strumento capace di accompagnare al meglio i cineasti con i quali lavoriamo e che il resto del mercato ha sempre meno voglia di distribuire. Noi crediamo ancora che per il cinema indipendente è singolare e sia un pubblico e quindi anche un mercato – perché non siamo un'operativa ma una impresa commerciale. Crediamo però che bisogna trovare un nuovo modo di raggiungere quel pubblico.

Viviana Andriani

l'italiana. Vorrei tornare a Parigi. È adesso stampa, e cosa dice qui stampa di prete... E faccio parte di quelli che sono stati travolti in pieno dalla chiusura dei luoghi di cultura. La nostra attività normale è

scrivere la sceneggiatura di un nuovo film. È difficile avere finanziamenti. Ma per me è un'occasione. Voglio tornare a fare film a bassissimo budget

Sophie Letourneur

Come uffici stampa evidenziano il lavoro degli altri, mentre il nostro è poco visibile, poco riconosciuto e per nulla sostenuto dagli aiuti al settore

Viviana Andriani

quella classica di un ufficio stampa e consiste nel promuovere film in uscita in sala anche eventi in luoghi d'arte come il Centre Pompidou, ed in questi mesi è completamente ferma. Oggi il nostro lavoro consiste nel distillare quello che avevamo fatto nei mesi scorsi, nell'annullare eventi. O cercare di salvare, spostando le date sempre più in là. Ma non si può spostare tutto all'infinito. Nel tempo che resta e per non de moralizzarsi, con altri due colleghe, Chloé Lorenz e Laurent Graneau, abbiamo creato un'associazione: il CLAP (Cercle libre des attachés de presse de Cinéma). Il nostro è un mestiere particolare. Mettiamo in evidenza il lavoro degli altri, mentre il nostro è poco visibile, poco riconosciuto e per nulla sostenuto dagli aiuti al cinema. L'associazione cerca di tessere delle legami con le altre associazioni di categoria, come la Sfr (Société des réalisateurs de films), per cercare di coordinarci per aiutare i più fragili tra di noi.

Viviane Andriani

sto cercando di finanziare il film che ho appena finito di scrivere. Edita. I produttori e i distributori hanno sugli scaffali una pila di film già prodotti che aspettano di uscire in sala. Non possiamo far altro che insistere. Passa il mio tempo a inviare dossier. Certo di impegnarmi con la Sfr, vista la situazione, è diventato un centro di discussione molto attivo... Non mi arrendo all'idea che la sala sparisca come modo essenziale di mostrare i film. Anche quando ho lavorato per la televisione (la mini-serie «Carabini», nel 2010) ho fatto in modo di organizzare delle proiezioni in sala. Il fatto di mostrare un film ad un pubblico fisicamente presente per me è irrinunciabile.

## MODERN TIMES REVIEW



43<sup>e</sup> festival  
international  
du film  
documentaire

12  
mars  
21  
2021

### Cinéma du réel previews 43rd festival

J'aime 2

January 14, 2021 By Modern Times Review



The 43rd edition of [Cinéma du réel](#), held 12 – 21 March 2021, forges ahead with its programme, regardless of the health situation in France at the time of presentation. With fervent hope a physical aspect of the festival will take place, Cinéma du réel is also working on all possible options depending on the rules in place (total or partial lockdown, curfew, or limited access to theatres).

Whatever the final outcome, the festival has announced its official categories and competitions and will also feature special screenings, previews, rarities, first-time screenings, and the [Paris DOC](#), the professional platform. More information on the complete program will be available in the coming days, but below is a preview of what to expect.

#### OFFICIAL COMPETITION

- International selection // around 20 short and feature-length films – as a French premiere
- French selection // around 20 short and feature-length films – as a world premiere

#### A FIRST WINDOW

- A selection that covers young filmmakers' first documentary steps, as curated by a selection committee composed of students.

## PIERRE CRETON

- Pierre Creton is both a filmmaker and a farmworker. Born in 1966, he lives and works in Vattetot-sur-mer (Seine Maritime). He studied at the Villa Arson (Nice) and Le Havre School of Fine Arts. He is well-known for his films *A Beautiful Summer* (2019) and *Va, Toto!* (2017). All of his work is shaped by and around daily gestures and the land as the place and time of his existence as both a filmmaker and farmworker.

## FILMMAKERS IN THEIR GARDENS

- These directors have chosen nature as a space of life and filmmaking. They turn this everyday setting into the garden of their thoughts, their concerns, the joys or difficulties of living, and the wellspring of their relationship to others. With films by Margaret Tait, Anne Charlotte Robertson, Joachim Pinto, Rose Lowder, and more.

## POPULAR FRONT(S): what use are citizens?

- At the heart of the debates, the idea of democracy, the decisions, and commitment of everyone to help build society and drive its transformation. This year's programme focuses on our role as citizen – the role we agree to assume and the role we could seize. It questions how direct actions can influence the decisions of those who govern us, in order to defy fatalism and celebrate possible victories.

## FESTIVAL CONVERSATIONS

- An exploration of the relationship between literature and documentary cinema. Building on the words of practitioners – those who make, those who create – this involves not only exploring the fictional vein of documentary writing, but also the way in which writing associates careful observation with a subjective point of view and opens itself up to the existence of others.

**MODERN TIMES REVIEW**

J'aime 142



## Paradise lost

**ENVIRONMENT:** A single man wields enough power to uproot the living artifacts of his country's collective history and memory.

### *Taming the Garden*

Director: Salomé Jashi  
Producer: Vadim Jendreyko, Erik Winkler, Martin Roelly, Salomé Jashi  
Country: Switzerland, Germany, Georgia



Review written by **Lauren Wissot** FEBRUARY 1, 2021

Premiering in the World Cinema Documentary Competition at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival, Salomé Jashi's *Taming the Garden* is a multi-prism meditation that begins with the simplest (if strangest) of premises and slowly, nearly imperceptibly, expands to become a cautionary tale for all.



*Taming the Garden*, a film by Salomé Jashi

## By force

Through a series of painterly images, the award-winning director, who was born in Tbilisi and whose 2016 doc *The Dazzling Light of Sunset* nabbed the Main Prize at *Visions du Réel*'s Regard Neuf Competition, takes us on a fairytale-like journey to the Georgian coast. It's a magical locale where century-old trees, some the size of small skyscrapers, have stood watch over generations of villagers. But the trees are slowly disappearing – or, more accurately, migrating, being uprooted by force (not unlike the perpetually unstable country's own citizens). This disturbing disruption isn't due to climate change or as the result of any existential threat – unless you consider a single wealthy man with a destructively bizarre hobby an omen of things to come.

*Through a series of painterly images, the award-winning director...takes us on a fairytale-like journey to the Georgian coast.*

While the impoverished villagers have always viewed the green giants as an integral part of their community, this never-named outsider – who also happens to be the most politically powerful man in the country, hence folks are reluctant to refer to him directly – sees them as trophies. Traveling to the far-off coast he collects tree after tree, transplanting them one at a time to his luxurious private garden. It's a herculean process that involves a slew of often exhausted and exasperated workers, and a long trip across a tranquil but moat reminiscent sea. In addition to their pittance, the villagers are bequeathed massive collateral damage, (literally) earth-shattering destruction left in the stranger's wake. The gaping holes where the stoic wood once stood, as well as torn-up roads and the felling of less prized, inconveniently in the way trees – all a visual testament to the exploitation of man and the commoditizing of the natural world.

Substituting breathtaking composition for any narration, Jashi captures the fluid movement of branches, the «dancing» of the trees – even the sailing away of one towering plant from a rooted one's POV. This subtly serves to visually remind us that these collector's items are in fact animate beings (conversely, the replanted trees we see in the operatic finale exhibit a taxidermy beauty, stand museum-style still).



*Taming the Garden*, a film by Salomé Jashi

## Moved to tears

Like other recent nature docs – James Reed and Pippa Ehrlich's *My Octopus Teacher* or Viktor Kossakovsky's *Gunda* – *Taming the Garden* eschews anthropomorphizing for the much deeper cinematic statement that these nonhuman creatures are all individuals deserving of respect in their own right – though the film also echoes the universal plight of nonsentient entities – the destruction of mountains in Appalachia or on Navajo territory in the US similarly forces impoverished communities into a Faustian bargain. Money to feed families comes at the cost of the desecration of the land to which they're sacredly wed). There's a reason that several of the rural Georgians are moved to tears with the whisking away of their trees. These living spirits possess ancestral memory within their rings, are the collective caretakers of humanity itself. A sentiment we'd all be wise not to doom ourselves to forget.

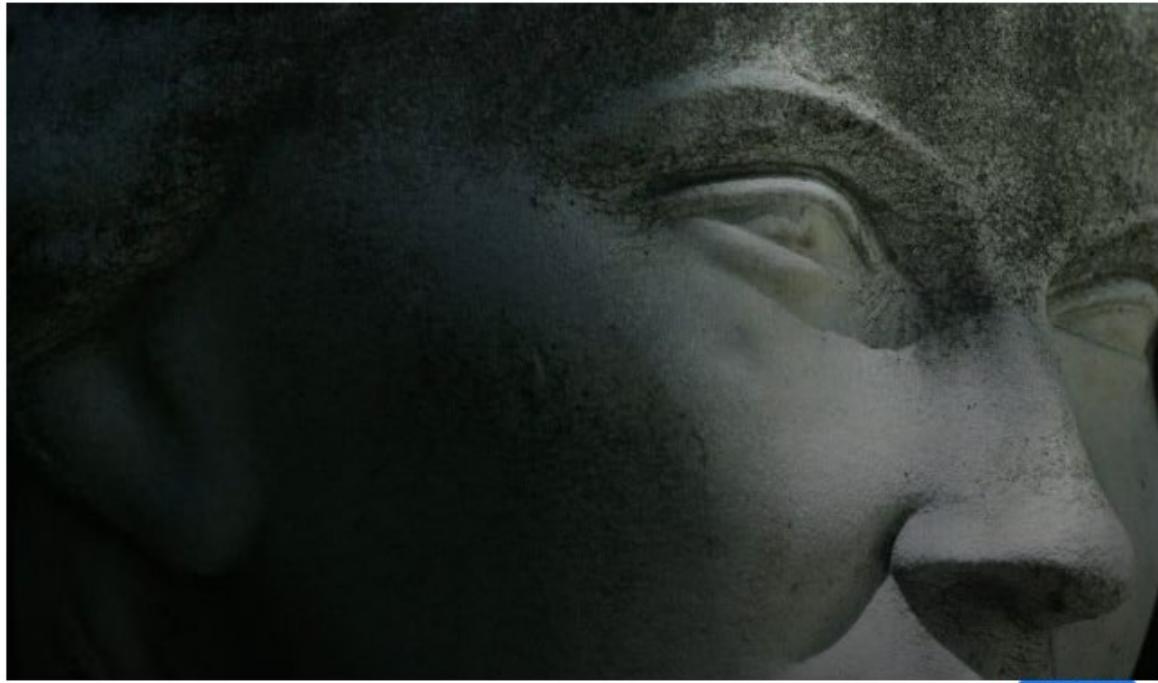
142 J'aime



**Lauren Wissot**

A US-based film critic and journalist, filmmaker and programmer.

## MODERN TIMES REVIEW

**J'aime 52**

## The trauma mapped on a nation-state's skin

**TRAUMA:** An unorthodox documentary on the exceptional journey of one of Serbia's first female partisans, who helped lead the resistance in Auschwitz.

### *Landscapes of Resistance*

Director: [Marta Popivoda](#)  
Producer: [Dragana Jovović](#), [Marta Popivoda](#), [Jasmina Sijercic](#)  
Country: [Serbia](#), [Germany](#), [France](#)

Review written by **Carmen Gray** FEBRUARY 6, 2021

*Landscapes of Resistance*, the latest documentary from Marta Popivoda, who directed the more formally rigorous body and space interrogation *Yugoslavia, How Ideology Moved Our Collective Body* (2013), world premiered at the 2021 [International Film Festival Rotterdam's](#) Tiger Competition. On one level, it is a record of testimony, a tribute to political principle, unbreakable courage, and a bulwark against the historical erasure of one [Balkan](#) woman's wartime experience. On another, the film is a bracing portrait of activist legacy; of intergenerational solidarity between women combatting [fascism](#) in an ongoing battle that, as much as its guises and methods have shifted in a transforming world, remains, in essence, the same.



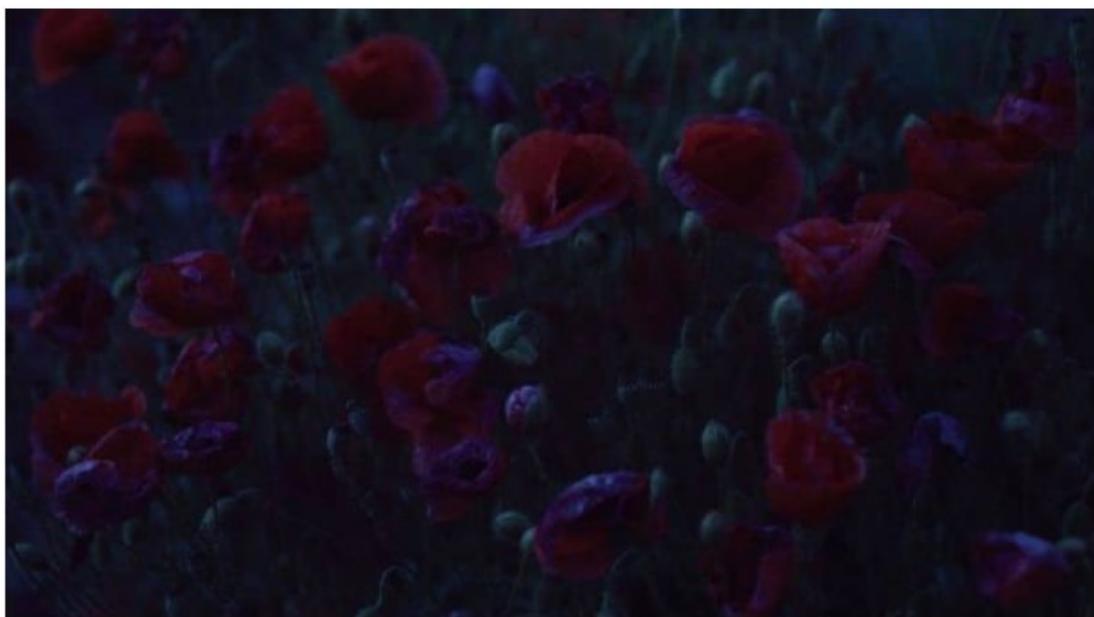
*Landscapes of Resistance*, a film by Marta Popivoda

## A fierce will to live

In reminiscences filmed over recent years, nonagenarian Sofija Sonja Vujanović recounts with a spry, no-fuss clarity — astonishing, given the depths of atrocity she has endured — her life as an active leftist. She came to this life young, as a consumer of stories by Russian Marxist Maxim Gorky and other forbidden «progressive» literature through like-minded classmates, and then became the wife of a communist in Valjevo, in what was Yugoslavia (now Serbia). When the city fell to German occupation during the Second War War, she became one of the first female Partisans, whose activities included ambushing a German-manned train to redirect wheat back to peasants. She was captured and tortured, then interred in several Nazi concentration camps, including Auschwitz, where she was a resistance movement organiser. She planned an uprising in coordination with Polish partisans in the male camp through notes and maps, stashing knives, and training fellow female inmates. Her recollections of the journey to Auschwitz (Czech railwaymen frantically gesturing of imminent gassing, to their confusion) and the abject revelation of the kind of place to where they had arrived are as jarring and devastating as any survivor story to emerge from the hellscape of Europe's dark wartime divides. Extremely risky as her camp activism was, she is adamant that it gave her purpose and a fierce will to live, in contrast to the many suicides who threw themselves against the compound's electric fence.

*The transmission of history is the film's concern, as is the way the past is inscribed upon the places and people upon which it was enacted*

The transmission of history is the film's concern, as is the way the past is inscribed upon the places and people upon which it was enacted, be they the dense leaves of the Balkan woods, their luscious darkness once offering hiding (sketched animation repeoples them with traces of figures), or the skin of a political prisoner's arm with dark green numbers inked upon it — Sonja's tattoo from Auschwitz, which has shifted position with gravity over the years, but remains indelible. Sonja is shown in person sometimes, as from the hard-earned comfort of her home (complete with beloved pet cat) she tells her tale, but this more conventional interview framing is used sparingly. As we listen to her speak of her experiences, unhurried and deliberate, with the odd sprinkling of defiant humour, the camera hones in on textures and details of the physical environments within which these events occurred. Some are unmistakable in their connotative horror (the remnants of crematoriums, for instance), while others (flowers in fields, or the cracks in building facades) are less specific but evoke the way in which trauma stays in the body, and under the terrains of nation-states, mapped into their contours and crops, haunting them, whether or not it is granted a voice; the latent meaning never fully repressed, despite time's passing and silencing taboo.

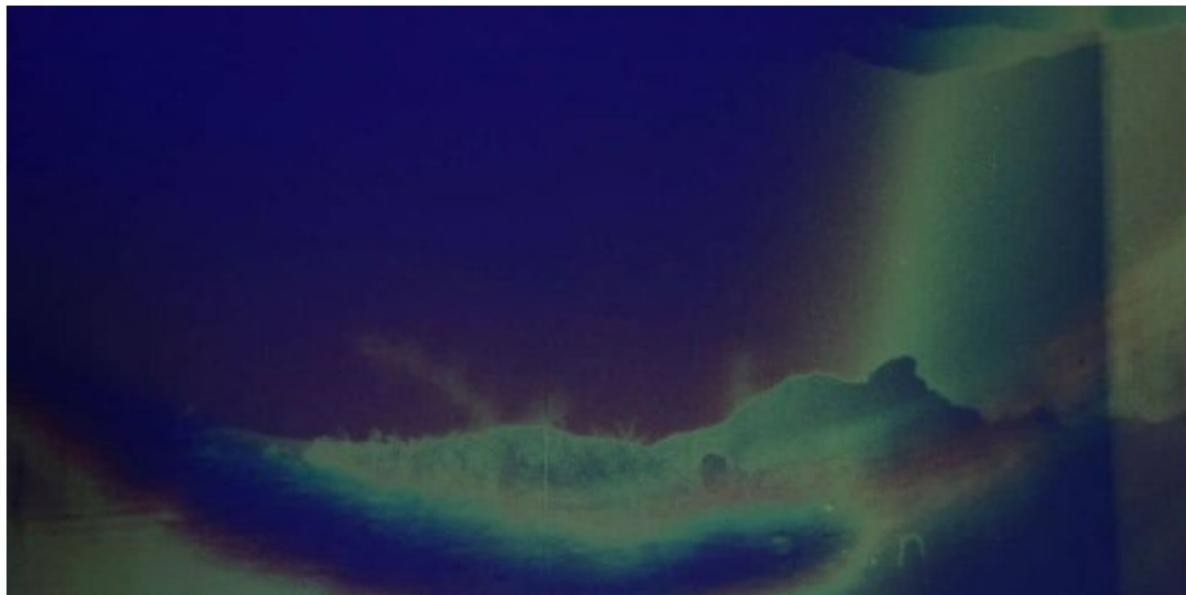


*Landscapes of Resistance*, a film by Marta Popivoda

## Spirit persists

Ana Vujanović, the film's co-writer and Popivoda's partner, is Sonja's great-niece. Excerpts of letters between them and journal entries chart the inspiration the filmmaking pair have absorbed in their own developing anti-fascist activism from a friendship of over a decade with this underground fighter who, even in her nineties, celebrates her birthday with a red socialist star-shaped cake. Sonja does not condemn their decision to make a life in the land of her former oppressors, making the distinction that it was the Nazis that tormented her and her comrades, not the German people. Ana and Marta are themselves ambivalent about their new home of Berlin, which has granted them refuge from the homophobia and radical nationalism prevalent at Europe's periphery, where the rehabilitation of Nazi collaborators is debated in the assemblies of state but has taken them to the very source of the brutal capitalism that wracks the continent's poorer edges. As anti-refugee sentiment rises in Germany, the couple join protests against it. We sense, also, the energy they've passed back to Sonja, seeing that her actions weren't for nothing and a collective spirit persists. «We learnt from Sonja we don't need to be heroes to be Partisans, but we must be Partisans!» they write, declaring this film a «Partisan film» and humbly contending that if fascism again takes hold, their will at least be «a little bit of noise against the far-right».

## MODERN TIMES REVIEW



*eartheartearth*, a film by Daichi Saïto

### Cinéma du réel announces international & French competition titles for 43rd edition

1 like J'aime 38

February 8, 2021 By Modern Times Review



#### International Selection

- *A River Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces* (dir. Shengze Zhu) – USA
- *Armour* (dir. Sandro Aguilar) – Portugal, Canada
- *Citadel* (dir. John Smith) – United Kingdom
- *eartheartearth* (dir. Daichi Saïto) – Canada
- *End of the Season* (dir. Jason Evans) – USA \*European Premiere (EP)
- *Faraway My Shadow Wandered* (dir. Liao Jiekai & Sudhee Liao) – Singapore, Japan  
\*International Premiere (IP)
- *Feast* (dir. Tim Leyendekker) – Netherlands \*IP
- *Figure Minus Fact* (dir. Mary Helena Clark) – USA
- *The Filmmaker's House* (dir. Marc Isaacs) – United Kingdom
- *Flowers Blooming in our Throats* (dir. Eva Giolo) – Belgium, Italy
- *FREIZEIT or: the opposite of doing nothing* (FREIZEIT oder: das Gegenteil von nichtstun) (dir. Caroline Pitzen) – Germany \*IP

- *The Land of Lives* (dir. Kevin Jerome Everson) – USA \*World Premiere (WP)
- *The Inheritance* (dir. Ephraim Asili) – USA \*EP
- *Landscapes of Resistance* (Pejzazi otpora) (dir. Marta Popivoda) – Serbia, Germany, France
- *Odoriko* (dir. Yoichiro Okutani) – Japan
- *Patrick* (dir. Luke Fowler) – United Kingdom \*IP
- *Delphine's Prayers* (Les Prières de Delphine) (dir. Rosine Mbakam) – Belgium, Cameroon \*WP
- *Rock Bottom Riser* (dir. Fern Silva) – USA
- *Sol de Campinas* (dir. Jessica Sarah Rinland) – Argentina, United Kingdom
- *Taming the Garden* (dir. Salomé Jashi) – Georgia, Germany
- *Tellurian Drama* (dir. Riar Rizaldi) – Indonesia

## French Selection

- *Avant que le ciel n'apparaisse* (dir. Denis Gheerbrant) – France
- *Baleh-Baleh* (dir. Pascale Bodet) – France
- *Corps Samples* (dir. Astrid de la Chapelle) – France
- *Dear Hacker* (dir. Alice Lenay) – France
- *The Inventory Will Be Drawn up at 11 a.m. in the Presence of the Poet's Wife* (dir. Martin Verdet) – France
- *A Floating World* (dir. Jean-Claude Rousseau) – France
- *Foedora* (dir. Judith Abensour) – France
- *Garage, Engines and Men* (dir. Claire Simon) – France
- *Glow of the Hyenas* (dir. Nicolas Matos Ichaso) – France
- *Hairy Heart* (dir. Skander Mestiri) – France
- *He Carries Evil Under His Armpit* (dir. Marie Ward) – France
- *Living with Imperfection* (dir. Antoine Polin) – France
- *Longing for an island* (dir. Laetitia Farkas) – France
- *Kindertotenlieder* (dir. Virgil Vernier) – France
- *A Memory of Archives* (dir. Christophe Bisson) – France
- *Nightvision* (dir. Clara Claus) – France
- *Random Patrol* (dir. Yohan Guignard) – France
- *Saxifrages, quatre nuits blanches* (dir. Nicolas Klotz, Elisabeth Perceval) – France
- *Silabario* (dir. Marine de Contes) – France
- *Venice Beach, CA* (dir. Marion Naccache) – France

## MODERN TIMES REVIEW



1 J'aime 7



## The «Revolt of Dignity»

**MIGRANTS:** Returning to the origins of the gospel and staging it as a passion play for the rights of migrants.

### *The New Gospel*

Director: Milo Rau  
Producer: Arne Birkenstock, Olivier Zobrist, Sebastian Lemke  
Country: Germany, Switzerland



Review written by **Carmen Gray** MARCH 8, 2021

Milo Rau is, of course, not the first director to turn the [Passion Play](#) into a film. Nor is he the first to do it in the southern Italian city of Matera. Pier Paolo Pasolini and Mel Gibson both made their films about the trial and crucifixion of [Jesus](#) there, and it's a legacy the Swiss theater director, known for provocative political action, wishes to transform into more meaningful community engagement and impact. *The New Gospel* is both a recording of the Play, and its costumed pageant procession, and a look behind the scenes of its preparation, in which migrant labour [activism](#) struggles to inform its ever-evolving real-world implications.

Rau is the artistic director of Belgium's [NTGent](#) theater, where he adheres to a manifesto of social change and empowerment beyond mere representation. He was invited to do a project in Matera as part of its 2019 European Capital of Culture selection. Upon his initial visit, he soon became aware of the inhumane conditions in [refugee camps](#) located in the city's surroundings, and the exploitation of labourers linked to [mafia corruption](#). How could one today invite local non-professionals into the cast, as Pasolini had done in the '60s, and leave invisible the most destitute and oppressed — the refugees? It was obvious to Rau that they must be central, that the project must bring them material benefits, and that were Christ to preach in the twentieth century, he would not turn a blind eye to their plight.



*The New Gospel*, a film by Milo Rau

## The twelve apostles

To embody Jesus, and the social revolution he continues to stand for in all of its shifting manifestations, Rau enlisted Cameroonian political activist [Yvan Sagnet](#), who fights for the rights and dignity of undocumented workers in Matera and organised southern Italy's first agribusiness strikes. To do this, Sagnet brought migrants together by appointing twelve sub-leaders representing twelve communities, like the twelve apostles of Jesus, in a solidarity movement of the poor. Refugees in Matera are earning five euros or less per hour on orange and tomato farms, and are frequently left homeless, denied access to available resources for housing. Some, desperate, are driven to prostitution on the city's streets. The struggle of contemporary apostles is really one against capitalist exploitation and a [racism](#) that views basic rights not as inalienable, but as the dominion of a certain sector of society alone, the documentary suggests.

*were Christ to preach in the twentieth century, he would not turn a blind eye to their plight.*

In his so-called «Revolt of Dignity», Sagnet fights for better housing, access to medical treatment and employment contracts for migrant labourers, as well as the respect that should make such things a given. Despite a lack of official recognition of their right to reside and support themselves in Italy, these refugees are not criminals, he emphasises. Every one of them has crossed desert or sea to arrive in Italy — a great ordeal that cannot be abstracted. He's very effective as a mobiliser, imploring workers that if they stay inside alone rather than joining to have their voices heard their conditions will never change. And he draws the convincing connection that rejecting an affinity with these marginalised would mean denying Jesus — though one wouldn't know it by the inaction of the [Church](#), which has chosen to remain silent on the government's plans to evict a refugee ghetto while offering no valid alternative.



*The New Gospel*, a film by Milo Rau

## Casting

Casting among locals to fill other roles occasions what is perhaps the most viscerally alarming scene in the film, as one hopeful whips a chair and utters racist abuse in enactment of soldier cruelty that seems to tap a prejudice seated far deeper than mere performance. The mayor has a role in the Passion Play as Simon of Cyrene, who was compelled by the Romans to carry the cross of Jesus, taking on that part as he did «not want to be Pontius Pilate,» he says. His desire to avoid a villain role adds to doubts over his sincerity in supporting the project, being that it is a public relations opportunity for him in the European Capital of Culture spotlight. An Instagram star also tries out, reinforcing the sense that agendas of self-aggrandisement over humanitarian motivations are at the heart of some citizens' desire to be involved. But other guiding lights are envisaged, albeit from afar. A mural on a public wall depicts the charismatic, pan-Africanist social revolutionary Thomas Sankara, who was assassinated fighting for his people's dignity against a legacy of colonial exploitation — a figure of sacrifice who has inspired Sagnet and shows that prophets in the form of radical spearheads for change are global and manifold. As we hear ring out at a demonstration: «Those who fight for dignity and welfare fight for it for the entire humankind.»

1 J'aime 7



**Carmen Gray**

Freelance film critic and regular contributor to Modern Times Review.





[Cinéma du réel](#) mixes documentary, essay, and experimentation in selections that reflect the diversity of genres and forms of the cinematographic approach in the world.

*Modern Times Review* has gathered a collection of [content and reviews of the documentaries](#) featured at this year's Cinéma du réel. This year's [online edition](#) takes place 12 - 21 March 2021. Find all the information on Cinéma du réel tickets, payment options, geo locations, and technical information - [HERE](#)

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## News

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- [Cinéma du réel previews 43rd festival](#)
- [Cinéma du réel announces international & French competition titles for 43rd edition](#)

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## Films

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**Landscapes of Resistance**

**Director:** Marta Popivoda



**TRAUMA:** An unorthodox documentary on the exceptional journey of one of Serbia's first female partisans, who helped lead the resistance in Auschwitz.

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**Taming the Garden**

**Director:** Salomé Jashi



**ENVIRONMENT:** A single man wields enough power to uproot the living artifacts of his country's collective history and memory.

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## The New Gospel

Director: Milo Rau

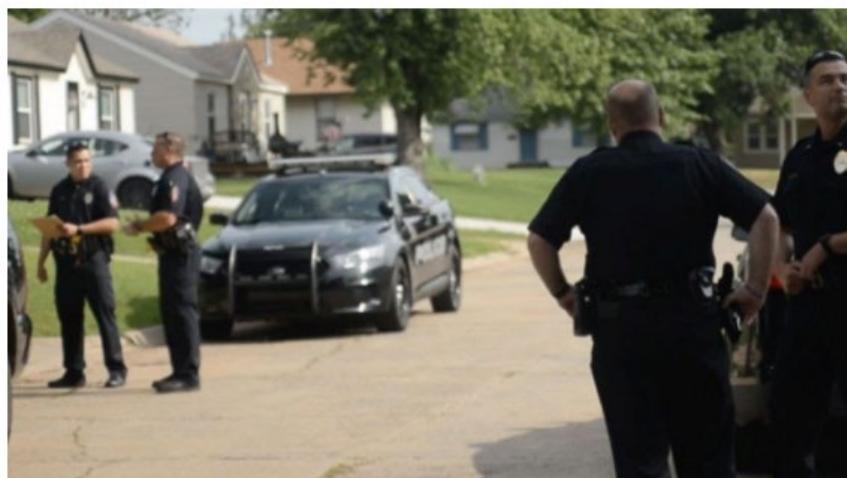


**MIGRANTS:** Returning to the origins of the gospel and staging it as a passion play for the rights of migrants.

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## Random Patrol

Director: Yohan Guignard



**POLICE:** The daily grind of one Oklahoma police officer.

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## MODERNTIMES REVIEW

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Venice Beach, CA

Director: Marion Naccache



**SOCIETY:** With a country and neighbourhood changing in strange and scary ways, residents of Venice Beach, California express their views of the world.

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Who Is Afraid of Ideology?

Director: Marwa Arsanios



**ECO-FEMINISM:** Nature is the best source for strength and survival in a war-torn part of the world, and Kurdish women of Syria intend to utilize this while rebuilding their lives when peace settles in again.

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Regards,  
Truls Lie  
editor-in-chief

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**MODERN TIMES REVIEW**

## Neither the sea nor the sand

**SOCIETY:** With a country and neighbourhood changing in strange and scary ways, residents of Venice Beach, California express their views of the world.

*Venice Beach, CA*

Director: Marion Naccache

Producer: Jérôme Czapka, Alton Franco Jr, Franck Leibovici, Marion Naccache

Country: France



Review written by **Neil Young** MARCH 11, 2021

For confluent reasons of geography and industrial-cultural economics, *Los Angeles* has long been the most filmed city in the world. After 124 years of «*La La Land*» cinema, how can new angles be found on California's mega-metropolis? French photographer/anthropologist Marion Naccache — as part of her project chronicling specific urban seashores — finds a fresh approach with *Venice Beach, CA*, a detached but intimate portrait of the eponymous, raffishly bohemian enclave.

Naccache's series began with 2010's 65-minute *Coney Island (last summer)*, focusing on the fabled *New York* amusement-park; the follow-up *Arpoador*, about a spur of land in Rio de Janeiro (the city where she resides) was reportedly completed around 2015 but has yet to surface publicly. And it appears that the 79-minute *Venice Beach, CA* was also a time-consuming affair: a version was screened at Los Angeles' Skid Row History Museum & Archive as long ago as November 2016.



VENICE BEACH, CA, a film by Marion Naccache

## Just over one mile

The completed version, premiering at *Cinéma du Réel*, begins with a title-card that's simultaneously precise and vague: we will see «Venice Beach Boulevard between Rose Avenue and Windward Avenue [a distance of 0.7km, just over one mile] at sunrise between 5am and 9am one fall.» Which fall? Overheard news-footage of an electioneering *Donald Trump* suggests the autumn in question may well be 2015. It is also unclear whether the film was shot on a single day or over a period of weeks. The latter seems most likely, given how Naccache freewheelingly discards linear chronology. *Venice Beach, CA* begins in semi-darkness and returns to the noirishly pre-dawn at semi-regular intervals.

Appearing as it does in the early months of the *Joe Biden* era, the film is endowed with a certain time-capsule quality. *AMERICA IS NOT A FREE COUNTRY IF IT IS GOVERNED BY A RACIST PROFITEER* reads a hand-written sign propped up on the beach's busy boardwalk. This strip has been consecrated as a «free speech zone» since its creation in 1905, part of tobacco-magnate Abbot Kinney's visionary development of the area (complete with six miles of artificial canals, half of which remain) as a reasonably-priced haven for artists and outsiders.

For a hundred years or so, this new Venice offered «actual affordable housing by the sea,» as one speaker puts it in the film's opening moments. Like all the soundtrack's contributors, he is heard but not seen, an editorial decision that intriguingly de-emphasises considerations relating to race and ethnicity. «This is a really weird town,» he remarks, «all nice and friendly during the day. But at night...»



VENICE BEACH, CA, a film by Marion Naccache

## Bums and billionaires

Naccache's selection of voices makes it clear that Venice (pop. 40,000) contends with numerous overlapping socio-economic malaises. These include a large and widening gap between rich and poor («bums and billionaires» rub shoulders here), drug and alcohol issues, undiagnosed and untreated mental illness, homelessness, and rapid **gentrification** hastened by the area presence of Snapchat's headquarters. The internet communications giant, founded here in 2011 eventually moved out in spring 2018 after stirring up considerable enmity among longer-term residents (vocally expressed here).

The dozen or so speakers are allowed to discourse and even sometimes ramble, without any audible input from the director herself. Naccache shares editing duties with the experienced Isabel Monteiro de Castro, whose credits around Latin America include «littoral» notables like Karim Aïnouz's *Futuro Beach* (2014) and Lorenzo Vigas' *From Afar*, winner of the **Golden Lion** at the other Venice in 2015.

*Appearing as it does in the early months of the Joe Biden era, the film is endowed with a certain time-capsule quality.*

The resulting effect is similar to a slow, halting meander along this windy waterfront, whereby we encounter myriad «commentators» eager to provide first-person testimony about their own experiences and/or analyse the peculiarities of this particular neighbourhood. But while the subjects covered obviously have much wider applications, it would be a mistake to read *Venice Beach, CA* (or indeed Venice Beach itself) as a microcosm of **America** in the 21st century, nor even of Los Angeles.

For one thing, Venice is right there on the seaside. And despite its sun-and-sand global image fostered via TV programmes such as *Baywatch*, most residents or visitors to smoggy Los Angeles glimpse the ocean rather rarely, if ever. The centre of Downtown is fully 25km (16 miles) from Venice. Indeed, Venice is of interest exactly because it is so different in so many ways; it retains genuine character (and characters) along with community spirit. The film's early-morning visuals emphasise the beauty of the sky and the palm-tree-fringed beaches, and many of the shopfronts exude an air of appealingly unvarnished scruffiness — perhaps they still do, half a decade later.

## A history in film

Filmmakers have long been drawn here: the first glimpse of Charlie Chaplin's Little Tramp was via *Kid Auto Races At Venice* (1914); Orson Welles convincingly dressed it up as a seedy Mexican border-town for *Touch of Evil* (1958); the laid-back, marijuana-chilled vibe proved an ideal home for both Kris Kristofferson in (and as) *Cisco Pike* (1972) and Jeff Bridges' eponymous super-slacker in *The Big Lebowski* (1998).

Devotees of cult classics, meanwhile, revere Curtis Harrington's oneiric *Night Tide*, which played at that other Venice's film festival in 1961 and recounts the amorous adventures of a sailor played by Dennis Hopper against the alluringly shabby backdrop of the run-down waterfront. Venice Beach CA, with its fixed cameras and leisurely long takes, concentrates with rigid but sympathetic intensity on this area to such a degree that its atmosphere is evoked more directly, more immersively — and, in the end, more persuasively — than ever before.

 J'aime 39

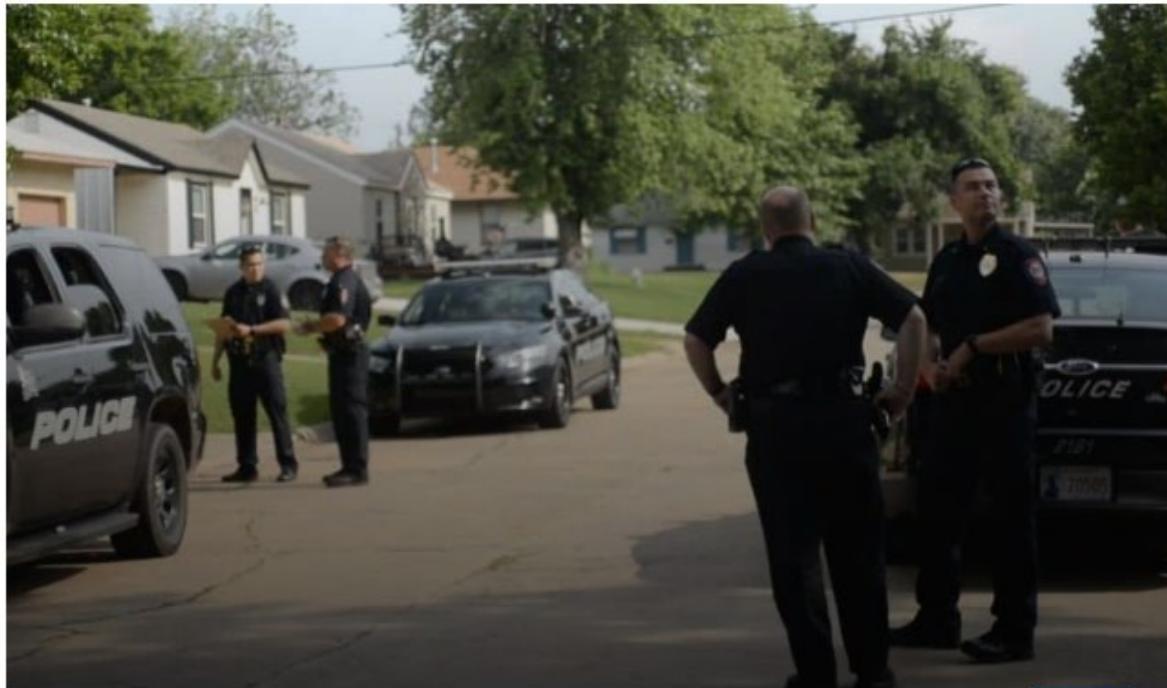


**Neil Young**

Young is a regular contributor to Modern Times Review.



## MODERN TIMES REVIEW



J'aime 0



## In pursuit of «law and order»

**POLICE:** The daily grind of one Oklahoma police officer.

### *Random Patrol*

Director: Yohan Guignard  
Producer: Pascal Barneville, Maud Deschambres, Bastien Ehouan  
Country: France



Review written by **Sevara Pan** MARCH 12, 2021

The 30-minute documentary *Random Patrol*, directed by French filmmaker Yohan Guignard, opens with a view of a **police** car at the break of day.



*Random Patrol*, a film by Yohan Guignard

## Yukon, Oklahoma

A white man clad in a police uniform, with 'Yukon, Oklahoma' emblazoned on his shoulder patch, enters the car. The camera stays within the confines of the police car thereafter, shot almost in its entirety from the passenger seat. At the very onset of this chamber piece documentary, the police officer, who becomes known to us as Matt, utters the words that set the tone of the film. «I wonder if today is the day,» he says succinctly, «I wonder if today is the day I am going to be killed. It's the first thing I think about when I put my uniform on.»

*«I wonder if today is the day I am going to be killed.»*

Matt's day is marked by what the police call «random patrolling», inspecting a given area at random times. However, it is not the dramatic goings-on of his police work that become illuminative, but his daily practices that appear minuscule. As Matt goes about his day, there are things that he does «out of habit, out of reflex,» like drawing a gun as he sees a young unarmed man walking across a parking lot to ask him a question. «I am okay to park there for a work-out, right?» the man asks at last.

Matt attributes his «reflex» to «one of the biggest problems in policing», that is «becoming more and more isolated from regular people» and «thinking the worst about the people, and that they are going to hurt you.» «But it does something to your mind, it does something to your heart. It closes you off from normal people,» he adds.



## Tragic failings

Matt's musings bring to the fore tragic failings of policing in the [United States](#) that have obstinately shaped the officers' conduct: a failure to train officers as compassionate servants of the community and a failure to throttle their use of force, constraining them to wield it only as a last resort and when confronted with an immediate threat.

«Law and order are Matt's duties,» the synopsis of the film elegantly reads, throwing in, albeit indirectly, an imperative question about the police force that historically emerged to help those with economic power maintain order. What is actually the duty of policing in contemporary US reality? As Victor E. Kappeler and Larry K. Gaines poignantly point out in their book *Community Policing: A Contemporary Perspective*, order is not a commodity that the police can effectively impose on communities, rather it is a «hallmark of communities that participate in social equity and self-governance to improve the quality of life for all people.»

*Matt's musings bring to the fore tragic failings of policing in the United States*

*Random Patrol* is hardly a study of modern-day policing and its larger implications in the United States. What the film does, however, is capture the daily ruminations of a white police officer in an [Oklahoma](#) town who worries about how the job has changed him. «Matt, why are you so angry?» – the officer recalls his fiancee asking on the day he proposed to her. He had no response.

**Sevara Pan**

Journalist and film critic.



**MODERN TIMES REVIEW****Close to Turkey's border****Hans Henrik Fafner**

Fafner is a regular critic in Modern Times Review.

**ECO-FEMINISM:** Nature is the best source for strength and survival in a war-torn part of the world, and Kurdish women of Syria intend to utilize this while rebuilding their lives when peace settles in again.

***Who is Afraid of Ideology?***

Director: [Marwa Arsanios](#)  
Producer: [Sophie Delhasse](#)  
Country: [Lebanon, Kurdistan, Syria](#)

**Jinwar** is a very special community. It is a tiny village in the easternmost part of [Syria](#), close to the borders of [Turkey](#) and [Iraq](#). It is [Kurdish](#) land but open for all ethnicities and denominations. That being said, no men are allowed. The village is a refuge for women and their children. Some inhabitants have escaped abusive husbands, others are widows, and a few just feel this is the right way for them – to decide their own fate and prove their own strength.

The landscape is open and windswept. There are no neighbors to be seen from the cluster of small clay houses, and this is important. The whole idea has to be close to nature, to be self-sufficient. This way the women of Jinwar live according to a Kurdish saying: On this soil, ants, birds, snakes, humans, and foxes have the right to live.

## Mountains as protectors

Lebanese filmmaker **Marwa Arsanios** has taken upon herself to describe this take on life in her latest documentary – a truly gripping tale, visiting women on three locations in the region. Apart from Jinwar, she has visited female soldiers in the mountains of Kurdistan and has given voice to refugees from a Lebanese cooperative on the Syrian border. Together, they give important insight on life and survival in war-torn environments and a refreshing view of our resource exploitation's impact on our eco-political models.

«I remember my childhood,» says Arsanios as some kind of mission statement in the beginning. «My first ecological feature was my mother because she told me that we as humans have a place in nature like a tree, the bird, and I have the right to exist like all other species at the same time and in the same place. We should not hurt the earth, we should protect the tree, don't eat meat, don't kill the animals. But we are children of the 20th and 21st centuries, and it took a long time before this philosophy reached us.»

*Some inhabitants have escaped abusive husbands, others are widows, and a few just feel this is the right way for them*

With that in mind, the female soldiers seek shelter in the mountains and form their philosophy of guerilla warfare in accordance with their surroundings. Here, nobody can threaten them. They gain strength from the mountains and the land.

The mountains have always been a strong protector of persecuted people. We are reminded that the Yazidis fled to the mountains in 2014 when **ISIS** attacked them. ISIS is no longer around in the same way, but new dangers lurk and, therefore, the women keep up their guard. As they put it, they sing songs to the mountains, not about them.

## New Beginning

This is a film about a new beginning. The women of Jinwar are fully aware that the Syrian regime is planning to regain full control over the Jezireh region where they live – but now, Turkey's security zone is also very close, as we know from its current situation. But they do not intend to let the rulers reinstate the old system that was centralized and lacked all respect for local populations. They did not want to understand the people, and a lot of social and psychological ills spread before 2011. There is an abundance of public land around them and 80–85% is fertile. The 59 women of Jinwar have built new hangars for the sheep, and in all of Jezireh, 15 million trees have been planted. The war has made the women realize what was stolen from them, and they are determined to correct things.

*the female soldiers seek shelter in the mountains and form their philosophy of guerilla warfare in accordance with their surroundings.*

This is their message as well as the message of this spectacular film. If you are Kurdish, you do not get a security approval but if you are from Aleppo, you do right away. The war has taught each of the women that they can gain strength from nature, cooperation, and mutualism – and that is true ecology.



**FR** — FESTIVAL E RASSEGNE

## 43° Cinéma du Réel · 12-23 marzo 2021 · Su piattaforma Canalréel

di **Claudio Panella** · 14 Marzo 2021



Foto tratta dal film "Turning the Tables" di Rahmen Dasty

Dopo le traversie del [2020](#), i principali festival internazionali sperimentano quest'anno formule inedite. Così, il Cinéma du Réel di Parigi ha aperto la piattaforma [Canalréel](#) e si è inaugurato venerdì 12 marzo scegliendo come film d'apertura [Nous](#) di Alice Diop, fresco vincitore della sezione Encounters alla Berlinale e di cui già lo scorso anno il Réel aveva programmato un'anticipazione con un incontro pubblico tra la regista e lo scrittore Pierre Bergounioux, il quale è stato invitato a tenerne un altro lunedì 15 marzo.



Frame tratto dal film "Nous" di Alice Diop

Nel 2021 la manifestazione parigina propone dunque proiezioni in streaming sul suo nuovo canale, riservate però a un massimo di 400 persone collegate dalla sola Francia, mentre stampa e addetti ai lavori da tutto il mondo possono vedere i film dei concorsi (internazionale e francese) su Festivalscope. Altra peculiarità dell'offerta del festival diretto da Catherine Bizern è che le proiezioni principali hanno sì una replica ma i film sono resi disponibili a una cert'ora e devono essere visti con soltanto quindici minuti di margine da quel determinato orario, creando così un palinsesto più simile a quello della sala e non lasciando a chi guarda decidere come e quando farlo: si riaffermano in tal modo le scelte di curatela e programmazione tradizionali, tenendo in qualche modo a bada la 'voracità' dei cinefilì che nell'ultimo anno si sono trovati di fronte a una sovrabbondanza di film disponibili direttamente da casa.

Uno dei primi lavori presentati nella competizione francese, il mediometraggio *Un souvenir d'archives* di Christophe Bisson, racconta bene la condizione del 'mal d'archivio' tramite le parole della ricercatrice Isabelle Ullern, che consulta e mostra alla camera le carte appartenute alla scrittrice e filosofa Sarah Kofman conservate al glorioso IMEC dell'Abbaye D'Ardenne: l'avere a portata materiale tanti documenti inediti e privati genera una curiosità insaziabile che precipita in una sorta di coazione ipnotica e di *addiction* (parola di Ullern), in cui si viene assorbiti dai dettagli oltre che dal sovrannumero di stimoli. Sulle piattaforme di cinema, con le dovute differenze quanto a limiti di tempo e a distrazioni, accade qualcosa di simile: chi segue i festival sul web – che siano di documentari o di film a soggetto – si ritrova immerso in un flusso di immagini, di sguardi e di storie da cui si può uscire a fatica e psico-fisicamente molto provati.



Frame tratto da "A River Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces" di Shengze Zhu

Tutto scorre, com'è noto, e ce lo ricorda la regista Shengze Zhu con il suo *A River Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces*, presentato anch'esso a Berlino 2021, nella sezione Forum, e poi al Réel. Originaria di Wuhan ma oggi residente a Chicago, l'autrice ci mostra la sua città a partire da una lunga sequenza filmata da camere di sicurezza che registrano l'immobilità del lockdown dello scorso anno. Poi, la città d'acque che sorge nei pressi della confluenza tra Fiume Azzurro e Fiume Giallo si rianima (benché le scene che seguono siano in buona parte girate prima della pandemia), rivelando le varie facce di una metropoli moderna dove si inaugurano nuovi ponti futuribili ma in cui l'alta marea estiva si riprende i suoi spazi senza che nulla la possa contenere. Scorrono sullo schermo, mute, le parole di diari e lettere indirizzate dai loro cari a chi non ce l'ha fatta a vedere la fine dell'epidemia. Scorre lo Yangtze e i coraggiosi che vi nuotano dentro restano pressoché immobili, ma non appena cedono allo sforzo vengono portati fuori dell'inquadratura dalla corrente impetuosa che tutti ci trascina.



Frame tratto dal film "Rock Bottom Riser" di Fern silvia

Dalla selezione del Forum berlinese arrivano anche opere quali *The inheritance* di Ephraim Asili, *Taming the garden* di Salomé Jashi e *Rock Bottom Riser* di Fern Silva. Da Rotterdam, *Feast* di Tim Leyendekker, *Landscapes of Resistance* di Mara Popivoda, l'indonesiano *Tellurian Drama* di Riar Rizaldi, *Earthearthearth* di Daichi Saïto e il corto di produzione italiana *Flowers blooming in our throats* di Eva Giolo. Un altro film breve di ambientazione italiana è *Palermo Sole Nero* di Joséphine Jouannais. Più anteprime nella competizione francese che annovera nomi noti e film attesi quali *Garage, des moteurs et des hommes* di Claire Simon (che esplora il mondo maschile dei meccanici), *Saxifrages, quatre nuits blanches* di Nicolas Klotz ed Elisabeth Perceval (che riprende un loro lavoro del 2009, *Zombies*, aggiornandolo all'immaginario epidemico-pandemico) o il corto *Kindertotenlieder* di Virgil Vernier (realizzato per intero con footage di TF1 dell'autunno 2005, quando le banlieues parigine vengono messe a ferro e fuoco dalle rivolte dei giovani che vi abitano presi di mira dal Ministro dell'Interno Sarkozy).

Su di una linea simile si situano gli appuntamenti della sezione "Front(s) Populaire(s)", caratterizzata dall'interrogativo *À quoi servent les citoyens?* con riferimento particolare all'attuale tempesta emergenziale, che prevedono dibattiti sulle leggi securitarie e proiezioni di opere quali *Her Socialist Smile* di John Gianvito (ritratto della militante socialista Helen Keller) o un film collettivo realizzato da documentaristi attivi nella Hong Kong di oggi. Tra le altre proiezioni speciali, *Das Neue Evangelium* di Milo Rau, visto a Venezia 2020, *Ziyara* di Simone Bitton, premiato al Filmmaker 2020, e *Golda Maria* di Patrick e Hugo Sobelman, video-ritratto di una sopravvissuta alla Shoah intervistata nel 1994 e firmato da nipote e bis-nipote.



Frame tratto dal film "Das Neue Evangelium" di Milo Rau

Va infine segnalata la retrospettiva completa dei film di Pierre Creton, che permette di ripercorrerne giorno dopo giorno l'itinerario peculiare, tanto più che ogni programma è accompagnato da conversazioni con il regista stesso. Creton è un cineasta per cui la scelta di vivere e lavorare in campagna e la volontà di filmarla sono andate di pari passo, dagli anni Novanta a oggi. Il suo penultimo lungo *Va, Toto!* (2017) è stato visto anche in Italia, al Torino Film Festival, ma non i suoi primi, testimonianze degli incontri che ne hanno determinato la vita (a partire da quello con l'apicoltore Marcel Pilate, che appare nel suo corto del 1994 *Le vicinal*). In dialogo con quest'omaggio, la sezione "Cinéaste en son jardin" con titoli di Joaquim Pinto, Jonas Mekas, Hilal Baydarov, Sophie Roger e altri per dimostrare come i lavori creativi e quelli con la terra possono essere ben più vicini che non antitetici. Nell'abbondanza di proposte cinematografiche digitali, a ciascuno/a di trovare il suo giardino.

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**DA** — DISCORSI SULLE ARTI VISIVE

## Pierre Creton · Retrospettiva completa al 43° Cinéma du Réel e 3 DVD per le Éditions de l'œil

di **Silvia Nugara** · 26 Marzo 2021



Frame da "Ma Toto", 2011

A Maniquerville, in Normandia, la storica casa di riposo sorge in un parco presso un castello diroccato. Generazioni sono cresciute venendo a trovare un parente o passeggiando tra gli alberi con il pensiero di finire qui i propri giorni. Ma la struttura è obsoleta e gli ospiti devono essere trasferiti presso un'altra sede, più nuova ma anche più triste, accanto a una rotatoria, niente verde intorno, traffico e cemento. *Le gran cortège* (2011) di Pierre Creton parte da qui, dalla fine di un'epoca che si impone inesorabilmente su corpi vulnerabili che non hanno alcun potere su ciò che accade loro.

In questo corto, il regista filma il trasloco degli ospiti, caricati a uno a uno in barella su un'ambulanza e portati verso la nuova casa. Durante il breve tragitto, la macchina da presa sta loro accanto e filma lo spaesamento sui volti vissuti, l'apprensione, la vulnerabilità, l'abbandono in mani altrui. Il film ha la forma di un corteo o di un rosario in cui ogni sequenza segue un ospite che il regista da dietro l'obiettivo di volta in volta nomina: "Je suis Madame Deparis", "Je suis Madame Sérandour", "Je suis Monsieur Dechaneloup", "Je suis Monsieur Delamare"... In francese "je suis" ha un doppio significato: io sono e io seguo. Questo rapporto di omonimia tra "essere" e "seguire" alla prima persona presente esprime in modo eloquente il rapporto di prossimità e di empatia che il cineasta stabilisce con i suoi soggetti, siano essi umani o animali, poiché l'intera filmografia di Creton indaga la relazione con il vivente in tutte le sue forme in un incessante tentativo di identificazione con l'altro.

*Le grand cortège* segue di due anni il lungometraggio *Maniquerville* (2009), girato nella stessa residenza in dismissione poco prima che avvenisse il trasloco, ma si tratta di due opere diverse per quanto sorelle. *Maniquerville* è girato in un bianco e nero che richiama gli schizzi a carboncino su carta mentre *Le grand cortège* è a colori. In quest'ultimo il tempo sfugge tra le mani, la camera a mano è mobile, in apprensione, mentre in *Maniquerville* si avverte il tempo stagnante e la vecchiaia che trovano un riflesso ma anche un balsamo nella letteratura. Un'operatrice, infatti, invita l'attrice Françoise Lebrun (presenza ricorrente in Creton) a leggere Proust con gli anziani ma, in una scena, il frastuono del vicino cantiere è tale da rendere quasi impossibile la lettura ad alta voce.



Frame tratto da "Maniquerville" (2009)

“Io non faccio film su qualcosa, ma sotto il segno di qualcosa, oppure nel mezzo di qualcosa” ha dichiarato Pierre Creton durante uno degli incontri che hanno accompagnato la retrospettiva completa dedicatagli dal parigino Cinéma du Réel 2021, edizione online che solo il pubblico francese ha potuto seguire nella sua integralità per via di restrizioni geografiche di accesso ad alcune sezioni del festival. Ma chi non avesse potuto seguire le proiezioni e gli incontri digitali di approfondimento potrà comunque entrare in contatto con tutta l'opera finora non edita in DVD di questo cineasta grazie alla pubblicazione di un cofanetto in tre volumi curato da Cyril Neyrat e Gaël Teicher per le raffinate Éditions de l'œil/La Traverse (che pubblicano in DVD, tra gli altri, anche l'opera di Jean-Daniel Pollet e alcuni film di Paul Vecchiali). Ogni volume+dvd ha un focus: *Sur la voie* raccoglie le opere legate in qualche modo al movimento, alle linee di fuga, alle traiettorie esistenziali, ai mezzi di locomozione, treni, trattori, biciclette, automobili, simboli di un trasporto erotico, mediatori di una relazione sensuale al padre che si allunga come un'ombra su tutta la filmografia dell'autore sin da *Le voyage à Vézelay* (2005), in cui l'elaborazione del lutto inizia con l'uso del veicolo paterno (in realtà è di Vincent Barré, scultore e regista spesso complice) per andare a visitare la tomba di Georges Bataille. Un padre ciclista e cacciatore amato e rinnegato dal figlio stanziale, vegetariano e omosessuale che sembra cercarlo e ritrovarlo in tutti i contadini attempati, corpulenti, arruffati, ruvidi ma anche teneri che attraversano il suo cinema. Un cinema che sin dalla fine degli anni Ottanta è per Creton un prolungamento della vita che ne amplifica la capacità trasformativa sulla materia. Ma il racconto, la narrazione, il film sono anche immanenti all'istante vissuto, ne sono parte integrante e non intervengono *après coup*, come osserva l'amica e co-sceneggiatrice Mathilde Girard nel saggio che apre il volume *Sur la voie*, nome della prima versione di un film girato nel 2013 e poi modificato nel 2017 col nuovo titolo *Sur la voie critique*. Il ritorno, talvolta anche a distanza di anni, su uno stesso film non è un caso isolato nel percorso di Creton che lascia certe opere decantare e macerare un po' prima di manipolarle nuovamente. *Sur la voie critique* comincia con la storia parallela di Pierre e Yacine, due ragazzi che si ritrovano sui banchi di scuola insieme ai bambini come se dovessero recuperare il tempo perduto, rimediare agli studi carenti. Ciascuno nella propria classe si applica e attraverso la conoscenza (una delle insegnanti è Françoise Lebrun) capisce di voler andare per il mondo e scoprirla con occhi nuovi. Il film diventa allora una specie di road movie, intraprende una deriva esplorativa che porta i due cammini a incrociarsi per poi separarsi nuovamente. Una riflessione sulla necessità del ritorno e sulla ricerca del sapere come cura di sé e del rapporto con le cose.



Frame tratto da "La vie après la mort" (2002)

*Habiter*, con la prefazione di Gaëlle Obiégly, è il tomo che raccoglie le opere sullo spazio domestico inteso come casa o luogo di provenienza ma anche come territorio dell'anima e paesaggio sentimentale popolato di affetti, fantasmi, ricordi, presenze su cui si proiettano sogni e desideri. Tra questi un posto importante spetta a Jean Lambert, anziano agricoltore con cui Creton intreccia un'amicizia il cui precipitato poetico è il dittico *La vie après la mort* (2002) e *L'heure du Berger* (2008): film di amore, di assenza, di spettri e metempsicosi. Regista contadino, Creton filma nella stessa regione normanna in cui è nato e in cui coltiva la terra e alleva bestie che sono parte del suo cinema tanto quanto gli abitanti del paese. Creton non esprime l'incanto rurale né prova alcuna nostalgia per un mondo arcaico immaginario. Rifugge da qualsiasi retorica di ritorno alla terra perché lui quella terra non l'ha mai lasciata veramente anche se ha studiato le Belle arti a Le Havre. Il suo cinema mostra la minaccia della finitudine, racconta la morte e l'erotismo, l'attrazione verso la decadenza. Le persone che filma popolano il suo quotidiano sin dall'infanzia, le ha viste cambiare negli anni e a loro volta lo hanno visto invecchiare. Non sono necessariamente persone che condividono la sua visione del mondo, non ce le mostra come esempi o esemplari da compatire, ma non può fare a meno di avvicinarle, passarci del tempo, interrogarle, ascoltarle, elaborare con loro un pensiero sul mondo tramite il cinema come avviene in *Secteur 545* (2004), il primo lungometraggio ad aver ricevuto una distribuzione nelle sale francesi. Una serie di coppie o singoli agricoltori risponde alla domanda "cosa differenzia l'umano dall'animale?": non è che un modo per filmare i volti, i gesti, la mimica di vicini di casa e compagni di strada, i gatti che passano, che salgono sulle spalle di uomini in apparenza rozzi ma capaci di effusioni e delicatezza. Creton è un cineasta tra gli agricoltori, non al di sopra di essi né di passaggio. In uno dei cortometraggi recenti, *L'avenir le dira* (2020), il dialogo viene meno ma resta la prossimità ai corpi, il senso di un destino comune. Il film ritrae un padre e un figlio alle prese con la raccolta del lino. Di questi uomini schivi vediamo l'impegno di giorno e di notte sulle trebbiatrici, la fatica delle manovre, i visi induriti dalle incombenze, le braccia e le nuche arse dal sole. I loro gesti sono insostituibili dalle macchine. Al rumore degli attrezzi e agli echi di una radio si sovrappongono brevi scambi di battute tra chi filma e chi è filmato: "Sono due anni che c'è una siccità incredibile. Non sappiamo come faremo". Gli agricoltori si muovono in campi spopolati, distese di pale eoliche, presso cartelloni che denunciano l'inquinamento elettromagnetico. La terra sta soffrendo e si avverte la minaccia di una fine, l'urgenza di un cambiamento che non sappiamo se avverrà.



Frame tratto da "L'heure du Berger" (2008)

*N'avons-nous pas toujours été bienveillants?* è il volume che raccoglie opere di Creton e di Vincent Barré introdotte da un saggio del critico Cyril Neyrat, già autore del libro-intervista *Cultiver, Habiter, Filmer* (Independencia Editions, 2010) con illustrazioni di Antoine Thirion. Qui si tratta di compiere un percorso attraverso un'amicizia al lavoro e nel lavoro, che permette di apprezzare la dimensione collettiva della produzione di Creton tanto nella scrittura quanto nella realizzazione. I film brevi qui riuniti sono stati programmati al Réel insieme a *Le bel été* (2019), opera importante di autofiction sentimental-politica che racconta il mutamento dei rapporti in un trio di amici (Simon alias Pierre Creton, Robert alias Vincent Barré e Sophie alias Mathilde Girard) che durante l'estate accoglie alcuni giovani rifugiati africani. I nuovi arrivati portano effervesienza, desideri nuovi, convivialità allargata, ampliano e ridisegnano il perimetro del gruppo. Il film chiama in causa le sfumature chiare e oscure della benevolenza, definita da Barthes come quella forma d'amore caritatevole che tende verso l'eros ma si trattiene. Per il semiologo, questo sentimento ha due possibili configurazioni, quella umida e quella secca: la prima corrisponde a un desiderio sublimato per via di sospensione che garantisce alla controparte un'indipendenza libera da ricatti emotivi; la seconda è una bontà tanto distaccata da risultare indifferente. Tutti i personaggi del film oscillano tra questi due poli muovendosi in un campo di tensioni che relativizzano il potere dell'occidente bianco. La frugalità della vita in campagna nutre e lenisce lo spirito di chi ha sofferto lasciando intravedere possibilità di evoluzione che però restano sospese, aperte all'inatteso. La vitalità luminosa e aerea de *Le bel été* trova nei sei minuti di *Un dieu à la peau douce* (2019) il suo corrispettivo notturno, terrigno, carnale, con la storia di un complicato *ménage à trois* tra alcuni dei personaggi del suo film gemello.

Quello di Creton è sempre un cinema del crinale, della soglia tra documentario e finzione, tra vita e morte, tra luce e ombra, tra domestico e selvaggio. Il suo più compiuto esempio è *Va, Toto!* (2017) un film dalla struttura articolata, scritto dal regista insieme a Vincent Barré, Mathilde Girard e Pierre Trividic come fosse una partitura contrappuntistica che intreccia diverse linee melodiche per raccontare uno struggente rapporto umano-animale. Il titolo è un bel gioco di parole che richiama la località dove vive il regista ed è ambientata la storia, Vattetot-sur-mer. Come in molte zone rurali, anche lì c'è il problema dei cinghiali che devastano gli orti e il Comune prova a risolverlo autorizzando la caccia. Toto è il nome con cui viene battezzato un cucciolo di cinghiale scampato a una di queste battute di caccia. L'anziana Madelaine lo accoglie in casa come un animale domestico, lo nutre con il biberon, lo porta a passeggio insieme ai cani, lo fa dormire in una cesta calda. Toto cresce per lo più nell'ostilità della comunità che teme possa un giorno far danni come poi puntualmente accade. Creton segue da una parte la resistenza di Madelaine che forse "nel medioevo sarebbe stata accusata di stregoneria e messa al rogo" e dall'altra resta mesmerizzato da questo animale enigmatico, allo stesso tempo destinatario di affetto e immagine dell'estranchezza assoluta all'umano, alle sue leggi e alle sue proiezioni simboliche.

Il cinghiale è una presenza arcana che mi riporta alla mente un ricordo personale. Quando avevo sette anni, la maestra ci fece svolgere un esercizio che ho ritrovato tra i vecchi quaderni conservati dai miei genitori: dovevo dire che cosa mi sarebbe piaciuto essere se non fossi stata un essere umano. Risposi che volevo essere un cinghiale e ne feci un ritratto a tutta pagina: maestoso e con un fiorellino rosa tra le zampe. In un foglio elencai cinque ragioni della mia scelta: perché è forte e ha le corna, perché è libero, perché mangia tanto, perché vive nel bosco, perché è un po' feroce. Non sono sicura di aver scelto il cinghiale in piena coscienza, non ho particolari ricordi legati a questa bestia o a sue rappresentazioni. Se leggo le risposte dei miei compagni, mi sembra che la mia fosse una provocazione, una forma di ribellione alla differenza tra le risposte soavi delle femmine (un tripudio di farfalle, ruscelli, cagnolini e pure una Biancaneve) e quelle muscolari dei maschi (pantera, leone, cane lupo). Non ho mai desiderato vivere nel bosco come una bestia feroce ma credo che il cinghiale fosse intuitivamente il mio modo di esprimere un desiderio di libertà, di oltrepassare le attese e i confini normati del linguaggio. Quanto scrive Cyril Neyrat su *Va, Toto* conforta questa ipotesi: "L'image est du règne animal, écrivait Fernand Deligny, voulant dire par là qu'elle partage avec les bêtes le privilège de ne pas être asservie au langage. On ne parle pas aux bêtes, sauvages ou domestiques: on les regarde vivre, se mouvoir, dormir, on peut aussi les suivre et s'ouvrir dans leur sillage à un devenir-animal. Le silence des bêtes nous impose de les y rejoindre, leur compagnie nous accorde des plages d'existence libérées du langage, de son emprise sur le monde sensible".

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#### SUL WEB

[Filmografia di Pierre Creton](#)

[Cinéma du réel – Pierre Creton](#)

[Editions de l'œil](#)



NOTICIAS

3<sup>e</sup> festival  
international  
du film  
documentaire

12  
21 mars  
2021



Bibliothèque publique  
d'information  
Centre Pompidou



## Festival Cinéma du réel 2021: Todas las películas en competencia

Publicada el 12-02-2021

- La muestra de documentales que tiene como sede el Centro Pompidou de París apuesta para esta 43<sup>a</sup> edición (12 al 21 de marzo) por un formato online.
- En la selección internacional figura el estreno mundial del corto argentino *Sol de Campinas*, de Jessica Sarah Rinland.

El **Festival Cinéma du réel** que dirige Catherine Bizern anunció la selección de sus dos competencias principales:

**COMPETENCIA INTERNACIONAL**

21 films, (11 largos y 10 cortos) / 3 world premieres, 4 international premieres, 2 European premieres.

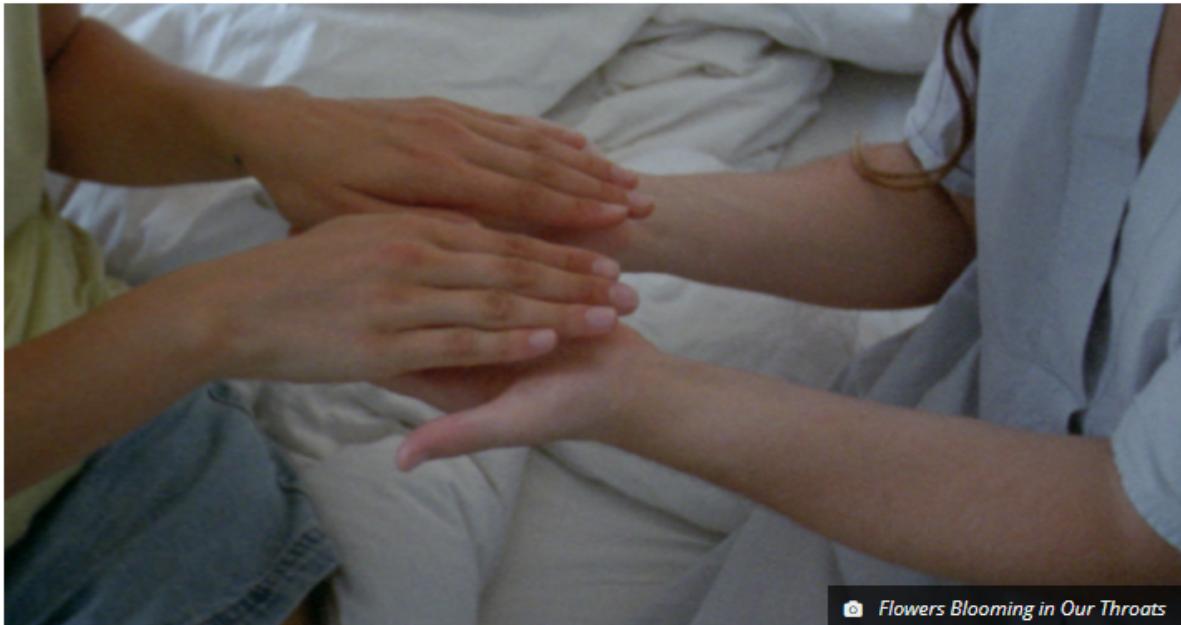
- A River Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces** de Shengze Zhu (USA / 2021 / 87')
- Armour** de Sandro Aguilar (Portugal, Canadá / 2020 / 30')
- Citadel** de John Smith (United Kingdom / 2020 / 16')
- earhearthearth** de Daichi Saito (Canadá / 2021 / 30')
- End of the Season** de Jason Evans (USA / 2020 / 13') \*European première (EP)
- Faraway My Shadow Wandered** de Liao Jiekai & Sudhee Liao (Singapur, Japón / 2020 / 70')
- \*International premiere (IP)
- Feast** de Tim Leyendekker (Países Bajos / 2021 / 84') \*IP
- Figure Minus Fact** de Mary Helena Clark (USA / 2020 / 13')
- The Filmmaker's House** de Marc Isaacs (United Kingdom / 2020 / 75')
- Flowers Blooming in our Throats** de Eva Giolo (Belgium, Italy / 2020 / 8')
- FREIZEIT or: the opposite of doing nothing (FREIZEIT oder: das gegenteil von nichtstun)** de Caroline Pitzen (Germany / 2021 / 71') \*IP
- The I and S of Lives** de Kevin Jerome Everson (USA / 2021 / 7') \*World premiere (WP)
- The Inheritance** de Ephraim Asili (USA / 2020 / 102') \*EP
- Landscapes of Resistance (Pejzazi otpora)** de Marta Popivoda (Serbia, Germany, France / 2021 / 95')
- Odoriko** de Yoichiro Okutani (Japan / 2020 / 113')
- Patrick** de Luke Fowler (United Kingdom / 2020 / 21') \*IP
- Delphine's Prayers (Les Prières de Delphine)** de Rosine Mbakam (Belgium, Cameroon / 2021 / 80') \*WP
- Rock Bottom Riser** de Fern Silva (USA / 2021 / 70')
- Sol de Campinas** de Jessica Sarah Rinland (Argentina, Reino Unido / 2021 / 26') \*WP
- Taming the Garden** de Salomé Jashi (Georgia, Alemania / 2021 / 87')
- Tellurian Drama** de Riar Rizaldi (Indonesia / 2020 / 26')

**COMPETENCIA FRANCESA**

20 films en world premiere (9 largos y 11 cortos)

- Avant que le ciel n'apparaisse** de Denis Gheerbrant (Francia / 2020 / 85')
- Baleh-Baleh** de Pascale Bodet (France / 2020 / 51')
- Corps Samples** de Astrid de la Chapelle (France / 2020 / 15')
- Dear Hacker** de Alice Lenay (France / 2021 / 60')
- The Inventory Will Be Drawn up at 11 a.m. in the Presence of the Poet's Wife** de Martin Verdet (France / 2021 / 60')
- A Floating World** de Jean-Claude Rousseau (France / 2020 / 56')
- Foedora** de Judith Abensour (France / 2020 / 81')
- Garage, Engines and Men** de Claire Simon (France / 2021 / 70')
- Glow of the Hyenas** de Nicolas Matos Ichaso (France / 2020 / 53')
- Hairy Heart** de Skander Mestiri (France / 2020 / 29')
- He Carries Evil Under His Armpit** de Marie Ward (France / 2021 / 17')
- Living with Imperfection** de Antoine Polin (France / 2021 / 66')
- Longing for an island** de Laetitia Farkas (France / 2021 / 80')
- Kindertotenlieder** de Virgil Vernier (France / 2021 / 27')
- A Memory of Archives** de Christophe Bisson (France / 2020 / 45')
- Nightvision** de Clara Claus (France / 2020 / 37')
- Random Patrol** de Yohan Guignard (France / 2020 / 30')
- Saxifrages, quatre nuits blanches** de Nicolas Klotz, Elisabeth Perceval (France / 2021 / 82')
- Silabario** de Marine de Contes (France / 2021 / 12')
- Venice Beach, CA** de Marion Naccache (France / 2021 / 79')

# Senses of Cinema



© Flowers Blooming in Our Throats

## Making Visible: The 2021 Cinéma du Réel

by Andrew Northrop | May 2021 | Festival Reports | Issue 98

An immediate glance at the International Selection of 2021's Cinéma du Réel identifies familiar films from IDFA, International Film Festival Rotterdam and the Berlinale's recent editions. The festival offers a smaller scale however, with International and French Selections fitting succinctly on to one page respectively. As such, recent festival highlights including Marta Popivoda's *Landscapes of Resistance*, Ephraim Asili's *The Inheritance* and Daïcho Saito's *earhearthearth* sat in close proximity with emergent offerings from Kevin Jerome Everson, Jessica Sarah Rinland and Rosine Mbakam. That made for a strong International selection with little filler, though the festival's French selection was more disparate, with more determined titles standing out more prominently than others.

This year's edition was simultaneous with lockdown measures in many European countries surpassing a year. Works that engage with elements of the pandemic are beginning to enter the festival circuit, and fortunately those that Cinéma du Réel selected are delicate and focused in approach rather than advantageous. Eva Giolo's *Flowers Blooming in Our Throats* considers the hidden machinations of abuse in the homes we now frequently occupy. The short features a fabric of domesticated images thrown into instability with the recurring motif of a red filter passed in front of the 16mm camera's lens. Hands suffuse the film's visual strata in a series of tableaus; a person holding a knife, a woman pulling against her hair, vegetables being cut, a palm basking in the sunlight. Giolo's film is a haptic reminder that a gesture might be benign or have the ability to evolve into or signify something more sinister. An elastic band snapping against the wrist could denote a fairly innocent compulsive movement or an exercise from cognitive behavioural therapy for example, and that kind of indeterminable threshold haunts the duration of the film.

Shengze Zhu turns her eye to the Yangtze River in Wuhan with *A River Runs, Turns, Erases, Replaces*, with the pandemic making its mark early on as the landscapes along it become ever vacant. The film's wide cinematography and steady pace invites small, distant figures to catch incidental attention à la Barthes' notion of the punctum. Letters written to Zhu's father from the United States intermittently occupy the subtitle space, expressing regret about not seeing him since 2017. The evocation of both distance and loss leaves the film with a heavy weight and reveals a personal interpretation of the many bridges along the river. Befitting for a film so directly linked to a body of water, it often feels like the viewer is given time to sink into the images.



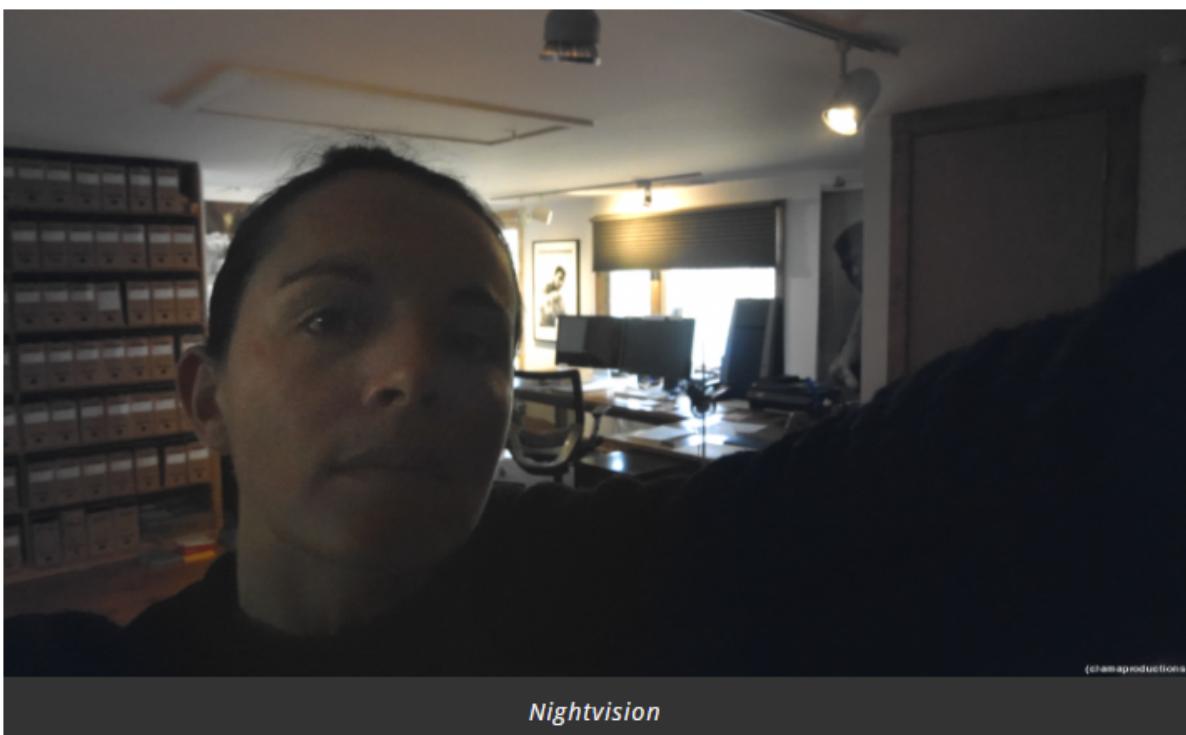
*The I and S of Lives*

The reactions to George Floyd's murder in police custody are focused on in a captivating way in one of Kevin Jerome Everson's recent shorts, *The I and S of Lives*. Everson focuses on an inconspicuous and calming moment from protests in Washington D.C.: a lone roller-skater listening to music and flowing over letters from the bright yellow mural on Black Lives Matter Plaza. Though the short directly links to activism in response to Floyd's passing, it also taps into a universal element from protests around the globe: the presence of individual figures whose auras attract attention not in a loud way, but in a way that feels almost calming. Everson captures the man's movements in a cyclical fashion, showcasing his knack for capturing subjects with the care that makes many entries in his filmography feel like personal dialogues.

In the festival's French Selection, Virgil Vernier's *Kindertotenlieder* focuses on protests responding to the death of two teenagers chased by police in 2005, occurring in the Clichy-sous-Bois near Paris. Trawling archival footage from French television coverage, the film witnesses the codification of France's lower class and migrant communities on air, with much of the footage favouring the presentation of representatives from official bodies and citizens with a certain affluence or perceived innocence. In many ways, the images are an extension of the same system that caused tensions to evolve into violent protests. The protesters are barely in-

terviewed, and the pacing of Vernier's short gives enough space for that absence to become apparent. It's also a film that doesn't make a stern delineation on whether violent protests are right or wrong, and instead pieces together the elements that made them both occur and continue.

Caroline Pitzen also resists the temptation to underline viewpoints in *FREIZEIT or: The Opposite of Doing Nothing*, wherein a group of left-leaning teenage Berliners discuss their political views. Instead of painting the cohort's opinions as absolute, Pitzen gives them space to just be politically inclined individuals with developing thoughts; allowing them to talk in pairs and groups or read and respond to texts. Too often, films about activists fall into the trap of either painting their subjects in too one-sided and godly a light or play into sensational news cycles too heavily, often brushing away flaws and leaving interjecting dialogues unspoken. In reality, people's opinions develop and become challenged over time, and Pitzen's film lays that thought process open, creating a refreshing portrait of the teenagers. It sits nicely alongside Ephraim Asili's New York Film Festival hit *The Inheritance*, where the filmmaker re-enacts scenes from his time in a Black activist collective's house in Philadelphia, mixing house disagreements with the wider legacy of Black Marxist groups such as the MOVE organisation. In both films, political thoughts are acknowledged as being part of long-term and malleable practices that have kinks that need ironing out, without reducing their radical potential.



*Nightvision*

Other works at the festival attempt to make sense of the often-hidden nature of harassment, abuse and gender dynamics, much like *Flowers Blooming in Our Throats*. Clara Claus uses the mode of diary to explore the experience of discovering that her boss's neighbour is looking through the house's windows at night in *Nightvision*. Claus's boss thinks little of the discovery, but her position as a woman staying there alone gives the film a claustrophobic air, with the night-vision CCTV images turning the neighbour into a haunting figure comprised of slowly refreshing digital pixels. The filmmaker's reflections on the scenario heighten the discomfort of not knowing the neighbour's motives and how the situation might develop, but also her dilemma about confronting him and whether the possibility of closure outweighs the unstable safety of turning a blind eye. Like Giolo's short, the threshold at which movements becomes dangerous lingers over the film.

Tim Leyendekker's *Feast* turns to re-construction and a myriad of formal methods in order to make sense of a public case that concerns inherently private activities. The film retraces the 2007 Groningen HIV case where three men drugged and knowingly infected sexual partners with HIV. A long durational shot of paraphernalia inventoried by a policewoman and a re-enactment of an early sex party all build tension. It's the most direct engagements that are the most stirring, however. An audio testimonial where a man is uncomfortably interviewed about a sexual experience that became rape is fused with obfuscated and tightly zoomed images from footage where skin and walls morph into an uneasy dance of foreground and background, as if the film itself is a body reliving repressing trauma. The differing approaches that Leyendekker employs throughout the film highlight how making sense of cases such as these is an incredibly fragmented exercise.



Testimonies themselves are an invaluable way of sharing experiences of abuse, requiring a great deal of trust and empathy between the victim and the person listening. Rosine Mbakam's friend Delphine allows the director to film her sharing her story about the circumstances that led to her migrate from Cameroon to Belgium in *Les Prières de Delphine*. Mbakam's presence behind the camera is felt throughout, and the film invites the viewer into the empathetic space shared by the two women. That trust is key given that Delphine's story involves rape, prostitution work, strenuous relationships with her father and the instability of her current living situation and employment prospects in Belgium. It's a direct piece of cinema that transmits Delphine's testimonies through a series of long durational shots, and ultimately inclines Mbakam to reflect on the pair's shared experiences and meeting as Cameroonian expats in Belgium. The film also highlights the nature of migrant labour in Belgium, course correcting a sense that the wider experiences that led to their living there are too often left unspoken.

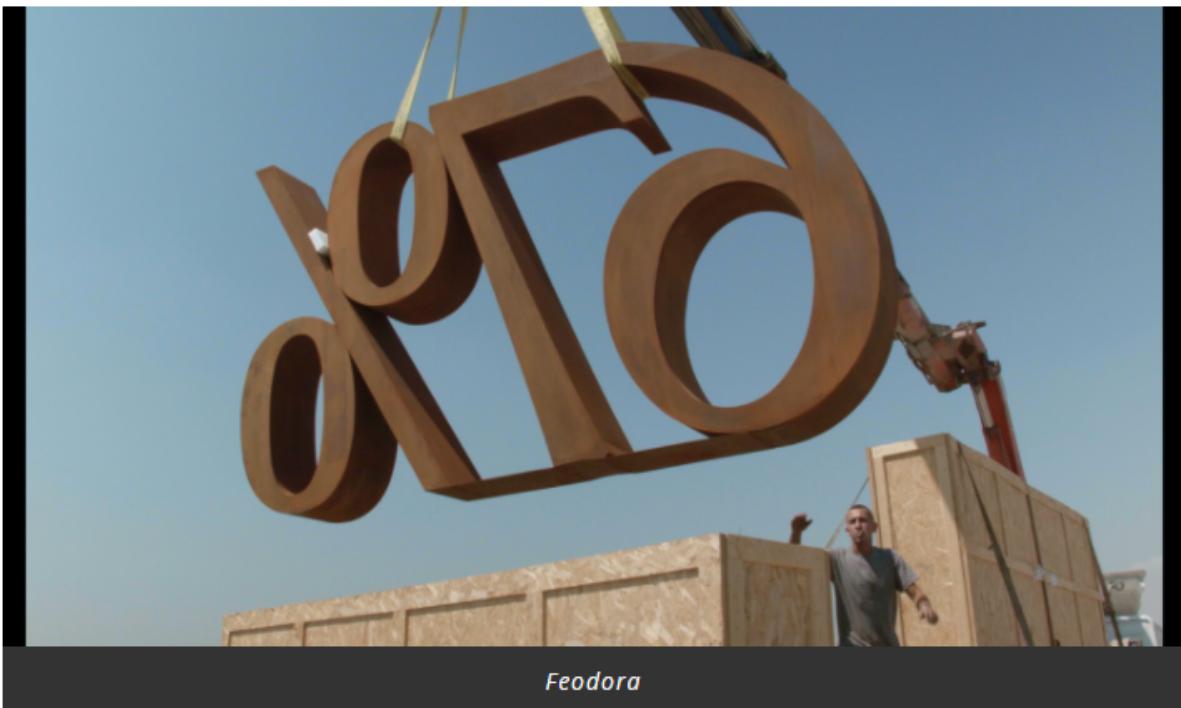
Historic events relating to globalisation and imperialism can also be obfuscated, making documentary film-making a valuable tool for making the hidden visible. Riar Rizaldi's *Tellurian Drama* tells the story of the Radio Malabar radio tower in Indonesia, established by the Dutch but built by indigenous workers who were required to work within the then unfamiliar Western dogmas of time and labour value. Interviews, archival footage, texts, a musical performance, scans of Dutch documents overlayed with the landscape, and a pulsating score all contribute to this multi-layered portrait. Most importantly, these elements are a way of dealing with the gaps in the historical ledger of the Dutch, who only saw it as a positive pursuit and eventually left the location in ruin. Notions of legacy become complicated when the film mentions that the local Indonesian government would like to turn the now overgrown site into a tourist attraction, and the complexity of these interjecting points are what makes Rizaldi's distancing from a conventional architectural mode rewarding.



*Sol de Campinas*

Other histories can be found deep in the soil, requiring excavation to visualise them. *Sol de Campina*, the latest conservation focused film from Jessica Sarah Rinland, forms a delicate and tactile inquiry into an archaeological site sharing the film's name in Brazil. As workers move between lab and field work, Rinland's intimate 16mm cinematography homes in on the nuances of individual processes, all of which build towards a collective picture. As a 3D visualisation of the centuries old site forms, so does Rinland's portrait of the current iteration, taking in local language, food and music. Similarly, and also shot on 16mm film, Luke Fowler's *Patrick* builds a portrait through microcosms, tracing the legacy of Patrick Cowley, a prominent musician in disco music whose practice burgeoned in San Francisco. Old synthesiser parts are showcased, giving added tactility to the stories one of Cowley's friends recites about their contributions to disco music, whilst prominent queer nightclub EndUp is profiled delicately amidst San Francisco's broader green areas. The musical score builds from slow ambient pieces to more upbeat tempos, matching the film's momentum of knowledge building.

MiniDV tape is used to capture the Odoriko strip theatre dancers in Japan in Yoichiro Okutani's *Odoriko*. The low fidelity nature of the format often causes venue lights to bloom and spread softly over the image, giving the documentary a haziness that reinforces both the increasing rarity of the dancers, as well as the clubs' societal status as an often-hidden part of cities carrying shameful connotations. The film's proximate and respectful nature comes with a host of memorable fly-on-the-wall moments including one of the dancers discussing how she inherited the tradition from another, and a delicately filmed sequence where a suspended dancer learns moves against a black backdrop. The irony of a practice that's becoming less and less visible existing within a space hidden from conventional view is not lost on Okutani, who builds a portrait of the women free from talking heads and outsider opinions.

*Feodora*

Museums too are often a tumultuous site of visibility, exploring national identities and largely perpetuating unsustainable and expensive divisions in the art industry. But what does it mean for a museum to exist within a contested territory, on occupied land? In *Feodora*, Judith Abensour explores the unusual circumstances surrounding the opening of the Palestinian Bir Zeit museum in Ramallah. Amidst a landscape of rapid modernisation, the museum transforms from a hastily opened and empty building to holding a hurried exhibition about Jerusalem, with low-income workers picking up the slack from the wealthy curators. The museum exists on complicated ground both physically and metaphysically, and the film's pacing gives voice to multiple viewpoints, whether its security guards who speak of the rejuvenated area's vacantness, a Canadian-Palestinian activist who disagrees with the State as a concept, or the museum's Director on his motivations and the fragmented nature of Palestinian art. Though the museum hopes to become a beacon of Palestinian identity, it still falls into the institutional pitfalls of the art world and the perpetuation of class divisions. Ultimately, there's a sense that the menial workers are truly running the museum, patching together elements of incomplete artworks and enduring backseat driving from the affluent and oblivious curators. Abensour's film stands as witness to how these established institutional difficulties are transplanted on top of the already volatile tensions between Palestine and Israel.

One of the aforementioned benefits of Cinéma du Réel's 2021 edition was the close-knit feel of its International and French selections. Whilst other online festivals continue to group works in often-confusingly named and loosely formed strands, it can often meander towards exhausting ways of consuming new work. Amidst all the challenges of the pandemic, the landscape of viewing and consuming film has dramatically changed, and it is easy to view the increased access to content as a plus. But with too much on offer in a short window, viewing experiences can become muddy and tiring, permeating a sense of constantly trying to keep up with everything that presents itself as a click away. And that problem exists on top of the foggy sense of malaise many of us are feeling during these times. Succinct and tight programs feel more digestible, whilst still giving the viewer enough to ponder. At Cinéma du Réel this year, the films had a bit more malleability around each other, allowing connective threads to blossom a bit more naturally, something which I have hopefully demonstrated in this round up.

**Cinéma du Réel**

**12-21 March 2021**

Festival website: <https://www.cinemadureel.org/>