# FRAMES of REPRESENTATION

### Deframing





New Visions for Cinema 12–20 April 2019

Institute of Contemporary Arts The Mall London SW1Y 5AH

# FRAMES of REPRESENTATION



FRAMES of REPRESENTATION embraces the cinema of the real, which lies at the intersection of fiction and non-fiction. We believe that the aesthetics, politics and ethics of the cinema of the real enables the depiction of individual lives and an engagement with contemporary socio-political struggles.

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#### FRIDAY 12 APRIL

- 6pm Roundtable Discussion: Nation on Fire with the New Black Panthers, hosted by Ifeanyi Awachie
- 8.30pm Film: *What You Gonna Do When the World's* on Fire? (world premiere director's cut) + Q&A with director Roberto Minervini and Judy Hill, hosted by Nico Marzano

#### SATURDAY 13 APRIL

2.15pm	Workshop: The Sensuality of the End
	of an Empire with Gastón Solnicki, hosted
	by Mark Peranson
4pm	Film: Honeyland (UK premiere) + Q&A
	with directors Tamara Kotevska &
	Ljubomir Stefanov, hosted by Dennis Lim
6.20pm	Film: Normal (UK premiere) + Q&A
	with director Adele Tulli, hosted by Lili
	Hinstin
8.30pm	Film: Introduzione all'Oscuro
	(IIK premiere) + $O$ (IIK premiere) + $O$

Gastón Solnicki, hosted by Eva Sangiorgi

#### SUNDAY 14 APRIL

2pm	Talk: In Conversation with Wang Bing,
	hosted by Erika Balsom
3.45pm	Film: Beauty Lives in Freedom
	(UK premiere) + introduction with
	director Wang Bing

#### **MONDAY 15 APRIL**

6.15pm Masterclass: The Cinema of Carlos Reygadas, hosted by Jason Wood
8.15pm FoR Shorts #1: The Labyrinth + Those Who Desire + The Years + Q&A with directors Laura Huertas Millán, Elena López Riera & Sara Fgaier, hosted by James Lattimer

### **TUESDAY 16 APRIL**

6pm	Film: The Disappeared (UK premiere)
	+ Q&A with directors Gilad Baram
	& Adam Kaplan
7.30pm	Film: <i>Our Time</i> (UK premiere) + Q&A with director Carlos Reygadas, hosted
	by Athina Rachel Tsangari

#### WEDNESDAY 17 APRIL

4.45pm	Workshop: On Cinematic Language with AdeleTulli & Shengze Zhu, hosted by
	Ludovica Fales
6pm	Film: Between Two Waters (UK premiere)
	+ Q&A with director Isaki Lacuesta,
	hosted by Maria Delgado
8.50pm	Film: <i>Diagnosis</i> (UK premiere) + Q&A with director Ewa Podgórska, hosted by Kieron Corless

#### **THURSDAY 18 APRIL**

#### 5pm Seminar: The Lodz Film School & Polish Cinema with Pawel Lozinski, Ewa Podgórska & Wojciech Staroń, hosted by Kieron Corless 8.35pm Film: *Stones Have Laws* (UK premiere)

B.35pm Film: Stones Have Laws (UK premiere) + Q&A with directors Lonnie van Brummelen, Siebren de Haan &Tolin Erwin Alexander, hosted by Astrid Korporaal

#### **FRIDAY 19 APRIL**

5pm	Talk: Ethics and Aesthetics of Performa-
	tive Documentary, a conversation with
	Lonnie van Brummelen, Siebren de Haan
	& Tolin Erwin Alexander, hosted by
	Astrid Korporaal
6.30pm	Live Performance: Little Ethiopia by
	Joe Bini & Maya Hawke
8.30pm	Film: Don't Work, 1968–2018 (UK premiere)
	+ Q&A with director César Vayssié,
	hosted by Sophie Monks Kaufman

#### SATURDAY 20 APRIL

11am	Symposium: Pluralising Representations
	(until 5pm)
6pm	FoR Shorts #2: Anteu + Backyard
	+ <i>Tourneur</i> + Q&A with directors João
	Vladimiro, Khaled Abdulwahed and Yalda
	Afsah, hosted by James Lattimer
8.15pm	Film: Present.Perfect. (UK premiere)
	+ Q&A with director Shengze Zhu, hosted
	by Nico Marzano

### CONTENTS

2 Introduction by Festival Curator Nico Marzano

### FILMS

- 5 Mark Peranson on What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?
- 8 Arron Santry on *Honeyland*
- 11 Ilona Hongisto on *Normal*
- 14 Eva Sangiorgi on *Introduzione all'Oscuro*
- 17 Antoine Thirion on *Beauty Lives in Freedom*
- 20 James Lattimer on the FoR Shorts Programmes
- 24 Benjin Pollock on *The Disappeared*
- 27 Jason Wood on Our Time
- 30 Maria Delgado on *Between Two Waters*
- 33 Christopher Ian Smith on *Diagnosis*
- 35 Astrid Korporaal on *Stones Have Laws*
- 38 Sophie Monks Kaufman on *Don't Work (1968–2018)*
- 41 Becca Voelcker on *Present.Perfect*.
- 45 MASTERCLASSES, TALKS and WORKSHOPS

## Deframing

FRAMES of REPRESENTATION, now in its fourth edition, continues to be a showcase for the cinema of the real, exploring the aesthetic and political perspectives at its core. Over nine days, the festival presents the premieres of eighteen features, as well as an all-day symposium, a live performance, and a range of masterclasses, talks and workshops. In conversation with a community of filmmakers, researchers, activists and audience members, the programme aims to present and nurture a growing plurality of voices.

FRAMES of REPRESENTATION questions the categories, languages, and modes of speech and visibility that define the cinema of the real. Deframing, the concept at the heart of this year's festival, informs a programme which spotlights local experiences that form part of global conversations around class, gender, race, religion, sexuality and the environment. FRAMES of REPRESEN-TATION is a place for transgressive, unruly cinema, encapsulated by a programme which features a broad and unclassifiable range of works. As an art form, the cinema of the real embraces reality as constantly in flux, and truth as transitory and unattainable. Accordingly, the films and discussions presented at this year's festival emphasise decategorisation, embrace cultural complexity and seek to reroute dominant modes of power in the hope of moving towards a redistribution of political and cultural agency. The programme aims to examine how cinema can disrupt the regimes of surveillance and centralised control deployed by governments and global corporations to maintain an untenable status quo. Our line-up explores the potential of the moving image to unsettle hegemonic, neoliberal modes of separation and division, calling instead for connections across borders. For FRAMES of REPRE-SENTATION, cinema is a cultural event that both reflects and intervenes in the fabric of society.

Last year's introduction concluded with photographer Susan Meiselas' ambitious idea that 'a return always offers a new possibility'. This year, we welcome the return of Roberto Minervini, with whom we inaugurated FRAMES of REPRESENTATION in 2016. Opening this year's festival is the world premiere of Minervini's director's cut of *What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?*, which urgently questions what stories need to be heard, as well as how and by whom they should be told. An accompanying roundtable discussion with members of the New Black Panther Party reflects on how film can help push for greater social justice by examining the representation of their movement in both historical and contemporary terms.

In Present.Perfect. (Wan Mei Xian Zai Shi) (Shengze Zhu), Don't Work, 1968–2018 (Ne Travaille Pas, 1968–2018) (César Vayssié) and Beauty Lives in Freedom (Wang Bing), the filmmakers challenge conventional modes of documentary representation, rethinking cinema's aesthetics and politics in the digital age. Expanding on these concerns, a conversation with Wang Bing, director of West of the Tracks (2003), Bitter Money (2016) and Dead Souls (2018), will explore his acclaimed body of work, which uncompromisingly documents the human cost of capitalist expansion and totalitarian rule.

Stones Have Laws (Lonnie van Brummelen, Siebren de Haan and Tolin Erwin Alexander), Between Two Waters (Entre Dos Aguas) (Isaki Lacuesta) and Our Time (Nuestro Tiempo) (Carlos Reygadas) cast non-professional actors in constructed scenarios to consider the ways collective, local and personal narratives are told, foregrounding a collaborative approach to filmmaking based on genuine trust and partnership.

The vulnerability of film as a physical medium is at the centre of *The Years (Gli Anni)* (Sara Fgaier), *Backyard* (Khaled Abdulwahed) and *The Disappeared* (Gilad Baram and Adam Kaplan), which thematise loss, destruction and obsolescence as triggers for renewal and reinvention. In their innovative approach to the moving image, these films approach personal and political histories in a uniquely evocative way.

Normal (Adele Tulli), Those Who Desire (Elena López Riera) and Tourneur (Yalda Afsah) focus on the interplay between cinematic language and the performance of gender. The directors' close observations of gestures – both authentic and artificial – deconstruct normative representations of gender and question how and why such conventions persist.

With their focus on the cycles of nature and the fraught relationship between civilisation and the natural world, *Anteu* (João Vladimiro) and *Honeyland* (Tamara Kotevska and Ljubomir Stefanov) call attention to the role art and cinema may play in confronting humanity's impact on the environment. In both films, scripted human drama plays out alongside the rhythms of the natural world. In their singular ability to bridge the gap between nature and culture, these works reframe our relationship to the physical landscape beyond capitalist exploitation.

Furthermore, *Diagnosis* (Ewa Podgórska), *Introduzione all'Oscuro* (Gastón Solnicki) and *The Labyrinth* (Laura Huertas Millán) explore the historical, psychological and spiritual dimensions of our existence in the world. From the ruins of narcocapitalism to the imperial 'ruins' of Vienna, these films channel memories, thoughts and dreams to consider our lingering impact on the places we inhabit and the people we encounter.

The programme's foregrounding of new cinematic aesthetics and modes of storytelling continues with the live-cinema performance *Little Ethiopia*, a project by film editors Joe Bini and Maya Hawke – both long-time Werner Herzog collaborators. Deploying fragments of their shared personal histories and reframing archival material – including photographs, videos and clips from films they have edited – alongside live narration, the performance stages the development of a new cinematic narrative.

The festival concludes with Pluralising Representations, a day-long symposium which addresses the role of experimental aesthetics in producing diverse forms of knowledge. Referencing Walter Mignolo's concept of 'border thinking', two panel discussions highlight artistic practices that integrate peripheral perspectives and contribute to what Linda Tuhiwai Smith calls a 'recentering' of narratives.

This fourth edition of FRAMES of REPRESENTATION emphasises forms of filmmaking which aim to collectively discover and share knowledge outside the scope of dominant cinema. In its ongoing dedication to the cinema of the real, FRAMES of REPRESENTATION celebrates films which do not merely entertain viewers or replicate reductive categories, but rather, disorient us; these are films that instigate restlessness.

### What You Gonna Do When the World's On Fire?

Dir. Roberto Minervini, 2019, 106 min. Italy / USA / France, English

### World premiere director's cut + Q&A

A blistering meditation on the state of race in America, Roberto Minervini's *What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?* chronicles the lives of black communities in the Southern states, where the tragic aftermath of Hurricane Katrina remains acutely felt as police brutality claims lives with intolerable regularity.

Following several threads, including the New Black Panther Party's preparations for a large-scale protest against police violence, the film documents the lives of those who have been marginalised by the media and alienated by failing institutions. *What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?* captures the pressures of everyday existence for many black Americans, while finding moments of beauty, joy and radical togetherness.

The screening will be followed by a Q&A with director Roberto Minervini and Judy Hill, one of the film's protagonists, hosted by FRAMES of REPRESENTATION Festival Curator Nico Marzano.



### Mark Peranson on What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?

The representation of marginalised narratives is the central concern in all of Roberto Minervini's documentary-based cinema, which is almost exclusively focused on the working classes of the American South, mainly in Texas, where the Italian-born filmmaker has lived for two decades. But in the high-contrast monochrome *What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?*, this theme comes into even starker relief as the director focuses on race in Louisiana, piercing deep into the roots of social inequality. The title of the film comes from a 19th century spiritual, and draws a connection between the past and the present, indicating that we are dealing with continuation – that there has been no break from past racial and social divisions. Minervini might be one of the most political of contemporary filmmakers, but he is also a great humanist; or, maybe it's more appropriate to call him a magician.

How Minervini manages to create such relationships between filmmaker and what we'll call, for the sake of argument, 'documentary performer', is the product of the director's immersion in these communities, to the point of dissolving the border between camera and subject, between reality and construct. Minervini cares for his actors, which is evident at film festival screenings, which are attended not only by the director but also his actors (whether it's Judy Hill or members of the New Black Panther Party).

That Minervini's filmmaking is urgent goes without saying. What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire? is what the French call engagé, which does not mean a call to arms but rather a desire for self-reflection that, eventually, might lead to the honing of the spirit of the political animal. Hybrid filmmaking as termite art, What You Gonna Do... is an at-times very beautiful, always emotional, and extremely talky film which shows an idealistic form of democracy in action (a strange cross between Pedro Costa and Frederick Wiseman), and as such, stands in direct counterpoint to the sensation-driven Trumpian reality of contemporary politics.

Minervini wants to illustrate how a disenfranchised population needs to create their own public spaces in which they can debate, argue and express their frustrations with their lots in life, as their voices still aren't being heard in America's so-called democracy. The film depicts the explicit political action of the New Black Panther Party, as well as Judy Hill's Ooh Poo Pah Doo bar in New Orleans, which functions as a local agora. By the end of the film, Judy's bar has closed down, but that doesn't mean its denizens won't find another watering hole around the block. One of the impacts of presenting multiple, multigenerational narrative strands in a film like this is to imply that – to evoke another American metropolis – there are eight million stories in the naked city.

Mark Peranson is a film programmer, film critic and filmmaker.

### Honeyland

### Dir. Tamara Kotevska & Ljubomir Stefanov, 2019, 85 min. Macedonia, Turkish with English subtitles

### UK premiere + Q&A

Alive to the magic of the natural world and the wisdom of agricultural traditions, *Honeyland* questions the cost, both human and ecological, of unsustainable growth and the reckless pursuit of profit. Filmed in the hills of Macedonia, *Honeyland* observes the interruption of a beekeeper's harmonious life by an unruly family whose patriarch is blinded by the pursuit of wealth. Filmed in a verité style with delicate attention to the ever-present cycles of nature, growth, life and death, *Honeyland* prompts us to reconsider the ways in which we are bound both together and to the earth; while its characters quarrel and toil, the rich Balkan landscape abides, indifferent.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with directors Tamara Kotevska and Ljubomir Stefanov hosted by Dennis Lim, director of programming at the Film Society of Lincoln Center, New York.



### Arron Santry on Honeyland

Is there Spring? Sure there is.

The promise of renewal and regeneration, the miraculous arrival of Spring, has sustained humanity for millennia, unchanging as the sun. The ancient astronomical logic of the seasons has been the organising principle of all life on earth – birth, death, rebirth, a holistic cycle that invites cliché but always exceeds it. In our cities, hyperconnected and distracted, nature's cycles must be managed, held at bay in the name of productivity. On the Balkan steppe outside Skopje, however, the force of nature refuses to be ignored.

From the opening shot of *Honeyland*, these cycles are brought to light and interwoven as the camera takes in the sweep of a Macedonian plain, carved through by ancient paths, along which Hatidze, the yellow-bloused beekeeper makes her way. The frame is filled by the expansive landscape, unbordered by the horizon, emphasising her boundness – to the earth, to nature, to time, and to the paths that history has laid for us. Through the compassionate lens of the camera, we see her tend to her bees with a profound care rooted in the wisdom of tradition. Dislodging a sheet of slate from a rock face to reveal a swarming hive, she reaches in and extracts honeycomb with her bare hands. She is not stung.

Hatidze, however, is no mere embodiment of natural harmony. She is isolated, alone with her bedbound mother who is rooted 'like a tree' in their meagre homestead. Periodically travelling to Skopje to sell her honey, we see her charmed by the excesses of city life, an excess she tries to preserve through the purchase of a chestnut hair dye. Her longing for connection is met with the intrusion of a Turkish family who occupy a nearby plot of land, their campervan rolling through the ruins, a herd of cows in tow.

The film stages this collision of worlds with an ambiguity crafted by close observation. The family, chaotic and destructive though they seem, are caught up in the same pressures and fears that motivate Hatidze, whose hospitality is exploited by a father desperate to support his children. The film documents the disruption of the natural order that results, most evident in the

9

bee-stung faces of the family's children, a palpable image of the toll exacted by the reckless pursuit of profit.

Hatidze's resilience veers towards powerlessness in the face of these new circumstances. Her graceful respect of the natural world – the source of her identity more than simply her means of making a living – becomes a vulnerability, taken advantage of by a world that proceeds according to the logic of profit and productivity. But in the background, behind the spectacle of human drama, the seasons pass, the earth abides.

There is Spring.

Arron Santry is a writer and researcher.

### Normal

### Dir. Adele Tulli, 2019, 70 min. Italy, Italian with English subtitles

### UK premiere + Q&A

Through a series of wry and acerbic vignettes, Italian filmmaker Adele Tulli's *Normal* playfully exposes the spectacle of gender in our everyday lives. Featuring quotidian scenes shot throughout Italy, the film observes individuals – from childhood to adulthood – navigating normative gendered behaviour. In exploring the relational choreographies we act out on a daily basis, *Normal* reveals how the conditioning expectations of gender shape our smallest actions – affecting our gestures, desires, behaviours and aspirations. Through intimate and at times satirical observations, *Normal* asks us to consider where our gendered performances end and our 'real' selves begin.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with film director Adele Tulli hosted by Lili Hinstin, artistic director of the Locarno Film Festival.



### Ilona Hongisto on Normal

Adele Tulli's *Normal* is an observational work about gendered cultural rituals. It progresses from childhood activities to marriage, documenting the everyday and ceremonial acts through which we become gendered subjects. Boys become boys by playing video-games, driving motorcycles and engaging in war games. Girls become girls by having their ears pierced, working out and, eventually, having babies. The film reveals the constructed nature of what is considered normal.

The array of rituals observed in *Normal* is not surprising, but the style of filming opens up interesting avenues for thought. For one, the unobtrusive camerawork allows gendered rituals to unfold freely. Some events are observed from afar, while others have been shot at a closer range, yet always in a manner that does not interfere with the action itself. This enables the mise-en-scène of everyday life to take centre stage. For example, in the opening scene, a little girl is having her ears pierced. She is framed in a close-up, and the tight frame draws our attention to minute variations in her facial expressions. As the camera rolls uninterrupted, we witness the girl's emotions changing from anticipation to fear to relief through the process. The visual setup is complemented with offscreen voices orchestrating the ritual. The commentary by the girl's mother and the man performing the piercing attest to the girl being groomed to become the 'princess' little girls are expected to be. She is a silent actor in a play written and directed by others.

The unobtrusive, yet highly composed style of *Normal* reveals the social patterns with which gendered roles are constructed and performed. The film shows a society in which men train to be alpha males, and women learn to take care of them. This is embedded in a morbid consumerist logic where outfits, sporting gear and entertainment reproduce and enhance the traditional distribution of power. *Normal* questions the normalcy of this setup by letting the rituals unfold in their banality, emphasising their performative nature. The observational style induces an ironic tinge to the title of the film.

*Normal* ends with a gay couple's civil ceremony, gesturing towards alternative ways of living a gendered life. Interestingly

enough, as the film focuses on rituals that fortify the stereotypical binary of man and woman, these alternative patterns of gendered existence are left to the viewer's imagination. Tulli leaves the viewer to question how we can perform differently and live otherwise.

Ilona Hongisto teaches and researches documentary film at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia.

### Introduzione all'Oscuro

Dir. Gastón Solnicki, 2018, 71 min. Argentina / Austria, English

UK premiere + Q&A

Introduzione all'Oscuro is Gastón Solnicki's cinematic elegy to Hans Hurch, the long-serving director of the Viennale who unexpectedly passed away in July 2017. Through a series of contemplative vignettes set in the streets of Vienna, the film offers a glimpse into Hurch's fascinating and flamboyant life. Toying cleverly with nostalgia and the idea of personal histories, Solnicki delivers a fitting tribute to this influential figure while revealing the spectral presences that linger not only in our minds but in the cafes, museums and concert halls of our cities.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with director Gastón Solnicki hosted by Eva Sangiorgi, Director of the Viennale.



Gastón Solnicki's films travel between documentary and fiction. inescapably intertwined through a shared language that draws inspiration from the reality that is closest to the director. Made of the material of the world, cinema resists any classification of tone or register; this is a trait that stands clear in Solnicki's work. We can say that his films are a way of taking a position: in this autocritical process, he gives himself to the characters he portrays. His favourite themes (music, food, cinema, relationships) permeate his work, evoked between one composition and the following one in a continuity – where even the protagonists eventually grow up and turn into fictional characters, from Papirosen (2011) to Kékszakállú (2016). Among these connections, cinema is part of life itself and even acts as a therapeutic component. Solnicki spreads out the boundaries between private and public dimensions and weaves a narrative based on his passions and affinities. With no shame in revealing intimate relationships, each film is an emotional and perceptive journey, precisely because Solnicki exalts cinema's link with time and memory.

Mauricio Kagel, the Argentinean composer at the centre of Solnicki's first feature film,  $S\ddot{u}den$  (2008), announced, 'One does not choose family, religion, or the place where he is born. All this is arbitrary'. For Solnicki, cinema is the means of piecing together his own 'familienbande', his clan.

Introduzione all'Oscuro is dedicated to and inspired by Hans Hurch, a respected and beloved spirit in the world of cinema and film festivals. In the film, Solnicki not only reveals his presence but performs in front of the camera, becoming the narrative thread himself. The director walks through the streets of Vienna looking for objects and places related to his flamboyant friend; memories that celebrate him and exorcise the pain of his disappearance. On the screen, all these elements are transformed and they become cinema themselves, Gastón Solnicki and Hans Hurch included. In Introduzione all'Oscuro, there is no longer a limit between reality and fiction, or, better said, this is another dimension.

In the exercise of time that is inherent in the language of cinema, Solnicki delivers delicate combinations of image and sound that gift small perceptual epiphanies and music to the soul. The film is named after a piece by Sicilian composer Salvatore Sciarrino, and, touched by this inspiration, *Introduzione all'Oscuro* (in English, 'Introduction to the Dark') traces the uncontainable, the notion of something that is beyond any description, like that friend capable of pervading every person he knew, the city he inhabited, and the Viennale, the festival he personified for more than two decades. The film is permeated by a ghostly but loving presence – through hand-written postcards or Solnicki's recorded voice at the editing table – which is revealed to each viewer in a personal and secret way. I no longer know if I am talking about Hans or cinema itself.

Eva Sangiorgi is the Director of the Viennale.

### **Beauty Lives in Freedom**

Dir. Wang Bing, 2018, 265 min. China / France, Mandarin with English subtitles

UK premiere + introduction

Beauty Lives in Freedom is acclaimed artist and filmmaker Wang Bing's study of Gao Ertai, a dissident Chinese artist, philosopher and activist now residing in Las Vegas. Gao – who had been sent to the labour camps for 're-education' in the 1950s and was again detained following the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests – has committed his life to the study of aesthetics and alienation in an exploration of what it means to be free. In the generous observational style which has become his signature, Wang constructs a richly detailed and humane portrait of a life shaped by immense political and historical forces.

This screening is preceded by an introduction with director Wang Bing.



If we had to introduce Wang Bing's *Beauty Lives in Freedom*, it could be on the basis of its immediate predecessor, the monumental *Dead Souls* (2018): how Bing's latest film stems from it, how it differs from it to the point of justifying a new work of its own. *Beauty Lives in Freedom* is a monument of its own kind, a successor like Bing's 2007 *Fengming, a Chinese Memoir* to Jean Eustache's 1971 *Numéro Zéro*.

The testimony Wang Bing provides in *Beauty Lives in Freedom* is one more piece of evidence in the file opened in the mid-2000s, when the director began to prepare *The Ditch* (2010), an adaptation of Yang Xianhui's book *Goodbye, Jiabiangou*, named after the camp where several thousand 'rightist' men were sentenced to forced labour, starvation and often, death. To create *The Ditch*, Wang Bing travelled across the dry lands of the Gobi Desert (where the camp was located) and faced its strong winds to listen to the unbearable stories of the camp's survivors and shed light on their previously unheard narratives.

Much like He Fengming, Gao Ertai – a Californian-looking stateless man, with pristine white false teeth and long grey pulledback hair – was pursued and imprisoned by Chinese authorities for his dissenting opinions expressed in an essay written in his younger years entitled 'On Beauty'. Fifty years after the essay, Gao released his memoir, *In Search of my Homeland*, which details the many persecutions he and his relatives suffered until his exile in 1993.

The four-and-a-half-hour running time of *Beauty Lives in Freedom* may not have been sufficient to contain the vivid words and precise memories of this survivor, historian, painter and writer. A particularly moving element of the film is witnessing Gao handling old pieces of paper on which he had written micrographic poems and texts before hiding the scraps in the lining of his clothes during his time as a political detainee. Now kept by Gao in plastic binders, these scrolls or pieces of parchment are the tools that shape his memories; they are their origin and the source of their meaning ('real names are hard evidence'). In *Beauty Lives in Freedom*, the question of survival never arises without the question of art, since in such abject circumstances, it is not only about staying alive but about finding a reason for staying alive. Restoring the chronology of the shoot for the final edit, Wang recreates the mechanics of memory and its blind spots; the cracks or fissures caused by emotion or oversight. To consider a central focus of Wang's cinema, these gaps show what man is striving for when he no longer works. Gao's inability to rest contradicts his appearance: that of a retired man. Four and a half hours, it seems, is the time necessary for a man possessed with an incredible sense of determination to think through and recount how he was broken but remained standing; how, faced with incurable grief, he now seems incapable of ever sitting still again.

Antoine Thirion is a film critic and programmer.

### FoR Shorts #1

### The Labyrinth (El Laberinto)

Dir. Laura Huertas Millán, 2018, 21 min. France / Colombia / USA, Spanish with English subtitles



In *The Labyrinth (El Laberinto)*, French-Colombian filmmaker and artist Laura Huertas Millán explores the concept of narcocapitalism and its place in Colombian history and popular imagination. Drawing from ethnographic filmmaking traditions, *The Labyrinth* examines the Colombian drug trade's legacy of violence and human tragedy while experimenting with structure and narrative to blur the distinctions between fiction and reality, memory and history, imagination and experience.

### Those Who Desire (Los Que Desean)

Dir. Elena López Riera, 2018, 24 min. Switzerland / Spain, Spanish with English subtitles



A cloud of brightly painted pigeons cross the sky in Southern Spain; below them are their trainers,

men equally as fascinating albeit in more muted tones. With minute attention to detail, Spanish filmmaker Elena López Riera's *Those Who Desire (Los Que Desean)* is an affectionate portrait of the local tradition of 'colombiculture', wherein brightly-painted male pigeons compete for the attention of a female mate. Riera foregrounds the poetic choreography of the competition while exploring the complex themes of masculinity and courtship that underlie this age-old custom.

### The Years (Gli Anni)

Dir. Sara Fgaier, 2018, 20 min. Italy / France, Italian with English subtitles



The Years (Gli Anni) is Ligurian director Sara Fgaier's sensuous and poetic reinterpretation of French writer Annie Ernaux's lauded memoir of the same title. Fragmentary and elusive, the film is a highly personal collage of home movies in which the two women's lives seem to interweave. Celebrating the rich materiality of cinema and the rituals of photography and filmmaking, *The Years* is a sensitive meditation on the nature of time, identity and memory.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with directors Laura Huertas Millán, Elena López Riera and Sara Fgaier hosted by festival programmer and film critic James Lattimer. For a category so ridiculously ill-defined, the documentary has demonstrated surprisingly remarkable tenacity and longevity. 'Documentary' is a label slapped onto all manner of disparate forms to undermine their distinctiveness and render them more easily consumable, as if taming them might also tame the unruly worlds they depict. With this year's edition of FRAMES of REPRESEN-TATION dedicated to Deframing, it's thus no surprise that the category of the documentary proves a most insufficient reading aid to navigate the festival's two shorts programmes. This selection of films are as happy to invent or manipulate as they are to observe or document; they speak to the impossibility of finding one convenient objectivity, play around with modes, genres, frames and framing devices and work as much with the unsaid, the invisible, the constructed and the suggested as anything approaching the 'real'.

The first FRAMES of REPRESENTATION shorts programme opens with Laura Huertas Millán's The Labyrinth, a hypnotic exploration of the many boundaries blurred when fictional aspirations are made flesh: a hubristic drug lord once built a replica of the mansion from *Dynasty* in the Amazonian jungle that would eventually crumble along with his power. Shifting almost imperceptibly between images and accounts of past wealth and their traces in the present day, a portrait of a truly in-between realm comes into focus, equal parts Colombia and Colorado, immaculate and overgrown, real and imagined. Elena López Riera's Those Who Desire observes a peculiar pastime conducted by men in southern Spain, whereby each contestant paints a male pigeon in bright colours to compete for the affections of the one solitary female. Eschewing any direct commentary or easily definable viewpoint - aside from selected rules of the contest read out in voiceover – the wonderfully deadpan film allows the viewer to decide just what parallels to human courtship are being drawn and how seriously they are to be taken. And in Sara Fgaier's *The Years*, fragments of French author Annie Ernaux's memoir of the same name give structure, meaning and great resonance to flickering film reels of family life in Sardinia. This found-footage literary adaptation undermines two apparent necessities in one: the subjecthood of the essay film and the biographical link of the home movie.

João Vladimiro's Anteu opens the second FRAMES of **REPRESENTATION** shorts programme and takes an equally unorthodox approach to biography, albeit within a fictional framework. Although the trajectory followed by the 17-year-old Anteu – the last inhabitant of a Portuguese village facing extinction - does indeed move from cradle to grave, the conventional pivotal moments are conspicuously lacking, replaced instead by barrel rolling, ravishing landscapes, mathematical digressions in voiceover and the construction of a mysterious machine; a life story governed by the droll and the oblique. The undulating mounds of foam that suffuse Yalda Afsah's *Tourneur* feel like they've wandered in from some science fiction film, not least due to the droning noises and exquisitely precise sound design that accompany them. Although they are soon revealed to be just one extra attraction at a bullfight in southern France, the sense of otherworldliness they convey attaches itself to the entire spectacle, as the carefully restricted framings continually destabilise what's being seen: an everyday event transformed into a surreal choreography of bodies, collisions and swirling movements. What a frame can capture and what it cannot is at the heart of Khaled Abdulwahed's Backyard, which traces how a photograph taken back in 1998 close to the director's former home in Damascus is projected, sketched out, scanned and eventually reproduced via a 3D printer. The cactus field, the row of poplars to the rear of the image, and the table beneath the tree are all duly transposed, but what about everything else they once embodied? Surplus spills out from every frame.

James Lattimer is a festival programmer and film critic.

### FoR Shorts #2

**Anteu** Dir. João Vladimiro, 2018, 29 min. Portugal, Portuguese with English subtitles



A surreal meditation on the passage of time, *Anteu* tells the story of a teenager who finds himself the last surviving resident of a remote village. Portuguese director João Vladimiro blends myth, fiction and documentary realism to create an otherworldly parable. Produced by Portuguese production company TERRA-TREME (featured in FoR18), noted for their commitment to experimental forms of filmmaking, *Anteu* unfolds like a dream, unbounded by the conventions of narrative cinema.

### Backyard

Dir. Khaled Abdulwahed, 2018, 26 min. Germany, English



A forensic reconstruction played out on 35mm film, *Backyard* stems from a 1998 photograph of a cactus field taken by director Khaled

Abdulwahed near his home, southwest of Damascus in Syria. The picture is scanned, projected, dissected and passed through a 3D printer as Abdulwahed embarks on a meticulous process of reconstruction to create a version of the landscape in miniature. Confronting themes of borders, resilience and identity, Abdulwahed reflects on the aggressive military intervention and violence that has reshaped the terrain where the image was originally taken.

### Tourneur

Dir. Yalda Afsah, 2018, 14 min. Germany, no dialogue



Cryptic and compelling, Yalda Afsah's *Tourneur* is an abstract study of the archaic tradition of French bullfighting. Through elliptical footage in which we only glimpse brief snatches of action – the bodies of young men taunting and running from a bull that periodically tramples into the frame – *Tourneur* removes the practice from its cultural and geographic specificity, transporting it to an abstract cinematic space. Afsah's sound editing and use of music emphasise the sheer physicality of the event, silencing everything beyond the dance of man and bull.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with film directors João Vladimiro, Khaled Abdulwahed and Yalda Afsah hosted by festival programmer and film critic James Lattimer.

### **The Disappeared**

Dirs. Gilad Baram & Adam Kaplan, 2018, 46 min. Germany / Israel, Hebrew with English subtitles

UK premiere + Q&A

The Disappeared follows the story of the production and censorship of an action film commissioned by the Israeli government in 2000. Titled Hane'elam (The Disappeared), the original film confronted the contentious issue of the rising number of soldier suicides in the Israel Defence Forces. Despite its lavish budget and cast of leading Israeli actors, the film was banned just weeks before its release.

Israeli directors Gilad Baram and Adam Kaplan unravel the story of *Hane'elam*, presenting the recollections of the film's actors, production crew and director against a black screen overlaid with subtitles. Negating the power of the image, *The Disappeared* considers the concept of absence as presence and shows how film – censored or otherwise – continues to live on through cultural memory.

This screening will be followed by a Q&A with directors Gilad Baram and Adam Kaplan.



### Benjin Pollock on The Disappeared

What's clear? Nothing is clear in this country. Do you understand? Black is white and white is black, but for you, everything is just black.

This dialogue, taken from Eli Cohen's Israeli war film *Shtei Etzbaot Mi'tzidon* (1986), is an appropriate starting point to consider Adam Kaplan and Gilad Baram's latest film, which utilises various textures and tones of black and white to revisit another Israeli government-funded feature film, *Hane'elam (The Disappeared)*.

Directed by aspiring filmmaker and military commander Michael Yoray, *Hane'elam* was commissioned in 1998 as a box office successor to *Shtei Etzbaot Mi'Tzidon*, with a purpose to raise public awareness of soldier suicides within the Israel Defence Forces. Despite being made in-house by the IDF and allowed a considerable budget, the film was inexplicably censored just weeks before its release and was never seen by the public.

More than two decades later, Kaplan and Baram reimagine Hane'elam through the recollections of those involved in its creation. Far from a nostalgic look back at the ill-fated production process, this striking film offers a considered and thoughtful comment on absence and memory, as well as cinema's often complicated relationship with the military in Israel.

In all but the opening and closing frames, the sound plays out against a black screen, alternating between a digital black image and the analogue black signal of erased VHS tapes. But everything isn't just black or white. Over time, the white subtitles become characters in the film, offering illumination as interviews with the cast and crew are deftly interwoven with script readings. In the darkness, we are left to immerse ourselves in the audio and create our own images relying on the memories – however subjective – of the people who were part of the making of *Hane'elam*. This internal process at once comments on the spectacular power of the moving image and allows us to collaborate with Kaplan and Baram in the act of recovery; one that is felt and heard but remains unseen.

Just as Baram's previous work, *Koudelka: Shooting the Holy Land* (2017), explores how Israeli citizens are taught *not* to see the apparatus of State control which surrounds their everyday lives,

The Disappeared forces us as an audience to consider absence as a compelling presence. In doing so, this innovative film uncovers the multiple ways that cinema can be experienced and how censored images continue to live on, despite their official erasure.

Benjin Pollock is a writer and researcher.

## Our Time (Nuestro Tiempo)

Dir. Carlos Reygadas, 2018, 173 min. Mexico/France/Germany/Denmark/Sweden, Spanish with English subtitles

### UK premiere + Q&A

Mexican auteur Carlos Reygadas' Our Time is an unsparing account of a marriage in crisis. Starring the director and his real-life spouse Natalia López, the film depicts a couple navigating the difficult terrain of an open relationship. Ranch owners Juan (Reygadas) and Esther (López) live on the outskirts of Mexico City with their three children. When horse-breaker Phil becomes the object of Esther's longing, Juan finds himself profoundly distraught as he is forced to confront his precarious sense of pride and masculine identity. Through an approach that mirrors non-fiction filmmaking traditions, Reygadas captures the beauty and intimacy of the family's daily life, as well as the disruptive forces of paranoia, distrust and patriarchal values. With the breadth of attention that is typical of his films, Revgadas shifts his gaze from the human drama at the centre of the narrative to the rich environment of the ranch and its surrounds. Disavowing the conventions of popular cinema, Our Time is a deeply personal and provocative work that asks challenging questions about the nature of romantic relationships outside of social norms.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with director Carlos Reygadas hosted by filmmaker and projection designer Athina Rachel Tsangari.



There are few more original and uncompromising auteurs working today than Carlos Reygadas. The director of Japan (Japón, 2002), Battle in Heaven (Batalla en el cielo, 2005), Silent Light (Stellet Licht, 2007) and the infinitely enigmatic Post Tenebras Lux (2012), Reygadas is unique among Mexican contemporaries such as del Toro, Iñárritu and Cuarón, and possesses an artistic aesthetic and sensibility all of his very own. He is a filmmaker for whom sound is as important as image. For Reygadas, cinema is all about tone and texture.

Like his previous work, *Our Time* (*Nuestro tiempo*, 2018) is a hypnotic and provocative meditation on issues of the physical, spiritual and existential variety. Reygadas has always enjoyed making his audience uncomfortable, forcing them to engage with his work in a manner that is perhaps alien to more mainstream cinema. It's a commitment, if accepted, that pays rich dividends.

Featuring the director and his wife Natalia López (an editor who has worked with Reygadas, Amat Escalante and Lisandro Alonso) in the lead roles, the film follows Juan and Esther as they live on their remote but idyllic cattle ranch with their children. The couple has until now enjoyed an open relationship, but when Esther falls in love with an American horse trainer, she stops sharing details of her affair with her husband. The pain of not being in control leads Juan to question the conjugal arrangement and his own limitations, and slowly but surely, he begins to unravel, losing himself in a maelstrom of punishing recriminations and jealous emotions.

Produced by Jaime Romandía (Reygadas' long-term collaborator) and gorgeously and sensuously shot by Diego García (who also acted as the cinematographer on Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Cemetery of Splendour*), the film initially ruminates on life at the ranch (punctuated by excursions to Mexico City) and the joy of a rural existence unburdened by convention. The lives of the children (played by the real-life progeny of Reygadas and López) seem especially carefree and idyllic as they frolic and play among nature. Clouds begin to gather, however, and *Our Time* seamlessly segues into an incredibly courageous and bracingly raw portrait of a marriage in crisis, that is unafraid to blur the lines between fact and fiction. Initially evocative of Atom Egoyan's *Calendar* (1993), the stakes here are arguably higher as the viewer is invited to ruminate on how much we are seeing is torn from reality.

An elemental and endlessly fascinating work that contrasts the brutality of nature with the propensity for violence triggered by human emotions, *Our Time* reminds us that film and filming is an act of voyeurism. It will leave you shaken and stirred.

Jason Wood is a writer and curator.

### Between Two Waters (Entre Dos Aguas)

Dir. Isaki Lacuesta, 2018, 136 min. Spain, Spanish with English subtitles

#### UK premiere + Q&A

Returning to the Andalusian town of San Fernando twelve years after filming *The Legend of Time (La Leyenda del Tiempo)* (2006), Isaki Lacuesta's *Between Two Waters (Entre Dos Aguas)* continues the story of two brothers on diverging paths, reunited after years apart. Scripted but filmed on location with a non-professional cast of San Fernando locals, the film blends narrative cinema with a non-fiction ethos to construct a portrait of life in a deeply troubled region, where violence and unemployment seem to deny all hope for salvation. A searing indictment of the systemic neglect of marginalised communities, *Between Two Waters* captures the desperation and frustrations of its characters with urgency and unblinking realism.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with director Isaki Lacuesta hosted by Maria Delgado, Professor & Director of Research at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London.



Exploring the legacy of the legendary flamenco singer Camarón de la Isla, Isaki Lacuesta rooted *The Legend of Time (La Leyenda del Tiempo)* in San Fernando, Camarón's home town in southern Spain, focusing on Isra (Israel Gómez Romero), a teenager grieving for his late father. Tradition dictates that Isra can't sing flamenco while in mourning, but the ghost of Camarón – as much as that of his wayward father – hovers offer the adolescent boy and his aspirations.

Born in the year Camarón died and boasting the same head of curly hair, Isra might indeed be a Camarón in the making. He bickers with his older brother Cheito (Francisco José Gómez Romero) and is looking to impress a local girl. He wants to leave San Fernando, travel abroad and find his place in the world. Isra is growing up. Taking its title from one of Camarón's most famous songs, *The Legend of Time* works at the intersection of documentary and drama to offer a window into cross-cultural influences, family dynamics and the pull of inherited customs and rituals.

Twelve years on, Lacuesta revisits Isra in *Between Two Waters* (*Entre Dos Aguas*), which centres on the young man's attempts to win back the trust of his wife (Rocio) and three daughters (Manuela, Erika and Daniela) on release from prison for drug trafficking. Isra may have dreamt of moving on, but he stayed put in San Fernando, a city with one of the highest unemployment rates in Spain. He's twice tried to commit suicide and knowingly reflects that drugs, jail or death are the three options available to most of the community. His wife won't have him back unless he changes his ways and his two elder daughters don't recognise him. It is his less volatile brother Cheito who has managed to forge a life outside San Fernando, joining the navy and travelling the seas as Isra once hoped to do. Isra's return from prison is balanced by Cheito's return from a period battling Somalian pirates. The two men have taken very different paths.

Footage from *The Legend of Time* throws the present into sharp relief, providing a gulf between earlier aspirations and the reality of the existence that Isra now negotiates. The film has a moving humanity – from the birth of Isra's daughter, which opens the film, to his banter and battles with his brother. There is a tension
between Isra's wish to forge a different life for himself as a dutiful father and provider – changing his toddler daughter's nappy, seeking work, attending a baptism – and the pull of the past. His request for a tattoo that tells the story of his father's death, and his recognition that he's 'useless at everything except selling drugs' is one of the film's many reminders of the ominous weight of history. In this respect, *Between Two Waters* has something of the impact of a Greek tragedy, wherein primaeval forces are brought into contact with a will that is tested and tried across different scenarios.

Spain's economic crisis is never far from the film's surface and is reflected and refracted through the lens of Isra's predicament. The camera stays close to Isra, observing the texture of his skin, his patchy beard, the tattoos that adorn his torso and the desperation embodied in his body language. This proximity gives *Between Two Waters* an extraordinary sense of intimacy. The time spent watching these brothers negotiate their return home further allows the viewer to enter the rhythm of their worlds. The film's pulsating score – drawing on local sounds and fragmented voices – is provided by Kiko Veneno and Raül Refree.

Lacuesta opts for the name of a song by Paco de Lucía to provide the title of the film. Between two waters. The idea of betweenness is also a comment on the wider issues that the film negotiates. The small peninsula where the film is set lies in the bay of Cádiz between the Spanish mainland and Morocco. Its physical environment is one that negotiates both water and land. Bridges figure prominently in the action. Isra and Cheito fight like Cain and Abel. *Between Two Waters* moves in the delicate terrain between real life and fiction; Israel Gómez Romero hasn't spent time in prison, but Francisco José Gómez Romero is in the navy. Inspired by the real, the film gives the viewer both a portrait of time passing – parallels with Truffaut's Antoine Doinel films and Linklater's *Boyhood* can be drawn – and of a man trying to make sense of the pieces that make up his life, in search of a redemption that appears forever out of reach.

Maria Delgado is an academic, critic and curator.

# Diagnosis (Diagnoza)

Dir. Ewa Podgórska, 2018, 78 min. Poland, Polish and French with English subtitles

#### UK premiere + Q&A

Polish director Ewa Podgórska's dreamlike *Diagnosis (Diagnoza)* is a journey into the depths of a city through the memories and emotions of its inhabitants. Inspired by the concept of urban psychology, the film portrays the city as a space of resistance, recovery and alienation, as it asks us to reflect on how our social interactions shape the spaces around us.

With its deft balance of the personal and societal, *Diagnosis* reframes our understanding of the built environment, encouraging us to consider how we can care for each other to find a deeper sense of belonging in urban spaces.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with director Ewa Podgórska hosted by Kieron Corless, Deputy Editor of Sight & Sound.



## Christopher Ian Smith on Diagnosis

*Diagnosis* is a remarkable work, a dreamlike drift that charts a path through the psyche of the Polish city of Lodz. We are told in the opening titles, it was once 'a wondrous city of factories and revolutions', a city that once prospered as a socialist, industrial hub. However, over recent times it has faced many economic, social and cultural challenges. As a study of a place, *Diagnosis* abstains from any kind of chronology or biography, instead we are merely offered glimpses of unfulfilled dreams and hints of a difficult past.

Through birds-eye-view drone photography and slow tracking shots, this subjective perspective on Lodz offers a view of the city as planners and architects had once seen it. These urban scenes offer a counterpoint to the beating heart of the film – observational, personal stories from a selection of the city's inhabitants, each juxtaposed with moments of psychoanalysis that provide the film's framework. This is a call and response investigation into the film's main characters' personal stories, connections with the city and interactions with others. Our patients are asked to answer questions without thinking: If this city was an animal, what would it be? If this city was a colour, what would it be? If this city was a gender...

What appears initially to be a psychogeography of the city develops into a beautiful, tender and tragic discourse on personal relationships – one most prominently focused (perhaps unsurprisingly, given its basis in psychoanalysis) on the complexities of the parent-child bond. The film's characters reveal how their interdependence with others has shaped their lives in the city: The man who cares for his Alzheimer's afflicted mother, the doting father anxious that he is unable to fulfil the expectations of his role, the older woman haunted by a moment of disconnection between her father and her 6-year-old self.

*Diagnosis* is a portrait of a city explored through the humanity of its residents. They are voices both together and alone, networks of experiences, collective memories imprinted on the city's bricks and mortar.

Now lie down comfortably. Relax. Breathe deeply...

Christopher Ian Smith is a writer-director who lives in London.

# Stones Have Laws (Dee Sitonu a Weti)

Dirs. Lonnie van Brummelen, Siebren de Haan & Tolin Erwin Alexander, 2018, 100 min. Netherlands/Suriname, Saamaka, Okanisi and Dutch with English subtitles

#### UK premiere + Q&A

Stones Have Laws (Dee Sitonu a Weti) is an immersive initiation into the life of a Maroon community in the former Dutch colony of Suriname. Combining stories of African ancestral traditions and escaped slavery with enacted contemporary rituals, the film explores how the community's powerful ties to the land have become endangered as industries threaten to devastate the region through deforestation and mining.

Directors Lonnie van Brummelen, Siebren de Haan and Tolin Erwin Alexander closely involved the community in the development of the project, which was written using an experimental process of collective scripting. The result is a unique cinematic form that bridges filmmaking, poetry and theatre.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with directors Lonnie van Brummelen, Siebren de Haan and Tolin Erwin Alexander, hosted by Astrid Korporaal, Research and Symposium Curator of FRAMES of REPRESENTATION.



A remote part of Suriname, a community discusses whether to share their stories with the white people who have come to make a film: *Stones Have Laws.* Out of the depths of the waters, at intersections with an immense forest, through sugar cane, rocks and trees, the voices of Maroon wisdom make themselves known. They are descendants of enslaved Africans who managed to escape the plantations, to learn from indigenous peoples and to carve out a life based on the lessons of ancestors, spirits and nature. Their survival has been based on keeping things hidden from colonising forces.

# Not everything can be said. An oath has been made that certain things should remain secret.

One of the elders speaks these words off-camera. This conviction comes from a space outside the frame. And yet, as the increasing encroachment of mineral and logging firms threatens their way of life, the community agrees to find a way to become visible on their own terms. Through a process of translation, scripting and re-appropriation, directors Lonnie van Brummelen and Siebren de Haan worked with theatre maker Tolin Erwin Alexander and poet and village captain Dorus Vrede to set the stage for an ethical exchange. Gradually, in the right order and with proper attention to rituals, the audience is permitted to enter into a story that crosses oceans and stretches through uncharted territories.

The map of this landscape is unmoored from Western accounts of Suriname, and re-spoken through the languages of the Okanisi and Saamaka peoples. What is felt and experienced is separated from mere hearsay: the word for history is spoken in the Dutch colonists' tongue. Each of the protagonists tells their part of the story in their own style, a performance amplified by ritual and the cooperation of non-human actors. The air of the film is thick with sounds, simultaneously suggesting and obscuring many more messages to which we are not yet attuned. Images seem to rise up from the mists of the forest, as a token of the gods' approval.

The laws referred to in the title of the film are not dogmatic rules. They open up spaces for interpretation and dialogue, for collective movement of imaginations into the future and the past. From the start, we are made aware that this is a tale of mythic proportions. The common origin at its heart is ecological rather than human. It is a tale of water that submerged the land and remained, and a warning that it will rise again. Even more than its stunning depiction of the natural beauty and vitality of a world in jeopardy and the accounts of creative endurance, the value of this film lies in its appeal for audiences to enter into conversation with what is beyond our small sphere of habitual consideration.

Astrid Korporaal is a curator and writer, and PhD candidate in Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths University.

# Don't Work, 1968–2018 (Ne Travaille Pas, 1968–2018)

Dir. César Vayssié, 2018, 88 min. France, French with English subtitles

#### UK premiere + Q&A

The distinction between art and life dissolves in César Vayssié's pulsating new film *Don't Work*, 1968–2018 (*Ne Travaille Pas*, 1968–2018), which follows a year in the life of Elsa and Gabriel, two young artists studying at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Without dialogue, this hypnotic film follows the pair as they navigate love and create work amid political and social tumult. Set against a frantic montage of images and accompanied by a soundtrack by Avia x Orly, this striking film reflects on the societal changes that have transpired since the May 1968 protests.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with director César Vayssié hosted by writer Sophie Monks Kaufman.



'Tell me to what you pay attention, and I will tell you who you are', wrote the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset in his 1962 book *Man and Crisis*. There is a microcosmic version of this truth to be found in *Don't Work*, 1968–2018 (Ne Travaille Pas, 1968–2018), which offers such an unrelenting torrent of content that selective attention from viewers is inevitable.

Unfolding like a feature-length version of the 1 Second Everyday app, Vayssié follows two fine arts students in Paris – Elsa Michaud and Gabriel Gauthier – over the span of a year (March 2017–18). The film splices together split-second extracts of everyday life, global news, political speeches, advertisements and social media; adding absurdity with intense close-ups on emoticons, and gravitas with the use of anti-establishment slogans sourced from 1968 graffiti.

The May 1968 uprisings in France and the state of the nation 50 years later provide the loose framework for the film, which begins and ends in the University of Nanterre (a key site for student meetings and protests in '68). An opening title card warns of graphic violence, before audio of Parkland shooting survivor, Emma González, giving her famous speech naming her murdered classmates is followed by visuals of Elsa and Gabriel in the Nanterre gardens. The couple kiss as González's raw eulogy continues, underscored by tense electronic music by Avia x Orly that provides a consistent musical spine to the stream of largely dialogue-free footage.

The impact of this opening media mash-up is both confusing and rousing, posing questions like, 'Is it respectful to sample such a loaded speech?'. Tragedy is ubiquitous after zooming out far enough, and surely it is more courageous to live your small life than to despair before the bigger picture.

There is humour in some of the edits, such as a cut from a famous majestic building to a cartoonish Facebook page capitalising on the building's name to sell fast-food. At a reach, you could say that Vayssié skewers the commercial hellscape we now reside in; however, the point of the film is more open-ended, and its grace notes arrive in the occasional moments where the music fades down, and spoken words are allowed to resonate. 'My god, my god, here is life, simple and placid,' reads an orator, quoting the French poet Paul Verlaine. The speech is from 1968, but it is used over footage from a contemporary Emmanuel Macron rally. This free approach to looting the past is touching. We don't have to draw our focus and inspiration from what is most obnoxiously present. We are not beholden to the images forced in front of our eyes. We can choose which values to channel guided by a desire to save our souls.

Sophie Monks Kaufman is a writer.

# Present.Perfect. (Wan Mei Xian Zai Shi)

Dir. Shengze Zhu, 2019, 124 min. USA / Hong Kong, Mandarin with English subtitles

#### UK premiere + Q&A

The explosion of live-streaming platforms in China and the ensuing government crackdown provides the context for Shengze Zhu's *Present.Perfect.* (Wan Mei Xian Zai Shi), a work comprising intimate footage shared by twelve Chinese online streamers. Regardless of class, sexuality or physical ability, these personal broadcasters open themselves to an anonymous audience in search of connection. Through a diverse collage of videos, *Present.Perfect.* encourages us to consider the ways in which we expose ourselves online in pursuit of affirmation, and to confront how, for better or worse, our identities and relationships have become entangled with network technologies

This screening is followed by a Q&A with director Shengze Zhu hosted by FRAMES of REPRESENTATION Festival Curator Nico Marzano.



Stitching industriously in a garment factory, a young woman streams herself on a smartphone. *I only do this when the boss is away*, she says. *This is reality*. A pig farmer puts down her selfiestick. *Streaming anchor earns billions by going to the toilet*, she jokes, *but you'd better not watch it, just stay outside*. These women are working two jobs, bridging two economies; live-streaming is a big industry in China. 'Anchors' perform strange stunts or record everyday life like the protagonists in the factory and farm. Viewers post on-screen comments and virtual gifts that can be redeemed for money. In 2017, the number of live-stream users in China reached 422 million. Shengze Zhu's third film, *Present.Perfect.* creates a collective portrait of contemporary China composed entirely of footage from live-streaming sites.

Zhu followed a dozen streams over the course of a year; their seemingly mundane content intrigued her for what it revealed. Condensed from eight-hundred hours of footage to two, *Present. Perfect.* exposes the extent to which live-streaming offers an alternative form of sociability for those whose identity, disability or socioeconomic status might make some interpersonal interactions difficult. As much as it portrays present-day China, the film is also a study of emergent virtual communities and the support and visibility they provide their users.

Recalling the documentary form's historical claims to truth, the film title's grammatical tense plays with the function of cinema to record the past and the function of live-streaming to broadcast the present. It suggests that what we *have seen* affects the present, and what *has been* might not be this way forever. An anchor walks us through the demolition rubble that will soon engulf his home. Xi Jinping's dream of gentrification unravels as a shakily-framed ruin in reverse. As China's built landscapes change, so do its virtual ones. Censorship has curtailed live-streaming with regulations and fines. Since its making, several streams featured in *Present*. *Perfect*. have been taken offline, with all points of contact to their anchors lost.

The long take is a feature of live-streaming, but also characterises Zhu's observational approach, which affords people time to express themselves. We can deduce the content of viewers' typed comments – even if they are out of frame – from the way anchors respond, telling and re-telling their life stories for minutes on end. Anchors hold their cameras differently, walk with particular gaits, and speak with various accents – we might say *Present.Perfect*. is the work of a dozen directors. Zhu's decisive cuts and the conversion of all footage to black and white reinserts her editorial presence and reflects her background in photography and journalism. The division of the film into chapters recalls the chronological and titled vignettes of Zhu's previous works, filmed in her hometown of Wuhan in central China. In those films, like this one, reality meets its constructed representation, and real-time becomes a time capsule.

Becca Voelcker is a writer, researcher and film programmer.

Festival Curator Nico Marzano

Research & Symposium Curator Astrid Korporaal

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#### MASTERCLASSES, TALKS and WORKSHOPS

Roundtable Discussion: Nation on Fire with the New Black Panthers, hosted by Ifeanyi Awachie Friday 12 April, 6pm

Members of the New Black Panther Party are joined in conversation by Roberto Minervini, who worked with members of the political group on his film *What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?*, featured in this year's FRAMES of REPRESENTATION.

Along with other guest speakers, the discussion will cover current day racial politics in the US and the historical and contemporary iterations of the Black Panther movement. By adopting a roundtable format, the dialogue will attempt to deinstitutionalise historical narratives of oppression and exploitation. The conversation will also address themes explored in *What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?*, including life in black communities in the American South under the long shadow of Hurricane Katrina.

Workshop: The Sensuality of the End of an Empire with Gastón Solnicki, hosted by Mark Peranson Saturday 13 April, 2.15pm

Hosted by film programmer, film critic and filmmaker Mark Peranson, this workshop offers an in-depth discussion of Argentinian filmmaker Gastón Solnicki's body of work. Through his distinctive filmmaking, Solnicki considers the material agglomeration of time, memory and human relationships within the architecture of the city. Drawing on films including *Süden* (2008), *Papirosen* (2011), *Kékszakállú* (2016), and *Introduzione all'Oscuro* (screening at this year's festival), the workshop considers Solnicki's engagement with Western decadence, asking how an alternative cinematic language may reflect on its disintegration.

Talk: In Conversation with Wang Bing, hosted by Erika Balsom Sunday 14 April, 2pm

Chinese filmmaker and artist Wang Bing (*Beauty Lives in Freedom*, 2018, *Dead Souls*, 2018, *Mrs. Fang*, 2017, *Bitter Money*, 2016, *The Ditch*, 2010, *Fengming, A Chinese Memoir*, 2007) discusses his uncompromising political filmmaking, examining the ethics of representation under and against Chinese authoritarianism in a conversation hosted by Erika Balsom, Senior Lecturer in Film Studies at King's College London. Throughout his acclaimed body of work, including the seminal *West of the Tracks* (2003), the director turns his camera towards those displaced by the changing social and economic landscape of a rapidly-developing China. Shot digitally, Wang's monumental films reflect his rigorous attention to political and emotional subject matter. This discussion presents an opportunity to engage with Wang's ambitious practice, considering its place in contemporary China.

Masterclass: The Cinema of Carlos Reygadas, hosted by Jason Wood Monday 15 April, 6.15pm

In this masterclass, Mexican auteur Carlos Reygadas (*Our Time (Nuestro Tiempo)*, 2018, *Post Tenebras Lux*, 2012, *Silent Light (Stellet Licht)*, 2007, *Battle in Heaven (Batalla en el cielo)*, 2005, *Japan (Japón)*, 2002) discusses his poetic approach to cinema. Reygadas' work dissolves conventional boundaries between narrative and non-fiction filmmaking traditions, as the director's camera patiently observes not only his film's characters, but also the interior and exterior landscapes around them. Hosted by Jason Wood, Creative Director of HOME Manchester, this masterclass offers an in-depth exploration of the formal and aesthetic choices that inform Reygadas' work.

Workshop: On Cinematic Language with Adele Tulli & Shengze Zhu, hosted by Ludovica Fales Wednesday 17 April, 4.45pm

Two filmmakers featured in this year's festival, AdeleTulli (Normal) and Shengze Zhu (Present. Perfect. (Wan Mei Xian Zai Shi)) come together to discuss their approaches to filmmaking beyond the confines of dominant cinema. Though the contexts (both formal and cultural) in which they work are starkly divergent, Tulli and Zhu both question the place of cinematic language in contemporary life, examining the ways in which it compels us to perform, as well as how it incites us to consume. Seminar: The Lodz Film School & Polish Cinema with Pawel Lozinski, Ewa Podgórska & Wojciech Staroń, hosted by Kieron Corless Friday 19 April, 5pm

Organised in association with the Polish Cultural Institute, this seminar focuses on the internationally renowned Lodz Film School and its graduates, which include luminaries such as Krzysztof Kieślowski and Andrzej Wajda. The discussion examines the school's unique approach to film teaching and considers its place within world cinema.

Polish directors and graduates of the film school Pawel Lozinski (*You Have No Idea How Much I Love You*, 2018 (featured in FoR17)), Ewa Podgórska (*Diagnosis* (*Diagnoza*), featured in this year's FoR) and Wojciech Staroń (*Argentinian Lesson*, 2011, *Brothers*, 2015 (featured in FoR16)) discuss the institution's role in the development of their work, as well as its broader influence on non-fiction cinema internationally.

Talk: Ethics and Aesthetics of Performative Documentary, a conversation with Lonnie van Brummelen, Siebren de Haan & Tolin Erwin Alexander, hosted by Astrid Korporaal Wednesday 17 April, 5pm

Featured in this year's festival, Stones Have Laws (Dee Sitonu a Weti) is an expansive and immersive initiation into the life of a Maroon community in the former Dutch colony of Suriname, Directors Lonnie van Brummelen, Siebren de Haan and Tolin Erwin Alexander discuss the unique collaborative process that produced the film, and the evolving relationship with the community that lies at its core. Reflecting on the strategies from filmmaking, poetry and theatre that were developed together with the protagonists, they shed light on an approach that acknowledges society as a relational movement. Highly aware of the complex ethics and responsibility of representation, the directors speak in terms of scripted appropriation and re-appropriation rather than objective anthropological observation.

Live Performance: *Little Ethiopia* (European premiere) by Joe Bini & Maya Hawke, 2019, 90 min., Friday 19 April, 6.30pm

Editors Joe Bini and Maya Hawke – both long-time Werner Herzog collaborators – develop a narrative built on their shared personal histories in this unique performance. Incorporating personal photographs, videos and clips from films they have edited alongside live narration, Bini and Hawke improvise a story which integrates the themes of love, sexuality and contemporary discourse around gender.

Symposium: Pluralising Representations Saturday 20 April, 11am–5pm

Referencing Walter Mignolo's concept of 'border thinking', this day-long symposium offers a place to discuss peripheral perspectives in film, art and media, and to contribute to what Linda Tuhiwai Smith calls a 're-centering' of narratives. Through two panel discussions, the event focuses on two central questions:

In this contemporary moment of individualism, media sensationalism and disconnection, how can we develop collaborations that take a wider view of the 'global' and embrace local specificity?

How can we practice thinking, making and organising from a peripheral perspective; supporting the idea that there are as many realities as there are relations?

The first panel focuses on reframing collaborative work, considering experimental educational models, modes of activist storytelling and filmmaking projects that work across cultural contexts. Speakers include Rolando Vázquez, Preti Taneja and Charlotte Gleghorn.

The second panel focuses on reframing interactions with materialities and environments, looking at examples of nature documentaries, virtual environments and video installations that reflect human and non-human interrelations. Speakers include Amy Cutler, Umran Ali and Khadija von Zinnenburg Carroll.

The Pluralising Representations Symposium is curated and chaired by Astrid Korporaal, Research and Symposium Curator of FRAMES of REPRESENTATION.

### PROGRESSIO

Established with Cineteca Madrid, Sundance Institute and The Visible Institute at Kingston University, this full-day event brings together industry professionals and filmmakers to provide guidance, feedback and support for innovative moving image projects in their early stages of production.

Progressio aims to provide participating filmmakers with resources and connections, and to extend and diversify dialogue between filmmakers, academics, artists, audiences and industry professionals. Progressio provides participating directors with the opportunity to test, expand and strengthen their visions in a space dedicated to the creative process. Filmmakers are free to convey their ideas via a range of methods and approaches, including verbal and written presentations, clips, drawings and images.

In this pilot year, Progressio supports two unique film projects by emerging voices: Brittany A. Shyne's *Seeds* and Javier Fernández Vázquez's *A Storm Was Coming*, two films that reflect the concept of Deframing that underlies this year's festival. Shyne explores the importance of land ownership for Black farmers in the American South, while Vázquez's work centres on the recovery of anti-colonial history in Equatorial Guinea.

#### Programme:

Seeds (in development, USA) is a feature-length work exploring the importance of land ownership for Black farmers in Southwest Georgia. The film traces the historical roots of generational farmers, whose presence in the region is declining in record numbers.

Brittany A. Shyne is a filmmaker, writer and producer from Dayton, Ohio.

A Storm Was Coming (in development, Spain) focuses on Ësáasi Eweera, the last native Bubi leader who opposed Spanish rule on the island of Bioko in Equatorial Guinea. The film reflects on the gaps, silences, contradictions and falsehoods upon which colonial history is often built.

Javier Fernández Vázquez is a filmmaker, anthropologist and visual culture researcher based in Madrid.

Following their presentation at this first Progressio event, both projects will be featured in the next Progressio session at Cineteca Madrid in September 2019.

#### CHASE SEMINARS

#### Approaching Documentary as Art (After Adorno) Tuesday 16 April, 3pm, Studio

In his critique of the culture industry, Theodor W. Adorno insisted that the nature of photographic and cinematic representation was incompatible with the more reflective aesthetic contemplation demanded by 'serious' art. Cinematic realism, in his view, engaged audiences in a passive relationship to dominant ideologies by claiming and appearing to represent the real world. As such, Adorno did not consider cinema or photography to be legitimate forms of art. In defiance of this claim, artists and experimental filmmakers have, for decades, sought to radicalise the codes of cinematic representation beyond dominant cinema. This seminar will explore how artists and filmmakers have 'deframed' cinema and photography, considering how the entanglement of art and documentary has influenced our understanding of truth, history and justice.

*Re-framing the City on Film. Documentary as Memory, Place and Space* Thursday 18 April, 2.30pm, Studio

Since the advent of the moving image, how we imagine and relate to the city has been profoundly shaped by its representations on film. In this seminar, Polish filmmaker Ewa Podgórska will present scenes from her film, Diagnosis, which screens at this year's festival. The film is a journey into the depths of a city through the memories and emotions of its inhabitants. Podgórska's unique filmic language, inspired by urban psychology, offers new approaches to film as a methodical tool that interacts and responds to the real and imagined spaces it represents on screen. This seminar will provide insights into Podgórska's creative process and will include the screening of short excerpts from the film. Podgórska will be joined by a panel of academics and film practitioners to explore concepts relating to the city as a space of resistance, recovery and alienation.

### Independent Film Council

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