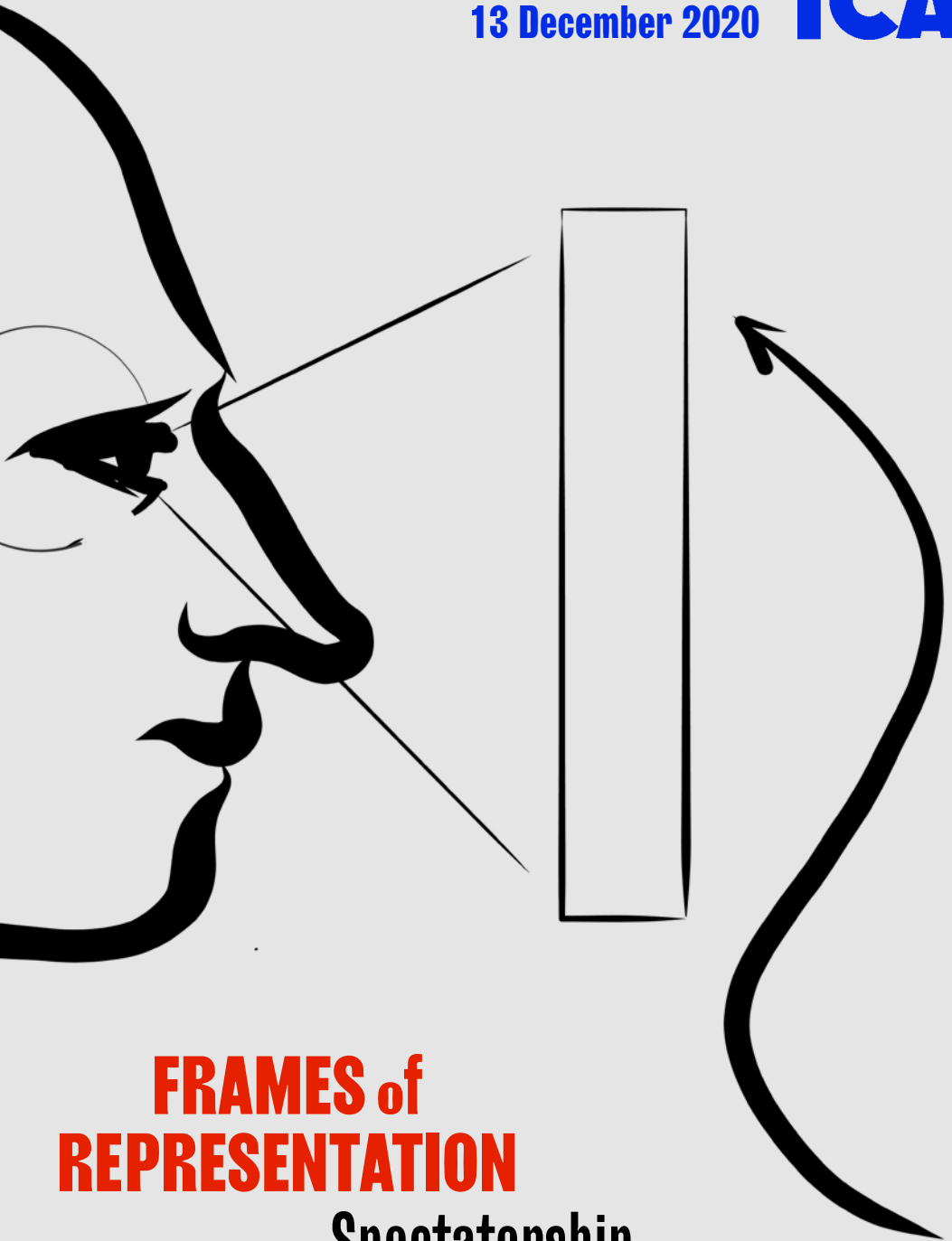


27 November –
13 December 2020

ICA



**FRAMES of
REPRESENTATION**

Spectatorship

ica.art/FoR20
#FoR20

27 November –
13 December 2020

FRAMES of REPRESENTATION

Spectatorship

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 sociopolitical struggles.

ICA

Programme

Friday 27 November, 6.30pm

Panquiaco

Saturday 28 November, 4.30pm

Oroslan

Saturday 28 November, 7pm

The Earth Is Blue as an Orange

Sunday 29 November, 4pm

Immortal

Sunday 29 November, 6.15pm

Soviet Cycles: A Round-table Discussion on Spectatorship and Censorship

Tuesday 1 December, 6.45pm

La vida en común

Wednesday 2 December, 6.45pm

Piedra sola

Thursday 3 December, 6.45pm

Los conductos

Friday 4 December, 6pm

IWOW: I Walk on Water

Saturday 5 December, 6pm

For Shorts #1: *Reynard (Raposa)* + *Seven Years in May (Sete anos em maio)* + *Tender (Tendre)*

Sunday 6 December, 6.15pm

Un Film Dramatique

Monday 7 December, 7pm

Harlem – 125th Street / Lexington Avenue: Artist's Talk with Khalik Allah

Tuesday 8 December, 6.30pm

A Storm Was Coming (Anunciaron tormenta)

Wednesday 9 December, 6.30pm

Endless Night (Longa noite)

Thursday 10 December, 7pm

From Tomorrow on, I Will (Chun nuan hua kai)

Friday 11 December, 6.20pm

The Cloud in Her Room (Tu fang jian li de yun)

Saturday 12 December, 6.30pm

For Shorts #2: *Apiyemiyeki?* + *Aggregate States of Matters* + *Sun Dog*

Sunday 13 December, 6pm

Air Conditioner (Ar condicionado)

Contents

Panquiaco 8

Elena Gorfinkel on *Panquiaco* 9

Oroslan 10

Wendy Ide on *Oroslan* 11

The Earth Is Blue as an Orange 12

Astrid Korporaal on *The Earth Is Blue as an Orange* 13

Immortal 14

Jonathan Romney on *Immortal* 15

Soviet Cycles: A Round-table Discussion on Spectatorship and Censorship 16

La vida en común 17

Maria Delgado on *La vida en común* 18

Piedra sola 19

Jason Wood on *Piedra sola* 20

Los conductos 21

Cecilia Barrionuevo on *Los conductos* 22

IWOW: I Walk on Water 23

Matt Turner on *IWOW: I Walk on Water* 24

FoR Shorts #1: *Reynard (Raposa)* + *Seven Years in May (Sete anos em maio)* + *Tender (Tendre)* 25

Ana David on FoR Shorts #1 26

Un Film Dramatique 27

Nicolas Raffin on *Un Film Dramatique* 28

Harlem – 125th Street / Lexington Avenue: Artist's Talk with Khalik Allah 29

A Storm Was Coming (Anunciaron tormenta) 30

Sophie Brown on *A Storm Was Coming (Anunciaron tormenta)* 31

Endless Night (Longa noite) 32

Kieron Corless on *Endless Night (Longa noite)* 33

From Tomorrow on, I Will (Chun nuan hua kai) 34

Julian Ross on *From Tomorrow on, I Will (Chun nuan hua kai)* 35

The Cloud in Her Room (Tù fāng jiān lǐ de yún) 36

Raquel Morais on *The Cloud in Her Room (Tù fāng jiān lǐ de yún)* 37

FoR Shorts #2: *Apiyemiyeki?* + *Aggregate States of Matters* + *Sun Dog* 38

Carmen Gray on FoR Shorts #2 39

Air Conditioner (Ar condicionado) 40

Simran Hans on *Air Conditioner (Ar condicionado)* 41

INTRODUCTION

FRAMES of REPRESENTATION, the ICA's annual film festival, returns for its fifth edition with a programme that encapsulates notions of spectatorship – a collection of works that explore the spaces between knowledge and participation through the act of viewing. The festival continues to be an international showcase for the cinema of the real, exploring in depth the aesthetic and political implications of filmmaking as both a collective practice and an art form.

Guided in part by the tumultuous circumstances of the past few months, we have extended the festival from nine days of screenings and related events, originally scheduled to take place at the ICA in April 2020, to a 17-day programme exclusively available via Cinema 3, the ICA's new digital platform. This new schedule allows for a more fluid pace and flow between the 20 films we are presenting this year (14 features plus two programmes of three shorts) and the Q&As and conversations taking place alongside them.

Ideas of spectatorship have informed the curatorial and programmatic approach behind this edition of FRAMES of REPRESENTATION, which questions the role of the spectator within the current audio-visual landscape and challenges the relationship between presentation and action. These 20 films prompt engagement with a shared time that extends from the moment of their viewing into future possibilities for imaginative transformation. While every edition of FRAMES of REPRESENTATION celebrates films that transversely address the categories, languages and modes of visibility that define the methodologies associated with the cinema of the real, this edition in particular foregrounds the idea of the image as a moving proposal for the renegotiation of positions of reception and agency, providing a space for fluid dynamics rather than rigid dichotomies.

All previous editions of the festival have explored the idea of how the cinema of the real embraces reality in its constant states of flux. And to a certain extent, what has happened this year could be an opportunity for artists to return to working together: questioning, cooperating and finding ways to reinvent the world, starting both from a new imagination and from an awareness that each individual is part of a societal balance whose relationships can be never treated as definitive or taken for granted. The artist as a social worker, in other words, with a responsibility to themselves and to society – yet keen to reassess and reinvent, with life, art and film as founding elements.

Our opening and closing films, Ana Elena Tejera's *Panquiaco* and Fradique's *Air Conditioner*, share several thematic points of contact. Both are rooted in geographical spaces, connecting Latin America (*Panquiaco*) and Africa (*Air Conditioner*) with Europe. And both expand the possibilities of the cinema of the real, playfully juxtaposing surreal events with more neorealist aesthetics while meditating on the concepts of returning and home.

Home is also an implicit focus in *IWOW: I Walk on Water*, largely filmed by Khalik Allah on the same Harlem street corner that has long preoccupied his filmmaking and photographic practices. We began our FoR journey in 2015 with Allah's *Field Niggas*, a year before FoR grew from a laboratory into the first edition of this film festival, and *IWOW: I Walk on Water* itself stems out of *Field Niggas*, a continuation of Allah's attempts to destabilise common narratives of race and marginalisation.

Notions of belonging and returning, intertwined with explorations of recent history, feature in two Spanish works: Eloy Enciso's *Endless Night* echoes Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet by approaching the present through representations of the forgotten past; while Javier Fernández Vázquez offers a counter-narrative to the traditional history of Spain's complex relationship with Equatorial Guinea, its former colony, in *A Storm Was Coming*. FoR supported *A Storm Was Coming* at the inaugural edition in 2019 of PROGRESSIO, our development platform, and so it's appropriate that we're now bringing you the completed film, following its world premiere at the Berlinale in February.

Immortal by Ksenia Okhapkina, *Oroslan* by Matjaž Ivaniščin and *The Earth Is Blue as an Orange* by Iryna Tsilyk are three Eastern tales that grapple with grief, mortality and the spectacle of representation. Through different yet connected methodologies, each film addresses the fabrication of realities, juxtaposing the fictional with the observational to tackle the collective and individual intimacies intertwined within the creative processes of filmmaking and storytelling.

Returning to Latin America, Argentine directors Ezequiel Yanco and Alejandro Telémaco Tarraf traverse parallel realities that constantly shift between survival, dreams and adulthood in *La vida en común* and *Piedra sola*. Both works represent devotional journeys that connect people to places as part of societies that can't be simply observed and accounted for – both filmmakers feel they must live within these societies, or at least develop strong and urgent ties, in order to understand them. Such threads are common to many other works featured in FoR20: particularly Camilo Restrepo's *Los conductos*, a relentless and psychedelic journey through Colombia, and Affonso Uchôa's *Seven Years in May* (screening as part of FoR Shorts #1), a hypnotic look into the dark Brazilian past. While Uchôa's work explores the unheard stories and silenced characters of Contagem, a city in south-east Brazil, Ana Vaz's *Apiyemiyeki?* (FoR SHORTS #2) journeys to the north-west of the country to revisit the 1970s massacre of the Waimiri-Atroari indigenous community by the Brazilian military dictatorship.

Both Franco-American filmmaker Éric Baudelaire and French auteur Isabel Pagliai place kids at the centre of their latest films. This is youth who can live through and witness their own blossoming yet brutal relationships, as in Pagliai's *Tender* (FoR Shorts #1), or who can become filmmakers themselves – as in Baudelaire's *Un Film Dramatique*, where 21 middle schoolers attempt to examine what cinema is, in a work that resists any vertical separation (such as director and subject, or master and student) while positioning learning as a performative act.

Childhood is also a focus in Zheng Lu Xinyuan's pulsating first feature *The Cloud in Her Room*, a generational reflection on love, returning and impermanence that weaves together reality, fiction and experimental reveries. Dreams of other realities also take centre stage in *From Tomorrow on, I Will* by Ivan Marković and Wu Linfeng, which tracks the rhythms that define the gargantuan and rapidly-changing city of Beijing. Watch out, especially, for the unforgettable final shot of this beautiful work.

In *Reynard* (FoR Shorts #1), the camera of Leonor Noivo gracefully acts as a silent witness; while in *Aggregate States of Matters* (FoR Shorts #2), Rosa Barba leads an operatic investigation into the increasingly problematic balance between humans and nature, synthesising the ways in which different places around the world are part of the same wider motion. Dorian Jespers' stunning and unsettling *Sun Dog*

(FoR Shorts #2) harnesses an immersive visual language, blending watery and metallic soundscapes with liturgical music and a Tarkovskyan treatment of space and time – and signals the arrival of a distinctive new voice on the international landscape of the cinema of the real.

I hope that both these individual works and the wider festival experience – filtered this year through the prism of Covid-19, which has forced us to put an end to our plans for in-cinema and in-person interactions between us – resist the theoretical separation between (film)makers and audiences, and between individuals and collectives. In the words of French philosopher Jacques Rancière in *The Emancipated Spectator*, a text that has inspired our curatorial thinking:

Emancipation begins when we challenge the opposition between viewing and acting; when we understand that the self-evident facts that structure the relationship between saying, seeing and doing themselves belong to the structure of domination and subjection. [...] The spectator also acts, like the pupil or the scholar. They observe, select, compare, interpret. They link what they see to a host of other things that they have seen on other stages, in other kinds of places. They compose their own poem with the element of the poem before them.

FRAMES of REPRESENTATION has been conceived to foster collective learning in conversation with a community of filmmakers and activists, while encouraging all of us to question traditional hierarchies and structures of seeing, listening and acting via the poetry of spectatorship. I wish you all great discoveries in the hope that they may stir new ideas – and subvert any reassuring orders and paths we may have created for ourselves.

Nico Marzano, Head of Cinema, ICA

FRAMES of REPRESENTATION 2020 takes place exclusively online at Cinema 3, the ICA's new digital platform. Each film will be available to viewers in the UK to stream on demand for seven days after its initial screening.

Tickets for each film cost £6 for non-members – but ICA Members can access the entire programme for free. All talks, discussions and Q&As are free.

Friday 27 November
6.30pm



Panquiaco

Dir. Ana Elena Tejera
Panama 2020
80 min.
Portuguese and Dulegaya with English subtitles
UK premiere

Panama is not only a geographical space connecting Central and South America – it also offers a vantage point on both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Less concerned with bodies of water than the terrains that separate them, Panamanian filmmaker Ana Elena Tejera's *Panquiaco* is narratively divided between Portugal and Panama. Against this liminal backdrop, the film is a meditative exploration of one man's return home after a lifetime away. Titled in memory of an indigenous man whose aid to Spanish explorer Vasco Núñez de Balboa has long been forgotten, *Panquiaco* offers an unflinching reflection on the concept of home.

The screening is followed by a Q&A with director Ana Elena Tejera.

Ana Elena Tejera's lyrical docufiction *Panquiaco* fluidly navigates the relation of Panamanian indigeneity to global diaspora. Defined by water, Panama is an isthmus that bridges Central and South America and the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, a geographical nexus demarcated by colonisation, trade and transit. Yet an indigenous chronicle of the land of 'two seas', and the ocean as an animating cosmology, precedes it.

Panquiaco was filmed with the collaboration of the Ustupu community in Guna Yala, in Campo Laurel and in Darién, Panama, and in the Portuguese town of Vila do Conde, and Tejera's participants portray themselves. The film opens on a Koguis creation myth that posits the sea as a force: as much epistemological as spiritual, enfolded origin and subjective imagination. 'The sea was not water, nor a thing nor a person. It was our mother, it was our memory, it was our thought.' Such an expansive sense of the potentiality of the oceanic opposes the ways in which the sea has historically been harnessed: a paradoxical medium for imperial and capitalist circulation, exploitation, extraction.

This tension animates Tejera's film through its focus on Cebaldo de León Smith, a Dule fisherman's assistant living in Northern Portugal. Cebaldo yearns for home in Guna Yala, and flickers of that life thickly present as remembered elsewhere. In the cold, foggy, purple Portuguese evening skies and craggy coast, Cebaldo toils, then drinks in port-town bars and listens to *saudade*-laced songs on the jukebox. In private, he plays an answering-machine recording of family members' messages, their long-ago-captured voices describing how they have waited – anniversaries of deaths unmet with his visitation. Reminiscences of childhood bring images of a boy playing and bathing in undulating water infused with medicinal plants, leaves sticking to his wet skin.

Such longings invite a reckoning with the filial ghosts that remain there, cemented in the gulf of absence. Tejera interweaves Cebaldo's homecoming with the practices of the Ustupu community: women intricately embroider Guna *mola* in scarlet cloth and mustard thread; elders sing and prepare for a funerary rite. The elements of subjective memory and collective sacraments intersect with the saga of Panquiaco, who directed the Spanish colonial conquistador Vasco Núñez de Balboa to Europe's first encounter with the Pacific Ocean. Panquiaco's grief at his own betrayal of the land is allegorised, linked to Cebaldo's mourning work, both figures left to 'wandering between two seas'. The self-exiled subject must reconcile himself with earthly and spiritual departure.

Indigenous poet leader and botanical healer Fernando Fernández, among other oracular figures, advise Cebaldo that his task is a difficult one. 'The sea is waiting for you, wherever you are... The land that we lose does not return. You have to let it go.' Such a loss of land links a floating transit and a deeper historicity of colonial dispossession. Yet the sea's exigency embraces the breath and spirit of the exile, engulfing the tumult of the castaway who drifts far from home.

Elena Gorfinkel is an academic and film critic.

Saturday 28 November
4.30pm



Oroslan

Dir. Matjaž Ivanišin
Slovenia / Czech Republic 2019
72 min.
Slovenian with English subtitles
UK premiere

Set in a remote Hungarian village and based on a Zdravko Duša short story, Matjaž Ivanišin's *Oroslan* follows the lives of a Slovenian minority community as they grapple with grief and mortality following the death of an elderly villager. Ivanišin fabricates reality, juxtaposing the fictional and the observational with the tradition of oral storytelling to explore how Oroslan's passing triggers rumination and introspection within the community. Often shot from behind or sharply from the side, Oroslan's friends and acquaintances recount personal stories, slowly revealing their relationships with him and recreating his image through tales of their own fears and desires.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with director Matjaž Ivanišin.

The most satisfying cinema makes unwitting storytellers of its audience, by which I mean that it leaves space for the viewer to create and engage with the film both during and after. It is an invitation to bring the colour of personal memories to the viewing experience. It is cinema that demands engagement rather than passivity. Matjaž Ivanišin's *Oroslan*, an examination of a life as repository of stories, does all of this and more in a brooding account of loss within a small community.

Based on 'And That's Exactly How It Was', a short story by Slovenian writer Zdravko Duša, *Oroslan* first gives a sparse account of the aftermath of the death of a man named Oroslan, whose life fitted into the rhythms of the village. Daily meals are prepared in a bilious, steamy kitchen, then packaged into containers to be delivered to those who, for whatever reason, can't or won't cook for themselves. When a neighbour notices that Oroslan's containers sit untouched by his door, she raises the alarm at the local bar, Oroslan's second home. Two men are dispatched to check, and it soon transpires that he died alone from an epileptic fit.

In a series of chapters that are starkly divided by punctuating black-screen edits, the film starts to give shape to the dead man through the memories of those who knew him. A man who is revealed to be his brother talks about the passing of two of his relatives, Oroslan and a girl who drowned years earlier. Another man talks admiringly of Oroslan's butchery skills and his approach to payment for services: 'Never for money, only for meat.' But there are no flashbacks and – deliberately – we are never shown his face. To know Oroslan, the audience must create him for themselves from a combination of the stories told about him and imagination drawn from personal experience.

Ivanišin set the film in a Slovenian minority community in Hungary, and uses the villagers as actors, participants and – to a certain extent – co-creators. They were given lines to read but also contributed memories and stories specific to the locality. The result is both a portrait of a man and a portrait of a community. Oroslan – an epileptic, a skilled butcher, a hard worker, an enthusiastic drinker who preferred pubs to churches – may be physically absent from the film, but in bearing witness through memories, his family and neighbours ensure that even after death, he lives on. And in doing so, the picture reflects on the medium itself. For what is cinema if not captured memories given permanency?

Wendy Ide is a film critic.

Saturday 28 November
7pm



The Earth Is Blue as an Orange

Dir. Iryna Tsilyk
Lithuania / Ukraine 2020
74 min.
Russian and Ukrainian with English subtitles
UK premiere

The first feature from Ukrainian director Iryna Tsilyk focuses on single mother Anna and her family, portraying their daily lives through their own filmmaking as a way to cope amid the conflict in eastern Ukraine's Donbas region. *The Earth Is Blue as an Orange* echoes, through a collaborative and multilayered film construction, the filmmaking process of Anna's family during shifting balances and fragile grounds. Unforgiving grey landscapes and military interventions loom over the family while their collective and individual intimacies intertwine within the creative process, serving as an act of resistance against five years of ruthless brutality.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with director Iryna Tsilyk.

A family sits together in a small Ukrainian dining room conducting a heated argument. The topic of debate: how will they show the audience of their film that they have been living in a war zone for five years? The question is approached with earnestness and passion throughout *The Earth Is Blue as an Orange*, as young Myroslava Trofymchuk, her single mother Anna, her sister Anastasiia, her two little bothers and her extended family attempt to represent their life in a small city in the 'red zone' of Donbas. Since meeting director Iryna Tsilyk at a regional youth filmmaking camp, eldest daughter Mira has dreamed of becoming a cinematographer. While Mira works on her first film, about the daily trauma of shelling and bombings while living under siege, Tsilyk carefully documents the way that the project becomes another example of the family's fierce support for one another.

Through collective efforts that reveal their resourcefulness and resilience, the family takes on multiple roles: scriptwriters, editors, actors, interviewers, advisors. They haul cameras into cellars, pin up backdrops, debate their lines and each other's performances. One of the children remarks, presciently, at the start of the documentary: 'It should be kind of tragic.' What the meta-level approach of a film within a film reveals, however, is not the artifice of representing reality. Instead, Tsilyk's quiet glimpses into the interior life of the Trofymchuk family portray their home as an oasis of warmth and creativity in 'the emptiness of war'. The impressions of Anna between scenes, the mixture of empathy, pride, encouragement and joy as she watches her children, emphasises that maintaining this space of relative security and freedom is hard work and a labour of love.

'Some people would do anything for a good shot'

There is another subtle relationship set up by the film, as the business of war progresses alongside the work of art. Apart from a few shouts and stoic profiles of soldiers, the absence of men is striking. The camera steps into these absences – and, with it, so does the audience. It is left to those who remain to rebuild the future, to shift the frame towards life. This sense of quiet resistance is amplified by the movie's soundtrack, mostly made up of lively conversations and instruments played by family members with the sound of shells muffled in the background. As Anna's mother recounts a particularly violent episode, her grandchildren listen with the intensity of those who know the importance of being heard. With the magic of cinema, history is remembered and retold from the inside through interviews with neighbours and loved ones, painful memories and emotional triumphs.

Astrid Korporaal is a curator and writer, and a PhD candidate at Kingston University.

Sunday 29 November
4pm



Immortal

Dir. Ksenia Okhapkina
Estonia / Latvia 2019
61 min.
Russian with English subtitles
UK premiere

Ksenia Okhapkina's observational study focuses on Apatity, an industrial town in northwestern Russia that was originally built as a Soviet-era forced-labour camp. Apatity echoes the numbness that characterises the young faces in the forced spectacle of marching and dancing, performing inherited rituals that defined the community's existence following the fall of the Soviet Union. Surrounded by a landscape in a state of almost permanent hibernation, bodies and shapes enact a never-ending repetition of formulaic forms of alienation, pieces of a still-existent state machine.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with director Ksenia Okhapkina.

Ksenia Okhapkina's documentary *Immortal* ends with the image of a roomful of small children in beds, some waking as snow falls outside the window. It's an eerie, fairytale-like scene, as if they're hatching out into the strange world that awaits them. The universe of *Immortal* is strange indeed, and elemental: snowdrifts glitter in close-up; a solitary dog howls in the Arctic night; boys discuss a fabled jellyfish said to live forever, a figure of the impression of suspended animation that dominates the film. But the milieu that Okhapkina films could hardly be more concrete: the industrial town of Apatity in the Murmansk region of Russia's far north, an area that, the opening titles tell us, was developed as part of the industrialisation programme of the gulags. The region was once populated by prisoners; but once the prisons closed, says the caption, people stayed.

The suggestion is that today's inhabitants of Apatity are still prisoners, or perhaps ghosts. *Immortal* depicts something like a ghost society, a residue of the former USSR (a faded image of Lenin still peers down from a wall). The strangest remainder of Soviet values here is the existence of the Young Army, established in 2015 to inculcate military values in Russian youth. We see Apatity's school-age boys undertaking manoeuvres in ruined buildings: learning to dismantle rifles, absorbing their instructor's macho banter, listening to heroic legends of Soviet pilots. Meanwhile, upholding traditional gender roles, young girls study ballet steps with a martial edge in preparation for the gala that the youths will perform for the annual Heroes Day.

Meanwhile, trains and buses clatter by; faceless figures in parkas cluster in the night; the mouldering corridors and stairwells of apartment blocks seem to belong to some submarine realm. Beyond the opening captions, there is no explicit commentary; and the film's jigsaw structure, alternating the children's training with eerie tone-poem images, invites us to assemble our own picture of what Apatity is and what, as a supposedly representative image of Russia today, it *means*. The viewer may feel that Okhapkina is offering a distorted, partial, polemical image of Apatity; the town must surely offer some cultural pleasures beyond the solitary tree lit up with acidic yellow lights. But the world she invites us to inhabit is, for the space of an hour, intensely vivid: a seeming cultural fossil in present-day Russia, and yet manifestly alive before our eyes.

Jonathan Romney is a film critic.

Sunday 29 November
6.15pm



Soviet Cycles: A Round-table Discussion on Spectatorship and Censorship

Film-makers Ksenia Okhapkina (*Immortal*), Matjaž Ivanišin (*Oroslan*) and Iryna Tsilyk (*The Earth Is Blue as an Orange*) discuss their filmmaking practices and their most recent features, all made and set in former Soviet Bloc countries and all receiving their UK premieres this weekend at FRAMES of REPRESENTATION. Hosted by film critic Jonathan Romney, this round-table session will focus on storytelling and spectatorship as tools for processing personal and political trauma; the ways in which these films present the differences between unspoken repression and articulated communal discourses; and modern modes of censorship and film production in the respective milieus of each filmmaker.

Soviet Cycles is curated in collaboration with the National Film and Television School.

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Tuesday 1 December
6.45pm



La vida en común

Dir. Ezequiel Yanco
Argentina / France 2019
70 min.
Spanish with English subtitles

Absences, rather than presences, haunt *La vida en común*, an evocative film of Argentinian director Ezequiel Yanco. Set in Pueblo Nación Ranquel, an indigenous settlement of the Rankülche tribe located in the vast province of San Luis, this coming-of-age story follows a group of young teenage boys on the hunt for a puma that has been stalking their village, becoming their rite of passage into adulthood. Missing links propel the film forward: the puma is nowhere to be found, adult figures exist only on the periphery, a beloved dog goes missing. Exposing these voids, Yanco and his young protagonist Uriel traverse parallel realities, constantly shifting between survival, dreams and adulthood.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with director Ezequiel Yanco.

The narrative of the hunt has had a potent influence on modern cinema – whether as a signifier for a particular model of patriarchal masculinity that cannot break away from a dangerous hunter-gatherer archetype, as with John Boorman's *Deliverance* (1972), or as a metaphor for a society simmering with latent violence, as with Carlos Saura's *La caza* (1965). Ezequiel Yanco's *La vida en común*, set in a remote dusty region of northern Argentina, takes a slightly different slant. In delineating the adventures of two boys on the cusp of adolescence tracking down a cattle-eating puma, it shows elements of the Ranquel people and the ways they survive – both economically and emotionally – in a society that is consistently forcing them to assimilate. The hunt represents a coming of age for friends Isaías (13) and Uriel (11), and the camera lingers on the boys giggling about their haircuts and facial hair, shyly observing a new girl and seeking to integrate themselves into the adult-led hunts.

Yanco's film positions the adults at the peripheries of the narrative. It is the boys and their dogs that the camera follows, and it is through their eyes that the changes experienced by their community are narrated. Returning to the *pampa*, the small Ranquel community inhabits concrete tents built by the regional government to emulate their traditional housing. These spectacular houses create a dramatic scenographic contrast to the empty landscape, and are one of many examples – Isaías's recording of birdsong on his mobile phone for the hunting of small birds is another – that show modernity shaping the indigenous community's way of life.

Uriel's voiceover narrates the history of how different children came to the area, and film footage, prints and photographs point to the political and familial histories the children have inherited. The legacy of the devastating 19th-century Conquest of the Desert – the state-legitimised massacres of the indigenous population, highlighted by Lisandro Alonso in *Jauja* (2014) – hovers over the film.

The pursuit of the puma represents the boys' entry into the world of adulthood, a way of articulating their agency in a society where they are expected to acquiesce. Uriel and Isaías are frequently seen climbing the concrete structures built for the community. They want to control what they can of this vast space, to train their dogs, to ride a motorbike, to provide food – as in the graphic opening sequence of a boar being captured and butchered. They want to belong. Avoiding simple binaries, Yanco opts to let the boys tell their own stories against the shifting light and multi-layered sounds of this extraordinary landscape. The result is a poetic work where the layered resonances of colonialism are all too present.

Maria Delgado is an academic, critic and curator.

Wednesday 2 December
6.45pm



Piedra sola

Dir. Alejandro Telémaco Tarraf
Argentina / Mexico / Qatar / UK 2020
82 min.
Spanish and Quechua with English subtitles
UK premiere

Alejandro Telémaco Tarraf's first feature unravels across the Puna, the highlands of the Argentinian North West, a bare landscape infused by ancestral forces and myths. While framing the daily hardships faced by Puna settlements with rigour and humbleness, *Piedra sola* goes beyond a mere observational approach, moving into the meanders of Andean cosmology and spirituality. Accompanying a native llama herder whose flock has been attacked by a puma, a central figure in the region's culture and its way of living, Tarraf embarks on a devotional journey in search of those intertwined connections between individual and universal spheres of existence.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with director Alejandro Telémaco Tarraf and cinematographer Alberto Balazs.

'My interest as a director is to find this ancient voice that has something to offer the current social climate. In order to do this, I chose to bring the camera to the remote village of El Condor, at 4,200 metres above sea level between the bordering mountains of Northern Argentina and Bolivia. A place where civilisation as we know it in the Western world has not yet emerged. Where electricity has only just arrived and the way of life is closer to that of our ancestors.'

– Alejandro Telémaco Tarraf

The debut feature from filmmaker and audio-visual artist Alejandro Telémaco Tarraf, the fable-like *Piedra sola* is set within a small community in the northern highlands of Argentina. Adopting a bare-bones narrative structure, the film follows a native llama herder who sells meat and wool at the nearest town, but finds his livestock under threat from a puma. Evoking ancient tradition, the farmer must engage with his somewhat mystical foe, precipitating an encounter that is perhaps more a journey in search of ancestry. 'I was born as my grandfather died,' says Tarraf. 'I inherited his first name as my second name. For many years, I have had the feeling of carrying some kind of death on my shoulders. A heritage that I am still not able to comprehend.'

Inspired by the archetypes of the tarot and the Andean Cosmovision, where the past is thought to be ahead and the future behind, *Piedra sola* was filmed in a community where the mystical and the mythical still govern the way of life. Tarraf, who also acts as his own editor, spent a lot of time in this remote but visually arresting location, working with local people and non-actors. 'By using non-actors and portraying local conflicts, I am interested in the diffusion between documentary and fiction, dream and reality, and in discovering an image more true to life in all senses. It is a form of narration that encapsulates the essence of human longing.'

With echoes of Patricio Guzmán in its analysis of the relationship between past and present, the film is also evocative of the work of Lisandro Alonso and Carlos Reygadas through its use of natural light and landscapes. A truly mesmerising and sensory experience, *Piedra sola* has that rare ability to transport the viewer to somewhere else entirely.

Jason Wood is a writer, curator and filmmaker.

Thursday 3 December
6.45pm



Los conductos

Dir. Camilo Restrepo
France / Colombia / Brazil 2020
70 min.
Spanish with English subtitles
UK premiere

Shot on 16mm celluloid, Colombian filmmaker Camilo Restrepo's *Los conductos* uncovers the sociopolitical reality of his country and Latin America through the hallucinatory journey of a troubled, restless man through desolate streets and allegorical decomposing existences.

After freeing himself from the psychological abuse of a religious sect, Luis Felipe Lozano, aka 'Pinky', the film's protagonist and a real-life friend of Restrepo, begins his quest for both a personal and more society-wide liberation. Relentlessly visionary and enhanced by psychedelic visuals, *Los conductos* traces Pinky's journey while simultaneously reflecting on the political and social landscape of Colombia. At once oneiric and violent, *Los conductos* collapses the chasm between Pinky's inner turmoil and the ills of Colombia, exposing a fractured society as hungry for justice as its protagonist.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with director Camilo Restrepo.

*It's true that my painting is made up of screams without a current of air.
My monsters come out of the hand, and are men and gods or animals or half
of everything.*

– Emma Reyes

Pinky is Pinky. Camilo Restrepo met him while filming *Como crece la sombra cuando el sol declina* in 2013. A friend of Restrepo, he juggled at traffic lights and printed T-shirts, and had earlier escaped from a religious sect where violence was considered a lesser evil.

Los conductos is Pinky's story, and is also the story of the elements in Colombia. Narrated through characters from street mythology, it presents the fable of the bandit Desquite, seen by some as an avenging social vigilante in the 1950s; the exploits of Tuerquita, Bebé and Pernito, clowns of the 1980s who measured wells in the streets to reveal the corruption of the rulers; and the legend of the lame devil, who educates a young man in the hypocrisies of society.

Restrepo reinvents the images of the everyday, making them appear strange so that common elements become essential and take on a surreal force. The objects in the body of the film are transformed into symbols that derive, in a dense current, a deep voice – a magma that unites different moments, people and objects, turning them into something new.

Born in Medellín, Restrepo went to France to study painting, then bought a Super 8 camera and started filming. The materiality of celluloid and the geographic distance is, perhaps, what made it possible for him to approach Colombia through his films with a different but absolutely personal perspective. This, his first feature film, is a journey through channels that establish unexpected connections and re-actualise stories from the past to make it clear that nothing has changed that much.

The representation of the violence that is lived in this world becomes evident, as does the impossibility of getting out of certain holes. Even so, *Los conductos* does not offer an unequivocally anthropological story. Rather, it approaches its tale in a visceral way, but without moral judgment.

Restrepo's work is thought-provoking and political because he is committed to the reality he films, but without taking sides or reviling it. If a gun has 'This is my life' engraved on its butt, it is because the world is not fair. When one faces death on a daily basis, survival becomes a daily task. So the street, that nocturnal space that is there to receive us, is not only the desolate outside, but perhaps also the last interior space we have left.

Cecilia Barrionuevo is the Director of the Mar del Plata International Film Festival.

Friday 4 December
6pm



IWOW: I Walk on Water

Dir. Khalik Allah
USA 2020
198 min.
English
UK premiere

'I am a homeless saint,' whispers a man against a black backdrop. *IWOW: I Walk on Water* is the monumental new diary film from New York-based director and photographer Khalik Allah. The film returns to 125th Street and Lexington Avenue in East Harlem, the same intersection at which Allah has based much of his work in recent years. Centred upon Allah's longtime friendship with Frenchie, an homeless Haitian man, *IWOW* also acts as a record of the director's recent life – documenting his relationships with his girlfriend Camilla and an inner circle of confidantes, including Fab 5 Freddy, members of the Wu-Tang Clan and his mother.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with director Khalik Allah.

‘So you wanna make this movie with me?’ says Khalik Allah, talking to his girlfriend Camilla at the start of his third feature *IWOW* (2020). ‘It’ll be a simple movie, just everyday stuff.’ Having worked with Beyoncé on *Lemonade* (2016) then travelled to Jamaica and back for his second feature *Black Mother* (2018), the filmmaker here returns to more familiar territory. The majority of *IWOW* was shot on the same corner of Harlem where he made his first feature *Field Niggas* (2015), the place where he’s spent much of the last decade refining his photographic practice.

Though Allah has been using video since he was 14, his films feel like those of a photographer. Sound is usually asynchronous to the images; the focus, foremost, is on portraiture. In interviews, Allah has referenced studying some of the greats of social realist street photography – Henri Cartier-Bresson, William Klein, William Eggleston – before realising that their work didn’t represent his experience. To produce something that did, he realised that he would have to follow his own path: shooting where he wasn’t supposed to, in ways he had been advised against using. A candid approach would never work. To make real portraits, he’d have to talk with people – or, better still, get to know them.

So he looks and listens, stitching together what he finds. Polyphonic and polyvalent, Allah’s films feature a plurality of voices, but *IWOW* has two that tether it. First is Frenchie, a homeless Haitian man with whom the filmmaker has been working for years. Acting, as Allah does, as both participant and spectator, Frenchie serves as a sort of gravitational force from which the film orbits outwards. ‘I want you to be a broadcaster,’ Allah tells him. ‘People want to hear from you.’ Speaking less himself, Allah instead asks a cast of friends and strangers for their opinions on life, love and faith, ‘broadcasting’ their feelings about this world and the next in the form of a three-hour aural-visual collage that channels their thoughts through Allah’s own unique aesthetic approach and lyrical perspective.

Shot on a mixture of film formats and stocks, Allah’s films are always exquisitely beautiful, displaying his affinity for capturing the dramatic qualities of light as it lands on (usually black) faces and (generally urban) surfaces. But with *IWOW*, Allah also displays a newfound vulnerability. Take, for instance, the scene where his mother challenges his choices and beliefs, using his given name rather than the one he has chosen. Or the one where his girlfriend upends his worldview, questioning the literal ways in which he sees the world. Having made his life all about looking, Allah finds himself being told that he can’t even see what lies right in front of him. The prominence of Camilla, the second key voice, makes implicit what Allah’s films have always suggested: his camera isn’t just a tool for seeing but for listening (and hopefully learning) too; a way of letting others in. A diary film like few others, *IWOW* might seem simple, but under the surface is anything but.

Matt Turner is a writer and film programmer.



FoR Shorts #1

Reynard (Raposa)

Dir. Leonor Noivo

Portugal 2019

40 min.

Portuguese with English subtitles

UK premiere

Seven Years in May (Sete anos em maio)

Dir. Affonso Uchôa

Brazil / Argentina 2019

42 min.

Portuguese with English subtitles

Tender (Tendre)

Dir. Isabel Pagliai

France 2020

43 min.

French with English subtitles

UK premiere

Reynard follows Marta as she navigates the effects of a serious illness. Flashes of red – Marta's hair, coat, nails – allude to the allegorical fox with a hint of danger, the colour deliberately framed in contrast to the muted surroundings and often punctuated by contradictions: a woman vomiting blood, cherry-picking carried out with an ominous precision. Leonor Noivo's camera gracefully acts as a silent witness, pacing behind the young woman as though on the hunt.

Seven Years in May places the past as a dark, foreign country, revisiting it through the hypnotic, pulsating words of the film's young protagonist. Immersed in the sepulchral night as he sits in front of a campfire, Rafael dos Santos Rocha is not an immaculate off-screen narrative voice but a figure engraved in the landscape, an ostracised and oppressed individual whose body and existence have been violently marked by police repression. *Seven Years in May* continues Affonso Uchôa's exploration of the silenced stories and characters of Contagem, a city in south-east Brazil, amid a larger narrative of poverty, racism and systemic institutional corruption.

Tender takes us into late summertime, often at sunset, and a group of kids wandering barefoot around a lake like wild animals. Their views on love show cunning, but the tension between the girls and the boys is both fierce and inseparable from desire. While Isabel Pagliai's work at times seems to hide violence behind its title, it also unequivocally stands beside the children like a tree or a shadow, witnessing their blossoming yet brutal relationships as their slender bodies are quietly covered by the dusk.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with directors Leonor Noivo, Affonso Uchôa and Isabel Pagliai.

FoR Shorts #1 is presented in academic partnership with Falmouth University.

*One way could be you being an actress for a character who isn't you, who isn't me ...
Of a character we both can build? That's it.*

The cards are laid on the table right at the start of Leonor Noivo's *Reynard*, a layered, truth-to-essence portrait (shot on 16mm) of a heroine's mental affair with her body. Fiction will envelop reality and thus bring it to the forefront. Cinema will become a game for its makers, one of narrative experimentation and artistic freedom, and the viewer will be offered a staging of reality. Noivo and actress Patrícia Guerreiro (playing Marta-Patrícia) slowly unfold a story of a behavioural malady and the inner path its bearer walks to cope with it, aiming at a personal liberation that presents itself as both intricate and necessary. Through a gentle display of Marta-Patrícia's obsessions, patterns that guide her life, one infers that we are at least partly dealing with anorexia – and with a body to which she will literally and metaphorically pose as a spectator when cinema infiltrates the narrative with an excerpt of Guerreiro's performance in João Botelho's *O Fatalista* (2005).

In Affonso Uchôa's *Seven Years in May*, the body of Rafael dos Santos Rocha bears victim to the external and very tangible menace of police brutality in Brazil. The game of re-enactment is deliberately put to use in order to place the viewer as a spectator on a night of violence through which Rocha lived some seven years ago. With a fluid narrative fully committed to portraying and denouncing the pain of its subject, Uchôa closes this nocturnal journey by making sure Rocha wins the last game, one in which he stands still in the face of social inequality.

Suspended in time and place, we find the youngest of our subjects in Isabel Pagliai's *Tender*. Mia, still a child, keeps her reins on Hugo short when discussing his love affair with Chaïnes, a girl to whom he took a liking a few months before. Pagliai tenderly wraps these children in the poetic density of the carefree nature in which they spend their time, allowing their bodies and words to take centre stage. Their love is combat, their strength unequivocal. Holding its intimate yet kaleidoscopic gaze at human nature and the forces that surround it, the cinema of the real in this programme is one that elevates and dignifies those who these films portray.

Ana David is a film programmer.

Sunday 6 December
6.15pm



Un Film Dramatique

Dir. Éric Baudelaire
France 2019
114 min.
French with English subtitles
UK premiere

A powerful exercise in collectivity, *Un Film Dramatique* is co-directed by Franco-American filmmaker Éric Baudelaire alongside a class of 21 middle schoolers. The film takes shape over a period of four years, during which time Baudelaire collaborated with students at the Dora Maar school in Paris' Saint-Denis commune. Compiling individual and communally-made film footage, *Un Film Dramatique* features the students' insights on their young lives as they offer personal reflections and join in shared discussions about politics, identity, cooperation and belonging. The ensemble examines what cinema is, resisting any concepts such as master and student while learning becomes performative, in the making, activity.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with director Éric Baudelaire.

A strong initial workshop idea, several types of camera and a long-term commitment: these are the preconditions established by Franco-American artist and filmmaker Éric Baudelaire, the recipient last year of the prestigious Prix Marcel Duchamp, for the making of his new feature. He shaped the project with Dora Maar school in the Parisian suburb of Saint-Denis, and with a group of 21 middle schoolers, who showed both spectacular commitment and a truly free spirit during the four years of filming.

Although the overarching rules governing the film's structure are deliberately made evident, Baudelaire has created a work from which emerge varied and surprising frames of reflection that intertwine throughout. The film offers rich perspectives on the complex relationship between students and current events (individually and collectively, how did they experience the terrorist attacks that took place in Paris in 2015?) and questions their relation to the image (including their own), which fascinates as much as it makes us wonder what will remain of the traditional cinemagoing experience for younger generations.

Through each participant's life outside the school walls, Baudelaire also suggests a rich spatial and social cartography, a patchwork of the many situations to which we are invited: the families and neighbours we meet and the homes and intimacies we discover, which reveal both the diversity of representative family structures, pastimes and professional activities, and, more globally, the diversity within the French public school system. Baudelaire, who trained as a historian and political scientist, has crafted an experiment in film literacy, an alluring work of non-fiction filmmaking and a snapshot of today's France that is reminiscent of some of his most recent and equally absorbing projects: such as *Après* (2017), an exhibition at the Centre Pompidou exploring the aftermath of the attacks in France, and *Where are you going?* (2018), an art project considering the consequences of the Brexit referendum.

As the title of *Un Film Dramatique* suggests, however, the central thread of thoughts is a reflection on the film form. Baudelaire invites the ensemble to examine what constitutes a film and prompts them to start filming their everyday lives, urging them to break down the barriers between *watching* and *making*. The participants, who are also active spectators of their own lives, interrogate their perceptions of their own routines, and of what is recognised as having a narrative interest in the making of a cooperative film. We see the schoolchildren getting progressively more personal in the material they produce – proving the efficacy of Baudelaire's initiative, as he himself becomes witness to each participant's fragments of their life. For the students, the emancipative process of making the film establishes the keystone of a positive, reflective and (re)active relationship with the over-present image, both filmed and experienced. This bond solidifies throughout the film, as the participants gain confidence in the medium and in their capacity to navigate it an increasingly unrestricted way.

Conceptually, as a pedagogical exercise, the film seems sufficient to itself as a wholesome experiment. An external, foreign audience feels secondary, inasmuch as the intent behind the experience has been flawlessly fulfilled. However, Baudelaire and the 21 co-directors' final work is so revealing in grasping the relationship between today's youth and the moving image, between current events and the questions they raise, that it proves a revelatory and fabulously inspiring watching experience.

Monday 7 December
7pm



Harlem – 125th Street / Lexington Avenue: Artist's Talk with Khalik Allah

Returning to FRAMES of REPRESENTATION after premiering *Field Niggas* in 2015 and *Black Mother* in 2018, New York-based director and photographer Khalik Allah is back this year with *IWOW: I Walk on Water* (screening from Friday 4 December). Hosted by Shanida Scotland, Head of Film at Doc Society, this conversation focuses on Allah's photography practice to discuss his body of work, which is centred on black communities in Harlem and particularly those living at the intersection of 125th Street and Lexington Avenue. Destabilising common narratives of race and marginalisation, Allah's cross-disciplinary work includes his ongoing photography series intertwined with his filmmaking practice, ranging from the raw, visionary *Field Niggas* to *IWOW*, which will be addressed alongside projections of many of his most iconic photographs.

Tuesday 8 December
6.30pm



A Storm Was Coming (Anunciaron tormenta)

Dir. Javier Fernández Vázquez
Spain 2020
87 min.
Spanish and Bubi with English subtitles
UK premiere

Pushing beyond the confines of accepted colonial histories, the debut solo feature from Spanish director Javier Fernández Vázquez is an audiovisual experiment rooted in rigorous anthropological research. Developed last year at the inaugural edition of PROGRESSIO, *A Storm Was Coming* offers a counter-narrative to the traditional history of Spain's complex relationship with Equatorial Guinea, its former colony.

Blending genres and mixing film with original drawings, writings and photographs, the feature intersperses quotidian scenes filmed within Equatorial Guinea with austere close-ups of a voiceover studio in which Spanish actors narrate a version of history that questions the so-called official narrative. But within this studio space, the artificiality is heightened as the actors stumble over their story. *A Storm Was Coming* is an unflinching defence of oral history's capacity to challenge dominant narratives of power.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with director Javier Fernández Vázquez.

In 2018, the ICA announced that *A Storm Was Coming* and Brittany Shyne's *Seeds* would both receive support through the inaugural edition of PROGRESSIO, the FRAMES of REPRESENTATION film development platform established by the ICA in association with Cineteca Madrid, the Sundance Documentary Institute and Kingston University. *A Storm Was Coming* received its world premiere in February 2020 at the 70th edition of the Berlin International Film Festival, and has since featured at several other festivals and won a number of awards.

If anthropology was once considered the handmaiden to colonialism, filmmaker and anthropologist Javier Fernández Vázquez uses form to deconstruct power structures that forced their way into recorded history.

In *A Storm Was Coming*, Vázquez investigates an incident that occurred in 1904 on the island of Bioko in Equatorial Guinea. Spanish missionaries were moving in and colonial police were terrorising the locals, but Esáasi Eweera, the king of the Bubi community that is indigenous to the island, was resisting the oppressive Europeans. Something then happened in the dead of night that was far more sinister and brutal than the Spanish authorities reported.

The town of Moka has layers of memory. There is the Moka that Vázquez reveals to us now, through static landscapes and deteriorated visuals. There is the Moka that the colonisers claimed and photographed. And there is the intersection where these two points in time are brought into a sensory dialogue. Erasure is embodied by the texture of the film, as is the damage of overexposure.

Deteriorated archive images develop out of overexposed whiteness to be consumed once again by the bleached void; a photograph flashes on the screen, disappearing before you can engage your gaze; a double-exposure wavers between Moka now and the Moka recorded by colonialists. The ghosts of racist infrastructures haunt how we engage with what we see today, and how we take the privilege of a gaze for granted.

There is intentional visual absence in sections of *A Storm Was Coming*, as descendants of the Bubis express in interviews with Vázquez how they want to be represented. Through these oral histories and a sensory ethnography of space, the narrative builds layers of history over the present, revealing how trauma continues to resonate through time.

The shared communicative memory is more insightful than the tenuous and incomplete dossiers, which reveal nothing but egotistical drives and manipulative excuses. Vázquez films men reading these documents, a vocalisation that exposes their vacuous nature: self-congratulatory, childish and gaslighting, like many voices in contemporary right-wing politics.

Gaslighting is denying someone else's reality and perceptions until they doubt it themselves, and the very ground they stand on feels unsteady. These documents refer to Esáasi Eweera as the 'so-called' king, and instead call him by another name. In present-day Moka, two men discuss how the sense of fear and belief that Moka wasn't their land stretched into this century – the tentacles of cultural gaslighting.

A Storm Was Coming re-evaluates what we give weight to in terms of truth and evidence, and how lines fed by officiating authorities should not be taken at face value. It is the poem spoken in the Bubi's language, written by Justo Bolekia Boleká, that illuminates the night. It names the violence and gets to the heart of a historical crime.

Sophie Brown is a film programmer and writer.

Wednesday 9 December
6.30pm



Endless Night (Longa noite)

Dir. Eloy Enciso
Spain 2019
90 min.
Galician and Spanish with English subtitles
UK premiere

In Eloy Enciso's third feature, a man returns to his Galician hometown after years of absence to unearth hidden stories from the years following the Spanish Civil War. With echoes of Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet's methodologies in approaching the present through representations of the forgotten past, *Endless Night* assembles different accounts from plays, memoirs and letters by writers and artists such as Max Aub, Alfonso Sastre and Luís Seoane. In an unfolding series of austere, well-composed and often nocturnal scenes evoking a nightmarish atmosphere, non-professional actors lay out testimonies and fabulations side by side in order to delve into the long night of the fascist Franco regime.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with director Eloy Enciso.

Galicia has, for the last decade or more, been an incubator of the most radical tendencies in Spanish narrative cinema. The third feature by Eloy Enciso, one of contemporary Galician cinema's leading lights, is set in the region during what we gradually realise are the early years of the Franco dictatorship, when the victorious Nationalists' repression was at its most deadly. *Endless Night* centres on the nocturnal wanderings across a town, and across then snowy, forested landscapes, of Anxo (artist Misha Bies Golas), a Republican returned to his homeland now the Civil War has ended, and on his encounters and conversations that gradually assume darker hues as they recount the murderous reprisals that are being unleashed.

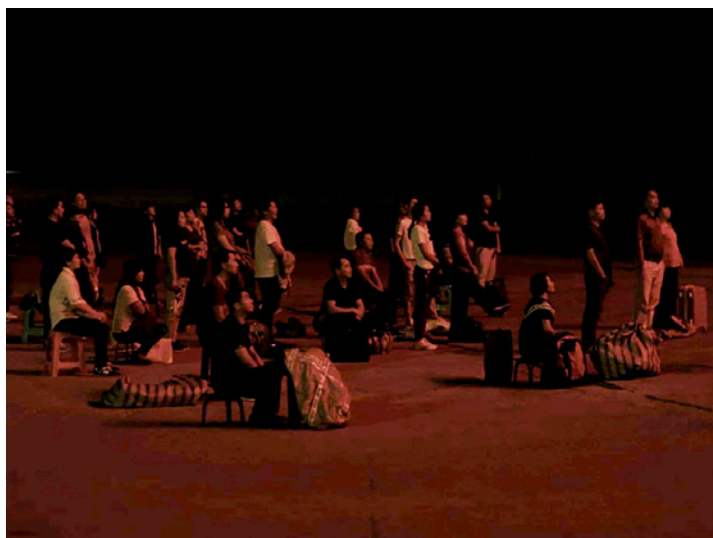
One impetus for *Endless Night* was Enciso's discovery of diaries, letters, memoirs, exile literature and other personal writings from this period, most barely known even in Spain owing to contemporary state suppression, that give detailed accounts of the suffering and violence endured by opponents of the newly installed fascist regime during what writer Celso Emilio Ferreiro called 'the long night of stone' (the same line provides the film's original Galician title, *Longa noite*). Excerpts from these piercing texts are used understatedly to intense effect: most notably in the middle section of the film, where the acting takes on a recited, almost mediumistic quality; and in disembodied voiceover in the hypnotically extended final section, which immerses us in an eerily rendered night-time forest that ultimately seems to swallow Anxo.

For Enciso, these writings seemed to connect more powerfully than any others with his own despair at the political disasters being inflicted today; as the title suggests, the darkness of this period extends into the present and beyond. Darkness in *Endless Night* is literal as well as metaphorical: a virtually tactile, occasionally oneiric and uncanny presence thanks to Mauro Herce's magnificent cinematography. We are compelled to inhabit the darkness of those times by way of imaginative solidarity with the agonies endured, with the lives erased.

The Galician landscape also assumes prominence, a psychic space profoundly marked by history's vicissitudes. The texts speak of forcible deracination, not only of obliterated family and community bonds but of a broken connection with the land itself. As all this becomes apparent – slowly, stealthily – the film acquires immense force and gravitas, becomes pervaded by an overwhelming sadness. *Endless Night* is a cry in the night: an act of remembrance and resistance that restores but a few of history's forgotten voices, its recuperated fragments shored against all our ruins.

Kieron Corless is a writer and editor.

Thursday 10 December
7pm



From Tomorrow on, I Will (Chun nuan hua kai)

Dirs. Ivan Marković and Wu Linfeng
Germany / China / Serbia 2019
60 min.
Mandarin with English subtitles
UK premiere

By following Li, a nightwatchman, as he goes about his daily rounds, Ivan Marković and Wu Linfeng's *From Tomorrow on, I Will* tracks the rhythms that define the gargantuan and rapidly changing city of Beijing – from the movement of crowds in the markets and streets to the way the light alters its buildings and open spaces.

As we follow Li and his roommate, whom he only meets to swap shifts in bed, we're immersed in a silent urban landscape filled alternately by fluorescent-lit streets and intermittent greenery. Diegetic sound and still cameras intercept the fine contrasts between human bodies and urban constructions, and between confined and wide-open spaces. Quiet songs and remnants of vegetation erupting in the concrete jungle stand as signs of resistance against the incessant and oblivious expansion of capitalism.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with co-director Ivan Marković.

As people from all walks of life criss-cross a Beijing intersection in *From Tomorrow on, I Will*, we momentarily lose sight of Li, a night guard whose solitary life we follow. The restless city of Beijing, his home, is on hyperdrive day and night in its endless pursuit of progress. In his book *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (Verso, 2013), Jonathan Crary discusses the round-the-clock activity into which capitalism leads us, examining an abandoned plan conceived in the 1990s by a Russian/European space consortium to launch parabolic reflectors into space in order to illuminate night on earth. An endeavour like that might not be so far-fetched in Beijing, where a LED billboard once replaced sunlight when smog darkened the daytime sky.

Often shown asleep or standing still, Li is swimming upstream in a city where rest has become an act of defiance. Co-director Ivan Marković, who previously shot Dane Komljen's *All the Cities of the North* and Angela Schanelec's *I Was at Home, But*, frames Li mostly alone within four walls, sheltered from the energy that floods the city and always out of sync with his surroundings. Li shares a bed with his roommate in a damp-looking underground house, one of many residences in the city now declared illegal, but they rarely see one another as Li works nightshifts. Beijing itself seems to be unsure at what point in time it exists, suspended between present and future. The city is shown full of half-built scaffolding and covered with billboards depicting 3D renderings of imagined destinies.

'Yesterday returns once more,' Li sings alone in his bed. For him and his city, *déjà vu* is a daily routine. Patrolling his office building, Li encounters an old man carelessly asleep against a window; later, he unintentionally mirrors this moment when he rests his head against a similar windowpane. The unfinished sentence that is the English title of the film is the opening line from the last poem that Chinese poet Hai Zi wrote before his suicide; the closing line of the same poem lends its name to the film's Chinese title. Time spirals forward, but if you stand still, you might catch a glimpse of yourself passing by.

Julian Ross is a curator, researcher and writer.

Friday 11 December
6.20pm



The Cloud in Her Room (Ta fang jian li de yun)

Dir. Zheng Lu Xinyuan
Hong Kong / China 2020
98 min.
Chinese with English subtitles
UK premiere

A visual diary loosely based on the filmmaker's memories, Zheng Lu Xinyuan's pulsating first feature weaves reality, fiction and experimental reveries into a generational reflection on love, returning and impermanence.

When Muzi returns home to Hangzhou for Chinese New Year, she finds the city covered in mist. Failing to create meaningful connections with those around her, she takes comfort only in solitude and deserted city spaces at night. Intimacy briefly arises around cigarettes, food, songs and whistles, but no one or nothing ever accesses Muzi's melancholic state of mind – except for the camera.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with director Zheng Lu Xinyuan.

Building up from her own personal memories, Zheng Lu Xinyuan composed her first feature as a subtle study of the representation of character interiority in cinema, centred on a 22-year-old girl whose inner world becomes accessible through the film's visual reveries.

When Muzi returns home to Hangzhou for New Year, the place at she arrives in the middle of winter is a ghost town: a dim picture of her childhood and adolescence, a place to which she no longer belongs. Avoiding her father's bright, tidy house, a world beneath which secret wounds persist, and her mother's more hospitable home, which represents abandoned womanhood, Muzi obsessively seeks refuge in the now-derelict apartment where she grew up.

Muzi's uneasy initiation into adulthood is mirrored by her return to her childhood memories, which never become palpable but are somehow projected through landscape and other characters. The opening credits are accompanied by a free-floating camera in the middle of the greenery that surrounds the family's old apartment, a reconstruction of her departure; Muzi takes her boyfriend to the old family house, trying to relive her parents' conjugality in their own bed; her young half-sister, whose innocent face is framed by the camera while she models in the school show, evokes what would have been Muzi's awareness of her leading role as the family's only child.

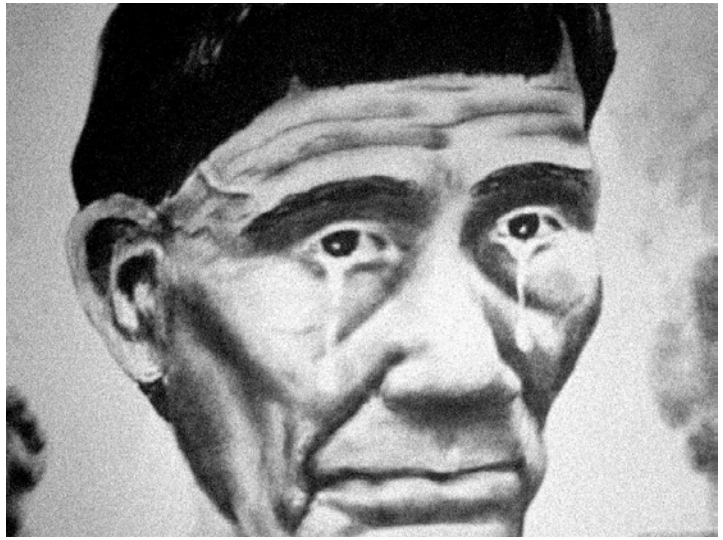
In fact, Muzi's identity is reimagined in other female characters: most importantly her mother, who is depicted either as lonely and out of place, or as a beautiful young woman to which the camera dedicates the attention for which she yearns. But Muzi is the one at whom the spectator looks most often, although not much is to be learned from her apparently quiet face: neither actions nor words should be taken at face value. The frequently heartless statements Muzi addresses to her lovers reveal only her fear of abandonment.

But it is in the face of Muzi's opaque look that Zheng Lu's experimentation with the camera becomes bolder as it reaches baffling dimensions. Like the film sequences reversed into negative images, the girl's interior life is turned into thunderstorm skies, night lights, the outside world seen through a car window, cave walls covered by crystals that sparkle under the light.

The Cloud in Her Room is an aquatic passage that Muzi traverses, like the long silent nights through which she walks alone. The veil that envelops her mind is shattered throughout the film, changed by different states of water: the ongoing rain that covers Hangzhou, the pond-like ceiling that drips, the bathtub where she lets her femininity float, the swimming pool inside which bodies turn into foetuses and are doubled up by the surface.

Raquel Morais is the FRAMES of REPRESENTATION Festival Coordinator.

Saturday 12 December
6.30pm



FoR Shorts #2

Apiyemiyeki?

Dir. Ana Vaz

Brazil / France / Netherlands / Portugal 2019

28 min.

Portuguese with English subtitles

Aggregate States of Matters

Dir. Rosa Barba

Peru / Germany 2019

18 min.

Spanish and Quechua with English subtitles

UK premiere

Sun Dog

Dir. Dorian Jespers

Belgium / Russia 2020

21 min.

Russian with English subtitles

UK premiere

Apiyemiyeki? revisits the massacre of the Waimiri-Atroari indigenous community by the Brazilian military dictatorship through the archives of indigenous rights campaigner Egydio Schwade. Mixing original footage with archive materials such as Waimiri-Atroari narratives and self-portraits, which Schwade collected while teaching the community how to read and write, Ana Vaz continues her creative exploration of the connections between ethnography, history, language and colonialism through the film's palimpsestic structure.

Aggregate States of Matters is an operatic investigation, shot in 35mm, into the increasingly problematic balance between humans and nature. Mapping different states and geographies of water, central to all forms of life, Rosa Barba shows how human actions are violently affecting both the landscapes and the local communities of the Quechuan population in the Peruvian Andes. Conceived as a holistic fusion of electronic sounds, scientific accounts and depictions of local rituals and customs, *Aggregate States of Matters* synthesises the way different places around the world are part of the same wider motion.

Sun Dog follows Fedor, a young locksmith, through the everlasting Arctic winter darkness that envelopes the frozen city of Murmansk in the far north-west corner of Russia. Wandering from door to door, Fedor encounters multiple bodies, while voices and presences fade away as rapidly as they emerge and faces are hardly distinct from the surrounding obscurity. First-time director Dorian Jespers defines a distinctive immersive visual language, blending watery and metallic soundscapes with liturgical music and a Tarkovskyan treatment of space and time.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with directors Ana Vaz, Rosa Barba and Dorian Jespers.

FoR Shorts #2 is presented in academic partnership with Falmouth University.

Anchors are unmoored from dominant narratives in this trio of shorts, nudging us to orient ourselves within a cacophony of voices and reckon with the distortions of history.

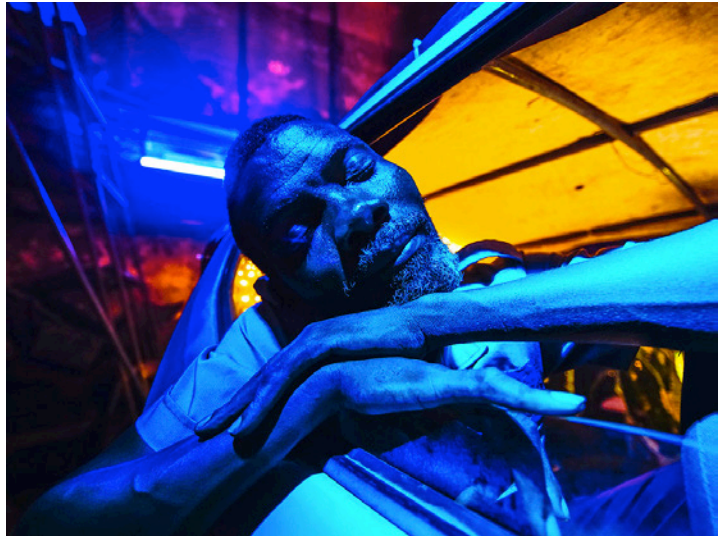
‘It is as if the dictatorship never ended for these people, and they continued to receive all its violence.’ So it is said of the Waimiri-Atroari, a people indigenous to the Brazilian Amazon, in Ana Vaz’s *Apiyemiyeki?*. Their archive-sourced drawings, originally part of a communications drive to ‘civilise’ them, show the atrocities they suffered under the watch of the ruling junta, which built a highway through their land to exploit its resources in the 1970s. As they are superimposed upon the environment, collective memory is dynamically renegotiated. The Waimiri-Atroari shift from being the silent recipients of oppressive definitions and a challenging dialogue opens up with the audience, as we are compelled to account for the true seat of savagery reflected back upon us.

The monumental physicality of Peru’s Cordillera Blanca is captured on 35mm with a keen sense of materiality in Rosa Barba’s *Aggregate States of Matters*. As a throng of people murmurs, text is overlaid, translating the thoughts of the Quechuan people who are dependent on water from a receding glacier. The Quechuans believe that the gods will maintain their resources forever – and accept that if they don’t, all things end when they should. Great white masses break up and land turns arid by matter melting, making dissonant their faith in a natural order. We’re invited to ponder whether the abstract meaning systems of the humans who are as much the casualties of colonialist ‘progress’ as the Earth can absorb this transformation, and what hand we’ve had in shaping an ecosystem so out of joint.

We glide aurally like disembodied ghosts over another icy expanse and into Murmansk, a port city in the Russian arctic. The locals in *Sun Dog*, by Dorian Jespers, press on with life in the darkness of a winter so endless that reality loses its edges. Through a blizzard-lashed dreamworld of phantasmagorical visions and sonic echoes of the ocean deep, locksmith Fedor, a key emblazoned on his jacket, is called on to help those shut out in the cold. Amid woozy, sliding vantage points, we grasp for guidance. ‘It’s all for you,’ a woman addresses us. ‘Even me – I live here only for you.’ This melancholic half-world is condemned to serve our touristic gaze, which beams back no warmth. But the sun may not be far off.

Carmen Gray is a journalist, film programmer and critic.

Sunday 13 December
6pm



Air Conditioner (Ar condicionado)

Dir. Fradique
Angola 2020
72 min.
Portuguese with English subtitles
UK premiere

Set against the humid backdrop of Luanda, Angolan filmmaker Fradique's *Air Conditioner* playfully juxtaposes surreal events with neorealist aesthetics. Air conditioner units mysteriously fall from the sky as sounds are abstracted or decelerated to slow motion; a protagonist recalls the nightmare of a dry, waterless sea while attempts are made to rebuild people's lives after the civil war. As characters move languidly, music and sound shape the city and our perceptions of its chaotic hum. Written, produced and shot in an almost dreamlike tone by collective Geração 80, and introduced by Cafuxi's atmospheric photographs of Luanda, *Air Conditioner* probes the effects of political secrecy while expanding the possibilities of the cinema of the real.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with director Fradique.

In apocalyptic times, what does political filmmaking look like? For Angolan filmmaking collective Geração 80, it looks like air-conditioning units dropping from the sky.

Directed by Fradique, produced by Jorge Cohen and co-written and shot by cinematographer Ery Claver, the film features the jazz sounds of singer-songwriter Aline Frazão and black-and-white still photography by visual artist Cafuxi. Together, they use the imaginative possibilities of science fiction to offer a critique of both the former Portuguese colony's 'airspace' and its 'conditioning', or the self-interest with which it has been shaped.

In Luanda, Angola's capital, air conditioners are falling from their fixtures. According to the omnipresent sound of the radio, a spectre of all-too-recent revolution, conspiracy theories are rife. Audio dispatches suggest that the failing units are a ploy to insert Chinese-manufactured fans into the Angolan market; the country is 'always trying to import models from abroad'. Buildings are overheating, and tempers could also do with cooling off. A security guard, Matacedo (José Kiteculo), and a maid, Zezinha (Filomena Manuel), have been ordered by their boss to fix a broken A/C, which involves a trip to a repair shop owned by the notorious Mr Mino (David Caracol).

Without speaking aloud, a neighbour says to Matacedo, 'The thing you're looking for – you'll find it in a TV set.'

War veteran Matacedo begins a dreamlike sojourn around the port of Luanda, a city still rebuilding after Angola's 27-year civil war (1975-2002). As white Portuguese settlers established themselves in the country's interior, refugees fleeing the war were pushed outwards; the city now houses some eight million people. Matacedo spends lengthy stretches of the film wandering corridors and stairwells, peeking into scenes of the domesticity that lives behind half-closed doors. His own building houses families cramped into one-bedroom apartments, their living quarters stacked on top of one another. Tangled wires and makeshift power generators replace gardens. Like the air conditioners, the tall tower might well collapse – or combust.

'Our memories fall out with the trees,' says Mr Mino, whose shop contains the last plants in the city. According to the eccentric technician, the air conditioners hold secrets. Breaking one apart, it is revealed that the component contains memories. Like *Back to the Future's* Doc Brown, Mr Mino has used it to build a kind of time machine. When Matacedo steps inside, he feels the bliss of a cool breeze for the first time in days – and the visceral rush of the national trauma he's unable to forget.

Simran Hans is a film critic.

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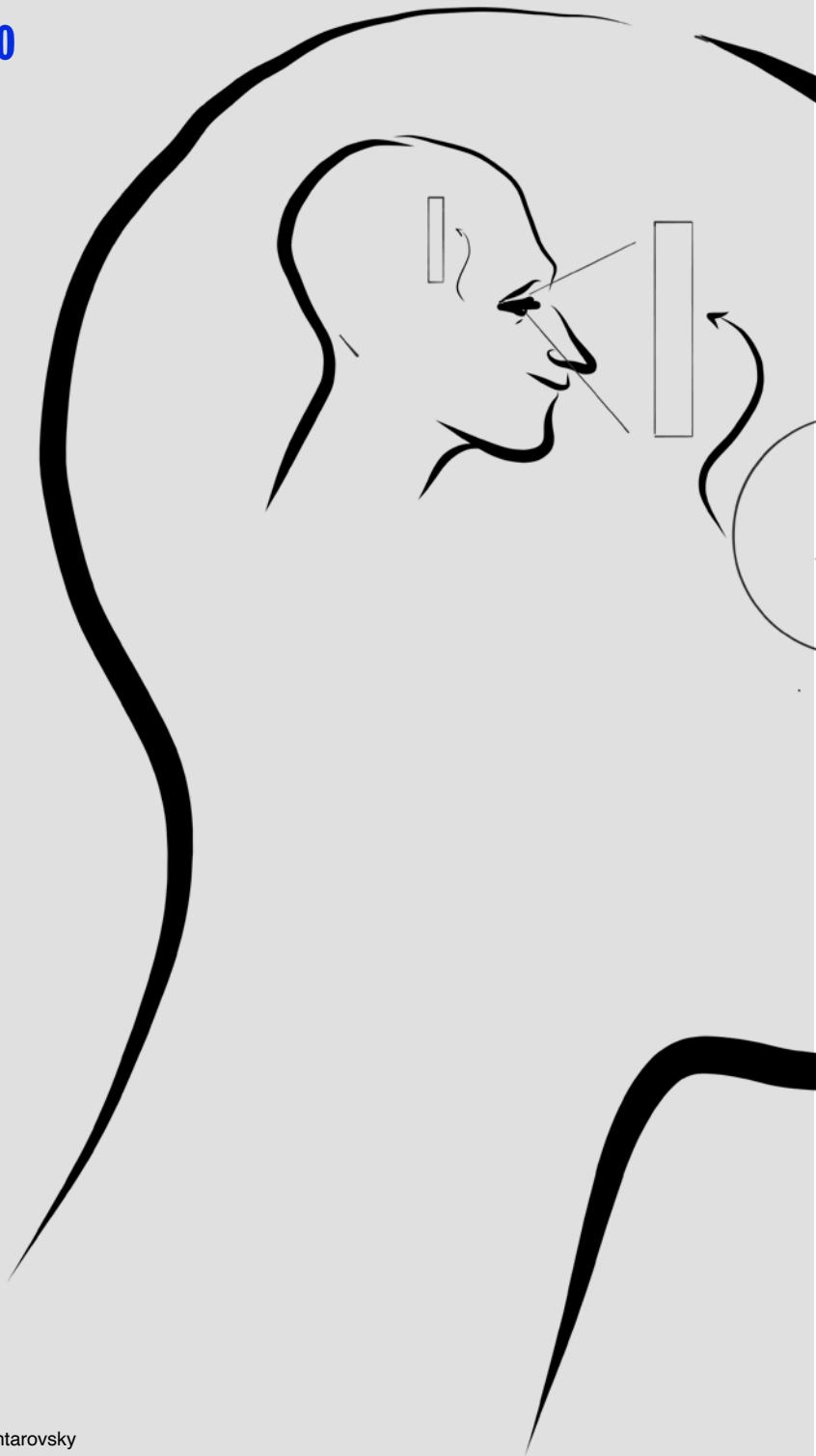


Illustration by Sanya Kantarovsky