

25 November –
4 December
2021

**FRAMES of
REPRESENTATION**
(Re)Imagining



ICA

Since its first edition in 2016, **FRAMES of REPRESENTATION (FoR)** has established a reputation as a unique showcase for the cinema of the real, with strong political convictions and a commitment to aesthetics. *(Re)Imagining*, the thematic focus for the sixth edition of FoR, places filmmakers from across the globe in dialogue via a collection of works that address the moving image and modes of storytelling as multilayered devices. The 20 premieres composing the #FoR21 programme explore film practices at the intersection of image production, co-creation, and – to some extent – artistic manipulation.

All screenings will aim to initiate intimate conversations around the ethical boundaries and processes underpinning these aspects of filmmaking, to explore some of their inter-connected trajectories. An accompanying programme of masterclasses, workshops, and performances from the line-up will further interrogate the relationships between creation, reality, and artifice.

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**FRAMES of
REPRESENTATION
(Re)Imagining**

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#FoR21**

ICA

Programme

THURSDAY 25 NOVEMBER

8pm Opening Night: *A Night of Knowing Nothing*
+ Q&A

10.30pm Performance – the Sonic Liberation
Front + Recordat

FRIDAY 26 NOVEMBER

5pm Workshop – the Sonic Liberation Front
+ Radio alHara راديو الحارة

6.20pm *Seeing Red (La sangre en el ojo)* + Q&A

8.15pm *El Gran Movimiento* + Q&A

SATURDAY 27 NOVEMBER

11am Symposium – how to think: Radio Silence

3.30pm Workshop – The Aesthetics of Framing:
Roberto Minervini in Conversation

5.30pm *Il Palazzo* + Q&A

7.45pm Masterclass – Cinematic Visions:
The Methodologies of Gianfranco Rosi
+ *Notturmo*

10.59pm Daniel Blumberg: *FRAIM*

SUNDAY 28 NOVEMBER

1pm *Bulletproof* + Q&A

3pm *All Light, Everywhere* + Q&A

5pm *Dirty Feathers* + Q&A

MONDAY 29 NOVEMBER

6.20pm *A Man and a Camera* + Q&A

8.45pm Performance – *My First Film* by Zia Anger

TUESDAY 30 NOVEMBER

10am PROGRESSIO

6pm Roundtable Workshop – Fabulations in the
Cinema of the Real

8.15pm FoR Shorts #1: *Silabario* + *Hotel Royal*
+ *La Cumbre* + Q&A

WEDNESDAY 1 DECEMBER

6.15pm *I'm So Sorry* + Introduction

8.15pm *The Last Shelter (Le dernier refuge)* + Q&A

THURSDAY 2 DECEMBER

8.15pm *To The Moon* + Q&A

FRIDAY 3 DECEMBER

6pm *Aleph* + Q&A

8.15pm FoR Shorts #2: *Kindertotenlieder*
+ *Unrendered Road* + *Listen to the Beat*
of *Our Images (Écoutez le battement*
de nos images) + Q&A

SATURDAY 4 DECEMBER

6pm *Archipelago (Archipel)* + Q&A

8.15pm Closing Night: *The Tale of King Crab*
(*Re Granchio*) + Q&A

10.30pm DJ Set – the Sonic Liberation Front
+ Radio alHara راديو الحارة

CONTENTS

- 6 INTRODUCTION
Nico Marzano
- 9 Opening Night: *A Night of Knowing Nothing*
+ essay by Andréa Picard
- 11 *Seeing Red (La sangre en el ojo)*
+ essay by Prof Maria Delgado
- 13 *El Gran Movimiento*
+ essay by David Jenkins
- 15 The Aesthetics of Framing:
Roberto Minervini in Conversation
+ essay by Wendy Ide
- 17 *Il Palazzo*
+ essay by Cristina Piccino
- 19 Masterclass – Cinematic Visions:
The Methodologies of Gianfranco Rosi
+ *Notturmo*
+ essay by Nico Marzano
- 21 *Bulletproof*
+ essay by Maya Daisy Hawke
- 23 *All Light, Everywhere*
+ essay by Matt Turner
- 25 *Dirty Feathers*
+ essay by Isabel Stevens
- 27 *A Man and a Camera*
+ essay by Mark Donaldson
- 29 Live Performance – *My First Film*
+ essay by Ross McDonnell
- 31 FoR Shorts #1: *Silabario* + *Hotel Royal*
+ *La Cumbre*
+ essay by Carmen Gray
- 33 *I'm So Sorry*
+ essay by Nat Muller
- 35 *The Last Shelter (Le dernier refuge)*
+ essay by Maria Kazarian
- 37 *To The Moon*
+ essay by Simran Hans
- 39 *Aleph*
+ essay by Wim Vanacker
- 41 FoR Shorts #2: *Kindertotenlieder* +
Unrendered Road + *Listen to the Beat*
of Our Images (Écoutez le battement
de nos images)
+ essay by Carmen Gray
- 43 *Archipelago (Archipel)*
+ essay by Nicolas Raffin
- 45 Closing Night: *The Tale of King Crab*
(Re Granchio)
+ essay by Jason Wood
- 47 Performance – the Sonic Liberation
Front + Recordat
- 47 Workshop – the Sonic Liberation
Front + Radio alHara راديو ال حارة
- 47 Symposium – how to think:
Radio Silence
- 48 Daniel Blumberg: FRAIM
- 48 PROGRESSIO
- 48 Roundtable Workshop – Fabulations
in the Cinema of the Real
- 49 DJ Set – the Sonic Liberation Front
+ Radio alHara راديو ال حارة

INTRODUCTION

FRAMES of REPRESENTATION 2021 (FoR21) is filtered through the lens of *(Re)Imagining* – a thematic focus concerned with storytelling and filmmaking as intersections of fabulation, collaboration, and – to some extent – the manufacturing of images.

FoR21 considers film as a means of artistic production, as a way of eliciting experimentation, and as craftsmanship. The theme of *(Re)Imagining*, however, also allows for the study of filmmaking's ethical boundaries, of film as a medium of manipulation, in this way questioning ideas of authorship, co-creation, and control in the formation of the moving image.

This sixth iteration of FoR continues to embrace the founding principles that have also guided the previous editions – principles that situate the festival as a laboratory at the crossover between fiction and nonfiction filmmaking, firmly rooted in the so-called cinema of the real. The FoR21 programme offers an opportunity to dig deeper into the craft of cinema, interacting with various approaches to storytelling whilst exploring the converging responsibilities of the filmmaker, the framed subject, and the viewing community in the creation, co-creation, and *reimagination* of the cinematic language.

FRAMES of REPRESENTATION 2021 is, as ever, inspired by collaboration and internationalism taking on new forms and shapes, merging practices of sonic and audiovisual media with other contemporary art forms. We'll be joined over the festival's ten days of screenings, discussions, and special presentations by filmmakers from Argentina, Canada, China, Colombia, France, Ireland, India, Italy, Mali, the Netherlands, Palestine, Portugal, and the USA. Through diverse methods and with distinct voices, their works shine light on important social struggles through necessary and richly visual stories, all centred on a genuine and profound commitment to the lives they feature on screen.

The 20 premieres on the FoR21 programme – 19 of which are UK premieres, with 1 London premiere – seek to instigate conversations on the relationship between aesthetics and politics, aiming to collaboratively confront processes that underpin core aspects of filmmaking. An accompanying programme of workshops, discussions, and performances will further interrogate the relationship between creation, reality, and artifice.

Our opening night film is Payal Kapadia's *A Night of Knowing Nothing*, a bold and distinctive debut feature that – through its immersive, mysterious, and spiritual sensibility – denounces the political contradictions of contemporary India, whilst simultaneously examining the dilemmas of artistic production through its portrayal of human relationships.

Thereafter, FoR's encounters with Latin America will continue with two distinguished works. While *Orione* (FoR18), the first feature by Argentine filmmaker Toia Bonino, was primarily concerned with maternal grief, her new film *Seeing Red* (*La sangre en el ojo*) shifts the focus to masculine repression and brotherhood. By contrast, Kiro Russo's *El Gran Movimiento* is both a folk horror and a singular city symphony, laying bare the plight of the working classes in La Paz, Bolivia.

Moving north from Latin America to the USA, two films explore the culture of gun violence and the role of the police in urban communities. *Bulletproof* by Todd Chandler and *All Light, Everywhere* by Theo Anthony both urge us to consider subjectivity in any given viewpoint, prompting us to reimagine the idea of the ‘objective lens’ through the moving image.

Social justice is also at the core of *I’m So Sorry*, the latest environmental work from Zhao Liang (*Behemoth*, FoR16), which at the very start ominously announces that ‘Humanity likes to return to nightmares’. Liang’s spectral guide recounts nightmares of the nuclear age, however spectrality is also key to Guido Hendriks’s *A Man and a Camera*, which follows a voiceless figure roaming the Dutch borderlands, and ultimately invites us to reconsider who we are when we confront ourselves through the camera. *The Last Shelter* by Ousmane Zoromé Samassékou is another work examining the nature of haunting landscapes, with stories of migration in Western Africa set against recurring shots of the treacherous Sahara.

Innovative and playful formats are explored in Iva Radivojević’s *Aleph* and Tadhg O’Sullivan’s *To The Moon*. Inspired by Jorge Luis Borges, Radivojević’s dreamlike journeys blend magical realism and narrative fiction with the methodology and practices of nonfiction filmmaking. O’Sullivan, on the other hand, takes the spectator on a night walk around one full lunar cycle, drawing on archival film, literature, opera, and specially-shot celestial landscapes from around the world.

The festival’s last night begins with Félix Dufour-Laperrière’s *Archipel (Archipelago)*. Shifting from Québec’s complex colonial past to the work of activist Hubert Aquin, this eclectic and political travelogue reinvents the director’s native homeland, and is also the first ever animation feature presented at FoR. Closing FoR21 is Alessio Rigo de Righi and Matteo Zoppis’ *The Tale of King Crab (Re Granchio)*, which draws on the experiences of Italian immigrants to Argentina by way of a picaresque cinematic language, accounting for and reimagining a historical epic of lost love and lost treasure.

We’re dedicating the festival’s first Saturday to discussions on the methodologies behind the cinema of the real with a focus on contemporary Italian filmmaking, featuring contributions from three major directors. Roberto Minervini (*The Other Side*, FoR16; *What You Gonna Do When the World’s on Fire?*, FoR19) is joining us at FoR21 as producer of Carlos Alfonso Corral’s debut feature *Dirty Feathers*, which explores the homeless experience in El Paso, Texas – he’ll also be in conversation about his own cinema at an event presented in partnership with the National Film & Television School. Federica Di Giacomo (*Deliver Us*, 2016) will present *Il Palazzo*, a humorous yet melancholic exploration of an art commune in Rome. The day concludes with Gianfranco Rosi (*Sacro GRA*, 2013; *Fire at Sea*, 2016), who will lead an all-encompassing masterclass on his oeuvre before a screening of his latest work *Notturmo* (2020).

FoR21 includes two special programmes of short films. The first features *Silabario*, Marine de Contes’ hopeful short capturing the quiet resurgence of a forgotten language in the Canary Islands; followed by *Hotel Royal*, which sees Salomé Lamas’ travels through a seaside hotel; and *La Cumbre*, Felipe López Gómez’s moving visit to his long-abandoned familial home in the Andes. The second selection of shorts includes Virgil Vernier’s *Kindertotenlieder*, a reconstructed chronology of the Paris riots of 2005; *Unrendered Road*, Tali Liberman’s poetic and philosophical road

movie travelling between Jerusalem and Jericho; and *Listen to the Beat of Our Images* (*Écoutez le battement de nos images*), which sees directors Audrey and Maxime Jean-Baptiste give voice to a Guianese community displaced by France's space race.

FoR21 also features the second edition of PROGRESSIO. This platform was launched in 2019 by the ICA, in association with Cineteca Madrid and the Sundance Institute to support independent filmmakers in the development of feature-length projects by engaging with the aesthetic and political aspects of their works, and by facilitating exchanges with key industry guests. This year, Marine de Contes and Tamer El Said have been invited to share their upcoming feature films at FoR21, both of whom have previously been screened at the ICA. Marine de Contes is a French director and editor, whose film *The Game* was presented at FRAMES OF REPRESENTATION in 2018. Egyptian filmmaker Tamer El Said's debut feature *In the Last Days of the City* was distributed by ICA CINEMA in 2017.

Alongside FoR21's film programme, there is also a line-up of performances, including *My First Film* – Zia Anger's experimental multimedia work (especially adapted for FoR21) that seeks to reinterpret conventional frameworks of the cinematic experience; and a rare solo show by experimental musician, composer, and artist Daniel Blumberg, who has released two solo albums with Mute Records and recently composed the score for *The World to Come* (dir. Mona Fastvold, 2020).

An annual FoR highlight is the day-long symposium, which this year takes the form of a radio broadcast: 'how to think: Radio Silence'. This forum brings together contributions from artists, thinkers, activists, and healers through an intimate and durational audio piece to be played just once, along with an accompanying film screening of *Tío Yim* by Zapotec director Luna Marán.

Informed by our desire to relentlessly explore new frontiers and support experiences of resistance, FoR21 also features an online broadcast station created in collaboration with the Sonic Liberation Front – a group of sound platforms and sonic artists who have come together with the Bethlehem-based station Radio alHara راديوالحارة to unify their sound for Palestine.

Finally, our most fervent ambition through FRAMES OF REPRESENTATION 2021 is to provide a space to question the idea of cinematic authorship and co-creation across the whole spectrum of filmmaking and, ultimately, to foster a community of filmmakers, researchers, and audience members alike – one that can continue *(re)imagining* new forms of collaboration, innovation, and resilience.

Nico Marzano, FoR Curator

Thursday 25 November
8pm



Opening Night: A Night of Knowing Nothing

Dir. Payal Kapadia
France/India, 2021
97 min.
Hindi/Bengali with English subtitles

UK PREMIERE
+ Q&A with director Payal Kapadia

Payal Kapadia's bold and distinctive debut feature is an immersive and spiritual work addressing issues of artist production, as well as the political complexities of contemporary India. *A Night of Knowing Nothing* is framed by fictional letters from a female student to her estranged lover. The film initially lends itself to investigative fictional storytelling, before exploring the political contradictions of contemporary India.

Combining a mixture of found footage, sketches, and her own material, Kapadia – an alumna of the Film & Television Institute of India – repositions the work of fellow students at other educational establishments, charting the fractious relationship between a nation's youth, its rigid caste structures, its families, and its far-right government. Among many other ideas and leads, *A Night of Knowing Nothing* also aims to reimagine the role of a film school in this turbulent and often violent political epoch.

A dual pulse courses through Payal Kapadia's haunting debut feature: one laced with longing and heartbreak expressed through anguished introspection, the other intrepidly looking for markers of resistance and flickers of change. Perhaps ultimately more double than dual, these twin inner and outward manifestations reveal how society's ills can be individually subsumed, can destroy from within, can squander hope, can even extinguish or prevent love – and make *A Night of Knowing Nothing* all the more complex and alluring in its mix of sensuality, intimacy, and collective movement. 'It is a complicated film and I think neither one of us fully understood it,' confesses unseen protagonist L in one of her unsent letters to K, her estranged lover, about a film she is editing – an avowal through which we can reflexively parse the intimations of Kapadia's evocative title.

L is a fictional film student whose letters are discovered in a cupboard of a campus hostel. They function as an epistolary guide for a film searching for signs of life amid a twilight of encroaching darkness across contemporary India. A mesmeric mix of grainy, sometimes chiaroscuro black-and-white Super 8 and 16mm images, home movies in burnished colour, archival images, phone and CCTV footage – all cohesively adhering to a found-footage ethos of having been captured and collected over a number of years and rediscovered during editing – adds a multitude of frames, authors, and broader contexts to lovesick correspondence voiced in a soft yet dejected tone. Drawings adorn the images from time to time, a reminder of human touch and indexical representation – like a handmade stamp upon reality, a tactile desire to alter its course.

The lover in question has disappeared, we learn, due to his parents' refusal to let him marry L, who is of a lower caste. His absence, which is felt as betrayal and cowardice as much as inevitability amid a societal system of tiered oppression, is transmuted into agency. L is propelled to move through her sadness with the help of her friends and colleagues, who believe in cinema and freedom of expression as tools to combat prejudice and pave the way for a brighter, more equitable future. Poised between romantic, naïve, and tactical manoeuvres in the dark, these students are caught up in a cruel story of youth in which their desire to change the world is met with state violence and the contagion of fear.

A Night of Knowing Nothing is a fervent cinétract on love and revolt composed of an impressionistic interplay between a collage of images and a multi-layered soundtrack, whose scratchy transistor-like sounds amp up the tension amid field recordings, such as a wild natural (and human) gale set against a thicket of insects, voices rallying in dissent, and L's plaintive, unanswered monologue. Just as the dialectic between presence and absence fuels the paradoxical conundrum of capturing the flow of history in the making, the unbridled energy of dancing provides a fitting leitmotif. (Is it any wonder that dancing is what recurs throughout all of Adam Curtis's 'documentaries' about violence and oppression?).

Kapadia's film is awash in present-day nostalgia, invoking great parallel cinema filmmakers like Ritwik Ghatak (who features prominently on a mural) and Mrinal Sen, as well as nodding to Kurosawa and Godard as if they were being discovered for the first time by a generation of cinephiles awakened to art's ability to illuminate in times of darkness. But this diegetic innocence is met by a clear-eyed filmmaker who pulls the veil on the contradictions of '60s-era intelligentsia probing the nuances of uncertainty as a just, even necessary means forward.

Friday 26 November
6.20pm



Seeing Red (La sangre en el ojo)

Dir. Toia Bonino
Argentina, 2020
66 min.
Spanish with English subtitles

UK PREMIERE
+ Q&A with director Toia Bonino

Toia Bonino's follow-up to her debut feature *Orione* (2017) opens with footage of a man, Leo, floating across a sanguine swimming pool. But where the Argentine filmmaker and artist's first feature was primarily concerned with maternal grief, this second act – of what will become a trilogy – shifts the focus to masculine repression as Leo deals with the death of his brother Ale in the only way he knows how: through violent revenge fantasies that consume his waking moments.

Through home movies, smartphone footage and a striking visual formalism, *Seeing Red* subverts the archetypes of crime movies and revenge tragedies to present a multi-layered portrayal of the indelible psychological scars caused by toxic masculinity and dehumanising prison systems.

Seeing Red (La sangre en el oro) picks up where Toia Bonino's 2017 film *Orione* ends, following Ale's younger brother Leo who is released after spending 14 years in prison, motivated solely by the urge to revenge his brother's death. In *Orione*, Ale's mother came from a place of reimagining: a place where she could construct another life for her son, where the act of baking a cake becomes a way of making sense of the violence in which Ale had become enmeshed. In *Seeing Red*, however, there is no reimagining for Leo beyond a primeval desire for vengeance.

The image of Leo floating in a pool may suggest tranquillity and calmness, but his voice is filled with rage and resentment. Leo is pushing 40, but his boasts, his posture, and his behaviour signal arrested growth. Leo is an angry boy trapped in the body of a man. He narrates a life where stealing is seen as mere mischief. He can't recognise its impact on those whose homes he invades. Leo shares his tips on whom to rob and when; how to stake out wealthy neighbourhoods to plan the best time for a break-in; and how crime escalates to feed a wild cocaine habit. Theft becomes, quite simply, a way of life.

Leo's vision is singular and inflexible, driven by the desperate void left by not having had the chance to say goodbye to his brother. Through the testimony of others – including Leo's daughter and Ale's ex-partner – the viewer sees the impact of Leo's singular vision. These women bear the scars of a corrosive masculinity that sees them as disposable, as casualties of the hermetic bubble in which Leo exists. Floating in a swimming pool on an inflatable rubber ring, Leo looks like a giant child: unable to grow up, unable to get out of the pool in which he appears almost trapped, endlessly floating without direction or purpose beyond the obsessive, all-pervasive need for revenge.

Bonino's film is crafted without Leo looking at the camera. He is always to one side, always partially captured, off-kilter and never quite present. Leo's absence is felt by his family. His 15-year-old daughter recalls him as never there. As Leo mourns Ale's absence, his daughter mourns his. Mobile phone cameras capture the traces of lives damaged by Ale's crimes but these figures are, in many ways, less present than Ale's ghost, hovering over everything Leo does. *Seeing Red* invites the viewer to watch, listen, and observe without rushing to judge, and to make their own decisions as Leo faces a future where he remains trapped by the past.

*Professor Maria Delgado is an academic, critic, curator
and advisor for the ICA film programme*

Friday 26 November
8.15pm



El Gran Movimiento

Dir. Kiro Russo
Bolivia / France / Qatar / Switzerland, 2021
85 min.
Spanish with English subtitles

UK PREMIERE
+ Q&A with director Kiro Russo

El Gran Movimiento is both a folk horror and a singular city symphony that lays bare the plight of the working classes. After a week-long walk, Elder and his fellow miners arrive in the Bolivian city of La Paz to demand their right to work. Through hypnotic dancing, wondrous urban landscapes and a cast of nonprofessional actors, Kiro Russo blends the fantastical with the real. Inspired by his native city and influenced by both Soviet montage and indigenous Bolivian traditions, Russo presents a work that is as much a fever dream as it is an anthropological and social investigation into this vast Latin American capital.

The so-called ‘city symphony’ film has long sought to represent urban landscapes as a form of complex machinery. Humans are merely the fuel that help these machines to operate. With his film *El Gran Movimiento*, director Kiro Russo reimagines the formal structures of the classic city symphony, and recasts the Bolivian capital of La Paz as something closer to a hybrid of organic and mechanised matter. He retains the crushing sense of alienation that comes from entering an urban landscape, particularly for those who have been displaced – forcibly or otherwise – from a rural habitat. Yet he also draws on the manifold inequalities and incompatibilities that come with adapting to life in the capitalist mecca, and he focuses on those vital parts of the machine that are broken, or have been fixed using incorrect parts.

The film opens on a slow zoom into central La Paz – warm Super 16 images are overlaid with a discordant mesh of music and the sharp clamour of diegetic sound from a protest. A group of ex-miners have tramped for a week from country to city with the aim of demanding that their jobs be reinstated. From this opening scene, the sublime indifference that exudes from the looming concrete edifices that besiege the workers from all sides alerts them to the futility of their mission, despite the moderate attention given to them by the local media. One of their number, Elder, falls ill as the journey has exacerbated the symptoms of his industrial disease. The loose plot of the film then proceeds to chart the efforts of his loquacious godmother to soothe Elder’s various ills by whatever means necessary.

In its presentation of soused witch doctors and belief systems grounded in suspicion and conspiracy, *El Gran Movimiento* is at once a celebration of folkloric idiosyncrasy and a lamentation for the moments when this ethereal way of being clashes with the coldly utilitarian functions of the cityscape and, tragically, the human body. The film is as much a reimagining of tone as it is of form, presenting life as both a protracted death rattle and a joyful excuse for dance and festivities: a state in which elation and desolation exist as one. Looking at the city through a psychedelic lens – as Russo does here – can be both terrifying and transcendent, and as these two divergent ways of life jostle for supremacy, we see light in the darkness and darkness in the light. The film is as interested in the poetics of death (via Elder’s tragic fate) as it is in the death of poetry (modernism’s blind consumption of tradition). It’s not about ironies as much as it is about opposites, and the place where opposites meet.

David Jenkins is the Editor of Little White Lies

Saturday 27 November
3.30pm



The Aesthetics of Framing: Roberto Minervini in Conversation

Still from:
What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?
dir. Roberto Minervini
Italy / USA / France, 2018
106 min.
English

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Filmmaker Roberto Minervini joins Sandra Hebron, Head of Screen Arts at the National Film & Television School (NFTS), for an in-depth conversation about his cinema, which often takes us to the backyards of the American Dream. Minervini has often worked collaboratively and intimately with the American communities that are the subjects of his films, and here he'll be discussing his relationships with his protagonists, and how his ideas about repositioning a filmmaker's intentions from authentically representing the community to entering a more dialogical mode of storytelling unfolds in practice. He'll also be discussing how his cinema often looks beyond the frame, calling for debates on the causes of unrest and on the social conditions that may lead to politically inept governments and deep civic inequalities.

It's relatively easy to tear up the rule book. But to do so while also retaining a place of safety within a film for those who are its subjects, to blur the boundaries between factual filmmaking and fiction but to also maintain an essential truthfulness, is a rather more complex undertaking. And this is what distinguishes Roberto Minervini and his approach to the reimagination of the cinema of the real.

An Italian filmmaker who lives and works in America (he is based in Houston, Texas, and has made films in the Bible Belt southern states of Texas and Louisiana), Minervini has an outsider's eye on the worlds he invites us to explore and to learn about. These worlds include the fundamentalist Christian goat farmers and rodeo riders of Texas in *Stop the Pounding Heart* (2013); Louisiana's disenfranchised army veterans and the victims of the opioid epidemic in *The Other Side* (2015); and the struggling working class New Orleans Black communities of *What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?* (2018). But Minervini's genius is to realise that even an outsider's perspective comes with its own preconceived notions and prejudices, both about the subjects of the film and about the form that the work should take. Speaking in an interview with *Film Comment*, Minervini said, 'I have to be very careful and aware of the fact that I am there, that I am very dangerous, that I could ruin everything. So the more I sabotage myself, the better it is for the film.'

That self-'sabotage' takes the form of protecting the purity of the material that is shot – in uninterrupted takes, without cuts, captured by Minervini and regular collaborator Diego Romero – by not allowing himself the opportunity to review the footage. To watch the footage, Minervini argues, would mean that he might impose a shape on the story, to bring expectations that might skew the power structure between the people in front of the lens and those behind it.

Instead, Minervini hands over the footage, with no directorial guidance, to his editor Marie-Hélène Dozo. The edit is a process of discovery for Dozo, who finds her own stories; and rediscovery for Minervini, who reconnects with the film several months along the line. Trust and collaboration are key in Minervini's democratic way of working, which strips back the ego inherent in the idea of storytelling and instead offers the audience the same journey upon which Minervini himself embarked. Essentially, as a director, Minervini has reimagined the most fundamental aspect – the role of the film 'maker' itself.

Wendy Ide is a film critic

Saturday 27 November
5.30pm



Il Palazzo

Dir. Federica Di Giacomo
Italy/Czech Republic, 2021
97 min.
Italian with English subtitles

UK PREMIERE
+ Q&A with director Federica Di Giacomo

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In the heart of Rome, facing St Peter's Basilica, stands Il Palazzo. Like a renaissance patron, its owner offered shelter to an eclectic and sui generis group of friends, turning Il Palazzo into an art commune that at times acted as an incubator of creativity, dreams, and poems. At other times, though, it served as a trap, a perfect excuse for avoidance and procrastination, while everything revolved around a charismatic *Pygmalion* figure: Mauro.

Filmmaker Federica Di Giacomo was herself an occasional member of this community, and was invited back by the older tenants who came together after Mauro's sudden passing. At times melancholic, at times humorous, *Il Palazzo* is a portrait of the man and of the artist reconstructed through the stories of those who knew him, together with snatches from the original archive of the visionary project that would consume his life – an unfinished project that now serves as a mirror reflecting images from the past.

It all begins with the death of a friend: a special person who for many years drew a group of young people into an artistic utopia – illusory, perhaps – that became a way of life. The sudden absence of Mauro – and, with him, his visionary dreams – forces these people, no longer all so young, to look back decades at a bygone era. For many, this era seems very distant, while for others, it's an eternal present. Regardless, they're all forced to face the collection of memories left behind for them by their friend: his images, in which they themselves feature, and that utopian space, *Il Palazzo* – a condo in the centre of Rome where their dreams and experiences had no boundaries. They all lived there, loving and inventing themselves and their world. Is that what creativity means?

As Federica Di Giacomo explores this moment of transition, she grasps its implications and conflicts while also remaining close to the open poetics that defined the project and that still inform many of the choices made by those who moved in its circle. To do so, she places herself on an edge, somewhere between observer and participant. She belongs to this universe – but in her film, her friends become characters. Thanks to this gap, they can fall into dialogue with the past, openly and sincerely discussing their current states of mind.

Di Giacomo's cinema finds correspondence with reality in its staging: here, 'truth' is produced through these apparently very private stories that ultimately narrate a fragile condition that is very much of our time. The missing friend's point of view meets that of the director, and both transform from people into actors. This relationship of gazes oscillates between the incompleteness of the artistic gesture and the state of being in the world, leaving the characters the freedom to shamelessly ask unspoken questions about friendship and love, whilst painfully assessing their choices.

For Di Giacomo, filming is never reproducing what exists but, rather, it is venturing: leading us through the less noticeable dynamics that a situation can contain. This applies equally to the occupied properties featured in *Housing* (2009), and to the intertwining of religion and superstition in *Deliver Us* (2016). Her research produces a constant melee between cinema and reality that pushes the images beyond themselves, disrupting genres, practices, and habits of vision to convey the epiphany of a surprise.

Cristina Piccino is an editor at Il Manifesto

Saturday 27 November
7.45pm



Masterclass — Cinematic Visions: The Methodologies of Gianfranco Rosi + Notturmo

Still from:

Notturmo

dir. Gianfranco Rosi

Germany / France / Italy, 2020

100 min.

Italian / Arabic / Kurdish with English subtitles

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Masterclass – Cinematic Visions, 7.45pm

Gianfranco Rosi, the Golden Lion and Golden Bear-winning Italian filmmaker discusses his vision of the cinematic language with ICA Head of Cinema and FoR Founder & Curator Nico Marzano, dwelling on the expansive range of methodologies that have accompanied his impressive 30-year career. From his very first feature *Boatman* (1993) to his most recent work *Notturmo* (2020), Rosi's oeuvre not only foregrounds a carefully crafted aesthetic, but also pulsates a very specific vision of the real. In this masterclass, with the support of stills and extracts from each of his works, Rosi addresses his rigorous approach to craftsmanship, and how – through profound care of his subject matter – he ensures that the stories and human beings he encounters remain at the heart of his works.

Screening of *Notturmo*, 9pm

Following the masterclass, there will be a special presentation of *Notturmo* introduced by the filmmaker.

What does cinema stand for? Looking through Gianfranco Rosi's complete filmography, which spans nearly three decades, it seems safe to assume that the distinction between documentary and fiction increasingly feels meaningless to him; we sense, instead, an obsession with the real, for a cinema constantly in pursuit of the truth. Truth not intended as a philosophical or ethical quest but as a moment: something to capture before it's too late, before it has vanished. Something that can be as fleeting as Ali's gaze in *Notturmo* (2020) or as confrontational as the cry of the killer in *El Sicario, Room 164* (2010), or as reassuring as the woman making up her family's bed on the island of Lampedusa in *Fire at Sea* (2016).

From *Boatman* (1993), his very first film, to *Notturmo*, his most recent, Rosi's cinema not only demonstrates a carefully crafted aesthetic but also pulsates with a specific vision. His filmmaking resonates through his rigorous approach and profound care for the stories he encounters, as well as for the human beings who eventually find themselves in the foreground in his works.

Rosi seems to be constantly absorbed by the idea of looking for the right distance between the subjects of his stories and his camera. This can be seen whether we are in the holy city of Benares, where the dead are burned before their ashes are cast into the sacred Ganges (*Boatman*), or in a desert 200 miles from Los Angeles (*Below Sea Level*, 2008). It's evident in a locked motel room near the Mexican border (*El Sicario, Room 164*), roaming around Rome's vast circular highway (*Sacro GRA*, 2013), on the movingly beautiful island of Lampedusa (*Fire at Sea*), and in the painfully tormented Middle East (*Notturmo*). This carefully considered measure, which results in very clear formal and political implications in all of Rosi's films, allows the viewer to relate to something deeply intimate, whether reflected in a long sequence or in a fleeting image.

*Nico Marzano is the ICA's Head of Cinema,
and the Founder & Curator of FoR*

Sunday 28 November
1pm



Bulletproof

Dir. Todd Chandler
USA, 2020
84 min.
English

UK PREMIERE
+ Q&A with director Todd Chandler

Bulletproof examines the culture of gun violence and mass shootings within American schools – but rather than lingering on any specific events of terror and violence, filmmaker and educator Todd Chandler takes us through the ritualised preparations and lockdown drills that now form part of the average school day. From teacher training sessions at gun ranges to trade fairs specialising in bulletproof whiteboards, Chandler presents us with a nightmarish vision of a capitalist society where there's money to be made from the fear and horror prevalent in modern educational establishments.

What does it say about a society when school shootings are so normalised that prevention and protection become million-dollar industries? What impact does this sustained culture of fear have on the educational development of a nation's youth? These are just some of the questions that *Bulletproof* asks us to consider.

This is the demilitarisation of filmmaking, the end of cinematographer as ‘shooter’ – gone are the crosshairs on the ground glass, walking bullets onto the issue’s target. Where you look, the way you look, is no longer circumscribed with a bullseye.

Faces are included or redacted according to peacetime principles. The director refuses to hang his hat on the techniques of interrogation, the way so many documentarians do: the torturous sit-down interview. Instead, spoken word can be at once wild and synchronous, attributed and disembodied, dissociated and owned, but never ad hominem pinned on anyone. The opposite of the hysterical aftermath’s angry grieving back and forth. Finger guns out.

Unlike a sniper’s scope, this camera can see around corners; simultaneously, we are inside the classroom with the cowering re-enactors who have barricaded the door, and out in the hallway, where the pretend assassin begs to be let in. Constructed scenes can exist in this nonfiction film. So can pure surveillance passages of students traversing hallways. Shots of the CCTV devices themselves are made into a montage of introspection with their truthless gazes.

Our eyes remain open while the schoolchildren close theirs, trusting us as they meditate on their precious breaths. The foreground is the background. Adults are children, acting out classroom invasions; children are adults, poking holes in lies at town meetings.

Todd’s direction does not isolate and neutralise according to the rules of engagement of normal, blunt force trauma film formulae. Stuff the wound with gauze – music here, no music there.

Do you have any more questions about this automatic weapon I am holding? Nope. The director speaks once, but whispers to us in every frame.

Notice how you feel.

The threat always comes from inside.

Remember that one for a long time; the drill sergeant gently admonishes the teacher who has shot a computer-generated student through the chest.

I am overwhelmed by so many subtle details. A maths teacher shakes his head at the end of a drill – archival footage of the installation of a metal detector that cuts to the bone.

One amorphous school, Texas-Chicago-America, a convention in Las Vegas, the mountainous desert imprisoned by billboards, casino hotels with eyes that blink suggestively. In a stucco house in California, a sewing machine gun splices Kevlar into free bulletproof hoodies to disguise capitalism’s ugly face.

I can see why my advice wasn’t helpful early on in the editing of this film. I didn’t understand the construction because it is so original. It’s not a language I’ve even heard before, or a structure I could imagine. I learn how to watch it from watching now.

Maya Daisy Hawke is an editor and experimental filmmaker

Sunday 28 November
3pm



All Light, Everywhere

Dir. Theo Anthony
USA, 2021
109 min.
English

LONDON PREMIERE
+ Q&A with director Theo Anthony

Objectivity, or the lack of it, has been a key talking point in nonfiction cinema since Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922). Theo Anthony's third feature *All Light, Everywhere* reevaluates this notion and its interconnected meanings in a contemporary setting, drawing connections between colonial photographic methodologies of the 19th century and modern police technologies in Baltimore. Recent history and dramatic events have lent the film an even greater political pertinence, and have prompted larger discussions on the role of the police in our communities.

As spectators, we are urged to consider – as in the case of police body cameras, for instance – what is 'subjective' or 'objective' in any given viewpoint. Have smartphones, in the hands of bystanders, allowed for a more democratic holding-to-account of police brutality? *All Light, Everywhere* questions and reimagines the very idea of the 'objective lens', positioning the camera as a weapon for both oppressors and the oppressed.

In *Ways of Seeing*, John Berger writes that ‘the relation between what we see and what we know is never settled. Each evening we see the sun set. We know that the earth is turning away from it. Yet the knowledge, the explanation, never quite fits the sight.’ When *All Light, Everywhere* opens with a close-up of writer-director Theo Anthony’s optic nerve, on-screen subtitles tell us that what we are looking at is his blind spot: an area that connects the retina with the brain but holds no photoreceptors of its own. As the subtitles say, ‘At the exact point where the world meets the seeing of the world, we’re blind.’ As well as being a striking image with which to start a film, this proves to be a clever way to signal not just the distances that exist between what we see and what we know, but also the things we are not willing, or able, to perceive. You can’t see your own blind spot; the brain approximates what would be present in the absence, and fills in the spaces in between.

All Light, Everywhere is, to quote the filmmaker’s own description, a film about ‘shared histories of cameras, weapons, policing and justice’, but it is also a film about seeing. Cataloguing a history of the connections between camera technologies and policing, the film’s central inquiry into police body-cam usage stems from the observation that a camera, despite regularly being presented as an instrument of objective record, is weapon-like in its usage and design. As well as exploring historical precedents and compiling various schools of thinking through the essayistic, expansive form, Anthony’s act of reimagining is to redirect the perspective and actively work towards exposing the fallacy of objectivity, taking the camera out of the hands of the axes of power and turning it towards himself and others in order to scrutinise its usage, and demonstrate how it is manipulated to surveil, suppress, and abuse.

Interviewed recently by Jordan Cronk, Anthony said that his work involves ‘an attempt to understand power through the ways in which the world becomes known – through images, through technology, through maps, through bureaucratic policy and procedure.’ He is also interested in what has gone unseen and what has been ignored – that which has not been made known. In that opening shot of Anthony’s blind spot, when the camera scans his eye, we see one optical device examining another, two lenses that each show only a selective and subjective frame of reference. In *Ways of Seeing*, Berger writes that ‘every image embodies a way of seeing’. It is noteworthy that the first image Anthony chooses for *All Light, Everywhere* is one that not only reveals the apparatuses of vision, but also exposes the fallibility of these tools.

Matt Turner is a writer and film programmer

Sunday 28 November
5pm



Dirty Feathers

Dir. Carlos Alfonso Corral

USA/Mexico, 2021

74 min.

English/Spanish with English subtitles

UK PREMIERE

+ Q&A with director Carlos Alfonso Corral

Inspired by the untimely death of his uncle, who frequently found himself living on the streets, Carlos Alfonso Corral's debut feature seeks to understand the homeless experience in El Paso, Texas. Taking us from a homeless shelter to the streets and under bridges, *Dirty Feathers* observes expectant parents, grieving fathers, and abandoned veterans. Approaching individuals with an intimate gaze, Corral's camera renders empathy and closeness while piecing together the lives of his subjects and their stories of hardship and pain, ultimately accounting for their hopes and their dreams. Corral's approach to collaboration and closeness in the relationship between filmmaker and subject matter also reverberates through his influential partnership with filmmaker and film producer Roberto Minervini (*The Other Side*, FoR16): the producer behind *Dirty Feathers* and a director with whom Corral has regularly collaborated, most recently on *What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?* (FoR19).

Carlos Alfonso Corral didn't go to film school. If he had, perhaps he would never have made *Dirty Feathers*, his debut feature. The ethics of filming homeless people are so fraught that a respected nonfiction filmmaker recently told me that he always advises his students against it – the power dynamic is so weighted in favour of the filmmaker. All too often, homeless people are stripped of their humanity and too neatly presented as objects of pity.

'I feel the baby move and it makes me feel like shit,' says Reagan in one of *Dirty Feathers*' opening scenes, glass pipe in hand. Corral never shies away from the reality of life on the streets – but a miserabilist tale of victimhood this is not. To film as intimately as Corral does takes a fair degree of collaboration, whether it's observing water droplets on Reagan's husband Brandon's back as he takes a shower, or gleaning details not just about his past but about his dreams for the future, such as opening a soul food restaurant. 'I think I know what you're trying to do here,' said Brandon, when he first spotted Corral with his camera. A partnership was born.

Corral's camera drifts around the streets of El Paso, Texas in the vicinity of the city's corporate-speak-named shelter, the Opportunity Center for the Homeless (from which most of his subjects are banned). His lyrical, handheld, monochrome cinematography shows off his background as a photographer, as well as his training – in lieu of film school – in the camera department of documentary filmmaker Roberto Minervini, the producer of *Dirty Feathers*. He shares with Minervini (and with Khalik Allah, director of the hallucinatory *Field Niggas*) a determination to fuse hardscabble lives on the edge of society with a freewheeling impressionism and bold aesthetic experimentation – in order to disrupt familiar us-and-them dynamics. 'I wanted to heighten the feeling of what happens between the film and the viewer,' says Corral of his shooting style.

It helps that the 32-year-old director grew up in the same split-border cities on which he sets his camera loose: El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, across the border in the Mexican state of Chihuahua, memorably described by *The New York Times* as 'an estranged couple, surrounded on all sides by mountains and desert'. Commendably, there are no scene-setting vistas in *Dirty Feathers*. And despite the film's setting on the frontline of Trump's war on immigration, political issues – be they healthcare or border policies – only come into focus when a character raises them. Corral's camera is kept tight on his subjects and their experience of the streets – whether sharing trainers, meals, or life stories – and the soundtrack echoes this too: the poetic voiceover merging the thoughts of his characters with the rumble of the surrounding roads. The result is an immediate and intimate street saga that Corral describes as a film not about homelessness but about 'endurance, faith, human connection, love and lack of love'.

Isabel Stevens is the Production Editor of Sight & Sound

Monday 29 November
6.20pm



A Man and a Camera

Dir. Guido Hendriks
Netherlands, 2021
64 min.
Dutch with English subtitles

UK PREMIERE
+ Q&A with director Guido Hendriks

With the support of:



A voiceless figure roams the Dutch borderlands, filming everything and everyone he encounters. As he moves from doorstep to doorstep, many of the inhabitants he comes across react with a mixture of bemusement, concern, and simmering anger.

Practically drawing parallels to Bram Stoker's narratives, Guido Hendriks's spectral filmmaker can only pass through his subject's doorways by invitation, lending *A Man and a Camera* an unearthly and unsettling quality. When residents open their doors to this mute observer, Hendriks asks us to reconsider who we are when we find ourselves on camera, and how we fill the awkward silences in our interactions with strangers. As we briefly peer into these lives, the film becomes a work of suburban ethnography that reimagines the conventions of observational filmmaking while simultaneously questioning notions of cinematic control and authorship.

There is a beautiful moment early on in Guido Hendriks's *A Man and a Camera*. Faced with the film's voiceless observer, a woman in a headscarf disappears back into her house while her husband attempts to communicate with the spectral figure on his doorstep. She soon reappears holding her toddler, presenting them to the camera and stating, 'this child can't hear or speak either'. It's a moving and spontaneous moment of empathy.

This spontaneity is one of the joys of Hendriks's film, which upturns and reimagines the conventions of observational filmmaking. In the work of directors like Frederick Wiseman or the Maysles brothers, permission is initially sought and the film's subjects are often instructed to carry on as normal, as if the cameras aren't there. Here, the camera is unavoidable and there is an open invitation to interact with the lens. Some recoil, hiding behind trees or cracks in their doorway, while others confront the lone cameraman, asking 'Why are you doing this?' or physically putting up barriers with their fists. Hendriks allows the objects of his observations to guide the film. If they become agitated or aggressive, he leaves. If they invite him in for coffee, he steps over the threshold into their homes. He allows himself to be directed by his subjects rather than the other way around.

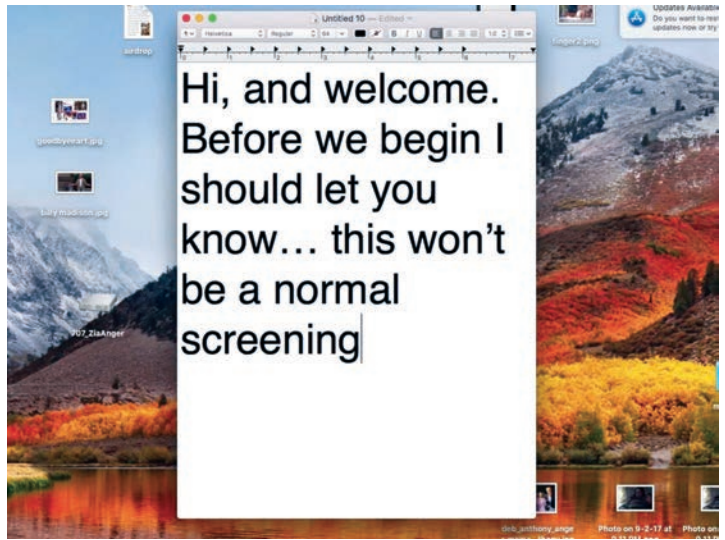
In giving up control, *A Man and a Camera* avoids getting caught up in the sprawling institutions or big characters you find in traditional nonfiction films. Instead, it trains the lens on the banalities of suburbia as it flits in and out of everyday lives. We observe family breakfasts and nights in front of the television while a biography of Adolf Hitler is hastily, apologetically hidden from view.

Hendriks's suburban ethnography has just as much in common with the work of Robert Flaherty than it does the work of Robert Drew. As Western society continues to rethink its colonial past, *A Man and a Camera* is timely in the way it reflects the camera back on the white Europeans who once wielded it. If we're uncomfortable with a cameraman observing our daily routines, why do we think nothing of the same thing being done further afield?

Ultimately, Hendriks is grappling with the age-old search for Dziga Vertov's 'objective truth'. And in so doing, he deconstructs and reimagines centuries of cinematic conventions to provide us with a singular vision of contemporary suburbia.

Mark Donaldson is a film programmer and podcaster

Monday 29 November
8.45pm



Live Performance — My First Film

Still from:
My First Film
dir. Zia Anger
USA 2018
75 min.
English

Zia Anger's *My First Film* is an experimental multimedia performance that seeks to reinterpret conventional frameworks of the cinematic experience. Readapted by Anger especially for FRAMES of REPRESENTATION 2021, this self-reflective and highly conceptual narrative investigates the artist's personal and professional failures, contemplating the film industry and a woman's place within it.

In this live and partly improvised performance, with space for audience interaction, Anger questions traditional relationships between creator and spectator, filmmaker and venue, cinema and art – gesturing toward a resistance and reimagining of the normalised understanding of the moving image.

Driven by profit, the shrinking standards of the film industry include and exclude accordingly. There is an inbred inside track for the filmmakers who follow the rules: they graduate from shorts to the all-important first feature, calling cards that shoot the prodigious to fame or let the less successful play the game again. Success stories cast a long shadow. What happens to everybody else – ‘failure’ – is, by design, both much more common and far less discussed.

In alarming fire-engine-red font, IMDb (‘the world’s most popular and authoritative source for movie, TV and celebrity content’) declaratively defines Zia Anger’s first feature *Always All Ways, Anne Marie* as ‘abandoned’. Though the status is inaccurate, if not slanderous – Anger’s film was neither abandoned nor unfinished, but, rather, rejected from the 50 film festivals to which it was submitted – the stigma and serious insult remains, damning the artist as transgressive and untrustworthy, unreliable, incapable.

From this generative absence, Anger has since produced her most innovative work to date. In *My First Film*, a rescue mission the artist describes as an ‘interactive live cinema performance’, Anger reclaims and reappropriates, creating a new, unexpected and unburdened exhibition context for *Always All Ways, Anne Marie*, as she reconceives what is recognised as failure, and imagines a new artistic route for herself – one that moves both backwards and forwards. Narrating the film’s production history, Anger sits and types, sharing a screen split by application windows (media player, word processor) that put text and context side by side. In a form reminiscent of the diary film or desktop documentary, Anger’s interrogative, introspective performance proceeds in simultaneous first- and third-person. Spanning improvised iMessage exchanges, AirDropped Instagram stories and a revealing (self-)scrutiny of the ethical compromises of a crowd-funded, micro-budget labour of love, *My First Film* is always surprising: at first in the thematic, structural symmetries it finds with its predecessor – rebirth, revolution – and perhaps most of all in the tone of sorrow it strikes.

Anger’s shift from film to performance might not necessarily split her artistic practice in two. The audience’s view of *Always All Ways, Anne Marie* as a film may be highly controlled and limited, but Anger’s talent as a filmmaker is evident here, and even more undeniable elsewhere. Working in plain sight in a commercial mass medium, Anger has in her unrivalled music video filmography – subversive visuals often made with movement director Monica Mirabile, cinematographers Ashley Connor and Mia Cioffi Henry and musicians such as Jenny Hval and Mitski – formed a formidable and still-underappreciated body of work. Negotiating the public and private lives of the filmmaker in her *My First Film* performance, Anger has, with revivifying transparency, proven the system to be broken. In her filmmaking, she continues to demonstrate exactly why the art form is still worth saving.

Ross McDonnell is a writer and film programmer

Tuesday 30 November
8.15pm



FoR Shorts #1

Silabario

Dir. Marine de Contes

France, 2021

14 min.

Spanish with English subtitles

Marine de Contes (*The Game*, FoR18) returns to themes of landscape and tradition with an entrancingly beautiful work about the quiet resurgence of a forgotten language. Amid the stunning, seemingly unspoiled landscapes of La Gomera in the Canary Islands, ghostly apparitions commune with the birds by way of silbo – a language exclusively based on whistling. Unfolding as a poetic dream of a world not yet damned, *Silabario* portrays an ecological utopia where human beings surrender to nature, resisting any pernicious urge to mould it in their image. This quiet, hopeful plea implores us to listen to the world around us.

Hotel Royal (still above)

Dir. Salomé Lamas

Portugal, 2021

30 min.

Portuguese with English subtitles

Hotel Royal follows a hotel chambermaid as she conducts her daily cleaning duties – and while moving from room to room, director Salomé Lamas (*Eldorado XII*, FoR16; *Extinction*, FoR18) and her protagonist construct the stories of the rooms' absent occupants from what they've left behind. *Hotel Royal* feels like a voyeuristic yet deeply humanistic peering-in at

unmade beds, unfinished breakfast trays, and traces of reality. Complicity becomes a companion piece, adding to the disquieting mood – a familiar trope in Lamas's cinematic gaze. *Hotel Royal* builds through evocative sound design and haunting imagery, blending factual accounts with imaginary storytelling as it directly questions the subjectivity that we bring to images and objects.

La Cumbre

Dir. Felipe López Gómez

Canada, 2021

9 min.

Spanish with English subtitles

Canada-based Colombian filmmaker Felipe López Gómez returns to his isolated familial home in the Andes – which has laid abandoned for two decades. Through family photos, contemporary footage and the memories of his beloved grandparents, López Gómez weaves a melancholic and intimate portrait of his upbringing. *La Cumbre* is not only a compassionate look at the passing of time and the impact of familial roots on each of us, but also a testament to an idyllic youth.

UK PREMIERES

+ Q&A with directors Marine de Contes, Felipe López Gómez, and Salomé Lamas

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To make or to watch a film is to engage in a process of translation. Traces of reality persist in the frame, but in what guises do they appear, and how is their meaning revealed or reconstituted? We grasp for a communal language as a portal to our pasts and to each other.

In *Silabario*, by Marine de Contes, a lone island stands, obscured by a haze of clouds. A trill pierces the air. Distance, suddenly, is no object. On La Gomera, one of the Canary Islands, the whistled language of Silbo cuts across forested valleys and ravines difficult to traverse by foot, enabling an ease of communication that was indispensable in times before mobile phones. As an articulation of identity, Silbo is being revived and passed on. Locals reconnect with natural transmission modes, facing the sky like birds, and a future that honours the past like a song.

‘There’s no need to reinvent the world,’ we hear in *Hotel Royal*, by Salomé Lamas. ‘Paying close attention is enough.’ A woman filling in as a chambermaid at a Portuguese hotel scans the personal belongings in each room off a long corridor, as she goes about her duties. A narrated screenplay echoes her movements and line of vision – but never exactly squares with what is in the frame, reminding us that cinema is always an imperfect construction. The tock of an asthma inhaler keeps rhythm like a metronome, or a machine striving for life. Behind each numbered door, objects of the absent lie as transient markers of identity, and of stories that remain out of reach. Closed up in the wake of catastrophe, and haunted by endless variations on the identical, the hotel becomes a site of intrusion. As voyeurs or lone travellers on our own brief stop-off, we thirst to make meaning; to co-opt each over-determined item and read it dry.

Sensory immediacy transcends the remove of time in *La Cumbre*, by Felipe López Gómez. A layered soundscape of fauna and running water, and the oral recounting of memories, reanimate still photographs with the atmosphere of bygone family life in a cottage in the Colombian Andes. The filmmaker alleviates his nostalgia for childhood, and a home departed. His grandmother, tapping precise, descriptive co-ordinates that take one’s mind back, recalls making the sweet drink *aguapanela* with a citronella-like plant that must still grow beside the kitchen window. For transient moments, it is also as if the gulf between the audience and the formative years summoned up dissolves in the luscious, generative green of a shared vision. Battles fought over territory extend to its competing narratives in history. In a digital age, those with dominion over mediated reality have the power to colonise minds. But what if we read rebelliously, lamenting and calling back into being the erasures that underpin such struggles?

Carmen Gray is a journalist, film programmer and critic

Wednesday 1 December
6.15pm



I'm So Sorry

Dir. Zhao Liang
Hong Kong/France/Netherlands, 2021
96 min.
Chinese/Japanese/Russian/German
with English subtitles

UK PREMIERE + Introduction

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'Humanity likes to return to nightmares', announces Zhao Liang (*Behemoth*, FoR16) in his latest nonfiction work, where nightmares of the nuclear age continue to cast a long shadow. This spectral guide revisits sites of devastation and containment, meets those living with the aftermath of Chernobyl and Fukushima, and witnesses a weekly anti-nuclear demonstration in Japan.

I'm So Sorry is both a poetic apology to future generations and an immersive panorama of a planet living with the catastrophic effects wrought by our pursuit of progress. It is a view of a world where homes lie abandoned while specialist buildings are constructed to house harmful materials; and as the next man-made disaster skirts the edges of the film, Liang's work pleads with us to better consider the consequences of our actions.

The ominous crackle of a Geiger counter accompanies the opening sequence of Zhao Liang's poetic documentary *I'm So Sorry*. A forest, abandoned playgrounds, bunkers sunk in fields – these desolate landscapes devoid of human presence set the stage for a video essay that ruminates on the ruins left behind by nuclear power – once thought of as the ultimate military deterrent and a source of clean energy. Liang captures the visible and invisible damage of radiation on a timescale that far exceeds the human.

Throughout the film, nature – beautifully portrayed – seems pitted against the destructive hubris and greed of mankind. Weeds push through the cracks of abandoned houses and schools; the gorgeous cherry blossoms around the nuclear power plant of Fukushima bloom with an almost grotesque splendour; a wild boar darts away from the camera; ivy wraps itself around cars; and lush pink roses grow in the garden of an old woman living in Chernobyl's Exclusion Zone. They form treacherous foils to the death and disaster associated with these sites. However, this is not an instance of nature asserting its dominance and healing the afterlives of modernity, but rather the final convulsions of a broken planet where everybody, human and nonhuman, loses. The bees have long disappeared from Fukushima.

I'm So Sorry shows how predominantly the elderly, who are isolated from society, lonely, and abandoned by the authorities, as well as the very young, disabled and maimed by the devastating effects of radioactive fallout, suffer most. In this narrative, political ideologies, historical events and – on a more individual level – the lives and livelihoods of families have been erased and now only gather dust. Liang sensitively documents the traces of past habitation and life, allowing ghosts and rubble to tell the story. A Noh performer (classical Japanese theatre) clad in a traditional costume and wearing a mask figures as a guide connecting these sites of nuclear disaster, and stands as a silent witness to a catastrophic past and cursed future. Nuclear isotopes remain radioactive for thousands of years, well beyond human lifespans.

Some of the film's most telling footage involves the vast workforce and enormous technological infrastructure needed to process, decontaminate, and store radioactive waste. Here, too, the manual and dangerous labour required to clean up the world's nuclear mess is human capital easily spent. Hidden from view and buried deep underground, another disaster awaits and turns *I'm So Sorry* into a prescient and powerful yet moot apology to humankind and to the planet.

Nat Muller is a curator and writer who is currently completing a PhD at Birmingham City University

Wednesday 1 December
8.15pm



The Last Shelter (Le dernier refuge)

Dir. Ousmane Zoromé Samassékou
France/Mali/South Africa, 2020
85 min.
French/Bambara with English subtitles

UK PREMIERE

+ Q&A with director Ousmane Zoromé Samassékou

Dedicated to his Uncle Amadou, who embarked on a journey to Europe almost 32 years ago without leaving a trace, Ousmane Zoromé Samassékou's *The Last Shelter* focuses on the House of Migrants – a waystation on the edge of the Sahara for those committing to their journeys across and/or out of Africa, and a stopover for those preparing to return home.

Among the many stories are those of Esther and Kadi, two teenage girls from Burkina Faso en route to Algeria. The girls discuss their anger and frustration at the dashing of their youthful dreams of being able to express themselves through music, art, education, or sport. They long for a better life whilst grappling with external influences, exposed to narratives dropped by western culture. Another recurring presence is the desert itself – treacherous and elemental. In juxtaposing this arid wilderness with the relative safety of the shelter, Samassékou presents us with a portrait of the migrant journey that is both intimate and vast.

The quest for freedom takes on a colourful, deeply intimate, yet detached form of observation in Ousmane Zoromé Samassékou's portrayal of the migrant experience, taking place in Gao, a city situated in the western African Republic of Mali. Surrounded by haunting ochre landscapes amid a vast desert, Gao is home to La Maison du Migrant – a temporary refuge for travellers from the likes of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and Guinea, among other territories. Acting as a meditative halfway house, suspended in time whilst war and terrorism rages beyond its walls, this turquoise-coloured sanctuary welcomes transiting migrants pursuing solace and respite in exile from their homelands. Curiously, in its state of limbo, the shelter affords displaced persons an opportunity to collectively reinvent their dreams of the future. This is particularly prominent in scenes where Samassékou's attentive lens focuses on Esther and Kadi: two young women who have recently fled Burkina Faso. Both are intent on sacrificing their pasts in the hope of fleeing to the idealised paradise of Europe, or perhaps even America.

Through its loose structure, the film prompts the viewer to consider: what price should one have to pay for a dream of a better, or rather safer, tomorrow? And what guarantee is there that such sacrifices, made on long and dangerous routes through volatile deserts, will eventually reveal the road to liberty for distressed migrants? *The Last Shelter* shows that there are no easy answers. However, what we do see through director and cinematographer Samassékou's fly-on-the-wall perspective – which carefully seeks to capture communal dynamics via a non-intrusive camera – is how an air of uncertainty in the refuge invites pilgrims of freedom from all over the sub-Saharan to reimagine their identities and, subsequently, their future path.

On the one hand, one could argue Samassékou's film is a commentary on the harsh realities of existence in Western Africa, as relayed through occasional stories of persecution and ostracism by its protagonists. Yet I see this work as a delicate exploration of diverse imaginaries, sensitively examining how the concept of happiness is a key element in humanity's search to discover the meaning of life. 'I used to hate my life and everything in it,' utters young Esther in a moving monologue toward the end, before setting off for Algeria. 'But since I arrived here, I understood that you should love life, and life will love you back.'

In truth, the loosely structured and meandering narrative of the film is rather simple at its core; we see migrants entering the shelter, briefly sharing their hardships of an unforgiving world, and then continuing on their voyages. What remains fascinating, however, is the nature of their dreams, whether failed or still being realised, drawn to locating what Samassékou describes as 'an imagined idea of El Dorado'.

*Maria Kazarian is a writer, an editor,
and the ICA Cinema & Film Coordinator*

Thursday 2 December
8.15pm



To The Moon

Dir. Tadhg O'Sullivan
Ireland, 2020

76 min.

English/German/French/Irish/Farsi/Russian/
Czech/Swedish with English subtitles

UK PREMIERE

+ Q&A with director Tadhg O'Sullivan

Drawing on archival film, literature, opera, and specially-shot moonlit landscapes from around the world, writer-director Tadhg O'Sullivan's film is a poetic ode to the multitude of ways in which this celestial body has an impact on our lives and cultural heritage. *To The Moon* takes the spectator on a sort of night walk, shifting from the romantic to the unsettling and foreboding. Structuring the film around one full lunar cycle, O'Sullivan seamlessly shifts from ineffable and tantalising themes such as life and death to superstition and science – each linked by their historic connections with the moon.

Tadhg O'Sullivan's otherworldly essay film unfolds under the Moon's watchful gaze. The Irish filmmaker understands that although our Earth pivots around the Sun, it is the Moon that circles us.

It is an act of a reimagining to declare a barren rock more poetic than a star. Yet this is precisely what O'Sullivan does. Indeed, the film's title is borrowed from the English Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley:

*Art thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,
Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth*

Shelley imagines the sky to be a lonely place, but for O'Sullivan it is a site of connection. Glimpsed from Earth, the Moon is a collective experience shared across geography, time and space. The film patchworks clips from 25 different national archives that stretch from Japan to Estonia, as well as newly commissioned footage of the Moon. In various cultures, the Moon serves as a creative canvas for the mediums of art, literature, cinema, and song. From the silent cinema of Alice Guy-Blaché to Czech filmmaker Petr Weigl's 1977 interpretation of Antonín Dvořák's moonlit opera *Rusalka*, his reference points are enjoyably broad.

The film uses the lunar cycle as an organising principle, which is structured as a kind of ebb and flow. Instead of moving through a single night, the film journeys from fat, radiant full orb to a slim, waning wisp. 'Let me begin again,' says O'Sullivan's voiceover, partway through the film.

A woman wakes from a dream and walks to her moonlit window. She parts her curtains; a clever cut imagines her view; a person rides a horse through a rocky canyon, led by a crescent Moon. The film collages together images of those beckoned, beguiled, and illuminated by *La Luna's* glow. It provides cover for furtive kisses; a montage that celebrates the Moon's romantic potential is soundtracked by the twinkle of Claude Debussy's *Clair de lune*. It is the backdrop to longing: lighting up mountains, sending flowers exploding into nighttime bloom. Nocturnal creatures are awakened by moonlight, too. In archive footage that delves into Estonian folklore, we learn of a sprite known as Mother Twilight.

O'Sullivan is equally entranced by darker aspects of the Moon's tidal pull. Its strange, feminine power arouses all sorts of superstitions. She induces 'lunacy', summoning witches and vampires and werewolves. She rules the ocean. She is an altar; we see birds soar towards her face, and hands raised in supplication.

Simran Hans is a film critic

Friday 3 December
6pm



Aleph

Dir. Iva Radivojević
USA / Croatia / Qatar, 2021
91 min.

Arabic/English/Greek/Nepalese/Serbo-Croatian/
Spanish/Thai/Zulu with English subtitles

UK PREMIERE

+ Q&A with director Iva Radivojević

Inspired by Jorge Luis Borges' *The Aleph*, Iva Radivojević's film blends magical realism and narrative fiction with the methodologies and practices of nonfiction filmmaking. Departing from Argentina, *Aleph* leads us through an intertwining labyrinth of countries, film forms and perspectives in order to reach what Borges described as 'the unimaginable universe'.

Radivojević's journey compares prayer rituals of organised religions, while juxtaposing Bedouin nomads with name-brand sandals. Through short vignettes and parallel arches and archetypes, *Aleph* strives to reveal more about our inter-connectedness as a species. Unfolding as a dreamy reality from continent to continent, as a philosophical travelogue in perpetuum mobile, Radivojević's film makes for a hypnotic and transcendent journey.

As Borges wrote, the first letter of the alphabet – A, Alpha or Aleph – is the beginning of everything and contains all of the world's knowledge. Like a shade of white encapsulating all colours to represent a blank canvas, a fresh start and a hint at endless possibilities. As a liberation of sorts, as if being reborn in the present and the present only. It is a mantra *Aleph* embraces beautifully as it zooms into the present of a multitude of characters scattered all over the world, observing and absorbing those ties that bind to expose a larger question and a bigger picture. A human shuffle of sorts, it implicates us as viewers, giving us the responsibility to look beyond the film and become active participants in our own dreams, in this life. One could call it a cinematic twist on speed dating – speed dating for both dreamers and existentialists alike, through internal dialogue and external conversation, through reframing and reimagining personal and collective truths – to end up with a beautiful reminder and a renewed conception of the unexpected and surprising impact of human connection.

Aleph is a free-associative labyrinthian journey set in a world devised by a dreamer and tied together by a narrator: our lucid dreamer of dreams, responsible for creating and recreating memories. Each narrative thread leads us closer to the centre of Borges's inspired unimaginable universe: through textures and melodies, through deconstruction and contrast, through the said and the seen, leaving us in a constant state of wonder. As in dreams, the film keeps on slipping through our fingers, with faces turning nameless and names turning speechless, as an effect of that ever-evolving inner world. *Aleph* wants to escape interpretation to get as close as possible to that unattainable object of our desire: Lacan's *objet petit a*, again in line with *Aleph*, in line with that beginning, to challenge us to embrace diversity and an open mind. It's up to us and no other to make us feel too much. To make us feel all the emotions of the world. To have me versus the world evolve into me and the world.

Aleph is intuitive, *Aleph* is sensitive, *Aleph* is heartfelt. The stage is nowhere and everywhere. The film feels like endless wordplay: a constant stream of going back and forth between the characters, the viewer, and the filmmaker, where we all converse around a T.S. Eliot-inspired cup of tea, going from one side of the screen to the other, while we wander and get lost in that forest of eyes, as if we're window-shopping those windows to the soul. We've entered a game of truth or dare in a world where truth no longer matters as everything has become subjective. We stir and stare at that swirling universe captured in that mysterious, lavishing porcelain cup of tea until we stop asking ourselves: do I dare? Do I dare? Do I dare disturb the universe?

This is only a dream, the first words uttered, and maybe it was, but it was a hopeful one and that's the essence after all. Where it all starts from, hope. To end with, I've seen nothing, and I've seen it all. All with a capital A. As in *Aleph*. As in the beginning of it all.

Wim Vanacker is a film critic and script consultant

Friday 3 December
8.15pm



For Shorts #2

Kindertotenlieder

Dir. Virgil Vernier

France, 2021

28 min.

French with English subtitles

Taking its name from Gustav Mahler's song cycle set to poems by Friedrich Rückert (the title translates as *Songs on the Death of Children*), Virgil Vernier's *Kindertotenlieder* examines the cyclical nature of oppression and revolt. Repurposing footage of the 2005 French riots, Vernier presents a reconstructed chronology of a moment in recent French history that still remains painfully relevant. Through a careful treatment of factual chronology, *Kindertotenlieder* addresses themes of institutionalised racism, brutality, political apathy, and youth disenfranchisement – all contributing factors to a vicious sociopolitical cycle that goes hand in hand with the price society is routinely asked to pay in order to achieve a certain so-called safety and security.

Unrendered Road

Dir. Tali Liberman

Israel/Palestine, 2021

21 min.

English

Tali Liberman's poetic and philosophical road movie travels between Jerusalem and Jericho, a journey otherwise untraversable by satellite navigation and Google Maps. This examination of the political and

legal reasons as to why technology is unable to detect a route to the Palestinian territory where Jericho is situated is embedded in Liberman's multi-layered moving image project that unfolds here, reimagining a connection between two states in still-deeper and more painful turmoil. *Unrendered Road* confronts how these navigation systems act as another form of checkpoint, barring entry to or exit from the region. Liberman's research questions the political and societal structures that underpin cartography as it seeks to redraw the borders between these two historic cities.

Listen to the Beat of Our Images (Écoutez le battement de nos images) (still above)

Drs. Audrey & Maxime Jean-Baptiste

French Guiana/France, 2021

15 min.

French with English subtitles

Sixty years ago, the French Guianan town of Kourou was chosen as the site of France's new space centre, following France's departure from Algeria. Audrey and Maxime Jean-Baptiste's film gives voice to the 600 Guianese people who were unceremoniously removed from their homes as a result. Combining archival footage with stories of those who were displaced, *Listen to the Beat of Our Images* restores this lost town to something more tangible: cementing and reanimating the community's legacy beyond the images that remain, and juxtaposing the rush to colonise the stars with the injustices of postcolonial displacement.

UK PREMIERES

+ Q&A with directors Virgil Vernier, Audrey & Maxime Jean-Baptiste, and Tali Liberman

Burnt-out cars are strewn through *Kindertotenlieder*. They are charred beacons of resistant yet impotent rage against the heavy-handed policing methods, racial profiling, and lack of opportunities fuelling disaffection among youth in the Paris suburbs. Filmmaker Virgil Vernier has assembled archival footage from television news bulletins of the 2005 riots, sparked when two children fleeing police were killed, and then-presidential hopeful Nicolas Sarkozy was campaigning on a hardline policy of restoring order. Some locals rejoice at the crackdown; others condemn riot police, who fire teargas into a mosque, for stoking tinderbox tensions. The German-language title, shared with a Mahler song cycle composed as an outpouring of grief over children's deaths, reframes this lattice of historical impressions as a mourning refrain.

The idea of a road as a simple, traversable line that connects one city to another is shown in Tali Liberman's *Unrendered Road* to be a seductive illusion – at least, when it comes to Jerusalem and Jericho, geopolitical hotspots of contested habitation and access. A woman wishes to reach Jericho, governed by the Palestinian National Authority on the West Bank. A car drives through a landscape. The earth is raw, carved up, a massive construction site of occupation and projected dreams of civilisation. Despite an ancient road, the journey is absent from Google Maps. Digital place, after all, is contingent on control. Even aerial perspective offers no definitive overview when all vantage points are relative. Lines of origin back through history are barricaded and broken, with no clear way to go.

Listen to the Beat of Our Images revisits the impact of colonialism on the settlement of Kourou in French Guiana, chosen by the French government as the site of a new space base in the 1960s. Locals were displaced, and the environment disrupted with excessive rainfall. Audrey and Maxime Jean-Baptiste draw on audio-visual footage from the archive of state space agency CNES (Le Centre national d'études spatiales, or National Centre for Space Studies), recontextualising it through the voiceover of a granddaughter who considers the rocket launches not with propagandistic triumphalism but with the melancholy of a town descendant who saw life as she knew it eclipsed. Within images of power and spectacle, she clings to personal traces. Laid bare is the annihilation that is the flipside of supposed progress.

Carmen Gray is a journalist, film programmer and critic

Saturday 4 December
6pm



Archipelago (Archipel)

Dir. Félix Dufour-Laperrière
Canada, 2021
72 min.

French/Montaignais with English subtitles

UK PREMIERE

+ Q&A with director Félix Dufour-Laperrière

In a Québec both real and imagined, both past and present, ‘You don’t exist’ becomes a familiar refrain throughout Félix Dufour-Laperrière’s poetic and political travelogue. Punctuated by a compelling variety of animation techniques, *Archipelago* brings to life a vibrant imaginary world that acts seamlessly as both a stark contrast to and a playful collaboration with existing archival imagery and newsreel footage, worked into the structure of a tale rooted in reality.

Shifting from Québec’s complex colonial past to the work of activist Hubert Aquin, *Archipelago* emerges as a historical testament to and a philosophical treatise on notions of national identity. Together with his team of animators, Dufour-Laperrière redraws his home territory in order to better understand and reimagine the paradoxical realities of a contemporary Québécois.

Félix Dufour-Laperrière's second feature-length film, *Archipelago*, is the first animation to ever be presented at FRAMES of REPRESENTATION. In a collaboration with Dufour-Laperrière's team of artists and animators, *Archipelago* continues the Québécois filmmaker's exploration of places and displacement – following works such as *Transatlantique* (2014), which, like *Archipelago*, was also presented at the International Film Festival Rotterdam. Taking the form of a travelogue along the Saint Lawrence River in Canada, and to the multiple islands that lay next to its running water, this rich, communal, and multiform composition merits its place within this year's FoR theme of *(Re)Imagining*.

Archipelago's overflowing visual language – sometimes radiant, at other times austere – offers a variety of perspectives from which one could choose to interpret it. Forms, shapes, colours, words, faces, landscapes: Dufour-Laperrière's use of mixed media, which includes archival footage, approaches a collective past with fluidity, multiplying its existence through the crafts and minds of twelve artists and animators who have seemingly been given a creative *carte blanche*. For the viewer, however, *Archipelago* is a voyage that feels tranquil and coherent: a philosophical conversation on dislocation, periphery, and community that develops throughout the course of the film. Reusing reels from a descriptive and rather arrogant piece of French TV journalism on the Saint Lawrence River, Dufour-Laperrière reimagines a journey and provides a non-factual – or rather, *afactual* – response to an imposed discourse, one inherited from an outworn modernism. Instead of facts, the filmmaker privileges metaphors; rather than descriptive images, he relays subjective interpretations of his animators and listeners.

Indeed, peripheries remain at the core of *Archipelago*. Shaped by a meditative and contemplative process, Dufour-Laperrière's *peripheries* (the term deriving from *peri* and *pherein*, which together translate as the 'act of carrying around' from ancient Greek) not only carry the viewer through dense narration, but also bear the weight of the encountered places, whether drawn from reality or imagination, as well as their histories, peoples, crafts, and the societal baggage that comes along with them. As such, *Archipelago* delivers a sharp political and historical criticism, although always with a touching bashfulness, ceaselessly providing a space for refreshed and elastic forms of temporality. And as it embodies the reimagined Saint Lawrence River as a murmured female presence, narrator Florence Blain Mbaye's voice – mostly soothing, at times resentful – is omnipresent but never intrusive, personal but never exclusive.

Putting aside the voyeuristic apparatus of live-action filming, Dufour-Laperrière empowers forgotten forms of transmission: (hi)stories through oral exchanges, identities through dialogue, existence through fabulation. The film's familiar refrain 'Tu n'existes pas' ('You don't exist') repeats a seemingly more rational counter-voice, ultimately proven wrong by the reality of what the viewer and listener come to see and hear: a mere oral existence, but an existence nonetheless, an intangible form erased and replaced in our memories by the tyranny of realistic images and texts.

Partly an invented nonfiction and partly a journalistic fiction, *Archipelago* expands notions of history, community, and belonging on screen. Here, Québec is both a place and a state of mind, and *Archipelago* a generous invitation to pause and take part in it.

Saturday 4 December
8.15pm



Closing Night: The Tale of King Crab (Re Granchio)

Dirs. Alessio Rigo de Righi & Matteo Zoppis
Italy/Argentina/France, 2021
105 min.
Italian / Spanish with English subtitles

UK PREMIERE

+ Q&A with director Matteo Zoppis

In the Italian village of Vejano, a group of elderly hunters meet over a meal, exchanging stories and songs. At the centre of their tales is Luciano, a drunk outsider who is ostracised from the community when a rash moment results in fatal consequences. Landing on the Tierra del Fuego archipelago, the southernmost tip of the South American mainland, Luciano seeks mythical treasure, aided and hindered by a group of treacherous gold-diggers.

The Tale of King Crab both accounts for and reimagines a historical epic of lost love and lost treasure. As with all folk tales, Luciano's life has been passed on for others to continue, to be retold and reshaped. Alessio Rigo de Righi and Matteo Zoppis draw on multiple experiences of Italian immigrants to Argentina, transforming Luciano into a mythological migrant hero. *The Tale of King Crab* is a modern-realist picaresque novel that artfully wraps reality and fabulation into an experimental cinematic language that daringly appropriates new frontiers of storytelling.

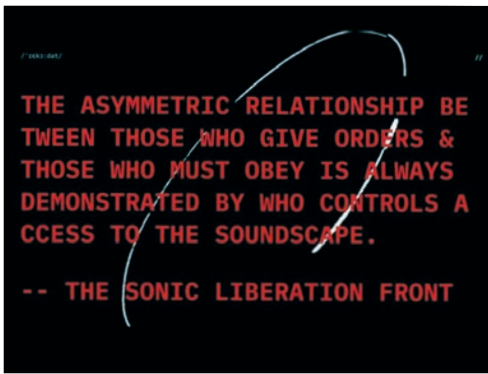
In a remote corner of contemporary Italy, a group of elderly hunters communing over food, wine, and song reminisce about the tale of Luciano, a wandering drunkard in a remote Tuscan village. His story has been passed down through generations and mutated so many times that there is little point attempting to discern how much of it is true. Falling into dispute with the local prince over his right of passage through a gateway, the untamed Luciano commits an unforgivable crime and is forced to flee. An exiled criminal, he finds himself in Tierra del Fuego, an archipelago shared by Chile and Argentina at South America's southernmost tip. There, amid dramatic landscapes comprising snowy mountains, glaciers, tundra, and wind-sculpted trees, Luciano hooks up with a band of ruthless gold-diggers in search of a mythical treasure that may pave the way for his journey towards redemption.

A cinematic diptych, *The Tale of King Crab (Re Granchio)* was one of the glittering jewels at Directors' Fortnight in Cannes 2021. The narrative debut of Italian-American filmmakers Alessio Rigo de Righi and Matteo Zoppis, the film emerges from the duo's interest in folktales and legends of the peasant tradition. As with earlier documentaries *Belva nera* (2013, also shot in Tuscia) and the award-winning *Il Solengo* (2015), the film playfully interrogates the imperfections of an oral tradition that ends up giving rise to new tales and stories. A beautifully realised mediation on narrative and re-imagining narrative, it is a work reminiscent of Michelangelo Frammartino's Calabrian set *Le quattro volte* (2010) in its innate naturalism.

Belva nera arose from a folktale about villagers being terrorised by a leopard – animals always feature in the films of Rigo de Righi and Zoppis, with the crab in this instance lending the film a magical surrealism – and there is something incredibly organic about their latest work. This undoubtedly stems from weaving the hunters who provided the source material into the very fabric of the film, drawing upon their memories and even casting them in supporting roles. Luciano is played Gabriele Silli, a nonprofessional actor cast for his resemblance to the surviving physical descriptions of the character he portrays (in real life, he's now even referred to as Luciano). A project that seems to have begun as a documentary but subtly and successfully navigated the transition to fiction, *The Tale of King Crab* also eloquently reflects, in its Argentine sequences, on myths drawn from the culture of immigration.

Making the habitat in which it unfolds central to the film – shooting in Tierra del Fuego would prove a physical challenge, a challenge exacerbated by COVID-19 protocols – music also plays a pivotal role, and contributes to the themes of mythology and folklore. Vocal music conveys narrative content, but the filmmakers also draw upon popular folk songs that may be similar in melody but that may have contrasting relationships to the texts on which they are based. Rigo de Righi and Zoppis have also spoken of their desire to have the music engage in a dialogue with the images, and in this sense, there is reflection, refraction, but also counterpoint.

Jason Wood is a writer, curator, and filmmaker



Thursday 25 November, 10.30pm

Opening Night: Performance – the Sonic Liberation Front + Recordat

A line-up of artists from the Sonic Liberation Front will be curating the FoR21 Opening Night with a live performance, to be followed by a sonic performance from sound platform Recordat.

Friday 26 November, 5pm

Workshop with the Sonic Liberation Front + Radio alHara راديوالحارة

FRAMES of REPRESENTATION 2021 features an online broadcast created in collaboration with the Sonic Liberation Front, a group of sound platforms and sonic artists who have come together with the Bethlehem-based station Radio alHara راديوالحارة to unify their sound for Palestine. Throughout the festival, the radio station will stream audio from the films presented at FoR21, inviting several directors to discuss the soundscapes behind their works.

Saturday 27 November, 11am

Symposium – how to think: Radio Silence

Part I: Screening of *Tío Yim*, 11am

Part II: Audio Piece, 12.45pm

An annual highlight of the festival is the day-long symposium, which this year takes the form of a community radio broadcast titled 'how to think: Radio Silence'. This forum brings together intimate and informal contributions from artists, thinkers, activists and healers through a film screening and listening event that are all about slowing down and being-with.

Part I, 11am – 12.45pm

The day will commence with a screening of the film that inspired the project, *Tío Yim* (2019) by Zapotec director Luna Marán.

Encouraged by his daughter, Jaime Luna (Tío/Uncle Yim) – indigenous philosopher, social leader and singer songwriter who has lost his voice – composes a new song about his tumultuous life after 15 years of silence. Yet this time he will do this alongside his family; their memories and interpretations are contradictory and painful. *Tío Yim* is an immersion into the identity of a family shaped by tradition, music, and communality.

Born in the indigenous Zapotec community of Guelatao de Juarez, Oaxaca, Mexico, Luna Marán has worked for more than a decade in educational programs centred around feminism, diversity, and communality, in organisations such as Campamento Audiovisual Itinerante (CAI), Cine Too Lab, and JEQO. She has also actively supported alternative exhibition projects in Mexican provinces, mainly via Aqui Cine and the Cine Too Theater in Guelatao. She is co-founder of Brujazul, a production company with which she produced *The Blue Years* (2017), winner of several awards including the FIPRESCI Prize at the Guadalajara International Film Festival, and nominated for the Ariel Award for Best First Film by the Mexican Academy of Cinematographic Sciences and Arts. She has also directed short films *Nocturnes* (2009) and *I Am So Like You* (2011) – *Tío Yim* (2019) is her first full-length film.



Part II, 12.45 – 5pm

The day continues with shared listening, as well as moments of gentle discussion and nourishment. Played just once, a durational audio event brings together the voices of a community who have never met in person, but who choose to share their work and lives with each other through the intimacy of sound. The broadcast includes writing, music, found sound, and personal reflections, meandering through stories of family, grief, hedges, water, snakes, protest, futures, ghosts, and other worlds.

Artists involved in 'Radio Silence' include Alexa Mardon, Alexandrina Hemsley, Andrea Luka Zimmerman, Fili 周 Gibbons, Khairani Barokka,

Nahuel Cano, Omikemi, Paula Montecinos, Rajni Shah, Reza Mirabi, Sheila Ghelani, Raju Rage, and Venuri Perera. For those not able to attend the physical event, the radio programme will be broadcast online simultaneously.

The symposium forms part of the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) project 'Performance Philosophy and Animals: towards a radical equality' led by Professor Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca in partnership with the Academy of Theatre & Dance, Amsterdam. There will be a parallel event happening simultaneously in Amsterdam.

Still from: *Tío Yim*, dir. Luna Marán, Mexico 2019, 82 min., Spanish / Zapotec with English subtitles

With the support of:



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Saturday 27 November, 10.59pm

Daniel Blumberg: FRAIM



Experimental musician, composer, and artist Daniel Blumberg will perform a special, late-night solo show in ICA's Cinema 1 as part of FRAMES of REPRESENTATION 2021.

Blumberg is a prolific visual and sonic artist who has released two solo albums with Mute Records, *Mimus* (2018) and *On&On* (2020), and recently composed the score for the film *The World to Come*

(dir. Mona Fastvold, 2020). He also operates in the multi-disciplinary duos BAHK (with Elvin Brandhi) and GUO (with Seymour Wright).

He performs a bespoke solo show entitled FRAIM especially for the festival.

Tuesday 30 November, 10am

PROGRESSIO

FoR21 also features the second edition of PROGRESSIO. This pioneering platform was launched in 2019 by the ICA, in association with Cineteca Madrid and the Sundance Institute, to support independent filmmakers in the development of feature-length projects by engaging with the aesthetic and political aspects of their works and facilitating exchanges with key industry guests. This year, Marine de Contes and Tamer El Said have been invited to share their upcoming feature films at FoR21, both of whom have previously been screened at the ICA. Marine de Contes is a French director and editor, whose film *The Game* was presented at FRAMES OF REPRESENTATION in 2018. Egyptian filmmaker Tamer El Said's debut feature *In the Last Days of the City* was distributed by ICA CINEMA in 2017.

Tuesday 30 November, 6pm

Roundtable Workshop – Fabulations in the Cinema of the Real



In the cinema of the real, fabulation and reimagination allow us to reconfigure ways of being, listening and sharing. Through a collaborative and interactive mode of spectatorship, the filmmaker, their subject(s), and their audience are all collectively involved in co-creating an aesthetic of reality.

In this workshop, filmmakers Guido Hendrixx (*A Man and a Camera*), Tadhg O'Sullivan (*To The Moon*), Iva Radirojević (*Aleph*) and Matteo Zoppis (*The Tale of King Crab*) will be in conversation with

film critic and script consultant Wim Vanacker. Together, they'll discuss some of these practices and consider how cinematic fabulation can expand the language of the moving image, enabling us to imagine new social collectivities on screen. Bringing together directors who all, in their individual ways, reflect on human nature through striking and playful formats that skillfully blend reality and artifice – together with the support of previous works and experiences from each of the participants – the workshop explores how filmmakers today may strive to resist established cinematic norms and practices.

Still from: *Aleph*, dir. Iva Radivojević, USA / Croatia / Qatar 2021, 91 min., English

Saturday 4 December, 10.30pm

DJ Set – the Sonic Liberation Front +
Radio alHara راديو الحارة

The Sonic Liberation Front and Radio alHara راديو الحارة will also feature on the festival's Closing Night with a DJ set.

FoR21 Team:

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Production Manager
Nicolas Raffin

Festival Coordinator
Maria Kazarian

Research & Symposium Curator
Astrid Korporaal

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