

MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY

FILMS BY JEAN-MARIE STRAUB & DANIELÈ HUILLET,
MEGAN FRASER AND REDMOND ENTWISTLE

March 7 – 19, 2008

Tour d'Ombres (2007) anamorphic 16 mm, 12 minutes – screened continuously during regular gallery hours

Megan Fraser

Performer: Madan Kumar

Production assistant & translator: Krishian Dangal, Luigi Beltrame

In Megan Fraser's *Tour d'Ombres*, a preservation worker enacts a performance comprised of gestures relating to his work on the architectural structure, *Tower of Shadows*. We are left unclear as to whether his actions constitute an attempt at repairing or destroying this monument by Le Corbusier in his planned city of Chandigarh, India.

Friday, March 7 & Saturday, March 8 • 7:30 pm

Arkhé (2007) 35 mm, 15 minutes

Megan Fraser

Assistant camera: Noski Deville, Mathias Nyberg

Sound: Diane Rushton

Sound mix: Mikaël Barre

Producer: Redmond Entwistle

Arkhé, a study of the last days of the Medical Museum at the Royal London Hospital, uses the process of filming as an intervention into the visual order of the institution. As the architecture and ways of viewing are dismantled, the film brings a new way of looking to these bodies that were only intended for a medical eye.

The Bridegroom, the Comedienne and the Pimp (1968) 35 mm, 23 minutes

Jean-Marie Straub & Danièle Huillet

Based upon Ferdinand Bruckner's *Krankheit der Juenge* (Pains of Youth, 1926) and three poems by Juan de la Cruz (1577)

Actors: Rainer Werner Fassbinder (Freder in the play, Pimp in the film), Lillith Ungerer (Marie in the play, Lilith in the film), Hanna Schygulla (Lucy), Peer Raben (Alt in the play, Willi in the film)

Photography: Klaus Schilling, Hubs Hagen

Sound: Peter Lutz, Klaus Eckelt

Filmed in five days on location in Munich, August 1968

Bridegroom couches political rebellion in a concentrated reinvention of film convention and genre that has retained its modernist ability to shock for over twenty-five years. Since it features performances by Rainer Werner Fassbinder and the Action-Theater of Munich, *Bridegroom* marks the point of intersection between Straub/Huillet and the radical origins of what became the New German Cinema.

— Barton Byg, *Landscapes of Resistance*

Not Reconciled or 'Only Violence Helps Where Violence Rules' (1964-65) 35 mm, 55 minutes

Jean-Marie Straub & Danièle Huillet

Based on the novel *Billiards at Half-Past-Nine* by Heinrich Böll

Actors: Henning Harmssen (Robert Fahmel, age 40), Ulrich Hopmann (Robert Fahmel, age 18) Ernst Kutzinski (Schrella, age 15), Ulrich von Thüna (Schrella, age about 35), Martha Ständner (Johanna Fähmel, age 70), Danièle Huillet (Johanna Fähmel as a young woman)

Photography: Wendelin Sachtler

Sound: Lutz Grübnau

Music: Béla Bartok, Johann Sebastian Bach

Filmed in six weeks on location in Cologne and Munich

Out of a long story spanning half a century, we get an agglomerate of fragments, bits and pieces of the past recollected by the various characters in conversation or reenacted in flashbacks to Nazi and Kaiser Germany, with sudden disconcerting shifts to different characters or to different periods, and with no clear links provided among the tangled pieces of retrospection. Hence the missing pieces carry as much weight as those included – the weight, we feel, of all in the past that has been forgotten or repressed and yet continues to bear upon the present.’

— Gilberto Perez, *Modernist Cinema, The History Lessons of Straub and Huillet*, Artforum, October 1978

Wednesday, March 12 • 7:30 pm

Language and History in the Work of Friedrich Hölderlin

A lecture by Valeria Bonacci (University of Paris, Sorbonne)

Friday, March 14 & Saturday, March 15 • 7:30 pm

Introduction to Arnold Schoenberg's "Accompaniment to a Cinematographic Scene" (1972) 16 mm, 15 minutes

Jean-Marie Straub & Danièle Huillet

Actors: Günter Peter Straschek, Danièle Huillet, Jean-Marie Straub, Peter Nestler

Photography: Renato Berta

Sound: Jetti Grigioni

Music: Arnold Schoenberg

Filmed in Rome and Baden-Baden, July – September 1972

This short film, too, is almost a summary of film history, a chromatic scale of cinematic possibilities. Walsh compares the elimination of tonal harmony in Schoenberg's music with the 'elimination of perspectival illusionism' in *Introduction*. Although I would argue that the elimination is not absolute, the flatness of the images throughout the film is indeed striking and crucial to its structure. On the one hand, this flatness increases the relevance of time as a tool of visual composition, since there is virtually no movement within the images in most of the film. On the other hand, this flatness does lend the film an added level of 'unreality,' as desired by both Brecht and Schoenberg. The shots of the film have a 'still-photo quality,' which Walsh locates as the distinction between 'document' and 'documentary.' Each shot is in some respect a document, in addition to its content, of an aspect of film history and film's material possibilities.

— Barton Byg, *Landscapes of Resistance*

Paterson-Lodz (2005) 16 mm, 60 minutes

Redmond Entwistle

Sound programmer: Dave Hunt

Assistant camera: Tamara Tracz

Interviews: Dr. Feliks Tych, Soloman Maizel, Dr. Steve Golin

Paterson – Lodz reconstructs the complex history of immigration and political movements of two silk factory towns in Poland and New Jersey at the start of the 20th Century. Fragments of historical narration overlay

images of glass impressions of the ground, and both are set against soundscapes of the two cities in the present that fill the space of the gallery/cinema.

Wednesday, March 19 • 7:30 pm

Ford Square (2005) 16 mm, 8 minutes

Megan Fraser

Sound: Redmond Entwistle

Sound mix: Mikaël Barre

In *Ford Square*, local boys and students from the London Islamic School Mahrassah, play a game of soccer in a square. Filmed from one fixed position over the course of a day, the film captures the rhythm of their play against the growing skyline of city development.

Social Visions (2000) 16 mm, 15 minutes

Redmond Entwistle

Sound editor: Erin Guinn

Assistant camera: Sally Brockington, Kai Hilton

Social Visions portrays Los Angeles through a series of panoramic photographs, clichéd op-eds from the Los Angeles Times, along with personal histories constructing a paradoxical space and temporality of the image in which erasure and development emerge as a defining character of the city.

History Lessons (1972) 16 mm, 85 minutes

Jean-Marie Straub & Danièle Huillet

Based upon Bertolt Brecht's *The Business Affairs of Julius Caesar* (1937-1939)

Actors: Gottfried Bold (The Banker), Johann Unterperntinger (The Peasant), Henri Ludwigg (The Lawyer), Carl Vaillant (The Writer), Benedikt Zulauf (The Young Man)

Photography: Renato Berta, Emilio Bestetti

Sound: Jetti Grigioni

Filmed on location in Rome, Frascati, Terenten (Alto Adige) and on the island of Elba, June – July 1972

The car, physically there amid the traffic in the streets, is made into a metaphor for the camera, equally a concrete part of the reality it serves to explore. Just as the car is limited to the available pathways, and restricted in its motion along them by the surrounding traffic, so too the camera is necessarily limited by the material circumstances under which it operates.

.... Any approach taken to history must be recognized as itself a part of history, inevitably affected by the material circumstances under which one drives a car, writes (or reads) a book, makes (or watches) a film. Everywhere in the films of Straub and Huillet we are made conscious of the activity of filmmaking as itself inscribed in history

— Gilberto Perez, *Modernist Cinema, The History Lessons of Straub and Huillet*, Artforum, October 1978

For more information, please contact the gallery:

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Gallery hours: Wednesday – Sunday, 11:00 AM to 6:30 PM

Subway: F to East Broadway; B, D to Grand Street or J, M, Z to Delancey / Essex Street