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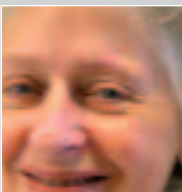
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JORIS FONDATION
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ivens

YEARLY

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Some practical experiences with the production of the Joris Ivens DVD boxset

JORIS IVENS DIGITAL



André Stufkens

THE EUROPEAN FOUNDATION JORIS IVENS IS

WORKING ON THE PRODUCTION OF A JORIS

IVENS DVD BOXSET, WHICH WILL PROVIDE AN

OVERVIEW OF HIS OEUVRE. MANY OF HIS CLAS-

SIC FILMS AND BONUS MATERIAL (INTERVIEWS

AND DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE SAME TITLES)

HAVE ALREADY BEEN DIGITISED. IN JULY 2006

WORK BEGAN ON DIGITAL RESTORATION OF THE

FILMS. AROUND 600 PRINTS OF IVENS' FILMS

HAVE BEEN STUDIED FOR THIS EXTENSIVE PRO-

JECT IN ORDER TO GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING OF

THE VERSIONS STILL IN EXISTENCE TODAY. IN

SOME CASES THERE ARE 40 TO 50 PRINTS AND

MULTIPLE VERSIONS OF A SINGLE TITLE.

PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN VERSIONS HAVE ALSO

BEEN DISCOVERED. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF

MAKING THIS DVD COLLECTION AND WHAT

PROBLEMS HAVE ARISEN IN THE PROCESS?

'If you want to get to know a filmmaker well, you have to go and see his films', wrote Joris Ivens (1898-1989) towards the end of his life. A clear and attractive statement – after all, film could not exist if it weren't for the viewer. Millions of people have seen his films' but as they are now stacked away on the shelves of the film archives they have become virtually unknown. Although his films are well represented at film festivals worldwide', his oeuvre is a thing of the past. In general, what applies to Ivens' films applies to all films: after a release cycle of varying length, only very few films are given a second life.³ Hollywood blockbusters and cheaper series on video and DVD pile up in the shops but the majority of artistic films disappear from sight.⁴ They become destined for the film archive, where they are 'laid to rest' so to speak.

DIGITAL REVOLUTION

Nevertheless, with the advent of the digital revolution - the most drastic change since the invention of film itself – the archive can now take on a new role. Instead of being a graveyard of sorts, the film archive can be a lively distribution point. The logistic rigmarole and cost of getting old films in tins from the archive to the viewer now seems a thing of the past. Although the collective cinema experience of 35mm film will always be cherished, new screening and distribution possibilities such as digital cinema and digital television call for the necessity of digitalisation. In the meantime the Ivens classics *De Brug* (*The Bridge*, 1928) and *Zuiderzeewerken* (*Zuiderzee*, 1930) can be viewed online and *Regen* (*Rain*, 1929) (accompanied by the music of Hanns Eisler) became available on DVD in April 2006. These rapid developments confront archives with new challenges and problems. Ivens' statement (above) is a stimulus for the EFJI to bring some 15 of his films out on DVD. We have been working on the production of a DVD boxset since 2003 and hope to present it to the public in November. It is being produced in conjunction with the Film Museum (Overveen), A-film (Amsterdam), CAPI Film (Paris), ARTE (Paris), Facets (Chicago) and Digital Film Center (Arnhem).

Joris Ivens editing his
documentary *Wij Bouwen*
(*We're Building*, 1930).

© JIA/EFJI



Digital corrections of Ivens films at Edit'B: Osan Olçay, Walter Swagemakers (Filmmuseum) and Bouke Vahl

OBJECTIVES FOR THE JORIS IVENS DVD-BOX

The first objective is that the DVD boxset will include a cross-section of Ivens' work, from his earliest short film *De Wigwam* (*The Tipi*, 1912) to his swansong *Une Histoire de Vent* (*A Tale of the Wind*, 1988).⁵ Joris Ivens is a typical oeuvre-builder, whose themes, stylistic devices and meanings stand out when a number of works from the DVD collection are seen in relation to each other. Only then does it become clear that in many ways, both physical and metaphysical, the four natural elements form a thread through his work. Only then do we notice that all of his documentaries have fictive happy endings, in line with a short film from his youth about cowboys and Indians, a thrilling battle between good and evil, with good prevailing in the end. When we look at the films from the boxset in chronological order, we are placed, as it were, in a time capsule taking us back to the turn of the 20th century – a century of extremes resulting in extreme movies. With rising exhilaration we watch our grandparents, only two generations away, throwing heavy boulders into the Zuiderzee to tame the sea and create the great polders. They worked with their bare hands – and there were no working regulations back then. Whether dealing with Dutch dyke builders, Russian Komsomol youths, American grain farmers or Vietnamese rice growers, Ivens shows the shockingly fast transformation of the 20th century – from the age-old agrarian to the modern industrialized culture, which, in both east and west, went hand in hand with violence. As far as Ivens was concerned, it involved political ideals as well, as he believed that the economic and technological changes would also create social changes.

Not only does a century unfold before our eyes, the development of cinema can likewise be followed - from black and white to colour, from silent to sound and on to synchronized sound, from the simple hand-held camera with irregular taping speed to film rolls of two minutes and expensive cameras with rails and cranes. Since Ivens filmed on every continent, it made sense to pro-

duce the collection in several languages for an international audience.

CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION ETHICS

The second objective is to present the films on DVD in a responsible manner by producing a 'critical historical edition' with contributions by film scholars.⁶ Just as there are conservation and restoration ethics in which international standards are set for respectfully dealing with the cinematographic heritage on nitrate or acetate, there should be rules for digital media.⁷ This is probably all the more urgent considering how simple it is to revise and alter original material on the computer. An extensive and sincere account of the versions and criteria used and the choices made is the least we may expect – although this is not yet common practice. Martin Koerber, a German specialist in digital restoration, noted in 2002:

'On virtually all' cinephile DVDs' that I have seen so far, there is not any documentation about the sources used for the transfer of the film, nor commentary on the editing strategies used; thus there is no knowledge transmitted of any restoration or 'enhancement' of image and sound. [...] I would welcome information about the aesthetic decisions considered in preparing a film for DVD'.⁸

DILEMMA

Anyone wishing to compile a set of classic films on DVD is faced with a fundamental choice - is the aim to be as authentic as possible or to appeal to the modern viewer's contemporary visual expectations? Should a classic be an old film dressed up as new or simply a novel visual experience? Young audiences are not used to silent movies and even get restless with silence, which is the reason most DVD compilers go for accompaniment with a new composition. However, in the Ivens DVD collection, films like *De Wigwam*, *De Brug* and *Regen* will be presented in their original silence – if only because the director himself at the end of his life showed ever more admiration for this silent

period in the history of cinema. Although he was well aware that many shows were accompanied by ad hoc music he still chose to present his films in silence. The viewer centres his/her attention on the visual aspects during silent presentations, and that is exactly what these films deserve. Moreover, this increases the possibility of seeing the developments in Ivens' film career and of making comparisons between the films.

Another example: modern viewers, used to spotless copies of contemporary movies on television and in the theatre, will consider any scratch on the image as an inaccuracy. The 2002 DVD boxset of the French avant-garde cinematographer Jean Vigo (1905-1934) contains movies that have hardly been cleaned - cables, scratches and stains are visible throughout. Was this a conscious choice, laziness or an economic consideration? On the other hand, David Shepard, who edited Robert Flaherty's classic *Nanook of the North* (1922) for DVD, removed the flicker, which was produced by the Akely camera that Flaherty had used for filming the Inuit, as well as a reindeer hair that was disrupting the image. Moreover, he changed the irregular speed of the images. Shepard claims that as a consequence of democratisation and of greater access to old movie treasures on DVD, the perusal of archival treasures is no longer the secret ritual of 'archival Pharisees' performing, so to speak, biblical exegesis for the initiates only.⁹ In his view, classics on DVD should create a new visual experience and be attractive for younger generations, who can enjoy the 'oldies' again, free of wrinkles and other imperfections.

RESPONSIBLE PRESENTATION

There is something to say for both viewpoints and it would even be worth considering showing the results of both to make the audience aware of the choices. Philology and literary criticism, from which the term 'critical historical edition' is derived, commonly use the terms 'text-critical edition' and 'diplomatic edition'. An old text can be published in a 'critical edition', which aims at modern readers who want optimal access to the text, but want to read it in its original language (abbreviations are written out in full, punctuation added etc.). It can also be published in a 'diplomatic edition', which is aimed at scholars and sticks to the original text as much as possible. The question is whether it is desirable to show the original text or later versions. In itself, a later version can also be the topic of research. Whatever one chooses, the reader is entitled to a sincere justification so that it becomes clear why certain interventions have been used. This counts for literature as well as for films. So one should be able to find out which version has been selected as the basic material for the boxset, which conservation method has been used and how digital corrections have been performed.

The Ivens DVD boxset will contain a silent edition of *Regen*, which was scanned from the version that was cut in the New York Museum of Modern Art in 1940. This film print is the longest we know of and is based on the most authentic Russian version (the 1929 Dutch version is lost). The print of this MoMA version shows a remarkable number of black and white montage crosses all over the frames. Every so often we come across thumbprints (an Ivens trademark) and perforations made by customs checks, as well as light cables and stains. Ivens assembled his movies at the time by cutting the film and hanging the strips in the right order on a rail – in a sort of clothesline effect. In *Regen* there is a shot that has been assembled the wrong way round: raindrops falling into a canal create circles on the surface of the



Stills *De Wigwam* (*The Tipi*, 1912) before and after restoration © JIA/EFJ

water that get ever smaller. Was this carelessness on the part of Ivens or a visual joke? Or could it be a later mistake by an operator who glued the strip the wrong way round after repairing damage to that particular spot? Another classic example is the 'mistake of the bike', when John Fernhout, sitting on the back of Ivens' bike, filmed the reflection of another bike in the puddles of water on the road. The film shows the bike upside down, riding along the upper edge of the frame. In some later versions the bike is turned around so that it assumes a 'natural' movement along the bottom of the frame. It is of course the wrong way round. The perforations, cables and stain have surely come about through later use and misuse and did not form part of the authentic version. They will naturally be removed. On the other hand, original disassembling crosses disrupt the beauty of the images to such an extent that they will be removed from the DVD-version as well. In this case an aesthetic consideration is deemed to outweigh the criterion of authenticity.

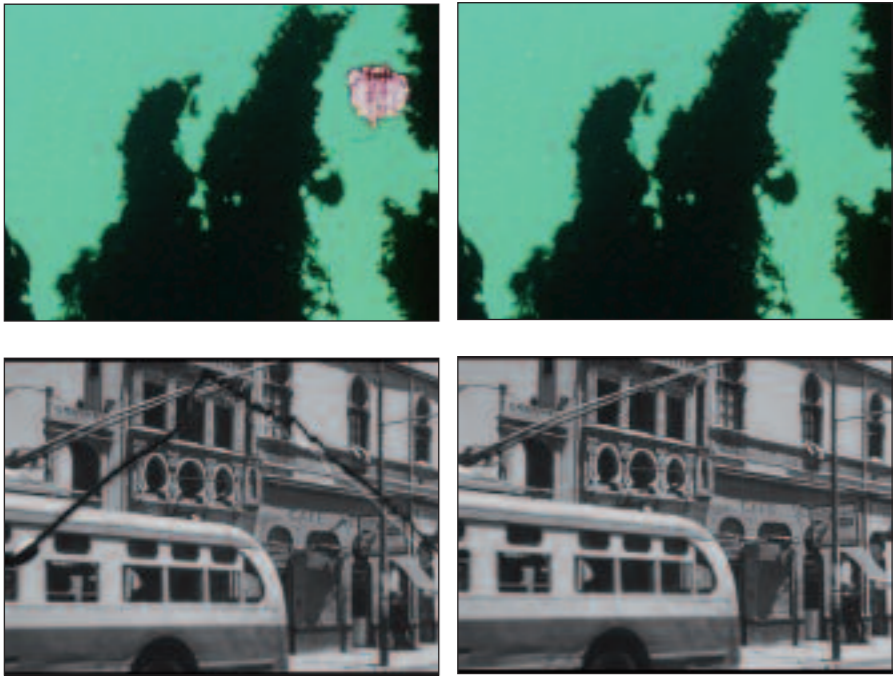
The opposite can also be the case. Halfway through the wonderfully preserved *Philips Radio* (1931), the first Dutch movie with sound, a French title board appears out of the blue, while the rest of the movie shows exclusively Dutch title boards. When and why the French title was added could not be traced from the restoration history but it was certainly not part of the original version. Naturally the French text will be replaced by Dutch text for the DVD, using the same 1931 design to get as close as possible to the authentic version.

OBSTACLES WITH BITS AND BYTES

The digitalisation of cinematographic heritage, no matter how attractive, must overcome many obstacles. Seven years after the introduction of DVD it has become a 'hot item' for numerous international conferences and the same conclusion is drawn every time: the possibilities are endless, but so are the problems and risks. Thus Jan-Christopher Horak raises doubts on the glittering promise of the digital revolution:

'While the digital world promises unlimited access to film history (certainly a technological possibility), the economic reality is that the number of films available on the market through digital technology will continue to shrink rather than expand'.¹⁰

Apart from the financial and economic stumbling blocks,



Still *Pour le Mistral* (1965)
before and after © JIA/EFJI

Still ...à *Valparaiso* (1963)
before and after © JIA/EFJI

there are many other factors, such as the search for good basic material, the problems surrounding rights and piracy, the dematerialization of the carrier (and thus its devaluation) and finally the technical deficiencies. Together these factors amount to a digital labyrinth in which one could easily get lost. Below are some comments on the realization of a digital dream.

1. The best version

Finding the most suitable version is a time consuming and expensive task. Parisian archives, for example, have yielded the best source material for five French movies made by Ivens, which have subsequently been digitalized in London. A film version of *Regen* originating from Vancouver provided the source material for a new conservation of the sound version, for which Lou Lichtveld (better known from his alias Albert Helman) wrote the music in 1932. Dutch titles will be added to complete this version. We looked for the best sound version of *Komsomol* (1932) in a Russian archive in the Urals. From Chile and Uruguay we received an uncut version of ...à *Valparaiso* (1963), which shows that Ivens cut some scenes shortly after its world premiere. After months of searching for the original material of a film portrait by Jean Rouch, filmed in Katwijk with Joris Ivens and Henri Stock, it turned up on the shelves of the Leiden filmmakers Busschots. The print contains stains that can only be corrected frame by frame. As a consequence, four seconds of stained film produces some 96 frames needing correction work, which is a very costly job. Digital correction can work miracles that would not be possible with any older technique, but it comes at a price.

Extensive research on the different versions has been conducted at the Ivens collection of the Overveen Film Museum. In 1994 Bert Hogenkamp and Sonja Snoek led an in-depth conservation project of Ivens' nitrate collection at the museum. Archives all over the world provided film versions for this purpose. The poetic film *Regen* alone (a mere 11-12 minutes long) yielded thirty-eight prints and eleven versions. Just as no two showers are alike in reality, the various film versions differ in both length and character. During the preparation of his documentary about Ivens' film *Power and Land* (1940) the American History Professor Ephraim Smith discovered two short and up to then unknown documentaries made by Ivens. Of *The First Years* (1949) the censored puppet scene, developed in the Jiri Trnka Studios in Prague, was rediscovered (see page 28).

Next to the successes there have also been some disappointments. A long search for an Ivens documentary on the art of Marc Chagall delivered only a few unclear rushes. The material of *Comment Yukong déplaça les Montagnes* (*How Yukong Moved the Mountains*, 1976) turned out to be so discoloured that it was unsuitable for digitalisation without costly conservation (for which there are no available funds). An unknown French version of *Borinage* (1934) has shown up with an entirely new beginning, other images and titles. To heighten the viewer's awareness of the problems facing researchers, two versions of Ivens' children's film *De Wigwam* are included: a longer and very damaged version with stark contrasts, and a shorter version with softer contrasts, more tonal definition and little damage. Of *Regen* both the original silent version from 1929 and the sound version by Lichtveld and Eisler are included in the boxset. Since music ensembles worldwide are interested in performing these works live, a scholarly edition is all the more urgent. Ivens' documentary *The Spanish Earth* (1937), shot during the Spanish Civil War, will be provided with commentary by both Ernest Hemingway and Orson Welles.

2. Rights

Many projects are hampered by the absence of clear film rights. Copyrights differ per country and not every country has signed the Bern Convention (Act of Paris), which sets out international agreements. And how do the author's rights relate to those of the producers? Quite a number of Ivens' films were made possible by one-off production companies of friends who scraped the money together for the film at the time, but have died in the meantime. Some producers have sold or discontinued their companies or gone bankrupt. Try and work out who owns the rights. And what if an entire country disappears? Since the reunion of East and West Germany, the rights of Ivens' East German DEFA films are in the hands of Progress Film Verleih, but it sold the DVD rights to the American company Icestorm. As a consequence they are too expensive to record.

3. Devaluation

The fact that films are easily reproducible on DVD fundamentally changes the nature of the original work of art. When stored in a tin, a film is unique and protected from large-scale misuse as few people have access to 35mm projectors or cutting tables. The relative cheapness of DVDs paves the way for carelessness as anyone can manipulate a film on computer, and thereby infringe upon a work of art. The neutralization of artistic value and the loss of 'aura' was originally signalled by Walter Benjamin in his famous 1936 article on the work of art in the era of its technical 'reproducibility'.¹ DVDs are democratic consumer items owned by the masses, comparable to the 6 billion pictures shot with digital cameras every year. Film is becoming a consumer good, no longer enjoyed and experienced by a group of people in the silence of the movie theatre, but consumed, in zapping mode, like any other pastime.

On the other hand, the digital revolution will inevitably increase the value of the masters, the 'vintage prints' on nitrate and acetate, all the more so because Kodak will soon stop producing 35 and 16mm material. Filmmakers are already more inclined towards shooting digitally and in due time 35mm film (and its screening in movie theatres) will disappear. The masters on nitrate and acetate will become the valuable and durable 'incunabula' of cinema. According to recent research they can be preserved in good condition for 500 years if kept in ideal conditions.² This invalidates the urgency of digitising collections straightaway. Whilst there is no certainty about the standards of

digital conservation and given the short lifespan of formats, techniques and equipment, huge investments are exceptionally risky. The Ivens DVD boxset is therefore not meant as a conservation project; the films are not being digitised in order to preserve them. On the contrary, during the selection of source material the Film Museum has decided to restore and preserve several films anew in order to gain better primary material. The film itself remains the basis for conservation and restoration. The digital history of conservation and restoration created in the production of DVDs should never replace that of the film, as it is much too risky.

4. Digital shortcomings

Films on DVD still have a number of recognized technical limitations. A digital image, built up with bits and bytes, can never get the same warmth, depth, and texture or density definition as a 35mm print. An image encoded to MPEG does not show all twenty-four frames of the film, but only two to four, filling in the remainder by calculation. Essential information can get lost in this way. Some camera movements are too complex and exceed the bit-rate, causing irregular images. For this reason a *pan* (a panoramic horizontal movement of the camera) from *Pour le Mistral* (*For the Mistral*, 1965) across a field of grain swaying in the wind, which shows the double movement of both camera and filmed object, delivers a bumpy image. Colour is another such problem. The colour range of DVD is much smaller than film. The colours of *Pour le Mistral* have faded and are digitally adapted to the modern taste, but in the process fine nuances are lost. Undeniably each change of colour is subjective and arbitrary. Often parts of film images are dropped or are framed in black because the ratio of old film formats conflicts with the DVD formats. The frames of *Borinage* (1934) are jumpy, because the film combines full screen and normal image (two different framing formats from the period of silent movies and sound movies respectively). If desired, this could easily be rectified in the digital version. A special case is the transition to cinemascope format in *Pour le Mistral*. With an analogue projector the sudden broadening to a panoramic image can be achieved with a change of lens, considerably widening the film screen. On a fixed screen this cannot be reproduced in any other way than with diminutions and working with black frames – causing precisely the opposite effect. The film speed, which varied in the period of silent movies between 16 and 21.5 and presently 24 images per second, does not correspond with the 25 images of DVD, not to mention the differences between NTSC (29.97 fps) and PAL or the regional codes. There is continual technical modernization: today's standard will be obsolete tomorrow. The Ivens films have been scanned on 2k or lower, but in the near future 4k will be the standard. In the digital labyrinth competitors take part in a rat race – film lovers should not be too disturbed by this.

CONCLUSION

'Film won't have a second century', said filmmaker Chris Marker in 1991.³ The twentieth century was the age of the movie, but in the 21st century new media are well on their way of ousting the 'mother of all moving images'. Nevertheless, new media can offer their predecessors, the classic movies, the chance of a second, third or multiple life, so that future generations can continue to enjoy works by the pioneers of cinema.

This is a revision of an article published earlier in *S@P-jaarboek*



Still ... à *Valparaiso* and
De Wigwam (*The Tipi*) before
and after
© JIA/EFJI

Thanks to Rob Stufkens for his advice on this text and his information on the Middle Dutch texts, to Marceline Loridan-Ivens (EFJI, Paris), to Bram Relouw (EFJI), to Walter Swagemakers, Mark-Paul Meyer, Dorette Schootemeier and Ad Pollé (Film museum), Jan Maarten Groen, Mark Vanherck and Joris van Wijk (A-Film), Jos van der Linde, Jan van Sandwijk (VEVAM), Floris Kolvenbach (Digital Film Center) and Johannes Carl Gall (Berlin).

¹ Evidence of these millions of viewers: Ivens' American documentary *Power and the Land* (1940) attracted 6 million viewers in the US (up to 1962); the *YuKong*-series was viewed in the Netherlands alone by 2 million television viewers. The film *Lied der Ströme* was according to propaganda figures given by its commissioner, the World Federation of Labour Unions, viewed by as many as 500 million people.

² See www.iven.nl, 'agenda'.

³ Jan-Christopher Horak in 'Old Media Become New Media: The Metamorphosis of Historical Film in the Age of Digital Dissemination', in: Martin Loiperdinger (ed.), *Celluloid Goes Digital. Historical-Critical Editions of Films on DVD and the Internet. Proceedings of the First International Trier Conference on Film and New Media*, October 2002, Trier, p. 20.

⁴ Nick Wrigley, board member of the Masters of Cinema website in 'Will we ever see some classic films on DVD?'

⁵ In the meantime 27 films have been digitised and undergone a quality check: 17 Ivens film titles, with the addition of 4 versions of 3 titles; and diverse bonus material: interviews, films and reports. The definitive selection depends on obtaining the rights, financial considerations and technical feasibility.

⁶ The term 'Historical critical editions' was launched during the 1st International Conference for Film and New Media (University of Trier, October 2002), following the already current academic use of 'historical critical text editions', which finds its roots in philology and literary criticism. See: Kurt Gärtner, 'Philological Requirements for Digital Historical-Critical Text Editions and Their Application to Critical Editions of Films', in: Martin Loiperdinger (ed.), see note 4, p. 49-54.

⁷ The 135 film archives that are affiliated with the FIAF (Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film), including the EFJI, have all signed the 'Code of Ethics' and various subcommittees provide guidelines adapted to new techniques and insights - the 'FIAF Cataloguing and preservation rules'. Rule 1 of the 'Code of Ethics' states: 'Archives will respect and safeguard the integrity of the material in their care and protect it from any forms of manipulation, mutilation, falsification or censorship.' Rule 2: 'Archives will not sacrifice the long-term survival of material in their care in the interests of short-term exploitation.' And rule 4: 'when copying material for preservation purposes, archives will not edit or distort the nature of the work being copied. Within the technical possibilities available, new preservation copies shall be an accurate replica of the source material. The processes involved in generating the copies, and the technical and aesthetic choices which have been taken, will be faithfully and fully documented.' (Code of Ethics, Brussels 1999, 2nd edition)

⁸ Martin Koerber 'Inside and Outside the Bubble: Archival Standards and the DVD Market', in: Martin Loiperdinger (ed.), see note 4, p. 34-35.

⁹ David Shepard, 'Silent Film in the Digital Age', in Martin Loiperdinger (ed.), see note 4, p. 23-28.

¹⁰ Jan-Christopher Horak in 'Old Media Become New Media: The Metamorphosis of Historical Film in the Age of Digital Dissemination', in: Martin Loiperdinger (ed.), see note 4, p. 21.

¹¹ Walter Benjamin, 'Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seinen technischen Reproduzierbarkeit', in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, Berlin 1936.

¹² Thanks to Paul Read, who made these figures available at his presentation at the FIRST symposium 'European Film Heritage on the Threshold of the Digital Era', 1 June 2004, Brussels. Based on research by the Danske Filminstitut *Preserve then Show*, 2002 and the Archimedia Seminar in Copenhagen, November 2001. His lecture appeared in *Journal of Film Preservation*, FIAF Brussels, no. 68 12/2004, p. 32-45.

¹³ Chris Marker, cited in: Thomas Tode, *Film - That Was Last Century*. Chris Marker's CD-ROM *IMMEMORY ONE*, in Martin Loiperdinger (ed.), see note 4, p.39.

the foundation update

IVENS SEMINAR AND RETRO-SPECTIVE TOUR IN ISRAEL

Fourteen films by Joris Ivens and Marceline Loridan-Ivens toured through Israel and visited venues in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Rosh Pina and Mitzpe Ramon. Documentary film art has really taken off in Israel over the last couple of years, both in quality and quantity. Award winning documentaries from the likes of Yoav Shamir (*Check Point*, Winner of the Joris Ivens Award 2003 at the IDFA) or Avi Mograbi (*Avenge But One Of My Two Eyes*, winner of the Amnesty International DOEN award at the International Film Festival Rotterdam 2006) confirm this fact.



Marceline Loridan-Ivens debating during the Joris Ivens seminar in Israel, February 2006

People gathering for the opening ceremony of Het Arsenaal, May 10th 2006

The Israeli filmmakers achieved their dream of an Ivens tour through the country by organizing it themselves. In their own words: 'Ivens' films challenge [you] to think about the roots of documentary film, especially about engagement of the filmmaker and the different approaches to documentary style'. The start of the tour involved a three day seminar organized by the Israeli Documentary Filmmaker FORUM in Mitzpe Ramon, with Marceline Loridan-Ivens and André Stufkens invited as guests. Dan Geva and producer Osnat Trabelsi gathered academics from Tel Aviv and Jerusalem to discuss Ivens' film oeuvre from various angles (literature, film art, sociology, architecture) with the audience.

OFFICIAL OPENING HET ARSENAAL

On May 10 Het Arsenaal was officially opened by the Mayor Ter Horst of Nijmegen. Het Arsenaal is the name of a building dating from 1820-1824 situated in the centre of



Nijmegen, that served as a depository for weapons and gunpowder and, more recently, as a municipal archive. Since 2003 the building has been completely refurbished and has become the gateway between two major, new shopping streets. On the ground floor there is grand café and restaurant. The other levels of the building are occupied by cultural institutions and foundations, with film being a main focal point. These institutions will join forces for special projects, such as the city film competition in 2005. The office and viewing room of the EFJ are located on the first floor. The building is conveniently located opposite the new municipal archive, where the Ivens Archives are stored.

IVENS FILMS IN MUSEUMS

Films by Joris Ivens were screened in renowned museums across Europe, the U.S.A. and Australia. The Musée Picasso in Paris, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, The National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne and the Museum of Modern Art in Turin all hosted Ivens' work.

The exhibition 'Cézanne and the Provence' in Washington was accompanied by a film program of classics related to the south of France, including work by Renoir, Pagnol and Ivens (*Pour le Mistral*). Ivens' film about the Spanish Civil War *The Spanish Earth* (1937) was screened three times a day until the end of May as part of the exhibition 'Picasso - Dora Maar, 1935-1945' at the Picasso Museum in Paris. Later on, in the autumn, this Picasso Love & War exhibition moved to the NGV in Melbourne. For the bi-annual film expo at the Whitney Museum in New York Christopher Williams selected two films by Ivens: *The Bridge* (1928) and *Valparaiso* (1963). The MoMA screened five films from the *How Yukong Moved the Mountains* series, and at the same time Washington University, Seattle, held a seminar asking 'Is History of the Cultural Revolution possible?' which also mentioned the Yukong series. In a group exhibition with wind as the central theme at the Museum of Modern Art of Turin (GAM), Irish artist Bryan McCormack created a huge outdoor sculpture related to Ivens' *Pour le Mistral* (1965) which is being screened continuously nearby.

DOSSIER IVENS AT IL CINEMA RITROVATO IN BOLOGNA

During the Il Cinema Ritrovato festival in Bologna, the three rediscovered films of Joris Ivens (Second Trade Union film, 1930) were screened during the popular 'Dossier' presentations, with programs presented by leading experts. Other protagonists this year were Roberto Rossellini, Pier Paolo Pasolini and Michelangelo Antonioni. The three parts of the Second Trade Union film were found in the vaults of the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision by Prof. Bert Hogenkamp. During the 'Dossier Ivens' program, André Stufkens introduced the films to a fascinated audience, who had sold out the screening room. This year marked the 20th edition of this exceptional festival that shows an array of unknown, little-known, rediscovered, and restored films. Over a single week, it gathers several of the latest international restorations from some of the world's most creative archives. The festival thus provided a fertile ground for discussion among eminent film historians, experts, and archivists, as well as showcasing the most up-to-date, advanced restoration techniques. It also meant a privileged chance for the public of Bologna to witness the highlights of the festival on the famed Piazza Maggiore.



OEUVRE AWARD FOR IVENS AT DOCUPOLIS FESTIVAL

The Barcelona documentary film festival – Docupolis – will dedicate their Author's Retrospective 2006 to Joris Ivens with seven films and a posthumous Man with the Movie Camera Award. The films were screened on the 6th, 7th and 8th October and the retrospective was opened by a round table debate with Marceline Loridan-Ivens, André Stufkens and film scholar Josetxo Cerdán.

JAN ROELOFS

To fulfil the board membership for the city of Nijmegen after the departure of Mayor Guusje Ter Horst, Mr. Jan Roelofs agreed to join the board and become treasurer. Jan Roelofs has a long term relationship with the foundation, as previously he supported the events in Nijmegen to celebrate Joris Ivens 90th anniversary, in 1987. He studied social geography, art management and communication and was for many years a spokesman for the municipality. He also arranged the international partnership between Nijmegen and cities in Nicaragua and Russia. Jan Roelofs is related to many other cultural institutions, both local and national.

VOLUNTEERS AT THE FOUNDATION

Two volunteers, Anne Jaspers and Tim Sparla have joined the foundation and are assisting in making an inventory list of the newspaper clippings in the Joris Ivens archive (so far 4000 articles). The articles, dating back as far as the 1920's, are from newspapers and magazines from all over the world. Anne loves puzzles, which comes in handy when dealing with the disorganised and sometimes chaotic nature of the materials. Also, the abundance of languages is quite a challenge. When the inventory list of the clippings is complete it will be added to the archives section of our website, www.ivals.nl.

NEGATIVES MARION MICHELLE

Tim is also digitising the 1500 recently acquired photo negatives from Marion Michelle relating to her relationship with Joris Ivens. Michelle and Ivens met in 1944, collaborated on several films and became lifelong friends. Michelle, who took a lot of photos during her life, donated the photo negatives linked to Joris Ivens to the European Joris Ivens Foundation. The other ones went to the George Eastman House in Rochester, USA. The Ivens collection contains about fifteen hundred negatives, which are now being scanned to be digitised and at the same time converted into positives to make them more accessible.

The collection contains a wide variety of photos not only of Ivens himself, but also of some of his friends and acquaintances like for instance Dr. Leibovici, the Pozners, Eddy Allison, the Sadouls, the Guyards, Pablo Picasso and of



André Stufkens introducing Ivens films at the Docupolis filmfestival in Barcelona

Hugo Salinas, director of Docupolis and Chilean artist Fernando Alday presenting a portrait of Ivens to Marceline Loridan-Ivens during Docupolis

course Marion Michelle herself. Michelle travelled with Ivens around the world taking photos in many, diverse locations. The earliest photos date back to the early days of their friendship in Hollywood, and go right up to photos from 1995, when Marion Michelle had a photo exposition about Joris Ivens in Centre Pompidou in Paris. Parts of the Ivens filmography can also be found in the Marion Michelle collection like the photos she made in the period when Ivens filmed *Indonesia Calling* and *The First Years*.

The collection contains a lot of beautiful portraits of Ivens taken during various stages of his life. Of great interest to the Foundation are of course the photos that have never been seen before. What particularly makes the collection valuable for the Foundation is the fact that the photos provide images of Ivens at leisure, and that it contains some complete photo series', as before it was thought there was only one in existence. Altogether, the collection provides a 'visual biography' of a major part of Ivens' life, which was possible due to the long lasting friendship between Marion Michelle and Joris Ivens. (see also photos p. 32)



Tim Sparla scanning the negatives of Marion Michelle

When night falls the Piazza Maggiore in Bologna becomes a large outdoor screening place of the Il Cinema Ritrovato filmfestival



Doc's Kingdom 2006

Bram Relouw

Maybe it was because of the occasional rain shower, a very rare event in the Portuguese Alentejo region in mid-summer, combined with moderate temperatures for this time of year (20-25°C), that the 2006 Doc's Kingdom had a more focussed structure and audience. APORdoc, the organisers of the event, provide a unique feature which sets Doc's Kingdom apart from other seminars and festivals - the panel and public discussions take up about 50% of the total time and everybody gets a decent chance to speak his/her mind about the films or about the seminar itself. Another great feature of Doc's Kingdom 2006 was the presence of two major directors: direct cinema legend Fred Wiseman and Pedro Costa, Portugal's foremost contemporary documentary filmmaker. No surprise then, that one of the main focal points of this edition was direct cinema.



The first day was dominated by the premiere of *Colossal Youth* (2006), also screened in Cannes recently, by Pedro Costa. The second day offered a varied program of contemporary direct cinema-style films from Portugal and India with interesting films about micro-environments in an urban setting. *On Edge* (2006) by Catarina Mourão, about underprivileged children and the tight social environment they grow up in, stood out, because of its fragile and subtle approach, which allowed the audience a real close look at these kids and their dreams. The third day opened with the magnificent *Belfast Maine* (1999), a monumental, four-hour film about every aspect of life in this town, perfectly capturing the oeuvre of Wiseman and his direct cinema style.

It took seminar director José Manuel Costa six years to get Frederick Wiseman to attend, and this opportunity was fully exploited by devoting the next two days to his work. Two close reading sessions covering a whole afternoon unveiled Fred Wiseman as a direct, witty and sometimes ironic entertainer with a huge amount of experience. He invited the audience to analyse fragments of his films and discuss them. Although the audience buried him with questions and comments, Wiseman stayed in full control and managed to get his vision across clearly and captivate the audience in the process.

The final film, by Robert Kramer's daughter Keja Ho Kramer, was very introspective and dreamlike, and did not quite fit with the rest of the program, plus it did not seem to come across to the audience.

The closing discussion was, as always, rather bravely about the format of the seminar itself and was livelier than ever. Many new ideas were raised in the search for the best format. Doc's Kingdom is always a very pleasant experience because of the complete approachability of the directors, the relatively small scale and the beautiful location.



FREDERICK WISEMAN: THE INTERVIEW

Why did you start making films and why did you choose documentary?

I have always been interested in making films. I got sidetracked when I went to law school. When I reached the age of 30 I began to wake up and think that I should do something I like. This was around the time that the technical developments in 16mm made it possible to shoot synchronous sound films with available light. I thought there were many areas of our experience that were not on film and that now it was possible to use the new technology to make movies about many aspects of our lives which had not previously been the subject of films. Ordinary experience is made up of the same elements of joy, sadness, banality, comedy and tragedy as great drama and I wanted to draw on that for my films.

How would you describe your style/approach?

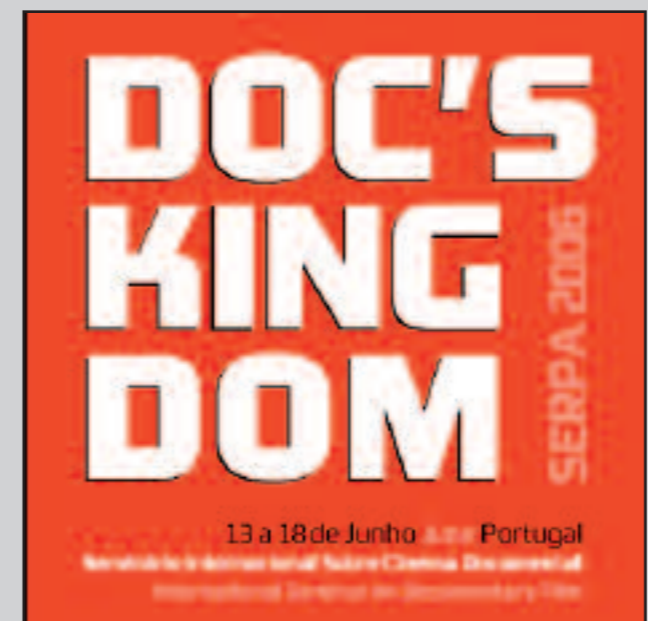
Get permission to film. Small crew (myself and two others). No lights. Handheld equipment. Patience. Approach the shooting and editing with an open, non-ideologically tainted mind. Accumulate 60 to 100 hours of rushes. Spend a year editing trying to think your way through the intense experience of a six to eleven week shooting period and the record of that experience in the rushes. Find a dramatic structure for the material. Finish. Start a new film.

Do you want to change something with your films, make a difference? If yes, what kind of difference?

I do not know any examples of a film effecting social change. I think it filmmaker hubris to think their work so powerful that some people will change as a result of seeing the film. In a democratic society there are lots of sources of information. It is just as well that no single work is so powerful as to bring about change (assuming one knows what constitutes change and how to make the judgement that it is "good" or "bad").

Have you seen any films by Joris Ivens and what did you think of them?

I have not seen many of Joris Ivens' films. Those that I have seen have been beautifully made but didactic.



CATARINA MOURÃO: THE INTERVIEW

Catarina, we saw your beautiful film *On Edge* (2006) about underprivileged children and their tight social environment and interaction. Why did you start making films and why did you choose documentary?

It's hard to pinpoint a reason why I began to make films, I suppose I really wanted to make music but realized I didn't have the talent and film was the closest I found to music. Choosing to make documentaries came next. I was mesmerized when I started watching documentaries and realised it was possible to tell moving poetic stories with real people, it seemed much more of a challenge and much more "me" than the conventional fictional approach to film. On one hand, documentary could be a more accessible way to make films but on the other hand, to grasp reality in its complexity and unpredictability asked for a sense of freedom and challenged me to find a more personal way to tell a story both on the content and the form.

How would you describe your style/approach?

I don't think I have a specific style or approach. I admit I have a soft spot for a more improvised cinema verité approach to documentary but each story asks for a specific approach. Still I believe a viewer can spot a kinship between my films but this lies more on the way I connect to people and the way I use humour. Of course there is a specific song that comes again and again, but when I start a film I am never conscious of this. I like to film people in relation to a specific space, I like to see the changes people make in spaces and the way the space changes them. I like to film in micro-cosmos. I like the small gestures, the small moments, which reveal the pain, the sorrow, and the madness. I like to feel present time and play with it. I like to observe but I also like to intervene at times. I rely on my intuition; I've learnt not to be dogmatic.

Do you want to change something with your films, make a difference? If yes, what kind of difference?

I'm not sure I can change things with my films but I like to believe they make a difference for those who watch them. At least I would like my films to give the viewer a new vision of reality even if it's just the reality next door. If documentary manages to release people from prejudice, giving them a new perspective on reality, suggesting questions instead of insinuating answers, that for me is already a big achievement.

Have you seen any films by Joris Ivens and what did you think of them?

Yes, I've seen some films by Joris Ivens and what I feel is really fascinating in his work is that despite the fact that he seemed to be always in the right place at the right time, a changing world in war or between wars where the contradictions inherent to the human struggle to survive are magnified, this never stopped him from exploring form and experimenting with different approaches to documentary. He could have easily fallen into the trap of the militant filmmaker but the desire to make films and experiment with the filmic language was always stronger. This is why his films are universal and timeless.

See www.iven.nl/docskindom for a complete program of last years edition

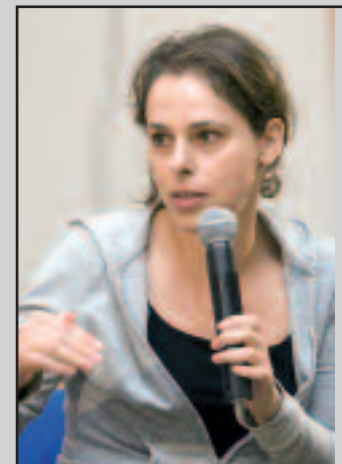
p. 10: Landscape of Alentejo, surrounding the village of Serpa
© Antonio Cunha

p. 10: José Manuel Costa interviewing Frederick Wiseman
© Marisa Cardoso

Catarina Mourão
© Marisa Cardoso

Frederick Wiseman
© Marisa Cardoso

Pedro Costa
© Marisa Cardoso





Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*,
1937 c/o Beeldrecht and
Joris Ivens, still from
The Spanish Earth, 1937
© JIA/EFJI

ART & WAR

The Spanish Civil War
Picasso
Hemingway
and Ivens

The Spanish Civil War began seventy years ago (1936-1939), and has been the focus of countless articles and publications, even to this day, describing the details and complexities of what became the most inflammatory political and military conflict to effect Europe in the run up to the Second World War. Spain became a battlefield for both Hitler and Stalin to test modern warfare and totalitarian ways of political governance, in which even artists played their role as soldiers on the cultural front. Never before or since have that many artists felt such a passionate urge to contribute and take a stand, both in their works of art as well as in warfare itself. Vanguard art became militant art. Just look at those who were involved - Hemingway, Aragon, Dos Passos, Taro, Capa, Malraux, Renn, Regler, Picasso, Miro, Spender, Auden to name just a few. 'War makes you more alert, one sees more intensely', Ivens remarked after his first experience of war. Maybe this alertness and the notion that civilization itself was at stake, that Fascism must be stopped, explains why from out of this bloody, cruel battlefield with its half a million victims emerged passionate works of art that pushed the boundaries of photography, literature, painting, poetry and

filmmaking. The iconic image of this war, and soon to be regarded as the most important piece of political art of the Twentieth Century, was Picasso's *Guernica*. The genesis and reception of *Guernica* show parallels with Ivens' classic documentary on warfare *The Spanish Earth*, made in collaboration with Ernest Hemingway and John Ferno. Both works of art were commissioned around the same time, were created in the same period and were premiered at the same date and location - the Spanish Pavilion at the World Exhibition in Paris. Both were used to raise money for war relief and for that reason toured throughout the USA. Their innovative nature went on to influence painting and filmmaking. This year, exhibitions at the Musée Picasso in Paris and the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne brought both works together, just as they been in the beginning. One month before the Spanish Government was defeated by General Franco in March 1938, Hemingway started writing 'For Whom the Bell Tolls', his first novel since 'Farewell to Arms', his anti-war novel about World War 1. Stacey Guill (see page 14) describes in a dissertation the interlinking themes of 'Guernica', *The Spanish Earth* and 'For Whom the Bell Tolls'.

timeline

The Spanish Earth, Guernica, For Whom the Bell Tolls and The Spanish Pavilion

1931 1936	APRIL 14	King Alfonso XIII flees from Spain. The Republic proclaimed
	FEBRUARY 16	Parliamentary elections won by the Frente Popular (34.3 %)
	FEBRUARY 18	Joris Ivens arrives in New York
	JULY 17	Counter-revolution under the leadership of General Franco
	SEPTEMBER 5	Robert Capa takes famous photo of Dying Soldier, Fredrico B. Garcia
1937	SEPTEMBER 19	Pablo Picasso, who was living in Paris, is appointed director of the Prado Museum. Start of activity to safeguard the collection
		In New York Film Historians Inc. commission Helen van Dongen to edit a compilation film <i>Spain and the Fight for Freedom</i> with the assistance of Ivens; Dos Passos and McLeish write the voice over narration
	NOVEMBER 5-7	Franquists besiege Madrid
		In New York founding of Contemporary Historians Inc. (John Dos Passos, Archibald McLeish, Clifford Odets, Lillian Hellman, Dorothy Parker, Herman Shumlin, Ernest Hemingway, Joris Ivens)
	DECEMBER 26	Joris Ivens sets sail for Paris
	JANUARY 6	Picasso is visited, in Paris, by the committee for the Spanish Pavilion at the World Exhibition in Paris. They request him to create a large mural painting for the Pavilion, to be opened on May 23
	JANUARY 8	Picasso creates a series of etchings called 'Songe et Mensonges de Franco'
	JANUARY 15	Joris Ivens signs a contract in Paris with Luis Buñuel, a representative of the film section of the Ministry of Propaganda, to provide the rushes of the film
	JANUARY 17	Arrival of Joris Ivens and cameraman John Ferno in Valencia
	JANUARY 21	First shoot of <i>The Spanish Earth</i> : a speech by President Azaña
	JANUARY 22	Ivens and Ferno travel to Madrid, and stay in Madrid hosted by the Fifth regiment
	FEBRUARY 12	Joris Ivens films German Junkers aircraft bombing the city of Morata de Tajuña
	FEBRUARY 27	First stone laid in the building of the Spanish Pavilion on the exhibition site
		Picasso has yet to began preparing any artwork for the Pavilion
	MARCH 16	Hemingway, Ivens and Ferno enter Spain
	MARCH 21-27	Ivens, Ferno and Hemingway filming at the Guadalajara front in Brihuega
	APRIL 11	Dos Passos arriving in Madrid joining the filmcrew
	APRIL 18	Picasso starts creating some sketches for a design of a large painting
	APRIL 22	Final day of shooting of <i>The Spanish Earth</i> in Fuenteduña
	APRIL 25	Ivens and Dos Passos leave for Valencia, on their way out of the country
	APRIL 26	German Junker aircraft bomb and almost completely destroy the Basque City of Guernica, causing the death of 3,000 citizens
	MAY 1	Picasso begins an impressive and intense creative process lasting two months at 7, rue des Grands-Augustins, Paris, in which he creates <i>Guernica</i>
	MAY 6	Ivens and Helen van Dongen begin the editing process, which takes until July 3rd
	MAY 11	The frame and linen, measuring 349 x 776cm, is placed in Picasso's studio. Dora Maar starts photographing the process of sketching and painting
	MAY 23	Official opening of the World Exhibition in Paris, but the opening of the Spanish Pavilion is postponed for another seven weeks
	JUNE 4	Screening of incomplete and silent version <i>The Spanish Earth</i> at the Second American Writers Congress at Carnegie Hall with speeches by Hemingway and Ivens
	JUNE 10-14	Hemingway writes the commentary script for <i>The Spanish Earth</i>
	JULY 3	Masterprint of <i>The Spanish Earth</i> with voiceover from Orson Welles is now ready
	JULY 8	Screening of <i>The Spanish Earth</i> at the White House for President Roosevelt
	JULY 10	Gerda Taro, a friend of Robert Capa, is killed while photographing the war
1939	JULY 12	Opening of the Spanish Pavilion at the World Exhibition in Paris with Picasso's <i>Guernica</i> along with screenings of several films like <i>The Spanish Earth</i>
		Screening of <i>The Spanish Earth</i> in Hollywood at Frederic March's home.
		Capa's famous photo of the dying soldier is published in LIFE together with an article on <i>The Spanish Earth</i> with Hemingway's commentary and photo stills
	AUGUST 20	Release of <i>The Spanish Earth</i> , with a premiere at the 55 th Street Playhouse, New York
	NOVEMBER 17	American Writers Congress has speeches by Ivens, Hemingway and Picasso
1975 1981 2006	FEBRUARY	Hemingway starts writing <i>For Whom the Bell Tolls</i>
	APRIL 1	Madrid falls to Franco's forces, thus ending the civil war
	May 1	<i>Guernica</i> arrives in New York for exhibitions around the USA
		Ivens returns to Spain after democracy is re-established and visits Fuenteduña
		<i>Guernica</i> returns to Madrid
		Exhibition at the Musée Picasso and National Gallery of Art in Melbourne - 'Picasso, Love & War'

Horacio Ferrer,
Los aviones negros, 1937 c/o
 Beeldrecht



The Spanish Earth, Guernica, For Whom the Bell Tolls and The Spanish Pavilion

Stacey Guill

THE RELEVANCE OF *THE SPANISH EARTH* TO ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S SPANISH CIVIL WAR-BASED FICTION, ALTHOUGH REFERRED TO BY A FEW CRITICS, REMAINS A RELATIVELY UNTAPPED RESOURCE. YET I WOULD ARGUE THAT THE FILM HAS A CENTRAL PLACE IN IDENTIFYING IMPORTANT THEMES AND ICONOGRAPHY WHICH EMERGED FROM THIS CATAclysmic HISTORICAL EVENT. IN THIS ARTICLE, I WILL

DISCUSS A LITTLE KNOWN ASPECT OF THE FILM'S DISTRIBUTION -THAT IS, ITS INCLUSION IN THE SPANISH PAVILION OF THE 1937 WORLD EXPOSITION IN PARIS- AND DEMONSTRATE HOW RE-CONTEXTUALIZING THE FILM IN THIS UNIQUE FRAMEWORK OF ART, POLITICS, AND WAR, ADDS VALUABLE INSIGHTS INTO HEMINGWAY'S NOVEL, *FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS*.

The creation of *The Spanish Earth* was a collaborative effort in which director Joris Ivens relied on the contributions of a team of artistically talented and politically committed individuals including: cameraman John Ferno; film editor Helen van Dongen; composers Marc Blitzstein and Virgil Thomson; sound director Irving Reis; and the world-renowned writer, Ernest Hemingway. Ivens summed up the team's unified motive: "Our film had to convince this audience, which was at best indifferent, of the righteousness of the democratic cause of the Republican Government, and to offer the truth about the people's fight in Spain."¹ In this sense, the film exemplifies Ivens' conception of the French term *temoignage*, which he defined in an interview as "the mature and deeply human testimony of a particular group of artists."²

The prevailing assumption is that the distribution of *The Spanish Earth* was limited to small theaters and film societies in the United States, yet the truth of the matter is that the film was one of three pro-Loyalist documentary films on the Spanish Civil War that were shown in the Spanish Pavilion when it opened on July 12, 1937, a day before the film's premier at the Los Angeles Philharmonic.³ The Spanish Pavilion, although it opened seven weeks late, was one of the most popular venues at the Paris World Exposition in which 44 countries were represented and which was attended by over 30 million visitors. In her in-depth 1986 study of the Spanish Pavilion, Catherine Freedberg concludes: "The pavilion's organizers understood that the '37 fair would offer the Republic its greatest and perhaps its last opportunity to make an appeal on behalf of its cause to the assembled public and officials of the civilized world."⁴ The organizers chose to broadcast their message to the world through artistic expressions that included murals, photomontages, sculptures, paintings, lithographs, photography, war posters, cultural artifacts, postcards, performance, and film. Among the many noteworthy artists who contributed their voices to the exhibit were Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, Alexander Calder, José Renau, Luis

Buñuel, Rene Magritte, Julio González, and Alberto Sánchez. Freedberg points out that the pavilion represented a "confluence of a shared political stance with advanced artistic ideas."⁴ Thus, in a sense, it can be characterized as a much broader example of Ivens' conception of *temoignage*.

The Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne was held from May 25 through November 15, 1937. Situated on 250 acres, it stretched from the Trocadero in the center of Paris to the banks of the Seine and was "one of the largest ever held". The Spanish Pavilion, though a modest structure, was superbly designed by architects José Luis Sert and Josep Lacasa. Consisting of three stories of steel and glass, it was located on the right bank of the Seine. Towering over this relatively small rectangular building were the enormous monumental pavilions of the Soviet Union, Italy, and Germany—each standing as symbolic statements of their ideological positions and reflecting the uneasy European political climate of the 1930s. At the entrance to the Spanish Pavilion stood a totem-like

"Our film had to convince this audience, which was at best indifferent, of the righteousness of the democratic cause of the Republican Government, and to offer the truth about the people's fight in Spain."

sculpture measuring 41 feet in height. Alberto Sánchez created the abstract sculpture specifically for the pavilion and gave it the title "The Spanish People Follow a Way That Leads to a Star." The ground floor of the pavilion consisted of a portico and an open courtyard with a retractable awning. Across the courtyard, in view of Picasso's famous mural *Guernica*, was a stage and projection booth. Among the films shown at this venue were three pro-Loyalist films depicting the war—*Spain 1936*, by Luis Buñuel and Jean-Paul Le Chanois; *Heart of Spain*, by Herbert Kline and Paul



Joris Ivens and John Ferno, film stills *The Spanish Earth*, citizens of Morata de Tajuña in despair during the bombing of German Junkers © JJA/EFJI



Augusto, *Que fais-tu pour empêcher cela?*, 1936

Pablo Picasso, *Étude 16, Mère à l'enfant mort sur une échelle*, May 1937 c/o

The exterior of the Spanish Pavillion (Josep Lluís Sert and Luis Lacasa) with in front a sculpture of Alberto Sánchez Pérez, 1937

The Spanish Pavillion at the World Exhibition, July 1937. At the front the auditorium where Ivens' *The Spanish Earth* was screened, behind this space Picasso's *Guernica*

Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, 1940

Guernika, after the bombardment of the German airforce, 26 April 1937

René Magritte, *Le drapeau noir*, 1937 c/o Beeldrecht



Strand; and *The Spanish Earth*. Picasso's enormous canvas was his response to the horrific unprovoked aerial bombing of the Basque town of Guernica by Hitler's infamous Condor Legion. The artist created the mural specifically for the pavilion and it became the centerpiece of the exhibition. While there is no sign of Hitler's Condor Legion or bombs in the mural, the message of the confusion, terror, panic, and death emanating from the sky is clearly established by iconic images which also appear in other Spanish Civil War-era art: victims' eyes cast upward; a bombed-out house, vacant and on fire, with a lamp dangling from what is left of a ceiling; wounded and terrified animals. Of the five adult faces in the mural, four are women in various postures of suffering—one is dazed and fleeing; another

In The Spanish Earth the creators also focused on women and children victims and the destruction of civilian homes by the air raids, and used very similar images

one holds a lamp and seems to be searching for loved ones; one is helplessly falling backward into leaping flames, her mouth open in a silent scream; and one is weeping over a dead child.

While Picasso refused to give any detailed explanations of the meaning of the mural, one cannot overestimate the symbolic weight of these visual images or the inter-connectiveness they share with the countless other artistic repre-



sentations of the terror, devastation, and death caused by the fascist aerial bombing raids. In *Shouts From the Wall*, Cary Nelson points out, for example, that there is a striking similarity between the woman with the dead infant in Picasso's *Guernica* and the image on a 1936 war poster of a woman holding a dead child, and suggest the possibility that this image may have "influenced Picasso's *Guernica*."⁶ While Picasso never acknowledged any such influence, the point to be emphasized here is that very similar iconic images evoking this new human calamity of "terror from the skies" obviously dominated the mental landscape of many of the artists who were emotionally involved in the suffering of the defenseless Spanish civilians. Other artwork included in the pavilion devoted to this same theme demonstrates this point. For example, Horatio Ferrer's *Madrid 1937 (Los Aviones Negros)* includes a group of women and children who exhibit very similar expressions of anger, shock, vulnerability, and suffering as those in Picasso's *Guernica*. As in the mural, the focus in these paintings seems to be primarily on the most vulnerable victims—women and children.

In *The Spanish Earth* the creators also focused on women and children victims and the destruction of civilian homes by the air raids, and used very similar images. In the scene of the bombing on the city of Morata de Tajuna we see, for example, women running down streets, others are searching vainly for relatives, still others covering their eyes and cowering in fear. In another scene in the film, survivors carry doors (from what is assumed to be their now-destroyed homes) to be used in the building of a barricade,



and in another scene the camera surveys a room with a bed and a single lamp still hanging from a single rafter, but now minus the exterior wall and most of the roof. Considering the film within the framework of *Guernica* allows us to notice the inclusion of these iconic images in the film which we might not otherwise have missed. As this example shows, the inter-connectiveness of iconic images emerging from the art produced during the Spanish Civil War often incorporated the intersection of artistic medias. In his discussion of *The Spanish Earth*, John Garrick relies on this intersection of artistic genres to make a point: "*Guernica*," he asserts, "is the most concentrated vision imaginable of what Hemingway believed about truth and was trying to say in *The Spanish Earth*."⁷ I would go a step further and suggest that the connection Garrick is sensing is that both film and mural attempt to communicate the humanitarian disaster in Spain through very similar visual images and, moreover, that these images successfully convey the true reality—the interiority—of what the victims of the war were experiencing. Keeping in mind my suggestion of the existence of similar images of human misery between film and mural, consider this comment by a film critic on the bombing scene in the film in a 1938 edition of *The Magazine of Art*: "The planes are overhead. The camera spins propeller-wise and locates them . . . the mother runs towards us, someone's young sister looks about uncomprehendingly dazed. . . . We find ourselves beside the dead, touching their feet, meeting their unseeing eyes. In one house, burst open by a bomb, the camera descends to the broken bed."⁸

What is evident in this description of the scene in the film is that through superior camera work, skillful directing, heartfelt commentary on the action, and the use of powerful evocative iconic images, the film, like Picasso's mural, succeeds in conveying the terrifying menace from above and the shatter world of the victims below. More importantly, as with the eyes of the horse and the bull in Picasso's *Guernica*, and for that matter through the eyes of El Sordo's doomed guerrilla band in Hemingway's novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the viewers of *The Spanish Earth* are asked to witness and experience the victims' every emotion. Other artwork in the pavilion which responded to the tragedy of the bombing of Guernica included a riveting painting by Rene Magritte entitled *le Drapeau Noir* ("The Black Flag"). Here the entire focus is on the enemy bombers rather than the victims. Against a bluish-black sky, strange dark mechanical forms hover in a threatening, predatory-like formation. Magritte's anonymous, monster-like image of the Nazi bombers seems to be calculated to convey the overwhelming dominance of Hitler's war machine over the helpless Spanish citizens. These sentiments and images are not unlike the novel's Robert Jordan's description of the enemy bombers in Hemingway's novel as "mechanized doom,"⁹ or Hemingway's comment in *The Spanish Earth*, "High in the sky in shining silver it comes to all who have no place to run, no place to hide."

In the hope of directing the tide of international opinion towards the Loyalists' cause, the Republican government firmly believed that it was crucial that the exhibition clearly communicate the progressive social and economic reforms they had begun to put in place and which demonstrated their democratic ideals. The inequitable distribution of ownership of Spain's arable land was a deep-seated and divisive issue in Spain and one which the Republican government made attempts to reform. One example of an artistic response to this land reform theme in the pavilion came in the form of the newly-developed genre of photomontage. It was created by one of the organizers of the

art in the pavilion and a pioneer in the genre, José Renau. Superimposed over a photograph of a Spanish peasant cultivating the soil are statistical figures for peasant wages throughout Spain. On another area of the montage are percentage graphs about the distribution of land. According to Mendelson, the mural underscores the "unfair distribution of land and the substandard living conditions in Spain" and "justif[ies]" the farmers' "efforts to reclaim land form the wealthy 1 percent that the indicated owned almost 44 percent of the land."¹⁰

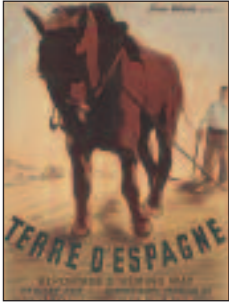
Mendelson's assertion that the statistics on the mural served as a justification of the peasant's "efforts to reclaim land from the wealthy" is a pertinent, if unintentional, reference to the revolutionary character of the Spanish peasant, and brings to mind the iconic image of the farmer/soldier, farm implement/weapon image so often seen the war posters and an image and theme that reappears in both the film and Hemingway's novel. The most dramatic artistic representation of this particular iconic image in the Spanish Pavilion filled the stairwell that connected the three-level exhibition. As visitors ascended the long curving ramp to the second floor gallery they were confronted with Joan Miró's enormous mural (18' high by 12' wide) of a frightened and angry figure wildly swinging a sickle, or reaping hook. He is wearing the red woolen cap of a Catalan peasant and the sickle is held in his right hand. The sickle seems to represent both an instrument of harvest as well as a weapon of defense against enemies, thus infusing the peasant with a revolutionary spirit. Freedberg, in fact, remarks that Miró's peasant "rises up from the earth in violent protest against his oppressors, ready to do battle in defense of his land and freedom."¹¹ Miró painted the figure directly onto the wall of the stairwell and entitled it, "The Reaper." It is also known as "Catalan Peasant in Revolt." The scene of the Republican takeover in Pilar's hometown in Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is the most unflinchingly brutal depiction of the divisive issue of land autonomy in Spain. Brandishing a variety of farm implements as weapons, and identified not by name but only as "men" or "peasants," the loyalist supporters bludgeon and hack to death their fascists neighbors as they force them through a literal "furrow" of death before finally

"Guernica," he asserts, "is the most concentrated vision imaginable of what Hemingway believed about truth and was trying to say in The Spanish Earth."

flinging their bodies off the high cliffs into the gorge below. "We thresh fascist today," comments one of the peasants, "and out of the chaff comes the freedom of this pueblo."¹² Other photomontages in the pavilion focused on the Republic's devotion to the protection of the artistic patrimony of Spain. Directly related to the destruction caused by the bombing of cities was Franco's systematic attempts to destroy Spain's artistic treasures by targeting libraries, museums and other historical sites in the bombing raids. Thus, protecting these cultural treasures became part of the Republic's propaganda campaign. It was also an issue close to the heart of Spain's artistic community. Picasso, for example, accepted the role of Honorary Director-in-Exile of the Prado in 1936 after it was bombed by the fascists as part of their advance on Madrid, and Renau was instrumental in arranging for the endangered artwork contained in the museum to be moved to Valencia. Renau created a photomontage mural for the pavilion documenting this evacu-

A.P. Cond, *Madrid The military practice of the rebels*, 1936

Poster *Terre d'Espagne* (french version *The Spanish Earth*), 1938
© JIA/EFJI



Joris Ivens and Ernest Hemingway in Hollywood presenting *The Spanish Earth*, July 1937
© JIA/EFJI

Ernest Hemingway and Joris Ivens in the trenches of the Morata de Tajuña front, 5 April 1937
© JIA/EFJI

Juan Miró, *Aidez Espagne*, 1937 c/o Beeldrecht

ation of works of art from the Prado to Valencia. Mendelson observes, “[Renau] created a striking vision of El Greco’s *Trinity* being lifted out of the flames and away from enemy fighter planes. Two arms outlined in white reach up and out of the burning skyline of Madrid, while a stenciled truck indicated the route to safety. The medieval Serrano towers, where the works would be stored in Valencia, are depicted as powerful bulwarks against any potential threat to their destruction.”³

When considering Hemingway’s and Ivens’ appreciation of Spain’s artistic heritage, and the artistic sensibilities of the other members of the production crew of *The Spanish Earth*, it is not surprising that they included a scene in the film in which members of the Spanish militia are frantically extracting paintings and other valuable works of art from a recently bombed structure. Hemingway’s commentary follows: “The Duke of Alba’s Palace is destroyed . . . treasures of Spanish art are carefully salvaged . . .” (*The Spanish Earth*). In a 1937 review of the film for *Night and Day*, reporter Anthony Powell identifies the art objects in this scene: “Later there was a close-up of some art treasures—an eighteenth-century edition of *Don Quixote* and an oil painting attributable to a disciple of Carlo Dolce—being rescued from bombardment.”⁴

It is also reasonable to hypothesize that Ivens and Hemingway had a specific reason for documenting the rescue of the valuable edition of Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* and why Ivens recounts that they deliberately included a shot in the film of “a circle of sandbags [protecting] the equestrian statue of Don Quixote.”⁵ I propose that it is the same reason why the walls of the ramp leading up to the second floor of the Spanish Pavilion were emblazoned with quotations from *Don Quixote*. Cervantes was at the time, and still is Spain’s most famous author and, more importantly, internationally recognized and admired. Thus, in associating the author with the Republican Government-sponsored pavilion by placing his inspirational words on the walls of the stairwell, and in documenting on film Franco’s attempt

It is also reasonable to hypothesize that Ivens and Hemingway had a specific reason for documenting the rescue of the valuable edition of Cervantes’s Don Quixote

to destroy the statue of Don Quixote and rare edition of Spain’s most treasured piece of literature in *The Spanish Earth*, both Ivens and his production crew, and the organizers of the pavilion, hoped to create a heightened concern within Spain, and the world’s democratic communities, of what cultural brilliance could be lost under the iron grip of fascist anti-intellectualism. The quotations from Cervantes’s novel on the wall of the pavilion’s stairwell provided only one of the many examples of the Spanish Pavilion’s response to the fascists’ wartime slogan “Death to Intelligentsia.” Prominently displayed on the ground floor, on the wall facing *Guernica*, was a large photograph of Spain’s most revered young playwright and poet, Federico Lorca. Under the photograph were the words “Federico García Lorca, Poet Killed at Granada,” and propped up, at the bottom of the tribute to the poet, was a manuscript of *The House of Bernada Alba*, a play Lorca was working on shortly before his murder by the fascists in November 1936. Lorca was only one of the many Spanish artists and intellectuals who were executed by the fascists or who died in the fighting. One of the exhibits in the Spanish Pavilion consisted of var-

ious photos of Madrid’s newly established university, University City. In the offensive on Madrid which began in November 1936, the fascists led an attack into the University complex and overran and occupied many of the buildings. The resulting siege of the campus turned it into a battleground. Alongside the photographs of the university in the pavilion exhibit, were more recent pictures of several of the campus buildings now completely destroyed. Above the photos the caption read, “*Hier et Aujourd’hui*” (“Yesterday and Today”). The renowned photographer Robert Capa, who was present during the worst of the fighting in and around University City, captured scenes of the destruction. Several of the photos appear in his memoirs of the Civil War entitled *Death in the Making*. In the book, Capa describes these photos and his feelings about the destruction of the campus: “The word no longer dominates in the University of Madrid; lead from rifles, from machines guns, from field artillery is master now. Soldiers, spraying [with bullets] the grounds where students dodged



the strong sun of Castile, sit in the armchairs from which professors retailed the wisdom of the ages. On a library table an anti-tank cannon stands in readiness, just in case. . . .In a chemical laboratory, sheltered from rebel fire, the defenders sleep and eat.”⁶ Discussing the symbolic weight of this destruction of Madrid’s prized center for higher education, Allen Guttman observes, “The destruction of Madrid’s university symbolized . . . the attitude of Fascism toward science.” Guttman explains, “Meanwhile, in Spain, the front lines zigzagged through the campus of the University of Madrid. For 29 months, battles were fought in buildings erected for the study of philosophy and advancement of science. . . .Most liberals . . . assumed that the destruction of the campus was the responsibility of the enemy, of men who did not share their faith in a ‘liberal’ education.”⁷

While the creators of *The Spanish Earth* did not directly address fascist anti-intellectualism, it could be suggested, given the message of the photos in the pavilion exhibit,



and considering the observations by Capa and Guttman, that it was not by happenstance that battle scenes in and around the University City of Madrid were used in the film and that Hemingway would observe in the accompanying narration: “This is the salient driven into Madrid itself when the enemy took University City. After repeated counter-attacks, they are still in the Casa de Velasquez, the palace on the left with the two pointed towers, and in the ruined clinical hospital” (*The Spanish Earth*). It is also important to note that Hemingway’s novel has as its hero an American university professor who teaches Spanish language and Spanish literature, is interested in Spanish art treasures, refers to Spanish authors, and talks of visiting the Prado Museum in Madrid. This is obviously Hemingway’s way of weaving another important Spanish Civil War theme into the narrative. In this case, this master of implication is showing us a liberal educator who, because of his democratic ideals, is willing to sacrifice his life to combat fascist anti-intellectualism.

CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of the 1937 Paris World Exposition, the Spanish Pavilion was dismantled and the artwork in the exhibit was dispersed to various parts of the world, never to be completely reassembled again, thus erasing for future generations the power of their intermingling forces. Also seemingly erased from Hemingway scholarship is the recognition that this fascinating film which Hemingway was so closely associated with, earned a place in this remarkable symphony of artistic voices. Voices that combined to make what they hoped would be an effective col-

lective appeal to enlist their audiences’ attention and sympathy on behalf of the Spanish Republic. Discussions of *The Spanish Earth* often tend to focus too tightly on either selected elements in the film itself, the political motives of Ivens and/or Hemingway, or the film’s obvious propagandistic intent, and neglect to consider comparing it with other artistic responses to the Spanish Civil War. Recognizing that the film was part of the Spanish Pavilion not only means it had a wider audience than is assumed, but also situates it in a fascinating and valuable art-historical continuum. We are able to better appreciate Hemingway’s heightened sensitivity to the images and issues of the war.

This article is a revised version of chapter IV ‘The Spanish Earth and The Spanish Pavillion’ of the dissertation ‘Hemingway and The Spanish Earth: Art, Politics, and War’

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Marion Michelle, Pablo Picasso and Joris Ivens, 1954
© MM Coll. /EFJI



¹ Quoted in Kees Bakker, ed., *Joris Ivens and the Documentary Context*, Amsterdam University Press, 1999, p. 264-65.
² Quoted in William Alexander, *Film on the Left: American Documentary Film From 1931 to 1942*, Princeton University Press, 1981, 166.
³ Sources which refer to the film’s inclusion in the Spanish Pavilion include Gijs van Hensbergen’s *Guernica: The Biography of a Twentieth-Century Icon*, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2004, p. 73; Russell Martin’s *Picasso’s War*, Dutton, 2002, p. 115; *Treasures of the World*, “Guernica and the Spanish Pavilion,” www.pbs.org/treasuresoftheworld/
⁴ Catherine Freedberg *The Spanish Pavilion*, 1986 New York: , p. 125
⁵ Erik Mattie, *World’s Fairs*, Princeton Architectural Press, 1998, p. 180.
⁶ Cary Nelson, *Shouts From the Wall: Posters and Photographs Brought Home From the Spanish Civil War by American Volunteers*, University of Illinois Press, 1996, p. 43.
⁷ John Garrick, “Hemingway and *The Spanish Earth*,” *A Moving Picture Feast: The Filmgoer’s Hemingway*, Ed. Charles M. Oliver, Praeger, 1989, p. 81.
⁸ Rpt. in Sidney Meyers and Jay Leyda, “Joris Ivens: Artist in Documentary,” *The Documentary Tradition*. Ed. Lewis Jacobs. Norton, 1979, p. 166.
⁹ Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, p. 97.
¹⁰ Jordana Mendelson, *Documenting Spain: Artists, Exhibition Culture, and the Modern Nation, 1929-1939*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005, pgs. 150, 155.
¹¹ Freedberg, p. 545
¹² *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, p. 118.
¹³ Mendelson, p. 169.
¹⁴ Qtd. in Valentine Cunningham, ed. *The Spanish Front: Writers on the Civil War*, Oxford University Press, 1986, p. 210.
¹⁵ Joris Ivens, *The Camera and I*, International Publishers, 1969, p. 124.
¹⁶ Robert Capa, *Death in the Making*, Covici, Friede, 1938, N. pg.
¹⁷ Allen Guttman, *The Wound in the Heart: America and the Spanish Civil War*

FIRST FICTIONS

Henri Storck and Joris Ivens before Borinage

Ian Mundell



Henri Storck, a love affair on the beach, film still *Idylle de Plage*, 1931
© Fonds Henri Storck

Henri Storck is considered one of the fathers of Belgian cinema, a pioneer of the nation's documentary movement and in particular its tradition of films on art. The centenary of his birth will be celebrated throughout 2007 in Belgium, with retrospectives of his films and the publication of a book of images and documents on his life and work. A series of stamps celebrating Belgian cinema will also be issued in Storck's honour.

Joris Ivens and Henri Storck are usually discussed in terms of their collaboration on the film *Misère au Borinage* (1933), but the paths the two young directors took before this moment have remarkable similarities. Both from bourgeois backgrounds, they had explored their enthusiasm for cinema

through film clubs, and made their first images under the influence of Europe's avant-gardes, from Paris, Berlin or Moscow. Both had dabbled in newsreels and made films to order, whether for companies, unions or civic authorities. And both had made medium-length fiction films, which demonstrate a remarkable similarity in theme and appearance.

The two fiction films share an aesthetic that the film-makers consciously suppressed when they came to work together, and which demonstrates a closeness of spirit and cinematic approach that is perhaps surprising given the radically different paths their careers would take after *Misère au Borinage*.

INTRODUCING HENRI STORCK

Henri Storck was born on 5 September 1907 in Ostende, a fashionable seaside

resort on the Belgian coast. His parents owned a shoe shop, a business that Storck was forced to enter at an early age following the death of his father in 1923. While his formal education ended here, he continued to develop in a rarefied cultural atmosphere¹. Thanks to the family's artistic connections Storck came to know painters such as James Ensor, Léon Spilliaert and Constant Permeke and frequented their studios. Through younger artists, such as Félix Labisse, he was exposed to the ideas of surrealism. Storck painted as well, but found he had no special talent. Instead, he turned to photography and then to film with the gift in 1926 of a Pathé Baby 9.5mm amateur camera. He filmed the beach, the sea, the port of Ostende. His aim was to bring motion to the vision of the Belgian coast that these painters had enshrined in their work.

These films are lost, but Storck remade them in 1929-30 when he bought a Kinamo 35mm camera, the same make used by Ivens for his earliest films. These *Images d'Ostende* explore the shapes and textures of the coast, from the isolated dunes to the boats in the harbour. There is no progression from one image to the next, and certainly nothing like the structure that Ivens brought to his earliest films, such as *The Bridge* (1928) or *Rain* (1929), but still there is a similar desire to document and even analyse nature. By this time Storck had decided that he wanted to make a career in cinema, declaring in a sort of personal manifesto called *Eureka*, written in June 1929, that he wished to become an "active witness to the century. I will show people how the world works, how people live, how they organise themselves. And this through a universal means of expression: cinema."

He subsequently travelled to Paris to seek the advice of the film critic Léon Moussinac, who advised him that his best course would be to go home again and prove himself in Ostende rather than be just another hopeful in the French film industry. Storck took this advice, and returned home. Thus the young Henri Storck was not that dissimilar to the young Joris Ivens. Both were from middle class backgrounds in provincial towns, Storck in Ostende, Ivens in Nijmegen. Both were expected to make a respectable career in the family business, shoes for Storck, photographic equipment for Ivens. But both were intent on escape into a more creative, cosmopolitan life, represented by Paris for Storck and by Berlin and then Amsterdam for Ivens.

There was also a common influence from their contacts with painters, Storck with the expressionists Ensor and Permeke and the symbolist Spilliaert, Ivens with the symbolist Jan Toorop and his daughter Charley Toorop. They even shared an interest in surrealism, its influence being seen in early projects such as Ivens' uncompleted collaboration with Erich Wichman, *De Zieke Stad* (*The Sick City*, 1927-28), and Storck's collaboration with Labisse, *La Mort de Vénus* (*The Death of Venus*, 1930)².

That both young men chose cinema as a means of artistic expression has a lot to do with another common experience: the cinema club.

CINEMA CLUBS AND TOTAL CINEMA

Amsterdam in the mid-1920s offered Joris Ivens a rich cultural life, but it was not always possible to see the latest experimental films. Inspired by a private screening of Vsevolod Pudovkin's *Mother* (1926) in 1927, Ivens and his friends started the Filmliga, a society dedicated to showing films that, for artistic or political reasons, were not otherwise distributed in the Netherlands. This included the abstract films of Walter Ruttmann and Hans Richter, Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922), René Clair's *Entr'acte* (1924), Germaine Dulac's *La Coquille et le Clergyman* (*The Seashell and the Clergyman*, 1928), plus the films of Alexander Dovzhenko, Sergei Eisenstein and Alberto Cavalcanti. Ivens took an active part in running the Filmliga, in particular dealing with invitations to directors to present their work in person. This allowed him to travel and meet some of the leading film makers of the day.

Storck, meanwhile, was a frequent visitor to the cinema club established in Brussels, and it was here in February 1927 that he had the pivotal experience of seeing Robert Flaherty's film *Moana* (1926), a documentary on the idyllic lives of Polynesian islanders. "I never suspected that films so true, so real, so beautiful, so human could be made," Storck said later in life³. The experience inspired Storck and his friends to establish a cinema club in Ostende. From 1928 to 1930 the club showed 150 silent and avant-garde classic films, including Storck's own first efforts.

It is not entirely clear how closely Storck participated in the club after its first season, since he was required to do military service from mid-1928 to mid-1929. However, between the clubs of Ostende and Brussels Storck was able to study and discuss the works of film makers such as René Clair and Eisenstein. It also allowed him to make links with the wider world of cinema, and it was through this activity that he first became aware of Ivens' early films. When he first heard of the Kinamo, for instance, it was as the camera used by "young French directors and the Dutchman Ivens, even by the Russians Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov"⁴.

As a result of the film club experience, both Storck and Ivens saw the great possibilities that the cinema had to offer, without being encumbered by conventions or genres. They thought that all the tools and strategies of cin-



ema could and should be brought to bear in a film, whether that meant using fictional approaches in factual film or vice versa. They had strong feelings about what was and was not good filmmaking, but almost no sense of anything being out of bounds. Storck, for instance, was shooting newsreels of Ostende in 1930 alongside his more abstract projects, and had a dismissive view of how other cameramen worked. "Always the same angles, the same depressing lack of imagination," he complained⁵. It was obvious to him that a better film could be made by using close-ups, by moving along with the action, as in fiction films.

THE URGE TO FICTION

Not only did these two young men consider the strategies of cinema applicable to both factual and fictional subjects, but they both had a strong urge to make fictional films. They both took advantage of the first opportunity to do so. For Ivens, the desire to work on a fiction film arose directly from his experience with the cinema club. "Stimulated by the Filmliga audience, I very much wanted to apply the perception I had acquired in *The Bridge* to a film with more content, action and people — more material. I wanted to direct as well as photograph," he said⁶.

It was through the Filmliga that he knew the writers Jef Last and Mannus Franken, who would be his collaborators in the film *Branding* (*Breakers*) (1929). The idea of a love story involving an unemployed fisherman came from Last, and he went on to play the role in the film. Franken, meanwhile, wrote the script and in the end took charge of much of the direction of the actors. Ivens dealt with the camera and the editing. They filmed in the Dutch coastal town of Katwijk, in col-

Henri Storck, a love affair on the beach, film still *Idylle de Plage*, 1931
© Fonds Henri Storck



Joris Ivens and Mannus Franken, a love affair in the dunes, film still *Branding* (*Breakers*, 1929)
© JIA/EFJI

p. 23: Joris Ivens and Henri Storck filming *Borinage*, 1933
© JIA/EFJI

Storck devised a special camera, a kind of sand yacht to make tracking shots, 1931
© Fonds Henri Storck

laboration with the residents⁷. Also part of the team was John Fernhout, the teenage son of Charley Toorop, and a future collaborator of both Ivens and Storck⁸. Storck had a more traditional exposure to fiction film before embarking on his own production. After his newsreel and documentary work of 1930, he had been engaged by the French production house Gaumont Franco Films Aubert. He worked as an assistant cameraman in Paris on the Pierre Billon short films *Route Nationale No 13* (1931) and *Bombance* (*The Feast*, 1931), then in Nice as an assistant to Jean Grémillon for *Dainah la Métisse* (*Dainah the Mulatto*, 1931). But he found this experience of big studio production frustrating, and he left GFFA with the intention of making his own way in the film industry in Paris. Nevertheless, it was in Ostende that Storck made his first fiction film, *Idylle à la Plage* (*Idyll on the Beach*, 1931), with the financial backing of contacts he had made in the Flemish business community. It is the story of a young soldier who meets and falls in love with a young woman he meets on the

beach, the difficulty he has in pursuing the relationship, and their eventual successful tryst. While the couple of years between *Branding* and *Idylle à la Plage* marks the transition from silent film to sound, Storck's film is still essentially a silent film to which sound was later added. Both films were made with same cinematic vocabulary learned from the cinema clubs. And while there are significant differences between the two films, the similarities are instructive⁹.

SOCIAL REALISM VERSUS SOCIAL SATIRE

Both films are love stories, in coastal settings, in which the lovers are thwarted. In *Idylle à la Plage* the obstacles are not serious: the young soldier (Raymond Rouleau) must return to his barracks on the day he meets the girl (Gwen Norman) rather than pursue his evident advantage into the evening. The following day he has duties to perform before he can leave in the late afternoon, and when he finds the girl on the beach she is watched over by a fearsome chaperone, who must be distracted in order for the lovers to be together.

While this is mostly a matter for gentle comedy, there are moments of satirical edge, such as when the soldier pursues the girl across a crowded beach as if from trench to trench. And in the end, it is an amorous, elderly colonel who distracts the chaperone. As if to endorse the evocation of his satirical portraits of Ostende society, the painter James Ensor appears briefly in one beach scene. Surrealism is perhaps a stronger influence on Storck's film, however, with the lovers wandering in some distinctly sinister parts of the beach, among the rock pools and the low-water places of the port, where Norman lies down so that her hair blends in with the seaweed. There is also a typically surreal interest in shells and sea creatures, from the starfish that Norman and Rouleau make dance to a child's sand castle with a shrine to a dead crab.

In *Branding* the approach is more realistic. The collaborators wanted to create a socialist feature film, countering the sentimental commercial cinema of the time. In line with this thinking, the lovers have a harder time. The fisherman (Jef Last) is engaged to a neighbour's daughter (Co Sieger), but their relationship comes under strain when he becomes unemployed. The more time he spends looking for work, and the more of his possessions he has to pawn, the greater the distance

between them. Seeing his opportunity, the pawnbroker (Hein Blok) starts to court the daughter and finally wins her. The fisherman contemplates suicide, but finally decides to put life on land behind him and go back to the sea.

Evocations of the social setting are made through short documentary sequences of people working, and long shots over the town and its harbour. There are also long sequences showing the ritual of churchgoing and a funfair, in which the actors mingle with the locals. There are resonances of Soviet films in Ivens' camera work, but it is perhaps German cinema whose influence can be felt most strongly. The fisherman's search for work is highly evocative of films such as Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin* (1927), while towards the end of the film Last has a distinctly Expressionist manner, reminiscent of Conrad Veidt in Robert Wiene's *Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1920).

SEA, SAND AND SEX

The two films are the most similar in the scenes that depict the pairs of lovers on the beach or among the dunes, in both cases a landscape in which they can be alone and develop an intimacy. In *Branding* there is a playful pursuit through the dunes, which allows Ivens to shoot Last and Sieger from low angles, against the sky, or to look down on them, cut off from the rest of the world. The lovers play with the sand between them, a tactile process that expresses both their hopes (Sieger is building a house for them) and allows them the romance of touching, holding hands. In *Idylle à la Plage*, Rouleau and Norman play similar drawing games with the sand, the camera again focusing on the intimacy of their hands. They are later shown alone on the beach, walking along and slowly discarding their clothes to reveal bathing suits. Storck depicts this with long shots over the whole beach, showing the lovers to be entirely alone, combined with relatively close, low angle shots that frame them against the sea and sky.

In both cases the lovers are cut off from the world and the things that could keep them from being together. For Storck this is the end of the story, and the happily united lovers get to have their dream-like moment on the sunlit beach. Their lingering final kiss is accompanied by two odd counterpoint images, first of the tide turning and creeping over the sand (not the crashing of waves commonly seen when the sea stands in for passion),

then a crab digging itself backwards into wet sand.

In *Branding* the isolation of the dunes is no protection from the forces that drive the lovers apart, and the sea and the sand take on a more threatening aspect. On a second walk in the dunes, the games between Last and Sieger are less harmonious, and Ivens and Franken produce a striking reversal of the hand holding that has gone before. The lovers are about to embrace, but Sieger puts her hand down on a gorse bush, drawing blood. The mood is broken, but Last raises his hand (a dramatic shot from behind his back) and brings it down on the gorse, before placing it in his pocket. Sieger takes out his hand to remove the gorse spines, and notices that his watch and chain are gone. Last, meanwhile, notices the brooch that the pawnbroker has given her. The rift is complete.

Another intersection is in the two films' depiction of popular culture and social customs. The public beach as a setting in *Idylle à la Plage* is familiar from Storck's earlier films, and here we have the whole custom of Sunday promenades and meetings. But the inclusion of such scenes in *BRANDING* is perhaps more unexpected. Here we have a different version of the Sunday ritual, dressing up and promenading, for church rather than the pleasure beach. This follows, however, with the decoration of the neighbourhood and the larger funfair, at which the pawnbroker finally wins over Sieger. The irony is that Last has finally found work, leading donkeys up and down the beach for children to ride.

It is worth noting that both Storck and Ivens made technical innovations in order to film their sea and beach scenes: Storck devised a sort of sand yacht that allowed him to take smooth, dramatic tracking shots of his lovers walking along the shore line. Ivens' innovation came in shooting the fisherman's attempt at suicide. "In order to film the movement of the sea and the surf in a dramatic, subjective way I constructed a rubber sack with a glass front to contain my head and arms and camera," he explained.¹⁰ "This enabled me to shoot while breakers rolled over my camera and myself, producing shots of the sea movement with a violent quality that nobody had seen before on the screen."

Each innovation served the film, one allowing the violence of the sea to be captured, the other the dream-like beach.

FICTION FRUSTRATED

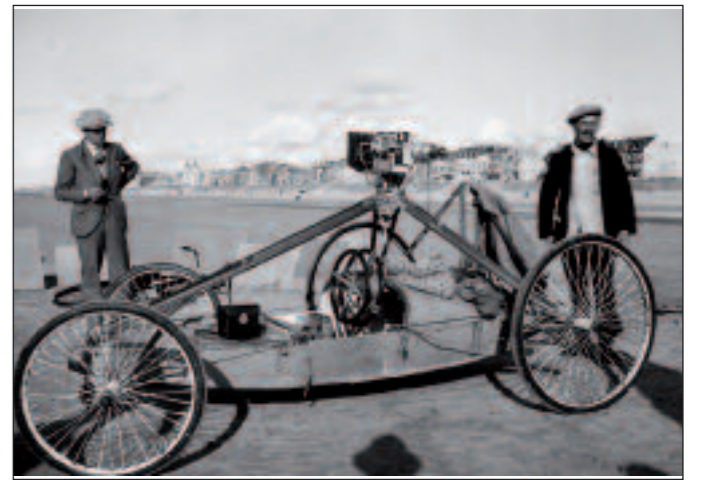
A final similarity between the two films is that neither was particularly successful when completed, although in later years both gained favourable notices. *Branding* was screened to a Filmliga audience in February 1929, but was not well received¹¹. Ivens' subsequent film, *Rain*, was much more to their avant-garde tastes, and it seems that *Branding* was allowed to slip into the shadows. There is no indication that the film reached Brussels or Ostende, and that Storck saw it before making *Idylle à la Plage*.

After filming and editing a silent version of *Idylle à la Plage*, Storck had problems with his backers, and it was not until March 1932 that he was able to add sound and music to the film, which had been re-edited at least twice in the interval. It was finally released in Paris in 1932, with moderate success, but in Brussels it was booed by the audience of a gala where it was presented with Fritz Lang's *M* (1931)¹². It later emerged that Lang, who was present, had liked Storck's film and wanted to talk to him about going to Hollywood, but the young director had taken to his heels.

Ivens and Storck met for the first time in November 1930, at the second Congress of Independent Cinema, in Brussels, and then frequently in Paris before their celebrated collaboration on *Misère au Borinage*. They did not collaborate again, and their subsequent careers were radically different. Ivens travelled the world, making films for political causes and personal essays on the elements. Storck worked primarily in Belgium, making films about the country's folklore and artists.

Both men wanted to make fiction films, beyond the stories that they used to frame their documentaries, but both were frustrated either by events or the lack of sympathetic producers. Ivens came close with *The Story of GI Joe* (1945) and *Til Eulenspiegel* (1956), while Storck succeeded with *Le Banquet des Fraudeurs* (*The Banquet of Frauds*, 1952), about smugglers in a town where the borders of Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands intersect.

The two men remained on good terms, sharing a collaborator in John Fernhout and frequently crossing paths over the years. They were brought together again, in Katwijk in 1980, by their mutual friend Jean Rouch for *Cinémafia* (1980), in which they discuss their love of the sea, their films of the 1930s and their common debt to Robert Flaherty.



¹ The best source of information on Storck's early life is Vincent Geens "Les Temps des utopies: l'ambition cinématographique d'Henri Storck, de 1907 à 1940" in Les Cahiers d'Histoire du Temps Présent no 7 (2000) p189-237, published by the Centre d'Études et de Documentation Guerre et Sociétés Contemporaines (Bruxelles).

² Copies of this erotic, surreal short film no longer exist, and may never have been shown in public. It features Gwen Norman, the same actress who would star a year later in *Idylle à la Plage*.³ Interview with Wieslaw Hudon cited in Geens (2000) p195. ⁴ Letter from Storck to his mother (22/10/29) cited in Geens (2000) p195.

⁵ Henri Storck "Les films de reportage" Tribord no 3 (août 1930) pages not numbered. *Tribord* was the magazine published by Storck, Labisse and friends in Ostende in 1930-31. Storck discusses the matter further in interviews with Julien Flament ("Henri Storek" [sic] La Meuse (18/1/31) page not known) and Marc Carghese ("Propos d'Henri Storck sur le cinéma" Sésame no 6 (20/10/32) p8-10). Joris Ivens "The Camera and I" Seven Seas Books (Berlin) 1969 p33.

⁶ Hans Schoots "Living Dangerously: A Biography of Joris Ivens" Amsterdam University Press (Amsterdam) 2000, p44.

⁷ John Fernhout worked as a cameraman on Ivens' documentaries in 1930-33, then *The Spanish Earth* (1937) and *The 400 Million* (1939). For Storck he took a sea voyage through the Panama Canal to the Pacific, sending back reports that would be edited by Storck into *L'île de Pâques* (1935) and two other films about life at sea. Afterwards he worked with Storck on a series of documentaries with tourist and industrial themes, and the drama documentary on social housing *Les Maisons de la Misère* (1937).

⁸ Some caution is necessary in analysing Storck's intentions from the copy of *Idylle à la Plage* available. According to Jacqueline Aubenas ("Hommage à Henri Storck. Films 1928-1985. Catalogue Analytique" Commissariat général aux relations internationales de la Communauté Française de Belgique (Brussels) 1995, p22-23) the original negative disappeared in the bombardment of the Billancourt laboratories Paris in 1943. Current copies, entitled *Idylle sur le Sable*, come from a copy edited down from around 35 minutes to around 21 minutes by the original Belgian distributor.

⁹ Ivens (1969) p34.

¹⁰ Ivens (1969) p34; Schoots (2000) p44-45.

The intensity of the 'single-shot-cinema'



André Stufkens

‘THE NEXT GENERATION SITS ON THE SHOULDERS OF THE PREVIOUS ONE’, IVENS ONCE SAID. IVENS LOVED DISCUSSING NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN DOCUMENTARY FILM WITH YOUNG FILMMAKERS OR TEACHING THEM ABOUT FILM. THE DOCUMENTARIES OF LEONARD RETEL HELMRICH (B.1959) SHOW MANY STRIKING SIMILARITIES WITH IVENS’ FILMS. IN THE IMAGES (E.G. DEPICTING MUTUAL SOLIDARITY, LIKE THE MOVING OF A HOUSE OR PUTTING OUT A FIRE, IMAGES OF ANIMALS USED AS METAPHORS OR THE AESTHETIC APPROACH OF EVERY DAY BEAUTY) BUT ALSO IN THE APPROACH, FOR EXAMPLE, THE CONTINUOUS SEARCH FOR NEW TECHNIQUES AND A NEW FILM LANGUAGE.

Grand Jury Prize World Cinema 2005 at Sundance Festival. The film is part of a triptych about an Indonesian family in Djakarta. In the final part, *Stand van de Sterren* (*Shape of the Stars*), on which he is working now, he follows the granddaughter of the Christian Rumidjah, while her sons have converted to Islam. With his filmic way of thinking he developed the innovative ‘single shot cinema’. Using a self designed steady bracket camera, a brace with a light weight camera, moved in front of his body with the tips of his fingers, he experiences total freedom to film seemingly impossible shots. The people do not notice they are being filmed, Retel Helmrich looks right at them, knowing from experience what his camera, moving like a dragonfly around the people, is recording. This principle is clearly visible, the distance to the people is closer then ever, even more so because he always uses a wide-angle lens. His films become a flow of images, with a wonderful focus on the emotional inner life of the main characters, who are trying to cope with a rapidly changing society.

Through this new film ‘language’, the films of Leonard Retel Helmrich provide a new viewing experience, more intense and more intimate. He won the Joris Ivens Award at IDFA with *Stand van de Maan* (*Shape of the Moon*) and the

Leonard Retel Helmrich demonstrating his single-shot-cinema
© Henk Braam

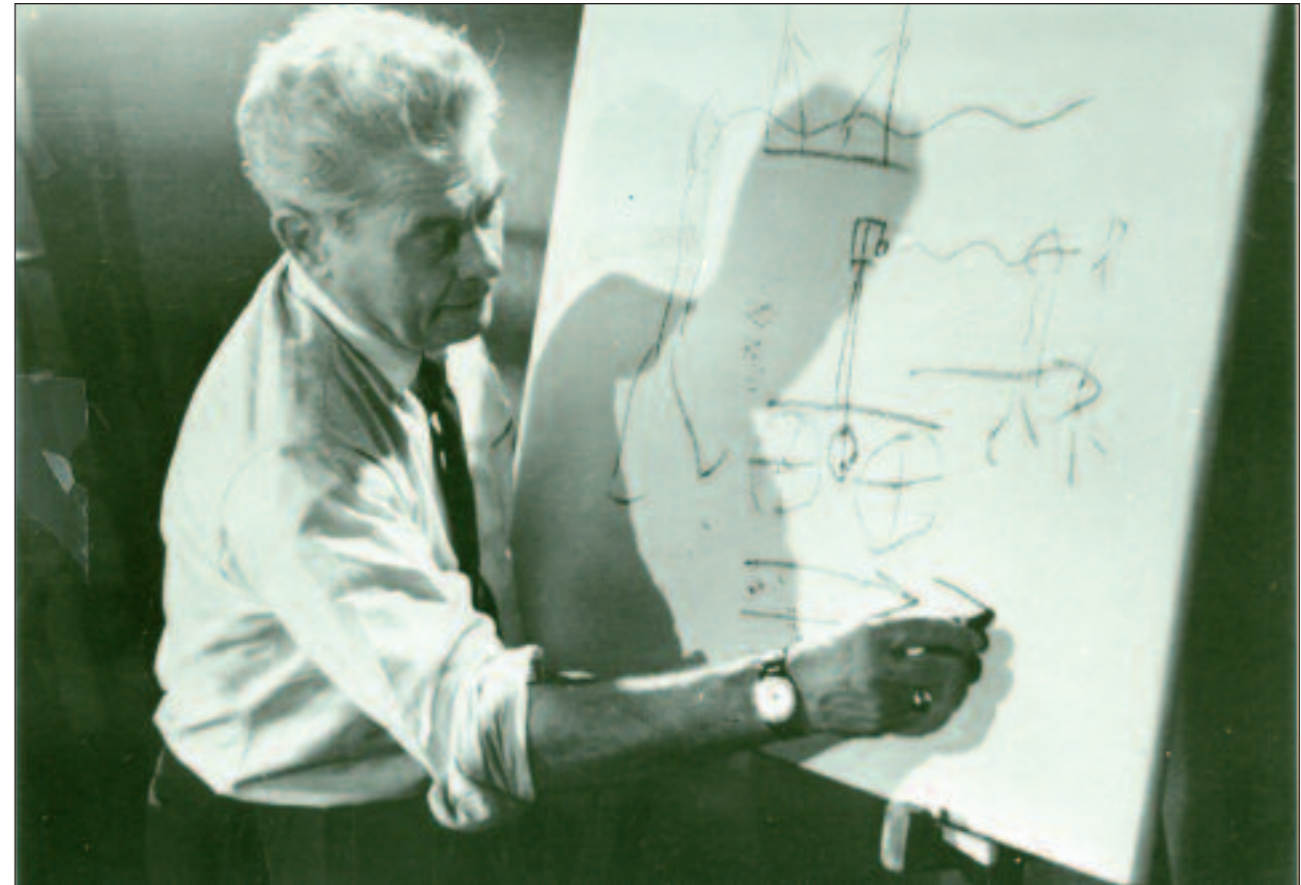
Germaine Krull, *Joris Ivens* filming *The Bridge*, 1928
© Krull Stiftung Folkwang Museum Essen

AS: I feel your filmic way of thinking has created a new direction in documentary filmmaking.

LRH: Yes, I hope it will be picked up, and now people do view it this way. I’m glad they do. I’m not trying to create fiction, but I do try to put concepts I recognise in reality, and which people in general recognise, in a story. Doing that, I don’t want to be [tied] to journalistic dogmas. Journalism is obsessed with the idea that things should be

ple in a visual way with a new era, like Ivens did in the Twenties with his modernist films.

LRH: Indeed I do want to connect to the present viewing behaviour. That’s why I watch programs for the young and MTV, fast editing, short shots, fast images. But in computer games there is no editing at all but still a lot of speed and a lot of camera motions. It’s a flow and the camera circles the characters, they don’t really go ‘inside of them’. I



‘true’. I do want to tell the truth, but the truth as I experience it myself.

AS: You have developed a film technique in which filmmakers can create their own style. Do you think your technique will become more widespread?

LRH: Absolutely, that would be my greatest desire. Then I would feel like having launched something. I’m not saying that I’m the best in this technique, ideally someone else comes along and films [something] much better, but using this technique. I teach all over the world, but this goes further than just techniques, it is so close to myself, it’s comparable to a vision that originates out of life itself. I just returned from Surinam, where I taught a course in filmmaking at the Film Academy of Pim de la Parra, who was also a friend of Ivens. You could compare his approach with Ivens, who gave lectures, courses and workshops all over the world to young people, Chile, China, Cuba, The Netherlands, everywhere using the same concept - to create a film within a limited period and budget. Hand out cameras to young film students and get out there. And I don’t know if you have noticed, but all my films include a rain scene, as in Ivens’ *Rain* (1929).

AS: In the development of the documentary every time a new technique was developed, it led to a new way of filming, which matches the audience’s need for new ways of watching. A new style of watching, such as presented by you, strives to accommodate the peo-

ple can provide an alternative to this view. With my way of shooting, especially in *The Shape of the Stars*, I’m trying to reach a younger audience.

This film follows an adolescent in that life in Indonesia, who also watches MTV and that kind of thing, and I want to look from within their world, without alienating the adult crowd.

AS: German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk speaks of the term ‘condensation’ as being inherent to present times. Condensation, a strong intensity and involvement to the other.

LRH: We want to get deeper inside the mind of others, definitely. I’m trying to accomplish this in all my films, as this year in *Promised Paradise*, to view the world from the perspective of the Bali bomber. This also has to do with the cameras, they are so small now that it is possible to get real close. A lot of camera operators don’t like wide-angle lenses, because it blows up a face. This is true, but I always keep some background in the shot and using this as a reference you can be very close to people and see a sort of distortion in the image, similar to being very close to someone in reality. It’s also got to do with an organic experience of space and time. In *Cinéma Vérité* the camera is always one step behind, to avoid being in the way the camera is often on the side and people are mostly shown in profile, whereas I want to see the faces of the people, their emotions. Meanwhile I look at them and judge the space and the situation, so I can adjust to the developments with a smooth camera movement, without cutting or shifting frame abruptly.

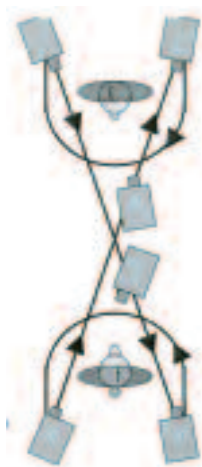


Joris Ivens sketching a design for an experimental camera
© JIA/EFJI

Sketches of Leonard Retel Helmrich for students to exercise Orbit camera movements for the single-shot-cinema
© L. Retel Helmrich

Sketches of Leonard Retel Helmrich for students to exercise Orbit camera movements for the single-shot-cinema
© L. Retel Helmrich

Leonard Retel Helmrich, crossing the bridge, film still *The Shape of the Moon*, 2004
© Scarabee Films



AS: What are your references from film history?

LRH: Concerning film theory, André Bazin - he was an advocate of the wide-angle lens and called camera movement the essence of film. And Joris Ivens concerning documentary. Murnau and Leni Riefenstahl too, not because of her ideology of course, I don't like rhetoric and propaganda at all, but she was very aware of camera movement. With Ivens there is always movement, either the camera moves or something in the images moves, I completely agree with him. With me it is the same and I take it one step further, I try to keep the camera moving at all times. Very slow or very fast but always moving, even if it is less noticeable e.g. when a person is speaking. Just like the surface of water, which is never completely motionless.

AS: A beautiful comparison. Ivens once said: 'I paint with living water, not with dead water.'

LHR: Yes, just like the emotions are a space, they are constantly in motion and you float on it, so to speak, you feel them out with the camera like with a dowsing rod. An Indonesian cameraman, with whom I'm working, has also incorporated this filmic way of thinking. His and my shots are constantly moving. A one hour scene can be edited to the essence, without it being noticeable, the camera movements of him and me flow into each other organically. Of course I do direct, but it feels as if you are completely there and are not continually manipulated by hard cuts and different viewpoints. The audience wants to feel in control. I met Ivens once, at the premiere of *A Tale of the Wind* (1988) in Rotterdam in the presence of Queen Beatrix. This film also is about east meeting west, just like my films. And it is full of this powerful observation which is an intrinsic part of Dutch documentary. The registration of a raindrop, a spider's web, the rays of the sun into a bamboo house. I was at the last IDFA at the screening of the three rediscovered Ivens films, I felt being part of this tradition, which does inspires me. This is all in my head as I'm filming in Indonesia. The Netherlands excel in documentary film-making and this is often overlooked in the field. The Dutch documentary tradition is important, the government should acknowledge this in the same way as they acknowledge 20th century painting in museums. Documentary is an important part of art history.

AS: Ivens too used to say that he was not as much inspired by his fellow filmmakers but by painters like Van Gogh, Rembrandt, Ruisdael and Vermeer. By studying the light, the clouds and the water on their canvasses. You also chose to study, besides film history, the history of art.



LHR: Yes that is funny, it may seem very abstract, but this is my perception of how life is. If you would compare western history and art history, the interaction between the two is fascinating, there are so many parallels. Regular history sums up the facts in a tidy order, but the *why* behind these facts can be found in art history, of which documentary is an important part. Documentary is a young art form, but can learn from older art forms. For me, I think documentary is still in the renaissance and will develop much further. The string I use, attached to a fictitious lens cap on a detergent bottle, which is used by the students to practice filming outside the camera, resembles the string that was used to reinvent the perspective in the renaissance. Bruneleschi and the others aimed this string from their eye on the object, and this is what my students do to become aware of the concentric way of thinking and filming. You aim the string at an object in the centre and become a part of the concentric space. If you aim at another object, you aim at another centre in another concentric space. These different concentric spaces can be interlinked. I have worked through a couple of basic camera movements which I teach them. The fun part of single shot camera is you can cross the 180° axis much easier. Because there is always some background in the image and the movement is continuous you will not get disoriented. With single shot cinema there is no breaking up of space and time by editing, but exiting perspective changes which effect your emotions, your soul.

Promised Paradise will be broadcast on Dutch television in December (VPRO). The film won the first prize at the Zanzibar International Film Festival.

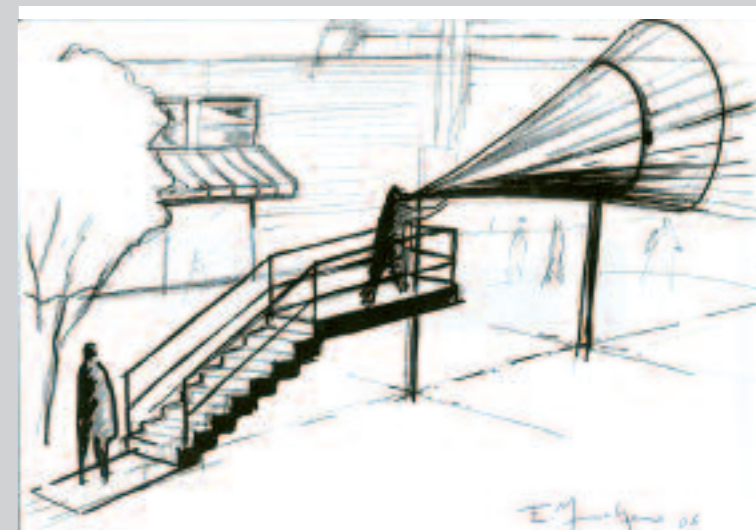
contemporary art inspired by ivens >>

Brian McCormack, *Joris Ivens meets Hraesvelgr* (detail), 2006.
© by the artist

This sculpture about the wind, Joris Ivens and the legend from Norse mythology, making the wind blow, includes a screening of Ivens' *Pour le Mistral* on-loop in a purpose-built viewing-room. For further information www.iven.nl

Fernando Alday, *Joris Ivens*, collage, 2006
© artist

Emilio Menchero Lopez, *La Passionaria Porte-Voix*, Brussels, 2006
© artist



Ivens' political satire with puppets animation found

Jiri Trnka's and Joris Ivens' illegitimate child



DURING RESEARCH FOR THE JORIS IVENS DVD BOXSET, 179 METERS OF RUSHES WERE FOUND OF THE LIVELY PUPPET SCENE FROM THE DOCUMENTARY *THE FIRST YEARS* (1947-1949)¹. THIS ANIMATION SEQUENCE WAS CUT FROM THE FINAL VERSION OF THE FILM, AND HAS NOT BEEN SEEN SINCE 1948. THE DISCOVERY OF THE ANIMATION SEQUENCE PROVES ONCE AGAIN THAT IVENS' DOCUMENTARY STYLE INCLUDES A VARIETY OF TECHNIQUES. FICTION, FANTASY, DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES ARE AS MUCH PART OF IT AS NEWSREELS, REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS. THE PUPPET SCENE WAS ENTIRELY PERFORMED BY THE FAMOUS CZECHOSLOVAKIAN PUPPET MAKER, MOTION-PICTURE ANIMATOR AND ILLUSTRATOR JIRI TRNKA AND HIS ASSISTANTS AT TRICK BROTHERS STUDIO. THE IDEA AND SCRIPTS, CREATED BY JORIS IVENS, MARION MICHELLE AND CATHERINE DUNCAN, SHOW IN NUMEROUS VERSIONS A RADICAL POLITICAL FANTASY ABOUT THE TENSIONS IN EUROPE, WHEN FORMER ALLIES BECAME ENEMIES WITH OPPOSING ECONOMICAL AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS. DROPPING THE PUPPET SCENE WAS JUST ONE OF THE MANY DIFFICULTIES THE AMBITIOUS PROJECT OF *THE FIRST YEARS* HAD TO FACE. AT THE END OF THE PRODUCTION IVENS WROTE: '*OUR FILM BECAME A KIND OF ILLEGITIMATE CHILD*'.

André Stufkens



'ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A PUPPET'
When Joris Ivens was still in Australia during spring 1946, he was commissioned by Lubomir Linhart, head of the nationalized film industry in Czechoslovakia, to film the reconstruction of the country after the devastation caused by the Second World War. Three other countries, the 'new democracies' Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Poland, were eager to join the production and share costs. Ivens' film crew worked in Bulgaria from June to September 1947, in Yugoslavia from October to November 1947, in Poland from January until May 1948, before finally returning to Prague. From June 1948 until December 1949 Joris Ivens and Marion Michelle lived in Prague to film the Czechoslovakian episode and then bring together and finish the four-part

film. Marion Michelle: 'I felt and Joris too that it was important to give some background on the four Slav countries. In our intention the film was made for Western audiences who had no idea of European history and culture'. Catherine Duncan, the Tasmanian actress and playwright who wrote the commentary for *Indonesian Calling*, joined them for seven months to write the commentary for *The First Years*. The first version of the Czechoslovakian script, dated August 20, 1947, shows the structure of this episode, focussing on the long history of fighting for liberation and independence for Czechoslovakia.² The episode was to start with Jan Hus and the Taborites, a sequence which needed re-enactment with 15th century knights, priests and peasants. Like the following sequences about the battle of Lipany, cultural history (renaissance, baroque) and the national independence in the 19th and 20th century no re-enactment was eventually used, but this part was presented with the help of documents, maps, graphics, shots of architecture and newsreel material. After the historical part a 'shoe-story' showed peasant shoemakers in the mountains and the large Bata factory, which after the Nazi occupation would make boots to stamp down the Czech people. The final part, focusing on the new situation and daily life in the country after the liberation was the most problematical. From the start, it included a long puppet sequence, with a complicated and innovative mix of reality and animation. The first and largest script version opens with 'One upon a time there was a puppet,' and the camera pans across Jiri Trnka's studio, where two puppeteers are working on a set of puppets - a worker with a cap, a peasant with a tractor, Mr. Master, a typical American businessman, Pan Franta, a landlord and Petka, a funny little fellow, dressed in what was once a snappy business suit. 'Plans, plans, plans...' Petka shouts, walking around the animation studio, pulling charts and graphs from the walls, 'I hate plans!'

MARSHALL PLAN VERSUS FIVE YEAR PLAN

After the war, the former allies the United States and the Soviet Union implemented contrasting economic plans in



line with their opposing political ideologies. Three months after the declaration of the Truman Doctrine, outlined in a presidential speech on March 12, 1947, the Secretary of State, General Marshall, called for an American plan to revive Europe and protect the countries under threat of communism. In Eastern Europe, under Soviet control thanks to various agreements like Yalta, only Greece and Czechoslovakia had democratic governments. In 1946, the Communist Gottwald was elected Prime Minister of a coalition government after the Communists won the elections. Although there was still distrust of Western powers - people still remembered the betrayal of Munich 1938 which led to the Nazi occupation - Czechoslovakia intended to attend the first meeting to discuss the Marshall Plan in Paris in June 1947 with France, the UK and other countries. However the Soviets forced Czechoslovakia to avoid the event and join the Cominform in September 1947 instead. A fierce anti-American campaign started, aiming to reveal the real purpose of the Marshall aid, which according to this campaign only supported the American war industry and intended to bring countries under the military influence of the US.³ In February 1948, the Czechoslovakian Communists took power, supported by a massive general strike of 2.5 million workers.⁴ Within weeks of this undemocratic takeover, the US Congress and Truman passed the law authorizing the Marshall plan.

When Joris Ivens and Marion Michelle started working on the Czechoslovakian part of the film in June 1948, the impact of the Marshall plan was still a hot topic. In an 'Analysis of Puppet Sequence' Ivens stated: 'The whole puppet sequence is in fact, a satirical analysis of the Marshall Plan for European recovery'.⁵ According to this analysis the full scope of the plan was destruction of heavy industry in favour of agricultural economy ('Cheeses instead of washing machines and Skoda locomotives'), destruction of the Five Year plan ('free enterprise instead of collective planning) and interference with other countries' political policies. Eventually this Marshall Plan would equip Western Europe for a war against the Eastern socialist democracies and the Soviet Union. This idea gets its artistic realisation through a nightmare suffered by Petka, of which two versions were designed. In the first version, piles of cheese ordered by the Americans turn into flying missiles, first flying over Holland and Greece, then taking the shape of bombs, even atomic bombs, before destroying Big Ben in London, the Eiffel Tower in Paris and Czechoslovakia. The second version shows a trunk belonging to Mr. Master full of friendly animals, which turn into aggressive war monsters with guns and tanks. When Petka awakes he finds out that the explosions in his nightmare were only caused by some blows to his head from Pan Franta, and that there is still time to prevent a real nuclear war.

THE ROLES OF THE PUPPETS

The hero Petka typifies the little grumbler. He dreams of dollars and British pounds and wants to sell consumer goods to people, like the 10,000 washing machines, making him a profit, instead of delivering these precious goods to community organisations like crèches, cooperatives, hospitals etc. It's Mr. Master who persuades him to sell the washing machines at a higher price for profit instead of need. Puppet Petka goes to the country and is confronted with reality - mechanised farming, community buying and selling, industrial development. In these scenes puppet animation and reality were mixed. Puppet Petka visits places like the Skoda Factory and realizes that the country develops well in a planned economy. After the nightmare Petka understands the real intentions of Mr. Master, and then



p.28: Joris Ivens, the Trinka Group and the visiting Russian puppet creator Obratsow during the making of the puppet animation scene, Prague 1947
© JIA/EFJI

Stills from the Puppet-scene
© JIA/EFJI



Marion Michelle and Joris Ivens at the Trinka Group
© JIA/EFJI

struggles with him to put him back in his dollar trunk. A peasant intervenes and throws Franta in the duck pound, pushes the dollar trunk underground and embraces Petka, who is now happy to join the workers and peasants fulfilling the Five Year Plan. A Happy Ending then? Not for the puppet sequence itself. The first version, a 12 page script (which would have resulted in at least 20 minutes of puppet animation film) was reduced and reduced again down to a basic story covering just two pages, in which the mix with reality was dropped and Petka disappeared. Only Franta, the landlord with no land, and Mr. Master remained, focussing on the main reactionary opposition, which should be defeated. ‘Today everybody is talking about plans. Now there are two ways of looking at plans. Either you like them - or - you like them.’ In the end even this small animation sequence was

dropped, although it’s not clear whether this was ordered by the state. According to Marion Michelle it was more likely that it was the creators themselves, as they didn’t seem to be satisfied with the end result, they didn’t insist on including it and were not disappointed by cutting it: ‘We felt no censorship, nobody tried to influence us’.⁶ The puppet scene was too superficial, the mix with reality was a problem. However, another version was created. Instead of starting in a studio and visiting several locations in the country, the puppet sequence was shot as part of a performance by a travelling puppet theatre visiting a village, where children were applauding and laughing. This wasn’t an improvement either, because it showed that the puppet scene was in fact meant for children instead of adults. In a letter to Marion Michelle, Joris Ivens wrote about the comment of a Russian director who said that such a serious subject as the Marshall Plan shouldn’t be treated with a satirical animation. Such a non-serious approach would also undermine the credibility of the rest of the documentary and harm its continuity. Although other parts of *The First Years* were also fictionalised, like a feature in the Polish part, this fiction was not serious enough. Ivens himself perhaps realized what the main weakness was, when he noted in the margins of the script next to the name of Pan Franta: ‘Too stereotypical’.

ANIMATION AND JIRI TRNKA

Why did Ivens decide to choose puppet animation for such a documentary in the first place? In 1946, Jiri Trnka, who had founded his puppet animation company one year before, won the Cannes Film Festival with a fairytale cartoon called *The Robbers and the Animals*. At the end of that year his first puppet feature film, the *Bethlehem* sequence of *The Czech Year* was internationally acclaimed for its beautiful, brilliant animation of simple puppets, rooted in folk tradition. In February 1948, the Communist regime started subsidising his films. Trnka’s international prestige in the West could have helped the distribution of *The First Years*, Ivens must have thought.

Moreover, Ivens wasn’t unfamiliar with animation. He himself was eager to include fictionalised and dramatic elements in his documentaries. An early script from 1927 shows an animation scene, and in many documentaries from the 1930’s Ivens used graphics and didactic animations to explain technology. In *Komsomol* (1932) an animation sequence was included with three-dimensional objects, created at the UFA studios in Berlin, presenting a futuristic view of train transport. His wife Helen van Dongen, and friends Hanns Eisler and Joseph Losey, had made *Pete Roleum and his Cousins* (1939) with puppet animation for the New York World Fair, only 9 years before. Hanns Eisler stayed in the same premises as Ivens, Michelle and Duncan during the production of the puppet scene. In Ivens’ film career, cartoons and animation were included in *Indonesia Calling* and *l’Italia non è un Paese Povero* (*Italy is not a Poor Country*, 1960) and to some degree a sequence from *A Tale of the Wind* (1988), where satirical types are presented in an artificial setting in a factory hall, could be regarded as a puppet scene.

The puppet sequence also underlines Ivens’ view of the role of artists in society. One of the early scripts opens with a panorama shot of Trnka’s studio, showing the artists’ plans. Obviously this film sequence itself was part of the plan, and it proves how artists, writers, composers and technicians supported the general idea of the Five Year plan in the artistic field.

in memoriam



CATHERINE DUNCAN 1915-2006

On August 14th, Catherine (Kate) Duncan died in her Paris home. As a young woman, Tasmanian-born Duncan left for mainland Australia where she began a career as an actress and playwright at the progressive left-wing New Theatre in Melbourne. In the 1940s she became one of the country’s most popular radio actresses, even winning an Oscar (along with co-star Peter Finch). She met Joris Ivens soon after his arrival in Australia in August 1945, when Ivens, appointed Film Commissioner, was creating his



HELEN VAN DONGEN, 1909-2006

On September 28th, Helen van Dongen, Joris Ivens’ second wife, died in a nursing home in Brattleboro (Vermont, USA) following a period of declining health. She was born on January 5th 1909 in Amsterdam. After an education at Catholic schools, Van Dongen began work as a young trade correspondent in 1927 (speaking four languages fluently), for the Amsterdam branch of CAPI, the photo and optical equipment firm of C.A.P. Ivens, Joris’ father. At that time Joris Ivens was branch manager and he asked Helen to become his private se-

Dutch East Indies Film Unit. Duncan introduced Ivens to the Indonesians who supported national liberation. After Ivens resigned and attacked Dutch colonial policy by making his political pamphlet *Indonesia Calling* (1946) he asked Duncan to write the commentary: ‘The story of ships that didn’t sail’. This collaboration with Ivens gave her an opportunity to enter the film field. She wrote and directed the first three films made by the Australian National Film Board - *This is the Life*, *Men Wanted*, *Christmas Under the Sun* - commissioned by the Department of Immigration. In 1947 she left Australia for London, and soon after settled in Paris.

During a seven month stay in Prague, at the invitation of Ivens, she wrote the commentary for *The First Years* (1949). She also befriended German composer Hanns Eisler, who was living in the same house as Ivens. In between writing for the BBC and French Radio she started a biography on Ivens. He however rejected it, claiming that it was not serious enough. She had a marvellous style of writing, intelligent, alert and witty, but it would have been almost impossible to pinpoint Ivens’ complex and nomadic life. In 1950 she met American photographer Paul Strand, who settled in the same neighbour-

hood of Paris. Duncan wrote several intimate portraits about Strand for his photo books. In 1957 Duncan accepted Henri Langlois’ invitation to become secretary of the FIAF (International Federation of Film Archives), only to leave after a year, asking her good friend Marion Michelle to replace her. In collaboration with Michelle she published an essay entitled ‘Working with Ivens’ and in 1999 she wrote some words for the program to accompany ‘Passages’, the Ivens exhibition at the Valkhof Museum in Nijmegen - Ivens’ birthplace. In 1998, she charmed an international audience of Eisler specialists gathered at the same Museum with her vivid memories of Hanns Eisler. She was also directing workshops and published a book for children - ‘The Grandmother’s Book’. She gave the Ivens Foundation her documents relating to Ivens in 2002. We will remember her as a strong and vivid personality, engaged and with a lot of sense of perspective and humour. One of her lines, written in 1948, shows her beliefs: ‘In a world which is changing as rapidly as ours there is a constant need to revise outworn ideas and philosophies and to promote new understandings. To let others see us as we really are, and to see others in their true relationship to ourselves’.

cretary. Soon a love affair started. In the same year, Joris Ivens started with his first film experiments, and later, while he was out of office filming *The Bridge* (1928) and *Rain* (1929), Van Dongen managed the CAPI business which Joris was neglecting. She became more and more involved in his film work and in the activities organized by the Dutch Film League, such as translating for guest filmmakers like Eisenstein, Vertov, Pudovkin, Richter and Dulac. Besides these administrative tasks for CAPI (which also included collecting clippings on Ivens, which formed the basis of the first Joris Ivens Archives) Ivens asked her to fulfil ever more tasks for his film projects.

In 1929 she did some camera work and editing for *We are Building*, especially the *Zuiderzee* section. She edited *Philips Radio* and the sound versions of *Rain* (Lichtveld score) and *New Earth*. She followed Ivens to Russia, where she studied with Eisenstein, Vertov and Pudovkin and lectured at the Academy of Cinematography. After Ivens had settled in the USA, she edited classic Ivens films such as *The*

Spanish Earth, *The 400 Millions* and *Power and the Land*. Paul Rotha wrote in ‘The Film Till Now’ about the collaboration between Ivens and Van Dongen: ‘They worked on equal terms as joint creators, a collaboration which has been one of the most fruitful in film history, but which has tended to obscure Helen van Dongen’s own quite distinct talent. That talent came into its own with the two war record films, *Russians at War* and *News Review No. 2* of which she was producer as well as editor. [...] No one at work today observes more subtly the implications and possibilities of isolated shots, nor has a surer instinct for the links between them.’ (Paul Rotha, 1949. *The film till now; a survey of world cinema, with an additional section by Richard Griffith*. London Vision, 1949)

When Ivens left for Australia, without Van Dongen, in 1945, she continued working in the USA and collaborated with Robert Flaherty on *The Land* and *Louisiana Story*. Her last film was *On Human Rights* (1949), made for the United Nations. In 1950 she married Kenneth Durant and retired from filmmaking.

1 Catherine Duncan, 1948

2 Robert Flaherty, Helen van Dongen and Joris Ivens in New York, 1940

© JIA/EFJI



Aquisition Marion Michelle

Marion Michelle donated 1500 negatives to the Joris Ivens foundation.

The photos on this page show the boat trip in 1946 of Ivens and Michelle from Australia to Europe passing Egypt and the shooting of *The First Years* in Poland and Bulgaria in 1948.

© MM Coll. / EFJI



Ivens revisited in Italy:

Il Mio Paese / My Country

VICARI'S FILM PREMIERED AT THE VENICE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Joris Ivens finally started making his only Italian documentary *l'Italia non è un Paese Povero* (*Italy is not a poor country*) in 1960, after having written about, and planned to do, a film there for many years.

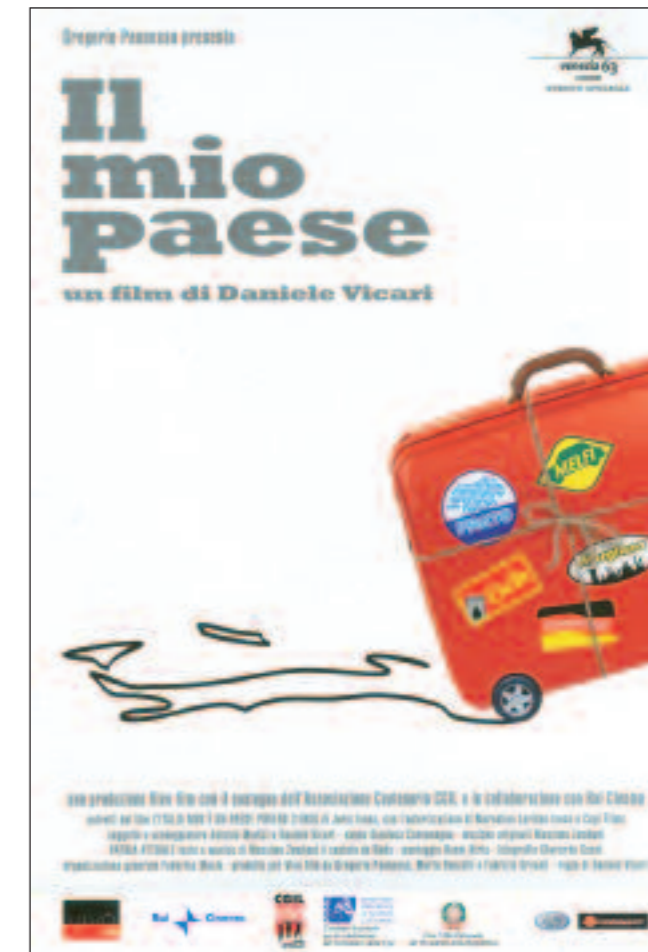
He knew the country, loved the people and adored Italian culture. He also gathered together a lot of talented people - Alberto Moravia, Tinto Brass, Valentino Orsini, Mario Volpi and Paolo and Vittorio Taviani. His three-part documentary, made for RAI television, became a rich mosaic, full of imagination, extraordinary for its sensibility and complexity. Although the subject is about the search for methane gas and its extraction and distribution by ENI (see comment below), Ivens created imaginative images, dreams, humour, love and contrasts of tradition and modernity, referring to earlier films like *Philips Radio* and *Borinage*. He was able to grasp the spirit of Italy, at a time when the country was in transition from an agricultural society to an industrialized country, on the eve of the economic boom of the 1960s. As always, Ivens presented hope for a better future.

The director Daniele Vicari premiered his documentary *Il Mio Paese* (*My Country*) at the Venice International Film Festival on 8th September. It is a road movie crossing Italy, revisiting locations where Ivens shot his film, although in the opposite direction - it starts in Sicily, where Ivens ended. Here, Vicari got on a bus to join people travelling to Frankfurt to look for work. He journeyed from Gela and Termini Imerese, passing Melfi, Prato and Port Marghera, to the laboratories of Enea in Rome.

Vicari saw and filmed a country in difficulty. There were shots of declining industrial zones and ruined factories, but also new transitional areas, showing the change from an industrial and mechanical society into a post-industrial service based society. The film was supported by the trade union CGIL, and will certainly cause discussions amongst workers over which direction Italy should now take. Prato, for example, was a booming and prosperous town in the 1980's based around the textile industry, but it has failed to maintain this momentum, and has been invaded by Chinese workers and entrepreneurs. Which challenges should be faced, and which brave choices made, to bring modernization without disregarding the past?

Daniele Vicari: 'When I saw Joris Ivens' film *Italy is not a Poor Country* I had the impression that his work contained an important element, which clearly focuses on the story of the route an entire society is taking: individual and social work. Work seems to be a non poetic topic for a film, raw, difficult to manipulate with a narrative method, but it is one of the few universal topics, together with love, friendship and not many others. Human beings transform themselves and the world around them, they influence history and decide their lifestyle. That's the main subject of Ivens' oeuvre and that's what I tried to grasp as well. My country is in transformation, *[it is]* not easy to understand. This is the reason why I let this giant of cinema lead me in order not to get lost in this complex reality.'

The Foundation provided 19 segments, totalling 13 minutes, of Ivens' Italian film which were intercut with contemporary images from the same location 45 years later.



Film poster *Il Mio Paese* (*My Country*, 2006)

© VIVO Films, Rome

Daniele Vicari,
film stills *Il Mio Paese*
© VIVO Films, Rome

Joris Ivens, film stills
l'Italia non è un Paese Povero
(1960)
© JIA/EFJI

Daniele Vicari and
Marceline Loridan-Ivens at
the premiere of *Il Mio Paese*,
during the 63rd Venice
International Film Festival,
7th September 2006
© VIVO Films, Rome



• IL MIO PAESE, DAVIDE VICARI. 113 MINUTES, COLOUR - DIGITAL
- 16/9, PRODUCED BY VIVO FILM, ROME

New books and DVD's



• **SALVADOR ALLENDE, BY PATRICIO GUZMÁN**
DVD: Éditions Montparnasse

The documentary *Salvador Allende* (2004) by Patricio Guzmán was released on DVD in 2005 by Editions Montparnasse. This film describes the life and political career of Salvador Allende in Chile. In 1964 Ivens had filmed Allende's election campaign, he was the political left's nominee for president, in a documentary called *Victory Train*. During the campaign Allende traveled the whole country by train and visited even the smallest villages. A large amount of footage from Ivens' *Victory Train* was used in the film *Salvador Allende*. It covers the twenty years up to Allende's victory in the 1970 presidential elections. He was the first democratically elected socialist president in Latin America. The CIA considered him a great (communist) threat, a "Fidelism without Fidel" and tried everything to stop him from winning. When this failed they tried to get rid of him, which included donating large sums of money, and some say even weapons, to the right wing opposition in 1972. This, combined with economic problems and social upheaval among the bourgeois class led to the coup d'état in 1973 which resulted in Allende's removal from power and execution. Right wing General Pinochet took over, establishing a military dictatorship, which sent the country into strife, with thousands of people disappearing and/or being murdered. The film uses interviews with family members, friends and politicians and a great amount of archive footage to bring to life Allende and his political career.



• **LE REGARD DES OMBRES, BY LUISA PRUDENTINO**
Book: Blue de Chine

Chinese cinema was discovered and celebrated around the world as an alternative for Hollywood and European cinema. This book of Sinologist and specialist on Chinese cinema Luisa Prudentino describes the history of the seventh art in contemporary China, starting with the fifth generation with cineastes like Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige. The reputation of Chinese cinema is based on independent films without authorisation of the omnipresent state. In the introduction chapter Prudentino explains about the special role of the extraordinary documentary *How Yukong Moved the Mountains*, the 12 hours series of films made by Joris Ivens and Marceline Loridan-Ivens, and *A Tale of the Wind*. Their film approach and camera work differed so much from the still backward film practice at the time, when only 'Mao-modelled' films were permitted. It's impossible not to notice the parallels between Ivens and the first films of Tian Zhuangzhuang, influencing the sixth generation. Another parallel between Ivens and modern Chinese cinema: the coincidence between the cinematographical time and real time. Or the unity between representation and narration which is the essential characteristic of modern Chinese cinema. The book includes an interview with Marceline Loridan-Ivens about her experiences in China.



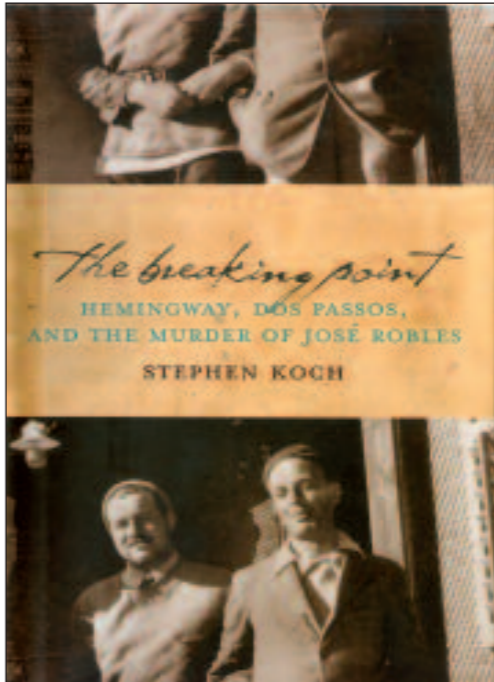
• **A PIECE OF HEAVEN, PRIMARY DOCUMENTS, BY S. LOUISA WEI**
DVD: Blue Queen

For young documentary filmmakers in China Situ Zhaodun - a veteran professor of Beijing Film Academy whose students include fifth generation filmmakers like Chen Kaige and Tian Zhuangzhuang - is a god-father figure. Many have shown their works to him, but few know stories of his life. Film student S. Louisa Wei created a documentary, a puzzle of situations and revelations, to portray Situ Zhaodun. The puzzle includes various stories like his five-year imprisonment under a death sentence handed down for offending Madam Mao or about his father Situ Huimin, head of the China documentary studios and later on minister of culture. All of these fragments are tied together through talking about his 40-year-long friendship with Joris Ivens, his devotion to teaching documentary filmmaking and the birth of over 40 works of documentary.



• **MÉDITATIONS CATASTROPHIQUES, BY ÉLIE FAURE**
Book: Bartillat

On the cover Don Quichotte is waving a red flag in besieged Madrid in February 1937. It shows the importance of respecting, protecting and safeguarding art & culture. This film still from Ivens' *The Spanish Earth* is an appropriate image covering the content of texts, articles, interviews, manifestos, petitions and letters written by French art historian Élie Faure (1873-1937). He adored Spain, a 'l'amour fou', and supported the Spanish Republic with all his heart and energy, even attended the battle field during war. By relating the rich art history of Spain, Don Quichotte, Greco, Velázquez, Zurbarán or Goya with the politic situation after the government was attacked by fascists rebels and the Spanish Civil war started the book really becomes a catastrophic meditation. Faure did his utmost trying to prevent Franco ruining the Spanish art treasures of museums, castles and churches and supported Picasso and others to safeguard the paintings and sculptures of the Prado museum. This theme is obvious in Ivens' film as well, as proofed by the image on the cover (also see article of Stacey Guill, page 14-19).



• **REGEN, BY JORIS IVENS**
(SOUND VERSION HANNS EISLER)
DVD and book: Suhrkamp

In the Ivens newsmagazine issue 10/2003 German musicologist Johannes Carl Gall wrote an extensive article on his synchronisation of Hanns Eisler's score (1941) to Ivens' mute film *Rain* (1929). The score was only ment as an incidental music experiment as part of the Rockefeller Foundation-founded Film Music Project of Eisler and Adorno. Also three other films were selected by Eisler to present his ideas on film music: *White Flood*, *A Child Went Forth* (Joseph Losey) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (John Ford). Next to the scores Eisler and Adorno wrote a classic book on film music 'Composing for the Films' (1944). A new German edition of this book 'Komposition für den Film', annotated by Gall, includes the results of the Film Music Project on DVD, by presenting almost all films and scores involved. The wonderful research resulted in a beautiful reconstruction of the sound version of *Rain* with the support of Mark-Paul Meyer (Filmmuseum) and the Ivens Foundation. For the first time ever, after previous attempts in the 1970's had failed, the music of Eisler finally fits the images of Ivens. Although the original version of *Rain* still is and will continue to be silent. The Eisler score, the quintet 'Fourteen Ways to describe Rain', became a classic of modern music and is still performed around the world.



• **THE BREAKING POINT, BY STEPHEN KOCH**
Book: Counterpoint

What happened behind the scenes of *The Spanish Earth* between John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemingway and Joris Ivens? Stephen Koch wrote a novel with the Spanish Civil War at the background, trying to explain the breaking point and disintegrating friendship between American modernists in literature Hemingway and Dos Passos in the year 1937. Conflicting characters, rising differences in political opinions, especially when Dos Passos noticed that a friend of him, José Robles had most probably been executed by Soviet agents, caused the break. Together with Ivens, 'Dos' and 'Hem' were founding members of Contemporary Historians, an ad hoc group of liberals who contributed the money and commissioned *The Spanish Earth* to support the Republic. Hemingway-in essence non-political-ranged himself more and more with the policy of the Republic and the Popular Front, while Dos Passos got more and more objections. Besides these political affairs the nuisance about the adultery of Hemingway with journalist Martha Gellhorn, the rivalry to become 'the spokesmen of the left', the macho behaviour and self-loathing (even suicidal) of Hemingway, played a part, according to Koch's fiction.

SOLIDARITY AND INSPIRATION:

Joris Ivens and the Groupe Medvedkine

IAN MUNDELL



tradition of cultural engagement. This engagement was led by the Centre Culturel Populaire de Palente les Orchamps (CCPPO) which, since 1959, had put on exhibitions, plays and, amongst other things, run a cinema club. This club showed the films of Joris Ivens alongside those of Eisenstein and René Vautier.³

When a strike broke out at the Rhodiaceta textile factory in Besançon in February 1967, the Centre arranged for films to be shown to the workers occupying the factory. As part of this initiative, CCPPO founder René Berchoud wrote to film director Chris Marker asking if he had films to send and whether he would come to see what was going on for himself⁴.

Despite being heavily involved in coordinating the collective film *Loin du Vietnam* (*Far From Vietnam*, 1967) (of which Ivens was also part⁵) Marker visited the strikers. He wrote a magazine article about their action, and set in motion a project to document the strike and the issues behind it. The resulting film, co-directed by Marker and Mario Marret, was *A Bientôt, J'Espère* (*See you soon, I hope*, 1968).

It focuses on union organiser Georges 'Yoyo' Maurivard, showing his activities around the strike and includes interviews with other workers. Much of it was filmed in the workers' homes, at the end of shifts, and the debilitating effects of the routine they were forced to follow is all too apparent. The result is a grey, grim portrait of the workers' lives, filmed in a restrained fashion that sets aside Marker's habitual visual and verbal playfulness.

The film attracted favourable reviews and prompted debate when shown on French TV in March 1968, but was less well received by the workers themselves. When Marker showed the film in Besançon the following month, they told him that it was "sad", "romantic", and even ethnographic in its distance from their own lives⁶. It showed the militants and the strike, they said, but not the preparation and training that constitute the daily life of an activist in a factory. Marker's response was that only the workers themselves could make such a film.

THE GROUPE MEDVEDKINE

This suggestion did not come out of the blue. Alongside the work to film *A Bientôt, J'Espère*, Marker had encouraged other film-makers to visit Besançon, to meet the workers and exchange views on how they could collaborate further. The French première of *Loin du Vietnam* took place in Besançon, in tribute to the strike. Screened to an audience of workers and activists, it was followed by a discussion with directors Alain Resnais and William Klein. This collaboration culminated in a "week of Marxist thought" in early December 1967, when activists met with directors such as Marker, Marret, and Jean-Luc Godard to discuss cinema and current affairs. One outcome was the suggestion that the workers should document their own actions, for instance during the enforced idleness of strikes', with support from film professionals of the sort who were mobilised to make *Loin du Vietnam*.

In the early months of 1968, classes commenced with directors of photography, camera operators and sound recordists. The dozen or so workers involved first made a photo-reportage, then shot their footage using loaned and donated equipment. They named their group in homage to the Soviet director Alexander Medvedkine, whose film-train travelled the USSR during 1930s, producing films at

factories, showing and discussing them with workers.

Marker's challenge from April 1968, that they should make a response to *A Bientôt, J'Espère*, was the ideal project for the Groupe Medvedkine. Still collaborating with militant filmmakers, the workers shot footage of the strikes and the demonstrations that broke out in May and June, but then they reached something of an impasse. Towards the end of 1968, the Groupe had no shortage of material but in the words of Slon, "perhaps it still lacked momentum". This was provided on 17 December 1968 when Joris Ivens made his first visit to Besançon, to present his Vietnam war film *The 17th Parallel* (1968).

JORIS IVENS

Joris Ivens had been abroad or tied up with his Vietnamese projects for much of the period in which the Groupe Medvedkine had been developing. He was in Vietnam during the first half of 1967, then editing and mixing *The 17th Parallel* through to the end of the year. He then returned to Vietnam, and was in Laos before and during the upheavals of May 1968. By the end of that year his colleagues were bogged down in the editing of the Laos material into what would become *Le Peuple et ses Fusils* (*The People and Their Guns*, 1969), but he was free to go to Besançon⁸. He received a warm welcome from the Groupe Medvedkine, and as might be expected felt an immediate sympathy with what it was trying to do. "When Chris Marker explained the initiative of this group to me, I was very happy because I've always thought that it is here that militant cinema could truly be born, directly in the movement and not through people coming from the outside..." Slon reports. The subsequent discussions went on all night. "Don't start with films that are too difficult, but don't make them too simple either," Ivens told them. "You must be daring and not repeat all the things that have been done before, but really advance our work... You have a great responsibility because Besançon will be a kind of pilot group... You must learn the art of cinema and remain constantly in contact with the factory, with the workers, so that your films really become a weapon in the struggle."

After this the Groupe reordered its material and wrote a scenario centred on Suzanne Zedet. She had appeared in *A Bientôt, J'Espère*, a silent presence beside her exhausted husband. But in May 1968 she was filmed addressing workers outside the Yema watch factory in Besançon, making her first speech in front of a crowd, telling them how and why they should continue the strike⁹. The Groupe made Zedet the centre of the film, expanding from this moment on the picket lines to show her role as the secretary of the factory's union branch. The film was finished in May 1969. At the beginning of the film the young militants pay tribute to Ivens. It opens with scenes of their workshop, their cans of film and an editing table, then moves to scenes of militant life. Cut into this is shot of a poster for a screening of Ivens' film *The Spanish Earth* (1937), in solidarity with the people of Spain, then another calling for support for the North Vietnamese.

Although *Classe de Lutte* is organised around a central character (a rather traditional approach favoured by Ivens, and fundamental to his view of how a political message should be put across) this did not mean that the Groupe Medvedkine had to abandon its goal of showing that the workers could make film with all the creativity of auteur cinema. *Classe de Lutte* bristles with tricks and flourishes, to the extent that some critics saw the hand of Marker or Godard behind the scenes.

The film won the World Federation of Trade Unions prize at the 1969 Leipzig film festival, and was shown on the French

parallel circuit of cinema clubs, cultural centres and factories. It was frequently shown together with *A Bientôt, J'espère*, sometimes linked by an edited recording of the discussion between Marker and the Besançon workers, called *La Charnière* (the hinge, or turning point). It seems that the two films were also edited together for German television in 1970, under the title *Die Kamera in der Fabrik* (*The Camera in the Factory*)¹⁰.

Joris Ivens kept in contact with the workers in Besançon, for instance participating in a union training day" in March 1969, and was invited to the CCPPO's tenth anniversary celebrations in October the same year¹¹. After making several more films, the Besançon group dissolved in 1971, while a sister Groupe Medvedkine at Sochaux continued to 1973. However, interest in the work of the Groupes has received new interest in recent years, with a retrospective at the Belfort Film Festival in 2002 and the issue this year of a DVD collection.



A double DVD set of the films of the Groupe Medvedkine at Besançon and later at Sochaux is published by Iskra and Editions Montparnasse. It includes A Bientôt, J'espère, La Charnière and Classe de Lutte, as well as the Groupe's subsequent productions. Details are on <http://www.iskra.fr>. IAN MUNDELL is a film writer based in Brussels.



Film poster *Le 17e Parallèle*,

1969.

photo: Marceline Loridan-Ivens

© JIA/EFJI

Ian Mundell is a journalist and film writer based in Brussels. His recent work has dealt with the Vietnamese films of Joris Ivens, especially *Loin de Vietnam*, and he has written an introduction to Ivens' oeuvre in the 'Great Directors' series published by the cinephile website 'Senses of Cinema'. He is currently compiling an analytical chronology of the life and work of Henri Storck, for the Fonds Henri Storck in Brussels.



¹ The title is an inversion of the French for 'class struggle' (lutte des classes) and means class or lesson in the struggle.

² The main source for these events is a 10-page pamphlet "Slon présente le groupe Medvedkine de Besançon" (May 1969), a copy of which exists in the archive of the Cinémathèque Royale de Belgique in Brussels. Slon - the Service de Lancement des Œuvres Nouvelles - was established in 1967 to produce *Loin du Vietnam*. Towards the end of 1968, it was reconstituted as a production and distribution collective, in which role it supported the Groupes Medvedkine at Besançon and Sochaux, and distributed their films. It later became the collective Iskra.

³ Jacques Gavoille 'De la stagnation à l'expansion (1919 - vers 1970)' in 'Histoire de Besançon: de la conquête française à nos jours' Vol II edited by Claude Fohlen (1982) Cêtre (Besançon) p609-610. Iskra 'Les Groupes Medvedkine' (2006) Editions Montparnasse (Paris) p3.

⁴ Slon (1969) and Chris Marker 'Pour Mario' in Iskra (2006) p11-19.

⁵ For the collaboration of Ivens and Marker in *Loin du Vietnam*, see Ian Mundell, *Far From Vietnam*><Inside Vietnam, in issue 9 (November 2003) p25-28 of the European Foundation Joris Ivens news bulletin.

⁶ Slon (1969). Guy Hennebelle 'Le Cinéma militant est un étincelle...' 'Cinéma d'aujourd'hui' no 5-6 (mars-avril 1976) p35-42.

⁷ Slon (1969). Guylaine Guidez 'L'Aurore d'un cinéma ouvrier' Le Nouveau Cinéma no 1840 (16/6/70) p8-10.

⁸ Robert Destanque and Joris Ivens "Joris Ivens ou la mémoire d'un regard" Editions BFB (1982) p307-8.

⁹ Slon (1969) says that this footage was shot by Bruno Muel and Mario Marret. Muel (Images Documentaires no 37-38 (2000), cited in Iskra (2006)) says that it was himself and Elvire Lerner. Muel had collaborated with Marceline Loridan and Jean-Pierre Sergent on *ALGÉRIE ANNÉE ZÉRO*, and had filmed with Sergent in Colombia in the mid-1960s.

¹⁰ Sam Dilorio 'Chris Marker film and video collaborations' Film Comment web resource, linked to July-August 2003 edition. <http://www.filmlinc.com/fcm/online/markerfilms.htm> (accessed 9/06).

¹¹ [JIA 106] 16/3/69 the certificate of having attended the day is signed by other participants.

¹² [JIA 105] 10/10/69 Invitation from René Berchaud.

Survey Retrospectives and Screenings 2006



CANADA / 28 October, Cinematheque Ontario, Toronto - *The 17th Parallel*
 GERMANY / 24 - 25 October, Konzerthaus Berlin, Werner-Otto-Saal, Berlin - *Rain* (Ivens/Franken), silent and live music version from Hanns Eisler
 SPAIN / 5 - 9 October, Docuspolis documentary film festival, Barcelona - *The Tipi, The Bridge, Rain* (Ivens/Franken), (Ivens/Storc)'Presentation of 'Man with the Movie Camera' Award - to Joris Ivens
 AUSTRALIA / 16 & 19 August, 16 & 20 September, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne - *The Spanish Earth*
 ITALY / 7 & 8 September, 63rd International Film Festival of Venice - *Il mio Paese* (Daniel Vicari) about *Italy is not a Poor Country*
 GERMANY / 3 August, Sommerliche Musiktage Hitzacker, Hamburg - *Rain* (Ivens/Franken), silent & live music of Hanns Eisler
 ITALY / 29 July, the 25th International Price to Screenplay Sergio Amidei, Gorizia - *Pour le Mistral*
 ITALY / 4 July, Il Cinema Ritrovato, Bologna - three rediscovered films, parts from the *Second Trade Union Film*.
 PORTUGAL / 30 June, Museum Serralves, Porto - ...à *Valparaíso*
 SPAIN / 26 June, Canal Cinemania - *The Spanish Earth*
 PORTUGAL / 13-18 June, Doc's Kingdom, Serpa - seminar for partners of the European Foundation Joris Ivens
 AMSTERDAM / 5 June, Filmmuseum, Amsterdam - *Song of the Rivers*
 GERMANY / 20 May, Beethovenhaus, Bonn - *Rain* (Ivens/Franken) (silent and Eisler-version)
 THE NETHERLANDS / 17 May, Pan Historic Society, Radboud University Nijmegen - Lecture by André Stufkens (EFJ)
 GERMANY / 15 May, Staatstheater Darmstadt, Darmstadt - *Rain* (Ivens/Franken), silent and with live music of Hanns Eisler
 U.S.A. / 14 May, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York - ...à *Valparaíso*
 ITALY / 11 May, Casa del Cinema, Rome - *Italy is not a poor country*
 ITALY / 3 May, Teatro Strehler, Milan - *Italy is not a poor country*
 GERMANY / 26 April, Suhrkamp Verlag - Presentation / publication 'Kompositionen für den Film' (Eisler, Adorno) including a DVD with the *Rain* (Ivens/Franken) version of Eisler (Gall, Meyer 2005).
 BELGIUM / 28-30 March, filmfestival 'Visions on Labour', Filmmuseum / Musée du Cinéma, Brussels - Ivens retrospective - three rediscovered films, parts from the *Second Trade Union Film: On Youth, Struggle and Labor, Railway Construction Zuid-Limburg, Concrete Construction, Philips Radio, New Earth, Borinage* (Ivens/Storck), *The Bridge, Breakers* (Franken) and *Zuiderzee*
 FRANCE / 9-18 March, Cinéma du Réel festival, Paris. Prix Joris Ivens awarded to Xiao Renjia (China) for *Celles qui ont de petits Pieds*.
 U.S.A. / 4 March, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York - *The Bridge*
 ISRAEL / 28 February - 11 March, Cinematheque / Israel Film Archive Jerusalem - Joris Ivens / Marceline Loridan-Ivens retrospective. 28 February: *A tale of the Winá*; 1 March: *The Seine meets Paris, ...a Valparaíso, The Mistral*; 4 March: *The Bridge, Rain* (Ivens/Franken), *Philips Radio*; 6 March: *The 17th Parallel*; 7 March: *The Birch Tree Meadow*; 8 March: *Borinage* (Ivens/Storck), *Indonesia Calling*; 9 March: *The Spanish Earth, The 400 Million*.

Cinematheque Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv - Joris Ivens / Marceline Loridan-Ivens retrospective: 27 March: *A Tale of the Winá*; 1 March: *The Bridge, Rain* (Ivens/Franken), *Philips Radio*; 3 March: *Borinage* (Ivens/Storck), *Indonesia Calling; The Spanish Earth, The 400 Million*; 4 March: *The Seine meets Paris, ...a Valparaíso, The Mistral, The 17th Parallel*; 5 March: *The Birch Tree Meadow*
 Cinematheque Rosh Pina, Rosh Pina - 7 March: *A Tale of the Winá*, *The Spanish Earth*; 11 March: *The Seine meets Paris*
 ISRAEL / 23-26 February, Israel Documentary Filmmakers Forum, Mitzpe Ramon
 Seminar specifically dedicated to Joris Ivens and Marceline Loridan-Ivens with a retrospective and lectures by film scholars and filmmakers. Films: *The Bridge, Rain* (Ivens/Franken), *Philips Radio, Borinage* (Ivens/Storck), *The Spanish Earth, The 400 Million, Indonesia Calling, The Song of the Rivers, ...a Valparaíso, The Mistral, The 17th Parallel, A Tale of the Winá*, *The Birch Tree Meadow*
 15 February-22 May, Musée Picasso, Paris - *The Spanish Earth* (three times per day)
 U.S.A. / 11 February, National Gallery of Art, Washington - *Pour le Mistral*.
 U.S.A. / 9 February, Yale Universiteit, New Haven - *The Seine Meets Paris*
 THE NETHERLANDS / 7 February, Utrechts Architecten Café, Utrecht - *The Bridge*
 U.S.A. / 2-22 February, Museum of Modern Art, New York on location at Washington University - 5 parts of the *Yukong* series: 2 February: *Rehearsal for a Peking Opera, The Drugstore, The Oilfields*. 3 February: *A Woman, a Family*. 4 February: *The Oilfields, Rehearsal for the Peking Opera, The Drugstore*. 6 February: *The Generator Factory*. 8 February: *The Generator Factory, A Woman, a Family*. 22 February: *The Generator Factory*
 GERMANY / 26 January 2006, Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern - *Rain* (Ivens/Franken), silent and with live music by Hanns Eisler
 THE NETHERLANDS / 18 January 2006, LUX, Nijmegen - First screening of a series of "City" films for the Joris Ivens Award Nijmegen 2005
 THE NETHERLANDS / 30 December 2005, Final Nijmegen 2000 years - Screening "City" films Joris Ivens Award Nijmegen 2005 at the Keizer Karel place
 GERMANY / 14 December 2005, Kurzfilm-Surreale, Leipzig - *Rain* (Ivens/Franken)
 THE NETHERLANDS / 8 December 2005, Trytone festival, Amsterdam - three rediscovered films, parts from the *Second Trade Union Film: On Youth, Struggle and Labor, Railway Construction Zuid-Limburg, Concrete Construction* with live music
 THE NETHERLANDS / 8 December 2005, FNV in action, Amsterdam - *Railway Construction Zuid-Limburg*
 THE NETHERLANDS / 6 December 2005, Culturele Kring Malden, Malden - Lecture "Joris Ivens and Nijmegen" by André Stufkens
 THE NETHERLANDS / 2 December 2005, IDFA, Amsterdam - Screening of rediscovered films with live-music performance
 THE NETHERLANDS / 24 November - 4 December, IDFA, Amsterdam. VPRO Joris Ivens Award presented to Adán Aliaga (Spain) for *My Grandmother's House*.

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The photography of Wilhelm Ivens

When Wilhelm Ivens (1849-1904) emigrated from a village near Cologne in Germany to Nijmegen in the Netherlands, only twenty kilometers from the German border on the banks of the river Waal, he couldn't have imagined that he would be the founder of a small dynasty lasting three generations who would have an enormous impact on Dutch photography and film. His son, Kees Ivens, opened the first chain of photography shops in Holland, introducing new equipment, X-ray photography, color photography and other photographic innovations. His grandson Joris became the first Dutch filmmaker to gain an international reputation. When emphasizing that he was an artist, Joris Ivens would refer back to his grandfather, stating that he came from an artistic family. Proof of this will soon be seen in Nijmegen with an indoor and outdoor exhibition, a book and educational program that will reveal the life and oeuvre of Joris Ivens' grandfather.

During the preparations for this event, a number of previously unknown photo albums and photos were discovered. A special chapter in the monograph will be dedicated to the artistic relationship between Wilhelm's photography and Joris' films, showing family treats in both oeuvres. In fact Joris Ivens' decision to become a documentary filmmaker can be regarded as an organic and logical next stage in the development of this family. The three generations give a unique example how one art form – photography - transformed into a new art - cinema.

MUSEUM HET VALKHOF, KELFKENSBOSS 59, NIJMEGEN; FROM MARCH 24TH UNTIL AUGUST 12TH 2007. ORGANISATION: MUSEUM HET VALKHOF, EUROPEAN FOUNDATION JORIS IVENS, REGIONAL ARCHIVES NIJMEGEN. 'WILHELM IVENS, PHOTOGRAPHER', BNM PUBLISHERS € 24, 95

Wilhelm Ivens, Kronenburgerpark, 1890, Coll. Regional Archives Nijmegen

Wilhelm Ivens, Sint Annastraat, w.d., Coll. Regional Archives Nijmegen

Wilhelm Ivens, Panoramic View on Nijmegen, 1880, Coll. Regional Archives Nijmegen



short cuts

Joris Ivens place and street

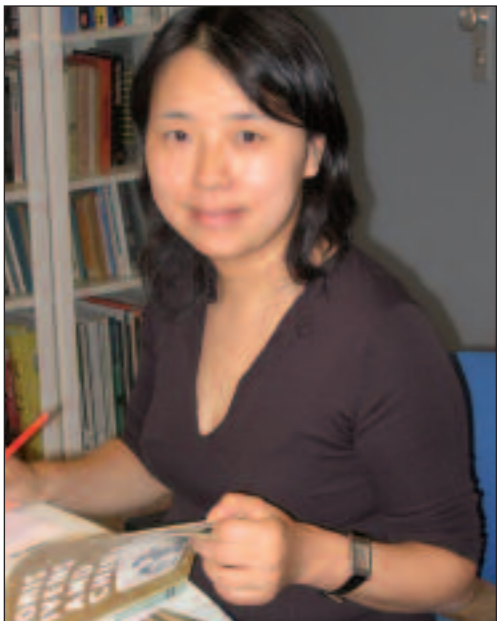


In the newly built quarter of IJburg in Amsterdam, located by the harbour, streets are named after photographers and filmmakers. Joris Ivens Street and Joris Ivens Place are surrounded by a Johan van der Keukenstreet, a Bert Haanstraquay and a Daguerrestreet.

Photo Henk and Arthur de Smidt

Yukong a source for researchers

ChunlanZhao, a Chinese student living in Belgium, wrote a dissertation about urban development and urban-rural settlement in the Peoples Republic of China between the 1950's and 1980's. The documentary *How Yukong Moved the Mountains* (1976) by Ivens/Loridan proved to be an unexpected source of documentation for her research. The long, spontaneous conversations from men and women on daily life presented opinions never before seen or found elsewhere. The unique way of filming and the open minded way of approaching the people in front of the camera resulted in films that were completely different from Chinese state films of that era. 'As revealed in *A Petrol field: Daqing*, many wives were proud to talk about their activities in



home building and farming. When building activities had been traditionally perceived as man's job only, it became a vital practice and experience for these women to prove their potentials and capacities.'

Zuiderzeewerken



Mr. Jan de Heij, a film collector, provided the foundation with a new print, an unknown version of *Zuiderzeewerken* probably released in the 1950's by the Amsterdam School Bioscoop, an educational institution presenting films in schools. The version was re-edited to give a didactic idea of the technological creation of these large works to defend Holland against a flood and reclaim new land. According to Mr. De Heij, the voice-over for this originally silent film was provided by Dr. C. Van Rijsinghe, a well know publicist, lecturer on radio broadcasting and a marvellous teacher.

Filmmuseum 60 (1946-2006)

The Netherlands Filmmuseum was founded on 22 July 1946, right after the war, at a time when the hunger to watch films was bigger then ever before or after. Piet Meerburg and Paul Kijzer, very much aware of the importance of preserving old films, founded a historical film archive, for which they asked Jan de Vaal (1922-2001) to be the manager. Without a single film, without money or a place to work Jan de Vaal started creating a film archive. He was passionate, devoted to film art, and had little time for either the film industry or the authorities, who did not show any interest in preservation of films. Despite these unfavourable circumstances, the unrelenting Jan de Vaal headed the Filmmuseum for forty years, and created an institution with collections of international prestige, like the Desmet Collection, the Joris Ivens collection, the films

from the Dutch East Indies, and the film poster collection of early films. Thousands of film treasures were saved by Jan de Vaal, despite never receiving the budgets he asked for from the ministry. An estimate: Jan de Vaal left the Filmmuseum 15 million meters of film, 250.000 photos, 40.000 film posters and 1.100 objects. Besides acquisition and preservation, Jan de Vaal organized innovative film programs, inspired film scholars and organized meetings of and for Dutch film fans. 'Loyalty was his greatest characteristic', wrote filmmaker Johan van der Keuken; 'Solid like a rock', said Marion Michelle; 'totally devoted and professional', wrote Amos Vogel; 'Courageous', said Joris Ivens; 'He was the soul of the cinematheque', wrote Henri Storck; and Madeleine Malthête-Méliès remembered: 'Only thanks to his perseverance the Filmmuseum survived'.

According to Prof. Dr. Bert Hogenkamp, film historian, and André Stufkens, director of the Ivens Foundation, the Filmmuseum should honor Jan de Vaal by naming the library and study center after him, dedicate a special film program to him and publish a serious history of the Filmmuseum. Hogenkamp and Stufkens issued a press release in July 2006 to draw attention to what they see as an oversight. They believe that as long as the Filmmuseum, supposedly the guardian of Dutch film history, is not able to deal with its own history, and cannot take an objective and serious approach towards the pioneering role of Jan de Vaal, it will continue to have a big problem.

Joris Ivens and Jan de Vaal, 1971.

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THE

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