

THE

ivens

MAGAZINE

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EUROPEAN FOUNDATION JORIS IVENS

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110TH ANNIVERSARY JORIS IVENS
110
SPECIAL ISSUE





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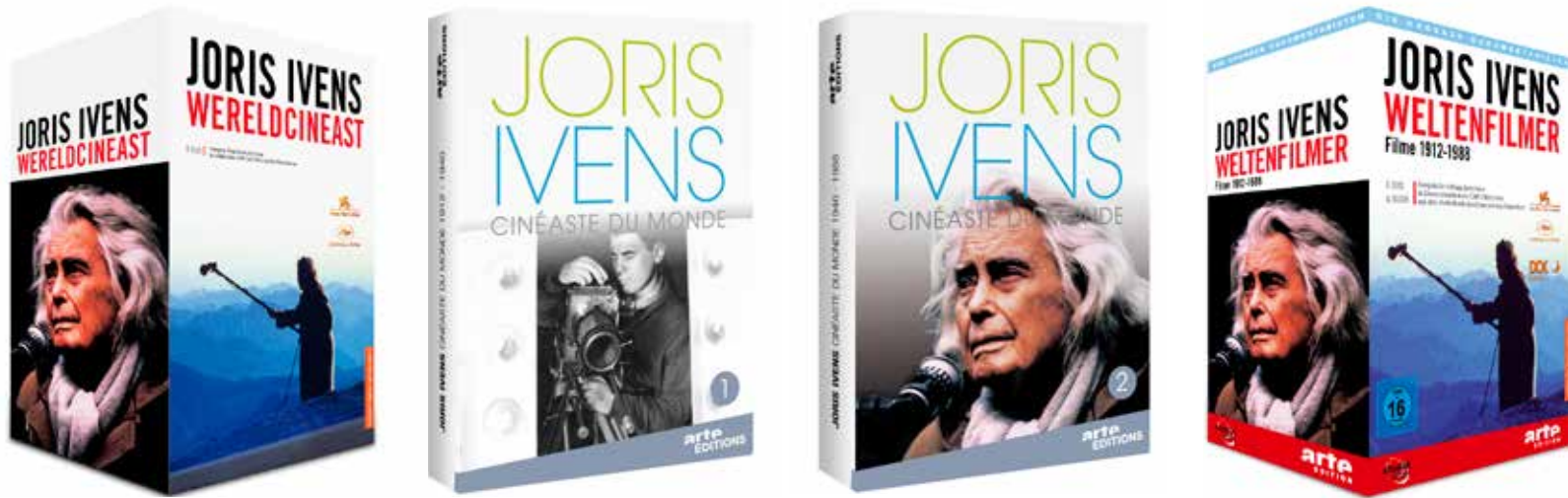
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THE FILMS OF JORIS IVENS

AFTER A THOROUGH DIGITAL RESTORATION

The European DVD-box set release



ANDRÉ STUFKENS

'WHEN YOU WATCH THE FILMS, I HOPE YOU PUT JORIS IVENS IN YOUR HART'. WITH THESE WORDS MARCELINE LORIDAN-IVENS PRESENTED THE JORIS IVENS DVD-BOX TO THE AUDIENCE ON 18 NOVEMBER 2008 IN NIJMEGEN, EXACTLY 110 YEARS AFTER JORIS IVENS WAS BORN IN THAT CITY. 'I WAS HOPING FOR THIS RELEASE FOR MANY YEARS, AND I'M GLAD THAT TODAY THE COLLECTION HAS BEEN COMPLETED'. FINALLY, AFTER FIVE YEARS OF PAINSTAKING RESEARCH AND RESTORATION, 15 HOURS OF IVENS' FILMS BECAME AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC. THIS EVENT WAS THE STARTING POINT OF AN INTERNATIONAL RELEASE, WITH DVD EDITIONS IN THE NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM, FRANCE, NORTH AMERICA, GERMANY, SWITZERLAND AND AUSTRIA, AND WITH RETROSPECTIVES, DEBATES AND SYMPOSIA IN NIJMEGEN, BEIJING, AMSTERDAM, ROTTERDAM, PARIS, NICOSIA, NEW YORK AND LEIPZIG. TOGETHER WITH THE FILMS, AN EXTENSIVE NEW BOOK ABOUT JORIS IVENS WAS PUBLISHED AS WELL. THE DVD COLLECTION IS THE RESULT OF A COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN FOUNDATION JORIS IVENS, WHICH PRODUCED THE BOX, CAPI FILMS IN PARIS, AND THE FILMMUSEUM IN AMSTERDAM.

NIJMEGEN

André Stufkens, director of the Ivens Foundation and curator of the DVD collection, said during the presentation: 'In his lifetime, the films of Ivens were seen by many millions, and since then they have become part of film history, and they continue to be screened at numerous film festivals all over the world. I'm very pleased that with the release of this box-set, the films of Joris Ivens will finally be available to everybody'. 700 film copies have been extensively researched in numerous collections all over the world, and great care has been taken to find or restore every film to its (most) authentic state. Even of such a short film like *Regen / Rain* (1929), 38 copies and 11 different versions are in existence, making the reconstruction of the original version a complex and painstaking task. Bouke Vahl, head of the audio-visual company Edit'B has, together with his colleague Ozan Olçay, worked intensively for the last two years on the digital restoration of the material, a mammoth task entailing a total of 600.000 manual corrections. To shed some

1 Joris Ivens DVD-boxes
in the Netherlands (Just),
France (Arte) and Germany/
Austria (absolut Medien)
Design: Walter van Rooij
an Arte-Editions

Nijmegen, 18 November 2008,
LUX Theater,
© Storm Stufkens:
2 Jan Roelofs presenting
the panel with José-Manuel
Costa, Bert Hogenkamp,
Peter van Bueren, Michael
Chanan and Tom Gunning.
3 André Stufkens hands
over the first Joris Ivens
DVD box to Marceline
Loridan-Ivens
4 Marceline Loridan-Ivens
thanking the audience



1 Marceline Loridan-Ivens and Serge Toubiana presenting the box at the Cinémathèque Française on March 5th 2009

Nijmegen 19 November 2008, Seminar at the Arsenal © Storm Stufkens:
2 Edgar Reitz, Marceline Loridan-Ivens, José-Manuel Costa, Tom Gunning, Michael Chanan, Bert Hogenkamp and André Stufkens in Nijmegen.
3 View on the seminar lunch in Nijmegen
4 Marceline Loridan-Ivens and Sylvain De Bleckere
5 The Ivens-Nooteboom Family

Paris, March 5th at the Cinémathèque Française © Storm Stufkens
6 Audience waiting for French release at the CF
7 Adrienne Fréjacques, Marceline Loridan-Ivens, André Stufkens and Serge Toubiana on stage at CF
8 Richard Leacock attending the opening event at the CF
9 André Stufkens talking with Lily and Philips Freriks

light on this complex work, a short documentary highlighting the restoration process is included as a bonus in the DVD collection.

SEMINAR

During a debate between Marceline Loridan-Ivens, German filmmaker Edgar Reitz (of the acclaimed *Heimat*-series), film scholars Tom Gunning (University of Chicago), Michael Chanan (University of Roehampton) and José-Manuel Costa (University of Lisbon), the importance of Ivens' film oeuvre, as well as his personal influence, were discussed.

Edgar Reitz referred to *Heimat 2*, which contains a short sequence where the protagonist puts a rose on Ivens' grave in the Parisian cemetery where he is buried.

Edgar Reitz: 'When we were shooting *Heimat 2*, in the middle of work, we received word of Ivens' death. I was completely shocked, and I cancelled filming for that day. Instead, I told my staff and my team how I first met Joris Ivens and Marceline...'

The next day a seminar further explored Ivens' work, including lectures by Reitz, Gunning, Chanan and Bert Hogenkamp (University of Utrecht) and Sylvain de Bleckere (University of Hasselt). Two lectures are published in this magazine (see page 6-10)

AMSTERDAM

A few days later the box was presented in Amsterdam, during the IDFA (International Documentary Film Festival) to four women: Marceline Loridan-Ivens, Tineke de Vaal, Ally Derks and Sandra den Hamer. When André Stufkens handed over the DVD box to Ally Derks, director of IDFA, she said: 'I'm very proud that IDFA has named the festival's main award for the international competition after Joris Ivens. Without any doubt we will continue to do so with even more pride in the future'. Sandra den Hamer, director of the Filmmuseum, which organised an extensive retrospective of Ivens' films, underlined the collaboration between the Filmmuseum's archive and the Ivens Foundation.

PARIS

In March of this year, the Cinémathèque Française (CF) in Paris also held an extensive Ivens retrospective, showing 50 of his films and spanning almost his entire career. This event coincided with the release of the French edition of the Ivens DVD collection by ARTE Éditions. Before an audience

that filled the entire Henri Langlois Hall Serge Toubiana, director of the CF, remembered the words he wrote when Ivens died in 1989: 'Some day we will look at all his films again as pebble stones on the road to History, and make up the balance. For one thing is certain: until his final breath, this man didn't renounce cinema. And now it's time to see his films again, an oeuvre of documentaries that is dense and crucial, covering a large part of the 20th century'. The presentation was attended by Marceline Loridan-Ivens and Richard Leacock. André Stufkens thanked Adrienne Fréjacques, head of ARTE Éditions, for the collaboration to make a perfect French version of the Ivens DVD collection.

A few weeks later a debate was held by the CF on the Yukong-series, and the Institut Néerlandais in Paris organised an evening honouring Ivens' film oeuvre.



REVIEWS

- 'Watching Ivens is watching the birth of the creative documentary...The bulky book that is released together with the box appears essential for the true appreciation of Ivens' work: next to the production process, the structure, context and audience- and critical reception of each film is thoroughly discussed. ****'

- Kevin Toma *Horen & Zien, De Volkskrant*, 27 November 2008

- In the Top Ten of Best DVD Releases of 2008, the DVD box collection 'Joris Ivens – Wereldcineast' ranks at no. 4, behind The Stanley Kubrick Collection, Disney's Pixar Ultimate Collection and Cristian Mungiu's feature *4 Months, 3 Weeks & 2 Days*, and is therefore the highest ranking Dutch DVD product

- Jan Pieter Ekker, *De Volkskrant*, 27 November 2008

- 'The DVD box' book is of the highest quality and based on sources that are aptly relevant to topicality.'

- Herman Veenhof, *Nederlands Dagblad*, 6 January 2009

- 'It is truly terrific that this wonderful box-set, containing 5 DVD's and a book on Ivens, only costs €49.95. It makes the work of this groundbreaking cineaste accessible [to a wide audience] and will surely contribute to the enduring legacy of Ivens' name. The films have all been carefully restored and the bonus materials add exceptional value. For every film lover this box-set is a must-have.'

- Lars van der Las, *FOKI.nl*, 4 February 2009



- The Joris Ivens DVD collection has been nominated for the II Cinema Ritrovato DVD Award 2009 in Bologna.

- 'The beauty of the DVD medium is that each disc can store multiple versions. While watching *Rain*, one can choose either the music that Lou Lichtveld made for the sound version in 1932, or the score by German composer Hanns Eisler.'

- André Waardenburg, *NRC*, 19 November 2008

- 'Each film in the DVD-box has been carefully preserved and digitally restored. The optional Dutch and English subtitles appear on screen in a well-suited and readable typeface. The sound tracks are, apart from a slight hiss and a few ticks, undamaged. The music, commentary voices and dialogues flow in a clear sound from the speakers. The most valued extra that is contained in the *Joris Ivens - Wereldcineast* DVD-box, is the accompanying book of more than 500 pages by André Stufkens. Every film that has been included in the collection is discussed extensively, in which the author addresses aspects such as content, film production, context, Ivens' film language and meaning, audience- and critical reception of the films and quotes from reviews. The book offers a thorough and detailed insight into Ivens' oeuvre.'

- Guido Franken, *NeerlandsFilmdoek.nl*, 24 January 2009

1 Edgar Reitz and Marceline Loridan-Ivens, Nijmegen 18 November © Storm Stufkens

2 The audience waiting for the opening event at the CF, Paris March 5th

Amsterdam, presentation at IDFA, Tuschinski, 21 November © Arthur de Smidt

1 Claude Brunel, Henk de Smidt, Ally Derks, Marceline Loridan-Ivens

2 The reception at Tuschinski

3 Tineke de Vaal receives the box during the opening speech by André Stufkens

4 Sandra den Hamer receives the box during the opening speech by André Stufkens

Paris, debate on March 15th © Storm Stufkens

1-2 The panel, with moderator Serge Toubiana, participants from right to left: Adrienne Fréjacques, Claude Brunel, Jean-Paul Dollé, Serge Toubiana, Marceline Loridan-Ivens, Jean Pierre Sergent, André Stufkens, Peter de Rijck (Institut Néerlandais).

3 Marie Storck and Marceline Loridan-Ivens

4 Alberto del Fabro, curator of the Joris Ivens retrospective of 50 Ivens films at the CF



JORIS IVENS 110

‘As the 21th century gains an identity, the previous century must come into focus as offering both warning and promise’



TOM GUNNING

“ON THIS 110 ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF JORIS IVENS, WE STAND NEARLY A DECADE INTO A NEW CENTURY. WE HAVE ENTERED THE PORTAL OF A NEW ERA, WITH A NEW MANDATE, ESPECIALLY JUST RECENTLY IN MY COUNTRY, WHERE I AM PROUD TO SAY MY CHICAGO HYDE PARK NEIGHBOR AND FORMER UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO COLLEAGUE BARACK OBAMA HAS TAKEN OVER THE LEADERSHIP OF OUR GOVERNMENT, ENDING AN ERA OF SHAME. ALBEIT ARMED WITH NEW HOPE, WE ALL FACE A TIME OF ECONOMIC CRISIS, TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND INTERNATIONAL DIVISIONS. IT IS AN ERA THAT I THINK IVENS WOULD RECOGNIZE AS SIMILAR TO HIS OWN IN MANY WAYS. WHAT SENSE CAN WE MAKE OF THIS WORLD AND WHAT TOOLS DO WE POSSESS TO HELP US? AS A HISTORIAN OF THE CINEMA, I PLACE A SKEPTICAL, BUT HOPEFUL, FAITH IN TWO THINGS. FIRST, THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR TECHNOLOGIES OF VISION AND SOUND AND THE POSSIBILITY THEY OFFER FOR RENEWING OUR PERCEPTION AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD. BUT WE HAVE LEARNED THAT TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS NEVER SOLVES PROBLEMS ON ITS OWN, AND INDEED CAN RATHER SERVE TO FURTHER THREATEN, CONTROL OR DECEIVE US. THEREFORE I ALSO PLACE MY HOPES IN THE KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE PAST ON WHICH A CRITICAL APPROACH TO THE ROLE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES DEPENDS. AS THE TWENTIETH-FIRST CENTURY GAINS AN IDENTITY, THE PREVIOUS CENTURY MUST COME INTO FOCUS AS OFFERING BOTH WARNING AND PROMISE.

The last century enacted dramas of hope and betrayal, of extraordinary technological progress and unbelievable barbarism – with the one often enabling the other. Cinema may have offered, as pioneer figures such as D.W. Griffith once claimed, the possibility of an international language laying a new foundation for peace and understanding between nations. But cinema, in its participation in policies of war and genocide, may also have already, as more recently figures such as Jean Luc Godard have maintained, fundamentally betrayed the possibilities it offered. From the origins of film at the turn of the twentieth century, filmmakers and theorists recognized a profound connection between cinema and history. Film, it was claimed, could record history - and indeed the twentieth century was the first century to be filmed. Cinema therefore stands as the witness to the promise and turmoil of the last century. But, beyond bearing witness, cinema also helped form the twentieth century. The camera, as filmmakers like Joris Ivens demonstrated, is not simply an instrument of passive recording and distanced contemplation. Ivens and other pioneer filmmakers forced the camera to penetrate reality, intervening in the actual flow of life, capturing its rhythms in the process of editing and splicing together the disparate places of the world, functioning as a tool and a weapon.

Ivens was born almost exactly at the moment of cinema's emergence and cinema intertwined with his life from childhood on, as the filmmaker and his medium shaped each other over a long lifetime. Years later he titled his autobiography *The Camera and I*. One could claim not only that Ivens and the movie camera grew up together, but that Ivens symbiotically fused with his camera. Perhaps more importantly, Ivens used the film medium to create modern modes

of perception that allowed his audiences to understand the twentieth century and conceive of new modes of inhabiting it. Ivens made his first experimental films at the end of the 1920's, the most innovative and exciting decade in the history of the cinema, when film began to fashion itself self-consciously as a modern art form and to intervene in the political and social struggles of the new century. As Dziga Vertov proclaimed, filming the modern world demanded that the camera leave the artificial environment of the film studio in order to dive into life itself. The cameraman, as Vertov and Ivens both demonstrated, must walk in rhythm with life, inhabiting and analyzing the new modern environments of city streets, the railway, the factory and the political demonstration.

As a machine itself, the camera 'understood' the new world of technology. The opening of Ivens' first masterpiece *The Bridge* juxtaposes this mechanical eye with the titanic structures of the railway and the mechanical bridge. Rather than simply celebrating the power and scale of this industrial structure, Ivens' vision, embodied in the camera and the edited film, breaks down the bridge's construction and displays its unique rhythms. This mobile and mechanical eye moves cannily within a modern technological environment, at home in the task of conveying its power and logic; but the cinema also literally *incorporates* this modern power and logic, making them palpable for the human body and perception. Ivens' mastery of cinema's embodied participation in a new world develops in practice the theoretical discussions and filmic experiments of filmmakers as diverse as Vertov and Jean Epstein. If less ambitious than the broad political vision of Vertov or Epstein's philosophical exploration of the interweaving of matter and consciousness,

Ivens' cinema probes more deeply into the specific places and processes of the twentieth century, dwelling on the intensities of specific situations and the gestures of labor devoted to defined tasks. Epstein sought a new form of visual abstraction and Vertov portrayed the new type of proletarian existence the revolution promised, but Ivens burrowed into each specific context, seeking the unique face of Belgian strikers in *Borinage*, or Chinese soldiers in *The Four Hundred Million*. This rooting of cinematic observation in the details of physical engagement in the modern world may constitute Ivens' most enduring contribution.

One could claim that Ivens' filmmaking operates between two registers. The political activism of Ivens' films can never be ignored; but the political nature of these films relies on their simultaneous engagement with modern environments (factories, systems of transportation, mass organizations of labor and politics, modern warfare and revolution) and their attention to the familiar rhythms of everyday life. Ivens' cinema employs a profound dialectic. On the one hand, it displays an affinity for the mechanical, for the power and precision of technology, a cinematic fascination found in many other filmmakers of the twenties. On the other hand, not even Robert Flaherty more lovingly documented the gestures of manual labor, the skill involved in traditional crafts, from baking bread to weaving fiber sandals, the gait of people walking in city streets or of peasants working in the fields. But for Ivens these modern technologies and these traditional actions belong to the same world. While for Flaherty and some other early documentarians the tasks of handicraft represented a vanishing pre-industrial world that the cinema must preserve, Ivens' cinema reveals these traditional gestures deeply imbedded in the modern world. The energies of modernity and physical labor for Ivens are not inherently opposed. Spanish peasants fitting together an irrigation trough are participating in the modernization of their environment, while the glass blowers in the Philips factory demonstrate artisan skills in concert with the industrial order of production. The solidarity of the working class is founded in the common physical rhythms of cooperation evident in Ivens' films of groups involved in construction, mass meetings, or even military training. While these processes of discipline may have a coercive force in some circumstances, Ivens more typically shows them as the basis of community, participation in a common task, the physical basis of working together.

If the common rhythms of group effort and machines typifies the editing strategies of filmmakers of 20's and 30's in a variety of modes from the Socialists (Vertov and Dovzhenko), Fascists (Leni Riefenstahl and late films by Walter Ruttmann), and even Hollywood (King Vidor's *Our Daily Bread*), Ivens uniquely endows such processes with an embodied sense of hand and body, making them into ballets of grasping and shaping, lifting and carrying. Modern mass movement in both entertainment and politics often fused individual bodies into the composite that Siegfried Kraauer called 'the mass ornament,' typified by the precision choreography of the musical hall performers the Tiller Girls (and eventually the carefully drilled crowds of the Nuremberg rallies and Maoist May First celebrations). But Ivens avoids coalescing the groups he filmed into a single entity by always providing a sense of individual embodiment, of the coordination of individual skill and grace into a community more than an ornament.

Ivens' films of warfare effect us less with their images of artillery or troops movement (although these images appear, continuing his theme of man's relation to modern technology) or even their recording of atrocities, than by revealing the way modern warfare descends onto civilian

life, and even more essentially the way everyday life continues to function within an environment of death as a daily threat. From the streets of Madrid or Shanghai in the 30's to the underground tunnels of North Vietnam in the 60's, Ivens discovered a modern world of total mobilization in which the distinction between soldier and civilian, habitat and battlefield disappeared. The bombing of cities and villages explode domestic spaces into public view as daily life encounters daily death. Ivens' films capture the process of gathering and eating food, finding shelter, or the chillingly undramatic process of retrieving the bodies of air raid victims. Even sensational newsreel footage of carnage becomes, when integrated into Ivens' films, an aspect of the process of survival rather than simply a journalistic display of atrocity. The political commitment of Ivens' cinema rested on fundamental belief that the rhythms of life persist, have power and take precedence over the maneuvers of power. One might, (and perhaps should) critique this faith on political grounds. Cinema's power as propaganda rests partly on placing its inherent powers in the service of a specific message, and Ivens' political commitments sometime used cinema in this manner. But this ability to communicate does not exhaust the power of these films. Their por-

The political commitment of Ivens' cinema rested on fundamental belief that the rhythms of life persist, have power and take precedence over the maneuvers of power.

trayal of the rhythms of life in the struggle against death exceeds any specific message they can be made to convey (e.g. *The Four Hundred Million*'s apparent support of Chiang Kai-shek).

Beyond whatever argument one might derive from Ivens' films (or that he intended them to carry - and identifying these can be difficult, since even Ivens changed his mind about the meanings his images were intended to convey), I believe that his films pioneered a mode of historical knowledge that is not restricted to arguments that could be translated into words. Ivens' cinema never rested in passive observation, but intervened in the world, penetrating the processes of modern life, grabbing hold of it in an attempt to change it. In other words, these films go beyond the resources of the eye or of surface visibility (or of ornament). Ivens' pioneering work with the handheld camera (whose image has a privileged place in the opening of *The Bridge*) marked his essential attitude towards the cinema. Although Ivens certainly did not restrict himself to handheld filming, the mobility of his cinematic point of view and identification with the filmmaker's body established principles for all his work. (It is significant that Ivens' argument with Chinese officials in *A Tale of the Wind* revolves around their restriction of the view points from which he could film the ceramic army of Emperor Qin.) Ivens used the camera



Michael Chanan and Tom Gunning
© Storm Stufkens

less as a portable keyhole of observation than a handheld tool that groped its way into the landscapes, people and things before it. Thus Ivens approached the cinema as labor, as a process able to recognize and inhabit a world in which the people he filmed also used their own tools and their hands to engage in a common physical task of remaking the world. Beyond propaganda, Ivens created a cinema of the hand and body. (The hand it as motif reaches a climax in the Ivens' and Loridan's testament film *A Tale of the Wind*, especially in the images of the Buddha of Dazu and his thousand hands – hands that significantly bear an eye in their palm, and in Ivens' explanation to the Chinese child that although they speak different languages they share 'the language of the hand.')

That Ivens' films often carried messages cannot be denied. But at this point in history it is less their arguments than the world they portray that endures for us. It is there that their honesty lies, not in terms of historical veracity, but in capturing those aspects of life – movement, urgency, skill, grace – that motion pictures alone could convey in all their vividness. Let me emphasize, however, that the independence of these films from any specific argument does not indicate a separation of the aesthetic from the political. On the contrary, I would maintain that it is in their portrayal of the world of everyday survival and labor that Ivens' films are most political.

Ivens emerged from the avant-garde experiments of the late twenties and early thirties, the sort of experimental film-making exhibited by The Film Liga, the Dutch independent film society that Ivens helped found. But Ivens transformed this tradition as much as he drew on it. Rather than primarily conceiving of cinema as an art form, Ivens thought of it as experimental process, an investigation. Besides associating cinema with a scientific tradition, the term experiment defines film as a process rather than a product and Ivens' first films sometimes did not even reach a final form for public exhibition. The experimental film that marked one of Ivens' first forays into the cinema (beyond this childhood Indian adventure film, *The Wigwam*), *The Ik Film*, experimented with subjective filmmaking through literal identification of the camera with the point of view of the filmmaker (and therefore viewer). Although apparently conceived as a fiction film, the drive behind this experiment for Ivens and his collaborator Hans Van Meerten lay in making the camera participate in the action rather than maintain a position of outside observation. In a previous essay I placed Ivens' work (and this experiment specifically) within a long Dutch tradition of fascination with optics and optical devices. But this highlights only one side of Ivens' discovery of cinema. The footage shot for the *Ik Film* (which has not survived) apparently disappointed the filmmakers since on the screen this mobile optical point of view seemed unsteady and caused the viewer to become dizzy. Rather than anchoring the viewer in the world, this camera eye seemed to float vertiginously through space, as if disembodied. I would claim that Ivens' work strove to find a way to realize this early im-

pulse to base cinema in the drama of perceiving the world through a physical embodiment in action and labor. The eye must be supplemented by the hand (or, as with the Buddha of Dazu, the hand must contain an eye, hold a vision); and, even more, the body must be located within a physical and social world of action. The failure of the *Ik film* taught Ivens that a human point of view could not be restricted to optics alone. The camera's representation of human perception was not simply visual, but involved a bodily orientation, and that implies a social orientation as well.

Another early film experiment that Ivens undertook in collaboration with Mannus Franken whose footage does survive (although it was apparently never shown publicly as a finished work), *Etude des Mouvements* shot in Paris in 1928 highlights the complex context of Ivens' entrance into cinema. On the one hand as a *study* of motion, the film accents the approach to cinema as investigative tool, a culmination of the tradition of chronophotography of Muybridge and Marey. But *Etude* also carries an aesthetic connotation, invoking the explorations that musicians and painters offer of their media. Clearly this film does not gather scientific data useful to physics or physiology. The film consists of images of automobile traffic in Parisian streets edited rhythmically. In some ways it is a preparation for Ivens' later much more complex exploration of the ability of the techniques of the cinema (both filming and editing) to capture a modern mobile environment in *The Bridge*. At the same time one can't help feel lurking within this film a modern sense of space as exciting, varied, but also dangerous. While the cameraman as a human being negotiating a physical relation to this constant flow of motion remains invisible, it serves, I think, as a structuring absence. We sense the all too human invasion of this space of rapidly moving machines. Ivens inherited from 20's experimental film a new task in which cinema no longer was seen simply as a means of recording the world or arranging fictional dramas, but rather as a new mode of exploration and discovery. This project of discovery Ivens soon realized meant using the formal properties of film to explore the modern world, to take a role in constructing and understanding it. This meant not only recording movement but reaching into the world, shaping it with the tools of the cinema the language that merges the hand with the eye.

Rather famously, when Ivens introduced his film *The Spanish Earth* in Hollywood he emphasized that the cinema could not include everything. For example, Ivens described with intense physical detail the pain of being hit by a bullet to his audience, but he confessed that the film of a wounded man could only convey the sensation indirectly. He also added, 'There are some things that we could not get in. The way the ground rocks and sways under your belly and against your forehead when the big bombs fall. That does not show.' Nonetheless, it was Ivens' mission as a filmmaker to attempt to make such physical sensations 'show', not simply as sensations, but as an orientation towards the world, the encounter between a vulnerable human body and a concrete physical world, and the impact of technology as the force of history and politics. These are never simply aesthetic and formal concerns, but Ivens' cinema also went beyond a plea for specific action. In our new century the further development of new visual and aural media and their systems of distribution must take up again the experimental pathway in order to use this new technology as a tool for understanding and transforming the world. The dangers and promises of the next century will be embodied in the way we use these new media.

”

POLITICS OF DOCUMENTARY

‘documentary is ready to take up the political challenge because politics is in its genes’



“ WE ARE HERE TO CELEBRATE THE WORK OF JORIS IVENS, AND IN PARTICULAR TO LAUNCH UPON A WORLD WHICH SADLY DOESN'T KNOW THAT IT NEEDS THEM, A SET OF DVDS OF SOME OF HIS MAJOR FILMS. I WOULD LIKE TO FOCUS HERE ON A SET OF PROBLEMS ABOUT THIS ENDEAVOUR, WHICH SUCH A REVIVAL IS ALWAYS LIABLE TO PRODUCE, BUT IN THIS CASE IS PERHAPS PARTICULARLY ACUTE. I REFER TO THE POLITICAL NATURE OF THE WORK, WHICH WILL UNDOUBTEDLY PRESENT CERTAIN DIFFICULTIES IN AGE WHICH HAS FORGOTTEN THE PROMISES OF COMMUNISM AND REMEMBERS ONLY ITS FAILURES. IN PARTICULAR, I SHOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS, ALBEIT INDIRECTLY, THE POSSIBLE MISINTERPRETATION OF THE REVIVAL OF THESE FILMS AS A CASE OF NOSTALGIA. I WANT TO INSIST, FIRST OF ALL, THAT IN THE HOMAGE TO JORIS WHICH I'M DELIGHTED TO SHARE WITH EVERYONE HERE, THERE IS NOTHING AT ALL NOSTALGIC, BUT ONLY A DESIRE TO SHARE THE EXAMPLE OF A FILM-MAKER WHOM I HAVE ALWAYS REGARDED AS A PAST-MASTER OF A CRAFT WHICH IN A MUCH SMALLER WAY, I ALSO CLAIM AS MY OWN.

MICHAEL CHANAN

One of the themes which emerged yesterday - everyone seems to be agreed upon it - is that documentary is not objective. I concur, but I'd like to introduce some riders. The first is that I have my doubts that Joris would have agreed quite so readily. He would at least have wanted to qualify the proposition. After all, he was wedded to a materialist conception of the world, dialectical materialist to be precise, and stemming from this, a realist aesthetic which saw the camera as a recording instrument, albeit subject to the poetic, and just as important, ideological instincts of the film-maker. Hence his criticisms of the work of the Grierson school in Britain, when he said, for example, about *Housing Problems*: 'If the British films had been sponsored directly by social organisations fighting the bad housing conditions instead of by a gas company, they would have closed in on such dramatic reality as rent strikes and protest movements.' The issue is not that what *Housing Problems* shows isn't true because it isn't objective, but that what it shows is the result of certain ideological choices. What it shows is a half-truth, and the problem with half-truths is that they tend to show the wrong half.

On the other hand, Ivens would have agreed that a watertight definition of documentary is effectively impossible – many people have tried to provide one and they all come unstuck, Grierson included; although if you must have such a definition, then Grierson's 'creative treatment of actuality' is as good as any. However, it would be better to think of documentary in the same way that Wittgenstein taught us to think of forms of life like games, which come in families and are related by family resemblance. (In this scenario, it's perfectly possible to have two grandchildren who both resemble a common grandparent but look nothing like each other.) One of the troubles with the attempt at defining documen-

tary is that often a film comes along which breaks the rules while clearly remaining documentary - this was true, for example, of *Chronicle of a Summer*. That is to say, the rule-breaking film remains rooted in socio-historical reality. This I would say is true of much of Joris's oeuvre, and this has important implications.

He himself expressed this problem in his own way - also referred to yesterday - when he said in his autobiography that documentary is a creative no-man's land, an interloper in the genre system. This is also to say that documentary tends to escape the control of the studios; or maybe they don't like it precisely because it deals in reality. Think of it this way: When you stage a fiction, in the studio or on location, you are suspending time and date and entering a temporality corresponding to the narrative to which the scene belongs. When you film a documentary, what you capture in the camera is a moment grabbed from the day and time given by the calendar and the clock - although of course it's true that this is frequently manipulated, and often obscured in the course of editing to fit the temporality demanded by the argument of the film.

Joris's last film is not just a personal quest, but a metaphor for the documentary endeavour.

What this means is that while we've become suspicious of the claim that documentary is objective, this doesn't mean that in the end there is no difference between documentary and fiction, or that documentary is only a special form of fiction, whatever Godard has claimed. The question, then, is not how to define the beast, but how to understand what makes it different from fiction.

Michael Chanan, detail
© Storm Stufkens

Tom Gunning
© Storm Stufkens



Tom Gunning is a Professor in the Art Department and the Cinema and Media Committee at the University of Chicago. Author of *D. W. Griffith and the Origins of American Narrative Film* and *The Films of Fritz Lang: Allegories of Modernity and Vision*, he has written numerous essays on early and international silent cinema, and on the development of later American cinema, in terms of Hollywood genres and directors as well as the avant-garde film. In 1989 he published the famous *The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde*. In 2002 he wrote 'Joris Ivens, Filmmaker of the 20th century, of The Netherlands and of The World' for the catalogue of the US Ivens film tour. In March 2009 Gunning was the first film scholar to receive the Distinguished Achievement Award from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for realizing the project 'Poetics of the Moving Image'.

Michael Chanan, José-Manuel Costa, Tom Gunning © Storm Stufkens



This question, I believe, hangs on the role of documentary in the public sphere. If the public sphere is the arena of free speech, the network of dialogue in which public opinion is formed and those in authority are held to account, then the history of documentary – first its exclusion from the cinemas, and then the split between television and independent documentary – is a clear demonstration that this is not a single and unitary space of free and equal debate, but a network of parallel and overlapping zones, often of limited extension, and with unequal access to the mainstream forms of publication and broadcasting.

In other words, there are central media and peripheral ones, and documentary is clearly peripheral. But these zones are not disconnected, they overlap and rub off on each other. The small publics of the latter often consist in the most active members of civil society, organised in trades unions, campaigns and pressure groups, nowadays often employing their own publicity officers and political lobbyists to create a presence in the wider arena. Ivens was a pioneer precisely in working with groups like these.

In short, the mainstream media which serve both the state and civil society as the central means of communication are never entirely closed off, but on the contrary, always to some degree permeable to ideas and opinions arising in the interstices, the margins and from below. Documentary is one of the forms through which new attitudes enter wider circulation, through the form of its advocacy and the articulation of the social actors who participate as subjects.

Moreover, documentary is ready to take up the political challenge because politics is in its genes, though not always expressed. But the documentary camera is always pointing directly at the social and the anthropological. These are spaces where the lifeworld is dominated, controlled and shaped by power and authority, sometimes visible, mostly invisible but often palpable. The problem for the documentary then is how to render the invisible in visible form (also alluded to yesterday). In this sense, Joris's last film is not just a personal quest, but a metaphor for the documentary endeavour.

Finally, this also means that documentary addresses itself to the spectator quite differently from fiction. Fiction

movies, inheriting the narrative paradigms of nineteenth century novel and drama, bourgeois forms modified by cinema's populist vocation, appeal directly to the spectator's emotional and sentimental life, their private subjectivity – even when dealing with public, historical or political subjects. Documentary, on the other hand, speaks to the viewer as citizen, as a member of the social collective, as putative participant in the public sphere. The public sphere is its home ground. Without it, the public sphere isn't working properly.

Or as Paula Rabinowitz has put it in a book called *They Must Be Represented* – the phrase comes from Marx, of course – classical Hollywood narrative binds its spectators through psychologically-motivated characters and conventions which enhance verisimilitude and invite the viewer's identification. The apparatus situates the viewer as the subject of a desire which is private and internal. By contrast, the documentary mobilises the viewer as a social subject, situated in history. 'This subject clearly desires too, but the desire is directed toward the social and political arenas of everyday experiences as well as toward world-historic events shaping those lives,' and away from the psychological manifestations 'which characterize the fetishistic forms of narrative desire'. She adds that this is not to pose a clear-cut distinction between inner and outer forms of desire, but to suggest that these are interpolated differently in fiction and in documentary, which makes different kinds of claims about reality.

However, there is an important rider: to be political in this sense is not necessarily a question of advancing an ideological position, militating for a cause or campaigning for anything. It isn't even necessary to mention politics. Because what the documentary can do is to call public attention to its subjects and concerns sometimes just by bringing them to light, without being wrapped in the narrative plots of fiction and drama, but instead turning stereotypes back into real people with their own names and in their own living environment. In a world dominated by fantasy images, the return of documentary is therefore a healthy sign of a return to reality – although once again it's not so simple. For example, first-person political documentary is liable to encourage the narcissism of a Michael Moore or a Nick Broomfield, something quite alien to Ivens, and the result is a form of inquiry which betrays both the political impotence of the inquirer and the loss of an organised radical political culture to orient their critique. But this is not a personal criticism of these two film-makers – it's a problem about the political and ideological environment in which they work.

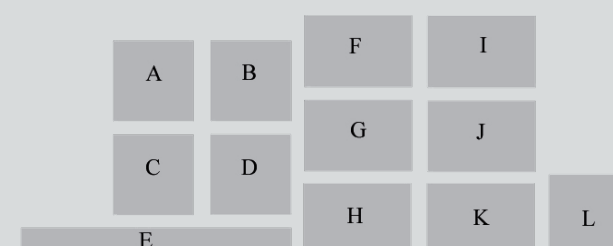
In the end, therefore, the work of Joris Ivens presents us with what Derrida would call an impossible paradigm, in which, in order to follow his example, we can no longer make political films in the same way at all, because the ideological context which they answer to is no longer with us. Our publics remain in urgent need of a cogent interpretation of the world we live in – today more than ever – but quite rightly have become sceptical of easy solutions. For the documentarist, therefore, who wishes to honour the example which the work of Joris Ivens represents, the only solution is to return to his notion of documentary as a creative no-man's land, and to respond to the paradigm he offers by means of deliberate and strategic creative betrayal. (To which I can only add a motto taken from Samuel Beckett: 'Failed again. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.')

contemporary art inspired by ivens

acrylic on panels
Polyptych in progress.

13 panels

- A. Map Zuiderzee ca. 1932 103 X 103 cm
- B. Text from film J.Ivens 103 X 103 cm
- C. Text from film K.Vidor 103 X 103 cm
- D. Map Arcadia (USA) 103 X 103 cm
- E. Copy of tapestry from Bayeux : 25 X 300 cm
- F / K. Photos of films by K. Vidor & J. Ivens : 100 X 150 cm
- L. Text by Sigmund Freud : 103 X 103 cm



ANTHONY FREESTONE

Contemporary Art nowadays concerns more and more the visual culture itself, the overwhelming quantity of images, which are always and everywhere available through an increasing amount of media, in a fragmented, chaotic or meaningless form. A growing number of artists makes 'copying' a means of style like Hans Richter, Luc Tuymans, Fernando Bryce or Anthony Freestone. Since classic antiquity most art has been mimetic, an imitation of the world surrounding us. But these artists imitate the imitation. Not by means of a mechanical reproduction because that would make the work of art – according to Walter Benjamin's well-known thesis from the 1930's – lose its aura. Anthony Freestone (1961, Paris) creates perfect copies by hand, the work itself is a ritual like copiers created copies for centuries as an everyday routine, like the medieval copists. Freestone gets his images from movies, television, uses maps and



charts, textile patterns and texts from various media. He combines all his images into complex polyptychs. One year ago Freestone started to work on the polyptych 'Joris Ivens & King Vidor', with images of the Bayeux Tapestry (twelfth century), film stills from *Our Daily Bread* (1934) by King Vidor and Ivens' *New Earth* (1933) from the Ivens Archive, a picture of both filmmakers, maps of the Zuiderzee from 1930 and Arcadia combined with a text of Sigmund Freud. Freestone expects the polyptych to be finished at the end of this year.

The 'Ivens-Vidor' polyptych in progress, May 2009
© Anthony Freestone, Saint Denis
The 'Ivens-Vidor' polyptych in progress, June 2009
© Anthony Freestone, Saint Denis
The scheme of the 'Ivens-Vidor' polyptych

JORIS IVENS 110 IN BEIJING

Seminar '50 years of Joris Ivens in China'

SUN HONGYUN,
Ph.D.,
Beijing Union University
SUN JINYI,
Postgraduate,
Beijing Normal University

TO COMMEMORATE THE 110TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF DUTCH FILM MAKER JORIS IVENS, AN INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC CONFERENCE TITLED '50 YEARS OF JORIS IVENS AND CHINA' IS HELD ON NOVEMBER 18TH TO 20TH 2009 IN BEIJING. THANKS TO THE SPONSORS, INCLUDING ART AND MEDIA SCHOOL OF BEIJING NORMAL UNIVERSITY, CENTRAL NEWSREEL AND DOCUMENTARY FILM STUDIO, CHINA FILM ARCHIVE AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS, THE COMMITTEE SUCCESSFULLY INVITES MORE THAN THIRTY EXPERTS IN DOCUMENTARY FILM ALL OVER THE WORLD. IN ADDITION, IVENS' PREVIOUS COLLEAGUES, COLLABORATORS, AND INTERPRETER IN CHINA ALSO CAME TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE AND DEPICTS THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH THE DOCUMENTARY MASTER JORIS IVENS.



It is on November 18th which is Joris Ivens' birthday that the conference opening ceremony followed by an academic seminar is held in Art and Media School of Beijing Normal University. Among those experts, Professor Si-Tu Zhaodun of Beijing film Academy who visited Ivens with his father firstly states that Ivens' documentaries indicate an individual social sense and humanism. However, misleading toward him and his films still exist. Not only does Mr. Si-Tu Zhaodun disagree with the ideological analysis to Ivens, but also refutes that Ivens has a sort of particular 'China Complex'. According to the materials Ivens chooses and methods he uses, Si-Tu Zhaodun concludes that Ivens'

documentaries in China belong to mainstream documentaries at that time. It is a way for Ivens to try to explain a period of Chinese history.

Thomas Waugh, a Canadian professor studies Ivens' works, defines *The Four Hundred Million* (1938) as 'solidarity film'. He points out that Ivens adopts a mode—the *mise-en-scène* approach when shooting spontaneously—which could be called a halfway style between Hollywood and Newsreel. Kees Bakker, a French expert from Institute Jean Vigo, compares *The Four Hundred Million* (1938) and *Fighting Soldiers* (1938) by Fumio Kamei from a perspective of hermeneutics. Documentaries of both directors are based on their deliberately choosing from things happening. Because of this, he says they are like horses with blinders on. Professor Zhang Tongdao of Beijing Normal University thinks one of the most important factors in Ivens' life is China and his films about China. Obviously, there is a film legend between Ivens and China since during the 50 year friendship, he shows his ideological assistance, experiences severe conflict and frustration, and finally successfully communicates with China in term of culture. Another article titled 'Documentary Reenactments: A Paradoxical Temporality' is delivered by Professor Bill Nichols of San Francisco State University. He takes one of the Ivens' films -*Borinage*- as an example to illustrate reenactments contribute to a vivification of that for which they stand. They make what it feels like to return to a certain situation, to re-perform a certain action, to once again adopt a particular perspective more vivid. Ivens' former assistant in France, Mr. Jean Pierre Sergent, looks back Ivens' complicated emotions and final understanding toward China from 1938 to his last years. He believes that Ivens is a great artist with individual independence and dignity. 'He acted as the world citizen he had always been, and as a man among the men. This was the Chinese Dream of Joris Ivens. 'René Seegers, a Dutch film maker introduces situations of Ivens' films in western countries by a speech named 'The Unfortunate History of the Screening of Yukong'.



p.12:
1 Canadian filmscholar
Thomas Waugh
2 Fu Hongxing, director
of CFA, makes a
congratulation speech
3 Documentary filmmaker,
professor and good friend
Situ Zhaodun
4 Jean-Pierre Sergent
5 Ye Schichun

p.13:
1 The guests and hosts
of the Ivens' seminar in
Beijing
2 Ivens' cameraman Wang
Decheng
3 Film teacher Zhang
Tongdao
4 Ivens' translator Lu
Songhe
5 Seminar Room

Moreover, Nie Xinru, a professor of East China Normal University tries to explain why Ivens shoots *How Yukong moved the Mountains* (1976) and in his opinion, reasons could be attributed to the foreign policy of China government at that time. Professor Zhang Xianming of Beijing Film Academy holds an opinion that there is a misleading: Ivens is a topic of minority in the world while in China there are a major of people talk about him. Professor Shan Wangli of China Film Art Research Center summarizes the present researches on Ivens' works in China. Dr. Sun Hongyun analyses both *Yukong* by Ivens and *China* by Antonioni. According to comparing their different motives, approaches, distinct inclinations and their perspectives of screen writing, she points out that their works depict situations in China differently even though they shoot them more or less in a same period. Furthermore, there are other experts deliver their academic speeches about Ivens and his films.

The next day, former colleagues, collaborators and interpreter of Ivens in China attended the oral history section in China Film Museum. Lu Ming, a director of Yan'an Movies Corps recalls that the camera which was confidentially given by Joris Ivens in 1938 makes a great contribution to the film cause of CCPC in the initial stage. Then staff of *Early Spring* (1958), *How Yukong Moved the Mountains* (1976), and *A Tale of Wind* (1988) reminisce their experience working with Joris Ivens. Wang Decheng, a photographer of *Early Spring* says Ivens requires photographer to take camera with him everywhere and to wait for appropriate oppor-

tunities to shoot at any time. Qian Liren, a group leader of *Yukong* reveals that they try their best to meet Ivens' requirements to shoot in name of Culture Revolution and with a recommendation of Premier Zhou Enlai. However, referring to their demotions to countryside, they could by no means let Ivens know. Another former group leader, Ms. Ye Shichun believes that Ivens insists on reality and nature of film making and definitely denies re-enacting. However, during the Culture Revolution period, Ivens couldn't have an idea that local people might do some preparations before he comes. In addition, Ms. Lu Songhe, the interpreter for Ivens in films *Yukong* and *A Tale of Wind* recalls that Ivens not only requires her to be a language assistant but also wishes she could be sensitive to interesting new things and provide some shooting suggestions. Yang Zhiju, one of the photographers of *Yukong* recollects that Ivens requires their cameras to participate incidents instead of merely zooming in and out. Besides, Ivens also emphasizes actual sound in his films. A lighting engineer, Guo Weijun retrospects that Ivens pursues completely nature light when he shoots *Yukong*. Subsequently other staff and some figures in his films recall their memories with Joris Ivens.

During the period of the conference, China Film Archive screens Joris Ivens's films: *The Four Hundred Million* (1938), *Early Spring* (1958), *Football Story* (1976), *A Tale of the Wind* (1988). These films again receive an intense reverberation among audiences.



the foundation update

2009-2012

The European Foundation Joris Ivens (EFJI) will receive from the Province of Gelderland an annual subsidy for the 2009-2012 period. This is the outcome of the negotiations between the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences, the Province and the Municipality of Nijmegen. These authorities strongly urged for the continuation of the Foundation, since they are of the opinion that the archival task of the Foundation is important, and the authorities involved are furthermore very satisfied with the high quality standards that the Foundation maintains regarding its work. Before this, the Culture Council has judged the work of the Foundation as exemplary, and achieving good results. The Board of Governors of the EFJI has applied itself from its foundation for cooperation with national and international partners, from a strictly independent position.

Ivens' films screened continuously in museums

The ongoing trend of the last few years continues: on an increasing scale, films by Joris Ivens are permanently screened in museums, as part of exhibitions on modern art and culture. In the Hygiene Museum in Dresden, Germany, the films by Ivens on nature played a prominent part in the exhibition titled *2°, Weather, Climate and Man*. This large-scale interactive exhibition studied the delicate relationship that exists between mankind, nature and atmosphere through multimedia installations, hands-on elements, natural objects and other exponents.

The Academy of the Arts in Berlin, Germany, showcased the great variety of different forms of 'notation' in modern art during the 20th and 21st century. The exhibition, titled *Notation*, travelled on in 2009 to the Centre for Contemporary Art and Media in Karlsruhe, Germany. Accompanying the exhibition, an authoritative catalogue was published (see page 42).

In the Museum for Contemporary Art in Barcelona, Spain, (MACBA), four Ivens' films were part of the successful exhibition *Universal Archive – The Condition of the Document and the Modern Photographic Utopia*. This exhibition focussed on the reliability and validity of the photographic image in this post-modern age of digital photography, which is by its nature prone to manipulation. The exposition also addressed the question whether photography is able to produce a truly universal visual archive. In 2009 the exhibition travelled to the Museum Berardo de Lisboa in Lisbon, Portugal. 'A fascinating exhibition', *Le Monde* commented, 'with an excellent catalogue' (see page 42).

Tilda Swinton's film festival

Actress Tilda Swinton (1960), star of such acclaimed and eclectic productions as *Edward II* (1991), *Orlando* (1992), *The War Zone* (1998) and more recently *Adaptation* (2002), *The Chronicles of Narnia* (2005/07), and whose performance in *Michael Clayton* earned her an Oscar, is the founder of a new film festival. This festival, directed by both Swinton and film expert Mark Cousins, took place in Swinton's home-

town of Nairn, in north-east Scotland. For the first edition she selected the early Ivens' film *Rain* (1929). To a certain degree the event is meant as an antithesis to the pomposity of most current film festivals. Swinton and Cousins aim to revive the pure, romantic fascination with film. To this end Swinton rented an old ballroom in her hometown, the Ballerina, and so the festival was dubbed *The Ballerina Ballroom Cinema of Dreams*.

The costs for the event have so far been met by Swinton. Glamour, as well as big budget premieres will be absent during the event. Visitors pay only £3 admission fee, or else a tray of self baked treats, to be shared with the audience, will do just as well to earn a place on the beanbags from which the films can be enjoyed.



The Office

Since Spring 2008, new staff members have joined the Ivens Foundation. Per 1 January 2008 Rens van Meegen (graduated filmmaker – Film Academy Brussels) has succeeded Bram Relouw as the coordinator of the EFJI. Four new members who are currently working at the Foundation have studied at the Radboud University in Nijmegen: Rob Comans (graduated film scholar), Eric Brouwer (graduated historian), Britt den Bebbler (graduated English Literature) and Merel Geelen (graduated art historian). Rens and Rob spent many busy months on the subtitling of all the films included in the DVD box-set. Eric Brouwer organised the symposium at Ivens 110th anniversary in Nijmegen, Merel listed the Jan de Vaal Archive collection, and Britt functions as the Foundation's librarian. Anne Jaspers, Tim Sparla, Britt den Bebbler, Robijn Namenwirth and Suzanne Geldhoff worked as volunteers on various projects. Anne is listing all the clippings of the Ivens Archive collection with reference words. Tim Sparla, Suzanne Geldhoff and Rens van Meegen worked on the Wilhelm Ivens educational project on 19th century and contemporary photography.

Royal Honour for André Stufkens

The Mayor of the city of Nijmegen and former Minister of the Interior, Mr. Thom de Graaf, presented on Monday 28 April 2008 the decorations belonging to the Knighthood of the Order of Orange-Nassau to André Stufkens. De Graaf praised the many activities that Stufkens has taken upon himself in recent years in order to gain wider recognition, both nationally and internationally, for Nijmegen's most famous sons: director Joris Ivens and the renowned Gothic manuscript illuminators known as the Limbourg Brothers. Stufkens, who is both director of the European Foundation Joris Ivens, and as such has been managing the Joris Ivens Archive in Nijmegen for the past 12 years, and also acts as chairman of the Limbourg Brothers Foundation, established in 2002, has been one of the initiators of all these activities. Apart from that he also acts as Secretary of the co-



operative platform of the cultural-historic foundations of the oldest city in the Netherlands, Nijmegen. As chairman of the parents association 't Span he initiated a commune for mentally handicapped youngsters that resides in a renovated monumental building.

Seminar on Ivens and China in Beijing

In the year that the China Film Archive celebrated its 50th anniversary, an International Academic Symposium was organised on 'Joris Ivens and 50 Years of China's Film' (see p. 12-13). The relationship between Joris Ivens and China started in 1938, when he filmed *The 400 Million* in China. He secretly handed his Bell & Howell camera and some film stock to cinematographer Wu Yinxian (*Street Angel*, 1937), who smuggled this precious tool to the Red Base in Ya'an province. With this equipment the Ya'an Film Group shot their first documentaries. A key moment in China's film history, according to film scholar Chris Fujiwara: 'Ivens' gift, evidence of a great filmmakers idealism and perseverance, is also a symbol of cinematic solidarity'.

In 1958 the Ya'an Film Group merged with other film groups to form the Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio in Beijing, where Joris Ivens was active as both teacher and adviser. For decades Ivens trained young Chinese filmmakers in the appliance of Western camera techniques, and in the practice of filmmaking.

Mr. Fu Hongxing, director of the China Film Archive, explained in his speech the importance and influence of Ivens on China's film culture: 'He is a world famous film master, and he is also a loyal and honest friend to the Chinese people. He helped the Chinese when they suffered hardship. He is a great man with a strong sense of justice.' The seminar was hosted by professor Huang Huilin and attended by filmmakers and film scholars from China, as well as those from France, the Netherlands, the USA and Canada. The seminar was sponsored by the China Film Archive, the College of Arts and Media of Beijing Normal University, China Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio, China Filmmakers Association, Huaxia Film Distribution, China Scientific Education Film Studio, China Film Museum, China Projection Association and China Film Producers Association. The scholarly journal 'Studies in Documentary Film' will publish in July 2009 five lectures held at the conference by Thomas Waugh, Kees Bakker, Jean-Pierre Sergent, Zhang Tongdao and Sun Hongyun.

Meetings with the China Film Archive in Nijmegen and Paris

In Paris Mr. Fu Hongxing, head of the China Film Archive, visited Marceline Loridan-Ivens to discuss various subjects concerning Ivens and China. Being a filmmaker himself (*Zhouenlaiwaijiaofengyun*, 2007) he demonstrated vividly



the new film techniques he had learned from Ivens when he was still a film student.

To commemorate Ivens' 110th anniversary, Mr. Hongxing proposed to organise several events. One of the issues discussed was the protection of copyright in China. To improve the situation a China Copyright Association exists, and a first China Copyright Meeting was organised in December 2008. In Nijmegen a delegation of the China Film Archive visited the European Foundation Joris Ivens. In the depot of the Ivens Archive objects and documents from China were looked into, such as a letter from Prime Minister Zhou Enlai. The delegation, under the supervision of adjunct-director Zhang Jianyong, proposed a plan for further cooperation in the future with our archive. Young Chinese students and filmmakers frequently consult the Ivens Archive. There are several projects in development, one of them concerns a PHD study that compares Antonio's film *Chung Kuo-Cina* (1972) and Ivens/Loridan's collaborative film *How Yukong Moved The Mountains* (1976).

Joris Ivens and Marceline Loridan-Ivens awarded in Trieste

The first edition of the International Documentary Festival in Trieste dedicated 'a tribute to Joris Ivens' containing six of his films. The director of the festival gave an award to the Foundation honouring Ivens and Loridan-Ivens film oeuvre.



Mayor Thom de Graaf presenting the decorations of the Royal Knighthood to André Stufkens
© Storm Stufkens

Fu Hongxing, Marceline Loridan-Ivens and André Stufkens

Zhang Jianyong and the delegation of the China Film Archive in front of Ivens' birthhouse

Poster Joris Ivens Retrospective Cinémathèque Française March 2009

The workers of the Ivens Foundation in Nijmegen

Ivens' Kinamo with which he made *The Bridge*, *Rain*, *We're Building*, *Borinage*, *New Earth*...
(Collection European Foundation Joris Ivens)

Emanuel Goldberg.
Undated photo, probably from the early 1920s when explained the Kinamo to Joris Ivens in Dresden

JORIS IVENS, EMANUEL GOLDBERG, AND THE KINAMO MOVIE CAMERA



MICHAEL K. BUCKLAND

THE COVER OF THE LAST ISSUE OF THIS MAGAZINE (No. 13, 2007) SHOWS JORIS IVENS USING A KINAMO CAMERA TO FILM THE LIFT BRIDGE IN ROTTERDAM IN 1928. HE HAD WORKED IN THE KINAMO ASSEMBLY LINE IN DRESDEN AND ADVISED BY ITS DESIGNER EMANUEL GOLDBERG. THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE OF THE KINAMO AND THE INFLUENCE OF GOLDBERG ARE ACKNOWLEDGED IN IVENS' MEMOIRS AND ARE ROUTINELY MENTIONED IN BIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNTS OF IVENS' EARLY YEARS. A BIOGRAPHY OF GOLDBERG ALLOWS A FULLER EXPLANATION.¹

EMANUEL GOLDBERG BEFORE THE KINAMO

Emanuel Goldberg was Russian, born in Moscow in 1881. He graduated in Chemistry at Moscow University, but left Russia to avoid antisemitism and settled in Germany. He studied photochemical reactions at the University of Leipzig and became an assistant to Adolf Miethe in the Photochemistry Laboratory at the Technical University in Berlin-Charlottenburg. From 1907 to 1917, he was head of the department of photography at the Königliche Akademie für graphische Künste und Buchgewerbe (Royal Academy of Graphic Arts and Bookcraft) in Leipzig and published papers on photographic and printing techniques. His early inventions related to gelatin wedges (the 'Goldberg Wedge') and the Densograph for measuring the characteristic curves of photographic emulsions.

In 1917 Goldberg became a director of Ica, the Internationale Camera Aktiengesellschaft, in Dresden, then the centre of the German photographic products industry. The Carl Zeiss Stiftung had consolidated its camera manufacturing operations in Ica making it the largest camera company in Germany. Goldberg's assignment was two-fold: to help modernize the firm, and to develop new military products, but military products were soon outlawed by the Treaty of Versailles. Ica was then reorganised into two divisions: one for still cameras and related equipment, and the other, under Goldberg, for movie equipment. In 1926 Ica merged with Ernemann, Contessa, and Goerz to form a new company under Goldberg's leadership, Zeiss Ikon. The Carl Zeiss Stiftung owned most of the shares and exercised close control.

Ica was already making movie equipment in 1917 and Goldberg foresaw a large market among amateurs making home movies, especially if cranking were eliminated. He opted for a spring-driven motor, a challenge because the diminishing tension of the spring has to be converted into a even movement driving the take-up spool and its slipping clutch as well as the shutter and film gate.²

THE KINAMO

The Kinamo was the smallest of competing, compact 35mm movie cameras brought to the market in the early 1920s.³

The Debie Sept, a spring-driven 35mm camera marketed in 1921, held five metres of film, enough to film for only 17 seconds. The Bell & Howell Eyemo appeared in 1923. Studio cameras acquired electric motors and hand-cranked cine cameras were soon obsolete.

The initial model was the basic, hand-cranked Kinamo N25 for cassettes of 25 metres of 35mm film. (A variant model took 15 metre cassettes.) The spring motor attachment was in experimental use in 1923 and marketed, with an optional delayed action shutter release, in 1924.

The Kinamo was very compact. The N25 model took 35mm film but was only 15 cm high, 13 cm deep, and 10 cm wide (6 x 5 1/2 x 4 inches). Film cassettes were easily changed even in sunlight. Pressing a button would mark the film at the end of a scene. Film speed could be reduced for trick photography and slow movement. A model with four film speeds and an attachment that enabled it to copy films, the Universal Kinamo, was also marketed from 1925.

During the 1920s cinematography progressively differentiated into three markets: professional studio work; semi-professional (technical, scientific, business, sport, documentary, and experimental films); and home movies. Ica promoted the Kinamo for everything other than studio production of feature films.⁴ The Kinamo was used with Ica's 'Goldberg Mikrophot Microscope Attachment' for filming through a microscope.⁵ The 1920s saw a rapid increase in the use of microfilm in scholarship, libraries, record keeping, and the mechanization of office procedures. The Kinamo was used in a data processing system for preparing telephone subscribers' monthly bills.⁶

The Kinamo also took stills and was probably intended to be an all-purpose 'universal' camera. However, the cost and flammability of 35mm film led amateurs to smaller, less-expensive 9.5 and 16mm formats. Ica introduced the Kinamo S10 for 10 metre cassettes of 16mm safety film, then the improved K510. With the unexpected success of the Leica, still cameras moved towards larger, double-frame 35mm format and Goldberg and his staff at Zeiss Ikon developed the Contax to compete with the Leica. Kinamo production was phased out by 1938, replaced by the Movikon 16mm and 8mm movie cameras.

JORIS IVENS WORKS ON THE KINAMO

In his memoirs Ivens describes how he went to Germany to study photography, initially in Berlin, then in Dresden, where he worked in the Ernemann and Ica companies. At Ica, Ivens worked on the Kinamo assembly line and later wrote:

*In the mechanical workshop, one man made a great impression on me: Professor Goldberg. He was an inventor who had just perfected a marvellous little camera, the famous Kinamo, a professional 35mm spring-driven camera of a robustness and precision that was astonishing for its time. From this man I learned the basic principles of this kind of machine and I meddled with the secrets of manufacture.*⁷

Goldberg was also an adjunct professor (*Honorarprofessor*) at the Dresden University of Technology Institute for Scientific Photography (Wissenschaftlich-Photographisches Institut) directed by his friend and dissertation advisor Robert Luther. Goldberg and his firm contributed substantially to the development of the Institute.⁸ His inaugural lecture in 1921 was on 'Cinematography as a Technical Problem.' He taught courses and published technical articles on cinematography, including one on filming cloud movement.⁹

GOLDBERG'S KINAMO MOVIES

Goldberg himself had been learning the characteristics of the Kinamo by producing short dramas with himself, his

wife (Sophie), his son (Herbert) and daughter (Renate, now Chava Gichon), and friends as actors. To increase Kinamo sales Ica (and later Zeiss Ikon) added intertitles to these films to create four short films promoting the Kinamo: *Ferientage am Matterhorn* (Holidays at the Matterhorn, 1924), *Im Sonneck: Bilder aus dem Kinderleben* (In the Sunny Corner: Scenes from the Children's Life, 1924), *Zeltleben in den Dolomiten* (Camping in the Dolomites, 1925), and *Die verzauberten Schuhe: Eine heitere Kinamo-Tragödie* (The Magic Shoes: An Amusing Kinamo Tragedy, 1927). In 1927 Goldberg made a skiing drama with a group of students: *Ein Sprung ... Ein Traum: Eine Kinamogeschichte aus dem Studentenleben* (A Jump ... A Dream: A Kinamo Story of Student Life, 1927). These films reveal skillful composition, crisp editing, and sophisticated use of backlighting, shadows and entrances.

JORIS IVENS USES THE KINAMO

In 1927 Ivens used a Kinamo to experiment with free-form, hand-held filming inside a Zeedijk bar and liked the tonal quality of the resulting film: 'But, even better, with my camera held in my hand, the marvellous Kinamo of Professor Goldberg, I was, naturally, freed from the rigidity of a tripod, and I had given movement to what, normally, would have had to be a succession of fixed shots. Without knowing it, filming flexibly and without stopping, I had achieved a continuity. That day I realised that the camera was an eye and I said to myself, 'If it is a gaze, it ought to be a living one'.¹⁰

IVENS USED THE KINAMO FOR THE BRIDGE (1928):

For me the bridge was a laboratory of movements, tones, shapes, contrasts, rhythms and the relations between all of these. ... What I wanted was to find some general rules, laws of continuity and movement. ... I used a borrowed camera from my father's store, a Kinamo with three lenses. ... The



Germaine Krull, Joris Ivens filming *The Bridge* with the Kinamo, 1928
© Folkwang Museum Essen, Krull Sammlung

Emanuel Goldberg, film stills: 'Herbert Goldberg on a moving train' (unidentified film), from *Zeltleben in de Dolomiten* (1925, Goldberg with son Herbert), *Die verzauberten Schuhe* (Goldberg, daughter Renate, unidentified youth, son Herbert, and wife Sophie), Father and son open a package on a skiing trip (unidentified film), Intertitle in *Zeltleben in den Dolomiten* with Zeiss Ikon logo and promotional slogan: *Kinamo-Selbstaufnahme*. ("Film yourself with the Kinamo"), *Im Sonneck* (1924, with Goldberg's children Herbert and Renate).
© Heirs Goldberg



Kinamo is a small spring driven automatic handcamera. It holds a magazine of seventy-five feet of 35mm film. I had worked on this very model in the construction department in the Ica factory. I had learned all its advantages and also its weaknesses from Professor Goldberg, the inventor of this practical little instrument, so that when I took the Kinamo onto the bridge it was already an old friend.¹¹

The Bridge is a fast-paced, rhythmic series of patterns and movements in and around the bridge: shadows, girders, wheels, steam, seagulls and boats. It is both a study of movement and also a portrait of the bridge, the steam trains that cross it, the boats that pass under it, and life around it. Ivens had consciously explored what his camera could do. The first image is of the bridge, but in the second and third shots are close-ups of the Kinamo.

While Ivens was filming the bridge in Rotterdam he was simultaneously filming microscopic objects at Leiden University. It is not known what equipment he used, but it is probable that, like others, he used a Kinamo (perhaps the very same camera as for *The Bridge*) to film through a microscope using the Goldberg Mikrophot Microscope Attachment.

Ivens used the Kinamo in several films. *Borinage* (1933) was filmed mainly with Kinamo cameras by Joris Ivens and by Henri Storck, who had been trained in Kinamo use by Boris Kaufman. *Borinage* was filmed surreptitiously, and, being so small, the Kinamo was easily concealed from the police, which, on at least one occasion, prevented Ivens from being arrested and deported.¹² *Indonesia Calling* (1946) was filmed using a borrowed Kinamo camera.

GOLDBERG AND IVENS IN DRESDEN IN 1931

Ivens returned to Dresden in August 1931 for the VIII International Congress of Photography, which was noteworthy for international agreement on a film speed standard proposed by Goldberg and Luther which became DIN 4512 and also because Goldberg demonstrated his ‘Statistical machine,’ a desktop search-engine for finding documents on rolls of 35mm film, probably the first use of electronics for information retrieval.

A special session for the general public on August 5 had talks by Goldberg, Eggert, and Ivens. Goldberg gave a lecture on ‘Fundamentals of Talking Films’ with an elaborate demonstration. Eggert summarized the development of colour movies. Ivens spoke on ‘The documentary film in the avant-garde.’ Ivens said that commercial considerations led to ‘art inflation’ in the film industry and that avant-garde filmmakers sought to achieve purer artistic expression. Cinematography is the art of moving images and an aesthetic sense of rhythm was fundamental. The principles of rhythm, important in music, painting, literature and dance were also decisive for cinematographic movement, and film needs its own rhythmic principles involving both spatial and temporal relationships. Documentary films can evoke patterns of time and space from the objects filmed instead

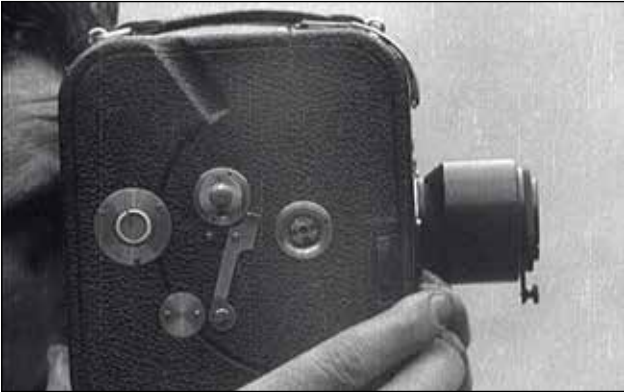
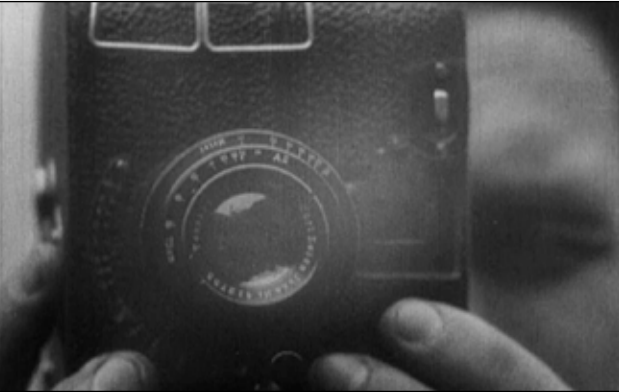


of using externally-imposed sequences of ideas. Hence documentary films can inspire more authentic feature films. Ivens then screened excerpts from several films: *Zuiderzee* (Ivens, 1930), *Turksib* (Victor Turin, 1929), *Sturm über Asien* (Vsevolod Pudovkin, 1928), *Philips Radio* (Ivens, 1931), *Studie Nr 9* (Oscar Fischinger, 1931), and unidentified animated films made at Fleischer Studios. Ivens’ Congress paper was printed in the proceedings, an almost identical version was published in 1963, and an English translation in 1999.¹³ Cameraman Erwin Anders may well have been referring to Ivens’ screening at the 1931 Congress in his 1963 tribute to Ivens:

At the end of the 1920s I worked as an assistant to the world-famous scientist Professor Dr. Emanuel Goldberg in Dresden. He had prepared the way for participation in the film medium by a wider circle with his 35mm Kinamo movie camera, which, for its time, was unusually compact and affordable. Many of those who bought it were simply amateurs who wanted only to enrich their family records, but there were also scientists, especially doctors, and also some young artists who wanted to express their concerns to the public through the film. And it happened that one day I was able to see a documentary film by a young Dutchman about the draining of the Zuiderzee that had been filmed with this spring-driven camera. The creator of this film was Joris Ivens. Together with our Prof. Goldberg we were deeply impressed with what a work of art had been achieved by Ivens with a camera thought to be more for amateurs.¹⁴

OTHER KINAMO USERS

The Kinamo proved ideal for alpine skiing sequences in the mountain films of Arnold Fanck. Impressed, cameraman Robert Baberske used a Kinamo to film *Berlin – Die Sinfonie der Grossstadt* (Berlin – Symphony of a Great City, 1927) and later in *Leuchtfeuer* (1954).¹⁵ Ella Bergmann-Michel bought a Kinamo on Ivens’ advice and used it in *Fliegende Händler* (Travelling Hawkers, 1932).¹⁶ Others reported to have filmed with Kinamos include Sepp Allgeier, Wilfried Basse, Jacques Cousteau, Boris Kaufman, Martin Rikli, Henri Storck, Dziga Vertov, and Jean Vigo. The Kinamo was probably quite



widely used among avant-garde and semi-professional filmmakers but details are hard to find. As Goldberg intended, the Kinamo succeeded in making home movies popular among the wealthy, at least in Germany.¹⁷

GOLDBERG AFTER THE KINAMO

Goldberg became an important and respected figure in photography and cinematography. He was best known for his work on sensitometry and a book, *Der Aufbau des photographischen Bildes* (The Construction of the Photographic Image).¹⁸ A founder of the German Movie Technology Society (*Deutsche Kinotechnische Gesellschaft*), he received the society’s Messter Medal for services to cinematography. Everything changed on 3 April 1933, when Goldberg was kidnapped from his Zeiss Ikon office by Nazi thugs. Released a few days later, he moved to France, then, in 1937, to Palestine, where he established a laboratory in Tel Aviv which became Goldberg Industries and, later, a major firm Electro-Optical Industries (‘EI-OP’) in Rehovot. Engineers trained by Goldberg played a substantial role in the development of Israel’s high tech industry. He lived until 1970, honoured in Israel but largely forgotten elsewhere. The Nazis would not give credit to a Russian Jew; his publications receded from view as time and scholarship advanced; and ambitious others, Heinz Küppenbender, Vannevar Bush and J. Edgar Hoover, took or concealed credit for his major achievements: the design of the Contax 35mm camera, his search engine, and microdot technology, respectively. Even his several years as the founding chief executive of Zeiss Ikon remains unmentioned in successive Zeiss corporate histories in 1937, in 1951, and even in 2000. It is a case study in how thoroughly the memory of a well-known figure can be erased.¹⁹

COMMENTARY

Innovation in camera technology can have two kinds of impact: a technical change can allow a different filming technique; but, as important, exploring the changed affordances of a new technology allows the cinematographer to

discover new possibilities in film craft. Technique includes both technology and know-how. An example of an innovative camera having a strong influence occurred in the early work of Joris Ivens when he experimented with the Kinamo. It is often hard to know who used what technology to what effect in which film, but in the case of Joris Ivens, Emanuel Goldberg, and the Kinamo it has been possible to document something of what happened.

Postscript: A screening of Goldberg’s films, probably the first since 1933, was organised on March 9, 2009, at Kino Arsenal in Berlin.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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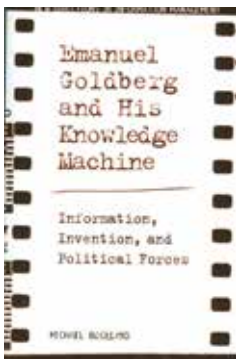


Kinamo advertisement, ‘A new source of pleasure’, 1923

Film stills *The Bridge* (1928), Joris Ivens shooting with the Kinamo

Kinamo advertisement ‘Film yourself’

Early Kinamo advertisement implying ease of hand-held use and modernity



Ivens' Kinamo

Kinamo open, showing film cassette
Kinamo's Mikrophot attachment

Cover Michael Buckland's book 'Emanuel Goldberg and his Knowledge Machine'

Germaine Krull, *Joris Ivens filming The Bridge with the Kinamo*, 1928
© Folkwang Museum
Essen, Krull Sammlung



Wissenschaftlich-Photographisches Institut 1908-2008, 2008, Dresden, TU Dresden, Institut für Angewandte Photophysik.

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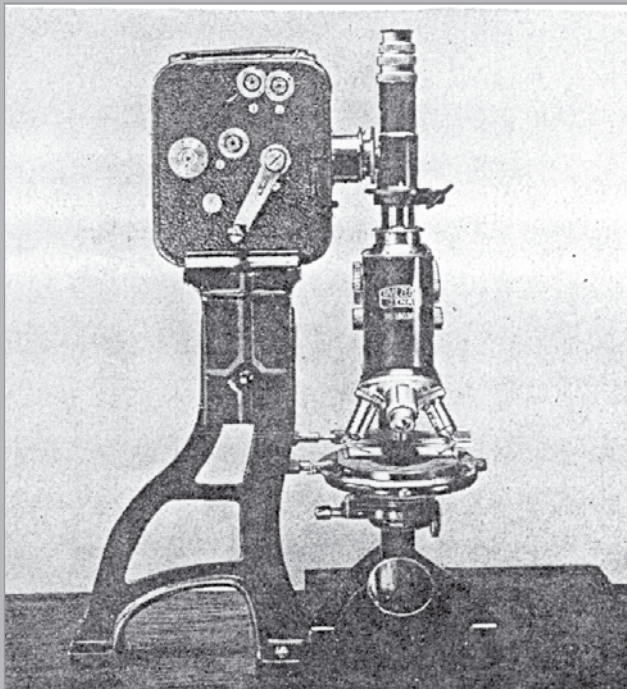
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A mystery solved



The Bridge was shot with the Kinamo camera, often on the same day that Ivens made scientific films. These microscopical films made at the University of Leiden were lost, and it remained a mystery how Ivens managed to combine these two film projects. In his first autobiography he wrote: 'In the morning I would be at the University; at noon I would rush to the Rotterdam bridge and put in about two hours of work; later in the afternoon I was bent over the University microscopes. I used a borrowed camera from my father's store, a Kinamo with three lenses. By practising a certain economy at the University, I always managed to have enough negative film for my work at the bridge'. Using the same camera equipment and the same film stock for completely different films is impossible, unless a device is available to make microscopic shots with a steady objective as easily as free hand subjective shots. Such a device was made by Goldberg: the Mikrophot attachment.

Joris Ivens must have used this Zeiss Ikon Mikrophot attachment for his microscopic films. He only had to attach the same Kinamo with which he made *The Bridge* and could use the same film stock on the same day. [SF]



Ivens research in Chile

When Chile's film history began to be written, it suffered from a violent cut during the 70's. After the coup d'état the cinematographic activity stopped, and every film, document, and everything that could be used as a means of expression was destroyed. In this context, the copies of ...à *Valparaíso* filmed in Chile by the Dutch master Joris Ivens, were burned or sold clandestinely. During many years, this film and two other produced in our country in co-production with Argos, France, and the University of Chile, *El circo más pequeño del mundo* (*The World's Smallest Circus* / *Le petit Chapiteaus*) and *El tren de la Victoria* (*The Victory Train* / *Le train de la victoire*), could not be seen.

During the long cultural silence in Chile of the military dictatorship, the Experimental Cinema Center of the University of Chile was closed down, bringing to an end the film production and the place where young filmmakers of the New Latin-American Cinema Movement used to meet for cinematic reflection and analysis.

Three years ago and after 35 years, the Film School was reopened under the Image and Communications Institute (ICEI) of the University of Chile. Different generations of filmmakers

have met again with the formation of students as a common project. In the context of the reconstructive project, the research *Joris Ivens in Chile: three films and his legacy* has got together academicians and filmmakers to know details of the Dutch expert's visit, his activities, and the production of the three films he made during his stay, in order to establish his influence in the national cinematography. Chilean filmmakers Sergio Bravo and Pedro Chaskel, who worked with Ivens, agree that this visit was important, but still today there is no specific information of this event, its consequences in our cinematography, or the influence of his working methodology.

This research was rewarded by the Audiovisual Promoting Fund of Chile (Fondo de Fomento Audiovisual) and sponsored by the ICEI of the University of Chile, the National Film Library, the Netherlands Embassy, and the European Foundation Joris Ivens. The research team is formed by Tiziana Panizza, Pedro Chaskel, Judith Silva, Tatiana Díaz and Viviana Erpel, who are working at the moment on the interviews to the people who worked with Joris Ivens, in order to establish the motivation and developing of his stay, the Chilean context of those years, his influence, and

the search for the lost copies to know their state of conservation.

The results of this investigation will be published in a bilingual web page, where audiovisual and photographic material can be found. A catalog with unedited information on the production of the three films will also be published. Finally, after 45 years, the public screening in Chile of ...*A Valparaíso* will be organized, in addition to the release of the other two films.

As academicians and researchers, we are sure that the presence of Joris Ivens' films in Chile will contribute to the recovery of our collective memory and identity inscribed on the international cinematography.



Joris Ivens and poet Pablo Neruda in Valparaíso, 1962

Power for the Parkinsons

Power for the Parkinsons, a 57-minute historical documentary about Joris Ivens' *Power and the Land* (1940), is nominated for three regional Emmy Awards. It took eight years for Dr. Ephraim K. Smith, a professor emeritus of history at California State University, to realize this film. One of his favourite films is *Power and the Land*, and he wondered what had happened to the Parkinson farm and family, the protagonists of the film. In summer 2000, Smith made his first trip to the St. Clairsville, Ohio, and he initially was disappointed that the Parkinson farm was gone and all family members appearing in *Power and the Land* were dead. However, he met Parkinson grandchildren, a nephew and some

childhood friends of the family, 'who shared their memories of the family, photographs and stories they had been told about the film,' Smith said. He found at their place two lost films of Ivens, spin-offs of *Power and the Land*. The documentary is nominated in the Michigan Chapter of the National Academy of Television, Arts & Sciences 2009 awards program's Historical Documentary, Editing for a Nonnews Program and Writing categories. Smith, who made the film through his Heritage Productions Inc., has taught courses on American film history and on making historical documentaries during a tenure at Fresno. He also was curious about his own abilities. 'I don't think I ever revealed to any of my stu-

dents or even to other faculty members that deep down inside I wanted to make a PBS-quality documentary,' he said. 'Quite simply, I wanted to know if I could do more than just talk about films. So I am thus deeply appreciative for the honour of these Emmy nominations.'

Power for the Parkinsons premiered on Detroit Public Television in 2008 and has since been broadcast or scheduled by 11 other PBS affiliates. Previews of Smith's documentaries are available on his website, www.powerforparkinsons.com, which also includes outtakes and scholarly articles on rural electrification and *Power and the Land*. The new documentaries are available for purchase at the site.

Ephraim Smith (right) with his wife and filmcrew in Nijmegen, 2002



THE PANORAMIC EYE OF A FALCON

The Limbourg Brothers,
The Month June, from the
Book of Tides, *Les Très Riches
Heures du duc de Berry*,
1412-1416. Musée Condé,
Chantilly.

ANDRÉ STUFKENS

Nijmegen artists: the Limbourg Brothers and Joris Ivens

‘THE CAMERAMAN CARRIES THE CAMERA, LIKE A MEDIEVAL FALCONER CARRIED HIS FALCON’, JORIS IVENS SAID TO FELLOW DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS.¹ WITH HIS CAMERA RESTING ON HIS SHOULDER OR IN HIS HAND, THE FILMMAKER SPIES HIS SURROUNDINGS WITH THE ACUTE SHARPNESS AND PANORAMIC VIEW OF A FALCON. THE ARTISTIC CHALLENGE LIES IN THE ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE THIS UNSUSPECTING REALITY AT ITS MOST POWERFUL, IN A FLASH AS IT WERE. OTHERWISE THE ELUSIVE PREY ESCAPES, BECAUSE FOR A DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER, REALITY NEVER REPEATS ITSELF.

More than 500 years ago, three brothers that were born in the city of Nijmegen, had already proven to be able to immortalize reality with astonishing details in books of hours like the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* – *The Very Rich Hours of the Duke of Berry* (1412-1416), which ranks among the most famous artworks in the world.

On the 18th of November 2008, coincidentally the very same day that the Ivens DVD collection was launched in Nijmegen, the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles opened an exhibition focusing on the *Belles Heures* illuminated manuscript, crafted by the Limbourg Brothers. The Metropolitan Museum in New York is scheduled to exhibit their exquisitely refined art in the Fall of 2009.

The three brothers Herman, Paul and Johan lived between 1385 and 1416. They spent their childhood in the Burcht Street, situated in the centre of Nijmegen, a mere three streets away from the place where Joris Ivens was born in 1898.

Are there any similarities to be found in the art of these fellow citizens?

THE LANDSCAPE OF NIJMEGEN

Thinking of Holland, a foreigner will picture flat land, flat polders under sea-level, criss-crossed by ditches and protected by dikes and pumping stations. Nijmegen on the other hand is ‘not looking at all [like] a real Dutch town’, wrote Ivens at an early stage.² This oldest city in The Netherlands, which received its market rights from Emperor Hadrian 2000 years ago, is situated close to the German border and built on five hills at the banks of the River Waal, the river that connects the industrial Ruhr area with Rotterdam. It is at Nijmegen that the soggy Dutch delta ends, and the dam that indicates the European continent begins.

From an historical point of view, Nijmegen has always been a pivoting point, between cultures and world empires, a border town as well as a frontier town, a city that knows both influx and outpouring of people. This was where Roman civilisation ended, at the northwest frontier of the Roman Empire, since the tribes that lived above the rivers refused to let themselves be subdued. This was the border between the catholic South and protestant North of Holland. This was where the Allied liberation force halted in 1944, after the impossibility of an offensive on Arnhem had become clear.

Following the failed operation Market Garden, an Allied force half a million strong amassed in the vicinity of Nijmegen which, when the ensuing operation Veritable had commenced, proceeded to recapture Germany from the Nazi’s with an attack led from the west front.³

NATURE AND HISTORY

The strategic location of Nijmegen has attracted army commanders, merchants, foreign adventurers, and artists through the centuries. On the hills of Nijmegen the Romans built a large garrison settlement housing 20.000 men, Charlemagne established one of his three palatinates there and Emperor Frederico Barbarossa built the largest stronghold in the Netherlands: the Valkhof Castle (The Falcon Courtyard Castle). From this hill a total of twenty-eight emperors, from Constantine the Great up to Napoleon I, beheld the grandiose spectacle that unfolded beneath them, lending a view on the river that winds itself through the countryside, and the valley with the impressive cloud-filled sky above. On this place Nature and History coincide, it was here that the Batavians rose up in revolt against their Roman occupiers in 69 A.D., an event that has been regarded for centuries as the symbol of the Dutch struggle for independence, the birth myth of a nation.⁴ Many artists were inspired by the magic of this location, the view from and onto this particular place, the cosmic unity of time and space, of Nature and History: ranging from the Limbourg Brothers, Albert Cuyp, Jan van Goyen, Salomon van Ruijsdael, up to Joris Ivens and Nescio.

THE VALKHOF/ THE FALCON COURTYARD

Joris Ivens lets his first autobiography begin at this place: ‘One of my earliest memories is of my father taking me by the hand and leading me to the top of the highest of the five hills on which Nijmegen was built. There, at the top of the Valkhof, under a clump of ancient trees, was a tablet which my father read to me and which later I often read to myself: ‘Here, in the year 70 A.D., Claudius Civilus, leader of the men of the Low Lands, stood here and looked down with grinding teeth over the Rhine – watching the legions of Rome marching into the country...’⁵ At this height grandfather Wilhelm Ivens placed his collodium plate camera to capture with great perfection and skill photographs of the castle’s ruins and the ships gliding up and down the Waal River.⁶ Father Ivens aptly felt the magic and historical importance of this place when he had a photograph taken of the castle’s ruin including, through the trees, a vista of the bridge spanning the Waal River, a construction that had been realised on his initiative and through decades of persistence. ‘After eleven centuries...’, father Ivens noted under the photograph, in which he referred to the fact that Charlemagne, and even the Romans before him, had tried to subdue the river at this exact spot.

Father Ivens felt part of History, and imprinted on his son Joris the necessity to also leave his mark on the times in which he lived. Joris Ivens has never filmed the Valkhof, but apparently a panoramic view, a documentary style and the filming of historically important landscapes seem to have been passed on to him genetically. Anyone who looks at the opening images of *The Spanish Earth* (1937), as well as those



of *The 17th Parallel* (1968) will notice that Ivens films a grand panoramic image from a height, using a master-shot which shows a valley with a river below, and a bridge on the right. Even amidst the chaos of war, the memory of this childhood view never left him. The very same view that was such an influence on the Limbourg Brothers.

UNIQUE FAMILIES FROM NIJMEGEN

Just like Joris Ivens, the Limbourg Brothers grew up in a Catholic family, that originated from Germany. Their grandfathers emigrated to Nijmegen to take up a new trait. Johannes de Lymborgh, grandfather to the three brothers, left the small town of Limbourg, situated between Aachen (Germany) and Liège (Belgium); Joris Ivens grandfather, Wilhelm Ivens, said goodbye as a young man to his family in a small village near Cologne (Germany).

From an early age the three brothers, as well as Joris Ivens, were initiated in the secrets of their crafts in the workplace of their families, grandparents en parents. The Brothers were tutored daily by their uncle, Herman Maelwael, a heraldic artist; by their father, Arnold van Lymborch, a wood carver, who were both in the service of the Duke of Gelre, and by their great-uncle Johan Maelwael, painter of royalty at the Burgundy court in Dyon (France).⁷

The young Joris Ivens grew up among the cameras, photographic- and film material of his grandfather’s photo studio and fathers photography shop. The looking at and digesting of visual impressions was essential to both families. Only because of this familial context their perfectly honed skills and visual concentration accumulated, allowing their craft to mature at such an exceptionally high level. Both families provide unique evidence, within three generations, of how an old art form transformed, through innovations of the youngest generation, into a new art form. Within the



Aelbert Cuyp, *The Valkhof (Falcon Courtyard) at Nijmegen from the Northwest*, ca. 1655, oil on canvas. Coll. Indianapolis Museum of Art

Construction of Waalbridge, 1936, initiated by Joris Ivens’ father.

Joris Ivens / Marceline Loridan-Ivens, *Opening sequence Le 17e parallèle, panoramic view on Bèn Hai River with bridge from the hill side*, 1968. © CAPI Films





Maelwael/Van Lymborgh family, the art of heraldic painting – the Dutch word ‘schilderen’ (meaning: to paint) is derived from coat of arms ornamentation – developed into the art of miniature painting, with such novelties as one-page illustrations, atmospheric perspective, individual expression in faces, and a strong sense of realism. In the Ivens family, the transition from 19th century photography into 20th century film art can be seen.

FROM LOCAL TO INTERNATIONAL

Herman, Paul and Johan left at an early age – the oldest was 15 years of age, the youngest 11 – for Paris, to perfect their trade in the goldsmith and painters district. Through bitter competition and rivalry in the acquiring of commissions, the artists soon demonstrated an astonishingly rapid artistic development. The prodigious talent of the brothers, with their brilliant use of colours, lavish splendour, and close observation of the natural world, was almost instantly noticed by Jean de France, Duke of Berry and important patron of the arts at that time.

It is supposed that the brothers, at least the most gifted of the three, Paul van Limbourg, have also made a trip to Italy. When the boys returned temporarily to their native ground, political rivalries between the duchies of Burgundy and Gelre resulted in their incarceration in Brussels. Later on they were employed fully by the Duke of Berry, lived in Bourges, and were the best paid artists of their time. Until the moment of their death they regularly returned to Nijmegen to secure their assets.

Joris Ivens also left at a young age – he was 18 – his parental home in Nijmegen to complete his study in Economics in Rotterdam and Berlin. When his choice to pursue a career in film art had been made, the encounter with the modernist art circles in Berlin, Paris, Moscow and New York ensured a rapid development of a new art form, the documentary film art. Ivens also ran the risk of incarceration on political grounds, had he tried to return to his home town during the 1950's. He also accepted commissions from world leaders: he made the most effective film that advocated President Roosevelt's New Deal policy, and granted at least two requests of the Chinese Prime Minister Zhou En-Lai to make films in China and Vietnam. Eventually, Ivens also settled on the Île-de-France.

PARIS

The geography of Paris' Île de France shares strong similarities with that of Nijmegen and its surroundings: a mountainous region with forests and a fertile valley with a broad river.

The famous calendar sheets of the twelve months, which make up the phenomenal book of hours *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, display twelve castles belonging to the Duke, often with a river and farmlands in the foreground. A few times the River Seine appears in the painting, with the Louvre and Le Châtelet castles in the background.

Hugh Honour and John Fleming already commented that these landscapes are not only panoramas depicting castles, but also literally panoramas from castles.⁸ Timothy Husband, curator of the NY Metropolitan Museum, confirms

in his authoritative publication on the Limbourg Brothers: ‘The compositions, whether set in a vast complex urban architecture or in a deep, expansive landscape are no less than panoramic.’⁹ Painted with the same panoramic view, that they had experienced around the Valkhof in their youth.

In his *Seine* film, Ivens also connects the landscape with the urban culture, as it has extended enormously through the centuries. This time his viewpoint is, unlike the opening images of *The Spanish Earth* and *The 17th Parallel*, which display a panoramic view from a hill, a panoramic vantage point from the river itself. A view he also knew well from his childhood because he, as an able swimmer, was used to swim back to the city, after a dive from the many Rhine barges that trafficked the Waal River.

MINIATURES AND FILM

The painted miniatures and the films are not only separated by many centuries, but both art forms seem to have nothing in common. But Umberto Eco has already remarked that the book of hours illustrated by the Limbourg Brothers, displays a striking cinematographic quality.¹⁰ The Duke of Berry has read the *Très Riches Heures* in very much the same way as we watch television nowadays, poses Eco. The alternations between the hours of the day, the months of the year, the change from day to night and the use of sequences with a narrative development, establish an almost cinematic form of drama. It is a style exercise that Ivens also uses repeatedly in many of his films, such as *Power and the Land* (1940), *La Seine a rencontré Paris* (1957), *Before Spring* (1958), *...à Valparaiso* (1963), *Pour le Mistral* (1965), Rotterdam-Europoort (1966) or *The 17th Parallel* (1968). Through the use of anecdotal miniatures, short stories and vignettes unfolds, through the artificial compression of time, the progression of day into night, or even the change of the seasons. One can ‘read’ Ivens’ films as secular books of hours.

SOCIAL AND ARTISTIC REALITY

The Limbourg Brothers and Joris Ivens made their groundbreaking art during extremely violent times. The Hundred Years War (1337-1453), the bubonic plague and pervasive poverty struck France when the Limbourg Brothers stayed in Paris and Bourges.

Their patron, the Duke of Berry, showed himself a brutal ruler, who could only afford his lavish collection of castles by imposing heavy taxes on his agricultural workers and citizens. Furiously, the inhabitants of Paris drove the Duke from the city and set fire to his castle.

All this remains invisible in the miniature paintings. In spite of their vivid sense of realism, the three brothers do not show the social reality of their day, instead they seek to present an idealised image of peace and prosperity, of Good Government. The former director of the Bibliothèque Nationale once described Jean de France as ‘an insatiable exploiter of the poor, but with exquisite taste.’¹¹ As commissioner and patron, he accorded his artists full freedom to put their creative and innovative talents to optimal use.

Joris Ivens filmed at five war fronts, in what historian Eric Hobsbawm termed ‘the Age of Extremes’.¹² Ivens’ cinematic career coincides with the rise and fall of the Russian revo-

lution, the Great Depression of the 1930's, two world wars and the bloody process of decolonization and national independence in the Third World. Despite the violence, all of Ivens’ films always have a happy ending. His films deal with utopian views and the hope that together with the extremities of the technical and industrial revolution, a social revolution would also be possible. In spite of what he witnessed, either in the presence of brutal rulers, or as brutal consequences of their rule, he filmed idealised images of peace and prosperity.

REALISM AND IDEALIZATION

The documentary character of both the miniature paintings and films is therefore not an end in itself: registering or coverage are not the objected goals. Reality is closely observed, with a falcon-like gaze, and then artily captured, but digested in a personal way. The unflinching realism serves a higher purpose, be it religiously, politically or artistically. Both miniatures and films are not idealized images in the classical sense, the goal is not to beautify the visible reality, so an ugly face is still an ugly face. The mowers, threshers and sheep shearers depicted in the miniatures work by the sweat of their brow, and have the same physical appearance as the farmers and dike workers in Ivens’ films. On the February sheet by the Limbourg Brothers, as well as in Ivens’ last film, some characters are seen granting a casual and unembarrassed view of their naked crotches. This has nothing to do with eroticism, but is instead a custom rooted in an old peasant culture, which attaches little value to underwear. The sense of idealization that these artists from Nijmegen employ, resides therefore not in that which is depicted, but instead in the use of scenery, editing and the narrative relationship that people have with each other and with nature. Both the idealist scenarios of the books of hours and the films visualise the deeply felt utopian desire for harmony and justice among men and in nature, on a everyday and human level. In spite of the misery they witnessed in the world around them.

TRANSITION

Within the framework of their respective fiction, the books of hours by the Limbourg Brothers, as well as the documentary films made by Ivens, reflect their era better than many other artworks. The books of hours herald the birth of humanism, the transition from a feudal medieval world to a bourgeois culture during the Renaissance. In Ivens’ film oeuvre, the turbulent transition of a seven-thousand year old agrarian society into a modern industrial world is made visible on a global level. A world of geographical and cultural migration, of economic and mental globalisation. In the last ten years of his life, Ivens grows more aware of the limitations of this modernist world view, of ideologies, and of science and technology. It becomes evident in a film about the wind in China, in which Ivens says: ‘It is not only science that works miracles. I also believe in magic.’ In its form, neither a feature film nor a documentary, *A Tale of the Wind* (1988) is a key film, that looks ahead at the film art of the 21st century, in which genre boundaries continue to blur. Through its content the film tries to convey that spiri-



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Wilhelm Ivens, *Panorama view on Beek*, 1890 Coll. Royal Family, The Hague

Wilhelm Ivens, *Panorama view on Beek*, 1890 Coll. Royal Family, The Hague

Joris Ivens, *Opening sequence The Spanish Earth*, panoramic view on Tajo valley, 1936. © CAPI Films

Joris Ivens, *Filmstill la Seine a rencontré Paris*, view on Notre-Dame Cathedral, 1957. © CAPI Films

Joris Ivens, *Film still from ...à Valparaiso*, 1963. © CAPI Films

Joris Ivens, *Film still from ...à Valparaiso*, 1963. © ARGOS / CAPI Films

Storm Stufkens, 180° panoramic view on Nijmegen and river Waal, 2009. © Photographer

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Aelbert Cuyp, *View on The Valkhof (Falcon Courtyard) from the South-east and river Waal at Nijmegen*, ca. 1655, oil on canvas. Coll. National Galleries of Scotland

Wilhelm Ivens, *View on The Valkhof and river Waal*, 1890. Coll. Familyarchive Nooteboom-Ivens, Nijmegen

Wilhelm Ivens, *View on Nijmegen and river Waal*, ca. 1890. Coll. Regional Archive Nijmegen





ceived in the 1950's to film a 'bataille de nuages', a battle of the clouds. An idea that takes hold of him and for the realisation of which he will continue to strive. Not only in the Mistral film, but also in a script titled 'The Clouds' (1963): 'So thereabouts we start. In the middle of the polder, in the middle of a painting or a cloud. (...) The clouds are closely connected to the lives, work and dreams of the people who live on the flat land. It involves the sea, and also the poets.' For the Rotterdam film Ivens wants to use a jet fighter, diving from the clouds to the harbour below, and then back up again into the clouds, to plummet down again to the

polder landscape. Since no jet fighter is made available the plan never sees fruition. Ivens returns to it himself when, in 1972, he visits the mountains and clouds of Xijiang and Tibet, and conceives a 'sequence avion' as part of the Yukong series. He develops this in a screenplay entitled 'The Roof-top of the World', which uses exclusively aerial sequences filmed from an aeroplane, from the highest mountain peaks of Tibet to the east coast of China, and from there into the ocean and the depths of the sea.¹⁵ Eventually, all that is realised from this concept are the aerial scenes from A Tale of the Wind, involving the landscapes and mythical monuments of the wind.

BLUE

Even this cosmic notion to embrace heaven and earth can be traced back to a childhood memory of Joris Ivens when, in the summer of 1922, he is lying on his back on the small beach that borders on the Waal River by Nijmegen. To his loved one he writes: 'Yesterday I was on the Waal, the day was a godsend, the sky clear and deep blue, a day on which it feels good to lie on your back and look at the sky and suddenly shake your head, arms spread wide apart; when you feel a power growing within yourself – a vast sense of freedom, like gazing ever deeper into the blue – as in eyes you want to peer into it. These days I'm just a horrid lazybones.'¹⁶ The Brothers undoubtedly have had a similar experience on the banks of the Waal. On their August sheet the first nudes in Western art can be seen without any classical or religious connotation. In the waters near the castle of Etampes, some farmers are seen relaxing and swimming, looking for coolness in the sweltering summer heat. A commonplace experience that, through the visual imagination of the brothers, similar to that of Ivens, has nested itself permanently in art- and film history. A commonplace experience that, through the visual imagination of the brothers, similar to that of Ivens, has nested itself permanently in art- and film history.

VISUAL, VERY VISUAL

Joris Ivens has repeatedly pointed out the importance of the visual arts in relation to his cinematic oeuvre: 'Many ask me which director has influenced me the most...and then I answer that most of it does not come from other filmmakers, but from the art of painting from my own intuition in the tradition of Dutch painterly art.'¹⁷ And: 'The visual arts have a revolutionary influence on me, because my talent is purely visual. Very visual! And that is part of our Dutch culture. Herein lie the roots of my visual perception, the sense of reality.'¹⁸ I'm a Dutch realist. I speak the language of Van Gogh and Brueghel.'¹⁹ That Ivens does not refer to his world famous fellow inhabitants of Nijmegen is hardly surprising. The books of hours by the Limbourg Brothers belong to the national treasures of France (Musée Condé, Bibliothèque Nationale) and the

US (Metropolitan Museum).

As late as 1953 the city archivist of Kleve, Friedrich Gorissen, found in the Nijmegen municipal archives evidence that links the background of the Limbourg Brothers, who before that moment had been described as Flemish artists from the Meuse region, directly to the city of Nijmegen.²⁰ It then took a further fifty years before their birthplace once again embraced these prodigal sons as their own. Through these artists a Dutch-Rhineland tradition comes to light, which marries an acute observation of the mundane in the physical world – paying attention to even the most trivial details – to metaphysics. This Dutch-Rhineland cultural sub-sector, situated roughly between the cities of Utrecht and Cologne, with Nijmegen as navel between east, west, north and south has, in the greater part of Dutch history, played a more prominent role than the county of Holland. This cultural context of Nijmegen's artists sheds a new light on Ivens' oeuvre.

Exhibition 'The Art of Illumination. The Limbourg Brothers and the Belles Heures of Jean of France, Duke of Berry',
J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles: 18 November 2008 – 6 February 2009
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: 21 September 2009 – 3 January 2010
Timothy Husband, *The Art of Illumination. The Limbourg Brothers and the Belles Heures of Jean of France, Duke of Berry*, Yale University Press.
André Stufkens, 'De rivier een zee...een zéé. De Waal als muze – The river a sea...a sea. The river Waal as a muse',
NUMAGA 2009.

- 1 Filmmaker Chris Marker remembers this statement from Ivens after seeing his *Le joli mai* – The beautiful month of May in 1960. Referred to in *Weisse Taube auf dunklem Grund* – White Doves on a Dark Background, 50 years anniversary of the Filmfestival Leipzig, 1977, p. 136. See also: André Stufkens, 'Since the time of the Cyclopes...Joris Ivens and the twentieth century, an introduction', in *Joris Ivens, Passages. Joris Ivens and the art of this century*, Valkhof Museum, Nijmegen: 1999, p. 10.
- 2 Joris Ivens, *The Camera and I*, Seven Seas Books, Berlin: 1969, p. 13. The first draft for this work was already written in 1941-1943 and edited by film historian Jay Leyda.
- 3 Martha Gellhorn, a good friend of Joris Ivens, who stayed with Hemingway in Madrid during the filming of *The Spanish Earth*, wrote as a war correspondent on the violence of the war in Nijmegen in 'A Little Dutch Town' in *The Face of War* (1959).
- 4 In the 17th century, Rembrandt's painting of the Batavian army commander Claudius Civilus and his soldiers swearing the oath adorned the newly built City Hall in Amsterdam, as it was indicative of the independent spirit mentioned above. After just one year – in 1665 – it was replaced, since the Amsterdam regents thought the painting too crude in its honesty. At the end of the 18th century, the Dutch revolutionaries, following the spirit of the French Revolution, called their republic the Batavian Republic.
- 5 Joris Ivens, *The Camera and I*, see note 2, p. 13.
- 6 See for Wilhelm Ivens and his relationship to Joris Ivens' work: André



- Stufkens, 'Old and new objectivity. Wilhelm, Kees and Joris Ivens, a family tradition with the mechanical eye' in Wilhelm Ivens (1849-1904), Photographer of Nijmegen, The Valkhof Museum 2007, pp. 44-64.
- 7 For more information about this family and the Limbourg Brothers: Pieter Roelofs and Rob Dückers et al, *The Limbourg Brothers. Nijmegen Masters at the French Court 1400-1416*, Ludion 2005.
 - 8 Hugh Honour & John Fleming, *A World History of Art*, London 1992, p. 365.
 - 9 Timothy Husband, *The Art of Illumination. The Limbourg Brothers and the Belles Heures of Jean of France, Duc de Berry*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, Yale University Press, 2008, p. 4.
 - 10 Umberto Eco, in his preface to the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, Paris: Editions Seghers 1991, p. 7-9.
 - 11 Edmond Pognon, *Très Riches Heures de Duc de Berry*, 1990, p. 9.
 - 12 Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes. The short twentieth century 1914-1991*, London: 1994.
 - 13 Speech held by Joris Ivens before the city council of Nijmegen at the acceptance of the town's Honorary Citizenship, 4 October 1988.
 - 14 Joris Ivens in an interview with Claire Devarrieux and Christine de Navacelle, *Cinéma du Réel*, 1988.
 - 15 Joris Ivens, 'Scénario pour la séquence avion', manuscript 10 December 1972, and 'Notes sur la Séquence: La physionomie géographique de la Chine', manuscript 17 December 1972. JIA.
 - 16 Joris Ivens in a letter to Miep Balguérie-Guérin, n.d. (presumably 22 August 1922). JIA.
 - 17 Joris Ivens in an English interview by Anatole Stern, Warsaw 1948, typescript in the Hans Wegener Archive.
 - 18 Joris Ivens in an interview by Petra Lataster, in *Berlin Encounters, Foreign Artists in Berlin 1918 to 1933*, Berlin: 1987, p. 127.
 - 19 Joris Ivens, interview by Jan Bart Klaster, *Het Parool*, 18.11.1978, p. 26.
 - 20 Friedrich Gorissen published his find in the *Contributions and Statements of Gelre* in 1953 and 1955.

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The Limbourg Brothers,
The Month October, from the
Book of Tides, *Les Très Riches
Heures du duc de Berry*,
1412-1416. Musée Condé,
Chantilly

p 27:
Jan van Goyen, *View on The
Valkhof Castle*, 1641, oil on
canvas. Coll. Museum Het
Valkhof, Nijmegen.

Joris Ivens, *Film still from
Pour le Mistral*, 1966.
© ARGOS / CAPI Films

Joris Ivens and Marceline
Loridan-Ivens, film still
from *A Tale of the Wind*,
1988, © CAPI Films

Storm Stufkens, 180°
*panoramic view on Nijmegen
and river Waal*, 2009.
© Photographer



Doc's KINGDOM 2009

Re-questioning the political image

This annual festival for the documentary film, held in Serpa, in the remote Alentejo region in Portugal, reaches its ninth edition this year. Structured around a central theme, the festival offers many documentary films, followed by collective debates, the purpose of which is to establish a dialogue between the filmmakers who are present and the audience. This debate serves greatly to deepen the experience of the specific films, and also offers a reflection on documentary film art in general, its different stylistic and cultural approaches and the way documentary film art serves as a reflection of the time. The 2009 edition focuses on the 'Re-questioning of the political image', and some of the filmmakers present are Eduardo Escorel, Robert Fenz, Sylvain George, Jean-Pierre Gorin, Manuel Mozos, Aliona Polunina, Abderrahmane Sissako, Gonalo Tocha. The Joris Ivens Magazine spoke to Eduardo Escorel and Robert Fenz.

Interview
Eduardo Escorel

ROB COMANS

Is there such a thing as a 'political image', as opposed to a political film?
'I feel they are both part of the same equation. It's hard to talk about political films and not at the same time include in that definition political images as well, since they very much belong to the same medium, share the same entity. I think that the concept of the political film has changed, and that it is harder to define nowadays. Current directors don't seem to be interested in teaching anymore, their focus seems to be more on understanding a complex world'.

What makes a film politically charged?

'I think for a film to be called political, it needs to present some sort of curiosity, to set out to reveal something that was hidden before. By taking the audience on that journey and by unveiling that secret a new experience and growing awareness are created for the people who see the film. Political films, in short, should have that element of revelation in them'.

Do you consider yourself to be a political filmmaker?

'Absolutely not. I don't believe that film can change society's ills, that is a notion that we have cured ourselves of. Politics may be able to change society, but it is not up to art to do that. All one can hope for is that film may be able to change individuals, but society as a whole will not be changed by art'.

Do you think it is possible to be a filmmaker and not be political? Can filmmaking and ideology exclude each other?

'Very much so. As I've said before, a lot of films nowadays seem to be lacking some sort of zeal, a desire to instruct, to teach. Today directors tend to simplify things, and seem more interested in clarifying the workings of a nefarious world. I think that this is a difficult moment for the documentary as a genre. The different modes have all been tried out, and been taken as far as they can go. The audiences for documentary films are getting smaller, and as lesser people see documentary films, this tends to result into a decreasing commitment with documentary film art'.

The films at this edition of Doc's Kingdom are (political) documentaries from different decades (1960's up to the present). Do you feel there is a difference in political content during these decades, and the way ideology is being expressed cinematically?

'Of course. Naturally, the political issues vary during different decades, and the way films reflect these differ as well. The sense of radicalism that you saw in the 1930's is gone. Someone like Michael Moore for instance, I would not typify as a political director. I don't mean to put down his work, but I regard him as more of a showman than as someone who is seriously politically active. I do feel that film has become a more democratic medium, and with that I mean that the means to make films have become more widely available to people. Back in Rio I teach film courses, and my students can

obtain camera's, technical equipment and software more easily than in the time that I was a student. Which is good. Another example is a film project that has been going on for twenty years now in Brazil: the Indian population is being instructed in filmmaking, and after that they are given camera's, to film their own lives and their world from their own perspective, as opposed to the more anthropological point of view from which they have been seen for a long time. So that is a good example of film being a democratic medium, available to a large group of people, as well a political medium, as it carries within itself that revelatory element: the audience learns something about a culture they have been unfamiliar with before, and they are being taught by the Indians themselves through film'.

Jean Cocteau said: 'If you don't have a concrete idea, then go into the world and improvise.' I agree with that. You can discover a lot but it takes training. You have to learn your camera, you have to learn how images speak and that takes practice. When you are able to improvise it allows you to go into the street to find images that communicate so much more than just at random shooting. So it's not about taking the idea literally. It's rather to give a sense of feeling about the subject. Joris Ivens did that, but nowadays a lot of filmmakers are working in this way. Chantal Akerman when she filmed *L'autre c  t  * she had a certain idea about what she wanted. But what happened there, shaped the film. Robert Gardner, what he noticed while making *Forest of Bliss*, was the steps in Benares. So he decided to go every morning with his camera to the steps and let in a way the steps be-

Antonio Cunha,
Landscape of Alentejo
(Portugal), surrounding the
village of Serpa, 2005.  
Photographer

Your films, especially Meditation on Revolution 5 that we just saw, has some striking resemblances with the film Rain. Of course it's different in many ways but the rainy sidewalks, the footsteps in the puddles, the close ups of metal and above all it's all filmed in grainy black and white.
Yes I can see what you mean. The dark images at night in rainy New York. People walking in the street. But this is another movie. It has its own theme.

Yes I can see that. Maybe it's because you have a similar way of working? Ivens, when he filmed Rain, would go into the street with a hand-held camera and improvised. He only knew that he wanted to film rain. There was no detailed scenario that he followed. Is that similar to your approach?
Yes, the way that Ivens held the camera was very innovative. And the fact that he had one theme, rain, and that he filmed very freely is something that I myself do very much. I usually start a film with an idea. Something that I want to investigate. But I also try to let the circumstances of the location, what happens when I arrive, have a huge influence. So there is an idea like you saw in *Meditation on revolution*. It has an overarching theme. I explore the theme in different contexts. I went to Cuba, Rio, Mexico City and Mississippi and made different films. But they all deal with the notion of revolution.

And what is then your way of working on this theme?

I go into the street and improvise. I always remember what

come the director of the film. Starting from the steps, everyday something happened.

Is it not dangerous to let it just happen? Isn't there the risk that you lose control over your theme and the film might scatter?
O no. As an artist you always have enough obsessive quality. Chantal Akerman's obsession led her to particular spaces that she wanted to document. And through those obsessions a structure emerged. In one instance, she returns to one part of the wall. This becomes the place where she returns to. That allows a transition to take place and rethink what you are looking at, what you have already seen. So I think there is no fear that it's going to scatter. Maybe when ten filmmakers made a film about a subject, and you want to combine all the images that they made together, it could get scattered. But I do believe that an author has a direction, and sense will come out of exploration. I go into a project, a theme, and I'm going to go and find how to speak of the project through my eyes. Maybe in a similar way that Ivens had found a way to speak about the rain. He didn't go with a pen and paper. He went with his camera, and his images are going to bring me to that other spot, that speaks of rain in a cinematographic alphabet.

Interview
Robert Fenz

RENS VAN MEEGEN

Eduardo Escorel was born in 1945, in S  o Paulo (Brazil). After obtaining a degree in Social and Political Science at the University of Rio de Janeiro, he started his film career as an (assistant) editor, sound recording engineer and assistant director. From 1965 to 1975 he worked as an editor on several films by one of the most acclaimed directors of the Brazilian Cinema Novo movement, Glauber Rocha (1938-1981). One of those films, *Terre em transe / Earth Entranced* (1967) is also part of this year's film program of Doc's Kingdom. This production, Rocha's most influential film abroad, offers an intense, operatic spectacle that conveys a true sense of the violence and irrationality that characterize electoral politics in Brazil. The protagonist is a poet-journalist who abandons his elite milieu for radical politics, but becomes as disillusioned with his new comrades as he was with the cowardice of the intellectual class. In 1975, Eduardo Escorel directed his first feature film, *Love Lessons*, and has been working as a director ever since. Several of his documentary films, *O Assalto ao Poder / Assault on Power* (2002), *J* (2008) and *O Tempo e o Lugar / Time and Place* (2008) are being screened during this year's festival. Eduardo Escorel lives in Rio de Janeiro.

Robert Fenz is an original young filmmaker. He worked as a cameraman and assistant director together with Chantal Akerman on her film *L'autre c  t  * about the Mexican border. He has his own distinct body of work, which he presented at this year's Doc's Kingdom, where he was one of the main guest. In the series *Meditation on Revolution* (five parts) he explores the definition of the word 'revolution', in different parts of the world. In his experimental short film *Crossings* he explores the lines that separate two nations, Mexico and the United States. Beside showing his own films, he was asked to put together a program of filmmakers that where an inspiration to him. In this inspiring program, Johan van der Keuken and Raymond Depardon were included.





THIS IS WAR!

Robert Capa, Joris Ivens and John Fernhout in China, 1938

Rixt A. Bosma

ON JANUARY 21ST 1938, ROBERT CAPA SAILED ABOARD THE FRENCH SHIP ARAMIS FROM MARSEILLE TO HONG-KONG. FOR EIGHT MONTHS HE WOULD REPORT FROM NORTHEAST CHINA ON THE SECOND SINO-JAPANESE WAR (1937-1945). THE THEN 25-YEAR-OLD CAPA WAS WORKING ON AN UNUSUAL COMMISSION. THE YEAR BEFORE, PHOTOGRAPHING THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR, CAPA HAD OPERATED IN RELATIVE FREEDOM, WITH ASSIGNMENTS FROM OR IN COOPERATION WITH SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINES, SUCH AS LIFE. NOW HE HAD BEEN ASKED BY JORIS IVENS TO ASSIST HIM FILMING AND TO WORK AS A STILL PHOTOGRAPHER FOR *THE 400 MILLION* (1939). THE THREE HAD MET IN SPAIN, WHILE IVENS AND HIS CAMERAMAN JOHN FERNHOUT WERE FILMING THEIR DOCUMENTARY *THE SPANISH EARTH*.



RESEARCH IN PHOTO COLLECTIONS

Thirty silver gelatin prints made by Robert Capa in China in 1938 in the photography collection of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam formed the starting point for my photo historical research with a focus on the 'photographs as objects', following their historic trajectories from origin towards usage. One of the main questions is how and under which conditions the photographs were made by Capa in China and in what way and to what extent they influenced or determined our image of the Sino-Japanese War. Besides the photos in the Print Room of the Rijksmuseum, the archives of the Robert Capa and Cornell Capa Archive at the International Center of Photography (New York), Spaarnestad Photo (Haarlem), Filmmuseum Amsterdam, Special Collections of the University Library Leiden and the European Foundation Joris Ivens (Nijmegen) among others were of special interest.

UNDER CONTROL

In Europe the Sino-Japanese War was generally seen as the Eastern frontier of a battle similar to the one which was fought in Spain at that time: the resistance against violent fascist elements. Therefore, many turned their eyes to the developments in China. Japan had taken control of the northern province Manchuria in 1932 and there reigned a constant fear of further Japanese advance and the escalation into war. These expectations indeed became reality when the Chinese Nationalist army lead by 'generalissimo' Chiang Kai-shek refused any further concessions with the Japanese at the Marco Polo Bridge near Beijing. This military encounter heralded the beginning of the second Sino-Japanese War and in 1941 merged into World War II. Their common enemy caused the Chinese Nationalist government and the Communists to join forces after a decade of political and military clashes.

- 1 An., During the shooting of *The 400 Million*, on tank: Israel Epstein and Joris Ivens, on front row: Robert Capa, John Fernhout, Chuck. 1938. Coll. JIA
- 2 An., Robert Capa (right) photographing the battle at Tai'erzhuang, 1938. Coll. JIA
- 3 An., During the shooting of *The 400 Million*: Robert Capa, John Fernhout and Joris Ivens, with Chinese censors. 1938. Coll. JIA
- 4 An., During the shooting of *The 400 Million*, on monument: John Fernhout, Joris Ivens and Robert Capa. 1938. Coll. JIA



1 An., Joris Ivens and Robert Capa, 1938. Coll. JIA

2 An. Robert Capa, John Fernhout, Joris Ivens sitting under a train, 1938. Coll. JIA

3 An., Robert Capa, Israel Epstein, John Fernhout, Joris Ivens and Jack Young in a train, 1938. Coll. JIA

4 Schweizerische Illustrierte, 'Fighting China', article with photos of Robert Capa, 1938

After their arrival in China, in early March 1938, which was followed by a month of negotiating with the Chinese censors, Capa was perceived by the authorities as a member of the film team, rather than an independent photo journalist. The censors, who worked under the supervision of Chiang Kai-shek, appointed a general to accompany Ivens, cameraman Fernhout and Capa on their journey through China. A Chinese cameraman would join them with a 16 mm camera to record simultaneously as they where filming scenes for *The 400 Million*. Only after approval of these film reels was Ivens permitted to send his own footage to Hollywood for developing. While Ivens and Fernhout had their troubles with the censors, Capa felt concerned about his own work. The obligations towards Ivens and the filming, the constraints the authorities forced upon them and his dependence on the work and travel schedule of the production of *The 400 Million* left him little freedom. In April 1938 Capa wrote to his agent in New York: 'They are very fine fellows, but their movie is their private affair (and they let me feel that) and the still pictures are completely secondary'.

NOT AN EASY TASK

In the first week of April, Capa and the film crew were finally allowed to travel closer towards the war front. When the Battle of Tai'ershuang was fought, the Chinese authorities gave them permission to enter the war grounds. This battle in the little village 800 km northeast of the government headquarters in Hankow was considered to be the first great victory for the Chinese since the outbreak of the war and therefore an event not to be missed by the foreign reporters. For Capa it must have been a relief to be finally able to get close to the actual events of the war, after sitting idle for more than a month. But he felt the burden of the 'adjusted' agreement with Ivens and Fernhout: 'The pictures of Tai'ershuang are not bad, but it really was not easy to photograph well if you have a big film-camera on your back, 4 censors around, then to help [...] the film-operator and then not to photograph anything that appears in the film... In one word, I have to photograph to the side and don't have many time to do it either.'

Robert Capa nevertheless did manage to produce a considerable number of photographs of the Sino-Japanese War: stories on the Battle of Tai'ershuang, the bombings of Hankow, the Yellow River floods, the strategic importance of the Chinese railroads and portraits of general and madame Chiang Kai-shek would be some highlights of his journalistic work. His reportages would be published in Life, with whom he had arranged an assignment for China, and numerous other international illustrated magazines like the French Ce Soir and Regards, the English Weekly Illustrated, the Dutch Katholieke Illustratie and Het Leven and the Swiss Schweizer Illustrierte Zeitung. The Robert Capa and Cornell Capa Archive at the International Center for Photog-

raphy in New York, which contains the most comprehensive collection of his photographs, negatives and written documents, holds around 850 gelatin silver prints of his journey through China. The majority bears the stamp Pix Publishing Inc. on the verso; it was this photo agency that represented Robert Capa while he worked in China³.

HUMAN MISERY

For the first time in his career Capa saw himself confronted with a large distance between the work in the field and the process of getting his work published. Not only the literal distance between him and his agents, colleagues and family in Europe and the U.S.A. was unprecedented, but also the language barrier, his isolated position within the film team and the controlled working conditions enforced by the Chinese censors made that his adaptability and patience was tested. Above all, the lack of freedom of movement resulted in a distance between his camera and the subject. A distance also Joris Ivens recalled when looking back at his first trip to the country with which he would develop a lifelong relation. Still, Ivens claimed to have seen 'the ritual signals of the war – the broken or mutilated bodies, the (...) refugees, the distress, the fear, the human misery, but also the courage, and despite the regrettable efforts of my censors my camera had caught a few glimpses that (...) accused the war. All wars.'⁴ Both Capa and Ivens had, within this restricted space, to look for signs and details which would represent the larger picture of the Sino-Japanese War.

WORK PHOTOS

During the study of Capa's photographic reports from China, in press prints and published form, I came across a seperate body of work which had a completely different character: photographs that posses little or no news value, but are visual accounts of the working conditions of the film team. They where made by Capa, and some of them by John Fernhout and the Chinese crew members; most likely they exchanged their still cameras occasionally. These 'work photos', or peeks 'behind the scenes', are not only part of the collection of the Print Room at the Rijksmuseum: the most extensive collection (around 80 prints) can be found in the archives of Joris Ivens at the European Foundation Joris Ivens in Nijmegen. The work photos provide a unique insight into the relationship between the members of the film team (for the larger part consisting of Chinese officials and helpers), their (means of) travel, their waiting and working. An important aspect is their function in the identification of places, events and people.

A striking example of the work photograph as means of identification is shown by the portrait (inv. no. 4524) of John Fernhout and Joris Ivens meeting general Sun Lieng-chung (Li Tsung-jen) of the 35th division of the Kuomintang (Tai'ershuang, April 1938). Another image (inv. no. 4593)

shows the core of the film team, together with production assistant Jack Young, a Chinese with American education, in the foreground, who is sitting next to Ivens and Fernhout in what appears to be the interior of a train. Capa is leaning forward on the windowsill, next to him with glasses and a smile on his face, looking in the camera, is the Polish journalist Israel Epstein who worked for the American news agency United Press and accompanied the team for a part of their trip. The third example of a work photo (inv. no. 4564) functions as a bridge between the published stories and the working conditions. On this photograph, most likely made by John Fernhout, we see the subject of both the filmmakers and the photographer. The large Debie Parvo 35 mm film camera on a tripod is pointed at camouflaged artillery, near Tai'ershuang. In the last half of The 400 Million scenes of this artillery are included. In the right corner of the frame, Robert Capa can be seen in action with his compact Contax II by Zeiss Ikon. From this angle he must have taken a picture of the working conditions, with the film camera and probably Ivens in sight. But in Capa's archived 'stories', a photograph taken with a similar point of view as this image can be found⁵. It was published in 1938 in the Schweizer Illustrierte Zeitung⁶ and in Life⁷ as part of photo stories on the Chinese defense and the battle of Tai'ershuang. It shows that the work photos may be regarded as key documents in understanding the creativity and skills of both the war photographer and the filmmaker in reporting of a war in a framework of strictly controlled conditions.

'This is War!', Robert Capa and Gerda Taro travelling photo exhibition (New York, Milan, London, Brussels), October 10, 2009 -January 3, 2010. The Netherlands Photomuseum, Rotterdam, curated by the International Center of Photography in New York.

- 1 Letter by Robert Capa to Peter Köster, Hankow, April 25, 1938, New York, ICP, RCCCA, no. T C14. The letters from China were originally written in Hungarian and German and were, in the sixties, translated into English.
- 2 Letter by Robert Capa to Peter Köster, Hankow, April 25, 1938, New York, ICP, RCCCA, no. T C14.
- 3 Pix Publishing Inc., based in New York, received Capa's exposed negatives and notes for captions. Pix edited the material and produced typed captions to the 'stories'; the division was made by a certain date, place, subject or event.
- 4 Joris Ivens, Robert Destanque, *Aan welke kant en in welk heelal. De geschiedenis van een leven*, Amsterdam 1983, p. 195.
- 5 Robert Capa, press print with stamp Pix Publishing Inc. on verso, April 1938, silver gelatin print, 18 x 24 cm., Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv. no. RP-F-2005-107-137.
- 6 *Schweizer Illustrierte Zeitung*, nr. 35, 31 August 1938, XXVII Jahrgang, p. 1088-1097.
- 7 *Life*, May 23, 1938, p. 18-21.

Robert Capa

The Hungarian-American war photographer Robert Capa (born as Endre Friedmann in Budapest, Hungary, 1913 – Thai Binh, Vietnam 1954) lived since the early thirties in exile in Germany and studied Political Sciences at the Deutsche Hochschule für Politik in Berlin. In this period Capa had his first publication of his photographs: he portrayed Leon Trotsky in Copenhagen (1931). In 1933 Capa left for Paris; rising Nazi-ideology caused a hostile climate towards Jews. In Paris he invented -together with his great love and colleague photographer Gerda Taro- his pseudonym Robert Capa and shaped his strong ambition to become 'a famous American photojournalist'. He first established international fame through the publication of his photographs from the Spanish Civil War. The image of the falling Spanish soldier (1936) taken at the very moment he is hit by a deadly bullet became an icon and gave a great boost to Capa's starting career. Other reports which were widely published in the international press included China (1938), The Battle of Rio Segre (Spain, 1938), Refugees from Barcelona (Spain, 1939), D-Day (France, 1944) and the liberation of Leipzig and Paris (1945). In 1947, together with colleague photographers George Rodger, Henri Cartier-Bresson and David Seymour, he founded the cooperative photography agency Magnum Photos. It has grown since into a world famous agency with offices in New York, London, Paris and Tokyo and its photographers have chronicled world events from a highly respected documentary practice. Robert Capa died an untimely death in 1954, after stepping on a land mine in Vietnam, which was occupied by France.



Rixt Amarins Bosma (Netherlands, 1979) studied Art History at Leiden University and graduated in 2003 with the thesis *Contemporary Documentary Photography and the Postmodern Thinking. Representations of the Genocide in Rwanda*. Since, she has worked as a freelancer, contributing to various projects as project manager of travelling photography exhibitions, web editor and photo historical researcher, with a special interest in documentary photography. The research on Capa (which started in September 2008 and was finished in April 2009) was carried out with support of the Manfred and Hanna Heiting Fund and will result in a book. The scholarship was founded in 2005 to encourage young researchers from all over the world to study the history of photography, with a focus on the collection of photographs in the Print Room of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam.

An., John Fernhout, Joris Ivens and Robert Capa sitting on a destroyed Japanese tank, 1938. Coll. JIA

An. John Fernhout, Joris Ivens and Robert Capa, 1938. Coll. JIA





The Maoist Mise-en-Scène:

ANTONIONI, IVENS, AND THE CHINESE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

JIE LI

AS CHINA BEGAN TO RE-ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH WESTERN DEMOCRACIES IN THE 1970s, PREMIER ZHOU ENLAI INVITED TWO RENOWNED EUROPEAN FILMMAKERS, MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI AND JORIS IVENS, TO VISIT THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC WITH THEIR CAMERAS. BOTH FILMMAKERS SOUGHT TO BRING BACK "A JUST IMAGE" OF A COUNTRY AND A REVOLUTION THAT HAD BEEN SO IDEALIZED AMONG THE LEFT IN WESTERN EUROPE. NEVERTHELESS, FIRST RELEASED IN 1972, ANTONIONI'S *CHUNG KUO* WAS DENOUNCED IN 'THE PEOPLE'S DAILY' FOR HAVING "A VICIOUS MOTIVE" AND "DESPICABLE TRICKS," AND THE ENTIRE CHINESE POPULATION WERE THEN MOBILIZED INTO A MASS CRITICISM CAMPAIGN AGAINST A MOVIE FEW OF THEM HAD SEEN. WHEN IVENS AND LORIDAN-IVENS RELEASED THEIR 12-HOUR EPIC *HOW YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS* IN 1976, HOWEVER, HISTORY WAS JUST TURNING A NEW PAGE WITH THE DEATH OF MAO ZEDONG AND THE REVELATION OF ATROCITIES COMMITTED DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION, THEREBY BRINGING THE FILM CYCLE, WHICH HAD PORTRAYED OF THE MAOIST ENTERPRISE IN A GLORIOUS LIGHT, INTO THE SHADOW OF OBLIVION.

Michelangelo Antonioni in Beijing, 1972.

Joris Ivens / Marceline Loridan-Ivens, Filmstills
Histoire d'un Ballon (from the series *Comment Yukong déplaça les montagnes*, 1976.
© CAPI Films

After some thoughtful commentary on one or both films from renowned film and cultural critics such as Umberto Eco, Susan Sontag, and Serge Daney in the late 1970s, these monumental works have received but minimal critical attention. Moreover, both films had practically disappeared from public circulation except for occasional retrospectives of their auteurs at film festivals. Fortunately, *Chung Kuo* has become available on DVD in 2007, while two films of the *Yukong* series, *The Pharmacy* and *A Football Incident*, will become available through the 2008 release of the Joris Ivens DVD-box. At this historical juncture, it seems particularly apt to take a fresh look at these once controversial films and ask what they might still reveal to us, not only about China during the Cultural Revolution, but also about the politics and ethics of image-making across a cultural abyss.

I would like to begin with a sequence in the middle of *Chung Kuo* that was widely criticized as an archetypal encounter between a Western filmmaker and his non-Western subjects. Here, Antonioni and his crew entered a Hunan village that was not part of their official itinerary. The surprise of the villagers, mixed with what the voiceover identifies as curiosity and fear, is visible in their blatant stares into the camera, which is said to 'mystify, exoticize, and colonize' them.¹ While this is certainly true on some level, a closer look at the sequence might yield an alternative reading: while villagers gather in front of their doors to look at their unannounced guests, the film observes with image and voiceover that all doors are framed with revolutionary slogans—an official ideological frame into which they are to appear and disappear as actors according to script. Indeed,

the village chief is filmed to give instructions for the elderly and the shabbily dressed to go out of sight. Perhaps he is only trying to be patriotic and not make his village and his country lose face in the eyes of the foreigner, yet it is by the same logic of exclusion that the Great Famine (1959-1962) that took tens of millions of lives left so little photographic testimony; and that migrant workers were driven out of Beijing during the 2008 Olympics.² The villagers in Antonioni's film, however, had not yet rehearsed their act, and their centrifugal flights out of the film frame that pursues them only serve to highlight the boundaries between the on-screen and off-screen spaces. So while Antonioni is pinning down his film victims like butterflies, he is also making them *visible* in a way that they had never been before and even making visible the panoptic scopic regime under which they had lived for decades.

In the same year that Antonioni filmed these Hunan villagers, Ivens and Loridan brought their crew to Xinjiang in Northwest China, chosen for its population of Uighur minorities and for a 'scoop,' which, according to Ivens' autobiography, means to film 'in a region where no one has yet filmed.'³ When they arrived in Kashgar, however, they found 'hundreds of extras' ready to follow whatever directorial orders he might give, be it to simulate the freedom of religion through prayers or a free market with fully stocked shelves.⁴ Had Ivens and Loridan been postmodernists exploring the dynamic interface between fact and fiction, they could have documented a most spectacular feat of the Chinese official *metteurs-en-scène*. But since they wanted to have *real* images of China, Kashgar never made it into their *Yukong* cycle. Ivens/Loridan as well as Antonioni came to China in search of an authentic world where social relationships are not mediated by images, only to find another kind of 'society of spectacle,' where the politics of representation have penetrated the most remote villages and peripheral 'autonomous regions.' Even if they did not own televisions and rarely saw films, the Hunan villagers Antonioni encountered and the Kashgar 'masses' at Ivens' disposal were well used to playing their parts in a Maoist *mise-en-scène* that had long pre-existed the presence of the foreigners' cameras.

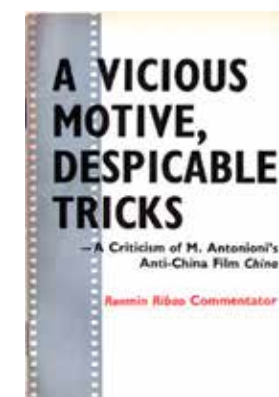
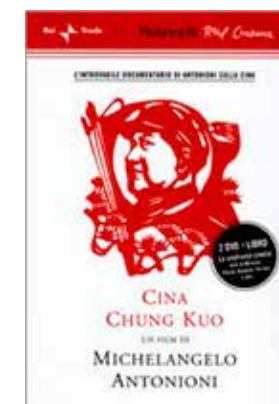
As scholars point out, the Cultural Revolution, which began in 1966, created 'an elaborate pattern of daily living that puts enormous premium on forms - forms of speech, behavior, bearing, and countless other ritualistic details.'⁵ Thus one of the great contributions of *Chung Kuo* and *Yukong* has been to document the Cultural Revolution's repertoire of theatrical postures in the clothing, speech, and gestures of their ordinary subjects. For instance, Antonioni filmed two scenes of kindergarten children doing song-and-dance numbers in praise of Chairman Mao, and it is both touching and frightening to watch their not-quite-disciplined little bodies imperfectly enacting certain grandiose and rigid patterns. In the same film, youths are often

seen to march in squads on the streets, carrying spades as if they were rifles. Ivens and Loridan, on the other hand, filmed the movements of crowds in various celebrations and parades, where gongs and drums, red flags and ribbons endow the ocean of people in monotonous blue Mao suits with an incredible atmosphere of festivity. Apart from such occasions, they also reveal through the voiceover that crowds gathered whenever they see the film camera, and even more if Ivens and Loridan are present, so there is something inevitably spectacular about everything that they filmed, even if it was just an interview with a small group of workers. In fact, *Yukong* rarely if ever features a private interview—all interviews are conducted within a work team, a family, or another kind of group setting, thereby showing another fact of life during the Cultural Revolution: no one can escape surveillance from others.

If all of China was a stage (or a movie), and all Chinese men and women were actors, there were still imperfect rehearsals, spontaneous lapses, and tears at the edges of the stage set. It is the inclusion of accidental figures and unscripted moments *alongside* iconic images and polished performances that distinguish both *Chung Kuo* and the *Yukong* cycle from all Chinese domestic productions of the time. Both films thus provide us with the most *human* pictures we have of life during the Cultural Revolution, whose visual legacy otherwise appears to us today as fanatic, hysterical, exaggerated and overwrought.

The 1950s and 1960s had seen the advent of new techniques and technologies of cinema vérité and direct cinema, in particular the lightweight 16mm cameras with synchronous sound. For the *Yukong* films, Ivens and Loridan spent the first phase of production weaning their Chinese cinematographer Li Zexiang from the tripod, insisting that he keeps the camera rolling even when nothing exciting appeared to be happening, and asking him to keep his ears as well as his eyes open so as to adjust his camera movement accordingly. By filming meetings and interviews with the techniques of direct cinema rather than reducing them to sound bites, Ivens and Loridan also allow the audience to discern a *power* struggle beneath the liturgy of clichés, between teachers and students, between workers and management, sometimes even tensions within the same family. In one film, a young woman excitedly shows her elders a new pair of pants she had bought—since she has only one other pair—but is criticized by her family for her 'petit-bourgeois materialism' and for 'forgetting revolutionary values.' As we watch such grandiose reproaches that make the young woman hang her head, however, it is not hard to see a domestic economy in straitened circumstances.

If images and voices from the quotidian realm humanize the heroes of the *YUKONG* films, the 'slices of life' captured in *Chung Kuo* are more wont to contradict, undercut, or even undermine the credibility of omnipresent heroic im-



Michelangelo Antonioni during the shooting of *Chung Kuo* - Cina, 1972

Booklet against Antonioni's film, Renmin Ribao, 1974

Michelangelo Antonioni, Filmstills opening sequence *Chung Kuo* - Cina, 1972





Fromanger, Poster
Comment Yukong déplaça les montagnes, 1976. © CAPI Films

Joris Ivens and Marceline Loridan-Ivens during the shooting of *Comment Yukong déplaça les montagnes*, 1976. © CAPI Films

Joris Ivens / Marceline Loridan-Ivens, *Film stills La Pharmacie* (from the series *Comment Yukong déplaça les montagnes*, 1976. © CAPI Films



Jie Lie (1979), film scholar from Shanghai is preparing her dissertation about the Cultural Revolution in China at Harvard University, Cambridge Massachusetts, USA.

ages. Antonioni frequently juxtaposes officially sanctioned images—such as gigantic posters on the street of happy, robust peasants and workers—with a more down-to-earth picture at the margin of such images—such as scantily clothed laborers dwarfed by the little hill of goods on their handcarts. Connected through a pan, a zoom, or a cut, these two orders of images point to a certain disjunction between the signifier and the signified in the Chinese visual culture at the time, a disjunction that shocked, offended, and in some other cases inspired the film's Chinese audience, nurtured on a decade-long diet of Socialist Realism.

In early 1974, more than a year after *Chung Kuo* was released in Western Europe and the United States, 'The People's Daily', the Party newspaper with the biggest circulation in China at the time, published an editorial denouncing the film, thereby launching a nationwide campaign to criticize Antonioni. A 1974 anthology of such criticism, entitled 'The Chinese People Cannot Stand to Be Humiliated', shows that local officials at every shooting location wrote denunciations of the Italian director. The indignity they voiced may be classified into three interrelated objections: 1) Antonioni is a bad guest who used his camera in an intrusive and disrespectful manner. 2) He focused on the old, the backward, and unsightly aspects of China, thereby 'blackening the image' of a new, modern, revolutionary China 3) He deliberately left out or mangled certain iconic images and sounds that are sacred to China during the Cultural Revolution.

As we later learn from the annals of political and diplomatic history, the real target of the campaign against *Chung Kuo* had been Zhou Enlai, the premier who invited Antonioni and Ivens to China in the first place. Still in the process of editing *Yukong*, Ivens and Loridan were also called upon to publicly criticize Antonioni, which they quietly declined.⁶ The criticism campaign had also implicated their film: When Ivens and Loridan sent their cinematographer Li Zexiang to do some supplementary shooting, they also discovered that he seemed to have 'forgotten' everything they had taught him about direct cinema—the campaign against Antonioni apparently served as a much more forceful counter-pedagogy. In early 1975, Ivens and Loridan screened a rough cut of a few finished films of the *Yukong* cycle to a committee of leading cinematic and cultural representatives, and the Ministry of Culture came up with 61 'suggestions for revision,' many of which were similar to minor criticisms of

Chung Kuo, such as grey skies, an old woman's bound feet, the figure of a handcart puller, etc.. Indeed, the *Yukong* film might have suffered a similar condemnation or might have been altered beyond recognition had Zhou Enlai not passed on a message to Ivens: 'Take your film, leave immediately and don't ever come back.'⁷

Fortunately, in another year, the Cultural Revolution would have come to an end, and filmmakers would be freer to look more candidly and with less ideological baggage at the reality around them. As Chinese cinema since the 1980s becomes globally visible for the first time, filmmakers of the fifth and sixth generations—many of whose works are closely connected to the documentary genre—have gone even further than Antonioni and Ivens/Loridan to break the official molds of *mise-en-scene* and to bring China's most marginalized peoples into the realms of representation. Defined as 'the solicitude for the human spirit, attention to the rock bottom of society, and a bottom-up perspective,'⁸ China's new documentary movement produced such films as Wang Bing's nine-hour three-part epic *West of the Tracks* (2003) on northeast China's industrial area as millions of workers undergo a painful transition from state-owned industry to a free market. Based on techniques like sync-sound, long takes, follow shots, and interviews, this sequel on the fate of China's working class is perhaps the closest inheritor of the *Yukong* cycle in style and content, except that there is no more faith in the redeeming power of a political, social, or cultural revolution.

- 1 Thomas Waugh. "How Yukong Moved the Mountains: Filming the Cultural Revolution." *Jump Cut*, 12/13, Dec. 1976, pp. 3-6.
- 2 Reuters. "Beijing Olympic clean up sweeps out migrant workers." July 21, 2008. <<http://www.reuters.com/article/GCA-Olympics/idUSSP26521520080721>>
- 3 Joris Ivens & Robert Destanque. *Joris Ivens ou la mémoire d'un regard*. Paris: Éditions BFB, 1982. p. 321.
- 4 Hans Schoots. *Living Dangerously: A Biography of Joris Ivens*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2000. p. 325.
- 5 Ban Wang. *The Sublime Figure of History: Aesthetics and Politics in Twentieth Century China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997. p. 208.
- 6 Li Zexiang. "Filming How Yukong Moved the Mountain with Ivens." in *Dianying Yishu [Film Art]* 2004 vol 5. p. 68.
- 7 Lin Xudong. 'Documentary in Mainland China.' Carter, Cindy (trans). *Documentary Box*. Vol. 26, 2005. ([url= http://www.yidff.jp/docbox/26/box26-3-e.html](http://www.yidff.jp/docbox/26/box26-3-e.html)).
- 8 Lu Xinyu. *Documenting China: The Contemporary Documentary Movement in China*. Beijing, SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2003.

Retour à Vinh Linh - 40 ans après / Revisiting Vinh Linh - 40 years after

XUAN PHUONG AND LE 17E PARALLÈLE

'SINCE A LONG TIME I HAD A DREAM: RETURNING TO VINH LINH AND TRYING TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED WITH THESE COURAGEOUS PEOPLE, LIVING NEAR THE 17TH PARALLEL, WHERE JORIS IVENS AND MARCELINE LORIDAN-IVENS FILMED THEIR IMPRESSIVE DOCUMENTARY LE 17E PARALLÈLE. I ALWAYS WONDERED HOW THESE PEOPLE ARE LIVING TODAY, WHAT HAD FATE IN MIND FOR THEM WHO SUFFERED SO MUCH FROM THE BOMBARDMENTS DURING THE WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE? EXACTLY 40 YEARS AFTER THE FILM WAS MADE THIS DREAM OF MINE WAS REALIZED WHEN IN APRIL 2007 VIETNAMESE NATIONAL TELEVISION DECIDED TO MAKE THIS DOCUMENTARY: RETOUR À VINH LINH – 40 ANS APRÈS.'

A turning point

Xuan Phuong is probably the best testimony to make this film. She was appointed interpreter of the film crew in 1967, but also took care of Joris Ivens' and Marceline Loridan-Ivens' medical situation, because she had studied medicine. She already collaborated with Joris Ivens during the shooting of *Le ciel, la terre* one year earlier. The relationship between her and Ivens / Loridan-Ivens intensified enormously during the two months at the war front. In Vinh Linh they lived underground, in tunnels and caves, where the citizens had built a complete village many meters inside the earth to protect themselves against the US bombings. She worked as if she was three men, and always was keen on results and continued to be optimistic. After the shooting was finished Xuan Phuong wrote to Ivens / Loridan-Ivens: 'I've guided many delegations before, along all North Vietnam. I've seen and learned a lot, but yet this isn't the same. With you I felt more reflective, I've grown. I understood that filmmaking is tough and difficult, but also very interesting, necessary and creative'.² It was a turning point in her life again. With the support of both filmmakers she decided to become a filmmaker herself.

Bare foot

This was not the first switch in her adventurous life and proofed not to be her last. At 16, Xuan Phuong left her home in central Vietnam to join the Viet Minh's struggle against the French colonizer in 1946. She marched barefoot through the mountains, manufactured explosives, acted in propaganda plays and accompanied foreign delegations for more than a decade before becoming a filmmaker covering the 'American War' for North Vietnam. She filmed the fight for liberation from 1968 on and was present when the last US soldiers fled the

country in Hanoi in 1975. Also her family members organized a narrow escape from the chaotic town in one of the last helicopters to leave the country and settled in California. But Xuan Phuong staid, proud about the victory of her compatriots and hopeful about a more justified society in the future. It took 25 years before she saw her family again. In the meanwhile she went to France to earn some money with translations. Her savings were used to buy Vietnamese art. After the turn to the free market in Vietnam which gradually began in 1986, she returned to Hanoi to open the Lotus Art Gallery in one of Ho Chi Minh City's fancier neighbourhoods. Later, she bought vacation homes on Con Son Island in the South China Sea and developed a small resort where prisoners of the South Vietnamese government once languished in infamous 'tiger cages'.³

Speaking out

Although her family connections and knowledge of French helped her build a comfortable life, Xuan's status in the country has been somewhat precarious, she says. In part, her upper-class origins are a mark of suspicion, despite her past heroism. Now 80, she has spoken out in her autobiography *Ao Dai: My War, My Country, My Vietnam* with the title referring to traditional garb worn by Vietnamese women. Originally written and published in France, the book has had limited distribution in Europe and the United States. Phuong takes pride in Vietnam's successful fight to become independent of the French and the Americans. But her pride is tinged with sadness over the increasing divide between rich and poor. 'After such a long life, it's so sad to see so many things that have gone wrong', she said.⁴

Returning to Vinh Linh

Arriving in Vinh Linh in April 2007 the

film crew was warmly welcomed by the president of the Quang Tri region.⁵ In front of the camera he thanked with all his heart Joris Ivens and Marceline Loridan-Ivens for sharing their solidarity with the people of Vietnam during the most difficult and dangerous moments of hardship. Four villagers spoke about their memories of the shooting, one peasant of 90 years old and another 101! After four days of research we were most happy to find the nine year old orphan Duc who was interviewed for Ivens' film on 6 June 1967. He is now 49 years old, an teacher in mathematics at a secondary school in Vinh Linh. He is living happily with his wife and four children in a house surrounded with pepper trees. He immediately remembered me and invited me as a family member, which really affected me. That night we showed the film *Le 17e Parallèle* again to the villagers of Vinh Moc. Some laughed when watching the captivation of an American pilot by pupils, others had to cry when they saw relatives, who were not living anymore and they had not seen for decades. The youngsters of Ho Xa who never experienced war were very amazed: 'Why the Americans did destroy Ho Xa on such a barbarian way!'. When Joris Ivens could be able to watch Duc again he certainly would say: 'C'est merveilleux, LA VIE !'

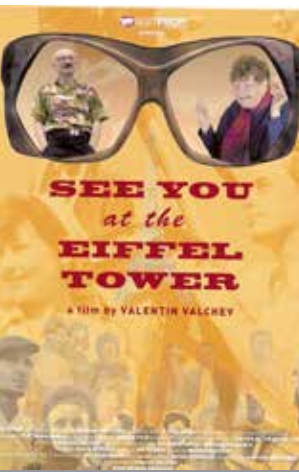
- 1 Xuan Phuong in her letters to the Joris Ivens Archives, September 2008.
- 2 Xuan Phuong, in a letter to Joris Ivens and Marceline Loridan-Ivens, 5 August 1967, Joris Ivens Archives.
- 3 Information from Bill Snyder's article, 'Vietnam's market economy leaves the poor behind', *Chronicle Foreign Service*, December 8, 2008.
- 4 Bill Snyder, ib idem.
- 5 Xuan Phuong, see note 1

revisit VIET

Joris Ivens / Marceline Lorian-Ivens, *Film still Le 17e parallèle: 9 year old Duc*, 1968. © CAPI Films

Filmstills *Vinh Linh - 40 ans après* with Xuan Phuong and Duc





See you at the Eiffel Tower

The documentary concerning Ivens' film *The First Years* (1947-1949), titled *See you at the Eiffel Tower* and made by Bulgarian director Valentin Valchev, had its first screening at IDFA 2008. Since 2004 Valchev visited the four countries where Ivens made his film: Bulgaria, former Yugoslavia, former Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Ivens' film was meant as a documentary consisting of four parts, concerning the young states that wanted to follow a socialist policy during the difficult years of reconstruction after WW II. Ivens started this film series with much enthusiasm, but ended in despair: it proved to be a difficult film project, marred by obstructions and attempts at censorship by the various states. The screenplay of the film was written by American photographer Marion Michelle, Ivens' partner at that time, who had also worked as a camera woman

on *Indonesia Calling* (1946). She is the focus of attention in Valchev's film. The director had preferably taken her to the places where she had filmed during the period 1947-1949, and had made friends among the local people. But this proved to be too physically demanding for the 90 year old Michelle. Mentally she remained as lucid as ever, gifted with a phenomenal and vivid memory. Contact with the descendants of persons who appeared in Ivens' film, such as Bebe Slavka and Todor of the Bulgarian village of Radilovo, is therefore made by film: through film images Michelle communicates with Bulgarians, Poles and Czechs. *See you at the Eiffel Tower* is about the crossing and conquering of borders, both mentally and geographically, through love and the film medium. During the process of filming Valchev skipped all ideological- historical

criticism on Ivens' film, which was once part of his first scripts (see Ivens Magazine 10, 2004, p. 32-34 'Us 4 Revisited, Films, Dreams, Pilgrimage'). What left is an intimate and warm hearted film with a clear message: film and love can unite people, forget those things that drives us apart. In this sense this documentary fits the intentions Ivens and Michelle had with their film *The First Years*: get to know each other.

See you at the Eiffel Tower (2008) - Director Valentin Valchev - Production company: AGITPROP - Running time: 95 minutes



An old friend of the Chinese people

'Don't film China as a rose' was Prime Minister Chou En-Lai's advise to director Joris Ivens and Marceline Lorian-Ivens, when they embarked in 1972 on a film project focusing on China's Cultural Revolution, the 12-hour long documentary epic *How Yukong Moved The Mountains* (1976). The Prime Minister meant that Ivens/Lorian-Ivens shouldn't limit themselves to showing only the beautiful sides of China. Looking back it becomes clear just how ambiguous this advise was. *An old friend of the Chinese people*, a film made by Dutch filmmaker René Seegers, shows the way in which the Chinese leaders won artists, journalists and filmmakers over to support their cause during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

The documentary focuses on the question 'Who is directing whom?' Interviews with former collaborators and friends in China give an insight into the conditions under which Ivens had to work. They were the first Westerners, after decades of isolation, to be allowed to present China to the outside world on such a large scale. The film fitted China's desire to open windows to the world. In this sense the film series was a cultural-historic event: 250 million people watched the film. Never before in history did so many people get acquainted with ordinary Chinese

people and saw glimpses of daily life in China. However, Prime Minister Chou En-Lai had taken precautions to ensure that the projected image of China was a positive one. Ivens filmed during a period – after Nixon's historic visit to China in 1972 – in which the most radical period of the Cultural Revolution had died down. Before shooting began, Ivens and his wife Marceline Lorian-Ivens had attended meetings in Western Europe and prepared lists of questions regarding matters people in the West would like to know about China. These questions served as a guideline for the film. Director Seegers consulted, among others, the Ivens Archives for his research. In *De Groene Amsterdammer* newsmagazine, Seegers says about the film: 'Did Ivens let himself be forced into a strait-jacket by the Chinese ruling elite? Did he see what they wanted him to see? Or was it more subtle than that and did he see, as a fervent Maoist, especially that which he himself wished to see? It is a very Dutch trait to regard Ivens either as a great director who was naïve about the Cultural Revolution, or as a reprehensible, Stalinist hardliner. I think the truth lies somewhere between those two opposites. Ivens travelled all over the world and witnessed many changes. He's never been naïve about anything, but an idealist, that

he was. He really did believe in a better world.' 'It's an intriguing mechanism,' continues Seegers, who explains that he was a Maoist himself. 'What do you see when you travel somewhere? For the most part, and this is also confirmed by scientific research, we see our own bias and pre-conceived notions. The so-called 'pram-syndrome': when you're pregnant, you start seeing prams everywhere. Our image of reality is greatly influenced by that which we share with others.' Seegers made a film with nuances, but no new facts. Everything said in the films had been told before, and published in China or by Ivens / Lorian-Ivens themselves 25 years ago. It is rather manipulative of Seegers to cross-edit images of *Yukong* with well known Chinese footage of hysteric mass rallies with Red Gards raising Mao's Red Book. Ivens / Lorian-Ivens never filmed such sequences and were not interested in this aspect of China. Former members of film teams of Ivens / Lorian-Ivens still speak with warmth about their relationship with these filmmakers.

An old friend of the Chinese people (2008) – Director: René Seegers – Production company: VPRO and Lowland Services BV – Running time: 55 minutes

An Australian 're-visits' Indonesia Calling.

BY JOHN HUGHES

JOHN HUGHES' WORK ON JORIS IVENS IN AUSTRALIA IS EXPECTED TO PREMIER AT THE MELBOURNE FILM FESTIVAL IN AUGUST 2009.1

'We sent the film to Poland to have it judged by Joris Ivens.'

Keith Gow, Waterside Workers Federation Film Unit, Australia (1953-'58)

Joris Ivens' time in Australia and the context of his *Indonesia Calling* (22 minutes, 1946, Australia), is concerned with a complex historical moment of de-colonization. The Netherlands East Indies, occupied during the war by Japan, was soon to be free of Japanese occupation and its colonial past. The Netherlands, Australia, Britain, the US, and the Indonesians, were all divided in a variety of ways about how this might be achieved. When Sukarno and Hatta proclaimed Indonesia's independence on August 17, 1945, Joris Ivens -with his American, Australian and Indonesian collaborators- began to forge, what was to become, as Ivens himself said at the time, 'Australia's first labour film'.

This moment of 'independence' was fought out in several registers. There was the challenge for an Australian

government to stand up in support of their close northern neighbour against wartime allies and major Western powers. There was an opportunity for the Australian people to reject a culture of racial discrimination and collaborate with Indians, Chinese and Indonesians. And there was the necessity for a film to be made independently of government and corporate interests. Joris Ivens film, in one way and another, engaged productively with each of these, and had lasting effects.

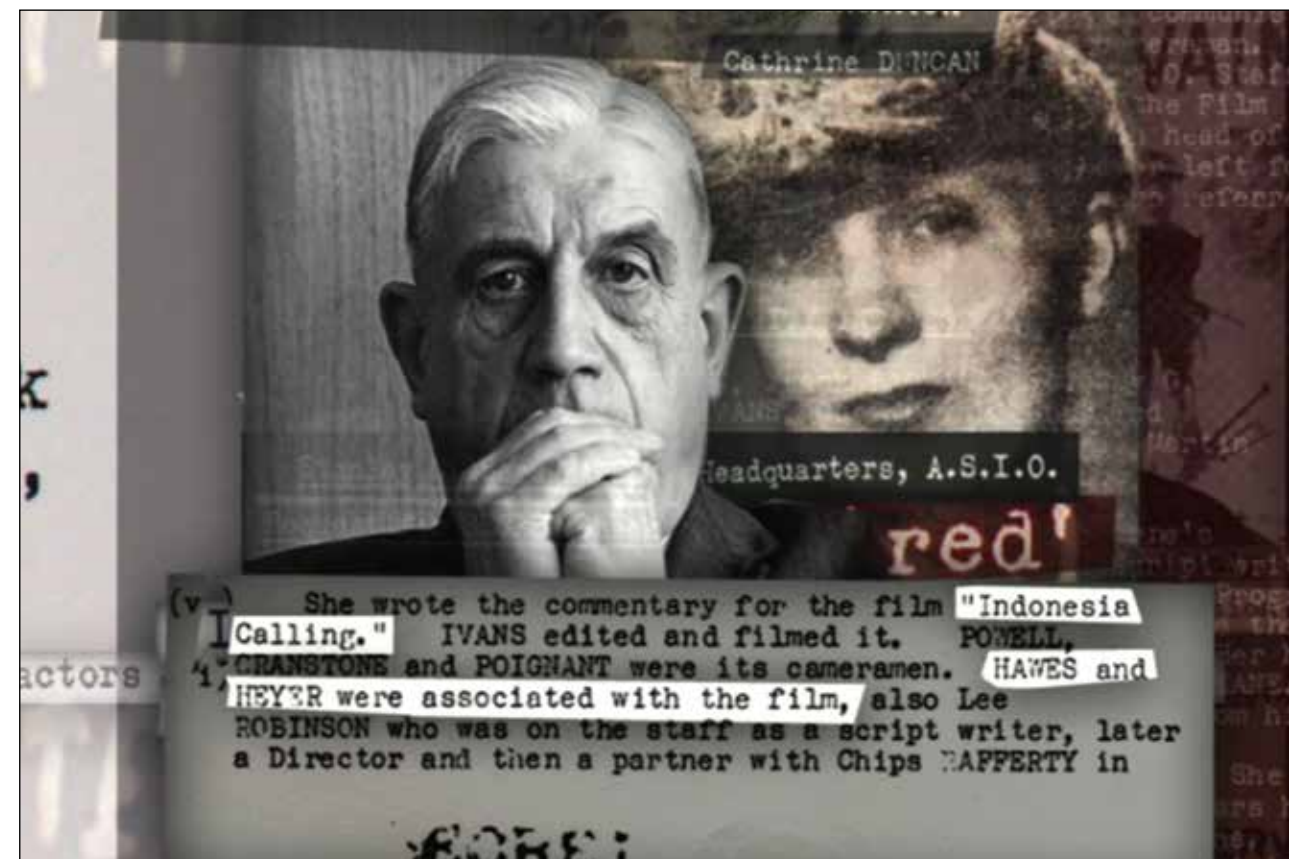
For Australian film culture *Indonesia Calling* demonstrated to an Australian trade union leadership how effective a film could be in contentious political debate. It was Ivens' precedent that created a fertile environment for the initiative of the WWF unit's Norma Disher, Keith Gow and Jock Levy who went on to produce an important body of 'progressive' film work for the unions from 1953-'58.

When Joris Ivens became President of the Jury at the World Festival of Youth and Students in Warsaw in 1955 he awarded a Gold Medal to an Australian film *The Hungry Miles* (WWF Film Unit, 25 minutes, 1954)². During a film I made about this WWF units' work in the late 1970s I asked veteran Australian filmmaker Keith Gow how *The*

Hungry Miles was first received by the union leadership. He was a little reticent about it. He said the leadership were 'surprised', and even 'disappointed'. They thought they were getting a film 'about a particular strike, a particular struggle'. But *The Hungry Miles* has a much broader canvas; it constructs a history of dockworkers' activism including startling recreations of the 1930s depression on the wharves. The union leadership decided they would put the film aside as 'it shouldn't perhaps be widely shown immediately', as Keith delicately put it. He went on: 'however when the film won a gold medal in Poland and had been received well at screenings for the rank and file... the leadership then saw that it must have some value.'³ The Waterside Workers Federation film unit went on to make about a dozen films; the filmmakers' unique position, supported by the most militant and strategic union in the country, allowed their work to be sustained when others were blacklisted, or severely constrained in government agencies under conservative governments. We remain appreciative of Joris Ivens' commitment.

John Hughes

John Hughes, *Filmstill Indonesia Calling: Joris Ivens in Australia.*
© Early Works



MA VIE BALAGAN

Quelques extraits



“ À LA FIN DE LA PROJECTION DE ...À VALPARAISO, JE ME SUIS APPROCHÉE DE JORIS. M'A-T-IL RECONNUE? JE L'IGNORE. JE ME SUIS PRÉSENTÉE COMME UNE JEUNE RÉALISATRICE QUI REVENAIT D'ALGÉRIE, QUI PEINAIT SUR LE MONTAGE, ET JE LUI AI DEMANDÉ S' IL POUVAIT ME DONNER DES CONSEILS. JORIS M'A RÉPONDU QU'IL N'AVAIT PAS LE TEMPS, MAIS IL A TOUT DE MÊME NOTÉ MON ADRESSE ET IL M'A DONNÉ LE NUMÉRO DE TÉLÉPHONE DE SON MONTEUR. J'AI APPELÉ CET HOMME, ET IL S'EST CHARGÉ DU MONTAGE DU FILM QUI DEVIENDRAIT ALGÉRIE ANNÉE ZERO.

Huit jours après l'avant-première, j'ai reçu un énorme bouquet de fleurs. Joris Ivens m'envoyait une brassée de roses de Moscou, où il était membre de jury du Festival international. Avec un petit mot. C'était en 1963. Et puis, plus de nouvelles. Quatre mois plus tard, je l'ai retrouvé par hasard dans une exposition de photographies sur Cuba, place Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Et là nous ne nous sommes plus quittés.

Quand Joris a vu chez moi une reproduction de 'Guernica', il a été bouleversé. C'était le seul tableau qui me renvoyait à quelque chose de ma propre vie. Les cris de 'Guernica', je les ai vus à Birkenau. On dit toujours que l'horreur des camps n'est pas représentable, mais Picasso l'a fait. Oui, il a su. Nous étions très amoureux. Pourtant je n'aimais pas trop la Hollande, *a priori*, ni les protestants quand ils ont le pouvoir. Ils ont fait l'Afrique du Sud et l'Indonésie. Et ils ont déporté quatre-vingt-dix pour cent de leurs Juifs. Joris était hollandais, mais catholique. Il avait quitté son pays rejeté par son père et par ses compatriotes pour avoir osé faire le film *Misère au Borinage*. Ce magnifique film muet raconte une grève des mineurs, en Belgique, qui s'est achevée en 1933 dans une violence inouïe. Joris était parti en Amérique avec cinquante dollars en poche. Il n'avais jamais revu son père. Il a eu du mal à quitter son père, il a eu mal à quitter le parti communiste. Il avait du mal à quitter les femmes, il ne les affrontait jamais. C'était sa faiblesse. Mais il avait pris conscience, dans sa jeunesse, de l'exploitation des peuples et des classes ouvrières européennes, et croyait que les hommes pouvaient changer le monde.

Avec Joris, une autre vie a commencé. Même si les débuts furent longs et difficiles entre nous, en raison de ses absences. Puis Joris m'a emmenée dans un endroit glauque, chez lui, rue Guisarde, au sixième étage sans ascenseur – avec son asthme ! Au secours ! Pour se laver, on utilisait les W.-C., qui faisaient en même temps douche. Un homme si célèbre qui vivait si pauvrement. Moi, j'habitais alors dans un appartement certes pas très confortable mais vaste, genre loft. Et puis j'étais modern. Meublée années 1950. Carrément. Un mur gris, un mur vert, un mur blanc. À soixante ans, Joris, lui, était resté pauvre. Mais Marceline a pris tout cela en main. J'ai créé la maison de production. J'avais envie de partir avec lui au Vietnam, je voulais appliquer les nouvelles

méthodes du cinéma direct. Nous avons tourné *Le 17e parallèle* ensemble. J'ai fait le son du film sans en avoir jamais fait auparavant, et véritablement participé à sa réalisation en apportant les nouvelles idées cinématographiques des années 1960, de la 'nouvelle vague'.

En 1967, Joris et moi étions à Hanoi. Notre but était de convaincre Pham Van Dong, Premier ministre de Vietnam du Nord, de nous laisser aller à l'endroit le plus dangereux de l'attaque américaine. Nous étions dans le jardin du palais présidentiel, il faisait beau, j'étais bras nus. Est arrivé tout d'un coup un homme plié en deux sur une canne, portant une grande barbe avec des poils poivre et sel, très drôle. C'était Ho Chi Minh. Il s'est approché, s'est assis. Il écoutais notre conversation. Pham Van Dong voulait bien que Joris parte, mais pas moi. Joris avait alors soixante-dix ans. Moi presque quarante. Mais aux yeux du Premier ministre vietnamien, j'étais une petite Parisienne en talons hauts, une 'femme fragile'. Tout d'un coup Ho Chi Minh a vu mon numéro de matricule sur mon bras nu. Alors il m'a demandé : 'Tu étais à Auschwitz, toi?'. J'ai répondu que oui. 'Tu es restée longtemps ? ' Je lui ai donnée les dates. 'Ils ne t'ont pas cramé, là-bas? ' - La preuve que non. - Eh bien, dans mon pays, tu as le droit de faire ce que tu veux. Tu iras le 17e parallèle.'

C'est au Vietnam, avec Joris, que j'ai commence à me geler de l'intérieur, parce que je me projetais complètement dans les événements extérieurs. Ce n'étais pas une ouverture aux autres. C'était comme si le langage que j'utilisais n'était plus le mien. J'étais dans l'action, je faisais des films, il fallait résoudre des problèmes, prendre parti, lutter. Je ne pensais plus à moi. C'était la politique. J'étais obsédée par l'idée de participer à une aventure qui changerait le monde ; d'aider les plus misérables, les plus pauvres. En fait, c'était une illusion. Les gens se libèrent eux-mêmes ou pas du tout.

J'avais toujours voulu vivre comme quelqu'un qui n'a rien à perdre. La perspective d'une vie sans risqué m'ennuyait profondément. Ma disponibilité était inchangée depuis le tournage de *Chronique d'un été*, dans lequel je disais : 'Quand je descends dans la rue, je ne sais pas toujours ce que je vais faire. Et pour moi, l'aventure est toujours au coin de la rue'. Le coin de la rue, avec Joris, c'étais la Chine. La société chinoise m'émeut parce qu'elle est proche de là d' où je viens. Il y a les raviolis – ma mère faisait des raviolis. Ce côté laborieux des Chinois, un peuple capable de se débrouiller avec tout ce qu'il trouve, un peuple dur aussi, avec une longue histoire, aussi longue que la nôtre, une continuité historique. Un peuple des grands commerçants, comme le peuple juif. Et puis, il y a dans les philosophies juive et chinoise cette même idée de 'retournement' nécessaire, il faut sortir des limites de son moi pour changer le monde en transmuant le passé, en une sorte de révolution permanente. Dans le judaïsme, on parle de *téchouvah*, en Chine, c'est *fan shen*, le retournement total à l' intérieur de soi. C'est un mot que j'ai entendu souvent pendant la révolution culturelle : 'Faire *fan shen*'. Un bouleversement de l'intérieur, qui fait l'on change du tout au tout en restant soi-même.

Les Chinois ont ce proverbe : 'Lorsque la terre respire, cela s'appelle le vent. C'est ainsi, lentement, qu'est née l'idée de partir filmer le vent en Chine. Le secret du souffle, c'est ce que Joris cherchait en tournant son dernier film en Chine, au risqué d'en mourir. Déjà, pendant les repérages, en

décembre 1985, il avait pris froid, pneumonie, asthme. Il avait été transporté aux soins intensifs de l'hôpital Capital parce qu'il ne pouvait plus respirer. Je dormais à côté de lui, sur un petit lit pliant. Je n'ai jamais oublié cette image de moi, avec mes petits paquets en plastique par terre m'efforçant de prendre le moins de place possible. Bernardo Bertolucci vivait dans le même hôtel que nous, à Pékin, où il préparait le tournage du *Dernier Empereur*. Un jour, Bernardo s'approche de moi et dit : 'J'apprends que Joris est très gravement malade.' Il adorait Joris. Il met sa main dans sa poche et il en sort une liasse de dollars : 'Tu vas en avoir besoin, tu les prends, et c'est tout, tu ne dis rien.' Il a été extraordinaire. Il y a des moments, comme ça, de réconfort inattendu.

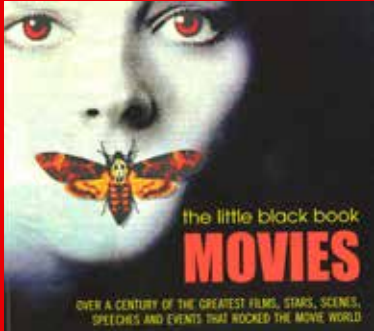
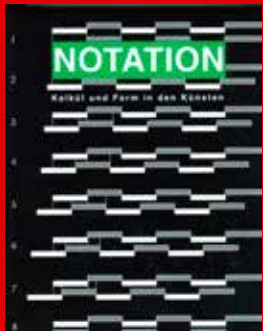
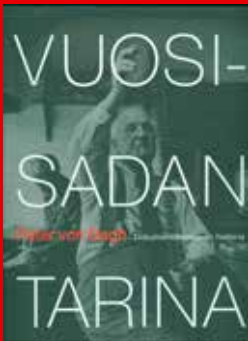
Depuis l'an 2000, je porte l'étoile de David. Parce que je suis juive et que je les emmerde. Elle m'a été offerte par Joris, il y a longtemps. Joris non plus n'était pas juif. J'avais besoin de m'évader pour survivre, après les camps. Même si, au retour, j'ai vécu des histoires d'amour avec des garçons juifs. Mais au retour, j'étais folle. Sauvage, d'une sauvagerie, d'une timidité et d'une violence inouïes. Lancée dans une quête d'amour disproportionnée, écrasée par un sentiment d'insécurité totale. Il m'a fallu du temps, des dizaines d'années...C'est Joris qui m'a apporté cette confiance en moi, acceptant mes contradictions sanglantes. Et moi les seins. C'est Joris le premier qui m'a aimée telle que j'étais. Il m'a fallu du temps pour comprendre que finalement, avec lui, je m'étais gelée de l'intérieur.

Nous avons partagé vingt-sept, vingt-huit ans de vie. Tous jours dans l' essentiel, sans oubli de l' essentiel, jamais. Notre confiance réciproque était totale. Un homme de soixante ans et une femme de trente ans. Une toute petite famille, mais si forts ensemble. Une hydre à deux têtes, disions nous, travaillant intensément, si longtemps envers et contre tout. Nous nous accordions chacun de grandes libertés, mais aucune d'elles n'a jamais affecté notre univers commun, parce que nous savions où était l'essentiel. Sans lui, seul le travail m'a sauvée et comme lui, je veux mourir debout, dans le travail.



Marceline Loridan-Ivens signing her book.
Photo: Storm Stufkens

In October 2008 Éditions Robert Laffont published Marceline Loridan-Ivens' autobiography *Ma vie balagan*, 260 pages. 'Ma vie balagan' means a live in chaos, in disorder after the hebrew word 'balagan'. It was nominated for 'Le Prix Elle' (April) and received 'Le Prix Méiri pour la Mémoire 2009' in June 2009. It was written in collaboration with Elisabeth D. Inandiak, journalist (correspondent for 'Courrier International' in Indonesia, where she lives), novelist ('Le Livre de Centhini', prix de la Francophonie Asie 2003) and script writer (a.o. *Une Histoire de Vent* and *La Petite Prairie aux boulaux*).



**THE STORY OF THE CENTURY:
THE HISTORY OF DOCUMENTARIES
(VUOSISADAN TARINA.
DOKUMENTITITIELOKUVAN HISTORIA)
By: PETER VON BAGH**
*Book: Teos Publishers, Helsinki (2007,
Finnish), 394 p.*

Not quite a tsunami, but a substantial wave of ever more books on (the history of) documentary film is being published. The book of renowned film historian and critic Peter van Bagh (1943) is a new landmark in this niche. Its size, design and content sets it apart from all previous ones: it is ‘the first coffee table book’ on documentary film history. Not for showing off, but out of respect for documentary film art. Peter von Bagh is a long time specialist in the field, a cinephile with passion, knowledge and a mission: watch films, watch forgotten films! He was director of the Finnish Film Archives, wrote over 30 books about filmmakers and films, and programs the most exciting treasures of film history for the Il Cinema Ritrovato Festival in Bologna and the Midnight Sun Film Festival in Sodankylä. The structure of the book is clear: two lines are evident: the description and analysis of 160 documentary film classics, from Lumière’s *l’Arrivée d’un train en gare de La Ciotat* (1895) up to Spike Lee’s recent *When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts* (2006), a description of the century and the context in which the films were made. According to Bach we cannot understand the 20th century without the evidence captured on camera, as both an antidote and complement to so-called ‘reality’. Documentaries were the prevailing mode of the new art, cinema, during its first fifteen years since its inception at the end of the 19th century. And cinema continues to be vital, surprising and urgent today. Von Bagh analyses in this book five films of Ivens (*Rain* (1929), *New Earth* (1934), *The Spanish Earth* (1937), *The 400 Million* (1938) and *A Tale of the Wind* (1988)), not in a formal encyclopaedic way, but by focusing on its images. This groundbreaking overview of the history of documentaries is most certainly deserving of an international translation and distribution.

**NOTATION
KALKÜL UND FORM IN DEN KÜNSTEN
By: HUBERTUS VON AMELUNXEN,**

**DIETER APPELT AND PETER WEIBEL
(ED.)**
*Book: Akademie der Künste, Berlin
/ ZKM. Karlsruhe (2008, German),
424 p.*

What Ivens’ film *Rain* tells us about modern art: it is an avant-garde city symphony, it has a non-dramatic narrative, structured along musical lines, like a piece of notation. And it tries to capture an atmosphere, a flow, created during a long, two year process, with many trials and errors. *Rain* was part of the intriguing exhibition in Berlin and Karlsruhe *Notation: Calculus and Form in the Arts*. In 20th century art, notation and notational systems have been crucial. Not only in music, but also in the visual arts, dance, theatre, architecture, literature and film. John Rajchman writes in an essay for the exhibition catalogue, that the increasing importance of notation shows a profound change in ‘the idea of art itself, the ways it is made, talked about, or received.’ With Modernism’s shift away from finished masterpieces, a new emphasis on process has been created, on what Gilles Deleuze has called the ‘mode of becoming,’ which is always central in notation. For the first time the curatorial team brought together an exciting variety of notational systems by artists like Etienne-Jules Marey, Marcel Proust, Alfred Stieglitz, Oskar Fischinger, Brancusi, Artaud, Moholy-Nagy, Paul Klee, Joris Ivens, Walter Benjamin, John Cage, up to contemporary artists like Anthony McCall, Rodney Graham and Bernd Alois Zimmermann. Here the focus is primarily on the artistic proces, opposite to the usual curatorial practice of only exhibiting finished products. This is a major contribution to both the reconsideration of modern art, and the mapping out of distinctions and parallels between the arts.

**PUBLIC PHOTOGRAPHIC SPACES
By: JORGE ROBALTA, CLARA PLASENCIA,
ANNA JIMÉNEZ JORQUERA**
*Book: Museo d’Art Contemporari de
Barcelona (2008, English), 498 p.*

Ivens’ films were part of large scale public photographic exhibitions, like the FiFo Exhibition in Stuttgart (1929) or the Spanish Pavilion at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1937. Being both mass media, Film and Photography

found ways to reach millions in these kind of public spaces. Some films of Ivens were directly based on photos: *Komsomol* (Max Alpers), *La Seine a rencontré Paris* (Henri Cartier-Bresson), other Ivens’ films were created in close relationship with photographers, like Germaine Krull (*Zeedijk-Filmstudie, Études des mouvements à Paris, De Brug, Regen*) and Robert Capa (*The 400 Million*). Ivens’ film *Lied der Ströme* is a communist counterpart to Edward Steichen’s photo exhibition ‘The Family of Man’. To trace the function of photographic exhibitions in the cultural landscape between 1928-1955 the Museum of Contemporary Art in Barcelona (MACBA) organized a much praised exhibition, including four films of Ivens. The exposition *Universal Archive - The Condition of the Document and the Modern Photographic Utopia*, centred around the reliability and validity of the photographic image in this post-modern age of digital photography, which is by its nature prone to manipulation. The exposition also addressed the question whether photography is able to produce a truly universal visual archive. Nearly 2,000 documents (of which almost 1,000 vintage photographs) were shown dating from 1851 to 2008 by some 250 authors, including Lewis Hine, Eugène Atget, El Lissitzky, Herbert Bayer, Edward Steichen, Berenice Abbott, August Sander, Weegee, Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans, Joris Ivens, Allan Sekula, Robert Adams, Martha Rosler and William Klein. The extensive catalogue describes the photographic exhibitions from El Lissitzky’s ‘Pressa’ in 1928 up to Steichen’s ‘The Family of Man’ (1955).

**JORIS IVENS WERELDCINEAST
By: ANDRÉ STUFKENS**
*Book: European Foundation Joris
Ivens (2008, Dutch), 544 p.*

Accompanying the DVD collection of the same title, André Stufkens wrote an extensive book to describe the 20 films included. Of every individual film the book explains the content, the film production (almost on a diary-like level), the context, the film language, the different versions and restorations, the reception history (both critical and public) and quotes from film critics. This book provides the most complete study of Ivens’ films, and is based on recent worldwide film scholarship. Dissertations, theses, articles and books about individual films

by Ivens provided up-to-date source material and facts. Many new insights were included, focusing on the films itself. Although Ivens’ oeuvre has often been divided into militant films and poetic films, or into films for the capitalist West and communist East, Ivens’ films oppose such narrow-minded categorizations. A ‘capitalist’ publicity film like *Philips Radio* connects seamlessly with the ‘communist’ *Komsomol*, because the radio waves in *Philips Radio*’s final sequence continue into the first images of radio communication in *Komsomol*. The militant *Borinage* finds its counterpart in the idyllic *Power and the Land* in the US. The poetic concept of a film mosaic for *Pour le Mistral* was used for the concept of the radical *Loin de Vietnam*. Some projects lasted over a period of 30 years before they were realised, like the concept for a film about the elusive wind, which started with an idea on a Mediterranean beach in 1958 and saw its fruition with *A Tale of the Wind* in 1988. A film critic wrote: ‘this book gives the necessary background to understanding Ivens’ films’.

**THE POLITICS OF DOCUMENTARY
By: MICHAEL CHANAN**
*Book: BFI, British Film Institute (English,
2007), 280 p.*

‘What do you get out of this, holding this thing in our faces?’ is the essential ethical question posed on the cover of Chanan’s book. Why are you filming your selected subjects and how do you represent them in the public sphere? Maybe you must be a filmmaker, as well as a teacher and professor of film, like Michael Chanan, to return to this basic question and fully understand the consequences of interfering with somebody’s life by putting it on camera. This very readable and inspiring book traces the history and impact of documentary from the first Lumière films to Grierson and his contemporaries, through Free Cinema, Cinema Vérité and Direct Cinema, up to the current documentary resurgence. Chanan’s long career as a documentary filmmaker, as well as his teaching of film in Latin America, London and on festivals and film schools around the world shaped this very challenging and erudite book. Throughout the book new observations, ideas and visions on practice, theory, history and contemporary themes from documentary a film leap from the page. Chanan is capable of

describing the general line and keeps a firm grip on the overall documentary field, but he is also capable to explain complex developments in a clear way, while at the same time focusing on striking details. For instance Esfir Shub’s film *K.Sh.E. (Komsomol, Patron of Electrification, 1932)*, saved by Chanan from oblivion. Made in the same year that Ivens was struggling with sound recording on location in Magnitogorsk while filming *Komsomol*, Shub succeeded in extensive location filming with synchronised sound, including dialogue and musical performances. A real find. Following the tradition of the British documentary movement, Chanan establishes relations between individual films and developments in society and the public space. An exemple is Chanan’s vision on Ivens’ poetic films like *La Seine a rencontré Paris* or ...à *Valparaiso*. According to him the work of independent film-makers like Joris Ivens, Alain Resnais and Chris Marker was the poetic expression of oppositional and dissident opinions, a crucial element in post-war documentary opposing the television culture. An inspiring book.

**FIAF 70 ANS OF FILM ARCHIVES
By: ÉRIC LE ROY, ROBERT DAUDELIN
(ED.)**
*Book: CNC, Centre national de la
cinématographie (French, English,
Spanish, 2008), 200 p.*

Film, even when it is ‘archived’, is a living art, unpredictable’, so a book documenting 70 years of film archives should be just as lively and unpredictable. When FIAF (Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film) celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2008, Éric le Roy and Robert Daudelin decided not to make a standard history book, but a collage of 140 documents, thoughts, poems, sketches, discoveries, essays, personal memories and quotations, representing the foremost passion of some 20 contributing FIAF members.

FIAF was founded in 1938 by four film archives in Berlin, London, Paris and New York. Nowadays 132 film archives in 68 countries have joined FIAF in its enormous task of saving the world’s film heritage. In 2002 the Ivens Foundation joined FIAF. In an article in this book André Stufkens explains the concepts and ideas of a number of artists / sculptors in Holland, China,

US, Belgium, Italy and France who were inspired by Ivens and his films. ‘The location and origins of these sculptors show that Ivens was, if only geographically, one of the first inhabitants of the global village. And stylistically, the sculptures are a good representation of Ivens’ hybrid, multifaceted and contradictory personality, which was so difficult to encompass’. The book has been designed like a treasure vault, every page must be opened in a special way to discover its hidden treasure-like content

**MOVIES, THE LITTLE BLACK BOOK
By: CHRIS FUJIWARA**
*Book: Cassell Illustrated (English,
2007), 800 p.*

For this publication, some 62 critics wrote a history of film in an attractive and expressive way, preventing the pitfall of summing up dry standard facts. They were given the freedom to select and describe in short entries of up to 300 words, what they considered seminal moments in 100 years of cinema: A Century of the Greatest Films, Stars, Scenes, Speeches and Events that Rocked the Movie World. Some thousand ‘key scenes’, ‘key moments’, ‘key events’, ‘key persons’, ‘key films’ and ‘key speeches’ are described, unlimited by genre, era or continent. The items discussed range from all over the cinematic field-silent and sound; colour and black and white; Hollywood feature films and documentaries; animation and otherwise; mainstream and alternative. A film history like ‘a rich wild bouquet of colourful flowers’, but also with a clear chronological order. This history starts with ‘The Death of Cinema’. In this entry, Paolo Cherchi Usai discusses how from the inception of the medium, films were made and just as quickly destroyed by the film industry. ‘History is written by the winners.’ Sadly, this explains the almost complete absence of Dutch entries, save the sparse ‘key moments’ of Joris Ivens donating a camera to a group of Chinese revolutionaries, which formed the springboard for the Chinese documentary movement, as well as the founding of the Hubert Bals Fund, which supports filmmakers in developing countries

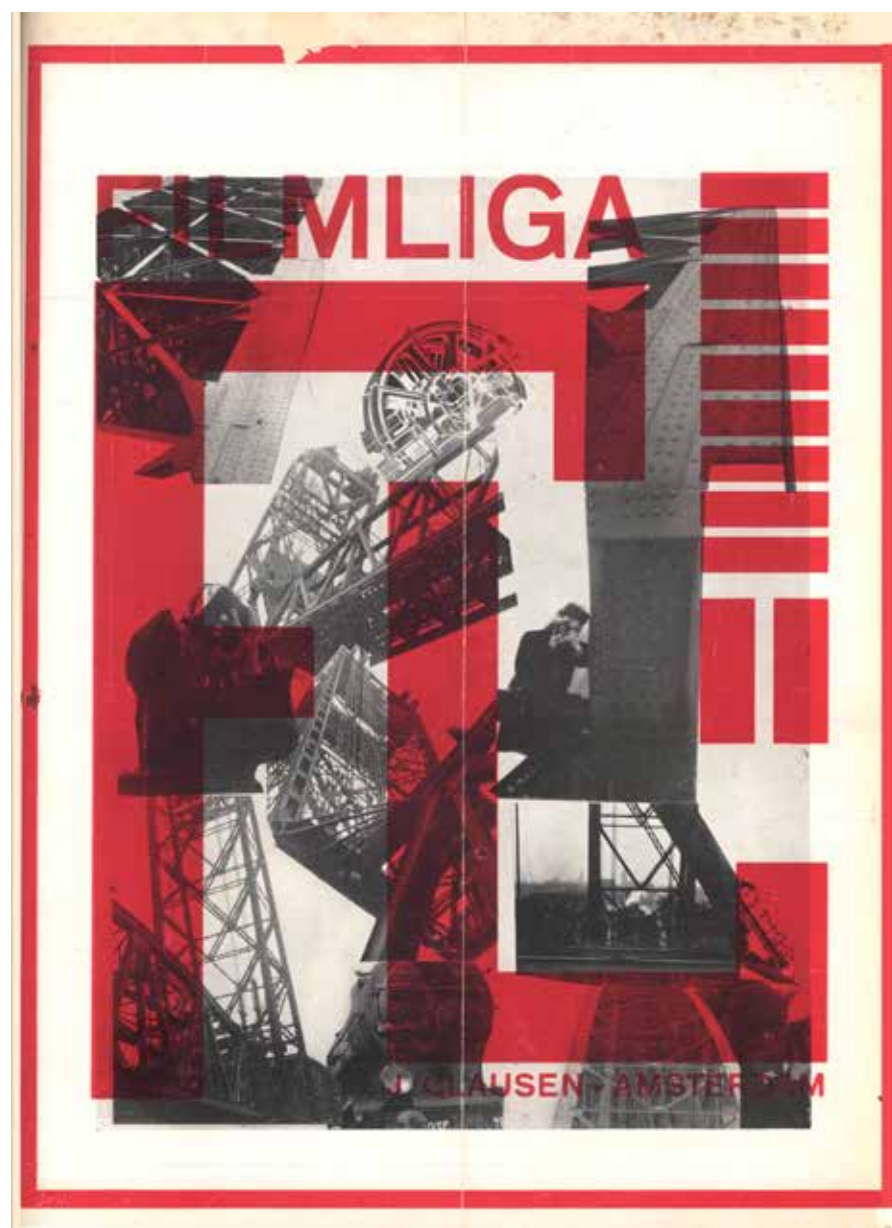
S. van Ravensteijn, *Front cover Filmliga programme with a collage of photo's made by Germaine Krull: Joris Ivens shooting The Bridge, 1928.* Coll. Filmmuseum.

Paul Strand Charles Sheeler, *Filmstills from Manahatta, 1921.* A film similar to Ivens' *The Bridge*.

THE BRIDGE

SEEN IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE PROGRAMME

BY PETER BOSMA



INTRODUCTION

MY OPENING QUESTION IS: HOW HAS *THE BRIDGE* BEEN SCREENED IN RECENT DECADES? WHICH CONVENTIONS CAN BE IDENTIFIED IN PROGRAMMES FOR *THE BRIDGE* AND WHAT ARE THEIR IMPLICATIONS? WE ARE NOW IN A POSITION IN WHICH WE CAN LOOK BACK AT EIGHTY YEARS OF SCREENING PRACTICES AROUND *THE BRIDGE*. GIVEN THAT THE EFFECT OF A FILM IS INFLUENCED BY THE CONTEXT IN WHICH IT IS SHOWN, IT MIGHT PROVE INTERESTING TO REVIEW THE OPTIONS FOR POSITIONING *THE BRIDGE* IN A PUBLIC SCREENING. BEING A SHORT FILM, *THE BRIDGE* WILL INEVITABLY BE PRESENTED IN A MIXED PROGRAMME. BUT THE CORE QUESTION IS: WHICH OTHER FILMS SHOULD FEATURE IN THIS PROGRAMME? THIS IS A CHOICE TAKEN BY THE PROGRAMME-MAKER ON THE BASIS OF ARTISTIC VISION. HERE, I BRIEFLY REVIEW A FEW OPTIONS FOR PROGRAMMING *THE BRIDGE*: FIRST IN RELATION TO THE OEUVRE OF JORIS IVENS (THE DIRECTOR AS AUTHOR); SECOND, IN RELATION TO THE REPERTOIRE OF THE NETHERLANDS FILM LEAGUE (DE NEDERLANDSE FILMLIGA) AND THE INTERNATIONAL AVANT-GARDE FILMS OF THE NINETEEN TWENTIES; THIRD, IN RELATION TO THE NATIONAL CINEMA IN THE NETHERLANDS IN 1928 (CINEMA PROGRAMMES IN THE NINETEEN TWENTIES) AND FINALLY, IN RELATION TO THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY.

The Bridge is a silent film and hence raises the question of a musical score. There are four main possibilities: first, try to reconstruct the original score; second, select a score from existing compositions; third, compose a new score from scratch; and fourth, use musical improvisation. The score for the première in 1928 cannot be reconstruct-

ed because the original composition by Hans Brandt Buys has been lost. Joris Ivens was happy with this score but two (anonymous) film critics said somewhat scathingly in their reviews that it was 'a mistake' and that it constituted 'poor musical illustration'. In recent years three contemporary composers have been bold enough to compose a new score for *The Bridge* (John Cage in 1981, Bob Zimmermann in 1982 and Oscar van Dillen in 2006). The film has also been accompanied on several occasions by improvising musicians. A combination of existing compositions has not yet been tried, but it could generate many interesting ideas. For instance, how would a piano sonata by Domenico Scarlatti sound as background music for *The Bridge*? In his autobiography Joris Ivens himself contemplates a sound version: '*THE BRIDGE is a silent film but today the possibilities of the sound track would help all the sensations that were aimed at in this silent shot. Sound perspective would establish a relationship between the distant traffic noises mixed with the close-up sound of the smooth, sticky, greasy cables sliding over the wheel.*'

The European Foundation Joris Ivens, which watches over the legacy of the filmmaker, demands that *The Bridge* be screened silently at every public performance. A reprise with musical accompaniment may be performed afterwards. The 2008 DVD version of *The Bridge* has no musical accompaniment.

THE OEUVRE OF JORIS IVENS (1898 -1989)

The Netherlands Film Museum has mounted Joris Ivens retrospectives on several occasions, often as a birthday tribute during Ivens' lifetime. Ivens died in 1989. The posthumous view of his oeuvre was given a powerful boost five years later with the 'Joris Ivens Nitrate Collection' project at the International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (IDFA 1994). In 2008 the presentation of the DVD box containing the collected works of Joris Ivens prompted the Film Museum to present a retrospective at the IDFA again, this time entitled '110 years of Joris Ivens' (for a detailed inventory of all the retrospectives and their take on *The Bridge*, I refer the reader to my article in Dutch at the website of the European Foundation Joris Ivens).

My primary thesis is that *The Bridge* marks the transition from amateur to professional filmmaker in the oeuvre of Ivens. It may be described as an exercise in style, a sort of cinematographic sketch pad, a study in movement, but also as a masterful debut piece. His emergent skills are clearly traceable in a chronological list of his films. *The Bridge* further presages the later work of Ivens 'the author'. This is clearly displayed in the link between *The Bridge* (1928) and *à Valparaiso* (1963). The Chilean port is built on five hills, the affluent members of society ascend and descend by cable car while the poorer inhabitants go up and down never-ending flights of steps. The rise and fall of the cable car is reminiscent of the rise and fall of the vertical lift bridge. The

film from the sixties contains traces of Ivens' reflectivity and a resonance of his poetic inclination, this time mixed with social engagement.

THE SCREENING AT THE NETHERLANDS FILM LEAGUE (MAY 1928)

The world première of *The Bridge* took place on 5 May 1928 during the eleventh production of the Netherlands Film League. The programming of the Netherlands Film League was characterized by an explicit vision of filmmaking. This lends itself perfectly as a context for the screening of films and was applied for the first time in 1986 when film historian and guest programmer Nico J. Brederoo presented 'The history of a film culture' for the Dutch Filmmuseum. In the season of 1999/2000 the Filmmuseum organized an itinerant programme consisting of eight reconstructions of Film League productions. In 1999 a reconstruction of the eleventh production of the Film League, as compiled by Joris Ivens in 1928, was presented exclusively in the Filmmuseum. *The Bridge* was shown with two Soviet films *Zvenigora* (Aleksandr Dovzhenko, 1928) and *Baby Ryansanskie* (Women of Ryazan, Ivan Pravov & Olga Preobrazhenskaya, 1927). In 1999 the American film historian Tom Gunning positioned *The Bridge* in relation to the Film League and the international avant-garde films of the inter-war period:

'THE BRIDGE demonstrates the principle that a film needs to discover and explore its own language, based on dynamic composition and montage rhythm. Ivens described THE BRIDGE as 'well-considered laboratory work', thereby highlighting the affinity between the League productions and his own work as a filmmaker. Both stemmed more from discovery, exploration and experimentation than from traditional ideas about the making or screening of masterpieces. Both were seen as a step towards the realization of the inherent potential of the film.'

The Bridge was immediately hailed as a landmark in the development of the international avant-garde film and is now part of the canon. It is an ode to industrial technology and fits into the modernist movement of the inter-war years. In *The Bridge* (1929) Joris Ivens analyses the different movements around the then brand new vertical lift bridge with, on the one hand, the crossing horizontal lines of ships and trains, with cyclists and cars in the distance and, on the other hand, the rise and fall of the bridge itself (visualized by, amongst others, the movement of the counterweights).

NATIONAL CINEMA IN THE NETHERLANDS AROUND 1928

For Ivens *The Bridge* marked the transition from amateur to professional filmmaker. In what kind of film climate did he begin his professional career? Who else was making films at that time? What kind of Dutch films were being shown in the cinemas and which amateur filmmakers were on the scene?

In her dissertation, film historian Susan Aasman places



Germaine Krull, Joris Ivens filming *The Bridge* with the *Kinamo*, 1928
© Folkwang Museum Essen, Krull Sammlung





Ivens within the context of the amateur film in the Netherlands of the nineteen twenties. In 1928 amateur filmmakers began to organize themselves in the ‘kino’ section of the Netherlands Association of Amateur Photographers (*Nederlandse Amateur Fotografen Vereniging*). The Netherlands Cinefilm Association (*Nederlandse Smalfilmliga*) was founded by Mannus Franken in 1931, with support from Joris Ivens and J.C.Mol (see Aasman 2004, p. 56-59). Film historian Bert Hogenkamp sets *The Bridge* in the context of the Dutch documentary in the inter-war period, which puts Ivens in the company of Willy Mullens, the Polygoonjournaal, Jan Hin, Max de Haas and again J.C. Mol (see Hogenkamp, 1988, p. 48).

The Bridge can also be set in the context of the films being shown in the cinema around 1928. “*De Rotterdamse school # 8: stille stad, levende muziek*” (Rotterdam School #8: silent city, living music) presented an uncompromising version of this perspective in 2007 (curated by Frank van Berkel). A compilation of documentary images, newsreels, cinema advertisements and *avant-garde* films gave the audience a chance to see the railway bridge ‘De Hef’ from three different cinematographic angles (Paul Schuitema, Krieger, Joris Ivens), supplemented with the musical renditions of three contemporary composers (Koos van der Griend, Arend Niks, Oscar van Dillen). In *Maasbruggen* (1937) director Paul Schuitema focuses on two traffic bridges: we see the traffic flow, hordes of cyclists and vehicles, being tamed by a policeman or the barrier of the bridge. The camera is directed at the ground much of the time; the railway bridge appears only incidentally. *Panorama van de Koningshaven* (Panorama of the Koningshaven) (1925) is a conventional cinema documentary made by the company Hafilmi (short for the *Haagse Film Industrie*), with a superfluity of interim explanatory titles. Director Krieger employs very few creative camera angles to observe the harbour and makes *The Bridge* by Joris Ivens suddenly stand out in stark contrast as a visionary and daring piece of cinema.

THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY

When Ivens showed *The Bridge* in the Soviet Union, he was reportedly barraged with practical questions from an audience of manual workers: ‘How many tons does the bridge weigh? How long is it? How high? How much cargo passes through every day? Where did those trains come from? And where were they heading?’ Similar down-to-earth questions might just as easily occur to a modern audience. The railway bridge that crosses the Koningshaven in Rotterdam can now be described as a ‘space of shared memory’ (*lieu de memoire*), which resonates with impressions from outside the film. In 1985 a monograph had already appeared about ‘De Hef’. In 1993 the railway bridge went out of use and only just escaped demolition, eventually becoming a national monument in April 2000. *The Bridge* can also be

programmed from the perspective of the collective memory, with Hans Keller’s television documentary *About The Bridge* (Over De Brug, 1981) as the first stopping point (see Hosman 1981 & 2008). Among the people whom Keller allows to speak are the bridgekeeper and a man who took (and survived) a dive from the bridge. Rotterdam poet Cornelis Vaandrager recites his poem *De Hef*. In 2007 *Geschiedenis TV*, the digital theme channel of the Dutch broadcasting network VPRO, launched a website featuring an interactive historical map of the Netherlands, with the Rotterdam Hef Bridge as one of the landmarks (www.plaatsvanherinnering.nl). *The Bridge* may also be programmed as one of the many visualizations of ‘places of shared memory’ in the Netherlands. The footage can be organized chronologically (*The Bridge* as an illustration in a portrait of society around 1928) or thematically (*The Bridge* as one of many memory images of architectural icons).

FINALLY

The programme is always a key factor in the screening of a film, because the manner of presentation determines the response of the audience. Here the short silent film *The Bridge* (Joris Ivens, 1928) is placed in a range of programming perspectives: the oeuvre of the maker, the international *avant-garde* movement, the national cinema in the Netherlands around 1928, and the collective memory. This case study on the programming of *The Bridge* can be further elaborated within each perspective and enhanced with other examples of short films which are shown in various compilations. I have discussed only one film here and have presented only a summarized account of the various programming perspectives, but I hope I have succeeded in linking the historical landscape of the Dutch film world in the nineteen twenties with the situation of the film programmer eighty years later.

P.S. THE DISTRIBUTION PRINT OF *THE BRIDGE*

A public screening is only possible if the distribution print is authentic, complete and in good condition. What is the situation regarding *The Bridge*? Ivens spent three months in the winter of 1927 and the spring of 1928 gathering footage for *The Bridge*. At the end of this period, he had accumulated around 1,000 metres of rushes on 35mm, which he processed into a final version comprising 352 metres (source: the Film Commission Report, 1928). This would result in a screening time of 17 minutes for a projection speed of 18 images per second (15 minutes for 20 images per second). The Netherlands Film Museum has twenty-one different conserved elements of *The Bridge* (including a negative print, a positive print and an intermediate, 16mm projection print), which have come from various laboratories (Cinetone, Cineco, Haghefilm) and sources. In 1991, when the

nitrate print was found to be in poor condition, a project was set up, headed by Sonja Snoek and Bert Hogenkamp, to compile an international inventory of Ivens’ entire oeuvre. The conserved films were screened in December 1994 at the International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (see IDFA catalogue 1994, pp 138-145) in association with the Film Museum, the Film and Science Foundation (*Stichting Film en Wetenschap*) and the European Foundation Joris Ivens. The project was described in a separate Film Museum publication (see Reijnhoudt, 1994, p 21). The different versions of *The Bridge* should be further researched. Is the conserved version of 1994 the optimal version, with the original length and sequence? Film historian André Stufkens doubts that the original camera negative did actually end up in the Museum of Modern Art in New York, as stated in the conservation report by Catherine Common and the viewing report by Sonja Snoek (23-3-1994). The copy at the MOMA contains a series of upturned (and thus mirrored) images. The multi-language title shot was added later with a view to international distribution in 1928. *The Bridge* probably went into première in May 1928 without an opening title. Which version is most authentic? In November 2008 the official presentation took place of the first DVD box containing the historico-critical edition of a big part of the oeuvre of Ivens, including the most complete and correct version of *The Bridge* (see Stufkens, 2006 and Stufkens, 2007).

I would like to express my gratitude to the European Foundation Joris Ivens (André Stufkens), the Netherlands Film Museum (Rommy Albers, Marleen Labijt, Wim van Tuyll), Floris Paalman (University of Amsterdam) and Anouk de Haas (Gemeentearchief Rotterdam) for their comments and help.

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The Bridge was screened on-loop during the exhibition ‘Interbellum Rotterdam’, 2001. © Van Es Stadsprojecten

p.46
André Mergenthaler, performing his score for *The Bridge*, Cinémathèque Municipale de Luxembourg, 2005

Poster film programme Rotterdam Classics with *The Bridge*, 2008

Poster *Avant-Garde* programme with *The Bridge*, 1931. Coll. JJA

Dance performance with live music and *The Bridge*, Friederike Plafki, Steven Garling, Robby Hirsche, Dresden 2004.



Peter Bosma (1960) graduated in Theatre Studies from Utrecht University. He was attached to the Open University as course team leader and currently teaches Art Policy and Management at Utrecht University. He also works as Cinematheque programmer at Lantaren/Venster, Rotterdam. In the nineteen eighties he sat in on the film history course taught by Hans Saaltink at the Netherlands Film Academy, which included a detailed introduction to the oeuvre of Joris Ivens (as well as Eisenstein, Buster Keaton, Fritz Lang, Chris Marker and many others).



Ivens portrait on Veolia train

Since August this year, the likeness of Joris Ivens can be seen travelling between the cities of Nijmegen (his place of birth) and Roermond. His portrait is part of a series that has been placed upon railway cars by Dutch transportation company Veolia. This company provides transport by buses and trains in the provinces of Gelderland and Limburg. From the end of 2007 onwards, Veolia has introduced a total of sixteen new trains on the so-called Meuseline (named after the River Meuse, which connects both provinces). This has been done to accommodate the growing number of passengers on this section. To indicate the special relationship between the trains and the route on which they travel, portraits of people who have been of importance to this particular region have been placed upon the trains.



Ivens Archive on Chinese television

Chinese film crew of CCTV-6 came to Nijmegen to film parts of the city connected to Joris Ivens, such as the Ivens Archive and the Ivens monument. Their film is part of a six-part TV-series on The Netherlands. The millions of Chinese viewers will be informed on Holland through Dutch film history. The first episode will focus on WW II, and will feature films like *A Bridge Too Far* (1977), *Black Book* (2006) and *Soldier of Orange* (1977). The second episode presents artists in film, such as Vermeer in *Girl With a Pearl Earring* (2003), and Van Gogh. The third episode will highlight the Dutch documentary. highlight the Dutch documentary with sequences on Joris Ivens. In July 2009 a film crew from

Shanghai will visit the Ivens Archive to make a documentary on Ivens.

Four times Rain at the Hanns Eisler Film Music Conference

As the grand finale of a conference on Hanns Eislers' film music in Berlin, a world premiere was arranged with no less than four different versions of *Rain* (Ivens / Franken, 1929). Following the original silent version from 1929, the sound version composed by Lou Lichtveld (1932), Hanns Eisler (1941) and Ed Hughes (2001) were also performed. Film scholars, composers and musicologists gathered to discuss the relationship between image and sound and Eisler's visions regarding this topic. The 'Ensemble Klangexekutive' with conductor Manuel Nawri had some minor problems with the synchronisation, but the result was overall convincing and attractive.

DOK's Leipzig 2009: Ivens retrospective.

The German Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv organises an annual retrospective during the biggest documentary film festival in Germany: DOK's Leipzig. This year (at the end of October) the subject will be the film oeuvre of Joris Ivens. Former collaborators of Ivens, as well as film scholars, will focus on the films that Ivens made in Germany. An accompanying publica-



tion will be published during the retrospective. During the festival, the German version of the Ivens DVD box-set will also be presented.

Antoni Muntadas wins Velazquez Prize.

On June 5th the Spanish artist Antoni Muntadas was presented with the 2009 Velazquez Prize by the Spanish minister of Culture with a cash award of 125,000 euros. The award was bestowed in recognition of his outstanding and intense career and contribution to contemporary national and international art. Born in Barcelona in 1942 and a resident of New York since 1971, Muntadas is a pioneer in electronic art. The Velazquez Prize has been presented since 1992 to artists like Antoni Ta-



pies, Juan Soriano, Antonio Lopez and Luis Gordillo. Muntadas created in 1995 the multimedia environment *La Siesta / The Nap*, for the project *Beyond the Bridge*, initiated by the Ivens Foundation and MonteVideo/TimeBasedArt. Muntadas portrayed Ivens connecting scenes from early films of Ivens with the siesta as a leitmotif, and has been exhibited worldwide since.

The Stuttgart Staatsgalerie: 'Film and Photo': An Homage.

To commemorate the 80th anniversary of the exhibition 'Film und Foto' organized by the German Werkbund (Work Federation) in Stuttgart in 1929 the Staatsgalerie will exhibit originals from the artists involved. In 1929 some 1,200 objects by 191 artists of various nationalities demonstrated the aesthetic developments that characterized a new era of photography. The 'Fifo' reaped wide recognition already then, and to this day is considered one of the epoch-making international exhibitions of the twentieth century. Also Joris Ivens' avant-garde were screened at that time and now again (from 4 July – 2 November 2009)

Willi Ruge, Poster Film und Photo Ausstellung, 1929



THE

ivens

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