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Germaine Krull, *Joris Ivens filming the lift bridge in Rotterdam*, Winter 1928,
Coll. Joris Ivens Archives © Estate Germaine Krull, Photographische Samm-
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MAGAZINE

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'A Film without concessions'

RESTORING THE BRIDGE

ANDRÉ STUFKENS

Thomas Waugh: *'Today the film [The Bridge] reads like an exuberant textbook of the virtuoso editing of Ivens' mentors in both the Soviet Union and the Western European avant-garde'*¹

To ensure that the most authentic version or reconstruction of each film is included in the Joris Ivens DVD box set, *The Bridge* has been digitally restored. Since it is one of the international landmarks of vanguard filming in the 1920s, it is even more important to create a version that is as close as possible to the original - premiered on the 5th May 1928.

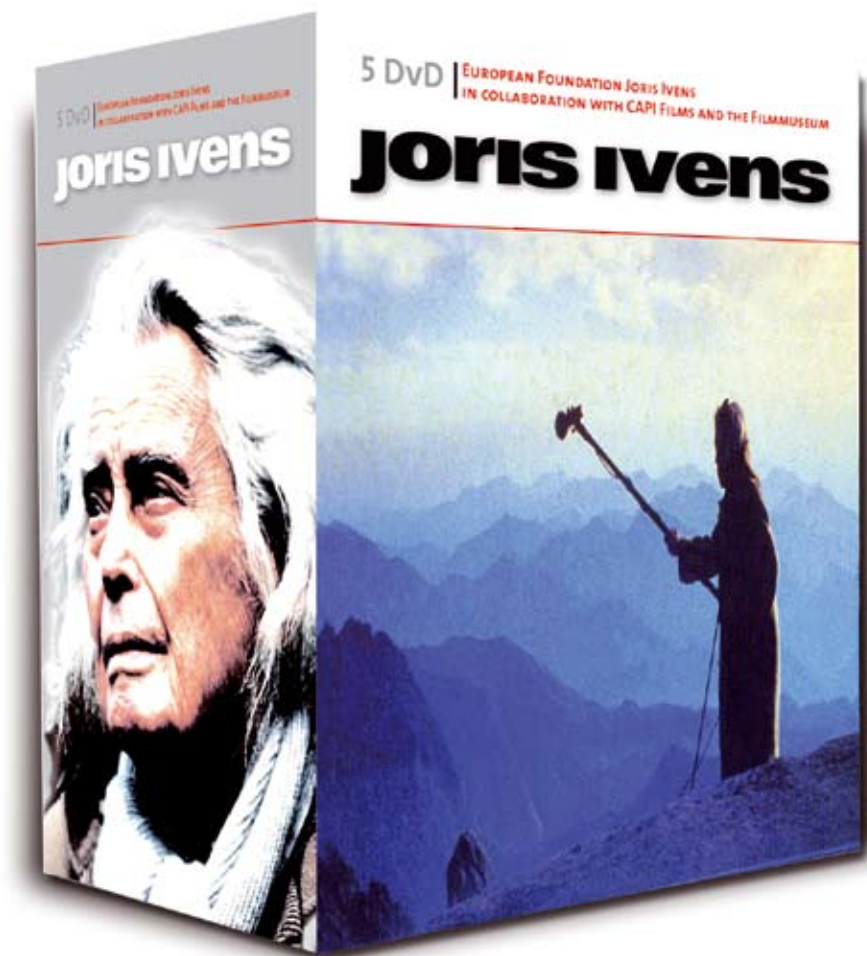
Tom Gunning: *'The Bridge and Rain are not only avant-garde masterpieces with a unique filmic language, they are also reflections on the future of a filmic view. When we try to categorize them under any existing genre it turns out that they are neither feature films, nor are they abstract films. They are important films in the history of the documentary film, partly because they changed its form'*²

Although *The Bridge* is a short film which only lasts eleven minutes, it has a long and complex history of duplication, distribution and restoration. There are various versions of *The Bridge* in existence without documentation as to why and where each of them derive from. Over the decades, it seems that new prints of *The Bridge* have become increasingly alienated from their original source. A frame-by-frame analysis has been made to compare different

versions.³ When studying the prints which were the result of the most recent restoration in 1994/1995 and which were distributed and screened in the last decade, an amazing number of frames upside down, mirrored and / or moving backwards can be seen. How could this happen and why did nobody notice this?

Little information about the shooting of *The Bridge*, between January and April 1928, has been saved. Ivens was still an amateur filmmaker, nobody knew or noticed what he was up either. It was only the photographer Germaine Krull, Ivens' wife at that time, who took a number of splendid photos showing the acrobatic points of view Ivens used, balancing on the steel beams of the lift bridge. According to his own account, he shot 1000 metres of film and cut it back to half its length. The sketches on cards Ivens made during the editing (see page 4) in order to create his study of movements, and compose the interrelationships between direction, movement, composition, light and darkness, are untraceable. During the editing, Ivens was thrilled and felt that he was on to something special.

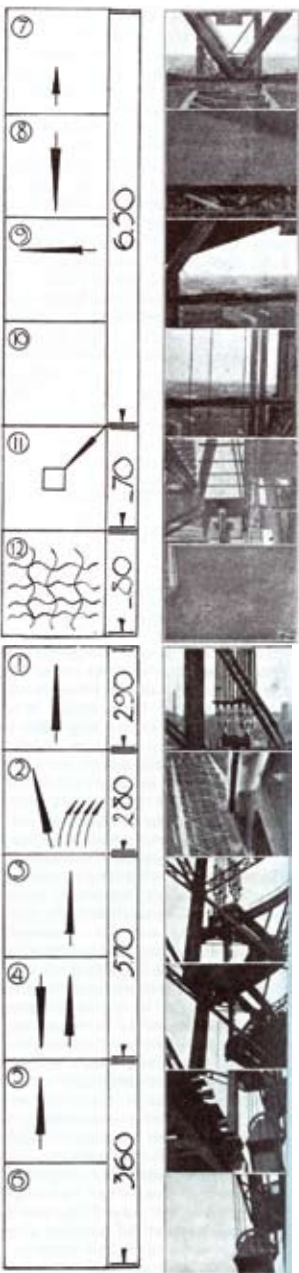
Joris Ivens: *'At the moment of editing I found myself in such a state of creative excitement, that I wasn't even able to put the scissors into the film...I worked day and night with the passion and enthusiasm of a pioneer who had just discovered virgin land'*.⁴



The Joris Ivens DVDbox with 20 films, will be released in autumn 2008 in The Netherlands, France and US in three languages: English, French and Dutch. Design: Walter van Rooij

Germaine Krull, *Joris Ivens editing the Bridge*, 1928. Coll. EFJI © Estate Germaine Krull, Museum Folkwang, Essen





A film analysis in stills of a sequence from *The Bridge* by A. Boeken, published in 'Filmliga II, 5', February 1929, p. 60

Joris Ivens, sketches for the editing of *The Bridge*, 1928.

Restoring *The Bridge*, Edit-B, Janneke, Bouke en Ozan.

Germaine Krull, *Joris Ivens editing The Bridge*, 1928. Coll. EFJI © Estate Germaine Krull, Museum Folkwang, Essen

It was particularly the psychological and dramatic effect of arranging images which attracted his attention. Ivens only focused on one goal: pushing the equipment, budget, subject matter and time to the absolute limits; to reach for the very essence of filmmaking - movement. No actors, no dialogue, hardly any information about where and why, just movement. In this way, *The Bridge* became a model for the purification and re-routing of film art. 'Nobody knows yet the principles of the 7th art, but you have to discover these principles', he explained at the time.⁵ The more strictly he stuck to his basic assumptions and make no concessions, the better the result would be. The development and printing of the film was normal and needed no trickery, Ivens wrote in his first autobiography. In April 1928, film journalists started writing about this simple but revolutionary project. Much of the information on the production comes only from these reports. The Filmliga (Film League), who premiered the film in May, regarded *The Bridge* as the first international breakthrough by a Dutch avant-garde film. They published photos by Krull and an analysis by Joris Ivens himself, which gave some further information on the making of the film. After the success of the premiere, new articles were published.

Germaine Dulac: 'On one evening I stayed in Amsterdam and somebody said to me: 'Do you want to see a film about the new bridge in Rotterdam? I said: 'Yes', and imagined it a documentary, with moving images of wheels of a mechanical construction...But no, I saw in front of me a moving symphony, with harmonies, chords, grouped in several rhythms. I felt a theme with a response surpassing the bridge itself.. consonances, dissonances by the selection, the contrasts or the grouping of harmonies, large structures by the angles and point-of-views from which is has been shot, rhythms, cadences, times. For me Joris Ivens, the man who orchestrated everything, is one of the visual musicians of the future'.

Jean Lenauer: 'This film is a pure, visual symphony, composed with a masterly technique and an amazing confidence. {...}. The film reveals the new talent of Joris Ivens, who does not use any tricks, does not avoid any difficulties, of whom we may certainly expect unsuspected visual pleasures in a short while.'

In August 1928, three months after the premiere, the Filmliga wrote: 'The film, which since its first screening has seen some small changes, was very well received'.⁷ Evidently, various versions existed in the first year already. In all probability, the portrait at the beginning of the film of Mr. Joosting, the engineer who designed the lift bridge in Rotterdam, was cut off. A description of the script by Ivens

mentions that the opening sequence of the film was meant to show the ingredients and means with which Ivens made the film: 'Opening title; a technical drawing with the design of the lift bridge; a panoramic view of the complete bridge; the engineer, Mr. Joosting; the camera and the director'.⁸ Nevertheless, the head of Joosting does not appear in any of the known prints. It is also very likely that the opening titles changed between May 5th and the moment when Ivens realized that a European tour was going to take place so that an opening title with four languages would make sense. In May, the film was sold to Sovkino in the Soviet Union; in August, UFA showed the film in Berlin and they asked permission from the Central Board of Film Censors in November to also distribute the film in The Netherlands.⁹ UFA applied for a film of only 352 metres! In December, Studio 28 in Paris bought the rights for a release in France in January 1929.

In 1933, UFA lost the exploitation rights and they reverted to Ivens. He kept several prints in Berlin, but in 1938, when he was living in the United States and had a good relationship with Iris Barry, head of the newly founded Film Library of the MoMA in New York, he decided to ship the nitrate prints from Berlin to New York. Iris Barry was one of the four founders of the FIAF in 1938, the International Federation of Film Archives, which attempted to save as much as possible of the film heritage at a time when the film industry preferred to destroy films after their distribution had ended. Due to all kind of bureaucratic troubles it was almost a year before the Ivens prints arrived safely at the MoMA. On 10 January 1940, Ivens wrote to Barry: 'Impressed as I am by the excellent work the Museum of Modern Art has done in America to make these kind of films better known to the American public, it is a great pleasure to me to turn these negatives over to you for the permanent use of your library archives'. In order to assure himself that the prints were in good shape, Ivens checked the material in March 1940. Afterwards he wrote to Barry: 'I was at the Delux Laboratories and have looked at the negatives and the dup-prints of my films. *The Bridge*, *New Architecture* and *Pile Driving* arrived all three in original negative and in dupe positive. The Museum of Modern Art already has one print of *The Bridge*, printed from this very negative. The print in your possession is the only correct one. Both of the above mentioned duplicate prints and the original negative have to be matched with prints in possession of the Film Library. New intertitles, both in negative and positive, have to be made.' This request was fulfilled, new opening titles in English were made. After 1945, when Ivens left the US, he was unable to follow any further developments of these prints.

In July 1946, a national film archive was also founded in

the Netherlands, with grand ideals but little film stock. In 1950, its director Jan de Vaal wrote to Ivens that one of the few Ivens films which he had in his film archive was *The Bridge*. It is more than likely that this print originated from the Filmliga collection.¹⁰ The only nitrate print of *The Bridge* in the Netherlands was protected by duplication, and not without reason: the print was decomposing which necessitated the removal of decomposed footage in 1979 and 1991. Of the original 305 metres only 234 metres were found on a shelf in 'hockey-puck' condition, with honey and a massive amount of powder. The end of the reel could still be unwound, even though it was very brittle, but the images had been bleached away. Only the end title 'Einde' still had a little black in its frames. What was left had to be destroyed.

When the Film Museum decided to restore the Ivens nitrate collection again in 1994 the MoMA sent their (314 metre) nitrate negative of *The Bridge*, as did the Danish Film Institute and the Cinémathèque Française." The curators decided to make their restored version by using the longest existing print - that of the MoMA - without the titles added in 1940, and replacing the latter with the opening title (with the four languages) from the Copenhagen print. As a matter of fact, the MoMA version is longer than the Filmliga version (305 instead of 314 metres), in which all the first and final frames before and after the splices were cut off. The quality of both versions differs; the MoMA version has strong contrasts and dark images, with little definition in greys. The Filmliga version is a bit softer in tones, has more definition and greys. There is a curious note in the restoration report: 'The MoMA negative is the original camera negative'. Both versions show the same damages, so one is an old duplicate of the other; or both are duplicates of the same source material.

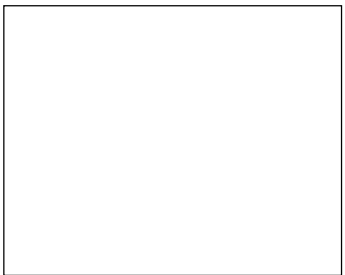
For some reason, in 1994 the content of the films was not compared, only their quality. Otherwise it would have been noticed that the MoMA version had changed in many ways over the decades from the 1928 version: not only had its length been changed, but shots and frames had been included (and also most likely excluded) as well, complete sequences had been put upside down and /or mirrored. The reason for this is unknown. The abstract and fragmented character of the film, with no clear narrative and no dialogue, makes it almost impossible to reconstruct the right order when there is no reference film around. *The Bridge* has often been compared with a Mondrian painting, with its vertical and horizontal linear character. As with these Mondrian paintings, it is hard to tell the correct orientation without additional knowledge.

Meanwhile, the distribution copies from the restored 1994 version of the Film Museum show strange upside down images of cars and buses on a bridge, an upside down image of a small boat canoeing on a river, an insert with a part of a bridge upside down, or an upside down bridge level gauge returning to zero. What was once a strict film without concessions has become a piece of folly.

COMPARISON VERSIONS OF THE BRIDGE

- 1 CAPI Film logo (shot o)
This logo must have been added at least one year after the first screening, when Joris Ivens' father was persuaded to start a film department within the CAPI company. This only became significant when Joris Ivens got serious commissions from the Dutch construction workers union (ANBB) in 1929 and the Philips Company in 1930.

Filmliga version



MoMA version



shot nr. 1

shot nr. 3

shot nr. 5

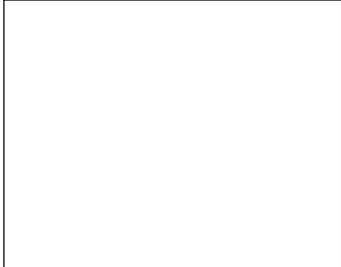
shot nr. 6

shot nr. 6

shot nr. 42a / 15a

shot nr. 42b / 15b

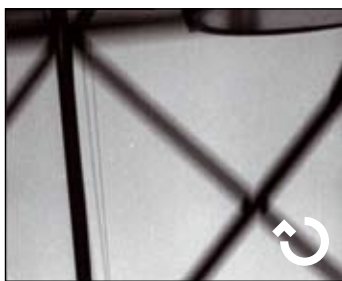
shot nr. 15c



shot nr. 16a



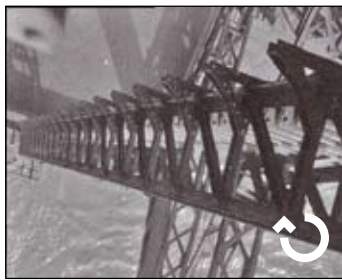
shot nr. 16b



shot nr. 35



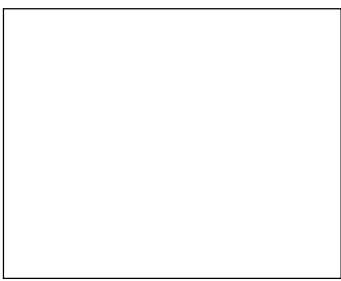
shot nr. 39



shot nr. 44



shot nr. 45



shot nr. 46



2 Opening title (shot 1)

Joris Ivens himself stated in several press clippings: It is my intention to make a film without titles. In doing so I am forced to focus with ultimate concentration on pure elements of film'.¹² In the script he refers to 'Beginning title' and 'End (piece of absolute film)'. Apart from the one at the beginning, no titles were intended. The four languages indicate international distribution. This became apparent only months after the first screening, when *The Bridge* was distributed in Germany, the Soviet Union, the Netherlands and France.

3 The bridge (shot 3)

The MoMA version has a fade-in from a black frame, while the Film Liga version has a hard cut. In general, all shots of the Film Liga version are a few frames shorter because these were cut off before and after the splice.

4 Ivens and camera (shot 6 / 6 / 7)

In the MoMA version, the first sequence of Ivens shooting with his handheld Kinamo shows a continuous movement in which the camera turns from the side to frontal, followed with a diagonal movement from the upper left corner towards the bottom right. In the Film Liga version, this sequence is broken and has a jump cut. After a still of Ivens with his camera seen from the side, the next shot shows Ivens with his camera from the front, but in the bottom right corner of the screen.

5 Steel arch (shot 15 a, b and c / shot 42)

In the MoMA version, the tilt towards the top of the steel arch of the central part of the lift bridge is followed by an insert of similar frames of the steel arch, upside down. The montage of the MoMA version places this complete sequence more towards the beginning of the film as shot 16, while in the Film Liga version it is shot 42 and it is linked to the sequences about the train entering the bridge.

6 Bumper lamp (shot 16a, b)

The sequence of a travelling shot with a frog perspective seen from below a bumper lamp of the train as it travels towards the underside of the bridge towers and arches is upside down in the MoMA version. This sequence is also broken in the MoMA version and repeated, while in the Film Liga version it is a continuous movement from one tower towards the other.

7 Traffic bridge (shot 33, 35, 39)

After the bridge keeper has gone upstairs to the highest level of the bridge tower and looks downstairs, several shots show traffic passing by on the bridge next to the railway bridge. The second shot of this traffic bridge is upside down; the following shot of a steel pile also.

8 Connections between train wagons (shot 44, 45, 46)

The complete sequence of the train driving towards the bridge differs in both versions. The MoMA version always shows shots with more frames, in this case enabling us to see the train itself and the steam, while the Film Liga versions starts a few frames later with steam only. The MoMA has two more shots of the connections between two train wagons. These shots are repeated in the same sequence.

9 Heavy counterweight (shot 88)

The shot of a heavy counterweight going down is upside down in the MoMA version.

10 Small boat (shot 89)

When the central part of the lift bridge has opened, the camera shows a birds-eye-view downstairs to the river. The shot of the small boat canoeing is upside down and mirrored in the MoMA version.

11 Bridge level gauge (shot 121)

The bridge level gauge drops to zero, but in the MoMA version it drops upside down.

12 Train wheel waiting on rail (shot 132)

Joris Ivens: 'In the course of the passing by of ships, the film shows a waiting train once in a while. As a result, the audience sticks to the subject, is excited to know whether more ships will pass by, and will be happy when the bridge is closed again and the waiting train can drive on. The insertion of this waiting train always occurs with part of the rails in view in the frame, for instance with a wheel standing still on a rail.'¹³ In the Film Liga version, the shot of the waiting train is inserted three times, in the MoMA version four times. The extra shot is inserted to break a rather long shot of the bridge going down. The shot of the descending bridge is broken in the MoMA version.

13 End title / black squares (shot 155)

The MoMA version has an original ending, using abstract or so-called absolute film. Instead of an end title, Ivens wanted the animation part with the black square diminishing and increasing two times after one other. These abstract images were already part of the first screening. The Film Liga version lacks this absolute film ending and has an end title which is old, but not what Ivens had intended.

- 1 Thomas Waugh, *Joris Ivens and the evolution of the radical documentary 1926-1946*, University of Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1981, p. 36.
- 2 Tom Gunning, *Het gaat om de film, een nieuwe geschiedenis van de Filmliga*, Amsterdam 2000, uitg. Bas Lubberhuizen, Tom gunning, p.254
- 3 A previous frame-by-frame analysis was made in 1975 by Attilio Caffarena in a Ph.D thesis *Il Ponte di Joris Ivens e le vanguardie cinematografiche degli anni venti. Trascrizione grafica e analisi semiologica*, University of Genoa, 1975. The total number of shots of the version Caffarena studied (Film Liga version) was 155.
- 4 Joris Ivens and Robert Destanques, *Joris Ivens ou la mémoire d'un regard*, 1982, Paris, Edition BFB, p. 73.
- 5 Joris Ivens, *De Amateur-Kinematografie en haar mogelijkheden*, in *Focus*, 4 February 1928.
- 6 Joris Ivens, 'De Brug', in *Cinema & Theater* nr. 233, July 1928.
- 7 An., 'Joris Ivens: "De Brug"', in *Filmliga* 12, August 1928, p. 14.
- 8 see note 6.
- 9 'Uitslag der keuring', report by the Central Board of Censors, 6 November 1928.
- 10 This collection created by Pelster and Franken at the end of the 1920s was called the CBLF (Centraal Bureau Liga Films) and they distributed vanguard films, screened by the Film Liga. After the war, the catalogue of films was managed by the Maatschappij voor Cinegrafie N.V. located at the Uitkijktheater (the Film Liga theatre in Amsterdam). In 1948, negotiations started to include the Uitkijk collection in the film archive collection of Jan de Vaal. The fusion resulted in the creation of the Foundation Netherlands Film Museum in 1952. It's also possible that Helen van Dongen brought a copy with her from the USA when she visited Jan de Vaal in 1949. A third possibility is Willem Sandberg, director of the Stedelijk Museum and chairman of the Film Museum, who as a member of the resistance against the Nazis was commissioned to manage the confiscated goods of German institutions (Beheersmaatschappij). Sandberg had to classify all UFA films in Holland and put these up.
- 11 An account of this restoration report and its most striking results can be read in Bram Reinhoud, *The Difficult Road to the Restoration of the Films of Joris Ivens*, Amsterdam: Nederlands Filmmuseum, 1994. The project was curated by Sonja Snoek, Mark-Paul Meyer and Bert Hogenkamp, assisted by Catherine Cormon.

12/13 See note 6.



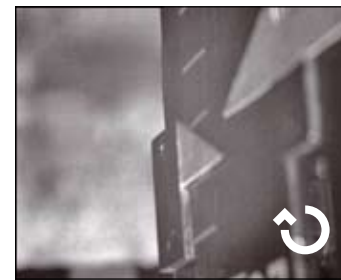
shot nr. 88



shot nr. 89



shot nr. 98



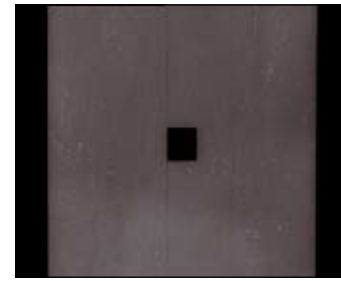
shot nr. 121



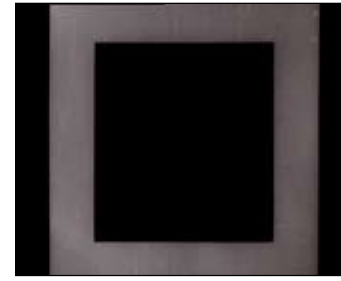
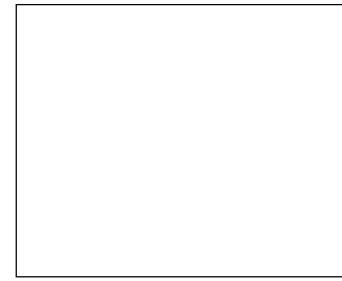
shot nr. 132



shot nr. 150



shot nr. 155a



shot nr. 155b

the foundation update

The opening of the exhibition of Wilhelm Ivens © Storm Stufkens

opposite: Listen to the silence, exhibition room art gallery Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin



THE NOOTEBOOM–IVENS FAMILY ARCHIVE TRANSFERRED TO NIJMEGEN

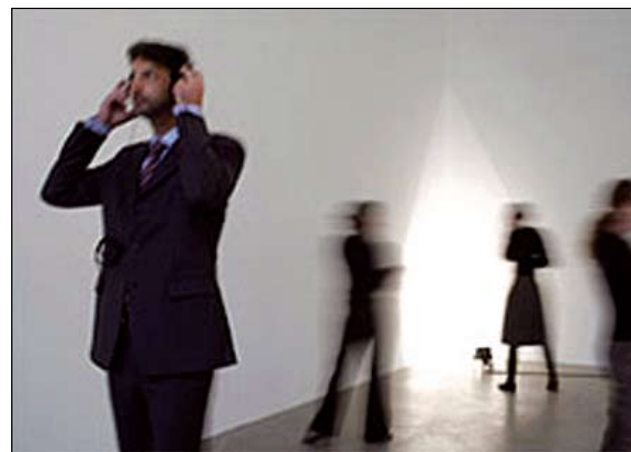
On 23rd March 2007, the Ivens family, represented by Josien Nooteboom, transferred their family archive to the city of Nijmegen. This event marked the opening of an exhibition about grandfather Wilhelm Ivens at the Museum Het Valkhof. The family collection derives from the legacy of Mrs. Thea Nooteboom-Ivens and Hans Ivens, the sister and brother of Joris Ivens. In their turn, they received a large part of this collection from their parents. The children of Thea Nooteboom-Ivens and Hans Ivens decided to deposit this collection in the municipal archive in Nijmegen, where it joins the collections of Wilhelm, Kees and Joris Ivens. Thanks to the generous donations by the Ivens family, in these very modern and well equipped vaults, almost all of the collections related to the Ivens family are now gathered in Nijmegen. Within the family collection, there are 27 photo albums from Kees Ivens, made up of photos from 1890 to 1941, provide many unique images of Joris Ivens in his youth. For example, one shows the first known photo of Joris Ivens handling a film camera, dated around 1910. There are 127 boxes all together, containing many interesting documents, like Kees Ivens' diary. Bob Haan, Ivens' nephew, listed all the documents which are applicable for the public. This collection, from three generations of the Ivens', proves what an enormous impact the family had on the development of photography and film history in the Netherlands - the

Josien Nooteboom watching the photo exhibition of her great-grandfather in Museum Het Valkhof © Storm Stufkens



mechanical eye became a family tradition. (See also the article about Wilhelm Ivens and his grandson Joris Ivens p.14).

LISTEN TO THE SILENCE



The well known Modern Art Gallery 'Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo' in Turin presented an exhibition on sound and vision. 'Silence. Listen to the Show' invited visitors to isolate themselves and embark on an acoustic voyage along fifty works of art created from the sixties onwards by acclaimed and emerging international artists, musicians, performers and filmmakers, like John Cage, Bruce Naumann, Marcel Broodthaers, Samuel Beckett, Glenn Gould, Karlheinz Stockhausen and Joris Ivens.

"Wherever we are, what we hear is mostly noise. When we ignore it, it disturbs us. When we listen to it, we find it fascinating. The sound of a truck at 50 m.p.h. Static between the stations. Rain. We want to capture and control these sounds, to use them, not as sound effects but as musical instruments" stated John Cage. Francesco Bonami curated this multidisciplinary exhibition featuring artists who share an interest in the mundane nature of sound. In the part-print-part-audio catalogue Bonami writes about *Rain* (Ivens, Franken, 1929): "This film by the Dutch director Joris Ivens is one of the most significant works of cinema to explore the relation between images and sounds. Furthermore, the events that followed its creation have made it into a veritable manifesto of the role of sound in cinema."

NEW MUSIC FOR *THE BRIDGE* (DE BRUG, 1928) AND *RAIN* (REGEN, 1929)

In Rotterdam and Utrecht composers created two new compositions for the silent movies of Joris Ivens' *The Bridge* (De Brug, 1928) and *Rain* (Regen, 1929). On Sunday 25th February, Daniel Cross (percussion) and Jeroen Kimmman (guitar) performed their new composition live with the films in the Hoogt Cinema in Utrecht. Prior to these live performances the silent versions and Hanns Eisler's sound version (1941) were screened. On 10th April, the Doelen Ensemble gave a live performance of their new composition in the series of 'Rotterdam Classics' in the Lantaren-Venster Theatre in Rotterdam. Oscar van Dillen wrote a composition for *The Bridge* based on the same minimal constructive principles as the film language itself.

CULTURAL AWARD FOR ANDRÉ STUFKENS

Queens' Commissioner of the province of Guelderland, Mr. Clemens Cornielje, presented the Bi-annual Cultural Award 2006-2007 of the Prince Bernhard Fund to André Stufkens in St. Stephens Church in Nijmegen on August 25th. According to the jury of the largest cultural fund in the Netherlands, the laureate deserved this award because of his virtues in organising many cultural activities as director



of the Ivens Foundation, chairman of the Limbourg Brothers Foundation and secretary of the Cultural and Historical Platform Nijmegen. The award consisted of a booklet, 5,000 euro and a ceramic sculpture specially designed by artist Judith van den Boom. Her design was inspired by a camera lens as used by Joris Ivens and the Limbourg Brothers (1380-1416), three world famous miniaturists who, like Ivens, came from Nijmegen, and designed such beautiful books as the *Très Riches Heures de Duc de Berry* (Musée Condé) and the *Belles Heures* (Metropolitan Museum, New York).

RAIN IN NEW DUTCH PHOTOGRAPHY MUSEUM

On 19th April 2007, the Dutch Photography Museum opened in a refurbished former harbour warehouse called Las Palmas in Rotterdam. The exhibition *Panorama Las Palmas* sets out from the Wilhelmina Pier to explore 150 years of photography by tracing the development of Rotterdam and its port in a one kilometre radius around Las Palmas. The oldest known photograph of Rotterdam (c. 1850) is being shown in public for the first time, together with many exceptional photos of the former polders, early construction activity, departing emigrants, the ravages of the Second World War, post-war reconstruction and the development into today's Kop van Zuid. The exhibition includes photo albums, amateur photos, films and anaglyphs, amongst which is Ivens' film *The Bridge*, shot in 1928 only a few hundred metres away from Las Palmas. Scheduled to continue for over a year, *Panorama Las Palmas* is the first semi-permanent overview of the history of Dutch photography (on show until 30th June 2008).

NEW EARTH AT THE THEATRE

To celebrate the 75th anniversary of the closing of the 'Afsluitdijk', excerpts of Ivens' documentaries *Zuiderzeewerken* and *Nieuwe Gronden* (*New Earth*), about the reclamation of the polders and closing of this huge dyke, were presented for various occasions, exhibitions, publications, television programmes and a theatrical play. Well known theatre group Dogtroep created a performance on a boat on which large screens showed excerpts of Ivens' films. This theatre boat reached the harbour of Almere, where the audience sat by the lakeside to watch the play.

SUBTITLES

As part of the ongoing listing of the archive collections, the volunteers of the Foundation have been working on commentary texts and subtitles. Most of these texts are incomplete, outdated or even missing completely, and it needs much accuracy to restore them properly. With the

assistance of special software the texts are being updated, corrected, translated and transferred into subtitles.

BRAM RELOUW

After seven years working for the Foundation, Bram Relouw will leave his job to become Cultural Co-ordinator of the Radboud University Campus, arranging cultural activities for students. Bram studied film studies at this university and is not only a film scholar, but also a painter and a singer in a band. During his involvement with the Ivens Foundation, he organized with much passion and efficiency projects like the educational website 'The Flying Dutchman', the City Film Contest and the educational project Eye & the City, about 19th Century and contemporary photography. Bram has always been an easy going, relaxed and hard working guy. We thank him sincerely for the pleasure of working with him and wish him all the best in his new job.

A TRIBUTE TO IVENS

The first **NODODOCFEST**, an International Documentary Film Festival, held in Trieste (Italy), conducted 'a Tribute to Joris Ivens' by showing 6 of his films. The Cultural Association "Il Nodo", in charge of the organisation of this event, has been working for years in order to promote Documentary Cinema. This Festival, the NODODOCFEST, wanted to give an overview of Italian and international documentary cinematography, as well as familiarising the public with the knowledge and debate on this cinematographic genre. The Joris Ivens programme – thanks to the collaboration between CAPI Film, the European Foundation Joris Ivens, The University of Trieste, the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia and the FICC – presented masterpieces by the great Dutch documentarist such as *The Spanish Earth*, *l'Italia non è un Paese Povero* and *A Tale of the Wind*. On May 9th - the opening night - *The Bridge* and *Rain* were screened, the first silently and the second dubbed live by the group "Electrosacher"



Queens Governor C. Cornielje (right) presents the cultural award of the Prince Bernhard Cultural Fund to André Stufkens © PBF

Marceline Loridan-Ivens meets the new mayor of Nijmegen (and former Minister of Interior Affairs) Mr. Thom de Graaf and Hannie Kunst, city councillor for art.

EARTH, WIND & FIRE (AND WATER)

ANDRÉ STUFKENS

Jiska Rickels and the Dutch Documentary Tradition



Cameraman Martijn van Broekhuizen and director Jiska Rickels shooting the Bering Sea for *4 Elements*, 2006 © Jiska Rickels

Apart from the many compliments, documentary filmmaker Jiska Rickels also received some rather random comments on her first feature-length documentary *4 Elements*: 'bold and forward', 'pretentious', 'juvenile exuberance', 'all style and no content'. In a confident voice, Rickels counters these critics: 'The film is not about beautiful images at all. Although it is true that I do see an awful lot of superficial images around me and I want to set something against this with my films'. In *4 Elements*, Jiska Rickels observes small isolated communities of men struggling in extreme physical conditions with the 4 classical elements of nature: earth and air, fire and water. In Siberia, the film crew followed 'smokejumpers', firemen battling a forest fire; on the Bering Sea, fishermen fishing for spectacular king crabs; in Germany, coal miners descending hundreds of feet into the earth, and in Kazakhstan, cosmonauts training and preparing for take-off into the air.

In essence, the film is about connections and relationships: chiefly the relationship between the workers themselves in their intimate moments of hardship, interdependence, silence and loneliness, surrounded by waves of 12 metres high or in mine galleries 1,200 metres underground. In transforming nature, they show the coexistence of men and nature, inextricably connected as well as drastically out of balance. The relationship between sound and image, too, is fundamental and very striking, as well as is the link between Rickels and her predecessors. *4 Elements* is both contemporary art and rooted in the rich tradition of the Dutch Documentary School. 'The next generation sits on the shoulders of the previous one', Joris Ivens once said and that is especially true of Rickels' documentary.

UNTERTAGE AND BORINAGE

In the end, making this four part documentary took four years. It started in 2002 with the first part, her graduation film *Untertage* (Days Under, 2003). With this film, shot at the Lohberg-Osterfeld mine in Germany, she proved that she was capable of creating stunning images underground, on to which something of her own fear and claustrophobic experiences must have been transferred. Before shooting, Rickels visited the Joris Ivens Archives to study Joris Ivens' and Henri Storck's film *Borinage*, about the coal miners strike in the Belgian region in 1933. She wanted to know how Ivens and Storck had solved the problem of filming underground. Descending and filming far down in these deep dark mine galleries with hot camera lamps is much too dangerous and could cause explosions.

She found out that some images in *Borinage* actually show coal miners drilling underground. However, this was found footage and had not been shot by Ivens and Storck themselves for the simple reason that they were never given permission to even enter the mining companies, let alone descend with the coal miners.

Most artists in the 19th and 20th century who opted for mineworkers as their subject matter were confronted with the same problem: the impossibility of representing mineworkers underground. Vincent van Gogh started his artistic career in the *Borinage*, but could only make drawings of poor men and women carrying large sacks of coals during day time and outside of the mines. Many of Ivens and Storck's images shot on the slopes of the black terrils resemble the raw drawings of Van Gogh. Unlike these artists, Rickels did receive full cooperation from the mining facility, although the danger of explosion urged her cameraman Martijn van Broekhuizen to opt for a Bolex camera with a spring-wound mechanism limiting shots to 30 seconds, without direct sound. Surrounding noise and direct sound were recorded later, above ground. These limitations affected the rest of the documentary; they even proved to be essential to the impact of the film. The dialogue is very limited, full concentration is put on photography, on lyrical and transcendent images, where we encounter utterly familiar and oddly mysterious scenes, with subtle gestures of men, scrubbing the filth of a day's work off each other, or just remaining silent during moments of complete dependence on each other. The success of *Untertage* - it won many awards at festivals around the world - inspired Rickels to proceed with other groups of professions and the full range of all 4 primordial elements.

MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH

Jiska Rickels, born in the Dutch 'Brabant' region in 1977, with a German passport, was raised in an artistically inclined family. Her father, Horst Rickels, is a composer and he trained her from an early age on to listen to music installations and unusual sounds and music. The subtle, lingering music he composed for *4 Elements* is essential to the total experience of the film. Her mother is a visual artist, who gave her daughter her visual talent. Initially, Jiska Rickels wanted to become an actress and she studied at the Academy for Dramatic Art. Since she did not feel comfortable on stage, she enrolled at the Film Academy to study documentary film in Amsterdam, and later on in Munich. For her admission, she created a film based on the four seasons called *The Sixth Day*, the day in the story of Creation when man was added to nature. 'My mind was full of these images, because I like to reflect on questions such as where we come from and why we are on earth. It is utter nonsense what some critics say, that I am too young to concern myself with these vital questions. Matters of life and death are apparent in every stage of life. I love to visit churches to experience and enjoy the silence, without feeling any pressure of a denomination, and to clear my mind before jumping into the hecticness of daily life again.' The motto of *4 Elements* is a sentence from Greek philosopher Empedokles 'There is no growth or death, only the mixture and changes of four everlasting elements, the fundamentals of all.'

UNCONTROLLED REALITY

'My decision to choose documentary film had to do with my eagerness to tell stories and adapt to unexpected situations in reality. In feature film, everything is planned and controlled, without the wonderful surprises reality grants you, miracles you cannot even think of or foresee yourself. For instance, when all the equipment and the crew were ready for departure to film on a trawler in the Bering Sea, the American captain suddenly cancelled the agreement. He had decided to join a Discovery Channel competition to catch as many king crabs as possible, in which he could win 200,000 dollar. He did not want a film crew on board during this contest, which he actually won by the way, we were told afterwards. In spite of his refusal, we left for Dutch Harbor on spec, searching for alternative boats, which we found and which proved to be even more suitable for shooting than our first choice. It seemed as if this was the way it was meant to be. And this is what we have experienced all the time: the obstacles were very annoying, but we were able to turn them into even better solutions. Previously, before we



Jiska Rickels, still from *4 Elements*, 2006 © Fu Works

Joris Ivens, still from *Rain*, 1929 Coll. EFJ © MLI



Jiska Rickels shooting *4 Elements* © Jiska Rickels

left, we had tough security training on the North Sea, to find out whether we could handle this kind of hardship and to learn what to do when getting swept overboard. Conditions were quite extreme on board in the Bering Sea, 12 metre high waves, and in spite of our training we became ill. The medicines to cure us made us lethargic and I even reached the dangerous point of losing all desire and willingness to continue. Nevertheless, only by enduring the same physical hardship as the protagonists of the film, we were able to film penetrating shots that allow the audience to grasp some of the extremes we survived. Some people say that they get seasick themselves when watching these shots, or claustrophobic during the mine part. I consider this a compliment. While filming, I always stand next to Martijn and we share the same view, how to shoot specific moments and locations and give them a universal timeless feel.'

PREDECESSORS

The comparisons with exemplary films on trawler fishing in the Netherlands are obvious: Herman van der Horst's *'t schot is te boord* (1952), or Bert Haanstra's *De stem van het water* (1967). These kind of documentaries shaped the reputation of the Dutch Documentary School in the 1950s and 1960s; *'t schot is te boord* won the Golden Palm in Cannes in 1952. Like Rickels' film, Van der Horst's documentary on herring fishing also focussed on pure photography and editing, lacked dialogue and presented metaphorical people in close harmony instead of individual personalities with their own sentiments or conflicts. It is not surprising that Van der Horst had to face the same kind of criticism that Rickels is confronted with now. Some sequences of Rickels' film, with high waves and getting the fishing nets on board, seem pure quotations of Van der Horst. 'I only saw this film after we were done shooting and the same applies to Haanstra's films', Jiska Rickels replies, denying any quoting. Haanstra's *Pantha Rhei* ('Everything streams', 1952) which presents the four elements - clouds, rivers, waves, corn fields - without any human beings, won the Grand Prix in Cannes 1952, but

was criticised for being 'too cold', 'too academic', 'without social meaning'. 'I would have loved to film a documentary like Haanstra's *Spiegel van Holland*, it's such a simple and great idea to film the environment reflected in the surface of rivers, lakes and canals. But our education at the Film Academy mainly focused on feature films, and I often rushed to the mediatheque to watch documentaries.'

DUTCH TRADITION

'My palette consists of many colours. My colours are the earth, the air, fire and rain. I'm working a lot with the effects of nature, because they are visual, because my art is very much a visual one!'" Joris Ivens said in a film interview in 1972. 'I show water, fire, wind and earth. The elements of nature are the ingredients for a documentary filmmaker, like colours and shapes for a painter. We don't have 'stars', we don't use actors, the elements of nature are simply our 'stars'.² Documentary film is very much a physical art, but nevertheless, like feature film it needs drama and conflicts to excite an audience. In Ivens' oeuvre, the four elements of nature are presented in a dialectical development, in a continuous process of contradictions with mythical proportions.³ The classical sequence of the closing off of the Zuiderzee in 1932 was filmed and edited by Ivens like a Herculean battle, each element: men, sea and water personified by its own camera. Sweeping cranes, tons of mud and heavy stones, dancing boats, engineers, workers and fast flowing streams of water in an ever narrowing gap are fighting each other beneath a cloudy sky. In Ivens' first films, like *The Bridge* and *Rain*, the elements of nature were already playing an important role. After watching *Rain*, French avant-garde filmmaker Germaine Dulac predicted in 1929 that Ivens would one day make a film about the wind. In *A Tale of the Wind* (1989), all four elements return, dominated by the wind, in all its forms, as an inner force of an Asthmatic, a physical force sweeping wind mills, kites, clouds and deserts, or a metaphysical force moving men in brain storms, changing cultures and historical movements.

This focus on the elements of nature did not just emerge naturally from the physical environment of a flat delta in Holland with its open skies, wind and special light reflected in rivers and lakes, it derived predominantly from its visual tradition of famous painters. 'The visual arts do have a revolutionary influence on me, because my talent is purely visual. Very visual!' Ivens declared. 'And this is part of our Dutch culture. We don't have great singers, composers, only a few good writers - but we do have great painters. In this my visuality is rooted, the feeling for reality'.⁴

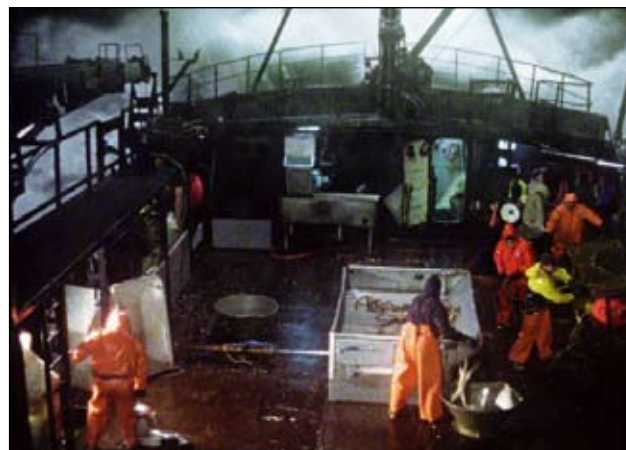
ARCHETYPES

What is the reason that your images resemble films of predecessors from the Dutch Documentary School? 'It has to do with my intuition, my alertness. The film *4 Elements* opens with a tree in flames. Right at the moment when I noticed this tree I immediately wanted to shoot it because I imagined this could represent the vertical connection between earth and heaven through a fire. And I hoped that the tree would fall down, which indeed happened. By coincidence, this scene occurred in front of me and it only took fast action to make the right shots before it was over. It won't repeat itself, so it depends on alertness and a clear vision.' The mesmerizing cinematography transcends time and location, goes beyond reality and reaches the subconscious, where it merges with existing archetypes, primal images with a universal visual language crossing cultures, eras and generations. Think of the final images of Johan van der Keuken in *The Long Holiday*: ships floating on a river in a very long shot, twinkling sunlight reflects on the gentle waves, it becomes out of focus, vague abstract images of reflections only, taking you out of that specific location and moment, leaving you with images and thoughts of departure and eternity. And again, think of the last moments of *A Tale of the Wind*: finally the wind starts blowing in an empty desert with a deep blue sky, it goes out of focus, abstract and transcendent, representing resignation and eternity.

The Dutch tradition with its focus on aesthetical, formal aspects started in the 1920s with the generation of the Film Liga and Joris Ivens. It reached its peak during the 1950s, before losing its attraction when cinéma vérité started in the 1960s with its subjective camera, rough grain film stock, and its rejection of manipulative images of beauty. And now, just when poor image quality seems to be everywhere, the notion of well composed images returns. 'In history it's always in waves, the current attention for aesthetics is logical. Although I felt relieved and free after *4 Elements* was over. I thought, this is finished now and I don't have to repeat it anymore. My next film will be a feature film and I want to shoot more roughly. At the moment I'm studying the Spanish language. After assisting director Byambasuren Davaa for the Oscar-nominated *The Story of the Weeping Camel* I now want to assist Julio Medem. Documentary or feature isn't an issue for me. I just want to tell stories in film'.

- 1 Joris Ivens in an interview with Gordon Hitchens recorded on 16 mm film and published in *Filmculture*, nr. 53, 54 en 55, spring 1972
- 2 Joris Ivens in an interview with Marcel Martin, in 'Entretien avec Joris Ivens', *Cinema* 69, nr. 132, February 1969
- 3 Robert Grélier, *Joris Ivens*, 1965, Editeurs Français Réunis, p.22-25
- 4 Joris Ivens in an interview with Petra Lataster, in *Berliner Begegnungen, Ausländische Künstler in Berlin 1918 bis 1933*, Berlin 1987, p. 127.

Jiska Rickels,
King Crabs fishing
at the Bering Sea,
still from *4 Elements*, 2006
© Fu Works



opposite:
Herman van der Horst,
Herring fishing at the
Northsea,
still from *'t Schot is te Boord*,
1952
© Nederlands Instituut
voor Beeld en Geluid



Jiska Rickels,
Fire in Siberia,
still from *4 Elements*, 2006
© Fu Works



opposite:
Joris Ivens,
Fire in Valparaiso,
still from *...à Valparaiso*,
1963 Coll. EFJI © MLI



Joris Ivens and Henri
Storck, Miner in Borinage,
still from *Borinage*,
Coll. EFJI © MLI

opposite:
Jiska Rickels,
Miners in Germany,
still from *4 Elements*, 2006
© Fu Works



Joris Ivens and Marceline
Loridan-Ivens,
Sky above Chinese moun-
tains,
still from *A Tale of the Wind*,
1988 Coll. EFJI © CAPI
Films / MLI

opposite:
Jiska Rickels,
Sky above Bering Sea,
still from *4 Elements*, 2006
© Fu Works



Wilhelm Ivens,
The Sultan of Siak,
Sharif Hashim Abdul Djalil
Shafudin.
Coll. Royal House Archives/
Koninklijk Huis Archief,
The Hague

THE MECHANICAL EYE As A FAMILY TRADITION

An exhibition and book about Wilhelm Ivens,
and his influence on Joris Ivens

FOR A LONG TIME, IT WAS THOUGHT THAT JORIS IVENS' DECISIONS TO BECOME A FILMMAKER AND TO FOCUS ON DOCUMENTARIES CAME OUT OF THE BLUE. ALTHOUGH ALL BIOGRAPHICAL AND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL LITERATURE ABOUT JORIS IVENS DESCRIBES HIS ROOTS - HE ORIGINATED FROM A FAMILY OF PHOTOGRAPHERS - THE ERUPTION OF HIS TALENT, SUDDENLY AND DEFINITELY AT THE END OF THE 1920s, SEEMED TO OCCUR WITHOUT PRECEDENT. JORIS IVENS TRAINED HIMSELF TO BE A FILM MAKER BECAUSE THERE WAS NO FILM ACADEMY AT THAT TIME. HOWEVER, THE FACT THAT HE GREW UP IN THE IVENS FAMILY ALMOST PREDESTINED HIM TO BECOME A MAKER OF DOCUMENTARY FILMS. HIS FAMILY HAD A TRADITION OF WORKING WITH PHOTO AND FILM CAMERAS, THE MECHANICAL EYE, WHICH SHAPED IVENS IN THIS DIRECTION.

FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS CAN BE TRACED IN ALL THREE GENERATIONS: GRANDFATHER WILHELM IVENS (1849-1904), FATHER KEES IVENS (1863-1941) AND JORIS IVENS (1898-1989). THIS FAMILY TRADITION RESULTED IN THE UNIQUE AND ORGANIC TRANSFORMATION OF ONE ART FORM, PHOTOGRAPHY, INTO A NEW ART FORM, CINEMATOGRAPHY. IN FACT, JORIS IVENS STILL CALLED FILM 'THE LIVING PHOTOGRAPHY' IN 1928. AN EXHIBITION AT MUSEUM HET VALKHOF, AND A BOOK SHOWING THE PHOTO OEUVRE OF WILHELM IVENS TRIED TO REVEAL THE INFLUENCES ON JORIS IVENS. EXTENSIVE RESEARCH BROUGHT TOGETHER 250 PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILHELM IVENS, INCLUDING PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE ROYAL FAMILY ARCHIVES, THE NOOTEBOOM-IVENS FAMILY ARCHIVES, AND FROM PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS.

Wilhelm Ivens, a master craftsman

While still young, he was only 18 years old, Wilhelm Ivens decided to leave his place of birth in the vicinity of Cologne (Germany) and emigrate to the Netherlands. Just across the border, in Nijmegen, two German pioneers of photography, Julius Schaarwächter and Gerhard Korfmacher, had already established themselves. He apprenticed himself to them to become skilled in the new profession. It is probable that he spent a semester studying with Dr. Vogel in Berlin, together with Schaarwächter's son. At that time, Dr. Vogel was the world's leading pioneer in the photography field,



and founded the photographic laboratory of the Technische Hochschule. Later, Wilhelm's son Kees was to become Dr. Vogel's assistant, and his grandson Joris, too, would receive his photographic training at the same institute in Berlin.

It provided three generations of Ivens' with a sound basis: a very thorough mastery of techniques and equipment, and a very thorough knowledge of chemistry, mechanics and optics. After his studies and periods of practical training, Wilhelm Ivens opened a photographer's studio of his own in 1871. He wanted to distinguish himself from the average photographer. In advertisements he called it an 'artistic photographic studio', in which the newest technical processes were used, such as the dry collodion plate, and he had special offers of artistic enlargements in crayon, carbon print, water colour and pastel. Joris Ivens wrote: 'My grandfather had started taking portraits with the invention that Daguerre had generously put at the disposal of everyone who wanted to work with it: these penetrating portraits of quiet people, in which attitude and expression mattered more than drama and originality'. A good example of this is the portrait of the Sultan of Siak from the Dutch East Indies, Sharif Hashim Abdul Djalil Sjaifoedin. Wilhelm Ivens was successful in his work and was elected as the first chairman of the Dutch Photographers Association in Amsterdam. The high point of his career was his commission for the Royal Family. Subsequently, the Queen Regent granted him a Royal Warrant, which became the start of a family tradition: his son Kees and grandson Joris would not rest until they too were decorated.

Wilhelm earned good money, his earnings equalled those of the police commissioner and the town clerk. This was partly on account of commissions from rich industrialists, such as the Jurgens family in Oss, the founders of the multinational Unilever company.

Realism and rationality

Wilhelm Ivens photographed what he had really 'seen' and deliberately wanted to show, with the exclusion of the accidental moment. Technically, a snapshot was still impossible. It would have created a blur and that would have detracted from his ideas of craftsmanship and beauty. It is the exact aspect of objective registration of Wilhelm Ivens' photographs which provides beauty and is in accordance with the credo of realism, as Courbet had already formulated in 1861: 'The beautiful is contained in reality. The beauty reality offers us surpasses anything an artist can imagine.'

This realistic and rational approach of Wilhelm Ivens was the result of lengthy and deliberate preparations, which were necessary for each photograph. Some photographs of the Town Hall, the Burchtstraat, and the Grote Markt were taken as early as 6 a.m. (according to the hands of the clock



on the Stevenskerk shown in the photo), when chances of any passers-by were slim. In a deliberate composition, Ivens 'unobtrusively' distributed the people who were present across the image. This applies to many of his photographs: the people present were asked to position themselves in such a way that it enhanced the depth effect. The compositions show that Ivens not only used a technical 'Focus of Sharpness', but also an artistic 'Focus of Attention'.

We can recognize photographs by Wilhelm Ivens from their craftsmanship, their severely ordered composition, and their rationality. They offer no messy cosiness, no picturesque romanticism of dilapidated ruins, but buildings, streets and objects which are clean, modern, done up and complete. In summary, it can be seen as the victory of the proud bourgeoisie who conquered the public domain in the 19th century and arranged it according to their own standards.

Panorama

Many of Wilhelm Ivens' photographs were taken from a high viewpoint. He did this to prevent motion blur, and also to supply the bourgeoisie with the imposing survey and grasp of the whole, both visually and informatively, which they desired, and which allowed him to excel as a photographer.

Wilhelm Ivens had a preference for panoramic images, whether of cityscapes or the countryside. The hilly landscape in and around Nijmegen, which was unique for the Netherlands, provided him with ample opportunity for taking them. Through the ages, the magnificent view from the Valkhof was an inducement for emperors like Constantine I, Charlemagne, Frederick Barbarossa, Charles V or Napoleon to stay or settle there. It is not unimaginable, however, that Wilhelm Ivens' desire for open spaces, skies and horizons was also related to the fact that he had weak lungs. Wilhelm Ivens himself, his son and also his grandson Joris, all suffered from lung diseases and would eventually die from them (Joris Ivens was asthmatic for a large part of his life and finally lived on only one lung). Many scenes in Joris Ivens' films, such as *The Spanish Earth*, *Power and the Land*, *Song of the Rivers* and *Pour le Mistral*, show similar wide horizons with beautiful skies as Wilhelm Ivens' shots from the hills in Beek or from the Valkhof in Nijmegen.

Nature walks were in the family's blood as well. Wilhelm, Kees and Joris enjoyed taking long walks. For this purpose, the filmmaker preferably retreated to the countryside or to mountains in splendid isolation.

Documentary and social engagement

On 2 December 1871, the same year in which he opened his first photographer's studio, Wilhelm exhibited photographs of 'The Five Reverend Father Jesuits killed by the Paris Commune on the 24th and 25th of May' in his shop window. These



Calligraphic document
'To her Majesty the Queen of the Netherlands' in the photo album of Wilhelm Ivens presented to the queen on 1 July 1890. Coll. Royal Archives

J.C. van Caspel, *Ivens&Co fotoartikelen*, 1899 (lithografie)

'Ivens - the rest', advertisement inspired by the famous Kodak slogan 'You press the button, we do the rest',

'Carte de visite', Wilhelm Ivens Photographic Atelier, backside.



Wilhelm Ivens, Orphans working in the kitchen of the Protestant Orphanage, 1896. Coll. Municipal Archives

Shipment Box Ivens&Co, 1914

Joris Ivens as a boy scout promoting a 'Boy Scout photcamera' of his fathers shop, 1908



Wilhelm Ivens, View on the Ooijpolder, 1890. Coll. Municipal Archives Nijmegen

Joris Ivens, The valley near Fuentedueña, opening sequence The Spanish Earth, 1937. Coll EFJI © MLI



documentary photographs in the shop window made a profound impression, because they came at a time when it was not yet possible to make photographic clichés and when newspapers tried to emulate the realistic power of photographs by means of engravings. Wilhelm Ivens recorded many a historic moment of city life: the visit of Queen Emma and her daughter Wilhelmina in 1890, the opening of the “Velocipede” Path, the jubilee of the actress Catharina Beersmans, the national song festivals and the invention of the Noviomagum steam carriage.

The commission to take photos of the Protestant Orphanage at the Scherpenkampweg allowed Wilhelm Ivens to demonstrate his social engagement. Ivens had shown his concern for orphans and homeless people prior to that, by appointing himself secretary of Humanitas (1870), a national society aiming at ‘the care and support of parentless and scruffy children of all denominations in the Netherlands who receive no care in any other way, respectful of anyone’s faith or creed.’ This social/liberal attitude of Ivens, a Catholic, turned out to be an essential characteristic of the family, which would also become apparent in later generations.

The awareness of the documentary possibilities offered by the mechanical eye, so emphatically present in his grandson Joris Ivens, had already started with Wilhelm Ivens. When Wilhelm’s son Kees started his own photography shop, he also displayed documentary news photographs in his shop window. Historic moments captured in photographs led to people crowding round the shop window, as on 2 May 1917, when photographs showed how an English pilot who had lost his way mistakenly caused damage to a Dutch coastal town. Although The Netherlands remained neutral during World War I, Kees Ivens organized a contest in 1919 of documentary photographs about the misery caused by this fighting. According to the appeal, he aimed to collect photographs which might be used for research purposes by following generations. He asked his son Joris to become secretary of this contest, with the result that he had to judge the multitude of documentary photographs. Therefore, in his youth, Joris Ivens grew up with documentary photography.

Up to date technology

‘The latest novelty’ is how Wilhelm Ivens advertised yet another new photographic technique, and his son Kees Ivens used ‘Ivens & Co, always up to date’ as a slogan for his national chain of photographic shops. The three generations of Ivens’ kept themselves well acquainted with the very latest techniques and applied them as quickly as possible. After corresponding with Professor Röntgen, Kees Ivens gave an early demonstration of experiments with X-rays, and he also introduced colour photography to the Netherlands using Lumière’s potato-starch-grain method. Prior to that, in 1896, Kees Ivens had been present at the first presentation in the Netherlands of Lumière’s Cinématographe. This led him to explain the workings of this wooden cupboard to a large newspaper audience, and to predict that this invention would turn out to be just as important as the art of printing. At an early stage, he added a film department for projection equipment for cinemas to his stock of photographic apparatus. It was one film camera from the shop which inspired Joris Ivens at the age of 13 to make a short film about Cowboys and Indians, entitled *The Wigwam*. After secondary school and his study of economics, Joris Ivens pursued his education in Berlin in 1921, where he took the following subjects: general photography, photographic optics, astronomic photography, film technique, spectral analysis, photo-chemical and photo-mechanical processes, the production and examination of photographic materials, and colour photography. He also did periods of practical training at the Zeiss Ikon and Ernemann camera factories in Dresden and Jena. ‘Both my inclination and my studies were purely technical-scientific at first’, Joris Ivens said of himself.³ And indeed, a permanent curiosity about new techniques and an eagerness to apply these immediately were as characteristic of Joris Ivens’ approach to film, as they were of his father’s and grandfather’s approach to photography.

From photography to film

In spite of his studies into photography, only very few photographs by Joris Ivens are known to exist. While in Berlin, he preferred to immerse himself in the newest expressionist films and to attend meetings of the ‘Deutsche Kino-technische Gesellschaft’. Kinotechnique, the working of film cameras, was part of his studies, and he assisted at film performances for which the Ernemann projection machines of his father’s shop were used. During his regular returns to the parental home in Nijmegen, Joris Ivens made short family films with subject matter that fits in with the subjects we know from the paintings of the Impressionists and the first short films of the Lumière brothers: contented civilians reposing in the garden in their spare time, sitting at their garden tables, or watering the plants. After completing his studies, Joris Ivens became technical manager of his father’s shop in 1925, and assistant manager of the main branch in Amsterdam in 1927. Developments in photo-chemistry occurred, and he published articles on them, including photo-telegraphy. Many demonstrations with film projection equipment were part of his regular job, as well as the making of purely scientific and didactical films using micro lenses. In this way, Joris Ivens’ transition to film was actually quite natural. Starting with a short childhood film based on feature films from America, he went on to unpretentious home movies and scientific films made on commission, before entering into his first film experiments, such as *Kinoschetsboek*, in 1927, for which he filmed accidental passers-by in the Kalverstraat in Amsterdam. Some of these experiments were various pub films, e.g. the *Zeedijk-filmstudie*, and a motion study of the traffic in Paris. Most of his film studies are lost, and of the films which were saved it is particularly *De Brug*



(1928) and *Regen* (1929) which have become classics.

From city photography to City film

Like his grandfather, who was a city photographer, his grandson Joris focused on city life as the subject of his first films. Wilhelm photographed modern life around 1888 in a provincial town with a new railway line, a new railway bridge, new housing estates and new public parks. Joris aimed his camera at the same city subjects of ‘La vie moderne’ (modern life) in the Netherlands, which had also been captured in impressionist paintings and in the first films by Lumière. Ivens filmed the arrival of a train, steam, metal and bridge piers, accidental passers-by under an umbrella, the view from his window. However, with regard to aesthetics, a revolution had taken place. The modernism of Joris Ivens created an entirely new avant-garde cinematic vocabulary.

This becomes apparent when we compare how Wilhelm and Joris dealt with similar subjects, such as railway bridges. In 1888, for his photograph of the railway bridge in Nijmegen, Wilhelm Ivens placed his camera far away, on a tripod, resulting in an objective image of the bridge as a whole. Forty years later, for his film *De Brug* (1928), his grandson climbs in, on and under the vertical lifting bridge in Rotterdam, using a small hand-held camera, zooming in on details of an iron arch with a number of bolts, from various impossible viewpoints. The renaissance image with the right perspective, so strongly present in the grandfather’s work, was broken by cubist analysis and fragmentation in *De Brug*. With this new avant-garde photographic vocabulary, photography and film acquired aesthetic overtones, as a result of which they could present themselves as art forms. At any rate, Joris Ivens saw his documentary films as works of art, and in order to buttress this idea, he succinctly wrote about his grandfather, too: ‘He was an artist’.⁵⁶

Correspondences

It was through the agency of Wilhelm Ivens that the King and Queen Carnival first started in his place of birth. Concerts, choral singing and parties were among his favourite hobbies. This tradition of a certain *joie de vivre* was continued in Kees and Joris Ivens. The rich catholic party culture of Joris’ youth, with its many masked balls and dressing up, ensured that he, too, remained a *bon vivant* in his later life, in spite of the misery he saw and filmed. The socio-cultural functions fulfilled by Wilhelm were continued by Kees Ivens, who not only become a politician, but also undertook pioneering initiatives in order to put his city on the map. Joris Ivens, too, was active as an organizer and administrator from his secondary school days onwards, and he continued this in his student years. During his entire film career, he took an active interest in such organizations as the Filmliga, the Association of American Film Producers

(as chairman), the World Union of Documentarists (as vice-chairman) and the Association des Documentaristes Internationales (as chairman).

In addition, grandfather, son and grandson were adroit entrepreneurs, and they knew how to combine this with social engagement. The fact that Wilhelm and Joris Ivens opted for a documentary recording of reality seems to derive from their social engagement, and from their urge to document industrial progress for everyone’s benefit. Wilhelm Ivens’ photographic report on the Orphanage in Nijmegen and the progressive circumstances in which the orphans and homeless were housed found a continuation in Joris Ivens’ film images of better housing, hospitals or factories for workers and farmers around the world.

The efforts of all three generations reveal a love and respect for the past, combined with powerful, future-oriented wishful thinking: the photographs of restored and new Nijmegen made by Wilhelm, the multitude of articles written by Kees Ivens about the history and future of his city, and the filmic images of art and culture from the past and the industry of the future made by Joris Ivens. With the same ease by which Wilhelm combined the medieval Kruittoren with the new railway bridge of 1888, Joris’ film camera swerved from the ancient pyramids to workers being exploited in the Egypt of the 1950s, or from a Roman temple in Sicily to a derrick in the sea.... In 1936, on the occasion of the opening of the Waal bridge, which had been built as a result of his efforts, Kees Ivens saw himself becoming part of a historic chain when he made a photograph of the 11th century Sint Nicolaaskapel, with the largest arched span in Europe in the background. The wish to be a part of history is something that Joris Ivens was brought up on.

A thing of beauty

The mechanical eye of the camera allowed three generations of Ivens’, with an optimistic and down-to-earth view, to shape modernism. ‘The camera is a thing of beauty in its victory of man over nature’, Kees Ivens stated enthusiastically. In a country without a film school, his education in the family tradition provided Joris Ivens with the right conditions to become a maker of documentary films.

Wilhelm Ivens, Picture postcard of the Railway Bridge Nijmegen, w.d. [1900]. Coll. H.de Weert

Kees Ivens, Railway Bridge Nijmegen in wintertime with icedrift, 1917. Coll. Nooteboom-Ivens Family Archives.

Joris Ivens, Railway Bridge Rotterdam, still from The Bridge, 1928. Coll. EFJI © MLI

1. Gustave Courbet, quoted in *Gedaanten van het realisme*, 1982, Louvain, catalogue of the Louvain Municipal Museum
2. *Provinciale Geldersche & Nijmeegsche Courant*, 5 April 1887
3. Joris Ivens, quoted in L.J. Jordaan, *Joris Ivens*, 1931, Amsterdam , page 5
4. Joris Ivens and Robert Destanques, *Joris Ivens, Aan welke kant en in welk heelal. De geschiedenis van een leven*, 1983, Amsterdam, page 26

ART IN THE CLASS ROOM



Students working on Eye & the City



Thijn van de Ven, Reconstruction photo-studio Wilhelm Ivens around 1885, Museum Het Valkhof. Coll. Leon Gulikers and FJM van de Ven. Reconstructed by Willemien Beurskens and Niels Coppes.

Tim Sparla and Suzan Geldhoff working on 'Eye & the City'.

Tim Sparla, design Outdoor Photopanel Wilhelm Ivens, 2007

THE FIRST PHOTOS EVER MADE, EITHER BY NIËPCE, FOX TALBOT OR PORTMAN, WERE 'CITY PHOTOS', SEEN FROM A WINDOW. WILHELM IVENS WAS A DEDICATED CITY PHOTOGRAPHER AND JORIS IVENS ALSO STARTED WITH CITY FILMS LIKE RAIN AND THE BRIDGE, LATER FOLLOWED BY FILMS ON BERLIN, PARIS AND SHANGHAI.

City photography is still a very vivid and innovative category of art, particularly attractive to young people. Architecture, leisure, shopping, social circumstances, human behaviour, waste, urban planning – all kinds of angles can be selected by photographers to express their relationship with cities. New equipment, and new ways of dissemination like mobile telephones, make city photos also suitable for new ways of communication and aesthetics. The educational project 'Eye & the City', developed by the Ivens Foundation, wants to inspire students at schools to study 'city photography' from the 19th Century up to today and create city photos themselves. The project was created by Suzan Geldhoff (University of Nijmegen), Bram Relouw and Tim Sparla, together with contemporary city photographer Henk Braam. It includes an outdoor exhibition on panels showing the photos taken by Wilhem Ivens, and a creative and educational interactive website. The project has been developed in collaboration with the municipal archive and Architecture Centre in Nijmegen and will also be used by municipal ar-

chives in Utrecht, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and other cities.

For further information visit: www.eyelandthecity.nl

This project is supported by the Mondriaan Foundation, Actieplan Cultuurbereik and the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds.



in memoriam

MARION MICHELLE 1913 - 2007

On Monday April 30th 2007, Marion Michelle died in hospital near Paris at the age of 93.

Her family name was Marion Michelle Kobletz. Her formative years read like an East Coast Railway schedule...born in Cleveland, Ohio (19 June 1913) in the heyday of the American Dream, educated at the University of Chicago, and then the 'inevitable struggle' in New York. In between, she made a Grand Tour of Europe in 1933, visiting London, Paris, Vienna and Moscow, as part of her literature studies.

Her father was a lawyer, and her mother only looked up from reading Proust when Marion came home from school, to see if she had washed.

'I began my photographic apprenticeship while a student at the University. I was soon attracted to New York where my first teacher was Paul Strand with whom I worked as a stills photographer on the film *Native Land*, a full length film on the violation of civil rights in the US.'

Sharing the precarious life of artists in a big city, she did photo reports for various newspapers, magazines and a photo book was published. 'Paul Strand was invited by the Mexican Government to make a film on primary education, part of the country's programme of social reforms. With a highly exaggerated belief in my capacities, Paul recommended that I should replace him. So, early in 1941, I set out for Mexico, where I made a series of photos of that enchanting country. Afterwards Hollywood followed and I worked at Universal Studios as a film editor and film supervisor for the Office of War Information.' At her parent's house she met well known authors who were exiles from Germany, like Bertolt Brecht and Hanns Eisler, who were initially supported by her father and also settled in Los Angeles. 'During this time I had an exhibition of my Mexican photographs in Westwood and another together with George Biddle and Man Ray, "Portraits" on Sunset Boulevard.'

She met Joris Ivens in Hollywood in January 1944. They were both married at the time, Ivens only two days before. After their first meeting in an elevator at the film studio, a

love affair started. When Ivens was appointed Film Commissioner for the Dutch East Indies and left the US, she soon followed, joining his Film Unit in Australia in the middle of 1945. In October they started shooting *Indonesia Calling*, a film rallying against the neo-colonialist attitude of the Dutch government. Because it was far too dangerous for Ivens to film in public he asked Michelle to shoot the film in Sydney Harbour without any preparation. 'It was a spontaneous film. Joris had renounced his post as Film Commissioner, the crew disbanded, cameras and equipment returned to the Dutch authorities. He was back to scratch. Everything had to be improvised. From the borrowing of a camera, begging for film stock up to the loan of a car. No more crew, just Joris and myself, with a few stalwart Aussie supporters. Filming had to be furtive, for the docks and the waterfront were carefully guarded. I lived on standby, my camera always ready loaded for action. And finally, from a modest reserve of film, shot in the urgency of action, he patched together a moment of history, still significant in its implications for those who see it today.'

The film caused Joris Ivens to have a serious attack of asthma and they both stayed in the Blue Mountains for six months to recover. The two of them sailed for Europe in the first days of 1947, and travelled to London, Amsterdam, Nijmegen and Paris. A new commission brought them to the 'Peoples Democracies' of Eastern Europe, where the situation was far more complex. 'It took all of Joris Ivens' skill and tenacity to mount this project in which four countries were involved, all trying to show as advantageously as possible the ambitions of its social and economic program, whereas on the contrary we wanted to show the enormity of the problems and how by telling the stories of real people, possibly the difficulties might be overcome.' Michelle wrote many versions of the script, but the bureaucrats posed just as many obstacles. 'We put our hopes for a more equitable world into the film, and though they were not realized *The First Years* remains a witness to the endeavours and aspirations of that time.' At the end of the production Michelle and Ivens left for Paris, where they found an apartment, but the love affair had ended. Michelle married Jean Guyard, a tax officer and painter in 1954. They remained friends until his death, and she would



loyally support him in many ways. Her job as secretary of FIAF, the world federation of film archives, from 1957 to 1968 was also most helpful for Ivens. In 2006 she gave all her papers, photos and documents concerning the FIAF to the Foundation. In 1972 Michelle became involved in the Association Internationale des Documentaristes, editing the A.I.D News bulletin until the Association was disbanded in the 1980's.

In between these activities, Marion continued taking photos, including one series on erotic sculptures in Paris, and making films. These included documentaries about the annual rally of *l'Humanité*, and the situation of women in the Middle-East. A further piece of work was commissioned by Bulgarian television, which involved returning to the village of Radilova to record the situation of the inhabitants twenty years after they were filmed in the Bulgarian part of *The First Years* – it was called *Master of the Rain* (1968). Together with her good friend Catherine Duncan she wrote a script for a feature film Ivens was planning to make about Till Eulenspiegel. They also published an essay entitled *Working with Ivens* and both wrote articles for catalogues for the Ivens exhibition 'Passages' at the Valkhof Museum in Nijmegen (1999) and the US tour in 2002.

Over the decades, Marion Michelle took some 1500 photos of Joris Ivens. These were exhibited in Leipzig, Paris (Centre Pompidou, 1995), Amsterdam (IDFA) and Nijmegen. She gifted all her documents and photos (negatives and prints) relating to Ivens to the European Foundation Joris Ivens, including the kind transfer of the copyright. Last year her collection of other photos was given to the prestigious collection at the George Eastman House in Rochester, USA.

Joris Ivens and Marion Michelle in Australia, 1946. Coll. EFJ-Marion Michelle, © EFJ

Willy Kessels, Filming *Borinage* at the shed of the Buize family at the 'Fonds du Roi Albert'. 1933, © Heirs Kessels. From left to right: Felicien Buize, cameraman François Rents, Henri Storck (in door opening), Joris Ivens and dr. Paul Hennebert (holding the window).

DURING THE CONTINUING RESEARCH FOR THE IVENS DVD BOX SET, ALL KIND OF PRINTS AND VERSIONS OF BORINAGE WERE STUDIED. ONE VERSION, A TWO-REEL CUTTING COPY OF BORINAGE, PROVED TO BE DIFFERENT FROM EXISTING VERSIONS. IT WAS ONE OF THE DISCOVERIES EMERGING FROM THE JORIS IVENS NITRATE PRESERVATION PROJECT AT THE NETHERLANDS FILM MUSEUM IN THE EARLY 1990S. IT DATED FROM THE LATE 1930S AND WAS KEPT IN THE VAULTS OF THE CINÉMATHEQUE FRANÇAISE¹. LASTING APPROXIMATELY 24 MINUTES, IT IS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THE THREE KNOWN VERSIONS:

- THE ORIGINAL SILENT FILM WITH FRENCH AND FLEMISH INTERTITLES RELEASED IN THE SPRING OF 1934
- THE RUSSIAN SOUND VERSION MADE BY JORIS IVENS AND RELEASED IN 1935
- THE VERSION PRODUCED BY HENRI STORCK IN THE EARLY 1960S, WITH A COMMENTARY BASED ON THE INTERTITLES OF THE SILENT VERSION, SPOKEN BY THE BELGIAN FILM CRITIC ANDRÉ THIRIFAYS.

By Bert Hogenkamp

BORINAGE Film Mystery

The Cinémathèque version comprises large parts of the Borinage film, including some footage that cannot be found in any of the three other versions. But a considerable amount of archive footage from other sources is also used to put the events filmed by Ivens and Storck in a wider historical context, starting with the First World War and ending in 1936. This 'external' footage is normal frame, whereas most (but not all) of the material shot by Ivens and Storck is full frame.

Who made this version and with what purpose in mind? Why did it never get beyond the stage of a cutting copy? What kind of soundtrack was envisaged? These are a few of the questions that the copy raises. After its discovery Storck was presented with a VHS of the Cinémathèque version. He made clear that he had never seen it before and had no idea who had been behind the making of it. Ivens could not be asked, as he had already passed away by this time, but he never hinted at its existence in the many interviews that he gave during his lifetime.

Given its provenance it is likely that the Cinémathèque version was edited in Paris. As the editor(s) had access to footage that had not been used in the silent or the Russian versions, it is also likely that the Communist lawyer Jean Fonteyne was the source. During the shooting of *Borinage*, Fonteyne had acted as driver and general factotum for Ivens and Storck. He was a leading member of the International Labour Defence, who knew the Borinage coalfield extremely well as he had been a counsel for the defence of countless miners charged with strike and other offences. Occasionally

Fonteyne used his personal 16mm camera to record Ivens and Storck at work, and specifically when cameraman Rents was being asked for his identity papers by a police officer. Along with footage of a visit by French writer André Gide to the Borinage in 1935 and shots of the 1936 strike in the coalfield, this material would be incorporated into the silent film *Autour du Borinage* (Around the Borinage, 1933-36). Fonteyne had set up the company Education par l'Image (EPI) for the production and distribution of *Borinage*. He had been instrumental in getting the footage shot by Ivens and Storck to the Soviet Union for the Dutchman to make the Russian version. Even if it can be safely assumed that Fonteyne was involved, this still does not answer the question of the authorship of the Cinémathèque version. All the more reason to have a closer look at it.

The cutting copy starts with archive footage of the First World War, followed by the intertitle '1918'. A few shots symbolise peace and industrial progress. The title '1928' is followed by a shot of swirling water. As the shots and titles make clear, overproduction leads to crisis. After the title '1932' the first shots of *Borinage* are shown - milk being thrown away and wheat being burnt. The French and Flemish subtitles are proof that these shots have been taken from a print of the silent version. French footage showing the effects of unemployment is mixed with shots of the Hunger Marchers from *Borinage*. Then a newspaper is shown, the Parisian daily *l'Intransigeant* announcing that 'new factories have been occupied by the workers'. After the Ambridge sequence (the shooting of the striking steel workers by police and deputies), the film progresses in time to '1936'. A title announces: 'In the Belgian Borinage', followed by a map of Belgium and Northern France showing where the region is located. After a few shots showing the landscape of the Borinage with its pits and the garden village of Monobloc, the film switched to footage taken underground, followed by a funeral procession and coal stocks. The home coming of the young miner Delplanck is succeeded by the Mouffe family eating potatoes. There follows the meeting of the unemployed in a room, but without the newspaper cutting with a picture of Lenin on the wall. The gates of the pits are closed and the women take to the street with the banner 'rather death than the starving of our children'. This slogan is repeated in Dutch as a headline of *Het Volk*, the daily paper of the Dutch Labour Party. The card playing strikers who are evading the assembly ban are followed by the family leaving Monobloc in a lorry, including the shot of the mother breastfeeding her child. The eviction of Augustin Cage and family plus the trip to his in-laws is followed by shots of the auction of impounded goods in the market place of Frameries.

The second reel starts with the bailiff sequence which is edited differently - the second shot of the alarm clock is shown after the departure of the bailiff and his company. Felicien Buize and his family are shown living in a shack at the 'Fonds du Roi Albert', along with the unemployed Victor Dubois. Other shots of slum housing are succeeded by the construction of the church. Then the film returns to Monobloc, showing empty houses. From the child playing with the wooden doll, the socks full of holes on the washing line and the youngsters playing cards, the film switches to the Mouffe family, asleep on their makeshift beds. Doctor Hennebert examines the Mouffe children, while the father puts the table back in its place. The film returns to the Delplanck family with the mother putting her little daughter to bed and heating water on the stove. On top of the slagheap, men and women are looking for coal. In the

concluding sequence shots of water are interspersed with shots previously shown in the film.

The clearest distinction between the Cinémathèque version and the other three, is the absence of the Communist demonstration in Wasmes with the painting of Karl Marx. Other references to Communism have been left out too - the tombstone of Louis Tayenne, the slogan 'Front Unique' painted on the factory wall and, of course, the newspaper clipping with a picture of Lenin. In the closing sequence the overtly Communist shots (demonstrated by the portrait of Karl Marx, the picture of Lenin) have been replaced by shots of running and swirling water. One can assume that the accompanying text of the other versions - the dictatorship of the proletariat and the realisation that socialism was the only solution - was to be replaced by another, non-Communist message. Even the choice of the newspapers shown indicates a different political angle. Compared to the French Communist daily *L'Humanité* in the silent version, the Parisian *L'Intransigeant* was clearly mainstream. Even starker was the contrast between *Le Drapeau Rouge* and *Het Volk*, which was outright social democratic and anti-Soviet - and therefore despised by the Communists. The choice of the latter newspaper is intriguing anyway. Why show a Dutch language headline in a film which only uses French captions?

Interestingly, by omitting all references to Communism the Cinémathèque version started to look like the film Pierre Vermeylen had had in mind in 1934. Vermeylen, one of the film's financial backers, had suggested drastic changes in *Borinage* after the largely negative reception at its premiere. For without changes, Vermeylen felt that the film's chances of making an impact were virtually nil - no one would show it. He suggested taking out the portrait

Stills from the mysterious version of *Borinage*, ca. 1938. Coll. Filmmuseum, Amsterdam.



Willy Kessels, Dr. Paul Hennebert lectures father and mother Buize about bottle milk feeding, 1933. © Heirs Kessels



of Lenin, as well as the demonstration in Wasmes with the painting of Karl Marx. As a former Communist candidate in the Borinage (for the 1929 Parliamentary elections) and a chairman of the Belgian section of the International Labour Defence, Vermeylen's views had to be reckoned with. Ivens, though, was prepared to make only one concession, to remove a series of no less than ten intertitles quoting the interventions in Parliament during the 1932 strike by the sole Communist MP Joseph Jacquemotte. But otherwise he was adamant that the film stayed the way it was. Despite serious doubts, Storck decided to concur with his co-director.

Other changes in the Cinémathèque version had no direct relationship with Communism. An interesting example is the alarm clock in the bailiff sequence. In the other versions it was used to show the time (6.55) when the workers started the occupation of the house and the time (8.35) when the bailiff gave up and left. In the Cinémathèque version the second shot of the alarm clock has been put after the departure of the bailiff. Next follows a shot of the workers drinking a pint of beer in a run-down pub. As it is now, the alarm clock seems to draw the spectators' attention rather to the hour that the workers are having a drink than to the patience that was required to oust the bailiff. Another re-editing technique used is the splitting up of sequences. The visit to the Mouffe family for example has been split in two and placed in different parts of the film. The same goes for the Delplanck and the Monobloc sequences. Why this is done remains a mystery.

Another important change in the Cinémathèque version concerns the chronological order. The film takes the viewers from the First World War to the year 1936 and then shows the events in the Borinage. There was a strike in that mining region in 1936, but it was rather different in character from



the defensive 1932 strike filmed by Ivens and Storck. For the 1936 strike was offensive, with such demands as trade union recognition, shorter hours and paid holidays – and it was successful in obtaining these demands. It was part of a nationwide strike movement that had started in the docks of Antwerp and coincided with the famous May-June factory occupations in France (to which the headline in *L'intransigeant* is referring). But there are no visible references to these offensive demands in the Cinémathèque version. The emphasis is on the poverty in the region. This is exemplified by the powerful sequence of men and women gleaning coal on the slagheaps, which is not only shown in full in the Cinémathèque version, but to which two extra shots not used in the silent version have been added at the end.

This brings us to the footage shot by Ivens and Storck present in the Cinémathèque version that cannot be found in the other versions of the film. There are ten such shots, all of them lasting only a few seconds. The most interesting are four shots showing the Buize family at the 'Fonds du Roi Albert'. In the first we see the mother cooking a meal. The interior of the shack is well known thanks to a series of still photographs taken by Willy Kessels. The second shot shows her and her husband locking documents in a drawer. It is only much later in the film that one sees them again examining the documents. The last shot is a close-up of the title deed for their shack. One can make out that the purchase price for their 'home' was no less than 2800 francs, payable in monthly instalments.

Such footage alone makes the Cinémathèque version worth preserving, even though it is only a cutting copy of a film that remained unfinished. But there is more - it is an example of the power of film editing, a historical document in its own right and above all... a mystery.



Bert Hogenkamp is a Media Historian at the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision. He also holds a professorship at Utrecht University. He has published a number of books on Ivens, including *De Borinage*, with Henri Storck, on film and the labour movement, and on the history of Dutch documentary film: 'De Nederlandse documentaire film 1920-1940'; 'De Documentaire Film 1945-1965'. Hogenkamp was also head advisor to the restoration project of the Joris Ivens Nitrate collection at the Film Museum in 1994 and rediscovered three Ivens films from 1930.

contemporary art inspired by ivens

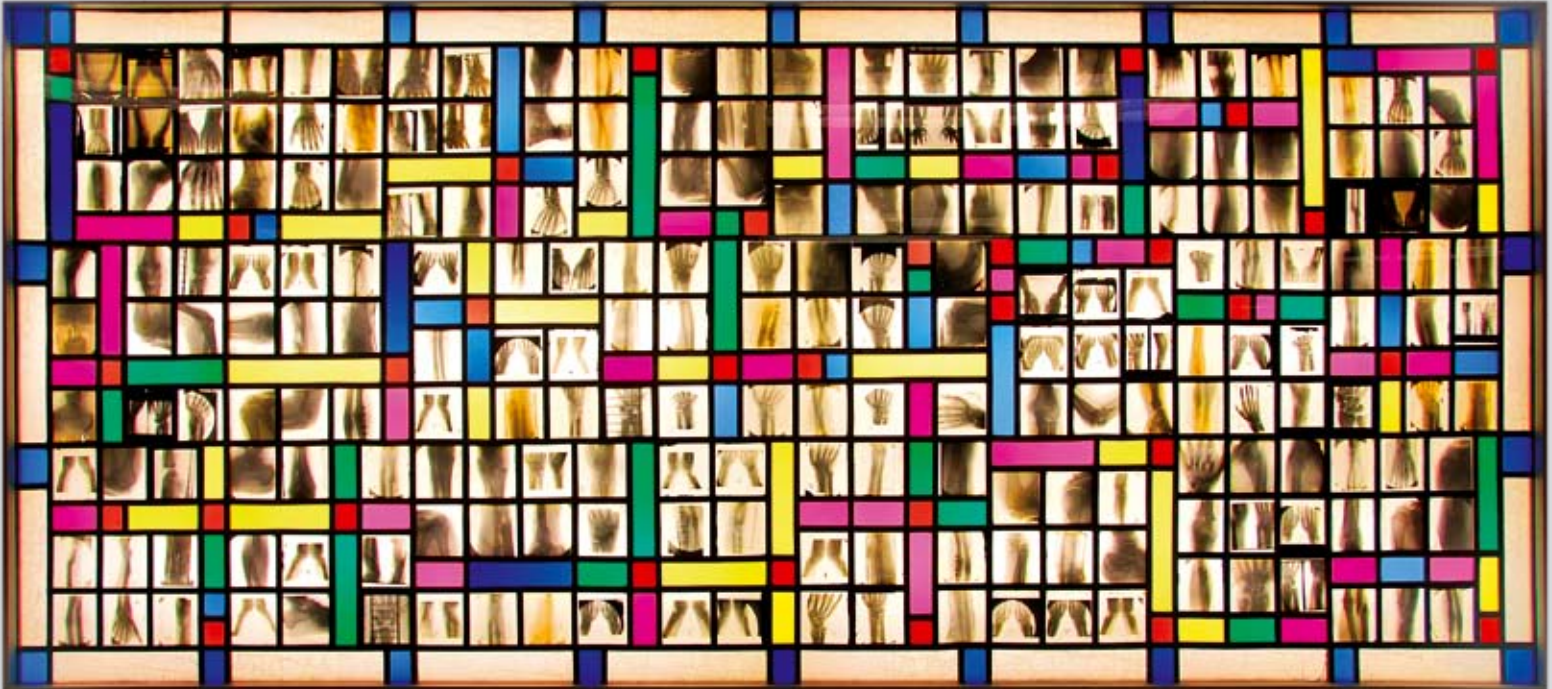


Judith van den Boom, *Bokaal* 2007, glass and pottery with glaze. © artist.
The design is based on lenses and city life as characteristics of Joris Ivens oeuvre and his fellow townsmen / artists the Limbourg Brothers.

Bob Lejeune, *Joris Ivens*, ceramics, 2005. © artist

Redingenstraat Leuven, *Joris Ivens' Third Eye*, mixed media.

Art work with 218 X-Ray photos made by Kees Ivens, 2007 CWZ Hospital. Design and construction: Ben Sanders with clients Pompe Kliniek



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Doc's KINGDOM 2007

Bram Relouw



This year's edition of the unique festival for documentary film had a full and impressive programme. The starting point of this edition was the function and power of the word. The word read, the spoken word, the voice, the text, on and off screen words etc. This theme was greatly developed in the fascinating discussions, where filmmakers and the audience explored the various uses and levels of impact that different uses of words/text can have.

Almost all possible uses of the word were included in the widely varied programme and the discussions were well moderated. Once again, this edition validated the enduring struggle of Docs Kingdom to create an open and interactive seminar, with a huge amount of audience participation.

The following people had their films shown at this edition: David MacDougall, Gonçalo Tocha, Peter Nestler, Pierre Creton, Vladimir Léon, Robert Kramer, Wang Bing.

Interview José Manuel Costa

When and why did you start Doc's Kingdom?

The first time was in 2000. In the late 1990s, responding to a production boom, Europe witnessed an increase of documentary "training events" but they seemed to us too heavily concentrated on the production strategies themselves, or on the production diffusion sides. You talked about technology and about money, but it seemed to us that the one thing that one *did not* talk about, at least in a deep way, were *the films* themselves...What was actually happening with the finished films? Where was documentary going? The seminar was a response to that feeling. Others must have felt the same, because, in the meantime, we have seen this reflective approach to spread out, in the shadow of the festivals. But, for once, we wanted it to be *the event*.

How do you look back on the previous editions?

The one very positive thing was the actual relevance of titles and names present, taking account of the shortness of the sample. Over seven events (and only five international ones) we had with us people like Fred Wiseman, Victor Erice, Rithy Panh, Pedro Costa, Sergei Dvortsevov, Sato Makoto, Avi Mograbi, Jose Luis Guerin, Peter Nestler, Klaus Wildenhahn, David MacDougall, Gert de Graaf, as well as very young filmmakers from very different – and distant – backgrounds. On the other hand, we are far from having mastered the way to conduct the group debates and make them always productive – some were fantastic, some were chaotic or less productive. On the *other* hand...I look upon this imperfectness as an asset, because it always makes us search for new solutions.

Antonio Cunha,
Landscapes of Alentejo
(Portugal), surrounding
the village of Serpa.
© artist



Interview David MacDougall

Antonio Cunha,
Landscapes of Alentejo
(Portugal), surrounding
the village of Serpa.
© artist

A cross section of films by David MacDougall was presented in Serpa with early African anthropological films, and very recent films about the Doon boys school in India.

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

As a university student in the 1960s, I was a keen film-viewer and saw all the latest films coming out of Europe, Asia and South America. At that time I was studying literature at Harvard but I decided that I wanted to make films. I enrolled in the film school at the University of California at Los Angeles, where I was exposed to the latest experiments of Direct Cinema and cinéma vérité, as well as to ethnographic films. I began to find documentary more interesting than fiction, because in documentary one constantly discovers things that exceed the limits of one's own imagination, and it is possible to convey those discoveries to others.

How would you describe your style and your approach?

My approach to documentary has always been consciously opposed to the didactic style of television journalism. In developing documentary narratives, I have been greatly influenced by the fiction films of Italian neorealism. In camerawork and editing I have moved gradually from an observational style, using long takes, toward a style in which I interact more with my subjects and try to convey more of the fragmentary, sensory qualities of conscious experience.

Do you want to change something with your film (even if it's just a deep down feeling), make a difference? If yes, what kind of difference?

I believe few films change the world, but they can change individuals. I generally find polemical films condescending toward their audiences and their subjects, and therefore self-defeating. So, few of my films are overtly political, but at another level I feel it is a deeply political act to explore aspects of human experience that have previously been stereotyped and mis-represented, or have not been adequately represented before. It is a question of trying to see the world more honestly.

Have you seen any films by Joris Ivens and/or met him? What did you think of the films/him?

I remember two of Ivens' films vividly, but for opposite reasons – *Borinage* and *A Valparaiso* – the first for its images of stark poverty (miners forced to scavenge for pieces of coal), the second for its extraordinary evocation of a place, and how it made me want to go there. Perhaps in some ways the films are alike, for both speak directly to the senses. It was in Paris that I heard Ivens speak of how he saw his future wife Marceline Loridan for the first time in Rouch and Morin's film *Chronique d'un été*, and I was struck by how, at least in this case, a film had changed lives.

And, for that, I had only one example that stood out as a possible "model", with the necessary adaptations: the Flaherty Seminar, where I had been back in 1979 – the 25th "Flaherty" – and where I actually met Joris Ivens for the first time. Pierre-Marie Goulet was the first to suggest Serpa as a possible location. The name Doc's kingdom is a tribute to Robert Kramer.

What are the basic principles of the seminar?

To show a limited number of (strong) films, typically twenty to thirty titles over four to five days.
To equally divide the time between projection and debates.
To invite the film makers to participate *beyond* the level of simply "Q&A"...
To concentrate on items of film *language*.
To favour dialogue between different generations.
To build on the effect of "gathering together" – the live, informal atmosphere and the cumulative, open discussion.
To be open to changes of the event itself.

Why did you choose this remote location?

The Alentejo region and Serpa proved to be an important asset. We are far from the diversions of the bigger cities and may concentrate on the group event itself. On the other hand, we may be inspired by a well preserved landscape and village, where a genuine popular culture remains – or should we say *resists*?

Doc's Kingdom is always seeking to improve itself. What future improvements or changes would you wish for?

The main challenge resides in the improvement of the collective discussions, trying to make them evolve in ever deeper ways, while keeping them always informal. We need to learn more about the process, and we also need some further logistic improvements – which call for a more solid and stable financial structure.

If you had an unlimited budget, what would be your ideal Doc's Kingdom seminar?

It would not necessarily be much "bigger", but better and better on the logistics and on the group debates. It would be immaculate on the image and sound quality of all projections (we continuously work on that level). It would be an effective exchange of experiences on the world level. It would always have relevant filmmakers from all continents, and it would also be able to welcome, without any costs for them, gifted students and young filmmakers from all continents. It would have young people questioning, and being questioned by veteran filmmakers. Finally, it would sow some seeds in the Alentejo ground, giving back to it part of what the local environment gives us.



© Bram Relouw,
The village of Serpa



David MacDougall is a leading ethnographic filmmaker and writer on cinema. His first film *To Live with Herds* won the Grand Prix "Venezia Genti" at the Venice Film Festival in 1972. Since then he has made prize-winning films in Australia, Africa, Europe and India. He recently completed five films on the Doon School, an elite boys' boarding school in northern India, and a contrasting film on a shelter for homeless children in Delhi. He is the author of *Transcultural Cinema* (1998) and *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses* (2006). He lives in Australia and conducts research at the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, Australian National University.

José Manuel Costa has been the passionate director of the Doc's kingdom seminar from the start. He was vice-president of the Cinemateca Portuguesa, head of the National Archive of Moving Images and professor at the university of Lisbon (Universidade Nova de Lisboa). He headed the LUMIERE Project for the conservation of silent films and was chairman of the European Filmarchives ACCE (Association des Cinémathèques de la Communauté Européenne). In 1983 he organized an extensive Joris Ivens retrospective and wrote the accompanying monography. He also published on D.W. Griffith, Frederick Wiseman, Robert Flaherty and many others.



Indonesia Calling

Joris Ivens and Australia

Henri Pieck, 50 Million
Indonesians silenced (detail),
lithography, 1929. Coll.
IISG.

Marion Michelle, *Indonesian
and Australian workers during
a waterfront rally in Sydney,
November 1945.* Coll. EFJ-
Marion Michelle, © EFJ

ON AUGUST 17, 1945, A LITTLE OVER A WEEK AFTER AMERICAN ATOM BOMBS LEVELLED HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI, THE YOUNG INDONESIAN INDEPENDENCE ACTIVIST SOEKARNO, SPEAKING FROM HIS FRONT GARDEN AT 56 PEGANGSAAN TIMOAR IN BATAVIA (NOW JAKARTA) ON BEHALF OF THE 90 MILLION ACROSS AN ARCHIPELAGO FROM JAVA TO WESTERN PAPUA, PROCLAIMED INDEPENDENCE OVER WHAT WAS AT THAT TIME THE JAPANESE OCCUPIED DUTCH COLONY OF THE NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES. THESE EVENTS DELIVERED A MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY DILEMMA TO AUSTRALIAN LABOUR PRIME MINISTER BEN CHIFLEY: SHOULD THE AUSTRALIANS SUPPORT THEIR WARTIME EUROPEAN ALLIES IN REPRESSING THE POST-COLONIAL NATIONALISTS TO THE NORTH? OR SHOULD THEY RECOGNISE REGIONAL ANTI-COLONIAL MOVEMENTS AS ESSENTIAL PARTNERS IN A NEW POST-WAR WORLD? IN COMPLICATED WAYS THEY TRIED TO DO BOTH, AND MATTERS UNRESOLVED AT THAT TIME – WEST PAPUA IN PARTICULAR – CONTINUE TO TROUBLE AUSTRALIAN-INDONESIAN RELATIONS TO THIS DAY.

BY JOHN HUGHES

The scale of the exodus when the Dutch fled Japanese occupation in early 1942 was enormous. The whole apparatus of Dutch colonial administration was transported by ship and emergency airlifts through Broome and to other ports in Australia. Fifty-seven aircraft arrived in Broome in one day; they would refuel and return through treacherous skies threatened by

campes that housed Dutch political prisoners evacuated from Dutch concentration camps in western Papua, where Indonesian independence activists had been exiled since the 1920s. Australians became aware of the internment of these men when one prisoner managed to toss a note to a railway worker at Liverpool Station in Sydney during transfer to the in-

‘...to articulate the past historically does not mean to recognise it “as it really was”, but to grasp hold of a memory as it flashes up in a moment of danger.’ Walter Benjamin, 1940

Japanese ‘zero’ fighters bringing files, arms and personnel. In two weeks there were 8000 refugees from the Indies in Broome. This hasty surrender provided the staging post for Japanese bombing raids on Broome and Darwin. Within twelve months or so the Dutch were operating a number of government departments on Australian soil. Among these were the internment

ment camp at Cowra. After a long campaign those interned were finally released (December 1943). They began to meet with Indonesian seamen, soldiers and administrative staff who were working around the country with the NEI government-in-exile. These were the people that formed the core of Indonesian independence activism in Australia.

Another office of the Netherlands East Indies government-in-exile was a film division. Joris Ivens, the newly appointed Film Commissioner began to assemble his unit. Among those drawn to work with Joris Ivens was the Australian radio star, writer and actor Catherine Duncan (see ‘In Memoriam: Catherine Duncan 1915-2006, EFJ *Newsmagazine* 12: December 2006). She was something of a celebrity in Australia. She won an Oscar in the mid 1940s for her radio performances and was determined to get into documentary filmmaking - the “it” avant-garde cultural form of the moment. It was Catherine Duncan who introduced Ivens to Indonesian independence activists.

1 At precisely the moment that the Indonesian independence crisis was unfolding, other arms of government in Australia were working toward the establishment of a government film production agency like that of the Dutch, and of the National Film Board of Canada. ‘Nugget’ Coombs as Director General of the Department of Post War Reconstruction, initiated in 1942 a series of actions that resulted finally - with important and constraining, possibly crippling, compromises - in Cabinet approval for the establishment of the Australian National Film Board that held its first meeting in May 1945. In June 1945, Joris Ivens spoke to a meeting of the ANFB with an address entitled ‘the meaning of documentary film in national development’. Little could he have known at that time that he was soon to make a decision regarding ‘documentary film in national development’ that would exile him from his homeland for decades.

Ivens’ principle task as the Netherlands Film Commissioner was to make works documenting and presumably propagating harmonious civil affairs following the re-occupation of the Netherlands East Indies, and then to establish a film unit for post-war reconstruction in cooperation with the Indonesian population. However, the United States’ FBI had been worrying about Joris Ivens since opening their file on him soon after he arrived in the US to work on the Roosevelt New Deal films (*Power and the Land*, 1940) and with Capra on the ‘Why We Fight’ series during the war. The FBI considered him “one of the most dangerous communists in the United States”. General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of Allied

Forces in the Pacific, therefore banned Ivens from war zones. So Ivens found that he and his crew were not invited to join the first shipload of political apparatus returning to Java with the intention of crushing the insurgency and re-establishing Dutch rule.

Behind the back of the Australian government the Dutch began forcing Indonesian soldiers under their command in Australia onto aircraft for flights out of Bundaberg to fight their countrymen across the islands. There was mutiny. Indonesians who refused service were arrested and held behind barbed wire at Casino in NSW. And when the Dutch started arresting Australians who refused to load munitions it became a matter for the press (October 1945). Loaded with troops, arms and ammunition, Dutch government officials urgently tried to leave Brisbane, where their navy was mostly docked. The waterside unions refused to load the ships, the seamen manning tugboats refused to work. Dutch shipping and Dutch business was declared black across the country as the Trade Union movement rallied in support of Indonesian Independence. Eventually the ACTU came on board under the slogan ‘everything Dutch is black’ (Lockwood, 1975).

Large numbers of Indian seamen were flown into Australia by the Dutch and Australian governments with the intention that they would fill the role that the Indonesians had refused. But Indian seamen as a rule were no more interested in supporting the reestablishment of colonial rule in the Asia Pacific region than the Indonesians. They too walked off in droves, leaving the Australian government with the dilemma of what to do - as the ‘white Australia policy’ was alive and well - with a growing number of non-white, unemployed, mutinous seamen. The frontlines of Indonesian Independence were here on the Australian docks, the ports of Java, and with the propaganda war for political support and public opinion.

2 Joris Ivens took the decision to back the Indonesians, and to defy the government that employed him. He resigned as NEI Film Commissioner and announced his reasons at a press conference at the Menzies Hotel in Sydney (November 21, 1945). This was reported on the front page of the *New York Times*. Working out of his flat in Elizabeth Bay, with Marion Michelle, Catherine Duncan, Indonesian activists and former political prisoners, and

with support from the Waterside Workers, the activist documentary *Indonesia Calling!* began to take shape. The producer was Eddie Allison, who later in 1946 made *Coal Dust*, and in the early 1950s established the alternative distribution company Quality Films in Sydney that dealt with non-theatrical distribution of eastern European art cinema and British and American ‘political’ documentaries. Working clandestinely, while very ill, with this remarkable ‘multi-cultural’ team, Joris Ivens with Marion Michelle as principle cinematographer, documented the events of the blockade: “a film about the ships that did not sail”; with commentary by Catherine Duncan, and narrated by fellow Australian New Theatre actor Peter Finch.

The film was made against enormous odds; there was very little available equipment or stock, indeed an Australian security file includes a handwritten note; ‘Kodak agreed not supply Mr Ivens with film footage’ (sic) (NAA: A6126/XMO). Film stock may have been ‘donated’ by Australian soldiers returning from Borneo, and ‘short ends’ were donated by Harry Watt, here in Australia making *The Overlanders*. John Heyer shot scenes for the film, as did Ken Coldicutt in Melbourne. Arthur Higgins, Alex Poignant, Merv Murphy and his partner at Supreme Sound, Gwen Oakley, all contributed to work on the film.

Indonesia Calling! was screened publicly for the first time in Australia at the Kings Cross Newsreel Theatre on August 9, 1946, to audiences mostly of Indonesians. While arguments about banning the film raged in Federal Parliament, prints were smuggled out of the country and exhibited in outdoor screenings in villages in Java and elsewhere.

3 When the Australian National Film Board’s first Producer-in-Chief Stanley Hawes arrived from Canada to take charge of the embryonic Film Division - the production arm of the ANFB - he inherited Department of Information newsreel units. Some of the people Hawes wanted to hire in the late 1940s and early 1950 were simply vetoed by security; others, having been hired, were sacked without any consultation with Hawes at all. (Oral history interview, Stanley Hawes: 1973) Catherine Duncan slipped through; early in 1947 she wrote and directed the Divisions first series, *Australia and Your Future* for the Immigration Department: *Men Wanted* (1947),



Flyer for Australians with information about the young Republic of Indonesia, 1946. Coll. JJA/EFJ

Bulletin Indonesian Seaman, 1945. Coll. JJA/EFJ

Clipping about action of Dutch ships against Australian demonstrators.



Christmas Under the Sun (1947) and *This is the Life* (1947). The security services soon realised that the government's film production house - with its mandated brief to deliver all government department film needs - had among its staff people who had worked on *Indonesia Calling!*

As the Cold War escalated, and Australia became increasingly enmeshed in the UK/US nuclear programmes, these brought with them increased security apparatus. Catherine Duncan was a prime target among many. The spooks concluded that her relationships with various men, Joris Ivens among them, and others at the Australian National Film Board's Film Division constituted a threat to national security. Indeed, the Division's Producer-in-Chief Stanley Hawes, was himself suspected of illicit relations with Catherine Duncan. This, along with the fact that she was still believed to be in contact with Joris Ivens, led to security vetoes for decades afterwards on a number of people with whom she was associated. These dossiers, of course, were secret, and none of those effected, despite what suspicions they may have had, could know of their existence, let alone being given the opportunity to know their accusers or answer the allegations against them.

"An undoubted communist" the security files asserted of Catherine Duncan, "she slept with anyone and did not care who knew it." And all those networked with her therefore: "due to their past intimate relationships with Communist Catherine Duncan ... could be call(ed) "to heel whenever it suited her". Furthermore, the security logic concluded, "Consequently information concerning the current activities of the Film Division... could be passed not only to the Communist Party of Australia but also abroad, possibly to Ivans" (sic) (NAA: 6119: 4046) Because of their work with Joris Ivens the security services closely watched and 'spoiled' security clearances and

job opportunities for those involved with *Indonesia Calling!* At one point the security apparatus of the Department of Supply's division that was managing security around the Australian/UK atom bomb testing suggested that these people should simply be culled during one of the many 'restructures' of the Film Division.

The suspicions held and damage done to the lives and work of all of these people in the name of national security were, in each case, smear without substance. Stanley Hawes' defence of some of these people contributed to his own difficulties - he was under enormous suspicion and pressure during his career with the variously named Film Division / Commonwealth Film Unit / Film Australia. The security agencies considered him a secret communist, classified him as 'adversely known' and a security risk up until about a year before he retired from the public service in 1970 (he was on limited contracts from 1946 until 1970; he was never given public service permanency). They also suspected him of being a spy, possibly because he had been recommended to the National Film Board by the first Film Commissioner, Canadian Ralph Foster, who fell foul of the Canadian Espionage Royal Commission of 1946.

This Canadian Royal Commission also undermined John Grierson, a friend of Hawes, and Film Commissioner at the time with the National Film Board of Canada. Grierson left Canada 'under a cloud' at this time as a result of the smears against him. (Kristmanson, 1998, Don Wall in Scher [ed], 1992)

4 Complex military and diplomatic negotiations proceeded on the ground in Indonesia, at the UN in New York and between 'stakeholders' in Australia, including the Waterside Workers' Federation. Australia finally came to a position in support of the Indonesian's cause, and was able to establish

its legitimacy with the emerging Indonesian leadership because of the support that had been demonstrated by Australian citizens in the boycotts and the film.

The film documents the first crucial six months of the blockade; however, over the course of a four year period over 550 vessels were affected. The Chifley Labour government's refusal to intervene against the waterfront unions, despite the government's ambivalence, was undoubtedly a factor in the success of the campaign. A negotiated settlement brokered by a United Nations 'Good Officers Committee' - a committee to which Australia's participation was nominated by the Indonesians - delivered a United States of Indonesia under the leadership of Soekarno which was handed sovereignty by the Dutch in late 1949. This became the Republic of Indonesia in 1956.

After the Chifley-Evatt Labour government fell in December 1949, the conservative Menzies government reversed the momentary autonomy of Australian foreign policy achieved in the war and immediate post war years in favour of policy development mediated through the old metropolitan powers. Australia participated in the covert trafficking of arms to anti-Soekarno uprisings in the Moluccas in 1952. The ongoing covert destabilisation against the 'non-aligned' movement finally climaxed with devastating force in the military coup of 1965 that deposed Soekarno and brought the pro-American dictator Soeharto to power. Estimates vary, and the number of those killed during purges that followed over several years will never be known, but best estimates say something in the order of 800,000 people were killed in what the *New York Times* described at the time as "one of the most savage mass slayings of modern political history". (Guardian [UK], July 19, 2000) Many of the young activists seen in *Indonesia Calling!* were murdered or 'disappeared' during that time.

5

Forces in contest within Australia, the United Nations and in the region in the early post-war years enabled a start to be made to an independent Republic of Indonesia and to a committed and engaged independent film culture

here in Australia. Soon the Cold War locked off this early post-war optimism - optimism for both an independent cinema and 'imagined communities' of independent nations forging their own futures with autonomy from metropolitan power. The Cold War

instead nurtured another kind of 'secret history'. The remarkably salient memory that remains is that of the effectiveness and value of a small film, advocating independence, and performing it, in interesting times



Australian filmmaker John Hughes' new project engages with *Indonesia Calling!* With an emphasis on the making of the film, fundamental relationships between Australia and Indonesia and the impact of Joris Ivens on the early post-war Australian documentary film culture. His most recent film *The Archive Project*, a feature documentary concerning the little known Realist film movement in Melbourne (1945-59) has been recognised with a number of awards including Critics Circle, 'Best Feature Documentary', an Australian Teachers of Media Award, the inaugural 'Joan Long Award for Achievement, Australian film history', Australasian Film and History Conference, 2006 and the NSW Premier's Award. Also in 2006, Hughes was awarded the 'Stanley Hawes Award for Lifelong commitment to Australian documentary'. An on-line work presenting the 60 year history of Film Australia, entitled 'Moving History', made in collaboration with the national public broadcaster ABC On-line and Film Australia, can be accessed at: www.abc.net.au/aplacetothink/#watch/. Previous work for film and television includes *Hidden Treasures Series One & Two*, *The Art of War*, *River of Dreams*, *After Mabo*, *What I Have Written and One Way Street*. He can be contacted at jheworks@websurf.net.au

Recently I had the pleasure of travelling from Melbourne to Nijmegen for an introductory period of research with the EFJI in pursuit of a project concerning the making of *Indonesia Calling!* The project *INDONESIA CALLING: Joris Ivens in Australia* revisits the making of the film, fills out a number of dimensions of the historical context of events depicted, and elaborates something of the legacy that this small film had in Australia for an emerging tradition of independent documentary here.

Readers will be familiar with *Indonesia Calling!*, Joris Ivens' twenty-two minute, 1945-46 film made under very trying conditions and following Ivens' resignation in Sydney in November 1945 as Film Commissioner for the Dutch East Indies. The *EFJI Newsmagazines* have published a number of essays related to this work; Robert Hamilton and Laura Kotevska's essay arguing that the film anticipates an Australian multi-culturalism at a time when the notorious 'white Australia' policy was still practiced is one example (*EFJI Newsmagazine* 11: November 2005).

Another is Gerda Jansen-Hendriks' scholarly reflection on a number of films depicting events surrounding the birth of Indonesia and the Dutch retreat from its former colony.

In particular Gerda Jansen-Hendriks considers in its relationship with *Indonesia Calling!*, *Through Darkness to Light*, made by colleagues of Ivens from the early period of the Dutch Film League avant-garde, Jan Mol and Mannus Franken, who took up the government commission that Ivens refused. She makes the point that "it is remarkable that a documentary about post-war Indonesia does not once name the newly proclaimed republic, nor

show Soekarno." She notes that Ivens' film - 'a film about the ships that did not sail', documenting as it does the very effective boycott of Dutch ships by the Waterfront unions in Australia - does not have any footage of Indonesia. She also makes the important point that a high degree of violence accompanying the independence struggle has been insufficiently represented in many accounts favouring the depiction of a heroic independence movement. (*EFJI Newsmagazine* 9: November 2003:21)

Gerda Jansen-Hendriks' essay, (and in another register the essay from Robert Hamilton and Laura Kotevska) remind us of that often complex historical complicity between myth, advocacy, nationalism, and documentary.

Within the extraordinary oeuvre of Joris Ivens' documentary century *Indonesia Calling!* is sometimes considered more a 'pamphlet' than a work inviting nuanced aesthetic appreciation. It is an

instance where the urgency of social justice - and in this case a specifically post-colonial ambition - to some extent negates the aesthetic modernism that Bill Nichols talks about as one voice in the dynamic of documentary tradition as it negotiated notions and practices of realism, modernism and rhetoric (Nichols in Bakker, 1999).

Within a tradition of advocacy and activism - a tradition that comes into focus today with the emergence of new forms of agit-prop cinema drawing on new technologies for production, distribution and exhibition - it may be that films like *Indonesia Calling!* are suddenly recognisable in their immediacy, their militancy, their urgency and their usefulness. The old documentary 'sell-line': 'films with a purpose', a slogan devalued and dormant now for some time, in the present moment suddenly regains its pertinence.

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Marion Michelle, *During the shooting of Indonesia Calling: Indonesian seamen, Joris Ivens and British filmmaker Harry Watt*, 1945. Coll EFJI-Marion Michelle © EFJI



revisit

ITA



revisit

USA

revisit

SP

revisit

BUL

Valentin Valchev,
Marion Michelle, 2004.
© Agit prop, Sofia



Italian Oscar for Il Mio Paese

The documentary *Il Mio Paese* (*My Country*, 2006), made by director Daniele Vicari, was chosen best documentary in 2006-2007 by the Accademia della Cinema. *Il Mio Paese* takes another look at Joris Ivens' television documentary *L'Italia non è un Paese Povero* (1960). Vicari received the 'David di Donatello' during a special event in Rome on June 14th. This Italian

Oscar was awarded by a jury of Italian filmmakers, similar to the competition for the US Oscar. The jury praised the social theme running through the film, focusing on problems currently concerning Italy, including labour, economics and social conditions. Film critics wrote: "One of the most important films of this year" (Silvana Silvestri, *Il manifesto*), "A necessary film" (Mau-

rizio Porro, *Il corriere della sera*) and "The country of Vicari is also our own country. It just makes us recognise it better" (Roberta Ronconi, *Liberazione*). Since April the film has been released in 13 theatres around Italy, in some cases together with Ivens' original. (See also article Ivens Magazine 12/2006, p. 33 and in this issue: p. 37)

accompanied by an elaborate website for educational use (www.powerforparkinsons.com).

Walter Cronkite

Prof. Ephraim Smith is proceeding with his documentaries on Ivens' *Power and the Land* (1941) to be called *Power for the Parkinsons* and *The Parkinsons*, and about the filmmaker and producer Pare Lorentz. After several attempts he has

finally found the best voice to complement the images - the voice of veteran American newsman Walter Cronkite. It fits wonderfully with the patriotic and journalistic style that Lorentz used in his film career. The documentaries are

Hollywood versus Franco

Which image Hollywood presented in films about Spain during the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship? In a documentary Hollywood versus Franco director Oriol Portal shows the vision of American novelists, script writers and directors. The feature film *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, based on the novel of

Hemingway might be the best known and popular example, but many more exist. Although *The Spanish Earth* wasn't a Hollywood production, but an independent one, the Ivens' film has been included, because of its impact on and contributions of Hollywood artists. Portal revisited the village Fuente-

dueña de Tajo in 2007 where Ivens filmed in April 1937. He interviewed film scholar Bert Hogenkamp and the current mayor of the village. The production will be ready in January 2008 and broadcasted on television around the world.

Revisiting Marion Michelle

BY VALENTIN VALCHEV

The idea of my film *Us 4 Revisited* was born in 2003 – to follow in the footsteps of Joris Ivens' 1947 film project *The Four New Democracies*, about post-war Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Poland, an unsuccessful co-production by the four countries. In 1948 the Yugoslav part was cut out of the film, for political reasons, and in 1949, the film appeared as *The First Years*. The script-writer and assistant director of the film was Marion Michelle, then Joris Ivens' partner. I was happy to find out that she was still alive at the time and living near Paris. I remember my first telephone conversation with her, in 2004. From the telephone booth in front of Hotel Polonia in Katowice, I called her to set up an initial meeting in Paris for two days later. The film crew of *The First Years* had stayed at the humble Hotel Polonia in 1947/8 during the shooting period in Poland. She was eager for our meeting but didn't care so much about the hotel and the

memories of the past. She was living in the present and looking ahead to the future. When we met, it turned out that it was physically impossible for her to revisit the four countries with our film crew. In spite of her exuberance and inner strength, she was 91 and in very frail health. She was so curious and concerned with what had happened to the places and people she had filmed 60 years before. In 1968 she had returned to Bulgaria to film *Masters of the Rain*, met the people from the Bulgarian part of *The First Years* and maintained a hearty relationship with them and their children ever since. So "Revisiting with Marion" changed to "Revisiting for Marion". She encouraged us a lot and showed real interest in what we would find out. For two years, our crew visited many archives, places and people from the old film, and I had a number of telephone calls with Marion. At our last meeting in September 2006, in Villier-Adam

near Paris, we showed her the film material. Our last telephone conversation took place on April 22, 2007. She was brave and cheerful as ever, inquiring about her Bulgarian friends, and once again promised to live to see the film - if I didn't meddle too much! But on April 30, 2007, Marion Michelle left us. I have been editing the film for some time now. I am spending quite a lot of time with Marion Michelle who, in my film material, is still living, and as witty and open hearted as she ever was. My film should be ready in 2008. I am thinking of another title for it. Gradually my film has changed from focusing on political and ideological turmoil and cataclysms of the 20th Century to the curiosity of life and people, in which I see the gentle influence of Marion. Now I am revisiting Marion - a great friend with a noble heart. And I know that she will somehow see my film - she has promised, and she always keeps her word.

Capturing the politic in Regen

On my first viewing of Joris Ivens' *Regen* (Rain, 1929), I was instantly captured by the depth of its message compared to the simplicity of its subject matter. Through his film, I believe Ivens masters the mood one feels during a rain shower. Yet, there is something more to be said about Ivens' film. It is not just a poetic recording of rain in Amsterdam. It seems that through the channelling of rain, this controlled nature is reflective of the way city life had become too restrictive, controlled and manipulated for Ivens.

In my final undergraduate year I decided to write a dissertation on this pivotal intersection in Ivens' life. To accompany my writing I would also 're-film' *Rain* in my university town, Lancaster, which is situated in an area of England renowned for its frequent rain. In making my own version of Ivens' original, I would be able to 'live' my hypothesis and prove Ivens' subtle politics in *Rain*.

I filmed for a total of six months. Rather like Ivens, I used the most modern technology that my (limited) budget allowed, a digital video-camera and tripod, shooting in colour and without audio. At the time I lived in Lancaster's city centre, and whenever it started raining I would rush out with my video-camera, covered with a plastic food-bag, and film the rain. I tried to remain faithful to Ivens' original in the shots I captured, recording puddles, people and transport. At first it seemed that much had changed in city-life since the 1920s. However, I soon learnt that Ivens' society still existed today, it had just modulated and shifted. Where Ivens had filmed trams, people and boats dominating the cityscape of Amsterdam, I filmed cars, trucks and busses. I even incorporated the man who holds out his hand to feel the first drops of rain (though, as with the original, this was somewhat staged). I only deviated from *Regen* by filming during night. This was to capture light reflections made in puddles, an aesthetic decision which I am sure Ivens would have taken advantage of, had the film-stock allowed this in the 1920s. Nevertheless, I felt it was important to remain honest to the subject-matter in *Rain* in order to discover Ivens' thinking behind his film.

Through this process of retracing Ivens' footsteps I began to understand certain messages behind his film. Every time I ran out to film the rain, I noticed that I would tilt my camera down towards the ground, or straight ahead towards a window, just as Ivens had. Why did Ivens do this when rain falls from the sky? Why did he feature so few scenes of falling rain in his film? Why did he

instead feature the accumulation of rain in puddles and the channelling of rain down drainpipes and into canals? I felt sure that *Rain* is not *just*, as some academics suggest, "a poetic nature recording", "a film of moods" consisting of "visual patterns of reflection and refraction".² This analysis seemed too obvious, and too categorical. I thought back to Paul Verlaine's lines which so influenced Ivens when making *Regen*, "Il pleure dans mon coeur, comme il pleut sur la ville/there is weeping in my heart, like the rain falling on the city". And this was where my hypothesis began to take shape. To me, these lines suggested not only a poetic and romantic vision, but also personal sadness and discontent.

Therefore, the argument which I seek to propose is that *Regen* contains elements of dissatisfaction which Ivens might have felt with life in the Netherlands. To this extent, our experience of *Regen* is based on the way the rain is controlled by the environment onto which it falls. This is not a nature recording because, except for the rain, there is a distinct absence of anything natural in Ivens' film. As soon as the rain makes contact with the city, it is channelled, distorted, collected, ejected and manipulated by its environment. Tarmac streets prohibit the rain from seeping into the ground while the people of Amsterdam escape under umbrellas and into cafes and trams. There are no fields or forests. All the elements of nature are withdrawn from the film. Something so natural becomes almost alien in the city environment, where great measures are taken to remain untouched by this invasion into modern living. Therefore, Ivens' *Regen* becomes a criticism of modernity, of life in Amsterdam, of the way city-life has become so detached from nature and humanity. Of course, I am not suggesting that Ivens filmed rain in the way he did with the express intention to criticise the society he lived in at the time. However, I believe Ivens expresses a strong feeling of unhappiness with his life in 1929 in *Regen*, revolving around a loss of harmony in the city. This, I be-

lieve, can only hint towards sympathy with a socialism that promotes harmony both in a natural and humanistic sense. He achieves this subtle criticism through his representation of the complete control people now have over nature. 'Koyaanisqatsi' as Godfrey Reggio states in his film of the same name: 'life out of balance'. Therefore, my final dissertation argued that *Regen* could be interpreted as Ivens' view that the society he lived in had lost its humanity, and a reflection of Ivens' growing sense of socialism. It is important to state that this assertion is not meant concretely, rather, it serves to reopen debate over the underlying meanings contained in *Regen*. My analysis is certainly not universally accepted, but in many ways, is a result of Ivens' masterly filmmaking which allow his films to be read in a great many ways. However, it is analyses of *Regen* which pigeon-hole the film as poetic or impressionistic which I believe limit debate over its connotations. Suggestions such as these do not take historical factors into account, and miss the pleasure of speculating over deeper messages contained in such films. Instead, these academics merely assign these films to generic stereotypes rather than opening discussion on an individual basis. And, as with Ivens' original, I leave my debate open for criticism and debate.

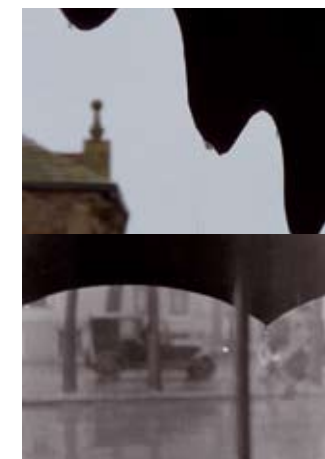
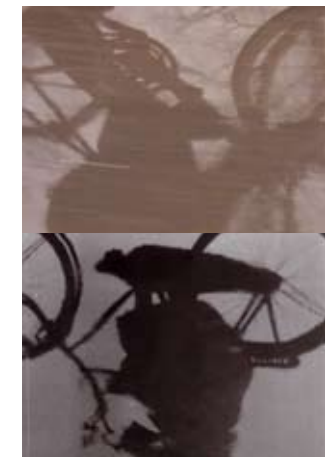
In completing this project, my thanks are extended to Dr Marc Furstenuau for his tutorage during my final year. Also to Stuart Smythe, who created the soundtrack to my final film. My 'revisit'-film can be seen on the Ivenswebsite: www.iven.nl/Rain-Martin

- 1 Stufkens, André, 'The Song of Movement', in Bakker, Kees (ed) (1999) *Joris Ivens and the Documentary Context*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, p. 60-66
- 2 Gunning, Tom, 'Joris Ivens, Filmmaker of the Twentieth Century, of the Netherlands, of the World' in Stufkens, André (ed) *Cinema Without Borders, the Films of Joris Ivens*, Nijmegen: European Foundation Joris Ivens [EFJI], p18-27

revisit

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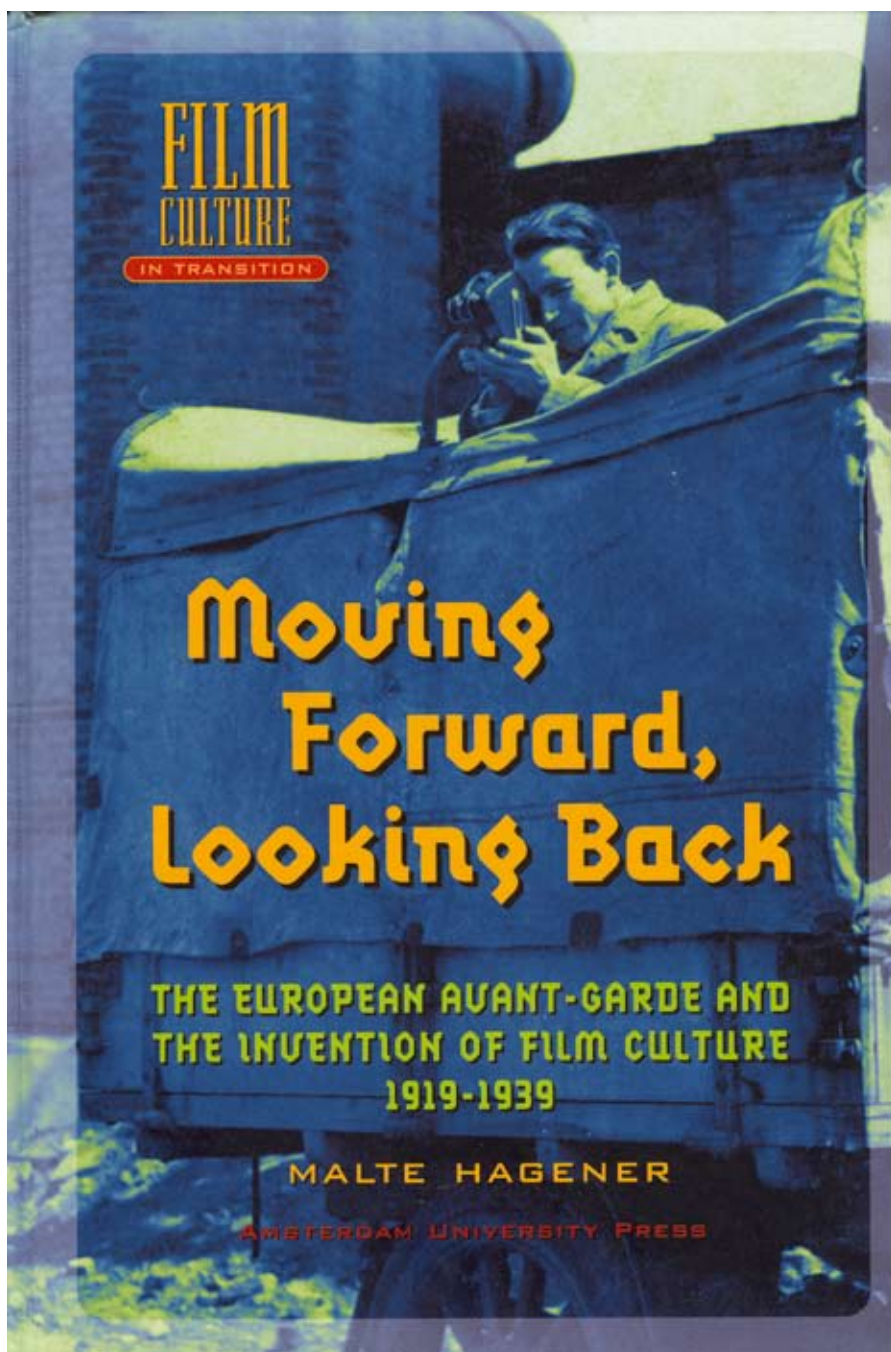
By LAWRENCE MARTIN



BY MALTE HAGENER

From the Bridge
to Magnitogorsk

JORIS IVENS, THE EUROPEAN FILM AVANT-GARDE AND THE COMING OF SOUND



Cover *Moving Forward, Looking back*, the shooting of Berlin, *die Sinfonie der Grossstadt*, 1927
© Amsterdam University Press

For the longest time, Ivens as a filmmaker and as a public figure has been highly controversial, especially in his native country. For those on the left, he has been a visionary and fighter for the good cause, always ready to struggle on behalf of the downtrodden and oppressed while those on the right of the political spectrum condemned him as a naive romantic who gave his talent to cynical powerbrokers at best, a Maoist hardliner who conspired with the devil at worst. While I do not deny that Ivens' (or, for that matter, any other artist's) political allegiances are a possible topic of discussion, my approach is different in not passing (moral) judgement from a position of 20/20 hindsight. Instead, I have approached the avant-garde of the *interbellum* in an archaeological fashion; thus, I have attempted to forget everything that came after the fact and to reconstruct it from the remnants that they have left just like an archaeologist does with a vanished species or civilisation. Moreover, I have not given priority to aesthetic factors since the avant-garde was active on so many fronts that purely aesthetic considerations turn it into a formalist endeavour that it never was.

THE COMING OF SOUND AND THE AVANT-GARDE

When skimming through the pages of film history books one can often read that sound film led to the demise or downfall of the avant-garde. It is my contention that sound film had a decisive effect on the avant-garde, but that it is insufficient to argue that it brought about the decline of the avant-garde. In aesthetic terms, sound proved to be a welcome addition as many early sound films were made in a context that was clearly influenced by avant-garde ideas of filmmaking, putting sound to innovative use: *Melodie der Welt* (Germany, 1928/29, Walter Ruttmann), *Sous les toits de Paris* (France, 1929/30, René Clair), *M* (Germany, 1930/31, Fritz Lang), *Entuziazm: Sinfonija Donbassa* (Soviet Union, 1930, Dziga Vertov), *Philips Radio* (Netherlands, 1931, Joris Ivens), *Dezertir* (Soviet Union, 1933, Vsevolod Pudovkin), just

THE AVANT-GARDE OF THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY, OFTEN DESIGNATED WITH LABELS SUCH AS CLASSICAL, CANONICAL OR HISTORICAL, HAVE BEEN A FASCINATING TOPIC EVER SINCE THEIR (SEEMING) DEMISE IN THE 1930S. IN COUNTLESS BOOKS AND EXHIBITIONS, FILMS AND RETROSPECTIVES, THEIR WORKS AND ACTIVITIES, THEIR IDEAS AND LEGACY HAVE BEEN HAILED AS BENCHMARKS FOR GENERATIONS OF ARTISTS TO COME. IN MY BOOK *MOVING FORWARD, LOOKING BACK. THE EUROPEAN AVANT-GARDE AND THE INVENTION OF FILM CULTURE* I HAVE PROVIDED AN OVERVIEW OF THE FILM AVANT-GARDE AS A NETWORK PHENOMENON AND AS A DIVERSIFIED AND ACTIVE FLOW. WHAT I WANT TO DO IN THIS ARTICLE, IS TO EXEMPLIFY MY APPROACH BY ADDRESSING THE JUNCTURE BETWEEN THE AVANT-GARDE AND THE COMING OF SOUND IN RELATION TO JORIS IVENS.

to name a few, not to forget the sound shorts of Oskar Fischinger and Len Lye. Not only were resourceful sound films made, but many of the central figures of the avant-garde had interesting ideas on the employment of sound and did not reject the new technology outright.¹ Some of the reasons for the restructuring and functional differentiation of the field (terms I find more productive than "destruction", "demise" or "downfall") are connected to the introduction of sound, but should be framed in a different fashion. Sound film did in fact act as an engine and catalyst that restructured cinema culture completely, in much the same way that today's digital revolution affects every sector of the "cinema institution". Yet, when addressing the introduction of sound, (in)direct influences of sound film are often very hard to distinguish from effects brought about by reactions to the beginning global economic downturn following on the heels of the October 1929 Wall Street crash. It could be argued that the decisive factor for the decline or restructuring of the avant-garde was not the aesthetic implications of the sound film, but the economic consequences, i.e. higher production costs and additional investments in wiring cinemas for sound. Yet again, innovative films continued to be made and initiatives continued to be active after the introduction of sound throughout the 1930s. To avoid reducing a complex phenomenon to a one-dimensional element, a different conceptual framework is needed.

Let me state my case: The *strategic convergence* of different players, organisations and ideas had, by 1929, generated a critical mass of interest in and support of the avant-garde, while the ensuing *functional differentiation* has been understood by many as a demise. On the one hand, the avant-garde did not manage to engender change in a way that many of its adherents were hoping for. On the other hand, one can also describe the development that set in around 1929 as the ultimate triumph of the film avant-garde: it did not bring about a transformation of the kind it had hoped for (i.e. a revolution), but it had considerable impact in a lot of different areas. The avant-garde could be held responsible for the naturalisation of the documentary as a genre and for the foundation of film archives in different countries, for large scale government support of cinema in virtually all European countries, for the establishment of film theory as a field of its own, and for the emergence of art house cinemas. The cultural acceptance of cinema as an artistic form and as a cultural factor is closely connected to the avant-garde and its wide-ranging activities. Thus, what counts as a defeat from one perspective, can be rephrased as a success story when using a different focus. The shift from strategic convergence to functional differentiation can be most clearly observed when examining the film societies. This (international) movement – most Western European countries had similar trajectories that overlapped and intersected – was intimately connected with the avant-garde and provided a platform for the films and ideas developed within a smaller circles of activists. Thus, the avant-garde enabled the screening organisations and, vice versa, the film clubs needed the avant-garde in order to function.

The Dutch *Filmliga* (in which Ivens played an active part) provides a perfect example of this trajectory from an initial phase in which a number of strands converged to a development in the 1930s in which the energy dispersed into different sectors. It was a curious coincidence that led to the foundation of the *Filmliga* in the first place: Legend has it that a scandalous and overcrowded screening of Pudovkin's *Matj* (Soviet Union, 1926, "Mother"), organised by the artist's society *De Kring* in May 1927, was temporarily halted by the

police, which led to the formation of the *Filmliga*.² While this is not entirely wrong in factual terms, it contains a measure of legend building typical of autobiographically tainted story telling. The idea of that night originated with Ed Pelster, a film distributor and member of the trade organisation *Nederlandsche Bioscoop-Bond* (NBB), who had bought the distribution rights to Pudovkin's film, but was not able to screen it because censorship prohibited public exhibition of the film. With press screenings, he mobilised journalists who, in turn, organised this closed screening for the artistic society. As a result of the publicity generated by the *Mother* incident, the *Filmliga* came into existence. It was, one could say, the fortuitous convergence of a commercial distributor, hard-nosed censors, journalists looking for a scandal, and a public interested in the cinema as a means for (social and political) change that kick-started the movement in the Netherlands. Ironically, the *Filmliga* was not able to screen *Mother* when it came around for distribution some months later because Pelster (even though he was a member of the *Filmliga*) preferred to rent the film to commercial cinemas. In 1929, after the (public) success of the *Werkbund* exhibition in Stuttgart (with a film programme curated by Hans Richter and a widely acclaimed exhibition), the meeting in La Sarraz (*CICIM – Congres International de Cinéma Indépendant et Moderne*), and with a boom in audience organisations (*Filmliga* in the Netherlands, *Film Society* in Great Britain, *Volksfilmverband* in Germany, diverse French organisations) and an upsurge in publishing and writing, the avant-garde seemed to be on the verge of a breakthrough to a mass movement. Yet, the opposite was the case: the avant-garde fell apart and petered out. Like in other European countries, the Dutch screening organisation peaked in 1929. On 9th November, the *Filmliga* opened a cinema of their own in Amsterdam - *De Uitkijk* - which was modelled on three Parisian precursors (*Vieux Colombier*, *Studio des Ursulines*, *Studio 28*). For the opening show in *De Uitkijk*, Joris Ivens' short film *Heien* (Netherlands, 1929) was followed by Carl Theodor



Joris Ivens and Pudovkin, 1929.
Coll. JLA/EFJI



Hans Richter, Robert Flaherty and Joris Ivens, 1940
(photo Helen van Dongen, Coll. JLA/EFJI)

An., Avant-garde, filmpos-
ter with Ivens' The Bridge,
1931, lithography. Coll.
JIA/EFJl. On the poster it
reads that the audience
is invited to shout and
whistle.



Joris Ivens and Dziga
Vertov, 1930.
Coll. JIA/EFJl

Joris Ivens and Luis Buñuel,
1958. Coll. JIA/EFJl

Joris Ivens and Sergei
Eisenstein, 1931 (detail
photo Germaine Krull
© Photographische
Sammlung Folkwang
Museum Essen)



brought about the decline of the film societies directly, but it was this changed situation that made the internal contra-
dictions that stood behind the strategic convergence in the
1920s visible; it is these internal contradictions that I now
want to turn to.

THE APORIAS OF THE AVANT-GARDE

I believe that a number of aporias riddled the avant-garde
and with the introduction of sound film these internal con-
tradictions became increasingly points of conflict. Groups
and initiatives had been kept together in the 1920s by a
vague opposition to the commercial feature film or to nar-
rative cinema. After 1930 their paths diverged because a
common enemy could no longer override programmatic
diversity. Even though the avant-garde itself wanted to
achieve fundamental change, one of its most important
tasks in retrospect was to raise these aporias to the level
of consciousness. As the fault lines became visible around
1930, different people took different approaches to these
problems and consequently went in different directions.
Yet, it was paramount that these issues – independence or
dependence, abstraction or realism, communism or fascism,
commercialism or elitism – were addressed thoroughly. In a
way, these aporias point to a central problem of any alter-
native political or social movement aimed at change: What
is the role of art in society and how can culture engender
change while operating in an environment that it wants to
transform?

Ivens had, up to 1930, tried to marry lyrical observations with
a constructivist worldview – films such as *De brug* (1928, *The
Bridge*) or *Regen* (1929, *Rain*) are the legacy of this short, but
intense phase in which he became the darling of the *Filmli-
ga*. After 1930, his films turned more political in every re-
spect. While there are a number of explanatory frameworks
for this development, the most decisive appears to be the
transformed context in which the films were being made.
For once, the early 1930s saw a massive politicisation of
European societies, so it is only logical that the films exhib-
ited the same trend. Secondly, left-wing organisations such
as trade unions, political parties, or youth organisations
increasingly turned to film as a propaganda medium, so
there were more commissions to be had. And thirdly Ivens
had turned into an avid supporter of the communist cause
after his first trip to the Soviet Union in 1930.

Joris Ivens, like many of his contemporaries in the avant-
garde movement, was highly conscious of the key issues
that were at stake when avant-garde filmmakers became
dependent on political organisations or businesses. An il-
luminating article published in 1931 in a Belgian magazine
is – in its pragmatic realism and undogmatic stance – still
way ahead of many retrospective studies of the avant-garde
which purely concentrate on formal aesthetic features.
Ivens shows a considerable awareness of the contradictions
and problems inherent in the avant-garde when he argues

in favour of the (commissioned) documentary as the last
stand of the avant-garde against the supreme film indus-
try: “the documentary film is the only means that remains
for the avant-garde filmmaker to stand up to the film in-
dustry”.⁴ He distinguishes between commissioned films for
the industry at large and work for the film industry. While
the former means only dealing with one person (or one en-
tity such as a board of directors), normally not an expert on
questions of film, the latter amounts in Ivens’ opinion to a
sell-out as one is caught in a corrupt system that thrives on
selling the same sentimental stories to the audience, try-
ing to keep their tastes simple and unsophisticated. Conse-
quently, Ivens sees industrial (or political) commissions as a
way out of the impasse that filmmakers found themselves
in with the introduction of sound:

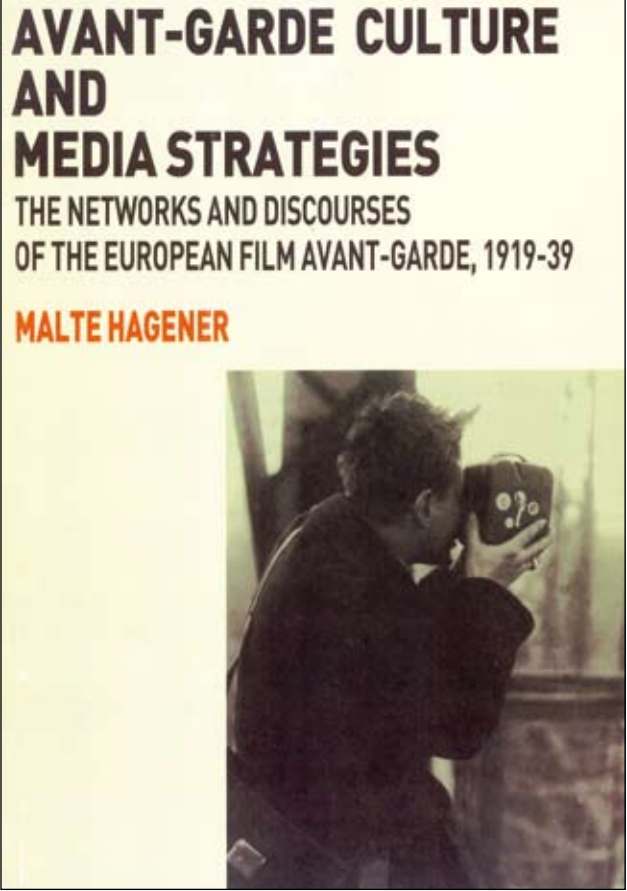
Because the documentary film mainly thrives on com-
missions – and for industries there is no better way of
advertising – the documentary filmmaker only has to deal
with one man: a businessman, an outsider in the field of
filmmaking. Therefore, it is in the interest of that director
to make a good film using truth and the documentary’s
character as the sole criterion. Should he work for the film
industry, however, he has to deal with a board, artists, and
censorship. He is no longer independent, he is bound; he is
more or less a slave. To break free from this slavery, he has
to be absolutely sure of the production and also be able to
convince his spectator, whether it concerns someone from
the industry or not.⁵

Invoking Hegel’s dialectic of master and slave, Ivens sees
the film industry as slavery for an avant-garde filmmaker
whereas a commissioned film is associated with freedom.
An echo of a position not uncommon in the 1920s can be
heard here: the film industry is the enemy which unites the
avant-garde. This opposition to the (commercial) film indus-
try (mainly the large companies such as the Hollywood ma-
jors, the German Ufa and others) had been used as rallying
points because it was easier to unite in opposition against
a common enemy than to look for compromises and shared
goals. At the same time, Ivens also makes clear that abso-
lute independence is an unattainable illusion, so a realistic
assessment of the different kinds of dependencies charac-
terises his approach.

There is of course a big difference between a commissioned
film and a commercial feature which Ivens hints at, but does
not make explicit. The key difference is the target market –
while a commercial feature needed to draw an audience on
the basis of its story, stars, spectacle, values, narrative engine
or other selling points, a commissioned film would normally
be shown to audiences interested in a theme, a company, a
certain technology or a shared political goal. These specta-
tors were much more open to experimental formats as their
main incentive for watching a film was not entertainment.
Thus, different forms of address or a stronger stress on in-
formation were rather accepted in these circles than in the
commercial circuit where big investments needed big cash
returns which consequently creates a climate disinclined to
innovation. It was questions of dependence – on whom, to
what degree and in what way do I depend – that was central
to the avant-garde.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, the avant-garde aimed at overcoming and abo-
lishing itself because it wanted to do away with traditional
art, i.e. an art that occupies by definition a specific functional
position in a society. By refusing to accept the institutions of
bourgeois art, by trying to dispose these, the avant-garde at



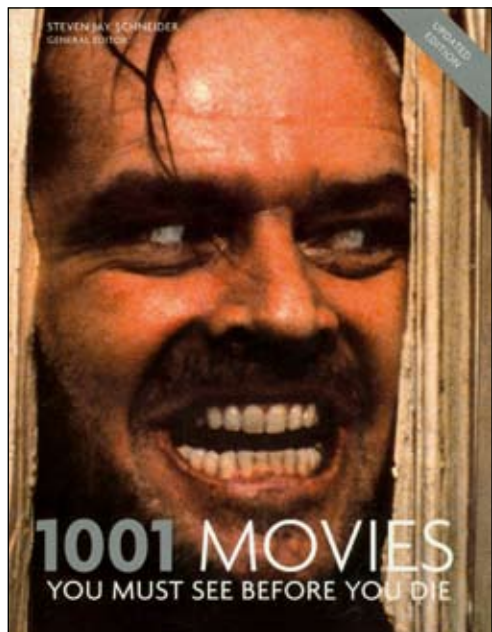
Cover dissertation
Malte Hagener
with Joris Ivens
shooting *The Bridge*

once evoked a mythical past in which art was an integral
part of life as well as a future which would overcome the
barriers between art and life. Yet, this characteristic dou-
ble movement which skips the present was not aimed at a
restorative reconstruction of a mythical past, but it wanted
to bracket the tensions and contradictions of modernity in
order to solve them on another level and at another time.
Working with modern technology meant to accept the gi-
ven reality and to include and redeem it within the avant-
garde which – as the activists believed – prefigured future
society and constituted a test run for the art to come. This
was the specific contribution of the avant-garde working in
reproductive media: to self-reflexively address through its
very means of expression the conditions of modernity that
made itself possible in the first place.

Malte Hagener studied media, philosophy and literature in Hamburg
(Germany), Norwich (UK) and Amsterdam (Netherlands), where he re-
ceived his PhD with a dissertation on the European film avant-garde.
Co-author (with Thomas Elsaesser) of 'Filmtheorie zur Einführung', co-
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Musikfilm 1928–38', 'Geschlecht in Fesseln. Sexualität zwischen Auf-
klärung und Ausbeutung im Weimarer Kino', 'Film: An International
Bibliography', 'Die Spur durch den Spiegel. Der Film in der Kultur der
Moderne', and 'Cinephilia: Movies, Love and Memory'. Assistant Pro-
fessor in Media Studies at Leuphana-Universität Lüneburg.



- 1 Think for example of the famous manifesto penned by Sergei Eisenstein, Grigori Alexandrov and Vsevolod Pudovkin.
- 2 On the history of the Filmliiga see Nico de Klerk, Ruud Visschedijk (eds.): *Het gaat om de film! Een nieuwe geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Filmliiga 1927–1933*. Amsterdam: Bas Lubberhuizen / Filmmuseum 1999. For a complete reprint of their magazine see Jan Heijs (ed.): *Filmliiga 1927–1931*. Nijmegen: SUN 1982.
- 3 Hans Schoots: *Gevaarlijk leven. Een biografie van Joris Ivens*. Amsterdam: Mets 1995: 68ff.
- 4 Joris Ivens: »Quelques réflexions sur les documentaires d'avant-garde«. In: *La revue des vivants*, No. 10, 1931: 518–520. English translation reprinted in and quoted after: "Notes on the Avant-garde Documentary Film". In: Kees Bakker (ed.): *Joris Ivens and the Documentary Context*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 1999: 224–226, here 224.
- 5 Ibid.: 224f.



1001 MOVIES YOU MUST SEE BEFORE YOU DIE

BY STEVEN JAY SCHNEIDER (ED.)
Book: Cassell illustrated / Librero
 (English, Dutch, German, French)



Many lists of “best films” (Top 10, Top 100, National Canon) exist, and most are restricted to one genre or country, and always arbitrary. The book ‘1001 Movies You Must See Before You Die’, published in a number of languages, wants to list films not only to inform and prescribe, but to motivate watching. It is a list that aims to do justice and give coverage to the entire history of film, to all genres and countries. Each title is accompanied by a brief synopsis and critique, some with pictures. Presented chronologically, the current edition begins with Georges Méliès’ *A Trip to the Moon* in 1902 and concludes with Gavin Hood’s 2005 film *Tsotsi*. Contributors include Tom Gunning, Adrian Martin, Jonathan Rosenbaum, Richard Peña, David Stratton, and Margaret Pomeranz. This is how the review of *A Tale of the Wind* made by Joris Ivens and Marceline Loridan-Ivens reads:

“Une Histoire de Vent / A Tale of the Wind (1988)
Reading over the filmography of Joris Ivens, it’s hard to believe that a single filmmaker made all his films. Here was an artist who was an active member of the first European avant-garde movement, who filmed the first Soviet Five Year Plan (*Komsomol*), the Spanish Civil War (*The Spanish Earth*), and the American New Deal (*Power and the Land*); and who made one of the first es-

sential anticolonialist films (*Indonesia Calling*). Such a life was not without its contradictions – few artists could claim to have been awarded both the international Lenin Prize and the rank of Commander of the French Légion d'Honneur. Therefore, it's so wonderfully appropriate that his final film, *A Tale of the Wind*, co-directed with his wife and filmmaking partner Marceline Loridan-Ivens, is one of the most graceful and haunting works of self-reflection in cinema.

Having witnessed during his 90 years enough for ten lifetimes, this 'flying Dutchman' turned his camera on perhaps his most elusive subject: himself. A lifelong asthmatic begins with some thoughts on the breath that sustains his and all life, and that is manifest in the world as the wind. Like Ivens's himself, the wind knows no boundaries, naturally linking peoples, cultures, and continents. Ivens's exploration eventually brings him back to China, site of several of his greatest films, where he sets out to find the Dragon, mythic representative of the wind, in order to learn its secret. There are bumps along the way: some Party officials do all they can to very politely stop him from shooting, while at times Nature has to be coaxed into cooperating with the filmmakers' project. Unable to film the magnificent terracotta warriors of the Qin Dynasty, Ivens and Loidan conjure up their own artefacts, even staging a Busby Berkeley-ish number with them. Moving between documentary, fiction, mythology, philosophy, and sheer whimsy, Loidan and Ivens created with their epitaph one of the most magnificently 'free' films ever made, a fitting tribute to one the cinema's true originals."

Richard Peña, Program Director Film Society of
Lincoln Center, New York

960 p. full colour, paper back;

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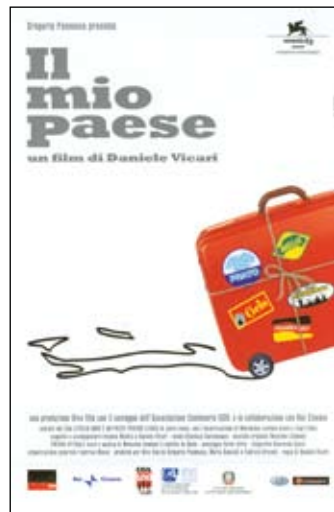
Reprint 2007 Cassell illustrated, London

IL MIO PAESE
BY DANIELE VICARI

Book & DVD: BUR Biblioteca Univ.
Rizzoli (Italian)



The documentary *Il Mio Paese* (My Country) tells the story of the national economical crisis in Italy and the consequent loss of international competitiveness. Daniele Vicari was inspired by Joris Ivens film from 1960, commissioned



by Enrico Mattei, president of ENI with an emblematic title: *l'Italia non è un paese povero* (Italy isn't a Poor Country). Ivens –with the assistance of Alberto Moravia (commentary), Tinto Brass, Paolo and Vittorio Taviani, Valentino Orsini and Mario Volpi- told the effort of the industrialization of a country on the eve of the economical boom and had an optimistic and hopeful narrative. What has remained today of that dream? Between 2005 and 2006 Daniele Vicari traveled again throughout Italy like Ivens did for his film, although in the opposite direction: from the industrial Sicily of

Gela and Termini Imerese, passing Melfi, to the laboratories of Enea in Rome, where research on the alternative energies are carried out, to a city like Prato, with its complex issues of Chinese immigration, to Port Marghera. This feature length documentary shows 13 minutes of Ivens' images as a constant reference. The documentary of Vicari, premiered at the Venice International Film festival in September 2006, wants to arouse a debate about the solutions to overcome the economic crisis.

Now a book is published together with the DVD and a weblog. Vicari describes a country which is in difficulty, that is changing its structures: together with its decline, the reconversion and the new transformation of Italy emerges. "Italy has always been a difficult country to decipher and therefore difficult to tell. When I saw Joris Ivens' film *Italy is not a Poor Country* I had the impression that his work contained an important element, which clearly focuses on the story of the route that an entire society is taking: individual and social work. Work seems to be a non poetic topic, raw, difficult to manipulate

with a narrative method, but it is one of the few topics which is universal, together with love, friendship and not many others. Human beings transform themselves and the world around them, they influence history and decide their life style. This is the reason why I let this giant of cinema lead me in order not to get lost in this complex reality”

200 pages, with DVD

ISBN: 8817019275

19,50 euro



35

**BY RUTGER BOOT AND CAROLIEN VAN
TILBURG**

Book: Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Dutch / Chinese)



To celebrate 35 years of diplomatic relations between the Peoples Republic of China and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Dutch Embassy in Beijing published a beautiful book with portraits of 35 extraordinary people who have played a prominent role in this colourful relationship. These included people from different backgrounds, Chinese as well as Dutch, Dutch Chinese or Chinese Dutch, entrepreneurs, scientists, artists, sportsmen, diplomats, both alive and dead. From Henk Bekedam, the director of the World Health Organisation (WHO) who pushed the Chinese government to an open policy towards the outbreak of SARS, to Zei Lai Sin, the ambassador of Chinese haute cuisine in Holland. Robert van Gulik, Jan Jacob Slauerhoff and Joris Ivens are included, being pioneering artists who went to China and stu-

died Chinese subjects at a time when this was completely unique. Ivens made 18 documentaries in China, from *The 400 Millions* in 1938 to *A Tale of the Wind* in 1988, which opens with a line from Ivens' childhood: 'Mama, I want to fly to China!' Although Ivens couldn't speak or understand Chinese he had warm relationships with Chinese personalities like the Prime Minister Zhou Enlai, and Weimin Situ, Head of the Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio and later Minister of Culture.

226 pages, full colour, paperback;

Dutch Embassy Beijing

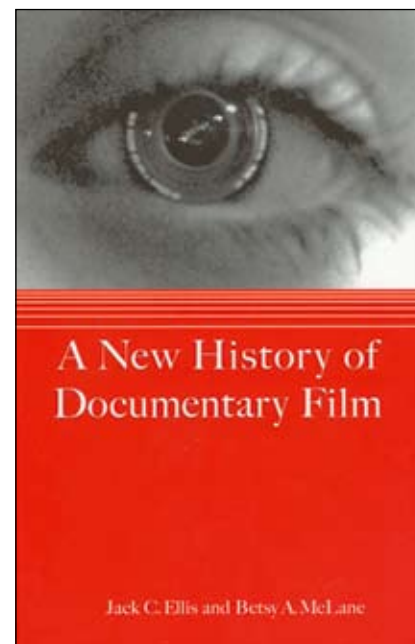
***A NEW HISTORY OF DOCUMENTARY FILM*, BY JACK C. ELLIS AND BETSY A. McLANE**

Book: Continuum (English)



In a lecture about documentary film at the Museum of Modern Art in 1939, Joris Ivens stated that "I believe documentary film has had a healthy development and that Hollywood has learned something from the independent filmmakers. For a while there was antagonism between the documentary and the so-called fiction film, but it became less and less as time went on". At that time, documentary film had only existed for about fifteen years, but it was already showing interesting developments as an art form in its own right.

In recent years, the documentary film movement has become stronger than ever. But interestingly, successful films like *Être et avoir* (Nicolas Philibert), *Fahrenheit 9/11* (Michael Moore) and *An Inconvenient Truth* (Al Gore), which attracted millions of viewers and had an enormous impact, bore similarities in both style and method with classic predecessors in documentary film history. To present students as well as moviegoers with insight into the history of this art form, Jack C. Ellis and Betsy A. McLane wrote 'A New History of Documentary Film'. 'New' because it's history has been updated to 2005 and includes the era of digital video and Video On Demand. The history is well written, in an accessible narrative, with a strong grip on the complete story, but still including striking and interesting details. For instance, the efforts in 1939 by Mary Losey to organise American documentary along British lines (Griersons GPO, Shell Film Unit) gets its

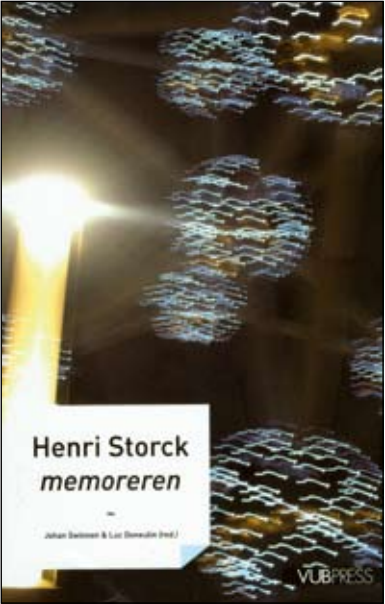


rightful attention for the first time.

However, the Association of Documentary Film Producers (ADFP) gathered an amazing bunch of film people, for example James Beveridge, Luis Buñuel, Robert Flaherty, John Grierson, Richard Griffith, Alexander Hackenschmied, Leo Hurwitz, Joseph Losey, Marion Michelle, Leo Seltzer, Ralph Steiner, Paul Strand, Helen van Dongen, Willard van Dyke and William Wells. These names were not mentioned in Ellis and McLane's book and they even forgot to write that Joris Ivens was the president of this ADFP. This ignorance is structural. The book is also 'New' because the history of documentary film is limited to films from the English speaking countries. Of course protagonists like Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Dovshenko, Ivens or Rouch cannot be completely neglected, but the fact is that Ellis and McLane use only Flaherty and Grierson as their "godfathers" and refer almost every new development in documentary film back to them. In this sense the title should read 'A History of Documentary Film in the Anglo-Saxon World'.

Mary Losey was right when she wrote about documentary in a 1941 ADFP catalogue: 'This is an art unlimited. The world is its studio and its people the actors. Seen in that light this is but a beginning'. We are waiting for a New History of Documentary Film with a worldwide approach.

358 pages, black and white illustrations, paperback:
ISBN 0-8264-1751-5; Continuum, New York.



HENRI STORCK MEMOREREN
BY JOHAN SWINNEN & LUC DENEULIN
(ED.)
Book: VUBPress (Dutch, French)



‘Who will live on in film history of the 20th century?’ ‘Chaplin, Flaherty and only a few other great directors, but I don’t think my films will survive’, Belgian filmmaker Henri Storck (1907-1999) answered during a dinner with friends at the end of his life. This line tells much about Storck, who was a sympathetic personality with a lot of Flemish humor and sense of perspective.. To prevent his prophecy from being fulfilled some thirty authors, a broad range of Belgian film scholars, filmmakers, writers and others, wrote articles from various points of view to shed light on Storck’s intellectual and cinematographic legacy. Storck is considered the Godfather of Belgian cinema with an impact on the development of local documentary film, film industry, film festivals and film culture. The centenary of his birth has been celebrated with film programs, seminars, lectures, a series of stamps, and the publication ‘Henri Storck memoreren’ (‘Reminding Henri Storck’).

Up till now only one catalogue and a nice biographic documentary film made by Robbe de Hert gave background information about Storck’s life and film oeuvre. But these were made twenty years ago. That’s why the initiative to publish this mosaic of texts with essays,

interviews, anecdotes and personal memories, is most welcome and needed. One of the best chapters is written by Ian Mundell and was published last year in the Ivens Magazine. Mundell focused on the remarkable similarities between Henri Storck and Joris Ivens. Although differing in character the parallels in their careers, especially in the period 1923-1937 are most striking. Before they collaborated on shooting Borinage in 1933, which is regarded the most important film of Storck, they both created fiction films with much resemblance.

Another chapter, about ‘Borinage in a dialectical perspective’, written by Luc Deneulin and Hubert Dethier is in several parts almost a copy, even sometimes verbatim, of a chapter written about Ivens’ dialectical approach in a book, which was published in 1988 (‘Joris Ivens, werelddineast 1898-1934’). Strange enough no reference to these sources were included.

This sympathetic book of friends with various angles and qualities doesn’t intend to present an integral view on Storck. Maybe next year when his biography will be published we will get to know ‘the complete Storck’.

Henri Storck memoreren
VUBPRESS (Vrije Universiteit van Brussel)
(Ed.) Johan Swinnen & Luc Deneulin
ISBN: 978-90-5487-437-9
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info@vubpress.be; www.vubpress.be



WILHELM IVENS
BY NIELS COPPES, ANDRÉ STUFKENS
AND BOB DE HAAN
Book: BnM Uitgevers (Dutch)



Since 1988, when Ingeborg Leyerzapf, head of the ‘Prentenkabinet’ (photographic department University of Leiden) published two articles about Wilhelm Ivens, for the first time an elaborated book on his photographic oeuvre has been published. New research resulted in a first unique overview of his photos, accompanying an exhibition at the Museum Het Valkhof. Although much more photos must exist, 250 photos were traced with which a much better insight in Wilhelm Ivens’ approach and vision can be presented. Niels Coppes, specialist of 19th century photography, described the technological and artistic developments of that century and which role Wilhelm Ivens played to improve the standards of craftsmanship and artistry. André Stufkens shed light on the parallels and differences between Wilhelm and Joris Ivens in a chapter about the family tradition with the mechanical eye (see p. 15-18 of this magazine). Bob Haan, nephew of Joris Ivens, listed all photos with dates and collections, a source of reference for further research. The 125 restored photos published in this book illustrate the distinguished quality of Wilhelm Ivens.

With the support of the Prins Bernard Cultuurfonds

BnM Publishers, European
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120 p. full color, Hard
cover

Survey Retrospectives and Screenings 2007

THE NETHERLANDS / 19 April 2007- Summer 2008, Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam - *The Bridge* (will be screened continuously during the opening exhibition ‘Panorama Las Palmas’. The exhibition shows for the first time a permanent overview of 150 years of Dutch photography on photo’s taken in the surroundings of Las Palmas and the Rotterdam docks).

FRANCE / 21 November, Centre Pompidou, Paris - *Rain (Ivens, Franken)* screened in an overview of the creative documentary film around 1930 and 1950.

GERMANY / 1 and 2 November, DOK Leipzig- *Le Ciel, la Terre (The Threatening Sky)*.

GREECE / 25 October - 1 November, Ecocinema 7th international Film festival, Piraeus, *Rotterdam Europort* (screened in a special program on harbors).

THE NETHERLANDS / 21 October, AVRO televisionprogram “Algemeen Film!”, series about Dutch documentary with a part about Joris Ivens.

AUSTRIA / 1-31 October, Austrian Filmmuseum, Vienna, ...À *Valparaiso* as part of a program entitled ‘The Essay in Cinema’.

THE NETHERLANDS / 7 October, Cinema Lantaren-Venster, Rotterdam, *Concrete Works*, screened in the series Rotterdam Classics, the compilation program “Building the city” – Construction films”.

THE NETHERLANDS / 26 September - 6 October, Netherlands Filmfestival (NFF), Utrecht, *Rain (Ivens, Franken)*.

THE NETHERLANDS / 9 September, Lantaren-Venster, Rotterdam, *Rotterdam Europort*, screened in the series Rotterdam Classics, the compilation program “Europoort”.

ITALY / 6 September, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Gallery for Contemporary Art, Turin, *Rain (Ivens, Franken)* silent and live music version from Hanns Eisler.

THE NETHERLANDS / 4 September, CASLa Architectuurcentrum, Almere, *Zuiderzee works* and *New Earth*.

FRANCE / 18-25 August, 30e Gouel ar filmou, Film Festival Dournenez, *Indonesia Calling!* and *Loi de Vietnam* screened as part of the program entitled ‘Portraits de colonisés’ (portrait of the colonized).

THE NETHERLANDS / 1 t/m 16 june, Schouwburg Almere en ‘de Kunstlinie’, Almere, fragments of *New Earth* and *Zuiderzee works* as part of Dogtroep performance ‘Laad Los’.

AUSTRIA / 28 May, Austrian Filmmuseum, Vienna, ...À *Valparaiso* screened in the frame work of a extensive retrospective of Chris Marker (1921) who wrote in 1963 the commentary text.

GERMANY / 11 May, Festival for Modern Music ‘3. Freiburger Frühling’, Freiburg, *Rain (Ivens, Franken)* silent and live music version from Hanns Eisler.

ITALY / 9 - 14 May, NODODOC FEST, Trieste, ‘a Tribute to Joris Ivens’ with *The Bridge*, *Rain* (first mute and afterwards accompanied with live-music from the band Electrosacher), *The Spanish Earth*, *Italia is Not a Poor Country* and *A Tale of the Wind*.

ISRAEL / 2 May, Jerusalem Music Center, Jerusalem, *Rain*, first mute and afterwards performing the score of Hanns Eisler ‘Fourteen Ways to Describe Rain’ (1941) and the score of Edward Hughes ‘Light Cuts through Dark Skies’ (2001). Australia / 27 April, University of Sydney, Sydney, *The Spanish Earth* screened in the frame work of a semester about the Spanish Civil War by prof. Judith Keene.

THE NETHERLANDS / 10 April, Lantaarn / ‘t Venster, Rotterdam, *The Bridge* and *Rain* performed live by the Doelen Ensemble.

GERMANY / 28 february, Körber-Foundation, Hamburg, *Rain (Ivens, Franken)* silent and live music version from Hanns Eisler.

CANADA / 28 february, Cinematheque Ontario, Toronto, ...À *Valparaiso*.

THE NETHERLANDS / 25 February, Filmtheater ‘t Hoogt, Utrecht, In the series CINEMUZE Daniel Cross (percussion) and Jeroen Kimman (guitar) performed their new scores of *The Bridge*, *Rain* and *Maasbruggen* (Paul Schuitema). Next to their own score both the silent versions of *The Bridge* and *Rain* were performed and the live-version of Hanns Eislers score.

SPAIN / 9 February 2007, Catal n Fundaci n Jordi Feixa, Barcelona, *Cinemat a* (Rouch, Ivens, Storck).

THE NETHERLANDS / 1 February 2007, Filmtheater Lantaren / ‘t Venster & International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR), *The Bridge* screened in the *Rotterdam Classics*, a series of film programs on films located in Rotterdam.

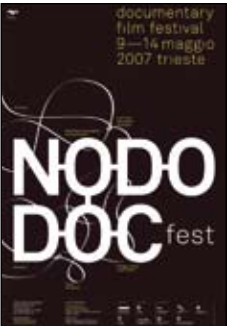
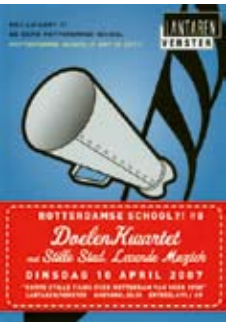
ITALY / 5 December 2006, Desert Nights film festival, Rome, *A tale of the Wind*.

THE NETHERLANDS / 24/28 November 2006, International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (IDFA), Amsterdam, *Rain* screened as part of the program ‘Top 10 Alan Berliner’.

AUSTRALIA / 15 november 2006, Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI), Melbourne, The retrospective program *Joris Ivens: internationalist*. In two screening sessions *Rain*, *New Earth*, *Borinage*, *The 400 Million*, *Power and the Land*, *Indonesia Calling*, ...A *Valparaiso* and *A Football Incident* (from the *Yukong* series) were screened.

CANADA / 12 November 2006, Rencontres internationales du documentaire de Montr al (RIDM), Montr al, Qu bec, *The Bridge*.

NEW ZEALAND / 1 November, New Zealand Film Archive, Wellington, *The Spanish Earth* screened by the seminar *NO PASARAN - New Zealand and the Spanish Civil War*.





Germaine Krull, John Fernhout assisting Joris Ivens during the editing of *The Bridge*, 1928. Coll. JIA/EFJI © Photographische Sammlung Folkwang Museum Essen.

In Ferno

Next year the documentary *In Ferno*, made by director Jacques Laureys and produced by Flip Nagler, will present the creative vision of cameraman, photographer and director John Ferno (born John Fernhout, 1913-1987). At an early age - he was only 15 years old - Fernhout was educated and trained by Joris Ivens to become a cameraman. Visual alertness and an inherent feeling for light and composition were in his genes due to his mother, the painter Charley Toorop, and his grandfather Jan Toorop. Ferno's film career started in 1929 as Ivens' assistant during the shooting of *Breakers* (1929), and it continued with *Zuiderzeewerken* and *Nieuwe Gronden* (New Earth). After assisting Hans Richter and Henri Storck, Ivens invited him to shoot *The Spanish Earth* in Spain with Ernest Hemingway - who called him Ferno.

The title of the documentary *In Ferno* relates to the many violent frontiers Ferno worked in, of which the Spanish Civil War was probably the most traumatic for him. Ferno joined Ivens and Robert Capa in the war zone in China (*The 400 Millions*) and collaborated with Joseph Losey (*A Child Went Forth*) in the US, before starting a career as a director in his own right (*And So They Live*). After the liberation of his homeland he returned to the Netherlands where he made a number of films supported by the Marshall Plan. His magnum opus became *Sky over Holland* (1967), in which he related Dutch landscape to Dutch art. Laureys' film will be presented at the Netherlands Film Festival in September 2008 and then shown on Dutch television.

Ivens and climate change

Following the documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*, climate change has become a pressing political issue, especially in Holland where a rise in sea level might cause a flood in which large parts of the country would disappear. A television commercial made by a large electricity company escalated the fear with footage of tragic floods. To counter this disaster, the film also shows solidarity between Dutchmen as they hold back the water with sacks of sand. And of course, solidarity is best shown with excerpts from Ivens' *Zuiderzeewerken* and *New Earth* - including the famous 'bucket line'. Film scholar Thomas Waugh has highlighted this theme across many of Ivens' films.

Ivens with Rain in Canon of Dutch cinema



Joris Ivens and Mannus Franken. Still from *Rain*, 1929. © MLI/MFS

The Netherlands Film Festival (NFF) proclaimed the creation of a 'Canon of Dutch Cinema', to gather together the highlights of Dutch film history. It will be the shortlist of essential films made by Dutch directors, which should be seen and studied by every citizen, pupil and student. The selection committee made up of film scholars decided to put only 16 films on the list, with a subtle division of directors, periods, genres (documentary, fiction, youth and animation films) and even regions. It was a nice consensus in the best traditions of the Dutch polders. However, no female director was selected and also a number of outspoken Oscar winners like *Character* by Mike van Diem and *Antonia* by Marleen Gorissen have been omitted. Joris Ivens' classic film *Rain* (made together with Mannus Franken, 1929) is part of the Canon. This Canon is meant to support film education and improve film awareness. It's just a pity that the attempt by the NFF to present the complete Canon on DVD has failed.

Author rights

The European Filmarchives (ACE) and the International Filmproducers (FIAPF) drew up a new agreement for depositing films in archives. This contract replaces the agreement of 1971 and addresses the global challenges in law and new technologies. Now the urgency of preserving film heritage is felt ever more, the interest of both the film producers and film archivists has been balanced in this contract to improve the deposits of increasing film stock. A clear juridical settlement is the more necessary now exploitation of film footage has become industrial. Since 1912 the Author Law protects works of arts and their creators in the Netherlands as is in most civilized countries. The film archives which are keeping and preserving the films need the permission of right holders to use, distribute, loan or exploit the films. However in the past year at least three times Ivens films were provided by the Filmmuseum and the Netherlands Institute of Sound and Vision without permission of the rightholder: for a television commercial, the integral dissemination on internet and a film production. The new agreement of ACE and FIAPF underlines again the necessity of a clear and reliable relationship between the people who deposit the films and the people who take care of their preservation.

DOK-Leipzig



Large crowds gathering before the screening rooms of DOK Leipzig, 2 November 2007

DOK-Leipzig celebrated its 50th anniversary. Joris Ivens was one of the initiators of this international film festival, that's why his film *The Threatening Sky* (1967) was shown and Marcelline Loridan-Ivens attended the festival as Honorary-Guest. Several film programs, debates and books reflected on the past: the possibilities and limitations to open an isolated society to the world with the screening of critical films, the role of the GDR State and censorship, etc. 31.000 visitors bear evidence of the vitality of this festival.

THE

ivens

MAGAZINE

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