



David Perlov. With courtesy of Mira Perlov.

The David Perlov DVD set, by Re:Voir Video, Paris 2007.

David Perlov, Joris Ivens
sequence from Diary, 1982.
With courtesy of Mira Perlov.

cal explanations of this sort, however, are never sufficient, certainly not when they are forwarded by a conscious and sophisticated film-artist like Perlov. The more so when the epistemic intent of the Filmmaker–Perlov, is not really the factual description of mere happenings within their materialistic historical context, but rather the investigation of the deeper sense and nature of their cinematic image in time and space.

This Perlovian ontology calls for a more acute state of contemplation in regard to this significant Cut - which reveals that Perlov actually implements, through, in and by it, a procedure of I would call ‘A classical Ivens rhetoric’, having been elevated by Ivens to a top notch level in two of Perlov’s beloved Ivens’ films: ...à *Valparaiso* (1963) and *Pour le mistral* (1966).

Invisible References to Ivens’films

In these two films Ivens breaks off with the mimetic illusion of the diagesis by means of a radical shift in the ontological status of his cinematic image (that is to say a shift in its validity as an existent entity). Certainly this calls for a clarification: In ...à *Valparaiso* it is the unforgettable ending shot of the elevator descending from the mountain, against the backdrop of the utopian sea-bay. From-out the rear window of the cabin we see a long white scarf swirling into the endless sky of the mythological city Valparaiso. We could have easily found ourselves savouring the sublime composition, but this is not our case as of now. Unlike the first part of the film, which is shot in black-and-white, this part is taken and screened in colour. Coincidence? A one time mischievousness? Six years earlier, in *Pour le mistral* Ivens utilizes a slightly different semiotic tactics. Again in the middle of the film he changes the gate-ratio from a frame with a screen ratio of 1:1.33 and a black-and-white cinematography, to a gate- ratio of 1:2.55 colour CinemaScope. This ‘Ivensian touch’ functions as a rhetoric tool to express the ‘other scale’ of the ‘Ru’ach’- Wind-Spirit-Soul-Essence, which Ivens was questing for during the entire film. By doing so he created a deviation in the most rudimentary conceptual set-up of the aesthetics and epistemology of the film, more over he promotes a rejection to the mere realistic possibility of actually capturing the physical wind that he, the documentary filmmaker, was trying to hunt down as a fantasmatic representation of his own unfeasible Ru’ach.

The invisible Wind and Spirit

And so, the wind as well as the spirit of Ivens insofar as being presented in *Pour le mistral* will remain at the end of his midlife’s poetic voyage, split between two realities: an unattainable object of desire on the one and a describable-materialistic-geographic feature and potentially presentable cinematic concept, on the other. By means of this rhetorical strategy , the author-Ivens will claim that the conscious plain of existence of the Ru’ach as a metaphysical source of existence can obviously not be visualized in a conventional cinematic frame; however though, pleading in a negating dialectical way, will justify the metaphysical presupposition that **the invisible sta-**

tus of the wind is, and only is that which can be visible. In other words the rhetoric of the Author-Ivens is asserting the notion that it is the wind’s invisibility in the empiric world which forcibly enables it to become visible only in and by the cinema, by means of using pure cinematic language, which in turn is absolutely idiosyncratic-thus, invisible to the non-cinematic-eye. (interestingly enough quite a bit of that has been discussed by Vertov in the mid 20’s).

Framing the Wind

A substantial argument such as this, the Author-Ivens’ rhetoric would argue, can be validated only by means of figuring ‘The wind frame’ merely in its most crystallized mode of ‘Being-A-frame’-i.e., in its absolute framefullness – e.g., Cinemascope, ‘Black-and-White’ that is to say a frame being unique in its structure – being moulded as a filmic element which exteriorizes its formulation as a pure frame –a frame in its most demonstrative and excessive mode which aesthetically stands out from the aesthetic’s gestalt structure and nature of the rest of the film.

However though, this cinematification (if to use Vertov’s terminology) formulates the status of the ‘frame of the Wind’ as nothing more than a ‘only a frame’, which in turn implies the question: what is a frame? By way of short-cutting, and fully aware of the danger of this too obvious ‘trapping question’ we would say: It is no more than an artificial perspectival projection of human consciousness. So, if to re-cap this first stage of the introductive analysis, and if we adopt the point of view which invites a reading of Perlov as a self-conscious artist who is systematically trying to see that which is invisible to the naked eye, through and beyond the mechanical materiality of day-to-day time and space, it would not be an untenable step for us to assume that Perlov, with all his complexity as an empiric ego, an artist, a documentarian being kept busy with his earthly cinema-of-chance shooting, cannot but reach out for the maestro – old Ivens, by means of symbolically transcending ‘Ars-poetic Ivensian cinematic bridges’ which inevitably emphasize the paradoxical affinity between the visible contents of the frame and the invisible signification of it. So, as of this phase of reading and even before having investigated the concrete contents of Perlov’s actual frame of Ivens, we can already notice that Perlov is following the cinematic and metaphysical footsteps of Ivens whom he takes as an artist who speaks ‘without words’ and who gazes ‘beyond that which eyes can see’.

A word by word analysis

In order to understand the fundamental assumption which charges a linguistic and investigatory argumentation of this kind, I would like to draw attention to Perlov’s verbal rhetoric – as he is mostly titled The Master of words. Hence, I would like to deconstruct and interpret, as if in a cinematic ‘slow motion’, the semantics of the verbal sentence by which Perlov introduces us to Ivens’ world: ‘Suddenly I find myself shooting in Black & white as if to sustain a forgotten melody’. Let us re-read this sentence, this time word by

word, as if it was a ‘rhetoric corridor’ which has the capacity to offer us a hidden more voluminous and fecund layer of meaning than that which the carefully gazing Perlov, can offer through the mischievous superficiality of the visual silent black & white image of Ivens standing on the balcony of his Paris home- and presenting himself to the camera. So what in effect, is Perlov telling us? ‘Suddenly’ and we would interpret: without being prepared or without pre-planned consideration, furthermore as being a happening resulting from an impulse, a reaction to something uncontrollable, that is to say to something belonging to the outer circle of rational-motivated-known explanation. ‘as if to’ -that is to say not ‘really’ (‘not in effect’)-, but as a linguistic metaphor to an alternative virtual reality which does not materialize in full scope within the empirical world. Let’s continue: ‘As if’ i.e., it is actually fantasized, and lacking any obligation, a sort of a Simulacrum in the sense of which things get unstitched down to the infinitive.

At this point the Perlovian phraseology moves on, to a concept from another discourse. He says: ‘to sustain’ - that is to tightly link the action to the question of willingness, standing in relation to a deeper intentionality- the source of which is lying in an act of free choice, (isn’t there a potential contradiction between the prior ‘suddenly’ and he latter ‘to sustain’) the intention of which is to deepen the complicated relationship between the ‘time organs’ i.e., – past, present and future: to permanently fixate it on the basis of stopping its mechanical dynamic move linearly forward. As such, the wish to ‘*sustain*’ is offered to us as no other than a fantasmatic wish since any preservation and fixation is a fulfilment of a pre-oedipal fantasy in relation to an imaginary signifier. In view of that, could one not regard Perlov’s frame of Ivens as an imaginary signifier of pure fantasy?

A forgotten melody

Perlov concludes the expositive poetic sentence with the phrase: ‘a forgotten melody’ . Here one has to ask: forgotten by whom? By the implied viewer who most probably never heard of Hanns Eisler ? By Perlov himself ? Perlov who compulsively needs to travel to Paris in search for Ivens and other haunting memories in order to battle his ‘Other’ struggling ‘Tel-Aviv consciousness’ which threatens to oblivate the universal voices of the great maestro’s of the cinema which he adored so much? And to which tune exactly does Perlov mean to if the cinematic ‘leap’ that he creates in the opening move of the scene is actually nothing more but mere appearances, that is to say one that pronounces itself in the field of contradiction i.e., colour Vs. black-and- white? And in saying ‘a forgotten melody’ does he really refer to Eisler’s music? Or isn’t it that in itself -as music (a system of abstract signs)-, Eisler’s music being activated by Perlov turns into a distilled metaphor of a cinematic memory trans-bridging the visual and the auditory?

A prophecy?

If we hold-up for another brief moment at this critical sentence and use it as a sign or as an evidence for an even



I. M. Article about David

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higher level of structure of the entire Perlov’s poetics, we could thus argue that the ‘Perlovian rhetoric’, serves as what can be metaphorically defined as ‘Perlov’s cinematic unconscious’. I am saying ‘the cinematic unconscious’ and do have in mind the classical Freudian in-accessible topographic area but not only that of Perlov the an empiric-ego but also that of the function of the *Diary*-Author– Perlov, the one who indeed as a person cannot materialistically look into the future as, (and play the role of) a prophet in the historical world –meaning in the sphere of mechanical time of the actual world, but nevertheless succeeds in identifying, without though being able to provide any verbal justification, that the Ru’ach- spirit of old Ivens, not only has not starve at this point in time of this encounter in Paris, but that it is about to intentinalize a dramatic artistic turning point in the last life-chapter of Ivens –a chapter which, obviously has not been written yet at that time.

I would like to propose the commentary that Perlov intuitively saw in what I earlier termed: his ‘cinematic unconsciousness’ ‘something’ – a pure intuition he himself as well as Ivens, obviously, were not able to express in words or action – but and only in the form of the action of filming and being filmed. And so this surplus of intuition and mutual energy was inevitably diverted into the moment of absolute desire for hunting and capturing Ivens’ image by Perlov.

But before we further continue our investigation let’s inspect the state of affairs from a bird’s eye perspective and comment, almost in brackets, in retrospect of the entire Ivens’ oeuvre, that both ...à *Valparaiso* and *Pour le mistral* - the two films which I earlier claimed Perlov is making an allusion to, (in between the lines of the invisible layers of the diegesis of their meeting), are in effect the two central (can we also refer to them as unconscious?) Ivensian Etudes for his Magnum Opus: *Une histoire de vent* (1988), which he directed in cooperation with his wife and creative partner Marceline Loridan-Ivens.

Paris as a reflection

Now, after having located these three films in their more accurate coordinates, we can continue our scrutiny and contextualization in order to unravel another indispensable





Graphics from the Davidperlov.com website. With courtesy of Mira Perlov.

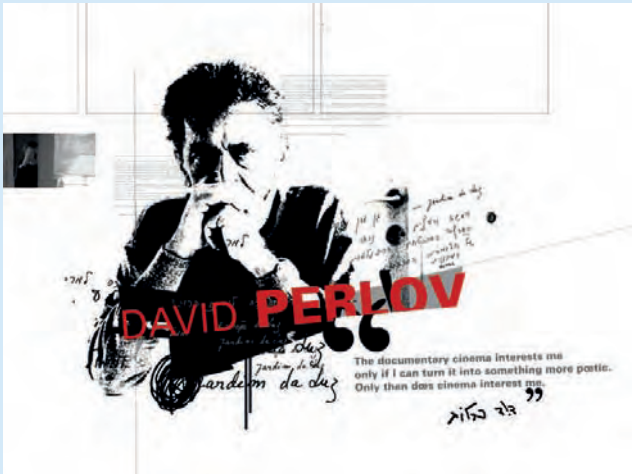
invisible essence of the Perlov-Ivens cinematic encounter. It is a cliché, indeed, that Paris is a cinematic convention in itself and in that respect it is unavoidable to recognize that Perlov’s filming of Ivens in Paris is also an allusion to another Ivens’ lyrical film: *La Seine a reconstruit Paris* (1957), Which Perlov stated many times in front of us, his students he loved very much. But more than that, it seems that Paris, in that cinematic sense can serve, for this reading, as a site of collective cinematic statue, an imago of cinematic consciousness belonging to and representing an era of founding filmmakers who have past by, or in other cases got pushed aside from the main stage of cinematic praxis. I’m referring to the first generation of cinema artists of which Ivens himself was also a milestone and just as well, being true for that period of Perlov’s filming time, has already become, for young and rebellious filmmakers, an anachronistic remainder of that generation. I was almost about to say it would have been too wild of an association to recall in this regard Georges Méliès, but it is the very unique soul and spirit of Perlov’s rhetoric (‘Suddenly I find myself...’) which enables me to speak ‘Here and Now’- and recall that in *Une histoire de vent* Ivens goes back as far as to the famous Méliès film: *Le Voyage dans la lune* (1902), and against its reconstructed and interpreted background he structures a cinematic testimony which states that Méliès -the ultimate daydreamer- the anti-thesis to the credo of any realistic documentary tradition, has actually been the fountain source of his cinematic fantasy and inspiration, propelling his consciousness of an artist.

A perfect image

Now, Let’s return for the last time to the magic moment of the ‘The Vertovian leap’ of Perlov into Ivens’ cinematic Paris and add another alighting layer to the reflexive cinematic imaging of Ivens in black-and-white;. Perlov adds to it an unambiguous political message stating that Ivens is in effect the ultimate representative of the legacy of the politically committed documentary. Perlov recognizes and admits that Ivens functions as the father figure – THE role model for the ultimately desirable Committed documentarian, and as such he proposes us to take a look at him as a fantasmatic image. But isn’t it self-evident that more than his gazing reveals the omnipotentability of Ivens’ cinematic image, it reveals the impotency (in its dialectically opposing sense of the impossibility of it’s Omni-potentiality) of the subject whom we can call, if to lean on phenomenological terminology: The ‘Being-Documentarian- Perlov’, that is to say: the documentarian artist who is forced to activate the visualizing cinematic language in order to signify the gap between his self image, which is not more than a partial and damaged image, and the image of ‘THE perfect’ and at the same time ‘the PERFECT’ image, being reflected at him through the lens of his camera - an image being in truth no more than a mirror reflecting back his own self-desired image. So, Perlov is gazing at Ivens not as an object or even a subject, but in effect, he is yearning for himself to be a perfect image of a ‘THE documentarian’ in order to define through its image and by it his very own partial and damaged image.

Mirror Stage

In light of this kind of reading, it becomes almost too recognizable not to be noticed that Perlov tells us nothing more than a story that in essence alludes of the ‘Mirror Stage’ narrative upon which Jacque Lacan constructs his decisive transformational phase from the imaginary order to the symbolic order - a defining moment in the maturation of the psyche and thus subjectivity: With Perlov, also, likewise



in Lacan’s model, there is an asymmetry on both sides of the view: on one side of the mirror having a gazing subject with a partial and damaged self-imaging while at the same time on the other side of the projecting image, there exists a reflected image of perfectly projected subjectivity. All that, however, is invisible to the eye of the implied viewer who is unavoidably being caught in the trap of the viewable and hear-able, engulfed in the story Perlov unrolls: ‘Here I am in Paris. Abrasha committed suicide but nonetheless, Joris Ivens, my idol is still here and he is 84 years of age’, says the narrator-voice, who is conveyed by the material voice of Perlov, the human subject. However though, even this seemingly accessible hermeneutic layer does not reflect quite the entire story. Firstly, due to the fact that Abrasha, who was a man of conscience and who possessed an utmost developed sense of justice, exactly as Ivens, has chosen to jump to his death from a balcony, whereas Ivens who was also posing for Perlov’s diagesis on a Parisian balcony has chosen to display over a balcony and through it his undefeatable desire and passion for life, despite of all hardships. Secondly, since it was not only that Perlov’s friends died, but also and even before them, all of Ivens’ friends (being 32 years older than Perlov) that had died a long time ago: e.g., Flaherty, Grierson, Vertov, Cavalcanti and Langlois (both of the latter also being Perlov’s friends as well), Vigo, Kaufman, Ruttmann, Rotha, Wright, Anstey, Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Dovzhenko. All of those intellectual artists who have laid the aesthetic and ideological foundations for the cinema of the 20th century (for its sins as well as for its pleasures) were friends to Ivens and it is their inventive filmic creation, as well as their theoretical endeavour, what has been cast into



David Perlov. With courtesy of Mira Perlov.

a cannon of the art of cinema. And now, in the context of the time frame of the cinematic world of Perlov-who himself attempts to become part of the on-going tradition of the authentic-absolute cinema, by adopting the image of ‘The lone Rider’ who conquers worlds of meanings with his ‘hunter-like camera’, the illusive impression and aurora of these grand-maestros is hiding in Perlov’s frame of Ivens in the form of a deep yearn, possibly recognizable, yet mostly hiding in the somewhat slightly and subtly embarrassed almost shy face of Ivens’ looking at the Hunter Perlov.

Arche

This is the documentarian-Ivens who has witnessed the dreadful massive death and moreover the banality of the psychotic violence of the 20th century, who now does not know exactly what Perlov expects him to do or to be, (‘what would you want me to be for you, my son ?’ is a question, certainly not being heard in the evident level of the exposed textuality, but however is echoing in its inner and latent layers) and that is why, in the sense of the immediate existing encounter time, that Ivens is troubled by the technicality of the issue whether Perlov is also recording his live sound or whether he is ‘only’ taking his mute visual image. Perlov informs Ivens that he is ‘just’ filming him (with no synch sound recording) since according to Perlov’s simultaneous narrating voice-over, Ivens’ voice has already been heard in (film) history and in this sense has already been ‘seen’ through his films. What has not been seen so far, says Perlov without words – that is to say whatever has not been captured yet, is the visual image of Ivens. Why is it then worth bothering to attain? Is it because of the old belief that one’s image carries one’s inner voice- his Arche.⁶ In Ivens’ case its his visual image which had remained invisible so far and long and therefore- in an unavoidable way that is what Perlov-the image hunter is seeking to reveal, capture, relocate and re-interpret in and for film history and more importantly-his private history as a valid witness of the objective history. Hence, as far as Perlov is concerned, revealing and visualising the image of Ivens is in fact an act of realization of the fantasy of the power of the image-taker over the existential-state-of-being of the filmed subject which is in turn ‘being-viewed’, as well as an act of signifying an extra Punktum (if to use Barthes’ term) in the filmed object (in that case what has escaped from being seen as a cinematic image is the subtle shyness in Ivens’ face).

Me and You

In this respect the conquest pursuit of the invisible image of Ivens becomes for Perlov what Lacan has defines as ‘object-desire’ (likewise the wind for Ivens). But in order to better understand the scope and nature of their mutual response to the neurosis of object-desire relations we need to make another detour and return for a brief moment to those we called ‘Ivens friends’ whom we earlier termed as ‘founding cinema masters’ and to redefine their identification as ‘friends’ in this context, not just as regular or vulgar’ socially know-abilities’ but rather as in the sense of the Greek philosophy, wherein the ‘friend’ stands for an opponent; a partner in and to a dialogue about truth -which exists openly, collectively and objectively in a shared and objective space of truthful ideas. i.e., a friend is the one whose task it is to tell and enlighten the truth which refuses to show itself, self-evidently. If we can accept this contextual configuration of this moment of Perlov-Ivens encounter we would clearly see, that all these forefathers and founders of cinema are indeed for all matter and sake are standing (ex-sisting) invisibly (already being fantasmatic objects in themselves) at the moment when we see David film-

ing Joris: Two old friends (‘Ich und du’ as by the teaching of Martin Buber), standing in front of each other as an image capturer and a captured image; a signifier and a signified; a subject and object; ‘father’ and ‘son’; reality and fiction; teacher and pupil- follower; master and apprentice; admiration and yearning; hope and memory; viewer and viewed, imaginer and imagined.

A post-ideological world

The being together though of the ‘Ich und du’ is a fiction. Ivens is in a state of terrible as well as glittering solitude : he has survived as a refugee ‘in time’ as well as ‘of time’ in film history, a time which has been conquered already by a new generation of documentarians and television makers, a generation that slowly started to nibble at the undisputable status of the Totem-Ivens: a child of the 19th century, the last protégé of the great utopia’s of communism of the first half of the 20th century, is now being eternalized in Perlov’s image as a lonely man, who is standing in front of us-the viewers, as a fragile image of himself: exposed, candid, upright, vigorous; talkative yet mute; ‘black and white’; looking with a decisive hesitation right into the Centre of the lens, obviously suffering from the asthma that has already destroyed two thirds of his lungs capacity. Ivens the ‘dinosaur’ who is trying with his last and final energies to represent and re-explain to himself as well as to the world his terms of Leninistic- materialist-dialectics that has gone out of fashion in the political climate of his time-the end of the 20th century. Now it is Ivens who is being immortalized and newly rephrased by Perlov as the last total artist and voice of the political conscience of justice which was lost in the 20th century capitalistic race of greed - A post-ideological world that has been drowning itself in POSTs [(post) structuralism, (post) Marxism, (post) modernism, and of-course (post) documentarism].

Has anything changed?

Especially interesting is the manner of Perlov’s bidding farewell from Ivens: he asks a rhetoric question, as if being talking to eternity, while Eisler’s music is fading in again with Iven’s cry embedded in it: ‘has anything changed ?’ and while the open ended signification of the question is echoing from the soundtrack, we see Ivens’ image standing and gazing back at Perlov, who is asking compulsorily once more: ‘Has anything changed?’ So by way of doubling and re-doubling’ past cinema prophecy and present cinema, sonic and visual signs are floating in and out of time, in this cinematic endless loop (which in effect lasts no more than few mechanical seconds) and thus charges the invisible revelation of the future rebounding the past. In consequence, at this moment of farewell, Perlov is not only emphasizing his neurotic political-Historical anxiety, which is being legitimized by Ivens’ famous scream in *New Earth* - calling for the elimination of class differences and condemning the cruelty of capitalism, but and moreover, represents the mutual call of both these artists-generation apart, for humane salvation, by way of appealing through a fantasmatic quest for an alternative-INVISIBLE, yet, symbolic order. And so the scope of the question widens. No longer trivial in the sense of: Is it possible for a change to take place ? but in effect: Has modernism kept its promise ? Were we there at all ? Suppose we would respond to ourselves positively and say: ‘Yes, we were’, How would we then take another question, being no-less profound: ‘what is that we did with our modernization, i.e. by being modern’ ? The figure of Perlov, who took the position of gazing-at-Ivens would have probably said something in the spirit: ‘Yes, we were. But we were in the state of ‘Desire’. That is to



say in a permanent state of a quest for something which cannot be fulfilled nor obtained, because of the intrinsic structure of our subjectivity'. And Ivens? How can we read his hypothetical answer to such a philosophical questions ? Six years after the Perlov-Ivens encounter, the becoming-visible sophisticated image of the documentarian-Ivens in *Une Histoire de Vent* will set-up a challenge for the very validity of documentary visibility and in a way will bear the code for such a possible answer. While, regretfully it is beyond the limits and scope of this article to seriously and systematically relate to this question in depth I'll nevertheless lay the foundations for such future consideration through a quick leap into Ivens' and Loridans' *Une Histoire de Vent* .

A Tale of the Wind

First it is imperative to notice that if we accept that the image of Ivens in Perlov's *Diary* enables us to see Ivens both as a human being and a symbol of the utopian documentarian, then, at Ivens' moment of truth in *Une Histoire de Vent* the possibility of reading the documentarian Ivens as such-i.e., a perfect image of a utopian documentarist, is destroyed. In fact Ivens implicitly asks us not to believe the visibility which Perlov has granted us with. I draw this notion from the text itself: At the course of the last shot of the Studio scene -the-central episode in the editing structure of *Une Histoire de Vent* –a scene into which all the eclectic narratives of collapsing communist China are eclipsing - the character of Ivens-with his face painted in the form of the mask of Sun-Wugang-The Ape King, Ivens turns away from the camera, leaves the imaginary studio and fades back into the reality of the historic world, which he tried, in the good old Marxist fashion, to change throughout his life. He goes back to the historic world due to the fact that only in the realistic world in which he was active all through his lifetime, could the documentarian-Ivens , revive his image as the real and *reel* image of the 'absolute invisible' – that is to say, in the image of the great wind (as well as spirit and soul). Indeed, in the last scene of their Magnum Opus, the screen-character Ivens commands the invisible wind: 'Wind ! Blow !' and indeed it obeys the godly symbolic command but by its very appearance it allows us to trace the very destruction of the intrinsic virtue of visibility of the category of the image, insofar as that nothing whatsoever remains visible but an absolute white blindness, which conquers the apparent signifying space of the frame. However devastating the storm of the wind is, Ivens, instead of self-indulging into what the Greeks used to call Atê, i.e., a sense of loss and destruction, would laugh sky-high with a great laughter set-free from the arresting-wires of reality. Now, and only now, as a metaphysical effect of the laughter, the frame will gradually regain its normative visibility and the protagonist Ivens will be re-self-revealed, descending from the mountain of God (and life) with his arms spread aside in an accentuated crucifix composition. Now he will make himself irrevocably disappearing. The chosen frame space for that crucial moment is the right bottom corner

of the frame (the point which we grasp last upon scanning the frame). Joris Ivens is leaving us with an infinitive space of emptiness of white and the sealed heaven from above⁸.

The final self image

It seems that the foreshadowing significance of the last self- image of the Master-Ivens, as presented in his last film could not have been but virtually captured by the witnessing eye of the camera of the pupil-Perlov. It also seems that the grand-maestro himself had to reach the end of his blood-saturated historic documentation of the 20th century in order to be able to stand in front of his own death, and algalma⁹ - in order to rise up to a new level of invisible knowing – freed from the shackles of western rationalization - through which he could simultaneously be commanding and confessing, or should I say admitting in the ex-sistence and in-sistence of the pure category of the invisible as a core foundation of subjective visual documentation – i.e., in order to establish a pure cinematic image of that which is unseen to the naked eye; The unseen, being nothing else than the place in which, far from the boundaries of our physiological visual perception, Desire and Fiction are created – Desire and Fiction as the very catch of breath of 'being documentarian'. And whoever has not seen the old Ivens laughing at the face of the great Invisible Wind has not seen a 'being documentarian' in his entire life. Perlov was there to insinuate that it would be worth while to wait for this last Ivens invisible visibility, and now it is for the wind of the history of cinema to further carry this vision, farther than both friends could have visioned and imagined .

Translation from Hebrew: M. Oppenheim.

- 1 The method I'm using is analyzing through a contextual and somewhat hermeneutic reading of the aesthetic and semantic layers of Perlov's rhetoric, leaning on Lacanian terminology and phenomenological conceptualization.
- 2 Out of the range and interest of this discussion are the numerous appearances of Ivens filmed by others - on TV interviews or late documentaries like *Cinemafia*, *Temoins*; Joris Ivens , or even Ivens' appearance in the fiction film *Havre* – all, regretfully falling into different, too vague, categories, to be discussed here and now.
- 3 One can notice many parallels between the art of Chagall and the drawings of Perlov.
- 4 Ru'ach= The Hebrew-Biblical proverb/expression, meaning **Wind** as well as **Spirit** as in 'Spirit of God', or 'hand of God' (Later also in Latin: Spiritus Sanctus) or **Soul** or **Essence** and is used in two different, although related senses:
 - Description of a [prophetic] mission;
 - Description of an momentary ecstatic experience (full of enthusiasm), that evokes the man to prophesy, sing, play, dance or be creative in whatever other way.
- 5 'Here and Now'- 'Hit en-Nunc' is a neologism coined by Ivens in regard to his conceptualization of his working method on his first film: *De Brug*. See: Joris Ivens, *The Camera and I* (N.Y. Berlin: International Publishers Seven Seas Books, 1969).
- 6 A Greek term refers to the origin, source, beginning of things, the first cause energy and power of life- first reason of matters
- 7 I'm thankful to Dr. Garnet Butchart for his introduction of these terms. See: Garnet C. Butchart, 'On Ethics and Documentary: A Real and Actual Truth,' *Communication Theory*, no. 16 (2006).
- 8 Note the resemblance of this frame to the book cover image of the existential 'The little Prince' by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
- 9 A Lacanian term which refers to the hidden core of subjectivity

Dan Geva, (Haifa, Israel 1964) is a documentary filmmaker and an academic scholar in the field of Documentary theory. Graduated with Best Graduate and best Cinematographer Award at the Sam Spiegel Film Institute. Under Perlov's personal tutoring he completed his first film *Jerusalem, Rhythms of a Distant City* (1993), a tribute to Perlov's classic *In Jerusalem* (1963). The film won high national and international acclaim and numerous prizes. Since then Geva has made over 25 full length documentaries with his wife and creative partner Noit Geva. Among them the International Award winning *What I Saw in Hebron* (1999), *The Key* (2001) *Fall* (2003), *Think Popcorn* (2004) and *Description of a memory* (2006) -a Homage to Chris Marker's classic *Description of a Struggle* (1961). His new up-coming Essay-film: *NOISE* (2012) will have its world premier at 'Its All True' International Film Festival, Brazil.

Geva teaches documentary theory and practice in various academic institutions in Israel and served as a visiting scholar at Johns Hopkins University, MD as a winner of the Schusterman grant. He is the winner of the lucrative Dan David prize for a promising researcher in Cinema and Society (2011) and is a Doctoral candidate in Tel-Aviv University, writing his Dissertation on the subject of: A model for the Invisibility of the Signifier 'Documentarist' in the Documentary praxis, as a criteria for re-thinking the 'Documentarist' as a Concept: A Case Study: Joris Ivens' Self-visual image.

the foundation update

Joris Ivens Award for Xun Yu Cinéma du Réel

On 31 March the 'Joris Ivens Award' 2012 of the Cinéma du Réel was presented to *The Vanishing Spring Light* made by the Chinese director Xun Yu, at the Grande Salle of the Centre Pompidou in Paris. The Joris Ivens Award is a special prize for the first or second film by a director, supported by Les Amis du Cinéma de Réel, Marceline Loridan-Ivens and the European Foundation Joris Ivens. *The Vanishing Spring Light* is the first in a series of four documenting the lives of the inhabitants of West Street in Duijiangyan City, in the Sichuan province in the southwest of China, in the course of the last two years before a major revamping of the neighbourhood took place in 2011. The history of West Street goes back more than 2,000 years. Debuting director Yu Xun shows us the old West Street community, in this first part following the last days of Grandma Jiang. The everyday conversations she has with the filmmaker about her health and children turn out to have a tragic subtext. This matriarch of an ordinary Chinese family has had a stroke following a nasty fall. Sitting in front of her house, she complains about her poverty and the lack of attention paid to her by her four children. As her health deteriorates, suppressed conflicts within the family bubble up to the surface. While Grandma Jiang is completely taken up with her medical condition, the family tries to hold everything together. *The Vanishing Spring Light* is a film about love and loss within a family, about obligations and blood ties, about guilt, change and fate. The documentary *A Nossa forma de vida* (*The Way You Are*) of PedroFilipeMarques received a special mention from the jury. Since 1978, the *Cinéma du Réel* international documentary film festival has been an outstanding international meeting point, where the public and professionals discover the films of experienced authors as well as new talents, the history of documentary cinema as well as contemporary works. The

festival programmes feature some two hundred films. The jury of the Joris Ivens Award consisted of Alessandro Comodin (director, Italy), Ross McElwee (director, US) and Susana de Sousa Dias (director, Portugal).



Simone Signoret, postcard.
Coll. JIA/EFJI

Two articles about The Rose Compass /Die Windrose

Recently two articles were published about Ivens' *The Rose Compass / Die Windrose* (1957) in the Newsletter of the DEFA Film Library at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. This institution houses an extensive collection of [East]-German films. Last year the Summer Film Institute (SFI) featured screenings of little-known and rare films on the topic COLD WAR/HOT MEDIA: DEFA and The Third World. One of the selected films was Joris Ivens' *The Compass Rose* (*Die Windrose*, GDR, artistic Dirs. Joris Ivens, Alberto Calvacanti; Dirs. Wu Kuo-Yin, Yannick Belion, Gillo Pontecorvo, Alex Viany, Sergei Gerassimov). Dennis Hanlon and Günter Jordan have written about it. The first essay in English is by institute participant Dennis Hanlon. He is an ACM-Mellon Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow in Film Studies and Emerging Media at Beloit College. His research interests are in transnational cinema, as well as politics and film. The second article has been written by documentary filmmaker and film historian Günter Jordan ('Film in der DDR', 2009). He shared information about *The Compass Rose* that he recently found in the production files of the film, which are housed at the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv in Germany. (NB: Jordan's text is in German.) For more information: <http://www.umass.edu/defa>

Xun Yu, film still *The Vanishing Spring Light*, 2012.

Chinese film poster *The Rose Compass*, 1957. Coll. JIA/EFJI
Rumanian film poster *The Rose Compass*, 1957.





Waalbrug 75: with photos, exhibition, book and festivities A FATHER, A SON AND TWO BRIDGES



Why did Joris Ivens decide to film bridges so many times? An obvious example is *The Bridge*. The bridge in *The Spanish Earth*, the bridge in *Indonesia Calling* and the bridge in *The 17th Parallel* play an important role as well, and reveal that Ivens had a great interest in this theme. These bridges are not only presented as steel constructions connecting river banks. In most cases Ivens used these bridges as metaphors as well; for crossing borders, for freedom and connecting cultures and nations. In all likelihood, this preference stems from his youth. Since 1905, when his father Kees Ivens initiated a plan for a traffic bridge spanning the river Waal, young Joris had been confronted day in and day out with an intense political, technological and cultural struggle to realize this Waal bridge, which took three decades. In 1936 this bridge was opened, the largest steel through arch span bridge of Europe at the time, situated in the most historic location of The Netherlands. Nijmegen celebrated the 75th anniversary of this bridge, honouring Kees Ivens with exhibitions, a book and public events. The Ivens Foundation initiated this homage to Kees Ivens.

A CULTURAL TASK

Kees Ivens was a successful entrepreneur and a promotor of active citizenship. After he was elected town councillor he initiated a number of projects to modernize the town. On the occasion of the opening in 1936, Kees Ivens published one of his many articles and booklets about history, photography and 'his' bridge. According to Joris's father, this bridge had a cultural task, a task of promoting peace, of connecting cities and regions which had been divided for centuries. This bridge enabled people to meet, to understand each other, to improve prosperity and prevent war. The same idea was presented by his son in the final sequence of *Indonesia Calling*, when representatives of various nations participate in a demonstration walking over the Sydney Harbour Bridge, showing unity and willpower. On 25 March 1945, the

Sunday Sun in Sydney published an interview with Joris Ivens titled 'A Father, a son and two bridges'. In it, Joris Ivens spoke of his father's lengthy struggle to realize this bridge, and the dramatic fact that within only four years this new bridge was destroyed by the Netherlands army itself, in order to block the invading army of the nazis. He also talked about the reconstruction of the bridge by the Nazis and the harsh struggle by the allies to liberate the city and recapture the bridge. This part of Operation Market Garden succeeded and Joris Ivens praised the courage of the citizens of his birthplace and the soldiers of the allied forces.

A THROUGH ARCH BRIDGE

Joris Ivens was not aware that the Sydney Harbour Bridge had been used as a model for the Nijmegen Waal bridge by the Dutch engineers. The Australian bridge had been opened four years previously, in 1932, and it was proof that a steel through arch bridge was possible. The same counts for the Bayonne Bridge in New York, which had been opened in 1931. The Dutch engineers opted for an elegant design, with the steel beams of the arch ending in one footpoint, unlike the design of the older bridges. The history of Kees Ivens's fight was presented by an exhibition at the Valkhof Museum. In the print room of the museum 150 exhibits were shown, mainly from the Nootboom-Ivens Family Archive and the Kees Ivens archives. As secretary of the Waal Bridge Commission he had kept all documents and newspaper clippings. The collection of the Ivens Nootboom family was transferred to the Regional Archives of Nijmegen a few years ago. The Stratemakerstoren Museum organized the C.A.P.Ivens Photo Prize 2011, in which both professional and amateur photographers participated. The then Mayor of Nijmegen, Mr. Thom de Graaf, opened the exhibition, received the first copy of the beautiful catalogue from André Stufkens and started the festivities.



Photos from the book: 'Over de Waal' (Vantilt/fragma, 2011, 240 p., ISBN 978 90 81450027)

Upper row: construction Waalbridge Summer 1935 (Regionaal Archief Nijmegen),

Second row: Kees Ivens (C.A.P. Ivens) with his family during carnival, 1915-1916 (Nootboom-Ivens Family archive)

Third row: The Waal bridge and Nijmegen destroyed in 1940 and 1944. (Regionaal Archief Nijmegen and A. Hustinx © Beeldbank WO2 NIOD)

opposite page:

Festivities Waalbrug 75, 16 June 2011. André Stufkens presenting the book 'Over de Waal' to Mayor Thom de Graaf.

Centi anni fa: THE CENTENNIAL OF WIGWAM



Once, when Joris Ivens was asked the question ‘what ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, IN THE SPRING OF 1912, YOUNG JORIS IVENS MADE HIS FIRST FILM, A FICTION FILM CALLED WIGWAM. IMPRESSED AS HE WAS BY COWBOY- AND INDIAN STORIES AND FILMS, HE RELOCATED THE ADVENTURES FROM THE FAR WEST TO THE RUGGED HILLS SURROUNDING HIS BIRTHPLACE NIJMEGEN. ‘THE WOODS AROUND NIJMEGEN WERE IDEAL FOR FILMING, ESPECIALLY WITH THEIR FINE SPRING FOLIAGE.’¹ IVENS HIMSELF INSISTED WITH RESPECT TO HIS FIRST FILM: ‘I’M NOT THE CHILDHOOD MOZART OF FILM, AND WIGWAM DOESN’T ANNOUNCE A CAREER LET ALONE A DESTINY. IT WAS JUST FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT...’² THIS UNIQUE EARLY HOME MOVIE IN ALL ITS INNOCENCE, AND IN SPITE OF IVENS’ DECLARATION, REVEALED A NUMBER OF CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES AND THEMES THAT WERE TO RETURN IN IVENS’ ADULT CAREER AS A FILMMAKER. WIGWAM FORESHADOWS A TALE OF THE WIND. WIGWAM IS PART OF THE ‘CENTI ANNI FA’-PROGRAMME AT THE IL CINEMA RITROVATO FESTIVAL IN BOLOGNA ON 29 JUNE.

brought you into film?’ he answered: ‘There’s no way to answer that without dredging up all sorts of strange memories from when I was a boy of twelve and was already

making cowboy films in which my entire family were obliged to perform, and I was both actor and director at once, and I walked into the living room unannounced with a horse. You can still see the hoof marks...’³ Young Joris Ivens’ sudden interest in film should have come as no surprise. The Ivens family had made a tradition of peering through lenses and working with cameras.⁴ His grandfather Wilhelm Ivens (1849-1904) emigrated in 1867 from a village near Cologne to Nijmegen, just across the border, where he trained to become a photographer, a recently established profession. Wilhelm’s son Kees and grandson Joris were likewise to acquire a solid background and considerable professionalism in optics, chemistry and mechanics. His son Kees Ivens chose not to follow in his father’s footsteps as a photographer, concentrating rather on the provision of photographic supplies at a time when amateur photography was coming into its own with the invention of the film roll. His irrepressible interest in new techniques inspired him to attend the first demonstration in the Netherlands of the Cinématographe Lumière and he predicted in a newspaper article: ‘The invention of film, of ‘moving pictures’, will one day be understood to have been as important for humanity as the invention of the printing press’. His enthusiasm also led to the immediate establishment of a film department in his shop. The young Joris Ivens was not interested in ‘motionless’ images, but was drawn rather to ‘moving photography’, to the art of film. Within the course of three generations, the organic transition between 19th century photography and 20th century film had manifested itself within a single family.⁵

In a photograph that dates from 1910, we can clearly see an Ernemann camera on a tripod from his father’s shop with the young Joris Ivens behind it as filmmaker. With evident foresight, his father wrote the word ‘Kinoman’ (‘film man’) at the bottom of the picture.⁶ In *Wigwam*, Ivens combines his curiosity for technique with his youthful fantasy and sense of play. With its Rhineland background, the Ivens family had a long tradition of celebrating feasts with fancy dress parties and masquerades, characteristic of the exuberant Catholic festival culture. At Sinterklaas, carnival, birthdays and other important occasions, the family would typically raid the costume cabinet. Family albums contain numerous photos of Joris Ivens dressed as a cowboy or an Indian, a farmer or a painter. He devoured the books of Karl May, who died in February 1912, and those of James Fenimore Cooper and was able to immerse himself with enthusiasm in the adventures of the native Indians. In the countryside surrounding the city, he and his chums would play ‘exciting, uninhibited running and trotting games, Indians against cowboys, devised and directed by Ivens himself’.⁷ During the annual October festivities, Joris and his friends queued up to see the latest American westerns, which were enjoying an initial heyday shortly after 1910. Two travelling cinemas had descended on Nijmegen and westerns were on the programme that year: *Redskins Attack a Farm* and

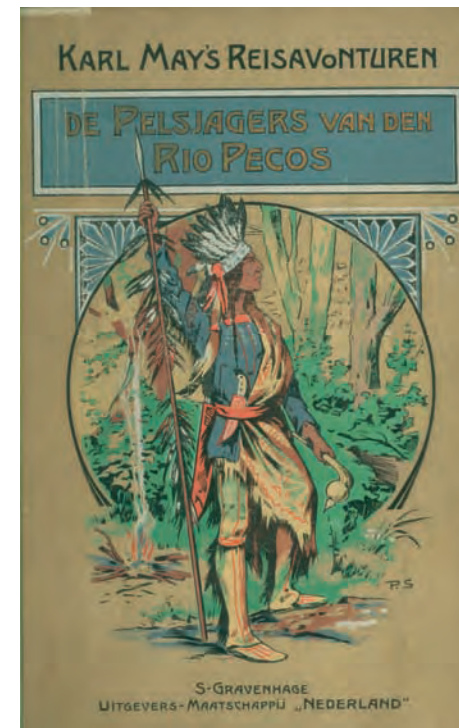
The Good Heart of a Redskin. The local Chicago Cinema organised an exhibition of ‘vivid, colour pictures’, among them *The Faithful Heart of the Indian*, which Joris attended dressed as a cowboy. In 1912, the same cinema screened *The Kidnapping* (‘An Apache drama in two parts’⁸). Ivens incorporated numerous elements from the films in question into the screenplay for *Wigwam*.

FILM PRODUCTION

Shooting took place in the spring of 1912 on the Heydepark estate south of the city of Nijmegen (now De Goffert) and the then undeveloped Kwakkenberg to the east of the city. The domains were the property of two prominent Catholic families of entrepreneurs: the Dobbelman family, known internationally for their soaps and detergents, and the Jurgens family, the founders of the Unilever multinational. There are no direct sources available on the production of *Wigwam*. The film images themselves provide information. For instance the fact that young Ivens was the director and not his father: in the sequence when the actors present themselves Joris can be seen instructing the members of his family to get out of the picture using discrete verbal and non-verbal instructions. The first credits were written by hand, Ivens himself recalls, although his father later replaced them with modern printing fonts.⁹ Based on the report of the first public screening in 1915, it would appear that the cowboy and Indian story was screened first, while the introduction of the cast was screened afterwards and separately using stop-motion technique because it did not belong to the narrative of the film. The family cast members’ exaggerated bows and Joris Ivens’ arm gestures towards the audience are more suggestive of the end of a performance than an introduction. Indeed, there are multiple examples of silent films from the same period in which the actors are presented at the end of the film. It seems logical, therefore, that this was also the case with respect to *Wigwam*, especially when one considers that an original introductory segment is contained in the film’s opening titles. At the beginning of the film, the parents arrive in a coach and the father steps out with a clipboard in his hand. After a hearty welcome, he walks towards the door of the house, but instead of going inside he closes the door and produces the clipboard with the title *Wigwam*, which he then holds in front of the closed door for a few seconds. After this we find the remaining cast positioned somewhat nonchalantly as a tableau de la troupe.

AN OPTIMISTIC END

The fictional and romantic character of *Wigwam*, in which a central character with ‘keen moral principles’ identifies with a victim and saves ‘the civilised world’ from external enemies, can be found in many of Ivens’ later films. The location of the film likewise contrasts the untamed natural world and modern urban culture. It ends in a moment of harmony, with the conflict solved and the good Indian playing host to the white family, sitting in a circle in



front of his tent, exchanging stories and sharing the pipe of peace; to all intents and purposes a ‘happy end’ as the film industry would describe it today. Virtually all of Ivens’ films end on an optimistic note, with a solution to the conflict or the prospect of a restoration of harmony. A gathering of people in a circle or around a table celebrating life and seeking solutions to problems together and with dignity can be found repeatedly in his films, for instance in *Borinage*, *Power and the Land*, *The First Years*, ...à *Valparaíso*, *How Yukong Moved the Mountains*, and also in his last film *A Tale of the Wind*. One of the last scenes of his film testament ends where *Wigwam* sets out, with a tent in which a social group, in this instance the film crew, lives in harmony, confronting and defeating an ‘opponent’ (the rising wind) in shared solidarity. Ivens’ first juvenile film and his last film, made 75 years later, show striking parallels: both are feature films in which Ivens’ plays the protagonist, solving conflicts until the end when harmony is being restored. That is the magic of real art.

Two covers of Karl May's books in Dutch. Travelling cinemas in the Netherlands: the Imperial Bio, 1908.

opposite page: The Ivens family and actors, at the end of *Wigwam*, 1912: Dora Ivens-Muskens, Thea, Joris, Coba, Wim, Hans and Kees Ivens. © JIA/EFJI

Wigwam, 1912. © JIA/EFJI



- 1 G.O. ‘t Hooft, *Notulen van de huishoudelijke vergadering*, in LUX 27/2, 1916 Amsterdam, p. 40. This report of the first public screening in December 1915 of *Wigwam* was published in the national magazine reads:
- 2 Joris Ivens and Robert Destanque, *Joris Ivens ou la mémoire d'un regard*, 1982 Paris, p. 29.
- 3 De Telegraaf, May 18th 1930.
- 4 André Stufkens, ‘Oude en nieuwe objectiviteit. Wilhelm, Kees en Joris Ivens, een familietraditie met het mechanische oog’, in Wilhelm Ivens (1849-1904), Nijmeegs fotograaf, 2007 Nijmegen, p. 45-64.
- 5 There is a direct link between Wilhelm Ivens’ objectifying urban photos and the objectifying presentation of the vertical lift bridge in Joris Ivens’ *The Bridge*. See André Stufkens, 2007.
- 6 *Family Album 1*, Collection Nootboom-Ivens, Regional Archive Nijmegen.
- 7 George Zorab in a letter to Joris Ivens, January 5th 1975, JIA.
- 8 Frank van der Maden, ‘Een wemeling van galoppe en helse achtervolgingen. Joris Ivens’ eerste filmavontuur’, in NUMAGA 1988, Nijmegen, p. 81-92.
- 9 Ibidem.

HOLLOW CITY

From censored poverty to cultural wealth

The transformation of Matera, with the Sassi (caverns) as shown in Ivens' *l'Italia non è un paese povero*



Matera today.

Joris Ivens, *l'Italia non è un paese povero*, 1960. Matera sequence. © CAPI Films



A NOTORIOUS SEQUENCE IN IVENS' FILM OEUUVRE WAS SHOT IN THE ITALIAN CITY OF MATERA. IN THE FRAMEWORK OF HIS DOCUMENTARY 'L'ITALIA NON È UN PAESE POVERO' (1960) IVENS FILMED DIRE POVERTY IN THE HOLLOW CITY OF MATERA: POOR PEOPLE LIVING IN THE CAVERNS BUILT INTO THE CALCAREOUS ROCK. THIS SEQUENCE WAS CENSORED AND CUT FROM THE VERSION BROADCASTED IN ITALY BY THE RAI FOR THE SIMPLE REASON THAT THEY DID NOT WANT TO SHOW POVERTY IN A FILM FOCUSSED ON INDUSTRIAL PROGRESS. A NEW FILM ABOUT MATERA, CALLED 'HOLLOW CITY', DIRECTED BY ANDREA DE SICA, SHOWS ITS REMARKABLE TRANSFORMATION FROM AN AREA OF DESTITUTION, KEPT SECRET OUT OF SHAME, INTO A SPECTACULAR CULTURAL PINNACLE, PRAISED BY UNESCO, THE WORLD MONUMENTS FUND AND FAMOUS DIRECTORS.

When Enrico Mattei, head of Italy's National Fuel Trust ENI (Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi), commissioned Joris Ivens to make a film about the optimistic perspectives for Italy's economy and society after the exploration of gas by ENI, he knew that Ivens would not go in for state propaganda. Ivens made a documentary that was mixed with fiction, dream sequences, imagination, futuristic music and also critical sequences. Like the one shot in Matera. Although Mattei allowed Ivens complete freedom the state television station RAI didn't agree with the Matera-sequence in particular. Up until today, the RAI will not show this censored part.

Meanwhile, the reputation of Matera completely changed, owing to these very caverns. By interviewing citizens from Matera Andrea de Sica wants to explain in *Hollow City* how the situation today differs from the situation back in the 1950's and 1960's.

The caverns in the ancient town of Matera have a history of centuries. They are called the 'Sassi di Matera', meaning 'stones of Matera'. The Sassi originate from a prehistoric settlement, and are suspected to be some of the first human settlements in Italy. The Sassi are houses dug into the calcareous rock itself, which is characteristic of the regions Basilicata and Apulia. In 1945 Carlo Levi wrote a famous book about this region of Lucania (which is known today as Basilicata), describing its extreme poverty. The peasants lacked

basic goods because there were no shops in the village. Homes were sparsely furnished. Healthcare was atrocious. The religious values of the villages Levi visited were a mixture of Christianity and mysticism. In a way Ivens' sequence in Matera echoes this book *Christ Stopped at Eboli* (Italian: *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*). It also could have reminded him of the situation in the Borinage, of the poverty in which the unemployed miners and their families had to live. In the 1950s, the government of Italy forcefully relocated most of the population of the Sassi to areas of the developing modern city. However, people have continued to live in the Sassi, and according to the English Fodor's guide: 'Matera is the only place in the world where people can boast to be still living in the same houses of their ancestors of 9,000 years ago.' Until the late 1980s this was considered an area of poverty, since these houses were, and in most areas still are, unfit for habitation.

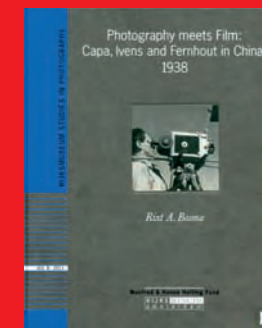
Current local administration, however, has become more tourism-oriented, and has promoted the reconstruction of the Sassi with the aid of the European Union, the government, UNESCO, and Hollywood. Today there are many thriving businesses, pubs, and hotels. Some caverns were transformed into expensive houses for yuppies.

Because of the ancient and primitive scenery in and around the Sassi, it has been used by filmmakers as the setting for ancient Jerusalem. The following famous biblical period motion pictures were filmed in Matera: Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (1964), Bruce Beresford's *King David* (1985), Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* (2004), Catherine Hardwicke's *The Nativity Story* (2006), Other famous movies filmed in the city include: Alberto Lattuada's *La Lupa* (1953), Giuseppe Tornatore's *The Star Maker* (1995) and *The Omen* (2006).

Andrea de Sica himself is the grandchild of famous Italian director Vittorio de Sica, after the war a leading figure of the neorealist movement after the war (*Ladri di biciclette*, 1948). When Ivens met Vittorio De Sica in Italy during his cineclub tour they agreed to make a film together. This plan was never realized.

Watching *Hollow City*: www.hollowcity.net

New books and DVD's



JORIS IVENS AND CHILE: DOCUMENTARY BETWEEN POETRY AND SOCIAL CRITIC

Tiziana Panizza. 2011, 136 p. color, Spanish/English, Editorial Cuarto Propio, Santiago. ISBN 978 956 260 539 7

'Why he was so important to me?' The famous Chilean filmmaker Raúl Ruiz (1941-2011) remembered the influence of Joris Ivens's stay and film work with Chilean film students back in 1963: 'I think because he was used to working with people who worked in different film genres and therefore accepted the existence of all these genres. Chile was, like every country that begins to work on a cultural activity, let's say, very sectarian. I'd written a script that you could call vaguely expressionist, which had shocked all the people who worked in experimental cinema. (at the Universidad de Chile), because in Chile what was accepted, in principle, was a more realistic film. As Ivens was used to working with all types of people, and he himself was someone who'd worked with the French avant-garde, he regarded what I proposed as normal, and said that it should be supported. It was my first contact with someone who thought about cultural policy in a very open way'.



Ivens and Pablo Neruda 1963

This is one of the quotations of film colleagues from the book 'Joris Ivens in Chile: documentary between poetry and social critic' published by Tiziana Panizza Montanari in collaboration with Judith Silva Cruzatt and Pedro Chaskel Benko. Panizza is a professor at the Instituto de la Comunicación e Imagen (ICEI) of the University of Chile in Santiago de Chile, where the Filmschool has been re-installed after many years. They have completed a book on ...à Valparaíso, Joris Ivens's documentary on the Chilean harbour city, which is based on thorough research in the archives of the Ivens Founda-

tion in Nijmegen, interviews and testimonies from colleagues and friends around the world, and the amazing discovery of scripts and other documents in Chili.

Although a number of the former film students who collaborated in the film school project have passed away, the authors of the book have succeeded in reconstructing this production. They reflect on the meaning of the images, and analyze the influence of Ivens's work on Chilean, and even in a broader sense, Latin-American film. Ivens's visit in the fall of 1962 inspired the Film school of the university to create a far greater number of films than before, and it provided other filmmakers in the region with a creative impetus. A real filmmaker, who dedicated his life to his art, served as an example to others who wanted to set off on the same risky adventure in the precarious reality of Chile. Ivens himself returned three times to Chile in order to develop this impulse. In 1964, he filmed the election of presidential candidate Salvador Allende, working with film students again. In October 1969, amidst the international turmoil, Ivens returned to Chile for the third time in order to attend the Latin American Filmmakers Conference, which is regarded today as the key moment in the formation of the New Latin American Cinema. At the end, Ivens held an impassioned speech in which he emphasized that, although cinema is militant or political, it has to be free in its choice of form, whether that of document, poem, lesson didactic or protest. Furthermore, cinema has to diversify working methods. Filmmaker Sergio Bravo, undoubtedly Ivens's closest Chilean colleague, remarked '...I learned from his experience, his knowledge, but not from his method, which was very personal'. Bravo also was the most outspoken critic of Ivens' film: '...à Valparaíso is a false, timeless, picturesque film [...]. I feel as though despite the fact that Ivens is a humanist, a leftwinger, the film is made with a European vision'. According to the authors, now that time has passed, a large part of the film's interest and uniqueness lies precisely in the personal, foreign perspective of a traveller who contemplates the strangeness of what is before his eyes. This is exactly the way the film evolved, as a travelogue, a travel journal, when Ivens wandered around the streets and hills of Valparaíso, noting his impressions on long lists. This mosaic of impressions has shaped the structure of the film. The travelogue is one of the earliest genres in film history and it is perfectly equipped to discover locations,

as befitted Ivens's nomadic life. Apart from the genre of the travelogue, à Valparaíso also shows traces of the genres of the city symphony with a critical purpose and that of the film essay. This links the film to a number of previous documentaries by Ivens and explains why his Chilean film became such a rich film with many layers of meaning. This book provides the reader with a complete and very interesting insight into many aspects of the making, meaning and reception of Ivens's Chilean film.

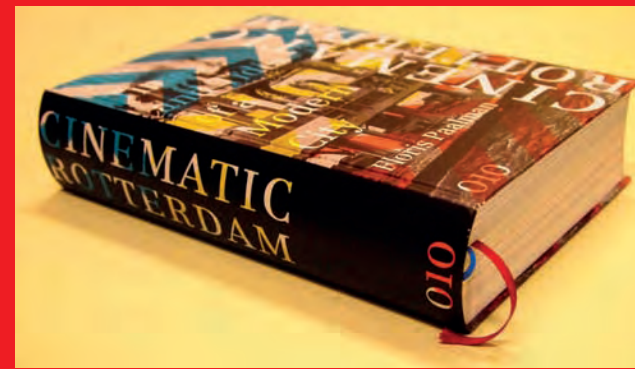
PHOTOGRAPHY MEETS FILM: CAPA, IVENS AND FERNHOUT IN CHINA, 1938.

Rixt A. Bosma, 2011, 56 p., color, English, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. ISBN 978 90 71450 31 0 NUR 652

Tucked in between the uncontested highlights of Robert Capa's career as a war photographer –the photograph of the falling soldier from the Spanish Civil War (1936) and the series of the landing on Omaha Beach (1944)– is a series of less known war photographs from China, with a Dutch connection. Capa was part of the small film crew, led by Joris Ivens as a director and John Fernhout as a cameraman who made *The 400 Million* in 1938. Although some of Capa's China photos became icons too, the majority of his work from 1938 has been underexposed in monographs and biographies.

Photo historian Rixt Bosma is the first person to research Capa's China photos in collections in the US and the Netherlands. A number of his photographs are held by Dutch institutions, especially the Fernhout estate, the Rijksmuseum and the Joris Ivens Archives. The Ivens Foundation is keeping the largest number of working photos made by Capa in China. Bosma has unveiled the story behind Capa's trip to a China under siege in a beautifully designed book. In the summer of 1937, Capa and his girlfriend Gerda Taro, also a war photographer, were trying to get an assignment to shoot newsreels, in order to cover the Sino-Japanese war for the French branch of Time Inc. in Paris. Colleagues of Capa, photographers like Henri Cartier-Bresson and Paul Strand, were eager to make films at that time, because of the growing need for films, higher prestige and better business perspectives. Capa intended shooting footage for the popular *The March of Time* series. Apart from a business reasons Capa also had emotional reasons to leave for China. Gerda Taro had rejected his marriage proposal and Capa hoped that a long stay with her in a completely

New books and DVD's



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different country might give a fresh impetus to their relationship. However, history took a dramatic turn in Capa's life. On the very day in which *Life* confirmed the China assignment he was told that Gerda Taro had accidentally been killed by a loyalist tank while she was reporting the Spanish Civil War. Capa lost the love of his life and was inconsolable.

Later on, Joris Ivens remembered in his first autobiography: 'I felt it was my responsibility to get him working, to distract him'. In addition to this personal reason practical reasons played a role too: 'I had seen him do fine work on the Spanish front'. Ivens knew that Capa's photos would have news value and could cover the costs of his China film. Moreover, they did not have enough money to pay three film crew members. *Life* would pay for Capa's passage and Ivens's commissioners would pay the expenses in China.

The double position of Capa, both photographer and assistant film crew member, did not improve the quality of his photos. Capa's grief did not help either, he took hundreds of photos of Gerda Taro with him, which he handed out to everybody. The fact that the nationalist government of generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek was squaring?? and censoring the film production completely did not help either. Working conditions were taxing in China. 'Even these normal and strong people, like these Dutch ones, are passing out', Capa wrote. The crew never got permission to shoot in the locations they wanted. During five months of waiting and blockades by censors they only got the opportunity to enter the war zone once. 'When the photo isn't good enough, you were not close enough', used to be Capa's motto. The lesser quality of his China photos proves his adage: he had not been close enough. Neither had Ivens; he even intended to destroy the complete film after watching the rushes. *The 400 Million* was only saved because his friends pushed him to finish the film.

In the long run, the journey influenced both the careers of Ivens and Capa. Ivens fell in love with China and would return there many times afterwards. Capa wrote: 'I'm learning a lot from this trip, alas, mostly at my own back,



but when it ends, the moral will be, that I must work alone. That I have to sit idly and have to depend on others, that kills me.' On the other hand, he felt the need to collaborate with colleagues in distributing the photos and to avoid being dependent on large commercial press agencies: '...In any case, I am starting here the organization of a few young photographers and I shall continue the same in Europe.' This idea resulted in Magnum nine years later. Both the photos and the film were testimony of an important historical event, the birth of an independent and modern China.

MISÈRE AU BORINAGE HENRI STORCK DVD BOX #2

2011, 83 minutes

Cinémathèque de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, Henri Storck Fonds and CINEMATEK.

On Monday December 12 2011, Mrs. Fadila Laanan, the Minister of Culture and Audiovisual of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels, presented the first two DVD titles of the Henri Storck Collection in the presence of Ms. Marie Storck (the daughter of Henri Storck). The most famous film of the Belgian documentary filmmaker Henri Storck (1907-1999) was *Borinage* (1934), made by him and Joris Ivens in the Walloon mining region.

The first DVD (of a series of four) contains his early films of his hometown Ostend. Like Ivens, Storck developed a passion for movies by watching films at a new film club, where the experimental avant-garde films of the 1920s were shown. He had founded this Cineclub himself in 1928, and there he met young filmmakers like René Clair. On account of his personal contact in Ostend with artists like Spilliaert, Ensor, Labis and Permeke, his films had artistic overtones. Like Ivens, he shot his first film exercises with a handheld Kinamo camera, with which he made poetic and surreal short films. Gradually he became the most important documentary filmmaker of Belgium, which brought him international fame. In August 1933, he visited Joris Ivens in Paris with the request to make a film together in the Borinage mining district in Walloon. The miners were suffering under repercussion measures after a big strike. In September, they both went to the area and were shocked by what they found. Because of the gendarmes, part of their film had to be shot illegally. With the support of the miners *Borinage* has become a genuine and profound indictment of the crisis,

which is still gripping. This film and other social documentaries by Storck, such as *House of misery* (1937), are included on the second DVD. His legacy is managed by the Henri Storck Fund. In cooperation with the Royal Film Archive of Belgium, they have released the four DVDs. See: www.cinemathek.be. The two following titles of the collection will be released at the end of 2012.

HEMINGWAY'S SECOND WAR. BEARING WITNESS TO THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR.

Alex Vernon, 2011, 324 p., black-white, English, University of Iowa Press

ISBN: 978-1-58729-981-0

Several new articles and books were published on the American writer Ernest Hemingway, Joris Ivens and their cooperation in Spain on the film about the Spanish Civil War. Stacey Guill, who summarized her dissertation for the Ivens Magazine (#12, 2006, p. 14-19) published the article "'Now You Have Seen It': Ernest Hemingway, Joris Ivens and The Spanish Earth" in The Hemingway Review. She addresses the question what Hemingway contributed to the film, and what influence they had on each other, because it was a team effort. Ivens said: "It is still my opinion that any film, including any documentary film, has so many sides to its content and its expression that its ideal author is a team, a collective of people who understand each other." According to Guill, accounts by both Ivens and Hemingway attest to their compatible relationship during filming. It is not surprising that on account of this team effort, the contemporary perceptions of reporters, reviewers, and critics about what each individual collaborator contributed to the film are confusingly varied. Guill describes the contributions of each individual within this 'team effort'.

Alex Vernon published a book on Hemingway and his involvement in the Spanish Civil War titled 'Hemingway's Second War. Bearing witness to the Spanish Civil War'. Vernon specializes in war literature and journalism and has read all kinds of texts Hemingway has written about the civil war. Not only the famous novel 'For Whom The Bell Tolls', but also his NANA Dispatches (journalistic reports) and magazine articles.

Vernon is also the editor of a book in which Hemingway's commentary for the film *The Spanish Earth* will be published once more. This text has not been published since 1938.

In that year, Jasper Wood, a young American, published a booklet with text and illustrations, against Hemingway's own wishes and ideas (see Ivens Magazine #16-2010, p. 20-22). This new publication of Vernon will adhere to Hemingway's ideas about such a book, in which the accompanying texts are linked to the film stills. This forthcoming book will be published by Kent State University Press.

CINEMATIC ROTTERDAM. THE TIMES AND TIDES OF A MODERN CITY

Floris Paalman, 2011, 688 p., color, English, 010 publishers

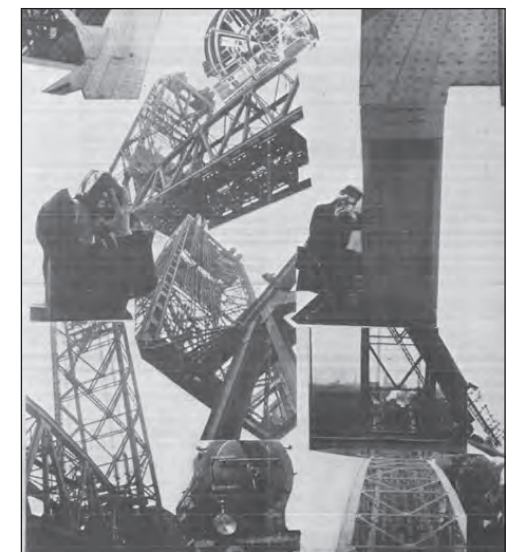
ISBN 978 90 6450 766 3

The City that Never Rests, Gateway for Giants, Runway 06-24, Rotterdam Gets to Work, Rhythm of Rotterdam... these film titles alone make clear that the harbour city of Rotterdam must be presented as a dynamic film set. In the course of one century, the second city of the Netherlands has developed from being a small city of 160.000 inhabitants into an industrial region of 1,2 million people with a hinterland of 500 million people. Its rapid transformation towards modernity may be inferred from the fact that it had the first skyscraper of the country, the first and highest lift bridge, the first pedestrian shopping street, and the first metro. Furthermore, for many decades until 2004 it also possessed the largest harbour in the world, and today it is still 'the Gateway to Europe'...a kind of miniature New York: 'a Manhattan on the Maas', the epithet Rotterdam has chosen for itself. Between the 1920s and 1970s, the town's modernist relationship between architecture, construction, industry, working class, technological innovation and social transformation was visualized in some 6,000 films. These films, varying from industrial-, promotional and educational films to feature films, newsreels and avant-garde films, were the source material of an elaborate research project by Floris Paalman, who has published his dissertation in a wonderful book. Paalman looks upon the cinematic city of Rotterdam as a complex network, a media web linked to other arts ('Medienverbund'), the participants of which are commissioners (entrepreneurs like Verolme, Veder and Landré, private and public institutions like the municipality, unions and pressure groups), artists and filmmakers, target groups (international clients of the harbour or striking harbour workers in Rotterdam itself) and audiences. All these participants are using films for different purposes, in alliances and in strategies for representing Rotterdam. Thomas Elsaesser introduced this concept of the 'Medienverbund' in a comparative publication about film in Frankfurt. He initiated the Cinema of Europe research project, to which Floris Paalman contributed with his Rotterdam project. Several years previously, Malte Hagener, another student in this project, had already published on networking in the cultural field, a strategy which had been started and developed by the (film)avant-garde in the 1920s. In this article, Hagener proves its increasing importance for our present-day culture (see Ivens Magazine 13, 2007, p. 32-35).

One of these avant-garde artists was Joris Ivens, who studied in Rotterdam, experienced his first serious love affair in Rotterdam, was introduced to politics for the first time by his friend Arthur Muller-Lehning in Rotterdam, became a president of the students' society in Rotterdam, and who would eventually make six films of his own in Rotterdam, and inspire at least six other films about Rotterdam. Owing to its extreme approach, *The Bridge* (1928) is known as 'a film without compromise', and it is probably the best example of this new modernist vision of Rotterdam, or even of the Netherlands, in its shift from an agricultural, folkloristic and traditional society into a modern industrial world. The spatial relationship between the steel beams and the steel train in a rhythmic dance of directions and compositions avoids any human emotions. And yet, this short film shouts for emotion, solely by the means of this extreme new way of presenting a city, in which the audience is provoked to focus on steel alone. It challenges the audience to experience 'Versöhnung', an aesthetic reconciliation with a new environment which had not previously been appreciated aesthetically, which had even been considered hostile until then. Through art, through cinema, the modern citizen accommodates with his own urban habitat. It is especially for Rotterdam that this function of art was important, because the attraction and promotion of the city was directly linked to a greater appreciation of modernity. *Rotterdam-Europoort* (1964) is a second film which can be considered as a film to accommodate with new tendencies in the city during the period of reconstruction: uniformity of flats, loneliness of elderly citizen, the loss of rituals and myths. By criticizing these tendencies, Ivens again presents a mission of reconciliation, of trying to reach for harmony.

This function is not mentioned in Paalman's book, because its focus lies on other

theoretical contexts, among others those of Giles Deleuze, Tom Gunning and Elsaessers' 'Medienverbund'. Paalman describes a nice example of such a 'Medienverbund': the collage on the cover of the Filmliga magazine #11 (May 1928), announcing Ivens' *The Bridge*. The Filmliga itself was founded by artists from various backgrounds. In Utrecht, Rotterdam and The Hague especially architects like Gerrit Rietveld, Sybold van Ravensteyn, Van Eesteren, J.J.P. Oud and others played an important role in founding the local branches of the Filmliga. Van Ravensteyn was the guy who advised Ivens to take a look at the Hefbrug (lift bridge) in Rotterdam for a possible film subject. It also was Van Ravensteyn who created the collage for the cover of Filmliga, compiled of photos made of the bridge by Ivens's girlfriend Germaine Krull. This German photographer crossed the boundaries of traditional female photography by shooting large steel harbour cranes in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Antwerp, Marseille and the Eiffeltower in Paris. Her first photobook was called *Métal*. The original design of the Filmliga magazine with the modern logo FL was made by De Stijl artist Vilmar Huszar. The cover of Filmliga #11 shows a new fragmented vision of a modern city created by a network of artists from various art disciplines, paving the way for a new cultural strategy. During the past several years, Paalman has presented various screenings of Ivens's films in collaboration with the Foundation. In addition, he was the programmer of the successful Rotterdam Classics series. His introductions to the films have turned out to be finger exercises for this magnum opus. A standard book on city films, a great example and a model for other cities.



short cuts



'La condition humaine' in film

In 1933, André Malraux was awarded the prestigious Le prix Goncourt for his novel 'La condition humaine' ('Man's Fate'). This novel describes the Shanghai Massacre of April 1927 when the military forces of Chiang Kai-shek suppressed a failed Communist rebellion with a great deal of violence. Its most striking theme is an existential one of choosing one's own meaning.

In June 1933, Malraux had met Joris Ivens, together with André Gide and Marc l'Herbier, during a preview of the French version of *Komsomol* (*Le chant des héros*). Malraux approved of Ivens's documentary, and asked the young filmmaker to adapt his book for film. In December, the first French newspaper articles were published about their plans. Which French filmmaker would film Le prix Goncourt? 'Hélas! Aucun.', *Cinémonde* wrote, it will be a Dutch filmmaker. However, his negotiations with French film producers failed. 'They wanted to limit my artistic freedom as a director', Ivens stated, and he accepted an offer of the Mezhrabpom Studios in Moscow instead. Ivens left for the Soviet Union and discussed collaboration with Meyerhold, who wanted to adapt the book for a screenplay. 'Perhaps the two directors will exchange actors', the press announced. Ivens intended to shoot a feature film with documentary aspects and parts, and in any case he wanted to travel to China. Ivens did not want unemployed Chinese acting in Russian studios. According to a journalist: 'Whether he will be able to shoot the film in Shanghai is the question, he could be captured because of the dangerous situation, but he could also use a different Chinese city'. Ivens asked Skljot for assistance in writing the script, the same scenarist who had helped him previously with *Komsomol*. In the end, the project was aborted, and colleagues were eager to take over.



Jean-Louis Jeannelle, a French researcher, is preparing a book on the cinema of Malraux, titled *Cinéma Malraux*. One chapter is dedicated to the many failed attempts to adapt 'Man's Fate'. After Joris Ivens, cineasts Dovjenco, Eisenstein and Gendelstein were inspired by Malraux's book as well. Eisenstein's script has survived, Ivens's script has disappeared and has not yet been discovered. Decades later, Fred Zinnemann (1969), Bernardo Bertolucci (1980's) and Michael Cimino (2001) again started film productions about 'Man's fate', but they failed too.

Thomas Waugh

In 1981, Thomas Waugh (1948, Ontario) published his dissertation *Joris Ivens and the Evolution of the Radical Documentary 1926-1946* for Colombia University. Waugh based his



wonderful research on many interviews with Ivens and on extensive research at the Ivens Archive, which had not been listed yet. Within three years, he expanded his research on Ivens to include the complete field of the committed documentary in his book: *Show Us Life: Towards a History and Aesthetics of the Committed Documentary* (1984). For thirty years Waugh has lectured on Ivens all over the world. At the moment, he is writing a book which is entirely devoted to Ivens. The research for his dissertation ended with *Indonesia Calling!* in 1946. His new book will describe Ivens's entire film oeuvre up to 1988.

Paula Houben

Paula Houben from the University of Groningen has completed her thesis in French about Marceline Lorisani-Ivens after extensive research of the files of the Foundation, interviews with Marceline Lorisani-Ivens and others, and studying films and literature. This is probably the first study of Mrs Lorisani-Ivens's life and work. Houben has based her thesis in part on the theoretical framework of Dr. Ernst van Alphen, published in 'Caught by history – Holocaust effects in Contemporary Art, Literature and Theory' (Stanford University Press) and on Lawrence L. Langer 'Holocaust Testimonies: the ruins of memory' (Yale University Press). 'There is wall between me and everybody else who didn't experience the Holocaust. I'm living on one side, in reality, while you are living on the other side, in the imagi-



nary life', Lorisani-Ivens said. Elie Wiesel, who survived the Holocaust at the same age as Lorisani-Ivens did, refers to this same wall or gap: 'The Holocaust? The ultimate event, the ultimate mystery, never to be comprehended or communicated. Only those who were there know what it was like; the others will never know.' Language is inadequate to describe the experience, that is why experience and memory are kept locked up inside the person. By analyzing films made by Marceline Lorisani-Ivens, such as *Algérie*, *l'année zéro*, *Le 17e parallèle* and *La petite prairie aux bouleaux*, Houben has tried to apply the results of contemporary studies of the holocaust trauma to representation in film. 'When it is impossible to talk about The Absolute Evil, about the horrors, it's better to talk about things that make you live. This film especially is about what helped me live. And I can help others to live', the director wrote about her film *La petite prairie aux bouleaux*.

De Uitkijk 100 years old

The first documentaries of Joris Ivens were shown in 'De Uitkijk', the oldest film theatre of the Netherlands. This year 'De Uitkijk', established in Amsterdam and situated on the Prinsengracht 452, will celebrates its centenary. This film theatre started in 1912, as a theatre especially for the elite, called the City Bioscoop. In Dutch film history, this theatre rose to fame after it was renovated in 1929 and began to be used as the home theatre of the Filmliga. This avant-garde film circle wanted to screen the newest European films. Its first director Mannus Franken, connoisseur of the French avant-garde, wrote a statement saying 'No entertainment, but Film Art!' The opening film programme on 9 November 1929 showed *La passion de Jeanne d'arc* by Carl Th. Dreyer and *Heien (Pile driving)* by Joris Ivens.

