

# Alternative CINEMA

FALL 2017

Tuesdays at 7:00 PM • Golden Auditorium • 105 Little Hall • Colgate University • Free Admission • Open to the Public

## September 5

### Portrait of Jason

Dir. Shirley Clarke. 1967. 105mins.

Hailed by *The Village Voice* as saying “more about race, class, and sexuality than just about any movie before or since,” and described by Ingmar Bergman as “the most extraordinary film I’ve seen in my life,” Clarke’s confrontational portrait makes a radical experiment of uncovering what Peggy Phelan called “the endless theatre of everyday life.” Jason Holliday, the raconteur at the center of Clarke’s film, was recorded over 12 hours, recalling his life as a cabaret performer and sex-worker, slipping in and out of the personas that allowed him to rub shoulders with late 1960s New York’s convulsive counter culture. *Portrait* (reveals the complicated life of a man who, unable to perform on stage, populates his own life with a series of masks.

## September 12

### Tongues Untied

Dir. Marlon Riggs. 1989. 55 mins.

Denounced from the floor of Congress as obscene, Marlon Riggs’ account of gay Black life in America was made at the height of the HIV/AIDS crisis and in the puritanical atmosphere of the late 80s culture wars. Inventively deploying a lexicon of documentary styles, Riggs’ called it his “last gift to the community,” completed before succumbing to complications from AIDS. Effervescently paced and brimming with anger, poetry, and eroticism, it has endured as a classic of the New Queer Cinema and a landmark moment in self-representation from the margins of American life.

## September 19

### Symbiopsychotaxiplasm

Dir. William Greaves. 1968. 75mins.

Exploring the limits of film’s capacity to capture reality, William Greaves’ master-class in documentary reflexivity plays out like a cinematic rendering of Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle. After recruiting students from New York’s Actor’s Studio to perform a simple scene, Greaves tasked a second crew to record the first crew, and then a third crew to record the second, creating layers of fact and fiction that unravel like Russian Dolls. Dubbed “the most versatile and durable of African-American independents” by J. Hoberman, Greaves’ revelatory experiment faded into obscurity after its completion, only to find widespread critical acclaim 25 years later. A conceptual masterpiece that deconstructs the hierarchical power dynamics of cinematic production, *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm* presents a manifesto for the potentialities of truth on film.

## September 26

### Up Right

Dir. Nick Cave (2015), 20 min.

4:30pm (note special time)

**Nick Cave, Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation Visiting Artist in Residence Fall 2017, in person.**

*Up Right* is a “call to arms, head and heart.” This work documents a piece that invites viewers into the space of transformation as one set of performers “dress” another set of performers, “preparing them in mind, body and spirit to face the forces that stand in the way of selfhood...to enter a world they have complete control over...like warriors of their own destiny.” This short film will be followed by a discussion with Artist in Residence Nick Cave.

## October 3

### Meeting Outsiders and The Ax Fight Meeting Outsiders

Dir. Dominique Gallois and Vincent Carelli. 1993. 22mins.

### The Ax Fight

Dir. Timothy Asch and Napoleon Chagnon. 1975. 30mins.

The sins and virtues of ethnographic documentary are on full display in this program, examining representations of indigenous tribes in South America. Documenting an astonishing meeting between two groups of indigenous Brazilians, one that has assimilated western cultural traditions, and one that has only recently been contacted by outsiders, *Meeting Ancestors*

articulates both the trauma and comedy of indigenous encounters with different societies. An attempt at fusing science and documentary, *The Ax Fight* was made by anthropologists attempting to document the Yanomami tribe, assumed to be a violent indigenous society in Southern Venezuela. One of the most controversial ethnographic documentaries ever made, *The Ax Fight* has been the subject of widespread criticism due to the perceived off-screen influence the film crew had on the subjects they studied.

## October 17

### Psycho-Ethnographies The Devil’s Toy

Dir. Claude Jutra. 1966. 15mins

### Land Without Bread

Dir. Luis Buñuel. 1933. 27mins.

### The Subconscious Art of Graffiti Removal

Dir. Matt McCormick. 2001. 16mins.

Comedy, satire, and absurdity boil over in these three pseudo-documentaries from across the 20th century. In *Land without Bread*, Luis Buñuel takes a Surrealist approach to the ethnographic film, documenting the region of Las Hurdes in a manner subtly mocking and parodying the “travelogue” films popular at the time. The film was banned by the Spanish government for many years. Claude Jutra’s exploration of the love that dare not speak its name is veiled as a cautionary tale against the newly popular skateboard in late 60s Montreal. Finally, McCormick’s deadpan essay film *The Subconscious Art of Graffiti Removal* makes the tongue-in-cheek argument that municipal efforts by Portland, Oregon to mask and erase all traces of graffiti should be seen as an important new movement in modern art.

## October 24

### Videograms of a Revolution

Dir. Harun Farocki and Andrei Ujică. 1992. 106mins.

Beginning at the precise moment when Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu gazed into a crowd of 11,000 people and realized he was staring at an uprising, *Videograms* underlines the power of media to narrate history—for better, or for worse. After storming the Communist Party Headquarters during the democratic revolution in 1989, Romanian dissidents all raced to the country’s central television station, in an effort to declare the country free and frame the event in their own ideological terms. Utilizing footage recorded by citizens on the ground and assembling the newly unrestrained television broadcasts, Harun Farocki and Andrei Ujică’s vivid essay film explores the fraught dynamics between politics and moving images after state propaganda could no longer be believed, and political upheaval appeared inevitable.

## October 31

### Beirut Diaries

Dir. Mai Masri, 2006, 80 min

**Colgate/Flaherty Global Filmmaker Residency Screening with filmmaker Mai Masri in person.**

Nadine Zaidan, a 25-year-old Lebanese activist, was one of thousands who gathered in Beirut’s Martyrs’ Square in the days after the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in February 2005. Following Zaidan as she witnesses the political ferment embodied in the March 11th Movement, also known as The Cedar Revolution, Masri’s documentary moves us through a massive crowd of people of all ages, factions, and religious affiliations as they debate issues such as Syria’s influence in Lebanese politics, the establishment of an international commission to investigate Hariri’s assassination, and the organization of free parliamentary elections in an attempt to forge a new direction for their country. This event is made possible thanks to the generous support of University Studies and the Office of the Dean of the Faculty, and in collaboration with The Flaherty.

## November 7

### Another Year

Dir. Shengze Zhu, 2016. 181mins.

**Filmmaker Shengze Zhu in person.**

The winner of the international competitions at Visions du Réel and RIDM, *Another Year* is a deceptively simple work that takes an uncom-

monly perceptive look at today’s China. The film is made up of 13 static shots, one for each of the 13 dinners that Shengze Zhu filmed once a month with a Chinese working class family. Making brilliant use of variations in framing dictated by confined spaces and showing mastery of elision, bringing dynamism to the narrative, the young filmmaker observes the funny, tense and dramatic interactions of the three-generation family, illustrating the socio-economic challenges facing a large part of China’s population.

## November 14

### Performance and Reenactment: Approaches in Contemporary Documentary Buffalo Juggalos

Dir. Scott Cummings. 2014. 30mins.

### East Hastings Pharmacy

Dir. Antoine Bourges. 2012. 47mins.

In two remarkable contemporary documentaries, the dynamics of performing identity and re-enacting what cannot be legally recorded are vividly enumerated. In Scott Cummings’ immersive and surreal series of vignettes, Juggalos (fans of rap/metal group Insane Clown Posse) perform tableaux of their subcultural rituals and strange familial-camaraderie. An epicenter for procuring heroin and methamphetamine, the Downtown Eastside neighborhood of Vancouver is home to thousands of homeless drug users and sex workers. Dotting the blighted landscape are small methadone clinics that offer a way out, though remain off-limits to documentary filmmakers. In Antoine Bourges collaborative documentary *East Hastings Pharmacy*, those who frequent these clinics recreate and perform the tense struggles of negotiating addiction within a state-run bureaucracy. Through vivid and forensic attempts to recreate these everyday realities, Bourges and his collaborators offer a powerful document of resilience.

## November 28

### Resurrecting Hassan

Dir. Carlo Guillermo Proto, 2016. 100mins.

**Filmmaker Carlo Guillermo Proto in person.**

Few documentaries in the last decade have compelled the emotional nakedness and unfettered intensity observed in *Resurrecting Hassan*. The members of the Harting family are all blind, making their living busking in the Montreal metro for tips. Following the death of their youngest child, the family becomes entangled with a faith healer and mystic who claims to be capable of resurrecting the dead. With unflinching candor, Proto attends to the everyday lives of the Hartings, as they struggle to remain tethered to one another in the face of catastrophe.

## December 5

### Marwencol

Dir. Jeff Malmberg and Chris Shellen. 2010. 82mins.

After being beaten into a brain-damaging coma by five men outside a bar, Mark builds a 1/6th scale World War II-era town in his backyard. Mark populates the town he dubs “Marwencol” with dolls representing his friends and family and creates life-like photographs detailing the town’s many relationships and dramas. Playing in the town and photographing the action helps Mark to recover his hand-eye coordination and deal with the psychic wounds of the attack. When Mark and his photographs are discovered, a prestigious New York gallery sets up an art show. Suddenly Mark’s homemade therapy is deemed “art”, forcing him to choose between the safety of his fantasy life in Marwencol and the real world that he’s avoided since the attack.

## December 19

### Student Showcase

Please join us in screening and celebrating the fall semester work of our student video artists!

This series is made possible by the Department of Art and Art History, the Film and Media Studies Program, the Colgate Arts Council and a generous grant from the New York Council on the Arts Electronic Media and Film Program.  
Programmed by Eli Horwatt and Penny Lane.