September 4
Let the Fire Burn
Jane Samuel, 2016, 90 mins
The MOVE organization was formed in 1972 as a “back to nature” Black liberation group led by the charismatic John Africa, who advocated members live communally, grow dreadlocks, shun technology, and cut a diet of raw food. After escalating tensions with law enforcement, West Philadelphia police used teargas, 10,000 rounds of ammunition, and ultimately a bomb to kill 11 members of the MOVE organization. In a textbook example of smart storytelling and journalism, Let the Fire Burn illuminates a forgotten moment in American history foreshadowing the current social unrest preceding. Unveiling like a taught thriller, director Jason Osder assembles a complex portrait of one of the most shameful moments in modern American history.

September 11
Stranger with a Camera
Elizabeth Barrett, 2006, 61 mins
Investigating the circumstances surrounding the 1967 murder of Hugh O’Connor in a poor Appalachian mining town, director Elizabeth Barrett sparks a compelling discussion about the ethics of capturing the image of others. Depicting the historical sentiments of Appalachians living in the heart of the “poverty belt,” where residents have frequently been subject to pitiless representations by the media, the film transforms what appears to be a simple case of the murder of a photographer, into a larger interrogation of private dignity and public exposure. A brilliant and complicated look at the impact of representation on the lives of those represented.

September 18
Far from Vietnam
Jean-Luc Godard, Chris Marker, Alain Resnais, Agnès Varda, Joana Hadjithomas, Julieta Venegas, William Klein, Claude Lelouch, 1966, 120 mins
“In a few minutes, this film will come to an end. You will leave this theatre and for many of you a world without war. This is also our world, that is to say how easy it is to forget certain realities. We are far from Vietnam… We live in a society that has pushed very far its capacity to hide its own goals, its own dizzy excesses and above all its own violences.” This quote begins the collaborative essay film from some of the most innovative artists of the French new wave. A work born of rage and a desperate hope for resolution to the conflict, Far from Vietnam assembles documentation of the war itself, but most poignantly, the American ideological framework it produced, long after the mission became indefensible. Co-sponsored by FSEM.

September 25
Nina’s Heavenly Delights
Pratibha Parmar, 1996, 94 mins
Scottish humor meets Bollywood masala in this lesbian rom-com. Nina’s Heavenly Delights is both lovely and startlingly strange, already slipping beyond the present moment we rarely think to preserve: the in-between minutes of daily life spent waiting for things to happen, shot in locales as diverse as the lush jungle to a residential district infused with haze. The picture of Singapore is both shallow and startlingly strange, already slipping beyond the present city’s inhabitants struggle to hold in their hands. The Impossibility of Knowing

October 23
Let’s Love Hong Kong
Yau Ching, 2012, 82 mins
Yang Ziguang’s critically lauded sci-fi/romantic comedy, the first film made in Hong Kong by a woman about lesbian love. A website called “Let’s Love,” allows for an interactive erotic exchange, setting off a chain of desire and obsession between a string of lesbian lovers. Situated in the bustling and crowded Hong Kong cityscape, the film centers on tomboy Zero, who begins a courtship with Chan (who makes her living dressing in costumes for the website), bewitching Nicole into an erotic obsession. Bending with sensuality and urban anxiety, Yau creates a subtle and humorous love triangle, subversively structured around lesbian desire.

October 30
Tongues Untied
Marlon Riggs, 1988, 55 mins
Chic Point
Sharif Waked, 2003, 7 mins
One of the most exciting new voices in cinema today, Sky Hopinka’s stories of social dysfunction across three-generations. A Brechtian experiment in exploring, begging for questions rather than answers.” Over the course of these videos, Hopinka engages in a fascinating and novel take on the ideas of place and landscape.

November 13
The Arbor
Clio Barnard, 2010, mins
British artist Clio Barnard delivers one of the most original documentaries in recent memory, presenting audio interviews with the children of renowned playwright Andrea Dunbar, stylishly performed (in an astoundingly crafted lip-sync) by actors. Dunbar, whose naked depictions of working class-life in Thatcher’s England on the Butterworth Estates, also suffered from alcoholism while raising three children on her own. Paying homage to Dunbar’s brilliant as a writer, the film vividly renders a cycle of social dysfunction across three generations. A Brechtian experiment in revealing truth through performative fiction, Barnard’s unflinching biography illustrates the layers of life through the eyes of parents and children.

November 27
“We All Seemed to be Having the Same Dreams” – The Videos of Sky Hopinka In Person
One of the most exciting new voices in cinema today, Sky Hopinka’s videos focus on indigenous language and politics, familial connection, gender identity, memory, and landscape. Framing discrete indigenous identities through a process called ethnopoetics, described by Almudena Escobar Lopas as “a response against the ethnographic gaze that has long objectified indigenous people,” Hopinka “confronts ethnography through poetry and the capacity of learning from a point of not-knowing… a process focused on the sensitive, emergent, and open-ended qualities of exploration, begging for questions rather than answers.” Over the course of these videos, Hopinka engages in a fascinating and novel take on the ideas of place and landscape.

December 4
What Now? Remind Me?
Joachim Pflug, 2011, 164 mins
Having lived for over two decades with HIV, an acclaimed filmmaker records a year of his life undergoing a grueling drug regimen and experimental treatments that produce hallucinations, nausea, and endless complications. But not even these ordeals halt his camera’s ability to capture an enthrallment with the everyday miracles around him, intensified by a proximity to his own mortality. A philosophical diary-film, Pitta’s internationally award-winning self-portrait is a rapturous visual evocation of memories and observations that unearths like a life-long revenge.

December 11
Catfish
Henry Joost and Ariel Schulman, 2010, 87 mins
A cautionary tale of the virtual crucible of the real world, and a documentary that stretches the limits of belief, Catfish changed the vocabulary of relationships over social media forever. After Nev becomes estranged with a woman online, it becomes increasingly clear that she is hiding something. As he and his filmmaker friends investigate the mystery begins to unravel. A documentary skirting the line between reality TV and outright fiction, Catfish offers an engaging account of deception.