

Press Release



Forum 2018: Special Screenings

The *Forum* now completes its programme with a series of Special Screenings committed to an alternative view of film historiography.

Since its foundation in 1971, the *Forum* has always shone a spotlight on historical films too, shaking the foundations of a cinematic canon whose main interest lies in feature films from Western Europe and North America. This year's programme once again stands in opposition to such views and is dedicated to cinema from Africa, documentary and experimental film, "anti-cinema" films and salacious b-movies and "dirty" films.

Before becoming Nigerian prime minister, writer Abubakar Tafawa Balewa landed a bestseller with his biographical novella "Shaihu Umar". In 1976, Adamu Halilu adapted the material into a film, which is set in the late 19th century and revolves around an Islamic cleric telling his life story, which bears the marks of slavery. Long thought lost, the film rolls for several prints were rediscovered in 2016 in the archive of the Nigerian Film Corporation and restored by Arsenal - Institute for Film and Video Art with the support of the German Federal Foreign Office. The splendid new digital version of *Shaihu Umar* now receives its first screening at the *Forum*.

The *Geschichten vom Kübelkind* (*Stories of the Dumpster Kid*) were shown at the very first *International Forum of New Cinema* in 1971 and have now been digitally restored. The series revolves around a rebellious "Dumpster Kid" played by Kristine de Loup, who always appears in a red dress and has various anarchic struggles with society. Ula Stöckl and Edgar Reitz shot *Geschichten vom Kübelkind* in 1969 with only their friends. Their series of 25 16mm short films of different lengths was a way of positioning themselves outside of the standard cinema system, with guests at a sort of pub-cum-cinema in Munich able to "order" individual episodes from a menu. Together with the documentary *Der Film verlässt das Kino: Vom Kübelkind-Experiment und anderen Utopien* (*Film Beyond Cinema: The Dumpster Kid Experiment and Other Utopias*) by Robert Fischer, a selection of the unique films is now to be screened again. A "pub cinema" much the same as the original screening set-up will also be installed at silent green Kulturquartier in Wedding on February 19, with these Special Screenings attended by Stöckl and Reitz.

Put together over five decades, the Arsenal and *Forum* archive still forms an important part of the institution's work. This work involves a large amount of international exchange, which forms the subject of a public panel discussion on February 22 as part of *Forum Expanded's* "Think Film No. 6 - Archival Constellations". One of the participants is Viviana García

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Besné, who attends as a representative of the Permanencia Voluntaria film archive in Mexico, which was heavily damaged during the earthquake in September 2017. The archive's treasures include many of the popular films built around the character of luchador Rodolfo Guzmán Huerta alias El Santo, a wrestling superstar and actor who always appeared in his iconic silver mask. He plays the role of "El Enmascarado" in his first film *Santo contra Cerebro del mal* (*Santo vs. Evil Brain*), which was shot in Cuba in 1961 by Joselito Rodríguez. A restored version has now been created in collaboration with the Academy Film Archive, which allows an important piece of Mexican popular culture to make its way back into cinemas.

11 x 14, the first feature-length film by James Benning, is film theory in images. It is composed of single shots, each of which individually narrate something and hold the film together via recurring elements. What is narrated is pure form. *11 x 14* was originally shown at the *Forum* in 1977. It has now been restored by the Austrian Film Museum in collaboration with Arsenal - Institute for Film and Video Art and returns to the *Forum* once again as a 35mm print. As the smallest unit of a festival, a film can also become its narrative.

In their 1985 documentary *Yama-Attack to Attack*, which is hardly known outside of Japan, Japanese directors Mitsuo Sato and Kyoichi Yamaoka created a portrait of the Tokyo district of Sanya, where day workers lived in wretched conditions and were exploited by Yakuza gangs in full view of the police and the Japanese elite. For documenting the excesses of a capitalism with fascist undertones, the two directors paid the price with their lives, as both were murdered by Yakuza henchmen. This underrated milestone in political documentary filmmaking will be screened at the *Forum* on a 16mm print with English subtitles.

Mohamed Zinet's film *Tahia ya Didou* was shot in 1971 as a commission for the city of Algiers and blends documentary and fictional elements into a poetic, biting, passionate portrait of the director's home city. Shelved by its original commissioners, it developed into a cult film following repeated screenings at the Cinémathèque d'Alger. A digital restoration of this imaginative work now receives its premiere at the *Forum*.

Kad budem mrtav i beo (*When I Am Dead and Pale*) by Živojin Pavlović is regarded as a key work of the Yugoslavian "Black Wave". Shot in 1967, it tells the story of the irreverent Jimmy, who wants nothing more than to make it as a singer, regardless of his lack of talent. This punk film bursting with music also explores the bustling outskirts of Belgrade, which back then were still a work in progress. Following a digital restoration by the Jugoslovenska Kinoteka, this new version is screening for the first time at the *Forum*.

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The Japanese “pink eiga” films form perhaps one of the most idiosyncratic phenomena in the whole of international cinema. Conceived to entice male audiences with erotic content, the genre also attracted numerous young directors who bent it to their will and created some of the most radical, avant-garde works in Japanese film. A considerable number of the Japanese directors most well-known today took their first steps with “pink film.” What’s less well-known is that one of the driving forces behind the “pinku eiga” genre is actually a woman, who was concealed behind the male pseudonym Daisuke Asakura. With its “Pink Tribute to Keiko Sato”, the *Forum* is showing three of the producer’s most original films. Atsushi Yamatoya wrote his absurdly titled 1967 film *Inflatable Sex Doll of the Wastelands* in parallel to his script for Seijun Suzuki’s classic *Branded to Kill*, to which the former work undoubtedly forms a twin of sorts. For Masao Adachi, 1971’s *Gushing Prayer* was one last attempt to couch social critique in sexually provocative form, before he turned his attention to political activism. Finally, the most recent work in the series is the debut film by Masayuki Suo, who later landed one of the biggest hits in Japanese film history with *Shall We Dance*. *Abnormal Family* from 1984 is his tribute to Yasujiro Ozu, who for all the stylistic similarities would hardly have been pleased by the degree of sexual permissiveness.

This year’s *Forum* programme is to be opened with a concert by a group of Arab avant-garde musicians who will each provide a solo accompaniment to seven short films by Georges Méliès from 1899 to 1907. Supported by the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC), Sharif Sehnaoui (electric guitar), Khyam Allami (synthesizer, oud, drums), Magda Mayas (piano), Tony Elieh (electric bass, electronics) and Abed Kobeissy (buzuk, electronics) will be giving their “Georges Méliès “Solitudes” Cine-concert” at the Delphi Filmpalast on February 16.

Concert:

“Georges Méliès „Solitudes” Cine-concert” with Sharif Sehnaoui, Khyam Allami, Magda Mayas, Tony Elieh and Abed Kobeissy

The 2018 Forum Special Screenings:

11 x 14 by James Benning, USA 1976

Der Film verlässt das Kino: Vom Kübelkind-Experiment und anderen Utopien (Film Beyond Cinema: The Dumpster Kid Experiment and Other Utopias) by Robert Fischer, Germany - WP

Geschichten vom Kübelkind (Stories of the Dumpster Kid) by Ula Stöckl, Edgar Reitz, Germany 1970



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Kad budem mrtav i beo (*When I Am Dead and Pale*) by Živojin Pavlović, Yugoslavia 1967

Santo contra Cerebro del mal (*Santo vs. Evil Brain*) by Joselito Rodríguez, Mexico 1961

Shaiu Umar by Adamu Halilu, Nigeria 1976

Tahia ya Didou by Mohamed Zinet, Algeria 1971

Yama-Attack to Attack by Mitsuo Sato, Kyoichi Yamaoka, Japan 1985

“A Pink Tribute to Keiko Sato”:

Inflatable Sex Doll of the Wastelands by Atsushi Yamatoya, Japan 1967

Gushing Prayer by Masao Adachi, Japan 1971

Abnormal Family by Masayuki Suo, Japan 1984

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