

**FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS
ONLINE**

Mon Dec 14 | 8:00 PM |

Jack H. Skirball Series

\$10 [members \$8]

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The Clamor of the Excluded

Seven films, six decades, seven countries

Voices and visions of peoples on the edge and over the edge

Co-curated by Sherry Millner and Ernie Larsen

Starting with a first presentation at the 2008 Oberhausen Film Festival, Sherry Millner and Ernest Larsen—artists, filmmakers, writers, educators, troublemakers—have curated and exhibited multiple programs of short films that critically and/or actively represent resistance to power all over the world. Carried out over decades as the project *Disruptive Film*, the duo's groundbreaking research demonstrates not only the variety of everyday resistance strategies, but also a surprising diversity of experimental approaches to short-form nonfiction media. Their second selection for REDCAT (since their presentation in 2016) includes *Crowded* by Alonzo Crawford (1978), shot in a Baltimore prison, *Xochimilco 1914* by Los Viumasters (2010) from Mexico, *Crude Living on Oil in Syria* by Rozh Ahmad (2014), and their own *How Do Animals and Plants Live?* (2020) shot in a destroyed migrant squat in Greece.

In person: co-curators Sherry Millner and Ernie Larsen

"Demonstrates the remarkable power of film to engage, move, provoke and contend." - Bill Nichols

"One of the most notable aspects of the series is that it refreshingly views political documentary and experimental films as located on the same continuum." - Chris Robé, *Pop Matters*

"A visual demonstration of the powers of film. Such a collection of rare and precious items from many times, places and conflict situations, not only provides a strong perspective about film history, but also transmits to us the practical energy to struggle with our present injustices." - Nicole Brenez

"The love of cinema also means knowing what to do with images that are really missing." - Serge Daney

Program

Alonzo Crawford: **Crowded**
1978, 10 min, USA

When the inmates of the grotesquely overcrowded Baltimore City Jail sued the city and state, African-American director Alonzo Crawford, on a budget of \$400, documented conditions inside - and on the strength of that unyieldingly attentive visual evidence, the prisoners won.

Aryan Kaganof: ***Threnody for the Victims of Marikana***

2014, 27 min, South Africa

On August 16, 2012 the South African Police opened fire on a crowd of striking platinum workers, killing 34 and injuring 78. This three-part film uses symphonic and other music, found footage, theoretical analysis, and irony to arrive at a new understanding, both philosophical and visceral, of how the massacre could have happened - under a government ruled by the once-revolutionary ANC.

Millner & Larsen: ***How Do Animals and Plants Live?***

2020, 29 min, USA

While inquiring into the forcible eviction and immediate demolition of the self-organized anarchist-supported migrant squat Orfanotrofeio in Thessaloniki, Greece, in July 2016, this experimental video essay extrapolates on the proposition that "no one is illegal" in the renewed if fragile context of the common.

Rozh Ahmad: ***Crude Living on Oil in Syria***
2014, 20 min, Syria

The journalist Rozh Ahmad - at a ramshackle roadside refinery - relentlessly portrays the terrifying despoliation of a village, a people, and a landscape all at once, caught in the pincers of an endless war.

Kamran Shirdel: ***Tehran is the Capital of Iran***
1966, 17.40 min, Iran

This film, censored even before it was completed, sets affecting, often harrowing images of the discarded urban poor against recitations of official reports and schoolbooks. Shirdel's searing vision was undoubtedly seasoned by study at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome. At considerable cost to his career, he inaugurated an Iranian version of neo-realism - a take-no-prisoners style of direction.

Zelimir Zilnik: ***Black Film***
1971, 14 min, Yugoslavia

In a last-ditch gamble to "solve the homeless problem" in the workers' state of Yugoslavia, the filmmaker invites six homeless men (ignored by the "socialist" government) into his own apartment ... And lives to tell the tale.

Los Viumasters: ***Xochimilco 1914***
2010, 4.5 min, Mexico

On the morning of December 4th, 1914, Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata met for the first time. An original stenographic record of their conversation, just hours before they took control of Mexico City, exists. A mere century later, this playful film animates the words of these revolutionary heroes and their historic repercussions.

The Filmmakers

Rozh Ahmad is a freelance journalist and videographer who reports on the Kurdish inhabited regions of Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Syria. Based in Paris, he was educated in England and has roots in Iraq's Kurdish region.

Based in Baltimore, **Alonzo Crawford**, an avid proponent of the short documentary, co-founded and designed the graduate film program at Howard University. His other films include *Gila Monster* (2007), *Sleep to Dream* (2014), and *The Making of Outrage* (2016). The latter explores the tumultuous impact within the black community in Baltimore of the April 2015 death of young Freddie Gray while being transported in a police van.

A poet, novelist, and visual artist, as well as a prolific filmmaker, **Aryan Kaganof** made the first feature film shot entirely on mobile phones, *SMS Sugar Man* in 2007. He also founded the music research project, The African Noise Foundation.

Based in Mexico City, the animation collective **Los Viumasters** has produced clips and videos for rock groups, documentaries and fiction films

since 2009. *Xochimilco 1914* won the Best Mexican Animated Short Film Award at the 13th Guanajuato International Film Festival.

A great pioneer of Iranian cinema, **Kamran Shirdel**, born in 1939, is also the founder and director of the Kish International Documentary Film Festival.

Based in Novi Sad, Serbia, an innovator of hybrid cinematic forms, particularly the docudrama, **Zelimir Zilnik** is among the most important of the politically engaged filmmakers in Europe. He initially gained fame first within the Yugoslavian Black New Wave of the 1960s and has made dozens of films and television programs during his long career.

Note From the Curators

We have been incubating this collection of short films for decades. We saw a few of them as far back as the late 1960s. They were projected on the walls of lofts or in funky theaters on the Lower East Side of New York City. The audiences were made up of hippies, impatient radicals, artists, and troublemakers—people who, like us, believed they were going to change the world. So the collection of films we are in the process of assembling is the distillation of our lifelong engagement with the intersection between the stirring histories of struggles for freedom across the globe and the wide-ranging, often surprising, history of short-form experimental non-fiction media... an engagement both passionate and critical.

These films make propositions – or “escape routes” – from exhausted classical documentary forms. They each employ critical interventions intended to contest, resist, or imaginatively overturn repressive conditions, stale culture, the violence of the state, patriarchy, racism, the rule of global capital.

We are aiming at a gradual construction of an alternative history – a history that has at times been blocked, repressed, censored or hijacked – of short-form radical experimental non-fiction media, from 1914 up to the present. The films that we selected address radical potentiality. They ask and often answer the complex question of how political resistance can be articulated in forms that are not only appositely representative of resistance but that also embody that shape-shifting force in their own diverse historical moments and contradictions.

Today or tomorrow any and all of us are very likely to be caught up in the crossfire of our era’s global upheavals and sudden revolts. The films shown tonight offer precise and often deeply affecting visions that evoke previously underexplored potential for common understanding of these unending crises.

According to the French critic and filmmaker Jean-Louis Comolli: "Defeating or overcoming the existing order of things requires the invention of forms that are different to those serving to repress our consciousness and our movements." The requirement to which Comolli refers should, we feel, encompass the invention of forms of life, of politics, and aesthetic forms, as an intentional project that produces the conditions through which such revolutionary change could begin to be achieved. And the invention of such forms is always experimental.

Our search for these little-known and under-valued films continues... We hope that our archeological effort, which often meant dusting off, translating, and subtitling uniquely moving films never before seen by English-speaking audiences, will prove to be as much a discovery for the spectators as they have been for us.

The Curators

Sherry Millner & Ernie Larsen collaborate on film, video, photo-text, book, curatorial and other research projects. Co-creators of the collaborative video project *State of Emergency* (involving 20 artists), they have also produced several situationist films, two anti-documentaries redefining criminality, and a series of semi-autobiographical videos focusing on authoritarian structures indispensable to capital. In 2008, at the Oberhausen Film Festival, they co-curated *Border-Crossers and Trouble-Makers*, ten programs that aimed to rewrite the conventional history of experimental political media. They co-curated *Disruptive Film: Everyday Resistance to Power*, two DVD volumes of political/experimental short-form films and videos, for Facets Media. Their photo-text projects on Vietnam and on Greece have been published in *Rethinking Marxism* and online in *Social Text* and in *e-flux conversations*. Their collaborative book, *Capital's Greek Cage* (Autonomedia), explores the immiseration of the Greek population by the EU and the related growth of fascism. Millner produces installations, such as *The Domestic Boobytrap*, which exploits U.S. army manuals to demonstrate the radical instability of domestic space, and many photomontage series, currently including *No Respirator Included*. Larsen writes fiction and media criticism. His most recent book *The Trial Before The Trial*, an account of his experiences on a Manhattan grand jury, is available from Autonomedia Press.

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