

*We were really sad to call off the screening of the restored version of Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press (Dorian Gray im Spiegel der Boulevardpresse, 1984) last spring. At the last minute, Ulrike Ottinger had to cancel her US tour, which included presentations at the Metrograph (New York City), BAMFA (Berkeley), the San Francisco Film Festival, and REDCAT. But she will be back, at least virtually, and will meet us at 6:45 AM German time to discuss another of her classic films, Exile Shanghai!*

## **FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS**

**Sat Sept 19 | 4:30 PM |**

Jack H. Skirball Screening Series

\$10 [members \$8]

To get tickets, visit: [ULRIKE OTTINGER 2020](#)

## **ULRIKE OTTINGER**

***Exile Shanghai* (1997, 280 min.)**

Program curated by B er enice Reynaud

During "her long and splendid career" (*New Yorker*) spanning nearly five decades, legendary German *auteur* Ulrike Ottinger has run the gamut from flamboyant, cutting-edge fictions (*Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press*, 1984) to groundbreaking documentaries, such as *Taiga* (1992) or *Exile Shanghai*. Shot by Ottinger herself, the film conjures memories of Jewish immigrant lives in Shanghai — from Sephardim in the mid-19th century, to Russian emigr es escaping pogroms, to Europeans fleeing the Shoah. Unexpected versions of utopias emerged — such as the existence of a queer scene or the opening of Viennese-style pastry shops in the ghetto where the community was confined during the Japanese occupation. Ottinger composes a fascinating mosaic by interweaving interviews with six expatriates, rare archival material (visual and musical) and meditative, long takes searching the cosmopolitan city for traces of synagogues, schools and salons.

### **In person via Zoom in Germany: Ulrike Ottinger**

"Deliriously sumptuous and transgressive, Ulrike Ottinger's world can hardly be confused with humdrum reality. Watching her films is like traveling through an undiscovered country of marvels, a journey alternately dazzling, infuriating, hilarious, and rewarding. Mongolian nomads, feral feminists, and

Shanghai and Jewish culture rub elbows [in the work of] this unique filmmaker who combines an outlaw's spirit and an ethnographer's eye with an artist's sense of wonder." — *The Village Voice*

"The epic documentary *Exile Shanghai* forms a faux-Rashomon tale of histories converging on one another. Chronicling the Jewish diaspora throughout Asia, and specifically within Shanghai in the 1930s, six stories overlap, rhyme, and blur together in a massive, intimate, epic, and mundane journey. " — Metrograph

"*Exile Shanghai* exploits the cinema's potential to represent both perceptual reality and the imaginative oneiric aspects of subjectivity." — *CineAction*

"A monument to the Jews who built a society for themselves in Shanghai, Ulrike Ottinger's documentary is a fascinating, kaleidoscopic vision of the historic cosmopolitan metropolis." — Vancouver International Film Festival

**Note: The film is in five parts and will be presented with a 30-minute intermission at 7:00 PM after the second part. Screening will resume at 7:30 PM and will be followed by a Q&A with Ulrike Ottinger around 9:50 PM.**

Part 1: Rena Krasno (63,7 Min.)

Part 2: Rabbi Theodore & Gertrude Alexander (83,8 Min.)

Part 3: Inna Mink (43,3 Min.)

Part 4: Georges Spunt (37,3 Min.)

Part 5: Geoffrey Heller (52,5 Min.)

One of the most important German filmmakers since the 1970s, **Ulrike Ottinger** was born during WWII in Konstanz, Germany, and studied art at a very young age. From 1962 to 1968, she lived and worked as an artist in Paris, where she exhibited, in particular, at the Salon de la Jeune Peinture. She studied etching techniques with Johnny Friedlaender and attended lectures at the Sorbonne with Claude Lévi-Strauss, Louis Althusser and Pierre Bourdieu.

After returning to West Germany, she founded the "filmclub visuell" in Konstanz in 1969, as well as the "galeriepress" gallery and press. With Tabea Blumenschein (1952-2020), she realized her first film in 1972-1973, *Laocoon & Sons (Laokoon & Söhne)*. She then moved to Berlin, where she still lives today. After *The Enchantment of the Blue Sailors (Die Betörung der blauen Matrosen, 1975)* came the female pirate film *Madame X (Madame X - Eine absolute Herrscherin, 1977)*. Beginning in 1979, she realized her "Berlin

Trilogy": *Ticket of No Return (Bildnis einer Trinkerin, 1979)*; *Freak Orlando (Kleines Welttheater in fünf Episoden, 1981)*; and *Dorian Gray in the Mirror of the Yellow Press (Dorian Gray im Spiegel der Boulevardpresse, 1984)*.

*China. The Arts – The People (China. Die Künste – Der Alltag, 1985)* is the first in a series of long documentaries shot over the course of her travels through Asia. In Mongolia she made the narrative film *Johanna d'Arc of Mongolia* in 1989, followed by the eight-hour documentary *Taiga. A Journey to Northern Mongolia (Taiga. Eine Reise ins nördliche Land der Mongolen, 1992)*. In *Countdown* (1990), she brought a similar ethnographic perspective to her city of Berlin between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification. She returned to China to shoot *Exile Shanghai (Exil Shanghai 1997)*, then traveled to southeast Europe to direct the documentary *Southeast Passage (Südostpassage, 2001)* and the feature *12 Chairs (12 Stühle, 2004)*.

In 2007, she made *Prater*, a "surrealist documentary" about the famous Viennese amusement park (shown at REDCAT, 2008), then, back in Asia again, she directed *The Korean Wedding Chest (Die Koreanische Hochzeitstruhe, 2008)* (shown at REDCAT, 2009) and *Under Snow (Unter Schnee, 2011)*, shot in Japan. *Chamisso's Shadow (Chamissos Schatten, 2016)*, her longest documentary (12 hours) so far, interweaves beautiful landscapes with ethnological insights and personal experiences. Her latest film, *Paris Calligrammes (2020)*, recently made its world premiere at the 70<sup>th</sup> Berlinale, which also awarded her its prestigious Berlinale Camera.

Ottinger's films have been shown in festivals all over the world, including Toronto, Amsterdam, Moskow, London, Montréal, Jerusalem and Rio de Janeiro. Retrospectives have been organized in a variety of venues, such as the Cinémathèque Française and Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid, the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Center for Contemporary Art in Tel Aviv. She received numerous awards, including the Audience Jury Prize in Montréal, the German Bundesfilmpreis (Visual Design), and several German Film Critics Awards.

She has also worked in photography throughout her career and has taken part in major art exhibitions, presenting works at the Biennale di Venezia, Documenta and the Berlin Biennale, among others. Additionally, she has staged plays and operas, and she has created several artists' books and catalogues. In 2011, she received the Hannah Höch Prize from the city of Berlin for an outstanding artistic life's work. The Concordia University of Montréal awarded her an honorary doctor of fine arts in 2018.

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