

59TH
INTERNATIONAL
ART EXHIBITION

LA BIENNALE
DI VENEZIA

VENICE

ISSUE 3/3

APRIL
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FRENCH
PAVILION

CONSERVE
SHOW
RESTAGE
REVIVIFY

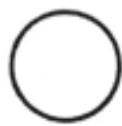
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DECENTERED TRAVELER



WITH REVERENCE FOR MY SISTER FARIDA

...my sister Farida and Vladimir Ilitch Lénine (the name of the avenue I was living on, the communist revolutionary), both by my side—brought some excitement!

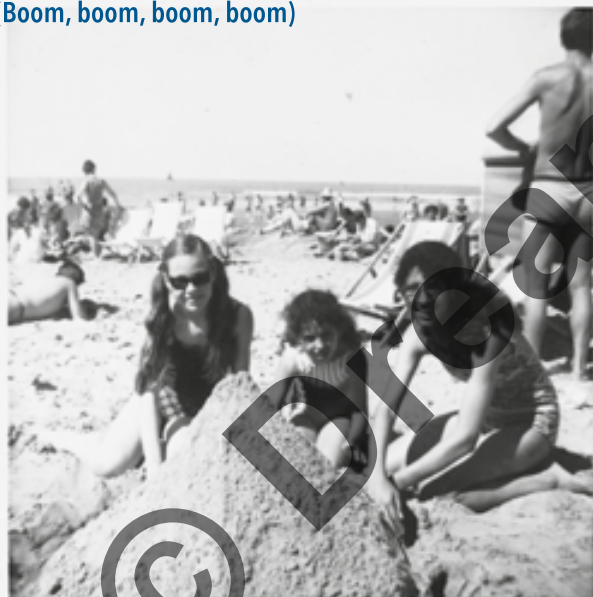
In 1978, I was fifteen and we, teens, daughters and sons of immigrants, listened to Funk and Rhythm & Blues: James Brown, Rose Royce, Nina Simone, Georges McCray, Aretha Franklin, Isaac Hayes, The Temptations, Marvin Gaye...

I remember so well the words from Message From A Black Man by The Temptations:

Yes, your skin is white...
Does that make you right?
Why don't you think about it?
Think about it, think about it, think about it,
Think about it...
This is a message,
A message to y'all:
Together we stand,
Divided we fall, oh!

Or those of Cloud Nine, also by The Temptations

The childhood part of my life
Wasn't very pretty
(Boom, boom, boom, boom)
See, I was born and raised
In the slums of the city
(Boom, boom, boom, boom)
It was a one-room shack
That slept ten other children beside me
(Boom, boom, boom, boom)
We hardly had enough food
Or room to sleep
(Boom, boom, boom, boom)



Jeanine à gauche, Zineb au milieu
Saida à gauche. (Blankenberge)
Faisant un château de sable

...My sister Farida and I shared a bedroom as well as musical tastes.

This was the only music we identified with because of its anti-racist and militant message. We were well aware of the Civil Rights Movement and its struggle for social justice but in France there was no such political activism yet. Back then, we identified with African Americans. Was it not James Baldwin, the writer who once said that "Algerians are the N... of the French"? At the time, he was living in Paris and socializing in Algerian cafés.

FROM FARIDA TO ZINEB

PLAYLIST

01. GEORGE MCCRAE

Rock Your Baby
(TK RECORDS/JAY BOY/3:14 (SINGLE)
/6:24 (ALBUM)

02. ARETHA FRANKLIN

Respect
(WARNER MUSIC GROUP/2:26)

**(You Make Me Feel Like)
A Natural Woman**

(ATLANTIC/2:46)

03. THE TEMPTATIONS

Papa Was A Rollin' Stone
(GORDY/6:54 (SINGLE)/12:02 (ALBUM)

Ain't Too Proud to Beg
(GORDY/2:36)

Message From a Black Man
(TAMLA MOTOWN/6:03)

Cloud Nine
(GORDY/3:28)

04. JAMES BROWN

Sex Machine
(KING RECORDS/2:49 (PART 1)
/22:33 (PART 2)

Papa's Got Brand New Bag

(KING RECORDS/1:55 (PART 1)
/2:12 (PART 2)

**Say It Loud, I'm Black and
I'm Proud**

(KING RECORDS/2:45 (PART 1)
/2:30 (PART 2)

05. PATTI LABELLE

Lady Marmalade
(LEGACY RECORDINGS/3:56)

06. THE J.B.'S

Doing It to Death
(PEOPLE RECORDS/10:01
(PART 1 & 2)

07. ISAAC HAYES

Theme From Shaft
(STAX/3:15 (SINGLE)/4:34 (ALBUM)

08. WAR

Low Rider
(UNITED ARTISTS/3:11)

09. DIANA ROSS

Upside Down
(MOTOWN/3:38)

Jeannine, Zineb and Farida in Blankenberge (Belgium). Photo album (c. 1978). Zineb Sedira's private collection

This was a revelation to me, after spending my childhood listening to Algerian and Egyptian musicians such as Rabah Driassa, Noura, Mazouni, Dahmane El Harrachi, Warda Al-Jazairia, Farid El Attrach, Oum Keltoum, Mohammed Abdelwahab, the Lebanese singer Fairuz, and French pop music: France Gall, Johnny Halliday, Sheila, Cloclo and his Claudettes, Ringo...

I didn't identify with the music of my childhood, either Arabic or French.

Instead, I was completely obsessed with James Brown's song "Say it loud, I'm black and I'm proud." It really spoke to me:

Now we demand a chance to do things for ourselves
We're tired of beatin' our head against the wall
And workin' for someone else
We're people, we're just like the birds and the bees
We'd rather die on our feet
Than be livin' on our knees...

When I was sixteen, my sister Farida committed suicide—the result of an identity crisis and of cultural displacement... Around the same time, other tragic events happened: more deaths and the detention of numerous friends, cousins, Maghrebi neighbors, overdoses, thefts, murders, more suicides...

Thus began a long descent into torment, a period of intense mourning during which I became obsessed and possessed by this Afro-American music, the music so loved by my sister, my role model who died at the tender age of twenty...

ZINEB SEDIRA



Agnieszka Gratza

VENICE, A MISE EN ABYME

Venice, the third and last issue of a publication conceived as an integral part of the French pavilion presentation, differs from *Algiers* and *Paris* in more ways than one. The cover, for one thing, sheds the vintage look that defined the previous two issues better to reflect—in a mise en abyme of sorts—what awaits the visitors as they enter the pavilion. Lifted from the film projected within the pavilion where it had been filmed, the artist's words overlay the issue's contents as a voice-over script that runs across it. The "Screenplay," a recurring section in all three issues, this time round is that of Zineb Sedira's own film about films.

The new look owes much to the militant Rabat-based literary and cultural magazine *Souffles*, just as the first two issues were indebted to the illustrators of Algerian cinema and television magazine *Les 2 écrans*, and Slim (Menouar Merabtène) in particular. A bilingual, French and Arabic publication touted as "a manifesto for a new aesthetics in the Maghreb," *Souffles* came out in 1966—incidentally the year when *The Battle of Algiers* was first released at the Venice Film Festival—and it was in circulation until 1972.

Borrowed from Eugénie Zvonkine's insightful essay "Conserve, Show, Restage, Revivify. The Film as (Trans)portable and Projectable Museum," which we are reprinting here in a shorter version translated into French for the first time, the issue's sub-title resonates with Sedira's project for the French Pavilion and with her wider practice. The image selected by the artist for the third in a series of collectable posters, the center spread around which the whole issue is built and from which it grows out, as it were, reflects the extensive archival



Still from *Dreams Have No Titles* (2022) by Zineb Sedira. Courtesy the artist

work that informs *Dreams Have No Titles*—somewhat ironically, the title of both Sedira's exhibition at the French Pavilion and of the film at its heart.

One way to think about the French Pavilion in its present guise—complete with a purpose-built movie theater—is as a "black cube," a term that the documentary filmmakers Céline Gailleurd and Olivier Bohler, in one of the two case studies analyzed by Zvonkine, use to describe an exhibition and a projection space rolled into one. Mathieu Copeland's *The exhibition of a film*, 2015, equally qualifies as one. As its title suggests, the work is as much about exhibiting a film as about filming an exhibition. Copeland's filmic exhibition is among the five artistic contributions to appear in this issue (the other ones being by Rayane Mcirdi, Alessandra Ferrini, Kapwani Kiwanga, and Danilo Correale), which could thus be seen as a "(trans)portable museum" in its own right.

"Exquisite Corpse," Naeem Mohaiemen's offering for the "Film Program" column, collates film clips put forward in turn by his students at Columbia University in a nod to the Surrealist drawing game, culminating in a collectively authored short film by that title (yet another instance of mise en abyme). In lieu of the archival film programs presented at the outset of the last two issues, we publish the register of international students enrolled at the CSC (Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia) in Rome, together with a list of film-essays made by the 1964-66 cohort.

As befits an issue that bears La Serenissima's name, and which is presented at the French national pavilion, the "triangular" co-productions and collaborations between Italy, Algeria, and France that have guided artist Zineb Sedira's archival research right from the start here come to the fore. In "Italian Filmmakers and the Algerian Question," an essay specially commissioned for this newspaper-cum-magazine, Luca Peretti addresses the involvement of leftist intellectuals, including filmmakers, in the struggle for Algerian independence, which he sets within the wider context of anticolonial and "Third-Worldist" movements of the 1960s and 1970s. The same holds true of Wassyla Tamzali's *An Algerian Education* (2007), an excerpt from which is reprinted in this issue. It begins with a joyous account of the Tri-Continental Film Festival in 1973. The event, staged in Pesaro on the Adriatic coast, is overshadowed by news of the Pinochet-led

military coup that deposed Salvador Allende's government on another September 11; its poignant description speaks to the conflict raging on in Ukraine.

London, the place that has shaped her as an artist—in some ways more so than our three titular cities—ever since she moved there in 1986, also makes its presence felt in this last issue. That a sizeable proportion of its contributors, who count among Zineb's nearest and dearest in professional terms, should be based there is hardly a coincidence. They include Londoners John Akomfrah, Gilane Tawadros, and Sonia Boyce, who used to live next door to Zineb and has now taken over the neighboring pavilion. In a freewheeling conversation that took place in Zineb's home, Tawadros and Boyce consider the vital role of London's housing cooperatives and squats in facilitating artistic production in the 1970s, especially in Brixton, the rough but diverse and culturally vibrant area where Zineb Sedira has settled down.

Conversations, which were practically absent in the previous issues, take pride of place in *Venice*—starting with the discussion between the artist and Yasmina Reggad or the Decentered Traveler, who co-curated the French Pavilion and was the commissioning editor for this final issue which bears her distinctive stamp. The curatorial duo artReoriented also have their say in "Texts Have No Titles," a personal essay that relates their first encounter and ensuing collaborations with the artist, leading up to their curatorial work on the French Pavilion, alongside Reggad.

In what is yet another *Venice* highlight, Mathieu Klebeye Abonnenc's lively, fast-paced interview—stitched together from numerous exchanges staggered over the course of several years—with the late Sarah Maldoror (1929-2020) gives a sense of the humor and humanity of the militant film director of French West Indian descent who began her career as Gillo Pontecorvo's assistant during the shooting of *The Battle of Algiers*. It goes hand in hand with "La Discothèque de Sarah Maldoror," a selection of African, African American, and Antillean music featured throughout Maldoror's oeuvre, put together and contextualized for us by *Chimurenga* magazine's editor and founder Ntone Edjabe. The "Playlist," a constant in all three issues, is doubled up in this one by Zineb's own music selected in conversation with her long-lost sister Farida, to whom this issue is dedicated.

— A.G.

◀ Illustration in *Souffles*:
revue culturelle arabe
du Maghreb 18 (1970): 66.
Courtesy Abdellatif Laâbi



Exhibition view of *Dreams Have No Titles*, French Pavilion, Venice (Italy), 2022. Photo: Mathieu Carmona



Design by Mohamed Chebaa in *Souffles: revue culturelle arabe du Maghreb* 16/17 (1969): 8. Courtesy Abdellatif Laâbi

IN CONVERSATION:

YASMINA REGGAD AND ZINEB SEDIRA

YASMINA REGGAD: We created *aria* (artist residency in Algiers) in 2011. This was the start of our collaboration and it proved to be fertile ground for discoveries and knowledge exchange. This artist residency was first of all intended to welcome to Algiers professionals of contemporary art from the Maghreb and the rest of the world, and to facilitate encounters with the protagonists of the emerging Algerian art scene. It quickly became an institution that fostered numerous international partnerships—from Algiers toward the world—and its activities diversified to include discursive programs, curatorial training, exhibitions, and newly commissioned works. It fostered a unique rapport between us, culminating ten years later in the French Pavilion. Your work has been going back and forth between the United Kingdom, France, and Algeria for two decades now. How does *aria* fit into this?

ZINEB SEDIRA: I consider *aria* to be an extension of my artistic practice. This artist residency anchors my work more permanently in Algeria. It's also the HQ of my extended Algerian artistic family. I sometimes include the work of an artist supported by *aria* in some of my exhibitions, or we collaborate more directly on the development or the making of works. This was the case with Amina Menia who contributed to the research and filming of *Gardiennes d'images* [Image Keepers] (2010), or with Sofiane Zouggar whose project *Memory of Violence* (2018—) was presented as part of my solo exhibition *Air Affairs* and *Maritime NonSense* at the Sharjah Art Foundation in 2018. We will see many of these fellow artists in my *Dreams Have No Titles* exhibition at the French Pavilion.



During one of the three shootings of Zineb Sedira's film *Dreams Have No Titles* in the French Pavilion in Venice in January 2022. Photo: Zineb Sedira

YR: Is putting the city of Algiers on the map of international artistic centers of production an attempt to recreate the conditions of and offer a contemporary take on the Algiers of the 1970s, the “Meca of revolutionaries,” as Amílcar Cabral had dubbed it? Indeed, your new work references this context of intellectual and political ferment. It was a time when activists from all over the world met in Algeria to debate, extend the frontiers of the struggle, and invent new futures, in the hope of putting an end to colonial empires and colonialism, dictatorships, racism, fascism and capitalism. With that in mind, your new work brings together your allies, the emotional and intellectual family that has been with you and supported you throughout your career. It was present at its various stages, from research to the production and exhibition of the finished work.

ZS: My apprenticeship in collaboration began with my family—my mother, my father and my daughter—and it materialized in my earliest video works. It was only in 2006 that I started to shoot and travel with a professional crew, sharing unforgettable moments of creative exchange and political discussion, especially in Algeria and Mauritania. My inner circle has remained the same for many years, and these proved to be lasting friendships.

I feel the need to share experiences, discoveries, so as to make up for the isolation of the studio and move forward. These alliances and this second family are what drives my artistic development. It's therefore natural that my project should echo this genealogy and that I should seize the opportunity of this Venetian adventure to surround myself with former collaborators and contributors. This is the case with the photographer Thierry Bal, my companion in all the Mauritanian, Algerian, London-bound, and Venetian adventures; with the director of photography Emma Dalesman who had already worked on *MiddleSea* (2008), a film for which she traveled by sea from Marseille to Algiers and back; the boom of the sound recordist Ross Adams also reappears fifteen years after our last collaboration. The film crew was recently joined by a newcomer, my son Ali, who participated in all the filming sequences of *Dreams Have No Titles*.

And then, I am reunited with my great friends from London with whom I grew up as an artist: my “sister” Edith Pasquier, as a set photographer; the artist Sonia Boyce, my former neighbor who will occupy the neighboring British Pavilion, and Gilane Tawadros, one of my first curators, who has written extensively about my work—the two come together in my film to reminisce, in the span of a conversation, about the activist and cultural history of Brixton, our neighborhood.

Sadly, I quote far too few people. The credits for my film and the exhibition are as long as in movies! This is partly because of the shooting of a party scene to which I invited all my friends from Paris: Mourad, Hervé, Nabil, Olivier, Amel, Kapwani, Mohamed, Simon, Cléo, Sarah, Ghislaine, Laura, Zahia, Nico, Katia, Marie, Rayane, Anne-Marie, and Caroline. I even called on my musician friends Bardo, Margot, and Delphine who played live for the occasion.

YR: In *Dreams Have No Titles*, you've chosen to look at a major turning point in world history from the vantage of the cultural, intellectual, and avant-garde production of the 1960s and 1970s, with a focus on the seventh art. You are particularly interested in the collaborations between France, Italy, and Algeria, a rich yet largely overlooked repertoire of cinematographic co-productions, which you draw on for your project. In lieu of the bipolar East-West division that held sway during this phase of the Cold War, you prefer to highlight existing links, exchanges, and the North-South solidarity. Where does your passion for cinema—especially militant cinema—and for movie theaters come from? What were some of your influences and references?



Still from *Dreams Have No Titles* (2022) by Zineb Sedira. Courtesy the artist

ZS: When I talk about the cinema of this era, I'm talking about the films of my childhood in the 1960s, and about my father. It was with him that I went to the cinema Les Variétés in Gennevilliers (no longer around). There one could see Egyptian films, but it was the Italian peplums and Spaghetti Westerns that had the greatest impact on me. Gennevilliers is a crucial stage in the making of this project, and I recently filmed my parents in the Jean Vigo cinema.

Later, when I first visited the archives of the Algerian Cinémathèque in 2017, I discovered the country's rich cinematic heritage, which is hardly acknowledged when it comes to the history of the medium's avant-gardes. The films that were made following independence abided by Third World values and aesthetics—a true revolution on the big screen. I felt close to this militant and anti-colonial approach, inspired by the Cuban model and testifying to the political courage of certain directors. In my new project, it was important for me to remind people that in France and above all in Italy, directors (co-)produced films that supported and conveyed ideas developed in the Third World. As a result, I consider these co-productions to be among the most important manifestations of the solidarity advocated at the time, and that I'm trying to rekindle today.

Moreover, paying tribute to the Venice Film Festival was important to me because the French Pavilion is housed in the same city. And, needless to say, France and Algeria are two countries that are part of my identity!

It was a pleasure and an incredible opportunity to be able to spend time studying the filmography related to the Algeria-France-Italy “triangular” production network and, most of all, to discover new films or to see others again with fresh eyes: *Z* (1969) by Costa-Gavras, with whom I had the chance to speak in Paris as part of my research at the Cinémathèque Française, which he directs; Michel Drach's *Élise ou la vraie vie* [Elise, or Real Life] (1970), a recently restored film that has unjustly been forgotten; Ettore Scolla's *Le Bal* [The Ball] (1983), which covers fifty years of great moments in history, from the 1930s onwards, through as many musical genres and dances. At the Gramsci Foundation in Rome, we were able to see different script versions of Luchino Visconti's *The Stranger* (1967), revealing the director's disagreements with Albert Camus's widow, Francine Faure. And there was, of course, Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* (1966), which has haunted my artistic work ever since I first saw it in London in the 1990s.

For the militant films or ones that greatly inspired me but which do not belong to this category of co-produced films I would mention Mikhail Kalatozov's *Soy Cuba* (1964), Agnès Varda's *Salut les Cubains* (1963), Mohammed Lakhdar-Hamina's *December* (1972), Orson Welles's *F for Fake* (1973), Fatma-Zohra Zamoum's *Z'har* [(Un)lucky] (2009), Raoul Peck's *I Am Not Your Negro* (2016), and Pedro Almodóvar's *The Human Voice* (2020)...

YR: And yet, in your work, your passion and desire for cinema only become visible starting with your 2019 solo exhibition *A Brief Moment* at the Jeu de Paume in Paris, namely with the installation *Standing Here Wondering Which Way to Go* (2019), which is broken up into four scenes, a structure borrowed from the seventh art. In scene three, titled “Way of Life” with an ironic nod to the advent of North American domestic modernity, you literally move the living room of your London home into the museum. This installation is presented once more in the Venice exhibition, like a film set within which the public is invited to behave as if they were guests at your house. Incidentally, it

was used for shooting scenes of the film projected inside the Pavilion's screening room—a room that is at once a reproduction of the cinema of your childhood, a film set, and lastly a viewing room for visitors at the Venice Biennale. It's worth noting that most of the above-mentioned reference films are adaptations,¹ while you yourself, by means of the remake, summon filmic sequences, their settings and interpreters, in the resulting cinematographic installation.

Disquieting strangeness or Brechtian distancing? Yet again, you offer us a fiction of the real where all the elements of your biography and personal fiction are made identifiable for the public because they are historicized. Does the exhibition at the French Pavilion fulfill your dream of cinema?

ZS: Indeed, the *Way of Life* installation created especially for the Jeu de Paume exhibition, is the aesthetic starting point for my new installation at the French Pavilion. I have long been interested in the relationship between fiction and reality. As well as making films, I am a photographer. And so, aside from the fact that all the furniture, books, and objects had been lifted from my London living room, the photographic trompe l'oeil affixed to the walls is also highly relevant. Up to a certain point, we have the illusion of a reality that eventually projects us into an elsewhere, in this instance the original location. This device allows me to play with the notion of a mise en abyme by revealing my personal history—what I call the “little history”—within the big one.

As for the movie theater at the French Pavilion, it melds together two cinemas in Gennevilliers: Les Variétés, the cinema of my childhood, to which I pay tribute by borrowing its wooden folding seats, and the Jean Vigo cinema where I went in my teens, and whose dimensions are reproduced almost exactly in the Pavillon's screening room.

Moreover, remakes of scenes from films, which were indeed novel adaptations for the most part, feed into my film *Dreams Have No Titles*. It's a real game of Russian dolls! For these remakes, we built actual film sets. I also wanted to preserve a trace of the days during which these sequences had been shot, as artworks or installations in their own right dotted around the three rooms of the pavilion. Is it the end of a shoot? Did the crew just leave to have lunch? Will they come back tomorrow to continue shooting? I don't know if you remember what it felt like to visit the deserted studios of Cinecittà in Rome during the lockdown? There was no one around barring a few technical crews, and we were able to enter sets that were already set up or under construction, indoors and outdoors. The uncanny nature of this experience has stayed with me, and I wanted to share it with the audience in Venice.

But I also relate the notion of remake to that of the mise en abyme, which often crops up in my work. I myself am an artist-director making a film about films. My personal history is the starting point for a mise en abyme of the history of cinema by means of different strategies designed to create a fiction-reality.

YR: Very often you appear in your films as an artist-interviewer or an artist-researcher. It occurs to me that a work which casts light on the performative aspect of your Venice exhibition is the installation *Air Affairs* (2018), for which we traveled by train and plane for seven days across the British Empire, along the 1932 British Imperial Airways route that began in England and went all the way to India. For the entire journey, in all the public places we stopped at—from hotels to airports, all the way to our final destination, Sharjah—you daily performed the role of a woman from the 1930s. I vividly recall that your mere physical presence, with your small suitcase, beret, low bun, and sunglasses, transformed and shifted the reality of the world in October 2017 into a cinematic universe. As I followed you around to photograph your “performance,” I was attracting as much attention as a photographer chasing a star. Doesn't this work announce your desire to become an actress in your films? And wasn't it what convinced you that the two of us, who collaborated on this project, could also take part in your film?



Zineb Sedira, *Air Affairs*, 2018. Courtesy the artist, kamel mennour, Paris and The Third Line, Dubai

ZS: I have often appeared in my video projects as myself, the artist who interviews, questions, or speaks with her mother and daughter (*Mother Tongue*, 2002) or her father (*The Land of My Father*, 2016), or again with “image keepers” such as Hélène Detaille (*Transmettre en abyme*, 2012) or Safia Kouaci (*Image Keepers*, 2010).

Indeed, in *Air Affairs*, I adopt a different stance. For the first time, I put myself in the skin of a character, and I wear a period outfit and accessories.

We find this new kind of performance in *Dreams Have No Titles*. And it is with this experience in mind that I conducted a real casting among my friends and even the technical crew. My son Ali, the production assistant, thus plays the role of the bartender in the film *Le Bal* and watches me dance with my friend, the artist Fayçal Baghriche; Damien Bailly, who built some of the sets and filmed the *making of*, makes an appearance in *The Stranger*. As for you, the project's curator, I tapped into your talents as a performance artist and had you play in *The Battle of Algiers*!

Humor and comedy also had a place in *Air Affairs* through your involvement as a witness and “documentarian.” By playing the *paparazza*, you showed me that collaborations between artists or friends (even novice ones) opened up a world of creative possibilities. If truth be told, I had so much fun playing this 1930s part that I wanted to relive those moments with you and many others, and to infuse my film with this kind of humor.

1. Z, *Elise, or Real Life*, *The Stranger*, and *The Human Voice* are adaptations of homonymous novels by Vassilis Vassilikós, Claire Etcherelli, Albert Camus, and Jean Cocteau respectively, whereas the film *Le Bal* [The Ball] is an adaptation of the play staged by the Théâtre du Campagnol company.

YR: Over the past decade, we have traveled a lot together, and on this occasion we have browsed and rummaged through miles of archive shelving in Algeria and Italy. We share a passion for archives. And we had privileged access to incredibly rich and yet underused collections. I remember that an employee of the Algerian national television asked me to specify my profession: “What kind of researcher?” “I search for gold,” I replied earnestly. What are you searching for, Zineb? And what did you find?

ZS: As you know, I'm fond of old, abandoned (or not), and obsolete objects. I have a passion for ruins, among other, as evidenced by my photographic series *Haunted House I* (2006), or for rust (*The Lovers*, 2008). What's more, I collect and buy a lot of clothes, vinyl records, furniture, and objects from the 1960s and 70s. It was a real pleasure to spend so much time researching the design and fashion of this period, and then to go and hunt for all the objects needed for the exhibition set, as well as the costumes for the different interpreters in the film. My 1960s wardrobe has equally been put to good use!

Let's not forget that the research period coincided with the global pandemic in the spring of 2020. It immediately became apparent that I would not be able to freely consult the film archives of the three countries in question. This is why I called upon consultants, three experts in film archives from this period—Malika Laichoun Romane, who was to complete the research I had already carried out in previous years in Algeria, Léa Morin took on archival research in France, and Cecilia Cenciarelli in Italy.

I was nevertheless able to stay in Paris on several occasions and conduct research at the Cinémathèque Française, the National Center for Cinema, and the Cinémathèque Africaine. The two of us were also able, though not without some difficulties, to travel twice to Italy and explore, among other, the archives of the Cineteca di Bologna, the Italian National Film Library, which houses the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia (CSC), the Audiovisual Archive of the Labor and Democratic Movement (AAMOD), the Gramsci Foundation in Rome, as well as the collection of the National Museum of Cinema in Turin.

Of all these important heritage sites, the ones that made the deepest impression on me were the Cinecittà studios, and the different archive repositories at the Algerian Cinémathèque which preserve unsuspected treasures of film history from the 1960s and 70s. In general, I was inspired, both visually and conceptually, by film studios and sets, as well as the endless aisles of shelving filled to the brim with film reels of all shapes, materials, and periods.

And I finally hit upon a real gem! Some texts made reference to a mysterious film, *Les Mains libres*, sometimes called *Tronc de figuier* [Fig Tree Trunk], dating to 1964-65. Highly intrigued, I set out to find it. It turned out to be the first known international Algerian production and one of the first documentaries that had independent Algeria as its main subject. The premiere of the film took place in Algiers at the Cinéma l'Afrique in 1965. It was followed by a screening at the Cannes Film Festival (out of competition) and a few screenings in Italy, before disappearing from circulation. I finally managed to locate a 35mm print, titled *Tronc de figuier*, held in the AAMOD archives in Rome. Thanks to the efforts and enthusiasm of this institution and the Cineteca di Bologna, in charge of the film's restoration, I was able to view it quite quickly and even insert some snippets of the restored film into my own film for the Pavilion.

I was touched when I discovered this Algeria of 1964, which is not otherwise well documented. Images sweeping the entire Algerian territory from North to South and from East to West bear witness to the richness of the landscapes and the diversity of its traditions. They are interspersed with rare French archival materials from the Algerian War and accompanied by a beautiful text in voiceover. *Les Mains libres* is also a political and militant testimony; the film speaks of the residual traces of colonization and of the work yet to be done on the back of this newly-gained freedom.

— Y.R., Z.S.



Still from *Dreams Have No Titles* (2022) by Zineb Sedira. Courtesy the artist

The Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia (CSC), founded in Rome in 1935, has come to signify Italian cinema education in acting, directing, photography, set design, costume design, screenwriting, sound production, editing, production, and film animation (since 1983). The CSC has historically admitted a significant number of international students (more than 13 per cent) in the past 85 years.

1964

Cristiane (incompiuto) di Vittorio Saltini
Du bravi amici di Rosalia Pizzi
Dopo il buio di Roberto Faenza
Espana di Elena Lumbreras Gimenez
Il gutta di Ana Lanatta
Infanzia (incompiuto) di Stefano Silvestrini
Neo intimista di Franco Bricani
Riposati brav'uomo (Il matrimonio) di Carlo Morandi
Lo strangolatore di Boston di Dan Perry
Tutto per un provino di Rudolf Bregstein

1965

Le urance di Akiva Barkin
Bei tempi di Gianluigi Calderone
Camera d'albergo di Anita Triantafyllidou
Diritti del pubblico di Emidio Greco
Il duello di Adrian Maben
Erostrato (Gli altri eroi) di Roberto Faenza
Il furto di Humberto Blanco Pinol e Roberto Levy
La Gabbia (Partire) di Orlando Aguilar
La notte vuota di Alberto Severi
Salve Dimora di Oddo Bracci
Il sole si accende di Stefano Silvestrini

1966

Hasta di Roberto Levy
Eppur si muove di Oddo Bracci
Evelina Marco Aldo di Domenico D'Alessandria
Gli innamorati dell'amore (incompiuto) di Orlando Aguilar
Nome dei quali (incompiuto) di Mario Chiari
Patto di Humberto Blanco Pinol
Un po' di gelosia di Maxim Ghemon
Qui giace di Gianluigi Calderone
Sproloquio di Alberto Severi
Ti amo, ti amo di Bernardo Ramero Pereira
Uno due tre di Emidio Greco

Flavia Laviosa, Alfredo Baldi, Jim Carter and Diego Bonelli, "International students at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome: 1935-2020: A history to be written," *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies* 9(2): 175, 201.

CSC'S INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:
A CHRONOLOGICAL MAP

Names of the students, followed by their countries of origin (of which they held citizenship at the time of registration at the CSC) for the following years:

1964

BREGSTEIN, PHILO (NETHERLANDS)
 GOMI, NOBUO (JAPAN)
 HARTOG, SIMON RAOUL (UK)
 LEVINE, DAVID (ISRAEL)
 LUMBRERAS GIMÉNEZ, HELENA (SPAIN)
 MOCKLER, ANTHONY (UK)
 PEARSON, PETER (CANADA)
 PERRY, DAN (ISRAEL)
 POLIZZI, ROSALÍA (ARGENTINA)
 SHIRDEL, KAMRAN (IRAN)
 ZÜLFICAN, ÖMER YAHYA (TURKEY)

1965

BARKIN, AKIVA (ISRAEL)
 GRAHAM, MICHAEL ROBERT (USA)
 GROGAN, EUGENE LEO (USA)
 JAKER, WILLIAM BRIAN (USA)
 REILLY, JAMES FRANCIS (USA)
 SUNG, JOHN (TAIWAN)
 TRIANTAFYLLIDOU, JOANNA ANITA (CYPRUS)
 VRETTAKOS, COSTANTINOS (GREECE)

1966

AGUILAR PATIÑO, ORLANDO (PERU)
 BETANCUR, JAVIER (COLOMBIA)
 BLANCO PIÑOL, HUMBERTO DE JESÚS (CUBA)
 GHENOV, MAKSIM (BULGARIA)
 GROSS, RICHARD (USA)
 KHOSROW, AZARAN (IRAN)
 MABEN, ADRIAN (UK)
 LEVY VÁSQUEZ, ROBERTO FRANCISCO (MEXICO)
 PEREIRO ROMERO, BERNARDO (COLOMBIA)
 ROUSSOS, PANAGIOTIS (GREECE)
 SOUHEL, ABDEL (NATIONALITY NOT AVAILABLE)
 SOUHEIL BEN-BARKA (MOROCCO)
 VALLEJO RENDÓN, LUIS FERNANDO (COLOMBIA)

"Le esercitazioni degli allievi del CSC," in *Vivere il cinema - 50 anni del Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia*, Rome: Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Direzione Generale delle informazioni, dell'editoria e della proprietà letteraria artistica e scientifica, 1985, p. 111-112.

Exquisite Corpse:
Video Fieldwork

A film program curated by
NAEEM MOHAJEMEN

"Exquisite Corpse" was a cumulative daisy-chain sequence for students of the class "Edge of Frame: Fieldwork in Video Archive," taught over Zoom during the pandemic lockdown of fall 2020 at the Department of Anthropology, Columbia University, in collaboration with the Heyman Center. Following the surrealist drawing game, each student selected a film clip and wrote a narration for it. The film stitched together in this manner (with fifteen co-directors) was the first chapter, followed by three films with five co-directors. The final chapters were the individual films made by each student.

— N.M.



Poster for *Edge of the Frame: Fieldwork in Video Archive*, class at Columbia University, fall 2020

- ◆ **THE ANALYSIS**
dir. Matt Bates
(13', 2020)
- ◆ **UNTITLED**
dir. Maya Esberg
(10', 2020)
- ◆ **WATCH: BORDER AGENT'S GENDER REVEAL EXPLOSION IS THE MOMENT THE MASSIVE ARIZONA WILDFIRE STARTED**
dir. Audrey Gee
(8', 2020)
- ◆ **DORVAN**
dir. Abigail Hickman
(11', 2020)
- ◆ **WAITING**
dir. Mourin Irfat
(8', 2020)
- ◆ **GHOST TOUR**
dir. Charlotte Lucas
(12', 2020)
- ◆ **LOOMING DISPLACEMENT**
dir. Denise Mantey
(10'16", 2020)
- ◆ **A WOMAN MAKES A MOVIE**
dir. Amalia Rose Mayorga
(21'27", 2020)
- ◆ **THE SOUND OF ONE HAND WRITING**
dir. Jessie Morris
(14'28", 2020)
- ◆ **RAVENOUS DISCOURSE**
dir. Jonathan Murachanian
(15', 2020)
- ◆ **I AM LADY GAGA**
dir. Ibbly O'Carroll
(9', 2020)
- ◆ **EXQUISITE CORPSE**
dir. Bates, Esberg, Forsyth, Gee, Hickman, Hietpas, Irfat, Lucas, Mantey, Mayorga, Morris, Murachanian, O'Carroll, Pena, Wakil
(22', 2020)



Opening credits of *Tronc de Figuier / Les Mains libres* (1964-65) by Ennio Lorenzini. Still from *Dreams Have No Titles* (2022) by Zineb Sedira. Courtesy the artist

ITALIAN FILMMAKERS AND THE ALGERIAN QUESTION

Luca Peretti

Giovanni Pirelli was the son of a wealthy Italian entrepreneur. Not unlike the publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, he chose not to embrace a career in the family business and instead used his wealth to work in the cultural sphere. When at the very beginning of the 1960s he sought out and eventually met Frantz Fanon in North Africa, he had already been “actively involved with aiding the FLN through the Jeanson Network, a group of leftist intellectuals against torture and genocide and committed to Algerian independence, and he provided funding and documents to deserters and political prisoners,” as scholar Rachel Love wrote, drawing on the research of Italian historian Cesare Bermani. In fact, there was widespread support for the Algerian struggle for liberation, and the *questione algerina* (the Algerian question) was hotly debated in Italy. As poet, cultural organizer, and leftist militant Franco Fortini wrote to writer Elio Vittorini in 1960, “what happens in France and Algeria concerns all of us. The future of French democracy depends on the solution of the Algerian conflict, and this means that the future of the democracy in all of our countries depends on the victory of the Algerian nation.”

Leftist intellectuals were very involved in

deed. One can look, for instance, at the exhibition *La nazione algerina* (“The Algerian Nation”) that took place in Milan just before the Algerian independence (June 1962) with photographs and documents of the struggle for liberation of the Algerian people on display. The committee that promoted it reads like a who’s who of the intellectual left of the time: Lelio Basso, Renato Guttuso, Giulio Einaudi, Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, Giovanni Pirelli, Rossana Rossanda, etc. Some of them were also the promoters of the *Comitato anticoloniale italiano* (Italian Anticolonial Committee), which produced texts, leaflets, and also a movie, a short propaganda film entitled *Algeria anno 7* (Algeria Year 7), perhaps the first openly pro-Algerian Italian audiovisual work (as Erica Bellia has shown in her research). Before that, or at the same time, photographers like Mario Dondero and Vittorugo Contino traveled to Algeria. Other directors did too: Renzo Rossellini, the son of Roberto and a filmmaker himself, was in Algeria at some point during the war and he collaborated with Algerian filmmakers before the independence; legendary B-movie and underground director Alberto Cavallone may have gone to Algeria but he went to Tunisia for sure (as with other aspects of his life, mysteries

abound) and a lost film, *La sporca guerra* (The dirty war), may have dealt with the Algerian War—again, best to use the conditional here. In short, for the Italian left, the Algerian War became the symbolic one (before the revolution in Cuba, before the imperialist war waged by the US in Vietnam), but it wasn’t only an affair of the left.

In fact, perhaps more surprisingly, it wasn’t only the left that explicitly or implicitly supported the Algerian struggle for independence. It is well known for example that Eni, the Italian national oil company, whose president was the Christian Democrat Enrico Mattei (until his killing in 1962), sided and supported Algerians, and perhaps even played a role in the Évian Accords between Algeria and France. What is less known is the fact that a film was proposed to Eni—which at the time, like most companies, sponsored several films—precisely on the subject of the Algerian independence struggle, and in particular the dangers posed by the OAS (the French right-wing paramilitary organization). The script, preserved at the Eni archives, had among its writers the screenwriter of *The Battle of Algiers*, Franco Solinas. In the introduction to the script, the connection between Algeria, Italy, and the importance of anticolonial struggle is clearly drawn: “The film wants to talk about the irresistible push toward freedom of the underdeveloped countries, the internal struggle of colonialism and its consequences in the life of the metropolis. We are Italians, but we are first of all Europeans, and the French war against Algeria (with its consequences) concerns us too [...]. Of course, the threat is everywhere, but the Algerian war and the corruption it has provoked in France seems exemplary to us.”

During the 1960s, after the Algerian independence, the relationships built during this period of solidarity and interactions took on a different shape. Casbah Films, an Algerian production company, started to co-produce films with Italian producers and directors. The best known of these films is also one of the most important films in the history of cinema: according to scholar David Forgacs, “*The Battle of Algiers* was the product of a fortuitous and fortunate encounter between an FLN activist turned film producer [Yacef Saadi] looking for a director and two Italians [Gillo Pontecorvo and Franco Solinas] who were seeking a producer for an anti-colonial story. Each brought different resources, knowledges and skills to the project.” That encounter had precedents, inspirations, contacts, and perhaps even existing networks to rely on. What’s more, Casbah Films had just produced another film, also directed by an Italian, Ennio Lorenzini, a documentary director who will later make a feature-length fiction film. *Les Mains libres* (also known by the title *Tronc de figuier*, 1964-65) was filmed in the mid 1960s, just two years after the independence, in the midst of transformations and evolutions in Algerian society. This documentary, around fifty minutes long, was only recently rediscovered at the “Audiovisual Archive of the Democratic and Labor Movement” (AAMOD) in Rome, where it has been preserved and not forgotten for over fifty years. The first part of the film, entitled “Sea and Desert,” recounts the return of Algerians from France (by way of the sea), and the work done to extract oil from the desert. Stylistically, the film is reminiscent of industrial cinema, that of films sponsored by companies to talk about their work—though this did not preclude artistic concerns. The second part, “The struggle,” is closer however to militant cinema: we see how the war against France unfolded, how Algerians organized themselves in their fight. The final part, “Freedom,” shows two aspects of contemporary Algeria: a rural self-government council and a group of young people discussing the future of the country and especially how and if socialism and Islam can be reconciled. Before Pontecorvo’s famous *The Battle of Algiers*, by means of different cinematic styles and traditions, Lorenzini shows the birth of a nation, within the context of anticolonial and Third-Worldist struggles.

RÉ 44^e festival international du film documentaire
EL 11 mars 2022
 FR / EN

ACCUEIL _ LA PROGRAMMATION _ RDV EUROPEENS DU DOCUMENTAIRE DE PATRIMOINE _ LES PROJETS

LES MAINS LIBRES
 Ennio Lorenzini / 1964 / Algérie / 53 minutes / Français, Arabe

ARCHIVIO AUDIOVISIVO DEL MOVIMENTO OPERAIO E DEMOCRATICO
 To be published **SOON**

The 2022 annual publication of the AAMOD

Algeria, internazionalismo e cinema italiano

Edited by Letizia Cortini, Luca Peretti and Paola Scarnati

will be published in **THE SECOND HALF OF 2022**

POUR UNE MEILLEURE INFORMATION

SOUFFLES propose un échange publicitaire avec toutes les revues et publications anti-impérialistes et de soutien à la cause des peuples palestinien et arabes.

— L.P.

IN CONVERSATION: GILANE TAWADROS AND SONIA BOYCE



GILANE TAWADROS: Let's talk about squatting, shall we? And I don't mean what you do in the gym.

SONIA BOYCE: I don't go to the gym.

GT: Well, that's easier then. So, tell me, were there squats here on Villa Road?

SB: Yes, this whole street during the 70s, became a squat, like a lot of London at that point. London was pretty decimated after the war, in terms of housing, and so there were a lot of places that needed care. Villa Road had become a squat and then a housing cooperative; there were other squats as well here in Brixton. But this particular road was famous during the 70s, as there was a battle between squatters and the police. So much so that it was not only on the news but the BBC made a documentary about this battle. Brixton as a whole has historically had that kind of counter-cultural energy... Living here as part of the cooperative was really about cheap housing. Good spaces but mainly cheap housing that was part of activist culture that spanned the late 60s, early 70s, and into the 80s.

GT: So many artists and musicians couldn't have made it as creative people in that critical peer period after leaving art school when you've basically got five years to really make a commitment to your art form or else the likelihood is you're not going to become an artist, and that was facilitated by housing co-ops but also the fact that people were able to squat houses. Practically all artists of a certain generation at one point or other lived either in a housing cooperative or a squat.

SB: That's how Zineb and I got to know each other; it was because we were living in Brixton Housing Co-op which is not far from Villa Road. There is an informal network of people often working in the cultural industries: writers, artists, musicians, people in theatre, social workers. Someone might mention that they know that you're living in cheap housing but maybe you have to move from there because of a lease that might be coming to an end or, if you're squatting, there's a chance that the house might get taken back by the authorities, by the council. You've got what was happening here in South London, but it was happening in lots of different parts of London. In the 70s, I was growing up in East London and I was connected with what my teachers were part of, and that housing cooperative culture was connected to the Rock Against Racism and other activist scenes. Or you have somewhere like Westbourne Grove or Notting Hill, where there was a lot of squatting. What was really interesting about the model that had developed in West London was that a lot of young people who were studying law were part of that squatting culture. That meant there was foresight in terms of the legal questions not only about squatting but also about property and land ownership. A lot of what went on in those micro, I could almost say tribal communities, was the exchange of how you can work the system and be a cultural activist at the same time.



Sonia Boyce and Zineb Sedira were representatives and members of the Black Women Study Group initiated in 1996 in Brixton. Photo: Zineb Sedira's private archive



Still from *Dreams Have No Titles* (2022) by Zineb Sedira. Courtesy the artist

GT: People forget how there was a sort of punk DIY culture which was about problem solving, finding yourself a place to live, a place where you can make work, create connections with people. Later on in the 80s, when there were so many empty office blocks, it facilitated lots of artists and curators to occupy those spaces and make them into temporary galleries or exhibition spaces. And that is what fueled the whole contemporary art economy here in London. There are things going on in other parts of the country but really that huge push and growth came out of artists doing things for themselves and making use of whatever resources they could find.

SB: I am wondering about when you first came to see me and, to be honest, I can't remember how we got to know each other.

GT: I somehow got your contact details but I can't remember how, maybe through the Whitechapel Art Gallery because I had seen the show that you were in, *From Two Worlds*, and I wanted to do my MA on you, Lubaina Himid, and Sutapa Biswas. But there wasn't very much written about any of you. So, I had to go directly to the source. You were very generous: you invited me to come see you and I came with my cassette tape recorder. I still have the cassettes. My archive is full of things, referencing you and Zineb. If you or Zineb need to find anything, I've got things stashed away I didn't know I had. I still have the tapes of the interviews I did with you about your work. It was through those conversations that I got to know you, that I was able to write about your work.

SB: I am thinking about that moment when Zineb was living in the Brixton Housing Co-op, and Rotimi Fani-Kayode was living a few doors down on Railton Road, the photographer Ajamu, the photographer and stylist, Ka-che Kwok, C.L.R. James, who I know was really significant for you in terms of the question of writing and history. Race Today Collective were looking after C.L.R. James. One could call it a "bohemian life," a way of living that was resistant to mainstream culture. There was a lot being built here in this one small neighborhood.

GT: It's incredibly important. Autograph—the Association of Photographers that Rotimi Fani-Kayode helped to establish—also started off right across the road from Brixton tube station, in the Bon Marché building.

SB: In the house that I lived in Railton Road, we had a dark room, so there were lots of photographers coming through the house to use the dark room. Joy Gregory, Robert Taylor, Rotimi Fani-Kayode, Ingrid Pollard... There was a lot of cross-fertilization happening. Creation for Liberation that had come out of the Race Today collective, who produced these annual open exhibitions where they would invite someone like Eddie Chambers to come and Chila Burman to be a selector from an open submission. And then, down the other end of Railton Road, the Herne Hill end, you'd got the 198 Gallery which was set up as a hub for art and culture. It was all happening in Brixton. For me, Brixton is a place that generates creative energy because there are so many different kinds of people that live in the same space, that are somehow affected by the same energy. There is a variety of informal networks and a lot that has emerged from here.

— S.B., G.T.

The title of the project draws on a passage from Valentino Orsini's film *I dannati della terra* (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 1969), an homage to Frantz Fanon's 1961 book by that title. The plot revolves around Fausto—a white, Italian filmmaker and professor—who is ridden with ethical and ideological angst as he attempts to complete a film on decolonization struggles left unfinished by his late friend Abramo—a black, African filmmaker. Fausto defines this work as a "a bomb to be loaded so that it might make noise." This expression acts here as a methodological compass to think about the potential intrinsic to the activation of this historical material in the present, while considering the ideological commitment that has allowed for both its formation and current preservation. Just as Fausto is faced with the task of paying homage to, and expanding on, Abramo's revolutionary work, similarly, Giovanni Pirelli (see *Chapter 0*) took it upon himself to build on Fanon's legacy. The work of the Centro di documentazione Frantz Fanon founded by Giovanni Pirelli in 1963 can be thought of as a similar process, raising many of the same questions that are voiced by Fausto in the film. Furthermore, Orsini's adoption of Third Cinema aesthetics and ethos provides both a visual and methodological reference point for the project. In the exhibition, some of the most critical musings in the film are put in dialogue with Giovanni Pirelli's self-reflexive writing within the installation *A Bomb to Be Reloaded* (*Chapter 1*). Part of this work was developed with the students from Brera Art Academy in Milan. The installation includes historical documents, publications and quotes printed on large banners, as well as an interview with Kadigia Bove, a Somali-Italian actress and singer who appeared in Orsini's film. This presence also attempts to make up for women's lack of visibility in the narration of the historical context of what is referred to as "Third-Worldism." The installation emphasizes the importance of self-analysis and self-criticism in the authors' writing and in the exhibition.

01./03. View of the exhibition "A Bomb to be Reloaded" at the Villa Romana, Florence (Italy), 2019. Photo: Leonardo Morfini (OKNO studio).
 04. Interview with Kadigia Bove. View of the exhibition "A Bomb to be Reloaded" at the Villa Romana, Florence (Italy), 2019. Photo: Leonardo Morfini (OKNO studio).

ALESSANDRA
 FERRINI

érythrée



01

Illustration in *Souffles*: >
 revue culturelle arabe
 du Maghreb 19 (1970): 8.
 Courtesy Abdellatif Laâbi

< Illustration in *Souffles*:
 revue culturelle arabe du
 Maghreb 19 (1970): 46.
 Courtesy Abdellatif Laâbi

04

namibie

mozambique

zimbabwe



02
 03

✓ Study plan for the scenography of the film *The Stranger* by Luchino Visconti. Fondazione Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia - Biblioteca "Luigi Chiarini." Courtesy Daniela Garbuglia, Gina Shu Garbuglia and Peiti Yeh

Interview with
JOHN AKOMFRAH

AFTER YEAR ZERO - GEOGRAPHIES OF COLLABORATION SINCE 1945

After Year Zero: Geographies of Collaboration since 1945, exhibition and conference at Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (Germany), 2013. Curated by Anselm Franke and Annett Busch in cooperation with the artists of the exhibition and research curator Heidi Ballet. Courtesy Smoking Dogs Films and John Akomfrah

The question people are always intrigued by and ask is: what is the relationship between all these converging ideas and political commitments in the work. And the simple answer is that they are not, in principle, separate in my mind. The reasons why I got involved in moving image culture wasn't to make *Gone with the Wind*, you know, it was as part of an ongoing set of engagements with matters political, cultural, and of course national. And the second thing that I think is important to say is that a lot of the work for me emerged out of an engagement with a set of people. If you are part of a collective and you've got a range of people from different backgrounds, different classes and ethnicities, they come with their own political cultural agendas, and so the work becomes a kind of distillation of these competing, converging forces. So yes, I would be interested in liberation theory, for instance, in Fanon's ideas. We've got women who are raising questions about gender identity and questions of power. We've got literary figures interested in Derrida and Roland Barthes who are saying, "Well, actually, we need to deal with a question of authorship." You've got political fellow travelers who say, "Actually, the question of race in class needs to be thought through," etc. These are questions that emerge out of a personal engagement with a range of people who are part of this collective that you're part of. But also out of their attempt to make the work, because the work is trying to say something about difference and political power, about marginality and exclusion, and these things are not just filmic. They are epistemic, cultural, and political. So it's a complicated question but what I am saying is that some of it is forced on you by the nature of the associations you make and some of it arises out of a desire to make a difference in your practice.

— J.A.

*A mise en abyme...
Sharing and merging
political and personal
stories*

[PAUSE]

*Crossing the Atlantic
My own experience of
migrating to London...*

*Algerians crossing the
Mediterranean*

*A re-enactment of my
family script as the
colonised,
as immigrants*

MADJID ASSOUL
HORYA MAKHLOUF
RAYANE MCIRDI



01

"Venise 2022" is not only a significant event on the international cultural scene, but is also the name of a space for artistic and historical reflection that was launched in Gennevilliers in March 2021. The project is led by Chaker, Chayma, Djaafar, Doria, M. Douss, Horya, Imane, Léa, Inès, Madjid, Messaoud, Miloud, Rayane, Syrène, Zaineb, and the city's department of culture and youth.

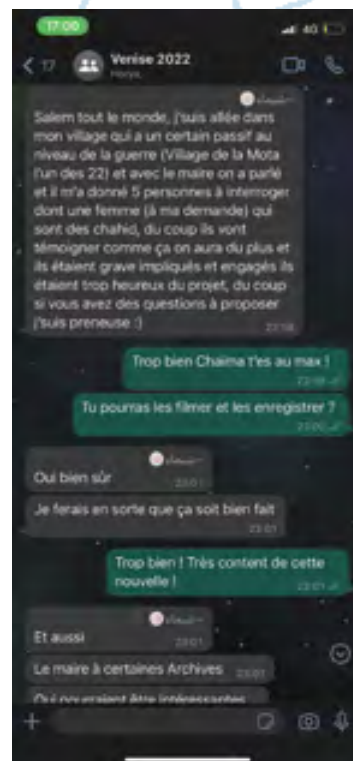
At its heart are encounters and a will to explore some of the shared history of those involved in this work of memory. For one thing, there are the Chibanis, a word borrowed from Maghrebi Arabic (تجانبية: the one with white hair) to designate the workers who arrived in France in the 1950s from certain countries that were part of its colonial dominions. Now retired, they still often live in workers' hostels (there are five in Gennevilliers). There are also the young people, aged between 16 and 21, born or studying in Gennevilliers, many of North African descent, who met at the Lycée Galilée, as part of the city's youth programmes, or during the 17 October 1961 commemoration day. Alongside them are the artist Rayane Mcirdi—mentored by Zineb Sedira—Madjid Assoul, responsible for youth services, and

Horya Makhlof, a cultural mediation officer.

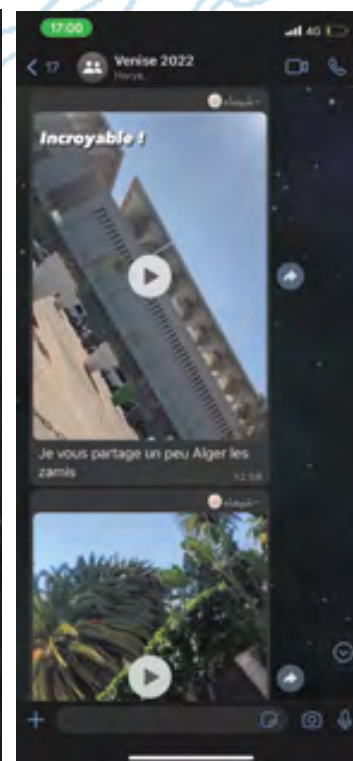
During this long-term investigation, carried out on a voluntary basis, the Chibanis and the young people meet up, put questions and listen to each other, tracing unofficial accounts missing from the historical and official discourses recounting the Algerian War and the French colonisation. At the workers' hostel at 115 Avenue des Grésillons, at the Espace Mandela, dedicated to the young people of Gennevilliers, the École Municipale des Beaux-Arts/Galerie Édouard-Manet, as well as at the Cinéma Jean-Vigo, they have collected words and memories, compiled anecdotes and archives, watched examples of counter-narratives and films suggested by Zineb Sedira (including Mohamed Lakhdar-Hamina's *Chroniques des années de braise* [Chronicles of the Years of Fire], winner of the 1975 Palme d'Or at Cannes but since forgotten).

A film will be created from all this live matter, and from the exchanges that nourished it, directed by Rayane Mcirdi and co-written with his young collaborators. It will bear witness to an intergenerational experiment of discovery of the Other, of sharing knowledge and histories, both personal and collective.

01. From left to right: Kahlalou Messaoud, Madjid Assoul, Miloud Mesbah and Rayane Mcirdi. Project "Venise 2022," 2021-2022. Photo: Rayane Mcirdi.
02./03. Extracts from exchanges on the Whatsapp group "Venise 22." Screenshots, Rayane Mcirdi, 2022.
04. Survey collectively prepared by the group "Venise 22." Screenshot, Rayane Mcirdi, 2022.



02



03



04

One
troub

Sixty
still i

A fem

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Wassyla Tamzali

AN ALGERIAN EDUCATION

Wassyla Tamzali, *Une éducation algérienne. De la révolution à la décennie noire* (Paris: Gallimard, 2007), Collection Témoins, 52–54

In the shadow of the prophets, the children of the Algerian revolution gave birth to the idea of the Tri-Continental Film Festival. We were going to carry the good news across the sea: “Algeria will be the cinema capital of the three continents.” Boudj in his long black coat à la Garibaldi, Yazid, Mustafa, Muloud from Paris, and me with the glasses of a star—we were all in Pesaro to announce the good news. The Revolution! Comrades! Italy! The cinema! (But also, pasta and Chianti.) We were smart, beautiful, and funny. Ours was one hell of a cinema! I traveled there with Raymundo Gleyzer. It was a glorious time when love and revolution were synonymous. But the party was ruined. We left Algiers at the beginning of the Chilean military coup and arrived in Rome at the end of the drama, 11 September 1973, our 9/11. The Americans, following their favorite script of doing everything to prevent hope, reacted quickly to the speakers at the Club des Pins. On the airport bus to Rome, we learned with incredulity that the Chilean army had overthrown the debonair president, the good doctor Allende, who looked just like a family doctor. He who dreamed of a socialist revolution, with consensus for his movement, and whom the American ambassador referred to as a “bastard” in his memoirs! September 11, 1973 was the first warning shot against the uprising of the peoples of the three continents. In Piazza Lazzarini, the ideal square of the small town of Pesaro, the commercial port of mountainous Urbino with its Renaissance castle, home to Paolo Uccello’s *The Miracle of the Desecrated Host*, which I then saw for the first time and devoutly admired, with its *trompe-l’œil* library, the perfect image of European humanism, which fascinated me and made me so critical of my own people. There, in the heart of beauty and civilization, I discovered the lie of politics. In the face of general impotence, footage of the tragedy was broadcast live on television for hours. We were plunged into horror. This was followed by the aerial bombardment of the Moneda Palace, where Allende and his collaborators had taken refuge. Faced with death, he ultimately chose to be alone, killing himself with the gun his friend Castro had given him. He became a legend, while leaving us all in mourning. Then came the bloody violence of the army against the civilian population, against the thousands of men and women who were sheltering in the stadium. Victor Jara, the guitarist whose fingers were cut off, was killed by 34 bullets... “They ask me: why does your poetry / not speak of the dream, of the leaves / of the great volcanoes of your homeland / Come see the blood in the streets / Come see / the

blood in the streets / Come see / the blood in the streets.” Pablo Neruda, who abandoned his candidacy for President when he learned that his friend was going to run, died in Madrid shortly after Allende, once again allowing Allende to precede him.

A podium was set up in Piazza Lazzarini and the panels of the Mostra were covered up with white sheets. Like dirty shrouds, the sheets were splattered with angry red words that implicated Vietnam, Palestine, and the people of Chile in the same martyrdom. The locals looked upon us with favor. We left the Teatro Sperimentale to go out into the square with thousands of people, carried away by the power of the speeches in a language we did not understand but whose meaning we could guess. It was a moment of dark beauty. Italian politicians and trade unionists harangued the crowd, giving vent to their anger at the tragedy and the American support for the criminals. Here beat some of the heart of the world. Indifferent birds performed their usual ballet in the reddish sky of late autumn, and doves bathed in the white marble fountain. We had received our first blow, the first bloodbath that washed away our dreams. There would be more.

The Latino filmmakers who came there were no choirboys, and since fiction precedes reality, some of the films foreshadowed what had just happened. When I saw Allende in newsreel images captured in a film on the day of his inauguration, younger looking, resurrected, surrounded by deputies with grim faces who were already beyond themselves, I felt like shouting, “Beware Presidente!” It was too late.

After Pesaro, I never saw Raymundo again. The Argentine army, buoyed by Pinochet’s success and the impunity of his crimes, stepped up its repression. Shortly after our time in Pesaro, coming off a flight from Buenos Aires to New York, he was kidnapped. We never had news of him again, not me, nor his fellow fighters from Argentina. Reality caught up with us. At the end of vigorous discussions on cinema, the enemy put a very real hand on the shoulder of a comrade.

All I have left is a Polaroid photo taken in a village in Kabylia, a round, sonorous name, an ungainly figure beside me in the deserted Piazza Navona, a young man and a young woman, an Argentine and an Algerian, lost in the night, caught up in a world that would soon turn upside down. Everything else between us had dissolved. An unfaithful memory, another reality. I went back in Algeria. The struggle went on.

There was never a second Tri-Continental Film Festival, but for many years after, Algiers continued to host all those who fought for the liberation of the people. The world revolved around Algiers, and we around the world: Chileans, Palestinians, Spaniards, Moroccans, Portuguese.... At that time the city had the soul of a metropolis. The international utopian community looked upon us with dewy eyes, and I was proud to be the cherished host of this magical place. We still had the passion of the first hour and the unique opportunity of being children of Algeria’s early years. We didn’t age at the same rate as the calendar. Yes, our youth lasted a long time.

— W.T.



During an interview between Wassyla Tamzali, Maya Ouabadi, Touda Bouanani, and Léa Morin. First edition of *En attendant Omar Gatlatto* by Wassyla Tamzali (1979). Mock-up by Mohamed Khadda. Photo: Léa Morin, 2021

À Paraître

« En attendant Omar Gatlatto »
de Wassyla Tamzali
Direction d'édition Maya Ouabadi,
Léa Morin et Touda Bouanani.

Publication en trois langues (arabe, français et anglais) du livre de Wassyla Tamzali sur le cinéma algérien (et introduction au cinéma tunisien) paru en 1979 à Alger. Jamais distribué, quelques exemplaires ont été sauvés du pilon il y a une dizaine d'années par l'autrice, activiste féministe et écrivaine Wassyla Tamzali.

À paraître à l'automne 2022 aux Éditions Motifs (Alger) en collaboration avec Archive Books (Berlin) et Talitha (Rennes).

Conserve, Show, Restage, Revivify.

THE FILM AS (TRANS)PORTABLE AND PROJECTABLE MUSEUM*

Eugénie Zvonkine

One of the less studied aspects of the complex relations between cinema and museums as well as exhibition spaces is the idea that cinema could be (and sometimes already is) the guardian, the keeper, the curator, and the missing link between museums and artworks that belong to it. Of course, a vast range of interactions exists between video, cinematic renditions, and museum and exhibition practices; among these, the category of “exhibition films” made regularly to accompany exhibitions has to be taken in account. Some of them lack an independent artistic scope, and are there only to document an exhibition, while others present inventive and artistic approaches.

The lockdowns around the world, for instance, have inspired museums to invent new ways of conveying the museum space to the audience by means of the moving image. These videos are an important way for spectators and scholars to experience the exhibitions no longer available to them. One might imagine a whole range of films that give an account of real or invented exhibitions. On one side of the spectrum, we would find films whose goal it is to give an account of an event rather than to integrate one artistic form into another. The two feature films that this paper will discuss would be situated on the other side. These are, of course, only two examples from a

large collection of feature films using and representing invented museum spaces.

In France, two edited collective volumes were dedicated to this specific practice in cinema.¹ In her discussion of Mark Lewis’s film *Cinema Museum* (2008), Barbara Le Maître showed how the experimental director and visual artist “transformed a medium into an instrument of *musealization*.”² By exploring film as a *conservation* and *curating* practice of invisible and ephemeral art forms, my own text prolongs their reflections and analysis.

My examples come from very different social, historical, and cultural contexts in order to allow us to observe



The Way We Look Now III, 2021 © Zineb Sedira. Courtesy kamel mennour, Paris and The Third Line, Dubai.

MINISTRE DE LA CULTURE
Algérien de la Cinématographie
Bibliothèque Algérienne

Format

35 mm

Titre

⓪

ASIRI

Durée

30 min

Qualité

A et B

Version

ARABE

Partie

1

Copie n°

26



© Dreams Have No Titles

how these questions are addressed by artists and directors from a variety of backgrounds. The cult Soviet film *Assa* (1987) by Sergey Solovyov, my first case study, aims to make visible a work of art rendered invisible by censorship and the socio-political system in place. In the case of the French documentary *Jean-Luc Godard, the Disorder Exposed* [*Jean-Luc Godard, le désordre exposé*, 2012] by Céline Gailleurd and Olivier Bohler, on the other hand, if the exhibition is invisible, it is because of its public failure and brevity. In both films, cinema rescues the artwork from oblivion, and embodies what André Bazin called its ontological function, that of embalming.³ For this reason, I would prefer using the term “museum” to qualify the spaces created by the films, rather than simply equating them with audio-visual exhibitions. Indeed, whereas the exhibition’s aim is to present artefacts to the public and it is mostly an ephemeral form, the museum works not only as a display but also as a conservation and preservation space.

ASSA AS A “PORTABLE MUSEUM”

Sergey Solovyov discovered the work of the “New Artists” group founded by Timur Novikov in 1982, and decided to feature some of it in the film. These artists were unknown to the general public and the film became a way of presenting their work to a wider audience. Solovyov made the most of his status as a renowned and respected film director in the Soviet context and of what it allowed him to do: “They were half-forbidden, and I was completely authorized!” (Solovyov 2012). Some of the artists whose work will appear in *Assa* were part of the famous “bulldozer exhibition,” staged on the wasteland between the Profsoiuznaia and Ostrovitianova streets in Moscow on 15 September 1974. This exhibition of non-conformist and avant-garde art was repressed by actual bulldozers sent by Leonid Brezhnev, which destroyed most of the artworks. However, as Emanuel Landolt reminds us, this decision “and the indignant reaction on the international level that followed, forced the regime to soften the political repression, which profoundly changed the artistic landscape (with the first organization of semi-official exhibitions).”⁴

While preparing the film, Solovyov discovered the flat that Novikov turned into an art gallery named *Assa*. Impressed by the artistic potency of what he saw, he nonetheless took on the role of an art curator and conservator: “Sergey Bugayev ‘Afrika’ took me to his room, where he lived, which was later reproduced exactly as it was in the film *Assa*. When I entered it, I immediately said: ‘this needs to be transferred into the film in the same way that the Hermitage Museum was evacuated during the war. You need to put a number on every item, take it away and reinstall it identically on the set.’”⁵

The lead actor in the film, Sergey “Afrika” Bugayev, a musician and a visual artist, talked about their collaboration as a way of “relocating” their art inside the film: “We transferred our ways of working, of relating to each other onto the platform of Solovyov’s film. We were very thankful to him because he was very attentive to and respectful with every proposal and suggestion made by Sergey Shutov and Timur Novikov.”⁶ The notion of “relocation,” which Francesco Casetti uses to characterize moments when cinema is presented *not* on the wide screen but on the computer or other interactive screens, emphasizes the spatial transference of the artworks from the ephemeral real-life space accessible only to a few viewers and spectators (there are only a few surviving testimonies of this gallery and of its precise installation) to a more lasting venue that is also accessible to many more viewers: the set and the film itself. In this respect, it is striking that the title of the film is the same as the name of the art gallery, as if in an attempt to substitute one for the other.

The story of the film’s premiere, which was meant to take place in the Udarnik, one of the oldest movie theaters in Moscow, makes obvious the need for cinema to act as a platform for underground and non-conformist artists. Inaugurated in 1931, and for a long time considered as the country’s most important movie theatre, in 1989 it still had 1200 seats. Solovyov wanted to accompany the premiere of the film by an exhibition of avant-garde painters from Moscow and Leningrad, besides a concert by underground rock groups.⁷ In the end, the first public screening of *Assa* took place on 24 March 1988, at the DK Melz, aka the Dvoretz na Lauze, also an important venue, but not as big (800 seats) nor as central as the Udarnik. The Soviet administration thus tried and effectively managed to marginalize the avant-garde and underground artists in the final years of the Soviet era.

However, the film did play its part as a “portable” museum since it started showing in different cinemas in April 1988 and had over 17 million viewers during the Soviet period. Even though some of the spectators (perhaps many) will not have been aware of the artworks they saw in the film, they were made widely available. Natalya Surkova, an art curator in the city of Perm, discovered the non-conformist painters thanks to a screening of *Assa* in a local movie theater in 1988: “At that time, it was my very first encounter with contemporary art. How could we even know this sort of thing existed? Until 1989, Perm was a closed city, and I didn’t know any local artists at the time.”⁸

THE FILM ABSORBS THE ARTWORK

There are a number of artworks in the film, including *The Communication Tube* by Guennady Donskoy, Mikhail Roshal-Fedorov, and Viktor Skersis (group Gnezdo, 1975);⁹ *The Iron Curtain* by Gennady Donskoy, Mikhail Roshal-Fedorov, and Viktor Skersis (group Gnezdo, 1975); Sergey Shutov’s *Hand With a Gas Mask* lamp. Sergey “Afrika” Bugayev shows a notebook with his drawings in the film. The first of Bananan’s dreams in the film is Bugayev’s experimental animation made by painting on film. The second “dream” is an excerpt from Evgeny Kondratyev’s film *Nanainana* (1984). Thus, Solovyov really becomes a curator of contemporary art, introducing in his film excerpts from other films, just as they could be screened in a museum. Even though there might not be enough pieces for a real-life museum, contemporary art still features more prominently in the film than it would normally do in a Soviet film at the time. What is especially interesting is how these artworks are woven into the cinematic and fiction canvas of the feature film.

There are three different modalities in which Bananan’s room is shown in the film. The first one is that of the “guided tour,” a traditional stylistic exercise in a museum.¹⁰ There are two of those in the film. The second one, given by Bananan himself when he comes back to his room after being beaten up, shows in quite an obvious way the director’s desire to make the spectator “visit” this space as if they were a museum visitor. Bananan, as the lodger and the owner of this room, is not very likely to explore and discover different items in it. Still, this is what he does, and the camera lingers on his hands touching and moving around different art objects in the room.

The longest sequence in which we find ourselves inside the “exhibition” room takes place an hour after the beginning of the film. Alika and Bananan are talking, and Alika starts looking around the room. She asks: “Who is this?” Bananan does not stop at the object he was questioned about: “This is my favorite singer, Nick Cave. And this is Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space. And this is the *Communication Tube*.” The camera, in tune with this new turn of events, leaves the characters and gets closer to the wall, gliding along the wall and the artefacts being described. The *Communication Tube* is presented just as in a museum since there is not only the object itself but also a wall label with instructions for its use next to it.

In yet another cinematographic modality of weaving artworks into the film canvas, the feature film literally engulfs the art object which becomes interactive and participates in

the dramaturgy of the characters’ relationships. Bananan explains to Alika how the *Tube* works in “position number one” (Alika speaks, he listens) then in “position number two” (he speaks, Alika listens). This display authorizes Alika to reveal to him her close relationship with the mafioso Krymov and her reluctance to leave him. When Krymov, who has discovered her feelings for Bananan, tries to force her to tell him about it, they both freeze, their ears pressed to the tube, in a new position, which could be “position number three.” Thus, the film breathes new life into the artwork and even invents new uses for it.

I would argue, however, that the most present and perceptible modality used by Solovyov in his film is that of withdrawal, with the attending difficulty to see and enjoy this art, since it constantly comes in and out of view, reminding us of its ephemeral quality. The first time we see it, Bananan’s room appears as a luminous rectangle and a sort of artistic aside in the rather dark and very Soviet flat where he lives. Its bright colors are striking, but then the image goes black, and the vision of the room comes back a few seconds later only to disappear again, thus teasing the spectator—Bananan is playing with the lights, switching them on and off. Bananan and Alika then leave the flat and we will not be admitted into the room for seven more minutes. The next morning, we will catch another glimpse of the room as Alika slowly opens the door before the sequence abruptly ends. This image of entering the museum space is reiterated, in the second part of the film, when Krymov slips inside Bananan’s room and his progress is checked by an artwork we had not seen before—the *Iron Curtain*. It hangs in the doorway, preventing us from seeing the room. Krymov hesitates in front of it, leaving enough time for the spectator to read the inscription on it, then moves it aside with a strong metallic noise and enters the room. We stay outside the space and observe it from a distance. Later, we will find ourselves inside the room with Krymov who turns the lamp made by Shutov on and off, thus once again making our vision uncomfortable and intermittent.

Mixing all these works within one canvas that has an official author (the film director) is precisely what can be considered problematic about this “portable” museum. Avdotia Smirnova recounts how scandalized Mikhail Roshal-Fedorov and other artists were about not being credited clearly enough in the film.¹¹ A spectator who is not in the know might think that all these artworks are Solovyov’s or his team’s inventions. The reaction of the artists also shows that they considered the film as a kind of a portable museum space and a platform for their art, but one that failed to promote their names.

“EVERYTHING MUST GO”

Céline Gailleurd and Olivier Bohler’s *Jean-Luc Godard, the Disorder Exposed* opens with a reminder of the ephemeral character of an art exhibition held in a museum. It starts with a sequence showing workers dismantling and folding a poster of the exhibition curated by Jean-Luc Godard at the Centre Pompidou in 2006. The workers finish their work, carelessly throw the poster into their van, and address the camera in a joking tone: “Farewell, Godard!” In a staged sequence, the camera then follows André Labarthe, the famous documentarist and film critic, as he enters the Centre Pompidou and attempts to buy a ticket to the Godard exhibition. “But this exhibition took place years ago, sir,” answers the museum employee. Both these sequences emphatically state one of the main ideas of the film: the museum exhibition is an ephemeral form, which becomes unavailable even though we might like it to be preserved for future generations of visitors. The initial title of the documentary project was, incidentally, *Farewell, Godard! Everything Must Go*.

What makes this exhibition particularly interesting is, first of all, the fact that the Centre Pompidou commissioned one of the most renowned film directors to make it, but also that it proved to be a resounding failure.¹² The reasons for the failure might be considered twofold. Godard’s initial concept for the exhibition, entitled *Collage(s)*, was never realized. The Centre Pompidou decided instead to produce a prior project for an exhibition conceived by the director—*Travel(s) into Utopia, 1946-2006, In Search of the Lost Theorem*. In her paper on Godard and the museum, Jennifer Ver-raes reminds us that Godard’s “hostility toward institutions in general” extended to museums: “he not only battled with the institutions that intended to exhibit his work (the MoMA, Le Fresnoy—National Studio of Contemporary Arts, the Centre Pompidou) but also obstinately refused to use the museum as a set for his films,” with only three exceptions: *Bande à part* (1964), *Allemagne année 90 neuf zero* (1991), and *Our Music* [*Notre musique*, 2004].¹³ The other reason has to do with what spectators and art buffs expect from an exhibition curated by a film director. Their “horizon of expectation” (according to Jauss’s terminology) was not met by the exhibition.

actor, and thinker

Gazing at and looking at
Flashes of cinematic memories

(Dreams, hope, friendship...

This is part of an artistic community)
Rêves, espoir, amitié... Cela fait partie
d'une communauté artistique

the exhibition of a film, 2015

DCP Interop 2K flat 24p, Audio 5.1 (48kHz / 24 bits),
VO-ANG / No subtitles, 100 minutes

Taking its construct both within the reality of a film and its medium, *The exhibition of a film* envisages through a polyphony of sound and images the possible textures offered by the cinematic environment. The time of the film stems from the spatial ad-equation of a projected image and of a sound heard. The film's spatialization defines its different textures, and thus creates an exhibition both to be seen and listened to, in other words, an experience in cinema. An exhibition for a context, namely a film screened in a cinema, and thus as much an exhibited film, the film of an exhibition or again a filmed exhibition. Working within its own abstraction, this exhibition as a feature film plays with the spatialization of sound, and its polyphony in space. It envisages the unicity of the image and its possible fragmentation on the screen. This exhibition considers its structure as its material, and is constructed by the alternating and confronting of abstract elements and/or filmed scenes. The exhibition of a film aims at being something other than a structuralist "epic", or a suite of artist's short films one after the other. Instead, each layer is constitutive of the whole, becoming a potential field of action.

MATHIEU COPELAND

01. Courtesy Benoît Maire.
02. Courtesy Philippe Decrauzat.
03. Courtesy Tim Etchells.
04. Courtesy Lawrence Weiner.
05. "Lili", courtesy Charles de Meaux.
06. Courtesy Maria Eichhorn.

Gailleurd wrote that "one of the main theories that Malraux develops in his texts about art ends here: the museum is no longer able to separate the artwork from the lay world." In the film we see the non-cathartic disposition of the objects that make up the exhibition, bathed in a "neutral lighting, without any trace of aura" which contributes to a "desacralization of the art."¹⁴ A sequence of the film collates the visitors' indignant commentaries, which go from questions such as "Why turn the Centre Pompidou into an attic?" or "Are the perplexed looks on the visitors faces part of the concept of the exhibition?" to direct insults: "I think it's disgusting."

THE "DREAMED UP" MUSEUM

At the origin of the documentary lies a salvation gesture by the two young directors who also happen to be cinema scholars. When they learned that all the elements composing the exhibition were being thrown away or given to a charity, they were desperate to safeguard "an archive" of the exhibition and requested the permission to film the dismantling of the exhibition with a small video camera.¹⁵ Then they went to Emmaüs—a charitable association that collects used items to be given away or sold for little to the poor—and bought everything they could from the exhibition that seemed valuable. For several years they lived with the furniture and panels from the exhibition in their Parisian flat, before the idea of the film dawned on them.

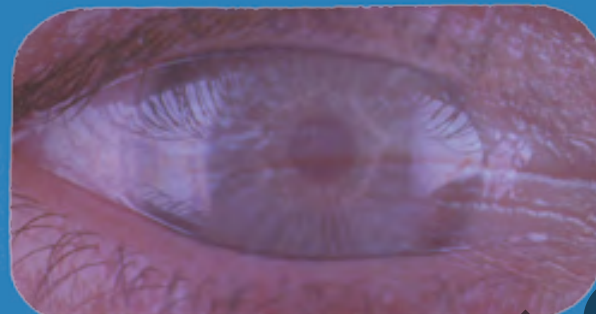
In the film, the documentary film directors decide to salvage the exhibition by editing video materials of the exhibition that they filmed while it was happening, and using archival footage from Godard's previous interviews and films. They also invite André Labarthe to help them decipher the meaning of this artistic event and why it was not understood by the public.

The stylistic exercise that is a guided tour here takes on diverse and playful forms. A sequence from the film *Amateur Report* [Reportage amateur, Maquette expo, 2006] by Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville shows Godard explaining the exhibition *Collage(s)* as he originally conceived it on a small-scale model. His hand pointing out these small spaces and tiny objects reminds us of a reversed museum tour, where the museum is small and the visitor a giant. Gailleurd and Bohler invent yet another device: in response to the classical "white cube" of the museum, they present the spectator with a "black cube." Not the "black box," as Erika Balsom dubs the movie theatre,¹⁶ but an exhibition and screening space rolled into one: in a completely black room, they display facsimiles of exhibit items and screens of various sizes on which they show excerpts of the exhibition, of Godard's films, and of the shows Labarthe made with Godard in previous years. Labarthe, the only authorized visitor of this "black cube," reacts

01



02



03



04

ALL THAT WE SEE IN CINEMA IS FALSE
& YET
IT IS THE ONLY REALITY WE KNOW

05



06

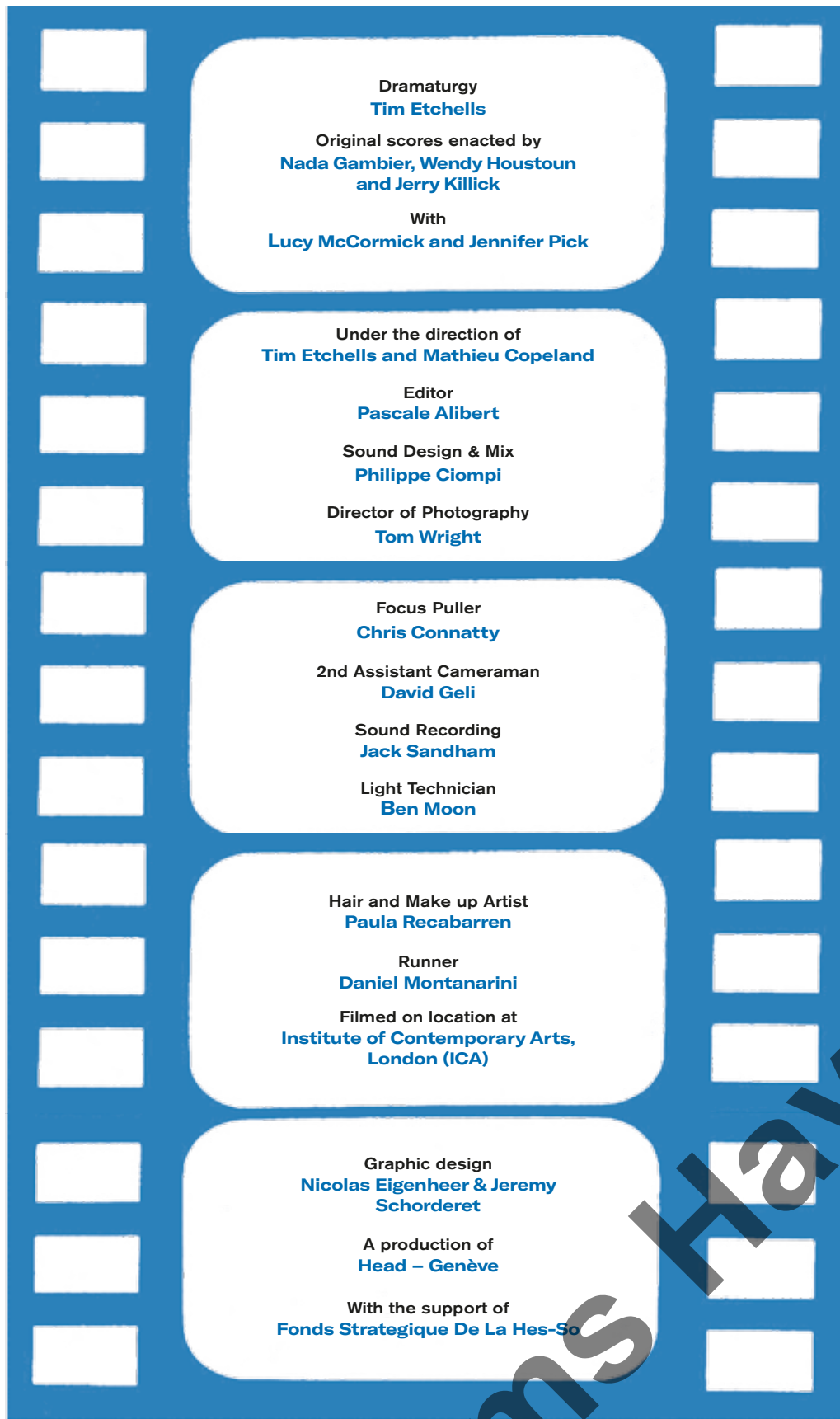


An exhibition by
Mathieu Copeland

With

Mac Adams, Fia Backström, Robert Barry,
Erica Baum, Stuart Brisley, Jonathan Burrows,
Nick Cave, David Cunningham, Philippe
Decrauzat, Peter Downsbrough, Maria Eichhorn,
F.M. Einheit, Tim Etchells, Alexandre
Estrela, John Giorno, Sam Gleaves, Kenneth
Goldsmith, Myriam Gourfink, Karl Holmqvist,

Marie-Caroline Hominal, Myriam Lefkowitz,
Franck Leibovici, Benoît Maire, Charles De
Meaux, Karen Mirza & Brad Butler, Ieva
Misevičiūtė, Meredith Monk, Charlotte Moth,
Phill Niblock, Deborah Pearson, Vanessa
Place, Michael Portnoy, Lee Ranaldo, Lætitia
Sadier, Laurent Schmid, Leah Singer, Mieko
Shiomí, Susan Stenger, Sofia Diaz + Vítor
Roriz, Kasper T. Toeplitz, Daniel Turner, Cosey
Fanni Tutti, Alan Vega, Lawrence Weiner



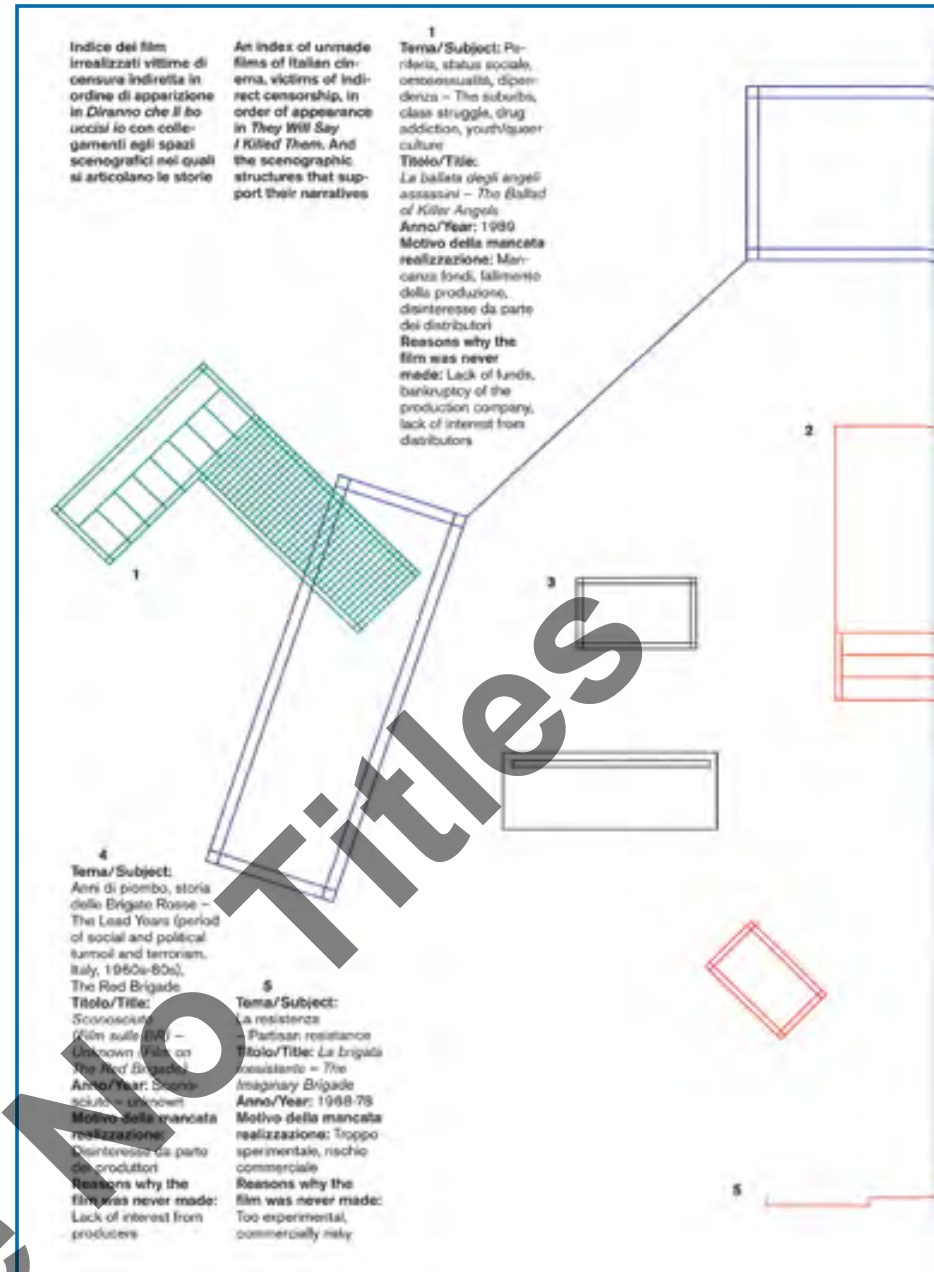
Dramaturgy
Tim Etchells
 Original scores enacted by
Nada Gambier, Wendy Houstoun
and Jerry Killick
 With
Lucy McCormick and Jennifer Pick

Under the direction of
Tim Etchells and Mathieu Copeland
 Editor
Pascale Alibert
 Sound Design & Mix
Philippe Ciompi
 Director of Photography
Tom Wright

Focus Puller
Chris Connatty
 2nd Assistant Cameraman
David Geli
 Sound Recording
Jack Sandham
 Light Technician
Ben Moon

Hair and Make up Artist
Paula Recabarren
 Runner
Daniel Montanarini
 Filmed on location at
Institute of Contemporary Arts,
London (ICA)

Graphic design
Nicolas Eigenheer & Jeremy
Schorderet
 A production of
Head – Genève
 With the support of
Fonds Stratégique De La Hes-S



Indice dei film
 irrealizzati vittime di
 censura indiretta in
 ordine di apparizione
 in *Diranno che li ho
 uccisi* io con colle-
 gamenti agli spazi
 scenografici nei quali
 si articolano le storie

An index of unmade
 films of Italian cin-
 ema, victims of indi-
 rect censorship, in
 order of appearance
 in *They Will Say
 I Killed Them*, and
 the scenographic
 structures that sup-
 port their narratives

1
 Tema/Subject: Pa-
 rteria, status sociale,
 omosessualità, dipen-
 denza – The suburbs,
 class struggle, drug
 addiction, youth/queer
 culture
 Titolo/Title: *La balata degli angeli
 assassinati* – *The Ballad
 of Killer Angels*
 Anno/Year: 1989
 Motivo della mancata
 realizzazione: Man-
 canza fondi, fallimento
 della produzione,
 disinteresse da parte
 dei distributori
 Reasons why the
 film was never
 made: Lack of funds,
 bankruptcy of the
 production company,
 lack of interest from
 distributors

4
 Tema/Subject:
 Anni di piombo, storia
 delle Brigate Rosse –
 The Lead Years (period
 of social and political
 turmoil and terrorism,
 Italy, 1960s-80s),
 The Red Brigade
 Titolo/Title:
 Scioscorta
 (film sulle Brigate
 rosse) –
 Disown (film on
 the Red Brigades)
 Anno/Year: 2005
 Motivo della mancata
 realizzazione:
 Disinteresse da parte
 dei produttori
 Reasons why the
 film was never made:
 Lack of interest from
 producers

5
 Tema/Subject:
 La resistenza
 parigina
 Titolo/Title: *La Brigata
 Immaginaria* – *The
 Imaginary Brigade*
 Anno/Year: 1968-78
 Motivo della mancata
 realizzazione: Troppo
 sperimentale, rischio
 commerciale
 Reasons why the
 film was never made:
 Too experimental,
 commercially risky

to these excerpts and comments on them. Once again, the film not only preserves the artefacts of the exhibition, but goes further, staging the “relocation” in a visible and emphatic way inside the film.

As Gailleurd herself puts it, this black space and the sequences that unfold within it was an attempt to devise a “museum dreamed up, imagined and reorganized by La-barthe.”¹⁷ This dreamed up museum has its roots in André Malraux’s “imaginary museum,” which brings together and makes it possible to compare artworks from different countries and cultures.¹⁸ However, the black cube invented by Gailleurd and Bohler spatializes this imaginary museum and endows it with three dimensions, even though they are then filmed and projected again on a bidimensional screen. By reintroducing the exhibition in a cinematic apparatus, Gailleurd and Bohler’s film thus seems to come full circle.

BACK TO NARRATIVITY

Although it is entitled “the Disorder Exposed,” the documentary reintroduces a sense of narration inside the apparent chaos of the exhibition. The film ends with images of the exhibition being deinstalled and most of its items sent to Emmaüs. This is how Gailleurd and Bohler described this sequence in their script: “In the courtyard of the association are displayed, out in the open, amid sundry other objects, those that were part of the exhibition *Travel(s) in Utopia*: an armchair, a coffee table, centenary olive trees, a bed, drowned out by other, anonymous and everyday-looking objects. A slight vertigo seizes us when we realize how they blend in with the crowd. On each one, there is a tag with a modest price.”¹⁹ And then something magical happens: one of the Emmaüs “companions,” whose face we

do not see, starts re-visiting the dismantled exhibition, offering to the spectator an ultimate guided tour of the remnants of the project. He points out a drawing and starts wondering if it is “a nose or an eye, because if it is an eye, it is a Cyclops, but if it is a nose, it is a clown.” He then approaches the black panel onto which are glued the etching of a crucified man by Goya and aligned small wooden crosses. He then starts interpreting what we see with “surprising erudition,” but also with an unfeigned enthusiasm that most of the visitors at the Centre Pompidou clearly lacked.²⁰

* This essay is an edited version of a research article by the same title authored by Eugénie Zvokine which originally appeared in *The Garage Journal: Studies in Art, Museums & Culture* (<https://thegaragejournal.org/en/>), issue 4. The journal was supported by Garage Museum of Contemporary Art (Moscow). Publications in the journal were discontinued in February 2022 in protest against Russian invasion of Ukraine.

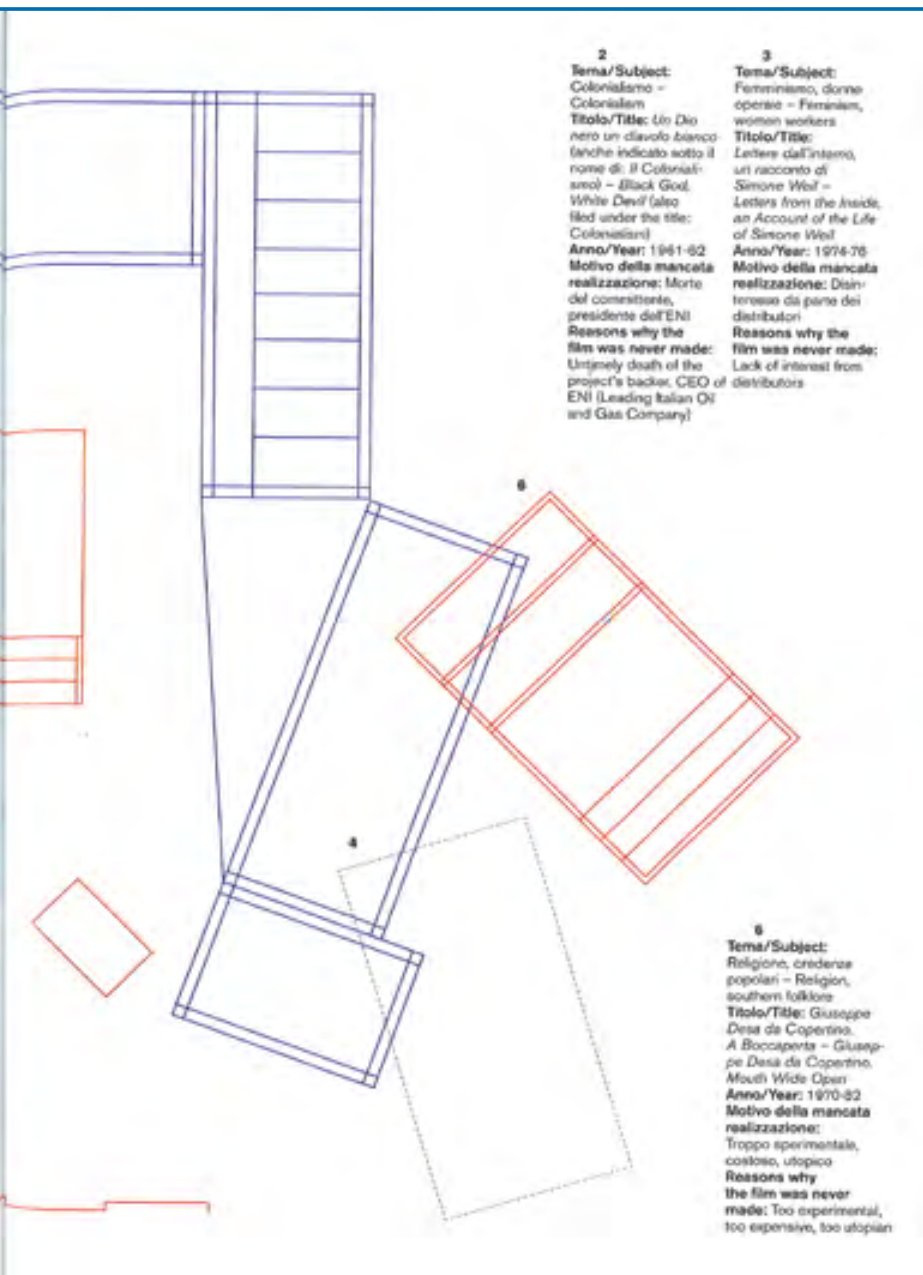
1. Barbara Le Maître and Jennifer Verraes, eds., *Cinéma muséum: le musée d’après le cinéma* (Paris: Presses universitaires de Vincennes, 2013) and Joséphine Jibokji, Barbara Le Maître, Natacha Pernac, Jennifer Verraes (eds.), *Muséoscopies. Fictions du musée au cinéma* [Muséoscopies, Fictions of Museum in Cinema] (Nanterre: Presses universitaires de Paris Nanterre, 2018).
 2. Le Maître et Verraes, *Cinéma muséum*, 24.
 3. André Bazin, “Ontologie de l’image photographique” [Ontology of the Photographic Image; first published in 1945], *Qu’est-ce que le cinéma?* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1990).
 4. Emanuel Landolt, “À la recherche de la peinture pure et de dieu: Édouard Steinberg interprète de Malevich” [Searching for the pure painting and for God: Eduard Steinberg interprets Malevich],

Ligeia 2, no. 141-44 (2015): 5-20.

5. Sergey Solovyov in Boris Barabanov, Assa, *kniga peremen* (Moscow: Gorodets, 2019), 71-72.
 6. Sergey Bugayev in Barabanov, Assa, 255
 7. About Solovyov’s relationship with the rock groups, see Rita Safariants, “Thank God We’re Not Alive: The Rock Star in Soviet and Post-Soviet Cinema,” in B. Beumert and Eugénie Zvokine (eds.), *Ruptures and Continuities in Soviet/Russian Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2018), 90-107; and “VGIK’s School of Rock: Legacies of Popular Music on Film,” *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 13, no. 2 (2019): 208-16.
 8. Natalya Surkova, “Art-gruppa Gnezdo, *Communication Tube*,” site of Museum Permm. <https://permm.ru/~communication-tube>.
 09. You can view the artwork here: <http://www.museum.ru/alb/image.asp?4155>.
 10. On the “guided tour” in cinema, see Mathias Lavin, “Le cinéma en visite. Le motif de la visite guidée au cinéma” [Cinema on a tour. The motif of the guided tour in films], in Verraes and Le Maître, *Cinéma muséum*, 135-47.
 11. Avdotia Smirnova in Barabanov, Assa, 238.
 12. On this subject, see Jean-Luc Godard, “Ce qu’ils aiment à Pompidou, c’est les morts” [What they like

at Pompidou, it’s dead people]. *Libération*, July 12, 2006; Clarisse Fabre, “Comment Jean-Luc Godard s’est disputé avec son commissaire d’exposition” [How Godard argued with his curator], *Le Monde*, April 23, 2006; and Daniel Fairfax “Montage(s) of a disaster: Voyage(s) en Utopie by Jean-Luc Godard,” *Cinema Journal* 1 (2015): 24-25.
 13. Jennifer Verraes, in *Muséoscopies*, 266.
 14. Céline Gaillourd, “Du naufrage des utopies à l’effondrement de l’œuvre totale: le monde sidéré” [From the shipwreck of the utopias to the collapse of the total artwork: the stunned world], *Cinéma & Cie. International Film Studies Journal* 1 (January-June 2009): 32-33.
 15. Interview with the author, conducted on September 20, 2021.
 16. Erica Balsom, *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013), 39-43.
 17. Interview with the author, September 20, 2021.
 18. André Malraux, *Le Musée imaginaire* [The Imaginary Museum] (Paris: Gallimard, 2012).
 19. Céline Gaillourd and Bohler, *Adieu, Godard! Tout doit disparaître* [Farewell, Godard! Everything must go] (2012), script.
 20. Gaillourd and Bohler, *Adieu, Godard!*, 30.

– E.Z.



2
Tema/Subject: Colonialismo - Colonialism
Titolo/Title: Un Dio nero un diavolo bianco (anche indicato sotto il nome di: Il Colonialismo) - Black God, White Devil (also listed under the title: Colonialism)
Anno/Year: 1961-62
Motivo della mancata realizzazione: Morte del comitato, presidente dell'ENI
Reasons why the film was never made: Untimely death of the project's backer, CEO of ENI (Leading Italian Oil and Gas Company)

3
Tema/Subject: Femminismo, donne operose - Feminism, women workers
Titolo/Title: Lettere dall'interno, un racconto di Simone Wolf - Letters from the Inside, an Account of the Life of Simone Wolf
Anno/Year: 1974-76
Motivo della mancata realizzazione: Disinteresse da parte dei distributori
Reasons why the film was never made: Lack of interest from distributors

6
Tema/Subject: Religione, credenze popolari - Religion, southern folkloric
Titolo/Title: Giuseppe Dessì da Copertino. A Boccaperuta - Giuseppe Dessì da Copertino, Mouth Wide Open
Anno/Year: 1970-82
Motivo della mancata realizzazione: Troppo sperimentale, costoso, utopico
Reasons why the film was never made: Too experimental, too expensive, too utopian

They Will Say I Killed Them (Rome: NERO Editions, 2018), 20-21

DANILO CORREALE



During one of the three shootings of Zineb Sedira's film *Dreams Have No Titles* in the French Pavilion in Venice in January 2022. Photo: Zineb Sedira

The act of weaving the story together was painful: studying something to then fix its narrative in a shareable form is itself a violent act, which puts an end to the author's passion in order to nourish that of the audience. Hence the desire to work on gesture rather than representation, to deconstruct the symbolic space of the screenplays and fuse it with the physical space of the scene, through a synecdoche that for every fragment of script imagines a spatial and architectural volume.

The period running up to production was marked by an alternation of conflicting feelings, moments of euphoria and dejection that could acquire meaning only through an act of resistance against an increasingly uninhabitable political present. Hence the need to build a counter-narrative to this big little story, which is not only that of cinema's contribution to Italian mass culture, from post-fascism to 1984, but also that of a collective cultural history that urgently needs to be deconstructed and rewritten.

Daniilo Correale, New York, June 2018. From *They Will Say I Killed Them* (Rome: NERO Editions, 2018), 5-6.

Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath

TEXTS HAVE NO TITLES

This film is about trickery.

These words are taken from the opening lines with which Orson Welles introduces the nine-minute trailer for his 1973 *F for Fake*, a docudrama about the illustrious art forger Elmyr de Hory. Far from being only a dazzling account of de Hory's notoriety, Welles's film essay functions as an evocative investigation of the nature of truth.

These are also the words with which Zineb Sedira opens her film for the French Pavilion. Sedira's appropriation of this specific scene from Welles's trailer as an opening act for her film *Dreams Have No Titles* is very telling of her practice as an artist and her commitment to challenging questions of authorship and authenticity. Who writes history and for whom?

For over two decades, Zineb Sedira has been employing photography and film, in all of its expanded formal dimensions, to explore the surviving traces of a

number of controversial histories that still haunt us. We first came across Zineb's work in 2008. Exactly where and when doesn't really matter. What does matter, however, is the artwork that we saw: *The Lovers: Death of a Journey* (2008), a haunting image of two floating boat carcasses resting, like two humans, against one another—a couple broken by the passage of time and the eroding force of a relentless sea. Zineb made this photographic work while on an expedition to the edges of the Mauritanian coast, a geographical area marked by the daily departures, but also the gruesome returns of bodies, of young Africans hoping to reach Europe.

It was only a matter of time before our paths would cross again and we began working together. This happened two years later, in 2010, with *End of the Road* (2010), a work we commissioned for *Told—Untold—Retold*, the inaugural contemporary art exhibition of the Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha. Photographic images of old broken cars, framed within Zineb's signature light boxes of various sizes were accompanied by a two-channel film, in which we witness the cars being swallowed up by an unstoppable grinding machine. By means of an underlying narration told in her own voice, the artists bring the personal and the universal together, in a work that is as much political as it is visual.

Since then, our collaborations with Zineb have taken several forms, as film took on an ever more prominent place in her multifaceted practice. Central to what she does is an overlapping of histories, objects, and locations mined from extended periods of archival research and creative reflection. With the precision of an archeologist, and the curiosity of a detective, the artist uncovers the persistent remains of historical struggles, moved by a desire to chart out the present. Shaped by her family's experience of emigrating from Algeria to France, her growing up in Paris and eventually moving to England in 1986, Zineb has a critical grasp of the annals of history. She does not shy away from the tensions of a highly political present, yet her eye remains cast on a future with infinite possibilities.

For Zineb Sedira, the desire to make films stems from her commitment to tackle a number of pressing issues, ranging from the critique of colonial legacies to the ongoing debate about integration, mobility, and globalization. Cinema in Sedira's hands becomes a tool of agitation, whereby dominant narratives are confronted with the voices from the so-called margins. In Sedira's films, individuals and communities whose stories had so far been overlooked are brought to fore, regain their agency, and speak for themselves.

This unwavering commitment to excavate history with a small "h" characterizes the film that the artist has created for her exhibition at the French Pavilion in Venice. Mixing original footage and reenactments of scenes from the same films, she masterfully constructs a collage of personal accounts and journeys, which taken together paint a sobering picture of displacement and belonging, vulnerability and resilience, and the courage to dream.

A couple dancing in a music hall, in Ettore Scola's 1983 film *Le Bal*; a young woman cutting her long black hair in a scene from Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966 epic film *The Battle of Algiers*; Orson Welles himself reciting the piercing words from *F for Fake*—these are some of the characters in the film. Are they professional actors, or Sedira's friends? Do they realize they are being filmed? Have their words been scripted or improvised? Are the scenes unfolding before our eyes a recounting of events that truly happened, or simply traces of bygone dreams?

In line with the major strands of her practice to date, Zineb has envisioned an immersive installation that transforms the entire space of the French national pavilion. Blending fact with fiction, she creates an environment where the fault lines that distinguish the past from the present are blurred. In this staged universe, Zineb conceives the pavilion's architecture as an extension of the projected image. To the often-uncontested reliability of the archival record, she opposes the open-ended possibilities of storytelling, in order to show how film is entwined with politics.

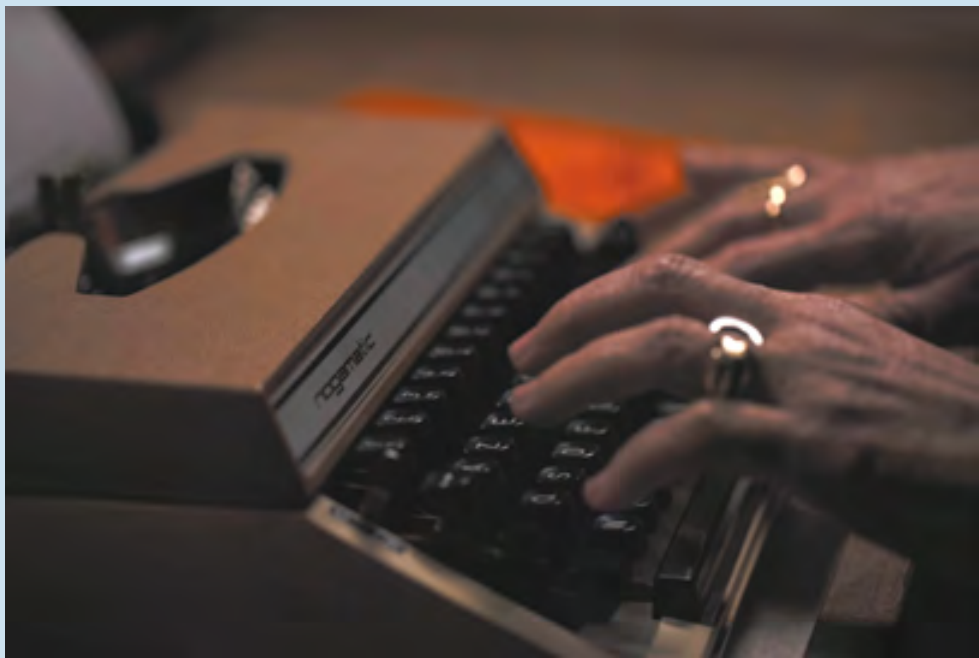
"F" is indeed for "Fake," but perhaps even more so for "Fight!" In what is a celebration of the spirit of solidarity that allowed so many filmmakers, musicians, authors, and activists during the long 1960s to shoot films, write books, make music, and dream together, Zineb Sedira has created a filmic and immersive installation where she takes up the mantle of solidarity, at once acknowledging what her illustrious predecessors have achieved and paving the way for the work that remains to be done.

As societies across the globe face the repercussions of unforgiving political and historical struggles, Zineb Sedira approaches her project for the French pavilion as a tribute to the individuals and communities who opened up the possibilities of cinema to point out, and in many ways dismantle, the yoke of colonial tyranny. Her exhibition is an invitation to acknowledge these cinematic milestones, some of which she has rescued from obscurity herself. But equally it is a cautionary tale about the failure of the emancipatory promise which, for many people, remains an unrealized dream.

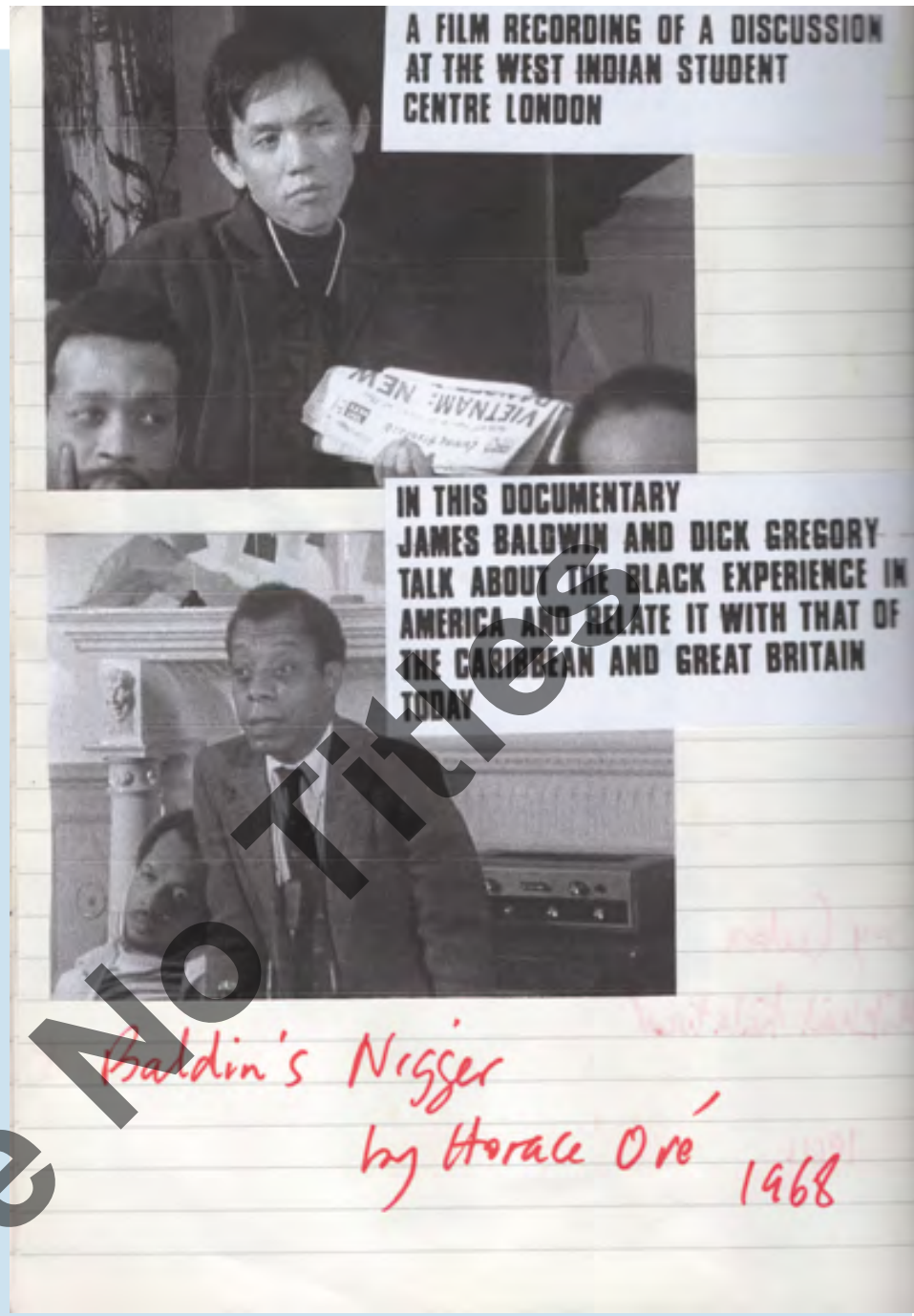
In the last scene of her film, we see Sedira sitting in a small movie theatre with her curator friends. Together, they are watching a scene from *Les Mains libres*, Ennio Lorenzini's 1964-1965 documentary film, which was believed to have been lost until Sedira uncovered it in a Roman archive. It is currently being restored. People from all walks of life euphorically dance to the rhythm of a newly gained independence. Soon after, through the use of a green screen—another form of fakery that loops back to Welles's opening words—we see Zineb dancing away to the same music. She dances with the crowds. She dances for herself. She dances alone. She dances in solidarity. She dances to resist, to mourn, to dream, and her dreams have no titles.



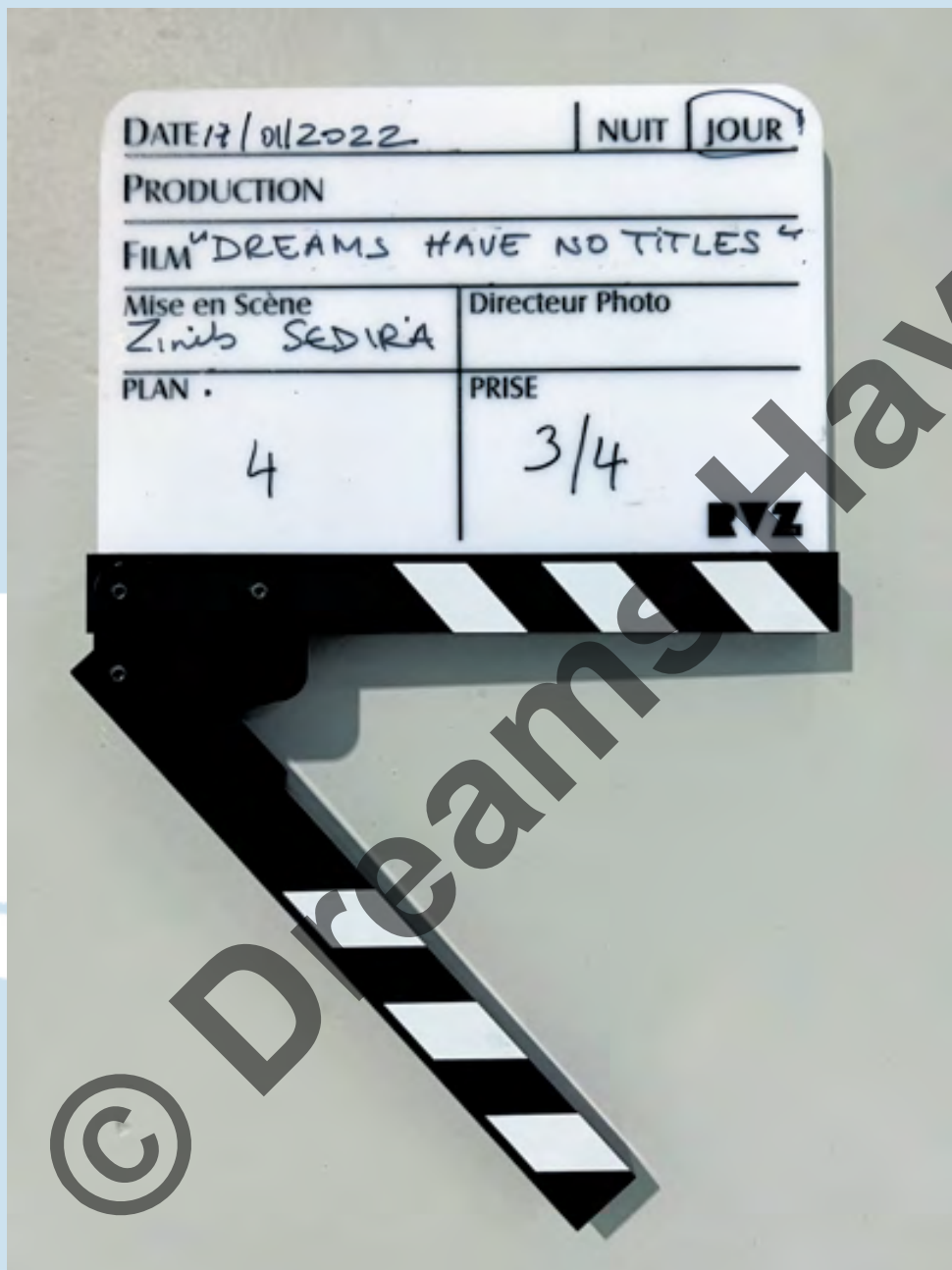
Still from *Dreams Have No Titles* (2022) by Zineb Sedira. Courtesy the artist



01



02



03

cinéma



04

pour un cinéma








01. Still from *Dreams Have No Titles* (2022) by Zineb Sedira. Courtesy the artist.
 02. Preliminary storyboard for *Dreams Have No Titles*, Zineb Sedira, 2021-2022.
 03. Photo: Zineb Sedira.
 04. Preliminary storyboard for *Dreams Have No Titles*, Zineb Sedira, 2021-2022.
 05. Preparatory floor plans of director of photography Emma Dalesman for the shots and lighting of the sequence of *Le Bal* by Ettore Scola in *Dreams Have No Titles*. Zineb Sedira, 2022 / Images of the monitor during the shooting of that scene. Photo: Zineb Sedira.

^ Design in *Souffles: revue culturelle arabe du Maghreb 2* (1966): 19. Courtesy Abdellatif Laâbi

THE HISTORY OF CINEMA IS THE HISTORY OF THE POWER TO CREATE HISTORY

Jacques Ranciere

05

-  2k Jem ball
 -  2k fresnel
 -  2x1
 -  2.5k plus CTO OR 5K fresnel
 -  750W S4
 -  MirrorBall
 -  4x mirror balls rigged FOR wide
- NOTE bring mirror Ball down FOR cu's 1 And use behind Camera
- Can we replicate any of the practicles



Jaclynne Saab. "children of war" 1976

CHILDREN OF WAR (1976)

Le bateau de l'exil, 1982

**Planning
Tracing
Remaking
L'Étranger,
another book,
another film
Albert Camus,
Luchino Visconti
Many others
L'Étranger
The Stranger
The Outsider**

André Bazin

About Revivals



Exhibition view of *Dreams Have No Titles*, French Pavilion, Venice (Italy), 2022. Photo: Zineb Sedira

The real novelty of the summer season on Parisian art house screens has been the number of revivals. This phenomenon undoubtedly did not begin in 1951. It has been observed here and there for two or three years, in art house cinemas especially, but it seemed confined to small semi-specialized theaters whose clientele were almost identical to that of film clubs. However, this new commercial approach should not be identified with the film club phenomenon.

It is true that the latter is not independent of the former, and it can be admitted that the efforts of the clubs have effectively prepared the ground, but it is a question of something quite different from extending their audience to the point of allowing it to be taken over by a commercial approach. It is far from the case that the number of members of the Federation grows according to a geometric progression. The material difficulties, on the contrary, remain pressing, and many clubs owe their survival only to the stubborn devotion of their organizers. If, therefore, the activity of film clubs has something to do with the growing interest in certain old films, it cannot be by direct influence. The clubs sow a good seed, but it grows elsewhere. They help to impose the idea of a cinematographic past equal to or superior to its present, of the existence of an art of filmmaking endowed with the same properties as the other arts, that is to say capable of standing the test of time. But this key-idea follows its own path; it is nourished by something other than the fanatic devotion of cinephiles, and one can follow its trail, no less characteristic than in France, in a country without film clubs, such as the United States.



During the shooting of the sequence of *F For Fake* by Orson Welles in *Dreams Have No Titles* in the French Pavilion in Venice in January 2022. Photo: Zineb Sedira

We can take it for granted that when Chaplin added a soundtrack to *The Gold Rush* with a new release in mind, put *City Lights* back on the market while waiting for *The Kid* and *The Circus*, he was undertaking an operation that had no com-

parison, in spirit as well as in form, with the creation of a film club. Similarly, René Clair, cutting six hundred meters from *À nous la liberté* [*Freedom for Us*], restored the print to bring it up to date. I can well imagine the film clubs of 1955 fighting over the last used reel of the 1932 version to compare it with the new commercial version. This imaginary example perfectly illustrates the difference between the film club phenomenon and revivals. In the first case, it is a conscious and respectful interest in history, the work remains linked to its date, it is significative of the historical context found in it. In the second case, the work, although old, retains a vitality and an unquestionably contemporary value. The ageing of its technique, the multiple signs of time, marked in the costumes, the make-up, and the acting, cease to be redhibitory obstacles to the interest of the public for its essence. The film club fan reads in the text an author of the sixteenth century. The future spectator of *À nous la liberté*, in its 1951 version, will smile at the slight archaisms of the lengthy text, but, being a skillful teacher, René Clair will have cut out the passages that are incomprehensible without a dictionary. The cinephile went for old films. Some old films prove capable of going to mainstream audiences.

Although it is limited in principle to certain films, the practice of new releases is nonetheless radically revolutionary as regards the cinematographic mores. As Marcel L'Herbier once explained, cinema was opposed to the other arts in that the latter set out to conquer Time, while film aimed at conquering Space. Not only could Stendhal proudly proclaim that he was writing to be read in a hundred years' time, but even the artists most concerned with obtaining the immediate consecration of success—painters, poets, playwrights, architects—knew that their real trial would be appealed by posterity. It is Ronsard's challenge to Helen's beauty. The cinema, on the other hand, was in fact subject to the same constraints as fashion. It had to conquer as many screens as possible, as quickly as possible, within a maximum period of four or five years. The ideal example is Chaplin, whose films covered the whole world. No geographic conquest in history has ever come close to that of the mythical little man. But Chaplin himself, taking great care to withdraw the previous film from circulation to ensure the success of the next, illustrated until recent years the law of spatial competition.

The practice of "remakes" specifically demonstrates this state of affairs. When a film has been successful enough to be still remembered commercially, the original is not simply put back into circulation, the film is remade, sometimes with the precision of a carbon copy, with other actors and a different director. This was the case with *Back Street*, *Daybreak* or, very recently, *The Raven*.

No doubt one could trace this aesthetic phenomenon back to economic infrastructures. The extension of the distribution circuit, the speed with which the film must travel through it, the commercial nullity with which it is struck at the end of its run are the direct consequence of the

scale of the investments. The cinema is an industry that needs to revolve, the new drives out the old without consideration of value, simply because it is older, or rather the newness itself is partially identified with value. This is the principle of the private screening rooms where seats are more expensive. However, economic imperatives are not the only ones involved here. They confirm rather than create the sociological demand. The situation is not so different in Soviet Russia, however, even though the organization is independent of profit. (It is true that as ideologies age, novelty is called upon).

It would be absurd to argue that the economic infrastructure of journalism is the reason why yesterday's newspaper is no longer valuable—yesterday's crimes are well worth today's. The comparison is only partly valid because, despite its fictional character, film is also psychologically dependent on its actuality. Thousands of roots link it to the present, which dry up once the season has passed, starting with its technical evolution. Even if one disputes that there is progress in art, even if one refuses to identify the improvement of means with aesthetic progress, the fact remains that the film acts first by its force of illusion; it presents itself as the closest fiction to the reality of the physical world. This illusion of reality, photographic realism notwithstanding, cannot do away with a minimum of conventions. From Lumière's unedited film to *Citizen Kane*, cinema has constantly seen its technical infirmities diminish. In 1925, a silent film gave the perfect impression of reality; in 1936, its silence was a convention that could only be accepted willingly. Realism is the general law of cinema, but it is relative to its material evolution. To these imperative constraints are added the secondary variations of artistic technique, photographic style, that of lighting, of link shots, of editing. All these conventions are transparent in their novelty but become opaque after five or six years when another fashion has imposed itself.

In addition to these strictly cinematographic factors, we must also consider the more or less direct crystallization of the era, its tastes, its sensibility, a thousand details that "date" a film, even more so if we are only talking about a few years' hindsight: according to the well-known aesthetic law that says that a century marks a work less than twenty years. Of all the arts, it is cinema that gives the action of time its greatest hold, and we might even think that this erosion of the years reaches everywhere else but the accidental superstructures of the work when it touches the essential in cinema. It strips and purifies theater, poetry, and painting less than it destroys cinema in its principle of realistic illusion. How, in fact, can one identify with heroes, participate in an action, believe in the objective reality of events that the marks of time render in some way insoluble in the imagination. The woman I seduce through the medium of a star cannot wear a dress from 1925 or have her hair cut like a boy's, and I cannot abscond with her in a Hispano-Suizo. The temporal relativity of cinematic appearances is their absolute. Essentially felt as present, like reality and dreams, cinematic action cannot, by definition, admit to being past. The remake, which is nothing more than a re-actualization of a film, has only a superficial analogy with the theatrical production, which updates the representation of an old text, because the text is the essence of the play, its unchanging core, whereas the film production can no more be distinguished from the script than the body from its soul. Re-shooting a film is equivalent to rewriting the play, and one does not rewrite *The Miser*.

This obligation of contemporaneity, which anchors the film in the depths of our imagination and prevents it from following the thread of time that carries us along, takes on a subtly destructive form when it affects the actor, or at least that vari-

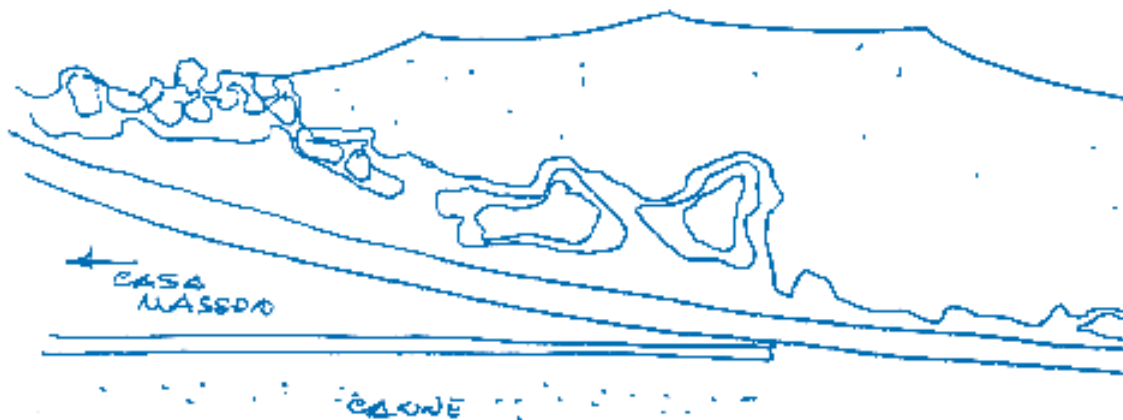
ety totally identified with the cinema that is called the "Star." This is the very subject of *Sunset Boulevard*. "A star," exclaims Norma Desmond, "cannot grow old," trying by the affirmation of this truth to exorcize its consequences. Yes, stars cannot grow old because, completely identified with their myth, they experience a mockery of immortality in the adequacy of their image, an immortality that condemns them to death, since it forbids them to live and grow old with their body. It is quite different in the theater, no matter how famous the actor. Sarah Bernhardt ended up being deified after more than half a century of fame, despite her wooden leg. It goes to show that awareness and the desire for illusion are the very foundations of the theatrical universe. The audience can easily distinguish Sarah Bernhardt from the "Eaglet" or Phaedra, but it cannot distinguish Garbo from... Garbo, even when she incarnates (it would be better to say "disincarnates") Marguerite Gautier or Christina of Sweden.

The laws of cinematographic illusion can be detected precisely in a phenomenology of the actor. In the last ten or fifteen years, the decrease in the number of real stars, if not their disappearance, has often been noted, as well as the consequent rise of the simple star and, more recently, of the anonymous interpreter. The reason for this is better understood today: the cinematographic illusion was beginning to take on a life of its own, a layer of consciousness was creeping in between the spectator and the film, which did not yet free the latter from its temporal servitude, but already insidiously called it into question. This temporary servitude is now disappearing for an ever-widening section of the public. Billy Wilder's autopsy of the star in *Sunset Boulevard* is only understandable in this perspective.

Preston Sturges's *Mad Wednesday* strikes me as even more significant, since it allows us to perfectly grasp the novelty of the phenomenon, both in relation to the old commercial system and as regards film clubs. We know that the beginning of the film is composed of an old Harold Lloyd sequence, but unlike the *Queen Kelly* fragment in *Sunset Boulevard*, this scene, shot some twenty-five years before, is an integral part of the new film—an episode that the script places around 1925. Specially shot sequences are, moreover, inserted in the editing. That way, the actor is really twenty-five years younger at the beginning of the film. Preston Sturges thus presents the old at the same level as the new, breaking the charm that embalmed Harold Lloyd in his myth. He remakes him into an actor who has the right to grow old and it is, in fact, this sort of renewed Sleeping Beauty miracle that constitutes, over and above the plot, the real scenario of the film.

The phenomenon of revivals undoubtedly exceeds in complexity and meaning the case of films in which cinema plays at being aware of its past, but it proceeds from the same deep-rooted cause: a decisive modification of the relationship between the audience and the film. The primary and total illusion in which the spectator was once lost, the identification without the ability to distance oneself, the intoxication of the cinematographic presence whose charm was not to be disturbed by any sign of the times, are gradually being replaced, at least partially, by a conscious and consenting illusion, different no doubt from that of the theater, but presupposing, more or less like that of the book, the possibility of taking part in an imaginary universe, in spite of the stylistic ornaments which, as the film ages, no longer allow for any confusion with real life.

MARÉ



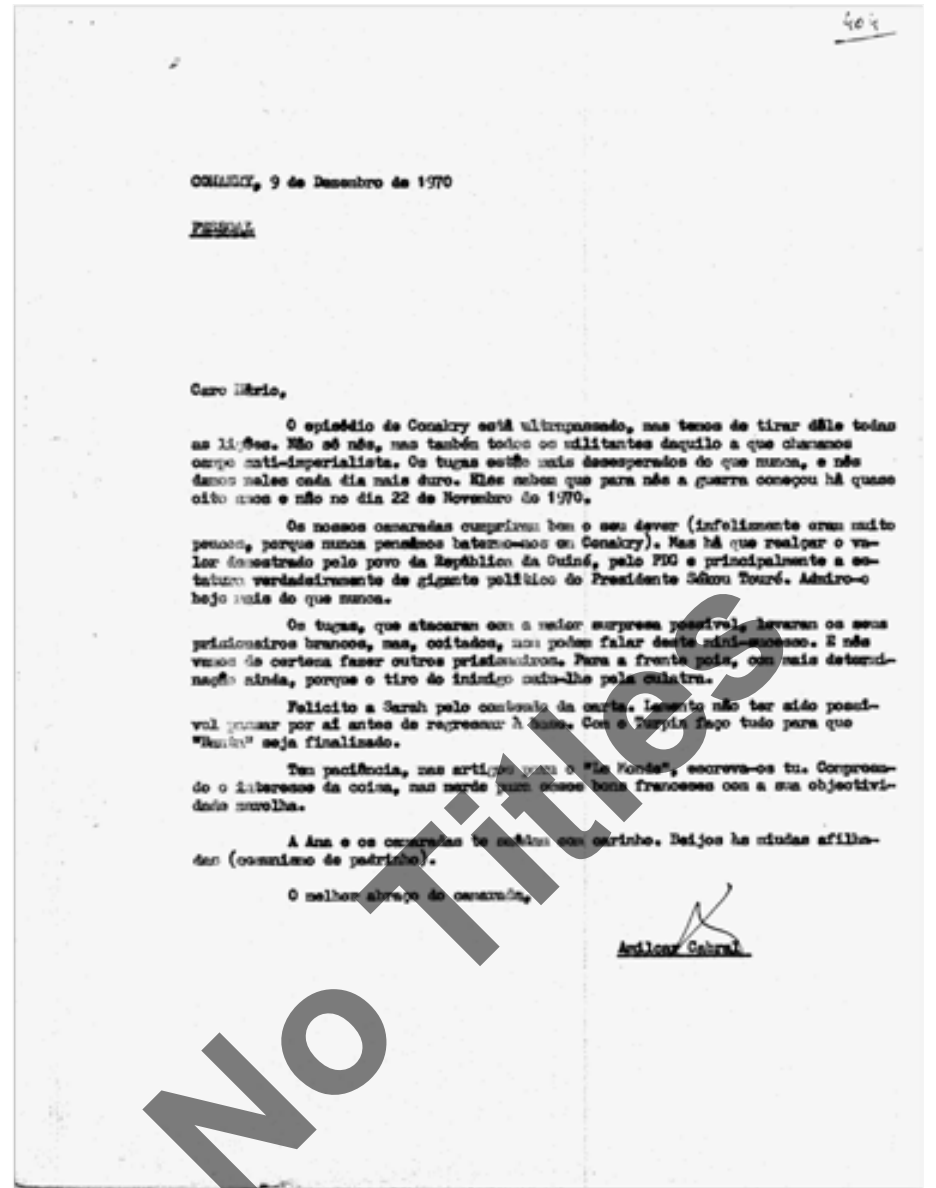


Exhibition view of *Dreams Have No Titles*, French Pavilion, Venice (Italy), 2022. Photo: Zineb Sedira

There is therefore no reason to see in the "revivals," as is sometimes insinuated, the consequence of a hypothetical decline of cinema. It is not because current films are not as good as they were fifteen or twenty years ago, and that the public realizes this, that *The 39 Steps*, *Bizarre, Bizarre*, and *A Night at the Opera* are being re-released. On the contrary, it is because only now there is a public capable of appreciating these masterpieces despite their age. In its time, *Bizarre, Bizarre* was a sensational failure before winning an ironic revenge of esteem over *Juliette*, or *Key of Dreams*. But it is possible that in 1955 a cinema on the Champs-Élysées would release *Juliette* anew on the occasion of a new film by Carné, and that it will then be found to have charms that we deny it today.

Which is to say that the filmmaker can finally consider winning their appeal, and not only in the cénacle of film libraries or before the informed audience of the clubs, but faced with the public itself, the one that pays, the only one that counts for producers. Directors do not have to write, like Stendhal, to be read in a hundred years, but they can now entertain the hope of being seen in ten years' time. Even if this event does not reach the magnitude that would convince producers to invest their capital over such a long period of time, even if it were only a matter of conserving copies in good condition among distributors, so as to allow them to be re-released here and there from time to time, one could see in it more than the youth of a golden age of cinema.

— A.B.



Letter from Amílcar Cabral to Mário de Andrade dated from December 9, 1970 about the "Conakry episode" [invasion of the Republic of Guinea, Operation Green Seal]. Courtesy of the Mário Soares Foundation / DAC—Documents Amílcar Cabral

IN CONVERSATION:

MATHIEU KLEBEYE ABONNENC AND SARAH MALDOROR

MATHIEU KLEBEYE ABONNENC: Where does the title of your film *Monangambee* come from?

SARAH MALDOROR: It was a cry, Monagambeeee! The Angolan independence fighters used it in the bush to say that they were coming or going, to signal their presence, to talk to each other. I shot the film in natural settings in Algeria, with the help of the Algerian army, and in a prison, because the story takes place in a cell. *Monangambee* was originally a short story by José Luandino Vieira, who at the time was locked up in the Tarrafal prison in Cape Verde. He was a political prisoner. *Sambizanga* is also adapted from one of his short stories, *The Real Life of Domingos Xavier*.¹ So Luandino Vieira was in prison, he was an intellectual, and we had to get him out. Asking ourselves how we could help him, we decided to make the film to publicize his imprisonment.

MKA: It was Mário Pinto de Andrade who translated the story into French under the title *Le Complet de Mateus* [for the Algerian magazine *Novembre*].²

SM: Yes, *Monangambee* simply tells the story, based on a real event, of a woman who goes to see her imprisoned husband. She brings him a "suit," and the guard who overhears her asks himself, "a suit!?" He quickly goes to his superior and says, "She's bringing him a suit, so that must mean he's going to court." So they torture him, saying, "Why is she bringing you a suit? Who is your lawyer?" But the "suit" was a dish of beans. What I wanted to show in this film was the misunderstanding between the colonized and the colonizer over a word. It's a work on misunderstanding. Because you have to know where racism comes from, what it is, how it is born, why we kill each other. All it takes is one word. A suit.

It was my first film, and it was very successful. I didn't know what a festival was at the time, so it went to Tours, which was a very important festival at that time. One day I went to the cinémathèque in Algiers, because I also learned about cinema in this remarkable place, run by Jean-Michel Arnold and Ahmed Hocine. Jean-Michel Arnold then asked me, "Have you read *Le Monde*?" I answered "No," and he congratulated me because I had won first prize in Tours. He then showed me an article by Jean de Baroncelli³ on the film.

MKA: Could you tell me about *Guns for Banta* that you shot after *Monangambee*?

SM: *Guns for Banta* is very simple: a war, whatever it is, cannot be fought without the daily participation of the people. *Guns for Banta* was simply women leaving a village and bringing rifles, and then the children picked up the baton, and so you could see the rifles eventually reaching the fighters. It was not the fighters who carried the guns but the women. They didn't have a child on their back, they had a bomb. I film the everyday. I'm not interested in heroes. And I had the idea for *Guns for Banta* because I saw these women carrying these bombs. Why Banta? Because it was a nice word, and there was a village called Banta. The boats stopped there, they unloaded, and that was it. In the film, you see children with bombs on their heads, walking like this in single file, all armed. They are participating in the war but as porters.



On *Monangambee*, *Guns for Banta*, and *Sambizanga*

I met Sarah Maldoror in 2006, during an exchange between her and the actor Jean-Michel Martial about the film he had made a few years earlier on the Guyanese poet Léon-Gontran Damas. During this lively discussion, Sarah did not fail to remind him, forcefully, that she too had made a film about Damas in 1994.

It was Damas who prompted me to contact her again some time later, so that I could see this film that I was not aware of. It was a magnificent film, shot in black and white, which uniquely inscribed the poetry of Léon-Gontran Damas and the Guyanese landscape in the cine-geography of Third Cinema. This first meeting led to several long, informal conversations, spread over several years as we wandered around Paris and Saint-Denis, from cafés to cinemas, from exhibitions to bookshops. Sarah lent herself to the game with a lot of generosity, patience, and the devastating humor that is hers. She agreed to answer my questions, which were often awkward and insistent, particularly about the film *Guns for Banta* made in 1970. The following interview, which was conducted in several stages, cannot fully convey Sarah Maldoror's incredible vitality, contagious optimism, and cinematic desires. A cinema entirely dedicated to fighting against this "violence that has presided over the world's arrangement,"¹ a daily, renewed, tenacious struggle, without heroes or leaders.

Mathieu Klebeyé Abonnenc, March 2022.

1. Frantz Fanon, *The Damned of the Earth* (Paris: François Maspéro, 1968/1961), 7.

Study plan for the scenography of the film *The Stranger* by Luchino Visconti. Fondazione Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia - Biblioteca "Luigi Chiarini." Courtesy Daniela Garbuglia, Gina Shu Garbuglia and Peiti Yeh



Dreams, fictions, archives, and realities



MKA: How did the filming go?

SM: What I remember is that I randomly chose women with a look, but there was no star. I said to myself, I'm going to choose those with worn features, by whatever. I gave them an appointment, and what did I see? Women all dressed up. They had taken out their sarongs from I don't know where, very beautiful ones. I said to myself, "But it's going to look fake. Why did they do that?" So, I go there, "Ah," I say to one of them, "where did you get that outfit from? It's so beautiful! I don't usually see you wearing outfits like that, I've never seen them before. She replies, "Let's forget the war; we're going to be filmed." I then went into a hut and asked the four ladies to change, to leave their fancy dresses because they had to be in military uniform. They answer me, "No, but you understand, I have my son in Lisbon, so you never know, he may go to the cinema and perhaps he will be able to see me, and to see me like that, in military clothes... No, I want him to see his mother looking very pretty, very beautiful, that's why we all decided to dress up, to put on our best clothes."

MKA: What did you decide to do at that moment?

SM: From that moment, I added a sequence, telling them, "Get dressed and say why you are wearing these dresses, like this, between you." They laugh, they have fun, they get dressed; one says, "It's good, because you never know, I don't have a husband, but if a soldier sees me in this outfit, maybe he'll become my husband." You know, everyday concerns, and then you see them all dressed up with the bombs, and you think it's quite normal.

MKA: Does the fiction become a documentary of the shooting too?

SM: Yes, documentary, fiction, I always mix the two. [...] I shoot these sequences and I put them in the film, and people say no, but I say you have to be open and ready, as I learned with Mark Donskoy.⁴

MKA: Then comes *Sambizanga*.

SM: I shot the film in Congo-Brazzaville, and I worked with the Angolans who were there. It is a film produced by the French. *Sambizanga* also tells the story of a prisoner who is tortured. And his wife who says to herself, "I'm going to defend him, I'm going to look for him, I want to know where he is," and she travels a long way to Luanda, the capital of Angola, to find out which prison he is in. And when she arrives, he has died under torture.

MKA: Were you working again with Elisa Andrade?

SM: Yes. Elisa was Cape Verdean, the wife of an Angolan official. She was very beautiful. I was criticized a lot for having chosen such a stunning woman for this role. I said to myself, why not? Why should a fighter's wife be in rags? Why should she be wearing old slippers? No. She is a woman who fights in her own way. She goes looking for her husband with her child on her back.

MKA: So, the film traces her political awakening, as with Awa's character in *Guns for Banta*?

SM: The film follows her journey, when she suddenly discovers that her husband is an activist, that he is fighting for the liberation of Angola. He was a tractor driver. She was not aware that he was involved in politics and, as the film unfolds, she learns that her man is a fighter. Because women are always put aside, but if a woman does not participate in the war, the war cannot take place. In *Sambizanga*, I didn't want to show her with a gun, but that's what happened. She takes part in the fight, she goes into the maquis, and then she fights. This is also what I wanted to film in *Guns for Banta*.

France financed *Sambizanga*. I submitted a script to the CNC, and I got an advance on receipts, because Angola was not a French colony. It was the colony of others, of the Portuguese neighbors. But today, if I want to make a film about Louis Delgrès,⁵ I will get nothing, because Guadeloupe and Martinique are French colonies. That's where the problem lies.

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— S.M., M.K.A.



Installation view of Mathieu Klebeye Abonnenc "Foreword to Guns for Banta" at Gasworks, London (Great-Britain), 2000. Photo: Kristel Raesaar



Shooting of a sequence from *The Battle of Algiers* for the film *Dreams Have No Titles*, Zineb Sedira, 2022



1. José Luandino Vieira. *The Real Life of Domingos Xavier*, followed by *Mateus's Suit*, trans. Mario de Andrade (Dakar/Paris: Présence Africaine, 1971).
2. See "Sarah Maldoror nous déclare," *Jeune Afrique* 468 (1969/1970).
3. A former film critic at *Le Monde*.
4. Mark Semyonovich Donskoy (1901-1981), to Sergej Eisenstein's student and assistant.
5. Louis Delgrès, colonel, republican officer from Martinique and a key figure in Guadeloupe, who fought to the death against Napoleon Bonaparte's plan to re-establish slavery in Guadeloupe.

La Discothèque de Sarah Maldoror*

01. ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO

Monangambée (1969)
(SHORT FILM/18')

In the film, which marks Art Ensemble's first appearance on record, they improvise in the space between the minimalist dialogue. The music was never released, though some of the themes would reappear on their debut LP titled *People in Sorrow* (1969). It was also Maldoror's first collaboration with the then-emerging Tri-Continental creative black music scene in Paris, bringing together African-American, Antillean, and African musicians. These collaborations are mapped out under the heading "The Power of the Story" in *Chimurenga Chronic: Imagi-nation Nwar* (2021).

02. NGOLA RITMOS

N'biri Birin (1964)
(ALVORADA/4'05")

The Angolan folk song popularized by Ngola Ritmos appears in the closing scene of *Sambizanga* (1972), through the voice of Belita Palma. The film also features "Caminho do mato," a struggle anthem based on a poem by Agostinho Neto.

03. YEBGA LIKOBÀ

Un dessert pour Constance (1980)
(FEATURE/84')

The Cameroonian saxophonist and member of the Paris-based groups Intercommunal Free Dance Music Orchestra, West African Cosmos, and Edja Kungali, provides the free-jazz soundtrack of Maldoror's satire on France's pseudo-integrationist policies.

04. LES VOLTAGES 8

Roger a dit wha wha (1973)
(MAGIC' TIRELIR DISQUES/4'07")

Maldoror used her initial films on Aimé Césaire to feature the national music of Martinique and Guadeloupe. The gwo ka of Erick Cosaque and his group Les Voltages in *Aimé Césaire au bout du petit matin* (1977), and Max Cilla's spiritual bélé in *Aimé Césaire, le masque des mots* (1986).

05. LÉON-GONTRAN DAMAS

Tu Étais Au Bar (1967)
(FOLKWAYS RECORDS/10'44")

For her film-poem on Léon-Gontran Damas, Maldoror draws on the only recorded reading of his epic *Black-Label* (1956). The theme of exile, which is central to her narrative on Damas, is represented through songs from Geoffrey Oryema's 1990 LP *Exile*.

06. MIRIAM MAKEBA

Umquokoza (1968)
(REPRISE/3'10")

Maldoror met Miriam Makeba and Nina Simone during the Pan-African Festival of Algiers in 1969, and the trio remained friends throughout their lives. She uses her film *Ana Mercedes Hoyos* (2009) to pay tribute to the Colombian painter/sculptor and the South African singer, while also exploring Afro-Colombian heritage. The film is a sonic retrospective of Makeba, who had passed away during its making.

07. ARCHIE SHEPP

Scala Milan AC (2003)
(SHORT FILM/18')

Another important encounter at the PANAF of Algiers in 1969 was with the saxophonist Archie Shepp. Maldoror uses his solo improvisation and rap (with lyrics by her) to soundtrack her fable on banlieue culture—not the instrumentalized *black-blanc-beur* produced by the state but a people-centered vision of French multiculturalism.

08. TOTO BISSAINTHE

Papa Danmbalah (1977)
(ARION/4'48")

Toto Bissainthe (1984) is a film-portrait of the great Haitian singer in her quest to reconnect with the African continent, and a tribute to the collaborative work of Maldoror, Bissainthe, Douta Seck, and other members of the theater troupe Les Griots during the 1950s.

(*With thanks to Annouchka de Andrade and Les Gardiennes de la mémoire—Pascale Obolo, Anna Tje and Rhoda Tchokokam.)

PLAYLIST

Sarah Maldoror (at the center) on the set of *The Battle of Algiers*. Courtesy of Annouchka de Andrade and Henda Ducados



Dreams Have No Titles
Revolutionary tracks
Creative
Militant cinema
Soy Africa
Soy Africa
Soy Africa
Soy Italia...

Kinjeketile Suite, 2015

A recovered film
Telling tales

A magical
making
of...



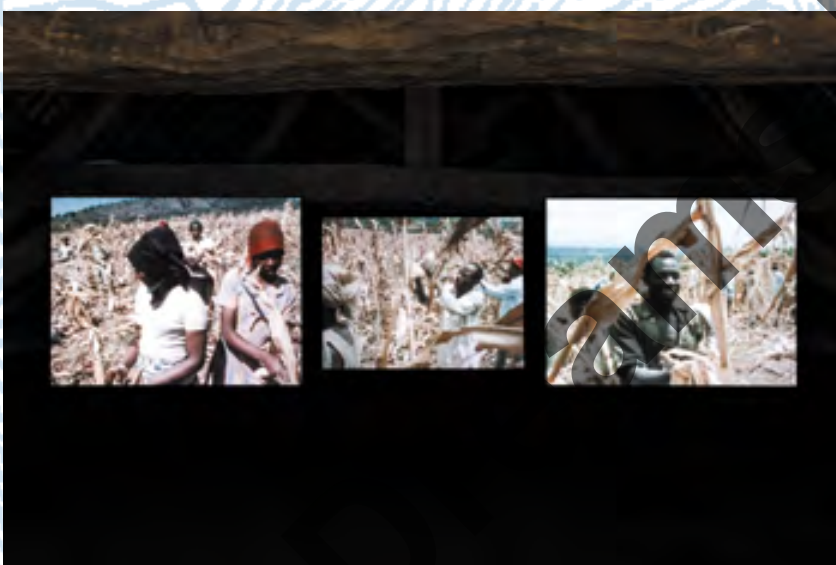
In 1905, a healer named Kinjeketile Ngwale encouraged the people of East Africa to revolt against the German colonial authorities. This became known as the Maji-Maji war. Kinjeketile distributed a sacred water to the fighters that was supposed to liquefy German bullets. *Maji* means "water" in Swahili. This revolt, which was very harshly repressed, lasted two years and ruined the country.

Tanganyika gained its independence in 1961, after more than a century of German and British colonization, and the United Republic of Tanzania was created in 1964. Julius Nyerere, who was the first president (1964-1985), introduced the concept of Ujamaa, which can be translated as "community" or "familyism." These two key moments in Tanzania's history are linked by this installation, which questions the role of ancestral beliefs in political ideology. Kapwani Kiwanga examines the way in which the Maji-Maji war, and its adaptation in folklore and popular culture, formed the starting point and crystallization of a Tanzanian national identity that would assert itself at independence. Here she composes a visual and spatial narrative from documentary archives, magazines, photographs, political tracts, plants, and fabrics—which she deploys in an architecture inspired by museographic designs.

Mixed-media installation. Variable dimensions.

KAPWANI KIWANGA

Ujamaa, 2016



In 1967, Julius K. Nyerere introduced a policy intended to manifest the ideal of a humanist, pan-African utopia: Ujamaa. This system was based on an ideal of an egalitarian, just, supportive, and self-sufficient society. It was embodied in practice by the creation of Ujamaa villages that operated on collectivist principles. Kapwani Kiwanga examines this formidable political and social laboratory to grasp the dynamics of this belief in a fairer system, without concealing the reasons for its failure.

This video triptych presents a fragmented montage of images from two reports on Ujamaa villages—*Ujamaa: A Portrait of Tanzanian Socialism* by Yves Billon and Jean-François Schiano (1976) and *Ujamaa* by Jonathan Power (1977). This work focuses on the agricultural practices, which were supposed to be the basis for the success of the Ujamaa system.

Triptych video, color, sound. Sound editing Cristián Sotomayor. Video editing Benoit Delbove. Films extracts ©Yves Billon and Jean-François. Schiano / Jonathan Power.

Uhuru ni Kazi, 2016



Documentation on the Ujamaa period is scarce. Kapwani Kiwanga, however, came upon the work of Canadian filmmaker Gerald Belkin (1940-2012) who spent two years immersed in an Ujamaa village in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Based on this experience, Belkin produced revealing documentaries of how the locals interpret the country's politics and Ujamaa theory. Without voice-over commentary, he filmed the daily lives of the villagers and collected their testimonies.

Continuing her work on memory and its oral transmission, Kapwani Kiwanga has selected six films by Gerald Belkin, presented side by side to create a polyphony of diverse voices. She confronts these singular orations with the official political statements of the time. The surrounding walls are lined with posters bearing slogans from the time of President Nyerere, and the establishment of the concept of Ujamaa in Tanzania: *Uhuru ni Kazi* (Freedom is Work) and *Uhuru ni Jasho* (Freedom is Sweat).

6 monitors, 6 translation booklets. Films extracts of Gerald Belkin, black and white, sound. Courtesy Belkin Estate.

Texts by Julie Pellegrin. Photos: Exhibition view of "Ujamaa" at La Ferme du Buisson, Noisiel (France), 2015. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Emile Ouroumov.



THE DECENTERED TRAVELER

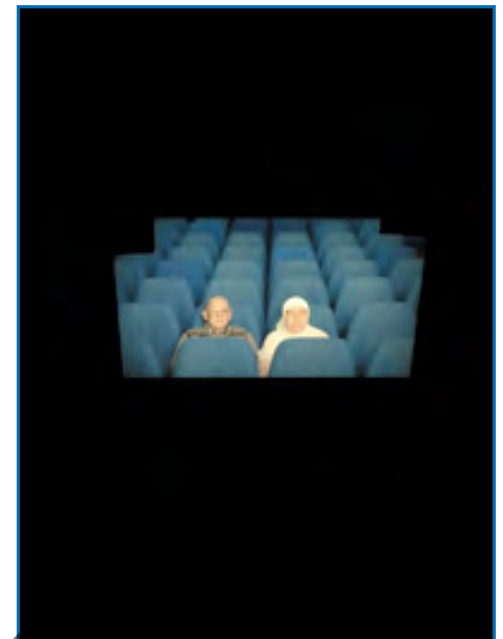
Yasmina Reggad



Screening room of the C.N.C.A, Algiers (Algeria). Photo: Zineb Sedira, 2018

I remember reading somewhere that, in the late 1960s, Algerian President Houari Boumediène granted an Algerian citizenship to Miriam Makeba, who had been stripped of her South African nationality and forced into exile for decades. I like to think (perhaps I even made it up?) that the ceremony took place during the singer's concert at the Atlas Hall in Bab El Oued and that, as a thank you, she performed the song *Ana Hourra fi El Djazaïr* [I am free in Algeria] in Algerian Arabic that evening.

I met Miriam Makeba again in Algiers on June 21, 2018 at the Centre National de la Cinématographie et de l'Audiovisuel (C.N.C.A). The image of her face dazzled the screen of the projection room as she sang *a cappella* for the camera of William Klein. The documentary *Le Festival Panafricain d'Alger* (1969), "the third world opera" was being screened in its film version, preserved in the archives of the C.N.C.A., just for me and Zineb.



Cinema Jean Vigo, Gennevilliers (France). Photo: Yasmina Reggad's archive

*I took refuge in watching movies
In creating my own cinema*

I don't remember ever going to a regular cinema with Zineb. The few times we were together in a screening room, it was empty. Like in Algiers, we didn't sit next to each other.

In October 2021, from the back of Room 1 of the Jean-Vigo cinema in Gennevilliers I watched Zineb's parents sitting in the second row watching a film. Emma Dalesman, the director of photography, was pointing her camera at them with her back to the screen. Zineb, meanwhile, was watching the image of her parents' faces illuminated by *The Battle of Algiers* live on the small control monitor.

More recently, in January 2022, with Sam and Till, we found ourselves in the French Pavilion in Venice, in the cinema room where the film *Dreams Have No Titles* is shown in the exhibition.

We were watching *Les Mains libres*, and Emma was filming us.

— Y.R.



Still from *Dreams Have No Titles* (2022) by Zineb Sedira

On the cover: Still from *Dreams Have No Titles* (2022) by Zineb Sedira. Courtesy the artist.

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Mathieu Klebeye Abonnenc

Artist, researcher, curator, and film programmer, lives and works in Sète (France)

artReoriented

Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, founders of the multidisciplinary curatorial platform artReoriented, directors of Hamburger Bahnhof, and curators of the Lyon Biennale 2022, live and work in Germany

John Akomfrah

Artist, film director, writer, screenwriter, and theorist, lives and works in London (UK)

André Bazin

Film critic and film theorist

Sonia Boyce

Artist and researcher, Professor of Black Art & Design at University of the Arts London, lives and works in London (UK)

Mathieu Copeland

Curator and editor, lives and works in London (UK)

Danilo Correale

Artist and researcher, lives and works in New York (USA) and Naples (Italy)

Ntone Edjabe

Writer and DJ, and the founder and editor of *Chimurenga*, a pan-African platform of writing, art, and politics, lives and works in Cape Town (South Africa)

Alessandra Ferrini

Artist, researcher and educator, Research Fellow 2022-2024 at the British School at Rome, and PhD candidate at the University of the Arts London, lives and works in London (UK)

Agnieszka Gratza

Editor and art critic, lives and works in Rome (Italy)

Kapwani Kiwanga

Artist and researcher, lives and works in Paris (France)

Sarah Maldoror

Militant film director and screenwriter

Rayane Mcirdi

Artist, lives and works in Asnières-sur-Seine (France)

Naeem Mohaiemen

Filmmaker, writer, artist, Associate Professor of Visual Arts & Concentration, and Head of Photography at the School of Visual Arts at Columbia University, lives and works in New York (USA)

Luca Peretti

British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Warwick, lives and works in Coventry (UK) and Rome (Italy)

Yasmina Reggad

Curator, performance artist, dramaturg, and researcher, co-founder and curator at aria (artist residency in algiers) and artistic director of the Bial das Amazônias (Belém, Brazil), lives and works in Brussels (Belgium)

Zineb Sedira

Artist and co-founder of aria (artist residency in algiers), lives in London (UK), works between Algiers (Algeria), London, and Paris (France)

Gilane Tawadros

Curator, writer and Chief Executive at DACS, lives and works in London (UK)

Wassyla Tamzali

Writer and feminist, lives and works in Algiers (Algeria) and Paris (France)

Eugénie Zvonkine

Historian, researcher, cinema critic, co-director of the research programme ESTCA and lecturer at the University of Paris 8, lives and works in Paris (France)

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