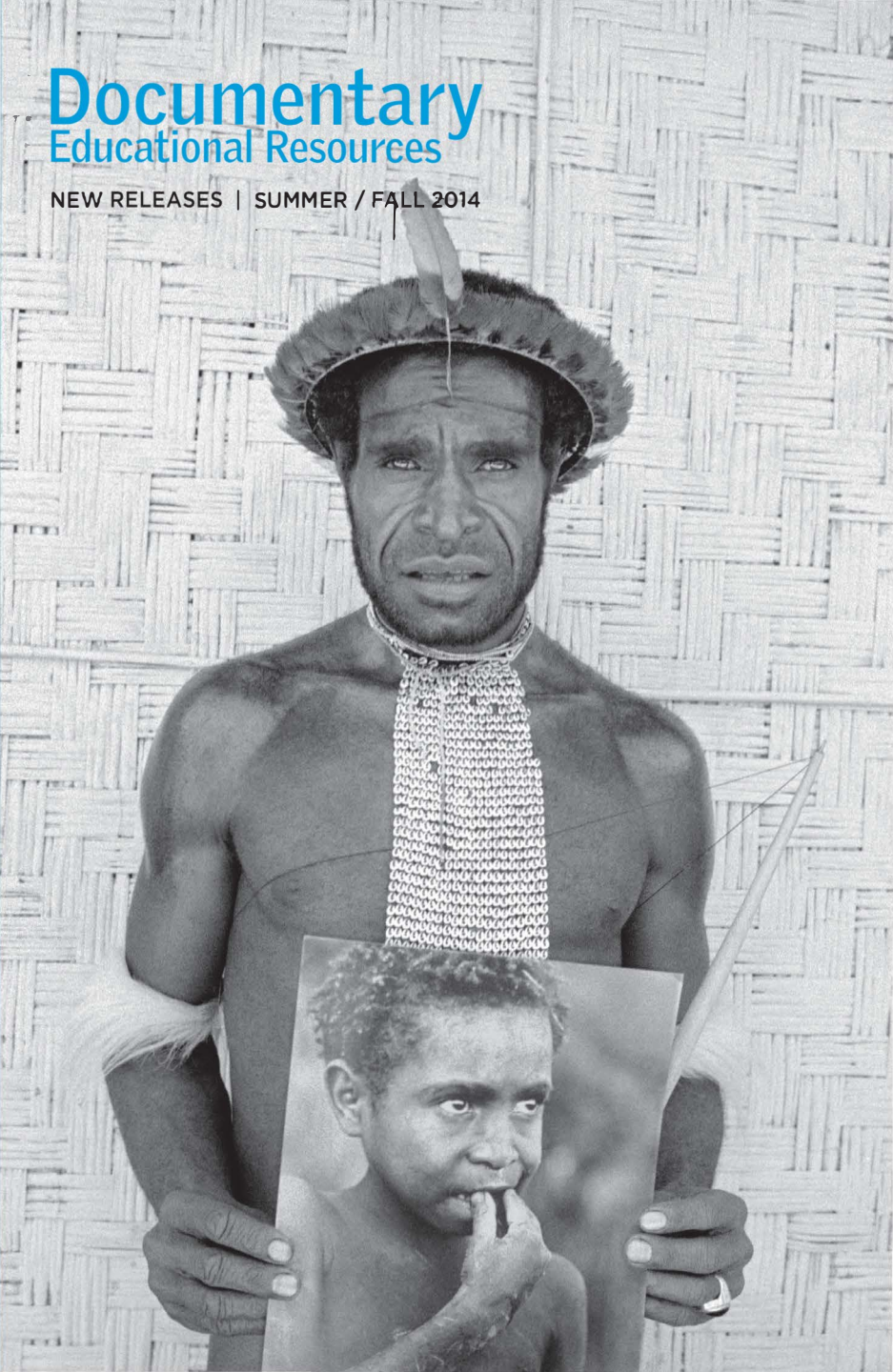
Documentary
Educational Resources

NEW RELEASES | SUMMER / FALL 2014



GODS AND KINGS

by Robin Blotnik, produced by Rachel Lears
87 min, 2012

In the muddy market square of Momostenango, Guatemala, shamans burn offerings in the shadow of the Catholic church as pre-hispanic gods dance beside horror movie monsters. Presenting a striking case never before documented on film, *Gods and Kings* illuminates the ways in which global media and politics are re-imagined as they become part of Maya cultural practices and belief systems.

( ) *Intangible Culture Film Prize,* RAI, 2013

HOLLOW

by Elaine McMillion Sheldon
104 min, 2013

The story of McDowell County, West Virginia, is the story of America: of boom and bust economies, small towns facing changes beyond their control, and challenges and triumphs of every size. *Hollow* is an interactive documentary and community participatory project that examines the future of rural America through the eyes and voices of those living in McDowell County. DER's special Educational DVD Edition allows viewers guided access to 35 important stories from the project, combining video portraits, data visualizations, photography, soundscapes, community-generated content and grassroots mapping to bring the stories to life.

( ) *Winner, Peabody Award,* 2014

RETURNING SOULS

by Hu Tai-Li
85 min, 2012

The carved pillars of the Amis tribe's ancestral house recount tribal legends and are home to ancient spirits. The pillars, however, were moved from the village to Taiwan's Institute of Ethnology Museum after a typhoon toppled the house 40 years ago. This film follows a group of young Amis who seek to restore the pillars and connections with their ancestors. Their efforts for cultural revitalization are complicated by the influence of western religions, national land policy, and local politics in this unique case of repatriation.

( ) *Special Mention, Intangible Cultural Heritage Award,* Jean Rouch Int'l Ethnographic Film Festival, 2014

A WEAVE OF TIME

by Susan Fanshel
60 min, 1986, Digitally Remastered 2014

In 1938, noted anthropologist John Adair travelled to the Navajo reservation in Pine Springs, Arizona with a 16mm hand wind motion picture camera. There, Adair met and filmed the Burnside family, creating a visual record of Navajo life in the 1930's. *A Weave of Time* juxtaposes Adair's previously unseen historical footage with contemporary scenes and in-depth interviews with the family 50 years later. The film presents a complex microcosm of Navajo culture in transition and raises questions about the survival of ethnicity in 20th century America.

Winner, Earthwatch Award, 1987

THE NAVIGATORS

by Sam Low
59 min, 1983, Digitally Remastered 2013

Over 1,000 years ago, Polynesia was explored and settled by navigators who used only the waves, stars, and flights of birds for guidance. Anthropologist and filmmaker Sam Low visited the tiny atoll of Satawal in Micronesia's remote Caroline Islands where Mau Piailug, the last navigator to be ceremonially initiated, set sail in a traditional Polynesian canoe from Hawaii to Tahiti: 2500 miles across the ocean without any Western navigational instrument. To master the lore of navigation was to attain great status in traditional societies of Oceania. Today, few men remain with Mau's skills, knowledge, or aspirations.

Blue Ribbon, American Film Festival, 1983

CINE Golden Eagle, 1983

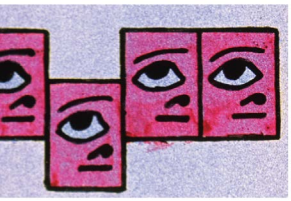
NEIGHBORS

by Richard P. Rogers, produced by Janet Mendelsohn
28 min, 12 min extra, 1977, Digitally Remastered 2013

Neighbors examines the challenges and opportunities of neighborhood revitalization through the stories of 12 residents of Boston's South End. While documenting the differences among these residents, the film also reveals their common goals — to make their neighborhood a better place to live. Included on the DVD is *Neighbors Revisited* (12 min, 2012) in which producer, Janet Mendelsohn, and cameraman, Kevin Burke, return to the South End to interview several of the participants in the original film. The update brings the dynamics of change in this community into the present.

Finalist, American Film Festival, 1978

Broadcast on PBS and ABC-TV, 1978



Fellowship Award in Film, New York Foundation for the Arts, 1987-1988

FOUR FILMS BY ROBERT ASCHER

by Robert Ascher
21 min, 1986 - 1995, Digitally Remastered 2013

This collection contains four animated films by writer, educator and anthropologist, Robert Ascher. These films were created using a technique called "direct animation" — drawing with pen and ink directly on 35mm film. Films in this compilation have been included in the permanent collection of MoMA, the New Zealand National Art Gallery, the Jewish Museum, NYC, and the Israel Film Archive.

CYCLE 5 min, 1986
BAR YOHAI 6 min, 1987
BLUE, A TLINGIT ODYSSEY 6 min, 1991
THE GOLEM 4 min, 1995

Bronze Award, International Film and Television Festival, 1978

ROOT HOG OR DIE

by Rawn Fulton
56 min, 1978, black & white, Digitally Remastered 2014

Since early Colonial times, the rural hilltowns of New England have been home to generations of farmers. This film follows the cycle of the farming year, and in its course we visit with elders who reflect on farming's deep natural patterns, share their family histories and personal memories, and ponder the inevitable forces of technological and social change. Now beautifully remastered, this film is a portrait of a living remnant of a once pervasive but rapidly vanishing way of life.

The latest edition in DER's George C. Stoney Collection

FIVE FILMS ON POLICE

by George C. Stoney
152 min, 1960-1966, black & white, Digitally Remastered 2013

These films present police officers as instruments of social service for all. The films were made for use during group discussions where police could share their experiences with one another and with people from hospitals in their communities. The films were produced in collaboration with the Louisiana Association for Mental Health, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Institute for Mental Health, and the New York Police Department. Films included are *Booked for Safekeeping* (1960), *The Cry for Help* (1962), *The Mask* (1963), *Under Pressure* (1964), and *The Man in the Middle* (1966).

COLLECTED FILMS OF **JORGE PRELORÁN**

A cinematic icon in his native Argentina, Jorge Prelorán was a pioneer in the field of ethnographic documentary. He is best known for an intimate approach he termed "ethnobiography," in which protagonists tell their personal stories in their own words, while revealing the stories of their communities and cultures. DER is proud to announce the first three titles in a collection of his works:

IMAGINERO – THE IMAGE MAN (53 min, 1970)
An ethnobiography of Hermógenes Cayo, a self-taught woodcarver and painter who lives on the high Andean plateau of Argentina.

COCHENGO MIRANDA (53 min, 1974)
A warm, intimate portrait of life in the extensive region of the Pampas in Central Argentina through the eyes of a cattleman who has lived here for over 30 years.

ZULAY, FACING THE 21ST CENTURY (110 min, 1989)
Filmed over a span of 8 years, this film is based on dialogue between Zulay Saravino, an indigenous Otavaleña of Equador, and Mabel Prelorán, an Argentine anthropologist living in Los Angeles.

As a companion to these films, we also offer **TRACES AND MEMORY OF JORGE PRELORÁN** (directed by Fermin Rivera, 79 min, 2009), a beautifully filmed, illuminating biographical portrait in which the filmmaker shares candid insights into his life and work.

TURNING TIDE: THE ROBBIE LEPPZER COLLECTION

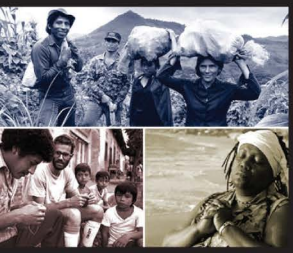
Robbie Leppzer is an award-winning documentary filmmaker whose works capture the experiences of ordinary people grappling with critical issues of our time, such as anti-war and anti-nuclear protests, human rights, and cross-cultural understanding. His film, video, and public radio works remain a valuable historical record of the 20th and 21st Centuries, and encapsulate the experience of grassroots activism from a cross-section of races, religions, and ages.

ACROSS THE AMERICAS: INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES

45 min, 1992/1993

Indigenous people from North, South, and Central America speak out about their common legacies of survival and contemporary struggles over land, human rights, and the environment.

COLUMBUS DIDN'T DISCOVER US 24 min, 1992
ARCTIC TO AMAZONIA 21 min, 1993



BUILDING BRIDGES: CROSS CULTURAL JOURNEYS

66 min, 1985/1994/2007

In Central America, young athletes and harvest volunteers from the U.S. engage in citizen diplomacy, while in Senegal, an African-American storyteller rediscovers her African roots.

HARVEST OF PEACE 29 min, 1985
FUTBOLITO 28 min, 1994
IRMA'S JOURNEY 9 min, 2007

VOICES FOR PEACE: FOUR FILMS ON GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM

92 min, 1984/1989/1990

Four films on grassroots activists from a cross-section of races, religions, and ages as they work together to stop war.

CHOOSE LIFE 8 min, 1984
CALL OF THE PEACE PAGODA 28 min, 1989
STRAIGHT TALK 31 min, 1990
VOICES FOR PEACE 25 min, 2001

FEATURE-LENGTH FILMS

National Broadcast, Free Speech TV

SEABROOK 1977
80 min, 1978

In April 1977, the small coastal town of Seabrook, New Hampshire became an international symbol in the battle over atomic energy. Concerned about the dangers of potential radioactive accidents, over 2,000 members of the Clamshell Alliance, a coalition of environmental groups, attempted to block construction of a nuclear power plant through a civil disobedience protest. As a result, 1,414 people were arrested and jailed in National Guard armories for two weeks. Filmed in verité style, *Seabrook 1977* chronicles the dramatic events which made world headlines and sparked a grassroots antinuclear power movement across the United States.

World Premiere, Sundance Film Festival, 1997

National Broadcast, Cinemax/HBO and Sundance Channel

AN ACT OF CONSCIENCE
90 min, 1997

How far are you willing to go to stand up for your deepest beliefs? For Randy Kehler and Betsy Corner, their life-long commitment to pacifism led them to risk losing their home. For fourteen years, they publicly refused to pay federal taxes as a protest against war and military spending. As a consequence, their home was seized by U.S. marshals and IRS agents. Narrated by Martin Sheen, this feature-length documentary chronicles the couple's five-year struggle to nonviolently resist the seizure of their home, in which they are joined by hundreds of supporters from across the country including noted author and activist priest Fr. Daniel Berrigan and long-time folksinger Pete Seeger. The film provides a thought-provoking glimpse of the conflict surrounding "The American Dream."

Official Selection, Boston Independent Film Festival, 2005

National Broadcast, Free Speech TV

THE PEACE PATRIOTS
78 min, 2005

This film is an intimate portrait of American dissenters reflecting on their personal participation as engaged citizens in a time of war. *The Peace Patriots* chronicles the early protests against the U.S. invasion and military occupation of Iraq as seen through a diverse group of individuals, ranging in age from 14 to 75, including teenagers, college students, war veterans, teachers, clergy, and community activists, as they take part in vigils, marches, theater performances, and civil disobedience sit-ins. Featuring music by Steve Earle, Pete Seeger, Ani DiFranco, Billy Bragg, Jonatha Brooke and John Sheldon. Narrated by Janeane Garofalo.

FILMMAKER SPOTLIGHT

ROBERT GARDNER

Robert Gardner (1925 - 2014) was an internationally renowned filmmaker and author whose works have entered the permanent canon of non-fiction filmmaking. In addition to having created some of the most influential ethnographic films to date, Gardner developed and hosted the television series *Screening Room* from 1972 to 1981, and was chairman of the Department of Visual and Environmental Studies and director of the Carpenter Center for Visual Arts at Harvard University for many years. Gardner's works are immersive, sensory explorations of culture, revealing subtleties of our shared human experience.

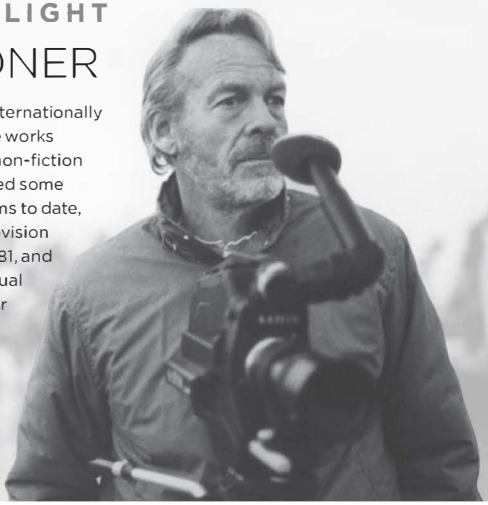


photo by Ned Johnston

DEAD BIRDS RE-ENCOUNTERED

45 min, 2013 - COMING SUMMER 2014

In 1961, Robert Gardner organized an expedition to the Highlands of New Guinea to film the Dani people. He stayed for six months to create an essay on the themes of violence and death most dramatically witnessed within the intense ritual warfare between rival Dani villages, and ultimately on the role of violence in human life and culture. The end result was his seminal film, *Dead Birds*. Twenty-eight years later, Gardner returned to the Dani villages to see what had become of the people he had met and to show them the film. That visit is the kernel for Gardner's latest work, *Dead Birds Re-encountered*:

"I have been told by people who know better that it is a risky business returning to a place where you have enjoyed some remarkable experience. But I will say that going back to the Highlands of Western New Guinea (aka West Papua) was enormously engaging. I saw people I cared for deeply and who became part of my life wherever I lived. Making a film about all this was not at all difficult." - Robert Gardner

OTHER WORKS BY ROBERT GARDNER

DEAD BIRDS 83 min, 1964

RIVERS OF SAND 85 min, 1974

FOREST OF BLISS 90 min, 1986

MARK TOBEY 19 min, 1952

3 ART MAKERS 48 min, 1966-2000

SEAN SCULLY AT WORK 90 min, 1986

SCREENING ROOM was a 1970s Boston television series developed and hosted by Robert Gardner. On-air for nearly a decade, the series offered independent filmmakers a chance to show and discuss their work on a commercial station and reach mainstream audiences. This unique program dealt even-handedly with animation, documentary, and experimental film. Many of the filmmakers presented on the show are now considered the most influential contributors to their respective fields of modern cinema. Thirty episodes have been edited for release as DVDs and are now available for purchase individually, in a set by category of animation, documentary, and experimental film, or as part of the complete series.

ANIMATION

ROBERT BREER • 75 min, 1976
GEORGE GRIFFIN • 71 min, 1976
JOHN & FAITH HUBLEY • 64 min, 1976
DEREK LAMB • 2 DVDs, 150 min, 1973 / 1975
CAROLINE LEAF & MARY BEAMS • 75 min, 1975
JAN LENICA • 80 min, 1973
SUZAN PITT • 71 min, 1975
JOHN WHITNEY, SR • 68 min, 1972

DOCUMENTARY

LES BLANK • 75 min, 1976
EMILE DE ANTONIO • 79 min, 1973
ROBERT FULTON • 75 min, 1975
HILLARY HARRIS • 2 DVDs, 151 min, 1973 / 1979
PETER HUTTON • 72 min, 1977
RICKY LEACOCK • 64 min, 1973
ALAN LOMAX • 75 min, 1975
RICHARD P. ROGERS • 76 min, 1975
JEAN ROUCH • 64 min, 1980

EXPERIMENTAL

BRUCE BAILLIE • 72 min, 1975
JAMES BROUGHTON • 75 min, 1977
ED EMSHWILLER • 77 min, 1977
HOLLIS FRAMPTON • 74 min, 1977
STANDISH LAWDER & STANLEY CAVELL • 74 min, 1973
RICKY LEACOCK • 64 min, 1973
JONAS MEKAS • 75 min, 1975
YVONNE RAINER • 74 min, 1977
MICHAEL SNOW • 74 min, 1975

Winner, Special Student Film Award, Göttingen International Ethnographic Film Festival, 2014

DESCENDING WITH ANGELS

by Christian Suhr
80 min, 2013

A Palestinian refugee living in Aarhus, Denmark has been committed to psychiatric treatment after possession by evil spirits, known as *jinn*, caused him to destroy the interior of a mosque, crash several cars, and insult numerous people. His possession has already been treated with Quranic incantations so he sees no need for further treatment, but psychiatrists believe medication is needed. This film explores the crossroads of Muslim exorcism and psychiatric medicine, comparing two systems of treatment which, despite vast differences, share a view of healing as faith in an external non-human agency — God or biomedicine.

2-DVD set contains over 4.5 hours of archival and supplemental materials

TRACKS ACROSS SAND

by Hugh Brody, produced by Betsy Carson
2 DVD set, 270 min, 2012

This interactive 2-DVD set presents a unique account of the first Bushman land claim made by the ǂKhomani San of South Africa. Shown through the perspectives of the ǂKhomani San themselves, this film chronicles their ongoing struggle to safeguard their language, land, culture, and human rights. Culled from over 130 hours of video recorded between 1996 and 2010, this film follows the land claim from its inception up until ten years after it was granted, and includes archival photos, maps, family trees, stories, segments on Bushman language, and interviews with figures who were instrumental in securing the claim and building community.

Grand Prize, Asian Vision, Taiwan International Documentary Film Festival, 2012

THE SOUND OF OLD ROOMS

by Sandeep Ray
72 min, 2011

Shot over the course of 20 years, this film traces the life of Sarthak, an Indian man who juggles his desire to be a poet with the practicalities of raising a family. He still lives in the crumbling home where he was raised with his nagging but affectionate mother, wife, and young son, and sleeps, as he has since a child, surrounded by books. As Sarthak leads us through the cultural consciousness of Kolkata, his own experiences raise larger questions about the choices we make and how art and life inform one another.

Talk to us about hosting your own community screening

POWER TO THE PEDALS

by Bob Nesson
30 min, 2013

Wenzday Jane's bicycle meant personal freedom when she was growing up in public housing outside Boston, Massachusetts, and would later inspire her passion for mechanics and welding. Now a self-taught innovator and a community leader, Wenzday Jane heads an urban movement to replace trucks with cargo bicycles for local delivery, municipal waste-hauling, and agricultural distribution. This film portrays the transformative vision and extraordinary efforts of a young woman whose innovative leadership is reshaping her community.

Official Selection, Visions du Real, 2014

MYSTIC MASS

by Karim B. Haroun
70 min, 2014

Every year, thousands of Shia Muslims meet in the village of Nabatieh in Lebanon to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, assassinated in 680 A.D. It is by far the most important religious event in the Shia faith, and leads to the formation of immense mass movements all around the world. *Mystic Mass* documents the ceremony, and provides an exhaustive description of how the mass is formed, how it attains its highest mystical levels, and how it dissolves – all within twenty four hours.

Broadcast on PBS SoCal, 2014

TALKING STONE

by Paul Goldsmith
60 min, 2014

Hidden away in the canyons of a military base on the edge of the Mojave Desert is the largest concentration of rock art in North America. Created over thousands of years by a now vanished culture, the rock art represents the oldest known art in California. Through the perspectives of modern native people, scholars, hunters, and the military officers who are stewards of this remote terrain, this film seeks to unravel the mysteries of these ancient works of art and the people who made them.

DER DIGITAL

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ALEXANDER STREET PRESS (ASP)
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MISSION

A 501(c)(3) non profit, DER's mission is to promote thought-provoking documentary film and media for learning about the peoples and cultures of the world. DER's catalog **is one of the most significant collections of anthropological film in the world today.** As stewards of this important resource of our collective history, we are committed to ensuring access to our collection for both scholarly and general audiences. DER believes that film and media can engage emotions and intellect to alter preconceptions and foster tolerance across social and cultural barriers.

SCREENINGS & OUTREACH

To get in touch with us about screening one of our films, please email orders@der.org. Become an active member of DER's community by joining our mailing list, following our social media, and letting us know how we can better serve you.

CONTACT US

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Cover photo by Susan Meiselas / Magnum Photos
from *Dead Birds Re-encountered* by Robert Gardner (pg 7)

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