Documentary
Educational Resources

New Releases | WINTER 2008

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Cabal in Kabul
by Dan Alexe
87 minutes, 2007, in Farsi with English subtitles

For the past ten years, Zebulon and Isaac, the two remaining Jews in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, have been living in the courtyard of Kabul's old synagogue. The elderly Isaac lives on the ground floor and makes a living by selling amulets to his Muslim neighbors. Middle-aged Zebulon lives upstaris and haggles with the same Afghans over his illegally produced wine. There is no love lost between the two men; they systematically abuse and insult each other at every turn.

Director Dan Alexe films these staunch enemies with great ease and intimacy. Like the hero of *Yojimbo* (or *For a Fistful of Dollars*, for those who prefer the Western version), he acts as double agent, bouncing between the two rivals, collaborating, refusing to judge, and exposing the sadomasochistic relationship that can dominate this small Jewish community.

Everyday Life of Roma Children from Block 71
by Ivana Todorovic
color, 21 min, 2006

An intimate window into Serbian Roma culture, this documentary sheds light on the intricacies of Roma customs and their amalgamation of cultural influences - from traditional Roma and Serbian culture to Hispanic pop-culture. Ivana Todorovic documents the life of the Stankovic family, who migrated from Southern Serbia in search of better opportunities. Provided with few social services, their living conditions are rough and the children work to help support their family. Remarkably resilient, funny and optimistic, the children speak openly about their hopes and dreams, including educational opportunities from which they are often excluded. Charming and informative, the documentary brings an alternative and very human view of the often-beleaguered and impoverished Roma.

!KUNG SHORT FILMS
By John Marshall and Timothy Asch
color/b&w, 159 min, 2007

Filmmakers and DER founders John Marshall and Tim Asch pioneered an innovative method of educational ethnographic film based on the short film study. Concentrating on capturing the depth and complexity within a single social event, the films were to be used separately or in combination as catalysts for discussion and further study. This approach remains unusual in ethnography today.

The !Kung short films were shot between 1957 and 1958 on one of many of Marshall's Peabody/Smithsonian sponsored expeditions to film and learn about the Ju/'hoansi. For the first time, fifteen of these classic short films of the Ju/'hoansi people are compiled on DVD: *Argument About a Marriage*, *Baobab Play*, *Children Throw Toy Assegais*, *A Curing Ceremony*, *Debe's Tantrum*, *Group of Women*, *A Joking Relationship*, *Lion Game*, *The Meat Fight*, *The Melon Tossing Game*, *Men Bathing*, *Playing with Scorpions*, *A Rite of Passage*, *Tug-of-War*, and *The Wasp Nest*. This re-mastered/authored compilation contains additional information about the series as well as the individual films.

Death Row
by Bruce Jackson and Diane Christian
color, 59 minutes, 1979

The film is about how Ellis prison (Texas) death row inmates get by, how they fill the years between fixing of a death sentence by a judge and ultimate resolution in freedom, commutation or death by lethal injection. In 1979 the filmmakers had unsupervised access to the Row, without guards and officials in the cells when they were doing the filming and interviewing. No other documentary film shows this otherwise hidden territory in the American criminal justice system - in fact, it would be impossible to make such a film today.

Out of Order
by Diane Christian and Bruce Jackson
color, 89 minutes, 1983

In *Out of Order* six former Catholic nuns tell why they entered and why they left religious life. They talk about single life and marriage, the changed place of religion in their lives, sex roles, institutional supports and burdens, and work. The film offers unique insight into female socialization and identity in modern America by probing ideals and realities of womanhood, sex, work and service from an unknown and unusual perspective.

Daughter From Danang
by Gail Dolgin & Vicente Franco
color, 81 min, 2002

A heartbreaking documentary that upsets your expectations of happily-ever-afters, *Daughter from Danang* is a riveting emotional drama of longing, identity, and the personal legacy of war. Born in Danang, Vietnam in 1968, Heidi is the mixed-race daughter of an American serviceman and a Vietnamese woman. Fearing for her daughter's safety at the war's end, Heidi's mother sent her to the U.S. on "Operation Babylift." Mother and daughter would know nothing about each other for 22 years.

Now, as if by a miracle, they are reunited in Danang. But what seems like the cue for a happy ending is anything but. In intimate and sometimes excruciating moments, this film profoundly shows how wide the chasms of cultural difference and how deep the wounds of war can be--even within one family.

Red White Black and Blue
By Tom Putnam
color, 86/53 min, 2007

This is the first feature-length documentary to tell the story of the Battle of Attu, one of the bloodiest battles of World War II and the only invasion of the United States since the War of 1812. Life-long friends Bill Jones and Andy Petrus fought 3,000 Japanese in a secret Alaskan invasion during World War II. Now, 60 years later, these two forgotten heroes embark on an intense and emotional journey back to the remote Aleutian island of Attu. Through their eyes you'll experience the complicated, sometimes contradictory mindset of a nation at war and see what it really means to be an American hero.

FROM THE ARCHIVE :
SCREENING ROOM SERIES
by Robert Gardner

Screening Room was a 1970's Boston television series that for almost ten years offered independent filmmakers a chance to discuss their work and show it to a large urban audience. Developed and hosted by filmmaker Robert Gardner, this unique program dealt even-handedly with animation, documentary, and experimental film, welcoming such artists as Stan Brakhage, James Broughton, Suzan Pitt, Hollis Frampton, and Yvonne Rainer. The series, considered an invaluable historical record of modern cinema, has been transferred to digital format, for archival preservation by the Museum of Film and Broadcasting in New York City. Nearly 100 programs were produced during the years *Screening Room* was broadcast. Twenty-six episodes have been edited for release as DVDs and are available through Documentary Educational Resources. Please contact us for discounts on orders of multiple episodes.

Often called "the father of West Coast independent cinema," **James Broughton** appeared on *Screening Room* in April, 1977. He screened and discussed the films *Loony Tom: The Happy Lover*, *This Is It*, *Water Circle*, *Windowmobile* and *Testament*.

color, 75 min, 1977/2007

Abstract computer animator, inventor and digital pioneer **John Whitney** was a guest on the inaugural episode of *Screening Room* in November, 1972. He showed and discussed *Permutations*, *1-2-3-Osaka*, *Matrix*, *Matrix III* and a film by his son, John Whitney Jr., called *Terminal Self*.

color, 68 min, 1972/2005

A major figure the experimental film movement of the 1960s and '70s, **Ed Emshwiller** appeared on *Screening Room* in July 1975 to screen and discuss the films *Chrysalis*, *George Dumpson's Place*, *Carol Emshwiller*, *Thanotopsis*, *Film With Three Dancers*, *Scape Mates* and *Crossings and Meetings*.

color, 77 min, 1975/2005

One of America's most influential political and avant-garde filmmakers **Emile de Antonio**, along with visual anthropologist Edmund Carpenter, appeared on Screening Room in June 1973 to screen and discuss excerpts from his films *Point of Order*, *Rush to Judgment*, *In The Year of The Pig* and *Millhouse: A White Comedy*.

color, 79 min, 1973/2005

Extraordinary non-fiction filmmaker and gifted aerial cinematographer **Robert Fulton** appeared on *Screening Room* in April 1973 to screen and discuss *Machu Pichu* and *Reality's Invisible*. Fulton returned in April 1979 and screened excerpts from the films *Street Film*, *Path of Cessation* and *Chant*.

color, 75 min, 1975/2007

Independent animator and painter **Suzan Pitt** appeared on *Screening Room* in July, 1975. She screened and discussed *Bowl*, *Garden*, *Theatre*, *Marble Game*, *Crocus*, *Cels*, *Whitney Promo*, and *Jefferson Circus Songs*.

color, 71 min, 1975/2007

For more information on all available episodes, visit:
http://www.der.org/films/screening-room-series.html

FILMMAKER SPOTLIGHT :

BOB CONNOLLY & ROBIN ANDERSON
Australia

Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson are two of Australia's most distinguished documentary filmmakers. Best known for their films about Papua New Guinea's higland tribes, they also produced *Rats in the Ranks* (1996), an exposé of inner city council politics in Sydney, and *Facing the Music (*2001), which explores the impact of government cutbacks on post-secondary education.

Their work has been shown around the world and received numerous national and international awards, including an Academy Award nomination for *First Contact,* and the husband-wife team were acknowledged by the Australian Film Insitute in 1992 with the prestigious Byron Kennedy Award.

The Highlands Trilogy: The Complete Collection DVD Box Set

Set in the Papua New Guinea Highlands and shot over ten years, *First Contact* (1983), followed by *Joe Leahy's Neighbors* (1989) and *Black Harvest* (1992), depict the lasting impact of moderninty on a primitive society. All three films have won the Grand Prix at France's prestigious Festival Cinema du Reel, and AFI awards for Best Documentary. For the first time in the U.S., the complete trilogy is available through DER on DVD. This box set features all three stunning, critically acclaimed documentaries plus extras.

color, 350 min, 2005, 3 DVDs featuring films and extras

First Contact (part 1 of The Highlands Trilogy*)*
by Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson
color, 54 min, 1983

In the 1930s, Australian miners lead by Michael Leahy and his brothers made their first trek into the New Guinea highlands. This film documents that first contact between white people and highlanders. Compelling footage of the initial meetings is combined with interviews of the surviving Leahy brothers and highlanders who recall the impressions and shock of those long ago events.

Joe Leahy's Neighbors (part 2 of The Highlands Trilogy*)*
by Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson
color, 90 min, 1988

Joe Leahy is the mixed race son of Australian miner Michael Leahy and a young highland girl. Now in his fifties, he is a wealthy coffee plantation owner and lives in Western-style grandeur amidst his poorer Ganiga neighbors on land they practically gave him. The tribe tries to cling to its customs, while at the same time they perceive that Joe's modern ways have brought him a better life...

Is he (as some claim) a colonialist exploiter, ripping off his Ganiga brothers? Or, on the contrary, is he a new kind of tribal chief, one who brings economic development to a place badly in need of modernization? The film poignantly portrays both perspectives without value judgments or resolution for either side.

Black Harvest (part 3 of The Highlands Trilogy*)*
by Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson
color, 90 min, 1992

Black Harvest charts the progress of Joe Leahy in convincing the Ganiga tribespeople to join him in a coffee growing venture. He provides the money and the expertise; they supply the land and labor. But on the eve of success, the world coffee price collapses and tribal warfare erupts in the valley. Always suspect because of his mixed-race status, Joe is in deep trouble with the tribespeople when his promises of riches fail to materialize. As he organizes to emigrate with his family to Australia, he is a saddened man with an uncertain future.

Being Innu
by Catherine Mullins
color, 77 min (English only) and 52 min (English/Innu/French), 2007

For thousands of years the Innu lived off the land. They were nomads, sometimes also known as the Montagnais. In the 1960s, government policy forced them to settle and form communities in Labrador and Quebec. Ancestral ways collided with modern ones, giving rise to ongoing struggles. Now the grandchildren tell their own story.

Being Innu takes an unvarnished look at life in the village of Sheshatshiu, Labrador. Six savvy, gutsy young people talk to Montreal filmmaker Catherine Mullins about addiction, suicide, lack of jobs, hopelessness. Interviews with Elders, grandparents and teachers round out this portrait of a community in crisis - sadly a situation not unlike that of many other aboriginal nations. What is remarkable about Innu youth is their love of the land and of their native language. For them, being Innu means finding a balance between the traditional ways of the past and today's reality.

San Francisco - Still Wild At Heart
By Melissa Peabody
color, 59 min, 2007

As San Francisco grapples with what it means to have coyotes as new residents, along comes *San Francisco - Still Wild At Heart*, a compelling one-hour natural history film that chronicles the return of coyotes to this city's landscape. Lyrical in style, the film is a virtual case study of the coyote's arrival in urban America, as it explores the complexity, conflicts, and richness of this fertile interface between urban life and wild nature.

Melting Wok
By Mainak Bhaumik
color, 29 min, 2007

Bhaumik's film provides insight into India's often-overlooked Chinese population, examining the thriving Chinatown in Kolkata, Bengal. Exploring the factors that make up Chinese-Indian identity, the film looks at the Indian cultural stereotypes of Chinese immigrants and the effects of government resettling of Chinese-Indians during the 1962 border conflict between the two countries. A portrait emerges of a hardworking and traditionally enclosed immigrant community, but one that is becoming increasingly assimilated with mainstream Indian culture.

On the Other Side
by Nozomi Ito, Aoife Nugent, Peter Scheehle, and Allan Shinohara
color, 51 min, 2007

On the Other Side follows a group of Jamaican migrant farm workers through the highs and lows of the tobacco season during which they must make the best of a life far from home and cope with the mundane and often unpredictable nature of farm work. Told in the workers' own words, *On the Other Side* rises above the political to focus on the often-overlooked human face of migrant labor. What emerges is an inspirational story of sacrifice and love of family; of hard work and dedication; of bitter isolation and loneliness.

Rivers of Sand (Special Edition)
by Robert Gardner
color, 83 min, 1973/2007

Rivers of Sand was filmed in a Hamar village in southwestern Ethiopia, where a beautiful and beautifully dressed people lead a life of male vanity and female hard labor and oppression. Women endure whippings, decorative scarring, and cutting out of teeth to please the male eye. An unusually conscious and critical local woman talks to the camera from time to time, giving an insider's view of her life there. Gardner films the agricultural work, herding, hunting, ceremonies, and physical environment of these people to render a unique account of life in one place that has disturbing overtones of the life lived in all places.

This Special Edition DVD includes:
- The film optimally remastered for sound and image from a new 35mm blow up
- Audio commentary track by Robert Gardner and Robert Fenz
- Photo gallery featuring still images and journal entries read by Robert Gardner

Forest of Bliss (Special Edition)
produced with Ákos Östör
color, 90 min, 1986/2007

Forest of Bliss deals with the ancient and still thriving city of Benares, India, built along the river Ganges. The city's large business is to care for the dying and cremation of the dead. Without voiceover commentary or written explanation, the film involves the viewer in a pure and intense encounter with what is seen and heard. The film looks at specifics, but also opens itself to larger concerns such as the eternal cycles and metamorphoses of water and earth, flesh and wood and fire, wind and the spirit. This much discussed and debated film is at once science and poetry.

This Special Edition DVD includes:
- The film optimally re-mastered for sound and image from a new 35mm blow up
- *Looking at Forest of Bliss*, a feature-length program with Robert Gardner and Stan Brakhage
- Photo gallery featuring still images and journal entries read by Robert Gardner

The Lost Water
by DaKxin Bajrange (Chhara)
color, 21 min, 2007

73% of the total salt production in India comes from Gujarat State, almost 60% of which comes from Little Rann of Kutch (LRK), Gujarat. This film shows the salt workers of LRK, known as Agariyas, working as bonded laborers and the serious physical and mental health hazards they face due to the dangerous nature of their work.

The LRK area has recently been designated as a wildlife sanctuary for the threatened Indian Wild Donkey, making salt workers and salt production in LRK now illegal. Agariyas have now been forced by government authorities to look outside the LRK for work, struggling for both their ancestors' land and their livelihood.

Documentary Educational Resources is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 1968 and incorporated in 1971 for the purpose of producing and distributing cross-cultural documentary film for educational use. We were early innovators in developing 16mm film and media based curriculum for classroom use. Our company focus, then and now, is to support filmmakers who have long-term commitments to the people that they film. We find that filmmakers who work collaboratively with their subjects produce film with integrity.

It is also our focus to distribute media that has the power to overcome barriers to cross-cultural understanding. Media can be the first step in growing sensitivity and awareness of other cultures. This in turn may lead to tolerance and acceptance and eventually give way to appreciation and admiration of other cultures.

Our archive is one of the most historically important resources of ethnographic film in the world today. In 1975 DER co-founders John Marshall and Timothy Asch were key figures in establishing the Human Studies Film Archives at the Smithsonian Institution and their bodies of work are among the most significant ethnographic collections within the HSFA. We continue to collaborate with the Smithsonian on the use of our films for research. Our films have been screened everywhere, from villages and refugee camps in Africa, Native American reservations, to classrooms, museums and theatres worldwide.

If you have further questions please visit our website

www.der.org

Or contact us by email, fax, phone or mail

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