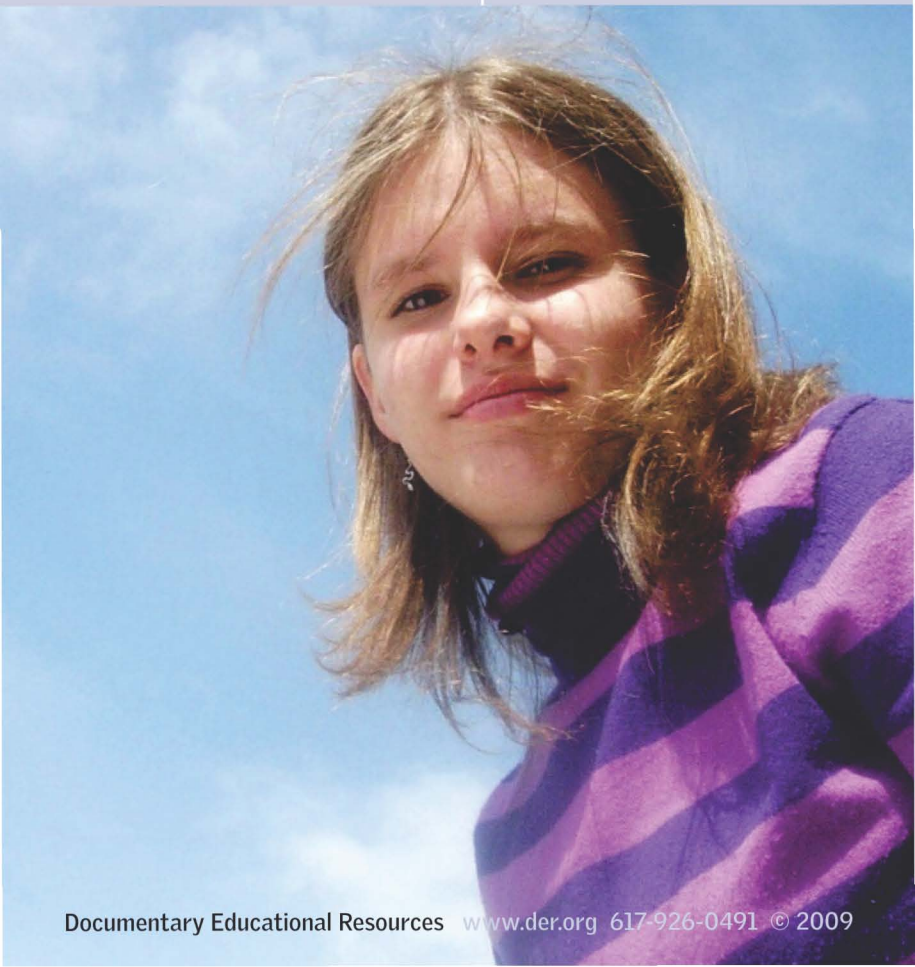
Documentary Educational Resources

New Releases | WINTER 2009



WINTER 2009

Greetings to all our friends and colleagues,

Great collections have formed the basis of DER's acquisition and distribution strategy since our founding in 1968 when we introduced the exemplary !Kung Bushmen films of John Marshall and the groundbreaking Yanomamo films by Timothy Asch.

Since that time we have continued to see the value in acquiring important filmmakers' entire oeuvre, such as the works of Robert Gardner or the Netsilik Eskimo films produced in collaboration with the National Film Board of Canada.

Now, in order to make these and other titles more accessible and affordable to our customers we are introducing collections of titles that will resonate in ways that will provide a richer and more informative viewing experience.

Cynthia Close
Executive Director
Documentary Educational Resources

Forest of Bliss by Robert Gardner

Three Non-Fiction Films by Robert Gardner

color, 83/85/90 min, 1964-2008

Robert Gardner was the Director of the Film Study Center at Harvard University from 1957 to 1997. He is an internationally renowned filmmaker and author whose works have entered the permanent canon of non-fiction filmmaking. Frequent demand has brought three of his most important works together at a discount price. This package includes Special Edition DVDs of *Dead Birds*, *Rivers of Sand*, and *Forest of Bliss*. Encompassing two decades of his filmmaking career they describe a unique arc in non-fiction filmmaking - from classic and lyric documentary, through an experiment in cinéma verité, to an unsurpassed realization using no words whatever.

Dead Birds
color, 83 min, 1964

The Special Edition 2-disc DVD includes the remastered *Dead Birds* and the following extra features:

- 6 sequences of edited scenes cut from the first answer print of *Dead Birds* with original narration and a commentary by Robert Gardner and Lucien Taylor.
- An audio track of commentary by Gardner and Ross McElwee.
- A French language track narrated by Jean Rouch.
- A gallery of photographs shot during the making of Dead Birds and accompanied by excerpts read by Gardner from his field journals.
- An excerpt from a television interview featuring a conversation about *Dead Birds* between Octavio Paz, William Alfred and Robert Gardner.
- 2 sequences from a black and white print of Dead Birds made at the time of the film's release, accompanied by a conversation by Gardner and Lucien Taylor.
- Previously unreleased outtakes from the archive of footage shot for *Dead Birds*.

Rivers of Sand
color, 85 min, 1974

This Special Edition DVD includes:

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

Forest of Bliss
color, 90 min, 1986

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 108 min program with Gardner and Stan Brakhage
- Photo gallery featuring still images and journal entries read by Robert Gardner

For more information on this collection and others now available, visit our website:

www.der.org/collections

FILMMAKER SPOTLIGHT :
Rina Sherman
South Africa

Born in South Africa, Rina Sherman was exiled from the country and settled in France in 1984 where she has been living and working since. In 1990 she completed a doctorate with distinction at the Sorbonne, supervised by Jean Rouch. Now a writer, filmmaker and anthropologist, Rina has initiated several cultural projects. In 1997, she began work for the project *The Ovahimba Years*, a multi-disciplinary long-term research program (drawings, oral tradition, video, film, photography) aimed at creating a living trace of Ovahimba cultural heritage. Over a period of seven years, she established an extensive record of the daily and ritual lives of the Ovahimba, from which she has made three films and a multimedia exhibition, entitled *Work in Progress*.

The Ovahimba Years: A Multidisciplinary Ethnographic Study

by Rina Sherman
color, 131 min, 1997-2008
Purchase all three titles together for a 25% discount!

Keep the Dance Alive
color, 75 min, 2007

A unique voyage through the music, dance and spirit possession practices of the Ovahimba people of north-western Namibia and south-western Angola, Keep the Dance Alive features remarkable footage of how dance and spirit possession is integrated into everyday life from infancy to death. The documentary presents a singular vision of the Ovahimba people, that of director Rina Sherman who filmed the lives of an Omuhimba family for seven years. She focuses on how singing, rhythm and voice work together with dance and spirit possession to compose a complete imaginary universe and a dense and complex social structure.

When Visitors Come
color, 30 min, 2006

When Visitors Come is a film about an anthropologist in situ, and evokes several notions central to fieldwork, such as the nature of the bond between the observer and the observed, the observed observer, participant-anthropology, and emotion as possible vector or hindrance in fieldwork. The film explores the evolution of the relationship between Sherman and the Omuhimba family with whom she lived for seven years, shows the group of young people from the community of Etanga discovering the presentation of their cultural heritage at the *The Ovahimba Years* multi-media exhibition, and shows the resulting discussions and consequences of the exhibition once everyone is back in Ovahimba country.

Shake Your Brains
color, 51 min, 2000

A film about alcohol abuse in the Kunene North Region of Namibia. It was made to alert the youth of the detrimental effects of alcohol abuse. The film provides and overview of alcohol abuse amongst the Ovahimba and Ovadhimba communities of Kaokoland. A number of members of these communities provide moving and sometimes amusing witnesses of the devastating and often tragic effects of alcohol abuse. Whilst alcohol abuse is a problem in the Kunene Region of Namibia, with not only permanent commercial and traditional selling points in the larger and smaller urban areas but also itinerant traders selling or exchanging alcohol throughout the region, it is still limited for the most part to only a part of the population and takes place as an occasional rather than an ongoing occurrence.

FROM THE ARCHIVE : screening room

The Complete Series
30 episodes
1972-1981

In the early 1970s a group of idealistic artists, lawyers, doctors and teachers saw an opportunity to change commercial television in Boston and the surrounding area. It would require years of litigation up to and including the Supreme Court, but the case was won and the Channel 5 license was given to WCVB-TV. *Screening Room* was one of several programs offered in an effort to provide alternative television viewing. The idea behind Screening Room was to give independent filmmakers an opportunity to discuss their work and show it to a large urban audience. Nearly 100 ninety-minute programs were produced and aired between 1973 and 1980. Now, DER is pleased to offer *Screening Room* in collections, by episodes on animation, documentary, and experimental film, or as a complete series, at a special discounted rate. For more information, please visit the *Screening Room* series page on our website.

Screening Room Animation Collection

Includes the following nine episodes:

- **Robert Breer** (75 min, 1976/2005)
- **George Griffin** (color, 71 min, 1976/2006)
- **John & Faith Hubley** (color, 64 min, 1975/2005)
- **Derek Lamb** (color, two DVDs 75min/75 min, 1973 & 1975/2008)
- **Caroline Leaf and Mary Beams** (color, 75 min, 1975/2005)
- **Jan Lenica** (color, 80 min, 1973/2005)
- **Suzan Pitt** (color, 71 min, 1975/2005)
- **John Whitney, Sr**. (color, 68 min, 1972/2005)

Screening Room Documentary Collection

Includes the following ten episodes:

- **Les Blank** (color, 75 min, 1976/2005)
- **Emile de Antonio** (color, 79 min, 1973/2005)
- **Robert Fulton** (color, 75 min, 1975/2007)
- **Hillary Harris** (color, two DVDs, 75 min/76 min, 1973 & 1979/2007)
- **Peter Hutton** (72 min, 1977/2005)
- **Ricky Leacock** (color, 64 min, 1973/2005)
- **Alan Lomax** (color, 75 min, 1975/2005)
- **Richard P. Rogers** (color, 76 min, 1975/2007)
- **Jean Rouch** (color, 64 min, 1980/2007)

Screening Room Experimental Collection

Includes the following eleven episodes:

- **Bruce Baillie** (72 min, 1975/2005)
- **Stan Brakhage** (108 min/77 min, 1973 & 1980/2005)
- **James Broughton** (75 min, 1977/2005)
- **Ed Emshwiller** (77 min, 1975/2005)
- **Hollis Frampton** (74 min, 1977/2006)
- **Standish Lawder & Stanley Cavell** (74 min, 1973/2005)
- **Jonas Mekas** (75 min, 1975/2005)
- **Yvonne Rainer** (74 min, 1977/2005)
- **Michael Snow** (74 min, 1975/2005)

(un)veiled: Muslim Women Talk About Hijab
by Ines Hofmann Kanna
color, 36 min, 2007

(un)veiled introduces the audience to ten Muslim women from various backgrounds who now live in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Their discussion about hijab, the headscarf, revolves around a lecture on the same topic that was banned last minute but delivered anyway. In a time when Islam and especially Muslim women are represented as monolithic and beset by backwardness, the women in *(un)veiled* show the diverse, lively, argumentative debates in Muslim societies about the meanings of modernity, emancipation, and feminism. Dubai, where the filmmaker lived for eight months, becomes a character in itself, showing the complex face of a contemporary Arab city.

Umiaq Skin Boat
by Jobie Weetaluktuk
color, 31 min, 2008

Umiaq Skin Boat is a beautiful and poetic 30-minute film about a group of Inuit elders in Inukjuak, Quebec who decide one summer to build the first traditional seal skin boat their community has seen in over 50 years. Once an essential vessel for travel and for hunting large prey like bowhead whales, the umiaq has been replaced in modern times by canoes powered with out-board motors. In the process of working together on the boat, the elders recount astonishing stories of survival while navigating volatile and unforgiving Arctic waters, and of dangers both natural and man-made. Shot against the backdrop of the magnificent northern landscape, *Umiaq Skin Boat* bears witness to the resilience of the Inuit spirit in changing times.

Speaking Tree
by Natasha de Betak
color, 65 min, 2008

Speaking Tree tells the story of a man named Deva who looses his mind while grazing camels in the desert of India. As a result of his madness, he is chained to a tree for nearly a decade and cared for by his mother and brother. When an earthquake devastates the region, leaving tens of thousands dead, Deva regains his sanity and attempts to adapt to his former way of life. Through candid observation of Deva, interviews with his family and footage of contemporary Indian village life, Natasha de Betak weaves a compassionate and visually stunning account of the fragile man's bout with insanity and his struggle to come to terms with his newly regained clarity of mind.

The Al Hadji and His Wives
by Jie Lie
color, 50 min, 2006

The Al-Hadji and His Wives is a portrait of a Mbororo Fulani patriarch, Al-Hadji Isa, his savvy wives, and their rebellious daughters. The documentary provides a glimpse into their everyday lives, religious and moral practices, as well as the political opinions the Al-Hadji has to offer from his particular corner of the world. With a critical but sympathetic gaze, it also chronicles and investigates the process and rationale by which Amina, a 16-year-old daughter of the family, is forced into an unwanted marriage. While her attempted escape had been in vain, Amina has inscribed her silent protest on the walls of her mother's hut and onto the film, serving as a testimony of women's resistance and resilience under an oppressive patriarchy.

The Fenland (Le Brouck)
by Colette Piault
color, 38 min, 1972

The Fenland was devised and shot in close collaboration with a group of eight local fenlanders, young men and women who live and work as market gardeners in the area of Saint Omer, Northern France. The film bears witness to a particular moment in time - a moment of recognition when these young agriculturalists, who belong to a relatively closed specific socio-economic group, ask themselves some hard practical questions about the unique problems facing their kind of agriculture.

The film aims to be sociological to the extent that it reveals and fixes a moment of social change. But it takes care not to freeze this in an ideological or political analysis; it does not try to smooth over the positions they take, which are often contradictory yet all the more illuminating for that.

It was the young Fenlanders themselves who chose the sequences to film and the themes to bring up in the discussions. These young people offer their views on the future of the Fenland, on aspects of trade unionism in agriculture and the possible options open to them. More than the commentary, which serves merely as introduction or to make a link, it is the discussions off camera between the young people that really weave the film together.

A Little Corner of Paradise
by Jacqueline Veuve
color, 85 min, 2008

This is the story of the life reborn of Ossona, a hamlet in Val d'Hérens in the Valais canton, which was abandoned in the sixties and has now become the pilot project for an agro-tourism site. From 2005 to 2008, we followed the restoration of this site listed as a sustainable development zone, and those involved in the project.

Some of them are aged between 14 and 16 years old and were born in Haïti, Morocco and Sion. These youth attend an institution for teenagers in difficulty. Can their minds be transformed by tiring work in the mountains? Once a week, through building and farming work, they completely put themselves into restoring this ghost hamlet. The other participants are between 75 and 90 years old. After having spent their childhood in self-sufficiency here in Ossona they left to discover "modern" life when the dams were being built. As witnesses, they have returned to tell their stories... What can representatives of the valley's old folks and multicultural youth have in common? What do they have to talk about, what can they pass on to each other?

The film retraces this adventure up to the end of the first stage with rural self-catering cottages and an inn, but it also recounts the financial, administrative, political and ecological obstacle course faced equally by the commune of St-Martin and the peasant on his land. Yesterday, today and tomorrow. Chronicle of a rebirth. The power of hope.

To view our entire catalog and order,
visit our website:
www.der.org

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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Cover image from *A Little Corner of Paradise* by Jacqueline Veuve

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