SURVIVORS
WeOwnTV
84 min, 2018

Survivors chronicles the stories of three Sierra Leoneans during the 2014-2016 Ebola epidemic. Through a unique community filmmaking initiative, the film reveals the conflicts between national identity and international aid while foregrounding the incredible work and compassion of Sierra-Leoneans during the darkest days of the outbreak. Through this intimate look at the efforts of a group of individuals, who risk their own health for the sake of their community, the film presents a view of the Sierra-Leoneans as agents of their own destiny.

“Sierra Leoneans emerge as reflective commentators on their experience of this terrible disease, displaying a quiet heroism and love not often noted in myriad representations of Africa.” — Pamela Scully, Professor of African History, Emory University

LOCATION
Sierra Leone

SUBJECT AREAS
Global Health
Epidemiology
Medical Anthropology
African Studies

( ) Emmy Awards Nominee, Outstanding Social Issue Doc
( ) Peabody Awards Nominee

CIAO BABYLON
Kurt Reinhard & Christoph Schreiber
52 min, 2017

By the end of the century half of the 6,500 languages spoken today will have vanished; and with every language dies a unique way of perceiving the world. Ciao Babylon follows linguist Dan Kaufman, founder of the Endangered Language Alliance (ELA) in New York, as he documents endangered languages spoken throughout the city. Among the ELA’s patrons is Giancarlo Malchiodi, who once spoke perfect Romanesh. Hoping to rekindle his knowledge of the language, he and his mother travel to her hometown in Switzerland, where they discover that Portuguese immigrants offer new hope for the language’s continuity. Charming and accessible, Ciao Babylon is a strong introduction to the issues of endangered languages, promoting a love for the richness and diversity of the many languages in our own backyards.

LOCATION
New York
Switzerland

SUBJECT AREAS
Endangered Languages
Linguistics
Urban Studies

( ) Margaret Mead Film Festival
( ) Shanghai International Film and TV Festival
( ) Solothurner Filmtage, Switzerland
THE SOUND OF BELLS
Marcia Mansur & Marina Thomé
70 min, 2016

In Minas Gerais, Brazil, bell sounds set the pace of life for residents in historic cities, announcing time for work, rest, pray, and celebration. There are over 40 bell rings; variously shaped by their Catholic origins and African influences, inspiring the nomination of the practice as Brazilian Intangible Culture. The film brings to life, the bell ringers – men who have devoted their lives to this work, and their young apprentices – and their everyday commitment to the work. The film raises important questions about forms of language and communication. The documentary is a poetic representation of religious experience in everyday life.

Honorable Mention, International Heritage Film Festival
Best Doc, 21st Florianópolis Audiovisual Mercosul
Best Cinematography, 1st Mostra Sesc de Cinema Paulista
Margaret Mead Film Festival
Finnish Anthropological Society, Film Programme

FIRELAND DOGS
John Dickinson
70 min, 2019

Fireland Dogs explores the relationships between humans, domesticated animals, and the environment. In Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, dog owners have been abandoning their pets in the countryside, leaving the feral dogs to threaten both livestock and wildlife. Through interviews with pet owners, farmers, and politicians, the film explores the community’s efforts to curb the situation, bringing to the fore our attitudes towards our pets, and raising troubling questions about our role in the domestication and neglect of animals, and our impacts on the environment.

National Broadcast, Argentina
Earthvision Feature Award, Santa Cruz Film Festival
Cine Ambiental de la Patagonia
Puerto Madryn International Film Festival
SWEETHEART DANCERS
Ben-Alex Dupris
13 min, 2019

_Sweetheart Dancers_ is a story about Sean and Adrian, a Two-Spirit couple determined to rewrite the rules of Native American culture through their participation in the ‘Sweetheart Dance.’ This celebratory contest is held at powwows across the country, primarily for men and women couples, until now. The rules have evolved over the past 30 years, and for some, the contest has become a lifestyle, and a legitimate sport for families who want to spend their lives carrying on the culture of their ancestors through competition dance. A great film for exploring the intersection of Native and LGBTQ+ identities.

Big Sky Documentary Film Festival
Seattle International Film Festival
Cine Las Americas
AFI Docs

VOICES OF THE RAINFOREST
Steven Feld
67 min, 2019

_Voices of the Rainforest_ is an experiential documentary about the ecological and aesthetic coevolution of Papua New Guinea’s Bosavi rainforest region and its inhabitants. The film is based on Feld’s 1991 CD, produced by Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart, which condenses twenty-four hours of sounds of the rainforest and the Bosavi people into one CD. The new film draws on Feld’s extensive photography and new video footage to immerse viewers in the rainforest, and make audible myriad connections between the everyday sounds of the rainforest biosphere and the creative practices of singing to, with, and about it by the Bosavi people.

Society for Visual Anthropology Film and Media Festival Scholarship Film Festival, U Pennsylvania
_Honorable Mention, ICTM 2020 Doc Film Prize Competition_
THE BUDDHA MUMMIES OF NORTH JAPAN
Shayne Dahl, Satoshi Watanabe
20 min, 2017

At select temples throughout northeastern Japan, the robed bodies of self-mummified Buddhist monks are worshipped as “Living Buddhas.” They are thought to heal the sick, protect the living, and continue to inspire monks with the intense dedication of their ascetic discipline centuries before. The Buddha Mummies of North Japan includes interviews with the monks who attend to these “Living Buddhas,” descriptions of the dieting regime and austerities required in order to self-mummify, and a rare redressing ritual in which the robes of the mummies are cut into talismans for devotees.

Best Cinematography, Doc Short Film Festival
Best Documentary, U of Toronto Film Festival
Best Graduate Student Film, SVA Film Festival
Royal Anthropological Institute Film Festival
Taiwan International Ethnographic Film Festival
Soc for the Anthropology of Religion Biennial Conference
Association of Asian Studies Annual Meeting

A LONG WAY HOME
Luc Schaedler
73 min, 2018

A Long Way Home takes us on a fascinating journey into both the grim days of recent Chinese history and the dazzling cultural scene in present-day China. Five Chinese artists stand at the centre of the film: the modern dancer Wen Hui, the writer Ye Fu, the cartoonist Pi San, and the visual artists Gao Brothers. They are part of a fragile yet courageous counterculture. Taking their own family stories as starting points, they explore the echoes of the past in order to understand the social and political problems of the present. As the film progresses, their struggle for a democratic civil society emerges as relevant in China and beyond.

“Unpretentiously the film tells of the shocking effects of a totalitarian system on the body and soul of individuals.”
- Film Bulletin

Nominee, Swiss Film Award
Nominee, Prix de Soleure, Solothurn, Switzerland
Films du Monde Montreal
Dharamshala International Film Festival
LIFE IS A VERY STRANGE THING
Les McLaren & Annie Stiven
78 mins, 2017

Life is a Very Strange Thing is a mosaic of post-colonial France revealed through four generations of Frédéric Duveille’s remarkable family. Frédéric is a high school rebel, ethnomusicologist, and multinational garbage executive, recently returned from abroad to a France that is both familiar and on edge. His grandfather was a colonial governor in Cambodia; his father, a recordist of traditional music in Africa; his niece is in the activist group FEMEN; and his French-Gabonese daughter narrowly avoids terrorist attacks in Paris. With humor and charm, the film details one family through time, as legacies of colonial, cultural and political influences hover in the present.

“...a brilliantly crafted film... it carries us into the life of metropolitan France today with an intimacy that is thoroughly enjoyable.” – David MacDougall, filmmaker & film scholar, Australian National University

Rencontres Cinématographiques de Cannes
Brisbane International Film Festival
Cinema des Antipodes, St Tropez

FORSaken FRAGMENTS
Robert Gardner
84 min + extras, 1958-2010

A collection of short films and unfinished “fragments” from renowned filmmaker Robert Gardner. These short works span Gardner’s life and career and reflect his interests, from ethnography to the art world. Though presented here as a set, the pieces stand alone as riveting cinematic experiences, offering insight into Gardner’s personality and curiosity.

Films:
The Old Lady; Tide; The Photographer; Salt; Creatures of Pain; Three Non-Commercials; Anthem; Healing; Supplicating Women; Life Keeps on Passing; Hauling Sharks; It Could be Good, It Could Be Bad; Deus Ex Boltanski; Still Journey On.

DVD contains selectable director’s commentary tracks, a recording of Gardner’s appearance at a 2010 screening of FRAGMENTS, and a full-color companion booklet.

“We’re not looking back, we’re keeping up with Robert Gardner.” – Haden Guest, Director, Harvard Film Archive
MOTHER, DAUGHTER, SISTER
Jeanne Hallacy
27 min, 2018

CONTENT WARNING: This film contains explicit descriptions of sexual violence.

Mother, Daughter, Sister exposes the Burmese military’s practice of using rape as a weapon of war. The film details the stories of Kachin and Rohingya activists, including Shamima, a volunteer counselor working with survivors of military rape, Dil Kayas, a teenage survivor, and San Lung and Lu Ra, the sister and mother of two school teachers brutally raped and killed in 2015. Powerful testimonies from these survivors, witnesses, and activists reveal the far-reaching impact of sexual violence and trauma upon the non-Buddhist communities in Burma. Together, the women call for justice and an end to the army’s impunity.

Best Short Doc, Global Voices, UN Women Film Festival, Freedom Film Festival, Malaysia/Human Rights Film Network, Asian Film Festival of Dallas, Indigo Moon Film Festival, Tryon International Film Festival

SITTWE
Jeanne Hallacy
19 min, 2017

Sittwe gives voice to two teenagers, Phy Phyu Than, a Rohingya (Muslim) girl, and Aung San Myint, a Buddhist boy, separated by conflict and segregation in Burma’s Rakhine state. Both teens saw their homes burned down during communal violence that erupted in Sittwe in 2012. Than is confined in an apartheid-style camp and has no chance to go to school or travel to her home just a few miles away. Meanwhile, Myint’s family struggles to survive and support his high school studies to fulfill his dream to go to medical school. Filmed over two years, the youth share their perspectives on the fear that divides their communities, and their ultimate hope for reconciliation. The film gives voice to two sides of a complex issue to suggest ways forward towards peace building among youth.

Freedom Film Festival, Malaysia, US Mission to the United Nations (NY)
ENTRETEJIDO
Patricia Alvarez Astacio
34 min, 2015

*Entretejido* is an observational ethnographic film that weaves together the different sites and communities involved in making alpaca wool fashions in contemporary Peru. Peruvian alpaca wool has held an important place in the rich textile traditions of Andean highland communities for generations. Among today’s cosmopolitan elite, the wool has attained the status of luxury item, enhanced by its manufacture by indigenous artisans and herders. The film is a study of indigeneity as it plays out along the supply chain that bridges Peru’s rural, indigenous poor with the urban, global fashion world, exploring issues of identity and economics.

Best Graduate Student Film, SVA Film Festival
Royal Anthropological Institute Film Festival
Taiwan International Ethnographic Film Festival

THE VILLAGE
Mark McCarty
70 min, 1968, Digitally Remastered 2019

*The Village* is an intimate study of the slow-paced diurnal round of activity in Dunquin (native name Dún Chaoin), County Kerry, Ireland. The observational film explores daily life in Dunquin and addresses emigration, tradition, tourism, language preservation, and cultural changes in Ireland. Additionally, *The Village* is an important film in the history of documentary and is considered an important milestone in establishing the observational documentaries as we know them today.

“The heart of The Village... is the culture of the peasants today... remarkable how many of the folkways are captured in only seventy minutes.” – John C. Messenger, *American Anthropologist*, 1972
STORIES FROM THE ARCHIVE (NYU C&M)
Multiple Filmmakers
116 min, 2012-2017

The NYU Culture & Media series is a new collection showcasing ethnographic documentaries from the Program in Culture & Media (C&M) at New York University. In the first volume of the series, Stories from the Archive: History, Representation, and Identity, students offer different strategies for bringing life to archival materials. The filmmakers variously draw on letters, archival and found footage, and photography in order to craft dynamic stories. The films explore the meanings and relationships embedded in material objects and images and raise questions about how images are created, and circulated.

Films:
Archives of Extinction (Alyse Takeyesu, 12 min, 2016)
Pixelating Holiness (Sarah Riccardi-Swartz, 15 min, 2017)
What Remains (Lee Douglas, 29 min, 2015)
More than a Face in the Crowd (Sami Chan, 25 min, 2012)
A Correspondence (Leili Sreberny-Mohammadi, 16 min, 2014)
Ode to Fazil’s (Marcel Rosa-Salas, 19 min, 2017)

POINT OF VIEW (NYU C&M)
Multiple Filmmakers
97 min, 1998-2017

The second volume of the NYU Culture & Media series, Point of View: First Person to Observational, explores different methodologies in ethnographic documentary filmmaking. In each short film, the filmmaker establishes a unique point of view, and thus entry point for the audience, as observer of their own or others’ lives. All reveal the importance of observation - of the physical spaces and of their characters’ interactions - for engaging audiences in otherwise inaccessible spaces and intimate conversations.

Films:
Cast in India (Natasha Raheja, 26 min, 2014)
My Mom’s Name is Jean (Myles Jewell, 27 min, 2008)
The Bride Who Wouldn’t Smile (Camilla Neillsson, 8 min, 1998)
The Ladies (Tyler Zoanni, 14 min, 2015)
Back to Me (Zeynep Sertbulut, 22 min, 2017)
YANOMAMŌ SERIES: REMASTERED EDITION, VOL. 1

Timothy Asch, Napoleon Chagnon
9 films, 1968-1971 - Remastered 2020

DER is pleased to announce the release of newly restored works from the Yanomamō series (1968-1971) by Asch and Chagnon. The landmark series, which offers an irreplaceable window into a way of life that has been eclipsed by outside social, political and economic forces, helped to pioneer sequence storytelling and has long been a staple of visual anthropology. The films remain an important contribution to our understanding of who we are as humans, providing insight into one chapter of human diversity and our capacity for adaptation to diverse local environments.

The newly remastered films have been created from High Definition transfers made from their original 16mm film elements presenting the films in bright, intimate detail and for the first time are available with Spanish and Portuguese subtitles. Additionally, The Ax Fight (1975), the most influential film in the series - known for its groundbreaking storytelling techniques - will soon be available as a 4K digital remaster.

DER’s preservation efforts could not have been accomplished without the support of the National Film Preservation Foundation, the University of Missouri, Friends and Alumni of the M.A. Visual Anthropology- University of Southern California, Documentary Arts and Ethnographic Research (DAER)- Temple University, Culture and Media Program at New York University, Emilie de Brigard, Sue Cabezas, Robert Lamelson, Peter Dow, members of the Chagnon family, and our many generous individual donors.

The first batch of the remastered Yanomamō series will be available in early 2021 on DVD and digital site license (DSL).
NEWLY REMASTERED TITLES – COMING IN EARLY 2021

FEATURES:

THE AX FIGHT  30 min, 1975
A ground-breaking filmic exploration of Yanomami kinship, alliance, and conflict resolution.

MAGICAL DEATH  29 min, 1973
Classic ethnographic film about Yanomami shamanism.

A MAN CALLED “BEE”: STUDYING THE YANOMAMÖ  40 min, 1974
Tim Asch’s documentation of Napoleon Chagnon’s fieldwork among the Yanomami.

SHORT FILMS:

ARROW GAME  10 min, 1974
Documentation of Yanomami children’s games.

CHILDREN’S MAGICAL DEATH  7 min, 1974
Yanomami children imitate a ritual frequently preformed by their shaman fathers.

CLIMBING THE PEACH PALM  9 min, 1974
An observational study of Yanomami ingenuity and tool use.

A FATHER WASHES HIS CHILDREN  15 min, 1974
An observational study of Yanomami parenting and gender roles.

A MAN AND HIS WIFE MAKE A HAMMOCK  12 min, 1974
An observational study of domestic interactions, daily life and crafts.

MOONBLOOD: A YANOMAMÖ CREATION MYTH  14 min, 1976
Performance of a Yanomami myth revealing verbal and nonverbal communication.

WEEDING THE GARDEN  14 min, 1974
Documentation of everyday Yanomami life and agricultural practices.

RESTORATION EXAMPLE: A MAN AND HIS WIFE MAKE A HAMMOCK

PREVIOUS VERSION

2020 REMASTERED EDITION
THE HEALER AND THE PSYCHIATRIST
Mike Poltorak
74 min, 2020

On the South Pacific Island group of Vava’u, the traditional healer Emeline Lolohea treats people affected by spirits. One day away by ferry, the only Tongan Psychiatrist Dr Mapa Pulioka has established a public psychiatry practice well known across the region. Though they have never met in person, The Healer and the Psychiatrist creates a dialogue between the two practitioners on the nature of mental illness and spiritual affliction. It not only underscores the shared commitment of the two healers, but the barrier to access both experience due to the community’s lack of understanding of mental health offerings.

LOCATION
Tonga

SUBJECT AREAS
Medical Anthropology
Indigenous Beliefs
Oceania

German International Ethnographic Film Festival
London International Documentary Festival
Harvard University

THE LAST BONESETTER
Adam Booher, Kathryn Oths
27 min, 2018

In remote areas of the Peruvian Andes, such as the highland hamlet of Chugurpampa, traditional healers have all but disappeared. Still, due to the rigors of peasant life, there is high demand for the healing tradition of bonesetting, which involves massage, joint adjustment, and setting breaks. The Last Bonesetter traces the career of 80-year-old Don Felipe, one of the last practicing bonesetters (hueseros) in the area. Besides being a well-known bonesetter and herbalist, he also serves as a midwife and a curer of illnesses unique to the Andes such as susto (soul loss from fright). This compelling ethnographic portrait explores Felipe’s impact on the routines of life in Chugurpampa, and the search for an apprentice to continue his work.

INCLUDED ON THE DVD
Así Sobrevivimos: Getting By in a Changing Climate
(7 min, 2018)
**OYATE**

Dan Girmus  
72 min, 2017  

Oyate follows two close-knit families on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota over the course of a single summer. In a meditative flow through their day-to-day experiences – highlighting everyday moments, feelings, gestures, and events – the film presents the often intractable social and economic hardships of contemporary reservation life, without reducing the characters to these issues. By doing so, the film subverts standard tropes of Native life in film and media, and instead offers an affirming look at the two families’ shared joy, struggle, and sense of community.

Artistic Vision Award, Big Sky Documentary Film Festival  
Regard Neuf Finalist, Visions du Réel  
EthnoKino, Switzerland  
Sebastopol Documentary Film Festival  
Independent Film Festival Boston

**LOCATION**  
Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota

**SUBJECT AREAS**  
Indigenous Studies  
Observational Filmmaking  
Ethnography

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**TAJEN**

Robert Lemelson & Alessandra Pasquino  
30 min, 2017  

Shot in the arid landscape of West Bali, Tajen follows multiple narrative threads of the ancient spectacle of the Balinese cockfight. Through attention to the blade, the rooster, and the cockfighter, the film conveys the intimacy, brutality, and festivity of the fight. The film, and its companion website Tajen: Interactive were conceptualized as a visual ethnography to complement Clifford Geertz’s seminal piece, “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight” and bring the study of the fight into the 21st century.

Society for Visual Anthropology Film Festival  
International Ethnographic Film Festival (Belgrade)  
Taiwan International Ethnographic Film Festival

**LOCATION**  
West Bali, Indonesia

**SUBJECT AREAS**  
Symbolic Anthropology  
Asian Studies  
Traditional Game and Sport
SANKARA IS NOT DEAD
Lucie Viver
110 min, 2019

Sankara is not Dead is an exploration of Burkina Faso in the wake of the 2014 uprising against president Blaise Compaoré. Following widespread unrest and disillusionment, the young poet Bikontine travels along the country’s only rail line to record the stories of his fellow citizens in a rapidly changing society. From South to North, through cities and villages, he explores the enduring political legacy of former president Thomas Sankara, assassinated in 1987 by Compaoré’s supporters and known as the “African Che Guevara.” Ultimately his journey reveals the growing frustration of a generation shaped by the ever present ideals of Sankara and the prevailing hope for a better future.

John Marshall Award, Camden International Film Festival
Africa International Film Festival
Göteborg Film Festival
Cinéma du Réel
Budapest International Film Festival

A YEAR IN THE FIELD
Dennis Lanson, George Gmelch
33 min, 2020

A Year in the Field is an engaging introduction to contemporary ethnographic fieldwork. The film follows Estonian cultural anthropologist Joonas Plaan through the ups and downs of his research on how communities experience climate change in a small Newfoundland fishing village. Seamlessly blending the story of Joonas’s struggle to gain the trust of the community and the story of Newfoundland’s place in climate change, A Year in the Field offers insights into ethnographic practices. As Joonas discovers, fieldwork not only respects and prioritizes local knowledge, it is also a transformative experience for the individual who engages in it.

“This lovely, instructive film is a must-see for anyone interested in understanding how ethnography in a community actually gets done.” – Russ Bernard, Inst. for Social Science Research, Arizona State University

LOCATION
Burkina Faso

SUBJECT AREAS
African Studies
Political Studies
Post-colonial Studies

LOCATION
Newfoundland

SUBJECT AREAS
Anthropology
Fieldwork and Methods
Climate Change
COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT & PRESERVATION

DER prides itself on being more than just a distributor or a preservation facility. When John Marshall and Timothy Asch founded the organization in 1968 ethnographic filmmakers were focused on preserving “vanishing” cultures. While that concept has fallen out of fashion in recognition of the persistence of cultures and communities, many of the mid-century anthropological works indeed have become irreplaceable historical documents, valuable to researchers and community members. Further, many of these works are milestones in the development of ethnographic film, notable for their innovation in ethical and authentic filmmaking practices, and breaking new ground in cultural representation, reflexivity and collaboration. These works continue to serve as powerful teaching tools for the depth of their inquiry into changing cultural practices and beliefs, material culture, subsistence, social organization, politics, and identity.

In 2015, DER formalized the Collections Management and Preservation program. For each of the over 850 films we distribute, DER maintains master materials. Our work involves ensuring that these masters can be made accessible in numerous formats to meet the needs of diverse audiences and screening venues. Most recently this has included improving on the quality of film-to-digital transfers and releasing films in various high definition formats. In addition to the restoration and remastering of films from the Yanomamö series, we recently released upgraded versions of classic films, The Village and The Drums of Winter.

We have an extensive wish list of titles requiring preservation and/or remastering. We are in various stages of research and development related to collections management work for the following titles and series:

• The Hunters by John Marshall
• The Pittsburgh Police series by John Marshall
• Character Formation in Three Cultures, and others by Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson
• Tapir Distribution, Firewood, and Tug of War from the Yanomamö series

If you are interested in supporting this work, through a financial, in kind or other donation, we’d love to hear from you.
AVAILABILITY & ACCESS

EDUCATIONAL VIEWING
DER films are available to educational institutions on DVD, educational streaming platforms, and through digital site licenses (DSL). All include limited public performance rights.

HOME VIEWING
Many titles are available on DVD and for home streaming from our website. Selected titles are also available on Vimeo On Demand and other home streaming platforms.

SCREENINGS
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