Documentary
Educational Resources

NEW FILMS | FALL 2025 - WINTER 2026

ON BEHALF OF THE LIVING

Ton Otto, Christian Suhr, Gary Kildea
105 min, 2023

Anthropologists Otto and Suhr explore how people in two very different cultures—the Netherlands and Baluan Island, PNG—grapple with the universal question of life after death. Their journey reveals not only diverse beliefs, but also their own limits of open-mindedness, moments of skepticism, and struggles to embrace unfamiliar ideas.

***"On Behalf of the Living** has terrific pedagogical potential, including in contexts where one wants to teach students what fieldwork is really like, and is essential viewing for all who research religion."* — William Jones, Joel Robbins, Rupert Stasch, and Leanne Williams Green, University of Cambridge

Ethnografilm, France
European Society for Oceanists, Switzerland
SVA Film and Media Festival (SVAFMF), USA

LOCATION
Netherlands
Papua New Guinea

SUBJECT AREAS
Kinship Studies
Religious Studies
Research Methods

LANGUAGES
Paluai (Baluan Island)
PNG Tok Pisin

THE MBAKO TRIAL: MYTH AND REALITY

Jean-Michel Kibushi Ndjate Wooto
87 min, 2023

1933, North-East Congo: The Belgian colonial authorities accuse a group of men of being *Aniotos*, men who kill like the leopard. With no visual documentation of the hearings, Congolese filmmaker Kibushi re-imagines the events through animations, re-enactments, and interviews, challenging Western depictions of the leopard men as a "Savage Other" and the colonizers' understanding of socio-political order and justice.

"This is where the subtlety of Jean-Michel Kibushi Ndjate Wooto's documentary lies. Over the course of the film, he flips the script: it is no longer the trial of Mbako, but rather that of the violent, "savage" imagery that the white colonizer helped to create and perpetuate throughout colonization." – Q Moyan, cinergie.be

RAI Film Festival
Festival du Film Européen de R.D. Congo, DRC
Kasseler Dokfest (KADO), Germany
"Congo in Harlem 15", Maysles Documentary Center, USA

LOCATION
DR Congo

SUBJECT AREAS
African Studies
Law & Justice Systems
Postcolonial Studies

LANGUAGES
Kibali
Kikongo
Lingala
Tetela

RIADA

Carlos Tobón Franco
100 min, 2023

The construction of the controversial Heidroituango mega-project, intended to supply 20% of Colombia's energy needs, has significantly altered the social and geographical landscape of the Cauca Canyon, leading to displacement, economic upheaval and environmental degradation. *Riada* is an ethnographic film that explores these consequences through interviews with scientists and residents, capturing the profound changes over thirty years.

"A portrayal of one of the most brutal infrastructure developments in the Global South (if not in the world)."
— Veronika Kusumaryati, Asst. Professor of Anthropology, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and co-director of *Expedition Content*

Latin American Anthropology Film Festival
19th Galician Ethnographic Film Showcase (MICE)
25th Bogota International Documentary Showcase

LOCATION
Colombia

SUBJECT AREAS
Displacement Studies
Energy and Water Systems
Environmental Management
Natural Resources
Sustainability Studies
Visual Ethnography

LANGUAGES
Spanish

CRUCES

Carlos Tobón Franco
24 min, 2020

Cruces is an experimental and multivocal ethnographic exploration of the geographies and human stories along and across the US-Mexico border. Using landscape scenes and sound recordings– from desperate emergency call recordings to a concerned NGO worker and an undocumented resident in NYC–a portrait emerges that captures the scope of one of the most defining and political phenomena of our time.

"The superb sounds and landscapes work as a background and a stage to understand the push and pull factors stimulating migration from Latin America to the United States."
— Martha Menchaca, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, University of Texas at Austin

Royal Anthropological Institute Film Festival (RAI), UK
Athens Ethnographic Film Festival (Ethnofest), Greece
Society for Visual Anthropology Film & Media Festival, USA
Latin American Anthropology Congress Film Festival, USA

LOCATION
Mexico
United States

SUBJECT AREAS
Borderlands Studies
Human Rights Studies
Latin American Studies
Migration Studies
Political Ecology

LANGUAGES
Spanish

BALLAD ON THE SHORE (岸上漁歌)

Ma Chi Hang
98 min, 2017

The People on Water (水上人) of Grass Island and Aberdeen, Hong Kong have a centuries-old oral tradition: ballads about life on the sea. The lyrics tell of a harsh life and read like nautical charts: 'If hungry, row your boat to Conic Island'. The film records the unique songs and the everyday practices of the boat people as their way of life disappears.

"Ma Chi-hang's reflexive documentary* Ballad on the Shore *exemplifies what Benjamin J. Harbert calls "ciné-ethnomusicology": film work that inflects ethnomusicology by "relating music to cinematic experiences" in an epistemological circuit of documentation and film exhibition." *— Yearbook for Traditional Music*

Intangible Culture Film Prize, RAI Film Festival, UK
Ethnomusicology Film Award Nominee, RAI Film Festival, UK

LOCATION
Hong Kong

SUBJECT AREAS
East Asian Studies
Ethnomusicology
Maritime Studies
Oral Literature Studies

LANGUAGES
Cantonese
Tanka dialect

TWO POETS AND A RIVER

Richard K. Wolf
75 min, 2021

Set along the Oxus River, this film follows Wakhi musicians Qurbonsho (Tajikistan) and Daulatsho (Afghanistan), whose art and lives reflect themes of love, loss, and separation. Once a shared homeland, the Wakhan was split in the 19th century, and the river became both a border and a metaphor, shaping their music and poetry. Richard K. Wolf shot the film over 2.5 years.

"This film is recommended for courses in cultural anthropology, sociology, and world music. It is a captivating introduction to this type of music and the environment and men who sing the songs." *— Educational Media Reviews Online*

ICTM Prize, Int'l Council for Traditional Music, Portugal
RAI Film Festival, UK
Association for Asian Studies Film Expo,
Chinese Musics Ethnographic Film Festival, China

LOCATION
Afghanistan
Tajikistan

SUBJECT AREAS
Central Asian Studies
Ethnomusicology
Literature and Poetry

LANGUAGES
Dari
Tajik
Wakhi

CO-HUSBAND (SAHAYAK SHREEMAN)

Ganesh Panday
35 min, 2020

The practice of polyandry among indigenous Humlo people, where brothers share a wife, is closely linked to the caravan trade and men traveling for months at a time. Polyandry has allowed families to share resources, have a larger support system, and prosper economically. Will this kinship structure continue to exist with the decline of this form of work?

"A deeply human and visually stunning exploration of love, duty, and family in the high Himalayas, offering a rare glimpse into the intimate rhythms of fraternal polyandry. More than an ethnographic study, it's a moving portrait of resilience and connection that expands our understanding of what kinship can mean in South Asia and in the world." – Prof. Harjant Gill, President, Society for Visual Anthropology

Best Short Film, SVA Film and Media Festival
Best Documentary, Nepal International Film Festival
EthnoKino Film Festival, Germany
KratFest, Int'l Fest of Ethnological Doc Film, Macedonia

LOCATION
Nepal

SUBJECT AREAS
Economics
Family and Kinship
Gender Studies
Nepali & Asian Studies

LANGUAGES
Humlo
Nepali

HELP ME HELP YOU

Stéphanie Sassen
36 min, 2023

In Namibia's Kalahari Desert, Nyae Nyae has long drawn outside attention and aid. *Help Me Help You* follows young Ju/'hoansi as they grapple with the deeper roots of educational marginalization in their community while participating in a video training (project) run by an overseas NGO. The film reflects on the complexities of good intentions, revealing both hope and disillusionment beneath them.

"*Help Me Help You *is a compelling and thoughtful documentary that challenges conventional notions of aid and assistance. Through its intricate examination of the dynamics between helpers and those they aim to help, Stéphanie Sassen offers a critical look at the complexities of intervention and the true meaning of making a difference." — CLIMAX Festival Internacional de Cinema Independiente

Best Documentary Short, Santa Cruz Int'l FF, Argentina
Best Ethnographic Film, New York Int'l Film Awards, USA

LOCATION
Namibia

SUBJECT AREAS
African Studies
Development Studies
Educational Policy
International Relations

LANGUAGES
Ju/'hoan

Meeting under a tree at Duinpos, Nyae Nyae region, northeastern Namibia, October 2024. photo: Frank Aveni

REVITALIZING ROOTS, AND BRANCHING OUT: OUR NEXT CHAPTER

The distribution landscape is ever changing, and we at DER continue to grow and adapt while staying true to our roots as a nonprofit supporting independent filmmakers. With **DER Streaming**, a new website now in development, we are building on our solid foundation for ensuring lasting access to the films, voices, and stories at the heart of our mission. For the first time, DER's entire collection of more than 800 ethnographic and documentary films will be available in one place.

At its core, this initiative reflects our dedication to:

- **Expanding access** to our full catalog of ethnographic and documentary films
- **Reaching new audiences** and connecting more directly with the communities we serve
- **Offering a richer, more intuitive viewing and learning experience**
- **Enabling greater flexibility** in meeting specific institutional needs
- **Enhancing film pages** with filmmaker interviews, teaching guides, and related resources
- **Delivering responsive support** to educators and institutions worldwide

For more information on licensing and pricing options, please contact **orders@der.org**

INTRODUCING THE DER COMMUNITY CIRCLE

You spoke—we listened!

Many of you have asked for more ways to experience DER films at home and connect with a like-minded community. That is why we are launching the **DER Community Circle**, a new membership program designed to bring our global audience together and open up new ways to engage with our catalog.

As a member, you will enjoy:

- **Quarterly access** to six thoughtfully curated films to watch from home
- **Post-screening events** like moderated discussions and filmmaker talks
- **A vibrant community space** for connecting with fellow nonfiction film enthusiasts

The DER Community Circle is for anyone curious about the intersections of film, social science, world cultures, and lived experience. Whether you come from academia or simply share a passion for nonfiction storytelling, you will find a welcoming space here.

To become a member or for more information, visit our website: **der.org/membership**

GOODBYE, CAPTAIN (ADEUS, CAPITÃO)

Vincent Carelli, Tatiana Almeida, Ernesto de Carvalho
175 min, 2022

Vincent Carelli, founder of the Indigenous collective Vídeo nas Aldeias, presents the final film in his *Martyrdom* trilogy. At the request of the younger generation, community leader Captain Krohokrenhum of the Gavião Parkatêjê in Brazil recalls the disastrous first contact with the *kupen* (whites) and the community's ensuing loss and alienation, while participating in recent efforts to rebuild their cultural world.

"[This film is] an almost universal allegory about the history of capitalism and a farewell to a specific world and its people. It is also, in a way, Carelli's farewell to the history of over three decades of work encapsulated and embedded in three films, his* Martyrdom *trilogy."
— Outskirts Film Magazine

Mondes en Regards Prize, Jean Rouch Int'l Ethno. FF, France
Sheffield International Documentary Festival, UK
International Documentary Film Festival, Netherlands

LOCATION
Brazil

SUBJECT AREAS
Cultural Revitalization
Indigenous Studies
Latin American Studies
Visual Anthropology

LANGUAGES
Gavião
Portuguese

THE SONG OF AIDA (LA CHANSON D'AIDA)

Giovanni Principalli
90 min, 2024

The film follows Aida, a Roma woman living in a Roma camp in Bari, Italy, from adolescence to adulthood as she pursues independence. Her journey reveals the obstacles she faces both from her traditionally patriarchal community and an Italian society marked by strong anti-Roma sentiment. *The Song of Aida* is a portrait of resilience amid persistent marginalization and cultural constraints.

"The Song of Aida *is the fruit of more than twenty years of acquaintance, frequentation, presence, during which Principalli enters the dwellings of others and their lives, which are told to him. In the film, no one is excluded. Everyone can talk and then think again. So grow."*
— Viva Paci, Professor in Film Theory, l'Université du Québec

Int'l Human Rights Film Festival (FICDH), Argentina
Ethnocineca, Austria
Festival de Cine Etnográfico de Ecuador
Nordic Anthropological Film Association (NAFA)

LOCATION
Italy

SUBJECT AREAS
European Studies
Gender & Women's Studies
Minority Studies
Romani Studies

LANGUAGES
Italian
Romani
Romanian

Baliem Valley 1961: Short Films by Robert Gardner

Filmed and Directed by Robert Gardner
142 min, 2021 (filmed 1961)

Robert Gardner's Harvard Peabody Expedition to Netherlands New Guinea resulted in one of his most widely seen, discussed, and debated films, the feature-length DEAD BIRDS (1964). In the final years of his life, he also began editing together more than a dozen short pieces drawn from the hours of footage amassed during the expedition. Following his death, Gardner's Estate, under the direction of Adele Pressman, embarked on a project to complete and present these short works. Olivia Wyatt was commissioned to complete the editing on Gardner's pieces, and Ernst Karel was brought on to construct soundtracks for the films, using the sound recordings taken by Michael Rockefeller during the expedition. Ranging in length from 2-20 minutes, these short films each focus on a specific facet of Hubula culture. However, in Gardner's hands, they are almost transcendent in their visual clarity and the grace with which they depict both the Hubula people and their environment. Karel's soundtracks skillfully and unobtrusively utilize Rockefeller's tapes to bring into play the evocative sounds of Hubula life, while also referencing the people and processes of the expedition through which the visual and auditory elements were created.

PROGRAM 1: DAILY LIFE

77 min, 2021 (filmed 1961)

Boys Playing (19.5 min)
Grooming (2.5 min)
Tukom the Swineherd (5 min)
In Homaklep's Village (10 min)
Weaklekek Hunting Birds (2.5 min)
Craft (8.5 min)
Salt (18.5 min)
In the Gardens of Hellerabet (10 min)

PROGRAM 2: RITUALS

65 min, 2021 (filmed 1961)

Dancing an Etai (15 min)
The Wamkanneké Ceremony (14.5 min)
Ritual of War (15 min)
Ekiarotmilek's Funeral (12.5 min)
Making of a Kaio (6 min)
Uwar Making His Way (1.5 min)

RASPUTIN'S SHADOW (L'OMBRA DI RASPUTIN)

Pietro Francesco Pingitore
27 min, 2023

This short ethnographic film explores human, animal, and technological entanglements in Piacenza, Italy. Through layered soundscapes of voices, wildlife, and environments—fields, forests, the Trebbia River, and industrial outskirts—it traces care, conservation, and conflict in living with wildlife. The film invites reflection on interdependence and what it means to coexist with wolves and other forms of life.

LOCATION
Italy

SUBJECT AREAS
Conservation Studies
Environmental Ethics
Multispecies Ethnography
Visual Anthropology

LANGUAGES
Italian

Freiburger Filmforum, Germany
Festival Film Dokumenter, Indonesia
Korean Int'l Ethnographic Film Festival (KIEFF), Korea
Animal Nature Future Film Festival (ANFFF), UK

UNTIL THE SUN DIES (HASTA QUE SE APAGUE EL SOL)

Jonas Brander, Catalina Flórez
88 min, 2023

Until The Sun Dies follows two Colombian community leaders in their pursuit of justice: Albeiro Camayo, a Nasa Indigenous leader defending ancestral lands from armed groups and multinational encroachment, and Nobel Peace Prize nominee Luz Marina Bernal, seeking justice for victims of extrajudicial killings by the Colombian Army, including her son. Their intertwined stories embody the enduring resistance and quest for peace and dignity among Colombia's marginalized communities.

"This humble film reminds us that the voices of those barely heard in mainstream media are those who will pave the way into another future." — ACT Human Rights Film Festival

LOCATION
Colombia

SUBJECT AREAS
Development Studies
Indigenous Studies
Human Rights Studies
Latin American Studies
Political Science

LANGUAGES
Nasa
Spanish

World Premiere, DocLisboa, Portugal
Best Directing, Festival de Málaga, Spain
Best Documentary, Seattle Latino Film Festival, USA
Cali FICCALI International Film Festival, Colombia
CineFest Latino, USA

POTS OF MILLET, FACES OF GOLD: TRANSFORMATION

Richard K. Wolf
81 min, 2025

The latest documentary by Richard K. Wolf draws from his ethnomusicological research with the Kota people of South India over 35 years. The film thematizes music and the transformation of materials, bodies, and spiritual entities, moving from making pottery and musical instruments, to using these items in multiday mortuary ceremonies. The film is narrated in Kota and addresses Kotas 100 years in the future.

"Richard Wolf deftly explores the struggle of the Kotas to maintain their unique religion, language and ritual, framed by the observations and life experience of Duryodana, his long-term Kota friend and collaborator." – David MacDougall, Honorary Professor, Australian National University

LOCATION
India

SUBJECT AREAS
Anthropology
Ethnomusicology
Religious Studies
South Asian Studies

LANGUAGES
Kota
Tamil

India International Center, India
Kaleidoscope Centre for Alternate Education, India
RLMA Tamil Music College, India
Renmin University, Beijing, China

THE SACRIFICE

Robert Lemelson
80 min, 2025

Since childhood, Ketut Sudirta has lived with severe mental illness. His turbulent adulthood has been marked by episodes of instability and violence: wandering the streets, incarceration, hospitalization, attacking his half-sister, and questioning his own existence. Filmed and narrated by a childhood friend, this longitudinal ethnographic work explores the grief, concern, and culturally informed meaning-making that surround a deeply troubled life.

LOCATION
Indonesia

SUBJECT AREAS
Cultural Psychiatry
Medical Anthropology
Religion & Ritual Studies
Southeast Asian Studies

LANGUAGES
Balinese
Indonesian

Society for Psychological Anthropology Conference, USA
AAS-in-Asia Conference (as a work-in-progress), USA

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. Contact us to discuss video hosting options.

HOME VIEWING
Our titles are available on a variety of streaming platforms and on DVD for home users. Many films are also available for 48-hour rental on Vimeo on Demand.

SCREENINGS
DER films screen around the world at campus cinematheques, museums, art house theatres, film festivals, and non-profit events. 16mm print rentals of many of our classic titles are also available for screening. To arrange a screening, or to invite a filmmaker, use the form on our website: der.org/films/host-a-screening

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