

Press Release



“Dialogues with Films” - The *Forum* turns 40

As the Berlinale celebrates its 60th anniversary, the *Forum* will also be looking back on four decades of film and festival work. The stories of the two events are inextricably linked, with their shared paths yielding a fascinating piece of (film) history. When the Friends of the German Film Archive organised an event at the Akademie der Künste in the summer of 1969 to “supplement” the Berlin International Film Festival, it was primarily to express criticism at the Berlinale’s perceived conservatism and outdated views. Few expected that, only two years later, the event would develop into the “International Forum of New Cinema”, which has been an integral part of the Berlinale ever since.

How should one do justice to such an anniversary? Given the more than two thousand films shown at the *Forum*, no one selection of films could ever be truly representative. With this in mind, the *Forum* decided to take a different approach for its 40th birthday. The “Dialogues with Films” symposium was held at Kino Arsenal from July 1st - 5th 2009 in order to commemorate the original inaugural event. Twelve filmmakers who had already shown their work at the *Forum* were asked to present their favourite films from four decades of the *Forum*. Their selection was supposed to be subjective, unexpected, perhaps even random. The only restriction was the decade which each of the “curators” was allocated. Four groups of three directors thus each chose films shown at the *Forum* in the 1970s, 80s, 90s and, finally, in the 2000s. Each of them was still more than spoilt for choice however, having to make their selection from around 500 films.

This curatorial model also reflects one of the essential features of the *Forum*. Says section director Christoph Terhechte: “Many of the directors who showed their early works here have retained links to the programme, whether as mentors, frequently returning guests or as members of the audience seeking to gain insights into the films of younger filmmaking colleagues. This trend works in both directions though, with many directors going on to become role models for subsequent generations of filmmakers.”

The “Dialogues with Films” curators were Aditya Assarat, Bradley Rust Gray & So Yong Kim, Jia Zhangke, Ulrich Köhler, Sharon Lockhart, Avi Mograbi, Ulrike Ottinger, Sabu, Anja Salomonowitz, Angela Schanelec, Jean-Marie Téno and Jasmila Žbanić. They chose films by: Chantal Akerman, Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Souleymane Cissé, Claire Denis, Bill Douglas, Jean-Luc Godard, David Gordon Green, Hou Hsiao Hsien, Aki Kaurismäki, Anastasia Lapsui & Markku Lehmuskallio, Sharon Lockhart, Helke Sander and Michael Snow.

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The *Forum* does not look to represent one particular idea, or strive to be a “best of” list, instead seeking to make connections and set trends, to allow its films to enter into a dialogue or sometimes even contradict one another. That is something which has not changed over the last four decades. “We are still just as excited by every new voice, by every new generation of filmmakers”, says Christoph Terhechte. “We are convinced that we, in this way, provide a *Forum* in the truest sense of the word for both our audiences and the directors whose works we show.”

The selected films will now be shown again during the Berlinale. Three of the curators are also back at the *Forum* with their new films: Sharon Lockhart, Sabu und Angela Schanelec.

The Bill Douglas Trilogy, which was selected by Bradley Rust Gray and So Yong Kim, with only the first two parts being shown in the summer, will now be screened in its entirety and opens the 40th *Forum* at the Delphi Filmpalast on February 11th.

The publication “Dialogues with Films - 4 Decades of the *Forum*” will also be appearing for the festival. In addition to a foreword by Mark Peranson and texts written by the guest curators about the films they selected, it also includes a DVD with excerpts from the discussions held in the summer as well as from the films themselves. The publication will be sold at the cost price of 5 Euros.

The anniversary programmes and the publication have been made possible thanks to the support of the Hauptstadtkulturfonds.

The “4 Decades of the *Forum*” Film Programme

Die allseitig reduzierte Persönlichkeit - Redupers (The All-Around Reduced Personality - Outtakes) by Helke Sander, West Germany 1977, selected by Ulrich Köhler

Baara by Souleymane Cissé, Mali 1978, selected by Jean-Marie Téno

Beau travail by Claire Denis, France 1999, selected by Anja Salomonowitz

D’Est by Chantal Akerman, France/Belgium 1993, selected by Avi Mograbi

Dust in the Wind (Lien lien fung chen) by Hou Hsiao Hsien, Taiwan 1986, selected by Sabu

George Washington by David Gordon Green, USA 2000, selected by Aditya Assarat



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Kasaba by Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Turkey 1998, selected by Jia Zhangke

The Match Factory Girl (Tulitikkutehtaan tyttö) by Aki Kaurismäki, Finland 1989, selected by Jasmila Žbanić

My Childhood/My Ain Folk/My Way Home by Bill Douglas, UK 1972/73/78, selected by So Yong Kim und Bradley Rust Gray

Sauve qui peut (la vie) (Slow Motion) by Jean-Luc Godard, Switzerland/France 1980, selected by Angela Schanelec

So Is This by Michael Snow, Canada 1982, selected by Sharon Lockhart, and *Nō* by Sharon Lockhart, USA 2003, selected by Anja Salomonowitz

Seven Songs from the Tundra (Seitsemän laulua tundralta) by Anastasia Lapsui, Markku Lehmuskallio, Finland 2000, selected by Ulrike Ottinger

Press Office
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