

NEDERLANDS

SILENT

FILM 2023
FESTIVAL



CATALOGUE 2023

12 T/M 15

TICKETS

JANUARI 2023



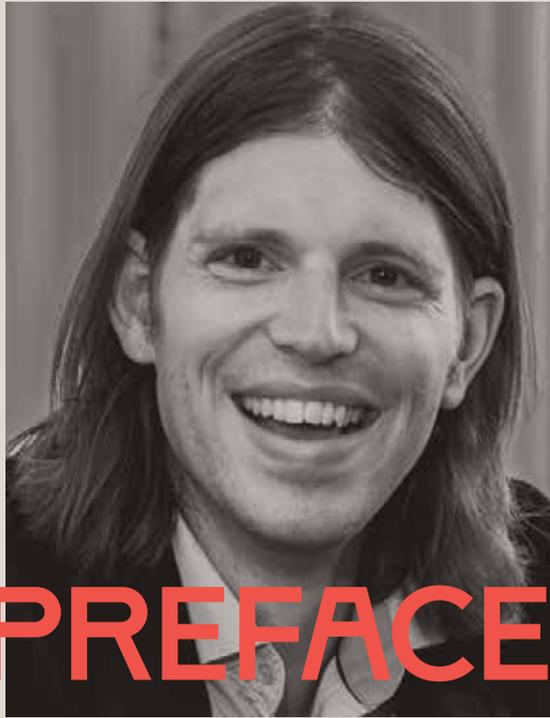
eye

KUNSTFLOEG
ERASMUS

cultuur
eindhoven

PARK
THEATER

WWW.NSFF.NL



PREFACE

At this moment it is almost impossible to imagine that last year, due to COVID, we still had a fully live-streamed program. But now, after 2 digital editions, we finally have a live audience in the theatre again! It feels like a new beginning, in which we could reinvent our festival a little bit as well. New people in the team, a new housestyle and more films, musicians, backgrounds and special guests than ever before! Once again this year we have taken up the challenge of compiling a program that does justice to the variety that silent film has to offer. We check whether the films are accessible enough for those who are first acquainted with silent film, but also select on how topical the films are right now. Not only do we, as every year, closely follow developments in terms of rediscovered films and beautiful new restorations, but we are also aware of the zeitgeist of today.

For example, we do not only continue to build on the rehabilitation of female filmmakers, and show a satirical film from Ukraine that was banned for years, we are also carefully examining whether certain ideas from the beginning of the last century are appropriate to screen nowadays, and how we can provide the proper context should these elements appear in a film. The program that is here now is like real life: there is laughter, crying, trembling with fear, joy and love; a reminder of much that is important in life, to enter 2023 in a beautiful way.

Remains for me to express my gratitude to the team, the board, all of our partners and sponsors for the enormous effort, support, passion and support to realize this sixth edition of the Dutch Silent Film Festival. And of course our thanks to you, the audience. Because the silent film, with live musical accompaniment, is a form that only really comes to life when experienced with others.

- Daan van den Hurk | Director Nederlands Silent Film Festival



ANIMATED ADVERTISING FILMS:

GEORGE DEBELS

At the beginning of the 20th century, not only the movies but also the medium of advertising was in its infancy. The animated commercial was unexplored territory and the Belgian-Dutch filmmaker George Debels (1890-1973) devoted himself to it for about twenty years. Debels was born in Antwerp and came to the Netherlands during the First World War. In Amsterdam he made dozens of short commercials, often under the name MacDjorski, and regularly collaborated with other Dutch filmmakers, such as Alex Benno or Otto van Neijenhoff. His 1919 film *Een Avontuurtje in 't Luchtruim*, a promotional film for the First Air Traffic Exhibition Amsterdam (ELTA), is the oldest preserved Dutch animated film.

His films often tell short stories in which all kinds of everyday products that are advertised play a role: such as Inventa gas stoves, the first Ford cars, Sickness chocolate bars, Friesche Vlag milk and different tobacco products. The films in this program thus provide a good picture of the customs and habits of the low countries during the interbellum. Some cliché images never seem to change, such as the Dutch tulip fields and bicycles, while certain racial and cultural stereotypes nowadays raise our eyebrows.

Just because of the large number of films he produced, George Debels is the most important animation film pioneer in the Netherlands. During the time when he started making animated films, there was hardly any animated film production in the Netherlands and Belgium. He often had to reinvent the wheel himself.

He closely watched foreign films that were shown in cinemas, because his films show clearly recognizable influences of characters from American animation films such as 'Felix the Cat' by Otto Mesmer & Pat Sullivan or 'Koko the Clown' by Fleischer studios. But he was also inspired by the trick films of the French filmmaker Georges Méliès. For this program, films have been selected which encompass Debels' entire oeuvre; from the oldest Dutch animated film to the early experiments with sound film from the 1930s, such as the 1934 film Opa's Wijze Raad, an advertisement for the Eindhoven cigar factory Willem I.

Most of the films in this program come from the rich collection of Eye Filmmuseum, which recently published a special playlist on YouTube. There is no definitive filmography of Debels' work and a significant portion of his oeuvre has probably been lost. Nevertheless, ongoing historical research and archival work sometimes provide surprising new insights and pieces of the puzzle. For example, three previously unidentified films from the CINEMATEK collection were recently added to the filmography. All three films can be seen in this program. A recent collaboration with students from the Utrecht School of the Arts resulted in a light-hearted documentary about the underexposed role of Debels as an innovator of Dutch animation. The documentary inventively combines animations, archive footage and interviews with family members and animation specialists, and the students' research also provided new insights into Debels' work process.

This program, which contains a selection of historical films and a recently created documentary, offers a unique opportunity to acquaint oneself with this forgotten animator and his films.

Program in collaboration with Kaboom Animation Festival, Family George Debels, Eye Filmmuseum, CINEMATEK and HKU University of the Arts.

- Written by: Mette Peters



FILM PROGRAM

GEORGE DEBELS: NEDERLANDSE ANIMATIEPIONIER

Made by: Salomé de Jong & Yanniek Klijn & Suzanne van Leeuwen & Tess Jones & Lena Umbgrove, Hogeschool voor de Kunsten Utrecht 2022, 12:10min

This film portrays animation pioneer George Debels and his animated advertising work. A student project in which animation, archival footage and interviews with relatives and animation specialists are combined into a entertaining and playful animated documentary.

copy: HKU

AN ADVENTURE IN THE SKY

George Debels & Alex Benno, 1919, silent, 1:59min

Come and watch the flying demonstrations above Amsterdam-North. Promotional film for the E.L.T.A., first aviation exhibition Amsterdam.

copy: Eye

A TRIP TO THE MOON

George Debels, Mac-Djorski-Films, 1928, silent, 2:32min

There is only one bicycle that can really withstand meteors on your bike ride through space. Only with a strong Nederlandsche Kroon Rijwiel you will arrive safely on the moon. Advertisement by Stokvis.

copy: Eye

ALL'S WELL, THAT ENDS WELL

George Debels, Mac-Djorski-Films, 1929, silent, 3:37min

Mimi is fired because of her poor cooking skills. After finding a new job she proves her former mistress wrong thanks to the new Inventa Gas cooker.

copy: EYE

NOT THAT DUMB

George Debels, Mac-Djorski-Films, 1928, silent, 2:45min

A prisoner doesn't like the prison food and escapes because he can't live without Sickness chocolate bars, because 'Sickness tastes better.'

copy: Cinematek

A GOOD RECIPE / UNE BONNE RECETTE

George Debels, Mac-Djorski-Films, 1928, silent, French (inter)titles, 5:16min

Not his doctor but his cat knows the best remedy for the sick boss: a good glass of Stout from the Royal Falcon Brewery in Amsterdam.

copy: Eye

AMSTEL BEER

George Debels, Mac-Djorski-Films, 1928, silent, 3:20min

Different beer brands compete against each other during a race in the stadium. Only one can be the best.

copy: Eye

GRANDPA'S WISE ADVICE

George Debels, Rex Film, 1934, sound, 2:16min

The popular Dutch folk singer Kees Pruis sings about grandfather's wise advice about cigars: There is only one Karel I. Lyrics written by the well-known lyricist Jacques van Tol.

copy: Cinematek

FILM PROGRAM

GNIEMEIJER'S STAR TOBACCO

George Debels, Mac-Djorski-Films, 1930, silent, 3:25min

Felix, the lightning sketcher, draws the pipe smokers of Niemeijer's Star

Tobacco: the dentist, the schoolmaster, the office worker, the stonemason, the angler, the farmer, the traveler, the baker and the gentleman in general.

copy: Eye

WHY FLUX IS HAPPY!..

George Debels, 1929, silent, 4:40min

A combined advertising film for different products: cigars, washing powder, butter, sweets, rusks, baby food and 1930s fashion.

copy: Eye

ADVENTURES OF KO THE COW

George Debels, 1936, sound, 6:35min

Because the demand for Frisian Flag milk is increasing and the stock is running out, Ko de Koe flies from the Netherlands to Indonesia with a rocket full of cans of milk.

copy: Eye



<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQr5oaajRw8P5FXQDE-QVKOfirxiZmDj7>

George Debels, Nederlandse Animatiepionier

APTITO GHERKINS

George Debels, Rex Film 1936, sound, 1:04min.

Pickled gherkins of Aptito from Geertruidenberg are crispy and tasty, indispensable for dinner and drinks. And the kids love it too!

copy: Eye

THE SECRET OF THE SPHINX

George Debels, Rex Film, 1935, sound, 2:12min

Two expedition members rescue the sphinx from the clutches of lion Glutton. As a reward they get to hear the secret composition of an ancient Egyptian cigarette recipe: currently used by the makers of Brooches.

copy: Eye



LOVE LIFE AND LAUGHTER

"What is Betty Balfour's secret? Is it her charming smile, her radiant eyes, her all-conquering personality, and youth? Who's to say and why to delve into it! Our gloomy and troubled time needs Betty Balfour, for she brings diversion with her healthy humor and silver laughter.' writes the Bredasche Courant on 27-11-1923. However, it could just as well have been written today in our own announcement of LOVE, LIFE AND LAUGHTER, according to the literary newspaper HET VADERLAND in 1924, 'one of the most beautiful films by this wonderful artist.'

De Amstelbode seems to have the answer on the above written question and writes on 13-10-1923: "The secret of her success lies in the fact that she never plays a part beyond her strength, continuing under all circumstances her Squibs-creation which has secured her a joyful place in the firmament of the world of cinema. One could call her the female counterpart of Charlie Chaplin, if her playing were not of an entirely different genre."

Betty Balfour was one of the greatest British actresses of the silent film era. To quote the Evening Post of 22-12-1923 "...this mischievous English movie star played with such naturalness, simplicity and charm that unreality becomes reality."

If you search for announcements and advertisements for LOVE, LIFE AND LAUGHTER (in Dutch titled SQUIBS, DE KONINGING VAN DE MUSIC HALL), you will see that this film has played throughout the Netherlands for years. Yet this at the time very well received film was lost for a long time. For Years, it was even on the BFI Most Wanted list, an initiative to actively find lost films.

The beautiful town of Hattem, a Dutch Hanseatic city on the river IJssel, is a picturesque place. It also had a building that served as a cinema for no less than 3 years. And there is no other way than that LOVE, LIFE AND LAUGHTER was screened there, perhaps one of the last times it was seen in the Netherlands. That is, until today, on January 13, 2023! Because when this building had to be renovated, a number of film cans were found. In the hope that this would contain unique WWII material, these cans were brought to the Eye Film Museum. But what was actually found will be shown tonight.

- Written by: Daan van den Hurk

NEW

BEGINNINGS



January marks the beginning of the New Year, a time for fresh starts and new resolutions. On the occasion of this year's Netherlands Silent Film Festival—the first in-person edition in two years!—we wanted to celebrate the new, in its many different guises. We also wanted to celebrate the work of women screenwriters, directors, colorists, and editors, women who were drawn to cinema in its first two decades and active participants in its development all around the world. So, drawing solely from films (at least) co-authored by women, this program is about fresh starts, new opportunities, unexpected reversals, exciting changes, and surprising new perspectives. It brings together six films, from Denmark, France, England, and the United States, that celebrate the pleasures as well as the growing pains of every new beginning. From documentary footage to experimental filmmaking and from early comedies to polished advertising films, “New Beginnings” is a program of delightful variety and a true showcase for women filmmakers active during cinema’s first decades.

In Grundlovsdagen, den 5 juni 1915 (1915) two Danish women, Julie Laurberg and Franziska Gad, capture images of the processions and celebrations when women were granted the right to vote in Denmark. Laurberg and Gad, who co-owned a successful portrait photography studio in Copenhagen, were also photographers for the royal court and thus were able to easily document this moment of hard-won change and new opportunities for Danish women. In *The Troublesome Stepdaughters* (1912), scripted by American screenwriter Marguerite Bertsch, tensions arise between a father's new wife and his five daughters. Bertsch, who was educated at Columbia University's Teacher's College, was a public school teacher before joining Vitagraph as a staff writer in 1911, one of many American women who turned to screenwriting in the early years of cinema. Bertsch's intellectual and dramaturgical qualities quickly ensured her professional success and she would go on to (co-)direct some features. However, she left the film industry at the peak of her success.

As cinema grew and became more popular, people outside of national commercial film industries picked up the new art form. *I'd Be Delighted To!* (1932), an amateur film made by American husband-and-wife team Cynthia and S.W. “Winkie” Childs Jr., offers a completely different kind of new beginning: new romance and budding intimacy. The filmmakers playfully depict a cozy dinner date between a man and a woman by only showing us their hands and feet, a creative choice that likely helped to earn the film a spot on the Amateur Cinema League's “Ten Best” list for 1932. This film illustrates the surprising originality of those working outside the professional circuit, and Cynthia would go on to be the sole director of the couple's later film *Seductio Ad Absurdum* (1940).

A non-romantic new beginning can be found in the work of French avant-garde filmmaker and theorist Germaine Dulac, who saw cinema itself as a new modern form of visual expression that could create emotion through motion, rhythm, and juxtaposition. Calling for a new cinema free of narrative and literary trappings—or a “pure cinema”—Dulac sought, with films like *Themes et Variations* (1928) which she directed and edited, to launch a new way of understanding film as a visual symphony.

A varied filmmaker, theorist, film and theater critic, activist, playwright, and feminist journalist, Dulac was a pioneering member of the "impressionist" or "first avant-garde" movement in 1920s France and was involved in the formation of Cinémathèque Française in the 1930s.

In the British dramatized advertising film *Changing Hues* (1922), the ability to have new fashion helps a woman attain romance and happiness. Made to sell dyeing and cleaning products, this hand-colored film tells us that even if you can't afford a new dress, you can still change its colour and look like new. In early cinema, hand- and stencil colour was usually considered women's work, as it was a very precise and monotonous skill.

New opportunities and fresh starts can also be surprising. In the Danish comedic western *Manden uden fremtid* (*The Man Without a Future*) (1916), the titular hero finds out he is not just a 'mere' cowboy, but actually of aristocratic descent, a discovery which opens up all kinds of new possibilities. Credited as the first professional Danish female screenwriter, Harriet Bloch, an autodidact, wrote this romantic, not violent western for one of the biggest Danish stars of the time, dashing Valdemar Psilander. They had worked together before and he had expressed his wish to play a cowboy, so Bloch created the character especially for him. Bloch left the film industry in the early 1920s, to start something new.

- Written by: Anke Brouwers & Kate Saccone



CINEMA'S FIRST NASTY WOMEN

This program explores slapstick comedies from 1906 to 1913, all sourced from the Cinema's First Nasty Women collection, trying to understand if they were as outlandish for the audiences back then as they seem to our eyes today. Do these films show wild imaginations of their makers more than a century ago, or could they be a rather accurate reflection of what was really happening? And if they were really rooted in reality, should we not take these films more seriously, as comments on real life issues, rather than silly fantasies?

LA GRÈVE DES BONNES (THE MAIDS' STRIKE) (FRANCE 1906)

Dir: Charles-Lucien Lépine. Scen: André Heuzé. Photog: Segundo de Chomon. Prod: Pathé Frères. Premiere: October 10, 1906. Running time: 7 min. Also released as: Servants' Strike (UK); La grève des cuisiniers (alternate French title); La huelga de las sirvientas (Spain); Lo sciopero della serve (Italy); Huelga de criadas (Mexico). Digitized from a 35mm print held by the British Film Institute.

The housemaids all go on strike! They protest in the streets with signs like “Long live the Strike!” and “Down with bosses!” The police are unable to contain or control them. The women give fiery speeches at a labor council meeting and drink boisterously in a saloon. 1906 was the peak strike year in France until 1914, the year when 1,309 strikes sent 438,000 workers to the picket lines. Though the film was meant to be a travesty of working women’s activism, it survives today as an empowering document. Vive la grève! - Maggie Hennefeld

La grève des nourrices (The Nursemaids’ Strike) (France 1907)

Dir: André Heuzé. Prod: Pathé Frères. Premiere: September 13, 1907. Running time: 12 min. Also released as: The Nurses’ Strike (US); Huelga de nodrizas (Argentina); Streik der Ammen (Germany). Digitized from a 35mm print held by Fondation Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé.

LA GRÈVE DES NOURRICES, A FILM BY ANDRÉ HEUZÉ.

Pathé frères production, 1907. © Fondation Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé

The nursemaids organize a general strike to protest their deplorable labor conditions. They march in the streets and clash violently with the police, who are no match for their collective feminist anger. Meanwhile, children organize a counter-protest and cow udders are enlisted as scab labor. Babies feed from cows through plastic tubes in the closing emblematic shot, which distills the film’s central message: another world is possible. You may recognize several images from The Kitchen Maid’s Strike (also in this set), filmed one year earlier by Pathé. It was not unusual for film companies to recycle their own scenarios (often with different actors or characters), but surprising that they would repurpose their own footage as well. We even see a duplicated scene here that had been lost (or cut) from surviving copies of Kitchen Maid’s Strike. - Maggie Hennefeld

LES FEMMES COCHERS (THE COACHWOMEN) (FRANCE 1907)

Dir: André Heuzé. Prod: Pathé Frères. Premiere: February 15, 1907. Running time: 10 min. Also released as: The Cabby’s Wife (US). Digitized from a 35mm print held by Fondation Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé.

Les Femmes cochers, a Pathé frères production, 1907. © Fondation Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé

Although it may sound strange, around 1906 lady horse cab drivers were all the rage in Paris. They were called les femmes cochers and they became such a popular draw that they frequently appeared in French films entitled or starring a “femme-cocher.” In this comedy, a coachman stumbles home drunk provoking his wife to take up the reins. More than a few traffic accidents and mishaps ensue during her shift. The lady cab drivers all land in the police station. After everything is cleared up, they drive away in their coaches and have fun smoking pipes together. - Maggie Hennefeld

CUNÉGONDE FEMME COCHÈRE (CUNÉGONDE THE COACHWOMAN) (FRANCE 1913)

Cast: Little Chrysia (Cunégonde). Prod: Lux. Release: February 14, 1913. Running time: 6 min. Also released as: Arabella and the Wizard (US); Cunegonde als huurkoetsier (Netherlands). Digitized from a 35mm nitrate print held by EYE Filmmuseum.

Cunégonde dons the working clothes of her sick husband to replace him as a horse cab driver. If this sounds daring and a bit surreal, it was actually commonplace at the time. From 1906 on, lady horse cab drivers came into fashion in Paris. They were called les femmes cocher[s], and became popular sights much preferred by the clients. However, surrealism begins the moment Cunégonde starts driving, as she runs over a fakir, who spells a curse over her, turning her horse into a zebra, her chariot into a cupboard, and her customers into thin air. One of the most absurd episodes, with lots of trick photography, the film ends with a close-up of the desperate Cunégonde! - Elif Rongen-Kaynakçi

MADAME FAIT DU SPORT (MADAME IS ATHLETIC) (FRANCE 1908)

Prod: Pathé Frères. Premiere: June 12, 1908. Running time: 10 min. Also released as: Athletic Woman (US). Digitized from a 35mm print held by Fondation Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé.

Madame fait du sport, a Pathé frères production, 1908. © Fondation Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé

Madame starts her day doing Sandow exercises. After a vigorous mountain climb, she goes horseback riding and swimming. No rest after lunch, she instead ventures on a long uphill walk while carrying weights. Then she goes on a bike ride, drives a car, and finally competes against men in fencing. Madame’s busy day completely wears out her male servant, who’s tasked with assisting her. Although a short comedy, this 1908 film can also be seen as a manifesto for the suffragettes who demanded women’s sports to be taken seriously. At the time, female participation in sporting events was discouraged due to sexist concerns about women’s physical stamina. In some cases, popular sports were reduced to less physically intense “female versions.” Madame’s fortitude reveals otherwise. - Elif Rongen-Kaynakçi

VENTILATEUR BREVETÉ (THE NEW AIR FAN) (FRANCE 1911)

Scen: Louis Z. Rollini. Cast: ? (Léontine). Prod: Pathé Comica. Premiere: July 14, 1911. Release: July 21, 1911. Running time: 4 min. Restored by EYE Filmmuseum in 2009 from a nitrate print donated by the Archive Film Agency.

We saw what Léontine can do with a high-voltage battery, but she’s equally destructive with a portable air fan. It was a historically hot summer in 1911 when Pathé Comica devised a most ingenious solution: motorized fans mounted to moving vehicles. Titine and her family go for a fast-motion bicycle ride while enveloping the whole public sphere in their raging tornado of bodily ventilation. They knock over pedestrians, café diners, and horse-drawn carriages. Finally, they are steamrolled by the superior fan of a gas-guzzling automobile. Translated from Le Bulletin Pathé, they “are swept in turn like simple fetuses” (“se voient balayés à leur tour comme des simples fétus”). - Maggie Hennefeld

LA PILE ÉLECTRIQUE DE LÉONTINE (LÉONTINE'S BATTERY) (FRANCE 1910)

Cast: ? (Léontine). Prod: Pathé Comica. Release: September or October 1910. Running time: 6 min. Also released as: Betty's Electric Battery (UK). Restored 2019 in 4K by Fondation Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé from the nitrate negative in their collections.

La Pile électrique de Léontine, a Pathé frères production, 1910. © Fondation Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé

Léontine lights up our lives with an electric battery, electrocuting everyone in her path. Her victims include two old ladies (played by men in drag), dancers at a café, workers on a construction site, a group of lackluster conscripts, and the local police force. To add insult to injury, she douses everyone with buckets of water. The ninth episode of the series, it feels as relevant as ever amid today's anti-police global uprisings and the disastrous confusion between productivity and enjoyment. - Maggie Hennefeld

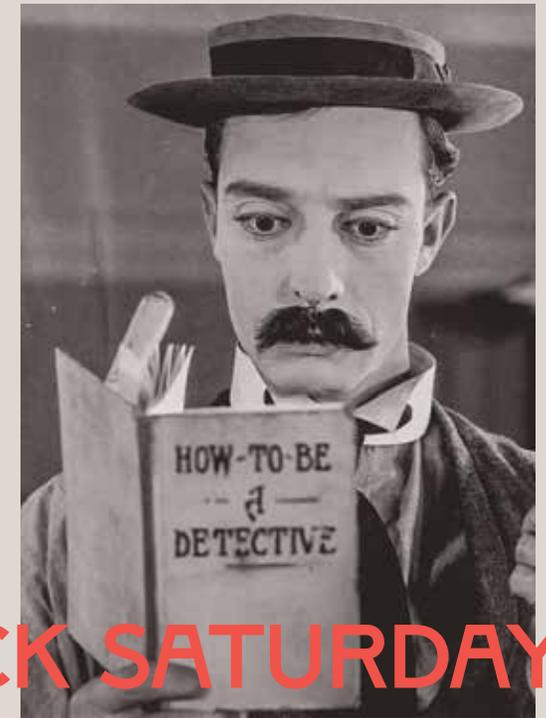
LÉONTINE S'ENVOLE (LÉONTINE GETS CARRIED AWAY) (FRANCE 1911)

Cast: ? (Léontine). Prod: Pathé Comica. Premiere: September 23, 1911. Release: November 8, 1911. Running time: 6 min. Also released as: Betty's Flight (UK). Restored 2019 in 4K by Fondation Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé from the nitrate negative in their collections.

Léontine s'envole, a Pathé frères production, 1911. © Fondation Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé

Léontine is sent airborne by too many helium balloons and takes a catastrophic joyride across town, while her parents and the townsfolk frantically chase after her. Her journey is depicted with dazzling aerial views. This was the third to last film of the series, which innovated ever new ways to envision the hellraising upheaval caused by Léontine's destructive excess of unmotivated enjoyment. Whether sailing a toy boat, playing leapfrog, or eating a snack (as she does in many other episodes in this set), Titine always finds a way to make it count. Ordinary habits pave the way to world-shattering catharsis. - Maggie Hennefeld

- Written by: Elif Rongen en Maggie Hennefeld



SLAPSTICK SATURDAY HAROLD LLOYD'S THRILL COMEDIES

Starting his career, pursuing his dream of becoming a serious actor, Harold Lloyd was hired by Hal Roach to do comedy. And he quickly learned that that was what he was really good at. After abandoning his first comedy character Lonesome Luke, which unintentionally imitated Chaplin too much, Harold created a character under his own name after picking up the famous glasses that characterize his appearance so much. Partly due to the glasses, his new character became more relatable, someone who could actually be your neighbor or your friend.

For years Lloyd had been trying to frighten his audiences with his so-called thrill comedies, all of them involving skyscrapers. Although the 1920's were an age of daring stunts, there was a limit of in how much danger the actors and stunt men could being put. It was a happy filming accident that influenced some of the most thrilling scenes in Lloyd's films. In Los Angeles, Hal Roach's studio was built on a hill, underneath which the Hill Street Tunnel ran. When filming two people standing on top of the hill, the cameraman accidently only filmed the torso's and the background, so it looked like the people were standing on an enormous height. The set for NEVER WEAKEN was built on that spot to create the illusion Lloyd was on a tremendously high construction, while in fact, he was not that far from the ground.



NEVER WEAKEN was so well made, it seemed impossible to outdo it. But Lloyd was able to do so in his only thrill feature film SAFETY LAST (1923), which screened at the NSFF in 2019.

Laurel and Hardy and the transition to sound

'[Hal] Roach Skeptical of Sound in Shorts' reads a headline in the Motion Picture News on August 4th 1928. The transition to sound films, or 'talkies', had started, but did not seem to be irreversible yet. Sound was embraced by some, but considered a passing novelty by others, or was sometimes even feared. In the 1920's the Hal Roach Studio's were among the most successful comedy studio's in the US. Under Roach's supervision comedy stars like Charley Chase, Max Davidson, Anita Garvin and Harold Lloyd emerged, as well as the famous duo Laurel and Hardy. Most of them were starring in so-called two-reelers, short comedies of about 20 minutes, that would typically fit on two film reels. And that was exactly where Roach's fear lies. "Sound and dialogue are all right for the feature picture. [...] but I am fearful that it will slow up the short comedy in which speed is one of our main assets." Another problem was that of leaving room for the laughter. Roach compares the situation with a stage comedy, where an actor can wait until the laughter had died out. "You might say you can leave certain pauses for your laughs on the screen, but that is impossible... A laugh might last a second or for minutes. What is going to happen midst of these laughs if the comedian bursts into dialogue. The audience is going to be afraid of missing the lines and must stop the laughter abruptly."

In the same article, Roach recalls a screening he attended. It was a program of talkies, with one of his own silent pictures in between. He felt insecure, especially because he thought the film was not very good. But a girl entered the theatre with such a contagious laugh, that it spread over the audience quickly and they didn't stop laughing until the film was over. It got more applause than any of the talkies. "Those are some of the things we will have to overcome. Of course we will find a way and means of doing it." "I wish it had been delayed a while longer at least, or I wish I could be sure that everybody else was deploying sound. If I was sure, I would give them a real novelty with the silent two-reel comedy"

WE FAW DOWN (1928) was Laurel and Hardy's second film that had a synchronized soundtrack, HABEAS CORPUS being the first. It contained music and some sound effects, but no dialogue, so that the film could also be distributed as a silent film with live music, as it is presented tonight. It was also the first film where director Leo McCarey (AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER, A LOVE AFFAIR, RALLY 'ROUND THE FLAG BOYS) took full credit for directing, after being supervising director for earlier Laurel and Hardy shorts. It initially included a sequence where the duo accidentally fled wearing each others trousers. Due to the restriction of the two reel comedy, the sequence had to be cut, but was too good to throw away, so it was later used for the first reel of their thrill comedy LIBERTY (1929)

Keaton and subject of film: film itself

"One of the first things I did was tear a motion picture camera practically to pieces and found out the lenses and the splicing of film and how to get it on the projector.. This fascinated me. [...] I made a friend with the cameraman and get in the cutting room... and find out how I get trick photography and things I could do with a camera that I couldn't do on stage." Keaton told Kevin Brownlow in one of his interviews. It was not only the camera that fascinated Keaton. He had a general fondness for mechanical gadgets and had a special room for them in his mansion to freely play around.

SHERLOCK JR is a display of Keaton's fascination of camera tricks and includes all sorts of possibilities Keaton had discovered about the magic of the camera and the cinematic illusions that are being created in the film almost become a character of its own. The most remarkable sequence in that respect is the one where Keaton dreams to be in the film that is being projected and needs to adapt himself to the ever changing backgrounds. Keaton says "Every cameraman in the business went to see that picture more than once, trying to figure out how the hell we did some of that." The film tricks were remarkably more sophisticated than the height trickery in NEVER WEAKEN. The film screen in the cinema you see in the picture is actually a cut-out. By lightning it exactly right, the illusion of a film screen is created. To change into the location shots, a precise measurement was necessary from Keaton to the camera. "As we did one shot, we'd throw it into the darkroom and develop it right there and then-and bring it back to the cameraman. He cut out a few frames and put them in the camera gate. When I come to change scenes, he could put me right square where I was, as long as the distance [to the camera] was correct."

Keaton solely directed SHERLOCK JR, but this was not originally the plan. Keaton always felt he owed Arbuckle everything he knew about making films. After all, it was Arbuckle who introduced Keaton to the world of film, and the two made many short films together. After Arbuckle tragically was trialed by the media when suspected of murder and nearly got convicted, Keaton wanted to bring him back into the business by hiring him as a director, being it under a pseudonym. After a few days, it was clear though that Arbuckle hadn't recovered from all the stress and didn't function but they couldn't just fire him. Keaton cleverly arranged a different directing job for Arbuckle, an offer he couldn't refuse. Arbuckle, not knowing that it was Keaton who arranged it, was placed for a dilemma by the offer, and Keaton said to him that they would hate to lose him, but that he shouldn't refuse this offer. Arbuckle thankfully accepted and Keaton went on shooting the film under his own directing.

- Written by: Daan van den Hurk



JUST AROUND THE CORNER

Frances Marion (1888-1973) was a screenwriter, journalist, author and filmmaker and one of Hollywood's most prolific women creators. Throughout her career, which spanned from 1915–1946, she both adapted other people's texts and wrote original scenarios. Marion also taught screenwriting and published the textbook *How to Write and Sell Film Stories*. During her long career, Marion directed only two films herself; *Just Around the Corner* and *The Love Light* (both in 1921).

Just Around the Corner is about the poor family Birdsong; a mother and her son Jimmie and her daughter Essie who live together in New York City's tenements. The children both work to earn a living, while the mother's health rapidly declines. Essie is allured by the city's glamorous nightlife, and she finds a job as an usher in a cheap theater where she falls in love with Joe Ullman, a crooked ticket speculator. Her mother repeatedly begs to meet Essie's fiancé, but Ullman declines to pay visits. Jimmie fears that the tension will cause their mothers' illness to get worse.

Adapted from a short story called 'Superman' by Fannie Hurst, originally published in *The Saturday Evening Post* in 1914, the film displays the unhealthy and unfair conditions of life and work in the big city. The film has almost documentary moments showing female workers forced to do after-hours work, or people struggling with the snow and cold in chilly winter weather.

For many years, *Just Around the Corner* could not be seen, since only two incomplete prints have survived in the film archives: one held at the Library of Congress (53 minutes, missing the ending) and the other at Eye Filmmuseum (58 minutes, missing significant sections like the dance contest). In 2021, these two archives joined forces to reconstruct the film using these incomplete elements, to make a new version that can be presented to the audiences.

Although complementing each other well in terms of continuity, these two prints originated from different negatives; one for domestic and the other for foreign release. This results in scenes entirely built up by different takes, shot from different angles, length and distance. Since the domestic version held at the Library of Congress contains the better takes, these were preferred whenever possible for the reconstruction. The last reel is entirely taken from the foreign release version held at Eye. It is important to note that while the result represents the most complete narrative, this combination of different shots and takes cannot be considered to represent the 'original version'; neither of the domestic, nor of the foreign release version.

The original title cards that were present in the American print are used, even if they sometimes show significant decay. Newly translated and recreated cards from the Dutch print are inserted to make up for the missing ones. Both prints were scanned in 4K at the Film Laboratory of the Library of Congress' National Audio-Visual Conservation Center in Culpeper, Virginia. The narrative is restructured at Eye by closely comparing the two versions, since the research did not yield the original script. The colors are digitally recreated at Haghefilm following the tinting scheme of the Dutch print. The speed is fixed at 19 frames/second, resulting in the total running time of 79 minutes.

- Written by: Elif Rongen





PIGS WILL ALWAYS BE PIGS

Germany gave Ukraine the silent comedy “Pigs are always pigs” (1930), shot at the Odesa film factory “Ukrainfilm” in 1930 by director Hanan Shmain.

The film, which was considered lost, was found in the Federal Archives of Germany in 2015.

On August 22, 2016, thanks to the Embassy of Ukraine in Germany, seven rolls of positive and negative film were added to the film stock of the Oleksandr Dovzhenko National Center.

“Finds like “Pigs...” are rare and mostly by chance, because the Dovzhenka Center, unfortunately, does not yet have the resources for a systematic study of foreign film funds, in some of them, such as Czech, Yugoslav, German, French and Japanese, beyond any doubt, there is still a lot of Ukrainian silent cinema, which is now considered lost. Sometimes they can significantly change our current ideas about early Ukrainian cinema,” commented Ivan Kozlenko, former director of the Oleksandr Dovzhenka National Center, on the return of the film.

It is worth noting that comedies are the rarest genre among the surviving Ukrainian films of the silent period, because they were the first to be banned even before they were released due to their criticism and mockery of the then social vices. To date, only five surviving Ukrainian silent film comedies are known, among which “Pigs...” is one of the best.

“Pigs...” is a witty, satirical comedy that ridicules Soviet bureaucracy, formalism brought to absurdity by disorder and sabotage, bourgeois and provincialism, which are far from the historical challenges of the time. In this direction, the film comes close to the middle-class comedies of Mykola Shpykovsky, and especially to his legendary Shkurnyk (1929), aimed at an immanent critique of the new Soviet way of life, and together with it forms a separate corpus of early Ukrainian satirical film comedies.

Hanan Shmayin is now a completely forgotten original director of the Kurbas school. In the fall of 1921, when Kyidramte moved to Bila Tserkva, 19-year-old Hanan joined the drama studio that operated at the theater. From 1923 to 1928, he worked in the director’s laboratory “Berezoly” and assisted Kurbas in a number of productions. In 1930, Shmain moved to Odessa, where he began working at a film factory. In the same year, Hanan had a son, Ilya, who later became a famous theologian and Orthodox priest.

“Pigs are always pigs” is Shmain’s feature directorial debut. In 1936, he made his most famous film at the Kyiv Film Factory - the comedy “Somewhere in the Summer” based on the script of Ilf and Petrov with Igor Ilyinsky in the lead role. The success of the film aroused the envy of colleagues, especially newly arrived Russian directors, with whom it was planned to “replace” almost entirely the repressed Ukrainian film professionals.

This is how Shmaina’s granddaughter, Anna Shmaina-Velikanova, a cultural researcher and Hebrewist, tells about it: “It was his famous film, after which Pyrev “ate” him. And when Les’ Kurbas was shot, he and his family had to run urgently. And so he ended up in Moscow.” The story of Shmain’s wonderful rescue from German captivity during the war is also amazing: “When the war started, he went to the Moscow militia in the very first days. And he was immediately captured. And the incredible boys from Bila Tserkva, who remembered his father, Moisei Shmain, a confectioner, hid him during selections for three years in a row.”

- Written by: Maksym Verteletsky





HURRA, ICH LEBE!

On the 22nd of February 1929, the film HURRA, ICH LEBE! had its first Dutch screening in the Rotterdam theatre Luxor. The film, a comedy about the fortunes of Pieter Kruis, a merchant in Colonial Goods, had premiered in Berlin two months before and had received good reviews. Especially the main actor Nikolai Kolin was praised and the reviews mentioned that during the premier screening, the audience started applauding multiple times during the film, to cheer for his performance.

In the Netherlands, the reception isn't any different. Good reviews and especially a lot of appreciation for the comedic talent of Kolin. But something else matters here: even though HURRA, ICH LEBE! Was a German production with an international cast of German, Russian and English actors – for the Dutch film critics, the fact that the film is set in the Netherlands and was partially recorded in Rotterdam, was an additional attraction. Some critics even called the film an international, Dutch coproduction, on top of which was mentioned that the film was the best national production up to that day – so better than the films that were made in the shortlived glory years 1915-1923 by Filmfabriek Hollandia or Theo Frenkel sr.

A type of appropriation that goes quite far. Because, even though HURRA, ICH LEBE! Is set in the Netherlands and the film indeed contains exterior shots of the Rotterdam harbour, the film is an entirely German production. Recorded in the film studio's in Neu-Babelsberg, southwest of Berlin.

The November 7th 1928 edition of the magazine 'De koerier' contains an extensive report of the activities in the studio. The fictitious village Buren, where most of the story is set, is constructed within the studio and, initially, is still called Wormerveer here. They have done everything to make it look like a typical Dutch village – including the ever turning wings of the mills – but for once, not with the 'Urker broeken' and 'Edammer kazen'. Everything refers to the Netherlands: the wellknown brands Van Nelle's tea, Scholte's eggnog and Bols old jenever, the street signs and the signs on the buildings and the houses. Sometimes with a small spelling or language mistake – such as 'gemeendeschool' (instead of 'gemeenteschool') or 'De moedige zeevaarder' (instead of 'zeevaarder'), which in the next shot is spelled correctly though. It is very obvious that we are in the Netherlands.

A few months earlier, director Wilhelm Thiele had spoken to the 'Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad' about why the film was set in the Netherlands. Thiele explained that about a year earlier, he was coincidentally in the Netherlands and was taken by the cinematic qualities of the Dutch landscape – with her mills and picturesque villages – and the Rotterdam harbour. Subsequently, he had decided to set film, based on the comedy 'Der mutige Seefahrer' by Georg Kayser, in the Netherlands, but it could 'just as well have been located in a German, French or Russian village,' said the author in the same article in 'De koerier'. The Dutchness – or better yet Hollandness – is just the added local flair. But for a 'chauvinistic' film critic this was more than enough to celebrate the film as a Dutch coproduction and to praise it.

The director of the film is Wilhelm Thiele (1890-1975), an actor and stage director born in Vienna who moved on to film in 1923. Hurra, ich lebe! Was already his ninth film in five years and fits nicely within the genre of light comedies Thiele was known for. After the arrival of the sound film, in 1930 he made the first German music film: Die drei von der Tankstelle – with, in the main parts among others, Heinz Rumann, Willy Fritsch and Lilian Harvey – three great stars of 1930s German cinema. The film was a big success and established Thiele's name within German film history. After the assumption of power by the National Socialists, the director of Jewish descent migrated to the United States of America. There he made, among others, two Tarzan films and already transferred to the new medium of television in 1949. Nevertheless, he was unable to match his German successes. In the 1960's, Thiele returned to West-Germany. There he directed two more films. Thiele passed away in 1975 in the USA.

The star of HURRA, ICH LEBE! Is Russian actor Nikolai Kolin. He was born in 1878 in St. Petersburg and worked as a stage actor in Moscow until the Russian Revolution of 1917. After the revolution, he migrated to France, where he continued to work as an actor, but now also in films. His first film role was in LE BRASIER ARDENT (1923), directed by star actor Ivan Mozzhukhin who likewise had fled Russia (in collaboration with Alexander Volkov). Next, there were a number of French productions – among which NOPOLÉON (1927) by Abel Gance. In the 1928 French-German film Geheimnisse des Orients (Alexander Volkov) he played the main role of Ali, a shoemaker who uses a magical flute to exchange his daily life for a fairy tale world.

Kolin received much praise for his role and transitioned to the German film industry.

His first German film was HURRA, ICH LEBE!. Again, Kolin steals the show. This time as a dorky village grocer who mistakenly is taken for dead and becomes a defenseless linchpin in a game of insurance fraud. But as befits a nice comedy, eventually everything turns out alright.

After HURRA, ICH LEBE! Kolin played in many German films. Mostly supporting roles as father figures or older gentlemen – until he terminated his acting career in 1955. He left West-Germany and migrated to the USA, where he died in 1973.

HURRA, ICH LEBE! is a simple, pretentionless story on hope and deception, but thanks to the staging and acting it turns into a comedic rollercoaster with, as the highlight, a completely over-the-top visit to a Rotterdam nightclub. In one of the supporting roles, we see Gustav Fröhlich as the mayor's son. Fröhlich was a young German actor who had made his debut in 1922 in De bruut, a Dutch-German coproduction directed by Theo Frenkel sr. In 1927, he played the male protagonist in Fritz Lang's epic Metropolis.

- Written by: Rommy Albers



LA CHUTE DE LA MAISON USHER

Year: 1928, France

director: Jean Epstein

cast: Marguerite Gance (Lady Madeline Usher), Jean Debucourt (Sir Roderick Usher), Charles Lamy (the friend), Abel Gance (café visitor)

On a bleak, stormy winter day a man was travelling by carriage to a remote place in England to pay a visit to his old friend Roderick Usher. In his hand he held a letter, in which his friend, who he hadn't seen in years, begged him for help. However, when he nears the Usher family's castle, which arises threateningly out of the swampy landscape, even the coachman doesn't want to drive him any further.

It doesn't take long before the man notices that something isn't right in the Usher home. Roderick is obsessed with the paintings of his wife Madeline. He's creating her portrait to add to the family gallery, but, since she's suffering from a deadly illness, he doesn't have much time left. The painting is eerily realistic, almost more so than the living Madeline, who keeps getting more ill as the painting progresses. When he paints her cheek, she reaches towards her tormented face. It's reminiscent of Oscar Wilde's book 'The picture of Dorian Gray', though opposite: Dorian Gray remains eternally young and beautiful, while his painted portrait ages.

'LA CHUTE DE LA MAISON USHER' is the film adaptation of multiple horror stories by Edgar Allan Poe, among others 'The Fall of the House of Usher' (1839) and 'The Oval Portrait' (1942). For these stories, at the time already nearly a century old, director Jean Epstein used the most modern tools of avant-garde cinema, from wind machines and rapid montage to slow motion, making the film visually overwhelming. Not only the inhabitants of the castle are holding each other in a strangle hold, the viewer is equally incapable of looking away.

MACABERE BRIDE

While in Poe's eponymous tale Roderick and Madeline are siblings, in the film they are married. Like a macabre bride Madeline, played by Marguerite Gance, wife to Abel Gance (the famous director himself plays a small part as a café visitor), floats meekly across the screen. She has no lines; she is only being watched and the film focusses primarily on the equally exasperated Roderick. We see his obsession with Madeline grow ever stronger in slow motion recordings.

The slowing of time plays an important role in the film. Director Jean Epstein uses a special high speed camera, which enables the recording of a high number of images per second. This technique wasn't simply used as a trick to increase the spectacle, rather it strengthens the realism. All facets of facial expressions, not visible to the naked eye, are thus made visible in the picture. As such we can follow along with a plethora of Roderick's emotions, poignantly played by Jean Debucourt. No matter how eccentric his behaviour is, you can completely relate to him as a viewer. The family doctor on the other hand, is really a creepy character due to the complete lack of emotion on his face. The reflection on his glasses often doesn't even allow us to look into his eyes.

The outdoor scenes are tinted in icy lavender blue (a technique where the film stroke is laid in a colour bath) , which strengthens the claustrophobic atmosphere of the candle lit mansion. The camera swings up and down, as if being swept away by the wind, and you almost literally get goosebumps on your arms. Despite the English settings of Poe's stories, the camera crew remained in France; filming in Bretagne among other places. Here originated Epstein's fascination with this area, which led to the fishing drama 'Finis Terrae', an ode to the rough nature of the islands of Brittany.

THE IMAGINING OF MUSIC

It's this same nature that Epstein uses in 'La Chute de la maison Usher' to depict music in the film, such as Roderick's guitar playing. Close-ups of his hand on the snares are put in an increasingly fast montage, alternated with dreamy shots of the glimmering sea, a mist-enshrouded lake and branches rocking back and forth. These shots seem to be unrelated to the story and the place where we are at that moment, instead they reflect Roderick's melancholy and restlessness. This montage works just like the music, which can take us to a different place and evoke images and feelings.

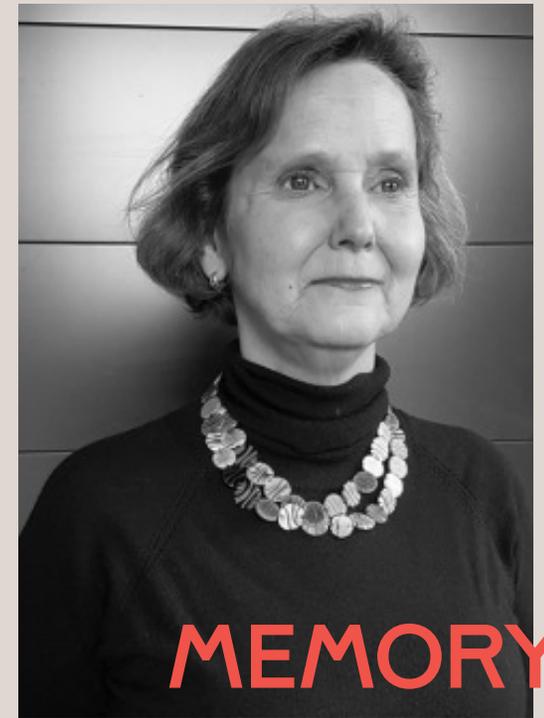
Henri Langlois, the co-founder of the Cinémathèque française in Paris, praised this film by comparing it to a piece of music composed by Debussy. Because of this musicality, La Chute is sometimes shown at festivals completely silent, without any musical accompaniment. This is of course not the case at NSFF, but we can trust the renowned composer Gabriel Thilbaudeau and harp player Elizabeth-Jane Hurley to raise this film to an even higher plane through their music.

At this screening of the film, which the Dutch inspection committee of 1931 judged as "insane" and thus only appropriate for those 14 years or older, we show a recent digitisation of the analogue restoration done by the Royal Belgian Film Archive (CINEMATEK) in collaboration with Cineteca di Bologna. The copy is part of the collection of Eye Filmmuseum, whose nitrate print of the film was used to create the restoration. The negative of the film lies with the Cinémathèque française.

- Written by: Vera de Lange

ABOUT VERA DE LANGE

Vera de Lange writes about film, art and photography of the interbellum. She was a collaborator in the creation of exhibitions and research projects for among others Museum MORE, Stadsarchief Amsterdam and Eye Filmmuseum. She also contributed to diverse exhibition catalogues, among which 'Modern Perspectives: Foto en film Amsterdam 1920-1940' and 'Nieuwe Kaders: Schilderkunst, fotografie en film 1920-1940'. Under the name verascoop she writes a blog on film and museum culture.



IN MEMORY OF MARLEEN LABIJT

In December, with great sadness, we received the news of the sudden death of Marleen Labijt. Marleen had been working at Eye Filmmuseum with great passion and engagement for over 30 years, initially taking care of the bookings for all of the films that Eye distributed throughout the Netherlands. Then, for more than 20 years, she handled all of the archival loans requests for materials from the museum's collection. With great enthusiasm, she promoted Eye's restorations both nationally and internationally and helped programmers from film festivals, film museums and all other types of theatres from all over the world with the organisation of screenings with films from the archive.

It is within this role that also the Netherlands Silent Film Festival got to know Marleen. Strict, but with great kindness and care, as well for the films and her colleagues at Eye, as well as her clients whom she always helped with any issues and with great advice. Marleen was of great importance when we first started this festival. She guided us through all of the processes and complications and supported us however she could. Especially during the difficult covid years, she was particularly helpful and was essential in the complex process of the sudden shift to organise the festival completely online.

With pain in our hearts we bid farewell to Marleen Labijt. Out of gratitude for everything she did for us and everything she meant for the entire international film community, we dedicate the screening of Au secours! And La chute de la maison Usher to her. We wish her family, her friends and colleagues much strength with this great loss.

COLOFON

ORGANISATION

Director: Daan van den Hurk

programming and research Martine Bouw

production: Imke van den Hurk

Marketing & communications: Moniek Louwers – DEJA VI

Head of technique: Wim Corbeij

Projectie DCP: Jasper Spoelstra

Volunteers: Dijun Lin, Jeroen Maasland, Jan Prummel, René van Hoek, Sander Duijneveldt, Oguz Uysal, Charles Knibbeler. Wim Corbeij

STICHTING ZOLDERKAMERTJESKLASSIEK

Board: Dennis Metz, Lily Mrofcynski, Manon Willems

VIDEO, FOTOGRAFIE + BRANDING

Registration: Frans Mrofcynski

Photography: Moniek Louwers, Frans Mrofcynski

Branding: Willem van Kollenburg

PROGRAM

Presentations: Daan van den Hurk, Elif Rongen-Kaynakçi, Annike Kross, Mette Peters, Anke Brouwers, Kate Saccone

Musicians: Daan van den Hurk, Emma van Dobben, Frank van der Star, Bart Soeters, Meg Morley, Maud Nelissen, Elizabeth-Jane Baldry, Richard Siedhof, Mykyta Sierov, Gabriel Thibaudeau

CATALOGUE

Texts: Daan van den Hurk, Martine Bouw, Anke Brouwers, Kate Saccone, Elif Rongen-Kaynakçi, Maggie Hennefeld, Rommy Albers, Maksym Verteletsky, Vera de Lange, Mette Peters

Design: Moniek Louwers

PARTNERS

Cultural partners: Pand P, Parktheater Eindhoven, Eye Filmmuseum

Impulsgelden Kunstloc Brabant, Stichting Cultuur Eindhoven, Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, Cultuurstation

Special thanks to: The Social Hub, Hotel Parkzicht, Eye Filmmuseum, Lobster, Dovzhenko Centre, Bundesarchiv, Murnau Stiftung, CINEMATEK, Dansk Film Institut, Österreichisches Filmmuseum, Yale Film Archive, Light Cone, British Film Institute, Kino Lorber, Kaboom Animation Festival, Filmtechniek, Filmhuis Gouda, Filmhuis Hofdael, Cultuurstation, Filmhub Zuid, Marleen Labijt, Elif Rongen-Kaynakçi, Leenke Ripmeester, Rommy Albers, Frank Roumen, Jasper Spoelstra, Ron Salari, Serge Bromberg, Maria Chiba, Bryony Dixon, Janneke van Dalen, Florian Haag, Mette Peters, Bruno Mestdagh, Ivo Blom, Vera de Lange, Maggie Hennefeld, Anita Tromp, Laura Bertram, Ingrid van Zummeren, Lynn Ansems, Henrik Holm, Wendy Rijken, Pieter-Jan Smit

