

CINEMA ADrift



Volume 7



COLORADO DRAGON FILM FESTIVAL

JUNE 2 - DENVER ART MUSEUM

100 W 14TH AVE PKWY, DENVER, CO 80204

JUNE 3-4 - KING CENTER

855 LAWRENCE WAY, DENVER, CO 80204

WWW.CDFILM.ORG

Colorado Dragon Film Festival aims to elevate the Asian Pacific American (APA) communities by recognizing the works of Asian directors, actors, and talented artists of this community and to build bridges of awareness, knowledge, and understanding between the different APA communities through cinema.



/CDFILMFEST



@CDFILMFEST



@CDFILMFEST





CINEMA ADRIFT

Volume 7

411:

Colorado Dragon film festival 2017

2016 lists from co-editors

Spoiler Alert -Matt Strackbein

Digital Comics -Nathan Ellis

John Waters 2016 list

Three Drawings -Nick Arno

Japanese Film Distribution -Jason Suzuki

Abbas Kiarostami poem

REVIEWS:

Too Late -Jason Suzuki

Jack Reacher -Jason Suzuki

High-Rise -Mara Norman

Alone in Berlin/The Comedian -Wm Wilder

A Bigger Splash -Mara Norman



“As I researched sleep, I found that we sleep in intervals. The REM intervals loop several times a night. Each loop is about 90 minutes long. It is the same running time as an average feature film. So maybe the running time of films fulfills our subconscious needs? Therefore, entering a movie theatre is not unlike entering a dream. Films hypnotize us and take us to new worlds. Sleeping and films are like twin realities.” – Apichatpong Weerasethakul quote from Cemetery of Splendour DVD extras.



Mara's favorites 2016

- A Bigger Splash (Luca Guadagnino)
- The Lobster (Yorgos Lanthimos)
- High Rise (Ben Wheatley)
- Paterson (Jim Jarmusch)
- Moonlight (Barry Jenkins)
- Toni Erdmann (Maren Ade)
- Knight of Cups (Terrence Malick)
- Certain Women (Kelly Reichardt)
- The Neon Demon (Nicolas Winding Refn)
- Nocturnal Animals (Tom Ford)
- Embrace the Serpent (Ciro Guerra)
- Jackie (Pablo Larraín)
- Weiner-Dog (Todd Solondz)



Recommended docs:

- One More Time with Feeling (Andrew Dominik)
- I Am Not Your Negro (Raoul Peck)
- We Are X (Stephan Kijak)
- Hockney (Randall Wright)
- Gimme Danger (Jim Jarmusch)



Jason's top 13 favorites 2016

Being Good (Mipo O)

Too Late (Dennis Hauck)

A Bride for Rip Van Winkle (Shunji Iwai)

Raiders! The Story of the Greatest Fan Film Ever Made (Eric Zala)

Nerve (Henry Joost and Ariel Schulman)

Heart Attack (Nawapol
Thamrongrattanarit)

The Lobster (Yorgos Lanthimos)

The Wailing (Na Hong-jin)

Emi-Abi (Kensaku Watanabe)

Anti-Porno/The Whispering Star (Sion Sono)

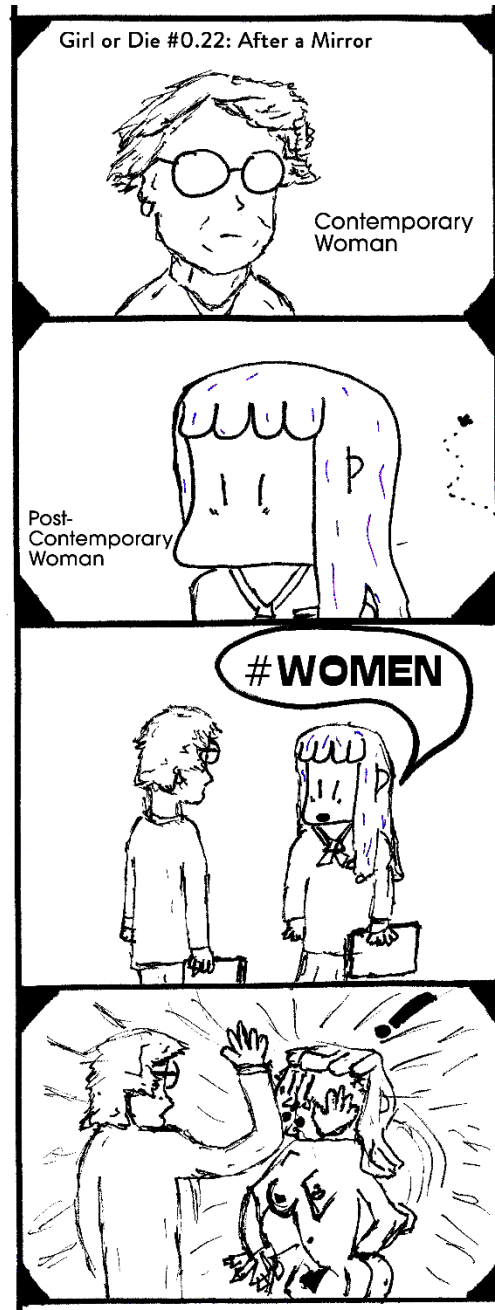
The Nice guys (Shane Black)

Harmonium (Foji Fukanda)

Demolition (Jean-Marc Vallee)



Sono holding the script for love exposure





Too Late (Dennis Hauck)

By Jason Suzuki

With a majority of theaters digital only and lacking in film projection capabilities, along with the rise of productions big and small shooting digital with RED and Alexa cameras, the filming and exhibition of a movie on film has become a marketing tool. Big names like Nolan and Tarantino have given viewers early access screening incentives, just as long as those screenings are on film. It's a nice gesture but not all that impressive when their budgets can support the choice to shoot on film. Additionally these directors have a pedigree of surefire profit, meaning the studios can handle striking up all those prints; not to mention the fact that while these examples may have been shot on film, they were most likely still edited digitally. It's even more ridiculous when you consider that **The Hateful Eight** had a Cinerama logo without actually being shot on the format. **Too Late** on the other hand is a film deserving of its 35mm fetishism as it makes

stylistic and narrative choices based on it while never forgetting the hard-boiled, regretful mood it is creating beyond the help of the grain.

John Hawkes, in what will most likely become his quintessential performance in the years to come, surpassing **The Sessions** (sort of like how Elliot Gould is more intrinsically linked with **The Long**

Goodbye rather than **MASH** despite its popularity), plays Sampson, a private eye looking for a missing woman, a stripper named Dorothy. Sampson is too late to save the young woman, finding her murdered just minutes after having spoken to her on the phone (one of many references to the title). The moments before, during, and after her death are done in a bravado long take, expertly executed and incorporating extended zooms and split screen, the camera dancing around a good portion of the cast of characters that we'll come back to later in the film.



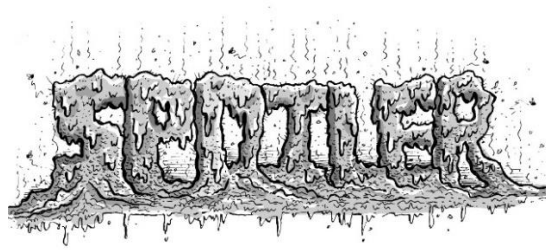


It's easy to think that the energy of the opening sequence won't be maintained throughout the film. Starting out of the gate with a long take has been seen elsewhere as a way to easily hook the audience. **Too Late** however is broken up into five acts, each the length of a reel of film, shot in continuous takes that are equally long. The opening act is just an introduction to the bold nature of the film, which remains in the four subsequent reels. Every now and then there will be an awkward pause or line read when an actor almost forgot their next line, it saves the movie from being too clean and proper and more evocative of the freewheeling, low-budget nature of the era it wants to emulate. There's an authenticity to the film, director Hauck wanted each sequence to be done in one go, all in camera. There is no seamless joining of shots which is why the long take has become so popular. The non-linear narrative shakes off some of the played out post-Tarantino stigma when considering that maybe the film is recreating when a projectionist has the order of his reels jumbled up.

The way we are divulged information includes the audience on this idea of being late. When we know motivations or outcomes it doesn't matter if the next reel takes place before or after the previous one, we can't go back and analyze what has happened. It's a way to make the world feel poetically pre-destined for

the most regret. It's a testament to the direction that the physicality of the celluloid is felt from its structure. From the beginning, the film is not very concerned with the mystery of who killed the girl and why but rather exploring a world occupied by characters filled with regret, a sense of being too late. It's not annoying when the title of the film is spoken, as it usually is in most cases, because it already hangs over every moment and the characters are contemplative enough to realize it. The noir coating is aligned with the idea that everyone has a role to fit into, the character tropes are the existences already carved out.

To divulge any more would ruin the film's joy of discovery. Even knowing the structure of the film won't spoil the surprise of its confidence. What's not surprising is that this is a debut, the stage of an artist's career where anything seems possible. There is a single moment late in the film that surpasses its overall boldness. It is imaginative and serves as a reminder that new, and exciting things can still happen in a movie. A tender moment between Sampson and Dorothy serves as the centerpiece of the film, but this other moment could be taken as the film's true core. A simple means of expressing dreams not attained and impossible futures. All accomplished pure and in camera, like the rest of the film.



Hush, little baby, don't you cry...

The new millennium began with internal e-memos and encrypted relays across what has come to be known as the pre-teen days of the Internet. And as we all know, preteens are younger than they seem, with many still wiping snot from their nostrils, and peeling dead skin from the bottoms of their fungus-covered toes. Self-published pornographic folk art in the form of satanic ritual side by side with retail, fan fiction and precious-soft opinionated things. And the information shot forth like blue lightning, or the Holy Ghost!

Tear-stained messages, throbbing with organic fear, to both misunderstood and erotic-like pleasure mixed with skin-deep scornfulness: save our collective precious infantile ears and preserve our individual magical ability to observe only the purest form of art. In essence the correspondence between studios, critics and even select fans-turned-website-click-baiters wrestled with how much to divulge and when to divulge it. The jellyfish amongst them professed a need to say it all with counter-contingencies such as the right to use their own voice wherever and whenever they chose. The sharks swam for cash. The rest screamed in horror for no real reason at all.

"Damn Grandpa's 'news hour'!" they'd holler. "Straight to Hell with Primetime!" shouted sugary milk crusted Green Day t-shirts and second-skin pajama pants from around the world.

A sincerely invested need for self value clashed with self pity and the rollercoaster ride from fingertips to eyeballs became blood-soaked, deadly, and for god's sake offensive! Your mother's needlepoint now locked away in a cupboard, safe from your uncontrollable desire to end it all as your whispers are amplified and your amplifications muffled. Like choking on chlorine-drenched varmint while liberating your soul with sweet lucidity, it just wasn't worth the effort, but we did it anyway.

No one, not even the U.S. government would intervene in what soon became a political correctness the likes of McCarthyism or the Crusades. An utterance would lead to a swift spearheaded gag order, or worse, icy stares from your peers as they secretly formulated your demise. Socially, publicly, or in your most private moments -- escape was futile, sentencing severe and your lessons learned even in the face of the establishment's undoing.

Warning. No warning. Warning. No warning. WARNING! They just couldn't keep it up, so they continued to put it down. Disturbingly desperate and grossly absurd, the increasing need to know everything there is to know, yet without disappointment, morphed into abstract critique. Bullshit best left for the cinema ne'er-do-well as a stereotype that should fade as quickly as it rose. However, before you are offended at the suggestion your offense is in and of itself petty, call out one last time for reason in a world gone mad.

Brother! Sister! Prevention is imperatively necessary, or expectations will only continue to suffer an ego's burden. From this moment forth, an oath! Find your own voice or enjoy the orchestral world around you in whatever mutated rhythm it may present itself. Be it in your darkest nightmares or your brightest waking hours, rest, breath in, and exhale. Enjoyment is so fleeting when compared to anger and hate, but why should it be?

Spoilers are dead, long live spoils! If after you've let it go, was it ever even there?



MATT STRACKBEIN ©2016

Are Digital Comics a Good Thing for a Struggling Industry?

By Nathan Ellis



Physical media as we know it is dying and the consumer audience now values convenience more than ever. Writer Mark Millar (Kick-Ass, Civil War) recently redacted a statement about how the digital format could have the potential to cripple retail comic stores. His initial concerns were expressed in 2011, a notably poor year for the industry (May of that year was the first time in the business' history that not a single title sold over 100,000 units). It would be in bad taste to pick on a talented man for a statement that he made during a time when his profession sat on a razor's edge, a statement he has since publicly changed his mind on (albeit only to pitch a digital comic he was about to release). It does, however, bring up an important talking point about how we enjoy our media now and if there's any danger at all in this specific market not surviving the digital transition.

Comic books find themselves in an odd microcosm of the business world, representing the source material for countless blockbuster movies, games, and television shows. Yet comics in particular are usually a last priority in entertainment, even for the target demographic. It's a business founded on not just extra income, but the income left over after that. Not for one second do I believe that the comics industry is disposable, but the majority of the money that keeps these companies afloat represent those

last few working class dollars circulating through the economy every month. It's been described before as an industry run on sticky dimes and lunch money and while I can agree with that sentiment, dimes don't cut it anymore.



Serialized magazines featuring high fantasy, drama, romance, and adventure could be found on local newsstands across America during periods of post war prosperity. Accessibility wasn't an issue (pun intended) for this new popular format, becoming so successful that entire magazines were being dedicated to single characters. The neighborhood kids could dig through their pockets for those last few lint covered cents with one hand, the next issue of Action Comics or Tales of Suspense in the other, and smack them down with a furious excitement. With the help of extraordinarily talented artists and writers exhibiting endless imaginations, publishing companies were selling metric tons of seemingly worthless, low-grade paper. They were action packed, colorful, and compelling visual experiences for the youth of America, cornering a market that film had yet to compete with.

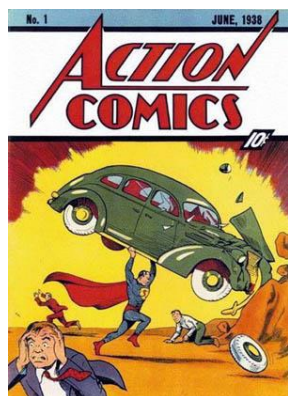


Fast forward to the present day and you can watch high budget movies and television shows on your phone almost anywhere in the world with a monthly service that costs less than a book. And with a small investment a person can grab a controller and interact in a computer generated environment for literally hundreds of hours. To say the entertainment industry is competing for our attention is putting it lightly. Compare these to the growing cost of single issue comic books (\$3.99 is fast becoming the standard price) and newer generations are understandably more interested in spending their allowance on these infinitely more cost effective and content rich hobbies.

The consumers who stuck with the glossy paper versions of these characters are rewarded with inflating cover prices, crossovers that encourage the purchase of unrelated titles, and terrible sales gimmicks that end more often than not in rebooted numbering or continuity. These practices only serve to punish loyal readers. They are poor trends that resulted in so many new series that newsstands just didn't have the room anymore, forcing the audience to buy from few and far between niche stores. It's the very same success driven inflation that almost killed Marvel in the 90's. If accessibility is a problem and the solution is a few keyboard strokes away, then it comes off as a cruel joke to play on the dwindling customer base for artists to wag their fingers at people for not purchasing the way they supposedly should have.

Creators who show their bleeding hearts for the poor little retailers neglect to consider that the business existed before said establishments. While our entitled bitching over their choices might induce aneurysms in the offices of comics publishers, at the end of the day it's up to the consumer to decide which middle man they choose to get their books from. To top it off, the hesitation against more options for the fans becomes a complete slap in the face when you take into account that over all other media, comics still hold the edge of collectability.

There's this very insightful article over on the website Giant Bomb about how physical media still has an economic market with things like collectibles/special editions and the desire to support and display our favorite content. The resurgence of vinyl is a testament to that. Hell, the industry this discussion is about comfortably houses terms like "reader copies" and "variants". It's not out of the ordinary to see someone walk out of your LCS with 3 or 4 issues of the same book anymore. Now, I could understand when people like Jonathan Hickman put so much work into attractively presenting their book, masterfully incorporating graphic design and meticulously going over page layouts with the artist, that they would be worried about how all their hard work is displayed through the Comixology app or on cbz files. What I don't understand, is how a more highly available format becomes the subject of contention.



Is it because of how difficult convincing the consumer to buy 10 digital variants of Kick-Ass 2 all to complete one fucking sentence on the covers would be? God forbid an unsightly symptom of the comics boom like excessive variants goes out of style and retailers have more room on their shelves for all 52 Batman titles and X-Men spinoffs. The overflow of product spilling from one franchise to the other and confusing entry points that scare curious newcomers away does far more damage to retail businesses than digital sales. To put it bluntly, if the advent of a more accessible means of purchase forces publishers to trim the abundant hedges on their

product lineup, it might be time to embrace the shears and cut the shit.



This doesn't mean I encourage anyone to cancel their pull list and boot up the computer or the iPad, far from it actually. After all, this discussion so far is solely about availability and in that regard I think it's very safe to say easier access granted to us through the power of the magical interwebs is a great thing. But if there's a local shop in your area with decent customer service, no question about it go with them. Even if they're insufferable assholes (I'm looking at you Mile High Comics) at least you'll still technically own the books you just bought. What do I mean by that? Comixology, the leading and pretty much only digital storefront with same day access and major publisher support, is now barely letting readers download directly to their devices as opposed to only being able to enjoy your favorite titles through their in-browser app. Meaning if your internet connection goes kaput, or even more terrifying, they get in some legal or financial rut that shuts them down for good, say goodbye to everything you spent your dirty dollar on. The latter is unlikely, but you're still technically just renting a vast majority of the items on Comixology for the same price you could own a real copy with the potential to become a collector item.



Compare that to the Marvel Comics Unlimited business model of allowing people to read from their massive digital archive for ten bucks a month. You're still just renting until that subscription is up, and you'll have to wait months for new issues to be included in their library but I do appreciate that there's no illusion of ownership on the buyer's part. Other companies including DC, Dark Horse and Image seem to go down the cover price route but you do get the benefit of downloading directly to your hard drive.

So digital isn't necessarily this consumer friendly bastion either. So, now what? It's all up to you my friends. There's an endearing satisfaction in holding the physical copy in your hands, it's at your disposal to read or lend out at any time. You're also supporting the people in brick and mortar stores, most of which offer better sales and incentives than any legal outlet online can. And If you find that elusive gem of a shop, the owner might actually be happy to see your in every Wednesday. On the other hand, if the alternative is not reading comics at all because of your location or social anxiety, sleep safely knowing that you can click, flip, and swipe your way to that next issue of Batman or Captain Marvel because hey, it's 2017 and we live in the God damn future.



Jack Reacher: Never Go Back (Edward Zwick)

by Jason Suzuki

It was always going to be tough to follow up 2012's initial *Jack Reacher*. It was brisk, well-constructed, had a quiet and haunting opening from the point of view of a sniper picking off innocents, a bathroom fight scene as if choreographed by the Three Stooges, and Werner Herzog was the villain. Both critics and audiences were not as enamored with the second round of Reacher. What critics failed to see was that with the sequel Cruise and company found a way to include Reacher in what has become a long line of characters portrayed by Cruise that are outwardly perfect but with tragic flaws underneath. These moments of deep-seated imperfections might have made the film come off as uneven for those expecting their blockbuster lead to excel emotionally as much as he does at beating up bad guys (more on this later).

There are other aspects to the film worth noting: once again a Tom Cruise vehicle features very capable female characters, at times proving more so than he. As a producer the man has a knack for picking female leads and getting them to play against type or providing them a stepping stone to breakout roles: Rebecca Ferguson in *Rogue Nation*, Rosamund Pike was in the first *Jack Reacher* before she did *Gone Girl*. In *Never Go Back* we get two with Cobie Smulders as Major Susan Turner and Danika Yarosh as Samantha, the teenager who might be Reacher's kid (she's not, a sigh of relief for our hero). With Cruise they create a family dynamic, adding a twist to the narrative as the film finds parallels between the thriller genre and a film about parents dealing with a rebellious teenager. The realization that certain lines of dialogue would be right at home in either type of film is the true brilliance of the script.

But ultimately the makeshift family life is not one for Reacher. Recalling *Rear Window's* L.B. Jeffries, his affection for another only comes out in certain contexts. He's the father figure Samantha needs, but his paternal responsibilities come out when he gets to enact violence upon the man who put her in danger. Even more jarring is the

steadfastness Reacher has when finishing off the hired killer sent to do in Samantha; breaking his arms and legs, smashing his face in, and then throwing him off a rooftop. It's the kind of outburst which hints at unsettling personality traits and would be right at home in a Michael Mann film. Reacher is more the father who will save his daughter if kidnapped; both the audience and Reacher himself can't as easily see him giving hugs or endearments. Though he does encourage Samantha to pursue art.

It's not completely out of line to draw parallels between this and Cruise's personal life as he has treated performance as therapy on more than one occasion – the difficulty reconciling with a father who abandoned his mother in *Magnolia* was probably the most personal he got. Reacher being a man who can carry all his belongings in a backpack, once his job is done it's onto wherever his past will take him. A military ID, thirty six dollars, a toothbrush, and no home address are what he carries on his person. It's bittersweet as Reacher says his goodbyes and hits the road again. It alludes to future adventures but what lingers is Reacher's self-awareness that should he stay he would only disappoint as work comes first. Being a family man is not in his nature. Cruise is at a loss for words during his farewell with Yarosh, avoiding eye contact. This is the film's most revealing character moment for Reacher. It's the first time we see him vulnerable, inadequate. Cruise delivers what is his most complex performance within this cycle that we can deem the "Middle-Age Action Blockbuster" phase of his career. In the end, *Never Go Back* is about the dread of knowing yourself too well, and that maybe it's wiser to deny what you inevitably won't be able to keep.



John Waters 2016 top 10

1. Krisha (Trey Edward Shults)
2. Tickled (David Farrier and Dylan Reeve)
3. Everybody Wants Some (Richard Linklater)
4. Roar (Noel Marshall)
5. Wiener-Dog (Todd Solondz)
6. Elle (Paul Verhoeven)
7. Julieta (Pedro Almodovar)
8. Like Cattle Towards Glow (Dennic Cooper and Zac Farley)
9. Valley of Love (Guillaume Nicloux)
10. A Quiet Passion (Terence Davies)

List appropriated from ARTFORUM December 2016

Happy 90th Birthday Kenneth Anger



born feb. 3, 1927

High-Rise (Ben Wheatley)



By Mara Norman

How long does a given systemic structure have until it falls into chaos and destruction? In Ben Wheatley's film based on the JG Ballard novel from 1975 about three months. Tom Hiddleston plays Dr. Robert Laing a brain pathologist working at the school of physiology. He is a scholar and professor who studies the abnormalities of the brain. We see Laing one of the newest tenets to the high-rise, moving into the middle of the building on the 25th floor. His possessions stacked in brown boxes in contrast to poured concrete pillars and walls. This high-rise shows class delineations as the more affluent tenants occupy the higher floors of the building. Jeremy Irons is the architect Anthony Royal who lives in the penthouse suite and has a full garden with animals including a black sheep living at sky level.

Reminiscent at times as a high-rise version of Bong Joon-ho's 2014 film *Snowpiercer*. Signs of trouble begin to show right off the bat with power surges, elevator disturbances and clogged trash shoots. The lower floors are where the families with children live; they often get the blame for the problems occurring in the building.

Early on we see a French aristocratic party at Royal's suite; Laing, the new tenet, is invited; he is ridiculed and put down. These surreal high-rise tenants are in a trance-like state as they swim at an indoor pool and shop at the in-house supermarket; everything is self-contained. Some inhabitants, usually the male tenets, leave occasionally to go to work. At one point, someone asks Laing for a ride to work stating they had forgotten where they parked the car.

As the story unfolds madness ensues on all levels; inner and outer realities blend in a dream like cacophony. Does this chaos merely mirror Laing's internal reaction

to extreme hierarchy and conformity or has the world truly gone mad? At one point Royal's wife's friend, a famous actress asks, "Has anyone actually made a formal complaint to the owners?" Royals wife replies, "We are the owners."



Excellent supporting roles are played by Sienna Miller, Luke Evans and Elisabeth Moss. In the dark hours of night, during power outages, night looting raids occur: it's every person for themselves. The rich and powerful continue bizarre hedonistic parties as the floors below fight. All the children band together in a strange playland of a twisted summer camp singing "row row row your boat, gently down the stream, merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily - life is but a dream" amplifying the surreal nature of this story and the odd stance that has been exposed. Luke Evans' character Richard Wilder mid-film decides to make a documentary to expose the injustices occurring in the building. Later he finds his obsession for truth leads him to his own extreme anger and ultimate abuse of power. Royal, as the architect, plays a kind of unconsciously naively innocent mad scientist tinkering away. His own flawed thinking is the possible undoing of his utopian dreams. Mirrors reflect infinite mirrored images in an elevator to the penthouse suite, Royal in a blood-soaked lab coat that looks like a doctor smock that mimics a straight jacket.



RESIST! Two New Films Show How To

In a recent New York Times Magazine feature article “Forces in Opposition” (Lincoln’s birthday: 2/12/17), Amanda Hess claims that “a new Feminist movement has sparked a mobilization on the left...” She wonders, “Can its factions hold together?” While Hess ponders this timely question around resistance movements, once again, art gives tangible examples:

Two new films, one tragic--one comedic, highlight how resistance (passive or overt) gets things done! At first glance, “The Comedian” and “Alone in Berlin” seem to have nothing in common. But both shine a spotlight on resistance. Despite the edgy rawness of both films, they do inspire hope in our current time of political upheaval.



“Alone in Berlin,” a fact-inspired World War II drama, depicts a suspenseful resistance carried out by a heart-broken father and mother. Filmed by Vincent Perez and written by Perez and Achim von Borries, it is inspired by the 1947 novel *Every Man Dies Alone* (*Alone in Berlin* in UK) by Hans Fallada based on a true event: Otto and Elise Hampel, risking their lives to resist Nazi Germany, devise a unique tactic to get out their message.

Each day they leave postcards around Berlin with anti-Hitler/Nazi statements. In actuality, the Hampels’ resistance lasted from September 1940 until their arrest in autumn 1942. During that time-frame they hand-wrote over 200 postcards, dropping them in mailboxes and leaving them in stairwells in Berlin. Eventually, caught and tried, they were beheaded in Berlin’s Plötzensee Prison in April 1943.

Perez does a great job, in his third directorial turn, creating a quiet, yet suspenseful, picture showing the minute details involved in an act of resistance. Tension builds as Emma Thompson and Brendan Gleeson go about these simple yet terrifying acts. They give outstanding performances as parents determined to wake up a sleeping city oblivious to Nazi atrocities.



Both working-class citizens, their own wake-up call comes when they receive their soldier son’s death telegram. Gleeson, a huge hulk of depression, provides the impetus to the resistance, while Thompson, the grieving mother, plods along without knowing what he’s up to. These two go from shock-stricken zombie-like creatures to tender partners. Perez captures the nuances with a precision that feels like ice slowly melting. A moment of tenderness between the two is handled with gentleness and grace. Be sure to bring your Kleenex.... As Rex Reed’s review title aptly insists (01/12/17), “Valiant ‘Alone in Berlin’ Is Slow but Worthy of Attention.” And that attention attests not only to the filmmaker’s prowess but also to a story/truth that gives a hint of hope in the darkest of times.





Coltrane offers...passionate soloing by Blanchard and Coltrane [Paula Edelstein review, 2016]). Terrence Blanchard composed eight full tracks featuring Kenny Barron, Ravi Coltrane, Khari Allen Lee, David Pulphus and Cary Allen and is worth the price of admission. Luckily, the Blue Note CD comes out April 7th.



You'd be hard-pressed to find a good review of "The Comedian" considered a flop by most hard-nosed critics. But its resistance delivers on multiple levels: Robert DeNiro's Jackie Burke resists his type-casting as a former hit sit-com Archie-Bunker-style curmudgeon. He wants to make a comeback as a stand up, his first love. He's the type of comic that resists hecklers with his fist, which lands him in deep trouble.

DeNiro's a Lenny Bruce-style comic that smacks his audience hard with nasty truths. His shock-appeal deserves to be admired—he cuts deep, but like Lenny Bruce, he isn't a liar. (Check out the documentary "Dying Laughing" about stand up. It explores the challenges and nuances of this difficult art form.) DeNiro's love for the art of standup is still intact. Ever since "The King of Comedy" he's wanted to show his chops again. Too bad the critics don't appreciate his craft.

And the final resistance shines in the way Taylor Hackford has gathered a long list of cameos poking fun at both celebrity icons and nasty-style comic "Fries" (Cloris Leachman's character chokes to death on one of Jackie's jabs during her "fry".) Each performance is a small gem: watch the likes of Danny DeVito, Charles Grodin, Patti LuPone, Harvey Keitel and Billy Crystal as they poke fun of themselves by hamming it up. Such a trip...such a fuck you to repression in a world of all-too-serious times.

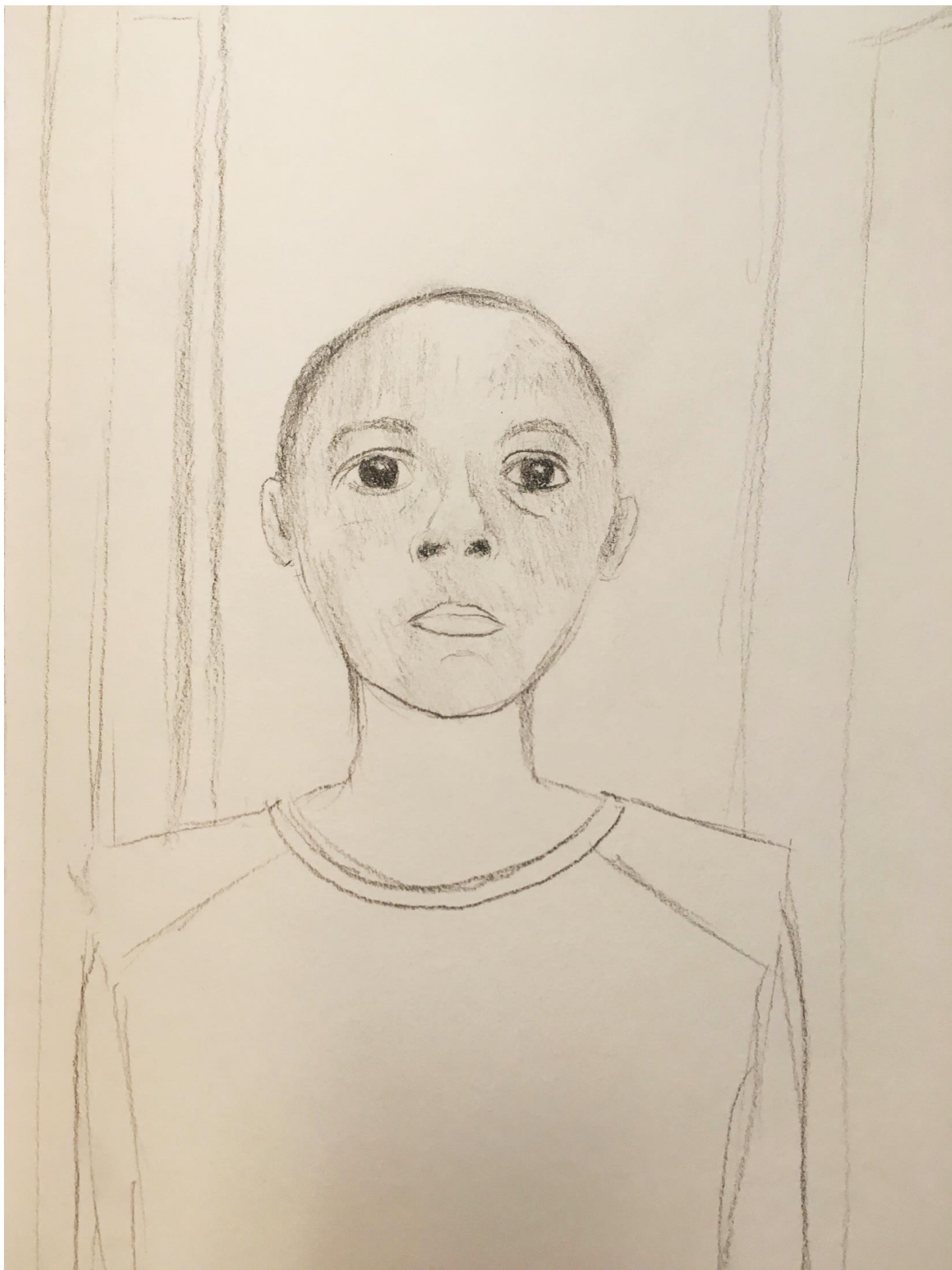


By Wm Wilder who has been resisting since 1954 after witnessing the televised McCarthy hearings.

Arguably, the soundtrack itself is a form of resistance. ("Such songs as "Jackie In The Rain," "Jackie Gets Out," and "Jackie's Lament" expertly support DeNiro's character emotionally and stylistically... "Tit For Tat Nocturne" featuring Ravi



1956 - 2016



原節子



A Bigger Splash (Luca Guadagnio)



By Mara Norman



The film begins with Marianne Lane, played by Tilda Swinton, a pop star performing at a stadium before an enormous crowd; she steps to the edge of the stage greeting the crowd. We do not hear her voice. We next see her naked sunning herself by a pool. We witness Marianne with her lover Paul on vacation in the countryside; relaxing in the glowing sun in a secluded muddy spot; their quietude is interrupted by a cell phone ring, a plane flies over casting a shadow.



Ralph Fiennes character Harry Hawkes arrives as an unexpected surprise guest in a fast-paced manic escapade bringing his nearly grown daughter Penelope played by Dakota Johnson. Thus, sets up the cast of characters of this four-person drama. The boundaries blur immediately as Paul asks, "Oh, you brought a protégé?" It seems that it is a surprise to all involved that Harry has a grown daughter; in an attempt to have a vacation with his new-found daughter, Harry ends up crashing the vacation of his ex-partner,

Marianne. Through the action of the story and at times in flashbacks, past histories, age dynamics and subtle personal relationships are exposed.



With all the tension and suspense of a Hitchcock mystery this contemporary "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf" draws us in. This film has difficult moments where we as viewers are flies on the walls watching the relationships unfold. The acting is what makes it a pleasure to watch. Swinton's character has blown out her voice at a concert and is on vacation to rest and repair it after surgery. Matthias Schoenaerts plays partner turned nurse Paul, giving her pills and instructing her to not talk until her throat heals. Marianne only able to speak in strained whispers. The stories are not black and white; things float in grey areas for much of the film. Sympathies and accusations float from character to character illuminating each characters' own flaws; true natures are exposed alliances made and broken.

The elements of the film, the structure, the acting, the setting and pacing work together with beautiful precision. The film is a dance exploring communication, dichotomies of silence, crowded and secluded spaces. All are expressed through the exterior landscapes and the subtle communication (things said and not said between the characters). The question is who holds the power in these relationships. We see in this film levels of communication and power dynamics collide. The playing field is never level and constantly shifting. Jagged sharp rocks and desert landscape cocoon the setting for the drama to unfold.



Retro2016: The State of Western Distribution for Japanese Film

Not much has changed since I wrote about this topic a year ago (CA.V). While there remains a strong market for home video releases of classic Japanese film whether art-house, cult, or otherwise, contemporary Japanese films - specifically from new/un-established filmmakers - have a hard time finding their way to Western shores save for specific film festivals and a handful of brave distribution companies still willing to bet on Japan. It's the same story we've all heard a number of times and it doesn't look to be changing.

Not every city has a film festival that programs a strong Asian lineup (the Academy Awards regularly overlooks this region; no buzz = no screening) and importing a single DVD from Japan can add up to south of USD100 at check out. Below is a breakdown of what this past year looked like for a Nipponophile who might prefer Mipo O over a two-part live action adaptation of Attack on Titan.

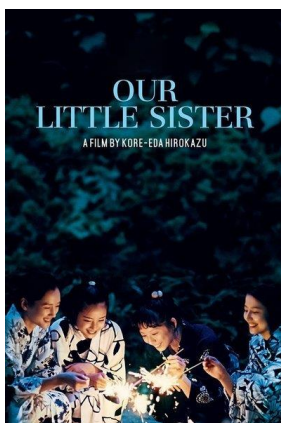
Theatrical: Familiar Names, Slight Delay

Kore-eda, Kawase, Kurosawa, Godzilla. All the usual suspects. As of late there has been an effort to reduce the wait time between a film's domestic release and its US one. This effort though has been mainly in the realm of Korean and Chinese film. Take Well Go USA's release of *The Assassin* which was almost a year after its premiere at Cannes and compare it to their handling of *The Wailing* which had its Cannes premiere, domestic release, and US release all occurring within a matter of weeks. For myself I was able to see films like *Train to Busan*, *Tunnel*, and *The Himalayas* all within a week, sometimes day and date, of their domestic releases. And thanks to AMC Theater's acquisition by Wanda Dailan Group, quality (and not) Chinese titles also have reduced wait times - a late year treat thanks to the likes of *I Am*

By Jason Suzuki

Not *Madame Bovary* and *The Wasted Times*.

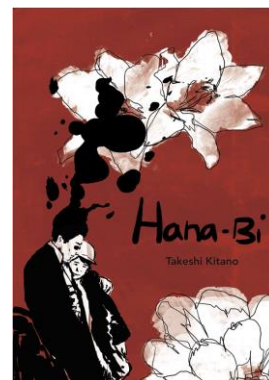
The Japanese films do not fare as well. The norm is around a year for the select few films that get a theatrical run in more cities than just the coasts. Because of this, sometimes we have the interesting occurrence of one film by a director getting a theatrical release the same time as their most recent work is touring the festivals. Sony Pictures Classics gave us *Our Little Sister* the same time as *After the Storm* was being picked up by Film Movement (who also got the other Japanese film at Cannes 2016 *Harmonium*, both being released sometime next year).



The only name to buck this trend this year was *Godzilla*. Toho couldn't resist reneging on the "final" part of Kitamura's *Final Wars* after the release of the recent Hollywood film (an art film I'm assuming due to Binoche's involvement) and got Hideakki Anno to helm *Shin Godzilla*. After its late July release in Japan it received a limited US theatrical run in October which is not a bad turn around. It's the films that don't get picked up which is the bigger concern.

Next year we should be seeing US releases for those two Cannes acquisitions from Film Movement and the smash anime hit *Your Name* to mention just the more high-profile titles in the pipeline. Sono's recent work, *A Bride for Rip van Winkle*, *Being Good*, and *Mohican Comes Home*, to name a small

percentage of worthwhile films to come out this past year, have no releases planned.



Third Window Films: The Year of Kitano/Lowlife Love

Adam Torel continues to amaze with his distribution (now production) company that he has been the sole operator of for the past decade. In the past Third Window Films have gone back and released earlier films from favorite directors like Shinya Tsukamoto. This year saw the release of five film from Takeshi Kitano and an upcoming set of three films from Toshiaki Toyoda. The Kitano films released showed a belief in his non-gangster pictures: *Dolls*, *Kikujiro*, *A Scene at the Sea* (review), *Kids Return*, and *Hana-bi*. The timing is perfect as Film Movement has released restorations of Kitano's two earliest films (please someone release *Getting Any?*).

As for new Japanese film Third Window Films added another Sono film to their collection: *Love and Peace*, Ken Ochiai's loose remake of Chaplin's *Limelight* with jidai-geki stuntmen replacing outdated vaudeville performers Uzumasa *Limelight*, and most importantly a film that Torel produced *Lowlife Love* from filmmaker Eiji Uchida. They had released Uchida's *Greatful Dead* and teamed up - with the help of Kickstarter backers - to make this unsentimental look at independent filmmaking. A perfect film for what is hopefully Torel's next major focus,

the production side of things. The distribution side might slow down but Ken and Kazu and Destruction Babies have already been announced as having joined the collection for release the following year. Probably the most important curator/distributor of Asian film.

KimStim: Brave Curation

A company that has been dedicated to releasing some of the more interesting international works (The Strange Little Cat, Blind, Night and Day), KimStim deserves a shout out for taking on Ryusuke Hamaguchi's five-hour Happy Hour. They have also picked up Kiyoshi Kurosawa's excellent Creepy. US shores have had a little bit of a Kurosawa drought as Real, Seventh Code, and Journey to the Shore were passed on. A supporter of digital purchasing options as well as physical media, these films will be made as accessible as a film of its length can be.

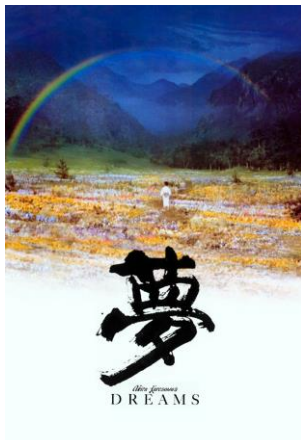
GKids: There's More to Ghibli than Miyazaki

With no new Ghibli films left to release, GKids have decided to look back at the company's history and what never made it to the US despite the popularity of the company from which these works came. The first title in this rectification is Isao Takahata's masterpiece Only Yesterday. Released in 1991, GKids produced an English dub to go along with the film to encourage younger and illiterate potential viewers. The dub starred Daisy Ridley and Dev Patel. Their next Ghibli release will be 1993's Ocean Waves, the first film by the studio to be directed by someone other than founders Miyazaki or Takahata. Miss Hokusai was their other Japanese offering of 2016.



Repertory Home Video (Upgrades, Reissues, and Introductions)

The standout company this year has to be Arrow Video and their classics/art house side-label Arrow Academy. In terms of box sets and collections we have them releasing an upgrade to Kobayashi's The Human Condition trilogy before Criterion got around to it, and a truly wild amount of 60's and 70's cinema the standouts being the Female Prisoner Scorpion set (*review). More recent genre classics like Audition and Dark Water (*review) received loving treatments and there is already two Miike trilogies announced for 2017.



The Criterion Collection was able to do some loving work even with all the preparations for streaming service FilmStruck. Most notable their release of Kurosawa's Dreams (*review) had over four hours of bonus material. Death by Hanging and Story of the Last Chrysanthemum (*review) were two other heavy hitters of the canon finally coming out on home video in the states.

What has become a common occurrence is debate on whether some of these releases are accurate to their original presentations. The Female Prisoner Scorpion set was the center of heated debated over the new cyan look to these restorations and fans of Mizoguchi's The Story of the Last Chrysanthemum had to face the reality that the film's surviving elements are very rough although it

seems Criterion could have done something to the audio on their edition of the film, or rather should have left it alone when compared to the UK Blu-ray released by Artificial Eye in 2012.

*reviews mentioned available at cinema-adrift.com

Arrow Video/Arrow Academy (21 films): The Human Condition Trilogy, Female Prisoner Scorpion Collection, Outlaw Gangster VIP Collection, Nikkatsu Diamond Guys Vol. 1 (Voice Without a Shadow, Red Pier, The Rambling Guitarist), Nikkatsu Diamond Guys Vol. 2 (Tokyo Might Guy, Danger Pays, Murder Unincorporated), Audition, Dark Water

Criterion Collection (13 films): Complete Lady Snowblood, Death By Hanging, The Naked Island, The Story of the Last Chrysanthemum, Woman in the Dunes (review), Lone Wolf and Cub Collection, Akira Kurosawa's Dreams

Third Window Films (11 films): Love and Peace, Uzumasa Limelight, Lowlife Love, Hana-bi, Kikujiro, Dolls, Kids Return, A Scene at the Sea, Toshiaki Toyoda: The Early Years (Pornostar, Unchain, 9 Souls)

Masters of Cinema/Eureka! (2 films): Journey to the Shore, Sweet Beanci

Kino Redemption (1 film): Maichan's Daily Life: The Movie

Olive Films (1 film): Hana-Dama: The Origin

Synapse Films (1 film): Nurse Diary: Beast Afternoon

Twilight Time (1 film): The Bullet Train



Sion Sono



Abbas Kiarostami
born June 22, 1940 - died July 4, 2016



By Abbas Kiarostami
Translated from Persian by Karim Emami

“A Wolf Lying in Wait”

A red dotted line on the white snow
wounded game
limping away.

The full moon
reflected in water,
the water
contained in the bowl,
and the thirsty man
deep in sleep.

Moonlight
shining on a narrow path
that I won't take.

What a pity
I was not a good host
for the snowflake
that settled on my eyelid.

White colt
red to his knees after gambling
in a field of poppies.

Morning is white,
evening is black,
a gray sorrow
in between.

A wolf
lying in wait.

Flight
is the reward of a caterpillar
that wrapped itself
in a cocoon of silk.

A whirlwind
toppled
the shepherd's boiling kettle
set up on top of a hill.

The smell of smoke
the smell of burning rue
the sound of a baby crying
an abode hut.

A young moon
an old wine
a new friend.
An apple fell from the tree
and I thought of
the apple's attraction.

THE COLORADO DRAGON FILM FESTIVAL is a highly curated weekend of classic and contemporary Asian/Asian-American film. Showcasing 11 feature films and 6 short films from around the world, from debut filmmakers and established masters. Opening night is Friday, June 2 at the Denver Art Museum's Sharpe Auditorium with Taiwanese musical *52Hz, I Love You*. On June 3 and 4 the fest moves to the King Center at Auraria Campus with full days of programming. Below are some recommendations to get started.
-Jason Suzuki, glorified film picker CDF



Being Good (Mipo O) **Japan**

Her follow up to *The Light Shines Only There*, Mipo O's beautiful film is Exhibit A that Western distributors focus only on established names from Japan while ignoring the new masters. A triptych of small-town stories that center on cycles of abuse. The stakes are high and the film dares to posit that it's a good thing to give a shit.



Heart Attack (Nawapol Thamrongrattanarit) **Thailand**

A playful exploration of the difficulties maintaining a balance between work and everything else. An overworked freelance Photoshop wizard starts to develop a rash all over his body after staying up five days straight. The tropes of a rom-com are superimposed onto the main character's monthly visits to his doctor.



The Future Perfect (Nele Wohlatz) **Argentina**

This debut is a documentary/narrative hybrid where language barriers inform the plights of its characters but also the structure of the film itself. 17 year-old Xiaobin has moved to Argentina but doesn't know any Spanish. The more she masters the second language, the more she is able to disrupt the narrative of the film.



What's in the Darkness (Wang Yichun) **China**

Another debut, this time it is a teenage girl's coming-of-age story set against the backdrop of the hunt for a serial killer terrorizing a small town in 90's China. It is a mysterious, unsentimental look at budding sexuality amidst death and authoritarianism.

P.S. There will also be a screening of the new restoration of Edward Yang's *Taipei Story* (1985). It was co-written and stars Hou Hsiao-hsien, he even mortgaged his home to finance the film. And we are also paying our respects to the late master Seijun Suzuki with a free showing of his *Youth of the Beast* (1963).



