

ACROSS

1 The 'zine you are currently holding (first word)

DOWN

2 The 'zine you are currently holding (second word)



Cinema Adrift

Film 'zine for film freaks.

Vol. 2 – 2nd Quarter 2015

In which we look at the careers of Paul Thomas Anderson (pg. 4), M Dot Strange (pg. 36), Naoko Ogigami, and Hitoshi Matsumoto (pg. 25), look at *Birdman*'s relation to Carver (pg. 13), trace the Beat Myth (pg. 29), get our monthly dose of Japanese film (pg. 11), become obsessive teenager stalker fans of pop singers (pg. 35), and risk punishment to the genital region (pg. 7).

Please send your letters, suggestions, dick picks, death threats, fan-fiction, invoices, and any writings on film-related topics you think would look good in future issues to cinemaadrift@gmail.com.

"Sometimes you have to destroy narrative in order to save it."

**QUOTE CORNER:
David Bordwell**

Letters from the Co-editors

Loosely the topic of this volume was literary adaptation but somehow in my mind the topic grew into the idea of inspiration. What am I inspired to see, read and create? With Vol.2 it has been fun and exciting to realize we have created a space to grow and develop our ideas about film--if we can't be free here on these pages, where can we be free? In a world where bloggers are imprisoned or killed for trying to express their opinions, I feel strongly in creating an open space for explorations of ideas in a loose yet serious way. Cinema adrift is where we point out sometimes obvious, sometimes hidden and sometimes forgotten bits of cinema news. Thanks to everyone who has contributed.

- Mara Norman

If you would like to submit reviews, comics, musings, ideas please email us at cinemaadrift@gmail.com

I leave you with a little tidbit I found on the extras of the Sam Peckinpah's ***Straw Dogs*** (1971)

Jan. 5, 1972

Dear M. Scott:

Thank you for your comments. I didn't want you to enjoy the film. I wanted you to look very close at your own soul.

Sincerely,

Sam Peckinpah

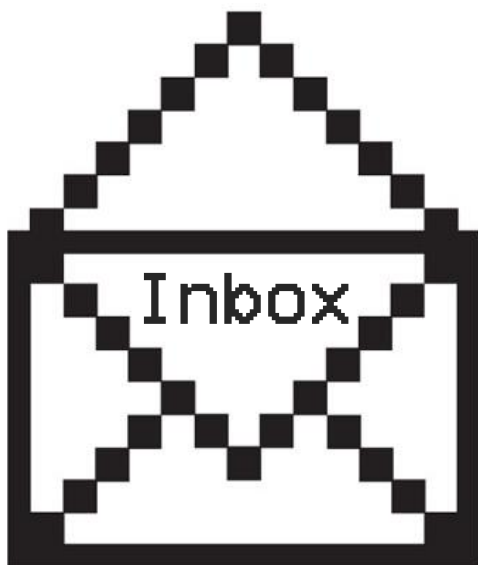
A quarterly publication is a lot like an Ozu film. In between the first issue of Cinema Adrift and the one you're reading now a wedding took place, there was a funeral, someone had an abortion, haters hated, and other conventionally major events were relegated to ellipsis. But now we can get back to the real "tofu" of it all.

On a separate note I'd like to call everyone's attention to a trend in the film industry that I have just recently noticed but may have been going on for who knows how long. Have you ever noticed that in the majority of films that receive theatrical distribution, major characters are seen either drinking soda and/or eating popcorn? The very same items that you can purchase at these so called entertainment establishments. The eyes of actors and actresses, all colors represented by M'n'Ms. Sex scenes, sweat inducing copulations, much like the perspiration on the side of our fountain drinks which we are forced to caress. Sounds of popcorn bags line up perfectly to most major chords, usually by a 3rd or a perfect 5th.

Just as the power of the replay button allowed us to see the explosives placed in those towers and what's really in those trails left by aerial modes of transportation, we can see the subliminal of the theatrical motion picture; removed once the films reach home video.

We can't stay quiet any longer.

-Jason Suzuki



EARLY SUPPORT

It's nice to have a new outlet for film writing and judging by the favorites of 2014 lists, we can look forward to different points of views on movies that don't get much attention. However I would like to think that *Leviathan* would have found its way into someone's list were we not subjected to the ripple effect theatrical distribution for cities that are not NYC and LA. Regardless, keep on keepin' on!

JAMIE GOMEZ

BROTHERLY LOVE

I loved your Cinema Adrift Zine! So proud of all of you that made it happen. Keep following your bliss! Cheers!

JIM NORMAN
(brother to co-editor)

READER SEEKING ARTICLE

I am in search of information about an article published in what I believe was an American magazine sometime in the early 2000s, but I could be wrong. I should like to obtain a photocopy of said article. The name of the magazine is not known to me. It was presumably published in 2001 or the early months of 2002 (in any case before September of 2005 as that is when I went cold turkey on publications of any kind at the behest of my physician).

The writer was a journalist named Carter Mackenzie (or possibly Mackenzie Carter). The title of the article was something like "Screenwriters Turned Directors Turned Actors" or "Screenwriters Whom Have Become Directors and Then Became Actors." The article goes on to discuss actors who had previously been screenwriters that had gotten into directing.

GEOFF DONALDSON

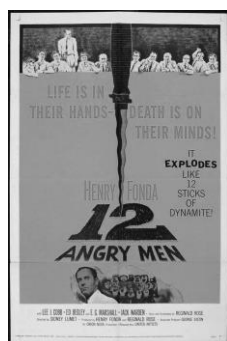
PAST BLAST

Dear Ms. Norman and Mr. Suzuki: We are returning your 'zine CINEMA ADRIFT. At first glance, I figured the 'zine worthy of distribution. Why wouldn't I? So did the curators of The Great 'Zine Expo back in 1988 when the 'zine was first featured. As you should know, it was the great Kate MacArthur who created the 'zine you tried to pass off on us as an original. Let me give you a word of advice concerning the penalties from plagiarism. It's not worth it. Believe me.

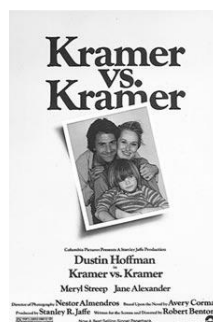
Sincerely,

Sydney D. Lewis
Executive Curator
'Zine Collective of America

**An
Over-
simpli-
fication**



+



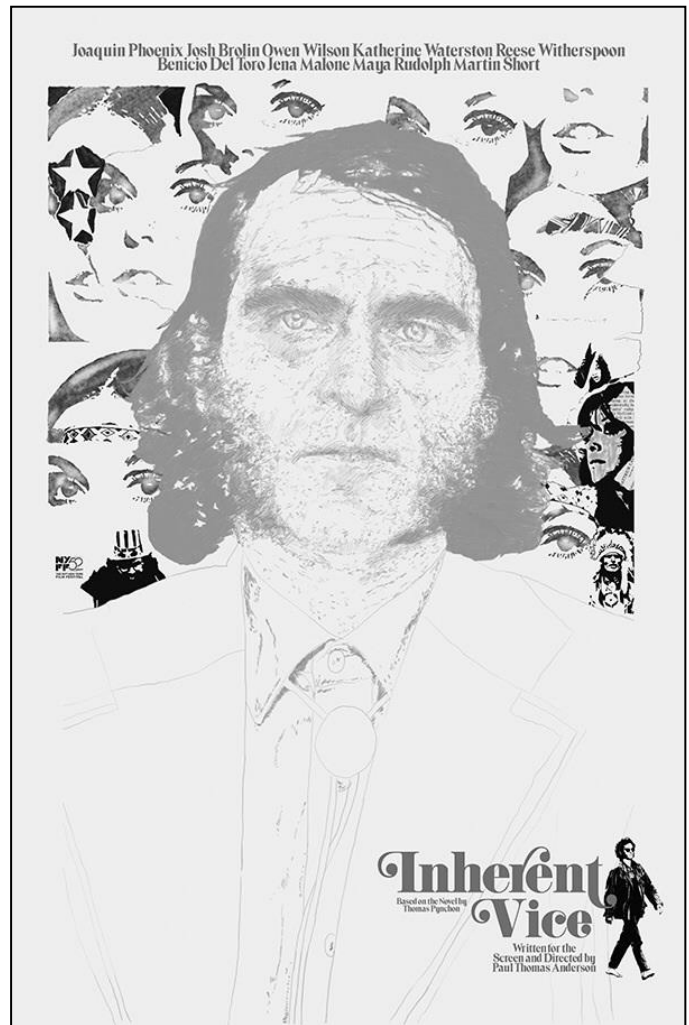
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PTA Rant

by Mara Norman

Inherent Vice (2014) – the return of PTA! How do I separate my journey as a fan? By the time *Magnolia* (1999) came out, I could happily say Paul Thomas Anderson is one of my favorite filmmakers. PTA creates characters I love to watch on screen. There is a sensitivity he captures through his use of dialogue and the way he chooses to shoot his characters. He allows the camera to touch on little subtleties. This gift shows up in his very first film *Hard Eight* (1996); the film captures and documents the little movements that as a viewer I appreciate; from John C. Reilly's character John putting on his Velcro shoes to Philip Baker Hall's Sydney pulling his coat cuff to cover a blood stain. Anderson introduces the characters within the picture plane then allows subtle aspects of the characters to reveal themselves. It's as if I'm seeing aspects of behavior that the characters are unaware. He takes me on a journey where I am curious and loving of the characters from almost the first shot. In his first four films *Hard Eight* (1996), *Boogie Nights* (1997), *Magnolia* (1999), and *Punch Drunk Love* (2002) Anderson depicts his characters' struggles within a contemporary American/California/Nevada landscape. His first four films highlight subtle character studies told with sweeping camera movements. I get to know and see the characters as the camera guides my journey and yet it's those subtle choices which I love; for example, William H. Macy's "Quiz Kid" Donnie Smith touching his mouth as he looks at Brad the bartender's braces. It's as if the characters are actually introduced through their frailties rather than strengths. Anderson depicts the small aspects of a character's personality not to be glossed over or cut out but gently witnessed. Anderson has often been quoted saying how much he "loves" actors; and thus, casts in such a way to



create characters that may appear outside social mainstream norms but are fleshed out with honest sincerity. His first four films expressed an arc of characters not always seen in contemporary movies.

Anderson then made two films that were in some ways departures from his previous work. *There Will Be Blood* (2007) and *The Master* (2012). *There Will Be Blood* was a push away from his previous model of character study. As a fan and viewer, I had a bit of a struggle and had to let go of my own expectations of what a PTA movie was and go along for the visual ride. Both films are historical fictions depicted with epic filmmaking techniques including vast landscapes and aerial shots. *There Will Be Blood* is a further journey into California's history. This was Anderson's first big jump back into a historical past; it is documenting the groundwork that led to the contemporary mess in which his first four films find themselves. The

discovery of oil fields in California and the money, betrayal and greed that resulted from these discoveries. The epic nature of the film dominated. There were still subtle choices taking place but the focus in the depiction of the nature and personality of the main character, Daniel Plainview, played by Daniel Day-Lewis, drive to dominate and conquer the landscape. The visuals dominated even more than the characters. The Master has an equal epic quality to it. Both ***There Will Be Blood*** and ***The Master*** are stories about a huge transition to the American/California dreaming landscape, early 1900's oil speculation and the post WWII transition from a war time to domestic expansion. ***The Master*** beautifully captures the uneasy time period. When you are out west, the end of the line, no more westerly expansion-- where else to go except the inward expansion of the mind, and the exploration of consciousness, psychology, religion and spirituality.

Both films begin with long visuals with no dialogue. We witness the main characters isolated, carrying out various actions, highlighted in both cases by beautiful haunting score by Jonny Greenwood. ***The Master*** is dominated by two over the top characters, Lancaster Dodd played by Philip Seymour Hoffman, and Freddie Quell played by Joaquin Phoenix who actually mimic the epic landscapes they inhabit. They are both swallowed up by this strange American dream. These two epic masterpieces, visions of cinematic magnitude, left me feeling alienated and abandoned by the warm oozing red and the cool blue. These visual masterpieces are in some ways more emotionally distant than Anderson's earlier work. When I think of these films I think of them as colors rather than characters; in my mind ***There Will Be Blood*** is red and ***The Master*** is blue. As much as I relish the beauty of these two films I miss the small struggling characters from Anderson's earlier work. I miss Philip Baker Hall's Jimmy Gator and Sydney Brown, Mark Wahlberg's Dirk Diggler, John C. Reilly's John Finnegan and Officer Jim Kurring, Julianne

Moore's Amber Waves, Adam Sandler's Barry Egan; I miss Roller Girl, "Quiz Kid" Donnie Smith, Scotty J the list goes on and on. With Anderson's early films he showed characters struggling with personal grief and loss, the overwhelming surprise and mystery of falling in love, emotional survival and overwhelm. I love and miss those kinds of characters.

And so with

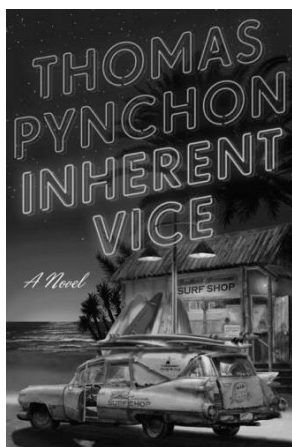
Inherent

Vice (2014) I

am so happy to declare the return of Paul Thomas Anderson.



The one I know and love. Joaquin Phoenix's Doc Sportello and 1970's LA showcase some of the main strengths of PTA's filmmaking, bringing me into a world of tiny subtleties of characters and filming it with immense skill. What I love most is the sweet hidden aspects of his characters; I have always appreciated the deep respect he shows in subtle ways. His camera lovingly observes the characters with humanity and compassion. With ***Inherent Vice*** we return to a semi-contemporary setting. It is a bridge between the past of ***There Will Be Blood*** and modern-day LA in ***Magnolia***. The use of sunny washed out yellow light and shadow hidden faces helps mirror the confusion of the time. We drop into the story with a conversation between two ex-lovers in Doc's apartment, the exchange includes an awkward kind of politeness and an urgency of the trouble Shasta Fay has found herself in. We then are on the street near a beach but its view hidden between buildings, its view obscured. Then boom, sonically we are hit over the head with the song "Vitamin C" by the band Can. When that scene hit me in the face all I could do was smile. Yes he's back!



Anderson's adaptation of the Thomas Pynchon's 2009 novel is an excellent connection between his earlier films and his two epic masterpieces.

Inherent Vice drops us into 1970 post Charles Manson Los Angeles. The story captures a time in our recent history, the

tail end of the Vietnam War. The film artfully depicts the polarities between power, control, freedom, conformity, mind expansion and paranoia; it explores the huge cultural shift California went through. Larry "Doc" Sportello, with his inner wise female narrator is our moral compass as we move into this noir-type private investigation case involving an "ex-old lady", Shasta Fay, and the disappearance of her billionaire land developer boyfriend Mickey Wolfmann. Doc is a witness to the various power plays unfolding throughout the narrative, but the main story point and movement of story is the perspective of witnessing a lost innocence of the California dream; and yet, taking it within the context of Anderson's two previous films stands as perhaps the main theme and crux of all his work. At one point in the film his friend Sortilege, who also represents his inner voice of reason, asks what will keep him up at night; his response, "little kid blues" and so the theme of this film and perhaps the theme of all of PTA's work is the loss of innocence and the preservation and protection of it when possible. Anderson's love for actors is the thing that comes through in his work. The love for actors, thus the love for his characters and finally his love for the audience. Watching his attention to his characters cures my own inner little kid blues every time.

Inherent Vice was nominated for an academy award for best adapted screenplay. After reading the novel, I was impressed at what a skillful job Anderson did at honing down the essentials of the novel and making a cinematic cohesive film. I am amazed the film was not nominated for best director and best cinematography, but maybe being ignored by the academy means you are on the right track. After happily watching ***Inherent Vice*** three times, I realize what I love so much about Paul Thomas Anderson's movies. They are like listening to a great song or looking at a great painting. I am compelled to return. I want to watch them over and over again to see new things I have missed, a sweet smile or movement of eye, a silly turn of phrase. In interviews Anderson says he is a lover of actors and you can tell with the movies he has made and the performances he has documented. He has allowed great actors to grow and flourish. I haven't even begun to discuss his use of music as a subtext, which will have to be saved for another rant. All I can say is go watch ***Inherent Vice*** right now and all his others movies too; let PTA lead the way, trust him and his camera, spend time to get to know the characters he creates. They will help you see, feel and love in ways we sometimes forget. Let his camera be a guide for your own eye to see the tiny subtleties in people you know and see in your everyday life. That sweetness is there too but sometimes hidden. I am already excited about his next film and the one after that and the one after that.



REVIEW CHALLENGE

THE CHALLENGE:

Review a film in 300 words, 100 words, 50 words, 25 words, and 10 words.

CHALLENGER: Jason Suzuki

PUNISHMENT IF SUCCESS CONDITIONS NOT MET:

200 rubber band snaps to the testicles.



FILM REVIEWED:

Fanny and Alexander (Ingmar Bergman, 1982, Sweden) – 312min.

300 WORDS: It's hard to imagine that two and a half hours could be cut from this film, and from that cut version people could still fall in love with what was at the time supposed to be Bergman's final outing as a director. The motifs of the stage and religion had appeared throughout his work beforehand but here they are combined into something extremely personal and always enthralling. It's amazing that while watching the film there isn't any scene that strikes the viewer as one that could be cut, leaving an equal or even better film. Within the titular characters, two children of the Ekdahl family, it is Alexander who we see Bergman in and gets the most attention out of the two. Alexander's sister, Fanny, is a quiet girl but some of the best moments of the film are those involving the development of her character, moments which are so quiet that they are easy to miss and easy dismiss her as a minor character. Still, this is just as much a portrait of the entire Ekdahl family as it is an autobiographical depiction of a boy's relationship to death, fantasy, and the supernatural. It is these scenes with the kids' uncles, their aunts, and the rest of the family that provide the film with other depictions of marriage to place against the second half arc where Fanny and Alexander's mother remarries to an extremely strict and abusive bishop. Regarding Bishop Edvard, actor Jan Malmström does a great job portraying this villain. Usually the choices are either to give some sympathetic, tragic qualities to a villain or to go full-on, over the top evil. Malmström does neither. His attempts to control his new wife and her two children are all the more menacing for it. See the complete version.

100 WORDS: It's a testament to Bergman that he can be forced to cut out almost half of his film and still create something that resonates with so many people. It's a shame though that it's the bastardized version of *Fanny and Alexander* which has received the acclaim, like a world-renowned painting discovered to be pan and scanned. Bergman fully brings all his interests into this opus and is arguably his most autobiographical film, Alexander a reflection of the director and Malmström's brilliantly acted Bishop Edvard a reflection of Bergman's own father and upbringing. All the time put into it is doubly rewarding.

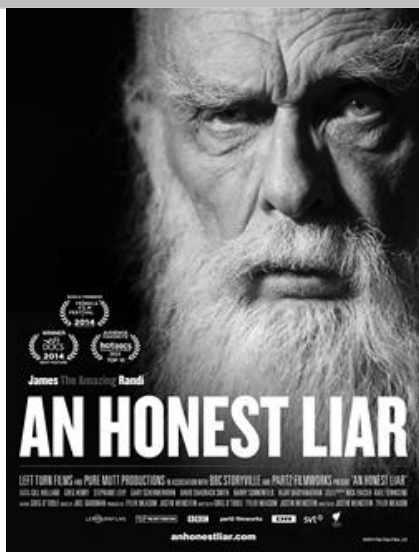
50 WORDS: Before watching this film, five and a half hours may seem long but it isn't when you get into Bergman's autobiographical reflection on two siblings who go from affluent theater family to the strict prison/home hybrid of a bishop stepfather; the actor playing said stepfather gives a standout, unwavering performance.

25 WORDS: Bergman's film pulls you in for the entire duration, an impossible feat to cut down and keep any of the magic and dread in the film.

10 WORDS: Long in objective time but not long in subjective time.

SPOTLIGHT TITLE: AN HONEST LIAR

Justin Weinstein & Tyler Meason, 2014, USA



By making the Amazing James Randi, magician and skeptical investigator, the focus of their documentary, Weinstein and Meason have created a film that works on many levels. On the most basic level it is an entertaining profile about the man, with just as much screen time devoted to his private life as there is to the fascinating stories of the ways he went about debunking faith-healers, self-proclaimed psychics, and in general the people who take advantage of others for reasons other than entertainment like in the context of a magic show. But once that next level shows up, the film becomes something more aligned with works like *F for Fake* and *A Man Vanishes*. This other level is hinted at early on in the film when Randi states something along the

There are two genres that stand out as prime examples of modern Korean cinema: the revenge thriller and the rom-com.

My Ordinary Love Story has elements of both but through its twists and turns, the bottom line is that this film is a very special exploration of relationships and the trust required to pull them off. In order to enjoy the full effect of the film it's important to go in as blind as possible so here is the most basic relaying of the film's starting point:

of that if information is presented in documentary form, people will believe it. As individuals making a documentary, it should be difficult to continue on and let this opportunity pass. Thankfully, the filmmakers don't and realize that they are creating "truth." There are so few documentaries that understand they are just as assembled as any narrative film. The majority of recent documentaries take on the form of exposés that its audiences will believe in its entirety, not questioning any detail. Even though today's audiences are considered to be post-modern in their sensibilities and in the way they relate to and view works of art, there is very little of that essential questioning of objectivity, unless it aligns with any preconceived notions only then their skepticism will reveal itself.

While the film doesn't go as far into explorations of the inherent subjectivity of the documentary form like the two above mentioned titles, the fact that *An Honest Liar* does so at all, makes it something to check out.

The other step to enjoying the film is giving it a second viewing almost immediately after the first. The twists and turns the films takes during the first viewing, and all the revelations had through them now inform everything in the first half, giving scenes initially used to set up the story added depth. The relationship in the film becomes so much more emotional and the film much richer for what it has to say about the give and take necessary in a relationship from both sides. This film continues the lineage of not only great revenge thrillers and romantic comedies from South Korea, but also fits in with the other Korean films who refuse to stay in one genre, so as to better convey its ideas.

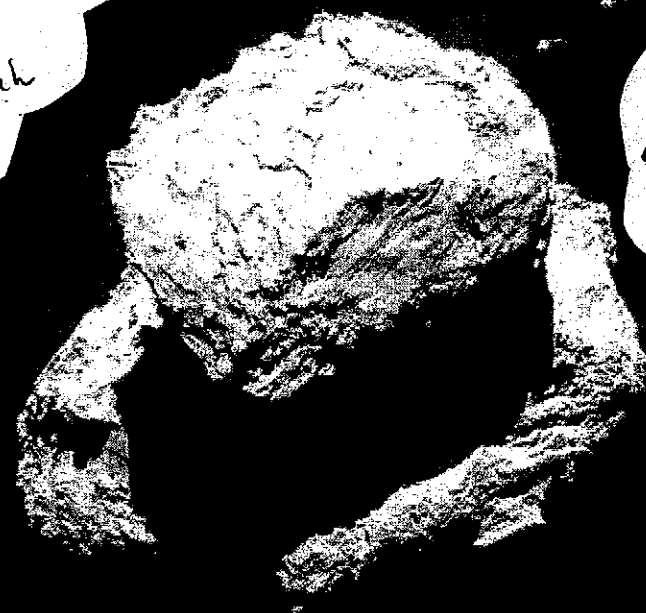
Eun-Jin is a woman whose every relationship has failed because of the lies and infidelities of the men. Because of this, with her current relationship with Hyeon-Suk she acts a little more forceful and controlling, refusing to be taken advantage of again. When she sees some suspicious texts on Hyeon-Suk's phone she decides to investigate with the help of her police officer friend So-Young. To say any more would take away immensely from the joy of seeing where this simple act of distrust takes her.



SPOTLIGHT TITLE: MY ORDINARY LOVE STORY

Lee Kwon, 2014, South Korea

...Gotta get to **VIDEO Station**
to pick up my copy
of **Over the Top** before
the last copy is
rented out! Hope Noah
saved one for me.....



While I'm on
earth, I may as
well **Kick some**
Netflix ass! I
hate those guys!
So impersonal...

For some real human interaction,
choose a place where they'll put
aside a movie they THINK you might
like—and a fucking algorithym
didn't tell them to. Love,

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GONE GIRL – Reviewed by Bruce – Courtesy of The Video Station

Based on a best-seller written by Gillian Flynn, *Gone Girl* is a shining example of the serendipity that can occur when a

master director's art is applied to a genre piece. I haven't read the book, so maybe I'm wrong on this one, but I've always felt that thrillers like this were strictly for long plane flights or bored stay-at-homes. Conversely, a terrific film director, like **David Fincher** here, can take a simple thriller and transform it into something artful. After all, classic Hollywood movies of the 1930's, 40's, and 50's consisted almost exclusively of this phenomenon, while also partaking of many other genres which, on the surface, were fairly forgettable, if not vapid.

Gone Girl's plot is labyrinthine, with many players. Nick Dunne (**Ben Affleck**) is complaining to and with his sister Margo (**Carrie Coon**, excellent) about his wife Amy (the fantastic **Rosamund Pike**). He goes home to find a crime scene, and Amy is missing. A search is initiated, and Nick must deal with the two police detectives in charge of the case (**Kim Dickens** and **Patrick Fugit**). I'll try not to give too much away, but Amy at one point searches out an old boyfriend, played effectively by **Neil Patrick Harris**, and Nick employs a celebrity lawyer, played with great gusto by **Tyler Perry**.

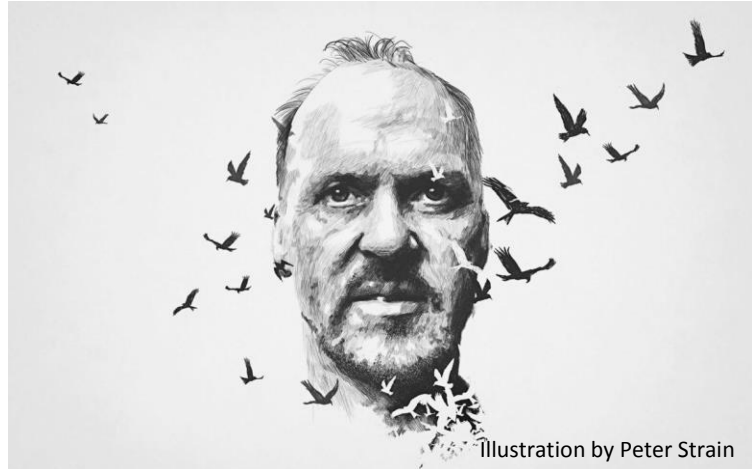
In perhaps a knowing tribute to one of the supreme examples of a great artist transforming genre into something unforgettable, Fincher opens the film with a shot of the back of his leading lady's head, that of a very cool platinum blonde. Indeed, Rosamund Pike's performance as The Amazing Amy is consistently shadowed by that of **Kim Novak** in **Alfred Hitchcock's** *Vertigo*. Pike's face, hair and body are all locked into a frigid beauty that serve to mesmerize and lull all around her, as she pursues her Satanic, manipulative machinations... or is that the sucker's path to reading her fascinating performance, and this sinuous, ever-coiling movie? And speaking of her ability to control others, it's interesting that the trailer trash couple she encounters are blithely impervious to her wiles.

Here, I must admit to having watched *Gone Girl* four times already, and after this last time, I have become persuaded that it's a feminist film in disguise. Isn't Amy simply a neglected wife, who had turned herself into her husband Nick's dream girl, and remained so, even in marriage? And isn't Nick in actuality the bad spouse, who took up with a younger woman, and couldn't handle the same money problems nearly every married couple faces, despite having a doting, beautiful, and smart wife, whose money it was in the first place? I also believe, from a close reading of her facial reactions when she's watching Nick on TV, that she truly wants to be with him, not for monetary or any other base reasons, just to be in a "normal marriage," with this man who once worshipped her.

To continue the allusions to *Vertigo*, what Fincher/Flynn have essentially done is to flip the script, so that Pike/Novak is obsessed with Affleck/Stewart. And instead of **Jimmy Stewart** trying, yet failing, to convince Kim Novak's character(s) to be with him, Pike goes to almost unbelievable, indeed *Grand Guignol*, lengths to win back her mate. She must convince him that, against all his misgivings and better judgment, he does indeed want her, and the last shots persuade us that he may indeed.

:LATE FRAGMENT

*And did you get what
you wanted from this life, even so?
I did.
And what did you want?
To call myself beloved, to feel myself
beloved on the earth.*



Birdman opens with an inscription from Raymond Carver's tombstone. His poet's declaration, "I did." He *did* get his life's wish..."to feel myself beloved on the earth."—a contrast to Michael Keaton's meditative levitation in scene one of the film. He doesn't need a chair, or the earth, to be in balance. ***Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)*** offers a "late fragment" of Keaton's character, Riggan Thomson. His balanced levitation is interrupted by nagging ghostly backstory from Riggan's former superhero character, Birdman, a life-sized, full-feathered Bird who kvetches an irritating raspy voiceover rattling racket in Riggan's head. The Bird power will not back off. Not only does his voice, heard as an evil alter-ego, but his physical presence dogs Riggan (imagine having a life-sized feathered friend breathing down the back of your neck). But, trying hard not to be outdone, Riggan has magical/mystical powers of his own: he levitates, moves solid objects at will. He knocks an obnoxious co-actor from a chair, with intent and force, without laying a hand on him. But he cannot get his former self, Birdman, to shut up and leave him to current business: Broadway opening night.



Michael Keaton, known for his Bruce Wayne/Batman roles in Tim Burton's ***Batman*** (1989) and ***Batman Returns*** (1992), asked Gonzalez Iñárritu, after reading his script for ***Birdman***, if he was making fun of him in his Batman roles (Foundas, Scott, 27 Aug. 2014: "Interview: 'Birdman' Director Alejandro Gonzales Iñárritu on His First Comedy"

Variety. Archived). Gonzalez Iñárritu clarified his intent, and Keaton, who admires Gonzalez Iñárritu's work, jumped at the chance to play Riggan Thomson, the lead character. Gonzalez Iñárritu knew what he needed when he chose Keaton, "When I finished the script, I knew that Michael was not the choice or option, he was the guy." (Ryzik, Melena, Oct. 8, 2014, "Everyman Returns" NYT Archived) Perfect fit. In fact, how ***Birdman*** captured Oscars for Best Picture, Best Screenplay, Best Director, Best Cinematography, yet overlooked Keaton for Best Actor remains a mystery. *C'est la vie...*

Michael Keaton is "the guy" who masters Riggan Thomson. At one point, Riggan confesses his life feels like the Carver-characters that he's written into his play, "What We Talk About When We Talk About

Love,” based on the Carver’s short story, Riggan begins to feel like the characters Mel and Ed, one a stubborn, verbally abusive, arrogant bully who puts his wife, Terri, down with subtle sarcasm. He loathes her tolerance of her ex’s, Ed’s, abuse, while he pontificates on “ideal” love and yet misses his own nasty behavior toward Terri. Riggan also plays Ed in a scene that is pivotal to the film’s ending. The scene takes place in a motel room where Terri and Nick (who is actually playing Mel) are interrupted by Ed wielding a gun—will he shoot them? He has a history of abusing Terri as we learned from scene one. Instead, he blasts himself in what looks like suicide (described as an act of “super-realism”, a new form of method acting, branded by the film’s theatre critic NYT Tabitha Dickinson (Lindsay Duncan). What Tabitha doesn’t realize is that Riggan’s on-stage shooting is prompted by his competition with fellow actor Mike Shiner’s (Edward Norton) method acting. Shiner blows up when his gin has been replaced by water in the first scene and sees nothing wrong with his erection in the motel scene; in fact, he tries to entice Lesley (Naomi Watts, his girlfriend) to actually have intercourse on stage. Riggan’s and Mike’s competition is blatant to anyone who’s followed them backstage. And, of course, that’s the film’s audience as well. Yes, Riggan’s awareness of his characters’ reflecting his own chaotic life sounds a bit like Keaton’s fear that Gonzalez Iñárritu may be making fun of his characterization of Batman. With all this reflection coming and going, how’s an audience member supposed to keep track of it all?

The reverberation/reflection is the beauty of Gonzalez Iñárritu’s examination of Carver’s characters. He reveals that his “own experiences influenced many of *Birdman’s* themes, and said ‘What this film talks about, I have been through. I have seen and experienced all of it; it’s what I have been living through the last years of my life.’” (Fleming Jr., Mike Oct. 15, 2014. “Alejandro G. Inarritu And ‘Birdman’ Scribes On Hollywood’s Superhero Fixation: ‘Poison Cultural Genocide’—Q&A interview-852206). Most of Carver’s characters fit a pretty tight mold: Life crisis in the American Dream. Life crisis of American man in crisis. Life crisis of aging male; a universal mold from **Hamlet** to **Lear** to Richard’s to Henry’s, lives highlighted in the spotlights thanks to Shakespeare. Many more contemporary down-and-out heroes carry the mantle as job failures: From Willy Loman to Will Ferrell’s Nick Halsey, a recently fired salesman in *Everything Must Go* directed by Dan Rush (May 13, 2011 US film release date) based on another Carver story (*Why Don’t You Dance?*, Carver 1980-81, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.). Carver’s broken men struggle with alcohol, womanizing, domestic violence, chauvinistic, drunken male bonding. (“So Much Water So Close to Home”; “Vitamins”, in *Where I’m Calling From*, selected stories, c. The Atlantic Monthly Press, NY, 1988.)

What *do we* talk about when we talk about *Birdman*? Mainly about male characters who only gain awareness by being held in a tight spot. Much kerfuffle swims around the one-shot camera work in *Birdman*. “The decision to make the film appear as a single shot came from [Gonzales Iñárritu’s] realization that ‘we live our lives with no editing’. By presenting the film as a continuous shot he could ‘submerge the protagonist in an “inescapable reality” and take the audience with him.’ (Foundus) Alexander Dinelaris, Jr., who co-wrote the script with Gonzales Iñárritu, admits, “you have to be an idiot to do it all in one shot. You have to be an idiot to attempt it. It takes a great, great deal of ignorance to not pay attention to the difficulties and to think you’re going to do this. *Birdman* looks like a good idea now, but a year and a half ago we did not know how we would land (McKittrick, Christopher, 26 November 2014, “Birdman: “Completely one shot? Don’t even try it” Creative Screenwriting Magazine). *Russian Ark* (2002) directed by Alexander Sokurov uses a single-shot 96-minute Steadicam sequence shot to show Russian history through a tour of the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. “The narrator implies that he died in some horrible accident and is a ghost drifting through the palace...he encounters various

real and fictional people from various periods in the city's 300-year history." ("Festival de Cannes: Russian Ark". *festival-cannes.com.*, October 2009) Sokurov's stroll through history captures a ghostly vision of wandering into a deeper and deeper part of Russia's past. Surely Gonzales Iñárritu's keenly aware this technique forces Riggan into his own ghostly encounter with his past. Just as *Russian Ark* gives a continuous review of Russian History, Gonzales Iñárritu's fragment of Riggan's life shifts through tighter and tighter pressure: long, narrow corridors, intense colors, backstage relationship conflicts, Riggan's reflection in his dressing room make-up mirror, all increase the pressure moment-by-moment. There is no escaping one's past/history. The compression yields an intense dream-like quality forcing Riggan to face the consequences of his life's actions. *The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance* blossoms into his ability to fly unencumbered.

Riggan's dénouement carries the freedom that any fully-fleshed-out character needs to escape a life of self-deception. Just as Carver's characters reflect his own life and cultural times, Birdman, Riggan, Gonzales Iñárritu, Carver and his characters are all linked in a cultural reflection of men caught in narcissistic self deception.



In a New York Times book review, **Raymond Carver's Life and**

Stories, Stephen King quotes the novelist Diane Smith ("Letters from Yellowstone") who laments, "That was a bad generation of men..." (www.nytimes.com/2009/11/22/books/review/King) No doubt, because hindsight is 20-20 vision, Carver certainly portrays an underbelly of his life and times in a way that many find distasteful by 21st Century standards. But, by honing in on one of Carver's most famous stories, "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love," Gonzales Iñárritu digs deeply into the male cultural reflection of violent hero turned clown. King sees Carver as "...surely the most influential writer of American short stories in the second half of the 20th Century..." and then goes on to highlight Carver's tumultuous life and career. "As brilliant and talented as he was, Ray Carver was also the destructive, everything-in-the-pot kind of drinker who hits bottom, then starts burrowing deeper. Longtime A.A.'s know that drunks like Carver are master practitioners of the geographical cure, refusing to recognize that if you put an out-of-control boozier on a plane in California, an out-of-control boozier is going to get off in Chicago. Or Iowa. Or Mexico. And until mid-1977, Raymond Carver was out of control...." Of course, Carver's not alone in his use of booze to stimulate creativity. But he does not back away from the consequences of the bargain. And Birdman's relocation from West Coast to East challenges the consequence of a geographical cure. In a nutshell, this is why even though, as Diane Smith laments a particular generation of men, what we find in Birdman, in Keaton, In Gonzalez Iñárritu, and in Carver is the courage to go through seemingly unending narrow hallways to break free and fly. Now, *that* is both magical and mystical.

Wm Wilder is a contributor to Cinema Adrift and is hoping for everyone to enjoy confusing films more than once. (see Cinema Adrift, vol. I)

What We Talk About When We Talk About Snacks by Jim Norman

My friend Dave Dunbar was choosing a snack. He was a vending machine route driver, so that gave him the right. We were all sitting around the table snacking, in fact. There was Dave, and me, and Dave's wife Lulabelle, we called her Lula, and my wife Ginny.

There was a bowl of Chex Mix on the table. It kept going around the table. Somehow, we got on the subject of snacks. Dave thought the best snacks were those with a high fat content. He's been filling vending machines with snacks for 15 years. "Low-fat snacks, like rice cakes or kale chips, those aren't snacks", he said.

Lula said her ex, Darrel, loved snacks. He loved them so much they nearly killed him. She said "he was sitting in bed one night eating Bugles, and he just stopped breathing! I made him vomit. I nearly lost him. But he really loved snacking."

"That's not love of snacking!" Dave said. "That's just gluttony!"

"Call it what you will" Lula said. "People snack differently. In his own way I think he thought he was snacking responsibly."

"That's dumb" Dave said. "What do you guys think? Would you call that snacking?" he asked Ginny and me.

"I'm really no expert," I said. "I've snacked a time or two in bed. I didn't know the guy. But I think what you're saying is that love of snacking is an absolute."

Dave said, "The kind of snacking I'm talking about is. The kind of snacking I'm talking about doesn't almost kill you."

Ginny said, "We shouldn't judge."

I shoved some Chex Mix in my mouth and wiped my hand on her pants.

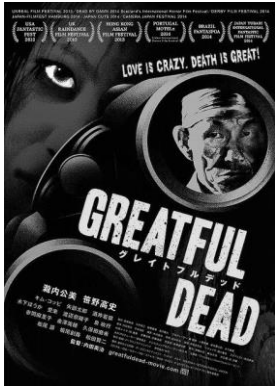
Ginny works in a liquor store. We met when I came in to get smokes. In addition to both loving Pringles, we also enjoy spicy pork rinds.

"I'll tell you what real love of snacking is," Dave said. "One day I was driving my route, and I rear ended this old couple while trying to eat some fries." He took a handful of Chex Mix, put the pretzels back into the bowl, and ate only the cereal. "I mean, I really slammed them. Put them both in the hospital." I'd heard the story before, but not in the context of snacking. "They both had multiple fractures. Bandages from head to toe. Had to eat through a straw. I went to see them several times. I felt really bad. My insurance covered everything, but still. After the bandages were removed, the guy tells me the worst part of the whole ordeal was not being able eat snack." We all laughed. "Now that's true love of snacking!"

I could hear my stomach grumbling. I think everyone's stomach was grumbling. We needed something of sustenance. Something more than snacks. Even when the bowl ran out.

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Greatful Dead (グレイトフルデッド)

Uchida Eiji, 2013

Where to see it:

UK Blu-ray/DVD from Third Window Films

This film from the director of the Oshima/New Wave-esque *The Last Days of the World* (2011) has drawn comparisons to *Amelie*, *Audition*, and even Sono's 4 hour masterpiece *Love Exposure*. The assortment of titles mentioned should give an indication how unique *Greatful Dead* is and personally I found the *Love Exposure* comparison to be most apt.

Ever since she received a very large inheritance, Nami (Takiuchi Kumi) spends the free time afforded to her by not having a job by shopping the many TV shopping channels and keeping a log book on the loners she observes and has dubbed "solitarians." When she comes across the perfect specimen, a crotchety old man (Sasano Takashi), she takes a special interest in watching his loneliness as he waits the days out until his death.

While *Love Exposure* was a little more obvious with its criticisms of religion (I still love the image of them trying to hold up the cross) *Greatful Dead* is much harder to decipher its stance on the born-again. Its skillful blending of tones is the other comparison to *Love Exposure* that I would draw.

In one second Uchida can go from the grisly to the operatic absurdism of a Chuck Jones cartoon. It all works and is always exciting.



My Man (私の男): Kumakiri Kazuyoshi, 2014

Where to see it: ...

Since debuting in Yakusho Koji's directorial debut *Toad's Oil* in 2009, Nikaido Fumi has exhibited hints to having a similar career to Asano Tadanobu. She has shown a knack for associating herself with projects that are reliably interesting just as he largely has throughout his career, especially the beginning which saw Asano starring in *Maborosi*, *Shark Skin Man* and *Peach Hip Girl*, and an unsettling appearance in *Love & Pop* just to name a few. *My Man* puts these two, who both have the ability to come off as charismatic whether or not they say much, something that can equally be called an exploitation of a taboo and a taboo-romance. Asano plays Jungo, a man who seemingly on a whim decides to adopt a little girl who lost her family during the 1993 Hokkaido earthquake. Years later they see each other as father-daughter but have also developed a physical relationship.

The film uses flash-forwards, flash-backs, and a noticeable in a good way score by Jim O'Rourke to depict how their familial and romantic relationship changes over time, which the film is not afraid to jump forward over long stretches without warning. With some distance, I am leaning more towards the taboo-romance side over simple exploitation as the film is non-judgmental, equally able to utilize objective distance and even stylized moments that can either operate as visualizations of the subjective, either character feelings or artistic touches of an all-seeing observer. There is a small handful of scenes which run long, meant to make you uncomfortable. One in particular is absolutely standout, involving blood coming down from the ceiling onto the two in the throes of passion. It is a meeting of all the elements of the film at their highest points: the score, the visuals, and to the unease of the viewer, the performances.



Kaisha Monogatari: Memories of You (Ichikawa Jun, 1988)

Where to see it: From the Criterion Collection library with a Hulu Plus subscription

For those who don't want the added work of tracking down English-friendly international releases, the work of Ichikawa Jun has been largely unseen and unheard of save for the brilliant *Tony Takitani* (2005). Thankfully Criterion has the rights to this Ichikawa title, hopefully more, and has put it up online. The most simple way to describe the film is that it follows a company's section head (Hana Hajime) and his rekindled passion for jazz music to combat the melancholy of his impending retirement. He, along with other aged coworkers, form a jazz band where he picks up the drumsticks after years of putting them to the side. But *Kaisha Monogatari* is just that, a story about a company, it's more than a portrait of just one employee but gives many of his coworkers time to be explored creating a mosaic of the human condition that can be found in a setting commonly portrayed to be entirely soul sucking in other films. So many tiny stories are taking place simultaneously on just one floor of an office building. We are allowed glimpses into these stories, just enough to infer and see entire lives completed through the combination of the younger employees who are either working their way up at any cost or just their temporarily and the older employees who have given so much of their precious time to work but still find that they'll miss the place once they retire.



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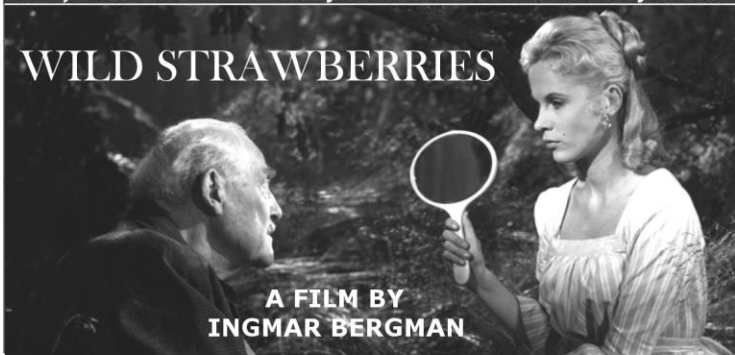
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Literary Adaptations: Disappointments and sometimes the best of both worlds

Robin Hyden



Daniel Day makes Pfeiffer cry because he is great in this film and she stinks.



Winona Ryder's performance is as ~~bad~~, dumb, stupid as her hat.



The disappointment that ensues over most film adaptations of classic novels is something we are all familiar with. My disappointment arises most often for two reasons: thoughtless casting and emphasis on the plot instead of the novel's ideas. Both problems, obviously, lie at the feet of the director, however, the screenwriter has an immense responsibility to understand the meaning of the novel on a deeper level as does the casting director. When all three have a real knowledge for the source material, a film can have the power to equal or excel some of literature's most meaningful works.

Let's take a look at one of the (in my opinion) big failures. *The Age of Innocence*, made in 1993 by Martin Scorsese, starring an excellently cast Daniel Day-Lewis as Newland Archer. The film is very satisfying on many levels if you are not familiar with Edith Wharton's novel. If you love the novel, you know how incredibly bad the choices of Winona Ryder and Michelle Pfeiffer for May Welland and Ellen Olenska are. The character of May Welland is described as that of a cool, icy, blonde, athletic young woman who is untroubled by passion or existential worries. A "goddess" Diana-like creature--- aloof and innocent and a very American ideal of young woman-hood at the time of the novel. She is very much a "type" of her social class and breeding. This is one of Wharton's major themes throughout her writing. She herself was raised to be a "May" and suffered nervous breakdowns and many identity crises throughout her life for her inability to embody this image of American girl-hood. Wharton was a huge disappointment to her parents when she turned out to be a social failure, especially since she was from one of Gilded Age New York's first families. An understanding of the importance of this issue to Wharton's writings and life should have been top-most in the minds of those who were casting for the character of May. Instead we have Winona Ryder and her vaguely neurotic manner, her dark looks, and her not-very-convincing upper-class accent. Of course, she was nominated for an Academy Award for her performance which, if you know nothing of Wharton, was an okay one. One comment by Martin Scorsese from a "making of" article I read at the time really gets my goat. He wrote in a note to Ryder, "Winona--- you truly "became" May." When I read this, I had an apoplectic fit. The exact opposite is true. Did Scorsese REALLY read *The Age of Innocence*?

The other problem with casting in the film is Michelle Pfeiffer. Ellen Olenska is described by Wharton as small, dark, foreign in dress and manner--- a true bohemian. She is however a native New Yorker who has lived abroad for many years. Pfeiffer's accent is ridiculous, almost as much as Madonna's acquired British accent. Pfeiffer's pale blue, pink -rimmed eyes convey the opposite of Ellen's "warm, brooding eyes." Her attraction for Archer is her "difference"---that she is not the all-American blonde type. The character always seemed to me to be vaguely of Jewish ancestry by Wharton's description of her black curls, her intellect and love of art. Not exactly what I think Michelle Pfeiffer is capable of portraying. Some actresses are so good that they can embody their opposite type, but these two are not quite of that caliber. Her love scenes with Day-Lewis lack the swooning atmosphere that envelope the two characters in the novel when they are near each other.

Scorsese's inability to get the film under control is a reason for the odd narration of excerpts from the novel by Joanne Woodward. Narration is often a sign of a lack of visual storytelling which is completely shocking when we are talking about Martin Scorsese, one of the most visual filmmakers of our time. I simply think the material was not right for him to be translating onto film---he could not quite make it work.

Let's turn to two films whose source material is from E.M. Forster, *A Room with a View* and *Howard's End*. The success of these two adaptations lies firmly with the talents of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala the screen writer. In one case, she improved on the vaguely incoherent novel and in the other case, she faithfully conveyed the author's feeling to the screen. In both cases, casting was almost perfect.

For *A Room with a View*, Prawer Jhabvala retells a strange little story of a young British woman who was raised to conform but finds herself pulled away from a traditional Edwardian life by her attraction to a young man of a lower class. The subtleties of the story are difficult for modern Americans to grasp—and indeed, why should we be interested in the minute social constrictions of a brief time in history in another country? We care because Forster has created some of the most charming, funny and eccentric characters in this novel. One character who benefited from Prawer Jhabvala's re-write is Mr. Beebe, the earthy vicar. In Forster's novel, Mr. Beebe sympathizes and relates to Lucy Honeychurch's love of art, specifically her love of Beethoven. This love represents her passion for life which really has no place in the Edwardian countryside of the middle-class. He sees big things for her—a "higher life" and as he makes her his confidant, encourages her to live a celibate life. This is where the novel becomes problematic. Some literary critics believe that Forster at this time was struggling with his sexuality and endeavoring to live a "normal life" and that he was trying to make Lucy do the same. Of course, like anything that is trying to be something it is not, the novel ends on a sour un-true note. Prawer Jhabvala knew this about Forster and adjusts the ending to what seems its "real" or "true" conclusion. The ending that perhaps Forster would have written if he had been out of the closet and not trying very, very hard to make himself "normal." While the novel's ending seems unnatural, the film resolves with Lucy denying with all her strength that she loves George and after making a huge mess of everyone's expectations, (at Mr. Beebe's urging) does the thing she has said she would never do—go off with George and live a full life in which she can be herself. This is the "natural" ending for a story about society's expectations and the inner lives of the people of the Edwardian Era's changing times.

Howard's End is one of the most satisfying and faithful literary adaptations I can think of. It is another subtly complex story about class, changing times, and humans striving to live fuller lives filled with art and beauty---"to connect" --- Forster's shorthand for seeing life whole. The two sisters at the heart of the film and novel are Margaret and Helen, and they are both odd, wonderful, eccentric human beings about whom we, today, would say are highly evolved. They take an interest in a young working-class man who they meet through humorous circumstances and the rest of the novel is a commentary on how lives affect each other and the question of what are our responsibilities to each other. The film reflects the beautiful, humane humor of the novel as well as its tragedy. Prawer Jhabvala faithfully chooses the best dialogue from the novel while she accurately conveys the heart and soul of Forster's vision. Emma Thompson as Margaret, and Helena Bonham-Carter as Helen give a portrait of sisterhood that is true and complex and loving—the kind of relationship that I envy (This is before Bonham-Carter had an affair with Thompson's husband, Kenneth Branagh, however). Anthony Hopkins is excellent as the emotionally stunted business man Mr. Wilcox—sort of a rich conservative Republican of the Edwardian Era that Margaret, astonishingly, marries, thus starting off the avalanche of events that propel the characters to the conclusion. Spoiler: the side of literature and art win.

A beloved novel is a sacred thing to the one who loves it. A great novel can give the reader a sense of transcendence. To see the book misunderstood and then misinterpreted is a tragedy. To see it transformed into an equally beautiful art form is magic.



Getting acquainted: from L to R. George (Julian Sands), Mr. Beebe (Simon Callow), and Freddy (Rupert Graves) take a "bathe."



Lady novelist Eleanor Lavish (Judy Dench) and Charlotte Bartlett (Maggie Smith) venture forth -- two lone women lost in Firenze. Let us hope they remembered their macintosh squares...

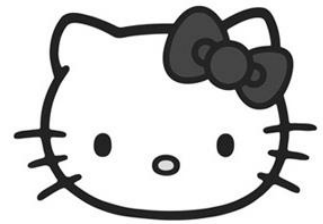


Representing repressed homosexuality, Daniel Day-Lewis is excellent as Cecil Vyse, Lucy's huasband-to-be.



Shrink-age! Rupert Graves wows as Freddy Honeychurch.

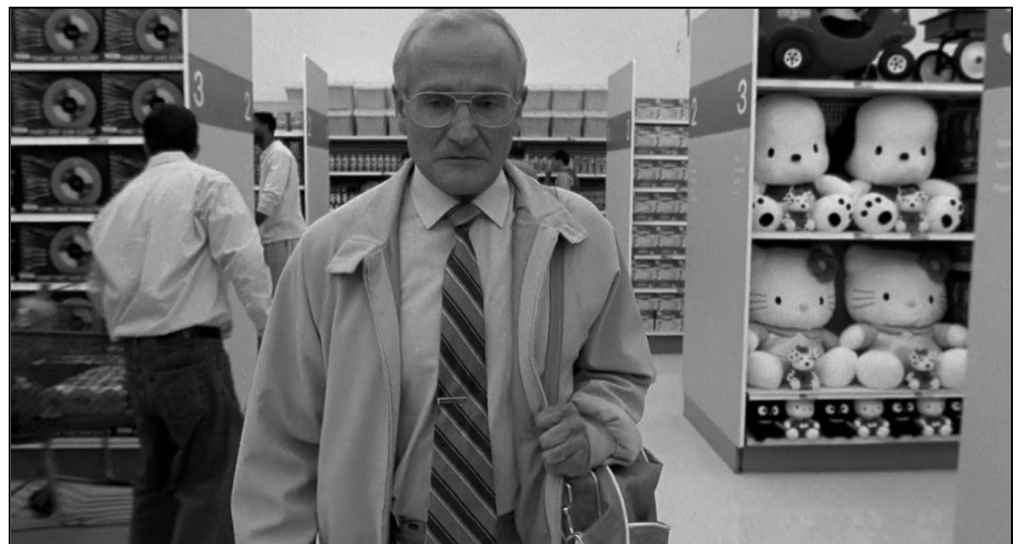
Hello Kitty Spotting



Hello Kitty has been spotted in Mark Romanek's *One Hour Photo*. The film, which features one of Robin Williams' finest performances, also features Hello Kitty of various size plushies in aisle 3 (*bottom right*) and as a bed-side buddy to Sy "the photo guy" Parrish (*above right*).



If you've seen the beloved feline in any capacity in a film, send information (preferably with time stamps) to cinemaadrift@gmail.com



FLASHBACK!

7 years ago this month

The Cover: A mostly nude Tila Tequila

Articles: Banned in China, Actors Turned Directors Turned Screenwriters

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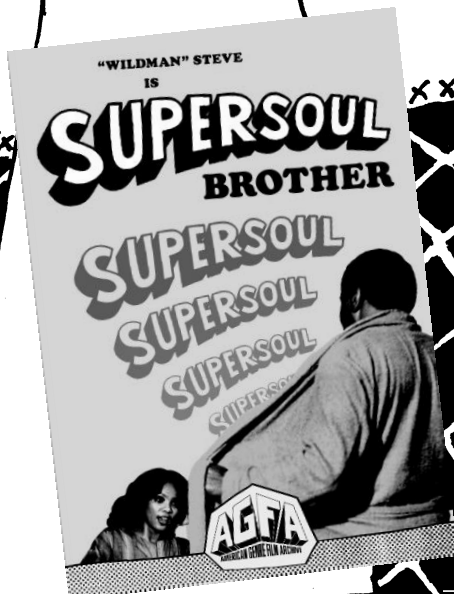
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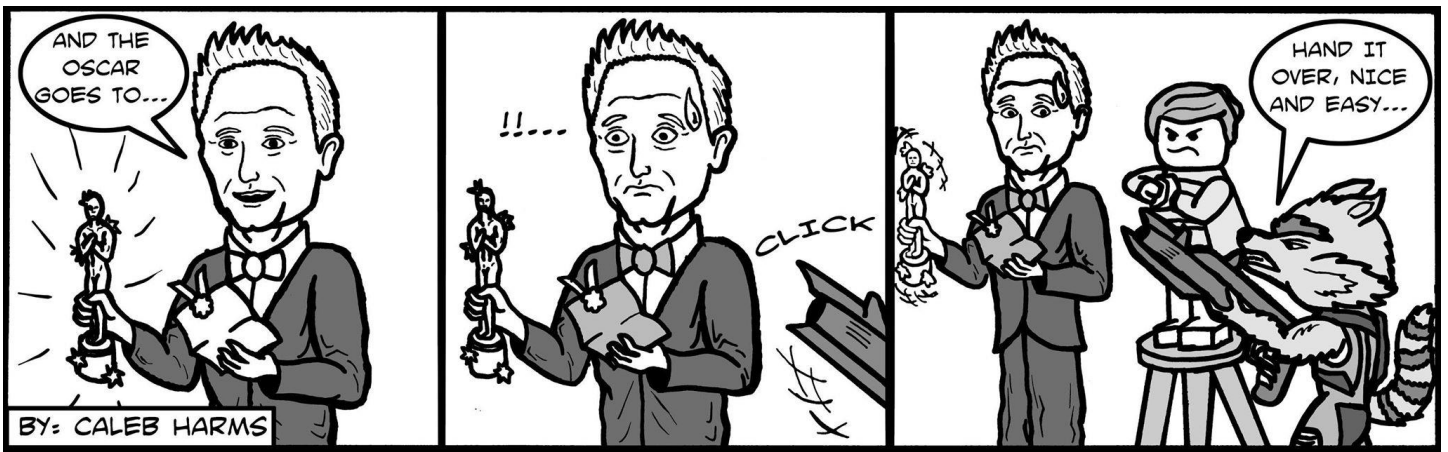


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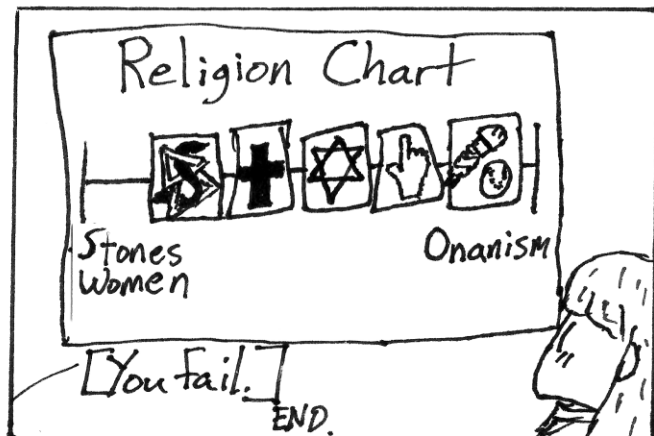
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My Ordinary Love Story
(Lee Kwon, 2014)

Crank: High Voltage
(Nevelandine/Taylor, 2009)



X-Men



Bring It On



Sonam Kapoor

“Haters gonna hate, and
ain’ters gonna ain’t.”
-Dave Skylark



Evil Dead II (Sam Raimi, 1987)



Easy Rider
(Dennis Hopper, 1969)



Christmas Vacation
(Jeremiah S. Chechik, 1989)



Love Exposure (Sion Sono, 2008)



The Naked Gun: From the Files of Police Squad!
(David Zucker, 1988)



Filth
(Jon S. Baird, 2013)



RESIST THE ADAPTATION: THE FILMS OF NAOKO OGIGAMI & HITOSHI MATSUMOTO

by Jason Suzuki

In regards to his next film Kiyoshi Kurosawa stated, “That [upcoming] film is based on an original idea, and in Japan, it’s become nearly impossible to raise the financing for a movie which is not adapted from a franchise or a manga and doesn’t have a micro budget.” To be filmed in Paris, Kurosawa’s next film seems to be starting a trend for the director working outside of Japan. His latest film *Seventh Code* was an idol-starring vehicle for Atsuko Maeda, an irreverent cold-war spy thriller taking place in Vladivostok, Russia’s eastern port city situated on the Sea of Japan near the borders of China and North Korea. He goes on to say, “While we have more freedom as directors today, we’re also more limited in the kind of films we can do with smaller budgets. I can’t make a samurai film like Akira Kurosawa would do, so my movies are often about daily life in Tokyo.”

There are two commercial filmmakers working in Japan that I’d like to highlight. Both have oeuvres that continue developing/expanding on constant themes. And both have resisted the above mentioned pressure to adapt a pre-existing work (with one exception). Despite the cohesiveness of their work I hope to properly explore, it is their refusal to repeat themselves which has made them a hard sell outside of Japan. They are creating original works in both senses of the word: not an adaptation and feels like we have not seen it before. The two filmmakers are comedian superstar turned filmmaker Hitoshi Matsumoto and one of the few internationally recognized female directors from Japan, Naoko Ogigami.

Born in 1972, Naoko Ogigami studied film in the states in 1994; her feature length directorial debut would come out a decade later with *Yoshino’s Barber Shop*. The film is sort

of a tranquil take on coming-of-age rebellion with shades of Shirley Jackson’s “The Lottery” but in Ogigami’s film the small town community’s unquestioned rituals include forcing all the young boys to sport the same bowl haircut. When a city boy moves into the town he begins to resist and question why his cool locks, complete with stylish blonde highlights, need to be made to look the same as every other boy’s. A group of boys eventually befriend the new kid thanks to his porn mag collection; they start to question their haircuts soon afterwards. In this group of boy’s is the film’s main character, the son of the woman who runs the barber shop. The film takes an interesting and non-judgmental stance in regards to conformity and rebellion as well as the fickle nature of what’s considered fashionable. With each film Ogigami continues to simultaneously be about individuals and the groups they belong to, exploring loneliness and the connections we naturally make, all while trying to never align with audience expectation.

A quick disclaimer: while researching Ogigami I was not able to find a copy of one of her six films: the high school set *Love is 5, 7, 5!* (*Koi wa go-shichi-go!*, 2005) about a girl who joins a haiku club. From the outset we have an Ogigami trope: a focus on characters with a very specific preoccupation or occupation as a starting point. While Yoshiko and her barber shop are not the character or setting given the most screen time, it is this woman and her place of business that is the center of the conflict of the narrative. From then on Ogigami’s films became more focused on these people and their day-to-day business with less worry about having a conflict to propel a plot.



From the Japanese diner located in Finland in *Kamome Diner* (*Kamome shokudo*, 2006) to the cat-loaning startup in *Rent-A-Cat* (*Rentaneko*, 2012), these businesses give her an ideal setting to explore the loneliness as well as the simple joys of day-to-day life without resorting to melodramatic developments. Her films, at least narratively, are tranquil. I make the distinction because Oigami is not afraid of inserting one-off dream sequences or in what is one her greatest moments, an air-guitar performance complete with a stage, fog machine, and concert lights.

Her only adaptation is *Kamome Diner*, based on a novel by Yoko Mure but you wouldn't think so given how perfectly it aligns with Oigami's feel for characters and situations. Satomi Kobayashi (who is also the lead in Oigami's picture a year later, *Megane*) plays Sachie, a woman from Japan who has decided to open up a diner in Helsinki, Finland. Her only business is from Tommi, a Japanese culture enthusiast. Along the way she meets two more Japanese tourists who eventually get brought on to help out at the diner which begins to attract more customers. The film feels perfectly measured and can be divided up by when the other two Japanese ladies Midori and later Masako enter the picture. The structure and balance of the film feels as if it was made by Sachie herself, who we are allowed to see the fine details of her preparing treats, meals, and coffee. Though she has stated that she will have a shot of a cat in every film of hers, there is another type of shot that reappears throughout her work: a character stopping for a moment and finding satisfaction in their situation. Even if it's not where they planned to be or would make for a satisfying state of things to conclude with in most other films big or small. This ennui of daily life and small joys of getting by can be taken as the character problem that needs to be solved, the entrepreneur protagonist of *Rent-a-Cat* even fields questions about her lack of a love life. "Feeling lonely? Rent a cat," she yells out the megaphone with her cart of kittens. Her own loneliness/grief of her grandmother's passing is present, yet it's the act of helping others through her business where she can take her mind off herself. Oigami portrays realistic and understated fantasy worlds in which her characters can easily become part of a slowly changing present.

Oigami's other venture outside of Japan was Canada with the film *Toilet* (2010) which she filmed in English and, with the exception of Oigami mainstay Masako Motai, a Canadian cast. The focus in this film is a family who are so estranged from one another that they still resemble the collection of strangers who would go on to form groups in films *Megane* and *Kamome Diner*. Three siblings in their twenties, in the wake of their mother's death, are forced to live in the same household through circumstance. They share the house not only with each other, but all of their mother's belongings and their grandmother, a Japanese woman who speaks no English (Motai). Oigami's deadpan humor translates very well into English; the three siblings call their grandmother "botchin" which is hilarious every



time for those who know what "grandmother" is in Japanese. What is most surprising about this work is that despite being entirely in English, sporting a cast that has been on shows like *Degrassi* and *Orphan Black*, and being made in North America, there is no official release of the film on this side of the shore. This being a perfect entry point into her work is now moot. Thankfully exposure or lack thereof won't stop her from continuing to make films. Having children is another story though.

Not only is Oigami a filmmaker with a strong vision, she is dedicated to the world of independent film and remaining independent herself. In an interview with *Time Out Tokyo* she compares filming in North America to filming in Japan:

Perhaps because of the economic problems, and the fact that the unions have become too strong, there are a lot of films that are called 'low-budget' that aren't really low budget at all. In Japan you can easily make a low-budget film in the tens of millions of yen bracket [less than a million dollars], but in America it's not like that, it could be 500 million yen [around six million dollars] or even a billion yen [around 12 million dollars]. But I think that kind of film can't be called 'low-budget' anymore.

To Oigami she does not see the same limits Kurosawa does with smaller budgets as far as the types of films one can do. Like him she realizes the greater freedom as opposed to studio work but seeks no more. Instead of trying to make films that seem like they have bigger budgets than they do, she realizes she doesn't have to follow rules and actively attempts to subvert expectations. Her objective has been to avoid pigeonholing (which is what I have been attempting to do). In this way Hitoshi Matsumoto is a

kindred spirit, using his immense fame and power to create works of subversion with bigger budgets and in a studio system.

With Matsumoto the problem is not about finding an audience outside of Japan as two of his four films have received distribution in the states (theatrical even!), the problem is with his films not being able to move away from the “Good ‘Ole Weird Japan” stereotype in order to be taken seriously rather than just exercises in strangeness without meaning. The other problem is the presentation of his films, providing little of the necessary context to Matsumoto aside from that he is the “Jerry Lewis of Japan.”

It can be argued that the two films of his that have not been picked for foreign distribution are the ones that test the audience a bit more than his other works, or at least the audience hoping for a consistent zaniness that can be chalked up to cultural divisions. In each of his films the

An obvious comparison to be made is to another comedian-turned filmmaker, Takeshi Kitano. But even Kitano had been appearing in the films of other filmmakers before he landed his first gig as director. Besides Kitano, other comparisons would be to Akira Kurosawa and David Lynch, who started as painters and then went into filmmaking. Their expertise with another craft not only lends itself to a great visual eye but also more refreshing films overall. What’s missing is the proper consideration for Matsumoto which Kitano has received. His films are much more personal than they might seem on initial viewings: *Symbol* looks at the role of the individual in the grand scheme of the world, *Scabbard Samurai* reflects on the role of the performer, and *R100* reflects on the role of the filmmaker. All three Matsumoto has experienced.

Here’s the premise of Matsumoto’s sophomore feature *Symbol*: a man (Matsumoto in his last starring role in one of his films to date) sporting kiddie pajamas and a bowl

松本は4人の存在を無視しなければいけない

themes take a greater importance than being weird just to be weird. These themes are still being filtered through Matsumoto’s sense of humor and his previous TV work but are not made apparent enough; a cult following won’t consider deeper meanings but still regard the films as of the ilk of other wacky-Japanese imports to be laughed at instead of with. Basic plot outlines to his films sound like they could be comedy sketches just as well as they are feature films. The medium of film gives the ideas at play more time to be developed, thus separating itself from the topical, the superficially bizarre, or the lowest common-denominator ad nauseam. And with each passing film Matsumoto shows more confidence with the medium and since *Big Man Japan* the argument that it’s just a stretched out sketch gets harder to use. These three film post-*Big Man Japan* are the ones I wish to look at as two of them have not received distribution in the states and the other one has been met with undeserved underwhelming reaction.

The majority of his films deal with entertainment and performance. Known as the *bokke* half of comedy duo Downtown, the dim-witted masochist who takes most of the abuse, Matsumoto’s characters are ones that endure continuous anguish usually of the physical kind.



haircut wakes up in a white room with no doors but with walls that go on seemingly forever to some sort of an infinity ceiling. Suddenly he is swarmed by cherubs that emerge from the walls. They melt back into the walls except for their penises, which stick out forming tiny buttons covering the walls and part of the floor. We cut back and forth between that room and Mexico, where a luchador prepares for a fight, his family concerned at how strange he gets before a match. Back with Matsumoto we watch elaborate gags get executed as he tries to figure the room out, experimenting with the different penises, ranging anywhere from materializing toothbrushes, banzai plants, and sushi but no soy sauce. With each cherub penis press it’s what we exert to the world, resulting in what crazy shit the world throws back at us, mostly tortuous. We try to escape to a stage in life when what we do in our bubble of existence has effects around the world, unknown to us as to what we are causing. We’ll do this until that big, and final, penis press. It’s a grand and abstract conveyance of what it’s like to exist and one of those rare films which doesn’t seem to have any obvious points of reference in the art world. The post-modern use of pastiche is certainly in with filmmakers like Quentin Tarantino and the current film discussion culture can be boiled down to “this film is this other previous film meets this other previous film” so it’s refreshing that *Symbol* brings to mind nothing else in film but rather those escape the room video games where you solve obtuse puzzles combining objects found in the room you have awoken in without reason. This film will most likely be the one considered his masterpiece once more time has passed. That or the “Pie Hell” challenge after he lost a bet to his other half Hamada-san.

Matsumoto’s third film, also probably the most unique in his filmography so far, is *Scabbard Samurai* (2011) about samurai Kanjuro who has a bounty placed upon him after

he abandoned his post. He is on the run with his nine-year-old daughter encountering a trio of absurd bounty hunters but once he is captured he is given thirty days to make the son of the local feudal lord laugh or else he must commit seppuku. The young lord is in a deep and long lasting period of grief since the death of his mother by the way. Again, a high concept that sounds like it could just as easily been a sketch but Matsumoto is looking to do something different than even his previous two films. The absence of a sword bears evolving meanings as the film goes on but what is most apparent in *this* reading of the film is the parallel between a samurai without a sword and a comedian without an audience willing to meet halfway. Even though everyone else begins to like and root for Kanjuro, the focus still remains on the one not laughing.

This is Matsumoto's most personal film yet as it equates the plight of a comedian to get laughs to a matter of life and death and depicts the tunnel vision to a non-laughing audience member as the cause. Without hopefully reaching too far, it is the character of Tae, the daughter of Kanjuro who tries to help her dad come up with new bits to make the young lord laugh and save his life, who has a real life inspiration in Matsumoto's own daughter who was born during the time *Symbol* was released. The empathy shown for the children of entertainers who must watch their parents do weird things in order to make people laugh. This empathy is something even seen in Matsumoto's TV work, except in that case it ends with a Thai-kick to the ass. In the case of the film, a Thai-kick to the heart. The last few minutes of the film take a sudden dramatic turn and continue on to a conclusion that will leave you tearing up [NOTE: Within two viewings Jason teared up at the same spot, there is no guarantee that others will do the same]. What Matsumoto has done here is make a film that is deeply touching and emotionally satisfying. Something that no one would have guessed after *Big Man Japan* and *Symbol*.



R100 is his most ambitious work yet and one that directly deals with filmmaking. Compared to his previous two films it's proven an easier sell thanks to the inclusion of S&M themes (don't get me wrong, Drafthouse Films, I love you for bringing this over). Yet again not many want to look beneath the leather straps. In her review for the New York Times Manohla Dargis seems in dire need of context to the

film as the majority of her review is spent on an ill-fitting comparison to Cronenberg's *Dead Ringers* and to Ai Tominaga's good looks. But it's her final statement that's the most telling of her superficial assessment of the film, "Mr. Matsumoto, as if realizing that viewers might need to wake up, stuffs a ball gag in a child's mouth and throws in some reflexive nonsense involving an old director and some critics who seem to be watching the same movie you are. They think it's terrible and finally it's hard to disagree." She accuses Matsumoto of too much indulgence with the gross-out sadist humor but doesn't realize that all that "reflexive nonsense" is really the heart of the film, a film which *is* about indulgence and not merely a salaryman's fantasy. Once it's revealed that the story of a man taking care of his son while his wife is in a coma and has signed a year-long binding contract with an S&M club is really the film-within-the-film, the actual story is about self-indulgence of another variety, that of the filmmaker. *R100* goes from the quiet, simply shot family melodramas popular in Japan's golden age of film to documentary to an energetic spy thriller in the course of the plot created by the 100 year old director. That might be just your average Japanese zaniness were it not decisions supported by the film's story. If the director is 100 years old he probably lived through all those fads in filmmaking and thus would incorporate as many as he could in his grand statement that only those the same age of him would be able to understand, hence the title of the film. This is indicative of many elements of Matsumoto: on the surface grand gestures of weirdness to be taken for broad novelty but actually a subtle touch.

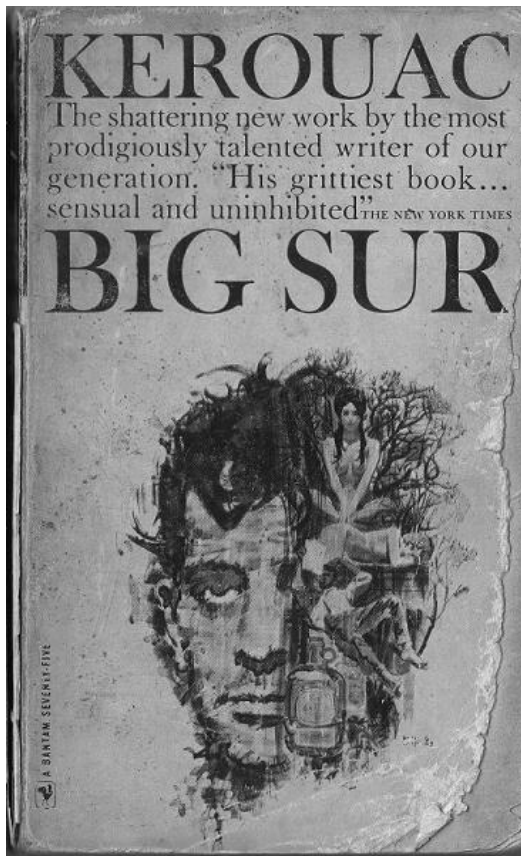


Going back to Kiyoshi Kurosawa's statements, maybe it's a good thing that those historical epics won't be able to be done on the same level as Akira Kurosawa's. The majority of those are of the highest quality since they not only told exhaustively researched stories set in the past, but in equal measure were commenting on the times in which Kurosawa was making them. It's not like the *jidai-geki* is off limits and can't be done well as seen by *Scabbard Samurai*. And just as Oigami has journeyed abroad on multiple occasions it is exciting to think about what Kiyoshi Kurosawa will be doing in France. In order to reach that unknown godhead of pure cinema, we should recognize the filmmakers that resist the adaptation and continually chip away until they produce works uniquely cinematic.

Jason Suzuki is a contributor to Cinema Adrift.
He has taken 200 rubber band snaps to the testicles.

Rewards of Adaptation: The Beat Myth and Beyond

Cinema and literature function as two different art forms. Stories captured in prose can be a well of images, dialogue, and narrative. Contemporary innovative and experimental fiction is an interesting exploration of form. Innovative writing forms are conducive to the strengths of cinema. Reading experimental literature provides an open space that allows the imagination to breathe. One of the best things about seeing a successful adaptation, a film that stands on its own as its own work, is that more often than not I am moved to go find the original



source and usually the entire body of an author's work. So the process can



go back and forth, the chicken and the egg situation. Cinema being a visual form allows a vast audience to engage with a literary work. New myths and stories are created. I think of the idea of the beat myth that is now part of our collective cultural story. Films and fiction often times for me go back and forth as parallel tracks; whereas I engage with film in a certain visual way, with a book I have a different relationship; I get to engage with the text on the page. It can be an endless and rewarding cycle. It's interesting to see how in contemporary culture we have many threads occurring

simultaneously as in the beat myth, for example. You have the poets and writers, Ginsberg, Kerouac, and Burroughs, all writers who broke literary ground and also have had an impact on the cultural landscape as the myths their personalities have created. The lines begin to blur watching James

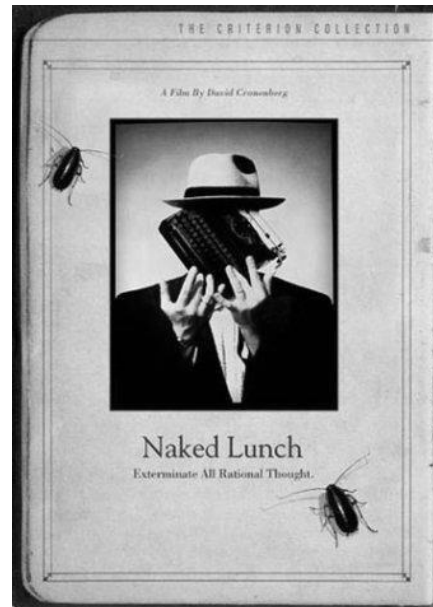


Franco reading *Howl* on film, listening to a recording of Allen Ginsberg reading his epic poem and then going to the text to engage with it on the page. All three works stand on their own and yet experiencing them all in different forms add layers of ways to engage with a work of art.

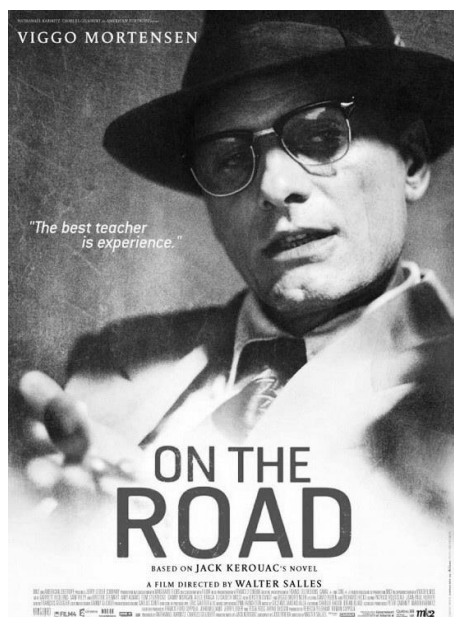
It is almost impossible to truly adapt a book to film. Hiroshi Teshigahara's *The Woman in the Dunes* (1964) and David Cronenberg's *Naked Lunch* (1991) are two of the more successful adaptations.



Teshigahara worked closely with *The Woman in the Dunes* author Kobo Abe to write the screenplay. In *Naked Lunch* Cronenberg not only used William Burroughs original text, he mined other novels, as well as aspects of Burroughs' own personal history and then took artistic license and added his own imaginations and curiosities to create the film. Other adaptations of innovative contemporary writers like Hubert Selby, Jr's



Requiem for a Dream and *Last Exit to Brooklyn* pushed me back into his work. And so this back and forth research, watching, reading, learning goes on and on. At times the innovative literary technique can open the door to open-



minded directors like Cronenberg and Teshigahara. Another technique is to stick strictly to the original source. Walter Salles *On the Road* (2012) beautifully captures the book using text directly

lifted from the novel. Other faithful adaptations include *Big Sur* (2013),

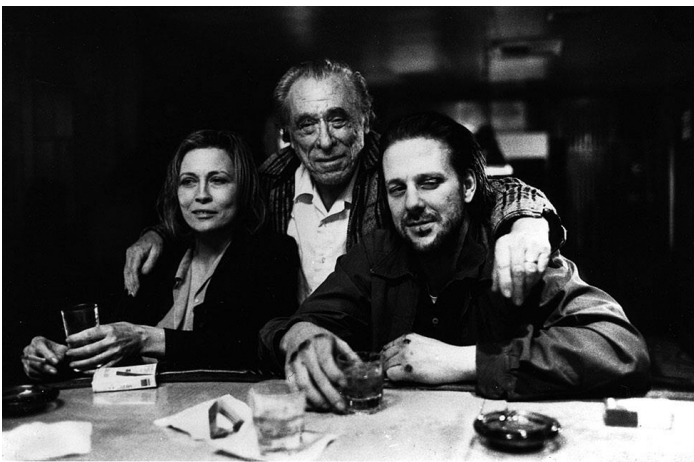


Howl (2010) and *Factotum* (2005). Charles Bukowski created autobiographical fiction enough to capture a myth-like stature



in the culture. Kerouac was a casualty of it and yet his work still holds up after more than 50 years. The fun thing to do is follow the trail--watch a great movie, dig deeper into the author's work, read other books by the same author, find the poems, read them, listen to the poet's read their own work on poetry archives like **pennsound**, the **naropa poetics audio archive** and

ubuweb; immerse yourself in the world these artists create, go deeper still, watch, feel, have fun. Use these artists and filmmakers as inspirations to do your own creative work. Push to see, explore other unique work that is more hidden from mainstream culture, look forward, seek out innovative work that is happening in film and literature now.



Here are a few adaptations, literary historical fictions and documentaries I recommend. As I was writing this I went down a bit of a rabbit hole but came back out to give you a small list of recommendations listed alphabetically. Each film listed below can take you into your own rabbit hole--enjoy.

Barfly (1987) dir. Barbet Schroeder, written by Charles Bukowski

Big Sur (2013) dir. Michael Polish, based on Big Sur (1962) by Jack Kerouac

Cosmopolis (2012) dir. David Cronenberg, based on Cosmopolis (2003) by Don DeLillo

Factotum (2005) dir. Bent Hamer, based on Factotum (1975) by Charles Bukowski

Howl (2010) dir. Rob Epstein and Jeffery Friedman, based on the poem "Howl" (1956) by Allen Ginsberg

Inherent Vice (2014) dir. Paul Thomas Anderson, based on Inherent Vice (2009) by Thomas Pynchon

I shot Andy Warhol (1996) dir. Mary Harron, based on The Letters and Diaries of Candy Darling (1992) and SCUM Manifesto (1967) by Valerie Solanas

Last Exit to Brooklyn (1989) dir. Uli Edel, based on Last Exit to Brooklyn (1964) by Hubert Selby, Jr.

Naked Lunch (1991) dir. David Cronenberg, based on Naked Lunch (1959) by William S. Burroughs

On the Road (2012) dir. Walter Salles, based on On the Road (1957) by Jack Kerouac

Requiem for a Dream (2000) dir. Darren Aronofsky, based on Requiem for a Dream (1978) by Hubert Selby, Jr.

The Woman in the Dunes (1964) dir. Hiroshi Teshigahara, based on The Woman in the Dunes (1962) by Kobo Abe

Recommended Documentaries:

Bukowski: Born Into This (2003) dir. John Dullaghan,

Burroughs: The Movie (1983) dir. Howard Brookner, containing many original sources including, William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Lucien Carr, Terry Southern, Brion Gysin, Francis Bacon, John Giorno, Patti Smith

Fried Shoes Cooked Diamonds (1979) dir. Costanzo Allione, featuring Amiri Baraka, William S Burroughs, Gregory Corso, Anne Waldman, and Allen Ginsberg

In Motion: Amiri Baraka (1983) dir. St. Clair Bourne,

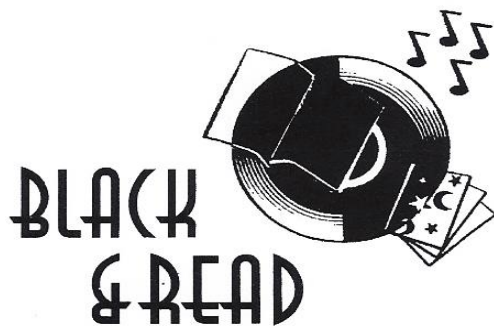
Let it Come Down: the Life of Paul Bowles (1998) dir. Jennifer Baichwal

Poetry in motion (1982) dir. Ron Mann, featuring Helen Adam, Amiri Baraka, Ted Barrigan, Jim Carroll, John Giorno, Anne Waldman

The Life and Times of Allen Ginsberg (1993) dir. Jerry Aronson

Mara Norman co-editor of cinema adrift

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QUOTE CORNER:

Georges Franju

"I don't like others to dream for me, yet I give dreams to others. What can I do about it? Too bad about the contradiction. And all the better if the films I make for my own pleasure are well received by the greatest number of people."

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EPISODE 55: DIGGING UP THE MAFIA STYLE – DISCUSSION OF TWO FILMS. INCLUDES HILARIOUS BIT ABOUT JAPANESE FILMS WITH "RAPE" IN THE TITLE.

FILM REVIEW: *The Hidden Blue* (Yang Soo-yong, 2007) by Eric Fierro

When I heard that one of my all-time favorite filmmakers was going to remake this Korean movie called *The Hidden Blue* I looked it up on Netflix and sure enough it was there. So after I finished my *House of Cards* I finally checked out this subtitled film. Having watched *House of Cards* before *The Hidden Blue* did not help it at all. That show's perfect pacing and truly unpredictable story, not to mention the great lighting and editing and acting, are hard to follow up, especially for a Korean movie with a small budget and not as much talent behind and in front of the camera as *House of Cards*.

I had seen some Korean films before this one such as *I Saw the Devil* and Spike Lee's *Oldboy* and while the film seems typical of Korean cinema, it was lacking in many departments leaving much that can be improved with the remake. Yang Soo-yong's film about Nam-hee, a woman whose run in with a childhood friend gives her the perfect opportunity to exact revenge on the professor who used her, is extremely dark. While I enjoy films that don't always give us the happy Hollywood ending, I feel like there needs to be a good narrative reason for it and Yang Soo-yong does not seem to have one. In short: the film meanders a bit too much. It spends too much time with things other than the revenge plot. *Save the Cat* would have definitely helped refine the finished product.

The main character's childhood friend Park has become a rough gangster, only helping Nam-hee out because she let him lose his virginity to her when they were in middle school. It's a disturbing plot point to say the least. They don't rekindle any sort of romance in the film though, which I'm not sure is good or bad. Park's treatment of those around him, especially Nam-hee, made me very uncomfortable. You hope that maybe they can save each other but not many scenes offer any glimmers of this possibility.

American independent films like *Little Miss Sunshine* have set certain standards as far as character development and unpredictable, powerful storytelling that the rest of the industry understands as well. With this understanding, hopefully the second go-round for *The Hidden Blue* (also a title change please?) will cut off the fat and make for one lean thriller.

Eric Fierro is currently getting a major in film. After graduating he will move to Los Angeles where he hopes to find work as a screenwriter/director of Oscar winning (fingers crossed) films.

Facebook.com/eric.fierro.92

Twitter.com/ericfilm27

Instagram.com/forgottenmemoriesproductions

First and Last Frames: Nobody's Daughter Haewon (Hong Sang-soo, 2013)



HIKIKOMORI YEAH!

home video and digital recommendations

The past few months have seen more than a few worthwhile campaigns from independent distributors that range from funding the restoration of a single film, the restoration of multiple films, breaking into a new distribution territory, and developing a streaming service. The companies are Bleeding Skull Video, Kino Lorber, Arrow Films, and Vinegar Syndrome respectively. Other crowd-funding campaigns of note is Flicker Alley's manufactured-on-demand DVD program, Oscilloscope's restoration for Kelly Reichardt's debut feature, and Third Window Films' New Directors of Japan set. With companies like Arrow Films and Vinegar Syndrome, their goals were not dependent on the success of their campaigns; Arrow was coming to the US regardless and Vinegar Syndrome was always going forward with their streaming service called Exploitation.tv. The crowdfunding was a way to gauge interest as well as help speed up the process of their goals. It also provided fans a way to be a part of a company's growth and get good deals on future products/services. With Kino's boxset, extra films to be restored and added to the set are promised if more money than asked for is received. For the collector, these campaigns are a way to help more adventurous releases come to home video, and a way to get a copy of it for the collection.

BLU-RAY REVIEW: THE FAN

ECKHART SCHMIDT, 1982, GERMANY, 94MIN

MONDO MACABRO BLU-RAY/DVD COMBO. BD25 1080P

There are films like *Taxi Driver* in which your time with a character is time spent counting down to when their delusions will reach their climax and fully externalize to a disturbing denouement. The best of these films come off at first as character studies but reveal themselves to in actuality be filtered through its protagonist. The world is distorted but not to the point of fetishizing mental illness, just enough to gradually align us with the character's view. *The Fan* does just this.

In *The Fan* our Travis Bickel is a high school girl named Simone. Her god is pop-idol R. She doesn't attend school regularly, instead using her time waiting for the postman to give her the letter from R she has no doubt is on the way but worries his personal assistant, her mother, or even the postman himself is keeping from her. At home she is distant from her parents. At school she is distant from friends; Simone is in a perpetual daze from the music of R, not even touching pen to schoolwork except to make R-centered doodles. As the film goes on she finds herself setting off from the daily grind of school, home, and post office to her destined meet-up with R.

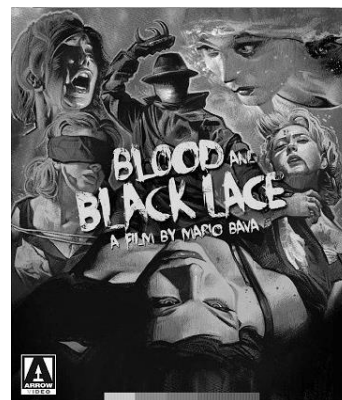
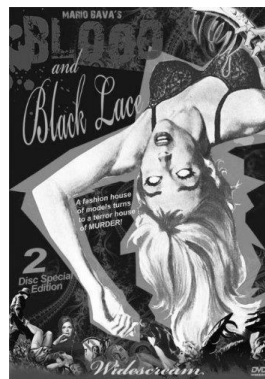
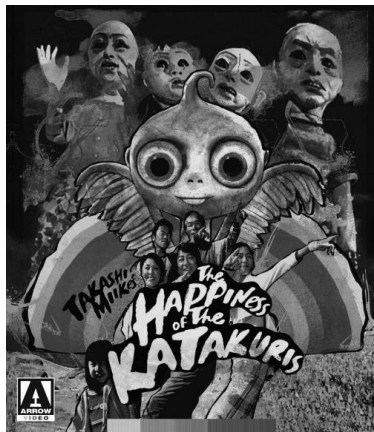
Its soundtrack, one of many standout aspects of the film, works both diegetically and non-diegetically. It weaves between headphones in the film to the score out of film itself. The score by Rheingold is both the pop music Simone constantly has coming out of her headphones but is magnified at times to the extent that it envelopes scenes; it's just another aspect of Simone's voice over, another entrance into her descent into teen-idol obsession. This is an aural touch to the film that mimics the hypnosis R's lyrics have over Simone and is complemented by the film's visuals. This is much more than a pop-shock piece about teen-idol obsession.

Mondo Macabro's release of *The Fan* has clear hopes of helping establish interest in director Schmidt and help get more of his work released in the states. The rest of the special features include text biographies on the key people involved in the film and offer many interesting bits of information from the inception of the film as a short story in a punk 'zine the director created to the post-film controversy when lead actress Désirée Nosbusch tried to stop the film's release. The text features add up to the amount of a good sized booklet and greatly help contextualize a film that can still be appreciated on its own.

The twenty minute interview with the director, the best special feature on the disc, helps clarify things brought up in the text supplements. Schmidt's discussion of his work will make you hope Mondo Macabro has plans on releasing more of his work in editions like this one. He goes into the film's subtext as he saw it and brings with him a refreshing view on whether or not people find the other layers to the film. It's a shame that Nosbusch and Schmidt had a falling out after the release of *The Fan*, something that he holds a sadness for in the interview, but if De Niro and Scorsese had a falling out we would at least have *Mean Streets* and *Taxi Driver*. Which leads me to think Nosbusch and Schmidt could have had their *The King of Comedy*.



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THE FILMS OF M DOT STRANGE

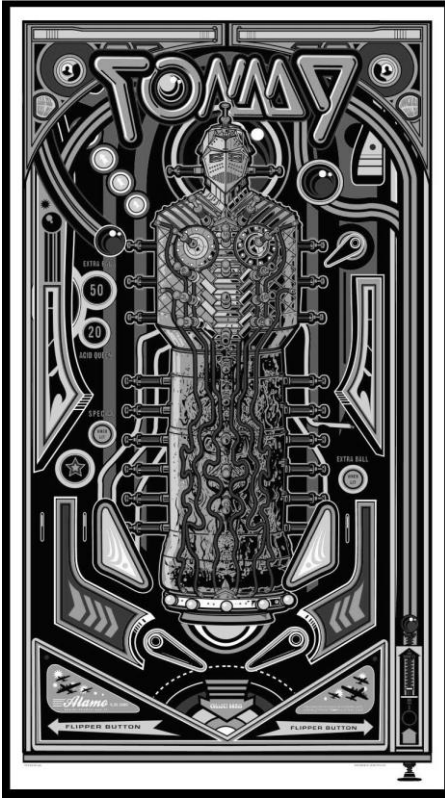
Animation has been one of the consistent modes of filmmaking that have allowed filmmakers to tell their stories with a crew of one. New technologies have allowed M Dot Strange to create very personal films and distribute them himself. The use of *personal* is apt to describe his films as he often does the majority of the work including all of the animation, sometimes music, sometimes character voices, and just about everything else. His end credit sequences are shorter than most films opening credits. His first feature *We Are the Strange* debuted to a small audience at Sundance and since then he has made two more films in 2012 and 2014: *Heart String Marionette* and *I Am Nightmare*. His work immediately draws comparisons to Tim Burton's visual style except the films of M Dot Strange are more concerned with mood over narrative and the worlds are more contorted. Pointed figures and jagged edges spring from nowhere. Black, white, and red are the most dominant in his color schemes (save for a few exceptions). It's like the sets of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* running on a PlayStation 2.



We Are the Strange follows two characters as they go on a journey for some ice cream but get caught up in a city hosting multiple monster battles. It is animated in a style dubbed by M dot Strange as "Str8nime" which is a combination of Strangeness, 8bit videogame culture, and Japanese anime. It is simplistic but is easily the standout work amongst the three films.

Each subsequent film is more narrative driven than the last. We only have a minor sense of story and character in *We Are the Strange* thanks to a clever select player sequence at the beginning of the film, mimicking that of a video game. It shows that the aesthetics of video games, both the 2D and 3D eras, have an influence on Strange. The physical qualities of animation styles such as stop-motion and hand drawn also factor into to a mixture with computer graphics. Character models are even rendered to resemble hand-crafted wooden figures in *I Am Nightmare* which is his most story driven film that sits in a weird space between adults-only and kid-friendly. It's something that could win a bigger audience thanks to its interesting world and characters as well as a voice cast that is more than just a handful of people. But it's the animation which might be the biggest hurdle that people used to smoother animation, whether CGI or hand-drawn, can't jump. If anything, it's great that M Dot Strange has a place to sell his films, doing it just like his films meaning largely by himself, to better help him slowly work on whatever he is doing next.

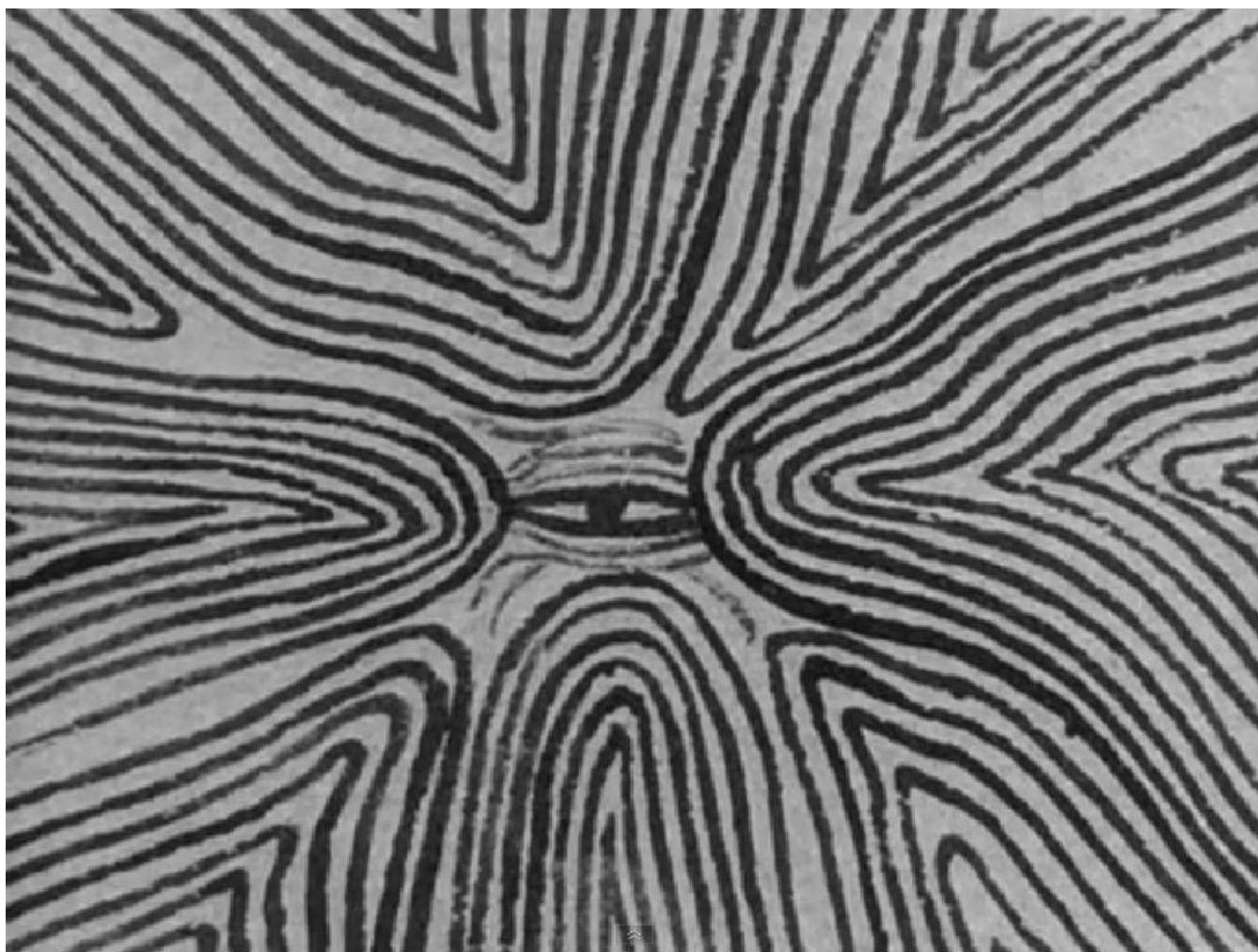
You can purchase a bundle of all three films along with 5 hours of bonus *I Am Nightmare* content for \$24.99 at iamnightmare.vhx.tv



MARA' S
MARCH
MADNESS



By pure cinematic luck, in the same week in the middle of March, I was able to see two classic films on the big screen: Nicolas Roeg's *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (1976) and the 40th anniversary of Ken Russell's *Tommy* (1975). As much as we hear, in the dialogue of public popular culture about the rise and dominance of TV and VOD as a superior way to see films, I still am an advocate of seeing film in a theatrical setting on a big screen with a good sound system. David Lynch has discussed on many occasions his belief in the benefit of seeing movies in a dark theatre with a good sound system. For a good time look up some of his opinions on YouTube. On one of my personal favorites, he discusses watching a movie on a phone, ". . . now if you are playing the movie on a telephone. You will never in a trillion years, experience the film. You'll think you have experienced it. But you'll be cheated. It's such a sadness that you think you've seen a film on your fucking telephone, get real." I don't want to sound like I'm just caught in a nostalgia trip. I watch many movies at home and enjoy the experience of having the choice of watching a film I like multiple times; I do like watching what I want when I want. I've even watched movies on my iPad on YouTube when I am unable to see them any other way; but when given a choice to be a small spectator in a vast visual landscape surrounded by sound, to be transported, surrounded by darkness nothing compares. So this March thanks to The Alamo Drafthouse and The SIE FilmCenter, I was transported to the mid-seventies craziness, the colors, the sounds, the random weird sex scenes thrown in completely out of context, and most of all, especially *Tommy*, the awesome soundtracks. So as viewers around town, when you have an opportunity to see a classic film on a big screen, get your ass off your couch and head on down; watch a film with other people, laugh, cry and rock out together. We need each other and we need to experience cinema in the best possible setting.



cinema adrift

Editors:

Jason Suzuki & Mara Norman

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Table of Contents: *The Spirit of the Beehive*

Above: *The Woman in the Dunes*

Contributors:

Eric Fierro

Caleb Harms

Robin Hyden

Jim Norman

Bruce Shamma

Ken Truhan

Wm Wilder

Thanks:

Belinda Harms

Brandon of Fedex Office

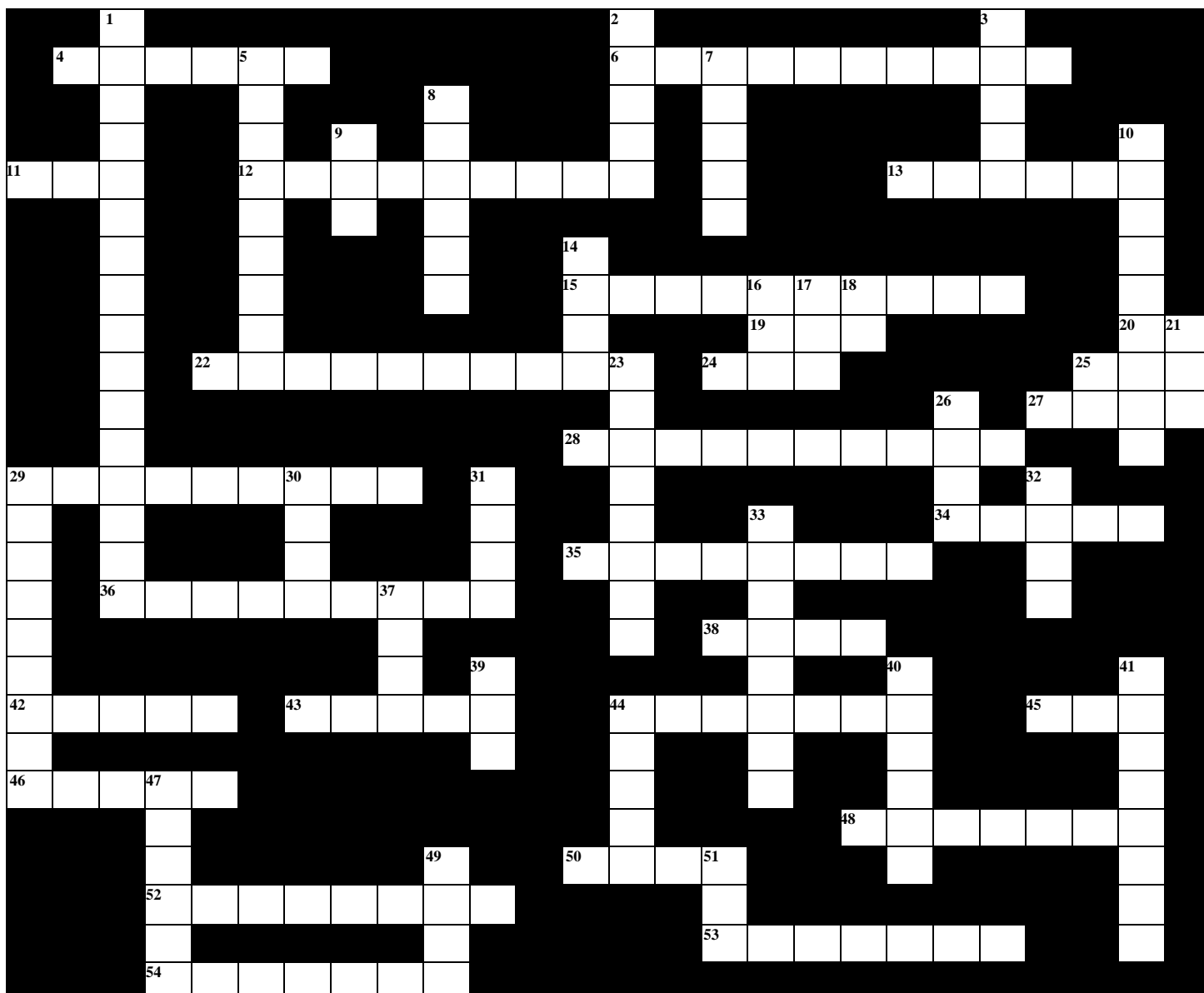
The Video Station

Vinegar Syndrome

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NEXT TIME ON CINEMA ADRIFT...

E X P E R I M E N T A L



across

4. movie house
6. alternation in structure
11. abbr. resolution
12. altman/carver bi-pass
13. lacking aim or direction
15. japan's ambassador
19. buddhist school
20. action
22. at close range
24. sokurov film
25. 60's subculture
27. coppola cousin
28. lynch first
29. paris, texas star
34. to live
35. type of shooting style
36. doc's ex-old
38. winged animal
42. the _____ beauty
43. success' smell
44. the mask one presents

45. kurosawa 1985 film

46. pinball wizard
48. acetic acid and water
50. ali: fear eats the _____
52. main filmmaker
53. age of innocence author
54. an act of remembrance

down

1. bergman 1957 classic
2. home of the cinémathèque
3. pigment
5. big man japan, downtown, symbol
7. bowie's passport status
8. fool for love
9. larry sportello
10. home alone starring dustin hoffman
14. size for a red or blue line
16. japanese resistance 180 degree rule
17. altered states director
18. ____ and out burger
21. a lyric poem
23. akira

25. it's alright ____ i'm only bleeding
26. french resistance 180 degree rule
29. 44 in craps
30. to alter, adapt, refine
31. future summer month filmmaker
32. a transition without a cut
33. texas _____ massacre
37. f for _____
39. the master
40. substitute for ten mothers
41. essential
44. one hour _____
47. m for _____
49. _____ follows function
51. high and _____