

THE

# ivens

MAGAZINE

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in this edition :

**By Camera and by Gun:  
Joris Ivens  
and the Radicalization of  
Latin American Filmmakers**

SUSAN MARTIN-MÁRQUEZ

**Odyssey to The 17th Parallel**

ALEX VERNON

**Unique photos found,  
made by Young Ivens**



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# ivens

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Cover photo: *Joris Ivens, 22 November 1988.*  
© Abe Frajndlich, New York. With courtesy of the photographer.  
Photo *Paolo Taviani in Rome, 19 September 2013*  
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Photo *Leonard Retel Helmrich.* © André Stufkens  
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Interview with Paolo Taviani

# UNDER THE SIGN OF SCORPIO

ALESSANDRO CECCHI AND MAURIZIO CORBELLA'



#### HOW DID YOU MEET JORIS IVENS? COULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE WITH HIM?

We met him because Enrico Mattei said to our producer: 'I want to make a big documentary for Eni? and I want the world's greatest documentary filmmaker'. Mattei measured it all against himself: he was one of the greatest industrialists, so he wanted the greatest director. At that point, the producer came to us and asked: 'What should I tell him?' Having a strong knowledge of film history, we replied: 'Flaherty died twenty days ago; there's Joris Ivens, but he's a communist, you've got to tell Mattei'. Bear in mind that in those days you could never mention the word communist! That was the climate of the time. So Mattei said 'OK, so he's a communist, but is he good?' 'Yes'. 'Then it doesn't matter: let him come!'

So Joris Ivens came and had a meeting with us. We really loved his films. We had often organised the screening of his films in Pisa, so we expected someone like him have something of an air of self-importance – we were very young at the time. Instead we met a man of great warmth and simplicity – and I'm not saying this with rhetoric for the person who died, but because that's what he was like! He was curious about us, our lives, the bond between Vittorio and me, and we hit it off right away. Among other things, he asked, as a communist (in those days being a communist wasn't like it is today: we didn't know much about Stalin, for instance), to go and speak with the leaders of the Italian Com-

munist Party to find out something about this company Eni and this person Mattei and to figure out whether it was worthwhile making the film. He went and they said to him: 'Absolutely, because Mattei is an interesting character for us too'. So, very happy with this, he began the making and preparation of this film.

I remember he asked to be isolated, not exactly in the centre of Rome, but in a hotel near Frascati, so he could work better. We would go there to meet him. I remember Vittorio and I had written something, with Valentino Orsini, who was also very much involved in this production, and we brought him lots of projects right away. Ivens – who knows if his notes are still around – would take our subjects, our ideas, saying 'Yes, indeed, interesting! But now let's go and make site visits.' And off we went. We travelled around the North, went to Central Italy, and to Sicily, but especially to Grottole (in Basilicata). And so began the script for this documentary film that he wrote with great passion. Ivens would say: 'This solitude helps me a lot, but I get bored a lot too! Why have you left me here? What am I doing up here? It's useful because it allows me to work, but please come more often! They consider me a legend here, but it's as though I've been "crystallised" in this place'. So we wrote this script together, or rather: he wrote it, but only after several meetings and discussions with all of us, where he proved to be very open.



photo top:  
Paolo Taviani in Rome,  
19 September 2013  
© Lorenzo Pisanello

A laughing crew of *L'Italia non è un paese povero*, autumn 1959. With Joris Ivens in the middle, Paolo Taviani (R), Tinto Brass, Mario Volpi (behind camera), Vittorio Taviani and Valentino Orsini.  
© Joris Ivens Archives / EFJI.

Alessandro Cecchi and Maurizio Corbella at the Ivens Archives, June 2012.





**SO AS WELL AS A PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP, YOU WERE ALSO FRIENDS.**

Yes, of course. I remember my wife had given me a present of a cologne a few years before, because I was newly married – I think it was called Manchester – and then I couldn't buy it anymore, because we had no money. I remember once when I was walking with Ivens along Via Veneto, I saw this cologne in a shop and said 'I haven't got a penny – my wife gave it to me but I've never bought it since'. And the next day, he had got the cologne for me. He was thoughtful like that. Mere tokens, of course, but they were kind gestures. I should also mention that, mainly thanks to Valentino's strength in terms of economic organisation, we got Eni to give a lot of money to Joris Ivens, both for making the film and for him personally. So much that he asked us: 'How much can I ask for?' I can't remember the figure, but it was high. We answered: 'This much!', and he said: 'Ah! I've always done everything in life for free and never earned a penny. I don't own a home, I've got nothing!' And we replied: 'Try saying this figure'. He said that figure and they gave it to him! He was happy. He bought a home in Paris with that money! So, we young and penniless were very proud of ourselves for having been able to provide money to a director who was more or less sixty at the time. He was sixty years old, but very robust. I remember during the site visits in Gela (in Sicily) we went swimming in the sea, and he came along with us and still had a mighty upper chest – it made a certain impression on me, because clearly I considered him very old. I was twenty-three at the time and all those over forty were old to me! Yet he also had a girlfriend who joined him; he was very modest about the topic, but he was a ladies' man.



**'He was a kind person, but he also had his angry moments'**

He was a kind person, but he also had his angry moments. Once, in the editing with a Moviola, I remember the work went on and on and was endless – through no fault of his, but for other reasons – so every now and then the production company would send another film editor to edit other things when he wasn't there. One morning he arrived at his Moviola and found this guy who said to him: 'Yeah, just give me a moment till I finish...' and stayed there. Ivens then turned off the Moviola and the editor protested. So Ivens picked up a chair and shouted: 'This is Joris Ivens's Moviola! Get out!' – but with such force and violence that it was totally unexpected. On the topic of astrology, he would say 'I'm a Scorpion, therefore I'm aggressive!' I'm a Scorpion too: we're kind, but when we get angry... So our relationship was always great. I've said before that they would call him from Amsterdam to give him an award or recognition. As you know, he couldn't go back to the Netherlands (due to political problems). I remember once, passing a florist, there were some tulips and he said: 'For goodness sake, don't let me see those tulips!' I detest them, because they remind me of the rulers of my country who are preventing me from returning! Instead, this barrier that had formed between him and his country broke down and Ivens went back to the Netherlands. But before leaving – I don't remember what season it was, coming up to winter – he said to me: 'But I don't have a coat'. And I replied: 'I'll give you mine, if you want'. He tried it on and said: 'It suits me'. Delighted with himself, he put this coat on, and so one of the greatest directors went to get his award in Amsterdam wearing his assistant director's coat! Every now and then, it was exciting for Vittorio, Valentino and me to hear him talk about cinema and say: 'As Sergei

told me...' – and it was Eisenstein! – or 'When Vsevolod told me...' – Pudovkin! – or: 'Hemingway didn't agree, but Orson Welles on the other hand...' But he spoke of them like regular collaborators, not like the legends they were for us and still are to this day. Despite this, Ivens was very conscious of himself, of his value, and he really believed in this film. But at the same time, he had great respect for those who collaborated with him. When talking to him, you didn't have the impression you were speaking with a person who felt above those he worked with. No, he was one of us!

**DID YOU STAY FRIENDS EVEN AFTER THE FILM?**

Yes, we saw him a few times, but the nicest encounter was in Florence when he premiered *Io e il vento* (*A Tale of the Wind*, 1988). What's more, to me it's one of his best films, really a great film, made at the age of ninety, which is an extraordinary phenomenon in itself. We met him at the cinema in Florence and I remember Vittorio and I felt moved: we embraced each other and he gave us a long and tight hug too, and as we hugged he spoke in our ears. We were also on the jury together in Venice (1984), in a Festival where Antonioni was president, and the jury included (poet) Rafael Alberti, (painter) Balthus, (poet Yevgeni) Yevtushenko, (writer) Günter Grass, and then there were us. But none of these personalities – except for Antonioni of course – understood anything about cinema. I remember when they commented on the films, they came out with statements that made it clear that deep down they detested cinema – in those years it was common understanding. Theirs was art – poetry, painting, literature. So much so that the only ones Vittorio and I could talk to were Antonioni and Joris. We were always in agreement and we would always agree

to join forces to pass certain films, trying to marginalise these personalities. Ivens himself would comment on their reactions, saying it was 'a madhouse, if we think they're the world's greatest art films... Let them do their own job! We do ours well and that's what we're going to do!'

**AFTER SO MANY YEARS, WHAT ARE THE ASPECTS OF IVENS'S LESSONS THAT RECUR IN YOUR POETICS, EVEN TO THIS DAY?**

I don't know – it's a legitimate question, but I couldn't give you an answer, because it's obvious that by working with a director like Ivens you learn lots of things that become part of you. You don't even remember any more what you take from it. One key thing, as we've often said, is that when we worked with him, we realised we weren't documentary directors. We agreed with him on that point. So much so that when we were filming in Sicily – because he couldn't come to Sicily to do the shooting, he had to quickly edit the other two episodes: only Vittorio and I went and shot the Sicilian episode – he said, after seeing the material: 'This is more for a fiction film than a documentary!' In fact, going down there, we had invented lots of stories, passing them off as true. I remember at a certain point during the trip from Nuovo Pignone as far as Gela, I saw a marching band playing in a village. We stopped ahead and I said to the assistant: 'Go to that village there, listen to this band, then put them on a truck and tomorrow we'll head down, that way you'll get them to cross our path: we'll do the filming while they're passing by, with the band playing'. When Ivens saw it, he asked: 'Is it real?' And I replied: 'Of course! We came across them on the street and then told them to do it all over again as a favour!' 'Ah, good, very good.'

Now, Ivens said so, but also in his cinematic 'truth', it was all true and all false – true and false, but in the right way! And maybe this is what we have taken from him when he filmed the poverty of the Italian South – where there are also true documents of the rooms where people live, of the pictures on the walls, the flies, etc. – he did the same thing. You'll have heard the story of the olive tree that fed the two families who lived there. None of it is true! In fact, when we were talking, we saw a beautiful olive tree and he came up with the idea of creating this story that isn't true... or rather: it's 'true', essentially quite true, and yet it's not. If you go and check, you'll discover I went to choose the characters there myself. Together with Tinto Brass, we went to choose those who could play this 'part'. So it isn't actually 'true', but this is also the truth, that is, the truth is very often invented. And he, a great documentary maker, was one who documented and invented even reality itself in order to make what he told even truer.

**HOW IMPORTANT IS THE EUROPEAN FOUNDATION JORIS IVENS TODAY?**

It's very important! I'd say especially at the moment with a revival of interest in documentary filmmaking, which had quite been neglected. This comes from someone who doesn't make documentaries, who has always made fiction films: when we were young we did indeed love the film history of the great artists I mentioned before, but we also loved documentaries. We didn't consider documentaries a 'lesser part' of cinema; it was the kind of filmmaking Eisenstein or John Ford did. Then instead, little by little, this focus was lost and the fault, particularly in Italy, lies with the governments we've had: because we didn't like making documentaries? Because we were forced to keep within the 10 minutes, since they were combined with film projections in theatres; and in 10 minutes any idea is contracted! This is why we made documents that were 'film tasters', neither documentaries nor films, so hybrids that occasionally turned out to be pretty good, but essentially weren't satisfactory. It was a way to discourage the production of documentaries. Vittorio De Seta, one of the greatest Italian documentary filmmakers, was an exception!

Then, recently, as you've seen, a documentary won an award in Venice.<sup>3</sup> This is a major event. I haven't seen it yet, but I've heard it's a good film. But what's particularly good is the choice made by Biennale director, Alberto Barbera, to include this film in the Festival and that the jury then selected it for an award. So right now, it is very important to rediscover the maestro who has created the greatest documentary works, Joris Ivens, and then to make him known,

in various circles, not only at the Cinémathèque Française, but everywhere. This is the aim of the Ivens Foundation. It would be nice to go back to China, where Ivens was; it would be interesting to see the relationship between his China and the China of today. Or to South Vietnam – not North, because that would be complicated. It would help understand. Let's take *Terra di Spagna* (*The Spanish Earth*, 1937): it would be important to go to Spain and propose again this documentary, among other things written by Hemingway, with a commentary by Orson Welles – in short: it also has a fine cast, and presents itself well! So the force of Joris Ivens's films is once again current, precisely today, in the battle that's being fought for documentaries in the film world.

**WE'VE ALSO LEARNED FROM PREVIOUS INTERVIEWS THAT IVENS MADE USE OF COLOUR. AS WE COULD SEE FROM THE DOCUMENTS PRESERVED IN THE FOUNDATION, THIS IS A USE THAT IS LINKED TO EDITING PLANS. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THIS ASPECT?**

Ivens started the editing of the film *L'Italia non è un paese povero* (*Italy is Not a Poor Country*). Once it went into slow motion, after about twenty days of work, we saw a nice board with all the sequences indicated and so many colours. He gave a different colour to each sequence, then when the sequences were quite similar, he gave the same colour. He would say: "This way, I can immediately see the balance, harmony or discord in the film at a glance". I remember he once said: "There's too much yellow... Obviously, I have to balance this yellow with other colours" – with other sequences, that is! – "I have to place these sequences in relation to each other to create a more harmonious work". And in that sense, it was an important lesson. Of course, then everyone goes his own way, but this is a way of always bearing in mind that, when you make a film, you shouldn't let yourself get carried away, maybe with a part that comes more easily to you... Obviously, this will always be the case, but you always have to stay focused on the unity of the work you are doing. And he always remembered it, because he had this board that allowed him to move forward and to correct himself. But in the end, he used to say: "Then you can even throw the board away – you can also do without it!"

1 Interview September 19th 2013, Rome  
2 Eni (Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi), at the moment Italy's biggest industrial company working in 79 countries with 67,000 employees, was established in 1953 by its Chairman, Enrico Mattei. He acquired important oil concessions in the Middle East, North-Africa and the Soviet Union, breaking the oligopoly of the 'Seven Sisters' that dominated the mid 20th century oil industry, like Shell, Esso, Caltex and BP. He himself coined this name 'Seven Sisters'. On 27th October 1962 Enrico Mattei died in a mysterious aircraft accident after a bomb exploded in his private airplane. The unsolved death of Mattei has obsessed Italy for years and was the subject of *Il caso Mattei* (*The Mattei Affair*, 1972) by Francesco Rosi.  
3 *Sacro GRA*, by Gianfranco Rosi (Italy, 2013), winner of the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale Festival 2013.

Joris Ivens, Film still from *L'Italia non è un paese povero*, 1960. Coll. JIA/ESJI/PROA.

Paolo Taviani, in *Quando l'Italia non era un paese povero*, by Stefano Missio, 1997.

Vittorio (L) and Paolo Taviani with the Golden Bear prize, February 18, 2012 at the 62nd Berlinale International Film Festival. ©AFP Photo / John MacDougall.



**Research**

Alessandro Cecchi from the Institute for Music of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice and Maurizio Corbella from the University of Milan are studying Ivens's Italian film even more deeply than before. In the past already two Italian documentaries focussed on various aspects of the film. Stefano Missio interviewed a lot of the collaborators involved, presenting Rai's censorship, in his *Quando l'Italia non era un paese povero* (1997). Daniele Vicari in *Il mio paese* (2006) made a road movie following the geographical route of Ivens's film in opposite direction, linking the promising booming industry presented by Ivens with the current de-

cline and crisis in Italy, suffering dramatically from inherent weaknesses and setbacks in the international marketplace. His documentary won the David di Donatello for best documentary at the Venice Film festival in 2007. The first interest of Cecchi and Corbella was the experimental film score, composed by Italy's pioneer of electronic music in Rome, Gino Marinuzzi Jr. They found the tape with the recording of the cues and the original manuscript in the house where Marinuzzi's widow still lives. They also were in touch with ethnomusicologists Ignazio Macchiarella, Antonello Ricci and Nicola Scaldaferrì, who are helping to delve into Ivens's use of folk musical repertoires of the legendary Sicilian folksinger Cic-

cio Busacca and Diego Carpitella's collection of field-recordings in Lucania. At the Cineteca Nazionale they received the help of Mario Musumeci, who believes to have found traces of the original negative film, which were cut and edited with other dupe negative footage for the realization of the International version. This discovery could finally make it possible to trace what happened to the original negative. Cecchi and Corbella already lectured about this subject at various events and are preparing a book about *L'Italia non è un paese povero*. Moreover they are trying to newly publish the original unreleased film in the series "Real Cinema" of the Italian publisher Feltrinelli, with the support of the Archivio Storico Eni.



# the foundation update

New design website by  
Walter van Rooij and Bjorn  
Thanhauser

Edgar Reitz during an  
interview about Ivens, 19  
November 2008, N1



## New website

At the beginning of 2014 the new website of the Foundation will be launched. The design is based on visual tiles. The renewal of the website is not only intended to update the design, it is especially necessary to make the digitised collections available to the public. Numerous search terms refer to tens of thousands of documents, articles, posters and photos. Short film interviews about Ivens will be presented on-line as well: with Edgar Reitz, Paolo Taviani, Leonard Retel Helmrich, Thomas Waugh and others.



## Poetry & Politics Film competition

Joris Ivens integrated poetry and politics in his films. As a mean of honouring this approach and supporting contemporary documentary filmmakers the Foundation will start an on-line film competition called 'Poetry & Politics'. Once

a year a prize of 2,500 euro will be granted to the winner. Criteria are political message and/or ways of production/dissemination and poetry in the film language. The short films will become available on our new website.

## Catalogue raisonné

The Foundation has started a long-range project to describe all films, titles and versions in a catalogue raisonné. The reception and an analysis of the films will be part of the research project as well. In fact 20 films were already researched within the framework of the DVD-box. Esther van Ede, student at the University of Utrecht, continued this research project by studying the first home movies of Joris Ivens (1912-1927). Esther made a shot-by-shot analysis of the home-movies. A home movie that never had been screened before was discovered. Interesting also is the discovery that the photoshop owned by his father C.A.P. Ivens possessed and sold the Kinamo N25 camera right from the moment ICA produced it in 1921. It makes it plausible that Joris Ivens shot his first home movies in Nijmegen with this handheld camera from his father's shop. Pedro Tavares, Graduate on Documentary Film Studies. ESTA (Higher Education for Technology) – IPT in Tomar, Portugal, will especially study the Vietnamese films. The research of Gunter Jordan about the DEFA films made by Ivens fits with this catalogue raisonné project.

## The board

As of 2012 the board of the Foundation consists of:  
**Drs. Paul Kusters, MA**, (1962, president), studied Film studies at the Radboud University in Nijmegen, worked at the Netherlands Filmmuseum (a.o. a restoration project of nitrate films by Joris Ivens) and the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision. Runs an image research agency.  
**Drs. Marc Dankbaar, MA** (1964, secretary), studied law at the Radboud University in Nijmegen, worked for the national trade union (FNV), was a teacher at the Radboud University, at the moment he teaches at the Hanze University Groningen. He is also Chairman of the international Music Meeting.  
**Dr. Sylvain De Bleekere, PhD** (1950), studied Philosophy at the University of Leuven, is teaching at the University of Hasselt (Belgium). He published books about Nietzsche, Tarkovski, Ivens and visual culture and visual thinking. Was editor for film magazine Cinemagie. Is chairman of the cultural foundation Men(S)tis.  
**Dr. Liang Luo, PhD** (1974), studied at the Beijing Normal University (China) and took her PhD at Harvard University. She is teaching at the University of Kentucky (USA) on modern literature in China, especially the poet Tian Han. She lecturing and publishing around the world, among other things about the international relationships within the vanguard movement.  
**Cornelis Nootboom** (1942-2013), studied at the Theater Academy in Maastricht, was an actor in various theatre companies. He also wrote and directed theatre plays for the left wing political theatre group Proloog and was part of their management collective. Later on, he was appointed deputy director of the Theaterschool in Amsterdam. He was a nephew of Joris Ivens, the son of his sister Thea Nootboom-Ivens.  
To our sadness Cornelis Nootboom passed away completely unexpected on Saturday 1 June 2013. We will remember his humour, sense of perspective and well-considered ideas about the Foundation. Until the end of his life he kept his beliefs and political convictions.  
**Prof. Dr. Bert Hogenkamp, PhD** (1951) studied history at the University of Amsterdam and took his PhD at Westminster

College, London. He is Head of Research at the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision and used to teach at the University of Utrecht. He is extraordinary professor at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam. He has published many books and articles about the history of documentary (he is preparing his third and final part of the history of Dutch Documentary film) and is also a board member of the Henri Storck Fondation and Studio Nieuwe Gronden.  
**Dr. Ralf Schenk, PhD** (1956), studied at the Karl Marx University in Leipzig and was film journalist of various cinema magazines. He worked at the Filmmuseum Potsdam and Progress Film-Verleih. He published many books and articles about German filmculture, focussing on the history of DEFA, the Babelsberg film studios and filmmakers like Slatan Dudow, Manfred Krug en Frank Beyer. Since 2012 he has been Chairman of the DEFA-Stiftung and programmer at Berlinale and Dok Leipzig.  
In 2010 Sabine Lenk was appointed board member:  
**Dr. Sabine Lenk, PhD** (1959, treasurer), studied Film studies in at the University of Erlangen and Nouvelle Sorbonne III in Paris. Worked in various filmarchives such as the George Eastman House (Rochester, USA), Cinémathèque française (Paris), Royal Filmarchive of Belgium (Brussels), Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Municipal Filmarchive of Luxembourg. She used to be head of the Düsseldorf Film-museum (Germany) and published about early cinema and archives. Is a board member of KINtop, Film Amateurs, Mémoire d'Europe Inédits.



## Joris Ivens Archives digitised

Last year, the Joris Ivens Archives were digitised again. This had already been done ten years ago, but this time at a higher resolution and in colour. The BREED Company will continue scanning other collections from our vaults. The files will become available on our new website.

## Province of Gueldern

Since 2009 the Foundation has been subsidized by the province of Gueldern in which Nijmegen is situated. The province has again appointed the Foundation as a cultural partner in the framework of her policy plan 'Gelderland cultural province' for the next three year. However this partnership will be subsidized with a much smaller amount of money. That is why the Foundation is also looking for other sources of finance.

## The Unknown Ivens

For five years Joris Ivens collaborated with and was commissioned by the DEFA (Deutsche Aktien-Gesellschaft, the first post-war production company in Germany). For almost ten years he was also involved in the International Leipziger Documentary and Short Film Festival for Cinema and Tele-



Günter Jordan studying the  
Joris Ivens Archives

Digital scanner at BREED,  
Nijmegen (left)

vision (today: DOK Leipzig). For 35 years he was a corresponding member of the Deutschen Akademie der Künste (German Academy of Arts). His collections and first official archive were established in East-Berlin. The first documentaries about him were produced there too. From the GDR he explored the world, and, last but not least, the turning point in his political genesis was there. Nevertheless, this period of his life was up till now the least well documented so far. A research project of film historian and DEFA-specialist Günter Jordan and the DEFA-Foundation will fill this gap. The discovery of new exciting source material on this period in various archives and a more elaborated research framework pave the way for a reconsideration of Ivens. This not only concerns the intertwining of his biography and the historical context, but also the production history and analysis of films like Freundschaft siegt (Friendship Triumphs, 1952), Friedensfahrt 1952 (Peace Tour, 1952), Lied der Ströme (Song of the Rivers, 1954), Mein Kind (My Child, 1956), Die Windrose (The Windrose, 1957) and Die Abenteuer des Till Eulenspiegel (The Adventures of Till Eulenspiegel, 1957) as well as Ivens' contribution to Unbändiges Spanien (Unruly Spain, 1962). These films were not only treated in a painful way by historiography, but also by Ivens himself. He could not stop praising Lied der Ströme during the 1960s, but he fell silent and ignored this film completely during the final two decades of his life. Will this continue to be a Curiosity of Film history or should Ivens be saved from Ivens? This revealing book will be published next year and hopefully it will be accompanied by a DVD-edition of DEFA-Films by Joris Ivens.



Cornelis Nootboom, 1942-2013

## Joris Ivens Award (Cinema du reel) for Dieudo Hamadi

How can somebody become a filmmaker in a country without cinema? On Saturday 31 March the young Congolese filmmaker Dieudo Hamadi received the Joris Ivens Award at the 35th Cinéma du réel Filmfestival in the Centre Pompidou, Paris for his documentary film Atalaku. The Joris Ivens Award is meant for debut or second films. Hamadi made his film in Kinshasa, a city of nine million inhabitants, without cinema however. He filmed the presidential campaign in 2011, which was only the second free election since the



Dieudo Hamadi © Jean-Eudes  
Bazin

Marceline Loridan-Ivens  
presenting the Joris Ivens  
Award © Clair-Emmanuelle  
Blot



Dieudo Hamadi, still from *Atalaku*, 2013.



Film Theatre Centre Pompidou  
© Clair-Emmanuelle Blot



Democratic Republic of the Congo gained independence in 1960. Gaylor, who is penniless (like most of Kinshasa's nine million inhabitants) and a pastor turns into an atalaku, which means a 'crier' in Lingala. He makes a deal with the political candidate who has offered him the highest price for his services: ensuring the campaign's street publicity and finding musicians to write the campaign song. *Atalaku* could certainly not have been made by a non-Congolese, given the extent to which the filmmaker becomes one with those people he films – he is sometimes summoned to film ballot-box stuffing and the teeming crowd makes way for him, dimly aware that having a witness is crucial. The film is constructed so as to show the domino effect between the atalaku and those he pays down the line, the musicians, salespeople and dancers. It ends in confusion and discontent, when Gaylor, who preaches to a very ephemeral god, is blamed for his inability to keep the promises made by others. Hamadi's choice to continue filming two weeks after the election allowed him to accommodate an epilogue that breaks with this occasionally immersion in violence, which also gives the film its force.

Peter Davis at the Joris Ivens Archives



**Peter Davis donates film interviews**  
In 1981 Canadian documentary filmmaker Peter Davis made film interviews (16 mm.) with Joris Ivens in Paris, Martha Gellhorn in London and Helen van Dongen in Vermont. These long interviews are focussing on their memories of the Spanish Civil War. Joris Ivens directed *The Spanish Earth* in Spain from January until the end of April 1937. Helen van Dongen edited the raw material in New York. Martha Gell-

horn was present in Madrid reporting as a war correspondent, while her love affair with Ernest Hemingway was blossoming. Hemingway joined Ivens's film team on the war front in March '37. Gellhorn felt quite positive about Joris. According to Gellhorn he was always brave, funny and persuasive, stayed calm despite the chaos and dangerous circumstances. Back in the US Gellhorn succeeded in arranging a meeting between president Roosevelt, Hemingway, Ivens and herself at the White House. Peter Davis gave the original film prints to the Foundation, parts of them will become available on our new website. He is preparing a documentary about Ivens, *The Spanish Earth* and the Spanish Civil War, which will include excerpts of the interviews. Davis originates from London, where he completed his Masters studies at Oxford University before emigrating to Sweden and then North America. Since he founded Villon Films in 1970, he has been independently producing and distributing some seventy films with a strong focus on socio-political documentary. He won numerous awards and his work has been shown on every major television network on the globe including CBC, CTV, BBC, CBS, NBC, Swedish Television, German Television, and NHK Japan.

### Hanns Eisler commemoration

Fifty years after German composer Hanns Eisler passed away, a series of commemorations were organized around the world. Various of these events were accompanied by screenings of Ivens films, such as *Regen*, *Komsomol* and *The 400 Million*. Eisler wrote the score of these films. Their professional collaboration began in Magnitogorsk in 1932. It resulted in the 'Suite für Ochester Nr. 4 opus 30' ('Die Jugend hat das Wort'), accompanying the film *Pesn O gerojach* (*Komsomol*, *Song of Heroes*). For the film *New Earth* (1933), the classic sequence capturing the closure of the dike got striking staccato music, matching the fast rhythm of the editing. Eisler arrived in the US in 1938 as an exile from Nazi-Germany, where he met Ivens again. Ivens asked him to write music for *The 400 Million*. Eisler based this experimental score on Adorno's twelve-tone system. In 1941 the roles reversed. It was Eisler who asked Ivens if he could use the silent film *Rain* for his 'Film Music Project'. Eisler was head of this project at the New School of Social Research in New York. Afterwards, Eisler considered the quintet 'Vierzehn Arten den regen zu beschreiben' ('Fourteen ways to describe Rain') as his best piece of chamber music.



The Centre for the Moving Image in Scotland found photos of Eisler and Ivens, made during the sound recordings for *Komsomol* in May 1932. The photos were sent by Ivens himself to the *Cinema Quarterly* (edited by the Edinburgh Film Guild) and were published in Autumn 1932.

## Ivens in Museums (1): Centre Pompidou and Rijksmuseum: Philips Radio

### Centre Pompidou

'Multiple Modernities, 1905-1970' is the name of the new presentation of the collection of Centre Pompidou, the National Museum of Modern Art in Paris. It completely renews the museum's traditional presentation, focusing on a more open, wide ranging approach to art in the modern period. All continents are covered in this selection of over 1,000 works by nearly 400 artists, making for a more balanced representation of the various regions in the

The circuit now incorporates artistic expression that developed in the USA, Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and Africa alongside the different movements in Europe. This greatly enlarged reading of the history of art also sheds fresh light on a number of unjustly-neglected aesthetics and artists. Organized in chronological order from 1905 to 1970, it shows how key modernist ideas spread throughout the world, and focuses on the artistic expression of regions hitherto considered marginal. 'Multiple



presentation of the Rijksmuseum's collections. Instead of presenting various art forms separately (painting, sculpture, applied arts, etc.), the visitor is guided through a chronological circuit in which painting, sculpture, applied arts and historical objects are combined to produce an overview of Dutch art and history from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century. In the past, before this renovation, the presentation at the Rijksmuseum of art&history halted at the beginning of the 20th century. Thanks to exciting purchases and loans, various new exhibition rooms were created. In the first room of the 1920s *Philips Radio* of Joris Ivens is shown permanently as an icon of modernism. The Ivens film is surrounded by paintings of Piet Mondriaan and Theo van Doesburg, the chairs of Gerrit Rietveld, the photographs of Man Ray and a real airplane of Frits Koolhoven. *Philips Radio* -the first sound film of the Netherlands-reveals how the country changed into a modern industrial society.

New forms of art, like photography, film and design, are presented as equal to older art forms. Harm Stevens, curator of the 20th century exhibition: 'We show films as an autonomous art. So no abridgments, but integral screenings of the complete films'. The decoration is sober and modest. There are no digital adornments. 'The art and the materials have to tell the story. The artistic and historical standard is defined by the rest of the museum and this is very high. We selected iconic pictures and classics'. *Philips Radio* is known as the 'Modern Times' of the Netherlands, although it lacks the humor of Chaplin's film.

world, and a wider overview of this period of art. Ivens' *Philips Radio* (1929) is on show in the part called 'Construct Revolution', next to Tatlin, Malewicz, Pevsner and Huszar.

Modernities' reflects a wide diversity of artistic experience, and features experimental film, photography, the applied arts and architecture. The presentation includes a larger number of women artists, and also puts the spotlight on modern artists' interest in non-Western arts, popular art, naive art, modern life and the applied arts. In addition, this multidisciplinary exhibition gives visitors a chance to see 200 unfamiliar works illustrating the rich variety of the Centre Pompidou collection, together with new acquisitions and major recent donations. 23 October 2013 - 26 January 2015



### Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

On 13 April 2013, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam was reopened after a vast ten year renovation. The international press lavished praise on the restoration and adjustments and the splendid interior design. Perhaps even more sweeping than the architectural interventions and the scrupulous restoration of the nineteenth-century decoration is the new concept for the







SUSAN MARTIN-MÁRQUEZ,  
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY<sup>1</sup>

# BY CAMERA AND BY GUN

*'The people have started to find their true path [...] the struggles are, little by little, stronger and more heroic. We are all in an enormous laboratory, and history will tell what our place is, with a gun and (yes, dear Joris) a camera.'*  
Sergio Solomonoff, letter to Ivens  
February 23, 1970<sup>2</sup>

## Joris Ivens and the Radicalization of Latin American Filmmakers

During World War II, Jimmy Jones, the son of a Washington, D.C. medical doctor, travels to Bolivia to negotiate a deal to secure quinine production for the United States. While there, Jimmy befriends a young indigenous couple and a medicine man. He also falls in love with María, the 'Spanish' daughter of a landowning family, a 'modern woman' who promotes progress and education for the native communities. Jimmy's rival for María's affection is the Nazi Hugo, who conspires against the American by turning his Bolivian friends against him. Just as the indigenous youth is preparing to murder Jimmy, however, he falls ill with malaria. The medicine man's treatment is ineffective, but the stricken youth's girlfriend has learned how to prepare quinine from American books, and armed with that knowledge she manages to save him.

Throughout 1941, Joris Ivens pitched a number of variations on this film scenario, produced with the aid of the Academy Award-winning Hollywood screenwriter Donald Ogden Stewart, to several studios as well as to United States and

Bolivian government officials.<sup>3</sup> Ivens aspired to become an important player in—and beneficiary of—the 'Good Neighbor Policy', which had been launched by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to improve relations and promote a more fruitful exchange between the U.S. and Latin American nations in the aftermath of the Depression and at the onset of World War II. Although indirect pressure continued, the U.S. suspended its practice of military intervention in the region's internal and external affairs, and a new State Department agency that included a motion picture division was charged with encouraging solidarity across the Americas.<sup>4</sup> Seeking a \$1.2 million budget, Ivens proposed a series of films 'to promote better cultural and economic relations and to counteract popular misconceptions which the people of the U.S. may have of the people of the republics to the South', noting that 'this can best be done by films of the documentary type', so long as they are 'more dramatic, entertaining, and therefore commercially feasible'. Ivens planned to 'surprise' American audiences with the level of

technological development in Latin America by showing, for example, 'a modern city or university next to an Incan ruin'.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, in an apparent pursuit of commercial viability, the Jimmy Jones scenario trafficked in stereotypes (the malleable indigenous youth quickly turns to violence), reproduced colonialist narratives of modernity (U.S. medical knowledge trumps native practices), and exploited ethnographic prurience (Ivens' files on the project include notes for the incorporation of 'Indian love-making' customs into the film).<sup>6</sup> Though it appears to have initially met with significant enthusiasm, as evidenced by supportive letters from the State Department as well as Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Ivens' project never made it into production.<sup>7</sup> In the decades that followed upon this brief moment of potential Latin America-centered collaboration, Ivens and the U.S. government each underwent transformations in perspective and practice that placed them on opposite sides of an unbreachable ideological divide. The Cold War ushered in a new period of aggressive U.S. intervention in Latin America, ostensibly designed to contain the global expansion of communism. From the 1950s to the early 1980s, as J. Patrice McSherry has written, 'U.S.-backed armed forces carried out military coups throughout Latin America, moving to obliterate leftist forces and extirpate leftist ideals' through counterinsurgency operations and training programs.<sup>8</sup> Ivens, by contrast, worked to burnish his leftist credentials, and beginning in the 1960s he made numerous trips to Latin America to work with filmmakers who sought to solidify or spark the creation of socialist governments, often by militating against regimes—typically dictatorships—that were supported by the U.S.<sup>9</sup> In this article, I will draw extensively upon original documents housed in the Joris Ivens Archive in order to provide a broad-based account of Ivens' multifaceted goals and frequently clandestine activities during this time period, ranging from his work for the Cuban revolutionary army, to his support for guerrilla warfare and paramilitary filmmaking across the region, and his close collaboration with and admiration for the creators of what would come to be known as the New Latin American Cinema.

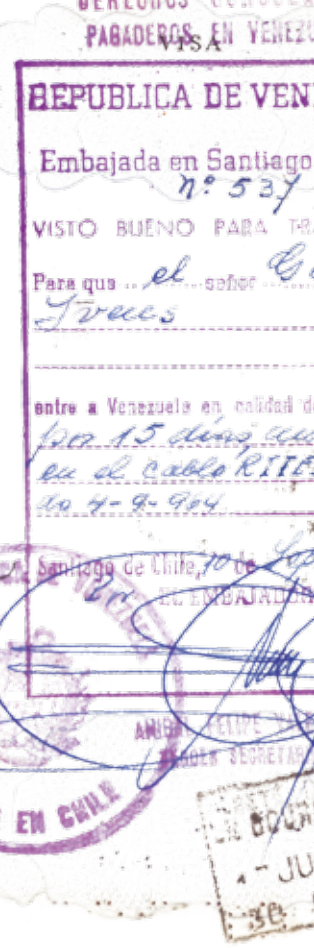
### JORIS IVENS AND REVOLUTIONARY FILMMAKING IN CUBA

Ivens' period of intensive involvement with Latin American filmmakers began with an invitation from Alfredo Guevara, who headed up the Cuban Institute for Cinematic Arts and Industry (ICAIC), the state-run production company that had been founded shortly after the victory of the revolution in the first weeks of 1959.<sup>10</sup> Ivens traveled to the island in early September of 1960 with an initial plan to shoot a film and provide guidance to ICAIC's personnel, many of whom were relative newcomers to the medium. Ivens stayed for six weeks, but the trip was not his last: over the course of the next two and a half years, the filmmaker would come to spend a considerable amount of time in Cuba.

The night of his arrival, Ivens delivered a lecture to

300 members of ICAIC. It was the first of many times in which he impressed the Cubans with his boundless energy, notwithstanding the fact that he was already into his sixties, and suffered from a severe asthma that was exacerbated by the island's climate.<sup>11</sup> During his visit, Ivens reviewed rushes and films by a range of Cubans, scheduling in special meetings with different categories of ICAIC's staff, such as short film specialists and the newsreel group.<sup>12</sup> The archive includes hand-written notes from some of those sessions, which reveal that Ivens honed in on fundamental technical issues—criticizing, for instance, the lack of variety in camera framings and movements, or in editing styles—as well as on ideological concerns. For example, in his notes regarding the 1959 documentary short 'Housing' ('La vivienda')—which had been directed by the Centro Sperimentale-educated ICAIC co-founder Julio García Espinosa—Ivens characterizes the work as 'not accusing enough; not enough angry about poverty, or richness'.<sup>13</sup> Ivens continued to advise Cuban filmmakers to foreground their moral stance in lectures he delivered at ICAIC on later visits to the island, weighing in on the ongoing and impassioned debates regarding the degree to which cinematic texts should privilege ideological clarity over the promotion of critical reception practices. In April of 1962, for example, he provided a detailed consideration of the use of voiceover narration, concluding that documentaries should allow the audience actively to consider different viewpoints, before indicating which one of those viewpoints was the most legitimate.<sup>14</sup> In the same lecture, Ivens also acknowledged the young institution's growing pains, recognizing the challenges that ICAIC's apprentice filmmakers faced, given the dearth of a film school, and the exhausting on-the-job training that made it difficult for them to participate in professional development opportunities. In order to satisfy the 'hunger for learning' and enable ICAIC's members to 'make a jump in the quality' of their films, Ivens announced that time would be set aside for a new series of finely-focused hands-on workshops and theoretical debates.

During his inaugural visit in the fall of 1960, Ivens also shot two documentary films. Although Alfredo Guevara had asked him to produce a work on the revolution, Ivens proposed instead that he take a trip around the island with a small crew in order to create a more free-form example of cinematic journalism (Ivens and Destanque 260). The resulting film, titled 'Travel Notebook' ('Carnet de viaje'; 1961), adopted an upbeat tone to highlight the early accomplishments of the revolution. Inspired by the refurbishing of an enormous movie theater into the 'Charlie Chaplin Workers' Film Club', Ivens framed the narrative as a letter to the iconic silent-era star beloved by Cubans, and he also featured the 'birth of Cuban cinema' with images of ICAIC's film and animation studios and youthful personnel at work in a number of scenes. But the remainder of 'Travel Notebook' sought to document the island's rich popular culture—showing Afro-Cuban dances, for example—as well as the regime's efforts to improve

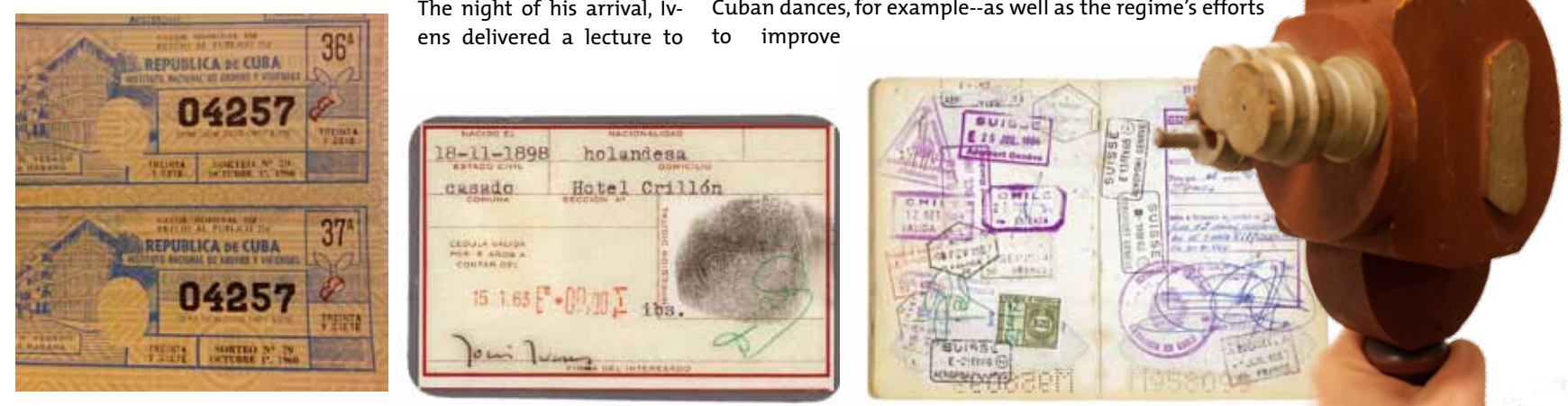


Left to right: Cuban lottery tickets from October, 1960;

Ivens' Chilean identification card; Ivens' passport with a stamp from Venezuela;

One of the wooden cameras Ivens used to teach filmmaking in the Cuban war correspondents school. Coll. JJA/EFJL.

Production photo from Pueblo armado with Joris Ivens in the middle of the back row, Cuba, 1961. Coll. JJA/EFJL.





Joris Ivens and Fidel Castro, 1961. Coll. JIA/EFJL.

Article on the war correspondents school published in *Verde Olivo*, August 1962; although the article carefully omits Ivens' participation, the drawing appears to be of him filming. Coll. JIA/EFJL.



daily living standards across the island: the new homes that were replacing huts for farmworkers and fishermen and women; the rehabilitated hospital that provided health care to all; the literacy campaign and educational initiatives that reached the remotest of areas. The guided filmmaking tour around the island would be repeated for subsequent visits of other foreign filmmakers, such as Chris Marker and Agnès Varda, whose own documentaries ('Cuba sí!' [1961] and 'Salut les Cubains' [1963]) registered many of the same locations, cultural characteristics, and revolutionary achievements as 'Travel Notebook'. Although they met with varying degrees of censorship outside of Cuba, these films were undeniably successful in their sympathetic portrayal of the hopeful ebullience of the first years of the revolution. Ivens collaborated intensively on 'Travel Notebook' with a small group of Cuban directors and cinematographers, including Jorge Fraga, Jorge Herrera, and Ramón Suárez, who would soon become major figures in the Cuban industry.<sup>15</sup> They were constantly by his side in Cuba, and continued to shoot needed footage once Ivens returned to Europe later in October. Several ICAIC associates also worked on postproduction with Ivens in France. The Dutch filmmaker was particularly anxious to have Fraga's help at the editing stage, and ICAIC grudgingly released him to travel to Paris in late December. It was a very busy time—Saúl Yelín, ICAIC's Director of International Relations, wrote Ivens that the atmosphere was like a 'mad people hospital' as all were preparing for the grand premiere of the institute's first feature film, *Stories of the Revolution* (*Historias de la Revolución*; Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1960)—and resources were very tight. Yet ICAIC's officers anticipated that Ivens' work would draw invaluable global attention to Cuba. They agreed to send Fraga, but Alfredo Guevara wrote to let Ivens know that he would soon be needed back in Cuba for work on the literacy campaign and the 'People's Encyclopedia' project of short didactic films, and Yelín also asked Ivens to seek out a 'cheap hotel' for him to minimize the expense.<sup>16</sup> During his stays in Cuba, Ivens left a profound impression on Fraga and his other local collaborators, as evidenced in personal correspondence and in more public fora. Although many Cubans recalled Ivens' advice regarding structural

and technical matters, such as the challenges of capturing the gradations of color and texture in Cuba's vegetation and sky with black and white film stock,<sup>17</sup> they also emphasized the filmmaker's personal qualities. In one of several articles published on Ivens in ICAIC's magazine *Cine Cubano*, for example, Fraga recalled his initial shock at the heated argument that the Dutch filmmaker engaged in with a farmer during the film shoot. First thinking it was an abuse of power, he later discovered that it was characteristic of Ivens to take as a given the equality of his interlocutors, eschewing 'paternalism and more or less sentimentalist attitudes'.<sup>18</sup> Alberto Roldán, who had also worked on the documentary shoots, was impressed by Ivens' ability to remember very precise details about everyone he had met in Cuba.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Héctor Veitia, who worked closely with Ivens during his later visits, recalled the small but personalized gifts that the filmmaker brought them from his travels, such as endearing figurines from Mexican markets (including one of an owl that he was saving especially for Chris Marker, who was obsessed with the birds). Veitia recounts how, as Ivens was about to board one of his flights home, he embraced him and felt that 'I had met a great man, and had come to love him as much as my own parents'.<sup>20</sup> Fraga expressed similar sentiments in a letter in English he sent to Ivens after his first departure in the fall of 1960: 'we all have missed you, but I give myself a special right for missing you, not only because I've learned many important things from you (possibly more than you may be conscious of, I hope!) but also 'cause I've won an enduring friendship, a precious thing'.<sup>21</sup> As Julio García Espinosa noted on the occasion of a 1963 roundtable event dedicated to Ivens, 'what better homage can a man receive in his life than to know that something of him as a person and as an artist lives in others?'<sup>22</sup> Ivens' encounters with a range of Cubans and his experiences on the island during such a historically resonant period would also have a profound effect on him. The Cubans' response to the ongoing threats of counterrevolutionary activity and U.S. invasion, for example, came to alter some of the parameters of his filmmaking project, but also prompted Ivens to conceive of his mission in more ambitious terms. The shift began as he was filming scenes for 'Travel Notebook' in the city of Trinidad, and Fidel Castro called to request that he interrupt that shoot in order to capture a skirmish with counterrevolutionaries in the jungles of the Escambray mountains.<sup>23</sup> Castro then asked that the resulting footage be incorporated into a film depicting the recruitment and training of the popular militias that were charged with defending against such attacks, and Ivens and his Cuban crew consequently spent four weeks with a fledgling brigade, an experience that is recorded in 'Cuba, an Armed People' ('Cuba, pueblo armado'; 1961). As Thomas Waugh has noted, this film is more intimate and dramatic than 'Travel Notebook', tracing out the development of the group of soldiers from a ragtag band—even a parrot seems to make fun of their inexperience—to a well-disciplined and skilled unit that confidently pursues threats to the revolution.<sup>24</sup> The original footage of the military engagement with the counterrevolutionaries is skillfully woven in so that it appears to represent the brigade's first major victory. (The rebels eventually surrendered, an event that they reportedly consented to re-enact so that Ivens might film it in better light. The voiceover narrator underlines the difference between these 'confused peasants' who are fooled into taking up arms against the revolution—and are freed by their captors—and Batista-era torturers-turned-mercenaries, who are shown no mercy.) Notwithstanding the sometimes overbearing tone of the narrator, Waugh argues that the film culminates effectively in an agitprop ending



in which 'an entire nation, editorially synthesized, seems on the march'.<sup>25</sup> Ongoing militarization continued to impact Ivens' Cuba work. After the filmmaker returned to Europe in mid-October of 1960, the shooting of additional key scenes for his two films was delayed because Jorge Herrera was called away to cover an invasion attempt that the Cubans believed would be launched from Guatemala (which was ruled by a U.S.-backed military dictatorship at the time), and from United Fruit Company holdings throughout the region. Letters to Ivens from both Fraga and Alfredo Guevara that autumn refer to the expected invasion, which did not in fact take place until April of 1961 (the famous Bay of Pigs episode).<sup>26</sup> Although filmmakers from ICAIC were mobilized to cover the Bay of Pigs invasion, the need for specially-trained soldiers to handle such eventualities became acutely evident, and Ivens subsequently stepped forward to assist with the initiative. The archive includes a Spanish-language typescript titled 'Cinema, an Arm of the Revolution', at the top of which Ivens has written in French, 'article by Joris Ivens 1962 Cuba for "Olivi Veriti" the magazine of the Cuban army'.<sup>27</sup> The piece was in fact published under the title 'The Role of Cinema at the Front' in January of 1962 in *Verde Olivo*, the weekly news and culture magazine of the armed forces. The final copy is substantially revised to include vivid examples from World War II and Ivens' personal anecdotes from shooting in China and Indonesia, as well as to cast a more positive spin on the footage that ICAIC had managed to capture during the Bay of Pigs invasion. Both versions underscore the crucial ways in which filmed images of people's armed struggles may inspire solidarity with those struggles at home and abroad, asserting that 'in the face of possible aggression, in Cuba cinema can be another valuable weapon on the national and international front'. Both are also clearly designed to persuade officers (likely readers of *Verde Olivo*) not to view the camera operators among their troops as 'artists' indulging in 'dangerous fantasies', but rather to respect, valorize and facilitate their work.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, they acknowledge the need for those operators to be thoroughly conversant with all aspects of combat operations; in short, they must be properly trained—politically, militarily, and technically. Ivens was centrally involved in that training, as he would later reveal in his autobiography,<sup>29</sup> and as additional documentation from the archive also confirms. Ivens recounts that Fidel Castro himself had been anxious to incorporate camera operators into the military, and that he was asked to take charge of the initiative because of his experience filming during wartime. The documentarist met with Castro to negotiate the terms, and then worked to convert a rural hacienda that had once belonged to the dictator Batista's family into a facility that would be baptized the Frank Pais School, in memory of the anti-Batista resistance fighter.<sup>30</sup> Ivens mentions that a Haitian writer and two young technicians from ICAIC assisted him; one of the school's students has further specified in a recent interview that in addition to Ivens his instructors were René Depestre, Jorge Herrera, and Héctor Veitia (Marrero Yanes).<sup>31</sup> The group was initially given a single 16mm camera to be shared by forty recruits, many of whom were urban and rural workers with limited educational backgrounds. Recalling that in the Spanish Civil War he had seen young soldiers training with sticks of wood instead of rifles, Ivens decided to have his students practice with wooden cameras as well; he had them 'film' simulated battles with home-made 'Bell and Howell' mock-ups, and was amazed when they described with great precision all of the 'shots' they had captured, and entered into fierce debates regarding the different strategies that they had em-

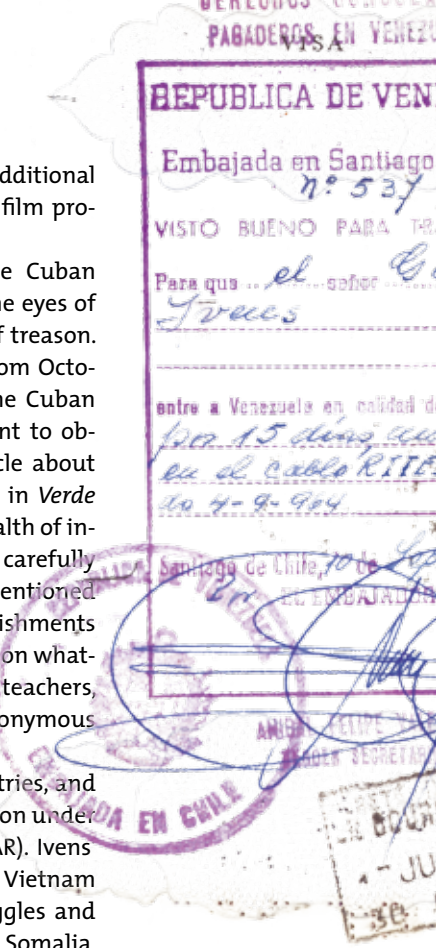
ployed.<sup>32</sup> In time, the school was provided with additional cameras, as well as the necessary equipment for film processing and editing.<sup>33</sup> During this period, Ivens' involvement with the Cuban army had to be kept completely secret, since in the eyes of the Dutch state it might be construed as an act of treason. The archive includes an official request dating from October 1961 that his passport not be stamped at the Cuban airport,<sup>34</sup> which was evidently a precaution meant to obscure his precise whereabouts. Similarly, an article about the school published in the late summer of 1962 in *Verde Olivo* (also filed away in the archive) provides a wealth of information and photographic documentation, but carefully elides all reference to Ivens.<sup>35</sup> The students are mentioned by name in the text and photos, and their accomplishments are singled out for praise. But there is no information whatsoever regarding the school's administration and teachers, and only a 'general education' class—with an anonymous instructor—is shown in progress.<sup>36</sup> Ivens eventually moved on to work in other countries, and the war correspondents school continued to function under the umbrella of the Cuban Armed Forces (MINFAR). Ivens pupils and those of successive classes covered the Vietnam War, as well as a number of independence struggles and other conflicts in Africa (in Angola, the Congo, and Somalia, for instance), which otherwise would have remained largely undocumented.<sup>37</sup> In his autobiography, Ivens recalls re-encountering in Hanoi one of his former Cuban students, who was also filming the Vietnam War, and who told him how valuable his lessons had proven to be, particularly his advice about when to set aside the camera and take up the rifle in the midst of battle. Ivens pauses to reflect on the ways in which documentary filmmaking has drawn him closer to history, as well as to others: 'When I happen to come across a man who brings me back to a time when his life and mine have touched, I am simply happy. It is a reward that comes at just the right moment, and it is quite different from a prize at Cannes'.<sup>38</sup>



Joris Ivens during the shooting of *Pueblo armado*. Coll. JIA/EFJL.

#### THE 'JORIS IVENS BRIGADE': GUERRILLA FILMMAKING THROUGHOUT LATIN AMERICA

During his time in Cuba, Ivens also became involved in a surreptitious and remarkably wide-ranging project to promote revolutionary filmmaking in and about Latin America, which until now has been little studied by scholars of either the Dutch cineaste or, more broadly, of Latin American cinema. To my knowledge, there are only two published sources that examine this project in any detail. Hans Schoots' biography of Ivens devotes a tantalizing two pages to the filmmaker's 'secret activity' in relation to Latin American filmmakers.<sup>39</sup> Schoots provides a Eurocentric account, asserting that the initiative began in 1960 at the Leipzig Film Festival, with the establishment of scholarships enabling aspiring filmmakers from the Third World to study at DEFA,







V. Torres, 'It's not just about shooting the film but about bringing it back!', cartoon, Cuban war correspondents school. Coll. JIA/EFJL.

the Berlin-based East German film school and production facility. In his autobiography, however, Ivens explains that the project was centered in Cuba and originated in Fidel Castro's and Che Guevara's mission to spread armed revolutionary struggle throughout Latin America, a step that he himself had come to believe was necessary during his time on the island. The Cuban leaders as well as Ivens viewed film as an important weapon in the revolutionary arsenal, and the documentarist agreed to direct what he terms a 'semi-clandestine movement' to create cadres of guerrilla filmmakers.<sup>40</sup>

Ivens notes that the movement had no legal existence in Cuba, and that officially he was simply working as a consultant for ICAIC.<sup>41</sup> In the archival documents as well as in some of the secondary literature a number of participants make reference to the 'Joris Ivens Brigade', or simply to the 'brigade', a word that Ivens has also written on the back of at least one of the relevant pieces of correspondence; the term 'the organization' is also sometimes used.<sup>42</sup> Roque Dalton, the Salvadoran poet, journalist, and revolutionary who spent much of the 1960s in Cuba as a guest of the prestigious Casa de las Américas cultural institution as well as in military training camps, interacted with members of the Joris Ivens Brigade, who were involved in what he characterizes as a 'vast plan' to film Latin Americans' armed liberation struggles.<sup>43</sup>

In his autobiography Ivens recounts that he periodically held 'very discrete' meetings in Cuba with comrades from different Latin American nations; they would spend hours discussing militant filmmaking initiatives, with Ivens providing advice for development and expansion, and arranging to supply any necessary materials or equipment, which he purchased second-hand in Mexico. Although Ivens mentions no specific dates, these meetings must have taken place during his lengthy stays in Cuba from the fall of 1960 through 1962. When possible, Ivens personally reviewed the footage shot by brigade members, and he also arranged for would-be filmmakers to travel to Cuba to study at ICAIC.<sup>44</sup>

What is not completely clear from the available sources is how, precisely, the significant expenses this project entailed were covered, although the Cuban government evidently picked up part of the bill (Ivens notes that on the island he was provided a villa, a few collaborators, and a 'little bit of money').<sup>45</sup> Curiously, Ivens does not mention DEFA as a training location, but the East German 'scholarships' to which Schoots refers did indeed facilitate the brigade's work. A January 2, 1961 letter to Ivens from Willi Zahlbaum, who was studio director at DEFA from 1960-62, is cautiously vague but refers to the finalization in December [1960] of a proposal including all of the necessary 'political, technical, organizational, and financial measures' discussed at the Leipzig Film Festival (which had been held in November). Zahlbaum notes that a small committee was working to implement Ivens' training plans even though the funding was not yet in place; his mention of a 'Moscow consultation' also seems to indicate that some of that funding might come from the Soviet Union. He concludes the letter by reassuring Ivens that 'we are ready!' and by noting that the head of the film school has told him that 'three foreign friends' will arrive in January.<sup>46</sup>

A recently-published text presenting the testimonial of a Salvadoran militant, pseudonymously referred to as 'Manuel Antonio', apparently provides the first documentation of the experiences of this earliest group of brigade members who studied at DEFA beginning in January 1961.<sup>47</sup> Manuel Antonio was sent to the GDR via Mexico City and Havana, where he spent several days in the company of Roque Dalton. The text notes that Ivens' assistant in Cuba, the Argentine 'Alicia', organized Manuel Antonio's travel, and that once he arrived in Berlin he joined other brigade members, all of whom shared an apartment. Three of the six members of this group have since died and are mentioned by name in this volume: the Guatemalan poets Arqueles Morales and Otto René Castillo, and the Venezuelan journalist Cayetano Ramírez (I will discuss the latter two in more detail below). In addition to taking classes in filmmaking and in German (which presumably facilitated their studies and allowed for some degree of integration into GDR society), the group underwent personal defense and paramilitary training.<sup>48</sup> This source provides a unique account of the experiences of the early 'brigadiers', but unfortunately because of ongoing security concerns it is quite short on details.

In his brief treatment of this facet of Ivens' career, Schoots asserts that the filmmaker's 'coordinating work' with Latin America ended when Moscow withdrew support for the project, noting that the Soviets 'favored the parliamentary road to socialism and were worried that Cuba might encourage armed struggle'.<sup>49</sup> It is clear, however, that much more than 'encouragement' was coming from Cuba--and from Ivens.

#### THE 'JORIS IVENS BRIGADE' IN VENEZUELA: A CASE STUDY

The training of guerrilla filmmakers was an essential aim of the Joris Ivens Brigade, but the Dutch documentarist's sponsorship of revolutionary filmmaking in Latin America was not limited to that endeavor. My research suggests that Ivens' wider strategy, formulated in collaboration with a host of Latin American associates, and continuing for some time after his early-1960s visits to Cuba (well beyond the presumed period of Soviet sponsorship) was four-pronged: 1) training of soldier-filmmakers from throughout Latin America who would both participate in and film guerrilla warfare; 2) support for Latin American 'civilians' interested in producing militant films that might be shown in alternative or clandestine circuits, if not through traditional commercial channels; 3) commissioning and/or collection

of footage shot by Latin American filmmakers for incorporation into the work of radical European cineastes; and 4) pitching of co-productions of 'legitimate' films directed by Ivens. The latter measure provided cover for the underground activities, but was also necessary for economic reasons: Ivens was extraordinarily generous with his time, energy, and advice, but he was not inclined nor could he afford to be entirely selfless, as he had to earn a living through filmmaking.

To exemplify how this process worked 'on the ground', I will focus on Venezuela, which is less discussed in the critical literature on Latin American filmmaking of the era, but is the best documented case in the Ivens archive, perhaps in part because of the relatively less repressive conditions in that country in the sixties.<sup>50</sup> Even so, as this was a predominantly covert militant project, any characterization of the brigade's activities remains a partial one. Ivens himself notes in his autobiography that 'this is a moment in my life that I have forgotten somewhat, because I had to forget it'.<sup>51</sup> Secrecy and indirection were the rule, and for that reason understanding the archival materials sometimes requires deciphering 'coded' communications, and reading them alongside a fragmentary, often equally circuitous--and occasionally politically revisionist--secondary bibliography.

Unlike many other Latin American nations, officially Venezuela had transitioned to democracy by the 1960s. From 1948-1958, Venezuelans had suffered first under a military junta and then under the violently repressive, U.S.-backed dictatorship of Marcos Pérez Jiménez. During this period, members of oppositional groups such as the Venezuelan Communist Party (PCV), the Democratic Action Party (AD), and the Social Christians (COPEI) had been forced into exile or underground, where they mobilized against the dictator. After Pérez Jiménez was deposed in January 1958, the nation appeared successfully to shift to democratic rule with the election of AD founder Rómulo Betancourt as president. But the controversial Punto Fijo Pact governing the transition established a limited-party system (with power essentially shared by the AD and COPEI), and swept aside the PCV. By 1961, when Betancourt broke diplomatic ties with Fidel Castro, welcomed U.S. President John F. Kennedy to Venezuela, and stepped up persecution of the militant left, committed communists had split into two camps: one that continued to hope for increased participation through democratic means; and another that advocated for armed struggle. With the support of neighboring Cuba, two revolutionary groups emerged, the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN)—led by figures such as Douglas Bravo and Teodoro Petkoff--and the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), and urban and rural guerrilla campaigns were initiated. Betancourt responded by launching a vigorous counteroffensive, increasing the repressive measures. Later in the 1960s, however, successive presidents sought to appease the left and negotiate with guerrilla leaders, and by the end of the decade many of the latter had been amnestied and returned to 'legitimate' politics (Bravo, who continued the armed struggle into the 1970s, was a notable exception).<sup>52</sup>

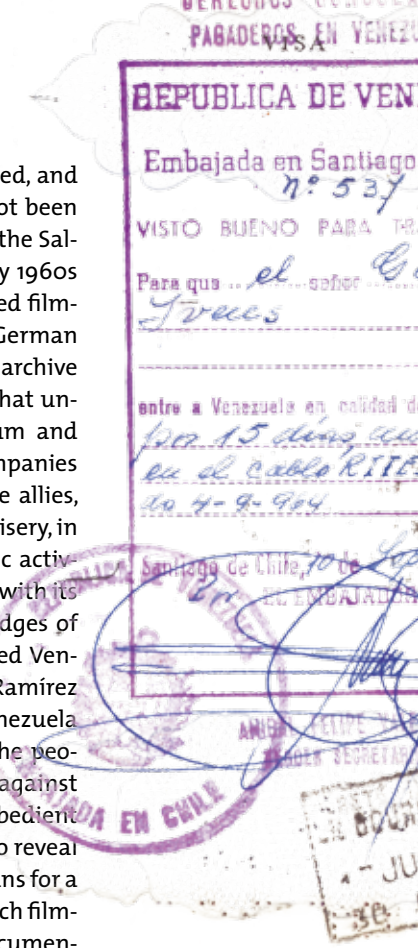
During this convulsive time period, Ivens interacted with a significant number of Venezuelan militants, intellectuals, and cultural figures, who would participate to a greater or lesser extent in the brigade. Cayetano Ramírez, for example, makes several appearances in the Ivens archive.<sup>53</sup> Ramírez was a life-long communist, taking a leadership role early on through his local Communist Youth league and working to organize young workers and students in the 1950s.<sup>54</sup> He was a journalist and served on the board of that sector's union, the SNTP, one of the leading forces opposing the Pé-

rez Jiménez regime. In 1957 he was detained, tortured, and held in the Obispo prison.<sup>55</sup> I unfortunately have not been able to determine how Ramírez first met Ivens, but the Salvadoran testimonial text indicates that by the early 1960s he had been selected to join the brigade that studied filmmaking at DEFA.<sup>56</sup> By 1963 he was drafting plans in German for militant films regarding Venezuela. The Ivens archive includes two such documents,<sup>57</sup> which emphasize that under Betancourt the nation's tremendous petroleum and mineral wealth remained in the hands of U.S. companies (especially Standard Oil) and their Venezuelan elite allies, while the vast majority of the population lived 'in misery, in backwardness, under political terror', as 'democratic activity is cruelly suppressed'. Caracas initially impresses with its modern buildings and wide avenues, but on the edges of the city live hundreds of thousands of impoverished Venezuelans in hillside shantytowns. It is no surprise, Ramírez asserts, that the largest crowd ever recorded in Venezuela had gathered for the visit of Fidel Castro, or that the people had formed the FALN to take up armed struggle against 'the terror of the Betancourt government that is obedient to the U.S.A.' One of Ramírez's documents appears to reveal the influence of Ivens, as it outlines more specific plans for a film adopting the 'I form' (harmonizing with the Dutch filmmaker's own preferred manner of 'personalized' documentary storytelling),<sup>58</sup> with a narrative revolving around the experiences of Andrés, who moves from student to worker to insurgent commander.

According to his Salvadoran comrade 'Manuel Antonio', after the training in Berlin Ramírez spent time in France and Italy before returning to Venezuela to work as a journalist and university professor. A typewritten page of notes by Ivens dated January 16, 1967 indicates that Ramírez left Europe for Caracas on the 5<sup>th</sup> of that month, carrying with him two cameras (one 16mm and one 35mm), and charged with setting up an independent documentary group focused on filming Caracas and emphasizing its 'Americanization'—a vague characterization that nonetheless jibes with the more explicitly militant plans formulated in Ramírez's texts. In the notes, Ivens remarks that Ramírez has also been given two letters and a copy of his Vietnam War film 'The Sky, the Earth' to deliver to Josefina Jordán, another collaborator already at work in Venezuela, and that he has been enjoined to establish good relations and to cooperate with her and her group.<sup>59</sup> Curiously, however, none of the letters from Jordán or the other Venezuelans makes any reference at all to Ramírez,<sup>60</sup> and none of the quite sparse secondary bibliography ties him to Ivens or to filmmaking in Venezuela.

Most of the archived correspondence is between Ivens and three other important Venezuelan filmmakers, all of whom debuted in the 1960s: Jordán (b. 1940), Carlos Rebolledo (1932-1994), and Jesús Enrique Guédez (1930-2007). Rebolledo had lived in exile during the Pérez Jiménez dictatorship, studying humanities in Chile, where he joined the university film club and had the opportunity to interact with the young Chilean directors who would later collaborate with Ivens, and then working on newsreels in Mexico with the famed producers Miguel and Manuel Barbachano. At the beginning of the 1960s, he received a scholarship that enabled him to study filmmaking at the IDHEC in Paris,<sup>61</sup> where it is possible that he first met Ivens. Guédez, for his part, was an award-winning poet and a journalist who left his post at a leading newspaper and sold his car in order to undertake filmmaking training in Europe, at Rome's Centro Sperimentale, in 1962-63.<sup>62</sup>

In a characteristically gendered representation of Venezuelan film history, Rebolledo and Guédez have been called





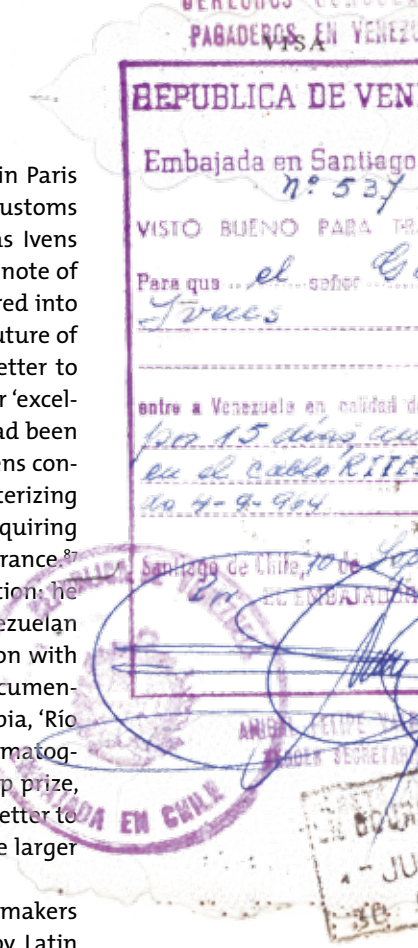
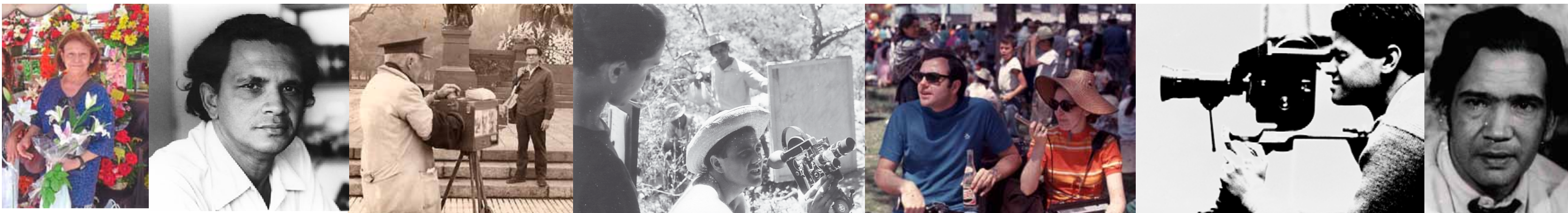
the 'fathers of Venezuelan social documentary'.<sup>63</sup> Josefina Jordán's name is often omitted from Venezuelan film genealogies—notwithstanding her own significant contributions to the medium—and in various public and private communications the director herself occasionally adopts a self-deprecating tone and minimizes her own work on behalf of the development of documentary, sometimes citing her child-care responsibilities.<sup>64</sup> Yet Jordán's correspondence with Ivens is both the earliest and latest in the archival folders from Venezuela, and it reveals her persistence and dedication to the cause of committed filmmaking. Significantly, in the 1967 text regarding Cayetano Ramírez's trip to Venezuela, Ivens refers to 'Josefina's group', suggesting that he views her as the leader of that documentarist 'foco'.<sup>65</sup> For her part, Jordán would come to characterize Ivens as 'my dearest friend'.<sup>66</sup> She first met the Dutch filmmaker in Cuba in 1962. Barely beyond her teenage years, Jordán had managed to scrape together funds for a 16mm camera, which she had used to film the upheavals of the early 60s.<sup>67</sup> She periodically dropped her footage off at the Cuban embassy in Caracas, and the leader of Venezuela's Communist Youth also hand-delivered a large roll of her images to ICAIC when he traveled to Cuba, where it was incorporated into the Latin American newsreels directed by Santiago Álvarez. Jordán was offered an internship at ICAIC, and ultimately she spent eight months in residence learning about all aspects of film production. Jordán's stay in Cuba coincided with Ivens', and when she met with the latter in person, René Depeste, his Haitian collaborator in the war correspondents school, served as translator.<sup>68</sup> Twelve days after her return home (on January 13, 1963), Jordán wrote to Ivens in Chile, inviting him to visit Venezuela. She noted that his stay would be sponsored by the Caracas Athenaeum; Jordán's references to the possibility that Ivens might be hosted by the president of the Athenaeum in her beautiful, art-filled home with fine Spanish wines suggests that she was well aware of the filmmaker's appreciation for creature comforts. At the same time, she deploys indirection to communicate the required (a)political valence of the public aspects of his visit, requesting that he bring along films like 'The Seine Meets Paris' for a retrospective, since '[those of] your films that are already here don't strike me as the most appropriate ones for this occasion. Here we have *Song of the Rivers* and two others of that style. Do you understand?' (While 'Seine' provides a poetic glimpse of Parisian daily life from aboard a boat traversing the iconic river, *Song* is a DEFA-produced exaltation of international workers' struggles). Jordán also suggests that to save on transportation costs they wait until he has traveled 'closer to us, as you told me [you would do] in Mexico', carefully avoiding any direct mention of Cuba and their contacts there. Jordán's references to the film she plans to shoot on Venezuelan flora—extolling the wealth of trees

in her native land—also appear to be cyphers for a more political project, and indeed later in the letter she cannot resist mentioning her surprise at discovering the complex and changing reality of the country upon her return, and her desire to capture it all on film.<sup>69</sup> Ivens didn't arrive in Venezuela until the early fall of 1964, stopping over not from Cuba but from Chile, where he had been filming 'Victory Train', a hopefully-titled short about Salvador Allende's ultimately unsuccessful first bid for the presidency. During his visit, Ivens met a range of Venezuelan cultural figures, and the number of interlocutors in the archive expands. One subfile includes multiple exchanges with Carlos Rebolledo and with Venezuelan publisher and producer José Agustín Catalá regarding a planned co-production between the latter's Ávila Films and the Parisian backer of many of Ivens' films, Argos, as well as other documentary projects to be shot by the local group. Catalá (1915-2011) was an AD party member and major activist against the Pérez Jiménez regime, who had spent several years in jail in the 1950s and was well known for his *Black Book of the Dictator* listing the assassinations, torture and other repressions of the era.<sup>70</sup> Just after Ivens' visit, on September 30, 1964, Rebolledo sent him an enthusiastic letter, affirming that their encounter—characterized as 'a breath of fresh air'—had left him and Catalá feeling rejuvenated and confident about the joint filmmaking opportunities.<sup>71</sup> Catalá followed up on October 7, informing Ivens that he had contacted Argos and looked forward to their collaboration.<sup>72</sup> Ivens sent numerous telegrams and letters seeking to finalize the agreement. But by February of 1965, the deal had fallen through, and Rebolledo wrote bitterly to Ivens about Catalá's 'odd and somewhat unstable character', remarking that 'he is like all the wealthy men in this country, he invests his money wherever the profits are surest, are most guaranteed'.<sup>73</sup> In his reply, Ivens urged Rebolledo to maintain a cordial relationship and persist in seeking to work with Catalá, and most particularly that he attempt to revive his enthusiasm for the coproduction.<sup>74</sup> The latter efforts, however, were unsuccessful: for several years, Ivens continued to hold out hope that Catalá would help finance one of his films—in the summer of 1966 he was still fishing for an opening<sup>75</sup>—but the project would never come to fruition. As the archive reveals, the Venezuelan group experienced other disappointments as well. Jordán, Rebolledo, and Guédez had met with Ivens during his visit in order to formulate detailed action plans, which are summarized or referenced, more or less cryptically, in their letters.<sup>76</sup> The group quickly founded and registered a production company, UNIFILM, to provide a legal front for their work.<sup>77</sup> Joining forces with one of Venezuela's top cinematographers, Abigail Rojas, they sought out paid commissions—for tourism-oriented, scientific, and commercial films—to bolster their cover story and,

crucially, as a source of personal income as well as funding for their clandestine activities. The conflicted relationship with Catalá hindered some of those efforts. Furthermore, according to a letter Jordán later sent Ivens, Rojas did not initially demonstrate the expected solidarity with the group: he demanded the usual fees for his work, failed to fulfill his obligations regarding a potential for-profit job, and had not yet delivered any of the oil industry images filmed with a portion of the 'seed money' that Ivens had supplied.<sup>78</sup> Some of those start-up funds were used to train two young guerrilla filmmakers (who are referred to as 'students', 'reporters', or 'cinematic journalists' in the epistolary record), and here Rojas did come through, providing both the necessary instruction and a 16mm camera of his own for the trainees to share. But Jordán was also dismayed that neither shot any of the anticipated action footage. In a recent publication, she has remarked that once the guerrilla filmmakers found themselves in their Lara mountain outposts, 'whenever there was an armed encounter, they preferred using a gun rather than a camera'. They eventually buried the camera in a cave.<sup>79</sup> Through their passion and perseverance, however, the group's members did manage to produce important documentary works. During his visit to Caracas, Ivens asked to see the hillside shantytowns which had been mentioned in Cayetano Ramírez's texts and which had likely been the subject of conversation with a number of his Venezuelan interlocutors. For his part, Guédez discussed with Ivens his plans for 'The City that Watches Us' ('La ciudad que nos ve', 1966), a film centered on the shantytowns that he would direct with Jordán as assistant director and Rojas as cinematographer, and that is now considered the foundational work of Venezuelan social documentary. Guédez later published the notes that he jotted down after his conversation with Ivens (dated September 15, 1964), which indicated that the latter advised him, for example, to craft a rich soundtrack with authentic materials, to balance shooting interiors and exteriors, close-ups and wider shots, and to find a 'narrative backbone' to provide structure to what otherwise might seem to be disperse anecdotes.<sup>80</sup> Guédez and Jordán began their project by recording many interviews over the course of several months, familiarizing themselves with the people and types of activities they would find once they returned for the final shoot. But they also discovered that once they did so, surprises emerged in front of the camera, such as the children who played war games—reflecting the theme of violence that the filmmakers sought to capture—but also staged protests over the price of milk.<sup>81</sup> Most importantly, the documentary emphasized the residents' agency, in a bid to counter the paternalism with which they were typically treated in the press; as Guédez insisted in an interview, 'they are people who go hungry, but who have not stopped

thinking'.<sup>82</sup> Guédez sent the finished film to Ivens in Paris early in 1966; the work was initially held up in customs (presumably for political reasons),<sup>83</sup> but as soon as Ivens was able to watch it with several friends, he sent a note of praise to Guédez, remarking that it should be entered into a European festival and that it boded well for the future of the group.<sup>84</sup> He later wrote a warmly supportive letter to Jordán as well, telling her that he 'really loved' their 'excellent' film.<sup>85</sup> When Guédez informed Ivens that he had been invited to submit the film to the Evian Festival,<sup>86</sup> Ivens contacted a colleague involved with the event, characterizing the Venezuelan filmmaker as 'very talented' and inquiring about the possibility of funding to invite him to France.<sup>87</sup> But Ivens perhaps found himself in a sticky situation: he was president of the Evian jury, and when the Venezuelan film ended up a finalist, it was in direct competition with his friend and collaborator Jean-Pierre Sergent's documentary on the FARC guerrillas in neighboring Colombia, 'Río Chiquito' (1966), made in conjunction with the cinematographer Bruno Muel. The latter film garnered the top prize, and Ivens perhaps sought to soften the blow in his letter to Jordán, implying it was still in essence a win for the larger cause.<sup>88</sup> Sergent and Muel were two of the European filmmakers allied with Ivens who incorporated footage shot by Latin American brigade members into their own work: in another documentary from the same period, 'Camilo Torres', they used images of the guerrilla-priest's funeral filmed by Colombian associates.<sup>89</sup> Ivens also enlisted the Venezuelan group to provide similarly high-value (and in some cases potentially high-risk) footage, typically characterized as 'actualités' or 'ethnographic' or 'educational' materials in the correspondence, or even more obliquely in one letter from Guédez as 'a compilation of some material'.<sup>90</sup> The archive reveals that Ivens' efforts to aid that mission were not always felicitous. An obviously fake letter, dated October 22, 1964, from 'Educational et Television Films, LTD' in London, certifying that 'Mr. Carlos Rebellero is employed by our company for the purpose of filming items of a technical and cultural nature', and requesting that 'you give him every possible facility in his work',<sup>91</sup> was likely completely unusable, given the (clearly unintentional) mélange of English and French in the company's moniker, and Ivens' characteristic misspelling of Rebolledo's name.<sup>92</sup> Ivens seemed especially eager to receive images from the oil industry in Venezuela, and his exchanges with Rebolledo and other members of the group often included inquiries regarding Rojas' progress on a project they referred to as 'The Richest People in the World';<sup>93</sup> the title was evidently meant ironically but it also provided an excellent cover, since slickly-produced petroleum company documentaries such as 'Assignment: Venezuela' (1956) typically asserted that the oil fields were

From left to right: Josefina Jordán, today; photos from the 1960s and 1970s of Jesús Enrique Guédez (2 images); Raymundo Gleyzer and Juana Sapire (2 images); Sergio Solomonoff; and Carlos Rebolledo.



Joris Ivens, still from ...A Valparaíso (1963): cartoon criticizing U.S. interference in Latin America. © Argos Films, Paris.



Juan David, Caricature of Ivens, published in *Cine Cubano* in 1963.



Caricatura de Joris Ivens

Alfredo Rostgaard, ICAIC's famous tenth anniversary poster featuring a smoking camera-gun.



Poster, 1968 Latin American Documentary Film Festival, Mérida, Venezuela, organized by Carlos Rebollo.

Poster for one of the Latin American Film Weeks held in Venezuela in the years following the 1968 Mérida festival.



providing highly desirable blue- and white-collar jobs and bringing great prosperity to Venezuelans. But the exchanges regarding this material hint at possible tensions between filmmakers on either side of the Atlantic. While for security reasons the Latin Americans may sometimes have preferred contributing anonymously to the films of their European counterparts, many of them were also seeking to establish careers in their own right, and public recognition of their work—especially at European festivals, given the persistence of (neo)colonial hierarchies of value—was also essential.<sup>94</sup> Ivens appears to recognize this when he asks Jordán to remind Rojas to send him the oil company town footage—and urges her to assure him that he will be fully credited as the ‘auteur (director and cameraman)’ of the film, which he hopes to post-produce in Paris, send out to festivals, and usher into distribution.<sup>95</sup>

It is not clear what, in fact, happened to this footage, but it is possible that some of it may have ended up in another important documentary produced by the Venezuelan group during this time period, ‘Dead Well’ (‘Pozo muerto’, 1967), directed by Rebollo in conjunction with Edmundo Aray and shot by Rojas. At the time, oil companies were strategically cutting back on their investments in the country in order to pressure the Venezuelan government to grant them more concessions. The measure resulted in even greater hardship for the Venezuelans who depended upon the industry for their livelihood, as ‘Dead Well’ documents. Shot in the Maracaibo Basin region, the film focuses on three men: a barber who had worked for 25 years at the La Paz petroleum camp and was left in utter poverty when the company decided to abandon the site; a fisherman who had shifted to oil work but was forced back to his original profession after the retrenchment, only to find that marine life had been devastated by the industry; and a journalist from the area who documented the consequences of ‘imperialist intervention’ in Venezuela.<sup>96</sup> This film is considered the first to treat the oil industry from a specifically Venezuelan (and of course highly critical) perspective. Together with ‘The City that Watches Us’, it was also recently voted one of the ten most important Venezuelan documentaries ever made by a group of eighty film professionals and critics.<sup>97</sup>

The make-up of the creative team of ‘Dead Well’ exemplifies the ways in which the brigade members’ networking amplified their field of action. Rebollo’s collaborator on the film, together with Rojas, was Edmundo Aray, a central player in the 1960s avant-garde group ‘The Roof of the Whale’ (‘El Techo de la Ballena’), which was dedicated to ‘cultural guerrilla warfare’<sup>98</sup> and whose participants had ties to the brigade as well as to Ivens. The archive includes a letter from Aray to Ivens, inviting the filmmaker to participate in The Roof of the Whale’s international conference in the summer of 1967.<sup>99</sup> Josefina Jordán’s husband, the visual artist Jacobo Borges, was also a participant in The Roof of the Whale. Borges, for his part, moved into politically-engaged multimedia work in the second half of the 1960s, and he directed the cutting-edge urban installation ‘Image of Caracas’ (‘Imagen de Caracas’), a massive project to which Jordán contributed as well. The piece, which took several years to prepare (from 1966–68), had been commissioned by the Caracas municipal council to commemorate the 400-year anniversary of the founding of the city. It involved live performances as well as images cast upon large mobile screens by eight film and 45 slide projectors, all of which recreated episodes in the city’s history, with a special emphasis on the exploitation but also the activism of the working classes. The public roamed freely throughout; the team sought to create a ‘fluid’ and ‘questioning space’, where traditional boundaries between spectacle and audience member would be erased and the latter would come to the realization that ‘the answer is not in the show, the answer is himself’.<sup>100</sup> Not surprisingly, given its radical goals, the installation was quickly shut down by the government. But according to Jordán and others, many of the nation’s film professionals received essential training through ‘Image of Caracas’.<sup>101</sup>

The Venezuelan brigade members went on to become central players in the development of film culture in their home country and in some cases in the larger Latin American context. Rebollo, for example, became the director of the film department at the University of the Andes in Mérida, which he helped to convert from a facility specializing in science documentaries to a center for politically-committed filmmaking. Inspired by a similar event in Viña del Mar, Chile held in 1967, he organized a pan-Latin American documentary film festival in Mérida in 1968, which brought forty cineastes and sixty films to Venezuela. ‘Dead Well’ and ‘The City that Watches Us’ were shown alongside landmark works such as Fernando Solanas’ and Octavio Getino’s Argentine film *Hour of the Furnaces* (*La hora de los hornos*), which sparked student protests in the streets of Mérida.<sup>102</sup> The event was one of three festivals of the late 1960s (together with the first and second [1969] editions of the Viña del Mar festivals) that enabled filmmakers to exchange ideas and explore differences and commonalities, solidifying the concept of a ‘New Latin American Cinema’ that was emerging inside and outside of the region. Rebollo invited Ivens to serve on the jury of the Mérida festival, but he was unable to do so. He did attend the 1969 Viña event, and the folder archiving materials from that trip includes a playful hand-made certificate, cut from scalloped-edged paper (perhaps a placemat), and reading in French, ‘To the Great Man and Cineaste Joris Ivens as a PERMANENT MEMBER of the Mérida Festival’.<sup>103</sup> Ivens’ telegraphic notes from the festival contained in this folder—he has jotted down, for example, ‘Paternalisme – Marker – Goddard [sic]’; ‘Latin America is in a state of war [...] new form is not aesthetic, more ideological’<sup>104</sup>—suggest that he was struck by the degree to which Latin American filmmakers were seeking to distance themselves from some of his European colleagues, and fully embrace militant filmmaking. His own speech at

the event lauded those moves. Asserting that ‘the only film that counts now is the militant and revolutionary film’, Ivens urged Latin Americans to eschew traditional European teachings regarding filmmaking, and to learn to use whatever means were at hand: ‘guerrillas don’t think that they have to have the best rifle in order to engage in combat; instead, they act, they fight, and if necessary they take up the machete’.<sup>105</sup>

Rebollo, Guédez, and Jordán joined in the search for new cinematic forms and practices that might respond to the specific circumstances and needs of Latin America, producing many important films after their inaugural works in the mid- to late-1960s. A letter from Jordán, undated but evidently sent sometime after 1969, is the last documentation in the archive of Ivens’ exchange with the Venezuelans.<sup>106</sup> Jordán’s tone in this missive is much more confident and optimistic. She notes that her letter is being delivered in person to Ivens by Teodoro Petkoff, the former guerrilla fighter in the FALN, characterized by Jordán as a ‘hero’. In 1971, Petkoff and others, including Jordán and her husband, joined forces in a new political party, the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS). MAS adopted as a campaign slogan the title of the film that Jordán co-directed (with Franca Donda), ‘Yes We Can!’ (‘¡Sí podemos!’ [1972]), which was a significant feminist work focusing on women’s mobilization.<sup>107</sup> As part of the ‘Urgent Cinema’ (‘Cine Urgente’) group, Jordán organized screenings in factories and working class neighborhoods, and in her letter she asked Ivens for ‘combative’ films to show in those venues. She thanked him as well for facilitating their relationship with French producer Argos, which was providing them the necessary credentials to film in relative freedom in Venezuela. She sent along a copy of her husband’s documentary ‘May 22’ (1969) with Petkoff, asking for Ivens’ opinion. But Jordán also signaled her new group’s independent thinking, making their priorities clear: ‘we are now endeavoring to convert the political goal, the efforts in favor of the Revolution, into the center of our work; cinema is one instrument among others, and while we may not have sidelined aesthetic form, we do hope that it springs from a search for a new language’.

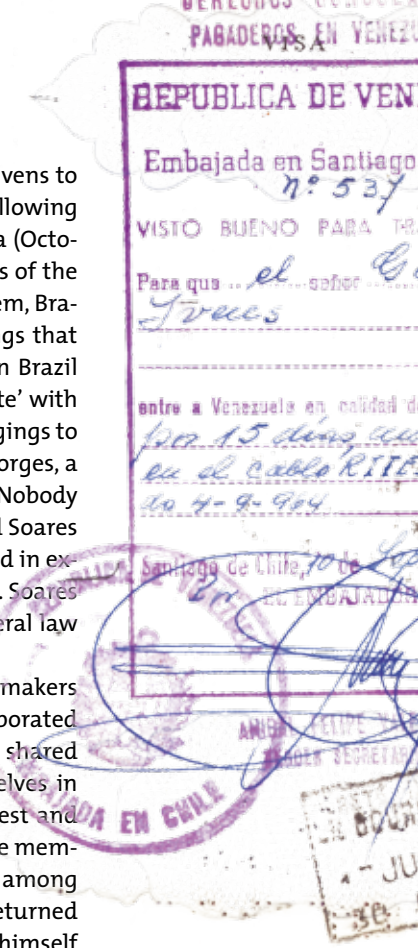
#### THE REPRESSION OF RADICALIZATION: PLEAS FOR AID

The era of guerrilla struggle in Venezuela ended relatively peacefully with amnesty protocols, and there is no indication that any Venezuelan participants in the Joris Ivens Brigade suffered persecution for their work on that front.<sup>108</sup> Some of Ivens’ Latin American interlocutors and collaborators elsewhere were also fortunate to escape relatively unscathed after engaging in more or less radical forms of militant activity. Perhaps the most surprising such case is that of Brazilian Elmar Soares de Oliveira. Soares, described by his friends as a self-effacing and generous dentistry student from a wealthy family living in a home overlooking Copacabana beach,<sup>109</sup> was the founder of the Fotograma group at Rio de Janeiro’s Museum of Modern Art, which promoted and screened animated films.<sup>110</sup> Soares appears to have become increasingly involved in left-wing activism as the Brazilian military regime first instituted after a coup in 1964 stepped up its repressive measures. He wrote an emphatic letter to Ivens from Paris on December 20, 1968, describing himself as an independent filmmaker involved in a group devoted to the production of 16mm black and white ‘political cinema’, films designed for ‘consciousness-raising’ and ‘agitation’ and screened in schools, union halls, and shantytowns.<sup>111</sup> Soares explained that he had spent five months in the French city seeking out distributors for the Brazilian films, and he invited Ivens to a Parisian screening of his works; he also aimed to locate European films of a similar

nature that might be screened in Brazil, and asked Ivens to participate with some of his documentaries. The following fall, on the anniversary of the death of Che Guevara (October 8, 1969), Soares along with three other members of the militant group MR-8 hijacked an airplane from Belém, Brazil to Havana; it was the first of a series of hijackings that would be undertaken by left-wing organizations in Brazil during this time period. Soares left a ‘farewell note’ with his parents instructing them to distribute his belongings to the needy, and leaving his film projector to Chico Borges, a like-minded friend and fellow Fotograma member. Nobody appears to have been injured in the hijacking,<sup>112</sup> and Soares was received with full honors in Cuba, where he lived in exile for a number of years before moving to Portugal. Soares was eventually able to return to Brazil, after a general law of amnesty was passed in 1979.<sup>113</sup>

Unfortunately, others were not so lucky. Many filmmakers in the region with whom the Dutch filmmaker collaborated (in some cases via the brigade), or with whom he shared a friendly and collegial relationship, found themselves in the crosshairs of repressive states. One of the earliest and most horrific losses was that of an inaugural brigade member, Guatemalan poet Otto René Castillo, who was among the original group of six DEFA students. Castillo returned to Guatemala in 1964 and immediately immersed himself in important cultural initiatives (he directed the Municipal Theater in Guatemala City, for example) as well as in the armed struggle against the military regime first installed by a U.S.-launched coup in 1954. In 1965, Castillo was preparing to film a Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) guerrilla outpost in the mountains when he was detained by the military and then sent into exile. Castillo used his time abroad to serve on the organizing committee of the World Festival of Youth and Students, before surreptitiously re-entering Guatemala and becoming the head of propaganda and education for the FAR. In 1967, Castillo was wounded, captured, and taken with his comrade Nora Paiz to a military base, where the two were mutilated and burned alive.<sup>114</sup> I have not been able to find any allusions to Castillo’s death in the archive, and it is not clear when or how Ivens might have learned of this tragedy, or how it may have affected his attitude regarding the brigade.

Poignantly, the archive registers joy as well as sorrow in the case of Raymundo Gleyzer, an Argentine filmmaker who was ‘disappeared’—sequestered, tortured and killed—during the ‘Dirty War’. Gleyzer, who directed important works such as *Mexico: The Frozen Revolution* (*México: La revolución congelada*; 1970) and *The Traitors* (*Los traidores*; 1973), and founded the Cine de la Base militant filmmaking group, had befriended and consulted with Ivens regarding his projects beginning in the late 1960s. On February 19, 1972, Gleyzer sent Ivens a brief birth announcement together with a snapshot of a tiny Diego Julián Gleyzer in the arms of his mother, Gleyzer’s wife and collaborator, the sound technician Juana Sapire. Underneath the photo of Diego, Gleyzer has written (in French), ‘A new revolutionary filmmaker?’ Ivens, in turn, has written on the envelope of the birth announcement: ‘Raymundo Gleyzer in 1976, 1977 imprisoned in Argentina by the Fascist government. We have taken action to free him’.<sup>115</sup> Unfortunately, however, all efforts to save Gleyzer failed, and Sapire and their young son Diego were forced to flee Argentina.<sup>116</sup> (See the accompanying interview with Sapire regarding her and Gleyzer’s relationship with Joris Ivens and his wife Marceline Loridan.) The archive includes a number of pleas for aid from or on behalf of other Latin American filmmakers caught up in the political violence of the era. Several documents, for example, relate to the case of Colombian documentarists Julia



Ivens striking the obligatory pose at the base of the ‘Christ the Redeemer’ statue in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, February, 1968. Coll. JJA/EFJI.







Joris Ivens during the shooting of *Pueblo Armado*, 1962

tortured. An international campaign to free Achugar was successful: he was released after two months and went into exile.<sup>122</sup> Terra, however, languished for years in prison: the final note to Ivens on the back of the photograph, written from Stockholm in 1978, explains: 'I am a refugee in Sweden (for the last three months; I've come from six years of prison). Do you think that I can go to Holland (or even better Benelux) as I am interested in doing so now, since between studying Swedish, or studying French or Dutch, I prefer the last two options'.<sup>123</sup>

There is no record in the archive of Ivens' response to these particular requests, but there is one similar case in which his efforts are indeed well documented. Beginning in late December of 1974, Ivens was sent several letters regarding the Chilean filmmaker and critic Joaquín Olalla, who had worked as an assistant director on his 1963 film 'A Valparaíso'. Jaime Falcón, a Chilean exiled (as Terra would be) in Sweden, informed Ivens that Olalla had been shot in the leg during the military coup that had deposed Salvador Allende and brought General Augusto Pinochet to power on September 11, 1973; he had been pursued by the police ever since then, and it was imperative that he leave the country. Falcón asked Ivens to write directly to Olof Palme, the Prime Minister of Sweden, as his own letters had gone unanswered, and the Latin American Refugees' Committee had not yet deemed Olalla's case grave enough to prioritize it, dramatically asserting that 'we believe a word from you will save him'.<sup>124</sup> By January of 1975, Ivens had written the Swedish leader, beseeching him to aid in rescuing the Chilean, whose talent, honesty, and patriotism he extolled.<sup>125</sup> He cabled and wrote Falcón, enclosing a copy of his letter to the Prime Minister, and expressing 'with all my heart' the hope that it would help save their 'dear friend'.<sup>126</sup> Ivens also sent along a copy of a 'personal' letter to Pierre Schorri, who was evidently an advisor to the Prime Minister, enjoining Falcón not to reveal his knowledge of its existence or contents. In that letter, Ivens appealed to Schorri for help, mentioning their mutual friend, the French revolutionary theorist and activist Régis Debray (who is perhaps best known for having fought with Che Guevara's guerrilla forces in Bolivia).<sup>127</sup> The archival paper trail ends here, but the historical record registers a successful resolution of the crisis: Olalla did indeed make it to safety in Sweden, where he resided for over thirty-five years until his death, though sadly he never returned to work in the cinematic field.<sup>128</sup>

The requests for aid, originating from countries across the entire region, attest to the breadth of Ivens' involvement in Latin America, and make clear that the Dutch filmmaker continued to be viewed as a trusted and loyal supporter, even beyond the period of his most active collaborations. The archive in fact documents Ivens' efforts to find the most precise language to summarize the commitment that I have sought to detail over the course of this essay. In the draft version of his reply to a 73<sup>rd</sup> birthday greeting telegram sent by the 'Latin American Delegation' at the Leipzig Film Festival in November, 1971, Ivens debates between different phrasings.<sup>129</sup> The final version, however, is characteristically unwavering: 'As always I stay firmly attached and closely connected with you and your important film work for the national liberation of your countries of Latin America'.

and Carlos Álvarez. The latter's 1971 film 'What is Democracy?' ('¿Qué es la democracia?') had been classified as subversive and confiscated by the Colombian military, and in the summer of 1972 the couple (along with fellow filmmakers Gabriela Samper and Manuel Vargas, and the distributor Jorge Morantes) were detained, tortured, and imprisoned. A Tricontinental Film Center press release, included in the archive among other related documents, urged the sending of telegrams and notarized letters demanding freedom for the filmmakers.<sup>177</sup> Ivens also received more personal appeals. The Mexican actress and dancer Rosaura Revueltas<sup>18</sup> sent him a telegram regarding her brother and 89 students and teachers who had been imprisoned since October of 1968. José Revueltas, a renowned screenwriter, dramatist, novelist and activist, was accused of inspiring the student protests that had ended in the Tlatelolco massacre ten days before the Olympic Games. Noting that the group had been on a hunger strike, Rosaura told Ivens, 'they need urgently your valuable help'.<sup>19</sup> Another request for aid, this one from Eduardo Terra, is penned on the obverse of a black and white photograph of Ivens taken at the the 1969 Viña del Mar festival; several notes trace out a sad progression of events subsequent to Terra's initial encounters with the Dutch filmmaker in Chile and his native Uruguay that year.<sup>20</sup> After attending the Viña festival, Ivens had traveled on to Montevideo to celebrate the inauguration of the Third World Cinematheque (Cinematca del Tercer Mundo), which began its program with an homage to Ivens and a retrospective of his work. The Cinematheque had built up a collection of 120 films from throughout Latin American and other 'third world' countries, hosted screenings and debates, launched a magazine, and trained filmmakers.<sup>21</sup> The back of the photograph includes a dedication 'with fondness and affection' to 'comrade Joris', and is signed 'with admiration and respect Eduardo Terra Executive Producer of the Third World Cinematheque Montevideo Uruguay until 1972'. The 'until 1972' is significant: in the lead-up to Uruguay's June 1973 military coup, repressive measures increased and the Cinematheque was targeted. In May of 1972 both Terra and another co-founder of the Cinematheque, the film distributor and producer Walter Achugar, were detained and

tortured. An international campaign to free Achugar was successful: he was released after two months and went into exile.<sup>122</sup> Terra, however, languished for years in prison: the final note to Ivens on the back of the photograph, written from Stockholm in 1978, explains: 'I am a refugee in Sweden (for the last three months; I've come from six years of prison). Do you think that I can go to Holland (or even better Benelux) as I am interested in doing so now, since between studying Swedish, or studying French or Dutch, I prefer the last two options'.<sup>123</sup>

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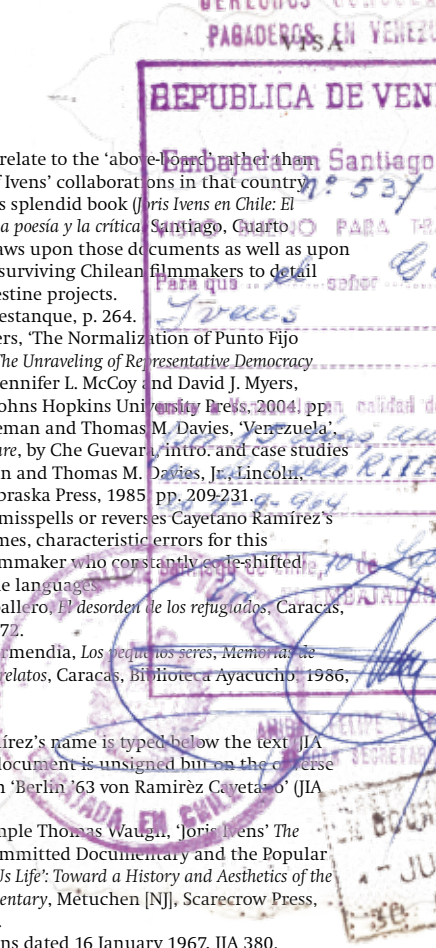
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- 1 Warmest thanks to André Stufkens and Harko Wubs, who provided invaluable research support both during and after my visit to the Archive. I am also grateful for the assistance of Max Matthee-O'Brien and Theo Matthee-O'Brien, who translated German-language documents for my research, including the ones cited here. Other translations, from French, Spanish, and Portuguese, are my own.
- 2 JIA 38. Sergio Solomonoff is an Argentine documentarist who graduated from the Film Institute at the Universidad del Litoral, founded by Fernando Birri in 1956. He left Argentina with his family in 1976, at the beginning of the military dictatorship of Jorge Rafael Videla (the period known as the 'Dirty War'). After democracy was reestablished, Solomonoff returned to Argentina in 1984, and created the program in Social Communications at the Universidad Nacional de Entre Rios.
- 3 Throughout this essay, real names will be used for those of Ivens' correspondents whom I have been able to contact for permission, as well as for those who have since passed away. As I note below, I will use a pseudonym for one of Ivens' collaborators who requested that I do so.
- 4 HWC 146-150; Hans Schoots, *Living Dangerously: A Biography of Joris Ivens*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2000, p. 162.
- 5 Fredrick B. Pike, *FDR's Good Neighbor Policy: Sixty Years of Generally Gentle Chaos*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1995, pp. 164-76; Darlene J. Sadlier, *Americans All: Good Neighbor Cultural Diplomacy in World War II*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 2012, pp. 2-4.
- 6 HWC 147.
- 7 HWC 146, 149.
- 8 The 'Good Neighbor Policy' would instead be promoted onscreen—in some ways surprisingly similarly to Ivens' original suggestions—by works such as the Disney animated features *Saludos Amigos* (1942) and *The Three Caballeros* (1944). For incisive analyses of some of the Good Neighbor-era films, see Sadlier, and Ana López, 'Are All Latins from Manhattan? Hollywood, Ethnography, and Cultural Colonialism', *Film and Nationalism*, ed. Alan Williams, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 2002, pp. 195-214.
- 9 J. Patrice McSherry, *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America*, Lanham [MD] and Oxford, Rowman & Littlefield, 2005, pp. 3, 12-18.
- 10 Earlier in his life, Ivens had made a trip to Cuba (where he visited his *Spanish Earth* collaborator Ernest Hemingway in 1938) and another to Mexico (where he visited his friends the Eislers in 1939 and sought support from the Mexican Ministry of Agriculture to make a film, a project that never came to fruition) (Schoots, pp. 139, 152-53). But over the course of the 1960s, Ivens traveled much more extensively throughout Latin America. I have been able to document individual trips and repeated and/or extended visits in six countries during this decade. The filmmaker undertook lengthy stays in Cuba from September 1960 through 1962; occasional trips to Mexico from Cuba during the same period: four visits to Chile (in spring 1963; for three months from late 1963 into 1964; in late summer 1964; and for the Viña del Mar festival in 1969); one visit to Venezuela, in September 1964; two visits to Brazil, in late summer 1967 and spring 1968; and one trip to Uruguay in November 1969.
- 11 Undated telegram from Guevara to Ivens, JIA 362.
- 12 Thomas Waugh, *Travel Notebook. A People in Arms: Joris Ivens' Work in Cuba*, *Jump Cut*, no. 22, 1980, pp. 25-29, [http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/\[C22\]folder/IvensInCuba.html](http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/[C22]folder/IvensInCuba.html) (accessed 5 August 2010); Héctor Veitia, 'Palabras de Héctor Veitia sobre Joris Ivens', *Cine Cubano*, nos. 14-15, 1963, p. 29; 'Mesa redonda sobre Joris Ivens', *Cine Cubano*, nos. 14-15, 1963, pp. 23-24.
- 13 'Mesa', pp. 22-23; Ivens' Cuba schedule notes, JIA 359.
- 14 Ivens' Cuba lecture notes, JIA 359.
- 15 Ivens' Cuba lecture notes, JIA 620.
- 16 Fraga had worked as a television cameraman and producer before the revolution and was one of the founding members of ICAIC. He was an important director of documentary films and newsreels—a number of them award-winning—and also rose to Vice-President of production of ICAIC in 1978. He subsequently helped to found and create the curriculum for the International School of Film and Television (EICTV), where he taught and served as an administrator. Herrera was a brilliant cinematographer, well known for his work on films such as *Lucía* (Humberto Solás, 1968) and *The First Machete Charge (La primera carga al machete)*; Manuel Octavio Gómez, 1968). Suárez, similarly, was the D.P. on the early films by Cuba's best-known director, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea.
- 17 Letter to Ivens from Alfredo Guevara, 28 December 1960, JIA 362; Letter to Ivens from Saúl Yelín, 28 December 1960, JIA 362.
- 18 Michael Chanan, *Cuban Cinema*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2004, pp. 198-200; Juan Antonio García Borrero, *Intrusos en el paraíso: Los cineastas extranjeros en el cine cubano de los sesenta / Outsiders in Paradise: Foreign Filmmakers in Cuban Cinema of the 1960s*, Granada, Junta de Andalucía, 2009, pp. 155-64.
- 19 'Mesa', p. 22.
- 20 'Mesa', p. 24.
- 21 Veitia, p. 29.
- 22 Letter to Ivens from Jorge Fraga, 11 November 1960, JIA 362.
- 23 'Mesa', p. 19.
- 24 Joris Ivens and Robert Destanque, *Joris Ivens ou la mémoire d'un regard*, Paris, BFP, 1982, pp. 260-63.
- 25 Waugh, 'Travel'.
- 26 Waugh, 'Travel'.
- 27 Letter to Ivens from Alfredo Guevara, 28 December 1960, JIA 362; Letter to Ivens from Jorge Fraga, 11 November 1960, JIA 362.
- 28 JIA 362.
- 29 Joris Ivens, 'El papel del cine en el frente', *Verde Olivo*, 7 January 1962, pp. 13-15. In his autobiography Ivens recalls that Castro himself insisted that military cameramen should not be seen as artists: 'this has nothing to do with the cinema, if it did I would send them to ICAIC' (Ivens and Destanque, p. 266).
- 30 Ivens and Destanque, pp. 266-79.
- 31 Orlando Oliva, 'Corresponsales de guerra y futuros cineastas', *Verde Olivo*, 26 August 1962, pp. 60-66.
- 32 Depeste is a Haitian poet who during the Duvalier dictatorship lived in exile in Cuba, where he was very active in the cultural initiatives of the revolutionary government. Herrera, as mentioned above, had served as cameraman on the two films Ivens produced in Cuba. Veitia was a screenwriter, documentarist and newsreel director who, like, Jorge Fraga, later became involved in the EICTV, where he currently serves as Head of Advanced Studies. Interestingly, in the piece he published on Ivens in *Cine Cubano* in 1963, although he is characterized as 'one of the young Cuban filmmakers who was closest' to Ivens, he is vaguely listed as his 'assistant' (Veitia, p. 29). This is likely due to the need for absolute secrecy regarding Ivens' involvement with the Cuban army, an issue I address in the following paragraph.
- 33 See also Chanan, pp. 197-98; Waugh, 'Travel'.
- 34 Oliva.
- 35 Letter from Antonio Alvite Estévez, Director General of Immigration, 20 October 1961, JIA 362.
- 36 Oliva; also in JIA 362.
- 37 Ivens' precise role continues to be elided in a recent article on the Frank Pais facility published in Cuba's official newspaper (Raquel Marrero Yanes, 'Imágenes en la memoria: Sección filmica de las FAR', *Granma*, 27 December 2011, *Toronto Forum on Cuba*, <http://www.torontoforumoncuba.com/20/post/2011/12/imagenes-en-la-memoria.html> [accessed 25 May 2013]). René Rodríguez Cruz, who was one of the original revolutionaries accompanying Fidel Castro on the Granma in the crossing from Mexico to Cuba, is credited with setting up the school. But according to the earlier *Verde Olivo* article, Cruz was instead tasked (quite importantly) with establishing the school's film processing facility.
- 38 For example, much of the archival footage incorporated into Jihan El Tahri's 2007 documentary *Cuba, an African Odyssey* must have been shot by graduates of the school.
- 39 Ivens and Destanque, p. 270.
- 40 Schoots, pp. 270-71, 273-74.
- 41 Ivens and Destanque, pp. 263-64.
- 42 Ivens and Destanque, p. 264.
- 43 See for example the letter to Ivens from a Costa Rican participant (12 April 1967, JIA 380), who argues that the relative freedoms in his home country would make it an ideal base of operation for the 'brigade'. In his narrative treatment of the testimony of 'Manuel Antonio', which I discuss below, Sandoval also uses the term 'brigade' (Miguel Ángel Sandoval, *El niño del río*, Bloomington [IN], AuthorHouse, 2006). Ivens has written 'Brigade' as well as 'Proj Ven' on the back of the 30 September 1964 letter from the Venezuelan Carlos Rebollo, who I discuss below (JIA 380). The Sandoval text, and another letter from Ivens to Rebollo (25 September 1964, JIA 380) also use the term 'organization'—in the latter, Ivens refers to the 'organization that you know of'.
- 44 Otto René Castillo, *Informe de una injusticia*, 2nd ed., intro. Roque Dalton and Huberto Alvarado, San José [CR]: Editorial Universitaria Centroamericana, 1982, p. 12.
- 45 Ivens and Destanque, pp. 264-65.
- 46 Ivens and Destanque, p. 264.
- 47 Letter to Ivens from Willi Zahlbbaum, 2 January 1961, JIA 29.
- 48 Sandoval.
- 49 I was briefly in contact with 'Manuel Antonio', who granted permission for me to include these and several other details that appear later in this article. But he ultimately preferred not to participate in a more formal interview. Mario Roberto Morales also cites a typescript testimonial document from a friend of Otto René Castillo, one of the brigade members, which corroborates some of the information from 'Manuel Antonio' (*La ideología y la lírica de la lucha armada*, Guatemala, Editorial Universitaria, 1994, pp. 225-27).
- 50 Schoots, p. 273.
- 51 There are extensive materials in the archive on Chile,

- 18 'Mesa', p. 22.
- 19 'Mesa', p. 24.
- 20 Veitia, p. 29.
- 21 Letter to Ivens from Jorge Fraga, 11 November 1960, JIA 362.
- 22 'Mesa', p. 19.
- 23 Joris Ivens and Robert Destanque, *Joris Ivens ou la mémoire d'un regard*, Paris, BFP, 1982, pp. 260-63.
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- 29 Ivens and Destanque, pp. 266-79.
- 30 Orlando Oliva, 'Corresponsales de guerra y futuros cineastas', *Verde Olivo*, 26 August 1962, pp. 60-66.
- 31 Depeste is a Haitian poet who during the Duvalier dictatorship lived in exile in Cuba, where he was very active in the cultural initiatives of the revolutionary government. Herrera, as mentioned above, had served as cameraman on the two films Ivens produced in Cuba. Veitia was a screenwriter, documentarist and newsreel director who, like, Jorge Fraga, later became involved in the EICTV, where he currently serves as Head of Advanced Studies. Interestingly, in the piece he published on Ivens in *Cine Cubano* in 1963, although he is characterized as 'one of the young Cuban filmmakers who was closest' to Ivens, he is vaguely listed as his 'assistant' (Veitia, p. 29). This is likely due to the need for absolute secrecy regarding Ivens' involvement with the Cuban army, an issue I address in the following paragraph.
- 32 See also Chanan, pp. 197-98; Waugh, 'Travel'.
- 33 Oliva.
- 34 Letter from Antonio Alvite Estévez, Director General of Immigration, 20 October 1961, JIA 362.
- 35 Oliva; also in JIA 362.
- 36 Ivens' precise role continues to be elided in a recent article on the Frank Pais facility published in Cuba's official newspaper (Raquel Marrero Yanes, 'Imágenes en la memoria: Sección filmica de las FAR', *Granma*, 27 December 2011, *Toronto Forum on Cuba*, <http://www.torontoforumoncuba.com/20/post/2011/12/imagenes-en-la-memoria.html> [accessed 25 May 2013]). René Rodríguez Cruz, who was one of the original revolutionaries accompanying Fidel Castro on the Granma in the crossing from Mexico to Cuba, is credited with setting up the school. But according to the earlier *Verde Olivo* article, Cruz was instead tasked (quite importantly) with establishing the school's film processing facility.
- 37 For example, much of the archival footage incorporated into Jihan El Tahri's 2007 documentary *Cuba, an African Odyssey* must have been shot by graduates of the school.
- 38 Ivens and Destanque, p. 270.
- 39 Schoots, pp. 270-71, 273-74.
- 40 Ivens and Destanque, pp. 263-64.
- 41 Ivens and Destanque, p. 264.
- 42 See for example the letter to Ivens from a Costa Rican participant (12 April 1967, JIA 380), who argues that the relative freedoms in his home country would make it an ideal base of operation for the 'brigade'. In his narrative treatment of the testimony of 'Manuel Antonio', which I discuss below, Sandoval also uses the term 'brigade' (Miguel Ángel Sandoval, *El niño del río*, Bloomington [IN], AuthorHouse, 2006). Ivens has written 'Brigade' as well as 'Proj Ven' on the back of the 30 September 1964 letter from the Venezuelan Carlos Rebollo, who I discuss below (JIA 380). The Sandoval text, and another letter from Ivens to Rebollo (25 September 1964, JIA 380) also use the term 'organization'—in the latter, Ivens refers to the 'organization that you know of'.
- 43 Otto René Castillo, *Informe de una injusticia*, 2nd ed., intro. Roque Dalton and Huberto Alvarado, San José [CR]: Editorial Universitaria Centroamericana, 1982, p. 12.
- 44 Ivens and Destanque, pp. 264-65.
- 45 Ivens and Destanque, p. 264.
- 46 Letter to Ivens from Willi Zahlbbaum, 2 January 1961, JIA 29.
- 47 Sandoval.
- 48 I was briefly in contact with 'Manuel Antonio', who granted permission for me to include these and several other details that appear later in this article. But he ultimately preferred not to participate in a more formal interview. Mario Roberto Morales also cites a typescript testimonial document from a friend of Otto René Castillo, one of the brigade members, which corroborates some of the information from 'Manuel Antonio' (*La ideología y la lírica de la lucha armada*, Guatemala, Editorial Universitaria, 1994, pp. 225-27).
- 49 Schoots, p. 273.
- 50 There are extensive materials in the archive on Chile,

- but they mostly relate to the 'above-board' rather than covert aspects of Ivens' collaborations in that country.
- Tiziana Panizza's splendid book (*Joris Ivens en Chile: El documental entre la poesía y la crítica*, Santiago, Cuarto Propio, 2011) draws upon those documents as well as upon interviews with surviving Chilean filmmakers to detail their non-clandestine projects.
- 51 Ivens and Destanque, p. 264.
- 52 David J. Myers, 'The Normalization of Punto Fijo Democracy', in *The Unraveling of Representative Democracy in Venezuela*, ed. Jennifer L. McCoy and David J. Myers, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004, pp. 11-29; Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davies, 'Venezuela, in *Guerrilla Warfare*, by Che Guevara, intro. and case studies by Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davies, Jr., Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1985, pp. 209-231.
- 53 Ivens often misspells or reverses Cayetano Ramírez's first and last names, characteristic errors for this globetrotting filmmaker who constantly code-switched between multiple languages.
- 54 Manuel Caballero, *El desorden de los refugiados*, Caracas, Alfadil, 2004, p. 72.
- 55 Salvador Gamendia, *Los pequeños seres. Memorias de Altagracia y otros relatos*, Caracas, Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1986, p. 252.
- 56 Sandoval.
- 57 In one, Ramírez's name is typed below the text (JIA 794); the other document is unsigned but on the reverse Ivens has written 'Berlin '63 von Ramírez Cayetano' (JIA 380).
- 58 See for example Thomas Waugh, 'Joris Ivens' *The Spanish Earth*: Committed Documentary and the Popular Front', in *Show Us Life! Toward a History and Aesthetics of the Committed Documentary*, Metchen [NJ], Scarecrow Press, 1984, pp. 105-32.
- 59 Notes by Ivens dated 16 January 1967, JIA 380.
- 60 Jesús Enrique Guédez, one of Ivens' other collaborators, apparently worked alongside Ramírez for an extended time at the Venezuelan newspaper *La Calle* (Maruví Leonett Villalquirán, ed., *Jesús Enrique Guédez*, Caracas, Cinematca Nacional, 2002, p. 7). But there is no hint of that relationship in the archived correspondence. According to Jordán, upon his return to Venezuela Ramírez filmed several segments for 'Image of Caracas', discussed below (Jordán, personal correspondence with author [email, 14 September 2013]).
- 61 Isaac León, Federico de Cárdenas and Marino Molina C., 'El cine en Venezuela y la Muestra Latinoamericana de Mérida: Entrevista con Carlos Rebollo', *Hablemos de Cine*, no. 42, 1968, p. 14.
- 62 Leonett Villalquirán, p. 7; María del Carmen, 'Entrevista a Jesús Enrique Guédez (2003)', *Hablemos de poesía*, <http://migueleguedez.wordpress.com/2009/02/05/entrevista-a-jesus-enrique-guedez-2003/> (accessed 7 July 2013).
- 63 Roberto Rojas, 'El Departamento de Cine de la Universidad de los Andes 1962-2003', *Boletín del Archivo Histórico*, vol. 10, no. 17, 2011, p. 48, <http://www.saber.ula.ve/bitstream/123456789/34727/1/articulo1.pdf> (accessed 20 June 2013).
- 64 Rojas' essay is a case in point: it includes no mention whatsoever of Jordán, despite her participation (as assistant director) on Guédez's important short 'The City that Watches Us' and her work on essential political documentaries in the 1970s. Jordán refers to her child-care commitments in her undated letter to Ivens (JIA 380), and in Julianne Burton and Zuzana Pick, 'The Women behind the Camera', *Heresies* 16, vol. 4 no. 4, 1983, p. 48.
- 65 For more on Venezuelan women filmmakers, including the pioneering 1950s documentarist Margot Benacerraf, see Karen Schwartzman, 'A Descriptive Chronology of Films by Women in Venezuela, 1952-92', *Journal of Film and Video*, vol. 44 nos. 3-4, 1992-93, pp. 33-50.
- 66 Notes by Ivens dated 16 January 1967, JIA 380.
- 67 Immediately after asserting this, she also adds, in her characteristically modest fashion, that she is undeserving of Ivens' friendship (undated letter to Ivens from Jordán, JIA 380). Similarly, in a recent publication, Jordán expresses her gratitude for the fact that during his 1964 visit to Venezuela Ivens spent many hours with her in her humble attic apartment (Josefina Jordán, et al., *Abigail Rojas y el sueño del cine venezolano*, Caracas, Fundación Historia y Comunicación, 2006, p. 14, n. 2), where she was recovering from a leg injury.
- 68 Jordán, *Abigail*, pp. 11-12.
- 69 Burton and Pick, p. 46; Jordán, personal correspondence, 14 Sept. 2013.
- 70 Letter to Ivens from Jordán, 13 January 1963, JIA 380.
- 71 See José Agustín Catalá and Eleazar Díaz Rangel, *De Pérez Jiménez a Hugo Chávez: Censura y autocensura*, Caracas, Centauro, 2003.
- 72 Letter to Ivens from Rebollo, 30 September 1964, JIA 380.
- 73 Letter to Ivens from Catalá, 7 October 1964, JIA 380.
- 74 Letter to Ivens from Rebollo, 6 January 1965, JIA 380.
- 75 Letter to Rebollo from Ivens, 26 February 1965, JIA 380. According to Rojas, Rebollo did benefit significantly from maintaining close ties with Catalá. For example, the producer reportedly recommended Rebollo to





the University of the Andes (ULA), where he was soon promoted to head up the film department. Under Rebolledo's leadership in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the department expanded to become a major center for film education and left-wing filmmaking in Venezuela, notwithstanding financial ups and downs (Rojas, pp. 22, 23-26, 32-40).

75 Letter to Jordán from Ivens, 23 July 1966, JIA 380.  
76 Letter to Ivens from Jordán, undated, JIA 380; Letters to Ivens from Rebolledo, 30 September 1964 and 6 January 1965, JIA 380.

77 Jordán, *Abigail*, p. 14.  
78 Letter to Ivens from Jordán, undated, JIA 380.  
According to Jordán, Ivens provided \$500 each to her and Rebolledo; she was never informed where the funds came from, and assumed that it was Ivens' own money (personal correspondence, 14 September 2013).

79 Jordán, *Abigail*, p. 14; Jordán, personal correspondence, 14 Sept. 2013.

80 Jordán, *Abigail*, p. 83; Jesús Enrique Guédez, 'Joris Ivens', *Encuadre*, no. 58, 1995, pp. 10-11. Reprinted in Leonett Villalquirán, pp. 62-63.

81 Leonett Villalquirán, p. 45.  
82 'Jesús Enrique Guédez', *Cine Cubano*, nos. 89-90, 1974, p. 93.

83 In response to a concerned query from Guédez regarding the customs problem, Ivens recommended that he send subsequent 'ethnographic' materials to him in many small packages, with photographs and documents separate from film reels (Letter to Ivens from Guédez, 20 Apr. 1966, JIA 380; Letter to Guédez from Ivens, 27 April 1966, JIA 380). Exchanges such as this one appear to belie Guédez's claims in the early 2000s that he was not engaging in militant filmmaking in the 1960s (Carmen).  
84 Letter to Guédez from Ivens, 12 April 1966, JIA 380.  
85 Letter to Jordán from Ivens, 23 July 1966, JIA 380.  
86 Letter to Ivens from Guédez, 20 April 1966, JIA 380.  
87 Letter to Guy Gauthier from Ivens, 27 April 1966, JIA 380; confirmed as well in the letter from Ivens' secretary to Guédez, 23 May 1966, JIA 380.

88 Letter to Jordán from Ivens, 23 July 1966, JIA 380.  
89 In a spring 1966 letter to Colombian brigade members, Ivens informed them that their Torres funeral footage had been used by Sergent in his film. He also shared feedback from his colleagues (presumably Sergent and others) regarding the quality of all the footage they sent him. The group criticized the fact that some sections were out of focus, that the hand-held camera was too shaky, and that pans were poorly executed. At the same time, they extolled the Colombians' bravery in confronting the police while filming. Curiously, there was no acknowledgment that the dangerous filming conditions may have contributed to some of the technical 'defects' (JIA 380.46-48; in the archive, this letter has been included with the Venezuelan materials since at one point in the text Ivens mistakenly refers to Caracas instead of Bogotá). As Rebolledo noted in a 1968 interview, in the Latin American context, 'it's not important that a work is deficient, because sometimes that deficiency comes from a lack of resources rather than a lack of talent' (León, Cárdenas and Molina C. p.15). I conclude below that several of the Venezuelan brigade members, like many other Latin American filmmakers and indeed even Ivens himself, would come to reject the imposition of traditional aesthetic notions in the context of their search for a new form of politically-engaged filmmaking.

90 For example, in the letter to Guédez from Ivens, 27 April 1966, JIA 380. Letter to Ivens from Guédez, 20 April 1966, JIA 380.

91 Letter from 'Stanley Forman', 22 October 1964, JIA 380. The fake surname is also quite playful.

92 The same misspelling of Rebolledo's name is found in Ivens' April 27, 1966 letter to Guédez (JIA 380).

93 For example, in the letter to Ivens from Rebolledo, 6 January 1965, in the letter to Rebolledo from Ivens, 2 March 1966, and in the letter to Guédez from Ivens, 27 April 1966 (JIA 380).

94 In a 1968 interview with a Peruvian film magazine, Rebolledo lamented the legacy of paternalism in the relationship between Europe and Latin America: 'Latin American artists are artists when they have triumphed in Paris, Rome or New York; we are unlikely to recognize them before then' (León, Cárdenas, and Molina C., p. 17).

95 Letter to Jordán from Ivens, 23 July 1966, JIA 380. In one of her letters to Ivens, Jordán also expresses exasperation with the unwieldy and evidently less creatively-satisfying procedure of sending undeveloped footage to Paris, awaiting feedback, and having others edit the images and design a soundtrack (undated, JIA 380).

96 León, Cárdenas and Molina C., p. 14.  
97 'Elegidos los mejores veinte documentales del cine venezolano', *Lailatina*, <http://www.lailatina.com.ve/lailatina2010-2012/index.php/news/cultura/arte/3425-elegidos-los-mejores-veinte-documentales-del-cine-venezolano> (accessed 23 July 2013).

98 Gabriela Rangel, 'An Art of Nooks: Notes on Non-Objective Experiences in Venezuela', *E-misférica*, vol. 8 no. 1, 2011, <http://hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/en/misferica-81/rangel> (accessed 17 May 2013).

99 Letter to Ivens from Aray, 26 June 1967, JIA 380; Ivens ultimately did not attend.

100 Rangel; Inocente Palacios, Adriano González León and César Kennert, 'Imagen de Caracas: A Unique Place', *The Drama Review: TDR*, vol. 14 no. 2, 1970, pp. 130-37.

101 Burton and Pick, pp. 46, 48; Rojas, p. 34; Lucía Lamanna, *Se hace camino cuando son pies de película los que andan: Departamento de Cine-ULA, Mérida, Universidad de los Andes*, 1986, pp. 25-27.

102 Rojas, pp. 22-31.  
103 JIA 804.  
104 JIA 804.

105 Quoted in Marcia Orell García, *Las fuentes del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano*, Valparaíso, Ediciones Universitarias de Valparaíso, Pontificia Católica Universidad de Valparaíso, 2006, p. 68.

106 JIA 49.  
107 Schwartzman, p. 36; Carmen, Jordán and Donda went on to establish the Grupo Feminista Miércoles in the late 1970s.

108 By the late 1960s and early 1970s, Venezuela had in fact become a refuge for Latin American filmmakers fleeing repression and military dictatorships in their home countries. Uruguayans Ugo Ulive, Mario Handler and Marcos Banhero, for example, are three notable cases.

109 A recent source indicates that the home was on the Avenida Atlántica, an address matching the one Soares indicates in his letter to Ivens. The police were reportedly dumbfounded by the idea that someone living in such circumstances would support Communist ideals (Eliete Ferrer, ed., *68 a geração que queria mudar o mundo: Relatos*, Brasília, Ministério da Justiça, Comissão de Anistia, 2011, p. 85).

110 Ferrer, pp. 79-85.  
111 Letter to Ivens from Soares, 20 Dec. 1968, JIA 36; emphasis in original.

112 I do not wish to 'soft-pedal' the violent actions of guerrilla groups throughout Latin America, many of whom were supported by Ivens and his colleagues in the region. However, it is important to remember that, as J. Patrice McSherry has noted, 'there was no equivalency between the systematic state terror of the military regimes and

the more limited violence carried out by guerrilla bands in various countries [...] they generally did not engage in indiscriminate terrorism' (p. 28).

113 Ferrer, pp. 83-85.  
114 Dalton in Castillo, pp. 12-13; Morales, pp. 223-32.

115 JIA 42.  
116 Fernando Martín Peña and Carlos Vallina, eds., *El cine quemado: Raymundo Gleyzer*, Buenos Aires, Ediciones de la Flor, 2000, pp. 191-92.

117 JIA 40.  
118 Rosaura Revueltas was acclaimed for many performances in Mexican films, but was perhaps best known for her starring role in the U.S. independent film *Salt of the Earth* (1953), inspired in a strike that Mexican-American mine workers won after their wives became involved in the picket line. During the shoot the film's cast and crew were attacked by Communists, and Revueltas was arrested and deported from the U.S. The film, and Revueltas, were subsequently blacklisted. Revueltas first met Ivens at the World Festival of Youth and Students held in Warsaw in 1955, and he arranged for her to tour through East Germany, where *Salt* was playing; there, she met Bertolt Brecht and was incorporated into the Berliner Ensemble. She was also contracted to play in the *Caucasian Chalk Circle* in Cuba, where she resided for three years at the beginning of the 1960s, coinciding with the period of Ivens' extended stays on the island (Rosaura Revueltas, *Los Revueltas: Biografía de una familia*, Mexico City, Grijalbo, 1980, pp. 228-99; 312-13).

119 JIA 49.  
120 JIA 804.  
121 Julianne Burton, ed., *Cinema and Social Change in Latin America: An Interview with Filmmakers*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1986, p. 229; 'Una cinemateca ausente: La Cinemateca del Tercer Mundo', *Cine Cubano*, nos. 73-75, 1972, p. 138.

122 Burton, *Cinema*, p. 231; Lucía Jacob, 'Marcha: De un cine club a la C3M', *Marcha y América Latina*, ed. Mabel Moraña and Horacio Machín, Pittsburgh, Biblioteca de América, 2003, pp. 420-21.

123 Under the title 'Colombia and Democracy', which referred ironically to the title of Carlos Álvarez's confiscated film, *Cine Cubano* published an extensive dossier including many of the letters sent to the President of Colombia by international film organizations in early 1973 demanding the release of the filmmakers (*Cine Cubano*, nos. 86-88, 1973, pp. 78-94). The Colombians were eventually freed, and Samper—who died as a result of her mistreatment in prison not long after her release—wrote about her experiences in *La Guandoca* (Bogotá, Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1975). Revueltas was sentenced to sixteen years in prison but was released on probation in 1971. I have not yet been able to determine what happened to Terra after his arrival in Sweden, which took in a large number of Latin American refugees during this time period (Ferrer, pp. 626-27).

124 Letter to Ivens from Falcón, 24 December 1974, JIA 112; letter to Ivens from Falcón, undated [but subsequent to 24 December 1975], JIA 112.

125 Letter to Palme from Ivens, 12 January 1975, JIA 112.  
126 Letter to Falcón from Ivens, 12 January 1975, JIA 112.  
127 Letter to Schorri from Ivens, 12 January 1975, JIA 112.  
128 Panizza, p. 114.  
129 JIA 39.

# A SHARED PURPOSE

Interview with Juana Sapire  
by Susan Martin-Márquez

## Exchanges between Committed Filmmaking Couples: Gleyzer-Sapire and Ivens-Loridan<sup>1</sup>

The Joris Ivens Archives house a touching birth announcement and photograph that Argentine filmmakers Raymundo Gleyzer and Juana Sapire sent to Joris Ivens and Marceline Loridan to communicate the happy news of the arrival of their son Diego on February 19, 1972. This is the only trace in the archive of the warm relationship between the two couples. The following selections from an interview with Sapire, conducted in New York City on August 9, 2013, provide some details regarding that relationship.

Gleyzer (1941-1976) was a photographer who studied filmmaking in La Plata and began shooting important documentaries in the early 1960s. He was profoundly impacted by Ivens' work, according to Sapire and others.<sup>2</sup> For her part, Sapire (b. 1943) worked closely with Gleyzer on a number of his films, as a sound specialist and script researcher, as well as in other roles. As political repression intensified in Argentina, the two began to produce increasingly militant works that they filmed and screened in clandestine fashion. Already in the 1960s, Ivens' documentaries were being projected and discussed in alternative spaces in Buenos Aires,<sup>3</sup> and a number of documentarists sought to extend those politically-engaged reception practices; Gleyzer, Sapire and others did so with the formation of the 'Cine de la Base' group in the early 1970s.

In the late 1960s, Gleyzer and Sapire spent over two and a half years traveling and working together throughout Europe. Gleyzer was a correspondent for an Argentine TV news show, and they shot segments for the program and also pitched their documentaries to European distributors in order to cover their expenses. While in Paris, the couple met Ivens and Loridan for the first time:

*So then we went to meet Joris Ivens, who received us with the attentiveness and the humbleness of someone who is truly great. A truly great person doesn't tell you, 'I am the best maestro', no, not at all. A relationship sprang up right away. Joris was very unassuming, and we were very young—well not that young, but twenty-something [...] With Joris there was an immediate friendship, they connected really well, because those two, especially the two men, had ideas in common, about socialism, about documentary film, about films that help in some way, that mean something, that survive, [so] that forty years later I am still arranging for screenings. That is the greatest honor.*

Gleyzer and Sapire showed Ivens and Loridan two of their films, *The Earth Burns* (*La tierra quemada*; 1964) and *It Happened in Hualfin* (*Ocurrido en Hualfin*; 1965),<sup>4</sup> and the conversation during this and subsequent encounters always revolved around cinema. According to Sapire, they spoke 'of film of film of film':

We discussed the cinema of Fernando Birri, of all of those *maestros* who taught us to make film, documentary film. And Joris Ivens, I wouldn't say he was a man of few words, but he wasn't one to speak about foolish things—that is to say, no 'small talk'.

Though Ivens spoke little of his private life, Sapire notes that the Argentine couple saw something of themselves in the Dutch filmmaker and his wife:

*We were always in contact with Joris [but] I couldn't tell you very much about his personal life. I can tell you that with respect to his wife, they loved each other and were a filmmaking couple. That is to say, they were like us but older. They worked together, they lived together, they did everything together.*

In subsequent meetings, Gleyzer consulted with Ivens regarding his projects:

*Later we met up with Joris on two or three more occasions. Once Raymundo went to see Ivens with Álvaro Melián.<sup>5</sup> We were going to make *The Traitors*, and so they went to Joris Ivens to consult with him a bit, to talk about the project, and he was extremely interested, it was a film about labor union bureaucracy.*

This was the same period that they were producing their 'Comunicados'-short underground films documenting militant acts (such as the kidnapping of the head of the Swift meat packing plant, which ended successfully with the release of the unharmed manager in exchange for food distributions to the workers):

*Joris was really enthusiastic, you know? It was as if he also became young again. He was excited about Raymundo because he brought him in on his projects and asked for his opinion; it was a really lovely thing.*

This was also a time of personal joy for the young Argentine couple, which they conveyed to Ivens and Loridan:

*And then we sent a letter to Joris Ivens -I'm not sure if I have it somewhere- telling them that I was pregnant. They were really happy, and then they would ask if the baby had been born yet or not, and we sent them this [birth announcement]. [...] I did go to Paris with Diego when he was really small [and] I think that on that occasion we also went to see Joris and Marceline.*

The relationship, however, was tragically cut short by Gleyzer's 1976 'disappearance' by Argentina's military regime—which Ivens later noted on the birth announcement envelope—and by Sapire's subsequent exile in the United States with their young son Diego.

Years later, after Ivens had also died, Sapire did reconnect with Marceline Loridan. As it turned out, the two women discovered that they shared a family name-Rosenberg-and a history of traumatic loss, but also a significant sense of purpose:

*In Leipzig they held an homage to Joris Ivens, Raymundo Gleyzer and Santiago Álvarez. So Santiago's wife, Joris Ivens' wife, and Gleyzer's wife, we were all there. Joris Ivens' wife, a very tiny redhead who is really lively -wow!- I don't know if we remembered that we had known each other in that time period, but we also connected and we talked a great deal. Marceline has her number tattooed on her arm, which I stared at, like an idiot. She told me yes [...] I turned 15 in Auschwitz -what a lovely place to turn 15, I told her because when I was 14 they took my father away, and then I never saw him again. They put me in different places...but then I was saved [...] She is a great person. She also takes care of the work of her husband.*

In fact, not only in their dedication to preserving archival materials and to promoting the public screening of their husbands' (and their) documentaries, but also in their own creative initiatives and their devotion to community outreach and human rights, both Marceline Loridan and Juana Sapire have continued to carry on the important work that they shared with Ivens and Gleyzer.



Joris Ivens and Marceline Loridan-Ivens, 1969 during the shooting of *Le 17e parallèle*. © CAPI Films. Coll. JIA/EFJI.

Juana Sapire and the couple's son Diego Gleyzer, today. Coll. Sapire.

Birth announcement card Diego Gleyzer, 1972, Coll. JIA/EFJI.

Juana Sapire and Raymundo Gleyzer. Coll Sapire.



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1 With transcription assistance by Hugo Ríos-Cordero.  
2 A fellow Argentine filmmaker, Alejandro Malowicki, noted of Gleyzer that 'his most important role model was Joris Ivens, he was always talking about Joris Ivens'. An Uruguayan colleague, Walter Tournier, asserted even more emphatically of Ivens that 'for us he was like God'. Fernando Martín Peña and Carlos Vallina, eds., *El cine quemado: Raymundo Gleyzer*, Buenos Aires, Ediciones de la Flor, 2000, pp. 30, 75.  
3 Fernando Solanas (co-director with Octavio Getino of *The Hour of the Furnaces*[*La hora de los hornos*, 1968] has stated that the experience of screening films by Ivens and by the Cuban documentarist Santiago Álvarez in bars in Buenos Aires—which immediately provoked impassioned political debates—was the inspiration for his and Getino's conceptualization of the 'film act', in which audience members dialogue actively throughout clandestine film screening sessions, and ideally are prompted to convert that dialogue into action on the streets ('Making of', *La hora de los hornos* [DVD], Cinesur). Though their political ideology differed (they were not Peronists like Solanas and Getino), Cine de la Base members shared a similar philosophy regarding militant reception practices.  
4 Ivens had high praise for this film, which he characterized as 'very pure, politically and artistically'. Martín Peña and Vallina, p. 44.  
5 Argentine filmmaker Álvaro Melián, who also underscores the impact of the Dutch filmmaker, has referred as well to this important meeting that he and Gleyzer held with Ivens regarding *The Traitors* (*Los traidores*, 1973). Martín Peña and Vallina, pp. 68, 92-93.



# Letter to Joris Ivens

Valparaíso, June 7th, 2013

Dear Joris Ivens,

I am writing you from Valparaíso, Chile. It is June 2013 and it is more than 50 years ago that you visited this city. It is 6 hours earlier than in Europe. Your afternoon is my morning and your morning is my night.

I am writing you because I want to tell you about the condition of this city and this country, 50 years after the release of your film. Actually your film was the reason that I wanted to come here ...*A Valparaíso* had its premiere in 1963, 10 years before the coup took place on September 11th, 1973. That day, the first democratically chosen socialist president of Chile, Salvador Allende, was violently thrown over by Augusto Pinochet.

In ...*A Valparaíso* you show a kaleidoscope of small city stories: the city's history, the daily reality of its inhabitants. You show the dockworkers, the sailors, the bars, traces of other countries, poverty, the wind, the sun. You show the commercial city downtown and the 42 hills that surround it. The voiceover in the movie contemplates: "It was the richest port. It was the goal, the destination. It was often lauded."

You introduced the city to me through your motion-picture, but I got to know it by strolling through it, photographing it, being submerged in it. I crossed it on foot, by cable car and by minibus. I went up and down and up again.

This city, where Salvador Allende was born as well as Augusto Pinochet.

This city, where today's reality doesn't differ that much from the reality you show.

This city, where you spend some months, 50 years ago, and where I am staying now.

Chris Marker wrote the commentary that accompanies the film – he never visited Valparaíso but instead saw the city through your notes and observations. Like you, Marker often traveled and in the fifties he wrote a series of travel books called *Petite Planète*. "Not a guidebook," Marker promised, "not a history book, not a propaganda brochure, not travelers' impressions, but instead equivalent to the conversation we would like to have with someone intelligent and well-versed in the country that interests us."

He visited Madagascar, Egypt, Poland, Venezuela, Iran, Tahiti, Finland and many other countries. Chile is not present in this series. What would be the result if the two of you were still alive and had been able to make a *Petite Planète* about Chile, now, in the year 2013?

This year it is 40 years ago the coup took place, 23 years after the end of the dictatorship and a year of national elections. Will the party of Sebastián Piñera –the Berlusconi of Chiliwin again? Or will the centre-left coalition, the parties in power in the period between Pinochet and Piñera, regain power? However it will turn out, the chance that any party will change the ultra neoliberal model introduced by Pinochet is highly unlikely.

One of the most popular travel guides today, Lonely Planet, informs its readers in the Do's and Don'ts section that the dictatorship is old news: "Discussions should start with a focus on more contemporary issues." A rather strange comment when you consider that the high inequality rate in today's Chile is a direct result of the years of the dictatorship. Maybe you had time to read *El Mercurio* while you were

here; this oldest newspaper of the continent still exists. But nowadays, it is one of the two major enterprises that own all the press in Chile leaving the media-landscape even less multiform than the last years of the rule of Pinochet. In an *El Mercurio* dated December 19th, 1987, I found an announcement by the Municipality of Valparaíso. Which states: ¡Gracias Presidente! "Valparaíso greets her President and the honorable Junta of the government and welcomes the decision to install the National Congress in our city."

On one of my first walks, just a few days after my arrival, I passed the building where the National Congress is seated. In his commentary in ...*A Valparaíso*, Marker imagines how the typical, triangular houses of Valparaíso transform into boats. The National Congress however, seems to do quite the opposite. It is what it wants to portray: an image of power or a "window to the sea" as the architects put it.

In 1987, Pinochet changed the law in order to move the National Congress from the capital of Santiago to Valparaíso. A new building had to be constructed for this. In February 1988 an appeal was made to all architects of Chile to submit proposals. There were 539 proposals submitted. 539 architects were willing to design the symbol of Pinochet's power: a new National Congress. Commissioned by Pinochet, built for Pinochet. This all happened the year prior to a national referendum in which the people had to decide to either keep the regime and Pinochet for another 8 years or not.

But, opposite to how he imagined his future, history took another turn. In the referendum, 53,31% of the Chilean population said NO to another term of Pinochet rule. This meant that the National Congress in Valparaíso became a platform for the first democratically chosen parliament in 16 years and not Pinochet's Junta.

In an article published in *El Mercurio* that day, the 11th of March 1990, the National Congress is compared to a triumphal arch. I can't help wondering whose triumphs that would be?

To me, the National Congress symbolizes the panoptic after-shock of the Pinochet regime.

I find myself in a society in which privatization is the standard: in education, healthcare, and media. Fortunately there are the students who organize mass-protests and occupy universities. As we speak, the journalists of *El Mercurio* Valparaíso have been on strike for a month and the copper workers are on strike as well.

As Marker writes in his commentary: "the adventure is that of obtaining livable homes, gardens that can be cultivated, and justice." And the adventure continues.

Perhaps only the fortune-teller in your movie knows what the future holds for this city.

Greetings from Valparaíso,

Eva



# Joris Ivens and contemporary Art

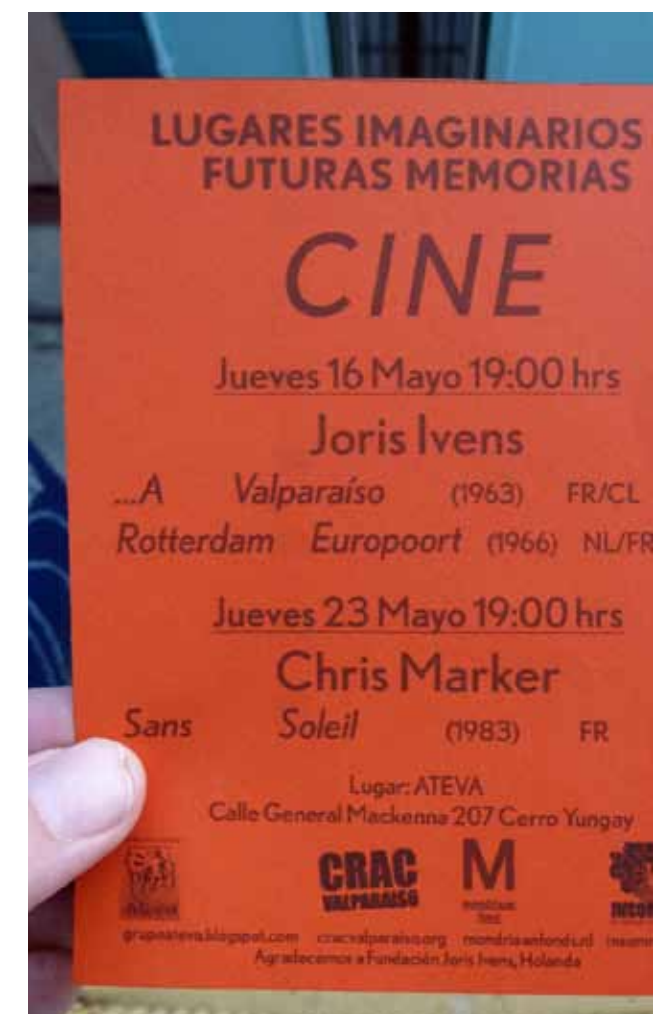
**THIS 'LETTER TO JORIS IVENS' WAS WRITTEN FOR A 'SKYPE PERFORMANCE' ON JUNE 7, 2013. IT WAS DEVELOPED FOR A PERFORMANCE IN ART SPACE MASCHINENHAUS, ESSEN (GERMANY). ARTIST CHRISTIAN ODZUCK INITIATED THE EVENT AND THE BOOK *INVISIBLE CITIES* BY ITALO CALVINO INSPIRED THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE EVENING.**

I read aloud from Valparaíso this letter addressed to Joris Ivens. During the reading I showed several images in front of the webcam. In Germany the audience was given a printout with on one side the text written by Chris Marker for Joris Ivens' film ...*A Valparaíso* and on the other side an image of the National Congress of Chile, which is located in. The performance was developed during an artist in residence period at CRAC Valparaíso offered by the Mondriaan

Fund, the Netherlands Foundation for Visual Arts, Design and Architecture. During this period I worked on the project *¡Gracias Presidente!* which had as result a newspaper called 'El Deformés' and a Skype performance.

People on the streets in Valparaíso participated in this project by answering a questionnaire, buying the printing matter (newspaper 'El Deformés') and attending the performance. The film ...*A Valparaíso* has been an important source for the project and fragments from it were printed in the newspaper as well as used during the performance.

© All photos by the artist Eva Olthof







# ‘PATRIA NEGRA Y ROJA’

CRISTÓBAL BARRIA

José Venturelli and Joris Ivens: orientations of a nomad friendship.

José Venturelli, *El Sudor* (The Sweat, detail, silk screen 1973), signed and with personal note for Joris Ivens. With a poem of Miguel Hernández.

Cover book, José Venturelli, *Patria Negra y Roja*, 1975. Coll. De Vaal.

## RECONSTRUCTING A RELATIONSHIP

Today, thanks to the book ‘Joris Ivens en Chile’ by Tiziana Panizza, we have an idea how the four visits of Joris Ivens affected the film creation of our country, Chile, and by extension, that of Latin America. Nevertheless, his influence with regard to cinema does not exhaust the total network that links Joris Ivens with Chilean culture. Artists such as Pablo Neruda, Roberto Matta or José Venturelli established a relationship of friendship with Ivens, and, in the case of Venturelli, even of collaboration.

Venturelli and Ivens met in La Habana, in the year 1961<sup>1</sup>. The Chilean painter had arrived two years previously and had become enthusiastic about the revolution that had just started. In that year, Venturelli inaugurated an exhibition in the National Library of Habana, and painted the mural ‘Solidaridad con América Latina’ in the Hotel Habana Libre as well as the mural with a tribute to Camilo Cienfuegos in the ministry of Health. He also taught

in the Graphics experimental workshops in La Habana<sup>2</sup>. Ivens, meanwhile, also arrived in Cuba to present his work, and to film *Carnet de Voyage* (Travel Notebook, 1961) and *Pueblo Armado* (An Armed People, 1961). These documentary films functioned as film schools for young Cuban filmmakers, because Ivens invited young film students to join his crew<sup>4</sup>. That is how both artists met, as part of a movement of professionals and volunteers from all continents who were ready to support the Cuban revolution. At the same time, Ivens met Salvador Allende in Cuba, who invited him to visit Chile for the first time, in April 1962<sup>5</sup>.

Because of the nomadic character of their lives and careers, Venturelli and Ivens developed a friendship without borders. Proof of this is first of all their correspondence kept in the archives, written in three different languages, and sent from at least five different countries and continents. Their occasional meetings are proof of this nomadic friendship too: they met not only in Cuba and Chile, but also in

Switzerland, France, and especially China<sup>6</sup>. A friendship that went beyond their political commitment, because it did not stop when Venturelli distanced himself from the Communist party.<sup>7</sup>

When we try to define the political sympathies that these two artists felt for each other, we could say that each considered the other a revolutionary artist with a special affinity for China. Similar to revolutionaries like Che Guevara, whom they met in Cuba, they experienced the freedom of travelling from one side of the world to the other, which enabled them to attend any new social uprising wherever it occurred. This is why they could be commissioned by groups from East and West, from either side of the Iron Curtain. Nevertheless, only a few letters have survived of this friendship today, one photograph at the Chinese Shin Dao beach, and a collaborative work: ‘Patria roja y negra’, a book of drawings made by Venturelli for which Ivens wrote the preface.

## ‘PATRIA ROJA Y NEGRA’

In the year 1975, Venturelli published a book with a series of drawings denouncing the human right violations taking place in Chile. Venturelli was in Switzerland, unable to return to Chile after the military coup by Pinochet in September 1973, which was supported by the CIA. The military coup in Chile and the resulting dictatorship would not only end the life of the socialist president Salvador Allende, and with him his democratic way towards socialism, but would also kill and torture so many other Chileans.

Venturelli’s book was published in October, 1975, in a multilingual edition of 200 copies. Each one is composed of 58 drawings, divided into eight chapters, whose captions are quotations of poems by Federico García Lorca and Miguel Hernández. An original lithography, numbered and signed, was included. Venturelli’s work was introduced with a preface by Joris Ivens. Venturelli’s series of drawings develops a linear narrative plot structure that follows a chronological order in which Chilean peasants appear as protagonists.

The drawing series start by contextualizing the peasants geographically and socially. We can identify elements that characterize four elements of the Chilean landscape: Los Andes, the sea, the araucaria and the volcano. This volcano is, together with birds, a returning theme in Venturelli’s work as well as in Miguel Hernández’s poetry, with which the first chapter opens<sup>8</sup>.

In the following chapters, we see women -presumably peasants, workers, or wives of peasants or workers- caught in a moment of reflection. The picture of a peasant in a moment of contemplation is another classical component of Venturelli’s iconography. In the next chapter the poem ‘Sino sangriento’ of Miguel Hernández introduces the uprising of the people. The end of this third chapter presents us with the only images of the enemy. The military appear dehumanized, as a perfect reference to Francisco Goya’s painting ‘Los fusilamientos del tres de Mayo’ (1813-14), and the Spanish victims are replaced by a woman running in fear towards us. In the next chapters, ‘Los ojos abiertos’ and ‘El pozo y el espejo’, one can feel the inspirational influence of Goya’s ‘Los desastres de la guerra’ (1810-15), too.

The drawings of bodies affecting us with horror alternate with drawings of those who have survived in the sight of death (p. 16) and who will escape to the mountains at the end of the chapter. The next two chapters depict scenes of detention and torture. The hands (p. 41) play a symbolic role, as they do in all of Venturelli’s art, and they help us follow the plot. In the beginning these hands help us to identify the characters as workers, now they help us identifying them as prisoners. These hands are not only used for labour, they also express feelings of anger, love and fear (p. 42).

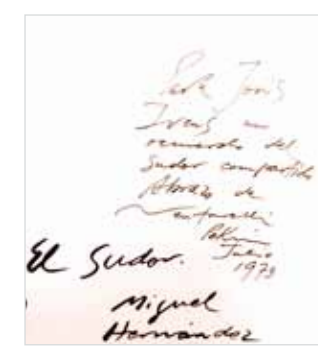
In all of his drawings, Venturelli uses a constant interplay between the line and the smudge, without distinguishing figure and context. This gets a special significance on p. 45 where the bodies melt with the landscape. In the last chapter, Venturelli separates himself from reality and imagines an ending different from the historical facts that have occurred up to that year (1975), projecting what was part of his own ideology. He shows us how the oppressed peasants organize themselves to gain the final victory. This last chapter is preceded by an excerpt from the poem *Campesinos de España* (1937) by Miguel Hernández, : ‘...despierta... que no es tarde’. Venturelli does not quote the Spanish peasants from the original poem ‘Despierta español que no es tarde’, establishing an analogy between what happened in Spain and Miguel Hernández’s appeal to wake up the Spanish peasants, and what happened in Chile and its personal appeal to the peasants of the country.

As we have seen, Venturelli has shaped this book as an iconographic summary of his oeuvre, referring to previous work and including images that will transform into precursors of future work. In addition, it has a basic narrative structure showing the facts that have occurred in Chile. This mix of historical fact and imagination reminds us of Joris Ivens’s strategies and his famous words about his own documentaries: ‘The film screen is not a window through which one looks at the world, it is a world unto itself’<sup>9</sup>.

In Venturelli’s book we cannot identify a single historical fact about Chile in the first two years of dictatorship. This book, then, constructs itself in perfect tune with the documentary oeuvre of Joris Ivens, who used to re-construct and re-compose historical facts in his documentaries, organizing the imagery evoked by a situation or a place into a narrative structure.

The resemblance between the oeuvre of both artists does not end there. Venturelli has represented his protagonists as a group or class, without portraying or identifying anybody in particular, as Ivens did in most of his films. In addition, the importance of nature, and the geographic context in relation to social conflicts, as they appear in ‘Patria roja negra’, are recurring elements in Ivens’ films, too. Context and nature appear filled with meaning, like the wind and the mountains in *A Tale of the Wind* (1988), or in ... *à Valparaíso* (1961), a film that is closer to Venturelli’s work. Both artists attempt to represent mythical characters that embody a social conflict in all its intensity. Both Ivens and Venturelli use nature and the geographic context as protagonists in their work. These have historical relevance, because they permeate a context of industrialization on a global scale. A process of industrialization executed by one political system or another, which, when implemented, left behind a series of maladjustments that provoked social conflict in different locations on the planet. If we had an opportunity to check Ivens’s body of work as a whole, we would find a global image of these issues.

Finally, Ivens’s introductory text, which is meant to facilitate the understanding of the book,<sup>10</sup> is tailored to the sequence of Venturelli’s drawings, as if it were one of the audio comments that he was putting into his films while editing. (He usually asked other artists or colleagues, like Hemingway or Chris Marker, to do this). Here the camera work has been replaced by Venturelli’s drawings<sup>11</sup>. It is in fact Ivens himself who makes an analogy between this book and his films in his texts: ‘Todo el conjunto tiene una continuidad dialéctica y sorprendente, como el montaje de un buen film’<sup>12</sup>. Without a doubt, this book shows that Venturelli was familiar with the steps that Ivens’s generation had taken in film editing. We can infer this, for example, from the picture of the mother dressing her small child, followed by that of the mother



José Venturelli, *El Sudor* (The Sweat, detail, silk screen 1973), signature and personal note for Joris Ivens.

On a beach in China: Fang Xiao, José Venturelli and his daughter Paz and granddaughter, Joris Ivens, 1972. Coll. Fundación José Venturelli, Chile.

Joris Ivens and Pablo Neruda, October 1962. Coll. JIA/EEJI.

José Venturelli, from chapter 8 ‘El trueno abre el cielo’, *Patria Negra y Roja*, 1975. Coll. De Vaal.





José Venturelli, from chapter 7 'Es odio esta angustia', Patria Negra y Roja, 1975. Coll. De Vaal.

José Venturelli, from chapter 6 'No sacare los ojos de tu rostro', Patria Negra y Roja, 1975. Coll. De Vaal.

José Venturelli, from chapter 7 'Es odio esta angustia', Patria Negra y Roja, 1975. Coll. De Vaal.



covering a body, which we suppose is her grown son (23) and (24), or from the juxtaposition, where the peasants uprising is developed on the left side of the composition, while when the army answers, it does so on the right side of the next page (12) and (14).

Venturelli's book was proposed by the editor of the Workers' Party of Switzerland of that time. Initially, they hoped to give it an international distribution. 30,000 copies were sent to the German Communist party, and to the Chilean as well<sup>3</sup>, by whom they were supposed to be distributed. However, these organizations withdrew, with the result that just a few copies were left in Switzerland. Sadly, the resulting small edition and the difficulties of distributing this book do not give us insight on how it was received.

#### IVENS AND VENTURELLI, OTHER WORKS AND ORIENTATIONS.

The only reference to 'Patria negra y roja' which can be found in the letters of Venturelli and Ivens is in a Thank You note from the painter to Ivens, in regard to the preface that 'will have a great importance for the public exposure, distribution and understanding of the book'<sup>4</sup>. It is easy to understand, then, that when Venturelli asked Ivens to write the preface, this was not only because he was capable of commenting on his drawings, making them easier to understand, but also because Ivens had been a pioneer of the mass media in the nineteen thirties, he understood and knew how to use their power to present a theme to public opinion. For Ivens, making a documentary did not start with the screenplay and did not end with post-edit. Its distribution was an essential part to him. Frequently, this would even determine its outcome and give sense to all of its realization. His well-known film *The Spanish Earth* (1937), for example, was made with the twin goals of influencing the US audience, and of helping to raise funds for bringing an ambulance to the Spanish civil war. *The Power and the Land* (1940) was made to promote the installation of electricity in the rural areas of the USA<sup>5</sup>. It is precisely their aim of denunciation and their search for a political effect through their art in which Venturelli and Ivens seem to coincide most. This is why Ivens, in his preface, out of all images of 'patria negra y roja', selects the face of a girl that looks straight (16) at us, which, together with another drawing showing families looking for their relatives with an ID sized picture, (38), may be interpreted as a petition for help directed at the reader. Ivens starts the preface by taking a stand against the idea popular among Chileans that they are isolated from the world, because of geographical boundaries: 'Los chilenos dicen a menudo, que están separados del resto del mundo. No es verdad. Ellos también son nuestro mundo.', reincorporando el país geográficamente al globo 'Los andes es la espina dorsal, Chile es parte del cuerpo...y los chilenos no están solos.' Later in the preface, he emphasizes that Venturelli 'habla el lenguaje universal de los grandes pintores'<sup>6</sup>.

Both artists are characterized by their aim of reaching the largest possible audience, or 'the great audience'<sup>7</sup> as Ivens calls it in a letter sent to the painter. A precursor in Venturelli's oeuvre for the book 'patria negra y roja' is his book '28 de enero'<sup>8</sup> where, together with poems written by Pablo Neruda, we find a series of etchings by Venturelli which had first appeared edited as flyers distributed by hand among the protesters on the day following what is called the 'matanza del 28 de enero' (the January 28 killing). This is not the only experiment Venturelli has made to give greater political impact and higher visibility to his work. While working as an assistant to Siqueiros<sup>9</sup>, Venturelli had a flourishing career as a muralist, an art that in the México of Siqueiros, Rivera and Orozco, answered to the maximum

of being 'an art of the people and for the people' and that owed its popularity precisely to its capacity of delivering a message to a large audience, most of whom were illiterate. However, while the coverage of a static wall is limited by the circulation of people in front of it, a film, or a book of images in which there would be little text, and that in 5 different languages, may tour the whole world and be seen one or many times by different people from different cultures. Venturelli and Ivens were completely aware of the international reception their works had, directed as they were at an audience that was not geographically attached to the social conflict that they wanted to denounce in their work. Therefore, they intended to build an oeuvre in the 'universal language', as Ivens calls it, while describing Venturelli's work as a multicultural scenario, capable of being appreciated by both political sides.

Ivens, also known as the 'holandés errante' was known for showing the workers and peasants of remote locations to other workers and peasants of different extremes of the globe. That's how, for example, he shows Vietnam peasants in Cuba, a Belgian workers' strike in in Moscow or the Spanish republicans in the USA, etc. He sees himself and his film work as the needed connector for social change on a global scale.

We can find traces of this throughout *Song of the River* (1954), a film which explores the capacity of cinema to build a narrative that incorporates locations of different parts of the world into just one temporal sequence, using scenes filmed in six different countries. By exploring the possibilities of the 'new art' and in accordance with an utopia of world order and unification, Ivens attempted to build a cinema that can be understood by everyone, and that is how he described it in a letter written to Venturelli: 'Cuidar un estilo popular, es decir, comprensible para el gran público y jamás aburrido o didáctico'<sup>20</sup> one that can, as Michael Chanan says, compete with TV journalism<sup>21</sup>, which was showing its full power in those years already.

As Erica Deuber-Pauli observed in the catalogue of an exhibition in Sion: with Venturelli 'les travailleurs Chiliens entrent dans l'histoire de la peinture'<sup>22</sup>. This happened as much in Sion, Switzerland, as it did in China, Cuba, Chile, Russia, etc. And of course it also happened in 'Patria negra y roja', a book that, unlike '28 de enero', was made with the purpose of international distribution. However, what Erica Deuber-Pauli and other foreigners see in Venturelli's oeuvre, is, as we have already observed, not a portrait of a particular peasant or worker, but an image of the Chilean peasant as a group or class, according to Venturelli, (amanecer en Cautín 1971). Which elements did Venturelli use to construct this image of the Chilean peasant?

Is not only the works that travelled around the world, Venturelli or Ivens also travelled behind or ahead of them. From the beginning, Venturelli was interested in travelling around his country, drawing and painting whatever caught his attention, that is, the social conflicts and living conditions of the peasants<sup>23</sup>. In addition, his political duties allowed him to travel around the American continent. As a result, he was strongly influenced by the Mexican muralists, whom he defined as 'El fenómeno más universal del arte Americano'<sup>24</sup>.

Similarly, in his stays in China, he shared with masters like Ai Ching, Qi Baishi or Sian Shan, and observed China's long tradition of painting and drawing, acquiring more freedom and spontaneity in his line (conifera marina 1974), and a new approach to watercolour (colegiala). These experiences enriched his view, as he said himself<sup>25</sup>, but the 'colonies' were not the only elements from which Venturelli's view would be built. Venturelli, included himself in a long Eu-

ropean tradition of social protest when quoting Goya or working with Miguel Henríquez and Federico García Lorca's poetry. However, he also knew how to absorb cultural modernity. Venturelli's line was compared to that of Matisse by Alicia Roja<sup>26</sup>, while he says himself that he sees 'from Munich to Klimt, from Cézanne to Picasso'<sup>27</sup>. That is how, when Venturelli found himself unable to return to his country, he reconstructed an image of it and its people which he could 'export' and share with a distant audience, thanks to the synthesis of his experiences as a traveller, from which it emerged.

Venturelli and Ivens built their oeuvre distancing themselves from the social realism of Zhdanov's doctrine. They based their artistic practice not so much on objects as on context, and by this I am referring to their preoccupation of inserting their works into spaces, networks and other ways of participation. This is the manner in which they attempted to construct an oeuvre capable of being received by a massive international audience, using pedagogic forms of art, appropriate to their times. This was possible, to the extent in which their oeuvre and their friendship too, reveal a conflicting relation between a global unification project executed by both political blocks, and the direct experience with the multitude of cultures they found in their voyages.

- 1 Panizza, M. T., Silva, C. J., & Chaskel, P. (2011). Joris Ivens en Chile: El documental entre la poesía y la crítica = Joris Ivens in Chile : documentary between poetry and social critic. Providencia, Santiago: Cuarto Propio.
- 2 Venturelli, Paz. Interview by the author, 22 of April 2013. Paz Venturelli is the daughter of José Venturelli who also met Joris Ivens.
- 3 Mansilla, L. A. (2003). Hoy es todavía: José Venturelli, una biografía. Santiago de Chile: LOM Ediciones.
- 4 The fact that Ivens leaned on young local students of cinema at the moment of filming had a strong impact on the formation and in the artistic scene of these countries which at this moment were starting to develop a school of cinema. The specific case of Chile is the aims of the book of Panizza & Silva mentioned before.
- 5 See note 1.
- 6 Venturelli, Paz. Interview by the author, 22 of April 2013.
- 7 Venturelli was removed of the Chilean Communist party because he declared sympathy for China's Communist Party, this occurs in a context of deterioration of the relations between soviets and Chinese, what eventually will make South-American communist parties to take soviet's side. "El Siglo" (November 1964). Santiago. Chilean Communist Party Newspaper.
- 8 I think the relations between the poems of Miguel Henríquez and Federico García Lorca with the drawings of Venturelli is essential to interpret the book, nevertheless, this is not the occasion to go deeper in it, nor it would be crucial to bring to light the relationship between Venturelli and Ivens.
- 9 Ivens, J. (1969). *The camera and I*. New York: International Publishers, p. 3010 "will have a great importance for the public exposure, distribution and understanding of the book". Venturelli, José a Ivens, Joris. 24 September 1975. Coll. Joris Ivens foundation.
- 10 I'm not saying here that Venturelli is not the author of the script behind the sequence of images of his book. As can be deduced from the few remaining letters between Venturelli and Ivens, Venturelli had sent a sequence of images to Ivens who then wrote his preface.
- 11 Venturelli, José. Patria negra y roja. Genève: Librairie Rousseau, 1975. p.4.
- 12 Venturelli, Paz. Interview by the autor, 22 of April 2013.
- 13 Venturelli, José a Ivens, Joris. 24 September 1975. Coll. Joris Ivens foundation
- 14 Sklar, R. (1993). Film: An international history of the medium. New York: Harry N. Abrams.
- 15 Venturelli, José. Patria negra y roja. Genève: Librairie Rousseau, 1975, p. 3.
- 16 Ivens, Joris a Venturelli, José. 31 December 1973. Coll. Fundación José Venturelli.
- 17 Venturelli, J., & Neruda, P. (1947). *28 de enero*. Santiago: Talleres de Moneda 716.
- 18 Siqueiros, who thanks to an arrangement of Pablo Neruda travels to Chile in 1941, take José Venturelli, Alipio Jaramillo and Erwin Wenner as assistants to paint the mural on the Escuela de México in Chillán, Chile.
- 19 Joris Ivens a José Venturelli, 31 December 1973. Coll. Fundación José Venturelli.
- 20 Chanan, M. (2007). *The politics of documentary*. London: British Film Institute, p. 6.
- 21 Venturelli, J., & Kantonales Kunstmuseum (Sitten). (1986). *Venturelli - la terre qu'on a: Sion, Musée cantonal des beaux-arts, 31.1. - 15.3.1986*. Sion: Musée cantonal des beaux-arts, p. 20.
- 22 Mansilla, L. A. (2003). *Hoy es todavía: José Venturelli, una biografía*. Santiago de Chile: LOM Ediciones.
- 23 Venturelli, J. (2003). *La pintura chilena: Defensa del realismo*. En Mansilla, L. A. (2003). *Hoy es todavía: José Venturelli, una biografía*. Santiago de Chile: LOM Ediciones.
- 24 Venturelli, José. En entrevista dirigida por Deuber-Pauli, Erica. Sin fechar 1988. Ginebra, Suiza.

26 . Rojas, A. (1990). Mi reencuentro con José. José Venturelli, 45 años de pintura, 1943-1988. Muestra retrospectiva. Santiago de Chile: Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes.

27 . Venturelli, J. (2003). *La pintura chilena: Defensa del realismo*. En Mansilla, L. A. (2003). *Hoy es todavía: José Venturelli, una biografía*. Santiago de Chile: LOM Ediciones.



José Venturelli, Autumn, oil on canvas. Coll. Fundación José Venturelli, Chile.



Joris Ivens filming the election campaign of Salvador Allende 1963. Coll. JIA/EFJI

Cristóbal Barria was born in Santiago, Chile 1984. He actually lives in The Netherlands and studies a master in art history in Università Sapienza Di Roma. At the moment his interests are focused on Latin American art studies in a worldwide perspective.





# JORIS IVENS: ESSAYS ON THE CAREER OF A RADICAL DOCUMENTARIST

Interview Thomas Waugh



THOMAS WAUGH (1948, ONTARIO) IS WRITING AN EXTENSIVE MONOGRAPH ON IVENS'S ENTIRE FILM OEUVRE. ALREADY IN 1975 HE TOOK IVENS AS THE TOPIC OF HIS DISSERTATION 'JORIS IVENS AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE RADICAL DOCUMENTARY 1926-1946' FOR COLOMBIA UNIVERSITY IN NEW YORK. WAUGH BASED HIS PIONEERING TEXT REQUIRING NEW INSIGHT IN IVENS'S EARLY FILMS ON INTERVIEWS WITH IVENS AND ON RESEARCH AT THE IVENS ARCHIVE, WHICH AT THE TIME HAD NOT BEEN LISTED YET. WITHIN THREE YEARS, HE EXPANDED THIS SUBJECT INTO THE COMPLETE FIELD OF COMMITTED DOCUMENTARY IN HIS BOOK 'SHOW US LIFE: TOWARDS A HISTORY AND AESTHETICS OF THE COMMITTED DOCUMENTARY' (1984). UNTIL TODAY HE IS LECTURING ABOUT IVENS ALL OVER THE WORLD. HE IS A PROFESSOR IN FILM STUDIES & INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN SEXUALITY AT CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY IN MONTREAL.

**You wrote a dissertation when you were 27 years young. What was the relevance of Joris Ivens to you at that time?**  
Thomas: Well, I was part of a certain generation of the nineteen seventies, of the new left and studying in New York City. It was a very exciting time, Erik Barnouw was one of my teachers and he was really a mentor to me and even seemed to bring together my passion for documentary and my political convictions around the left. Also I was trained as a film historian and the fact that Ivens was off in China making *Yukong*, but had been working for almost fifty years on the left in documentary and other kinds of hybrid cinemas interested me: being able to trace a certain trajectory of this kind of film making through the avant-garde period of the nineteen twenties, through the Popular Front of the nineteen thirties, through the War, through the Cold War, through the period of the Counter Culture and the Thaw and the nineteen sixties and here we were. And no one had ever written significantly to my satisfaction about Ivens and here was my opportunity. It was the time at which was *Yukong* was coming out. That was the relevance in 1976.

**So you met him personally in Paris?**  
Thomas: I met him in Paris, I met him in Montreal when he showed *Yukong* and where else did I meet him? I think I

met him three times... He was very kind to me, he was very positive and so I just took off with it. And by the time I finished my dissertation it was 1981. I had only covered the first twenty years of his career and was already up to 625 pages between 1926 and 1946. So I stopped with *Indonesia Calling* and that was my dissertation. But I continued to work on him throughout the nineteen eighties and the nineteen nineties and more recently. And finally, in this century, I decided this is crazy, I will put it all together in one book. And for this book I am in birth pain as we speak.

**Is there another relevance nowadays compared with the seventies, the eighties?**  
Thomas: That is a good question. I mean the historical interest has greatly increased, considering he continued working up until 1989. And I think *Une histoire de Vent* is an interesting synthesis of his career and gives a kind of roundedness to it, 1925 to 1990. Here we have the trajectory of not only documentary, not only left filmmaking nor experimental filmmaking, but a kind of passionate parallel cinema that he embodied through all those years in so many different contexts, so many different countries, so many different pedagogical contexts. He influenced filmmakers in so many countries, including Canada, even though he was there only briefly. So the historical interest had increased when I came back to the book. Also I think his political relevance is still there. But now we can think of him politically in terms of understanding the history of the left. Not that the left is over. I think his kind of left, the old party, the old communist left has become a historical object of study. But obviously in this century with its popular movements of resistance that are ongoing as we speak... there is a great deal of relevance politically speaking as well as aesthetically in thinking about the cinema of commitment, of resistance that he embodied.

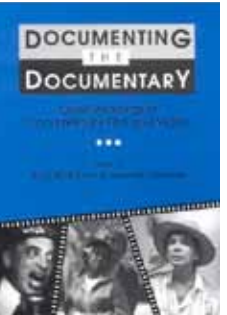
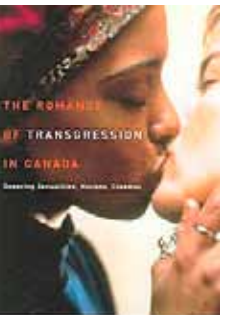
**In your dissertation, for the first time, a film scholar researched and wrote about some major characteristics of Joris Ivens's films: very fast editing, various modes of documentary, like the personalized documentary. What would you describe as the characteristics of Joris's images, unique compared with his fellow documentary filmmakers?**  
Thomas: In terms of style and aesthetics and form he really did everything. He really grew from period to period, absorbed all of the currents of every historical moment that he was in. For example when cinema direct came along in the nineteen fifties he was very resistant to it. He said that all these people with all the fancy new cameras weren't swimming towards any objective, they were just splashing around. And he says just because you have synchronized sound in a light weight camera doesn't mean you are accessing the truth. He was very resistant but as we know he... after a few experiments in the nineteen sixties he came on board with *Le 17me parallèle* in Vietnam and produced his own kind of direct cinema together with Marceline Loidan, a very interesting kind. A kind in which his authorial stamp and his point of view, his perspective or their perspective, was very clear. I think that... if we have to define what Ivens's documentary is... what makes it distinctive, I would list a dozen things and I don't know whether I can but... aside from this interest in politics (I think even though *Une histoire de Vent* is considered by some to be an abjuration of politics in a certain way, I don't think it is, I think it is a synthesis of his career, of his political interest and his cultural interest...) aside from his interest in politics I think that there are many thematic interests that he really approached better than anyone else: work, daily life, the pro-

duction of the fundamentals of life like water, food. Beyond his thematic interest I think that he retained a lot of the interest in form... that he first awoke into the avant-garde in Amsterdam in the nineteen twenties. He was really a perfectionist around editing and provocative visual and kinetic editing for example. I think that his sense of the modernist frame, the very bold and kinetic frame stayed with him until the very end.

**Your other field of interest in research is Third World cinema. Has this also to do with Joris Ivens?**  
Thomas: I think that Ivens among European and North-American filmmakers invented the solidarity film and in particular he was extremely prophetic in developing what we would now call the Third World or post-colonial solidarity film. With *Indonesia Calling*, a film that is absolutely unique... from 1946 he basically put in place what younger filmmakers have been doing ever since, lending their vision and their resources to artists, to filmmakers, to people living in the global south. Whether we are talking about Indonesia or Chili or Cuba or Mali or China, even other countries in Africa and Asia who are represented in some of the East German films like *Song of the Rivers*, Algeria and Cameroon and India, West Bengal for example. He pursued this for the following forty years and a whole new generation that belonged to the New Left in the nineteen sixties followed in his footsteps. I am not saying that the filmmakers of the global south always followed his initiatives. Though I don't think that he invented Third World solidarity film before they did necessarily. But he often called documentary the conscience of the cinema and he realized that this was one of the things that European and North American documentary had to do immediately after World War Two and he laid the groundwork for it.

**Your latest book is about transgression and sexuality, nations and moving images. A very complex relationship between mental and physical transgression. Is there any relationship with Joris Ivens's career and films with this theme?**  
Thomas: Yes and no. I was working on Joris Ivens long before I developed my interest in queer cinema, in LGBT cinema, in sexual transgression cinema. Or perhaps not long before: I was working as a critic for a gay community newspaper as I was writing on Ivens and I suppose I felt that the two domains were entirely separate. Now I don't think they are. I think that political cinema, political documentary shares, crosses those boundaries whether we are talking about class and poverty or whether we are talking about disenfranchised sexual minorities. I think that the two areas increasingly over the last decades have shared a lot. In terms of applying the grid of sexual transgression to Ivens, I think he belonged to an older generation of the old left, the old communist left, that considered sexuality perhaps a bourgeois concern. The Bolsheviks introduced all kinds of sexual and gender reforms in the nineteen twenties and then under Stalin the Soviet society withdrew those reforms, whether we are talking about abortion or homosexuality or women's equality. However I think that much of Ivens's work after the nineteen forties can be considered profeminist. Films like *Die Windrose* are very important and completely unacknowledged in terms of their development of a feminist point of view before their time. So it is very interesting from that perspective.

Interview: André Stufkens;  
Typoscript: Wilma Roland



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# 'DID WE GET THE SHOT?'

ALEX VERNON

## Odyssey to 'The 17th Parallel'



Paris Match, coverphoto with U.S. Navy Lt. Ronald Dodge, captured after he was shot down on 17 May 1967, issue November 10 1972.

Joris Ivens/Marceline Loridan-Ivens, Film stills le 17e parallèle: stock footage of Captain Michael K. McCuiston captured after he was shot down on 8 May 1967. © CAPI Films, Paris

16 MAY 2013. "FILM MOVEMENTS IN ALL COUNTRIES BEGIN WITH THE DOCUMENTARY," SAID MR. KHUONG THAN HY. WE WERE GATHERED IN AN AUDITORIUM AT THE FILM ART RESEARCH AND ARCHIVE CENTER, HO CHI MINH CITY (7 PHAN KE BINH STREET)—A CONTINGENT OF EIGHT UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AND THREE FACULTY MEMBERS FROM HENDRIX COLLEGE IN CONWAY, ARKANSAS, U.S.A.; FOUR PEERS FROM CAN THO UNIVERSITY IN VIET NAM; THE CENTER'S DIRECTOR AND STAFF; AND

THIRTY-ODD MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF VETERAN FILM-MAKERS FROM THE WARS FOR INDEPENDENCE. SOME FAMILY MEMBERS WERE ALSO IN ATTENDANCE, KHUONG THAN HY HAD WITNESSED THE BATTLE OF DIEN BIEN PHU (1954); MOST WORKED ON FILMS BETWEEN 1967 AND 1975. MME. NGUYEN THI XUAN PHUONG, THE VIETNAMESE INTERPRETER AND MEDIC FOR JORIS IVENS AND MARCELINE LORIDAN'S 1968 FILM *THE 17th PARALLEL*, HAD ARRANGED THE EVENT.

That its national film movement began with documentaries was indeed the case in Viet Nam, at least in terms of the official legend and this assembly of former soldiers supporting the northern cause of reunification (*national* is a loaded term in Viet Nam). On 15 October 1947, in the jungles outside Saigon, Mr. Khuong Me and a handful of compatriots resolved to establish a filmmaking society both to record the people's struggles and to make films available to as many audiences as they could reach. Khuong Me, heralded as the father-the "Mr. Lumière" -of Vietnamese film, translated Pierre Boyer and Pierre Fauveau's *Ciné Almanach Prisma* (1947) to serve as an instruction manual. He purchased the first piece of equipment, a second-hand French camera, and six months after its resolution the group had produced its first film.

We heard many stories that day. Of running projectors by pedal power, and packing and scrambling when hostilities threatened. Of relying on lamps, magnifying glasses, and ammunition boxes rather than proper equipment; of developing film under blankets or in enormous urns. Of filming out in front of the combatants, of seeing comrades killed, of being wounded. Of witnessing a bombing during a wedding, with the only remains of the bride and some of the guests the bits of clothes in the trees.



Xuan Phuong shared stories from the filming of *The 17th Parallel*. Bombs knocked Ivens off his feet twice. Such bombs, she told us, basically liquefied the impacted ground, turning it into something like quicksand. Ivens had to crawl out with great care just to reach solid earth, much less to avoid touching another bomb. Or a corpse. And both times, as others helped pull him up, his ears, nose, and mouth full of dirt, his first concern was for the film: "Did we get the shot?" She also retold a story from her memoir 'Ao Dai: My War, My Country, My Vietnam': when the crewmember Kue was taking the film back to Hanoi for processing, the bombs came. He cradled the film with his body, like a mother protecting her child. He lost his life. His blood can still be seen on the original reels.

One scene of *The 17th Parallel* shows the people of Vinh Linh assembled underground to watch a patriotic play about their lives. But they also, Xuan Phuong told us, loved movies. They would walk by torchlight to the improvised venue, extinguishing them whenever shouts of "Mây bay! Mây bay!"— in an eerie echo of *The Spanish Earth's* "Aviación! Aviación!"—broke the night. (As his writings indicate, Ivens had his experience in Spain in mind as he worked and reflected on this new film<sup>3</sup>). She singled out the film *The Lighting of the Wind* as being particularly spiritually meaningful to the Vinh Linh community, as the filmmaker was in the auditorium with us that day. Its filming was quite challenging, constantly interrupted by the war and the need to fight. Ivens filmed in Vinh Linh because it was the front line, occupying the north bank of the Ben Hai River, which loosely followed the 17th parallel demarcating the "two" Vietnams. His film opens grandly with a precariously achieved shot from the flagpole of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, looking south, across the river, past the flapping flag. After a long, difficult journey from Hanoi, the crew finally arrived in Vinh Linh, where it was on location from 15 May to 8 June.

II  
After a week in Ho Chi Minh City, my group travelled to central Viet Nam, where we spent two days in Hue followed by a week at the Vinh Thuy Commune, Vinh Linh District, Quang Tri Province. It was 40° Centigrade the day we drove up; the day before it had reached 43°, the hottest day in thirty years, we were told. Our stay, from 20-26 May 2013, neatly coincided with the journey dates forty-six years earlier such that we experienced something of the filming conditions. Our friends from the Film Center envied us our journey. Several, including the director, came from Quang Tri. "You will be walking in the footsteps of legends," one of the actors told us, speaking of the war dead. "Their spirits are real. You might encounter their souls in the river." Vietnamese congregate to place flowers and floating lanterns for the sacrificed in the Thach Han River by the old Quang Tri citadel, about 15km south of the Ben Hai, where fierce fighting took place in 1972. The Khe Sanh battlefield is in the province's northwest corner. Quang Tri province also houses the Trung Son War Martyr Cemetery for those killed on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and the La Vang Church, where the Virgin Mary appeared in 1798 to console persecuted Catholics. Vinh Linh itself had been razed—every structure we saw, every building and pole and road, had been built in the last thirty-five years. "It is sacred ground."  
Ivens and Loridan were neither the first nor the last to report from Vinh Linh. Its contiguity with the foe made it a choice site and source for northern propaganda. The European filmmakers arrived in the middle of a vicious military campaign, with mutual months-long bombardment, initi-

ated by Hanoi. Ivens' biographer Hans Schoots draws a cynical surmise on this point:  
From this perspective, it is - to put it mildly - remarkable that the North Vietnamese government had failed to evacuate the civilian population and was exposing it to the large-scale American/South Vietnamese reprisals it cannot have failed to expect. This of course fitted into the theory of people's war, in which every civilian was forced by its own government to participate in the fighting. In fact the theory really did not recognize 'civilian population' as a category at all. In this particular case the population of Vinh Linh was placed in a position in which it could not escape active participation in the war. At the same time, propaganda aimed at Western public opinion would stress that civilians fell victim to brutal American violence.

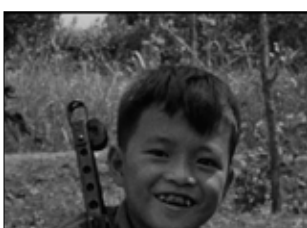
Schoots can't determine whether Ivens and Loridan fully understood the military situation. "What we can say, is that they don't seem to have asked themselves any questions.... The bombing that the inhabitants of Vinh Linh are subject to [in the film] seems to come out of thin air."<sup>4</sup> True enough, and while the film does get around to acknowledging attacks on the American bases overlooking the river plain at Doc Mieu and Con Tien, the delayed presentation until relatively late in the film suggests a self-defensive response. We ought, however, to contextualize Schoots' contextualization. As U.S. bombing of the area predated the North's launching of this particular campaign by a couple of years. This specific episode of bombardment arguably does represent a valid perspective of the larger act of self-defense. Another propaganda work focusing on the area, the book *With the Fighters of Quang Binh-Vinh Linh* (1966), for example, discusses the bombing of Vinh Linh's capital Hoxa, which Ivens' film shows already destroyed. Children like the film's nine-year-old Duc were soon sent to live in the relative safety of Hanoi, and according to a number of the elderly citizens of the Vinh Thuy commune with whom we conducted oral histories and spoke informally, the government did enforce some evacuations. The distances and chronologies of these displacements weren't entirely clear from these interviews—they could have signified removal from one's family home to a nearby tunnel village, such as the coastal complex at Vinh Moc.

One seventy-five year old woman my group met testified to raising her family underground for ten years, from 1965 to 1975. "During the war, a bomb would explode near the house, like only two meters away, and there would be about twenty-five people in the house, yet no one died. I used to be buried in the tunnels and they had to pull me up. Three to four people were buried in the tunnels like that. They dug the ground up, then pulled me out." Just like the young women in the film, Nguyen Thi Gai worked in the fields during the day, and slept in the tunnels at night. She had no clothes for her babies born underground.<sup>5</sup>  
The various articles in *With the Fighters of Quang Binh-Vinh Linh* relate an identical story to *The 17th Parallel*. They describe the barbarous bombing by the American "imperialists", "pirates", and "bandits", and lionize the people's heroic and successful resistance. We read about agricultural gains despite the bombs, about hospitals, theaters, nurseries, and the downing of American pilots. "In the daytime the peasants placidly ploughed, dug, and replanted rice seedlings beside the craters made by the bombs. Some of those huge holes had been turned into ponds where fish were reared....Children went to school, with camouflage boughs on their backs; they discussed various types of aircraft...as if they were playthings." When a jet roaring overhead sent a foreigner into a trench, a veteran of World War II, the kids

Students from Hendrix College and from Can Tho University in Viet Nam.

Xuan Phuong revisiting Vinh Linh for a documentary about *The 17th Parallel* with Duc, 2009

Joris Ivens/Marceline Loridan-Ivens, Film still le 17e parallèle: young Duc training the capturing of a US pilot. © CAPI Films, Paris







Film poster *le 17e parallèle*. Coll. JJA/EFJ

Joris Ivens: 'Did we get the shot', 1967. Coll. JJA/EFJ

Film still *Vinh Linh: The Steel Rampart*, 1970.



laughed at his frightful ignorance: "That was a supersonic plane; when you hear it there is no danger anymore; it's gone already."<sup>6</sup> The book even excerpts a February 1966 *Evénement* article Ivens wrote about his visit the year before.<sup>7</sup> The Vietnamese documentary *Vinh Linh: The Steel Rampart* (1970) appeared two years after Ivens' film.<sup>8</sup> It tells a similar story but at less than half the length. Some scenes are stock footage; others are lifted directly from *The 17th Parallel*, such as an early shot looking across the river past the flapping flag and the following explosion and burning house, a shot of an American pilot's severed hand, and the besieged Con Tien (the latter film's past tense narration appears to recognize the use of older footage). Both films have an underground nursery, hospital, kitchen, and command post. Both have people digging out the tunnels and women brushing their hair. Both appear to include the same militiaman, wearing a camouflage shawl tied around her neck over a long-sleeve black shirt. Both films have a loud-speaker sounding to the comrades across the river and craters turned into fish ponds. Both have a cute dog. Instead of a live performance celebrating the villagers' own wartime lives, this film shows a projector team playing a film that includes anti-war protests in the United States.

*The Steel Rampart* does seem to portray the Vietnamese as more aggressive combatants. It features women firing rifles and anti-aircraft guns, not just as leaders and trainees, and names one woman, Truong Thi Khue, as a "heroine" for shooting down a plane. This emphasis on the women fighters is common among North Vietnamese documentaries like these films and the book, and films like *Cu Chi Guerrillas* (1967). The American imperialists do have a conscience, as they drop leaflets warning of future B52 strikes. For a few seconds toward the end, a captured pilot, hands bound behind him, walks between two women, the one in front carrying his parachute.

Director Ngoc Quynh's most interesting sequence appears a minute later. A group of soldiers play a folksong on homemade instruments, the music persisting as we watch a montage of artillery rounds shoved into breaches, of a line of babies swinging in baskets, of the destruction at the other end of the artillery's trajectory (against Con Tien). Babies and sprouting rice finish the film. It otherwise lacks a plot, though its brevity, its brisk editing pace, and its musical score quicken it.<sup>9</sup>

*The 17th Parallel*, on the other hand, insists on lingering, on the dragging along of daily life. Ivens crafted his film precisely to resist an imposed progression:

To screen two hours in which nothing actually happens, a chronicle in which people continue nevertheless to be interested, fascinated, that for me...That is Art with capital A...Someone once said to me: after ten minutes I'd forgotten it was one of your films. That pleases me enormously, that the author doesn't intrude in his work. Art isn't an alibi to produce whatever you want. It's also not so important if Ivens has been able to speak his mind...In a couple of years' time, when the conflict has passed, the film will return as a historical documentary. Only then will its qualities be apparent.<sup>10</sup>

Or as he expressed this notion more succinctly: "It's a very strange film. It's not really one of my films. It's actually not a film at all."<sup>11</sup>

One might suspect Ivens' hand in overemphasizing the collective monologic patriotism, or see him as faithfully documenting the heaviness of the sanctioned message however much that message smuggled up with his own politics. How else do we expect these citizens to portray themselves in a Hanoi-supported film and with local party cadre and fellow comrades looking on? Ivens was himself perhaps more

ideologically committed than some of his subjects: "I understood that to carry out my task: make a film worthy of our common people's war, the film director and his team must completely integrate themselves into this war, that the director himself becomes a combatant, and more than before with my shootings in Spain, China, Cuba, I was aware that our camera had to be a weapon."<sup>12</sup> Yet we should take care to avoid simplification. This statement by Ivens curiously situates him at once, per Christina Schwenkel's framework, as a globe-trotting foreign correspondent whose work "parallels that of anthropologists" as well as an "insider" documentarian-ethnographer like his Vietnamese counterparts. Schwenkel's article on Vietnamese wartime photojournalists sensitively contends that

"socialist journalism" ...transcends conventional discussions of "propaganda" and "ideology" and challenges commonplace assumptions that knowledge production in a socialist context is the "soulless" work of servants of the state...[The Vietnamese p]hotographers' self-positioning as artists and historical agents, in their quest to represent particular truths about the war through a more ethnographic and humanistic approach, called into question the often dehumanizing and objectifying tendencies of "objective journalism" as practiced in the west.<sup>13</sup>

Schwenkel, I think, helps us understand Ivens' pride in a film that isn't a film, in a visual record whose import will increase with the passing of time beyond political urgency. *The Steel Rampart's* brief shot of a uniformed Vietnamese photographer, as a subject within the documentary, embodies this doubled position as recorder and recorded (Schwenkel titles her essays by quoting a source: "The Camera Was My Weapon").

We do experience some narrative lines besides the self-defensive military operation, especially as the film highlights the successive generations. It opens with the elders discussing their displacement and suffering, it then focuses on the younger adults engaged in managing the community and participating in the militia, and it finally turns to the children's education as future combatants and even present contributors to the fight: "Hands up!" they repeat after their teacher, as the film ends. And if *The Spanish Earth's* narrative unexpectedly loses the Julian thread (after the film crew lost touch with him), *The 17th Parallel's* narrative unexpectedly gains a thread with the capturing of the American pilot. It's as if he drops out of the heavens on any odd day, and the film, already approaching two hours, decides it's high time to wrap up.

### III

It was Captain Michael K. McCuiston's twenty-first mission flying his F105D "Thunderchief." He thought he went down on 7 May 1967; he was later informed it was the eighth.<sup>14</sup> It happened just as he hit the pickle button to drop his ordnance.

He continued to fly, leveling out around 5000 feet. Eventually another pilot pulled up alongside and told him to bail out: "You are on fire!" He tilted his right canopy mirror back into position (during combat he angled the mirrors so the reflections wouldn't distract him) and saw the fuselage fire. He pushed the mirror back, turned down the left mirror, saw the fuselage fire on that side, and pushed that mirror back. His stick finally went dead. There was nothing left at the other end.

The official "loss coordinates" for his ejection are 181100N 1054900E, in Ha Tinh, two provinces above Quang Tri and Vinh Linh.<sup>15</sup> According to McCuiston, the image of two pilots going down in Ivens's film notwithstanding, no one else was shot down that day. The Vietnamese organized

POWs by their capture date, and he was the sole member of his group. U.S. records confirm that his was the only loss on the 8th. McCuiston recalls that a few weeks before, another pilot had been shot down in same "hole," though he was never heard from again.

He had been brought down by 37mm anti-aircraft fire. "Two of the other F-105s made strafing runs on enemy troops who were approaching the downed pilot while the other aircraft, flown by Maj. Al Lesinski..., climbed to altitude to provide radio relay to organize the SAR effort." A-1s replaced the F-105s, but the helicopters did not arrive in time.<sup>16</sup> McCuiston later heard from a buddy that someone in Saigon cancelled the helicopter mission even though there was plenty of daylight left.

After hitting the ground, Capt. McCuiston found himself cornered in rocky terrain as a group of Vietnamese approached wearing militia hats, brandishing AKs, and shouting "Hands up!" One of them slid down the hill toward him. McCuiston took cover behind a rock as the other man shot off a full banana-clip's worth of rounds on automatic. When he stopped to reload, McCuiston stepped out and fired four rounds, killing him. The other militiamen acted as if it had never happened. They walked up to the American, he dropped his pistol, and they led him away.

On the walk, one of them struck him from behind in the head with the butt of his AK, swinging it like a baseball bat, knocking McCuiston to the ground. He couldn't see the man; the blow came out of nowhere. He was unconscious for about thirty seconds. He thought he had been bayoneted as well because of the blood covering one of his sleeves. They secured him in a back room, something like a storage closet or cold cellar built into the earth, in a home about 1000 yards from the capture site. The house itself wasn't underground; it had a roofed porch in the front.

A day or two later he heard a crowd outside. The locals hadn't mistreated him, yet this new commotion scared him. He was brought out to the porch, where the crowd had gathered on the sloping ground below.

At some point he became aware of the filming. "I didn't see any gringos," he told me on the telephone, "Only Vietnamese." If Ivens and Loridan were present, they didn't show themselves. As neither Ivens nor Loridan mention the significant event of witnessing the capture of a pilot in any of their published accounts, Ivens most likely used footage from another source.<sup>17</sup> Indeed in a 1974 letter to Debbie Litt of Detroit, Michigan, he admits to including footage of a captured American pilot taken by a Vietnamese cameraman in a "1967" film. The pilot in question is U.S. Navy Lt. Ronald Dodge, who was shot down 17 May 1967 (after Ivens departed Vinh Linh). He could not have appeared in the found footage film *Le ciel, la terre* (1966), and he does not appear in *Loi du Vietnam* (August 1967). Presumably Ivens has McCuiston in mind.<sup>18</sup>

McCuiston mugged for the camera; he wanted his picture taken. He recalled a woman in the front row with bad betel nut blackened teeth, holding a baby in one hand while shaking her other fist and shouting at him. All the while her baby smiled and waved, trying to make a new friend.

The next morning his captors woke him, gave him a conical "coolie hat," and without binding him in any way walked him some distance away. He had no idea where they were leading him. That's when the locals staged his capture for the camera albeit without the dramatic violence of the actual event. The flight helmet they handed him belonged to a pilot with a much bigger head, and McCuiston had the astonishing presence of mind to pull it as far down as possible to call attention to this other lost pilot for whoever might see the footage.



Joris Ivens: 'Did we get the shot', 1967. Coll. JJA/EFJ

Sometime during these two or three days in the house, a woman came into the room, handed him an unloaded .38, and pointed it at him. He nodded to confirm it his. She took it back and counted from one to six in Vietnamese as she pointed at each chamber. As she repeated the process, he assumed that they weren't going to report the killing of the militiaman, that it had never officially happened, because an American POW was more valuable than a killed comrade. Maybe, he reflected when he told me the story, he made this assumption to give himself some peace of mind. A regular army officer with a jeep and a driver took him to another demonstration. This time the crowd started throwing rocks. One of the rocks hit the Vietnamese officer as he ran McCuiston back to the jeep before they managed to pull out of range.

The journey to Hanoi took two to three weeks, on foot and in trucks and jeeps.

He tried to escape once. At first they had strapped him side-saddle to a wheel, then they tied him to the canopy frame. "I was bounced all to hell!" Though after he managed to untie himself, he just sat there. There was nowhere to go. The officer laughed good-naturedly. On a later day, when the officer was shaving and McCuiston gestured that he would like to shave as well, the officer gestured back that he wanted to but couldn't. That razor had to last him the rest of the war. "He was good to me," McCuiston said. "Just doing his job, getting me to the next place."

Once on the journey north McCuiston was subjected to a rope torture. It was the middle of nowhere, and for no apparent reason. McCuiston has suspected that the Vietnamese soldier might have just been practicing. He bound Mc-





Affiche: 'Que le peuple Sud Vietnamien héroïques se lèves!', 1966. Coll. EFJI.

Joris Ivens and president Ho Chi Minh, 1966. Coll. EFJI.

Students from Hendrix College and from Can Tho University in Viet Nam.

Cuiston's arms to cut the circulation, and when he released the binds the blood rushing back was excruciating. There was also a mock firing squad. McCuiston was only giving his name, rank, and service number, so they tied him to a tree, leaving his arms free. Two Vietnamese soldiers faced him. He pointed at his forehead with one finger, asking them to make it quick. They released him and continued on. He hadn't been particularly worried, as he assumed he was much more valuable alive than dead.

The next day they linked him up with a Navy A4 pilot, Bob Wideman, a lieutenant junior grade who in his early twenties was the youngest pilot POW. His plane had gone down two days before McCuiston's.<sup>19</sup>

The only real scare for McCuiston and Wideman came from their own. They were chained in the back of a dump truck along with a fifty-five gallon fuel drum and a couple of guards when flares lit up the trail. The Vietnamese stopped the truck, shut off the lights, jumped out and ran, leaving them in the truck. U.S. jets open up on this target-of-opportunity; a few rounds hit it but did little damage. Anti-aircraft guns chased the planes away. The guards hopped back in the truck and they continued on.

Along the way McCuiston forgot the name inside the helmet his captors had him wear for the reenactment. It was a short name; it started with a G.<sup>20</sup>

#### IV

Upon his arrival at the Hanoi Hilton, the torture began. The Vietnamese handed Captain McCuiston paper and a pencil to sign a confession. He wrote "Did not" in front of every sentence, and returned it. The next morning they woke him at 0500. He fully expected the torture to continue. But they moved him to another cell, and left him alone. It was sheer chance, he believes, that they never discovered his negating of the confession. He soon learned that seven to ten planes had been shot down shortly after his arrival—he figures he owes those pilots for sparing him more torture because the Vietnamese had new people to beat.<sup>21</sup>

He, Wideman, and Major Richard "Dick" Vogel (USAF) were cellmates. Vogel had been shot down and captured on 22 May. One day during their captivity a couple of East German cameramen arrived to report on life at the Hanoi Hilton, eventually producing the 1967 pro-North propaganda documentary *Pilots in Pajamas*. They were particularly interested, according to McCuiston, in Lt. Cdr. Richard "Dick" Stratton of the "Stratton incident" (who famously blinked T-O-R-T-U-R-E in Morse code while being filmed), and Douglas Hegdhal, a sailor who in April fell overboard in the Gulf of Tonkin and was picked up by a Vietnamese fisherman. At nineteen he was the youngest Hanoi Hilton POW and the only draftee.<sup>22</sup> McCuiston and his two cellmates watched through peepholes as the Germans filmed Stratton and Hegdhal doing chores. They were then pulled out and told to dig in the garden, shamming their daily activities. The Germans trotted over and turned their cameras on them, ignoring the North Vietnamese soldiers waving and shouting them away. McCuiston, an avid golfer, held his shovel like a golf club to help himself be identified—which his father was able to do.<sup>23</sup>

Four years after his arrival, doing exercises in his cell by lifting a bucket, he noticed a protuberance in his bicep. On the day of his capture he hadn't been stuck with a bayonet after all—a bullet must have ricocheted off the rocks and had finally worked its way to the surface. Captain McCuiston was released on 3 March 1973. American doctors removed the bullet, which he still has. He completed an air force career, retiring as a lieutenant colonel in 1981 and then entering a second career as a commercial pilot.

Xuan Phuong's inspiring work with Ivens led to a new career as a filmmaker for the Ministry of Information and Culture that lasted until her retirement. In the early 1990s she opened The Lotus Gallery in Ho Chi Minh City for emerging artists. She achieved all her successes without ever joining the communist party. In July 2011, the French ambassador Jean-François Girault bestowed Xuan Phuong with the title Chevalier de la Légion D'Honneur. The certificate and a frame of ceremony photos hang in her small if overabundant art gallery on Pasteur Street in Ho Chi Minh City's District 1.

Nguyen Thi Gai had only ever wanted an education. Her family's poverty precluded it, requiring her to work at home and in the fields and at home so her five younger siblings could attend school. After marriage, the war kept her in the fields. She never became literate. Her husband was reticent about his service—he helped shoot down three U.S. jets, he captured one pilot (whom they treated like a family member before passing him along, he assured me), and he travelled to fight in the south. In her interview, she gave her husband more credit for actively protecting the American captive from those who wanted to beat him. He reminded them to blame the leaders not the soldiers, she said, "they were just doing the jobs they were given." Speaking for herself, she said that "Previously, when I still didn't know how to think, then say for example, the country of Vietnam, or the U.S., for example, would be said to be two enemies, but in actuality that is not true. We have to say it is just one leader, only the leaders, they were wrong, but the people all prefer to love, to respect one another."

Forty years later, in their lovely home in the Vinh Thuy Commune of Vinh Linh, just up the road from where my students and I helped build a bathroom for a nursery, this couple hosted our group to an amazing lunch and a siesta every afternoon for a week. Speaking about us, Thi Gai observed that "it's fun, but for example in the past no one would visit one another at all. But nowadays, people are moving increasingly closer, generally the international community in general is uniting together, shaking hands with us." Life is a "hundredfold" happier now.

Their six children have all achieved graduate degrees. Among them are two teachers and a prominent artist, my friend Vo Xuan Huy. He spent the first six year of sleeping and hiding underground. Recently he has turned to grappling with the war in his work. He and I are talking about a future project where U.S. and Vietnamese students collaborate on a site-specific piece of art that recognizes the old Quang Tri battlefield but transforms those hostilities into an act of creative friendship.

Hanging in my dining room is a gorgeous lacquer piece of his, a rough black circle on a textured cerulean blue field, inspired by an image from his wartime childhood. Sometimes I know it as *Bomb Crater*. Sometimes, *Fish Pond*.

1 Though President Ho Chi Minh did not officially establish the industry until his decree of 15 March 1953.  
2 Xuan Phuong (with Daniele Mazingarbe), *Ao Dai: My War, My Country, My Vietnam*, 2001 Ashland.  
3 In addition to the general parallels of an earthbound civilian-at-heart population victimized from the air and fighting intruders, the later film has minor echoes. Women and girls receiving food through a window recall the bakery window in Fuenteduena; caring for the wounded in both films occurs near the end; etc.  
4 Hans Schoots, "Entanglements at the Seventeenth Parallel: Joris Ivens and European views on the Vietnam War." Lecture at the Congress on Europe and the Vietnam War at Utrecht University, the Netherlands, December 2000 (<http://www.hansschoots.nl/engels/parallel.html>).  
5 Interview conducted by Dr. Anne Goldberg, Hendrix College, at Nguyen Thi Gai's home in the Vinh Thuy Commune (23 May 2013). Interview transcribed and translated by Hendrix student Giang "Gaby" Le. All further quotations from Nguyen Thi Gai are from this interview.  
6 *With the Fighters of Quang Binh-Vinh Linh*, Vietnamese Studies No. 9 (Democratic Republic of Vietnam, distributed by Xunhasaba: Hanoi, 1966), 41.

7 Joris Ivens, "Heavens and Earth," in *With the Fighters of Quang Binh-Vinh Linh*, 19-20.  
8 *Luy thep Vinh Linh*, directed by Ngoc Quynh (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-uziN-Ssmg>). Awarded a gold medal at the International Film Festival in 1971 in Moscow and Golden Lotus at Vietnam Film Festival in 1973.  
9 There is also a fictional film, *17<sup>th</sup> Parallel: Nights and Days* (1973), filmed in Vinh Linh, Vinh Moc, and other locations during the last years of American military operations. See Ninh Loc, "War Movie Golden Memory for Lead Actress Days and Nights," *Viet Nam News: The National English Language Daily* (26 April, 26 2010) (<http://vietnamnews.vn/sunday/features/199030/war-movie-golden-memory-for-lead-actress-sand-nights.html>). The new-mother-turned-revolutionary, whose baby is cared for collectively, appears to be a basis for the French film *Indochine* twenty years later.  
10 Joris Ivens in conversation with B.J. Bertina, in *De Volkskrant*, 16 November 1968; quoted in Stufkens, cite.  
11 Quoted in Stufkens, cite.  
12 Ivens and Loridan, *17e parallèle, la guerre du peuple: Deux mois sous la terre* (Paris 1967), 8.  
13 Christina Schwenkel, "The Camera Was My Weapon": Reporting and Representing War in Socialist Vietnam, in *The Anthropology of News & Journalism: Global Perspectives*, edited by S. Elizabeth Bird (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010): 86-99, 88-89. Given their similar content but different authors and audiences (European for Europeans and Vietnamese for Vietnamese), these two films about Vinh Linh would make for an excellent study of ethnographic representation.  
14 Unless otherwise noted, McCuiston's story comes from a telephonic interview with the author conducted 29 June 2011 and a follow-up on 28 August 2013 after he reviewed a draft of this section.  
15 This is north of where McCuiston thought he went down—although not being the flight leader, he wasn't as aware of his position. Apparently lat/longs in official reports are notoriously unreliable, yet Mary Schantag from the POW Network informs me that "Ha Tinh would have been from the text of the incident reports" and is more trustworthy than coordinates (personal email 16 July 2013). In this case the lat/long and the incident report text both land him in Ha Tinh.  
16 Chris Hodson, *Vietnam Air Losses: United States Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps Fixed-Wing Aircraft Losses in Southeast Asia 1961-1973* (Hinckley, England: Midland Publishing, 2001), 99.  
17 Two of the militiamen wear near-white uniforms; no one else in the film wear such clothes.  
18 Folder 421, JJA. Litt's letter is dated 26 August; the copy of Ivens' reply is not dated. Litt had seen the photo in *Paris Match* ("Hanoi sous les bombes: un cineaste temoigne," 9 September 1967); she was active in MIA recovery efforts. The photo also appeared on the cover of *Life* (10 November 1972), identifying the pilot as U.S. Navy Lt. Ronald Dodge and noting that the Hanoi government claims no knowledge of his whereabouts. Ivens told her it was an enlarged still from the Vietnamese operator's footage. (On Dodge, see <http://www.pownetwork.org/bios/d/d054.htm>).  
19 Though Loridan does write about being informed by the village doctor that two planes were shot down and their pilots captured in Ha Tinh, where she was nursing an injury, and where McCuiston was shot down: "One of them is wounded. He was immediately treated by the farmers who found him" (34). It's hard to date Loridan's travels precisely, but this event probably occurred in the first two weeks of May—again, when McCuiston was shot down. McCuiston's head injury from the rifle-butt was indeed bandaged by his captors.  
20 The chronology is a challenge. A few paragraphs later, Loridan writes, "It is Sunday." She departed that evening around 1700 for Vinh Linh. This would be either Sunday 7 May or Sunday 14 May. Three U.S. pilots were shot down and captured on 5 May outside Hanoi. Five were shot down on 12 May, and the last known location of two of them, Maj. Robert A. Stewart and Capt. Peter P. Pitman (USAF), was Quang Binh province between Loridan's location and Vinh Linh (both MIA and presumed dead). But they were flying in the same plane. And on Sunday the 14<sup>th</sup>, Lt. Cdr. Charles Everett Southwick and Lt. David John Rollins, in the same Navy F-4B, went down and were captured while attacking the Than Hoa Bridge (Hobson 100). I suspect the doctor was referring to Stewart & Pitman or Southwick & Rollins, with discussion of two pilots at some point in the communication chain misunderstood as two planes.  
21 Few paragraphs later Loridan is delayed a probably a night or two on her journey south to rejoin Ivens, but then she writes that she "met up with Joris two days ago" and they "should have already been in Vinh Linh" and writes as if he is arriving with her for the first time. But leaving on 14 May and being delayed would put them in Vinh Linh on the 16th at the earliest, when all other documents tell us that filming began on the 15th.  
22 POW Network (<http://www.pownetwork.org/bios/w/w068.htm>) and Hobson (99).  
23 Three pilots with monosyllabic last names beginning with 'G' went down in the same general vicinity. The closest both geographically and temporally was Lt. Dany Elloy Green (USN), lost near Ha Tinh (21 Dec 1966). He became a POW and was released 4 March 1973, a day after McCuiston. Lt.



Vo Xuan Huy, *Bomb Crater / Fish Pond*, lacquer piece.

Cdr. Harold Edwin Gray Jr. (USN) was lost near Dong Hoi in Quang Binh province (7 Aug 1965) and believed killed in action. Capt. Wilmer Newlin "Newk" (USAF) Grubb was also lost near Dong Hoi in Quang Binh (26 Jan 1966), was captured, and died in captivity. Most Air Force pilot helmets were camouflaged, so the unknown owner was probably a naval aviator.  
21 As McCuiston and Wideman's story evidences, the arrival date at the Hanoi Hilton does not equate to the loss or capture date, so it is difficult to determine when these 7-10 arrived. One good candidate is 19 May or a day or so after. On that day, "Black Friday" for the navy, twelve pilots were recorded as losses—ten from the navy, one from the marine corps, and one from the air force. Eight of those were captured and sent to infamous prison; three of those eight died in captivity (Hobson 101-102). If this is indeed the same group that interrupted McCuiston's interrogation, his transit time from capture to imprisonment would have been roughly twelve days.  
22 Hegdhal was released on 5 August 1969, as a humanitarian display for the North Vietnamese, but with the blessing of the POW chain-of-command because Hegdhal had memorized the names of the other 250 or so captives.  
23 McCuiston's parents identified him on 16 October 1967 while seeing a clip from *Pilots in Pajamas* of him walking into a building aired on NBC. Two days later they were interviewed on the network's news program (Owner: NBC News, Clip Name: 5112772197\_s01, Date: 10/18/67, Title: PARENTS OF DOWNED FLIER IN VIETNAM INTERVIEWED, Media ID: 0274E95, Ardome ID: 1100100610047920122. See [http://www.nbcuniversalarchives.com/nbcuni/clip/5112772197\\_s01.do](http://www.nbcuniversalarchives.com/nbcuni/clip/5112772197_s01.do)) The POW Network has an online transcript of Pilots in Pajamas: [http://www.pownetwork.org/nvp/pilots\\_in\\_pajamas.pdf](http://www.pownetwork.org/nvp/pilots_in_pajamas.pdf). Decades after his release, watching television in a Canadian hotel room, he watched himself walk across the screen in a war documentary, presumably this same clip from the East German film.

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Interview with Leonard Retel Helmrich about his latest film *Hollandse Nieuwe* (Raw Herring, 2013)

# FEEL WITH YOUR EYES, LOOK WITH YOUR HANDS

Leonard Retel Helmrich, Film still  
*Hollandse Nieuwe* (Raw Herring, 2013).



**YOU MADE A FILM ABOUT HERRING FISHING CALLED *HOLLANDSE NIEUWE*. WERE YOU COMMISSIONED TO MAKE THAT FILM?**

Leonard: Yes, it was commissioned by the EO, a Dutch television channel (Evangelical Broadcasting Association) and paid for by the fishing industry. I found the subject interesting because it fits entirely into the documentary film tradition, such as Griersons' *Drifters*, Herman van der Horst's *'t Schot is te boord* (*Shoot the Nets*) and Joris Ivens's *Branding* (*Breakers*). Grierson filmed the Scottish fishermen during a time of change and that same factor applies to my film. The aim of *Drifters* was to show that the craft was disappearing and becoming completely mechanised. In my film you can see the fishermen using machines to empty the ocean of fish. After all, the Dutch fished in the fishing area situated right next to the one portrayed in the *Drifters*.

**JORIS IVENS SITUATED *BRANDING* JUST AS YOU DID, IN KATWIJK, THE NETHERLANDS. IN HIS FILM HE CONNECTED UNEMPLOYMENT TO A LOVE STORY, THE MATERIAL WITH THE IMMATERIAL. THAT IS ALSO A PROMINENT FEATURE IN YOUR FILM.**

Leonard: I try to get under the skin of others. How they deal with the world around them influenced by new technologies. Ivens did that too. And when I'm busy filming I try to use my eyes to absorb the empathy for the person to be filmed and then translate it in an orbital movement by means of the camera in my hand. Feeling with eyes and looking with your hands as it were.

**THE POWER OF YOUR FILM WORK LIES IN THE FACT THAT YOU NEVER STAY ON THE OUTSIDE, THE FOCUS IS ALWAYS ON THE INSIDE.**

Leonard: I think that as a filmmaker you should be aware that you are never an outsider, but a participant. You can put a lot more emotion into things when you actually participate in an event. That's the way I made the film about herring fishing as well. In the end, however, I realised that things were very different from my preconceived ideas. My initial sympathy for the fishermen due to the idea of a vanishing craft gave way to mixed feelings when I saw that they had tons of dead fish which they just threw back into the sea. If you have mixed feelings after seeing the film it is because I felt that way.

**BACK TO THE TRADITION A MOMENT. YOU BELONG TO THE FOURTH GENERATION OF DUTCH DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS. YOU DEVELOPED A NEW TECH-**

**NIQUE WITH A NEW VIEWING EXPERIENCE. ARE THERE OTHER FILMS OF WHICH YOU SAY: THAT'S WHAT I THINK ABOUT SOMETIMES?**

Leonard: No, it is mainly the entire tradition of documentary filmmakers that I think about. And especially Ivens for his courage in making *Indonesia Calling!* An anti-Dutch film, then. I was also threatened when I was on board the herring boat. "If you report me I'll kill you," said the captain. I considered not using the material. I'll just use it in the film, as it is. But I'm not going to report the captain. I hope I'm a little safer after revealing this. I hope they do not come after me.

**BUT DO THE THREATS CONTINUE?**

Leonard: Yes, the threat still exists. However, I think the issue is important. I'm not offering criticism. I'm not saying: you must stop fishing. I'm simply saying: if the fishing tradition is destroyed it'll be your own fault. If you keep on dumping copious amounts of fish back into the sea, in that manner, don't be surprised if you have less fish next year.

**DID YOU RECEIVE ANY COMMENTS OR CENSORSHIP FROM YOUR DIRECT COMMISSIONER IN RELATION TO THIS?**

Leonard: Yes, he was actually afraid because he had drawn up a contract with them. A ridiculous contract in which he gave them editorial power. All wrong. I then reported him to the Film Fund. There they said, this isn't permissible, your artistic freedom is a right. And I also find that my journalistic freedom and journalistic obligation are at stake. I use reality as a source of inspiration for my film. And I do this according to my own subjective view. Because objectivity doesn't exist.

**YOU ALSO SHARE A COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS WITH IVENS. THERE IS A PARALLEL BETWEEN *HOLLANDSE NIEUWE* AND *BRANDING* AND ALSO *A TALE OF THE WIND*. IMAGES OF NATURE, METAPHORS SUCH AS A STAR THAT TURNS OUT TO BE A DEWDROP, FOR EXAMPLE, IN YOUR NEW FILM FOOTAGE OF FISH, SUN, TWINKLING, BEATING OF THE WAVES. YOU CAN ONLY SEE THIS IF YOU REALISE THAT EVERYTHING IS RELATED.**

Leonard: I found it symbolic that the wave of the wake cuts through the virginity of the water.

**IS THAT SYMBOLISM SOMETHING THAT STEMS FROM YOU YOURSELF? ARE YOU SENSITIVE TO THAT?**

Leonard: I try to translate my emotion into image. I have a feeling, look

around me and at a certain point my gaze remains fixed on an image representing that emotion. Then I select that image as the best. And then the emotion comes across as such too.

**THE SAME APPROACH APPLIES TO ALL PHENOMENA IN THE FILM?**

Leonard: Absolutely. A holistic view is my starting point. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. You also need to have the interrelationships, of the various elements, in the picture. That's why I said: single shot cinema. And I do that with an orbital camera movement. For a moment you have two elements in the picture and can then move on to the next element in an organic manner. You must have the freedom to weave, as it were, into the situation with your camera, and to dance along with the event itself.

**PEOPLE NO LONGER ACCEPT MANIPULATION THROUGH EDITING AND CUTTING. THAT HOLISTIC OR ORGANIC ELEMENT IS THE FILM LANGUAGE OF THE FUTURE. IT OFFERS SO MUCH ADDITIONAL VALUE.**

Leonard: Yes, and that is also thanks to the technique, which is becoming smaller. Only when the camera is no longer a physical thing do we finally have the freedom that film can actually offer. The disappearance of heavy bulky cameras offers that possibility.

**THE SINGLE-SHOT TECHNIQUE AND NOW THE COLLECTIVE-SHOT TECHNIQUE WERE BOTH DEVELOPED FURTHER BY YOU. THEY PRESENT AN AMAZING NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR DOCUMENTARY FILM TECHNIQUE BUT ALSO FOR FEATURE FILMS.**

Leonard: Yes. Especially the collective-shot technique. I would like to make a feature film in which the actors also handle the camera themselves. And where there is no dividing line between crew and cast. So that the two melt into one world. In a recent experiment at the New York University, I used a metronome to solve the difference in rhythm between what actors are doing and what the technical crew is doing. Each act always proceeded through the rhythm of the metronome. That method lets you record a long scene in a single shot.

**FILM TECHNIQUE IS MAKING HEADWAY THROUGH TECHNICAL INNOVATION. IS THE DOCUMENTARY FILM TECHNIQUE UNDERGOING CHANGE TOO IN TERMS OF CONTENT?**

Leonard: Yes. But people always act. That is one problem that makes the content harder to change. On the other hand, nowadays there are cameras hanging everywhere and people are either constantly acting, because they know they are being filmed or are otherwise just being themselves because they are used to the camera.

**DO YOU NOTICE THAT ASSIGNMENTS ARE EASIER TO COME BY BECAUSE OF YOUR SUCCESS?**

Leonard: I get asked regularly anyway, but I only pick the subjects that really touch me. I am now looking at how I can apply 3D to my research and my work at the university. 3D is very much in and there is lots of investment from business and industry. It's a permanent thing. And I like that because you can take another step forward.

**YOU SEE OPPORTUNITIES FOR 3D AND DOCUMENTARY?**

Leonard: Absolutely. With just a small camera you can already film in 3D.

**SO WHEN YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE FUTURE, YOU ARE ACTUALLY TALKING ABOUT YOUR COLLECTIVE-SHOT BY THE PARTICIPANTS THEMSELVES.**

Leonard: Yes. And with 3D that's possible. The point is in fact: the cameras should not be too large. There is a really tiny camera available now called Iconics. Doctors use them in operations to see where they need to make incisions in 3D.

**ALL OF THESE TECHNICAL INNOVATIONS COME FROM AEROSPACE, THE MILITARY AND HEALTHCARE. THAT'S FASCINATING, DON'T YOU THINK?**

Leonard: Yes, if it can give us that freedom: make use of it!

**I SEE A BOOK LYING HERE ABOUT ARCHIVES. DO YOU EVER THINK ABOUT YOUR FILM LEGACY?**

Leonard: Yes. But it is hard to archive digital media and it is extremely expensive to put that on 35mm yourself. Eye Netherlands Film Institute was going to blow up and archive *De stand van de Sterren* on 35mm but then ran out of money. Incredibly disappointing!

**IS THERE MORE INTEREST AMONG FILMMAKERS TO ARCHIVE THEIR OWN FILMS?**

Leonard: I don't know of any colleagues who are doing that. Most of my colleagues are subject-oriented. I find that a big problem, that documentaries are evaluated according to their subject. I find the form and the way in which the subject is treated more important. Subject-oriented films soon become dated. Unless they are very well filmed. I always want to have the subject that goes deeper than just one issue to do with something or the other. Even with films such as *Promised Paradise*, which is about terrorism in Jakarta and about the bomb attack on Bali, I want to highlight the human aspect in such a way as to show that it goes further than just that one issue. I want to talk about the manner in which people are philosophically engaged and how they are interacting with one another. So that it provides a portrait of an era which is actually a piece of history and that, hopefully, will be picked up in the future as teaching material or suchlike.

**DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHERE YOUR APPROACH COMES FROM?**

Leonard: My father was a great storyteller. I was just seven and I often heard the stories he told about Indonesia, before and during the war and during the Bersiap (Dutch name for violent and chaotic phase of the Indonesian National Revolution after the end of World War II). The funny thing is that he told the same stories to other people but slightly different each time. The form and content varied in the interaction with the person listening. It's then that I thought, actually: you can tell a story in a hundred ways. Subjectivity goes further than that. If I tell the story right now it's very well possible that it'll come cross differently tomorrow. And who you tell it to is also important. I found that bit very fascinating in itself. But the problem with film is that you capture it and it is then an historical portrait.

**EACH ONE OF YOUR IMAGES IS ANECDOTAL. IT PROVIDES A LAYER, A MEANING, A STORY.**

Leonard: Yes. An image should consist of several layers. That way it can be interpreted in different ways by the viewer and by me as well. I often do not even know why I want to use a particular image and also at a certain spot. I find that out later on.

**FILMING INTUITIVELY THEN. SOMETHING JORIS IVENS DID TOO.**

Leonard: Yes. Film academies often teach: You have to focus right away on what you want to shoot, and in my view that is wrong. Ivens knew what the essence was of what he wished to present. He then used his intuition in order to make a choice. And personally, it's there I see what my relationship is to what Ivens did: his manner of focussing and what I do. I see a scene and name its essence and that is also exactly what my focus is and then I start filming.

Interview: André Stufkens; film recordings: Harko Wubs; typescript and editing: Wilma Roland.

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## A NEW MUSIC EXPERIMENT ACCOMPANYING RAIN

IN 2011, I WAS GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMPOSE FILM MUSIC TO JORIS IVENS' *REGEN* (RAIN, 1929). THIS WORK WAS PART OF THE GRAND OPENING CONCERT FOR THE STUDIO FOR FILM MUSIK AT THE FREIBURG MUSIKHOCHSCHULE, GERMANY, IN 2012. DURING THIS CONCERT, IVENS' FILM WOULD BE SHOWN FIVE TIMES, FIRSTLY AS A SILENT FILM AND THEN WITH MUSIC BY LOU LICHTVELD, HANNS EISLER, ED HUGHES AND MYSELF. THE ONLY PRACTICAL LIMITATION TO MY COMPOSITION BEING THAT I UTILIZE THE INSTRUMENTATION ALREADY PRESENT IN THE OTHER COMPOSITIONS. I PURPOSEFULLY CHOSE TO FORGO THE USE OF ELECTRONICS IN THIS PIECE AS THIS LIMITATION PROVED INTERESTING, ESPECIALLY DUE TO THE STARK CONTEXTUAL DEPENDENCY OF THE FILM.

Opening night of the Studio for Film Musik at the Freiburg Musikhochschule with performance of *Sx Regen/Rain*.

The beginning of my compositional process was the analysis of the film. I looked at an array of different elements using diverse criteria, such as: movement and direction of movement; how the camera was used (static or in motion, for instance); repeating motives (flowing water, rain drops); the variety of machines (airplanes, cars, trams, bicycles, boots, ships, etc.); whether a multitude of people are to be seen in the picture or not; whether man-made or natural objects are seen; rhythmic events etc.

Through this analysis, I was able to build a multidimensional matrix which, among other things, showed me the various motives that span throughout the film (I admit that this type of analysis provokes this result). At this point I want to make clear that I purposefully ignored any extraneous information seen in the film. I wanted to inform my viewpoint exclusively through this analysis. I had not given any thought as to what the music would sound like during this process. It was easy to see that the evocativeness of *Regen* could very easily be diminished by music and that the film worked very well as a silent film! My next step was to find or create an exigency for the film music as I never had the intention of creating an atmospheric music for this film. My solution was as follows: the ambient sound is missing from the silent film, which helps lend a more realistic depiction of each scene and thus give it a contextual right to exist. If I used certain aspects of the ambient sound in a compositional manner, then the music would not be independent of

Freiburg Musikhochschule.



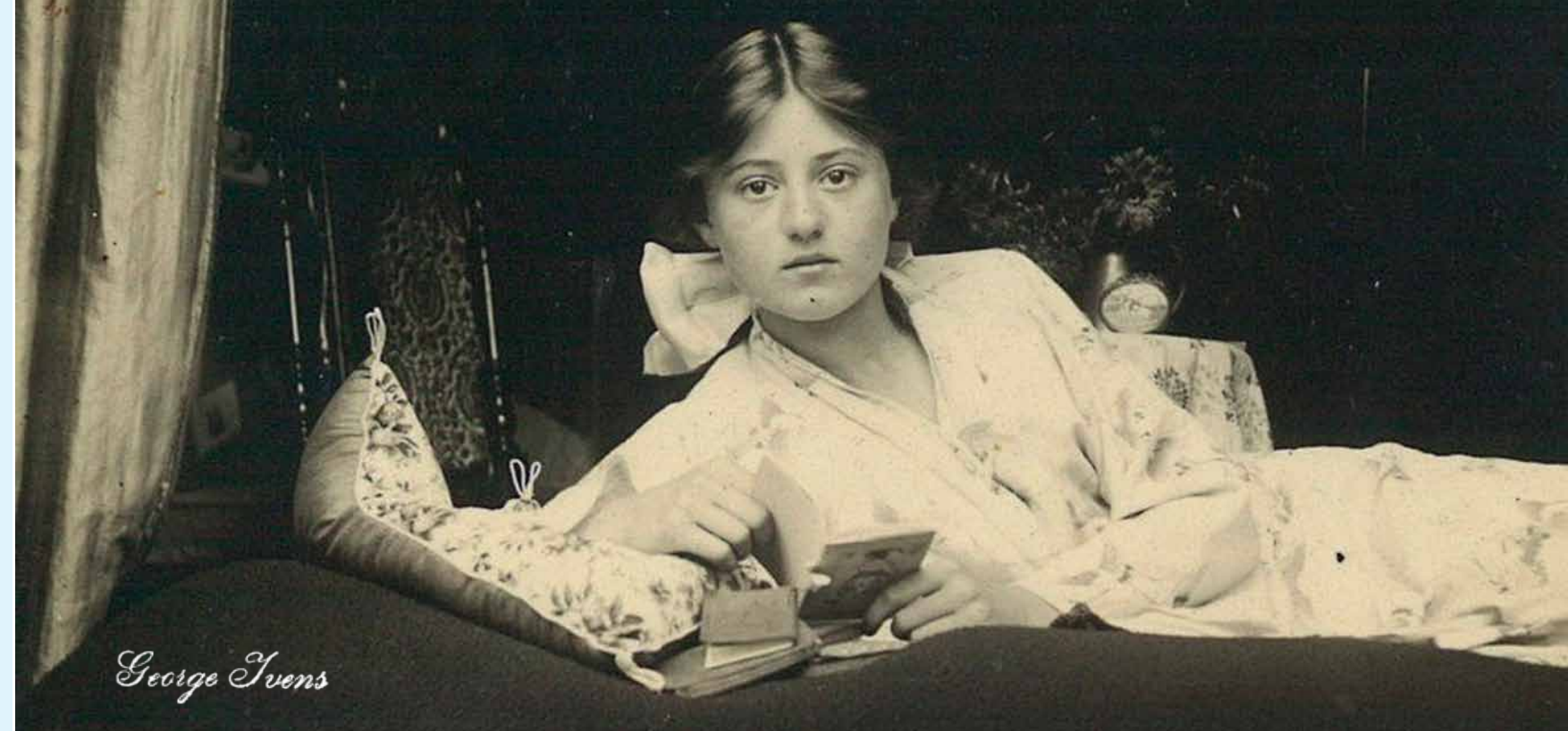
the film but also not simply background music. Music and film can blend together in this way. At the same time I have the possibility, especially since I am not using the real ambient sound, to highlight the role of music in the film.

The result of this concept is as follows: each element is paired with a sustained chord and some elements are also musically accentuated, which I see as an artificial ambient sound. In addition, an ostinato is used as a 'soundtrack' for an overarching motif. As the film progresses these two layers blend more and more together to an extent that their clear roles at the beginning are at the end more ambiguous. Also, elements of the film that are musically accentuated become increasingly frequent as time passes. For instance, the same cello pizzicato can be heard in the following different contexts: indicating a new scene; accentuating an action in the film (window closing, footsteps, raindrops, windshield wipers, an umbrella closing, etc.); as a remnant of the soundtrack. (I setup the work as follows so that this ambiguity would be effective: I first developed a tempo matrix of eighth notes using a computer program coupled with the length of each element that I analysed. In this way each element 'fits' exactly onto this matrix. The natural deviations in tempo were kept to a minimum and each element had its own tempo which varied minimally from the others. A conductor must then conduct with a click track that is synchronized with the film during a live performance.)

The first half of the film was composed with this method in mind. In the second half of the film the material is drastically reduced because of the lack of foreseeable rhythmic patterns which occur during a scene change or an action in the film. The number of these coordinated actions are so low that the viewer cannot be sure if such actions are on purpose or not. In a way, the audience member is 'conditioned' through the compositional process of the first half of the film so that he will begin 'hearing' rhythmic elements during the later part of the film (for instance, horse hooves or raindrops whose rhythm is coupled to the eighth note matrix but not heard in the music). Through this process, it is my wish that the viewer will hopefully observe new details in the film and the music that they normally would not have.



ALEXANDER GREBTSCHENKO was born in 1975, in Varna, Bulgaria. He studied composition with Prof. Cornelius Schwehr and Electronic Music with Prof. Mesias Manguashca at the Musikhochschule Freiburg. From 2004 to 2011 he was the director of the Studio of Electronic and Electroacoustic Music at the Musikhochschule Freiburg. He has been the recipient of numerous Scholarships, including Stipends from the Landesgraduiertenförderung Akustik, Bundespräsidenten, Donaueschinger Musiktage. He has received performances throughout Europe as well as Canada, USA, Australia and China (EXPO 2010, Shanghai).



Joris Ivens, Greet in kimono, 1915. Coll. EFJI.

Elsbeth Doorenbos

Class mates of Joris Ivens, 1915 (front row, second from the right)

## UNIQUE PHOTOS FOUND MADE BY YOUNG IVENS

DEDICATED TO MOVEMENT AND THE MOVING IMAGE ONLY A FISTFUL OF 'STATIC' PHOTOS TAKEN BY JORIS IVENS HIMSELF ARE KNOWN. SOME FIVE VINTAGE PRINTS ARE PART OF THE JORIS IVENS ARCHIVE. THIS NUMBER OF PHOTOS HAS BEEN EXTENDED BY A GIFT IN JUNE FROM ELSBETH DOORENBOS AND HER NEPHEW CARLOS MARTINEZ-VAN ANDEL TO THE FOUNDATION. IT CONCERNS VINTAGE PRINTS OF PHOTOS MADE BY JORIS IVENS IN SPRING 1915. ON THE BACKSIDE HE HIMSELF PUT HIS PERSONAL STAMP ON IT WITH HIS BIRTH NAME: 'GEORGE IVENS'. ALSO HAND WRITTEN DATES AND NAMES ARE MENTIONED.

The series is related to his friends and class mates at the secondary school in his birthplace Nijmegen and to one of his juvenile love affairs. We see Joris and his friends in April 1915. Already at an early age Joris loved to be surrounded by girlfriends, like Greet and Anna sitting next to him. Anna van Breda Beausar wrote in a letter, dated 4 May 1915: 'A certain George Ivens is head over heels in love with me.' The photo of Greet in kimono is quite remarkable: a girl of 15 years with a very self-assured gaze is posing on a couch with kimono. The composition and concept remind us of the paintings and photos of Dutch painter Breitner, 20 years earlier. The photo proves that young Ivens was aware of art and found some satisfaction in aesthetics. The stamp 'George Ivens' and hand written text 'Joris Ivens' proof that Joris choose a nickname generally known by his friends differing from his first name, used by his family and given to him by his parents.

His love Anna moved to The Hague two months after these photos were taken. After graduating from school she found a job at the headquarters of the Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij (BPM, later on part of Shell). At the age of 19 she fell in love with one of the personal secretaries of Hendrik Colijn, director of BPM at the time and in the 1930's Prime-Minister of The Netherlands. This guy, Edwin Doorenbos, a protégé of Sir Henri Deterding, was 29 years

old, already married and had two children. Although he spoke various languages he was not especially equipped for this secretarial function. He wanted to found a union against the wishes of his boss Mr. Colijn. When because of it Colijn dismissed Anna on the spot Doorenbos entered the room of the director and shouted 'Coward!', before resigning himself. In 1924 Edwin Doorenbos left to the U.S. with a small group of musicians dressed in Dutch traditional costumes, earning money by singing on the road. One of his songs had an autobiographical line: 'I was passing by ro-ro-roaming'. In the early 1930's this global troubadour and his wife divorced and Anne continued raising their children on her own. Edwin Doorenbos is best known for acting in *Komedie om geld* (*The trouble with Money*, 1936), a fiction film of German director Max Ophüls. Elsbeth Doorenbos is preparing a book about this grandmother and grandfather of hers.







# JAN DE VAAL AND THE NETHERLANDS FILM MUSEUM (1947-1987)

Jan de Vaal, 17 december 1955.  
Copyright: Nationaal Archief / Spaarnestad Photo / Henk Blansjaar.

A book on the history of the Dutch national film archive.

Cover brochure Nederlands Filmmuseum, 1955.

ALTHOUGH THE ART OF CINEMATOGRAPHY IS BEING CONSIDERED THE MOST IMPORTANT ART OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY THE PRESERVATION OF FILM WASN'T TAKEN SERIOUSLY. ONLY A FEW FILM BUFFS LIKE HENRI LANGLOIS AND GEORGES FRANJU IN FRANCE, IRIS BARRY IN THE US OR ERNEST LINDGREN IN THE UK HAD THE VISION TO ACQUIRE, COLLECT AND PRESERVE FILMS AGAINST THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FILM INDUSTRY ITSELF. IN THE NETHERLANDS IT WAS JAN DE VAAL WHO MANAGED THE NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE FROM 1946 UNTIL 1988. HE STARTED IN 1946 WITH NOTHING, ONLY AN EMPTY CUPBOARD, AND CREATED DURING FOUR DECADES A FILM COLLECTION OF INTERNATIONAL PRESTIGE AND IMPORTANCE. FOR INSTANCE THE JEAN DESMET COLLECTION, WHICH WAS INSCRIBED IN THE UNESCO MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER. THE IVENS FOUNDATION INITIATED THE PUBLICATION OF A BOOK ABOUT THIS DUTCH FILM BUFF, WHO SAFEGUARDED DUTCH FILM HERITAGE. MIRJAM VAN KEMPEN-VAN DER VELDT STARTED IN 2012 WITH THE WRITING OF THIS BOOK.

#### THIS HISTORICAL TOPIC?

First of all, I just love digging through boxes and boxes of old files and letters. There's something about the smell of archives that always makes me happy. There are just thousands of stories waiting to be told out there, and all you have to do is find them. During the course of my education I quickly got interested in Dutch film history in general, but it was always the more personal stories that fascinated me the most. The stories of men in small town villages fighting the oppressive power of their church by getting together in a small make-shift cinema, the stories of filmmakers trying to get recognition for their hard work against all odds. When I heard there was an opportunity to write about Jan de Vaal I quickly recognized the potential of the subject. Yes, it is a personal story, but through this story another story can be told: that of the Dutch postwar film-culture, a subject that hasn't really been described thus far.

#### YOU STATE THAT THE DUTCH FILM CULTURE HASN'T REALLY BEEN DESCRIBED LIKE THIS BEFORE. CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHAT WAS GOING ON EXACTLY?

The post-war Dutch film culture is defined by a schism between the commercial circuit and what I like to call the alternative circuit. There's has not been much research regarding those years, and the research that does exist focuses on the commercial circuit or is simply too fragmentary. My goal is to give a clear insight into this part of history from the fifties and onwards, through the work of Jan de Vaal. After the war, there was an eruption of activities regarding film. These initiatives shared a focus on film as a form of art. Many people got together in different organizations promoting film from their own perspective in the pillarized Netherlands. De Vaal and his Filmmuseum stood at the centre of all of this. He had the films, the connections and the passion and work ethic to bring it all together. I aim to give insight into the most important players and their broad scope of activities, from distribution to education, expositions, archiving, screenings, debates and even scientific research.

#### WHAT ARE SOME INTERESTING THINGS YOU'VE FOUND?

Of course I have discovered numerous hidden plots and schemes, and some little hidden treasures like a short news-reel of Fritz Lang visiting the vaults of the Filmmuseum and talking to Jan de Vaal in 1959. But actually, the thing that I found most interesting was the immense amount of work

that De Vaal did. Especially in the beginning, when he was trying to set everything up, he tirelessly wrote an infinite number of letters to people all around the world, trying to get films for his archive. These letters are a display of his passion for film, a passion that transpires in all of his work. The book on Jan de Vaal is scheduled to be published in 2014 by Van Gruting Publisher. The editorial board consists of prof. dr. Bert Hogenkamp (VU University Amsterdam), prof. dr. Frank Kessler (University of Utrecht), dr. Sabine Lenk and André Stufkens. The Ivens Foundation and EYE Film Institute Netherlands are preparing a special presentation at EYE with a film program and event to commemorate Jan de Vaal.



Mirjam van Kempen at the office of the Ivens Foundation.

Cover of the book.  
© vG Publishers

Jan de Vaal with: Bert Haanstra in Beijing (1978), Henri Langlois in Antibes (1957), Alberto de Cavalcanti (1952), Queen Juliana and chairman Willem Sandberg (1958), Joris Ivens (1978).

Photos: Coll. De Vaal / EFJI.





**'THEN BEGAN THE BATTLE ROYAL', MARION MICHELLE AND THE FIAF CRISIS**

Magazine: *The Moving Image, Association of Moving Image Archivists, 2013, 262 pages, b-w, English, University of Minnesota Press, 2013. 262 pages, ISSN 1532-3978*

Going through the files of Marion Michelle, kept by the European Foundation Joris Ivens in Nijmegen, is like reading a crime novel. Sabine Lenk, who researched these files: 'her papers document important moments from a quintessential conflict inside the Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film (FIAP, International Federation of Film Archives). Some of the best known film archivists such as Henri Langlois, Ernest Lindgren and Jacques Ledoux, played a significant part, as well as FIAF-president Jerzy Toeplitz. The latest issue of the 'The Moving Image' [ISSN 1532-3978] published her article 'Then began the battle royal', written in collaboration with André Stufkens. In this article the conflict is reconstructed from the point of view of Marion Michelle. Being the secretary of FIAF she functioned as a catalyst of this conflict, accelerating a development inside FIAF necessary to force a club of old friends to reform and become a professionally structured and ever growing association of film archives. Since 2002 the European Foundation is associate of FIAF. Marion Michelle, who fell in love with Joris Ivens the moment they met in Janu-

ary 1944, gave her collection to the Foundation, because of her shared live with Joris Ivens. She joined him in Australia, where she was asked to film the strike in the harbor of Sydney for Indonesia Calling!

This story of the Battle Royal is full of distrust and deception, betrayal and falseness; but it also reveals growing friendship among people trying to sort out an extremely difficult situation, which -as 'loyal servants' to their cause -- forced them to 'murder' one of 'FIAF's fathers,' Henri Langlois so, that the association could become independent.

<http://www.amianet.org/resources-and-publications/publications/journal>

Sabine Lenk (1959) is a film archivist, and Affiliated Researcher at Utrecht University. She worked for film archives in Belgium, France, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. From 1999-2007, she was the director of the Filmmuseum Düsseldorf (Germany). She is a co-founder of KINtop, Jahrbuch zur Erforschung des frühen Film. She has published widely on film archiving, cinema museology and early cinema in journals such as Film History, Montage/AV, 1895, Journal of Film Preservation and Archives. Her most recent book is Vom Tanzsaal zum Filmtheater. Eine Kinogeschichte Düsseldorf (2009).

**Review:** 'The real gem was the story on Langlois and Michelle. Beautifully written and a compelling story.'

Geoff Alexander, Director Academic Film Archive of North America.

Einar Lauritzen, Marion Michelle and Jan de Vaal during the FIAF Congress in Antibes, 1956. Coll. De Vaal.



**HEMINGWAY AND GELLHORN**  
DVD and Blu Ray; 155 minutes; HBO Studios / Warner Home Video, April 2013.



Michael Kaufman's *Hemingway and Gellhorn*, the HBO movie released in May 2012, and just re-released on DVD in March of this year, attempts to offer a glimpse into the tempestuous relationship between Ernest Hemingway and one of the most esteemed war correspondents of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Martha Gellhorn, against the backdrop of some of the major conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century including the Spanish Civil War, the Japanese invasion of China and WWII. The film is structured primarily around Gellhorn's first-person reflections and evokes a compelling account of her six decades-long journalistic career and her 8-year relationship with Hemingway. Gellhorn, portrayed by the actress Nicole Kidman, certainly deserves recognition for her lifelong dedication to writing about the effects of war on ordinary people. The film does an admirable job of demonstrating why Hemingway referred to her as 'the bravest woman I ever saw,' as we see Gellhorn shivering in the cold of an Helsinki winter while covering the Russian invasion of Finland, stowing away on a hospital ship in order to report on the D-day invasions, and cowering in horror as she witnesses the scene at the Dachau concentration camp following the arrival of the Allied troops.

We like to think of historical docu-dramas as useful interpretations of history. Unfortunately, this obviously carefully researched and thoughtful presentation of Gellhorn's life and career, and the astute cinematic compilation of the major political conflicts of our current era, is played out against a woefully shallow and uneven portraiture of one of the greatest American writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century -- Ernest Hemingway.

It's hard not to be struck by the film's insistent dark slant on the author, starting with our



Set photo Hemingway & Gellhorn with Clive Owen (Ernest Hemingway), Santiago Cabrera (Robert Capa), Nicole Kidman (Martha Gellhorn) and Lars Ulrich (Joris Ivens). © HBO.

first glimpse of a drunk and brutish Hemingway, portrayed by the completely miscast Clive Owen, sadistically clubbing the head of a marlin he has just landed and snarling: 'Everything Dies!' As the film progresses, it becomes obvious that the screenwriters, Barbara Turner and Jerry Stahl, were not interested in presenting any true assessment of the depth of Hemingway's political and social awareness, his uncompromising work ethic, or his profound interest in the human psyche. The same counts for Joris Ivens, who is dressed in black, suggesting a devilish influence on Hemingway and Gellhorn. Ivens never wore such a black battle dress. Neither did he or Hemingway and Gellhorn experience their activities near and on the war front as a kind of thrilling trip to an exciting bar in some kind of exotic country. They were on a very risky mission trying to counterbalance with their art the overwhelming propaganda of the Franco-side in the US-media. Instead, the screenwriters chose to regurgitate one Hemingwayesque cliché after another - few of which are flattering to the author. Throughout the film the viewer sees a loud, macho, self-serving braggart who is constantly drunk, sarcastic and combative. Rarely is Hemingway seen actually plying his craft at his typewriter. This is particularly unfortunate in regard to the section of the film that deals with the Spanish Civil War. The screenwriters missed the opportunity to accurately render what is a fascinating and relatively unexamined time period in Hemingway's life, during which he risked his personal reputation, his literary career and occasionally his own life, in order to publically support the democratically elected government of the Spanish Republic in its struggle against the insurgent general Francisco Franco and, at the same time, take a stand against the spread of fascism in Europe.

During the course of the war, which lasted from 1936-1939, Hemingway paid for two volunteers

to travel to Spain to fight for the Republican cause, raised money for badly-needed ambulances, wrote 31 dispatches for the North American Newspaper Alliance (NANA), contributed several articles for *Ken* and *Pravda* magazines and participated in nearly every aspect of the making of director Joris Ivens' pro-Republican documentary, *The Spanish Earth*. His play entitled 'The Fifth Column', his five short stories that deal with the war, and his masterpiece 'For Whom the Bell Tolls', taken together, delve more deeply and concisely into this complex and brutal war than any of the myriad of other novelists who have taken on the topic. Yet sadly, if we were to judge Hemingway solely by what is presented in this film, we would conclude that the author went to the war front merely to escape his second wife, Pauline Pfeiffer, and begin an affair with Gellhorn and that war-torn Spain and the suffering of the Spanish people served only as a backdrop for reinforcing his infamous macho image.

The integration of the actors with archival footage, and in particular with scenes from *The Spanish Earth*, is quite effective. Since this documentary is rarely discussed or fully appreciated, it in itself is a reason for seeing the film. However, as in the case of the portrayal of Hemingway, director Ivens' contributions to the fight against fascism and his support of the Spanish Republic are not thoroughly researched or convincingly presented. The limited acting experience of Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich, who portrays Ivens, contributes to the impression that he was simply a member of Hemingway's entourage of admirers—rather than a renowned and experienced director. In the final analysis, *Hemingway and Gellhorn* offers the viewer valuable insights into the life and career of Martha Gellhorn but unfortunately it is at the cost of yet another myopic view of Ernest Hemingway. While it is undeniable that Hemingway had many flaws, he was also a patient teacher, an astute and careful listener, and a brilliant author. It is also true that both Hemingway and Gellhorn had very strong and competitive personalities and that their relationship was often quite volatile. In the end, however, the personal relationship between two people is an elusive thing to pin down. Ironically, it is Martha Gellhorn herself who, in a letter written not long after their divorce, perhaps more fairly assessed the character of Ernest Hemingway and the reason for the deterioration of their relationship: 'He is a rare and wonderful type . . . he is a good man . . . he is however bad for me, sadly enough, or maybe wrong for me is the word; and I am wrong for

him.' (May 17, 1944). And after she presented *The Spanish Earth* to President Roosevelt and his wife, she wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt: '...and I hope that you are also fond of those two comrades in arms that are so very dear to me. (...) I think Joris has done a tremendous job, it is a document of personal courage that would win one a decoration in any war, except in this one...'. (8 July 1937).



Stills from Hemingway & Gellhorn: Nicole Kidman included in footage from Ivens' *The Spanish Earth*. Fiction mixed with documentary film. © HBO.

Stacey Guill holds a PhD in Literature and Criticism from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Her doctoral dissertation is entitled "Hemingway and The Spanish Earth: Art, Politics and War" (2006). She has presented papers on Hemingway and the Spanish Civil War at five International Hemingway Conferences, written two articles for *The Hemingway Review* on the topic, and has contributed a chapter to a new book on Hemingway entitled *Hemingway in Context* (2012).







**VLADIMIR POZNER SE SOUVIENT**  
 Book: Vladimir Pozner, 2013, 256 pages, b-w, French, Lux Éditeur, ISBN : 978-2-89596-162-8



Last October the memoirs of a lifelong friend of Joris Ivens, the French poet, journalist, screenwriter and novelist Vladimir Salomonovitch Pozner (1905-1992), were published in a new edition by Lux éditeur. Pozner was born in Saint-Germain des Prés and died there, in the Rue Mazarine, a few streets away from Ivens's apartment. During his life he travelled and lived in many countries and befriended artists who were influential in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Alexandre Blok, Bertolt Brecht, J.R. Oppenheimer, Dashiell Hammett, Boris Pasternak, Isaac Babel, Hanns Eisler, Marc Chagall, Fernand Léger, Luis Buñuel, Charley Chaplin, Pablo Picasso and Joris Ivens. Pozner's parents were Russian Jews, who had to escape from Russia due to their anti-tsarist politics. In 1908 the family returned to Petrograd (Saint-Petersburg) after they were granted an amnesty. He met Gorki, who was related to his parents, and saw the outbreak of the October Revolution on his doorstep. In the 1920s he studied at the Sorbonne and started translating Russian literature by young writers. In Berlin, the only city which gave visa to artists



from the Soviet-Union, he met his old friends again: Gorki, Mayakovski, Chloviski and Pasternak. Back in Paris, he published his first poems. As secretary of the editorial board of 'Commune', a magazine of the association of revolutionary artists AEAR (Association des Écrivains et Artistes Révolutionnaires) he collaborated with Vaillant-Couturier, Aragon, Malraux, Gide and Cartier-Bresson. In these circles he befriended Ivens and Hanns Eisler. In 1936, Pozner travelled across America, in the same year Ivens entered the US. Pozner produced lively pieces of reportage, influenced in his style by modernist montage effects in edgy collages of notes. Next to poetry, journalism and novels, he started writing scripts for feature films, such as *The Conspirators* (1944, with Hedy Lamarr and Peter Lorre) and *Siodmaks' The Dark Mirror* (1946, with Olivia de Havilland), for which Pozner was nominated an Oscar. In 1944, Pozner and Ivens collaborated on a film script called *Woman of the Sea*, in which Greta Garbo would play the female captain Dagny of a Norwegian coaster with an all-female resistance group, trying to escape. Very much to their disappointment, after months of preparations and discussions, Ivens and Pozner could not convince Garbo to realize the film. In May 1953, Pozner received a letter from Ivens in which Ivens explained that they finally had the opportunity to finalize a film project together. For this ambitious documentary *Lied der Ströme* (*Song of the Rivers*, 1954) about the communist trade unions along the river banks of six large rivers: the Yangtze, Mississippi, Volga, Nile, Ganges and Amazon, Pozner contributed to the script and wrote the commentary text. Completely com-



pletely piled from footage shot by various cameramen in these six countries the films' unity depended on the editing and the commentary. In the end, it became a rigidly Stalinist, but also uniquely fascinating, almost biblical epic fresco, a communist counterpart of *The Family of Man*. In fact, an attempt to globalize filmmaking, the final stage before the entry of television and television-satellites. In the Ivens chapter in 'Pozner se souvient', Pozner restricts his memories of Ivens to describing anecdotes from the production of *Song of the Rivers*. Ivens continued his loyal friendship with the Pozner couple, Vladimir (Volodja) and his wife Ida, until Ivens died in 1989. Pozner passed away three years afterwards.



Cover of Fernão Pessoa Ramos's book 'A imagem-câmera' (2012, Papirus Editora, Brazil). It examines the relationship between the experiences of a filmmaker, the possibilities of the camera and the experiences of the spectator. For the cover the author has chosen a still from Ivens' *Rain*. Ivens invented and used new technologies for this film because he wanted to have more control over the 'eye of the camera' and therefore automatically more control over the experiences of the spectators.

## Ivens in Museums (2): Museum of Modern Art, Arnhem and Hamburger Bahnhof Berlin: Rain

### The Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem

The Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem (MMKA) exhibits 'The Melancholic Metropolis: Cityscapes between Magic and Realism, 1925-1950'. Magic realist painting is displayed alongside photography and film of the same era, which visualize the metropolis as a place of stillness, loneliness, and melancholy. Ivens's film *Regen* (*Rain*, 1929) is on exhibit permanently, alongside other avant-garde films. Photos made by Germaine Krull, Ivens's wife at that time who inspired him to film cranes and bridges, are presented as well.



### THE METROPOLIS AS A MOTIF

During the first half of the twentieth century, philosophers, sociologists, writers, artists, photographers, and filmmakers presented the metropolis as the locus of modernity – the place where capitalism, industrialization, technological progress, and mass consumption were most clearly manifested. In addition, they saw the modern metropolis as an environment that gave rise to new visual experiences, which make appealing themes for the visual arts: crowds, traffic, billboards, and skyscrapers. While many artists celebrated this hectic



urban condition, the magic realists and other artists represented in this exhibition tried to give shape to the fantasies, fears, and alienation which went hand in hand with living in a large modern city – a place characterized by disconnection and anonymity. The results are images that are often mysterious and sometimes threatening.

### FILM

Magic realist cityscapes also show some affinity with city images in films of the era. The Melancholy Metropolis looks at two film phenomena in particular. The city symphony, an important film genre in the Inter-War period, often highlights the city as a mysterious and melancholy space. The exhibition features examples such as *A propos de Nice* (Jean Vigo, 1929), *Regen* (Joris Ivens, 1929) and *Impressionen vom alten Marseiller Hafen* (Vieux port) (Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, 1929). In addition, urban spaces play an important role in French poetic realism of the 1930s. Films by directors such as Jean Renoir, Marcel Carné and Julien Duvivier often favored the motif of a lonely character wandering through the empty city at night or in the early morning hours. Carné's images of the city, in particular, demonstrate a strong similarity with those in the paintings, drawings, and photographs in the exhibition.

The exhibition is curated by Steven Jacobs, an art historian who currently teaches at the Department of Art-, Music- and Theater Studies at Ghent University in Belgium.

From 20 October 2013 to 23 February 2014

### Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum of Contemporary Art in Berlin: Rain

Susan Philipsz (1965, Glasgow) will create an installation at the former train station in Berlin. She has exhibited widely, at MoMA, the



Documenta, Guggenheim Museum, Walker Arts Center, Ludwig Museum, Palazzo Reale, Moderna Museet, Museo Reina Sofia and many others, and won the Turner Prize in 2010 in Tate London. For the Hamburger Bahnhof's Historic Hall she will exhibit a large-scale sound installation that will address themes of movement, separation and displacement. The installation will take elements of the architecture of the Historic Hall into account, specifically the twelve steel arches that line the space and create a 24-channel sound installation with speakers attached to either side of these supports. During her research she was thinking about the former function of the Hamburger Bahnhof as a site for departure and separation. She became fascinated by the generation of émigré artists who fled Germany for America in the 30's, especially composer Hanns Eisler. Because of his film music, his work is intricately related to the film culture of the first half of the 20th Century. He wrote the score *Fourteen Ways to Describe Rain* for the film *Regen* (1929) by Joris Ivens. It enhances scenes depicting the fleeting impressions of objects rushing by the window of a train, as well as raindrops and rivulets drawn sideways on the window by the movement of the train.

Exhibition January 31st – May 4th 2014



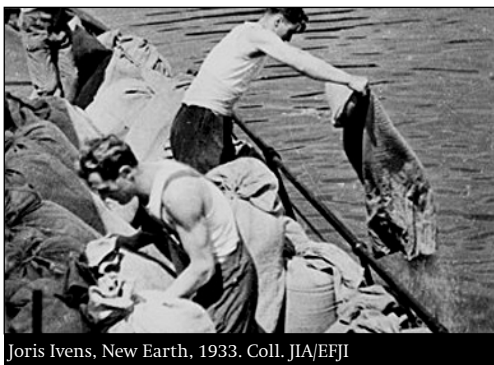
# short cuts



Villa Noailles in Hyères

## A secret mecenas of 'New Earth'

In July 1933 Ivens was ill. Partly because of his poverty and lack of money to finish *New Earth*. He wanted to expend his documentary *Zuiderzeewerken* about the closing of dikes with an episode of the reclamation of land and a political final sequence with an indictment against hunger. Without budget he couldn't even afford to pay a singer. Until today it was unknown that a secret Maecenas really saved the film. According to Monique Teunissen-Amagat, art historian at the cultural



Joris Ivens, *New Earth*, 1933. Coll. JIA/EFJ

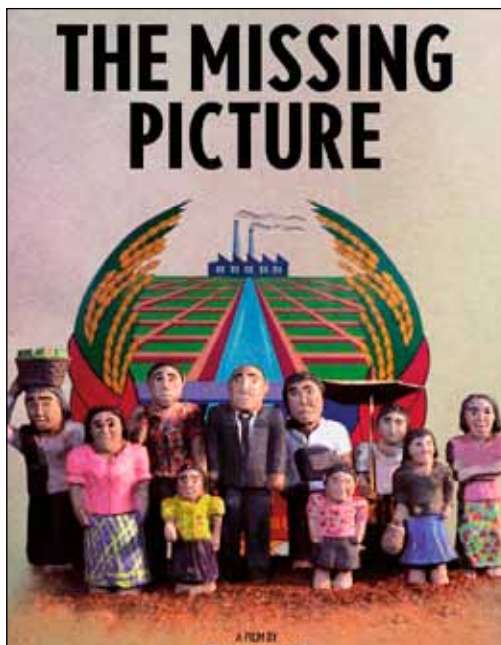
centre Villa Noailles in Hyères, it was Charles de Noailles, who spent 7.000 Frs in the film. Charles de Noailles and his wife, Marie-Laure de Noailles, already were well known patrons



Georges Auric, Luis Buñuel and Charles de Noailles, 1930

of the arts. He financed Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí's *L'Âge d'Or* (1930) and Jean Cocteau's film *Le Sang d'un Poète* (1930). The couple also financed Man Ray's film *Les Mystères du Château de Dé* (1929), which centers around Villa Noailles in Hyères. They first asked Mies van der Rohe and then Le Corbusier to design their private house. Ultimately it was Robert Mallet-Stevens, who in 1923 build this avant-garde villa. They bought art works of Piet Mondriaan, Sybold van Ravesteijn and Theo van Doesburg to decorate the house. Since 2010 the villa became an international center for the arts and contemporary creation, through the annual hosting of the International Fashion + Photography Festival, Design Parade, and numerous other events related to fashion, photography, architecture and design.

## IDFA Top 10: Rithy Panh selected two films of Ivens/Loridan-Ivens



At the request of 26<sup>th</sup> IDFA, Cambodian director Rithy Panh (1964, Phnom Penh) compiled his personal Top 10 of documentary films. These films are screened during the festival, accompanied by a Retrospective of the filmmaker's own work. Two films of Joris Ivens/ Marceline Loridan-Ivens have been selected in his Top 10. Rithy Panh is well known for his documentaries about the Killing Fields of Cambodia, which he experienced himself. His family members were expelled from Phnom Penh in 1975 by the Khmer Rouge. One after another, his father, mother, sisters and nephews died of starvation or exhaustion, as they were held in a remote labour camp in rural Cambodia. His film *The Land of the Wandering Souls* (*La terre des âmes errantes*, 2000) is a sort of road movie along the route where Alcatel commissioned labourers to lay the country's first optical fi-



Rithy Panh at IDFA. Photo IDFA.

ber cable. The film follows a Cambodian workers family as they are digging the trenches across Cambodia for this cable, depicting their poverty, hardships and lousy working conditions. At one point during their excavation, the workers uncover a killing field, a remnant of the genocidal purges of the Khmer Rouge. Rithy Panh made his breakthrough in 2003 with *S21, The Khmer Rouge Killing Machine*. His latest film, *The Missing Picture* (*L'Image manquante*, 2013), was the winner at Cannes' 'Un Certain Regard'. Panh's story of his family's nightmarish experience during the Pol Pot re-



Rithy Panh, Film still *The Missing Picture*, 2013

gime in Cambodia during the 1970s is expressively told through first-person narration, but acted by clay figures.

Rithy Panh selected two films of Ivens/Loridan-Ivens: *The Football Incident* (*L'Histoire d'un ballon*, 1976) and *A Tale of the Wind* (*Une histoire de vent*, 1988). He is very much in favour of committed filmmaking in which the director on the one hand is deeply involved in his subject matter on a very human level, and on the other hand makes it clear that no objective truth is being presented. On the contrary: fiction and reality play a continuous game with what is true or false. In his opinion, his films always show a false mirror of reality. This resembles Pablo Picasso's famous quotation: 'We all know that Art is not truth. Art is a lie that makes us realize truth, at least the truth that is given us to understand. The artist must know the manner whereby to convince others of the truthfulness of his lies.'

