

## Biennial Conference of the Finnish Anthropological Society 2019

### FILM SYNOPSES

#### The Sound of Bells - 70 mnts

Marcia Mansur and Marina Thomé

In Minas Gerais, Brazil, bell sounds set the pace of life of the residents of the historic cities, announcing time for work, rest, pray, and celebrate. The bell ringers, characters from the top of the towers, are known to have transformed bell rings over the centuries from their colonial origins and have mixed them with the strong African heritage in Brazil. 42° Margaret Mead Film Festival (Official Selection - USA, 2018); Best Anthropological Documentary and Best Transmedia Project at V MAAM Muestra de Antropología Audiovisual de Madrid no Museo Nacional de Antropología (Spain, 2018); 27th Biarritz Festival Latin America (Official competition - France, 2017); Special Award at 3rd Golden Tree International Documentary Film Festival (Frankfurt, 2018); Honorable Mention at 2nd Heritales - International Heritage Film Festival (Portugal, 2017); 8th International Ethnographic Film Festival of Recife (Brazil, 2017). The movie trailer can be watched on: <https://vimeo.com/204105371>

#### Scenes from a Transient Home - 13 mnts

Roger Horn

Filmed on Super 8mm, "Scenes from a Transient Home" presents a fractured portrait of life for Zimbabwean migrants when they travel back home to visit. Christmas dancing, New Years Eve celebrations, house floods, and illegal gold panning are just a few of the events filmed by Roger Horn who bookends the film with a major life event for his family.

Visuals were filmed on multiple Super 8mm film stocks in Cape Town, South Africa and Harare, Victoria Falls, and Kadoma, Zimbabwe. The audio spans four years of casual conversations, observations, and video elicitation from Zimbabwean migrant women as part of filmmaker Roger Horn's PhD research.

#### From the Land - 28 mnts

Jeff Silva and Ramona Badescu

Mixing fragmented stories of people with views of a landscape in perpetual transformation we travel intimately in the footsteps of a contemporary Alice in what was once a leafy forest populated by birds and water sources and is today a modern day "concrete jungle" in the center of the infamous northern district of Marseille.

At the crossroads of societal, historical, architectural and human issues, nature seems caught in a grip, breathing only in the hollow of a memory of those who lived through it as children in the 60's and 70's. Separating image from text, "Là où la terre" paints a portrait of a contemporary

neighborhood battered by perpetual violent transformation that echoes in the vulnerable voices of its habitants and the tension between presence and absence, broken down into patterns; plants, animals, humans.

#### In the Outskirts of Venice II - 22 mnts

Riina Sherman

In this 2nd study on Venice, I focus on women's lives in Venice and include the work of poet, humanitarian, and courtesan Veronica Franco.

When crossing the Via della Libertà causeway into Venice, especially at night, I am overcome with melancholy as I enter this world built on water that seems to have been there forever and yet on closer inspection shows distinct signs of its future disappearing. There is the ebb and flow of the water, the milky green lagoon and the opaque turquoise canals. A world of mariners, travelling to and from the islands in gondolas, water taxis and vaporetti. In Venice I stick to the outskirts and the islands, I stop here and there in the insulate corners of the city floating landscapes, where the eroding movement of time stopped seems to be eternal.

In Cities & Elsewhere, I concentrate on the immediacy of time, the here and now, the feeling of being there. I draw on the traditions of the tableaux vivants of Louis XIV, Delsartean 'Living pictures' and the later poses plastiques performance activities. My work as a performance artist in Johannesburg early 1980s informs the live still scenes filmed here, transforming everyday scenes and duration performances, inspired by Philip Glass, the Wooster Group, Elizabeth LeCompte, Spalding Gray, Benjamin Patterson.

#### Now I am Dead - 30 mnts

Isabel Bredenbröcker, Philipp Bergmann

Now I am Dead (2018) takes an unexpected turn which transforms the narrative from meta-critical docufiction into an immersive tale. Anthropologist Isabel Bredenbröcker and director Philipp Bergmann had planned to explore the status quo of the ethnographic encounter through the lens of Isabel's research on death in a Ghanaian town. Shortly after their arrival in Ghana, in the midst of filming, Isabel's grandfather dies in Germany. Baffled by the coincidence, in between assisting an undertaker, visiting the morgue, attending funerals and inspecting cemeteries, she asks for advice. How to react to the death of a far-away family member whilst shooting a film on death in West Africa?

Help comes from friends and collaborators: an undertaker, a neighbour, a research assistant and friend, a priest. A second narrative streak in which the grandfather is commemorated in town develops alongside other death-related events, such as picking up of a soul or the dressing and treatment of dead bodies. The perspective of the foreign visitor is tragically inverted and incorporated into a local perspective. The distinction between the other culture and one's own gets blurred, just as the threshold between life and death can be experienced in a playful way.

Passager - 63 mnts

Arjang Omrani-Asef Rezaei

The collaborative project of audio-visual anthropology explores the 6 months (mobile phone) video diaries of Asef, an Afghan refugee boy, in which he shares his everyday experiences, as well as the more in-depth memories and dreams. The collection creates sensory and intimate experience and insight to his life while portraying a refugee's life with an existential and anthropological view point. The sense of duration and suspension, detachment and belonging to the space and locations he ought to stay, the emotional flux between hope, hopelessness, helplessness, the desire and the battle for a better life condition are the major significant elements that Asef diaries are sharing with its audience.

In this experiment of shared anthropology, I have been teaching and supervising Asef about filming and the ideas of sensory story-telling and montage in order him to be able to apply them in his own creative way in filming process.

The film therefore is edited (by me) based on the a.m ideas, while constantly updating him and receiving feedback.

This film project, based on the time proposal of the exhibition can be presented as multi screen sound image installation or a shorter version can be custom designed

I have a song to sing to you - 6 mnts

Eluned Zoe Aiano, Alesandra Tatic

As a child, Ivanka was chosen by fairy women for the special task of entering the realm of the dead to discover the future. As an old lady, the spirits have left her, so how does she navigate between the two worlds now?

This experimental short documentary seeks out Ivanka, a woman who lives in rural Eastern Serbia and who spent most of her life falling into trance to enter the realm of the dead and learn about the future. Ethnographic archive materials from her days as a prophet are interwoven with contemporary footage shot now that the supernatural forces have left her. As such, the film plays on dualities of time and ontology to explore how this experience has affected her relationship to the landscape that surrounds her, while engaging in a meta discourse on the digital nature of film and visualisation of memory.

The film was funded by the London Short Film Festival as part of their "With Teeth" scheme to support non-conformist independent filmmaking.

The Mill - 34 mnts

Daniel Allen, Patrick Tubin McGinley

The Mill is a non-narrative film that falls into the category of sensory ethnography. It focuses on an unmodernised paper factory in Estonia, taking in the sights and sounds that fill that space.

Significantly, although people are present, the film is not about them – it doesn't develop characters in any conventional way; rather it treats human and non-human actors equally so that machines, textures, sounds, and people all get the same billing.

The standard model of both fiction and documentary demands a beginning, middle and end: a narrative, driven forward by human action. The protagonist takes action, the action has a consequence, the plot moves on. For any of this to happen, time must pass. However, without the overriding need to follow biographies, establish characters, reach conclusions (i.e. submit to a cause-and-effect model) the events of The Mill become independent of each other. The film joins the papermaking process at a particular point, and leaves it at another point. Those two points happen to be the beginning and end of the process, but these scenes, and all the scenes in between, are interchangeable because they are not qualified by time or the constraints of traditional human narrative. The Mill is an expression of the space of the factory and a representation of the experience of being there. Neither of which, within the world of the film, require time as a motive force.

#### Guardians of the Night - 16 mnts

Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier and Eleonora Diamanti

When the night falls and it invades the streets, other forms of life emerge. Guardians of the Night sheds light on the people, activities, sites and ideas that occur after the sunset in the city of Guantánamo, Cuba.

Guardians of the night is an experimental and sensorial short-length ethnographic film about the cyclical and spontaneous life activities that emerge at nighttime in the city of Guantánamo, Cuba. The senses are at the center of the night experience along with reduction of visibility. This creates a perfect focus to reinvigorate discussion and promote an innovative approach around sensory visual ethnography. The young and talented electronic musician Zevil Strix from Guantánamo produced the original soundtrack of the film.

#### Sakatti - 6 mnts

Maija Lassila, Petri Luukkainen

In 2009 a British company Anglo American found an orebody, named 'Sakatti' after the nearby Sakatti ponds, under the wet Viiankiaapa mire in Sodankylä, Finland. It is speculated to be Europe's largest copper discovery in decades. The company conducts mineral exploration in the mire and a mine is expected to be built under the mire in 10-15 years. It is unsure what kinds of transformations lie in the future for the fragile environment. Sakatti is a poetic close-up journey into the mire's existence in the world of humans and more-than-humans, multiple time scales and its overlapping meanings.

Keeper of the Fire - 47 mnts  
Evan Raymond Spitzer

“Keeper of the Fire” is a three-channel ethnographic exploration of Mount St. Helens investigating the question of how we humans interact and relate to the volcano and its destructive history. Through interviews with geologists, ecologists, tribal spiritual leaders, and locals, the film allows for a meditation on the powerful force and influence that volcanoes can have on a region and our ways of making sense of the world.

Douro - Symphony of a river - 16 mnts  
Virgilio Oliveira

From high up in the glacier carved mountains of Northern Spain, towards the Atlantic Ocean in the cities of Porto and V.N.Gaia in Northern Portugal, Douro - symphony of a river presents a reflexive journey through one of the most important water highways in the Iberian Peninsula. From the seemingly quietness of the natural world into the noise of human presence, this sensorial experience celebrates the Douro's importance to the sustainability of life since the dawn of human history.

PAANI: Of Women and Water - 22 mnts  
Costanza Burstin

An ethnographic documentary that explores the peculiar and constant relationship between women and water in Modiya, a small Muslim village of Rajasthan desert (India). This visual research sought to investigate the specific ways in which local women perceive, experience and behave towards water in a context where access to this resource is scarce and rife with complications. In particular it examines the way in which the agency of these women can be seen in their daily tasks, managing water collection and usage. They live their struggle with tenacity, determination, elegance and humor, despite the fact that water scarcity represents a serious problem for family health, sanitation and wellbeing.

Changa Revisited - 60 mnts  
Peter Biella and Leonard Kamerling

Since he was a boy growing up as a herder, Maasai elder Toreto ole Koisenge dreamed of cattle. When anthropologist / filmmaker Peter Biella first visited his homestead in 1980, he had over six hundred head. Today his herd numbers only twenty. The world of the Maasai pastoralists has grown smaller since the Tanzanian government put a stop to their seasonal cattle migrations and forced them to live in permanent settlements. For elder Toreto ole Koisenge, the dream is no longer about cattle. In this new world of tumultuous change, how can he create a life that offers his children wisdom, humanity and hope?

Changa Revisited is portrait of a Maasai family seen from two points in time across a thirty year divide. The film draws on hundreds of photographs and audio recordings taken in 1980 by Peter

Biella. These images, woven with contemporary video footage, create a deeply personal portrait of the unfolding of a family's life through three decades of volatile change.