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Trop tôt, trop tard, Straub, Jean-Marie, 1981

Nicht versöhnt oder Es hilft nur Gewalt wo Gewalt herrscht (Not reconciled), Straub, Jean-Marie, 1962

Moses und Aron (Moses and Aaron), Straub, Jean-Marie, 1975

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Fortini/Cani, Straub, Jean-Marie, 1976

Geschichtsunterricht, Straub, Jean-Marie, 1972

Antigone, Straub, Jean-Marie, 1992

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September 16 – November 28, 2016

Not Reconciled.

The Cinema of Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet

Danièle Huillet (1936-2006) once recalled that she could clearly remember first meeting Jean-Marie Straub (b. 1933) in Paris in November 1954 because the Algerian War was just breaking out. Soon beginning work on a script for a film about the life of Bach, their relationship was again marked by the conflict when the couple left France in 1958 so that Straub could dodge the draft.

They settled in Munich, home to a lively, young film scene, making their first films in German, including *Machorka-Muff*, *Not Reconciled* and the long-planned *Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach*, films that garnered them a strong international critical reputation. Eventually settling in Rome in 1969, they became truly international filmmakers, making films in German, Italian and French, shot with international crews and casts in Germany, Italy, France, Egypt and (three shots) in America.

Compared early on to the work of Bresson, Dreyer and Brecht, their films are, nevertheless, truly singular. These are films that disorient and overwhelm. And through the moments of disorientation come brilliant moments of clarity. These films stare at, and listen intensely to, the world and its people, so that we may see what is always present but absent. Filmed by a camera Straub once described as an "accomplice," the characters energetically burst off the screen through carefully rehearsed performances that focus on the voice and minimal, but immense, gestures. We experience their struggles, their hopes, and their pain as though they were sitting right in front of us.

Working with simple means, small budgets, and a set of gradually refined rules, their films are nevertheless diverse and varied, polished and handmade. They collaborated with many of the same crew members for decades (sound engineer Louis Hochet, cinematographers Uto Piccone, Renato Berta, and William Lubtchansky) and they edited their films themselves, creating unexpected, off-kilter rhythms out of blocks of shots ("cinematographic material," they called it) with direct location sound that was never mixed to smooth out the discontinuity between takes.

Just as contemporary politics and border crossing marked their young lives, their films return constantly to themes relating to geography, national borders and language. In short, the land: who it belongs to, how it is divided and by whom, how it is used, whose blood has been spilled on it and who lies buried beneath. Already present as a background issue in their early short films, the land takes an ever more prominent role, overtaking the frame and soundtrack. Long landscape sequences punctuate, break up, or emphasize the drama in *Moses and Aaron* and

Fortini/Cani; making bonfires and sacrifices to the gods to ensure a good harvest are discussed again and again in *From the Cloud to the Resistance*; *Too Early, Too Late* surveys the landscapes of France and Egypt in relation to their various revolutions; and the earth comes to the fore as a secondary character, if not in some sense a protagonist, in *Antigone*, *Workers*, *Peasants* and *The Death of Empedocles*, whose subtitle—"When the green of the earth glistens for you anew"—could very well serve to describe their entire oeuvre. — *Ted Fendt, editor of Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet (FilmmuseumSynemaPublications, 2016)*

Concurrent with the film retrospective, Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet: Three Works will be on exhibit on Levels 0 and 3 of the Carpenter Center August 4 – September 24. The installations feature video, stills, an annotated script and other materials related to Every Revolution is a Throw of the Dice, Cézanne. Conversation with Joachim Gasquet and A Visit to the Louvre. Straub and Huillet's publication Writings (2016) accompanies the exhibition and is available in the Carpenter Center's CRC/bookshop. The exhibit is organized by James Voorhies, former John R. and Barbara Robinson Family Director of the Carpenter Center, in coordination with Miguel Abreu Gallery in New York. For more information visit ccva.fas.harvard.edu.

Special thanks: Joshua Siegel—Museum of Modern Art, New York; Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York; Thomas Beard.

All prints courtesy Miguel Abreu Gallery except for Sicilia!, a print from the HFA collection.

Introduction by John Gianvito
Friday September 16 at 7pm
Sunday September 25 at 4pm



Machorka-Muff

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub. With Erich Kuby, Renate Lang, Günther Strupp
West Germany 1963, 35mm, b/w, 19 min. German with English subtitles

Relishing his political and sexual prospects in postwar Germany, a former Nazi colonel muses on the stupidity of the bourgeoisie, who can be easily duped in the voting booth and in the bedroom. Straub-Huillet's first released film is a powerful, almost surreal, distillation of Heinrich Böll's story, skewering the German soul through gallows humor, an interior monologue of calculation and cynicism, and a montage of jingoistic newspaper headlines. Straub would observe that the film is "built on the equation M [military] = M3 [murder]."



Not Reconciled, or Only Violence Helps

Where Violence Rules (*Nicht versöhnt oder es hilft nur gewalt, wo gewalt herrscht*)

Directed by Jean-Marie Straub. With Heinrich Hargesheimer, Carlheinz Hargesheimer, Martha Staendner
West Germany 1965, 35mm, b/w, 55 min. German with English subtitles

“Long live dynamite!” Straub-Huillet attempt to unmoor their audience by denying them the soothing reassurances of conventional storytelling, spatial continuity or psychological explanation as they hopscotch across the chronologies of Heinrich Böll’s novel, moving freely between the Kaiser autocracy of the 1910s and the Adenauer economic miracle of the 1950s. In doing so, they chart the origins and legacy of Nazism, and the moral demands of obedience and sacrifice within the German bourgeois family.



The Bridegroom, the Comedienne, and

the Pimp (*Der Bräutigam, die Komödiantin und der Zuhälter*)

Directed by Jean-Marie Straub. With Irm Hermann, Kristin Peterson, Hanna Schygulla
West Germany 1968, 35mm, b/w, 23 min. German with English subtitles

Love is a tawdry transaction, and a coercive weapon of the ruling class, in this exhilarating, controversial product of the Munich Action-Theater, an immediate forerunner to Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s Anti-Theater productions of the late 1960s. Invoking the writings of Chairman Mao and the events of Paris 1968, Straub and Huillet cast Hermann, Schygulla and Raben (who would soon become regulars of the Fassbinder acting ensemble) along with

Fassbinder himself in this radical condensation of Ferdinand Bruckner's 1926 play *Pains of Youth*, a single eleven-minute shot that is subsumed within an intricately structured, twelve-shot constellation of other quotations, including poetry by Saint John of the Cross and musical passages from Bach's *Ascension Oratorio*.

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Friday September 16 at 9pm



Too Early/Too Late

(Trop tôt/Trop tard)

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub

France/Egypt 1982, DCP, color & b/w, 100 min. German, French, Arabic with English subtitles

Inspired by a letter by Friedrich Engels and a 1974 account of two militant Marxist writers who had been imprisoned by the Nasser regime, Straub-Huillet filmed *Too Early/Too Late* in France and Egypt during the anxious months of 1980 that followed the Camp David Accords and culminated in Anwar Sadat's assassination the following year. They reflect on Egypt's history of peasant struggle and liberation from Western colonization and link it to class tensions in France shortly before the Revolution of 1789, quoting texts by Friedrich Engels as well as the pioneering nonfiction film *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory* (1895). The film was a major influence on contemporary filmmakers like Harun Farocki, Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi, and John Gianvito.

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Saturday September 17 at 7pm



From the Cloud to the Resistance (*Dalla nube alla resistenza*)

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub. With Olimpia Carlisi, Guido Lombardi, Gino Felici
Italy/West Germany 1979, DCP, color, 105 min. Italian, Dutch, French, German with English subtitles

Straub-Huillet's *From the Cloud...* bridges history and myth, modernity and antiquity. Based on six mythological encounters in Cesare Pavese's *Dialogues with Leucò*, and on Pavese's last novel, *The Moon and the Bonfires*, about the savage murders of Italian anti-Fascist resistance fighters during World War II, the film has affinities with *History Lessons*, *Too Early/Too Late*, and a series of films of the 2000s in which they returned to Pavese's *Dialogues*.

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Saturday September 17 at 9pm



Fortini/Cani

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub
Italy/France 1977, DCP, color & b/w, 83 min. Italian and Hebrew with English subtitles

Franco Fortini, a Communist critic and writer of the Italian New Left, reads excerpts of his book *The Dogs of Sinai*, which condemns capitalism and the state of Israel in the aftermath of the Six Day War in 1967, while also reflecting on his own Jewish heritage. Cinematographer Renato Berta's panoptic camera surveys the Italian landscape where partisans resisted German soldiers. *Fortini/Cani* is an elegiac and damning meditation on abuses of power and historical amnesia.



Every Revolution is a Throw of the Dice

(Toute révolution est un coup de dés)

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub. With Danièle Huillet, Helmut Färber, Michel Delahaye
France 1977, DCP, color, 10 min. French with English subtitles

Straub and Huillet invited friends to recite Stéphane Mallarmé's 1897 poem "A Throw of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance," with its radically modern use of free verse, in a park alongside the wall in Père Lachaise Cemetery, where the last 147 men and women of the Paris Commune were lined up and shot dead in 1871. It is not hard to understand why these ambitious filmmakers were drawn to Mallarmé's late-19th-century poem, which casts readers adrift in a sea of elusive meanings, a playfully and hermetically cubist constellation of words that can assume myriad visual, aural and symbolic forms.

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Free Book Event - CRC/bookshop
Monday September 19 at 6pm

The Carpenter Center's CRC/bookshop hosts a [book event](#) with editor, translator, and writer Sally Shafto. *Writings: Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet*, recently published by Sequence Press and edited by Shafto with Katherine Pickard, traces the evolution over five decades of Straub-Huillet's writing activity, from manifestos to detailed descriptions of working methods, letters, questionnaires, select interviews and oral interventions. Their writings open up a further understanding of their contributions and unique place in film history.

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Introduction by Barton Byg
Monday September 19 at 7pm



Antigone

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub. With Astrid Ofner, Ursula Ofner, Libgart Schwarz
Germany/France 1991, 35mm, color, 100 min. German with English subtitles

Danièle Huillet compared filmmaking to archaeology. This film uncovers many layers of language, image and performance. Hölderlin's translation, with some of the most beautiful and powerful German poetry I know, was adapted by Bertolt Brecht in 1947-8, the version Straub and Huillet interpret. As in early cinema, the camera remains at one axis: all variations come only from angle, focal length and tilt or pan. The oblique placement of actors and camera in the ancient Teatro di Segesta allows the landscape, the trees and the stones to comment on the drama. The wind and sun intensify the visual effects. Actors represent the richness of East and West German theater, while Antigone herself is a young film student, Astrid Ofner, in her first acting role. While WWII was Brecht's contemporary reference, it is the First Gulf War here; Straub-Huillet keep Antigone's confrontation with Creon entirely historical. Only the bracketing sounds of Bernd Alois Zimmermann's music and a military helicopter gesture toward the present. But the film's final text is Brecht's warning in 1952 against those who prepare the wars of the future. Tiresias's last utterance remains timely: "And as I have looked back and round myself, look you ahead and shudder." – *Barton Byg*

Barton Byg teaches German and film studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. He is author of the book Landscapes of Resistance: The German Films of Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet (University of California Press, 1995) and worked with Danièle Huillet on the English subtitles for many of their films.

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Friday September 23 at 9pm



History Lessons (*Geschichtsunterricht*)

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub. With Gottfried Bold, Henri Ludwigg, Johann Unterpertinger
Italy/West Germany 1972, DCP, color, 85 min. German with English subtitles

An extended shot from a car coursing through the streets of Rome in 1972—which is to say, the ancient Republic in ruins—sets the stage for Straub-Huillet’s complex interpretation of Brecht’s unfinished experimental novel *The Business Affairs of Mr. Julius Caesar*. The work explores history as it has been written by the victors, with their hero worship of tyrannical leaders (whether Caesar or Hitler), and offers an alternate view of history writing as fractured and potentially revolutionary. Caesar’s former slave and former banker are both featured, providing their own differing perspectives on the emperor’s career in the political, economic, and military life of ancient Rome.



En rachâchant

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub. With Olivier Straub, Nadette Thinus, Bernard Thinus
France 1982, 35mm, b/w, 7 min. French with English subtitles

Beneath the subversive comedy of Marguerite Duras’ 1971 short story “Ah! Ernesto!,” about a precocious and determined nine-year-old boy, lies a terse and tough rejection of all forms of authority, whether family, school, or nation. *En rachâchant* was released in France on a double bill with Eric Rohmer’s *Pauline at the Beach*.

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Saturday September 24 at 7pm



**Eyes Do Not Want to Close at All Times,
or, Perhaps One Day Rome will Permit Herself to Choose in her Turn (Othon)**

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub. With Adriano Apra, Anne Brumagne, Olimpia Carlisi
West Germany/Italy 1969, DCP, color, 88 min. French with English subtitles

Straub-Huillet's first color film, *Othon* adapts a lesser-known Corneille tragedy from 1664, which in turn was based on an episode of imperial court intrigue chronicled in Tacitus' *Histories*. The costuming is classical, and the toga-clad cast enacts the drama's original French text amidst the ruins of Rome's Palatine Hill while the noise of contemporary urban life hums in the background. Their lines are executed with a terrific flatness, and the language in *Othon* becomes less an expression than a thing itself, an element whose plainness here alerts us to qualities of the work which might otherwise be subordinated. "If at every moment one can keep one's eyes and ears open to all of this," Straub wrote, "it's possible to even find the film thrilling and note that everything here is information—even the purely sensual reality of the space which the actors leave empty at the end of each act." —
Thomas Beard

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Saturday September 24 at 9pm



The Death of Empedocles

(Der Tod des Empedokles)

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub. With Andreas von Rauch, Vladimir Baratta, Martina Baratta
West Germany/France 1986, 35mm, color, 132 min. German with English subtitles

The pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Empedocles possessed magical healing powers through his communion with the gods and nature. He inspired awe and trust in the people by prophesizing a vision of a new Earth, a communist utopia, before committing a noble suicide. However, at the start of Straub-Huillet's mesmerizing film—an adaptation of the first version of Hölderlin's tragic poem, written during the outbreak of the French Revolution—Empedocles is at the point of death. An enemy of the priestly state, he is cast into darkness, suffering the torments of loneliness and doubt, but finds renewed strength, even immortality, through the will of the people.

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Exhibit Tour and Discussion with Stephen Prina
Sunday September 25 at 7pm



Moses and Aaron

(Moses und Aron)

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub. With Gunter Reich, Louis Devos, Eva Csapo
West Germany 1974, 16mm, color, 105 min. German with English subtitles

Straub-Huillet filmed Schoenberg's unfinished opera in the Roman amphitheater of Alba Fucens. Taking nearly fifteen years to finance, *Moses and Aaron* was based on their rigorous consideration and questioning of Biblical and archeological history, particularly with respect to the collective memory—passed down and transcribed over hundreds of years, however inaccurately—of the Egyptian enslavement of the Hebrews and the Exodus. Straub-Huillet's concern is with the myth of human progress, and the transition from polytheism to monotheism. Lost in the process, they suggest, was a kind of tenderness and rootedness in nature—a traumatic absence into which a new kind of violence was born.

*Join us in the galleries of the Carpenter Center on Level 3 at 6pm for a final viewing of the exhibition Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet: Three Works, followed by screening of *Moses and Aaron* in the theater. Visual Environmental Studies Professor Stephen Prina will then lead a discussion after the film.*



**Introduction to Arnold Schoenberg's
'Accompaniment to a Cinematographic Scene' (*Einleitung zu Arnold Schönbergs
Begleitmusik zu einer Lichtspielszene*)**

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub
West Germany 1972, DCP, color, b/w, 15 min. German with English subtitles

In 1923, sensing the gathering storm of "fear, danger, and catastrophe" in Germany, the composer Arnold Schoenberg wrote a devastatingly prescient and heartbreaking letter to his former friend, the painter Wassily Kandinsky. Schoenberg aligned his fate with that of all Jews, knowing they were soon to face exile or violent death. Straub-Huillet's film, a recitation both of Schoenberg's letter and Bertolt Brecht's 1935 speech to the International Congress in Defense of Culture, is a fierce condemnation of anti-Semitism, German crimes against humanity, and the barbaric war machine of capitalism.

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Monday September 26 at 7pm



Workers, Peasants

(Operai, contadini)

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub. With Angela Nugara, Giacinto Di Pascoli, Giampaolo Cassarino

Italy/France 2000, 35mm, color, 123 min. Italian with English subtitles

A peasant tradition of making homemade ricotta cheese on a wood-burning fire becomes an act of resistance in this unforgettable film. Amateur actors from the regional Buti theater, many of them ordinary laborers and farmers, recite or read passages from Elio Vittorini's Marxist novella *Women of Messina*, their singularly musical voices ringing out as one in the verdant forest. The story, which Italo Calvino called a "choral narrative," centers on a group of workers and peasants who rebuild their lives in the aftermath of the Second World War by rebuilding a destroyed village and forming a utopian community.

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Friday September 30 at 7pm

Proposition in Four Parts (*Proposta in quattro parti*)

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub

Italy 1985, DCP, color & b/w, 41 min. English, German & Italian with English subtitles

D. W. Griffith's 1909 short film *A Corner in Wheat*, a Biblical tale of avarice, divine retribution, and the prolonged suffering of the masses, is the prelude to this political film essay. Straub-Huillet offer a dialectical montage of cause (capitalist greed) and effect (the poverty of the farmer and the urban underclass), and draw from excerpts of their earlier work: *Moses and Aaron*, *Fortini/Cani* and *From the Cloud to the Resistance*.



These Encounters of Theirs

(Quei loro incontri)

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub. With Angela Nugara, Vittorio Vigneri, Grazia Orsi
Italy/France 2005, 35mm, color, 68 min. Italian with English subtitles

In the last feature-length collaboration between Straub and Huillet before Huillet's death in 2006, villagers from across the length of Italy—a peasant, a postmaster, a theater director, a mayor, a rope maker—gather in the Tuscan countryside to recite the five final scenes of Cesare Pavese's *Dialogues with Leucò*. Published in 1947, just two years after the Holocaust and the Second World War and two years before Pavese's suicide, the *Dialogues* offer a series of meditations on human destiny, both comical and tragic, between ancient Greek mythological figures. Desperate in their hunger for immortality, mortals are blind to the gift of being human—of their ability to experience joy and suffering; to feel a passing breeze or the touch of another body; to name, remember, and act.

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Friday October 14 at 7pm



Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach

(*Chronik der Anna Magdalena Bach*)

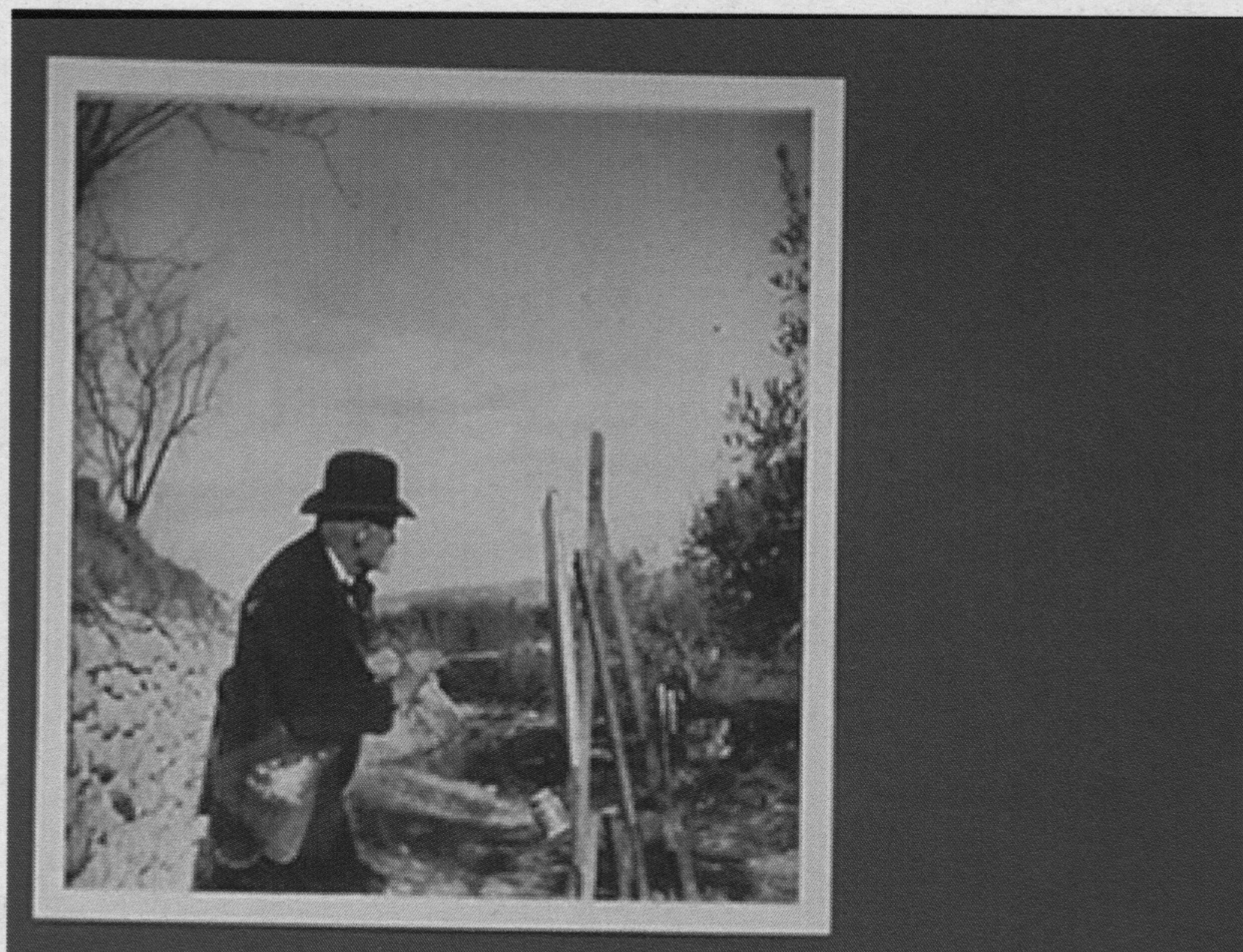
Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub. With Gustav Leonhardt, Christiane Lang-Drewanz
West Germany/Italy 1967, DCP, b/w, 93 min. In English

“The starting point for our *Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach*,” Straub once noted, “was the idea to make a film in which we used music not as an accompaniment, or as a commentary, but as an aesthetic matter.” Though the film recounts the life of J.S. Bach via fictionalized letters from his wife, and is meticulously staged through period costumes, instruments and locations, the *Chronicle* is no hagiography. Rather it’s a kind of anti-biopic, resolutely de-romanticized and all the more illuminating for it. As elsewhere in Straub-Huillet’s work, one witnesses the vital import of direct sound: all the featured compositions in the film, a representative selection from Bach’s career, were performed and recorded live before the camera, and almost always as a single take. “In practical terms,” the filmmaker explained, “you could say that we tried to bring music to life on-screen, to show, for once, music to filmgoers.” – *Thomas Beard*

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Friday October 14 at 9pm



Cézanne. Conversation with Joachim

Gasquet (*Cézanne. Dialogue avec Joachim Gasquet*)

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub
France/West Germany 1989, 35mm, color & b/w, 51 min. French with English subtitles

Joachim Gasquet’s 1921 memoir of his friend Paul Cézanne is an invaluable portrait of the painter’s life and work. Straub-Huillet use passages from this book, together with pastoral scenes from Jean Renoir’s film adaptation of *Madame Bovary* (1933) and photographs of Cézanne by the painter Maurice Denis, to make a moving and profound personal essay. Cézanne (along with Giotto) was a guiding light for Straub and Huillet. They shot the film, in part, at Mont Sainte-Victoire, where Cézanne revolutionized the history of art, marveling, “Look at this mountain—it was once fire.”



A Visit to the Louvre

(Une visite au Louvre)

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub

France/Germany 2004, 35mm, color, 48 min. French with English subtitles

Straub and Huillet had fierce opinions about the presentation and preservation of art in museums, from the use of protective glass to the way paintings are hung, lit, and conserved. Their visit to the Louvre is a reflection of these strong sentiments, as well as a richly revealing look at their way of looking. They use words attributed to Paul Cézanne (as quoted by Joaquim Gasquet) to critique images, venomous about some artists (David, Ingres) while honey-tongued about others (Murillo, Tintoretto, Veronese, Delacroix, Courbet).

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Friday October 28 at 7pm



Communists (*Kommunisten*)

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub

France/West Germany 1989, 35mm, color, b/w, 51 min. French with English subtitles

Communists comprises six scenes concerning resistance to “forms of domination and violence of man on man,” including Communist prisoners who face down their Fascist interrogators during World War II; Egyptian workers and peasants who revolt against their colonial exploiters in 1919; and Italian Alpine communities who in 1967 refuse to show mercy to the Nazis who butchered their families during the war. Straub focuses on the precipitous moment when men and women must choose between self-sacrifice and annihilation. He suggests that survival from oppression, and faith in the fantastical dream of a “new Earth”—the nascence of popular resistance—can perhaps come through music, the joy of a child’s touch, a walk in the country, a will of the imagination.



The Aquarium and the Nation

(L'Aquarium et la nation)

Directed by Jean-Marie Straub

Switzerland 2015, DCP, b/w, color, 31 min. French with English subtitles

André Malraux once wrote, “The greatest mystery is not that we have been flung at random between this profusion of matter and the stars, but that within this prison we can draw from ourselves images powerful enough to deny our nothingness.” Straub considers this in his latest film, creating a cosmic interplay of Haydn’s symphonic *Seven Last Words of Our Savior on the Cross*, a fish tank at a Parisian Chinese restaurant, the birth of a nation in Jean Renoir’s 1938 film *La Marseillaise*, the Jung Institute of Paris, and Malraux’s wartime novel *The Walnut Trees of Altenburg*.

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Friday October 28 at 9pm



Black Sin (*Schwarze Sünde*)

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub. With Andreas von Rauch, Vladimir Theye, Howard Vernon
West Germany 1988, 35mm, color, 42 min. German with English subtitles

Straub-Huillet filmed the third version of *The Death of Empedocles*, the unfinished late-18th-century play by the German lyric poet Friedrich Hölderlin, in the dazzling sunlight and mottled shadow of the Sicilian landscape. It was there that the Greek pre-Socratic philosopher Empedocles legendarily cast himself into the volcanic fires of Mount Etna to prove his immortality. Empedocles debates Pausanias, his loyal disciple (*erômenos*), about the divine powers of love and strife that govern all matter, whether the strange and mystical elements of air, fire, water, and earth, or the mercurial and tragic behavior of gods and humans, mad in their compulsion to forsake nature and each other. *Black Sin* is a meticulous rereading and reworking of a play whose first version Straub-Huillet had adapted in *The Death of Empedocles*.



Itinerary of Jean Bricard (*Itinéraire de Jean Bricard*)

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub
France 2007, 35mm, b/w, 40 min. French with English subtitles

Scarred by wartime occupation and postwar pollution, Coton Island is a palimpsest of history brought vividly to life in Jean Bricard's childhood memories. The island, strategically located on the Loire, was once a lively port

town with ash trees, vineyards, and tributaries alive with salmon and shad. But in 1944 Coton Island was occupied by the Germans and became the setting for brutal roundups and executions (including that of Bricard's uncle) and for small acts of heroic resistance. Collaborating with Huillet on the script, Straub completed *Itinerary* after her death in 2006. He filmed Coton Island against a stark and leaden winter light; he used deliberately long tracking shots and nearly still compositions to evoke a kind of enduring resilience.

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Sunday November 20 at 7pm



Sicilia!

Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub. With Gianni Buscarino, Vittorio Vigneri, Angela Nugara
Italy 1998, 35mm, b/w, 66 min. Italian with English subtitles

Something as simple as a herring roasting on a hearth, or a meal of bread, wine and winter melon, takes on the humble aura of a Caravaggio painting in this masterful film. That is to say, Straub-Huillet extol ordinary Sicilians who are poor of means but rich in spirit. Filmed in Syracuse and Messina, *Sicilia!* is a tragicomedy involving an orange peddler, an Italian recently returned from America, two “stinky” police officers, a guilt-stricken landowner, a traveling knife sharpener and, perhaps most unforgettably, an indomitable peasant mother who reminisces about meals of snails and wild chicory, her husband's philandering and cowardice, and her own father's belief in an honest day's labor, socialism, and St. Joseph.

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Sunday November 20 at 8:30pm



Where Does Your Hidden Smile Lie? (*Où gît votre sourire enfoui?*)

Directed by Pedro Costa

France/Portugal 2001, 35mm, b/w & color, 104 min. Italian & French with English subtitles

This film portrait presents an extraordinary look into the creative process of filmmaking through a case study of longtime collaborators Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, who are carefully observed at work reediting their recent feature *Sicilia!* as they teach a group of students at the National Studio of Contemporary Arts in Tourcoing. Costa meticulously records the dialectic, argumentative mode the filmmakers use to reach decisions about each cut. In a remarkable sequence, the two filmmakers have a standoff in virtual darkness (Huillet having switched off the Moviola that provides much of the illumination for Costa's shooting). Equally compelling is the documentation of Straub's close commentary on techniques from such diverse influences as Chaplin and Eisenstein. This remarkable documentary, an episode from the landmark series "Cinema of our Time," is a brilliant examination of the art of editing and a meditation on the aesthetic and political implications of film technique.

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Monday November 28 at 7pm



57350

Class Relations (*Klassenverhältnisse*)

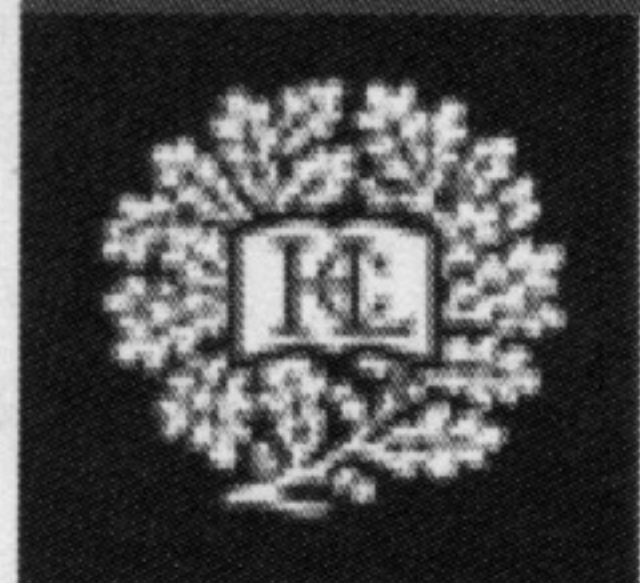
Directed by Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub. With Christian Heinisch, Mario Adorf, Harun Farocki
West Germany/France 1983, 35mm, b/w, 130 min. German with English subtitles

Straub-Huillet's brilliant distillation of Franz Kafka's incomplete first novel *Amerika* is perhaps the most authentically German treatment of Kafka ever made. An ecstatic and haunted fever dream of the United States—the place where Kafka longed to disappear, if only in his imagination—*Amerika* is told from the perspective of a young German immigrant who encounters a strange new world, with its violent lies and quixotic optimism, like a modern-day Parsifal. Straub and Huillet took pains to render the German mannerisms and dialect of Kafka's novel faithfully, and shot their film almost entirely in the port city of Hamburg. But their depiction of injustice and exploitation transcends historical specificity; as Straub said in 1984, "Kafka, for us, is the only major poet of industrial civilization, I mean, a civilization where people depend on their work to survive."

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