

2021 | Issue 1 | test run

CINEDOME

welcome to the cinedome

Genuine thanks to anyone reading our first ever issue! Your support encourages us to create more.

We have good things planned. We don't really have a plan. You can be assured that we have good things in store though.

***

We would like to thank our contributors for being the first authors to believe in us, and spend their time writing great articles.

Special, heartfelt thanks to Cinephobe for being kind enough to entertain evan's interview. Evan also did irreplaceable work on the layout for each article. Thank you.

Tireless editing from Anon MK II. Much respect, salute and thanks (yes, I know this sentence is not imperfect...).

And of course, sincere gratitude to adventurous gal for having the guts to start all this.

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大林宣彦
Written by elliott k

HISTORY FROM THE OTHER SIDE

NOBUHIKO ŌBAYASHI'S "WAR TRILOGY"

Ōbayashi films referenced in this article are also available on YouTube and the Criterion Channel

On 10 April this year, the world lost one of its foremost cinematic minds: the restlessly innovative, imaginative, and brilliant Nobuhiko Ōbayashi. The Japanese writer-director's career spanned six decades, multiple mediums, styles, genres and themes, yet his legacy is frustratingly undervalued in the West.

He spent the 1960s and early-to-mid 1970s developing his aesthetic via increasingly surreal, Nouvelle Vague-influenced short films such as *Emotion* (1966) and *Confession* (1968), and regenerating the Japanese advertisement industry with his memorable ads for Hagar Slacks and Mandom, among others. Ōbayashi made his debut feature *Hausu* in 1977, released that summer to both commercial success and critical ambivalence. Now considered a classic of oddball horror, Hausu was popularised amongst a new Anglophile generation through a 2009 re-release in the Criterion Collection, whose iconic cover is just as wild as the movie itself.

This success laid the foundation for two decades of box office hits in Japan, such as *The Little Girl Who Conquered Time* (1983) and *Chizuko's Younger Sister* (1991), cementing Ōbayashi's place in world cinema as an auteur capable of appealing to mainstream audiences. He also gained critical credibility with idiosyncratic tales of youth, innocence, love, and escapism, often adapted from popular novels or mangas. However, as the 20th century morphed into the 21st, he explored darker territories, whether it be the lust and desire of *Sada* (1998), or the murder and revenge in faux-documentary *The Motive* (2004), suggesting that projects with more thematic depth and nuance were to come as their director's artistic evolution progressed.

Others may say that this triptych simply continues a rich lineage of antiwar cinema in Japan dating back to the 1950s and extending to present day; a lineage including acclaimed titles such as Kobayashi's *The Human Condition* (1959-1961), *Kinoshita's Twenty-Four Eyes* (1954), and *Rhapsody in August* (1992), the latter directed by Ōbayashi's longtime friend and mutual admirer Akira Kurosawa. But these films veer off from this national cinematic tradition, and possess their own stylistic and thematic ambitions. Whereas The Human Condition 'broke new ground with its grim depictions of Japanese atrocities' with grounded realism, and Twenty-Four Eyes created a space of national mourning removed from a country's self-inflicted pain, the War Trilogy does neither. Ōbayashi does not paint a harrowing reminder of the atrocities on the battlefield, and nor does he revel in the melodramatic tragedy of lives lost — instead, he forges a new kind of antiwar cinema: surreal, sprawling, and utterly singular.

Perhaps the best way to view these films and place them in context is by asking where they sit within the grander scheme of Japanese history, seeing them as a Japanese artist evaluating their national identity, and their role in one of history's most fatal wars, at once rebelling against, accepting, and questioning Western narratives.

An old adage claims that history is written by the victors. The phrase was popularised by both Axis and Allied powers in World War II (though its earliest origins can be found centuries before), which has proven more than accurate over the last seven decades in direct relation to that conflict.

Though Germany and Japan are now two of the world's most developed and admired nations, the narrative surrounding World War II painted in Western media remains incredibly one-sided. This is understandable. After all, no one can deny that Adolf Hitler was an evil dictator; that the racial policies and human rights violations of the Nazi party were absolutely wrong;

and their conflict cost millions of innocent lives. Though never governed by the Nazis per se, the Japanese wrote themselves onto the wrong side of 20th-century history through their pact with Germany and Italy.

Portrayals of the country are particularly damning, especially in relation to the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. In media depicting the atomic bombings, Japanese citizens with families, passions, and careers have been denied a happier future by the machinery of war, and are presented only in extreme caricatures, exterminating their humanity. Those who tried to dispute in the intervening decades that those air raids were anything other than a necessary evil have been met with vitriol. Even the aforementioned Rhapsody in August faced walkouts at its Cannes premiere for suggesting such.

Nobuhiko Ōbayashi was born on 9 January 1938 in the town of Onomichi, Hiroshima. He was one of the remaining survivors of the attack before his death, and one who bravely used his platform to tell his story. It would be understandable if Ōbayashi took a similar stance to Kurosawa, but he does not believe in an ethos or a history so concrete.

Similar to Roberto Rossellini's 'War Trilogy' of the 1940s, what makes these three films so special as a trio is their explorations of individual effects that loss on the battlefield can have in both a local and national community. In Seven Weeks, acceptance of past horrors is at the forefront. Hanagatami's innocence wanders through the maelstrom of war, lost in conflict. The trilogy's first instalment, Casting Blossoms to the Sky, proclaims the eternal legacy of World War II.

In *Casting Blossoms*, the year is 2011. Journalist Reiko Endo visits the town of Nagaoka — a place that, like Ōbayashi's native Onomichi, was a site of destruction during World War II — and investigates the effects of both the aforementioned war and the 2004 Chuetsu earthquake on the environment and its inhabitants. She discovers her ex-boyfriend, Kenichi, now a teacher, staging a school play dramatising the bombing. War still looms large over the town, evident through oral history recited by residents; schoolbooks; art; and communal celebration and mourning.

While the above may sound nebulous, the film has tremendous thematic depth, expressed through the most luxurious and masterful filmmaking of its director's career. Archival footage, dramatic flashbacks, practical effects, grand performances, and more are balanced within an ambitious non-linear screenplay. This is complemented by frantic edits, quick camera swipes and flirtations with visual surrealism that have illustrated much of Ōbayashi's later career.

Cleverly, the script (written by Ōbayashi himself in a rare solo writing credit) anchors this with a touching myriad of interpersonal relationships, all intertwined around a compelling narrative. Both an enthralling examination of broken love and a grandiose thinkpiece on the legacy of tragedy, Casting Blossoms to the Sky is opulent — a singular, genius work of art.

Following up such a masterpiece was never going to be easy. However, the manner in which Ōbayashi did so is surprising and admirable in equal measure. Clocking in at 171 minutes, 2014's *Seven Weeks* may be the longest film of the three, but is also in many ways the most restrained — an appropriate choice, considering the themes of acceptance and confrontation within the actions perpetrated by Japan in World War II.

Whereas *Casting Blossoms*, and particularly *Hanagatami*, purposefully eschew aesthetic reality with audacious green screen and effects, the trilogy's middle child is very much a visual black sheep. Set in the town of Ashibetsu (a real place, whose citizens helped fund the film), *Seven Weeks* was filmed on real sets and locations and tells the story of patriarch Mitsuo's impending passing and the mysterious secrets of his past that arrive in its wake. Doing this, Ōbayashi deploys several non-actors and relatively muted cinematography to show the horrors of war being slowly revealed in the present day.

The movie brilliantly explores the societal and psychological repercussions of being on the wrong side of history. Many may distinguish it as a weaker entry due to this film's contained tone and lack of traditionally memorable Ōbayashi set pieces, but to dismiss it is to ignore another fascinating outing from an auteur ageing like a fine wine as he entered his late 70s.

Last is *Hanagatami*, the film that received the most favourable distribution. It screened at Rotterdam in 2017, and recently released on Blu-ray in Europe courtesy of Third Window Films. Though to fully comprehend the meaning of this film, one must take a step back and research its production. This was intended as Ōbayashi's first film, and then his last, and ended up being neither.

Nobuhiko planned *Hanagatami* as his debut, and developed the screenplay based on Kazuo Dan's 1937 novel years before *Hausu*.





Obayashi Subs



Evan Morgan is organising this fundraiser.

Created 27 April 2020 | Creative Arts, Music & Film

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Instead, he waited and waited, until a doctor in Tokyo diagnosed the director with lung cancer, telling him he had just six months to live.

This revelation may have ended the careers of many, but not Ōbayashi, who sped his passion project into production at last, and created one of the greatest achievements in a long career brimming with excellence.

Calling *Hanagatami* a film is underselling it. It isn't so much a film as it is a surrealist scrapbook inhabited by nuanced lamentations on death, war, mortality, and love. Each sequence is made with such meticulous care and vivacious enthusiasm for the form that it's impossible not to fall into its receptive arms.

Narratively, Obayashi sticks within the confines of Karatsu, a coastal town whose citizens are beginning to feel the effects of faraway war. Thematically, however, he casts his net far and wide into subtle symbols that evoke either a glorious past or doomed future. One can't be sure what these symbols mean, but knows that they are important. For the director, that is enough. These visual cues take the form of bombastic colour palettes, altering frame rates, incessant repetition, and the use of the green screen so innovative that it warrants a whole other essay of its own.

Another thing these visuals capture is how through a modern perspective, the horror of World War II really does feel absurd and incomprehensible, something that people's awareness of is more so defined by media than lived experience. But Ōbayashi was there in 1945 when the atomic bomb landed on Hiroshima. He saw the nuclear wasteland that was left of his home city, saw the rubble and lives ruined for himself, and channels this potently into his art. Above all, a firm rebuttal for whoever doubted the validity of the auteur theory is here: a singular vision of a director destined to embolden future filmmakers to make similarly exciting and distinctive works.

Ultimately, he outlived his doctor's prediction, and crafted another gem in 2019's Labyrinth of Cinema: a beautiful, sprawling accessory to the War Trilogy, in which the individuals of the current generation are transported into the previous era to understand the horrors of World War II, before his passing earlier this year.

Here lies a perfect trilogy of films, complementing and contrasting one other on a thematic, subtextual, and visual level, bound to be discussed in arthouse circles forevermore.

But alas, few cinephiles mention this gorgeous trio and the vast majority of Ōbayashi's post-Hausu oeuvre. A lack of distribution in the West and limited accessibility outside of Japan prevents such conversation. In fact, many of Ōbayashi's efforts, such as *Turning Point* (1994) and Tom Cat Holmes' *Deduction* (1996) are virtually impossible to find, legally or otherwise.

However, hope remains. As is often the case for obscure foreign-language directors, Ōbayashi's later work has gained traction through new HD releases in Asia, and the corresponding torrents they birth. A new Japanese Blu-ray of *His Motorbike Her Island* (1986) has a glorious 720p file available on private trackers and other servers, one far preferable to the shoddy YouTube version. Additionally, Seven Weeks has escaped six years of internet limbo by finally gaining English subtitles to accompany its DVD-quality rip. Many of his 70s and 80s work such as *The Adventures of Kinosuke Kindaichi* (1979) and *The Visitor in the Eye (*1977) have been released since the director's death.

Even major distributors are joining in this exciting trend. Criterion is streaming *Sada* in 1080p on the Criterion Channel, and their *Dreams* (1990) Blu-ray features a 150-minute documentary that Ōbayashi shot behind the scenes. Last year MUBI screened Hanagatami as part of their Rotterdam retrospective, and are expected to do the same for Labyrinth of Cinema later this year. UBU has his ten earliest short films accessible for free on their website. Fans are doing their part, too, most notably Evan Morgan's successful GoFundMe campaign to give proper English subtitles for *Goodbye to Tomorrow* (1995). The campaign promises that more films will receive such treatment in the future.

Most significant in regards to distribution is the UK Blu-ray release of Hanagatami by Third Window Films. One can buy the region B disc from the East Asian cinema distributor's store, or off on Arrow. Should it sell well, perhaps we will see similar discs for Casting Blossoms, Seven Weeks, or even inaccessible obscurities from his forgotten 90s period.

But for now, we have the torrents, and, from what I can gather, around 30 Ōbayashi films are currently available online. Some lack subtitles, yes, but a beauty and vitality that transcends the boundaries of language prevails. I encourage the reader to seek these experiences out — to embrace and immerse the self in one of cinema's most diverse and enthralling bodies of work, continuing the legacy of its creator, and giving him his deserved place among the pantheon of canonised Japanese auteurs.



SLOW CINEMA
AS A TOOL OF THE OPPRESSED
WRITTEN BY @EVILBJORK

Perhaps the most beloved and identifiable style in underground avant-garde films today is slow cinema. The style has been a part of the arthouse genre since the 60s, although the term is only ten years old, popularized in an article for Sight and Sound by Jonathan Romney. Slow cinema could be accurately described as a style that downplays events in favor of mood. Slow cinema directors slow down the pace of dialogue and character movement, as well as extend shots beyond normal length. This style has become common in recent years, although many don't know of its radical origins.

At the 1960 Cannes Film Festival, Michelangelo Antonioni premiered *L'Avventura*, a film unlike anything that came before it. It was much slower than films of the time, running at 145 minutes with little dialogue. The cinematography was considered unusual for positioning characters with their backs to the camera while talking and rarely having two people facing the camera at the same time. During its premiere the audience booed and dismissed the film. In response to its disastrous premiere, a letter commending the film for its incredible nature was written and signed by dozens of prominent filmmakers, helping the film gain respect. *L'Avventura* could be considered the first slow cinema movie, in pacing at least. From here slower paced movies became more common, even becoming trademarks of Andrei Tarkovsky and Stanley Kubrick.

The next big step in giving slow cinema its voice was the introduction of Chantal Akerman. Akerman started her career in 1968 with the short *Saute ma ville*, which led into a series of films between 1972 and 1974. She indulged in long takes and anti-mainstream topics. A notable film from this period is *Je, Tu, Il, Elle* (1974), starring Akerman herself exploring female sexuality in a stripped-down style. This is one of the early realizations of slow cinema as a counterculture style. The long takes and minimalist story instills the isolation the main character feels, and effectively transports the viewer into her shoes. The transposition informs the audience on a greater level than a mainstream approach might have been capable of.

The effect would be reused for Chantal Akerman's next feature, the 202 minute epic Jeanne Dielman, 23, *Quai du Commerce 1080 Bruxelles* (1975). A mother goes through her daily routine over three days, cooking and running errands. Akerman showed the mundane scenes in real time to "look carefully and to be respectful," as Akerman put it. She created the film with a feminist message in mind, even shooting it with an entirely female crew. In Akerman's perspective, the hierarchy of respect places the work of a woman lower than that of a car accident or explosion, similar to a woman's place in the social hierarchy. She even said, "Woman's work comes out of oppression and whatever comes out of oppression is more interesting."

The same year as Jeanne Dielman's premiere, Theo Angelopoulos released his first major film, *The Travelling Players(*1975). Running at 223 minutes, it depicts the dreary experiences of a Greek theater troupe as they migrate around their country during World War II. Ten years later would see the next milestone of slow cinema: *Shoah* (1985). The nine and a half hour long documentary about the Holocaust uses interviews from survivors, witnesses, and ex-Nazis to paint a portrait of the horrific events. In 1994, Béla Tarr's *Sátántangó* emerged. Although this wasn't Tarr's first film, Sátántangó gained significant notoriety for being a seven hour narrative film. It shows how the fall of communism affects each villager living in a small Hungarian village.

In each film, slow cinema tells the story of the oppressed and persecuted. It puts the viewer in their shoes, and lets them linger for longer than traditional filmmaking. The themes are more obvious in Shoah, but the other two also educate Western audiences about the struggles of living in impoverished countries, or dealing with Nazi occupations during World War II.

By the time we reach the 90s, over the last three decades few movies could be defined as slow cinema. In the 1998 article "The Decay of Cinema" Susan Sontag argues that popular film has mutated from a spellbinding experience into a battery of the senses. She also argues that the art form has morphed into "the unprincipled manipulation of images to make them more attention-grabbing." Although that was about to change.

The widespread sentiment at the time caused an explosion of slow cinema movies after the millennium. Prominent slow cinema directors suddenly received more notoriety. Gus Van Sant adopted the slow cinema style in his "Death Trilogy," as well as Vincent Gallo with *The Brown Bunny* (2003). Michael Haneke won the Palme d'Or for his feature *The Piano Teacher* (2001), as did Gus Van Sant for *Elephant* (2003), showing a growing respect and recognition of the style.

Slow cinema expanded with advancements in digital and videotape technology. Now directors could shoot with high-definition cameras that significantly cut down the cost of filming, and allowed for longer takes than what was possible on film cameras.

This change facilitated Wang Bing who in 2002 premiered his nearly ten hour epic, *Tie Xi Qu: West of the Tracks* (2002). This documentary focuses on the decline of Shenyang, China's industrial Tiexi district, which once was a vibrant example of China's socialist economy. Throughout the documentary there are long voyeuristic shots of factory workers taking breaks and working with steel. These shots go on for upwards of half an hour without a cut.

Similarly, after working on his eleven hour epic *Evolution of a Filipino Family* (2005) for ten years, which he shot on film, we see the breakout of Lav Diaz. Diaz started creating films at a faster pace using digital cameras. He eventually released three more movies with lengths over seven hours in the 2000s alone.

Both directors are nonwestern filmmakers, Wang Bing being from China and Lav Diaz being from the Philippines. They detail sceneries Westerners have little exposure to. Relating this back to Akerman's feminist declarations, these filmmakers also use slow cinema as the most comfortable way to tell their story of oppression to Westerners, directly or indirectly.

This theme of nonwestern directors adopting the slow cinema style becomes commonplace from this point forward, with a huge number of directors from Apichatpong Weerasethakul to Pedro Costa releasing new films. In 2010, Weerasethakul won the Palme d'Or for *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives,* which paved the way for the biggest mainstream recognition of slow cinema yet.

At the 86th Academy Awards, Steve McQueen's *12 Years a Slave* (2013) won the Oscar for Best Picture. This was only his third film, and yet he took slow cinema to a level of mainstream recognition it had never seen before. The film was the real life story of Solomon Northup, a free black man living in pre-Civil War New York. He was abducted and sold into slavery, remaining confined until twelve years later. McQueen, a Black filmmaker, portrays stories by and about oppressed people again. This brought slow cinema its widest recognition yet and helped in making this style universal.

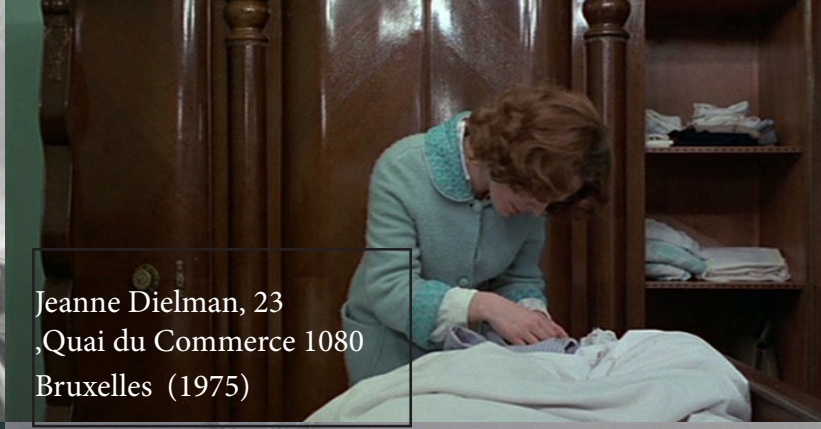
Slow cinema as a style of filmmaking is often misunderstood. The general view of the style is only perceived by the slowness and length. Film scholars Katherine Fusco and Nicole Seymour pointed out in their book Emergency and the everyday that Westerners mischaracterize the slow cinema movement as a relaxing or pastoral escape from technology-saturated lives, while these films usually focus on laborers struggling to survive. As they put it, "…For those on the fringes of society, modernity is actually experienced as slowness, and usually to their great detriment."

Many respected directors don't think of their own films as slow cinema. That is a label that has been placed upon them. They simply tell their stories the truest way they can. Lav Diaz has stated that he doesn't consider his films as "slow cinema," but because of a desire for artistic independence, and to express Filipino peoples ancestral identity, he can't imagine making a film any other way.

Now, hundreds of films that could accurately be described as slow cinema have opened in the last ten years, a far cry from the handful available in previous decades. What I find most exciting is the feeling of newness the style has. It hasn't reached its culmination yet, and continues to grow. With many of the style's most respected creators working on new projects and directors constantly emerging, we can expect a lot to come.

@evilbjork recommends ten slow cinema films to explore

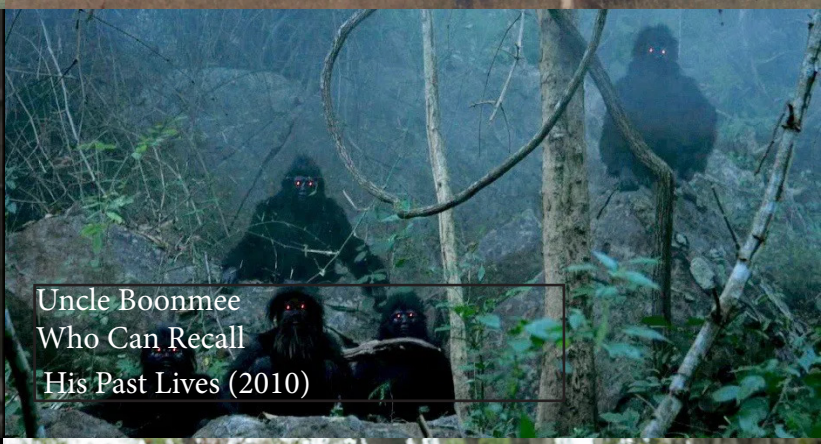

L'Avventura (1960)


Jeanne Dielman, 23
,Quai du Commerce 1080
Bruxelles (1975)


Stalker (1979)


Landscapes In The Mist (1988)


Tie Xi Qu: West of the Tracks (2002)

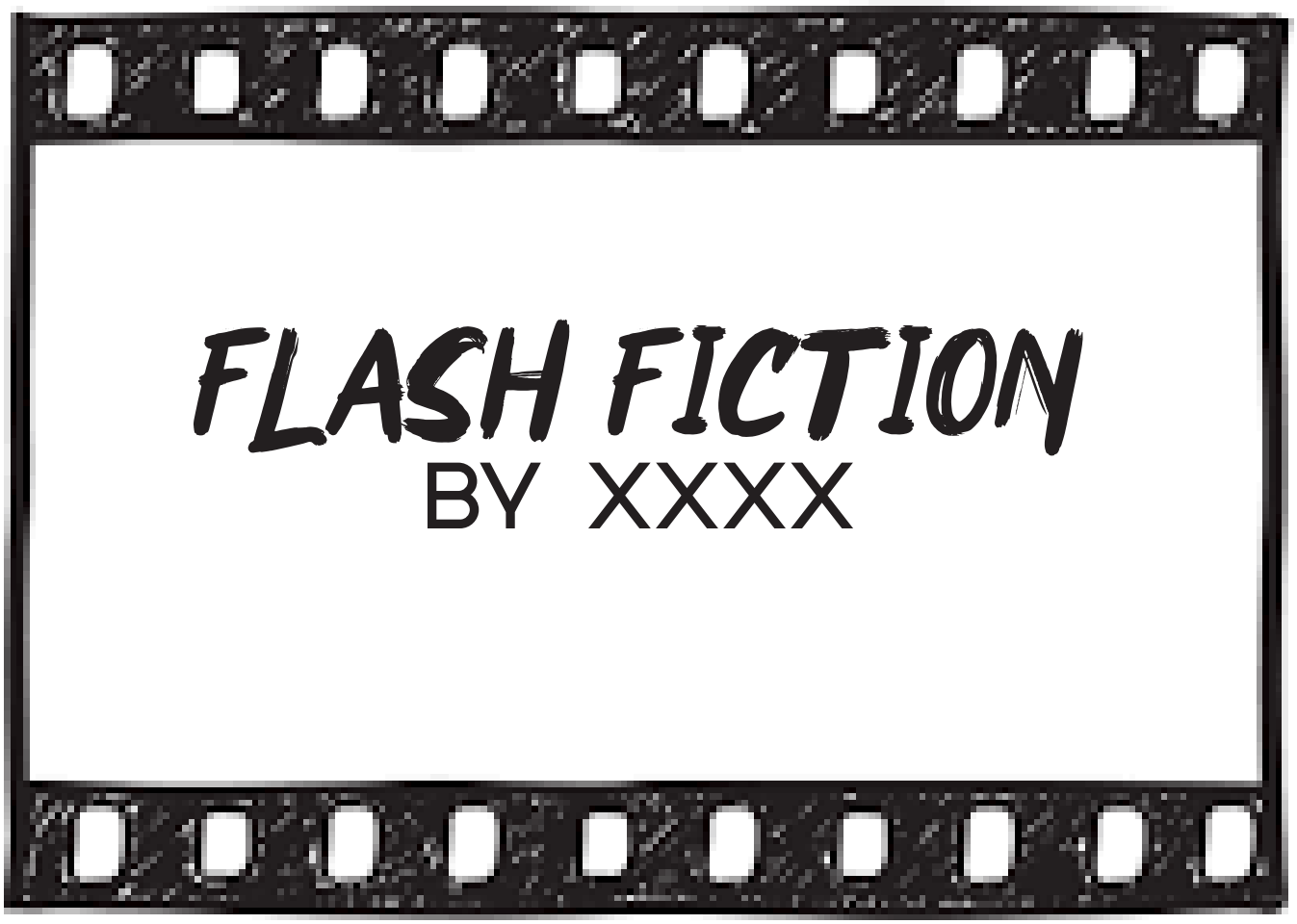

Uncle Boonmee
Who Can Recall
His Past Lives (2010)


The Turin Horse (2011)


12 Years
A Slave (2012)


Norte, The End of History (2013)


An Elephant Sitting Still (2018)



SIR KEITH STRUGGLED to light his cigar. His greying hair was rippled by the playful wind. He felt like Burt Reynolds in Gone With the Wind. He covered his cigar with one hand, while lighting it with the other. It finally lit, setting ablaze another day of deep-seated 35mm dreams. This was a successful moment.

After all, a man of culture can't just smoke cigarettes or marijuana. They must smoke Cuban. Especially after the age of 50, which is often regarded as the age of becoming wise. Sir Keith wasn't particularly wise. To be honest, he was pretty fed up. He stood there, exhaling the smoke, and looking around at a world that disappointed his primordial tomfooler

He wanted to make films that made people leave their day jobs and follow their dreams. Just never happened. Too much stress. Back when he was young, there was no way to film with mobile phones. Mobile phones weren't even real. Instead, directors had to carry around massive equipment. Had to tape the whole bloody thing. And then they had to sit and cut the tape into pieces, and then glue the pieces together. Plus, he didn't have the money to get a degree in it.

Sir Keith had gone, instead, into the military. That was how he became knighted, for his service. Although there was hardly anything gallant about it. The knighthood wasn't official. Sir Keith had knighted himself, as a way of commemorating his own bravery. Getting a sword on the internet was no mean feat, but he went deep into the Dark Web and found one that fulfilled his requirements: a sword carved from Armenian silver, its hilt encrusted with gems that were smelted from acid rain. He used the sword to touch himself and that was it, really. Yet his real dream, this fervent dream to be a director remained unfulfilled. Meeting such a person, unfulfilled by knighthood yet consumed by a passion for art, was rare

Sir Keith didn't have any friends in the industry. In fact, Sir Keith didn't have friends. He was a bit difficult to talk to. Too many celluloid nightmares stormed his subconscious. One drunken night, he told a stranger about his vision of a swan that, upon extending its wingspan, became an oak tree doomed to roam the night skies forever. The confused stranger asked him what this meant. Sir Keith replied that the flying oak tree symbolized oak trees that could fly.

Although Sir Keith had an active imagination, he had absolutely no idea how to translate that vividness into a tangible, realistic aesthetic. There was another time when he attempted a more realism-oriented approach through a documentary: an insightful observation of the concrete outside Regent's Park. The documentary would be about the shoes of different people who stepped on two particular slabs of concrete. The two slabs were inspired by Godard's immortal work Masculin Feminin, with the left slab representing the feminine, and the right representing not only the masculine, but also the conservative nature of those who insist on the dominance of the masculine. He called the documentary Concrete.

A great artist would do this, anyway. Observe what went on with the mainstream. That was why he was standing outside the worst-reviewed cinema he could find within £5 travel distance, nonchalantly emulating Burt Reynolds in Gone With the Wind to get into the zone. He took one last puff and looked for a recycling bin. There was no recycling bin. This was tragic.

One couldn't just throw a cigar onto the road. A normal bin wouldn't do either. The bin needed a purpose, just like anything else in the universe. The bin must recycle, just as how Sir Keith's lungs recycled carbon dioxide. He had to find the right bin. And so, Sir Keith set off to find a recycling bin.
He ignored the thought that people were smirking at him. He often had such paranoid thoughts. They came from the feeling that his actions were inconsequential, that maybe, he should simply throw the finished cigar on the road. "There are more important things at stake," his mind taunted. Yet, he persisted in finding a recycling bin.

It took him an hour to find one. He'd ended up in a whole other part of London, where concrete slabs had not arrived. He gingerly moved his overworn, brown loafers onto each new cobblestone, attempting to find a reassuring grip. This reminded him of Kurosawa's epic Derzu Ursala, where the man travels across a lot of mountains on his spiritual journey back home. Finally, he reached the bin. He let the cigar fall into the bin with epic slo-mo. Now, he had found a home for his fallen cigar.
Sir Keith returned to the cinema one and a half hours later, by which point the film he had intended to see was over. It was an arthouse film that was not supposed to last too long. The ticketeer informed him that this had been their last screening of the day. Sir Keith decided to return later.



UMBERTO D: THE END OF ITALIAN NEOREALISM

WRITTEN BY @ IAMTHEOS



The Second World War left Italy in ruins, caused by the bombardments during the war. Out of Postwar Italy came Neorealism, with films like *Ossessione* (1943) by Luchino Visconti and *Rome Open City* (1945) by Roberto Rossellini, the latter dealing directly with the Nazi occupation. Neorealism was a byproduct of its environment. Directors had difficulty funding cinematic ventures with the state of the economy, so they got by with what they had, which included on-location shooting and non-professional actors. Thematically, Neorealist films dealt with representations of the working class and daily life in postwar Italy. A famous example is *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) by Vittorio De Sica, which portrays a father's struggle to provide for his family and his search for his stolen bicycle. Four years later, De Sica's 1952 film *Umberto D* was made against a different backdrop. Italy had transitioned from an agrarian to industrial industry and endured political reform and censorship. If *Rome Open City* is considered by film scholars the starting point of Neorealism, then *Umberto D.* is considered the endpoint of Neorealism in Italy.
After the war, the European Recovery Program, (better known as the Marshall Plan), rebuilt Italy's infrastructure with the support of the United States. The economic boom during the late 40s and early 50s gave way to a new Italian society that wanted to restore their international image by, "reemploying the myth of self-representation, "Italiani brava gente" … [which claims] the intrinsic goodness of the Italian people." This image was promoted by the new Italian government elected in 1948. Beating the Italian Communist Party, the Christian Democratic Party ran on "postwar progress and substantial reform..." however "fearful of radical innovation and concerned mainly with stability and restoration." The following year, Italy's postwar living had come to an end four years after the war. Italy in the 1950s had changed. It no longer was concerned with the war but instead focused on moving forward. Umberto D reflects upon that environment through the experiences of Umberto and the secondary characters that fill his life.

Morandini, "Italy From Fascism to Neo-Realism," 357
Morandini, "Italy From Fascism to Neo-Realism," 358
Regina M. Longo, "Between Documentary and Neorealism: Marshall Plan Films in Italy (1948-1955)," California Italian Studies vol 3, no. 2 (2012): 8

Umberto D is about a retired government worker and his dog wandering aimlessly to make enough money to pay off his debts. His landlady wants to evict Umberto to charge double for his room, stretching out his meager government pension. *Umberto D* shares qualities with previous neorealist films. It's shot on location; uses non-professional actors and documentary camera techniques; and focuses on the working class. The film starts off with pensioners protesting to raise their pensions with signs that say "We have worked our whole lives," and "Justice for Pensioners." De Sica's opening scene calls back to his earlier film *Bicycle Thieves*, which starts with men struggling in securing an opportunity to earn money and live. One tries to get a job while the other protests to make enough to live. This introductory scene announces, "the dual themes of social injustice and old age that locate Umberto D on the losing end of the neorealist' inaugural promise," which was a desire for a profound renewal of people and society.

De Sica uses Umberto as a vessel to witness these social failings. Italy had moved on from the war but in doing so, "De Sica's paragon of the middle class, had conveniently forgotten the truths of the war years." These truths in the film are showcased through lack of Italian solidarity and the selective amnesia of the middle class represented by the landlady. In a New York Times article written by De Sica analyzing *Umberto D*, he states that, "the landlady is a typical, authentic middle-class woman." Wanting to redecorate her apartment, the landlady doubles her tenant's rent in order to fit in within her economic class. Throughout the rest of the film, Umberto tries desperately to raise enough money. After the protest, he harasses fellow pensioners by selling them his watch for less than he'd wanted to. A similar situation arises later on when selling his books. Umberto also hospitalizes himself to save on food. Lastly Umberto tries begging for money, but is unable to bring himself to do it. He has his dog, Flike, beg in his stead but stops him when a previous coworker recognizes his dog. De Sica and cinematographer, G.R. Aldo, craft these scenes in painstakingly objective long shots and takes. The scene when Flike is used for alms is shot at the Pantheon, a symbol of the old Roman Empire which is now juxtaposed next to one of Italy's current failures. Throughout the movie, De Sica also criticizes Umberto for being more worried about appearing poor than actually being poor. DeSica says that in the end, ..when there is no hope of getting help from anybody it is just then that Umberto could have found a way out. By taking the girl [Maria] out of this house, being a father to her. Two, or three, together might solve their problems.

De Sica's biggest criticism of the new Italian society was that in their stride towards modernization, Italian people had forgotten the virtue of working together. In a sense *Umberto D* was about neorealism as it came to an end. One undescribed force that led to the end of neorealism was government censorship and changes in film structure.
In 1949, wanting to reinvigorate the film industry, The Christian Democratic party passed the Andreotti Law. Named after its author Giullio Andreotti, the bill greatly affected neorealist makers like Vittorio De Sica.

On the one hand, the law protected the national movie industry against American competition by taxing imported films and by imposing compulsory programming of Italian films for eighty days a year in every theater, thus tripling the distribution of Italian productions on the home market. On the other hand, "la leg Andretti" reintroduced strict precensor-

ship, putting the state in control of the movie industry. All scripts were to be submitted to a special ministerial commission, and only those that met with official approval were granted production loans. This system drastically reduced attempts at filming controversial subjects and discouraged producers from supporting films that were unlikely to receive financial assistance. Producers had a hard time getting state grants for neorealist films and thus moved onto other projects that had better chances at funding. Their departure contributed to the rise of different kinds of cinema: Hollywood-esque comedies, melodramas, historical-mythological, and pink neorealism. During the 1950's all of these genres experienced hits at the boxoffice. The last of those four genres, pink neorealism, used neorealist elements and story conventions to tell uplifting narratives.

Although Italian Neorealist films were unpopular in Italy, they won accolades and awards in international film festivals. The Andreotti Law would also censor neorealist film by denying "export license on the pretext that it 'slandered Italy.' " If Italian directors like De Sica wanted to have their films funded or exported, they had to find new ways. Neorealist ideas could no longer be driven by narrative means; instead that shift had to move to the image. This allowed the neorealist elements to be freed from their attachment of content to that of form which led to new auteurs of Italian cinema like Fellini, Antonioni, and Visconti to apply neorealist style to narratives disconnected from postwar Italy. Instead of being able to read the screenplay for Umberto D and take away the film's message, one must watch the film to grasp it.

Umberto D marks the end of neorealism in Italy. In a sense, it seems fitting, for there are no children or a new generation to follow at the end of the film. All that De Sica leaves us with is an old man at the end of his life. All he has is his trusty dog, Flike, as he walks away towards the horizon away from the viewer. Neorealism as a movement may have ended in Italy but its influence continued both locally and around the world. Film critic André Bazin championed them throughout France and influenced early 50s and 60s directors of the French New Wave like Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut. In Italy, Federico Fellini would redefine neorealist principles of making films from life by applying other forms of realities like the spiritual or metaphysical. This short-lived movement that came out of the struggles of post World War II brought about a new form of cinema, one that was unshackled to any previous mode of filmmaking.



viewing room

Day by day, humble pirates distribute movies through online hubs. Their efforts have encouraged a greater variety in taste and Friday night viewings. However, niche releases remain true to their name and stay under the radar. Consumers and connoisseurs can agree that there's just too much cool shit out there, regardless of accessibility.
Films like Kaagaz Ke Phool will never become household names. Whether they're deserving of being so isn't the focus of the article. The first iteration of Viewing Room launches upon the vacancies in discussion around underseen cinema and attempts to inspire a response beyond the reactionary LB watchlist entry. Few talk about the films beyond what they are. So why not show what they're not about?
No one on the World Wide Web has transformed obscure kino into clickbait. No one.

- anon MK II



A Night On The Water (1998)

What you see:
A woman high on Valium embraced by her equally high lover, thus mistaking him for both zoologist and cardiologist.

What you get:
Hundreds of other gold screencaps. Readers may write off A Night on the Water as a run-of-the-mill Korean-American romance, with a bland stockbroker falling for a manic pixie dream prostitute. Don't. Quality and lack thereof duke it out for a 100 minutes in frantic fashion, neither gaining an edge over the other. Passionate eighties saxophones squeal alongside what sounds like a proofread but Systran translated script. Hammy acting ruins soft, Doyle-esque mise en scènes. Sex takes place on a glow-in-the-dark bed. Yes, the bed itself glows. Its green light alleviates the tedium from the couple's prolonged intercourse. No one signs up for 1001 Nights of Fucking on the Fucking Glowing Bed...right?

Great for:
Group watches, or a primer on the stock market of waxing and waning expectations.



6ixtynin9 (1999)

What you see:
Enthusiastic housewife suggests healthy recipes to prepare for the guest of honor.

What you get:
A million baht, and a slew of other crazy shit. A saleswoman gets laid off and opens the front door to the end of the world as she knows it, through a cardboard box containing the aforementioned sum. The housewives are among other breezy characters she encounters while escaping Thailand. Gangsters, policemen, and lovelorn siblings stand between her and fabled England. She hides their corpses, and scrubs her bathroom tiles 'til the blood disappears. Relatable. The screwball equivalent of Jeanne Dielman (1975).

Great for:
The depressing nights of unemployment during 'rona, and wanting to relive the awkwardness of asking a man to climb inside a bamboo bookcase and seeing if he fits.



Quiet is the Night (1978)

What you see:
A girl stares deadpan at a subject off-camera and sings about...dunno. The lyrics are awfully abstract.

What you get:
Daddy issues, Noël edition. The protagonist is not the girl featured in the still. Instead, we get a young dweeb. All Wiktor desires is to sail out into the open summer sea with his best friend for two weeks. However, his father, a police commissioner, entertains neither his simple requests nor cries for validation. He's too busy hunting down the serial killer targeting children just weeks before Christmas. Both the press and Wiktor grow impatient from the father's staunch obstinance, colder than snow trickling from grey skies to their Polish town. If he won't notice me, Wiktor thinks, then I must find the killer myself! Affirm my capabilities! Then, painful, bleak reality collides with his fantasies and his father's happy holidays...

Great for:
An alternative Christmas family drama when sick of Die Hard (1988) or The Irony of Fate (1975). Ensure that relatives can handle the slow burn psychological analyses before the thriller kicks in. Maybe spike their eggnog beforehand.



Kagaaz Ke Phool (1959)

What you see:
Filthy, these cinemas. Disgusting. Vile. A den of sins and bunnies, Playboy and dust alike. Didn't you know? My daughter has asthma. Bring me your manager!

What you get:
We've seen this trope time and time again. Talented but disillusioned director encounters an unaspiring yet plucky actress with potential. They make movies and love, but only with their eyes and ethereal musical numbers because Bollywood. Then a series of misfortunes crush our protagonist, one devastating blow after another. No longer can he abide by the industry's ills, or seek refuge at home or in art. Paralleling the own director's struggles, this quasi autobiography ends the same way Dutt's life eventually did. Meanwhile, the girl shines like a star above, burning all too bright for his wretched soul.

Great for:
Witnessing gorgeous black-and-white photography of cinematographer V.K. Murthy, while gulping down that espresso depresso. A poem lit by a lone spotlight, replete with the smoke and dust of smothered dreams.



Rose Tinted Dreams (1977)

What you see:
Bleach: a maiden's antidote for the aching ass.

What you get:
He's a Slovak. She's Romani. Can I make it any more obvious? Jolana yearns for an escape from the poverty and chaos of her Gypsy family, through ideals of the Slovak ordinary. Jakub delivers letters throughout his sleepy, sunlit hamlet, and resurrects chickens shot to death. His everyday life is akin to a fairy tale; her exotic origins complement his proclivity towards romance like a charm. Opposites attract. On the railway, he proclaims that he could grow wings and skip town anytime. She entertains his whims, but then shuts him down with, "Don't fly away." Instead, they run away together, to the city, fleeing judging eyes on both sides. Don't expect a happy ending.

Great for:
Satisfying the romantic's cravings. The Czechoslovak Romeo and Juliet that drawls with the sprightliness of a daydream, and halts at sobering inevitability. Wake up and taste the yolks, raw and alone.



Dreams of the City (1984)

What you see:
She's so done with your shit, grammatical conventions be damned.

What you get:
Bitter resignation. In sweltering Damascus, hot single moms (thanks, Yasmine Khlat) struggle against the patriarchal system while raising their children during political turmoil. Gamal Abdel Nasser, a charismatic military officer, ousted monarchic despots through a coup d'état in the 1950s. Syrians and Egyptians believed he could lead their countries and the Middle East into a pan-Arabic democratic utopia. Even so, Deeb witnesses oppressive nationalism and tyranny. Men in power punish all dissenters, self-aware or ignorant, regardless of intention and weight of the crime. The director, Mohammad Malas, wrote the script as a retrospective to his own childhood. Knowing what happened to Nasser's promises emboldens Dreams of the City with an exacting cynicism. Yet the innocence of a child's perspective detaches the film from political advocacy— thus avoiding the ire of censorship. Nevertheless, the emotional draw rests upon the relationship between Deeb and his mother. The two worry, laugh, and cry together. Their aching, tender gestures surrender to a marred future.

Great for:
An adventurous trek into Syrian cinema, overlooked by most critics and cinephiles. The poor picture quality and subs may deter viewers from pressing onwards, but intrepid souls that conquer the janky, almost lo-fi landscape will be rewarded with a great formalist coming-of-age. Restoration when?

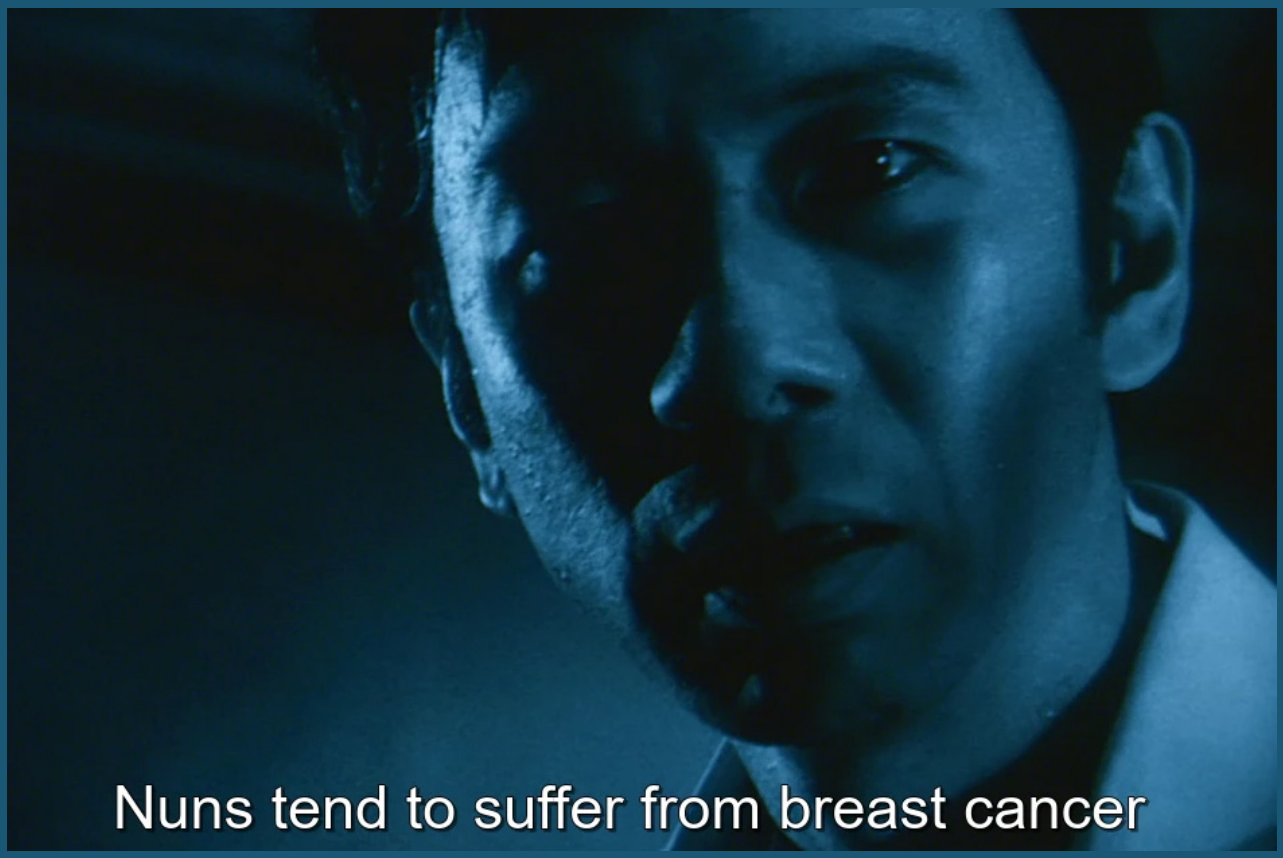


Ornamental Hairpin (1941)

What you see:
Jesus, Grandpa. You know Grannie needs her hearing aids, and she can't grab them from her current position.

What you get:
Sorry, octogenarian deviants. Nothing wilder here than a snoring match, or blind monks crossing a railless bridge for two minutes. A misstep onto the world's most lethal hairpin cripples Nanmura, a soldier chilling in a bucolic inn. The guilt-ridden owner, Emi, hears about the accident, and returns all the way from Tokyo to aid his recovery. Accompanied by the inn's other guests, they spend mornings playing hide-and-seek in the woods. During evenings, everyone complains about the sashimi served at each dinner. The elephant in the washitsu is the raging war outside. Each traveler treasures their fleeting respite. No one wants this gentle summer to end, least of all Emi.

Great for:
After a long day, and in the mood for a kino short and sweet. Mizoguchi and Ozu claimed they could never make films like Shimizu's. Ornamental Hairpin is another subtle drama in the auteur's oeuvre, weaving in and out of lighthearted antics to contemplative questions gone unvocalized. When Emi ascends the stairs towards the film's final moments, she glimpses the future atop: beyond the camera's perspective. The viewer can only absorb the trepidation in her steps, her eyes brimming with hesitation.



A Snake of June (2002)

What you see:
/r/badwomensanatomy.

What you get:
A bizarre /r/DeadBedrooms scenario elevated by the pervading monochrome blue. Rinko finds photos of herself inside an envelope. The snapshots taken without her consent show her masturbating on her couch, juxtaposed between an indoor palm tree and the raindrops slinking down her window. Starved from intimacy, she seeks pleasure alone. Upon registering her arrival home, her husband looks up from scrubbing the sink with a casual greeting, sans the warmth of a kiss or an embrace. The anonymous voyeur, played by the director while imbibed with the spirit of a sadistic Dr. Ruth Westheimer, blackmails Rinko. His salacious commands over the phone—walks of shame, downpour boudoir sessions, the usual—reveal more of her repressed desires than bare skin. Even as the second half veers into surreal body giallo, the material retains a compelling emotional connection to its protagonist. By the time she blooms into self-assuredness, and the husband into self-awareness, their inhibitions precipitate into an electrifying storm of catharsis and reconciliation.

Great for:
Couples therapy.



The Nightmare (2015)

What you see:
Give him a break. Maybe a Kitkat too, if he hasn't flung that out of the fridge yet

What you get:
It Follows (2014) meets benign Babadook. High school has never been a place to flaunt one's freak flag. Tina's aware of this unspoken rule, which is why she screams and flees the E.T. knockoff during their first encounter. Her family and friends stay blind to the creature. They prescribe her medications, sideyes, and shrugs. She'll get over it. But she doesn't. The relentless hardtek raves Tina could once lose herself in drive her home, where she's forced to confront her anxieties. Going where no teen thriller has ventured, her therapist advises her to...you know, talk to him. Get to know the dude. Ask for his A/S/L. The two share quiet, cute moments interrupted by the sudden reveal of the monster to everyone else. That's when the movie shifts into insouciant Carrie (1976) gears, fueled by a Tina unleashed.

Great for:
More contemporary, femme, psychological horror features. Gal pals would love a sleepover screening this, Raw (2016), and Swallow (2019).



La Marie-vison (1983)

What you see:
The incel's weather report and justification for never straying from the basement.

What you get:
A lepidopterist wakes up inside a baroque bathtub, channeling Norma Desmond as she preens at her hand mirror à la Snow White. Her name's Marie. She is the embodiment of unabashed kitsch. Her son, Kinya, knows nothing about the outside world, stuck inside their apartment decorated in artful gauds, no less free from Marie's clutches than the butterflies pinned to their walls. A young woman, wishing to whisk away Kinya and consume him for her own selfish love, inflicts indecision within him. He agonizes over his splintered identity, as preconceptions regarding his past and future are ripped apart. Absurd fiction and radicalism intertwine.

Great for:
Understanding Terayama's mommy issues a little better, when in the mood for a New Wave piece dripping with substance. Themes include creating an androgynous parent to fill in the void of unconventional absences; relating familial structures to national institutes; radical fluidity of genders and sexes; the warzone between lovers and MILs...a lot to unpack for one play. He pulls it off with a flourish. Kudos.



ANTROPOPHAGUS

WRITTEN BY afterceasetoexist



Joe D'Amato's 1980 spaghetti splatter opus *Antropophagus* occupies a very interesting position in the history of exploitation cinema. The film — also known as *The Savage Island* and *The Grim Reaper* — inspired restless vitriol when it emerged on VHS in the United Kingdom during the midst of the country's "video nasty" craze. During this tumultuous period, a wide variety of horror films (generally low-budget grindhouse fare) were targeted by the British Director of Public Prosecutions, typically for their violent content that was regarded as "obscene." The panic resulted in the seizure, censoring, and even banning of numerous films — and Antropophagus was one of the primary targets of the movement's ire. However, 40 years after the controversy, does it still hold up as a provocative horror film?

The film concerns five travelers vacationing in Greece — Andy, Maggie, Carol, Arnold, and Daniel. They're preparing to tour an archipelago for some bright, sunny fun, when a stranger named Julie asks for a ride to one of the islands that her friends live on. She explains that this particular island has a handful of permanent residents and is seldom visited by tourists. Carol's tarot cards ominously suggest that something bad will happen if they go to the island, but the rest of the group disregards this and resolves to stop there anyway.

When they arrive, their enthusiasm ebbs with the revelation that the island is in severe disarray, and gives way to horror when they discover a mutilated corpse in an abandoned house. The group gathers that they're being stalked by a cannibalizing beast man — and they're the only other people on the island. Worst vacation ever. You know what happens next: bloodshed, gut-spilling, and viscera splattering. And frankly... considering the film's poster — depicting the moment when George Eastman's character devours his own intestines — should it surprise anyone?

After a long string of sexploitation skin flicks, Antropophagus was D'Amato's (whose filmography includes other evocative titles such as *Porno Holocaust* and *Erotic Nights of the Living Dead*) first foray into bloody horror, and he pulled no punches. The film's central gore scene, wherein an incandescent Eastman devours the unborn child of one of the main characters, is gruesome enough to offend anyone, much less the conservative sensibilities of Britain's milquetoast censorship board. It's not difficult to see why it became one of 38 other films to be successfully prosecuted by the DPP. The violence, however intermittent it may be, is brutal and messy, punctuated by an eerie atmosphere courtesy of the film's caliginous island location.

Unfortunately, I concede here: for all the film's merits, it is also typical as far as vintage grindhouse goes. The film conjures intrigue because of its association with the video nasties, but I'll be honest with myself. Self-cannibalization is pretty messed up. But is it really so unwieldy nowadays? After all the decades of *Hostel, Saw*, and *Wrong Turn,* is 10 seconds of fetus-munching unpalatable? I'm unsure. So much of the mystique surrounding the film is predicated on old accusations of being a snuff film and distorting youthful minds, but that flavor of hysteria doesn't exist today. Horror

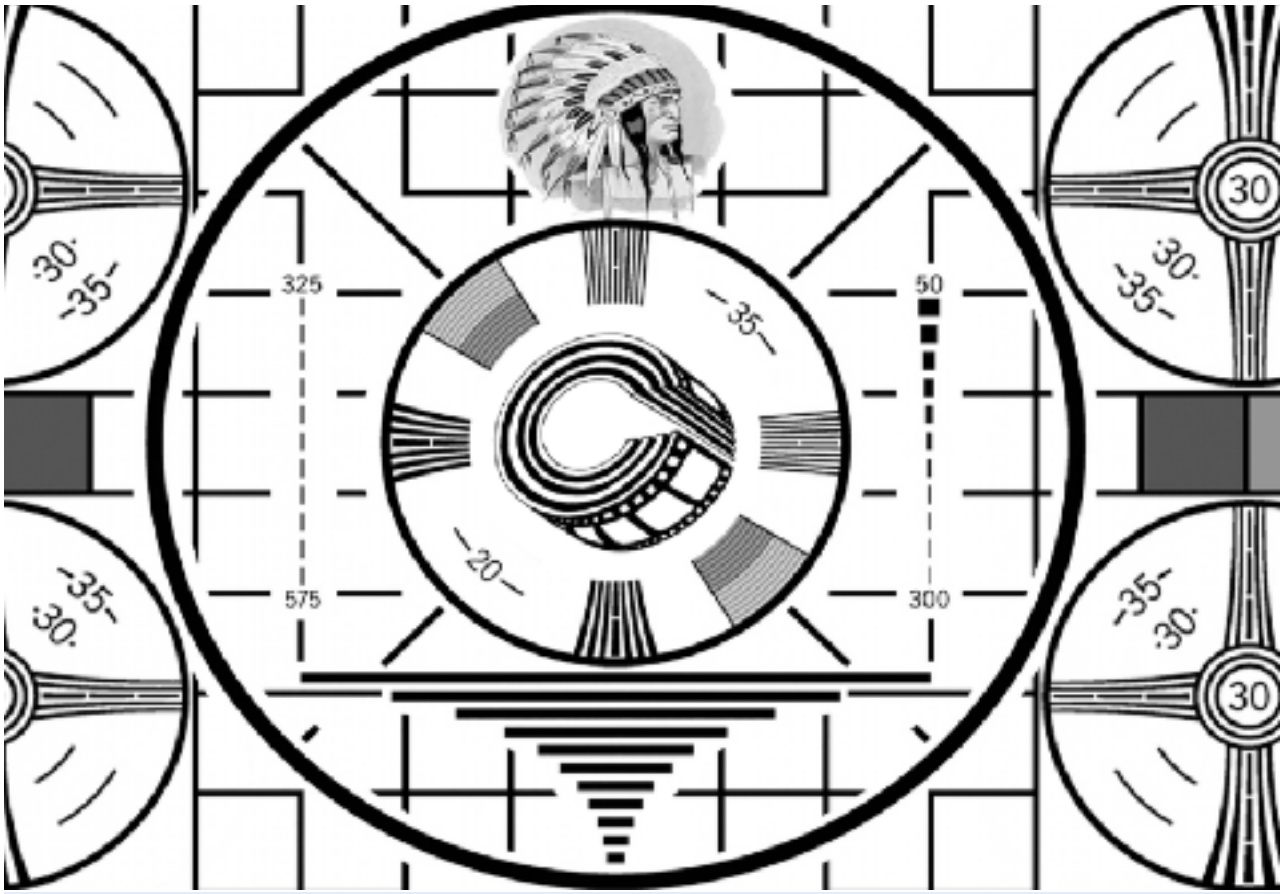


films do still occasionally arouse controversy, but are seldom accused of corrupting people.

In addition to the aforementioned franchises softening audiences' reactions to sadistic violence, gory horror films are plentiful on streaming platforms and the direct-to-DVD market. It's clear that bloodshed in movies will never be as contentious as it was 30 years ago. And like many exploitation films of that period, *Antropophagus* contains a handful of shocking scenes interspersed between a lot of fluff. In this case, the tourists wander around the island for eons, doing little aside from nervously talking to each other and being subjected to fake-out scares. The film amounts to a slow burn, but for what? Despite the film's merits, Antropophagus ultimately bears the B-movie curse.
...Good for me, then, that I love this flavor of glacially–paced sleazoid trash. Much of *Antropophagus's* runtime indeed consists of characters exploring and trespassing gloomy rundown catacombs and abandoned mansions. However, the surprisingly gorgeous photography coupled with the gothic predilections of the eerie, organ-laced soundtrack prevents it from ever lapsing into a dull charade.

D'Amato's direction isn't perfect: the whole affair occasionally feels lethargic and scatterbrained, and the kill scenes are shot with a fleeting urgency. Yet the sheer, schlocky fun of the proceedings nullify most of these problems. For the so-bad-it's-good crowd looking for a chuckle, there's plenty of pulpy acting and awkward dialogue to be entertained with. Overall, whatever its issues, a positively menacing tone imbues the film, rarely abating despite the unmistakable slow burn.

Antropophagus is by no means mandatory viewing for the intellectual, but if one is looking for squeaky bats dimly lit by atmospheric torches and some shocking gore peppered in, they can seldom do better than this. Not a perfect product by any stretch but a worthwhile one, nevertheless. As far as Eurotrash goes, this is as good as it gets.



Sunday, August 2	
12:30am	L'AMOUR BRAQUE - Andrzej Żuławski, France, 1985
2:15am	DEMON IS ON THE ISLAND - Francis Leroi, France, 1983
4:00am	SOMETIMES A GREAT NOTION - Paul Newman, USA, 1971
6:00am	THE LONG ABSENCE - Henri Colpi, France, 1961
7:44am	John M. Stahl x 2
7:45am	BACK STREET - John M. Stahl, USA, 1932
9:10am	ONLY YESTERDAY - John M. Stahl, USA, 1933
10:59am	Guest Pick: Michelle Facey
11:00am	THE CHRONICLES OF THE GRAY HOUSE - Arthur von Gerlach, Germany, 19
12:44pm	Patrick Deval x 2
12:45pm	HERACLITUS THE DARK - Patrick Deval, France, 1967
1:05pm	ACÉPHALE - Patrick Deval, France, 1968
2:00pm	BUCK AND THE PREACHER - Sidney Poitier, USA, 1972
3:45pm	BITTER END OF A SWEET NIGHT - Yoshishige Yoshida, Japan, 1961
5:15pm	MAN ON A TIGHTROPE - Elia Kazan, USA, 1953
7:00pm	CLASSIFIED PEOPLE - Yolande Zauberman, France, 1987
8:00pm	KING OF THE GYPSIES - Frank Pierson, USA, 1978
10:00pm	F AS IN FAIRBANKS - Maurice Dugowson, France, 1976

CINEPHOBE INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW BY EVAN

How do you decide what to watch? Cinema's accessibility is, in most cases, in the hands of curators. Hollywood studios, streaming services, repertory theaters, and festivals inform the ways we consume films. Distributors like Criterion restoring an older film and bringing it back into the public consciousness molds a vast but perpetually incomplete 'canon.' At best, curation answers to consumers' wants, but any institution must prioritize their financial needs. Thus, a rabbit hole of cinema exists outside the periphery of the canon, its gems guarded by tight-knit Internet piracy circles.

The act of discovery can feel like mining for diamonds, so it's no wonder many film fanatics keep their discoveries to themselves. That's why, for some culture hoarders, Cinephobe.tv is a radical concept.

'Cinephobe' began as an Instagram meme page targeted at New York City cinephiles. It parodied hyperspecific yet seemingly universally recognized aspects of NYC film culture, like the supermodel appearance of the ushers at The Metrograph, or the unsanitary IFC Center. It meme-ified the failure of Moviepass, the length of La Flor, and IndieWire's A24 shilling - it was deeply niche humor for a deeply niche audience, bringing levity to an otherwise snooty culture.

In response to theater closures due to COVID-19, it's since evolved into a pirate radio streaming service. The anonymous group offers a rich variety of obscure oddities and classics, much of which would otherwise be difficult to find. The program runs 24/7, centering no specific timezone, and freely roams through series and grab bags of cinema's deep cuts. While it can feel like an overwhelming catalog, watching a rabbit hole of handpicked films live with other viewers serves as proxy to making new discoveries in a theater.

Cinephobe is a rare labor of love in a world in which curation and financial profit are inextricably tied to one another. Its sole purpose is to serve the people in an unprecedented time, gesturing at what a world in which art is separate from commerce might look like.

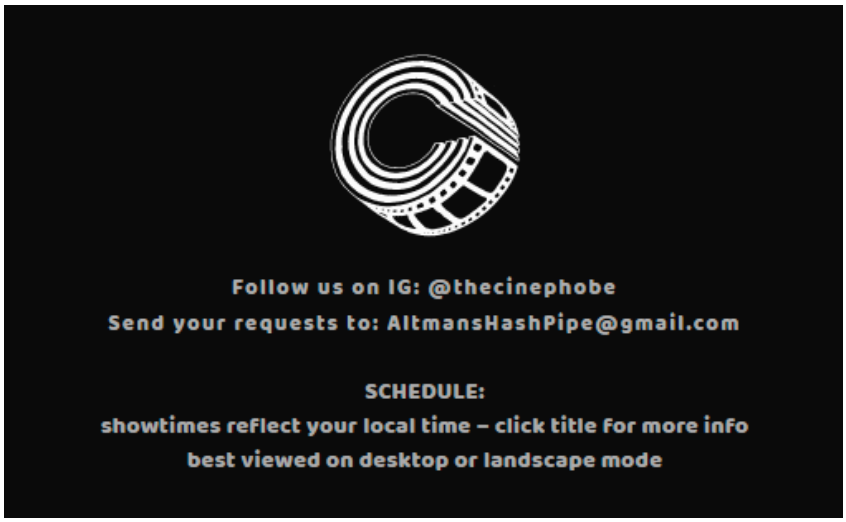
I spoke to a member of the anonymous collective in an e-mail interview below:

What's the Cinephobe mission statement and/or manifesto?

When we began the TV channel aspect of Cinephobe in March, we never really sat down to hash out a raison d'être. It was more of a pragmatic decision. "Shit, there are no theaters. Let's start a pirate station." We had already existed for a few years as a meme page that was kinda there to poke the eye of NYC arthouse culture. Lovingly of course, since it's where we come from - but the snobbery, hypocrisy, and general lameness of cinephiles and "film world" people is too irresistible to not have a laugh about. Anyway, we had built a little audience and when quarantine began we realized that we could create a platform for exhibiting rare and obscure titles to our followers. Now we have people watching [from] all

What have been some of your favorite films you've screened so far? Have any of you personally made new and exciting discoveries in the process?

There are a few dozen films in particular that we had on our minds when we started - these kind of constitute the Cinephobe canon, I guess. To rifle off a few... Last Summer, OC & Stiggs, Mike's Murder, Night of the Juggler, Du côté d'Orouët, Remember My Name, Who Killed Teddy Bear, Promise of the Flesh, Wait Til The Sun Shines, Nellie, Bewildered Youth...
Every day we play at least a couple things we hadn't seen before - stuff that we've been meaning to get around to or things we've learned about along the way. We also have an open-door curatorial policy, where anyone can request to introduce a film. Some of those Guest Picks we've run have been rewarding and not stuff we've seen before. Off the top of my head, a couple titles we've discovered in this process would be The Hunt (Carlos Saura) and Shoot (Harvey Hart) - both crazed films about unchecked masculinity. Ashley Connor, a cinematographer we like, programmed a block of experimental films this week and one that she played, The Secret Garden by Phil Solomon, was utterly mind-roasting. I'd only read about Solomon before then.



I'm interested in the thought process behind 24 hour programming. How do you delineate a 4:00am movie vs. an 8:00pm movie? Saturday vs. Wednesday, etc?

Since we have a global audience, time zones play into our favor a bit here. But it gets tricky - when it's 8am in the UK, should they be seeing the same stuff the West Coast is seeing at midnight? Why not? However we do stick to cult films of the 60s and 70s in the prime time spots and give the early AM to older work, often silent films. Lately we have been switching it up a bit with replays so everyone gets a chance to see something we may have shown at a less desirable time.

These hundreds of films couldn't have been torrented in a day... what got you started in digitally collecting films and how can you possibly have this many?!

Ha, we have been collecting digital copies of films almost as long as we can remember liking movies. We've been active in online film trading groups, creating and sharing rips for about 20 years. It started with the megar film offerings on Napster and Soulseek. I remember being amazed at downloading an entire movie on dialup in like 2000. It took three days. That moved on to Usenet, then eMule, then finally the torrenting era. Many full hard drives later, here we are - still always downloading new stuff or returning to things

I know that so many people wear their obscure taste/access to rare films as a badge of honor and we hope that Cinephobe actively subverts that in some way, not just by putting the work out there, but also through our open-mic approach to film curation. We've been really excited by all the people who have stepped up to make selections and do intros.

Have you received backlash from online communities/NYC film circles? Any insight into the minds of people who effectively hoard culture?

Of course we have. What is funny about meme culture is that people like the humor the more it relates to them, however this doesn't seem to work when people feel like they have territory over butt of the joke. So we were deemed assholes and villains by a certain subsect of the NYC film intelligentsia, even though a particular aspect of our project was in homage to them. They felt attacked. These are the exact people we want to rebel against because this sort of dominion over cultural currency does no good except to stroke the ego of your small clique of friends.

You constantly hear the cliche that cinema is a world language, so when we caught backlash early in this project, accused of - believe it or not - somehow being disrespectful to the pirates who did the rips in the first place (side note - we've also created and played our own rips), we were taken a little aback. One particular figure here in NY tweeted out to the 7k+ followers of his newsletter that were stealing "the glory"! Like, that's what he was concerned with. Glory. It really drove home that certain people in this community are feeling vulnerable now that their own source of "glory" is on hold, and they feel some resentment when outsiders receive a bit of the attention they feel entitled to. But of course that's insane - we have nothing to sell and we don't ask for money...the only reason we like having more eyes on us is because it's that many more people we get to share movies with.

Do you miss the theatrical experience?

Very much so, in fact the days leading up to the lockdown I was still debating whether it was safe or not to see an Andre DeToth movie at Film Forum, which I regretfully decided against. There is nothing like seeing a film projected on a large screen and we miss the feeling of communal viewing very much and hope it returns as soon as possible with all of NYC's theaters remaining open for years to come. The rep houses in this city are the best in the world and they are all doing tremendous work year in and year out and a lot of the films we have played on Cinephobe.tv were introduced to us by attending screenings here. Now if we could only figure out what to do about some of these people...

Tune into Cinephobe at www.cinephobe.tv, and follow them on Instagram: @thecinephobe.

Are you interested in writing for us? Please don't hesitate to contact us at welcome2thecinedome@gmail.com

We are interested in everything from full-fleshed retrospectives to satirical jabs.

Write on any director, or any movement. Our love is simply for film.

It could also be writings regarding things that concern cinema, such as how piracy or the COVID lockdown has affected cinema.

We're also interested in creative galleries. This magazine can be a great platform for cinematic stills.

Let's hear any other ideas you've got!



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