

# ON FILM presents experiments in cinema

an 8-week series of narrative and experimental films

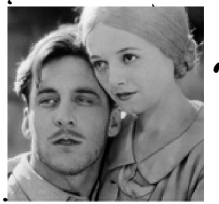
SPRING 2023, Wednesdays @ 7p.m., Dewey Auditorium

2/15

**Jabberwocky** (Jan Švankmajer, Czechoslovakia, 1971), 14 min. Surrealist filmmaker Jan Švankmajer's animated stop-motion film takes its English title and text from the 1871 narrative poem by Lewis Carroll and loosely bases its contents on the Czech children's book ANIČKA SKRÍTEK A SLAMĚNÝ HUBERT by Vítězslav Nezval. JABBERWOCKY is a nonsensical, playful study of reality through the imagined life of childhood objects and domestic settings. Švankmajer's animation brings to life these whimsical worlds typically masked by the utilitarian and the orthodox.



**Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans** (F.W. Murnau, USA, 1927), 95 min. SUNRISE was the German expressionist filmmaker F. W. Murnau's first film with Fox Studios after emigrating to Hollywood. Murnau's creative use of film form—including ghostly superimposition and innovative tracking shots—brings the impression of first-person experiences and emotional life to this entrancing story of betrayal and redemption. While not initially a box office success, the film was awarded three academy awards in 1929, including the Oscar for Unique and Artistic Production, and has since been regarded by critics as one of the greatest films ever made.



2/22

**Parataxis** (Skip Battaglia, USA, 1980), 3 min. PARATAXIS loops image fragments and phrases to illustrate how a memory and the narrative one produces about that memory have a nonsensical connection that continuously morphs with each recollection. This xerographically animated short is the first film produced using a Xerox 6500 Color Copier on paper by Skip Battaglia, Rochester-based animator, filmmaker, and professor at RIT.

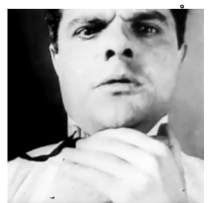


**Muriel or the Time of Return** (Alan Resnais, France, 1963), 115 min. MURIEL, Renais's follow up to LAST YEAR AT MARIENBAD (1959), is another remarkable reflection on the instability of time and memory. A mother and stepson, played by Delphine Seyrig and Jean-Baptiste Thiérrée, and their seaside hometown of Boulogne are each haunted by the past. This impossibly dense film is renowned for its jarring, elliptical editing that refuses to let the spectator to feel at ease with the time and space of the film world.



3/01

**Ghosts Before Breakfast** (Hans Richter, Germany, 1927), 9 min. This imaginative film—full of stop motion animation, reverse motion, negative film, and other visual tricks—is a valentine to both the materiality of film and motion itself. Richter humorously attends to commonplace objects to the point of abstraction. Infamously, the Nazis attempted to destroy this supposedly “degenerate” film.



**Man with a Movie Camera** (Dziga Vertov, USSR, 1928), 68 min. “I am kino-eye, I am a mechanical eye. I, a machine, show the world as only I can see it.” Vertov's personification of the camera's eye, in both his theory and practice, expresses a general predilection among early experimental filmmakers that the cinema was THE medium to best express the experience of modernity. This influential film is renowned for its sheer number and diversity of visual effects accomplished both during production and in post-production.

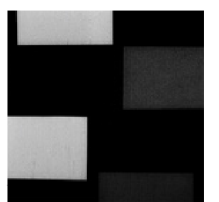


3/15

**Return to Reason** (Man Ray, France, 1923), 3 min. Most well-known for his surrealist and Dada-inspired photography, in this 1923 short film Man Ray brings his cameraless contact prints and abstracting techniques to the moving image. Parisian fairgrounds at night, salt and pepper, nails, springs, a paper mobile, and a woman's torso in the fractured light of a rainy window move, rotate, spiral, and shake creating a defamiliarized orchestra of movement. The film features the model and artist Alice Prin, or Kiki de Montparnasse, famous for her many collaborations with avant-garde artists.



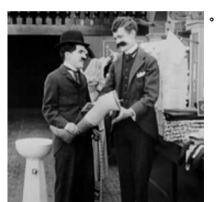
**Rhythmus 21** (Hans Richter, Germany, 1921), 4 min. A German painter and art historian of the Dada movement, Hans Richter also explored filmmaking, animation, and graphic art during his career. A series of moving rectangles and squares, RHYTHMUS 21 is the first in a series of films that explores rhythm in the moving image. The series mixes mediums, treating the screen as a painting surface, but simultaneously applying temporal principles of music to the moving image. Richter's films pioneered abstract animation, exploring movement, temporality, and the relationships between geometric forms in space.



**Entr'acte** (Rene Clair, France, 1924), 25 min. Originally commissioned by painter Francis Picabia and composer Erik Satie as a short film to be played as a prologue and intermission for their Dadaist ballet Relâche, ENTR'ACTE is made in the Dadaist spirit and briefly features the art movement's influential figures Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp playing a game of chess. Through a mix of comedy and fantasy – using comedic reveals, slow-motion, stop-motion, and reverse-motion – René Clair's film is an absurd and fantastic look into avant-garde moving image.



**The Floorwalker** (Charles Chaplin, USA, 1916), 34 min. Chaplin's silent film THE FLOORWALKER features his iconic character “The tramp,” a childlike vagrant doing his best to play the part of a gentleman. This character, described by Chaplin as a “mass of contradictions,” influenced and enthralled Dada and surrealist artists with his ability to turn absurd humor into social commentary. In THE FLOORWALKER, the tramp plays a clumsy customer who unwittingly becomes entangled in an embezzlement scheme. The set, including an escalator, is used to create a series of classic slapstick moments.



Generously sponsored by Film & Media Studies, Visual & Cultural Studies, AS&E, UCIS, and the Departments of English, Art & Art History, and Modern Languages & Culture

3/22

**Boccioni's Bike (Skip Battaglia, USA, 1981), 8 min.** Drawn on paper with felt-tip pen and pencil, BOCCIONI'S BIKE is Skip Battaglia's first experiment with animation—and drawing. Inspired by futurism, it explores the motions of a cyclist, alternating between abstraction and figuration.

**Frank Film (Frank Mouris, USA, 1973), 9 min.** The Oscar-winning FRANK FILM is an experimental collage of images Frank Mouris collected from magazines for over five years. The soundtrack overlapping two voice-overs, one narrating Mouris' autobiography, the other describing the images, adds to the film's hypnotic quality.

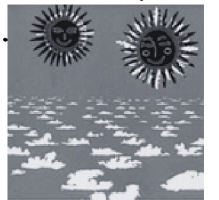
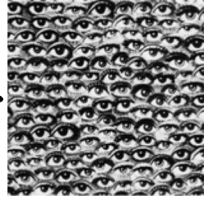
**Fuji (Robert Breer, USA, 1974), 8 min.** Combining live action footage with line drawings, this short animation depicts a train ride past Mt. Fuji in Japan.

**Notes on a Triangle (René Jodoin, Canada, 1966), 5 min.** A triangle performs a ballet to the music of a waltz, dividing and subdividing into multiple geometrical forms.

**Bead Game (Ishu Patel, Canada, 1977), 6 min.** Winner of BAFTA Award in 1978, the stop-motion animation features thousands of beads that assume shapes of mythical and real creatures at war with one another.

**Now is the Time (Norman McLaren, UK, 1951), 3 min.** Made of photographed paper-cut outs and images drawn directly on film, NOW IS THE TIME is one of the first experiments on 3D animation.

**Urbanissimo (John and Faith Hubley, USA, 1967), 6 min.** After breaking away from Hollywood—Faith Hubley was a script clerk at Columbia, John Hubley was a Walt Disney cartoonist—the husband-and-wife-duo turned to a non-conventional, anti-Disney animation style of their own, of which URBANISSIMO is an example.



3/29

**Bleu Shut (Robert Nelson, USA, 1970), 33 min.** BLEU SHUT is obsessed with marking time, explicitly announcing every minute that passes during its 33-minute runtime. Edited together from a wide variety of sources, including home movies and soft-core pornography, this film is an exploration of cinematic temporality that also teases its audience with a playful game-show style format.

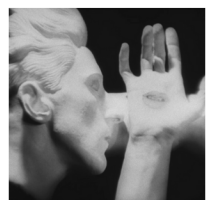
**Wavelength (Michael Snow, Canada, 1967), 45 min.** Structured by a single 45-minute camera zoom in a large studio apartment, WAVELENGTH introduces several characters played by prominent figures such as experimental filmmakers Joyce Wieland and Hollis Frampton. Through these characters, the audience receives small fragments of dialogue and even witness a death, however the film is resolute in gradually minimizing the visibility of the space and any semblance of narrative. This film is one of the most prominent examples of structuralist film, a film movement that foregrounds the base materials and forms of cinema.



4/05

**The Blood of a Poet (Jean Cocteau, France, 1932), 55 min.** Toying with ever-conscious forms of directorial theatricality, Jean Cocteau's debut feature (the first installment of his Orphic trilogy) inhabits a space of mythic, self-interrogating surreality. Baroque interiors, florid performances, and cutting-edge practical effects swiftly sketch out a dreamlike world which seems the natural home of his own art. Interrogating the links between dreaming and creative work, Cocteau's film upends filmic realism by offering a tantalizing alternative – and one with an abundance of its own rewards.

**Zéro de Conduite (Jean Vigo, France, 1933), 41 min.** Jean Vigo's timeless chronicle of brash, anarchic adolescence shimmers in and out of realist modes in working to capture the rowdy spirit of its youthful cast. Centering on a group of boys who rebel against the mannered confines of their boarding school, Vigo's easy melding of the observational and poetic never feels anything but natural, making for a work which privileges the kind of individual expression which would define French filmmaking for the remainder of the century to come.



4/12

**Un Chien Andalou (Luis Buñuel, France, 1929), 16 min.** One of the most famous examples of surrealist cinema, Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí's UN CHIEN ANDALOU begins with the iconic slicing of an eye that makes way for a radical transformation of cinema's visual language. With its evocative use of associative editing, the film charts a nightmarish journey into the human psyche. Including severed hands and coffins made from grand pianos, UN CHIEN ANDALOU is an unforgettable dream created by two of the most well-known surrealists.

**Spellbound (Alfred Hitchcock, USA, 1945), 111 min.** In Hitchcock's SPELLBOUND, Ingrid Bergman plays a psychoanalyst who falls in love with her hospital's newly hired director, played by Gregory Peck. She soon realizes that the director is suffering from amnesia and is unsure of his own identity. Through psychoanalysis, Bergman uncovers a mystery involving a possible murder and cover-up. Including a surreal dream sequence designed by Salvador Dalí, SPELLBOUND delves deep into the psyche to weave an extraordinary tale of romance and suspense.

