

Film Resources for World History / Contemporary Cultures

Dustin Kaspar and Sandy Cioffi – October 27, 2015

Feature Films

5 Broken Cameras (2011) Dir. Emad Burnat and Guy Davidi

Palestine – Politics, Human Rights, History

When his fourth son, Gibreel, is born, Emad, a Palestinian villager, gets his first camera. In his village, Bil'in, a separation barrier is being built and the villagers start to resist this decision. For more than five years, Emad films the struggle, which is led by two of his best friends, alongside filming how Gibreel grows. Very soon it affects his family and his own life. Daily arrests and night raids scare his family; his friends, brothers and himself are either shot or arrested. One camera after another is shot at or smashed. Each of the 5 cameras tells part of his story.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2125423>

Full Film: <https://vimeo.com/66922877>

Beats of the Antonov (2014) Dir. Hajooj Kuka

Sudan – People, Human Rights, Arts

Sudan has been in an almost constant state of civil war since it achieved independence in 1956, and it split into a pair of sovereign states in 2011. On the border between the two, Russian-made Antonov planes indiscriminately drop bombs on settlements in the Nuba Mountains below. Yet, incredibly, the people of the Blue Nile respond to adversity with music, singing and dancing to celebrate their survival. **Beats of the Antonov** explores how music binds a community together, offering hope and a common identity for refugees engaged in a fierce battle to protect cultural traditions and heritage from those trying to obliterate them.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3904204>

Full Film: <http://www.pbs.org/pov/beatsoftheantonov/>

Born Into Brothels: Calcutta's Red Light Kids (2004) Dir. Zana Briski

India – Society, People

Admire the apparent growing prosperity of India, there is a dark underbelly of poverty on another side of the nation that is little known. This film is a chronicle of filmmakers Zana Briski and Ross Kauffman's efforts to show that world of Calcutta's red light district. To do that, they inspired a special group of children of the prostitutes of the area to photograph the most reluctant subjects of it. As the kids excel in their new found art, the filmmakers struggle to help them have a chance for a better life away from the miserable poverty that threatens to crush their dreams.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0388789>

Full Film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyXFr2g1x8>

#chicagogirl: The Social Network Takes on a Dictator (2013) Dir. Joe Piscatella

Syria – Human Rights, People, Politics

From her childhood bedroom in the Chicago suburbs, an American teenage girl uses social media to run the revolution in Syria. Armed with Facebook, Twitter, Skype and cameraphones, she helps her social network in Damascus and Homs brave snipers and shelling in the streets and the world the human rights atrocities of one of the most brutal dictators. But as the revolution rages on, everyone in the network must decide what is the most effective way to fight a dictator: social media or AK-47s.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3060338>

Full Film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrW1mI0eM68>

Genghis Blues (1999) Dir. Roko Belic

Mongolia – People, Society, Arts

The extraordinary odyssey of a U.S. musician of Cape Verdean ancestry to Tannu Tuva, in central Asia, where nomadic people throat sing more than one note simultaneously, using vocal harmonics. A bluesman, Paul Pena, blind and recently widowed, taught himself throat singing and was by chance invited to the 1995 throat-singing symposium in Kyzyl. Helped by the "Friends of Tuva," Pena makes the arduous journey. Singing in the deep, rumbling kargyraa style, Pena gives inspired performances, composes songs in Tuvan, washes his face in sacred rivers, expresses the disorientation of blindness in foreign surroundings, and makes a human connection with everyone he meets.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0187859>

Full Film: <http://www.sundancenow.com/film/genghis-blues/911>

God Loves Uganda (2013) Dir. Roger Ross Williams

Uganda – Society, Politics, Human Rights

A powerful exploration of the evangelical campaign to infuse African culture with values imported from America's Christian Right. The film follows American and Ugandan religious leaders fighting sexual immorality and missionaries trying to convince Ugandans to follow biblical law.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1874513>

Iraq in Fragments (2006) Dir. James Longley

Iraq – Society, People

Iraq in Fragments illuminates post-war Iraq in three acts, building a picture of a country pulled in different directions by religion and ethnicity. Filmed in verité style with no scripted narration, the film explores the lives of ordinary Iraqis to illustrate and give background to larger trends in Iraqi society.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0492466>

Full Film: <http://www.veoh.com/watch/v17848912nxZa27gs>

The Pipe (2010) Dir. Risteard O'Domhnaill

Ireland – Environment, Society, Politics

A compelling documentary film four years in the making, The Pipe tells the story of the small Rosport community which has taken on the might of Shell Oil and the Irish State. The discovery of gas off this remote coastal village has led to the most dramatic clash of cultures in modern Ireland. The rights of farmers over their fields, and of fishermen to their fishing grounds, has come in direct conflict with one of the world's most powerful oil companies. When the citizens look to their State to protect their rights, they find that the government has put Shell's right to lay a pipeline over their own. Already 5 locals have spent 94 days in jail rather than let the proposed Shell pipeline cross their lands. This once tranquil area is engulfed in turmoil, as huge numbers of police drafted in. Normal policing has broken down following baton charges, surveillance, arrests, and a hunger strike by a local schoolteacher.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1674204>

The Revolution Will Not Be Televised (2003) Dir. Kim Bartley and Donnacha O'Briain

Venezuela – Politics, History

On assignment in Venezuela, two documentary filmmakers find themselves in the middle of a political coup detat overthrowing President Hugo Chavez's government...

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0363510>

Full Film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZajyVas4Jg>

The Road to Guantanamo (2006) Dir. Michael Winterbottom

USA, Cuba – Politics, History, Human Rights

In 2001, four Pakistani Britons, Ruhul Ahmed, Asif Iqbal and Shafiq Rasul and another friend, Monir, travel to Pakistan for a wedding and in a urge of idealism, decide to see the situation of war torn Afgahnistan which is being bombed by the American forces in retaliation for the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Once there, with the loss of Monir in the wartime chaos, they are captured by Northern Alliance fighters. They are then handed them over the American forces who transport them to the prison camps at the Guantanamo Bay base in Cuba. What follows is three years of relentless imprisonment, interrogations and torture to make them submit to blatantly wrong confessions to being terrorists. In the midst of this abuse, the three struggle to keep their spirits up in that face of this grave injustice.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0468094>

Sweet Crude (2009) Dir. Sandy Cioffi

Nigeria – Environment, Politics, Human Rights

Despite the valuable crude oil that flows from the ground beneath their feet, the impoverished villagers in the Niger Delta wage a daily struggle to survive. This Seattle-made documentary journeys to the region to examine the complex powder keg situation that could have drastic local and global effects.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1028583>

The Yes Men Fix The World (2009) Dir. Andy Bichlbaum and Mike Bonnano

USA – Environment, Politics, Human Rights

Troublemaking duo Andy Bichlbaum and Mike Bonanno, posing as their industrious alter-egos, expose the people profiting from Hurricane Katrina, the faces behind the environmental disaster in Bhopal, and other shocking events.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1352852>

Full Film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajkItiDgTLY>

Short Films

Battle of the Xingu (2009) Dir. Iara Lee

Brazil – Politics, Environment, Society

The Xingu, a tributary of the Amazon, is home to over 10,000 indigenous people who rely on the river for survival. The Brazilian government, however, keen to develop the region, is proposing what would be the world's third largest hydroelectric dam, threatening to destroy the biodiversity of the Xingu River Basin and deprive these people of their rights to a sustainable future. Cultures of Resistance was in Altamira in 2008 for the Xingu Alive Encounter—one of the largest-ever gatherings of indigenous Brazilians—to witness the spectacular determination of the Amazon people to protect their way of life. Today, plans to build the dam continue. Thankfully, so do the protests. In January 2009, over 100,000 Brazilians gathered in Belem for the World Social Forum, where once again the people of the Xingu made their voices heard, and made clear that they will not stand by to watch the death of the river and the extinction of their culture.

Full Film: <https://vimeo.com/10459021>

Behind the Word (2013) Dir. Clementine Dusabejambo

Rwanda – Education, Society

A young student finds her lack of English brings her considerable ridicule from her classmates. One of her teachers tries to abuse her, the unwelcoming climate she finds at school because of the language barrier is so unbearable for her but she cannot tell it due to lack of words, she struggles to learn new languages, due to her drawing talent, she will be able to capture her arts teacher and with her they try to fix her problems

Full Film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7L2pVzc2KA>

Green Sea (2009) Dir. Ignacio Busquier

Argentina – Society, People

Different people working on the most southern tea-growing in the world, are intertwined to build a relaxed look on small moments and details of the routine about gold green, as some residents called the Tea of the zone of Campo Viera and Obera in pcia. Misiones, Argentina.

Full Film: <http://myhero.com/films/view.asp?film=GreenSea&res=high>

Honor the Treaties (2012) Dir. Eric Becker

USA (Native) – People, Society, Politics

Honor the Treaties is a short documentary film that examines photographer Aaron Huey's powerful advocacy work for Native American rights on the Pine Ridge Reservation. His advocacy work began with his 2010 TED Talk calling for the return of the Black Hills to the Lakota Sioux. Viewed online over 800,000 times, the talk caught the attention of legendary street artist Shepard Fairey, who installed a sixty by eighty foot mural, based on a collage of Aaron's images, in Los Angeles.

Full Film: <https://vimeo.com/47043218>

Lan Yan (2013) Dir. Danielle Schmidt

China – People, Society

The rapid increase in prosperity and the international modernization of Shanghai has been implemented on a mass scale at the expense of the displacement of lower-income traditional Chinese communities. As residents of a Shikumen area known as Lan Yan, Mr. Zhang and his daughter reflect upon the sense of closeness and community he and his neighbors have experienced for over a century despite their cramped living conditions. Lan Yan captures the essence of this community as a window in time before the neighborhood is doomed to be swept away by the surrounding high-rise metropolis.

Full Film: <https://vimeo.com/127948087>

Miseducation (2012) Dir. Nadine Cloete

South Africa – People, Society, Education

What's your walk to school like when you have to cross one of the poorest neighborhoods in South Africa to get to class? Kelina, aged 12, goes to school in a township in Cape Town, riddled with guns, drugs and violence. How does she see the world on her daily trip to school? This film is part of Why Poverty?, a groundbreaking cross-media event taking place in November 2012, urging people around the world to ask this question. Supported by 70 broadcasters around the world, the event aims to jump-start national and global debates about poverty in the 21st century.

Full Film: <http://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/100000001906071/miseducation.html>

My Name is Feker (2011) Dir. Orlando von Einsiedel

Ethiopia – People, Society

Feker Asheme has had a very challenging life. At 7 she ran away from a family who did not live her ending up on the streets of the nearby city of Bahir Dar in Ethiopia. By 8 she was working in a brothel. Today, aged 19, she has found a way out of prostitution and is trying to rebuild her life. My Name Is Feker retells Feker's story but by following the lives of 3 girls who are living out the life she once led today. Bleak, beautiful and ultimately uplifting the film is an evocative reminder not just about the enduring nature of the human spirit but also about how seemingly chance meetings can have life changing consequences.

Full Film: <https://vimeo.com/41605430>

Not Anymore (2013) Dir. Matthew VanDyke

Syria – Politics, People, Society, History

The story of the Syrian revolution as told through the experiences of two young Syrians, a male rebel fighter and a female journalist, as they fight an oppressive regime for the freedom of their people.

Full Film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RA8HsfRioWE>

Rosa These Storms (2015) Dir. Sean Kusanagi and Hannah Gregg

Guatemala – People, Society

Rosa Coj Bocel's smile is infectious. Her eyes shine and her grin turns into a full-blown laugh as she talks about how much she has waited for this day to arrive. This day is her graduation from Solola High School at age 25. Rosa - These Storms is Rosa's story. Rosa's voice weaves quietly through as she talks about growing up in a small village in rural Guatemala. Her eyes well with tears as she shows pictures of her little daughter. Nothing in her life has been easy. But, as a bird who weathers rain and storms, Rosa shows us all what it means to follow your dreams and to fly.

Full Film: <https://vimeo.com/143099296>