

ARTFORUM

DECEMBER 2016

I N T E R N A T I O N A L



BEST



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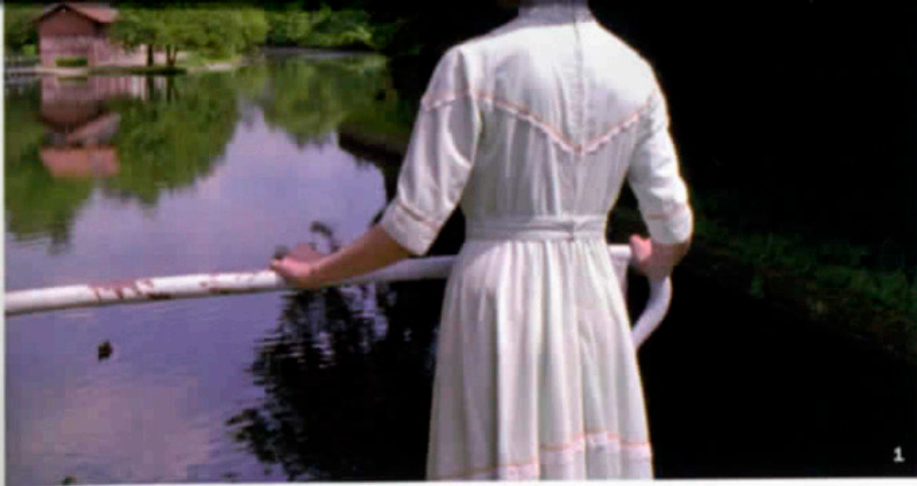


\$15.00



2016





James Quandt

JAMES QUANDT, SENIOR PROGRAMMER AT TIFF CINEMATHEQUE IN TORONTO, IS THE EDITOR OF *APICHA TPONG WEERASETHAKUL* (AUSTRIAN FILM MUSEUM, 2009) AND *ROBERT BRESSON (REVISED)* (INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2012).

1 JEAN-MARIE STRAUB AND DANIELÉ HUILLET (Museum of Modern Art, New York)

MOMA's comprehensive retrospective, awaited for decades, proved that the deracinated duo were, like Bresson, the most voluptuary of ascetics.

2 FROM THE BRANCHES DROPS THE WITHERED BLOSSOM (Paul Meyer)

The much-abused term *restoration* finds authentic meaning in Belgian director Paul Meyer's long-forgotten 1960 portrait of immigrant coal miners in the Borinage: an emergent classic of neorealist cinema.

3 SIERANEVADA (Cristi Puiu) Puiu's brilliant, baleful comedy about a Romanian family gathering could be retitled *Waiting for Ciorbă*.



4 THE DEATH OF LOUIS XIV (Albert Serra)

Whereas Roberto Rossellini's 1966 chronicle of the monarch's rise to power focused on sartorial style as political stratagem, Albert Serra, the Catalan connoisseur of libertinage, concentrates on the king's attenuated demise by gangrene. Jean-Pierre Léaud as Louis, all but consumed by his peruke, nerves leaping in his powdered cheek, deteriorates magnificently.

5 THE ORNITHOLOGIST (João Pedro Rodrigues) Rodrigues's *River of*



No Return escalates its homo-pagan-Christian lunacy through a joyous coda that quotes another bird-oriented film, Pasolini's *The Hawks and the Sparrows* (1966).

6 MA' ROSA (Brillante Mendoza) Mendoza returns to the social realism of his early masterpiece, *Slingshot* (2007), in this pre-Duterte study of a drug-dealing *nanay*—infinitely preferable to the year's other Filipino film about a martyred matriarch, Lav Diaz's *The Woman Who Left*.

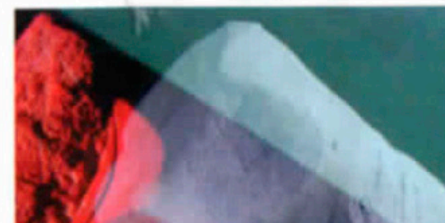
7 YOURSELF AND YOURS (Hong Sang-soo) Trouble comes double in Hong's witty work-over of *That Obscure Object of Desire*.

1. Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, *Lothringen!* (Lorraine!), 1994, 35 mm, color, sound, 21 minutes. Colette (Emmanuelle Straub). **2. Paul Meyer, *Déjà s'envole la fleur maigre* (From the Branches Drops the Withered Blossom), 1960, 35 mm, black-and-white, sound, 83 minutes.** **3. Cristi Puiu, *Sieranevada*, 2016, HD video, color, sound, 173 minutes. Aunt Evelina (Tatiana Iekel).** **4. Albert Serra, *La mort de Louis XIV* (The Death of Louis XIV), 2016, HD video, color, sound, 115 minutes. Louis XIV (Jean-Pierre Léaud) and Dauphin (Aksil Meznad).** **5. Pablo Larraín, *Neruda*, 2016, HD video, color, sound, 108 minutes. Oscar Peluchonneau (Gael García Bernal) and Martínez (Diego Muñoz).** **10. Manuela De Laborde, *As Without So Within*, 2016, 16 mm and 35 mm, color, sound, 24 minutes 38 seconds.**

8 NERUDA (Pablo Larraín) Of Larraín's two biopics of 2016, this sly—if occasionally too Felliniesque—portrait of the Chilean poet-politician trumps the director's moribund *Jackie*, which is primarily about Natalie Portman's slurred diction.

9 KÉKSZAKÁLLÚ (Gastón Solnicki) Airlessly premeditated and pristinely composed, Solnicki's preposterous paralleling of the fates of three young Argentinean women with that of the doomed bride in Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* manages to lodge in the memory through its sheer audacity. The peerless 1965 recording of the opera under the baton of István Kertész provides the frissons.

10 AS WITHOUT SO WITHIN (Manuela De Laborde) Uncanny framing and lighting transform unidentifiable props into sci-fi whatsits in this hypnotic study in superimposition. □





1. Bruce Conner, *Three Screen Ray*, 2006, three-channel digital video, black-and-white, sound, 5 minutes 14 seconds. Still from the 2016 HD digital remastering. 2. Ezra Edelman, *O.J.: Made in America*, 2016, HD video, color and black-and-white, sound, 467 minutes. O. J. Simpson and Nicole Brown Simpson. 4. Bi Gan, *Kaili Blues*, 2015, HD video, color, sound, 113 minutes. Chen Sheng (Chen Yongzhong). 7. Sergei Loznitsa, *Austerlitz*, 2016, 4K video, black-and-white, sound, 94 minutes. 9. Marcin Wrona, *Demon*, 2015, HD video, color, sound, 94 minutes. Zanita (Agnieszka Zulewska) and Piotr (Itay Tiran).

J. Hoberman

A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO *ARTFORUM*, J. HOBERMAN IS THE AUTHOR, MOST RECENTLY, OF *FILM AFTER FILM: OR, WHAT BECAME OF 21ST CENTURY CINEMA?* (VERSO, 2012).

1 **THREE SCREEN RAY** (Bruce Conner) This superkinetic triptych, created by the artist in 2006 using material from his 1961 film *Cosmic Ray*, was the moving-image high point of, as well as a synecdoche for, MOMA's recent Conner retrospective, "It's All True"—itself a triumph of installed film pieces.

2 **O.J.: MADE IN AMERICA** (Ezra Edelman) Nearly eight hours in length, Edelman's documentary meditates on O. J. Simpson as a person and as a construct even while using his life as a text illuminating the force of race and the nature of justice in late-twentieth-century America—and beyond.



3 **TONI ERDMANN** (Maren Ade) Humanism lives in this epic father-daughter farce that, once it gets going, is also a remarkable disquisition on contemporary Europe. Ade's movie gets an extra zetz of actorly energy for being mainly set in Romania and thus, in its bravura performances, functioning as an extension of the no-longer-quite-so-new Romanian cinema.

4 **KAILI BLUES** (Bi Gan) Bi's eccentric, remarkably assured first feature is elusively memorable in both affect and



aspiration—creating a pretzel-shaped time-space continuum with affinities to the thinking of Alain Resnais, Chris Marker, and Béla Tarr.

5 **THE DEATH OF LOUIS XIV** (Albert Serra) Serra's sequel of sorts to Roberto Rossellini's *Rise of Louis XIV* (1966) is also the ultimate "shock of the old" film, with Jean-Pierre Léaud, now seventy-two, in virtually every shot, gazing into the camera, as the dying Sun King.

6 **SIERANEVADA** (Cristi Puiu) Not quite drama but a total technical tour de force, Puiu's insanely voluble ensemble piece is set, more or less in real time, mainly in a cramped Bucharest apartment in which the great mystery of life has less to do with 9/11 than it does with figuring out where the camera is placed.

7 **AUSTERLITZ** (Sergei Loznitsa) No question where Loznitsa plants his camera. Once in place at the site of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Oranienburg, Germany, now a tourist site, it never moves, observing human awareness and boredom with devastating results.

8&9 **THE WITCH** (Robert Eggers) and **DEMON** (Marcin Wrona) The year's most head-splitting double bill would pair these two horror movies. Each evokes the historical uncanny as it fissures a particular family—one in seventeenth-century Puritan Massachusetts, the other in post-Communist Poland.

10 **"WALKERS: HOLLYWOOD AFTERLIVES IN ART AND ARTIFACT"** (Museum of the Moving Image, New York) Curator Robert M. Rubin's ragingly impure exhibition was a cinematic spook-a-rama. Recklessly juxtaposing the real and the fake, fetish and desecration, curator/collector, Rubin managed to conjure the Sargasso Sea that Nathanael West called the Dream Dump. □

