The Essay Film: Portraits and Self-Portraits (ENGL 87500 / BAM 70500)
Spring 2022, Wednesdays 4:15-6:15, room 6417
Prof. Wayne Koestenbaum
office hours by appointment
wkoestenbaum@gmail.com

Text

Schedule

Feb. 2 Introduction

Feb. 9 Agnès Varda, The Gleaners and I (GC)
Agnès Varda, Elsa La Rose (Ubu)
Agnès Varda, Black Panthers (Ubu)
optional: Agnès Varda, Jacquot de Nantes (Criterion Channel)
Agnès Varda, "Camera Three: Interview with Sontag and Varda" (Ubu)
Georg Lukács, "On the Nature and Form of the Essay" (Alter/Corrigan, 21-40)

Feb. 16 Shirley Clarke, Portrait of Jason (GC and Criterion Channel)
Ja’Tovia Gary, An Ecstatic Experience: Trailer (Vimeo)
Ja’Tovia Gary, Cakes Da Killa: No Homo (Vimeo)
Ja’Tovia Gary, Goodie Goodies (Vimeo, or www.Jatovia.com)
Ja’Tovia Gary, Women’s Work (Vimeo, or www.Jatovia.com)
Carolee Schneemann, Fuses (Ubu)
Theodor Adorno, "The Essay as Form" (Alter/Corrigan, 60-82)
Paul Arthur, "Essay Questions" (Alter/Corrigan, 161-171)

Feb. 23 Isaac Julien, Looking for Langston (GC and Ubu)
Isaac Julien, The Attendant (Ubu)
Isaac Julien, Encore: Tabula Rasa (Ten Thousand Waves) (Ubu)
Phillip Lopate, "In Search of the Centaur" (Alter/Corrigan, 109-133)
Isaac Julien, "From Ten Thousand Waves to Lina Bo Bardi, via Kapital"
(Alter/Corrigan, 335-344)

March 2 Marlon Riggs, Tongues Untied (GC)
Marlon Riggs, Black Is...Black Ain’t (GC and Academic Video Online)
Tourmaline, Atlantic Is a Sea of Bones (https://visualaids.org/blog/aerb-tourmaline-statement)
Cheryl Dunye and Ellen Spiro, DiAna’s Hair Ego Remix
(https://visualaids.org/blog/artist-statement-cheryl-dunye-ellen-spiro)
Tiona Nekkia McClodden, *The Labyrinth 1.0*
https://visualaids.org/projects/alternate-endings-radical-beginnings

Brontez Purnell, *100 Boyfriends Mixtape (The Demo)*
https://visualaids.org/projects/alternate-endings-radical-beginnings

Hans Richter, "The Film Essay" (Alter/Corrigan, 89-92)

March 9
Chantal Akerman, *Dis-moi* (Criterion Channel)
Chantal Akerman, *Saute ma ville* (Criterion Channel)
Chantal Akerman, *Je tu il elle* (Criterion Channel)
Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Mouth to Mouth* (Ubu)
Timothy Corrigan, "Of the History of the Essay Film" (Alter/Corrigan, 197-226)
Laura Rascaroli, "The Essay Film: Problems, Definitions, Textual Commitments"
(Alter/Corrigan, 183-196)

March 16
Barbara Hammer, *Maya Deren's Sink* (Ubu)
Barbara Hammer, *Dyketactics* (GC and Ubu)
Barbara Hammer, *Nitrate Kisses* (GC and Ubu)
Barbara Hammer, *Audience* (Criterion Channel)
Peggy Ahwesh, *From Romance to Ritual* (Ubu)
Peggy Ahwesh, *Martina's Playhouse* (Ubu)
Peggy Ahwesh, *Beirut Outtakes* (Ubu)
Peggy Ahwesh, *The Vision Machine* (Vimeo)
Alexandre Astruc, "The Future of Cinema" (93-101)

March 23
Apichatpong Weerasethakul, *Mysterious Object at Noon* (Criterion Channel)
Su Friedrich, *The Ties That Bind* (Criterion Channel)
Su Friedrich, *Scar Tissue* (Ubu)
Su Friedrich, *Gently Down the Stream* (in compilation *Hide and Seek*) (GC)
Su Friedrich, *But No One* (in compilation *Hide and Seek*, GC)
Su Friedrich, *Hide and Seek* (GC)
Hito Steyerl, "The Essay as Conformism?" (Alter/Corrigan, 276-285)

March 30
Sky Hopinka, *Dislocation Blues* (skyhopinka.com and Criterion Channel)
Sky Hopinka, *Kunjkaga Remembers Red Banks, Kunjkaga Remembers the Welcome Song* (skyhopinka.com)
Sky Hopinka, *Lore* (skyhopinka.com and Criterion Channel)
Sky Hopinka, *Anti-Objects, or Space Without Path or Boundary* (skyhopinka.com and Criterion Channel)
Sky Hopinka, *Venite et Loquamur* (skyhopinka.com and Criterion Channel)
Sky Hopinka, *wawa* (skyhopinka.com and Criterion Channel)
(suggested text: Sky Hopinka, *Perfidia* [Wendy’s Subway/CCS Bard]):
http://www.wendyssubway.com/publishing/titles/perfidia
Maya Deren, *Meshes of the Afternooon* (GC [Academic Video online] and Criterion Channel)
Max Bense, "On the Essay and Its Prose" (Alter/Corrigan, 49-59)

April. 13 *The Early Works of Cheryl Dunye* (Greetings from Africa, The Potluck and the Passion, An Untitled Portrait, Vanilla Sex, She Don't Fade, Janine) (GC)
Kalup Linzy, *Keys to Our Heart, Dayz of Our Ego, All My Churen, Ozara and Katessa* (Vimeo), and *1.10 Epicity* (Ozara and Katessa) (Youtube)

April 20  SPRING BREAK

April 27  William Greaves, *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm (Take One)* (GC and Criterion Channel)
Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin, *Chronicle of a Summer* (Criterion Channel)
Raymond Bellour, "The Cinema and the Essay as a Way of Thinking" (Alter/Corrigan, 227-239)
Thomas Elsaesser, "The Essay Film" (Alter/Corrigan, 240-258)

May 4  Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Reassemblage* (Vimeo)
Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Shoot for the Contents* (Criterion Channel)
Harun Farocki and Christa Blümlinger, "The ABCs of the Film Essay" (Alter/Corrigan, 297-313)
Rea Tajiri, "Essay Documentary: The Disembodied Narrator and an Unclaimed Image that Floats through Space and Time" (Alter/Corrigan, 333-334)

May 11  Djibril Diop Mambéty, *Contras City* (Ubu)
Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Love Meetings* (Criterion Channel)
Warhol film(s) screened in class? (TBA)

**Requirements**

Class presentation.
Final project: a film, an essay, or a work of autobiography/biography.
In-class writing games/exercises.
Punctual attendance and informed participation.

**Learning Goals**

Make an essay film. Write spontaneously. Investigate a genre and hypothesize its contours.
Speak generously and precisely about art.