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 Afternoon* (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.