

THREE SIXTYO

British Film Institute News April 1986

THE CONVICTION BEHIND CARAVAGGIO



**KUROSAWA HONOURED
EISENSTEIN DISCOVERED**

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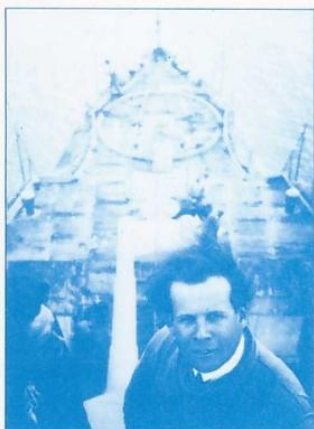
THREESIXTY

APRIL 1986

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WRITE!

Strategic questions

I read with interest about Colin MacCabe's appointment as the new Head of Production at the BFI Production Board.

Having told us about his past, maybe he could be invited to tell the members at large what he hopes the Production Board will be doing in the future.

How does he see the Board working? What kind of production does he feel the Board should be supporting? Where does he see the Board's limited funds going? Does he hope for support from other areas in the industry? Will the Board itself consider supporting other areas?

Incidentally, who are the current Board members?

Richard Gates
London N4.

Threesixty° replies: The BFI Production Board members are: Margaret Matheson (Chair), Reg Gadeny, Annabel Jankel, Fizzy Oppé, Simon Perry, Caz Phillips, Salman Rushdie, Ann Scott, Alan Yentob.

Colin MacCabe responds and sets out his view on page 8. ■

My beautiful launches

In his recent article on *A Zed and Two Noughts* in *Threesixty*°, James Park is incorrect in stating that *The Draughtsman's Contract* was launched at the London Film Festival. The world premiere of the film took place at the Edinburgh Film Festival in August 1983. At that Festival there was also a major exhibition of costumes from the film together with Peter Greenaway's paintings and production material from the film. This was achieved with a great deal of help and hard work from the BFI Production Board and in particular Mary-Jane Walsh.

This might be a suitable opportunity to alert James to the fact that *My Beautiful Laundrette* received its world premiere at Edinburgh this year. Much as we would have liked to, we were unable to mount an exhibition of costumes from the film as they were still in the spin drier.

Jim Hickey
Filmhouse,
Edinburgh ■



Mundy Ellis – 'probably the best Press Officer in the world' – left the BFI on April 1st. Pictured above greeting Orson Welles at the 1983 Guildhall celebration she organised for the BFI's 50th Anniversary, she

moves on after five years in which, besides giving the BFI a public face, she launched and edited both this magazine and the Film and TV Yearbook.

She is now working on a new British Pavilion for the Cannes Film Festival.

Letters to: *THREESIXTY*°, BFI, 127 Charing Cross Rd, London WC2H 0EA

photograph: Sten Rosenlund

Akira Kurosawa – BFI Fellow

'A Light in the Japanese Window' was the NFT season which sparked off unprecedented British interest in Japanese cinema in the late 1950s. Over recent years, appreciation has accelerated with an NFT Japanese season almost every year. In 1980, Kurosawa's film *Kagemusha* opened the London Film Festival, and in 1985, his spectacular epic *Ran* did the same.

This year in March, the BFI set the seal on its close association with Japanese cinema by making Akira Kurosawa its tenth Fellow – "for helping to shape the world's film culture over the last half-century."

The day after he arrived in England for the opening of *Ran* on March 7, Kurosawa was interviewed on stage at the NFT by the BFI's John Gillett at a Guardian Lecture. A capacity audience was there to hear him speak of his work.



Kurosawa at Kensington Palace to be made a Fellow of the BFI by its Patron HRH The Prince of Wales.

Crucial to his method of filmmaking, he said, was to become steeped in his subject over many months, and in answer to questions about his consistent use of Western themes – Shakespeare's *King*

Lear in the case of *Ran* – he explained how this intensive assimilation of a subject resulted in its metamorphosis into a wholly Japanese expression. Two days after the Guardian Lecture, Kurosawa was

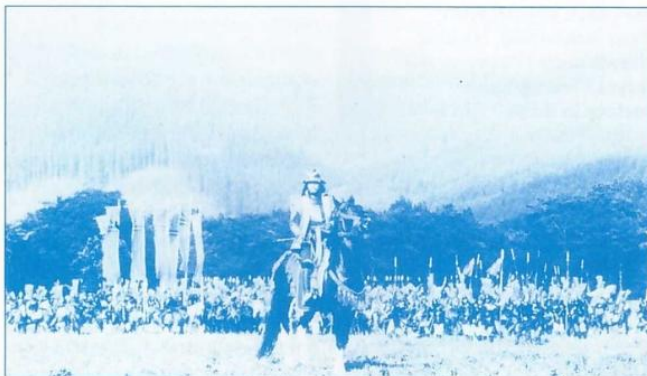
questioned again on this aspect of his work with keen interest – this time by the BFI's Patron HRH The Prince of Wales as he awarded Kurosawa his Fellowship during a private audience at Kensington Palace.

At a dinner in his honour at the Inn on the Park (hosted by The Guardian Newspaper), Kurosawa met many British filmmakers including BFI Chairman Sir Richard Attenborough, BFI Governor John Boorman, Hugh Hudson, Richard Lester, John Schlesinger, Lynda Myles, Simon Perry, Mamoun Hassan and Sir David Lean, who was made one of the first Fellows at the BFI's 50th Anniversary celebrations in 1983.

■ BFI Fellows:

- 1983 Marcel Carné
Michael Powell
Eméric Pressburger
Satyajit Ray
Orson Welles
David Lean
- 1984 Lord Bernstein
- 1985 Lord Brabourne
Lord Olivier
- 1986 Akira Kurosawa

AKIRA KUROSAWA was born in Tokyo, Japan, on 23 March 1910. He enrolled himself at a western-style art school and by the age of 18 was holding professional exhibitions. In 1936 he became an assistant director at PCL Studios. He worked as assistant to Kajiro Yamamoto and also as a scriptwriter. During World War II he was spared military service but told to make patriotic films for the homefront workers. He has worked mainly for the major Toho, and brought international fame to Japanese cinema with *Rashomon* (1950). Until the mid-1960s he continued to write or co-write scripts for several other directors, including Satsuo Yamamoto, Senkichi Taniguchi,



Ran, the latest magnificent film from Kurosawa, made half a century after he first entered Japanese cinema.

Issei Mori and Keisuke Kinoshita.

Films: 1943: *Sugata Sanshiro* (*Sanshiro Sugata I/Judo Saga I*). 1944: *Ichiban utsukushiku* (*The Most Beautiful*). 1945: *Sugata Sanshiro II* (*Sanshiro Sugata II/Judo Saga II*): *Tora no o o fumo otokotachi* (*They*

Who Step on the Tiger's Tail). 1946: *Asu o tsukuru hitobito* (*Those Who Make Tomorrow*) (co-dir.); *Waga seishun ni kuinashi* (*No Regrets for Our Youth*). 1947: *Subarishiki nichiyobi* (*One Wonderful Sunday*). 1948: *Yoidore tenshi* (*Drunken Angel*). 1949: *Shizukanaru ketto* (*The*

Quiet Duel); *Nora inu* (*Stray Dog*). 1950: *Shubun* (*Scandal*); *Rashomon*. 1951: *Hakuchi* (*The Idiot*). 1952: *Ikiru* (*Living/To Live*). 1954: *Shichinin no samurai* (*Seven Samurai*). 1955: *Ikimono no kiroku* (*I Live in Fear/ Record of a Living Being*). 1957: *Kumonosu-jo* (*Throne of Blood*); *Donzoko* (*The Lower Depths*). 1958: *Kakushi toride o san-akunin* (*The Hidden Fortress*). 1960: *Warui yatsu hodo yoku nemuru* (*The Bad Sleep Well*). 1961: *Yojimbo*. 1962: *Tsubaki Sanjuro* (*Sanjuro*). 1963: *Tengoku to jigoku* (*High and Low*). 1965: *Akagi* (*Red Beard*). 1970: *Dodeskaden*. 1975: *Dersu Uzala*. 1980: *Kagemusha* (*The Shadow Warrior*). 1985: *Ran*.

1981-1986



Stars of the British Screen, a touring exhibition of 180 outstanding photographs from the 1930s to the present day, was seen by 50,000 people at the National Portrait Gallery alone and associated screenings played to full houses. The show portrays the stars and provides a fascinating view of the shifting notions of iconic glamour which define stardom afresh for each generation.

The BFI's Stills, Posters and Designs department was the exhibition's largest source of material, with former Stills Head Michelle Snapes masterminding the BFI's contribution as one of her last projects before her recent appointment as Deputy Curator of the National Film Archive.

Stars of the British Screen, a British Film Year exhibition, is being shown until 17 May at the Royal Photographic society in Bath.

for papers exceeding expectations in both quality and quantity. Over 230 proposals came from 35 countries – including Japan, India, China, Tanzania, Chile, Hungary and Kenya – and choosing 120 for presentation in July proved difficult.

The Conference draws upon interdisciplinary research exploring such areas as national policies towards broadcasting (including the resurgence of debates about public service broadcasting); the television audience; textual analysis; and theories of representation.

A new area of emphasis this year is media education, with examples of practice and

research from across the world – particularly valuable when considering the relationship of children to television. There are also many papers with a feminist perspective on television, and the growing field of television history is well represented.

The BFI's Television Unit is the nerve centre of the Conference's organisation, working in association with the Department of English and Media Studies at the Institute of Education.

■ **ITSC 1986: 10/11/12 July.** Contact Lucy Douch or Lilie Ferrari for registration details: BFI Television Unit, 81 Dean Street, London W1V 6AA. 01-437 4355.

BFI Summer School 1986

Beyond 1984: Cultural Reconstructions in 1980s Britain

This year's Summer School looks at media production in the 1980s which confront us as a period of crisis, change and reconstruction. How are the media, mainstream and alternative, situated in this change? The school will pose this question of cinema, television and video – understood as cultural institutions, industries and products. Through selected case-studies, recent debates in cultural politics will be brought to bear on examples of reportage, fiction, entertainment and alternative practice in TV, film and video chosen from such titles as: *Edge of Darkness*, *At the Edge of the Union*, *The Miner's Film*, *Rainy Day Women*, *Rambo*, *Letter to Brezhnev* and *Black Silk*.

■ **The Summer School will be held at Stirling University, July 19-26.**

For details write to Martha Stanton, BFI Education, 81 Dean Street, London W1V 6AA.

First feature first

The 1985 BFI Film Award for the most original and imaginative film to be presented at the NFT during the past year was won by Chen Kaige for *Yellow Earth*. A new film from the People's Republic of China, the award panel described it as "an outstanding first feature which extends the range of contemporary Chinese filmmaking".

Yellow Earth was one of 160 films shown during this year's London Film Festival.

The BFI Film Award was first presented in 1958 and former winners have included Antonioni, Resnais, Bertolucci, Godard and Fassbinder. In many instances the Award has gone to previously little-known directors – such as Peter Greenaway in 1980 for *The Falls* and Chris Marker in 1983 for *Sunless* – who have gone on to attract a wider public appreciation.

The Award Panel is made up partly of people working at the BFI and partly of outsiders. One member had to declare an interest as this year's panel came to its conclusion and withdrew from deliberations for the best possible reason: Archie Tait of ICA Projects had just acquired the film for British distribution. He intends to release it at the ICA and other UK cinemas on 8 August. ■



Yellow Earth: 'original and imaginative'. 1981-1986

Talking television

The first International Television Studies Conference was held in 1984 – the BFI's 'Year of Television'. An audience of 300 delegates at the University of London's Institute of Education in Bloomsbury heard 70 speakers from sixteen different countries. An anthology of selected papers, *Television in Transition*, was published by the BFI earlier this year.

The event is to be repeated and indications are that the 1986 Conference will be bigger and even better, with proposals



New chapter for Wales

Behind the severe redbrick exterior of an Edwardian schoolhouse in Cardiff, building is under way on a major innovative project for film and media education in general. The old classrooms are currently occupied by Chapter Arts Centre, which has recently pulled itself out of grim financial difficulties and now plans to extend its facilities to include a new film complex and a Media Education Institute. When complete, the new Chapter will effectively be Wales' national film theatre.

The BFI's £150,000 contribution to the £650,000 project furthers its policy of establishing media centres in cities throughout Britain.

Already under construction is a 200-seat cinema, the first purpose-built cinema in an arts centre outside London, with comfortable and properly raked seats, a new screen and ease of access for the disabled.

Also on site are film and video workshops, which link films screened in the cinema with film and video produced independently and by local people about local concerns, as well as editing facilities, which allow the production process to operate in-house right through to its final stage.

The MEI has been conceived as an education wing of the new Media Centre at a time

when schools and colleges are developing media studies as an essential item on the curriculum. The MEI's radical departure from conventional supply-on-demand methods is encapsulated in its outreach practice, specifically designed to work in tandem with courses in schools – in organising projects, tours to local press, radio and TV organisations, screenings at the film theatre and in publishing teaching packs.

It will appeal to a broad constituency, providing for primary school to tertiary level and adult education, as well as teacher training and evening meetings for those involved in community affairs.

The MEI is expected to reach over 3000 children and 200 teachers a year. The basic principle – of pupils and teachers being encouraged to develop a full-time syllabus through the use of facilities in an independent centre for the contemporary arts – they believe to be unique.

Certainly, the work of the MEI will help maintain the Welsh pioneering tradition in the media field of secondary education in Britain. As the organisers at Chapter put it: where else are schools likely to find 8mm film production and editing equipment, video equipment, photographic, print and silk screen facilities, a media library, video archive and viewing facilities, all combined with production skills and expertise, under one roof? ■

Patience Coster

Broader choices, bigger audiences

Attendances at the 33 cinemas in the UK which receive programming advice from BFI Distribution reached an all-time high estimated at over 975,000 during 1985. This was the third year of steady growth and is in marked contrast to UK cinemas overall, where attendances over the past three years have fluctuated wildly.

BFI Distribution is also pleased by the increased number of titles shown. "We booked well over 4,000 programmes in 1985" says Vincent Porter, Head of Distribution, "and are building audiences by broadening choice. BFI programming cannot rely on the blockbuster syndrome which accounts for this year's main upturn in commercial cinema." The range of films shown is enormous – from first-time student features to cinema classics, art-house and cult releases.

One strength of the BFI's system is the relationship between BFI Distribution and the cinemas it supports. Cinema directors work closely with programme advisors in Distribution to devise programmes for a wide range of audiences. They also encourage participation by running educational courses, inviting filmmakers to talk about their work and staging day events and festivals, besides providing facilities like bars, restaurants, galleries and bookshops.

The most popular films vary from venue to venue, but almost everywhere foreign language films jostle for popularity with english language films. *Subway*, *Swann in Love* and *Rosie's Carmen* were popular choices, as were *Paris Texas* and British films such as *Wetherby*, *Dance with a Stranger* and *A Private Function*. ■

France salutes BFI Chairman



Jack Lang (right) congratulates a new Commander.

The highest rank in the French Order of Arts and Letters went to BFI Chairman Sir Richard Attenborough in January. France's Minister of Culture, Jack Lang, presented the award at the Cinemathèque Française, the BFI's French equivalent. Amongst those present were film director Costa-Gavras – who heads the Cinemathèque – and the British Ambassador in Paris.

This year is the Cinemathèque's 50th Anniversary and it is marking the occasion by choosing – exceptionally – a foreigner for this high honour. Before Sir Richard's investiture, the only people from outside France to have been made Commander were Elizabeth Taylor, Peter Ustinov, George Cukor, John Huston, Kirk Douglas and Jerry Lewis.

Sir Richard is honoured not only as an independent producer and director but also for his services to film culture as Chairman of the BFI – whose work was warmly praised as an example to the Cinemathèque – of RADA and of the British film production company Goldcrest.

The investiture took place while Sir Richard was in Paris for the opening of his latest film, *A Chorus Line*.

In 1983 to mark its own 50th Anniversary, HRH The Prince of Wales presented one of the first BFI Fellowships to French director Marcel Carné. ■

A fragment at a time over many years, a composite picture of the life and diverse activities of the great Soviet film-maker Sergei Eisenstein has been accumulated at the BFI.

Suddenly, with separate major collections having been left to us by two of his close friends – Ivor Montagu and Marie Seton – a remarkably full and complex visual record is emerging.

Ranging from pre-Revolution family album pictures to photographs taken shortly before his death in 1948, the two collections comprise portraiture, publicity stills, storyboards, drawings, production shots, location references and holiday snaps, besides photographic records of many momentous events and meetings with contemporaries such as Buñuel and Chaplin. A good deal of the material is previously unpublished.

Ivor Montagu – a founder member and chairman of the Film Society – first met Eisenstein in La Sarraz, Switzerland, at the 1929 conference now regarded as the precursor of the modern film festival. Montagu invited Eisenstein to London, where he lectured to the Film Society, presented *Battleship Potemkin*, and was recognised as the seminal influence on film-making he remains today.

Fluent in one another's native language, the two men struck up a close friendship, later visiting Hollywood together as collaborators (an episode documented in Montagu's 'With Eisenstein in Hollywood', published in 1968).

Montagu's first recorded contact with what is now the BFI was in 1939 when, as head of the Progressive Film Institute, he corresponded with curator Ernest Lindgren about the deposit of his own film, *Bluebottles*, with the National Film Library, later to become the National Film Archive.

From then until his death in 1984, Montagu was in constant contact with the Archive and became a familiar and respected figure, both as a user and contributor, to several generations of archivists.

Marie Seton's association with the BFI was a similar one. Film producer, author and lecturer, her expertise in many areas of film both grew with and contributed to the Institute.

Her knowledge of Eisenstein in particular was unrivalled in many ways. She met him in 1932 whilst working as a correspondent for a theatre journal, enjoyed a long association with him, and in 1952 wrote a definitive biography – parts of it dictated by him.

Much of what she detailed in the

biography was previously unknown and highly illuminating about the psychology and intellectual theories that motivated the film maker. She also brought to light many aspects of Eisenstein's work which might otherwise have been lost: footage of the controversial and unfinished *Que Viva Mexico* was bought by her after his death from Upton Sinclair and re-edited as *Time in the Sun*; and she even went so far as to salvage a series of his extraordinary erotic drawings by smuggling them through customs rolled in her belt.

The Montagu and Seton collections of visual material are complemented by their respective correspondence with Eisenstein, also now with the BFI though at present still largely bound in the brown paper and string they arrived in.

When the whole of the two massive collections have been brought together and catalogued – and the BFI departments concerned point out that processing may take more than a year – the picture of Eisenstein available to researchers in Britain will arguably be more comprehensive than it was even during his lifetime.

■ The Museum of Modern Art is organising a major Eisenstein exhibition in association with the Eisenstein Museum of Moscow and the BFI. It will be mounted during 1987 at the Hayward Gallery and NFT in London, Cornerhouse in Manchester, and MOMA in Oxford.

■ The BFI will publish three volumes of Eisenstein's writings, 'Selected Works in English', in a new translation next Spring.



Friends and visual legacies

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Some crew. Above, left to right: **Georgia Hale**, **Ivor Montagu**, **Sergei Eisenstein**, **Eduard Tisse** and **Charlie Chaplin**



Inset: Eisenstein 'directs' Jean-Georges Auriol; *La Sarraz* 1929
Main photo: later the same year, 'P.C.' Eisenstein improvises
Ballet of the British Bobby above Foyle's, Manette St., Soho

CITY LIMITS MAGAZINE

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TO NEW HEIGHTS...
A LANDMARK IN CINEMA HISTORY"

DAVID ROBINSON, THE TIMES

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ALEXANDER WALKER, THE LONDON STANDARD

私 *RAN* 15

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Though everyone who read the *Caravaggio* script wanted to see it made, Derek Jarman spent seven obsessive years seeking funds. His highly ambitious and unconventional conception of a film about the life of a great Italian Renaissance painter was considered a risk. The BFI Production Board backed their own conviction in Jarman and the script with £475,000. Earlier this year, the finished film won a Silver Bear as the British entry in the Berlin Film Festival and a rapturous reception from the Berlin public. Its imagery is challenging and fresh and its success opens new possibilities to future filmmakers. As *Caravaggio* comes to the screen in this country, Head of BFI Production **Colin MacCabe** reflects on the BFI's role at the cutting edge of cultural and aesthetic innovation.

THE CONVICTION BEHIND CARAVAGGIO

In funding Derek Jarman's *Caravaggio*, the BFI continued its policy of backing experimental low-budget features, a policy which has produced such outstanding films as *Radio On*, *The Draughtsman's Contract*, *Ascendancy* and *Nineteen Nineteen*. Its release this month provides an eloquent argument in favour of the existence of the BFI's Production Board. And such arguments, films made that would not otherwise have been made, are always welcome for a body which, because of its public status, is constantly called upon to justify itself. If the Board is not being assailed by one side for its retreat into commercialism, then it is being roundly criticised from another quarter for not being commercial enough.

In fact the whole opposition between culture and commerce on which such criticisms often base themselves is almost entirely bogus. A film without distribution simply doesn't exist for the cinema, so that to fund films which cannot be shown could only be countenanced by those whose attachment to the Romantic conception of the artist or the sociologist's conception of society allow some ill-defined notion of personal intensity or social worthiness to replace any notion of public appreciation. Equally, the only films that can now justify their costs commercially in terms of their life in the cinema are those huge spectacles that one associates with the names of Spielberg and Lucas. All other films live either at the mercy of television patronage – with ZDF in Germany, Channel 4 in Britain and RAI in Italy functioning as the Medicis of the post-industrial age – or in the murky world of tax write-offs.

In this context the Production Board functions as the only source of money which is concerned neither with profits or television but in expanding the possibilities

of the cinema, of making available images which will enrich an audience's experience and enhance their understanding. In seeking to do this it has two major advantages. On the one hand, the range of taste and ability on the Board allows for an unusual degree of input into script selection. On the other hand, BFI Production was built up throughout Peter Sainsbury's time as Head of Production so that it now provides a filmmaker with a wealth of expertise and facilities from the moment of the film entering pre-production to its promotion world-wide when finished.

Over the past five years, the Production Board has responded to change. Its earlier commitment to avant-garde aesthetics has been replaced by an attempt to bring some of the concerns of the avant-garde into films which are widely available to the public. This transformation has been much influenced by developments in exhibition. The advent of Channel 4 has ensured television transmission for much of the Board's production and Channel 4 has proved an extremely important patron. Its valuable support of the early 1980s has turned into the absolutely necessary commitment whereby the Board's very existence and the Government monies on which it draws are largely dependent on Channel 4's contribution.

But it is not just in relation to television that exhibition has changed. Developments in cinema-going and the increasing importance of video are as important. There is now a real possibility of theatrical exhibition which can bypass the majors. The BFI-supported regional film theatres complement the range of independents in London to offer an alternative circuit for the Board's films. On the downside, however, the increased use of video has more or less destroyed the non-theatrical

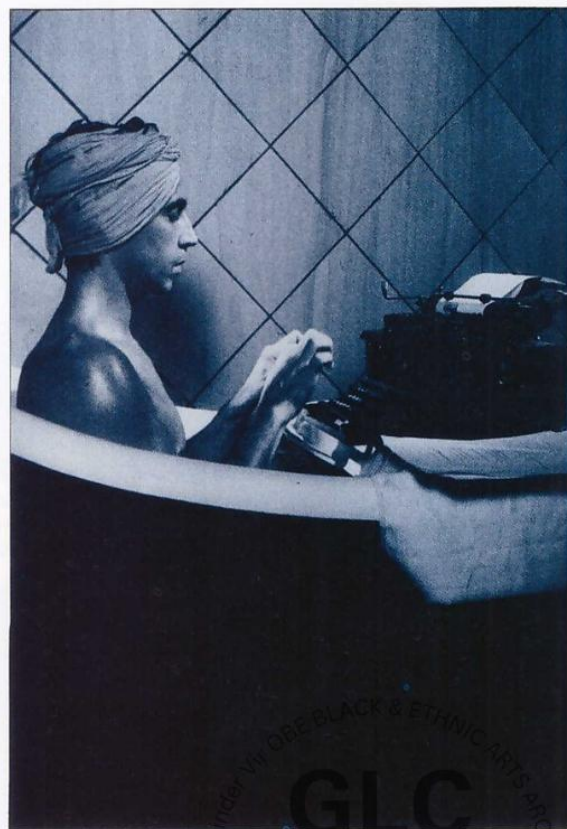


■ Rome's decadent glitterati with Caravaggio's patron

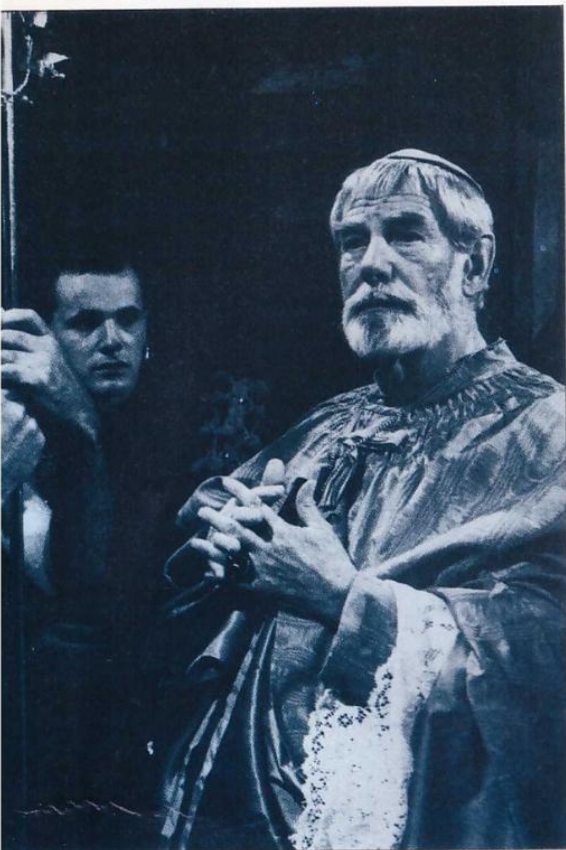
Derek Jarman's new film is based on Caravaggio's life (1571-1610), which was marked by extremes of passion, violence and moral and artistic radicalism.

Filmed in a warehouse on the Isle of Dogs, its scenes progress from the bright luminosity of the painter's early works to

the chiaroscuro 'cinematic lighting' he invented. Its twentieth-century and period costumes and settings combine to encourage a broader interpretation of the film's themes than the purely art historical. In some ways, *Caravaggio* is as much about the artist Jarman



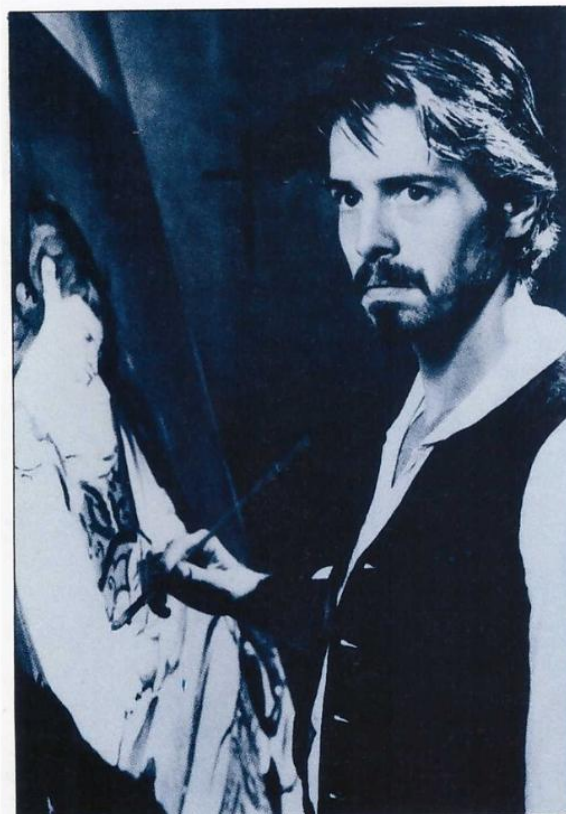
■ Rival painter Baglione concocts slander 6



Cardinal del Monte (Michael Gough, right)

as the Italian Renaissance painter who was so influential yet scandalised his contemporaries with the controversial nature of his work and his resistance to the social mores of his time. The story of an artist marginalised by the society in which he lived has long held an

irresistible fascination for Jarman. His detective work on the paintings and research into contemporary documents has resulted in a partly factual, highly imaginative and visually stunning portrait which unifies the religious, artistic and sexual sides of Caravaggio's nature.



■ Nigel Terry as Caravaggio

market on which much independent work relied for public exhibition. The Board's present commitment to low-budget features is thus one which makes sense in terms of patterns of exhibition. More important, perhaps, is that it also makes sense in relation to the needs of film-makers. The proliferation of film courses within higher education, the establishment of the workshops, the continuing success of the National Film School – all these developments mean that the Board is no longer pre-eminently concerned with the first-time filmmaker. Its task must rather be to allow the most challenging and exciting filmmakers to develop talents which would otherwise remain unused.

Such abstract definitions, however, are both necessary and unilluminating. Concrete examples are more instructive and that is why the release of *Caravaggio* is so welcome. Without the Board the film would never have been made – thirteen previous scripts and seven years of looking for money testify to that. At the same time it was a film which everybody who had read the script wanted to see made. It is just this kind of film that the Board is there to support. *Caravaggio* is adventurous and experimental – an investigation of the historical and psychic conditions of art which breaks radically with the conventions of costume drama.

Caravaggio is, like all Jarman's other features, concerned with the past but this is not the past of the museum. It is a past in vital and informative connection with the present. The whole design of the film, which emphasises the continuity of Italian street life across historical periods upsets expectations of what a 'historical' film might be. The film is, however, deeply engaged with making the past live, in producing a Caravaggio who in his sexuality and in his ambiguous commitment to his art will speak to us as his paintings speak to Jarman.

Concrete examples do, however, have their disadvantages: people immediately generalise so that in a flash any particular film becomes a general model. My comments on *Caravaggio* might easily and ludicrously be turned into a policy in favour of making unconventional films about art history. What is generalisable from *Caravaggio* is not its subject matter or even its form, but the fact that it represents something genuinely new, images of a kind that have not been seen before. It is these that the Board will be looking for and one particular area where one would expect to find them is in the first generation of Black British filmmakers whose experiences and analyses will be so vital to the general development of our culture.

If the funding of low budget features allows the Board to produce fresh images, developments in both technology and education have meant that there are now even more people involved in image-making than ever before. From the experimental use of super-8 through video art to the training in video technology offered to unemployed youth, there is a proliferation of images – but images which remain invisible: unwatched by all except the makers themselves and their teachers. In order to make these images visible the

Board is considering producing a regular series of programmes of such material for Channel 4. The aim here would not be to provide funding – although small amounts of completion monies might be available – but to ensure that these images got wider circulation in our society.

The dual programme outlined here would allow the Production Board to continue its work at the cutting edge of aesthetic and cultural innovation, providing public opportunities of viewing the most significant images being produced and continuously exploring and redefining the relations between commerce and culture.

The BFI's productions find their rationale in the widening of audiences's experience and in providing both money and an environment in which the most gifted film directors can use their talents to the full. The BFI's collaboration with Derek Jarman which ranges from *The Angelic Conversation* – a £50,000 non-narrative avant-garde film – to *Caravaggio* – a £475,000 historical narrative – bears witness to a productive partnership and the range of film-making which the BFI is committed to supporting. ■

Colin MacCabe

Caravaggio Diary

■ The BFI and Film Production Policy. At the ICA on 21 April, Colin MacCabe discusses the BFI's policy and strategy with producer Lynda Myles, Rod Stoneman of Channel 4 and former head of the NFFC Mamoun Hassan.

■ Derek Jarman's *Caravaggio*, the book of the film, is published on 21 April (see p.14).

■ *Caravaggio* is previewed at the NFT on 23 April, with a Guardian Lecture by Jarman following the screening.

■ *Caravaggio* opens at the Lumière Cinema on 24 April. It is released around the UK on the following dates:

Bristol, Watershed:	April 28
Edinburgh, Filmhouse:	May 4
Glasgow, Film Theatre:	May 18
Newcastle, Tyneside Cinema:	May 19
Oxford, Phoenix Cinema:	May 30
Manchester, Cornerhouse:	May 16
Norwich, Cinema City:	June 2
Cardiff, Chapter Arts Centre:	June 5
Coventry, Univ. Warwick Arts Ctre:	June 9
Ipswich Film Theatre:	June 12
Derby, Metro Cinema:	June 19
Canterbury, Cinema 3:	June 19
Bradford, Film Theatre:	June 26
Leicester, Phoenix Arts:	June 29

Dates for Belfast, Birmingham, Cambridge, Dundee, Nottingham, Sheffield and others unconfirmed. For information about screenings outside London contact Peter Grant 01-437 4355.

■ Derek Jarman discusses *Caravaggio* at the ICA on 30 April. ICA 01-930 3647.



Family portrait: mother, brother and sisters in *Distant Voices*.

With annual funding roughly equivalent to the sum spent on simply promoting a single blockbuster, BFI Production has achieved extraordinary results in recent months. The success of *Caravaggio* follows closely that of *Nineteen Nineteen* and *A Zed and Two Noughts*.

Meanwhile, far from the glare of publicity, Terence Davies has been working on his new BFI-produced film *Distant Voices*. It looks certain to further a fine record.

DISTANT VOICES

Those who saw Terence Davies' semi-autobiographical *Film Trilogy* will know he spares few feelings and certainly none of his own. His new film *Distant Voices* promises to be equally harrowing, equally challenging, and much funnier: "there are two jokes in this one," he says "and I'll try to keep at least one."

"People might think I have angst for all, but the *Trilogy* was made very selfishly, for me, as a kind of exorcism." He would never have made it, he says, had he envisaged its enormous success – but neither festival awards nor a Channel 4 screening have deterred him. Asked by the BFI to write another film, this time to be shot on 35mm and in colour, he responded with *Distant Voices*, which was shot recently in London and Liverpool and is now close to completion in the editing room.

"A film about the nature of memory," is how Davies describes his new film, "made using the memories and frequently-told stories of my family, refiltered through my own memory."

"Fragmentary as memory in form," the film deals with "events of emotional rather than narrative importance" and is structured around a wedding. Davies' father is the central pivot around which Mother, Eileen, Maisie and Tony revolve with equal dramatic weight. It develops ideas formulated with the *Trilogy* and uses film's "ability to move in and out of time and thought in a kind of thrilling realism of interior monologue".

Set in, or rather "oscillating between" 1940–1955 in Liverpool, *Distant Voices* is "a conglomeration of organic bits: beginning, middle and end, but not necessarily in that order".

Shot on filters, the film's colour is in tones from sepia to coral, giving a period

feel which is "sumptuous and rich – but definitely not chocolate box."

Davies regards his work as "a record of people talking and a juxtaposition of images", and is concerned to escape the theatrical and literary narrative conventions which he sees as blighting filmmaking. "I try to write filmically and keep dialogue to a minimum," he says.

Briefing *Distant Voices* actors, he instructed them: "Don't act – feel it in your guts. Film photographs thought. If the thought is phoney, it will show". Everything Davies says conveys the depth of feeling and commitment he seeks to instill and he tells his story vividly, with a fierce passion.

He is almost as passionate about cinema itself. "Filmmaking is a deep joy," he says, adding with amazement, "for which I get paid. That confuses the committed lapsed Catholic in me, who believes anything joyful must be subject to guilt".

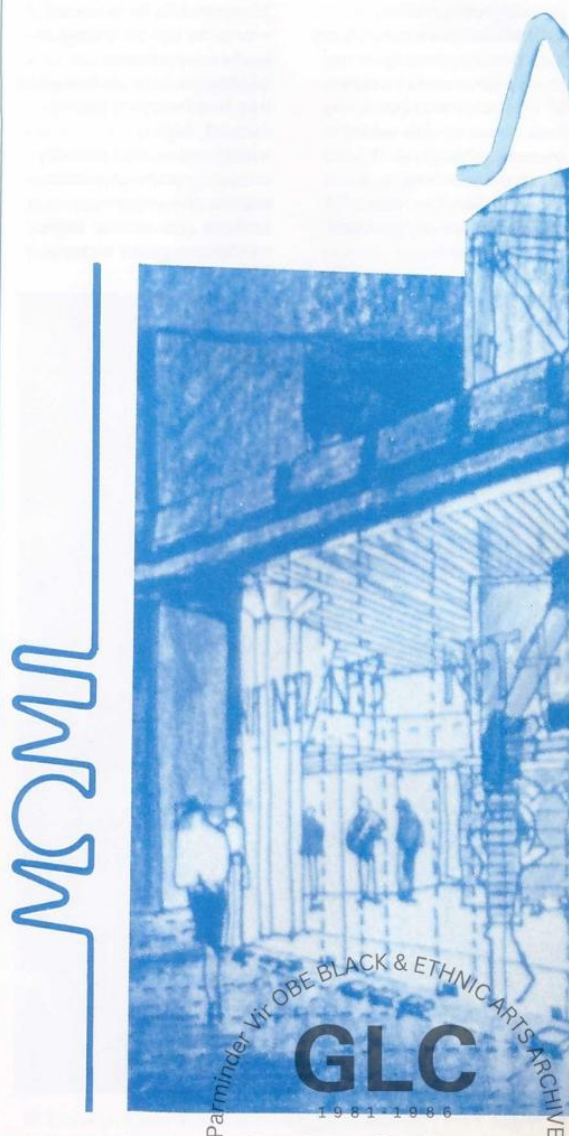
Distant voices, like *The Trilogy*, experiments with and inverts many cinematic conventions to create fresh images and new forms, though with never a hint of cerebral dryness.

All who have seen it so far have been unanimous in praise. After a recent rough-cut screening for BFI Production, Davies was asked to leave the Board to deliberate in the usual way. Only 30 seconds elapsed before he was called back into the room. The Board wished to congratulate him immediately and even later could only suggest the most minor changes.

Release plans for the film, which runs at only 46 minutes, are currently uncertain. *Distant Voices* was originally planned as the first part of a 90-minute narrative and might not be screened alone. Davies is already at work on the second part: *Still Lives*. ■

STRONG SUPPORT FOR MOMI

A new focal point for London's South Bank skyline, the planned 100-foot MOMI tower will reach up above Waterloo Bridge from the new shared MOMI/NFT foyer. Containing a periscope, kaleidoscope and camera obscura, it will mark the position of the new museum in a striking and appropriately visual way.



Working for London
archive.parmindervir.com

Until quite recently, the BFI's Museum of the Moving Image was a bold and elaborate concept, with a tangible existence largely composed of architectural plans, mountains of research notes and a site beneath Waterloo Bridge. Now, the plans are becoming reality and the research is bearing fruit.

Co-ordinators David Francis and Leslie Hardcastle have little time to stop and admire either building or artefacts, but they do have a moment to share their enthusiasm for an aspect of MOMI's development that particularly pleases them: the support of outside experts.

"Making movies is a co-operative, collective activity," Leslie Hardcastle points out, "and we have always hoped to reflect that in the way the museum works. Perhaps the most important feature of MOMI is that it isn't going to be the property of the co-ordinators," he says. "It will belong to the people who spend their lives working in film and television – from the grip to the producer, from the lab assistant to the master of special effects." They are the people who will shape it, he explains, and as word of MOMI spreads they are beginning to come forward with support.

Few could have started with wider contacts amongst the people they need than David Francis and Leslie Hardcastle – as Curator of the National Film Archive and Controller of the NFT respectively. And with the added combination of evangelical zeal and midnight oil, the list of willing advisors they and the MOMI researchers have assembled now looks extremely impressive.

The target is to have close and constant links with an inner

core of six experts – already dubbed 'The Six' – and to be able to call upon further specific expertise from appropriate members of an additional group known as 'The Hundred'.

'The Six' already includes film critic and historian David Robinson, television documentarist Norman Swallow and Curator of the Royal Photographic Museum Brian Coe. 'The Hundred', though also as yet short of a full complement, is equally strong. Familiar BFI names such as Sir Richard Attenborough, Charles Beddow, John Gillett, Philip Simpson and Anthony Smith take their place in distinguished company which includes: Edgar Anstey, British documentarist; Tony Bridgewater, pioneer television technician; Kevin Brownlow, film editor and historian; Jim Clarke, film editor; Sir Denis Forman, first Director of the NFT and Chairman of Granada Television; Bernard Happe of Technicolor and past president of the BKSTS; Ray

Harryhausen, special effects designer; Percy Livingstone, of the Society of Film Distributors and past Managing Director of Twentieth Century-Fox; Andrew Mitchell, Head of Elstree Studios; Michael Powell, film director; David Samuelson, of the Samuelson's technical equipment group and Chairman of the BKSTS; Alan Sapper, General Secretary of the ACTT; Colin Sorenson, Curator of the Museum of London; and Fred Zinnemann of the Directors Guild of Great Britain.

With the help of such people coupled to the expertise which exists amongst BFI members and staff, MOMI will clearly never lack interesting ideas. It is the influence and participation of those involved in film and television which will make the museum an exciting place to visit. And not only for those who actually make images move, but for everyone who has ever so much as wondered how. ■



Amongst the hundred advisors who will bring MOMI to life are Oscar-winning animator Dick Williams (above) and special effects master Ray Harryhausen, creator of the *Jason and the Argonauts* hydra (below).



photograph: David Watson

Parminster VMOBE BLACK & WHITE ARTS ARCHIVE
GLC
1981-1986

Television access – a programme for progress

We expect our museums, galleries and libraries to preserve those artefacts we consider to be part of the nation's heritage and to make them accessible for our enjoyment and education.

Strange then, that television, the most pervasive medium of our time and a dynamic cultural influence, can also be the most inaccessible, apart from the moment of transmission when it is broadcast into our homes and captured by a few of us on video recorders. Reflecting, recording and interacting with our society, the art of television is nevertheless an ephemeral one.

Everyone has a view about the way the medium is used, yet no public facility for reviewing programmes or researching their content exists.

The BFI is concerned to change this and last year, with the support of ITV and Channel 4, the National Film Archive embarked on a major new project to record television programmes directly from the network. The Archive's TV collection is now growing apace and there is an embryonic structure for providing public access. This, we feel, is the right moment to seek further co-operation with the broadcasters, and to discuss with the relevant government ministries ways of raising the necessary funding to run a television access library. The conference which we are hosting in May will address the problems, with Jeremy Isaacs, Brian Wenham, David Shaw and Ken Trodd among the invited speakers. The Home Office, the Office of Arts and Libraries, the Labour Party and the Conservative Party will also be represented and the event will culminate with the presentation, by Anthony Smith, of the BFI's Plan for Access. ■

Mairede Thomas
NFA Television Officer

White heat and red shadows in the Archive

Two unique and complementary collections of film, recently received by the National Film Archive, reveal a fascinating view of the changing public faces of the Conservative and Labour parties. They also trace the development of film and television's increasing importance as tools of political persuasion.

The Documentary Acquisitions Department of the Archive is currently working through both collections: one from the Conservative and Unionist Films Association comprising internally-made films of the period 1947-54 (donated privately); the other from the Labour Party comprising Party Political Broadcasts and BBC recordings of party conference proceedings made between 1955 and 1984.

Having viewed and documented over 300 films so far, one archivist notes that whilst the degree of sophistication increases dramatically over the years spanned – and politicians who make dull talking heads tend not to reappear – the issues covered remain surprisingly consistent. Early Conservative titles such as *Pink with a Red Shadow* and *Doorstep to Communism* certainly lack the subtlety of current Saatchi and Saatchi-monitored productions: *Doorstep to Communism*, for instance, cuts between Nuremberg rallies and Red Square Parades with a voiceover on the perils of socialism. As regards issues, however, in films made as long ago as the 1960s Robin Day is already to be seen goading Labour politicians into exposing splits within their party, and Denis Healey is shown expressing outrage at the appalling unemployment figure (then standing at 300,000).

Collection highlights include the furor created by many now-legendary speeches – such as Harold Wilson's 'White Heat of the Technological Revolution' and Edward Heath's 'At a Stroke' – besides lesser-known curios such as the Monty Python team's film *Who's There?*, made for training Labour Party members in the art of doorstep canvassing, and CUFA's series *Who Voted for This?*, starring the fictional character Uncle Bob attacking nationalisation and made to tour pre-television Britain in Conservative 'Mobile Cinemas'.

The two collections add to party political footage already with the Archive to form an important body of such material and a wealth of information for researchers. Unfortunately, due to funding levels within the Archive, it could be several years before viewing prints can be made availableunless, of course, there is a change of political will on the funding of Archive activities. ■

New ethnic post shows success in new ventures

Jim Pines' newly-created post of Ethnic Film and TV Advisor at the BFI is self-explanatory. But how to focus existing concern for ethnic work across the span of BFI activities – and how to inject it where it does not exist – is an unwieldy brief which demanded a few weeks simply assessing priorities following his appointment last summer; since then he has not stopped.

Almost a year on, two recent events and two set for the near future best reflect the range, nature and success of his work.

A two-day Film Programming Workshop brought together BFI Programme Advisors, the Film Society Unit, The Other Cinema and 17 black film organisers to take a fresh look at the distribution and exhibition of film and video in relation to community venues.

Shortly afterwards, Pines was involved in a colloquium billed as 'Race and Ethnicity in Television – Future Directions for Research' which looked at how research in this area might be developed and funded. This event was attended by over 30 academics, researchers and practitioners.

For the future, Pines is helping to plan special events at the NFT and the Edinburgh International Film Festival.

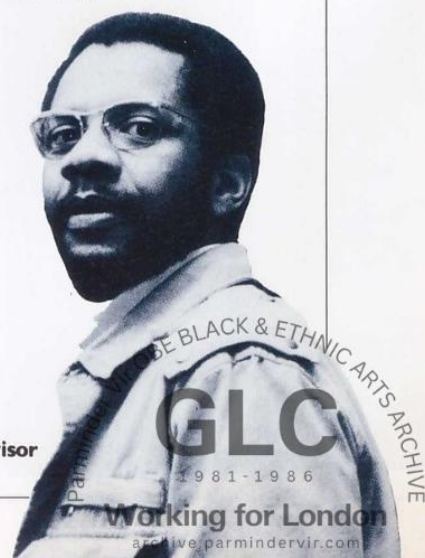
A May/June NFT season 'Images of Empire', will include two Saturday day schools: 'Representations of Colonialism in Indian Cinema' and 'Black Film and Video Workshops in Britain'.

The new Edinburgh venture will be a three-day conference (11-13 August) entitled 'Third Cinema: Theories and Practices.' Filmmakers, critics, theorists and historians have been invited from Africa, Latin America, India, Sri Lanka and the British and US black independent sectors to discuss Third World cinema, and a supporting programme of films is set for the first week of the Festival.

■ **Details of all the above from Jim Pines at the BFI, 127 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0EA.**



Party political 'Mobile Cinema'



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Jim Pines

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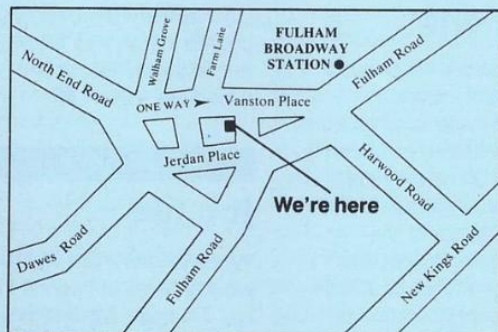
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GLC

A difficult year ahead

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The total increase in the original BFI grant is £363,000 – 4.5% more than last year's grant of £8,075,000 – which is over £200,000 less than the bare minimum to support the BFI's existing services.

Responding to news of the grant – announced by Mr Richard Luce MP, Minister for the Arts – BFI Director Anthony Smith said: "The Minister has made great efforts in what he had always told us was going to be an extremely difficult year, but unfortunately he has not been able to maintain our grant in anything like real terms. There will, therefore, have to be cuts in a number of our services and activities, and this applies to our regional clients as much as to the central activities."

"There will clearly be a difficult year ahead. Unfortunately, the Minister has not been able to recognise in cash terms the successful efforts we have made throughout our organisation to raise sponsorship and private monies for specific activities. This is particularly acute in the case of production where Channel 4's grant of between £300,000 and £400,000 has to be equalled from other sources. We are very grateful to the Minister for his efforts to help BFI production, but it seems at this stage impossible for us to achieve the necessary sum."

"Clearly, we have work to do in the next year to encourage the Government to make a priority of film within the funding of the arts." ■

Film society summit

At an occasion attended by film society members from all over the UK, the British Federation of Film Societies Awards were presented on 23 March at the NFT, during the National Viewing Session Weekend.

With around 350 film societies on the BFFS books, the awards committee had a hard time in selecting the society it felt had made the most significant contribution during the year. The scope of innovations it looked at ranged from drive-in movies to evening classes scheduled alongside programmes of films. The Film Society of the Year Award eventually went to Yeovil Cinemathèque for their energetic programme of movies and special events, including shows for children, an illustrated lecture by Ossie Morris on cinematography, and a day entitled Pure Genius centred on the work of Welles, Guney, Tarkovsky and Iselliani.

Other awards went to Preston, Jersey, Bedford, Gothique (London), Southampton University, Bank of Scotland (Edinburgh), with special commendations for Avondale (Strathaven), Oscar (Guildford) and Hartlepool. A Chairman's award went to Grace Allington and Nathalie Savage to mark 30 years of work for Stroud Film Society.

The special Kodak Community Award of £500 went to New Kettering Film Society for a scheme whereby archive film about the local area is screened to elderly people and their reactions recorded on video by young locals. The project is of benefit to young and old, corresponds with schools' work on the BBC Domesday Project and helps develop local film and video archives.

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Applications or nominations for the 1986 award are welcome from individuals and groups working within or outside the formal education system. Initiatives may relate to production, distribution, exhibition or archiving.

The closing date for nominations is 30th April.

■ **Application forms and details from Philip Simpson, BFI Education, 81 Dean Street, London W1V 6AA.**

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Film music

The BFI will make an Award for Film Music at its Awards Evening later this year.

BFI members may nominate three films with outstanding musical scores for consideration by the Anthony Asquith Award Jury which consists of John Dankworth, Carl Davis, Mark Bonham-Carter and Sidney Samuelson. A prize of a selection of soundtrack albums will be made to the member who has the most interesting reasons for nomination.

■ **Please send nominations as soon as possible, together with reasons for your choice, to Wayne Drew, Press Office, BFI, 127 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0EA.**

Video focus

In response to spirited lobbying at last year's Conference, a BFI working party has been set up to formulate a policy for video.

The working party, chaired by Vincent Porter, is currently establishing an overview of existing video-related practice within the BFI and seeking policy statements and suggestions from other interested bodies.

It aims to take account of all areas of the fast-changing video culture, from the booming pop promo industry to the vigorous but financially-embattled subsidised sector. ■

Job file

When BFI librarians noticed a weekly surge of interest in film and TV trade papers, they soon detected the reason and responded to demand. A well-used file of photocopies now stands at the library desk, marked 'Vacancies being Advertised in the Current Film and TV Trade Papers'. ■ 1986



Films for Women illustration from *Lianna*

Derek Jarman's *Caravaggio*

by Derek Jarman

When I was at school I read lots of Shakespeare plays which only much later, if at all, I saw in performance. The experience has made me wary of scripts – even of great plays. With films, even more than with plays, reading the script can never be a substitute for seeing the actual work. But with a film like *Caravaggio* which, as well as being visually stunning, has quite literary dialogue and is densely packed with historical references, then a script is very useful to be able to refer to. The *Caravaggio* 'book of the film' (to use the publisher's own phrase) is in fact more than just a script, it is also full of fascinating anecdotes about the making of the film – how, for example, when preparing to light the film, the filmmakers discovered previously unobserved facts about the way *Caravaggio*'s own paintings were lit (almost always from the left rather than from the right). For all his films Derek Jarman has made a point of keeping a splendid visual record. The *Caravaggio* book is enhanced by wonderful production photographs by Gerald Incandela and reproductions of *Caravaggio* paintings and sketches. The whole is a fascinating record of

how a film both mirrors and transforms the reality on which it is based ■

Geoffrey Nowell-Smith

Thames and Hudson

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Women's Film List

compiled by Jane Root

The Women's Film List, produced by BFI Education, has been extensively enlarged, re-organised and up-dated. It provides details of film and videos directed by women currently available for hire in the UK.

The largest section categorises the films and videos by subject area – e.g. Abortion, The Politics of Health, Crime, Work – with each area contextualised by a brief introduction. Further sections list animated, experimental and television material. Indices are alphabetical, by title and director.

The List should provide a valuable resource for teachers and anyone interested in the development of women's film and video-making in this country. ■

BFI Publications, 81 Dean Street, London W1V 6AA.

£5.50 inc p&p

British Films 1927-1939

edited by Linda Wood

The British film industry has never been more active than it was during the 1930s. *British Films 1927-1939* is essential reading for anyone interested in the period. It is divided into three sections.

1. The detailed chronology covers the introduction of sound, the battles with the dominant American companies and the rapid growth in new British companies.

2. Annual production charts (with a title index covering the whole period) provide start dates for principal photography, and the names of studios, production companies, distributors and directors for each of around 1,700 films produced during the period.

3. The statistics section includes a wide variety of figures; for example statistics for new film companies (as many as 170 to 415 for any single year) and for the rapid growth in studios. There are also lists of the top box office films and stars.

The appendices list titles in distribution in 1986, provide a bibliography and offer guidelines for researchers. ■

BFI Publications, 81 Dean Street, London W1V 6AA.

£4.50 inc p&p

The Cinema Book

edited by Pam Cook

Over the past two decades the study of film has changed more dramatically than any other academic discipline in response to social and cultural shifts. It has also gained increasing popularity in secondary, further and higher education. Here for the first time, is a book which

encompasses the entire field of contemporary film study; a book which unravels the complex issues and debates, and which presents a history of the study of film in an accessible and stimulating form.

The *Cinema Book* includes over 400 illustrations and an extensive guide to the BFI's collection of film extracts which can be hired and used together with the text. This book will provide an invaluable reference and source book for teachers and students in the field, both at secondary and higher levels of education. ■

BFI Publications, 81 Dean Street, London W1V 6AA.

£12.95 (£14.45 inc p&p)

Films for Women

edited by Charlotte Brunson

Films for Women examines the representation of women in films, films by women and above all, films for women and in doing so traces the changing debates about women and film that have occurred since the 1960s.

During the 1970s both mainstream and independent cinema began increasingly to produce films addressed to women. Hollywood did so to exploit the commercial potential of a new type of female consumer, whilst the women's movement began producing films in order to offer radically different representations of women. Now various groups of feminists, with diverse concerns and aims, are mobilising as filmmakers, distributors and exhibitors, to give a new meaning to the notion of films for women. The book *Films for Women* will be published in June 1986. ■

BFI Publications, 81 Dean Street, London W1V 6AA.

£6.95 (£7.70 inc p&p)

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Film music

The BFI will make an Award for Film Music at its Awards Evening later this year.

BFI members may nominate three films with outstanding musical scores for consideration by the Anthony Asquith Award Jury which consists of John Dankworth, Carl Davis, Mark Bonham-Carter and Sidney Samuelson. A prize of a selection of soundtrack albums will be made to the member who has the most interesting reasons for nomination.

■ **Please send nominations as soon as possible, together with reasons for your choice, to Wayne Drew, Press Office, BFI, 127 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0EA.**

Video focus

In response to spirited lobbying at last year's Conference, a BFI working party has been set up to formulate a policy for video.

The working party, chaired by Vincent Porter, is currently establishing an overview of existing video-related practice within the BFI and seeking policy statements and suggestions from other interested bodies.

It aims to take account of all areas of the fast-changing video culture, from the booming pop promo industry to the vigorous but financially-embattled subsidised sector. ■

Job file

When BFI librarians noticed a weekly surge of interest in film and TV trade papers, they soon detected the reason and responded to demand. A well-used file of photocopies now stands at the library desk, marked "Vacancies being advertised in the Current Film and TV Trade Papers." ■

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