

# *Beyond Observation*

- + 5 films by 5 filmmakers
- + Curated by Soudabeh Moradian

# *Beyond Observation*

## *Curated by Soudabeh Moradian*

In my selection, I've chosen five films that diverge from the conventional approach and challenge established norms. These films are carefully selected for their ability to provoke thought, stir emotions, and inspire dialogue, aiming to transcend the boundaries of traditional cinema. They all offer a fresh perspective by evolving into a realm of pure visual artistry yet profound meaning. Each film invites viewers to embark on a captivating journey into the world of the unexpected, where the boundaries are pushed to their limits. Through this selection, we aim to celebrate the transformative power of cinema and foster a deep appreciation for unconventional visual artistry and contemplation.

### **Films:**

*We Had Each Other* by Kelly Gallagher

*May The Earth Become The Sky* by Ana Vîjdea

*Inhale/Exhale* by Andrey Silvestrov

*Celebrating The Next Twinkling* by Boryana Rossa

*Parenthesis* by Vasilios Papaioannu



**Soudabeh Moradian** is an Iranian-American filmmaker. Her movies are mainly based on social issues, women and psychological impacts of war, such as "Polaris", "Doomsday Machine", "Story Of The Land On Ashes", "Mahin" and "The Mermaid". A number of her movies have been showcased in several film festivals around the world and won awards, such as Hamburg (Germany), Dresden (Germany), Ebenezer (Austria), Borne (Czech Republic), Madrid (Spain), DOCSDF (Mexico), Barcelona Planet film festival (Spain), Roma Cinemadoc (Italy), Spotlight Documentary Award (USA), Sydney World Film festival (Australia), Lisbon film festival (Portugal), Document 7-human rights film festival (Scotland), and California Women film festival. She holds an MFA in film/video from CalArts and is currently an Assistant Professor at Syracuse University, New York.

## We Had Each Other - 2022

A group of powerful, bold, Irish women political prisoners at Armagh Jail shook Ireland to its' core in 1980 when they began a transgressive "no-wash" protest, refusing to bathe for a year to bring attention to their plight and the abusive mistreatment of Irish political prisoners by the British government.



# We Had Each Other

## by Kelly Gallagher

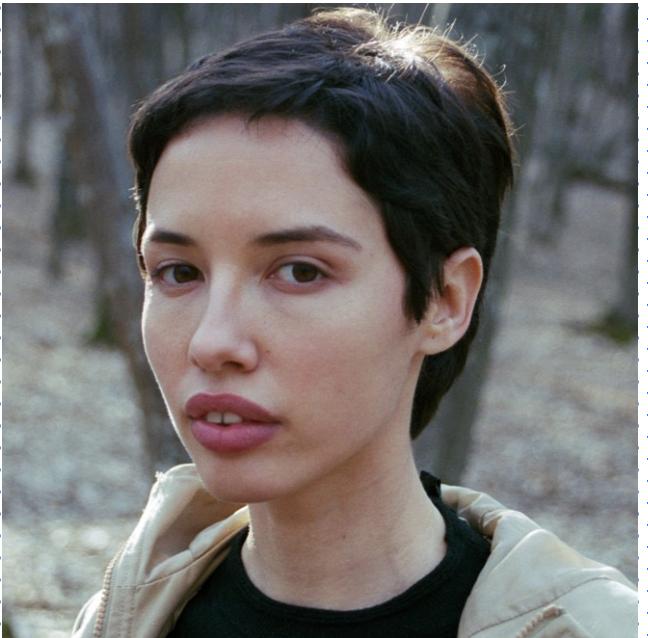
- *"We Had Each Other"* offers a poignant exploration of the collective resistance of Irish women political prisoners at Armagh Jail in 1980. Through symbolic recreations and powerful imagery, the film underscores the importance of defending justice and freedom when threatened. Kelly's cinematic techniques, such as overscanned 16mm frames, emphasize the cumulative power of images, mirroring the collective spirit of the film's characters. This short yet impactful experimental documentary serves as a reminder that films should resonate with our shared sense of justice-seeking humanity, especially in an era increasingly divided and isolated by the dominant powers: a powerful content that we see in most of Kelly Gallagher's films.
- **Kelly Gallagher** is an animator, filmmaker and film professor. In her work, she's exploring politically radical left histories through collage animation, found footage essays, and experimental live action. experimental films, documentaries, and animations explore histories and movements of resistance. Additionally, she makes urgent and radical personal essay films utilizing found footage and experimental animation practices. Her theoretical and scholarly work investigates the political and feminist possibilities of experimental animation. Her award-winning films and commissioned animations have screened internationally at venues including: the Museum of Modern Art, the National Gallery of Art, Sundance Film Festival, the Smithsonian Institution, Anthology Film Archives, and International Film Festival Rotterdam. Her most recent animations have also screened on Netflix and PBS. She's presented solo programs of her work at institutions including: SFMOMA, Close-Up Cinema London, SF Cinematheque, and Wexner Center for the Arts.



# May the Earth Become the Sky - 2022



Maria, a 48-year-old woman, is trapped between two worlds—one guided by asceticism, the other fueled by the need to reconnect and be with her two sons. Through carefully composed shots and minimalistic sound, we glimpse into her everyday life, thoughts, and emotions.



# May The Earth Become The Sky

## by Ana Vijdea

- "*May the Earth Become the Sky*," moves beyond merely observation to capture the intricate human complexities that lie at its heart. While it maintains the observational documentary approach, the film skillfully navigates the depths of Maria's inner world, revealing the layers of her emotions and the complex choices she faces. Through a minimalist and meditative narrative style and carefully composed shots, the film offers viewers a profound and intimate understanding of her life, as she grapples with the spiritual calling that pulls her away from her responsibilities as a mother. The film delves into the depths of human experience while shedding light on the conflicting forces that shape an individual's existence and allowing the viewer to engage with the story on a deeper level.
- **Ana Vijdea** is an artist who works predominantly with film and video. She holds a BA in Cinematography and Media from Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj (RO), and an MFA in Film from Syracuse University, NY (US) where she studied under the auspices of the Fulbright program. Throughout her studies she made several films that were screened and awarded at various international film festivals such as IDFA-International Documentary Festival Amsterdam, True/False, Doclisboa, and DocEdge among others. In 2017 she was named one of the "25 New Faces of Independent Cinema" by Filmmaker Magazine.

Inhale/Exhale , 2022



Sound-art movie. Sounds of nature of wild Kamchatka turn into Music. The music of the elements confronts human civilization.

# Inhale/Exhale

## by Andrey Silvestrov

- "Inhale/Exhale," presents a mesmerizing blend of nature, imagery, and sound in a meditative and captivating manner. This sound-art movie immerses viewers into the wild landscapes of Kamchatka, transforming the nature's sound into a compelling and evocative form of music. As the natural world unfolds before the viewers, it juxtaposes the music of the elements with the advancement of human civilization, creating a cinematic contrast that invites reflection and contemplation.
- Andrey Silvestrov Movie and theatre director, artist and producer. Graduated from the faculty of Art History of the Russian State University of Humanities and later from Boris Yukhananov's Workshop of Individual Directing. His works in cinema as director and producer include Volga-Volga (2006), Kandinsky Award for the Best Media Project of the Year; Brain (2010), the Best Experimental Film Award of the Syracuse International Film Festival in New York; Birmingham Ornament (2011), Discovery Award of the Horizons Programme at The Venice International Film Festival; Birmingham Ornament-2 (2013), Special Prize of the Rome Film Festival; Russia As a Dream (2016), a collective work of the participants of the KanskFilm Festival, Top Prize of Kinishock Festival; Ice Hole (2017), premiered at Kinotavr Film Festival. Imprint in motion (2021) is a cross-media project fusing the fine arts, contemporary dance, music and film-making.  
Up and Down (2023) - In 2008-2016, 2020, 2021 – director of the annual Innovation Awards in the sphere of contemporary art. As a director and artist participated in "Phantom- Knight" Exhibition Museum "Tsaritsyno" (2017), "Poetry and Performance" Exhibition, New Synagogue Zilina, Slovakia (2017), "Poetry and Performance" Exhibition, Sheddhalle, Zurich, Switzerland (2018), "Space hypnosis. Imaginary architecture" Exhibition Museum "Tsaritsyno" (2018), Multi-media Installation for permanent exhibition Museum "Tsaritsyno" (2019), Installation "Clay" for Ceramics Exhibition Museum "Tsaritsyno" (2021). World Language Exhibition (video installation) at the Pushkin State Museum of Arts . Also as an artist took part in Biennales of Contemporary Art in Bergen, Kiev, Odessa, Istanbul and other exhibitions.



## Celebrating The Next Twinkling - 1999



Within the span of less than 3 minutes, two girls' mood shifts from euphoric joy to extreme fear, ultimately leading to aggression.

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# Celebrating The Next Twinkling

## by Boryana Rossa



- In "Celebrating the Next Twinkling" , the unpredictable nature of change over time is vividly depicted through the experiences of its characters. In less than three minutes, the film takes us on a rollercoaster of emotions, from euphoric joy to extreme fear and aggression. This swift transformation of mood highlights the idea that life is a continuous series of peaks and troughs, where no emotion or state is eternal. The film's sequences, meticulously crafted, trace the fluctuations of emotions, highlighting how they serve as catalysts for our actions. Boryana's use of electronic media and techno-aesthetics of her generation adds a contemporary twist to this exploration of change, bridging the gap between artistic practices in the East and the West. Rapid and unforeseeable transformations, mirroring the dramatic shifts in the world, from political upheavals to global events that can alter our lives in the blink of an eye.
- Boryana Rossa is an interdisciplinary artist and curator who works in the fields of electronic arts, film, video, performance and photography. In 2004 together with the Russian artist and film maker Oleg Mavromatti, Rossa establishes UTRAFUTURO—an international group of artists engaged with issues of technology, science and their social implications. In 2012 Rossa has finished her PhD on Post Cold -War Gender Performances. Cross-cultural examination of gender representations viewed through Soviet, Russian and Bulgarian film re-enactments, in the Department of Arts, at Rensselaer, Troy, NY. She is also a director of Sofia Queer Forum, together with philosopher and activist Stanimir Panayotov. Recently she completed a residency for the research and development of the bio-art project "The Mirror or Faith" related to genetic predisposition of spirituality. PhD in Electronic Arts (RPI, Troy, NY, 2012) and Associate Professor in Department of Film and Media Arts at Syracuse University, NY.



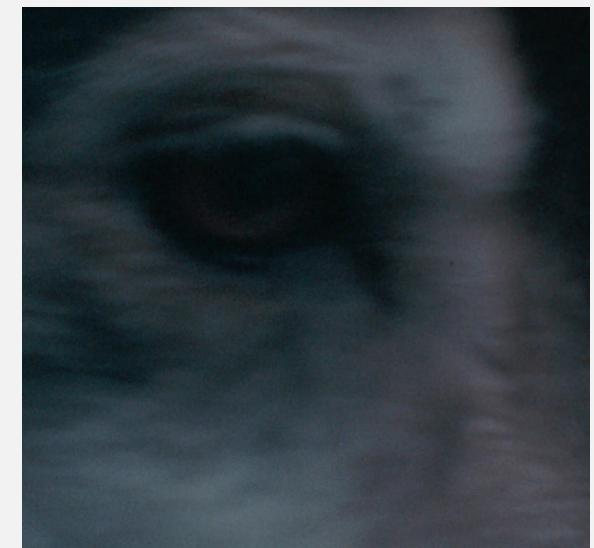
parenthesis  
vasilios papaioannu

In this lonely contemplation of a past summer, the ancient promontory becomes a parenthetical projection of frantic lines and alternating impressions.

# Parenthesis , 2021

## by Vasilios Papaioannu

- "Parenthesis" is a brief, impressionistic poem that emancipates inserted thoughts from their master. It employs mirroring bookends to emphasize the material's role as the dominant focal point, where the natural and civilized worlds momentarily converge. The film's intense, urgent portrayal of the sea keeps external distractions at bay. Using a Super 8 camera for the most part, Papaioannu cut together four and a half minutes of abstract consciousness, concluding with a woman's dive into the water. The dreamlike aesthetics of film stock, aptly complement the human cognition. Against the backdrop of pounding surf, disconnected moments prompt contemplation on existence, life, death, and recurring patterns.
- Vasilios Papaioannu is a filmmaker, photographer and mixed media artist currently based in Washington, DC. In his work Papaioannu explores the fleeting dreamscapes of reality using noise, movement and disturbance. He hybridizes different modes of filmmaking, unifying variegated media, primarily 16mm film, digital video and archival footage. His works have been shown in various venues around the world, such as Crossroads at SFMOMA, Anthology Film Archives, Athens International Film + Video Festival, Cork International Film Festival, Festifreak, Analogica, Cámara Lúcida, Engauge Film Festival, EXiS, L' Alternativa, Antimatter [media art], Montreal Underground Film Festival, Revelation Perth Film Festival and Sharjah Film Platform. Papaioannu holds an MA in Communication, Text Semiotics and Cinema from the University of Siena in Italy and an MFA in Film and Cinematography from Syracuse University in New York. Papaioannu is currently an Assistant Professor at the Cathy Hughes School of Communications, Department of Media, Journalism, and Film at Howard University.



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CURATED BY  
SOUDEBEH MORADIAN



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