Keswick Film

September - December 2019



Now in our 21st Year!

The Best of World Cinema



Keswick Film at the Alhambra St John's Street Keswick



www.keswickfilmclub.org





Keswick Film Club comes of Age!

Keswick Film Club enters its 21st year! You might ask 'What is the point of a film club?' Our club began life in 1998 with the simple intention of trying to bring films to Keswick on Sunday nights that would not be shown otherwise; foreign movies, some by first-time directors and, yes, even some arty ones. The idea of a film festival started the following year. The popularity of the films made the programmers more adventurous, expanding their choices to the best of World Cinema: by 2004, 'Whale Rider' (from New Zealand) brought in an audience of 241. The festival, meanwhile, had become an annual event, showing films at both the Alhambra and Theatre by the Lake, where 'March of the Penguins' (from France) showed to 256 people in 2006. We have continued showing the best of World Cinema to this day, regularly getting well over 100 people to our most

popular films (but happy to show more obscure films to small audiences on occasion!) and recently still equalling those early numbers: 241 people crammed themselves into the Alhambra to see 'Edie' in 2018, whilst we had more than 150 people at three films last year.

And it isn't just you that like the Club! Along the way we have won many awards from the British Federation of Film Societies (now 'Cinema for All') including **Best Programme** four times, Best Website and even Film Society of the Year.

The Club also prides itself on being friendly so why not come along and give us a try? You may not enjoy every film we show, but we are sure you will enjoy a lot of them. There is no need to join, just come along and see for yourself!



We really hope to see you one Sunday night. There will always be one of us in the foyer waiting to greet you - why not pop in and say hello?

> Vaughan Ames Club Chair

COMMITTEE 2019

Vaughan Ames (017687 80969), info@keswickfilmclub.org

Secretary: Roger Gook

Vice Chair: David Miller Membership Secretary: Elspeth Payne Treasurer: Paul Titley Committee Members: Ian Payne (Festival Co-ordinator), Ann Martin, Stephen Brown (Webmaster), Angela Jackson, Alan Naylor,

Stephen Pye, Tom Rennie, Mike Newns, Nicki Baker

Where are these films shown?

We are very lucky to be able to show both the Club and the Festival films in the (newly decorated!) Alhambra Cinema. Walk from the Market Square at the south end (by The Royal Oak) and keep going up St. John's Street for 200 metres until you see the Alhambra on your right. Now over a century old, the Alhambra is a 'must-see' in its own right!

When are these films shown?

Most Club films are screened on Sundays at 5pm, but check in this brochure: there are two Club 'seasons', each with its own brochure, available in and around Keswick (e.g. Library & Booths).

The 21st Keswick Film Festival is from 27 February 2020 to 1 March 2020.

For more information **Email** us - info@keswickfilmclub.org or see our award-winning **website** - www.keswickfilmclub.org.

You can follow us on Facebook - Keswickfilm

or **Twitter** - @keswickfilm.

We even have a weekly email - see our website to signup.

How much will it cost?

Not only do we bring you these great films from around the world, but they won't cost you the Earth either! Even if you do not want to join, it will only cost you £6.50 to see a film - or only £3.00 for students, under 16s and benefit claimants.

...and what if I join the Film Club?

Then the real savings start! For £10 per year, you get:-

- A reduction of £1.50 on all Club screenings (to £5.00)
- £1 off Film Festival screenings
- £1 off Alhambra's own screenings on Wednesday (or Sunday in the summer)
- The option to buy Season passes: the autumn pass this year will get you in to all 15 films for £50
- To attend Caldbeck Area Film Society and Brampton Film Club at members' rates and vice versa
- A copy of this brochure posted to you each season
- A copy of 'Talking Pictures', our members' newsletter

Join at The Alhambra Cinema at any club screening. A membership form is available from our website or at the cinema. Post your application to the membership secretary at 10 Briar Bank, Cockermouth, CA13 9DL.

Can I help run the Film Club?

We are always looking for extra help, both for the club and the festival. Just see us after a film, or email us and we'll get back to you. Thank you in advance!

Sunday 8th September at 5pm

CAPERNAUM (Capharnaüm)

Director: Nadine Labaki. Lebanon 2018 (15, F) 2hr 6min. In Arabic with English subtitles.



We open this year with an amazing film that we couldn't get last season; nominated for Oscar, Golden Globe and BAFTA awards for best Foreign Language Film and for the Palme d'Or at Cannes, we felt we had to give you a chance to see it. The film follows a twelve-year-old boy, Zain, who is forced to wander the streets of Beirut trying to make a living where he can; he is one of the many thousands of unregistered children in Lebanon who have no access to schooling, medical care or travel documents. But this is no sad story or even a tear-jerker: Zain is fighting back. 'As the film opens, [he] is in court, suing his neglectful parents for having given birth to him. The piercing child's-eye view of his chaotic Beirut life, to which we flash back, suggests he has a case' - Kate Stables, Sight & Sound.

Filmed by award-winning Nadine Labaki using the real-life experiences of her non-professional cast, we feel a real anger at the plight of these kids (Using my first ever quote from the

Bible, 'And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be thrown down to Hades!').

The acting is superb - 'Zain Al Rafeea (who was working as a delivery boy when cast) is simply excellent in the lead role. In a spiky, foul-mouthed performance, he gives Zain the wary, weary adult toughness of a youngster whose childhood has been stolen from him' - Kate Stables again.

An opener to enjoy, then, as a story, with acting to revel at; but also one to get us thinking...ready for what we hope is a great season ahead.



Sunday 15th September at 5pm

ASH IS PUREST WHITE (Jiang hu er nü)

Director: Zhangke Jia. China 2018 (15) 2hr 16min. In Mandarin with English subtitles.



'Zhangke Jia's belter of a film is part crime epic, part woman-seeks-justice flick, part state of the nation address. It takes the staples of the gangster flick - the mobster's moll, gang rivalries, violent shoot outs - as a

jumping off point for both a granular character study of a woman's resolve, and a macro portrait of China at the turn of the century where modernity is quickly outstripping tradition. Either way, it's a riveting picture driven by a fantastic perform-

ance by Zhao Tao as a wronged woman whose laser focus makes 'Kill Bill's' The Bride look lackadaisical in comparison' - Ian Freer, Empire. China has produced many epic movies and Zhangke Jia has been part of that for over 20 years. Here he continues in his niche, using a grand story to frame the ills of Chinese society today. Bring it on!



Sunday 22nd September at 5pm

VARDA BY AGNES (Varda par Agnès)

Director: Agnès Varda. France 2019 (15, F) 1hr 55min. In French and English with English subtitles.



Agnès Varda directed 55 films in her 60 years in the industry. She presented this documentary about herself at the Berlin Film Festival this year with film notes that said 'I don't want to do press, I don't want to speak about my work. After Berlin, the film will be shown instead of me speaking!' This became very prophetic when she died a month later, aged 90.

We have shown several of her films here, including 'Cleo from 5 - 7', 'Faces, Places' and 'The Beaches of Agnes' and despite the programming team's normal dislike of documentaries, we felt you would want to see this one. It 'takes the form of an illus-

trated lecture, it's designed as a swansong, a greatest hits showcase that revisits and consolidates her extensive body of work...Varda's tone remains generously intimate, friendly and unpretentious' - Simran Hans, Guardian. Whether you have seen her films or not, this should be fascinating and even...educational!



ARDA

Sunday 29th September at 5pm

BALLOON (Ballon)

Director: Michael Herbig. Germany 2018 (12A) 2hr 5min. In German with English subtitles.



Buckle up and prepare for adventure! The first of this season's films chosen by Members' ballot, this one should keep everyone on the edge of their seats...

As the title suggests, the film is about a balloon journey, but this one follows two families trying to go from East Germany to West Germany in 1979... if they get it wrong, they risk imprisonment or even death.

Based on a true story, we follow the Wetzel family; inspired by a magazine article from New Mexico, they set about gathering up the materials (including one thousand square metres of cloth!) and building their balloon with their friends the Strelzyks, all in total secrecy from the Stasi and potential informants. They spent eighteen months preparing, watching weather forecasts and waiting for the ideal night with a strong Northerly wind to make the attempt; but the Stasi were on their trail...

Made in 2018, the release coincided with the 28th anniversary of reunification and has caused some controversy.

"In the year 2018, when many people are bickering over free-

dom, democracy and fractious GDR biographies, the cold war in which the balloon escape takes place seems very distant", von Uslar wrote [in Die Zeit]. "The land of desire, West Germany, for which thousands of refugees risked their lives between 1961 and 1989 no longer exists" - Kate Connelly, Observer. This hasn't stopped German audiences flocking to see the film, and visiting Pößneck, the village where the balloon was built. We might not get to Pößneck, but we can share in the adventure here in Keswick...



Sunday 6th October at 5.30pm (note later start!) LAST SUMMER plus Q&A with Director

Director: Jon Jones. UK 2018 (15) 1hr 34min. In English.



For those of you brought up in the countryside, remember those blissful, seemingly endless summers, playing games when you were young? Or for us townies, holidays away which went all too quickly... well this is the world we go back to with four young lads in remote Wales. Davy and brother Iwan run wild through the woods with their friends Rhys and Robbie, enjoying their little paradise... until a tragedy occurs.

The adults take over - of course - and try to work out what happened, and what to do next, always ignoring young Davy and keeping him out of their conversations. He realises that they really don't understand and that it is up to him to work it all out.

The film reviewers praise the young actors - especially Noa Thomas as Davy - and Jon Jones' directing; showing everything from a child's perspective is never easy for an adult, but

'you get the sense that Jones truly understands and treasures the foolish heroism of young boys' - Leslie Felperin, Guardian.

'Even in the darkest places it finds moments of joy and wonder, whilst the banter between the boys is beautifully observed and full of humour. Most importantly, it captures the children's perspective on life perfectly and uses it to challenge adult assumptions about what's best for them - or for anyone dealing with trauma. The result is a cinematic gem' - Jennie Kermode, Eye for Film.



We are pleased to announce that the director, Jon Jones will be here to answer your questions after the film.

Sunday 13th October at 5pm

PAIN AND GLORY (Dolor y gloria)

Director: Pedro Almodóvar. Spain 2019 (15) 1hr 53min. In Spanish with English subtitles.



Just about every critic has this down as the best film Almodóvar has done for some time and, as we like his films here in Keswick. this should be a treat for

Antonio Banderas plays Salvador Mallo (plays Almodóvar: this is semiautobiographical), an age-

ing director who has not made a film in a while. We follow his suffering and memories through this 'achingly beautiful' film. 'Almodóvar's colors...aren't just a stimulant but an energy source, like sugar: they get the eyes busy and keep them working, in turn heating up the brain's furnace. And before long, the heart starts pumping harder as well. Everything about 'Pain and Glory' is awake and alive, and Almodóvar's nerve endings become ours, too - (Stephanie Zacharek, Time).



Sunday 20th October at 5pm

ANIARA

Directors: Pella Kagerman and Hugo Lilja. Sweden 2018 (18, F) 1hr 46min. In Swedish and Spanish with English subtitles.



cruise ship, ferrying the wealthiest survivors of a dying Earth to a new home on Mars. When the Aniara gets knocked off course, a three-week voyage gets an updated ETA of "TBA." While the staff and the customers try to distract themselves with shopping, arcades and discos, as the years drag on, the ship's culture degrades...' - Noel Murray, LA Times.

Not so much a Sci-fi movie as a philosophical look at what humans might do when threatened with disaster (seems appropriate!), this looked too interesting to ignore. Just what would we do?

Sunday 27th October at 5pm

WOMAN AT WAR (Kona fer í stríð)

Director: Benedikt Erlingsson. Iceland 2018 (12A) 1hr 40min. In Icelandic, Spanish, English and Ukrainian with English subtitles.

In a world where climate change has become the biggest issue of our time, it is not surprising that films should be made about fighting it, but you will be surprised by the way this Icelandic

comedy-drama-thriller handles it.

Members' choice

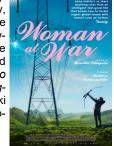
Our hero is a middleaged woman, Halla, who is a choir leader by day and has been trying to adopt a child for years, but we meet her walking across a vast moorland with her bow and arrows. Her target is not any animal though: she is after the electric wires held up by pylons. The

tension is high right from the beginning, though maybe the threepiece band playing on the moor is a little unexpected... 'It's a striking introduction to one of the most original and exciting characters to emerge from recent European cinema' - Nikki Baughan, Sight and Sound.

Our eco-warrior has taken on the aluminium industry which she believes is ruining the local countryside, supported by the government which is frightened of losing the Chinese investment involved. Rather than make this 'a gritty political pot-boiler', director Benedikt Erlingsson (we had his 'Of Horses and Men' here in 2014) 'weaves a captivating dark comedy from these urgent, quite chilling issues' - Aimee Knight, Little White Lies. He is very ably assisted by the star Halldóra Geirharðsdóttir who plays Halla and her identical twin Asa: she '...is phenomenal. Showing a flair for both drama and comedy' - Nikki Baughan again.

The storyline weaves its way between Halla and Asa, with some beautiful side stories (Halla's choir is hilarious, as is a poor cy-

cling tourist who I won't tell you about...). Erlingsson, who also co-wrote the story, gradually extends the plot, chasing the 'Mountain Woman' into the hills and following her home life into Ukraine. You will have to come to see the final mix of comedy and drama for yourself, but 'there can be no doubt that she is one of the year's strongest, most inspirational heroes' - Nikki Baughan. Then we can discuss what happens at the end...



Sunday 3rd November at 5pm

THE CROSSING (Guo chun tian)



Director: Bai Xue. China 2018 (12A, F) 1hr 39min. In Chinese and Cantonese with English subtitles.



The relationship between Hong Kong and China is big news as we go to press; this film is based on the weird fact that there is a black market of iPhones going from Hong Kong to China, where they were probably made in the first place.

'Huang Yao is shy 16year-old Peipei, who's frantically saving up for a holiday in Japan with her rich best friend Jo. Peipei commutes daily between her home in the Chinese Shenzhen and school Hong Kong. little make а money she smuggles

for a gang. It begins harmlessly enough, slipping a couple of iPhones wrapped in cling film into her school bag' - Cath Clarke, Guardian.

Newcomer Bai Xue is more interested in Peipei's character than the smuggling though, concentrating her cameras on the gradual change in Peipei and her relationships as she gets more involved. She lives with her mother in Shenzen, but her father lives in Hong Kong giving her access to school there.

Both parents have new partners, so when she meets Sister Hua, who runs the gang of smugglers, she seems 'a more appealing mother-figure...But her youthful naivety leaves her well out of her depth in both her relationships and the criminal underworld'-Tony Rayns, Sight & Sound.

That is not to say that Bai Xue's film is not dramatic; she keeps up the tension at the crossings, using hand-held cameras and changes of music to show Peipei's nervousness, but, as Cath Clarke goes on to

say, 'She has a light touch and a precise way of finding the emotion in scenes. It took her a decade after graduating film school to get this film made – it's worth the wait'.

Sunday 10th November at 5pm **DONBASS**



Director: Sergey Loznitsa. Ukraine 2018 (15) 2hr 2min. In Russian and Ukranian with English subtitles.



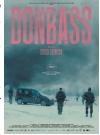
We had a double take when we saw the reviews of 'Donbass': a Ukranian black comedy? Really? Looking closer, that reaction is probably what director Sergey Loznitsa ('In the Fog') wants. His film is trying to show the sheer madness of the war in Ukraine, '...a place where there are still memories of the second world war, tribal loyalties concerning the Russia that saved Ukraine from Nazi Germany and fascism — but also, on the other side, the Stalinist terror-famine visited on Ukraine before the war' - Peter Bradshaw, Guardian.

Loznitsa does this by a series of episodes '...fuelled by ...collisions between the grave and the comic, a tonal oscillation mastered by Loznitsa in his documentaries and carried over here to support a vision of a society cracking under the weight of its own inconsistencies, corruption and mob mentalities' - Carson Lund, Slant.

As David Parkinson says in the Radio Times, 'Watching this... it becomes dismayingly clear why the people of Ukraine voted in 2019 to entrust the country's presidency to a comedian known for playing a decent politician in a TV series. From its opening se-

quence showing how fake news is concocted to control the thought processes of a divided nation, this withering and soberingly acute satire has a ring of authenticity...'.

So we can expect to laugh here, but possibly the same way you might laugh at some of the strange things that Trump comes out with; fortunately 'The compunction to tell the truth remains, which is why Sergei Loznitsa's body of work is so indispensable: It refuses to be complacent' - Jay Weisberg, Variety.



Sunday 17th November at 5pm

THE CHAMBERMAID (La camarista)

Director: Lila Avilés. Mexico 2018 (15, F) 1hr 42min. In Spanish with English subtitles.



film about one woman's fight to get to the top; in this case literally as well as figuratively as promotion means cleaning the floor above in this Mexican hotel.

For the time being, however, Eve has a world of grindingly hard work. She has to leave her young son behind in

the care of a neighbour, and has to get up even earlier in the morning than everyone else because she is also going to adult education classes' -

Peter Bradshaw, Guardian. 'This is brilliantly confident film-making. Avilés does not need to leave the building to examine class tensions and cultural misunderstandings. weaving her critique through the hotel's denizens' - Simran Hans, Guardian.





Sunday 24th November at 5pm

PERMISSION (Araghe Sard)

Director: Soheil Beiraghi. Iran 2018 (NA, F) 1hr 26min. In Persian with English subtitles.



Imagine if Harry Kane had been forced to miss the world cup because his wife would not let him go. Based on a true story, this is what happened to Afrooz in Iran, when her passport was refused because her husband had not given his permission.

Beyond her love of the game itself and her commitment to her country's success, Afrooz's identity is at stake. She has played for

11 years and been married for just six; why is being a wife then assumed to define her? A film that urges its audience to do more than just feel sad and sign a couple of petitions, 'Permission' brims with an anger that goes beyond that of Afrooz. It's less interested in tragedy than in making demands, less in pity than in emphasising how much potential is squandered when women are treated in this way. It's full of hunger for justice' - Jennie Kermode, Eye for Film.



Sunday 1st December at 5pm

THE BIRD CATCHER

Director: Ross Clarke. Norway 2019 (NA) 1hr 40min. In English.



Set in Norway in 1942, 'The Bird Catcher' follows the life of a young Jewish girl, Esther, after her father has been arrested by the Nazis. Her safe, middle class life falls apart and she is forced to go on the run to survive. She ends up in the middle of nowhere on a farm owned by Johan, a Nazi sympathiser, where she tries to remain unrecognized. Her only real friend is the farmer's son, Aksel, who knows the truth. Aksel suffers from cerebral palsy and has been taught by his father that Jews are not people, but as he gets to know her he begins to identify with her; he too is not accepted for who he is...

The film's writer, Trond Morten Kristensen, started writing the script in 2003 as he thought the Norwegian collaboration with the Nazis was being overlooked - 760 Jews were deported from Norway, whilst 900 survived by escaping to neutral Sweden. The story was picked up by the producer Lisa Black in 2008, but has only just been completed.

As Lauren Bray says in the Santa Barbara Film Festival review,

'The backdrop produces stunning winter images of coastal Norway near the Swedish border. The snow-frosted forests and idyllic countryside provide a nice juxtaposition to the suspense and fear the characters experience. The audience provided several audible gasps through every twist and turn in the plot.

The film is powerful and engaging, displaying deep loss due to war as well as forgiveness and redemption. It shows Esther's cunning and determination to survive in a world that doesn't want her to'.



Sunday 8th December at 5pm

BY THE GRACE OF GOD (Grâce à Dieu)

Director: François Ozon. France 2018 (NA) 2hr 17min. In French with English subtitles.



The film that takes off where 'Spotlight' finished. Not content with investigating historic child abuse scandals in the Catholic church, Francis Ozon released this drama around the trial of Cardinal Philippe Barbarin before the actual trial was finished. 'Not a documentary exposé, as the filmmaker once intended, because that would do little more than reiterate the facts these brave men have already worked so hard to disseminate through the media. And certainly not a psychosexual thriller in the vein of Ozon's previous work...No, this would have to be a sturdy portrait of everyday heroism - a sober but compelling drama that rewarded its real subjects by casting famous movie stars to play them on the big screen' - David Ehrlich, Indiewire.

The film follows the story of three semi-fictional victims of sexual abuse by the same priest, Bernard Preynat, after one of them, Alexandre, discovers he is still a serving priest many years later. He takes his case to Cardinal Barbarin who professes concern but does little about it. Once other victims hear about the case and come forward, Barbarin's position becomes harder to sustain. 'All three men's anguish, however, is put into relief by that of Emmanuel, one of Preynat's most serially exploited charges. Unlike his peers, the near-derelict Emmanuel has never managed to push past trauma to get his adult life on track; as the men form an activist union to "lift the burden of silence" on their abuse, he finally finds a place to belong' - Guy Lodge, Variety.

GRÂCE À DIEU

A very different film from Ozon's usual, then - viz 'Frantz', seen here in 2017 - but 'Ozon spins a palpable web of strength between his characters, so that even the most fragile among them can find the superhuman resolve they need to relive their trauma' - Ehrlich again.

Sunday 15th December at 5pm

PHOTOGRAPH

Director: Ritesh Batra. India 2018 (15) 1hr 49min. In Hindu and Gujarati with English subtitles.



For the many of us who came to see 'The Lunchbox' here in 2014, 'Photograph' will be your first Christmas present this year; the latest from director Ritesh Batra treads a similar path. Instead of a misrouted lunchbox, it all starts for our potential lovers here with a photograph.

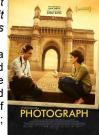
Rafi scrapes a living taking photos of tourists 'in front of Mumbai's Gateway monument. He sells his services to tourists by promising that "years from now, when you look at the photograph you will feel the sun on your face, the wind on your hair, and you will hear those voices again." If they do not have a picture, he tells them, "it will be all gone." - Nell Minow, Roger Ebert.com. One of these tourists is Miloni, a student studying accountancy, but wanting to be an actress.

When Rafi learns that his grandmother is refusing to take any medicine until he finds a potential wife, what could he possibly do? Naturally, he sends her the picture he has taken of Miloni. What could possibly go wrong? You guessed it: grandmother wants to meet Miloni. There follows a string of meetings where Rafi and Miloni pretend to be dating...but will it ever become more than pretence? You probably guessed that too...

'This is a film that ends with the two characters walking out of a movie theatre, with one of them saying, "The stories are all the

same in movies these days." It may be that the stories in movies are all the same. But it can be lovely when a movie like this one finds a different way to tell them' - Minow again.

So we finish our 21st Autumn Season with a movie which we hope will put you in a good mood for your Christmas festivities. We'll be back in January with more world cinema, and we have our 21st Film Festival at the end of February. Have a great Christmas everyone; see you in 2020!



Sunday 8th 5pm Capernaum

Lebanon, (15, F) Can a young boy escape the streets of Beirut?

Sunday 15th 5pm Ash is Purest White

China, (15) She went down for a crime, but she is coming back.

Sunday 22nd 5pm

Varda by Agnes
Agnes Varda showcases her own films. France, (15, F)

Sunday 29th Balloon 5pm

Iceland, (12A)

Germany, (12A) There must be some way out of here...

Sunday 6th	5.30	Last Summer plus Q&A with director
UK, (15)		Will anyone listen to a youth's version of events?
Sunday 13th	5pm	Pain and Glory
Spain, (15)		A film director reflects on his life as it all goes wrong.
Sunday 20th	5pm	Aniara
Sweden, (18, F)		A world of people reflect on life after it all goes wrong.
Sunday 27th	5pm	Woman at War

A woman does her best to stop her world going wrong.

Carlady ord	Opini	The Grossing
China, (12A, F)		Is it worth the risk to improve her life?
Sunday 10th	5pm	Donbass
Ukraine, (15)		A black comedic look at the madness of war.
Sunday 17th	5pm	The Chambermaid
Mexico, (15, F)		struggles to get to clean the top floor .
Sunday 24th	5pm	Permission
Iran, (NA,F)		Footballer cannot play for Iran; her husband says n

Norway, (NA)		Young Jewish girl on the run from the Nazis.
Sunday 8th	5pm	By the Grace of God
France, (NA)		Spotlighting the cover-ups in the Catholic church.
Sunday 15th	5pm	Photograph
India (15)		It all started with him taking her photo

5pm The Bird Catcher

Note: F Rated films denote significant female involvement - director and/or writer Front page picture is from 'Balloon' (29th September)



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