



8th Syros International Film Festival (SIFF)



Newsletter #4

OFF SEASON

#siff2020 #offseason

Monitor

A film program curated by the Syros International Film Festival (SIFF) every Thursday of August 2020 at 23:30 on ERT2

The Syros International Film Festival collaborates with the Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation (ERT) and presents a film program of four (4) weekly screenings on public television, in an effort to extend the actions of this year's festival theme "Off Season" to a new viewing format.

In its commitment to the development of a new kind of cinephilia in the digital age, SIFF seeks to present to a wide audience underseen films that are usually available through other distribution networks such as movie theaters and festivals, as well as exhibitions, museums, and galleries.

Four (4) screenings, equal to the number of days of this year's Syros International Film Festival (3–6 September 2020), eight (8) films that will have their Greek television premiere this August. **Tune in every Thursday in August (6, 13, 20, 27), at 23:30 on ERT2.**

For **Monitor #1**, SIFF introduces itself to viewers who have not yet had the opportunity to visit any of the Festival's events by offering a program referring to previous festival editions. The SIFF screening series on ERT2 begins with *Only Men*, a film by Eva Stefani, a director who participated in the Festival as Artist in Focus in 2019 and who has presented her work at the Festival numerous times, and with *Fraud*, a film that was screened at the Festival in 2016. This program (Monitor #1) resonates with the current conditions resultant of COVID-19 as the films capture the contradictory experiences of complete isolation and overwhelming interconnection in times of social crisis.



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The **Monitor #2, #3, and #4** programs include films that are presented for the first time as part of a SIFF screening. For some of the films, this screening on ERT2 is a Greek premiere. All of the films are in conversation with this year's theme "Off Season," together functioning as a prelude to the main Festival that will take place in early September in Syros (3–6 September). The selected films will convey the experience of movement, wandering, and transcendence; the ways in which material objects and human labor convey the spirit of "another" (or foreign) place; and the sense of being "unstuck" from time, "holiday" from everyday life.

Read in detail which films will constitute the "Monitor" program, in order of the date on which they will be screened:

Program and Film Descriptions:

Monitor #1 | Thursday, 6 August, 2020

Only Men

2019, Greece, 70 min.

Director: Eva Stefani

Eva Stefani's work, presented in the Pavilion of Greece at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, retells human stories that at first sight seem marginal, of little importance, yet unravel as significant paradoxes of realism and fiction. Small ceremonies of private life. "An infinitely large number of infinitesimally small actions," as per Tolstoy's description of history. She cites her own previous filmic stories and subversive acts to archival footage in her work. And like the pages of a diary, it reveals the intimacy of the human condition through an unofficial telling of the past that casts light upon history.

Fraud

2016, USA, 52 min.

Director: Dean Fleischer-Camp

Between 2008-15, a man filmed his life obsessively and uploaded it to YouTube. The hundreds of hours of raw footage revealed a very personal and intimate look into an American family's life and their struggle to survive. *Fraud* is a film created by piecing this colossal trove of home video into a narrative.



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Monitor # 2 | Thursday, 13 August, 2020

Gambling, Gods and LSD

2002, Canada / Switzerland, 180 min.

Director: Peter Mettler

A filmmaker's quest for transcendence becomes a three-hour trip across countries and cultures, between people, over time. From the scene of his childhood in Toronto, Peter Mettler sets out on a journey that includes evangelism at the airport strip, demolition in Las Vegas, tracings in the Nevada desert, chemistry and street life in Switzerland, and the coexistence of technology and divinity in contemporary India. Everywhere along the way, the same themes are found: thrill-seeking, luck, destiny, belief, expanding perception, and the craving for security in an uncertain world. Fact joins with fantasy; the search for meaning and the search for ecstasy begin to merge.

Monitor #3 | Thursday, 20 August, 2020

Hotel Diaries / episode: B&B

2005, UK, 6 min.

Director: John Smith

Made over six years in the hotels of six different countries, *Hotel Diaries* charts the 'War on Terror' era of Bush and Blair through a series of video recordings that relate personal experiences to the ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq and Israel/Palestine. In these works, which play upon chance and coincidence, the hotel room is employed as a 'found' film set, where the architecture, furnishing and decoration become the means by which the filmmaker's small adventures are linked to major world events.

Gallivant

1996, UK, 100 min.

Director: Andrew Kötting

A 6,000-mile journey zig-zagging around the coast of Britain, *Gallivant* is both an experimental travelogue and an intensely personal story. The director, his grandmother and daughter (who has learning difficulties) set out to travel all the way around the coastline of mainland Britain. They have adventures, meet strange characters and explore fishing villages on their journey. A documentation of the coast, through the eyes of real people, through meetings with genuine coastal residents, and through the places visited. The film is a snapshot of Britain today (complete with its past, which is part of today), and like a snapshot it may contain apparently irrelevant or unstructured elements; the background figure who wanders into the frame of a family group on the beach, may not be deliberately included, but their puzzled stare into the lens may transform and enhance the overall result. The viewer will have to confront their own assumptions about the way things are, rather than simply take on board the point of view of the film.



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Monitor #4 | Thursday, 27 August, 2020

Mountain Trip

1999, Austria, 4 min.

Director: Siegfried A. Fruhauf

Mountain Trip is a cinematic myriorama constructed of hundreds of Austrian postcards, which reflect a country's hackneyed trappings as no other medium can. The parameters of this experiment have been clearly defined: Two rows of postcards with mountain motifs (the cards in the upper row have been turned on their heads) are juxtaposed in such a way that mountains point to other mountains, the denouement of a massif butts up against a meadow, etc., resembling Chinese "cadavre exquis" cards which can be arranged to show an endless landscape.

Fake Fruit Factory

1986, USA, 22 min.

Director: Chick Strand

While its title may suggest an industrial film tracing an assembly line process to market, this documentary is less interested in products than in the people who make them—the young Mexican women who create decorative papier-mâché fruit and vegetables for a small handicraft facility. The story is told almost entirely through close-ups. The women do things—knead plaster, tear paper, apply paint, hang ornaments to dry, prepare food, care for children, count bills. As they work, they gossip and complain about men. The camera follows their faces and hands and the things that they produce. The gringo boss and his cousin, seen largely through glimpses of their faces, look on.

The Grand Bizarre

2019, USA, 60 min.

Director: Jodie Mack

A postcard from an imploded society. Bringing mundane objects to life to interpret place through materials, *The Grand Bizarre* transcribes an experience of pattern, labor, and alien[-]nation[s]. A pattern parade in pop music pairs figure and landscape to trip through the topologies of codification. Following components, systems, and samples in a collage of textiles, tourism, language, and music, the film investigates recurring motifs and how their metamorphoses function within a global economy.



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SIFF is held with the support of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF).

The 8th Syros International Film Festival is realized under the auspices and with support of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports.

You may stay informed about all the details and subsequent announcements of the #siff2020 program through SIFF's official website (syrosfilmfestival.org) as well as its official social media channels:

Facebook

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