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Two Steps Behind (2010 Poland 8min.) by Paulina Majda

Two Steps Behind is the story of a farmer's family with themes of partings, returns and goodbyes. It is a musically animated impression, which evidently refers to the issue of emigration, and is an attempt at answering the question "why?". Why did I decide to leave my home, my street, my place, my country? The story is based on a fragment of the book *All that Brightness* by Edward Stachura.

Mirror Man (1992 USA 18min.) by Andres Tapia-Urzu

A freak? A Superhero? An Alien? The protagonist of this video wears a skin suit completely covered with small mirrors. This personal and poetic piece follows the Mirror Man inside and outside, through urban and rural settings, from day to night. Light bounces off the mirrors, blinding at times, soft and inviting at others. Mirror Man's rhythm constantly changes, as does the tonal quality of the soundtrack. Mirror, mirror to my soul? Perhaps—every now and then we glimpse the video-maker in reflection as the Mirror Man walks through a forest or rolls across a field.

The Museum of Departures (2015 UK 5min.) by Gautam Valluri

The Gerrard Street Chinatown is perhaps London's greatest museum. Everything is displayed behind glass walls— people, actions, novelties, food items. It's the reconstruction of a culture that belongs to the other side of the world. A culture descended from a people that had departed their homeland. Through the glass's surface reflections, the artist sees reflections of himself and remembers sounds from his recent past and echoes of his own departures.

The Shout (2018 UK 9min.) by Tomasz Gwincinski

Under the surface of the facts swims the shapeless shadow. Beyond the dream within the dream it is the only substantial thing. What is left is the picture made from vibration... the shout that kills.

Ape Sh*t (2018 UK 18min.) by Nathanael Marklew

A young writer, James Fowler, deeply frustrated burns the first draft of his novel in its entirety. The following day James discovers a man apparently stabbed. Inexplicably, the deceased has on him an intact page from the previously destroyed manuscript.

Post Guayacan (2010 USA/Chile 2min.) by Andres Tapia-Urzu

Inspired by the picking moves and rhythms of the algae collectors of Guayacán Bay in Chile. The animated visual design of the video was interpreted as musical score for its soundtrack. Utopian landscapes and futuristic rituals of space create uncertain zones of reason.

Lampedusa (2019 UK 25min.) by Kaz Rahman

Originally made as part of Eduardo Miranda's live opera *Lampedusa*, the film is divided into three acts that encompass voyage/shadows, waterscape/sea creatures, cloudscape/birds.



SHORT FILMS THAT EMBODY IDEAS OF UTOPIA AND SOMETIMES DESCEND INTO STRANGE DYSTOPIAN SHADOW PLAYS

UTOPIAN LANDSCAPES



PROGRAMMER KAZ RAHMAN



PAULINA MAJDA (POLAND)



ANDRES TAPIA-URZUA (USA)



GAUTAM VALLURI (INDIA/FRANCE)



TOMASZ GWINCINSKI (UK)



NATHANAEL MARKLEW (UK)



KAZ RAHMAN (CANADA/UK)

20 FEBRUARY 6PM - PLYMOUTH ARTS CINEMA

DIRECTIONS SCREENING #3
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Tomasz Gwinciński (b.1963 Poland) Lives and Works in Plymouth, UK

Tomasz Gwincinski's work looks at relations between narrative film models and contemporary classical music forms / flows as well as the role of cyber text and Oulipo ideas in the creative process. Gwincinski studied composition with Boguslaw Schaeffer at Kraków Music Conservatory and Film at Plymouth Collage of Art and Fal-mouth University. His independent music and compositions for ballet and theatre have been presented in festivals such as Audio Art Festival (Kraków Music Academy), Jazz Jamboree (Warsaw), The Point (New York City), Trans Musicales (Rennes/Paris) and MCHAT Art Theatre (Moscow). Gwincinski has written / directed the feature films *Sherlock Holmes and People of Tomorrow* which premiered at the Mozig Art Festival (2018) in Warsaw and *Revolution 9* which is currently in post-production.

Paulina Majda (b. 1979 Poland) Lives and Works in Lodz, Poland

Paulina Majda (PhD) is a director, art director and designer. She graduated from the Animation Faculty at the Polish National Film School in Lodz and has been involved in various animation film productions as director, screenwriter, set designer and/or art director. Among them is the Oscar - winning movie *Peter and The Wolf* (dir. Suzie Templeton). *Two Steps Behind* has played in animation film festivals worldwide and was awarded distinction at the Animocje Festival in Bydgoszcz, Poland and won the award for best movie at Cutout Fest in Mexico. From 2010-2018 she worked at the Production Studio in Copernicus Science Centre in Warsaw where she directed the prize - winning fulldome animations *Dream To Fly* (2013) and *Hello Earth* (2017) which screened in planetariums and fulldome theatres globally.

Nathanael Marklew (b. 1997 UK) Lives and Works in Bristol, UK

Nathanael Marklew grew up in Plymouth and studied under Kaz Rahman at Plymouth College of Art; he is especially interested in the work of classic post-war American and European Film Directors. This is the premiere of *Apesh*t* which will have an upcoming screening at Allsorts Film Festival (Glasgow).

Kaz Rahman (b.1973 Canada) Lives and works in Plymouth, UK and Ontario, Canada

Kaz Rahman is an Artist/Filmmaker whose style explores the intersection between Islamic artistic expression, the natural elements and contemporary culture. His feature films *Salaat* (2010) and *Deccani Souls* (2012) can be described as 'Art Cinema' in the tradition of 1960's European and 1990's Iranian cinema while also exploring the thin line between fiction and documentary and themes such as time, memory and narrative dreams. His work has screened or exhibited at venues such as Anthology Film Archives (New York City), National Film Board of Canada (Toronto), Salar Jung Museum (Hyderabad), India Habitat Centre (Delhi), Andy Warhol Museum (Pittsburgh), The San Jose Museum of Art (California), Bogazici Film Festival (Istanbul) and SUFICINE Festival (Konya).

Andres Tapia-Urzua (b. 1962 USA) Lives and Works in Pittsburgh, USA

Andres Tapia-Urzua / ATU is an artist practicing in video, music, performance, interactivity, installation and cultural theory. His work continually explores the liminality of a cross-cultural, cross-technological identity. Fusing aesthetics, theory and political issues, he offers us a poignant and fascinating look at cultural identity, where social alienation, high-tech environments and the poetics of globalization are represented in sharp and accessible ways. His work has been published and exhibited in venues such as the Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley, California; the Global Multimedia Interface in London, UK; the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, USA; the Havana Biennale in Cuba; the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, USA; the National Museum of Bellas Artes in Santiago, Chile; and the Milan Biennale in Italy.

Gautam Valluri (b. 1985 India) Lives and Works in Paris, France

Gautam Valluri's work explores the relationship between architectural spaces and personal histories through the materiality of celluloid. He is the recipient of Masters Degrees in Experimental Film from Kingston University London and Université Paris VIII. His work has been exhibited at Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in London, Cinematek in Brussels, CCCB in Barcelona, The Korean Film Archive in Seoul and at various film festivals including International Film Festival Rotterdam, BFI London Film Festival, Edinburgh International Film Festival, European Media Art Festival and Images Festival.

Utopian Landscapes

The idea of a city celebrating a voyage from 400 years ago that was about people leaving to find a new and better life free from persecution across the Atlantic ocean in the 'new world' is strange on many levels- the voyage of the Mayflower (1620) represents a socio-political history that is mythical in its symbolism yet mostly removed from everyday life for those that live here. It is a grand recognition and salute to citizens of England who by and large decided to leave this place and search for something completely unknown; it can also be viewed as a niche caricature of what Americans may wish to see in connecting to a linear past or a symbol of the Colonial swagger that once defined Britain to those on the other side (and around the world).

In some ways this is the legacy of Plymouth- a historical port city that is filled with pirating legends, fitted with a powerful Navy and yet darkened by its WWII destruction and populated with many who despair of their place in the order of everything. The film, video and animated works in Utopian Landscapes embody ideas of Utopia that sometimes use Plymouth as a backdrop or show a dystopian 'New World' or simply reflect on the concept of place.

Cinematic Tradition: *The Shout* and *ApeSh*t*

Plymouth offers a myriad of interesting locations such as the vast ocean to nearby moors and an eclectic architectural mash-up that ranges from narrow cobblestone streets to neo-brutalist constructions. Both filmmakers Tomasz Gwincinski and Nathanael Marklew make interesting use of the city that seems both familiar and dream-like. In Plymouth native Marklew's *ApeSh*t* we see the existential struggle of the archetype writer through the lens of rough alley-ways and solitary meditations (at landmarks such as Drake's Reservoir and the Hoe). The film builds upon a tradition of post-war cinema while managing to feel dramatically fresh through the locations and edit structure. Polish exile Gwincinski's *The Shout* meanwhile is a surreal trip in the tradition of 60's-70's Polish/East-European cinema where saturated colors sparkle and characters seem transported to their place in Plymouth from another time and place.

Video Aesthetic: *Mirror Man* and *Post Guayacan*

Andres Tapia-Urzua's body of work is deeply rooted in the form of video and the possibilities of the medium; instead of trying to replicate the 'look' of Film (which has been a pre-occupation of independent Filmmakers for the last 25 years) he explores the unique aspects of the videoesque. In *Post Guayacan* we see the Americas through a portrait of post-industrial and post-video algae collectors of Guayacán Bay in Chile. The industrial sound and rhythmic visuals feel like a dystopian video game. The early work *Mirror Man* pictures the American city at night with the enigmatic wanderer both lost and symbolic of a lonely march to an uncertain future. The soundtrack guides and poeticizes this grey world that is a reflection of ourselves.

Returning Home: *Museum of Departures* and *Two Steps Behind* and *Lampedusa*

The theme of diasporas living or returning to a place is a common one in late 20th and early 21st century art and cinema; the approach in some of these works is both varied and unique. In Gautam Valluri's *Museum of Departures* a kodak slide presentation helps to evoke both nostalgia and a unwavering distance for the viewer through the windows of London's Chinatown. In Kaz Rahman's *Lampedusa* we see a number of formal approaches that include animated creatures and repetitive edits to Eduardo Miranda's score (originally produced for the Opera of the same name which is set before Shakespeare's *The Tempest*); the locations of the historic and eternal cities of Rome and Istanbul represent a voyage from the old world to and through the endless sea/sky. Paulina Majda's *Two Steps Behind* is a wonderfully melancholic journey to the new world through bright and sometimes dream-like animation that comes back to the beginning with the question- Why did I decide to leave my home, my street, my place, my country?

Kaz Rahman
Plymouth February 2020