

## 27th JAMES RIVER FILM FESTIVAL

April 22-25, 2021

Virtually presenting 9 programs in 4 days!

All screenings free (donations suggested)

Order your festival shirt on-line & have it delivered!

Visit our website: [www.jamesriverfilm.org](http://www.jamesriverfilm.org)

### THURSDAY APRIL 22

8 pm

***One Man Dies a Million Times (dir: Jessica Oreck, 2019, 92 min.)***

Time is out-of-joint in this beautifully made feature debut by American director Oreck, a mix of history and sci-fi, a "true story set in the future". Ostensibly the love story of two botanists who meet while establishing a vital seed bank to ensure survival during the German siege of Stalingrad in WWII, the film is a tapestry of time and topics--about seeds and diversity, about love and war, about hunger of all kinds. And what it means to be human when your humanity has been stripped away. Somewhat reminiscent of Marker's *La Jetee* and Resnais' *Night and Fog*. A Richmond premiere!

### FRIDAY APRIL 23

7 pm

***True Uncut Tales from Andy Warhol's Silver Factory:***

***How Andy Invented a Superstar***

***& How Andy Discovered Lou Reed, the Velvet Underground and Nico***

***(dir: Patrick Nagle and Catherine O'Sullivan, 2018, 105 min.)***

When Andy opened the doors to the Factory in the mid-'60s, an inspiring muse appeared, Edie Sedgwick, who would become his most glamorous superstar. An unflinching portrait of the tragic "It" girl, and Andy's stable of unconventional superstars. Plus,

the history of Andy's collaborations with the Velvets, dating back to their earliest performances, and how Nico completed the picture. Directors Nagle and Shorr keep the stories moving with uncensored interviews of the participants and rare archival footage.

9 pm

***Akran/ 37-73 (dir: Richard Myers, 1969/1974, 118 min./60 min.)***

One of the most important of the American avant-garde filmmakers, Richard Myers' conceptual works rely heavily on sounds and imagery from his subconscious. He taught for many years at Kent State University and was a JRFF guest in 2001 and 2013. We offer these films with his kind permission.

on *Akran*:

"A work of ambition and great technical virtuosity--there's enough going on in *Akran* to command anyone's attention."--Roger Greenspun, NY Times

"May be the single most important event at this year's Chicago Film Festival...a work of overpowering originality forcing us to rethink our ideas about the film experience. It is the most influential film since Godard's early work."--Roger Ebert, Chicago Sun-Times

"A feature length deluge of incessant, brilliant bursts of images, it creates a Joyce-like, dense and somber mosaic of memory and sensory impressions, a texture instead of a plot, a dream like flow of visually induced associations realized to be a statement about America today--the alienation and atomization of technological consumer society is reflected in the very style of the film."--Amos Vogel, Film as a Subversive Art

on *37-73*:

"I think *37-73* is an extraordinary work...I am astonished by his skill in image-making, and his power to evoke the crazy pain of being an artist. It is a haunting work with unforgettable scenes."--James Broughton, Filmmaker

"It is Myers' great and particular gift to be able to give exquisitely precise objective form to the stream of his consciousness so that it evokes a profound sense of recognition. It's as if he tapped our collective subconscious."--Kevin Thomas, LA Times

## **SATURDAY APRIL 24**

**4 pm**

***Comic Book Confidential (dir: Ron Mann, 1988, 90 min.)***

Perhaps no other artistic medium of the 20th century displayed so much potential for expression yet was so overlooked or maligned. A film history of the art of the comic book in America, 1930s-1980s, that deftly incorporates the social fabric of the times, which the comics mirror and satirize. The film interviews twenty-two artists and writers including Will Eisner, R. Crumb, Bill Gaines, Jack Kirby, the Hernandez Bros...Winner of the Genie Award, Best Feature Documentary 1989.

**7 pm**

***Stalin Thought of You (dir: Kevin McNeer, 2008, 58 min.)***

***w/ On One Day of the Day of Gods (work-in-progress)***

*Stalin Thought of You* is an in-depth look at Russia's greatest political cartoonist, Boris Elimov, who died in 2008 at the age of 108. A friend and ally of Leon Trotsky (the film contains home movie footage of the pair), Boris finds himself later working under Josef Stalin. Tensions build when Elimov is further compromised by the certainty that Stalin had his journalist brother killed. Director and Richmond native McNeer befriended the cartoonist in his last years and was given access to Elimov's home movies, which gives us a look inside the Red Curtain like never before--there's even a scene of Stalin supervising Elimov at work! *Stalin Thought of You*

received its American premiere in 2009 at the 16th James River Film Festival.

*On One Day of the Day of Gods (work-in-progress)* The title comes from a traditional opening of folktales told on Soqotra, an archipelago of islands off the coast of Yemen, whose millennia of isolation have produced a time-capsule: one-third of all plants and animals exist nowhere else. It's been called a "Second Galapagos" and compared to Lovecraft's haunting fantasy land-scapes. The inhabitants speak an ancient Semitic language which had no writing system a decade ago. But as with the rest of the planet, this microcosmos is under threat--developers eye the island's pristine beaches, and visitors enthusiastically introduce the Internet, plastics, English, and other double-edged gifts of globalization that have begun to unravel the ecology and identity of the islands. The film is a series of brief portraits: a woman makes incense burners, a blacksmith dances at his forge, children harvest resin from the endangered "Dragon-Blood" tree, descendants of slaves battle a rough sea to bring in their day's catch. \*\*Kevin McNeer, a Richmond native, is a filmmaker and editor, based in Moscow, where he attended film school.

**9 pm**

***From the Archives: "Music for Film" at the Byrd Theatre***

In April 2000, the 7th James River Film Festival presented Tom Verlaine and Jimmy Rip live at the Byrd for a program of experimental silent films--and we recorded it on video for our vaults. Now 21 years later, you can enjoy! For Verlaine (ex-Television), working with the silent films was challenging: "There's no click track, nobody saying I want music for this scene, it's constant music".

**SUNDAY APRIL 25**

**4 pm**

***Other Music (dir: Puloma Basu, Rob Hatch-Miller, 2019, 93 min.)***

In 2016, in the heart of NYC's East Village, a long-time popular indie record store, Other Music, closed. More than just a record store, it was a scene, a hang out, a place to meet and bond, where bands were formed, record labels founded, careers launched. Filmmakers Basu and Hatch-Miller met there too, and married. When the store closed, they'd been producing music videos, but decided to try to capture the essence of what had been--"we think it's important to celebrate what spaces like this have meant to people in the past". Featuring many famous customers and musicians--Animal Collective, Yeah Yeah Yeah, Interpol & more.

**6 pm**

***Two Films by Patrick Gregory:***

***The Trouble I See (co-dir: Sally O'Grady, excerpt, 2 min.)***

In 2013, a father-daughter dance was held at the Richmond City Jail--and so began an intimate chronicling of the lives of three incarcerated men and their families. Shot over seven years, this is an excerpt from the project, currently in post-production.

***China Series: pt. I 'One Morning' / pt. II 'At the Farm' (2021, 60 min. approx.)***

From the filmmaker's notes: "In 2018 while visiting an organic farm outside of Shanghai, I awoke earlier than my hosts. With my camera, I explored a nearby village just then awakening from its slumbers. On returning to the farm, I witnessed and filmed their daily harvest. Fascinated as always by the myriad subtleties in everyday life, this is what I observed that morning in China".

\*\* Patrick Gregory is a Richmond based filmmaker, editor, and cinematographer and recipient of two VMFA fellowships, as a VCU student and also as a professional.

**8 pm**

***Killer of Sheep (dir: Charles Burnett, 1978, 80 min.)***

One of the groundbreaking American independent films, Charles Burnett captured, with his first feature, a more realistic slice of "African-American life" than audiences were used to seeing. Shot on location in 1972-1973 with non-professional actors, Burnett financed the film out-of-pocket, and submitted the finished film for his UCLA thesis. The day-in, day-out poverty of our hero Stan, who works in a slaughterhouse trying to make ends meet in the Watts section of LA, evokes the Italian Neorealist films of *Bicycle Thief* and *Shoeshine*. The film existed for years without an authorized film score--it features vocals by African-Americans stalwarts Paul Robeson and Etta James --and was later fully restored by UCLA and distributed by Milestone Films. It was adopted into our National Film Registry in 1991. Burnett was a JRFF guest in 1999 and several years later returned to the area for the filming of *Nat Turner: A Troublesome Property*.

\* Films available for streaming ONLY at the scheduled screening times! Visit the website: [www.jamesriverfilm.org](http://www.jamesriverfilm.org)