

## Object Documentary

Sheffield Fringe 2016  
at Bloc Projects, Sheffield  
10 – 18 June

Mox Mäkelä  
Timo Menke &  
Nils Agdler  
Patricia Bandeira  
Ted Kennedy  
Peter Martin  
Francesco Pedraglio  
Leafcutter John  
Emma Leach  
Alison J Carr  
Jumana Manna &  
Sille Storihle  
Rosalind Nashashibi  
Richard Wiebe  
Pat Law  
Sasha Litvintseva  
Sarah Beddington  
Mairéad McClean  
Xiaowen Zhu  
Tinne Zenner  
Daniel Jacoby  
Ben Balcom  
Sky Hopinka  
Andrée-Anne Roussel  
Zachary Epcar  
Patricia Azevedo &  
Clare Charnley  
Scott Willis  
Ian Nesbitt  
Liz von Graevenitz  
Alistair Macdonald  
Michael Day  
Richard Bartle  
Maud Haya-Baviera  
Lesley Guy &  
Lea Torp Nielsen &  
Dale Holmes  
Jenni Olson

No More, courtesy of Mairéad McClean



Fri 10 June

6pm  
Reciprocal  
Relations

Film programme

8pm  
Leafcutter  
John

Performance

Sat 11 June

6pm  
Willing the  
Possible

Film programme + Reading

8pm  
Necessary  
Frames

Film programme  
Guest-curated by Gareth Evans  
+ Artists' talk moderated by  
Adam Pugh

Sun 12 June

2pm  
Ingested  
Entities

Film programme

4pm  
Concrete  
Utopia

Film programme + Artists' talk

12-6pm  
Bloc Open  
Studios

Mon 13 -  
Sat 18 June

2pm + 4pm  
daily:  
The Royal  
Road

Exhibition:  
Film duration 65 minutes

*Exile Exotic*, courtesy of Sasha Litvintseva



## Object Documentary



*Conflicting Thoughts: Thoughts on Conflict*, courtesy of Emma Leach

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The 5th edition of Sheffield Fringe investigates ‘documentary’ film as an art object. It does so on the premise that thinking of and trading documentary as an object opens up the possibility of the ‘objectification’ of actuality. ‘Objectification of actuality’ here means using ‘real’ people, ‘real’ situations, the experiential – historically, or the here-lived-now – as a material resource in art production, comparable to the way a sculptor may use wood, metal or concrete as material. Put simply, when artists use actuality as a material, does this process always amount to objectification as a negative value? Or can we assign a positive value to this ‘objectification impulse’ and think of it as a necessary strategy in disrupting the assumed political agency of the documentary medium itself?

The aim of this thematic focus is to position and think through ‘documentary’ film as an art object, and to examine the ethics of adopting such an approach within the field-specific context of contemporary art. One approach could be to think of documentary material from the artists’ perspective, and film objects from a curatorial perspective, similar to the way that Alfred Hitchcock thought of actors: as material objects “willing to be utilized and wholly integrated”. The intention is to look at this in both its positive and negative ramifications.

On the one hand it can be claimed that the purposeful and deliberate ‘objectification’ of real things and people can be of political use value in critiquing the field of documentary itself, as an institution. Deliberate ‘objectification’ as method can also reveal something more global about social relations, inherent hierarchies, and systemic inequalities. As a method, the ‘objectification impulse’ can also look towards, and highlight, more egalitarian modes of production to say something about community, responsibility and working together.

On the other hand, the issue of consent, or a lack of transparency on the part of makers can sometimes lead to ethical conundrums. Additionally, for audiences, some ‘objectification’ practices can appear as cruel, making them wonder exactly why they should be made to sit through the pain of others.

Overall, this edition questions how ‘objectification’ of the ‘real’ within artistic practices may impact on makers, participants, and audiences, in order to think through responsibility as an omni-directional orientation. – *Minou Norouzi*



We See Ourselves, We See Each Other,  
courtesy of Peter Martin

Friday 10 June 6 pm  
Film programme: 70 minutes

## Reciprocal Relations

01 **LEVITATION ON A CONCRETE SURFACE**

**Mox Mäkelä** | Finland 2015 | 16'28" | HD

02 **FUGITIVES FROM THE FIELDS**

**Timo Menke and Nils Agdler**

| Sweden 2005 | 16' | 16mm to Digital Video

03 **NOT OTHERWISE SPECIFIED**

**Patricia Bandeira** | Portugal 2014 | 10' | HD

04 **THE LONG VIEW** **Ted Kennedy**

| USA 2015 | 05'26" | Digital Video

05 **WE SEE OURSELVES, WE SEE EACH**

**OTHER** **Peter Martin**

| UK 2015 | 04'38" | Digital Video

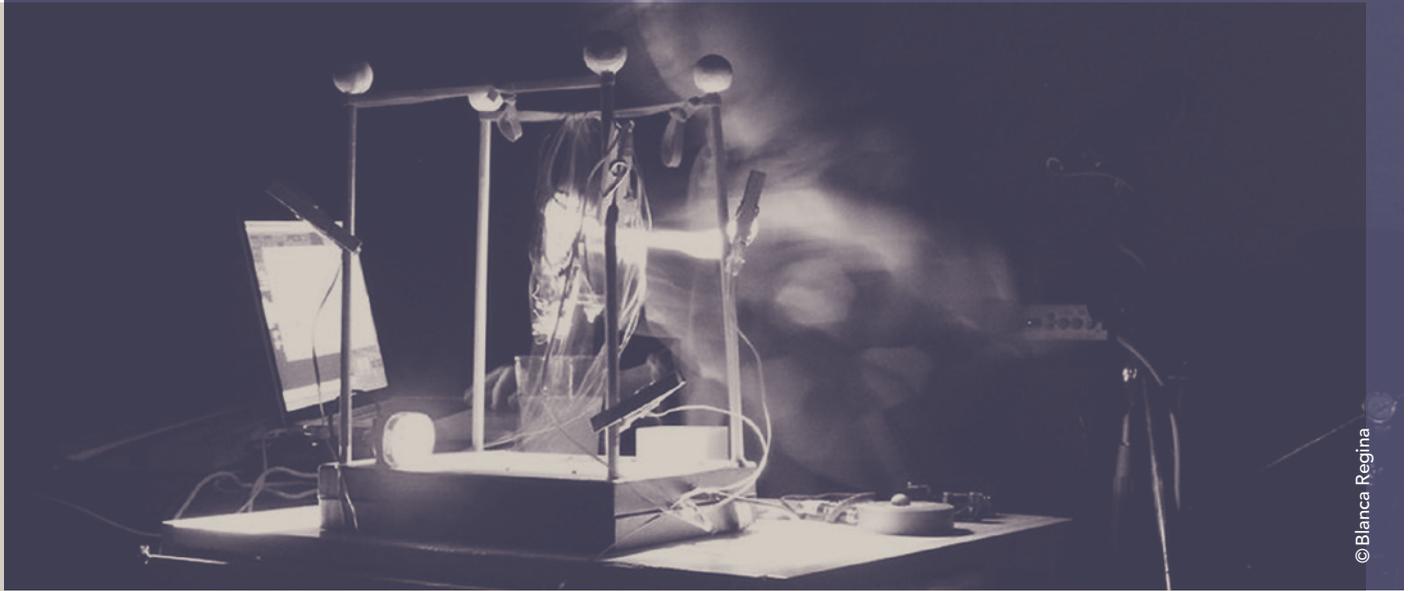
06 **THE PROTAGONIST** **Francesco Pedraglio**

| UK 2015 | 17'39" | HD

Documentary practice deals with the social world, live situations, 'real' things. Relating to the social world as an object and putting it in the service of artistic activity can create an ethical challenge. Indeed, thinking of documentary as an object, and of documentary material as a resource, can be discomforting. Beyond its status in the market place as an art object, the other ways in which documentary film can manifest as an object are difficult to articulate. But they can be felt.

Sometimes visible, sometimes implied, one of the ways an 'object relation' becomes palpable is in the relationship that creates the work. Where a discomforting relation is detected, we tend to address such occasions as 'problematic'. The first problem, it could be suggested, arises with the designation of value when defining an object vis-à-vis a subject. For example, in an effort to designate value through language, we speak of documentary subjects, not documentary objects. The second problem arises with exactly what we mean by the word 'documentary'. So far, known characterizations remain narrow.

Whether regarded as art works or documentaries, the critical stance of the films here lies in the relationship of the filmmakers to the material. Topics vary from opaque formulations on the politics of accelerated living; the controversial phenomena of electro-hypersensitivity; memory facing digital, chemical, neuronal, and environmental coercion; automated language tuition as authoritative prose; and the relationship between storyteller and listener as a form of reciprocal power. What these filmic expressions share is a strong sense of the positions from which they are speaking. Preferring a relation that does not subjugate its object of study, the films are instead a register of reciprocal relations. – MN



Friday 10 June 8 pm  
Performance

## Leafcutter John

*“Alongside Aphex Twin and Bogdan Raczynski – he’s one of the UK’s most fearlessly inventive electronicists”*

– Time Out London

*“A musician who combines acoustic and electronic music with an irresistible compulsion to build Heath Robinson-like inventions”* – The Guardian

*“One of the burgeoning stars of post-electronica”* – The Wire

Leafcutter John, originally from Wakefield, Yorkshire, is an award-winning musician and artist living in London. His releases on Planet Mu, Staubgold, and Desire Path Recordings combine elements of musique concrète and electro-acoustic music with voice and guitar work more commonly found in folk music. John will be performing material from his recent album *Resurrection*, using his self-made Light Controlled Interface. LCI is a light-controlled music performance system that is played gesturally using handheld lights, allowing very fine gestural control over sound. The sounds produced are strongly related to the performer’s actions and are all produced in real time to create an immersive audio-visual experience.

John won the Quartz prize for innovation in 2015 for his work on the LCI; in 2012 he took this system to Vietnam at the invitation of the British Council, and in 2014 played it to a sold-out Roundhouse in London, supporting Imogen Heap. He has toured extensively and worked/played with a wide variety of musicians, poets, and choreographers, including: Beck, Thursten Moore, Imogen Heap, Wayne McGregor, BBC Symphony and Concert orchestras, Matmos, Grace Jones, Nick Cave, Yo La Tengo, Beth Orton, Talvin Singh, and Otomo Yoshihide. John is also a key member of Polar Bear, a twice Mercury Music Prize-nominated band based in London.

[leafcutterjohn.com](http://leafcutterjohn.com)



Exile Exotic, courtesy of Sasha Litvintseva

Saturday 11 June 6pm  
Film programme: 80 minutes  
+ Reading

## Willing The Possible

01 **CONFLICTING THOUGHTS:  
THOUGHTS ON CONFLICT**  
Emma Leach | UK 2011 | 7'13" | HD

### **ON BEING SPIKY**

Reading by Alison J Carr  
Written by Emma Leach

02 **THE GOODNESS REGIME**  
Jumana Manna & Sille Storihle  
| Norway, Palestine 2013 | 21' | HD

03 **ELECTRICAL GAZA**  
Rosalind Nashashibi | UK 2015  
| 17'53" | HD

04 **WAR PRAYER** Richard Wiebe  
| USA, Cyprus 2015 | 17' | Digital Video

05 **LEAVING PYRAMIDEN** Pat Law  
| Svalbard 2013 | 2'50" | HD

06 **EXILE EXOTIC** Sasha Litvintseva  
| UK 2015 | 14'12" | HD

*"Living with one another can be unhappy, wretched, ambivalent, even full of antagonism, but all of that can play out in the political sphere without recourse to expulsion or genocide. And that is our obligation."* – Judith Butler

*Willing The Possible* takes its starting point from Emma Leach's film *Conflicting Thoughts: Thoughts on Conflict*, which explores mediation in the context of Scottish separatism. Narrative Mediation – a subgenre in mediation – is a methodology focused on multiplicity in the construction of conflict narratives. Originating as a method of conflict resolution in Narrative Family Therapy, it encourages face-to-face contact between parties. In the realm of cinema, the encounter between the film object and the audience, together forming a site for collective narrative plotting, could be thought of as just such a face-to-face contact. Though the films in this programme are situated in conflict zones across geographies and times, none make any singular known conflict narrative the central object of their study. Instead, the films allow the possibility of collective narrative plotting as an open-ended process – a way of thinking through conflicting positions. When making a film in, or about, conflict, past or present, what is our obligation as commentators, observers, or artists? What to make of works where an emotive conflict narrative is absent, replaced by strategies of ambivalence, humour, contradiction, or the ordinary – or where exile becomes an exotic vacation? – MN

*Willing the Possible* is accompanied by *On Being Spiky*, a text written by Emma Leach for this occasion, and read by Alison J Carr. Five years after making *Conflicting Thoughts* during a residency at the CCA in Glasgow, Emma reflects on the benefits of being spiky.



The Logic of the Birds,  
courtesy of Sarah Beddington

Saturday 11 June 8pm

Film programme: 75 minutes

Guest-curated by Gareth Evans

+ Artists' talk moderated by Adam Pugh

01 **THE LOGIC OF THE BIRDS**

**Sarah Beddington**

| UK, Palestine 2015 | 17'55" | HD

02 **NO MORE** **Mairéad McClean**

| UK 2014 | 16' | HD

03 **ORIENTAL SILK** **Zhu Xiaowen**

| US, UK, China 2016 | 30' | HD

04 **SLEEPING DISTRICT** **Tinne Zenner**

| Denmark, Russia 2014 | 11'47"

| 16mm to HD

## Necessary Frames

Given the times, it feels inevitable that artworks in any medium or genre, whether intentionally or not, will be considered for their 'use value'. This can be a world away from the crudely economic, being measures of, and aids towards, resistance to the diverse and significant forces currently oppressing us. Documentary, given its engagement with the 'real', however defined, might, it could – and should – be argued, feel this particular responsibility more keenly. This status is only increased when coupled with the form's condition, its intention and outcome, or not, as 'art'. This tension is felt most directly in how the work relates to its performers, its protagonists in the territory of the actual. The choices made result either in a piece that creatively supports and strengthens its personnel, or consumes them within a deadening hall of formal and conceptual mirrors.

Directed exclusively by women, this programme adopts different strategies towards the above issues, but each film, it feels, seeks a relevance to the pressured moment, as well as joining in a dialogue with the larger frames of time that we all move within. To be both urgent and enduring. Whether orchestrated or observed, retrieved or reflective, each purposes its intimate aesthetic, emotional and intellectual impulses and energies towards the common realm, with care and for consideration. They are singular and social.

From home to homeland, personal to public, their success in this pursuit is surely only aided by the fact that each maker has, in their own way, been required to navigate borders, to move outside familiar frames of experience into fertile encounter with the energies of the 'other'. – GE



Sunday 12 June 2pm  
Film programme: 70 minutes  
Curated by Esther Harris

## Ingested Entities

- 01 **JAGATA** Daniel Jacoby  
| Netherlands, Spain, Peru 2015  
| 21'54" | HD
- 02 **NOTES FROM THE INTERIOR** Ben Balcom  
| USA 2016 | 11' | 16mm to HD
- 03 **JÁAJI APPROX.** Sky Hopinka  
| USA 2015 | 07'36" | HD
- 04 **CHESTNUT COOKIES**  
Andrée-Anne Roussel | Canada 2015 | 04' | HD
- 05 **NIGHT SWELLS** Zachary Epcar  
| USA 2015 | 05'14" | HD
- 06 **CAVE** Patricia Azevedo and Clare Charnley  
| UK 2009 | 02'57" | Digital Video
- 07 **TAPES FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY**  
Scott Willis | UK 2014 | 15'40" | HD

*"In the end, we'll all become stories. Or else we'll become entities.  
Maybe it's the same."* – Margaret Atwood

People need stories. Atwood's relation of 'stories' to 'entities' seems apt in relation to the process of filmmaking, and to documentary footage in particular. Once the camera stops rolling, every piece of documentary footage, recorded for its 'story', instantly becomes an entity independent from the immediate and ongoing trajectory of the actual. Once ingested and imported into a timeline, the footage becomes part of a new community of files, and a component of a new entity: the film authored by the filmmaker.

In several of the films presented here, traces of the process of ingestion appear purposefully: the grain of film, the click of a tape. Elsewhere, food recurs as a motif: eggs, potatoes, and cookies appear symbolically, reminders that media components are not the only objects humans ingest to survive and that the mind is inextricably linked to the body. The interpretation of information is fundamentally a very physical process, which is just as much at risk of corruption or obsolescence as any audiovisual data.

These stories are individual, often idiosyncratic, yet acutely conscious of the landscapes and lives surrounding them. The narrator in Daniel Jacoby's *Jagata* remarks "Maybe it's impossible to grasp the world through the lens of your own life"; after all, it is no more considered possible for one person to articulate the whole world in a single story, than to physically breach a glass lens without destroying it. But as is abundantly shown here, from such a vantage point, the narrative possibilities are infinite. – EH



A Summer Voyage, courtesy of Alistair Macdonald

Sunday 12 June 4pm  
Film programme: 75 minutes  
+ Artists' talk

## Concrete Utopia

01 **WALK WITH A CART THROUGH**

**UPPERTHORPE** Ian Nesbitt

| UK 2016 | 40' | HD

02 **THE OUTSIDER** Liz von Graevenitz

| UK 2014 | 03'21" | HD

03 **A SUMMER VOYAGE**

**Alistair Macdonald** | UK 2015 | 16'51" | HD

04 **LITTLE THINGS** Michael Day

| UK 2013 | 02'10" | HD

05 **POWWOW** Richard Bartle

| UK 2007 | 06'04" | Digital Video

06 **MUSE** Maud Haya-Baviera

| UK, Germany 2015 | 2'20" | HD

07 **TOTALLER KEEPS SWINGING**

**Lesley Guy, Lea Torp Nielsen, Dale Holmes**

| UK 2014 | 03'25" | Digital Video

'Hope' may not be a word normally 'sanctified' in critical expressions about art.

It can, however, stand for affirmative action: concrete and material rather than abstracted and religiously intoned. Swimming against the cold stream of purely functional market calculations, these artists are unified in sometimes earnest, sometimes mischievous, sometimes confrontational artistic actions, sharing a concrete hope to carry things forward together into a collective future. While Europe is trying to work out how to live and work together, its organization framed by political rhetoric of exclusion, punctuated by extremist acts of violence, these films are concerned with the impact of place and politics on living.

The social and artistic actions expressed here communally extend what the Totaller collective refers to as "the logics of collage and bricolage". Relating to community, to landscape and to artistic studio practice, the politics of making emerges from all angles as an intervention into life at grassroots level. Humorous first-world observations about not having had enough coffee and a Macbook not being covered for accidental damage en route to an artists' residency contrast with a fantastically furious depiction of global politics and world leaders that have risen and fallen; animated anecdotes muse on Eisenstein's love life. A walk through familiar urban streets becomes a paean to the impossibility of completely coming together; the countryside emerges as a menacing place that nonetheless offers the possibility to structure things without the predetermined boundaries that urban centres are limited by. From the local to the global, the Bloc Studios-based artists and affiliates presented in this programme all in one way or another investigate 'making', both of art and of communities. – MN



The Royal Road, courtesy of Jenni Olson

Monday 13 – Saturday 18 June  
2pm & 4pm daily  
Exhibition: film duration 65 minutes

01 **THE ROYAL ROAD**

**Jenni Olson**

| USA 2015 | 65' | 16mm to HD

## The Royal Road

A cinematic essay in defence of remembering, *The Royal Road* offers a primer on the Spanish colonization of California and the Mexican-American War alongside intimate reflections on nostalgia, butch identity, and Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, featuring a voiceover cameo by Tony Kushner. Deceptively simple urban landscapes of California serve as the framework for the film's lyrical voiceover, combining rigorous historical research with a stream-of-consciousness personal monologue, and relating these seemingly disparate stories from an intimate, colloquial perspective. Shot on 16mm film and contemplatively crafted, *The Royal Road* is a film about landscapes and desire, memory and history – and the stories we tell.

Seamlessly merging aspects of colonialism and film history with humorously inscribed tales of love, Jenni Olson's film is a viewing experience, as equally isolating as it is invigorating. Skillfully managing to omit the on-screen depiction of even a single human body, the viewing self is found concretized through a spatial cohabitation with the film object, in an act of mutual contemplation.

Jenni Olson is an experimental filmmaker, and leading expert on LGBT cinema. Her first experimental feature documentary, *The Joy of Life*, premiered at Sundance Film Festival (2005) and was awarded the Riggs Award. Her short film, *575 Castro St.* premiered at Sundance and the Berlin Panorama (2009). It was commissioned for the release of Gus Van Sant's *Milk*, and is a permanent installation at 575 Castro Street, home of the Human Rights Campaign Action Centre. Olson is on many advisory boards including the Outfest/UCLA Legacy Project for LGBT Film Preservation, and Canyon Cinema.

## Contributors

Curator: **Minou Norouzi** is a founding member of Sheffield Fringe. She makes films, writes, and curates. Her video works have been shown at South London Gallery; Calvert 22; CCA Glasgow; QUAD, Derby; Telic Arts Exchange, Los Angeles; Oberhausen; Kassel Dokfest; Videoex; Hot Docs. She is an AHRC-funded PhD researcher at Goldsmiths University.

Archive Curator: **Esther Harris** is a media conservator and archivist based in London. Esther has been involved with Sheffield Fringe since 2012; she selects programmes from the open-call submissions and maintains the online archive.

Guest Curator: **Gareth Evans** is a writer, editor, presenter, event and film producer (*Unseen: the Lives of Looking; Patience (After Sebald);* and *By Our Selves*). He is Film Curator at Whitechapel Gallery, London.

Panel Moderator: **Adam Pugh** is a curator, writer and designer based in Norwich. He is currently running an artists' moving image project for the Independent Cinema Office in partnership with LUX. Freelance curatorial work includes projects for the Barbican Art Gallery, London Film Festival, OUTPOST Gallery, and Animate Projects.

Production Coordinator (Bloc): **Charlotte A. Morgan** is a Sheffield-based artist who works with writing, print, sculpture, photography, and performance. Charlotte is Creative Director at Bloc Projects, and Festival Producer for Art Sheffield 2016.

Installation Coordinator (Bloc): **Mark Riddington** is a Sheffield-based artist and Gallery Coordinator at Bloc Projects. Mark is a founding co-director of PRISM, a regular series of Sheffield-based, one-night-only contemporary art events.

Open Studios Coordinator (Bloc): **Richard Bartle** is a Sheffield-based artist. Richard is the Manager of Bloc Studios, of which he is a founding member. He was previously Director and Curator of Bloc Projects and a former Director of Sheffield Contemporary Arts Forum.

Design: **Tina Borkowski** is an independent designer and art director specialising in print publication for arts and culture projects, and design communications for socially responsible organisations.

Web: **Jonny Perl** is a web designer and developer based in London. His clients include publishers, art galleries, comedians, and theatres. He is one half of New York/London music collective Misty Roses.

**With special thanks to:** the contributing artists, Abbas Nokhasteh, Tony Downunt, Christopher Wright, Lesley Hewings, Andrea Phillips, Jennifer Fearnley, Didem Pekün, Luciano Zubillaga, Mark Nash.

Electrical Gaza,  
courtesy of Rosalind Nashashibi  
and LUX, London



## 10 – 18 June at Bloc Projects

Sheffield Fringe is an artist-led curatorial project exploring the intersection of art & documentary practices, through screenings, talks, exhibitions, and research, presented in partnership with Openvizor. Openvizor is a UK-based non-profit arts and cultural organisation fostering collaborations from the ground up, through projects with individual artists, local communities, activists and institutions around the world. Sheffield Fringe is produced in collaboration with Bloc Projects, Bloc Studios and Goldsmiths University London.

[sheffieldfringe.com](http://sheffieldfringe.com)



*Notes from the Interior, courtesy of Ben Balcom*



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