## Amiel Courtin-Wilson

New & Selected Works

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Born in Melbourne Australia in 1979, Amiel Courtin-Wilson is one of the most prolific, innovative and critically acclaimed Australian visual artist / filmmakers of his generation.

Amiel has directed work and collaborated with Opera Australia, Chunky Move contemporary dance company, his video installation work has toured at museums extensively across Asia (I THOUGHT I KNEW BUT I WAS WRONG, 2004) and more recently his films have screened at the Whitney Museum, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, National Gallery of Victoria, MONA, Yale, GOMA, the Gallery of New South Wales and ACMI (The Australian Centre for the Moving Image). Amiel has also lectured at UCLA with Peter Sellars, Harvard at the Sensory Ethnography Lab, AFTRS, Johns Hopkins University and his writing has featured in The Saturday Paper, The Monthly Magazine, Lumina and IF Magazine.

At 19 Amiel Courtin-Wilson's debut feature documentary, CHASING BUDDHA premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2000 and won best documentary at the IF Awards and the Sydney International Film Festival.

Amiel's co-directed documentary ISLANDS won several awards after premiering at the Museum of Natural History in New York and subsequently toured the United States for twelve months in 2002.

After directing music clips for the Avalanches and Beastie Boys' Mix Master Mike, Amiel formed the production entity Flood Projects in 2008.

Also in 2008, Amiel's seven year in the making feature documentary, BASTARDY won Best Documentary Jury Prize at the 2009 Film Critics Circle of Australia Awards (FCCA), Best Documentary at the ATOM Awards, was released theatrically to critical acclaim across Australia and was nominated for three Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Awards (AACTA).

Amiel's short film CICADA premiered at the Cannes Film Festival as part of Directors' Fortnight in 2009 and won a slew of awards in Australia and internationally.

Amiel's first solo exhibition of ink drawings was at Utopian Slumps Gallery in Melbourne in 2009 and Amiel's second solo exhibition of drawing, photography and video work THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT was at The Gertrude Contemporary Art Space in 2015.

Amiel's dramatic feature film debut HAIL premiered in competition at the Venice Film Festival, (Orizzonti, 2011) screened at over thirty film festivals, won many awards internationally and was named best Australian film of 2012 by critic Adrian Martin in the Monthly Magazine. In 2020 The Guardian listed HAIL as one of the top ten Australian films of the last decade.

Amiel's co-directed feature film RUIN won the Special Jury Prize in the Orizzonti competition of the Venice Film Festival in 2013 and won awards at other festivals for Best Direction,

Best Film, Best Cinematography and Best Editing (Asia Pacific Film Awards).

Amiel was commissioned to create CARSON, a short film for the 70th edition of the Venice Film Festival alongside directors such as Bernardo Bertolucci, Claire Denis and Monte Hellman as part of the Future Reloaded program which reflected upon the future of cinema.

In 2014 Amiel began researching his upcoming feature film AN AMERICAN TIME TRAVELLER about iconic free jazz pianist Cecil Taylor. Amiel moved to New York and lived with Cecil over the next two years-becoming his carer and archivist while also documenting his day to day life.

Also in 2014, Amiel exhibited a new video installation entitled THE DEATH OF A KING at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) in Sydney as part of a Yoko Ono retrospective.

In 2016 Amiel directed THE SILENT EYE, a feature length performance film collaboration with Cecil Taylor and Japanese dancer Min Tanaka commissioned by the Whitney Museum.THE SILENT EYE continues to screen at museums and festivals around the world and was named one of the best documentaries of 2016 in Film Comment.

Also in 2016, Amiel exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery in Australia and won the annual Digital Portraiture Award with the moving image work CHARLES.

Amiel was also commissioned by the Melbourne International Arts Festival in 2016 to create BREAKING WAVES, a fifty minute, two channel video installation work about composer Percy Grainger for the Ian Potter Museum, as well as UNDER THE WIRE a three channel video work at MUMA featuring Bill Morrison.

In 2015 Amiel received the Byron Kennedy Award at the 4th AACTA (Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts) Awards in Australia in recognition of his commitment to innovation in Australian cinema over the last two decades and in

2018 the Melbourne Cinematheque programmed Amiel's second retrospective of short and feature length films.

In 2020 Amiel created a feature length project "EDEN EDEN EDEN EDEN AT 50" in collaboration with Musee D'orsay curator Donation Grau and 50 museums and galleries around the world- all responding to the controversial French author Pierre Guyotat's banned text EDEN EDEN EDEN.

Aside from Amiel's slate of upcoming narrative and documentary feature projects in development and production, Amiel was also recently an EP on STRANGE COLOURS (Venice Film Festival 2017) and FRIENDS AND STRANGERS the critically acclaimed debut film by James Vaughan that was listed in the top 50 films of 2021 by Sight and Sound Magazine.



# ARTIST NOTES

Amiel Courtin-Wilson is an acclaimed, multi-disciplinary artist and filmmaker whose practice pursues the breakdown between creator and subject through an expansion of the possibilities of documentary portraiture. Centering on immersive, long-term collaborations with individuals including musicians, performers, poets and exinmates, Courtin-Wilson works across film, video, sound art, installation, theatre and performance.

Courtin-Wilson's gaze is firmly wedded to the process of his subjects' struggle to self-actualize on their own terms. It charts - from the deep interior - the means by which the individual carves a space for themselves through acts of defiance and reclamation, forging a shared aesthetic space that stands in radical opposition to the sociohistorical iniquities underpinning society's apathy and injustice.

Early works ('Chasing Buddha', 'Bastardy', 'Hail', 'Ruin') find Courtin-Wilson deeply engrossed in his subjects' lives, sometimes living with them for months or years at a time. Through this, a fluid, radical space is opened that introduces questions of the chaotic, the accidental and the surprising into nominal traditions of documentary/art practice. These portraits of iconoclasts and outliers render highly intimate moments on a perpetual cycle of personal change, charting a subjectivity that bleeds into the sublime as a continual state of transfiguration.

Increasingly, works from 2014 onwards ('The Death of a King', 'Charles') have sought to re-frame the fabric of documentary portraiture itself through the lens of visionary, extrarealist and para-cinematic formal gestures drawn from Materialism and the lyrical avant-garde. As these concerns have increasingly taken centre stage in Courtin-Wilson's work, a language beyond linear screen-based image media has evolved, with increased experimentation in site-specific, installation and multi-

channel projection presentations ('Breaking Waves', 'Under The Wire') incorporating performance, architecture and sound art elements.

"Courtin-Wilson's works are not strictly documentary in nature or form, but rather carefully contrived portraits of trauma and survival. Straddling a space somewhere between the real and unimaginable, his work is characterised by its combination of highly authored realist narratives with imagery that is raw, fragile, violent, impressionistic—and oftentimes staggeringly beautiful."

- Emma Crimmings, Gertrude Contemporary

Startling as a collection of individual works, Amiel Courtin-Wilson's body of work also functions as a serialised 'cosmology'- a living, breathing corpus of impressions, experiences, sensations, and memories.

Cumulatively, a picture emerges of urgent compassion, a restless exploration of embodied experience through radical portraiture. An artistic vision that is astonishingly rich – seemingly unfathomable.

Nick Feik Editor, The Monthly Magazine

A gifted artist of singular vision and ingenuity.

Erik Jensen Editor, Saturday Paper

An artist whose work is defined by creative risk taking and governed by an insatiable appetite to push boundaries, Amiel Courtin-Wilson is one of the hardest working, courageous, and prolific filmmaker / artists of his generation in Australia.

Katrina Sedgwick
CEO, Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI)

Amiel is one of the most distinctive and interesting Australian filmmakers and in my capacity as Senior Curator at the MCA I have followed his work for many years.

Natasha Bullock
Senior Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art (Sydney)

Amiel's expansive, exhilarating practice is unfailingly courageous, riveting, and visceral in its impact. His humanistic, character-centric works reinvent the relationship between anthropology and cinema, taking his audience on meditative, trance-like journeys into unseen and alien aspects of our environments, and ourselves.

Ulanda Blair
Curator Moving Image M+ Museum (Hong Kong)

# SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

## 'EDEN EDEN EDEN' AT 50 (2020)

In Amiel Courtin-Wilson's remarkable contribution to the international project "EDEN EDEN EDEN at 50", a collection of presences drawn from Melbourne's cultural landscape (readers, authors, performers, poets) enact a series of personal struggles with, and reflections on, Pierre Guyotat's eponymous 1970 text.

Text written and performed by: Pierre Guyotat

#### Readers:

Mahmood Fazal, Christos Tsiolkas, Dr Rebecca Hill, Jack Charles, Justin Clemens, Gig Ryan, Ana Kokkinos, Shane Jesse Christmass

#### Cinematography by

Germain McMicking, Michael Latham, Max Walter

#### Curator:

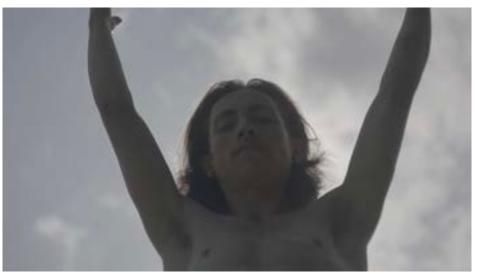
Donatien Grau

#### **Duration:**

10 mins / 70 Mins

Both the content of EDEN EDEN EDEN and its bracing structure lead to a unique and noble challenge on the part of the reader; how to sustain attention and focus; how to derive meanings beyond and beneath the brutally scatological visage: the pustulous, roiling skin of the text itself? In Courtin-Wilson's film record of this struggle, the flailing, failing flesh of the text itself finds its simultaneous antonym, its radical possibility for resistance, in portraiture of the human face and the breath of the body, the halt of gesture and in fascinated posture, the imposition of time and wind and cars passing and distraction.





## **EXQUISITE CORPSE (2018)**

The collaborative VR work Exquisite Corpse, created by six well-known Australian conceptual artists and filmmakers known collectively as BADFAITH, is inspired by and named after a parlour game that requires imagination and trust.

#### Virtual Reality work

#### Participating Artists:

Amiel Courtin-Wilson, Shaun Gladwell, Tony Albert, Daniel Crooks, Natasha Pincus, Luci Schroder

#### Curator:

Leo Faber

**Production Collective:** 

**BADFAITH** 

#### Official Selection:

Melbourne International Film Festival

#### **Duration:**

12 mins



In Amiel Courtin-Wilson's Exquisite Corpse segment on the hands, we are pinned to a painted concrete floor in a studio or warehouse and surrounded by young children, who poke and taunt us to a discordant soundtrack. They see us, but we are not human; we are a tortured insect. The "phantom-subjective image" is less noticeable in other media, such as film and photography. Yet in VR, a sense of presence is vital to the seemingly haptic experience of the visual. We feel neither present nor absent in any absolute ways, but rather somewhere in between – a chimera of detached mechanical vision and feeling, vulnerable flesh.

- Kit Messham-Muir, 1 Dec 2018

## **NAFA**

The 21st-century equivalent of a Surrealist game of chance, moving through the topography of artists' imaginings about the human body, edited with a punk taste for the experimental.

- Steve Dow, 4 Aug 2018

The Monthly





## THE SILENT EYE (2016)

THE SILENT EYE is a featurelength single-channel work that charts the delicate collaboration between free jazz pioneer Cecil Taylor and Butoh performer Min Tanaka over three days in Taylor's Brooklyn home.

The film savors a glimmering quality, observing what looks like a private ritual.

The new work from filmmaker Amiel Courtin-Wilson is all about that

that cinema orchestrates between the physical and the spiritual. Courtin-

lucid eye, the spectral death dance

Wilson's camera has the effect of

transforming the intimate into the

infinite... Extraordinary... Courtin-Wilson gets cinema as art's temporal

dimensions and disrupts our learned

vessel, the craft that navigates

cognition.

Steve Dollar, April 11 2016

Single channel video installation Commissioned by:

Whitney Museum

**Curators:** 

Jay Sanders, Lawrence Kumpf

Duration

70 mins

Other screenings:











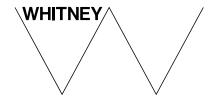


















## UNDER THE WIRE (2016)

The stairwells and byways of the dynamic MADA, MUMA precinct are taken over by the moving image, light and sound in this unique project curated by James Hewison, Head of Film Programs at ACMI.

Three channel video installation

#### **Artists:**

Amiel Courtin-Wilson, Rick Charnoski, Bill Morrison, Peter Knight

#### **Curator:**

James Hewison

#### **Group Exhibition:**

MUMA (Monash University Museum of Art)

#### Commissioner:

Melbourne International Arts Festival

#### **Duration:**

20 mins

Amiel's three channel work OKC was shot in Oklahoma in 2015 and grew out of a series of ongoing documentary works unfurling as dual slow-motion portraits of a small community forced to live in a hurricane-ravaged environment.

These moving-image installation pieces are like the half remembered dreams of this incident of environmental violence - temporary, incomplete worlds in which gaps and holes are exposed, like the gnostic vision of the world as created by a less than successful half-god that we must find a way of





MELBOURNE International Arts FESTIVAL





## **CHARLES** (2016)

Winner of the National Portrait Gallery - Digital Portraiture Prize, CHARLES is an immersive, highly empathetic portrait of a homeless schizophrenic man living on the streets of Oklahoma City.

Single Channel Video Installation WINNER - Digital Portraiture Prize 2016

#### World Premiere:

The National Portrait Gallery - Canberra.

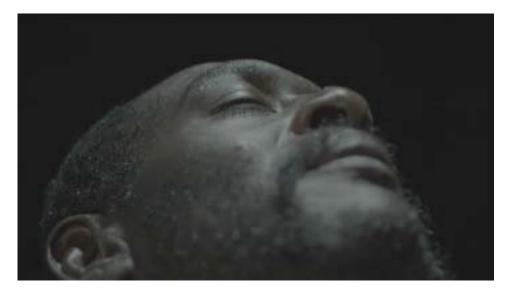
#### **Duration:**

6 mins

In CHARLES, a middle aged man appears in a state of gentle transcendent repose in this meditative reflection on identity, his eyes closed for the duration of the portrait.

The hovering spectral camera work by Germain McMicking opens an porous, intimate collective space that conjoins us with Charles as we momentarily step outside of time.

After the artist struck up a friendship with Charles, discovering in the process that he had a strong relationship to his dreams, Courtin-Wilson decided to shoot the portrait only a few feet from where Charles slept each evening - at the back of a local 7/11 at 1 o'clock in the morning.





# NATIONAL PURTRAIT GALLERY



## **BREAKING WAVES (2016)**

The tide-tossed reveries of Percy Grainger's obsessive, unconventional mind are made manifest in this multi-screen installation work.

Two Channel Video Installation
Ian Potter Museum

Commissioner:

Melbourne International Arts Festival

**Duration:** 

50 mins

From the childhood moment in which he observed waves lapping against a boat's side, pure and gliding tones exerted a pull on Grainger's psyche. His obsession was such that for the rest of his life he would rail against the "tyrannical rhythmic pulse" and "moral harmony" of Western music.

BREAKING WAVES incorporates archival instruments, score fragments and the recent re-making of three of the composer's original instruments to form an enveloping portrait of Grainger's lifelong crusade to free music of conventional constraints. An immersive psychological portrait employing high-speed, close up cinematography, it is an impressionistic gateway into the motivations that drove a truly singular artist.











## THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT (2015)

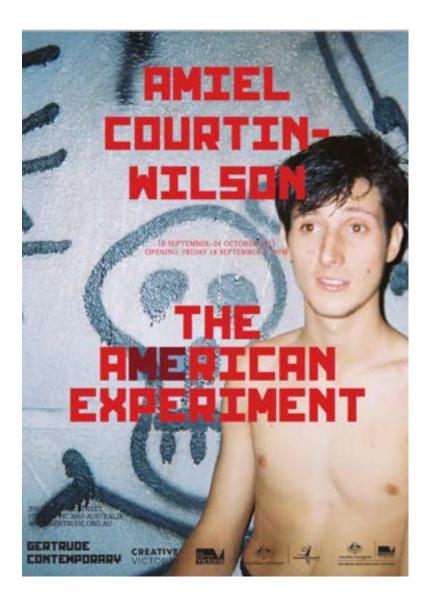
The American Experiment is a new solo exhibition by Australian artist and filmmaker Amiel Courtin-Wilson.
Representing a collection of expanded fragments assembled over seventeen years of filmmaking in the United States of America, the exhibition comprises moving image installation, audio recordings and diagrammatic endeavors to find new graphic representations of cinematic structure.

Solo Exhibition
Two Channel Video Installation,
Photography, Sound Installations,
Drawings
Gertrude Contemporary Art Space

Courtin-Wilson's exhibition forms part of a new interdisciplinary research focus at Gertrude Contemporary on the ever-mutable documentary form. The American Experiment specifically explores the intersection of contemporary art and documentary film. Of Courtin-Wilson's exhibition,

"By bringing this categorydefying and often confronting moving-image work into the gallery, we hope to ignite new ways of interpreting and understanding the increasingly overlapping relationship between contemporary art and the documentary form."





**Curator:** 







## The Sydney Morning Herald

Amiel Courtin-Wilson's still and moving images evoke urban and social decay and anguish, but there's an incredible softness and sensitivity to this arresting new exhibition. Elsewhere, there are audio interviews made with prisoners on death row, a towering grid of naive sketches from the artist's notebook and a pair of stunning film works...

Courtin-Wilson almost forensically examine two seemingly unrelated human subjects, his camera corralling and courting a man standing beneath a streetlight and a young boy in a gaming arcade via a series of shifting, sliding vantages. Among his fragmentary scenes and browbeaten settings, the artist unearths a clear and poignant humanist vision.

Dan Rule, September 22 2015

## THE DEATH OF A KING (2014)

Experimental Universe is a program of events featuring films, music and performances created by Australian artists responding to Yoko Ono's rarely-visited instructional works, Six Film Scripts (1964) and Imaginary Film Series (1968). The program also includes two film screenings of early Yoko Ono films, Apotheosis (1970) and Two Virgins (1968).

Single Screen Installation

Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) Sydney, Yoko Ono Retrospective "Experimental Universe"

#### Artists:

Pia Borg, Amiel Courtin-Wilson, Nathan Gray, Emile Zile, David Haines, Artists Film Workshop, Hi God People and Bum Creek.

#### Curator:

Joel Stern for Other Cinema

#### **Duration:**

6 mins

DEATH OF THE KING is a response to the Yoko Ono Film Script No. 4 "ASK THE AUDIENCE TO STARE AT THE SCREEN UNTIL IT BECOMES BLACK."

An assembly of material shot in Cambodia in 2013 during the Cambodia King-Father Norodom Sihanouk's funeral- a week long period of national mourning in which millions of Cambodians swarmed to Phnom Penh to grieve for the loss of their beloved leader. The profoundly overwhelming nature of this mass grieving seemed to resonate with the notion of an audience literally collectively willing an image out of existence. Courtin-Wilson chose to read the action of the screen turning black as being due to the audiences collective will rather than something imposed on an audience by the filmmaker/artist.



Museum of Contemporary Art Australia



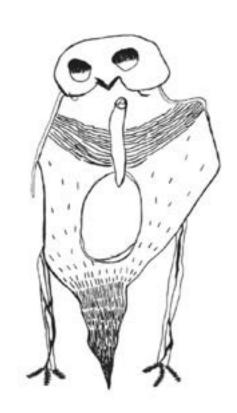
## LIKE TRYING TO COAX A LION OUT OF MY CHEST (2009)

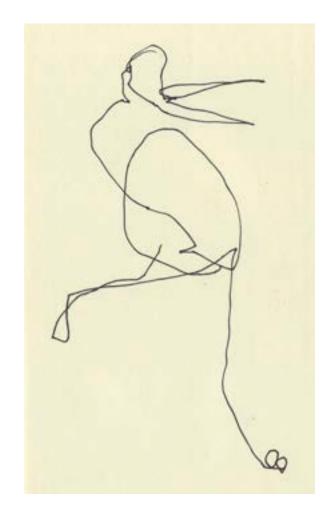
LIKE TRYING TO COAX A
LION OUT OF MY CHEST is
a fragmentary confessional.
Drawing for the artist Amiel
Courtin-Wilson is a private
practice in tandem with his
image making. In this exhibition
the images are liberated from
the pages of five years of
journal entries and writ large
on the walls of Utopian Slumps
in a series of twenty five three
foot by three foot drawings. A
saxophone filled with napalm
also makes an appearance.

Solo exhibition drawings and mixed media

Utopian Slumps Gallery

Curator:







### Writer Shane Jesse Christmass on Amiel Courtin-Wilson

The pessimist Schopenhauer once wrote, and he was speaking about writers here, but for our purposes, let's imagine he's speaking about artists.

"[Artists] can be divided into meteors, planets and fixed stars. The first produce a momentary effect: you gaze up, cry: 'Look!' – and then they vanish forever. The second, the moving stars, endure for much longer. By virtue of their proximity they often shine brighter than the fixed stars which the ignorant mistake them for... The third alone are unchanging, stand firm in the firmament, shine by their own light and influence all ages equally ... Unlike the others, they do not belong to one system (nation) alone: they belong to the Universe.

But it is precisely because they are so high that their light usually takes so many years to reach the eyes of the dwellers on earth."

As you walk around this 'Lion'

– this jungle king, this Panthera
Leo, that's trying to escape from a
ribcage, which category does this
exhibition exist within, Meteors?
Planets? Fixed stars? All answers
on a postcard, preferably one
that has a ruin of a building on it.

As you may know, Amiel Courtin-Wilson is a filmmaker. These drawings are an outlet. Outlet = Pipe or Conduit. These drawings are instantaneous. Instantaneous = Immediate or 'on the spot'. These paintings are righteous, or are they? Righteous = Virtuous or Respectable. Sinful = Bad or Corrupt. Are these drawings spiritual? Spiritual = Unworldly or Psychic. It's a big ask isn't it?

The Russian poet Osip Mandelstam, in his poem numbered '202' wrote that:

"Much we have to fear, big-mouth beside me! Our tobacco turns into dust, nutcracker, friend, idiot!"

- What do we, as simple people, have to fear?
- Is this outsider art?
- Outside of what? a giant priggish centipede?
- Outside of outsider art?
- Inside out from outsider art?
- Who cares? This is destruction.

"Hell is of this world and there are men who are unhappy escapees from hell, escapees destined ETERNALLY to reenact their escape."

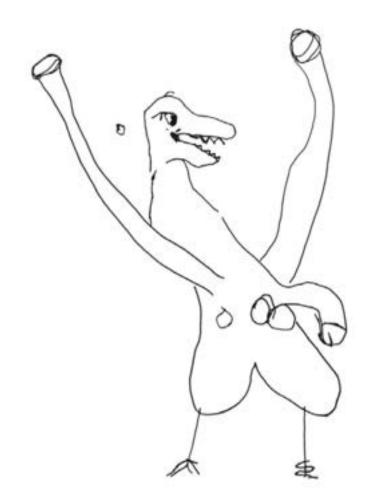
-Antonin Artaud

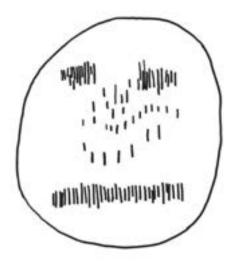
I can hear Amiel gulping in these drawings, gulping the insufferable, obese haunting. They're not cute pictures. What are you even doing here? You should constantly ask yourself this?

I know now what is going on here with Amiel's drawings. I never used to. Jean Cocteau, who was also a filmmaker, and boxing manager, wrote, that "the living language of dreams. The dead language of waking ... We must interpret and translate." He also scribed that "genius is the farthest extreme of the practical". There's nothing practical in this exhibition.

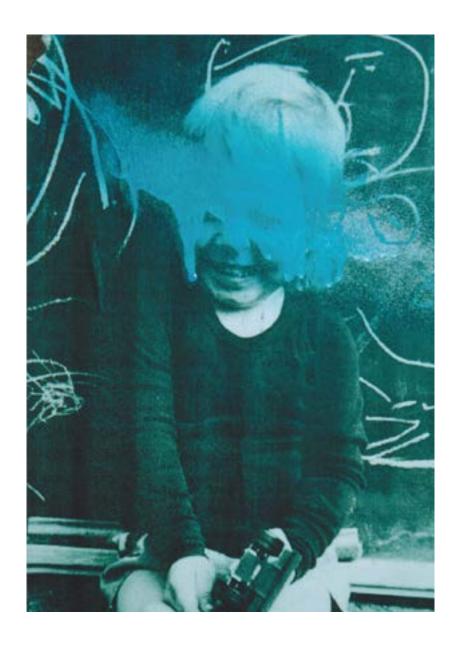
AND FINALLY: There's one or two murderers in any crowd. There's nothing practical in this exhibition, except social harmony.

Parts assembled and parts written by











## I THOUGHT I KNEW BUT I WAS WRONG (2005)

I THOUGH I KNEW BUT I WAS WRONG: New Video Art from Australia explores the impact of video art on Australian contemporary art over the past five years. Showcasing a diverse selection of video works, the exhibition introduces audiences to the ways in which Australian artists are using video to explore ideas of identity, lifestyle and society within the context of a diverse and multifaceted arts culture.

16mm single screen projection "PASH"

**Curators:** 

Alexie Glass, Sarah Tutton

Partner:

Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI), Melbourne

Duration:

#### Exhibition dates & venues

Bangkok, July-August 2004, Chulalongkorn University

Singapore, October-November 2004, NAFA

Seoul, February-March 2005, Ssamzie Space

#### Artists

Guy Benfield, Philip Brophy, Amiel Courtin-Wilson, Daniel Crooks, DAMP, Destiny Deacon, Virginia Fraser, Shaun Gladwell, Lyndal Jones, The Kingpins, Marcus Lyall, James Lynch, Tracey Moffatt, TV Moore, Patricia Piccinini, David Rosetzky, Ivan Sen, Monika Tichacek, Craig Walsh

Disparate in subject matter and style, the works in this exhibition share a common urge to communicate something immediate and relevant to their audience. I thought I knew but I was wrong is a snapshot of the range and breadth of Australian contemporary visual culture - from the slick to the lo-fi, the luxurious to the raw, and the comic to the confessional.



I THOUGHT I KNEW BUT I WAS WRONG presents the work of nineteen artists in three interconnected screening programs: Persona, Play and Space. These programs are intended as fluid groupings through which the viewer is able to engage with the works and the broad themes of identity, representation and the constructed environment.



NAFA



## 2004 AUSTRALIAN CULTURE NOW

ACMI and the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) join forces for the first time to present an unprecedented landmark national survey of the work at the edge of current artistic practice at Federation Square. Unmatched in its scale and spanning the breadth of visual culture, 2004 includes the latest film, video, television, painting, networked media, sculpture, installation, photography, craft, design and fashion. This major exhibition showcases new work by more than 130 leading and emerging Australian artists.

Single channel video installation "TAG"

ACMI Australian Centre for the Moving Image (Public Imaging Screens)

Curator:

Rhys Graham

Duration:

A spectral study of a game of blind man's bluff amongst a group of adult swingers, TAG is an impressionistic portrait of a prelude to an orgy. Shot entirely with a 1970's tube video camera under murky lighting conditions, TAG's smeared electric, almost monochromatic imagery deteriorates over the course of the piece - inviting the viewer into a visceral role of participant as members of the swingers group address the camera directly.

A portrait of sexualized ritual and play created to feel almost like a found artefact, TAG references overt Renaissance-era figurative tableau to speak to the self-reflexive nature of performed group sexuality in today's









# UPCOMING WORKS



MAN ON EARTH

Bob is a 65 year old Jewish New Yorker who went to Woodstock at 15, designed bathrooms for Elton John and Janet Jackson and is funny and full of life.

He also only has one week to live.

Diagnosed with Parkinson's, Bob has decided to end his own life using Washington State's Death with Dignity laws and MAN ON EARTH is the inspiring, surprisingly funny and heartbreaking portrait of Bob's last week on earth.

With unflinching intimacy and incredibly unique access, our film follows Bob as he tries to make peace with his family, the love of his life and himself, right up until he takes his last breath.

Deeply compassionate, MAN ON EARTH is a meditation on time and mortality, asking the big questions, "How do we face death when it comes?" and "What does it mean to live a complete life?" With sound design by Oscar Winner Robert Mackenzie, music by Oscar and BAFTA award winning composer Nicolas Becker, and editing by Oscar nominated editor Peter Sciberras, MAN ON EARTH is a cinematic journey with an unforgettable human being. Bob will stay with you forever.



**TRACES** 

An epic visual poem that takes audiences on a journey through the protean cycles of life and death, TRACES is an electrifying big screen experience designed to be seen as a large scale installation or performed with a live score in major venues around the world.

Using state of the art thermal imaging cameras to juxtapose a myriad of real peoples' everyday lives with never before seen documentary imagery of heat leaving the human body after death, TRACES invites audiences to renew their most intimate relationship with time, mortality and the human body in a transcendent, cathartic shared ritual.

Filmed over four years across the United States and Australia, TRACES transforms the delicate minutiae of human life into beautifully impressionistic glowing black and white moving images - creating a visionary journey through our own impermanence and the alchemical nature of life itself.

TRACES attempts to vivify existing representations of death, affirming the organic continuum between life and death and furthering Courtin-Wilson's exploration of the healing power of the moving image.

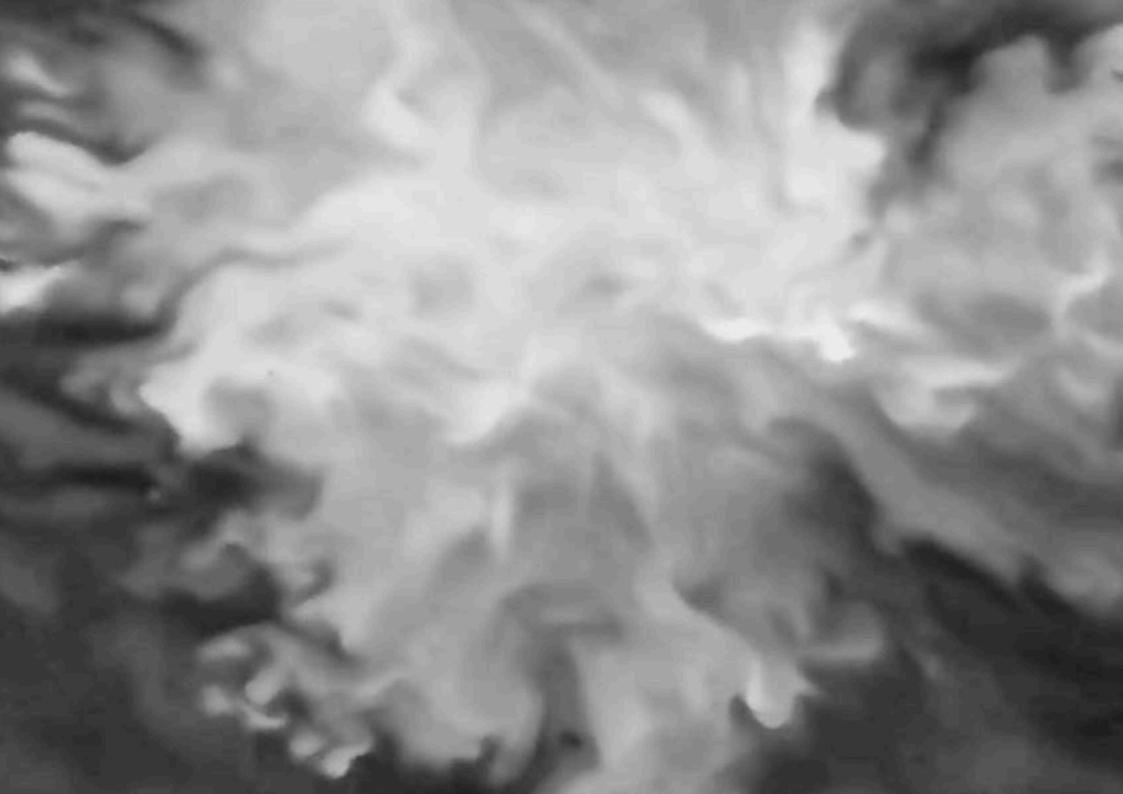
Cumulatively TRACES induces a sense of awe and ritual, punctured with moments of cognitive dissonance borne of bearing witness to the seemingly impossible thermal imagery.

In this sense, TRACES is a uniquely porous work, allowing the audience to experience the world through a series of shifting subjectivities as they traverse multiple lives.

This observational documentary imagery of dozens of vignettes of archetypal moments from childhood through to old age can be interpreted as either memory, dreams or as a series of parallel moments, both in and outside of time and the bodies on screen.

Seeing the world through an enhanced eye, TRACES roots itself in a pre-linguistic form of observance. A vision of transformational, delimited pure sensation, the figures on screen become pulsating, sculptural forms that extend Spinoza's theory of embodied immanence.

Featuring sound design from Academy Award winning Nicolas Becker, and delicate and staggeringly beautiful never before seen thermal imagery of the human body after death, TRACES aims to allow audiences to contemplate death in a meditative, personal and highly emotional manner. TRACES will tour the world in 2023.

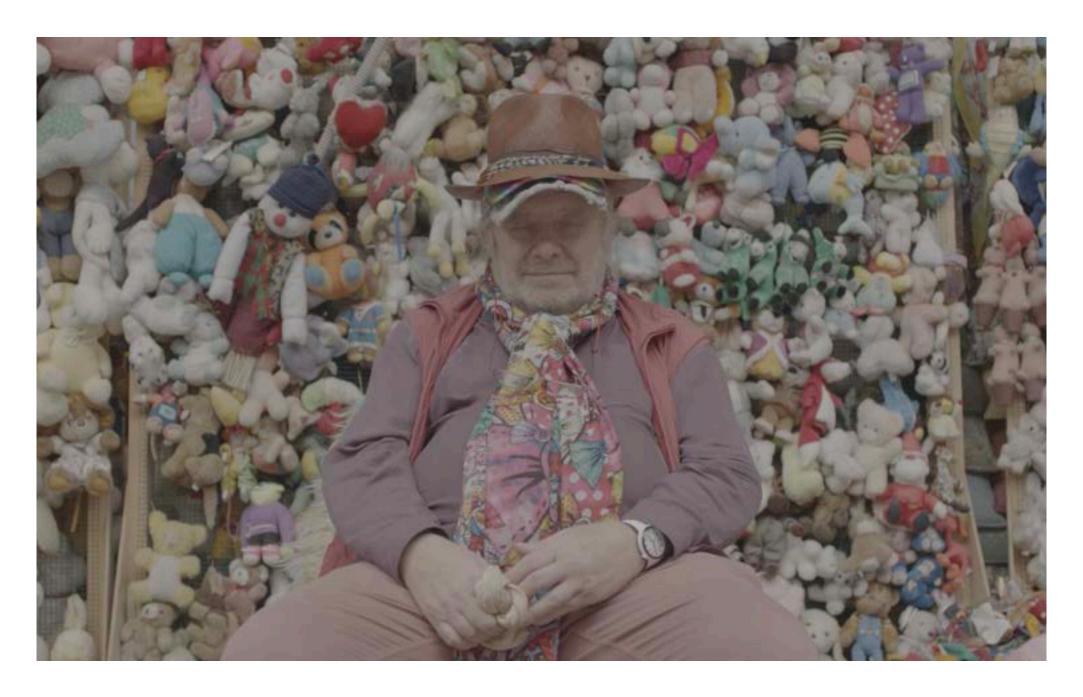












**BODY MUSIC** 

"My studio is like a big cathedral room... I feel like we are in a big, potentially vibrating structure - it's not inside, it's outside..."

-Charlemagne Palestine

Part invocation, part performance film and part exploded biography, this feature length documentary and single channel moving image work is structured as a series of revolving prisms through which to view the life and work of acclaimed visionary artist, composer and performer Charlemagne Palestine.

BODY MUSIC is an incandescent, kaleidoscopic sensory extravaganza that weaves unseen personal and performance archival material dating back nearly 70 years with newly filmed 2018-19 private performances situated in Palestine's cavernous Brussels studio and home.

Palestine's work expresses deeply embedded internal energies, a ritualistic use of physicality, motion and sound that represents a lifelong study of shamanic and animist theologies.

A floating camera passes over Palestine and his tens of thousands of teddy bear and stuffed animal deities in his studio. Charlemagne appears in a dense forest at dusk. Smoke fills a darkened room. Note clusters slip into haptic play with light, movement and colour pulses, the seen with the unseen, interior with exterior as Palestine's music recreates the physical world around him.

Courtin-Wilson follows suit, structuring a series of elemental visions or 'conjurings' that take place in different environments - a waking dream world that materialises across various forms - culminating in Palestine's extraordinary, self-constructed home studio.

The cumulative effect of juxtaposing archival material of multiple performances of the same work staged across decades evokes and mirrors Palestine's use of tone clusters and overtones in his piano playing, saturating eye, ear and body in a singular experiential tapestry.

BODY MUSIC deepens and re-imagines a collective body of work, spanning over 60 years, through the incorporation of rare and unreleased materials from Palestine's own extensive personal archive, while also attaining a delicate intimacy with Charlemagne's private world as he contemplates his own legacy.















AN AMERICAN TIME TRAVELLER: THE CECIL TAYLOR PROJECT

An elderly black man stands over a stove in his New York home, making a cup of tea. "There is a profound pleasure in taking ones time..." The elderly man slowly pours the steaming tea into a roughly glazed black earthenware mug. "When time is at your disposal..." The man takes a sip of his tea and walks through the clutter of his open plan home to a grand piano. He sits down at the piano and closes his eyes.

AN AMERICAN TIME TRAVELLER: THE CECIL TAYLOR PROJECT is a visually stunning, dense, impressionistic portrait of the greatest jazz pianist of the 20th century - Cecil Taylor. Born in 1929, Taylor's visionary music is responsible for the coining of the term "Free Jazz". Voted the greatest jazz pianist in the world for nine years in a row throughout the 1980's, Taylor's distinctively aggressive improvisational playing style was once referred to as like listening to "eighty-eight tuned drums."

What is less known about Cecil is that he is an extremely masterful time traveller. "Time is what wraps itself around you - and like a shroud, time is also death. I am the living field - I am aether - I am the join between two pieces of wood that form the basis of our house. I am the space between two lovers lips about to kiss for the first time. I am the conduit and the conductor."

Structured as a series of aphorisms and fragmentary anecdotes about Cecil's time travelling experiences, the film will unravel in an irreverent, essayist fashion, accompanied elegant, current day domestic documentary material of Cecil, extensive archival material and a series of impressionistic, abstract sequences representing time travel itself.

"The idea of massive amounts of energy being needed to travel through time - it's not true... you need to be still... and relaxed - it's about creating a space that enables you to become a conduit - so time moves through you rather than you moving through time... once time moves through you, then you can bend it and stretch it as you wish... and that's how it works...."

AN AMERICAN TIME TRAVELLER: THE CECIL TAYLOR PROJECT is an evocative and poetic portrait of one man's journey through time and space.







UNDERWOOD

The product of eight years of research, UNDERWOOD is a cinematic documentary feature film and moving image work exploring the cycles of life, love, death and the afterlife- all told through the narrative lens of dreams and nightmares from the collective unconscious of the American South West.

Featuring a mosaic of narrated dreams and nightmares from characters including elementary and high school students, survivalists, juvenile offenders, sex workers, storm chasers, veterans, fast food workers and many others, UNDERWOOD will be infused with a charged sense of portent as the film won't distinguish between a survivalists' vision of the imminent destruction of social structures, a Baptist Minister's view of End Times and an eleven year old's nightmare about the zombie apocalypse.

UNDERWOOD creates a delicate, ambiguous dystopian vision of America standing on a precipice; a young couple and their four year old child stockpile food and weapons as part of a drill that may or may not be real, a homeless man recounts a nightmare about a tornado that destroyed his family home and a young teen girl and her boyfriend negotiate with faceless men paying to watch the couple make love.

Told in large part through the pop culture reference laden nightmares of children and teenagers racked with underlying anxieties about love and intimacy, in this way UNDERWOOD walks a fine line between an imagined dystopia and observational material of an actual, current day dystopia in which parts of America are already falling into a feudalist twilight and crime, depression, lack of education and hyper consumerism all coalesce into an impossibly well calibrated stranglehold on the people of these communities.

With a narrative arc following multiple characters ranging in age from four to eighty four who all speak about their dreams and nightmares as they relate to anxieties about the future, love, the afterlife and ultimately their place in the world, we will be able to create an emotive and dense portrait of a culture via its subconscious entrails- a soothsaying divination derived from the dreams and nightmares of South western Americans as they are still being formed by an environment not equipped to sufficiently nourish them.

This idea of the futile attempts to control one's environment when faced with a hostile or at best apathetic social system is also central to the film's themes. The rituals of preparation for death coupled with rituals for self betterment through exercise, prayer and the accrual of material goods, all while still trying to grow up and evolve as individuals, is what will also give the film its uniquely compassionate pathos and ultimately mythical trajectory.

Deeply intimate and nuanced, UNDERWOOD is a surrealist essay film, a pointillist dreamscape portrait of the South West of the United States of America and a caustic and incendiary study of the subtle and not so subtle distortion of generations of minds exposed to the constant electrocution like stimulation inherent in our culture.

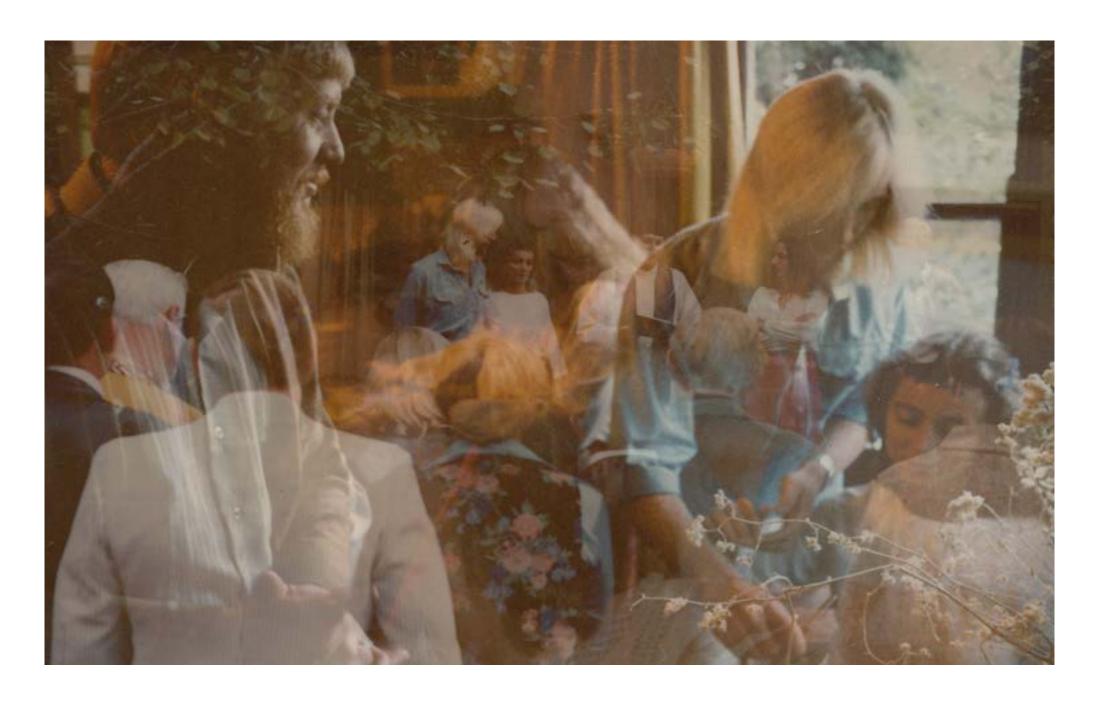


**CARNATION** 

In the American Southwest, two lovers forge an all-consuming transcendental love as their physical and spiritual worlds are pushed to the limits of time and space.

A profoundly moving feature starring an elemental group of young people performing as heightened versions of themselves, CARNATION is a mythical story about the collision between grace, beauty, violence and death and how these seemingly opposite forces are bound together.

CARNATION features music by Oscar Winner Nicolas Becker (SOUND OF METAL) sound design by Oscar Winner Robert Mackenzie (POWER OF THE DOG) editing by Oscar Nominee Peter Sciberras (POWER OF THE DOG) and cinematography by BAFTA winner Shabier Kirchner (SMALL AXE) & Sundance Award Winner Germain McMicking (NITRAM, TOP OF THE LAKE).



POLLY & PETER

POLLY & PETER is a unique feature length documentary and moving image portrait of two Australian artists born at the beginning of the 1950s whose lives became entwined through art and love.

Raised in Melbourne in very different families, Polly Courtin and Peter Ivor Wilson met at art school in 1969 and fell in love. Both painters, they exhibited together and separately through the 1970's. They were married in 1977 and had two children together in 1979 and 1982. They were divorced in 1984 but remained friends and continue to paint today as fervently and passionately as ever.

POLLY & PETER utilises an approach to portraiture used by Ingmar Bergman in his seminal short film about his Mother "Karin's Face" in which only stills and music are used to elegantly tell an entire life story. By foregoing dense biographical detail in the traditional form of interviews and narration and solely relying on photographs and music that slowly cross dissolves in a cumulative meditative collection of imagery across seven decades, POLLY & PETER is unique and deeply moving- precisely because the approach to narrative beckons the audience to piece a sweeping story together entirely from fragments of singular moments; an expression on a face or the body language in a candid portrait become scenes unto themselves when given enough time on screen.

Featuring sound design and music by Academy Award winning sound designers Robert Mackenzie and Nicolas Becker, POLLY & PETER is a unique and highly intimate portrait of two people who devoted their entire lives to painting.



MY NAME IS JACK

MY NAME IS JACK is a uniquely intimate, impeccably designed photo book a pictorial biography and chronicle of a life that celebrates one of the most iconic Indigenous performers in Australian history, Jack Charles.

Part of the stolen generation and founder of the first Indigenous theatre company in Australia, Jack has performed with all major theatre companies in Australia and is hugely respected by generations of performers. Separated from his Mother at ten weeks old and struggling with the sexual and physical abuse he suffered in boy's homes as a child, as an adult Jack was incarcerated many times due to a heroin addiction that lasted decades- subsequently necessitating a nocturnal second career as a cat burglar, "collecting the rent" from mansions in the affluent suburbs of Melbourne.

At age 60 Jack decided to never return to prison as an inmate and he spent the last seventeen years of his life on a relentless ascent as he became one of the most well loved and respected elder statesmans in Australia.

Told entirely through photography, MY NAME IS JACK will be an immersive, comprehensive portrait of Jack and his life story and will also feature a selection of short quotes, anecdotes and messages written directly to Jack by his collaborators, luminaries and admirers including Cate Blanchett, Gary Foley, Hugh Jackman, Rachael Maza, Archie Roach and many others.

Collating never before seen images from a myriad of sources including; Jack's personal collection, imagery from Amiel Courtin-Wilson's feature documentary BASTARDY, Jack's iconic one man show JACK CHARLES VS THE CROWN that toured Australia and Internationally for eight years and remarkable photographic award winning portraits taken by a slew of iconic photographers, the book will be impeccably designed and printed and will serve as a unique celebration of one of the most beloved indigenous figures in modern Australian history.

In response to the overwhelming appetite for further insights into this beloved Australian icon, we are also currently speaking with a number of international art book publishers with a view to launch the book internationally as well as nationwide across Australia.

Working closely with the Jack Charles Estate, Amiel Courtin-Wilson and FLOOD PROJECTS is currently beginning the preliminary researching this photo book with a view to launch the book in late 2023.

# FILMOGRAPHY



**RUIN** 







## **RUIN**

# Co-Writer, Co-Director, Producer, Additional Editor:

Amiel Courtin-Wilson Michael Cody

#### **Editors:**

Simon Price, Luca Cappelli, Sally Blenheim

#### Cinematography:

Ari Wegner, Germain McMicking

#### Sound Design:

Robert Mackenzie

#### Composers:

Steve Benwell & Scott Mcculloch

Music by:

Phil Niblock, Johann Johannsson & Stephen O'Malley, No Neck Blues Band, Tart, Charlemagne Palestine

#### Duration:

85 mins

#### **SYNOPSIS**

RUIN is an impressionistic fable - the story of Phirun and Sovanna- two young lovers inexplicably drawn together who escape a brutal and exploitative world of crime and violence in modern day Cambodia.

Fleeing Phnom Penh after a murder, they travel deeper into the jungle. As their vulnerable love ebbs and flows along their journey, they wake from the trauma of their former lives and unleash a violent rage upon the world. Love and death intermingle as they travel deeper into the abyss- their world strangely transforming around the two young lovers on the run.

WINNER Special Jury Prize Official Competition Venice International Film Festival (Orrizonti) 2013

WINNER Best Film, Best Cinematography SOPOT International Film Festival 2015

WINNER Best Cinematography
Official Competition Moscow
Tomorrow International Film Festival
2013

WINNER Best Editing Asia Pacific Film Festival 2013

WINNER Best Direction Fantaspoa International Film Festival 2014

Official Competition Sydney International Film Festival 2014

Official Selection Rotterdam International Film Festival 2014

Official Selection Goteborg International Film Festival 2014

Official Selection Valdivia International Film Festival 2013

**Official Selection** Cork International Film Festival 2013

Official Selection Sofia International Film Festival 2014

Official Selection Fantaspoa International Film Festival 2014

Official Selection Asian Deauville International Film Festival 2014

Official Selection Munich International Film Festival 2014

Official Selection Sitges International Film Festival 2014

Official Selection Transylvania International Film Festival 2014

Official Selection Karlovy Vary International Film Festival 2014

Official Selection Syros International Film Festival 2014

Official Selection Dark Mofo MONA Film Program 2014

Official Selection Melbourne International Film Festival 2014

Official Selection Brisbane International Film Festival 2014

Official Selection Cologne International Film Festival 2014

#### **WATCH TRAILER HERE**



HAIL















### HAIL

Writer, Director, Producer, Co-Editor:

Amiel Courtin-Wilson

Cinematographer:

Germain McMicking

Composer:

Steve Benwell

Producer:

Michael Cody

**Editor:** 

Peter Sciberras

Music by:

Terry Riley, Moondog, The Boxtops, Exuma, John McLaughlin

**Duration:** 

104 mins

#### **SYNOPSIS**

Dan is released from jail and reunites with the love of his life, Leanne. When she is ripped away from him, Dan falls into a savage hallucinatory state as he searches for revenge.

WINNER Sequence Jury Prize Best Film Fantasia International Film Festival 2012

WINNER Age Critics Award Best Australian Feature Melbourne International Film Festival 2012

WINNER Best Film Panorama Section Fantaspoa Festival Brazil 2013

NOMINATED Best Film, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Editing, Best Cinematographer, Best Score AUSTRALIAN FILM Critics Association (Afca 2013)

Official Competition Venice International Film Festival (Orrizonti) 2011

Official Selection Rotterdam International Film Festival 2012

Official Selection Adelaide International Film Festival 2011

Official Selection Sydney International Film Festival 2011

Official Selection Istanbul International Film Festival 2012

Official Selection Karlovy Vary International Film Festival 2012 Official Selection Munich International Film Festival 2012

Official Selection Seattle International Film Festival 2012

Official Selection Edinburgh International Film Festival 2012

Official Selection Melbourne International Film Festival 2012

Official Selection Cork International Film Festival 2012

Official Selection Fantasia International Film Festival 2012

Official Selection Message to Man International Film Festival 2012

Official Selection Transylvania International Film Festival 2012

Official Selection Fantastic International Film Festival 2012

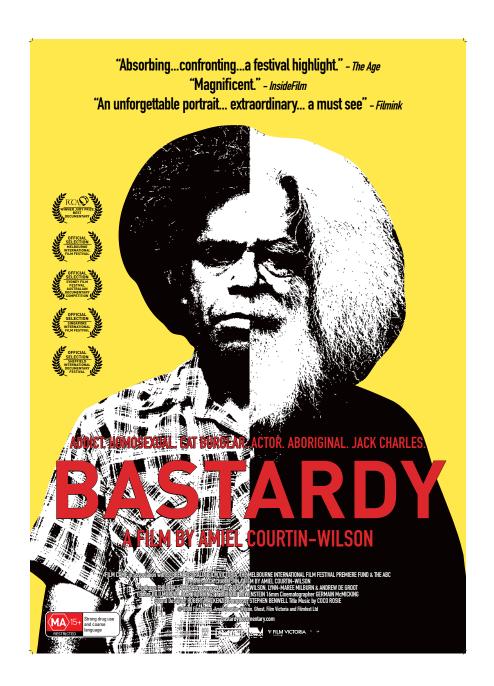
Official Selection Around the World in 14 Films (Berlin) 2012

Official Selection Slash International Film Festival Austria 2013

**WATCH TRAILER HERE** 



**BASTARDY** 







## **BASTARDY**

Feature Documentary, Writer, Director, Producer, Cinematographer: Amiel Courtin-Wilson

#### Cinematographer:

Germain McMicking

#### **Producers:**

Philippa Campey, Andrew De Groot, Lynn Maree Milburn

#### **Editors:**

Jack Hutchings, Bill Murphy, Richard Lowenstein

#### Music by:

Warren Ellis, John Cale, Jennifer Gentle, Coco Rosie, Steve Benwell

#### **Duration:**

83 mins

#### **SYNOPSIS**

An intimate documentary of Jack Charles, a.k.a. "Jackie", the legendary Australian aboriginal actor who cofounded Australia's first indigenous theatre company and struggled with his identity later in life.

WINNER Grand Jury Prize FIFO International Documentary Film Festival 2010

WINNER Australian Film Critics Circle Best Documentary Jury Prize 2009

**WINNER Best Documentary** Human Story ATOM Awards 2009

NOMINATED Best Documentary, Best Direction, Best Editing Australian Film Institute Awards 2009

NOMINATED Best Documentary Sydney Film Festival 2009

NOMINATED Best Documentary Asia Pacific Awards 2009

Official Selection Aboriginal Australian Film Festival Paris 2016

Official Selection Melbourne International Film Festival 2008

Official Selection Singapore International Film Festival 2009

Official Selection Sheffield International Film Festival 2009

Official Selection Mexico International Film Festival 2010

Official Selection Kiev International Film Festival 2010

Official Selection International RADO Film Festival Cameroon 2010

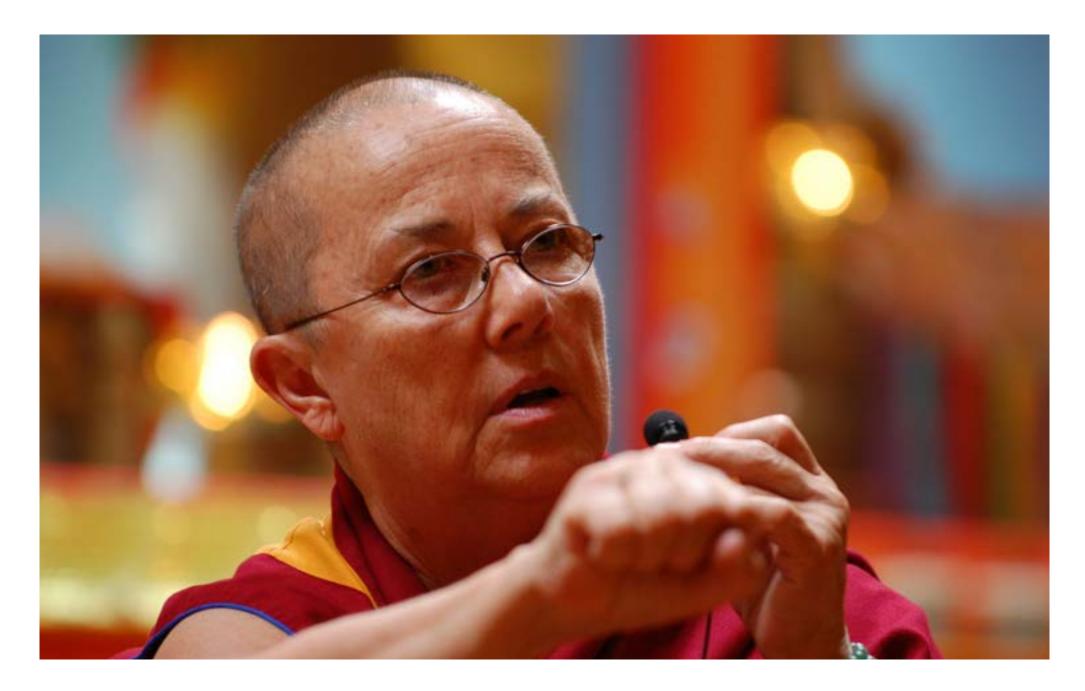
Official Selection London Australian International Film Festival 2010

**Screened** National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) Timeline Exhibition

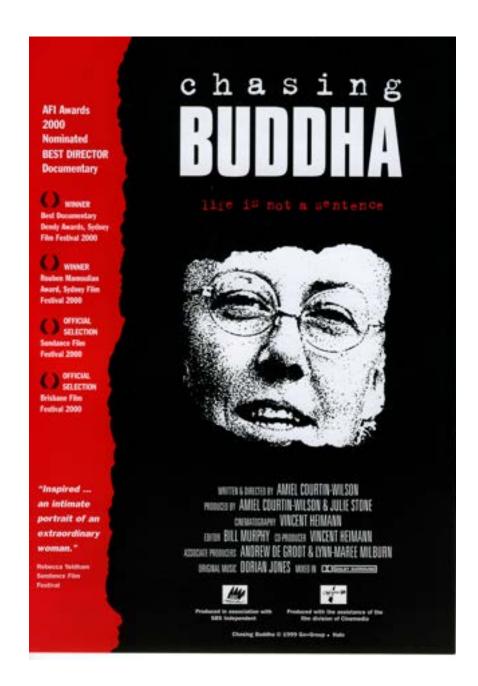
**Screened** ACCA as part of the Sovereignty Survey Exhibition 2017

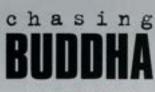
**Screened** at The Barbican, London 2014

#### **WATCH TRAILER HERE**



CHASING BUDDHA





lige 12 not a sentence

a film by Amiel Courtin-Wilson

Former Catholic, communist and militant feminist, Robins Courtin has been a Baddhist run for over twesty years.

Teaching Buddhism to prison immates in positertiaries across the United States, Robins shatters the steneotype of a Buddhist – her aggressive style leaving an indelible impression on everyone she meets.

In the heart of America's bible belt, Robina visits

Rentucky State Peritentiary to lead a group of death row instates on the path to enlightenment. Determined to harness their minds and deal with their violent crimes, the instates inspire Robins to work even harder at her own rigorous spiritual practice.

Constantly travelling, Robins faces her sacrifices as a nun – unraveling the traumatic events which first lead her to Buddhiam in 1977.

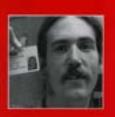
CHASING BUDDHA is the intimate portrait of one woman's relentless search for inner peace.





"I have many lives in the future -I'm not arraid of missing anything."

- Robina



Charles March

# CHASING BUDDHA

#### **FEATURE DOCUMENTARY**

Writer, Director, Producer: Amiel Courtin-Wilson

**Producers:** 

Julie Stone, Vincent Heimann

Sound Recordist:

Amiel Courtin-Wilson

Cinematographer:

Vincent Heimann

Editor:

Bill Murphy

Music by:

Alice Coltrane, Archie Shepp, Glenn Gould, Dorian Jones

Duration:

51 mins

#### **SYNOPSIS**

Australian ex-Catholic, expolitical activist and feminist, Robina Courtin has been a Buddhist nun since 1978. Teaching Buddhism around the world, she shatters the stereotype of a Buddhist nun, her intense and direct style leaving an indelible impression on everyone she meets.

In the heart of America's bible belt, Robina visits Kentucky State Penitentiary, guiding death row inmates and others on the path to enlightenment. Determined to harness their minds and deal with their violent crimes, they inspire Robina to work even harder at her own rigorous spiritual practice.

A bold, powerful portrait of one woman's series of transformations over the course of her life.

Official Selection Sundance International Film Festival 2000

**WINNER** Rouben Mamoulian Award Sydney Film Festival 2000

WINNER Dendy Award Best Documentary Sydney Film Festival 2000

WINNER Best Documentary Australian If Awards 2000

Nominated Best Director AFI Awards 2000

Nominated Best Documentary Critics Circle Of Australia 2001

Gallery Of NSW- Asia Pacific Documentary Focus Screenings

Official Selection Singapore International Film Festival

# **FILMOGRAPHY**

# SELECTED SHORT FILMS

# SELECTED SHORT FILMS

#### **CARSON (2013)**

Commissioned as part of the Venice 70 Future Reloaded Project celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the oldest film festival in the world.

Writer, Director, Editor: Amiel Courtin-Wilson

Cinematographer: Vincent Heimann

Official Selection Venice International Film Festival 2013

Duration: 2 mins

#### **CICADA (2009)**

Short Documentary

Director, Editor, Producer: Amiel Courtin-Wilson

**Cinematographer:**Germain McMicking

Composer: Steve Benwell

**Duration:** 8 mins

Official Selection Directors' Fortnight Cannes Film Festival 2009

Official Selection Clermont Ferrand International Film Festival 2010

**Official Selection** Sheffield International Documentary Festival 2009

Official Selection Melbourne International Film Festival 2008

Winner SBS Television Award St Kilda Film Festival 2009

**Special Mention** Krakow International Film Festival 2010

**Special Mention** Il Janela International De Cinema Do Recife 2009

Highly commended Best Documentary Flickerfest 2010

Nominated Best Documentary Australian Directors Guild Awards 2009

Nominated Best Documentary Sydney Film Festival 2009

Nominated Best Short Form Documentary ATOM Awards 2009

#### ON THE OTHER OCEAN (2006)

Writer, Director, Editor: Amiel Courtin-Wilson

**Cinematographer:**Germain McMicking

Sound:

Pauline Oliveros

**Duration:** 8 mins

Official Selection Melbourne International Film Festival 2006

Official Selection Sydney International Film Festival 2007

Official Selection Adelaide International Film Festival 2007

Official Selection "Pulse" American Director's Guild screening 2008

#### **ADOLESCENT (2003)**

Director, Producer, Writer, Editor: Amiel Courtin-Wilson

**Cinematographer:** Germain McMicking

**Duration:** 6 mins

Official Selection Melbourne International Film Festival 2003

#### **ISLANDS (2000)**

Short Documentary

Co-Writer, Co-Director, Cinematographer: Amiel Courtin-Wilson

Co-Writer, Co-Director, Cinematographer: Vincent Heimann

Editor:

Bill Murphy

Composer:

Dorian Jones

**Duration:** 26 mins

Official Selection:

Margaret Mead

Documentary Festival 2001

Hawaii International Film Festival 2001

Winner Documentary Excellence Award, Real Life On Film Int'l Festival, 2001

**Winner** Best Short Form Documentary Atom Awards 2001



# CONTACT

www.floodprojects.com

amiel@floodprojects.com

Aus Cell: +61 478 065 443