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FLICKER ALLEY PRESENTS
DZIGA VERTOV'S THE MAN WITH THE MOVIE CAMERA

Flicker Alley, in association with Lobster Films, the Blackhawk Films® Collection, the Cinémathèque de Toulouse, and EYE Film Institute, brings the extraordinary restoration of Dziga Vertov's *The Man with the Movie Camera* to its North American premiere.

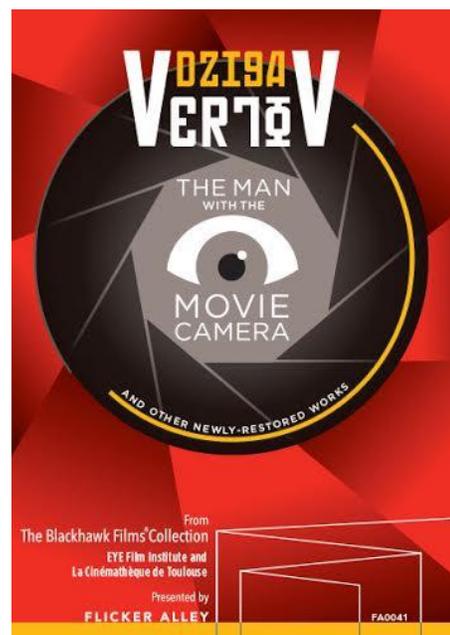
Flicker Alley, Lobster Films, and the Blackhawk Films® Collection are proud to present the pristine restoration of a cinematic masterpiece from one of the pioneers of Soviet film.

**Dziga Vertov's The Man with the Movie Camera
and Other Newly-Restored Works**

Dziga Vertov's The Man with the Movie Camera / 1929 / Directed by Dziga Vertov / 68 minutes / U.S.S.R. / Produced by VUFKU, Goskino, Ukrainfilm, and Mezhrabpom

"I am an eye. A mechanical eye. I am the machine that reveals the world to you as only the machine can see it." - Dziga Vertov ("Kino-Eye")

These words, written in 1923 (only a year after Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* was released) reflect the Soviet pioneer's developing approach to cinema as an art form that shuns traditional or Western narrative in favor of images from real life. They lay the foundation for what would become the crux of Vertov's revolutionary, anti-bourgeois aesthetic wherein the camera is an extension of the human eye, capturing "the chaos of visual phenomena filling the universe." Over the next decade-and-a-half, Vertov would devote his life to the construction and organization of these raw images, his apotheosis being the landmark 1929 film ***The Man with the Movie Camera***. In it, he comes closest to realizing his theory of 'Kino-Eye,' creating a new, more ambitious and more significant picture than what the eye initially perceives.



Now - thanks to the extraordinary restoration efforts of Lobster Films, Blackhawk Films® Collection, EYE Film Institute, Cinémathèque de Toulouse, and the Centre National de la Cinématographie - Flicker Alley is able to present ***The Man with the Movie Camera***.

Named the best documentary film of all time by Sight and Sound, ***The Man with the Movie Camera (1929)*** is presented here in its entirety for the first time since its original premiere. Discovered and restored at EYE Film Institute in Amsterdam - with extensive digital treatment by Lobster Films - the 35mm print from which this edition is, in part, sourced is the only known complete version of the film.

The Man with the Movie Camera features musical accompaniments by Alloy Orchestra.

About the Cinémathèque de Toulouse

Founded in 1964 by Raymond Borde and a team of film enthusiasts, the Cinémathèque de Toulouse is today considered - along with the Centre National de la Cinématographie and the Cinémathèque française - one of the three major French film archives. With a rich collection of over 43,000 films, 75,000 posters, and 500,000 photographs, the Cinémathèque de Toulouse holds an especially large catalog from Russian and Soviet cinema, testimony to its longstanding friendship with Gosfilmofond, the national archive of the former USSR, and now Russia. This 50-year relationship has allowed the Cinémathèque to work towards a better understanding of Soviet cinema in both France and Europe.

<http://www.lacinemathequedetoulouse.com/>

About EYE Film Institute Netherlands

EYE, the national museum for film, is located on Amsterdam's IJ harbour, and manages more than 40.000 films from all genres. The collection represents an outstanding sample of film history, from classics and blockbusters to cult films. EYE is internationally acclaimed for its knowledge of and expertise in the field of film restoration, research, and education. For young and old, for film enthusiasts and professionals, and from constantly changing perspectives, EYE focuses on film as an art form, as entertainment, and as part of digital visual culture. EYE was founded in 2010 as a result of the merger between four organizations: the Filmmuseum, Holland Film, the Filmbank, and the Netherlands Institute for Film Education.

<https://www.eyefilm.nl/en>

About Lobster Films

Serge Bromberg and Eric Lange founded Lobster Films in 1985. Since then, the Lobster collection has grown to represent some 20,000 rare, unknown, and amazing films, as well as classic films in black and white or color. A major player in the fields of film restoration and preservation, Lobster regularly helps film libraries and private companies from around the world bring cinema treasures back to life.

<http://www.lobsterfilms.com>

About the Blackhawk Film® Collection

Blackhawk Films® was founded in 1927 as a producer of film advertising for merchants and as a distributor of regional newsreels. The company made its mark as a

nontheatrical distributor with the advent of 16mm sound film in 1933, establishing several regional offices before WWII. In 1947, Blackhawk expanded into sales of used film and soon thereafter began distributing new 8mm and 16mm prints of Laurel & Hardy comedies from Hal Roach Studios as well as titles from such other suppliers such as Fox Movietone, Killiam Shows, and National Telefilm Associates. David Shepard joined Blackhawk as Vice President (1973-1976) and after founding Film Preservation Associates in 1986, acquired the Blackhawk Films® library which now comprises some 5,000 titles.

About Flicker Alley, LLC

Flicker Alley, LLC was founded in 2002 by Jeff Masino. Each Flicker Alley publication is the culmination of hundreds of hours of research, digital restoration, graphic design, music composition and scoring. Collectively, they reflect the creativity, expertise, and shared passion of many talented collaborators. The Flicker Alley brand has grown to enjoy national and international critical acclaim. The company is a four-time recipient of the National Society of Film Critics Film Heritage Award for publishing "rare early U.S. and foreign silent film."

<http://www.FlickerAlley.com>

<http://www.Facebook.com/FlickerAlley>

<http://www.Twitter.com/FlickerAlley>

Film Credits

Original Title: Chelovek s kinoapparatom

Released: January 8, 1929 (Kiev)

April 9, 1929 (Moscow)

Supervised and Edited by Dziga Vertov

Assisted by Elizaveta Svilova

Chief Cameraman: Mikhail Kaufman

Production: VUFKU (Kiev, Ukraine)

68 minutes

Music composed and performed by The Alloy Orchestra, following the musical instructions of Dziga Vertov. – © 1996 Junk Metal Music

Composed and premiered for the Giornate des Cinema Muto de Pordenone, Italy (Premiere at the Teatro Verdi, October 24, 1995).

Essay on The Man with the Movie Camera

After the success of *Manhatta* (1921, Charles Sheeler, Paul Strand) and *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (Walter Ruttmann, 1927), it seems that all major cities got their own cinematic portraits. A big city from early morning to the last light of evening: for several years, this became the theme on which the great filmmakers of the day applied their talents and diverse points of view.

Some will see *The Man with the Movie Camera* as the Ukrainian version of this exercise, the film in this case being a composite of several Soviet cities. Perhaps this is how Vertov

got the green light for the production. But the grammar and the objective of the film are obviously quite different.

To understand ***The Man with the Movie Camera***, we need to re-read Vertov in his *Kino-Eye* manifesto (1923):

"I am an eye ... I am the machine that reveals the world to you as only the machine can see it. I am now free of human immobility. I am in perpetual motion. I approach things, I move away from them. I slip under them, into them. I move toward the muzzle of a race horse. I move quickly through crowds, I advance ahead of the soldiers in an assault, I take off with airplanes, I fall on my back and get up at the same time that the body falls and gets up. This is what I am, a machine that runs in chaotic maneuvers, recording movements one after the other, assembling them into a patchwork. Freed from the constraints of time and space, I organize each point of the universe as I wish. My route is that of a new conception of the world. I can make you discover the world you did not know existed."

From the beginning, the film makes a point of the absence of intertitles and script. It needs no reference to theatre, no sets, no actors. It is a one-hour practical application of Vertov's most fundamental principles. No script (although there are 141-pages of guidelines!). No story, apart from the story of life unfolding before our eyes. No re-enactments, in order to try to approach as closely as possible a universal cinematic language.

In this way, ***The Man with the Movie Camera*** is a manifesto, today probably the most studied Soviet film and the one most shown in film schools. It constructs and deconstructs at the same time, puts the cameraman in the position of the filmed, introduces the viewer's perspective into the narration (we're not watching a film, we are present at the showing of a film before an audience). The real star is the camera, allowing the eye to see the invisible, or that which is rarely filmed.

Using cutaways and images of reels of film to remind audiences that it is a montage, a vision, Vertov restates one of the foundations of his theory. The viewer is not to be lulled by the facile spectacle of narrative and plot. All that counts is simply that he sees what the eye of the camera has recorded for him, orchestrated like music, with montage and visual effects. There cannot be any manipulation, and any attempt at trompe l'œil should be immediately apparent.

The movement is constant. The journey of the camera is as daunting as the city is tumultuous, and each individual, each living being, each object is a great part of a whole whose perspective can only be embraced by a hungry camera.

Such is life. And in this city, all the cinematic themes praising the Soviet Union are there: collective success, constructivism, industry, work, education, and culture.

Vertov, this film his masterpiece, decreed his own sound design for the film, which was only ever performed at the film's premiere. The Alloy Orchestra studied Vertov's musical notes

and based this new score on it, revisiting Vertov's imaginary audio universe and rendering a resolutely new orchestral arrangement of it.

Studying ***The Man with the Movie Camera*** is like entering into the essence of absolute cinema: a synthesis between the movement of the image and its deconstruction.

With this new restoration, we are at the heart of Vertov's vision. We discover the entire image as he had imagined and constructed it, which has been completely invisible since the original film's release.

About the 2014 Restoration

Essay by Mark-Paul Meyer, EYE Film Institute

The Man with the Movie Camera is one of the best-known works in film history and generally regarded as one of the great masterpieces of the classical Soviet avant-garde. Every person who has ever shown the slightest interest in the history of cinema has heard about this film and probably seen it at some point. But what has this person actually seen? Of course this is a question that often occurs when you see film presentations or video releases of films: how do you know what version you are looking at and how does it relate to other prints or copies of the same film? It is well known that many films exist in variant versions. Sometimes these are intentionally created by the director or the producer, as with multi-language versions, or films that were made with multiple cameras to produce additional negatives, as was common practice in the era of silent films. But mostly film prints have suffered from wear and tear, from cuts by projectionists or censors, or as a result of inferior duplication and reproduction. When you see a film from 1929, like **TMWTMC**, you must always be aware of the fact that you may be watching just "a" print of the film, not necessarily exactly as it was intended by the film maker or as it was shown on its opening night.

Unfortunately **TMWTMC** is mostly known in prints that are defective. For decades the film was widely seen only in prints that were printed with a sound aperture. **TMWTMC** was shot in the period of silent cinema with silent camera aperture. This means that the filmed image used the full area between perforations on both sides that were necessary for the transport of the film. In later years, when sound was introduced, part of the image width was used for the optical sound track. This reduced the horizontal size of the image ; then both top and bottom of the silent image were also cropped to maintain the customary screen shape. The consequence of this practice was that the cinema apparatus, both in cinemas and in film laboratories, was soon no longer set up for the silent frame ratio. In a nutshell, most prints of **TMWTMC**, even in archives, have these parts of the image cut-off. They are full length - all the shots are there - but suffer severe mutilation so far as the photographic composition is concerned.

The most important feature of the restored film print represented here is that the full frame image is preserved. This is because the print that served as the source is from the first years of its release and preserved in the archives of the EYE Filmmuseum in Amsterdam. This print was brought to Amsterdam by Vertov himself when he travelled through Western

Europe in 1931 and showed the film on different occasions. In the Netherlands this print was presented by the Filmliga, an active film club that promoted film as visual art. The film was shown in the presence of Dziga Vertov, and when Vertov returned to the Soviet Union, the print was acquired by the Filmliga. The Filmliga continued to occasionally show the film in the Netherlands and after the war the film became part of the collection of the then Nederlands Filmmuseum.

This vintage nitrate print is full frame and has superb photographic quality, due to the fact that it is directly printed from the original negative on good quality positive film stock. This doesn't mean that the film is perfect. For many reasons this print has also its deficiencies. The main reason is that the print was regularly used for presentations in the years that inflammable nitrate film was still shown. Subsequently the print was screened in the Filmmuseum itself as well as in other film museums and archives that requested the film print from Amsterdam. When in the 1960s a duplicate was made on non-flammable film stock, the film was already missing several elements that that will be described below. The ongoing use of the film created problems that can be summarized as wear and tear through continuously changing reel ends, the disappearance of credits and chapter numbers, and even a cut that might be a censor cut or a cut that made by a projectionist or programmer.

One short but essential scene was removed from the Amsterdam print. It is obvious from the film print that something was cut out, because a splice can be found, but there is no documentation on who or exactly why it was cut out. This sequence showed the birth of a baby very closely from the lap of the mother and was possibly considered as too explicit and shocking. These 39 frames - less than two seconds - were restored from a film reel that the Austrian Filmmuseum acquired in 2004 from The Russian State Documentary Film and Photo Archive at Krasnagorsk.

It is not clear whether the film print was presented with opening credits or not. The credits are obviously missing and all other existing prints have title cards that are not original from 1929. However, existing documents make it very likely that title cards were intended and that the text of the title cards sketched the artistic intentions of the film. The credits were recreated from the notes for the film, as was done before in the 1950s. Because the film is without intertitles, the titles at the beginning are important to direct the attention of spectators in a specific way. To avoid subtitling it was decided to create new titles in English, to facilitate an international audience.

As is clearly stated in the beginning credits of the film, **TMWMC** is a film in six chapters. These six chapters are no longer clearly distinguishable in the known existing prints. Also the print from the EYE Filmmuseum did not have clear indications anymore where the chapters started and where they ended. **TMWMC** was released in single reels of slightly less than a thousand feet each. Beginnings and endings of these reels were subject to damage when it was still common practice to show the shorter reels. Also, there were more reels than chapters, therefore the numbers seemed illogical if considered merely as indications for the reel order. It was common practice that every reel had a head leader and a tail leader, clearly indicating the number of the reel, but in this case the numeration was not in accordance with the division in reels and could therefore easily be considered as confusing

or mistaken and that therefore complete removal was chosen. Moreover, when it became practice to mount the shorter reels to reels of 2000 feet or even larger, the beginning and endings were taken off to enable a film presentation without undesired interruptions. When these larger reels were dismounted again, the reel ends were sometimes discarded or put in the wrong places. This is all speculation, but it is a fact that the numbers have disappeared, both from the Amsterdam print and from the prints that were available elsewhere.

However, during the restoration process it became clear that the film originally contained numbers that clearly indicated the different chapters, all intended as integral to the film, meant to be seen by the spectator. Oddly, the number 1 is still to be found in most prints, probably because it is somewhere in the middle of reel 1 and therefore never considered as a leader strip that could easily be taken off. It also clearly indicates the beginning of the film after a short introduction. The film consisted therefore of a prologue and six chapters. After the prologue the number 1 rises and the first chapter starts.

Fortunately, there is a 16mm print in the archives of EYE which turned out to be an early duplication of the original nitrate print. In this print the numbers were all still present, except number 6. Because of the specific graphic qualities of the numbers and the animated movement - the number falling at the end of a chapter and rising to indicate the start of the next - it was clear that these numbers were meant not only as reference for the projectionists, but also intended as integral parts of the film. Chapters started with a number rising and a camera lens that opened its diaphragm, and at the end of the chapter the same sequence was presented in reverse order: the diaphragm closed and the number fell. It was therefore possible to restore the division in six chapters. For the restoration the numbers that were still present in the 16mm print were digitized and edited into the film. Only the number 6 was newly created.

The original nitrate print was digitized at 2K resolution by Haghefilm in Amsterdam, on its Oxberry scanner with wet gate. The superb photographic quality of the original print guaranteed good quality digital files. The restoration interventions were made on the digital data, such as inserting the missing birth scene, the titles and the numbers. No elaborate clean up was executed. For the production of a new 35mm print, the data were recorded back to a 35mm black and white negative. The print made from this negative was presented for the first time in 2010 in Amsterdam. The file for the DVD, Blu-Ray and DCP was produced directly from the 2K data and extensively cleaned and restored by Lobster films in 2014.