

12/40

The Lacey Rituals: Films by Bruce Lacey and Friends at BFI Southbank in July



Bruce Lacey (born 1927) is one of Britain's great visionary talents. Artist, stage, screen and TV performer, absurdist, propmaker and filmmaker, he figured prominently on London's counter-cultural art scene during the 1960s and is as creative now, aged 85. Known for his unpredictable humour and strong political views, as well as his idiosyncratic art practices, he exerted considerable influence on post-war culture. Lacey has worked with all manner of filmmakers, musicians and other artists, from The Beatles to the Goons, and yet somehow, much of his work has remained obscure and little seen in recent years. Now, BFI Southbank celebrates and revisits the richness and diversity of his output with a season of rarely screened films and TV shows, including eight newly restored 35mm blowups of films by Lacey and collaborators, made by the BFI National Archive.

The season, which runs from 5 – 31 July, also features the world premiere of **The Bruce Lacey Experience**, a new film by Turner Prize winner Jeremy Deller and Nick Abrahams, and runs in conjunction with a major new Bruce Lacey exhibition at Camden Arts Centre and the release of a BFI DVD.

The Lacey Rituals: Films by Bruce Lacey and Friends is presented in four programmes during July and will include guest appearances by Bruce Lacey, Jeremy Deller and Nick Abrahams and Lacey family members:

Bomb Culture showcases eight short films by artists and filmmakers including **Lindsay Anderson** and **Jeff Keen** who, like Lacey himself, saw National Service.

It highlights the brutality and dark absurdity that many artists saw behind the political rhetoric of the post-war decades.

Provocative satire, surreal humour and general tomfoolery abound in **It's Rubbish, But By Jingo It's British Rubbish!** a selection of snappy, short films and TV shows by **Ken Russell**, cartoonist **Bob Godfrey** (*Roobarb*) and cult photographer-filmmaker **George Harrison Marks** – as well as **Bruce Lacey** and **Jill Bruce**. The Alberts, Lacey's cod-Edwardian novelty jazz musicians, who influenced The Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah band and The Beatles are highly prominent here. On the same wavelength and making appearances are **Ivor Cutler**, **Anthony Newley** and **Michael Bentine**.

The Lacey Family: Life on Earth collects together very personal, playful films woven around bodies and bodily functions, human behaviours and domesticity. *Kissing Film* features a 9-minute long intimate embrace. The programme includes **The Lacey Rituals**, shot by the young Lacey family in 1973. The children take turns to operate camera and clapperboard, creating a delightful and experimental hour-long home-movie.

In An English Country Garden will take viewers into Lacey's back garden for the performance of a pagan ritual and includes Richard Lester's ground-breaking 1960 classic **The Running, Jumping & Standing Still Film** – the Goons cavorting in the English countryside with Bruce Lacey in tow.

The season is launched on 5 July with the world premiere of **The Bruce Lacey Experience**, a new film by Jeremy Deller and Nick Abrahams, followed by an 'in Conversation' event with the filmmakers and Bruce Lacey. Deller and Abrahams enter Lacey's kaleidoscopic world, delving in to the treasure trove that is his Norfolk farmhouse and capturing his latest pranks, performances and outings. It's inspiring, uplifting and thoroughly entertaining.

The Camden Arts Centre exhibition **The Bruce Lacey Experience** runs from 7 July to 16 September. The BFI DVD, **The Lacey Rituals: Films by Bruce Lacey (and friends)**, released on 23 July, is a 2-disc set containing films, performances and documentation along with *The Bruce Lacey Experience* (2012).

Screenings taking place during The Lacey Rituals season:

World Premiere: The Bruce Lacey Experience + Jeremy Deller, Nick Abrahams and Bruce Lacey in Conversation

UK 2012. Dir Jeremy Deller & Nick Abrahams. c70min

Something of a Zelig figure, artist and filmmaker Bruce Lacey has exerted a significant influence on a number of key post-war underground cultural movements. Jeremy Deller and Nick Abrahams explore that rich history and present new pranks and performance art undertaken by Lacey too, taking in visits to his artefact strewn Norfolk farmhouse, the IWM Duxford aircraft museum and the vaults of the Tate. We look forward to welcoming the filmmakers and Bruce Lacey himself for an in-conversation event after the screening.

Thu 5 July 18:30 NFT1

Bomb Culture

Colour Poems (UK 1974. Dir Margaret Tait. 12min); **Bang!** (UK 1967. Dir Bob Godfrey. 8min); **Speak** (UK 1962. Dir John Latham. 10min); **Meatdaze** (UK 1968. Dir Jeff Keen. 10min); **O Dreamland** (UK 1953. Dir Lindsay Anderson. 11min); **How to Have a Bath** (UK 1971. Dir

Bruce Lacey & Jill Bruce. 5min); **Arbeit Macht Frei** (UK 1973. Dir Stuart Brisley. 19min); **Head In Shadow** (UK 1951. Dir John Sewell, Edward Dicks, Bruce Lacey & John Rolfe. 19min)

Presenting films by artists and filmmakers who saw National Service – such as Bruce Lacey – this programme highlights the brutality and dark absurdity that many artists saw behind the political rhetoric of the post-war decades. It blurs the boundaries between art, experimental, amateur and Free Cinema filmmaking and invites speculation as to the impact that these people's military experiences had on their films and the peace and psychedelic movements that followed.

Introduced by William Fowler, Curator of Artists' Moving Image, BFI National Archive

Fri 6 July 18:20 NFT2

Wed 11 July 18:20 NFT2

It's Rubbish, But By Jingo It's British Rubbish!

Everybody's Nobody (UK 1960. Dir Bruce Lacey & John Sewell. 20min); **Do It Yourself Cartoon Kit** (UK 1959. Dir Bob Godfrey. 6min); **That Noise** (UK 1961. Dir Bob Godfrey. 3min); **Monitor: Preservation Man** (BBC 1962. Dir Ken Russell. 16min); **British Landing on the Moon** (UK 1971. Dir Bruce Lacey. 3min); **Heads, Bodies and Legs** (UK 1965. Dir Bruce Lacey & Jill Bruce. 3min); **Uncle's Tea Party** (UK 1962. Dir George Harrison Marks. 5min); **The Alberts' Channel Too** (BBC 1964. Dir Dennis Main Wilson. 30min)

Provocative satire, surreal humour and general tomfoolery abound in this selection of snappy, rarely screened short films and TV shows by Ken Russell, Bob Godfrey and George Harrison Marks – as well as Bruce Lacey and Jill Bruce. Mocking authority and the British Empire in equally startling measures, 'Professor' Lacey and friends, cod-Edwardian novelty jazz musicians The Alberts, appear in virtually everything here – their stiff antique attire and playful, physical performances going on to influence both the Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band and the Sgt Pepper-era Beatles. Look and listen out too for Ivor Cutler, Antony Newley and Michael Bentine.

Mon 9 July 18:20 NFT3

Thu 12 July 20:30 NFT3

The Lacey Family: Life On Earth

Double Exposure (UK 1975. Dir Bruce Lacey & Jill Bruce. 3min); **Late Night Line-Up: Fun Fair** (BBC 1968. 14min); **Kissing Film** (UK 1967. Dir Bruce Lacey & Jill Bruce. 9min); **The Lacey Rituals** (UK 1973. Dir The Lacey Family. 59min)

Bodies and bodily functions, human behaviours and domesticity: all visceral, and unpredictable, yet intimate and everyday too. These playful, personal and self-reflexive films follow neatly on from Lacey's robot assemblages and humanoids exhibited in art spaces including Tate Britain, and, like these other works, they invite us to engage with the radical and subversive qualities contained in day-to-day life. *The Lacey Rituals*, shot by the Lacey family – the children taking turns to operate camera and clapperboard – must be one of the most delightful and experimental home-movies ever made.

Fri 20 July 20:40 NFT2

***Tue 31 July 18:10 NFT3**

***Followed by a Q&A with Lacey family members, Kevin Lacey, Tiffany Lacey-Edwards and Saffron Paffron**

In An English Country Garden

The Re-Awakening of My Ancestral Spirits (UK 1987. Dir Bruce Lacey. 22min); **The Flying Alberts** (UK 1965. Dir Roger Graef. 4min); **The Running, Jumping & Standing Still Film** (UK 1960. Dir Richard Lester. 11min); **Castlerigg** (UK c1981. Dir Bruce Lacey. 10min); **Agib and Agab** (UK 1954. Dir John Sewell. 21min); **Battle of New Orleans** (UK 1960. Dir Bob Godfrey. 3min)

Using green landscapes for all manner of unusual actions and alternative visionary deeds, Bruce Lacey and friends subvert the pastoral image of the rural idyll. See a

pagan ritual performed in Lacey's back-garden, the *Arabian Nights* presented on London scrubland, the beautiful Jarman-esque documentation of a stone circle on Super-8 film and – in Richard Lester's ground-breaking classic *The Running, Jumping & Standing Still Film* – the Goons out in the English countryside, cavorting with Bruce Lacey in tow.

Tue 24 July 20:30 NFT3

Fri 27 July 18:40 NFT3

Press Contacts:

Jill Reading – Press Officer, BFI DVD
jill.reading@bfi.org.uk | 020 7957 4759

Liz Parkinson – Assistant Press Officer, BFI Southbank
liz.parkinson@bfi.org.uk | 020 7957 8918

Caroline Jones – Press Officer, BFI Southbank
Caroline.jones@bfi.org.uk | 020 7957 8986

The Bruce Lacey Experience at Camden Arts Centre:
Alison Wright, Press Consultant
alison@alisonwrightpr.com | 01608 811 474

NOTES TO EDITORS

About the BFI

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

Booking Information

The BFI Southbank is open to all. BFI members are entitled to a discount on all tickets. BFI Southbank Box Office tel: 020 7928 3232. Unless otherwise stated tickets are £10.0, concs £6.75. Members pay £1.50 less on any ticket. Website www.bfi.org.uk/southbank

BFI National Archive

The BFI National Archive was founded in 1935 and has grown to become the largest collection of film and television in the world with over 180,000 films and 750,000 television programmes. Expert teams undertake the time-consuming and complex task of restoring films. With specialist storage facilities in Warwickshire and Hertfordshire the archive also boasts significant collections of stills, posters and designs along with original scripts, press books and related ephemera. We are funded partly by OfCom as the official archive for ITV, Channel Four and Channel Five. We record a representative sample of television across Britain's terrestrial channels and are the official archive of moving image records of Parliament.

BFI Filmstore

The BFI Filmstore is stocked and staffed by BFI experts with over 1,200 book titles and 1,000 DVDs to choose from, including hundreds of acclaimed books and DVDs produced by the BFI.

The benugo bar & kitchen

Eat, drink and be merry in panoramic daylight. benugo's décor is contemporary, brightly lit and playful with a lounge space, bar and dining area. The place to network, hang out, unpack a film, savour the best of Modern British or sip on a cocktail.

*** PICTURE DESK ***

A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting BFI Southbank screenings can be found at www.image.net under BFI / BFI Southbank / July 2012