

# THIS IS NOW: FILM AND VIDEO AFTER PUNK

Rediscovering underground film  
1979-85



This April **BFI Southbank** will present **This is Now: Film and Video After Punk**, a major season rediscovering key underground films from London's post-punk era 1979-85. This period saw an explosion in artist film-making which has, for the most part, remained unseen until now. These works by a key cohort of artists and film-makers such as **Grayson Perry, John Maybury, Tina Keane, Christine Binnie, Isaac Julien, Jill Westwood, Cerith Wyn Evans** and **Sophie Muller**, are newly available for the first time in a generation and promise to transform our understanding of the period and will undoubtedly be a revelation for audiences of all ages.

The season has been three years in research and development and is programmed by **William Fowler**, curator of Artists' Moving Image, **BFI National Archive**. Almost all of the works featured have been taken into the national collection and digitally re-mastered to the highest archival standards, and this season marks the starting point of a ground-breaking BFI project that will tour internationally through the artist moving image agency **LUX**.

The season at BFI Southbank will launch on **Friday 4 April** with a one-off live performance by **23 Skidoo** entitled *Seven Songs* featuring some of their classic underground tracks. This event will be set against a backdrop of the purpose-made video by **Richard Heslop** from 1981 - a collage film of found footage and appropriated clips, re-worked, coloured and treated to dizzying effect.

This is Now... will feature a wealth of independently produced film from a world where nightclub visuals became highly influential and developed into scratch video. Key figures captured on film include **Leigh Bowery, Michael Clarke, Siouxsie Sioux, Public Image Ltd** and many more, while women, black and gay film-makers found their voice, previously absent from the mainstream, in a playful reworking of the DIY aesthetics of the punk movement. A potent mix of art students, new romantics and other urban tribes transformed art, fashion, music and nightlife throughout this era. Contemporary culture is still experiencing the aftershocks of the power of the post-punk artistic experiment. These films are precious documents of some of its finest flowering and offered an antidote to the widespread physical and economic decay which blighted the early 1980s.

Here is a unique opportunity to see an extraordinary range of innovative, sexually provocative and beautiful short films, in specially curated programmes, with the added bonus of introductions and discussions featuring many of the artist film-makers themselves, including **Grayson Perry, Don Letts, Holly Warburton** and **Ken Hollings**. The majority of the Super 8

and 16mm films due to screen in this season have literally been out of circulation for thirty years. The project forms part of the BFI National Archive's ongoing work to restore significant yet marginalised areas of historical British experimental film.

In partnership with:



**William Fowler**, curator of Artists' Moving Image, BFI National Archive is available for interview on request

### **Programme:**

#### **SONIC CINEMA: 23 Skidoo and Richard Heslop: Seven Songs**

'23 Skidoo', the driving, intense post-punk, industrial fusion band will play live to a confrontational video collage made by Richard Heslop. As first released in 1982 on video label Double Vision, *Seven Songs* brilliantly collided a whole gamut of treated, plundered material to tracks from the hit '23 Skidoo' record of the same name. Presented tonight in a new, one-off, live version, the event forms the very special opening to our season This is Now: Film and Video After Punk.

**Followed by a DJ set from Don Letts in the Benugo Bar.**

**Fri 4 Apr 20:45 NFT1 Tickets £15, concs £11.50 (Members pay £1.50 less)**

#### **Film and Video After Punk: Salon Discussion**

The early 80s saw the emergence of vibrant, groundbreaking new styles, techniques and perspectives in underground and artists' film and video. In this informal event we consider the social and political background to this bold new wave of moving image production, and what its relationship might be to today's diffuse media landscape.

***We look forward to welcoming George Barber, Grayson Perry, Holly Warburton, Ken Hollings and other artists, filmmakers and commentators from the period for a wide-ranging discussion.***

***Please check BFI website for final confirmation of attendees***

**Mon 14 Apr 18:30 BFI Reuben Library**

#### **Performing The Self**

New ways to think about identity, the self and the body were all part of punk's powerful legacy. These imaginative, diverse pieces show how artists played with ideas of performance, forging a dynamic new pop art film culture that was snappy, stylish *and* existential.

***Still Life With Phrenology Head*** UK 1979. Dir Cerith Wyn Evans. 15min

***Human League: Don't You Want Me*** UK 1981. Dir Steve Barron. 4min

***Chat Rap*** UK 1983. Dir John Scarlett-Davis. 15min

***Adam Ant: Prince Charming*** UK 1981. Dir Mike Mansfield & Adam Ant. 3min

***Adam Ant: Stand and Deliver*** UK 1981. Dir Mike Mansfield & Adam Ant. 3min

***Solitude*** UK 1981. Dir John Maybury 11min

***The Modern Image*** UK 1979. Dir John Maybury. 13min

***Bungalow Depression*** UK 1984. Dirs Grayson Perry and Jennifer Binnie. 3min

***The Private View*** 1981. Dir Neo-Naturists. 13min

***Introduced by Wilma Johnson and Christine & Jennifer Binnie***

**Fri 4 Apr 18:30 NFT1**

#### **Home Taping**

The mainstream media was treated like a giant library to be plundered for provocative play and subversion in the early 80s. Whether filming their TV screen with a Super8 camera or deftly copying tape-to-tape, artists grabbed and juxtaposed disparate material to disrupt the dominant ideologies of the age, and create new visual music.

Programme includes:

***Still Life With Still Born*** UK 1980. Dir Cerith Wyn Evans. 20min

***Skinheads and Roses*** UK 1983. Dir Jill Westwood. 8min

***Tilt*** UK 1984. Dir George Barber. 6min

***Branson*** UK 1983. Dir George Barber. 2min

***Blue Monday*** UK 1984. Dir Duvet Brothers. 4min

***Commander in Chief*** UK 1984. Dir Gorilla Tapes. 4min

***Dolphins and Pop Music*** UK 1982. Dir Jeffrey Hinton. 18min

**Art of Noise: Legs** UK 1985. Dirs George Barber & George Snow. 7min

**Passion Tryptych** UK 1982. Dir Cordelia Swann. 3min

Includes key examples of the 'scratch video' phenomena.

**Sat 5 Apr 20:40 NFT2 Introduced by George Barber**

### **Just Images**

The moral, political and symbolic integrity of the image itself is explored, attacked and undermined in these richly textured films. John Maybury casts friends Siouxsie Sioux and David Holah in one of the singularly most stunning and ambitious Super8 works of the era: *Court of Miracles*. Young filmmakers bring on the post-modern age.

Programme includes:

**Court of Miracles** (UK 1982. Dir John Maybury. 40min),

**Glory Boys** (UK 1983. Dir Vanda Carter. 4min),

**Territories** (UK 1984. Dir Isaac Julien. 25min),

**Psychic TV: Unclean** (UK 1984. Dir Cerith Wyn Evans. 9min)

**Sat 5 Apr 20:45 NFT3, Tue 8 Apr 20:40 NFT2 We hope to welcome John Maybury to this event**

### **Before and After Science**

Grayson Perry, Anna Thew and Steven Chivers present stunning, lo-fi and strange new fictional worlds. Arcane beliefs, folk tales and a post-apocalyptic scenario shot in run-down London all provide welcome counterpoints to the rigidity of modern, patriarchal Christian society.

**Lost For Words**.UK 1980. Dir Anna Thew. 25min

**The Green Witch and Merry Diana**. UK 1984. Dir Grayson Perry. 25min

**Men Without Hats: Safety Dance**. UK 1982. Dir Tim Pope. 3min

**Catherine De Medicis Part 2**. UK 1984. Dir Steven Chivers. 25min

**Fri 11 Apr 18:20 NFT2, Mon 14 Apr 20:50 NFT2\*\* Introduced by Grayson Perry**

### **Through a Glass, Darkly**

Provocative filmmakers in the early 80s treated the moving image like a mirror; a surface of divination through which to probe inside their own mind and that of the viewer. This programme includes particularly challenging work that was originally connected to the industrial scene.

Programme includes:

**Shadow of a Journey** UK 1980. Dir Tina Keane. 20min

**Lyrical Doubt** UK 1984. Dir Judith Goddard. 16min

**Winter Journey in the Hartz Mountains** UK 1983. Dir Cordelia Swann. 8min

**Liquid Video** UK 1983. Dir Michael Kostiff. 10min

**All Veneer and No Backbone** UK 1980. Dir Holly Warburton. 6min

**The Wound** UK 1984. Dir Jill Westwood. 20min

**Grayson/Jewels/Flowers** UK 1985. Dir Jennifer Binnie. 3min

**Fri 11 Apr 20:45 NFT2\*, Thu 17 Apr 20:40 NFT2\* Introduced by Jill Westwood**

### **Video Killed the Radio Star**

Early independent video releases were the revolutionary, DIY antidote to a TV system only just gearing up for a fourth channel. They bypassed censorship and gave a platform to the marginalised and unsanctioned. This eclectic selection includes a very rare John Smith title and punchy, stuttering Scratch Video works by The Duvet Brothers, Kim Flitcroft & Sandra Goldbacher, Gorilla Tapes and George Barber.

**Echo and the Bunnymen: Shine So Hard**. UK 1981. Dir John Smith. 32min

**Miners Campaign Tapes: The Lie Machine**. UK 1984. 15min

**The Greatest Hits of Scratch Video Volume 1**. UK 1984. Dir various. 25min

**Sat 12 Apr 16:10 NFT2**

### **Entering the Dream Space**

Weaving film and video together, often utilising religious imagery, and introducing colour, effects and surface texture, filmmakers generated a new, vividly transcendental style by the end of the post-punk era. Key examples of this sensual, visually mature work are presented alongside other dynamic pieces that explore the dreamlike state.

**The Technology of Souls** UK 1981. Dir John Maybury. 11min

**In Excelsis Deo (In Adoration of God)** UK 1983. Dir Sophie Muller. 24min

**Miracle of the Rose** UK 1984. Dir Cerith Wyn Evans. 25min

**The Union Jacking Up** UK 1985. Dir John Maybury. 18min

**Sun 6 Apr 18:10 NFT3, Sat 12 Apr 18:20 NFT2**

**Don Letts Presents: Post-Punk**

DJ, filmmaker and musician Don Letts has been a vital, catalysing force in street and underground culture since the late 70s. He shot bold, immediate Super8 film (with sound) of a number of British bands – capturing the key punk rock renegades at their most raw and intense. In this programme we present never before seen footage of ‘Public Image Limited’, ‘The Pop Group’, ‘The Slits’ and more...

**Sat 12 Apr 20:30 NFT3**

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**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

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 £11.00, concs £8.50 Members pay £1.50 less on any ticket. Website [www.bfi.org.uk/southbank](http://www.bfi.org.uk/southbank)

**Tickets for FREE screenings and events must be booked in advance by calling the Box Office to avoid disappointment**

**BFI Shop**

The BFI Shop 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.

There’s more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Our world-renowned archival collections, cinemas, festivals, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire you.

**\*\*\* PICTURE DESK \*\*\***

**A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting BFI Southbank screenings can be found at [www.image.net](http://www.image.net) under BFI / BFI Southbank /April 2014**