

Keynote 1 // Robin Curtis (Freiburg)
A Self in Flux

Wed 5 May / 2:30 pm

Our notion of personhood is formed to a large degree through the demonstration of intentionality and reason, through the unity of the self and its consistency of expression and action, all of which seem to some degree to be contingent on the operation of memory. Recent scholarship on dementia suggests, however, that a loss of memory does not result in a loss of self and that while self-concept and self-knowledge as well as appearance may shift other key aspects may surface and give new shape to that self. This contribution will consider the degree to which the self may be considered as a construct in flux by examining the specific manner in which we as viewers gain access to a central character afflicted with dementia in a range of tellings, both fictional and documentary. By asking whether these dementia narratives highlight continuities determined externally, for instance, by the specific formal and commercial demands placed on feature films, or else suggest new and different bases for that self to persist, I will consider how films can influence our understanding of selfhood in flux.

Robin Curtis holds the Chair in Media and Cultural Studies at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg. Co-Director of the Centre for Popular Culture and Music, Freiburg. Born in Toronto. On editorial board of the journal *Pop. Kultur und Kritik* (Transcript Verlag) as well as the advisory board of the internet journal *nachdemfilm.de*.

Keynote 2 // Michele Aaron (Warwick)
“Warts and All”: Film, Ethics, and Human Frailty

Thu 6 May / 2:30 pm

In mainstream depictions of human debilitation and illness, those approaching death often exude bravery, beauty and stoicism. Real dying is rarely edifying, tidy or painless. It is characterized instead by banality, corporeality, increasing disability and often despair. Film provides a rich language for the frailties and profundity of dying – with Hollywood as chief grammarian – but similarly serves such mythic, and solipsistic, ends. Film has the potential however to do dying differently: it can, instead, connect us, ethically, to the vulnerability of others. The aim of this lecture, and of Life:Moving, the community-based research project of which it speaks, is to pursue this potential of film. Through exploring the project’s principles and processes, and the films co-created by its six hospice-user participants, I will discuss Life:Moving’s navigation of human frailty, responsibility and self-exposure and start to map an ethical praxis for their wider filmic representation.

Michele Aaron, Reader in Film at Warwick University and Director of Screening Rights Film Festival, has published widely on the cultural politics, and ethics, of representation and spectatorship.

Keynote 3 // W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago)
Cinemanía: Madness and the Moving Image

Fri 7 May / 6 pm
With guest: filmmaker Carmen Elena Mitchell (L.A.)

This essay takes its inspiration from Friedrich Kittler’s remark that “only films make it possible to present all the mechanisms of madness.” The film medium has, from the first, been associated with dreams, hallucinations, and psychosis, from *THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI* to *THE SNAKE PIT* to *MR. ROBOT*.

This lecture will survey films about mental illness, in order to focus on a film project by a mentally ill filmmaker (the author’s son, Gabriel Mitchell) who was diagnosed with schizophrenia at the age of twenty. Gabriel saw cinema as a way to represent madness from both inside and outside, and as both an individual and collective condition. His aim was to transform schizophrenia from a disability into a critical perspective.

During the keynote, the film projects **INFINITE LIGHT** (Carmen Elena Mitchell, 2017) and **CRAZY TALK** (Gabriel Mitchell, 2011) will be presented.

W.J.T. Mitchell teaches art, literature, and cinema at the University of Chicago, and edits the journal *Critical Inquiry*. His books include *Iconology*, *Picture Theory*, *What Do Pictures Want?* and *Image Science*. He is currently completing a book entitled *Seeing Through Madness*.

From Curatorial Practice // Richard Warden (Glasgow)
Moving Images: Family, Loss, and First-person Documentary

Fri 7 May / 2:30 pm

With guest: filmmaker and visual artist Theresa Moerman Ib

After nearly a decade of presenting mental health film to cinema audiences, programmer and producer Richard Warden reflects upon what this work has meant for him both professionally and personally. Warden has overseen more than 150 festival events, including postscreening discussions. Academics, filmmakers, health professionals, third sector representatives and people with lived experience of mental health challenges have taken part on panels. Audience members have consistently been encouraged to offer their insights.

Warden has found the most memorable events to be those involving the participation of documentary subjects. And when a filmmaker is present on screen and in person to explore family matters, the experience is profound. Short and feature film material complements a frank account of engaging with such films and audiences.

Extracts from the following films will be shown during the presentation:

- | **HERE ONE DAY** USA 2012, Kathy Leichter, 76 mins. (extract)
- | **THE CLOSER WE GET** UK 2015, Karen Guthrie, 87 mins. (extract)
- | **A FAMILY AFFAIR** NL/DK 2015, Tom Fassaert, 115 mins. (extract)
- | **THE THIRD DAD** UK 2015, Theresa Moerman Ib, 10 mins.
- | **WATERFALL** UK 2016, Tom Lock Griffiths, 19 mins. (extract)
- | **VIVIAN, VIVIAN** NL 2016, Ingrid Kamerling, 54 mins. (extract)

Richard Warden has served as Film Curator for the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival and as Festival Producer for Document Human Rights Film Festival. He is now researching mental health documentary at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow.

Theresa Moerman Ib is a Danish/Dutch visual artist and writer. Her work is often autobiographical and explores themes such as memory, identity, loss and displacement. She lives and works in Scotland.