

Film Synopses

Antony Gormley and the 4th Plinth

North American Premiere

Director/Producer: John Wyver

Distributor: Illuminations

Colour, 48 minutes, English, 2009

In summer 2009, artist Antony Gormley, creator of many iconic sculptures including *Angel of the North*, launched the live artwork *One & Other*, a unique portrait of contemporary Britain. Over 100 days and nights, 2,400 participants representing every region of the UK spent one hour alone on the empty plinth in Trafalgar Square. This informative documentary follows the process behind Gormley's monumental project and explores the origins of *One & Other* in the context of his earlier works. The film features archival material on key Gormley art from the past three decades, including lead figures moulded from his body that were crafted in early 1980s.

Chuck Close

Toronto Premiere

Director/Producer: Marion Cajori

Producer: Art Kaleidoscope Foundation

Distributor: Arthouse Films

Colour, 116 minutes, English, 2007

Since 1969, when his work was first shown at Bykert Gallery in Soho, Chuck Close has been best known as a reinventor of portraiture. As we hear this articulate and affable man discuss his personal journey, we also watch him create a self-portrait. Numerous interviews with his subjects—friends, artists and family who discuss their own work and life in relation to his—make clear how far this artist has transcended categories like realism, process and abstraction. Throughout, the profound influence Chuck Close has had on his generation of art becomes undeniable.

Colville

Toronto Premiere

Director/Producer: Andreas Schultz

Producer: Reinhard Wulf

Distributor: WDR Cologne/3sat

Colour, 67 minutes, English, 2008

Taking us into Alex Colville's studio and home, director Andreas Schultz creates an intimate portrait of one of the most famous living Canadian artists. Colville's subjects are drawn from his immediate surroundings: the small town of Wolfville; Evangeline Beach, with the silhouette of

Cape Blomidon on the horizon; the slopes of the Gaspereau Valley; the waters of the Grand Pré marshlands; and the 60-year relationship with wife Rhoda. By examining Colville's work through the landmarks of his intimate life, Schultz places the painter's famously opaque but highly realistic imagery into context.

Ernst Beyeler: Art Dealer

Toronto Premiere

Director: Thomas Isler

Producer: Bix Films, Freihändler

Distributor: Freihändler Filmproduktion

Colour, 66 minutes, English, French and German with English subtitles, 2007

This very personal documentary brings to light the important role Ernst Beyeler has had in the international art world. Beyeler has been an art dealer since 1947—helping the Museum of Modern Art acquire its first Picasso and showing the work of some of the greatest artists of modernism. He was instrumental in creating the world's largest and most important international art fair, Art Basel, and created the Beyeler Foundation, where his impressive collection is on public view. Interviews with associates, assistants and friends reveal diverse, oft-hidden facets of Beyeler's personality and knowledge, and reinforce his wonderfully infectious enthusiasm for art.

Fold, Crumple, Crush: The Art of El Anatsui

World Premiere

Director/Producer: Susan Vogel

Producers: Prince Street Pictures, Inc.; The Museum for African Art, New York, Elsie McCabe, President and Enid Schildkrout, Director of Exhibitions

Distributor: Prince Street Pictures

Colour, 53 minutes, English, 2009

Fold, Crumple, Crush presents a lively portrait of the first black African artist to achieve world acclaim at its highest levels. Director Susan Vogel provides an insider's view of El Anatsui's practice, a process that requires thousands of hours of labour to transform bottle caps and other scraps into vast, shimmering sculptures. We see the artist on the world stage of the Venice Biennale, in the small town of Nsukka as he goes about his daily life and inside his studio overseeing assistants. Behind Anatsui's charming, easygoing demeanour, the film reveals a man who remains mysterious even to his dearest friends.

Jean-Michel Basquiat: The Radiant Child

Canadian Premiere

Director: Tamra Davis

Executive Producer: Maja Hoffmann

Producers: David Koh, Lilly Bright, Stanley Buchthal, Alexis Many Spraic

Distributor: Arthouse Films

Colour, 88 minutes, English, 2009

Last year, Reel Artists screened a short Tamra Davis documentary showing one of Jean-Michel Basquiat's final interviews. This year, we present the Canadian premiere of Davis' feature about the legendary artist. Though Basquiat started out in graffiti, he quickly rose to fame in 1980s New York, creating distinctive paintings and befriending icons like Andy Warhol and Deborah Harry. However, trouble soon took hold, and the artist died suddenly at 27. In this definitive

documentary, Davis pays tribute to her friend Basquiat while acknowledging his difficulties. Interviews with Larry Gagosian, Annina Nosei, Julian Schnabel and others uncover the mystique of Basquiat as both artist and man.

Louise Bourgeois: The Spider, the Mistress and the Tangerine

Toronto Premiere

Directors/Producers: Marion Cajori, Amei Wallach

Distributor: Zeitgeist Films

Colour, English, 99 minutes, 2008

Louise Bourgeois: The Spider, the Mistress and the Tangerine is a cinematic journey inside the life and imagination of an icon of modern art. Louise Bourgeois has been at the forefront of developments in art for six decades. As a screen presence, she is magnetic, mercurial and emotionally raw. In this extraordinary documentary, her process is on full display. Filmed between 1993 and 2007, this feature presents a comprehensive documentary of creativity and revelation.

Pretend Not to See Me

Toronto Premiere

Director/Producer: Katherine Knight

Producer: David Craig

Distributor: Site Media, Inc.

Colour, 52 minutes, English, 2009

Living in remote Newfoundland, performance artist Colette Urban balances everyday living with the world of the imagination. Shot at her oceanfront farm, this film captures Urban as she restages 13 enigmatic performances from her lifetime of work. Resilient, determined, self-aware and funny, Urban embraces the transformative power of art: "I'm timid in the real world. Performance and this idea of disguise are a real comfort. I'm someone else once I'm in that role of the performer." Set against rugged east-coast beauty, Urban emerges as an empathetic, courageous and visionary character, someone following a dream and sustaining courage through acts of creative risk.

Si Sullivan m'était contée

Toronto Premiere

Director/Producer: Lauraine André-G.

Distributor: Vidéographe

Colour, 85 minutes, English and French with English subtitles, 2007

Françoise Sullivan, a co-signatory of 1948's *Refus global* and one of the greatest figures of modern Canadian art, was a dancer, choreographer, photographer, sculptor and painter. This film propels us into her universe, where art knows no boundaries—we follow Sullivan in her public life, her life as a teacher at Concordia University and her private life. In her studio, where she is still active, she discusses her career. *Si Sullivan m'était contée* takes us into the sphere of this versatile artist who has played a central role in the evolution of art in Quebec since the 1940s.

Takao Tanabe: A Work of Art

Theatrical Premiere

Director/Producer: Catharine Chesterman

Producer: Prometheus Films in association with Bravo!, a division of CTV Limited

Colour, 48 minutes, English, 2009

Takao Tanabe has been an important figure in Canadian art for over 60 years, contributing immensely to landscape traditions in contemporary Canadian painting. Born in British Columbia in 1926, Tanabe studied in Europe, the United States and Japan. This film chronicles Tanabe's life from internment on Canadian soil during World War II to beginning painting during the early days of abstract expressionism to working through his current practice. Now in his early 80s, Tanabe is direct and articulate, giving the audience a true sense of the man behind a remarkable body of work.

Traveling with Yoshitomo Nara

Toronto Premiere

Director: Koji Sakabe

Producer: Ryuichi Tokuyama

Distributor: Viz Pictures

Colour, 93 minutes, Japanese with English subtitles, 2007

World-renowned Japanese pop artist Yoshitomo Nara has gained cult status for his paintings of menacing children, among other works. *Traveling with Yoshitomo Nara* reveals the artist's personal world; it records the journey Nara took along with Hideki Toyoshima, the Graf AtoZ team and many others who contributed to the creation and ultimate destruction of his mammoth project *AtoZ*—a handmade exhibition in his hometown of Hirosaki featuring 26 rooms, one for each letter of the alphabet. With Nara as leader, we see how this large creation began taking form and watch the development of a surprising outcome for both artwork and artist.

Two Artists: Andrea Zittel and Monika Sosnowska 1:1

Canadian Premiere

Director: Michael Blackwood

Producer: Michael Blackwood Productions

Colour, 58 minutes, English, 2009

Filmed at the Schaulager in Basel, this film documents the exhibition *1:1*, which featured sculptures by Polish artist Monika Sosnowska and a comprehensive survey of American artist Andrea Zittel. Both artists design spaces and each responds to surrounding architectures, lifestyles and traditions. The exhibition title *1:1* refers to the resulting “parallel realities” as well as to the scale of many works—Zittel and Sosnowska often test the relationship of art and reality in life size. They also share an interest in the modernist era, its social utopias and its concrete efforts to unite art and life, in which architecture and design play an important role.

Yayoi Kusama: I Love Me

Toronto Premiere

Director: Takako Matsumoto

Executive Producer: Kanji Enomoto

Producers: Takashi Shimizu, Seiji Itaki

Distributor: Viz Pictures

Colour, 102 minutes, Japanese with English subtitles, 2008

Director Takako Matsumoto takes us into the world of Yayoi Kusama, a polka-dot-loving artist recognized throughout the international cultural scene. This film captures Kusama's creative process as she completes a series of 50 large monochrome drawings. As her work develops, one witnesses the essence of her art as it wells up in the conflict between life, death and love—sometimes quietly and sometimes just the opposite. Her firm self-confidence and dignified spirit, recorded in detail through Matsumoto's invaluable footage, allows viewers to enter Kusama's world, where there is never a dull moment.